



BROWN'S CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

Preserving the integrity of the watershed for future generations

2024 Annual Report & 2025 Annual Plan

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

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 water resources. In 2024, the BCWD worked with partners to develop the next 10-year watershed management plan, and there will be more opportunity for input in 2025 before its 2026 approval.

In 2024, BCWD partnered with the City of Stillwater, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and private landowners to restore over 2,000 feet of Brown's Creek to improve water quality, habitat, and recreation. The work will be complete in 2025. More information on the project can be found at bcwd.org/browns-creek-restoration-project/.

With the help of the East Metro Water Resources Education Program (EMWREP) and the BCWD Citizen Advisory Committee, 2025 will be another great year for community outreach. We will be sending out our annual newsletter, mailing updated homeowner packets to new residents, and implementing targeted outreach for upcoming projects. The CAC is planning summer outreach events, and our annual Community Event and Bird Festival will take place on September 20th in partnership with Sustainable Stillwater MN. We hope to see you join us for the fun!

Board of Managers

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

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

Regular board meetings are typically held at 6:30pm on the second Wednesday of each month. There will be board workshops in July and August to develop the 2026 Budget and workplan and assess the progress of the 2025 workplan. The full meeting schedule including dates, times, and locations can be found at bcwd.org/calendar/.

District Staff

District Office: 455 Hayward Ave N, Oakdale, MN 55128

District Website: www.bcwd.org

- **Karen Kill**, Administrator: 651.330.8220 or kill@mnwcd.org
- **Hannah Peterson**, Communications & Project Assistant: hpeterson@mnwcd.org

District Consultants (selected in 2025 biennial solicitation):

- **Legal Services:** Smith Partners PLLP
- **Engineering Services:** Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc.

How to Get Involved

- **Volunteer at an upcoming event:** See bcwd.org/calendar/ or facebook.com/browns-creek-watershed-district for upcoming opportunities.
- **Apply for a stewardship grant:** Learn more at bcwd.org/stewardship-grants/.
- **Join the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC):** Hybrid meetings are open to the public at the Lakes at Stillwater and over Zoom on the 2nd Monday of even months at 6pm. Learn more at bcwd.org/citizens-advisory-committee/.
- **Contribute to the Watershed Management Plan Update:** Learn more at bcwd.org/watershed-management-plan-update/.

2024 - 2025 Budget

2024 Actual Budget:

- **Revenue:** \$1,329,800
- **Expenses:** \$1,761,000

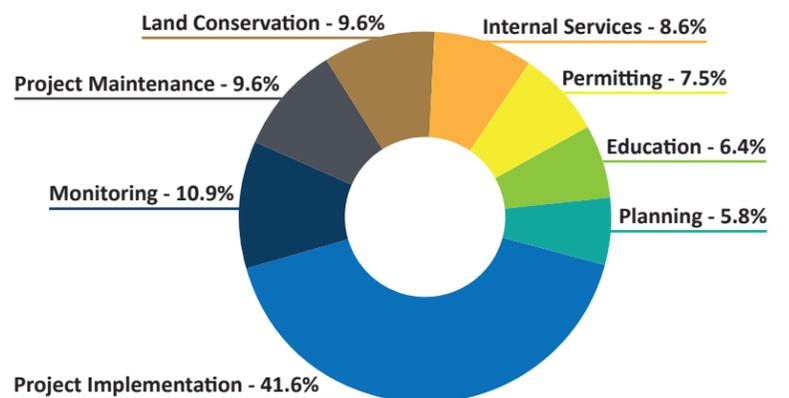
2025 Total Budget: \$2,089,000

- **Carry Over:** \$840,999 (40%)
- **Grants:** \$40,501 (2%)
- **Levy:** \$1,207,500 (58%)



Large projects include continued restoration along Brown's Creek.

2025 Budget Categories:



Watershed Facts

BWCD has four distinct landforms including the:

- **Headwaters Region:** predominantly lakes and wetlands
- **Brown's Creek Middle Reach:** predominantly wetlands
- **Long Lake Tributary:** routed to McKusick Lake
- **Brown's Creek Gorge:** where the creek flows into the St. Croix

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



Visit www.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.

Ecological Health

Unique ecosystems and endangered species were found in the watershed through lake vegetation surveys and a wetland inventory in 2024. The BCWD will continue with vegetative restoration projects and outreach on ecological health in 2025. The volunteer stream monitoring program with local high school students at SAHS continued in 2024 and will again in 2025.

Erosion Prevention & Sediment Control

To reduce sediment loads and erosion and improve water quality, the BCWD restores and protects riparian buffers and inspects projects. In 2024 the district continued to inspect and maintain capital improvement projects including the Brown's Creek Tributary restoration project and removed 30 tons of sediment from four direct outfalls to Brown's Creek.

Land Conservation

In 2024, the CAC continued biological monitoring at the Brown's Creek Conservation Area, in addition to the BCWD capturing wildlife photos with motion cameras. 2024 maintenance included invasive species removal. The BCWD is partnering with the Washington Conservation District on a 2025-2026 HELP grant which includes a prescribed burn and native tree and shrub plantings to improve habitat.

Wetland Management

In 2024, the BCWD completed an updated function and value inventory to ensure wetland classifications are accurate and align with current science and practice and test a new draft functional assessment tool. In 2025, the BCWD will conduct outreach to assess the feasibility of a wetland restoration project.

Floodplain Management

The BCWD continues to manage floodplains with its regulatory program and supporting flood risk reduction projects. In 2024, the BCWD partnered with the City of Stillwater to lower the 62nd Street Trail and bring several adjacent homes into compliance with the BCWD flood-freeboard standard of two feet to increase flood resilience in the area.

Lake Management

In 2024, the BCWD held community meetings for Long, Wood Pile, and Masterman Lake residents focused on shallow lake ecology, flood risk, and how they can help protect water quality. Water quality is trending upwards for Long Lake, and could soon be the final of Stillwater's lakes delisted for nutrient pollution, highlighting the success of collaborating with local partners to improve lake health.

Regulations

The BCWD administers a permitting program to ensure sustainable development in the watershed. In 2024, the BCWD began working with local partners to assess the regulatory program and anticipates beginning the rule revision process in 2026. The BCWD approved 14 permits in 2024, including four variances (Permits 23-02, 24-01, 24-06, & 24-09). There were no notices of probable violation issued.

Recreation

The BCWD seeks to protect and restore the district's resources to provide recreational value to the community. Biking or walking the Brown's Creek State Trail offers beautiful views, especially in the newly restored stretch through Brown's Creek Park in Stillwater. Restoration will create increased access to the creek, including an ADA accessible fishing pier.

Education, Outreach, & Stewardship

In 2024, the BCWD's CAC continued to host their Open Yard events and annual fall community event to engage and educate community members and continued their partnership with the East Metro Water Resources Education Program. These efforts will continue in 2025. The BCWD also offers stewardship grants to enable landowners to identify and implement projects to improve water quality and habitat in the watershed.

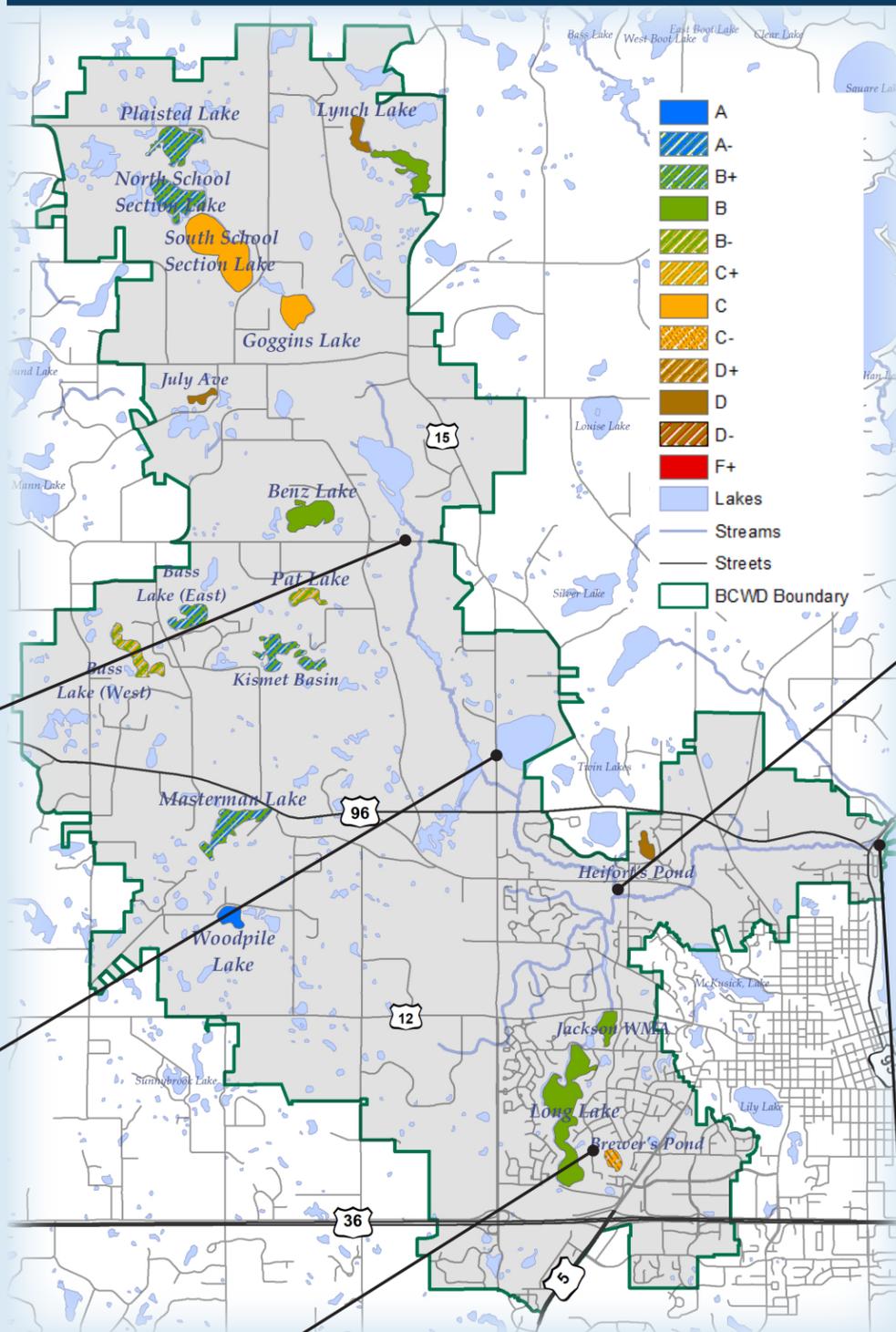
Stream Management

In 2024, work to restore 2,000 linear feet of the creek was completed under an MPCA 319 grant that covered 60% of the project with a 40% local match. The restoration project will be done in 2025 after a volunteer tree planting and stream access is completed. Continued outreach will take place in 2025 to plan restoration of an additional stretch of Brown's Creek.

Climate Change Adaptation

The BCWD has been assessing rainfall projection data and educating residents about their flood risks as well as encouraging landowners to install BMPs to increase capacity and resilience in their communities.

BCWD's 2024 Water Quality Report Card



Stormwater Runoff

The BCWD implements capital improvement projects and encourages installing BMPs to treat stormwater runoff before it reaches the creek, lakes, and ponds. In 2025, the Applewood Golf Course Stormwater Reuse project will come online, and the BCWD is also partnering with the City of Stillwater to install a stormwater separator near Brewer's Pond to improve Long Lake's water quality.

Groundwater Management

The district monitors groundwater measurements and trends to improve its understanding of the connection between surface and groundwater throughout the watershed. The BCWD participated in the Washington County groundwater plan update in 2024. The BCWD also continued with annual resident well monitoring efforts in 2024 and will in 2025 as well, hopefully adding 4-5 additional wells.

Monitoring & Data Collection

The BCWD partners with the Washington Conservation District to collect and evaluate water quantity and quality data on Brown's Creek and the district's major lakes. The creek's 2024 loads to the St. Croix River were:

- **TSS (Sediment):** 109.68 lbs/acre (Goal: 74 lbs/acre)
- **TP (Phosphorus):** 2,563 lbs/yr (Goal: 1,804 lbs/yr)