



**MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT**
QUALITY OF WATER, QUALITY OF LIFE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER SPRING 2012

UPCOMING EVENTS

Board meetings and workshops are held at the MCWD offices (18202 Minnetonka Blvd, Deephaven, MN 55391) and begin at 6:45 p.m. Find more information at minnehahacreek.org/events

- May 3** – Board of Managers Workshop
- May 5** – Minnehaha Creek Inquiry Institute
- May 10** – Board of Managers Workshop
- May 15** – Are We Ready? Forum (NOAA Study)
- May 17** – Citizens Advisory Committee
- May 24** – Board of Managers Meeting

- June 5** – Stormwater U: Advanced Site Assessment and BMP Selection
- June 7** – Board of Managers Workshop
- June 14** – Board of Managers Workshop
- June 21** – Citizens Advisory Committee
- June 28** – Board of Managers Meeting

- July 5** - Board of Managers Workshop
- July 8** - Minnehaha Creek Clean-Up
- July 10** - Stormwater U: Advanced BMP Operation and Maintenance
- July 12** - Board of Managers Workshop
- July 19** - Citizens Advisory Committee
- July 26** - Board of Managers Meeting



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A MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

As the weather warms up and Minnesotans begin another season of boating, fishing and enjoying their lakes and streams, we must remember our responsibility to keep those water bodies healthy and usable.



Administrator Eric Evenson

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) are quickly becoming the greatest threat to our lakes and streams and the quality of life of those that enjoy them. Stopping the spread of AIS is a top priority for Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) and we are working with agencies and citizen groups to protect our water resources from infestation.

These species are costing homeowners across the U.S. millions of dollars annually. The economic impact of one of the newest AIS found in the District, zebra mussels, alone is estimated to be more than \$5 billion nationwide. AIS can adversely impact lake and river ecosystems, destroying native and sport fisheries while also making them unusable for boating and swimming.

The MCWD is joining the battle to prevent the spread of AIS. In 2012, the District funded several “stop-gap” measures, including grants to communities for boat inspection, education, and research with the goal of holding new AIS infestations at bay while we develop a long-term AIS prevention and management plan. We hope to set a high standard for groups across the state with our comprehensive AIS plan.

The District is fortunate to have long-time city administrator Craig Dawson heading up the development of our AIS plan. We are also fortunate to have a bright and talented aquatic biologist, Eric Fieldseth, handling the technical side of our many AIS-related projects. They include:

- Monitoring the spread and distribution of zebra mussels throughout Lake Minnetonka
- Testing the effectiveness of aquatic beetles to control Eurasian watermilfoil
- Following up on herbicide treatment studies to remove curly-leaf pondweed
- Studying the movement of common carp in our upper watershed

Spring is an exciting time at the MCWD. Boaters, anglers and paddlers are gearing up for a season of recreation. Beachgoers, hikers, walkers and tourists are spending time near water bodies and the nature around them. Our beautiful, clean and healthy water resources make our watershed a blissful place to be this time of year, and we at the MCWD are continuing to do everything within our power to keep them that way forever.

- Eric Evenson
eevenson@minnehahacreek.org

Water Quality:

Water Quality Specialists:

Kelly Dooley | 952-641-4515 | kdooley@minnehahacreek.org

Yvette Christianson | 952-641-4514 | ychristianson@minnehahacreek.org

Lake and stream assessment is in full swing for the MCWD water quality department. Water quality staff regularly sample 41 stream sites and 54 bay and lake sites, including 16 limited access lakes accessible only by canoe. The data is assembled, analyzed and monitored for long-term trends and made available to the public in the annual monitoring report. Staff follow strict protocols to prevent sampling equipment and vehicles from transporting invasive species from an infested water body.

The MCWD is wrapping up a five-year project studying whole and partial lake herbicide treatments to reduce curly-leaf pondweed in Gleason Lake. Staff are monitoring the lake to measure the treatments' effectiveness and any impact on fish or other aquatic life. The department also released the 2011 Lake Grades report card, indicating that water quality has remained steady in the District.



Water quality staff regularly sample nearly 100 sites across the watershed.

Water quality staff is involved in a number of initiatives to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS), which are detailed below.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS):

Manager: Craig Dawson

952-471-8306 | cdawson@minnehahacreek.org

Like many organizations and individuals across the state, the MCWD is working hard to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS).

In February, the MCWD hired Craig Dawson to lead its AIS prevention and management efforts. Craig has a 32-year career in city management across the Twin Cities, including seven years as Shorewood City Administrator. In March, Eric Fieldseth joined the MCWD as an AIS Specialist to help implement the District's AIS projects. Eric previously worked in water resources for the Three Rivers Park District.

District staff are beginning the second year of a three-year zebra mussel sampling study

on Lake Minnetonka. Monitoring samplers are placed at 30 locations across the lake and examined monthly to gauge the spread of zebra mussels in the lake.



Zebra mussel sampling in Lake Minnetonka.

The MCWD is also beginning a large-scale study on the effectiveness of the milfoil weevil (*Euhrychipsis lecontei*) in reducing Eurasian watermilfoil. MCWD staff and the Ohio-based environmental consulting firm EnviroScience have chosen three study sites for this project: Christmas Lake, Libbs Lake, and Lake Minnetonka's Veterans Cove (near Big Island).

Meet Our New AIS Staff



Craig Dawson

AIS Program Director

(952) 471-8306

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Eric Fieldseth

AIS Specialist

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Planning, Projects and Land Conservation:

Manager: James Wisker

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The Planning, Projects and Land Conservation departments are working with a variety of organizations, agencies, residents and business owners on projects throughout the watershed. Staff are working with cities to develop plans for meeting Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements, which are benchmarks for water quality set by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Staff act as a liaison between the MPCA and cities, ensuring clear communication and helping develop ideas.



The Halverson property in Minnetrista, which will be restored to prairie, oak savanna and woodland.

space and public access, and building trails. Permits are being acquired for the work, which could begin as early as this winter.

Staff are preparing to begin restoration of a Minnetrista farm property the District acquired to prairie, oak savanna and woodland. The District is also considering acquiring an adjacent farm property and held a public meeting on the proposal in

MCWD planners are also making progress on restoring Minnehaha Creek through Hopkins and St. Louis Park. Plans include re-meandering parts of the creek, providing stormwater treatment, expanding green

April. The goal of the projects is to improve water quality in Six Mile Creek, which drains to Lake Minnetonka's Halsted Bay.

Operations and Maintenance:

Manager: Renae Clark

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In March the Operations and Maintenance department installed an innovative filter system to improve water quality in Minnetrista's Dutch Lake. It constructed two long trenches separated by a sand/iron filter, which removes dissolved phosphorus from a stream before it enters Dutch Lake. Staff will monitor surrounding water bodies to measure the filter's effectiveness.

Ground has been broken on a project to restore a stream and stormwater pond in Plymouth's Chelsea Woods neighborhood. A public meeting was held in February on the renovation of the Lake Nokomis weir, which is scheduled this summer.

Staff prepared the Gray's Bay Dam for opening once Lake Minnetonka rises to a sufficient level, according to the operating plan. Controlled burns have been conducted at several sites throughout the District to improve vegetation health and eliminate invasive plants.



A controlled burn at the MCWD's lakeshore demonstration site in the Excelsior Commons. The burns eliminate the thatch layer and reduce invasive plants.



The sand/iron filter system near Dutch Lake while it was under construction this winter

Regulatory:

Manager:

Steve Christopher | 952-641-4506 | schristopher@minnehahacreek.org

The Regulatory department is considering two new rules required by state law and minor changes to existing rules, to ensure clarity and public understanding. A 45-day public comment period will be open through June. Following that, the District will hold a public hearing to address any comments.

The MCWD Cost Share program is beginning its second year and has received an uptick in interest. MCWD staff members are reviewing sites and projects to determine which have the greatest water quality benefits for the cost. The Low Impact Development program helps fund larger development projects that exceed stormwater management requirements and is currently helping El Colegio Charter School



El Colegio School in Minneapolis, which will improve its stormwater management with the help of the MCWD's Low Impact Development program.

owners detailing how to conduct inspections and properly maintain the structures.

in Minneapolis renovate its stormwater infrastructure. The project will have a strong education component, including a student-produced video.

The department is in the midst of an education campaign to help landowners maintain their stormwater best management practices (BMPs) that are often required when building or renovating. Staff are preparing a mailing to BMP

Education:

Manager: Leslie Yetka | 952-641-4524 | lyetka@minnehahacreek.org

The Education program is conducting outreach for a major study looking at local stormwater infrastructure and changing precipitation patterns, funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Staff are keeping a variety of stakeholders abreast of the progress, publishing a project newsletter and hosting a planning forum to describe project goals and receive input from stakeholders.



The NOAA study will focus on the effects of a changing climate on stormwater management.

Education staff continue to work with 2011 Cynthia Krieg grant recipients on water quality and community engagement projects, and host workshops on a variety of topics, including proper application of road salt, adapting landscaping to climate change, building and maintaining a raingarden, and an introduction to stormwater best management practices.

Communications:

Manager: Telly Mamayek | 952-641-4508 | tmamayek@minnehahacreek.org

Recognizing the growing threat of aquatic invasive species (AIS), the MCWD was a lead organizer of the 2012 AIS Symposium, which featured national, state and local AIS experts who presented the latest research and management approaches. More than 200 people from across the state turned out for the two-day event in St. Paul. Staff also increased public awareness of AIS prevention with news releases on the MCWD's new AIS hires and the importance of using certified Lake Service Providers.

The department also helped build momentum for the second year of the MCWD Cost Share grant program with articles in several local newsletters, a feature article in Tonka Times Magazine, a revised fact sheet, and attendance at community events.

Communications Director Telly Mamayek engaged community leaders with presentations at several Rotary Clubs and Chambers



More than 200 people attended the 2012 AIS Symposium.

of Commerce throughout the District. The MCWD's Facebook page saw a nearly three-fold increase in interaction from 2011 averages.