



Brown's Creek Watershed District

Preserving the integrity of the watershed for future generations

2023 Annual Report & 2024 Annual Plan

The Brown's Creek Watershed District (BCWD) is a local unit of government dedicated to protecting, managing and improving the water resources within this watershed. The BCWD is 28 square miles and includes parts of the cities of Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, Lake Elmo, Grant, and Hugo as well as Stillwater and May Townships.

To implement its 2017-2026 watershed management plan, the BCWD utilizes education and cost-share programs, capital improvement projects, and its permitting program to preserve and restore the quality of our water resources.

BCWD is excited to partner with the City of Stillwater, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and private landowners to restore over 2,000 feet of Brown's Creek beginning in 2024. This restoration project will improve water quality, habitat, and recreation. Buckthorn and boxelder will be cut, allowing growth of native understory to hold soils to improve water quality, increase pollinator habitat, and improve plant diversity. Earth moving work will occur to reconnect the stream to disconnected old oxbows and floodplains; which will further reduce bank erosion and further improve water quality. Creating pools, narrowing the stream, and placing rock riffles and woody structures in the stream will improve fish and invertebrate habitat. Project updates will be available on the district's website at www.bcwd.org.

With the help of the East Metro Water Resources Program partnership and the BCWD Citizen Advisory Committee, 2024 will be another great year for resident outreach. Our annual newsletter will continue; there will be an eighth year of the monthly Open Yard series and another community event in the fall partnering with Sustainable Stillwater. We hope to see you join us outside or online for the fun!

Watershed Facts

BCWD has four distinct landforms including the:

- Headwaters Region which is predominantly lakes and wetlands,
- Brown's Creek Middle Reach which is predominantly wetlands
- Long Lake Tributary which is routed to McKusick Lake
- Brown's Creek Gorge which is what you see when you travel along the Brown's Creek State Trail.

BCWD contains some of the last remaining rare and unique ecosystems in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area including Brown's Creek, a cold-water fishery as well as other groundwater dependent wetlands. These ecosystems support a variety of plants and animals.

Who leads the BCWD?

The BCWD Board of Managers is appointed by the Washington County Commissioners. Managers can be contacted through the BCWD Office.

- Klay Eckles, President
- Debra Sahulka, Secretary
- Jerry Johnson, Treasurer
- Celia Wirth, Vice-President
- Chuck LeRoux, 2nd Vice President

Regular board meetings are held at 6:30p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at Family Means in Stillwater, MN.

July 10 and August 14 2024 Board workshops to develop the 2025 Budget and workplan and assess the progress of the 2024 workplan.

Ways to Get Involved:

- Join a volunteer event
- Apply for a stewardship grant
- Join a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting. Hybrid meetings are held at the Stillwater Public Library and over Zoom on the 2nd Monday of even months
- Contribute to the next Watershed Master Plan update by taking a survey and/or participating in meetings in 2024.

2024 Budget

Total Budget = \$2,565,888

Revenue: Carry Over 39% = \$992,580

Grants 15% = 392,506

Levy 46% = \$1,180,803

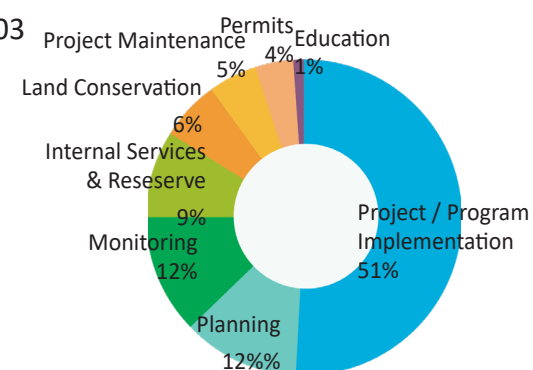
2023 Actual Budget

• Revenue: \$1,207,000

• Expenses: \$1,336,000

2024 Projects Include:

- Brown's Creek Restoration (\$400K)



District Administrator:

Karen Kill – 455 Hayward Ave N, Oakdale, MN 55128

651.330.8220 x 6616 or karen.kill@mnwcd.org

District website: www.bcwd.org

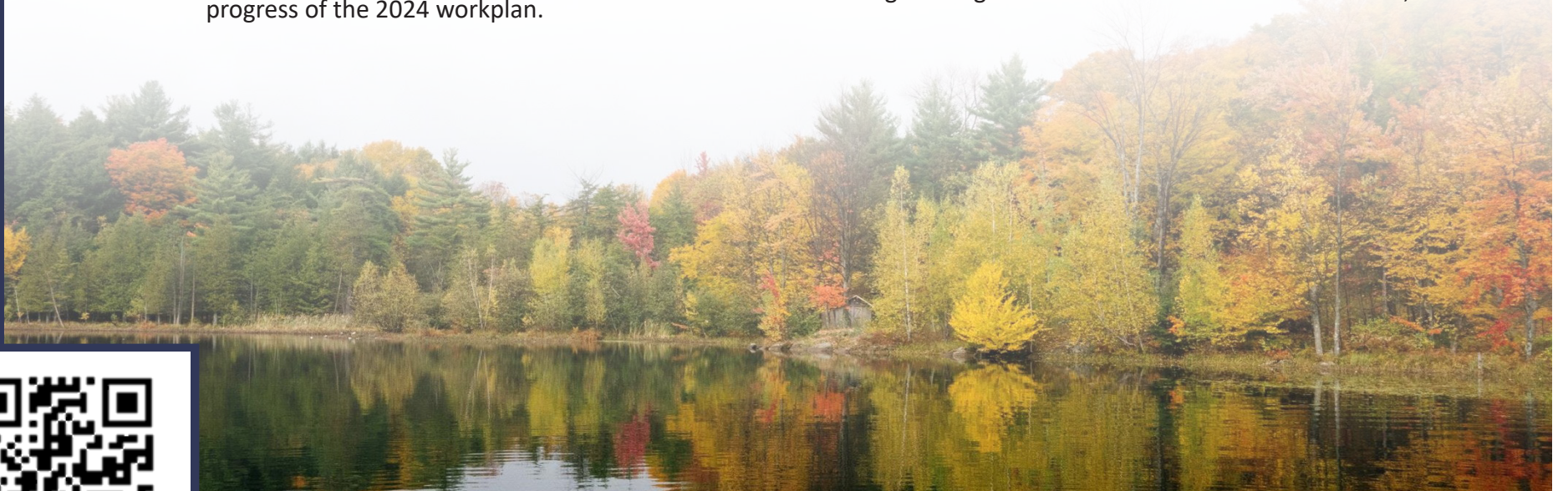
District consultants (selected in 2023 biennial solicitation):

Legal services: Smith Partners PLLP

Engineering services: Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc.



Visit BCWD.org to learn more.



Get your head, in the watershed.....

Explore some of the actions the BCWD takes to manage water resources within the district.

Lake Management

In 2023 the BCWD held community meetings for North and South School Section, Goggins, and Lynch lakes residents. The BCWD also held community meetings for the district's large ponds' residents, Brewers, Pat, Kismet, Sinnets, and Heifort.

Recreation

BCWD seeks to protect and restore the district's resources to provide recreational value to the community. The design for the upcoming Brown's Creek Restoration project along the Brown's Creek State Trail includes ADA trail access to Brown's Creek.

Regulations

BCWD administers a permitting program to ensure development is sustainable for water resources and downstream properties. 20 permit approvals, including 3 variance approvals (Permits 22-18, 23-01, and 23-05) 2 notices of probable violation were issued (Permit 22-11 was resolved and 23-03 led to a violation hearing and board order

Land Conservation

Habitat restoration occurred through a grant with Great River Greening from 2018 through 2023 at the Brown's Creek Conservation Easement Area. Approximately 3.23 acres of buckthorn was removed, as well as 7.56 acres of thinning and removal of red cedar.

Erosion

Prevention and Sediment Control

To reduce sediment loads and improve water quality, the BCWD restores and protects riparian buffers. In 2023 the district continued to maintain capital improvement projects including the Brown's Creek Tributary restoration project.

Stream

Management

BCWD has worked with community and landowners to improve Brown's Creek and its tributaries. In 2024 construction will begin on the Brown's Creek Restoration project, which will restore 2000 linear feet of the creek.

Stormwater

Runoff

BCWD implements projects like the Brown's Creek Rock Crib to treat stormwater runoff before it reaches Brown's Creek and the districts lakes and ponds. The Applewood Golf Course Stormwater Reuse project will come online in 2024, capturing and removing runoff before it enters Long Lake.

Wetland Management

BCWD assigns management classifications to its wetlands, so application of the rules matches the quality and condition of the resources. The district participates and helps to coordinate the Wetland Conservation Act process.

Floodplain

Management

By evaluating high water levels under existing and projected rainfall conditions, the BCWD can help residents and member communities prepare for the future. In 2023 the district continued flood risk assessments in areas of emerging concern.

Groundwater Management

Groundwater monitoring improves the districts understanding of surface water – groundwater connections throughout the watershed. The BCWD continued with annual resident well monitoring efforts in 2023 and is participating in the county groundwater plan update in 2024.

Monitoring and Data Collection

BCWD collects and evaluates water quantity and water quality data on Brown's Creek and the Districts major lakes. Brown's Creek 2023 loads to the St. Croix River:

- TSS (sediment) = 54.69 lbs/acre (goal 74 lbs/acre)
- TP (nutrients) = 1,494 lbs/yr (goal 1804 lb/yr).

Climate Change Adaptation

BCWD is using rainfall projections to evaluate how changing precipitation patterns affect water resource management decisions (i.e., flooding). The district began the process of updating its Hydraulic & Hydrologic model in 2023.

Ecological Health

The district continued macroinvertebrate and fish surveys of Brown's Creek in 2023. Chloride sampling in lakes and ponds began in 2023-2024. Lake vegetation surveys occurred in 2023; highlighting the biodiversity of the district. The volunteer stream monitoring program also continued in 2023.

Education, Outreach and Stewardship

In 2023 the BCWD continued to host an annual fall community event and monthly open yard series to engage the community in watershed management. BCWD partnered in the East Metro Water Resources Education Program - changing behaviors to protect and restore water resources.

