



Capitol Region Watershed District

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For Immediate Release

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CRWD Posts New Video:

A First Look at a Century Old Storm Sewer Tunnel

Saint Paul, Minn. (March 13, 2017) – Capitol Region Watershed District has posted a new four-minute video showing the first glimpse of a century-old, six-mile underground tunnel system, which travels from Como Lake and Lake McCarrons, and eventually carries storm water to the Mississippi River.

Trout Brook Storm Sewer System's extensive maze of tunnels carries water from neighborhoods in Saint Paul, Roseville, Falcon Heights, and Maplewood to the Mississippi River. Capitol Region Watershed District owns, operates and maintains the system, which is about 100 years old. The craftsmanship of the limestone arch tunnels is often seen at local historic sites. The tunnels play a vital role in moving rain water below ground to keep residents safe.

Data collected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration support the fact that intense storms are happening more often. In 2016, the Trout Brook system carried almost 3.9 billion gallons of rain water and snow melt to the river. Systems like Trout Brook are important for public safety because they carry runoff and help alleviate the potential for localized flooding, just one of the many impacts of climate change Minnesotans are experiencing.

System maintenance is ongoing and a significant part of Capitol Region Watershed District's work. The District is in the process of repairing the oldest section of the system by replacing missing or damaged mortar between the limestone blocks, installing a concrete liner where more defects occur and removing calcium deposits. Maintaining infrastructure like Trout Brook often goes unnoticed by the public because the tunnels are hidden below ground. These hidden resources are moving water from neighborhoods, via storm drains and the Trout Brook Storm Sewer System, to the river.

Water flowing into storm drains is only as clean as the community from which it comes. Once in the tunnel, the water isn't treated in any way. In 2015, the District piloted a program with Hamline University and the City of Saint Paul that encourages residents to adopt storm drains (adopt-a-drain.org) to keep communities, lakes and rivers clean. Residents are asked to report how much material they collect during the year to determine the program's collective impact. The program continues to be an integral part of the District's work with residents today.

Capitol Region Watershed District's new video includes a first look at the Trout Brook Storm Sewer System's historic tunnels and highlights work with residents to protect nearby lakes and the Mississippi River. Staff receive specialized training and equipment to enter the tunnels for maintenance activities. The tunnels are not open to the public for safety reasons. <https://vimeo.com/208134713>

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About Capitol Region Watershed District

Established in 1998, Capitol Region Watershed District covers 40 square miles and includes portions of Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Maplewood, Roseville and Saint Paul. The District is governed by a five-member Board of Managers that work to protect, manage and improve water resources including Como Lake, Crosby Lake, Loeb Lake, Lake McCarrons and the Mississippi River.

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