

# Communicating about Water Resources: Reaching Diverse Audiences

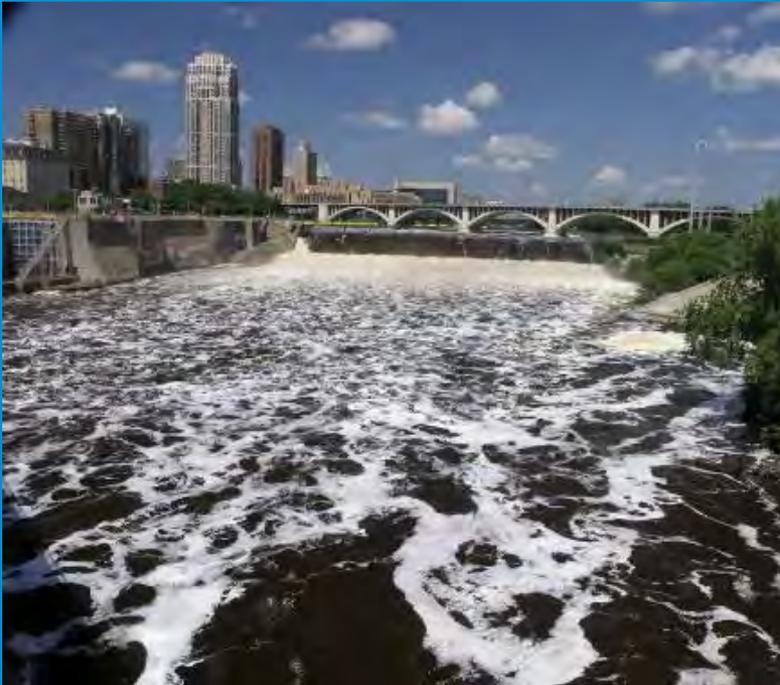
Jenny Winkelman, Education & Outreach Manager  
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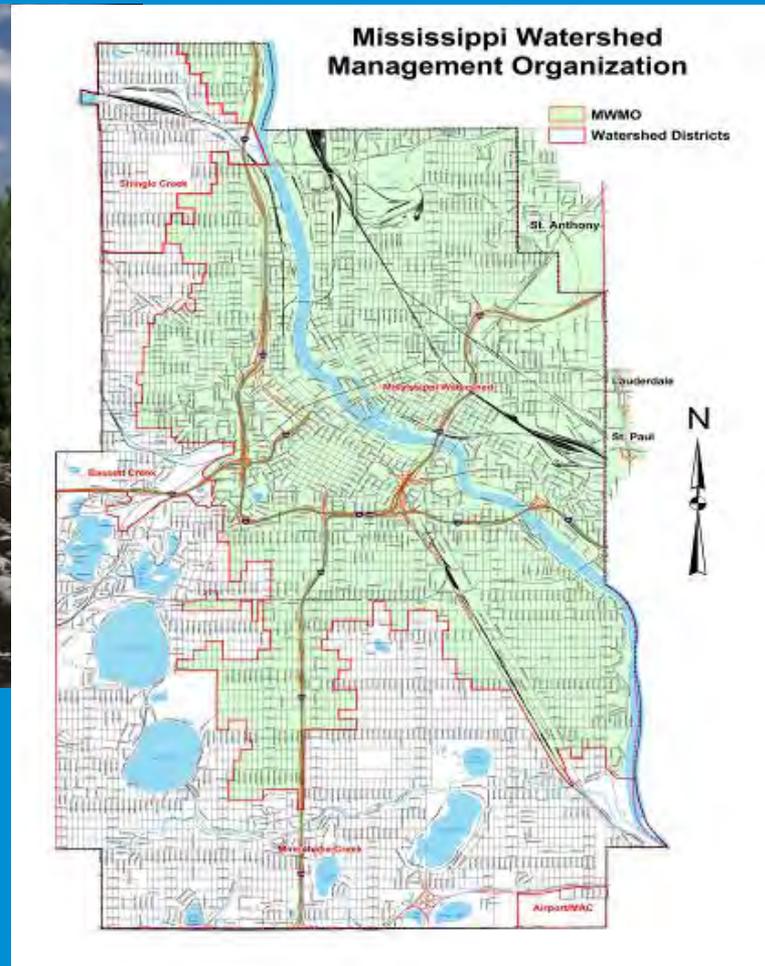
Mississippi River Forum Saint Cloud, 2011

# The MWMO

## Mississippi Watershed Management Organization



*Mississippi River in Minneapolis during high water.*



# The Changing Face of Minnesota



# Distribution of Racial and Ethnic Groups

<http://projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/>

# What does this mean for Natural Resource Management?

- Public understanding of need for conservation and protection
- Public participation in pollution prevention
- Connection to the natural world
- Resource use
- Funding sources
- Future workforce



# Best Practices for Water Education

- MWMO approach in the Hmong community
  - *Dej Tus Kab Ke - The Nature of Water*
  - The Mississippi River Green Team
  
- Reflections on what works



# Purpose

- Understand if and how pollution prevention information reaches a community
- Create a customized Education Plan
- Develop an approach to use in other communities



[www.mwmo.org/docs.html](http://www.mwmo.org/docs.html)

# Who are the Hmong?

- Southeast Asian
- Fought communism for CIA
- Fled genocide to Thailand
- Importance of Minneapolis-Saint Paul
- Growing populations in Rochester and SW MN



*Fleeing communism, many Hmong died crossing the Mekong River to reach Thailand.*

# Findings: Community Characteristics

- Methods
- Attributes
- 4 distinct audiences

Elders (>50 yrs)

1.5 Generation

Adults (18-49 yrs)

Youth (<17 yrs)

[www.mwmo.org/docs.html](http://www.mwmo.org/docs.html)



# Findings: Communication

- Identify a specific audience
- Oral communication
- If printed: use English, make it recognizable
- Involve leaders as spokesperson
- Be culturally appropriate
- Avoid technical jargon



*Telling the story of crossing the Mekong River—in a traditional storycloth and a public art project.*

# Planning Water Education

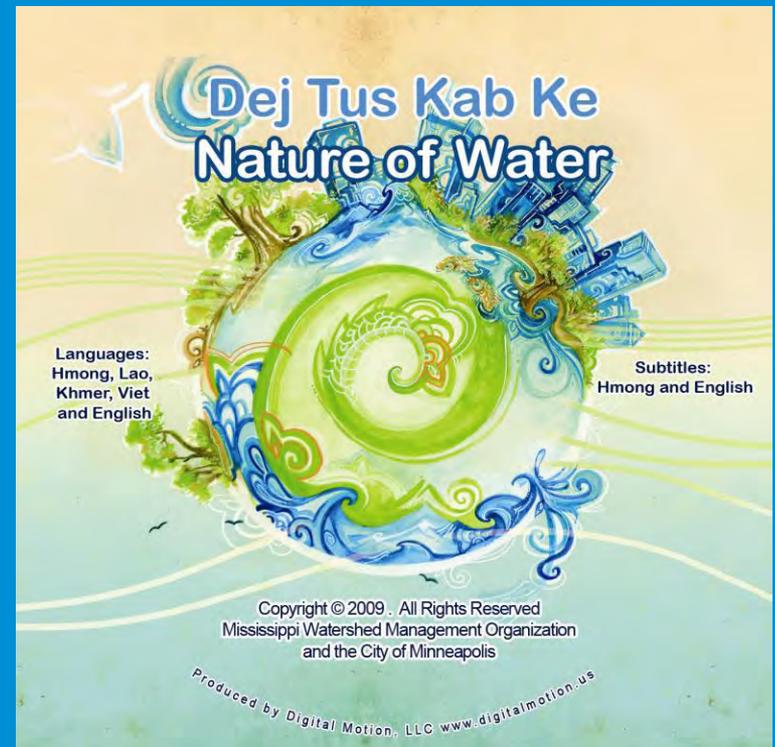
- Be clear about what you want to accomplish
- Plan activities accordingly
- Be flexible, evaluate, adapt



# Increase Environmental Literacy & Stewardship

## *Dej Tus Kab Ke – Nature of Water*

- 5 spoken languages: Hmong, English, Khmer, Vietnamese, Lao
- Subtitles: Hmong & English
- *Take one home with you!*





# Build Capacity and Leadership

- Develop partnerships
- Invest in the youth
- Direct them to careers



*The "Mississippi River Green Team", an urban conservation corps.*

# Reflections on Engaging New Communities

- Set groundwork for success
- Know your audience
- Start where they are
- Communicate how *they* do, not how *you* do
- Be prepared to develop relationships, not just materials
- Plan for the long term; build a network of people and resources

