

District Update

December 2023

As we wrap up another active year at the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (RPBCWD), we reflect on what we've accomplished. Our monitoring program continues to collect a wealth of data used to track the health of our lakes, streams, and wetlands. This data informs prioritization of projects selected to improve the health of the watershed. Projects such as the Upper Riley Ecological Enhancement Project, planned to begin construction in 2024, will improve watershed health by stabilizing erosion, reestablishing native vegetation, and restoring floodplains.

District staff continue to regulate activities that impact the watershed through our permitting program. In addition to reviewing permit applications, staff inspect construction sites to ensure appropriate measures are taken to protect our waterbodies. Staff also mailed postcards to nearly 600 lakeshore owners to provide information about shoreline permit requirements and who to contact with questions.

October brought the District's first ever Creek Week with activities for all. 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. Residents could also pick up a tree sapling reserved earlier in the year; the trees spent the summer growing strong roots in gravel beds at our office, giving them a strong start when planted in fall. Creek Week wrapped up with the annual Cycle the Creek – a staff-guided bicycle tour along Riley Creek. Beginning with Creek Week, and lasting all month long, the Passport Adventure encouraged people to get out to explore the watershed district by offering a prize pack to determined explorers.

In 2023, our Stewardship Grant program awarded almost \$170,000 to residents, homeowner associations, cities and others committed to implementing natural shoreline restorations, habitat restorations, waterbody native vegetation buffers, and stormwater management projects. Some projects were also awarded funds to help pay for professional maintenance during the first three years, which is a critical time to establish native vegetation.

RPBCWD welcomed three new staff to our team this year: Dylan Monahan as Administrative Assistant, Alaina Portoghese as Communications Specialist and Andrew Hartmann as Water Resources Technician. We were also excited to welcome a new GreenCorps member, Rachel Whittington, this fall.

We at the district look forward to 2024, where we will continue our work to develop our Ecosystem Health Action Plan (EHAP for short). This collaborative effort includes contributions from many partners to inform, through an ecosystem lens, development of the 10-year management plan update. Learn more about this effort at rpbcd.org/EHAP.

Sincerely,

Terry Jeffery
District Administrator



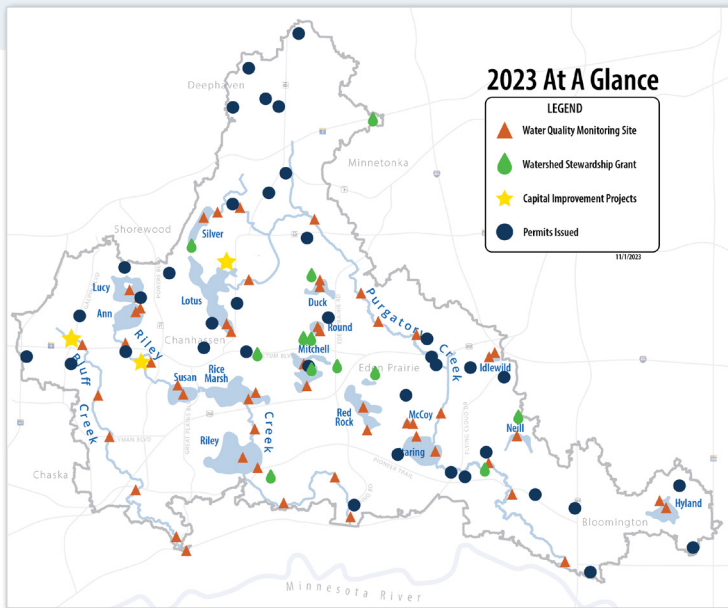
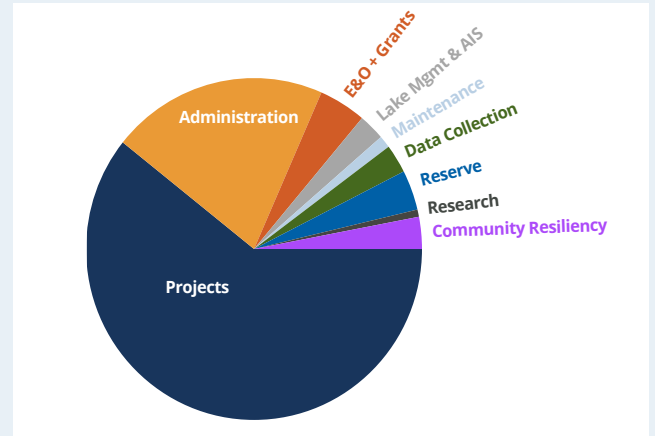
54 years of Watershed Protection

The Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (RPBCWD) is a special unit of local government with a boundary based on the watersheds of Riley, Purgatory, and Bluff creeks. It was established on July 31, 1969, following a petition by local property owners to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. The purpose of RPBCWD is to protect and improve the water resources of our communities. RPBCWD partners with local communities to identify top priorities and plan, implement, and manage efforts which protect and improve local water resources. In addition, the District works to educate and engage community members regarding the protection of the District's water resources.

District tax dollars at work

Activities of the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District are funded through property tax levies. We thank our community for their part in financing our mission of protecting, managing, and restoring our water resources!

The 2023 levy was \$3.8 million, and the board-approved 2023 budget, including funds from previous levies, was \$7.3 million. The funds were used for projects, as well as administration, maintenance, lake and creek monitoring, aquatic invasive species management (AIS), education and outreach (E&O) and grant funding, community resiliency, and a reserve fund for emergencies.



Photos in the 2024 calendar were submitted by community members through our 2023 Photo Contest.



Board of Managers

The District is governed by a five-person board of managers. Four managers are appointed by the Hennepin County Commissioners and one by the Carver County Commissioners. They serve three-year terms.



Tom Duevel Vice President Minnetonka	Jill Crafton Treasurer Bloomington	Dorothy Pedersen Secretary Shorewood	David Ziegler President Eden Prairie	Larry Koch Member Chanhassen
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Ecosystem Health Action Plan

RPBCWD has worked for decades to protect its natural waterbodies through directing management of stormwater runoff from hard surfaces. We are now developing an Ecosystem Health Action Plan to expand this mission to directly address green space runoff to take the next step to protect and restore water resources and reach towards a healthy urban ecosystem. The purpose of this plan has been to identify strategies, programs, and projects that can be undertaken to initiate ecosystem recovery to protect and restore water resources. Learn more at rpbcwd.org/EHAP.

Check out our Annual Reports

The watershed district's annual report is a summary of what happened the past year. It includes more information on watershed finances, projects, and plans for the upcoming year. Read the full report online at rpbcwd.org/annualreport.