



# LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

## Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

### Agenda Item

#### Item 6. I. – Education & Outreach

#### Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

#### Summary.

The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) met February 1, 2022. Brooke Asleson, the Chloride Reduction Program Coordinator at the MPCA, spoke with the group about Chloride pollution in MN and what actions are being taken to reduce the amount of salt entering the environment. Ms. Asleson provided her presentation. Managers can view the presentation using this [link](#). The MPCA is hosting a Workshop for local leaders. The workshop will be held Thursday, February 24, from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Registration is free and a link to register is include below under ‘Upcoming Events’.

In addition, Jen Dullum, Education Coordinator for the LMRWD, has been reaching out to schools within boundaries and close to the District. Responses from the schools has been limited. Olson Elementary school in Bloomington responded before Thanksgiving but has made no communication since then. If the Board is interested, a list of the schools can be included at a future meeting. Jen will continue to pursue communications with the schools.

Jen has also been keeping in touch with Ted Suss, from Friends of the Minnesota Valley. The Friends offices out of the Izaak Walton League Chapter House in Bloomington and will be forming its own River Watch Team to collect samples from the Chapter house. Mr. Suss hopes that youth working on the Friends team will help carry the program back to their schools.

In addition, I have been working with Maggie Karshcnia to plan an event this summer in partnership with NEMO (Non-point Education for Municipal Officials). NEMO is a program of the University of Minnesota Water Resource Center. Initial plans are for a ‘Workshop on the Water’. We are looking to get people out on the River, either on a barge, a river boat, or canoe. We are looking for additional partners and are planning an event for this summer.

Lastly, Jen has been working on handouts for the LMRWD to use at tabling events. The CAC has been reviewing the handouts and providing input. I have attached the handouts that we have so far. Jen is also looking for events that the LMRWD can table at. The Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce is holding its “Everything Spring Expo”, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Saturday, March 12, 2022 at Grace Church in Eden Prairie. This may be an opportunity to try out the handouts!

#### Attachments

LMRWD flyer  
Rain/Native Gardens  
Rain Barrels  
Steep Slopes

#### Recommended Action

No action recommended – for information only



## LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

The Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD) is a local, special-purpose unit of government that works to solve and prevent water-related issues. The LMRWD strives to protect, improve, and educate about our valuable water resources that are important habitats for our native plant and fish species as well as provide recreational opportunities and commercial barge navigation.

The District was established for, and is tasked with, maintaining a 9-foot navigation channel in the Minnesota River for goods and services to be transported far and wide.

The District also implements rules to oversee soil erosion control, floodplain and drainage alteration, stormwater management, and development on steep slopes within its boundary. These rules help protect public health and welfare, as well as natural resource preservation.

The District also participates in capital improvement and cost-share projects to improve our water and natural resources.

Contact us to learn more about the District, our projects and programs, and how you can get involved in protecting our shared water and natural resources.

Visit our website and follow  
us on social media!



[www.lowermnriverwd.org](http://www.lowermnriverwd.org)



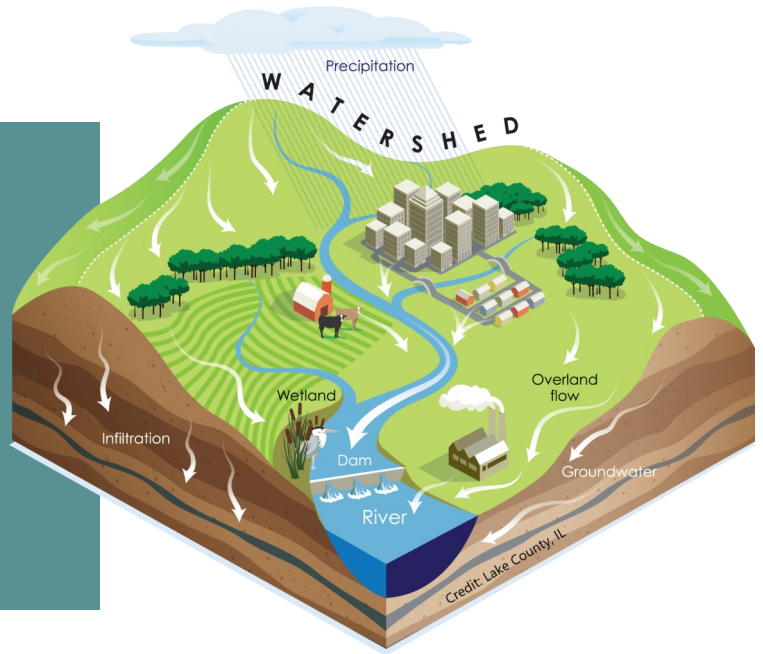
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# What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains rain and snowmelt, that don't soak into the ground, to a particular lake, river, or other waterbody.

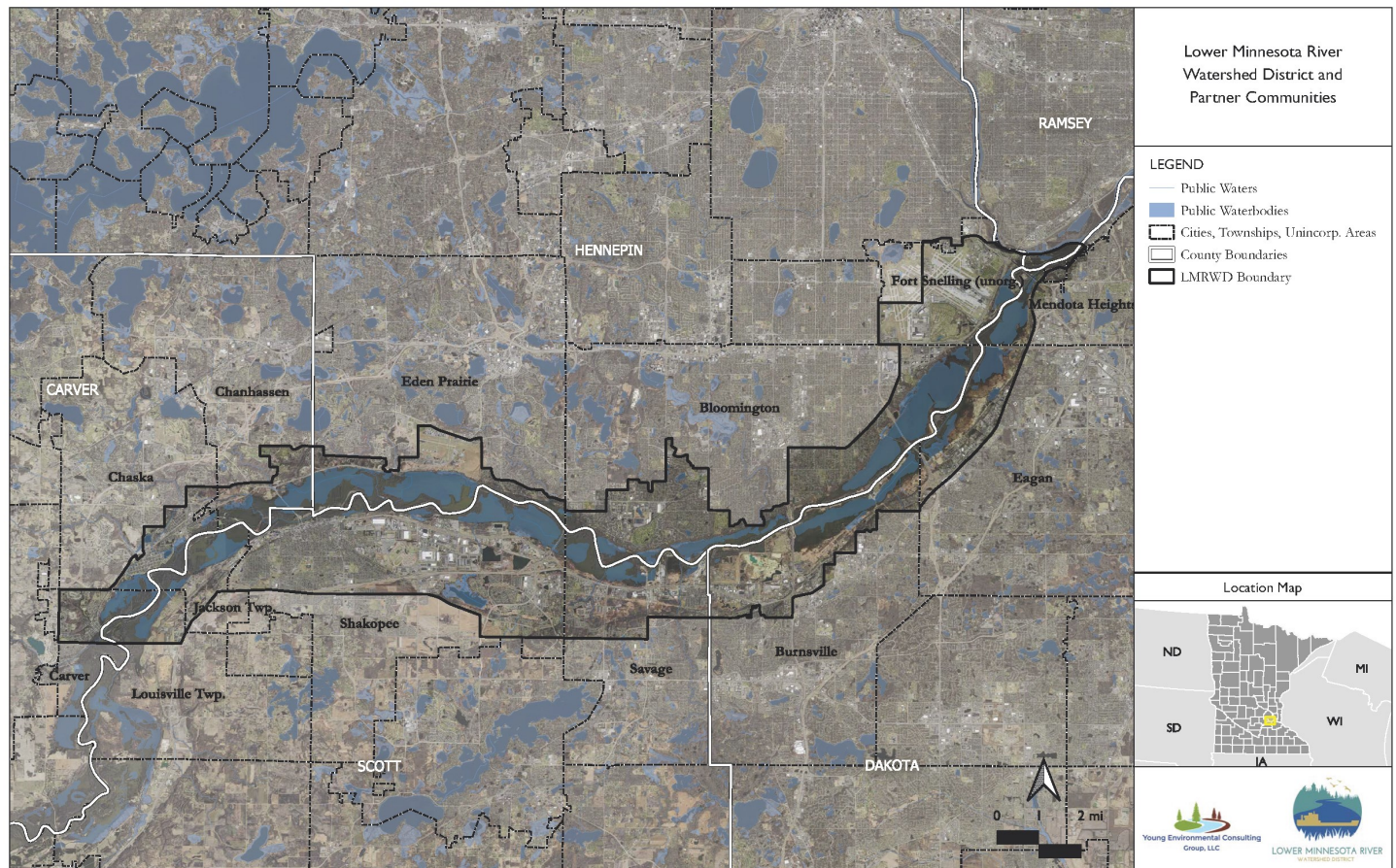
Watersheds can be small draining to a local pond or creek or large draining to a major river or ocean.

Everyone lives in a watershed.



The Lower Minnesota River Watershed District is approximately 80 sq. miles and includes portions of Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Scott Counties. It begins at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi River and continues 32 miles upstream to the city of Carver, including the bluffs on either side.

A large component of the central portion of the District is within the 100-year flood plain and the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.





LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER  
WATERSHED DISTRICT



Photo: The Spruce / Adrienne Legault



Photo: Joshua J Cotten / Unsplash



Photo: Gardening Know How / Andrey Nikitin

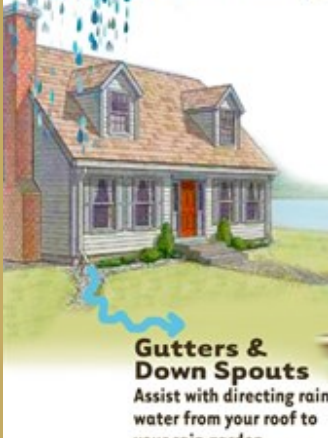
# Rain Gardens

A rain garden is a shallow depression that collects water from roofs, lawns, patios, sidewalks, and driveways. The water is held temporarily, so it can slowly filter into the ground instead of washing into the storm sewer.

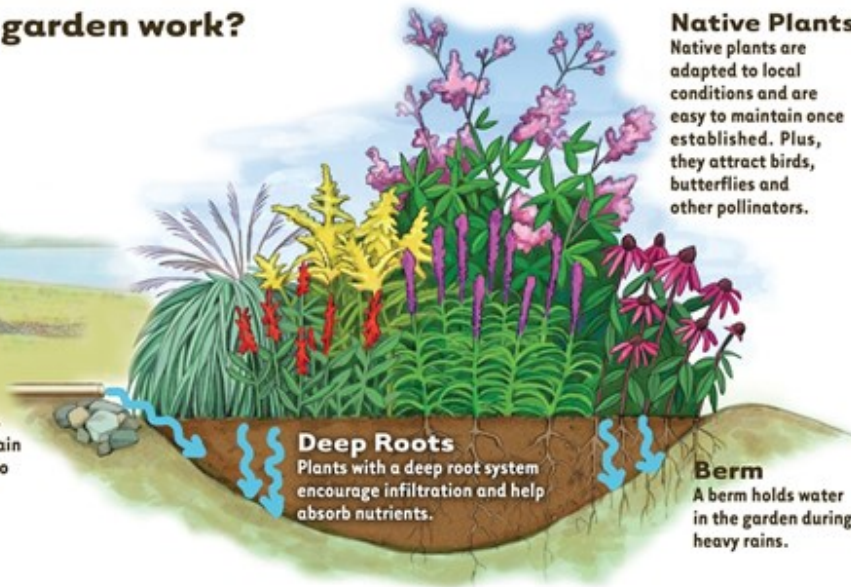
Water that runs off hard surfaces, like roofs and driveways, can pick up pollution and carry it untreated to our local lakes, streams, and rivers. Rain gardens remove pollutants like fertilizer, sediment, and chemicals before they enter our nearby water.

Rain gardens are planted with deep-rooted flowers, grasses, and shrubs. These plants help filter and clean water.

## How does a rain garden work?



**Gutters & Down Spouts**  
Assist with directing rain water from your roof to your rain garden.



**Native Plants**  
Native plants are adapted to local conditions and are easy to maintain once established. Plus, they attract birds, butterflies and other pollinators.

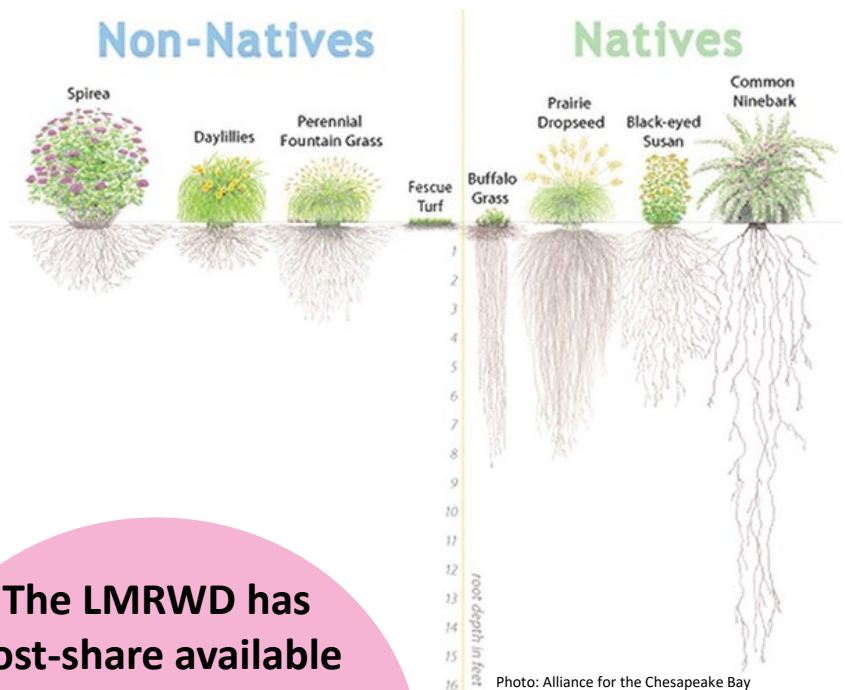
**Deep Roots**  
Plants with a deep root system encourage infiltration and help absorb nutrients.

**Berm**  
A berm holds water in the garden during heavy rains.

# Native Plants

A native plant is one that occurred naturally in a particular area without human interaction. Native plants do well in the soils and climate of their original location.

Because native plants are best suited for the environment they originated in, they typically need less water and pesticides. Their deep roots infiltrate water, maintain healthy soils, and reduce soil erosion.



**The LMRWD has cost-share available for rain and native garden projects. Contact the LMRWD for more information!**



The LMRWD is a local, special-purpose unit of government that works to solve and prevent water-related issues. Visit our website and follow us on social media!



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Photo: FCMP Outdoor

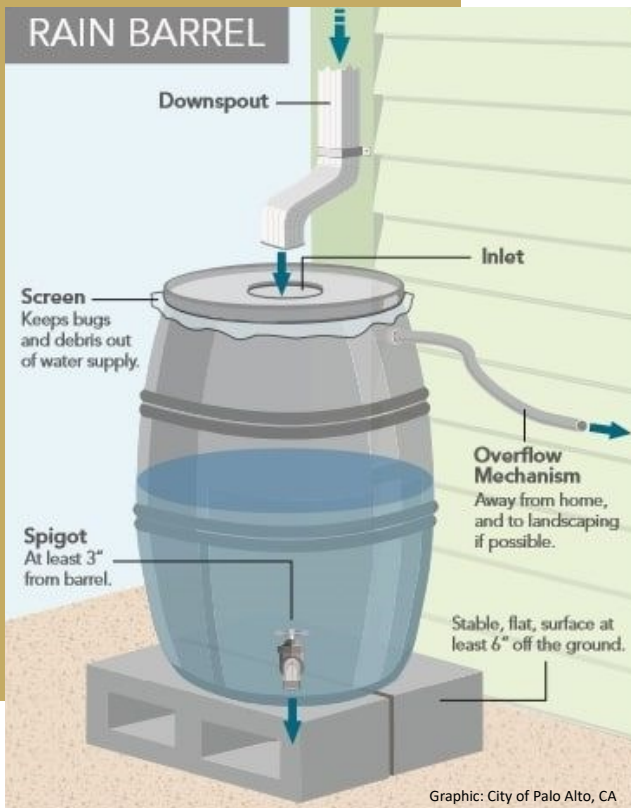


Photo: Shain Review

# Rain Barrels

A rain barrel is a system that collects and stores rainwater from your roof. A rain barrel will save money and water by collecting and using water that would otherwise be lost to runoff and diverted to storm drains. This effective and low-tech conservation tool provides a free source of water for your flowers, shrubs, trees, and gardens. When you use a rain barrel for your outdoor watering needs you reduce the demand on clean drinking water. Rain barrels also help reduce and slow the flow of runoff during storms.

A rain barrel is typically a 55-gallon drum and includes a screen, an overflow pipe, and a spigot near the bottom of the barrel. Rain barrels are often made of plastic, metal, or wood.



## Anatomy of a Rain Barrel

**Downspouts** carry water from the gutters to the rain barrel for storage.

Water enters the rain barrel through the **inlet**.

The **screen** of the rain barrel keeps debris and insects out of the water supply.

The **overflow mechanism** releases excess rainwater. It should direct rainwater into pervious surfaces like gardens for irrigation or can be connected to adjacent rain barrels.

The **spigot** allows access to the water stored in the barrel.

Our friends at MWMO have more information on rain barrels on their [website](#).

# Rain Barrel Basics

## Installation

If you have gutters and downspouts you can either:

- cut your downspout so water pours directly into your barrel or,
- install a diversion piece that directs water to the barrel while keeping your downspout in place. Diverters can often be found at your local hardware store.

If you don't have gutters and downspouts you can still direct water into a rain barrel. You can place your rain barrel under the roof's drip line or use a rain chain that hangs from the roof edge and into your barrel.

## Maintenance

- Inspect the inlet area occasionally to remove debris, algae growth, or any other obstruction from the surface.
- Clear downspouts, roof gutters, screens, overflow outlets, and filters on your barrel in the spring and fall to prevent clogging.
- Disconnect and empty your rain barrel once frost occurs at night. Freezing water may crack your rain barrel.

**The LMRWD has cost-share available for rain barrel projects. Contact the LMRWD for more information!**

- Once a year, clean any debris or buildup that may have accumulated inside your rain barrel with a non-toxic cleaner.
- Repair leaks or holes immediately.



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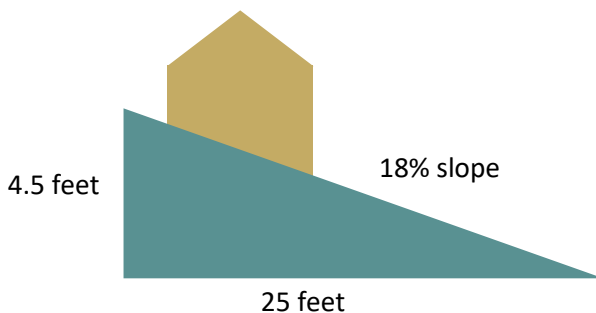
## How do I manage my vegetation on steep slopes? A guide for residents

Our watershed is part of a diverse landscape, that has many environmentally sensitive areas, including steep slopes and bluffs, fens, wetlands, trout streams, and floodplains.

### *Does your property have steep slopes or bluffs?*

Steep slopes and bluffs are areas that may be affected by extreme erosion due to steep grade. They are common along the Minnesota River. Properties along steep slopes and bluffs offer unique scenery but, these appealing locations require special care to preserve.

In technical terms, according to the definition of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed, steep slopes are a natural topographic feature comprising average slopes of 18 percent or greater measured over a horizontal distance of 25 feet or more.



Steep slopes have a 4.5 foot vertical rise over a 25 foot horizontal run, or have an 18 percent slope.



### *Why should I be concerned?*

Development and vegetation removal along steep slopes and bluffs often results in erosion and slope failure. Altering the land how the water moves across it can increase your property's susceptibility to erosion and slope failure, creating a serious threat to your home and personal safety.

By properly taking care of vegetation on steep slopes and bluffs through removal of invasive and noxious plants as well as, maintenance, and planting, we can avoid these risks.



## Site Inventory

Before selecting the means and methods for managing your project, you should account for both the vegetation and site features. The best method for achieving this is to walk the area and note the following:

- What is the **existing vegetation**? What types of plants are on the site? Are they native or invasive?
- Are there **noxious weeds** on the site? Noxious weeds lower the quality of our natural resources and can pose a health risk. Consult the [Minnesota Department of Agriculture](#) for information on management.
- What are the **landscape** features of the site? Are there slopes, structures, hazards, adjacent land uses, or other features to be aware of?
- Are there **sensitive landscape features** on the site that are unique, rare, or that require special consideration, such as, trout streams, fens, wetlands, slopes, floodplain, or other features?

## Vegetation Removal

If you plan to remove vegetation, there are several approaches to choose from that may suit your site.

**Cutting** is best for woody plants, and using a hand saws allows the trees to fall more slowly. There are multiple methods available, and cutting can occur throughout most of the year. Be aware that plants often resprout from stumps, and it can be hazardous to cut large trees without proper training.

**Pesticides** are best for most plants. They are effective but can be hazardous without proper handling. You can potentially damage desirable plants, and sensitive features need to be taken into consideration.

A **combination** of both methods, by applying herbicide shortly after cutting, reduces the chances of regrowth.



## Adding Vegetation

The methods for incorporating vegetation vary in the amount of time and resources they require.

**No action or natural revegetation** is best for large areas with a desired seedbank. This is inexpensive and requires little effort; however, results will be uncertain.

**Seeding** is best for establishing a new plant community and can be inexpensive. There are many options for applying seed, but it can be labor intensive.

**Planting** is best for introducing new, larger plants and dealing with smaller areas or inter-planting. There is a high survival rate with planting, but it can be expensive and labor intensive for large areas.

All revegetation methods should incorporate **site stabilization** techniques. Soil stability helps ensure seedling growth by creating a site more resilient to weathering and disturbances. There are many options: natural litter, cover crops, mulch, and erosion.

Contact your city government or the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District for more resources and information at [info@lowermriverwd.org](mailto:info@lowermriverwd.org).