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Blue Thumb Announces New Host Site

Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water, founded in 2006 as a program of the Rice Creek Watershed District selected Metro Blooms, a 30 year old nonprofit with deep roots in Minneapolis, to become its new host site.

Blue Thumb includes more than 70 partners - watershed districts, cities, landscape design and build contractors specializing in stormwater best management practices, native plant nurseries, and environmental nonprofits – working together to promote native plantings, raingardens and shoreline plantings. The partnership's impact has been recognized by the Star Tribune, the National Geographic-sponsored "Blue Legacy Tour, and clean water advocates across the country.

Metro Blooms was formed in 1983 by citizens as an effort to promote greening of the public spaces throughout Minneapolis. In the years that followed, it launched programs including garden awards and raingarden workshops. In 2008, it adopted the name "Metro Blooms" to reflect its focus on restoring the ecological function of the urban landscape and its expanding geographical reach.

"Both Metro Blooms and Blue Thumb aim to protect Minnesota's lakes and rivers through water quality awareness and education projects, specifically the promotion of raingardens, native plantings and other practices that reduce stormwater runoff to our lakes and rivers," commented Becky Rice, Metro Blooms Executive Director. "Metro Blooms has been a Blue Thumb partner since its inception, and this will give us the opportunity to build a stronger relationship whether or not we ultimately choose to put our organizations together formally." The Environmental Protection Agency identifies runoff as a vehicle for pollution to enter lakes and rivers, and has named it the most significant threat to water quality.

Metro Blooms has been offered an eight month contract to assist Blue Thumb in administrative, developmental, marketing and outreach in order to strengthen its programs. "Collaboration between Blue Thumb and Metro Blooms would allow both to expand the scope of their impact beyond the Twin Cities, with the hope of assisting in the formation of similar organizations out-of-state," says Jessica Bromelkamp, Outreach and Communication Coordinator of the Rice Creek Watershed District. Bromelkamp affirms that Blue Thumb, which continues as a program of the Rice Creek Watershed District, looks to broaden its reach, and will benefit from working with Metro Blooms, an organization that isn't geographically bound. Although the current agreement stipulates only eight months of services, it notes the "significant potential to become a long term partnership and possible host site for Blue Thumb."

Learn about Blue Thumb at www.BlueThumb.org. To learn more about Metro Blooms visit www.metroblooms.org.

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