

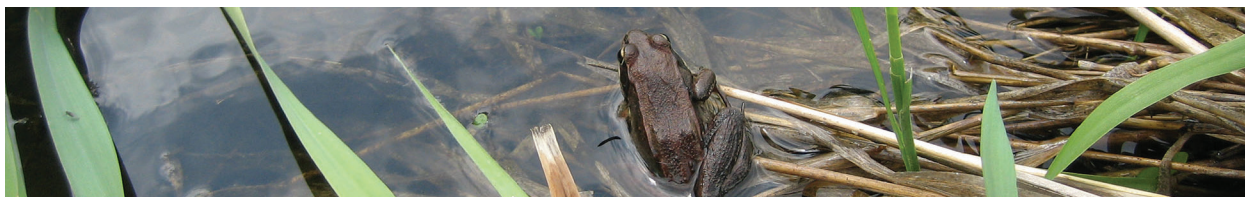
# BROWN'S CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

Preserving the integrity of the watershed for future generations

## WATERSHED NEWS - SPRING 2025

### What is the Watershed District?

**Watershed districts are local units of government based on hydrologic boundaries (where the water flows) to conserve natural resources.** The Brown's Creek Watershed District (BCWD) contains a few rare and unique ecosystems including Brown's Creek, a cold-water trout stream, and lakes, ponds, and wetlands that support a variety of plants and animals. The BCWD includes parts of Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, Lake Elmo, Grant, Hugo, Stillwater Township, and May Township.



### Brown's Creek Restoration Update

The BCWD worked with the MN Department of Natural Resources, the City of Stillwater, and adjacent property owners in 2024 - 2025 to restore 2,000 feet of Brown's Creek. Restoration activities included tree and shrub removal (buckthorn and boxelder), recreating the natural bends and curves in the stream, managing invasive species, and planting native vegetation.

**This restoration helps species in the watershed:**

- Rock riffles increase fish spawning opportunities and provide refuge for macroinvertebrates.
- Deeper pools protect aquatic species from the summer heat and provide overwintering habitat for fish and amphibians.
- Invasive species management and native plantings improve upland pollinator habitats.
- Woody vegetation provides refuge for small mammals, reptiles, and birds.

For more information, visit [bcwd.org/browns-creek-restoration-project](https://bcwd.org/browns-creek-restoration-project).



### Regulatory Program and Buffer Zones

Minnesota statute requires watershed districts to have rules and regulations to conserve natural resources in the state and watershed. The Brown's Creek Watershed District's regulatory program includes rules and a permitting process with requirements for stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, buffers, shoreline alterations, water crossings, and flood control.

Buffers zones are areas of native plants surrounding a water body that support ecosystem health by protecting water resources and creating habitat. They are required for development projects under Rule 4.0 (Lake, Stream, and Wetland Buffer Requirements) for Brown's Creek and its tributaries, lakes, wetlands larger than an acre, and groundwater dependent natural resources. Buffers can range from 25 to 150 feet wide depending on the criteria it meets, and they must be marked at the buffer's upland edge. Activities that will degrade water quality and habitat are prohibited in the buffer zone. The full details of Rule 4.0 can be found in the rules document found at [bcwd.org/permitting](https://bcwd.org/permitting).



### Vision Statement

The Brown's Creek Watershed District consists of communities interlaced with natural corridors. These natural corridors improve the function and value of the district's water resources and support a diverse population of plants, wildlife, and fish. The district brings people and the environment together to accommodate development that preserves the connection between surface water and groundwater and enhances the quality of these resources.

### District Office

**Address:** 455 Hayward Ave N.  
Oakdale, MN 55128

**Phone:** 651-330-8220

**Website:** [bcwd.org](https://bcwd.org)

### Board of Managers

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

Monthly board meetings are typically at 6:30pm on the 2nd Wednesday. See [bcwd.org/calendar](https://bcwd.org/calendar) for the full schedule.

### District Staff

- Karen Kill, Administrator:  
[kkill@mnwcd.org](mailto:kkill@mnwcd.org)
- Hannah Peterson,  
Communications & Project Assistant:  
[hpeterson@mnwcd.org](mailto:hpeterson@mnwcd.org)

### Get Involved!

Visit our website or contact us for involvement opportunities.

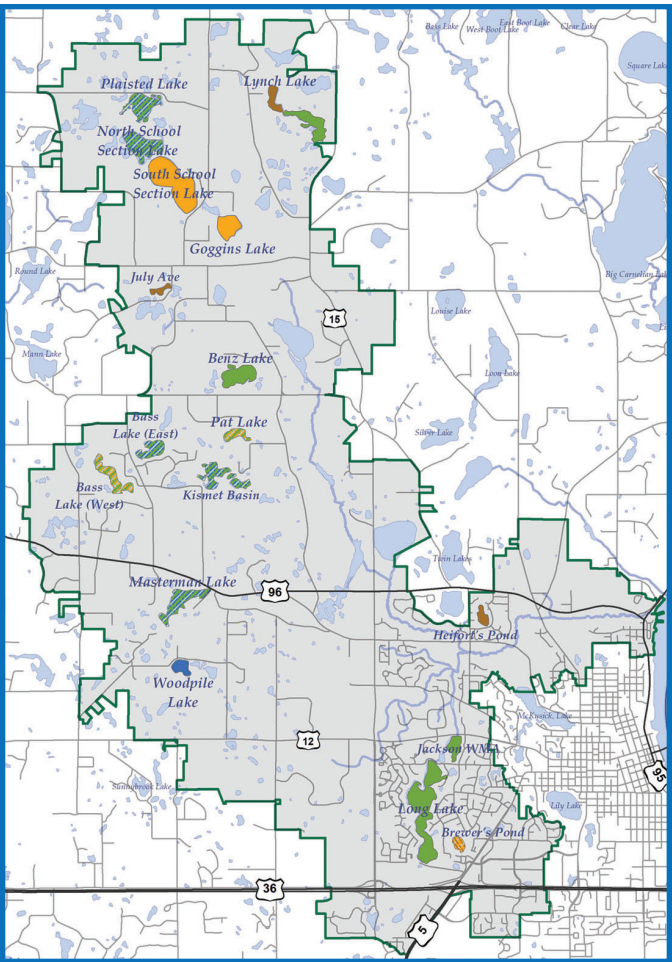
- **Volunteer:** [bcwd.org/calendar](https://bcwd.org/calendar)
- **Apply for a stewardship grant:** [bcwd.org/stewardship-grants](https://bcwd.org/stewardship-grants).
- **Join the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC):** [bcwd.org/citizens-advisory-committee](https://bcwd.org/citizens-advisory-committee).
- **Contribute to the Watershed Management Plan Update:** [bcwd.org/watershed-management-plan-update](https://bcwd.org/watershed-management-plan-update).
- **Request a free site visit:** [mnwcd.org/site-visit-signup-form](https://mnwcd.org/site-visit-signup-form).
- **Adopt a storm drain:** [mn.adopt-a-drain.org](https://mn.adopt-a-drain.org).
- **Search for and follow Brown's Creek Watershed District on social media:** [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).

### View Online

Scan the QR code or visit [bcwd.org/newsletters](https://bcwd.org/newsletters) to view this newsletter and past issues online.





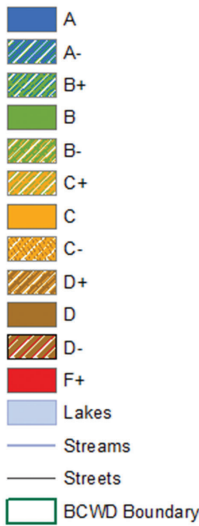


Water Quality Report Card

We partner with the Washington Conservation District to collect and evaluate water quantity and quality data on Brown’s Creek and the district’s major lakes. Continued monitoring provides a clearer picture of how to best restore and protect our resources for the future. 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)

The lake grades for 2024 are in the map to the right, and the full monitoring report can be found at [bcwd.org/lakes-and-streams-monitoring](http://bcwd.org/lakes-and-streams-monitoring).



Upcoming Events

Join us at one of BCWD’s upcoming fun and educational family-friendly events! Scheduled events include:

- **Brown’s Creek Tributary Restoration Tour** on May 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am at Brown’s Creek Park
- **Community Watershed Celebration and Bird Festival** on Sept 20<sup>th</sup> from 10am-1pm at Brown’s Creek Park

We are working hard to get more events on the calendar such as:

- The Lakes at Stillwater trail walking tour
- Native plant garden tour
- Brown’s Creek Restoration Project tour
- Painting or basketmaking with native plants
- Volunteer buckthorn removal

Visit [bcwd.org/calendar](http://bcwd.org/calendar) and follow us on Facebook so you don’t miss out on these events as they get scheduled this summer and fall.



455 Hayward Ave N. Oakdale, MN 55128

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
STILLWATER, MN  
PERMIT NO. 255

Stewardship Grants

Our Stewardship Grant Program provides residents with grants up to \$500 for projects that benefit water quality and wildlife habitat within the watershed. Examples include native pollinator gardens, raingardens, low-input or wildlife friendly turf alternatives, rain barrels, and targeted water education or outreach. **If you have a plan to implement conservation practices on your property, apply for one of our stewardship grants this year!**



Restoring Habitat at the Brown’s Creek Conservation Area

The Brown’s Creek Conservation Area is a parcel of land in Grant with 1,300 feet of Brown’s Creek and 2.4 acres of wetland that is owned and maintained by the BCWD with the goal to provide habitat for native species. The Citizen’s Advisory Committee conducts surveys each spring and summer to identify plant and bird species. There are also trail cameras on-site to take photos of wildlife, like the one below.

The BCWD worked with Great River Greening in 2019 to 2023 on a grant project to restore prairie, wetland, and woodland habitat. This year, we are excited to continue habitat restoration with a Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP) grant from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). HELP aims to restore and enhance native habitats across Minnesota to improve plant and animal diversity. The BCWD is partnering with the Washington Conservation District to enhance woodland and prairie habitats with a prescribed burn of 0.17 acres of prairie in spring 2025 and a volunteer planting of about 150 native trees and shrubs in 2026.

More information on the conservation area and updates on restoration can be found at [bcwd.org/browns-creek-conservation-area](http://bcwd.org/browns-creek-conservation-area).

