



Education & Outreach Plan

2018-2027

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2018

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1.0 Objective

Clean water through an engaged community

The objective of the Education and Outreach Plan (E&O Plan) is to improve water quality within the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (the District) by leveraging the power of engaged residents, professionals, and visitors to effect change and engage in protecting the watershed. Restoration projects, regulation, and management by the District are important components of its mission to protect clean water; a mission which cannot be completed without participation of citizens in the District. By fostering an engaged community, the District can increase awareness, grow stewardship, and build capacity to achieve the shared goal of protecting clean water.

The contents of this plan are informed in part by feedback gained through the public input process of the 10-Year Plan update. The process engaged multiple stakeholder groups, including residents, teachers, technical experts and leaders. The District thanks all those who made their voices heard throughout this process.

The E&O Plan provides the overall goals and objectives for Education and Outreach by the District. Each year the District uses the E&O Plan to develop a focused work-plan. Events and programs for each year are reflected on the District website: rpbcwd.org. The E&O Plan will be evaluated every three years and updated as needed at that time.

2.0 Goals & Strategies

The E&O Plan supports the Education & Outreach Goals and Strategies described in the Education & Outreach section of the 10-Year Plan. As noted in the previous section, these goals and strategies were developed through the public engagement process as a part of the 10-Year Plan update.

2.1 Education & Outreach Goal

EO 1. Design, maintain, and implement Education and Outreach program to educate the community and engage them in the work of protecting, managing, and restoring water resources.

2.2 Education & Outreach Strategies

EO 2. The District will develop and implement its E&O Plan. The E&O Plan specifies the objectives, guiding questions, target audiences, and methods to achieve the District's education and outreach goal. The District will regularly review its E&O Plan and update it as necessary.

EO 3. The District will collect data to evaluate the success of its education and outreach program and adjust its program to improve effectiveness.

EO 4. The District will tailor its education and outreach strategies to present complex and/or technical issues in a manner that is appropriate for each audience.

EO 5. The District will use its education and outreach program to raise awareness of watershed management issues and best practices (e.g., aquatic invasive species, conservation).

EO 6. The District will build awareness of our water resources by highlighting recreational opportunities and access.

EO 7. The District will seek opportunities to engage the public in its projects and programs through diverse methods outlined in the E&O Plan, including but not limited to: electronic communications, social media, website, informational signage, demonstration projects, tours, and open houses.

EO 8. The District will provide resources to increase stewardship within the community.

EO 9. The District will build community capacity by working with schools, lake associations, non-profits, or other stakeholders to develop a network of watershed champions.

EO 10. The District will continue to implement its cost-share program to provide incentive for residents, businesses, institutions and local governmental units to implement watershed best management practices.

2.3 Planning strategy

Plan S1. The District will partner with cities, state agencies, and other entities to implement projects and programs to meet District goals.

This planning strategy from the 10 Year Plan is repeated within the E&O Plan to emphasize the value of partnership for creating effective and cost-effective programming.

3.0 Engaging the community

Community-scale problems require community-scale actions, and water quality is an issue that affects and belongs to all. The E&O Plan aims to fulfill the District’s clean water objectives by fostering a community of stewards. The District began by inviting the community to participate in creating the E&O Plan itself, helping to identify community issues, priorities, and needs. The issues and priorities related to E&O generally fell into one of four categories of action: public engagement, awareness, stewardship, and capacity. These are all part of a multifaceted approach to education and outreach, and are reflected in the goals and strategies listed in section 2.0. The categories are described below, and the associated strategies are referenced.

3.1 Public engagement

Public Engagement as used in this document describes direct action by the District to share and seek information, and include the community in District processes. It includes asking questions of, and deeply listening to, stakeholders to learn their interests and concerns and gain a deeper understanding of community needs. Actions that could fall under the public engagement category include: public meetings and discussions about upcoming projects, presentations at association meetings, news releases to local papers, tabling and conversations at community events, door knocking, and growing newsletter and social media audiences. ([EO 4](#) & [EO 7](#))

3.2 Awareness

While awareness alone may not be sufficient to change behavior, it is an important and necessary component of education and outreach. Increased awareness is needed of not just the threats to clean water, but of a general understanding of “how water works”, and the work and role of the District in protecting clean water, and the wealth of natural resources within the District. To effectively raise awareness, science and data must be translated into clear messages, utilizing audience-specific language. Actions to increase awareness range from news releases to local papers and social media, to events that celebrate the many and varied natural resources in the District. ([EO 4](#), [EO 5](#) & [EO 6](#))

3.3 Stewardship

Stewardship is the act of caring for or managing something. To become a steward of water resources might involve changing a habit, or many habits over time. Awareness alone may not be sufficient to prompt behavior change, as there may be barriers to action in addition to knowledge (time constraints, cost, etc.). Supporting stewardship requires identifying desired behavior change and the barriers to that action, and creating programs and resources to help overcome them. ([EO 8](#) & [EO 10](#))

3.4 Capacity

The threats to clean water are large-scale, community issues. The work to address them needs to be at that same scale. The District will build capacity to do this work by partnering with stakeholders to create a network of watershed champions. These champions will not only take action themselves, but advocate for others in their communities to join them in stewardship.

[\(EO 9\)](#)

4.0 Audiences

Audiences are groups within a community who likely share motivations and common goals, needs, or issues. The topics of interest for each group, and the District's messaging for each may vary considerably, as will the best methods of delivery. It is therefore important that programs and resources be created with specific audiences in mind. The District has identified four general audiences for its education and outreach programming.

4.1 Residents

This is a diverse audience that includes homeowners and renters, families, couples and singles of all ages. Their local identity may be influenced by the city they live in, their proximity to a water body, land use practices on their property and the community groups associate with. These groups can be informal and formal and include neighborhood organizations, lake and home-owner associations, community and outdoor groups. One task with this audience is to create awareness that the behavior of each resident can affect clean water within the watershed.

4.2 Local Leaders

Local leaders may include elected and appointed officials like mayors, city council members and commissioners. This audience generally includes individuals with decision-making power on a local (city, county, state) level. It may also include leaders on a smaller or non-governing scale, like lake/homeowner association presidents, or heads of environmental and sporting groups. This audience typically is involved with visible projects on public or private property, and may have the opportunity to influence public policy or social norms.

4.3 K-12

The K-12 audience includes children, their parents, teachers and administration. Effectively reaching this audience requires not just the creation of new engaging youth programs, but identifying how best to support the current work of educators and tapping into existing programs. There are three school districts within the Watershed District. Local schools include, Elementary, Middle, and High Schools. There are both public and private schools, as well as language emersion schools. In addition, the Staring Lake Outdoor Education Center and Three Rivers Park District at Hyland Lake provide additional forums to engage this audience.

4.4 Businesses & Professionals

Local businesses and non-profits (including faith-based organizations) have the potential to be leaders in the implementation of best practices to protect water. Their campuses often have

large footprints, and their own community of employees or members who are impacted by the organization's culture. Professionals may be private businesses or government, and are those who do work that impacts water resources. These include individuals who manage winter snow and ice, turf grass, water conservation and habitat restoration, as well as landscapers, builders and developers.

5.0 Guiding questions

One goal of the public input process for the 10 Year Plan was to better understand the needs and interests of the community to help the District frame its messages, and create programs that are meaningful to its audiences. Through this process, three themes were identified. The first relates to the identity and function of watershed districts. The second relates to understanding how water resources work. The third is how community members can participate in the District's work of protecting clean water. Below, each theme is described in more detail, along with guiding questions that emerged through the public input process. These questions help to clarify the information, assistance, and experiences the community is looking for within the broad themes.

What is the Watershed District and how does it function?

These questions address the role of the District in protecting clean water. They range from the structure and function of the organization, to details about local water resources.

- What are the purpose and vision of the District?
- What is its governance structure?
- Who does it work with?
- What authority does it have?
- What are the water resources in its boundaries?
- How does the District make decisions about using resources and prioritizing projects?
- What has it done, and where is it headed?
- How does the District fit into the larger scale/landscape?

How does water work?

These questions relate to the science of natural resources. They range from how the District assesses water quality, to the current status of different water bodies, to how those water bodies respond to change.

- How is water resource health measured?
- How are local water resources doing?
- How are things changing?
- What are the primary pollutants of concern?
- How does water move through my community?
- How do invasive species impact water resources?
- How does storm water work?

- How do different types of water resources (e.g. lakes vs wetlands vs stormwater ponds) differ?

What can I do?

These questions are about actions that individuals can take. They range from regulation to stewardship.

- What can I do on my property to help protect clean water?
- What am I allowed to do on my property, and who makes the rules?
- How can I manage aquatic plants?
- What can I do about invasive species?
- How can I conserve water?
- What are best practices I can follow?

6.0 Topics

The E&O Plan exists to support the goals of the 10-Year Plan, and therefore topics for E&O programs and projects are taken directly from the goals and strategies of the 10-Year Plan. Topics, the associated goals/strategies, and the role of E&O are listed in the table below. Each year, topics will be selected as the education & outreach themes for the year and incorporated into the work-plan. Topics may be selected based on projects the district is implementing, current events, community interest etc. Some topics, like administration and planning, data collection, and best management practices will be incorporated every year.

TOPIC	GOAL	STRATEGY	HOW CAN E&O SUPPORT THESE GOALS
Administration & planning	Evaluation	Admin 1. Operate in a manner that uses District resources and capacity efficiently and effectively while advancing the District's vision and goals	Admin S3. The District will annually review its progress toward accomplishing the District's vision, goals, and planned implementation items. The District will publish the assessment as a part of its annual report
	Planning & prioritization	Plan 1. Plan and conduct the District's implementation program to most effectively accomplish its vision with consideration for all stakeholders and resources.	Plan S7. The District will seek to incorporate ecological, economic, and social benefits into its projects as opportunities allow. Plan S9. The District will partner with cities, state agencies, and other entities to implement projects to meet District goals.
Data collection	Data collection & monitoring	DC1. Collect data and use the best available science to recommend and support management decisions.	DC S8. The District will coordinate its monitoring efforts with other entities to promote efficiency, increase data availability, and to identify and fill in data gaps.
Community resiliency	Climate change	Plan 2. Consider sustainability and the impacts of climate change in District projects, programs, and planning.	Plan S2. The District will consider the potential impact of climate change when developing and implementing District projects and programs.
	Sustainability		Plan S3. The District will consider sustainability in the design and implementation of its projects and programs.

TOPIC	GOAL	STRATEGY	HOW CAN E&O SUPPORT THESE GOALS	
regulation	Permitting program	<p>Reg 1. Continue to use the District's regulatory program to protect water resources from further degradation.</p> <p>Reg S2. The District will periodically review its rules and update them as necessary. The District will update its rules in accordance with applicable Minnesota Statutes and with involvement of cities, state agencies, and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Reg S3. The District will periodically review the implementation of its regulatory and permit program for opportunities to improve the process.</p>	<p>Increase awareness</p> <p>Increase understanding of the importance of regulation</p> <p>Identify and decrease process barriers</p> <p>Communicate the program's impact</p> <p>Increase transparency</p>	
	Habitat protection & establishment	<p>WQual 1. Protect, manage, and restore water quality of District lakes and creeks to maintain designated uses.</p> <p>WQual 2. Preserve and enhance the quantity, as well as the function and value of wetlands.</p> <p>WQual 3. Preserve and enhance habitat important to fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife.</p>	<p>WQual S3. The District encourages cities and developers to seek opportunities to incorporate habitat protection or enhancement into development and redevelopment projects.</p> <p>WQual S7. The District will promote the use of natural materials and bioengineering for the maintenance and restoration of shorelines and streambanks where appropriate.</p> <p>WQual S11. The District recognizes the multiple benefits of vegetated buffers and promotes the use of vegetated buffers around all waterbodies.</p>	<p>Share recommended practices with audiences</p> <p>Increase awareness and implementation of techniques</p> <p>Identify and decrease barriers to implementing best practices</p> <p>Facilitate opportunities and awareness for public access to natural resource areas</p> <p>Increase general awareness</p> <p>Increase awareness of emergency rapid response</p>
	Buffers & bioengineering			
	Aquatic Invasive Species		<p>WQual S9. The District will partner with other entities to minimize the spread and reduce the adverse ecological impacts of aquatic invasive species.</p>	
Pollution	Erosion & sediment pollution	<p>WQual 1. Protect, manage, and restore water quality of District lakes and creeks to maintain designated uses.</p> <p>WQual 2. Preserve and enhance the quantity, as well as the function and value of wetlands.</p> <p>WQual 3. Preserve and enhance habitat important to fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife.</p>	<p>WQual S1. The District seeks to minimize the negative impacts of erosion and sedimentation through the District's regulatory, education and outreach, and incentive programs.</p> <p>WQual S12. The District will assist and cooperate with cities, MPCA, MNDNR, MnDOT, other watershed and other stakeholders in implementing projects or other management actions based on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Twin Cities Metro Chloride TMDL.</p>	<p>Increase awareness and implementation of techniques</p> <p>Identify and decrease barriers to implementing best practices</p> <p>Celebrate community successes</p>
	Chloride pollution			

TOPIC	GOAL	STRATEGY	HOW CAN E&O SUPPORT THESE GOALS
	Non-point source pollution	WQual S13. The District will continue to minimize pollutant loading to water resources through implementation of the District's capital improvement, regulatory, education and outreach, and incentive programs.	
Groundwater	Groundwater conservation	Ground S1. The District will promote the conservation of groundwater resources through its education and outreach program and will work with cities to encourage conservation practices (e.g. water reuse)	Translate data and science for audiences
	Groundwater-surface water interactions	Ground 1. Promote the sustainable management of groundwater resources. Ground S3. The District will work to increase the understanding of the interaction between groundwater resources and surface waters within the District and consider those interactions in future management decisions.	Increase awareness and implementation of techniques Identify and decrease barriers
Best management practices	Baseflow impacts	WQuan S2. The District will promote strategies that minimize baseflow impacts.	
	Infiltration practices	WQuan 1. Protect and enhance the ecological function of District floodplains to minimize adverse impacts.	Share recommended practices with audiences
	Low impact development	WQuan 2. Limit the impact of stormwater runoff on receiving waterbodies.	Increase awareness and implementation of techniques
	Conservation practices	WQuan 7. The District promotes/encourages cities and developers to implement Low Impact Development (LID) practices and will work with cities to reduce regulatory barriers to LID practices. WQuan 9. The District will work with cities and other stakeholders to encourage conservation practices (e.g. water reuse) to protect creeks, lakes and wetlands.	Identify and decrease barriers

TOPIC	GOAL	STRATEGY	HOW CAN E&O SUPPORT THESE GOALS
Other	Emerging topics	WQual 1. Protect, manage, and restore water quality of District lakes and creeks to maintain designated uses.	WQual S15. The District will cooperate with other entities to investigate treatment effectiveness of emerging practices.
		WQual 2. Preserve and enhance the quantity, as well as the function and value of wetlands.	WQual S16. The District will work with the state agencies and local governmental units to identify emerging pollutants of concern.
		WQual 3. Preserve and enhance habitat important to fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife.	
			Translate data and science for audiences Build connections with stakeholders

7.0 Methods

There are many and varied methods the District can use to deliver its programs. Through the public input process, a variety of methods were identified. Below is a description of the main methods that will be utilized. As noted in the goals and strategies section, partnerships will be sought to strengthen messaging and increase efficiency and capacity.

METHOD	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Web-based	Multi-media internet-hosted resources	Website, online document library, social media, forums, instructional videos, online newsletters
Print media	Physical materials and resources	Handouts, press releases, flyers, signage
Seminars	In-person lectures and presentations	Evening seminars on emerging topics, best practices, and understanding permit program
Hands-on programs	Programs that involve practice in a skill, and/or physical education component	Workshops, volunteer planting events, lesson plans, working with school groups
Active engagement	Connecting with existing community networks	Tabling at community events, door knocking, presentations at association meetings
Outdoor activities	Programs with an outdoor component	Tours, on-the water events, recreation

Incentive programs	Programs that offer resources to decrease barriers to action	Cost-share grants for water quality projects, teacher grants for projects or field trips
Action projects	Opportunities for community members to participate in district water stewardship activities	Master Water Stewards, citizen science, rain garden and other best practice implementation, clean-up events
Trainings	Continuing education programs	Teacher trainings, turf management best practices

8.0 Implementation

To implement its E&O program, the District will annually create a work-plan that identifies specific events and activities based on the Audiences, Topics, and Methods described above. It will craft messaging with the Guiding Questions in mind, to ensure these messages are meaningful to its audiences. The annual work-plan will cover all engagement categories and address all target audiences. The District will stay up-to-date on emerging topics and delivery methods, and incorporate modifications as appropriate. Programs that the District will implement include, but are not limited to those described below.

	Audience	Primary category(s)
<p>Local leaders outreach program</p> <p>This effort offers educational programming, provides resources and creates effective tools to assist and enable community leaders to make informed decisions regarding water resources. It may include activities such as participating in the University of Minnesota Extension’s NEMO program (Nonpoint source Education For Municipal Officials), presentations to city councils and commissions, and watershed tours or workshops.</p>	Local leaders	All
<p>Volunteer program</p> <p>The District’s volunteer program engages community members in projects that protect and improve water resources, educate the community, and expand the District’s capacity. The volunteer program includes opportunities like the Master Water Stewards, citizen science, and outreach at community events.</p>	All	Stewardship Capacity
<p>Cost-share program</p> <p>The cost-share program provides funding and technical assistance for projects that protect and conserve water resources, and increase public awareness of the vulnerability of these resources and solutions to improve them.</p>	Residents Local leaders Businesses	Awareness Stewardship
<p>Continuing education program</p> <p>The District offers continuing education which may take many forms. Examples of continuing education programs include seminars for professionals on best management practices, workshops for residents on raingardens, Project WET trainings for educators, and tours of resources or projects.</p>	All	Awareness Stewardship
<p>Youth outreach program</p> <p>The youth outreach program seeks to create meaningful childhood experiences connected to water resources, and expand increase understanding and stewardship of water resources in children and their families. Examples activities include guest presentations and citizen science opportunities for local schools and scout groups, service learning opportunities for high-school and college students, and providing financial and other resources to increase education about, and access to local water bodies.</p>	K-12 Residents	Awareness Stewardship

	Audience	Primary category(s)
<p>Communications program</p>		
<p>The communication program encompasses both passive and active communications. Passive communications include press releases and advertisements with both traditional and social media, as well as print materials and interpretive signage. Active communications include direct connections between district staff and representatives, and the community.</p>	All	Public engagement Awareness

9.0 Evaluation

Understanding program effectiveness requires collecting and analyzing data on outcomes over time. The types and methods to collect data depend on the program implementation. Below are general evaluation strategies by method. Overall evaluation of the E&O program requires looking at whether the E&O goals are being addressed, all the District’s audiences are being targeted, and all topics are being incorporated. A database will be created and this will be assessed on an ongoing basis, and evaluated annually. The E&O Plan will be evaluated every three years and updated as needed at that time. This may include gathering additional community input to reassess and update community needs and issues.

METHOD	EVALUATION TOOLS
Web-based	Track usage through website/social media/list-serve analytics using subpages and unique URLs and calls to action whenever possible
Seminars	Track participation; program evaluations
Hands-on programs	Track participation; program evaluations
Active engagement	Track number of individuals engaged in some capacity with the District (ex: attend an event, join the mailing list) and whether they engage again with the District (ex: attend a second event).
Outdoor activities	Track participation; program evaluations
Incentive programs	Track participation; track pollution reduction/habitat enhancement as possible/appropriate; track how participants find out about the programs; participant evaluations
Action projects	Track participation; track how participants find out about the programs; track project success; participant evaluations
Trainings	Track participation; collect feedback/quotes from participants to prompt future engagement; participant evaluations