

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Nine Mile Creek Watershed District



Prepared March 2025

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NINE MILE CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

NINE MILE CREEK DISCOVERY POINT

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2024 photo contest winner

Cover waterdrop inset picture by
Mark Bergeron,
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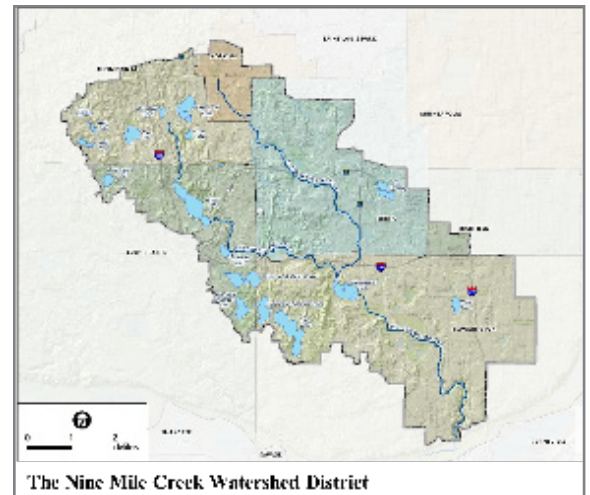
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Highlights and accomplishments of 2024	1
Board of managers	3
Employees and consultants	4
Community Advisory Committee	5
Technical Advisory Committee	6
Assessment 2024 work plan & 2025 work plan.....	7
2024 water quality monitoring program summary	7
2024 annual audit	7
Permitting activity	7
Biennial solicitation of interest proposals	8
Status of local plan adoption and implementation projects	8
Status of wetland banking programs	8
2025 annual budget	8
Fund balances	8
2024 annual communication	8
Appendices	9

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Established in 1959, the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District (NMCWD) was the state's second urban watershed district. Despite its name, Nine Mile Creek's main branch travels 15.5 miles from its headwaters to its confluence with the Minnesota River. The creek winds through the southwestern suburbs of the Twin Cities, with a 50-square mile watershed consisting of a largely developed urban landscape, and encompasses portions of Bloomington, Edina, Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, Hopkins, and Richfield. Appointed by the Hennepin County Commissioners, five managers serve three-year terms.



Consistent with its statutory and regulatory obligations under Minnesota Statutes § 103D.351 and Minnesota Rules 8410.0150, the board of managers has prepared this annual report of the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District's financial status, its yearly activities and projects, its 2024 permitting and enforcement program, and its 2025 goals and objectives. The managers invite comments and suggestions concerning this report—please submit comments and other questions about the watershed district to Cynthia Rubio at the contact information below for consideration by the board of managers.

The 2024 annual report is available on the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District website: ninemilecreek.org. Copies are also available by contacting Cynthia Rubio, Administrative Specialist, crubio@ninemilecreek.org, or by mail to Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, 12800 Gerard Drive, Eden Prairie, MN, 55346.

HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 2024

2024 Plan Implementation Tracking is found in Appendix 2. In 2024, the district began work on incorporating diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) practices into all areas of district work with the completion of its first DEIA plan. Other specific program area milestones are listed below.

Education and Outreach Program

The district's education and outreach programs strive to connect people with the water and natural resources of the Nine Mile Creek watershed. These programs aim to encourage stewardship behaviors in all those who live, work, and recreate in the district. In 2024, the district presented or partnered on more than 60 events around the watershed. These programs reached nearly 2,500 people of all ages. New programs included a series for teachers called STEM on Tap, in partnership with the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District. See upcoming events at: ninemilecreek.org/upcoming-events. The district maintains a robust presence on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube, with over 2,000 followers. Over 1,800 people have also subscribed to the district's e-newsletter.

Volunteer Programs

In a new research partnership with Bolton & Menk Inc., the district is helping to monitor snow piles in parking lots. These data will help make a tool to correctly size snow storage areas in parking lots to minimize meltwater and salt use after snow has been plowed. The district also maintains an active Community Advisory Committee (page 5).

Cost Share Grant Program

In 2024, the district awarded 26 cost share grants totaling approximately \$200,000 in project funding. Residents, associations, nonprofits, businesses, and cities are eligible to apply for grants for projects that protect and improve the water and natural resources within the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District. This year, the district funded new Low Salt Design pilot programs for the cities of Hopkins, Richfield, and Minnetonka. These pilots have taught city staff how to manage and design new development projects to reduce ice formation, thus reducing the need for salt. Bloomington and Eden Prairie are also participating in Low Salt Design pilot programs. For more information on grants visit: ninemilecreek.org/grants.

Projects

SOUTH FORK STREAMBANK STABILIZATION: We completed the South Fork Nine Mile Creek Streambank Stabilization project in 2024, restoring approximately 3,000 linear feet of the creek's eroding banks in Eden Prairie. The South Fork of Nine Mile Creek, from Lake Smetana in Eden Prairie to Normandale Lake in Bloomington, is listed as impaired by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for biotic impairment. This means that the creek is considered unhealthy for fish and other aquatic life.

The reconstructed side slopes of the creek used bioengineering techniques such as toewood, root wads, brush bundles, and vegetated reinforced side slopes (VRSS). These practices helped narrow the channel for more consistent flow in times of drought, while still accommodating the fluctuating water levels in the creek after it rains. The project also installed a series of rock riffles—strategically placed rocks to increase in-stream habitat. This improved stream design will limit erosion, increase flood storage, improve fish passage, and in-stream habitat for aquatic life. We also removed invasive buckthorn in the surrounding forest and re-seeded with native flowers and grasses beneficial to wildlife. A second phase of the project, located in Bloomington, is anticipated to be implemented in 2025. Learn more at: ninemilecreek.org/southfork.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT: Invasive common carp and goldfish are found in several NMCWD waterbodies and have negative impacts on water quality and native fish diversity. Using stream trapping and baited box net traps, 1,279 carp (collectively weighing 4,580 pounds) were removed from the Normandale Lake system in Bloomington. Goldfish from Lake Cornelia in Edina were also managed. Approximately 11,000 goldfish (weighing 1,914 pounds) were removed and an increase in native fish abundance and diversity has been identified as a result. NMCWD has also conducted invasive fish surveys in lakes in Edina, Bloomington, and Eden Prairie.

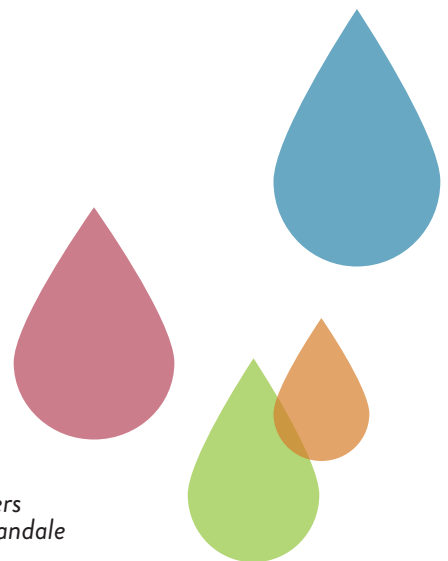
Planning

HOPKINS CENTRAL PARK FEASIBILITY STUDY: NMCWD is partnering with the City of Hopkins on their feasibility study of Central Park. Watershed staff worked with the city to expand the scope of work to look at above and beyond regulatory requirements for: flood mitigation, stormwater management, habitat improvement, and an opportunity to incorporate a new headwater to Nine Mile Creek.

BLOOMINGTON NINE MILE CREEK CORRIDOR RENEWAL PROJECT: NMCWD is partnering with the City of Bloomington on their Nine Mile Creek Corridor Renewal Project. The design team is assessing the stability of Nine Mile Creek, including streambanks, gullies, and wetlands, as well as considering upland restoration opportunities and improvements to Moir Park. Watershed staff assisted on development of the streambanks assessment scope and are providing expertise as it relates to the restoration design approach.



Staff, interns, and volunteers help remove carp at Normandale Lake in 2024.



2024 BOARD OF MANAGERS



PRESIDENT

Larry Olson

lolson@ninemilecreek.org

Appointing County: Hennepin

Term Expires: 9/2025

Board liaison to the CAC

Resident of Edina



VICE PRESIDENT

Robert Cutshall

bcutshall@ninemilecreek.org

Appointing County: Hennepin

Term Expires: 9/2027

Resident of Eden Prairie



TREASURER

Peggy Kvam

pkvam@ninemilecreek.org

Appointing County: Hennepin

Term Expires: 9/2026

Resident of Eden Prairie



SECRETARY

Chris-Ann Lauria

clauria@ninemilecreek.org

Appointing County: Hennepin

Term Expires: 9/2026

Board liaison to the CAC

Resident of Bloomington



MANAGER

Brian Kirk

bkirk@ninemilecreek.org

Appointing County: Hennepin

Term Expires: 9/2027

Resident of Minnetonka



MANAGER

Grace Butler

Appointing County: Hennepin

Term Ended: 9/2024

Resident of Edina

EMPLOYEES AND CONSULTANTS

EMPLOYEES

The district employed seven full time staff in 2024, and also hosted a MN GreenCorps member and two interns.

Staff	Position	Phone	Email
Erica Sniegowski	Administrator	952-358-2276	esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org
Elizabeth Boor	Watershed Specialist	952-395-8207	eboor@ninemilecreek.org
Brett Eidem	Project & Planning Manager	952-356-1999	beidem@ninemilecreek.org
Cynthia Rubio	Administrative Specialist	952-206-0980	crubio@ninemilecreek.org
Zach Stafslie	Regulatory Program Manager	952-204-9690	zstafslie@ninemilecreek.org
Claire Volk	MN GreenCorps Member 24-25	952-800-8353	greencorps@ninemilecreek.org
Jordan Wein	Water Resources Project Manager	952-800-8307	jwein@ninemilecreek.org
Gael Zembal	Education & Outreach Coordinator	952-204-9691	gzembal@ninemilecreek.org
Hailey Buckentin	Summer Field Intern		
Nik Luckow	Summer Education Intern		

CONSULTANTS

In addition, the district retains the services of an engineering consultant, a legal advisor, and an accountant to assist with district activities. The district contracts with a separate accounting firm to perform its annual financial audit.

Consultant	Services	Address	Phone	Email
Janna Kieffer Barr Engineering	Engineer	4300 MarketPointe Dr., Suite 200 Minneapolis, MN 55435	952-832-2785	jkieffer@barr.com
Louise Heffernan Barr Engineering	Engineer	4300 MarketPointe Dr., Suite 200 Minneapolis, MN 55435	952-832-2850	lheffernan@barr.com
Michael Welch Smith Partners, PLLP	Attorney	250 Marquette Ave., Suite 250 Minneapolis, MN 55401	612-344-1400	welch@smithpartners.com
Dan Cavanaugh JMSC Futurity	Accountant	5353 Wayzata Blvd., Ste 205 St. Louis Park, MN 55401	952-697-4522	dan@jmscfuturity.com
Andy Hering Redpath & Co	Auditor	4810 White Bear Lake Pkwy., White Bear Lake, MN 55110	651-255-9339	ahering@redpathcpas.com
Vicki Juelfs North Risk Partners	Insurance	2010 Centre Pointe Blvd. Mendota Heights, MN 55120	651-379-7876	vicki.juelfs@northriskpartners.com

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

The Community Advisory Committee is a volunteer advisory committee of community members that is annually appointed by the board of managers. The CAC provides recommendations to the board to aid in decision making, communicates concerns from the public, and helps educate the community. In 2024, CAC members also advised staff on cost share grant applications and the photo contest. The 2024 CAC members were:

Name	Address
John Arthur-- secretary	102 8th Ave. N. Hopkins, MN 55343
Roger Bildsten	6813 Brook Dr. Edina, MN 55439
James Clark	10716 James Rd. Bloomington, MN 55431
John Hickman	2450 W 105th St. Bloomington, MN 55431
Heather Johnson	5902 Olinger Rd. Edina, MN 55436
Charlotte Lefebvre	6412 Aspen Rd. Edina, MN 55436
Joshua Lynn--Chair	8710 Logan Ave S. Bloomington, MN 55431
Mandy Pedigo	1952 Mainstreet Hopkins, MN 55343
Tim Ronhovde	7287 Gerard Dr. Eden Prairie, MN 55346
Jonathan Scoll	6920 Valley View Rd. Edina, MN 55439



Photo contest winner,
Nicole Grabow

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

Representatives from each of the district's cities, Hennepin County, Metropolitan Council, and state agencies make up the district's Technical Advisory Committee. The TAC aids with the development of the district's watershed management and capital improvement plans, rules, and specific projects. Members of the TAC in 2024 included:

Name	Position	Organization
Kristen Asher	Public Works Director	City of Richfield
Ross Bintner	Water Resources Engineer	City of Edina
Jack Distel	Water Resources Specialist	City of Bloomington
Jennifer Dullum	Board Conservationist	BWSR
Bryan Gruidl	Water Resources Engineer	City of Bloomington
Kristopher Guentzel	Senior Water Resources Specialist	Hennepin County
Lori Haak	Water Resources Coordinator	City of Eden Prairie
Jen Kader	Senior Planner, Water Supply	Metropolitan Council
Eric Klingbeil	City Engineer	City of Hopkins
Katie Kowalczyk	Water Resources Engineer	MNDOT
Drew McGovern	Water Resources Engineer	Hennepin County
Miranda Nichols	Central Unit Supervisor	MPCA
Mattias Oddsson	Water Resources Engineer	City of Richfield
Phil Olson	City Engineer	City of Minnetonka
Wes Saunders-Pearce	Area Hydrologist	MNDNR
Sarah Schweiger	Water Resources Engineer	City of Minnetonka
Patrick Sejkora	Water Resources Engineer	City of Eden Prairie
Jason Swenson	Water Resources Engineer	MNDOT
Nick Tiedeken	Water Resources Engineer	MNDOT
Amy Timm	Watershed Project Manager	MPCA
Brian Vlach	Senior Water Resources Manager	Three Rivers Park District
Eric Waage	Director of Emergency Management	Hennepin County
Jessica Wilson	Water Resources Manager	City of Edina
Leslie Yetka	Natural Resources Manager	City of Minnetonka

ASSESSMENT OF THE 2024 WORK PLAN AND 2025 WORK PLAN

A detailed 2024 work plan and plan implementation tracking table is found in Appendix 2. The tracking table identifies measurable outcomes for program and project implementation items listed in Table 6-1 and 6-2 of the district's 10-year Water Management Plan (WMP). Specifically, the table highlights WMP activities for 2024, where the district is at in completing that activity, and measurable outcomes for each. The table also indicates whether the activity is listed as a workplan item for 2025 in the district's WMP.

2024 WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM SUMMARY

NMCWD conducted lake and creek monitoring in 2024 on waterbodies across the watershed. The monitoring program provides data about water quality and ecological health conditions. In 2024, we collected data on the following lakes: Arrowhead, Cornelia, Indianhead, and Mirror in Edina; Normandale and Southeast Anderson in Bloomington; Bryant, Northwest Anderson, and Southwest Anderson in Eden Prairie; and Holiday and Minnetoga in Minnetonka. In addition, we partnered with the City of Minnetonka to collect data on Wing and Rose lakes and with the City of Bloomington to collect data on Adelmann Pond. Spots along Nine Mile Creek were also monitored. The data establishes a reference point for normal water quality conditions, tracks changes, and informs studies. It also allows us to measure the success of past and ongoing water quality improvement projects. Our monitoring reports are available in Appendix 1 and on our website at: ninemilecreek.org/lake-creek-monitoring.

ANNUAL AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT AND AUDIT REPORT

The district's audited annual financial report was prepared by Redpath and Company, Ltd., a certified public accounting firm. As required by Minnesota Rules 8410.0150, subp. 2, the audited financial report includes classification and reporting of revenues and expenditures, a balance sheet, an analysis of changes in final balances, and all additional statements necessary for full financial disclosure. The 2024 audited financial report can be found in Appendix 3 and on the district's website at: ninemilecreek.org/reports.

PERMITTING ACTIVITY

SUMMARY OF PERMITS ISSUED

The district's rules are the cornerstone of the regulatory program, protecting lake and creek water quality, floodplains, wetlands, and more. Staff processed 176 permits and performed 1,014 inspections in 2024. We have approved or conditionally approved 155 of the 176 permits. 36 permits have triggered stormwater management which has created 310,988 cubic feet of storage and removed 21,083 pounds of total suspended solids and 106 pounds of phosphorus. Learn more at: ninemilecreek.org/permits.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

Permitted work is regularly inspected by district staff to ensure compliance with permit conditions. If probable violations are found, permittees are typically notified in order to seek voluntary abatement or correction before resorting to formal legal action. In 2024, three notices of probable violations were issued.



Adequate erosion control best practice on a recent permit inspection

BIENNIAL SOLICITATION OF INTEREST PROPOSALS

Under Minnesota Statutes § 103B.227, subd. 5, the district must issue a biennial solicitation for legal, technical, and other professional services. The district issued a formal solicitation for accounting, engineering, and legal services in early 2024. The district selected Cavanaugh and Company as its accountant, Barr Engineering Co. as its engineer and Smith Partners, PLLP as its legal counsel at its May 2024 regular board meeting. The district selected Redpath and Company to conduct the district's annual financial audit.

The district will solicit new proposals for engineering, legal, and other professional services in 2026.

STATUS OF LOCAL PLAN ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

The district monitors the plans of watershed districts and water management organizations that affect the district's cities and that have been approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources. The district also reviews and approves the comprehensive surface water management plans of each of the cities in the district. Currently, the cities of Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Richfield have approved local water plans.

STATUS OF WETLAND BANKING PROGRAMS

Because of the inherent limitations of a fully urbanized watershed, the district has not developed a wetland banking program. Instead, to date, it uses the state wetland bank administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. The district is, however, participating in review of wetland restoration/bank creation process on two sites: Hennepin County Home School site in Minnetonka and Fred Richards Park Redevelopment in Edina.

2025 ANNUAL BUDGET

The district adopted its 2025 annual budget in September 2024. The total levy for 2025 is \$3,660,500, a 14% increase from 2024. The 2025 budget is \$6,080,500, an increase of 5.6% from the 2024 budget. The 2025 budget is found in Appendix 4 and on the district's website at: ninemilecreek.org/reports.

FUND BALANCES

The district's fund balances and financial status are included in the district's 2024 annual audit. A copy of the 2024 annual audit is included in Appendix 3 and on the district's website at: ninemilecreek.org/reports.

ANNUAL COMMUNICATION

As required by Minnesota Rules 8410.0100, subp.4, the district prepared and disseminated its annual communication to watershed residents. This annual communication identified the board members, contact information, public meeting information, and provided a general overview of the watershed and its programs. It was made available online, on the district's website, and emailed out via the district's electronic newsletter. A copy of the 2024 annual communication is included in Appendix 5.

LIKE, FOLLOW, & SUBSCRIBE

If you would like to volunteer with us or stay up to date with district news, sign up for our e-newsletters at ninemilecreek.org.

Follow us on social media! Find us on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn.



APPENDICES

1. 2024 Water Quality Monitoring Report
2. [2024 Plan Implementation & 2025 Work Plan](#)
3. [2024 Annual Financial Audit](#)
4. [2025 Annual Budget](#)
5. [2024 Annual Communication](#)

