

2024 MN Watersheds Project & Program of the Year

Detailed Award Information Form

1) Award Category (check one)

Project Program X

2) MAWD Region (check one):

One Two Three X

3) Watershed District: *Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District*

4) Project/program name: *RWMWD Targeted Retrofit Program*

5) Nominator (if different from above watershed district)

6) Project/Program Summary (Limit 150 words) to be read at the awards program during the annual meeting banquet:

In 2012, RWMWD developed a Targeted Retrofit Program to help achieve water quality goals on properties with high impervious surface area. In this program, technical assistance, funding, and maintenance assistance are offered to select commercial, school, and faith-based properties in priority drainage areas. These areas are classified as impaired or at-risk of impairment, or are in underserved parts of RWMWD with a goal of developing partnerships to install stormwater infrastructure to improve downstream water quality. Since 2012, 55 BMPs have been constructed on 40 properties. These have been a variety of BMPs including removing over 100 parking stalls to install infiltration and filtration basins. GIS mapping and tracking tools were developed to quantify the benefit of all retrofit projects and help prioritize project areas. This program allowed RWMWD to reduce pollutant loads in priority waterbodies, including delisting of Kohlman Lake, and has led to longstanding partnerships with property owners.

7) Define need:

To preserve and improve water resources and related ecosystems to sustain their long-term health and integrity and contribute to the well-being and engagement of stakeholders within the community.

8) Goal/purpose of the project/program:

The goal of this program is to seek out opportunities for stormwater treatment beyond RWMWD's stewardship grant program and stormwater management permit requirements while building long-term relationships with the property owners.

9) Describe project/program:

The Targeted Retrofit Program was developed in 2012 to enhance efforts to meet TMDL and other water quality goals by seeking out opportunities for stormwater treatment

beyond the RWMWD stewardship grant program, which cover smaller-scale improvements, and permit requirements for construction on new developments and redevelopments. Since its creation, the program has enabled RWMWD to exponentially increase the number of larger scale and complex BMPs installed, including 55 stormwater retrofit BMPs on 40 properties including 17 churches, 9 schools, 9 commercial sites, and 5 publicly owned properties. Recent examples include removing 80 parking stalls at three Target retail stores to install tree trenches and filtration basins, a Maplewood arena parking lot which reduced impervious surface area to install 14 rain gardens, and flood reduction improvements and native habitat restoration at Roosevelt Homes, a 320-unit public housing complex in St. Paul.

10) Describe public benefit: *The projects installed through this program provide larger budget, larger scale BMPs. Each project is developed to improve surface water quality, create healthy ecosystems, and manage risk of flooding. They also inform our communities and empower them to become partners in improving and protecting the watershed through continued relationships and project support. Specifically, the relationships established through Targeted Retrofit projects have allowed RWMWD to respond to community feedback on localized flooding concerns, particularly in one of our priority equity areas on the east side of St. Paul.*

11) Watershed plan reference (where is the problem/solution identified in the watershed plan, does it address stated problems, objectives and goals):

The RWMWD 2017-2026 Watershed Management Plan identifies key goals of reducing local pollutant loads, achieving high quality surface waters, achieving healthy ecosystems, and informing and empowering communities. These goals are achieved through this program.

The Targeted Retrofit Program helps achieve a number of action items referenced in our management plan including:

- Action Item WQ2: Implement, or assist in implementing projects and/or programs recommended in total maximum daily load studies, watershed restoration and protection strategy studies, or other District studies.*
- Action Item WQ11: Expand the use of innovative water quality improvement designs, products, equipment, and methods as necessary to address sites with limited land area for conventional treatment techniques.*
- Action Item WQ13: Encourage and provide technical assistance to individuals to implement water quality improvement practices at their homes and businesses and in public places.*
- Action Item WQ17: Reduce stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces where opportunities arise (e.g., infiltration, impervious surface reduction, stormwater capture and use).*
- Action Item WQ18: Implement retrofit water quality improvement projects.*
- Action Item FL8: Reduce stormwater runoff volumes during development, redevelopment, or retrofit opportunities.*

- *Action Item IE14: Work with cities, neighborhoods, and other stakeholders to promote understanding and acceptance of green infrastructure and alternative stormwater management practices.*

12) Was project goal achieved? If so, how was the success measured?

The program has been deemed a success by the RWMWD Board of Managers by measuring the overall cost-benefit of each installed project. The cost-benefit and annual pollutant reductions provided by each project is recorded for annual TMDL reporting. In total, the installed BMPs have resulted in an annual reduction of 323 lb TP, 92,486 lb TSS, and 423,583 cubic feet of volume reduction.

In the first five years of the Targeted Retrofit Program, RWMWD focused our outreach and BMP installations to six school and six church sites. The first few phases of the program could not have been initiated nor excelled without the receipt of several Clean Water Fund grants. Staff have maintained relationships with each of these communities by continuing to conduct outdoor, hands-on watershed education activities with students in the school-based BMPs and volunteer groups at the churches. The success of these projects allowed us to expand to working with larger sites and businesses, recently including a partnership with Target to replace parking spaces with BMPs at their Eastside St. Paul, North St. Paul, and Woodbury Valley Creek Plaza store locations. Multiple projects, such as the Maplewood Mall stormwater management improvements, have reduced TP outputs going to Kohlman Lake, which was delisted as an impaired water body for excess nutrients earlier in 2024.

Finally, another qualitative measurement of project success has been our ability to both address flooding risks identified in our Beltline Resiliency Study and localized flooding concerns on a neighborhood level. The project at Roosevelt Homes complex sits on an intersection that is also home to the Eastside Boys and Girls Club and Cornerstone Montessori School all of which have retrofit projects installed to address neighborhood flood concerns and increase pollinator habitat. Our partnerships with each organization and the City of St. Paul allowed these projects to address periodic flooding of the intersection and portions of the grounds on each site. When completed in 2025, the projects will not only provide a tremendous water quality and flood reduction benefit, but the project will result in over an acre of turf grass being converted to native prairie.

13) Watershed or water body name to be protected or improved by project or program (if applicable)

The impetus for the program came to help identify projects to address external loads in the subwatershed of the impaired Kohlman Lake. As the program advanced, the program was expanded into other impaired, at risk, and underserved subwatershed areas. The projects installed through this program have been installed throughout the watershed district with a focus on impaired or at-risk water bodies and areas that score high according to the RWMWD social vulnerability index. The entirety of RWMWD drains to the Mississippi River which is identified in the RWMWD 2017-2026 Watershed Management Plan as an important resource to protect. Kohlman Lake was delisted from

the impaired waters list in 2024 and water quality in other lakes has improved with the implementation of these projects.

14) Watershed or water body information (e.g., size, watershed area, classification, description):

RWMWD is located in eastern Ramsey County and western Washington County. It covers approximately 65 square miles that ultimately drain into the Mississippi River. RWMWD includes all or part of 12 communities including St. Paul, Maplewood, Roseville, and Woodbury. RWMWD was created in 1975 and manages 20 lakes and five streams including 12 that are impaired or at-risk of becoming impaired for nutrients.

15) Project partners (financial or inkind support)

<u>Agency or organization</u>	<u>% Participation</u>
<i>BWSR- Clean Water Fund Grants</i>	15 %
	%
	%
	%

16) Start date: 2012

17) Project status:

On-going Project/Program X

Completed:

Completion date:

18) Project cost (this can be provided as total cash cost or a breakdown can be provided to show the cost of various project elements and partners): *\$7.7 million in construction costs.*

19) Letters of support:

Each application may have up to two letters of support. The letters can be from individuals, agencies, organizations, or local units of government. Letters from staff or managers of the sponsoring District will not be accepted. Attach letters to this application as a pdf document.

20) Photos:

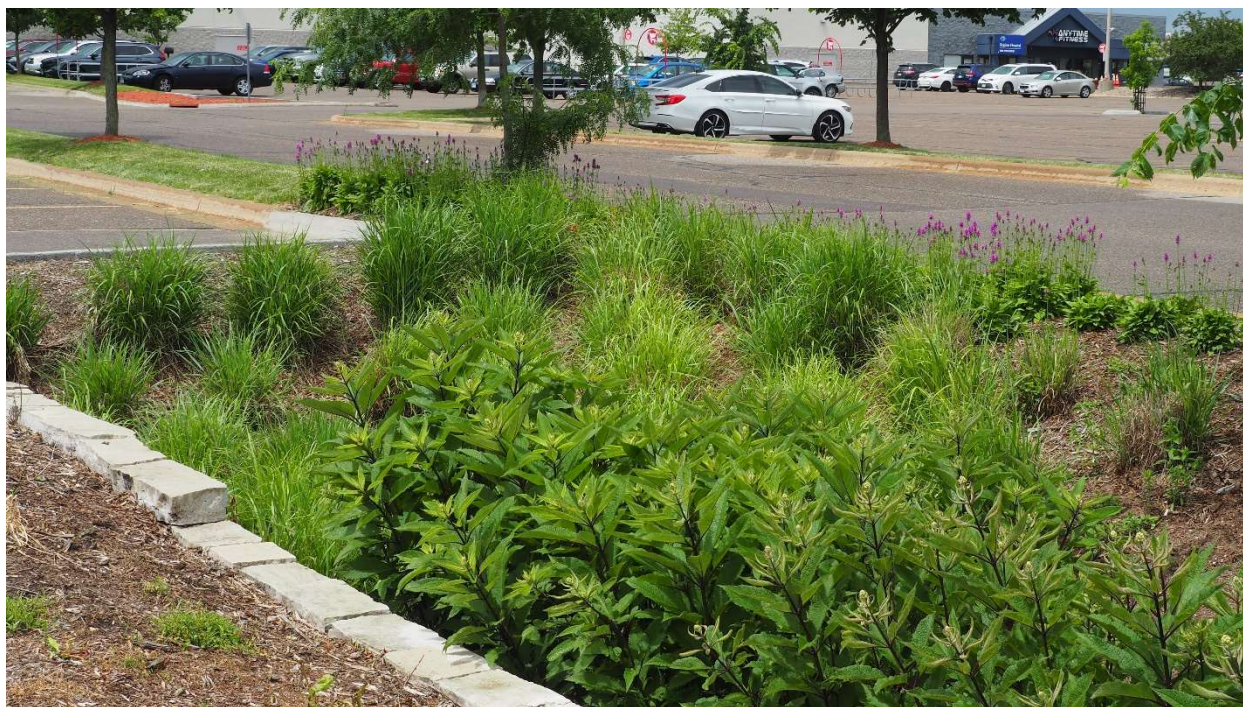
As noted in the instructions, each nomination must be accompanied by **at least 4 (4) photos**, but no more than eight (8) of the project or program. The photos must be in a digital format.

Rain garden at Mounds Park Academy, Maplewood.



Educational signage at Aldrich Arena, Maplewood.

1 of 7 rain gardens installed at East St. Paul Target.



Education event with students at St. Pascal Baylong Church, St. Paul.

1 of 4 rain gardens at North St. Paul Target.



Tree trenches at St. Pascal Baylon Church, St. Paul.

October 23, 2024

Karen Kill
Brown's Creek Watershed District
karen.kill@mnwcd.org

Dear Karen Kill and Award Review Panel,

I am writing this letter to enthusiastically endorse the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD) for the 2024 MN Watersheds Program of the Year award. I have had the pleasure of working closely with RWMWD and their consultants. I appreciate their dedication, clear communication, and exceptional achievements in the water resources field.

RWMWD has demonstrated exceptional skills, expertise and collaboration while assisting St. Paul Public Housing Agency (PHA) at our Roosevelt Homes Housing Development. RWMWD started working with PHA staff in 2022 to review flooding issues and develop solutions and practices to reduce the risk of flooding in parking lots, homes and our on-site maintenance shop. Flood risk reduction efforts will continue in 2025 along with the completion of converting over an acre of turf grass into native prairie.

RWMWD staff have consistently produced outstanding work that has earned them a great reputation in the industry. This project would not have been possible without their technical and financial support for the work.

Furthermore, RWMWD staff are team players that are always willing to answer questions and provide information quickly upon request. Their long-term commitment to each project is shown by the partnerships created, maintenance provided, and technical assistance before, during and after project installation. They have consistently delivered results that exceed expectations.

I am confident that RWMWD would be a worthy recipient of the 2024 MN Watersheds Program of the Year award. Their exceptional work ethic and dedication make them stand out, and the PHA is proud to have these projects to showcase to residents and other community members.

Thank you for considering RWMWD for this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brent Feller".

Brent Feller
Construction Program Manager
Saint Paul Public Housing Agency

Karen Kill
Brown's Creek Watershed District
karen.kill@mnwcd.org

October 22, 2024

Dear Karen Kill and Award Review Panel,

I am writing this letter to enthusiastically endorse the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD) for the 2024 MN Watersheds Program of the Year award. I have had the pleasure of working closely with RWMWD and their consultants and can vouch for their dedication, clear communication, and exceptional achievements in the water resources field.

RWMWD has demonstrated exceptional skills and expertise in the water resources field, which have been evident in their work with Ramsey County Parks and Recreation at the Aldrich Arena Parking Lot Retrofit Project in 2019. RWMWD worked closely with Ramsey County Parks staff to review the parking design to come up with practices to reduce impervious surface as well as increase pollutant removal, volume reduction, and native habitat in the parking lots.

RWMWD staff have consistently produced outstanding work that has earned them a great reputation in the industry. This project would not have been possible without their technical and financial support for this project.

Furthermore, RWMWD is a team player, always willing to answer questions and provide information quickly upon request. Their long-term commitment to each project is shown by the partnerships created, maintenance provided, and technical assistance provided before and after project installation. They have consistently delivered results that exceed expectations.

I am confident that RWMWD would be a worthy recipient of the 2024 MN Watersheds Program of the Year award. Their exceptional work ethic and dedication make them stand out, and Ramsey County Parks and Recreation is proud to have these projects to showcase to residents, arena users, and other government agencies.

Thank you for considering RWMWD for this award.

Sincerely,



Mark McCabe

Director - Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation | *Economic Growth and Community Investment*

651-266-0303

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