

City of Duluth, MN Educational outreach program

Description

The City has created a multifaceted outreach program to increase public awareness of pollution issues that impact Lake Superior. Funded through the Stormwater Utility, the program is in its sixth year.

Background

Duluth faces a somewhat unique challenge of increasing public awareness of the need for individual efforts to protect the pristine waters of Lake Superior (as opposed to the restoration message in other communities). The people of Duluth choose to live in Duluth because of the high quality environment, but often fail to recognize that they must act to protect the asset.

The City has designed an outreach program centering on watershed awareness featuring the over-40 small creeks and streams that traverse the City. Components of the program include the development of a collection of Duluth Stream cards featuring local streams and delivering protection message. In addition, the City has partnered with the University of Minnesota, Duluth on an award winning web site www.duluthstreams.org that offers educational material and real time data on streams. Duluth was instrumental in the formation of the Regional Stormwater Protection Team (RSPT), and serves as the chair. The RSPT includes all the neighboring communities and agencies in a combined effort to educate and provide workshops for construction and development.



The Stormwater Utility staff have developed a variety of classroom activities and public presentations. Each year, over 1,000 school children participate. Through the RSPT group, the City has also been able to establish partnerships activities including rain garden and rain barrel education, and will be part of a regional Watershed Festival in June 2005.

To support these efforts, the City has received over \$500,000 in grant funding.

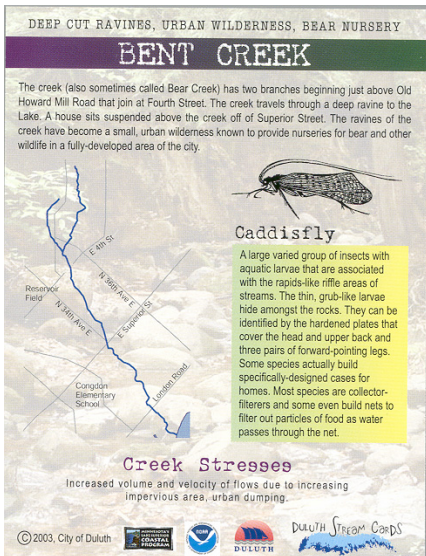
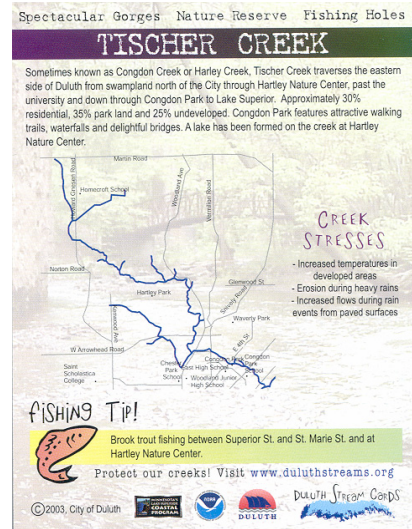
Results

The Duluth Stream cards have been distributed to over 3,000 school children locally and will be feature in information from the EPA and NOAA. Examples of the cards are included below.

The www.duluthstreams.org web site has received several awards and receives over 200,000 hits per month and 20,000 page requests. The real time data generated from samplers in three local streams has been used to illustrate the impact of salt on creeks during spring snow melt and immediately following early seasonal storms. Data has also been used to track construction erosion problems along stream corridors. Recently the site received funding to develop a new site with a regional approach (www.lakesuperiorstreams.org) to better illustrate the characteristics of the cold water streams that feed the Great Lakes.

The Regional Stormwater Protection Team has 22 member organizations including communities, agencies and Universities in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. The group has received over \$100,000 in grant funding and has a unique advertising campaign on regional radio and television.

Duluth Stream Card Samples



Contacts for Education Activities

Marnie Lonsdale
 Project Coordinator
 Utility Operations
 520 Garfield Ave
 Duluth MN 55802
 (218) 730-4063
mlonsdale@ci.duluth.mn.us

Todd Carlson
 Water Quality Specialist
 Utility Operations
 520 Garfield Ave
 Duluth MN 55802
 (218) 730-4051
tcarlson@ci.duluth.mn.us