

MIDDLE ST. CROIX WATERSHED MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Lakeland

Prepared by:

MIDDLE ST. CROIX WMO BOARD OF MANAGERS
APPROVAL DATE: March 12th, 2026

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INTRODUCTION

The Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization encompasses approximately 19.8 square miles and is located in the east-central part of Washington County. A distinction exists between the Middle St. Croix watershed and the other watersheds of Washington County in that the Middle St. Croix watershed has many small, parallel watersheds that all flow to the St. Croix, whereas the other watersheds in the County generally have one major drainage with a headwaters and outlet. Land use in the watershed is evenly distributed between agricultural uses, rural residential, high-density residential and commercial land uses.

The Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) is a Joint Powers Watershed Management Organization composed of ten St. Croix Valley communities established under State Statute 103B to cooperatively manage water resources within the watershed. The ten member communities of the MSCWMO are Afton, Bayport, Baytown Township, Lakeland, Lakeland Shores, Lake St. Croix Beach, Oak Park Heights, St. Mary's Point, Stillwater, and West Lakeland Township.

In general, the purposes of a Watershed Management Organization (WMO) are to conserve natural resources through land use planning, flood control, and other conservation projects in order to ensure continued public health and welfare. The specific purposes of a watershed management organization are:

- Cooperatively manage water resources in the watershed.
- Inventory and assess the resources of the watershed.
- Monitor the water quality of lakes and streams in the watershed.
- Provide education on water related issues in the watershed.
- Review development plans for stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, and provide wetland and shoreland protection.
- Plan and implement capital improvement projects that enhance the water resources of the watershed.

The mission of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization is to jointly and cooperatively manage the water resources of the watershed. The ten member communities will do so to conserve and protect the water resources in an efficient and effective manner.

ORGANIZATION AND BUDGET

MSCWMO Board of Managers

Each member municipality or township within the MSCWMO appoints one member to the MSCWMO Board. The 2025 representatives from each participatory community are listed below.

Annie Perkins
4042 River Road S.
Afton, MN 55001
651.592.3007

Tom McCarthy
16455 20th St. S.
Lake St. Croix Beach, MN 55043
651.436.7031

Brian Zeller (Chair)
84 St. Croix Trail S
Lakeland, MN 55043
612.325.3038

Tom Grahek
2959 Itasca Ave. S.
St. Mary's Point, MN 55043
612.417.5394

Carly Johnson
14418 57th St N
Oak Park Heights, MN 55082
651.261.5801

Avis Peters
13045 53rd Street Pl.
Stillwater., MN 55082
651.430.8163

Ryan Collins
1467 Benson Blvd E
Stillwater MN 55082
651.246.8264

Dave Millard
16051 Quality Ct
Lakeland, MN 55043
651.408.3483

Rachel Dana
2235 Oakgreen Ave N
West Lakeland Township, MN 55082
612.751.7583

John Dahl
775 3rd Ave N.
Bayport, MN 55003
651.439.7312

MSCWMO Contract Support Staff

The MSCWMO does not employ staff but does contract with several organizations for professional services. The organizations providing these services are listed below.

Administrator
Matt Oldenburg-Downing
Washington Conservation
District
455 Hayward Avenue
Oakdale, MN 55128
651.796.2227

Attorney
Troy Gilchrist
1250 Wayzata Boulevard E
Unit #1065
Wayzata, MN 55391
612.234.7539
troy@townlawcenter.com

Recording Secretary
Washington Conservation
District
455 Hayward Avenue
Oakdale, MN 55128
651.330.8220 Ext. 2225

Table 1: 2025 Budget

Administration Budget	Community Contributions
Administration - General	\$ 33,000
Accounting	\$ 1,800
Legal Fees – General	\$ 500
Audit	\$ 5,500
Insurance	\$ 2,600
Office supplies/equipment/postage	\$ 400
Minutes/Clerical	\$ 1,400
Copying/printing	\$ 400
Subtotal	\$ 45,600
Project Budget	
Project Contingency	\$ 2,000
Engineering - Project	\$ 4,000
Development Plan Reviews	\$ 7,000
Erosion Monitoring Program	\$ 2,400
BMP Program Tech. Assistance	\$ 32,000
BMP Program Cost Share	\$ 15,000
Community TA	\$ 3,000
Water Resource Educator	\$ 6,700
Website	\$ 900
Inspection and Tracking Database	\$ 900
Water Monitoring	\$ 23,000
Water Monitoring Equip. Savings	\$ 750
2025 WMP Update	\$5,000
Subtotal	\$ 102,650
TOTAL	\$ 148,250

Table 2: 2026 Budget

Administration Budget	Community Contributions
Administration - General	\$ 34,000
Accounting	\$ 1,880
Legal Fees – General	\$ 500
Audit	\$ 5,500
Insurance	\$ 2,600
Office supplies/equipment/postage	\$ 400
Minutes/Clerical	\$ 1,470
Copying/printing	\$ 400
Subtotal	\$ 46,750
Project Budget	
Project Contingency	\$ 2,000
Engineering - Project	\$ 4,000
Development Plan Reviews	\$ 7,000
Erosion Monitoring Program	\$ 2,520
BMP Program Tech. Assistance	\$ 34,000
BMP Program Cost Share	\$ 15,000
Community TA	\$ 3,000
Water Resource Educator	\$ 8,000
Website	\$ 900
Inspection and Tracking Database	\$ 500
Water Monitoring	\$ 23,000
Water Monitoring Equip. Savings	\$ 750
2035 WMP Update	\$5,000
Subtotal	\$ 105,670
TOTAL	\$ 152,420

AUDIT REPORT

Due to changes in annual audit requirements, the Board has opted to forgo an audit for 2025. The next audit is scheduled to be completed in 2029. An annual summary of budget vs. actual is prepared by staff and presented to the Board for review.

2025 PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

2025 Implementation of Performance Standards

The mission of the MSCWMO is to jointly and cooperatively manage water resources within the WMO and to provide effective and efficient services to the residents of the watershed. To work to meet this goal, the MSCWMO adopted Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS) developed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The watershed also provided assistance to member communities to integrate MIDS into local ordinance. Rather than create its own separate permit program, the MSCWMO reviews projects that meet the criteria listed in section 7.0 of the 2015-2025 Watershed Management Plan. Member communities do not issue permits until the project has met all applicable watershed performance standards.

Table 3: MSCWMO Project Reviews and Total Phosphorous Load Reductions of Permanent Stormwater Best Management Practices Estimated with the MIDS Calculator.

Year	Total Projects Reviewed	Total BMP Estimated TP Reduction (lbs./yr.)	Redevelopment BMP Estimated TP Reduction (lbs./yr.)
2016	19	26.7	25.6
2017*	19	133.6	124.7
2018	18	25.8	17.2
2019	13	17.9	6.0
2020	11	51.7	0.2
2021	13	14.0	7.6
2022	18	7.2	7.2
2023	22	13.0	11.1
2024	12	45.5	5.4
2025	27	11.4	6.4

*2017 includes the permanent stormwater BMPs installed as part of the St. Croix Crossing project.

2025 Projects Implementation

The MSCWMO 2025-2035 Watershed Management Plan prioritizes project implementation in the Lily Lake, Lake McKusick, Perro Creek and St. Croix Direct Subwatersheds to reduce total phosphorus (TP) loading to Lake St. Croix by at least 20 lbs. A total of 14 water quality improvement and habitat enhancement projects were installed in 2025 with an estimated annual TP load reduction of 2.6 lbs.

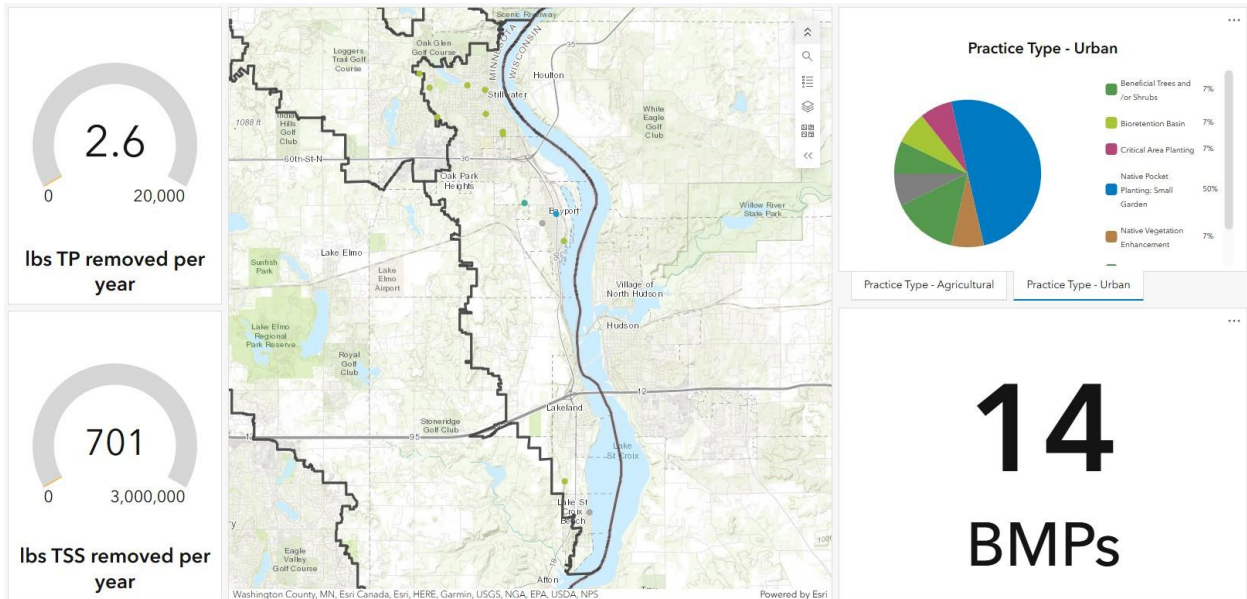


Figure 1. 2025 Installed Practices with Total Phosphorus (TP) and Total Suspended Solids (TSS) Reductions

Table 4: MSCWMO Water Quality Retrofits and Total Phosphorous Load Reductions of Permanent Stormwater Best Management Practices.

Year	Total Projects Installed	Total BMP Estimated TP Reduction (lbs./yr.)	Targeted Subwatersheds
2016	3	48.8	Lake St. Croix and Perro
2017	5	10.1	Lake St. Croix and Lily
2018	6	56.3	Lake St. Croix and Lily
2019	7	39.4	Lake St. Croix and Lily
2020	4	0.8	Lake St. Croix and Perro
2021	4	65.3	Lake St. Croix and Lily
2022	12	8.0	Lake St. Croix and McKusick
2023	15	18.3	Lake St. Croix, Lily, and McKusick
2024	13	25.5	Lake St. Croix, Perro Creek, McKusick
2025	24	2.6	Lake St. Croix, Perro, Lily, and McKusick

Best Management Practices and Subwatershed Implementation Program

The MSCWMO continues to seek partnerships to construct high-performing and low-cost stormwater best management practices identified in its subwatershed analyses. In 2025, three projects were completed that were either identified in a subwatershed analysis or located in priority direct drainages that were part of these analyses. These projects received state and local funding to design and construct:

Projects that were installed in 2025:

- St. Croix United Church Bioretention Project, Perro Creek Subwatershed.
- Bayport Fire Station Turf Conversion Project, Perro Creek Subwatershed.
- Barkers Alps Woodland Restoration, Perro Creek Subwatershed.

The following is a summary of work that was completed in 2025:

St. Croix United Church Bioretention Project:

The MSCWMO awarded a Landscaping for Water Quality Grant to St. Croix United Church in Bayport to replace an existing raingarden located near the intersection of 3rd St N and 2nd Avenue N. The existing raingarden was originally constructed by the MSCWMO in partnership with the City in 2011, and was determined to be non-functional by WCD staff due to sediment accumulation and outlet configuration. The new basin features an expanded footprint, relocated outlet for increased storage, and a more robust pre-treatment system for coarse sediment capture. The project is expected to reduce Total Phosphorus (TP) loading to Perro Creek by 2.16 lbs annually.

This project was identified as a priority retrofit location in the MSCWMO BMP Retrofit Analysis completed in 2024. The project was funded in part by the Washington Conservation District using

FY22 Clean Water Fund dollars (\$27,079), the Middle St. Croix WMO (\$1,504 cost share and \$1,220 in technical assistance time), and St. Croix United Church (\$1,504).



[Above] *Before (left) and after construction (right).*

Bayport Fire Station Turf Conversion Project:

In September, 2025 the MSCWMO board approved cost-share encumbrance of up to \$1,200 from the Water Quality Improvement Grant program to convert approximately 1.42 acres of turf to native prairie under an existing solar array at the Bayport Fire Station. Natural Resource Services completed the site preparation and seeding in October of 2025 at a total cost of \$4,630. The project is expected to reduce TP loading to Perro Creek and Perro Pond by approximately 0.48 lbs/yr while providing nesting and forage resources to birds, pollinators and other wildlife.



[Above] *Bayport Fire Station forment seeding, November 2025.*

Barkers Alps Woodland Restoration, Bayport:

In 2023, the City of Bayport received a Metro Conservation Partners Legacy Grant (part of the Outdoor Heritage Fund and part of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment) to enhance 24 acres of buckthorn-dominated woodland in Barker's Alps Park. The City of Bayport contracted with Landbridge Ecological to complete initial buckthorn removal in fall of 2024 with follow-up foliar spraying completed in 2025.



[Above] *Barker's Alps buckthorn removal 2024.*

Middle St Croix Mini-Grant Cost Share program:

The Middle St Croix WMO offers Stewardship Grants (up to \$500) to qualifying landowners to install low-cost BMPs in priority areas. The program saw 12 installations and 37 inquiries (likely future applicants). These projects included two woodland or bluffland enhancements and 10 native landscaping projects for wildlife benefit.



[Left] *Bird City Gardens/Mulberry Bird Station, Stillwater.* [Right] *Eckel native landscaping, Stillwater.*



[Left] *Lake St. Croix Beach bluffland enhancement.* [Right] *McCready woodland enhancement, Bayport.*

Erosion Monitoring Program

The MSCWMO erosion control inspection program was developed to ensure that the policies and performance standards of the MSCWMO are implemented during construction on qualifying projects. WCD staff inspect projects reviewed and approved by MSCWMO staff and the Board. The MSCWMO coordinates its inspection program with its member communities and their building/permit inspectors. The program focuses efforts on communities which do not have their own inspection staff available including St. Mary's Point, Lake St. Croix Beach, Lakeland, Lakeland Shores, and West Lakeland Township, although inspections are occasionally conducted in other communities on an as-needed basis.

In 2025, 29 erosion control inspections were conducted on 11 projects. Construction activity was significantly higher than previous years, and the building season was subject to wetter than average weather conditions, including several severe storms throughout the summer. Compliance over the year was generally high, with 31.0% of inspections receiving an A grade, 37.9% a B, 20.7% a C, 10.3% a D, and 0.0% an F. However, nine of the inspections were focused on just two projects, which either started as or were found to have a violation of bluff protection standards along the St. Croix River. An additional two projects were unaware of and nearly began work without a state-required construction stormwater permit, which regulates all projects disturbing more than one acre of soil.

For the purposes of this summary, compliance rates for inspection items were only considered when the item was marked "compliant" or "non-compliant", and all "not inspected" and "under review" items were removed from the total number of inspections for each inspection item. The most common non-compliant items noted were failure to minimize disturbance or use practices appropriate for steep slopes (58.3% of applicable inspections), failure to install downgradient perimeter controls at the edge of the site (34.8% of applicable inspections), and failure to properly maintain perimeter controls (23.8% of applicable inspections). The items with the highest compliance rates were proper vehicle sediment trackout prevention practices (88.2% of applicable inspections), proper maintenance of soil cover on previously disturbed soils (83.3% of applicable inspections), and proper installation of downgradient perimeter controls (65.2% of inspections). These figures were heavily influenced by a single site, which violated bluff protection standards without a project review on a bluff within the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway by clearing all rooted vegetation and dumping fill over the bluffline, leaving the steep slope and St. Croix River exposed with no erosion prevention or sediment controls. Considerable efforts were made by City, MSCWMO, and WCD staff to bring the landowner back into compliance through restorative grading, soil cover, and revegetation of the slope. Another site with an approved project review was found to have deviated from plans during construction by improperly installing their site perimeter sediment controls on the middle of the river bluff slope, which was an encroachment on City property, and were preparing to remove retaining wall timbers on the slope. Despite the violations and weather conditions seen in 2025, no sediment discharges or significant erosion events were observed on any site.

Other activities conducted in 2025 intended to improve compliance were distribution of "reminder flyers" to project contacts in the spring and fall to prepare sites for wet conditions, conducting pre-construction site meetings, and providing guidance to site managers for obtaining erosion and sediment control training and construction stormwater permits prior to construction. Considerable

technical assistance was also provided through coordinated on-site meetings during construction for permanent stormwater treatment features, in addition to erosion and sediment control solutions.

BMP Inspections and Maintenance

The MSCWMO BMP Inspection and Tracking Database was developed to ensure that the installed practices are meeting functional and aesthetic expectations. In 2025, 86 MSCWMO projects were inspected and graded as either “Nonfunctional”, “Partially Functioning”, “Degraded Aesthetics” or “No Maintenance Required”. Of the 86 inspected, 11 were graded as either “Nonfunctional” or “Partially Functioning”, indicating a need for partial or complete rehabilitation. In most cases, inlet clogging leading to bypass of the practice was responsible for a grade of “Partially Functioning.”

Annual routine maintenance was performed by WCD Maintenance Crew staff on several recent MSCWMO targeted retrofit projects, including:

- Inlet cleanout on 10 raingardens in OPH Area D
- Vegetative and Inlet Maintenance on Ozark raingarden
- Golden Creeper eradication efforts in the Mulberry Ravine
- Stillwater Country Club inlet and vegetative maintenance and Lily Lake Basin inlet cleanout and vegetative maintenance

Routine maintenance consisted of structural repair where necessary (e.g. repairing or retrofitting inlets), inlet cleanout, weed removal, mulching, and re-planting. Additionally, two small-scale retrofit projects were completed in 2025 with support from WCD staff, including the CSAH 5 Gutter Bin and Quixote IESF Inlet retrofit projects. A total of eight catch-basin liners were installed on Owens St N as a part of the CSAH Gutter Bin retrofit project, leading to the removal of nearly 450 lbs of sediment and debris. Samples were also collected from the gutter bags and analyzed for phosphorus and heavy metal content. In Lakeland, improvements were also made to six inlets along Quixote Ave N to improve the function and longevity of the iron-enhanced sand filter practice installed by the WMO in 2025.



[Above] CSAH 5/Owens St N Gutter Bin installation, Stillwater.



Before



After

[Above] Quixote Ave N IESF inlet retrofit, Lakeland.

The WMO also continued to work in partnership with the East Metro Water Resource Education Program, Cities, Sustainable Stillwater, the Friends of Lily Lake, and the Stillwater Foundation to implement an Adopt-a-Raingarden Program in Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, Bayport, Lake St. Croix Beach and West Lakeland Township. The program will continue in 2026 under volunteer management.

Groundwater

The MSCWMO continued to recognize the Washington County Groundwater Plan during 2025 and continued to participate in County wide technical advisory committee meetings to prioritize implementation and identify responsible parties for specific activities.

Local Government Controls

The MSCWMO continued to work with its member communities to strengthen water quality and natural resource management. Through a Clean Water Fund Accelerated Implementation grant the MSCWMO assisted its member communities to update their local controls. In 2018 all communities except Stillwater adopted Minimum Impact Design Standards (MIDS) into local ordinance and code. All communities will continue to participate in the MSCWMO's project review program. The City of Stillwater has adopted MIDS standards by resolution in 2019 but has not codified.

One Watershed One Plan

In 2025, the MSCWMO has worked collaboratively with 15 local governments participating in the Lower St. Croix Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. The MSCWMO will continue to work collaboratively to implement a coordinated management plan on the large HUC 8 basin scale.

Information and Education Program

Outreach and engagement to restore native landscapes and reduce runoff pollution

The Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water Program is a Minnesota partnership hosted by Metro Blooms. Public, private, and nonprofit partners work together to educate the public about native plants, raingardens and shoreline plantings and encourage homeowners to complete projects on their land. The program operates the www.BlueThumb.org website, hosts workshops and other events, delivers educational messaging through several media platforms, and has produced numerous print resources, including the Blue Thumb Guide to Year Round Yard Care.

EMWREP helps to support Blue Thumb financially (\$500 per year), as a guest speaker for events, and through its media and communications. EMWREP also hosted the following workshops and gardening events within the MSCWMO:

- Feb. 19 Trillium Garden Club in Stillwater (15 people)
- April 26: Sustainable Stillwater Eco Fair at Pioneer Park
- May 17: Invasive removal and native planting at Lumberjack Landing in Stillwater
- June 5 Wetlands of the St. Croix in Afton (27 people)
- July 16 Trillium Garden Club Tour in Stillwater (15 people)
- Tue., Nov. 18: Middle St. Croix WMO bluffland landowner workshop (17 people)

MSCWMO also mailed a two-page newsletter to riverway landowners in Bayport, Lakeland, Lakeland Shores, and St. Mary's Point

Adopt-a-Drain: The Adopt-a-Drain program engages community residents in helping to prevent stormwater pollution by cleaning leaves, litter and other debris off of storm drains near their homes. Volunteers get reminders via text or email and are asked to report their actions on-line so that cities can track the program's impact.

In 2025, EMWREP continued to promote the program through a variety of means, including:

- Participating in Watershed Partners and financially supporting the Adopt-a-Drain
- Publishing articles in local newspapers and city newsletters
- Collaborating with volunteer groups
- Sending quarterly e-updates to Adopt a Drain volunteers to share info about partner programs, upcoming events, and other volunteer opportunities
- [Adopt a drain \(video\)](#)(9-28-25) - 6k views on TikTok + 20k views on Instagram

There are currently 195 drains adopted in MSCWMO, including:

- 14 in Bayport
- 21 in Oak Park Heights
- 152 in Stillwater
- 8 in West Lakeland

Chloride education

We mailed an educational package to 52 private contractors, 75 schools, and 45 HOAs with info about SMART Salting best practices and upcoming trainings. We also sent an e-newsletter to 794 Adopt-a-Drain participants, volunteers, and lake associations members.

Throughout 2025, staff also published numerous news articles and videos about chloride pollution for social media and attended the DaVinci Fest at Stillwater High School on Jan. 25 to share info about chloride and SMART salting.

Well Water Screening Clinic

- During the Aug. 21 clinic in Baytown, we tested 135 samples for nitrate and chloride (200+ attendees) and had lots of important conversations about PFAS and other local drinking water concerns.

Presentations: Throughout the year, EMWREP staff gave dozens of presentations about local water issues, conservation success stories, partner projects and programs, and more.

- **Feb. 3: Presentation for Bayport City Council** (Barbara)

- **Feb. 6: Write in Our Midst:** Author Talk for Washington County Libraries about the St. Croix River (Angie) (30 participants)
- **April 8: Exploring the St. Croix: Adventures on and off the Water.** Hosted by Wild Ones - Oak Savanna St. Croix Chapter at Family Means in Stillwater (Angie)(25 participants)
- **May 6: Presentation for Sentence to Serve crew** (Angie and Tara Kelly) (10 participants)
- **June 26: Exploring the St. Croix River Valley.** Presentation to Washington County Master Gardeners at Bayport Library. (Angie) (90 participants)
- **July 15: Presentation about the St. Croix River** at Boutwell's Landing in Oak Park Heights (Angie) (80 participants)
- **July 30 – Aug 3: Washington County Fair**
-
- **Aug. 19: History Cruise** (Stillwater). Presentation about natural history and conservation in the St. Croix River watershed. (Angie) (154 participants)
- **Nov. 18: Stillwater Sunrise Rotary.** Presentation about watershed climate resiliency efforts (Angie) (45 participants)

Mentor & engage volunteers: Through EMWREP, MSCWMO engages volunteers in helping to educate the public, plant and care for trees, and complete projects to protect and restore waterways.

- **Water Stewards:** Water Stewards is a program operated by Freshwater, with local partners. Stewards complete 40-hours of on-line training plus a capstone project to become certified. Once certified, they volunteer 25-hours per year to support watershed and conservation initiatives in their local communities. There are currently 20 Water Stewards working in Washington County, including 4 in the MSCWMO.

In 2025, we received \$10k in grant funding from St. Croix Valley Foundation to help us recruit and train new Water Stewards. We'll be doing this work in partnership with the St. Croix Watershed Stewards (a sister organization, with volunteers in Minnesota and Wisconsin). With this new funding, we are now training two new water stewards in MSCWMO.

- **Adopt-a-Raingarden:** The Adopt-a-Raingarden program engages community volunteers to care for raingardens in Stillwater and Oak Park Heights. Volunteers commit to removing weeds, litter, and built-up sediment during the growing season and reporting larger maintenance concerns to staff at Washington Conservation District.

EMWREP collaborates with Sustainable Stillwater to keep an up-to-date list of volunteers and garden locations and plans an annual clean-up event. This year's event was held on May 10 and had eight volunteer participants. There are 35 adopted raingardens in the program.

- **Tree Stewards:** Minnesota's Tree Steward program is designed for people who love trees, enjoy being outdoors, and want to volunteer in their community. In addition to caring for

community trees, volunteers also help to lead reforestation efforts and share education and tree care information at community events. This spring, EMWREP worked with Washington Conservation District to host volunteer trainings on Saturday, April 5 in Scandia and Saturday, April 12 in Lake Elmo. We now have 43 certified Tree Stewards who have provided 150 hours of tree care and educational support to our communities in 2025.

EMWREP partners have utilized Tree Steward volunteers to help complete a wide array of native landscape restoration efforts in the MSCWMO this year. A few examples include:

- **Bayport:** pruning boulevard trees and caring for trees planted in the last 5 years
 - **Baytown Twp.:** Helping to sort and distribute trees at the WCD spring tree sale
 - **Stillwater:** Planting trees at Brown's Creek Park and removing buckthorn
-
- **School Planting Projects:** There are new school planting projects in progress at Lily Lake Elem. (Stillwater), New Heights (Stillwater), Afton-Lakeland Elem., and St. Croix Montessori (West Lakeland).

HOA Education Program recognized as MN Watersheds Program of the Year

Over the past three years, EMWREP has developed a comprehensive education program to support Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) in caring for their stormwater and green infrastructure. The initiative began in 2023-24, when we conducted surveys and focus groups to learn about the knowledge, behaviors, barriers, motivations, and education needs of HOAs. We then created an Education Toolkit with 12 fact sheets, covering a range of topics from stormwater ponds to snow and ice removal, and hosted a conference for HOA leaders.

This year, EMWREP partnered with UMN Water Resources and Minnesota Sea Grant to develop a three-part training course to help HOAs understand stormwater features and plan for long-term maintenance. Ten HOAs participated in the pilot training, including two from MSCWMO.

St. Croix River Workshop on the Water: July 30 in Taylor's Falls

The annual St. Croix WOW offers a unique opportunity for community leaders to network, access support from state and local government, and learn about issues such as sustainable community development, preventing harmful algal blooms, community forestry, healthy shorelines, and St. Croix Watershed resources and connections.

This year's workshop included keynotes from Matt Poppleton, Executive Director of Wild Rivers Conservancy of the St. Croix and Namekagon, Nate Toering, National Park Service, and Jen Kader, Clean Water Council. There were also five learning stations with mini-presentations. 120 local leaders from cities, counties, townships, watersheds, and SWCDs attended, including numerous people representing communities in the MSCWMO.

In addition, EMWREP maintains a robust presence on social media through its @mnnature_awesome accounts.

Find detailed information about education programming completed by the EMWREP partnership in its 2025 Annual Report.

Website

The MSCWMO continued to update its website in 2025. The website contains up to date meeting dates, agendas, minutes, annual reports, water monitoring information, contact information and more. In addition, the website also contains a section for grant reporting which highlights projects completed as part of the BWSR Clean Water Legacy Program. Project review applications can be submitted online, as well as all necessary information on the MSCWMO's project review process and status of submitted project reviews. The MSCWMO website can be viewed at the following link:

<http://www.mscwmo.org>

2025 Data Collection Program

Water Quality Monitoring Program

In 2025, the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) continued condition monitoring and water quality and elevation biweekly on McKusick Lake and Lily Lake, with the addition of collecting chloride samples to assess baseline chloride concentrations. Weekly to biweekly elevation data was collected on Brick Pond by a volunteer. Information from the Brown's Creek Diversion Drainage which flows to McKusick Lake is monitored by the Brown's Creek Watershed District, but resulting information is also provided to the MSCWMO for use in management planning. In 2022 a permanent, fully automated monitoring station was established on Perro Creek to better characterize loading from Perro Creek to the St. Croix. The MSCWMO monitored volume and concentration of discharge for both base flow and storm flows from Perro Creek in 2025.

Full water monitoring reports can be viewed on our website. The 2025 monitoring report will be available in May of 2026.

<http://www.mscwmo.org/water-monitoring>

2026 WORKPLAN

Best Management Practices Program

The MSCWMO will continue to promote its Best Management Practices Program in 2026. The MSCWMO will continue to work to engage landowners in the Lily Lake, McKusick Lake, Perro Creek, Lake St. Croix Direct Discharge North and South subwatersheds.

Watershed Management Plan; Subwatershed Analyses and Implementation

In 2026 the MSCWMO will continue working with the City of Stillwater, City of Bayport, City of Lake St. Croix Beach, other member communities, MnDOT, and private landowners to design and install targeted stormwater quality best management practices identified in subwatershed analyses. As part of the 2026 -2036 management plan update, the MSCWMO has identified existing subwatershed analyses and implementation to determine what practices are outstanding or are in need of retrofit or reinstallation and being implementation.

Water Monitoring

The MSCWMO will continue water quality condition monitoring program for Lily and McKusick Lakes and Perro Creek. The MSCWMO will be conducting macrophyte surveys on Lily and McKusick Lakes. The MSCWMO has contracted with the Washington Conservation District to complete monitoring and reporting again in 2026. The MSCWMO is planning to apply for funding to monitor the volume and concentration flowing out from the Mulberry Ravine and select stormwater outfalls in the City of Stillwater discharging directly into Lake St. Croix.

Public Education and Outreach Programs

The MSCWMO will continue to participate in the East Metro Water Resource Education Program. The activities and programs offered through this partnership will help MSCWMO meet its goals for education and outreach.

Lower St. Croix One Watershed One Plan

The MSCWMO will continue to work collaboratively with 15 units of government charged with water governance in the Lower St. Croix HUC8 watershed to implement a coordinated management plan.

Development Plan Reviews and Erosion Control Inspection Program; MSCWMO Policies and Performance Standards

The MSCWMO will continue to review qualifying projects for consistency with the 2026 Watershed Management Plan, and will continue to coordinate its review process with its member communities. Staff will also continue to inspect current and past projects to ensure erosion control practices are implemented, and stormwater management features are functioning as planned. The MSCWMO will promote trainings and events that will improve performance on future projects.

Website Update and Maintenance

The MSCWMO continues to update and maintain its website.

APPENDIX A

2026 Annual Communications

AFTON

The City of Afton is one of ten member communities of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) that collectively works to improve the water quality of Lake St. Croix. The MSCWMO provides educational, technical, and financial assistance to the City of Afton to effectively manage water resources. They also partner with the Washington Conservation District to provide design and cost share assistance for voluntary conservation projects on private lands that reduce sediment and phosphorous pollution entering the St. Croix River. If you are considering a conservation project on your property or have any questions about the MSCWMO watershed please contact Matt Oldenburg-Downing, Administrator of the MSCWMO at moldenburg-downing@mnwcd.org or Annie Perkins, the City of Afton appointed MSCWMO Board Manager at 651-592-3007.

BAYPORT

The City of Bayport is one of ten member communities of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) that collectively works to improve the water quality of Perro Creek and Lake St. Croix. The MSCWMO provides educational, technical, and financial assistance to the City of Bayport to effectively manage water resources. They also partner with the Washington Conservation District to provide design and cost share assistance for voluntary conservation projects on private lands that reduce sediment and phosphorous pollution entering Perro Creek and the St. Croix River. If you are considering a conservation project on your property or have any questions about the watershed please contact Matt Oldenburg-Downing, Administrator of the MSCWMO at moldenburg-downing@mnwcd.org or Council Member Orin Kip, the City appointed MSCWMO Board Manager, at 651-439-7312.

BAYTOWN TOWNSHIP

Baytown Township is one of ten member communities of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) that collectively works to improve the water quality of Lake St. Croix. The MSCWMO provides educational, technical, and financial assistance to Baytown Township to effectively manage water resources. They also partner with the Washington Conservation District to provide design and cost share assistance for voluntary conservation projects on private lands that reduce sediment and phosphorous pollution entering the St. Croix River. If you are considering a conservation project on your property or have any questions about the watershed please contact Matt Oldenburg-Downing, Administrator of the MSCWMO at moldenburg-downing@mnwcd.org or Township Board Member Avis Peters, the Township appointed MSCWMO Board Manager, at 651-430-8163.

LAKELAND

The City of Lakeland is one of ten member communities of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) that collectively works to improve the water quality of Lake St. Croix. The MSCWMO provides educational, technical, and financial assistance to the City of Lakeland to effectively manage water resources. They also partner with the Washington

Conservation District to provide design and cost share assistance for voluntary conservation projects on private lands that reduce sediment and phosphorous pollution entering the St. Croix River. If you are considering a conservation project on your property or have any questions about the watershed please contact Matt Oldenburg-Downing, Administrator of the MSCWMO at moldenburg-downing@mnwcd.org or Councilman Dave Millard, the City appointed MSCWMO Board Manager, at 651-408-3483.

LAKELAND SHORES

The City of Lakeland Shores is one of ten member communities of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) that collectively works to improve the water quality of Lake St. Croix. The MSCWMO provides educational, technical, and financial assistance to the City of Lakeland Shores to effectively manage water resources. They also partner with the Washington Conservation District to provide design and cost share assistance for voluntary conservation projects on private lands that reduce sediment and phosphorous pollution entering the St. Croix River. If you are considering a conservation project on your property or have any questions about the watershed please contact Matt Oldenburg-Downing, Administrator of the MSCWMO at moldenburg-downing@mnwcd.org or Brian Zeller, the City appointed MSCWMO Board Manager, at 612-325-3038.

LAKE ST CROIX BEACH

The City of Lake St. Croix Beach is one of ten member communities of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) that collectively works to improve the water quality of Lake St. Croix. The MSCWMO provides educational, technical, and financial assistance to the City of Lake St. Croix Beach to effectively manage water resources. They also partner with the Washington Conservation District to provide design and cost share assistance for voluntary conservation projects on private lands that reduce sediment and phosphorous pollution entering the St. Croix River. If you are considering a conservation project on your property or have any questions about the watershed please contact Matt Oldenburg-Downing, Administrator of the MSCWMO at moldenburg-downing@mnwcd.org or Mayor Tom McCarthy, the City appointed MSCWMO Board Manager, at 651-436-7031.

OAK PARK HEIGHTS

The City of Oak Park Heights is one of ten member communities of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) that collectively works to improve the water quality of Perro Pond and Lake St. Croix. The MSCWMO provides educational, technical, and financial assistance to the City of Oak Park Heights to effectively manage water resources. They also partner with the Washington Conservation District to provide design and cost share assistance for voluntary conservation projects on private lands that reduce sediment and phosphorous pollution entering Perro Pond or St. Croix River. If you are considering a conservation project on your property or have any questions about the watershed please contact Matt Oldenburg-Downing, Administrator of the MSCWMO at moldenburg-downing@mnwcd.org or Council Member Carly Johnson, the City appointed MSCWMO Board Manager and the Treasurer for the watershed, at 651-261-5801.

ST. MARY'S POINT

The City of St. Mary's Point is one of ten member communities of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) that collectively works to improve the water quality of Lake

MIDDLE ST. CROIX WATERSHED MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

St. Croix. The MSCWMO provides educational, technical, and financial assistance to the City of St. Mary's Point to effectively manage water resources. They also partner with the Washington Conservation District to provide design and cost share assistance for voluntary conservation projects on private lands that reduce sediment and phosphorous pollution entering the St. Croix River. If you are considering a conservation project on your property or have any questions about the watershed please contact Matt Oldenburg-Downing, Administrator of the MSCWMO at moldenburg-downing@mnwcd.org or Council Member Tom Grahek, the City appointed MSCWMO Board Manager, at 612-417-5394.

STILLWATER

The City of Stillwater is one of ten member communities of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) that collectively works to improve the water quality of Lily Lake, Lake McKusick, and Lake St. Croix. The MSCWMO provides educational, technical, and financial assistance to the City of Stillwater to effectively manage water resources. They also partner with the Washington Conservation District to provide design and cost share assistance for voluntary conservation projects on private lands that reduce sediment and phosphorous pollution entering Lily Lake, Lake McKusick, or the St. Croix River. If you are considering a conservation project on your property or have any questions about the watershed please contact Matt Oldenburg-Downing, Administrator of the MSCWMO at molding@mnwcd.org or Council Member Ryan Collins, the City appointed MSCWMO Board Manager, at 651-246-8264.

WEST LAKELAND TOWNSHIP

West Lakeland Township is one of ten member communities of the Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) that collectively works to improve the water quality of Lake St. Croix. The MSCWMO provides educational, technical, and financial assistance to West Lakeland Township to effectively manage water resources. They also partner with the Washington Conservation District to provide design and cost share assistance for voluntary conservation projects on private lands that reduce sediment and phosphorous pollution entering the St. Croix River. If you are considering a conservation project on your property or have any questions about the watershed please contact Matt Oldenburg-Downing, Administrator of the MSCWMO at moldenburg-downing@mnwcd.org or Board Member Rachel Dana, the Township appointed Board Manager, at 612-751-7583.