Managing the Watershed

Five managers, appointed by the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners to three-year terms, direct the activities of the District. In September, Manager Kloiber was reappointed to his fourth term on the board. As Kloiber starts his fourth term, he is looking forward to the District “completing the Edina streambank restoration project and the water management plan”.

The managers work with state agencies, Hennepin County and the cities within the District to implement the goals and policies of the approved water management plan set forth in state law. Watershed district activities are funded through property tax levies.

Discover Discovery Point

Visit Discovery Point, our office and education facility, to see examples of stormwater best management practices, like raingardens, a cistern, and permeable pavements. We also have a Little Seed Library. Based on the Little Free Library model, you can take seeds, or drop off seeds at Discovery Point. We have many varieties of native seeds to choose from!

This fall, the District’s Board of Managers approved phase one of a restoration plan for the 5-acre Discovery Point site. The plan will guide the removal and control of invasive plant species, like buckthorn and garlic mustard, and include native plant regeneration. The site restoration was kicked off by a buckthorn bust. Over 20 volunteers from Barr Engineering Company came and removed about half an acre of the invasive plant. The restoration is a great opportunity to educate the public in the removal of invasive species and the importance of habitat restoration.

Water Management Plan Update

The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District Management Plan sets the vision, guidelines, and proposed tasks for managing surface water within the boundaries of the District.

Required by law, the District’s current plan was adopted in March 2007, with the next generation plan due in 2017. The Board of Managers, Technical Advisory Committee, staff, and community members have all provided valuable input into the plan as it has developed. As part of the community input process, the District collected feedback from citizens through an online survey. The survey received 719 responses, and the information was used by the Board of Managers as they prioritized issues to be addressed in the plan. The District also hosted a community input forum in May to solicit feedback regarding citizen issues and concerns. The plan will go out for public review in early 2017.

New District Administrator Hired

After 10 years of working as the Administrator, Kevin Bigalke accepted a position in July at the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. Randy Anhorn was hired in September as the District’s new Administrator. Randy has B.S. and M.A. degrees in aquatic biology and more than 25 years of experience working on natural and water resource management issues. His past work experience includes time as the Supervisor of the Land and Water Unit at Hennepin County, as the District Administrator/Aquatic Biologist for the Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District, and as a Principal Environmental Scientist for the Metropolitan Council.

His professional experiences include initiating and managing numerous watershed-wide pollutant loading and total maximum daily load (TMDL) studies and leading diverse stakeholder groups through long-range planning processes. Randy has stated, “I can’t wait to apply my past experiences to the District’s projects and programs. I believe, as do the District’s Board of Managers, that our efforts, even small ones, can have a big cumulative impact on the condition of our lakes and rivers.”

New District Administrator

Randy Anhorn
New District Administrator
Lakes and Creek

In 2016, the District monitored Nine Mile Creek and four lakes (Penn, North and South Cornelia, Normandale and Southwest Anderson) to determine the overall health of the lakes and creek. The data collection results will be available in early 2017 when the District’s 2016 Annual Report is released. Annual reports are available on our website.

Grants Awarded

Grant money is available for projects that protect and improve water and natural resources within the Nine Mile Creek Watershed. The deadline to apply in 2017 is March 24. Over $120,000 in grant funds were awarded in 2016 for projects such as raingardens, lakeshore stabilizations, and native habitat restorations. Visit www.ninemilecreek.org for more information about the District’s cost share grants.

Education Program Highlights

The education and outreach program had a busy year bringing programs to students, families, and adults. Highlights include the launch of the Master Water Stewards program in the District, with seven stewards being certified in the first cohort. By learning about water and ways to keep it clean, Master Water Stewards reduce stormwater pollution locally. The first cohort of stewards has been busy installing raingardens and helping their neighbors capture and clean stormwater. Six new stewards recently started the second cohort. Visit www.masterwaterstewards.org for more information or to apply.

In 2016, the Summer Education Series helped people learn to kayak, identify common weeds, and other fun skills. This program strengthened partnerships with local organizations like the Bush Lake Chapter of the Izaak Walton League, DNR’s MinnAqua Program, and the Three Rivers Park District. The Summer Education Series was recognized by the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts as a finalist for Program of the Year in 2016. Check the District’s website this spring for its 2017 Summer Education Series programs.

This year we were also proud to launch our new website, which was created by Windmill Design, a local web design company. With beautiful photos and user-friendly features, the website makes finding events and information much easier. Visitors to the site will find tips for clean water, information about the District and Discovery Point, and much more. Check back frequently for seasonal posts and District updates, and don’t forget to sign up for our electronic newsletter!