



# Rice Creek Watershed District

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2024 ANNUAL REPORT





# About Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD)

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## Website



Clickable Link





# About Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD)

- A special-purpose unit of government
- Established by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources on January 18, 1972, upon petition by county boards with support from citizens and cities.
- Approximately 186 square miles of urban and rural lands in Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey, and Washington Counties.
- Includes all or portions of 28 cities and townships. (Arden Hills, Birchwood Village, Blaine, Centerville, Circle Pines, Columbia Heights, Columbus, Dellwood, Falcon Heights, Forest Lake, Fridley, Grant, Hugo, Lauderdale, Lexington, Lino Lakes, Mahtomedi, May Township, Mounds View, New Brighton, Roseville, Saint Anthony, Scandia, Shoreview, Spring Lake Park, White Bear Lake, White Bear Township and Willernie).



## RCWD Mission

To manage, protect, and improve the water resources of the District through flood control and water quality projects and programs.



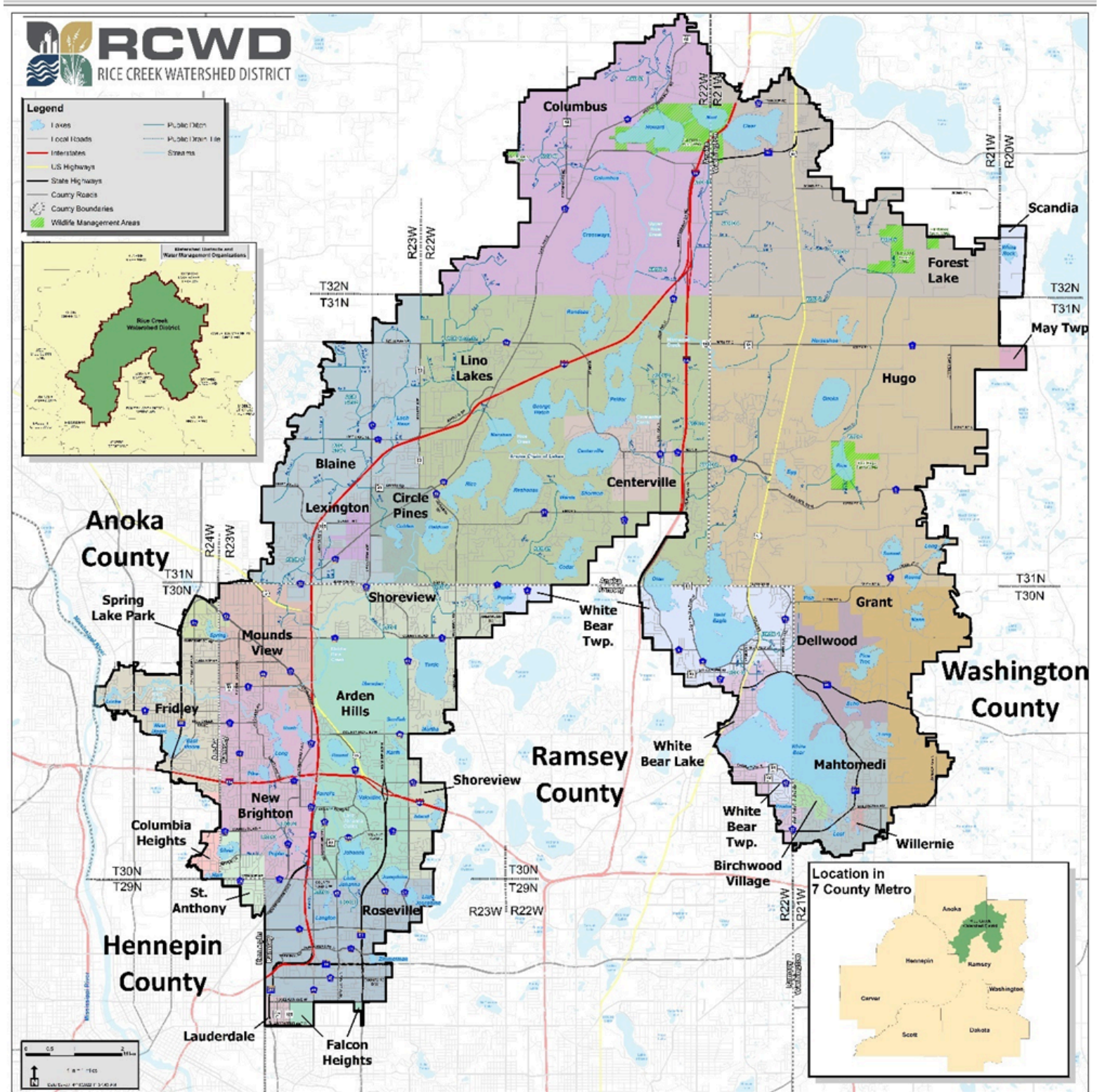
## RCWD Watershed Management Plan 2020-2029

- Completed in 2019 (approval and adoption in 2020).
- Board adopted Resolution 2021-08 on May 26, 2021, to approve several minor updates





# Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) Map





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## Budget, Expenditures & Revenue

*Based on Audit*

Expenditures/Programs	2024 Budget	2024 Expenditures	2024 Project Anticipation Fund 99	2025 Budget
General Administration	\$523,535	\$444,628		\$535,272
Environmental Education	254,068	221,836		305,389
Information Mgmt/Technology	271,146	174,384		316,014
Water Resource Restoration	2,165,193	932,098	2,700,000	2,922,551
Regulatory	1,590,761	1,103,529		1,565,687
Ditch & Creek Maintenance	1,741,000	1,334,263	1,400,000	1,955,483
Lake & Stream Mgmt/Monitoring	1,147,001	828,433	200,000	1,155,911
District Facilities	641,635	281,114	200,000	654,307
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>8,334,339</b>	<b>5,320,285</b>	<b>4,500,000</b>	<b>9,410,614</b>



## 2024 Board of Managers & Advisory Committee

### 2024 Board of Managers

**Mike Bradley, President**

Email: mbradley@ricecreek.org

County: Ramsey

Term Expires: January 2027

**John Waller, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

US Mail Only

County: Washington

Term Expires: January 2028

**Steve Wagamon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

Email: swagamon@ricecreek.org

County: Anoka

Term Expires: January 2028

**Marcie Weinandt, Treasurer**

Email: mweinandt@ricecreek.org

County: Ramsey

Term Expires: January 2026

**Jess Robertson, Secretary**

Email: jrobertson@ricecreek.org

County: Anoka

Term Expires: January 2026

### 2024 Citizen Advisory Committee

**Dave Anderson**, Anoka County

**Megan Forbes**, Ramsey County

**Peter Larsen**, Washington County

**William Lazarus**, Ramsey County

**Douglas Ramseth**, Washington County &  
Clear Lake Association

**Michael Schroeder**, Liaison from Ramsey  
Conservation Department

**Mary Jo Truchon**, Supervisor & Liaison from  
Anoka SWCD

**Teresa O' Connell**, Anoka County

**Andrew Kovacs**, Ramsey County

**Richard Thompson**, Washington County

**Rebecca Keller**, Anoka County



## 2024 Staff

Nick Tomczik – District Administrator  
Ali Chalberg - Watershed Technician and Inspector  
Kendra Sommerfeld - Communications & Outreach Manager  
Anna Grace – Regulatory Technician  
Molly Nelson – Outreach and Grants Technician  
Patrick Hughes – Regulatory Manager  
Matthew Kocian – Lake & Stream Manager  
Catherine Nester – Water Monitoring Technician  
Tom Schmidt – Drainage and Facilities Manager  
Theresa Stasica – Office Manager  
Kelsey White – Permit Technician  
Abel Green – Operations and Maintenance Inspector  
Will Roach – Watershed Technician/Inspector  
Erik Larson – Watershed Inspector  
Emmet Hurley – Program Support Technician  
Sara Belden – Project Technician  
Sarah Struntz – Watershed Inspector  
Connor Price – Technical Field Assistant  
David Petry – Project Manager



*Figure 1 RCWD All Staff paddle day down Rice Creek*



## 2024 Legal, Professional, and Consulting Services

RCWD solicited statements of interest for legal, technical, accounting, human resource, and information technologies professional services in 2024. Following solicitation, the RCWD selected Rinke – Noonan for legal counsel, Redpath and Company for accounting, and Houston Engineering for technical, RYMARK for informational technologies, and no firm for human resource services. During 2024 RCWD contracted with Smith Partners for legal counsel and Career Enhancement Options, Inc. for human resources.

RCWD maintains a list of professional service providers to call upon for assistance with engineering, design, construction, and general consulting. Companies complete and submit the Professional Services Sign-up Form to be considered for potential work with the RCWD.

### ***Legal Counsel***

Rinke Noonan  
John Kolb, Hannah Schacherl  
Suite 300, US Bank Plaza  
PO Box 1497  
St. Cloud, MN 56302  
Phone: 320-251-6700



### ***Consulting Engineers & Other Services***

Houston Engineering  
Chris Otterness, P.E.  
7550 Meridian Circle North  
Suite 120  
Maple Grove, MN 55369  
Phone: 763-493-4522



Redpath & Company - Accounting &  
Auditing Mark Gibbs  
4810 White Bear Parkway  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110  
Phone: 651-426-7000



RYMARK  
6200 Shingle Creek Parkway, Suite 595  
Minneapolis, MN 55430  
Phone: 612-328-8900



## Introduction

This annual report is a review and assessment of the previous year's work and its efforts towards the goals of the Watershed Management Plan (WMP). RCWD 2020-2029 Watershed Management Plan: [2020 Watershed Management Plan - Rice Creek Watershed District](#).

### Purpose of Annual Report

The purpose of the annual report is to fulfill the requirements set forth in Minnesota Statute Chapter 103D.351, which requires watershed districts to file an annual report with the Board of Soil and Water Resources and the Department of Natural Resources. Minnesota Regulation MR 8410.0150 requires the report to contain certain information.



*Figure 2 Howard Lake*

### What's in the Annual Report?

The RCWD WMP includes 9 management categories, organized to provide a review and assessment of RCWD efforts in these categories and includes implementation activities. Implementation activities include projects and programs that directly address management issues and associated measurable goals.

The nine management categories include:

- 103E Public Drainage Systems
- Other Drainage Systems
- District Facilities
  - section includes documentation of MS4 activities\*
- Flooding
- Water Quality Management
- Funding
- Collaborations
- Regulatory
  - section includes documentation of MS4 activities\*
- Communication, Outreach, and Education
  - section includes documentation of MS4 activities\*

\*RCWD has an MS4 permit through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for portions of the public drainage system. This annual report includes documentation of information required by the MS4 permit.



## 2024 Highlights

### Public Drainage Program

- Completed 126 inspections and 45 maintenance projects on 15 of 22 different public drainage systems (68%). Exceeds MS4 permit requirement.
- Completed major repair of Ramsey County Ditch #4 and allocated costs using a blend of ad valorem and water management district funds.
- Completed repair of Anoka-Washington Judicial Ditch 3 Branches 1, 2, & 4

### District Facilities Program

- Completed 23 facility inspections (72% of all District facilities).
- Focus on troubleshooting/repairing Iron iron-enhanced sand Filters
- Regional Flood Control and Stormwater Management
  - Ramsey County Ditches 2, 3 & 5 Basic Water Management Project: Continued efforts with the Cities of New Brighton, Saint Anthony, and Roseville to complete Phase 3, Jones Lake construction, of this project and to detail an anticipated implementation schedule and priorities, cost allocations, and revenue generation methods.

### Water Quality Program

- District staff monitored 9 lakes, 10 long-term stream and ditch sites, and four synoptic or project-specific sites
- Partners and volunteers monitored an additional 17 lakes
- District staff collected 423 water samples on lakes, streams, and ditches 2,170 individual laboratory analyses were conducted
- Centerville Alum Treatment Project- Clean Water Fund grant supported. 1st half of the alum treatment completed
- Clearwater Creek / JD3 Feasibility Study completed in 2024
- Hwy 61 Ponds Project was initiated in 2024
- Aquatic Invasive Species
  - The Carp Management Program
    - 1,029 adult carp were removed from the Long Lake / Lino Chain of Lakes system
    - Since program inception, 56,881 carp have been removed from the Long Lake Lino Chain of Lakes system, which is approximately 40,000 lbs.
    - Overall, carp density has been reduced by nearly 90%, and long-term management goals were met for the first time in 2023
    - Solely based on phosphorus content in carp tissue, this program has removed approximately 1,700 lbs. of phosphorus from the Long Lake / Lino Chain of Lakes
    - Phosphorus concentrations are declining, and native aquatic plants are increasing in the system
  - RCWD partnered with three lake associations to manage curlyleaf pondweed

### Grant Programs

- Stormwater Management Grant Program
  - Awarded \$300,150 to 5 cities to implement five water quality and/or flood control projects
- Water Quality Grant Program
  - 15 projects were awarded approximately \$119,705.84 to assist landowners with the installation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to improve the quality of surface waters within the District.

- Mini-Grants Program
  - \$10,000 was available. A total of 20 mini-grants were issued: 5 grants for rain barrels, 2 grants for low-mow turf, 1 grant for water outreach and education, and 18 for native plantings.

#### **Permit/Regulatory Program**

- Received 85 permit applications
- 73 permits issued
- 120 permits closed
- Successfully completed a revision to the rule set (Board approved on 11/13/2024 and implementation took effect on 01/01/2025)

#### **Outreach Program**

- (See Outreach & Communications section)



*Figure 4 Hansen Park, Iron Enhanced Sand Filter, New Brighton, MN*



## MS 103E Public Drainage Systems

The District has identified “MS 103E Public Drainage Systems” as one of its nine management categories. The category is defined as, “Management and maintenance of public drainage systems in its role as Drainage Authority (County and Judicial Ditches established under MS 103E).” There are 3 key issues within this category: Public Drainage System Maintenance, Repair, and Management Approach; Repair Project Financing; and Stakeholder Outreach on Drainage System Roles and Expectations.

### **Public Drainage System Maintenance, Repair, and Management Approach**

The District has identified the need to comprehensively manage public drainage systems to provide the necessary level of service to both current and future development. The complexity of managing public drainage systems has led to several challenging issues faced by the District, including reestablishing the as-constructed and subsequently improved condition (ACSIC); prioritization and scheduling of drainage system inspection and maintenance; maintaining drainage records in centralized locations and providing for public access to these records; and managing the public drainage systems to serve multiple land uses as well as current and future development without exceeding the geometry and conveyance of the ACSIC.

**Goal:** Schedule, prioritize, and execute inspection and maintenance of the District’s public drainage systems to preserve and/or restore drainage function for multiple uses.

**Measurable Goal:** Inspect each of the District’s public drainage systems over each 5-year period of the Plan. RCWD Board adopted 4 policies to ensure adequate progress in this category.

As the public drainage authority, RCWD is responsible for maintaining approximately 114 miles of public drainage systems.

### **2024 Accomplishments and Activities:**

The District completed 126 inspections and 45 maintenance projects on 15 of 22 different public drainage systems in 2024. This is 68% of the total drainage systems, which exceed the minimum of 20% goal identified in the watershed management plan—completed 17 of 17 scheduled inspections.

These inspections also involve illicit discharge detection in public drainage systems identified by the MPCA as part of RCWD's MS4.

Examples of 2024 Public Drainage Maintenance Projects include (but not limited to):

- ACD 10-22-32 –main trunk Beaver dam removal and channel excavation from East of Jodrell to south of Pine Street.
- ACD 72 – replacement of existing clay tile with HDPE tile on various branches
- ACD 46 – bank failure repair.
- ACD 53-62 – stabilization of main trunk repair access points.
- Beaver activity was at a record pace in 2024, with 15 unique Beaver-related maintenance projects totaling \$19,126.50 across multiple systems.
- WJD 5 – Completion of main branch replacement of existing clay tile with HDPE tile /repair from County Road 50 to branch 1, Installation of surface intakes/ inspection ports.

## **2025 Work Plan**

The District will continue to inspect and maintain the public drainage systems and complete maintenance projects as recommended by the Public Drainage Inspector and in accordance with the inspections schedule. The District will continue to promote agreements with municipal partners to increase maintenance activities on public drainage systems.

Efforts planned by the Public Drainage Inspector include (but not limited to):

- ACD 72 – replacement of existing clay tile with HDPE tile on various branches
- ARJD 1 – Work with City of Mounds View to coordinate maintenance
- ARJD 1 – main trunk tree & brush removal from County Road J to 93rd Ave; main trunk excavation; Restwood Rd. to Flowerfield Rd. and Naples to I-35W
- Drainage system right-of-way maintenance on various systems as possible, such as ditch bank mowing.

## **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) previously deemed that some of the public drainage systems are considered part of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). During public drainage systems inspections, illicit discharges are included in the items being inspected and, if found, are noted in the inspection report and reported as required.

RCWD has evaluated the land use around the public drainage systems that are included in the District's MS4 and determined that priority areas are not present. However, District staff regularly monitor the open systems, remove obstructions, and evaluate opportunities to prevent pollutants and improve water quality.

Public drainage staff are trained each year in illicit discharge recognition. The District will continue to inspect public drainage systems for illicit discharges.

In 2024, MPCA requested updated mapping and data regarding its MS4 features. Current guidance from MPCA suggests public drainage systems (PDS) and current District owned facilities may not meet MPCA's requirements to necessitate RCWD holding an MS4 permit. MPCA has provided a petition for RCWD to request reevaluation of its MS4 status.

## **Repair Project Financing**

The District has identified a need for establishing an equitable means of apportioning the cost of MS 103E public drainage system repair projects.

**Goal:** Equitably apportion costs of public drainage system repairs.

**Measurable Goal:** Utilize 100% of the District's established cost allocation methodology.

The District has one policy to ensure adequate progress in this category.



## **2025 Work Plan**

Continue to allocate the costs of public drainage system repairs through implementation of the hybrid legal framework, which includes MS 103E, 103D, and 103B.

Charge allocations for the ACD 53-62 Main Trunk repair project begin in 2022. Forty percent of the preliminary cost is allocated to the whole district via ad valorem funds. The other 60% is allocated to landowners directly draining to the system (WMD charge). Landowners with WMD charges will pay a single-year annual charge (collected through property taxes) for amounts less than \$300. In instances where the parcel's charge incurred exceeds \$300, the landowner will pay three equal annual installments (still collected through property taxes). No interest will accrue in the first three years.

## **Stakeholder Outreach on Drainage System Roles and Expectations**

The District has identified the need to ensure communication to stakeholders is clear about the condition of the public drainage system, the effect of proposed repairs, and the District's roles and authorities.

**Goal:** Use communication and outreach tools as an integral element in managing public drainage systems to credibly convey District roles and authorities and system data and information, thereby increasing knowledge, awareness, and capacity among stakeholders.

**Measurable Goal:** Send at least 1-2 project communications to affected landowners and stakeholders in addition to MS 103E legal requirements; release one press statement for each major repair project; and update the RCWD website's drainage page quarterly with project updates.

The District has three policies to ensure adequate progress in this category.

### **Accomplishments and Activities:**

In an effort to communicate landowner rights to convey the District's role and authority, the District continues to update the Drainage Portal, which is available online and maintains the official drainage systems records.

## **2025 Work Plan**

The District will continue to hold informational meetings prior to public hearings. The District will also ensure the use of consistent terms and definitions when communicating about drainage. The District will continue to send notices in advance of maintenance activities when feasible.

## Non-103E Systems

The District has identified “Non-103E Drainage Systems” as one of its nine management categories. The category is defined as “Management of drainage systems not established under MS 103E and stormwater conveyance systems within the District boundary.” There is one key issue within this category: Management of Non-103E Systems.

The District has identified that despite the limited role and authority of the District in managing non-103E systems, these systems can impact upstream and downstream water quantity conveyance and water quality and may serve a public benefit.

**Goal:** In consideration of the District’s limited role, address conveyance concerns on non-103E systems within the framework of District policy.

**Measurable Goal:** Address 100% of all non-103E system concerns as determined by the District's Natural Channel Management Policy.

The District has 2 policies to ensure adequate progress in this category.

### **2024 Accomplishments and Activities:**

Continued to engage in collaboration with private partners to address existing issues according to its policies. The RCWD Natural Channel Management Policy guides any work in and around natural waterways specifying the triggers and actions related to RCWD’s role in maintaining natural or recreational systems.

Communicated to landowners and partners the RCWD Natural Channel Management policy when an inquiry was received regarding private drainage and natural conveyances. District staff followed the policy to assess the involvement of the District in these private matters.

### **2025 Work Plan**

Continue to use consistent messaging when engaged in non-103E drainage systems and follow the Natural Channel Management Policy. RCWD’s new website does include information on the Natural Channel Management Policy.



## District Facilities

The District has identified “Management of District Facilities” as one of its nine management categories. The category is defined as, “Operation and maintenance of water management structures and property constructed and/or owned by the District.” The key issue within this category is Management of District Facilities.

A “District facility” is defined as a physical water management project constructed and/or owned and maintained by the District for purposes of addressing water quality, regional flooding, or wetland habitat. In recent years, the District has focused on understanding what District facilities exist, where they are located, what their current condition is, and whether the facilities need maintenance or repair. In some cases, access to the facilities is an issue, and the District has been researching and documenting both the physical condition and legal access to each District facility.

### Goals:

- Sustain an updated District program that focuses on the construction, inspection, maintenance, and/or operation of District facilities in accordance with their water management purposes and gauges their effectiveness over time.
- Strive to obtain and maintain legal access for the operation and maintenance of those District facilities that currently do not have legal access.

**Measurable Goal:** Inspect 100% of District facilities over the 10-year period of the watershed management plan (2020-2029) and obtain legal access to 75% of District facilities over that same time period.

The District has 5 policies to ensure adequate progress is achieved towards these goals.

### 2024 Accomplishments and Activities:

District staff tracks all facility inspection activities as well as maintenance or repairs completed each year. Of the 32 total inventoried facilities, 23 were inspected in 2024, 72%. At the end of 2024, the District had legal access to 20 of 32 facilities (63%). A breakdown of these general activities can be found in the following table.

ID	Facility Name	Inspected	Maintenance	Notes	MS4
CB-1	Walls Bros. Wetland Restoration	X	X	Vegetation management	X
LL-2	Rondeau Lake Outlet Channel	X			
LL-3	Rondeau Lake Fish Barrier	X	X	Pulled and replaced sections according to DNR permit	X

LL-4	Hardwood Creek Restor. (2012)				
SV-5	Middle Rice Creek Restor. (2005)				
AH-6	Middle Rice Creek Restor. (2016)	X			
FD-7	Locke Lake Sedimentation Basin				
NB-8	Long Lake Sedimentation Basin	X			
NB-9	Jones Lake Outlet				
NB-10	35W Wetland Treatment Area				
AH-11	E2 Wetland Weir	X	X		X
AH-12	Lake Johanna Outlet				X
AH-13	Floral Park Berm & Outlet	X			
AH-14	Hwy 10 & 694 Outlet	X			
WBT-15	RWJD1 & Hwy 61 Treatment Ponds	X			X
WBT-16	RWJD1 Fish Barrier	X			X
MM-17	Hall's Marsh Outlet	X			X
RV-18	Oasis Pond Sediment Basin & Weir	X			X
AH-19	Lake Josephine Outlet				X



FL-20	Lamprey Pass	X			X
RV-21	Little Josephine Outlet	X			
CB-22	Browns Preserve	X			X
NB-23	Hansen Park Sediment Basin	X	X	Pond buffer maintenance	X
NB-24	Hansen Park IESF	X	X	IESF vegetation management and buffer	X
AH-25	Bethel North				
HG-26	Oneka Ridge Golf Course Reuse *				
FL-27	Rehbein Farms	X	X	Vegetation management	
RV-28	Oasis Pond IESF *	X	X	IESF vegetation management and buffer	X
WBL-134	Priebe Lake Outlet	X			
FD-139	Lower Rice Creek Stabiliz. (2020)	X	X	I inspected this and we repaired a section as a result, repair work was finished in October 2023.	X
WBT-138	Bald Eagle Lake IESF	X	X	IESF vegetation management and buffer	X
	Lake Johanna Fish Barrier	X	X	Has a tendency to get blocked with plant material, cleaned as needed.	X
Total		23	10		17

*\* RCWD has only a limited role in operating and maintaining these facilities.*

*^ RCWD has interpreted generic MS4 permit language from the MPCA to assess which facilities may be relevant to the District's MS4 annual report. RCWD and MPCA have engaged in discussions regarding the capture of public drainage and facilities into MS4 jurisdiction.*

The following is a summary of non-routine facility maintenance completed by the District and other unique takeaways from 2024.

**Iron-Enhanced Sand Filters:** All 3 IESF sites were inoperable for the majority of 2024. The IESF at Hansen Park treated 0 gallons of RCD 2 runoff in 2024 (Hansens Park had a pump damaged by animals and was inoperable, the pump has been repaired and is in working order for the 2025 season).

With the repairs of a cracked pipe completed, Oasis Pond is expected to operate during the 2025 season.

The IESF at Bald Eagle Lake treated 0 gallons of RCD 11 runoff in 2024. The Electronic Control Unit on site was faulty and had internal damage in 2024. We will retrofit this site with an updated Electronic Control Unit for the 2025 season.

### **2025 Work Plan**

District staff will continue to inspect its facilities for proper operation and identification of maintenance needs. Many facilities are inspected annually or more frequently, while some are only inspected on an as-needed basis. At a minimum, all facilities will be inspected once every ten years. The District began a more detailed evaluation of each facility in relation to its physical location and condition based on site inspection. Staff will continue this investigation in 2025 and make recommendations for the next steps for each facility.

The District conducts active operational activities at Hansen Park and Bald Eagle Lake IESFs and provides support to the City of Roseville at the Oasis Pond IESF and to the Oneka Ridge Golf Course for its stormwater reuse irrigation system. These activities will continue in 2025.

The District established the Priebe Lake Outfall Project (PLOP). This flood control project was limited to its operable outlet and discharge pipe conveyance. In recent years, concerns were raised by landowners regarding water elevations and water quality at the outlet as well as landowners on Priebe Lake concerned with water quality. This initiated collaborative discussions as to how all parties may achieve the future condition. The District will continue to work with its partners to establish an agreeable framework for clear operational terms in collaboration with partner cities to be incorporated into the Priebe Lake Outfall Project MOA. Once the MOA is fully executed, the District will fulfill its obligations.

### **RCWD's MS4 Permit**

The District anticipates further engagement from the MPCA regarding the defined jurisdiction of the MS4 permit.

## Flooding

The District has identified “Flooding” as one of its nine management categories. The category is defined as, “Managing the peak rate and volume of runoff from the landscape in an attempt to reduce potential flood damages in receiving surface waters.” There are three key issues within this category: Addressing Existing Flooding Issues; Impacts of Future Developments on Downstream Rate and Volume; Modeling and Mapping.

### Addressing Existing Flooding Issues

To prevent increases in the magnitude and duration of flooding, one of the District’s primary functions is the maintenance of its public drainage system, which serves as the sole outlet for many areas of the District. The District also has an interest in managing the peak rate and volume of runoff from the landscape to reduce potential flood damage on properties adjacent to downstream receiving surface waters. Within the District, opportunities exist to decrease the risk and impact of known flooding issues through collaboration with local partners. The District has completed studies and analyses that demonstrate that District stormwater management rules (Rule C) alone cannot meet current and future flood management needs. Instead, the District utilizes a combination of regulation, projects, and programs to provide a multi-faceted approach for managing flooding.

**Goal:** Decrease the risk and impact of known flooding issues through collaboration with local municipal partners.

**Measurable Goal:** Collaborate with partners to implement District-prioritized flood risk reduction projects to accrue 200 acre-feet of new live flood storage during the 10-year lifespan of the watershed management plan (2020-2029), aimed at reducing the rate and volume of runoff.

The District has 4 policies to ensure adequate progress is achieved toward meeting this goal.

### 2024 Activities:

The District has several ongoing efforts, in collaboration with several municipal partners, aimed at developing suites of future capital projects that will create substantial volumes of new flood storage across the watershed:

- **Ramsey County Ditches 2, 3 & 5 Basic Water Management Project:** The current focus of the water management project is Jones Lake Improvements. Implementation of this project is critical for achieving regional flood risk reductions and must be completed prior to implementation of the other projects identified in the plan.
- **Stormwater Management Grant Program:** In 2024, three of the District-funded capital improvement projects resulted in reductions in rate control and/or runoff volume (listed below).  
*Note: Additional issue-specific information on this cost-share program is provided in the water quality and collaborations sections of this report.*
  - City of Roseville – C2 & Simpson Underground Infiltration - \$100,000
  - Washington County – CSAH 12 Improvements - \$10,000
  - City of New Brighton – Public Works Facility Flood Mitigation Project - \$100,000



**Priebe Lake Outfall Project (PLOP):** RCWD continues to work extensively with its partners (Birchwood Village, Mahtomedi, White Bear Lake) in response to landowner and City of Birchwood concerns at the PLOP outlet location in Hall's Marsh. POLP transverses the 3 communities and there are inputs to the pipe system beyond Priebe Lake.

District rules require volume reduction and rate control. A project's proposed peak stormwater runoff rates for the 2, 10, and 100-year rainfall events must not exceed the existing peak rates. Further, for projects within the Flood Management Zone, the peak runoff rates for 2, 10, and 100-year events must be reduced to 80% or less of the existing peak rates.

### **2025 Work Plan**

The District anticipates continuing its work with partners to implement components of the Ramsey County Ditches 2, 3 & 5 Basic Water Management Project in 2025. Finding adequate funding sources, both internal and external, has proven difficult for the large "prerequisite" project components, but the District is pursuing funding from the MN DNR, MPCA, legislature, and other grant opportunities.

The RCWD annually allocates funds to the effort. Efforts, \$200,000 in 2024 and cumulatively over \$5M so far on Hanson Park, Mirror Pond, and RCD 2,3,5, (with approx. \$1.2M on consulting (engineering) and \$4.1M on construction.)

The District has allocated \$300,000 in Stormwater Management Grant Program funding for 2024 to assist public and private entities with implementation of projects that provide stormwater quality treatment, runoff volume reductions, peak runoff rate control and/or reductions in groundwater usage.

The District will continue to work with its municipal partners to ensure successful operation of the Priebe Lake Outfall Project, including the outlet structure.

### **Impacts of Future Development on Downstream Rate and Volume**

As the headwater portions of the District and various drainage areas are developing, downstream flooding is an increased concern. To identify the location and scope of these flooding locations, the District developed hydrologic and hydraulic modeling of future developed conditions based on current and future community land use maps and application of District rules.

This analysis shows that projected future development will result in regional increases in runoff rate and volume, even with current District rules in place. Additionally, the limited conveyance of several public drainage systems that serve as the primary outlet for stormwater in some communities has raised awareness of volume constrained areas. Within these areas the runoff volume increases from future development will exacerbate existing and/or create new flood issues.

**Goal:** Understand the effects of future development on runoff volume, flow rates, and flooding, and work to minimize those effects through regulation, projects, and programs.

**Measurable Goal:** Update its Future Conditions Model at least once during the 10-year lifespan of the watershed management plan (2020-2029) to account for realized and proposed land development and modeled changes in regional precipitation patterns.

The District has 5 policies to ensure adequate progress is achieved toward meeting this goal.

**2024 Accomplishments and Activities:**

The District's regulatory permit program implements RCWD rules and considers flooding concerns related to development. These include individual project site controls, regional storage, implications from conveyance, and outlet downstream implications on flood elevations. Property development in the CSMP area must comply with the terms of the CSMP.

**2025 Work Plan**

The District will continue to communicate on this issue to its community partners as individual sites develop and contribute to the regional plan. The District will respond to applications in the CSMP area with the District tracking the municipalities and developers' capacity and allocations to other developments. An update of the District's Future Conditions Model will occur later in the ten-year plan cycle.

**Modeling and Mapping**

The District initiates maintenance of its modeling products to ensure the continued value of the models and their results. This maintenance includes annual updates to models to reflect changing infrastructure and land use, correcting deficiencies and errors, and adding new details and data where and when it becomes available. The District has developed a District Modeling Update Policy, including updates in tools and the development of MS4Front, to guide implementation of this maintenance effort.

**Goal:** Maintain and update District hydrology and hydraulic models to reflect changing conditions and adapt to evolving technology.

**Measurable Goal:** Complete an update to the District-wide model (existing conditions) annually (throughout the 10-year lifespan of the watershed management plan).

The District has 4 policies to ensure adequate progress is achieved toward meeting this goal.

**2024 Accomplishments and Activities:**

RCWD engaged its engineer to complete the annual update of the District-wide model, incorporating landscape-scale changes from new developments and major capital projects that were completed in the watershed over the previous year. In October 2024, a boundary change petition was submitted to the Board of Water and Soil Resources requesting changes to the legal watershed boundary in the southwest portion of the District to better reflect the current hydrologic boundary. The petition was accompanied by written statements of concurrence in the petition from the governing bodies of all affected cities, towns, and watershed management organizations having jurisdiction over the territory proposed to be added or transferred.

**2025 Work Plan**

The City of New Brighton has submitted a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) for the area around Hansen Park. The District's Hansen Park project required significant modeling of the area and resulted in a much-improved understanding of the floodplain. The District will be supporting the City through cost-share and modeling detail in its application and intended relief to landowners.

## Water Quality Management

The District has identified “Water Quality Management” as one of its nine management categories. The category is defined as, “Protecting and/or improving the water quality of District streams, rivers, lakes, and other watercourses.” There are six key issues within this category: Accelerated Sedimentation; Aquatic Invasive Species; Wetlands; Nutrient Enrichment, Algae, and Cultural Eutrophication; Surface Water Monitoring; and Surface Water / Groundwater Interactions.

### Accelerated Sedimentation

As changes in land use and rainfall patterns continue to occur within the RCWD, increases in runoff volume, flow, and velocity are experienced in portions of the watershed. These hydrologic changes can cause sedimentation rates to accelerate, leading to negative ecological and economic impacts. accelerated sedimentation can lead to a reduction in the storage capacity of lakes, ponds, and plunge pools, resulting in costly maintenance dredging efforts to restore storage capacity. Rice Creek flows through two lakes prone to rapid sedimentation: Long Lake in New Brighton and Locke Lake.

The District maintains sediment basins adjacent to Long Lake, in Locke Lake, on Ramsey County Ditch 2 within New Brighton’s Hansen Pond, on Ramsey County Ditch 4 within Roseville’s Oasis Pond, on Ramsey-Washington Judicial Ditch 1 just upstream of U.S. Highway 61, and on Ramsey County Ditch 11 just west of Eagle Street in White Bear Township.

#### Goals:

- Employ District regulatory authority and collaborate with partners (e.g. state, municipalities) on inspections to minimize sediment loading from erosion associated with land disturbance, land development, increases in impervious surface, or other changes in landscape construction sites that contribute to accelerated sedimentation.
- Pursuing collaborations to implement agricultural and urban BMPs to address sediment delivery to District water resources.
- Reduce in-channel erosion throughout the RCWD, and particularly in Lower Rice Creek and Middle Rice Creek, through the implementation of programs and practices to stabilize eroding channels and banks.

#### Measurable Goals:

- Reduce the average number of sediment-related permit violations per active construction site to less than one per site per year (by the end of the 10-year 2020-2029 watershed management plan timeframe);
- Continuing the annual implementation of cost share programs for water quality BMPs resulting in a total reduction of TSS loading to receiving waters of 100 tons (during period of the plan); and
- Pursue implementation of at least one BMP that addresses in-channel sediment delivery in Lower Rice Creek and one BMP that addresses in-channel sediment delivery in Middle Rice Creek (during the period of the plan).

The District has 6 policies to ensure adequate progress is achieved toward meeting this goal.

#### 2024 Activities:

RCWD completed inspections of **one** of its three stream stabilization and restoration sites. With minor



exceptions, the sites were found to be in good condition and continue to provide the intended benefit – i.e. reducing streambank erosion and sedimentation.



*Figure 5 Golden Lake Iron Enhanced Sand Filter at Golden Lake Park in Circle Pines*

Projects funded through the **2024 Stormwater Management Grant Program** are anticipated to reduce annual pollutant loading to District surface waters. Annual total suspended sediment (TSS) is expected to be reduced by approximately 1.3 tons, and annual total phosphorus (TP) loading is expected to be reduced by approximately 8 lbs.

**Iron-Enhanced Sand Filter (IESF) Projects** All 3 IESF sites were inoperable for the 2024 season. The IESF at Hansen Park treated 0 gallons of RCD 2 runoff in 2024 (Hansens Park had a pump damaged by animals and was inoperable, the pump has been repaired and is in working order for the 2025 season).

With the repair completed Oasis Pond is expected to operate during the 2025 season.

The IESF at Bald Eagle Lake treated 0 gallons of RCD 11 runoff in 2023 (After extensive trouble shooting the reason the site was having so many pumps and operation faults; we realized the Electronic Control Unit was faulty and had internal damage. We will be retrofitting this site with an updated Electronic Control Unit for the 2025 season.

## 2025 Work Plan

The District's **Stormwater Management Grant and Water Quality Grant Programs** (and the Mini-Grants program) will continue operation. Collectively, they offer over \$500,000 to District local governments, residents, businesses, and other stakeholders who aim to implement water quality improvement projects and best management practices within the District. After repairs to all 3 sites the IESFs at Hansen Park, Oasis Pond, and Bald Eagle Lake are expected to operate for the 2025 season reducing sediment and nutrient loads in Ramsey County Ditches 2, 4, and 11, respectively.

## Aquatic Invasive Species

Consistent with its mission, the RCWD takes an active role in managing those AIS that impact water quality or contribute to algae blooms and decreased water clarity. For other AIS that do not directly impact water quality, but may affect ecology or recreation, the District offers supporting services (i.e. data collection and general guidance). Research suggests that curly-leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*) and common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) are linked to water quality degradation and algae blooms. For this reason, the District plays an active role in managing these species.

### Goals:

- Mitigate adverse water quality impacts of common carp by reducing and maintaining their density with a long-term, sustainable approach.

- Partner with lake associations and homeowner groups to manage curly-leaf pondweed to improve water quality and native plant diversity.

#### Measurable Goals:

- Develop three system-specific common carp management plans, with priority to Clear-Mud-Howard Lakes, Peltier-Centerville Lakes, and Silver Lake (by 2029)
- Implement plans over the long-term to reduce carp density below their adverse impact threshold (100 kg/ha) on a per system basis.
- Work towards achieving 100 kg/ha carp density in the Long-Lino Chain (during the WMP time period).



*Figure 6 Johanna Creek Carp Barrier at New Brighton Community Center in New Brighton, MN*

- Implement annual curly-leaf pondweed management programs in District lakes that have lake association and/or landowner support with DNR technical guidance.

The District has 3 policies to ensure adequate progress is achieved toward meeting this goal.

#### 2024 Accomplishments and Activities:

The District partnered with seven lake associations to manage curlyleaf pondweed in 2024.

On Bald Eagle, Clear, Centerville, Peltier, Reshanau, Golden, and Silver Lakes, the District delineated beds of curlyleaf pondweed and procured permits from the DNR. On Bald Eagle and Peltier Lakes, the District also hired a contractor to apply herbicide as stipulated by the DNR permit. District staff attend technical conferences and collaborate with colleagues at the Department of Natural Resources and other agencies to ensure that best practices are followed to minimize negative impacts on native plants and promote water quality protection and improvement.

Continued implementing its Long Lake / Lino Chain of Lakes Carp Management Plan. In 2024, a total of 1,029 adult carp were removed from the system. The removal total was lower because the population was lower.

Since program inception, 56,883 carp have been removed from the system. Carp biomass increased slightly in 2024 to about 110 kg/ha, but still near the long-term goal of <100 kg/ha, and MUCH less than before program implementation (~700 kg/ha).

A carp population survey on Centerville Lake found the density to be very low – approximately 23 kg/ha. Box-netting was used to remove 91 carp, bringing the density to 20 kg/ha - well below the ecological





*Figure 7 RCWD Staff lake monitoring*

damage threshold of 100 kg/ha. Currently, carp do not appear to be a problem in Centerville Lake. In frequent population surveys (~ every 5 years) will continue in the future.

### **2025 Work Plan**

The District plans to partner with the same homeowner groups to manage curlyleaf pondweed.

The District will continue implementing the Long Lake / Lino Chain of Lakes Carp Management Plan. Primary activities will include adult carp removal during spring migration using the NEPTUN electronic guidance system and a new electrical aggregating system. The Johanna Creek Carp Barrier was installed and completed in 2023 with Watershed Based Implementation Funding. Carp removal, monitoring and barrier maintenance will continue in 2025.

### **Wetlands**

Managing wetlands is critical to many District interests including water quality and flood control. The availability of banked wetland credits (public or private) is vital to District projects.

**Goal:** Manage wetlands in a manner which improves diversity and ecological integrity on a District-wide basis, consistent with the Wetland Conservation Act and augmenting Comprehensive Wetland Protection and Management Plans (CWPMP) and local opportunities for preservation, enhancement, and restoration, while balancing multiple resource issues.

**Measurable Goals:** Continue implementation of the WCA and CWPMPs and complete annual reports summarizing implementation of the CWPMPs.

The District has 3 policies to ensure adequate progress in this category.

### **2024 Activities:**

The RCWD is the Local Government Unit (LGU) responsible for the implementation of the State Wetland Conservation Act (WCA), except for within the cities of Hugo, Circle Pines, and most recently Mounds View, or associated projects on state lands, such as those involving MnDOT and the DNR. Both WCA and District rules specify sequencing processes to avoid and minimize wetland impacts and replacement requirements for unavoidable impacts to wetlands. The District's role as the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Authority is also a key issue in the RCWD regulatory program and incorporated into that section of this report.

In addition, the RCWD maintains a set of rules that govern wetlands within special areas of the District, which are known as CWPMP areas. The CWPMP rules were developed as a component of Resource Management Plans (RMPs), which were developed for several locations in the District experiencing rapid urbanization, and included wetland management, public drainage systems, and water quality/quantity management considerations. The CWPMPs, RMPs, and Rule F were implemented as an effort to balance



the responsibilities of the RCWD as LGU for the WCA, drainage authority for MS 103E public drainage systems, and as a manager of water quality and quantity.

The District continued its administration/implementation of the WCA and CWPMPs. In addition to the review and noticing of WCA applications, the District reported all 2023 WCA activity to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and will be completing an audit review of Circle Pines, Hugo, and Mounds View permitting administration as cities within the District that have accepted the LGU responsibility.

### **Nutrient Enrichment, Algae, and Cultural Eutrophication**

Several lakes and streams in the RCWD have issues related to nutrient enrichment and cultural eutrophication. The RCWD has worked diligently to address the impacts of nutrient enrichment and cultural eutrophication by conducting diagnostic studies and assessments to mitigate excess nutrient loading to District waterbodies. These studies and assessments are essential tools in targeting actions, such as implementation of best management practices (BMPs), that diminish the effect of cultural eutrophication and will be relied upon by District staff to prioritize protection and TMDL implementation efforts.

**Goal:** Protect and improve water quality conditions in District resources by managing nutrient loading and restoring aquatic ecosystems.

**Measurable Goals:** Decrease the number of District lakes classified as "restoration" and increase the number of District lakes classified as "protection" by 2 over the next 10 years using the District's Lake Classification System. This will be accomplished through the annual implementation of cost share programs for water quality BMPs which results in a cumulative total reduction of total phosphorus loading to receiving waters of 300 pounds per year (during the WMP 10-year time period).

The District has five policies to ensure adequate progress is achieved toward meeting this goal.

### **2024 Accomplishments and Activities:**

Projects funded through the Stormwater Management Grant Program are anticipated to reduce annual pollutant loading to District surface waters. Annual total suspended sediment (TSS) loading is expected to be reduced by approximately 1.3 tons, and annual total phosphorus (TP) loading is expected to be reduced by approximately 8 lbs.

In 2024, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency removed four lakes from the *Impaired Waters* list. These lakes were listed as impaired for excess nutrients. Monitoring data from the RCWD and partners suggested that the lakes – Bald Eagle, Golden, Island, and White Rock – were meeting state nutrient criteria. "De-



*Figure 8 Centerville Lake alum treatment.*

listing" celebrations were held with several lake associations and cities in 2024. These lakes transitioned from the "restoration" to the "protection" phase, thus accomplishing the District's Measurable Goal for *Nutrient Enrichment, Algae, and Cultural Eutrophication*.

### **2025 Work Plan**

The District's Stormwater Management Grant and Water Quality Grant Programs will continue operation. Collectively, they offer over \$500,000 to District local governments, residents, businesses and other stakeholders who aim to implement water quality improvement capital projects and best management practices within the District.

IESFs at Hansen Park, Oasis Pond, and Ramsey County Ditch 11 will continue operation in 2024 and beyond, reducing sediment and nutrient loads from Ramsey County Ditches 2, 4 and 11, respectively.

The District will continue tracking water quality project information through the MS4Front database and utilize the information to monitor TMDL progress and reduce water quality treatment gaps in the landscape.



Figure 9 Centerville Lake Alum Treatment Public Information Meeting, Matt Kocian, Lake and Stream Manager presenting.

## Surface Water Monitoring

Surface water monitoring is a core function of the RCWD. The Monitoring Program Plan establishes monitoring goals and objectives, describes program organization, and identifies data quality objectives.

Monitoring data is used to inform an array of RCWD activities. Monitoring at long-term, fixed sites provides insight into resource conditions and long-term water quality trends. Synoptic monitoring allows District staff to determine if projects achieve predicted water quality benefits if similar projects should be pursued in the future, and how similar projects might be optimized to attain greater pollutant reductions. One-time (investigative) samples are also collected by the District typically to address a perceived transient or short-term water quality problem. Monitoring data is used to calibrate hydrologic, hydraulic, and water quality models that are relied upon by the District in implementation, collaboration, and regulatory efforts.

In addition to monitoring efforts conducted by RCWD staff, the District supports several volunteer monitoring programs. Volunteers monitor lake water quality through the Metropolitan Council's Community Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP). Through Friends of the Mississippi River, volunteers in the Stream Health Evaluation Program (SHEP) track biological health by collecting and documenting aquatic macroinvertebrates. The District partners with county conservation districts to measure lake levels. Finally, the District partners with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to operate a stream gauging station on Rice Creek in Mounds View.

**Goals:** Monitor District resources to aid in the planning and evaluation of RCWD management activities.

**Measurable Goal:**

- Annually update and implement the RCWD Monitoring Schedule, guided by the RCWD Monitoring Program Plan.

The District has 5 policies to ensure adequate progress towards this goal.

**2024 Accomplishments and Activities:**

- District staff collected 423 water samples on lakes, streams, and ditches; a total of 2,170 individual laboratory analyses were conducted. District staff regularly monitored 9 lakes throughout the watershed, collecting water samples and physical lake measurements (e.g. temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen). District partners and volunteers monitored another 17 lakes.
- District staff monitored water quality and physical parameters at 10 long-term stream and ditch sites and at 4 synoptic sites.
- The District continued its partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey to operate a continuous USGS stream gauging station on Rice Creek.



*Figure 10 Ali Chalberg, Watershed Technician, lake monitoring on Locke Lake.*



- Aquatic plant surveys were conducted at 10 lakes to manage invasive species and qualify overall lake health.

### **2025 Work Plan**

District staff will monitor water quality and physical parameters on District streams and ditches, and partner with the USGS to operate their stream gage. District staff, cooperators, and volunteers will continue to monitor lake water quality throughout the watershed. The District will continue to support the SHEP program and conduct aquatic plant surveys on area lakes.



*Figure 11 Water Monitoring staff stream monitoring.*



## Surface Water / Groundwater Interactions

The District's role in the management of groundwater resources is primarily as a collaborator and advisor through funding stormwater reuse projects and directing infiltration where appropriate. The RCWD is also responsible for conforming with groundwater plans developed by relevant counties and will review and submit comments to the DNR for water appropriation permits.

**Goal:** Protect groundwater-reliant District resources by implementation of surface water management activities.

**Measurable Goal:** Promote implementation of at least one BMP annually that benefits groundwater-reliant natural resources, such as stormwater infiltration practices or stormwater reuse projects.

The District has 5 policies to ensure adequate progress in this category.

### 2024 Accomplishments and Activities:

RCWD received and approved 18 permit applications that proposed at least one infiltration or filtration stormwater BMP. Together, these permit applications result in 10 infiltration and 18 filtration BMPs constructed throughout the District.

### 2025 Work Plan

Continue to promote the reuse of stormwater for its benefits to groundwater resources and improvement of surface water quality. Support and promotion can come through direct funding appropriation when a project is aligned with the 2020 WMP or through one of the District's grant programs. The District expects to continue developing these types of projects with its partners.



*Figure 12 Golden Lake shoreline and native plants*

## Funding

The District has identified “Funding” as one of its nine management categories. The category is defined as, “Prioritized budgeting of costs for District programs and projects and identification of revenue sources.” There are two key issues within this category: Financing and Funding Sources *and* Funding Distribution.

### Financing and Funding Sources

The District needs reliable sources of funding and sound financial management policies in order to carry out its mission.

**Goal:** Develop and implement an effective framework for sourcing the District and external financing and revenue to implement projects and programs to achieve the District’s goals.

**Measurable Goal:** Measurable funding goals were established in 2022. Implementation of the framework to assess 100% of District program and capital improvement projects to address financing and funding needs consistent with the framework.

### 2024 Accomplishments and Activities:

Examined and revised its General Fund Balance Policy. The revision establishes a benchmark by which to provide a fund balance cash flow operating reserve. The reserve being comprised of two elements:

- An unassigned fund balance within the General Fund of not less than 40 percent of the General Fund budget.
- **An assigned fund balance within the Implementation Fund of not less than 40 percent of the next year’s administrative budget lines.**

This is to capture the administrative needs of each fund, and the amount will fluctuate with each year’s specific budget objectives.

The District is attentive to its budget and works to document the allocation of funds. The District structured further documentation in its annual budget for clarity. The effort recognizes the importance of a reasonably consistent levy and its achievement through planning and saving for future needs. This includes the previously noted administrative cash flow reserve of both General Fund and its Implementation Administrative Budget, Restricted Funds, Committed Funds, Implementation Fund and Assigned Fund Balance. The definition of each classification follows:

- General Fund – covers the general administrative expenses of the District, including salaries, benefits, and office expenses.
- Implementation Administrative Budget – covers the administrative costs of preparing or amending the District’s plan and the administrative costs of implementation of the plan through projects and programs, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 103B.241.
- Restricted Fund – amounts are subject to externally enforceable legal restrictions, such as funds levied in a Water Management District (WMD) which are restricted to the defined purpose.
- Committed Fund - amounts that can be used only for specific purposes determined by a formal action of the government's highest level of decision-making authority, such as grant program awards. The commitments may be changed or lifted only by the government taking the same formal action that imposed the constraint originally.

- Program/Project Anticipation Fund – funds accumulated and committed as an alternative to issuing bonds to finance improvements based on findings as to the potential future need of funds for a particular purpose.
- Assigned Fund - amounts a government intends to use for a specific purpose.

RCWD values sound financial management policies to ensure financial stability of the District for the benefit of residents and businesses. The financing and funding of District efforts are carried out using a variety of funding methods. The Board of Managers strives to provide a balance between equity in paying for activities and a streamlined process minimizing administrative costs.

These financial methods can be grouped into two subcategories:

1. District-derived funds and
2. Outside funding sources.

The District can use ad valorem taxes (property tax to all taxable property within the District); the establishment of water management districts (WMDs) (property tax specific to local benefitted parcels, restricted funds) for the purpose of collecting revenues and paying for costs of projects initiated under 103D. Fees and charges are collected based on services provided for permit applications and other services.

RCWD developed its 2024 budget to align with the watershed management plan and deliver improved transparency for long-term financial stability. This is part of an effort to develop and implement an effective framework that supports balanced and steady District levy financing. There was a 5.25% levy increase for 2024 and a 4.65 rise in taxable market value, yet as always, a future year's changes in market value, economic conditions may result in changes to the levy rate. (The District is in four separate metropolitan counties; the District estimates its levy impact on every \$200,000 of taxable market value to be \$36.) The remainder of the revenue came from water management districts, fees, grants, investment income, and use of the District's fund balance.

The RCWD has frequently used the concept that the responsibility of paying for the completion of a project should be borne by and in proportion to the relative benefits received. When the benefits are regional in nature serving the public, ad valorem revenue is used. As the benefits become more localized, the different funding mechanisms will be considered, sometimes in combination.

Fund balance reserves are an important component of the financial health of RCWD and ensure the District has enough funds to meet contingency and cash-flow needs. The District's 2024 budget followed the District's General Fund Balance Policy and maintained a 40% assigned and unassigned fund balance. The District fund balance also includes a process to save and self-finance for future large projects. This "forced self-saving of funds" earmarks dollars for these future projects and eliminates the need to borrow funds and mitigates large swings or increases in the District's levy. The "forced self-saving of funds" are identified in the 2024 budget under the project anticipation fund. These are the best financial practices and as stated above in this section additional documentation in developing the 2024 budget.

#### **Outside Funding Sources:**

##### **Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF)**

BWSR's Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) remains a key source for RCWD and its partners, with allocations by watershed.

RCWD assists BWSR with the WBIF process by informing the watershed municipalities and partners about the program and by helping facilitate the convene meetings and coordinating with the voting members of the convene. The voting members consist of representatives from Anoka Soil and Water Conservation District, Washington Soil and Water Conservation District, Washington County, Ramsey County, the City of New Brighton, the City of Mounds View, and the Watershed District. The voting members of the convene review and discuss project proposals and hold a vote on each one to determine whether it should be recommended to BWSR for funding. For the FY24-25 program year, the RCWD received approval to apply for funds to be used for the design of concepts to restore and stabilize a portion of Anoka Washington Judicial Ditch 3 (Clearwater Creek) that is downstream of I-35W.

### **Clean Water Fund**

The District continues seeking external funding, including state grants like the Clean Water Fund.

The District can borrow funds to finance activities over the interim timeframe between project implementation and receipt of dedicated project funding. The District does not have any of the low-interest Clean Water Partnership Act Revolving Fund loans (from the MPCA) currently.

### **Funding Distribution**

The Board of Managers continues to refine its process for prioritizing the funding and implementation of projects and programs using a variety of funding sources that are available to the District.

**Goal:** Prioritize funding of projects and programs to most effectively meet the goals of the District.

**Measurable Goal:** As a part of each annual budgeting cycle, re-evaluate prioritization of District capital projects for the upcoming 5-year period.

The District has established 2 policies to ensure adequate progress in this category:

The Board of Managers values the equitable prioritization of projects throughout the District. 100% of communities and counties participated in the development of the watershed management plan; all requested and identified projects were included. The Board of Managers completes an annual budget that considers the District's capital projects and the requests of our stakeholder communities. They may consider the following factors when establishing priorities:

- Location
- Sustainability
- Consistency with District Programs
- Consistency with local plan priorities
- Capital and maintenance costs
- Expected benefits
- Multiple benefits

The Board works to prioritize requests for financial assistance to preferentially place District-led and cooperative regional projects within those geographic locations which provide the most flood control and water quality benefits to the region. The intent of prioritizing is to facilitate decisions regarding which projects provide the greatest benefit within the District compared to the fiscal investment with



the realization that this may not always be possible. In 2023, District staff continued to actively engage our partner communities regarding upcoming capital projects and budgetary needs for consideration in developing the 2024 District budget. It is anticipated that several projects that were discussed through this effort will be able to be funded by the RCWD Board in the coming year.

When the prioritization of proposed projects based on the factors above is comparable, the Board will strive to ensure that geographic funding equity is maintained across the District.

### **2025 Work Plan**

Continue to develop a transparent budget in consideration of its mission and the needs of residents and stakeholders. The Board will re-evaluate the prioritization of District capital projects and protection of past public dollar infrastructure investments during the annual budgeting cycle and continue to develop an effective framework for secure funding.

Evaluate any new concerns or assistance requests with consideration to the urgency of the problem, the nature of the District's responsibility, and the capacity of the District to respond (including available funding and staffing considerations). The Board requires that all cases be fairly considered and evaluated.

When the prioritization of proposed projects (based on the factors listed above) is comparable, the Board will strive to ensure that geographic funding equity is maintained across the District.



*Figure 13 Lake Johanna Shoreline*

## Collaborations

The RCWD has identified “Collaborations” as one of its nine management categories. This category is defined as: “developing and maintaining positive, collaborative relationships and agreements with other agencies and partners to better carry out the District’s mission.” There are two key issues within this category: Collaborations with Local, State, and Federal Partners *and* Collaborations with Private Partners.

*\*\*See Outreach and Communications section for additional information on Collaborations.*

### Collaborations with Local, State, and Federal Partners

**Goals:** Continue collaboration with local, state, and federal partners through project implementation, outreach programs, and city/county partner meetings to better carry out the District’s mission.

**Measurable Goal:** Hold one or more city/county partner meetings annually. It will also implement cost-share programs with public partners annually.

The District has 2 policies to ensure adequate progress in this category.

### Collaborations with Private Partners

**Goal:** Collaborate with private partners through voluntary action or cost-share incentives by effectively implementing the Natural Waterway Management Program, Stormwater Management Grant Program, and Water Quality Grant Program to achieve District and landowner goals.

### Measurable Goal:

Continue to fund its existing cost-share incentive programs annually.  
The District has 2 policies to ensure adequate progress in this category.

### 2024 Accomplishments and Activities:

The District partners with its 28 member cities and townships and 4 counties (Washington, Ramsey, Anoka, and Hennepin) on various initiatives to complete or progress District goals.



*Figure 14 Committee Hearing for Jones Lake funding with District Admin, Nick Tomczik and Representative Sandra Feist*

The Municipal Capital Improvements – Early Coordination Program enables staff to work closely with cities and other agency partners to identify voluntary capital improvement opportunities for water quality and water quantity conservation. The program works to provide cities (and other qualified applicants) access to funds from the District’s Water Quality Grant Program and the Stormwater Management Grant Program.

The District helps municipalities through coordination of Local Water Planning efforts. *All 28 communities now have RCWD Board-approved Local Water Management Plans.*



Figure 15 Fall 2024 City County Partner Meeting at Moore Lake in Fridley, MN

The Modelling and Planning Program impacts the effectiveness of collaborations but also addresses water quality and flooding issues (see those sections for additional information). RCWD collaborated with The US Army Corps of Engineers to implement the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) within our District. RCWD collaborated with FEMA about their Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). RCWD also collaborated with the Met Council, DNR, MPCA, MDH, and the USGS on various water quality monitoring initiatives. RCWD continues to work with communities and surrounding watershed districts on its Boundary Management Program. Ongoing efforts to update watershed boundaries will continue.

The Stormwater Management Grant Program and the Water Quality Grant Program are grant programs implemented annually. The Stormwater Management Grant Program is a grant program that funds capital improvements constructed by counties, cities, townships, school districts, libraries, and other entities, to enhance water quality (e.g., sediment, nutrient, & chloride management), alleviate flooding issues, or increase groundwater recharge. The District’s cost-share programs have substantial impacts on water quality and flooding issues; they also support the efforts of programs including the Groundwater Management & Stormwater Reuse Assessment Program. Issue specific information on this program is included in the Water Quality and Flooding sections of this report.

**Approved project funding for the 2024 Stormwater Management Cost Share Program is laid out in the table below:**

Applicant	Project Title	Total Funding Amount
City of Fridley	Street Rehabilitation Project No.ST2024-01	\$30,000
White Bear Township	Bellaire Ave Stormwater Pond	\$93,000
City of Arden Hills	2024 Street & Utility Improvements	\$70,000
City of New Brighton	4 <sup>th</sup> Street NW Storm Sewer Improvements	\$74,000
City of Willernie	Craig Place Storm Sewer Improvements	\$33,150
TOTAL FUNDS COMMITTED:		\$300,150



The Water Quality Grant Program provides funding and assistance for landowners to install Best Management Practices (BMPs) or projects that aim to improve the quality of surface water within the District. The RCWD has technical services agreements with Anoka Conservation District (ACD), Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Soil and Water Conservation Division (RSWCD), and Washington Conservation District (WCD) to assist with site assessments, project design, and landowner applications.

RCWD allocated \$175,000 for 2024 projects. A total of 2 projects in Anoka County, 10 projects in Ramsey County, and 3 projects in Washington County. Most projects in 2024 focused on lake shoreline restoration for erosion control and rain gardens for stormwater infiltration. This year, green roofs were introduced to the program as a BMP eligible for cost-share. The City of Fridley partnered with the RCWD Water Quality Grant Program on a road reconstruction project to install four curb-cut raingardens within the catchment area of the road project. Forest Lake Area High School partnered with RCWD Water Quality Grant Program, the Minnesota Water Stewards, and the BWSR Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP) to restore an infiltration basin and install a prairie conversion project near the entrance of the school. This project will be incorporated into the FLAHS environmental education program to teach water quality and habitat enhancement.

### **2024 Water Quality Grant Program Project Summary:**

- Five Shoreline Restorations
  - Six Curb-Cut Raingardens
  - One raingarden treatment train (3 raingardens)
  - One raingarden retrofit
  - One Wetland Shoreline Restoration
  - One infiltration basin restoration and prairie conversion
  - One farmland to prairie conservation cover
  - One pervious paver and downspout redirect raingarden



*Figure 16 Figure 4 Water Quality Grant Project installed in 2024 in Shoreview, MN*

### **2025 Work Plan**

Hold two City/County Partner Meetings

Continue collaborations with our partners through the Stormwater Management Grant Program and other grant funding sources. The District continues its goal to expand the quantity and type of projects funded through the program by continuing to conduct outreach to the agricultural and rural landowners of the District. RCWD will prioritize targeting projects in TMDL areas, projects identified in completed sub watershed assessment reports, and city's local water plans.



## Regulatory

RCWD has identified “Regulatory” as one of its nine management categories. The category is defined as, “administration of District rules to manage District water resources.” There are three key issues within this category: District Rules, the District’s Role as WCA Authority, and Permitting and Enforcement.

### **District Rules**

The District has adopted a set of rules to guide its decision-making regarding stormwater management, soil erosion and sediment control, floodplain alterations, wetland alterations, illicit discharge, and other activities within the boundaries of the District. These rules also incorporate the State’s NPDES and MS4 requirements.

**Goal:** Ensure that implementation of District rules adequately protects RCWD resources while providing enough flexibility that the program does not unreasonably hinder land use.

**Measurable Goal:** the District will annually implement the District’s rules through the permitting program and will solicit stakeholder input on the District rules every five years.

The District has 2 policies to ensure adequate progress in this category.

The District underwent a rulemaking effort in 2024. The purpose was to provide clarity, flexibility, and better align with the requirements of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit. The process of revising the rules included multiple opportunities for stakeholder input through an early feedback request, formal comment period, and public hearing. The revised rule set was adopted by the Board of Managers on November 13, 2024, and took effect on January 1, 2025. Consistent with the RCWD Watershed Management Plan, the District will continue to assess its rules for any needed revisions and receive input on its regulations to have an efficient and effective regulatory program.

### **District’s Role as Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Authority**

The District is responsible for the implementation of WCA (as augmented by the CWPMPs) to achieve no net wetland loss while recognizing the need to develop land and manage the maintenance/repair of public drainage systems.

**Goal:** Fulfill the District’s responsibility as the designated WCA LGU, as outlined in MN Rule 8420.

**Measurable Goal:** Implement the District’s wetland permitting program and annually report the LGU administration of the rule.

The District has 3 policies to ensure adequate progress in this category.

### **2024 Accomplishments and Activities:**

The District is the Local Government Unit (LGU) responsible for the implementation of the state Wetland Conservation Act (WCA), except for within the cities of Hugo, Circle Pines, and Mounds View, or associated projects on state lands, such as those involving MnDOT and DNR.

RCWD maintains a set of rules that govern wetlands within special areas of the District, which are known as CWPMP areas. The CWPMP rules were developed as a component of Resource Management Plans

(RMPs), which were developed for several locations in the District experiencing rapid urbanization, and included wetland management, public drainage systems, and water quality/quantity management considerations. The CWPMPs, RMPs, and Rule F were implemented as an effort to balance the responsibilities of the RCWD as LGU for the WCA, drainage authority for MS 103E public drainage systems, and as a manager of water quality and quantity.

Staff reported all 2024 WCA activity to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and will complete an audit review of Circle Pines, Hugo, and Mounds View as permitting administration cities within the District that have accepted the LGU responsibility.

### **2025 Work Plan**

- Continue its administration/implementation of the WCA and CWPMPs.
- Participate in the BWSR Wetland Conservation Act rulemaking effort and consider what, if any, changes are needed to RCWD rules as a result.
- Review and notice all WCA applications.



*Figure 17 Golden Lake Shoreline/Buffer Zone*

## Permitting and Enforcement

In accordance with District rules, permits are issued to protect public health and welfare and the District's natural resources.

**Goal:** Create efficiency and flexibility in the permitting process, while maintaining the intent of the rules.

**Measurable Goal:** Survey permit applicants to consider solutions to issues of stormwater and wetland permit flexibility, at least once during the 10-year implementation period of the Plan.

The District has 3 policies to ensure adequate progress in this category.

### **2024 Accomplishments and Activities:**

The District continued to implement an efficient regulatory program in 2024. The District remains committed to improving the application review process with simplified "insufficient" emails, increased phone calls on application review status, and pre-application meetings. Staff continue to improve the new online permit application. Applicants can submit their application information into guided fields and upload their application materials rather than fill out an application form by hand and submit their application through email or physically through the mail or dropping off materials at the office.

The permit application fee schedule was most recently adopted by the Board on December 9, 2021, and implemented on January 1, 2022. Thus far, the fee schedule has been successful in meeting the goals of the Board of Managers of simplifying the submittal process, recuperating approximately 60% of private permit fee review costs, and improving equity in the cost of permit review for compliance with the rules. No changes have been recommended to the fee schedule, but the Board of Managers sees value in continuing to assess the fee schedule on a yearly basis.

The District has a publicly available GIS viewer which is found on the District's Permitting Information webpage. The viewer contains map layers for roads, waterways, floodplains, RCWD's public drainage system (ditches and tiles), wetlands, topography, aerial imagery, and more. The viewer intends to assist landowners, cities, consultants, and others in project planning. In addition, RCWD completed its third full year of the permit database, MS4Front. The database has improved RCWD's effectiveness in tracking permits, stormwater BMPs, inspection reporting, and annual MS4 reporting among other benefits.

The Cities of Circle Pines, Hugo, and Mounds View continued to assume administrative delegation of District Rules C, D, E, and F. Staff continue to provide support to these cities when requested (e.g. questions on rule administration or as a WCA TEP member) and will complete the annual audit soon to ensure proper administration of District rules/standards.

### **Inspections**

The RCWD is geographically subdivided into inspection areas served by separate staff with multiple duties (not including the City of Hugo, the City of Circle Pines, and the City of Mounds View who have permitting authority for RCWD Rules C, D, E, and F—see map below). The RCWD continues to contract with the Ramsey County Soil & Water Conservation Division (Ramsey SWCD) (formerly Ramsey Conservation District) and Washington Conservation District (WCD) for inspection services within portions of the District. The inspection service agreement term with Ramsey County SWCD was extended in 2024 and will expire on December 31, 2026. The inspection service agreement with WCD

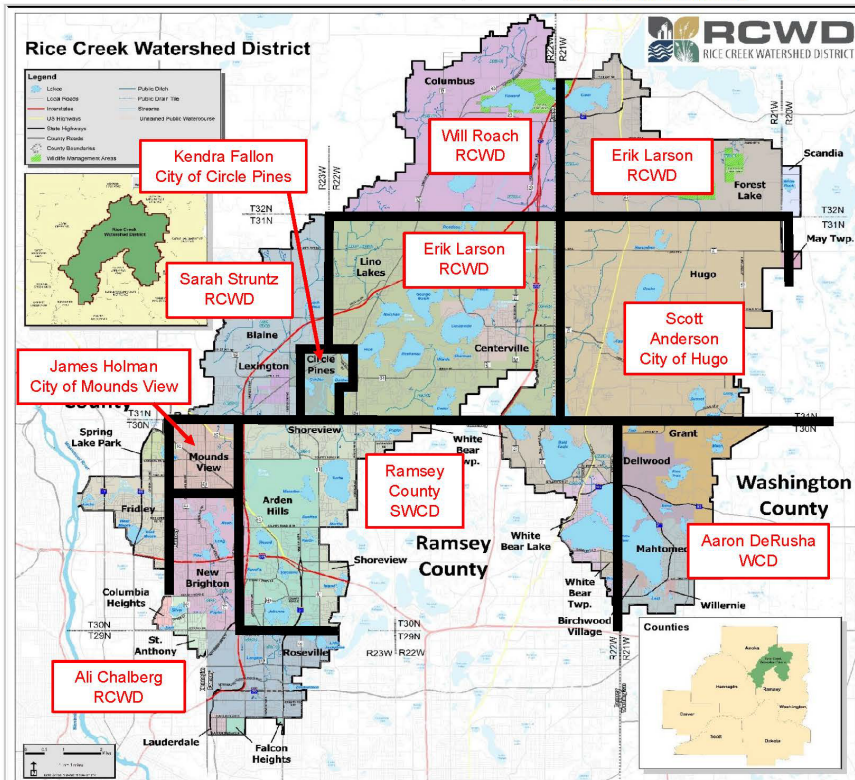


was also extended in 2024 and will expire on December 31, 2025. The relationship with both Ramsey County SWCD and Washington Conservation District continues to substantially contribute to the RCWD's overall inspection activity. Internally, the regulatory staff has expanded to include two full-time inspectors and two part-time inspectors that share time with other RCWD programs. The map below shows the current inspector areas within the District.

## Rice Creek Watershed District Inspector Area Map

October 7, 2024

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 Kendra Fallon (City of Circle Pines/WSB) – [kfallon@wsbeng.com](mailto:kfallon@wsbeng.com) / 612-201-1361  
 Scott Anderson (City of Hugo) – [SAnderson@ci.hugo.mn.us](mailto:SAnderson@ci.hugo.mn.us) / 651-762-6326  
 James Holman (City of Mounds View) – [jame.holman@moundsviewmn.org](mailto:jame.holman@moundsviewmn.org) / 763-717-4035



Aaron (WCD)	Erik (RCWD)	Sarah (RCWD)	Will (RCWD)	Ali (RCWD)	Ramsey County (SWCD)	Scott (City of Hugo)	Kendra (City of Circle Pines/WSB)	James (City of Mounds View)
Birchwood Village Dellwood Grant Mahtomedi Willernie	Centerville Lino Lakes Forest Lake Scandia May Twp.	Blaine Lexington Spring Lake Park Fridley	Columbus	Columbia Heights New Brighton St. Anthony Falcon Heights Lauderdale Roseville	Arden Hills Shoreview White Bear Twp. White Bear Lake	Hugo	Circle Pines	Mounds View

The District has continued a partnership with the City of Centerville through a JPA which started as a pilot program during the spring of 2021. Through this partnership program, RCWD has conducted erosion and sediment control inspections for City/District permitted projects to assist with meeting Minimum Control Measure (MCM) 4 requirements while billing the city a specific hourly rate for services under the JPA. Both organizations find value in the JPA and partner on necessary enforcement action to influence permit compliance. The JPA was first amended on February 24, 2023, to continue services into early 2024. In February, 2024 the JPA was again amended. The most recent JPA amendment incorporates a two-year automatic term renewal and utilizes the District's administration fee schedule.



The RCWD inspectors continue to maintain a regular presence on active construction sites while balancing the need to resolve older, inactive/historical permits. Inspectors prioritize efforts on active construction sites to close out active permits in a timely manner. Inspectors review the open permit list regularly; this review routinely shows a decrease in the number of outstanding historical permits. Regulatory staff will continue to make efforts in closing inactive/historical permits.

Inspectors will continue working towards the established goals of inspecting each active construction site at least once a month and contacting permittees at least once per year for inactive/historical or stabilized sites with remaining permit requirements.

**The following table shows the quantification of permit applications, inspections, and enforcement actions from 2022 – 2024 (last three years):**

Year	2022	2023	2024
Review Files (WCA-only decisions, complaint files, and other site reviews)	297	250	224
Permit Applications	118	81	85
General Permits Issued	108	92	73
Variances Issued	1	2	3
Enforcement Actions Taken	0	0	0
Construction sites inspected	242	207	247
Notices of violation - includes all inspection reports issued containing at least one non-compliant item (including minor compliance issues)	98	139	176
Total inspections	729	664	962
Stop work orders (10-day notice)	5	10	5
Frequency at which construction site inspections are conducted	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Permits closed	83	113	120
Previously permitted sites inspected for permanent Stormwater BMP maintenance	1	1	0
Board Orders	0	0	0

**2024 Activities:**

- Received 85 Permit applications
- 73 permits were issued in 2024; this includes applications from 2024 and previous years

The District measures the success of permit review by the issuance of permits and the closure of permits. District inspectors review permits to ensure that they meet the permit obligations. When deficiencies are observed inspectors continue to document the issues and actively work with applicants to bring their sites into compliance.

**2025 Work Plan**

- Ensure that permits are processed in a timely and professional manner
- Continue improvements to the regulatory department to increase efficiency of permit processing
- Utilize the District database (MS4 Front) to administer permitting, increase inspection efficiency, assist the District with MS4 permit compliance tracking (permitting and regulatory administration), and meet other program needs
- Work with cities to ensure that the RCWD rules are well-understood by city staff through RCWD partnership meetings and direct communications with municipalities and shared applicants.
- Ensure the District's permit program and responsibilities as the WCA Local Government Unit (LGU) are applied fairly and uniformly throughout the District
- Promote electronic permit application materials to make files more accessible and reduce paper usage
- Ensure permit holders and municipalities are using and encouraging proper erosion control measures at development sites through regular site inspections
- Continue to provide best project value to citizens by expending local efforts in coordinated regulation of MnDOT design-build approach to projects
- Improve readability of regulatory materials on the District's website
- Continue to hold an annual/semi-annual RCWD and consulting engineer permit team training seminar
- Continuing to encourage early project coordination with pre-application meetings
- Utilize site compliance verification memo to determine "level of risk" for permit compliance
- Continue contracted MCM 4 erosion and sediment control inspections under the amended JPA with the City of Centerville
- Continue to coordinate with Ramsey SWCD and Washington Conservation District for inspection services under agreements
- Review open, unresolved permit files and develop strategies for closure
- Review and consider changes to enforcement procedures for non-compliant sites
- Review and consider changes to surety fee schedule

## Communications, Outreach, and Education

The District has identified “Communications, Outreach, and Education” as one of its nine management categories. The category is defined as, “Implementation of effective outreach efforts related to District priorities, policies, activities, and projects. Outreach efforts tailored to four main audiences: General Public; Counties; Cities; and State Agencies.” Communications and outreach efforts were documented and aligned with the requirements of the MS4 permit.

### Communication Opportunities and Strategies

RCWD must identify and implement communication strategies and education opportunities for stakeholders to facilitate informed decision-making related to District resources.

**Goal:** Communicate with District constituents to define RCWD priorities and available data, to highlight activities and projects, and receive constituent input

#### Measurable Goals:

- Participate in at least 6 constituent meetings annually (homeowners’ associations, lake associations, neighborhood groups, or other city-hosted events).
- Post monthly updates to District social media platforms.
- Complete an information sheet and maintain current project information on the District website for all RCWD capital improvement projects.
- Complete an annual report and post it on the District website.

**Goal:** Ensure adequate resources are available to District constituents to ensure broad communication of the District’s mission.

**Measurable Goal:** Distribute at least 6 articles per year to partners and media on topics supporting the District's mission and produce/provide stormwater-related outreach materials to District partners at least two times per year.

The District has 4 policies to ensure adequate progress in this category.



Figure 18 Blue Thumb Rain Garden Maintenance Workshop in New Brighton, MN

### 2024 Activities and Accomplishments:

#### Workshops & Community Engagement

- Hosted Blue Thumb workshops on shoreline and turf alternatives.
- Led rain garden maintenance workshops in Shoreview and Roseville.
- Held a trivia night on watershed knowledge in Blaine at a local business.
- Engaged with cities at events like Earth Day at Mahtomedi and the Moore Lake Park Open House.

- Completed one-on-one meetings with cities to discuss water resource projects.
- Developed a public engagement plan for the Centerville Lake alum project.

## Education & Partnerships

- Collaborated on Friends of Mississippi River "On the Water" programming. [Read more](#)
- Partnered with Growing Green Hearts for hands-on education at schools and libraries. [Read more](#)
- Supported educational programs with Centennial Library, Blaine Wetland Sanctuary, and New Brighton Library.
- Hosted a Blaine SNA walking tour with Anoka SWCD.
- Met with Ramsey County on climate resiliency plans.
- Funded and participated in a watershed education video with Friends of the Mississippi River. [Watch here.](#)



Figure 19 Growing Green Hearts working with students from Hayes Elementary in Fridley, MN

## Lake & Stormwater Initiatives

- Centerville Lake Public Meeting for alum treatment.
- Created educational signs for Moore Lake Iron-Enhanced Sand Filter.
- Celebrated the delisting of four lakes from MN's impaired waters list. [Read more](#)
- Golden Lake and Bald Eagle Lake Celebration Events for being delisted from MN Impaired Waters List.
- Completed Lake Johanna targeted mailing (200 postcards on lake-friendly lawn care).



Figure 20 Bald Eagle Lake "Delisting" Celebration Event and Annual Meeting, White Bear Lake, MN

## Stormwater & Green Infrastructure

- Partnered with Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa on rain garden maintenance in Fridley, including native plantings and pretreatment chamber cleanings.
- Supported stormwater education at city and county partner meetings, highlighting Fridley's stormwater projects.



- Collaborated with Hayes Elementary teachers, incorporating macroinvertebrate ID and water testing in classroom.

## Awards & Recognition

- Won 2024 Program of the Year from MN Watersheds for the Invasive Carp Management Program.

## Creative & Digital Outreach

- Launched a water steward art project at Fridley Moore Lake Park. [Read more](#)
- Set up a newsletter process to submit info to cities/counties and improved the RCWD website.
- Created Rain Garden Maintenance and Rain Barrel Maintenance guidance documents.
- Daily to weekly updates and informational articles posted on social media platforms.



*Figure 21 Matt Kocian, Lake and Stream Manager, holding award for Program of the Year*

## Other Accomplishments

- Engaged citizens in volunteer programs including the Minnesota Water Steward Program and Stream Health Evaluation Program (SHEP).
- Supported communities and regional partners in their outreach efforts by providing content, resources, and appropriate assistance. This included shared content and materials, creation of targeted materials, expertise, and cost-share and incentive programs for partners to use with (including but not limited to) newsletters or community publications, social media and websites, community events or presentations, school programs, targeted audience or topic outreach, or implementation of a BMP program.
- Shared information on District programs, projects, policies, priorities, and activities with cities, townships, counties, legislators and legislative staff, state officials and staff, and partner organizations.
- Completed an annual report and posted it on the District website.
- Supported community and regional outreach partners including East Metro Water Resource Education Program (EMWREP), Blue Thumb (and Lawns to Legumes), and Metro Watershed Partners.
- Supported cities with direct outreach for Adopt a Drain program.
- Met with various cities one on one to discuss stormwater management projects, grant programs, and outreach activities.

## Grant Programs

The District implemented three incentive programs with two specifically targeting individuals (the Mini-Grant and Water Quality Programs). \$10,000 was provided through the Mini-Grant program. A total of 20 mini-grants were issued: 5 grants for rain barrels, 2 grants for low-mow turf, 1 grant for water

outreach and education, and 18 for native plantings. Of the 21 mini-grant awards, 1 award was forfeited.

### 2025 Work Plan

- Develop a targeted outreach plan to prioritize locations and water resource issues to focus on and engage those communities.
- Create toolkits and informational packets for RCWD's Grant program applicants.
- Establish new partnerships with local organizations and collaborate on outreach/education projects.
- Support and increase art-related activities throughout the District related to water resources.
- Continue promoting and educating the public about grant programs.
- Continue to host city-county partner meetings and meeting with cities one on one to discuss water resource needs.
- Develop and create more GIS tools to communicate with public
- Continue to host workshops with Blue Thumb, EMWREP, and other partners.
- Continue support for East Metro Water Resource Education Program (EMWREP), Blue Thumb (and Lawns to Legumes), and other non-profit organizations.
- Continue volunteer programs like SHEP and CAMP with partners.
- Develop new video material to engage the public to be used on our website, social media platforms, and at meetings.



Figure 22 Blue Thumb Rain Garden Maintenance Workshop, Roseville, MN

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