

# Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Executive Summary: 2023 Annual Report



## 2023 Activities & Achievements

In 2023, the BCWMC continued its work toward fulfilling its mission:  
*Stewardship of Water Resources to Protect and Enhance Our Communities.*

### Flood Control & Water Quality Improvements for DeCola Ponds and Bassett Creek

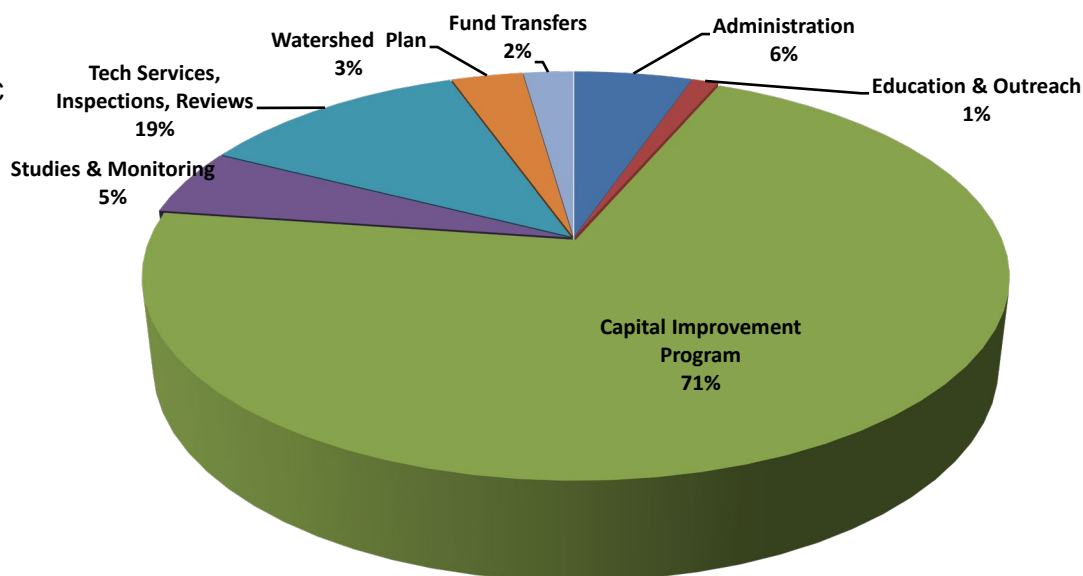
Each year, the BCWMC implements one or more major capital improvement program (CIP) projects to protect or improve water resources. In 2023, the [SEA School-Wildwood Park Flood Reduction Project](#) was constructed in Golden Valley. This project is working in conjunction with previously constructed projects around the DeCola Ponds to help lower flood elevations and improve water quality downstream in Bassett Creek. The project reduces the flood risk around DeCola Ponds D, E, and F by creating additional flood storage thereby removing 13 homes on DeCola Ponds D, E, and F from the 100-year flood level. Additional benefits of the project include water quality improvements and creation of 2.3 acres of wetland and prairie habitats. An intermittent stream (see photo) was built to convey flows during rain events and to add interesting aesthetics. The project also provides outdoor education opportunities for the adjacent School of Engineering and Arts and improves habitat for pollinators and wildlife. Vegetation around the site for planted and seeded in fall 2023 and will become established in 2024. Project funding came from the BCWMC CIP fund, a DNR grant to the City of Golden Valley, and city funding.



### Budget

In FY 2023, the BCWMC spent approximately \$783,300 on activities and programs and \$1.9 million on capital projects. BCWMC income included \$617,430 from member cities, about \$18,000 in grants and reimbursements, and over \$79,000 in development review fees. Another \$2.2 million was collected through a Hennepin County tax levy on watershed residents for the capital projects. For an itemization or more information on the BCWMC's 2023 expenditures, see the 2023 Operating Budget in Appendix A or the financial audit online.

2023 BCWMC Expenses



## 2023 Highlights

*The Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) is governed by a board composed of representatives from each of the nine member cities: Crystal, Golden Valley, Medicine Lake, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, New Hope, Plymouth, St. Louis Park and Robbinsdale. Representatives are appointed by their cities and serve three-year terms.*

### Watershed Plan Development and Public Open House

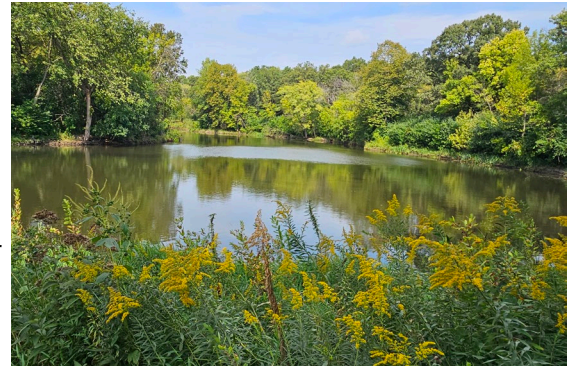
Throughout 2023, the BCWMC continued to develop its next 10-year watershed management plan. In February, the Commission held a public open house with 56 people attending including 34 residents and other stakeholders. The Commission approved a list of [prioritized issues](#) in August and began developing desired future conditions and 10-year goals to address each issue. Plan development will continue throughout 2024. All planning documents are available online at [www.bassettcreekwmo.org/document/2025-plan-update](http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org/document/2025-plan-update).

### Construction Wraps Up in Bryn Mawr Meadows Park & Lagoon Dredging in Theodore Wirth Park

In 2023, construction was completed on the [Bryn Mawr Meadows Water Quality Improvement Project](#) in Minneapolis. The project was built in partnership with the Minneapolis Park and Rec Board and the City of Minneapolis in conjunction with the Park Board's redevelopment of the park. The BCWMC project includes diverting runoff from a 45-acre residential area to the west into new stormwater ponds within the park for a total phosphorus reduction of 30 pounds per year. A Clean Water Fund grant partially funded the BCWMC project.



Also in 2023, the BCWMC completed the [Main Stem Lagoon Dredging Project](#) in Theodore Wirth Park. The project removed 25,650 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from three lagoons that are part of the creek. The lagoons were built in the 1930's by the Civilian Conservation Corps and have been accumulating sediment over the past 90 years. Although the project was designed to remove even more sediment, the resulting pollution control is still impressive with 390 pounds



of total phosphorus per year being removed from the creek and downstream resources like the Mississippi River. A Clean Water Fund grant from the MN Board of Water & Soil Resources and a Hennepin Co. Opportunity Grant partially funded this project.

### Parkers Lake Chloride Reduction Project Highlights the Issue of Over Salting

The overuse of winter deicers is a well-documented problem across the Metro area. Chloride (salt) has harmful impacts on infrastructure, vegetation, soils, and of course, water. It only takes one teaspoon of salt to pollute 5-gallons of water such that it can no longer support freshwater aquatic life. And that pollution is essentially permanent as there is no easy or affordable way to remove chloride from water. As a test to that claim of permanency, the BCWMC [studied mechanisms](#) to remove chloride from Parkers Lake in the city of Plymouth. Parkers Lake is considered impaired due to high chloride concentrations (meaning the lake does not meet State water quality standards).

The study focused on the viability of pumping chloride-laden water from the bottom of the lake and using ion exchange or reverse osmosis to remove chloride ions before returning the cleaned water back to the lake. While its feasible to remove chloride, the high capital and operation cost, intense maintenance needs, and large scale of the operation makes it infeasible for a lake. However, the BCWMC may explore these mechanisms for treating water in stormwater ponds before they discharge to a downstream waterbody.