Making Sense of the Dollars
Although governed by an elected board, conservation districts do not have levy authority and so must secure funds from many sources to maintain programs and services. The chart of 2011 revenues below begins to convey this but does not show the many sources that comprise each category for a total of 50 separate funding sources and grants. County grants alone is comprised of 7 grant projects. As part of this complex structure, ACD fosters partnerships with cities, water management entities, state and federal agencies, county departments, non-profits, and landowners.

Making Dollars of the Cents
Over the last decade, ACD leveraged 75¢ in federal, county and local funding for every 25¢ provided by the state. In 2011, ACD received $711,000 in Clean Water Funds on behalf of the eleven county metro area. Our share was $101,000.

More Funding
ACD uses general service funds and various grants to fund operations. The county provides substantially more than the state (see note under Making Dollars of the Cents). This is typical for counties with a large tax base.

State grants most relied upon in recent years include Natural Resource Block Grants, Native Buffers Cost Share, and the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Fund.
Anoka Conservation District

Organization
The Anoka Conservation District (ACD) was established in 1946. The mission of ACD is to “Conserve and enhance the natural resources of Anoka County. We do this by:
- informing and assisting landowners and local government in natural resource management,
- promoting stewardship practices for soil and water conservation, and
- conducting research and monitoring.”

Through the years, as the character of Anoka County changed, so did the ACD. We now offer a wide variety of services and are involved in all areas of natural resource management in the county. 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. Daily activities are attended to by a staff including:
- District Manager - Chris Lord - (763) 434-2030 ext. 13
- Administrative Assistant - Kathy Berkness - ext. 10
- Wetland Specialist - Dennis Rodacker - ext. 14
- Water Resource Specialist - Jamie Schurbon - ext. 12
- Conservation Specialist - Nate Zwonitzer - ext. 11
- Water Resource Technician - Mitch Haustein - ext. 15

E-mail: first-name.last-name@anokaswcd.org

ACD also hosted 2 full time Landscape Restoration Specialists for the Metro Conservation Districts, which ended with the 2011 calendar year. Information can be found at www.MetroCD.org

Public Expectations
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 are the only statewide form of government that works with private landowners to implement projects to meet these expectations. The majority of natural resources are found on private lands, specifically 78%, so this approach is critical to our long term quality of life.

Conservation districts are known nationwide as the most efficient way for improving natural resource quality, and are the only local conservation delivery system that covers the entire state.

Addressing the natural resource needs of Anoka County since 1946

Funding

Funding Trends
Over the years ACD has drastically increased revenue generated from fees for services as well as grants from local sources. State funding is available in three general categories: general services funds that can be used to fund district operations, competitive grants that must be applied to state objectives, and state cost share that is passed through to landowners to install conservation practices. General service funds from the state have remained unchanged over the last decade. A substantial portion of revenue is passed through to other local units of government and to landowners as cost share for projects. In 2011 ACD received $711,000 from the Clean Water Legacy Fund on behalf of the eleven county metro SWCDs. This all shows as revenue for ACD while only $101,000 of it directly benefited our operations.

The state provides approximately $21,000 per year of general funds toward the District’s operating budget of $400,000-$500,000.
Subwatershed Retrofit Assessment
Installing practices to improve water quality is being done much more cost-effectively in Anoka County thanks to the watershed retrofit assessment program initiated in 2008. The process begins by identifying the minor-subwatersheds that contribute the most pollution to degraded and high priority water bodies. Those subwatersheds are analyzed to find opportunities to retrofit stormwater treatment. Modeling is used to determine how much can be accomplished with water quality treatment practices and cost/benefit analysis is used to select the most cost effective approaches. ACD staff has identified 303 cost effective projects during the completion of 5 assessments in Anoka county and assisted Isanti county with two assessments in the Rum River watershed.

Benefits
All ACD programs are designed to address one or more natural resource concerns. In order of priority they are:

Water Quality: Lakes, Streams and Groundwater

Water Quantity: Drinking water recharge & flood reduction

Habitat: Wildlife habitat and connectivity

Wetlands: Prevent loss and degradation
Soils: Maintain soil productivity through sound agricultural practices

Land Protection
In partnership with cities, non-profit organizations and state agencies, ACD has facilitated the protection of 373 acres of high priority natural resources through acquisition and conservation easements. In 2011 ACD removed the collapsing homestead on a 75 acre parcel gifted to ACD by Herb Beach in 2010. ACD intends to keep making the property safer for public enjoyment.

Addressing the natural resource needs of Anoka County since 1946
**Conservation News**

Outstanding Conservationist—ACD selected the Rice Creek Watershed District as the 2011 Anoka County Outstanding Conservationist. RCWD has partnered with ACD on many projects over the years including the installation of 16 rain gardens in 2011.

Grant Awards—In 2011 ACD applied for several grants for the 2012-2013 biennium. ACD was awarded; $339,700 in Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment Funds for stabilization of Oak Glen Creek in Fridley, $129,938 in Clean Water Funds from the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council to install carp barriers on Typo and Martin lakes, $99,400 in Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund money through the Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources for ecological restoration efforts on the Anoka Nature Preserves property in the City of Anoka, and finally ACD prepared a successful application on behalf of the Metro Conservation Districts that was awarded $216,000 from the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment for the preparation of the subwatershed stormwater retrofit assessments.

Landscape Restoration Program—All but approximately $90,000 of the $1,000,000 allocation to ACD for the Metropolitan Landscape Restoration Program (LRP) has been utilized. The LRP was an eleven metro county partnership of shared technical staff that focused on providing design services for water quality improvement practices. In 2010 and 2011 the LRP completed 252 designs and 25 subwatershed stormwater retrofit assessments that identified over 2700 projects that would require $10,000,000 to install. $550,000 of the grant along with nearly $425,000 in local match was used to install 116 projects stemming from completed assessments. To ensure accountability to taxpayers, all of the designs, assessments and project profiles are posted to www.MetroCD.org. Failure to secure additional funding through the Board of Water and Soil Resources resulted in the eleven year program being terminated at the end of 2011.

Stormwater Pretreatment Chamber Invention—ACD staff invented the Rain Guardian™ to address many of the challenges associated with rain garden maintenance. ACD filed a patent in 2011 and is actively promoting its incorporation into the design of curb-cut rain gardens. A new website, www.RainGuardian.biz was created to feature this innovative product. Proceeds from sales will help fund conservation initiatives in Anoka County.

Six Cities Water Management Organization—Most of the Six Cities WMO was incorporated into neighboring Coon Creek Watershed District. The remainder of the dissolved entity is likely to be assumed by other water management entities. This is being done to streamline water resource management.

**Projects**

**Rain Gardens**

Curb-cut residential rain gardens are an effective and attractive way to reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality by collecting stormwater runoff from roads: fostering infiltration or evapotranspiration. This traps sediment and nutrients and keeps them out of lakes and streams. Rain gardens can be integrated into a home landscape, making them ideal for urban and suburban retrofit projects. Rain Gardens seldom have prolonged standing water and thus don’t create a safety hazard or mosquito habitat. In 2011 ACD assisted with the installation of 17 residential and 3 school rain gardens.

**Lakeshore Buffers**

Buffers of natural vegetation filter nutrients and sediment from runoff, provide habitat for wildlife, and reduce erosion of shorelines. In addition to the project shown below, lakeshore installation projects have been completed on Moore, Coon, Martin, Locke, Crooked, Typo and George lakes.

**Pond Outlet Modifications**

Modification of pond outlets has been identified during the retrofit assessment process as a very cost effective way of adding water quality benefits to ponds that were installed primarily as rate control features. Coon Creek Watershed District installed two such projects identified by ACD. ACD provided partial installation funds.
Programs

Project Summary 2000-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Consultations</th>
<th>Designs</th>
<th>Installations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lakeshore Buffers</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stream/Pond Buffers</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rain Gardens</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>Habitat Enhancement</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>280</strong></td>
<td><strong>188</strong></td>
<td><strong>137</strong></td>
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</table>

Streambank stabilization and restoration

In addition to the two projects shown below, which were completed in 2011, several riverbank stabilization projects have been completed, or are underway on Rice Creek, Rum River, Coon Creek, Mississippi River, Glen Creek, Pleasure Creek, Hardwood Creek, and Clearwater Creek.

- **Rum River riverbank erosion in Ramsey just downstream of the Rum River Central Regional Park with willow posts installed.**
  
  Riverbanks can be stabilized by anchoring cedar trees into the soil along the toe of the slope. This is called a Cedar Tree Revetment.

- **Bank failure on Clearwater Creek in the backyard of a Centerville resident.**
  
  With design assistance from ACD, this homeowner chose to utilize a product called Enviroloc to stabilize the failing bank.

Financial Assistance

Engineering Assistance - Through a state funded program, ACD has access to funds to contract with consulting engineers to design non-point source pollution projects such as riverbank and lakeshore restoration, gully stabilization, and sediment basins.

Cost Share - ACD utilizes many funding sources to provide cost share funds to Anoka County residents and local governments including but not limited to USDA Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program, USDA Environmental Quality Incentive Program, DNR Conservation Partners Grants, State Cost Share funds, MPCA Clean Water Partnership Grants, MN Clean Water, Land and Legacy Fund, County Ag. Preserves Grants, and Watershed District cost share programs.

The most common projects include:
- Lakeshore and streambank buffer restoration
- Streambank stabilization
- Wildlife habitat restoration
- Rain garden installation
- Invasive species control

Technical Assistance

Wetland Conservation Act - The ACD employs one full time Wetland Specialist whose state mandated 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.

Restoration Design and Conservation Site Planning - ACD staff provide landowners with design assistance to restore some of the ecological function of their properties. These designs are targeted to attract wildlife, reduce erosion, conserve water, and improve water quality for the same types of projects listed above in the Cost Share section.
Water Monitoring - In order to manage water resources for consumption, recreation, and wildlife, ACD monitors water quality and quantity. Cities and water management organizations often contract for these services.

- 6 Electronic Stream Elevation Monitoring Wells
- 22 Lake Level Gauges
- 15 Deep Groundwater Observation Wells
- 18 Electronic Reference Wetland Shallow Wells
- 15 Rain Gauges Monitored by Volunteers, six automated
- 1 Fully Automated Monitoring Station at the Rum River Outlet
- 29 Lake Water Quality Monitoring Sites Since 2000
- 63 Stream Water Quality Monitoring Sites Since 2000
- 14 Stream Biomonitoring Sites

Volunteer Stream Biomonitoring - Macro-invertebrates (bugs living in the stream) are monitored in streams throughout Anoka County by area students. Classes from seven area schools were recruited to conduct the field sampling, identify the invertebrates and summarize findings. The entire process is integrated into the class curriculum and provides valuable data for resource managers. Analysis of what's living in a stream provides insight into the quality of the water.

Shoreland Inventory - Since acquiring Global Positioning System capabilities, ACD staff have inventoried erosion, and landuse practices that degrade water quality on eleven lakes and two rivers/streams in the county.

Resource Investigation/Assessment - When routine monitoring identifies a problem, ACD responds by conducting a thorough analysis to determine the nature and extent of the problem and develop a plan to improve the resource. The most recent example of this was analysis of Woodcrest Creek for excess sediment.

Comprehensive Planning - ACD provides assistance to local governments to develop local water plans and resource management plans. ACD leverages other funding sources to help reduce costs. In 2009-2011, ACD assisted the Upper Rum River, Lower Rum River and Sunrise River WMO’s with portions of their water resource management plans.

Annual Tree Program - Each year ACD sells approximately 15,000 tree and shrub seedlings to promote the production of wildlife habitat and to control erosion. More than twenty varieties are available, the majority of which are native to Anoka County. We also distribute prairie seed and information on shelterbelt and windbreak planning and are available to help landowners develop site-specific plans.

Easements - ACD is committed to the development of a county wide easement program to help landowners that are interested in protecting and managing their properties as perpetual open space. Easement assistance will be provided based on the quality of the resource and the property’s location related to identified wildlife corridors and hubs. In 2010 an easement was established on 43 acres of high quality natural habitats on the south shore of Deer Lake in East Bethel.

Public Education and Information Access

Website - In addition to our website, www.AnokaSWCD.org, ACD maintains a website that functions as an interface to access information about the quantity, quality, distribution and management of natural resources throughout Anoka County. This site includes a mapping tool and water resource database access and charting tool to enable users to gather and customize available resource information. The site is also structured to easily integrate access to other local government sites with natural resource information and jurisdiction.

Videos for the Web - ACD staff has developed or is in the process of developing videos on the Rain Guardian pretreatment chambers, an introduction on how to make videos, Cedar Tree Revetments, the Lower Rum River WMO, Lakeshore Buffers, the Metro LRP, and a 2011 Annual Report of ACD Activities. Completed videos can all be found on www.AnokaSWCD.org and YouTube.

Environmental Education Programs - ACD developed a series of six brochures covering Rain Gardens, Landscaping for Wildlife, Lakeshore Restoration, Watersmart, Riverbank Restoration, and Native Plants and gives presentations on related topics.

Wildlife Habitat Enhancement

While many projects that ACD helps landowners install are designed to improve water quality, reduce flooding, or preserve soil resources, some installations are primarily done to enhance wildlife by creating habitat. The listed projects have been complete or are underway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th># of Projects</th>
<th>Wetland (ac)</th>
<th>Savanna/ Prairie (ac)</th>
<th>Forest (ac)</th>
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<td>East Bethel</td>
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<td>Fridley</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>Anoka</td>
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<td>Andover</td>
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<td>Ramsey</td>
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<td>12.6</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>202.4</td>
<td>895.6</td>
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</table>

Projects

City

Nowthen       
Oak Grove     
East Bethel   
Fridley       
Anoka         
Andover       
St. Francis   
Ramsey        
Total