

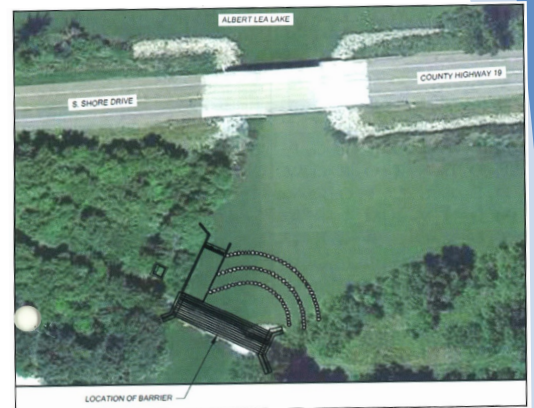
The Shell Rock River Watershed District (SRRWD) encompasses 246-square miles in Freeborn County, Minnesota. The Watershed is home to 11 lakes, including Albert Lea Lake, that is located partially within the city of Albert Lea and central to its tourism industry and identity.

The existing outlet structure and access bridge for Albert Lea Lake was installed in 1922 and was in need of repair. The District saw the opportunity to not only build a new dam but manage rough fish populations and aquatic vegetation by creating a 3-in-1 project. Groundbreaking for the construction of the new Albert Lea Lake Dam and Fish Barrier Project began in late August of 2014, and consists of a dam, fish barrier, and draw down structure.



Left: The old, failing dam.

Right: Aerial imagery and engineered drawing of the project.



1. Rock-Arch Dam



The previous fixed crest dam was replaced with a series of rock arches to provide a naturalized outlet to Albert Lea Lake. The uppermost arch will control the normal water level.

2. Electric Fish Barrier

An electric fish barrier will be used to stop the movement of fish, such as Common Carp, into Albert Lea Lake. It will also prevent the introduction of Silver Carp and Bighead into the SRRWD chain of lakes. The SRRWD has a proven track record of success with fish barriers. The fish barriers upstream of Albert Lea Lake include White Lake, Mud Lake, Goose Lake, and Wedge Creek have improved habitat and water clarity in the upstream areas.



3. Lake-Level Draw Down Structure

Installation of a structure to facilitate lake-level management gives the SRRWD flexibility to take action, as necessary, to benefit the health of the lake. Periodic lowering of lake elevations allows management of invasive plants and fish, improvement of water clarity due to reduction in wind generated turbidity, and time for plant colonization of shoreline and shallow water areas. The entire lake systems benefits from improving aquatic plant health.





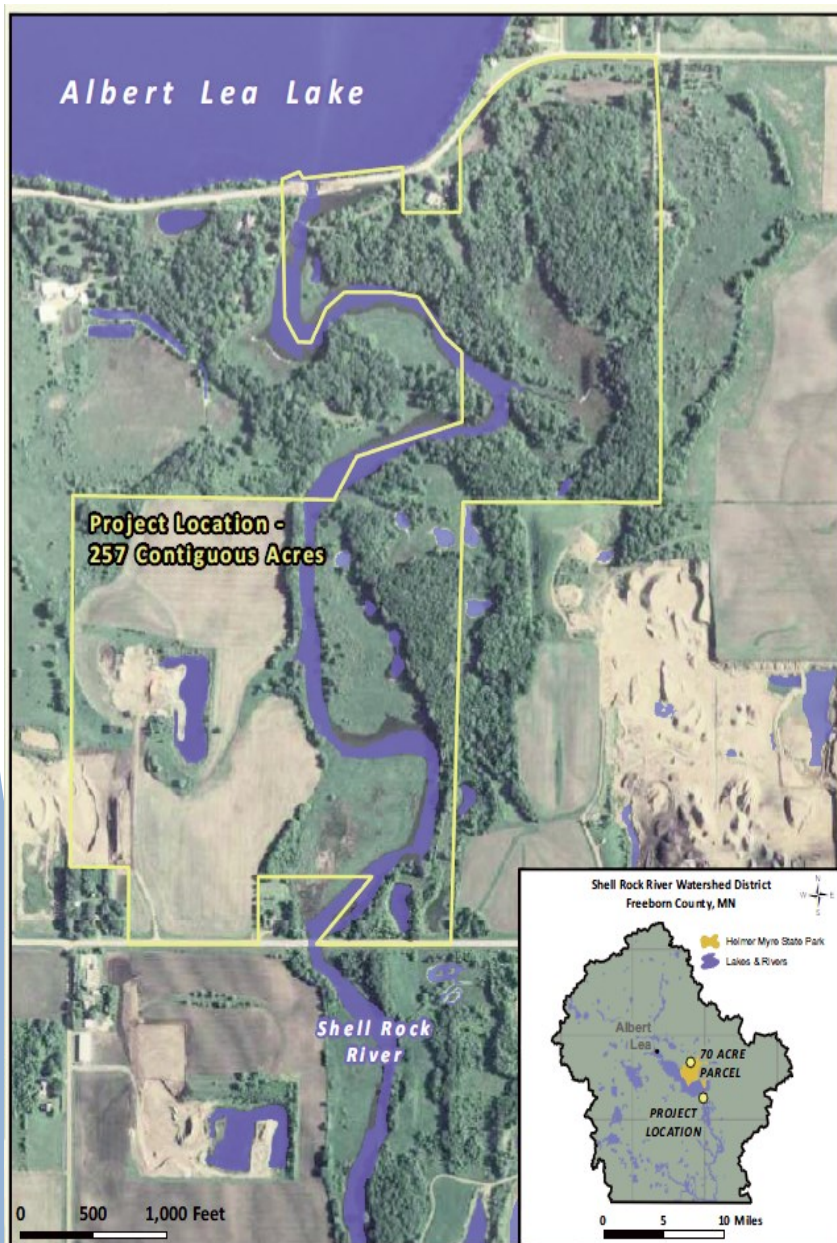
Shell Rock River Headwaters Restoration Project



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund Shell Rock River Headwaters Restoration Project

In 2012, The Shell Rock River Watershed District (SRRWD) purchased 257 acres of pristine land located at the headwaters to the Shell Rock River for the purpose of providing fish and wildlife habitat restoration, water quality, flood control and recreation opportunities.

The SRRWD Management Plan, developed in 2004, identified goals for accelerating programs for improved habitat, water quality and flood control. Acquiring the land allowed the District to meet these goals and create opportunities for the public that includes recreation, hunting, fishing and educational experiences.



- In addition to the land purchase, The Shell Rock River Watershed District provided \$2.68 million in local funding and/or in-kind services as part of the 206 Federal Grant
- The 257 acre parcel is located within the Albert Lea State Game Refuge and complements other existing activities for wildlife/fisheries management and recreation opportunities.
- The property has various amenities that include an outlet of Albert Lea Lake, the headwaters of the Shell Rock River, 1.4 miles of Shell Rock River within the property and a floodplain and mesic hardwood forest. The area is also home to undisturbed and highly diversified wetland complexes and riparian corridors and possible pre-historic native American habitat sites.
- There are various opportunities for native habitat restoration on the land including native plant seed bank development, wetland creation and restoration and native prairie establishment. In addition, floodplain forest and mesic forest restoration and shoreland restoration of the Shell Rock River are also important opportunities.

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