



**LOWER ST. CROIX WATERSHED**  
PARTNERSHIP



**1-22-24 Policy Committee meeting**

St. Croix River in winter, looking east from the Boom Site

## 1-22-24 Policy Committee Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Approve 1-22-24 agenda
3. Election of officers
4. Approve 10-23-23 Policy Committee minutes
5. Public Hearing for VBWD amendment request
6. Updates on 2024 Lower St. Croix Watershed Plan Implementation
  - WBIF Financial Report (FY21 & 23)
  - CWF Soil Health Grant
  - Hiring update for agronomy outreach specialist
  - Program updates
7. Project highlight:
  - Randy Hinze – 2023 Minnesota Outstanding Conservationist
8. Update on FY23 supplemental funding request
9. Minor correction of plan language to clarify St. Croix River as a priority water body
10. Set 2024 meeting calendar
11. Adjourn

### FY21 WBIF - Lower St. Croix Watershed Partners Grant (12/31/2023)

A		B	C	D	E	F	G
ACTIVITY		WBIF BALANCE	MATCH BALANCE	AMOUNT WBIF's ENCUMBERED (Sub-Agreements)	AMOUNT WBIF's SPENT	PERCENT WBIF's ENCUMBERED	PERCENT WBIF's SPENT
A1	Basin Ag Outreach Program	\$ 200,000.00	\$ -	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 185,305.92	100%	93%
A2	Structural Ag BMP Implementation	\$ 107,174.00	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 103,582.39	\$ 103,582.39	97%	97%
A3	Shared Services Educator	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 4,800.00	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 149,983.85	100%	120%
A4	Non-Structural BMPs	\$ 100,000.00	\$ -	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 97,540.00	100%	98%
A5	Structural Urban BMP Implementation	\$ 360,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 360,000.00	\$ 233,547.00	100%	65%
A6	Wetland Restoration Implementation	\$ 105,857.00	\$ -	\$ 105,843.07	\$ 105,843.07	100%	100%
A7	Internal Analyses	\$ 16,500.00	\$ -	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 16,500.00	100%	100%
A8	Targeting Analyses	\$ 150,000.00	\$ -	\$ 146,413.40	\$ 136,231.03	98%	91%
A9	Technical/Engineering	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
A10	Administration/Coordination	\$ 100,000.00	\$ -	\$ 107,192.14	\$ 109,544.74	107%	110%
	<b>PROJECT BALANCE:</b>	<b>\$ 1,264,531.00</b>	<b>\$ 129,800.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,264,531.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,138,078.00</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>90%</b>

<b>FY23 WBIF - Lower St. Croix Watershed Partners Grant (12/31/2023)</b>						
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
	<b>WBIF BALANCE</b>	<b>MATCH BALANCE</b>	<b>AMOUNT WBIF's ENCUMBERED (Sub-Agreements)</b>	<b>AMOUNT WBIF's SPENT</b>	<b>PERCENT WBIF's ENCUMBERED</b>	<b>PERCENT WBIF's SPENT</b>
<b>A1 Structural Ag BMP Implementation</b>	\$ 140,000.00	\$ 37,500.00	\$ 62,410.00	\$ -	45%	0%
<b>A2 Structural Urban BMP Implementation</b>	\$ 118,054.00	\$ 37,500.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	38%	38%
<b>A3 Non-Structural Ag/Urban BMP Implementa</b>	\$ 122,025.00	\$ -	\$ 122,025.00	\$ 910.00	100%	1%
<b>A4 Wetland Restoration Implementation</b>	\$ 220,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 220,000.00	\$ 220,000.00	100%	100%
<b>A5 Agronomy Outreach Specialist</b>	\$ 225,000.00	\$ -	\$ 225,000.00	\$ -	100%	0%
<b>A6 Shared Services Educator</b>	\$ 270,500.00	\$ 2,857.90	\$ 227,840.00	\$ 26,186.72	84%	10%
<b>A7 Technical/Engineering</b>	\$ 40,000.00	\$ -	\$ 13,000.00	\$ -	33%	0%
<b>A8 Internal Analyses</b>	\$ 18,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%	0%
<b>A9 Targeting Analyses</b>	\$ 45,000.00	\$ -	\$ 12,000.00	\$ -	27%	0%
<b>A10 Administration/Coordination</b>	\$ 80,000.00	\$ -	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 15,073.16	75%	19%
<b>PROJECT BALANCE:</b>	\$ 1,278,579.00	\$ 127,857.90	\$ 987,275.00	\$ 307,169.88	77%	24%



## Trout Brook at Afton Alps

### A Helping Hand for a Damaged Stream

A cold-water stream flows through the hills of Afton Alps and Afton State Park, bringing life to a valley in the woods. Over the past 150 years, Trout Brook has weathered the rise and fall of logging, decades of farming, and several manmade changes that made way for parking lots, roads, buildings and ski slopes.

In 2019, the South Washington Watershed District worked with Great River Greening and Vail Resorts to complete a large-scale restoration project.

Designed to return Trout Brook to good health, the stream was restored from a straight channel back to its natural, curving course.

### Now a Stream of Life

This stream is once again a cold-water habitat capable of sustaining its namesake Brook Trout. It serves as a passage for trout and other fish to swim upstream and down at different times of the year when feeding, overwintering and laying eggs.

But it is more than that. Native plants along its banks provide small animals like frogs, dragonflies, bees and songbirds with their daily needs for food, nests and shelter. Larger animals like deer, fox and badgers find a narrow corridor through the ice, as do

### Onward to the St. Croix River

Trout Brook flows through Afton State Park to the St. Croix River. The restoration established a riparian floodplain and buffer, which captures sediment and excess nutrients before the stream's water reaches the St. Croix. This helps improve the river's natural function.

The St. Croix is a federally protected Wild and Scenic River, a rich habitat that hosts diverse wildlife:

- 115 species of fish, including Smallmouth Bass, Mudpuppy, Walleye, Catfish and even Sturgeon
- 320 species of birds, with 90 qualifying for greatest conservation need
- 40 species of mussels, with five on the endangered species list

## In-progress (>\$50K)

- **Trout Brook Stream Restoration** (South Washington Watershed District)
  - 177lb/yr phosphorus reduction to Trout Brook and St. Croix River
  - \$350,000 from FY21

## Completed (>\$50K)

- **Sunrise River Wetland** (Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District)
  - 89lb/yr phosphorus reduction to Sunrise River
  - \$300,500 (\$80,000 from FY21, \$220,000 from FY23)





## In-progress (Agricultural)

### FY23-25 Grant

- **Danson Ag BMPs**
  - \$20,000 (Chisago SWCD)
- **Lucht Gully Erosion Project**
  - \$42,410 (Pine SWCD)

*Total = \$62,410 of \$140,000 available*

## Completed (Agricultural)

### FY21-23 Grant

- **Hinze Cattle Exclusion: Rock Lake**
  - \$4,580 (Pine SWCD)
- **Hinze Water and Sediment Control Basin**
  - \$8,476 (Pine SWCD)
- **McQuade Ravine Stabilization**
  - \$93,000 (South Washington Watershed)

*Total = \$106,056*





## In-progress (Urban)

### FY23 Urban Non-Structural

- **Street sweeping plan implementation**
  - Linwood Twp. (\$3630)
  - Wyoming (\$15,000)
  - North Branch (\$15,000)
  - Afton (\$13,395)
  - MSCWMO – 8 cities combined (\$45,000)

Total = \$92,025

## Completed (Urban)

### FY21-23 Grant

- **Big Marine Boat Launch Sediment Plume Reduction**
  - \$10,000 (Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed)
- **Oak street bioretention basins - completed**
  - \$45,000 (Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed)
- **May Twp. stormwater retrofit engineering/tech**
  - \$10,000 (Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed)

Total = \$65,000







## Completed (Wetland)

### FY21-23 Grant

- **Jones Wetland**
  - \$5100 (Pine SWCD)
- **Jahnz Wetland**
  - \$10,308 (Pine SWCD)
- **Goose Lake Wetland**
  - \$10,000 (Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed)

*Total = \$25,408 (+Sunrise River wetland project)*

*FY21-23 (\$105,843 spent/available)*

*FY23-25 (\$220,000 spent/available)*



# Targeting and Prioritization + Internal Analyses

## FY23-25 In-Progress

- **Goose Creek SWA** (Chisago SWCD)
  - \$12,000 (FY23)

*FY23-25 (\$12,000 encumbered of \$45,000 available)*

## FY21-23 Completed

- **Rock Lake SWA** (Pine Co)
  - \$12,541 (FY21)
- **Forest Lake Internal Loading Analysis** (Comfort Lake – Forest Lake WD)
  - \$16,500 (FY21)
- **Northeastern Washington Co St. Croix and Spring Streams** (Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix WD)
  - \$20,000 (FY21)
- **Sunrise River Pollutant Delivery Assessment** (Anoka Co)
  - \$27,200 (FY21)
- **Updated urban and rural subwatershed prioritization (SWA) protocols**
  - \$8000 (FY21)
- **Delineation and prioritization of contributing subcatchments - Pine County and Sunrise River**
  - \$26,772 (FY21)
- **Tree canopy assessment protocol for enhanced street sweeping**
  - \$8,500 (FY21)
- **Street sweeping studies – 16 cities**
  - \$40,000 (FY21)

*FY21-23 (A7: \$16,500 spent of \$16,500 available)(A8: \$136,231 spent of \$150,000 available)*



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## Educated and engaged public and private landowners to plant native landscapes & raingardens



### Workshops

We hosted online and in-person workshops about pollinators, bee lawns, woodlands, and prairies (507 total participants)

### Gravel Bed Tree Nurseries

Volunteers built and cared for four new gravel bed tree nurseries in Marine, Scandia, Stillwater and Lake Elmo and supported numerous planting projects.



### Popular Videos

- Raingardens (421k views)
- No Mow May (641k views)
- Dandelions (789k views)
- Bison release into the prairie (260k views)

### Lawns to Legumes

There were 376 Lawns to Legumes applications in Chisago, Isanti, Pine and Washington Counties.



### Site Visits

There were 448 site visit requests in Washington County.



### Urban Transformation

We created a pollinator planting demonstration neighborhood with Landfall, a mobile home park community,



### Indigenous Connections

We facilitated a workshop with Belwin Conservancy and Anishinabe Academy to help develop a habitat management plan that supports Indigenous-led education and cultural programming.





## ② Advocated for the care and restoration of natural shorelines.

### Shoreline Realtor Workshop

We hosted a workshop in February for realtors and appraisers selling shoreline property. (45 participants)

### Lakeshore Landowner Workshops

We held workshops on protecting and restoring shorelines & living on shallow lakes. (181 total participants)

### Special Events

We hosted a shoreline showcase in Chisago County and attended other special events for lakeshore landowners.

### Lakeshore Landowner Research

We conducted a survey and held focus groups with lakeshore landowners in Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District.

### New Education Materials

We created a shoreline landowner guidebook, welcome packets, and a new flyer, entitled "What to ask your lakeshore landscape contractor." We also created an online resource hub at [www.lsc1w1p.org/shorelines](http://www.lsc1w1p.org/shorelines).

### St. Croix River Workshops on the Water in Taylors Falls and Stillwater

We hosted two workshops attended by more than 140 local community leaders from 54 communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Speakers highlighted the risk of vanishing shorelines and shared strategies for de-listing lakes.





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## CREATED NEW TOOLS AND OFFERED TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO COMMUNITIES TO PROMOTE CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT

### **New Video**

We collaborated with regional partners to create an animated educational video for local leaders, entitled “When Development Comes to Town”

### **Community Outreach**

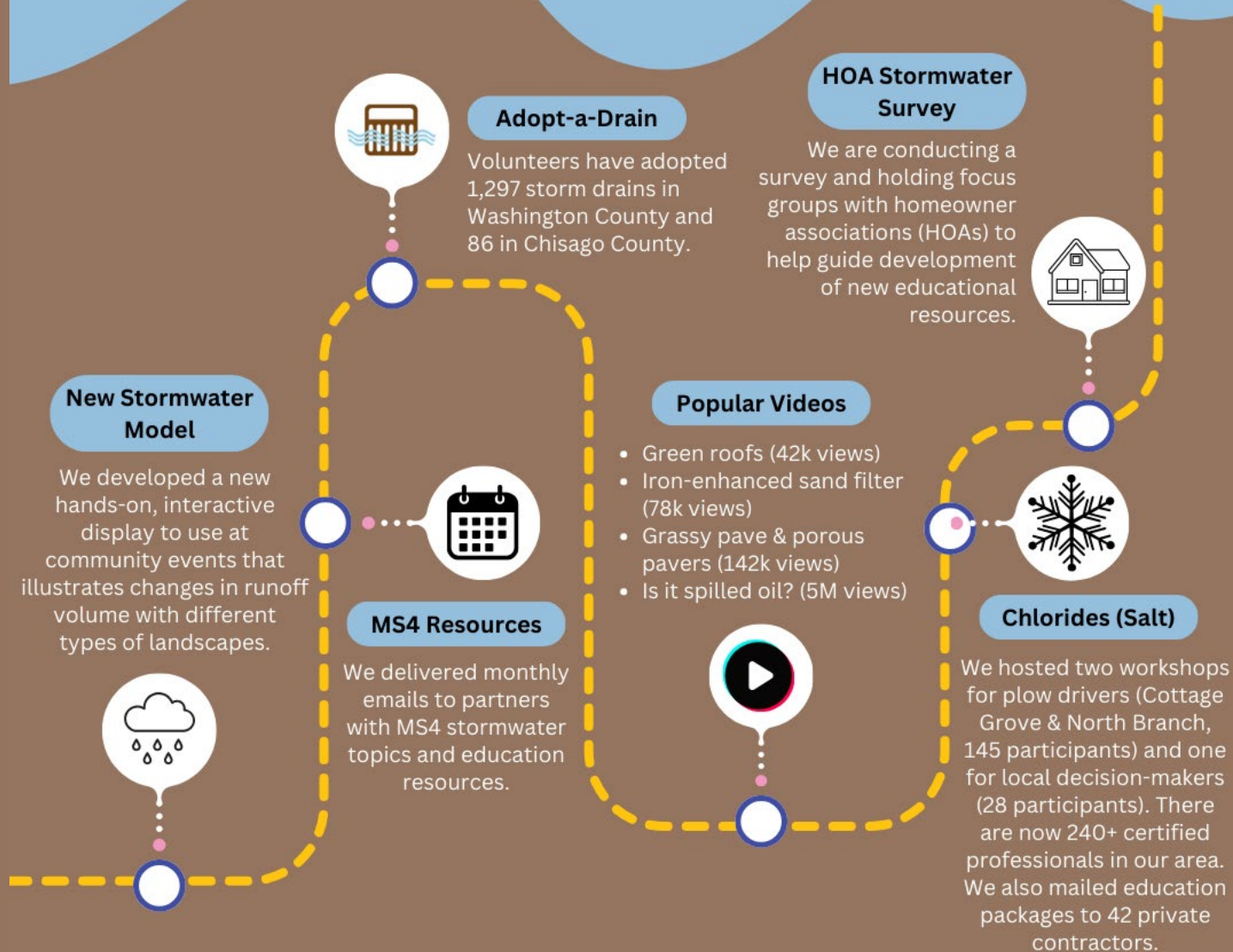
We are working with Chisago City, Marine, Scandia, North Branch, and Rush City to review existing ordinances and consider adopting minimal impact design standards (MIDS) + enhanced shoreline ordinances.





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## Created educational materials and hosted training events to help reduce stormwater pollution.





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Engaged farm owners and operators to reduce erosion, promote soil health, reduce water pollution, and restore habitat.



### WORKSHOPS & FIELD DAYS

We held online and in-person workshops about soil health, livestock, and farming equipment. Field days and a conservation cookout were also popular events!



### NEW ONLINE RESOURCES

We created a new resource page for farmers: [www.lsciwip/farmers](http://www.lsciwip/farmers).



### VIDEOS & COMMUNICATIONS

We created dozens of new videos to highlight conservation farming examples. Staff shared monthly ag program updates and events on WCMP 100.9 FM radio.

### CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

We led a new initiative to build relationships with BIPOC and immigrant farmers in the region in order to better support sustainable farming practices.



### CONSERVATION PRACTICES

We helped farm owners to enroll 12,000 acres in new conservation practices. This results in:

- 38,000 ton reduction in soil loss
- 2200 pounds per year reduction in phosphorus
- 58,000 pounds per year reduction in nitrates





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## Built social capacity for environmental change & strengthened community connections.



### Water Testing Clinics

We held well water testing clinics in Cottage Grove and North Branch. (300 tests completed)

### Robust Media Presence

We connected with new people through the East Metro Water and KnickPoints blogs, @MnNature\_Awesome social media accounts, and articles in the Stillwater Gazette, Forest Lake Times, Country Messenger, and other local newspapers.



### Community Events

We gave numerous presentations and participated in 20+ community events.

### Volunteer Mentorship

We co-hosted volunteer summits in May and August, and held a staff and volunteer training in October.



WE  
ARE  
WATER



### We Are Water Exhibit

Stillwater hosted the We Are Water, Minnesota traveling exhibit from October 12 - December 3 and shared many local stories.

### Setting Equity Goals

EMWREP staff helped to facilitate a half-day goal-setting workshop for Washington Conservation District and organization partners on February 16.



### Professional Conferences

Angie and Barbara gave presentations at the St. Croix Research Rendezvous, BWSR Academy, and Watershed Partners meetings.

### AmeriCorps Community Stewardship Facilitators

We are currently hosting two full-time Community Stewardship Facilitators through a new AmeriCorps climate resiliency initiative: Hannah Peterson and Lori Maxfield.





# Coming up next in 2024

- Shoreline Realtor on-demand workshop
- Shoreline Contractor workshop
- Workshops/events for the public – check events on [www.lsc1w1p.org](http://www.lsc1w1p.org)
- Expand audience for shoreline landowner survey and welcome packets
- When Development Comes to Town – video promotion
- St. Croix River Workshops on the Water (summer)
- Hiring new Agronomy Outreach Specialist + Watershed Educator

# Project Highlight

Randy Hinze:  
2023 Minnesota Outstanding Conservationist



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