

Rx for Woodbury Lakes

What if cleaning up a lake were as easy as healing an ear infection? “Take two trees and one raingarden,” the doctor would say, “and by the end of the week, the algal blooms should disappear.”

This summer, the South Washington Watershed District, Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District and Washington Conservation District will use an innovative technique, known as a sub-watershed assessment, to diagnose and prescribe treatment for water pollution in Carver and Powers Lakes in Woodbury. Using a combination of computer modeling software, maps and aerial photos, and on-the-ground research, project staff will select small areas by each lake, one to three blocks large, where raingardens, buffer plantings, vegetated swales and other water-quality landscaping can be added to keep dirt, phosphorus and other pollutants out of the water. A parallel project with the City of Woodbury will measure how well trees reduce stormwater pollution at Powers Lake. The goal for all three projects is to reduce nuisance algal blooms that prevent local residents from fully enjoying their community waterways, as well as to improve wildlife habitat.

The sub-watersheds project will include funding to help people living near Carver and Powers Lakes install recommended landscaping practices, as well as professional design assistance to ensure that planting projects are attractive and enhance people’s existing yards. The Powers Lake tree project will include funding to plant 80-100 young trees within a two to three block area near the lake. There will be no cost to residents for these trees, but priority will be given to streets with the most willing landowners. Because the majority of the developed land draining to Powers and Carver Lakes is privately owned, project partners are counting on support and participation from local residents and property owners to make these three projects succeed.

For information on the Powers or Carver Lakes projects, contact the Washington Conservation District: 651-275-1136, www.mnwc.org.