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# 9 MILE NEWS

## Spring Newsletter



### Water Management Plan Community Input Survey

Is there a water body that you love and want to protect? Are you worried about a specific lake? The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District wants to hear from you.

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and projects over the next ten years.

By taking the 5-7 minute survey and submitting your email address, you will be entered to win one of our great prizes, including tickets to the Centennial Lakes Putting Course in Edina!

[Take the Survey](#)

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## District Updates

### Seeking Citizen Advisors

The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District is accepting applications to fill positions on the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC is a volunteer advisory group that supports the watershed district in its mission to manage, restore, and protect water resources.

As a member, your role is to advise the Nine Mile Creek Board of Managers as a representative of citizen interests. This includes informing the board about issues of concern from the public, learning about water resource issues and management in the district, and providing assistance for volunteer activities. CAC members must live or work within the district. For more information, visit [www.ninemilecreek.org](http://www.ninemilecreek.org).

### Cost Share Grants Available



Grants are available for projects that protect and improve water and natural resources within the Nine Mile Creek Watershed.

Cost share funds are awarded for up to 75% of a project's cost with maximum grant awards of \$3,000 for residential projects, \$10,000 for lake and townhome association projects and \$25,000 for commercial, nonprofit and government projects. The District will accept applications through **March 25, 2016**. Applications are available on the District's [website](#).

**Have questions?** Contact Erica at [esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org](mailto:esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org) or 952-358-2276.

## 2016 Photo Contest



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The District is seeking pictures of Nine Mile Creek, lakes, parks, wildlife, plants, and other natural resource features within the watershed for our 2016 photo contest.

**Deadline: September 23, 2016.** Photos must be horizontal and not digitally altered beyond standard optimization. Photographers are required to fill out an entry form and grant of photo license. Up to 15 photos may be submitted. For rules and entry form, visit [www.ninemilecreek.org](http://www.ninemilecreek.org). Upload photos and forms at <http://cwok.me/cu/Photos>.

Winners of the contest will have their photo(s) published in the 2017 Nine Mile Creek Photo Calendar. The free calendars are distributed throughout the District.

**Calling All Crafters for *Putting Down Roots* Fiber Art Exhibit**

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You are invited to participate in the development of *Putting Down Roots*, a new eco-art exhibit to be on display at the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District and Mississippi Watershed Management Organization. Use any fiber medium to create a life-sized, 3-dimensional representation of plants for clean water and habitat and/or species that benefit from these plants.

[Learn More](#)

### **Want to work with others? Come to an art circle!**

Wednesday, March 16 from 5 p.m.-7 p.m. at Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point

Friday, March 18 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at the MWMO

Tuesday, April 5 from 5 p.m.-7 p.m. at the MWMO

Tuesday, April 26 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point

### **Grand Opening**

MWMO exhibit opening May 20 from 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

NMCWD exhibit opening May 24 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. featuring a talk by Heather Holm titled *What You Can Do For Pollinators: Creating a Pollinator-Friendly Garden Habitat*.

### **Connect**

Find *Putting Down Roots* on [Ravelry](#) and [Pinterest](#)!

### **Summer Education Series**

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Join us at one or more of these fun events to celebrate summer! Along with our popular Summer Education Series, we are rolling out new programs.

### **Summer Education Series**

Whether you want to be on the water, or transforming your yard, there is a program for you. **Registration required:** contact Gael at [gzembal@ninemilecreek.org](mailto:gzembal@ninemilecreek.org) or 952-204-9691.

#### **Intro to Kayaking**

Sunday, June 12th, 12:00-4:00 PM at the Bush Lake Izaak Walton Chapter, Bloomington

#### **Family Fishing**

Saturday, July 16th, 9:00-11:30 AM at Shady Oak Beach, Minnetonka

#### **Landscaping for Water Quality**

Wednesday, August 10th, 6:30-8:00 PM at Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point

#### **Fall Colors Hike**

Saturday, September 17th, 2:00-3:00 PM at Harrison Park, Bloomington

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location will have different activities, including water demonstrations for kids, nature trivia, or giveaways. Check [Facebook](#) and our [website](#) for clues to find the naturalist!

### Homeowner Series--New in 2016!

These short classes will have practical tips on how to maintain your home with clean water in mind. The Homeowner Series kicks-off with a DIY Organic Lawn Care Workshop on March 31st at 7 PM at Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point.

### Find us on Facebook and Pinterest

Like us on Facebook. Check often for information on District events, grants, fun wildlife sightings, and more!

Find us on 



Check out our Pinterest boards on native plants, raingardens and beyond, nature play, and more!

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## Upcoming Events

### DIY Organic Lawn Care Workshop

**Thursday, March 31st, 2016**

7:00-8:00 PM, Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point (12800 Gerard Dr., Eden Prairie)



We often teach about getting rid of turf. But, what if it is important to your family? Learn about keeping a healthy lawn while protecting clean water. Receive step by step procedures, a monthly schedule, and informational resources.

RSVP at <https://lawncare.eventbrite.com>

### Urban Waters Forum: Taking Action to Protect Our Lakes and Streams

**Saturday, April 23rd, 2016**



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Local experts will share their knowledge, case studies, and actions you can take on the water, on your property, and in your community to protect the health of local lakes and streams. You will leave inspired to take an active role in the health of our waters. Register on the Arboretum's [website](#) (\$15 admission).



## Fiber Art Grand Opening with Heather Holm

**Tuesday, May 24th, 2016**

6:00-8:00 PM, Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point (12800 Gerard Dr., Eden Prairie)



Come see the *Putting Down Roots* exhibit at Discovery Point. Donated art pieces will be on display throughout the building.

Heather Holm will speak from 6:30 to 7:30 PM, on *What You Can Do For Pollinators: Creating a Pollinator-Friendly Garden Habitat*.

RSVP requested: contact Gael at [gzembal@ninemilecreek.org](mailto:gzembal@ninemilecreek.org) or 952-204-9691.

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## Natural Resources

### How does salt affect our plants?

Text by Gael Zembal





Winter road salt is a necessary evil of northern winters. We rely on it to keep us safe, and yet salt damage is widespread. Plants especially feel the brunt of our increasing salt use, as salt sprays off the roads and builds up in the soil.

Salt spraying off of high speed roads can have immediate impacts on plants. Salt spray can drift up to 60 feet and coat buds, twigs, and needles. Damage from salt spray can appear in late winter. On evergreen trees, needles facing the road turn brown, because the salt draws water out of the needles. The tip of the branch may even die, causing many new shoots to grow around it in a “witches broom” pattern.

The damage caused by salt in soil takes more time to show up in plants. When salt builds up in soil, plants cannot access all the nutrients they need. Signs of this type of injury often appear when the plants' leaves begin growing in early spring or summer. The leaves may brown on the edges or turn color too early. If you notice these symptoms on your plants, re-evaluate how much salt you need to use in locations near those plants. Try shoveling early and often during storms, and then you may not even need salt.

### **Exploring the District: Hyland Ski Area**

Photo by Tim Stanz

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Skiing and snowboarding make winter fun. The Hyland Ski Area snowmaking team makes sure we can get out on the slopes, even when there isn't enough natural snow.

Once the temperature reaches about 28 degrees, snow making begins. With ideal conditions, the slopes can be ready in as little as three weeks. Hyland uses a team of 40 snow guns to make snow for the downhill ski slopes, and five miles of cross country ski trails. Up to four pumps get water to the snow guns, pumping at a rate of 3,000 gallons per minute. At night, the maintenance staff use two grooming machines, each 18 feet wide, to maintain the trails.

Just up the road at Richardson Nature Center, nature lovers can explore trails through beautiful forests and prairies. Though the snow on the trails is what falls from the sky, when conditions are right, you can rent snowshoes for \$5 per person. With the warmer weather, snowshoes are not being rented right now--however, warmer weather means that the maple sap is starting to flow! Check out the maple syrup events at Richardson on March 5th and 12th.

No matter how you do it, head outside to explore the District and enjoy the beginnings of spring!

## Spring Phenology



In the depths of winter, sometimes it seems like there is no bright color left in the world. While most birds grow new, drab feathers to blend into the winter landscape, there are a few that keep their bright plumage, like the red hood on this Red-bellied Woodpecker. By putting up a birdfeeder, you can attract these bright creatures to your window.

You can choose from many different seeds, depending on the types of birds you want to attract. Sunflower seeds are the general choice to attract a variety of birds, including cardinals or finches. Thistle is a special favorite of goldfinches, while safflower will attract grosbeaks and chickadees. You can also put out suet, a mix of fat and protein that woodpeckers love.

Keep in mind that bird seed can attract less desirable animals. House Sparrows and Brown-headed Cowbirds often eat sunflower seeds, but will destroy eggs and nests of other birds. Switching to safflower seed can deter these birds. Squirrels and chipmunks will also try to steal birdseed, if they can. Putting up baffles, or changing feeder types can often discourage these pesky rodents.

Here is a quick guide to seeds from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/types-of-bird-seed-a-quick-guide/>.



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A warm winter day makes for fun winter play by Nine Mile Creek.



A winter rain creates a waterfall into the District's rain garden.

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# 9 MILE NEWS

## News and Events Update



### Farewell from District Administrator, Kevin Bigalke

Dear Friends,

After over 10 years of working for the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, it is with mixed emotion that I write this letter. Friday, July 15 was my last day with the District. I have accepted a position as the Central Region Manager for the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.

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opportunity to work for them and for the constituents of the District. Over the past 10 years, the District has seen a great deal of exciting changes, from hiring its first administrator to accepting a generous donation of a property that has become the Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point to the significant efforts to protect and improve the water resources of the Nine Mile Creek Watershed. None of these things could have happened without the things that make this watershed district great-- an open and thoughtful Board of Managers and the tremendous support of the watershed residents and partner organizations.

While change can bring uncertainty, it also presents exciting opportunity. This is the case for the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District. The District is in the midst of developing a new water management plan. This new plan will guide the activities, programs, and projects the District implements over the next 10 years. In addition to the new plan, the District continues to develop exciting and interesting programs and learning opportunities at Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point. The District is also identifying and developing new projects that will result in the protection, improvement, and restoration of the water resources of the watershed. The District will certainly continue to be a leader in watershed management.

During these past 10 years, I have been fortunate to get to work with a strong Board of Managers, comprised of intelligent, professional, and most importantly genuine people. I have also had the good fortune of working with great staff and consultants. I thank each and every one of you for your commitment to the Nine Mile Creek Watershed and for making it a pleasure to come to work every day!

Thank you,  
Kevin Bigalke

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## In Memoriam



Ever since the District moved its offices to Discovery Point, we have collected stories about Barbara Kaerwer. Barbara donated the five acres of land and the house that became Discovery Point. Her kindness, generosity, and enthusiasm touched many lives, both in Eden Prairie and throughout the world. Barbara (Mackey) Kaerwer passed away on March 13th of this year at the age of 94.

From the handmade cabinets to the art pieces decorating the walls, Barbara's passion for art and beauty comes through at Discovery Point. The former house was built in the early 1950s by architects who studied under Frank Lloyd Wright. Barbara collected art from all around the world during her lifetime, and worked in various positions at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, University of Wisconsin Madison, and as a freelance art historian.

The house hosted many a happy party during Barbara's lifetime, from picnics out on the front lawn, to bobbing for apples at Halloween. Neighbors tell of seeing her



Barbara cared deeply about the land, and expressed a desire for that care to continue in the donation of her property to the Watershed District. We are happy to continue to tell Barbara's story, and be the caretakers of this land that she turned into a work of art.

You can read her obituary [here](#).

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## Upcoming Events

### Summer Education Series



Participants have been having a great time getting outside with the Summer Education Series! On July 16th, over 40 people learned the basics of fishing, and had fun catching a bunch of fish! There are still a few events coming up, including Landscaping for Water Quality on August 10th. [Learn More](#)



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# Summer Education Series

## Putting Down Roots Exhibit Grand Opening

May 24 | 6 PM with Heather Holm at 6:30 PM

Eden Prairie @ Discovery Point

## Intro to Kayaking

June 12 | 12 PM

Bloomington @ Bush Lake Izaak Walton Chapter

## Family Fishing

July 16 | 9 AM

Minnetonka @ Shady Oak Beach

## Landscaping for Water Quality

August 10 | 6:30 PM

Eden Prairie @ Discovery Point

## Fall Colors Hike

September 17 | 2 PM

Bloomington @ Harrison Picnic Grounds

Registration required for all events:

Email [gzembal@ninemilecreek.org](mailto:gzembal@ninemilecreek.org) | 952-204-9691



VISIT US ONLINE: [WWW.NINEMILECREEK.ORG](http://WWW.NINEMILECREEK.ORG)



## Putting Down Roots Exhibit

### Open hours and Art Circles

### Summer 2016

Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point ([12800 Gerard Dr. Eden Prairie](http://12800GerardDr.EdenPrairie))

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showcase how native plants, with their long roots, help keep water clean.

The exhibit is open weekdays from 8-4, with extended hours every **third Wednesday until 7 pm. The exhibit will be open throughout the summer.**

If you would like to contribute a piece, join us on our extended hours for an art circle! Other art circle times are the **fourth Wednesdays from 10-12.** We will provide some materials to get you started, but if you have a specific project in mind, bring your own materials. This is a great stash buster, something you can make to use up those odds and ends of yarn. Or, you can branch out into other fiber types, like felting, work with paper, or twine. Works should be life-sized, three-dimensional, and represent plants that are good for clean water and habitat and/or species that benefit from these plants. Use your talents to help raise awareness about the need to keep our lakes and creeks clean!



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## Pop up Naturalist

Find the Pop up Naturalist in parks and playgrounds around the District this summer. Hints as to where to find her will be posted on our Facebook page!

[Learn More](#)

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## Photo Contest



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The District is seeking pictures of Nine Mile Creek, lakes, parks, wildlife, plants, and other natural resource features within the watershed for our 2016 photo contest.

**Deadline: September 23, 2016.** Photos must be horizontal and not digitally altered beyond standard optimization. Photographers are required to fill out an entry form and grant of photo license. Up to 15 photos may be submitted. For rules and entry form, visit [www.ninemilecreek.org](http://www.ninemilecreek.org). Upload photos and forms at <http://cwok.me/cu/Photos>.

Winners of the contest will have their photo(s) published in the 2017 Nine Mile Creek Photo Calendar. The free calendars are distributed throughout the District.

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### Clean Water Tip



Fertilize your grass, not your lake! Green lawns certainly hold a special place in the hearts of American suburbanites. As you work on keeping your grass neat and green, consider these tips for clean water

1. **Leave grass clippings on the lawn.** These clippings are like free fertilizer.
2. **Clean up spills.** Fill the fertilizer spreader on a hard surface, so that you can easily sweep up spills. Clean up any fertilizer that bounces onto sidewalks or streets--it's the law in Minnesota.
3. **Fertilize in the fall, not in the summer.** Grass gets stressed out with the heat of summer, and adding fertilizer can stress it more.

If you use a lawn care company, or know someone who does, ask if they are certified in best practices for turfgrass management. One of the best places for lawn care companies to learn these up to date practices and get certified is at a Turfgrass Maintenance Workshop. One of these workshops will take place on July 27th at the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District, for free. Find more details and register [here](#).

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## Exploring the District

Lake Minnetoga: Headwaters of the South Branch of Nine Mile Creek





The South branch of Nine Mile Creek quietly begins its journey from a small, but beautiful lake in Minnetonka. Lake Minnetoga is surrounded by wetlands and vegetation; half of the shore area is private property, the other half is owned by the City of Minnetonka. Walkers and bikers can get to Lake Minnetoga on the LRT regional trail.

Lake Minnetoga has a dedicated [lake association](#) that is working to improve the quality of the lake and surrounding wetlands. Through their efforts, most of the homeowners on the lake have wetland plants, instead of turfgrass, right up to the edge of the lake. This helps improve habitat and water quality. They are also participating in habitat restorations to remove invasive species like buckthorn and garlic mustard. The association also periodically restocks the lake with fish that feed on the bottom feeder fish. Without these bottom feeders stirring up the lake bottom, the water is much clearer.

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## Phenology



Discovery Point is lucky to have three nest boxes on site. Staff check these boxes weekly to monitor the chicks' growth. Two of the boxes have been claimed by Black Capped Chickadees, while the other one has a House Wren in residence.

Many familiar backyard birds nest in tree holes (or nest boxes) including Black Capped Chickadees, Eastern Bluebirds, House Wrens, Tufted Titmice, and Tree Swallows. All of these birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. House Sparrows, an invasive bird from Eurasia and North Africa, also nest in these boxes, and will destroy eggs, chicks, and even mother birds. They sometimes build nests on top of any bodies, not cleaning it out first. These invasive species are not a part of the Migratory Bird Act, and should be removed if found in a nest box. This is why monitoring is so important!

The baby chickadees in this picture are "pinning" or growing their pinfeathers. These are the feathers that will help them fly when they are older. In this picture, they are probably 5-6 days old, but they have since "fledged", or left the nest.

If you would like to see your own baby birds, consider putting up a bluebird or chickadee box. Find out more information here: <http://www.sialis.org/>

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## Snapshot



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Summer is a great time to explore the lakes and parks around the District. Students at Creek Valley investigated the health of the creek by finding macroinvertebrates, or water bugs. In an Intro to Kayaking class, participants learned the basics of kayak safety and strokes, and practiced their skills off of the Bush Lake Izaak Walton League Beach.

### Find us on Social Media

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# 9 MILE NEWS

## Announcements

### Randy Anhorn Hired as District Administrator



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new District Administrator for the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District. My name is Randy Anhorn. I grew up in Central Minnesota and currently live in Independence, MN with my wife and two children. While growing up I spent a lot of time camping and fishing with family and friends. This time outdoors has fortified the strong connection I feel to our lakes and rivers. It has also shaped my belief that our water resources play an important role in our everyday life, contributing to our economy, recreational activities, education and lifestyle. I'm excited about this tremendous opportunity to



make a valuable contribution to protect and manage the Nine Mile Creek watershed's water resources.

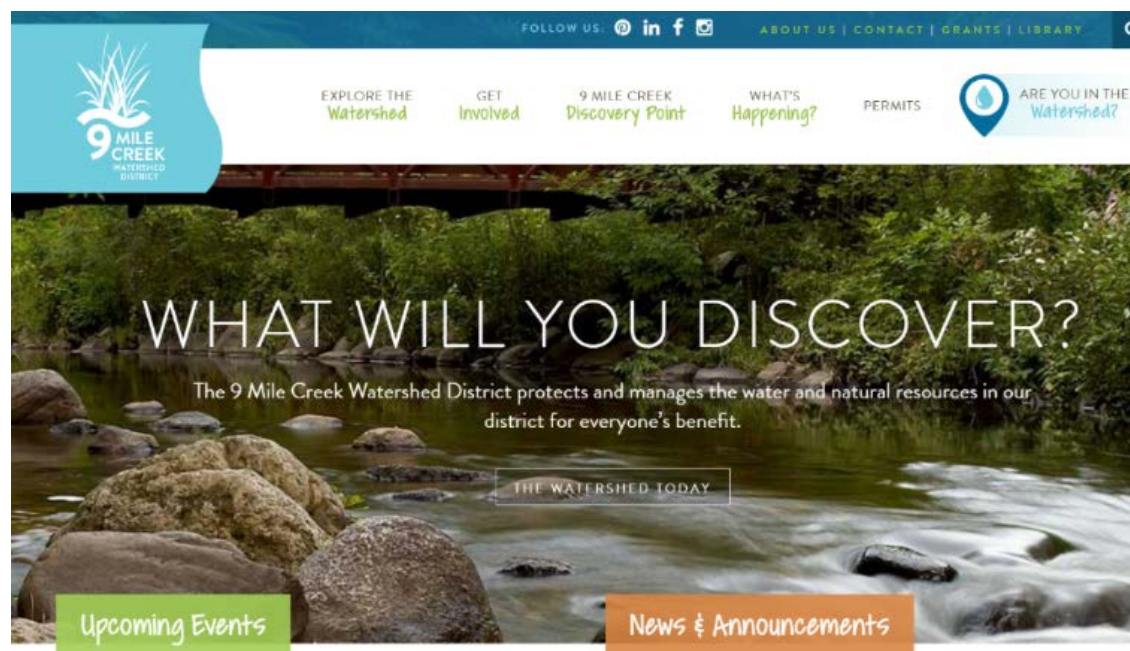
I have B.S. and M.A. degrees in aquatic biology and more than 25 years of experience working on natural and water resource management issues. My past work experience includes time as the Supervisor of the Land and Water Unit at Hennepin County, as the District Administrator/Aquatic Biologist for the Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District in northern Washington County, and as a Principal Environmental Scientist for the Metropolitan Council.

My 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. 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.

Best,

RANDY

## New Website Launched



We are excited to unveil our new website! With user-friendly features and beautiful

photos from around the District, the site has many new elements to explore. Check back frequently for upcoming events, seasonal tips, and announcements. Find us at: [www.ninemilecreek.org](http://www.ninemilecreek.org).

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## Little Seed Library Open

Come check out our Little Seed Library! Like Little Free Libraries, you can take some seeds, or leave some. Fall is a great time to plant native wildflowers, since the seeds will only start growing after a freeze-thaw cycle of winter. Be patient, however. The plants may take a few years to start flowering--they are focusing their energy on building roots in the first couple of years.

You can also harvest seeds from your garden and drop them off. The Little Seed Library is inside [Discovery Point](#), so come during business hours (8 AM-4 PM)! Find more information about other seed libraries [here](#).

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## Program Highlights

### Summer Education Series Wrap-Up



Each summer, we offer programs at parks and lakes around the District. This year's Summer Education Series was a blast, with new programs and recurring favorites. With five classes, and about 150 people attending, the programs introduced people to new skills, like kayaking, and helped them learn new information, like how to identify common yard weeds.

If you have an idea for a topic you would like to learn about, or if you know of a great presenter, [tell us!](#) We're always on the lookout for new program ideas.

---

### Putting Down Roots Exhibit

**Open through December 2016**

Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point  
([12800 Gerard Dr. Eden Prairie](#))



Come see Putting Down Roots, an exhibit at the intersection of art and science. Community members have contributed hand made flowers and animals to showcase how native plants, with their long roots, help keep water clean. New for this winter, help make the creek itself! Crochet or knit a simple ripple pattern 18 inches in width.

For inspiration, join us at an art circle on the **fourth Wednesday of the month from 10-12**. Works should be life-sized, 3-D, made with fiber, and represent plants that are good for clean water and/or species that benefit from these plants.



The exhibit is open weekdays from 8-4, with extended hours every **third Wednesday until 7 pm**. Find ideas at our [Pinterest](#) page or the Putting Down Roots [website](#).



## Upcoming Events

### Three Rivers Park District Chairlift Rides

**Oct 7: 5-9 PM | Oct 8: 4-9 PM**

Hyland Hills Ski and Snowboard Area: (8800 Chalet Rd, Bloomington)

Come out to the Hyland Hills Chairlift Rides in Bloomington, and find us at the 9 Mile Creek table. While you're there, observe the moon in honor of International Observe the Moon Night, or grab some native seeds for your garden. Search "chairlift rides" at [www.threeriversparks.org](http://www.threeriversparks.org) for info and tickets.



### Winter Parking Lot and Sidewalk Maintenance Workshop

**Oct 11: 9 AM - 2 PM**

Eden Prairie City Hall--Heritage Rooms (8080 Mitchell Road, Eden Prairie)

This training offers information for contractors, staff and volunteers who maintain parking lots and sidewalks. Best practices for managing snow and ice on these surfaces are covered. Training is free and includes lunch.



[Registration](#) is required.

### Winter Roads Maintenance Workshop

**Oct 13: 9 AM - 2 PM**

Minnetonka Community Center (14600 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka)

City, county, and state winter maintenance professionals are encouraged to attend this workshop that offers information about best practices for managing snow and ice on roadways. Training is free (includes lunch). [Registration](#) is required.



### Trick or Treat!



Discovery Point (12800 Gerard Dr, Eden Prairie) will be open for trick-or-treaters on Halloween. Stop by between **6-7:30 PM** on October 31st with your little ghouls for fun games and treats!

## State of the Water

**Dec 14: 6-8 PM**

Eden Prairie Community Center, Cambria Room: ([16700 Valley View Road, Eden Prairie](#))



Learn about the condition of the District's water resources, while celebrating the release of the 2017 Photo Calendar. Join us in honoring the winners of the Photo Contest, and all the volunteers who help keep our waters clean! RSVP

at: <http://www.ninemilecreek.org/whats-happening/upcoming-events/dec14>

## Great Backyard Bird Count

**Feb 17, 2017: 2-3 PM**

Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point: ([12800 Gerard Drive, Eden Prairie](#))

Come count birds for science! Bird watchers everywhere will contribute to the understanding of migration patterns and long-term trends of where birds are. Bring binoculars or use ours.

Dress for the weather. RSVP at [gzembal@ninemilecreek.org](mailto:gzembal@ninemilecreek.org) or 952-204-9691. Group will meet at Discovery Point, then move outside.



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## Clean Water Tip





### **Sweep up the leaves**

As you're raking and bagging leaves this fall, help keep them out of the streets and stormdrains. Clogged stormdrains, like the one pictured, lead to localized flooding. Leaves that wash down stormdrains also pollute our local lakes and creeks. Keep your neighborhood looking neat, and help keep our water clean at the same time!

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### **Creek Stories**

#### **Nine Mile Creek: More than just the water**

Photo by J. Elsen; Text by Kevin Zickert, 2016 Master Water Steward



For much of my life I have been a stone's throw away from Nine Mile Creek—not to say I have a strong arm, but more due to the creek's natural tendency to twist and turn. However, I have only recently come to appreciate Nine Mile Creek and the water bodies nearby. In the summer of 2016, I enrolled in Hennepin County's [Wetland Health Evaluation Program](#) (WHEP). This experience opened my eyes to the life below the surface of the water and the plants found in most of our lakes, creeks and wetlands. I learned a remarkable amount about the creatures and plants found in our water ways. I also came to understand that programs like WHEP and spaces such as Nine Mile Creek offer much more than just clean water and beauty.

These spaces offer a sense of community. Our waters cater to many different groups of people; those who walk or bike around the lakes and creek, and those that gather scientific data, to name a few. These spaces, these activities, and these programs have a tendency to gather like-minded and friendly people year after year. Water is our state's most prized natural resource, and our communities have an incredible pride in its use. I too am incredibly proud to be a part of this community, which is why I would like to make a call to action to you. However you use these spaces, please participate in water conservation. Nine Mile Creek and the other 10,000 plus bodies of water across the state of Minnesota are precious public resources. I urge you to not only enjoy our state's water ways, but to protect them as well. The "How Can I Help?" page of the Nine Mile Creek website is a great place to get ideas:

<http://www.ninemilecreek.org/get-involved/how-can-i-help/>


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## Snapshot





Despite the chilly weather, you can still find exciting things if you look closely! This American Dagger Moth caterpillar was found in Bloomington's Moir Park.


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# 9 MILE NEWS

## Reflecting on the successes of 2016



With the new year just around the corner, we reflect on the successes of the past year and eagerly anticipate what 2017 holds in store for us. Nine Mile Creek Watershed District continues to pride itself on being a transparent, cost-efficient and outcome driven organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing our water resources. We are extremely proud of all we have accomplished in 2016, and of the volunteers who have contributed their hard work and enthusiasm toward our water resources in 2016. Some highlights of the past year include:

- Updating our 10-year watershed management plan, which will set the District's goals and priorities, and define our programs and capital projects,

- Hosting our “State of the Water” and Photo Calendar release event, to recognize volunteers and partners that provided so much assistance in 2016 (nearly 60 brave souls braved the -20° evening to participate in the event),
- Expanding our education and outreach programs to include the Master Water Steward Program and continuing to hold a peer recognized Summer Education Series,
- Launching our new website to make it easier to learn about District activities and how to help improve our water resources, and
- Hiring a new District Administrator

We look forward to building on the collaborative efforts that made 2016 a successful year. In addition to continuing our core programs (e.g., education and water quality monitoring) in 2017, we look forward to completing our watershed management plan update, and beginning new projects. These include starting the Nine Mile Creek Stream Stabilization Project, evaluating solutions to water quality and nuisance biological issues in Normandale Lake, and expanding our partnerships with member cities to research regional stormwater management opportunities in re-development areas.

While there is still more to do, we look forward to working with you to continue to protect and enhance our water and natural resources.

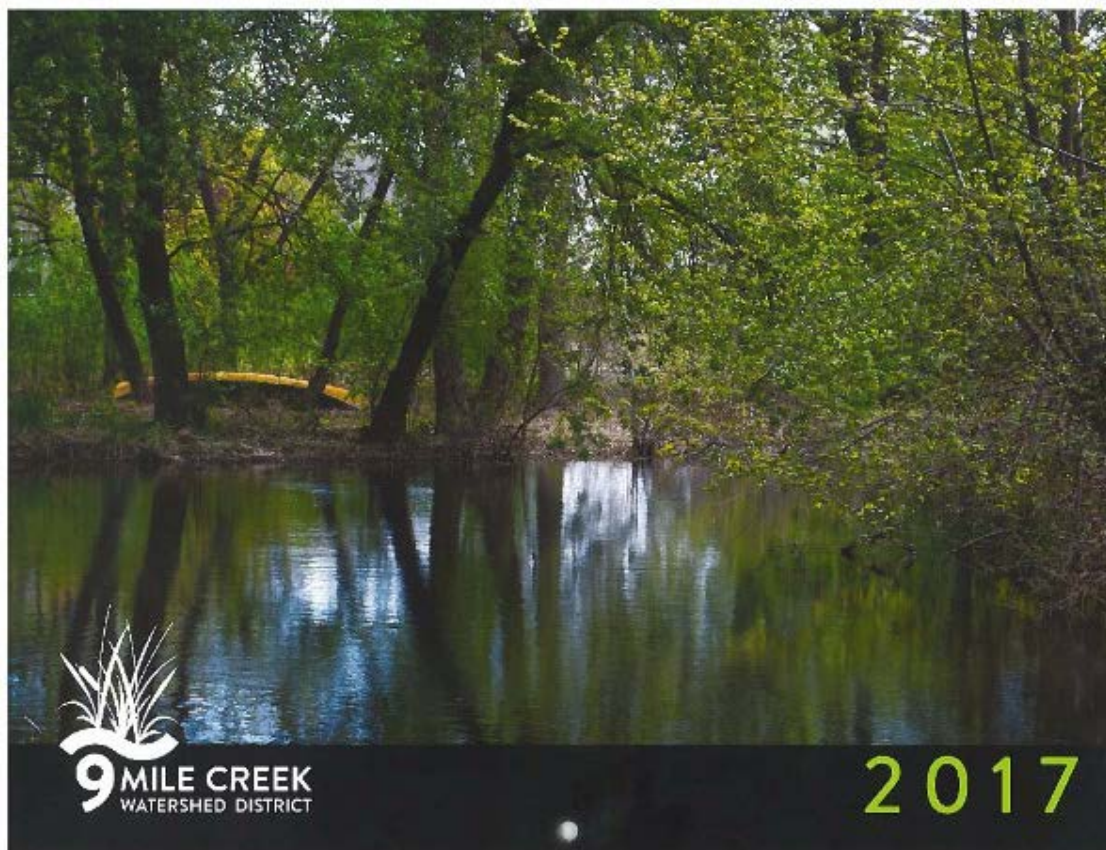


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## Announcements

### Annual Communication and Photo Calendar



The Photo Calendar turned out beautifully this year, thanks to the wonderful photos submitted by people all around the District. The District's 2016 Annual Communication is part of the calendar for you to read, or you can download and read it as a [PDF](#).

#### **Where can I get a calendar?**

Calendars are available for free at our city halls, libraries, and art and community centers, as well as our office, until copies run out. Check [our website](#) for exact locations.

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#### **District Awarded Clean Water Fund Grant**

The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District is happy to announce that a project to target stormwater best management practice (BMP) implementation on lands owned by nonprofits has been awarded funding from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) through the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.



The project will first prioritize project locations within the Watershed. Then the District will provide non-profit organizations with education and technical assistance to plan and design stormwater management practices on their site. The District was awarded \$83,339 to complete the project, which will begin this spring. BWSR funded 78 of the 171 applications it received.



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### **Grant Funds Available**



Funds are available in 2017 for projects that help protect the water and natural resources of the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District. Grants are available to residents, associations, nonprofits, schools, businesses, and cities for projects located within [District boundaries](#). Projects such as raingardens, pervious pavers, native habitat restoration and shoreline plantings are eligible for funding through the grant program. Many of these projects are also beneficial to pollinators, birds and wildlife since they include a variety of Minnesota native plants.

You are welcome to attend the Cost Share Grant information session on **Wednesday, February 15th, 2017 from 5:30-7:00 PM** in the Interpretive Room at Discovery Point. The session will provide more information about eligible projects and how to apply. Applications are due **Friday, March 24th, 2017**.

For grant guidelines and applications, check the [Grants](#) page on our website.

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### Seeking Citizen Advisors



The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District has two openings for Citizens Advisors. The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) is a volunteer advisory group that supports the watershed district in its mission to manage, restore, and protect water resources.

Participants on the CAC advise the Nine Mile Creek Board of Managers as a representative of citizen interests. CAC members inform the board about issues of concern from the public and learn about water resources issues and management.

CAC members get to have a little fun too! In the past, CAC members have helped out with stormdrain stenciling events and trash cleanups, fishing programs, and have even handed out candy for Halloween at Discovery Point!

**Applications are due by 5 PM on Monday, January 9th, 2017.** CAC members must live or work within the District. For the meeting schedule and application, see the [announcement](#) on our website.

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## Program Highlights

### State of the Water 2016





Our State of the Water event brought together people from all over the District to learn about the health of the waters in the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, and hear about upcoming projects on Normandale Lake, Lake Cornelia, and on the creek itself.

Afterwards, we honored the winners of the 2016 Photo Contest and all of the volunteers who gave their time to the District in 2016. Despite the cold night, over 50 people attended. This event marked the official release of the 2017 Photo Calendar. Thanks to everyone who has worked with the District, past and present, to make 2016 a great year for water.



Congratulations to the 2016 Photo Contest winners! Thank you to everyone who submitted pictures for the contest; your love of nature and passion for capturing beautiful places make this calendar the work of art that it is.

A big thank you also to our 2016 volunteers! You chose to spend your time and energy protecting the

environment, and we can't thank you enough! Your support is what makes the difference in our communities and around the District.

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### Master Waster Stewards Class Graduates



On December 6th, the first class of Master Water Stewards officially graduated. Congratulations to Kevin Zickert, Erin Hunker, Bob Prince, Bob Cutshall, Walter Levesque, Gael Zembal, and Lisa Nelson! The Master Water Stewards work to prevent water pollution on a local level by installing projects that capture pollution and keep our lakes and creeks clean, and educating their neighbors about keeping our water clean.

If you are interested in joining the next class of Master Water Stewards, go to [www.masterwaterstewards.org](http://www.masterwaterstewards.org).

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## Upcoming Events

### Birding Basics

**Thursday, February 2, 2017: 6:15-7:30 PM**

Jefferson Senior High, Rm A101: ([4001 W 102nd St., Bloomington](#))

\$14--Register through Bloomington Richfield Community Education



What's so big about birds? Find out about the easy and inexpensive hobby of birding, and the importance of birds in our world. Learn about some bird adaptations as well as tricks for identifying common birds in our area. We'll also discuss the upcoming Great Backyard Bird Count and the science behind bird migration. Class will be held indoors.

**\$14 program fee. Register under program #[5515BW](#) through Bloomington Richfield Community Education: ([br.thatscommunityed.com](http://br.thatscommunityed.com))**

### Great Backyard Bird Count

**Friday, February 17, 2017: 2-3 PM**

Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point: ([12800 Gerard Drive, Eden Prairie](#))

Come count birds for science! Bird watchers everywhere will contribute to the understanding of migration patterns and long-term trends of where birds are. Bring binoculars or use ours.

Dress for the weather. Event is free.

**RSVP on our [website](#).**

Contact [gzembal@ninemilecreek.org](mailto:gzembal@ninemilecreek.org) or 952-204-9691 for questions.



### Cost Share Grant Info Session

**Wednesday, February 15, 2017: 5:30 PM**

Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point: ([12800 Gerard Drive, Eden Prairie](#))

Are you interested in applying for a grant for a raingarden, habitat





restoration, or other project that protects local water or natural resources?

Attend a Cost Share Information Session and [learn more](#) about how to apply!

The Information Session will be held in the Interpretive Room of Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point.

### **Putting Down Roots Exhibit**

**January 2017**

Eden Prairie Library ([565 Prairie Center Dr, Eden Prairie](#))

#### **Moving to a new home!**

Putting Down Roots is on the move! For the month of January 2017, the Eden Prairie Library will showcase these handmade works of art. After that, the exhibit will move to the [Kroening Interpretive Center](#) in Minneapolis.



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### **Clean Water Tip**



## Reduce salt use

With a few good snowstorms behind us already, slippery roads and sidewalks are a fact of life. Use these tips to help reduce your salt use this winter:

**Shovel that snow.** The more snow that you can shovel or snow blow, the less salt you will need. Get out early and keep up with the storm.

**Leave space between granules.** There should be about 3 inches between each salt granule. A handheld spreader is great for making this pattern. Once the salt starts to work, you can shovel the ice away.

**Temperature matters.** Most salts stop working below 15° Fahrenheit (pavement temperature), and should not be applied. Instead, use a small amount of sand for traction.

Find more tips at <https://www.ninemilecreek.org/get-involved/learn/salt-reduction/>

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## Creek Stories

### The Two Faces of Winter in Bredesen Park

Photo and Text submitted by Elizabeth Daughton



Winter has two aspects in Bredesen Park. In early winter, I encounter a world of line and texture. Colors are drab, but dry vegetation adds punches of gold. On a foggy day, I see the outlines of bare branches as blurred, and the crisp stalks of dry reeds as adding punch to the brown landscape. Because the ponds are still open, muskrats and ducks swim among cattails and add movement to the still landscape.

In the winter, Nine Mile Creek laces its way under bridges, over rocks and around banks. The strength of the creek in the spring has defined the route through the woods. Blue jays fly in and out of trees alerting others that I am in their territory, and cardinals continue to sing in spite of the cold.

After snow falls, the park becomes a place of recreation for skiers and sledders. I enjoy hearing their happy sounds as they race down hills next to the pond. Walkers flock to the groomed trails and enjoy the dark edges of branches outlined in white and the pristine clear blue of the sky.

Early and mid-winter add joy to my life.

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## Snapshot







Despite the snow, the wildlife is active around Discovery Point. We saw the coyote and deer within ten minutes of each other (going opposite directions though; lone coyotes usually do not hunt full grown deer).


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