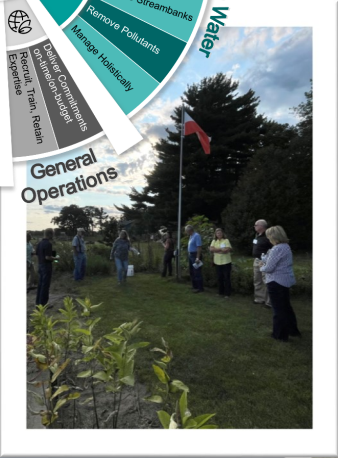




**2021
At a Glance**

ANOKA CONSERVATION DISTRICT



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

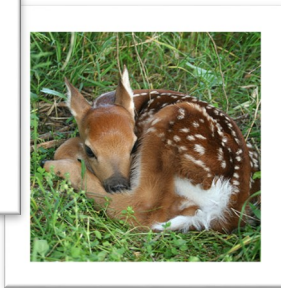
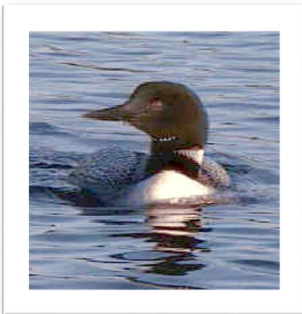
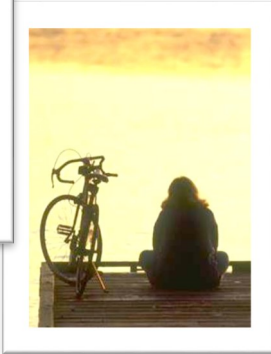
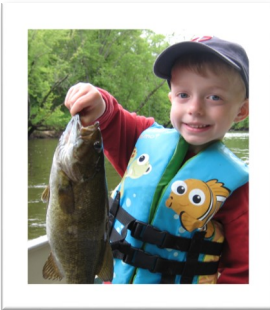
1318 McKay Dr. NE, Suite 300
Ham Lake, MN 55304
Ph: 763-434-2030
www.AnokaSWCD.org

The Anoka Conservation District (ACD), established in 1946 through a voter led petition, celebrated its 75th year of service.



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.



What We Do

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.

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

Soils: Maintain and enhance soil health.

ACD serves all of Anoka County's 363,000 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.

2021 Supervisors were:

- Chair - Mary Jo Truchon - term thru '24
- Vice Chair - Jim Lindahl - term thru '22
- Treasurer - Glenda Meixell - term thru '22
- Secretary - Colleen Werdien - term thru '24
- Member - Sharon LeMay - term thru '24

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)
Sharon LeMay, Glenda Meixell, Colleen Werdien, Mary Jo Truchon, Jim Lindahl

2021 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
- Restoration Ecologist - Carrie Taylor
- Outreach and Engagement Coordinator - Emily Johnson
- District Technician - Mollie Annen
- District Technician - Breanna Keith
- Assistant District Technician - Kat Dickerson

- Field Crew - Alaina Grzeskowiak
- Field Crew - Brandon Franton
- Field Crew - Jessica Daleske
- Field Crew - Monica Martinez
- Field Crew - Tenley Feinberg
- Field Crew - Savannah Pedersen

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 363,000 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.

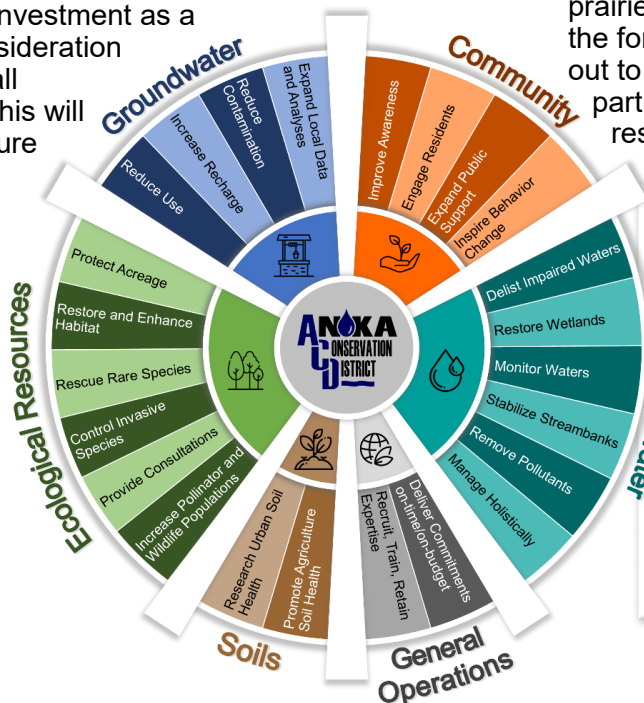
- Technical assistance – providing project design and installation management
- Financial assistance – securing, allocating and administering grant funding to install conservation projects
- Regulatory assistance – providing guidance to help keep landowners out of regulatory harm's way with regard to 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 and Updates

2021 - 2030 Natural Resource Stewardship Plan

ACD's 2021-2030 Natural Resource Stewardship 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.

The plan is built on a framework that integrates Return on Investment as a central consideration for vetting all activities. This will help to ensure that we are optimizing outcomes with limited technical and financial resources.



Outstanding Conservationist

ACD selected the City of Anoka as the 2021 Anoka County Outstanding Conservationist. From donating a 200-acre conservation easement to ACD, to annual goose hunts for veterans, the City of Anoka has demonstrated a commitment to preserving and enjoying our outdoors. At the confluence of the Rum River with the Mississippi River, the city has installed many water quality improvement projects including: 5 rain gardens, 350 feet of Rum River and 1,500 feet of Mississippi River bank stabilization, a state-of-the-art stormwater pretreatment facility, and 3 hydrodynamic separators. They have also improved habitat in prairies, wetlands, savanna, floodplain forest, and in the form of riparian buffers. A heartfelt thank you goes out to the City of Anoka staff and council for their partnership and enduring commitment to natural resources stewardship.

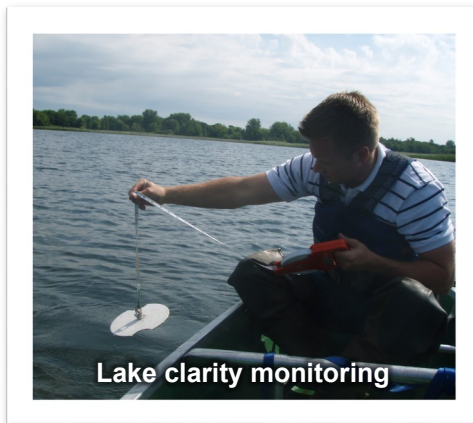


Programs

Monitoring and Inventory

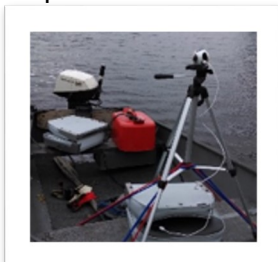
Water Monitoring - In order to manage water resources for consumption, recreation, and wildlife, ACD monitors water quality and/or quantity in Anoka County lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater. Data summaries and analyses are presented in an annual Water Resources Almanac. Water management organizations and lake associations often contract for these services. 2021 sites included:

- 11 manual precipitation gauges
- 22 electronic reference wetland shallow wells
- 24 deep groundwater observation wells
- 7 electronic stream elevation monitoring gauges
- 25 lake level gauges
- 6 lake water quality monitoring sites
- 11 stream water quality monitoring sites
- 4 stream biomonitoring sites with area high schools



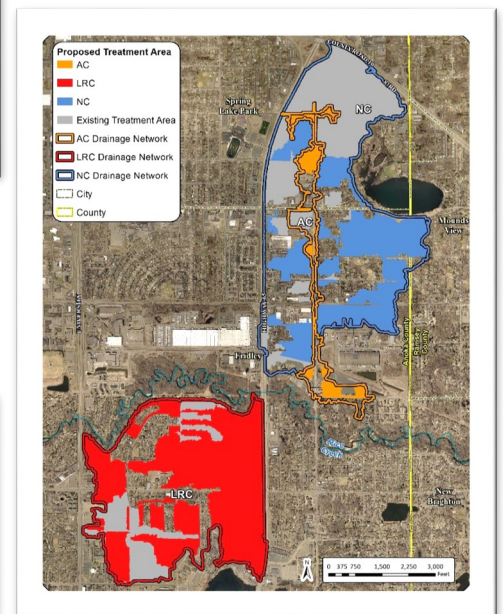
AIS Inventory - ACD staff completed an inventory of two aquatic invasive species on Lake George; curly-leaf pondweed and Eurasian watermilfoil to enable targeted treatments.

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. Photo inventories and erosion analysis of Ham Lake, East Twin Lake, Crooked Lake, Moore Lake, and Centerville Lake were completed in 2021.



Analysis & Planning

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 focused on select contributing drainage areas to Lower Rice Creek within the Rice Creek Watershed District. The area analyzed encompassed 1,115 acres and included 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.



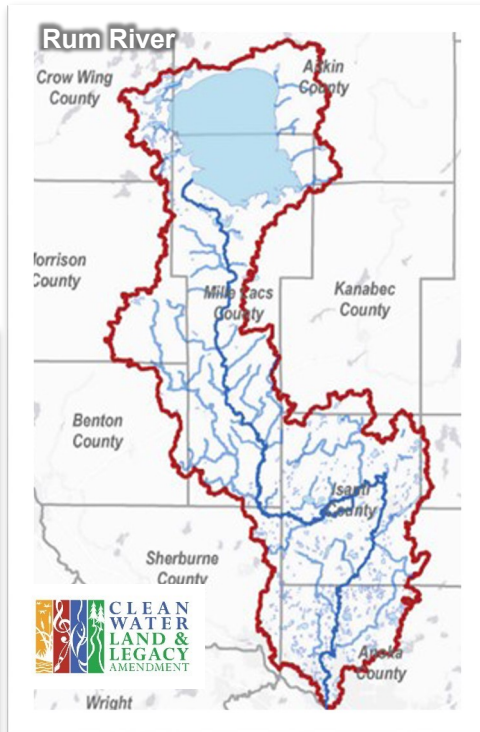
Identified projects were ranked in order of cost-effectiveness to maximize the use of limited financial resources. The ultimate goal is installation of projects that provide the greatest amount of stormwater treatment per dollar invested. In summary, 145 projects were identified throughout the three drainage networks. Project types consisted of 107 bioretention basins, 25 hydrodynamic devices, 9 infiltration basin installations or modifications, and 3 stormwater pond installations or modifications.

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.

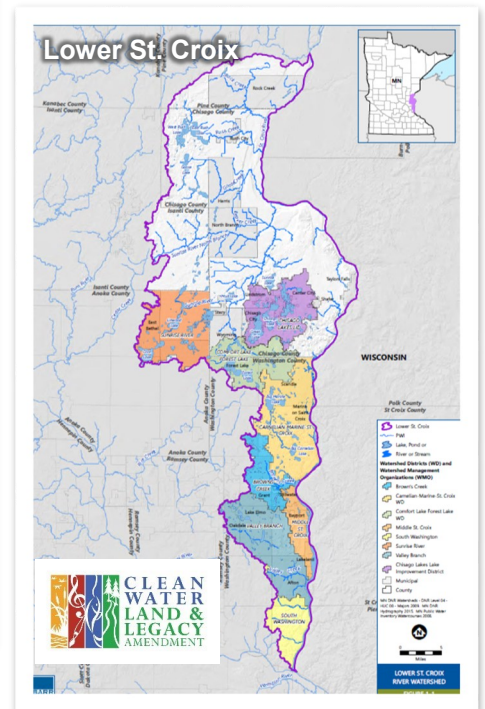
Riverbank Erosion Analysis - ACD conducts riverbank erosion analyses and estimates pollutant loading from each erosion stretch, assigns a “best fit” stabilization technique, and ranks potential projects by anticipated cost/benefit for pollutant removal. The ranked inventory is used to apply for state grants. In 2021 we identified 50 eroding stretches collectively dumping 8,517 tons of sediment into the Mississippi River. On the Rum River, 80 eroding stretches spanning more than 7 miles were identified in 2019, which led to more than \$1.4 Million in state grant funding to help property owners with to stabilize riverbank erosion. We plan for additional grant applications to do even more stabilization work in the future.



Rum River Watershed 1W1P - Partners throughout the 11-county Rum River watershed from Lake Mille Lacs to the City of Anoka are nearing completion of a One Watershed, One Plan. The plan identifies shared priorities. Implementation using an approximately \$1M state grant begins in 2022. 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.



Land Protection Strategies - The Rum River Reinvest in MN (RIM) Technical Advisory Committee prioritized parcels for protection. Under a conservation easement, the owner retains ownership and continues to pay taxes on the land, but there are restrictions on future development.

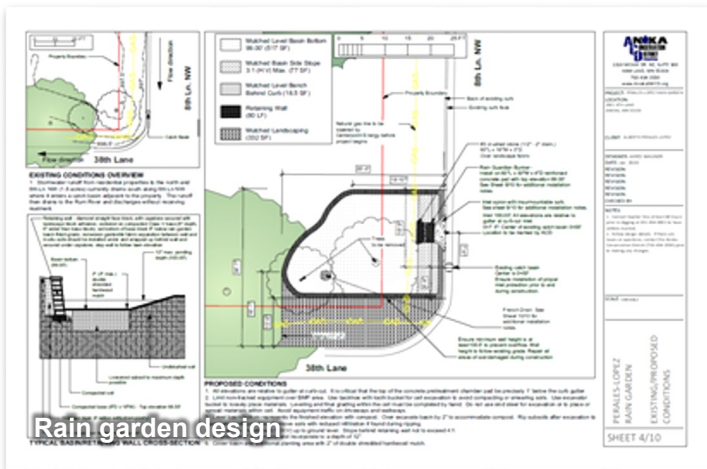
Wetland Restoration - ACD staff used GIS data—including aerial photos, topography, and national wetlands inventory data—to identify approximately 100 opportunities to restore drained and highly altered wetland areas. ACD followed up this effort with outreach to the properties with the highest potential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

Restorable wetland analysis



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 2021, ACD completed site surveys and/or designs for 2 septic system repairs, 1 pond modification, 1 wetland restoration, 8 curb-cut rain gardens, 6 riverbank stabilization projects, 9 habitat enhancements, and 9 lakeshore restorations.



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 2021, \$92,534 in grant funds were used to reimburse LGUs and Landowners for their efforts.

Engineering Assistance - ACD accesses 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.

The most common cost share projects include:

- *Lakeshore stabilization and buffer restoration*
- *Streambank stabilization and buffer restoration*
- *Rain garden installation*
- *Wildlife habitat enhancement and invasive species control*

Project Inspection & Maintenance Guidance

ACD provides long-term maintenance oversight. In 2021, 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.

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. A second inventory in 2021 revealed 34 potential violations. ACD staff will work with landowners and renters to achieve and maintain compliance.

Administrative Assistance

WMO Administration - ACD provides administrative support to watershed management organizations by completing annual reporting requirements and attending to some operational logistics.

Grant Administration - Grant administration and reporting requirements can be complicated. To help our partners take advantage of grant opportunities, ACD often provides logistical support to comply with myriad grant requirements.

Grant Applications - ACD prepares grant applications and work plans to compete for and secure funds on behalf of our partners.

Woodbury House Grant - ACD prepared a Clean Water Fund grant application on behalf of the City of Anoka to address severe riverbank erosion at the historic Woodbury House on the Rum River in Anoka. The successful application provides the city with over \$1M to address the problem, which threatens historically significant features.

Products

Annual Tree Program - In 2021, ACD sold 22,750 tree and shrub seedlings. 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 rain garden maintenance challenges and inlet problems: inlet erosion, inlet plugging and by pass, and excessive accumulation of sediment and debris in the basin. There are currently three product lines; Bunker, Turret, and Foxhole, with others under development to address varying site challenges. In 2021, nationwide sales neared \$600K. Proceeds fund conservation initiatives in Anoka County.



Rain Guardian Foxhole installed within a sidewalk

Conservation Supplies -

Materials and equipment for conservation projects can be hard to come by for landowners. To remove this barrier, ACD provides some items at cost. Common materials include erosion control fabric, concentrated herbicide premixed with surfactant, biologs, and plant materials. Equipment includes herbicide daubers, buckthorn pullers, tree planting bars, and a brush mower.

Public Outreach and Information Access

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

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

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.



Our Lakeshore Connection - Full Video

7.2K views • 2 years ago

AnokaSWCD

Animated video about lakeshore restoration and stewardship created in collaboration with the Anoka County Water Resource ...

CC

Intro | Shallow Lakes | Conclusion

3 chapters



Our Groundwater Connection: Contamination

34K views • 2 years ago

AnokaSWCD

Groundwater education video created in collaboration with the Anoka Co. Water Resource Outreach Collaborative. Watch Part ...

CC



Blog, Snapshot and eNewsletter - ACD updates our weblog, provides monthly snapshot summaries of activities, and quarterly electronic newsletters as outreach tools to engage public officials, colleagues and residents. These can be found at AnokaSWCD.org.

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 coordinate water resource outreach and engagement for watershed and city partners. The goal is to augment and enhance the outreach programming of its partners, inform communities about issues

Shout-out from the Community

In June 2021, young Raylin dropped his pacifier off the end of the dock into Martin Lake. Tragedy for any toddler. Tears. Surely it was lost.

His extended family looked down and much to their surprise, could see the pacifier resting more than 4 feet down on the lake bed! The pacifier with metal ring was easily retrieved with a magnet.

The seemingly small event was a milestone in clearer water for Martin Lake. The lake is on the State's "impaired waters" list due to high nutrients. The water tends to get green with algae in the summer. Officially, it's not swimmable or fishable for too much of the year. There are lots of other lakes like it.

For years its lake association and ACD have been working toward, and steadily achieving, cleaner water. Longtime Martin Lake resident Nancy Olson recounted, "Wow, we'd say that the carp management, rain gardens, no phosphorus fertilizers, spring clean-up, invasive species monitoring, weed removal wand at boat landing, and other projects are working! I can remember 30 years ago, standing in ankle deep water and not being able to see my toes."

To - Jamie Schurbon, ACD Watershed Projects Manager

"I just wanted to tell you THANK YOU for all of your work and efforts to help our lake. The clarity level has improved dramatically since I moved on Martin Lake in June of 2015. Removing the carp, the garbage, and all of the other efforts that have been made have really improved the quality of the water. I can actually see the bottom from my dock at a 2-3 foot depth. The fish are very healthy and clean. All of your hard work is truly appreciated!"

- Martin Lake Resident

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.

Public Officials Tour - ACD coordinated a public official's tour of water quality projects hosted by the Sunrise River Watershed Management Organization (SRWMO). The tour showed the city members of the WMO how their dollars are used. It was also an opportunity for multi-city discussion. Thirteen people attended including city council members, town board supervisors, a county commissioner, and SRWMO board members.

Tour visits included a stormwater pond enhancement, curb cut rain garden, lakeshore restoration, and infiltration basin. At three of the sites the owner was present to talk about the problems they had been experiencing and how the project has worked for them. Key information shared included costs, funding sources, and measurements of success.

SRWMO Public Officials Tour



Carp Fishing Clinic - Lakeshore owners from area lakes were provided a clinic on how to catch carp. After years of commercial and bulk carp harvesting, the remaining card of weary and may need to be removed one by one. This clinic was an effort to recruit and train an army of carp hunters. With perseverance, teamwork, skill, and a bit of luck, we may yet catch the cleverest remaining carp.

Carp Fishing Clinic on Martin Lake



Projects

2021 Project Technical Assistance Summary

Project Type	Consult	Design	Install	Maintain
Lakeshore	26	9	8	1
Streambank	42	6	12	0
Rain Garden	32	8	1	11
Habitat Enhancement	74	9	39	3
Other*	12	4	6	2
Total	186	36	66	17

*Carp management, pond modifications, subsurface sewage treatment systems, swales, groundwater conservation, agricultural projects, and wetland restorations

“We wanted to reach out to you and express our appreciation for the Anoka Conservation District. We especially wanted to thank Mitch Hausteine for his involvement in our project.

Since the beginning he has been responsive, collaborative, and a key resource in ensuring the success of the project. It has been refreshing to see his passion for the work he does. We appreciate how smooth he made this process and for his support to ensure things went to spec.”

- Riverbank Stabilization Program Participant

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



Cedar Tree Revetments

Cedar tree revetments provide a cost-effective stabilization approach for moderately eroding riverbanks. Anoka County Parks received funds from the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program and hired ACD to install 5,100 linear feet of cedar tree revetment on the Rum River 2020-2022. Using ACD staff and granted crew days from the Conservation Corp of Minnesota (CCM), ACD has installed 3,845 linear feet over the last two years. Progress to date includes:

Late Fall 2020

- 650 feet installed in Rum Central Regional Park

Full Season 2021

- 695 additional feet in Rum Central Regional Park
- 1,130 feet installed at Cedar Creek Cons. Area
- 400 feet installed at Timber Rivers Park, Andover
- 970 feet installed along three private properties

We plan to install the remaining 1,255 feet in 2022.



Rum River Stabilization - Phase 1

A 400-foot severely eroding bank was stabilized along private property in Oak Grove. This site was identified as a high priority in an erosion inventory completed by ACD. The stabilization solution used riprap to the two-year flood elevation, grading, and native plantings. This project enhances 0.45 acres of riparian habitat, while reducing sediment and phosphorus to the Rum River by 141 tons and 120 pounds per year respectively. The project was funded through a grant from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) with contributions from the landowner and Anoka County.



Mississippi River Community Park Stabilization

Approximately 1,500 linear feet of severely eroding riverbank within Mississippi River Community Park in Anoka were stabilized in 2021.

The slope above the water line was stabilized with bioengineering and native vegetation. Rock was used to armor the slope under water. River water quality was improved by 529 tons of sediment and 847 pounds of phosphorus annually.



This project enhances public recreation. Mississippi River Community Park and adjacent King's Island include 1.7 miles of Mississippi River trail, 0.78 miles of riverfront, 0.91 miles of oxbow channel, pedestrian access to the island, sporting fields, public duck and deer hunting, and a fishing dock. This project makes over ¼ mile of unsafe riverbank more accessible, stable, and fishable for users. By naturalizing the riparian zone, this project complements the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area rules.



ACD provided design and construction oversight services in partnership with City of Anoka. The project was funded by a Clean Water Fund grant, a Watershed Based Funding grant, and matching funds from the City of Anoka.

Rice Creek Erosion Stabilization

85 linear feet of eroding streambank was stabilized on Rice Creek in Fridley. Minimal rock riprap was used at the bottom of the slope. Native species well adapted to frequent water level fluctuations and shady conditions were planted above the riprap to soften its appearance and provide a vegetated buffer with habitat value. The project, funded by Rice Creek Watershed District and the landowner will reduce annual loading of sediment by 2,838 pounds and total phosphorus by 1.21 pounds. ACD provided design and construction oversight services.



Martin Lakes Shores Park Stormwater Pond Enhancement

An existing stormwater pond treating water draining to Martin Lake was enhanced in fall 2021. Prior to this project, the pond was undersized for its 41-acre residential contributing drainage. The pond is within Martin Lake Shores Park, and less than 100 feet from the lake so the lack of stormwater treatment had a direct impact on the lake. The pond footprint was increased 55% and the pond depth was doubled from 2.5 to nearly 5 feet. A fence-like wooden baffle was added to create a longer flow path for water and more sediment settling. The project will keep an additional 436 pounds of sediment and 1.09 pounds of phosphorus from reaching the lake each year. This project is part of a State Clean Water, Land and Legacy grant to the Sunrise River Watershed Management Organization. The Anoka Conservation District managed the project.



Linwood Elementary Rain Garden

ACD worked with Linwood Elementary School to renovate a rain garden at the school entrance. The basin chronically held water, making it unattractive and ineffective. Moreover, the standing water had killed many plants that might help its appearance. With the help of a volunteer parent who is a construction contractor, a French drain was added for drainage. Then, 4th graders added new mulch and replanted the basin with an assemblage of native pollinator plants they helped select.



Lakeshore Stabilizations

ACD partners with lakeshore landowners to stabilize erosion and enhance near-shore habitat. As an example in 2021, we worked with a landowner at Martin Lake to replace a crumbling, multi-layer shoreline retaining wall of concrete and creosote-soaked wood. The 100 ft shoreline also included a 612 square foot native plant buffer. In 2021 ACD worked with eight homeowners on similar projects, and began preparing for seven additional planned projects at Lake George in 2022.



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 was converted to prairie with a prescribed burn, seeding, establishment mowing and spot treatment. The Windswept prairie was enhanced with the help of Linwood Elementary students planting 1,800 native plants.

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

Blaine Preserve SNA – Populations of rare species are being crowded out by glossy buckthorn, trembling aspen, and aggressive grasses. 2021 efforts involved woody and herbaceous species control.

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 59 acres of otherwise high quality woodlands and wetlands in 2021.

Cedar Creek Conservation Area - Two wetland basins were enhanced to restore hydrology, increase water storage, and enhance native plant communities and wildlife habitat. Sheet piles were installed at two locations and part of the ditch system was filled. Reed canary grass areas were scraped and invasive species were treated. Native seed was spread in scraped areas.

King's Island – ACD staff, Mississippi Park Connection, Conservation Corps Minnesota, City of Anoka and volunteers worked together to clear buckthorn and plant a diversity of trees and shrubs 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 2021 priority invasive species were treated in 15 townships.

Riparian Pollinator Habitat – ACD provided technical and financial assistance to install pollinator habitat projects on four residential properties.



Robert and Marilyn Burman WMA



Ditch plug for wetland hydrology restoration

Non-native Phragmites Treatment – ACD collaborated with partners around the Metro to identify non-native phragmites populations. ACD staff facilitated treatment efforts at 64 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.

Lawns to Legumes – ACD, City staff and volunteers consulted residents along the Mississippi and Rum River within the Rusty patched bumble bee dispersal zone to install plants for pollinators. Installation was completed at 26 sites and 7 sites are underway.

Shoreline and Riparian Plantings – ACD worked with 10 landowners on Martin Lake, Linwood Lake, Sunrise Lake, Lake George, Rum River, and Mississippi River to install wildlife friendly native plantings that also filter overland runoff prior to discharge into the adjacent water resource.

Groundwater Projects

Septic System Repair or Replacement - ACD received \$38,793K in State funds to assist income qualified homeowners with repair or replacement of noncompliant septic systems. In 2021 two septic systems in shoreland areas were replaced.



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. 14 wells were sealed in 2021. Funds are available for 106 more in 2022 and 2023.

To - Kris Larson, ACD Water Resource Technician

“I also wanted to personally thank you for guiding me through this process. You were so knowledgeable and helpful. I can’t thank you enough!”

- Well Sealing Program Participant

Land Protection Projects

Reinvest in MN, Rum River - \$5.5M in state funds have been allocated to establish conservation easements on properties in the Rum River watershed. RIM applications are being processed for protection of 9,850 feet of Rum River shoreline on 167.5 acres. Sensitive and ecologically outstanding lands adjacent to the river were targeted for this round of funding.

Rare Plant Rescue Program – ACD, Critical Connections Ecological Services, and University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum staff secured funding to start a Rare Plant Rescue Program in MN. The group worked with volunteers to transplant 8,151 salvaged plants into four protected recipient sites. Seed from 14 rare plants was collected for the Arboretum seed bank including 1,000 from *Aristida longespica* and 1 million (1 gallon) from *Rotala ramosior*. To improve scientific understanding of *Rubus* propagation and planting, we conducted rudimentary experimentation. To expand the program, we established a salvage and monitoring database and initiated outreach to recruit additional partners. Rare plant rescue has been made possible with MN DNR’s permit application for the Propagation of Endangered or Threatened Species, which was developed in 2019.



Financials

Where the Money Goes

ACD finances vary annually due to the ebb and flow of competitive grants and installing large expensive projects periodically. Many state grants are from sales tax dedicated to natural resource activities. ACD is committed to accessing these funds so Anoka County taxpayers benefit from them in proportion to sales tax paid in the county. ACD strives to keep overhead costs down, while expanding services. Operations costs are consistently low. Personnel has slowly increased with inflation and the addition of staff to deliver on grants. Approximately 66% of personnel is directly related to projects; the rest covers paid leave and general administration.

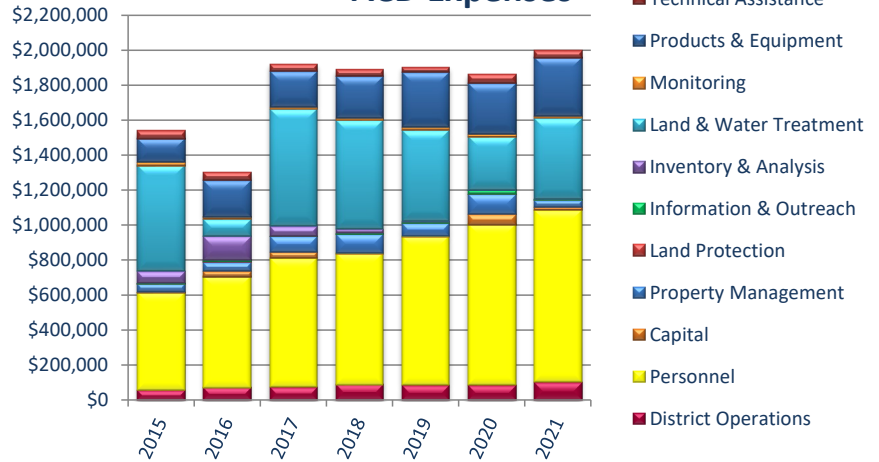
Making Sense of the Dollars

Although governed by an elected board, conservation districts do not yet have taxing authority and must secure funds from many sources to serve the public. Project installation is primarily covered by state grants, while general operations is mostly covered by County funds. County funds are critical because many grants do not cover overhead expenses. Many grants also require matching funds, so county funds must serve as match and cover all ineligible costs under grant rules.

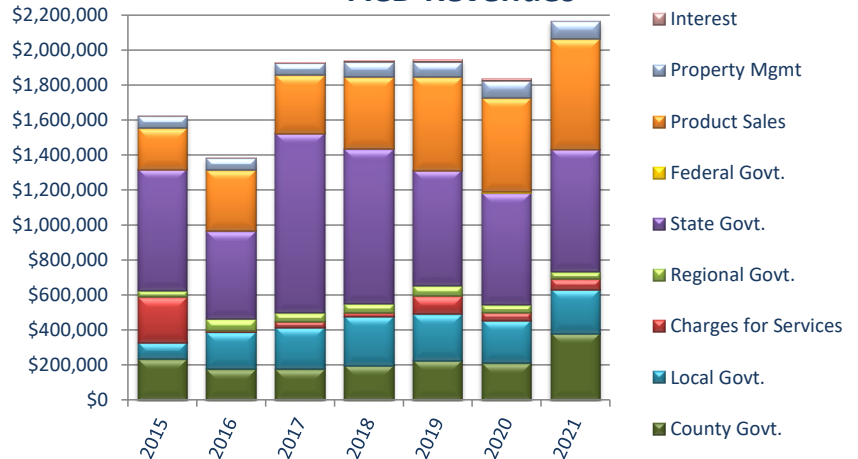
Making Dollars of the Cents

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 2021 revenue chart begins to convey this but does not show the 82 projects and programs supported by 24 distinct funding sources, many of which supported multiple projects and programs. For example, County Project Funds alone is comprised of 24 projects, and State Grants were used in part to fund 53 different initiatives.

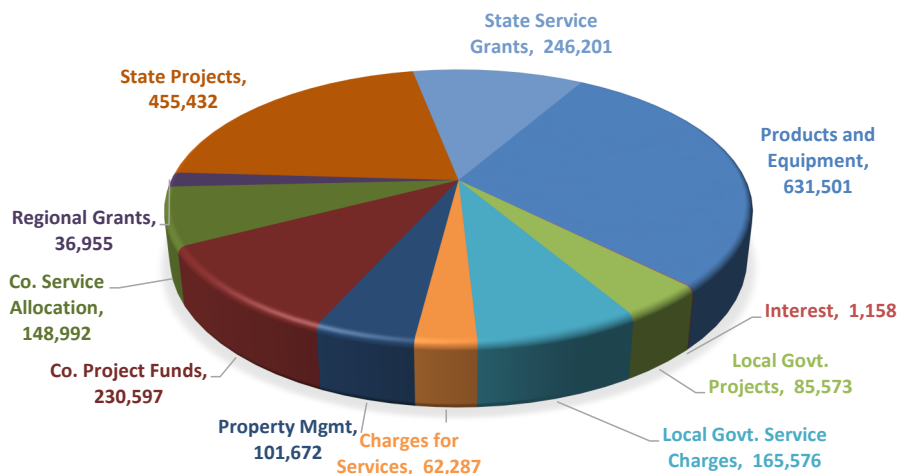
ACD Expenses



ACD Revenues



2021 REVENUE



On average, for every locally derived dollar, ACD leverages over four dollars from outside the county.