

Crowds Storm the Cottage Grove Park and Ride

The Raingarden Maintenance 101 workshops, held on Wed., Oct. 17 at the Cottage Grove Park and Ride were a smashing success. We had a total of 83 people in attendance, including parks and public works staff from Stillwater, Woodbury, Cottage Grove, Hastings, Maplewood and Washington County.

The workshops, which EMWREP sponsored along with Dakota County SWCD, MECA and Cottage Grove, were actually a two part venture. First, on Thursday, Oct. 11, three crews from the Minnesota Conservation Corps came out to the Park and Ride to get a hands-on lesson in raingarden maintenance. During the course of the morning, we weeded several gardens, built a rock step-down to control erosion near the inlet of one raingarden and re-planted and mulched three of the gardens. With this experience, MCC supervisor Brian Miller was able to prepare an estimate for how long and how much it would cost for an MCC crew of four to perform regular maintenance on a municipal raingarden.

During the follow-up sessions for public works staff and contractors on Oct. 17, Rusty Schmidt (WCD), Jay Riggs (WCD) and Mike Isensee (Dakota SWCD) led participants through the basic steps in raingarden maintenance, beginning with identifying weeds in an unmaintained raingarden and ending with a sample Raingarden Maintenance Request Form for cities that will be contracting out their yearly maintenance. Other materials distributed at the workshop included a sample Operations and Maintenance agreement for cost-share recipients developed by BCWD and a maintenance plan for the Park and Ride developed by MNDOT. Please let me know if you would like copies of any of the materials or a registration list from the workshop.



Save the Date!

Planners Workshop: Dec. 13, 9am-3pm

Our next Stormwater U workshop, *Integrating Natural Resource Protection into Comprehensive Plan Updates*, will be held on Thursday, Dec. 13 at the Stillwater Public Library. The goal of this workshop is to help city planners integrate surface and groundwater protection into their comprehensive plan updates. Staff from the Met Council and Washington County will be at the workshop along with facilitators from WCD and the U of M Extension Stormwater Program. We also hope to create sample comp plan language for the cities to take back with them.

This workshop will be geared specifically to cities in Washington County, although we expect that a few planners from outside the county may attend as well. There will also be a second workshop hosted by Minnehaha Creek Watershed District for west metro cities some time in January.

We would like to have at least one person from each city in Washington County attend; this may be a city staff person, a consulting planner, or both. We will also invite cities to send one or two representatives from their planning commission.

Look for an official announcement soon!



Neighbors of Bonnie Juran gather for a photo beside her raingarden during a Blue Thumb house party. Bonnie, who lives in Lake Elmo, received a cost-share grant from WCD in 2006.

Public Works Forum Update

Following the Raingarden Maintenance workshop on Oct. 17, I met with public works staff from Woodbury, Cottage Grove, Forest Lake and Hastings for the inaugural Washington County Public Works Forum. The group brainstormed a long list of topics to discuss at future forum sessions and decided that the best format would be a quarterly half-day meeting with some time for speakers or presentations and some for discussion and idea sharing between different cities.

I hope to hold the next forum meeting in December with Storm Pond Maintenance as the topic. Issues to discuss include controlling weeds and woody growth, managing easements, and much, much more.

Look for an official announcement soon!

Members of the East Metro Water Resource Education Program:

Brown's Creek Watershed District • City of Cottage Grove • City of Dellwood • City of Forest Lake • City of Lake Elmo • City of Stillwater • City of Willernie • Lower St. Croix Watershed Management Organization • Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization • South Washington Watershed District • Valley Branch Watershed District • Washington Conservation District • Washington County

