



## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

- I. Financial Report
  
- II. Activity Report
  - A. Membership
  - B. Staff
  - C. 2023 Activity
    - 1. Ongoing Programs
    - 2. Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF)
    - 3. Projects
  - D. 2024 Work Plan
  - E. Permits, Variances, and Enforcement
  - F. Storm Water Pollution Prevention Programs
  - G. Local Surface Water Plans
  - H. Consultant Services
  - I. Information Program
  - J. Expenditures

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PH: 952-563-4870

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## I. Financial Report

The RBWMO has not expended or accrued funds during the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023. No financial audits are necessary. Richfield and Bloomington expended \$2.5M and \$5.7M respectively from their storm water utility funds in 2023 to manage surface and stormwater.

## II. Activity Report

The RBWMO continues to function as an independent organization with Board membership consisting of the City Councils of both Richfield and Bloomington. The Staff of the RBWMO continues to be the staff of each City handling drainage and surface water issues within each municipality. Since each City addresses storm water and surface water issues on behalf of the RBWMO there is no official budget for the organization. Each municipality funds improvements and maintenance within the Watershed Management area within their City border via existing storm water utilities.

The 2018 Watershed Management Plan includes implementation of policies and programs that require financial resources from each member city. As in the past, costs to cover activities occurring in a particular city are borne by that city and activities transcending the municipal boundary will be shared equally.

Both Cities are permitted Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) operators under the NPDES permit program and implement Storm Water Pollution Prevention Programs (SWPPP) including education and maintenance programs.

### A. 2023 Membership

| Name                | Representing |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Shawn Nelson        | Bloomington  |
| Tim Busse           | Bloomington  |
| Simon Trautmann     | Richfield    |
| Jack Baloga         | Bloomington  |
| Sharon Christensen  | Richfield    |
| Chao Moua           | Bloomington  |
| Dwayne Lowman       | Bloomington  |
| Ben Whalen          | Richfield    |
| Mary Supple         | Richfield    |
| Sean Hayford Oleary | Richfield    |
| Patrick Martin      | Bloomington  |
| Jenna Carter        | Bloomington  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Richfield members can be contacted at:   | Richfield City Hall<br>6700 Portland Avenue South<br>Richfield, MN 55423<br>612-861-9700      |
| Bloomington members can be contacted at: | Bloomington City Hall<br>1800 West Old Shakopee Road<br>Bloomington, MN 55431<br>952-563-8700 |

## B. Staff

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Executive Director:           | Bryan Gruidl<br>City of Bloomington<br>Water Resources Manager<br>1700 West 98 <sup>th</sup> Street<br>Bloomington, MN 55431<br>952-563-4557 |
| Assistant Executive Director: | Mattias Oddsson<br>City of Richfield<br>Water Resources Engineer<br>1901 E. 66th Street<br>Richfield, MN 55423<br>612-861-9797               |

## C. 2023 Activity

Both cities perform the duties of the Local Government Unit (LGU) for BWSR for implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). Storm water utilities are also in place in both cities providing a reliable funding source for storm water and surface water resources management and improvement activities.

The fee structures for both cities storm water utility include a water quality component and a water quantity component. A credit/adjustment policy is in place providing incentive for property owners to incorporate storm water best management practices into their sites.

The RBWMO works collaboratively with its member cities to include and promote best management practices (BMPs) from both cities storm water programs. Richfield completed routine maintenance of all structural pollution control devices for which it is responsible within the permitted MS4 and performed seven city-wide street sweeping passes. Additionally, the city is on track to complete inspections of all

ponds and outfalls prior to the expiration of the General Permit. Staff turnover has hindered the completion of stormwater BMP inspections. Richfield staff have completed an updated BMP inventory, along with updates to inspection forms and procedures, and will continue to strengthen the inspection and maintenance program in 2024.

Bloomington provided two annual sweepings of city streets in addition to targeted sweeping in priority watersheds. Maintenance of structural pollution control devices was delayed in 2022 due to equipment issues. As a result, these devices were inspected and maintained in the spring of 2023. Inspections of 20% of the city's MS4 outfalls, ponds and sediment basins were also ongoing in 2023. Associated maintenance as identified by the inspections was either scheduled or completed at the time of inspection.

## 1. Ongoing Programs

Hennepin County Chloride Initiative (HCCI) – Completed in late 2022 this was a WBIF funded collaboration of water resource professionals, leading to the development of the Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota program. The program includes a toolbox intended for local government unit (LGU) staff to use to reduce chloride use in their communities. Materials include a presentation, videos, recruitment templates, conversation starters and handouts. This can be used for a variety of audiences; however, the targeted audience is property managers, homeowners/townhome associations and faith-based communities. These materials teach about steps to reduce chloride use without a reduction in safety.

Education and Outreach Program – Continue providing educational opportunities using the Wood Lake Nature Center and through partnering with other watershed districts and watershed management organizations.

Adopt-a-Drain - RBWMO also continued to participate in the Adopt-a-Drain program within the watershed in 2023. Adopt-a-Drain asks residents to adopt a storm drain in their neighborhood and keep it clear of leaves, trash, and other debris to reduce water pollution. Within the RBWMO there are currently 213 drains adopted. Participants reported removing 883.4 lbs of debris in 2023.

Storm Water Monitoring Program – Identified as a high priority in the RBWMO both Richfield and Bloomington continue to conduct regular water quality monitoring as outlined in Section 5.4 of the approved watershed management plan. The monitoring is intended to establish long-term water quality data for Wood Lake, Richfield Lake, Smith Pond, and Wrights Lake. Monitoring records are available upon request and posted on the RBWMO website.

Monitoring has been on-going at Wood Lake, Richfield, Lake, and Smith Pond since 2010. Monitoring began on Wrights Lake in 2013. From April to September,

monthly water quality samples and aquatic vegetation surveys were conducted on Wrights Lake and Smith Park Pond. This information helps inform on future management decisions.

Richfield retained Barr Engineering to conduct water quality monitoring in 2022. Barr staff conducted monthly sampling for temperature, dissolved oxygen (DO), chloride, pH, and phosphorus, as well as continuous water level monitoring. Wood Lake, Richfield Lake, and Augsburg Pond were monitored throughout the growing season. Beginning in 2023, Richfield staff transitioned to in-house water quality monitoring, with support from consultants on an as-needed basis.

Minnesota Stormwater Research Council – In 2023, using a large floating boom and the City of Bloomington’s Vactor truck, staff removed all the floating plants, like duckweeds, off Running Park Pond. This effort was done in coordination with the University of Minnesota (UMN) and the Minnesota Stormwater Research Council. Duckweeds are a common pond plant. They are native and a food source for wildlife. However, they can be aggressive and dominant pond surfaces. It is unknown exactly what effect this dominance has on water quality and if they, along with other pond plants, can be managed to improve pond function and health. To try and answer this question, the City and UMN teamed up on a project looking at the management of urban pond vegetation to control water quality benefits. A The duckweed removal was an effort to assess if water chemistry changes after a full pond removal. In addition to this work, Bloomington has collected comprehensive data on several ponds, two of which are in the RBWMO – Smith and Running. All of this data has been given to the UMN researchers. This research should help inform pond design and long-term management to utilize the benefits and avoid the issues that come with aquatic vegetation.

Website Maintenance – The website is updated with the current watershed management plan, contact information, and resource links for residents, the public and other agencies.

Technical Advisory Commission – In accordance with the 2018 Approved Watershed Management Plan, the RBWMO Technical Advisory Committee met on December 4, 2023. Minutes from that meeting are provided at the end of the report.

## 2. Watershed Based Implementation Funding

### 2020-21 Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Program

RBWMO partnered with the Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends (MVRF) to develop the youth education program with curriculum focused around basic hydrologic and ecological principles. The funding covered materials, educator fees, and transportation costs. Each session ended with a field trip to the Minnesota River at

the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge and Trailhead where students were able to perform water quality monitoring activities. In 2023 RBWMO completed the youth education program, expending remaining grant funds to support the purchase of water quality monitoring and educational equipment at Wood Lake Nature Center.

## 2022-23 Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Program

RBWMO was awarded \$75,000 from the FY 22-23 WBIF program and through a series of convene meetings the following projects were selected for funding: Conservation Education and Implementation Pilot Program (\$25,000), Sheridan Pond Water Quality Outlet Structure (\$20,000), and a Feasibility Study to assess hydraulic and biotic interventions to improve water quality and biotic integrity within the RBWMO (\$30,000)

*Conservation Education and Implementation Pilot Program* – A partnership with the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) member watersheds and led by Hennepin County to implement a pilot program engaging in education and outreach, and implementation of conservation efforts.

This pilot program was initiated in April 2022 when RBWMO staff worked with , WMWA members and member watersheds, Hennepin County and the Board of Soil and Water Resources to secure Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) grant dollars to pilot a two-year part-time Conservation Education and Implementation position employed by and shared jointly with Hennepin County with 50% of time spent on WMWA and Richfield-Bloomington WMO outreach and implementation, and 50% on Hennepin County outreach. Meetings from April through December 2022 refined the vision and scope for this position.

In spring 2023, Hennepin County filled the Conservation Specialist position. Throughout 2023 the Conservation Specialist has created work plans for WBIF funded projects, campaigns for pet waste, chloride, and Adopt-A-Drain education, and begun implementing outreach to faith-based organizations for chloride consultations. This position will coordinate the WBIF grant projects identified by each watershed including a Southgate Apartment BMP implementation, in the RBWMO.

The scope of the Southgate Apartment BMP implementation project is still being developed but is anticipated to include the following tasks: community engagement, concept design, final design, and construction. The project is scheduled to kick-off in Q2 of 2024 followed by construction in 2025.

*RBWMO Feasibility Study* - This feasibility report focused on water quality enhancements in the watersheds surrounding Richfield Lake, Wood Lake, Wright's Lake, and Smith Park Pond. Utilizing existing data, water quality estimates were developed for both external and internal loading. Based on these loading estimates

conceptual projects were identified to meet the goals of the RBWMO with respect to water quality, water quantity, and watershed-wide ecological integrity.

RBWMO staff plan to assess potential projects for implementation based on the findings of the 2023 feasibility study and ongoing dialogue with partner organizations.

### 3. Projects

Sheridan Pond Maintenance Project – Richfield Public Works Stormwater Utility division initiated this project to improve the functional nature of the pond as well as to enhance the adjacent terrestrial area. Phase 1 included dredging and re-shaping of the basin and storm sewer installation. A new outlet structure designed to improve downstream water quality by capturing debris funded through WBIF was also installed.

65<sup>th</sup> St. Reconstruction – 65th Street in Richfield was reconstructed from Rae Drive to Nicollet Ave. The project included utility replacement, road reconfiguration, the addition of a multi-use trail, and construction of a roundabout at 65th and Lyndale. Stormwater Elements: A SWPPP was prepared for this project and an MPCA Construction Stormwater permit was obtained. A key part of the utility work for this project was replacing the undersized storm sewer with a larger box culvert to alleviate localized flooding, as well as reconstructing the basin where the box culvert drains into Richfield Lake.

I-494: Airport to Highway 169 – Staff worked cooperatively with MnDOT to coordinate plans for stormwater utilities with highway construction.

#### D. 2024 Work Plan

Watershed Based Funding – As part of the FY22-23 WBIF staff will continue to work with Hennepin County, WMWA, and the other partners to launch, coordinate and implement educational programs including individual and multi-family housing focused equitable engagement projects.

For the FY2024-2025 WBIF funding RBWMO was awarded \$114,644. Staff anticipates moving forward with a feasibility study and preliminary design for one of the higher priority conceptual projects identified in the recently completed watershed wide feasibility study.

Education and Outreach – Staff will look to partner with adjacent watershed districts to promote and sponsor educational opportunities such as Smart Salting and Summer Turf Maintenance workshops. Additionally, staff will look for

opportunities to continue engaging with and educating youth about water and natural resources using the Wood Lake Nature Center.

Wood Lake Nature Center – The Wood Lake Nature Center is proposing to construct a new nature center building incorporating water education and water quality features. RBWMO staff are working to identify opportunities for partnership within this project, with a particular focus on enhancing education and outreach around water resources. Richfield WCA staff held a Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) meeting with the project team to discuss wetland conservation and public waters permitting requirements. The RBWMO will continue to coordinate and actively seek opportunities for partnership on this project.

I-494: Airport to Highway 169 – Staff will work cooperatively with MnDOT and the design-build team as the project continues construction.

Nicollet Avenue Reconstruction – Staff will continue coordination work with Hennepin County on meeting stormwater requirements for the Nicollet Avenue reconstruction and improving stormwater infrastructure in the corridor.

Adopt-a-Drain – RBWMO Staff will continue to promote the Adopt-a-drain program for the area. This program is organized through Hamline University and is now available to all interested entities in the metro area.

Ongoing Items – Staff will continue to implement ongoing studies and programs as outlined in the 2018 Watershed Management Plan, including:

- Website maintenance for distribution of education and WMO related information
- Water quality monitoring
- Continued TAC coordination

#### E. Permits, Variances and Enforcement

There were zero actions relating to the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) within the RBWMO area in 2023. The WCA 2023 Annual Reporting Forms are available upon request.

In 2023, Bloomington staff completed erosion control inspections at five construction/redevelopment sites in Bloomington within the RBWMO.

- 8201 Old Cedar: Apartment Complex
- 8244 13th Ave S: New single family home
- 9030 Park Avenue South: Single family home demo, lot currently vacant
- 7801 Portland Ave; BP Gas Station demo for I-494 project
- 7876 Portland Ave: Building demo for I-494 project



In 2023, Richfield staff completed erosion control inspections at five construction/redevelopment sites in Richfield within the RBWMO.

- 7132 Portland Ave S: Hope Church
- 6437 Lyndale Ave S: Lynvue Apartments
- 6300 Richfield Pkwy: RF64 Townhomes and Rya Apartments
- 6500 Nicollet Ave S: Partnership Academy
- 6501 Penn Ave S: Stormwater Management Project

#### F. Storm Water Pollution Prevention Programs (SWPPPs)

The RBWMO works collaboratively with its member cities to include and promote best management practices (BMPs) from both cities storm water programs consistent with the requirements of the MPCA Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Storm Water Program and the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP). In December 2022, Richfield staff began an update to the city SWPPP, transitioning to an improved, more concise format and incorporating the latest information. These updates were successfully completed in late 2023. Smaller scale revisions continue to be made as needed to supporting documents. The Richfield and Bloomington SWPPPs address all six Minimum Control Measures (MCM) outlined in the permit and BMPs have been prepared for each measure as follows:

##### MCM 1 & 2 – Public Education, Participation, Outreach and Involvement

The RBWMO, through its member cities, has an established education and outreach program that focuses on illicit discharge recognition and reporting, as well as other specifically selected storm water-related issues such as chloride management. In addition, both cities continue to solicit public input on the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program. The RBWMO offers opportunities to learn how storm water can impact streams, rivers, and wetlands, and the steps people can take to reduce pollutants in storm water runoff. These opportunities are offered on a continual basis at the Wood Lake Nature Center where the center receives 75,000 visitors per year (on average). In addition to educating various grades of student classrooms annually, additional education opportunities are provided through quarterly utility bill mailing inserts, Bloomington's Green Room (which is part of the City's biennial Home Improvement Fair), and Public Works Open House. Information is available on city websites, the RBWMO website, in city newsletters, and through employee training programs.

Public participation and involvement is solicited through public meetings and specific storm water project meetings, or open houses.

### MCM 3 – Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination

Both cities implement and enforce an illicit discharge program. Richfield's and Bloomington's staff keep up-to-date records of the storm sewer system identifying all ponds, lakes, streams, storm sewer pipes, conveyances, and outfalls leaving the RBWMO. Public Works staff annually inspects sanitary and storm sewer mainline pipes checking for defects such as fractures, cracks, open joints, or other defects that could lead to illicit discharges. Once identified, pipe distresses can be scheduled for repair or maintenance.

### MCM 4 – Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control

Both cities require site specific storm water management plans and erosion control plans for new development and redevelopment that meet the NPDES requirements. The required erosion control BMPs are monitored and inspected as the work progresses. Existing erosion control ordinances and development plan review procedures provide the mechanisms to help prevent soil erosion into the MS4.

### MCM 5 – Post Construction Storm Water Management for New Development and Redevelopment

Storm water runoff rate control continues to be a critical component in Richfield and Bloomington development/redevelopment.

The current MS4 permit was approved in November 2020. Post-Construction stormwater management requirements contain multiple components including: storm water volume reduction requirements for new development and redevelopment, regulating areas allowed for infiltration, allowable exceptions, mitigation provisions, long-term maintenance requirements of structural BMPs, and site plan review.

### MCM 6 – Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

Both cities continue to implement education and conduct inspection measure to ensure that good housekeeping practices are in place at their respective facilities.

Annually the City of Richfield completes several city-wide street sweeping passes and performs inspection and maintenance on all structural pollution control devices within the permitted MS4. Additionally, the City inspects all outfalls and ponds within the city's MS4 during each permit term.

Bloomington provides two annual sweepings of city streets and completes inspection and maintenance of 100% of the structural pollution control devices within the permitted MS4. Inspections of 20% of the city's MS4 outfalls, ponds and sediment

basins are also completed annually. Associated maintenance as identified by the inspections is either scheduled or completed at the time of inspection.

## G. Local Surface Water Plans

Bloomington's LSWMP received RBWMO approval on May 16, 2018.  
Richfield's SWMP received RBWMO approval on August 23, 2018.

Subsequent to the March 5, 2018 approval of the RBWMO Plan, staff has reviewed each city's plan to ensure conformance with new policies and procedures.

## H. Consultant Services

The RBWMO retained WSB to conduct a watershed-wide feasibility study in 2023.  
The City of Richfield retained WSB to conduct erosion control inspections on private redevelopment projects in 2023.

## I. Information Program

A copy of the publication for the Bloomington Sun and Richfield Sun Current is included.

The RBWMO website provides a location for the public and other agencies to view the Watershed Management Plan as well as find general contact information, and links to other water resources-related information. The website address is [www.RBWMO.org](http://www.RBWMO.org)

## J. Expenditures

All RBWMO expenses are shared equally and paid through the member cities storm water utility funds.

Insurance for 2023 was 2,477\$