



2010 Annual Report

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Scott Clean Water Education Program Partners:

Credit River Township · Jackson Township · City of Prior Lake · Prior Lake – Spring Lake Watershed District · Scott County · Scott Soil & Water Conservation District · Scott Watershed Management Organization · Spring Lake Township · Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

Background

The Scott Clean Water Education Program (SCWEP) was developed out of a need from local government organizations in Scott County to meet the educational requirements of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP). The goal of the SCWEP is to improve surface water quality in Scott County. Member agencies work together through the SCWEP to achieve this goal by coordinating the development and implementation of common education and outreach activities that: 1) educate residents, municipal officials, businesses and elected officials on the importance of water resources, and 2) promote and enable actions and behaviors consistent with the clean water goal. By working collaboratively, each participating agency maximizes program effectiveness and minimizes costs by setting common goals, objectives and actions, pooling resources, and eliminating duplication of similar activities and materials.

2010 Program Activities and Highlights

In 2010 the SCWEP educator submitted monthly stormwater education articles to local newspapers and city newsletters. In addition, stormwater education articles were submitted and published in the bi-monthly Scott County newsletter, the SCENE. Various topics were covered from spring clean – up to proper application of ice melt on driveways and sidewalks. The SCWEP also presented stormwater runoff information to residents at the Prior Lake Farmer’s Market in June, July, August and September. At the Farmer’s Market residents were able to inquire about stormwater runoff issues in their neighborhood and learn about **Clean Water Practices** to reduce impact to local lakes and rivers.

Throughout the month of May and early June the SCWEP provided stormwater runoff displays for the Prior Lake, Savage and Shakopee public libraries. The displays were stand-alone kiosks where visitors at the library could pick up information on preventing stormwater runoff and learn about **Clean Water Practices** such as raingardens, rain barrels, clean water lawn care and native gardens. At the end of July the SCWEP hosted a booth at the Scott County Fair. At the SCWEP booth residents were able to identify what watershed they live in by looking on a map. The map also indicated to fairgoers what creek or lake receives the stormwater runoff from their property. The Scott County Fair Board estimated that approximately 25,000 people entered the gates during the five best days of summer!

A utility insert was included in billing to residents in Credit River Township and Spring Lake Township during the month of July. The utility insert reminded residents that everyone has waterfront property. The insert provided residents suggestions to reduce stormwater runoff pollution from their property by cleaning up pet feces and trash; using zero phosphorus fertilizer; reducing the amount of fertilizers and pesticides they use; and mowing their turfgrass at a taller height (3 inches).

The Scott Clean Water Education Program administered a stormwater awareness survey in August through a number of methods and received 455 responses. The stormwater awareness survey was developed to better understand residents’ knowledge of stormwater runoff issues and how their daily behaviors impact the quality of area lakes and rivers. Here is a sample of some of the results:



Visitors at the Prior Lake Farmer’s Market on a beautiful summer morning.



SCWEP booth at the Scott County Fair waiting for the doors to open.

Question 1: Do you live in a watershed?

Response: 73% of respondents said no or not sure.

Fact: We all live in a watershed, an area of land that drains to a wetland, stream, river or lake.

Question 2: Does street runoff go to a waste water treatment plant?

Response: 55% said yes or not sure.

Fact: Only the water we flush down the toilet or rinse down our sinks goes to the waste water treatment plant. Street runoff flows to the nearest pond, lake or river untreated.

Question 3: Do we drink storm water?

Response: 61% said no or not sure.

Fact: Most of the water in Scott County eventually ends up in the Minnesota River. Yet storm water runoff for some communities does become drinking water.

Question 4: Do you use lawn fertilizer?

Response: 70% said yes to applying lawn fertilizer occasionally or sometimes.

Fact: Most fertilizers contribute to poor water quality and should be used sparingly or not at all. Try organic fertilizers instead. Your favorite lake will thank you with cleaner water.

Question 5: Is surface water quality important to you?

Response: 95% said yes, water quality is important.

Fact: Your daily habits can affect your community's water quality.

By the Numbers

Stormwater Awareness Survey:

- 455 Responses

Outdoor Education Days:

- 1,230 Students
- 8 days

SCWEP programming will rely on the survey results to guide educational activities and events to increase knowledge about our water resources and to stimulate clean water values into clean water actions.

September brought the Scott Soil and Water Conservation District Outdoor Education Days. The SCWEP Educator coordinated the Water Station at the Outdoor Education Days for 6 days in September and October (make up day because of the big rains in September). 1,248 students from elementary schools throughout Scott County learned about the water cycle among other environmental topics. At the water station students learned how a rain drop moves from the clouds to the ground, into our lakes and streams and eventually back into the clouds. They engaged in an interactive game where they described what the rain drop was doing as they moved from one station (i.e., soil) to another (i.e., river).



Students eager to answer a question about the water cycle!

The SCWEP hosted a booth at the Prior Lake Fall Community Fest. The Community Fest is an opportunity for residents to learn about various organizations in the area. The SCWEP provided information to residents about stormwater runoff and ideas to reduce impacts to the local ponds, streams and lakes. In October the SCWEP Educator was invited to participate in the Prior Lake – Savage Area Schools Field and Leadership Days at McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center (ELC) in Savage. The SCWEP educator provided an educational program for students to learn about raingardens at the McColl Pond ELC by evaluating visual properties of the raingardens. The students ranged from elementary age to high school and learned about the importance of soils, native plants and maintaining the raingardens to help keep our lakes and rivers clean.



Students clean up the streets for Clean Water!

The Prior Lake – Savage Area Schools EcoTeam and National Honor Society participated in the Community Clean Up for Water Quality with the SCWEP. The Community Clean Up for Water Quality is a program where community groups and residents gathered to collect leaves and other organic debris from the curb and gutter area in streets adjacent to Upper Prior Lake. The students distributed flyers to residents in the neighborhood one week before the clean up day to let them know about the event and invite them to participate. 25 students gathered on a brisk Saturday morning in late October to rake and bag leaves from the streets near Upper Prior Lake. By noon the students had collected 124 bags of leaves and organic debris. This prevented approximately 25 pounds of phosphorus from entering Upper Prior Lake and 25,000 pounds of algae from growing next summer. Dick’s Sanitation donated the bags and a roll – off dumpster to collect all the leaves and organic debris. The leaves were then composted at a local facility. The PLSAS EcoTeam and National Honor Society intend to clean up another

By the Numbers

Community Clean Up for Water Quality:

- **25 students**
- **124 bags of leaves**
- **25 lbs. of phosphorus**
- **25,000 pounds of algae**

neighborhood next fall.



SCWEP Educator receives a question about establishing sediment controls in winter

A presentation about identifying illicit discharges and good housekeeping practices was presented to Scott County highway maintenance personnel. Approximately 20 staff attended and listened to tips and suggestions for finding and reporting illicit discharges to the stormwater conveyance system. The SCWEP educator also provided the maintenance crew with reference cards to keep in their vehicles so they know who to contact in the event they find an illegal dumping. The SCWEP educator gave the maintenance staff ideas to contain chemicals and prevent illicit discharges to local waterways at their maintenance yard as well.

The City of Prior Lake hosted an erosion control seminar

titled, “Effective Erosion and Sediment Control for Residential Construction Sites.” Local and regional construction companies were invited to the seminar to learn about municipal permit requirements and methods for keeping residential home construction sites in compliance. The SCWEP Educator and Scott SWCD staff gave the presentation providing tips and suggestions for keeping soil on the construction site and preventing it from entering local lakes and rivers via storm drains.



SCWEP Educator explains what homeowners can do on their lawns to improve the quality of the lakes.

The Spring Lake – Upper Prior Lake Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) was presented to local government administrators at a meeting in December. The SCWEP Educator defined and explained the process of TMDLs.

Pollution sources were identified and potential solutions were discussed with many in attendance asking questions to clarify the issues and possible water quality improvement projects. In addition the Spring Lake – Upper Prior Lake TMDL was presented on the City of Prior Lake Cable Show with the City Administrator, Frank Boyles. The SCWEP Educator was a guest on the show and they discussed the TMDL and potential solutions for improving the quality of the lakes. The focus of improvements was centered on what homeowners living on or near the lake can do to improve the quality of the lakes.

Education & Outreach for 2011

The strategy for the SCWEP in 2011 will be to continue the consistent messaging about stormwater runoff and personal pollution prevention. This will be communicated through city and county newsletters and articles in the local newspapers. In addition, news releases will announce opportunities for homeowners to get involved in various learning sessions about reducing their own impact on our lakes and rivers. The news releases will also recognize the activities that have

contributed to improving the quality of our water resources.

By the Numbers

Illicit Discharge Detection Training:

- 20 County Highway Maintenance Staff

ESC Seminar:

- 15 attendees

MN River Board Grant:

- \$1,200



Residents discuss the best location for installing a raingarden.

Some targeted education, outreach and public engagement activities planned for 2011 will be: City of Prior Lake Boudin’s Neighborhood reconstruction project; the SCWEP Educator will inform and educate residents within the street reconstruction project about the importance of installing raingardens, rain barrels and evaluating the health of their lawns. Those that participate will receive financial incentives and signage that recognize them as, “Lake Friendly.” The SCWEP is hosting two turf maintenance workshops for reduced environmental impacts. One workshop will be targeted at professional contractors, public works staff, school district personnel and

property managers and the other workshop will be provided for homeowners. The SCWEP Educator applied and received a grant from the Minnesota River Board to support portions of each workshop. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about new techniques for lawn care while reducing impacts to local lakes and rivers. The professional turf maintenance workshop participants will have the opportunity to become “certified” in turf maintenance best practices by passing a short exam at the end of the workshop.

The SCWEP educator will again be working with the Prior Lake – Savage Area Schools EcoTeam in spring 2011. The project the EcoTeam will be working on is storm drain stenciling in the City of Savage and the Prior Lake – Spring Lake Watershed District. The students will canvass a neighborhood distributing flyers about the project and educating residents about the connectivity of storm drains to the nearby wetlands, lakes and rivers. The storm drain stencils will be painted with the message, “Don’t Dump, Drains to Lake or River.” This will inform residents that whatever is left in the street (pet waste, car fluids, grass clippings) eventually ends up in the nearby lake or river.

Educational workshops on raingardens and lakeshore restoration will be hosted in the summer of 2011. Specific neighborhoods and lakes will be selected based on subwatershed assessments and evaluations. Residents living in those neighborhoods and on the lakes will be invited to attend the educational workshops and learn how to install a raingarden or restore their lakeshore with technical assistance from the SCWEP educator and other SWCD staff.

Other activities and events planned for 2011 are: SWCD Outdoor Education Days water station coordinator and presenter; Community Clean – Up for Water Quality in Savage; and a workshop on Snow and Ice Control for Reduced Environmental Impacts.