

2014 Master Water Steward Bios

Laurie Bruno

I am a life-long Minneapolitan with a few years away. I have 2 grown children and am a retired social worker. My first endeavor in the environmental field was as a volunteer wetland monitor. From there I moved into habitat restoration activities and continue to do so. Shortly after retiring, I rewarded myself with a Master Naturalist training program in Ely. In recent years, I've volunteered for Friends of the Mississippi, Great River Greening, MN Arboretum, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and Woodlake Nature Center. I learned of the benefits of rain gardens while involved with wetland monitoring. I've installed rain gardens in each residence since then. I am troubled by standards that allow homeowners to route downspouts to paved surfaces. I've struggled with finding diplomatic ways to encourage neighbors to find different solutions for stormwater. I would like to establish improved rainwater management practices for my faith community property as a capstone project.

Amy Flatten

Amy recently graduated from UW Stevens Point in central Wisconsin and has moved back to her home state. Originally from the West Metro, she enjoys anything outdoorsy and every Minnesota season - honest! Amy has a strong passion for adventure and learning and enjoys sharing this love of our environment with friends, family, and kids. She has been a residential camp counselor, state park naturalist intern, and is currently a Conservation Corps member working with Project Get Outdoors serving to provide quality environmental programs to under-served kids.



Joan Freese

Joan is an educational content producer. As the Interactive Producer for [SciGirls](#), a PBS Kids series that encourages tween girls in STEM, she created an online “affinity” community for girls ages 8-12 and educational resources for [parents](#) and [teachers](#). The site won a 2011 Emmy Award in the New Approaches Daytime Children's category. Prior to this project, she produced [DragonflyTV](#)'s educational campaigns, which included the development of STEM materials for children, educators, and parents. Before joining TPT, Joan worked in online educational publishing at [PLATO Learning](#) and the Learning Company (aka [MECC](#)), developing



reading, math, and social studies content for the students in grades K-12. Joan holds a M.Ed. from the University of Minnesota in Learning Technologies. Her graduate project combined place based education with mobile learning to teach middle school students about watersheds in their own communities. Joan is a parent of two and volunteers as Girl Scout Leader and a First LEGO robotics coach.

Lee Globus

Lee enjoys boating, traveling, nature, fixing up his newly acquired creek-side shack, and spending time with his kids. In his spare time, he is a principal engineer at Emerson Process Management, teaches at University of Saint Thomas, and puts on big events/conferences for his professional organizations.



Sean Gosiewski

Sean and his family live in the Corcoran Neighborhood in South Minneapolis and are active with their block club and neighborhood. They have wonderful native plants in their backyard and are now digging up their boulevard to put in rain garden plants and are working to re-do their rain gutters so we can hook up our 3 rain barrels. Sean is the Executive Director of the Alliance for Sustainability that is working with the Freshwater Society and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District to help connect Master Water Stewards with volunteer opportunities with congregations, neighborhoods and environmental commissions in Minneapolis, Edina, St. Louis Park and Minnetonka.



For **congregations** we are linking them with Master Water Stewards who can do presentations to sign up members to have home water visits and to help congregations assess their opportunities to do stormwater BMPs.

With neighborhoods we are linking Master Water Stewards with neighborhoods that are interested in doing fall work for water clean ups and with **neighborhoods** getting ready for street re-construction to reach out to homeowners to educate them on the benefits of installing rain gardens.

With **City Environmental Commissions** we are helping Master Water Stewards connect with commission volunteers and city staff to encourage watershed friendly city policies including adopting a Living Streets Policy to install rain gardens and bike/pedestrian friendly design during street re-construction. Contact Sean right away if you are interested in one of these opportunities.

Mary Hammes

Mary is a graduate student in Natural Resource Science and Management at the University of Minnesota focusing on public participation processes and community-based environmental education. She became especially enthralled with water when working with the MN DNR Water Trails program maintaining our state's recreational rivers as a Conservation Corps member. Mary is very excited for this unique opportunity to better connect with her neighbors and community, learn more about the impact that we have on our local water resources, and apply some of the concepts she has been studying in her master's program. As a Master Water Steward, Mary hopes that she can apply her high energy, enthusiasm, and passion for outdoor recreation to inspire feelings of ownership for urban water resources in others.



Tara Hanlon-Nevins

Tara grew up in the mixed forest of northern Minnesota near Detroit Lakes. Her adventurous youth playing in the woods and family camping trips around the region helped harness an awareness and appreciation of natural, wild places. After graduating high school, she moved to Minneapolis and pursued a degree in landscape architecture. Her primary inspiration came from biking excursions on trails within the city which were excellent routes of alternative transportation. After enjoying some time in San Diego and completing a B.S. at UC Davis in landscape architecture, she helped design and build an off-the-grid hobby farm. She then moved back to Minnesota to get married and currently lives in Minneapolis next to the Kenilworth Trail. Most recently, she has been working at a garden center as a Nursery Manager and is currently pursuing a career as a landscape designer. Throughout her experience, she has become more acutely aware of how we individually impact our environment. She is making efforts to make a difference in the local watershed through her involvement and training in the Master Water Stewards Program.



Trish Hannah

I was fortunate to retire at age 55 from a 30 year career in interior design working for an architectural firm as a project manager on long term health care projects. I've since been testing the waters (no pun intended) searching for my bliss. I still hold a part time job but in my spare time I have ventured into the world of trail clearing, edible landscape gardening, foraging, food security and finally, fly fishing. I made a bucket list; first on the list was being able to teach my

daughter how to camp. I found my way enlisting as a Border Route Trail volunteer. I spent the next 5 years as a board member, camp cook and trail blazer. I learned much about the landscape of the MN/Canadian border and fending for myself in the wilderness. Along the way I gained an interest in foraging wild edibles and have since become in active pursuit. Back at home in the city, I looked for opportunities to satisfy my interest in food. Food security was my choice but without specific education I once again turned to volunteering. Working with Augsburg Campus Kitchens supervising adult youth in their commercial campus kitchen eventually led to creating and teaching a pilot nutrition/gardening/cooking class program for middle school kids at the Brian Coyle Community Ctr. While I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, the bliss was not there. During a weekend mushroom forage, camping alongside a stream, I was introduced to fly fishing; the last of the bucket list. It is now my passion. I serve on the board of FlyFishing Women of MN and spend as much time on the water as I am able. During these past 7 years of discovery I've come to realize how deeply dependent we are on our environment. I am very concerned about the impact any policy, industry or natural occurrence has on all water resources whether it be fracking in SE MN, pipelines from Canada heading to Lake Superior, large agricultural runoff or lack of buffering from new development. Community engagement on a grass roots level can bring about formidable change. Becoming a water steward will arm me with the knowledge and tools to encourage others to strive for the protection of all our water resources.

Randy Holst

I became interested in water quality after my wife Sue Nissen and I purchased a cabin in northern Minnesota. As a property owner and a lake association member, I became more aware of what effects runoff has with the lake's water quality. One of the first things we did at the lake with many other association members was to take a no chemical pledge on our lake shore property. The next step at the lake was naturalizing our shore line with native plants that will help minimize erosion and filter runoff entering the lake. Water runoff is not just a lake issue. It is a much bigger issue and is something I can do, if only in a small way in my own yard. At the lake we did draw attention to naturalization of the shoreline and at home I would hope we have the same results.



Michelle Jordan

Michelle grew up wading in the spring creeks of southern Minnesota and diving in the lakes of northern. But it wasn't until a trip to Siberia brought her up close to the largest freshwater body on the planet, Lake Baikal, that she decided she wanted to make a career out of playing in the water.



Michelle lived in Oregon for four years, earning a master's degree in water resources, studying river conservation, and gaining a passion for community organizing through growing a swing dance scene in her small town. In August of 2014 she returned to Minnesota, excited to get reacquainted with her home state and its waters. She is thrilled to be a part of this year's Master Water Stewards cohort, and to get to marry her loves of freshwater conservation and community.

Drew Kerr

Drew Kerr moved to the Twin Cities in 2011, continuing his career as a journalist before joining Metro Transit in 2013. As a public relations specialist, Drew keeps the public informed about Metro Transit's activities and encourages people to consider alternatives to driving alone. Drew grew up in Iowa and attended the University of Iowa, where he developed his interest in writing and served as an editor at the school newspaper. After graduating, Drew worked for newspapers in Lincoln, Nebraska and Saratoga Springs, New York. Although he grew up camping and fishing, it was hiking in the Adirondacks and other Northeast mountain ranges that Drew truly came to love the outdoors. Drew hopes to continue exploring Minnesota and learning about its natural resources. He lives in Minneapolis with his adopted dog, Gretta, and fiancée, Lauren.



Ava McKnight

Ava is delighted and grateful to be part of Master Water Stewards, an extraordinary community resource. She hopes to help people understand their relationship with the land and water near them. Her passion is to help those negatively impacted by the economic downturn—who have lost their former communities—to re-establish a connection with their new surroundings. Dedicated to the inclusion of both renters and homeowners in water use dialogues, she looks forward to helping community members understand storm water mechanics, issues and best practices.



St Luke church in Minnetonka, which is in the midst of a land-restoration project, is currently where Ava volunteers most of her time.

Ava has the ability to capture the hearts and attention of children and mentor all age groups. Making native flower seed balls, winter sowing, garlic planting, and sheet mulching are projects she has led with the church's children, families, and local Girl Scout troops. She established an "affordable housing" garden on church land as a landing place for plants from foreclosed homes. The garden serves as a resource to low-income families wanting to establish gardens in their new homes. Additionally, Ava administers the church's social media pages.

Her interest in water drainage began as a child when she would spend hours in the melting spring snow, diverting water from her family's rutted half-mile driveway toward the adjacent fields. Seeing the degradation of water quality in her family's beloved Kickapoo River in Wisconsin and Minnesota waters spurred her to help create local solutions. For over twenty years she has built low water-use habitats and garden spaces for insects, birds, butterflies, animals and humans.

Jessica W Miller

Jessica grew up in South Minneapolis and has always been fond of the Mississippi and Minnehaha Creek. Filled with great knowledge and loaded with a graduate degree she is energetic to improve water quality and share with others how to best do that. Her master's in science in Entomology was earned at the U of MN as well as her undergrad in Art history. Specializing in aquatic insects she is excited to keep the connection with Minnehaha Creek and how it is so connected to natural movements of water.



Kathleen Miller

I moved to Minnesota in 1977 and have been fortunate to live on or near Minnehaha Creek when living in Minneapolis and currently in Minnetonka. The creek has always been a treasured place for recreation: whether pushing a stroller, walking the dog or riding my bike. My interest in Master Water Steward is multifaceted: as a homeowner I am concerned about managing the deluge of stormwater with climate change, conserving and reusing water for gardens, and protecting overall water quality. The abundance of water in Minnesota should not be taken for granted. Currently, I work at the University of Minnesota, managing NIH medical research trials.

Sue Nissen

Sue has spent much of her life recreationally enjoying lakes and rivers and enjoys gardening. Both of these experiences have combined to peak her interest in water stewardship. She has seen a favorite lake decline because of decisions about its watershed, and learned a valuable lesson about landscaping and water needs when ill-suited plantings for the site were included in a plan for her yard. When she and her husband purchased a lake property in Otter Tail County they began to learn about the



role of native plantings through Otter Tail County Soil and Conservation District. They decided to naturalize their lake shoreline and through their lake association have participated in education efforts to engage other property owners. Sue is a teacher and currently manages the Novice Driving School at AAA Minneapolis.

Kelsey Piepkorn

I graduated from Bethel University, May, 25, 2013 with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science. Some of my favorite courses I completed during my undergraduate were Sustainable Living, Field Botany, Restoration Ecology, and Watershed Stewardship. I enjoy restoration work because I believe it is our responsibility to serve the earth that provides, everything, for people. I am currently serving the earth by completing restoration projects through Conservation Corps Minnesota. My host site is with Three Rivers Park District's Crow-Hassen location. I am very interested in botany and water quality. I also plan to get a master's degree in botany. In combination of working for Conservation Corps MN, I joined Master Water Stewards to continue my education in the environmental science field, to learn how to communicate with the community about the importance of water quality and to gain the skills needed to implement water quality projects.



Lauren Sampedro

Lauren's passion for the environment began when she did a report on rainforest deforestation in 7th grade, and this passion has only increased over the years. Her passion didn't focus as much on water until she moved to Minnesota in high school from IL. In high school she tested and compared the water quality of two different lakes in Stillwater, which really influenced her to focus on water issues. Lauren has recently graduated from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities with a B.S. in Environmental Science and a minor in Biology. Before graduating she has worked for the DNR protecting lakes from invasive species, tested water samples for the U of M, and with RWMWD in their water quality dept. After graduating she joined MPCA's GreenCorps and is serving as a Green Infrastructure Stormwater Member at Freshwater Society. She hopes to continue educating others on how to improve water quality and decrease water pollution, as well as influence others to commit to protecting our water resources. Outside of trying to protect the environment, Lauren enjoys bike riding, reading, and playing the piano.



Linda “Scotty” Scott

Scotty has experienced several jobs and careers with degrees in Education, Mechanical Design, and Cabinetmaking, currently self-employed as a cabinetmaker. She loves animals, travel, the outdoors, and loves to work with her hands. Scotty and her partner, Sue, have lived on a natural environment lake, Lake St. Joe, since 1990 and have participated as water quality monitors for the lake many of those years, always doing their part to protect the water quality of the lake. Through the Master Water Steward program she hopes to gently educate neighbors and instill in them the same desire to care about our water quality.



Grace Sheely

I am a 15 year Minnetonka resident who lives and raises bees on Glen Lake. I am blessed by the peaceful observations of the Purgatory Creek as part of my daily off-leash dog walks. I am an energetic volunteer and community worker. I am a pragmatic problem solver. I hope to gain a deeper understanding of the local impact of conservation activities within a watershed. I am excited to participate in a new program association in others who hold deep concerns and plans for local impact. I am a graduate of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities BA Economics/Sociology. Since 1988, I have been actively involved in community service as a grant writer, a coach, an accountant and an available volunteer. I believe that water quantizes and water qualities will cause more conflicts than oil in my children's' future. I hope to influence local water policies.



Greg Silverman

Greg is a Senior Developer/Analyst for the UMN Cardiovascular Informatics group (his favorite programming language and word: Groovy!). He runs to/from work all year round, accompanied halfway by his wife and their blue heeler. He has a BS in math and physics and some graduate work in statistics. Greg's second job is as a volunteer software developer for Metro Blooms, where he has created a mobile app for collecting data for baseline assessments of rain garden BMPs. In his spare time, he is working on a professional certificate in horticulture and plans on getting an advanced diploma in environmental management with a focus on botany. This course of study evolved out of his having transformed his and his mother's yards into native prairie. Greg's ultimate goal is to persuade people to move away from maintaining highly manicured lawns, and to landscape with native plants. Part of this



is driven by his admiration of Frank Lloyd Wright's design aesthetic; part is driven by concern about how maintenance of the typical lawn affects the environment. He and his lovely wife were thrilled to be recipients of a 2013 MCWD cost share grant for installation of a permeable paver driveway; they are looking forward to see how it functions in reducing stormwater runoff, and how the native grass planted in the turfstone fills out the unique design. To round out their environmental experiment, Greg and his wife also began hosting a beehive on their property in 2013 in collaboration with the UMN Bee Lab. Needless to say, Greg has been very excited about the Master Water Steward program since he first heard of it, especially since it fits in so well with his values and interests.

Bill Spece

Bill grew up in southwest Minneapolis where he enjoyed Minnehaha creek from an early age. He has many memories of hunting crawdads, tubing, splashing, etc. in the “crick”. Later he wised up and moved out of the frigid north country. When his daughters hit school age, it was time, despite his aversion to ice, to come back to Midwestern values. So he bought a house on the same Creek, where he is now empty nesting with his wife and their dog Zella. Bill joined the Master Water Steward program simply as a chance to give back to the community and have influence over the ecology of the “crick”.



Jeff Strom

I grew up and have lived a majority of my life in the Twin Cities area. Similar to many Minnesotans, a huge part of my childhood was spent enjoying the embarrassment of freshwater riches our state has to offer. My curiosity and passion for these resources led me to pursue environmental science degrees in college and grad school. For the past 5 years, I have been working for a local environmental firm doing lake and stream water quality assessments, management and restoration studies. About a year ago, my wife and I moved to south Minneapolis and into the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. Since we've moved, I've been looking for opportunities to meet our new neighbors and get involved in our neighborhood association and the community. When I read about the Master Water Stewards in our local newspaper, I felt it would be the perfect opportunity for me to combine my interest in community involvement and my passion for clean water and protecting our local resources.

Myrtle Turnquist

Myrtle is the CFO and Deputy CEO of the Regal Springs Group. The Regal Springs Tilapia group is an integrated tilapia producer with tilapia production, hatchery through grow-out and processing, in three countries: Indonesia, Honduras, and Mexico. Much of this tilapia is sold and distributed in the US. Of course clean water is critical to the Regal Springs group and is one reason why Myrtle is excited to be part of the Master Water Steward program. She wants to learn as much as she can from this program and be actively involved in the local community to save one of the world's most vital resources.



Louann Waddick

My earliest memories are enjoying the "land of ten thousand lakes." As a child living near the Minnehaha Creek, I enjoyed the waterways and lakes of Minneapolis. My parents' cabin was on one of our many wonderful pristine lakes of northern Minnesota. In my twenties, I felt the urgency to watch over our waters and joined the Freshwater Society. As an adult, my appreciation of nature and clean water is reinforced as my husband and I paddleboard, canoe, and swim in the waters of Minnesota.



With my background in commercial art, I understand the need to get the message to the public in a persuasive manner to change and improve their understanding for the need to protect this most important commodity: clean water. I am a founding member of E.G.G. (Edina Go Green) with the goal of extending recycling to our commercial community and to reduce the plastic bags clogging our waterways and endangering the wildlife that come in contact with these bags. I am a member of the League of Women Voters and an election judge. I volunteer at Baby Space, an organization to improve the lives of our Native American children.

I am excited to become a part of this pilot project and to share my time and talents with like-minded people who believe it is our duty to leave the world a better place.

Steve Wielock

A native Chicagoan that's been transplanted to Minnesota after crisscrossing the U.S., due to a 24 year sales career with the same company.

Steve became interested in stormwater-related issues after talking to a manufacturer, and also after talking with a family member who's a PHD who's heavily involved with watershed related issues here in MN.

After further study and research regarding clean water related issues, there appears to be an affinity that I have due to my background/interests (construction, sales, biology, microbiology, earth science, mathematics, working for a good cause and a love for doing many things out doors) that could lead me to a possible career change into this field of preserving our finite fresh water resources.

The Master Water Steward (MWS) program will help me determine if a career change is ultimately what's in store for me or if the MWS program will lead me to a higher degree of community service while maintaining my present career direction. I'm married to my sweetheart and have a 14 year old daughter who's always keeping on my toes.

I play guitar, like physical activity, challenges and get a kick out of finding value where others don't seem to see it.