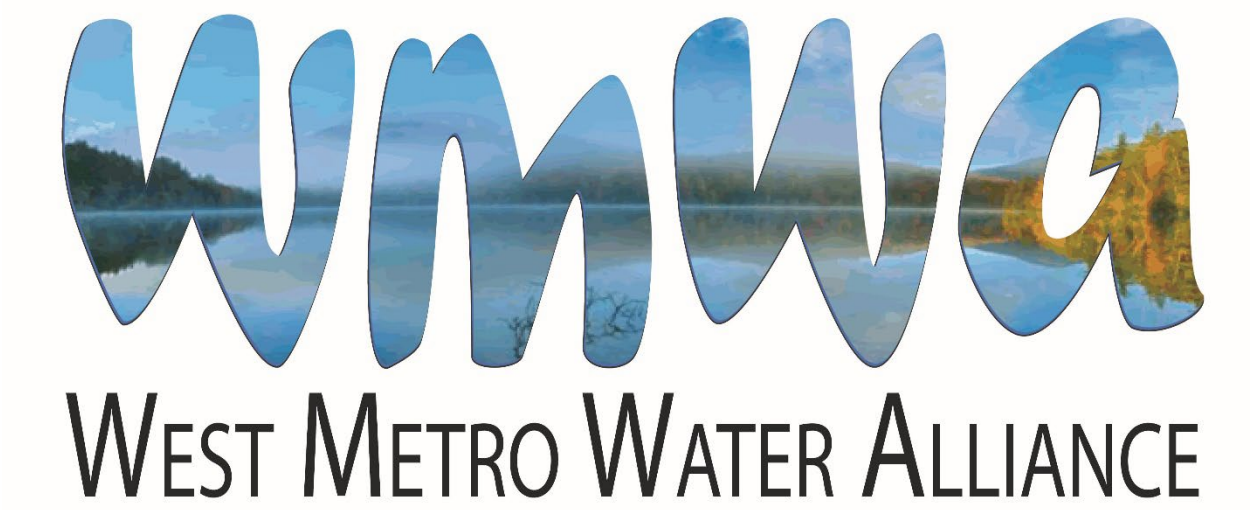
Item 7E.
BCWMC 4-20-23



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

BACKGROUND

In 2006 the Shingle Creek and West Mississippi Watershed Management Commission's Education and Public Outreach Committee (EPOC) invited the Education Committee of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission to partner in developing joint education and outreach activities. Since that time this voluntary partnership has grown to include the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission, the Three Rivers Park District, Hennepin County Department of Environment and Energy, and the Freshwater Society. The WMOs are designated as "members," the latter three organizations as "partners."

This alliance, the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA), grew from a recognition that the 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.

MEETINGS

WMWA meets monthly, as needed, on the second Tuesday, virtually via Zoom. Member representatives include Laura Jester, Bassett Creek WMC Administrator; Doug Baines, Commissioner, Elm Creek WMC; Nico Cantarero, Stantec, Dayton, Elm Creek WMC; Mike Sorenson, Robbinsdale, Bassett Creek and Shingle Creek WMCs, and Ben Scharenbroich and Amy Riegel, Plymouth, Shingle Creek, Bassett Creek and Elm Creek WMCs. Other attendees include Jessica Sahu Teli, Watershed PREP Educator; Diane Spector, Stantec/Wenck Associates, serves as technical support for WMWA, and Amy Juntunen, JASS, serves as administrative support. In 2022 twelve meetings were held. All WMWA member Commissioners and city staff are welcome to attend meetings.

THE WMWA PROGRAM

Goals of the WMWA program are to:

- Inform the public about the watershed organizations and their programs.
- Provide useful information to the public on priority topics.
- Engage the public and encourage positive, water-friendly behaviors.
- Help member cities meet MS4 permit requirements regarding education.

Five informational pieces have been developed by WMWA to support these goals. The *10 Things You Can Do* Brochure targets the general public. The brochure is distributed at all venues where the Commissions or member cities have a presence and also in the Watershed PREP classrooms**.** It is also available on the websites of the WMO member cities. In 2019 the *10 Things* brochure was updated and reprinted in partnership with Hennepin County.

The *Maintain Your Property the Watershed Friendly Way* handbook targets small businesses, multi-family housing properties, and common interest communities such as homeowners' associations. It contains tips for specifying and hiring turf and snow maintenance contractors, and includes checklists for BMP inspections.

The *Residential Snow and Ice Care* brochure is an educational piece designed to inform citizens of the chloride pollution problem and ways to reduce salt use. The *Commercial Snow and Ice* brochure is designed to inform HOAs, property managers and commercial applicators of the chloride pollution problem and ways to reduce salt use.

In 2021 WMWA began development of three new flyers to address MS4 permit education needs on the topics of Pet Waste, Water Softener Chlorides, and Deicer Chlorides. These flyers were completed in 2022 and provided to member cities for distribution and addition to website/social media.

All of the flyers can also be found on our website at http://www.westmetrowateralliance.org/flyers-and-newsletters.html.

WATERSHED PREP AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

Watershed PREP is a program of WMWA and stands for Protection, Restoration, Education, and Prevention. 2022 was the tenth year of the program. One contract educators is shared between the member watersheds. 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, other civic organizations, youth groups, etc. Goals of the program are 1) to have audiences gain a general understanding of watersheds, water resources and the organizations that manage them, and 2) to have audiences understand the connection between actions and water quality and water quantity. The ultimate goal is to make this program available to all fourth graders in the four WMWA watersheds and to other schools as contracted.

Fourth Grade Program. Three individual lessons meeting State 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 school grounds.

In 2022, 51 classroom presentations of Lesson 1 and 55 classrooms presentations of Lesson 2 were given.

Pilot classes on native plants were provided at 17 classrooms in three schools in 2022.

WMWA tabled at four outreach events with a total reach of 760 people, two in Plymouth and one each in Maple Grove and Robbinsdale.

UPDATED WORK PLAN

In 2021 the WMWA Work Plan was updated to reflect current practices. The updated Work Plan included the following major revisions:

1. Added an equity statement affirming the group's commitment to environmental justice for all and outreach to historically underrepresented groups.
2. Revised the general educational goals for non-single family property owners and managers to focus solely on providing information and guidance on appropriate BMPs.
3. Removed educational goals for developers as cities were seen as being the most appropriate points of contact with these stakeholders.
4. Removed educational goals for training city staff, as those are the responsibility of the cities.

5. Removed educational goals for agricultural property owners and operators as Hennepin County staff have taken on that role acting as the County Soil and Water Conservation District.
6. Added a key educational goal for all the stakeholders to "understand the relationship between climate and water quality and water quantity."
7. Revised the plan to replace references to the Hennepin County website with the WMWA website.
8. Eliminated Measuring and Monitoring Public Awareness as a major task. One of WMWA's first activities was sponsoring a professional opinion poll in the four watersheds regarding knowledge and behaviors. WMWA does not expect to repeat that poll due to cost but will build measuring and evaluating into individual activities.
9. Strengthened the Communication and Information Sharing activity to incorporate the website and social media.
10. Eliminated the Develop and Coordinate Regional or Countywide Activates task. Early on WMWA had sponsored a series of workshops for broader participation but found it to be an inefficient use of time and resources. The group will focus on spreading information about existing activities sponsored by other groups.

WMWA's 2022 and 2023 budgets reflect these activities and were approved by the members on March 9, 2021 and March 8, 2022, respectively. The budgets are included in this report as *Appendix C*.

SPECIAL PROJECT

In November 2020, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency approved the new 2020 MS4 general permit. WMWA member cities must apply for the new permit by April 15, 2021. Included in the new permit are several education requirements.

The 2022 Special Project was dedicated to helping member cities meet the new MS4 permit education requirements. In 2021 WMWA Special Project funds were approved for the creation of three one-page flyers to address pet waste, deicing chlorides, and water softener chlorides, as well as associated landing pages with further information on the WMWA website. Participating members created the content and hired Taurus Moon Graphic Design to complete the flyer design. The three flyers were completed in early 2022 and are available on the WMWA website at http://www.westmetrowateralliance.org/flyers-and-newsletters.html.

In 2022 the Special Project was dedicated to overruns in the Watershed PREP budget as necessary and to pursue hiring a part-time Outreach Coordinator jointly with Hennepin County.

WMWA OUTREACH COORDINATOR

In the fourth quarter of 2019, members re-evaluated spending on the current Special Project. Looking forward to the needs of 2020 and the future, members voted to use Special Project funding for 2020 to hire a WMWA Coordinator on a contract basis because members did not have enough time to dedicate to upcoming projects. An applicant was hired for the position beginning January 1, 2020. Due to difficulties with COVID, the applicant was unable to start and the position never moved forward.

In April 2022, WMWA members worked with the member watersheds, Hennepin County and the Board of Soil and Water Resources to secure Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) grant dollars to pilot a two-year full-time Outreach Coordinator position shared jointly with 50% of time spent on WMWA and Richfield-Bloomington WMO outreach, and 50% on Hennepin County outreach. Meetings from April through December refined the vision and scope for this position.

Resilient Yard Workshops

Due to COVID in prior years, Metro Blooms created an online webinar format of the workshop. WMWA did not sponsor workshops in 2022, though they are available to member cities through Metro Blooms directly.

WMWA Website

The WMWA website www.westmetrowateralliance.org serves as a repository for documents and information for access by member cities and citizens, lists local events WMWA is participating in and/or otherwise promoting, stores Watershed PREP information for schools.

The website had 689 unique visitors engaged in 937 individual users with an average of 1.46 pages viewed per session for a total of 1,069 sessions with 1,560 page views on the website in 2022. The website metrics can be found in Appendix B

The most visited pages were: Native Plants, Home, About Us, What You Can Do, Contact Us, Watershed PREP Class, Flyers and Newsletters, and The Water Cycle.

2022 Marketing Activity

In May 2016 WMWA created a social media campaign for the Pledge to Plant campaign and WMWA in general on Facebook and Twitter. As of December 31, 2020, the WMWA Twitter page had been discontinued. As of December 31, 2022 the Facebook page had 183 likes with 8 new followers in 2022. For the period January 1 - December 31, 2022, the Facebook page had 57 posts resulting in 522 engagements and 48 visits to the WMWA Facebook Page..

To learn more about WMWA, contact:
Diane Spector, Stantec, 763.252-6880, diane.spector@stantec.com
or Amy Juntunen, JASS, 763.553.1144, amy@jass.biz

APPENDIX

Table 1. 2022 schools and students participating in Watershed PREP classes?

2022 School Visits

Lesson 1: What is a Watershed and Why do we Care?

Date	School	School District	City	Watershed	Classes	Students
3/2-3/3	Elm Creek Elementary	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	8	160
4/6-4/7	Forest Elementary	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle	4	120
4/28	Woodland Elementary	Osseo	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	4	100
5/4/2023	Rush Creek	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	4	120
5/9	Basswood	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	5	127
5/11	Weaver Lake	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	4	98
5/12	Kimberly Lane	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	3	64
5/16	FAIR Pilgrim Lane	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle	3	64
5/17	Meadowbrook	Hopkins	Golden Valley	Bassett	4	122
5/19	Zachary Lane Elem	Robbinsdale	Plymouth	Bassett	3	61
10/4	Noble Elementary	Robbinsdale	Golden Valley	Bassett	2	44
10/27-28	Meadowbrook	Hopkins	Golden Valley	Bassett	5	125
11/9	Rogers	Elk River	Rogers	Elm	4	112
11/21	Dayton	Anoka-Hennepin	Dayton	Elm	4	105
11/28	Sonnesyn Elementary	Robbinsdale	New Hope	Shingle	2	37
11/30	Monroe Elementary	Anoka-Hennepin	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	4	92
				Total	**51**	**1551**

Lesson 2: The Incredible Journey

Date	School	School District		Watershed	Classes	Students
4/7	Forest Elementary	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle	1	30
4/29	Woodland Elementary	Osseo	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	4	100
5/10	Basswood	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	5	127
5/13	Kimberly Lane	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	3	64
5/18	Rush Creek	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	4	120
5/20	Zachary Lane Elem	Robbinsdale	Plymouth	Bassett	3	61
5/24	Forest Elementary	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle	3	90
5/25	Meadowbrook	Hopkins	Golden Valley	Bassett	4	122
5/26	FAIR Pilgrim Lane	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle	3	64
10/6	Noble Elementary	Robbinsdale	Golden Valley	Bassett	2	44
10/13	Weaver Lake	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	4	88
10/17	SEA	Robbinsdale	Golden Valley	Bassett	3	76
10/31-11/1	Spanish Immersion		St. Louis Pk	Bassett	4	137
11/10	Rogers	Elk River	Rogers	Elm	4	112
11/22	Dayton	Anoka-Hennepin	Dayton	Elm	4	105
12/1	Monroe Elementary	Anoka-Hennepin	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	4	92
12/14-15	Meadowbrook	Hopkins	Golden Valley	Bassett	5	125
				Total	**55**	**1557**

Other Classes

6/1/22	Woodland Elementary	Osseo	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	4	100
	Native Plants - Pilot					
6/22	Summer School-Rush Creek	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	3	74
	ecoscape/native plants/roots					
11/16-18	Robbinsdale MS	Robbinsdale	Robbinsdale	Bassett	10	242
	Water Cycle & Adapted PREP class					
				Total	17	416

Events

Date	**Event**	**Location**		**Watershed**	**# of Attendees**
4/23	Discover Plymouth	Plymouth		BC/EC/SC	160
5/7	MG Arbor Day	Maple Grove		EC/SC	150
8/4	Plymouth Kids Fest	Plymouth		BC/EC/SC	400
9/25	Elim Church	Robbinsdale		BC/SC	50
				Total	**760**

Watershed PREP

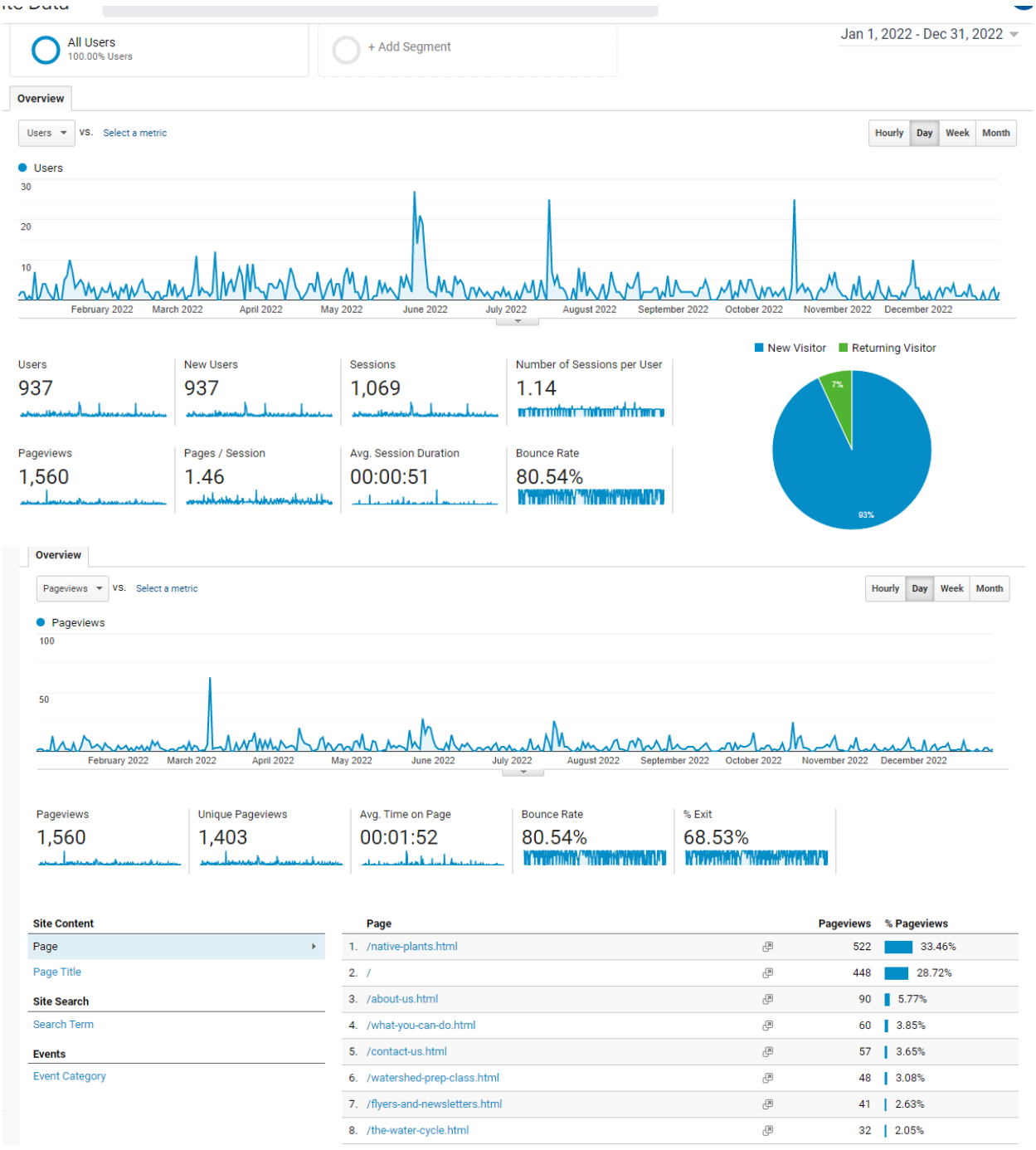
Lesson 1: What is a Watershed and Why Do We Care?

Lesson 2: Project WET, The Incredible Journey

Year	Lesson 1 Classes	Lesson 1 Students	Lesson 2 Classes	Lesson 2 Students
2013	35	870	9	230
2014	73	1875	5	160
2015	118	3106	27	859
2016	107	2850	20	524
2017	125	3358	38	1072
2018	143	3593	69	1755
2019	103	2681	58	1516
2020	20	572	10	256
2021	4	80	0	0
2022	51	1551	55	1557
Total	779	20,536	291	7,929

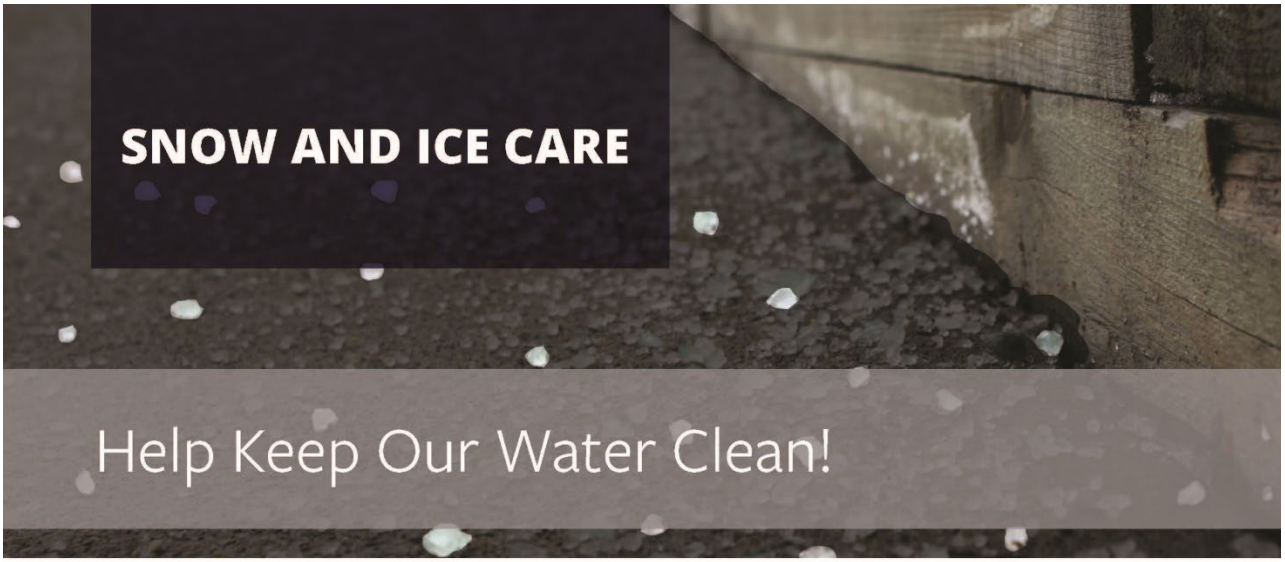
Appendix B – Website/Social Media Activity

Facebook likes grew in 2022 to a total of 183 likes and 212 followers. In 2022 there were 57 posts resulting in 522 engagements.



APPENDIX C – BUDGET

	2020	2021				2022				2023
	Balance	**Budget**	**Revenue**	**Expense**	**Balance**	**Budget**	**Revenue**	**Expense**	**Balance**	**Budget**
Admin/Tech Services Routine tasks, website, social media, meetings, etc	$4,754	$12,000	$12,000	$9,299	$7,455	$12,000	$12,000	$8,162	$11,293	$12,000
Special Projects	$10,717	8,000	4,000	0	14,717	16,000	8,000	2,278	20,440	16,000
Watershed Prep	$9,750	16,000	4,000	315	13,435	8,000	8,000	20,459	976	8,000
TOTAL	$	$36,000	$20,000	$9,614	$35,607	$36,000	$28,000	$30,899	$32,708	$36,000



SNOW AND ICE CARE

Help Keep Our Water Clean!

Salt use has been on the rise since the 1950s, leading to waters becoming increasingly salty. Chloride levels have become so high, many creeks and lakes are now considered unhelathy.

Chlorides harm plants and animals, contaminate drinking water, damage buildings, corrode vehicles, roads and bridges. Too much salt can lead to costly damages and environmental consequences!

Help keep our waters clean with these simple steps:

1. Clear walkways of snow to minimize ice build-up.
2. Temperature matters. If the temperature is below 15 degrees, salt doesn't work effectively. Consider using sand for traction.
3. Scatter salt where it's critical. Leave about 3 inches between grains of salt. A 12-ounce coffee cup of salt is enought to cover 10 sidewalk squares or a 20-foot driveway.
4. Sweep up leftoever salt, sand and deicer to reuse as needed

Created in collaboration with MN Water Let's Keep it Clean, the West Metro Water Alliance and the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District.

WMWA
West Metro Water Alliance

PET WASTE & WATER POLLUTION

Dog waste left on the ground washes into storm drains, lakes and streams, exposing people, pets and wildlife to harmful bacteria.

Good Neighbors Care About Clean Water

There are an estimated **310,000 dogs** in Hennepin County, and they create over **40,000 tons of waste** per year — that's a lot of poop!

This poop causes bacteria, excessive algae growth, and other water quality issues in our communities, so city ordinances require owners to clean up dog waste. This is also the neighborly thing to do to make sure we can all enjoy our local wetlands, lakes, and streams.

How does pet waste in my yard pollute water?

Dog waste contains harmful bacteria and parasites. When waste is left on lawns or not picked up, it is washed by the next rainstorm into the nearest lake or stream. Wading, swimming, or playing in bacteria-laden waters can be harmful to humans and pets alike. Pet waste also contains nutrients that promote weed and algae growth in lakes and rivers. Picking up pet waste keeps recreation areas clean, safe, and enjoyable.

What about all the other animals?

It is true that squirrels, birds and other wildlife can also contribute to water pollution. However, these animals tend to spread out waste across the landscape, whereas dog waste is concentrated in yards and along sidewalks or paths.

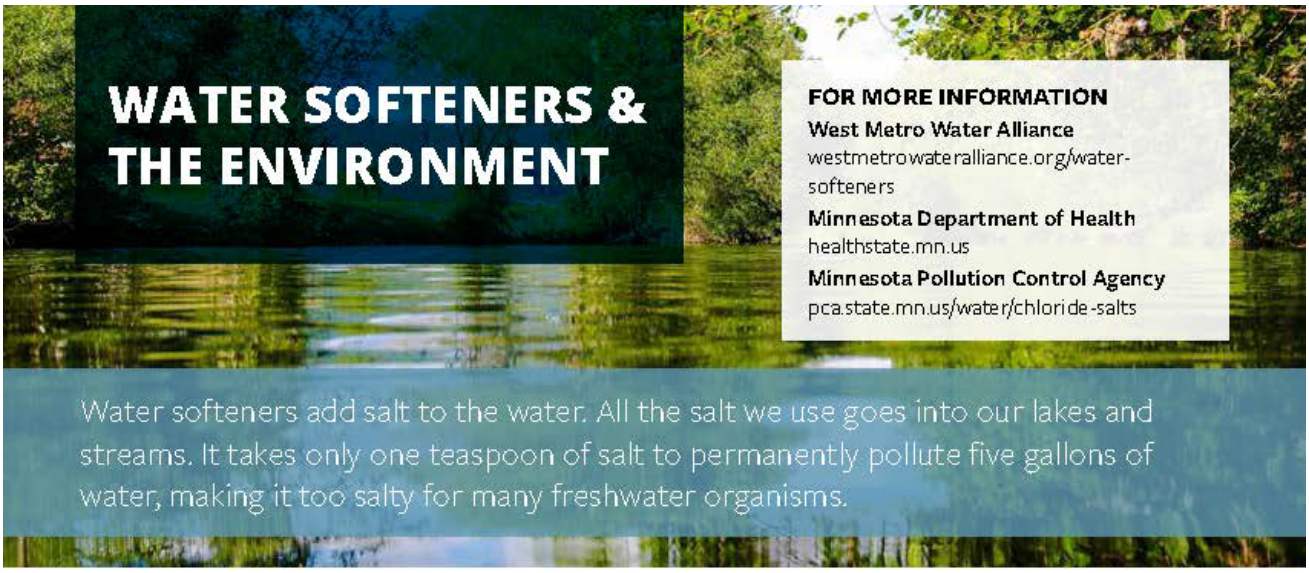
How can I be a good neighbor?

Pick up dog waste from your yard and throw it in the garbage — it is not a fertilizer. Carry disposable bags while walking your dog. Do the same at the dog park — don't make it somebody else's problem.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

For more information regarding the information in this flier, visit:
westmetrowateralliance.org/pet-waste

WMWA
West Metro Water Alliance



WATER SOFTENERS & THE ENVIRONMENT

FOR MORE INFORMATION

West Metro Water Alliance
westmetrowateralliance.org/water-softeners

Minnesota Department of Health
healthstate.mn.us

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
pca.state.mn.us/water/chloride-salts

Water softeners add salt to the water. All the salt we use goes into our lakes and streams. It takes only one teaspoon of salt to permanently pollute five gallons of water, making it too salty for many freshwater organisms.

Do I Really Need a Water Softener?

It depends!

Most of the groundwater in the Twin Cities is hard, meaning it has a high mineral content. Some cities pre-soften drinking water, while other cities leave water softening up to individual property owners.

If you live in a community that softens the drinking water, the water is already optimally softened so you do not need a water softener.

Cities in Hennepin County that soften drinking water:

- Minneapolis
- Golden Valley
- Bloomington
- New Hope
- Crystal
- Robbinsdale*
- Eden Prairie
- Tonka Bay
- Excelsior
- Saint Paul**

*Starting fall 2022
**Not in Hennepin County

If you live in Hennepin County and don't see your city on the list, chances are your water is not pre-softened. There is no requirement to soften your water, but you may wish to use a water softener to reduce your water's hardness. Contact your city to get information about the specific hardness of your water.

Have a private well? Use a test kit to test your water's hardness.

FACTS ABOUT WATER SOFTENERS

- Water softeners are used to reduce the hardness of water. This helps prevents mineral deposits on pipes, appliances, and glassware.
- Most softeners are ion-exchange systems. Hardness ions (calcium and magnesium) are exchanged for salt (sodium or potassium chlorides).

What Can I Do?

Determine if you really need one. If your water's hardness is less than **7 grains per gallon** (120 mg/L), you probably don't need a water softener. Contact your city for hardness information or use a test kit.

Reduce the salt. Only soften water that needs it. Don't soften water to outside spigots or cold water taps. Only soften to 5 grains per gallon — over-softening wastes salt and can corrode pipes. Check your unit's settings and adjust if they're too high.

Adjust the timer. If you have a timer-based softener, hire a professional to have it optimized or consider upgrading to a more efficient system.

Upgrade to a high-efficiency softener. If you're buying or upgrading a softener, look for one that has high salt-efficiency and is demand-initiated. You may pay a little more upfront, but you'll save on salt.

Filter out the iron. If you have a problem with iron, consider using an iron filter.

Conserve water. Reducing your overall water use has environmental and economic benefits.

WMWA
West Metro Water Alliance