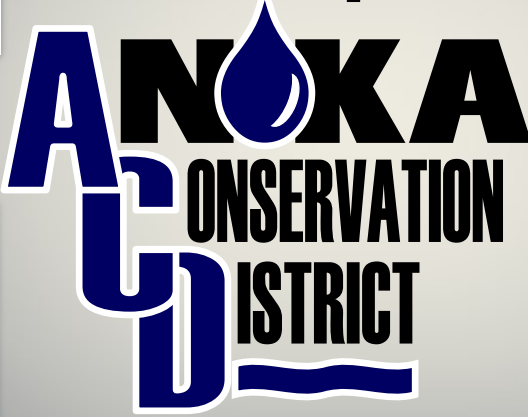




2024 Annual Report



Protecting water quality, recreation,
and wildlife by helping landowners
and local government manage
natural resources since 1946

1318 McKay Dr. NE, Suite 300
Ham Lake, MN 55304
763-434-2030
www.AnokaSWCD.org

Priorities



Anoka Conservation District (ACD) was established in 1946 through a voter led petition.

ACD's Mission is to holistically conserve and enhance Anoka County's natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations through partnerships and innovation.

ACD's Vision: Strong partnerships. Innovative solutions. Healthy environments.

ACD serves all of Anoka County's 369,000 residents spanning 284,000 acres, 72 recreational and natural environment lakes, 446 miles of streams and rivers, and a regionally critical groundwater resource. Programs are designed to preserve or enhance one or more natural resource benefits. In order of priority they are:

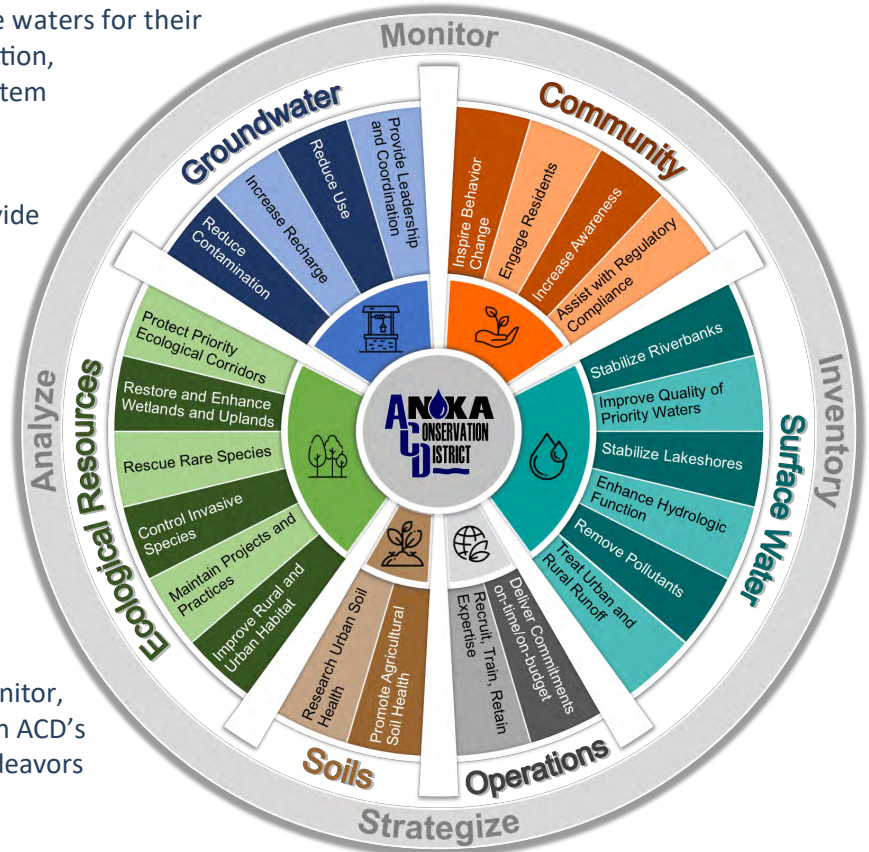
Surface Water: Maintain and improve surface waters for their benefits to pollutant assimilation, flood mitigation, recreation, groundwater recharge, and ecosystem services.

Ecological Resources: Preserve and enhance ecological resources for the benefits they provide in nutrient and carbon cycling, recreation, and wildlife.

Groundwater: Maintain and improve groundwater quality and quantity for its benefits for consumption, sanitation, and surface water baseflow.

Soils: Maintain and enhance soil health for its benefits of nutrient cycling and pollutant remediation, sustaining diverse flora and fauna, and providing food, fuel and fiber.

Along with these priorities, Community, Operations, and Foundational Knowledge (monitor, inventory, analyze, strategize) are embodied in ACD's Action Wheel, which features 24 keystone endeavors against which we measure progress.



Principles

Guiding Principles

- Focus on long-term resource sustainability
- Make informed and ethical decisions
- Promote cost-effective and efficient resource management
- Collaborate with both public and private sectors
- Utilize technology to achieve efficiency and enhance work products
- Keep natural resource issues visible in Anoka County
- Retain highly qualified, knowledgeable staff
- Seize opportunity and adapt to changing needs
- Develop diverse programs, partners, and funding sources
- Manage natural resources at efficient and effective geographic scales
- Engage the citizenry through outreach to encourage natural resource stewardship
- Consider the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of our actions

The Team

ACD's Board of Supervisors are elected to serve four-year terms. They determine the direction of the District and oversee its operations.

2024 Supervisors

- Chair - Mary Jo Truchon - term 2020 thru 2024
- Vice Chair - Jim Lindahl - term 2022 thru 2026
- Treasurer - Glenda Meixell - term 2022 thru 2026
- Member - Colleen Werdien- term 2020 thru 2024
- Member - Kate Luthner - term Nov 2023 thru 2024

2024 Staff

- District Manager - Chris Lord
- Office Administrator - Kathy Berkness
- Wetland Specialist - Becky Wozney
- Watershed Projects Manager - Jamie Schurbon
- Stormwater and Shoreland Specialist - Mitch Haustein
- Restoration Ecologist - Carrie Taylor
- Water Resource Specialist - Jared Wagner
- Water Resource Specialist - Kris Larson
- Water Resource Specialist- Breanna Keith
- Restoration Technician - Logan Olson
- Natural Resource Technician - Brian Clark, P.E.
- Outreach Coordinator - Aviva Meyerhoff
- Seasonal Technician - Sara Belden
- Seasonal Technician - Cassandra Smith
- Seasonal Technician - Nick Olson
- Seasonal Technician - Sally Herman
- Field Crew - Kayla Wagner

News and Updates

Future Funding Secured

- \$221K - Clean Water Fund to restore a wetland complex to improve water quality flowing into and through Typo Lake in Linwood Township.
- \$70K - Clean Water Fund to cost share well sealing.

Outstanding Conservationist

The City of Circle Pines was recognized as the 2024 Anoka County Outstanding Conservationist for successfully working with multiple partners to improve water quality in Golden Lake sufficiently for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to remove it from the Impaired Waters List.



Far left: Steve McChesney (Council), Nici Dorner (Council), Meagan Bachmayer (Council), Dave Bartholomay (Mayor), Matt Percy (Council), Mary Jo Truchon (ACD Chair), Kate Luthner (ACD Supervisor), and Chris Lord (ACD Manager)

Working Toward Goals

What we do - Action Wheel

During development of ACD's 2021-2030 Comprehensive Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, ACD identified several keystone endeavors for each of the foundational natural resources: Surface Water, Ecological Resources, Groundwater, and Soils as well as Community and Operation. We also recognize the foundational knowledge provided by monitoring, inventory, analysis and planning.

Why it matters - Quality of Life Assessment

As we make progress on these endeavors, we'll have a positive impact on the quality of life in Anoka County.

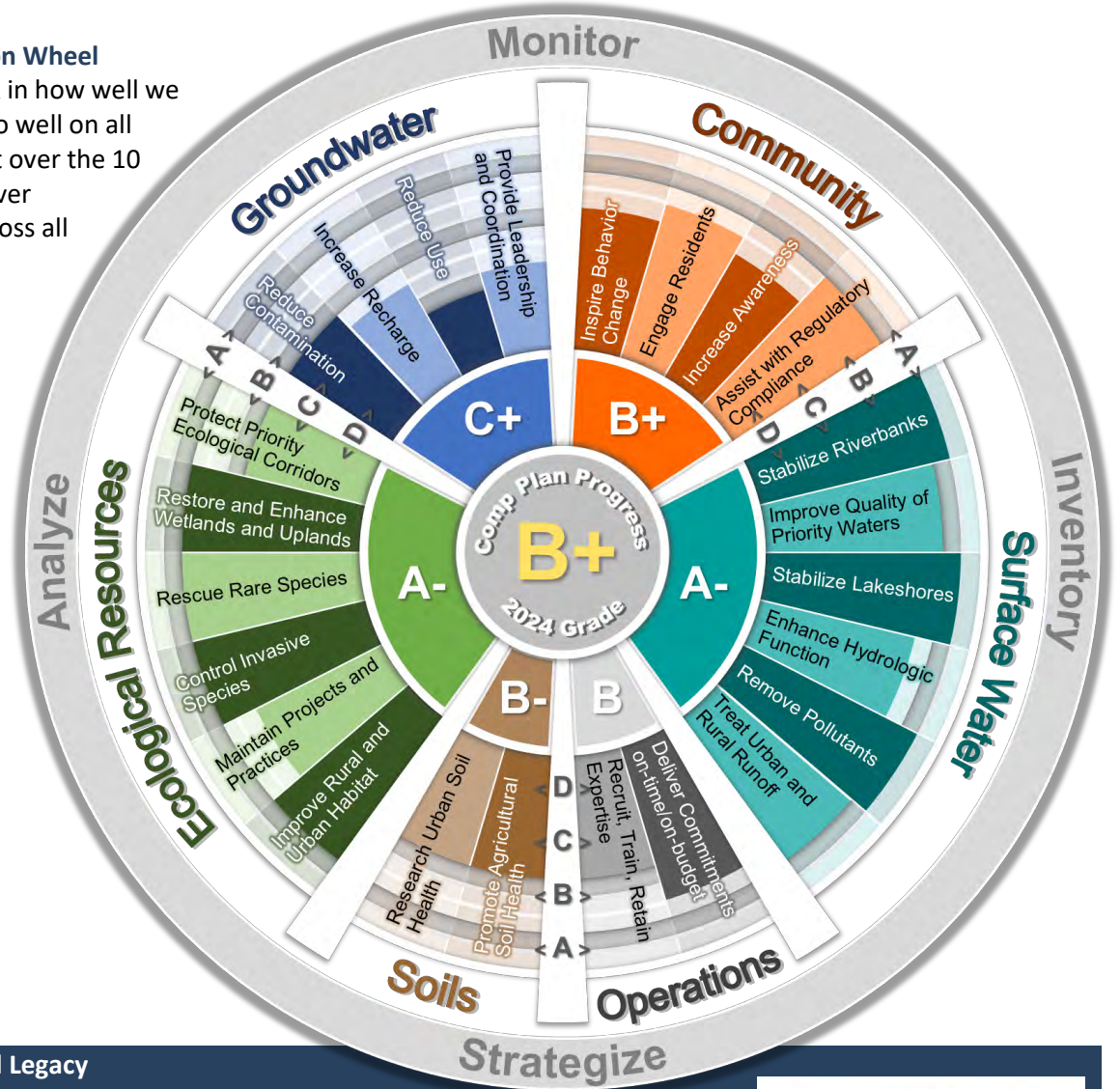
- Clean plentiful water for drinking and other uses
- Access to abundant high quality outdoor recreation
- Clean lakes and rivers

- Full, but not overflowing, surface waters
- Sustained diversity of plants and animals
- Healthy functioning ecosystems
- An engaged and invested public
- Productive working lands
- Vibrant local economy

How we're doing - Action Wheel

Each year, we take stock in how well we progressed. We won't do well on all endeavors each year but over the 10-year plan intend to deliver significant outcomes across all areas.

- A - Ahead of plan
- B - On track
- C - Progressing slower than anticipated
- D - No progress



Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Constitutional Amendment

Financial contributions from the Clean Water Fund (CWF) and Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Constitutional Amendment support many ACD projects. Look for their logo to know which projects they helped fund. Typically, water quality improvement projects receive Clean Water Funds and ecological projects receive Outdoor Heritage Funds.



Foundational Knowledge



Monitor

123 monitoring sites including lakes, rivers, wetlands, groundwater, soils, and precipitation involving quantity, quality and biology; baseline and trend monitoring are routine • Diagnostic monitoring for Linwood Lake and tributaries • Transitioning to simplified reporting coupled with user-friendly online data access

Inventory

Aquatic plant inventory of Lake George • Photo inventory of Rum & Mississippi rivers, Martin, Linwood, and Coon Lakes • Buffer law compliance inventory update

Analyze

Rum and Mississippi urban Stormwater Retrofit Analyses (SRAs) • Ford Brook rural Subwatershed Analysis (SWA) • Linwood Lake Dissolved Phosphorus analysis • Water Almanac presenting data and analysis

Strategize

Annual work plans for ACD, local WMOs, Rum and Lower St. Croix watersheds • Participate in regional ecological and groundwater planning initiatives

Featured Project

Linwood Lake Tributaries—Water Quality Analysis

Linwood Lake is impaired for excess nutrients. ACD monitored three stream sites that drain to Linwood Lake. The purpose was to determine pollution amounts and sources to Linwood Lake. The results will enable us to focus future efforts on the worst subwatersheds to identify and rank water quality improvement projects.

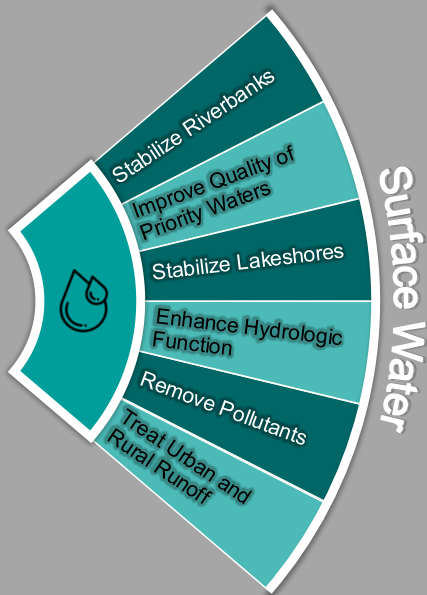


AnokaSWCD.org resources:

- Water Resources Almanac
- Monitoring Database

- Interactive Projects Map - Inventories
- Interactive Projects Map - Subwatershed Analyses
- ACD Annual and Comprehensive Plans

Surface Water



Stabilize Riverbanks

3,475 feet of riverbank across 13 properties on the Mississippi and Rum Rivers

Improve Quality of Priority Waters

Martin and Typo Lakes improving • Projects on Crooked, Fawn, and Martin Lakes, Mississippi and Rum Rivers

Stabilize Lakeshores

1,094 linear feet of lakeshore across 11 properties on Crooked, Fawn, and Martin Lakes

Enhance Hydrologic Function

Pond treating 35 acres for water quality and stormwater attenuation • 6 rain gardens treating 10 acres • 4 wetland fill violations resolved

Remove Pollutants

759.3 lbs Total Phosphorus (TP) and 864.5 tons Total Suspended Solids (TSS) reduced

Treat Urban and Rural Runoff

6 curb-cut rain gardens and 1 stormwater pond enhancing treatment of 45 acres of urban runoff • Cover crops enhancing treatment of 39.5 acres of rural runoff

Featured Projects

Rum River Bank Stabilization in Oak Grove

In 2024, a 935-foot stretch of the Rum Riverbank, one of the most severely eroded sections documented, was successfully stabilized. The project employed a combination of hard armoring methods, including rock riprap and articulated concrete block mats, to reinforce the steep slope along the bank, where water depths exceeded 10 feet in some areas.

- To reinforce 405 feet of the eroding bank toe in deep, fast-moving water, an articulated concrete block mat was deployed from a construction bench at low water elevation. Rock riprap was then placed over the block mat to conceal it from view and safeguard the lower bank up to a two-year flood level.
- Riprap toe armoring was installed along an additional 530 feet of severely eroded bank, providing reinforcement in areas with more moderate channel depths adjacent to the bank.
- A rock bendway weir was installed to redirect flow away from the bank at the most severely eroding zone toward the downstream end.

The project utilized grant dollars from the Clean Water Fund and Outdoor Heritage Fund, with match from the landowners, Upper Rum River Watershed Management Organization, and Anoka County. The project enhances 0.6 acres of habitat and reduces annual pollutant loads by 753 tons-TSS and 640 lbs-TP. Additional vegetation establishment will take place through 2025.



Photo: Downstream half of the project post-construction.

Martin Lake Shoreline Stabilizations

Nine lakeshore restoration projects were completed on Martin Lake. Over 900 linear feet of eroding shoreline was stabilized using a variety of approaches, including rock riprap, coconut fiber biologs, log revetments, and native plant buffers. Funding sources include the Clean Water Fund, Sunrise River Watershed Management Organization, Anoka Conservation District, Martin Lakers Association, and landowner contributions.

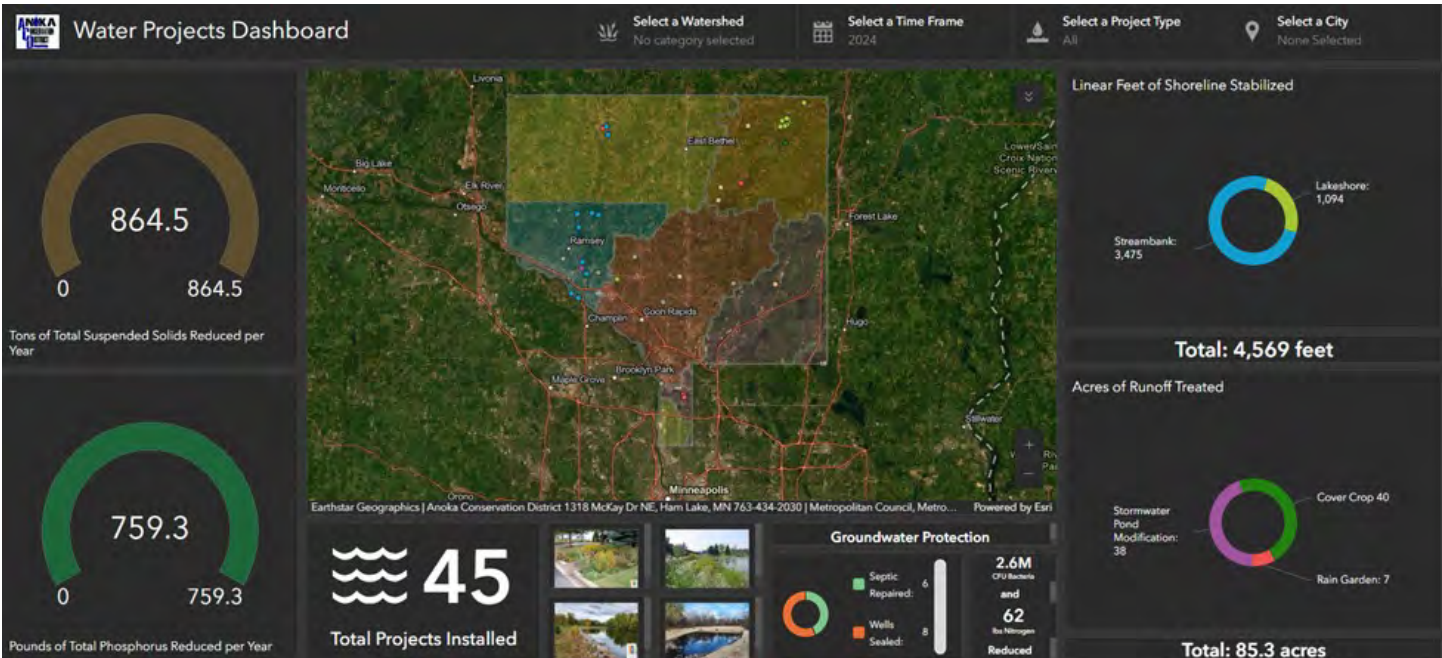


AnokaSWCD.org resources:

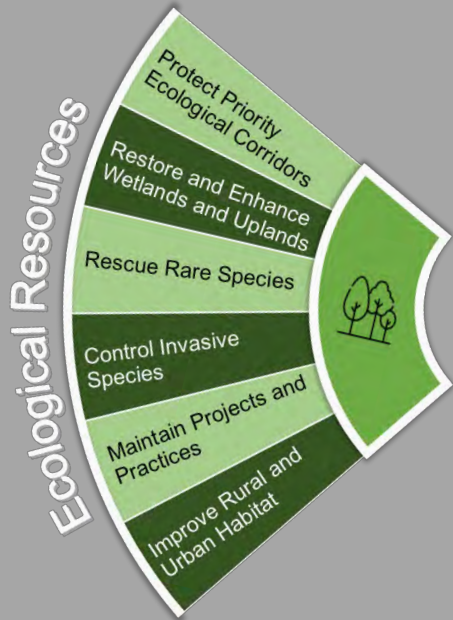
- Water Projects Dashboard
- ACD Annual and Comprehensive Plans
- Project Profiles

Interactive Projects Map -

- Streambank Stabilizations
- Lakeshore Stabilizations
- Rain Gardens
- Pond Modifications
- Other Innovative Projects



Ecological Resources



Protect Priority Ecological Corridors

Started two Conservation Easements: one located along Cedar Creek, the other has several rare plant populations

Restore and Enhance Wetlands and Uplands

42 acres prairie • 83.5 acres oak savanna and woodland • 27.4 acres wetland • 61,564 square feet riparian habitat • 5,772 square feet lakeshore habitat

Rescue Rare Species

1,000 rare plants rescued (5 species), planted into 3 protected sites • Monitored rare plant transplants at 10 sites

Control Invasive Species

73 acres buckthorn, 22 sites • 1.3 acres non-native Phragmites • 7 sites wild parsnip • 2 sites round-leaf bittersweet • 1 site golden creeper • 11 sites knotweed • 3 sites spotted knapweed

Maintain Projects and Practices

34 sites inspected • 42 sites included establishment maintenance

Improve Rural and Urban Habitat

37 pollinator plantings • 67,336 sq. ft. of riparian and shoreline buffers

Featured Projects

Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park Phase 1

Woodlands and oak savanna habitats have been invaded by buckthorn, honeysuckle, white mulberry, winged burning bush and garlic mustard. Enhancement activities were conducted to enhance native plant communities across 29 acres in Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park:

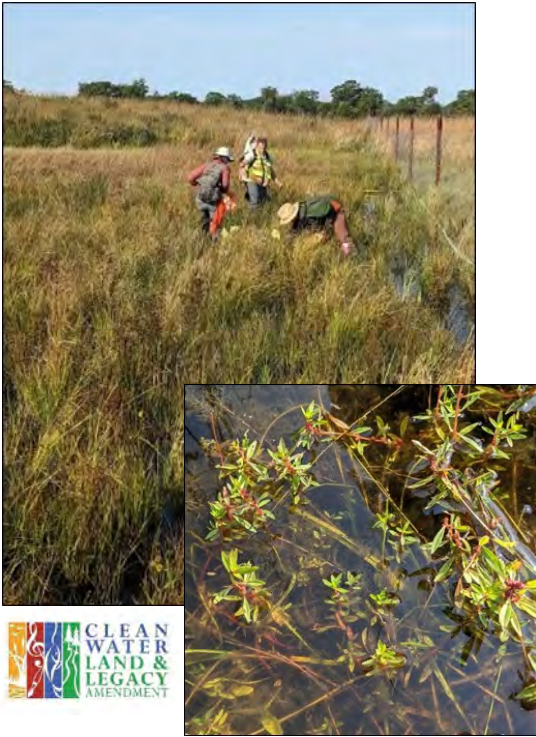
- 53 trees were removed to open the canopy, including ash infected by EAB, box elder, and pin oak that were creating dense thickets.
- Cut and stump herbicide treatment were conducted in areas.
- Forestry mowing and follow-up foliar treatment was conducted.
- Garlic mustard was flame torched and herbicide treated.
- Native seed mixes were spread in areas with bare soil.

The goal is to establish a diversity of tree age classes and canopy gaps to promote a functional and diverse savanna and woodland that can be maintained with prescribed burns. The project utilized grant dollars from the Outdoor Heritage Fund and match from the county.



Anoka Sand Plain Rare Plant Rescue Program

The Anoka Sand Plain Rare Plant Rescue Program is a collaborative partnership focused on protecting rare plants in the Anoka Sand Plain region. Our team collaborates with the MN Department of Natural Resources, landowners, developers and volunteers to rescue rare plants from permitted development project areas before construction begins. Rescued plants are transplanted into permanently protected natural areas and are monitored.



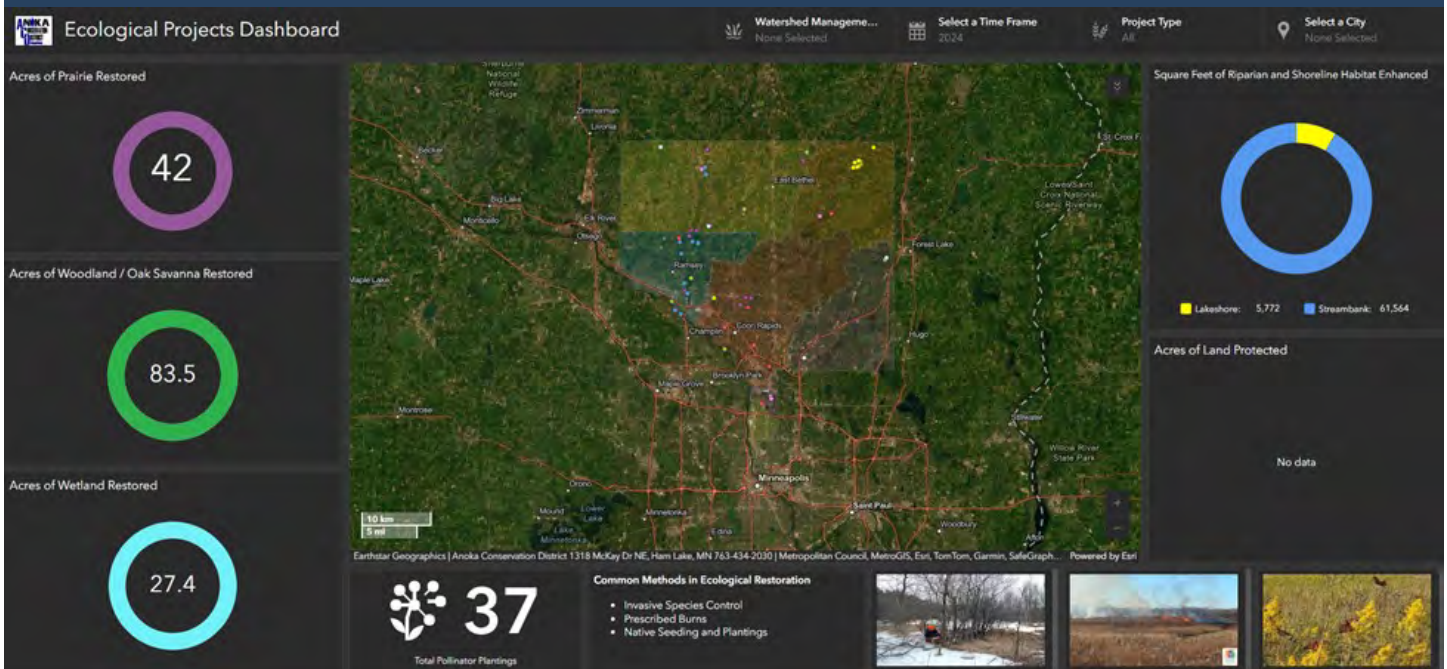
2024 ASP Rescue Program accomplishments include:

- Rescued over 1,000 plants, sod, and plant cuttings from future development sites including *Rubus missouricus*, *Rubus stipulatus*, *Rubus semisetosus*, *Hieracium longipilum* and *Oenothera rhombipetala*.
- Expanded rescue methods to include sod removal in densely populated patches.
- Conducted rare plant habitat surveys at potential recipient locations resulting in 3 new recipient sites and new partners.
- Transplanted over 1,200 rescued plants into three new permanently protected recipient sites with the help of local land managers and volunteers.
- Monitored *Viola lanceolata*, *Rubus semisetosus*, *Rubus stipulatus*, *Rubus fulleri*, *Gaylussacia baccata*, *Xyris torta* and *Rotala ramosior* rescue transplants at 10 protected recipient sites.
- Collected over 6,900 seeds from *Viola lanceolata*, *Rubus semisetosus*, and *Rubus stipulatus* for preservation in the UMLA Rare Plant Seed Bank.

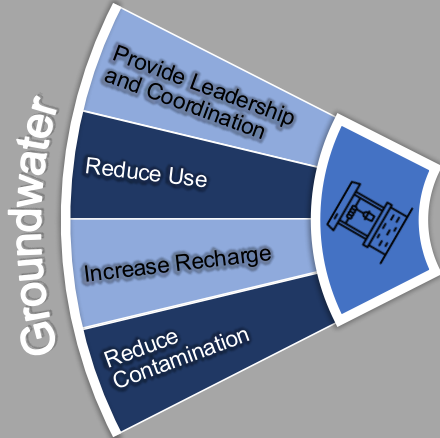
Monitoring *Rotala ramosior* seeding area at Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve.

AnokaSWCD.org resources:

- Ecological Projects Dashboard
- ACD Annual and Comprehensive Plans
- Project Profiles
- Interactive Projects Map -
 - Habitat Restorations
 - Pollinator Habitat
 - Land Protection



Groundwater



Provide Leadership and Coordination

Serve on metro groundwater sustainability workgroup • Provide educational material to partners that educates on groundwater resources • Pursue funding for Groundwater Specialist • Pass MASWCD resolution for groundwater conservation funding from DNR user fees.

Reduce Use

Comment on DNR water appropriation permits to reduce waste

Increase Recharge

6 rain gardens - 420K gal/yr

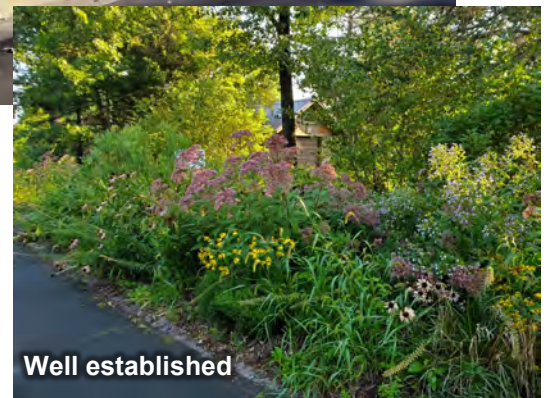
Reduce Contamination

6 Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) fix ups - 62 lbs Nitrogen, 2.6M CFUs bacteria
7 wells sealed

Featured Projects

Rain Gardens

Six rain gardens treating 7.4 acres of neighborhood that otherwise would have flowed without treatment into nearby water resources were installed in 2024. By redirecting water from roads into roadside depressions, rain water is given time to soak into the ground. Groundwater will be recharged with a total of 420,345 gallons/year from four of the six rain gardens. Annually, each rain garden recharges groundwater enough to serve all of the water needs of an average family.



Septic System Repair or Replacement

ACD distributed \$190,747.34 in State funds to assist low-income homeowners with repair or replacement of 6 non-compliant septic systems in areas with vulnerable surface water and groundwater resources. The projects will reduce nitrogen contamination in groundwater by 62 lbs/year.

AnokaSWCD.org resources:

- Water Resources Almanac
- Monitoring Database
- Interactive Projects Map - Inventories
- Interactive Projects Map - Subwatershed Analyses
- ACD Annual and Comprehensive Plans

Community



Inspire Behavior Change

78 projects installed
226 storm drains adopted
1,000 storm drain cleanings

Engage Residents

171 site consultations
45 project designs
11 volunteer planting or weed control events
489 tree customers, 26,400 trees planted
34 projects inspected and maintenance guidance provided

Increase Awareness

8 monthly snapshot newsletters
4 quarterly newsletters
2 public presentations
3 event displays
13 articles in city newsletters or local news papers
2,082 Facebook users reached
22 new Facebook followers
1,112 Facebook post views
29,070 blog article visits
149,113 unique website visitors
25,166 video views
1,487 hours of video viewing

Assist with Regulatory Compliance

99.9% buffer law compliance
Wetland Conservation Act guidance

Featured Projects

Student Scientists

ACD staff lead students to investigate river health by collecting and analyzing samples of aquatic life. The biomonitoring program provides useful data while giving students a hands-on environmental learning experience.

- 500 Students
- 19 classes
- 5 schools
- 4 rivers



“Our Connection” video series

ACD expanded the “Our Connection” video series with a video on Watersheds and Stormwater. Also nearing completion is a video on stormwater ponds.



Landowner Technical Assistance Summary

Priority Resource	Consultation	Design	Installation	Maintenance
Ecological Resources	28	20	19	28
Groundwater	14		14	
Soils	1	1	1	
Surface Water	128	24	29	14
Total	171	45	63	42

AnokaSWCD.org resources:

- Brochures & Displays
 - e-Newsletter
 - Blog
 - Volunteer opportunities
- www.youtube.com/@AnokaSWCD

Soils

Soils



Research Urban Soil Health

Field data collected and initial report prepared

Promote Agricultural Soil Health

Cost share funding promotion
 21 EQUIP applications, 4 funded totaling \$143K
 2 CSP applications
 1 project cost-shared for 40 acre site

Featured Project

Urban Soil Health

Field data were collected and analyzed to determine whether or not there is potential for simple soil health practices implemented in urban settings to have a meaningful impact on surface water and groundwater management. Coupled with an extensive literature review, analysis indicates that the potential exists, but more data are needed to quantify the potential magnitude of benefit.

Urban Soil Health 2024 – Preliminary Report
 A Case for Continued Analysis



Prepared by



Operations



Deliver Commitments On Time and On Budget

Extended 2 grants • Closed out 17 grants, fully delivered • Partially returned funds on 2 grants • All other grants progressing on schedule • Delivered on all WMO contract elements

Recruit, Train, Retain Expertise

Failed attempt to hire a Technician • Outreach Coordinator resigned • Seasonal staff turnover • Retain highly capable core staff • Addressed workload and accommodated leave requests • Invested 729 hours in staff development

Grants Completed in 2024

Grants Completed in 2024	Award
2021 - Anoka Sandplain 6 OHF	\$156,000
2021 - Mississippi East Metro WBIF	\$113,193
2021 - Phase 1: Targeted Rum River Bank Stabilization	\$440,000
2021 - Protecting groundwater quality in Anoka County through targeted well sealing	\$240,000
2022 - Anoka CWMA	\$15,000
2022 - Buffer Law	\$8,500
2022 - SWCD Local Capacity Services	\$131,300
2023 - Buffer Law	\$8,500
2023 - Habitat Enhancement in Anoka County	\$40,000
2023 - Septic Treatment Systems - NRBG	\$18,600
2023 - SSTS Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund	\$150,000
2023 - SWCD Local Capacity Services	\$136,725
2024 - Conservation Delivery	\$20,765
2024 - Habitat Enhancement in Anoka County Phase 2	\$20,000
2024 - Local Water Management - NRBG	\$11,050
2024 - Septic Treatment Systems - NRBG	\$21,200
2024 - Septic Treatment Systems Upgrade - NRBG	\$43,691
2024 - Shoreland-NRBG	\$3,570
2024 - Wetland Conservation Act - NRBG	\$86,267
Total	\$1,664,361

Financials

Where the Money Goes

Expenses vary annually due to the ebb and flow of competitive grants. ACD installed several large projects in 2024, many of which were funded from sales tax dedicated to natural resource activities. ACD is committed to accessing these funds to benefit Anoka County taxpayers in proportion to sales tax we pay. We strive to keep overhead costs down, while expanding services. Approximately 66% of personnel is directly related to projects.

Making Sense of the Dollars

Although governed by an elected board, ACD does not have taxing authority and must secure funds from many sources. State funds increased in 2024 due to several large project installations. County funds are critical to cover general operations because many grants do not cover overhead expenses.

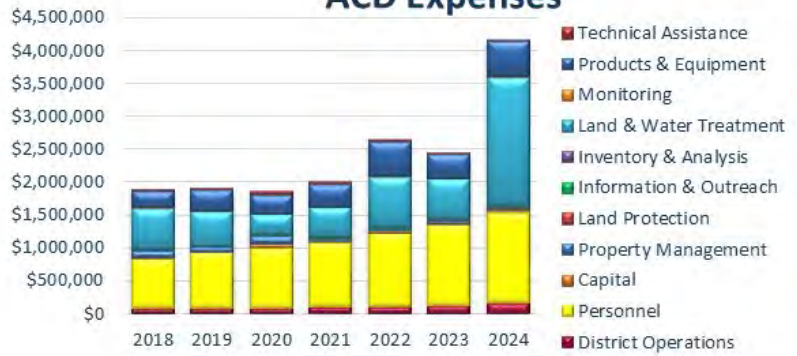
Making Dollars of the Cents

ACD collaborates with cities, watershed management entities, state agencies, county departments, non-profits, and landowners on projects of mutual interest. The 2024 revenue chart begins to convey this but does not show the 131 projects and programs supported by 28 distinct funding sources. On average, for every locally derived dollar, ACD leverages over four dollars from outside the county.

Diversify, Economize, Invest

Among ACD's many funding sources is revenue from selling our patented Rain Guardian pretreatment chambers, which exceeded \$900K in 2024. Through zero-based budgeting we annually trim underperforming programs. We also strategically invest to optimize dividend revenues and to enhance our in-house capacity with facilities and equipment.

ACD Expenses



ACD Revenue



2024 ACD REVENUE

