



2020

At a Glance

ANOKA
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

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

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www.AnokaSWCD.org

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

The **Vision** of ACD is: Strong partnerships. Innovative Solutions. Healthy Environments.

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.

As the character of Anoka County changed, so has ACD. We now offer a wide variety of programs and services in all areas of natural resource management in the county.



What We Do

All Anoka Conservation District programs address one or more natural resource concerns. In order of priority they are:

Water Quality: Maintain high quality surface waters, improve impaired surface waters, and protect drinking water.



Natural Habitats: Preserve and enhance ecological diversity in Anoka County and maintain ecological corridors and systems to support indigenous wildlife.

Wetlands: Achieve no net loss, and where possible, improve the quality and quantity of wetlands.

Soils: Maintain and enhance soil health.

Water Quantity: Stop long-term depletion, and where possible, replenish aquifer levels, control stormwater runoff and the resultant erosion, and reduce localized flooding and related damage.

ACD serves all of Anoka County's 357,000 residents spanning 284,000 acres, 72 recreational and natural environment lakes, 446 miles of streams and rivers, and a regionally critical groundwater resource.

Per MN Stat. 103C.005 Soil and Water Conservation Policy:

Maintaining and enhancing the quality of soil and water for the environmental and economic benefits they produce, preventing degradation, and restoring degraded soil and water resources of this state contribute greatly to the health, safety, economic well-being, and general welfare of this state and its citizens. Land occupiers have the responsibility to implement practices that conserve the soil and water resources of the state. Soil and water conservation measures implemented on private lands in this state provide benefits to the general public by reducing erosion, sedimentation, siltation, water pollution, and damages caused by floods. The soil and water conservation policy of the state is to encourage land occupiers to conserve soil, water, and the natural resources they support through the implementation of practices that:

- *control or prevent erosion, sedimentation, siltation, and related pollution in order to preserve natural resources;*
- *ensure continued soil productivity;*
- *protect water quality;*
- *prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs;*
- *reduce damages caused by floods;*
- *preserve wildlife;*
- *protect the tax base; and*
- *protect public lands and waters.*

Working to ensure natural resources are managed to sustain benefits for current and future generations will greatly reduce long-term infrastructure maintenance costs by reducing flooding, preventing groundwater contamination, maintaining surface water quality, and preventing sedimentation of stormwater treatment infrastructure. Improved fisheries, wildlife, aesthetics and recreational opportunities further improve the quality of life of Anoka County taxpayers.

Who We Are

The ACD Board of Supervisors is composed of five elected officials serving four-year terms. They determine the direction of the District and oversee its operations.

2020 Supervisors were:

- Chair - Mary Jo Truchon - term thru '20
- Vice Chair - Jim Lindahl - term thru '22
- Treasurer - Glenda Meixell - term thru '22
- Secretary - Steve Laitinen - term thru '20
- Member - Sharon LeMay - term thru '20

Daily activities are attended to by staff.

Guiding Principles

- Focus on long-term resource sustainability.
- Make informed and ethical decisions.
- Promote cost-effective and efficient resource management.
- Partner with both public and private sectors.
- Retain highly qualified, knowledgeable staff.
- Utilize technology to achieve efficiency and enhance work products.
- Keep natural resource issues visible in Anoka County.
- Respond to opportunity and changing needs.
- Develop diverse programs, partners, and funding sources.
- Utilize education and outreach in addition to technical and financial assistance to encourage natural resource stewardship.



ACD Supervisors (left to right)

Jim Lindahl, Glenda Meixell, Steve Laitinen, Mary Jo Truchon, Sharon LeMay

2020 Staff were:

- District Manager - Chris Lord
- Office Administrator - Kathy Berkness
- Wetland Specialist - Becky Wozney
- Watershed Projects Manager - Jamie Schurbon
- Water Resource Specialist - Jared Wagner
- Water Resource Technician - Kris Larson
- Stormwater and Shoreland Specialist - Mitch Haustein
- Conservation Specialist - Aaron Diehl
- Restoration Ecologist - Carrie Taylor
- Outreach and Engagement Coordinator - Emily Johnson
- District Technician - Mollie Annen
- Assistant District Technician - Alaina Grzeskowiak

- Field Crew - Chris Walz
- Field Crew - Haley Grunwald
- Field Crew - Jessica Daleske
- Field Crew - Dan Belden
- Field Crew - Julia Peterson
- Field Crew - Jack Beahler
- Field Crew - Maggie Allardice

SWCDs are non-regulatory local governments with elected boards covering 99.3% of Minnesota that provide technical and financial assistance to willing landowners to improve natural resources.

Serving the Community

Working with Local Government Entities

Natural resources valued by Anoka County residents require collaborative management by entities with varying jurisdictions within and across city, county and watershed boundaries. It is important that ACD remains continually engaged with each entity to

- avoid duplication,
- maximize efficiencies,
- capitalize on common interests,
- direct limited financial and staff resources to the most cost-effective approaches, and
- apply management strategies at a scale most appropriate to meet identified goals and objectives (e.g. multi-city lakesheds vs. multi-county aquifer recharge areas).

Working with the Public

Over 78% of Anoka County is privately owned, and over 350,000 residents call Anoka County home. Effective natural resource management requires that we actively partner with those who live, work, and play in Anoka County, whether or not they own land in the county. ACD enlists the public to assist with natural resource management by offering the following services.

- Technical assistance – providing project design and installation management
- Financial assistance – securing, allocating and administering grant funding to install conservation projects
- Regulatory assistance – providing guidance to help keep landowners out of regulatory harm's way with regard to several federal and state laws, and local ordinances
- Outreach and engagement – providing information resources and opportunities to assist with community efforts to improve our natural resources

Conservation News & Updates

Outstanding Conservationists -

The Anoka Conservation District selected the City of Blaine as the 2020 Anoka County Outstanding Conservationist. The City of Blaine has over 800 acres of dedicated open space throughout the City creating greenway corridors, opportunities to protect and restore biological diversity, and outdoor education and recreational opportunities. The Blaine Wetland Sanctuary is one of the City's open space sites serving many functions. The northern and central portions of the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary are being restored to increase diversity and are enrolled as

wetland banks, which will generate funds for the City to maintain and update the city's parks, trails and open spaces. The City of Blaine has had the difficult task of turning once ignored and undesired wetlands into a community resource. A special thanks to Rebecca Haug for her collaboration on projects of mutual interest. City Council member Swanson and Mayor Ryan have been strong advocates for conservation work.

ACD Stands Poised for a Decade of Natural Resource Stewardship - ACD is pleased to present our 2021-2030 Comprehensive Natural Resource Stewardship Plan to our implementation partners and stakeholders. The plan embraces the fact that all natural resources are interconnected and interdependent and presents stewardship goals, objectives and strategies in a manner that will enhance our ability to address issues holistically. The plan is structured around four



foundational natural resources: surface water, groundwater, ecological resources, and soils. We also dedicate a portion of the plan to our human resources in a section called Community.

While the plan has been adopted in its current state, over the coming months ACD intends to reengage with stakeholders who helped bring the plan together to solicit additional input for incorporation into an amendment mid-2021.

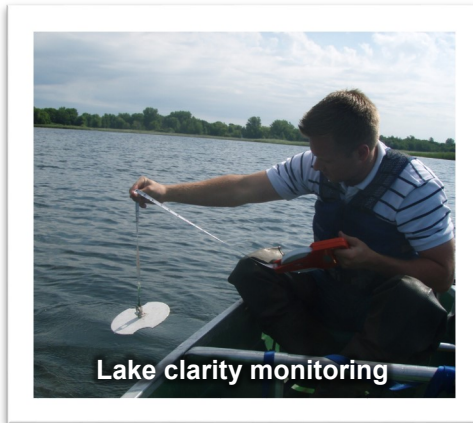


Programs

Monitoring and Inventory

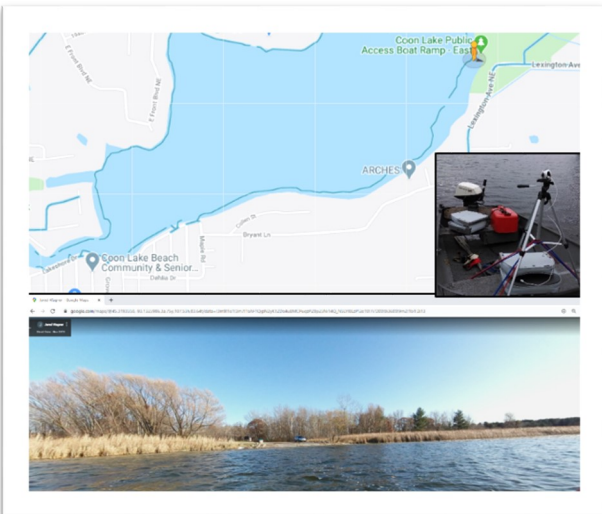
Water Monitoring - In order to manage water resources for consumption, recreation, and wildlife, ACD monitors water quality and/or quantity in Anoka County lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater. Data summaries and analyses are presented in an annual Water Resources Almanac. Water management organizations and lake associations often contract for these services. 2020 sites included:

- 11 manual precipitation gauges
- 19 electronic reference wetland shallow wells
- 24 deep groundwater observation wells
- 11 electronic stream elevation monitoring gauges
- 25 lake level gauges
- 1 continuous rain garden water level wells
- 3 lake water quality monitoring sites
- 18 stream water quality monitoring sites
- 1 continuous stream water quality monitoring stations
- 3 stream biomonitoring sites with area high schools



AIS Inventory - ACD staff completed an inventory of two aquatic invasive species on Lake George; curly-leaf pondweed and Eurasian watermilfoil to enable targeted treatments.

Shoreland Condition Inventory - Photo shoreline inventories were conducted using a camera that takes 360 degree photos. The photos are then uploaded to the internet and can be viewed by the public using Google Streetview. These photos will be used to rank erosion severity and help target future lakeshore restoration sites. Fawn Lake, Lake George, and some of Coon Lake, Linwood Lake, and Typo Lake were completed in 2020. Inventories on four more lakes will be completed in 2021.



Federal EPA 319 Grant - An approximately \$250K grant was secured by soil and water conservation districts in the Rum River watershed. The grants through the MN Pollution Control Agency will provide multiple years of continuing funds. Work beginning in 2020 focused on Green Lake in Isanti County. Impaired Green Lake drains to the Rum River, so improvements to it will benefit Anoka County residents downstream.

Analyses & Plans

Lower Rice Creek SRA - Stormwater retrofit analyses (SRAs) identify and rank potential projects to improve the quality and/or reduce the volume of stormwater runoff that drains to a priority waterbody. This SRA focuses on select contributing drainage areas to Lower Rice Creek within the Rice Creek Watershed District. The area analyzed encompasses 1,157 acres and includes portions of Fridley, Spring Lake Park, and a small area of Mounds View. Rice Creek ultimately discharges to Locke Lake and the Mississippi River, so projects identified will also benefit those waterbodies. Identified projects will be ranked in order of cost-effectiveness to maximize the use of limited financial resources. The ultimate goal is installation of projects that provide the greatest amount of stormwater treatment per dollar invested. Desktop analysis, field work, and technical advisory committee meetings were all completed in 2020. Water quality modeling and report generation will occur in 2021.

Linwood Lake Carp Management

- An analysis was completed on Linwood Lake to determine the feasibility of improving water quality by managing rough fish. The process involved analyzing population numbers and age

The public expects safe and plentiful drinking water, clean lakes and streams, good fishing and hunting, and plenty of opportunities to enjoy nature. Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are the only statewide government entity that works with private landowners to implement projects to meet these expectations. 78% of natural resources are on private lands, so this approach is critical.

classes, tracking carp movements and congregation patterns. We found carp populations are 10% above management targets and primed to increase with many young carp. A \$148,000 Clean Water Fund grant was secured to manage carp throughout the Sunrise River Chain of Lakes.

Rum River Erosion Analysis - In 2019, ACD conducted a bank erosion inventory on the Rum River throughout Anoka County. We identified 80 eroding reaches totaling more than 7 miles in length. We estimated pollutant loading from each stretch, assigned a “best fit” stabilization technique to each, and ranked the projects by anticipated cost/benefit for pollutant removal to the River. We used that ranked inventory to apply for state grants in 2019 and 2020 to do stabilization projects. All of this has led to more than \$1.4 Million in state grant funding to stabilize Rum River banks over the next three years with additional local match by Anoka County and the Upper and Lower Rum WMOs. We plan for additional grant applications to do even more stabilization work in the future.

Campus Groundwater Conservation Planning - The Metropolitan Conservation Districts, through funding provided by a Clean Water Fund Accelerated Implementation Grant, created the Campus Groundwater Conservation Planning (CGCP) protocol with the ultimate goal of water conservation project implementation. ACD led the process of developing and implementing protocols to analyze large campuses for opportunities to reduce groundwater use. Identified opportunities included fixture and equipment maintenance and upgrades as well as irrigation management recommendations. Options for infiltration practices that increase groundwater recharge were also highlighted. The program analyzed a total of 21 campuses throughout the 11-county metro.

Regulatory Assistance

Although not regulatory, ACD provides guidance to help keep landowners out of regulatory harm’s way.

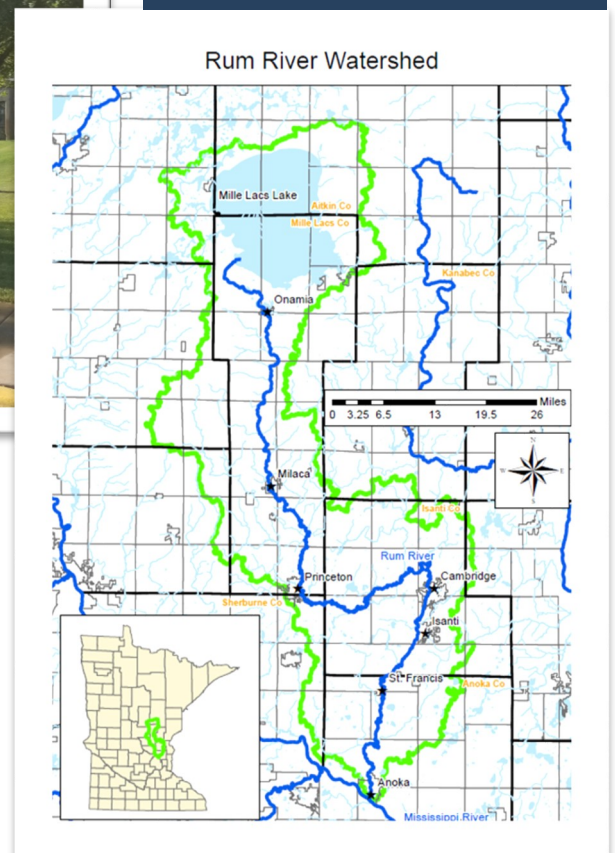
Wetland Conservation Act - ACD employs one full time Wetland Specialist whose responsibilities include serving on Technical Evaluation Panels, processing cease and desist orders, providing quality control reviews of wetland replacement plans and other projects that impact wetlands, and assisting project applicants by providing technical and regulatory interpretations to facilitate project review and permitting at the local level.

Buffer Law Compliance Inventory - Of the 112 parcels that an initial 2016 inventory suggested were non-compliant with buffer requirements, ACD assisted landowners to achieve 100% compliance in 2020. ACD staff are working with landowners and renters to maintain compliance and a second county-wide buffer inventory with additional outreach will be completed in 2021.



Land Protection Strategies - The Rum River Reinvest in MN Technical Advisory Committee prioritized parcels for protection. One parcel adjacent to the Rum River is in the process of implementing a conservation easement where the owner retains ownership and continues to pay taxes on the land, but there are restrictions on future building.

Rum River Watershed 1W1P - Partners throughout the 11-county Rum River watershed from Lake Mille Lacs to the City of Anoka were jointly awarded \$267K to complete a One Watershed, One Plan. The plan was well underway by the end of 2020 and will be completed in 2021. Anticipated local

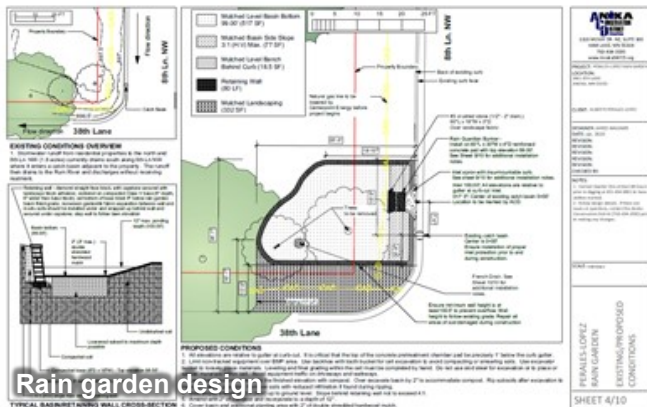


priorities include the Rum River, Lake George, East Twin Lake, Pickerel Lake, and protection of critical riparian lands.

Lower St. Croix Watershed 1W1P - A “One-Watershed, One-Plan” (1W1P) was recently completed to coordinate efforts across the Lower St. Croix basin. We worked with 16 counties, watershed organizations, and soil and water conservation districts who have water plans in the basin. The 1W1P contains our mutual priorities. The new 1W1P plan comes with funding to implement it. The State is providing approximately \$1.2M every two years during the 10-year plan life.

Technical Assistance

Site Planning and Design - ACD staff provide landowners with consultation and design assistance for projects that attract wildlife, reduce erosion, conserve water, and improve water quality. In 2020, ACD completed site surveys and/or designs for 2 septic system repairs, 2 pond modifications, 1 wetland restoration, 2 curb-cut rain gardens, 3 riverbank stabilization projects, 6 habitat enhancements, and 3 lakeshore restorations.



Wetland Restoration - ACD staff used GIS data—including aerial photos, topography, and national wetlands inventory data—to identify about 100 opportunities to restore drained and highly altered wetland areas. ACD followed up this effort with outreach to the properties with the highest potential for successful wetland restoration.

Urban SRA Protocol Metro-Wide Training - The Metropolitan Conservation Districts received a Clean Water Fund Grant to conduct analyses that identify cost-effective water quality improvement projects for priority waterbodies. The Subwatershed Retrofit Analysis (SRA) process includes protocols for both rural and urban subwatersheds. ACD staff provided training on the urban protocol and modeling process to over 30 staff from counties, soil and water conservation districts, and watershed districts throughout the 11-County Metro.

Financial Assistance

Natural Resources Block Grant - ACD supports the Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) program, Local Water Plan implementation, Wetland Conservation Act implementation, and Shoreland rules implementation by passing NRBG funds through to local government units (LGUs) in addition to helping land owners with SSTS fix up efforts. In 2020, \$88,465.95 in grant funds were used to reimburse LGUs and Landowners for their efforts.

Septic System Repair or Replacement - ACD received \$40K in State funds to assist low income homeowners with repair or replacement of noncompliant septic systems. In 2020 septic systems adjacent to Martin and Fawn Lakes were replaced, as well as one non-lakeshore property in the City of Ham Lake. \$25,447 in new grant funds is available in 2021.

Septic System Point of Sale Ordinance - With funding assistance from the Anoka Conservation District, Linwood Township is taking new steps to ensure local lakes, streams and groundwater are protected. The township is beginning implementation of an ordinance requiring septic system inspections before property ownership transfer. The goal is to ensure septic systems are functioning properly because a failing septic can be both a human health and an environmental threat.



Unused Well Sealing Cost Share - ACD was awarded a Clean Water Fund grant to coordinate a cost-share program to financially incentivize property owners to hire licensed professionals to seal unused wells in high priority areas. ACD engages landowners in targeted areas to protect municipal drinking water supplies through unused well sealing. 5 wells were sealed in 2020. Funds are available for 120 more in 2021 and 2022.

Reinvest in MN, Rum River - \$3M in state funds were allocated to established conservation easements on properties in the Rum River

watershed. One of the sites is located in Anoka County, the remaining sites are upstream in Isanti and Mille Lacs counties. Sensitive and ecologically outstanding lands adjacent to the river were targeted for this round of funding.



Engineering Assistance - ACD has access to funds through a state program to provide ACD staff or consulting engineers to design non-point source pollution projects such as shoreline restoration, gully stabilization, and sediment basins.

Cost Share - ACD helps landowners pay for conservation projects with community level benefits. Some incentive programs include the State Cost Share Program, USDA Environmental Quality Incentive Program, DNR Conservation Partners Legacy Grants, MN Clean Water, Land and Legacy Fund, County Ag. Preserves Grants, and Watershed District and Watershed Management Organization cost share programs.

Products

Annual Tree Program - In 2020, ACD sold 21,350 tree and shrub seedlings despite the pandemic. ACD organized a staggered drive-through pick up to ensure the customers and staff were safe. The three most important reasons ACD offers this annual sale are: soil and energy conservation, wildlife habitat enhancement, and native ecosystem restoration. We also distribute prairie seed and are available to help landowners develop site-specific plans.

Rain Guardian™ - ACD patented pretreatment chambers to address many of the challenges associated with rain garden maintenance in 2013. Distributorships covering 38 states, tradeshow, and the RainGuardian.biz website all promote the use of this product in bio-retention practices. In 2020, sales again topped \$500K. Proceeds from sales fund conservation initiatives in Anoka County. There are currently three product lines; Bunker, Turret, and Foxhole, with others under development to address a variety of field conditions.



"I was searching for help in dealing with our buckthorn issue and came across information about your organization... Carrie became our contact and I and our Association was so fortunate to have worked with her. Carrie is so helpful with information, with staff help, has a very professional demeanor, is quick with follow up to questions we had, and still is willing to help two years later. Two years ago, she helped me organize a major buckthorn removal project using the very effective cost sharing program. We removed one and half full trucks of buckthorn after Carrie and her staff identified and cut down the buckthorn. We had twenty of our residents take part of the removal project which resulted in a lot of pride. The ages were late 60's to 80+ year old's and no one got hurt. Yahoo!

I and our Association could not have asked for better service from an organization that cares about the local environment. The cost sharing program and Carrie are a terrific pair. Thank you."

Michael Steel, Weston Woods Townhome Association

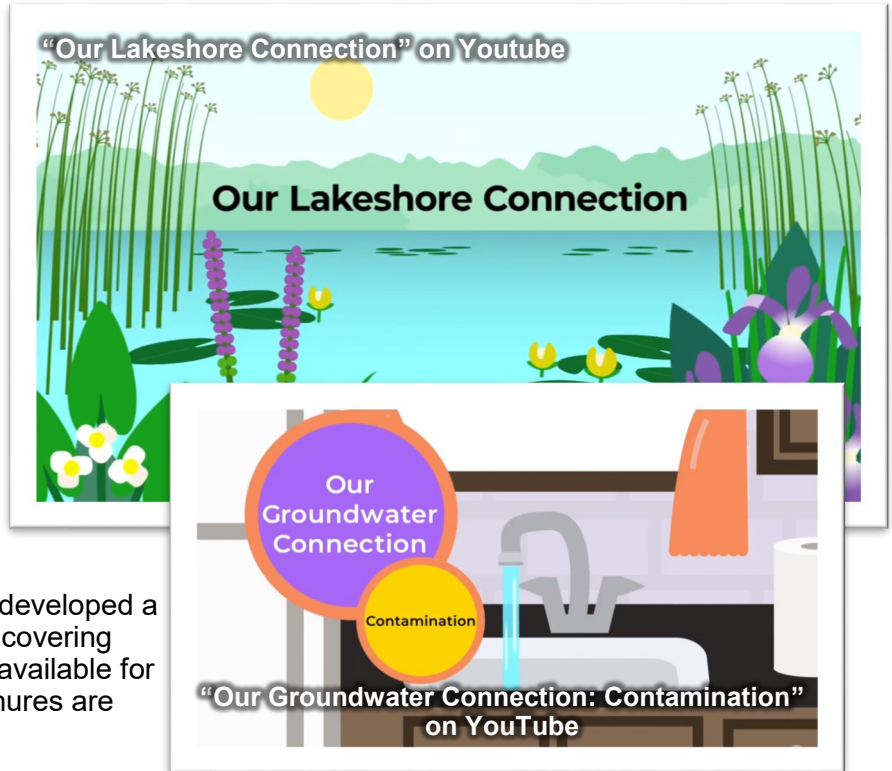
Public Outreach and Information Access

AnokaSWCD.org - Website design and maintenance is all completed in-house by ACD staff. A project map interface features ongoing and completed projects, inventories, and analyses. The site also includes current events, policies, board actions, financials, and information on technical and financial assistance programs and services.

Videos for the Web - ACD staff have developed videos on a variety of topics, all of which can be found on AnokaSWCD.org and YouTube. In 2020, ACD collaborated with several partners to co-produce an animated video to educate the public about groundwater entitled, “Our Groundwater Connection: Contamination” and a video about lakeshore stewardship entitled, “Our Lakeshore Connection.”

Blog and eNewsletter - In 2020, ACD continued to update our weblog and quarterly electronic newsletter as outreach tools to engage with the public. Past blog articles and issues of our eNewsletter can be found on our website.

Brochures and Table Top Displays - ACD developed a series of brochures and table top displays covering many natural resources topics that are all available for use by our partners. All displays and brochures are listed below.



Topic	Brochure	Display
Lakeshore Restoration: Enhancing water quality and habitat on your shore	x	x
Riverbank Stabilization: Understanding water flow and managing erosion	x	x
Backyard Habitat: Attracting wildlife to your property	x	x
Water-Smart: Conserving water at home	x	x
Rain Gardens: Treating runoff at the source	x	x
Wetlands: Benefitting wildlife and people.	x	x
Stormwater Management: Improving water quality and reducing runoff	x	x
Groundwater: Protecting drinking water for generations to come	x	x
Native Plants: Restoring habitat for local wildlife	x	x
Ecosystem Health: Improving landscapes by increasing diversity		x
Threats to our Natural Resource		x
Land Protection: Establishing a legacy		x
Soil Health (US Dept. of Ag. NRCS design)		x
Invasive Species: Combating a threat to native ecosystems		x

Anoka County Water Resource Outreach Collaborative - ACD serves as the host site for the Anoka County Water Resource Outreach Collaborative (WROC) Coordinator. WROC is a partnership formed in 2018 to implement a comprehensive water outreach and engagement program for watershed and city partners. The goal is to augment and enhance the outreach programming of its partners, inform communities about issues affecting local waterbodies and groundwater resources, and engage people in activities and behavior changes that will help protect and improve the health of these water resources. In 2020, WROC attended 6 outreach events, gave 6 presentations,

and hosted 5 workshops and trainings cumulatively reaching 795 people. In addition, greater emphasis was placed on online outreach methods and tools including student learning modules and animated videos. Also in 2020, WROC worked with local partners to translate “Our Groundwater Connection” into the 6 most commonly spoken, non-English languages in Anoka County.

Projects

2020 Project Technical Assistance Summary

Project Type	Consult	Design	Install	Maintain
Lakeshore	19	3	1	1
Streambank	38	3	2	2
Rain Garden	22	2	4	3
Habitat Enhancement	109	6	8	14
Other*	10	5	5	1
Total	198	19	20	21

*Carp management, lake outlet, pond modifications, subsurface sewage treatment systems, swales, and wetland restorations

“Our organizations continue to be amazed at the quality of support that we receive from the Anoka Conservation District. You ... have all been wonderful to work with. Thank you so much!”

John Vilandre, Lake George Improvement District and Lake George Conservation Club

All ACD projects are featured online at www.AnokaSWCD.org using our virtual project tour.

Web Data Access

In 2020, ACD contracted Barr Engineering to develop a publically accessible web database application displaying all of our monitoring data. The application can be found at our website under the “Monitoring” tab, or directly at this link: <https://maps.barr.com/Anoka/Home/Chart/>

Types of data that can be viewed, queried, and downloaded include:

- Lake water quality
- Stream water quality
- Stream hydrology
- Reference wetland hydrology
- Stream biology

Streambank Stabilization and Restoration

With grant funds from the Outdoor Heritage Fund and Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program and granted crew days from the Conservation Corp of Minnesota (CCM), ACD installed a cedar tree revetment at Rum River Central Regional Park stabilizing 650 linear feet of eroding Rum River shoreline in 2020. Cedar tree revetments provide cost-effective stabilization approach for moderately eroding riverbanks.



Project Inspection & Maintenance Guidance

ACD guides project installations and provides long-term maintenance oversight. In 2020, ACD staff inspected 28 projects and provided guidance on maintenance needs. Each project installed with public financial assistance must be maintained by the landowner for varying durations depending on the project type and contract terms. Routine inspections are important to ensure contract terms are complied with. Assisting landowners with project maintenance beyond the duration required by grant agreements is a cost-effective way to achieve added benefits.

Coon and Martin Lake Retrofits

One rain garden and two stormwater pond renovations were completed in 2021 to treat stormwater before it reaches Martin and Coon Lakes. The projects will collectively treat 39 acres of residential development that previously were draining to the lakes with little or no treatment. They will keep 2,100 pounds of sediment and 5 pounds of phosphorus from reaching the lakes each year. These projects are part of a State Clean Water, Land and Legacy grant to the Sunrise River Watershed Management Organization. The Anoka Conservation District is managing the projects. Additional funds remain and will be used for similar projects in 2021.

Rain Garden at Hupp Street near Coon Lake – Before and After



Stormwater Pond at 228th Place near Martin Lake – Before and After



Mississippi River Stabilization - Round 2

One severely eroding riverbank on private property along the Mississippi River in Ramsey was stabilized. The site spanned 100 linear feet and was identified as a high priority property in an erosion inventory completed by ACD. Stabilization of the site improves water quality by preventing 224,000 pounds of sediment and 112 pounds of phosphorus from entering the river each year. Funding for the project was provided by a Clean Water Fund grant, and the landowner provided required match funds.

100 linear feet of Mississippi Riverbank stabilized in Ramsey



City of Anoka Rain Gardens

ACD partnered with the City of Anoka to design and install three rain gardens as part of a city street reconstruction project in the 38th Lane neighborhood. These three new rain gardens join two others that were installed in 2017 to clean up stormwater from this neighborhood that otherwise drains directly to the Rum River via the storm sewer system. In total, the three new rain gardens will treat about five acres of drainage area and remove about 1,164 lbs of total suspended solids (TSS) and 3.6 lbs of phosphorus annually from the stormwater runoff. That's 75% of the pollutants from the treated drainage area.



Carp Management

ACD continued a multi-year effort to remove common carp from Martin and Typo Lakes for the purpose of water quality and habitat improvement. From 2017 to 2019, 11,000 carp were removed by box netting. Water quality in both lakes now has an improving trend. The work has been partially funded by a Conservation Partners Legacy grant from the MN DNR. Similar work continues in 2020-2022 throughout the Sunrise River Chain of Lakes (includes Linwood and Island Lakes) with a new \$148,000 Clean Water Legacy grant from the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources. The Martin Lakers Association and Linwood Township have been key partners.



Wildlife Habitat Enhancement

Some projects ACD installs with landowners are done primarily to enhance habitat for wildlife and pollinators.

Gordie Mikkelson WMA – 9.3 acres of old-field were prepped in 2020 for restoration efforts planned in 2021. This is the final element of a multi-phase effort in the WMA.

Robert and Marilyn Burman WMA – Ecological restoration of woodlands, prairies, and wetlands is being done in several parts of the WMA through control of invasive plants, tree thinning, and supplemental planting. DNR will maintain the prairies and savanna with prescribed burns.

Blaine Preserve SNA – Populations of rare species are being crowded out by cottonwood, trembling aspen, and aggressive grasses. 2020 efforts involved precision control woody and herbaceous species so as to harm the desirable rare species.

Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve – The CCESR is an internationally known ecological research area due to its largely in-tact and pristine ecosystems in a metropolitan area. Scattered, but manageable pockets of common and glossy buckthorn have been identified and are being treated. Buckthorn was treated in 25 acres of otherwise high quality woodlands and wetlands in 2020.

King's Island – ACD staff, Mississippi Park Connection, Conservation Corps Minnesota, and City of Anoka worked together to clear buckthorn at King's Island in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

Cooperative Weed Management Area Partnership – Using a BWSR and MN Department of Agriculture grant, ACD facilitated the Anoka CWMA Partnership's invasive species efforts including outreach, training, volunteer engagement, mapping, and priority invasive species treatments in Anoka County. The CWMA also provided technical assistance and cost share funds to residents. In 2020 invasive species treatment and habitat enhancement projects began on seven properties.



Nigbor slope restoration site

Non-native Phragmites Treatment – ACD collaborated with partners around the Metro to identify non-native phragmites populations. ACD staff facilitated treatment efforts at 67 sites around the Metro with funds from the MN Department of Agriculture. Invasive Phragmites, or common reed, is a highly invasive, non-native, wetland grass. Due to a relatively timely effort to identify the extent of the species in the state, and the relatively small size of infestations, Minnesota is in a position to eliminate invasive Phragmites.

Riparian Pollinator Habitat – ACD provided technical and financial assistance to install pollinator habitat projects on three residential properties and a pollinator garden at the Riverview Heights Park in Fridley.

Lawns to Legumes – Conducted outreach to residents along the Mississippi and Rum River within the Rusty patched bumble bee dispersal zone to install plants for pollinators. Initial site visits and plans were drafted for 33 residential properties with the help of volunteer coaches. Installation was completed at one site.

Rare Plant Rescue Program Pilot Project – ACD, Critical Connections Ecological Services, and University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum staff secured a DNR permit to salvage 3,000 rare plants from a development site and plant them into the protected Lino Lakes Wollan Park.



Rare Plant Rescue

Financials

Where the Money Goes

ACD finances historically experience dramatic variability from year to year due to activities being driven by competitive grants, several of which have been in excess of \$400,000. Many state grants are from sales tax revenue dedicated to natural resource activities. ACD is committed to accessing these funds so Anoka County taxpayers will benefit from them in proportion to sales tax paid in the county. Also of note is how consistent ACD's operational and personnel costs have been. ACD staff and supervisors strive to keep overhead costs down, while expanding services.

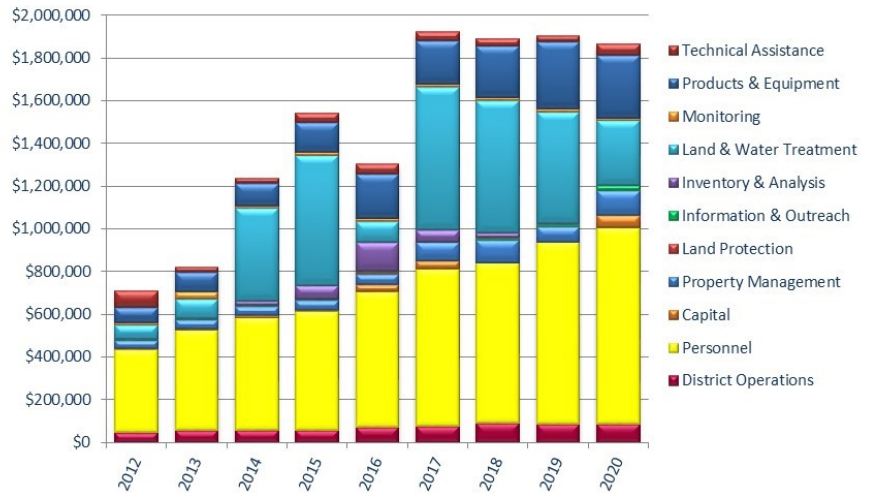
Making Sense of the Dollars

Although governed by an elected board, conservation districts do not yet have taxing authority and must secure funds from many sources to maintain programs and services. State grants are the primary funding source for project installation, while the county provides seven times what the state does to support general district operations. County funds are critical because many grants do not cover overhead expenses. Unfortunately, many grants also require matching funds, so county funds must serve as match and cover all costs ineligible under complex grant rules.

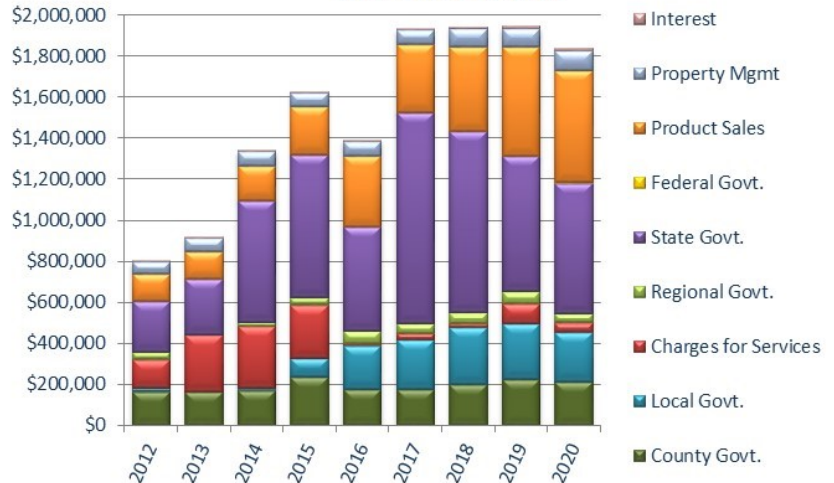
Making Dollars of the Cents

To provide comprehensive natural resource management, ACD collaborates with cities, watershed management entities, state agencies, county departments, non-profits, and landowners on projects of mutual interest. The 2020 revenue chart begins to convey this but does not show the 69 projects and programs supported by 28 distinct funding sources, many of which supported multiple projects and programs.

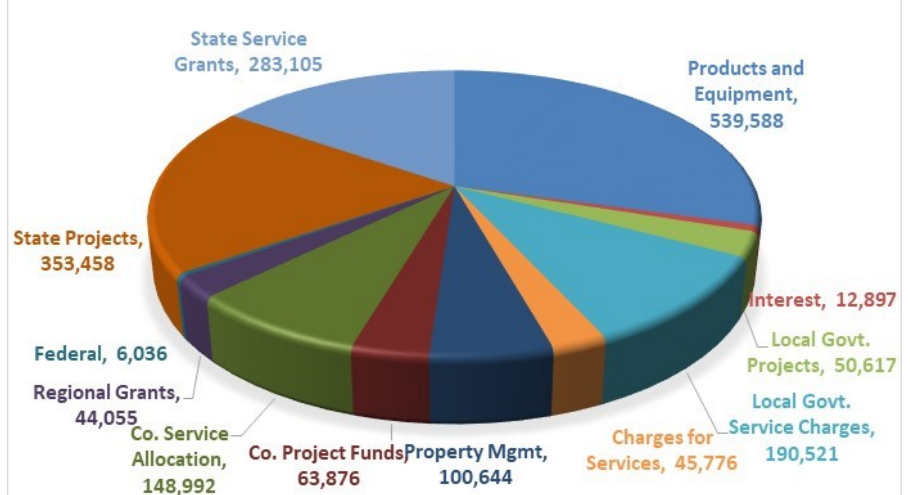
ACD Expenses



ACD Revenues



2020 REVENUE



Lackluster financial support for conservation by counties statewide has led to conservation districts seeking levy authority as their top legislative agenda item for several years.