



2023 Grant Program Report

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OVERVIEW

Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (RPBCWD) has three grant offerings. The Action Grant is open to all RPBCWD community members, and the Educator Mini-Grant is open to teachers and informal educators located within the district boundary. The Stewardship Grant is open to property owners within RPBCWD including homeowners, non-profits such as homeowners' associations and communities of faith, local units of government such as cities, schools, and businesses.

EDUCATOR MINI-GRANTS

The Educator Mini-Grant supports educators in their efforts to connect their students with water resources. An applicant can be awarded up to \$400 for a project that has a water resources component. Previous grantees received reimbursements for bus fees to a nature center, binoculars for wildlife watching, and snowshoe rentals. No applications were received for a Mini-Grant in 2023 despite multiple emails to teacher contacts.



In 2022, a teacher from Scenic Heights Elementary utilized an Educator Mini-Grant to purchase materials to repair a dock at a pond on school property. Students can now access the pond more safely to learn about water resources.

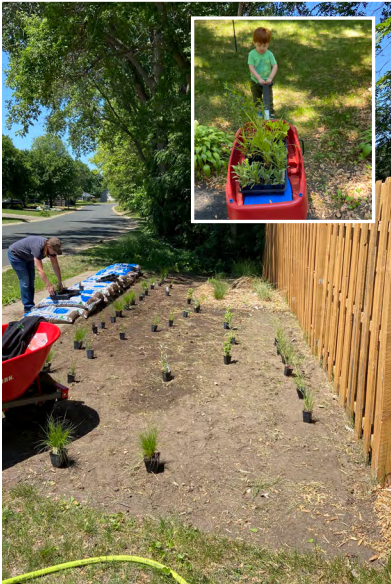
ACTION GRANT

Action grants are small, simple grants of up to \$250 for projects to protect clean water. They are designed to help members of the community install fun, easy projects as a way to grow awareness throughout within communities in our watershed. Applications may be submitted year-round, and grant money is reimbursed upon project completion.

Six Action Grants were awarded \$250 each in 2023. Two projects were completed and the four others will wrap up in 2024. Four of the projects occurred in Eden Prairie with the two others taking place in Chanhassen. The grants were awarded for these project types:

- Bee lawn with pocket prairie (one project)
- Native planting (two projects)
- Rain barrel purchase (two projects)
- Buckthorn blasters (one project)

Two Action Grant projects installed in 2023 included a native planting and purchase of a rain barrel.



STEWARDSHIP GRANT

The Stewardship Grant Program provides cost-share and technical advice for projects that protect and conserve natural resources. Ideal projects increase public awareness of the vulnerability of local water resources and solutions to improve them.

Potential grantees begin the application process by requesting a site visit. In 2023, 30 site visits were completed. These initial or "kick off" site visits are typically performed by Seth Ristow, Landscape Restoration Specialist, with the Carver Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). This ongoing partnership provides opportunity for district residents to discuss their project ideas with someone experienced in implementing a variety of best management practices including habitat restoration, erosion control, and rain gardens.

After the initial site visit, an application packet may be submitted. The application is reviewed initially by the RPBCWD grant coordinator to see if all required information was submitted. If so, the application is forwarded to the grant review committee, which in 2023 consisted of RPBCWD staff, Seth Ristow (SWCD), and Marilyn Torkelson (RPBCWD Citizen Advisory Committee).

Grant awards are based on the type of project and its value toward accomplishing District goals. The table below shows the maximum awards per applicant category. Not all projects are awarded the maximum.

Eleven grant projects were completed in 2022 with total cost-

APPLICANT CATEGORY	MAXIMUM AWARD	
	Percent of project cost	Dollar amount
Homeowner	75%	\$5,000
Non-profit	75%	\$20,000
Local government/ school/business	50%	\$50,000

share reimbursement of \$134,719. Before reimbursement, grantees must schedule and pass a project inspection (Carver County SWCD). The grantee must also submit a project report consisting of a summary description, photographs, and receipts before reimbursement is considered by grant coordinator. Grantees are required to maintain projects and submit reports after installation. Individual homeowners must maintain their project for at least five years. Other grant applicant types (non-profits such as homeowners associations, municipalities, etc.) must maintain their projects for at least ten years.

2023 STEWARDSHIP GRANT ACTIVITIES	QUANTITY
Site visits completed	31
New agreements signed	11
Active projects	19
Follow up inspections completed (projects completed in previous years)	58

Steps for a Stewardship Grant applicant/grantee.

1

Request a site visit

The first step in the grant process is to request a site visit for a consultation. Any requests that come in when the ground is frozen, will be held until spring thaw.

Request a site visit →

2

Submit a grant application

There are three different applications: One for a native planting, one for a rain barrel, and one for all other project types. The application period for new applicants is March 1st through October 31st.

Submit an application →

3

Submit a project report

Is your project complete? You'll need to submit a report to begin the project close-out review process.

Submit your report →

4

Annual reporting - long-term

Depending on the type of project/location, you are required to maintain your project for 5 years or 10 years.

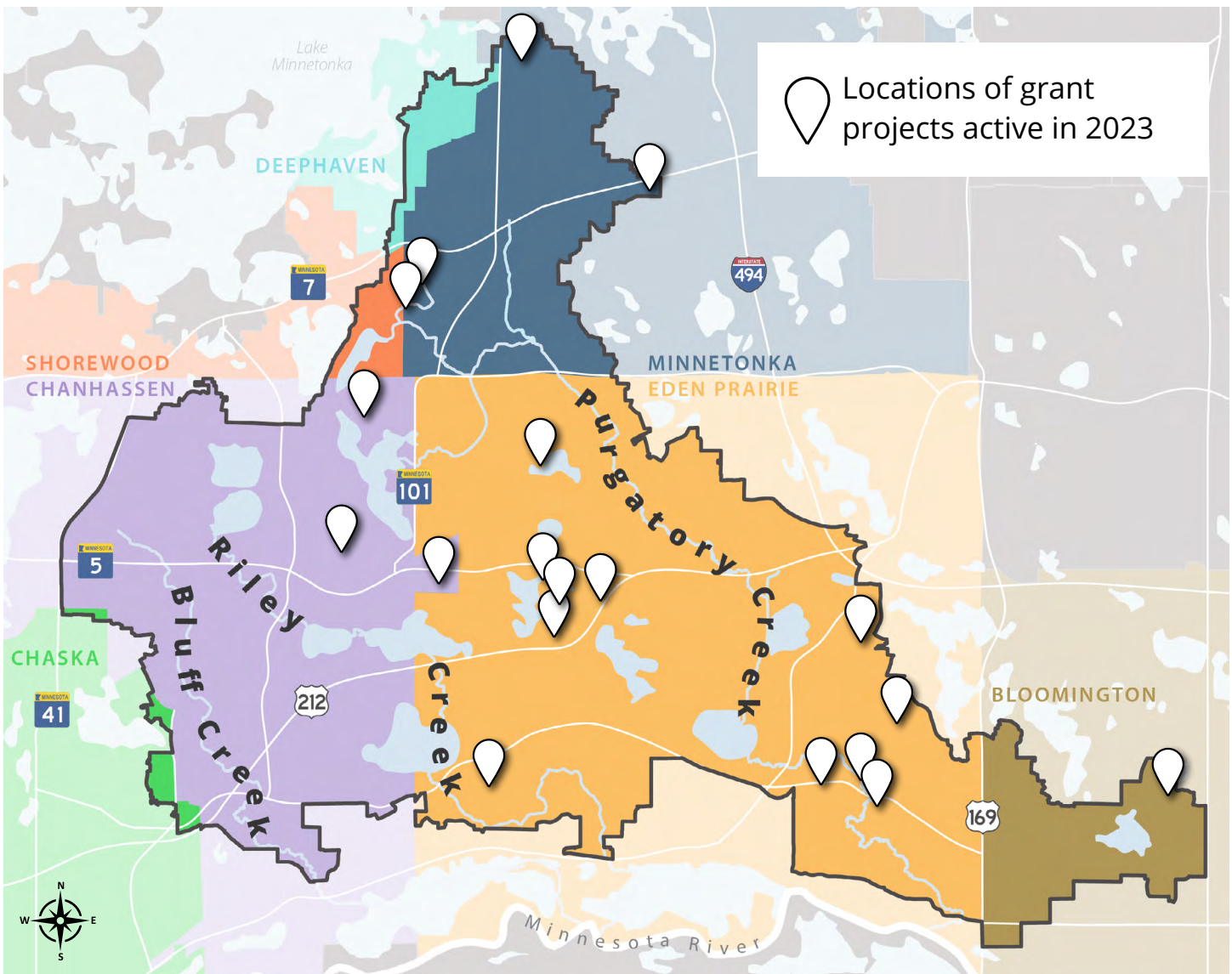
Complete annual report →

Active 2023 Stewardship Grants

In 2023, there were 19 projects undergoing active installation. The figures below summarize who, where, and what types of projects were active. The majority of grantees were single family homeowners. More than half of the projects occurred in Eden

Prairie, and most projects incorporated use of native plants through upland habitat or shoreline restorations. The map shows the approximate location of the active projects, which were distributed across four cities.

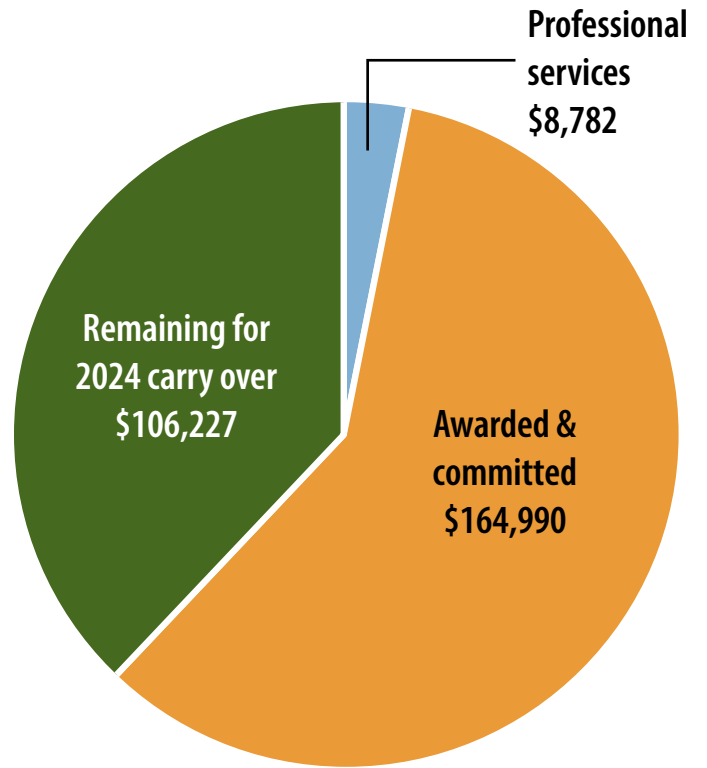
	Who were the grantees?		Where were they from?		What kind of project did they do?
Homeowners	12	Eden Prairie	11	Habitat restoration	10
Non-profits	4	Chanhassen	3	Shoreline resto/buffer	3
Municipality	2	Minnetonka	4	Native planting	4
Business	1	Bloomington	1	Other BMP	2



BUDGET STATUS

In 2023, the Stewardship Grant program had a budget of \$280,000. Of this, almost \$165,000 was awarded or committed to grant projects, and another \$9,000 was paid out to professional service support such as attorney review of cost share agreements and funds for Carver SWCD to perform site visits and inspections. About \$106,227 will be carried over to next year. The leftover amount of funds was higher than last year due to no high-dollar municipal project grant applications or awards as there has been in previous year.

2023 BUDGET END-OF-YEAR STATUS



EXAMPLE PROJECT:

NATURAL SHORELINE RESTORATION ALONG DUCK LAKE

Near Duck Lake Trail, the project restored an average of nine feet long a 120-foot stretch of eroded shoreline.



The project was installed in summer of 2023. Work included installation of native plant plugs, installation of native shrubs, application of erosion control fabric to protect soils while plants become established, and temporary fencing to protect young plants from geese. The total grant award for the project was \$5,000 with an additional \$1,500 to help pay for three years of professional maintenance.



BEFORE: Eroded shoreline with few plants to protect soil.

AFTER: A professional landscaper specializing in native plants stabilized the shoreline using coconut coir erosion control blanket. This was followed by installation of native plant plugs and native shrubs appropriate for the site. Temporary fencing was also installed to protect the young plants from geese and other wildlife.

