

Scott Clean Water Education Program 2017 Work Plan



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Introduction

The Scott Clean Water Education Program (SCWEP) began in 2010. This work plan builds off the progress and momentum that has developed since then, and focuses on improving and expanding activities that the current partnership believes will provide the greatest, most cost-effective impact.

The goal of SCWEP is to make clean water choices second nature for all who live and work in Scott County. SCWEP will utilize the “Clean Water Starts with Me!” message to help create a new “normal” in terms of how citizens of Scott County think of stormwater runoff and their roles in making a difference. The objective throughout implementation of this work plan is to make this message personal. “Clean Water Starts with Me!” can be paired with outreach targeted at agricultural, rural, shoreline, and urban residents, which allows the clean water message can be tailored to reach a wide audience. SCWEP will work towards their goal with both consistent, long-term broad-based messaging and focused, hands-on workshops and citizen engagement events tailored to target-specific audiences.

Scott County has a bountiful share of natural water resources, including more than 90 lakes totaling over 11,600 acres, thousands of wetland basins totaling more than 33,500 acres, and approximately 280 miles of public rivers, stream and creeks, including all of Eagle Creek and headwaters of the Vermillion River, both classified trout streams. SCWEP’s partners envision a future where clean water flows throughout Scott County, including in Credit River that meanders through Savage, the Minnesota River and Sand Creek surrounding the beautiful bluffs of Jordan, Roberts Creek that flows past farmland near Belle Plaine, and Raven Stream that borders many residential homes near New Prague; and in Scott County’s many lakes including Prior, Spring, Cedar, O’Dowd, McMahon and Pleasant.

Partners

Members of the SCWEP partnership believe more can be accomplished by working together. By collaborating, we eliminate overlapping programs, prevent inconsistent and duplicative messaging, and achieve similar outcomes at lower costs. The 2017 SCWEP partners are:

- Scott Watershed Management Organization
- Scott Soil and Water Conservation District
- Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District
- Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board
- Lower Minnesota River Watershed District
- Spring Lake Township
- Credit River Township
- Jackson Township
- Louisville Township
- Scott County

When and where possible, SCWEP will also collaborate with other agencies and organizations and implement outreach programs with similar goals and objectives in Scott County. This will help to achieve an even greater level of overall consistency, reach, and cost effectiveness. Other entities with which collaboration will be sought include but will not be limited to: the Cities of Prior Lake, Savage, Shakopee, Belle Plaine, Elko New Market, Jordan and New Prague; the University of Minnesota Extension Service; Scott/Carver Extension Master Gardeners; Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community; Three Rivers Park District; and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Audiences

As in past years, the SCWEP Work Plan will target and customize its “Clean Water Starts with Me!” campaign to three general audiences. These audience and the respective goals and objectives include the following:

AUDIENCE: Agriculture/Rural Landowners	
Goal	Land management decisions are made with conservation in mind and minimizing detrimental impacts to water resources
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Educate producers and landowners on local water quality impairments and show them how the actions they can take by implementing BMPs can have a positive impact (i.e. improve soil productivity) 2) Provide technical assistance and cost-share opportunities for the adoption of priority practices including but not limited to gully erosion control, cover crops, filter strips and riparian buffers, livestock manure management and appropriate fertilizer use
2017 Emphasis	Riparian corridor improvements (buffers, filters, etc.); manure and nutrient management; runoff volume reduction (native prairie, wetland restoration; soil health/ cover crops, etc.); and whole farm conservation planning
AUDIENCE: Urban and Lakeshore Residents	
Goal	Landscape design and maintenance choices protect water quality and reduce runoff
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Educate residents on how water is managed in urban environment and about ways they can positively impact water quality in their everyday lives 2) Offer how-to workshops and technical assistance on the adoption of suitable BMPs, such as water-wise lawn care, increased natural landscaping, raingardens and porous pavement.
2017 Emphasis	Homeowner responsibility for stormwater runoff; proper disposal of hazardous waste; water-friendly lawn care and conservation; snow/ice removal practices; raingardens; rain barrels; native plantings vs. lawn; pollinator habitat
AUDIENCE: Community Groups, Schools & Government	
Goal	Enhance the quality of and opportunities for conservation leadership, education and outreach
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increase awareness among community leaders and employees about water quality issues and solutions 2) Provide speaking engagements and educational opportunities that introduce soil and water conservation topics 3) Encourage volunteerism and foster relationships and networks that will result in improved water quality and personal accountability
2017 Emphasis	Illicit discharge detection and elimination; Scott County HHW facility, natural landscaping and water-friendly snow/ice removal practices in public spaces; reduced impervious surfaces

Programming

SCWEP will utilize both passive and active marketing and outreach techniques to connect with the identified audiences in Scott County. Generally speaking, active techniques consist of activities that are targeted, hands-on and engage with very specific audiences. They are point-in-time events that are scheduled according to seasonal relevance. They take significant time and resources to plan and implement, relatively speaking, but are also more likely to have a greater impact in terms of desired outcomes (i.e., changed behaviors). Examples include workshops, field demonstrations, targeted mailings, tours, and one-on-one landowners meetings. Passive activities, by contrast, are intended to reach large audiences and deliver consistent, base messaging. They have a lower impact relative to active techniques, but are also comparatively easy and inexpensive to implement. Examples include news articles and event displays that focus on the effects of how our decisions impact water quality – no matter where we live and work – and the positive or negative impacts we are responsible for on Scott County water bodies.

Listed below are the planned activities SCWEP for 2017. Ideas that are new for 2017 are highlighted.

Target Audience and Events/Activities	Dates	Objective	MS4 Activity
Agriculture/Rural Landowners			
Plant Native Prairie Workshop	March 2	1	X
Cover Crop Workshop	March 30	1	X
Nitrate Water Testing Clinic	April 28	1	X
Tree/Native Seed Mix Order Pickup	April 28 and 29	1	
Conservation Leaders/Awards	August	1	
Promote native grass planting	Ongoing	1	X
Promote buffer BMPs	Ongoing	1	X
Buffer open houses	Jan 24, 26, 31; Feb 2	1	
Extension's Living on the Land workshop series	Spring and Fall	1	
Promote Cover Crop/Soil Health BMPs	Ongoing	1, 2	X
Promote nutrient and manure management	Ongoing	1, 2	X
Provide technical assistance and cost share for agricultural BMPs	Ongoing	2	
Community Groups			
Community Conversations: WMO Water Plan Public Meetings	Jan 3, 4, and 9	1	
Scott WMO/SWCD Project Tour	September 27	1	
Promote proper disposal of hazardous waste via HHW facility	Ongoing	1	X
Education presentations to community leaders (WPC, Citizen Advisory Committee, etc.)	Ongoing	1	
Outdoor Education Day	Sept 18 - 22	2	
Carp Contest	May	2	
Prior Lake Savage Schools Jr. Naturalist Day	October	2	

Ice Cleanup Event Promotion/Assistance	February	3	
Clean-Water Clean-Up, rake the lake event	Spring and fall	3	X
Sportsmen’s Club Relationship Building	Ongoing	3	
Lake Association Relationship Building	Ongoing	3	
Share and promote Watershed Stewards Mini-Grants	Ongoing	3	
Urban and Lakeshore Residents			
University of MN Extension Garden Fever	April 1	1	X
New Prague Expo	April	1	X
Jordan Showcase	April	1	X
Scott County Fair	July 26 to 30	1	X
Prior Lake Community Fest	September	1	X
SCWEP Display rotation	Monthly	1	X
Landowner success stories	Every other month	1	X
Conservation Themes/Hallway	Quarterly	1	
Cooperative Media Plan	Ongoing	1	
Storm Drain Stencil Kit	Spring, summer, fall	1	X
Interpretive signage	As needed	1	X
Promote “unintentional” pollution and illicit discharge prevention	Ongoing	1	X
Begin to create marketing videos		1	X
Develop packet to mail to residents with new building permits about available technical assistance, cost-share, etc.	Send out quarterly	1	X
Raingarden Workshops	April 4, 6, and 8	2	X
Shoreline Restoration Workshop	April 18	2	X
Shoreline Stabilization Workshop	Fall	2	X

Programming Highlights

Workshops

Workshops on a variety of topics including native prairie, raingardens, and shoreline restoration and stabilization are offered throughout the year. These workshops are free and provide Scott County residents with opportunities to learn about options for utilizing conservation practices on their property. Many of the practices highlighted in the workshops may be eligible for SWMO or PLSLWD cost-share grants or incentives, and the SWCD provides technical assistance. The workshops provide Scott County residents with an opportunity to learn more about activities they are interested in, and start the conversation about technical assistance and cost share, which may ultimately lead to conservation practices being installed.

Residential Lawn Care Management

Residential homeowner lawn care education and outreach will focus on what individuals can do on their own lawns to reduce impact to the environment, focusing on proper fertilizer and pesticide application rates and timing, soil aeration and testing, and adding natural landscaping. Lawn care and fertilizing tips will be featured in The Scott County SCENE and on our display board and rack cards. The more residents that practice clean-water-friendly lawn care maintenance, the cleaner Scott Counties water bodies will be.

Storm Drain Stenciling Kit

A storm drain stenciling program, launched in April 2014, assists in educating the public about where rainwater goes when it enters the storm drains. Neighborhood storm drain stenciling kits may be checked out through the Scott SWCD office. The kit includes instructions, spray paint, storm drain stencils, hand brushes and door-hanger flyers that inform homeowners what is being done in their neighborhood and why. The message for the stencil reads, "Don't Dump, Drains to Lake (or River)." When checking out the kit, the SCWEP coordinator will give a brief presentation to the groups about why they are performing the activity and the importance of notifying residents about how the storm drains are connected to area lakes and rivers. This activity is targeted at youth groups in our community (4-H, boy scouts, girl scouts). The impact from the stenciling kit is twofold: the public seeing the stenciling will think twice before dumping into the storm drain, and the youth doing the stenciling will learn about how water can be pollution and storm drains through a hands-on activity that will stick with them as they grow up.

Outdoor Education Day

Every fall 5th graders from across Scott County come to Outdoor Education Day to learn about conservation. This includes rotating through six stations focused on forestry, wildlife, plants/pollinators, soil health, the water cycle, and pond macro-invertebrates. Stations are taught by natural resource professionals from many partner organizations. Outdoor Education Day is the main activity that SCWEP utilizes to directly reach Scott County youth. It gives SCWEP a chance to teach the value of water resource conservation to residents at a young age.

Scott WMO/SWCD Conservation Tour

The Scott WMO and SWCD host an annual conservation tour for local county officials to visit conservation projects throughout the county. This tour is a great opportunity to show how conservation is working in Scott County and show how dollars are being spent. By showcasing conservation projects to county officials, we give them have a better understanding of the importance of conservation, and they can see that over time real changes are being made in the county.

Success Stories

News articles, including personal accounts from past participants in workshops and conservation projects, will be used to promote SCWEP activities and events. For example, residents who created raingardens after participating in the workshop would be asked to provide a testimonial, sharing why they participated and why others should attend the workshops and create their own raingardens. Through success stories we will illustrate that everyday citizens are doing their part in keeping the water clean. Success stories highlight those who are doing their part for clean water and begin to create a new normal by showing that residents are changing their behaviors.

Attendance at Community Events

SCWEP participates in community expos and other relevant events, including but not limited to Garden Fever, Jordan Showcase, Prior Lake Community Fest and the Scott County Fair by putting up the "Clean Water Starts with Me!" display, and staffing a table with rack cards and information. We also set up a display at the Scott County Court House for the Earth Day/Arbor Day celebration. Attendance at community events is important

because it serves as a reminder to residents that SCWEP partner organizations are available, and gives residents that may not visit the offices a chance to talk with staff and start a conversation.

Publication of Rack Cards and Fact Sheets

Information and topics for display rack cards and fact sheets will be derived from the MS4 required focuses (e.g. illicit discharge, stormwater runoff, natural borders, etc.) as well as other local conservation topics (e.g. native prairie, shoreline restoration, etc.). The rack cards will be available every time the SCWEP board is displayed. The rack cards are especially valuable when the SCWEP display is not staffed, such as when on display at libraries. Residents viewing the display can take a rack card with them for more information on the various topics, plus get contact information if they are interested in learning more.

News Articles and Press Releases

News articles, press releases and website updates will provide an avenue for marketing messages, and allow SCWEP to build on and keep a consistent presence in the public eye. A timeline of proposed articles is provided in the appendix. News articles and press releases keep water resource conservation at the top of residents' minds. If someone sees our messaging once, they may ignore it, but the more they see it the more likely they are to think about it which may lead to behavioral change.

Scott SWCD Hallway Display Themes

Season-specific conservation topics will be shared with all audiences who visit the Scott County Conservation Center. Having these conservation topics on display is yet another visual reminder for residents that changes they make can have an impact on Scott County's water resources.

MS4 Activity Detail

There are six minimum control measures (MCMs) defined in the MS4 Permit, including:

1. Public Education and Outreach
2. Public Participation and Involvement
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
4. Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control
5. Post-Construction Stormwater Management in New and Redevelopment
6. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

This work plan is designed in part to meet the requirements of MCM 1 for partner MS4 Permitted communities. In addition to the public education and outreach, staff at the SWCD and WMO are available to assist MS4 communities in preparing their annual SWPPP and public meetings when requested.

Budget

The budget 2017 SCWEP budget is \$70,765. This includes \$68,765 for staff time to plan and implement activities, and \$2,000 for materials, supplies and related expenses. Of this total, Scott WMO is contributing \$62,065, Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District is contributing \$5,000, Lower Minnesota River Watershed District is contributing \$1,500, Vermillion River Watershed is contributing \$1,200 and Spring Lake Township is contributing \$1,000.

Outcomes, Evaluation and Reporting

The SCWEP goal – to make clean water choices second nature for all who live and work in Scott County – was reviewed throughout the year. It can be difficult to track progress towards this goal because behavior changes are not always measurable. We cannot count how many people stopped blowing lawn clippings onto the gutter, used less salt in the winter, or chose not to dump waste in a storm water drain as a result of SCWEP activities. There are, however, many changes that can be measured, and that is what the SCWEP evaluation is based on. These measurements include:

- Number of participants at SCWEP hosted events or workshops
- Number of direct mailings, brochures and flyers distributed
- Number of submitted press releases and articles
- Number of requests for technical assistance
- Number of best management practices completed through a partner organization

These numbers can be found in SWCEP's Annual Reports. They are important part of SCWEP, as these numbers are used in many partners' MS4 reporting. These measurements many not give a perfect picture of SCWEP's impact, but they be used as indicators of broader behavioral change and help shape future SCWEP programming. Evaluation continues to be an important component in understanding the effectiveness of reaching our goal of the "Clean Water Starts with Me!" campaign.

Goals Beyond 2017

The activities outlined in this report are geared toward achieving positive behavior change for the long term. This is an ongoing process and changes in perceptions and lasting behaviors are difficult to measure. In future years, many of these activities will be repeated as a constant reminder to the public that "Clean Water Starts with Me." As new ideas and opportunities emerge, new activities will be added to keep SCWEP relevant and reaching as many people as possible. SCWEP goals beyond 2017 include:

- Changing residents' way of thinking about stormwater runoff and their roles in making a difference
- Providing support and programming to partner agencies and others
- Showing the public that their everyday decisions do matter by including personal success stories in press releases and outreach
- Increasing workshop participation numbers to create greater impact and personal behavior change
- Building and enhancing partnerships between SCWEP and local citizen groups (i.e., lake associations, lake residents, sportsmen's clubs, existing social networks, community service clubs, etc.)