The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) is a local unit of government responsible for managing and protecting the water resources in one of the largest urban watersheds in the state of Minnesota. There are eight major creeks, 129 lakes, and thousands of wetlands within the MCWD.

IN PURSUIT OF A BALANCED URBAN ECOLOGY
Recognizing the relationship between our natural and built environments, the MCWD works in partnership with the public, private and civic sectors to help protect and improve our natural systems, make wise investments in public infrastructure and improve the quality of water and quality of life in our communities. The District pursues this work under three guiding principles:

» We will join with others in pursuing our watershed management goals
» We will intensify and maintain our focus on high-priority projects
» We will be flexible and creative in adapting our practices to those of our partners

MCWD led efforts to keep communities informed about flooding potential and response. P.2

REACH 20: The District built 2,200 feet of boardwalk around the section of Minnehaha Creek in St. Louis Park P.3

MCWD launched an assessment of the common carp population in the Six Mile Chain of Lakes. P.4
FIRST HALF OF 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

FLOOD RESPONSE

In response to widespread flooding due to the wettest Twin Cities spring on record, the MCWD led efforts to keep communities informed about flooding potential and response. The District also collected information about flooded areas and impacted structures to identify needed improvements.

FLOOD-RELATED ACTIVITIES:

- Coordinated with emergency management officials and other community leaders on flood prevention and response measures.

- Kept communities updated on high water conditions and projections, provided current high water information on website, and fielded dozens of media requests for information.

- Staff conducted numerous inspections and responded to flood-related inquiries regarding the permitting process, emergency work and requests for onsite meetings.

- Staff will aggregate and synthesize data gathered during high water and provide a comprehensive report on what happened, what the community response has been, and where the District can add the most value moving forward.

The MCWD is responsible for 181 square miles of land and water that drain into Minnehaha Creek and ultimately the Mississippi River. It includes all or part of 27 cities and two townships in Hennepin and Carver Counties.
REACH 20
This spring the District built 2,200 feet of boardwalk around the section of Minnehaha Creek in St. Louis Park that was restored in 2013. The boardwalk features two bridges and an environmental learning center that will bring residents close to the creek where it was previously inaccessible. The city of St. Louis Park will be building another 4,600 feet of paved trail.

UPON COMPLETION THIS PROJECT WILL:
- Create access to over 39 acres of green space through 1.5 miles of trail along 1 mile of restored Minnehaha Creek.
- Manage over 85 acres of regional storm water.
- Connect parks, housing, transit and employment.
- Provide recreation and environmental education opportunities.

COTTAGEVILLE PARK
The District is working with the City of Hopkins on a major expansion of Cottageville Park that will add community amenities and improve the health and visibility of Minnehaha Creek. The project will restore 400 feet of streambank and will filter about 20 acres of polluted stormwater that previously flowed untreated into Minnehaha Creek. The project leverages $15,000 in private contributions and $480,000 in Clean Water Funds and meets several of the City of Hopkins’ goals, creating 5 acres of parkland in a highly developed area. Construction is planned for 2015.

KNOLLWOOD MALL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
Staff finalized a cooperative agreement with Rouse Properties, which owns Knollwood Mall in St. Louis Park. The District is exploring opportunities to leverage $1.6 million in private funds to treat more than 150 acres of polluted stormwater, reduce flooding, and expand the District’s restoration of Minnehaha Creek further upstream.

LONG LAKE CREEK CORRIDOR
Leveraging a $200,000 contribution from the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services, final design was initiated to remediate the Long Lake Wastewater Treatment Pond restoring a meandering stream and mixed type wetland; improving water quality, habitat and flood storage.

TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) STUDIES
Worked in partnership with the MN Pollution Control Agency and over 20 public agencies to finalize and obtain EPA approval for TMDL Studies for 21 water bodies in the Upper Minnehaha Creek Watershed and Minnehaha Creek-Lake Hiawatha.

MN PUBLIC FACILITIES AUTHORITY
Supported by the District’s TMDL credit policy, the 325 Blake Road stormwater project in St. Louis Park was accepted on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s project priority list for $1.4 million in Public Facilities Authority’s funding.
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS)

AIS MONITORING:
The District began an inventory of the AIS throughout the MCWD and is monitoring closely for new infestations. Finding a new invasive species early can mean preventing a full-blown infestation in some cases. The District continues to track the spread of zebra mussels in Lake Minnetonka.

SIX-MILE CREEK CARP ASSESSMENT:
The District began a sweeping assessment of carp in the Six Mile Creek chain of lakes, in partnership with the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center. This assessment is the first step toward sustainably managing common carp in this area.

USGS ZEBRA MUSSEL ZEQUANOX TREATMENT STUDY:
The MCWD is assisting the U.S. Geological Survey in studying the effectiveness of Zequanox, a non-chemical treatment used to kill zebra mussels, in Lake Minnetonka. The study will determine how to best maximize the effectiveness of Zequanox and minimize the quantity and cost of application in lake environments. Zequanox will be applied in enclosed areas of Robinson’s Bay this fall.

DATA

ECOSYSTEM EVALUATION PROGRAM (E-GRADE):
Water Quality staff has developed a new grading system that evaluates the watershed based on the health of the entire ecosystem, rather than a few water quality parameters. The new program will be implemented over the next four years.

PERMITTING DATABASE TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS:
Staff began using a new web-based database this June. The new system will allow staff to access the database remotely, eventually allowing them to enter site inspections in the field, link photos to permits instantly, and generate inspection reports on site.

Get Involved!
Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, subscribe to our newsletter, Splash!, or visit us at www.minnehahacreek.org.
**EVENTS**

**Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Symposium:**
The District was the lead organizer for the 2014 Minnesota AIS Symposium in March, which drew more than 150 participants and garnered widespread media coverage on AIS-related topics.

**EDUCATION & OUTREACH**

**SIGNAGE AND CANOE LANDING IMPROVEMENTS:**
Developed a series of directional signs and canoe landing standards to encourage and improve recreational use of Minnehaha Creek. Designed interpretive signage for the Minnehaha Creek restoration in St. Louis Park. Developed design standards for new and existing Districtwide signage to further MCWD's educational goals through consistent messaging and design. Implementation of all of these initiatives is planned in 2015.

**TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS:**
MCWD offered trainings for technical staff across the District on winter road maintenance and salt use, proper maintenance of stormwater management systems, and turf grass care. It also partnered on a Shallow Lakes Forum for residents and educational workshops for municipal officials on the impacts of stormwater runoff.

**GRANTS**

**WATERCRAFT INSPECTION:**
Awarded more than $187,000 in watercraft inspection cost-share grants and contracts for service totaling more than 19,000 hours of inspections. Partnering agencies are Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, Lake Minnetonka Conservations District, Carver County, City of Shorewood, and Three Rivers Park District. Including the MN DNR's program, watercraft inspectors will be scheduled at 22 of the 26 public accesses within MCWD IN 2014.

**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT:**
Responded to at least 75 inquiries, conducted 24 site visits, processed more than two dozen grant applications, and finalized a number of previously funded projects. Several more applications will be processed during the remainder of 2014 and staff will be working with cities within the District to help fund the repair of shorelines damaged by high water this spring.
OPERATIONS & ADMINISTRATION

FINANCIALS: Established quarterly reviews with an auditor and completed annual audit process with no corrective action marks. Improved invoice review and payment process and implemented new process for work plans and budgeting.

HUMAN RESOURCES: Improved the orientation process for new hires and launched review of job descriptions, salaries and organizational structure.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT: Developed new resolution tracking process, refined process for preparing and distributing board meeting materials in a timely fashion, and continued to scan and organize electronic and hard copy documents.

TECHNOLOGY: Worked with vendors to improve quality and consistency of the building's technology, created user guides for the board room and conference rooms, launched interactive map for internal use.

A LOOK AHEAD

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY: Staff is preparing to update the MCWD’s Comprehensive Plan, which is due for adoption in June 2017. The focus of the plan update is improved implementation through public and private partnerships and by integrating our work with that of our member communities. Development of the plan will continue with outreach to communities, establishment of advisory groups, policy discussions and a District-wide public opinion survey.

MINNEHAHA CREEK URBAN CORRIDOR:
The District will be working in partnership with Hennepin County and the City of Hopkins through the SW LRT Community Works master development study of the Blake Road Station Area, to advance the planning of 325 Blake Road. Upon completion this project will be a key part of plans to revitalize the Blake Road corridor through mixed-use, transit-oriented, environmentally-conscious development; while expanding a 1,000 foot, 4.5 acre greenway; managing over 260 acres of regional stormwater; catalyzing business expansion and job creation, and connecting Hopkins and St. Louis Park through the Minnehaha Creek Greenway.

SIX MILE CREEK CORRIDOR:
Staff is in the process of collaborative planning with agencies, member communities, lake associations, businesses and property owners to identify opportunities to develop water resource projects which add value to the community.

EVENTS

» Minnehaha Creek Cleanup: September 7
» Clean Water Summit: September 11
» Watershed Heroes: October 16

Learn more at www.minnehahacreek.org