


CLEAN RIVER PARTNERS

Community Impact Report 2022



CLEAN RIVER
PARTNERS





We **inspire** people and organizations to **value**, **protect**, and **improve** the **Cannon River Watershed's** land and water.

In order to work with our communities in constructive ways, we focus on three core values: **Resilience**, **Equity**, and **Engagement**.

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A Message from the Team

We are proud to present to you the 2022 Annual Report for Clean River Partners! As a staff team, we are excited to share with you the impact that our partnerships and collaborations have been able to create over the past year and also our plans for the future.

Together, Clean River Partners has been tirelessly working for over 30 years to protect and preserve our rivers and waterways. And, we are pleased with our 2022 results! With our various initiatives and programs, we were able to engage with residents, farmers, water professionals, and nonprofit and college and university partners to support resilient and sustainable practices in our watershed.



Jennifer Tonko
Executive Director



Kevin Strauss
Community Engagement



Alan Kraus
Conservation Program



Dane McKittrick
Conservation Program

As a team, one of our proudest achievements was being able to measure a 60% reduction in stream nitrate concentration in Rice County's only self-sustaining trout stream. We also engaged more than 200 volunteers to remove over 8,000 pounds of trash and debris from the Cannon River, preventing pollution and improving the health of our waterways.

We were also successful in bringing together coalitions of partners at the local and state levels to imagine a more resilient and equitable water and land use future. Moving forward, we are more committed than ever to our mission of inspiring people to take actions to protect water. We will continue to work collaboratively with our partners and stakeholders to find the ways that a water nonprofit can provide the impetus to change existing systems, to build partnerships that ensure that all members of our communities benefit equitably and sustainably from the rich natural systems in our place, and to inspire and empower individuals and communities to take action for clean water.

Thank you for being a part of Clean River Partners and for helping us achieve these amazing results. We truly appreciate your support and look forward to continuing our work together.

Thank you,
Jennifer, Kevin, Alan and Dane

Our Values

RESILIENCE

We are working to **improve the sustainability of the watershed**, leaving the soil, water, and our communities better prepared for the impact of climate change and other future conditions.

EQUITY

We work toward **meaningful involvement and equitable access** of all watershed residents to a clean, healthy world.

ENGAGEMENT

We provide **opportunities for all stakeholders to engage in actions** that protect and improve the natural systems of the watershed.

In the last 10 years we've:

REMOVED

>100k

pounds of trash and debris removed from area lakes, streams and rivers

IMPROVED

>10k

acres of soil health improved to help farmers implement conservation practices like cover crops Kernza® or reduced tillage

PREVENTED

59k

pounds of nitrate prevented from entering streams, lakes and rivers in the Canon River watershed

PREVENTED

~2.6m

pounds of sediment prevented from entering streams, lakes and rivers in the Canon River watershed

In 2023 we will continue to **live our values** and **build partnerships** to **improve soil and water quality** in the Cannon River Watershed.

Highlights

Our Clean River Partners

Our Community Engagement and Conservation Programs are how Clean River Partners sparks behavior change, leading communities to co-create and protect a watershed with healthy soils, drinkable groundwater; and clean, fishable, and swimmable rivers, lakes, and streams.

When we work together we make a difference in our watershed. Stay connected to us at cleanriverpartners.org to see what we have planned for 2023 and beyond!

The following are highlights from our Community Engagement and Conservation Programs from 2022.

Members & Volunteers

14th Annual Cannon River Watershed-Wide CleanUP Event

More than 200 volunteers from eight communities carried out the 14th Annual Cannon River Watershed-Wide CleanUP. Together we **removed an estimated 8,650 pounds of litter from area streams, lakes and rivers!**

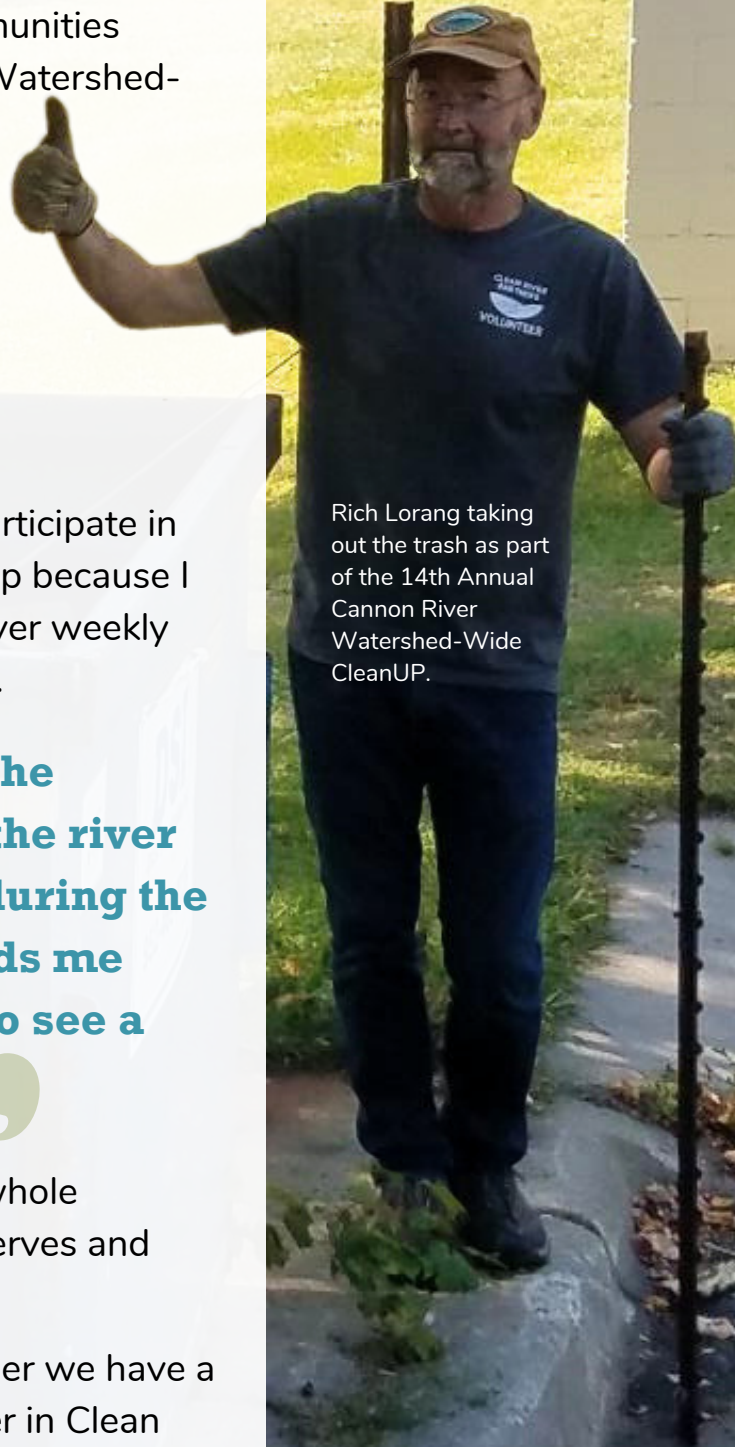
This year's CleanUP crews found a plastic bin full of unused first aid kits. CRP was able to donate those kits to charity.

Rich Lorang (from Northfeld, MN) said, "I participate in the Clean River Partners September clean up because I enjoy using the trails on both sides of the river weekly and float the river to fish and watch wildlife.

The cleanup means a lot to me. The removal of tons of garbage from the river is not our only accomplishment during the cleanup. Sharing this task reminds me that I am not alone in the desire to see a better river, world and water.

The cleanup demonstrates to kids and the whole community our affection for a river that deserves and needs our attention.

The cleanup is a yearly reminder that together we have a greater impact and that I have a local partner in Clean River Partners."



Rich Lorang taking out the trash as part of the 14th Annual Cannon River Watershed-Wide CleanUP.

Film Fans & Outdoorsy People

Downstream Environmental Film Festival

We **inspired more than 70 participants with ten** water-themed local, national, and international **short films** during the 6th Annual Downstream Environmental Film Festival.

Held at Riverside Park in Northfield, **participants also had a chance to get gear repaired at the Patagonia Repair Tent**, to get safety checks on a bike at the Farmstead Bike tent, to learn about library services, **and discover how to address climate change** at the Citizens Climate Lobby booth.

Community members coming together to learn about water issues through film at the 6th Annual Downstream Environmental Film Festival in Riverside Park, Northfield.



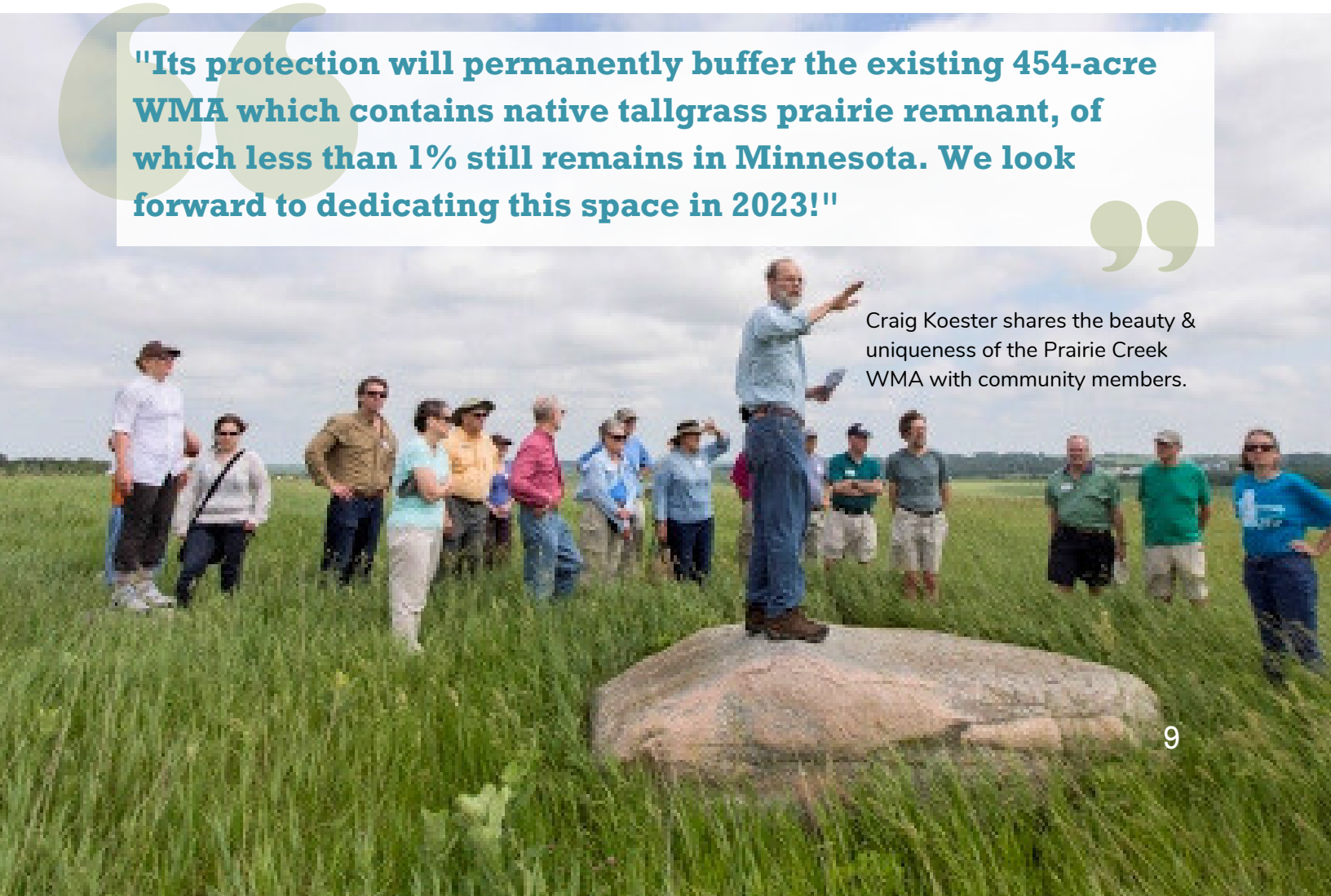
Landowners & Prairie Lovers

Prairie Creek WMA

We worked with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), Friends of Prairie Creek WMA and Craig Koester (and his family) to expand the Prairie Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) near Dennison, MN. This land provides permanently protected habitat for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators as well as for deer, wild turkeys, and pheasants. Spring and summer wildflowers provide a colorful outdoor experience for the 3.4 million people living within a 1-hour drive of this beautiful prairie.

“Working with Clean River Partners has been critical for expanding our regional presence with landowners in order to promote habitat conservation. The network that they’ve built within the community and their ability to reach diverse audiences and share information about land protection is incredibly helpful to the mission of the Trust for Public Land. Clean River Partners brings an invaluable local connection and water resource expertise. Because of this, **in 2022, together we added 138 acres of land to the Prairie Creek WMA.**” -- Nick Bancks (Trust for Public Land)

"Its protection will permanently buffer the existing 454-acre WMA which contains native tallgrass prairie remnant, of which less than 1% still remains in Minnesota. We look forward to dedicating this space in 2023!"



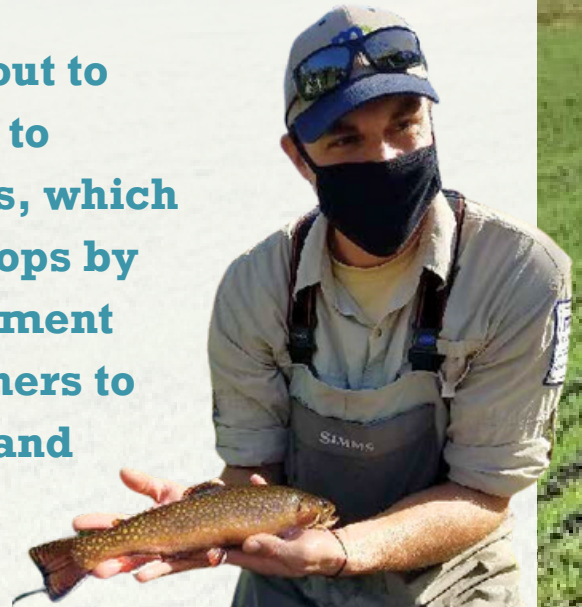
Craig Koester shares the beauty & uniqueness of the Prairie Creek WMA with community members.

Farmers, Local Governments & Researchers

Rice Creek Project

From 2018-2022, **we've achieved a 61% reduction in stream nitrate concentration in Rice Creek**, Rice County's only trout stream, and the only self-sustaining Brook Trout stream in SE Minnesota. Too much nitrate in a cold water trout stream harms the food source for trout, small macroinvertebrate populations (water bugs). It can also reduce the survivability of young fingerling trout. This nitrate reduction is linked to farmers planting and maintaining cover crops and buffers throughout the watershed.

Clean River Partners also reached out to landowners in Northfield Township to encourage the signup of cover crops, which resulted in 90 new acres of cover crops by three farmers. Their efforts complement ours well in reaching more landowners to encourage conservation of our soil and water resources.”

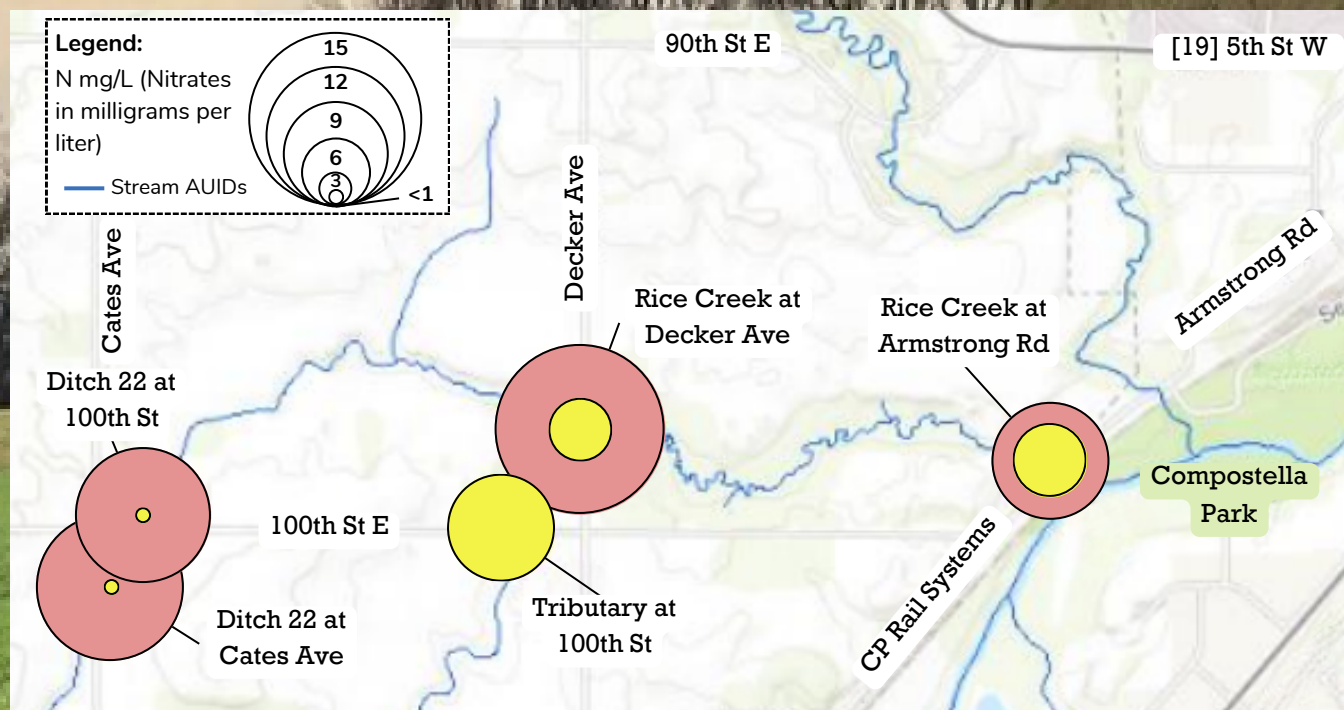


“Clean River Partners has been a true partner to us. We have been collaborating on several projects, most notably working with farmers around Rice Creek (just north of Dundas) to plant cover crops and reduce nitrates flowing into Rice Creek and then to the Cannon River. Rice Creek is Rice County's only self-sustaining trout stream, meaning the fish there repopulate without human intervention, so protecting this resource is critical.

-- Steven Pahs, District Manager, Rice Soil and Water Conservation District

(Background): Winter rye cover crops planted after soybean harvest (left side) grows alongside a permanent harvestable hay crop buffer preventing soil and nutrients from entering Rice Creek flowing through the tree area in the distance.

Significant Progress in Stream Nitrate Reduction from 2011-2022



N mg/L (Nitrates in milligrams per liter)

<u>Change</u>	<u>2022</u> ●	<u>2011</u> ●	<u>Location</u>
↓ -91%	1.20	12.65	Ditch 22 at Cates Avenue
↓ -96%	0.44	11.76	Ditch 22 at 100th Street
→ +2%	9.22	9.02	Tributary at 100th Street
↓ -63%	5.45	14.65	Rice Creek at Decker Avenue
↓ -36%	6.40	10.05	Rice Creek at Armstrong Road
↓ -61%	Average across all locations		

Foodies, Brewers, Bakers & the University

Kernza

We hosted or presented information at 18 public events where almost 600 people learned about protecting drinking water, managing cover crops, growing and marketing Kernza®, protecting soil and water, and improving farm profit. When farmers learn about the environmental benefits of conservation alongside the economic considerations, we're equipping them to make the best decisions possible for themselves and their land.

"Southeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership has been a supporter over the past three years of CRP's leadership in our region in production and market development for the new perennial grain Kernza®, and we have seen tremendous results come out of these research-to-action projects. Kernza® is a crop that has the potential to keep our soil on the fields, keep farm chemicals out of our water, and reduce carbon emissions from less tilling."

CRP's close-knit, trusting relationships with many actors in the agriculture sector in and around the Cannon River Watershed is helping to move Kernza® production forward in better balance with consumer demand."

-- Andi Sutton, Exec Director, Southeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, UMN Extension

Alan Kraus,
Clean River Partners

Dane McKittrick,
Clean River Partners

Innovators & Entrepreneurs

The Regenerative Agriculture Alliance

The Regenerative Agriculture Alliance (RAA) works to develop a network of agroforestry poultry farmers across the Midwest and beyond. The system RAA promotes is built on cycling energy and treating the environment, and those at each level of the food supply chain, with equity and respect.

The diverse, perennial farming model that RAA seeks to scale is based on Indigenous practices and has tremendous potential for improving water quality, biodiversity, and soil conservation within the region. Partnering with RAA has been a great way to live our values of resilience, equity and engagement to maximize our combined impact toward a more regenerative, sustainable agricultural landscape.

In 2022, a USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research Education Grant provided funds for CRP and RAA to co-develop interactive farm visits, workshops, student internships, and guest lectures.

“The partnership with Clean River Partners offers a terrific opportunity to make a community connection around the direct impact that farming practices have on the health of our watersheds. It's exciting to have value-aligned programming that we can leverage and engage to increase awareness of the Regenerative Poultry Ecosystem.”

-- Diane Christofore, RAA Executive Director



Wil Crombie shares information about Regenerative Poultry production on his farm near Faribault, MN

Thank You Members!

1st United Bank
 5th & Division Street Partners
 Adrienne Falcon & Dave Geist
 Alan & Emily Kraus
 Allene Moesler
 Allina Health System
 Alyssa Herzog
 Alyssa Ness
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 Andrei & Wendy Sivanich
 Anne Sawyer
 Anne Walter & Michael C. Swift
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 Chris & Deanne Weber
 Chris Robbins
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 Dan & Cahrene Dimick
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 Dan & Muriel Klatt
 Dana & Karin Jokela
 Danielle Wagner
 Dave & Gretchen Anderson
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 Defeat of Jesse James Days
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 Doris Welke
 Douglas & Lael Starkweather
 Duane & Diane Schlobohm
 Earl & Jan Benson
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 Edward Langerak
 Edwin Andersen
 Eleanor Haase
 Elizabeth Wright
 Emily & Nick Paulson
 Emily Mohl
 Environmental Carls Organized at
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 Eric Larsen
 Erica Zweifel
 Erickson Furniture
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 Jerry & Karen Appeldoorn
 Jill Trescott & Leo Reid
 Jim & Caroline Holden
 Jim Purfeerst
 Jocelyn Leung
 Jodie & Jay Little
 Joe & Sue Hollinger
 Joe McGough





Thank You Members!

Joel Lasater
Joel Weisberg
John Ferguson
John Hamer
John McCarthy
John's Bait & Tackle
Jon & Dana Kuehn
Joseph Kaderlik
Judy Schultz
Just Food Co-op
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Karen Kallestad
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Sam DeMas
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Shari Sneary
Sharon Meister
Sherry Anderson
Simple Generosity
Sinda Nichols
St. John's Lutheran Church
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Steven Larson
Steven Pak &
Katherine Tegtmeyer Pak
Steven Schmidt Construction
Sue & Frank Weaver
Susan Erickson
Suzanne Blue
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Thank you for your ongoing program support!

TOGETHER WE SUCCEED

- We could not do this work without our incredible members, sponsors, and partners. THANK YOU!
- We know that clean, affordable water is essential for life, and not equally accessible to all families in our area.
- Working together is the single best way we can ensure clean water in all of our communities today, tomorrow, and far into the future.

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LOCATION

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YOUTUBE

[Clean River Partners](https://www.youtube.com/CleanRiverPartners)



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