



Are permits required for projects?

Permitting supports Valley Branch Watershed District's efforts to protect its water resources. The most common activities that require a permit from the watershed include the following:

- Constructing 6,000 square feet or more of impervious surfaces (homes, driveways, accessory buildings, patios, swimming pools)
- Working below the 100-year flood level of a water body (retaining walls, sand beaches)
- Altering 1 acre or more by grading or filling
- Impacting or working near wetlands
- Subdividing land and constructing new homes, buildings, roads, etc.



Valley Branch Watershed District
P.O. Box 838
Lake Elmo, MN 55042
www.vbwd.org

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Additional resources:

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources—
Restore Your Shore: www.dnr.state.mn.us/rys

University of Minnesota Extension:
<https://extension.umn.edu/lakes-and-wetlands/shoreland-properties>

East Metro Water Resources Education Program:
www.mnwcd.org/emwrep

Washington Conservation District:
www.mnwcd.org/financial-assistance



WELCOME



Congratulations on owning shoreline property in the Valley Branch Watershed District.

We're happy you've made an investment here and hope to work with you to preserve the area's water resources.

Our mission

The mission of the District is to be careful stewards of the water resources within our boundaries, coordinating efforts with our communities and residents—like you. Read on to see specific ways you can preserve the beauty of this area and the value of your property.

Role of the Valley Branch Watershed District

The Valley Branch Watershed District is a local unit of government that manages water resources within the Valley Branch Watershed—an area covering approximately 70 square miles that ultimately drains to the St. Croix River. The District lies primarily within Washington County but includes approximately one square mile of Ramsey County. Within its borders are numerous water body basins and streams and 15 communities and townships:

Washington County Communities		Ramsey County Communities
City of Afton	City of Oak Park Heights	City of Maplewood
Baytown Township	City of Oakdale	City of North St. Paul
City of Grant	City of Pine Springs	City of White Bear Lake
City of Lake Elmo	City of St. Mary's Point	
City of Lake St. Croix Beach	City of Woodbury	
City of Mahtomedi	West Lakeland Township	

What's in your backyard?

LAKES: Eleven lakes within the Valley Branch Watershed District are classified as public waters; five have boat access.

STREAMS: There are 7 miles of stream—including Valley Creek, a designated high-quality trout stream.

SPECIAL SPECIES: Valley Creek's ecosystem has over 20 endangered, threatened, and special-concern species, including the American brook lamprey, the hooded warbler, and Blanding's turtle.

NATURAL COMMUNITIES: The VBWD contains 48 distinct types of natural communities, including 17 terrestrial communities, 12 plants, and 19 animals.

WETLANDS: Over 1,200 wetlands are home to various mammals, birds, and reptiles. These wetlands also help manage stormwater runoff.

PARKS: Lake Elmo Regional Park Reserve, within the central portion of the District, provides a variety of recreation opportunities. Other parks include Oakdale Nature Preserve, Joy Park, Katherine Abbott Park, and Sunfish Lake Park. Belwin Conservancy includes over 1,500 acres at the southern end of the District.

ST. CROIX RIVER: Ultimately, the Valley Branch Watershed District drains to the St. Croix River—one of the original designated Wild and Scenic Rivers in the U.S. due to its unique natural resources, recreational offerings, and striking beauty.



Keep your neighborhood water body clean and healthy with a natural shoreline buffer. What can you expect?

One of the best ways to contribute to the health of the water body you live on is to create or maintain a natural shoreline buffer. Grass mowed all the way to a shoreline may look tidy, but it's not good for your lake—or your property. What can you expect with a natural shoreline buffer?

- More fish and wildlife: Natural shoreline vegetation, including trees and shrubs, provides great fish and wildlife habitat.
- Better water quality: Shoreline vegetation reduces soil erosion and absorbs nutrients—creating better water quality.
- Reduced nuisance: Shoreline buffers reduce unwanted geese droppings and foul odors.
- Increased privacy: Trees and other shoreline vegetation maintain your privacy.
- Increased property value: Clean lakes increase nearby property values.

Funding available

Valley Branch Watershed District can help you plan and pay for home water-quality-improvement projects. Experts in erosion, landscaping, and water quality issues can help you design, implement, and pay for projects such as shoreline buffers and stabilizations, gully repairs, raingardens, and more. For information, go to the District's website: https://vbwd.org/Grants/best_management_practices_stewardship_grant_program.php (or scan the QR code above).



SIMPLE STEWARDSHIP PRACTICES

There are many simple stewardship practices you can implement around your home

- Maintain a vigorous and environmentally sound lawn
- Maintain your septic system
- Direct rain gutters into vegetation rather than pavement
- Reduce water runoff by capturing it in a raingarden or using permeable pavers or dry wells, which allow the water to collect and seep into the ground
- Avoid using salt in the winter, but if you must, shovel first, don't over salt, and sweep up excess salt
- Manage invasive nonnative species
- Avoid fertilizers and detergents with phosphorus, or use them conservatively
- Clean up after pets
- Keep mulch and yard waste away from water

Visit the VBWD website at www.vbwd.org for more information.

