

## Excellence in conservation: 2017 MAWD Outstanding Employee

Phil Belfiori, District Administrator for the Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD), maintains a focus on outcomes for district projects, which mirrors the long-term view he and his team take with project development.

This approach has helped Phil position the district as an innovative leader and is one reason why Phil has been named the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) 2017 Outstanding Watershed District Employee of the year.

Phil has served as Rice Creek Watershed District Administrator for seven years. As District Administrator his duties include management of staff, program development and oversight, lead staff liaison for the Board of Managers, and budget development and implementation.

Phil has more than 23 years' of experience in watershed and water resource management, and he has used that background when coordinating RCWD projects and programs. Under his leadership, the District has shifted its focus to project implementation. He has prioritized financial stability, increased staff capacity, improved communication and collaboration with community partners, and increased responsiveness to residents.

His leadership and work have resulted in numerous positive outcomes for the district, including three years straight without an increase to the district's tax levy, increasing the staff capacity and efficiency in outreach, project management, and improved relationships with cities, counties, and residents in the surrounding area.

Key initiatives during Phil's tenure have included the Middle Rice Creek Restoration Project, the Bald Eagle Lake Restoration Project (Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts 2016 project of the year), and Long Lake Watershed Demonstration Project.

"Phil's commitment to the district's employees, board, and many partners in conservation are examples of what it takes to achieve conservation excellence in our state," BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke said. "He and his team have been both innovative and practical and we're proud to present him with this award."



John Jaschke, Executive Director BWSR and Phil Belfiori, RCWD, and the MAWD Outstanding District Employee Award for 2017.