



2025 Grant Program Report

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rpbcwd.org/grants

OVERVIEW

Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (RPBCWD) has three grant offerings. The Action Grant is open to all RPBCWD community members, and the Educator Mini-Grant is open to teachers and informal educators located within the district boundary. The Stewardship Cost Share Grant is open to property owners within RPBCWD including homeowners, non-profits such as homeowners' associations and communities of faith, local units of government such as cities, schools, and businesses.

EDUCATOR MINI-GRANT

The Educator Mini-Grant supports educators in their efforts to connect their students with water resources. An applicant can be awarded up to \$400 for a project that has a water resources component. Previous grantees received reimbursements for bus fees to a nature center, binoculars for wildlife watching, and waders for students to use to collect aquatic macroinvertebrates. Three Educator Mini-Grants were awarded to teachers at Minnetonka High School for the purchase of water quality testing equipment for 10th graders to track trends in the water quality of Purgatory Creek.

Minnetonka High School 10th Graders conducting water quality testing on water collected from Purgatory Creek.



ACTION GRANT

Action grants are small, simple grants of up to \$250 for projects to protect clean water. They are designed to help residents have an impact on local water quality with small projects and grow awareness throughout communities in our watershed. Applications may be submitted year-round, and grant money is reimbursed upon project completion.

One Action Grant was awarded in 2024 to a student group at the University of Minnesota to assist them in a group project developing an ecological restoration plan for the Spring Road Conservation Project site. Another application from a neighborhood group in Minnetonka requesting funding to dredge and remove vegetation from a city-owned wetland was denied after the project did not receive approval from the City.



Equipment from a site visit with the University of Minnesota students at the Spring Road Property.

STEWARDSHIP COST SHARE

The Stewardship Grant Program provides cost share and technical advice for projects that protect and conserve natural resources. Ideal projects increase public awareness of the vulnerability of local water resources and solutions to improve them.

Potential grantees begin the application process by requesting a site visit. In 2025, 54 site visits were completed. These initial or "kick off" site visits are typically performed by Seth Ristow, Landscape Restoration Specialist, with the Carver Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). This ongoing partnership provides opportunity for district residents to discuss their project ideas with someone experienced in implementing a variety of best management practices including habitat restoration, erosion control, and rain gardens.

After the initial site visit, an application packet may be submitted. The application is reviewed initially by the RPBCWD grant coordinator to see if all required information was submitted. If so, the application is forwarded to the grant review committee, which in 2025 consisted of RPBCWD staff, Seth Ristow (Carver SWCD), and Marilyn Torkelson (RPBCWD Citizen Advisory Committee).

Grant awards are based on the type of project and its value toward accomplishing District goals. The table in the upper right shows the maximum awards per applicant category. Not all projects are awarded the maximum.

APPLICANT CATEGORY	MAXIMUM AWARD	
	Percent of project cost	Dollar amount
Residents	75%	\$5,000
Non-Residents (Non-profits, Local government, schools, businesses)	50%	\$50,000

Seventeen grant projects were completed in 2025 with total cost share reimbursement of \$164,095. Before reimbursement, grantees must schedule and pass a project inspection (Carver SWCD). The grantee must also submit a project report consisting of a summary description, photographs, and receipts before reimbursement is considered by the grant coordinator. Grantees are required to maintain projects and submit reports after installation. Individual homeowners must maintain their project for at least five years. Other grant applicant types (non-profits such as homeowners associations, municipalities, etc.) must maintain their projects for at least ten years.

2025 STEWARDSHIP GRANT ACTIVITIES	QUANTITY
Initial site visits completed	54
New agreements signed	17
Active projects	21
Close-out inspections completed	11

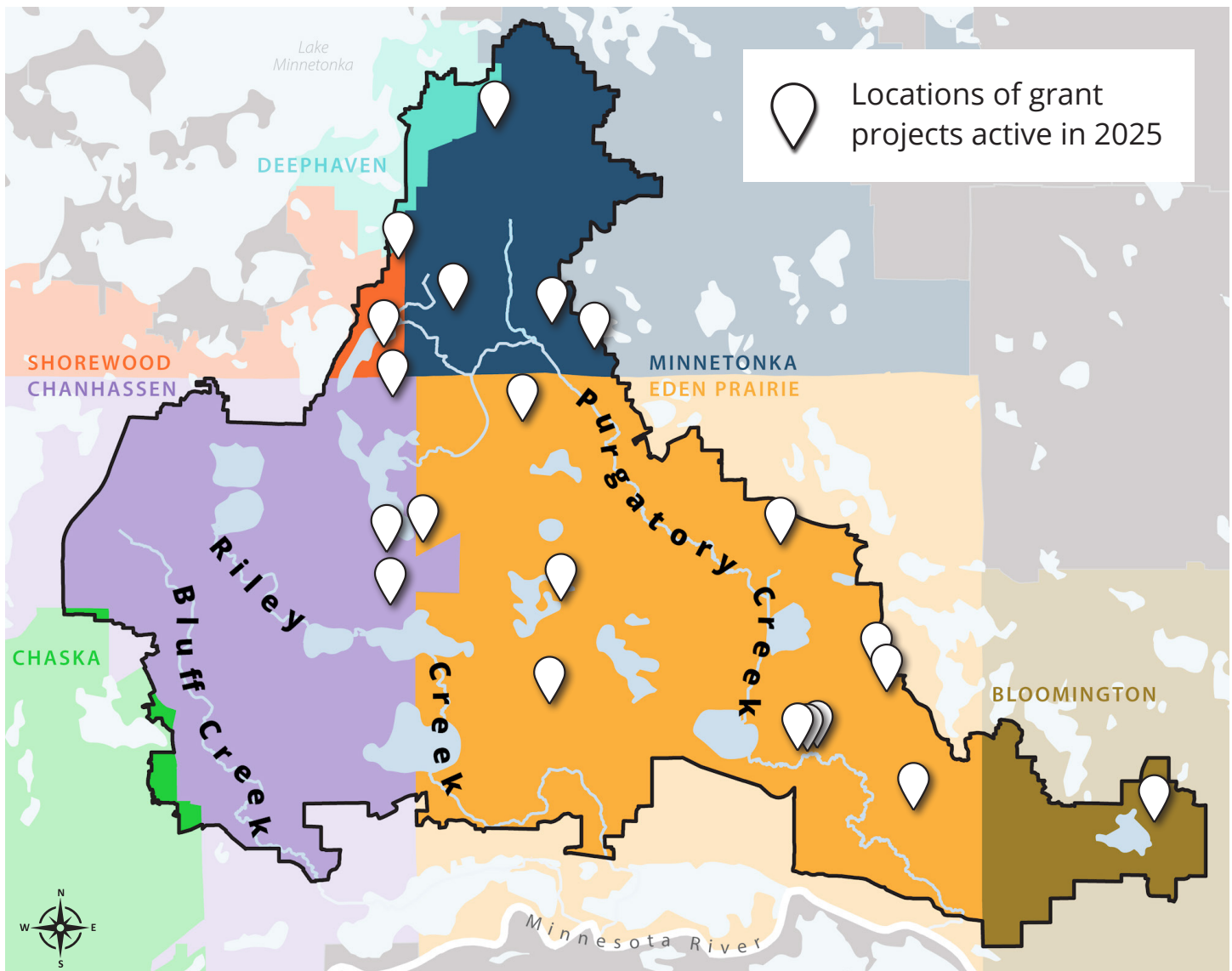
In 2025, we launched a new cost share program software. The new system includes automated email notifications to confirm site visit requests and other stages of the application/cost share process, including annual reporting reminders.

Active 2025 Stewardship Cost Share Projects

In 2025, there were 21 projects undergoing active installation. The figures below summarize who, where, and what types of projects were active. The majority of grantees were single family homeowners. Half of the projects occurred in Eden Prairie,

and most projects incorporated use of native plants through upland habitat or shoreline restorations. The map shows the approximate location of the active projects, which were distributed across five cities.

Who were the grantees?		Where were they from?		What kind of project did they do?	
Homeowners	16	Eden Prairie	11	Habitat restoration	13
Non-profits	2	Chanhassen	3	Shoreline resto/buffer	4
Commercial	1	Minnetonka	4	Native planting	1
Government	2	Bloomington	2	Alternative Lawn	1
		Shorewood	1	Stormwater BMP	1



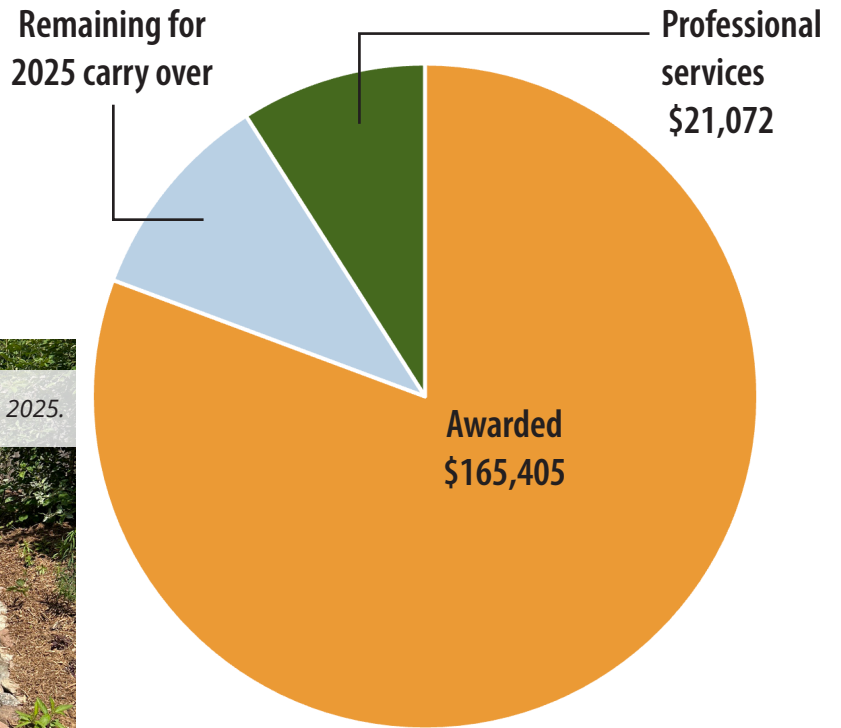
BUDGET STATUS

In 2024, the Stewardship Grant program had a budget of \$205,000. Of this, \$165,405.58 was awarded out to grant projects, and another \$21,072.31 was paid out to professional service support such as attorney review of cost share agreements and funds for Carver SWCD to perform site visits and inspections. About \$18,522.11 will be



Residential rain garden cost share project completed in 2025.

2024 BUDGET END-OF-YEAR STATUS



FEATURED COMMERCIAL PROJECT: RAIN GARDENS & HABITAT RESTORATION

This project installed 3 rain gardens totaling 4,000 sq-ft, a 1-acre habitat restoration, and a bored drainage system to direct roof water under the parking lot into the restoration site at a busy commercial strip mall.

The project was installed in summer of 2025 and will intercept and manage over 336,000 gallons of rooftop stormwater runoff annually.

Work included site preparation, installation of berms to divert drainage flow, implementation of a bored drainage system to direct roof water under the parking lot into the pollinator habitat, mulch application, and installation of 1,103 native plants and 44 lbs of mesic and wet mesic seed mixes. The plant list includes over 70 native species of grasses, sedges, rushes, and forbs. Total project installation cost was \$132,270.90.



BEFORE: stormwater runoff travels over the parking lot, collecting pollutants



AFTER: A downspout is redirected to a rain garden

FEATURED RESIDENTIAL PROJECT: GREEN ROOF

This project installed 1,000 square feet of sedum on the roof of a new construction home. The green roof will minimize stormwater runoff, reduce household energy use by serving as insulation, and act as an aesthetic centerpiece on a residential corner lot.

The project was installed in the fall of 2025 and will intercept and manage over 336,000 gallons of rooftop stormwater runoff annually.

Work included installation of a root barrier membrane, a water retention and drainage mat, flexible landscape edging, and 500 trays of various sedum species from the Minnesota Stormwater Manual's plant list for green roofs.

Total project installation cost was \$25,500.

