

2025 Education & Outreach Report

Liz Forbes, *Communications Manager*

Eleanor Mahon, *Community Engagement Coordinator*

rpbcwd.org/events-and-trainings

rpbcwd.org/calendar

The District's Education & Outreach program supports the goals outlined in the 10-year Management Plan by fostering an engaged community and offering opportunities for involvement.

EVENTS

Water Resources Summit

Water Resources Manager Josh Maxwell hosted the annual Water Resources Summit for partner organizations on February 27, 2025. The summit provided an opportunity to share monitoring results, planning efforts, and identify potential partnering opportunities.



Lake Association Summit

Fourteen representatives from eight lake/homeowner associations attended the 2025 Lake Association Summit at the RPBCWD office on March 19th. The event provided an opportunity for staff to provide an overview of the District's role in watershed protection, how to achieve a healthy lake, and capital improvement projects.



Open House: North Lotus Lake Water Quality Improvement Project

Two open houses were held in 2025 to collect input on preliminary concepts for the North Lotus Lake Water Quality Improvement Project. A mini-open house was held on June 8, 2025 at North Lotus Lake Park as part of RPBCWD's Creek Week activities. The exhibits including an overview of water quality projects identified in the Lotus Lake watershed, an updated preliminary concept for the North Lotus Lake Park project, and two exhibits to collect input on components including art that could be incorporated into the project. A second open house was held in conjunction with an open house for the City of Chanhassen's Pavement Rehabilitation Project on November 19.

Evening with the Watershed

Eighty-three local leaders, community members and partners joined RPBCWD on October 23rd at the historic Goodrich-Ramus Barn near Staring Lake for An Evening with the Watershed. The evening began with a social hour, followed by dinner and a presentation highlighting district projects, programs and highlights of the last 10 years. The evening capped off with an award ceremony recognizing some of RPBCWD's outstanding volunteers and water stewards.



STEM on Tap

RPBCWD partnered with Nine Mile Creek Watershed District and the City of Eden Prairie to offer six STEM on Tap workshops for area K-12 educators. Topics for the year included ornithology, GIS, Winter Tree ID, Art & STEM, Genetic Counseling, and Phenology. Over 100 teachers attended a 2025 workshop.



Creek Week

The District hosted it's third annual Creek Week in June 2025. The District hosted it's 3rd annual Creek Week in June. The week kicked off with Yoga in the Park and the 10th annual Cycle the Creek bike tour, followed by a park pop-up at North Lotus Lake Park, where visitors to the park could mingle with RPBCWD staff, play games, create artwork, and get an ice cream treat while enjoying a beautiful Sunday afternoon. Next, a Build Your Own Rain Barrel workshop hosted at the RPBCWD office had participants convert retired wine barrels into rain barrels to capture roof runoff. A Paint & Sip with Natural Inks packed the house at the OG Coffee & Wine Bar, while A Learn-to- Canoe



Events from Creek Week 2025



Night with the Staring Lake Outdoor Center promised to be a great evening before inclement weather forced a cancellation. The sky cleared up just in time for Friday's Volunteer Wetland Planting at the site of the Pioneer Trail Restoration Project.

Throughout the month of June, the Passport Adventure encouraged people to get out to explore the watershed district by offering a prize pack to determined explorers.

Native Plant Workshops

RPBCWD partnered with Carver County Water Management Organization and Carver Soil & Water Conservation District to offer two Native Plant Workshops in 2025. The first workshop was held on April 10 and was a general introduction to native plantings and their impact on water quality. The second workshop on August 5th was geared towards maintaining existing projects and identifying common threats to native plantings.



Discover Your Watershed Party

On September 24, RPBCWD partnered with Nine Mile Creek Watershed District and the City of Eden Prairie to host a 'Discover Your Watershed' Party at the Preserve Association Barn. Over 50 community members stopped by for barbecue and to learn more about cost share programs and ways to get involved in protecting our water resources.



Christmas Tree Giveaway

On December 13, RPBCWD partnered with The PROP Shop of Eden Prairie, PROP Food Shelf, and EP Public Schools Family Resources Program to give away Christmas trees to families in need. Mugs of hot cocoa and a blazing fire countered the bitterly cold temperatures as families picked up their trees. The trees came from a former Christmas tree farm owned by the Standal Family in Eden Prairie, the site of the Spring Road Conservation Project. Stands were donated by community members.

VOLUNTEERS

Adopt a Dock

Adopt a Dock is a citizen science initiative where lakeshore residents monitor for aquatic invasive species. In 2025, 23 households used passive plate samplers to monitor for zebra mussels on Duck, Lucy, Lotus, Mitchell, Red Rock, Riley, and Silver lakes.



Photo of a volunteer's Adopt a Dock plate sampler with zebra mussels.

Adopt a Drain

In 2025, 91 participants adopted 147 storm drains within RPBCWD, preventing 1,974 pounds of leaves, sediment, salt and other debris from entering our waterways. Led by Hamline University, Adopt a Drain allows individuals to adopt a storm drain in their neighborhood and pledge to keep it clear of leaves and debris throughout the year while logging their impact in an online portal. Across all of Minnesota, the Adopt a Drain program kept 164,125 pounds of debris out of waterways in 2025.

Minnesota Water Stewards

A partnership with the Freshwater Society, Minnesota Water Stewards trains and supports community leaders to reduce water pollution and educate their community to conserve and protect our waterways. The program was placed on pause in 2025 to allow for a program restructure. 24 past stewards continued their service hours within the District.

Citizen Advisory Committee

Staff Forbes and Staff Mahon serve as liaisons for the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). In 2025, the CAC had 10 members and held 10 meetings. Seven meetings featured internal (staff) and external guest speakers. One CAC member serves on the Stewardship Grant review committee.

WORKSHOPS & WEBINARS

Name	Date	Description	Attendees	Partner(s)
Woodland Invaders Workshop	3/03/2025	Hands-on event to identify and manage invasive garlic mustard and buckthorn.	23	City of Eden Prairie
Turfgrass Maintenance for Reduced Environmental Impacts Training	4/09/2025	Turfgrass maintenance professionals learn how turf management affects local lakes and rivers, gain techniques to optimize fertilizer and pesticide applications, and access resources to help implement new techniques into their lawn care maintenance.	35	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, NMCWD
Resilient Shorelines Workshop	6/17/2025	Covers fundamentals that shoreline property owners need for protecting water quality near their home, including shoreline site assessments, lakescaping and shoreline projects, plant selection tips, regulatory reminders, and access to resources.	28	Metro Blooms, City of Eden Prairie, NMCWD
Native Plants and Pocket Prairies Workshop	4/10/2025	Participants learn practical ideas for how to add native plants to their yard with small pocket prairies and large native plantings.	23	Carver SWCD, CCWMO
Native Plant Maintenance Workshop	8/5/2025	Resources to help residents learn best maintenance practices for their projects and how to identify common threats to native plantings.	34	Carver SWCD, CCWMO
Buckthorn Workshop	9/11/2025	Hands-on event to learn about how to identify and control invasive buckthorn.	21	City of Eden Prairie
Smart Salting Training - Liquid Deicer Refresher	10/30/2025	Training to provide winter maintenance professionals a closer look at when to use liquid deicer and how to develop strategies for product use, frequency and application for each winter event.	40	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, NMCWD

COMMUNITY EVENTS

In 2025, District staff participated in various community events and classroom visits. Staff tabled at these events:

- Eden Prairie Home, Landscape & Garden Expo
- Eden Prairie Eco Expo
- Eden Prairie Arbor Day Walk & Green Fair
- Chanhassen 4th of July Business Expo
- Minnetonka Summer Farmer's Markets (3x)
- Mitchell Lake Association Annual Meeting

Staff engaged with youth audiences at these events:

- Cedar Ridge Elementary School Science Night
Topic: Stormwater Runoff
- Eden Lake Elementary School 2nd Graders
Topic: Macroinvertebrates
- St. Hubert Catholic School 2nd Graders
Topic: Macroinvertebrates
- Metro Children's Water Festival
Topic: Aquatic Invasive Species
- Clear Springs Elementary School 4th Graders
Topic: Macroinvertebrates



COMMUNICATIONS

Annual Communication

In compliance with Minnesota Statute §103B.227, subdivision 4, the District created and distributed an Annual Communication. The 2025 Annual Communication includes general district information, project updates, and ways community members can help improve our water resources. The Annual Communication was sent to local leaders and municipal partners, emailed to our full mailing list, and handed out at community events. Download the document at rpbcd.org/annual-report.

Social Media

The District posts content on three social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn under the username @rpbcd. Through interactions and on handouts, the District encourages residents to follow District social media accounts.

Newsletters

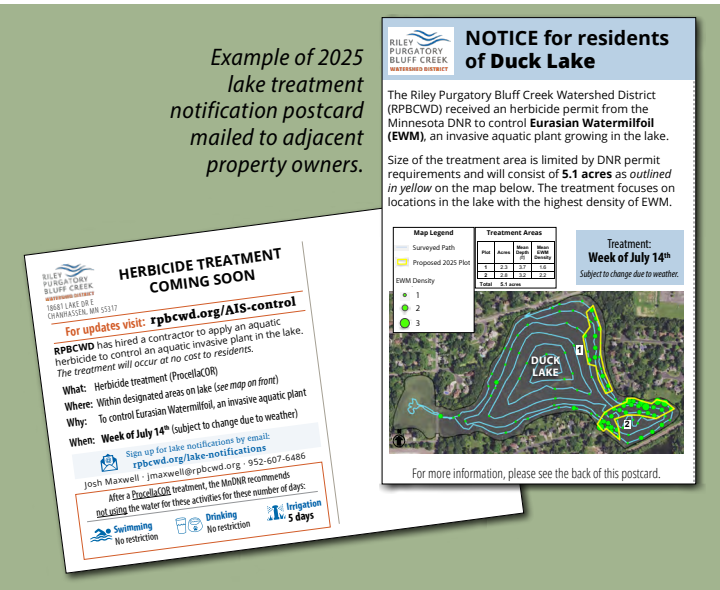
Electronic newsletters are sent quarterly to mailing list subscribers who opt-in for district updates. Subscribers can also opt to receive emails for volunteer opportunities and board meeting notices.

2025 Newsletter Summary

Issue	Recipients	Opens	Link Clicks
Winter	834	237	31
Spring	869	456	78
Summer	949	485	84
Fall	957	494	56

Direct Mail

Herbicide treatments to control aquatic invasive plants were conducted on six lakes in 2025. Before treatment, property owners adjacent to treatment areas were notified by postcard with a webpage link so residents could find out the latest information. Lake residents were also encouraged to sign up for a lake email notification service established in 2023. Lake association leaders were also contacted about treatments so that they could share the info with their association members.



Water Quality Factsheets

Every year, staff update water quality update factsheets for the previous year for three creeks and thirteen lakes:

- Ann
 - Duck
 - Hyland
 - Lotus
 - Lucy
- Mitchell
 - Red Rock
 - Rice Marsh
 - Riley
 - Round
- Silver
 - Staring
 - Susan

The 2024 factsheets were distributed electronically through email and on the website. A list of the factsheets may be accessed online at rpbcd.org/factsheets and on individual waterbody webpages at rpbcd.org/waterbodies. Printed copies were placed in the District office's front vestibule and provided upon request to lake associations and others.



New Website

In February 2025, RPBCWD launched a new website using the Streamline platform. Upgrades included built-in ADA compliance and the ability to send webpages to subscribers using the engage feature instead of through a separate application.

Wall Calendar

Each year, RPBCWD produces a wall calendar featuring artwork submitted to our annual Photo Contest. 183 photos were submitted, taken from natural areas around the district and featuring lakes and creeks, wildlife, insects, native plants and more. Each month of the calendar features callout text advertising RPBCWD projects and programs, as well as various ways community members can help protect our water resources.

Other Communication Items

In addition to growing content on the RPBCWD website, Education and outreach staff continue to expand the library of community engagement materials. We've also sponsored booklet printing with the Prairie Edge Chapter of Wild Ones.

Front and back cover of the 2026 RPBCWD Wall Calendar.



Seed packets containing a Pollinator Mix and a Bee Lawn Mix were handed out at community events.



In 2025, RPBCWD released five new stickers, which celebrate some of the native species found in Minnesota. Stickers continue to be very popular offering at tabling and other events.



E&O staff continue to upload recordings of Board of Manager meetings and work sessions to the RPBCWD YouTube channel.