**Community Engagement Basics**

**April 1, 2014**

**6-9 pm**

**Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Offices**

**Before this course begins-**

* Conduct a “one-on-one” meeting with a community member you don’t know very well but who you think might be interested in water issues in your community. Guidelines for this exercise are included in this packet.

**Brief Course Description**:

Engaging neighbors and community members in protecting our water with limited time, resources, experience and authority is a challenge. Yet we all know that slowing the flow of water and preventing water pollution is something that must be done on a community-wide scale. Individual actions add up, and empowering community members to take action in their “own backyard” is critical to making real progress to protect and clean up our lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands. This unit will explore community engagement strategies and share practical steps you can take to increase community engagement and use your limited time and resources wisely.

**Learning Goals and Assessments:**

1. Become familiar with community engagement strategies and learn more about what motivates people to engage in community. Participants will demonstrate what they learned by conducting and reflecting on the results of their one-on-one meetings.

Questions 1.

* What does community engagement mean?
* Why do people get involved in water protection?
* What can you do if people aren’t engaging in your water protection project?
1. Learn how to strategically target outreach efforts and make the most of the time you put in to engage members of the community in water protection. Participants will demonstrate what they learn by participating in a group activity to gather and analyze data, and discuss where to best focus their outreach and engagement efforts.

Questions 2.

* Where will you meet the people you hope to engage?
* What attributes make a person a good candidate to engage in your project?
* What was most helpful in finding out more about a person’s self-interest or circle of influence?
1. Learn how to successfully invite community members to participate in your water protection effort and grow your group of supporters and volunteers. Participants will demonstrate their learning by completing a writing exercise to record 3 points that they most want to keep in mind when engaging people in their water protection project.

Questions 3.

* How will you engage people in your project?
* How will you determine who you will approach for a one-on-one meeting?
* How will you reach the people you can’t engage directly yourself?

**Course requirements:**

* Attendance and Participation (Required, unless previously cleared with Program Manager)
* Expectations for Preparation: Conduct a “one-on-one” meeting with a community member you don’t know very well but who you think might be interested in water issues in your community.
* Assessments: The final assessment will ask participants to create a list of 20 people that they want to engage from the community in which they are working. Participants will note why water protection might be in their self-interest and which of the people on the list they can approach for a one-on-one meeting.

**To prepare for the next course:**

To prepare for the watershed tour-

* Based on what you have learned in the program, and what you still want to know, please bring at least three questions you will ask while on the watershed tour.