

THE Drift

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Watershed Education:
Diverse Communities
- 2 Water Elements: Chloride
- 2 Water Reuse Project
- 3 Comprehensive Planning
- 4 Water Almanac:
Seeing Groundwater

REFLECTIONS from Paul Ostrow

As I leave the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, I want to share a few thoughts about our work together. I have been very blessed to work with a first rate Executive Director, dedicated staff and thoughtful Commissioners. We have done good work together. Our organization has evolved into a mission driven enterprise with a reputation for getting results and being good stewards of our finances and our environmental legacy.

I want to share with you what I believe are the secrets of our success.

First, we are laser focused on our core mission. The watershed was created to be the guardian of a precious natural resource - our Mississippi watershed. Our staff time and our limited tax dollars are dedicated to this core mission. We are not just another "funding source." We will support only those projects or programs that improve water quality.

continued on page 3

MANY THANKS ...

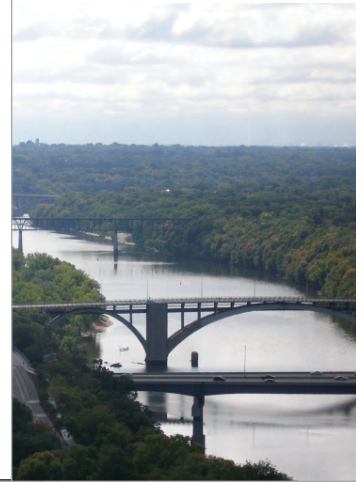
Many thanks to

**CHEV KELLOGG &
PATRICK KVIDERA**

for serving as Citizen Advisors
and to

**KARLYN ECKMAN &
PAUL OSTROW**

for serving on the MWMO
Board of Commissioners.



REFLECTIONS

from Karlyn Eckman

Minnesota's water resources are abundant and beautiful. We enjoy our iconic Lake Superior northshore, the Rainy River, the Saint Croix, and Boundary Waters Canoe Area. The headwaters of the Mississippi,



PAUL OSTROW served as an MWMO Commissioner representing the City of Minneapolis for eight years. He was the Chair of the Board for the entire time.



KARLYN ECKMAN served as an MWMO Commissioner representing the City of Saint Paul for nine years. She will continue to participate as an alternate.

Minnesota and Buffalo/Red Rivers originate in Minnesota and flow toward Canada and Mexico. Our lakes and cabins are part of our cultural history. We take our waters for granted, using potable drinking water to wash our cars and water the lawn. We hardly know our good fortune when it comes to our water resources when compared to other states and countries.

My focus has been on the forgotten marshes, springs and waters of the MWMO. The Mississippi is visible to everyone, capturing groundwater and stormwater and conveying water downstream. However, the less-noticeable upland marshes and creeks are critically important to the health of the Mississippi. The metropolitan area has lost nearly all of its pre-settlement wetlands. The remaining fragments are hidden gems that support dragonflies, herons, crayfish, frogs, fireflies and turtles. Wetlands filter out pollutants and provide habitat for fish, waterfowl, mussels and insects. The Caithlin marsh, Kasota ponds and wetlands, Skonard Spring and other remnants are worthy of a visit.

continued on page 3



Protect it. Pass it on.

**MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION**

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WATERSHED EDUCATION:**REACHING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES**

The Nature of Water—a DVD about water and pollution prevention—was recently completed in five languages: Hmong, Viet, Khmer, Lao and English (subtitles in English and Hmong). The DVD includes a 10-minute main feature as well as bonus features about drinking water, raingardens, what a watershed is, and more. DVD distribution is planned for next year; visit the MWMO website in January for more information about its availability (www.mwmo.org).

This DVD is one result of the MWMO's and the Minneapolis Public Works Department's commitment to reaching diverse constituents with information about water and pollution prevention. In 2007, a report *Assessing Attitudes, Perceptions and Behaviors about Water in Minnesota's Hmong Community* was prepared for the MWMO and Minneapolis to deepen our understanding of how one community shares information and their cultural context for water and stewardship. Creating information that honors the Hmong community's oral tradition, such as a DVD, was one recommendation of the report. Over time, focused strategies for increasing knowledge and stewardship will be expanded to other communities.

WATER ELEMENTS ... CHLORIDE

The evidence is mounting—winter salt use impacts our water resources. As more waters are tested, more waterbodies in the Metro Area have been found to exceed allowable concentrations of chlorides. Today, Minnehaha, Nine Mile, Bassett and Shingle creeks contain enough chloride to harm aquatic life, and the development of management plans have been mandated to reduce these levels.

Salts, such as sodium and potassium chlorides, are used in winter to control ice on our roads, sidewalks, parking lots and driveways. Deicing is the primary source of chloride in our local waters, and it doesn't take much—as little as one teaspoon contaminates five gallons of water! When salt dissolves, it becomes invisible but does not disappear. Instead, when snow and ice melt, the water flows into stormdrains, washing everything down the drain directly into our lakes and rivers.

To address this issue, the MWMO is part of a 319 grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to provide training free of charge to property managers, snow plow drivers, landscapers and contractors to learn about the best ways to control snow and ice in ways that also protect our water resources. The training is conducted by Fortin Consulting and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Participants are eligible to be certified by the state in Snow and Ice Control Best Practices

So, if you hire out snow removal on your property, choose a certified contractor or encourage them to become certified. A link to a list of certified contractors may be found at www.mwmo.org/certifiedcontractors.html

The MWMO also offers a free one-hour workshop on Homeowner Best Practices for Snow and Ice Control. If your organization would like to host a workshop, contact the MWMO at 612-465-8780 for details.



ABOVE: A worst case scenario—nearly 50 pounds of salt spilled in the street will flow into a stormdrain and directly into the nearest body of water. This amount of salt contaminates 10,000 gallons of water. It is costly and difficult to remove salt from water. Photograph by J. Winkelman, MWMO.



LEFT: Mayor of Saint Anthony Village and MWMO Commissioner Jerry Faust wields the scissors at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Water Reuse Facility. Also pictured is Paul Ostrow, MWMO Commissioner and Minneapolis City Council Member. Photograph courtesy of Saint Anthony Village.

WATER REUSE PROJECT IN SAINT ANTHONY VILLAGE IS A WINNER

The City of Saint Anthony Village is being recognized for its innovative approach to water treatment and reuse. In January 2010, the city will receive the Grand Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies of Minnesota. In 2008, it received an Honorable Mention from the City Engineers Association of Minnesota.

So what is all the fuss about? On the surface, Saint Anthony Village's Central Park and City Hall campus look pretty much the same as always. Looks are deceiving. Beneath the ground, a 500,000-gallon reservoir collects stormwater runoff from 13.5 acres of roads and the City Hall grounds; and filters backwash water from the city's water treatment process (nearly 75,000 gallons a week). Previously, the runoff and untreated backwash was disposed of as a waste product and discharged to the Mississippi River and Mirror Lake. Now, this water is valued and reused as irrigation water for 20 acres of Central Park and the City Hall campus. By reusing water to irrigate its green spaces, each year the city will save more than six million gallons of drinking quality water. Water reuse is also saving the city nearly \$40,000 a year in sewer and water costs; the projected payback time for this project is about 25 years.

This innovative project resulted from collaboration with and funding by the MWMO, Rice Creek Watershed District and Hennepin County; the project was designed by WSB Engineers and Associates.

For more details about the project, visit www.ws beng.com/pdfs/AwardStAnthonyWaterReuse.pdf

**COMPREHENSIVE
WATERSHED PLANNING**

Since 2008, the MWMO has been immersed in its “third generation” comprehensive planning process, which is expected to culminate in 2010. The MWMO is required, by the state, to update its plan every ten years.

What exactly is a watershed management plan? The purpose of the plan is to describe existing water resources, water-related problems, and possible solutions. The plan also serves as a policy guide to decisions related to water resource management.

The current MWMO plan was adopted in 2001, since then the MWMO has matured its vision for water resource management and has significantly increased its capacity to implement its goals. The new plan will better represent what and who the organization is today. The plan is intended to be of use to the general public. Some features of particular interest are an inventory of natural resources and information about how water resource management is shared among the MWMO's member communities, regional, and state authorities.

Community input has helped shaped the goals and actions of the plan - through surveys, focus groups, public meetings, and advisory committees. Public comment will again be invited in early summer. If you are interested in reviewing the plan or attending the public open house, check the MWMO website in late spring.

REFLECTIONS from Paul Ostrow *continued from page 1*

Second, we are focused on planning and measuring our success. Our Third Generation Watershed Management Plan represents outstanding work which will guide the activities of the MWMO. Our monitoring work is critical to ensure that we objectively measure our successes and challenges and work with other jurisdictions for ongoing improvements.

Third, our educational programs and Stewardship Fund continue to increase the awareness of residents in the Mississippi Watershed of the impact every resident can have on improving water quality. In the end, we cannot succeed unless individuals see the connection between their behavior and the watershed and unless neighborhoods work together creatively to positively impact the health of our watershed.

Fourth, the Board of Commissioners has wisely kept to issues of policy and has let our talented staff do what they do best - implement our programs and determine how best to achieve our goals.

Fifth but most importantly, good people. There is no substitute for talented and dedicated people of integrity who share a common goal.

It has been a great honor to chair the watershed for the past seven years. Many thanks to my fellow Commissioners and watershed staff. I am confident with the foundation in place that the watershed will continue to do extraordinary work.

REFLECTIONS from Karlyn Eckman *continued from page 1*

The MWMO is a relatively young watershed organization but has achieved a great deal since its beginnings. I am especially proud of the MWMO Stewardship Fund Program. The idea was first proposed by the Saint Anthony Park Community Council's Environment Committee and adopted by MWMO. The Stewardship Fund Program has provided watershed grants and assistance to over 45 local groups and organizations since its inception in 2003. MWMO's environmental education program is outstanding. MWMO's Hmong outreach efforts are innovative and exciting, as well as MWMO's sponsorship of winter maintenance training for municipal employees.

I will be succeeded by Matt Haas, representing the City of Saint Paul and the Saint Anthony Park Community Council (SAPCC). Matt served on the Rock-Tenn energy committee, and is the general manager of the Hampden Park Food Coop. He is a board member of SAPCC, bringing deep grassroots community experience. He will serve the watershed well. I will assist Matt as alternate commissioner.

Finally, watersheds are all about the people who live in them. What's it to you? You drink and bath in water that comes from your watershed. Water is precious: protect it, pass it on. Install a rainbarrel or raingarden, minimize de-icing salts, compost, and get involved! For those who have an interest in environmental issues and are looking for a way to become involved, your watershed organization needs you! MWMO welcomes citizen engagement through its Citizen Action Committee.

My thanks to the MWMO staff and of course my colleagues on the board, past and present. Your dedication and passion have made it all worthwhile.

MWMO COMMISSIONERS

- Paul Ostrow, Minneapolis
- Jerry Faust, Saint Anthony Village
- Karen Gill-Gerbig, Lauderdale
- Karlyn Eckman, Saint Paul
- Scott Vreeland, Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board



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Education & Outreach Manager
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Water Resource Manager
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Environmental Specialist
- Rachel Olmanson
Environmental Specialist
- Erica Sniogowski
Education & Outreach Specialist
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- P. Victor Grambsch At-large:
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- Alyssa Hawkins Minneapolis
- Craig Larson Minneapolis

