



MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

2023 MCWD BUDGET & WORKPLAN

Pursuing a balanced urban ecology through capital projects and policy

2023 BUDGET & WORKPLAN

January 2023 marks the mid-point in our 10-year cycle for watershed management planning at Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD). We can clearly see the progress achieved, with the help of partners, from the foundation laid in our 2017 Watershed Management Plan. From this vantage point we understand that delivering high-impact projects that measurably improve our treasured waters, while supporting the broader goals of building thriving communities, takes years. For this reason, each budget cycle represents not just an opportunity to look at the next fiscal year, but to strategically prepare to take on new impactful work in the years to come.

This workplan provides an overview of our 2023 annual budget and summarizes progress occurring throughout our watershed through strong partnerships.

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OUR APPROACH: IN PURSUIT OF A BALANCED URBAN ECOLOGY

We believe that clean water and a healthy natural environment are essential to creating and sustaining vibrant, thriving communities. The beauty, green space, and recreational opportunities found in the Minnehaha Creek watershed create a sense of place that provides a local identity, adds economic value, and increases well-being.

We put this belief into action by partnering with our communities to integrate the natural and built environments across the watershed. In pursuing these partnerships, we focus in areas of high need to achieve significant, measurable improvements, while remaining responsive to needs and opportunities watershed-wide.

2023 BUDGET BREAKDOWN

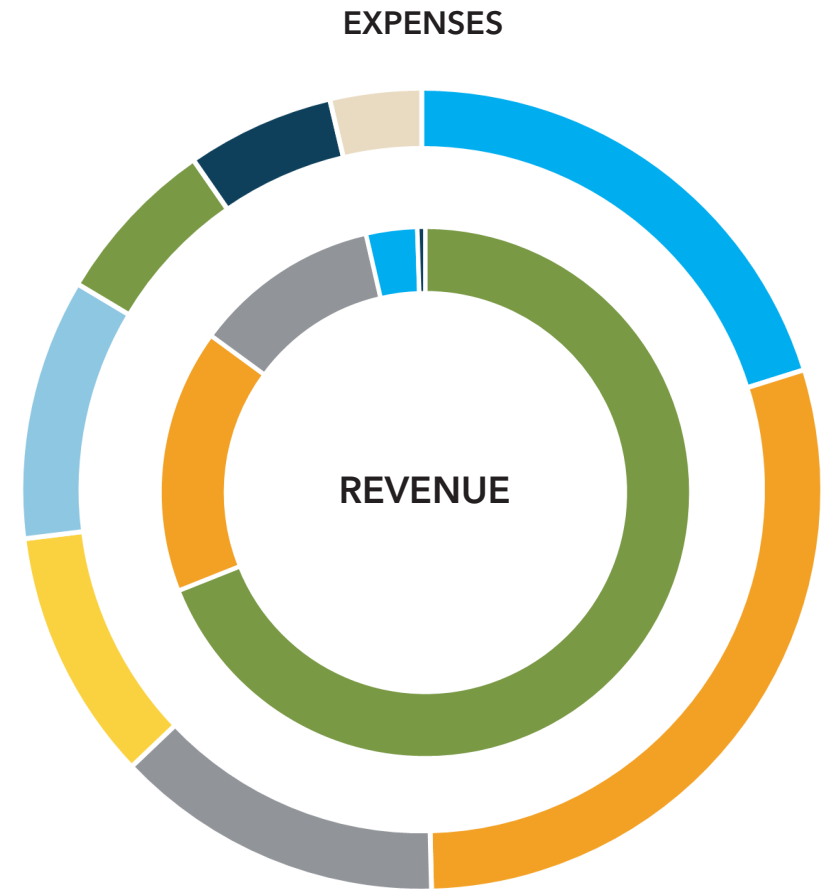
FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Our work is supported by an annual tax levy, funds levied in past years for multi-year projects (projects fund balance), funds reallocated from programs delivered under-budget (programs fund balance), grants and partner funds, interest, and reimbursement of permit fees.

After five years of maintaining a flat levy, we are proposing a 2 percent increase in the 2023 levy, or \$193,520, to support growth in project implementation in coming years as we take on more impactful and larger-scale capital work.

EXPENSES	2022	2023
Capital Projects	\$5,169,066	\$2,886,022
Capital Finance	\$2,758,468	\$4,212,718
Operations & Support Services	\$1,808,491	\$1,899,204
Research & Monitoring	\$1,208,792	\$1,454,612
Planning	\$1,226,937	\$1,505,479
Project & Land Maintenance	\$1,974,212	\$970,543
Permitting	\$825,894	\$852,789
Outreach	\$516,665	\$527,826
TOTAL	\$15,488,525	\$14,309,193

REVENUE	2022	2023
Levy	\$9,675,993	\$9,869,513
Projects Fund Balance	\$3,799,794	\$2,299,090
Programs Fund Balance	\$1,284,300	\$1,625,590
Grants & Partner Funds	\$647,218	\$445,000
Interest & Fees	\$81,220	\$70,000
TOTAL	\$15,488,525	\$14,309,193



WORKING TO CREATE LAND & WATER PARTNERSHIPS

CREATING SHARED BENEFITS

We've learned that we can best achieve our mission of protecting natural resources by working with land use partners, whether it's through a private development, park improvement, or municipal infrastructure project. As a regional agency, we've developed new ways to support our partners' goals and projects by applying our expertise in concept design, planning, permitting, and project management.



EARLY PARTNERSHIP COMES TO LIFE IN PLYMOUTH

The City of Plymouth (Plymouth) engaged early with MCWD to explore partnership opportunities for projects in Plymouth's capital improvement plan. Together, we identified a shared project to improve regional water quality within the Gleason Lake subwatershed. The project will be built in early 2023, and is a cost-effective partnership that provides an estimated 19 pounds of total phosphorus removal to the impaired Gleason Lake (pictured above). MCWD is providing financial assistance of up to \$100,000 in design and construction costs by integrating Plymouth's project into our Capital Improvement Plan.

ESTABLISHING A CLEAR PATHWAY FOR PUBLIC & PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

In 2023 we will officially launch MCWD's new Land and Water Partnership (LWP) program. We're designing this program with partners in 2022 to support projects that advance community goals and enhance the watershed's resources. The LWP program will create opportunities for partners to connect with us early in their project planning and budgeting processes. We're ready to work creatively to provide technical and financial support on public and private projects by integrating qualifying projects into our Capital Improvement Plan in future years.

REIMAGINING THE PERMITTING PROCESS

MCWD's permit review is key to ensuring natural resources continue to be sources of value for communities. By engaging early and collaboratively, MCWD leverages the permit process as an opportunity to provide service, grow relationships, and find mutual value in partnership. We're improving our permitting process to be simpler, more streamlined, better integrated with other agencies, and able to catalyze partnership opportunities.

*Learn more about these exciting updates
and how to participate at*

minnehahacreek.org/partnership



SIX MILE CREEK - HALSTED BAY SUBWATERSHED

OVERVIEW

The Six Mile Creek - Halsted Bay Subwatershed (SMCHB) is a water resource rich system that forms the headwaters of Lake Minnetonka and Minnehaha Creek. Five lakes within SMCHB are impaired by excess nutrients and Halsted Bay is the most degraded in Lake Minnetonka.

PARTNERSHIPS

With our priority to create value-added partnerships, MCWD joined with communities to develop the Six Mile Creek - Halsted Bay Subwatershed Plan, a collaborative vision to improve water quality and natural resources while integrating local goals around infrastructure, community development, and parks, recreation, and open space planning.

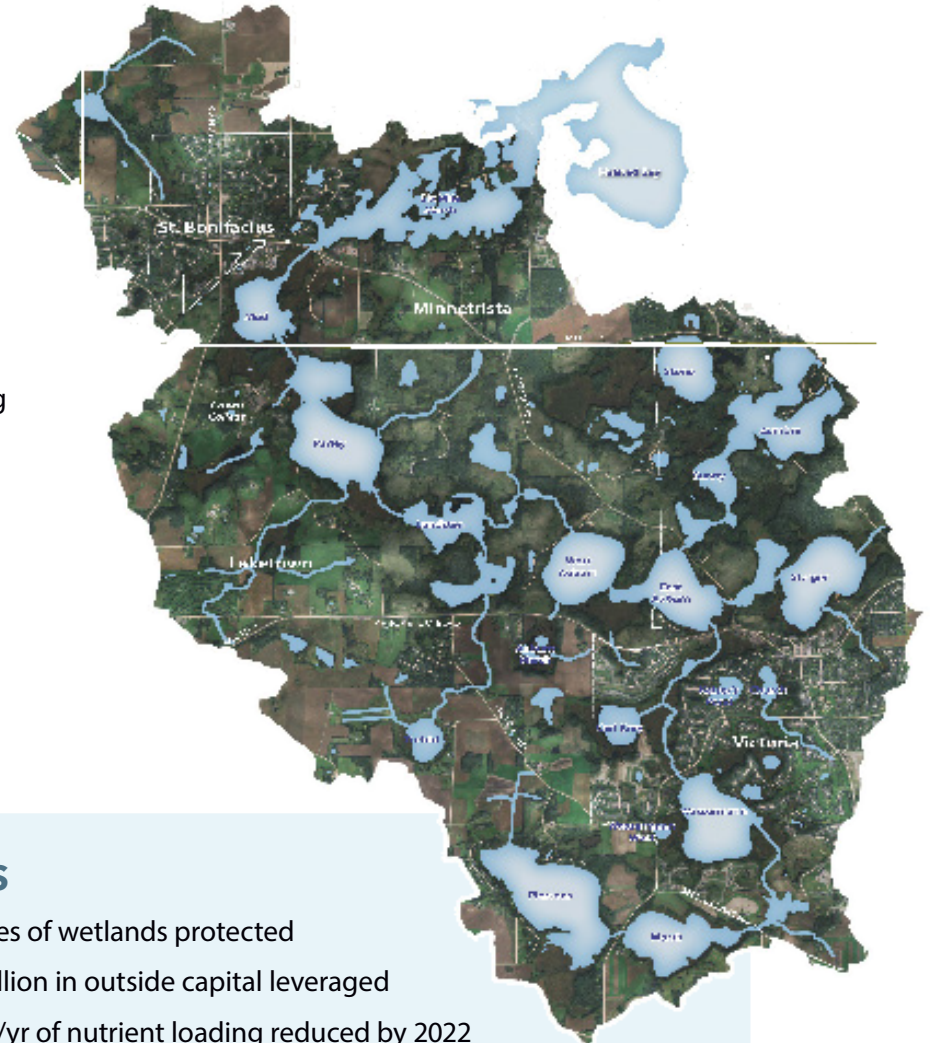
STRATEGY

- Restore lake habitat by managing carp populations
- Restore wetlands to reduce phosphorus and improve habitat
- Reduce phosphorus released from lake bottoms by controlling in-lake nutrients
- Implement stormwater management with cities & developers

WORK TO DATE

We have worked closely with the City and Victoria and other partners to restore Wassermann Lake, an impaired waterbody. 2022 marks the final year of this project work, as we look to continue restoration efforts downstream. Completed projects include a system wide carp management program, restoration of a 20-acre wetland in partnership with a private developer, and alum treatment of Wassermann Lake and an adjacent pond.

The restored lake can be enjoyed from the Wassermann Lake Preserve, a flagship project completed in 2021. This park, situated on the Wassermann shoreline, features restored native upland, shoreline, and stream channel habitat while providing unique nature-based amenities and creating the first waterfront park and preserve in Victoria, the "City of Lakes and Parks."



RESULTS

- 124 acres of wetlands protected
- \$1.2 million in outside capital leveraged
- 545 lbs/yr of nutrient loading reduced by 2022
- 190 acres of publicly accessible green space created
- 275,000 lbs of common carp reduced across 14 lakes
- 2,488 acres of deep and shallow lake habitat restored
- 25 percent improvement of nutrient concentrations at Six Mile Creek/Lake Minnetonka outlet over 10 years
- Wasserman Lake on track to be removed from State impaired list

SIX MILE CREEK - HALSTED BAY SUBWATERSHED 2023 ACTIVITIES

EAST AUBURN WETLAND RESTORATION

MCWD's Research and Monitoring team is collecting data in the wetland system between Wassermann and East Auburn Lakes. East Auburn is impaired for nutrients, and this wetland system has been identified as a major source. The data collection will help us identify innovative solutions to reduce nutrient loading to East Auburn by up to 135 lbs/yr. The monitoring effort will be complete in 2022, with feasibility and project design following in 2023.

TURBID-LUNDSTEN CORRIDOR

This degraded wetland system presents a unique opportunity to create a contiguous wetland and habitat corridor while reducing nutrient levels in both Turbid and Lundsten Lakes. The project could restore up to 95 acres of wetland and reduce nutrient loading to Turbid and South Lundsten Lakes by 35 and 55 lbs/yr, respectively. This restored corridor would be an asset in the future Victoria Greenway, which aims to create a connected system of parks and open space as development progresses south and west.



Above: Six Mile Creek flows into Halsted Bay on Lake Minnetonka.

LAKE MINNETONKA - HALSTED BAY ALUM FACILITY

MCWD is exploring the feasibility of a water quality treatment facility at the mouth of Six Mile Creek that would remove dissolved phosphorus from the stream before it enters Halsted Bay. This facility could remove 1,620 lbs/yr, approximately 50 percent of the nutrient load to Halsted Bay.

Below: Construction in 2022 added new trails and site interpretation to Six Mile Marsh Prairie, where agricultural land has been restored to native plantings to benefit the waters nearby.



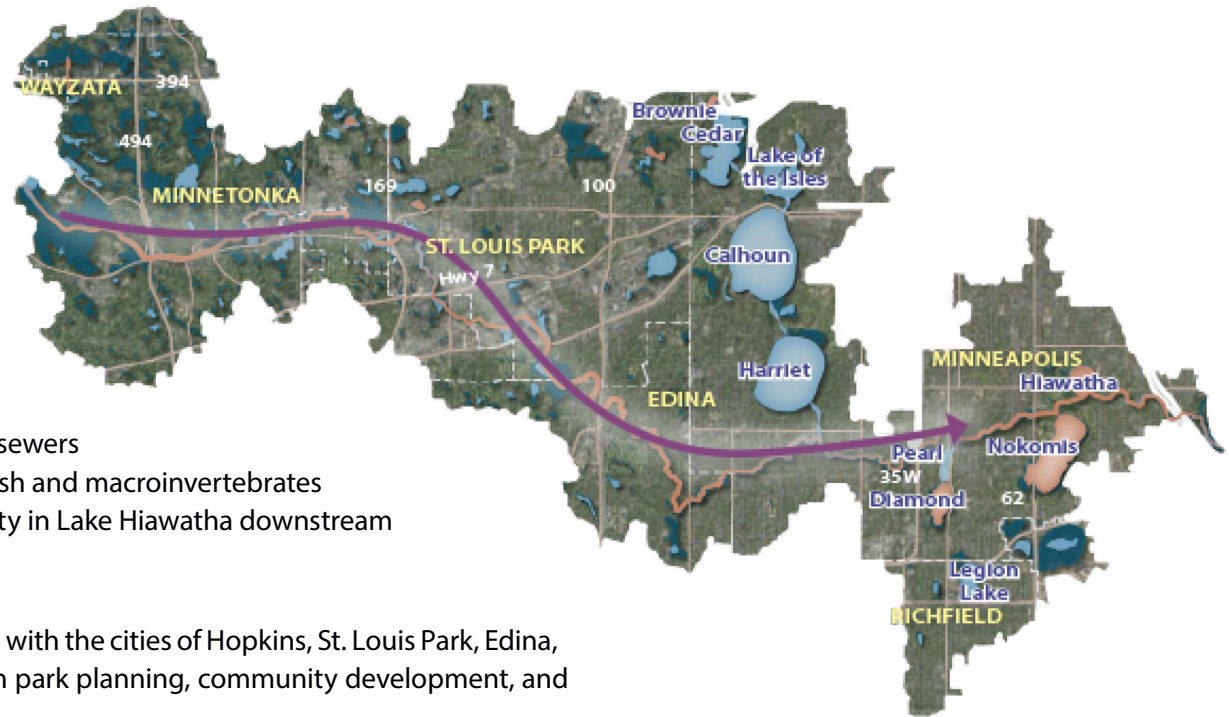
MINNEHAHA CREEK SUBWATERSHED

OVERVIEW

Minnehaha Creek flows nearly 23 miles from Lake Minnetonka and collecting stormwater from Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, Edina, Richfield, and Minneapolis, through the chain of lakes and into the Mississippi River.

The creek suffers from:

- A fragmented riparian corridor
- Altered stream channels with flashy water levels and flooding
- Polluted stormwater runoff from hundreds of storm sewers
- Impairments for E. coli, chloride, dissolved oxygen, fish and macroinvertebrates
- Transportation of nutrients that degrade water quality in Lake Hiawatha downstream



PARTNERSHIPS

We have developed strong relationships and momentum with the cities of Hopkins, St. Louis Park, Edina, and Minneapolis to integrate natural resource goals with park planning, community development, and infrastructure improvements.

STRATEGY

- Manage regional stormwater to slow down water, reduce runoff and pollution entering the creek, and decrease flood risk
- Restore the creek to reduce bank erosion, slow down water, and improve habitat and buffers while increasing opportunities for public access and economic development
- Restore and connect ecological corridors to maximize green space, improve habitat and flood storage, and strengthen resilience

WORK TO DATE

- Re-meandering sections of the creek in St. Louis Park and Edina
- Implementing stormwater management in Hopkins, St. Louis Park, and Edina
- Repairing eroded streambanks in Minneapolis
- Revitalizing Cottageville Park in Hopkins and Arden Park in Edina
- Creating new trail systems and public access to the creek in St. Louis Park

RESULTS

- 19 percent reduction in phosphorus levels in Lake Hiawatha
- Creek concentrations of chlorophyll-a that now meet state standards
- 60 acres of newly accessible green space
- 30 acres of restored wetlands
- 150+ lbs of phosphorus removed per year
- 3.2 acre-feet of floodplain storage
- 1.5 miles of restored creek/banks

MINNEHAHA CREEK SUBWATERSHED 2023 ACTIVITIES

325 BLAKE ROAD RESTORATION AND REDEVELOPMENT

Our project at this former industrial site bordering Minnehaha Creek will feature riparian restoration, open space amenities, and regional stormwater treatment. In partnership with the City of Hopkins and private development partner Alatus, approximately 12 acres of the site will be transformed into an integrated, transit-oriented mixed-use development. The completed site will treat polluted runoff from 270 acres of the surrounding region and reduce phosphorus levels by up to 385 pounds per year. MCWD has received \$2.4 million from Hennepin County, Met Council, Public Facilities Authority, and Clean Water Legacy Fund in project support.

The initial phase of the development is set to begin construction fall 2022 and continue throughout 2023 and will result in over 100 affordable housing units. This marks a major milestone that furthers our partners' (Hopkins, Hennepin County, Met Council) affordable housing goals, and is a powerful example of what our vision of a balanced urban ecology truly looks like in action.



Design drawing from consultants HDR and Damen/Farber of the fully restored and redeveloped 325 Blake Road, including recreational access to the creek and ponds to support regional stormwater management and cleaning.

COTTAGEVILLE PARK EXPANSION & GREENWAY CONNECTIONS

In 2023, we will invest capital funds to create a connection to the Minnehaha Creek Greenway trail system between Cottageville Park and the Minnehaha Creek Preserve. Additions at 325 Blake Road and Lake Street will include a Gateway Plaza and a new nature play area.

STREAM ENHANCEMENT & TRAIL CONNECTION

The Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) line will provide another important community connection to this revitalized corridor. In partnership with the City of St. Louis Park and the Metropolitan Council, a key connection will link investments along the Minnehaha Creek Greenway trail system to the Cedar Regional Trail and restore the streambank along the construction corridor. Project design work will begin in 2023 following completion of feasibility in 2022.

MINNEHAHA CREEK PARKWAY WATER RESOURCE IMPROVEMENTS

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, in coordination with the City of Minneapolis and MCWD, adopted a new 30-year vision and plan for the Minnehaha Creek Regional Trail in 2020. Conversations continue among the partner agencies to set a shared framework for implementation to transform this critical natural space in south Minneapolis, including regional stormwater management solutions and creek restoration to make water quality, infrastructure, and ecological improvements.

ACTIVITY SPOTLIGHT: CREATING A DATA DRIVEN TOOL FOR CLIMATE ACTION

CHANGING OUR APPROACH

Water systems throughout Minnesota were built for stable, predictable precipitation patterns. New extreme swings in precipitation are stressing our natural and built environments, impacting water quality, wildlife habitat, and the safety of homes, public infrastructure, and businesses.

At a regional level, MCWD is well-positioned to understand how changing weather patterns will impact water issues in communities by building a high-resolution model of our watershed. This new model will leverage advancements in data science, and combine state land surface information with local infrastructure to provide a more detailed understanding of surface and groundwater flows in the watershed. This tool will help identify cost-beneficial projects.

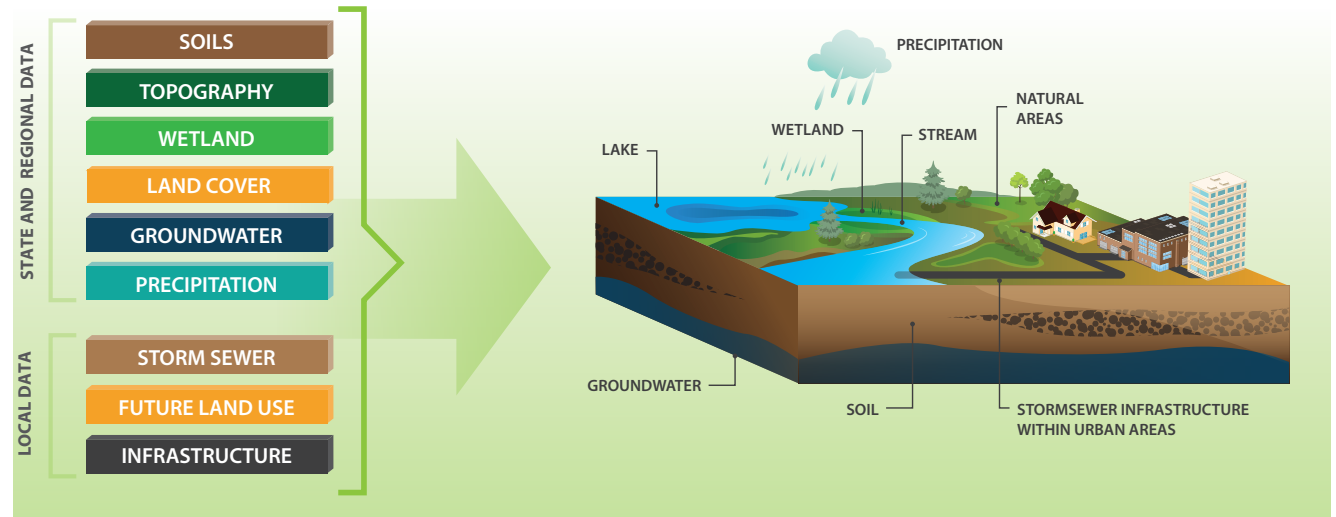
PARTNERSHIP FUELS PILOT WORK IN 2022

In 2022, we are partnering with the City of Edina and City of Victoria to develop a pilot model, an important first step as we seek to best serve our communities in their climate adaptation.

FULL WATERSHED BUILD & ENGAGEMENT BEGINS IN 2023

2023 will see our modeling work expand toward a fully built high-resolution model to serve the whole watershed and improve our understanding of how all surface and groundwater flows in the system. This new tool will help identify natural resources and public assets in need of protection.

HOW OUR NEW MODEL WILL USE DATA TO INFORM CLIMATE ACTION



High-resolution understanding of complex watershed

Predict impact of changing climate

OUTPUTS

Identify natural resources most in need of protection

Quantitatively compare proposed projects

Improve flood forecasting and emergency response

DEFINING OUR ROLE IN CLIMATE ACTION

Our Climate Action Framework, to be finalized in fall 2022, sets a direction for how we will engage with local, regional, and state partners over the next five years, leading to our 2027 Watershed Management Plan.



ADDITIONAL WATERSHED-WIDE SERVICES

In our commitment to serve partners and residents across the watershed's 178-square miles, we provide a variety of services that assist in clean water work to complement our work in focal geographies and through land and water partnerships.

SERVICE IN ACTION

Research and Monitoring staff, shown here, pump shallow groundwater from a monitoring well to collect water samples. Monitoring at varying depths and spatial locations throughout the wetland helps MCWD understand where phosphorus loading is coming from, which informs the design of water quality improvement projects.



SERVICES

- **Research and Monitoring:** Collecting and analyzing data across the watershed to identify resource needs to inform planning and implementation.
- **Permitting:** Reviewing and overseeing construction activities, in coordination with our communities, to protect natural resources from degradation as a result of land use change.
- **Outreach:** Connecting people to information they value and engaging residents, agencies, and private sector partners to ensure that our work is integrated with the goals of our communities.
- **Project Maintenance and Land Management:** Maintaining our projects and land to ensure their continued function and value and managing the operation of Gray's Bay Dam to balance the water budget throughout our 178-square miles and reduce the risk of flooding.

Find contact information for MCWD Board of Managers and staff across our programs at our website, www.minnehahacreek.org. We're excited to have a brand-new website to help share information our residents and partners value in 2023—keep an eye out for the launch in fall 2022!



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