



Clean Water Clean-Up 2023

PLSLWD EDUCATION AND OUREACH PLAN 2024



"Our mission is to manage and preserve the water resources of the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District to the best of our ability using input from our communities, sound engineering practices, and our ability to efficiently fund beneficial projects which transcend political jurisdictions."

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Executive Summary

The purpose of Prior Lake-Spring Lake’s Education and Outreach program is to improve the general understanding of water resources and the impact each citizen has upon them. The best advocate for water resources is an engaged and informed citizenry; this program seeks to make connections with our stakeholders and to foster an environmentally conscious community. The education and outreach program fulfills the goals laid out in the 2020 to 2030 Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP), requirements of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit for the Prior Lake Outlet Channel (PLOC), and when applicable, requirements of current grants. The 2024 Education and Outreach Plan will lay out specific activities that will be completed in 2024 to meet these goals and requirements.

To the extent feasible, the education and outreach program will coordinate efforts with partners and the Scott County Clean Water Education Program (SCWEP) to promote a community-wide understanding of local water resource issues and the impact each citizen has upon them, including aquatic invasive species (AIS), landowner best conservation practices, chloride pollution, and illicit discharge. Partners that share the District’s goals include:

- Prior Lake Association
- Spring Lake Association
- City of Prior Lake
- City of Savage
- City of Shakopee
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC)
- Scott County
- Metropolitan Council
- University of Minnesota
- Spring Lake Township
- Sand Creek Township
- Scott Soil and Water Conservation District
- Scott County Watershed Management Organization
- Prior Lake-Savage School District

Audiences of the District’s education and outreach program include agriculture and rural landowners, urban and lakeshore residents, lake-users, District partners, community groups, schools, businesses, and government.

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Communications

Communications are an important part of the District's education and outreach program. These efforts tend to be passive in nature with a goal of sharing information to create a more informed citizenry. These methods tend to have a wide reach with low effort but are less likely to have a strong impact on their own. The District conducts communications in a variety of formats including social media posts, website updates, presentations, tabling events, articles for a variety of publications, and the creation of other informational materials such as brochures and factsheets. Tabling also creates opportunities for CAC involvement in outreach.

Project Outreach

The District will develop outreach plans for any new projects and programs that may include informational materials for neighborhood residents, press-releases and newsletter articles, social media and website updates, and workshops. Outreach on completed and ongoing projects and programs may also be conducted. In 2024, specific outreach will be conducted to follow up on the Fish Lake Management Plan.

Promotional Materials

Utilizing items that residents and lake-users can take home with them from events can be an effective way to share District messaging, increase the visibility of the District and its work, and even serve as an incentive for participation in District events. For 2024, two types of promotional items are planned: stickers and hats. Stickers are cheap, well loved by children and adults alike, and are easily customizable. They can be placed on most items but are frequently placed on water bottles and on various types of cases. Creating stickers can provide an opportunity to collaborate with local artists or even the local schools as a competition. They can be used to share messaging on aquatic invasive species or other water quality concerns. Winter hats with the District logo are the other planned swag item. These would be given to dedicated volunteers as an incentive and token of appreciation. They would also serve to increase visibility of the District.

The list below categorizes and ranks events by priority level. Priority 1 events are events that the District plans to hold in 2024. Priority 2 events are events that the District plans to hold but may fall off the list if resources are limited. Priority 3 events are not planned for, but if extra resources are available, may be executed.

Communications Items

Title	Type	Priority Level (1-3)*
4 SCENE articles	Article	1
PLA newsletter article	Article	1
SLA newsletter article	Article	1
Annual Newsletter	Article	2
Event Notices and Articles	Article	1
Fish Lake Management Plan Mailing	Informational Material	1
Update 8 Information Resources for front desk	Informational Material	1
Update Website	Informational Material	1
Project Factsheets as needed	Informational Material	1
52 Social Media Updates	Informational Material	1
Spring Lake Association Annual Meeting	Presentation	1
Prior Lake Association Annual Meeting	Presentation	1
Spring Lake Township Annual Meeting	Presentation	1
Sand Creek Township Annual Meeting	Presentation	2
Prior Lake City Meeting	Presentation	2
Shakopee City Meeting	Presentation	2
Savage City Meeting	Presentation	2
Prior Lake Community Engagement Committee	Presentation	3
Prior Lake Rotary Meeting	Presentation	2
Fall Community Fest	Tabling	1
Pleasant Street Art Walk	Tabling	3
Stickers	Promotional Materials	1
Hats	Promotional Materials	1

***1 being the highest priority**

Events

Hosting volunteer and educational events and activities is critical to creating community connections and providing effective educational opportunities. These efforts typically reach a smaller group of people than communications and require more coordination, but often have a higher impact on individuals. Successful events also create opportunities for impactful articles and can be opportunities for informational material distribution. The District is required to host public involvement activities each calendar year as part of the MS4 permit, which must include a pollution prevention or water quality theme. The events outlined in the 2024 Education and Outreach Plan aim to include more stakeholders than in years past, fulfill MS4 requirements and WRMP Implementation Actions, and create opportunities for collaboration with new community partners.

New education events in 2024 include a Watershed Week in the summer full of engaging events that highlight the watershed and water resource concerns. These are *italicized* in the list below and include an AIS Paint N' Sip to teach about invasive species in our lakes, a Bike or Hike the watershed to highlight recreation and viewing opportunities within the District, and a Scavenger hunt to highlight local businesses, District projects, or District waterbodies, with added educational elements.

Clean Water Clean-Ups will be held again this year in the spring and fall as storm drain stenciling and buckthorn removal projects, respectively. These volunteer opportunities will be a chance to empower residents to act for the benefit of their water resources, environment, and community. It is also a great hands-on learning opportunity. Time and resources allowing, the buckthorn removed at the fall event will be used in a holiday wreath-making event to promote sustainability.

The list below categorizes and ranks events by priority level. Priority 1 events are events that the District plans to hold in 2024. Priority 2 events are events that the District plans to hold but may fall off the list if resources are limited. Priority 3 events are not planned for, but if extra resources are available, may be executed.

Event Items

Title	Type	Potential Partners	Priority Level (1-3)*
Board and CAC Project tour	Tour	Project Landowner	1
<i>AIS Paint N' Sip</i>	<i>Education Event</i>	<i>Local Business</i>	1
<i>Bike or Hike the Watershed</i>	<i>Education Event</i>	<i>Local Bike Shop and/or Local Organizations</i>	1
<i>Scavenger Hunt (project tour)</i>	<i>Education Event/Tour</i>	<i>Local Businesses</i>	1
Outdoor Education Days**	Education Event	SCWEP	2
Buckthorn Wreathmaking	Education Event	Local Artist	2
Reel Cool Fishing School**	Education Event	City of Prior Lake	1
Shoreline Restoration Workshop**	Workshop	Scott SWCD	1
Starry Trek**	Volunteer Event	University of Minnesota	1
Buckthorn Removal Volunteer Project	Volunteer Event	Spring Lake Township or City of Prior Lake	1
Storm Drain Stenciling	Volunteer Event	City or Townships	1
Carp Fishing Competition	Volunteer Event	Fishing Clubs	3
Aquatic Vegetation Identification Workshop	Workshop	Lake Association	3
Natural Landscaping Workshop**	Workshop	Scott SWCD	3
Participate in local boat parades**	Misc. Outreach Event	Prior Lake Association	3
Prior Lake Association Dive the Lake** (use our boat)	Misc. Outreach Event	Prior Lake Association	3

***1 being the highest priority**

**** Partner-led event (low effort)**

Volunteer Programs

The District offers regularly occurring volunteer opportunities and has built a strong volunteer base over the years. Volunteering provides residents an opportunity to connect with and further the District's work and mission and to learn more about our water resources. The District offers the following opportunities for volunteers to get involved with District programs and projects:

- Ice-on and ice-off reporters report lake ice conditions to staff.
- CAMP (Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program) volunteers monitor water quality on several District lakes bi-weekly throughout the monitoring season. This work is completed through a partnership with the Metropolitan Council.
- Volunteers assist with the carp management program by reporting signs and locations of carp activity.
- The District will continue to partner with volunteers on other projects as needs arise.
- The District's Citizen Advisory Committee is described below.

Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

The purpose of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) is to advise the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District Board and staff on issues related to lakes and other water resources within the Prior Lake - Spring Lake Watershed District. The CAC consists of residents who provide input, review, and make recommendations to the Board of Managers on projects, reports, and prioritizations. The CAC acts as the primary interface for the Board to address the current issues of concern of the local citizens. The duties of the CAC are defined by the Minnesota Statutes section 103D.331(1a), the Operating Guidelines created by the PLSLWD CAC, and the PLSLWD Governance Manual.

Community Programs

Farmer-Led Council (FLC)

Agricultural lands make up most of the landscape in the Spring Lake and Upper Prior Lake watersheds. The District will partner with Scott SWCD to continue its staff support of the Farmer-Led Council (FLC). The FLC meets 3 times per year and consists of local farmers within the PLSLWD. The role of the FLC is to develop and guide the implementation of strategies that the District will use to accomplish agriculture's share of nutrient reduction goals. It will:

- Inform decision-makers and the public about soil and water conservation opportunities.
- Identify base level and site-tailored practices that are available and needed.
- Define the best approach for assisting farmers to implement practices.
- Identify potential barriers to implementation, along with tools and resources needed to overcome them.

In addition to special events and workshops, the FLC sponsors the Lake-Friendly Farm Program, which was created to recognize the farmers that are doing an outstanding job of managing their farms in a way that protects the water resources in the District. Once a farm meets the program criteria, the farm is certified as a Lake-Friendly Farm, and the farmer receives a sign which they can post at their farm. The

program both identifies and publicly recognizes existing best management practices in the watershed and assists farmers in identifying areas for improvement to help protect our water resources.

Residential and Agricultural Cost-Share

The District will continue to partner with the SWCD to meet with landowners to promote rural and urban incentive and cost-share programs and encourage their participation.

Part of the goal of the District's cost-share program is to create a "culture of conservation" which inspires residents and results in residents pursuing conservation projects beyond the cost-share program and as a natural extension of their everyday activities.

The District offers incentive payments for lakeshore restoration, filter strips, wetland restoration, well decommissioning, water and sediment control basins and other best management practices. The District annually approves the SWCD Conservation Practice Payment Docket, which defines practices, payments, and evaluation tools. The District prioritizes projects that will have the highest benefit to reducing phosphorus and runoff volume to priority waterbodies.

Conservation Easements

The District has conservation easements that are inspected annually. In the spring, 124 landowners received a pre-inspection postcard prior to the annual site visit and a post-inspection letter noting the inspection findings, including any violations. Landowners are encouraged to join staff on site visits if they are interested. In 2024, staff will continue to follow-up and work with landowners to correct previously identified violations along with any newly identified violations.

SCWEP Partnership

The District will continue to partner with the Scott Clean Water Education Program (SCWEP) to extend its education and outreach efforts. This program is run by the Scott Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and includes the following partners:

- Scott Watershed Management Organization
- Scott County Government
- Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District
- Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board
- Lower Minnesota River Watershed District
- City of Credit River
- City of Shakopee
- City of Prior Lake
- City of Savage
- Spring Lake Township
- Jackson Township
- Louisville Township

The goal of SCWEP is to make clean water choices second nature for all who live and work in Scott County. SCWEP uses the message "Clean Water Starts with Me!" to empower individuals to think differently about stormwater runoff and their role in water quality. Audiences include agriculture, rural, urban and lakeshore residents, community groups, schools, and government.

SCWEP will continue to assist in the District's events and communications mentioned throughout this plan via media amplification and materials creation, planning, and day-of support. SCWEP will also

advance messaging on behalf of the partnership through cost-share program education and workshops on conservation topics.

Budget

In 2023, \$40,000 was budgeted for education and outreach activities, with \$11,104 of the budget expended. A large portion of the difference between the budget and actual expenditures is that the Website update process started later in the year. Unspent website update funds were brought forward into the 2024 budget. The budget for Education and Outreach activities decreased from \$40,000 in 2023 to \$38,500 in 2024 (see table below). The budget does not include staff time. Volunteer and Community Programs and Conservation Easements are not included in the Education and Outreach Budget.

Project	2023 Budget (\$)	2024 Budget (\$)
MS4 Education	2,000	N/A
SCWEP (SWCD)	4,500	6,500*
Website update	30,000	24,500
CAC	3,500	3,500
District Newsletter	N/A	1,000
Other educational tours, events, & materials	N/A	3,000
TOTAL:	40,000	38,500

*SCWEP will provide MS4 requirements in 2024 and the 2024 MS4 budget has been reallocated to SCWEP to reflect this.

Outcomes & Evaluation

The desired outcome for education and outreach in 2024 is to improve District stakeholders' understanding of local water resources; this strategic goal will be evaluated primarily by the District's compliance with the MS4 permit and following our 2020 Water Resources Management Plan. Metrics used to measure the impact of marketing strategies include:

- Number of participants at a specific District hosted event or workshop.
- Number of direct mailings, brochures, and newsletters distributed.
- Number of views digital content receives.
- Number of submitted press releases and published articles.
- Staff will develop post-event surveys to measure impact and inform future events.

To maintain compliance with the MS4 permit, District staff will continue to record and quantify the above metrics, which help document the success or benefit of each event, project, and program.

2023 Completed Activities

Activities & Events	Partners	Completed (Date)	Reach
Annual Update & Implement District Education and Outreach Plan	N/A	13-Jan	N/A
Contributed to Spring Lake Association Annual Newsletter	Spring Lake Association	March	1 article, 450 sent
Contribute to Prior Lake Association Annual Newsletter	Prior Lake Association	Early March	1 article, 500*
Mailing to farmers highlighting available cost share & services	SWCD	N/A	N/A
Coordinate CAMP program volunteers	Met Council	27-Oct	6
Coordinate carp volunteers	Volunteers	Spring & Summer	20
Spring Lake Association Annual Meeting Presentations	SLA	24-Apr	88
Vegetation Identification Workshop	Spring Lake Association	26-Jul	70 (18 in-person, 52 livestream views)
City of Prior Lake Fishing Clinic	City of Prior Lake	23-Jun	56
Stabilize Your Shoreline Workshop	SWCD	14-Jun	2
Fall Community Fest	SWCD	18-Sep	50*
Starry Trek	University of Minnesota	19-Aug	6
Send inspection letters to easement landowners	SWCD	Summer	124 + 25 city easements
Clean Water Clean-Up event	Scott SWCD, City of Prior Lake	28-Oct	26*
Outdoor Education Days	SWCD	28-Sep	63* from WD; 1,245 total
Prior Lake Association Annual Meeting Presentations	PLA	9-Sep	100*
Coordinate volunteer ice observer reports	Volunteers	January	30
Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings	Volunteers	6/year	11*
Farmer-Led Council (FLC) Meetings	SWCD	19-Dec	65*
City of Prior Lake Citizen Engagement Committee Presentation	City of Prior Lake	19-Oct	10*
SCALE Presentation	SCALE	13-Oct	80*
Website Updates	N/A	31-Dec	29,037 unique pageviews

Social Media Updates (weekly)	N/A	Ongoing	15,110*
Articles for website and Scott County SCENE.	Scott County, SWCD	Ongoing	19 articles (5 PLSLWD, 14 SCWEP)
Prior Lake American Event Article	SWCD	October	1 article
Shallow Lakes Seminar	SWCD	11-Oct	9
How to Build a Rain Garden	SWCD	12-Apr	6
Water Conservation Lessons	SWCD	1-Jun	168

***Estimate**