



-2025-
ANNUAL REPORT



Roseau Lake Project

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2025 DISTRICT INFORMATION

OFFICE INFORMATION

The Roseau River Watershed District (RRWD) office is located at 714 6th Street SW, Roseau, MN 56751. The office phone number is (218) 463-0313, and the office e-mail address is Tawni@roseauriverwd.com.

In 2025, the Board held regular business meetings on the first Thursday of each month at 8:00 a.m. (April – Dec.) and 12:00 p.m. (Jan. – March). All the meetings held by the Roseau River Watershed District are open to the public.

BOARD OF MANAGERS

A Board of Managers governs the Roseau River Watershed District. The Board has five managers; four of which are appointed by the Roseau County Board of Commissioners and one appointed by the Kittson County Board of Commissioners. The 2025 members were:

Chairman - Carter Diesen 40141 160 th St Wannaska, MN 56751	Vice Chairman - James Johnson 37232 240 th St Roseau, MN 56751
Secretary - LaVerne Voll 35572 520 th Ave Salol, MN 56756	Treasurer - Jason Braaten 30957 340 th St Badger, MN 56751
Manager - Cody Schmalz 4529 400 th Street Lancaster, MN 56756	

EMPLOYEES AND CONSULTANTS

The district has three full-time employees: an Administrator, a Watershed Technician, and a Watershed Assistant. Citizens are encouraged to contact the staff or managers at any time with suggestions or concerns.

Administrator - Tracy Halstensgard

Watershed Technician - Blaine Broten

Watershed Assistant - Tawni Wensloff

Attorney - Michelle Moren, Roseau, MN

Accounting Firm - Brady Martz, Thief River Falls, MN

ESTABLISHMENT

The Roseau River Drainage and Conservancy District, having been established by Order of the District Court, Roseau County, dated August 13, 1920, under the provisions of Chapter 13, Laws of 1919, Special Session. In 1963, the Governing Body of the Roseau River Drainage and Conservancy District petitioned the District Court, Roseau County as authorized in Minnesota Statutes, 112.74 for the right to operate and exercise all the rights and authority contained in Sections 112.34 - 112.83 of Minnesota Statutes. The Court, having heard the evidence adduced by the petitioners in favor of granting their petition, did order on June 17, 1963 that from and after this date the, the Roseau River Drainage and Conservancy District and its Governing Board shall operate under and exercise all the rights and authority contained in Section 112.34 - 112.83 of Minnesota Statutes, known as the "Minnesota Watershed Act", and shall hereafter be a Watershed District in accordance with the terms and provisions of the said "Minnesota Watershed Act", and the County Board of Commissioners of Roseau and Kittson Counties having petitioned the Minnesota Water Resource Board on November 20, 1963, asking for a change in boundary, for a change in name of said District to Roseau River Watershed District, and to designate a place of business for the Watershed District, pursuant to the provisions of Minnesota Laws of 1955, Chapter 799, as amended, and the Minnesota Water Resource Board having held a hearing on February 19, 1964 in Roseau did order on March 18, 1964, the change in name of the Roseau River Drainage and Conservancy District to the Roseau River Watershed District, the City of Roseau to be the place of business of the Roseau River Watershed District, and did define the District's boundary.

WATERSHED PLANNING

The board of managers initially adopted an Overall Plan for the RRWD on August 18, 1964, and was approved by the Minnesota Water Resource Board on April 20, 1965. In June 2004, the Board of Managers approved an update of the Overall Plan. An amendment to the plan was adopted in June of 2020. In 2021, the District entered into the One Watershed One Plan process with the Roseau County SWCD and Roseau County. This planning process was funded through a Board of Water & Soil Resources grant. The Roseau River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan was approved by the BWSR Board on April 26, 2023. The RRCWMP is available at the following website: <https://www.roseauriverjpb.org/theplan>

MISSION STATEMENT

The Roseau River Watershed District (RRWD) is committed to a leadership role in protecting, improving, and managing the surface waters and affiliated groundwater resources within the District, including their relationship to the ecosystem of which they are an integral part, through regulation, capital projects, education, cooperative endeavors, and other programs based on sound science, innovative thinking, an informed and engaged constituency, and cost effective use of public funds.

DISTRICT ACTIVITY

Website

The RRWD Board contracts with Dot.com Connections to maintain the District's website. The website can be viewed at www.roseauriverwd.com. Minutes, project information, governing documents, and online permit applications are available on the website. The website is under continued development.

District Meetings

In 2025, the Board held 11 regular monthly meetings and 4 special meetings.

Non-District Meetings

Minnesota Watersheds – In December 2025, Technician Broten and Manager Johnson attended the Minnesota Watersheds Annual Conference held in Nisswa, MN. The RRWD is a member of MN Watersheds, which provides assistance on issues that affect watershed districts.

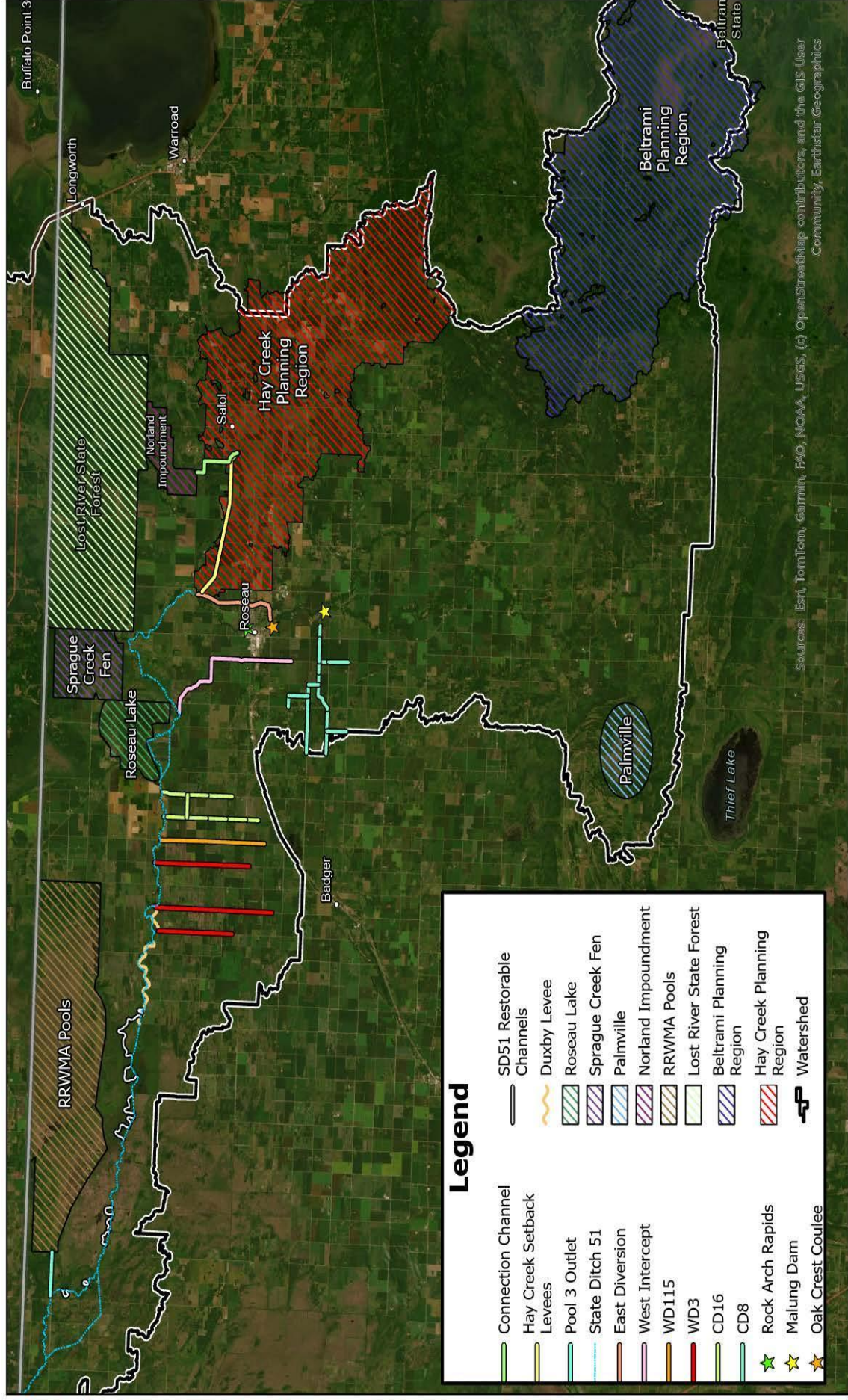
Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) - The Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) delegate in 2025 was Manager Jason Braaten. Manager LaVerne Voll served as the alternate delegate. Manager Braaten attended regular monthly meetings as well as various RRWMB committee meetings. The District participated in the Annual Conference sponsored by the RRWMB and the Flood Damage Reduction Work Group held in Moorhead, MN.

Roseau River International Watershed (RRIW) - The Roseau River International Watershed (RRIW) was created in 2000 with representation from both the United States (Minnesota) and Canada (Manitoba). The group continues to meet to address water related issues and concerns within the Roseau River Basin. The two RRWD board members delegated to represent the RRWD in 2025 were Managers LaVerne Voll and Cody Schmalz. Manager Braaten serves as an alternate.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) – The Citizens Advisory Committee is made up of RRWD residents who assist the board of managers on matters affecting the watershed district. The 2025 CAC meeting was held at the Roseau City Center on Wednesday, February 26th.

For a list of committee members, please contact the office or visit the RRWD website.

Existing Projects & Drainage Systems Map



RRWD Projects Map

Drawn by: BGB

PROGRAMS

Permits

In 2025, there were a total of 30 permit applications for the following activities: installation of culverts for field drainage and driveway accesses, ditch slope repair, agricultural tiling, and agricultural diking.

Roseau River Water Trail Plan

In 2017 the RRWD, along with community partners, initiated a planning process to map the Roseau River, improve accesses and amenities, and seek designation as a State Water Trail. In late 2017 a Stakeholder Group was formed. The mission of the group was as follows: The Roseau River Water Trail promotes enjoyment and conservation of natural, cultural, and historical resources of the Roseau River by encouraging responsible, high quality public access opportunities through partnerships and stakeholder advocacy.

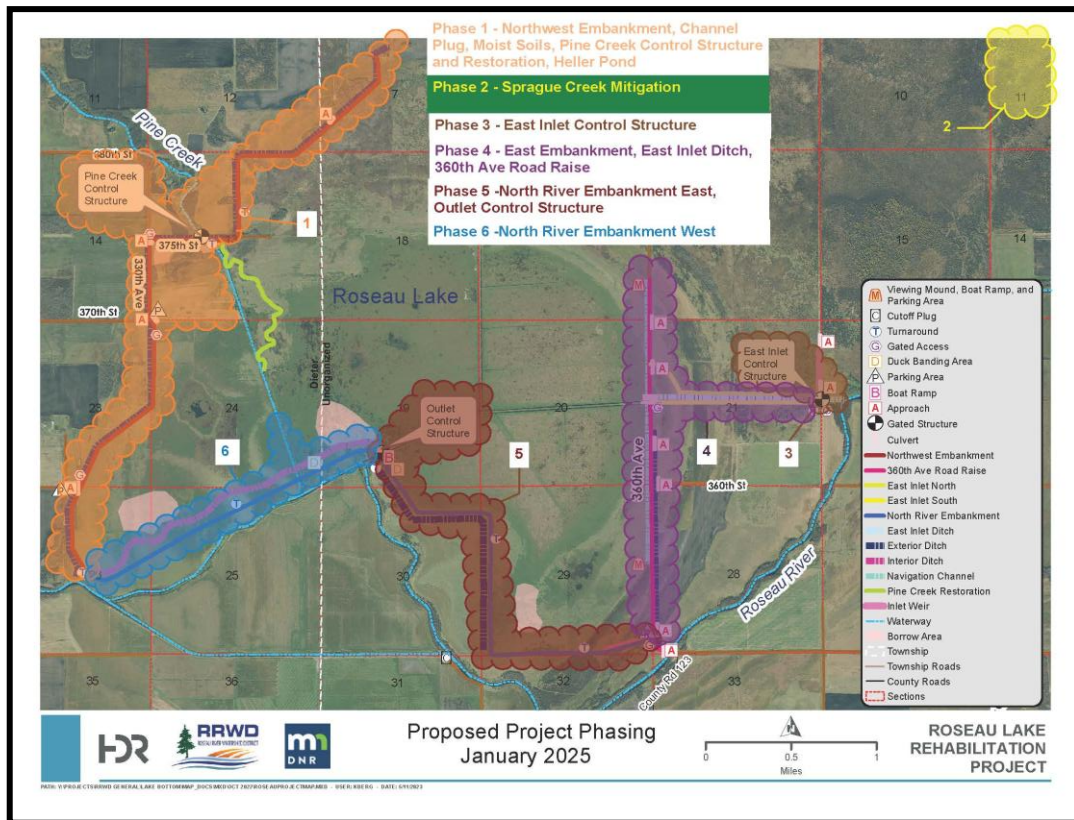
In 2018, a new boat dock and Kayak launch were installed at the Roseau City Park. The Stakeholder group also moved forward with drafting a Master Plan. Copies of the plan are available at the office or on the website at https://www.roseauriverwd.com/Project_Water_Trail.html



In 2021 the City Center Site was constructed and paid for by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Parks and Trails Legacy fund through the City of Roseau. In 2022 the RRWD partnered with the City of Roseau on a Northwest Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails application to continue to obtain funding for additional trail sites and continue to work through this process, being approved as a Regional Park & Trail in 2023.

PROJECTS

Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project



The Roseau Lake basin has provided uncontrolled flood water storage, but over the years it has become evident that having the ability to control the timing of when the basin floods would be beneficial. Roseau Lake currently floods with “early water”, which diminishes or eliminates the available flood storage when the flood peak of the Roseau River moves through the area.

This is a multi-purpose project intended to provide the following benefits:

Flood Damage Reduction

- Provide more efficient flood storage.
- Provide flood damage reduction downstream by decreasing peak flows in Caribou.
- Manage storage and flow release in beneficial consideration of Red River peak flows.
- Provide flood damage reduction in agricultural areas upstream and south of the Big Swamp along the Roseau River in Moose, Soler, Dieter, and Pohlitz Townships.

Habitat Restoration

- Streamflow restoration
- Improve water level management on WMA lands to improve vegetation management.
- Enhance waterfowl, fish, and wildlife habitats.

Erosion Reduction

- Reduction in riverbank erosion and bank sloughing on the Roseau River.

Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project (cont.)

The status of the project at the end of 2025 is as follows:

Construction

- Phase 4 construction was completed in the fall of 2025. This phase included the east embankment/road raise with interior and exterior drainage channels, along with the 100' wide inlet channel. Phase 3 includes the 8-Bay inlet control structure which is planned to be installed in early summer 2026.

Funding

- A grant application was submitted to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council for “Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project - Phase III” to further project construction. The application was forwarded for consideration to the 2026 Legislative Session for \$3.505 million.



Sprague Creek Mitigation

Due to the wetland impacts resulting from the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation project, a site of considerable size was identified for compensatory mitigation. The Sprague Creek site was identified as an opportunity to provide a functional lift to a large complex of wetlands, extending from the former Roseau Lake Basin northeast into Manitoba, Canada.

The wetland types within the site include but are not limited to; Spring Fen, Shrub Carr, Wet Meadow, Conifer Swamp and Sedge Meadow. The site is dissected by three laterals of Judicial Ditch 61(JD61). The ditches serve as a conduit, conveying groundwater and surface water from the large expanse of peat lands located north of the basin. The goal of the project is restoration of hydrology by reconnecting severed surface and subsurface flows to mirror a pre-drainage hydrological regime. These hydrologic improvements will result in restoration of native vegetation in a large expanse of brushland, such that community dynamics will be restored to a large wetland complex.

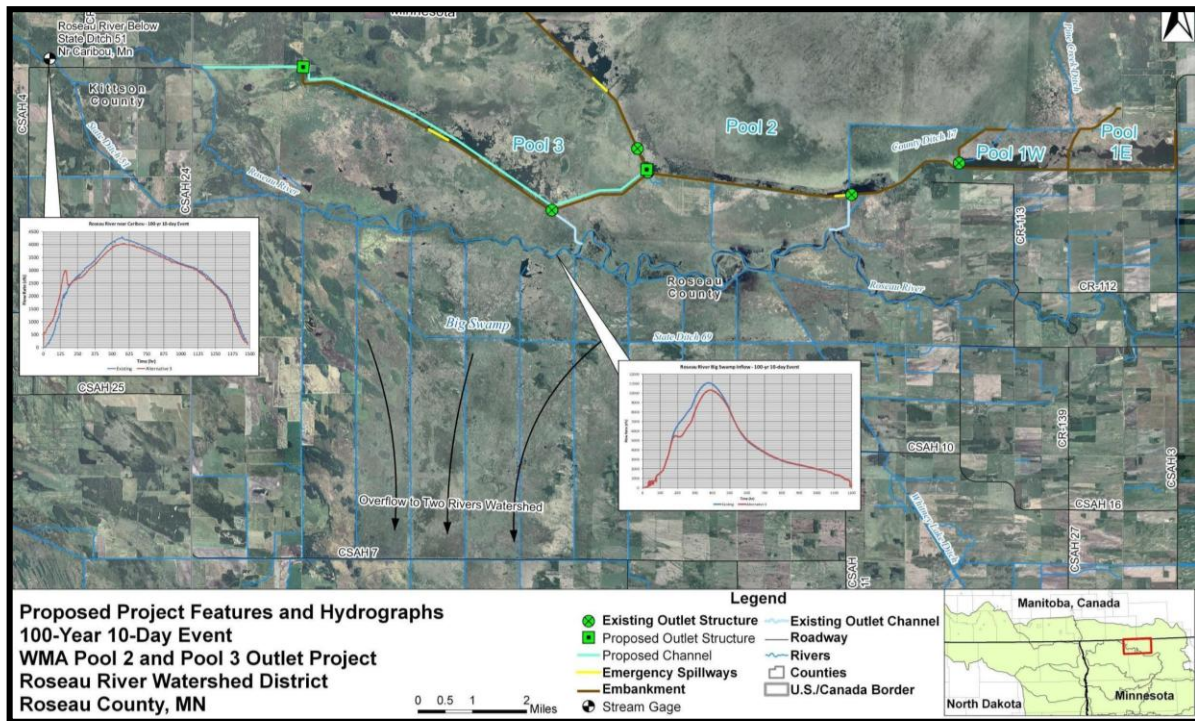


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The status of the project at the end of 2025 is as follows:

This component of the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project was completed in November 2025 by the contractor, Northern Harbor. The project included the filling in of abandoned laterals as well as installation of sheet pile diverters to help push flows across the landscape to restore historic hydrology to the area.

Roseau River Wildlife Management Area

Pool 3 Outlet Project



The Roseau River Wildlife Management Area (RRWMA) is located in northwestern Minnesota along the Canadian Border. This wildlife impoundment was constructed in 1952 & 1953. The stated purpose of the project was wildlife enhancement and flood control. The RRWMA project was modified in the late 1980's to extend its life and to increase its flood control benefits. This impoundment has provided many years of flood control benefits to the area. Over the years of operations, it has become evident that having the ability to transfer water between the pools to aid in flood control is beneficial. Experience has also been shown that being able to discharge large volumes of water, from the impoundment, before the Roseau River flood reaches this area, would decrease flood damage downstream on the Roseau River and Two Rivers.

Project Benefits:

Flood Damage Reduction (FDR)

- Replaced the failing control structure between Pools 2 & 3.
- Improve water level management for vegetation management.
- Control pool bounce to improve nesting success.
- Provide more efficient flood storage and improve the timing of 8,000 A-F of flood storage in the RRWMA
- Provide FDR downstream at Caribou.
- Manage storage and flow release in beneficial consideration of Red River peak flows.
- Provide FDR in agricultural areas upstream and south of the Big Swamp along the Roseau River in Moose, Soler, Dieter and Pohlitz Township.

Habitat Restoration

- Streamflow augmentation, improved dissolved oxygen levels, enhanced fish habitat, improved water management capability

Erosion Reduction

- Reduction in riverbank erosion and bank sloughing on the Roseau River.

Roseau River Wildlife Management Area

Pool 3 Outlet Project (cont.)

Partners: Red River Watershed Management Board, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and State of Minnesota Flood Damage Reduction Program.

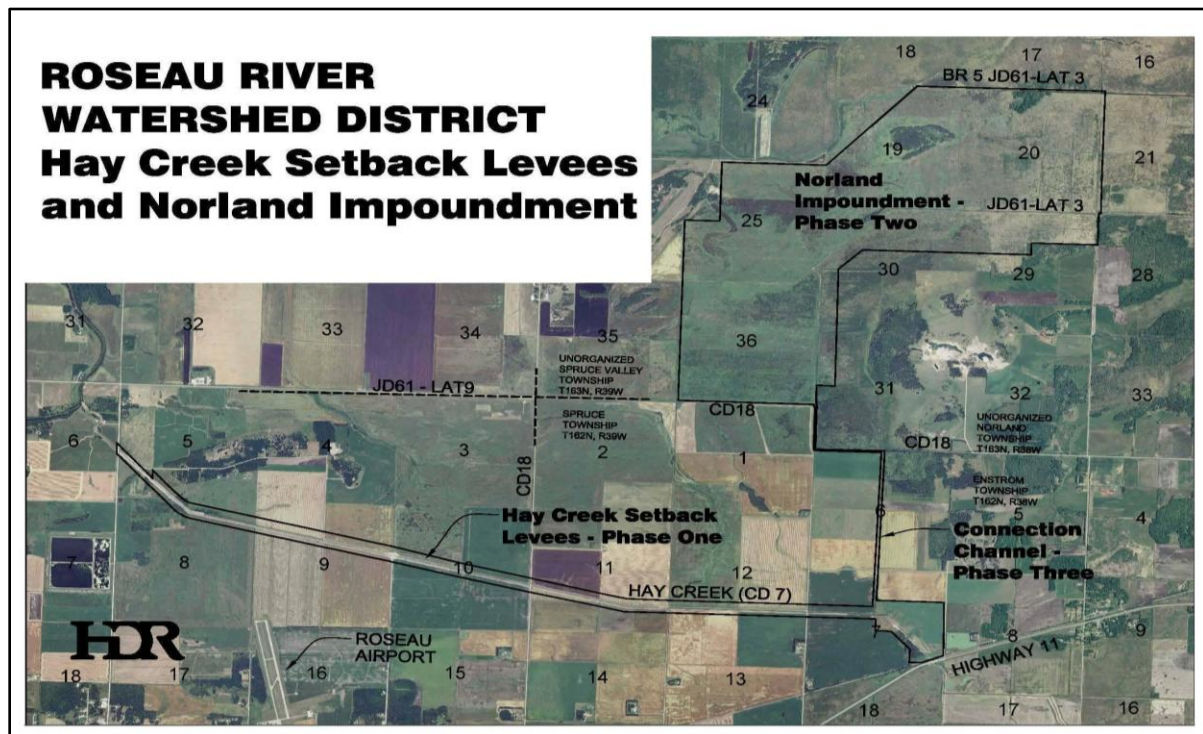
Status: Construction was completed in 2018. In the fall of 2019, initial operation was triggered during flood conditions



The status of the project at the end of 2025 is as follows:

Regular maintenance activities were performed by the DNR in accordance with the Maintenance Plan.

Hay Creek-Norland



The project area includes the lower portion of the Hay Creek watershed and adjacent 37 square mile Norland sub-basin. Hay Creek drains into the Roseau River immediately downstream from the City of Roseau. The project includes three features: 7-mile corridor restoration and floodway enclosed by setback levees, an off-channel impoundment site, and a connection channel. This site provides a total of at least 9,500 acre-feet of gated and un-gated runoff storage.

Partners: Red River Watershed Management Board and State of Minnesota Flood Damage Reduction Program

The status of the project at the end of 2025 is as follows:

Haying and mowing activities are part of the ongoing maintenance.



Palmville Flood Damage Reduction and Fen Restoration Project

The Palmville Fen, a major wetland area, covers approximately three-thousand acres located in the upper watershed of the South Fork of the Roseau River. Most of the land, owned and managed by MnDNR, is known as the Palmville Wildlife Management Area. The fen had been degraded by the construction of judicial and county ditch systems over the past century. At the time of the project's inception, nearly all the water entering from the 33 square mile drainage area came in from an existing channel of the Judicial Ditch 63 (JD 63), draining the wetland area, and then continuing to the South Fork of the Roseau River.

Partners: Red River Watershed Management Board, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and State of Minnesota Flood Damage Reduction Program

The status of the project at the end of 2025 is as follows:

The project is operational and functioning as designed. In 2025, mowing and regular structure maintenance took place.



Oak Crest Coulee



The RRWD partnered with the City of Roseau, Roseau SWCD, and Oak Crest Golf Course to address phosphorus and sediment issues in a coulee that drains some agricultural and urban land within the City of Roseau. The project goals were to reduce sediment (14 tons/year) and phosphorus (100 lbs./year) discharge into the Roseau River, replace the existing fixed weir with a gated weir to manage water levels for maintenance and fall drawdown, and to meet the requirements for the stormwater permit for the City of Roseau's expansion project(s). Phase I of the project addressed stormwater runoff, and Phase II addressed sediment and phosphorus removal. Construction took place in 2024.

Partners: City of Roseau, Oak Crest Golf Course, Roseau SWCD, BWSR Clean Water Fund, RRWMB, and RRWD

The status of the project at the end of 2025 is as follows:

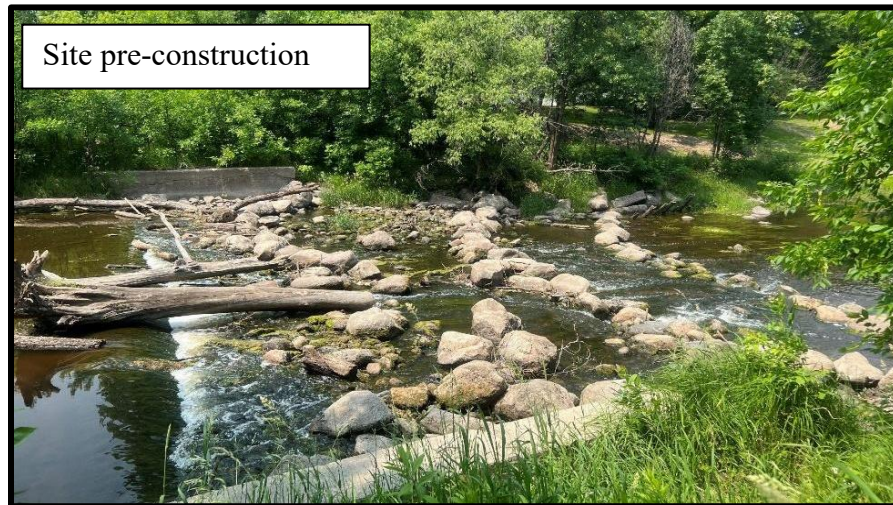
Oak Crest Golf Course and the City of Roseau are responsible for regular maintenance. The RRWD and the Roseau River Joint Powers Board perform inspections to insure compliance with Clean Water activities.

Roseau River Arch Rapids

One of the Red River Basin's earliest rock arch rapids is located within the City of Roseau. The Roseau River Rock Arch Rapids is an enhancement of rock rapids located at the site of a former low-head dam north of Highway 11. The original enhancement project for 2001 has since failed and no longer functions as designed.

A Joint Powers Agreement between the RRWD and the MnDNR allowed the rock arch rapids to be redesigned in order to restore fish passage to improve native species populations and to restore connectivity along the Roseau River. Project partners have been systematically improving public recreation within the river corridor, and the rock arch rapids provide opportunities for fishing and paddling.

In late 2022, the Roseau River Arch Rapids project was awarded a Conservation Partners Legacy Grant through the division of MnDNR Fish and Wildlife. The project was finished in the early fall of 2023.



Roseau River Arch
Rapids Site Post
Construction



The status of the project at the end of 2025 is as follows:

The site is monitored and no repair or maintenance were required in 2025.

Lost River State Forest Peatland Restoration - Phase I

Phase I of the Lost River State Forest Peatland Restoration will reconnect the upper 12.5 square miles of sloped peatlands along the Lost River, and lower reach consisting of 4.6 square miles of sloped peatland. Current hydrology is diverted via JD 61 and the Norland Forest Road. The project aims to restore hydrology throughout the peatland complex where drainage impacts have occurred.

Phase I of this project incorporates a water control structure to be added concurrently with the Norland Forest Road improvement. The control structure will be in-line with the centerline flow path of the Lost River. The site was identified as a priority due to its critical location along the main flow path within the peatland and planned road improvements.

The Lost River State Forest Peatland Restoration - Phase I was awarded a Conservation Partners Legacy Grant through the division of MNDNR Fish and Wildlife. Construction was completed in 2023 with final inspection and payment completed in 2024.

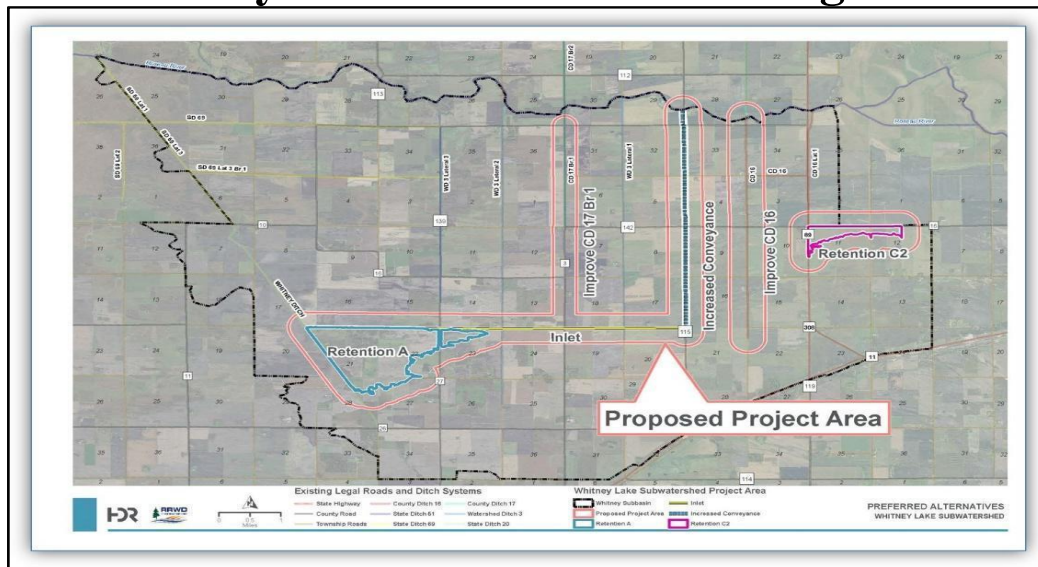


Lost River State Forest – Centerline Box culverts

The status of the project at the end of 2025 is as follows:

The site is monitored and no repair or maintenance were required in 2025.

Whitney Lake Watershed Management



Agricultural producers in the Whitney Lake sub watershed suffer frequent (every 1-2 years) inundation from minor events in both the spring and summer, causing crop loss and/or damage. The Project Team has identified problem areas, defined strategic solutions, and provided planning guidance to implement construction of retention and drainage projects. The goal is to construct a multi-purpose water management project that will meet the purpose and needs identified, meet permitting requirements, and be economically feasible. The Roseau River Watershed District is working to secure funding for the project. The District will utilize the Project Team process as identified in the *Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group Agreement*.

Project Benefits:

Flood Damage Reduction

- Reduce agricultural and private land damages
- Reduce the risk of road damage

Flood Storage

- Utilize two retention sites to reduce peak flows
- Contribute to regional goal of reducing peak flows to the Red River

Erosion Reduction

- Improve the stability of water courses
- Reduce sediment and nutrient loading from upland sources
- Improve water quality
- Positive impact on fish and wildlife

The status of the project at the end of 2025 is as follows:

The project is currently on hold as a result of a lack of funding and landowner interest.

Roseau River Restoration Project

Description/Location: The proposed restoration reach lies largely within the DNR Wildlife Management Area in Roseau County, MN. This reach of the river was channelized by the construction of State Ditch 51(SD51) which reduced the length of the river, increased its slope, and caused the river to be disconnected from its floodplain.



Historic oxbows remain intact, harbor diverse fish communities, and provide habitat for spawning and foraging when accessible during periods of high water. The restoration project will rehabilitate and reconnect the historic river channel and reestablish the natural channel profile and floodplain allowing a sustainable channel to meander as well as reconnect critical fish habitat to the main channel.

PROJECT GOALS:

Channel Restoration

- Reconnect historic river channel
- Reestablish natural channel and floodplain

Enhance Wildlife Habit

- Reconnect oxbows to provide crucial spawning and foraging habitat for fish
- Increase the amount of large river habitat within the watershed
- Restore riparian habitat

Erosion Reduction

- Improve bank stability
- Reduce sedimentation within the channel

The status of the project at the end of 2025 is as follows:

The project is currently on hold as a result of a lack of funding and landowner interest.

DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

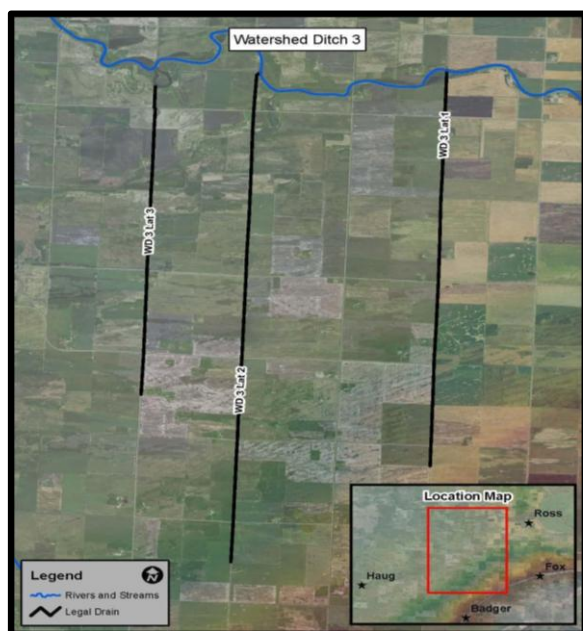
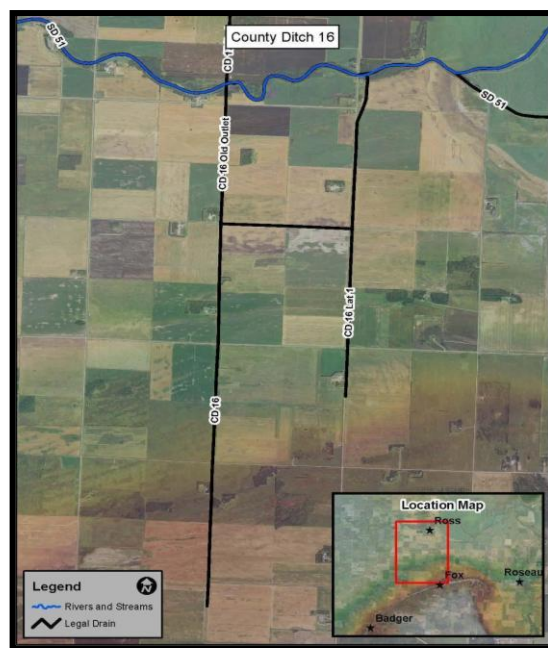
The Roseau River Watershed District is the Ditch Authority for the following systems:

Roseau County Ditch No. 16 (CD16)

Roseau County Ditch No. 16 (CD16) is located on the west side of Sections 34 and 27 in Dieter Township and drains lands in Dieter and Ross Townships. CD16 is in Dieter and Ross Townships and was turned over for administration and management to the Roseau River Watershed District.

In 2019 the District received an Improvement Petition for this system. Construction on the improvements was completed in October of 2022. In conjunction with the CD 16 Improvement Project, 27 sites were identified as contributing 84 tons of sediment annually into SD 51 in accordance with the PTMApp toolbar. Each of the sites constructed utilized Minnesota Clean Water Funds. They all consist of grade stabilization structures, which prevent head cutting and sediment deposition into the river. The final payment hearing was held in January 2023.

Current condition: 2025 inspection showed no repair was needed and normal maintenance was performed. Vegetation management is ongoing.



Watershed Ditch No. 3 (WD3)

Constructed in the 1970's, this ditch system consists of three laterals that drain land in Ross, Moose, Dieter, and Pohlitz Townships. Each lateral flows north and outlets into SD 51 (Roseau River).

Current condition: 2025 inspection showed various areas of slope instability as well as culverts nearing the end of their lifespan. The RRWD has been systematically replacing prioritized culverts as funding allows. The Board also authorized HDR Engineering to design a repair plan for the outlet of Lateral 2 that would allow for better flow into SD 51, causing less erosion. Vegetation management is ongoing.

State Ditch No. 51 (SD51) aka - Roseau River

Originally established by the State of Minnesota, State Ditch No. 51 (SD51) consisted of 10 river cutoffs constructed in the 1906-1907-time frame. From 1914 to 1918, the ditch was improved when the State of Minnesota dug the river channel from the Canadian border to and around the Roseau Lakebed. That expansion paralleled Cutoff Number 10 in Kittson County and followed the other cutoffs constructed in 1906 and 1907. In 1988, SD51 was expanded when the Roseau County Board of Commissioners turned over the Roseau River and Roseau Lake Bottom portions of Judicial Ditch No. 61 (JD61) and State Ditch No. 37 (SD37) to the Roseau River Watershed District. Under Minnesota Statute Authority, these ditches were combined with SD51 at a hearing conducted on October 11, 1988, and continued and concluded on November 1, 1988. The redetermination of benefits process found more than 9 million dollars in ditch benefits.

Various stabilization projects have taken place in recent years funded by the State of Minnesota Clean Water Fund grants through the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). These projects have removed sediment from the channel and installed stabilization structures at locations where other ditch systems enter SD51.

In 2023, the District also installed a weir in Cut-off #1 as part of the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project. The weir was installed to direct base flows through the historic channel, restoring approximately 3.17 miles of river habitat.



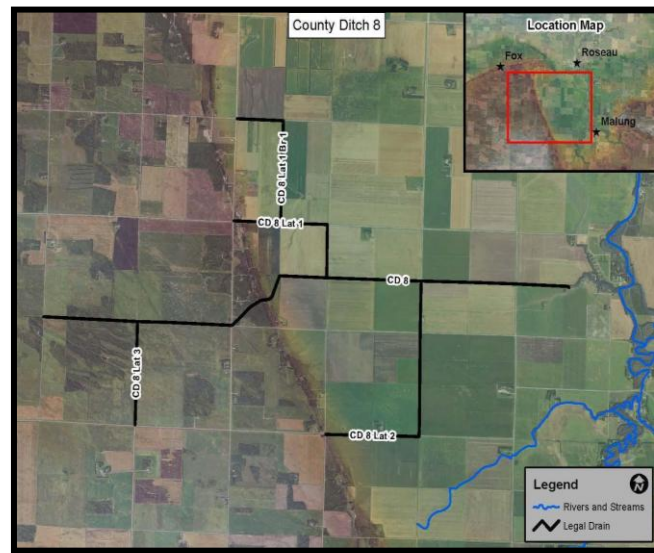
As water quality improvement, the District installed three side-water inlets in Cut-off #1 in 2023.

Current condition: There are areas with slope failures and the Board reviews sites for practicality of repair considering this is a river system. In 2025, a contractor was hired to removed debris and leaning trees in accordance MN DNR requirements.

Roseau County Ditch No. 8 (CD8)

This ditch, located in Jadis and Stafford Townships, was turned over for administration and management to the Watershed District in the 1960's.

Current condition: In 2025, the District completed repair to the ditch slope at two sites and replaced several failing culverts. Riprap was placed east of the box culvert under HWY 89; to prevent future erosion. The District also hired a contractor to remove dead trees and brush downstream of the outlet which is meant to improve the efficiency of the ditch system. Vegetation management is ongoing.



CD8 Clearing of dead trees and brush to improve drainage at the outlet.

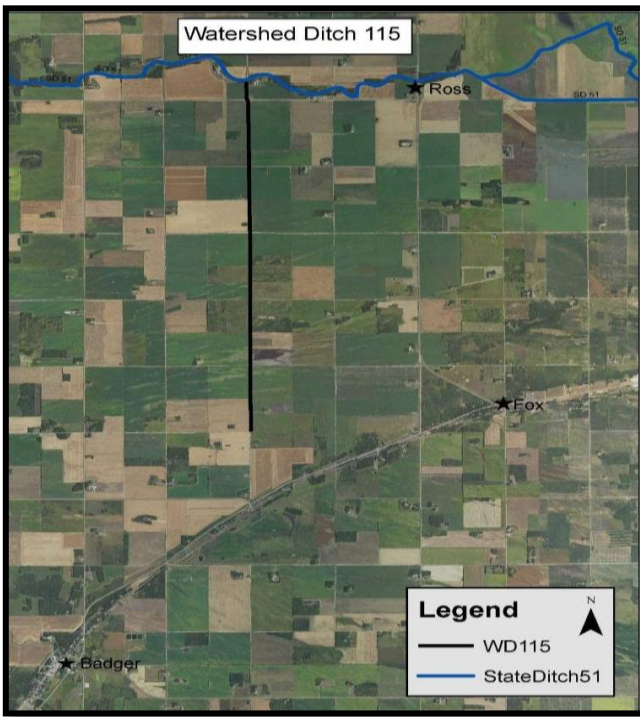
CD8 Installed riprap armoring at the centerline box culvert under HWY 89.



Watershed Ditch No. 115 (WD115) – originally named WD4

WD 115 is a 5.3 mile ditch located in Ross and Dieter Townships and has an approximate drainage area of 5.7 square miles. Twenty-nine surface water inlets (SWI) and one rock grade control structure were constructed as the water quality component of the project. Construction was completed in 2023.

Current condition: 2025 inspection revealed no issues with the system. Vegetation management is ongoing.



FINANCIAL

Budget: The budget adopted at the September 2024 meeting for 2025 locally funded expenditure is as follows:

Following discussion, a motion was made by Manager Voll seconded by Manager Braaten to approve the proposed 2025 budget. Motion carried unanimously.

2025 Administrative Budget:

Salaries & Benefits	\$	147,000.00
Managers per diem and expenses	\$	14,000.00
Dues & registrations	\$	5,000.00
Engineering	\$	7,600.00
Legal & other professional services	\$	20,000.00
Real estate taxes	\$	9,000.00
Rent & utilities	\$	4,650.00
Insurance	\$	6,000.00
Telephone & internet	\$	2,750.00
Office supplies & miscellaneous	\$	20,000.00
Cap. Outlay & building maintenance	\$	2,000.00
Stream gaging	\$	12,000.00
RRWD projects / maintenance	\$	-
Programs & planning	\$	-
	\$	250,000.00

Levys:

A motion was made by Manager Braaten, seconded by Manager Diesen to adopt the General Administration Levy Resolution setting the Administration levy at \$300,000.00. The motion carried.

After a motion by Manager Voll, seconded by Manager Johnson, the board adopted the following ditch levies.

Ditch system levies for the year 2025:

Watershed Ditch #3	25 %
County Ditch #8	20 %
County Ditch #16	0.5%
Watershed Ditch #115	0.5%
West Intercept (City of Roseau)	\$2,500 (set amount)
State Ditch #51	1% on redetermined benefits

After a motion by Manager Braaten, seconded by Manager Diesen, the board adopted the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) levy and ad valorem tax in the amount of .0003627 percent of the estimated market value of all taxable property within this district and within the counties set forth in Chapter 162, 1976 Session Laws. Half of the proceeds of this levy will be sent to the RRWMB, half remaining with the RRWD as Construction Funds.

2025 Audit Report