

Two Rivers

Watershed District

In Roseau, Kittson, & Marshall Counties



Board of Managers: Roger Anderson, Jim Kukowski, Darrel Johnson, Paul Olsonawski, Allen Brazier, Daryl Klegstad, Gary Johnson
Staff: Dan Money, District Administrator; Matt Thompson, Head Technician

410 5th Street S., Suite 112, Hallock, MN 56728 - Phone (218) 843-3333 - Email: daniel.money@mn.nacdnet.net

www.TwoRiversWD.com

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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Dan Money, District Administrator

Two Rivers Watershed District: Local Government Providing Drainage, Flood Control, and Water Quality Solutions

Who We Are:

The Two Rivers Watershed District is a local unit of government known as a 'Special District'. The TRWD was organized in October of 1957, and was the third Watershed District in the State. A 7 member Board of Managers is the governing body, made up entirely of local farmers, landowners and citizens. The Board is appointed by the County Commissions – 5 people from Kittson County and 2 people from Roseau County, and Board meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month in the District office. The District employs two people, one Administrator and one Head Technician. A Citizen's Advisory Committee is appointed by the Board of Managers and meets at least once per year to discuss District activities and provide recommendations and feedback to the District.

Where We Are Located:

The Two Rivers Watershed District does not follow political boundaries, but rather follows drainage boundaries. Originally the land area that drains to the Two Rivers made up the boundary of the District. In the 1980's the land area that drains to an unnamed coulee was added. That area lies between US Highway 59 in the Karlstad and Halma area and drains west to the Red River. In all, the District today covers approximately 1,454 square miles, and contains the Cities of Badger, Greenbush, Strathcona, Karlstad, Halma, Lake Bronson, Lancaster, Hallock, Kennedy, and Donaldson. The District office is located in the Kittson County Courthouse in Hallock, MN.

What We Do:

The TRWD operates under Minnesota Statutes 103D and 103E, and the purposes of the District are largely for local water resources management concentrating on the areas of Flood Control, Agricultural Drainage, and Water Quality. To accomplish these purposes, the District has constructed several projects, the first ones in the 1960's and the latest one in 2013. New projects to control flooding are currently in the research and development phase. These various projects are described below.

Impoundments: Three flood control impoundments have been constructed to

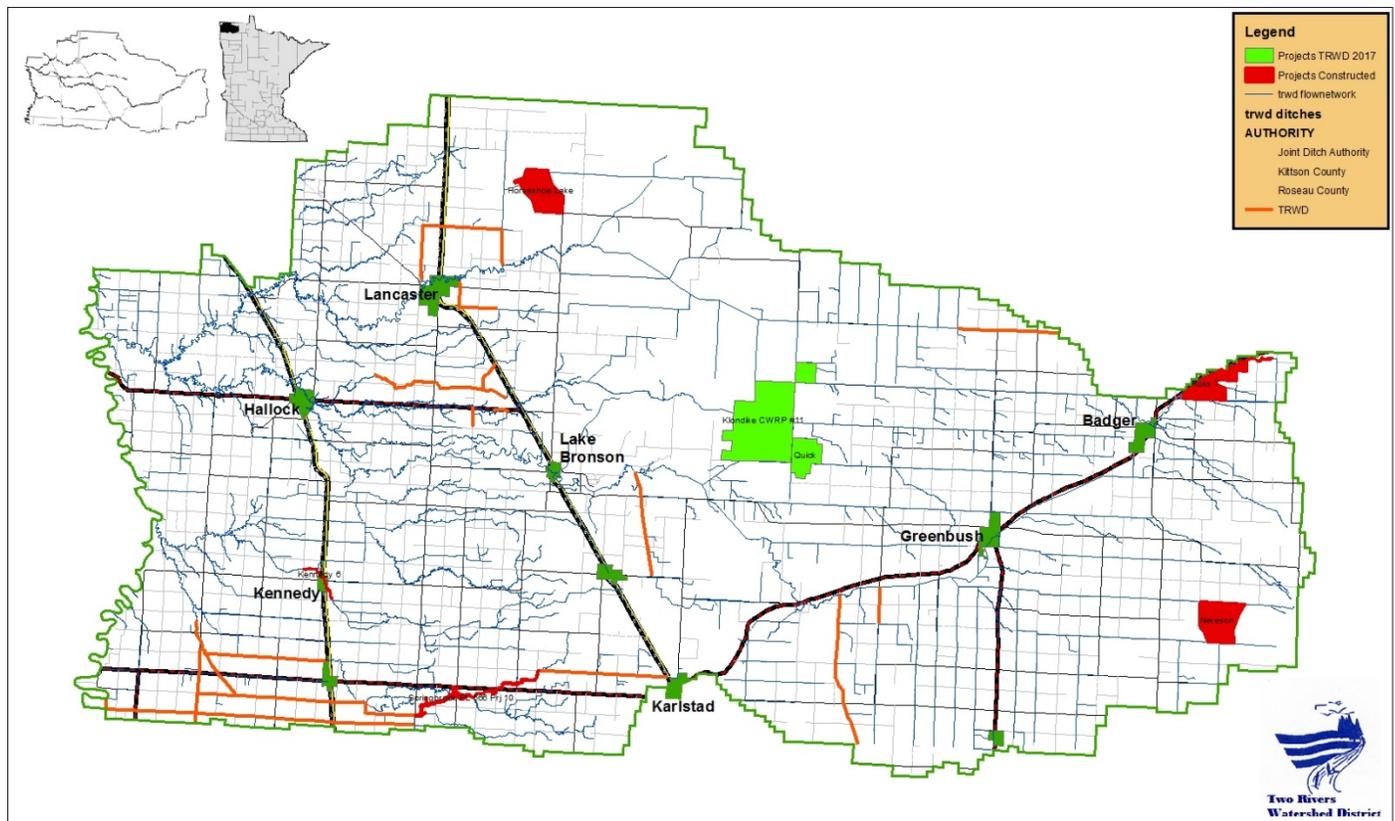
store floodwaters in a confined area instead of allowing it to spread across the landscape. Water that is stored is measured in Acre-Feet. One acre-foot is the amount of water that would cover one acre of land to a depth of one foot, and equals 325,829 gallons. The impoundments that the TRWD has constructed together store over 9,200 acre-feet of storage

The **Horseshoe Lake Impoundment** was built in the 1968-1969 in the Skull Lake Wildlife Management Area, located north of the City of Lancaster. This impoundment provides benefits to the North Branch of the Two Rivers by holding 2,130 acre feet of water and also provides wildlife habitat.

The **Nererson Impoundment** and the **Nererson Sub-impoundment** were built in the late 1980's and early 1990's within the Nererson Wildlife Management Area. They were constructed to provide water storage on the State Ditch #91 system, which drains to the South Branch Two Rivers and also to provide habitat for migratory waterfowl. Located approximately 8 miles south and 3 miles east from the City of Badger, they together they provide 3,500 acre feet of storage from a 16 square mile drainage area.

The **Ross Impoundment** was completed in 2008 and is located 2 miles north east of the City of Badger. This impoundment stores 3,600 acre feet of water from an 18.2 square mile area that drains to 'Skunk Creek'. It has flood damage reduction as well as natural resource enhancement benefits.

A new project, called the **Klondike Clean Water Retention Project**, is in the research, design, and development stages. This very large project will utilize a 12 square mile area to store approximately 37,500 acre feet of water, effectively controlling the runoff from a 143 square mile area. Another smaller project known as the **Polonia/Quick Clean Water Retention Project** is planned to store 1,100 acre feet.



Two Rivers Watershed District
Impoundments & Ditch Projects

In addition to impoundments, the District is also responsible for 92 miles of **drainage ditches**. These ditches are known as 'legal ditches', and are governed by Minnesota Statute 103E. Their purpose is to provide drainage primarily for agricultural lands, and they also provide benefits to public infrastructure, cities, and rural residences. The District inspects these ditch systems annually and performs maintenance activities like brush, cattail, and

beaver control, sediment removal, and erosion control when necessary.

Farmstead Ring Dikes: The District has worked with local landowners to provide cost share assistance, technical survey, design, inspection and contracting services for the construction of 22 farmstead ring dikes. These dikes provide protection to homes, bins, shops, barns and related structures associated with these farmsteads. They provide protection equivalent to the “100 year” flood event.

The Two Rivers Watershed District not only does construction projects, but has also developed many programs and provides services to address flooding, drainage, water quality, and erosion control. These are described as follows:

- **Stream Flow Monitoring** – During spring floods and summertime runoff events, the TRWD monitors flows on the rivers, ditches, and coulees to determine how much runoff there is, how high flood flows will be, and to help predict when crests will occur. The District works with the National Weather Service, USGS, MN DNR, and MN PCA in the collection and dissemination of this information. In addition, the District does a **Snow Survey** each year to measure snow depths and snow water content to help predict spring flooding.
- **Water Quality Monitoring** – The TRWD has a long history of monitoring the Two Rivers and tributaries to collect baseline information. A network of 12 monitoring stations has been established and long term data has been collected. Recently, the District has worked with the MPCA and MN DNR to intensify monitoring, determine reaches of river that have poor or bad water quality, and to determine how impaired rivers and streams can be cleaned up. Plans are being written, known as “Watershed Restoration And Protection Strategies”, or WRAPS for short.
- **Permitting** – The District regulates activities that have an effect on the quantity or the quality of surface water runoff, and requires permits for activities like ditching, diking, tile drainage, culvert installation, road building, and pumping. Permits help to ensure the water is not conveyed from upper lands onto lower lands in a way that causes flooding, erosion, or unnecessary damages.
- **Survey Services** – The District provides survey assistance to landowners who are contemplating works of improvement. The District has had success with assisting people to obtain permits from the DNR to remove sediment and clean out waterways that are listed on the DNR ‘Protected Waters’ map.
- **Information & Education** – Watershed education is an important part the District’s work, and staff participate in the **River Watch** program and the **Envirothon**, both of which help educate high school students. Also, the District collaborates with the Kittson SWCD to publish a **newsletter** known as the *Northland Conservation News* twice per year.
- **Local, State, Federal Liason** – Collaboration, communication, and networking is necessary to obtain funding for projects, implement various watershed related objectives, deliver programs and services, and uphold the water related laws of the state. The TRWD therefore works with citizens, government agencies, and private entities at the local, state, and federal levels to address water related issues.

How We Are Funded:

As a local unit of government operating under MN Statute 103D, the TRWD has taxing authority, and levies taxes for the general operations of the District and for maintenance of ditch systems. In addition, grant funding is frequently sought to aid in the planning and construction of projects. The TRWD has utilized bonding funds authorized through the MN Legislature, grant funding from various state agencies such as the DNR, MPCA, and BWSR, grant funding through federal agencies like NRCS and the USFWS. Grant funding is usually project specific and private resources are also sought out when appropriate or available. The District is a member of the Red River Watershed Management Board, and therefore is eligible for cost share assistance through that organization.

Future Activities:

As 2017 unfolds, the TRWD will be working on new projects and watershed management strategies. Current events and issues will involve a major planning process known as 'One Watershed, One Plan', local decisions regarding the new Buffer Law, project planning for the 'Klondike Clean Water Retention Project', construction of the 'Polonia/Quick Clean Water Retention Project', improvement of the 'Kittson County Ditch #21', continuing to monitor and report environmental conditions, maintenance of existing ditches and projects, and working with landowners to provide water management solutions.

Further information can be obtained by visiting our website at: www.tworiverswd.com