



# BROWN'S CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

Preserving the integrity of the watershed for future generations

## 2025 Annual Report & 2026 Annual Plan

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.

In 2025, BCWD continued to implement its 2017-2026 watershed management plan, utilizing education and cost-share programs, capital improvement projects, and its permitting program to preserve and restore the quality of water resources. BCWD also continued to develop its updated 2027-2036 watershed management plan, which can be found at [bcwd.org/2027-2036-watershed-management-plan](https://bcwd.org/2027-2036-watershed-management-plan) and will be finalized and approved in fall 2026.

In 2026, BCWD will be partnering with private landowners to begin the next phase of the Brown's Creek Restoration Project through Brown's Creek Cove, just upstream of the 2024-2025 restoration. Updated information for both project phases can be found at [bcwd.org/browns-creek-restoration-project](https://bcwd.org/browns-creek-restoration-project).

With the help of the East Metro Water Resources Education Program and BCWD's Community Advisory Committee, 2026 will be another great year for community outreach. We will be sending out the 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 19th 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
- **Celia Wirth**, Treasurer
- **Chuck LeRoux**, Vice-President
- **Luke Mattson**, Manager
- **Griffin Brod**, Manager

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 2027 Budget and workplan and assess the progress of the 2026 workplan. The full meeting schedule including dates, times, and locations can be found at [bcwd.org/calendar](https://bcwd.org/calendar).

### District Staff

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

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

**District Phone:** 651-330-8220

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

- **Attend an upcoming event:** See [bcwd.org/calendar](https://bcwd.org/calendar) or [facebook.com/brownscreekwatersheddistrict](https://facebook.com/brownscreekwatersheddistrict) for exciting upcoming opportunities to learn more about the watershed district or to volunteer at an upcoming event.
- **Apply for a stewardship grant:** Learn more about available landowner project funding at [bcwd.org/stewardship-grants](https://bcwd.org/stewardship-grants).
- **Join the Community Advisory Committee:** 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/cac](https://bcwd.org/cac).

### 2025 - 2026 Budget

#### 2025 Actual Budget:

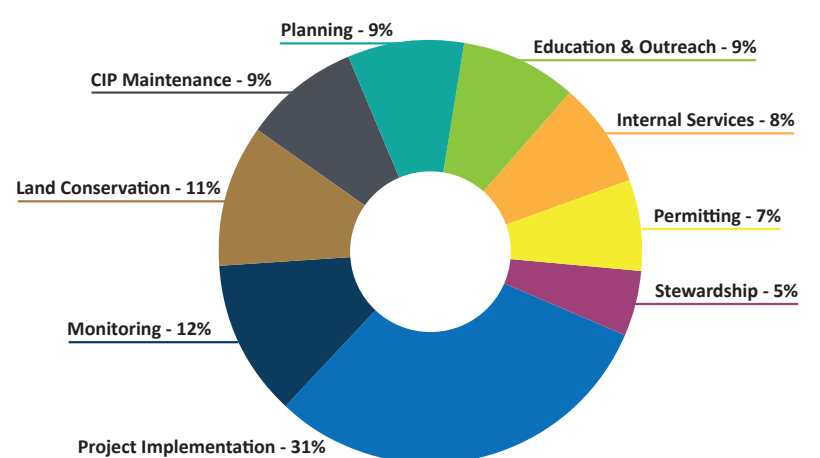
- **Revenue:** \$1,776,400
- **Expenses:** \$1,773,600

#### 2026 Total Budget: \$2,478,033

- **Carry Over:** \$820,996 (33%)
- **Grants:** \$409,291 (17%)
- **Levy:** \$1,247,745 (50%)

Large projects include continued restoration along Brown's Creek.

#### 2026 Budget Categories:



### Watershed Facts

In 2025, Brown's Creek Watershed District completed vegetation surveys in a few of the lakes in the watershed and found unique aquatic plants indicative of lake health! Some plants were rare for the region, such as Vasey's pondweed, and one is a state-listed rare plant. Some of the other species found included bladderwort, fern-leaf pondweed, white water lily, and duckweed. Learn more at [bcwd.org/aquatic-plants](https://bcwd.org/aquatic-plants). BCWD plans to provide education on beneficial aquatic plants with a focus on Long Lake in summer 2026.



Visit [bcwd.org](https://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

In 2025, BCWD partnered with A House Unbuilt on an art exhibit focusing on 12 unique species in the watershed, which will be on display at the Washington County Heritage Center through 2026. BCWD also identified unique aquatic plants in a few lakes during 2025 point-intercept surveys and will be focusing 2026 outreach on the ecological health benefits of aquatic vegetation in shallow lakes. The volunteer stream monitoring program continued with Stillwater Area High School students and will again in 2026.

## Erosion Prevention & Sediment Control

To reduce sediment loads and erosion and improve water quality, BCWD restores and protects riparian buffers and inspects projects permitted through its regulatory program. In 2025, BCWD also continued to inspect and maintain its capital improvement projects to ensure they were functioning and removing sediment.

## Land Conservation

In 2025, the CAC continued biological monitoring at the Brown's Creek Conservation Area, and BCWD continued capturing wildlife photos with motion cameras. As part of a state grant in partnership with the Washington Conservation District, BCWD completed a prescribed burn in 2025, and native tree and shrub plantings are planned for 2026 to improve habitat.

## Wetland Management

In 2025, BCWD explored opportunities to restore or protect wetlands in the watershed, some of which have rare plants and animals. BCWD also monitored how beavers altered the hydrology of wetland areas around the creek and its tributaries. This work will continue in 2026.

## Floodplain Management

BCWD continues to manage floodplains with its regulatory program. In 2025, BCWD met with its member communities to share flood risk data from its updated hydrologic & hydraulic model and to discuss opportunities to mitigate flood risk to be included in the 2027-2036 Watershed Management Plan.

## Lake Management

In 2025, BCWD completed point-intercept surveys on Goggins, South School Section, Benz, and Long Lakes to assess aquatic vegetation. In 2026, curly-leaf pondweed treatment will be done on South School Section Lake. BCWD will also be working on outreach in 2026 related to the health of Long Lake, especially related to the unique plants that indicate improving water quality in a shallow lake system.

## Regulations

BCWD administers a permitting program to ensure sustainable development in the watershed. In 2025, BCWD completed a regulatory program review with local partners. The district is planning for a rule revision in 2027. BCWD approved 30 permits in 2025, including two variances (Permits 24-18 and 25-04). There were no notices of probable violation issued.

## Recreation

BCWD seeks to protect and restore watershed 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 where a new ADA-accessible fishing pier and stairs to the creek have been constructed.

## Education, Outreach, & Stewardship

In 2025, BCWD's CAC and staff hosted tours and their annual fall community event to engage and educate community members. BCWD also continued its partnership with the East Metro Water Resources Education Program and supported watershed education for Stillwater students with Belwin Conservancy. These efforts will continue in 2026. 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 2025, BCWD hosted a volunteer tree planting at the Brown's Creek Restoration Project site near Brown's Creek Park. In 2026, BCWD plans to move forward with stream restoration upstream through Brown's Creek Cove. This totals over 3/4 mile of trout stream restoration.

## Climate Change Adaptation

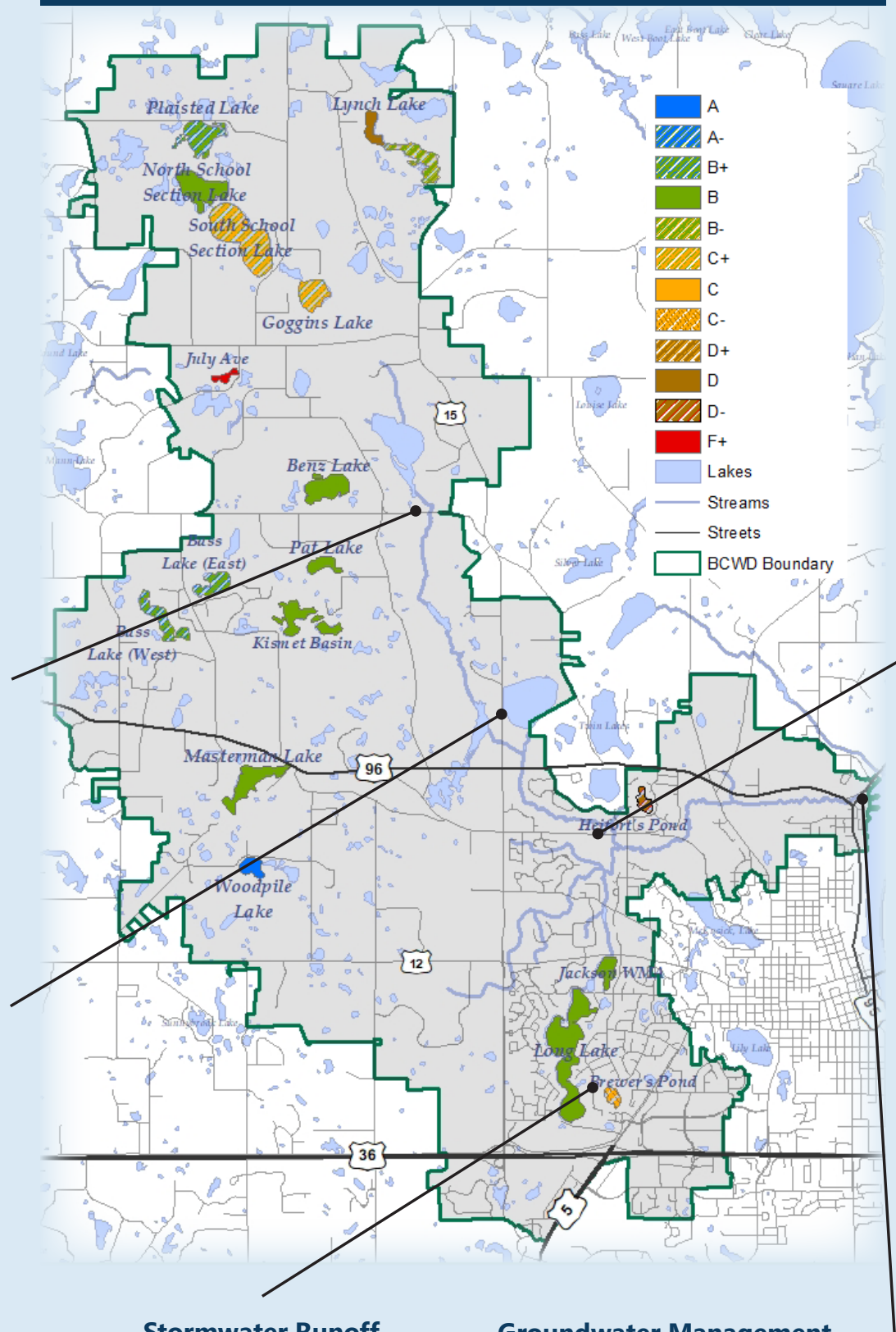
BCWD has been assessing rainfall projection data and educating residents about their flood risks as well as encouraging landowners to install BMPs to increase capacity and resilience in their communities.

## Monitoring & Data Collection

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 2025 loads to the St. Croix River were:

- TSS (Sediment): 140.17 lbs/acre (Goal: 74 lbs/acre)
- TP (Phosphorus): 2,893 lbs/yr (Goal: 1,804 lbs/yr)

BCWD's 2025 Water Quality Report Card



## Stormwater Runoff

BCWD implements capital improvement projects and encourages installing BMPs to treat stormwater runoff before it reaches water bodies. In 2025, BCWD partnered with the City of Stillwater to install a stormwater device to remove sediment near Brewer's Pond to improve water quality. In 2026, the Applewood Golf Course Stormwater Reuse project will come online.

## Groundwater Management

BCWD monitors groundwater measurements and trends to improve its understanding of the connection between surface and groundwater throughout the watershed. In 2025, BCWD continued annual resident well elevation monitoring and added a few additional wells. BCWD also worked to collect measurements on golf course wells. These efforts will continue in 2026.