

1.1.1 2015-2024 Education and Outreach Program

Education and Public Outreach is a core function of the Elm Creek Watershed Management Organization. The Commission has conducted some education and outreach activities and has also collaborated with other organizations in Hennepin County as part of the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) and participated in Metro-wide education and outreach initiatives such as Blue Thumb, Watershed Partners and Northland NEMO.

This Third Generation Education and Public Outreach Program expands the Commission's education and outreach activities. The program is set forth in more detail in Appendix E. The following sections set forth the program goals and strategies.

WATERSHED EDUCATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM GOALS

The goal of the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission's Education and Outreach Program is to educate and engage everyone in the watershed by increasing awareness of water resources, and creating and supporting advocates willing to protect and preserve the resources in the watershed.

Implementation Strategies. Each year the Commission will evaluate the proposed Education and Outreach program and establish education and outreach activities for the coming year. The WRAPS study may identify additional goals and strategies to be pursued in the coming years. The Commission will rely on the following and other strategies to implement the program and achieve the Plan's education and outreach goals:

- Participate with collaborative groups such as WMWA and Blue Thumb to pool resources to undertake activities in a cost-effective manner, promote interagency cooperation and collaboration, and promote consistency of messages.
- Use the Commission's, member cities', and educational partners' websites and newsletters, social media, co-ops, local newspapers and cable TV to share useful information to stakeholders on ways to improve water quality.
- Prominently display the Commission's logo on information and outreach items, project and interpretive signs, and other locations to increase visibility.
- Provide opportunities for the public to learn about and participate in water quality activities.
- Provide education opportunities for elected and appointed officials and other decision makers.
- Enhance education opportunities for youth.

2015-2017 Priority Areas for Education and Outreach. The following are the priority areas by stakeholder group for the first few years of the Third Generation Plan:

1. All stakeholders: use multiple strategies to deliver simple messages: "where does our water go" and "why do we manage water quality."
2. Homeowners: Disseminate education materials to all stakeholders about actions they can take to protect and improve water quality. Targeted messages:
 - a. Redirect your runoff onto pervious areas.

- b. Clean up after your pets.
 - c. Keep organic matter (leaves, grass clippings, seeds, etc.) out of streets, ditches, lakefronts, and storm sewers.
 - d. Reduce chemical and salt use.
3. Lakeshore property owners: sponsor workshops on basics of limnology, learning about AIS, and how to undertake lakescaping.
 4. Elected officials and city staff: Sponsor watershed and water resources training opportunities such as NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) for the city councils and planning commissions in the member cities. Develop a mechanism to share information about BMPs between the cities and with developers.
 5. Students: expand the Watershed PREP program to all elementary schools in the watershed, and begin developing a companion program for older students.
 6. Agricultural producers and hobbyists: identify and work with influential persons to spread the water quality and BMP message. Undertake a demonstration project with a co-op.