

The overarching goal of our program is to reduce *E. coli* and TP loading to impaired creeks attributable to improper disposal of pet waste. This is to be accomplished by directly reducing barriers to proper pet waste disposal and increasing awareness on the link between pet waste and stormwater pollution.

9) Describe project/program:

This program consists of 3 main tasks: 1) Pet Waste Station installation and regular maintenance. 2) Outreach and Engagement, 3) Evaluation and Administration.

- 1) **Pet Waste Station Installation & Regular Maintenance:** Pet waste stations that contain pickup bag dispenser, signage and a waste bin were purchased and installed by CCWD staff at strategic trail locations adjacent to impaired waterways. In October 2020, 13 pilot stations were installed along two popular residential trail systems in Blaine in the headwaters of Pleasure Creek and Sand Creek subwatersheds. These stations were serviced weekly by a contractor who restocks bags, empties waste bins, and reports the total amount of waste collected to CCWD staff via a simple Google Form. Based on positive public feedback and favorable waste collection results, CCWD applied for a federal 319 grant to expand this pilot into a multi-year program. CCWD was awarded these grant funds in 2022 which supported installation and 3 years of maintenance of an additional 10 stations in the middle and lower portions of the Sand Creek subwatershed along another residential trail system in Blaine plus the Sand Creek regional trail corridor in Coon Rapids. Currently, another expansion of the program is underway, adding 10 additional sites in a third subwatershed, Springbrook Creek. All stations continue to be serviced weekly by a contractor.
- 2) **Outreach & Engagement:** CCWD staff developed a key message, “Trash the Poo, Not Our Water,” adding it to swag and print materials, enhancing a minimal pet waste education program. For 2022-23 over 3,031 direct contacts and 955 units of poop bag swag distributed at a total material cost of about \$3,000 Those materials were distributed at 37 outreach events, including events targeted specifically at dog owners: Blaine’s Bark in the Park and the Coon Rapids Love My Pet Fair. Customized materials include poop emoji stress relievers, keychain flashlights, dog waste scoopers for people who can’t bend down, dog waste bag swag, 4” station stickers, “Super Scooper” stickers for kids, bookmarks, door hangers, postcards, QR codes, yard signs, and newsletter articles. Customized outreach interactive mapping activity was created using tiny poop emoji stickers to highlight favorite dog-walking sites to help track bag-swag use and inform hotspots and gaps for program expansion (map submitted in photos). In 2024, over 600 survey promotional materials were distributed to city partners and local emergency veterinary clinics to share with residents. City newsletter articles (11) and a cable access television story were published.
- 3) **Evaluation & Administration:** To show measurable outcomes of this program, the weekly waste collection reports are summarized each year to estimate pollutant

load recovery based on the total weight of waste collected and literature values of average fecal coliform and nutrient content per mass of dog waste. To date, an average of 738 pounds of dog waste have been collected per station per year, representing about 7.4 lbs TP and 7695 billion *E. coli* organisms per station per year. The cost to maintain each station from 2021-2024 was \$413.40 per year. A public input survey was launched in summer 2024 to help assess efficacy of the program and gain insight into public perception by trail users. This survey was promoted via direct mailers, trailside signage, city newsletter articles, targeted social media ads, and swag giveaways with customized QR code links. To date, over 250 responses have been recorded with plans to close the survey soon. The feedback will help demonstrate project need for and importance for future funding and inform project improvements.

10) Describe public benefit: Our Pet Waste Reduction and Education Program provides public health and welfare benefits by reducing the source of two target pollutants that contribute to local stream impairments for recreation and aquatic life, phosphorus and *E. coli* bacteria. Nutrients and bacteria are also listed as priority pollutants to address protection of downstream drinking water sources for the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul whose municipal supply intakes are located immediately downstream of Pleasure and Springbrook Creek outfalls. Additionally, our program reduces exposure to dog waste by trail users and provides cost savings to taxpayers by minimizing workload burden on our short-staffed city partners and reducing costs for future mitigative efforts at a cost of about \$90/lb of TP recovery.

11) Watershed plan reference: This program addresses water contamination cited in the CCWD 2013-23 Comp Plan from 2 pollutants identified in the TMDL study linked below. It reduces a source of pollution in identified target areas in a measurable way, can be scaled up or down as needed, and provides a visible demonstration of government tax dollars at work for education and outreach efforts.

- 2013-2023 Coon Creek Comprehensive Water Management Plan <https://www.cooncreekwd.org/chapter-2-mission-goals-20132023-comprehensive-plan/> pp 50-55 for Mission Goal 3: To ensure that water is protected from contamination
- 2016 Coon Creek Watershed TMDL Study <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-iw8-44e.pdf>
- CCWD Nine Key Elements Plan for Coon and Sand Creeks: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-cwp2-20.pdf>

This plan calls for installation and operation of at least 15 stations in the Sand Creek subwatershed and 10 stations in the Lower Coon Creek subwatershed in order to attain water quality standards by 2031 (p 14). Our current program includes 17 stations in the Sand Creek Subwatershed with plans to expand into Lower Coon Creek.

12) Was project goal achieved? If so, how was the success measured? Yes. Success is measured in 2 ways: the amount of pet waste collected and public support

as seen in our current survey results. As a result, the program expands into Springbrook subwatershed which has similar impairments.

13) Watershed or water body name to be protected or improved by project or program. Sand Creek and tributaries (Ditch 41, Ditch 39), Pleasure Creek. Springbrook Creek starting November 2024.

14) Watershed or water body information (e.g., size, watershed area, classification, description): **Sand Creek:** Sand Creek is the largest tributary to Coon Creek. The Sand Creek watershed is approximately 15.8 square miles (10,122 acres) of predominantly suburban residential area with some commercial and industrial areas. The impaired portion of Sand Creek is limited to a portion downstream of its confluence with Ditch 39. The headwaters of Sand Creek originate as a network of stormwater conveyance channels (Ditch 41, Ditch 60, Ditch 39) in the City of Blaine where it heads west before emptying into Coon Creek in the City of Coon Rapids. Coon Creek empties into the Mississippi River just upstream of the drinking water intakes for St. Paul and Minneapolis. **Pleasure Creek:** This 1,762-acre subwatershed is nearly fully developed. Over half of the land area is developed as single or multifamily residential with 3,377 households and 2 large stormwater ponds with adjacent trails that are heavily used by residents. Pleasure Creek drains part of Blaine then Coon Rapids before emptying directly into the Mississippi River just upstream of the drinking water intakes for St. Paul and Minneapolis.

15) Project partners (financial or inkind support)

| <u>Agency or organization</u> | <u>% Participation</u> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>City of Blaine</i> | 20 % |
| <i>City of Coon Rapids</i> | 10 % |
| <i>US EPA</i> | 20 % |
| <i>Coon Creek Watershed District</i> | 49 % |
| <i>Private Entities</i> | 1 % |

16) Start date: 11/01/2020

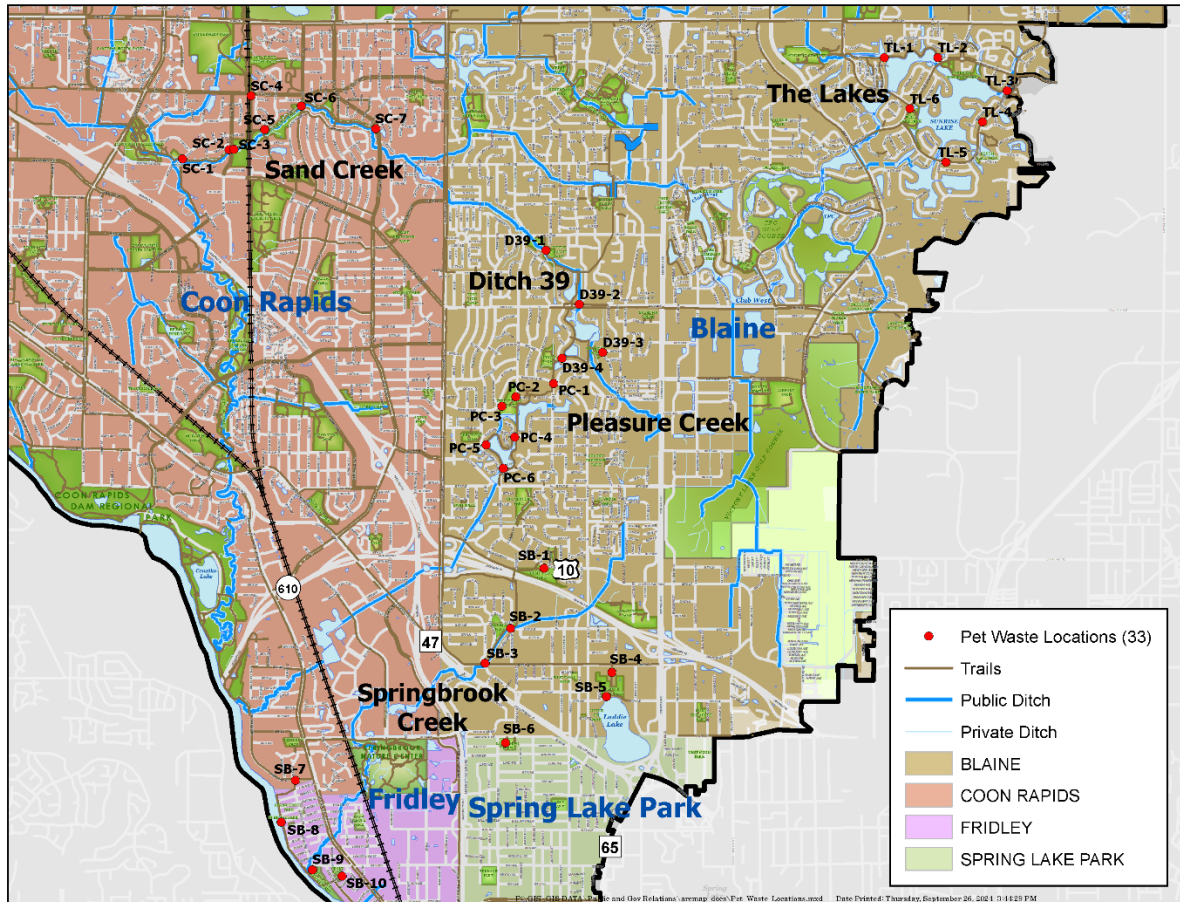
17) Project status On-going Project/Program

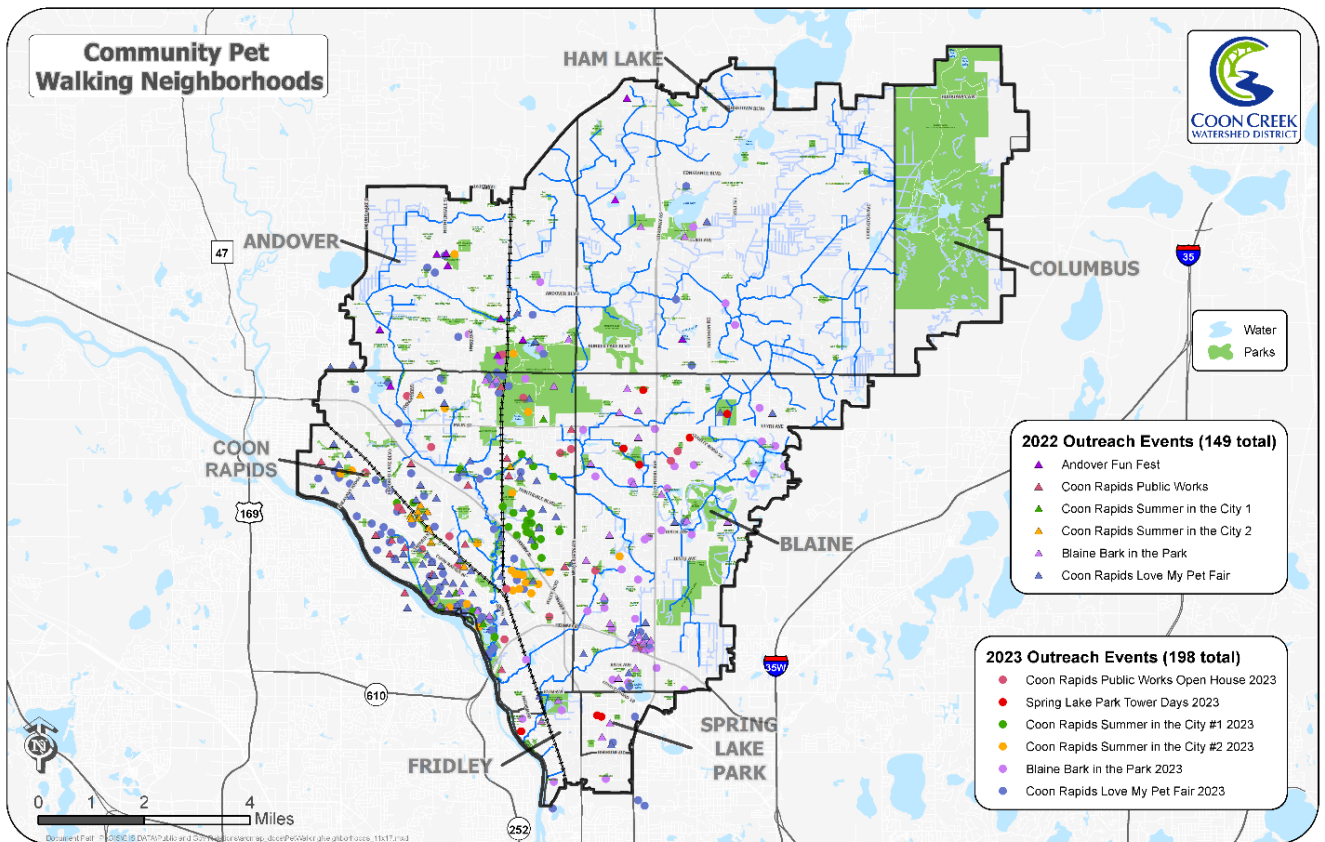
18) Project cost: CCWD staff installed the stations, managed the project, and did three outreach. Staff time not included. Maintenance cost per station per year: \$413.40. Average amount of waste collected per station per year: 738lbs

| | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| 23 Pet Waste Stations | \$ 5,122 |
| Bags- 3 Years | \$3,968 |
| Maintenance-3yrs | \$34,891 |
| Outreach-3 years | \$ 3,000 |
| Evaluation Survey | \$15,000 |
| Total | \$61,981 |

19) **Letters of support:** Two letters are at end of this application: City of Blaine and city of Coon Rapids.

20) **Photos** As noted in the instructions, each nomination must be accompanied by **at least 4 (4) photos**, but no more than eight (8) of the project or program. The photos must be in a digital format.







Help Us Keep Our Waters Clean! Take Our Survey

on Pet Waste Stations



www.cooncreekwd.org/pws-project/

We value your feedback!
Your input helps us improve our water quality

Thank You for your participation!

COON CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT





City of Blaine

10801 Town Square Drive NE

Blaine MN 55449-8100

City Hall 763-784-6700 | BlaineMN.gov

October 17, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Blaine to express our strong support for the Coon Creek Watershed District's program, "Measurable Pet Waste Reduction and Education," for the Minnesota Watersheds Program of the Year Award. This initiative has proven to be not only innovative and cost-effective for us but also essential in addressing citizen and environmental concerns related to pet waste management near our local streams.

Since 2019, we have partnered closely with the Coon Creek Watershed District (CCWD) to tackle the challenges including citizen complaints posed by pet waste along trails adjacent to our impaired waterways. We started with Pleasure Creek by surveying its Subwatershed residents. It identified barriers to pet waste pickup which led to the CCWD requesting city permission to install 6 pet waste stations. The success of this pilot project led to its expansion, showcasing the program's adaptability and effectiveness. We greatly appreciate that this was done at a time when we were very short-staffed and tight on budget. No additional city staff time or budget was needed by us, thanks to CCWD hiring a private contractor for the weekly maintenance and covering the cost and administration of the program.

In Blaine to date over 46,000 pounds of pet waste have been collected, preventing approximately 460 pounds of phosphorus and 460 billion *E. coli* organisms from entering our waterways. This remarkable achievement underscores our commitment to improving water quality and enhancing community well-being. The program's cost-effectiveness demonstrates overwhelming value in protecting our environment while engaging the community.

Our outreach partnerships have been successful and not only promote responsible pet ownership but also educate about environmental issues. Creative promotional strategies such as city social media posts and publications have significantly



City of Blaine

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increased public engagement, resulting in positive feedback and further support for the program.

The evaluation of the program through citizen surveys will critical feedback from the Blaine Community to further show the value of the pet waste stations. This program not only addresses the immediate concerns of pet waste management but also fosters a sense of community responsibility towards environmental protection.

We wholeheartedly endorse the "Measurable Pet Waste Reduction and Education" program for the MN Watersheds Program of the Year Award. It is a testament to what can be achieved through collaboration, innovation, and community engagement. We believe this initiative can serve as a model for other communities seeking to address this issue.

Thank you for considering our letter of support for this program. We look forward to the opportunity to celebrate the success of this impactful program.

Sincerely,

Please contact me if you would like any further information.

Sincerely,



Nate Monahan

Recreation Manager

City of Blaine

Parks and Recreation Department

10801 Town Square Drive NE, Blaine MN 55449

o: 763-785-6151 m: 763-286-6607

I am writing on the behalf of the City of Coon Rapids Parks Division to express our support for the Coon Creek Watershed District's program, "Measurable Pet Waste Reduction and Education," for the Minnesota Watersheds Program of the Year Award. This initiative has proven to be very effective and beneficial for us.

We have partnered with the Coon Creek Watershed District (CCWD) for the last 3 years to tackle the challenges posed by pet waste near Lion's Coon Creek Park and Sand Creek, an impaired waterway. We appreciate that CCWD has initiated this program. This program has not added city staff time or budget amendments and we thank CCWD for covering the cost and administration of the program.

Coon Rapids has seven stations and has collected over 11,000 pounds of pet waste, preventing approximately 110 pounds of phosphorus and over 110 billion E. coli organisms from entering Sand Creek .The program's cost effectiveness demonstrates integrity and its value in protecting our environment while engaging the community.

Our partnership with CCWD has been successful and not only promotes responsible pet ownership but also educates our residents about local water issues. Creative promotional programs such as pet waste bag swag at our annual Summer in the City , Pet Fair and Public Works Open House events increase public engagement, resulting in positive feedback and further support for this program.

The evaluation of the program through the citizen survey will help us gauge our community and promote awareness with our residents. We can use this in our planning and collaboration efforts.

Coon Rapids Parks Division endorses the "Measurable Pet Waste Reduction and Education" program for the Minnesota Watersheds Program of the year Award. It is a testament to what can be achieved through collaboration, innovation, and community engagement. We believe this initiative can serve as a model for other communities seeking to address this important issue.

Thank you for considering our letter of support for this program. We look forward to the opportunity to celebrate the success of this important and impactful program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "August A. Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

City of Coon Rapids Parks Division Supervisor