

Natural Resource Advisory Group

3.23.2023 Minutes

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

Guests: Pat Wilson

- I. Pat Wilson, board president of Friends of the Blufflands (and also part of Bluffland Coalition) shared the history of the group(s). Their agreement with the City of La Crosse is for restoration, reforestation, and addressing invasives. Providing physical work in La Crescent is beyond scope of the group, but may be able to provide advice. One suggestion was to develop a management plan for prairies potentially using the expertise of SE MN prairie enthusiasts.
- II. Old Business
 - A. Connections with La Crescent Public Library – Arbor Day (April 28) focus for a Makerspace Challenge event for school kids ages 7-11. Marge will contact Jess to determine current plans, and Randy will provide tree cookie if this fits with planned activities.
 - B. Migratory bird day - The team is still interested in holding the event on May 20, however the date remains tentative because of avian influenza.
 - C. Tree Ordinance status - Jason has been asked to combine the ordinances into one.
 - D. Pollinator Garden Signage in Frank J. Kistler Memorial Park – Jason’s suggestions have been incorporated, and he will get a mock -up of the updated version. All in agreement in placing the sign on the tallest wall in the southwest entrance.
 - E. Work Plan Review - Val Green is willing to walk the parks with us to help develop a Forest Habitat Monitoring plan. This could identify areas with erosion issues which could be addressed through an Eagle Scout project.
- III. New Business
 - A. Proposed dog park off South 7th Street - One of three current Eagle Scout projects is to develop the proposed dog park. Bill would like the NRAG to view the site to identify any concerns about tree removal and impact to flora.
 - B. Kistler Park native planting clean up – NRAG usually cuts residual vegetation late April or early May (last year April 26). Ruth will contact members about potential dates as weather permits. City will pick up residue and provide wood mulch as needed.

- C. Garlic Mustard Volunteer Event planning - Volunteer date of Saturday April 22 is confirmed, start time 10:00 a.m. Volunteers will provide their own gloves, and the city will provide trash bags. Appropriate disposal methods discussed. Betsy provided a draft news release for Houston County News, which the city can also post on the web site when finalized. Marge will be the volunteer sign-up contact and provide volunteers with the City volunteer waiver.

- D. Grant information from Val Green - Randy shared the information regarding MDA grants for noxious weed removal, as well as a USDA Forest Service grant for costs to acquire and establish forests.

- E. Next Meeting: April 20, 3:45 pm. Begin meeting at the dog park location on S. 7th Street

Respectfully submitted, Betsy Knowles