

# Water Education for Urban, Immigrant Audiences



Protect it. Pass it on.

MISSISSIPPI  
WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT  
ORGANIZATION

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Mississippi Watershed Management Organization



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# Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

- Special unit of government
- Taxing authority



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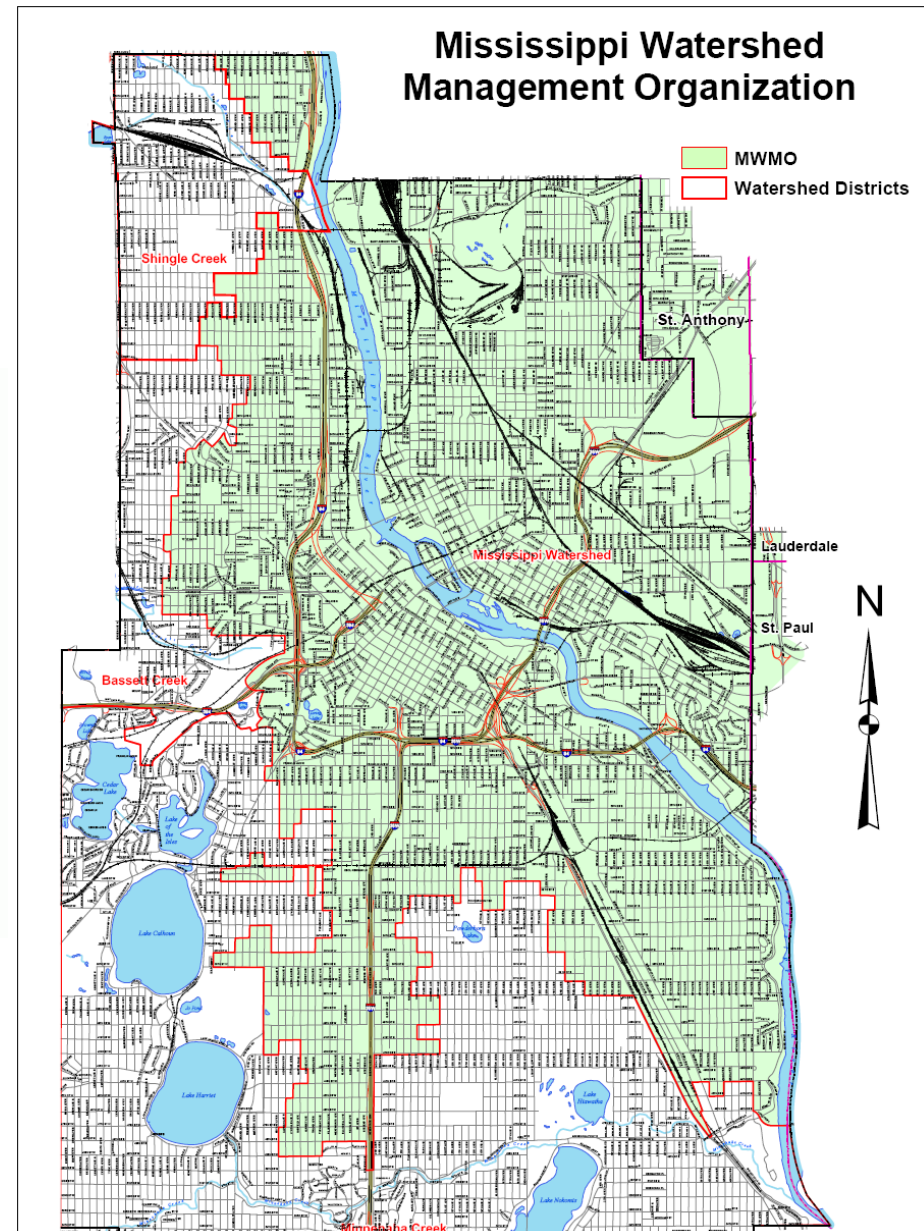


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# The MWMO



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# Who is our audience?

- Those who live, work and visit the MWMO
- Minneapolis translates for:
  - Spanish
  - Somali
  - Hmong
  - Lao
  - Oromo
  - Vietnamese



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# Hmong Study

- Understand factors affecting if and how pollution prevention information reaches a diverse community
- Customize a strategic plan for education
- Develop an approach to use in other communities



Hmong Study interview



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# Keys Findings

- Oral communication
  - If printed –choose English, use images, make it feel inclusive
  - Person to person is best
  - Involve leaders as spokespeople
- Identify specific audience
- Be culturally appropriate
- Be accurate - not technical



Storycloth- Crossing the Mekong River



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# Water Education Plan

## Outcomes

- Increase environmental literacy and stewardship
- Build community capacity
- Model best practices for reaching these communities



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# *The Nature of Water- Dej Tus Kab Ke*

- 10 minute main feature
- Audio: Hmong, Viet, Khmer, Lao, English
- Subtitles: English, Hmong
- Includes 12 bonus features



Filming for *The Nature of Water* DVD



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# Community POWER Grant

- Water education taught through waste and toxicity reduction workshops
- Trained community leaders in the topic
- Workshops continue to be part of programming for new immigrants



Hmong elders making non-toxic cleaners



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# Mississippi River Green Team

- Conservation-focused youth development and employment program for high school students
- Focuses on the Mississippi River, restoring natural places and protecting water quality



2010 Mississippi River Green Team



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# Engaging New Communities

- Set the groundwork for success
- Know your audience
- Make it relevant
- Develop partnerships



Canoeing on the Mississippi River



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# Set the Groundwork for Success

- Articulate your long term goals
- Set realistic expectations based on the group
- Be prepared to develop relationships, not just materials



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# Know Your Audience

Find out:

- Who they are
- What they know
- What they care about
- What they do



Children at a water festival



Hmong Elders gardening



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# Know Your Audience

## Understand communication preferences

- Communicate how *they* do, not how *you* do
- Communicate at the right level, with the right people



Explaining a raingarden at the Hmong Resource Fair



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# Know Your Audience

## Understand barriers to participation

- Money
- Time
- Access
- Relevancy
- Location
- Other?



Children at a water festival



# Make it Relevant

- Start where they are
  - Begin with the familiar
  - Find personal & culturally relevant connections
  - Encourage behavior change in activities that intersect with their lives
- Be where they are



Dragon Boat Festival in Saint Paul, MN



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# Make it Relevant

- Include social & economic issues
- Address multiple learning styles
- Be flexible & adaptable



Mississippi River Green Team  
installing a rain garden



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# Develop Partnerships

- Build capacity through credible messengers
- Train leaders and key staff members
- Encourage community partners to take the lead



Making non-toxic cleaners at the Hmong Resource Fair



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# Measuring Success



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# Questions?



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