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ANOKA CONSERVATION DISTRICT SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER



Strong partnerships.
Innovative Solutions.
Healthy Environments.



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ACD's mission is to holistically conserve and enhance Anoka County's natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations through partnerships and innovation.

Save Money and Water in 2022

Spring is here! If you have an irrigation system for your yard, you're likely considering getting it up and running within the next month or two. Irrigation settings often remain unchanged throughout the season, which typically results in overwatering. Overwatering wastes drinkable water, and assuming you don't have a private well, it also wastes money.



This year, in addition to following city restrictions (e.g. odd/even watering schedules), **try**

can simply turn your irrigation system off. In contrast, during periods of extreme heat and drought, supplemental watering may be necessary. Watch your yard for signs of drought before turning on your irrigation system, and rely on rainfall as much as possible.

When you need to use your irrigation system, **water your lawn one time or less per week with a good soaking** to encourage deeper root growth, and schedule watering times in the morning to reduce evaporation associated with midday heat and wind.

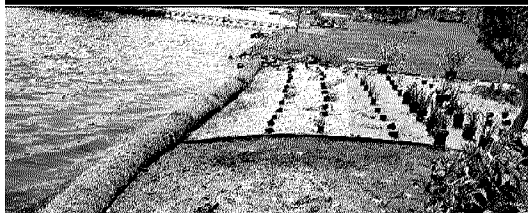
An alternative to active management is a **smart irrigation controller**. Smart irrigation controllers use an internet connection to actively monitor local precipitation patterns and automatically adjust watering frequency and duration accordingly. Visit the [University of Minnesota Extension's Lawn Care website](#) for additional lawn management resources.

Available Project Funding!

Assistance for Shoreline Erosion



Before



During Planting



One Month Later



One Year Later

ACD has a number of grant opportunities available for addressing shoreline erosion along both streams and lakes in Anoka County. If you have noticed your lakeshore migrating back on you over time, or perhaps once had a low walkable area along your river frontage that is now gone leaving only a steep drop-off, ACD may be able to help you design and even fund a project to protect your property.

The first step is a site visit to your property by ACD staff. Now is a great time to reach out to ACD to plan a site visit in the spring. We will assess your erosion problems, give you advice on how to address them, and see if your shoreline might fit into one of our various grant programs for financial assistance. Along with protecting your property, shoreline restoration protects the water resource you live on and enhances habitat for all of the wildlife that utilizes that resource!

Rum River Stabilization Grants

If your shoreline is falling into the river, migrating back over time, or the bottom has washed out leaving an overhang, these funds can pay for a substantial portion of design and construction of a solution. Funding is available to address erosion issues of all sizes, with landowners typically paying 15-25% of the project cost.



Before Construction



After Construction

Those interested can schedule a site visit with ACD staff to discuss options and see if your shoreline might fit into one of our various grant programs for financial assistance. Because the design and construction bidding can take months, starting in the spring is recommended. Contact Jared Wagner at jared.wagner@anokaswcd.org or 763-434-2030 x 200.



www.AnokaSWCD.org



www.AnokaCountyParks.com



www.URRWMO.org



Lower
Rum River
WMO

www.LRRWMO.org



CLEAN
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BSWR's Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Grant

Watershed District, City of Fridley, Coon Rapids, Blaine and Lino Lakes, received BWSR grant funds to create a pollinator corridor in the North Metro. These cost share funds are available to local residents and public spaces (e.g. places of worship and libraries) who are interested in creating pollinator habitat.



Eligible projects include native pocket plantings, pollinator beneficial trees and shrubs, pollinator lawns and pollinator meadows to benefit the rusty patched bumblebee and other at-risk species. Contact Carrie Taylor at carrie.taylor@anokaswcd.org or 763-434-2030 x 190 to learn more about the North Metro Pollinator Corridor cost share program.

Plant This, Not That

Spring has arrived and that means it is time to think about what to plant! Ornamental plants are not native to MN and therefore do not provide as quality of a food source to pollinators or wildlife. Some ornamentals have started to spread to natural areas where they can cause ecological harm. [Amur maple](#), [Norway maple](#) and [Winged burning bush](#) have been common landscaping plants but their spread into natural areas has been detected. That invasive behavior landed them on the MN [Noxious Weed List](#) as Specially Regulated Plants.

Avoid

Choose Instead

Amur Maple

Mountain Maple, Pagoda Dogwood, High-bush
Cranberry, Fireberry Hawthorn

Norway Maple

Red Maple, Sugar Maple, Hackberry, Basswood

Winged Burning Bush

Leatherwood, Pagoda Dogwood, Nannyberry, Wolfberry

There are many native plants to choose from that are suitable for landscaping. See the [Woody Invasives of the Great Lakes Collaborative](#) website's [Landscape Alternatives](#) for native plant ideas.

Blue Thumb's [Plant Finder](#) is a great tool



Many MN natives are available at [local plant nurseries](#).

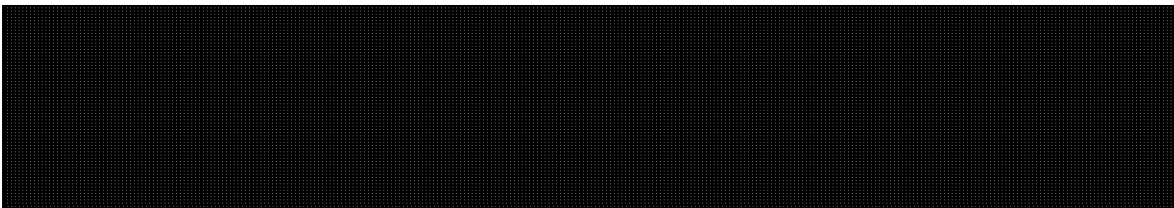
Conservation Project Updates

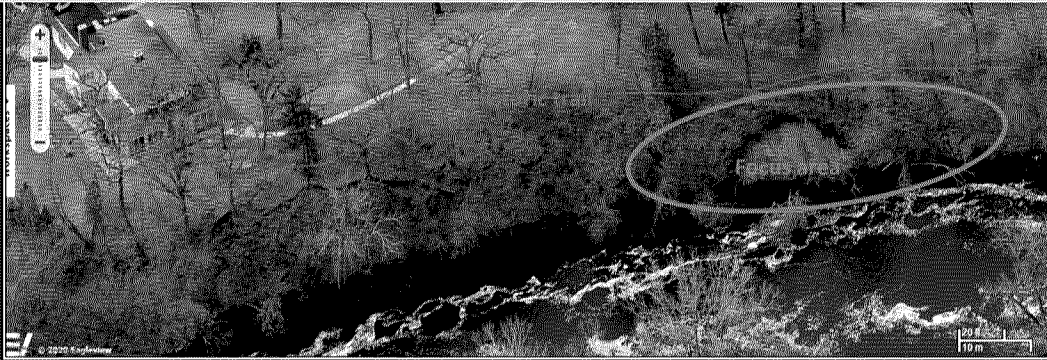
Lake George Shoreline Stabilization Projects



Seven lakeshore stabilization project designs are underway for properties on Lake George. ACD staff conducted targeted mailings based on a previously completed erosion inventory, and site visits were then conducted at properties with interested landowners. Potential project sites were prioritized by water quality improvement potential and funding available. Construction of these projects is anticipated for summer 2022.

Lakeshore stabilization techniques include coir logs, native vegetation buffers, minor regrading of ice heaves, and minimal riprap. The picture above shows an eroding shoreline with a short bank height that can be stabilized using a coir log and native vegetation. Stabilization of the lakeshores will reduce pollutant loading to Lake George and thereby provide water quality benefits. The native plant buffer areas will also provide habitat benefits.





Riverbank Stabilization at Woodbury House

ACD is collaborating with the City of Anoka to stabilize 300+ linear feet of eroding Rum Riverbank adjacent to the historic Woodbury House site. The ACD recently prepared a state Clean Water Fund grant application on behalf of the city, and the city is being awarded a \$1,008,820 grant. It promises to be a high profile and highly beneficial project.

This site is important for water quality and cultural reasons. It is on the Rum River and less than 1/2 mile upstream of the confluence with the Mississippi River. Reduction of sediment and nutrients in both these rivers is a regional priority. The site is also immediately upstream of Twin Cities drinking water intakes, so there are drinking water benefits. The Woodbury House itself is on the National Register of Historic Places. The house was built in 1857 and is currently occupied by the Mad Hatter Restaurant and Tea House. Work will take place on city-owned lands.

Currently, the riverbank has major failures extending up the 30+ foot tall bluff that are increasing in extent. Erosion affects river water quality, fish habitat, and threatens structures at the top of the bluff.

Rain Gardens for Rice Creek

Six rain gardens will be constructed on residential properties in a City of Fridley neighborhood adjacent to Rice Creek in 2022. The properties were identified as priority rain garden locations in the Lower Rice Creek Stormwater Retrofit Analysis (SRA) completed by Anoka Conservation District in partnership with RCWD.



ACD staff worked with landowners of the six properties to size rain gardens appropriately for each contributing drainage area and position the rain gardens in approved locations. Designs accounted for existing landscaping, yard slope, underlying soils and utilities, and landowner requests. Planting plans were also developed in collaboration with landowners to incorporate requested native species.

The project will be funded through a combination of the Rice Creek Watershed District's Water Quality Grant Program and the City of Fridley. The landowners will be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the rain gardens.

Watch for additional updates as the rain gardens are installed in 2022. To see other rain gardens already installed throughout Anoka County, please see the virtual project tour on ACD's website.

Habitat Enhancement in Anoka County

High quality ecosystems containing rare plants and a diversity of wildlife can be found throughout Anoka County. Anoka Conservation District staff coordinate with other local land managers to identify priority sites and collaborate with the Anoka Sand Plain Partnership to secure funding through the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Outdoor Heritage Fund to implement restoration activities. Ecological restoration is underway at multiple sites including:

Carl E. Bonnell WMA

- Early detection invasive species control

Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve

- Early detection invasive species control

- Restoring hydrology by plugging and filling ditches with US Fish and Wildlife Partnership
- Enhancing wetland and upland habitat with vegetation management

Blaine Preserve SNA

- Invasive species control
- Woody removal
- Prescribed burns

Robert and Marilyn Burman WMA

- Invasive species control
- Woody removal
- Prescribed burns

Gordie Mikkelson WMA

- Prairie enhancement
- Early detection buckthorn control

These management activities will shift the sites to functional native plant communities to restore rare Anoka Sand Plain plant communities that support a diversity of wildlife and close to home quality outdoor recreation.



Success on the Rum River

Cedar tree revetments are a cost-effective bioengineering practice that can be used to stabilize actively eroding riverbanks. Excessive erosion along riverbanks threatens property, contributes sediment and nutrients to the water, and eliminates wildlife habitat. Installation of cedar revetments and live stakes slows or stops erosion and reduces the likelihood of a much larger and more expensive project in the future.



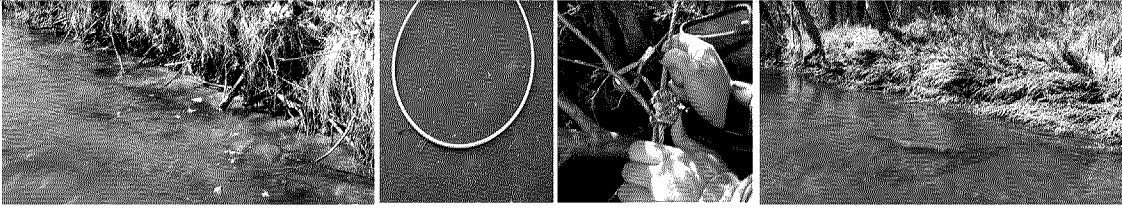
BEFORE



AFTER

Eastern red cedars, though native to Minnesota, can be a nuisance species with a habit of taking over and dominating open grassy spaces. These cedar trees can be obtained at little to no cost through land clearing efforts and repurposed to protect streambanks and provide habitat benefit. Efforts made by ACD throughout the last 10-years have resulted in large-scale pollution reduction and extensive land protection along the Scenic Rum River.

Since 2015, ACD has partnered with landowners, cities, parks departments, schools, and other community groups to install approximately 8,666 linear feet of cedar revetment. At the end of the 10-year project life, the current revetments in Anoka County will prevent an excess of 2,370 tons of sediment and 2,180 lbs of phosphorus from entering the Rum River, based on loading estimates.



Pre-project conditions commonly consist of an actively eroding riverbank and sparse understory vegetation. Ideally, cedar trees will be 10-14 ft tall and as robust as possible. They are limbed on one side so they lay flat.

Cedar trees are tied together using cable and cable clips. The trees are then secured to the riverbank using a duckbill anchor with the trunks facing upstream to divert the flow of water away from the bank.

The cedar trees are anchored parallel to the shoreline and live stakes are added between the trees, which will grow and spread into a shrub grove to provide long lasting bank protection and habitat.

Upcoming Board Meetings

May 16th, 2022

5:00PM

May Board of Supervisors Meeting

Email Kathy.Berkness@AnokaSWCD.org for meeting agenda and teleconference meeting link.

June 20th, 2022

5:00PM

June Board of Supervisors Meeting

Email Kathy.Berkness@AnokaSWCD.org for meeting agenda and teleconference meeting link.

July 18th, 2022

5:00PM

July Board of Supervisors Meeting

Email Kathy.Berkness@AnokaSWCD.org for meeting agenda and teleconference meeting link.

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