

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.

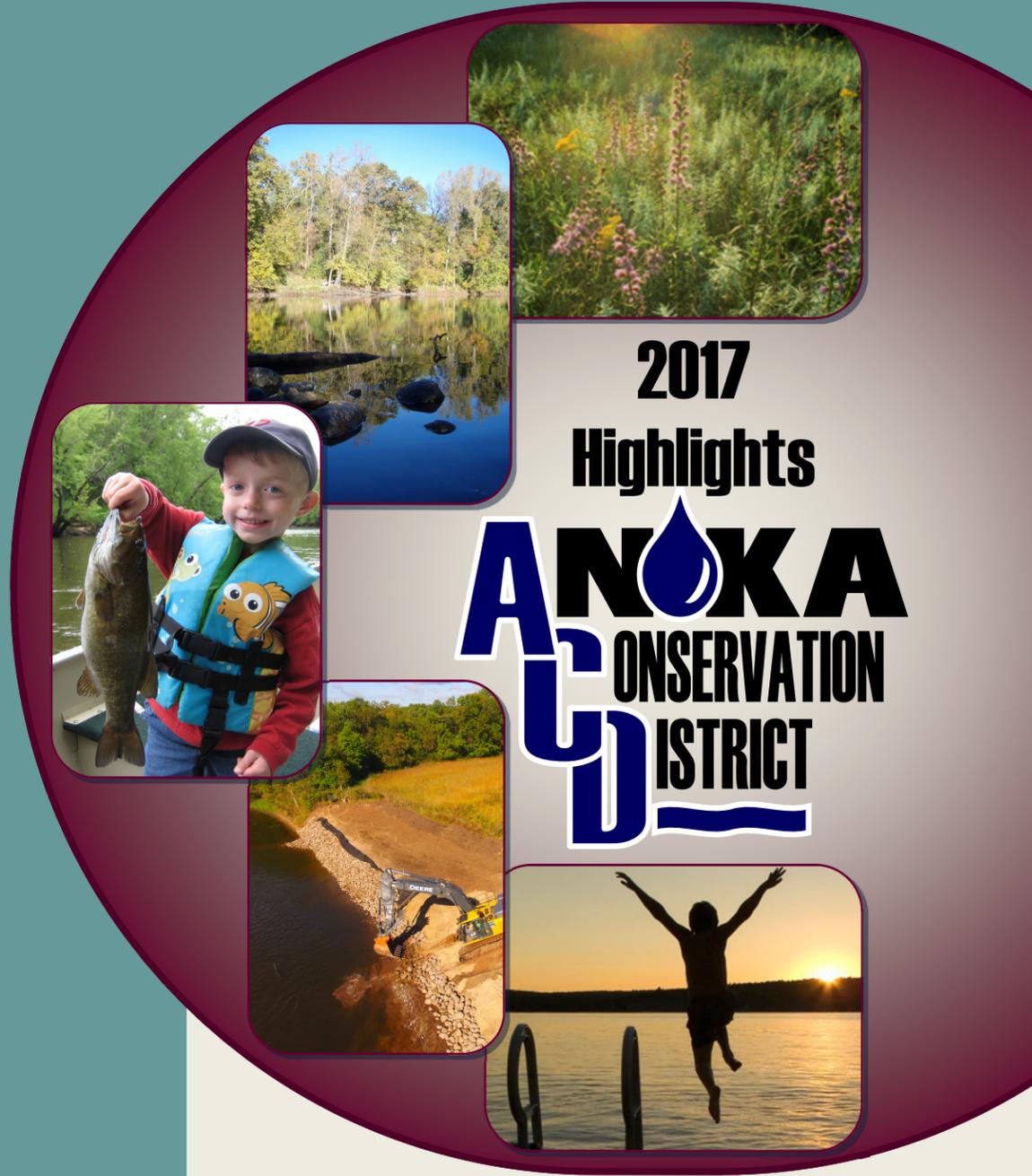


Making Dollars of the Cents

ACD routinely leverages state, county and local funding to pay for conservation programs and services. The chart of 2017 revenues begins to convey this but does not show the 76 projects and programs supported by 19 distinct funding sources. For example, County Project Funds alone is comprised of 6 projects. To implement a comprehensive natural resource management program, ACD collaborates with cities, water management entities, state agencies, county departments, non-profits, and landowners to deliver conservation activities of mutual interest.



The state provides approximately \$21,000 per year of general funds toward the District's operating budget of \$700,000. Efforts are underway to increase this contribution.



2017 Highlights



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



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Organization

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

ACD's mission is to: "Conserve and enhance the natural resources of Anoka County. We do this by:

- conducting monitoring and analysis,
- informing landowners and local government in natural resource management, and
- leveraging technical and financial resources to promote natural resource stewardship practices."

Over time, as the character of Anoka County changed, so did ACD and now offers a wide variety of programs and services 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. 2017 Supervisors were:

- Chair - Mary Jo Truchon - term through 2020
- Vice Chair - Jim Lindahl - term through 2018
- Treasurer - Glenda Meixell - term through 2018
- Secretary - Steve Laitinen - term through 2020
- Member - Sharon LeMay - term through 2020

Daily activities are attended to by staff. 2017 staff were:

- District Manager - Chris Lord - (763) 434-2030 ext. 13
- Office Administrator - Kathy Berkness- ext. 10
- Wetland Specialist - Becky Wozney - ext. 14
- Watershed Projects Manager - Jamie Schurbon - ext. 12
- Water Resource Specialist - Andrew Dotseth - (thru Sept)
- Water Resource Technician - Jared Wagner - ext. 18
- Stormwater and Shoreland Specialist - Mitch Haustein - ext. 15
- Conservation Specialist - Aaron Diehl - ext. 16 (Oct-Dec)
- Conservation Technician - Leah Hall - (thru Nov)
- Conservation Technician - Carrie Taylor - ext. 19
- Assistant District Technician - Nicole Szurek - ext. 17
- Conservation Corp MN Apprentice - Logan Berg (May-Aug)
- MN GreenCorps Member - Emily Johnson - ext. 11 (Sept-Dec)

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 (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.

SWCDs are local governments with elected boards covering 99.3% of Minnesota that improve natural resources by providing technical and financial assistance to willing landowners, not regulation.

of buckthorn will create space for native species that are now competing for resources.

These habitat enhancement projects were funded by the Outdoor Heritage Fund of the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment.

Monarch & Pollinator Cost Share - Using a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Fund, ACD assisted 6 landowners to install seed, plugs, trees and shrubs native to Anoka throughout 23.5 acres.



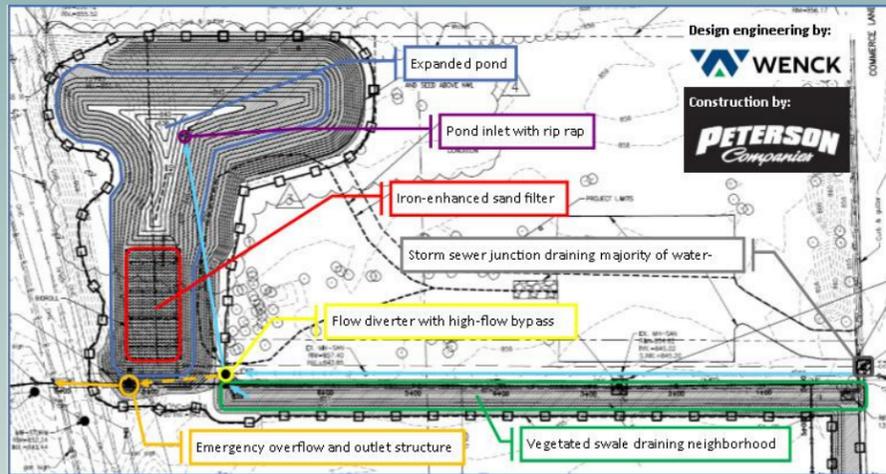
Financials

Where the Money Goes

ACD finances experience dramatic variability from year to year due to activities being driven by competitive grants. Most notable is the spike in 2011 due in large part to a \$1,000,000 grant that was used throughout the metro to identify and install cost-effective water quality improvement projects. The work products of that effort have been paramount in ACD's success over the last four years in receiving large grants for project installation. The large shift from Technical Assistance to Land & Water Treatment is due to this success. Over the past six years ACD has been awarded five separate grants that each ranged from \$400,000 to \$1,000,000. These funds 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. This testifies to the commitment of ACD staff and supervisors to keep overhead costs down, while continually striving to expand the level of benefit Anoka County taxpayers receive.



Addressing the natural resource needs of Anoka County since 1946



Glen Creek watershed was enlarged and enhanced with an Iron-Enhanced Sand Filter and a vegetated swale. The project is designed to improve water quality by 51,322 lbs/yr of sediment and 138 lbs/yr of phosphorus.



Wildlife Habitat Enhancement

Some projects ACD helps landowners install are done primarily to enhance habitat for wildlife and pollinators.

Beach Conservation Easement -

In the spring of 2017, a prescribed burn was completed on 8.3 acres of restored prairie on the Herbert Beach conservation property in St. Francis. 15 lbs of native pollinator seed mix was added to 10 acres of prairie.



Kern Conservation Easement -

A prescribed burn and supplemental seeding was completed on 4 acres of prairie and wetland on the Melanie Kern property. 950 trees and shrubs were planted in upland and wetland fringe areas. 350 wildflower plugs were planted in the prairie and woodland, and invasive species were treated with herbicide. The Kern property is protected with a conservation easement with initial restoration work completed ten years ago.

Mikkelson WMA - In 2017, 160 acres of the 842 acre Gordie Mikkelson WMA were treated for common and glossy buckthorn, which will create space for native species.

Boot Lake SNA - In the winter of 2016-2017, treatment of glossy buckthorn was completed on an additional 6.5 acres of densely infested acres in the Boot Lake Scientific and Natural Area. Removal

Benefits

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

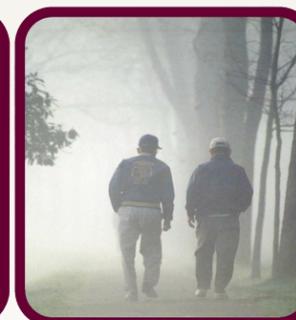
Water Quality: Maintain high quality surface waters, improve impaired surface waters, and protect drinking water



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



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 in, and where possible, improve the quality and quantity of wetlands

Soils: Maintain and enhance soil health

Addressing the natural resource needs of Anoka County since 1946

Conservation News & Updates

Outstanding Conservationist - ACD selected Steve and Lisa Voss as the 2017 Anoka County Outstanding Conservationists. Steve is a Sunrise River Watershed Management Organization representative and a long time advocate for projects that improve area lakes and rivers. Steve and Lisa installed three rain gardens on their Coon Lake property to treat water that otherwise would have discharge directly into the lake.



The Voss' receiving a painting by Supervisor Truchon (left)

Community Conservationist - ACD selected Cheryl Seeman as the 2017 Anoka County Community Conservationist. Cheryl also received the Minnesota Community Conservationist award. Cheryl is a Master Gardener, a showcase rain garden owner, and a tireless advocate for pollinator habitat creation.



Seeman (center) receiving a painting by Supervisor Truchon

MN GreenCorps Member Joins ACD - MPCA placed a MN GreenCorps member at ACD for eleven months beginning in September. With a focus on Stormwater and a knack for outreach, Emily Johnson rapidly initiated a suite of activities ranging from developing social media infrastructure and video editing to a stormwater table top display and brochure along with a series of 'Conservation Starts at Home' buttons. BMP inspection protocols and maintenance workshops were also advanced.

25 by '25 Community Waters Meeting - 100 public and private stakeholders met to discuss the Governor's initiative to improve water quality 25% by 2025. The League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region, Anoka County Water Task Force, ACD, and Anoka Ramsey Community College co-sponsored the event.

Clean Water Fund - \$236,000 was awarded to cost share riverbank stabilization efforts with a focus on bioengineering on private properties along the Mississippi River to reduce sediment in the river and improve habitat. This is the second such award in two years.

Outdoor Heritage Fund - \$41,000 was awarded from Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council for glossy and common buckthorn removal in the Mikkelson WMA. \$99,000 was awarded by DNR through the Conservation Partners Legacy program to allow for carp management on Typo and Martin Lakes in Linwood Township.

ACD purchased its office headquarters in 2010. The facility has six suites. ACD occupies one of those and rents out the others, providing a positive net cash flow.

Streambank Stabilization and Restoration

With grant funds from the Outdoor Heritage Fund and granted crew days from the Conservation Corp of Minnesota (CCM), ACD staff led crews to install cedar tree revetments at 7 private properties and one regional park spanning over 1,400 linear feet of the Rum River. Cedar tree revetments provide a cost-effective stabilization approach for moderately eroding riverbanks. The 235 trees needed for the project were donated by two landowners. Additionally, a 40 foot rock rip-rap project was installed on Rice Creek by a private landowner using cost share from the watershed district.



CCM crew members installing a revetment on the Rum River

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 and 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, creating neither a safety hazard nor mosquito habitat. In 2017, ACD assisted with the installation or enhancement of 4 residential rain gardens.



Curb cut rain garden in Fridley at the Redeemer Lutheran Church

Carp Management

\$99,000 was secured from the DNR Conservation Partners Legacy program along with \$9,900 in local match from the SRWMO and Martin Lakers to implement carp management on Martin and Typo Lake. In 2017, carp



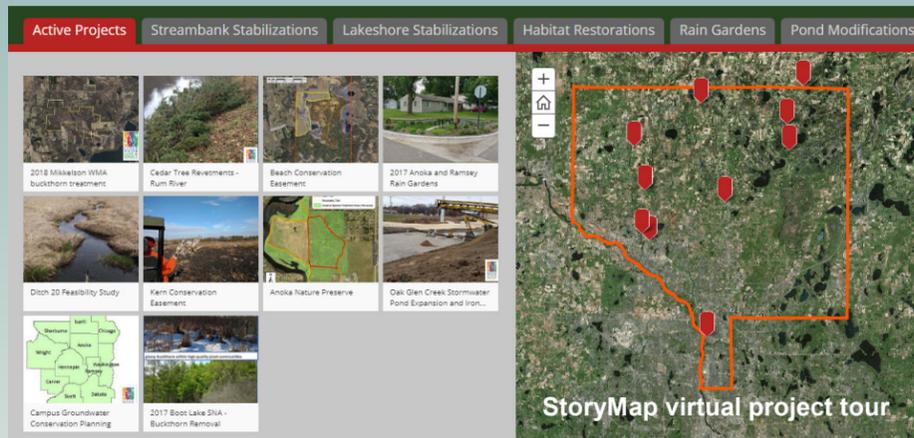
ACD and Carp Solutions staff harvesting carp using box nets

were tracked with radio telemetry and fin clipping, analyzed to determine the age composition, and harvested using box nets. Understanding the population will enable effective management plans to be developed to improve water quality on the lakes. Nearly 12,000 pounds of carp were harvested using box nets.

Oak Glenn Creek Pond Expansion and IESF

With \$517,780 secured by ACD from the Clean Water Fund of the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment and \$275,111 in matching funds from the City of Fridley, an existing pond in the Oak

information on technical and financial assistance programs and services. Website design and maintenance is all completed in-house by ACD staff



Brochures and Table Top Displays - ACD developed a series of brochures and table top displays covering Rain Gardens, Backyard Habitat, Lakeshore Restoration, Watersmart, Wetlands, and Riverbank Stabilization. In 2017 Stormwater was added to the collection. There are also displays without companion brochures for Invasive Species, Natural Resources Threats, Land Protection, and Soil Health. All are available for use by partners.

Projects

Project Summary 2000-2017

	Consult	Design	Install	Maintain
Lakeshore	107	71	42	1
Streambank	127	74	68	7
Rain Garden	160	171	141	17
Habitat Enhancement	53	14	16	10
Other*	11	4	10	4
Total	458	334	277	39

*Iron enhanced sand filters, carp barriers, and stormwater treatment structures

Project Inspection & Maintenance Guidance

ACD guides project installations and provides long-term maintenance oversight. In 2017 ACD staff inspected 183 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.

Lakeshore Restoration

ACD staff designed and coordinated installation of 145ft long cedar tree revetment on Locke Lake in 2017. Cost share funds from the Rice Creek Watershed District were used to help pay for the project.

Programs

Monitoring and Inventory

Water Monitoring - In order to manage water resources for consumption, recreation, and wildlife, ACD monitors water quality and quantity. Water management organizations and lake associations often contract for these services. 2017 sites include:

- 18 electronic and manual precipitation gauges
- 18 electronic reference wetland shallow wells
- 24 deep groundwater observation wells
- 25 lake level gauges
- 11 electronic stream elevation monitoring wells
- 8 lake water quality monitoring sites
- 26 stream water quality monitoring sites
- 3 continuous stream water quality monitoring stations
- 3 stream biomonitoring sites



Buffer Law Compliance Inventory - ACD worked with the 9 non-compliant landowners to make needed adjustments prior to the 2017 deadline for public waters buffers. Contact was also initiated with the 103 landowners that a 2016 inventory suggested were non-compliant with the public ditches buffer requirements. Compliance with this aspect of the law is to occur by November 2018.

AIS Inventory - ACD staff completed an inventory of two aquatic invasive species on Lake George; curly leaf and Eurasian water milfoil. The inventory enabled the lake improvement district to target herbicide treatments.

Wetland Restoration Inventory - ACD staff completed a county-wide inventory of sites where ditch blocks on private lateral ditches could result in wetland restorations without compromising drainage rights or risking flood damage to structures or septic systems. Wetland restorations have the potential to improve water quality, reduce flooding and improve wildlife habitat, all while being funded with private sector wetland replacement credit sales.

Analyses & Plans

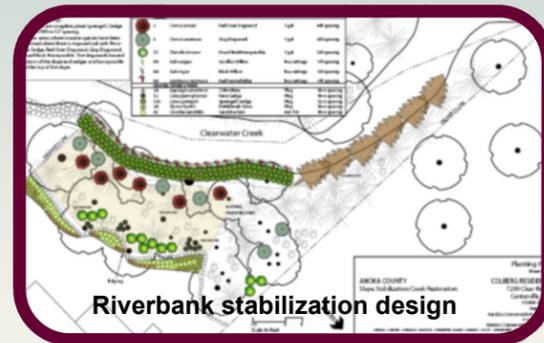
Lake George SRA - Lake George water quality has been declining over the last decade. To determine the cause and fix it, ACD secured a grant through BWSR, from the Clean Water Fund. In 2017 a consulting firm was contracted to develop a computer model of the watershed using extensive water quality and hydrology modeling data collected by ACD staff to calibrate it. Several water quality improvement projects have been identified. ACD staff will run project implementation scenarios through the model to craft a plan to improve lake water quality.

Rum River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy - ACD led an 11-county planning effort for the Rum River watershed from Lake Mille Lacs to the Mississippi River in the City of Anoka. The plan was completed in 2017. The partners that worked on the plan will pursue funds to take the planning effort to the next level and complete a One Watershed, One Plan.

Ditch 20 Feasibility - Ditch 20, which flows through wetlands is discharging extremely high phosphorus into Typo Lake from Isanti County. ACD is conducting a feasibility analysis to determine if and how we might restore hydrology to the partially drained wetlands, thereby improving Typo Lake water quality. Alternative water quality improvement practices will also be considered. Completion of the analysis is scheduled for mid 2018.

Technical Assistance

Site Planning and Design - ACD staff provide landowners with design assistance for projects that attract wildlife, reduce erosion, conserve water, and improve water quality. In 2017, ACD completed site surveys and/or designs for one iron enhanced sand filter, 6 curb cut rain gardens, 9 riverbank stabilization projects, 5 habitat enhancements, and 3 lakeshore restoration projects.



District Capacity Funding - In 2017, ACD used \$121,176 in District Capacity funds from the Clean Water Fund for 15 different efforts including: a website showcase for completed projects using StoryMap, land protection strategies, BMP inspections, project design services, a 360 degree photo inventory of the Rum River, a buckthorn treatment workshop for property owners adjacent to treated WMAs, rain garden effectiveness monitoring, installation of rain gardens in the Lower Rum River WMO, an inventory of septic systems on Linwood Lake, promotion of One Watershed, One Plan for the Rum River watershed, strategic planning for the Anoka Sand Plain Partnership, updates to table top brochures and displays, co-sponsoring the 25 by '25 Community Waters Meeting, a carp management initiative for Typo and Martin lakes, and purchase of equipment and software to support conservation efforts.

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.

Financial Assistance

Cost Share - ACD helps landowners pay for conservation projects with community level benefits. Some incentive programs include the

State Cost Share Program, USDA Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program and 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 projects include:

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

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.

Natural Resources Block Grant - ACD supports the Subsurface Sewage Treatment System program, Local Water Plan implementation, Wetland Conservation Act implementation and Shoreland rules implementation by passing NRBG funds through to local government units (LGUs). In 2017, over \$48,362 in grant funds was used to reimburse nine LGUs for their efforts.

Products

Rain Guardian™ - ACD patented pretreatment chambers to address many of the challenges associated with rain garden maintenance in 2013. Distributorships covering 31 states, tradeshow, and the RainGuardian.biz website all promote the use of this product in bio-retention practices. In 2017, sales were slightly less than 2016. To allow for the installation of roadside bio-retention practices at sites with sidewalks, staff developed a modular design that will be embedded in the sidewalk and can be extended in 3 foot increments. Proceeds from sales fund conservation initiatives in Anoka County.



Rain Guardian Foxhole installed within a sidewalk

Annual Tree Program - Each year, ACD sells approximately 23,000 tree and shrub seedlings to control erosion and enhance wildlife habitat. We also distribute prairie seed and are available to help landowners develop site-specific plans.

Public Outreach and Information Access

Videos for the Web - ACD staff have developed videos on a variety of topics, all of which can all be found on AnokaSWCD.org and YouTube. In 2017, ACD purchased two time lapse cameras, which were used to capture video of projects in the process of construction and functioning in the landscape.

AnokaSWCD.org - Staff added a StoryMap interface that features ongoing and completed projects, inventories, and analyses. The site also includes current events, policies, board actions, financials, and