

MEETING DATE: July 30, 2015

TITLE: Authorization to execute an agreement with Freshwater Society for Master Water Stewards program

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 15-064

PREPARED BY: Darren Lochner

E-MAIL: dlochner@minnehahacreek.org

TELEPHONE: 952-641-4524

REVIEWED BY: Administrator Counsel Program Mgr. (Name): _____
 Board Committee Engineer Other

WORKSHOP ACTION:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advance to Board mtg. Consent Agenda.	<input type="checkbox"/> Advance to Board meeting for discussion prior to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to a future workshop (date): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to taskforce or committee (date): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Return to staff for additional work.	<input type="checkbox"/> No further action requested.
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____	

PURPOSE or ACTION REQUESTED:

Authorize three years of funding to the Freshwater Society for the Master Water Stewards (MWS) Program.

PROJECT/PROGRAM LOCATION:

The Master Water Stewards Program in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District is a continuation of the three year pilot program (2013-2015) in the watershed.

PROJECT TIMELINE:

- July 2015 – Present proposal to Board of Managers for approval
- July 2015 – Begin recruitment for 2016 class of stewards
- December 2015 – Completion of the three year pilot program of the Master Water Stewards
- January – December 2016 – 2016 MWS program
- January - December 2017 – 2017 MWS program
- January - December 2018 – 2018 MWS program

PROJECT/PROGRAM COST:

Fund name and number: 4001
Current Budget: \$0
Expenditures to date: \$40,000

- December 2012 – MCWD Board of Managers approved \$15,000 Cynthia Krieg grant to support MWS program development
- December 2014 – Board of Managers approved \$25,000 Cynthia Krieg grant to support development of MWS curriculum and online delivery

Requested amount of funding: NTE - \$112,500 (\$37,500 for three years 2016, 2017, 2018)

2016 – Funding for up to 15 Master Water Stewards \$37,500 (\$2,500 per steward)
2017 – Funding for up to 15 Master Water Stewards \$37,500 (\$2,500 per steward)
2018 – Funding for up to 15 Master Water Stewards \$37,500 (\$2,500 per steward)

Is a budget amendment requested? No
Is additional staff requested? No

PAST BOARD ACTION:

December 2012 MCWD Board of Managers approved Cynthia Krieg funds - \$15,000
December 2014 MCWD Board of Managers approved Cynthia Krieg funds - \$25,000

SUMMARY:

In partnership with the Freshwater Society, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) was awarded a \$321,000 Clean Water Fund grant from the State of Minnesota for a three-year pilot of the Master Water Stewards program (MWS). The MWS was modeled after the Anne Arundel Watershed Stewards Academy in Millersville, Maryland and is similar in function to the well-known Master Gardener or Master Naturalist programs here in Minnesota. The three-year pilot began FY2013 and will be completed December 2015. The Master Water Stewards Program trains, certifies, and supports community leaders to install pollution prevention projects that educate community members, reduce pollutants from urban runoff, and allow more water to soak into the ground before running into storm sewer systems.

Launched in 2013, MWS provided training for 19 community volunteers to be certified as Master Water Stewards during the first year of the pilot. A second class of 28 additional volunteers received training and were certified in 2014. The third class of the pilot program includes 33 volunteers who will complete the program in December 2015. As part of their training (50 hours of classroom time), stewards candidates install a pollution prevention capstone project and conduct an outreach campaign to increase awareness and encourage friends, neighbors and community members to take action to protect clean water. Upon certification, Stewards agree to contribute at least 50 hours of community service and complete 12 hours of continuing education credits per year. The community service hours are required to be completed in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

As a result of the three-year pilot program in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, there will be a pool of 80 trained, local volunteers that can be deployed to meet water quality, education and outreach goals in the watershed.

The outcomes from the certified Master Water Stewards during the first two years of the pilot has resulted in 887,230 gallons of infiltration, 2.26 lb. total phosphorus removed and 407 lb. TSS removed annually. In addition, over 2500 people have been engaged in the watershed through education and outreach efforts by Master Water Stewards. The MWS outreach and education activities have included staffing information tables at community events, facilitating neighborhood gatherings, networking with community members, and serving on non-profit organization boards and advisory committees for municipalities and watershed districts. One highlight of volunteer service of the program will be the participation of over 25 MWS volunteers at the 2015 Minnehaha Creek Watershed Clean-up event.

Beyond the three-year pilot, MCWD and the Freshwater Society have been strategizing with other interested organizations on ways to expand the program to other watersheds. The Master Water Stewards program will be expanding to several watershed districts and municipalities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area starting in 2016. The expansion of the program will continue to include face to face training in addition to an online alternative for volunteers. The MCWD will be continue to be a host for the face to face training starting January 2016. The expansion will also result in a community of water resource advocates and volunteers throughout the Twin Cities area.

The first three years of volunteers certified with the Master Water Stewards program will continue to install pollution prevention projects in the watershed district in addition to being involved education and outreach activities. A goal is to have 125 Master Water Stewards certified in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District at the end of 2018.

During this next phase of MWS program the Freshwater Society will further develop the curriculum and provide a technology platform for face to face and online portions of the training. In addition, the Freshwater Society will provide Stewards with the education and support they need to develop a capstone project, provide a certification to Stewards that successfully complete the program, and track and report Stewards' volunteer hours through the MWS web site. In collaboration with MCWD, the Freshwater Society will assist in developing meaningful volunteer opportunities for Stewards. At the end of each program year for the duration of the three-year commitment of this agreement, the Freshwater Society will report the volunteer efforts of the Stewards in the MCWD, which could include number of volunteer service hours, number of stormwater projects installed, pollution prevention estimates and number of community members reached by Stewards' education efforts. The Freshwater Society will develop ongoing activities to build and support Stewards as a community, including offering continuing education opportunities.

RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, to support the District's Balanced Urban Ecology policy framework, which is the foundation for the District's projects and programs, MCWD's Education program is proposing continued support of the Master Water Stewards Program; and

WHEREAS, the Master Water Stewards program supports the District's Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan "two-track" approach of focus and flexibility in the watershed; and

WHEREAS, the District has provided financial and in-kind support to the Freshwater Society for the development of the Master Water Stewards three-year pilot program; and

WHEREAS, the three-year pilot program of the Master Water Stewards will result in 80 trained, local volunteers in the watershed district assisting with meeting water quality, education and outreach goals; and

WHEREAS, pending approval by the MCWD Board of Managers, the continuation of the MWS program would begin January 2016 and would be offered in the District for the next three years (2016-2018); and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the District Administrator to execute an agreement with the Freshwater Society to administer the Master Water Stewards program for three years for an amount not to exceed \$112,500.

Resolution Number 15-XXX was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____.
Motion to adopt the resolution ___ ayes, ___ nays, ___ abstentions. Date: _____.

Secretary Date: _____