

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Nine Mile Creek Watershed District



Prepared March 2026

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NINE MILE CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

NINE MILE CREEK DISCOVERY POINT

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Cover background picture of Normandale Lake taken by Mark Nordby, 2024 photo contest winner

Cover waterdrop inset picture of cardinal taken by Russell Stanton, 2024 photo contest winner

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For questions about the organization, contact Administrator Erica Sniegowski at: esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org or 952-358-2276.

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Established in 1959, 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 sections 103B.231, subdivision 14, and 103D.3551 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 2025 permitting and enforcement program, and its 2026 goals and objectives. The managers invite comments and suggestions concerning this report; please submit any comments or questions about the watershed district to Michelle Jordan at the contact information below for consideration by the board.

The 2025 annual report is available on the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District website: [ninemilecreek.org](https://www.ninemilecreek.org). Copies are also available by contacting Michelle Jordan, Administrative Specialist, office@ninemilecreek.org, or by mail to the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District office.

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 2025

In 2025, the district began planning and conducting engagement for its next ten-year water management plan. This is the 6th generation water management plan, and will cover the period 2027 to 2036. Other specific program area milestones are listed below.

COST-SHARE PROGRAM

The district adopted several updates to the cost-share program over the past year to make it more accessible and equitable for community members.

- 50% of the program's annual budget is now reserved for projects located within the district's priority equity zones, ensuring that funding supports communities with the greatest need.
- The district can now make direct payments to service providers or vendors for approved project costs under \$3,750, reducing financial barriers for applicants who may not have cash on hand.
- Reimbursement maximums and labor match awards were increased to reflect inflation and rising costs.

Bumblebee on swamp milkweed.

In 2025, the district approved 35 cost-share projects, providing approximately \$225,000 in project funding. Eligible applicants include residents, neighborhood associations, nonprofits, businesses, and cities—anyone working to protect and enhance the Nine Mile Creek watershed. Learn more about eligible projects and how to apply at [ninemilecreek.org](https://www.ninemilecreek.org).



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY (DEIA)

The district's internal Equity Workgroup—composed of board members, Community Advisory Committee representatives, and staff—continued to advance DEIA efforts in 2025. Staff participated in several trainings and workshops led by Indigenous partners and are working to build stronger relationships to support future collaboration. An accessibility audit of the district office was completed, and several improvements were made, including regrading pavers, pouring new concrete, and installing indoor tactile signage to enhance access for all visitors. We are proud of the meaningful progress made across each of these initiatives.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

In 2025, the education and outreach program reached over 2,000 people across the watershed. Common audiences included: residents, city staff, teachers, students, and people affected by district projects. We had over 40 separate events in all six cities of our watershed. Many of these events and programs were conducted with community and agency partners. Staff also participated in farmers' markets and targeted ten-year plan engagement events. In addition, we partnered with local artist Kimberly Boustead to host two creative community events that blended art, science, and environmental education, including Gyotaku goldfish printing.



Gyotaku goldfish printing

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Management of fish in district lakes ramped up in 2025. Staff have been studying many aspects, including fish movement, spawning, and species diversity, to better inform holistic lake management.

INVASIVE CATTAIL MANAGEMENT EXPERIMENTS

Research emerging from the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center shows that reducing invasive cattail dominance can open patches for native plants to establish and provide near-shore habitat for native fish species. The district applied for a permit through the Department of Natural Resources to remove three areas of cattails in Lake Cornelia. Our plan is to restore the managed areas with native lake plants.



Path of cleared cattails from Lake Cornelia.

PLANNING

Watershed management plan update

In 2025, the district kicked off its plan update process to begin development of our sixth-generation watershed management plan. This included an initial 60-day agency comment period, followed by plan engagement events. Our annual State of the Waters event served as our public engagement kick-off meeting. The district has also had many board workshop meetings centered around high-level topics, public input received thus far, successes of the current plan, and the role we anticipate playing in advancing the topics over the next ten years. Learn more at: ninemilecreek.org/water-management-plan/ or read the survey summary report here: ninemilecreek.org/survey-results-available/.

Bloomington Nine Mile Creek Corridor Renewal Project

The district is partnering to help transform the lower valley of Nine Mile Creek in Bloomington, where it has historically managed the stream by addressing erosion and adapting to changing flow conditions. The City of Bloomington has approved a local option sales tax to fund major improvements to Moir, Harrison, and Central Parks, including large-scale habitat restorations of the creek and forest. Watershed staff have informed approaches to streambank stabilization and wetland restoration. The Nine Mile Creek board amended the 2017 watershed management plan to incorporate this effort and intends to order a capital project in 2026, with the city hoping to begin construction later in 2026.

PROJECTS

South Fork Streambank Stabilization Project

In 2024, we completed the South Fork Nine Mile Creek Streambank Stabilization Project, restoring approximately 3,000 linear feet of the creek's eroding banks in Eden Prairie. Early in 2025, the restored channel was tested with spring rain, where, for the most part, the system held up well. Most of 2025 was spent establishing native plants and managing resprouts of invasive ones. Learn more at: ninemilecreek.org/southfork.



En plein air painter Robert "Bob" Matheson on the south branch of Nine Mile Creek.
Photo by Peggy Kvam.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

The district hosted volunteer events, including the annual headwaters trash cleanup in Hopkins and a new trash cleanup event at Oxboro Lake. Volunteers also monitored snow piles for a research project with Bolton & Menk. This research was awarded a grant from the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council.

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.



2025 BOARD OF MANAGERS



PRESIDENT

Larry Olson

lolson@ninemilecreek.org

Appointing County:

Hennepin

Term Expires: 9/2028

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

EMPLOYEES AND CONSULTANTS

EMPLOYEES

The district employed nine permanent staff, and hosted two MN GreenCorps members and multiple interns.

Staff	Position	Phone	Email
Erica Sniegowski	Administrator	952-358-2276	esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org
Elizabeth Boor	Water Resources Specialist	952-395-8207	eboor@ninemilecreek.org
Carrie Bush	Communications & Public Engagement Manager	952-529-2751	cbush@ninemilecreek.org
Brett Eidem	Project & Planning Manager	952-356-1999	beidem@ninemilecreek.org
Michelle Jordan	Administrative Specialist	952-206-0980	office@ninemilecreek.org
Cynthia Rubio	Watershed Technician	978-850-9191	crubio@ninemilecreek.org
Zach Stafslie	Regulatory Manager	952-204-9690	zstafslie@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
Rashi DaSilva	MN GreenCorps Member 25/26	952-248-0410	greencorps@ninemilecreek.org
Emma Gross	Field Intern		
Claire Volk	MN GreenCorps Member 24/25		
James Martinez and Natascha Nawrot: Hopkins ACE Interns			

CONSULTANTS

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., Ste 200 Minneapolis, MN 55435	952-832-2785	jkieffer@barr.com
Louise Heffernan Barr Engineering	Engineer	4300 MarketPointe Dr., Ste 200 Minneapolis, MN 55435	952-832-2850	lheffernan@barr.com
Michael Welch Smith Partners, PLLP	Attorney	250 Marquette Ave., Ste 250 Minneapolis, MN 55401	612-278-1422	welch@smithpartners.com
Dan Cavanaugh Cavanaugh & Co	Accountant	5353 Wayzata Blvd., Ste 205 St. Louis Park, MN 55416	952-922-2330	dan@cavco-cpa.com
Andy Hering Redpath & Co	Auditor	4810 White Bear Lake Pkwy., White Bear Lake, MN 55110	651-255-9339	ahering@redpathcpas.com

2025 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, provided contact information, included public meeting information, and provided a general overview of the watershed and its programs. It was made available on the district’s [website](#) and emailed out via the district’s electronic newsletter. A copy of the 2025 annual communication is included in Appendix 1.

2025 ANNUAL AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT

The district’s annual audited 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 2025 audited financial report can be found in Appendix 2 and on the district’s website at: ninemilecreek.org/reports.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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 2025, CAC members also advised staff on cost share grant applications. The 2025 CAC members were:

Name	City of Residence
John Arthur	Hopkins
Roger Bildsten	Edina
James Clark Chair	Bloomington
Heather Johnson Secretary	Edina
Charlotte Lefebvre	Edina
Mandy Pedigo	Hopkins
Tim Ronhovde	Eden Prairie
Jonathan Scoll	Edina



Photo contest winner, Mark Nordby

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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 2025 included:

Name	Position	Organization
Ross Bintner	Water Resources Engineer	City of Edina
Jack Distel	Water Resources Specialist	City of Bloomington
Chad Donnelly	Assistant Utility Superintendent	City of Richfield
Jennifer Dullum	Board Conservationist	BWSR
Eric Eckman	Water Resources Programs Manager	City of Minnetonka
Bryan Gruidl	Water Resources Engineer	City of Bloomington
Lori Haak	Water Resources Coordinator	City of Eden Prairie
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
Amy Riegel	Senior Water Resources Specialist	Hennepin County
Patrick Sejkora	Water Resources Engineer	City of Eden Prairie
Abby Shea	Principal Planner, Metro District Source Water Protection Unit	Minnesota Department of Health
Jason Swenson	Water Resources Engineer	MNDOT
Nick Tiedeken	Water Resources Engineer	MNDOT
Amy Timm	Watershed Project Manager	MPCA
Ryan Toot	North Metro Area Hydrologist	MNDNR
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
Erik Wojchik	Planning Analyst	Metropolitan Council
Leslie Yetka	Natural Resources Manager	City of Minnetonka

2025 WORK PLAN ASSESSMENT AND 2026 WORK PLAN

A detailed 2025 work plan and plan implementation tracking table is found in Appendix 3 of this report. The tracking table identifies measurable outcomes for program and project implementation items listed in the district’s 10-year water management plan (WMP). Specifically, the tracking table outlines WMP activities for 2025, the district’s progress in completing each activity, and the associated measurable outcomes. The table also indicates whether the activity is listed as a workplan item for 2026.

2025 WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM SUMMARY

The district conducted lake and creek monitoring in 2025 on waterbodies across the watershed. The monitoring program provides data on water quality and ecological health conditions. In 2025, we collected data on the following lakes: Arrowhead, Indianhead, and the north and south basins of Lake Cornelia in Edina; Bush, Normandale, and Penn Lakes in Bloomington; Holiday, Wing, Shady Oak, and Minnetoga Lakes in Minnetonka.

In addition, we conducted fisheries surveys and netting on Lake Edina and Mirror Lake in Edina; Oxboro, Penn, Bush, and Normandale Lakes in Bloomington; and Bryant Lake in Eden Prairie.

We also monitored spots along Nine Mile Creek. 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. The water quality monitoring report will be available in mid-late May in Appendix 4 and on our website at: ninemilecreek.org/lake-creek-monitoring.

PERMITTING ACTIVITY

SUMMARY OF PERMITS ISSUED

The district’s rules are the cornerstone of the regulatory program, protecting water quality, floodplains, wetlands, and more. Staff processed (or are processing) 161 permits and performed 800 inspections as of December 31, 2025. We have approved or conditionally approved 127 of the 161 permits. 38 permits have triggered stormwater management, which has created 201,225 cubic feet of storage and removed 12,879 pounds of total suspended solids and 126 pounds of phosphorus. We had no variance requests or denials in 2025. 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 2025, two notices of probable violations were issued, and the sites were brought back into compliance with district rules.

BIENNIAL SOLICITATION OF 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 for each city 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 limitations of a fully urbanized watershed, the district has not established its own wetland banking program. Instead, the district relies on the state wetland bank administered by the Board of Water and Soil Resources while participating in the review of proposed wetland bank projects. The Hennepin County Home School site in Minnetonka continues to evaluate feasibility. Although the City of Edina applied to create a wetland bank at Fred Richards Park, no solution met both banking requirements and project goals, and the application was withdrawn in the fall of 2025.

2026 ANNUAL BUDGET

The district adopted its 2026 annual budget in September 2025. The total levy for 2026 is \$4,071,00, an 11.2% increase from 2025. The 2026 budget is \$7,436,300, an increase of 22.3% from the 2025 budget. The 2026 budget is found in Appendix 5 and on the district's website at: [ninemilecreek.org/reports](https://www.ninemilecreek.org/reports).

FUND BALANCES

The district's fund balances and financial status are included in the district's 2025 annual audit. A copy of the 2025 annual audit will be available in mid-late April in Appendix 2 and on the district's website at: [ninemilecreek.org/reports](https://www.ninemilecreek.org/reports).



APPENDICES

1. [2025 Annual Communication](#)
2. [2025 Annual Financial Audit](#)
3. [2025 Plan Implementation & 2026 Work Plan](#)
4. 2025 Water Quality Monitoring Report (will be finalized mid-late May 2026)
5. [2026 Annual Budget](#)

