

### BCWD Board/Citizen Advisory Committee Tour August 30<sup>th</sup> 5:30-8:00pm

A: Brown's Creek Park: 5:30-6:00pm

- Future Brown's Creek restoration project
- Presentation of award to Andy Weaver and Glen Boettcher

B: Mendel Wetland (Drive by, approx. 6:05pm)

- History of restoration planning
- C: Brown's Creek Conservation Area: 6:10-6:40pm
  - Restoration of site

D: Rice property (Drive by, approx. 6:40pm)

• Historic flooding project

E: Goggins and South School Section (Drive by, approx. 6:45pm)

• Hydrologic background and Curly Leaf Pondweed management

F: Liberty Classical Academy (Drive by, approx. 6:55pm)

- Opportunity for future collaboration of school acquired property
- Permit #22-07 Raingarden

G: THPP outlet and DeWolf Wetland (Drive by and park, approx. 7:05pm)

• View THPP outlet and the DeWolf wetland which serves as pre-treatment for the THPP project

H: White Oak Savannah: 7:25-7:45pm

• Discuss elements of the district inspection and permitting program





Project benefits include:

□ Reduced bank erosion and subsequent sediment & nutrient loading to the creek

has embedded substrates and filled pools within the reach)

macroinvertebrates

□ The project will increase the number and depth of pools that will in turn provide thermal

biota during the summer months and provide overwintering habitat for fish and amphibians

□ Instream woody structure will provide fish and macroinvertebrate habitat and also protect

□ Reconnected floodplain will improve wetland hydrology and help rehabilitate native riparian

□ Native seeding will increase the diversity and extent of native vegetation over exotic invasives such as common buckthorn, reed canary grass, and garlic mustard

□ Native seeding will increase pollinator habitat

Establishment of brush piles and snag trees will provide refugia for a variety of non-game species such as small mammals, reptiles, and birds

□ Site access to the creek will include an ADA trail "spur"



- □ Improve fine sediment transport through the creek (e.g. reduce sediment aggradation that
- □ Rock riffles will increase fish spawning opportunities and provide stable refugia for

# BROWN'S CREEK

# Restoration Between McKusick Road & Brown's Creek State Trail

Potential restoration activities include bank shaping along existing eroded banks throughout the project reach and selective tree thinning that would benefit the herbaceous understory in this reach and improve creek access from Brown's Creek State Trail.









BROWN'S CREEK







Habitat restoration for macroinvertebrates and fish will include restoration of riffle and pool habitat which is lacking in much of the project reach due to bank erosion and instream sedimentation. Based on the length of the reach, it is anticipated about 25 riffles and pools will be restored. Furthermore, the project will include removal of invasive species and will improve access to the creek from the existing Brown's Creek State Trail. Trees proposed for harvest are comprised of boxelder and will be incorporated into the creek for fish and invertebrate habitat. The project will also include restoration of native herbaceous vegetation in the riparian corridor via native seeding along the reconnected floodplain. Native seed mixes proposed include State Mix 34-271 Wet Meadow South & West and 34-261 Riparian South & West.

### MENDEL WETLAND BACKGROUND

Mendel wetland is a large wetland complex located between Manning Ave and Mendel Ave north of Highway 96. The wetland is partially drained to the south by a ditch that runs north-south through the east side of the wetland. The BCWD has assessed this wetland and explored options for improving wetland function & value, while gaining water quality and volume control returns

The BCWD and the Washington Conservation District have had interest in restoring/conserving the Mendel Road Wetland for some time. Portions of the wetland are of high floristic quality, containing a viable stand of Tamarack (*Larix laricina*). The wetland is directly drained to Brown's Creek and the conjecture is that restoring a more stable wetland hydrology will reduce nutrient loading and/or reduce thermal loading and/or improve the quality (functions and values) of the wetland.

One approach to garnering water quality and habitat returns is to restore wetland hydrology by reducing or eliminating artificial drainage via a full or partial blockage of the existing ditch. Adjacent land use includes pasture and row cropping. To date a single landowner has raised concerns that the pasture would be less usable under a restored condition due to the perception of an increase in soil moisture.

The monitoring data indicate that the ditch only lowers groundwater levels within an area less than 50 feet away from the ditch. These findings indicate that the Mendel Wetland Restoration project (partial or full ditch blockage) would not cause groundwater flooding nor adverse impact on the adjoining or adjacent active pasture of row crop field(s).

A restoration project for the Mendel wetland provides some ecological benefits and may have the potential for a wetland banking project. Aside from the landowner approval there are relatively minor challenges to a simple wetland restoration project that provides ecological and hydrologic benefits to the District.



Figure 1 – General location of 'Mendel Road Wetland', which is NE of the Manning Avenue and Hwy 96 Intersection



Figure 2 – FQA plot and soil survey pit locations



Figure 3 – FQA and plant community mapping results

### **Brown's Creek Conservation Area Background**

**Site description:** The Brown's Creek Conservation Area (BCCA) is located in Northern Washington County off of 110<sup>th</sup> St N. near the Gateway Trail's crossing of Manning Ave N. The 13 acre parcel contains 1300 feet of Brown's Creek, 2.4 acres of wetlands, a 5.22 acres upland area, with the remaining acreage being wooded. The property was purchased in January 2017. Following the general direction of a public input process the Board decided the site will be actively managed for protection and restoration of the natural resources and allow infrequent passive recreation. No trails or facilities will be maintained.

The 2017 management plan for the property used the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) to classify and characterize the existing conditions and land cover. Seven units were identified as seen in the table and map below.



Figure 1 Brown's Creek Conservation Area Unit Map

### Long Term Management Goals

Unit 1, which is degraded grassland, will be converted to a native prairie; Units 3 & 4 will be managed as an Oak Woodland-Brushland. Unit 4 also contains a small knob of upland prairie area with desirable native species. All units will require management to control invasive species and promote floristic diversity and quality. Of the natural resource management actions proposed, Units 2, 5 & 6 are prioritized above others for the predictable aquatic habitat and water quality (modest) gains. Management of woody invasive species, particularly in Unit 6, will allow greater sunlight to penetrate, which will spur herbaceous growth thus setting forth a predictable narrowing and deepening of the stream. A narrower stream width-to-depth ratio will inevitably afford superior habitat and greater bank stability.

### **Restoration Activities**

The BCWD successfully partnered with Great River Greening for a 5 year grant for restoration work beginning July 1st 2018 and ending June 23, 2023. This grant will allow for \$52,000 worth of prairie, wetland, and woodland restoration.

Work that has occurred since then includes:

- Collection of up to 50% of the available seed from up to 50 individual Liparis lilliifolia occurred as part of a project with the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.
- A tree survey was completed to identify high value native species, as well as ecologically significant snags.
- A brush mower was used to remove buckthorn from units 2, 5, and 6. Removal of red cedar and limbing of large conifer species, many of them non-native, occurred in Unit 1. The goal of this was to allow for fire to be used as a management tool for a potential future prairie restoration. The removed biomass was piled and burned in Unit 1. Removal of red cedar also occurred in Unit 3 in an effort to remove some of the canopy to allow for native herbaceous species to resurface in the understory. Burn piles were limited to the slopes of Unit 3.
- Some raking of ash in the burn piles occurred to encourage regrowth.
- Follow up stump cutting and re-treatment plus foliar treatment for buckthorn.
- Savannah grass seed supplemental seeding and cover crop (oats) were seeded into burn scar areas to begin to re-build the organic matter in the soil.
- Invasive removal efforts: Dames Rocket, lamium, garlic mustard, mullein, thistle, Lily of the Valley, bull thistle.

### Next steps:

- This fall: buckthorn removal and native seeding event through the CAC Open Yard Series
- Planning for future restoration activities with the CAC and WCD using the BCWD budgeted funds

### **Plaisted Lake and Flood Mitigation Project**



### Why did BCWD Participate?

BCWD participated based on the following criteria determined in February 2003:

- Must fulfill ALL of the following criteria: ٠
  - 1. Must have standing water in home for more than three (3) years
  - 2. Flooding must have operational impact on BOTH the septic system and well
  - 3. The cost of moving the dwelling structure must exceed the cost of new construction
  - 4. Must not have available area to build new dwelling or move current dwelling on contiguous property

### How has Plaisted Lake responded?

Plaisted Lake was removed (delisted) from the state impaired waters list in 2022. It was only one of ~50 lakes in the state of MN!

BCWD does not have pre-project lake data, but began lake monitoring in 2008. It was impaired for excess nutrients. The lake continues to show an improving trend. Grades in 2008 were D+ and now consistently grading A-/B+ and meeting all state shallow lake standards. Likely, the removal of a noncomforming septic system has contributed to the improvements.

The 70-acre lake has a maximum depth of ~12ft and 100% littoral zone (light can penetrate to the bottom allowing plant growth over the whole lake).

### South School Section and Goggins Lakes Background Information

Through annual monitoring and occasional treatments over the last 6 years, the BCWD has been successful at managing curly-leaf pondweed (Potamogeton crispus, CLP) at low densities in South School Section Lake. In 2015, curly-leaf pondweed growth was so dense that is formed mats on the surface that restricted and/or prevented boater access in portions of South School Section Lake. During the development of the Northern Chain of Lakes Watershed Restoration and Protection

Strategy in 2016, South School Section lakeshore homeowners expressed interest in treating curly-leaf pondweed as soon as possible as their priority concern. A successful endothall treatment (2017) and highwater levels in 2018, 2019, and 2020 have significantly reduced the abundance of curly-leaf pondweed in South School Section Lake. As lake levels have risen over the last few years, the littoral zone has shrunk and pushed much of the aquatic vegetation (CLP included) closer to shore. After a pretreatment survey in 2021, CLP was treated again to prevent colonization of the newly inundated littoral zone.

The BCWD has also prevented the colonization of Goggins Lake since first discovering CLP in the lake. In May of 2020, EOR Conservation Biologist Mike Majeski found that curly-leaf pondweed had spread to Goggins Lake. This was the first recorded observation of curlyleaf pondweed in Goggins Lake. A rapid response effort was designed to eradicate CLP from Goggins Lake, or at a minimum reduce further spread. Small, isolated patches of CLP were treated in Goggins Lake in 2021. The post-treatment survey indicates that these efforts were successful at killing the nascent stands of CLP in Goggins Lake.



No CLP treatment is recommended for 2022 based on the 2022 delineation survey results. The number of points at which CLP was detected in South School Section Lake has decreased greatly since the 2021 treatment and is absent from Goggins lake altogether. Additionally, CLP was only growing at sparse densities at the sites where it was detected. At this point, the density of CLP is considerably lower than it was in 2019, when CLP was detected at 35 sites, and herbicide treatment was considered unnecessary and not cost-effective.

# Point-intercept aquatic plant surveys of South School Section Lake (SSSL) and Goggins Lake were completed on August 26, 2022

The FQI scores from both lakes indicate that the floristic quality of the plant communities increased since last surveys in 2014. The reason for the improvements is not immediately clear and could be due to several factors and their interactions such as water level fluctuations, water quality, aquatic plant management, or simply natural variability. Additionally, though FQI scores improved, the invasive EWM was observed at both SSSL and Goggins for the first time, with relatively high frequency of occurrence (44% of sites) at SSSL.

While every lake and lake user is different, most experts agree that CLP treatments, which almost exclusively involve the use of contact herbicides, are not warranted unless CLP occupies 15% or more of the littoral zone due to the potential for damage to non-target species. Intermittent treatments of CLP conducted over the past 5 years have helped to keep CLP below this threshold. The efficacy of these treatments has likely been aided by above average lake levels which likely reduced the area in which CLP could germinate or sprout from turions in deeper areas while expanding the littoral zone into shallower areas where little or no CLP seed/turion bank existed. EOR recommends spring CLP surveys every three years, which likely will be sufficient to identify problematic CLP growth greater than 15% or more of the littoral zone that warrants treatment.

Further, given that the quality of the aquatic plant community appears to be at least stable and possibly increasing, EOR is not recommending treatments to target EWM. However, the increase in the abundance of EWM should be monitored via early summer point-intercept aquatic plant surveys conducted every three years (e.g., 2025). If the frequency of EWM continues to increase to the detriment of the native plant community, EOR would likely recommend that BCWD explore herbicide treatments using ProcellaCOR. EOR has had outstanding success with ProcellaCOR treatments on lakes in Wisconsin and Minnesota both in terms of control of the target species (EWM) and avoidance of impacts to the native plant community. Progress towards achieving control of these target species is subject to change based on feedback from lake users and methods of control.



### Animation of Northern Chain of Lakes Filling

# **Trout Habitat Preservation Project/ Goggins Outlet Background**

**History:** Constructed in 2000, this project provides a stable surface water outlet to the Goggins, South and North School Section, and Plaisted lakes. The outlet elevation is set at 970.5, which was determined to be the approximate natural runout elevation for these basins and protects all upstream homes, septics and wells. The highest recorded elevation for these lakes was over 972. Without the project, the overflow elevation would have been approximately elevation 980, risking approximately a dozen homes. **Project Benefits:** This project was designed to capture, store and infiltrate the overflow from the Goggins-School Section lake system prior to discharge to the downstream wetland, which is considered the headwaters of Brown's Creek. This innovative outlet project has numerous benefits beyond flood control (e.g., runoff retention, increased wildlife/pollinator habitat, water quality treatment, groundwater recharge) and won the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) Project of the Year Award in 2004.







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LOT NUMBERS PER PRELIMINARY PLAT

THE FARMS OF GRANT City of Grant, MN	EXHIBIT STORMWATER FACILITIES
City of Grant, MN	STORMWATER FACILITIES





