



WATERSHED  
PARTNERS

## METRO WATERSHED PARTNERS MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 12, 2012

Capitol Region Watershed District  
1410 Energy Park Drive, Suite 4  
St. Paul MN 55108  
PHONE: 651-644-8888

### ATTENDEES

Joan Nephew, Freshwater Society  
Elizabeth Beckman, Capitol Region  
Amy LeMieux, West Metro Water Alliance  
Lynn Renee, Washington Co. master gardeners  
Jen Dullum, City of Farmington  
Angie Hong, Washington County  
Debbie Meister, MMC Associates  
Anne Weber, City of St. Paul  
Trevor Russell, Friends of the Mississippi River

Teri Heyer, US Forest Service  
Tom Sagstetter, Elk River Municipal Utilities  
Rebecca Haug, City of Elk River  
Jana Larson, Hamline University  
Mallory Anderson, MCWD  
Katie Fontana, City of Eden Prairie  
Becky Rice, Metro Blooms  
Madeline Seveland, Carver County

### PARTNER UPDATES

- Freshwater Society -- Water Stewards program kick-off. First program pilot in MCWD in Spring.
- Otto Doering will be giving a talk on nitrogen on October 4 at the University of Minnesota St. Paul Student Center, 7pm. He will also be giving a workshop at the U, with Deb Swackhammer, that same day. On February 12 Sandra Postel will be the speaker.
- FMR – has finished the State of the River report. Will be presenting on it in October at the WSP meeting.
- Cap Region is developing some new table top educational exhibits which will include a version of CGEE's Storm Drain Goalie.
- Stormwater Adaptation workgroups – MCWD.
- Cynthia Krieg grants due to MCWD at the end of September.
- Metro Blooms have been working to get a group together to discuss green infrastructure maintenance. First meeting was a couple of weeks ago. Looking at the long term costs of rain garden maintenance. Also looking at putting in 150 rain gardens around Lake Nokomis.
- Carver County completed their invasive species video and how to do a boat inspection. Also completed a 30-second PSA. Is posted on YouTube and Vimeo, available for free download so that anyone can use it.
- Extreme make-over at Maplewood Mall, celebration this Saturday 11-3 at the mall.

### STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATES

- Media Campaign – currently running a revised PSA on Comcast cable to promote the Girl Scouts clean-up on October 13.
- November roundtable slot will be used to do an “Art of Hosting” style conversation on what WSP should be focusing on in the coming years to best serve its constituents.
- Our December meeting will be our regular potluck and time to reflect on the year's accomplishments.

Presentation by **Dr. Kristen Nelson, Environmental Sociologist at the University of Minnesota's** Department of Forest Resources and Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology, and Principal Investigator on the **Twin Cities Household Ecosystem Project (TCHEP)** and **Dr. Maria Dahmus, Environmental Studies, the University of St. Thomas.**

In urban ecosystems, household decisions contribute to environmental pollution as well as environmental solutions. Although households are known to significantly influence the energy budgets of cities and nations, few studies have moved beyond energy to characterize household cycles of the major elements that contribute most to pollutants.

In the Twin Cities Household Ecosystem Project (TCHEP), we are quantifying the cycles of carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus through households along an urban to exurban gradient in the Saint Paul-Minneapolis, Minnesota metropolitan area. We are especially interested in how biophysical combined with socio-demographic and psychological factors influence household decisions about activities like transportation, diet, home energy use, and landscape management, all major contributors to household element cycles. Ultimately, we hope that our research will inform individual decision making and policies intended to mitigate local and global pollution arising from human activities in cities.

In the Lawn and Yard Care Choices study, we examine homeowners' yard care choices and their influence on C, N, and P fluxes. Specifically, we ask how social networks support household lawn care practices that promote water quality while maintaining a household's preferred lawn quality and function. We do this through mail surveys and small group discussions with homeowners in the Twin Cities. Findings from this research can inform the design of yard care resources for homeowners and urban policies to improve water and soil quality while supporting households' preferred yard qualities and functions.

**As an environmental sociologist, Dr. Kristen C. Nelson** contributes to the interdisciplinary understanding of environmental change and its dynamic with human systems. Her recent research focuses on urban ecosystems (household choices and community planning), deliberative governance and policy formation, environmental risk assessment, and wildfire preparedness; the agenda is theoretical and practical insights regarding what influences human behavior and societal change at multiple scales. At the University of Minnesota, she is a Morse-Alumni Undergraduate Teaching Award recipient, the Environmental Science, Policy, and Management Undergraduate Major faculty and a Professor in the Department of Forest Resources and the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology. As a resident of St Anthony Park neighborhood, she served on the District 12 Task Force to develop a small area plan for Como Avenue: The Como 2030 Plan. She serves on the St. Paul—Tree Advisory Committee.

**Dr. Maria Dahmus integrates environmental sociology and environmental policy.** In 2010, she joined TCHEP to investigate residents' understandings of urban ecosystem concepts represented through their yard care descriptions and stories. Her recent dissertation examined coalitions among 'unlikely' partners in Minnesota that developed natural resource policy together. She is also interested in how our ideas about the 'environment' form and change, particularly through outdoor education and changing cultural ideals. She teaches in the Environmental Studies major at the University of St. Thomas. Her Ph.D and M.S. are from the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin. She received a B.S. in Ecology and Conservation Biology and a B.A. in interdisciplinary liberal arts at the University of Texas.

**Powerpoint of talk is available at WSP website: [www.hamline.edu/cgee/watershed](http://www.hamline.edu/cgee/watershed)**

Some notes taken during talk:

Research resulted in a Household Flux Calculator. What results in the flux of CNP, run-off and gaseous

emissions.

Studied detached, single-family, owner-occupied homes. Respondents were slightly older, more educated and wealthier than population average.

How to target the group that is disproportionately creating emissions through certain behaviors. 70% of nitrogen emissions are coming from 20% of households. 80% of phosphorous is being emitted by 20% of households – through pet waste. Household activities calculator: [www.sciencebuzz.org/flux](http://www.sciencebuzz.org/flux)

What effected fertilizing behavior: social norms, judging that it's effective, judgment that they can do it.

Yards stories: social norms and ecological conceptualizations. Yard preferences and yard practices survey and recruitment tool to participate in a series of conversations about their yard.

Q: What is your ideal yard, yard practices, yard care outcomes?

Lawn and Yard Care choices guide.

83% said they think their neighbors have an expectation for a neighborhood of well-maintained yards.

TCHEP.umn.edu

New study: Homogenization of the American city and concepts of stormwater and water infiltration in private yards.

Q: what do people think about where their yard ends? The property line, though they did think about how it linked to the rest of the ecosystem in terms of fertilizer, but less so in terms of yard debris. Real debate about boundaries and responsibilities in terms of those boundary area.

## NOTES:

- **Next Steering Committee Meeting: Wednesday, September 19, 9 - 11 am**, at the Center for Global Environmental Education (CGEE), Hamline University. The Steering Committee meets each month to determine agendas and help steer programs. Meetings are open to all WaterShed Partners.
- **Next WaterShed Partners Meeting: Wednesday, October 10, 9 – 11 am at Capitol Region Watershed District.** Presentation by **Trevor Russell, FMR, and Lark Weller, NPS: State of the River Report.** The WaterShed Partners meet regularly, the second Wednesday of each month, from 9-11 a.m. at Capitol Region Watershed District offices: 1410 Energy Park Drive, Suite 4 St. Paul MN 55108.

*FFI: Contact a member of the steering committee or Jana Larson at 651-523-2812, [jlarson25@hamline.edu](mailto:jlarson25@hamline.edu)*

### **2012 Steering Committee:**

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