

– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

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EOR Receives Grand Award in Water Resources Engineering from ACEC-MN for Incorporating Green Infrastructure into a New, Sustainable Campus for the Capitol Region Watershed District.

St. Paul, MN – The water-centric, engineering and environmental consulting firm Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc. (EOR) has received the Grand Award in Water Resources Engineering for the design of a high-performance, sustainable campus that helps improve water quality and serves as an environmental education site, while providing a new pocket-park and green space for the community.

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Minnesota (ACEC/MN) has selected EOR’s Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) Campus design for its Engineering Excellence Grand Award in Water Resources. The Engineering Excellence Awards recognize engineering firms for projects that demonstrate an exceptional degree of innovation, complexity, achievement, and value. The award was announced on February 23rd at the 2024 ACEC/MN Engineering in Excellence Awards Gala held in St. Paul, MN.

The headquarters of the CRWD whose mission is “*to protect, manage, and improve water resources*” is located on a former industrial site adjacent to a diverse, residential neighborhood. EOR revitalized the new CRWD campus using innovative stormwater management practices and green infrastructure which was integrated with the overall site-planning and landscape architecture, creating a high-performance, sustainable campus. Despite the challenges of the small, post-industrial site, EOR used a water-resource focused approach and creative planning to strategically locate stormwater management techniques that reduce water usage, improve water quality, provide environmental education opportunities, and increase community green space, while improving the local ecosystem and promoting a healthier environment.

To accomplish these benefits, EOR combined the following suite of stormwater practices to increase stormwater infiltration and treatment on the campus:

- *permeable pavement (1,083 sq. ft.)*
- *boulevard tree trenches (2,460 sq. ft.),*
- *rain gardens (7,500 sq. ft., with over 50 species of native plants),*
- *an underground infiltration tank system (75,000 gallons),*
- *and two rainwater cisterns (3,000-gallon capacity per cistern; 6,000 gallons total).*

The CRWD campus features pollinator-friendly, native plants and several areas that function as outdoor classrooms. A community ‘pocket park’ is centered around an educational wetland pond, providing seating and shade. This pond is also integrated with an interactive, child-friendly, exterior educational exhibit about watersheds and the water cycle. The exhibit is fed by filtered, roof runoff water that is captured and stored in a cistern located within the main entrance. After the water passes through the exhibit, it is directed into the nearby wetland pond which serves as a main feature for the pocket-park.

This project represents Minnesota’s first stormwater infiltration project into petroleum-impacted groundwater, which reduces the concentration of contaminants and provides cleaner water draining into the Mississippi River. The project also retains all water that falls on site and meets 75% of CRWD’s water needs while simultaneously creating an educational campus that embraces its neighbors with a healthier, LEED v4 Gold certification - providing a sustainable, urban oasis for the community.

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