

Natural Resource Advisory Group

2.15.2024 Minutes

Present: Betsy Knowles, Marge Loch-Wouters, Jason Ludwigson, Jim Nissen, Ruth Nissen, Randy Ulrich, Bill Waller

Guests: Jeremy King (WDNR- Mississippi River Water Quality Technician)

- I. Presentation by Jeremy King - Jeremy provided an overview of chloride and sodium levels in local waterways, with a focus on levels in Blue Lake. Discussed sources and methods to reduce runoff. The potential role for public education by NRAG was discussed.
- II. Minutes from 1.25.2024 approved
- III. Proposed tree ordinance - additional changes were reviewed.
- IV. Review of La Crescent Park Habitat Plan prepared by Val Green. Val Green is tentatively scheduled to present the Plan to the Parks Commission at their meeting on March 18.
- V. February 24th - Dry Bluff Prairie Work Day Eagles Bluff Park. Contact Jason if available.
- VI. Dog Park update - The Park and Rec Commission is recommending that the City proceed with the Chestnut Street site for the proposed dog park. This is on the agenda for the Feb 26 City Council meeting
- VII. Annual report of NRAG activities in 2023. The report was reviewed and a similar accounting of activities will continue for 2024. 2023 Summary is attached.
- VIII. Wagon Wheel Sign. Options for signage discussed, with suggestions to include history, maps and potentially photo(s). In addition, links could be provided to additional information on the city website addressing questions that residents have raised.
- IX. Next Meeting: March 19, 3:15 pm

Respectfully submitted, Betsy Knowles

(See attached)

Natural Resources Advisory Group 2023 Summary of Activity

At the start of the year, the focus areas for the Natural Resource Advisory Group were identified as: invasive species control, overlook preservation, goat prairie maintenance, and forest habitat health. Additional areas were added during the year.

Invited individuals with extensive experience with buckthorn control and prairie restoration to meetings to share expertise. They represented the work of the Friends of the Marsh and Friends of the Blufflands. The DNR forester, Val Green, also attended a meeting to provide information on forestry plans and invasive controls .

Collaborated with the City to retrace park property boundaries in order to inform trail decisions.

Coordinated Arbor Day activities with the La Crescent Public library.

Provided feedback on City of La Crescent Tree Ordinance revisions.

Documented Trail Maintenance Guidelines which were formulated at a stakeholder meeting, and provided these to the Parks Commission.

Hosted the Migratory Bird Day event on May 20 in Vetsch Park.

Designed signage for pollinator identification for Frank J. Kistler Memorial Park with link to online guide. Additional signage designed for sensitive areas in Stoney Point.

Planned and participated in work days for garlic mustard removal in the spring, inviting community involvement.

Participated in work days for buckthorn removal in the fall, trail maintenance, and Frank J. Kistler Park native plantings.

Completed on-site reviews: 1) S 7th street proposed Dog Park area, 2) erosion concerns in Vetsch and Stoney; 3) trail viability and usage in Vetsch and Stoney; 4) off and on trail walk-through of Vetsch and Stoney with DNR forester.

Discussed approaches to developing a plan to monitor forest health with the DNR forester - in keeping with the City Parks Plan.

Increased outreach efforts through print and digital informational articles.

Hours of Logged Activity by NRAG members and community members

Activity	NRAG Hours	Community Member Hours
Garlic Mustard pulling (3 days)*	18	6.5
Kistler Pollinator Gardens	33	
Migratory Bird Day (prep and event presence)	31	
Seeding Prairie*	7.5	
Trail Maintenance*	11.5	
Buckthorn Removal*	12	4.5

* City employees also participated

Additional trail and prairie maintenance completed by community volunteers - hours unknown.