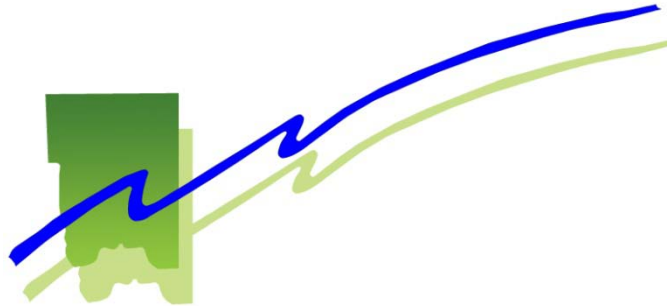


# 2011 Annual Plan

Ramsey Conservation District



**Approved by the Ramsey Conservation District Board of Supervisors on February 18, 2011**

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## Introduction and Organizational Chart

The Ramsey Conservation District (RCD) is a political subdivision of the State of Minnesota established to assist the citizens of Ramsey County conserve natural resources. The RCD is one of 91 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, within our State.

Leadership and governance of the RCD is provided by five elected Supervisors. The role of the RCD Supervisors is to develop policy, prioritize long-range plans for natural resource conservation programs, prepare an annual budget and work plan, and acquire the resources needed to implement natural resource conservation programs. The RCD does not have taxing or regulatory authorities and must rely on partnerships with other governmental agencies to fund and implement its conservation programs. Our primary partners are: Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), Ramsey

County Board of Commissioners, US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Metropolitan Conservation Districts (MCDs), seven water management organizations (WMOs) that have territory in Ramsey County, and 19 municipalities within Ramsey County.

**RCD Mission Statement:** The Ramsey Conservation District is the bridge between conservation agencies and Ramsey County citizens and local governments to sustain our natural resources through partnerships, technical services and education.

**Guiding Principles for RCD Programs:** To achieve our mission, the RCD has adopted this Annual Plan of Work for the period of January, 2011 through January, 2012. This work plan can be amended by the RCD Board of Supervisors at anytime during the year.

## RCD Board

Carrie Wasley - *Chair*  
Mara Humphrey - *Vice Chair*  
Margaret Behrens - *Information & Education*  
Gwen Willems - *Treasurer*  
Janelle Anderson - *Secretary*

## RCD Professional Staff

Ann WhiteEagle- *Administrator*  
Michael Goodnature - *GIS & Conservation Specialist*  
Ryan Johnson - *Urban BMP Specialist*

## USCA NRCS Staff

Michelle Wohlers - *NRCS District Conservationist*

## Volunteers

50 Ramsey County Residents - *Rain Gaugers*  
2 Volunteers - *MN DNR Ob Well Monitoring*

**The RCD will also utilize 3 student interns and the assistance of the Metro Conservation District in 2011**

## Committees & Assignments

### RCD Committees

Annual Report/Comprehensive Plan – RCD Board  
Budget /Finance - Wasley & Willems  
Personnel - Humphrey & Wasley

### Citizens Advisory & Board Committees

Rice Creek Watershed District- Anderson  
Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization- Behrens  
Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District- Humphrey  
Capitol Region Watershed District - Willems

### Agency & Government Committees

Legislative Committee – RCD Board  
Ramsey County League of Local Governments-Behrens & Wasley  
Metro Conservation District – Wasley & Humphrey

## **RCD Natural Resource Conservation 2011 Objectives**

### **1. Local Water Quality Improvement**

#### **Promote water quality improvement through RCD projects and programs and work on developing and implementing the initiatives set forth in the RCD Comprehensive Plan.**

- Through partnerships with several WMO's, provide technical assistance for stormwater best management practices (BMPs) and administrative cost share programs that are available to Ramsey County property owners.
- Implement all provisions required of soil and water conservation districts as prescribed in the MN Wetland Conservation Act. (Assist DNR and local LGU's enforce WCA, consult with local units of government administering the law, reporting WCA admin and wetland impact statistics to BWSR).
- Manage an administrative services cost-share program (funded by BWSR) providing reimbursement to local governmental units administering the MN WCA.
- Provide construction site inspections for surrounding municipalities in accordance with city erosion and sediment control rules and regulations
- Work with surrounding agencies in implementing sub-watershed stormwater retrofit analysis studies
- Initiate a well sealing cost share program for Ramsey County residents in drinking water supply management and well head protection areas, with funding provided by the CWF
- Collaborate and educate partners on groundwater protection information and initiatives.

### **2. Education and Outreach**

#### **Continue and enhance awareness of natural resource programs and efforts**

- Update the RCD website to keep partners and residents informed on current programs and projects.
- Collaborate efforts with multiple organizations such as, Blue Thumb, WMO's, Ramsey County Environmental Department, and Ramsey County Municipalities to promote conservation education for the citizens of Ramsey County
- Provide partners with mid and year end reports on cost share program initiatives.
- Aid in partners workshops supporting the concept of sustainable land use and water quality protection
- Attend and promote conservation practices at expos and school functions such as; Living Green Expo, Waterfest, Enviro-thon and Children's Waterfest
- Start an e-newsletter to inform residents and partners of RCD updates.
- Attend conferences associated with the advancement of RCD's programs and mission, such as: WCA technical, administrative and enforcement training, erosion and sediment control courses, stormwater modeling, GIS conferences and courses.
- Present BMP and water quality information to students at surrounding schools

### **3. Collaboration & Financial Stability**

#### **Develop greater fiscal stability through the collaboration of advanced partnerships**

- Identify unmet conservation needs in Ramsey County and work with WMO's and municipalities to implement efforts to meet these needs.
- Work with the County to ensure stable support for the RCD to implement conservation efforts for the citizens of Ramsey County

- Continue and expand contracts and agreements with watersheds and municipalities
- Seek and complete grant opportunities to meet target goals
- Work with legislative agencies to develop stable funding for Conservation District

## **Conservation Practice Goals through Cost Share Funding**

The RCD will promote and/or manage several cost share programs for the construction of natural resource conservation practices. Most of the cost share funding is provided to the RCD by the MN BWSR. However, several water management organizations work through the RCD to fund conservation projects with their cost-share funds.

### **1. BWSR Cost Share Funding**

BWSR provides cost-share funding to the RCD through annual contributions and through competitive special project grant allocations. The RCD is allowed to utilize up to 20% of this funding to cover the cost of technical and administrative services associated with the expenditure of these funds in 2011. The RCD has \$250,000 available for cost share projects in 2011 and projects that are already projected to utilize funding include Northwestern College and the Phalen Chain of Lakes.

### **2. WMO Cost Share Funding**

The RCD has partnerships with several WMOs where-by RCD staff work with land owners to install conservation practices and the WMOs provide cost-share assistance to the landowner. On average, the WMOs provide \$90,000 per year in cost-share assistance through the RCD to Ramsey County residents.

### **3. Metro Conservation District Landscape Restoration Program Cost Share Funding**

As part of legislative efforts in 2009, a proposal was put forth by the Anoka Conservation District to expand the LRP utilizing Clean Water Legacy funding to accelerate water quality improvement efforts

by focusing efforts in high priority subwatersheds. . Legislature approved \$400,000 the first year and \$600,000 the second year to Anoka Conservation District for the Metro Landscape Restoration Program. The LRP currently has two primary components that determine the nature and distribution of services provided. The first involves obligations to BWSR to access the funds allocated by the state for this program. The second obligation is to the participating member districts to provide the minimum number of hours contracted by each district. Each participating district is responsible to manage the workload in their respective county to address local high priority conservation needs. The RCD has encumbered \$62,000 in cost sharing funding through the LRP over 2010/2011. Cost share funding in the amount of \$12,000 will be spent on two separate retro-fit analysis studies completed that meet the objectives of the LRP program to identify best management practices to be installed. Cost share funding at a 1:1 match in the amount of \$50,000 will be contributed to three separate partners for water quality improvement projects to be installed in high priority areas within Ramsey County.

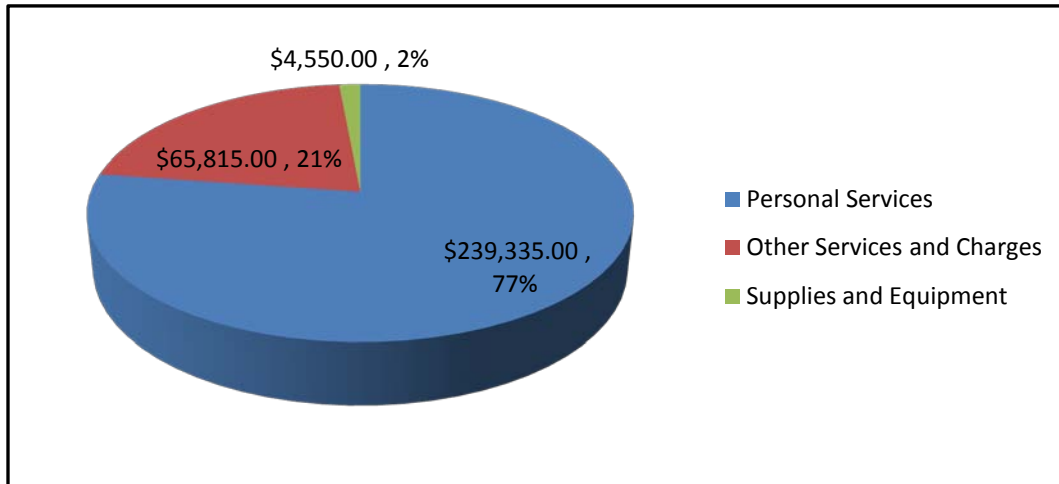
### **4. Well Sealing Cost-Share Funding**

In accordance with initiatives set in the RCD Comprehensive Plan, protect groundwater aquifers through the sealing of abandoned or unused wells, the RCD applied for and received a grant through the Clean Water Fund provided by BWSR. The project awarded will target the sealing of abandoned and unused wells within groundwater recharge zones of municipal water supply wells. This project will leverage \$200,000 directly for the sealing of abandoned or unused wells in Ramsey County. The project will include grant funding in the amount of \$128,625 and cost share consisting of homeowners contributing 50% of the well sealing not to exceed \$750 per well and in-kind contributions made by surrounding municipalities.

# 2011 Financial Information & Conservation Programs and Partners

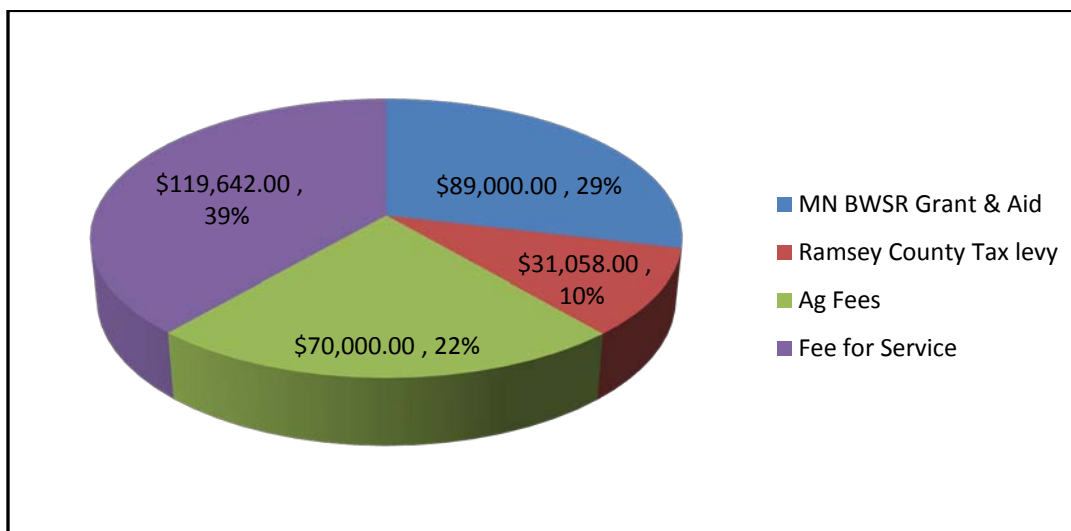
## 1. Operational Budget

Personal Services	\$ 239,335.00	77.3%
Other Services & Charges	\$ 65,815.00	21.3%
Supplies and Equipment	\$ 4,550.00	1.5%
Total	\$ 309,700.00	

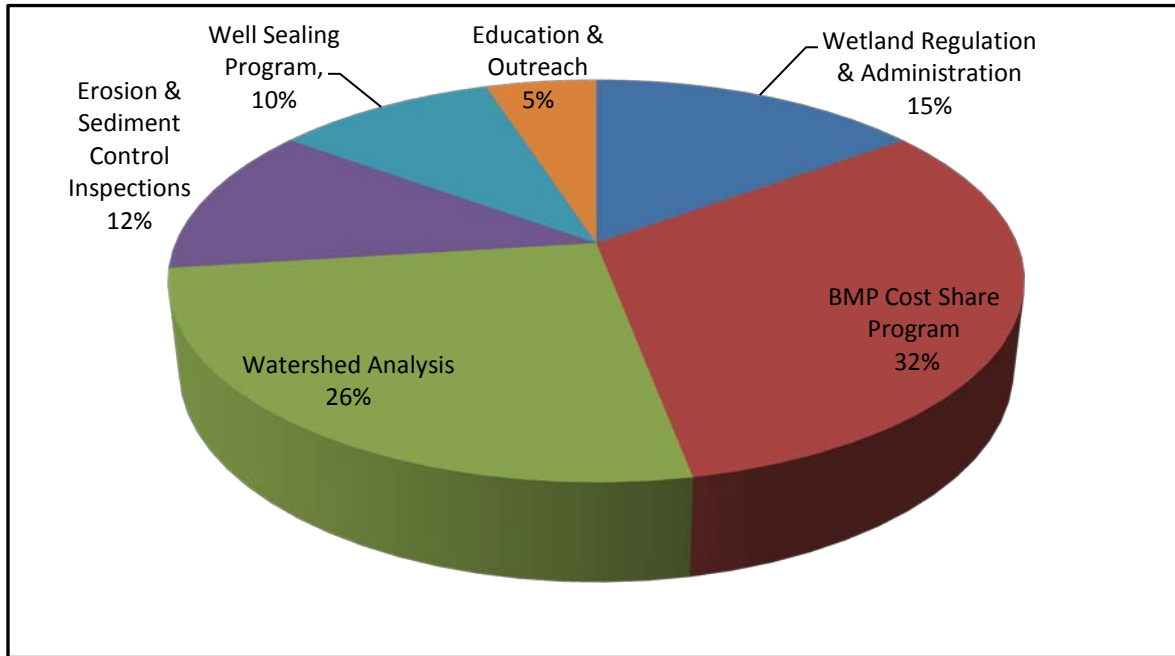


## 2. Operational Revenues

MN BWSR Grant & Aid	\$ 89,000.00	28.7%
Ramsey County Tax levy	\$ 31,058.00	10.0%
Ag Fees	\$ 70,000.00	22.6%
Fee for Service	\$ 119,642.00	38.6%
Total	\$ 309,700.00	



#### 4. 2011 Programs Staff Time Allocation



#### 5. RCD Conservation Partners in 2011

Organization	Provides the RCD with Financial Assistance	Provides the RCD with Technical Assistance	Provides the RCD with Organizational Assistance
U.S.D.A. , Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)		✓	
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources	✓	✓	✓
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	✓	✓	
Minnesota Department of Agriculture		✓	
Minnesota Department of Health		✓	
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	✓	✓	
Minnesota Association of Conservation Districts			✓
Metropolitan Council		✓	
Metro Conservation Districts	✓	✓	
Ramsey County	✓	✓	✓
Cities of Shoreview, Arden Hills, and Falcon Heights	✓		
Rice Creek WD	✓		
Ramsey-Washington Metro WD	✓		
Capitol Region WD	✓		
Vadnais Lake WMO	✓		
Grass Lake WMO	✓		
Valley Branch WD	✓		



# RCD 2010 Accomplishments

## Local Water Quality Improvement

- With a cost share grant of \$147,842.00 awarded through BWSR the RCD leveraged a total of \$309,412.00 for the installation of 13 shoreline projects that resulted in the restoration of 3,355 feet of shoreline for 5 Ramsey County lakes.



*A before and after photo of a shoreline stabilization project completed on Lake McCarron's in Ramsey County, with assistance provided by the RCD.*

- Through the RCD's technical service contracts with our WD's, 65 properties in Ramsey County were awarded cost share totaling \$115,109.59 for the installation of water quality best management practices.
- The RCD continued to partner with the cities of Shoreview and Arden Hills in 2010 to complete construction site inspections to ensure that best management practices were in place to prevent the runoff of sediment into surface waters.
- Two subwatershed retrofit analysis studies were completed by the RCD to determine prime locations for the installation of BMPs within two subwatersheds in Ramsey County. Funding for these projects came from the Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Organization, City of Gem Lake, Saint Paul Regional Water Authority and a Clean Water Partnership grant from the MPCA. These studies and others resulted in the identification of 240 sites and leveraged over \$50,000 of Clean Water Funding for the installation of water quality improvement projects.
- The RCD and two volunteers continued to monitor over 30 DNR Observation Wells to collect groundwater levels for an ongoing study.
- The Wetland Conservation Act, with funding provided by BWSR, was continued to be

administered and reported by the RCD resulting in the protection of wetland sites within Ramsey County.

- A collaborative effort between Ramsey County GIS and the RCD resulted in the orthorectification of historical 1991 aerial photos which now can be used to identify historic wetland signatures which will aid in Wetland Conservation Act decision making.

## Education and Outreach

- RCD staff assisted with two youth education events, the Senior Envirothon and the Children's Water Fest. The RCD staff also presented educational materials to students at Humboldt High School to prepare students for competing in the Envirothon.
- The RCD promoted conservation practices involving homeowners in Ramsey County at two educational conferences, Wild Ones and the Living Green Expo.
- The RCD continued to enter precipitation levels collected by over 50 Ramsey County rain gauge volunteers and report this information to the State Climatology office
- Several tours of conservation efforts completed by the RCD were conducted to promote awareness amongst partners.



*Mark Doneaux (Capitol Region Administrator), Ryan Johnson (RCD Staff) and Jan Parker (Ramsey County Commissioner) enjoy a pontoon tour of work completed on McCarron's Lake.*

## Collaboration & Financial Stability

- Several strategic planning sessions were completed by RCD Supervisors, personnel and partners to determine the RCD's vision for the newest version of the two year Comprehensive Plan that was submitted in 2010.
- Restructuring of RCD personnel was completed to ensure financial stability for the future.