



Minnesota Erosion Control Association

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# EROSION MATTERS

Advancing Effective Stormwater Management and Erosion Control Practices

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## 2017 MECA ~ Educational Opportunities

MECA educational events for 2017. Please watch your email for event announcements or go to [www.mnerosion.org](http://www.mnerosion.org) for forms, or call (320) 685-5444 to request registration forms!

### Field Seminar ~ August 1, 2017 in Sartell, Minnesota

Don't miss your chance to see the latest erosion and sediment control products and demonstrations. Come and see the actual practices installed on a site. Have your questions answered by experts!

### "On the Water" Education ~ August 8, 2017 in Stillwater, Minnesota

St. Croix Bridge Project on-the-water boat tour and educational presentations! Lunch will be served on the boat.

### MS4 Program Workshop, Inspections ~ October 25, 2017 in Rogers, Minnesota

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## 2018 MECA Conference

January 24th & 25th, 2018 with pre-conference on January 23rd, 2018.

Doubletree by Hilton Minneapolis Park Place

## How a City Rallied Together for Clean Water

By Lisa Vollbrecht, ENV SP, and April Ryan, PE

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With visible sediment plumes in their drinking water source, the Mississippi River, a Minnesota city known for superior drinking water quality gets proactive about stormwater pollution. First, they'd need buy-in from the community.

### 'We knew we had to take action'

The City of St. Cloud, Minnesota, is situated along the picturesque banks of the Mississippi River. More than a beautiful body of water, however, the river is also the City's sole drinking water source. So, when murky brown sediment plumes were spotted in the river after heavy rainfalls, the City took notice — and action.

"We knew we had to take action," said Lisa Vollbrecht, assistant director of public utilities with the City of St. Cloud. "And we needed to figure out the best way to address it."

The source of the sediment was traced to a 367-acre sub-watershed in the northeastern part of the City. The area, which consists of highly impervious industrial land use, was developed before water quality treatment standards were commonplace.

Though the City has been making water quality a priority over the past decade — gaining recognition for best tasting tap water in the state by the Minnesota chapter of the American Water Works Association in the process — they knew they had to go further in this area.



Continued On Page 2

## How a City Rallied Together for Clean Water (Continued from Page 1)

### Developing a multifaceted approach

The first step? Conduct an assessment. The City worked with engineering consultant, Short Elliot Hendrickson Inc., to determine the primary sources of pollution, and came up with a course of action to address stormwater management in the area and treat runoff before it entered the Mississippi River.

The result was a multifaceted plan that included in-the-ground stormwater treatment projects, such as a regional treatment system, raingardens, a GIS-based street sweeping program, sump catch basins and more. Together, the projects would treat over 21.6 million gallons of stormwater annually, and prevent more than 24,400 pounds of sediment and 34.2 pounds of phosphorous from entering the Mississippi River each year.

Now they needed buy-in from residents and business in the area.

### Educating the community and leading by example

Anyone who's worked on stormwater projects knows reducing pollutant loads takes more than the willpower of a municipality. It takes the support and cooperation of the community.

"Every water project is a community project," said Vollbrecht. "Our success relied on changing the mindset of community and our partners — the business owners."

As a result, the comprehensive stormwater treatment plan also included robust public education and ordinance enforcement strategies — bus tours, flyers and one-on-one meetings with large industrial properties — to spread the word and get buy-in. While a big part of changing the mindset was through education and communication, the project team knew that leading by example, and implementing projects on City-owned properties first, could improve engagement from the community.



Plumes of dark brown sediment, visible here along the shoreline, were the catalyst for a series of stormwater projects in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

It worked.

"When it comes to the environment and water quality, people want to do the right thing," said Vollbrecht. "They were extremely receptive."

*Continued on Page 4*

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## Message from MECA Board Member Brad Vierkant

Hello MECA members! My name is Brad Vierkant I have been a MECA Board Member for the past two years. For my day job, I work at Prairie Restorations, Inc., where I am the Services Site Manager for the Princeton office. It is a very rewarding job and each day is a new challenge. My favorite days are when I am able to get out of the office and spend time planting new projects. If I am not at work you will most likely find me chasing bass on Central MN lakes.

With the recent hot weather and storms I think it is safe to say that summer is here. All of the newly seeded areas are getting the needed water to germinate. It can be a challenge to effectively manage erosion when heavy rain events arrive. But with all the new options, materials and technology available it makes it much easier and more cost effective than just 10 years ago.

Please check our line-up for our upcoming workshops - we have a lot of great opportunities available.

August 1<sup>st</sup> - A field Seminar in St. Cloud. Various erosion control products will be displayed along with a planning exercise for the new Sartell High School.

August 8<sup>th</sup> - Boat tour of the new St. Croix River Crossing in Stillwater, MN. Discussions about this massive project will include the environmental initiatives used to protect the water, plants and wildlife.

October 25<sup>th</sup> - MS4 workshop in Rogers, MN.

We are currently in the process of selecting the speakers and presentations for our upcoming MECA annual conference. The MECA annual conference will be held January 24-25<sup>th</sup> at the Double Tree in Minneapolis, MN. We look forward to seeing you there!

Enjoy the summer!

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### MECA Board Members

President Greg Berg, Vice President Rick Baird, Treasurer John Paulson, Secretary Brad Vierkant, Board Member Jeff Forsberg, Board Member April Ryan, Board Member Keri Aufdencamp

### Wacky Ideas for July!

Create a wacky celebration on a July day!

- Chicken Lunch Anyone?
- July 6th is National Fried Chicken Day
- Macaroni Friday on July 7th
- Teddy Bear Picnic Day is July 10th
- Pie and Coffee? Pecan Pie Day on July 12th
- French Fry Break on National French Fries Day July 13th
- Pass out the lollipops! National Lollipop Day is July 20th.
- Take a chocolate milk break on
- National Milk Chocolate Day July 28th



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### How a City Rallied Together for Clean Water (Continued From Page 2)

The first project phase, which began in 2012, was completed a year after getting funding from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, in partnership with Benton County Soil and Water Conservation District. In all, 70 percent of the phase was funded by grants.

#### What's next?

Construction of the first phase was completed in October 2016. But the City doesn't plan on pausing long to reflect on their success.

Said Vollbrecht, "We want to keep going. There's plenty more we can do."

The City has already started work on the next round of projects in the northeast sub-watershed, and are in the beginning stages of implementing the same approach in other areas.

By committing to clean water and getting cooperation from the community, the City of St. Cloud is protecting not only their drinking water source, but also preventing pollution from entering the drinking water of numerous cities downstream. Their work is a model for others across the country.

#### About the Authors

Lisa Vollbrecht, ENV SP, is the assistant director of utilities with the City of St. Cloud.

April Ryan, PE, is a senior water resources engineer at Short Elliot Hendrickson Inc.

# THE MUD STOPS HERE

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## MPCA Seeks Early Feedback on Proposed Permit Changes for the NPDES Construction Program

When stormwater drains off a construction site, it carries sediment and other pollutants that harm lakes, streams, and wetlands. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 20 to 150 tons of soil per acre are lost every year to stormwater runoff from construction sites. Controlling erosion can significantly reduce the amount of sediment and other pollutants transported by runoff from construction sites. To keep Minnesota's valuable water resources clean, the MPCA issues National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits for Construction Activity to prevent stormwater pollution during and after construction.

Although the current construction permit is not scheduled to expire until August of 2018, the MPCA intends on re-issuing the permit as soon as fall of 2017. The expiration date coincides with the expiration of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit and the MPCA is concerned about having multiple general permits expiring on the same schedule due to limited staff resources. Additionally, the MPCA will not be proposing major changes in the draft permit.

Although no major permit changes will be proposed, several minor changes are needed as brought forward by both external stakeholders and MPCA staff. The MPCA is seeking early input on some of these changes for the permit. This is not the official public comment period and the MPCA will not be providing formal responses to all of the input received. The MPCA will use the information provided to compose the requirements to publish in the draft permit for the public notice. The official public comment period is tentatively scheduled for the summer of 2017.

The MPCA is encouraging all interested parties to review and provide feedback on some of the proposed changes. Please follow this link to participate:

[https://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/index.php?title=MN\\_Stormwater\\_comment\\_page](https://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/index.php?title=MN_Stormwater_comment_page)

### Habits That Make Your Brain Work Better

#### *Maintain Motivation*

Staying motivated helps to limit distractions and to maintain focus on your objective. Listen to some motivating music when you feel discouraged. Watch a motivational speech from your favorite movie to help you get your energy up. Do whatever it takes to keep your mental energy up and working towards finishing your task or moving toward your objective.

If you need a break from your work, then get up and take a short walk to clear your mind. Go get something to eat and get your body recharged to try and maintain that motivation to finish your work.

Sometimes, a fresh start is really what you need to finish.



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