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CONTACT

Sonya Carel, Visual Communications Dir.- scarel@eorinc.com (651) 203-6038

Kevin Biehn, Marketing Director

- kbiehn@eorinc.com (651) 203-6022

Arlington-Pascal Stormwater Improvements Receive 2010 Environmental Initiative Awards for Natural Resource Protection & Restoration



The Arlington-Pascal Stormwater Improvements represent a pioneering water quality protection and stormwater management project in which multiple infrastructure elements were implemented in coordination with the activities of several agencies. The fundamental project goal was to improve the water quality of Como Lake while addressing neighborhood drainage/flooding issues.

The Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) worked with Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc. (EOR) to address the concerns identified in the neighborhood-led Como Lake Strategic Management Plan (CLSMP). One of the primary concerns was the appearance of algal blooms, which deplete dissolved oxygen, result in fish kills, destroy wildlife habitat, and make water unfit for recreation. Algal blooms occur when there are high concentrations of phosphorus, and therefore their occurrence can be reduced by reducing phosphorus inputs. Reducing algae blooms makes Como Lake a nice place to enjoy Minnesota's natural habitat and to experience the benefits of water recreation.

This large community-wide project, implemented over a period of 6 years, incorporated many innovative sustainable stormwater management techniques including the largest infiltration/underground storage tank in Minnesota (651,657 gallons), the first installation of infiltration trenches directly under a roadway, a regional treatment pond retrofit that doubles as a water feature at the Como Golf Course, and multiple raingardens throughout the neighborhood.

The 8 community raingardens provide colorful native plants that help reduce flooding while also serving to help beautify the neighborhood streetscapes and serve as environmental education tools in the demonstration of sustainable stormwater management practices.

In addition to the innovative design and engineering, this project also incorporated a unique cost-share plan that was developed specifically to address these concerns across municipal borders. The success of the project was aided by the creative thinking of the CRWD and EOR, who worked cooperatively with the cities of St. Paul, Falcon Heights, and Roseville; and Ramsey County.

Further support from a Local Water Planning Challenge Grant through the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and a Minnesota Clean Water Legacy Grant helped to address the inter-community flooding and water quality problems in the Como Lake neighborhood. As Mayor Coleman stated upon completion of the infiltration pond at the re-opening of the Como Golf Course, "This project is an example of efficient public sector collaboration."

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Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc. 651 Hale Ave N Oakdale, MN 55128 T/ 651.770.8448 F/ 651.770.2552 www.eorinc.com