

## **Appendix B**

### **BCWMC Education and Outreach Plan**

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# BCWMC Education and Outreach Plan

## B.1. Main planning document that supports EOP

Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission – Watershed Management Plan – September, 2015.

## B.2. Executive Summary

The Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission's (BCWMC) Education and Outreach Plan provides key messages and a guide for disseminating the information in order to educate watershed residents, businesses, policymakers, city staff, educators, students and other interested parties. In particular, the BCWMC aims to change behaviors toward more water-friendly practices and to keep audiences apprised of the following:

- The background, projects, and responsibilities of the BCWMC;
- The water resources of the watershed, their condition, and expectations for future conditions;
- Pollutants, their sources and best management practices necessary to protect and improve water resources;
- Volunteer opportunities related to monitoring or improving water resources;
- Importance of broad input and participation on BCWMC projects, plans, goals, policies, and community outreach methods; and
- Importance of public involvement and understanding of all proposed capital projects and new regulations.

The BCWMC will use its annual operating budget along with collaboration with other entities and possibly grant funding to implement its Education and Outreach Plan. Each year, the Commission's Education Committee will recommend to the Commission a detailed plan of implementation (including timing and tasks) as well as a budget. The Commission's Education Committee, volunteers, and staff will be the primary Plan implementers. The BCWMC will also seek collaborative groups and partners to help achieve the goals set out in the plan. Some of the partners include Metro Blooms, West Metro Watershed Alliance, Metropolitan Council, Metro WaterShed Partners, various schools, and Hennepin County. Many of the activities will be designed to meet member city MS4 education & outreach and citizen participation goals.

## B.3. Core Audience

The core audience for each of the education topics and messages below includes several key groups:

- a. Watershed residents
- b. Elected and appointed officials in the watershed
- c. Businesses in the watershed
- d. Recreational water body users in the watershed.
- e. Educators and students in the watershed
- f. Environmental and special interest groups, lake associations, etc.
- g. Local government staff working in the watershed

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## B.4. Core Avenues of Disseminating Information

There are many ways and venues in which to disseminate educational materials to the various audiences. The primary of these that will be used most frequently include:

- a. BCWMC website
- b. Press releases
- c. Articles in city newsletters or newsletters of other entities
- d. Traveling exhibits and displays
- e. Watershed map, brochures, pamphlets and other written material
- f. Presentations to groups, organizations, and city councils or commissions
- g. Open houses, tours, meetings, workshops, trainings
- h. Permanent educational signs
- i. Participation in member city events (such as Plymouth Yard and Garden Expo, Golden Valley Days, etc.)
- j. Social media
- k. Broadcast or local radio or television spots

## B.5. Topics, Key Messages, and Implementation

<b>Topic:</b> BCWMC Background, history, responsibilities and projects
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**Audience:** Core audience + residents or entities affected by proposed or existing projects of the BCWMC

**Key Messages:**

- a. Location of the watershed and list of cities in the BCWMC
- b. Location and description of the lakes, streams, and wetlands in the BCWMC
- c. The purpose of the BCWMC along with its history, governance, goals, work program, events, partners, primary contacts, and funding
- d. Information on proposed or existing projects of the BCWMC including renderings and information on expected future conditions and aesthetics (vegetation, sight lines, etc.)

**Implementation:**

Core avenues of disseminating information +

- a. Maintain BCWMC website with information including:
  - Water resources, monitoring results, TMDL reports
  - Watershed map
  - Annual reports of the BCWMC
  - Budgets and funding
  - BCWMC list of contacts
  - BCWMC capital projects including feasibility studies, designs, opportunities for citizen input
  - Links to helpful websites and partnering organizations

- b. Provide mechanism (open houses, public meetings, site meetings, etc.) for residents or entities to learn about proposed BCWMC projects and provide input early and throughout planning and implementation process
- c. Maintain standard messaging/marketing/branding materials for BCWMC correspondence and displays including:
  - Introduction letter/packet about the BCWMC for new Commissioners and others
  - BCWMC logo
  - BCWMC letterhead with succinct mission statement
  - Standard BCWMC identifying paragraph (to be used in every news release and communication vehicle)
  - Traveling educational display (to be used at fairs, special events, etc. with related focus)
  - Summary of BCWMC annual report (brief.
  - One page fact sheet about the watershed

**Topic:** The water resources of the watershed, their condition, and expectations for future conditions

**Audience:** Core audience + focus on residents who live on lakes, streams, and wetlands

**Key Messages:**

- a. Definition of a watershed and the importance of water resources in the community.
- b. Location of significant water resources in BCWMC (streams, lakes, wetlands)
- c. Data and general information on condition of waterbodies (if known) with water quality trends (if available)
- d. Information on impaired waters and TMDLs
- e. Information on blue green algae and aquatic invasive species
- f. Information on effect of improved water clarity on aquatic plants
- g. General limnological information including algae-zooplankton-fish interactions and phosphorus release from hypolimnion
- h. Information on different streambank restoration techniques and the pros/cons of each method

**Implementation:**

Core avenues of disseminating information +

- a. Include water monitoring reports and TMDL documents on BCWMC website
- b. Develop fact sheets or less technical reports with monitoring results (for website and dissemination elsewhere)
- c. Install stream identification road signs at stream crossings

**Topic:** Pollutants, their sources and best management practices necessary to protect and improve water resources

**Audience:** Core audience + focus on residents who live on lakes, streams, and wetlands and businesses that have a potential for impact on water (lawn care companies, developers, engineers, consultants, etc.)

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**Key Messages:**

- a. Information on types of pollutants with emphasis on nutrients, chlorides, sediment, pesticides, and bacteria
- b. Information on differences between sanitary and storm sewers
- c. Information on importance of soil testing and how/where to use soil tests
- d. Information on how everyday activities from every property can effect water quality
- e. Effects of high nutrients on water quality including elevated possibilities for blue green algae blooms
- f. Major sources of pollutants include:
  - Grass clippings, leaves and fertilizers in street
  - General stormwater runoff and increased volume from hard surfaces
  - Runoff and associated pollutants from parking lots, driveways, rooftops
  - Eroding streambanks
  - De-icing materials
  - Industrial/commercial sites (spills, leaks, waste, vehicles, materials handling)
  - Direct runoff from lawns adjacent to lakes, streams
  - Pet waste, geese, wildlife
  - Trash
- g. Aquatic invasive species can significantly degrade habitat quality and recreational suitability
- h. Best management practices are everyone's responsibility (if we all do a little we can do a lot)
  - Sweeping grass clipping, leaves, and extra deicers from driveways, sidewalks, streets
  - Using environmentally friendly practices around yard and home
  - Installing raingardens, rain barrels, infiltration swales
  - Picking up trash and pet waste
  - Installing buffers along streams, lakes, wetlands
  - Monitoring for aquatic invasive species and remaining vigilant

**Implementation:**

Core avenues of disseminating information +

- a. Collaborate with West Metro Water Alliance
  - Develop educational materials including best practices brochures and Commercial Property Guidebook
  - Develop water quality problem or violations reporting form for use by residents
  - Develop interactive clean water curriculum for students and present in classrooms upon request
- b. Collaborate with Metro Blooms and Blue Thumb to provide workshops and trainings rain garden installations, native gardens, buffers, rain barrels, etc.
- c. Support Metro WaterShed Partners' Clean Water MN media campaign
- d. Support storm drain stenciling projects
- e. Support installation of storm drains and manhole covers with subwatershed identification and key messages

**Topic:** Volunteer opportunities related to monitoring or improving water resources

**Audience:** Recruit volunteers from core audience + focus on residents who live on lakes, streams, and wetlands

**Key Messages:**

- a. Volunteers are needed to help monitor water quality through the Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program and River Watch and other programs
- b. Volunteers are encouraged to participate on BCWMC committees
- c. Volunteers are needed for BCWMC participation in community events
- d. BCWMC Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners are noted as valuable volunteers
- e. Volunteers are respected and highly regarded by the BCWMC

**Implementation:**

- a. Support and work with Met Council's Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program for lake monitoring, Hennepin County's River Watch program for teachers and students monitoring streams, Hennepin County's Wetland Health Evaluation Program for wetland monitoring, storm drain stenciling projects, and other programs.
- b. Recruit volunteers through various events, venues and publications (cores avenues)
- c. Annually recognize and thank volunteers with thank you notes and recognition in press releases
- d. Recognize retiring Commissioners or Alternate Commissioners with resolution and certificate
- e. Provide training for volunteer activities, as needed
- f. Support or coordinate clean up events, creek walks, or other events and activities to involve the public

**Topic:** Importance of broad input and participation on BCWMC projects, plans, goals, policies, and community outreach methods

**Audience:** Core audience

**Key Messages:**

- a. The BCWMC values citizen input and needs citizen participation and support to balance interests and protect the watershed
- b. Residents are encouraged to attend BCWMC meetings to be informed and lend comments
- c. Lake associations, civic groups, environmental groups and others are encouraged to be informed and involved with the BCWMC
- d. Local elected officials are encouraged to understand the BCWMC 's Joint Powers Agreement and well as its goals, funding and governance and to lend input

**Implementation:**

- a. Maintained and updated website
- b. Broad dissemination of BCWMC meeting agendas/materials

- c. Written and verbal communication with residents, elected officials, and groups encouraging participation in meetings and events

**Topic:** Importance of public involvement and understanding of all proposed capital projects and new regulations

**Audience:** Core audience + residents, member cities and stakeholder groups potentially affected by a proposed project or regulation

**Key Messages:**

- a. Information on the location, layout, landscape changes, and effect of proposed projects
- b. Information on the effects and potential costs of proposed regulations

**Implementation:**

Core avenues of disseminating information +

- a. Notices to lakeshore groups, homeowner associations, boat owners and others directly affected by proposals/projects
- b. Notices to builders/developers and businesses directly affected by proposals/projects
- c. Public hearings prior to policy/project adoption with opportunities for citizen input and questions
- d. Presentations to city officials and key staff
- e. “Before” and “after” photos (or photo renderings) of proposed projects
- f. Policy/project fact sheet to send upon request and distribute at meetings

## B.6. Evaluation

The BCWMC will evaluate its success at relaying key messages. Evaluation could take the following forms:

- a. Number of copies of watershed maps, brochures, or written materials that are disseminated.
- b. Approximate number of people attending or contacted through events, tours, open houses, public meetings, etc.
- c. Surveys to test public’s awareness, knowledge, use, and perception of water resources and their use of best practices. Surveys can be implemented in conjunction with cities or other entities or done through the BCWMC
- d. Program/workshop evaluations submitted by participants
- e. Number of volunteers