

Our community in action

Community-scale problems require community-scale actions, and water quality is an issue that affects and belongs to all. The District is fortunate to have a community that is committed to protecting, managing, and restoring water resources.

Voicing citizen views

The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) is a volunteer advisory board that supports the District's board of managers in their mission to protect, manage, and restore water resources.

As representatives of citizen interests, committee members advise the board on decision making, communicate concerns from the public, and help educate the community on clean water action. The CAC is a core part of the district's regular functions, and CAC members throughout the District's history have helped to shape important local decisions.

Members of the CAC also work to shape some of the ways in which the district welcomes the broader community into water stewardship. Volunteer clean-up projects, wetland walk outreach events, new partnerships, and other projects have stemmed from CAC volunteers.



Eyes on erosion control
MEMBERS OF THE Riley Purgatory Creek Watershed District's Citizens Advisory Committee learned erosion control measures within the district Sept. 4, learning to identify correctly installed silt fences, rock filter dikes, wood fiber blankets and hay/mulch covers. Their eyes expand our ability to track erosion problems. Watershed District President Conrad Fishness said about the advisory group. Above, Don Atkins (left) discusses wetland drainage with watershed district board member Dal Day (center), Atkins and Michael Boland (right) are members of the advisory committee. All three men reside in Eden Prairie. (Submitted photo)

Upper left: members of the CAC worked with the City of Chanhassen to organize neighborhood community clean-ups for water quality in 2017 and 2018
Above: members of the CAC from 2019
Left: a newspaper photo from 1997 shows members of the CAC learning about erosion control measures (EPN)



An Adopt-a-dock volunteer checks for zebra mussels on Lake Lucy

Explore our yard

and discover sustainable practices you can take home to yours

This firestation uses practices to conserve water & promote healthy habitat. Explore the grounds to see how the City of Eden Prairie is reducing its water usage, and how you can help by:

- Installing a rainwater capture system, collecting and storing rainwater for use on the grounds.
- Planting native and drought-tolerant plants, trees and shrubs.
- Using native plants to create a habitat for pollinators, birds, and other animals.

We Use Rainwater

This project is a water conservation project at a fire station in Eden Prairie. Rainwater is collected and stored for use on the grounds.

The City of Eden Prairie worked with the District and the Metropolitan Council to build a capture and reuse system at Fire Station 2, and transform its grounds to native and drought tolerant landscaping

Local leaders in water protection

Seven different cities have boundaries that intersect with those of the District, as do two counties and a soil and water conservation district. Not to mention the many regional and state agencies that the District interacts with on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis. The partnership of these agencies and organizations make the work of protecting clean water possible.

Partnership is a two-way (or more) street. Some of the projects, events, and programs the District partners on are internal ideas. But just as often, the ideas come from the staff and leadership of local cities and other organizations, or through brainstorming sessions and needs assessments. Looking back through the projects discussed in other sections, you'll see clearly how these partnerships make the work of protecting, managing, and restoring water resources possible.



Supporting the City of Chanhassen for an environmentally-friendly brining facility

Citizen scientists on the lookout

Lakeshore residents in the District have long been strong advocates for clean water.

They also serve as an important resource for the District because of their close and frequent interactions with water resources. One such example is through the Adopt-a-Dock monitoring program, which engages dock owners to check underwater monitoring plates monthly for the presence of zebra mussels. Since 2015, volunteers have monitored lakes across the district, to supplement invasive species monitoring efforts by District staff. This type of citizen science both empowers local residents to contribute meaningful data to ongoing projects, and builds capacity within District research projects.

Supporting great work

The Watershed Stewardship Grant program is an essential part of the District's efforts to empower and assist community members to protect and improve local waterways.

Formerly known as the Cost Share Program, the Watershed Stewardship Grant program offers financial support and resources to District residents and organizations that are implementing water protection projects. Since it began in 2013, the program has contributed funds to many projects across the district, including installation of stormwater best management practices, purchases of environmentally-friendly equipment, and native habitat restorations.

Educator mini-grants were added to the grant program in 2016 and are designed to support educators in incorporating water resources into their teaching. Action grants were added to the program in 2019 and are small, simple grants for team projects that protect clean water. These grants help our broader community—residents, local businesses, students, and other groups—plan and implement projects that improve water quality and support education goals.



Above: a residential rain garden, installed with support from the District

Below: a shoreline restoration project on Mitchell was funded in part by cost share dollars



Businesses making a difference



Property managers learn about the impact that salt has on local waterways, and what they can do to reduce salt use on their properties

Businesses and professionals are an important part of this watershed community, and the decisions that they make can have lasting impacts on local water resources.

Business campuses often have large footprints, and their own community of employees or members who are impacted by the organization's culture. Professionals may be private businesses or government, and are those who do work that impacts water resources. These include individuals who manage winter snow and ice, turf grass, water conservation and habitat restoration, as well as landscapers, builders and developers.

By attending classes for turf grass management, learning about smart salting, installing advanced stormwater management strategies, and more, many businesses in this community have shown a commitment to improving their practices. Learning about these important topics and making changes can often save money and time, and help protect the environment.

The next generation

From pre-schoolers to college students, the next generation of water stewards is an essential part of our community.

The youth outreach program seeks to create meaningful childhood experiences connected to water resources, and increase understanding and stewardship of water resources in children and their families. The District partners local educators, the Eden Prairie Staring Lake Outdoor Center, and others to bring place-based and interactive water education into the classroom.

Older students can interact with the District through first-hand experiences such as volunteering. Service learners are college students or other community members who gain important skills in the field, and help the District collect water quality data, manage invasive species, and more. The District also takes on college-aged interns who help the district during the busy summer season.

Local educators participate in a Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) workshop led by staff from RPBCWD and Nine Mile Creek Watershed District



Volunteers pose after a successful day of planting young trees in the Scenic Heights School Forest Restoration Project, October 2019

Fourth-grade students from Eden Prairie learn about testing water quality with staff from RPBCWD and the Eden Prairie Staring Lake Outdoor Center, October 2018

