

BOARD MEETING AGENDA
Coon Creek Watershed District Offices - Board Room
Monday, October 14, 2024, 5:30 p.m.

Board of Managers:

Jim Hafner, President; Erin Lind, Vice President; Jason Lund, Secretary; Mary Campbell, Treasurer; Dwight McCullough, Member at Large

Note: Individuals with items on the agenda or who wish to speak to the Board are encouraged to be in attendance when the meeting is called to order.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of the Agenda** (*Additions/Corrections/Deletions*)
- 3. Announcements**
- 4. Open Mic/Public Comment**

*Members of the public at this time may address the Board, for **up to three minutes**, on a matter not on the Agenda. Individuals wishing to be heard must sign in with their name and address at the door. Additional comments may be accepted in writing. Board action or discussion should **not** be expected during the presentation of public comment/open mic. Board members may direct staff to research the matter further or take the matter under advisement for consideration at a future Board meeting.*

CONSENT ITEMS

The consent agenda is considered as one item of business. It consists of routine administrative items or items not requiring discussion. Items can be removed from the consent agenda at the request of a Board member, staff member or a member of the audience.

- 5. Approval of Minutes – September 23rd, 2024**
- 6. Administrator's Report**
- 7. Advisory Committee Report**
- 8. Bills/Accounts Payable**

POLICY ITEMS

PERMIT ITEMS

- 9. 24-022 Cardinal Crest**
- 10. 24-028 JHM Medical Park**

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 11. Ditch 60 Inspection Report**

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- 12. Strib article - Wetland Violation in Henn Co, 7 years on**
- 13. MPR News – Biochar Production & Use in MN**
- 14. Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan**

ADJOURN

COON CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT BOARD OF MANAGERS' MEETING

The Board of Managers of the Coon Creek Watershed District held their regular meeting on Monday, September 23, 2024, at the Coon Creek Watershed District Office.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM

Board Members Present: Erin Lind, Mary Cambell, Jason Lund, and Dwight McCullough

Board Member Absent: James Hafner

Staff Present: Bobbie Law, Tim Kelly, Erin Margl, and Corinne Elfelt

Staff Present on Zoom: Michell Ulrich, Jon Janke, Erik Bye, Dawn Doering, Abbey Lee and Jessica Lindemyer

Members of the public: PJ Disch (Permit 24-029)

2. Approval of the Agenda

Board Member Campbell moved to amend the agenda, moving agenda item 10 to the consent agenda. Seconded by Board Member Lund. The motion carried with 4 yeas (Board Members Lund, Campbell, Lind, and McCullough) and no nays.

Board Member Campbell approved the amended agenda. Seconded by Board Member McCullough. The motion carried with 4 yeas (Board Members Lund, Campbell, Lind, and McCullough) and no nays.

Mr. Disch left the meeting at 5:31 pm.

3. Announcements

Two announcements were made as follows:

- City of Coon Rapids Coon Creek Trail work has started.
- An interview with Dawn Doering, District Public and Government Relations Coordinator, has been posted on the City of Coon Rapids website regarding the the Coon Creek Trail extension.

4. Open Mic/Public Comment

No one was present for comment.

CONSENT ITEMS

5. Approval of Minutes of September 9, 2024

6. Approval of Bills for Payment:

Claims totaling \$ 277,132.58 on the following disbursement(s) list will be issued and released upon Board approval.

Vendor	Amount
V0005--LEAGUE OF MINNESOTA CITIES	786.00
V0015--ANOKA COUNTY MN	215,471.39
V0015--ANOKA COUNTY MN	2,050.00
V0019--MINNESOTA BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES	75.00
V0037--ECM PUBLISHERS INC	580.80
V0039--FOREST LAKE CONTRACTING INC	3,850.00
V0051--LENNAR FAMILY OF BUILDERS	6,000.00
V0052--LOFFLER COMPANIES INC	152.90
V0102--US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY	8,047.25
V0103--BANKERS ADVERTISING CO	2,075.78
V0104--MINNESOTA PIPELINE COMPANY	1,954.08
V0120--PARENT CUSTOM HOMES LLC	5,690.91
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	165.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	186.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	237.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	216.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	957.00
V0247--POOP 911 OF MPLS STP LLC	731.40
V0291--STONE CONSTRUCTION INC.	4,000.00
V0323--AK INVESTMENTS INC	2,830.84
V0324--BECKMANN CUSTOM HOMES LLC	2,038.75
V0325--BORDER FOODS INC	1,774.11
V0326--DOG WASTE DEPOT	2,629.70
V0327--EZ PRO CONSTRUCTION	3,068.85
V0328--HAM LAKE ASSOCIATION	1,350.00
V0329--REP ENTERPRISES LLC	2,720.00
V0330--VICKERY, NATHAN	2,136.91
V0331--WHITBY, EVAN & NANCY	2,210.31
V0332--XIENG LEE & PORSHOUA YANG	3,146.60
	277,132.58

The following permit item was moved to the Consent Agenda.

10. 24-029 Blaine Town Center

The purpose of this project, located Between 105th and 109th, East of the National Sports Center and West of Radisson Road NE in Blaine, is to complete Phase 1 of the Blaine Town Master Plan project which includes roads, mass grading, sidewalk, and utilities with service stubs.

The staff recommendation was to approve permit application number P-24-029 with 6 conditions and 3 stipulations as presented in the staff report:

Conditions to be Met Before Permit Issuance:

Rule 2.7 – Procedural Requirements

1. Submittal of a performance escrow in the amount of \$19,500.00.

Rule 3.0 – Stormwater Management

2. Include Basin identifier and impervious area columns in Table 2.2.
3. The eastern slope of Biofiltration Basin 5 (between 897 and 899 contours) appears to be steeper than 3:1. Please flatten this slope or provide additional stabilization measures (ie. Turf reinforcement matting) to prevent erosion on basin slopes.
4. Include all storm sewer profiles in the Phase 1 plan set once completed. Ensure all proposed sumps and SAFL baffles are shown/labeled on the profiles. Based on SHSAM calculations and storm sewer plan, sumps are proposed within CBMH 503 and MH 909, however, this is not reflected on the storm sewer profiles.
5. Please list the pond and basin high water levels from the "tailwater conditions" HydroCAD model on the grading plans. Two high water levels can be listed: one with tailwater conditions and one without.

Rule 4.0 – Soils and Erosion Control

6. Update the erosion and sediment control plan to include the following:
 - a. A note that soils and soil stockpiles will be stabilized within 24 hours of inactivity.
 - b. A note to sweep streets by the end of each workday.

Stipulations: The permit will be issued with the following stipulations as conditions of the permit. By accepting the permit, the applicant agrees to these stipulations:

1. If dewatering is required, provide DNR dewatering permit prior to construction. If a DNR permit is not required, provide well-field location, rates, discharge location, schedule and quantities prior to construction.
2. Completion of post construction infiltration tests on Biofiltration Basins 1, 2, 3, and 5 by filling the basin to a minimum depth of 6 inches with water and monitoring the time necessary to drain, or multiple double ring infiltration tests to ASTM standards. The Coon Creek Watershed District shall be notified prior to the test to witness the results.
3. Submittal of as-builts for the stormwater management practices and associated structures listed in Tables 2 and 3, including volume, critical elevations and proof of installation for hydrodynamic separators.

Board Member McCullough moved to approve the consent agenda items. Seconded by Board Member Lund. The motion carried with 4 yeas (Board Members Lund, Campbell, Lind, and McCullough) and no nays.

POLICY ITEMS

7. Citizen Advisory Committee Application

Ms. Lindemyer gave an overview of the current vacancies on the CAC and application of Coon Rapids resident Mr. Schneider, noting his service would provide the District with representation from the City of Coon Rapids.

Manager Campbell asked staff to confirm that the applicant would be an addition to the committee, not a replacement. This was confirmed

Board Member Lind approved the CAC application and appointment of Nathan Schneider to the CAC. Seconded by Campbell. The motion carried with 4 yeas (Board Members Lund, Campbell, Lind, and McCullough) and no nays.

8. Water Education Grant – Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Field Work

Ms. Lindemyer introduced Avail Academy's \$250 water education grant request. This is Avail Academy's 5th grade teacher's first application for a Coon Creek Watershed District grant.

Board Member Lund moved to approve the education grant. Seconded by Board Member McCullough. The motion carried with 4 yeas (Board Members Lund, Campbell, Lind, and McCullough) and no nays.

9. Benefits Update, Selections, and Timeline

Mr. Kelly gave an overview of the benefits package being proposed for District employees in 2025. He noted that it would come in under budget for 2025 as proposed and presented. He gave a brief history of the District benefits and payroll. The benefits and payroll are currently managed by Anoka County. Mr. Kelly outlined the goal to ensure that staff receive the same or similar level of benefits currently offered by the County.

Ms. Elfelt gave an overview of the meetings that occurred to research benefit programs and plans. She highlighted the goal of finalizing the transition from Anoka County payroll by December 2024 and the importance of having a benefits plan in place before that time.

Managers discussed Unum life insurance and short- and long-term disability benefits. Ms. Elfelt highlighted a new program through the State that will soon replace a short- and long-term disability program through the District.

Ms. Elfelt noted some of the biggest differences in the healthcare benefits being proposed. This included the following:

- Higher Deductibles
- Well Clinic no longer offered

Any losses are planned to be balanced with a higher dollar amount being contributed to each employee's HSA accounts. The healthcare plans were presented to staff along with a survey. Staff noted that the plans being proposed were chosen with the data collected via these surveys.

Ms. Elfelt recommended the Board approve entering contracts with:

- Unum – LTD, STD, Life Ins. and AD&D, Optional Life Ins
- Delta Dental
- BCBS – Medical
- BCBS – Vision

Managers discussed each plan. Staff thanked Manager Campbell for her help throughout this process. Board Member Campbell thanked staff for their recognition and stated that the benefits being proposed were phenomenal.

The Board discussed the timeline for approval with a focus on enrollment, staff's opinion on the plans being proposed, and the ability to change the plan if needed after one year. Staff discussed the benefits of multiple watershed districts coming together in the future to obtain a larger risk pool of employees.

Board Member Lind moved to direct staff to move forward with the entire benefits and payroll plan as presented by staff. Seconded by Board Member Lund. The motion carried with 4 yeas (Board Members Lund, Campbell, Lind, and McCullough) and no nays.

PERMIT ITEMS

The permit item was moved to the Consent Agenda.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

11. Third Wettest Year on Record

This news article from Fox 9 News summarizes the weather patterns in Minnesota for the first half of 2024.

12. BWSR updating WCA rules, reflecting statutory changes

ADJOURN

This article outlines Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) plans to amend the Wetland Conservation Act Rules to reconcile the Rules with WCA statutory changes. Mr. Kelly noted that the definition of a wetland is being looked at closely due to a change in the definition of deep-water habitats.

Board Member Campbell moved to adjourn at 6:18 pm. Seconded by Board Member Lund. The motion carried with 4 yeas (Board Members Lund, Campbell, Lind, and McCullough) and no nays.

President

**COON CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
Request for Board Action**

MEETING DATE: October 14, 2024
AGENDA NUMBER: 6
ITEM: Administrator’s Report

AGENDA: Consent

REQUESTED ACTION:

Receive report.

ADMINISTRATOR’S EVALUATION

Upcoming Board Considerations

- October 28: Award Lower Coon Creek Restoration Project
- November: Adopt 2024 -2033 Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan
- December – 2025 Tax Levy

District Capacity and Capability

The District possesses the required resources and is trained to undertake most of its legislative mission for which it is organized or designed.

The District can accomplish most required tasks to the required standard under most conditions.

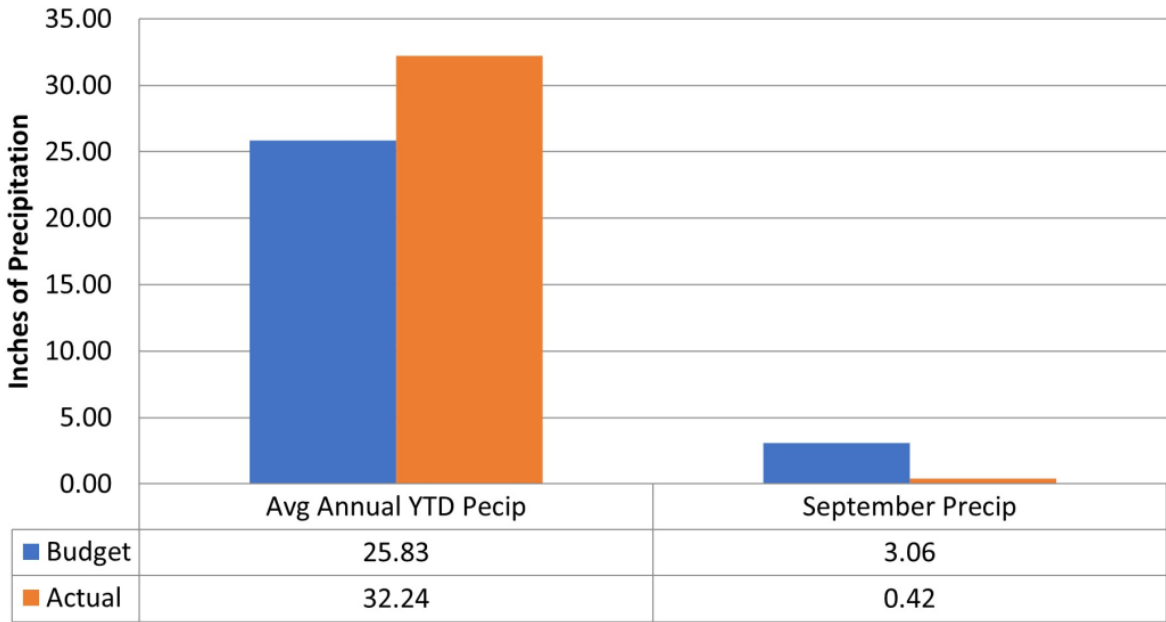
MANAGEMENT SITUATION

The District averaged 0.42 Inches of precipitation in the month of September. That leaves the District 2.6 inches or 86% below average for the month and 6.4 inches or 25% above for the year. Growing season precipitation (May-September) is 4.0 inches or 21% above average.

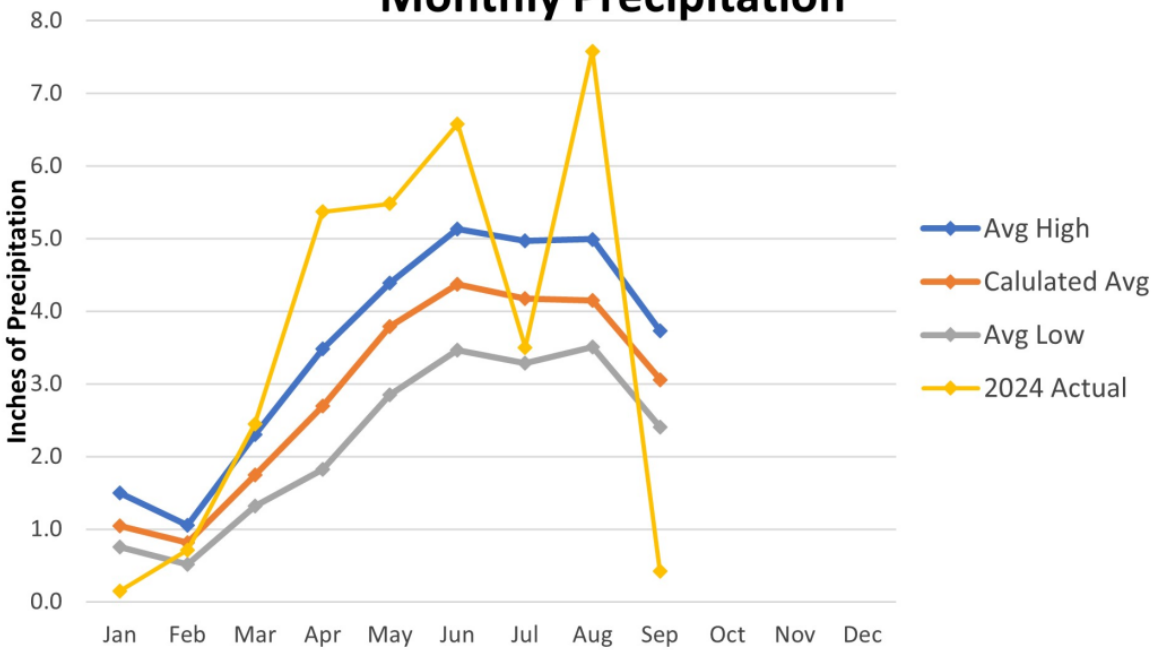
Drought status in the District has changed from “None” to “Abnormally Dry” for the first time since the beginning of April, leaving water levels and flows across the District lower than they have been all season and low or on the low end of normal for this time of year.

These conditions will persist with the National Weather Service predicting no precipitation over the next seven days.

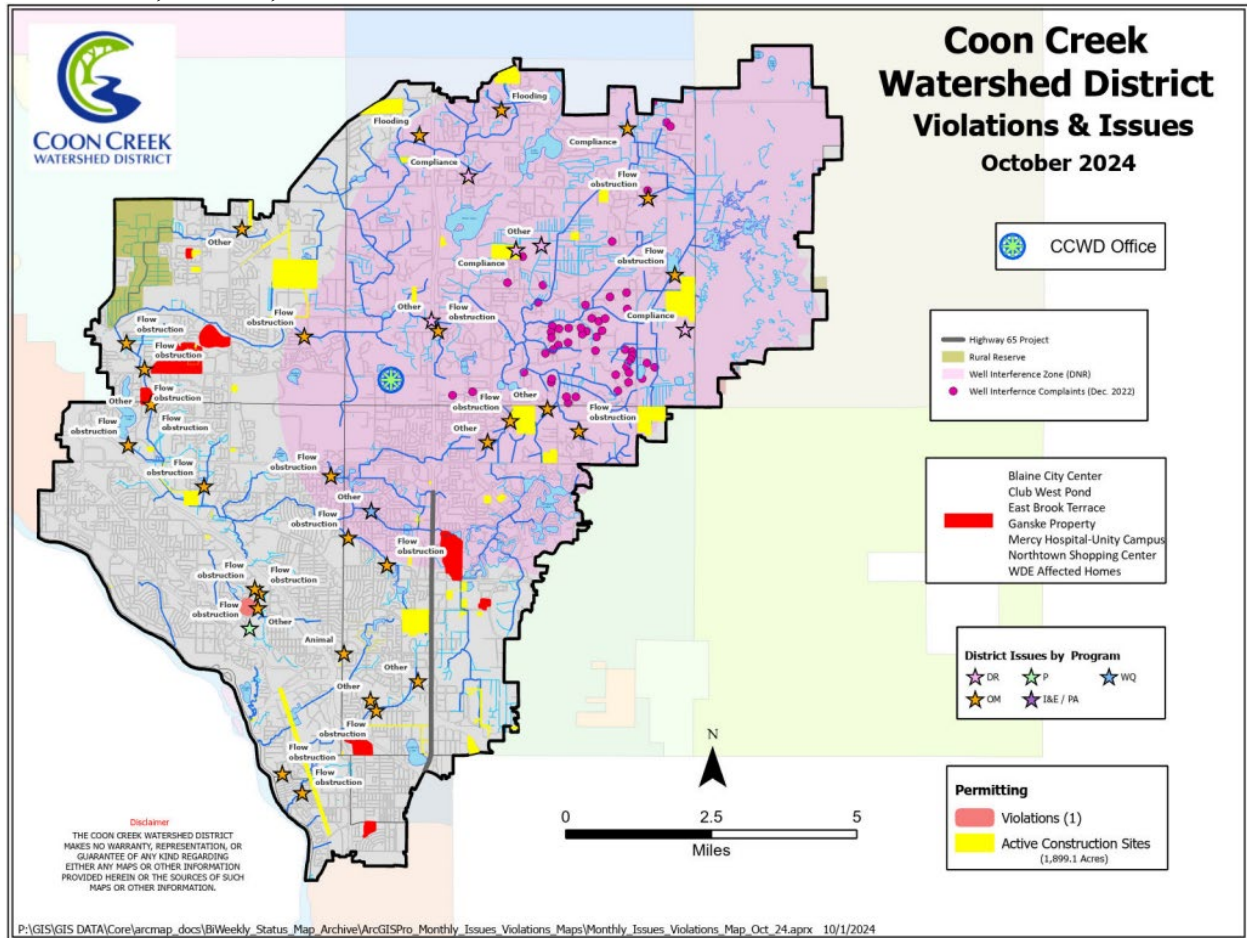
2024 Water Watch



Monthly Precipitation



Problems, Issues, and Concerns



Cooperator Actions

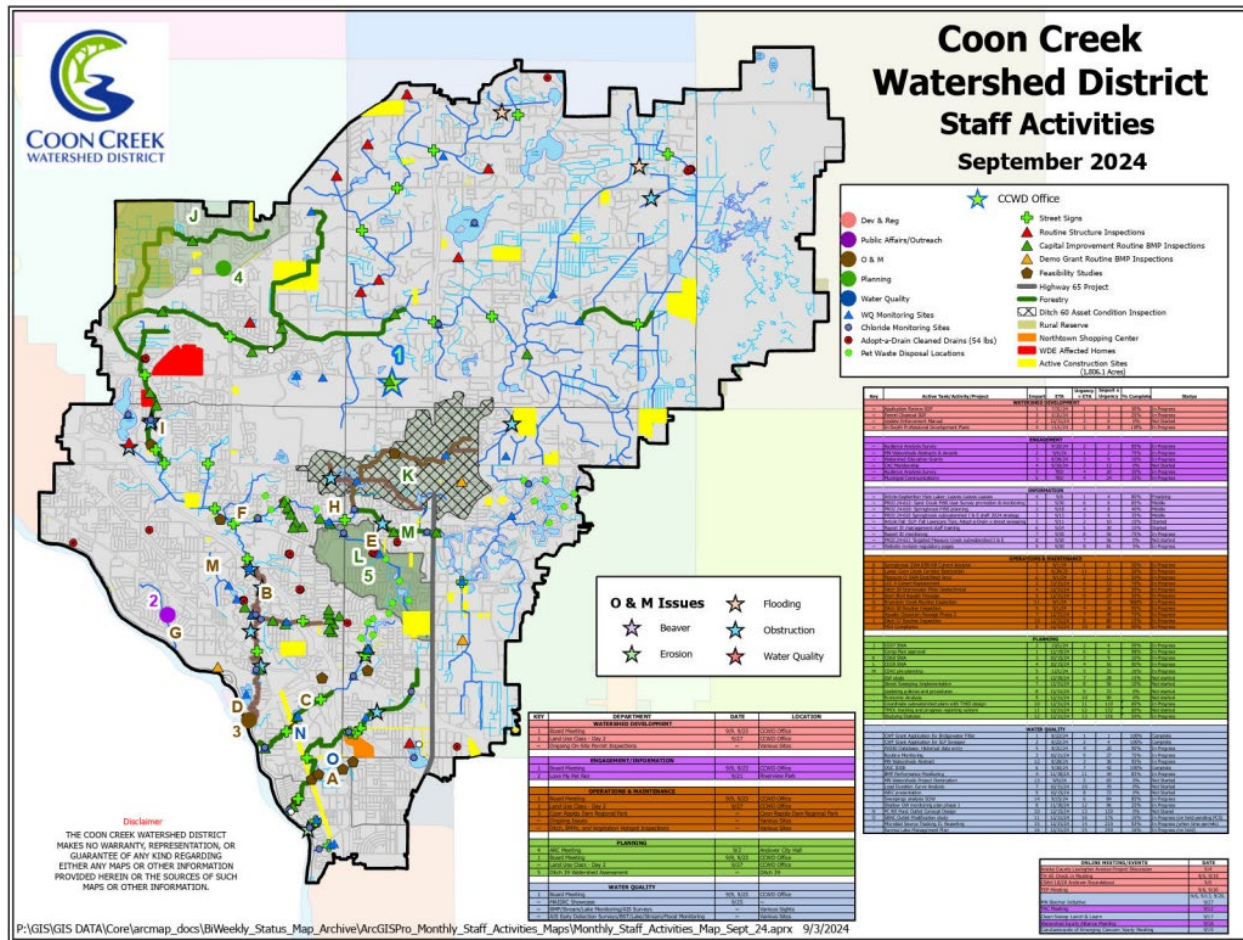
Agency	Status
BWSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Committee Meeting October 8 – Review Comp Plan Board Meeting October 23 -Approve Comp Plan
Clean Water Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council meeting October 21, 2024, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Policy committee meets October 25
DNR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DNR is updating the Public Waters Inventory over the next eight years,
DOH (Health)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Released Draft Drinking Water Action Plan – 10yr plan
Met Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Metropolitan Council issued a draft version of Imagine 2050, a development guide for the seven-county Metro area. Imagine 2050 includes a water policy plan.

MN DOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Report
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Collaborator Actions

Collaborator	Description
Anoka Conservation District	CCWD staff meeting with ACD staff on annual Water Almanac
Anoka County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway Creek signage project near completion; only sites under construction are not deployed. Inquired if CCWD to host Smart Salt workshop for Northtown Mall area snow removal contractors
Andover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Administrator interviews were held 10/3 Provided comments Met Council on Imagine 2050 plan
Blaine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 new Pet Waste Stations are being deployed in Springbrook Subwatershed area Northtown Mall EDA properties development incorporating public input highly
Columbus	
Coon Rapids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergoing MS4 audit by the MPCA, requesting assistance 1 new Pet Waste Station is being deployed in Springbrook Subwatershed area Sustainability Commission requested speaker on CCWD projects in Coon Rapids
Fridley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 new Pet Waste Stations are being deployed in Springbrook Subwatershed area EQEC requested speaker on Pet Waste Station program: 11/12
Ham Lake	
Spring Lake Park	1 new Pet Waste Station is being deployed in Springbrook Subwatershed area (Sanburnol Park)
Crooked Lake Area Assoc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requested content for annual newsletter Updating 5-year Lake Vegetation Management Plan in Nov.
Ham Lake Lake Assoc	Considering a lake-wide hybrid Eurasian Water Milfoil treatment as soon as this fall or next spring

STAFF ACTIVITIES



Special Projects

Anoka County Transition:

Benefits Replacement: Applications for BCBS and Unum will be finished by the end of the week. Delta Dental application, soon to follow. We anticipate Open Enrollment to take place October 28 to November 8.

Payroll Replacement: The District was informed last week that ADP will not accept our small group for payroll processing (this is a change from last year when RFP's were requested for payroll services.) Instead, we will be contracting with Paylocity to do the District's payroll, through Abdo. New employee paperwork for District staff will be done along with benefits enrollment. **Board Members will be doing their on-boarding paperwork before or after the October 28, 2024, Board Meeting. A reminder email will be sent to the Board.**

Audit (2023):

- Exit interview is scheduled for Tuesday October 22.
- Only one finding was made and has its source in the transition of records.

Comp Plan:

- Plan is scheduled for review before the Regional Committee on October 7.
- It is scheduled to go before the entire Board on October 23.
- Recommendation is to approve with a later amendment to correct two tables

MANAGEMENT DISPOSITION

Equipment and Facilities:

All equipment is in good working condition.

Financial Position:

Coon Creek Watershed District
CCWD - Budget Report

As of Date: 09/30/2024

	Year Ending 12/31/2024	Year To Date 09/30/2024			
	CCWD 2024 Budget	CCWD 2024 Budget YTD	Actual Expenses YTD	Variance YTD	
Revenue					
Property Taxes	4,965,765.00	3,724,326.00	2,594,543.71	1,129,782.29	-30%
Fees & Charges	298,423.00	223,821.00	183,431.46	40,389.54	-18%
Grants	314,539.00	235,908.00	226,013.90	9,894.10	-4%
Other Revenue	28,042.00	21,033.00	146,633.18	(125,600.18)	597%
Total Revenue	5,606,769.00	4,205,088.00	3,150,622.25	1,054,465.75	-25%
Expense					
Salaries & Benefits	1,981,605.00	1,486,215.00	1,321,728.68	164,486.32	-11%
Professional Services	589,000.00	441,765.00	226,831.60	214,933.40	-49%
Operating Expenses	239,164.00	179,388.00	153,954.98	25,433.02	-14%
Program Expense	2,757,867.00	2,068,416.00	900,143.92	1,168,272.08	-56%
Capitalized Expenses	166,708.00	125,037.00	69,549.50	55,487.50	-44%
Total Expense	5,734,344.00	4,300,821.00	2,672,208.68	1,628,612.32	-38%

Created on : 10/07/2024 10:48 AM PST

**Coon Creek Watershed District
Cash Balance**

As of Date: 09/30/2024

	Escrow Fund	General Fund	All Funds
	Month Ending 09/30/2024	Month Ending 09/30/2024	Month Ending 09/30/2024
Cash and Cash Equivalents			
Cash	1,821,215.12	(2,071,337.02)	(250,121.90)
Petty Cash	0.00	250.00	250.00
Investment Account	5,070.00	4,256,172.57	4,261,242.57
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,826,285.12	2,185,085.55	4,011,370.67

Created on : 10/07/2024 10:48 AM PST

September started with an operational fund balance of approximately \$2,523,031.65
 Change in net cash position was -\$337,946.10
 Balance of the escrow trust fund is \$1,904,354.17
 Eight months into the fiscal year, the budget variance is -%13 less than planned

updated 10.7.24

Staffing:

- Health: Staff are generally in good health thus far in October.
- Personnel Manual: In conjunction with the transition away from the County, the Personnel Guidance Manual is being re-written. North Risk Partners, our insurance broker, contracts with labor law firm Wagner, Falconer & Judd (WFJ) to provide legal advice. In addition, WFJ will produce a personnel manual for North Risk Partner clients at no cost. We are in the process of completing the questionnaire supplied by WFJ for compiling our draft Personnel Guidance Manual. Once a draft is completed, it will be presented to the Board for review and adoption. Our goal is to complete the project by January 13th, 2025
- Vacancies/New Hires
 - No vacancies

**COON CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
Request for Board Action**

MEETING DATE: October 14, 2024
AGENDA NUMBER: 7
ITEM: Advisory Committees Report

AGENDA: Policy Discussion Information

ACTION REQUESTED

Receive Report

BACKGROUND

The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) met on September 11th. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) did not meet in September.

- The next CAC meeting scheduled: October 9th at 4:30 pm hybrid with Zoom.
- The next TAC meeting scheduled: October 10th at 8:30 am hybrid with Zoom.

ISSUES/CONCERNS

Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

Most members of the CAC were present at the meeting, along with CCWD staff Jessica Lindemyer and Jon Janke. Absent were Gary Nereson and Joe MacPherson.

1. Open Forum

Engagement Coordinator, Jessica Lindemyer, asked each Committee member to share at least one topic, question, or concern they would like to see discussed or presented at a future meeting.

- Jason suggested a presentation on the history of the District, what's upstream, and an overview of how the District interacts with other agencies.
- Barbara expressed interest in learning more about invasive species, such as what species are currently present, how they are managed, and what species are likely to appear next.
- Paddy proposed a presentation outlining the development process, highlighting the major steps in the process and describing where and how CCWD is involved in the process.
- Jim expressed interest in discussing ideas for increasing public knowledge of CCWD, particularly as it relates to the purpose and use of tax dollars for water management.

2. District Update

Jessica gave a brief update on various District activities including the public hearing for the 2025 budget and the latest CAC applicant.

3. Staff Spotlight: Operations & Maintenance

Jon Janke provided an overview of the District's Operations & Maintenance program; describing annual maintenance tasks, the public ditch system, and how the District handles, processes, and tracks citizen issues and concerns.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC did not meet in August 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive the report.

**COON CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
Request for Board Action**

MEETING DATE: October 14, 2024
AGENDA NUMBER: 8
ITEM: Bills/Accounts Payable

FISCAL IMPACT: Budgeted
POLICY IMPACT: Policy

REQUEST
 Approve bills

BACKGROUND

Claims totaling \$226,645.16 on the following disbursement(s) list will be issued and released upon Board approval.

Vendor	Amount
V0008--US BANK	10,570.98
V0030--CONNEXUS ENERGY	315.94
V0037--ECM PUBLISHERS INC	484.00
V0052--LOFFLER COMPANIES INC	258.75
V0054--MICHELLE J ULRICH PA	2,266.00
V0061--NORTH PINE AGGREGATE	59,299.60
V0087--CLASSIC CONSTRUCTION INC	2,490.17
V0090--CENTERPOINT ENERGY-UTILITY	31.30
V0111--WELL GROOMED LAWNS INC	516.00
V0128--YTS COMPANIES LLC	2,100.00
V0128--YTS COMPANIES LLC	6,125.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	72.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	165.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	207.00
V0138--RMB ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES INC	1,125.00
V0195--STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES INC	30,089.75
V0195--STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES INC	16,524.00
V0195--STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES INC	24,200.96
V0195--STANTEC CONSULTING SERVICES INC	3,308.50
V0221--ABDO LLP	132.50
V0221--ABDO LLP	3,327.50
V0221--ABDO LLP	1,076.25
V0229--TRUE BLUE PLUMBING LLC	2,096.00
V0242--METRO I NET	5,398.00
V0333--MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE	788.00
V0334--ANDOVER STATION 2016, LLC	921.00
V0335--FERGUSON WATERWORKS	1,213.00
V0336--NUGENT SEALCOATING & PAVING	35,750.00
V0337--S & R DEVELOPERS LLC	10,431.75
V0338--WESTLUND, PAMELA	2,227.00
V0339--CONNOLLY & SONS CONSTRUCTION	3,134.21
	226,645.16

Permit Application Review Report
Date: 10/9/2024

Board Meeting Date: 10/14/2024
Agenda Item: 9

Applicant/Landowner:

Harstad Hills, Inc.
Attn: Marty Harstad
2195 Silver Lake Rd
New Brighton, MN 55112

Project Name: Cardinal Crest

Project PAN: P-24-022

Project Purpose: 11 lot residential development with associated stormwater treatment features

Project Location: 9050 East River Road NW, Coon Rapids

Site Size: size of parcel - 4.47 acres; size of disturbed area - 4.1 acres; size of regulated impervious surface - 1.24 acres

Applicable District Rule(s): Rule 2, Rule 3, Rule 4, Rule 5

Recommendation: Approve with 5 Conditions and 3 Stipulations

Description: The application is proposing the construction of an 11-unit residential development with associated stormwater treatment features. The project would include mass grading, utility installation, stormwater management, and home construction. The project would disturb 4.1 acres and create 1.24 acres of regulated impervious. The site drains to the northwest to Lower Coon Creek. The relevant water resource concerns are stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, and wetlands. These correspond to District Rules 3, 4, and 5. See attached Figure 1: Project Location and Figure 2: Site Plan.

Conditions to be Met Before Permit Issuance:

Rule 2.7 – Procedural Requirements

1. Submittal of a performance escrow in the amount of \$4,050.00.

Rule 3.0 – Stormwater Management

2. Provide proof of recording of a fully executed Operations and Maintenance Agreement for the perpetual inspection and maintenance of all proposed stormwater management practices after review and approval by the District.
3. The high water level listed for the infiltration basin and pond 1 are inconsistent between the grading plan and proposed HydroCAD model. Please update.
4. Rim and south invert elevation for the pond outlet control structure are inconsistent between the outlet structure detail and the storm sewer profile. Please update.

Rule 4.0 – Soils and Erosion Control

- Update the erosion and sediment control plan to include a note that soils and soil stockpiles will be stabilized within 7 days of inactivity.

Stipulations: The permit will be issued with the following stipulations as conditions of the permit. By accepting the permit, the applicant agrees to these stipulations:

- If dewatering is required, provide DNR dewatering permit prior to construction. If a DNR permit is not required, provide well-field location, rates, discharge location, schedule and quantities prior to construction.
- Completion of a post construction infiltration test on the Infiltration Basin by filling the basin to a minimum depth of 6 inches with water and monitoring the time necessary to drain, or multiple double ring infiltration tests to ASTM standards. The Coon Creek Watershed District shall be notified prior to the test to witness the results.
- Submittal of as-builts for the stormwater management practices and associated structures listed in Tables 2 and 3, including volume, critical elevations and proof of installation for hydrodynamic separators.

Exhibits:

Exhibit Type	Exhibit Author	Signature Date	Received Date
Joint Application	Kjolhaug Environmental Services Company LLC	05/28/2024	05/30/2024
Wetland Delineation Report	Kjolhaug Environmental Services Company Inc	05/01/2024	05/02/2024
Stormwater Drainage Report	Plowe Engineering	09/06/2024	09/09/2024
Construction Plans	Plowe Engineering	09/09/2024	09/09/2024
Plat	E.G. Rud & Sons	08/02/2024	08/08/2024
Geotechnical Exploration Report	Haugo Geotechnical Services	02/28/2024	04/24/2024

Findings

Fees and Escrows (Rule 2.7):

The applicant has submitted a \$7,010.00 application fee and deposit which corresponds with the nonrefundable application fee (\$10), base fee for a Single Family/Multifamily Residential Development project of 4.47 acres (\$7,000.00). The applicant will be required to submit a performance escrow in the amount of \$4,050.00. This corresponds to a base escrow of \$2,000.00, plus an additional \$500/acre of disturbance (4.1 acres of land disturbance proposed).

Stormwater Management (Rule 3.0):

Rule 3.0 applies to the proposed project because it includes land disturbing activities creating a cumulative total of 10,000 sf or more of new or fully reconstructed impervious surface.

The Hydrologic Soil Group (HSG) of soils on site are HSG B. Curve Numbers have been shifted down one classification to account for the impacts of grading on soil structure.

Rate Control: Peak stormwater flow rate at each point of site discharge does not increase from the pre-development condition for the 24-hour precipitation event with a return frequency of 2-, 10-, 100- years as shown in Table 1. The small rate increase to East River Road during the 2-year storm event is within model tolerance. The project will not impact Drainage Sensitive Use areas. The rate control standard is met.

Point of Discharge	2-year (cfs)		10-year (cfs)		100-year (cfs)	
	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
East River Road	0.19	0.29	0.68	0.68	2.18	1.73
NE	0.24	0.22	1.07	0.75	3.81	3.27
NW	0	0	0	0	2.43	1.11

Table 1.

Volume Control: The application proposes redevelopment which disturbs more than 50% of the site or reconstructs more than 50% of the existing impervious surface, therefore the volume reduction requirement is equal to 1.1 inches over the area of all impervious surface including existing impervious surface that is not proposed to be reconstructed. The amount of proposed impervious required to be treated is 54,202 ft².

The applicant is proposing the Stormwater Management Practices (SMPs) described below:

Drainage Area	Impervious required to be treated (ft ²)	Proposed SMP	TP Removal Factor	Required Water Quality Volume (ft ³)	Water Quality Volume Provided (ft ³)
Area D	1,797	none	0	164	0
Area 1	27,359	Pond 1	0.5	5,015	29,000
2a, 2b	25,046	Infiltration Basin	1	2,296	5,344
Totals:	54,202			7,477	34,344

Table 2.

The following pretreatment has been provided:

SMP ID	Pretreatment Device/Method	Percent TSS Removal
CBMH 3B Sump	Catch Basin Sump	82
vegetated swale	vegetated swale	80

Table 3.

Pretreatment is required to be designed such that the device/method provides removal of 80% TSS entering an infiltration or filtration Stormwater Management Practice. The proposed project meets pretreatment requirements as shown in Table 3.

Untreated Area D is a small portion of the site that includes the entrance drive and half of a roof from Lot 1. Because of existing grades, this area is not feasible to route to a treatment features. This accounts for approximately 3% of the overall impervious. The volume control standard has been met to the maximum extent practicable as shown in Table 2.

Water Quality: The total Water Quality Volume has been provided in aggregate.

Stormwater treatment on site must remove at least 80% of the average annual post development TSS per discharge location. The following TSS removal has been provided:

Discharge Point	TSS Removal Provided
East River Road	0
NE	87
NW	87

Table 4.

The TSS removal standard is met to the maximum extent practicable as shown in Table 4 for the reasons outlined above in the volume management section.

Discharges to Wetlands: Stormwater from the proposed project is being discharged into the following wetlands.

Wetland ID	NE wetland
Wetland Type	Slightly Susceptible
Change of Bounce 2-yr (ft)	0.3
Change of Bounce 10-yr (ft)	0.1
Inflow Velocity	0
Change of Inundation on 2-yr (hrs)	32
Change of Inundation on 10-yr (hrs)	41
Change of Run out Control (ft)	0

Table 5.

The proposed project meets bounce, velocity, inundation, and runout control requirements for all wetlands receiving discharge from the site as shown in Table 5.

Landlocked Basins: The proposed drainage system does not outlet to a landlocked basin, therefore this section does not apply.

Low Floor Freeboard: The proposed project is new development which includes buildings and habitable structures. Therefore, SMPs must be designed such that the lowest basement floor elevations are at least 2 feet above the 100-yr high water level and 1 foot above the emergency overflow. The lowest basement floor elevations proposed are 874.2 and 876.3 ft MSL. The applicable 100-year high water levels are 872.2 and 874.3 ft MSL and the applicable emergency overflows are 872.5 and 875 ft MSL. The freeboard requirement is met.

Maintenance:

Access: Sufficient maintenance access has been provided on the plans for all stormwater management practices.

Easements: Maintenance easements for all stormwater management practices are required for the proposed project. All required maintenance easements have been provided on the plans.

Maintenance Agreements: The proposed stormwater management practices will not be maintained as part of standard municipal public work activities. Therefore, a maintenance agreement that meets District standards will be required.

Soils and Erosion Control (Rule 4.0)

Rule 4.0 applies to the proposed project because it is a land disturbing activity that requires a permit under another District rule.

The proposed project drains to Lower Coon Creek. The soils affected by the project include Zimmerman and do not have a soil erodibility factor of 0.15 or greater. Disturbed areas are not proposed to be stabilized within 7 days, as required. The proposed erosion and sediment control plan includes inlet protection, perimeter control, rock construction entrance, and street sweeping. The erosion control plan does not meet District requirements because soils and soil stockpiles are not proposed to be stabilized within 7 days of inactivity. See attached Figure 3: Erosion and Sediment Control Plan.

Wetlands (Rule 5.0)

Rule 5.0 applies to the proposed project because it includes activities which result in the filling, draining, excavating or other altering the hydrology of a wetland.

Wetlands were delineated under PAN W24-013. The boundary and type application was reviewed and approved. The Notice of Decision was issued on 05/28/2024.

The applicant submitted a joint application form requesting a De minimus exemption on 05/28/2024. Wetland impacts are proposed through fill in 1 location. A wetland impact summary is outlined below.

Wetland ID	Impact Type (F/D/E)	Impacts (sf)	Impact Duration (T/P)	Replacement Ratio	Required Mitigation (sf)
1	Fill	1472	Permanent	0	0

Table 6.

The TEP agrees that the proposed project meets the requirements for a De minimus exemption under Exemption (8420.0420) Subpart 8. The Notice of Decision was issued on 06/12/2024. See attached Figure 4: Wetland Impacts.

Floodplain (Rule 6.0)

The proposed project does not include land disturbing activities within the floodplain as mapped and modeled by the District. Rule 6.0 does not apply.

Drainage, Bridges, Culverts, and Utility Crossings (Rule 7.0)

The proposed project does not include land disturbing activities which construct, improve, repair, or alter the hydraulic characteristics of a bridge profile control or culvert structure on a creek, public ditch, or major watercourse. The proposed project does not include land disturbing activities which involve a pipeline or utility crossing of a creek, public ditch, or major watercourse.

The proposed project does not include land disturbing activities which construct, improve, repair or alter the hydraulic characteristics of a conveyance system that extends across two or more parcels of record not under common ownership and has a drainage area of 200 acres or greater. Rule 7.0 does not apply.

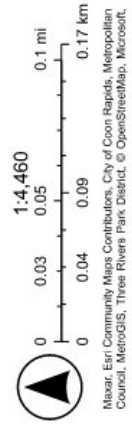
Buffers (Rule 8.0)

The proposed project does not include a land disturbing activity on land adjacent or directly contributing to a Public Water, Additional Waters, High or Outstanding Ecological Value Waters, a Public Ditch, or Impaired Waters/waters exceeding state water quality standards. Rule 8.0 does not apply.

Variances (Rule 10.2)

The proposed project is not requesting a variance from the District’s rules, regulations, and policies. Rule 10.2 does not apply.

P24-022 Cardinal Crest



Map: Esri Community Map Contributors, City of Coon Rapids, Metropolitan Council, AerialSIS, Three Rivers Park District, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft.

Figure 1: Project Location

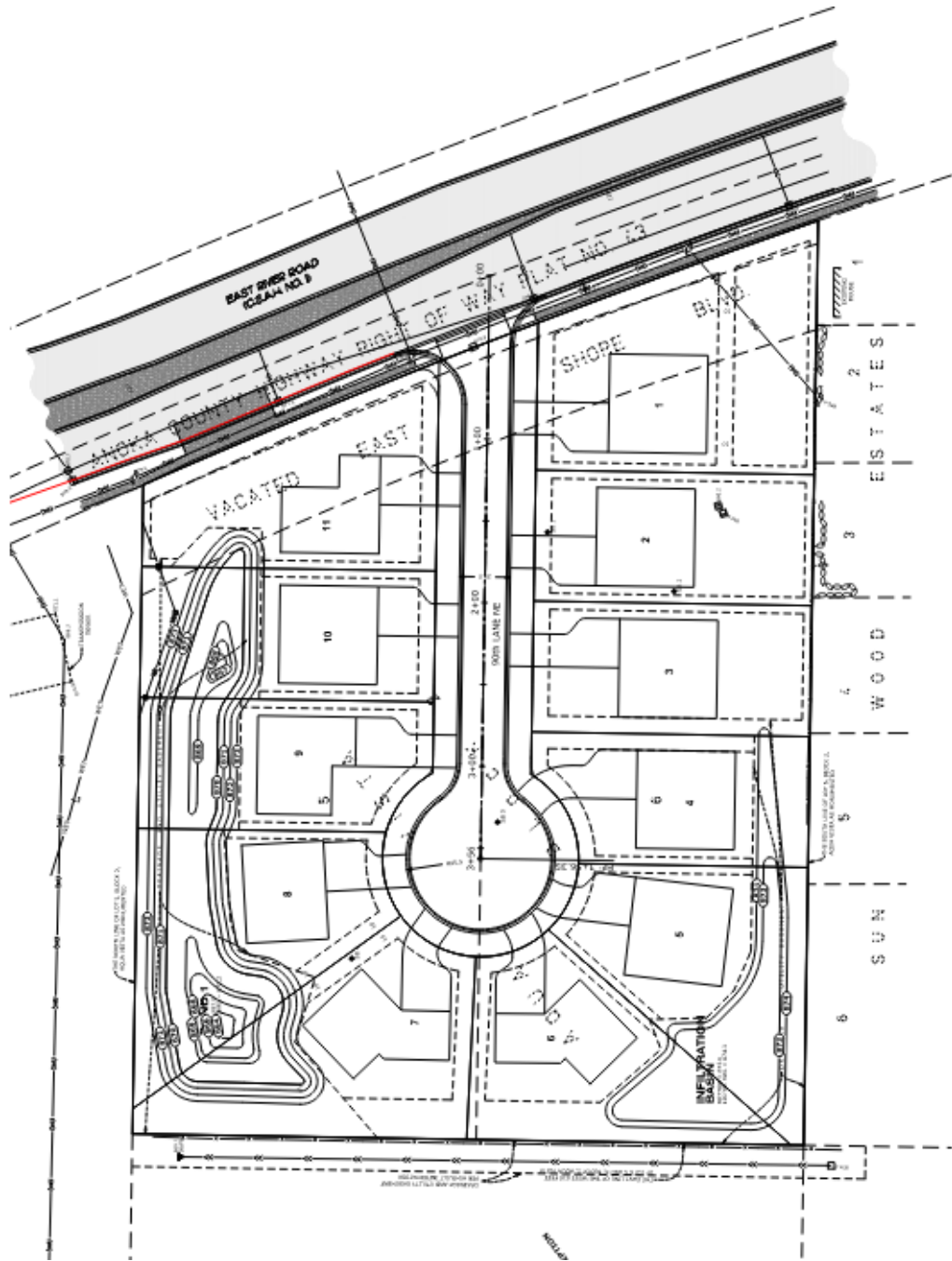


Figure 2: Site Plan

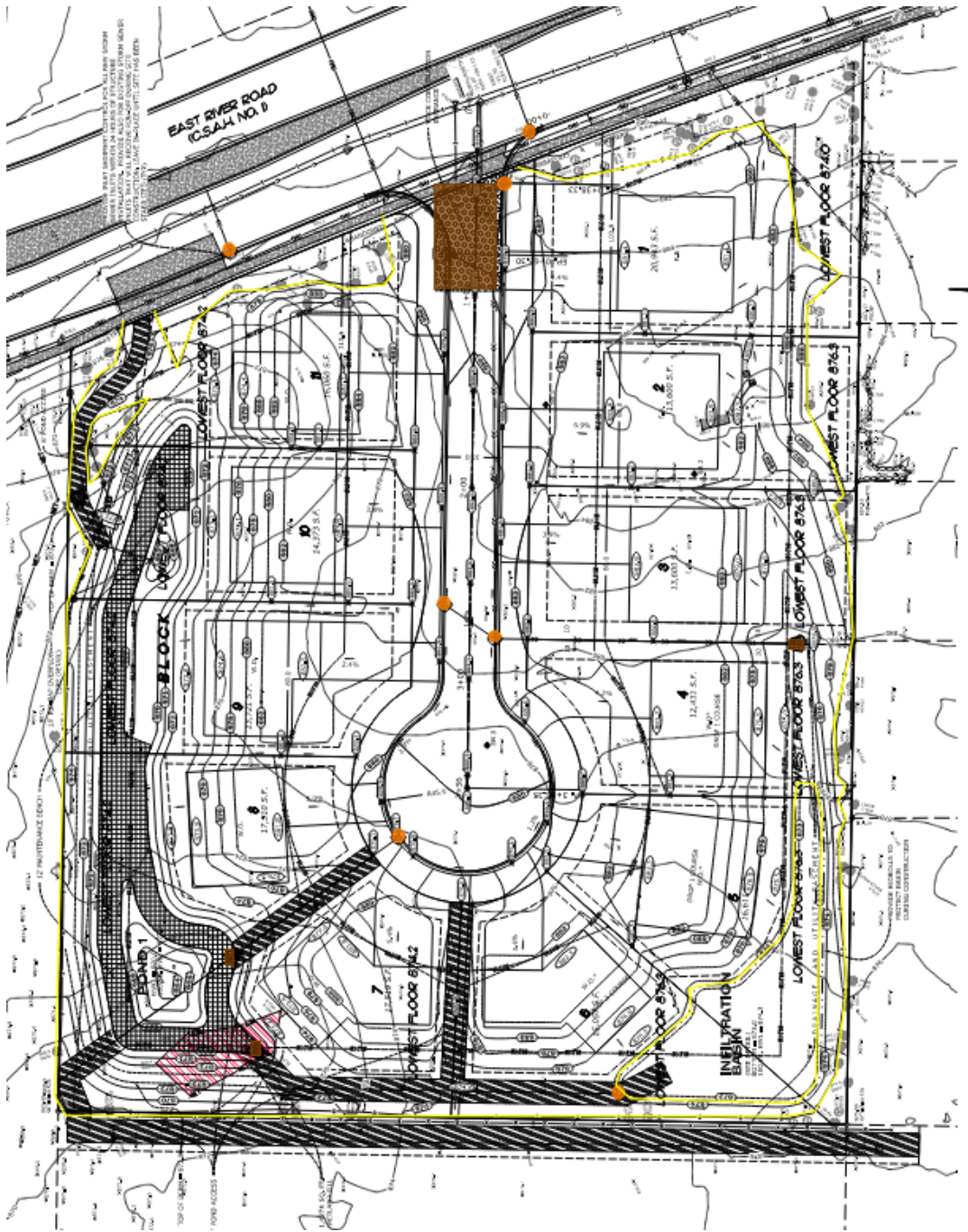


Figure 3: Erosion and Sediment Control Plan

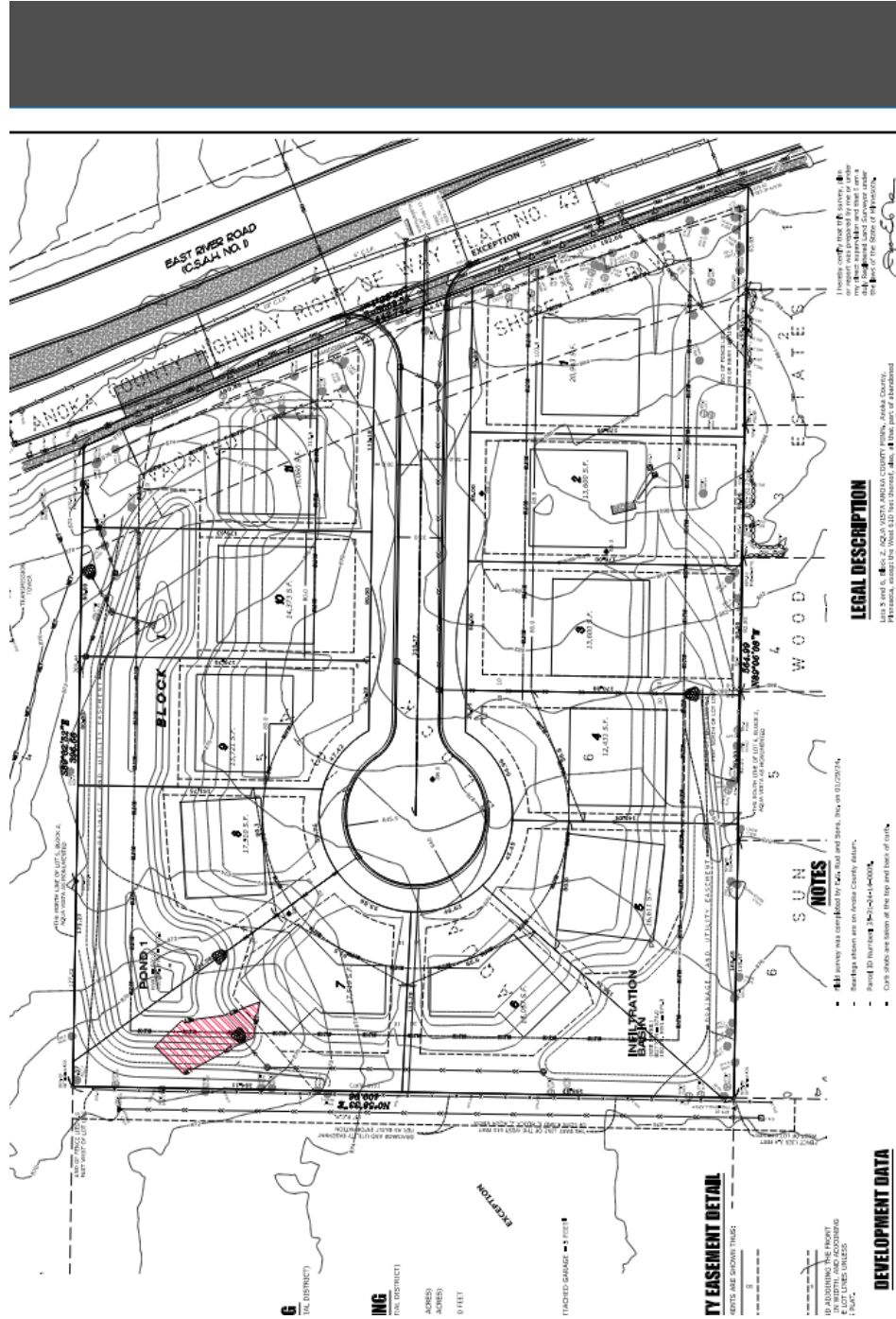


Figure 4: Wetland Impacts

Permit Application Review Report
Date: 10/14/2024

Board Meeting Date: 10/9/2024
Agenda Item: 10

Applicant/Landowner:

JHM Medical Park LLC
Attn: Stephen Poindexter
117 Wildwood Beach Rd
Mahtomedi, MN 55115

Project Name: JHM Medical Park II

Project PAN: P-24-028

Project Purpose: Construction of a commercial warehouse and office building with parking and associated stormwater treatment feature

Project Location: 9255 Holly Street NW, Coon Rapids

Site Size: size of parcel - 2.82 acres; size of disturbed area – 2.82 acres; size of regulated impervious surface - 1.97 acres

Applicable District Rule(s): Rule 2, Rule 3, Rule 4, Rule 6

Recommendation: Approve with 5 Conditions and 3 Stipulations

Description: The project proposes the construction of a commercial warehouse building with parking and associated stormwater treatment features. The parcel is 2.82 acres. The project will disturb all 2.82 acres and create 1.97 acres of regulated impervious. The site drains into Pleasure Creek. The relevant water resource concerns are stormwater management, erosion and sediment control and floodplain. These correlate to District Rules 3, 4 and 6. See attached Figure 1: Project Location and Figure 2: Site Plan.

Conditions to be Met Before Permit Issuance:

Rule 2.7 – Procedural Requirements

1. Submittal of a performance escrow in the amount of \$3,410.00.
2. Submittal of the remainder of the required review fee in the amount of \$200.00.

Rule 3.0 – Stormwater Management

3. Provide proof of recording of a fully executed Operations and Maintenance Agreement for the perpetual inspection and maintenance of all proposed stormwater management practices after review and approval by the District.
4. Update construction plans to include a maintenance easement of 100 ft (50 ft on either side of the centerline).
5. Provide proof of recording of a fully executed Operations and Maintenance Agreement for the perpetual inspection and maintenance of all proposed stormwater management

practices after review and approval by the District.

Stipulations: The permit will be issued with the following stipulations as conditions of the permit. By accepting the permit, the applicant agrees to these stipulations:

1. The applicant must apply for coverage under the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA's) Construction Stormwater Permit (Permit No: MNR100001).
2. If dewatering is required, provide DNR dewatering permit prior to construction. If a DNR permit is not required, provide well-field location, rates, discharge location, schedule and quantities prior to construction.
3. Submittal of as-builts for the stormwater management practices and associated structures listed in Tables 2 and 3, including volume, critical elevations and proof of installation for hydrodynamic separators.

Exhibits:

Exhibit Type	Exhibit Author	Signature Date	Received Date
Report of Geotechnical Exploration	American Engineering Testing	07/11/2023	05/15/2024
Construction Plans	Plowe Engineering, Inc.	09/04/2024	09/05/2024
Site Drainage Narrative and Calculations	Plowe Engineering, Inc.	09/04/2024	09/04/2024

Findings

Fees and Escrows (Rule 2.7):

The applicant has submitted a \$4,100.00 application fee and deposit. The appropriate application and review fee for this project type is the nonrefundable application fee (\$10), base fee for a Commercial/Industrial Development project of 2.82 acres (\$4,000.00), and addition to base fee (\$300.00) for a total of \$4,310.00. The applicant must submit an additional \$200.00 as required. The applicant will be required to submit a performance escrow in the amount of \$2985.00. This corresponds to a base escrow of \$2,000, plus an additional \$500/acre of disturbance (1.97 acres of land disturbance proposed).

Stormwater Management (Rule 3.0):

Rule 3.0 applies to the proposed project because it includes land disturbing activities creating a cumulative total of 10,000 sf or more of new or fully reconstructed impervious surface.

The Hydrologic Soil Group (HSG) of soils on site are HSG B. The proposed project incorporates soil amendments in accordance with District guidelines.

Rate Control: Peak stormwater flow rate at each point of site discharge does not increase from the pre-development condition for the 24-hour precipitation event with a return frequency of 2-, 10-, 100- years as shown in Table 1. The project will not impact Drainage Sensitive Use areas. The rate control standard is met.

Point of Discharge	2-year (cfs)		10-year (cfs)		100-year (cfs)	
	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
Pleasure Creek	1.18	0.81	4.57	3.07	14.78	8.78

Table 1.

Volume Control:

The proposed project is new development; therefore, the volume reduction requirement is equal to

1.1 inches over the area of all impervious surface. The amount of proposed impervious required to be treated is 85,898 ft².

The applicant is proposing the Stormwater Management Practices (SMPs) described below:

Drainage Area	Impervious required to be treated (ft ²)	Proposed SMP	TP Removal Factor	Required Water Quality Volume (ft ³)	Water Quality Volume Provided (ft ³)
untreated (A2)	1,343	none	0	246	0
Pond (A4)	8,455	Pond P2	0.5	15,502	31,042
Totals:	85,898			15,748	31,042

Table 2.

Infiltration may not be used as a volume control practice because the practice would need to be placed in areas with less than three feet of separation from the bottom of the infiltration system to the seasonally saturated soils or the top of bedrock.

Geotechnical information from July 2023 has been submitted which indicates that seasonally high saturated soils are likely at an approximate elevation of 870-871 ft MSL. The bottom of an infiltration system would need to be at elevation 873 ft or above. This is infeasible because of existing grades.

Because the volume reduction standard cannot be met due to these site constraints, the project proposes the use of the stormwater management practices and their corresponding TP conversion factors listed in Table 2. The volume control standard has been met as shown in Table 2.

Water Quality: The total Water Quality Volume has been provided in aggregate.

Stormwater treatment on site must remove at least 80% of the average annual post development TSS per discharge location. The following TSS removal has been provided:

Discharge Point	TSS Removal Provided
Pleasure Creek	80

Table 4.

The TSS removal standard is met at each discharge point as shown in Table 4.

Discharges to Wetlands: Stormwater from the proposed project is not being discharged into any wetlands, therefore this section does not apply.

Landlocked Basins: The proposed drainage system does not outlet to a landlocked basin, therefore this section does not apply.

Low Floor Freeboard: The proposed project is new development which includes buildings and habitable structures. Therefore, SMPs must be designed such that the lowest basement floor elevations are at least 2 feet above the 100-yr high water level and 1 foot above the emergency overflow. The lowest basement floor elevation proposed is 879.6 ft MSL. The applicable 100-year high water level is at 874.2 ft MSL and the applicable emergency overflow is at 874.3 ft MSL. The freeboard requirement is met.

Maintenance:

Access: Sufficient maintenance access has been provided on the plans for all stormwater management practices.

Easements: Maintenance easements for all stormwater management practices are required for the proposed project.

The proposed project is a new development project and includes a public ditch. Therefore, ditch

maintenance easements must be provided on the plan. The Public Ditch within the project is Pleasure Creek, so a maintenance easement of 100 ft (50 ft on either side of the centerline) must be provided. All required maintenance easements have not been provided on the plans.

Maintenance Agreements: The proposed stormwater management practices will not be maintained as part of standard municipal public work activities. Therefore, a maintenance agreement that meets District standards will be required.

Soils and Erosion Control (Rule 4.0)

Rule 4.0 applies to the proposed project because it is a land disturbing activity that requires a permit under another District rule.

The proposed project drains to Pleasure Creek. The soils affected by the project include Seelyeville which do not have a soil erodibility factor of 0.15 or greater. Disturbed areas are proposed to be stabilized within 7 days, as required. The proposed erosion and sediment control plan includes perimeter control, rock construction entrance, inlet protection and street sweeping. The erosion control plan meets District Requirements. See attached Figure 3: Erosion and Sediment Control Plan.

Wetlands (Rule 5.0)

The proposed project does not include activities which result in the filling, draining, excavating, or otherwise altering the hydrology of a wetland. Rule 5.0 does not apply.

Floodplain (Rule 6.0)

Rule 6.0 applies to the proposed project because it includes land disturbing activities within the boundary of the 100-year flood elevation as mapped and modeled by the District.

The regulatory floodplain elevation is 873.70 ft MSL. The application proposes the placement of 31.9 cubic yards of fill within the floodplain. This a one-time deposition of less than 50 cubic yards, therefore compensatory storage is not required. However, the proposed project provides 807.6 cubic yards of compensatory storage.

The proposed project is subject to flood damage. Low floor elevations are proposed at elevation 879.6 ft MSL, which meets the minimum floor elevation of 2 foot above the 100-year flood profile. See attached Figure 4: Floodplain Impacts.

Drainage, Bridges, Culverts, and Utility Crossings (Rule 7.0)

The proposed project does not include land disturbing activities which construct, improve, repair, or alter the hydraulic characteristics of a bridge profile control or culvert structure on a creek, public ditch, or major watercourse. The proposed project does not include land disturbing activities which involve a pipeline or utility crossing of a creek, public ditch, or major watercourse.

The proposed project does not include land disturbing activities which construct, improve, repair or alter the hydraulic characteristics of a conveyance system that extends across two or more parcels of record not under common ownership and has a drainage area of 200 acres or greater. Rule 7.0 does not apply.

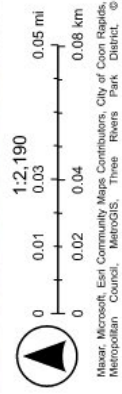
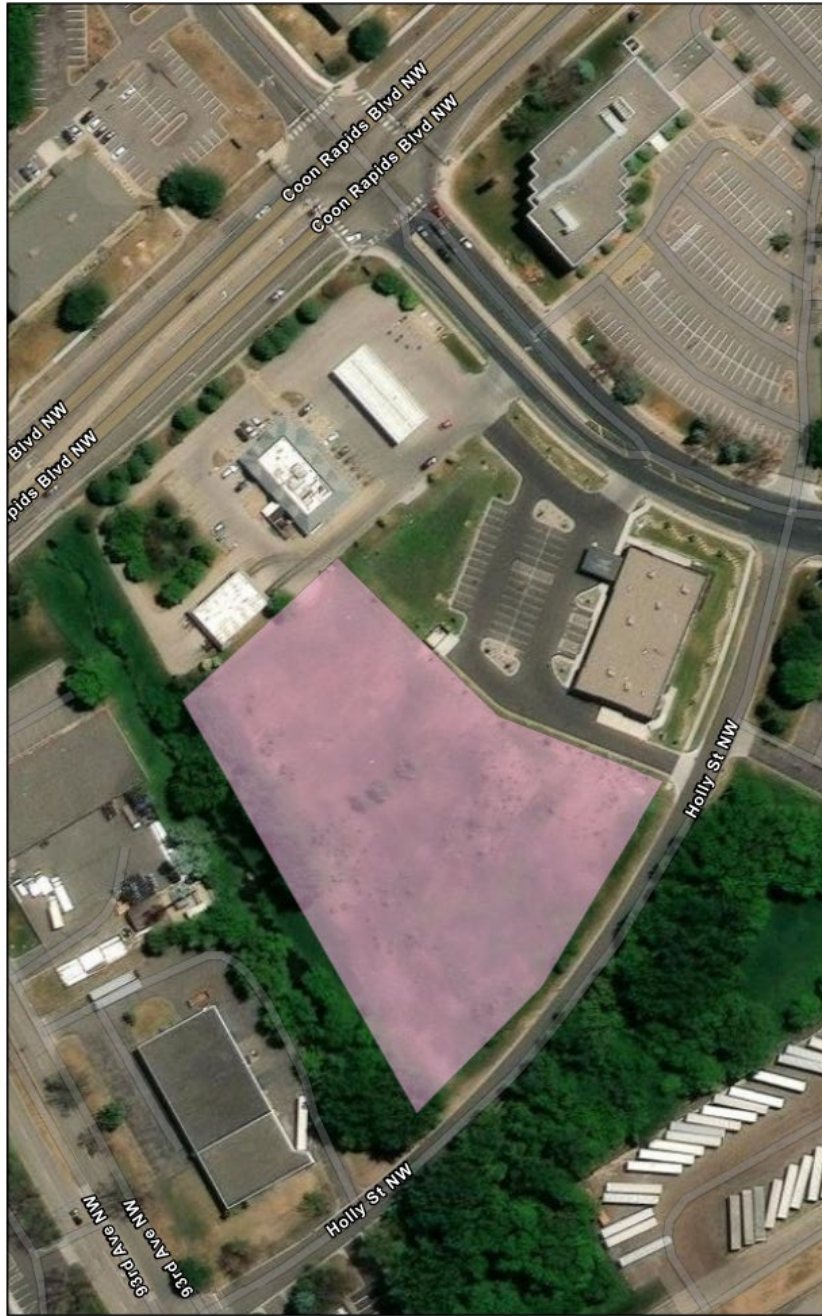
Buffers (Rule 8.0)

The proposed project does not include a land disturbing activity on land adjacent or directly contributing to a Public Water, Additional Waters, High or Outstanding Ecological Value Waters, a Public Ditch, or Impaired Waters/waters exceeding state water quality standards. Rule 8.0 does not apply.

Variances (Rule 10.2)

The proposed project is not requesting a variance from the District's rules, regulations, and policies. Rule 10.2 does not apply.

P24-028 JHM Medical Park II



10/8/2024

Figure 1. Project Location

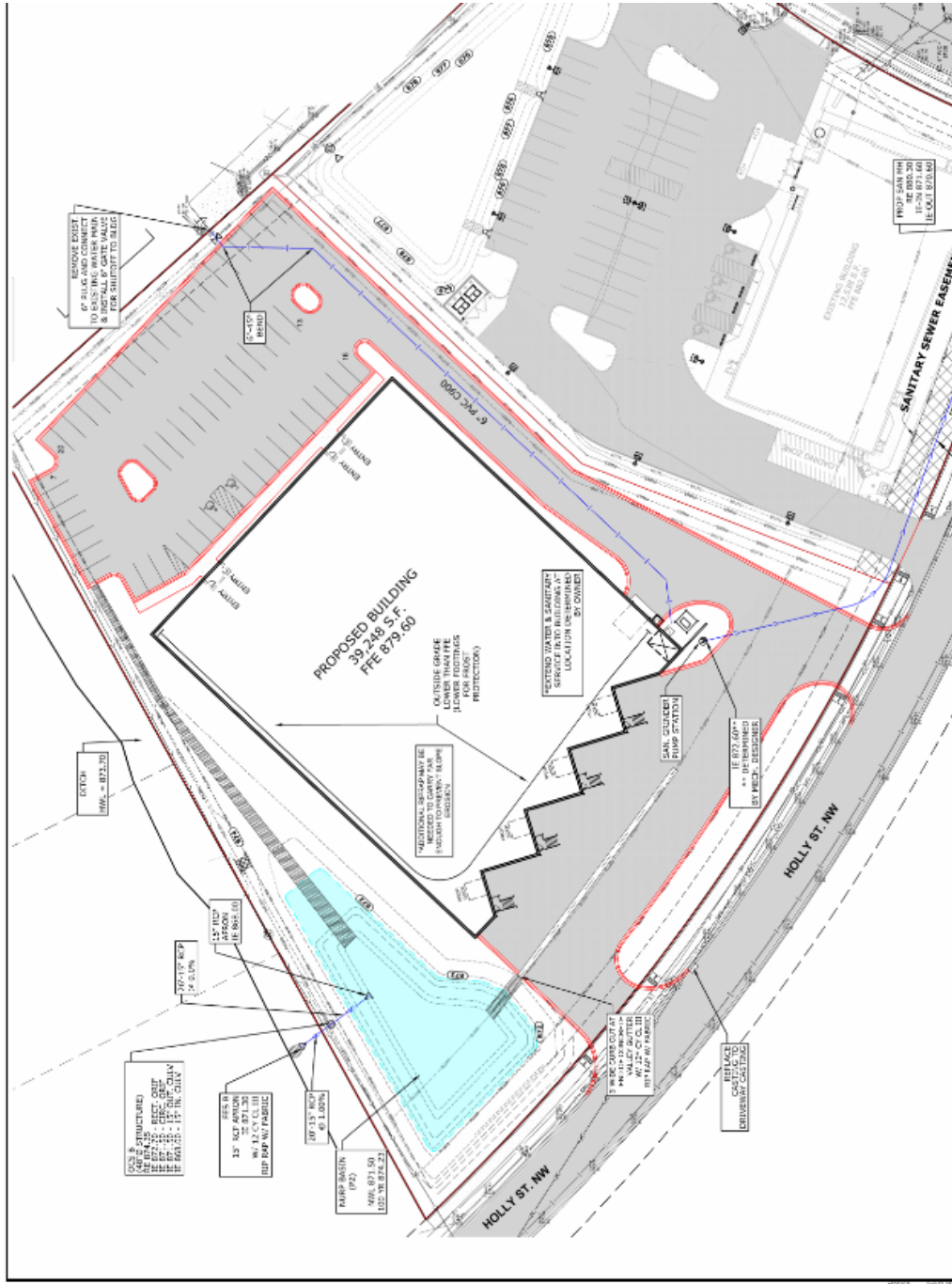


Figure 2: Site Plan



Figure 3: Erosion and Sediment Control Plan

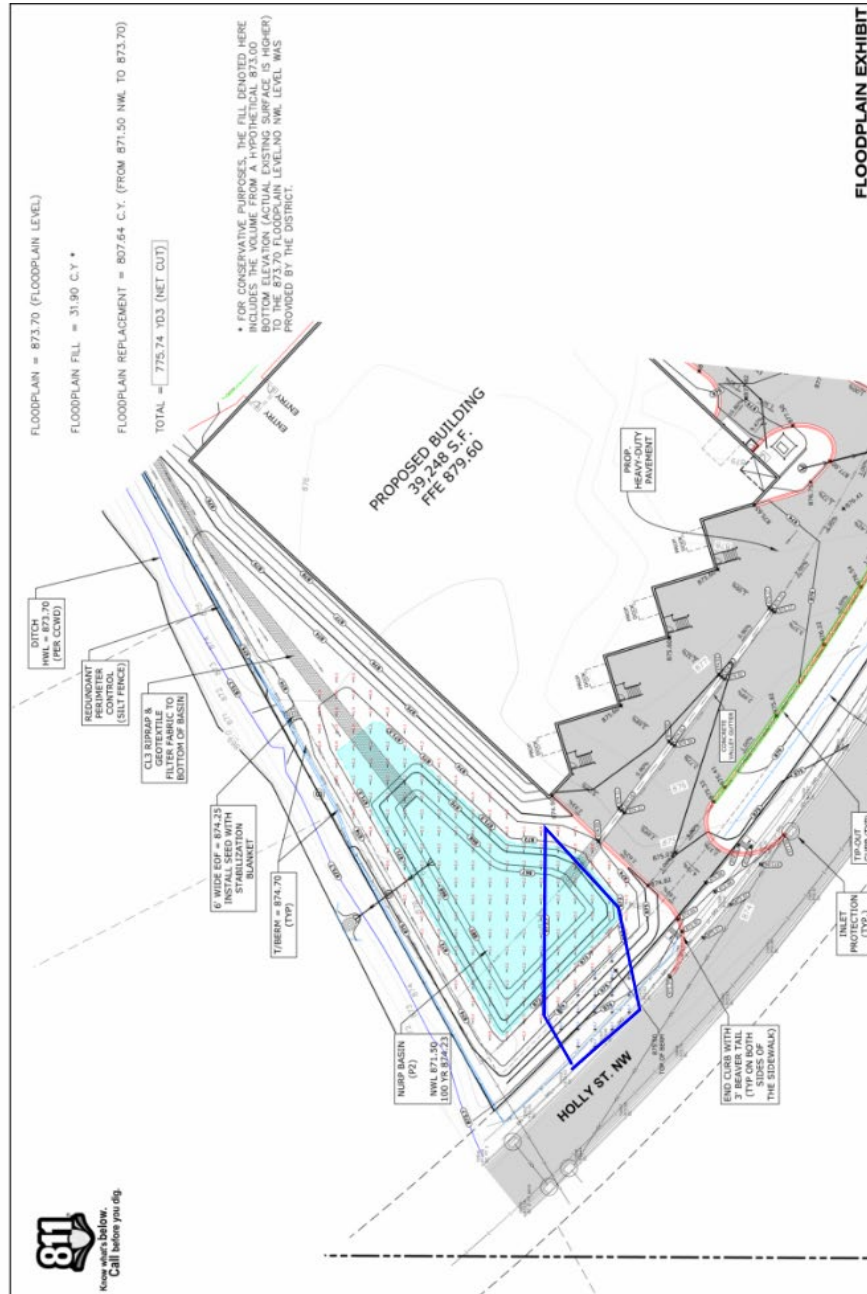


Figure 4: Floodplain Impact

**COON CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
Request for Board Action**

MEETING DATE: October 14, 2024
AGENDA NUMBER: 11
ITEM: Ditch 60 Inspection Report

POLICY IMPACT: Policy
FISCAL IMPACT: Budgeted

REQUEST

Receive inspection report.

BACKGROUND

This inspection is part of the District’s Operations and Maintenance (O&M) program and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirement of inspecting 20% of the open channels annually.

Ditch 60 is located in Blaine and Coon Rapids.
 The channel is 5.64 miles (29,779 feet)
 The drainage area is 3.6 square miles (2,279 acres)
 3 Public Laterals

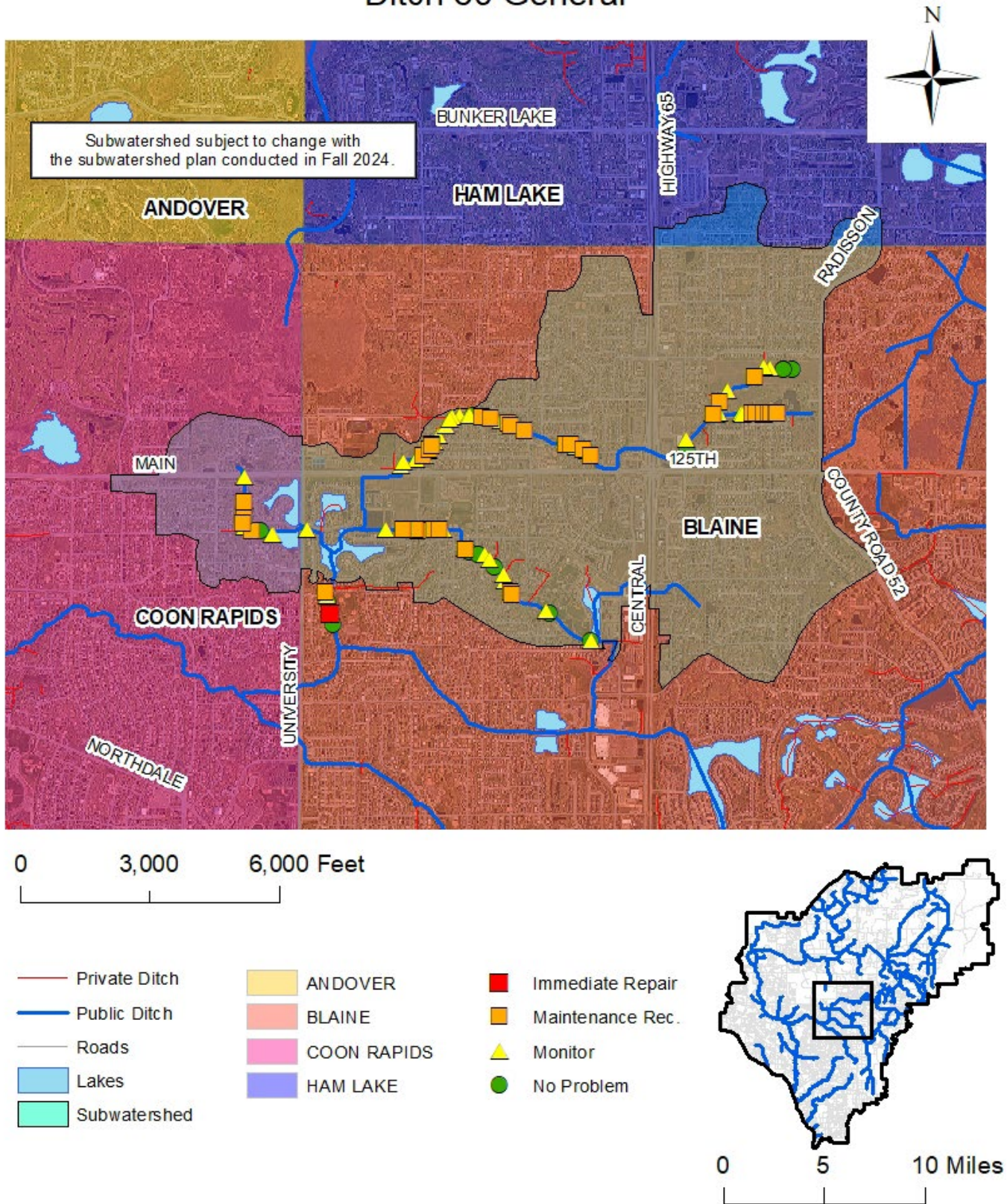
IDENTIFIED MAINTENANCE NEEDS

Need	Count	Cost Estimate	Immediate	Repair	Monitor
Obstruction	36	\$69,000	\$8,000	\$17,000	\$44,000
Ditch Repair	5	\$36,411	\$0	\$0	\$36,411
Bank Failure	11	\$78,962	\$0	\$0	\$78,962
Illicit Discharge	23	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Beaver	0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other	35	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	110	\$184,373	\$8,000	\$17,000	\$159,373

RECOMMENDATION

1. Receive report.

Ditch 60 General



<https://www.startribune.com/seven-years-on-wetland-damage-on-a-hennepin-county-farm-hasnt-been-fixed/601158467>

Seven years on, wetland damage on a Hennepin County farm hasn't been fixed

A county official called it the worst violation of the state's wetlands law that he's seen. But farmer Ernie Mayers said the county had damaged his farm by not maintaining nearby drainage.

[By Chloe Johnson](#)

The Minnesota Star Tribune

October 7, 2024 at 12:00PM



This 2018 image shows a ditch dug on Ernie Mayers' farm in Corcoran. This ditch and other work drained at least 11 acres of wetland there. (Provided by James Kujawa/Minnesota Star Tribune)

A farmer in western Hennepin County drained 11 acres in what a county official described as the worst wetland violation he had seen in his career. Seven years later, nothing has been done to mend or mitigate the damage.

This is despite years of attempts to close the case — including a 2021 settlement that the farmer signed, which absolved him of the majority of the destruction.

The farmer, Ernie Mayers, blames the county for failing to maintain a ditch that allowed water to collect on his land on Larkin Road in Corcoran. His attorney, Tom DeVincke, said Mayers didn't believe there were originally wetlands on his farm, but was attempting to enroll himself in a state program for wetland restoration anyway.

DeVincke has urged the city of Corcoran, which is now responsible for the case, to hold off of any action as Mayers explores a restoration program.

Corcoran, meanwhile, tried as recently as August to get final confirmation that Mayers had complied with the settlement, but it was unsuccessful, the city's public works director, Kevin Mattson, wrote in an email. The city now said it plans to turn the case over to state officials for enforcement.

<https://www.startribune.com/seven-years-on-wetland-damage-on-a-hennepin-county-farm-hasnt-been-fixed/601158467>

James Kujawa, who originally discovered the damage on Mayers' farm when he worked for Hennepin County, said the case was "the biggest violation during my career of the Wetland Conservation Act," a law which is designed to ensure there is no net loss of wetlands in Minnesota.

Kujawa said it's important to protect wetlands, which provide wildlife habitat, flood protection and improved water quality. But he also said Mayers has been successful in repeatedly stalling his case and was "getting by with something that the normal person can't get by with."

Finding damage

Kujawa worked as a senior environmentalist for the county, assisting the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission, which protects water quality in the region. He received a tip in 2017 that Mayers was digging through wetlands, and officials from the state and watershed commission convened to examine the land.

They found unpermitted work in several areas, including an underground tile line that had drained 11 acres, as well as a road and two new ditches that had together damaged about half an acre. The work also damaged additional wetlands outside the farm that are regulated under a separate program. Kujawa said the group never determined exactly how far the additional damage extended.

Mayers was served with a restoration order that required him to remove the underground tile drain, plug the ditches and remove fill he had placed for the road. While the case was initiated by the Watershed Commission, the group handed off its wetland duties to surrounding towns and cities during this period. In 2019, the city of Corcoran took over the case.

Mayers appealed, and Corcoran reached a settlement with him. The 2021 agreement allowed Mayers to leave the 11 acres drained by tile line untouched but still required that he fill in a ditch and buy wetland mitigation bank credits in a 4-to-1 ratio to compensate for work on a fraction of an acre.

"Yeah, he's getting some concessions, but the point was to get it resolved," said Travis Germundson, of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, which supervised the settlement process. "That didn't happen, I guess."

Settling a case

In a brief phone call, Mayers said that wetland regulators were "thieves" who were "stealing farmland from the farmers and making it wetland." He expressed frustration he was not

<https://www.startribune.com/seven-years-on-wetland-damage-on-a-hennepin-county-farm-hasnt-been-fixed/601158467>

allowed to clean out county ditches, which Hennepin County has not consistently maintained since the 1960s.

He then said he needed to talk to his lawyer before discussing the case further. Neither Mayers or his attorney, DeVincke, explained why he has diverged from a settlement agreement that he signed and had a hand in negotiating.

“Ernie is actually taking a different route,” DeVincke said, and is hoping to get credit for the wetlands on his farm through a state program.

Mayers won’t be allowed to enroll in a wetland restoration program, Germundson said. BWSR administers the Wetland Conservation Act and runs several restoration programs. Germundson said nobody with a pending violation is allowed to take part in them.

Mattson, the public works director for Corcoran, wrote that the city now plans to refer the case back to the Department of Natural Resources to enforce the original restoration order. DNR could serve Mayers with a civil citation, or even put a deed restriction on the land in question, an agency spokesperson said.

Germundson said he had not seen another case in 15 years with BWSR where someone signed a settlement and later changed their mind.

“Obviously the goal is to to get voluntary compliance,” he said. “It doesn’t seem like at this point that’s gonna occur.”

about the writer -Chloe Johnson Environmental Reporter

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<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2024/10/04/how-biochar-the-swiss-army-knife-of-climate-tools-is-growing-in-minnesota>

[Environmental News](#)

[Dan Kraker](#)

Coleraine, Minn.

October 4, 2024 4:00 AM

How biochar — the ‘Swiss Army knife of climate tools’ — is growing in Minnesota



A researcher cups a handful of biochar, a kind of advanced charcoal that can sequester carbon and provide other environmental benefits in Coleraine on Sept. 19.

Dan Kraker | MPR News

It smells like a giant campfire inside a big brick building in the small northeastern city of Coleraine, in northeastern Minnesota, where researchers are making a material that can not only fight climate change, but also provide a host of other environmental benefits, from improving soil to filtering pollutants.

It's called biochar. It's a centuries-old technology that is now the subject of renewed attention in Minnesota and beyond as companies and government agencies look for ways to reduce their carbon footprints.

For the past several years researchers at the Natural Resources Research Institute, an arm of the University of Minnesota have experimented making different formulations of biochar in a huge kiln in Coleraine.

In a process known as pyrolysis, leftover wood chips from a nearby pallet company are cooked at nearly 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit in an oxygen-free environment.

Researcher Cally Hunt holds the result cupped in her hands — small, easily crumbled, shards.

“It's pretty brittle,” she said, “Basically just black wood chips, cooked down.”

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2024/10/04/how-biochar-the-swiss-army-knife-of-climate-tools-is-growing-in-minnesota>



Cally Hunt, a researcher with the Natural Resources Research Institute, catches a handful of biochar coming out of a kiln at a research facility.

Dan Kraker | MPR News

Think of it as kind of advanced charcoal, said Eric Singasaas, director of the Materials and Bioeconomy Research Group at NRRI.

But this charcoal has climate change fighting superpowers.

Take a tree, explained Singasaas. When it dies, it decays. All the carbon dioxide it sucked out of the air during its lifetime returns to the atmosphere.

But the process used to create biochar, called ‘pyrolysis,’ changes the carbon into a form that doesn’t break down very easily.

“So if you put it in the ground, or in something like a building material, that carbon that was once atmospheric carbon, will stay in that form for decades to hundreds or even thousands of years,” said Singasaas.

That ability to essentially remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and store it, has sparked rapid growth in the biochar industry in the past couple years.

While still small, it’s doubled in about the last three years, said Myles Gray, who directs the United States Biochar Initiative. Companies that manufacture biochar have sprouted up around the country, including a startup in Minnesota.

That growth, Gray said, has been spurred by an increased demand for carbon removal credits for biochar. Gray said combined revenues reached approximately \$100 million last year.

“Essentially, large companies are buying biochar carbon removal credits to offset some of their emissions,” he explained.

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2024/10/04/how-biochar-the-swiss-army-knife-of-climate-tools-is-growing-in-minnesota>



Tony Masching with the Natural Resources Research Institute works on a kiln used to make biochar. Dan Kraker | MPR News

Microsoft, for example, has pledged to remove all of its current and historic carbon emissions.

But biochar can do a lot more than store carbon. Researchers at NRRI and elsewhere are using it to filter pollutants, improve soils, grow trees and even make concrete and steel.

“It’s the Swiss Army knife of climate tools,” said Jim Doten, carbon sequestration manager for the City of Minneapolis.

On a vacant lot near the University of Minnesota, the city of Minneapolis plans to break ground this fall on a \$1.5 million biochar plant, funded by the city and a large grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Doten believes it will be the first city-owned biochar plant in the country. The feedstock for the plant will come from trees thinned by utilities under powerlines, and from millions of ash trees in the state killed by emerald ash borer.

“There’s just a huge glut of wood that’s going to be burned, and we’re trying to prevent the burning of that wood and keep that carbon stored in a safe form,” Doten said.

Doten first learned about biochar while working as a hydrologist with the National Guard in Afghanistan around 2010. Back then he wasn’t interested in its climate benefits. He wanted to improve the region’s soil for farming.

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2024/10/04/how-biochar-the-swiss-army-knife-of-climate-tools-is-growing-in-minnesota>



City of Minneapolis carbon sequestration manager Jim Doten stands on a vacant lot near the University of Minnesota where the city plans to build a biochar plant. Dan Kraker | MPR News

Biochar has long been recognized for its ability to boost soil health. Researchers have found evidence of biochar use dating back centuries in the Amazon rainforest to enrich the soil.

When Doten came to Minneapolis, he created a program that uses biochar and mixes it with compost to supply community gardens, plant trees and remove pollutants from stormwater.

The city plans to deliver biochar for free to residents in its [green zones](#), and sell it to state and local agencies for their own climate mitigation work.

The city's plant is "on the smaller scale," Doten said. He expects it to process about 3,000 tons of wood annually, which will create about 500 tons of biochar. It's a large scale pilot he hopes will be replicated.

"One of the big purposes here is to show that this can be done, that there are uses out here," Doten said.

Meanwhile, an early stage Minnesota startup called Carba has developed a reactor that is able to create higher yields of biochar at a faster rate than typical pyrolysis kilns.

The company has partnered with Waste Management for its pilot-scale reactor, which it has deployed at a landfill in Burnsville. The biochar is then buried underground where it not only stores carbon, but also helps filter PFAS and other contaminants.

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2024/10/04/how-biochar-the-swiss-army-knife-of-climate-tools-is-growing-in-minnesota>



The University of Minnesota Duluth's Natural Resources Research Institute facility.

Dan Kraker | MPR News

CEO and co-founder Andrew Jones said there's a huge interest in companies buying carbon credits, and biochar has advantages over technologies such as direct carbon capture, which are expensive and unproven.

"It's durable and it's measurable and it's available now. It's highly scalable. And so biochar is sexy for a number of those reasons," said Jones.

Gray, of the United States Biochar Initiative, sees a lot of opportunity in states like Minnesota, where there's a lot of wood waste. There's also a surprising amount of wood available in cities, he said. A large tree care company opened a [biochar facility in Chicago](#) earlier this year.

Multi-purpose biochar

University of Minnesota Duluth researchers are studying several additional ways to use biochar.

They're testing biochar to capture E coli from stormwater runoff, and to help revegetate landfills.

Singsaas is leading a project funded by the U.S. Department of Energy that uses biochar instead of fossil fuels to make steel.

"We're getting calls from from the steel industry all over the world, because there's a big demand for lower carbon impact of the steel that goes into everything from our cars to our buildings to rebar and concrete," Singaas said.

The steel industry represents about seven percent of global carbon emissions. Biochar represents a substantial opportunity to reduce those emissions, he said.

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2024/10/04/how-biochar-the-swiss-army-knife-of-climate-tools-is-growing-in-minnesota>

One of the big challenges to making biochar use more widespread, Singaas said, is the need to create unique biochars, or “engineered biocarbons,” as he prefers to call them, for various applications. “Fit for purpose” biochar, as he calls it.



Eric Singaas, director of the Natural Resource Research Institute's Materials and Bioeconomy Research Group, inspects a handful of biochar. Dan Kraker | MPR News

Different uses, whether it's as an additive to be used in steel or concrete, or water filtration, demand different chemistry and structure of the material, Singaas said.

“That gap in research is what we're trying to fill so that this can become a more widespread thing,” he said.

But there's lots of opportunity as well. The U.S. Forest Service is interested in biochar for fuel reduction programs. It's expensive to thin forests for fire prevention, and there typically isn't a market for those small trees that are being thinned. Biochar could provide one.

And with more than one billion ash trees in Minnesota in the path of the destructive emerald ash borer, there's a lot of potential unused biomass to be used as feedstock to make biochar.

“But we don't want to go down the road of just using our forests thoughtlessly,” Singaas cautioned. “If you create markets for more biomass than the the landscape can supply, you risk winding up creating more harm than good.”

Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan Overview

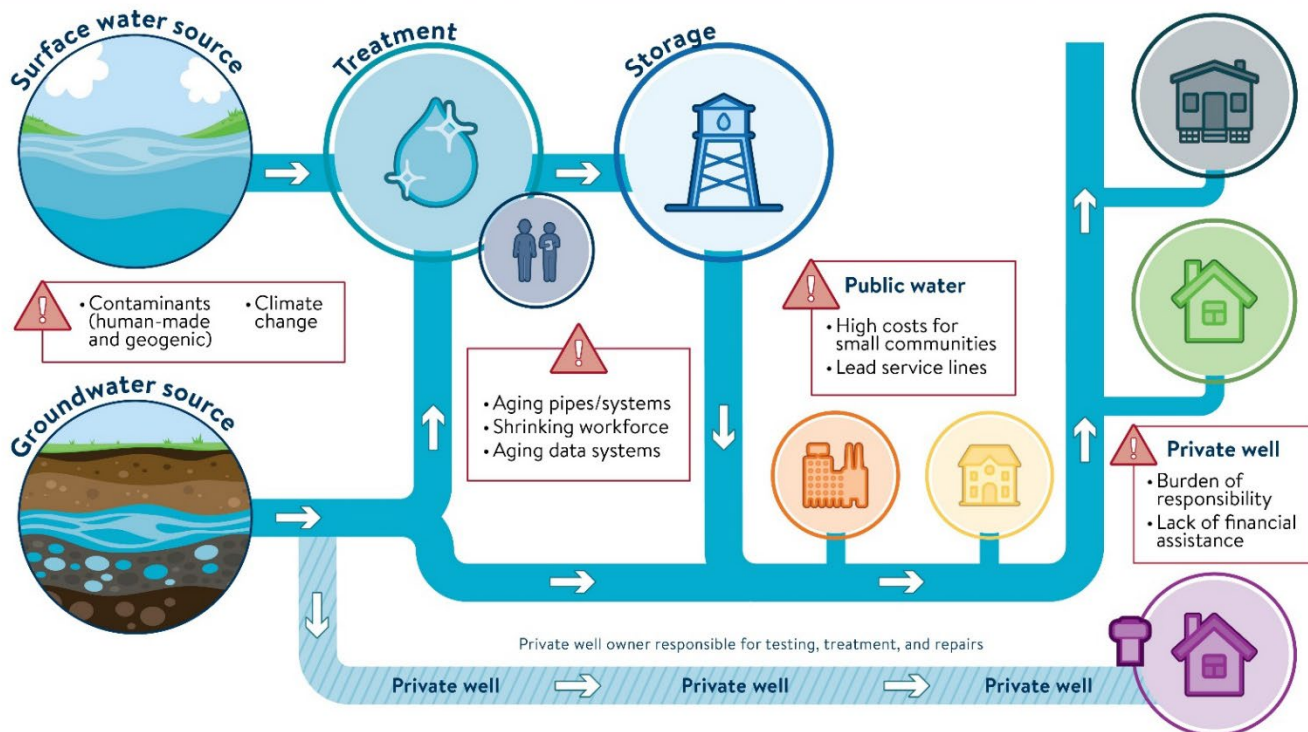
A 10-YEAR ACTION PLAN TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE IN MINNESOTA HAS EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SAFE AND SUFFICIENT DRINKING WATER

Provide input on the DRAFT Plan by October 17, 2024

You are invited to review the *DRAFT Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan* (the Plan) and provide input. The current version incorporates expertise and feedback from water professionals; state and local governments; researchers; and Minnesotans who drink water. We gathered input and feedback through community meetings, surveys, and discussions.

Access the DRAFT Plan, feedback form, and the reports that informed the Plan at [Future of Drinking Water \(www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/cwf/fdw.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/cwf/fdw.html).

There are risks to our drinking water, from source to tap



Goals and strategies to address key risks

Protect sources of drinking water

- Identify and manage potential threats around drinking water sources for public water systems and private wells.
- Include drinking water considerations in land use planning and zoning decisions.
- Emphasize source water protection in watershed management plans.
- Ensure adequate supply of water for public water systems and private wells.
- Ensure laws, rules, and ordinances adequately protect sources of drinking water.

Establish resilient drinking water infrastructure

- Support communities with asset management and resiliency planning for drinking water infrastructure.
- Support and grow the public water system and licensed well contractor workforces.
- Transition from legacy data systems to modern, resilient systems.

Ensure safe tap water

- Prevent and resolve health-based violations in public water systems and private wells.
- Reduce lead in drinking water.
- Establish equitable access to private well testing and mitigation.
- Empower Minnesotans to value drinking water and take actions to sustain and protect it.

Anticipate and manage emerging risks.

- Monitor drinking water sources for emerging contaminants and pathogens.
- Understand how people's health may be affected by emerging contaminants and risks.
- Prioritize emerging risks that present the largest public health burden in the context of all contaminants.
- Advance laboratory capacity and methods to analyze for emerging risks.
- Address drinking water risks related to climate change.

Engage partners

- Communicate with and support public water suppliers and licensed well contractors.
- Provide partners and residents with data on risks and challenges to safe drinking water.
- Facilitate outreach, education and assistance to communities/residents affected by drinking water contamination.
- Leverage advisory councils to understand and prioritize challenges to safe drinking water.
- Create more public-facing (toward residents) explanations of the drinking water supply system.
- Communicate with elected officials at all levels of government regarding drinking water concerns.

Legislative direction

The 2023 Minnesota Legislature provided Clean Water Fund dollars to Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to "...develop public health policies and an action plan to address threats to safe drinking water, including development of a statewide plan for protecting drinking water..." ([Minnesota Laws of 2023, chapter 40, article 2, section 7e](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/40/) [<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/40/>]).

09/10/2024

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-4547.