2024 MN Watersheds Project & Program of the Year

Preliminary Nomination Form

The Awards Committee is now accepting **Preliminary Nominations for Program or Project of the Year**. This simple, one-page **Preliminary Nomination Form** must be submitted by Sept 6, 2024. When determining the finalists, the Awards Committee will consider: clearly defined need, creative partnerships, innovative financing, resourceful solutions, success at meeting goal, and public value. Finalists, in each category will be asked to complete a full nomination form. The Preliminary Nomination form only requires a project/program description up to 250 words.

Award Category (check one)

☐ Project ☑ Program

MN Watersheds Region:

☐ One ☐ Two ☑ Three

Watershed District or Watershed Management Organization:

Brown's Creek WD; Carnelian Marine - St. Croix WD; Comfort Lake - Forest Lake WD; Middle St. Croix W

Project/program name:

Developing New Outreach Strategies for Homeowner's Associations (HOAs)

Nominator (if different from above)

Project/Program Summary (Up to 250 words).

There are 7,725 HOAs in Minnesota and nearly 27% of the state's population lives in an HOA. These communities function as quasi-governmental units and are typically responsible for maintaining parking lots, shared outdoor space, irrigation systems, and stormwater and green infrastructure within their boundaries. Unfortunately, HOAs often lack the technical expertise to properly maintain practices such as ponds, raingardens, and vegetated swales, and can also negatively impact water resources through their lawn care and winter maintenance practices. In a 2018 survey of stormwater professionals in Minnesota, 76% indicated that HOAs are a priority audience for education and outreach.

In 2023-2024, EMWREP worked with Wilder Foundation to conduct a survey and focus groups with HOA board members and property managers. Using lessons learned from this research, we developed an HOA Stormwater Education Toolkit with 12 one-page fact sheets that cover a range of stormwater and landscape maintenance topics relevant to HOAs, and also hosted a mini-conference for HOA leaders. In addition, EMWREP previously developed a guidebook entitled "Working with HOAs," based on similar research in 2017. All resources are available for use statewide: www.mnwcd.org/hoa-stormwater-tools

Project/Program Contact:

Name: Angie Hong
Phone: 651-796-2210
Email: angie.hong@mnwcd.org

Photos (Optional)

You may include up to four (4) photos of your project or program.

Submit nomination materials to Karen Kill, kkill@mnwcd.org by Sept 6, 2024.

HOA Stormwater & Landscape Maintenance

Survey Research Project

FRUSTRATED BY STORMWATER AND LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUR HOA?

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND GET A $10 GIFT CARD.

We are seeking input from homeowner association (HOA) board members and property managers to help us develop effective education materials.

- Are you unclear on how to budget for and properly maintain stormwater and green infrastructure practices such as ponds, raingardens, and conservation easements in your HOA?
- Do you understand city and watershed requirements related to stormwater maintenance?
- Are there resources and tools that could help to make your life easier?

Please take our short, 10-min survey to share your experience and opinions. As a thank you, you will receive a $10 gift card.

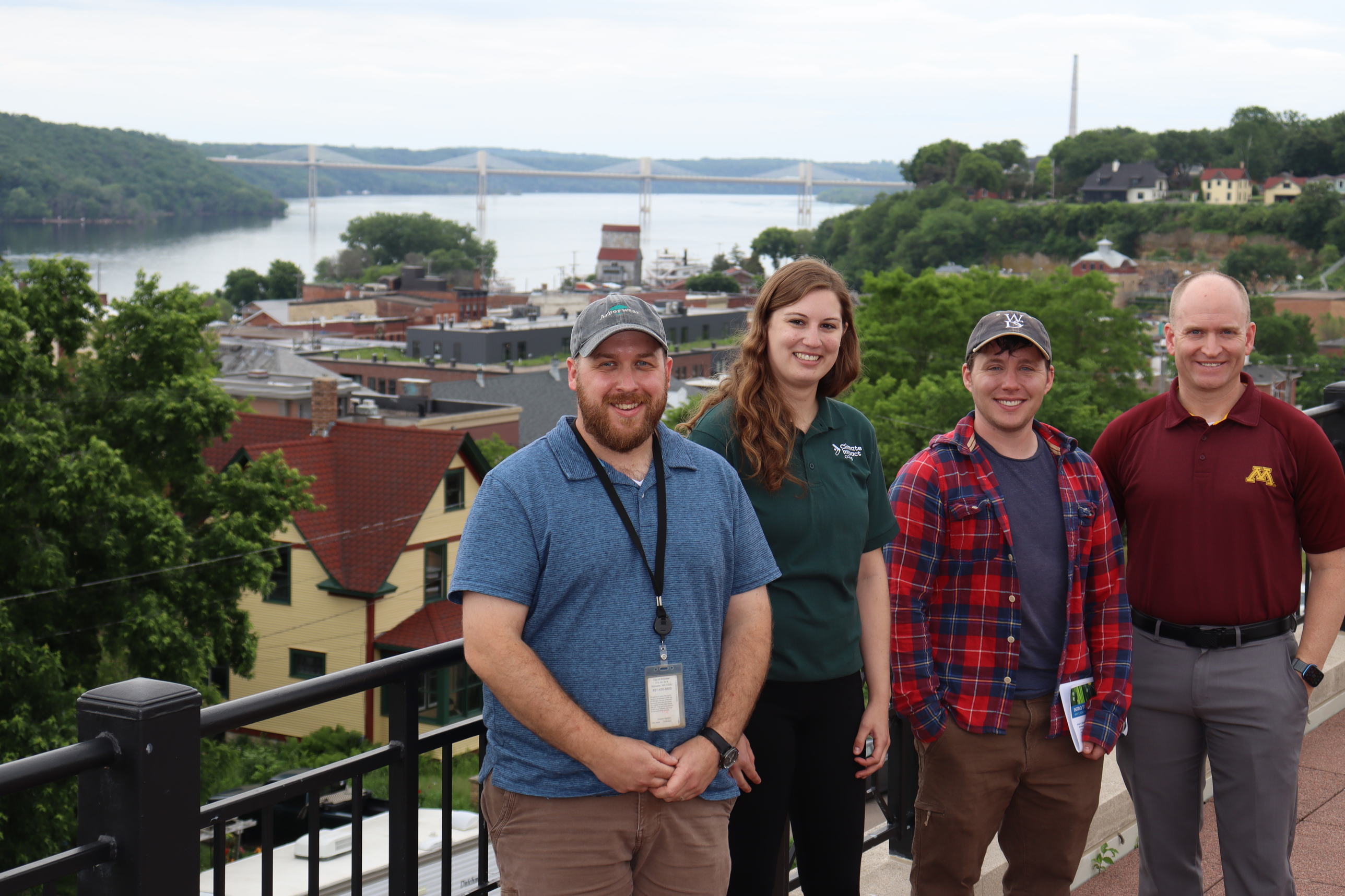
We are also inviting HOA board members to participate in a 1-hour focus group session on January 5 or 9, 2024 from 12-1pm, via Zoom. Focus group participants will receive a $30 gift card.

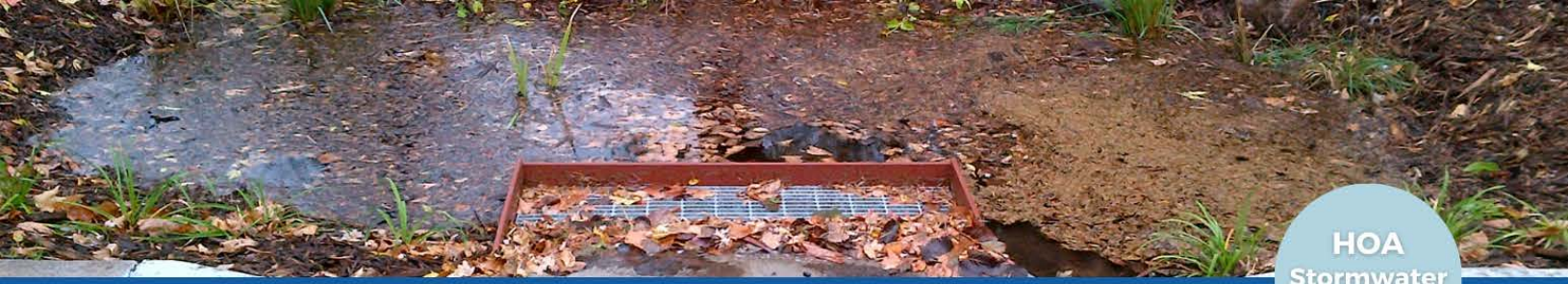
Your input will help us to develop educational materials to better support HOAs in maintaining stormwater and green infrastructure in order to meet local requirements, protect water resources, and reduce long-term maintenance costs. We anticipate having new resources available to share with you in 2024.

This project is funded by the Minnesota Sea Grant College Program with funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Minnesota Water Resources Center, in partnership with the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council and the Minnesota Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

For questions about the survey, please contact sera.kinoglu@wilder.org. For questions about the work of Washington Conservation District or to learn more about stormwater maintenance, please visit: www.mnwcd.org/hoa-stormwater-tools or contact Hannah Peterson at HPeterson@mnwcd.org.

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT





HOA Stormwater Toolkit

MANAGING COSTS

PLANNING & BUDGETING FOR MAINTENANCE

Key Maintenance Activities

While requirements vary between practices and cities, your green infrastructure requires regular maintenance. **Your HOA should hire a professional to address common tasks:**

- Inspect the practice once every six months and at least once annually, during or immediately after a significant rainfall to ensure proper function.
- Remove invasive or competitive species, prune, and/or replant as needed.
- Remove sediment, trash, and debris from storage areas, piping, and other structures.
- Repair eroded areas.
- Replace broken piping, inlets, outlets, etc.

Stormwater ponds must also be dredged to remove the accumulated sediment in the pool. While this occurs less frequently, it is also much more costly than routine maintenance. **As the owner of the infrastructure, your HOA bears the financial responsibility of maintenance and repairs.**

Estimated Maintenance Costs

The cost to maintain your stormwater infrastructure could vary significantly based on the type and size of the systems you have. A routine annual inspection will help you understand your maintenance needs and avoid expensive maintenance issues down the road. Typically, a raingarden will need $100 to $1,000 of maintenance every couple of years, while a large pond system may require $50,000 or more every 15 or 20 years for pond dredging, in addition to annual maintenance. **Speaking with a professional contractor, having a good maintenance plan, and keeping maintenance records are the best way to budget for these expenses.**

HOA Stormwater Toolkit

REDUCE YOUR WATER BILL

CASE STUDY ON SMART IRRIGATION CONTROLLERS

Woodbury as a Leader in Water Efficiency

The City of Woodbury is a leader in efficient irrigation practices. They require at least one type of smart sensor on all new irrigation systems: **Rain sensors** shut off the system when they detect rain, s**oil sensors** tell the system not to run when the soil is holding enough water, and **weather-based controllers** use forecasts and weather reports to determine if there has been or will be enough rain.

Woodbury has helped homeowners save water and money by bulk purchasing WaterSense-certified controllers and reselling them to residents for $35 (retail value: $230). This program found that **each controller saves an average of 24,000 gallons/year resulting in 29% ($50.80) savings/year on a household water bill. There is a potential savings of 50,000 gallons/year during dry years, and the program could save 85 million more gallons/year at full implementation.**

Pressure regulators are another savings opportunity. **Replacing original sprinklers with pressure regulated ones can save you 490 gallons/cycle on average. When running your system three days/week, 22 weeks/year, you could save 32,000 gallons/year. Pressure regulated sprinkler heads could save an extra 20 million gallons/year at full implementation.**

Woodbury HOA Cost-Share Program

The City of Woodbury also offers a cost-share program to Homeowner's Associations (HOAs) to improve the water efficiency of their systems. In a 2017-2021 program, the city funded up to 50% (up to $8,000 per metered property) of costs for efficiency improvement projects, which could include irrigation audits, installing pressure-regulated sprinkler heads, and implementing WaterSense certified upgrades. They contributed just more than $270,000 to the program. **The results included a 22% reduction in irrigation water use at 62 properties. About 50 million gallons of irrigation water were saved between 2017 and 2019, and the city expected savings of around 20 million gallons/year going forward.** A 2024-2028 continuation of this program offers up to 75% cost-share funding (up to $15,000).

Visit **woodburymn.gov/390/Water-Conservation** for more information and resources.

Reach out to your city for info on irrigation audits and other water saving measures such as irrigation re-use systems.

East-Metro Water Resource Education Program