



ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COUNCIL
City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation
Regular Meeting

Winslow Woods Park Shelter
Wednesday, August 13, 2025
4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

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I. CALL TO ORDER at 4:35 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL –

Marne Potter, Adam Fudickar, Denise Gardiner, Anne Crecelius, Jeff Ehman
Staff: Heidi Shoemaker, Rebecca Swift, Joanna Sparks

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 2025

IV. AGENDA

A. Appearances

A-1 Public Comment Period
No Public Comment.

B. Old Business

B-1 Bird Town Support

Shoemaker shared the application for Bird Town has been approved by Indiana Audubon and met the requirements. She has been given a login to create a webpage for Bloomington on the Bird Town Indiana site and is currently working on updating all of that information. Shoemaker will present this recognition to the Park Board on August 28.

B-2 Griffy Interpretive Sign

Shoemaker sent an electronic second draft of the first Griffy Lake Interpretive sign to members after the June meeting. A printed copy was provided at the August meeting for members to write their feedback and suggestions directly on the printed copy. One suggestion was to use more realistic images instead of the clip art for local wildlife.

B-3 Griffy Insect Study

Shoemaker announced that Brandon Olson accepted a full time position and his last regular work day was today but he would do some remote work and return for Bug Fest in September. In light of his change in employment, he is going to pursue publishing the insect study on his own. He is working with City GIS to edit the map to black and white instead of full color for publication purposes. The full color version will be available on the City of Bloomington website. He is making a few additional edits as well. Shoemaker agreed to send the link to the study to the members when it goes live.

C. New Business

C-1 Education Update

Sparks shared the woes of vegetation management while working around heat advisories and rain showers. Volunteer hours are also lower in the summer because the students are gone. Many professors require service learning hours and volunteer service picks up in the fall. There are 18 properties that have dedicated, long term Adopt-a-Greenspace volunteers assisting them. Sparks added the volunteer workdays often lead to impromptu learning and interesting discussions. Most recently, volunteers learned about cicada killers and the giant swallowtail life cycle during work days.

Sparks also promoted the partnership with MC-Iris to host the native plant sale on September 6 at the Switchyard Park Maintenance Building. The event will be held from 9am-1pm and there are around 6,000 plants that will be available while supplies last! Some species are more limited than others so come early if you are looking for cardinal flower. Sparks also promoted Bloomington Branches, the upcoming celebration of Bryan Park becoming an arboretum.

Shoemaker shared that applications are coming in and interviews are being set up to fill the part time education position. She also provided the members with the new parks program guide. This is the first guide where the staff hired in the spring had the opportunity to pick their own topics for programs. Some of the programs are brand new for Bloomington. She also mentioned the Griffy Lake Boathouse is closed during the week in October but staff still get requests for opportunities to get on the water Monday-Friday. Instead of offering just one sunset paddle in October, there will be four to provide more chances to get on the water.

Upcoming programs include Bug Fest that is less than a month away. It will take place at Karst Farm Park on Saturday, September 13. Nature Days start up again on Tuesday, September 2. Shoemaker recognized member Cathy Myer for her continued dedication in teaching at the Leonard Springs Nature Days and Griffy Lake Nature Days.

Gardiner shared some upcoming events from the Sycamore Audubon Society including the upcoming chimney swift watch at Fairview Elementary. Swift asked Gardiner for help getting swifts to use the chimneys at Rogers Family Park. Gardiner said putting up chimneys was trending for a while, but records show only about half ever get used by the birds. Making sure they are cleaned out regularly may increase the odds of them getting used. SAS is also prepping

for the annual Big Day on the morning of October 11 where they are partnering with Sycamore Land Trust.

Shoemaker added a follow up that she would be training some of the education staff and some boathouse staff in the citizen science project of monarch tagging. The hope is that after training, they will be able to offer pop up programs around town or at the boathouse to share this experience with the public. Tagging monarchs involves putting an informational sticker on the wing of a monarch so scientists can learn more about their migration path and the timing of their migration. Look to social media for pop ups! She added that if a monarch we tag is recovered in Mexico that you can print an online certificate and share this information with the public as well.

C-2 Griffy Lake Special Use Permit Requests

Mary Welz was meeting at Griffy Lake and happened to be at the property when I research company was testing out an unmanned aquatic drone with sonar technology. This brought up a discussion that we do not currently have policy written about drones. We do have research permits so the Parks Department did talk to the company about filling out one for this purpose. Research permits allow the department to know what is taking place on the property and make sure there is no damage to the park or wildlife. The Parks Department may look for guidance from ERAC to help form a policy about drones. Mary has gotten a research permit from the company, but it is still in discussion on whether or not it will be approved. Swift wonders if this type of drone could get a real map of the depth of Griffy Lake. ERAC stated the new policy should include restrictions for location of use, and prevent times of nesting birds and turtles. In general, ERAC seemed in favor of this research permit as long as they stayed out of the sensitive wildlife areas.

C-3 Invasive Insect Mitigation Efforts

Urban Forestry is controlling tree of heaven through basal bark treatment (BBT) in an effort to control spotted lantern flies. A thick oil is placed around the base of the tree and signs are posted for 48 hours to educate the public on the treatment. All pesticide treatments are also listed on the Bloomington Parks website since 2017.

On a side note, it was shared that the Monroe County Health Department has confirmed mosquitoes have tested positive for west nile virus in the county and in some of our parks.

C-4 Invasive Plant Management Updates

Much of this topic was tabled until next meeting since Welz was absent due to illness. The vegetation crew, who works on controlling invasive plants, has recently been moved under Welz so Sparks can focus on the native plantings and landscaping. We will invite Welz and some of her staff to the October meeting. Sparks did say the team works on manual removal of Johnson grass.

C-5 Encroachment

Swift stated that yard waste from park neighbors continues to encroach on the property lines but the major concerns are when structures are built, trees are cut, or mulching takes place.

Social trails connecting to the rail trail are also an issue. The Parks Department is also working with the Homelessness Response Coordinator and Community Foundation to provide resources and clean up for a large encampment in Browns Woods. Looking for signs of encroachment is easier in the winter with fewer leaves on plants and when we get new GIS imagery so staff will be looking for additional areas in need of management attention. Encroachment concerns can also be submitted through the uReport system.

Swift also shared BPRD is looking to create a permanent trail in Browns Woods to allow more public access into the property of old growth trees. She mentioned the park has beautiful spring ephemerals so care will be taken to protect the habitat during trail design.

C-6 Project Updates

Phase 1 of Building Trades Park will be finished by the end of the month. Some minor grading, seeding, and straw will still be completed and the roof will be going on the shelter soon. There will be a public celebration of the first phase completion so look for that announcement. Improvements of phase 1 come mostly from ARPA and focused on accessibility improvements. The phase 1 improvements included updates to the parking lot, removing an old boardwalk, and adding a new ADA compliant multiuse path. There will be a temporary path to the playground until the start of phase 2.

The Power Line Trail is in the permit review process. This is a Duke power line and they do not want trees planted along the trail but the City's Urban Development Ordinances requires planting and repairing buffers after a disturbance so there is some need for negotiation. Some of the required trees may be planted in RCA Park as it connects to the Power Line Trail. This project is not allowed to install lights so BPRD is looking into installing a smooth glow rock aggregate on the trail that will glow in the dark and be environmentally safe. There are 3 unhealthy trees that will be removed for this project. Removal will be planned as to not impact roosting bats or nesting birds. Swift will wait until plans are final before sending around the drafts of the project. This should go to bid in October and start in early 2026.

The Rogers Street trail crossing is finalized and Shoemaker will send the PDF of the plans to the Committee. This crossing will improve public safety and remove the angled crossing. The Rail Trail will remain and natural surface trail, but a small portion on each side of this crossing will be paved. Pedestrian-controlled rapid flashing beacons will also be installed for safety. A new street light will also be installed as mandated by the street department. This should go to bid in September and be awarded at the September Park Board. Ideally, this would be completed by the end of the year but weather will play a factor.

C-7 August Meeting Agenda Items

Inviting the Urban Forester for a Callery Pear update and the bicentennial planting.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, October 8, 2025

RCA Park Large Shelter