

History of Community Blue 2012-2014

Thanks to the Minnesota Clean Water Fund and Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources the "Community Blue": VLAWMO Partner Conservation Program awarded grants like never before in hopes of reaching out to citizen-driven efforts to improve our troubled ecosystems.

This was a unique and innovative program with a focus on engaging citizens, and building community partnerships through 7 highly visible, publically accessible restoration projects that beautified community spaces and improved water quality. Installed projects will be utilized in future years for hands on environmental education and community outreach programs. Grants covered 100% of the cost for materials, design, and installation up to \$20,000. A financial match is not required, but it did increase chances of receiving a Community Blue grant.

Who was Eligible?

The grant reached out to those who normally would not have access to such funds, or would not be able to install these restoration projects without considerable financial assistance. Groups eligible for the Community Blue program include: schools, non-profits, community and service groups, faith organizations, and certain small businesses. Local government agencies that partner with one of the groups listed above may also qualify. Individual homeowners do not qualify (please see VLAWMOs excellent Cost Share Program for these projects).

Why Did We This?

In addition to providing an entirely new type of community grant funding, improving water quality is a key goal of the Community Blue program. Specifically, Lambert Creek is a small creek that originates near Goose Lake and eventually discharges into Vadnais Lake. Vadnais Lake is the drinking water reservoir for the City of Saint Paul and surrounding communities. While not a highly visible water resource, Lambert Creek plays a vital role in channeling and directing storm water throughout the Watershed. Lambert Creek also runs through many wetland habitats that are home to a high diversity of wildlife species. Currently the creek is receiving far too much pollution from storm water containing high amounts of phosphorus, and E. coli. The Community Blue program goal hoped to capture almost 5.5 million gallons of storm water runoff annually, and reduce total phosphorus load into Lambert Creek by approximately 12.2 lbs/yr. For these reasons, all Community Blue projects must be located within the Lambert Creek subwatershed within VLAWMO boundaries. Portions of Gem Lake, Vadnais Heights, White Bear Lake, and White Bear Township all fall within this area.

To see all the Clean Water Fund stories for projects that have received Clean Water & Legacy funding, go to: <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/cleanwaterfund/stories/>