DeCola Ponds B & C Improvement Project (BC-2, 3, 8)



FINAL REPORT
October 2025

I. Project Overview

This project in the City of Golden Valley combined flood storage creation, water quality improvements, and upland habitat restoration near the Pennsylvania Woods area. The project created 23.9 acre-feet of flood storage, reducing flood elevations at the low point on Medicine Lake Road, and increased pollutant removal capabilities in the DeCola Ponds, which ultimately drains to Bassett Creek. The project also restored 3.2 acres of wetland and upland habitat. The project was the first in a series of BCWMC Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) resulting from the Medicine Lake Road and Winnetka Avenue Area Long-Term Flood Mitigation Plan. This CIP project builds off the City of Golden Valley's Liberty Crossing flood reduction project completed in 2017.

II. Project Area

The DeCola Ponds B & C Improvement Project is located just south of Medicine Lake Road and east of Winnetka Blvd. The project area incorporated much of the Pennsylvania Woods natural area and is immediately adjacent to multifamily housing including The Liberty Apartments and Townhomes and Dover Hill Apartments (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Project Location in Golden Valley east of Winnetka Ave. N. and South of Medicine Lake Road.

III. Project Description and Outcomes

Key elements of this project included the following (Figure 2):

A. Increase flood storage in DeCola Ponds A, B, and C by modifying the DeCola Pond C outlet structure and overflow to lower the Normal Water Level while increasing the overflow elevation of the berm on the south end of DeCola Pond C

B. Connecting the Liberty Crossing flood storage features to the expanded storage in the Dover Hills and DeCola Ponds B and C areas by installing a 14’ x 4’ box culvert.
C. Developing a sediment forebay in the Dover Hills area to develop water quality treatment volume, improve ease of maintenance, and enhance water quality downstream
D. Increasing the DeCola Ponds B and C open water area, and increasing associated water quality treatment volume through expanding contours below the Normal Water Level and dredging accumulated sediment in DeCola Pond B
E. Expanding the flood and water quality storage around DeCola Ponds B and C to create and restore wetland habitat and restore upland habitat in all disturbed areas to serve as wetland buffers.
F. Preserving trees on the large knoll in Pennsylvania Woods and preserving screening trees along the west, east, and south side of DeCola Pond B and along north and east side of DeCola Pond C. Tree removal occurred within project disturbance limits with approximately 223 trees and 432 shrubs replanted and approximately 2.9 acres restored with native wetland and upland seeding.

Project outcomes included:

- Additional Flood Storage Created: 23.9 acre-feet
- Improved Water Quality: 10.8 pounds of phosphorus reduction per year
- Restored Wetland and Upland: 2.9 acres
- Additional Open Water Area: 2.0 acres
- Reduced 100-year Flood Depth on Medicine Lake Road: From 3.1 ft to < 2.0 ft

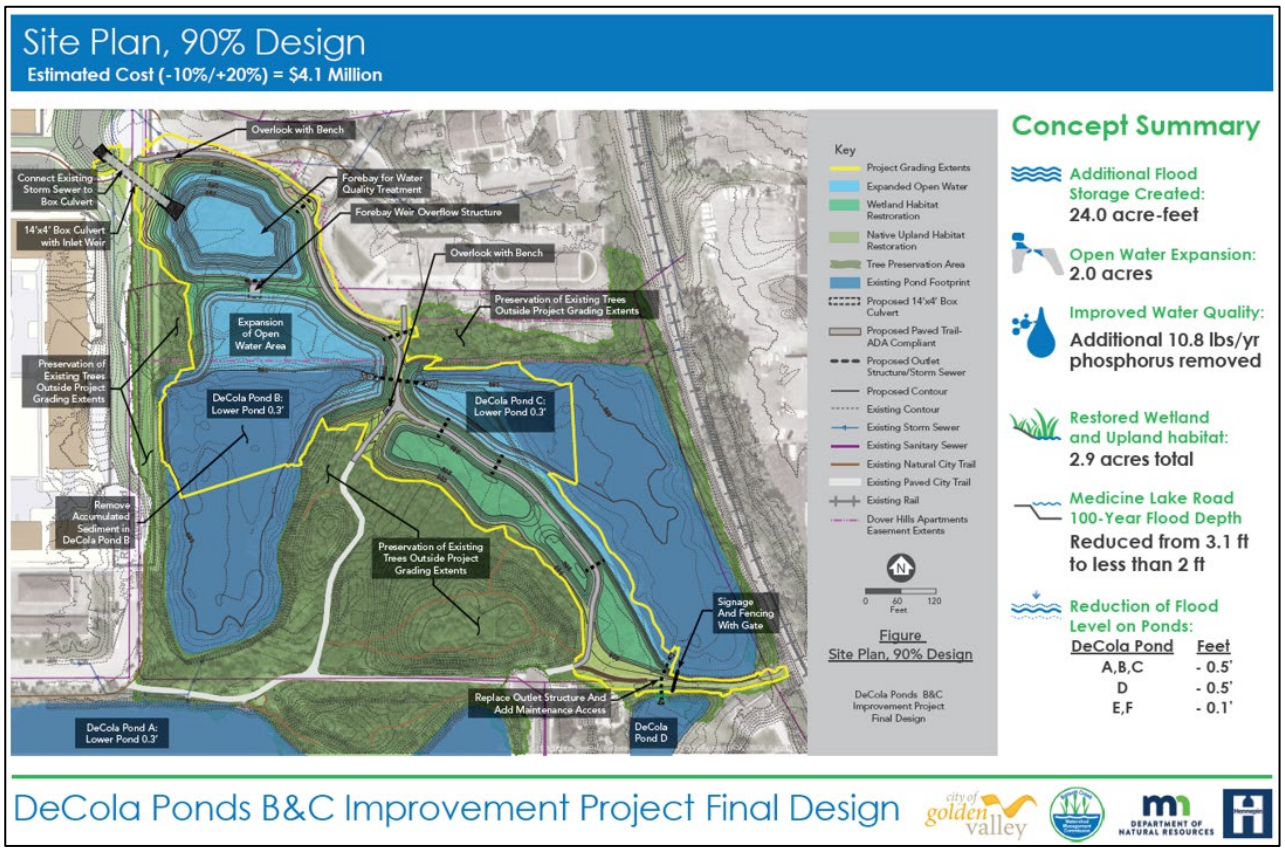


Figure 2. Project Components and Outcomes

IV. Timeline and Key Documents

All documents can be found at www.bassettcreekwmo.org/projects/all-projects/decola-ponds-b-c-improvement-project

May 2018:	Feasibility study completed
August 2018:	Project officially ordered
August 2018:	Cooperative agreement with City of Golden Valley for design, construction, long term maintenance approved
February 2019:	50% Designs approved
April 2019:	90% Designs approved
Summer 2020:	Construction completed
2020 – 2023:	Vegetation establishment
2024:	Tree replanting (from trees lost to drought)

V. Project Budget and Funding

The estimated cost for this project was $4.1 million. Funding sources included:

- $1,531,500 BCWMC CIP funds collected as ad valorem tax levied on all watershed residents by Hennepin County in 2019 ($1,031,500) and 2020 ($500,000)
- $68,500 Clean Water Fund Grant to BCWMC (Watershed Based Implementation Funding) from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources



- $1,391,388 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) Flood Damage Reduction Grant to City of Golden Valley
- Up to $700,000 Hennepin County and City of Golden Valley funds

While it's unknown how much funding the city and county contributed, the BCWMC reimbursed the city a total of $1,410,861.36 over three pay requests (February 4, 2020; November 30, 2020; and March 14, 2025). The remaining BCWMC funds of $189,139 will go into the BCWMC's Closed Project Account for use on future projects.

VI. Lessons Learned

Overall, the project was implemented without significant challenges. Vegetation and tree establishment was difficult due to significant drought conditions in 2022 and 2023. Several trees were replanted in 2024.

VII. Maintenance

The City of Golden Valley's maintenance schedule includes regular inspection of the outlet structures and other project components as well as maintenance, as needed, including sediment removal in the forebay constructed in the Dover Hills area.

VIII. Photos



Pond C before construction



After construction; during vegetation establishment