



9 MILE CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

2019
ANNUAL COMMUNICATION



District staff shares project information during a tour

Celebrating 60 years of watershed management

The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2019. In September 1959, a citizen petition founded the District to address water resource issues throughout its 50 square mile area. The District became the fourth watershed district established in Minnesota.

While the watershed's landscape has changed over 60 years, the District's mission has remained the same: to work with our partners and community stakeholders to manage, protect, and enhance our water resources.

We celebrated our anniversary year with many events for those who live, work, and play in our watershed. We hosted a tour of District projects for elected officials, partners, city staff and District leadership; we also led a public bike tour on the Three Rivers Nine Mile Creek Regional Bike Trail. In September of this year, we hosted our State of the Waters event, where we looked back at the work of the last 60 years and looked ahead to the future.

You can learn more about the District's history by scanning the QR code to explore our story map, "The Water We Protect: The Story of the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District". The story map combines maps with text, images, and multimedia content on the web, and has many interactive elements to explore. You can also stop by our office (12800 Gerard Dr, Eden Prairie) to pick up a limited edition 60th anniversary sticker. We are thankful for the support of all our partners throughout the District's history, and we look forward to the next 60 years.



Scan me



Larry Olson, the Watershed District's newest board manager

Managing the Watershed

Five managers, appointed by the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners to staggered three-year terms, direct the activities of the District. The Board of Managers work with state and regional agencies, Hennepin County, and the cities within the District to implement the goals and policies of the approved water management plan set forth in state law. District activities are funded through property tax levies.

In late September, Grace Sheely was reappointed to her second term as a manager for the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, and Larry Olson was appointed as the newest board manager. As an Edina resident, Manager Olson helped create the Lake Cornelia lake group. In that group, he serves as a director working with the City of Edina, DNR, and watershed district leaders to improve Lake Cornelia's water quality. He is also finishing up serving a six-year term on the Edina Transportation Commission. We are happy to welcome Manager Olson, and to have Manager Sheely reappointed to our Board.

After 12 years of service, Steve Kloiber retired from the Board in September 2019. We are thankful for Steve's service and the leadership he provided. Steve guided the District through many changes, including the building of the District's Discovery Point office and the hiring of several new staff members. As a Lake Ecology Supervisor with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Steve brought a wealth of knowledge to the District's Board. His expertise was instrumental in updating two Water Management Plans, as well as the District rules. With Steve's leadership, the District successfully completed many projects, including the Anderson Lakes Project and the Edina Streambank Stabilization Project.

NATURE NOTES: *Clean, drain, and dry your boat between lakes to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.*



An interesting sample caught during a fish survey

Lake and Creek Monitoring

The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District conducts annual lake and creek monitoring on waterbodies across the watershed. In 2019, the District monitored Nine Mile Creek, as well as Normandale, Mirror, Indianhead and Arrowhead Lakes. The monitoring program provides data about past and present water quality conditions within the watershed. The data establishes a reference point for normal water quality conditions, tracks changes, and informs additional studies. It also allows the District to measure the success of past and ongoing projects that seek to improve the health of District waterbodies. Our monitoring reports are available at: ninemilecreek.org/lake-creek-monitoring.

A fish survey conducted on Normandale Lake in 2019 by the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District indicated that the drawdown did not impact the number of fish species in Normandale Lake. However, the carp population in the lake may have benefited, as was seen in the large number of young carp in the lake. Carp can impact the health of a lake by stirring up the bottom sediments of the lake and releasing phosphorus. This can impact water quality by leading to algae blooms and reducing water clarity. The District is working with Carp Solutions to create a management plan for the harmful amount of carp found in Normandale Lake.

Permitting Program

The District's rules are the cornerstone of the regulatory program, protecting lake and creek water quality, floodplains, wetlands, and more. This year, permits following District rules will prevent roughly 30,000 pounds of sediment and 100 pounds of algae bloom-causing phosphorous from entering waterbodies. As of May, District staff now conduct erosion control inspections, formerly done by consultants. In August, the District Board of Managers expanded the Administrator's authority to approve permits. This allows most permit applicants to get their project(s) approved more expediently.



Floating silt curtain that protects lakes during construction

District Projects

NORMANDALE LAKE PROJECT Normandale Lake is a shallow, man-made lake in Bloomington. High phosphorus levels, the nutrient that fuels algae growth, and an abundance of the invasive aquatic plant curly-leaf pondweed led to a multi-faceted approach to improve the health of the lake. In 2018, a drawdown of the lake was initiated to reduce the amount of the invasive curly-leaf pondweed in the lake. The drawdown was completed in early 2019 and was followed in May by an alum treatment to reduce phosphorus levels in the lake.

Results from monitoring conducted in 2019 show that the drawdown was effective in controlling curly-leaf pondweed. The District will conduct an herbicide treatment of the lake in 2020. This will ensure that the remaining pockets of the invasive plant does not reach problematic levels.

LAKE CORNELIA & LAKE EDINA Lake Cornelia and Lake Edina are shallow lakes in Edina with poor water quality. Both lakes are on the state's impaired waters list for excess nutrients. Barr Engineering conducted a study for the District in 2018-2019 to determine how to address the poor water quality. The District will implement projects in 2020 to improve the health of the lakes. This will include conducting an alum treatment in the spring of 2020 on Lake Cornelia. This project, and other projects not yet determined, will work to control phosphorous in the lakes. For more information about alum treatments and up to date project information, visit: ninemilecreek.org/lake-cornelia-project

NON-PROFIT BMP PROJECT The District received an Accelerated Implementation Grant in 2017 from the Board of Water and Soil Resources to target priority locations for stormwater best management practices (BMPs) on lands owned by nonprofits. These locations were chosen because the sites have significant amounts of hard surfaces that contribute large volumes of polluted runoff to local lakes and creeks. Since 2017, the District has worked to identify suitable locations for stormwater management BMPs, prioritize the locations, secure partnerships to install the BMPs, and design the projects. The District will go out to bid for projects at five locations in early January for installation of the BMPs in 2020. For more information about this project, visit: ninemilecreek.org/nonprofits-grant



Normandale Lake alum treatment



Fish survey on Normandale Lake

NATURE NOTES: *Install a raingarden or restore a shore on your property. These practices can help make projects like those described above more effective at keeping lakes and creeks clean.*



New rain garden with Nine Mile Creek Watershed District sign

Cost Share Grants

The large rain garden pictured here now collects runoff from the driveway of the Opus 2 Condominiums and a neighboring condo in Minnetonka. The 1450 square foot rain garden also collects street runoff and was installed on communal green space between the two condos. The project was awarded a cost share grant from the District and was made possible by a 2018 graduate of the Master Water Steward Program.

In 2019, the District awarded 17 cost share grant totaling \$164,000 in funding. Some of the projects awarded funding included rain gardens and shoreline restorations. 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. Learn more at: ninemilecreek.org/grants



Let's Go Fishing event, part of the Summer Education Series

Education and Outreach

The District provides educational and volunteer opportunities for those who live, work, or play within the Nine Mile Creek watershed. In 2019, District programs and outreach efforts reached over 3,300 people. These included school programs, community outreach events, and presentations to businesses and commissions. We also offered trainings like certification workshops for salt applicators and Project WET (water education for teachers) workshops for educators.

PARTNERSHIPS We partner with many organizations to present relevant and engaging programming. One such program, developed through a partnership with the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District and the Carver County Water Management Organization, was the Sustainable Lawns workshop. Over 200 participants learned how to create a low-grow lawn during the four workshops that were held in 2019.

CHLORIDE REDUCTION Nine Mile Creek has too much salt in it. Because of this, the creek is on the state's impaired waters list for excess chlorides. The excess chloride primarily comes from salt applied to our roads, sidewalks, and parking lots in the winter.

The District was proud to receive an Environmental Leadership Award at the 2019 Road Salt Symposium from the Freshwater Society in recognition for its work to reduce the impacts of chloride on our water resources. We have assisted in creating guidance for communities interested in developing a rebate program to reduce chloride from home water softeners, as well as model ordinances for municipal officials in regulating the use of deicers. Staff also participated on the advisory committee for the creation of a smart salting training and manual for property managers. This training is added to the suite of Smart Salting trainings the District offers, which train salt applicators in best practices for parking lots, sidewalks, and roads. For tips to reduce chloride use and further information on the topic, visit: ninemilecreek.org/salt-reduction.

INTERPRETIVE SIGNS Have you been on the Cedar Lake LRT Trail recently? Then you might have noticed the new Nine Mile Creek headwaters sign near the north fork headwaters of Nine Mile Creek in Hopkins. New interpretive signs were also installed at Valley Park in Hopkins that describe the streambank restoration the District completed on the creek, and at Harrison Park in Bloomington describing the stormwater best management practices found in the parking lot.



New signs at Hopkins' Valley Park

Volunteer Programs

ADOPT A DRAIN The District was excited to expand the Adopt a Drain program watershed-wide in 2019. Through this program created by the Center for Global Environmental Education at Hamline University, residents can adopt a stormdrain and clean debris that has collected nearby and on the drain, preventing it from polluting waterbodies. The District is partnering with the cities of Bloomington, Edina, Eden Prairie, and Minnetonka on the program and the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek and Minnehaha Creek Watershed Districts. In 2019, over 200 drains were adopted throughout the watershed. You can adopt a drain at: adopt-a-drain.org

CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE The District's Citizen's Advisory Committee had 10 members in 2019. This volunteer group supports the District in its mission to manage, protect, and enhance water resources. Members advise on education topics, review residential cost share grant applications, and work on issues of concern around the watershed, such as pollinator habitat. We thank them for their hard work this year.

MASTER WATER STEWARDS In 2019, the District participated in the Master Water Stewards (MWS) program, with four stewards graduating, and another six entering the program. MWS go through online and in-person classes covering topics including hydrology, water policy, community engagement, and residential stormwater planning. MWS volunteer for the District and work in the community, at the grassroots level, to improve water quality. Pat K, a 2019 MWS graduate, had this to say about the program: "I signed up to take the Master Water Steward Course [...] with curiosity and a desire to learn about our water and how best to protect it. As 2019 unfolded and the classes were completed, a plan emerged to create a raingarden [...] in my townhouse complex. Becoming a Master Water Steward has opened my eyes and mind and given me the confidence to know that every person can do something important for our watershed!"

VOLUNTEER EVENTS The District hosted a volunteer creek cleanup in Hopkins, as well as a spring planting event at Discovery Point, the District's office and educational facility. Other volunteers with the District have helped monitor for zebra mussels in Bush and Bryant Lakes through the District's Adopt a Dock program and taken water quality samples at five lakes through the Citizen Assisted Lake Monitoring Program.

Learn how you can volunteer with the District at: ninemilecreek.org/volunteer-opportunities



Adopt a Drain member with a yard sign



Volunteers help plant flowers at Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point

Did you know? One teaspoon of salt permanently pollutes five gallons of water. To reduce your salt use, shovel early and often to prevent ice buildup. If you do need salt, don't pile it! Make sure each granule has space around it: more salt does not mean more melting.



*Pumpkinseed fish by 2018
Photo Contest winner Paul R*

Upcoming

PHOTO CONTEST We will be accepting photos for the Photo Contest in 2020. We are seeking pictures of Nine Mile Creek or anything within the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, including lakes, parks, wildlife, plants, and outdoor recreation. Spring and winter pictures are especially needed. The deadline for submission is September 18, 2020. For contest rules and entry forms, visit ninemilecreek.org/photo-contest/

Winners of the contest will have their photos published in the 2021 Nine Mile Creek Photo Calendar. The calendars are distributed free of charge throughout the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District.

BUILDING ADDITION In 2020, we are looking forward to adding two more offices to our Discovery Point headquarters, for a total of five offices. Construction is tentatively scheduled for spring 2020. The District office will remain open during renovations.



Subscribe!

Get updates from the District! Subscribe to our e-newsletter at: ninemilecreek.org.

The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District

The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District is about 50 square miles and encompasses the land area draining to Nine Mile Creek. We are a public entity that works together with our partners and community stakeholders to manage, protect and enhance the District's water resources for everyone's benefit. We serve the residents, property owners and visitors of the cities in our District: Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Richfield.

The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District Board of Managers meets the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the District office. Meetings are open to the public.

Front cover photo: Winter Scene by
2018 Photo Contest winner, Amy S

Find the District on Social Media!

Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn



Nine Mile Creek Watershed District

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Managers

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Grace Sheely, Vice President | Term Ends: September 2022

Erin Hunker, Secretary | Term Ends: September 2020

Bob Cutshall, Treasurer | Term Ends: September 2021

Larry Olson, Manager | Term Ends: September 2022

Staff

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