

Natural Resource Advisory Group
5.6.2025 Minutes
3:15 pm. City Hall Conference Room

Present: Mary Gegen, Ruth Nissen, Betsy Knowles, Marge Loch-Wouters, Jason Ludwigson, Randy Urich, Cindy Wright

- I. Approved Minutes from 4_2_2025.
- II. Old Business
 - A. Stoney Point Forestry Habitat Restoration Project Updates. There has not been any herbicide application yet. The wood chips are holding the soil so there are no apparent erosion issues in the mowed area.
 - B. Update on the tree trimming efforts. No new pruning has occurred since the last meeting.
 - C. Update on buckthorn and bittersweet removal. This removal is finished for the season. Areas that were addressed were the upper portion of Stoney Point, the trail from Veterans Park to Eagles Bluff trail, and the area adjacent to the prairie on Eagles Bluff. In addition, signs have been placed verifying the MN Land trust perimeter.
 - D. Garlic mustard pulling efforts. Four days were originally scheduled, however we only had volunteers pulling on one day because the garlic mustard is later than last year, and there is significantly less. We are currently waiting to see if we need to do a call for volunteers on another day, or if NRAG members could complete this year's effort. Possible dates are the mornings of May 12 and May 15. There will be an email confirmation for these dates.
 - E. Tree Ordinance. It has been reviewed by the City Council but is not yet adopted, as a few items are still under discussion.
 - F. Trail Maintenance Guidelines. Per guidelines, NRAG members regularly evaluate trail conditions. Discussed availability. Note: guidelines also suggest mid July for weed whipping and a walk-through to identify hazardous trees.
 - G. CPL Blufflands Grant Application. This has been awarded for \$ 50,000 for cutting and treating invasives in the approximately 224 acres of La Crescent bluffland parks.
 - H. CPL Grant Application Phase 2 Forestry Habitat Restoration Project Below Stoney Point Road. This has been awarded for approximately \$49,000 to complete forestry mowing in this area.

III. New Business

- A. May boulevard tree plantings - Tree Stewards Education - There are approximately 44 boulevard tree applications and the species requested are varied. This planting will likely begin in mid May. Mary has created an information guide for the homeowners.
- B. SHIP grant dry bluff prairie signs Eagles Bluff - SHIP funding was not awarded for this signage, so other funding is being sought.
- C. Residents establishing prairie - If a homeowner wants to plant prairie on their property, it is unclear how to address this because of the noxious weed ordinance. Discussed how permitting or signage might distinguish intentional prairie from weeds.
- D. Postcards - Stoney Point Project - The city received postcards from Underground Postcard participants which recognized the success of the Stoney Point Forestry Habitat Restoration.

IV. Other Items

- A. The sign which directed hikers to an alternative route at Stoney Point was stolen. Options to address vandalism were discussed.
- B. Frank J. Kistler Memorial Park Pollinator Plantings. These were burned in the spring. This created an opportunity to remove the landscape fabric that had strangled plants. We could not remove it all before it began to impact emerging plants, but Mary created a diagram so that we can remove the remaining fabric in 2026. Mulching can probably begin in late May when the plants are higher..
- C. Mary made a handout highlighting the benefits of trees which was posted on Facebook to help address comments about tree planting.
- D. Park sign design is on the agenda for the next Parks Board meeting.

V. Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 18 at 3:15 pm

Respectfully submitted, Betsy Knowles