



Restoring Wetlands in Anoka County

July 2014 Snapshots

Minnesota summers mean many things – fishing, swimming, and vacations at the cabin, to name just a few. Another sure sign of Minnesota summer are orange road construction signs. As you drive through those construction sites, have you ever thought about the impact those projects have on the local environment? State agencies have, and one of the roles that the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) plays is overseeing a wetland mitigation program that helps balance the state’s need for safe roads with its desire to protect the natural environment.



Andover residents gather at an Open House to learn about the wetland restoration project.

Wetland mitigation restores the lost ecological services of wetlands that are impacted during road construction. As wetlands are degraded, the local ecology suffers. Wetland restoration projects help prevent flooding, provide new wildlife habitat and protect water quality as compensation for wetlands impacted by road projects.

BWSR is partnering with the City of Andover in Anoka County on one such project, restoring wetland to an area that has been drained since 1931. The Woodland Creek Wetland Restoration Plan involves land that over the past 75 years has been home to agriculture, homes, and most recently a golf course that closed in 2008.

Recognizing the potential of the site for both wetland restoration and green space for residents, the City approached BWSR about working together on a restoration project. Using funds provided by the legislature, this state-local partnership is an effective means to meet multiple goals for both BWSR’s mitigation program and the City. This project is a rare opportunity for BWSR to restore a wetland in a highly urbanized area where it can offset wetland impacts due to Twin City metropolitan road construction projects. A concept plan has been developed that proposes to reverse the drainage, excavation and filling activities of the past by removing previously filled areas and filling previously excavated areas. A comprehensive vegetation establishment and management plan will be implemented to create native plant communities that will provide increased wildlife use and enhanced pollinator habitat. A minimum maintenance trail has been incorporated into the design that will provide access for local residents to observe wildlife and enjoy the landscape. The project also provides potential outdoor education opportunities for nearby schools. Interpretative signage and other educational features could be provided in the future.

BWSR is responsible for project design, and will oversee construction, vegetative management and monitoring activities over the course of the next five years. Once the wetland is restored, the City of Andover will take over management of the property, which it owns.

On June 4, 2014, the City of Andover and BWSR held a joint open house for residents who live in the area with over 40 local residents attending. It was a great opportunity to educate the community about the value of the wetland restoration project and the positive impacts it will have on the city moving forward. Final design work and more permits and approvals are needed, but the future looks bright for this project.

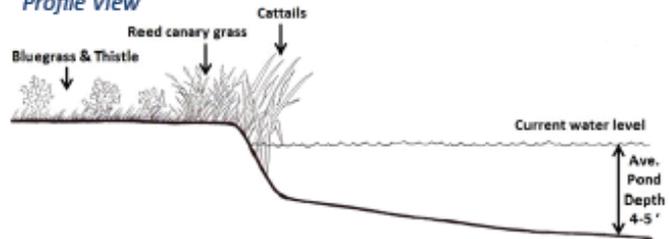
CURRENT CONDITION

Before restoration

Aerial View



Profile View



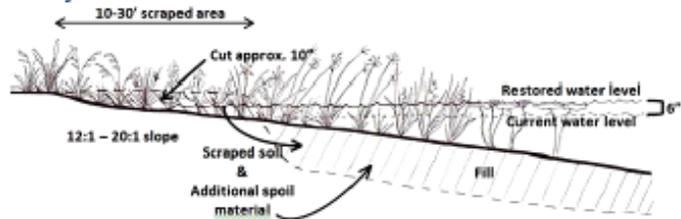
RESTORED CONDITION

After restoration

Aerial View



Profile View



A schematic of the site before and after restoration.