

Stormwater runoff is one of the greatest threats to water quality. Stormwater runoff carries pollutants like salt and phosphorus; sediment; and trash into our lakes, rivers and streams, and ponds. It can also contribute to flooding. The Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) Water Quality Grant Program promotes water quality improvement by providing financial and technical assistance to public and private landowners for projects that reduce or reuse stormwater runoff, prevent erosion, and/or filter pollutants.

Water quality projects that may be eligible for this grant program include: wetland restorations; rain gardens; shoreline or streambank restorations; replacing impervious surfaces with pervious pavers; infiltration basins; and critical area stabilizations. Projects to improve the function of an existing BMP (like installing a pre-treatment chamber) may be considered. Agricultural water quality projects may also be eligible.

All grant requests are subject to RCWD Board approval. Do not start any projects before applying or receiving approval. Projects that have been started or completed before the application is submitted or the grant is approved are not eligible. Projects required by RCWD, a City, or other permitting agency, or to correct a violation of RCWD rules are also not eligible.

Funding Availability

The 2023 Water Quality Grant Program has \$175,000 available for eligible projects. Projects may be approved for funding of 25%, 50%, or 75% of the total eligible materials and contracted labor **up to \$7,500**. The most common RCWD water quality grants are for 50% of the total project cost. Funding levels are based on RCWD criteria including pollutant load reductions and the overall project benefit to water resources.



White Bear Lake raingarden during a rain event

Is Your Project A Good Fit For This Program?

The RCWD partners with the Anoka (ACD) and Washington Conservation Districts (WCD) and the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation, Soil and Water Conservation Division (Ramsey SWCD) and their conservation specialists to determine if potential projects are eligible for this program. Conservation specialists provide technical assistance, site visits, and assistance completing the application for RCWD landowners (residents, businesses, cities, etc).

The conservation specialists evaluate potential projects for eligibility using the RCWD's screening form. Scoring is based on a project's proximity to priority and/or impaired water bodies; estimated water quality improvement; surface water rate and volume control; erosion and sediment control. Wildlife habitat improvement and public outreach are also considered. Potential applicants that are not eligible for this water quality grant program will be informed of potential eligibility for other RCWD programs.

Requesting a Site Visit and Submitting an Application

Request a free site visit by contacting your county's conservation specialist.

Anoka County: Mitch Haustein, (763)-434-2030 x15 or mitch.haustein@anokaswcd.org

Ramsey County: Brian Olsen, (651) 266-7280 or brian.olsen@co.ramsey.mn.us

Washington County: **Urban:** Lori Tella, (651) 330-8220 x36 or ltella@mnwcd.org

Rural: Angela Defenbaugh, (651) 330-8220 x23 or adefenbaugh@mnwcd.org

Hennepin County: Molly Nelson, (763) 398-3083 or mnelson@ricecreek.org

The conservation specialist will complete the grant application and provide a free project design for eligible projects. Conservation specialists will communicate any



Shoreline restoration at Centerville Lake

Applicants can work with a private designer on a project.
 These proposals must be submitted to the conservation specialist for review.

Deadlines

The RCWD reviews proposals ten times per year. Completed applications must be submitted to RCWD by the 20th of each month for consideration during the next month's review session. Applicants should supply information to the county conservation specialist well in advance of these dates. Failure to provide adequate time may result in a delay in the review process. Please allow four to six weeks for the review process once an application has been submitted. Applicants will be notified in writing of the Board's final decision within 10 business days of the Board meeting.



Recently installed raingarden

Do not start a project before receiving Board approval or the project will no longer be eligible.

Grant Program Agreement, Amendments, and Operation & Maintenance Agreement

The grant application form will also serve as the Grant Program Contract. It must be completed and signed by the landowner and the conservation specialist. The document will be signed by the RCWD after Board approval; the agreement term lasts for 18 months. **Changes to the project or amendments to the agreement may not be made without approval by RCWD.**

Project maintenance is the responsibility of the landowner (applicant). All landowners will be required to sign an Operation and Maintenance Agreement that provides details on expectations and time commitment. RCWD staff or the conservation specialist have the authority to inspect any projects during the agreement period.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend a Blue Thumb or partner-offered workshop on project maintenance.



Completed raingarden in Shoreview

Payment

Payment will be made **after** project completion and once RCWD has received all required documentation. These documents include:

- Completed Operations & Maintenance Agreement;
- Project photos;
- The RCWD Voucher and Practice Certification Summary Form; and
- Copies of all invoices and receipts

Applicants using contractors must also submit a copy of the contractor's contract for the project and all pre-lien notices and lien waivers of subcontractors and suppliers.

The assigned conservation specialist must inspect and certify that the project was completed according to the approved grant agreement, design standards, specifications, and pollution reduction values. All claimed expenses will be reviewed by RCWD staff. The RCWD Board reserves the right to adjust the costs submitted for reimbursement based on this review.

Conformance to Guidelines: The District reserves the right to withdraw funding for any project not completed in accordance with these guidelines or the terms of its executed Grant Program Contract. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to acquire any/all required permits and approvals prior to commencement of their project.

Do not start a project before receiving Board approval or the project will no longer be eligible.

Any submitted information, including but not limited to applications, conceptual designs, contractor bids, cost estimates, final designs and specifications, copies of permits and proof of expenditures becomes part of the public record.

The RCWD Board reserves the right to allocate unused funds into other District programs or make changes to this program as necessary.