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NEWS RELEASE

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Looking for a few good neighbors to protect water quality

Applications now being accepted for Master Water Stewards program

MINNEAPOLIS — All across the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area, neighbors are joining together to improve the health of water in their communities and beyond. By becoming trained and certified as Master Water Stewards, they have dreamed up, created and installed projects beyond what they thought possible. Applications are now being accepted for the next cohort of Master Water Stewards who want to make a real difference in their community.

Freshwater Society developed the Master Water Stewards program in 2013 to equip citizens with the knowledge and skills needed to help improve water quality at the grassroots level. The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) is one of many local watersheds sponsoring MWS classes, and is offering them free-of-charge to eligible residents.

“The Master Water Stewards program is designed to equip ordinary citizens with the skills they need to become leaders for clean water in their community,” said MWMO Executive Director Doug Snyder. “We at the MWMO are proud of our Master Water Stewards and their grassroots efforts to protect our water resources from polluted runoff.”

Master Water Stewards are certified by participating in a broad training curriculum led by experts in the fields of hydrology, stormwater management, water policy, community-based social marketing, and raingarden assessment and installation. They must complete a capstone project that captures rainfall and allows more water to soak into the ground, and lead a community outreach event. Stewards then become a point of knowledge and influence in their communities.

Local graduates include people like Brittany Faust and Kristine Maurer, whose runoff-absorbing landscape at a local café earned an award from the Freshwater Society. Ian Lamers and Liz Reiser built a stormwater treatment train in a residential backyard, while Erin Thomasson and Kathy Johannes lobbied local leaders to consider stormwater management when reviewing development proposals.

These are just a few examples of Master Water Stewards who are now volunteering their time to protect and improve water quality and habitat in their communities.

To learn more, citizens can visit masterwaterstewards.org or attend an upcoming information session at one of the following locations (all applicants welcome at any of the following sessions):

- August 14, 2017 – Freshwater Society, 5:30-6:30 pm, 2424 W. Territorial Rd., Ste. B., St. Paul, MN 55114
- August 29, 2017 – Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, 5:30-6:30 pm, 2522 Marshall Street NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418
- September 19, 2017 – Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, 5:30-6:30 pm, 12800 Gerard Dr., Eden Prairie, MN 55346

Or find more dates and times here: <https://masterwaterstewards.org/calendar/>

Accomplishments

Master Water Stewards volunteer 50 hours of community service in their initial year of certification, at least 25 hours each subsequent year, and attend eight hours of continuing education to maintain their certification. To date, stewards have accomplished a tremendous amount through their service. They have:

- Connected with thousands of people through outreach and educational events.
- Installed or planned more than 83 projects, including rain gardens, rain barrels, cisterns, a dry creek bed, and a permeable driveway.
- Prevented more than 1.2 million gallons of polluted stormwater runoff from entering our lakes, rivers, and creeks each year! In the process, these efforts remove silt, leaves, plant material, animal waste, automobile gas and oil spillage, excess salt and other pollutants.

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About the MWMO

The MWMO is a public organization that partners to protect and improve water and habitat in our urban watershed. We invest in people and infrastructure to support clean water, and provide knowledge, scientific data and expertise to help manage our vital water resources. mwmo.org

About Freshwater Society

Freshwater Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and inspiring people to value, conserve, and protect water resources. freshwater.org and masterwaterstewards.org