

2012 Annual Plan



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Introduction and Organization Information

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 90 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, United States 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, 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 2012 through January 2013. This work plan can be amended by the RCD Board of Supervisors at anytime during the year.

RCD Board

Mara Humphrey – *Chair*

Gwen Willems – *Vice Chair*

Margaret Behrens – *Information & Education*

Janelle Anderson – *Secretary*

Carrie Wasley – *Treasurer*



RCD Staff

Ann WhiteEagle – *Administrator*

Michael Goodnature – *GIS & Conservation Specialist*

Ryan Johnson – *Urban BMP Specialist*



Volunteers

55 Ramsey County Residents - *Rain Gaugers*

2 Volunteers – *MN DNR Ob Well Monitoring*

USCA NRCS Staff

Michelle Wohlers – *NRCS District Conservationist*

Committees & Assignments

RCD Committees

Annual Report/Comprehensive Plan – RCD Board

Budget /Finance – Humphrey & Willems

Personnel – Humphrey & Willems

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

Metro Conservation District – Willems & Anderson

RCD Natural Resource Conservation 2012 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), such as raingardens, and administrate 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 LGUs enforce WCA, consult with local units of government administrating the law, report WCA admin and wetland impact statistics to BWSR)
- Manage an administrative services cost-share program (funded by BWSR) providing reimbursement to local governmental units administrating 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
- Provide well sealing cost-share for Ramsey County residents in drinking water supply management and well head protection areas, with funding provided by the CWF
- Collaborate with 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, WMOs, 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 partner 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, Phalen Waterfest, Envirothon and Children's Waterfest
- 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
- Provide internships to current college students to offer experience working in the natural resource field.

3. Collaboration & Financial Stability- *Develop greater fiscal stability through the collaboration of advanced partnerships*

- Identify unmet conservation needs in Ramsey County and work with WMOs 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 2012. The RCD has \$90,000 available for cost-share projects in 2012 and funding will go toward practices installed along the Phalen Chain of Lakes, among other targeted priorities.



2011 BWSR Cost-share Funding was used to restore Lake Johanna shoreline.

2. WMO Cost-Share Funding

The RCD has partnerships with several WMOs whereby 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 \$100,000 per year in cost-share assistance through the RCD to Ramsey County residents.

3. Metro Conservation District: Metro-Wide Subwatershed Retrofit Analysis

A 2012 Clean Water Fund grant was awarded to the Metro Conservation Districts which will provide the Ramsey Conservation District with \$18,000 in cost-share funding during the next three years to analyze subwatersheds that contribute to the degradation of locally identified high priority water resources. The analyses to be completed will identify the location and estimated cost/benefit relationship for best management practices. This funding will aid in the cost of completing subwatershed studies for partnering WDs/WMOs within their jurisdictions.



2011 Clean Water Funds were used to help the Capitol Region Watershed District make a pond improvement, which included an iron enhanced sand filter.

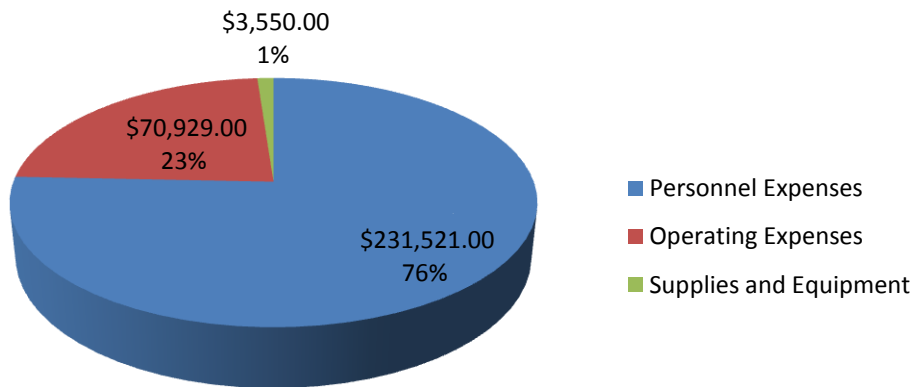
4. Well Sealing Cost-Share Funding

The RCD applied for and received a grant through the Clean Water Fund provided by BWSR in 2011. The project will continue to target the sealing of abandoned and unused wells within groundwater recharge zones of municipal water supply wells in 2012. The project will leverage \$200,000 directly for the sealing of abandoned or unused wells in Ramsey County. The project includes 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. This grant is accordance with initiatives set in the RCD Comprehensive Plan to protect groundwater aquifers through the sealing of abandoned or unused wells.

2012 Financial Information & Conservation Programs and Partners

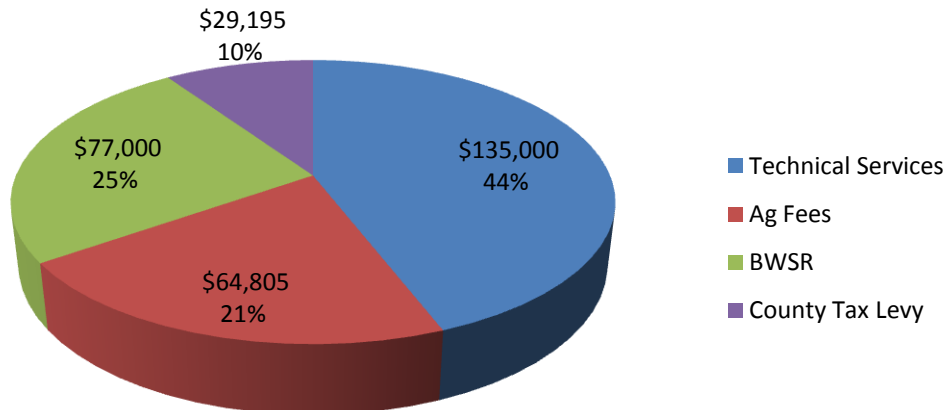
1. Operational Budget

Personnel Expenses	\$ 231,521	75.66%
Operating Expenses	\$ 70,929	23.18%
Supplies and Equipment	\$ 3,550	1.16%
Total	\$ 306,000	

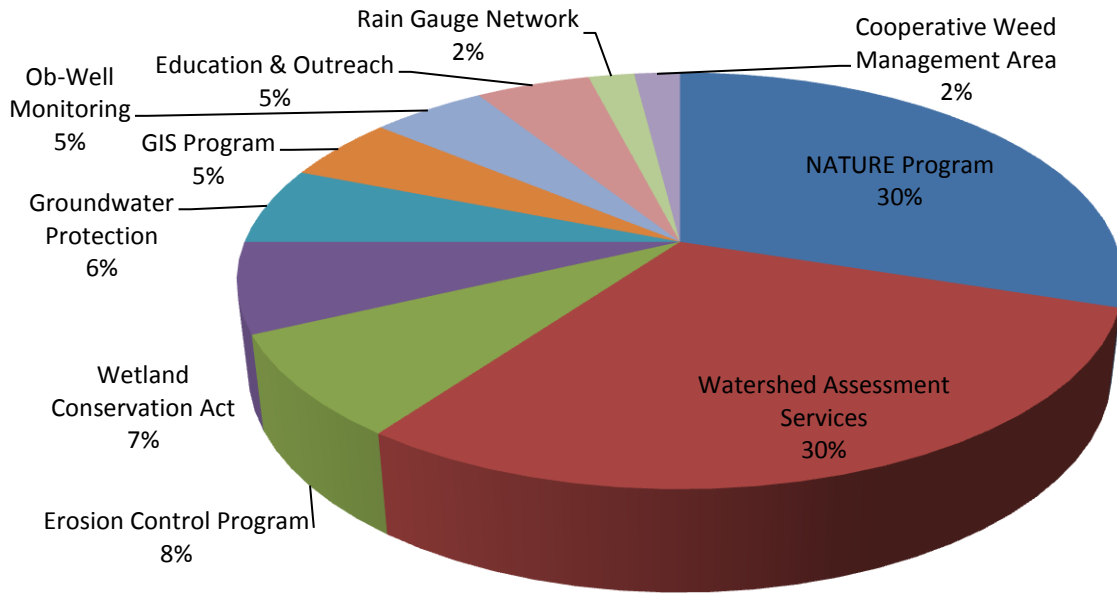


2. Operational Revenues

Technical Services	\$ 135,000	44.12%
Ag Fees	\$ 64,805	21.18%
BWSR	\$ 77,000	25.16%
County Tax Levy	\$ 29,195	9.54%
Total	\$ 306,000	



3. 2012 Programs Staff Time Allocation



4. RCD Conservation Partners in 2012

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		✓	
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	✓		
Rice Creek WD	✓		
Ramsey-Washington Metro WD	✓		
Capitol Region WD	✓		
Vadnais Lake WMO	✓		
Grass Lake WMO	✓		
Valley Branch WD	✓		
Mississippi WMO	✓		
Hennepin Conservation District	✓		

RCD 2011 Accomplishments

Local Water Quality Improvement

- Through the RCD's Well Sealing Program, cost-share funding in the amount of \$30,800.00 was used to assist 60 Ramsey County residents seal their unused wells.
- With a grant awarded through the Clean Water Land and Legacy's Clean Water Fund, the RCD and City of Roseville, MN assisted the Grass Lake Watershed Management Organization with the installation of a bioinfiltration basin that will capture runoff before it enters a wetland complex connected to Lake Owasso.



Bioinfiltration basin installed along Aladdin Street in Roseville, MN with funding provided by the Clean Water Land & Legacy

- The RCD completed the Bridal Veil Creek Urban Stormwater Retrofit Assessment which is the first one of its kind in the Twin Cities Metro Area, completed with funding from the Clean Water Fund for the Metropolitan Landscape Restoration Program, which encompasses a highly urbanized landscape that identified 77 retrofit opportunities.
- With funding awarded through BWSR, the RCD leveraged a total of \$154,000 for the installation of shoreline projects that resulted in the combined restoration of 4,000 feet of shoreline along Como Lake, Lake Johanna, Gervais Lake and McCarron's Lakes.



Shoreline restoration project on Lake McCarron's

- Through the RCD's technical service contracts with our WDs, 53 properties in Ramsey County were awarded cost-share totaling \$95,000 for the installation of water quality best management practices.
- The RCD continued to partner with the cities of Shoreview and Arden Hills in 2012 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 studies leveraged \$45,000 of funding provided by the RCD through the Clean Water Fund for a pond retrofit project in Capitol Region WD and a bioinfiltration installation project in Vadnais Lake Area WMO.



Bioinfiltration basin within VLA WMO installed to collect runoff from St. Mary's Church and Parking Lot

- The RCD staff and two volunteers continued to monitor more than 30 DNR Observation Wells to collect groundwater levels for an ongoing study.
- Provisions of the Wetland Conservation Act, with funding provided by BWSR, continued to be administered and reported by the RCD resulting in the protection of wetland sites within Ramsey County.

Education and Outreach

- RCD increased the public's awareness of programs in 2011 through publishing an RCD newsletter, creating an RCD Facebook page and handing out educational materials.
- The RCD staff continues to administer and organize precipitation levels collected by over 55 Ramsey County rain gauge volunteers and reports this information to the State Climatology office.
- Shoreline restoration workshops were conducted by RCD and MCD staff in Shoreview and Roseville, MN.
- RCD staff assisted a class of 5th graders planting 100 trees at the Como Woodland and the rededication of the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Dutch Oven.

- RCD staff assisted with two youth education events, the Senior Envirothon and the Children's Waterfest. The RCD staff also presented educational materials to students at Humboldt High School to prepare students for competing in the Envirothon.



Students participating at the 2011 Envirothon

- RCD exhibited cost-share and educational information at the Phalen Waterfest, Green Works Conference, and Falcon Heights Fair.
- RCD staff visited the green roof at the St. Paul Fire Station on West 7th street.
- The RCD established an accredited internship at the U of Minnesota for Sustainability Program.
- Northwestern College was chosen by the RCD as the 2011 outstanding Conservationist for their contribution and efforts toward the 4,000 feet of shoreline restoration along their Lake Johanna property.



Northwestern College accepts the Outstanding Conservationist award at the 2011 MASWCD Banquet

- RCD staff held a Water Testing Workshop in cooperation with Department of Ag to test Ramsey County citizens water for nitrates in their well water.

Collaboration & Financial Stability

- RCD Supervisors continued to meet monthly with a variety of agency, government, advisory

and board groups to discuss joint projects and environmental issues.

- Several state legislators attended an RCD Special Meeting to learn about how the RCD provides the citizens of Ramsey County with conservation assistance.
- The RCD staff and Board Member attended the annual MASWCD conference.
- The RCD showed continued fiscal stability in 2011, as revenues exceeded expenditures for the first time in many years.
- RCD received the Sustainable St. Paul award for partnership with the raingarden installed at the St Paul Parks facility.



RCD Administrator Ann WhiteEagle accepts the award with collaborating partners