

CRWD named Watershed District of the Year

State association gives award today at annual convention in Alexandria

AUSTIN, Minn. – Friday, Dec. 1, 2017 – Cedar River Watershed District received a statewide award today for its numerous projects focused on improving water quality and reducing local flooding.

CRWD was named the 2017 Watershed District of the Year during the annual convention of the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) in Alexandria.

Justin Hanson, CRWD administrator, accepted the award along with CRWD project manager Cody Fox and board member Mike Jones, who has served on CRWD's Board of Managers since its inception in 2007.

"This is an incredible honor to be recognized at this level by our peers and partners," Hanson said. "It's a reflection of the hard work and team effort put forward by our staff and board but we would not be in this position without outstanding agricultural producers and landowners and other partners."

Todd Piepho, an area hydrologist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, nominated CRWD for this year's award, recognizing the district's numerous efforts to improve water quality and reduce flooding within its 435 square miles of land in Mower, Dodge, Freeborn and Steele counties.

Under the nomination, CRWD was recognized for various work related to water regulation, water-quality improvement projects, water monitoring, flood-damage reduction, community engagement and watershed planning.

Among these efforts is the CRWD's ongoing five-year, \$8.4 million Capital Improvement Project (CIP) focused on building 25 structures in farm fields to temporarily retain stormwater and stabilize ravines along the Cedar River State Water Trail and within the Dobbins Creek subwatershed.

MAWD is a St. Paul-based association representing 45 watershed districts in Minnesota that are partners in water protection and management. MAWD provides educational opportunities, information and training for watershed district managers and staff through yearly tours, meetings and regular communication.

In 2012, CRWD received the Watershed Program of the Year award from MAWD. DNR officials also nominated CRWD for that award partly due to the CRWD staff's extensive work on alternative agricultural drainage demonstration projects with the University of Minnesota and other groups.

Two years earlier, Hanson, who was a CRWD resource specialist at the time, received MAWD's 2010 Watershed District Employee of the Year award.

Now in its 10th year, CRWD was formed in 2007 by local and state officials in response to the Austin area's two worst-known floods in 2000 and 2004. CRWD's top priorities are flood reduction and water-quality improvement.



CRWD staff receives the 2017 Watershed District of the Year award today at the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts' (MAWD) annual convention in Alexandria. Pictured (left to right) are CRWD's project manager Cody Fox; administrator Justin Hanson; and board member Mike Jones with Luke Skimmer, the ecological and water resources division director with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.