



**Minnesota Pollution
Control Agency**

520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155-4194

**Section 319 Grant Project
Final Progress and Financial Report**

Doc Type: Reporting/Final Report

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) provides grants to organizations to help fulfill the agency's mission. Each grant project is required to complete a final progress and financial report. Information from this grant report will be used to illustrate progress toward meeting the MPCA's goals and missions and will be shared with interested parties, targeted audiences, and legislators.

More information about preparing a final progress and financial report for a Section 319 grant project can be found in the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) Polluted Runoff: Nonpoint Source Pollution](#) website. This website describes the purpose of the Section 319 program and final project reports, the information that should be included in the report, examples of especially effective elements from 319 reports, and ways to expand the final project report to be used for outreach and education, building partnerships, and many other uses.

Instructions: This 319 grant project final progress and financial report must be submitted **no later than 30 days prior to the end of the grant contract**. It must include results, in the form of data and information, that best demonstrate achievement of project goals and objectives.

Please follow the attached report format, referring back to the work plan and budget and any subsequent amendments to your grant agreement, contract, or work order. When completed, send an electronic copy of the completed report to your MPCA project manager for review.

Grant project summary

Project title: Sand Creek Pet Waste Disposal Program

Organization (Grantee): Coon Creek Watershed District

Project start date: 1/1/2022 Project end date: 9/30/2025 Report submittal date: 9/29/2025

Grantee contact name: Tim Kelly (cc: Justine Dauphinais) Title: District Administrator

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(cc:jdauphinais@cooncreekwd.org)

Basin (Red, Minnesota, St. Croix, etc.)
/Watershed & 8 digit HUC:: Mississippi Rv-Twin Cities; HUC 07010206 County: Anoka

Project type: 319 Implementation

Grant funding

Final grant amount: \$41,759 Final total project costs: \$85,379.61

Matching funds: Final cash: \$12,613.61 Final in-kind: \$31,007.00 Final Loan: \$0

MPCA project manager: Mark T. Hanson

Executive summary

Problem

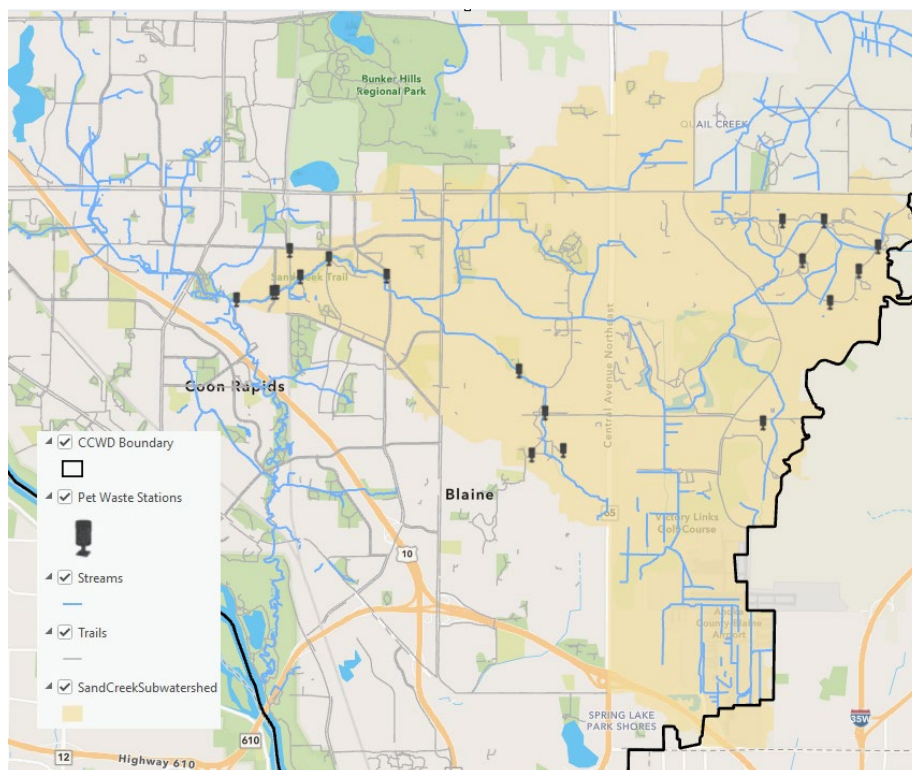
Both Sand Creek and downstream Coon Creek are impaired for aquatic life and recreation with 303(d) listings for macroinvertebrates, fish, and excess *E. coli* between 2006-2024. As part of the 2016 Coon Creek Watershed Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study, pollutant load reduction targets were established for both creeks for total suspended solids (TSS), total phosphorus (TP), and *E. coli*. The primary source of pollutant loading for Sand Creek was determined to be urban stormwater runoff, with domestic pet waste accounting for an estimated 89% of the total bacterial load. Additionally, a community survey conducted in 2020 in a neighboring catchment identified forgetting pet waste bags and a lack of disposal bins as barriers to picking up pet waste along public trails in this area. Given these factors, implementation of a pet waste disposal program was included in the CCWD's 2021 Nine Key Elements Plan for Coon and Sand Creeks. This plan proposed installation and operation of at least 15 stations in the Sand Creek subwatershed and 10 stations in the Lower Coon Creek subwatershed in order to attain water quality standards by 2031. Pollutant source reduction/ load removal estimates were based on the projected amount of dog waste removed per station (676 lbs/year based on preliminary 2020 data from the neighboring Pleasure Creek subwatershed) paired with literature values of average fecal coliform and nutrient content per mass of dog waste.

Waterbody improved

In accordance with the grant workplan, the CCWD set out to install, operate, and promote 18 dog waste disposal stations located along trail corridors adjacent to public waterways in the Sand Creek Subwatershed in Anoka County, Minnesota. The goal of this program was to reduce *E. coli* and total phosphorus (TP) loading to Sand Creek attributable to improper pet waste disposal by an estimated 126,918 billion organisms and 122 pounds per year, respectively. In addition to these quantifiable pollutant reductions, CCWD also sought to engage area residents and visitors via targeted outreach on pet waste pollution and proper disposal.

From January 2022 through December 2024, 17 of the 18 planned stations were operated including collecting weekly data on the mass of dog waste removed from each route to enable calculation of per station removal statistics. During the initial 3 years, despite having one fewer station than planned, the program achieved 102% of its projected pollutant reductions. Because pet waste station servicing costs came in under budget, a change order was granted to extend the program through September 2025. In April of 2025, an agreement with the City of Blaine, MN was reached to install the remaining 18th station. All stations (see map below) were serviced through September 30th, 2025 removing a 3.75-year total of 45,372 pounds of dog waste containing an estimated 473,226 billion organisms of *E. coli* and 454 lbs of Phosphorus.

This program is part of a broader overall effort to reduce pollutant loading in the Sand Creek Subwatershed and has not yet resulted in the removal of Sand Creek from the 303(d) impaired waters list. Sand Creek is scheduled to be formally re-assessed by the MPCA in 2030.



Project highlights

- This project focused on pollutant source reduction via the installation and operation of 18 dog waste disposal stations located along trails adjacent to an impaired receiving water for a 3.75-year pilot from January 2022 through September 2025.
- A unique aspect of this project was weekly data collection and reporting of the amount of dog waste removed per route to enable calculations of per station pollutant removal estimates for this best management practice. On average, 702 pounds of dog waste was removed from each of our stations per year containing an estimated 7,332 billion organisms of *E. coli* and 7 lbs of TP.
- In addition to direct pollutant source reduction, another goal of this pilot was public education and engagement through targeted outreach. CCWD staff developed customized educational materials and swag centered around a “Trash the Poo, Not our Water” theme. Staff attended 63 events, distributed over 4000 customized items, and had over 4,500 direct, in-person interactions with local community members and visitors.
- A post implementation survey of trail users received 267 unique responses which indicated a high level of support for the program with 73% of respondents reporting a decrease in the amount of pet waste observed along the trails since program initiation and 93% of dog walkers indicating they had used the CCWD-sponsored pet waste stations at least once. Of 265 respondents, 73 (28%) admitted they did not always pick up pet waste on a walk for one or more reasons. Of the 99 responses received for reasons for not always picking up dog waste, 63% indicated that the biggest barrier to picking up pet waste was either forgetting a bag (n=50) or lack of trash cans nearby (n=12), with 30% indicating an inability to pick up waste due to inaccessibility (n=28) or physical limitations (n=2), and only 7% indicating being unwilling to pick up waste due to lack of desire (n=6) or feeling it's unnecessary because its natural (n=1). It follows that operation of pet waste disposal stations with bag dispensers along these trails alleviates the main barriers to proper pet waste disposal.
- Given the favorable results of this pilot program from both a pollutant source reduction and public reception perspective, CCWD has expanded this work to two additional subwatersheds (Pleasure Creek, Springbrook Creek) and plans to continue administering this program with local funding through at least 2026 and hopefully beyond.
- Improving pet waste management is just one strategy as part of CCWD's broader efforts to reduce bacterial and pollutant loading in urban runoff. CCWD continues to implement new bacteria source tracking methods, additional source reduction efforts such as enhanced street sweeping, and stormwater treatment BMPs such as biofiltration and infiltration practices.

Goals, Objectives, and Tasks

The CCWD initially set out to contract weekly waste removal services for 18 stations for 2.75 years starting in January 2022 (Objective 1, Task A), develop and deploy customized engagement materials to educate residents and promote the pet waste disposal program (Objective 1, Task B), to conduct a post-implementation community survey that re-evaluates prevalence of pet waste observed along trails and quantifies barriers to proper disposal to compare against baseline results (Objective 2, Task A), and to fulfill all grant reporting requirements (Objective 2, Task B). This original work plan was modified slightly via two minor change orders which 1) extended Objective 1, Task A another full year through September 30 2025 for a total of 3.75 years of pet waste station servicing and 2) re-allocated surplus funding from Objective 1, Task A to Task B to enable purchase of additional outreach supplies for extended public engagement activities through September 30 2025.

More specifically, the stated goals, objectives, tasks, and deliverables were as follows along with a discussion of activities completed, results achieved, and any challenges faced:

Goal: Reduce *E. coli* and TP loading to Sand and Coon Creeks attributable to improper disposal of pet waste

Objective 1: Pet waste station operation and engagement

Objective 1 Deliverables: Proper disposal of approximately 676 lbs of dog waste per station per year for a total of at least 12,168 lbs of dog waste removed from the Sand Creek subwatershed per year (~122 pounds TP/yr and 126,918 billion organisms *E. coli*/year), refined estimates of mass of waste removed per station per year, templates for customized signage/ swag, engagement of residents (>1000 interactions at >25 outreach events)

Task A: Contracted weekly removal and quantification of waste from 18 stations to be installed within the Sand Creek subwatershed.

Results: Dog waste was removed, quantified, and properly disposed of weekly at all stations (n=17 in 2022-24; n=18 in 2025) from January 2022 through September 2025. The total amount of waste removed and properly disposed of over 3.75 years was 45,372 pounds of dog waste containing an estimated 473,226 billion organisms of *E. coli* and 454 lbs of Phosphorus. This total amount surpassed initial estimates given extension of the program for an additional year, with annualized per station removals exceeding initial estimates by 104-105% (see table below). This summarized data helped refine pollutant source reduction estimates for this best management practice (i.e., 702 lbs of waste on average per station containing 7,332 billion organisms *E. coli* and 7 lbs TP.) One challenge faced was siting the final 18th station as there were liability concerns regarding servicing stations on private property, so an alternative location on public land needed to be secured. Keeping records of weekly dog waste collected was also a challenge, but a simple google form provided to the contractor was an effective tool. The few data gaps were filled in with weekly averages given the extensive amount of reported data available over the multi-year period of record.

	2022 Q1-4	2023 Q1-4	2024 Q1-4	Initial 3-Year Pilot Total	Initial 3-Year Pilot Goal	% Goal achieved		2025 Q1-3	Extended 3.75-year Total	Extended 3.75-year Goal	% Goal achieved	Annualized Averages (mass/yr)
Total mass removed												
lbs of dog waste	12963	12542	11773	37277	36504	102%		8095	45372	45630	99%	12018
lbs of TP	130	125	118	373	366	102%		81	454	458	99%	120.2
billions organisms <i>E. coli</i>	135199	130810	122787	388796	380754	102%		84431	473226	475943	99%	125343
Per station totals												
lbs of dog waste	763	738	693	2193	2028	108%		463	2655	2535	105%	702
lbs of TP	7.6	7.4	6.9	22	20	107%		4.6	27	26	104%	7.0
billions organisms <i>E. coli</i>	7953	7695	7223	22870	21153	108%		4843	27713	26441	105%	7332

Task B: Program promotion including development and deployment of customized materials and citizen engagement at outreach events

Results: Over the course of the grant period, staff attended a total of 63 outreach events focused on raising public awareness about the environmental impacts of dog waste and importance of proper disposal. At these events, staff distributed 1,483 “Trash the Poo, Not our Water!” dog waste bag dispensers and 2,903 additional educational materials and promotional items including themed stress relievers, flashlights, bookmarks, stickers, brochures, pens, and cups. These outreach efforts resulted in at least 4,852 direct in-person interactions with community members

In addition to material distribution, staff collected information from dog owners about the locations where they commonly walk their pets. These data were used to identify potential hotspots for pet waste accumulation and to inform future program planning. Although the original outreach targets of more than 25 events and 1,000 interactions were met and exceeded by the end of 2023, district staff extended its outreach efforts into 2024 and continued them through spring and summer of 2025. A change order approved in April 2025 allowed the District to use surplus funds from Objective 1, Task A to purchase additional outreach supplies to support these 2025 efforts. The program was also promoted through District social media and featured in the *Coon Rapids Connection* newsletter, which is circulated to over 20,000 households.

Objective 2: Program evaluation & administration

Objective 2 Deliverables: Survey results/ program evaluation report, timely submittal of all required semi-annual and final grant reports

Task A: Post-implementation community survey. A survey of local residents and trail users to evaluate the prevalence of pet waste observed along trails and assess whether the program eliminated the existing barriers to proper disposal identified in baseline survey.

Results: The web survey developed and promoted by CCWD staff was closed in early 2025, receiving 267 individual responses. Of the 211 respondents who have been using the trails for at least three years, 153 (73%) reported a decrease in pet waste observed along the trails. Among the 230 respondents who walk dogs, 214 (93%) have used the CCWD-sponsored pet waste stations at least once. Of 265 respondents, 192 (72.5%) reported that they “always pick up dog waste on walks” with the remaining 73 (27.5%) respondents giving one or more reasons why they may not pick up waste on a walk. Of the 99 responses received for reasons for not always picking up dog waste, 63% indicated that the biggest barrier to picking up pet waste was either forgetting a bag (n=50) or lack of trash cans nearby (n=12), with 30% indicating an inability to pick up waste due to inaccessibility (n=28) or physical limitations (n=2), and only 7% indicating being unwilling to pick up waste due to lack of desire (n=6) or feeling it's unnecessary because its natural (n=1). It follows that operation of pet waste disposal stations with bag dispensers along these trails alleviates the main barriers to proper pet waste disposal.

It should be noted that 33 of 188 (18%) users of the Sand Creek subwatershed trail systems specifically (Sunrise Lake, Sand Creek Corridor, and Little League Park Trails) still reported seeing some pet waste along these public trails, illustrating a potential need for more stations or public education efforts. Given the positive impact of this program on local receiving waters and positive reception by area municipal staff, residents, and visitors, CCWD has decided to continue this program after expiration of the grant in September 2025 through at least the end of 2026 and hopefully beyond.

Staff did not encounter any challenges developing or promoting a survey in-house and were very pleased with the response rate. The survey was advertised with trail signage, targeted social media ads, the City newsletter, and with QR codes printed on swag distributed at local outreach events. The feedback received was very informative and valuable to illustrate support for the program.

Task B: Program/ grant administration including contract management, financial tracking, and grant reporting.

Results: Regular project and contract management continued throughout the duration of the 319-grant project workplan with no major issues or delays. CCWD staff submitted all required quarterly invoices, semi-annual progress reports, and a final report to MPCA on time. CCWD staff also hosted a final on-site project tour attended by MPCA project management staff. Yearend pollutant reductions and BMPs were reported in the BWSR e-LINK system under grant ID P21-0002. Two small change orders were submitted and approved and reporting templates were updated accordingly.

Project Results

The project was successful in achieving all stated goals and objectives with minimal challenges. Success was measured by comparing project outcomes as measured in mass of dog waste removed, number of events attended, number of outreach materials distributed, and number of direct interactions accomplished to stated deliverables (see details reported above).

In terms of pollutant source reduction in the Sand Creek subwatershed, this project facilitated the proper disposal of 45,372 pounds of dog waste containing an estimated 473,226 billion organisms of *E. coli* and 454 lbs of Phosphorus. This project also resulted in refined pollutant reduction estimates for this type of best management practice, with a per station average of 702 lbs of waste removed per year containing 7,332 billion organisms *E. coli* and 7 lbs TP. In terms of public education, this project reached over 9,000 individuals through distribution of customized outreach materials and direct in-person engagement at 63 outreach events.

In addition to measurable outcomes, project effectiveness was also evaluated via a post-implementation web-based survey conducted via Google Forms in late 2024 through early 2025. This survey asked questions about observations on the amount of dog waste observed before and after installation of the pet waste stations, station use, and behaviors of pet owners related to dog waste disposal. The survey was advertised via trail signage, targeted social media ads, the City newsletter, and with QR codes printed on swag distributed at local outreach events. The survey received 267 individual responses; data was analyzed using excel to compute summary statistics. The survey results revealed a decrease in observed dog waste along the trails since installation of the pet waste stations and a high rate of station use by trail goers. The survey also showed that the program eliminated the main self-reported barriers to properly disposing of pet waste: forgetting a bag and lack of trash receptacles. This combination of community-reported behavior changes and direct pollutant removal demonstrates clear environmental outcomes and supports the continued implementation of the program.

Work products produced as part of this grant work plan including the following (see attached zipper folder of documentation):

- Map of pet waste stations
- Map of preferred dog walking locations from crowd-sourced feedback at local outreach events
- Weekly dog waste removal tracking spreadsheet
- Post-implementation survey results (contact information removed for privacy) and summary report
- Customized outreach and survey promotion templates and photos (yard signs, stickers, banner, brochure, bookmark, pet waste bags, poop emoji stress relievers, flashlights, poop scoopers)
- City newsletters with articles promoting the program and survey
- BMP implementation report in eLink
- Photographs from select outreach events

We expect this project to result in long-term benefits well beyond the term and geographical scope of the grant work plan. Our emphasis on public engagement transformed this pet waste disposal program into a broader targeted public education campaign. Raising awareness and promoting behavior change related to proper disposal of pet waste will expand the reach of our program from select public trails adjacent to impaired streams to anywhere that dog owners live and recreate. Additionally, we will use the insights gathered from this project to tailor future implementation and outreach efforts. For example, our survey indicates that forgetting pet waste bags is more of a barrier than lack of waste receptacles. We intend to explore the possibility of installing bag dispensers alone (without trash receptacles) to reduce program costs or in areas where there is pushback to concentrated waste collection. We are also exploring a program where municipalities, HOAs, or businesses could adopt a full pet waste disposal station or bag dispenser to cut down on contractor costs. We will continue to purchase and distribute "Trash the Poo, Not our Waters!" pet waste bag dispensers as swag at outreach events. We have also begun the process of customizing pet waste disposal related materials to meet the requirements of the NPDES MS4 permit MCMs 1 and 3 to expand our public education and engagement work in these areas.

Project Partnerships

This project would not have been possible without the support of our municipal partners and landowners, City of Blaine, City of Coon Rapids, and the Lakes of Radisson Master Homeowners Association. We would also like to thank Walter's Recycling and Refuse Inc. of Blaine, MN for accepting the waste generated by this program at a reduced rate. Given the success of this project, we have already expanded this 18-station pilot program by adding 16 additional stations in two new subwatershed areas in partnership with the Cities of Fridley and Spring Lake Park.

Final Expenditures

See attached master tracking spreadsheet with tabs including details of cash match and in-kind contributions.

Project Name: Sand Creek Pet Waste Disposal Program
 Organization Name: Coon Creek Watershed District

9/30/25

						Cumulative Project Totals				
Objective	Grant	In kind match	Cash match	Total match	Budget total	Grant Expended	In-kind Expended	Cash match Expended	Total match Expended	Total Expended
Objective 1: Pet Waste Station Operation and Engagement										
<i>Task A: Contracted waste removal/quantification</i>										
2022 waste removal services	\$ 7,027.80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,027.80	\$ 7,027.80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,027.80
2023 waste removal services	\$ 7,027.80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,027.80	\$ 7,027.80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,027.80
2024 waste removal services	\$ 7,027.80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,027.80	\$ 7,027.80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,027.80
2025 waste removal services	\$ 6,130.75	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,130.75	\$ 6,130.75	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,130.75
<i>Task B: Program promotion/engagement</i>										
Supplies (bags, signage, printed materials, swag)	\$ 4,544.85	\$ -	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 12,044.85	\$ 4,544.85	\$ -	\$ 10,371.40	\$ 10,371.40	\$ 14,916.25
CCWD Staff* (Coordinator)	\$ -	\$ 4,500.00	\$ -	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ -	\$ 8,772.00	\$ -	\$ 8,772.00	\$ 8,772.00
CCWD Staff* (Specialist)	\$ -	\$ 6,000.00	\$ -	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ -	\$ 6,860.00	\$ -	\$ 6,860.00	\$ 6,860.00
Objective 1 - Total	\$ 31,759.00	\$ 10,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 49,759.00	\$ 31,759.00	\$ 15,632.00	\$ 10,371.40	\$ 26,003.40	\$ 57,762.40
Objective 2: Program Evaluation & Administration										
<i>Task A: Community Survey</i>										
Survey administration & report	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ 2,242.21	\$ 2,242.21	\$ 12,242.21
CCWD Staff*		\$ 1,500.00		\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ 6,477.00	\$ -	\$ 6,477.00	\$ 6,477.00
<i>Task B: Grant/Program Administration</i>										
CCWD Staff*		\$ 6,500.00		\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ -	\$ 8,898.00	\$ -	\$ 8,898.00	\$ 8,898.00
Objective 2 - Total	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 15,375.00	\$ 2,242.21	\$ 17,617.21	\$ 27,617.21
TOTALS	\$ 41,759.00	\$ 18,500.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 28,000.00	\$ 69,759.00	\$ 41,759.00	\$ 31,007.00	\$ 12,613.61	\$ 43,620.61	\$ 85,379.61

*CCWD Staff Rates are not to exceed:

\$68.00 (Coordinator)

\$40.00 (Specialist)

Adjusted in Change Order 1

Adjusted in Change Order 2