

NATURAL RESOURCES

The District has long had programs in place to facilitate natural resource protection and restoration. However, implementation has been slow due, in part, to non-existent or outdated plans and limited coordination with Cities. To improve and guide implementation, SWWD intends to pursue several natural resource planning efforts during the life of this WMP. Highest priority items include revisions to the District's existing greenway plan, completion of a ravine survey and assessment, and update of the District's Wetland inventory. Subsequent planning efforts will include evaluation of aquatic habitat of District resources and in-lake restoration plans.

The District's existing Greenway Plan was completed in 2000. While that plan remains valuable, it was completed prior to expansion of the District. Revision of the plan will expand existing identified corridors to the full District in cooperation with Cities and Washington County parks. The planning effort will also include substantial coordination with Cities and Washington County to identify approaches to establishing and protecting identified corridors.

Prior watershed inventory and modeling work has shown that ravine erosion (as opposed to bed or bank erosion) is a significant contributor to known sediment and nutrient levels in the District's water resources. Response to stabilize ravines is well established and relatively inexpensive. However, to date, there is little planning completed to guide that response. In partnership with MnDNR and Washington Conservation District, SWWD will complete a ravine inventory, rank the inventoried ravines based on erosion potential and downstream impact, and document standard stabilization practices to be used. Focus of this planning effort will be watersheds drained by natural streams and those with direct drainage to the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers. Ravines in SWWD's lake watersheds will be assessed as part of lake management planning.

SWWD completed a wetland inventory and management plan prior to expanding into the East Mississippi and Lower St. Croix management units. That inventory requires update to include changes over the past decade and areas now within SWWD jurisdiction.

Several of SWWD's completed lake management plans call for reductions of in-lake nutrient loading. To facilitate those reductions, SWWD intends to implement more extensive in-lake restoration efforts to improve aquatic habitat and foster more balanced fish and plant communities. SWWD will complete an aquatic habitat restoration plan to establish implementation tools to address in-lake deficiencies.