

West Metro Water Alliance

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West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) is a consortium of four WMOs - the Bassett Creek, Elm Creek, Shingle Creek and West Mississippi WMOs. Together with Three Rivers Park District, Hennepin County Department of Environment and Energy, and the Freshwater Society, WMWA has grown from a recognition that individual organizations have many common education and public outreach goals and messages that could be more efficiently and effectively addressed and delivered collaboratively and on a wider scale. The WMOs are designated as “members,” the latter three organizations as “partners.” WMWA representatives meet monthly at Plymouth City Hall. Doug Baines is the Elm Creek Commission’s representative to WMWA.

Watershed PREP

Watershed PREP is a program of WMWA and stands for **P**rotection, **R**estoration, **E**ducation, and **P**revention. 2014 was the second year of the program.

Two persons with science education backgrounds serve as contract educators to be shared between the member WMOs. The focus of the program is two-fold - to present water resource-based classes to fourth grade students and to provide education and outreach to citizens, lake associations, civic organizations, youth groups, etc.

Fourth Grade Program. Three individual classes meeting State of Minnesota education standards have been developed. **Lesson 1, *What is a Watershed and Why do we care?*** provides an overview of the watershed concept and is specific to each school's watershed. It describes threats to the watershed. **Lesson 2, *Water Cycle - More than 2-dimensional!*** describes the movement and status of water as it travels through the water cycle. **Lesson 3, *Stormwater Walk***, investigates movement of surface water on schools grounds. The ultimate goal is to make this program available to all fourth graders in the four WMWA watersheds (Shingle Creek, West Mississippi, Bassett Creek, and Elm Creek), and to other schools as contracted.

In November 2013 the educators submitted a Green Partner Grant application to Hennepin County to enhance the Watershed PREP initiative. The project goal was to triple the number of classrooms visited in 2014 and develop a stronger connection to action by introducing the Storm Drain Goalie into the program. In 2014 the County awarded a grant of \$7,940 to fund the expansion of Watershed PREP, which doubled in size (see Table 1). Tables 2 and 3 details the 2014 participation in the program.

Table 1. Watershed PREP Fourth Grade Program participation growth.

Year	# Classrooms	# Students	# and Type of Schools
<i>Lesson 1</i>			
2013	63	1,679	13 in six districts; one charter school; one parochial school
2014	116	3,469	30 in seven districts; one magnet school; one parochial school
<i>Lesson 2</i>			
2013	14	390	Three in three districts; one charter school; one parochial school
2014	22	645	Five in three districts

Table 2. 2014 schools and students participating in Lesson 1: What is a Watershed?

Date	School	District	Watershed	# Classes	# Students
7-Mar	Zachary Lane Elem.	Robbinsdale	Bassett Creek	1	27
7-Mar	Gleason Lake	Wayzata	Minnehaha Creek	1	25
12-14 Mar	Elm Creek	Osseo	Elm Creek	3	73
18-Mar	Oakwood	Wayzata	Minnehaha Creek	4	105
25-26 Mar	Plymouth Creek	Wayzata	Bassett Creek	5	135
8, 10 April	Kimberly Lane	Wayzata	Bassett Creek	6	143
15-Apr	St. Vincent de Paul	Parochial	West Mississippi	2	44
23-Apr	Rice Lake	Osseo	Elm Creek	4	100
24, 25 April	Oak View	Osseo	Shingle Creek	6	177
12-May	Earle Brown Elem.	Brooklyn Center	West Mississippi	6	168
27-May	Rush Creek	Osseo	Elm Creek	5	144
1-May	Sunset Hill	Wayzata	Bassett Creek	4	115
5-May	Birchview	Wayzata	Minnehaha Creek	5	150
17, 18 Sep	Woodland	Osseo	West Mississippi	5	123
22-Sep	Rice Lake	Osseo	Elm Creek	3	88
23-Sep	Hmong Inter. Academy	Minneapolis	Bassett Creek	3	50
29-Sep	Noble Academy	Minneapolis	Shingle Creek	2	60
1-Oct	Weaver Lake	Osseo	Elm Creek	4	120
1-Oct	Monroe	Anoka-Hennepin	West Mississippi	4	146
2-Oct	Neill Elementary	Robbinsdale	Bassett Creek	3	69
3-Oct	Rogers Elem	Elk River	Elm Creek	4	120
8,9,13-Oct	Oxbow	Anoka-Hennepin	West Mississippi	7	210
10-Oct	Jackson Middle School	Anoka-Hennepin	West Mississippi	8	240
15-Oct	Meadow Lake	Robbinsdale	Shingle Creek	4	96
20-Oct	Bryn Mawr	Minneapolis	Bassett Creek	1	32
22-Oct	School of Eng and Arts	Robbinsdale	Bassett Creek	3	78
28, 29 Oct	Champlin BP Academy	Anoka-Hennepin	West Mississippi	5	140
29 Oct	Spanish Immersion	Robbinsdale	Bassett Creek	5	120
Nov	FAIR	Magnet	Shingle Creek	4	105
Nov	Noble Elementary	Robbinsdale	Bassett Creek	2	64
10-Nov	Palmer Lake	Osseo	Shingle Creek	3	70
11-12 Dec	Hilltop	Wayzata	Minnehaha Creek	5	132
				116	3,469

*Educator did not record the number of classes.

Table 3. 2014 schools and students participating in Lesson 2: The Incredible Journey- Water Cycle Activity.

Date	School	District	Watershed	# Classes	# Students
19-May	Earle Brown*	Brooklyn Center	West Mississippi	6	168
20-Oct	Woodland	Osseo	West Mississippi	5	123
23-Oct	Rice Lake	Osseo	Elm Creek	3	88
27-Oct	Rogers	Elk River	Elm Creek	4	120
30-Oct	Monroe	Anoka-Hennepin	West Mississippi	4	146
				22	645

*Teachers borrowed the kit and performed the lesson.

Community Education and Outreach. The PREP educators provided outreach at five community and school events. They also presented the lessons to Hennepin County Environmental Services staff at their staff retreat. Participation is detailed in Table 4.

Table 4. 2014 Watershed PREP community education and outreach participation.

Date	Event	Location	Watershed	# Contacts
11-12 April	Plymouth Yard & Garden	Plymouth	Bassett Creek/Shingle Creek	Not recorded
26-Apr	Earthfest	Brooklyn Center	Shingle Creek/W Mississippi	79*
10-May	Twin Lakes Lakeshore	Robbinsdale	Shingle Creek	18*
21-Jun	New Hope City Days	New Hope	Bassett Creek/Shingle Creek	122*
24-Oct	St. Vincent de Paul Cleanup	Parochial School	West Mississippi	28
10-Oct	HC Dept Env Services Retreat	Silverwood Park	Countywide	~30

*Direct contacts

Evaluation:

The educators evaluate the success of the Fourth Grade Program by surveying students and teachers about the quality of the program, the learning that was observed, and the performance of the educators. Much of the feedback occurs during and right after the presentations in spontaneous comments.

Educators: “We get a number of students thanking us (sincerely) and then hear their chatter as they leave....”Oh that was really gross. I didn't know all of that went in our lake!” Teachers ask us to return, comment how great this is for fourth graders, it fits perfectly into what they are doing. “

2014 teacher comments:

“The kids really enjoyed it! We heard great things from students and parents as well. The kids went home and shared what they learned.”

“Students experienced learning that surpassed the intended outcomes. They were absolutely enthralled and completely engaged in the research, activities and conversations.”

“This visit was a great addition to our water unit. This presentation makes water protection real and local. Kids left feeling a sense of urgency and power to make a difference.”