

MASWCD 2010 Environmental Education Award Presented to the Douglas County Lakes Association (DCLA)

The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) has awarded the Douglas County Lakes Association (DCLA) with the 2010 MASWCD Environmental Education Award. The award was presented at the 74th annual MASWCD Convention, held Dec. 5-7 at the Crowne Plaza St. Paul Riverfront Hotel, in St. Paul, Minnesota. The award honors an individual or organization for creating innovative conservation education activities, reaching students and a variety of other audiences. The award focuses on those who are not professional educators.

DCLA was formed in 1992 and since that time they have become a household word known by everyone in Douglas County and beyond. Their dedication and hard work have been very evident through involvement in youth education efforts including their partnership with the Douglas SWCD on their poster and mural contest (donating \$500 towards science equipment to the winning school) and the conservation essay contest (awarding 2 college scholarships). DCLA also has sponsored in conjunction with the Alexandria Area Chamber of Commerce, the "Awake the Lakes Festival" on Memorial Day weekend. During this Festival, they sponsored kid's fishing, pontoon tours and water quality seminars.

The DCLA has provided volunteer assistance to landowners, the SWCD and the County, helping to install lakescaping practices, rain garden plantings and maintenance on existing sites. They issued a brochure to lakeshore owners as a guide on what can and can't be done on lakeshore and who to contact for questions. Recently, they have taken the lead on public awareness campaigns, and monitoring of lake accesses to help prevent the spread of Zebra Mussels.

The DCLA has been working for the past 18 years to protect, preserve and improve Douglas County lakes while at the same time working to improve public awareness of what needs to be done to continue improving and preserving the pristine lakes that are so prevalent in Douglas County.



Ian Cunningham, MASWCD Education Committee, presenting the 2010 Environmental Education Award to Bonnie Huettl, President of the Douglas County Lakes Association (DCLA).