

## Natural Resource Advisory Group

### 2.16.2023 Minutes

**Present:** Betsy Knowles, Marge Loch-Wouters, Jim Nissen, Ruth Nissen, Randy Urich, Bill Waller

**Guests:** Jess Witkins (La Crescent library)

- I. Connections with La Crescent Public Library - Jess Witkins attended the meeting to discuss ways that the library could foster connections with the Natural Resource Advisory Group, through activities that highlight conservation and climate change, and/or highlight Earth Day (April 22) and Arbor Day (April 28).
  - A. Ideas were shared, as well as discussing a link with the possible Migratory Bird Day.
  - B. For Arbor Day the city coordinates tree planting, tentatively at Horse Track Meadows this year. The library could use Arbor Day focus for a Makerspace Challenge event for school kids ages 7-11.
  - C. Randy has a cross-section of a tree- count rings, children could find the largest tree near the library and they can measure trees using a special tool they make themselves.
  
- II. Tree Ordinance - revision of tree ordinances discussed. As a tree city, La Crescent needs a designated Tree Board - currently the Parks Board. NRAG may be a more logical entity. Bill will discuss merging the sample and current ordinances with a more general focus on all trees in public spaces for consideration.
  
- III. Migratory Bird Day. This event remains tentative due to Avian Influenza, however, a target date of Saturday morning May 20 was selected. Jim will determine the availability of the bird banding crew that day. Migratory bird day offers an opportunity to families. Discussion on ways to make it more family-friendly - ex. Marge could do a kid hike on-site.
  
- IV. Pollinator Garden Signage in Frank J. Kistler Memorial Park. The past discussion has considered a small sign with a QR code with a link to an online guide, as well as a larger sign with bloom and color coding.
  - A. Decision to combine bloom/color sign with QR code if possible. The location needs to be determined. Input is needed on the depiction of dates and grasses.
  - B. Betsy will prepare a draft to discuss with Jason.

V. Work Plan - the work plan prepared by Bill was reviewed.

- A. Invasives - garlic mustard. The tentative target volunteer date is Saturday, April 22. No equipment is needed as volunteers provide their own gloves. The city will provide trash bags.
- B. Invasives - buckthorn. The tentative plan is to do a small-scale effort in the Fall of 2023 (cut stump). The city can provide for preliminary needs (spray, etc). Jim will get an equipment list from Friends of Marsh. Bill/Jason will explore the grant from MDA for Noxious Weed/Invasive Plant Grants.
- C. Forest Habitat - Randy will contact Val about a walk-through of forest parks, tentatively set for the second half of June.

VI. Smart Salting

- A. Marge reviewed information on Smart Salting and discussed ways that information could be shared with the public. City newsletter or Houston County News are options.
- B. Ruth has made a request for chloride levels in Blue Lake through the WI DNR Long Term Resource Monitoring Program, which is one of the two components of the federally mandated Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program.

Next meeting: March 23, 3:45 pm

Respectfully submitted, Betsy Knowles