South Washington Watershed District

2025 Annual Report

Photo credit: Sarah Lilja

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Board of Managers

2025

Manager	Position	Term Expires	City/County
Ms. Sharon Doucette 8966 Jasmine Lane South Cottage Grove, MN 55016 651-216-2555	President	05/01/2026	Cottage Grove/Washington
Ms. Emily Stephens 6638 Jareau Court South Cottage Grove, MN 55016 612-297-9938	Vice-President	05/01/2027	Cottage Grove/Washington
Mr. Kevin ChapdeLaine 601 2nd Avenue Newport, MN 55055 612-508-1284	Treasurer	05/01/2028	Newport/Washington
Mr. Mike Madigan 2366 Hidden Lake Cove Woodbury, MN 55125 612-508-1284	Secretary	05/01/2026	Woodbury/Washington
Mr. David Filipiak 1405 Carriage Road Woodbury, MN 55125 612-202-2828	Manager	05/01/2028	Woodbury/Washington

Introduction

The Cottage Grove Ravine Watershed Management Organization (WMO) was formed in 1984 to manage the resources of the watershed. This WMO was based on a joint powers agreement among the five cities in the watershed. A draft watershed management plan for the WMO was completed in April 1988; however, this plan was never approved or adopted by the WMO.

The WMO was later disbanded, and, in 1993, the Cottage Grove Ravine Watershed District was formed as the 42nd watershed district in Minnesota. The watershed district changed its name to the South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) in 1995. The SWWD was formed under, and operates in accordance with, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 103B, "Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act", and Chapter 103D, "Watershed Districts." In 2018, the SWWD celebrated its 25th year Anniversary as the 42nd watershed district in Minnesota. SWWD partnered with Great River Greening in October to host a volunteer planting and anniversary celebration at the SWWD prairie. In December 2018, the SWWD anniversary milestone was recognized at the Minnesota Association of Watershed District Annual Meeting.

The SWWD completed development of the watershed plan in 1996, approval of the plan was granted by the State Board of Water and Soil Resources in 1997, and later amended in 2002. Since that time the SWWD has focused its efforts on determining potential flood risk and developing a comprehensive flood relief system. The proposed system is designed in two phases; 1) reduce potential flood damages for existing developed areas of the watershed; 2) develop a comprehensive solution that provides stormwater management and flood control with capacity for the planned growth included in the 2020 comprehensive land use plans.

In April 2003, the SWWD petitioned the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources to enlarge the boundary and include the East Mississippi Water Management Organization. The East Mississippi Water Management Organization included all or portions of Grey Cloud Island Township, Cottage Grove, Woodbury, St. Paul Park, and Newport. The enlargement was completed as a part of recommendations from the Washington County Water Governance Study (1999). The enlargement petition was approved on May 28, 2003 by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). SWWD again petitioned BWSR in May 2010 to enlarge the SWWD boundary and include portions of the dissolved Lower St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (LSCWMO) which included all of Denmark Township and portions of Afton, Cottage Grove and Hastings. BWSR approved the enlargement in September 2010.

SWWD updated the Watershed Management Plan (WMP) through 2007, with BWSR approval in September of 2007, and SWWD Board adoption in November 2007. The updated plan lays out guidance on the management of water and natural resources through the year 2017. The WMP plan was amended in 2010 to include the new Coordinated Capital Improvement Program and three additional capital improvement projects. Another amendment to incorporate areas in its expanded boundary and the priorities and projects identified in the LSCWMO plan was completed in 2011.

In 2016, the SWWD updated the WMP dated 2007, amended in 2010 and 2011. On October 26, 2016, BWSR approved the October 2016 WMP, and the SWWD Board adopted the WMP in November 2016. This third generation WMP once again builds on past work in the District and is intended to serve SWWD for decades to come. It is structured in three parts.

Part I serves as a summary of various District plans and assessments and points the reader to more regularly updated District data, all of which is available on the District's website, www.swwdmn.org. The website which includes the District's water quality database and web map viewer with extensive spatial data and serves as a repository for District plans and reports. Part II includes identified issues and goals and serves as the basis for all actions that the District takes. Progress toward achieving goals will be routinely assessed and implementation actions adjusted as necessary. Should additional issues be identified by SWWD they will be incorporated through amendment. Part III serves as the District's implementation plan, establishing District programs, Long Range Workplan, and Administrative procedures. This part will be routinely updated through amendment to continue to serve the District.

The WMP complies with Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410, "Metropolitan Area Local Water Management," (July13, 2015), the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act, and Minnesota Statute 103D. This report has been prepared in accordance with Minnesota Rules Chapter 8410.0150, Annual Reporting Requirements. Contents of this report pertain to the calendar year 2025.

2025 Financial Report

The 2025 audit report is in Appendix A. Revenue and program expenditure summaries 2025-2026 are presented below.

Revenue

Revenue Source	2025	2026*
Ad Valorem Levy	$ 1,625,000	$ 1,800,000
Stormwater Utility		
SWWD Area	$ 2,470,260	$ 2,391,150
E. Mississippi	$ 386,500	$ 390,300
Lower St. Croix	$ 111,150	$ 111,250
Total Revenue	**$ 4,592,910**	**$ 4,692,700**

*Anticipated Revenue

Program Expenditures

Program Area	2025 Budget	2025 Actual/Unaudited	2026 Budget
1.0 Planning	$ 427,680	$ 408,711	$ 619,620
2.0 Regulatory	$ 61,700	$ 29,606	$ 57,050
3.0 Implementation & Maintenance	$ 4,141,484	$ 3,359,362	$ 4,661,646
4.0 Education & Information	$ 301,600	$ 218,326	$ 231,220
5.0 Operational	$ 499,852	$ 468,519	$ 532,852
6.0 Debt Service	$ 100,000	$ 305,060	$ 100,000
Total Budget	**$5,532,316**	**$4,789,584**	**$6,202,388**

2025 Activity Report

Fund 1-Planning

PURPOSE: TO PROVIDE CURRENT, SOUND GUIDANCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Surface Water

- Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Plan. In September 2017, SWWD held a two-day climate adaptation and resiliency plan workshop. The workshops were focused on adaptation and building resiliency into infrastructure and systems. This planning effort is an opportunity for our communities to address risks due to non-climate concerns as well; including poor planning, under-design, lack of maintenance, etc. Representative from local governments, institutions, and businesses participated in the workshops. The workshops resulted in a plan that identifies vulnerabilities and prioritizes actions to address them (https://www.swwdmn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/FINAL_SWWD-Climate-Resiliency-Plan-3_26_2018.pdf). That completed plan was adopted by the SWWD Board in 2018 and has been incorporated into the Watershed Management Plan as a guidance document. One of the common concerns across cities was a need to coordinate on flood response. In early 2019 SWWD worked with HDR, Inc to update SWWD's flood response and mitigation plan. In 2020, additional efforts will focus on updating operation and maintenance plans for active stormwater controls throughout the primary drainage path running north to south through SWWD including SWWD's central draw storage facility at the Woodbury/Cottage Grove border. In 2020, SWWD was awarded the 2021 Organization Award from the Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership for providing local leadership for climate adaptation and resiliency. The award reflects SWWD's accomplishments and ongoing work. SWWD is currently working to update its Watershed Management Plan which will incorporate much of the adaptation and resiliency plan across SWWD's various program areas.

- In 2021, SWWD completed an East Mississippi retrofit analysis that identified targeted BMPs within the Cities of Newport and St. Paul Park that will reduce the amount of total suspended solids (TSS) entering the Mississippi River. SWWD has implemented several of the identified projects with more to come. So far, TSS reduction projects have been implemented at 15th & Cedar and 16th & Cedar in Newport and at Nuevas Fronteras Elementary School and St. Paul Park Public Works in St. Paul Park. SWWD is currently working to develop and implement an additional TSS reduction project near Newport Elementary School. All projects are operated and maintained through agreement with Newport and St. Paul Park.

- In 2019, SWWD updated its flood response and mitigation plan. That plan identified a need to coordinate system operation between SWWD, Woodbury, and Cottage Grove. Those three agencies continue working to evaluate and operate the interconnected system. In 2023, SWWD and Woodbury completed an effort to further evaluate the Bailey Lift Station, a critical piece of infrastructure for flood protection of southern Woodbury. That effort has identified several improvements to maintain functionality and build resilience. Woodbury began implementation of identified improvements in 2024 with $550,000 in financial support from SWWD's Coordinated Capital Improvement Program. The cities work in this area continued through 2025.

- In 2021, SWWD and the City of Woodbury agreed to participate in developing an enhanced street sweeping plan. Based on research from University of Minnesota, enhanced street sweeping has been shown to be extremely cost effective at reducing phosphorus loading to water resources in addition to reducing sediment loading and other trash pollution. However, there is often difficulty in getting public works departments to implement enhanced street sweeping programs. By developing an enhanced plan together with the City, SWWD was able to work through those concerns. Following completion of the enhanced street sweeping plan in 2022, SWWD and City of Woodbury entered into an agreement to begin implementing the plan in the fall of 2022. The initial effort was successful, with the City capturing an estimated 75 lbs of TP from their sweeping operations over 1 month. Implementation continued through 2023 (298 lbs TP), 2024 (287 lbs TP), and 2025 (443 lbs TP). Efforts will continue indefinitely under an automatically renewing agreement.

  Additionally, SWWD has entered into an enhanced sweeping agreement with City of Cottage Grove to ramp up an enhanced sweeping program and assisted the City of St. Paul Park with replacement of their lone mechanical sweeper which was at the end of its useful life.

Natural Resources

- Glacial Valley Park Interpretative Center. SWWD's Watershed Management Plan identifies the potential and need for a facility (learning center) on the CDSF Prairie site to carry out desired functions of the site. In 2017 SWWD and its partners began work on scoping and designing a future facility and evaluating the need for the facility. A completed schematic design includes parking, regional and interior trail alignments and circulation, a shelter facility with restrooms, informational/interpretive kiosks, and gateway and wayfinding signage/structures. That schematic design has been incorporated into the SWWD Watershed Management Plan as a guidance document. SWWD and its partners will continue pursuing funding opportunities. The SWWD in partnership with Washington County and MNDNR updated the management plan for the prairie to include the conceptual design in early 2020. Planning for the future learning center continues. Hard trail construction was completed in 2024. Facility construction phases will continue once road and utility extension is completed by the City of Woodbury and funding for the facility is secured.

- In 2017, the SWWD began working with the Washington Conservation District to inventory and prioritize ravines within the Trout Brook subwatershed that have the greatest potential for pollutant load reduction for Trout Brook and the St. Croix River. The completed assessment was adopted as a guidance document to the SWWD Watershed Management Plan. SWWD continues to address priority ravines and seek funding for restoration.

- In 2025, SWWD moved forward on the CR74 Ravine Stabilization Project in Newport, in partnership with Washington County as part of its upcoming reconstruction of CR74 (65th Street). Final plans for the ravine work were prepared by Houston Engineering and incorporated into the county's road project. Construction is planned for the summer of 2026.

Water Quality Assessment

- SWWD Lake Management Plans. Consistent with the SWWD Watershed Management Plan, SWWD worked with its consultants to review existing SWWD lake management plans. Analysis indicated that SWWD's lakes are seeing more inflow and higher internal loading than previously thought. SWWD has shifted its retrofit strategies to larger regional BMPs to make larger reductions in watershed loading. SWWD continues to monitor and assess water quality annually. Updated lake management plans will

be incorporated into SWWD's updated Watershed Management Plan to be adopted in 2026 and the District anticipates pursuing internal lake phosphorus control projects over the next decade.

- In 2021, SWWD began in-lake AIS control efforts on Colby and Ravine Lakes, in consultation with MnDNR. Those efforts expanded in 2023, continued into 2024 and 2025, and now include Colby, Ravine, Markgrafs, Wilmes, and La Lakes. Efforts will continue at least for the next few years and will then be evaluated. If effective, AIS control efforts are expected to continue indefinitely.

- Regional BMP Feasibility. Concurrently with review of SWWD's lake management plans, SWWD, its consultants, and City staff evaluated feasibility of potential regional BMPs in the Armstrong, Wilmes, and Powers Lake watersheds. Several potential BMPs were identified to make large reductions in lake nutrient loading. Those BMPs are in various stages of development and implementation. The Seasons Park stormwater filter was completed and brought online in 2022. The Wilmes Lake Alum Treatment Facility and Hasenbank Stormwater Park were both completed and brought online in 2025.

  In 2024, SWWD and SRF Consulting completed modeling and vetting of possible locations and project concepts as part of a regional feasibility study around Markgrafs Lake to narrow down the best options to reduce phosphorus loading from the lake's 370 acre subwatershed. This effort has resulted in a suite of potential future regional BMP concepts that SWWD can pursue to drive improvements in Markgrafs Lake water quality. The first project was completed as part of Woodbury's 2025 street reconstruction project on the east side of the lake. A similar BMP feasibility study around Colby Lake was completed in 2025. These studies will drive a significant portion of planned BMP implementation in SWWD's next-generation Watershed Management Plan.

- Armstrong Lake Wetland Monitoring Plan. Armstrong Lake is a shallow waterbody located within the cities of Lake Elmo and Oakdale, Minnesota, within the South Washington Watershed District (SWWD). The lake has excess nutrient input from the watershed and adjacent land uses. The lake is bordered to the west by a large wetland feature: The Armstrong Lake Wetland. Using cattail harvesting within the wetland to reduce nutrient loading into the lake was identified as a practice of interest in both the Armstrong Lake subwatershed retrofit analysis and the northern SWWD stormwater best management practices (BMPs) feasibility study. SWWD began extensive monitoring in and around the wetland in 2024 and initiated a cattail harvesting pilot project in 2025. Research will continue into the potential for cattail harvesting to provide meaningful, cost-effective nutrient reduction for Armstrong Lake.

Fund 2-Regulatory

PURPOSE: TO LIMIT THE AFFECTS OF LAND ALTERATIONS AND PROTECT THE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE DISTRICT

Development Reviews

- Development Reviews. SWWD ensures compliance with rate and volume requirements by coordinating development reviews with Municipalities that have adopted a local surface water management plan and updated official controls. Staff conduct full development reviews of projects in Municipalities that have yet to adopt their plan or update controls. In Municipalities with an adopted plan and updated controls, SWWD reviews projects for regional impact. SWWD staff provided development review support for several Cities throughout 2025.

- With the State MS4 permit reissued in 2021, SWWD undertook and effort to update District rules. Several changes were made to make the rules consistent with various State requirements. The updated rules were adopted in October. SWWD updated its guidance materials to assist Cities with regulatory compliance.
  After consultation with MPCA, it was determined that SWWD no longer needed to be a permitted MS4 entity and its permit coverage was terminated in 2025. Although SWWD is itself no longer an MS4, it will continue to support its municipalities who are.

- SWWD monitored potential floodplain impacts from projects as part of its development review process. Multiple projects within the floodplain were reviewed, none of which decreased floodplain storage.

- Multiple projects within the Wilmes Lake watershed were reviewed for potential downstream impact at Wilmes Lake which has exhibited past flooding. No projects reviewed in 2025 are expected to exacerbate existing flooding concerns.

- SWWD maintains extensive hydraulic and hydrologic modeling of the District. Staff continues to work with City staff to accommodate incoming development while preserving critical floodplain storage in the District as identified in District models.

Wetland Conservation Act

- Wetland Conservation Act Administration. In 2012, SWWD became the Local Governmental Unit (LGU) for wetland permits within the SWWD boundary. SWWD currently contracts with the Washington Conservation District administer WCA. In 2025, WCD on behalf of SWWD reviewed 17 applications. SWWD staff conducted development reviews to ensure compliance with SWWD wetland standards and participated as part of the Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) to evaluate wetland impacts of proposed projects.

Erosion and Sediment Control

- Erosion and Sediment Control. SWWD standards require projects to meet NPDES requirements for erosion and sediment control. Additionally, SWWD rules require Municipalities to identify an inspector and conduct regular inspections. SWWD works with City staff as needed to assist with enforcement.

Fund 3-Implementation and Maintenance

PURPOSE: TO PROVIDE INFORMATION NECESSARY TO ASSESS STATE OF DISTRICT RESOURCES AND IMPACT OF DISTRICT ACTIONS

Monitoring

- SWWD continued to operate an extensive stormwater monitoring network as guided by its monitoring plan. Data collected as part of the program is used to identify trends in water quality which are largely driven by changes in stormwater runoff. Summaries of collected data are provided on the SWWD website. Both the SWWD website and monitoring plan are being updated as part of SWWD's Watershed Management Plan update process.

Maintenance

- In 2025, Great River Greening continued contract work on the prairie restoration and maintenance at SWWD's Central Draw Storage Facility. Work includes prairie/savanna establishment and maintenance, development and coordination of volunteer events, development and oversight of a simulated grazing (i.e. haying) program, and development of research opportunities with the University of Minnesota. This work will partially be funded through LCCMR funds through Great River Greening. Once restored, the basins will provide regional water quality treatment and flood control while also serving as public open space and connections within regional greenway corridors.

- SWWD, the City of Woodbury, and Great River Greening (GRG) initiated work through GRG's Pollinator Seed Initiative to address the shortage of pollinator-friendly seed. The primary goal of the initiative is to create a sustainable future for pollinator habitat restoration and conservation by creating local sources of genetically appropriate seed which could be harvested when commercial seed suppliers lack sufficient inventory. In 2018, over 10 acres of Koch pipeline corridor and adjacent parkland from Bailey Road to Ojibway Park in Woodbury was planted in native vegetation. This corridor is a prime location not only for seeding and propagation - where the corridor is accessible by trail and the current vegetation needs improvement, but also as an ideal setting to engage the neighborhood and schools adjacent to the corridor – over 1,500 households and 3 schools within 0.5 miles of corridor. Maintenance of the corridor continues as needed.

- SWWD staff completed an intense field review of the Wilmes Lake IESF in late 2023 to assess the project for maintenance needs and overall efficacy. Results indicate that the BMP is not performing as it should. SWWD is working with its consultants to design a retrofit to be completed in 2027.

Implementation

- SWWD implements projects to achieve District goals and objectives, sometimes in conjunction with partner agencies. Projects include:
    - Nuevas Fronteras TSS and TP filter system (2021)
    - Seasons Park Stormwater Filter (2021)
    - McQuade Ravine Stabilization (2021)
    - Hasenbank Woods Restoration (2022-Present)
    - Newport 16th and Cedar TSS BMP (2023)
    - Wilmes Lake Alum Treatment Facility (2025)
    - Hasenbank Stormwater Park (2025)
    - St. Paul Park 7th Street TSS BMP (2024)
    - Bluffs Regional Park Ravine Stabilization (2024)

- CR74 and Geneva Ave Ravine Stabilization (expected 2026)

Capital Improvement Plan

- SWWD has now completed construction of its Central Draw Storage Facility and Central Draw Overflow projects. Together, this system provides flood control for stormwater draining out of SWWD's Northern Watershed. The system is designed to capture and infiltrate all runoff from the former design storm event and continue to function even under more extreme events. That event has now increased both in rainfall amount and intensity which SWWD's system will continue to handle effectively in order to protect communities at the Woodbury/Cottage Grove border. Additional work is ongoing with both Woodbury and Cottage Grove to analyze their systems that discharge into SWWD's Central Draw in order to optimize operation of those systems and identify potential improvements to protect against increasing storm intensity.

- Restoration of Trout Brook was identified as a local priority by the former Lower St. Croix Watershed Management Organization which previously managed SWWD's Trout Brook watershed. SWWD and its partners developed and implemented a channel remeander and restoration project at Afton Alps Ski Area. That project relocated a ditched stream section out from the middle of the Afton Alps parking lot to the south side of the lot and recreated natural stream features. Construction was completed in 2019. In 2022, design for additional restoration work was completed. That work, including replacement of remaining perched culverts, instream stabilization at Afton Alps, and a new channel in Afton State Park was completed in 2024.

- Wilmes Lake Alum Treatment Facility in Kargel Park. Construction began on this important regional phosphorus reduction BMP in the summer of 2023 and was completed and brought online in 2025. Despite its high capital cost of $4.5 million, this project represented the most cost-efficient option to address heavy watershed phosphorus loading to Wilmes Lake. SWWD has an agreement to fund operation and maintenance of the facility through the City of Woodbury's Public Works Department.

- Hasenbank Stormwater Park. Construction of the stormwater park was completed in 2025. This project intercepts polluted stormwater runoff leaving Fish Lake before it gets to Powers Lake, and divert it to a series of large infiltration basins in Hasenbank Park. It serves as an example of how to incorporate stormwater management and native habitat restoration into an actively used city park. Several public art installations have also been incorporated into the project to interpret the stormwater treatment processes that will occur at the site.

- 16th & Cedar Underground TSS BMP. In partnership with the City of Newport, a Contech DSBB water quality treatment device was retrofitted into an existing storm sewer trunk line near the intersection of 16th Street and Cedar Lane in Newport. Construction was completed in 2023. This device will provide significant reductions in sediment, debris and other pollutants from the local drainage area to the Mississippi River. Newport's public works staff will maintain the structure on behalf of the SWWD. Extremely shallow bedrock in this area of the watershed makes BMP retrofits challenging to complete and expensive. This project utilized nearly $164,000 in BWSR FY23 Watershed-Based Implementation Funding in addition to local funds from SWWD and Newport.

- Bluffs Regional Park Ravine Stabilization. SWWD and Washington County spent much of 2023 finalizing plans for a series of project components aimed at stabilizing a large ravine above Lake St. Croix and reducing peak flow rates into the ravine from the surrounding landscape. Due to funding limitations, the project has been split into two phases. The first phase involves stabilizing an old rail grade embankment along the shore of Lake St. Croix at the bottom of the ravine and repairing/stabilizing an old steel culvert under the grade. Phase two will construct four retention basins with rate control outlets above the ravine, stabilize actively eroding areas of the upper ravine head cuts, and clear buckthorn and thin the forest canopy to allow for a thicker native groundcover layer to establish in the forested ravine. SWWD and the County continue to seek funding to implement these important projects. Phase one was constructed in late 2024 with future work to follow when external grant funding can be secured.

- Glacial Valley Park Learning Center and Interpretive Area Design. The District's management plan as required by the conservation easements covering the property has been updated and approved by both Washington County and MnDNR. The management plan now contains the completed conceptual design for the learning center, trails, and interpretive features. SWWD is working with City of Woodbury to plan for implementing the project. Extension of Glacial Valley Road is likely in the next 1-2 years which would provide utilities for the learning center. The City of Woodbury is planning an active park area immediately West of Glacial Valley which will also provide parking for Glacial Valley. The learning center will be constructed when funding is secured.

Incentives

- In 2025 SWWD continued its performance-based cost-share program. Instead of reimbursing landowners for a specific percentage of total project cost, SWWD reimburses landowners based on the amount of phosphorus that their project is expected to retain. SWWD's 2025 reimbursement rate was $5,000.00 per pound of phosphorus retained with reimbursement capped at total project cost. SWWD allocated $17,000 to 19 projects in 2025. Projects with higher funding levels typically treated runoff from several properties.

- In 2025 the SWWD continued to implement a BMP Maintenance Program. The SWWD has recently installed several stormwater BMPs in conjunction with road improvements projects with Cities where vegetation maintenance is the responsibility of the SWWD. Other older stormwater BMPs installed were also in need of maintenance. Maintenance was performed through contract by Washington Conservation District staff.

- The SWWD Board of Managers awarded $468,807 through its Coordinated Capital Improvement Program (CCIP) in 2025. Funded work includes operations and maintenance equipment, de-icing efficiency upgrades, flood control, and maintenance work.

- SWWD staff worked with Washington Conservation District and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to continue development and operation of a groundwater quality regional assessment program. The program consists of collecting seasonal water quality samples from wells existing around the CD-P85 and CD-P86 regional infiltration basins and Bailey Lake. Collected data are included in the SWWD monitoring report and will be used to monitor groundwater quality and serve as an indicator of potential impacts resulting from use of regional infiltration facilities. This effort is part of a larger initiative by State agencies to evaluate potential effects of large-scale infiltration.

- SWWD continued its collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources with monitoring wells on SWWD property as part of an effort to expand the State's groundwater monitoring network. Information on these wells located on SWWD property can be found at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/cgm/index.html.

- The SWWD maintains communications with Municipal water suppliers to understand the implications of the North and East Metro Groundwater Management area draft plan. A major effort of the draft plan is promoting water conservation. The SWWD partners with Municipal water suppliers to promote water conservation through residential irrigation retrofits, education, smart technology and stormwater reuse.

- In 2025, the SWWD continued to partner with the Cities of Woodbury and Cottage Grove to address water conservation through smart irrigation, a City-wide Residential Irrigation Controller program. We expect that program to expand to other residential conservation retrofits in 2026.

Fund 4-Education and Information

PURPOSE: TO EFFICIENTLY INFORM AND EDUCATE DISTRICT RESIDENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

- SWWD participated and continued support of the East Metro Water Resource Education Program (EMWREP). The EMWREP annual activities report is in Appendix B.

- SWWD contracted with Carpenter St. Croix valley Nature Center in 2025 to provide education activities and workshops with 6th graders. Programming includes a 6-week in-class program focused on water quality and watershed science. The program culminates with a daylong field trip to Carpenter Nature Center. The program will continue in 2026.

- In 2025, SWWD grew its social media presence and reach. The SWWD Facebook page obtained 15.1k Views, 450 Content interactions, 164 Link clicks, and grew by 53 followers. The SWWD Instagram page obtained 961 Views, 547 Reach, 17 Content interactions, 120 Page visits, and grew by ~20 followers (Instagram does not track follower growth for accounts with less than 100 followers). SWWD posted 74 Facebook posts and 19 Instagram posts in 2024.

- WD staff continues to collect and organize all SWWD monitoring data from the Washington Conservation District. SWWD maintains an online database for accessing monitoring data through the SWWD website. That database is currently being updated, and reporting will likely change on the updated SWWD website to comply with web accessibility requirements.

- In 2025, SWWD and the South Washington County School District (ISD833) continued its campus greening efforts. As part of ISD833 school improvement projects, SWWD works with ISD833 and school staff to plan and implement campus greening projects. Those projects generally include conversion of turf to prairie, woodland restoration or tree planting, and construction of outdoor classrooms. Projects are complete or ongoing at Lake Middle and Middleton Elementary campus, Nuevas Fronteras Elementary, Valley Crossing Elementary, Crestview Elementary, and the Cottage Grove Middle and Grey Cloud Elementary campus. When complete, campus greening results in a more resilient landscape that requires less irrigation, fertilizer, and pesticide use, while also providing expanded opportunities for on-site outdoor education, increased stormwater infiltration.

- In 2025, the SWWD continued to provide funds to the MN Stormwater Research Council (MSRC). The MSRC is an independent organization of stormwater professionals, practitioners, managers, engineers, and researchers working cooperatively to facilitate applied stormwater research in MN.

- As reported by Adopt-a-Drain, 579 new storm drains were adopted within the SWWD cities of Woodbury (261), Oakdale (245), and Lake Elmo (73).

Fund 5-Operational

- The SWWD District Board annually prioritizes work activities from the long-range work plan constituting targeted efforts for the coming year. These work activities translate into the annual work plan and budget for the SWWD. The annual work plan allows the District Board to establish a short-term operating budget while maintaining connection to the overall long term management goals of the District. Six Management areas have been defined through which the SWWD will work to execute the annual work plan. The areas are: (1) Planning, (2) Regulatory, (3) Implementation & Maintenance, (4) Education & information, (5) Operational, and (6) Debt Service Fund. According to Minnesota Statute 103D.911 the SWWD must hold a hearing and adopt a preliminary budget on or before September 15th of each year. The Final budget certification is due to Washington County by December 31st of each year.

- In 2025, SWWD continued collecting stormwater utility fees in the South Washington Watershed, East Mississippi, and Lower St. Croix management units. Revenue will be used to fund water quality projects only within each of the management units.

- The SWWD maintains an operational general fund for daily operations of the district. Operational general funds include, staff, managers, office expenses, insurance, audit and legal services.

Fund 6-Debt Service

- In 2011, the SWWD issued general obligation bonds for the construction of three projects within the East Mississippi management area. In 2016, SWWD refinanced the 2011 general obligation bonds. In March 2019, the 2011 general obligation bonds crossed over to general obligation refunding bonds resulting in a principal payment made by SWWD in the amount of $3,145,000. In 2025, SWWD continued principal and interest payments on the 2016A General Obligation Refunding Bonds, and will continuing paying on these bonds through March 2031.

2026 Workplan

As part of its annual reporting, the District evaluates performance of programs and progress toward meeting goals through implementation indicators established in this Plan and adopted guidance documents. SWWD has developed a workplan layout matching issues and program categories and subcategories outlined in the Watershed Management Plan:

2026 Work Plan
South Washington Watershed District

Date Established: 1-Jan-26
Date Last Updated: 7-Jan-26
Last Updated by: MAI

SWWD 2026 Budget

	Management Area / Action Item		SWWD Staff	Professional Services	Capital Outlay	WCD Technical Services	Management Area Total
1.0	**(1) Planning**						**$619,620.00**
1.1	***Surface Water (1)***						
	Gen	Staff time Modeling	$12,600.00				
	Gen	Staff time Resource Mgmt Plan	$7,560.00				
	Gen	Staff time Climate Adaptation	$11,340.00				
	Gen	Staff time Flood Damage Reduction	$7,560.00	$15,000.00			
	SWW	Hydrologic Modeling		$25,000.00			
	SWW	Climate Adaptation		$15,000.00			
	SWW	Resource Management Plan		$0.00			
	SWW	Flood Damage Reduction		$0.00			
	EMW	Hydrologic Modeling		$0.00			
	EMW	Climate Adaptation		$25,000.00			
	EMW	Flood Damage Reduction		$150,000.00			
	LSC	Resource Management Plan		$0.00			
	LSC	Climate Adaptation		$5,000.00			
	LSC	Flood Damage Reduction		$0.00			
1.2	***Groundwater (2)***						
	Gen	Staff Time	$2,520.00				
	Gen	MDH Study		$50,000.00			
1.3	***Natural Resource (3)***						
	Gen	Greenway Implementation	$25,200.00				
	Gen	Wetland Inventory	$0.00				
	Gen	Ravine Survey	$6,300.00				
	Gen	In Lake Restoration Planning-In Lake Treatment Plan Barr	$11,340.00	$200,000.00			
1.4	***Watershed Plan (4)***						
	Gen	Staff time Watershed Plan Update	$25,200.00	$25,000.00			
2.0	**(2) Regulatory**						**$57,050.00**
2.1	***Development Reviews/Regional Assessments (1)***						
	Gen	Staff Program Management	$9,450.00				
	Gen	Consultant Development Review		$20,000.00			
2.2	***Wetland Conservation Act (2)***						
	Gen		$3,150.00			$1,000.00	
2.3	***Erosion and Sediment Control (3)***						
	Gen		$6,300.00	$5,000.00			
2.4	***Rules (4)***						
	Gen		$8,127.00	$4,023.00			
3.0	**(3) Implementation & Maintenance**						**$4,661,646.00**
3.1	***Monitoring (1)***						
	Gen	Staff time	$8,946.00				
		WCD Monitoring Program				$275,000.00	
3.2	***Watershed Restoration (2)***						
	Gen	Targeted Retrofit	$44,100.00				
	SWW	Street Sweeping			$500,000.00		
	SWW	Targeted Retrofit (Wilmes Lake)			$250,000.00		
	SWW	Targeted Retrofit (Markgrafs Lake)			$400,000.00		
	SWW	Targeted Retrofit (Colby Lake)			$250,000.00		
	SWW	Targeted Retrofit (Ravine Lake)			$400,000.00		
	SWW	Targeted Retrofit (Mississippi River)			$100,000.00		
	SWW	Climate Resiliency			$150,000.00		
	Gen	Rural	$12,600.00				
	Gen	Administration	$0.00				
	Gen	Climate Resliency	$16,380.00				
	Gen	Greenway Habitat-In Lake In Stream	$23,940.00				
	Gen	Campus Greening			$45,000.00		
	Gen	Linear Corridor-CLP Grant Match Miss Landing			$10,000.00		
	Gen	Buffers-CG Still Ponds			$100,000.00		
	Gen	In Lake-AIS			$55,000.00		
	EMW	Street Sweeping			$0.00		
	EMW	Targeted Retrofit (Mississippi River) La/Ria Lake Outlets			$400,000.00		
	EMW	Climate Resliency			$10,000.00		
	LSC	Targeted Retrofit (Mississippi River)			$0.00		
	LSC	Targeted Retrofit (St.Croix River)			$100,000.00		
	LSC	Climate Resliency			$5,000.00		
3.3	***Maintenance (3)***						
	Gen	GVP Maintenance	$31,500.00	$40,000.00			
	SWW	BMP Maintenance			$300,000.00		
	EMW	BMP Maintenance			$50,000.00		
	LSC	BMP Maintenance			$25,000.00		
3.4	***Capital Improvement Plan (4)***						
	GEN	Program Management	$5,040.00				
	SWW	Overflow Maintenance			$0.00		
	SWW	Learning Center Construction			$0.00		
	LSC	Trout Brook			$0.00		
3.5	***Incentives (5)***						
	Gen (Water Quality Cost Share Program)		$63,000.00		$70,000.00	$12,000.00	
	Gen (AG BMP Program)				$50,000.00		
	Gen (Coordinated CIP)		$37,800.00				
	Gen (Flood Damage)		$6,300.00				
	SWW (Flood Damage)				$0.00		
	SWW (Coordinated CIP)				$650,000.00		
	EMW (Flood Damage)				$0.00		
	EMW (Coordinated CIP)				$5,000.00		
	LSC (Flood Damage)				$0.00		
	LSC (Coordinated CIP)				$5,000.00		
3.6	***Groundwater Sustainanility (6)***						
	Gen		$5,040.00				
	EMW (Water Conservation)				$50,000.00		
	SWW (Irrigation Controllers and Water Softening)				$100,000.00		
4.0	**(4) Education & Information**						**$231,220.00**
4.1	***Education (1)***						
	GEN						
		Staff	$15,750.00				
		Local Education		$4,800.00			
		CAC		$1,000.00			
		EMWREP		$38,700.00			
		Promotional/Events		$10,000.00			
		Experiential Programs		$15,750.00	$40,000.00		
		Metro Watershed Partners		$2,500.00			
	Information (2)						
4.2	**GEN**						
		Staff	$27,720.00				
		MN Stormwater Research			$25,000.00		
		Website/Databases		$8,000.00			
		Stormwater Utility Administration		$15,000.00			
		GIS		$15,000.00			
		Artist-in-Residence		$12,000.00			
5.0	**(5) Administrative/Operational**						**$532,852.00**
	GEN						
		Salaries/Benefits	$295,000.00				
		Manager Per Diems/Expenses	$19,000.00				
		Office Rent	$41,152.00				
		Employee Expenses	$12,000.00				
		Employee Training	$25,000.00				
		Office Equipment	$15,000.00				
		Office Supplies	$10,000.00				
		District Vehicle	$2,500.00				
		Legal Notices	$200.00				
		Dues	$15,000.00				
		Insurance/Bond	$45,000.00				
		Accounting Payroll	$6,000.00				
		Monthly Accounting	$3,000.00				
		Audit	$16,000.00				
		Legal	$25,000.00				
		HR/Other Consulting	$3,000.00				
		Equipment	$0.00				
6.0	**(6) Debt Service**						**$100,000.00**
	EMW				$100,000.00		
	Total		**$967,615.00**	**$701,773.00**	**$4,245,000.00**	**$288,000.00**	**$6,202,388.00**

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: FLOODING

Subcategories: FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION AND MITIGATION

Issue Goal:

Minimize existing and complete establishment of a controlled overflow from SWWD's Northern Watershed to the Mississippi River resources due to flood events.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Prevent increases in runoff from development activity through development and enforcement of District Rules;	Ongoing.	-	Enforce SWWD rules.
2	Prevent increases in flooding risk due to development (e.g. Wilmes, Ravine, and O'Conner's Lakes);	Ongoing.	-	Enforce SWWD rules.
3	Achieve no net loss in inventoried key flood storage areas;	Ongoing.	-	Enforce SWWD rules.
4	Achieve progress towards identified inter-community flow limits as development occurs;	Ongoing. Working with partners to review West Draw flows and La/Ria Lake flows.	-	Enforce SWWD rules. Include new actions and priorities in SWWD WMP update.
5	Maintain implementation flexibility (program framework and funding) to respond to identified flood damage reduction/mitigation needs that may arise.	Limited funds budgeted to begin building a reserve balance. Flood Response and Mitigation Plan updated. System optimization study complete.	-	Allocate budgeted funding to assist Cities in implementing identified improvements to systems and infrastructure to build resilience. Implement channel stabilization at Ravine Lake outlet.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: FLOODING

Subcategories: CENTRAL DRAW STORAGE FACILITY AND OVERFLOW

Issue Goal:

Complete establishment of a controlled overflow from SWWD's Northern Watershed to the Mississippi River.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Phase III, modification of the Ravine Lake outlet by 2017;	Complete	-	None
2	Phase IV, stabilization of Ravine Park by 2018	Complete	-	Monitor vegetation establishment, complete necessary vegetation maintenance
3	Phase V, construction of remaining pipe sections by 2019;	Complete	-	Coordinate with developer to protect pipe and SWWD's easement access and modify structures as needed.
4	Completion of functioning overflow system by January 1, 2020 as specified in SWWD/Lower St. Croix WMO consolidation agreement, unless otherwise agreed to by Cottage Grove, Woodbury, and SWWD.	Complete	-	None

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: WATERSHED ALTERATIONS

Subcategories: SURFACE WATER DEGRADATION AND IMPAIRMENT

Issue Goal:

Protection and restoration of District resources to meet local resource goals and State standards.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Adoption of completed TMDLs for Statewide and Regional resources for which implementation actions are identified for SWWD;	N/A	-	Incorporate relevant TMDLs into SWWD WMP update.
2	Colby Lake: Restore Colby Lake to state eutrophication standards by reducing the annual total phosphorus load by 1,303 lbs/yr.	Updated lake management plan completed as part of SWWD WMP update. SWA completed to identify regional BMPs within watershed	-	Develop and implement upstream regional BMPs. Continue enhanced sweeping program in partnership with Woodbury. Incorporate additional actions in updated WMP.
3	Wilmes Lake: Restore North and South Wilmes Lake to state eutrophication goals by reducing the annual total phosphorus load by 265 and 108 lbs, respectively.	Updated lake management plan completed as part of SWWD WMP update. Alum facility at N inlet complete and operational.	-	Develop and implement upstream regional BMPs. Continue enhanced sweeping program in partnership with Woodbury. Incorporate additional actions in updated WMP.
4	Powers Lake: Protect Powers Lake from exceeding state eutrophication standards by maintaining existing watershed phosphorus load.	Powers Lake continues to meet State standards. Updated lake management plan completed as part of SWWD WMP update. Hasenbank stormwater park complete and operational.	-	Develop and implement upstream regional BMPs. Continue enhanced sweeping program in partnership with Woodbury. Incorporate additional actions in updated WMP.
5	Armstrong Lake: Protect Armstrong Lake from exceeding state eutrophication standards by reducing the annual total phosphorus load by 89 lbs	Updated lake management plan completed as part of SWWD WMP update. Cattail harvesting pilot initiated.	-	Opportunistically pursue projects as part of development and redevelopment. Continue cattail harvesting pilot. Incorporate additional actions in updated WMP.
6	Markgrafs Lake: Restore Markgrafs Lake to state eutrophication standards by	Updated lake management plan completed as part of SWWD WMP update. SWA completed to identify	-	Advance most promising projects from SWA to full concept design and begin implementation.

	reducing the annual total phosphorus load by 209 lbs/yr	regional BMPs within watershed, first BMPs installed.		Incorporate additional actions in updated WMP.
7	Ravine Lake: Restore Ravine Lake to state eutrophication standards by reducing the growing season total phosphorus load by 141 lbs/yr at full build-out through enforcement of established total phosphorus loading standards.	Updated lake management plan completed as part of SWWD WMP update.	-	Incorporate additional actions in updated WMP.
8	Mississippi River: Meet proposed TMDL loading rate of 154 lbs/ac/yr of Total Suspended Solids;	SWWD's MS4 meets the TMDL with zero discharge. SWWD continues to assist Cities in achieving reductions in their systems. Conducted a Subwatershed Retrofit Analysis (SWA) for City of Newport in 2018; Underground TSS BMP at 15th and Cedar in Newport; Nuevas Fronteras underground TSS/TP BMP in St. Paul Park; Underground TSS BMP at 16th and Cedar in Newport. Executed agreement with Newport and St. Paul Park for SWWD to fund purchase of vac truck and the Cities to maintain SWWD constructed BMPs for 20 years. Partially funded replacement of sweeper for St. Paul Park.	-	Work with Newport and St. Paul Park to ramp up to enhanced street sweeping programs. Implement 65th/Geneva ravine stabilization project in cooperation with Washington County. Continue development of a TSS BMP at Newport Elementary School.
9	Lake St. Croix: Achieve 36%, or approximately 315 kg of total phosphorus load reduction for Trout Brook as specified in the Lake St. Croix TMDL.	Active participant in Lower St. Croix 1W1P partnership. Multiple BMPs have been installed in the Trout Brook watershed to date. Monitored stream load at SWWD's regional assessment location meets the proposed TMDL loading rate. Stabilization of the McQuade ravine directly tributary to Lake St. Croix. Completed 2 Trout Brook channel remeanders at Afton Alps and Afton State	-	Continue Lower St. Croix partnership participation. Work with Washington County to continue stabilization work at St. Croix Bluffs. Work with Carpenter Nature Center to complete ravine stabilization. Engage WCD and Lower St Croix partnership to pursue ag land nutrient reductions.

		Park. Worked with Washington County to stabilize active ravine at St. Croix Bluffs State Park.		
10	No net loss in wetland acreage or function;	Ongoing.	-	Enforce SWWD and WCA rules.
11	Protect/promote soil health as part of District projects and through District rules as a means to limit hydrological impacts of land alteration.	Funded several landowners pilots with cover crops through partnership with Lower St. Croix partnership and Washington Conservation District.	-	Participation in ag programs as part of the Lower St. Croix 1W1P partnership. Launch partnership with International Water Institute to implement their Stewardship Program with District landowners.
12	Continue existing Incentive programs to encourage voluntary implementation of BMPs;	Programs are ongoing.	-	Distribute up to $70,000 for BMP cost share.
13	Coordinate CIP plan with municipalities through engagement of a standing Technical Advisory Committee and implementation of the District's CCIP program;	Program is ongoing.	-	Distribute up to $600,000 for CCIP projects.
14	Evaluate impact of emerging contaminants and identify District programs or actions to control or mitigate that risk.	District staff and Board participated in various PFAS work grounds related to 3M settlement fund.	-	Ongoing participation in PFAS work.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: WATERSHED ALTERATIONS

Subcategories: EROSION

Issue Goal:

Prevent resource degradation of District resources from bluff, streambank, shoreland, and construction site erosion.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	In partnership with State and Municipal programs, promote and ensure erosion and sediment control compliance at active construction sites.	SWWD rules require compliance with ESC rules. SWWD staff assists its municipalities in site inspections during the construction season as requested. SWWD developed an ESC inspection tracing app currently used by Woodbury and Cottage Grove.	-	Enforce SWWD rules. Continue to support municipalities with ESC inspections.
2	Develop and implement buffer regulatory measures to comply with State requirements;	Rules were updated to reflect new MS4 permit. Changes included clarifications to buffer requriements.	-	Enforce SWWD rules.
3	Establish and maintain a 50 foot, permanently vegetated buffer along all bluffs, ravines, lakes, and streams;	N/A	-	Work with developers to ensure adequate buffers as part of development.
4	Identify and prioritize actively eroding ravines and address as budget allows;	Inventory complete for Trout Brook – McQuade ravine stabilized. Ongoing for rest of St. Croix watershed.	-	Partner with County to design stabilization of the 65th and Geneva ravine in Newport. Implement stabilization practices on active ravines near St. Croix Bluffs County Park.
5	Maintain and enforce rules which prevent increased channel instability due to development;	Rule is in place and enforced during development.	-	Enforce SWWD rules.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY

Subcategories: SUPPLY

Issue Goal:

Implement conservation efforts to ensure long term viability of groundwater resources in South Washington County.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Participate in development of a county-wide groundwater monitoring effort as identified in the County Groundwater Plan;	Ongoing monitoring efforts. Participation in County Groundwater Plan TAC.	-	Continue partnership with MPCA to monitor SWWD wells as part of the MPCA ambient groundwater monitoring program.
2	Maintain rules and permitting program necessary to adequately protect groundwater resources, protect recharge potential, and promote low impact development as identified in the County Groundwater Plan	Ongoing.	-	Enforce SWWD rules.
3	Implement conservation actions identified through regional planning efforts identified in the County Groundwater Plan;	Ongoing. SWWD routinely funds improvements in municipal de-icing operations through its CCIP program.	-	Continue to support cities in improving De-icing operations.
4	Incentivize practices that reduce demand on groundwater supply;	Ongoing. SWWD is currently assisting Woodbury and Cottage Grove with several pilot conservation programs.	-	Continue to support conservation programs.
5	Promote and incentivize feasible re-use of water;	Ongoing. Re-use is routinely used for required treatment on development projects, especially where soils, bedrock, or karst make infiltration infeasible.	-	Support use of re-use in development and re-development applications.

6	Promote use of infiltration as a tool for recharge where appropriate;	Not started.	-	Nothing planned.
7	Evaluate feasibility of active recharge.	UMN has completed a feasibility report on active storage of water within aquifers. The report identifies Woodbury as having high potential. Existing PFAS concerns and its likely solutions makes active recharge less of a priority.	-	Nothing planned.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY

Subcategories: PROTECTION (POLLUTION PREVENTION)

Issue Goal:

Protect groundwater resources through pollution prevention and management of surface water groundwater interactions.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Continue enforcement of existing karst rules;	Ongoing.	-	Enforce SWWD rules.
2	Consider pollution potential in siting and design of District funded stormwater BMPs;	Ongoing. Rules updated to reflect additional prohibitions on infiltration where groundwater pollution is a concern.	-	Enforce SWWD rules.
3	Utilize alternative compliance sequencing for meeting District development rules in areas where infiltration is not appropriate;	Ongoing. Several proposed developments in SWWD have used alternative compliance sequencing due to shallow bedrock, wellhead protection, and poor soils.	-	Enforce SWWD rules.
4	Participate in State and regional efforts to quantify risks to groundwater resources from de-icing operations;	SWWD is partnering with MPCA to include SWWD's groundwater monitoring sites as part of the MPCA ambient groundwater monitoring program.	-	Continue monitoring program.
5	Supplement County incentive programs to prevent pollution from septic systems and abandoned wells;	Not started.	-	Nothing planned.

6	Incentivize road authority upgrades to de-icing operations to prevent overuse of road salt;	Ongoing. SWWD continues to incentivize improvements through its CCIP program.	-	Continue to support cities in improving De-icing operations.
7	Continue groundwater quality monitoring at District regional infiltration facilities sufficient to identify potential impacts to groundwater from large scale infiltration practices.	Ongoing.	-	Continue monitoring program.
8	Consider additional protection of surface water features with potential to impact groundwater quality with guidance from State Agencies.	SWWD continues to engage Cottage Grove and Washington County in identifying and pursuing protection for Vandeberg Lake which has risen 20+ feet in the past 5 years, mirroring aquifer level increases.	-	Pursue protection for Vandenberg Lake if an acceptable strategy is identified by SWWD and its partners.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: NATURAL RESOURCES

Issue Goal:

Protect, restore, and reconstruct native terrestrial and aquatic habitat for the benefit of resource management.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Protect, restore, and reconstruct native terrestrial and aquatic habitat for the benefit of resource management.	Ongoing. SWWD continues restoration efforts on its Glacial Valley Park which includes over 200 acres of prairie and 50 acres of woodland restoration; Campus greening efforts ongoing at several school campus sites; Woodland restoration near Powers Lake underway; developing restoration opportunities in Xcel corridors.	-	Continue current restoration efforts at SWWDs GVP, Ravine Park, and school campuses throughout the District. Continue restoration of Hasenbank Woods near Powers Lake. Continue to engage Xcel on corridors. Advise on City restoration projects at Bailey school forest, Mississippi Dunes, and others.
2	Participate in development of regional programs to address spread and management of invasive terrestrial and aquatic invasive species;	Began in lake AIS control at Markgrafs, Wilmes, Colby, La, and Ravine Lakes.	-	Continue AIS efforts.
3	Implement local actions identified in regional planning efforts;	Not started.	-	Nothing planned.
4	Avoid impacts to rare, unique, and high quality habitats as part of all District projects;	Ongoing.	-	Nothing planned.
5	Maintain natural buffers or riparian areas on all District water resources;	Ongoing.	-	Nothing planned.

6	Promote use of site appropriate native plants as part of District funded projects;	Ongoing.	-	Continue use of native plants on SWWD projects and promote their use throughout the District.
7	Promote compliance with guidance for pollinator friendly design practices as part of District funded projects;	Ongoing. Continued campus greening effort at Lake/Middleton and beginning additional campus greening projects throughout District.	-	Work with ISD 833 schools to continue turf to prairie conversions. Continue use of pollinator-focused native plants on SWWD projects and promote their use throughout the District. Work to develop partnerships with large acreage landowners like Xcel to implement larger projects.
8	Consider preservation or restoration of native habitat and benefits to pollinators and other wildlife in allocation of incentive funding.	Ongoing.	-	Continue use of pollinator-focused native plants on SWWD projects and promote their use throughout the District.
9	Evaluate potential credit mechanisms to incentivize developers to maintain mature trees during development within 3 years;	Woodbury has altered development review policies to allow consideration of hydrologic and water quality benefits of natural land cover, including trees. SWWD has incorporated guidance into its Standards Manual explaining how to model water quality benefits of trees and woodlands.	-	Continue promotion.
10	Implement habitat improvement practices identified in completed Resource Management Plans.	SWWD has completed an update of its Lake Management Plans and continues to implement watershed improvements to reduce watershed loading. Future efforts at internal load control well be evaluated as watershed load reductions continue.	-	Continued implementation of watershed improvements.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: CLIMATE CHANGE

Issue Goal:

Facilitate increased resilience of District resources and public infrastructure through development of information and strategies and implementation of accepted climate adaptation practices.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Consider adaptive capacity—ability of a system to adjust to climate change to mitigate potential damages, take advantage of opportunities, or cope with consequences— of District systems and resources in Developing projects and management plans;	Consideration being made as part of planning for ongoing campus greening projects. District CCIP program now includes projects that build resilience in District resources and infrastructure.	-	Assist Cities with projects to build resilience.
2	Require use of up to date hydrologic data for meeting District development and redevelopment standards;	Ongoing. SWWD requires use of Atlas 14.	-	Enforce SWWD rules.
3	Utilize District surface water modeling and County Groundwater model to explore changes in surface water/groundwater interactions as a result of predicted changes in hydrologic conditions and water demand;	Not started.	-	Nothing planned.
4	Utilize District CCIP or similar program framework to assist Cities in adapting their infrastructure systems to increase resiliency—capability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from significant threats with minimum damage to social well-being, the economy, and the environment;	SWWD's CCIP program has been modified to include resiliency focused projects as eligible for funding.	-	Continue CCIP program.

5	Promote use of alternative landscapes which require less water;	Ongoing partnership with ISD 833 on campus greening projects throughout District	-	Continue to implement turf to prairie conversion on utility corridors and at school campuses.
6	Promote water re-use where feasible to reduce demand on aquifers;	Re-use routinely used where constraints prevent traditional treatment.	-	Continue to pursue opportunities that arise.
7	Work with local partners to improve delivery of soil conservation programs to prevent increased field erosion from changing precipitation patterns.	SWWD and its partners will begin engaging landowners on soil conservation efforts as part of the Lower St. Croix 1W1P development.	-	Work with partners to engage landowners in SWWD.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Subcategories: RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Issue Goal:

In partnership with Local, State, and Regional partners, operate a monitoring program adequate to establish baseline water quality and quantity measures and identify long-term trends. Operate a monitoring program adequate to detect changes in loading rate as a result of District implementation actions.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Maintain equipment inventory to quickly establish additional monitoring locations in response to identified resource concerns;	Ongoing.	-	Repair and replace monitoring equipment as needed.
2	Biennially, complete trend analyses for all lakes and Regional Assessment Locations and complete a review of the District's Monitoring Plan;	Ongoing. SWWD has recently completed an update of its lake management plans and monitoring plan as part of its WMP update.	-	Reconfigure web monitoring reporting as part of website update.
3	Expand groundwater monitoring program in partnership with Washington County, MnDNR, MDH, and MPCA to adequately characterize groundwater resources in the District;	Ongoing.	-	Continue partnership with MPCA to monitor SWWD wells as part of the MPCA ambient groundwater monitoring program.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Subcategories: DISTRICT-WIDE HYDROLOGIC MODELING

Issue Goal:

Maintain updated, District-wide hydrological modeling to inform District and Municipal management of resources and infrastructure.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Complete development of subwatershed models to complete District-wide coverage within 6 years;	Complete	-	Nothing planned.
2	Calibrate completed models to collected monitoring data once every 3 years.	Current models are up to date.	Calibrate to available data during model updates.	Nothing planned.
3	Promote use of District models and modeling specifications through dissemination on SWWD website.	Ongoing. Draft modeling spec is available on web. Models are available through request. Models are being used by DNR for floodplain updates.	-	Nothing planned.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Subcategories: RESEARCH

Issue Goal:

Work with local and regional partners to advance knowledge of watershed management issues.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Further identify and refine research and information needs as ongoing role of Technical Advisory Committee;	Identified climate related topics as part of climate adaptation plan. Staff participates as member of MN Stormwater Research Council. MSRC routinely works to identify and prioritize research needs.	Participation in MSRC	Continued participation in MSRC.
2	Pursue research opportunities to provide for identified information needs;	Ongoing. SWWD staff participates on the Stormwater Research Council advisory board and contributes funds to the collaborative effort.	Participation in MSRC	Participate in the MSRC through staff participation on advisory board and through contribution of funds.
3	Biannually publish a summary of completed and ongoing research efforts as part of annual reporting.	Not started.	-	SWWD will work to disseminate results of research completed as part of the MSRC.
4	As part of annual reporting, review existing District web tools for improvements and incorporation of new technologies.	Completed PTMapp model for the rural portions of SWWD; Updated monitoring database to improve function; Launched updated web viewer; working on website update.	-	Complete website and WQ database updates.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Subcategories: EDUCATION

Issue Goal:

Heighten the awareness of key constituencies within the District, sufficient to modify behavior to improve the recognition and implementation of District policies, programs, and activities.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Heighten the awareness of key constituencies within the District, sufficient to modify behavior to improve the recognition and implementation of District policies, programs, and activities.	Ongoing. Participating in the Master Water Steward Program	-	Continue to support the Master Water Steward Program by sponsoring interested residents, See EMWREP. Partner in Woodbury Green Talks series.
2	Actively participate in regional education efforts as an active partner in the East Metro Water Resources Education Partnership (EMWREP);	Ongoing.	-	See EMWREP
3	Develop District facilities for use as interpretive and educational sites as user demand grows with development (i.e. Signage trails, programming at CDSF);	Ongoing. Developed conceptual plan for future learning center at CDSF with Cities and stakeholders. Final planning for Hasenbank stormwater park. Signage for Seasons park filter	Local match funding allocated for design and construction	Pursue development of CDSF learning center when external funding is secured.
4	Evaluate the need and opportunity for shared Learning Center at the Central Draw Storage Facility;	Complete	-	None
5	Develop shared interpretive and educational programming through EMWREP for use at Municipal and District facilities focused on identified District issues;	Ongoing. Developed and installed signage at outdoor classrooms and Trout Brook. Hasenbank	-	Nothing planned.

		stormwater park complete. Interpretive mural at alum facility complete.		
6	Engage local public, private, and NGO partners to develop experiential programming for children;	Ongoing. Successful development and continued implementation of in class programming.	-	Continue in-class experiential programming in partnership with Carpenter Nature Center and South Washington School District.
7	Maintain a website to disseminate consistent information and coordinate program implementation;	Ongoing. Transitioned to .gov domain. Update started.	-	Complete website update.
8	Utilize existing Municipal committee structure to educate residents and disseminate information as part of the District's Citizen Advisory Committee;	Ongoing. Successfully re-launched CAC following pandemic. CAC is fully established and meeting regularly.	-	Continue to engage CAC and formally establish standing TAC following completion of plan update process.
9	Develop a mechanism to gauge effectiveness of educational programming efforts.	Not started.	-	Nothing planned.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Subcategories: PROGRESS EVALUATION

Issue Goal:

Utilize a Results Based Accountability approach in evaluating and refining implementation strategies for achieving resource goals and to evaluate and improve program performance.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Ongoing development and use of documented strategies and actions (i.e. Management plans and other guidance documents) to achieve established resource goals;	Ongoing. Minor plan amendment adopted in 2019. Minor plan adopted in 2022. Completed Gaps analysis of current WMP in 2023. WMP update in progress.	-	Complete WMP update process.
2	Incorporate strategy documentation, progress evaluation, and annual workplan into annual report;	Ongoing.	-	Continue to refine reporting and documentation methods.
3	Amend Watershed Plan as necessary to provide the District with programs and tools necessary to implement identified strategies.	Minor plan amendment adopted in April 2019.	-	Complete WMP update process.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Subcategories: UNIFORM STANDARDS

Issue Goal:

Establish and maintain District controls necessary to achieve established District resource goals, comply with mandated permits and programs, and maximize regulatory consistency with neighboring jurisdictions.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Regularly review and update District Rules as necessary to keep pace with changing resource issues and mandated regulatory programs;	Ongoing.	-	Nothing planned. Will revisit with TAC in 2027 following completion of plan update.
2	Ensure uniform MS4 program coverage across District using a documented cooperative approach;	N/A	-	N/A; SWWDs MS4 status has been reviewed by MPCA. SWWD is no longer an MS4.
3	Work with neighboring Watershed Districts to develop uniform standards where possible;	Not started.	-	Nothing planned.
4	Require municipal adoption of District Rules within 2 years of any completed update;	Ongoing.	-	Assist municipalities in Comp Plan and ordinance updates as requested.

Progress Evaluation for the Issue: EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Subcategories: COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION OF EFFORTS

Issue Goal:

Limit duplication of planning and implementation efforts by the District and its State and Local partners by improving collaboration and coordination of efforts. Create efficiencies in implementation through partnerships.

	Implementation Indicator	Issue Progress	Recommended Change /Action	Current Year Workplan
1	Collaborate and coordinate agency efforts through engagement of a standing Technical Advisory Committee;	Ongoing. TAC was engaged as part of climate adaptation planning in 2017. TAC members were engaged as part of regional BMP feasibility study. TAC established to support plan update process.	-	Formally establish standing TAC rather than ad hoc.
2	Incorporate local input into District planning efforts through engagement of a standing Citizens Advisory Committee	Ongoing.	-	Continue to engage CAC and expand role in District operations.
3	Inform State and Regional agencies and organizations of local efforts through participation in their advisory committees;	Ongoing.	-	Participate as opportunities arise.
4	Combine local implementation to gain economy of scale;	Ongoing. Executed agreement with Newport and St. Paul Park. SWWD is providing substantial funding for a vac truck to be shared by both Cities who will in turn maintain District constructed BMPs.	-	Nothing planned.

5	Incorporate implementation actions identified in regional planning efforts into District programs.	Not started.	-	Nothing planned.

Progress Evaluation for the Program: Planning

Subcategories: RESOURCE, FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION & MITIGATION PLAN, CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN, NATURAL RESOURCES, GROUNDWATER, GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, MODELING

Program Purpose:

Through its various planning efforts, SWWD evaluates resource issues, risks, and uncertainty in formulating a strategy or identifying practices to address identified issues. The District routinely collects information to evaluate success of implemented practices and better informed understanding of resource issues. Using that information, the District re-visits planning efforts to revise strategies as necessary.

	Performance Indicator	Implementation Schedule	Long Range Work plan Budget	Amount Spent to Date	Status	Program Performance	Recommended Change	Current Year Work plan
1	Maintain up to date planning documents necessary to guide District Implementation (staff time);	Ongoing.	$ 899,507	$ 709,600	Minor plan amendment completed in 2022. Rules updated 2022. Standards Manual and SWPPP updated in 2023. WMP update process underway	As Planned	-	$132,680
2	Complete SWWD Flooding Emergency Response Plan within 6 years;	Complete by 2023.	$ 45,000	$ 45,000	Plan completed. Subsequent system optimization plan also completed. SWWD to assist Cities in implementing identified	Ahead of schedule	-	$15,000

					improvements.			
3	Complete development of subwatershed hydrologic models within 6 years;	Complete by 2023.	$ 160,000	$ 348,167	Complete	Ahead of schedule	-	$30,500
4	Update/calibrate completed hydrologic models every 3 years	Ongoing.	$ 390,208	$ 247,986	On schedule. Models calibrated at they are developed or updated.	As Planned	-	$15,000
5	Review and update inter-community flow limits within 3 years (modeling);	Review/ update by 2020.	N/A, included above	$ -	Discussions ongoing as part of plan update. Additional info will be included in the updated plan for future implement ation.	Behind schedule	-	$ -
6	Complete resource management plans for all lakes and perennial open channel streams within the District within 6 years;	All plans completed by 2023.	$ 100,000	$ 100,000	New manageme nt plan was completed as part of WMP update.	Ahead of schedule	-	$ 105,150
7	Re-assess completed management plans at a minimum of once every 3 years to evaluate progress and review and adjust strategies;	Re-assess all plans by 2020. Every 3 years thereafter.	$ 227,821	$ 214,911	New manageme nt plan was completed as part of WMP update.	As Planned		$35,000
8	ID excessively eroding bluff ravines within 3 years;	Completed by 2020.	$ 45,000	$ 6,806	ID is complete. SWWD is pursuing stabilizatio n of prioritized ravines.	As Planned	-	$

9	Update the District's Greenway Plan within 3 years;	Completed by 2020.	$ 30,000	$ -	Plan will be updated as part of County's greenway plan update process	N/A, will be evaluated when County undertakes an update.	-	
10	Develop a Climate Adaptation Plan within 6 years;	Completed by 2023.	$ 105,000	$ 107,000	Complete. Plan sections are being incorporate into WMP update.	Ahead of schedule		$30,000
11	Participate in State or Regional planning efforts to coordinate groundwater resource assessment and regulation.	Ongoing.	N/A, included above	$ -	SWWD is participating on advisory committees for 3M settlement funds and Met Council Metro model update.	N/A	-	$ -
12	Work with partners to develop a Strategic Groundwater Assessment Plan to guide and coordinate groundwater monitoring efforts within 3 years;	Completed by 2020.	$ 8,000	$ -	Limited coordination with MPCA. SWWD's groundwater monitoring efforts now under umbrella of MPCA ambient groundwater monitoring program.	Monitoring is ongoing.	-	$ -
13	Work with partners to develop a Strategic Groundwater Regulatory	Completed by 2020.	$ 15,000	$ -	Not started.	N/A, on hold indefinitely while PFAS workgrou	-	$ -

	Coordination Plan within 3 years;					ps assess and plan.		
14	Update and finalize the Districts Wetland inventory within 3 years.	Completed by 2020.	$ 50,000	$ 3,962	Completed in 2024.	N/A	-	$

Progress Evaluation for the Program: REGULATORY

Subcategories:

Program Purpose:
Established under authorities granted in MN Statute 103D.341, District Rules seek to limit the affects land alterations to protect the public health, welfare, and natural resources of the District, reduce the need for additional storage capacity and the potential need for the construction of systems to convey storm water, preserve floodplains and wetland storage capacity, maintain or improve the chemical and physical quality of the surface and groundwater, reduce sedimentation, preserve the hydraulic and navigational capacity of water bodies, preserve natural shoreland features, and minimize the public expenditure to avoid or correct such problems in the future.

	Performance Indicator	Implementation Schedule	Long Range Work plan Budget	Amount Spent to Date	Status	Program Performance	Recommended Change	Current Year Work plan
1	Development Reviews and Assessments	Ongoing	$ 343,916	$ 196,970	Ongoing	As planned	-	$ 15,000
2	Wetland Conservation Act (Staff Time)	Ongoing	$ 30,000.00	$ 28,452	Ongoing	As planned	-	$3,100
3	Erosion and Sediment Control (Staff Time)	Ongoing	$ 140,000.00	$ 125,717	Ongoing	As planned	-	$1,550
4	Rules (Staff Time)	Ongoing	$ 10,000	$ 14,143	Ongoing	As planned	-	$12,400

Progress Evaluation for the Program: IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE

Subcategories: MONITORING

Program Purpose:

To optimize monitoring efforts for regional assessment, the District has designated key locations at critical crossings and checkpoints throughout the watershed as regional assessment locations (Chapter 6, Section 8 of the SWWD 2007 WMP, Houston Engineering). Locations were chosen to characterize water quality and quantity entering or leaving a region and are included on the District's web viewer. Data collected at these locations is used to identify trends in regional water quality and quantity as well as potential areas for concern, develop and verify regional models, set benchmarks for regional water quality, evaluate effectiveness of District Rules and evaluate regional effects of proposed development projects. Once established, all regional assessment locations are part of the District's permanent monitoring program and will be operated until deemed unnecessary by analysis and modeling.

	Performance Indicator	Implementation Schedule	Long Range Work plan Budget	Amount Spent to Date	Status	Program Performance	Recommended Change	Current Year Work plan
1	Survey aquatic vegetation of District Lakes a minimum of every 3 years;	Survey completed in 2015. Re-survey every 3 years.	N/A, included in monitoring budget	$ -	Comprehensive survey completed in 2024 as part of AIS control permitting.	As Planned	Individual lakes are being surveyed as required under permits for AIS control.	$ -
2	Annually implement District's monitoring plan;	Ongoing.	$ 1,776,901	$ 1,647,983	Ongoing.	As Planned	-	$250,000
3	Monitor levels and water quality of all publicly accessible lakes annually;	Ongoing.	N/A, included in monitoring budget	$ -	Ongoing.	As Planned	-	$
4	Monitor established Regional Assessment Locations a minimum of 3 out of every 6 years;	Monitor established sites 3 of every 6 years.	N/A, included in monitoring budget	$ -	Ongoing.	As Planned	-	$ -
5	Implement recommendations of the Strategic	TBD	N/A, included in monitoring budget	$ -	Not started.	N/A	-	$ -

	Assessment Plan once complete.							

Progress Evaluation for the Program: IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE

Subcategories: WATERSHED RESTORATION, RECONSTRUCTION, AND RESILIENCY

Program Purpose:

The District's Watershed Restoration, Reconstruction, and Resiliency program provides implementation funds to address problems that these changes cause including altered hydrographs or increase in peak flows as water runs off of the watershed more quickly, stabilization of natural drainage systems to withstand anticipated discharges, protection and restoration of rare and native communities, increasing resiliency of natural and man-made systems against climate changes, reducing habitat fragmentation by creating or maintaining linear corridors, managing invasive species, and protecting groundwater resources.

	Performance Indicator	Implementation Schedule	Long Range Work plan Budget	Amount Spent to Date	Status	Program Performance	Recommended Change	Current Year Work plan
1	Establishment and protection of identified greenway corridors (Greenway Plan);	Limited implementation ongoing under SWWD's existing greenway plan.	$ 700,000	$ 687,752	Work continues on the Central Greenway (Lake Elmo to Ravine Park) in cooperation with Washington County, Woodbury, Cottage Grove, and S Washington School District.	As Planned	-	$300,000
2	Implementation of completed resource management plans as guided by accompanying retrofit analyses;	Ongoing.	$ 3,875,000	$13,283,111	Underground TSS BMPs completed in Newport in 2020 and 2023, St. Paul Park in 2021. Seasons Park stormwater filter	As Planned	Accelerate implementation.	$1,550,000

					completed in 2021. Wilmes alum facility and Hasenbank stormwater park underway.			
3	Establishment and protection of vegetated buffers along streams, ravines, bluffs and around lakes and wetlands (Buffers, Part II);	TBD	$ 100,000	$ -	Not started.	Not started.	-	$ 50,000
4	Stabilization of identified ravines to prevent downstream transport of sediment and nutrients (Ravine Survey and Assessment Plan);	TBD	$ 179,591	$ 567,792	McQuade ravine stabilization complete. 65th and Geneva Ravine stabilization will occur in 2026. St Croix bluffs lower ravine stabilized in 2025.	As Planned	-	$ 260,000
5	Implementation of yet to be identified practices to increase resiliency of natural and man-made systems against land use and climate change (Climate Adaptation Plan)	TBD	$ 1,000,000	$ 250,000	Plan complete. Resiliency efforts now eligible for funding through SWWDs CCIP program.	Ahead of schedule	-	$
6	Implementation of regionally identified strategies to address aquatic and terrestrial invasive species.	Ongoing	$ 40,000	$ 113,744	Vegetation management efforts underway on Markgrafs, Wilmes, Colby, La, and Ravine Lakes. Will continue in 2025.	As planned.	-	$ 100,000
7	Implement yet to be identified flood damage reduction	Ongoing	$	$ 178,150	Multiple planning efforts have	As planned.	-	$

	and mitigation projects and practices (Flood Damage Reduction and Mitigation Plan;		101,423		been completed. SWWD has funds budgeted to assist Cities with identified improvements.			
8	Identify willing landowners and begin operation of pilot agriculture BMP research program within 6 years;	Ongoing	$ 383,123	$ 63,242	SWWD to participate in LSC 1W1P ag outreach and improvements efforts. Also engaging potential partners in complimentary effort.	As planned.	-	$50,000
9	Provide adequate funding for local implementation actions identified in the Washington County Groundwater Plan		$ 132,026	$ -	Not started.	N/A, all efforts on hold while PFAS planning continues.	-	$ -

Progress Evaluation for the Program: IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE

Subcategories: INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE

Program Purpose:

Communities rely on public watercourses, both natural and piped, for conveyance of stormwater runoff. Additionally, the District and its partners utilize an increasingly long list of BMPs to meet local resource goals. Conveyance systems and physical BMPs need routine inspection and maintenance to ensure long term functionality.

	Performance Indicator	Implementation Schedule	Long Range Work plan Budget	Amount Spent to Date	Status	Program Performance	Recommended Change	Current Year Work plan
1	Maintain database of all physical BMPs;	Ongoing.	$ 185,000	$ 26,000	Work completed annually in cooperation with WCD and other Washington County WMOs.	As Planned	-	$3,900
2	Inspect BMPs at a minimum of 10, 33, and 66% of expected BMP lifetime;	Ongoing.	$ 50,000	$ 54,600	Work completed annually in cooperation with WCD and other Washington County WMOs.	As Planned	-	$26,000
3	Perform maintenance or enforce maintenance agreements as necessary to maintain full resource benefits of BMPs.	Ongoing.	$ 523,194	$ 336,635	SWWD currently contracts with WCD to complete maintenance needs identified as part of annual inspection program.	As Planned	-	$26,000

Progress Evaluation for the Program: IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE

Subcategories: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT

Program Purpose:

Consistent with MN Rule 8410.0080 subp. 2, SWWD defines Capital Improvement Project (CIP) as a physical improvement with an extended useful life. For the purposes of its CIP Program, the District further defines a CIP as having a lifetime of greater than 25 years and a total project cost greater than $50,000. Generally, projects implemented under the District's CIP are developed and analyzed through completion of a feasibility study

	Performance Indicator	Implementation Schedule	Long Range Work plan Budget	Amount Spent to Date	Status	Program Performance	Recommended Change	Current Year Work plan
1	Provide adequate funding to carryout identified capital projects	Ongoing.	N/A	N/A	Current funding levels are adequate to complete planned work.	As Planned	-	N/A; broken out below
2	Deliver Capital improvements as scheduled in the long-range workplan	Ongoing.	$ 18,183,123	$ 14,184,565	Work on phases 3 and 4 of the CDO were completed in 2018. Excavation of regional basins at CDSF began in 2018 and will continue through 2020. Phase 5 was completed in 2020. Trout Brook Phase 2 was completed in 2019. Phase 3 completed in 2024.	As Planned	-	$660,000

Progress Evaluation for the Program: IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE

Subcategories: INCENTIVES

Program Purpose:

Implementation need outpaces the District's implementation capacity. To address that need and gain efficiency by drawing on the capacity of public and private entities in the District, SWWD operates several incentive programs to facilitate implementation by District residents and partners. Those programs are briefly described here. Additional information is available on the SWWD website.

	Performance Indicator	Implementation Schedule	Long Range Work plan Budget	Amount Spent to Date	Status	Program Performance	Recommended Change	Current Year Work plan
1	Maintain and refine existing incentive programs to adequately leverage community interest;	Ongoing.	$ 6,738,742	$ 4,298,276	Programs were modified for use as incentivizing improvements identified in development of SWWD's climate adaptation and resiliency plan. Includes funds granted to Woodbury and Cottage Grove for their irrigation controller cost share programs.	As Planned	-	$ 100,000
2	Expand existing cost share program to effectively target rural areas for source reduction within 3 years;	Expand/refine program by 2020.	N/A, inlcuded above.	$ -	SWWD partnered with WCD and IWI in 2024 to evaluate entire operation of one landowner. Several recommendations were made and served as the basis for a large cost share grant. Efforts will continue.	Behind schedule, first pilot launched in 2024 with WCD and IWI	-	$ -
3	Annually review District's role in and need for supplementing County groundwater focused cost share	Ongoing.	N/A	$ -	Not started.	Behind schedule. Nothing planned.	-	$ -

	and loan programs.							

Progress Evaluation for the Program: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Program Purpose:

SWWD is a member of the East Metro Water Resource Education Program. EMWREP is a partnership formed in 2006 that serves 20 local units of government in the east metro area. The purpose of the shared education program is to provide education to District communities and their residents about the impacts of non-point source pollution (e.g. Nutrients, de-icing chemicals) on local lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater resources and to engage them in projects that will help to protect and improve water quality in the region.

SWWD intends for this plan and its website to serve as a repository of water resource related information. The District's website includes several tools which serve to deliver information to District residents and stakeholders including: Resource Library, Water Quality Monitoring Database, Web Map Viewer and project Story Maps.

	Performance Indicator	Implementation Schedule	Long Range Work plan Budget	Amount Spent to Date	Status	Program Performance	Recommended Change	Current Year Work plan
1	Continue support of and participation in EMWREP; Local Education Programs	Ongoing.	$ 366,844	$ 961,259	Ongoing. Includes support for EMWREP, Master Water Stewards, Watershed Partners, and SWWD's experiential education programming	As Planned	-	$87,000
2	Increase use of Website and Web Tools (staff time);Research; Databases; GIS	Ongoing.	$ 261,376	$ 510,407	Website and tools currently being updated and/or improved to reflect ongoing WMP update and new ADA guidelines.	As Planned	-	$165,000
3	Annually update story mapping as part of annual report to reflect current project status;	Ongoing.	N/A, included above	$ -	Use of storymaps going away as they are inconsistent with ADA guidelines.	As Planned	-	$ -

4	Annually update water quality database to include previous year's data;	Ongoing.	N/A, included above	$ -	SWWD is currently working to transition to a more stable database. Once migration is complete, results will be incorporated on updated SWWD website.	As Planned	-	$ -
5	Annually update web viewer to reflect most recent spatial data;	Ongoing.	N/A, included above	$ -	Ongoing. Comprehensive viewer update completed in 2023.	As Planned	-	$ -
6	Distribute semi-annual newsletter to District residents and stakeholders regarding District efforts and progress in addressing identified resource issues.	Ongoing. News distributed in 2018 via website, Twitter, and Facebook.	N/A, included above	$ -	Information distributed via social medial and website.	Continue to increase news distribution via web.	-	$ -
7	Maintain up to date files on electronic library;	Ongoing.	N/A, included above	$ -	Ongoing.	As Planned	-	$ -

Progress Evaluation for the Program: ADMINISTRATION

Program Purpose:

Watershed administration program has five focus areas to develop and maintain: District Boundary, Funding, Local Water Plans, Reporting and Progress Evaluation and Long Range Workplan.

	Performance Indicator	Implementation Schedule	Long Range Work plan Budget	Amount Spent to Date	Status	Program Performance	Recommended Change	Current Year Work plan
1	Annually, evaluate District progress in achieving identified issue goals and effectiveness of District programs (staff);	Ongoing.	$2,226,090	$ 3,558,205	Ongoing.	As Planned	-	$499,852
2	Maintain funding levels adequate to meet implementation demand of the District;	Ongoing.	N/A, included above	N/A, included above $ -	Ongoing.	As Planned	-	N/A, included above $ -
3	In partnership with neighboring Districts, maintain legal boundary that reflects SWWD's hydrological boundary.	Ongoing.	N/A, included above	N/A, included above $ -	Ongoing.	As Planned	-	N/A, included above $ -

Progress Evaluation for the Program: DEBT SERVICE

Program Purpose:

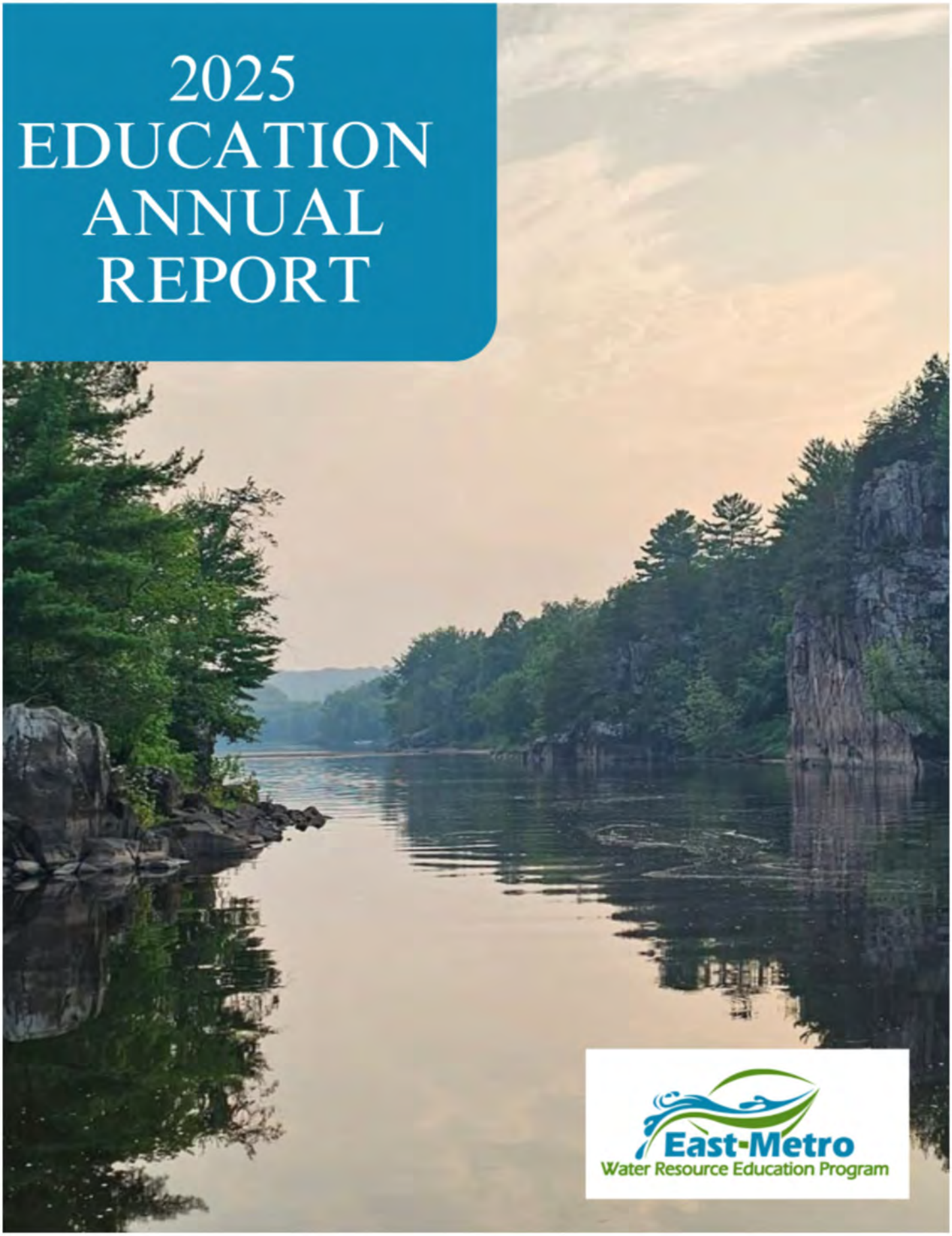
Not specifically mentioned in the 2007 SWWD Watershed Management Plan as a management area, debt service is included in the SWWD annual budget as an accounting fund. In 2002 the SWWD issued $5.8 million in General Obligation Bonds for the purchase of real property as described in the 1997 watershed plan. The SWWD completed acquisition of 150+ acres for increased downstream stormwater system capacity, flood control and stormwater management. Bonds were paid off in 2017. In 2011, SWWD bonded for three projects in the East Mississippi watershed (Newport Ravine, Clear Channel Pond, and Grey Cloud Slough). In 2016, SWWD refinanced the 2011 general obligation bonds. In 2019, the 2016 general obligation bonds crossed over to general obligation ***refunding*** bonds, which will save the SWWD $186,134.

2025 Audit Report on Compliance

The 2025 SWWD Financial Audit will be completed and submitted in May 2026.

Education

2025 EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT



East-Metro
Water Resource Education Program

2025 Education Annual Report

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   - Includes partnerships, youth education, volunteer programs, artistic collaborations, and media.
   - **Special feature:** Well water screening clinics

Appendix A: EMWREP 2025 Program Budget ...……...…..…….……..43

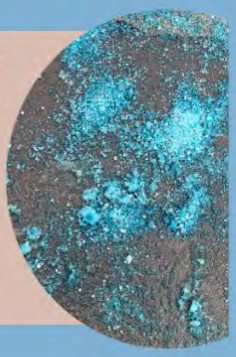
2025 Members of the East Metro Water Resource Education Program:

Afton • Bayport • Brown's Creek Watershed • Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed
Chisago County • Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District • Cottage Grove • Dellwood
Forest Lake • Grant • Hugo • Isanti County • Isanti Conservation District • Lake Elmo
Middle St. Croix Watershed • Newport • Oak Park Heights • Oakdale
Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed • Rice Creek Watershed • South Washington Watershed
Stillwater • St. Paul Park • Valley Branch Watershed • Washington Conservation District
Washington County • Willernie • West Lakeland • Woodbury • Wyoming

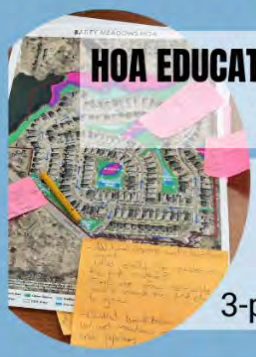
2025 EMWREP HIGHLIGHTS

EMWREP COMMUNITIES GET SMART ABOUT SALT

1119 municipal staff and contractors are Level 1 SMART Salt Certified in our region



HOA EDUCATION = MN WATERSHEDS PROGRAM OF THE YEAR



Representatives from 10 HOA communities participated in our 3-part stormwater series

BROWNS CREEK INSPIRES ART

Twelve regional artists created pieces inspired by Brown's Creek flora and fauna for the Water Where We Live exhibit

ICE RIDGES → EDUCATION

We trained 45 shoreline contractors and helped lakeshore owners turn ice ridges into ecological solutions

RIVERS AS CLASSROOMS

We connected with 300+ watershed staff, local leaders, and area residents afloat the St. Croix & Mississippi.

BUILDING VOLUNTEER NETWORKS

We launched a Tree Steward program and began recruiting Water Stewards for 2026. Quarterly emails go to 1200+ volunteers!

RESIDENTS ADOPT STORM DRAINS

There are 1292 storm drains adopted in Washington County and 113 in Chisago County!

NATURAL SHORELINES TAKE CENTER STAGE

We recognized four Natural Shorelines in 2025 for our inaugural award program.

About the Shared Education Program

Background: The East Metro Water Resource Education Program (EMWREP) is a local government partnership, formed in 2006, which is hosted by the Washington Conservation District. EMWREP's goal is to educate community residents, businesses, staff and decision-makers about issues affecting local lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater resources and to engage people in projects to protect and improve the health of these water resources.

Guiding philosophies and education approach: EMWREP acts as a connector and a catalyst to propel new initiatives, support the work of internal and external partners, and amplify the impact of locally led initiatives. Our education programs are action-oriented, encourage both individual and systemic change, and utilize social science research to guide development of effective outreach and engagement strategies.

EMWREP Partnership Structure:
In 2025, EMWREP partners included:

- Cities and Townships: Bayport, Cottage Grove, Dellwood, Forest Lake, Grant, Hugo, Lake Elmo, Newport, Oakdale, Oak Park Heights, Stillwater, St. Paul Park, Willernie, West Lakeland Township, Woodbury, Wyoming
- Counties: *Chisago, *Isanti, *Washington
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts: *Chisago, *Isanti, *Washington (host)
- Watershed Management Organizations: *Brown's Creek, *Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix, Rice Creek, Ramsey-Washington Metro, *South Washington, and *Valley Branch Watershed Districts, and the *Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization

**Indicates members that are also in the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership*

EMWREP partners jointly fund the program based on a set formula, with fees determined by population (cities and counties) or taxable market value (watershed organizations). See Appendix A for more detail. The program funds 1.5 FTE in staff support, plus materials and other expenses.

EMWREP education staff also work collaboratively with the agronomy outreach and watershed education staff for the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership, who are separately funded through a state grant.

2025 Education staff:

- EMWREP: Angie Hong (1 FTE) and Lori Maxfield (0.75 FTE as of July)
- Lower St. Croix Partnership: Barbara Heitkamp (0.5 FTE watershed education) + Ellen Badger Hanson (1 FTE agronomy outreach)
- AmeriCorps: Lori Maxfield (Jan – July), Samrah Kahn (April – July)

EMWREP staff communicate regularly with local staff at partner organizations, council members, and board members; prepare an annual report detailing program activities; and provide data for partners' MS4 Permit reports. A steering committee comprised of representatives from each of the partner organizations meets twice a year to provide recommendations on the program budget and activities. EMWREP plans and reports are available on-line at www.mnwcd.org/emwrep.

Coordination and Collaboration: The EMWREP and Lower St. Croix Watershed partnerships help to strengthen relationships between member entities and allow for better coordination and less overlap in the management of water resources. EMWREP staff also provide leadership for

several regional partnerships including Watershed Partners; St. Croix Environmental Education Partnership (SWEEP); Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water; and Minnesota Water Stewards.

Resources and Education Goals: Our collaborative education and engagement programming supports the following long-term goals:

1. Healthy lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands;
2. Clean, useable, and plentiful groundwater resources;
3. Connected habitat corridors;
4. An informed, environmentally conscious, and engaged populace that takes individual and collective action to protect and restore natural resources.

Secondary goals include:

1. Building social capacity for environmental change and strengthening community connections through partnerships, volunteer engagement, and education programs that encourage both individual and systemic change;
2. Building climate resiliency; and
3. Ensuring that all people in our communities benefit equally from the protection and restoration of natural resources and are equally engaged in the projects and programs that we implement.

Priority objectives for 2025:

1. Engage public and private landowners to plant native landscapes and raingardens, especially in priority locations.
2. Support partners in maintaining and restoring natural shorelines.
3. Promote conservation-minded development and stormwater management.
4. Minimize stormwater runoff pollution.
5. Build social capacity for environmental change and strengthen community connections.

(Clockwise from upper left) 1) Samrah Kahn bundles up to talk about native plants at the Belwin Bison Festival in Afton; 2) Lori Maxfield and Barbara Heitkamp visit Irving & John Anderson County Park in Oxford Twp; 3) Families hunt for aquatic critters at Carver Lake in Woodbury; 4) Chisago County staff, led by Susanna Wilson Witkowski, film a pair of videos about watercraft inspections at Rush Lake; 5) Angie Hong and Ellen Badger Hanson get ready to kayak at Allemansraat Park in Lindstrom; 6) NPS Ranger Nate Toering speaks during the St. Croix River Workshop on the Water.

Objective 1: Engage public and private landowners to plant native landscapes and raingardens, especially in priority locations.

Components of this work include:

1. Educating and engaging urban, rural, and commercial landowners
2. Collaborating with schools and religious institutions
3. Developing targeted outreach campaigns
4. Identifying and making "big picture" connections
5. Training landscape contractors and professionals
6. Utilizing and supporting regional programs such as Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water
7. Utilizing and supporting local, partner-led programs such as cost-share grants and site visits.

2025 Activities:

Continued participation in the Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water Partnership

The Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water Program is a Minnesota partnership hosted by Metro Blooms. Public, private, and nonprofit partners work together to educate the public about native plants, raingardens and shoreline plantings and encourage homeowners to complete projects on their land. The program operates the www.BlueThumb.org website, hosts workshops and other events, delivers educational messaging through several media platforms, and has produced numerous print resources, including the Blue Thumb Guide to Year Round Yard Care.

Staff from Rice Creek Watershed District, EMWREP, and Washington Conservation District worked collaboratively to grow Blue Thumb into a statewide partnership and develop marketing materials during the first decade of the program (2007-2017) and EMWREP continues to support the Blue Thumb financially ($500 per year), as a guest speaker for events, and through our media and communications.

Since 2019, Blue Thumb has been affiliated with the **Minnesota Lawns to Legumes program**, which is overseen by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). To date, 43,000 Minnesotans have applied and 11,000 have received grant support from Lawns to Legumes to create pollinator-friendly plantings such as bee lawns, native gardens, prairies, and flowering native trees. Pollinator planting projects also help to restore natural landscapes, reduce stormwater runoff pollution, and build climate resiliency for drought and mega-rains.

There is widespread interest in the Lawns to Legumes program and EMWREP continues to promote these and locally administered stewardship grant programs for landowners.

Provide outreach support for cost-share grant programs.

In 2025, EMWREP continued to promote partner-led programs such as watershed cost-share grants and site visits. There were 422 site visit requests in Washington County. A goal for future years could be to begin tracking site visit requests in other counties as well.

Workshops and webinars about native landscapes

Approximately 250 people learned how to create and manage native landscapes during workshops and webinars taught by EMWREP in 2025.

Date	Event	Location	# attendees
Feb. 8	Bringing Life to Your Landscape: Planting for Pollinators and Wildlife, Oakdale Garden Club	Oakdale	20
Feb 19	Trillium Garden Club	Stillwater	15
March 1	Chisago Lakes Business Showcase	Chisago Lakes	50
March 11	Planting for Pollinators Webinar	Online	40
April 3	Planting for Pollinators Webinar	Online	39
April 15	Wonderful Wetlands workshop with Mahtomedi Garden Club	Mahtomedi	30
June 3	Story Time at Cottage Grove Ravine	Cottage Grove	15
June 5	Wetlands of the St. Croix	Afton	27
July 16	Trillium Garden Club Tour	Stillwater	16

Habitat restoration and gardening events

Education staff attended numerous community events and also helped to recruit volunteers for native planting projects. **Note that additional community events, not specifically related to native landscaping or habitat restoration, are listed in other sections of this report.*

- April
  - **Sat., April 5: Tree Stewards Training** at Scandia Community Center
  - **Sat., April 12: Tree Stewards Training** at Lake Elmo Park Reserve
  - **Fri. April 25: Bailey School Forest tree planting** in Newport
  - **Sat., April 26: Brown's Creek tree & shrub planting** in Stillwater (80 volunteers!)
  - **Sat., April 26: Oakdale Eco Fair** at Castle Elementary
  - **Sat. April 26: Sustainable Stillwater Eco Fair** at Pioneer Park
  - **Sat. April 26: Scandia gravel bed nursery** (210 seedlings installed!)
- May
  - **Fri., May 2: Bailey School Forest tree planting** in Newport
  - **Sat. May 3: Growing Together Art & Community Event** in St. Paul Park
  - **Wed., May 7: Hassenbank Park planting** in Woodbury
  - **Fri., May 9: Bailey School Forest tree planting** in Newport
  - **Sat., May 10: Raingarden clean-up event** in Stillwater
  - **Sat., May 17: Invasive removal and native planting** at Lumberjack Landing in Stillwater
  - **Sat., May 17: Bison Festival** at Belwin in Afton (760 people and 30 bison!)

- June
  - **Sat., June 7: Landscape Revival** in Lake Elmo
  - **Sat., June 14: NWTF event** in Harris
- July
  - **July 30 – Aug 3: Washington County Fair**
- August
  - **Tue., Aug 5: Lake Elmo Night to Unite**
- September
  - **Sat., Sept 20: Brown's Creek Community Event** in Stillwater

(Left to right) 1) Samrah Kahn talks about turkeys and native plants at a NWTF event in Harris; 2) Tree Steward volunteers at work; 3) Advertising for Pollinator Pathways grants.

Multimedia content about native landscapes and raingardens

1. Relevant blog posts (and newspaper articles) at Angie Hong's eastmetrowater.org
   - Always the right time to plant a garden (3-7-25) "To plant a tree or a garden is an act of hope. We hope that the snow will melt and the sun will return. We hope that that neighborhood deer and rabbits will find enough food to eat, though not so much that our garden fails to grow. We hope that the earth will keep spinning, and the rain will fall, that there will be a warm home to live in, and hands to do the work. It's a small act of courage in an uncertain world, though really, when you think about it, not so small at all."
   - Tips for dry feet and healthy wetlands (4-11-25) "Though Minnesota might be known as the 'Land of 10,000 lakes,' we could just as easily call ourselves the 'Land of 1,000,000 wetlands.'"
   - Do turf lawns protect us from ticks or make the problem worse? (5-16-25) "Many homeowners assume that a tidy lawn with short grass is the best defense again ticks. On a large scale, however, suburban lawns may actually be making our tick problem worse."
   - Fall yard & garden – no it's not too late to plant! (10-3-25) "In the coming weeks, there are several steps you can take to prep your yard and gardens for winter and continue to support pollinators, birds and other wildlife. But, you might be surprised to learn that fall is also a really great time to plant a native garden!"

Tree Stewards (Washington Conservation District)

Minnesota's Tree Steward program is designed for people who love trees, enjoy being outdoors, and want to volunteer in their community. In addition to caring for community trees, volunteers also help to lead reforestation efforts and share education and tree care information at community events.

One big challenge facing many local communities comes from emerald ash borer, an invasive insect that first arrived in Minnesota in 2009 and has since killed millions of ash trees across the state. Last year, cities in Washington County removed hundreds of dead and dying ash trees, and the problem is expected to get worse in the coming years. Since ash trees comprise half of the urban canopy in many local cities, the impact will be striking.

This spring, EMWREP worked with Washington Conservation District to host volunteer trainings on Saturday, April 5 in Scandia and Saturday, April 12 in Lake Elmo. **We now have 43 certified Tree Stewards who have provided 150 hours of tree care and educational support to our communities in 2025.**

EMWREP partners have utilized Tree Steward volunteers to help complete a wide array of native landscape restoration efforts this year. A few examples include:

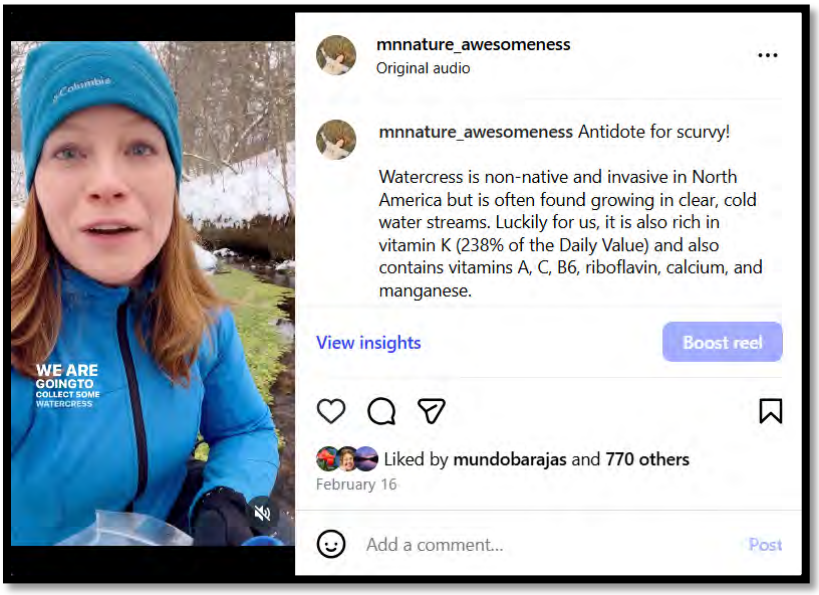
- **Bayport:** pruning boulevard trees and caring for trees planted in the last 5 years
- **Baytown Twp.:** Helping to sort and distribute trees at the WCD spring tree sale
- **Birchwood Village:** attending the community clean-up event
- **Cottage Grove:** pruning and staking trees, and removing undergrowth at Highlands Park
- **Lake Elmo:** pruning trees and attending National Night to Unite
- **Marine on St. Croix:** removing buckthorn
- **Newport:** Planting trees at Bailey School Forest
- **Scandia:** Re-locating the gravel bed tree nursery from the Public Works building to the Community Center
- **Stillwater:** Planting trees at Brown's Creek Park and removing buckthorn
- **Woodbury:** Planting trees at Hassenbank Park and other locations



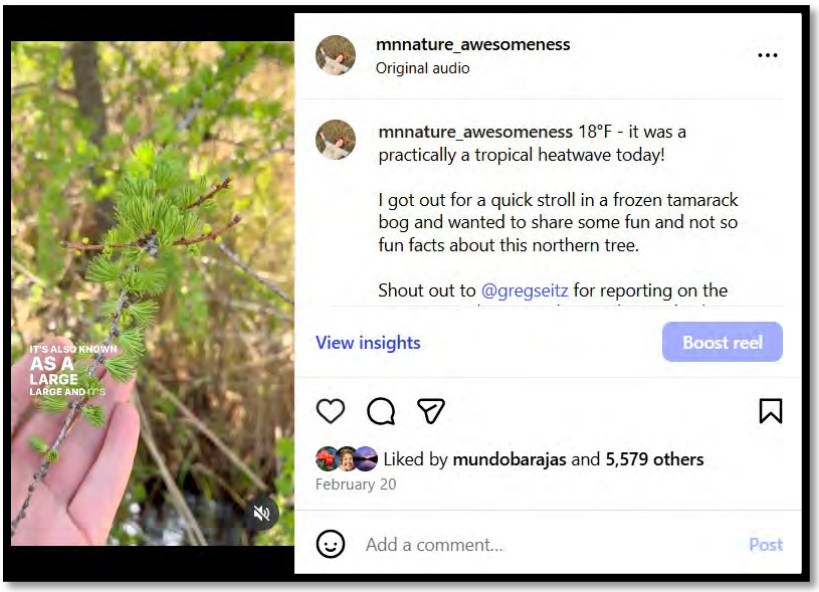
(Left to right) 1) Tree Stewards in Woodbury; 2) Volunteers plant trees at the Brown's Creek restoration site in Stillwater; 3) Young trees, ready to be planted.

Videos about restoring native landscapes shared on @mnnature_awesomeness accounts

- Harvesting watercress for salad (2-16-25) =
  - 4k on TikTok + 58k on Instagram/Facebook

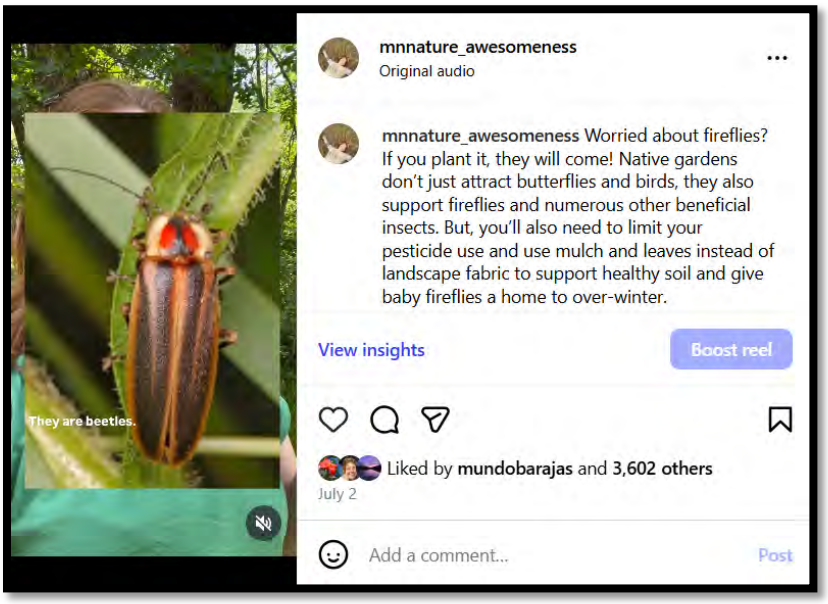


- Tamarack trees and climate change (2-20-25) =
  - 7k on TikTok + 169k on Instagram/Facebook + 1k on YouTube

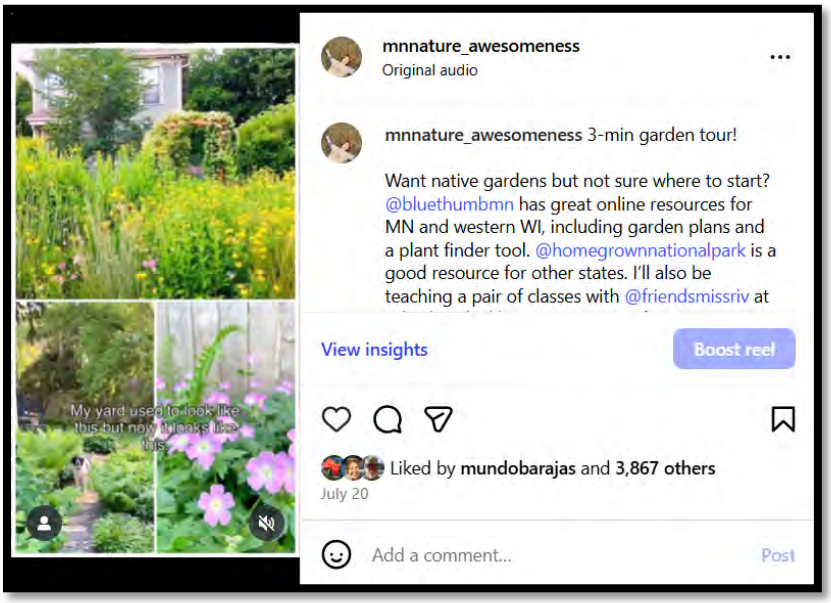


- Plant a tree or native garden (3-3-25) =
  - 2k on TikTok + + 10k on Instagram
- Skunk cabbage (3-14-25) =
  - 6k on TikTok + 5k on Instagram
- Chemical-free buckthorn management (3-17-25) =
  - 7k on TikTok + 19k on Instagram + 1k on YouTube
- Goats to manage invasives (5-16-25) =
  - 2k on TikTok + 7k on Instagram

- Dame's rocket (6-9-25) =
  - 21k on TikTok + 40k on Instagram/Facebook + 2k on YouTube
- Monarch monitoring with Great River Greening (6-29-25) =
  - 2k on TikTok + 6k on Instagram
- Plant native for fireflies (7-2-25) =
  - 13k on TikTok + 96k on Instagram/Facebook



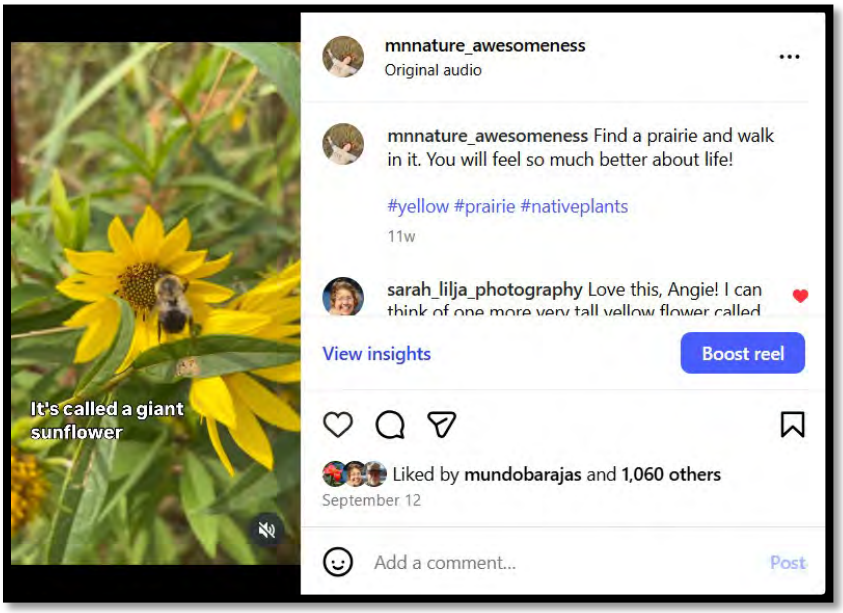
- 3-min garden tour (7-20-25) =
  - 34k on TikTok + 75k on Instagram/Facebook



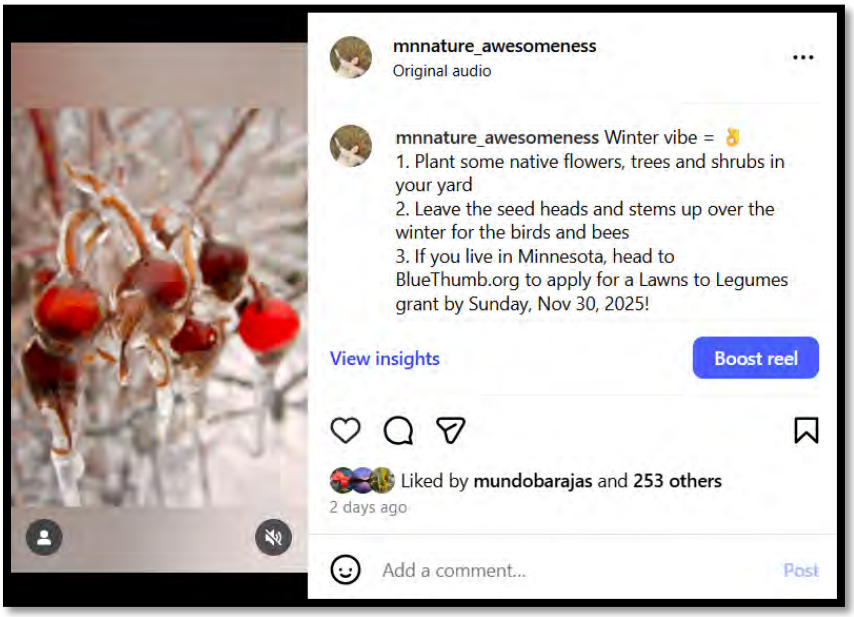
- Native garden growing stages (7-25-25) =
  - 4k on TikTok + 43k on Instagram/Facebook
- Burdock (7-31-25) =
  - 3k on TikTok + 12k on Instgram

- Native gardens are contagious (8-27-25) =
  - 8k on TikTok + 58k on Instagram

- Yellow blooms in the prairie (9-12-25) =
  - 19k on TikTok + 14k on Instagram



- 5 Birds and their habitat needs (9-18-25) =
  - 900 on TikTok + 4k on Instagram
- Late bloomers (10-5-25) =
  - 1300 on TikTok + 4k on Instagram+ 1k on YouTube
- Gathered - book review (11-11-25) =
  - 1k on TikTok + 2k on Instagram
- Chemical-free round leaf bittersweet control (11-20-25) =
  - 1400 on TikTok + 4k on Instagram+ 1k on YouTube
- Winter gardens (11-29-25) =
  - 500 on TikTok + 5k on Instagram



Learning traditional uses for native plants with Migiziwazison

Early this year, EMWREP staff made a connection with with Wendy Stone, a local resident in Grant who is co-founder of Migiziwazison (migizifoundation.org), a private nonprofit foundation based in Indigenous teachings that is focused on land restoration, reclamation, and grassroots efforts to promote a sustainable future.

Wendy and her husband Mark have previously worked with the Washington Conservation District (WCD) to restore woodland and meadow habitat and manage invasive species on their land. Through Migiziwazison, they also work with local residents, schools, and tribal communities to establish edible and medicinal gardens and restore native habitat. “Migiziwazison is rooted in traditional Anishinaabe knowledge,” Wendy says, “but our goal is to help everyone, from any background, understand the thousands of years of humanity’s history in this place we all now call home.”

In February, Angie visited Migiziwazison (Migizi) with Thomas Corcoran, a photographer who is part of the Likely Stories climate resiliency project. Later in March, EMWREP staff worked with Migizi to plan an informal “train the trainer” event for WCD staff. Wendy shared Indigenous knowledge about the traditional medicinal, cultural, and edible uses for native plants that grow in our region. Some of the many plants staff learned about during the visit include Echinacea (purple coneflower), wild onion, milkweeds, Joe pye, marsh horsetail, yarrow, and pines. Wendy shared in-depth info about how to access the health benefits of these plants and also how they’ve commonly been misused in pop culture.

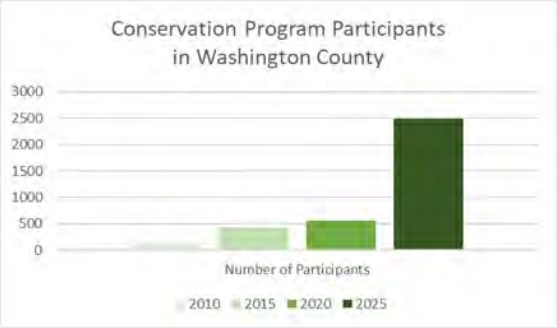
Later in November, Angie and Lori stopped out again to document the results of Wendy and Mark’s non-chemical round leaf bittersweet eradication. The couple was able to successfully kill a large patch of this invasive vine using an old billboard and went on to plant a new native prairie in its place.

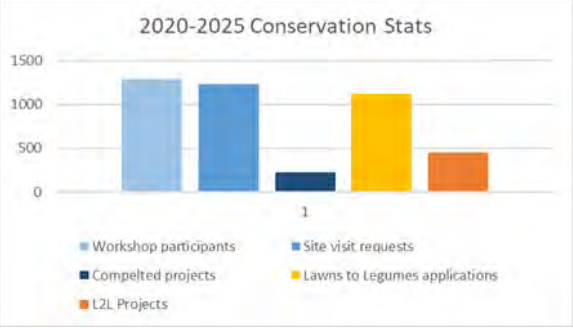
(Left to right) 1) Angie carries Wendy’s cat during a snow tour of Migizi in February; 2) Wendy shares Indigenous knowledge about native plants in Minnesota; 3) WCD staff tour Migizi in March.

2020-2025 Conservation Program Survey (Washington County)

Every five years, EMWREP conducts a survey of conservation program participants, which includes people who have attended workshops, requested site visits, or completed projects (raingarden, shoreline planting, prairie, cover crops, gully repair, etc.) with support from their watershed organizations and/or the Washington Conservation District.

This year's survey was sent to 2483 people and we received 326 responses (13% response rate). The number of conservation "participants" has grown substantially over the past 15 years.





Survey stats and key take-aways:

- In general, most people are happy with our workshops, site visits, grants, project design, and post project assistance. In addition, 80% say they are more knowledgeable about water issues thanks to our programs. However, several people requested more support for long-term project care and maintenance.
- People are most likely to hear about us through newsletters (1) and word-of-mouth (2).
- People are most often motivated by improving wildlife/pollinator habitat (1) or beautifying their landscaping (2). Receiving a grant helps to move them from thinking to acting. On the flipside, lack of time and the cost are most often cited as barriers to completing projects.
- 80% say they have taken other eco-friendly actions since completing their projects.
- 55% say their family, friends or neighbors were inspired to pursue a conservation project.

Here are a few quotes from survey respondents to boost your spirits!

> *I love the site visit as it was helpful and inspiring!*
>
> *We're so lucky to have locally-relevant expertise available to us as residents in such accessible formats. I very much appreciated the free site visit to learn about ways to think about how to improve my property, specifically as it relates to watershed.*
>
> *It really empowers people to learn about the environment and what they can do with just small projects or spaces, it can really make a difference if everyone tries a bit.*
>
> *Everyone was extremely knowledgeable and willing to provide advice.*
>
> *It's good to know there are experts giving advice on how best to conserve and protect our community.*

Objective 2: Maintain and restore natural shorelines.

Components of this work include:

1. Educating and engaging shoreline landowners
2. Collaborating with lake associations
3. Training landscape contractors and professionals
4. Training realtors selling shoreline properties
5. Educating and engaging local leaders from cities, townships and counties to adopt enhanced shoreline ordinances
6. Utilizing and supporting local, partner-led programs such as cost-share grants and site visits.
7. Collaborating with external partners such as Minnesota DNR and MN Lakes and River Advocates (MNLRA)

2025 Programs and Activities:
In 2025, EMWREP collaborated with the Lower St. Croix Partnership on a number of different initiatives including hosting a workshop for shoreline contractors, developing education materials related to ice heaves, continuing to promote the shoreline realtor workshop, and launching a new Natural Shoreline Award program. EMWREP also helped to support a shoreline stewardship campaign that was led by Minnesota Lakes & River Advocates.

Shoreline contractor workshop

On March 19, we hosted a half-day professional training for shoreline contractors that focused on meeting state and local rules, protecting fish and wildlife, and helping lakeshore landowners to deal with ice heaves. Forty-five contractors attended. List of contractors who attended the 3-19-25 workshop

Topics included:

- **Dealing with ice heaves and ridges:** Managing ice ridges in the spring, without impacting the stability of shorelines or damaging sensitive habitat. Which rules apply and who should you contact for proper approvals before beginning restoration work?
- **Staying out of trouble:** Understanding local and state rules for shorelines and wetlands and how to avoid violations, common pitfalls, “stop work” orders, and costly repairs
- **Finding creative ways to meet clients’ requests while protecting the health of our lakes**

Presentations from the workshops are included below:

- Welcome and 2025 Status of Minnesota Lakeshores - (slides) Barbara Heitkamp, Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership, BHeitkamp@mnwcd.org
- Shoreline basics - what’s allowed and what isn’t - (slides) Casey Thiel, Chisago SWCD, casey.thiel@mn.nacdnet.net

- Permitting and coordination for work related to ice ridges - (slides) Tom Langer, Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix WD, tom.langer@cmscwd.org
- Watershed and SWCD assistance and sample designs - (slides) Lori Tella, Washington CD, LTella@mnwcd.org
- Legal Considerations - Michael Welch, Smith Partners, Welch@smithpartners.com

*Click on the session title to watch the video recording of that presentation

On-demand shoreline course for realtors

In 2025, EMWREP and the Lower St. Croix partnership continued to promote our on-demand digital workshop for realtors who specialize in selling shoreline properties. The course was developed in collaboration with several partners from the east-metro area (Isanti SWCD, MN DNR, and MN BWSR) and the St. Paul Area Association of Realtors. It is designed to enhance realtors' understanding of shoreline-specific regulations and management, helping them guide clients to properties that fulfill their lakeshore aspirations.

Accredited by the Minnesota Commissioner of Commerce, this workshop offers 2.5 hours of continuing real estate education credits. For more information and to access the course, visit: https://spaar.com/shoreline-real-estate/

During 2025, 197 realtors registered for the course, with people attending from Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Pine, Ramsey and Washington Counties. Participants provided overwhelmingly positive feedback, rating the class an average of 4.4 / 5 (Very good – exceptional). Here is a sample quote:

> *"Great course, great information to use now and to be aware of in the future. Protecting our natural resources is critical to our sustainability as a species long term, so I hope there is more emphasis on this type of environmental awareness and activities to promote saving our planet. This is important in our changing society and I feel consumers are becoming more aware of the importance what each and every homeowner can do to promote longevity for our planet. Great speakers, presenters and wonderful to have this level of expertise teaching our class on Shoreline RE. "Great information, thank you! (Should be taught at all Minnesota schools.)"*

Natural shorelines video series

During the summer, we partnered with Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates and Erika Gilsdorf of LB Video Productions to launch a three-part video and digital marketing campaign to educate lakeshore landowners about the value of natural shorelines for water quality and wildlife habitat. Links to the videos are below.

- Are you a lake steward?
- Keep loons on your lake with natural shorelines
- Natural shorelines help pollinators

In 2025, we also continued to work with Erika on video PSAs related to aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention. You can find the videos at the Minnesota DNR website.

Barbara Heitkamp also created the logo for the MN Natural Shoreline Partnership, which you see above, and has worked in close partnership with others in the group to create new education materials and outreach strategies.

Lake and stream events

- Tue., Jan. 21: Mill Stream Community Engagement meeting in Marine on St. Croix
- Sat., March 1: Chisago Lakes Business Showcase
- Tue., April 8: Presentation to Oxford Twp. Board
- Sat., May 31: RWMWD WaterFest at Lake Phalen
- Thu., June 5: Center Lakes Association spring meeting
- Mon., June 9: Shoreline restoration event at Lion's Park on White Bear Lake
- Tue., July 15: Big Carnelian Shoreline Tour (by boat!)
- Tue., Aug. 12: Brown's Creek Project Tour
- Wed., Aug. 20: Get the Scoop on Clean Water event at Fransden Park on Rush Lake
- Mon. Sept 29: Critter Quest at Carver Lake
- Mon. Nov. 18: Wetlands and lakes of Oakdale for the Oakdale EMC
- Tue., Nov. 18: Middle St. Croix WMO bluffland landowner workshop

Natural Shoreline Awards Program Debuts

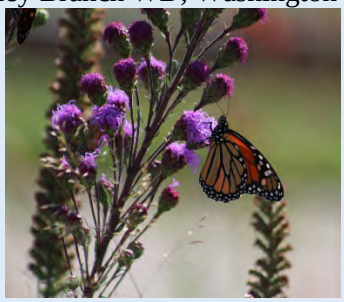
This year, EMWREP and the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership collaborated to launch an award recognition program. Natural Shoreline Awards recognize beautiful lakeshore, riverfront and streamside properties that incorporate native flowers, shrubs, trees and plants. Award-winning properties can be located in Chisago, Isanti, Ramsey or Washington Counties.

Meet our 2025 winners, announced in September:

- ***Single-family residential***
  - **Jane and Joe Lendway on Big Carnelian Lake** (Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix WD, Washington Co)


  - **Jean and John Schreckeis on Keewahtin Lake** (Comfort Lake - Forest Lake WD, Washington Co)


  - **Kim Ury wetland buffer in Oakdale** (Valley Branch WD, Washington Co)

- *Publicly owned park or public water access*
  - **Irving & John Anderson County Park** (Isanti Co)


New print materials

We continue to utilize the Lower St. Croix website as a resource hub for shoreline landowners: www.lsc1w1p.org/shorelines. Some of the new education materials created by EMWREP and Lower St. Croix staff in 2025 include:

- Manage your shoreline for water quality
- Prevent AIS when installing and removing docks and boats
- Dealing with ice ridges and heaves

East Metro Lakes e-newsletter

EMWREP manages an e-newsletter for lake associations and shoreline owners, which is delivered semi-monthly. The email has 196 subscribers in Chisago, Isanti, Ramsey and Washington Counties (Sign-up here).

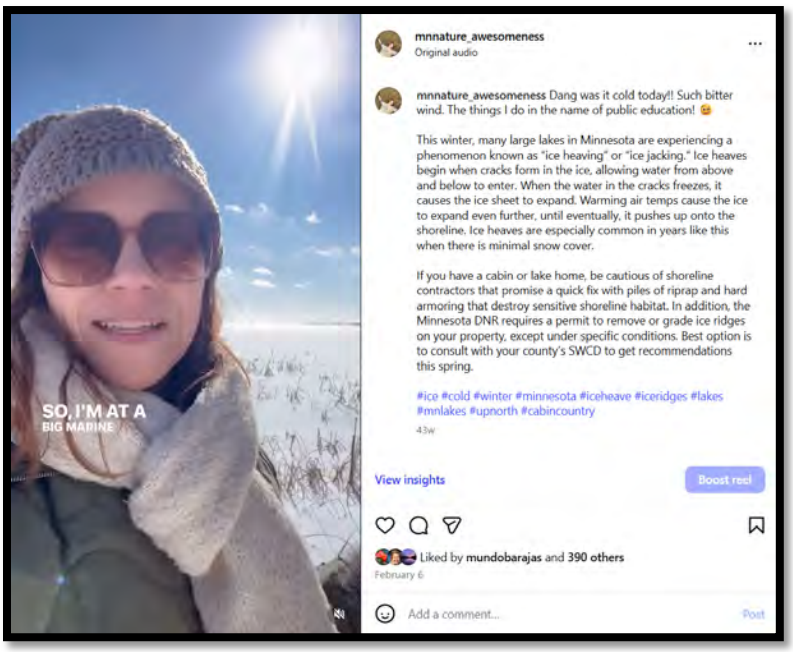
Multimedia Content about shorelines, streams and AIS

- Relevant blog posts (and newspaper articles) at Angie Hong's eastmetrowater.org
    - Ice castles and cliffs plus heaves on my shore? (1-31-25) "From ice castles to sculptures, and even scalable cliffs of ice, Minnesotans are adept at finding creative ways to have fun in the winter. What happens, though, when the dynamic power of ice wrecks havoc on shoreline properties?"
    - Rivers re-wilded, fish return (2-18-25) "From dam removals to re-meander projects, many rivers and streams in Minnesota are regaining their wildness and seeing fish and other wildlife return."
    - Minnesota Lakes – What's in a Name? (4-4-25) "Minnesota is home to 200 Mud Lakes, 150 Long lakes, and 120 Rice lakes. In addition to their actual names, the Minnesota DNR also assigns lakes a shoreland classification – natural environment, recreational development, or general development – that is used to guide lot size, setbacks, and land uses on surrounding properties."
    - Froggy Figaro (4-25-25) "Minnesota is home to 14 species of frogs and toads. During the spring, their chorus rings out as the males search for females and compete to present themselves as the most attractive option with whom to settle down and make a few thousand babies. Because each species has a distinctly different call, you can determine which types of frogs live in your area simply by listening to their symphony."
    - Keeping invaders out of Minnesota waters (5-23-25) "In 2024, Minnesota deployed more than 800 watercraft inspectors to public boat launches around the state to help staunch the spread of zebra mussels, spiny waterflea, and other aquatic invaders. The goal? Preserve Minnesota's famed "good life" and protect fishing, tourism, and cultural mainstays such as wild ricing and "up north at the cabin." One reason for optimism is that we are seeing fewer new infestations and better compliance with state laws for watercraft cleaning and inspections."
    - Mississippi River – Looking forward, looking back (June 6, 2025) "The Mississippi tops American Rivers' list of Most Endangered Rivers. And yet, as we look toward the future, there are reasons to remain optimistic."
    - Score your shore: A tool to measure the health of your lakeshore property (June 13, 2025) "Maintaining and restoring lakeshore habitat isn't just good for wildlife, it also helps to protect valuable real estate from literally washing away."

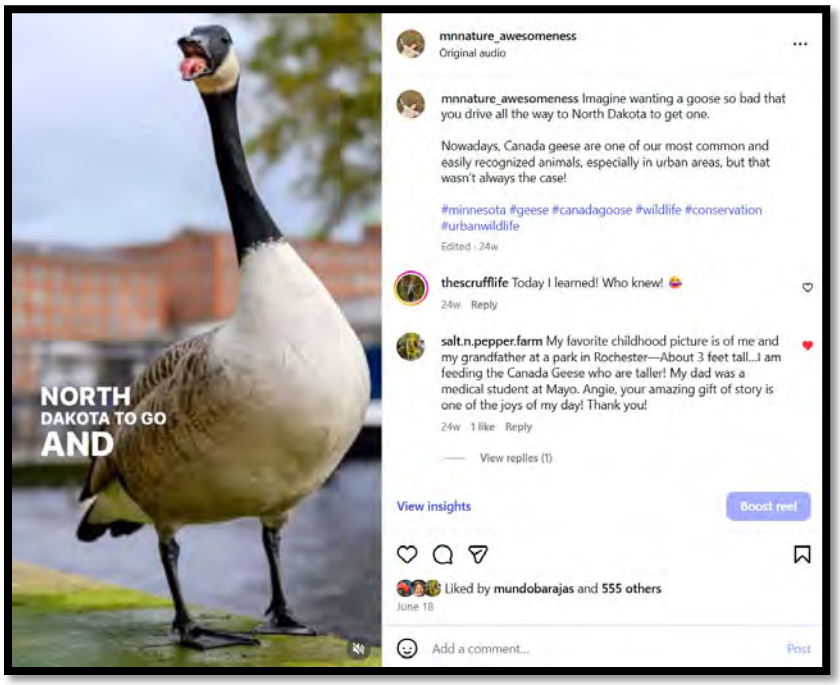
- Good for the goose and gander (June 20, 2025) “Given their current abundance, you might be surprised to learn that Canada geese were a rare novelty in the 1920s. In fact, state and federal agencies actually worked together to breed and re-introduce them to the wild during the 1950s.”
- Why is my lake green? (July 10, 2025) “Across the state, numerous beaches have closed unseasonably early due to blue-green algal blooms, which can be toxic to both people and dogs. How can you tell the difference between blue-green algae and run-of-the-mill pond scum?
- One fish, two fish, plant for more fish? (July 25, 2025) “Seine netting is one technique that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) uses to collect fish when developing an “index of biological integrity” for a lake, known as an IBI score. The number and variety of fish caught helps the DNR to determine whether a lake fully supports aquatic life.”
- Brown’s Creek winds its way toward cleaner water (8-4-25). “This summer, the Brown’s Creek Watershed District completes a large-scale stream restoration project, designed to reduce bank erosion, manage floodwaters during large rain events, and improve habitat for fish along a half-mile stretch of Brown’s Creek that flows between McKusick Ave. and the Brown’s Creek State Trail.”
- Zebra mussels and starry stonewort spread to more Minnesota lakes (8-29-25) “This summer, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has reported new infestations of aquatic invasive species - zebra mussels and starry stonewort - at a dozen lakes across the state. The discoveries underscore the inherent challenge of protecting Minnesota waterways in a state with more than 11,000 lakes, thousands of natural and manmade connections, and countless ways to access the water from public and private lands.”
- Flowers bloom in the shadow of a great white bear (9-5-25) “White Bear is a lake with a storied past. At 2438 acres, it is the second largest lake in the Twin Cities metro, and its history features a legendary fight with a giant bear, steamships, gangsters, famous authors, legal battles, and even an amusement park. Recently, efforts led by the Washington Conservation District have focused on improving habitat and reducing stormwater runoff from small communities located along the southeast shore of the lake.”
- Improvements at Square Lake Park will help to keep the water pristine (10-31-25) “Square Lake is one of the clearest lakes in the Twin Cities area and ranks in the top 1% for water clarity in the entire North Central Hardwood Forest Ecoregion of Minnesota. New park improvements underway this fall are designed to help keep Square Lake clean for years to come.”
- Cattails to the rescue? (11-7-25) “Could cattails help to solve phosphorus and chloride pollution in some of our lakes and wetlands? A new pilot initiative led by the South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) aims to find out.”
- Beaver Love: A new initiative aims to help beavers and people co-exist in harmony (11-28-25) “Last winter, Andy Riesgraf and Emily Fairfax teamed up to establish Beaver Innovations LLC, a UMN start-up company that is focused on finding ways to help beavers and people coexist in harmony. The duo’s first three beaver co-existence projects are located in Washington County at the Big Marine Park Reserve expansion site and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, made possible by funding from Pollinator Friendly Alliance’s biodiversity project.”

Videos about shorelines, streams and AIS shared on @mnnature_awesomeness

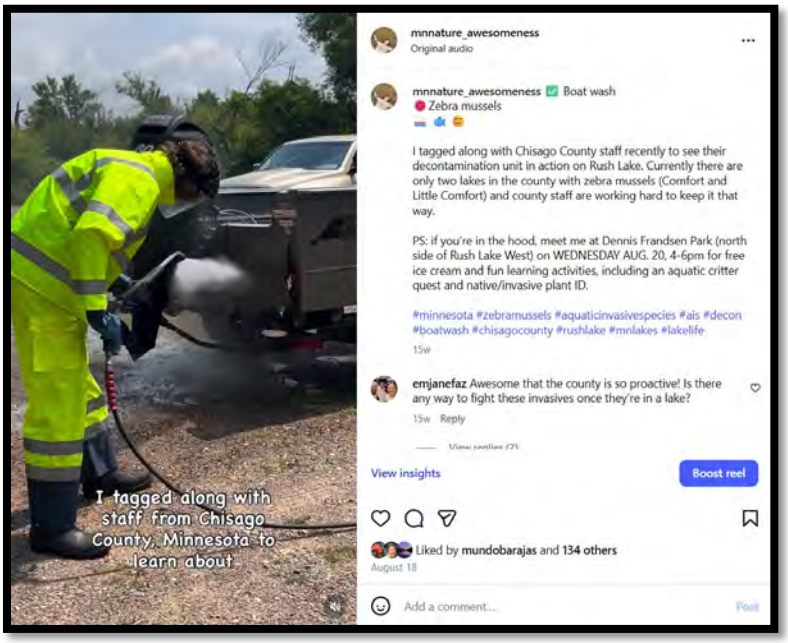
- Ice heaves (2-6-25)
    - 2k on TikTok + 6k on Instagram



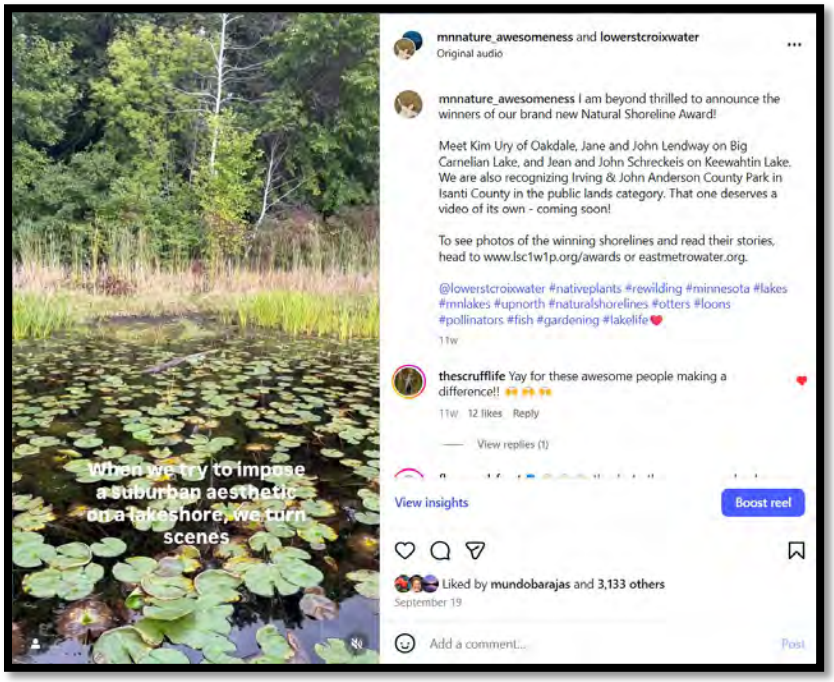
- Why is this pond black? (4-6-25)
    - 18k on TikTok + 9k on Instagram
- Mississippi River (6-3-25)
    - 4k on TikTok + 15k on Instagram
- Get yourself a goose (6-18-25)
    - 5k on TikTok + 14k on Instagram



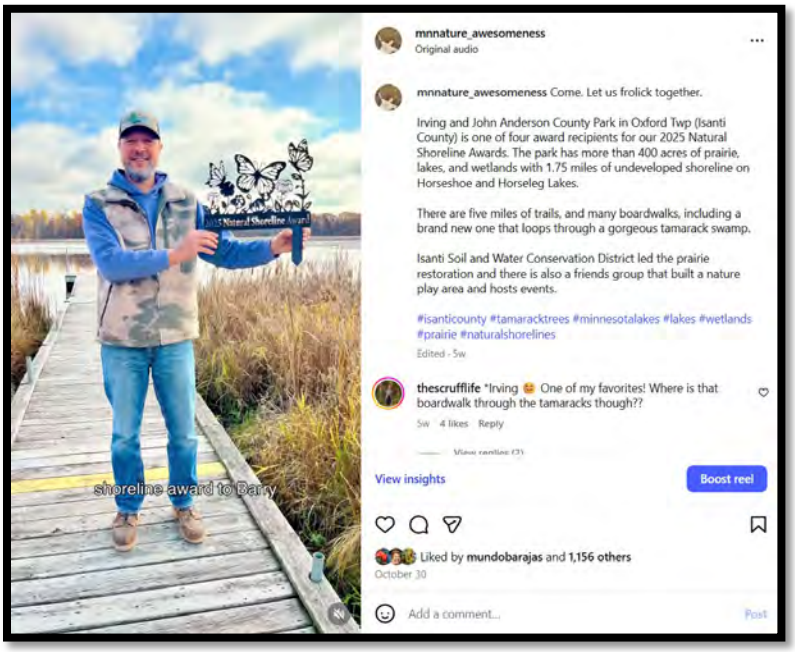
- Fish survey on Big Carnelian (7-16-25)
    - 2.5k on TikTok + 8.5k on Instagram
- Chisago County boat washing (8-18-25)
    - 1.5k on TikTok + 3k on Instagram



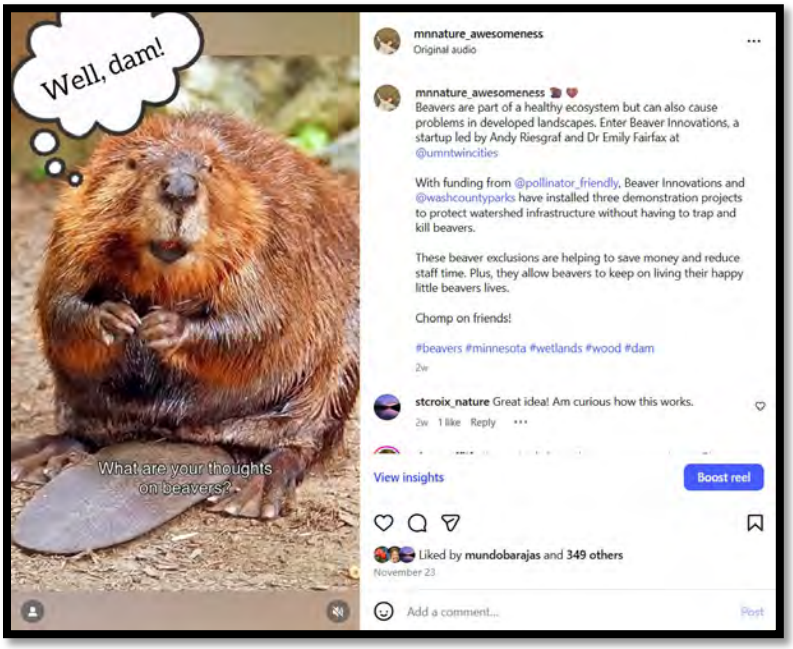
- Lake Alice drained (8-25-25)
    - 10.5k on TikTok + 7k on Instagram
- Lost Lake shoreline restoration (9-11-25)
    - 1.5k on TikTok + 3k on Instagram
- Natural Shoreline Awards (9-19-25)
    - 6k on TikTok + 58k on Instagram



- Brown's Creek restoration (10-8-25)
    - 3.5k on TikTok + 8k on Instagram
- Isanti Co Natural Shoreline Award (10-30-25)
    - 64k on TikTok + 14k on Instagram



- Cattails to the rescue? (11-2-25)
    - 3k on TikTok + 4.5k on Instagram
- Square Lake restoration project (11-17-25)
    - 2k on TikTok + 5k on Instagram
- Beaver co-existence projects (11-23-25)
    - 2k on TikTok + 4.5k on Instagram



Objective 3: Promote conservation-minded development and stormwater management.

Components of this work include:

1. Educating and engaging local leaders from cities, townships and counties to adopt MIDS.
2. Supporting local communities in natural resources planning to preserve open space, protect high quality and sensitive natural resources, and create/maintain habitat corridors.
3. Developing strategies for engaging builders and developers.
4. Developing educational materials for new homebuyers, especially those buying property to build or remodel on their own.
5. Supporting community and partner-led efforts to build climate resiliency

2025 Activities:

St. Croix River Workshop on the Water: July 30 in Taylor's Falls

The annual St. Croix WOW offers a unique opportunity for community leaders to network, access support from state and local government, and learn about issues such as sustainable community development, preventing harmful algal blooms, community forestry, healthy shorelines, and St. Croix Watershed resources and connections.

This year's workshop included keynotes from Matt Poppleton, Executive Director of Wild Rivers Conservancy of the St. Croix and Namekagon, Nate Toering, National Park Service, and Jen Kader, Clean Water Council. There were also five learning stations with mini-presentations. 120 local leaders from cities, counties, townships, watersheds, and SWCDs attended.

Workshop hosts included: EMWREP, Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership, Minnesota DNR, Wisconsin DNR, Chisago, Polk and Washington Counties, National Park Service, and Wild Rivers Conservancy.

Photos: 1) Katelin Anderson (Polk Co), Ellen Badger Hanson (LSC Partnership), Alexis Monti (Wild Rivers Conservancy), Barbara Heitkamp (LSC Partnership), Angie Hong (EMWREP). 2) Lisa Yaeger and Nate Toering talk about future plans from NPS. 3) Beautiful scenery through the St. Croix Dalles. 4) Fred Rozumalski (CMSCWD Board and Barr Engineering) talks about sustainable development. 5) Big wheel paddle. 6) Barbara leads the Shoreline Game.

Collaborate with Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership to conduct outreach to communities related to land use and water quality.

This year, the Lower St. Croix Partnership initiated a contract project with Barr Engineering and JB Hinds to help support outreach and engagement of local communities for ordinance review and updates. JB Hinds presented an initial review of community ordinances and zoning code related to stormwater management and shorelines at the Oct. 27 Policy Committee meeting. This work will be ongoing in 2026.

Supporting community and partner-led efforts to build climate resiliency

- **Watershed District flood resiliency planning:** During the 2023 legislative session, Minnesota invested over $100 million in a Climate Resiliency and Water Infrastructure Grant Program for local and tribal governments. Some of the local entities tapping into those funds this spring include the Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District (CMSCWD), Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD), and Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD).

  In 2025, EMWREP helped CMSCWD to facilitate a series of meetings with the communities of Marine, Scandia, May Twp, and Stillwater Twp. to identify vulnerable infrastructure, such as under-sized culverts and pipes or roads at risk of flooding. Staff have also helped to prepare outreach tools that will be used to share information about the project with the general public and homeowners at risk of flooding.
- **Washington County Climate Action Plan:** Watershed and EMWREP staff discussed challenges and goals for the county's climate action plan at the Sept. 3 water consortium meeting.
- **Likely Stories:** In 2025, Angie continued to participate in Likely Stories: A Photographic Journey through Climate Adaptations in the St. Croix Watershed. As part of this project, local artists seek to document the impacts of climate change, such as black ash swamps, decimated by Emerald ash borer, tamarack "ghost forests," algae blooms on the river and inland lakes, and future changes at the Allen S. King power plant. Equally important, they also hope to showcase examples of individuals, communities and organizations that are taking action to build climate resiliency.
- **Watershed Partners:** We worked with Watershed Partners to host a boat tour on the Mississippi River on June 11, departing from the Watergate Marina in St. Paul. During the workshop, Christy Marsden, curriculum manager for the University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership talked about Community Climate Leaders, a program for anyone looking to start — or sustain — their climate action journey. Community Climate Leaders provides online and in-person instruction on how to use your strengths, passions and motivations to fuel climate action in your community. Abby Moore, outreach Program Manager for the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, also provided a preview of the 2026 Sacred Water, Shared Future Mississippi River campaign.

HOA Education Program recognized as MN Watersheds Program of the Year

Over the past three years, EMWREP has developed a comprehensive education program to support Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) in caring for their stormwater and green infrastructure. The initiative began in 2023-24, when we conducted surveys and focus groups to learn about the knowledge, behaviors, barriers, motivations, and education needs of HOAs. We then created an Education Toolkit with 12 fact sheets, covering a range of topics from stormwater ponds to snow and ice removal, and hosted a conference for HOA leaders.

This year, EMWREP partnered with UMN Water Resources and Minnesota Sea Grant to develop a three-part training course to help HOAs understand stormwater features and plan for long-term maintenance. Ten HOAs participated in the pilot training, which took place on Jan 29, March 18, and May 7. Presentations and materials from this program are now available for any city or watershed district in the state to use. UMN Water Resources intends to take this program statewide in 2026.

The HOA Stormwater Toolkit, as well as presentations and materials developed for the Leadership Course can be found at www.mnwcd.org/hoa-stormwater-tools.

Most recently, EMWREP was recognized as Minnesota Watersheds' Program of the Year for 2025. The award was presented at MN Watershed's annual conference in Nisswa on Dec. 4. Kudos especially to Hannah Peterson, who has been the lead staff person on this project, planning events, developing fact sheets and maintenance resources, and helping to guide the survey and focus group work in 2023-24.

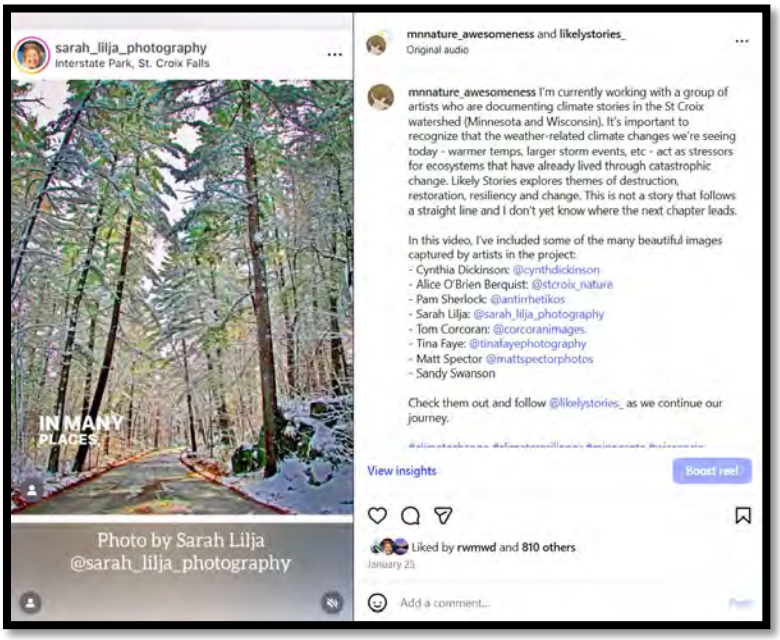
Above: EMWREP partners accept the award for Minnesota Watersheds' 2025 Program of the Year. (From left to right): Karen Kill, Brown's Creek WD, Kendra Sommerfeld, Rice Creek WD, Angie Hong, EMWREP, John Loomis, South Washington WD, Hannah Peterson, Brown's Creek WD, Ed Marchan, Valley Branch WD, Lauren Hazenson, Ramsey-Washington Metro WD, Griffin Brod, Brown's Creek WD.

Multimedia content delivered via print or online:

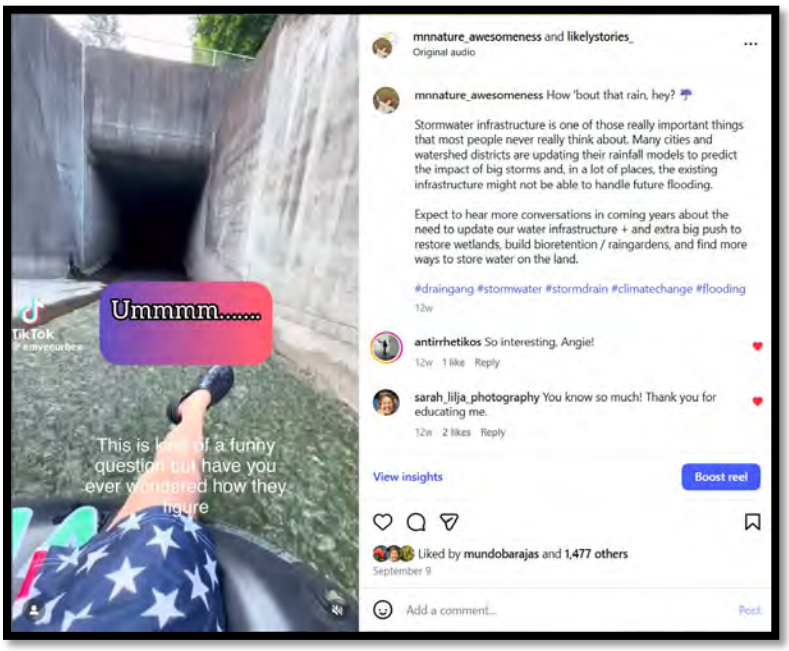
- Relevant blog posts (and newspaper articles) at Angie Hong's eastmetrowater.org
  - New grant funds help local communities prepare for extreme weather (1-19-25) "Local watershed districts, including the Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix, Comfort Lake – Forest Lake, and Ramsey-Washington Metro, are tapping into new funds from the state to reduce flood risk."
  - Likely Stories: A Photographic Journey through Climate Adaptations in the St. Croix Watershed (2-7-25) As part of this project, the artists seek to document the local impacts of climate change, such as black ash swamps, decimated by Emerald ash borer, tamarack "ghost forests," algae blooms on the river and inland lakes, and future changes at the Allen S. King power plant. Equally important, they also hope to showcase examples of individuals, communities and organizations that are taking action to build climate resiliency.
  - State funds help to amplify the work of local government partners in the St. Croix Watershed (5-5-25) "In its first four years, the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership reduced phosphorus to local waterways by 10,959 pounds per year, which is nearly double what the group hoped to achieve over the course of its 10-year plan."
  - What to do when the rain gets rainier (9-15-25) "Minnesota's average annual rainfall has increased 3.4 inches since 1891 and "mega rainstorms" are becoming more common. Learn what local watershed districts are doing to help reduce the risk of flooding in east metro communities."
  - Subtle signs of a changing climate (10-10-25) "Bluegreen algae blooms have become more prevalent in urban lakes, as well as in pristine northern lakes including Lake Itasca, the Boundary Waters, and Quetico Wilderness Area."

Videos shared on @mnnature_awesomeness

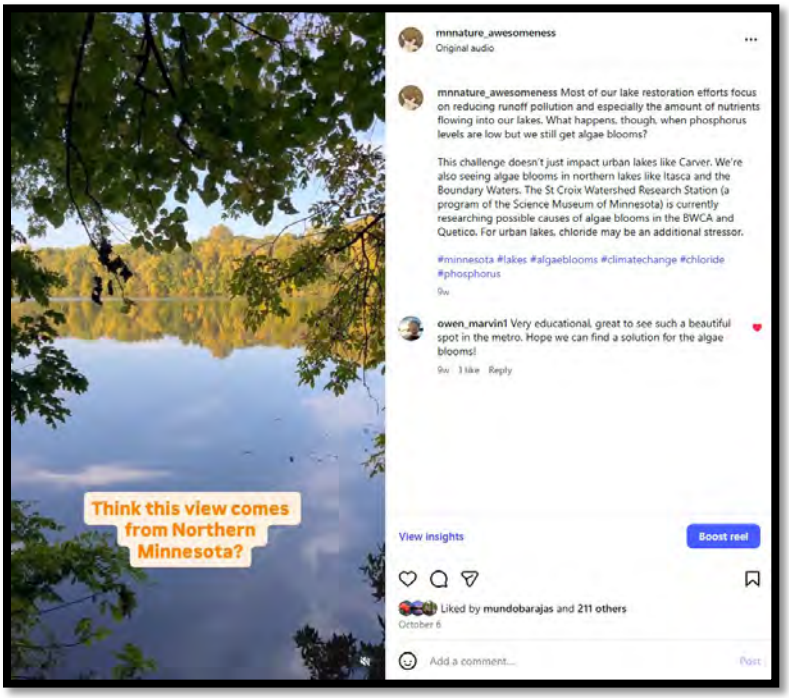
- Climate change and Likely Stories art project (1-25-25)
  - 2k on TikTok + 20k on Instagram



- Keystone Woods WMA (4-4-25)
    - 2k on TikTok + 7k on Instagram + 1k on YouTube
- Vikings and climate change (5-5-25)
    - 3k on TikTok + 1k on YouTube
- How they size stormwater infrastructure (9-9-25)
    - 5k on TikTok + 43k on Instagram



- Carver Lake and climate change (10-6-25)
    - 311k on TikTok + 3.6k on Instagram



Objective 4: Minimize stormwater runoff pollution.

Components of this work include:

1. Creating and disseminating stormwater education materials to the general public
2. Training municipal staff and contractors
3. Supporting partners in meeting MS4 permit requirements
4. Engaging community residents through the Adopt-a-Drain program
5. Utilizing and supporting regional programs such as Watershed Partners

2025 Programs and Activities:

Adopt-a-Drain

The Adopt-a-Drain program engages community residents in helping to prevent stormwater pollution by cleaning leaves, litter and other debris off of storm drains near their homes. Volunteers get reminders via text or email and are asked to report their actions on-line so that cities can track the program's impact.

In 2025, EMWREP continued to promote the program through a variety of means, including:

- Participating in Watershed Partners and financially supporting the Adopt-a-Drain
- Publishing articles in local newspapers and city newsletters
- Collaborating with volunteer groups
- Sending quarterly e-updates to Adopt a Drain volunteers in Chisago and Washington Counties, segmented by county and watershed, to share info about partner programs, upcoming events, and other volunteer opportunities
- Adopt a drain (video)(9-28-25) - 6k views on TikTok + 20k views on Instagram

To date, Minnesotans have adopted **28,100 storm drains**, including 1292 drains in Washington County and 113 drains in Chisago County. Which communities are leading the pack?

1. Woodbury – 347 drains adopted
2. Stillwater – 268 drains adopted
3. Mahtomedi – 180 drains adopted
4. Cottage Grove – 108 drains adopted
5. Oakdale – 108 drains adopted
6. Lake Elmo – 78 drains adopted
7. Forest Lake – 53 drains adopted
8. Chisago City - 50 drains adopted
9. Oak Park Heights – 32 drains adopted
10. Hugo – 30 drains adopted

STORMWATER EDUCATION RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES BY TOPIC

During 2025, EMWREP delivered monthly emails to partners with a variety of education materials including newsletter articles, social media graphics, and videos to be used in public education activities. We also shared these messages in print and social media communications. Activities completed for each topic are listed on the following pages.

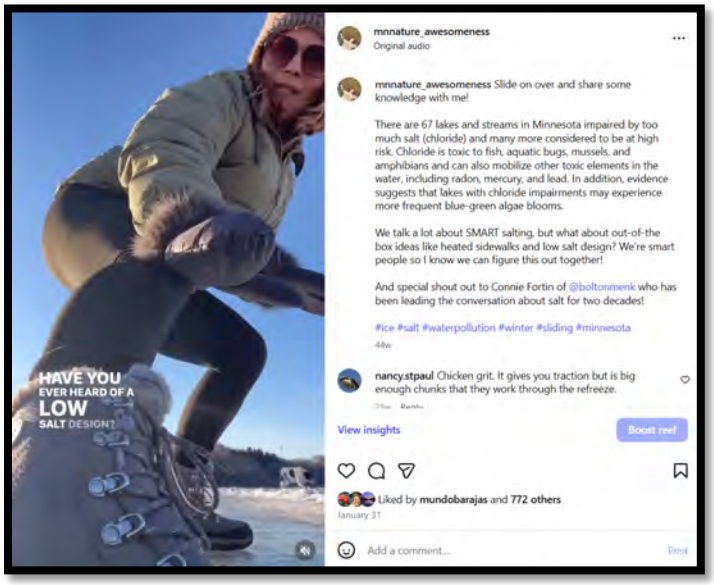
CHLORIDE (SALT)

In January, March, September and December EMWREP shared information and resources related to chloride pollution in the EMWREP partner email. Other activities in 2025 included:

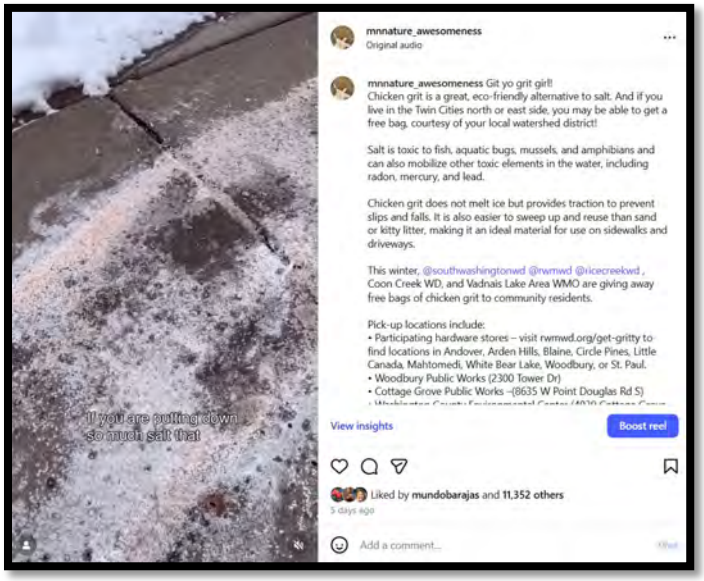
- **Winter Salt Awareness week, Jan 27-31**:
  - Social media: We shared info and presentations daily
  - Direct outreach: we mailed an educational package to 52 private contractors, 75 schools, and 45 HOAs with info about SMART Salting best practices and upcoming trainings. We also send an e-newsletter to 794 Adopt-a-Drain participants, volunteers, and lake associations members.
  - Online complain form**:** we created an online form for people to use to report excessive salt use at commercial properties
  - Community leaders workshop**:** for city councils, township boards, watershed boards and county boards on Jan. 31.
- **Chicken grit giveaways:**
  - During winter of 2024-25, the South Washington Watershed District offered free bags of chicken grit to local residents to use as an eco-friendly salt alternative for keeping sidewalks and driveways safe. The give-away was a smashing success! SWWD purchased 2,160 bags of grit and distributed 1,700 to local residents.

    Each bag is 25lbs, so using grit may have reduced local salt application by as much as 37,500 lbs! The most popular locations for residents to pick up grit were at Woodbury Public Works, Cottage Grove, and the Washington County Environmental Center.
  - During winter of 2025-26, SWWD launched round 2 of their grit give-away. Ramsey Washington Metro WD and Rice Creek WD also coordinated to offer free bags of grit at hardware stores in the north and east metro.
  - EMWREP helped to promote these grit give-aways through social media posts and videos, newspaper articles, and emails to local residents and volunteers.
- **SMART Salt Certification Workshops:** MPCA Smart Salting Trainings suggest ways for winter maintenance pros to save money and time, while reducing chloride pollution. There are now 1119 municipal staff and contractors who are Level 1 SMART Salt certified in our region (Chisago, Isanti, Ramsey, and Washington Counties). In 2025, EMWREP partners hosted two events:
  - **Tue., Nov. 19, 8am-1:30pm**: SMART Salt training for parking lots and sidewalks at Forest Lake City Center. 50 people attended.
  - **Wed., Dec. 10, 9am-1:30pm:** SMART Salt training for property managers and commercial property owners (online). 45 people attended.
- **Sharing resources:**
  - **Video:** Hold the Salt to Protect Minnesota Water
  - Low Salt Design Guide
  - EMWREP attended DaVinci Fest at the Stillwater High School in January.
  - **Tips for reducing water softening salt use**: shared on social media and via e-newsletters in September.
  - Lori helped Water Stewards in Woodbury to develop a SMART Salt education display for the Woodbury library in December.

- **Media communications**
  - When temps plummet, turn to sand or grit instead of salt (1-24-25) "By the time temps drop below 15°F, salt pretty much stops working and the ice will remain solid, no matter how much salt you dump on the ground."
  - Low salt design (video)(1-31-25)
    - 2k on TikTok + 20k on Instagram



  - St. Croix Watershed research highlights growing impact of chloride pollution (7-18-25) "Chloride is toxic to freshwater organisms like fish, frogs, and aquatic invertebrates and also alters lakes' internal chemistry, causing a cascade of unexpected impacts."
  - Salt pollutes – try chicken grit (video) (12-2-2)
    - 48.6k on TikTok + 190k on Instagram



  - Try chicken grit as an eco-friendly alternative to salt (12-5-25) "One way that homeowners, businesses, HOAs, and community organizations can help to reduce water pollution from winter salt is by using chicken grit as a no-salt alternative."

MS4 EDUCATION

In February, we shared info about Minnesota's MS4 General Permit, including this one-page fact sheet, and a new stormwater mapping tool from the MPCA.

ILLICIT DISCHARGE DETECTION AND ELIMINATION

In January, August, and November we shared information about illicit discharge detection and elimination (IDDE), including this one-page handout to help educate community residents about proper disposal of household chemicals and old and unused medications. The flyer also contains info about preventing illicit discharges to storm sewer systems.

Media Communications:

- Chasing rainbows in the shallows (1-15-25) "Seeing rainbows in the water at a stream or wetland near you? It could be from pollution, but not always! Learn how to tell the difference between natural sheens and spilled oil."
- Fish, with a side of anti-depressant? (11-18-25) "How and why are chemicals like estrone, DEET, cocaine, antidepressants, oxycodone, and veterinary antibiotics ending up in our lakes and rivers?"

PET WASTE

In March, we shared information about pet waste:

Reminder: Scoop the poop after the spring snowmelt
Now that the snow is melting, please remember to pick up and dispose of dog poop in your yard and while walking your dog. Dog feces can carry bacteria and parasites, including heartworm, whipworms, hookworms, roundworms, tapeworms, parvovirus, giardia, salmonella and *E. coli*. Some of the parasites remain infectious in contaminated soil for years. In addition, dog poop contains high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen.

Pet waste on or near sidewalks and streets can wash into storm sewers and ditches that connect to local lakes, streams, rivers and wetlands. Nutrients in the feces contribute to harmful algae blooms and the bacteria can make people sick if they are swimming or wading in the water. Some cities have even had to close beaches near dog parks after rainstorms due to contaminated runoff.

The city of [insert name here] requires all pet owners to pick up and dispose of dog poop and other pet waste in the garbage. [Insert ordinance language here.] Please remember to bring plastic bags with you when you walk your dog and pick up dog waste in your yard as well.

NO MOW MAY & SLOW MOW SUMMER

In May, we shared information about lawn alternatives, No Mow May, and "slow mow" summer.

- **Resources shared:**
  - Websites:
    - https://beecityusa.org/no-mow-may
    - How-to instructions for establishing turf alternatives
    - How to Plant a Bee Lawn
    - How to Plant a Low-Mow Lawn

- Articles:
  - "Anti being anti No Mow May"
  - Bee Lawns and Slow Mow Summer

- **Media communications:**
  - No Mow May (5-1-25) =
    - 12k on TikTok + 14k on Instagram
  - No Mow May & Slow Mow Summer (5-9-25) "Participating in No Mow May is a great entry-level action that anyone can take to help protect the environment, and best of all, it is FREE!"
  - Pussytoes lawn (5-6-25) =
    - 4k on TikTok + 6k on Instagram

WATER CONSERATION

In July, we shared information about water conservation inside and outside the home.

WHAT TO DO WITH LEAVES

In October, we shared information about proper management of leaves in the fall.

- Articles:
  - La, la, la leaves!
  - The Science of Leaves

Objective 5: Build social capacity for environmental change and strengthen community connections.

Components of this work include:

1. Building and nurturing partnerships with state and local government, non-profit organizations, sportsman groups, and community groups.
2. Engaging volunteers through programs such as Minnesota Water Stewards, Master Gardeners, AIS Detectors, Adopt-a-Drain, and Adopt-a-Raingarden.
3. Maintaining a robust community presence that utilizes multiple media platforms and communication strategies, including blog and newspaper articles, paper and e-newsletters, social media, websites, and community events.
4. Conducting audience research to understand knowledge, behaviors, barriers, and opportunities and guide development of effective outreach and engagement programs.

2025 Activities:

Participate in regional education partnerships:

One of the most important strategies utilized by the EMWREP program is to build partnerships and work collaboratively with federal, state, and local government; non-profit organizations; and community groups to educate and engage the public. In addition, Watershed Partners and SWEEP are two formal watershed education partnerships that EMWREP has actively supported for years.

- **Watershed Partners**
  - Watershed Partners is a coalition of more than 70 public, private and non-profit organizations in the Twin Cities metro area that has existed since 1996. Watershed Partners holds monthly meetings with guest speakers, oversees the Adopt-a-Drain program and www.CleanWaterMN.org website, and manages the Adopt-a-Drain exhibit space at the Minnesota State Fair.

  - In 2025, EMWREP coordinator Angie Hong continued to serve on the Watershed Partners' steering committee and helped to plan the **June 11 Watershed Partners Boat Tour on the Mississippi River.**

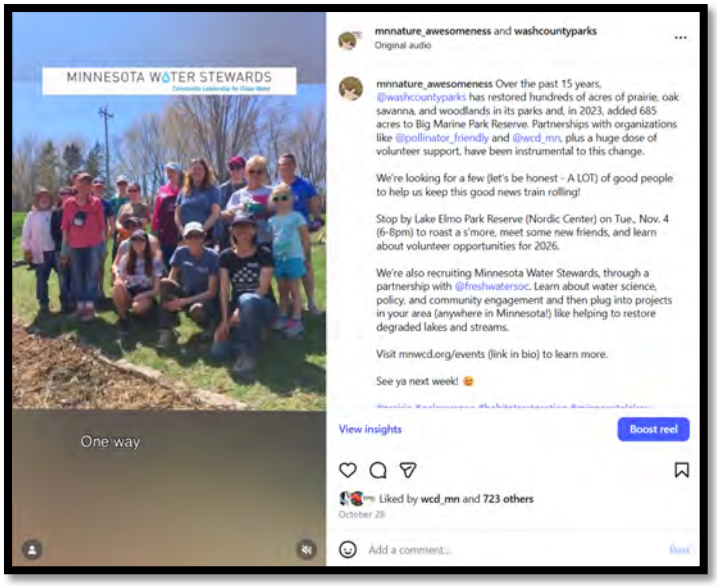
- **St. Croix Watershed Environmental Education Partnership (SWEEP)**
  - SWEEP is a partnership of environmental education professionals within the St. Croix River watershed whose mission is to inspire leadership in environmental education and stewardship through networking, community engagement, and collaboration throughout the St. Croix River watershed. Angie serves on the SWEEP leadership team.

  - In 2025, EMWREP collaborated with SWEEP to hold a communications workshop on **Feb. 25: Communications: Getting it right - from branding to crisis management.** The workshop featured a keynote presentation by Tricia Christiansen, as well as a panel forum with Sharon Stiteler, Chris Smith, and other local conservation communicators. The event was held at Carpenter Nature Center's Minnesota campus in Denmark Twp.

Mentor & engage volunteers

- **Water Stewards:** Water Stewards is a program operated by Freshwater, with local partners. Stewards complete 40-hours of on-line training plus a capstone project to become certified. Once certified, they volunteer 25-hours per year to support watershed and conservation initiatives in their local communities. There are currently 20 Water Stewards working in Washington County. Many have joined citizen advisory committees or boards at cities, watershed districts, SWCDs, and nonprofit organizations in our area.
    - **St. Croix Valley Foundation grant:** In 2025, we received $10k in grant funding from St. Croix Valley Foundation to help us recruit and train new Water Stewards. We'll be doing this work in partnership with the St. Croix Watershed Stewards (a sister organization, with volunteers in Minnesota and Wisconsin).
    - **3M PFAS grant application:** In 2025, also applied for 3M PFAS Phase 2 funds to recruit and train additional water stewards in 2027. Grant awards will be announced in spring 2026. If successful, the grant will also allow us to train stewards as PFAS specialists, design and install interpretive signage at public fishing piers, and offer bilingual fishing programs, in partnership with Baztec.
    - **Volunteer recruitment:**
        - We currently have 5 incoming stewards in Washington County for 2026 and are hoping to recruit stewards in Chisago and Isanti as well.
        - EMWREP hosted a "Friends and Volunteers Bonfire" on Nov. 4 at Lake Elmo Regional Park and has shared information about the program via newspaper articles and social media.
    - **Media communications:**
        - Minnesota Water Stewards goes statewide (10-24-25) "David, Kim, Barb and Mike are part of an elite cadre of volunteers helping to engage communities across Minnesota and western Wisconsin in grass-roots projects to protect and restore lakes, rivers, and streams.

          Beginning in 2026, Freshwater is taking the program statewide and removing the enrollment fee so that more people can participate."
        - Ways to get engaged in local conservation work (10-28-25)
            - 7k on TikTok + 9k on Instagram



- **Tree Stewards:** This spring, the Washington Conservation District launched a new volunteer program in partnership with Minnesota Extension. Tree Stewards attend community events, help to care for city trees, and support reforestation efforts. We currently have 43 Tree Steward volunteers. For more info, see Tree Stewards on pg. 9.
- **Adopt-a-Raingarden:** The Adopt-a-Raingarden program engages community volunteers to care for raingardens in Stillwater and Oak Park Heights. Volunteers commit to removing weeds, litter, and built-up sediment during the growing season and reporting larger maintenance concerns to staff at Washington Conservation District.

  EMWREP collaborates with Sustainable Stillwater to keep an up-to-date list of volunteers and garden locations and plans an annual clean-up event. This year's event was held on May 10 and had eight volunteer participants.
- **AIS Detectors:** This program is offered through the University of Minnesota. Participants complete 6-8 hours of on-line training and attend one full-day, in-person workshop. They learn how to identify invasive species including: Eurasian watermilfoil, hydrilla, starry stonewort, spiny waterflea, rusty crayfish, zebra mussels, quagga mussels, bighead carp, silver carp, round goby, and ruffe. Volunteers received a certificate upon completion of training and are asked to volunteer 25 hours per year.

  There are currently 20 AIS Detectors in Washington County. In 2026, EMWREP may host mini AIS identification trainings, in partnership with watersheds and counties.

Youth education

- **South Washington Schools:** For the past four years, South Washington WD and Washington County PHE have supported watershed education at South Washington Schools through a partnership with Carpenter Nature Center. In the current model, 6th grade students from Cottage Grove, Lake, and Oltman Middle Schools participate in five in-person lessons at their school and then enjoy a capstone visit to the nature center. EMWREP staff also help to teach these classes. In spring 2026, we hope to expand programming to include Woodbury Middle School, in partnership with Ramsey-Washington Metro WD.

- **Stillwater Schools:** During the 2025-26 school year, Belwin Conservancy began providing programming to 1,800 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students at Stillwater's seven elementary schools, with funding support from Brown's Creek and Valley Branch WDs. This will expand Belwin's existing education programming for St. Paul Schools, which has been ongoing since the late 1970s.

- **Children's Water Festivals:**
  - **Isanti County** hosted its children's water festival on May 16 in Cambridge.
  - **Metro Children's Water Festival** was held on Wed., Sept 24 at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. Each year, 1300 4th grade students from the seven-county metro area attend the CWF to participate in a variety of water-themed lessons and activities. A "Virtual Festival" is also available year-round for any teachers in Minnesota to use, and has modules related to hydrology, impacts, water, invasive species, climate change, and careers: https://metrocwf.org/festival/#virtual.
  - **Chisago Children's Water Festival** was held on Thu., Sept 25 at Wild Mountain in Taylor's Falls. 600 students from Chisago County attend the festival each year.

- **Volunteer Stream Monitoring:** Washington Conservation District (Aaron DeRusha and Carley Milanovich) works with high school students from Stillwater Area High School and St. Croix Prep to survey macroinvertebrate populations in Brown's Creek, Mill Stream, and Valley Creek. The students are trained using EPA protocols and WCD staff perform quality assurance checks and manages the data to ensure that it is useful to the watershed districts.

- **School Planting Projects:** There are new school planting projects in progress at Forest Lake High, Lily Lake Elem. (Stillwater), New Heights (Stillwater), Afton-Lakeland Elem., St. Croix Montessori (West Lakeland), Cottage Grove Elem, and Oltman Middle (Cottage Grove).

- **Youth Mentorship Pilot Program:** In 2024-25, Jessica Sahu Teli began planning a youth mentorship program for rising juniors and seniors at Tartan High School in Oakdale. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the program due to low enrollment. Lori Maxfield is now working with area high schools in Isanti, Chisago and Washington Counties to offer support for and info about possible careers in natural resources. We are currently discussing the possibility of a shorter, one-day event for high school youth in summer 2026.

- **Other youth education:** EMWREP staff also participated in the following youth events.
    - **Jan. 25: DaVinci Fest** at Stillwater High School
    - **March 20: Speaking Science** session at UMN
    - **April 24: Envirothon**
    - **July 22: Nature Exploration Camp** at Sunfish Lake Park in Lake Elmo
    - **July 23: Nature camp** at Ojibwe Park in Woodbury
    - **Sept. 20: Flock Together** BIPOC birding event at Lake Elmo Park Reserve
    - **Sept 29: Critter Quest** at Carver Lake
    - **Oct. 20-24: Carpenter Nature Center field trips** (765 kids attended!!)
    - **Nov. 12: National Science Teaching Association STEM Showcase** – Innovation Partner

Photos: 1-3) Students search for macroinvertebrates in the St. Croix River at Carpenter Nature Center. 4) A student at Cottage Grove Middle School tests out a constructed water filter. 5) Students learn about aquatic macroinvertebrates at Chisago Children's Water Festival.

Presentations:

Throughout the year, EMWREP staff gave dozens of presentations about local water issues, conservation success stories, partner projects and programs, and more.

- **Feb. 3: Presentation for Bayport City Council** (Barbara)
- **Feb. 6: Write in Our Midst:** Author Talk for Washington County Libraries about the St. Croix River (Angie) (30 participants)
- **Feb. 11: Presentation to Friends of Scandia Parks & Trails** at Scandia Community Center. (Angie) (25 participants)
- **Feb. 19: Wednesday with a Scholar series - Ramsey County Libraries**, in conjunction with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Minnesota. (Angie) (82 participants)
- **March 17: Presentation to Oakdale Environmental Planning Commission.** (Angie)
- **April 8: Exploring the St. Croix: Adventures on and off the Water.** Hosted by Wild Ones - Oak Savanna St. Croix Chapter at Family Means in Stillwater (Angie)(25 participants)
- **May 6: Presentation for Sentence to Serve crew** (Angie and Tara Kelly) (10 participants)
- **June 26: Exploring the St. Croix River Valley.** Presentation to Washington County Master Gardeners at Bayport Library. (Angie) (90 participants)
- **July 15: Presentation about the St. Croix River** at Boutwell's Landing in Oak Park Heights (Angie) (80 participants)
- **July 23: State of the Water in the St. Croix Watershed.** Presentation to Hudson Sunrise Rotary. (Angie) (30 participants)
- **Aug. 19: History Cruise** (Stillwater). Presentation about natural history and conservation in the St. Croix River watershed. (Angie) (154 participants)
- **Sept. 16: Chisago SWCD 75th Anniversary** bus tour and open house (North Branch) (Angie, Barbara, Ellen helped to plan) (25 bus / 50 open house)
- **Sept 16: Waters of Chisago County: Challenges, Changes, and Choices.** At the Chisago Lakes Area Library. (Barbara) (7 participants)
- **Nov. 5: Twin Cities Water Monitoring and Data Group**. Communicating with decision-makers and the public. (Angie)
- **Nov. 17:** Sharing EWMREP model with west metro partners (Angie)
- **Nov. 18: Stillwater Sunrise Rotary.** Presentation about watershed climate resiliency efforts (Angie) (45 participants)

Photos: 1) Angie talks about the natural history of the St. Croix River, from volcanoes and glaciers to present time; 2) The room was packed for a presentation about climate resiliency; 3) The history cruise was a special event for Washington County Historical Society.

Collaborate with artists to share watershed and conservation stories

The Water Where We Live: In winter of 2024-25, Brown's Creek Watershed District launched a collaboration with artist Victoria Bradford Styrbicki to showcase art inspired by the flora and fauna of the Brown's Creek Watershed. Twelve participating artists included Jennifer Anderson, Amy Clark, Mimi Exon, Deanna Grigus, Thersa Harsma, Brighton McCormick, Megan Miller, Jenny Elaine, Robin Stumbo, Amy Walsh, Jill Waterhouse, and Wookiye Win.

Over the course of several months, these artists learned from environmental professionals at Brown's Creek WD and EOR Inc and created art using a variety of different media. The art was displayed at A House Unbuilt's art, water, and ecology community space in Stillwater and there was an opening reception on March 6. Angie Hong also spoke at the event. The art was later shown at the Art Reach mobile art gallery and The Lakes of Stillwater senior living facility.

Read more about this project in this East Metro Water blog post from Feb. 28.

Photos: 1) Victoria Bradford Styrbicki stands by the Water Bar at her gallery in Stillwater. 2) A video provides info on how the project was developed.

South Washington Watershed District artist residency and installations: The SWWD's second artist resident was Taylor Mills, a Minnesota-born video, photo, and drone professional who captured footage of projects and locations around the district.

SWWD also sponsored several art installations at project sites. At Hasenbank Park in Woodbury, artists Christopher Harrison created a large staircase of gear-shaped stones, while Aaron Dysart fabricated a large metal tree and purple coneflower. At Wilmes Lake, Ojibwe artist Nipinet Landsem created a mural for the alum treatment facility.

Photos: 1) The mural at Wilmes Lake was completed in the fall. 2) A video from City of Woobury provides info about the art at Hasenbank Park.

Well Water Screening Clinics

Volunteers from Minnesota Ground Water Association and Minnesota Well Owners Organization helped us to conduct several very “well” attended Well Screening Clinics in 2025. Some of the volunteers came from as far away as Bemidji!

- Nearly 200 people attended the first clinic, which was held in Chisago Lakes on June 12
- During the Aug. 21 clinic in Baytown, we tested 135 samples for nitrate and chloride (200+ attendees) and had lots of important conversations about PFAS and other local drinking water concerns.
- The Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership also hosted a well screening clinic at Rock Creek Town Hall (Pine City) on Sept. 26, which was attended by many residents in northern Chisago and Isanti Counties.

Photos: 1) Water towards on display at Lakes Region EMA in North Branch. 2) Two volunteers measure water samples for nitrate at the Baytown screening clinic.

Currently, 100% of drinking water in Chisago, Isanti, and Washington Counties comes from groundwater. Groundwater also flows into and through cold-water trout streams, such as Brown’s Creek and Valley Creek; popular lakes, including Lake Elmo, Square and White Bear; and unique natural features such as a tamarack bog in Woodbury and black ash swamps along the St. Croix River. Nitrates and chlorides can degrade natural resources and also affect the safety of our drinking water supplies.

Chloride concentrations have been increasing in the Minnesota, St. Croix, and Mississippi Rivers since 1985 and there are 68 lakes and streams in the state that are classified as “impaired” for having too much chloride (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency). The MPCA has also found that 16% of shallow monitoring wells in the Twin Cities area have too much chloride. Chloride in drinking water can corrode lead and copper pipes, leading to additional health concerns.

Nitrate from fertilizer is another common groundwater contaminant. Through its Township Testing program, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has found that 9% of wells in communities with significant row crop production have nitrate levels above 10 mg/L (the health risk limit). In some locations, the percentage of private wells with elevated nitrates is even higher. This includes Cottage Grove (28%) and Denmark Twp. (14%).

EMWREP’s well screening clinics are free and have proven to be a good way to connect with community residents about a wide variety of water-related topics.

Media and communications

Print Communications

Newspaper articles: Angie Hong has published a weekly column for the Valley Life – Stillwater Gazette since 2006. The articles are posted on-line at www.eastmetrowater.org. Her column is featured monthly in the Forest Lake Times and is also frequently published in the Scandia Country Messenger, Cottage Grove Journal, Forest Lake and St. Croix Lowdowns, White Bear Press, and the St. Croix 360 online news site.

EMWREP also provides content for city, watershed, and WCD newsletters and helped to develop numerous targeted mailings for partners in 2025.

Online Communications

EMWREP uses a variety of online communication platforms to educate and engage with the public, including websites, social media, webinars, story maps, and a blog site. Staff also create content, including photos, events, articles, and videos for partners to share on their platforms.

Websites: EMWREP uses the following websites to share education and information:

- Washington Conservation District: www.mnwcd.org
    - /events - event info and registration
    - /emwrep - annual reports, plans, and downloadable print materials
    - /planting-for-clean-water - resources for planting projects
- East Metro Water: https://eastmetrowater.org - Tips and tales on keeping water clean
- Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water: www.bluethumb.org
    - Raingardens, native plants, shoreline buffers, and Lawns to Legumes
- Clean Water Minnesota: www.cleanwatermn.org
    - Watershed Partners produces high quality photos and articles for partners to use in their communications. Blog stories highlight actions that Minnesotans are taking to protect water.

Social Media Accounts:

Content is also shared on the following social media platforms:

- TikTok - @mnnature_awesomeness 111,800 followers
- Instagram - @mnnature_awesomeness 40,100 followers
- Facebook - @mnwcd - 1,500 followers
- East Metro Water blog – www.eastmetrowater.org – 2646 subscribers
- YouTube – @mnnature – 556 subscribers

During 2025, EMWREP produced 66 short videos for TikTok and Instagram. The five most popular videos this past year were:

1. An irruption of owls: 735,600 total views
2. Carver Lake blue-green algae blooms: 314,700 total views
3. Glacial erratics: 264,500 total views
4. Chloride pollution / chicken grit give-away: 238,600 total views
5. Tamaracks and climate change: 175,600 total views

APPENDIX A

EMWREP PROGRAM BUDGET

Staff Support and Overhead Expenses	Materials	Total
$181,685	$13,000	**$194,685**

MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS

	Partner	2025 Contribution
Watershed Management Organizations	Browns Creek Watershed District	$24,500
	Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District	$16,000
	Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization	$6685
	Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District	$16,000
	Rice Creek Watershed District	$6000
	South Washington Watershed District	$32,000
	Valley Branch Watershed District	$24,500
Counties	Chisago County	$8,000
	Isanti County	$1,600
	Washington County	$16,300
Soil & Water Conservation Districts	Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District	$8,000
	Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District	$1,600
Cities & Townships	City of Afton	$900
	City of Bayport	$900
	City of Cottage Grove	$3,500
	City of Dellwood	$900
	City of Forest Lake	$3,500
	City of Grant	$900
	City of Hugo	$3,500
	City of Lake Elmo	$3,500
	City of Newport	$900
	City of Oak Park Heights	$900
	City of Oakdale	$3,500
	City of St. Paul Park	$900
	City of Stillwater	$3,500
	City of Willernie	$900
	City of Woodbury	$3,500
	City of Wyoming	$900
	West Lakeland Township	$900
	TOTAL	**$194,685.00**

Local Articles

Woodbury News Net • June 4, 2025 • https://woodburynewsnet.org/3805/city-county/hasenbank-park-a-visionary-green-space-grand-opening-june-12/

Hasenbank Park: A Visionary Green Space Grand Opening June 12

by Doug Schultz

Doug Schultz

Functional art pieces, like these stepping stone stairs, called "Gears" by Minneapolis artist Christopher Harrison, allow visitors to Hasenbank Park to see up close how the park's stormwater filtration basins work.

WOODBURY, MN (WNN) – It's a whimsical yet functional public art installation. It's a prairie and woodland restoration site. It's a water quality improvement project. It's an outdoor educational experience space. It's just a fun place to play and wander.

It's not often that a new city park has the potential to be so many things for so many people, but that's exactly what the backers and planners of Woodbury's new **Hasenbank Park** hope it will be: a multipurpose park that is all of the above and more. The park is located along St. John's Drive, with its entrance at 10552 Water Lily Lane, on the city's east side, just north of Valley Creek Drive.

The new 5.5-acre park will not only connect the local neighborhoods with the Powers Lake trail loop, but will enhance the natural resources of the site, treat stormwater, make ecological processes visible, and restore critical habitat.

A collaboration between the South Washington Watershed District and the City of Woodbury that's been several years in the making, Hasenbank Park will hold its grand opening Thursday, June 12, from 4 to 5 p.m. The park is named after the Hasenbank family, who were early farmers in the area.

Staff from the city and watershed district, along with engineers from Barr Engineering, will be on site to answer questions (and perhaps make a speech or two). The artists will be there to talk about their work. An ice cream truck will provide refreshments. And groups involved in the project and with water quality and parks in general will have tables to provide information for the public.

The Washington Conservation District's Facebook page offers this invitation for the event:

"Explore the trails, public art, restored Hasenbank Woods, and the park-wide stormwater infiltration system that brings it all together. Take a self-guided tour through the park and follow the path of water as it moves through the system. Get to know the story behind the public art offerings, and learn about the restoration efforts in Hasenbank Woods.

"This is a free community event, open to the public. There is no parking lot at Hasenbank Park, so visitors are encouraged to walk, bike, and carpool."

John Loomis, SWWD's executive director, offered a more modest expectation for the event: "Hopefully it will be a chance for the neighbors to see that project that they've been watching over the last couple years." But he was quick to note that the park is innovative in combining habitat improvement, water quality protection measures and educational opportunities into one project. "All of our program ideas came together at this site," he said.

This metal sculpture of a bur oak, by Minneapolis artist Aaron Dysart, helps interpret features of Woodbury's new Hasenbank Park. (Image by Doug Schultz)

How It Came Together

The park is centered around two features: A wooded area on its east side and an open prairie area with stormwater filtration basins that incorporate art into their function. Long before the art (we'll get to that shortly) became a thing, though, the main impetus for the park was a desire to protect the water quality of Powers Lake to the west. While Powers Lake is not impaired and its water quality is good, "We're trying to do what we can to keep it that way," Loomis said.

The problem was that nutrient and chloride-rich water from Fish Lake and stormwater from other developed areas to the east flow into Powers Lake.

A number of factors are contributing to the build-up of phosphorus and other chemicals in the sediment of Fish Lake. They include the agricultural past of eastern Woodbury and the subsequent development of Woodbury, specifically Dancing Waters, that added chlorides (from street salts and home water treatment systems).A passive discharge pipe from Fish Lake to Powers was just beginning to degrade the quality of Powers Lake, too so this project came about in the nick of time.

The SWWD approached the City of Woodbury about using the city-owned parcel to construct a "best management practice" to protect Powers Lake, Loomis said, and in 2022 they began working together on the project. This was a multi-phased approach over several years.

First came restoration of Hasenbank Woods, a remnant oak forest and savannah that had become overgrown with invasive species. A herd of goats was hired to help restore native plant species. The goats love to eat invasive species like buckthorn and garlic mustard, and their hooves help to push native tree and plant seeds further into the soil.

In addition, work crews and volunteers thinned the woodland canopy, removed invasive species mechanically or by hand and reseeded the ground beneath the old-growth trees with native grasses, flowers and shrubs "to create a healthier, more resilient landscape," according to a July 2024 article in the Stillwater Gazette. This restored landscape is better at filtering water as it flows toward Powers Lake.

About That Art

Next came construction of a series of infiltration basins amidst restored prairie habitat designed to filter and absorb both stormwater and the water from Fish Lake. SWWD and the city worked with Barr Engineering on this part, and all three in turn worked with Minneapolis-based artist Christopher Harrison. According to the Gazette article, Harrison said he designed the giant gear-shaped stepping stones for the three filtration basins to be an interactive piece of art that would also "help visitors to understand how the mechanical part of the stormwater system…works. 'Making the gears into a pathway allows people to walk through the system and see it up close,' he explained. 'It also makes them aware that there is so much more going on in the park than they might initially notice.'"

Other art in the park that helps to tell the story of water quality protection was designed by Minneapolis-based artist Aaron Dysart. He created a burr oak sculpture made of metal pipes resembling plumbing fixtures and a giant purple coneflower with roots made of pipes. The works celebrate "the juxtaposition of human-designed technology and natural biological processes put to work in Hasenbank Park," according to the Gazette article.

When SWWD considers a project, it also tries to incorporate aspects that try to educate the public on why water quality matters, Loomis said. Use of art wasn't initially part of the discussion early on, but as discussions progressed, the idea emerged that art could help tell the story better than large interpretive signs with a lot of words that not many people may read, he said. "At some point, we knew we wanted to incorporate art as part of the educational component," Loomis said. "Hopefully, the public gets something more out of having longer-lasting sculptures out there."

The watershed district is also now requesting proposals for art work for a project involving protection of Wilmes Lake at Kagel Park.

Cost And Maintenance

The cost of the project, for design, construction, habitat restoration (including the goats), and the art all together was $1.5 million, Loomis said. There will be ongoing maintenance costs as well because it is an active **BMP**, he noted, with a pump station pushing water from Fish Lake through the series of filtration basins before it enters Powers Lake. However, with the way this one was designed, there should be less frequent maintenance of the landscape needed.

"They (active BMPs) cost a lot. So it only makes sense to use them as community space," Loomis said.

Ongoing work will be needed to maintain parts of the park, so there will be opportunities for volunteers to get involved. An event to pull more garlic mustard and buckthorn is coming soon.

Despite the need for ongoing maintenance, Loomis acknowledged that the woods are close to looking like they did before settlement of the land more than a hundred years ago: Native grasses and shrubs coming back amidst remnant oak woodland and oak savannah.

What Success Would Look Like

Besides visible habitat restoration, other measures of success for Loomis would be sustained, good water quality in Powers Lake (which will be monitored) and the site being actively used by neighbors and visitors.

Woodbury resident Mike Madigan, an SWWD board member for almost a dozen years who was involved in the development of the project, agrees. Asked what he'd like to see in five years, he replied, "People using and enjoying the park; good water quality in both Fish Lake and Powers Lake…Hopefully we can take Fish Lake and others off of the impaired waters list."

Another measure of success for Madigan, not so easily measured, would be increased awareness and people acting to protect Woodbury's water. "Woodbury probably has more water (bodies) than most communities, so we need to take care of them. Our aquifers are not endless. We need to make sure we are not polluting them…We need to pay attention to what goes into our drains."

For him, the educational component of Hasenbank Park, getting people to understand the relationship between a healthy prairie/woodland ecosystem and clean water, was critical. "I'm anxious to see if it works. I think it will."

Who Gets The Credit?

An early April view clearly shows the three interconnected infiltration basins at Hasenbank Park. (Image by Doug Schultz)

Both Loomis and Madigan were quick to give SWWD and city staff the credit for bringing the park development along. “They are the ones who really did the work,” Madigan said. They both gave a particular shout out to Kyle Axtell at SWWD. And Madigan also gave credit to Woodbury Mayor Anne Burt, who has been a long-time champion of environmental causes in Woodbury.

But credit also goes to Woodbury residents themselves, they noted. Woodbury residents consistently rate water quality as high among their list of concerns for the city. “Because we have all of these trails and parks with lakes and waters, people can see these resources and appreciate them and want to protect them,” Madigan said.

At new Hasenbank Park in Woodbury, stormwater treatment takes center stage

The park, designed around an active water treatment system and several large sculptures, officially opened June 12.

“Gears,” a public art installation by Christopher Harrison at the new Hasenbank Park in Woodbury, shown on June 12, 2025, consists of large gear-shaped stepping stones. The park is a joint project of the South Washington Watershed District and the city of Woodbury. (Courtesy of the South Washington Watershed District)

By **JARED KAUFMAN** | jkaufman@pioneerpress.com | Pioneer Press

UPDATED: June 22, 2025 at 11:46 PM CDT

Despite its importance to water quality, the infrastructure that filters and treats stormwater before it runs off into lakes is often invisible. These systems are usually moved into underground pipes or tucked alongside neighborhood ponds.

But a new Woodbury park is doing things differently.

At Hasenbank Park, which officially opened June 12, the South Washington Watershed District and city of Woodbury collaborated on public art and a unique design, aimed at bringing stormwater treatment into the open and encouraging neighbors to feel engaged in water-quality efforts, said Kyle Axtell, a project manager with the watershed district. An interactive online tool helps visualize how stormwater moves through the park.

"Flowing Roots," a sculpture by Aaron Dysart at the new Hasenbank Park in Woodbury, resembles large plant roots made of plumbing fixtures, topped with a purple coneflower. The work highlights the overlap between nature and industrial design and is meant to encourage park-goers to think more deeply about water

In addition to a connected series of water basins that filter runoff, the park also contains several large-scale sculptures: “Gears,” by Christopher Harrison, is a pathway of gear-shaped stepping stones over the water, and “Flowing Roots” and “Branching Out,” by Aaron Dysart, are a massive root structure and tree form, respectively, built larger-than-life with plumbing pipes.

“We’ve got stormwater management that people can see — it’s not just underground or hidden, and we wanted this to be a property and park space that the public would engage with,” Axtell said. “And what better way to help tell that story than through the use of art?”

Around 2018, the watershed district became concerned that water runoff from the Dancing Waters development, which drains into the Fish Lake wetlands off Valley Creek Road, would threaten the very high water quality in nearby Powers Lake.

Aaron Dysart's sculpture "Branching Out" stands behind flowing water at the new Hasenbank Park in Woodbury on June 12, 2025. The sculpture, along with several other public art installations and design features, is meant to highlight the park's active role in filtering stormwater to avoid polluted runoff into Powers Lake. (Courtesy of the South Washington Watershed District)

Separately, the watershed district was spearheading the restoration of Hasenbank Woods, a city-owned property that had become overgrown with invasive species and ash trees suffering from emerald ash borer infestations. The woods happen to be between the wetlands and Powers Lake, water officials realized, and the property also contained a small field the city had no plans for — so maybe two goals could be accomplished at once.

“It really came together as a win-win across the board,” Axtell said. “And in order to have healthy water, which is of course our primary mission at the watershed district, you’ve got to have healthy land.”

And the public art installations are more than decorative, he said — they’re a vital part of the park’s mission to pique people’s interest and encourage them to think about and learn about water-quality protection.

“It’s a way to engage the public that’s not just interpretive language on a panel,” he said. “We’re interested in showing people, more than telling

South Washington Watershed District project manager Kyle Axtell, left, and artist Aaron Dysart, second left, talk with attendees during the rainy grand opening for the new Hasenbank Park in Woodbury on June 12, 2025. (Courtesy of the South Washington Watershed District)

This is how artist Dysart sees it, too. He's well-known within the Twin Cities public art scene and was formerly St. Paul's city artist, and has been working for several years on developing his two sculptures in Hasenbank Park. (He also created the F. Scott Fitzgerald sculpture in Cathedral Hill that was stolen earlier this year.)

"We've realized that you can have all the facts and data and pie charts in the world, but if you don't have culture and connection, you're not going to reach people," he said. "To me, artwork and art as a visual language communicates in a different way — maybe not as direct, but more passionate, or bringing interest in learning a little more about what's underneath your feet."

Much of Dysart's work looks at the intersection between natural wilderness and manufactured objects, he said, so the idea of a stormwater treatment park was particularly interesting to him. And his two pieces are meant to work together in highlighting the water cycle: Trees bring water from the ground into the air, he said, and roots move water from the air back into the

“I try my best to situate my work in the realm of throwing people off a little bit,” he said. “Not in a malicious way but in a joyful way, so that they can peel back the onion layers and start to dive in a little deeper.”

Originally Published: June 22, 2025 at 5:15 AM CDT

SOUTH WASHINGTON WATERSHED DISTRICT

South Washington Watershed District
2302 Tower Drive
Woodbury MN, 55125
Request for Professional Services

The South Washington Watershed District uses outside consultants to provide professional services in the following areas:

1) Engineering
2) Legal
3) Financial Accounting

The South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) Board is requesting any firm interested in providing services to the SWWD submit a letter of interest, a list of related work/projects/clients, a list of key personal and their qualifications, and a current fee schedule. Information should be limited to four (4) pages total. The SWWD is required to request proposals for professional services every two years. Those firms selected will be placed in a pool of professional service consultants for calendar years 2024-2025.

Information must be submitted no later than 3:00 p.m. Thursday November 16, 2023. ***Email submittal is preferred.***

South Washington Watershed District
Attn: Matt Moore, Administrator
2302 Tower Drive
Woodbury, MN 55125
Ph: 651.714.3729
matt.moore@woodburymn.gov

Dated this 18th day of October, 2023.
South Washington Watershed District

Matt Moore, Administrator

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SOUTH WASHINGTON WATERSHED DISTRICT

Memo

To: SWWD Board of Managers

From: Matt Moore. SWWD Administrator

CC:

Date: December 7, 2023

Re: 2024-2025 Professional Services

***** Please note in an interest of saving paper we are not providing copies of the consultant information, if you would like this information please contact the SWWD office *****

The SWWD received 13 responses for engineering services, 1 legal response and 2 financial responses. There are 10 firms in the engineering pool that are returning responses.

Engineering:
1) Barr Engineering
2) Consor
3) Geosyntech
4) HDR Engineering Inc.
5) Houston Engineering Inc.
6) HR Green, Inc.
7) Inter-Fluve
8) ISG
9) Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
10) Moore Engineering
11) SRF Consulting Group
12) Stantec Consulting Services
13) Young Environmental

Other:
1) Sunde Land Surveying

Legal
1) Hellmuth & Johnson Legal-Jack Clinton, P.A.

Financial
1) Abdo
2) Redpath and Company

The Board could choose one of the following processes to establish engineering services for the 2024-2025 calendar years.

1) Place all responders in the pool and delegate work on a project by project basis.

2) Select a preferred vendor list using the information we have or request additional information.

3) Generate a short list from the twelve responders and conduct interviews to select one or multiple firms.

4) Other options

Each engineering firm has ample qualifications, personnel and experience in the types of watershed projects the SWWD is completing. Billing rates average $275/hour for Principals, $216/hour for Professional Engineers, $177/hour for Scientists and $136/hour for Technicians.

Requested Board Action

- The Board Sub-Committee recommendations:
    - Approval of 2024-2025 engineering services pool to include all respondents, providing a wide range of capabilities to address upcoming SWWD projects.
    - Approval of 2024-2025 legal services with Mr. Jack Clinton, Hellmuth & Johnson.
    - Approval of 2024-2025 financial services with Redpath and Company.
    - Approval of the 2024 and 2024 financial audits with Abdo.