



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

Winslow Woods Shelter
Wednesday, April 8, 2026
4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

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

II. ROLL CALL –

Cathy Meyer, David Parkurst, Bill Jones, Marne Potter, Angie Shelton
Staff: Heidi Shoemaker, Mary Welz, Rebecca Swift

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 2026

IV. AGENDA

A. Appearances

A-1 Public Comment Period
No public comment

B. Old Business

B-1 Election of Officers
Angie Shelton was elected Chair. Bill Jones was elected Vice-Chair.

B-2 Griffy Prescribed Burn Update
Welz shared the City contracted Habitat Solutions to complete a prescribed burn on 13 acres at Griffy Lake on March 24, 2026. Weather conditions were great for the burn and it was considered a success. The area was closed to the public for approximately two and a half days, but the rest of the park remained open the entire time. There have been four prescribed burns that have taken place at Griffy Lake and all of them have been in new locations. Staff now need to evaluate the previous prescribed burn sites to

determine if prescribed burns should continue to be part of the management plan in those areas.

Meyer has noticed that a lot of young American beech trees have been cut in the area and asked if the City was trying to eliminate them. Welz said there is an effort to reduce the American beech and some maples but the contractor was instructed to keep the understory trees including hope hornbeam and American hornbeam. Welz continued that there may have been more loss to understory trees than anticipated due to the fact that this was a new request and there may have been a learning curve. The management choice for removing American beech and maple trees is to support oak and hickory trees that are shade intolerant but support the most wildlife. Oaks and hickories are also considered more drought tolerant and in a changing climate may be more resilient in the future.

There is an arbitrary standard of introducing prescribed fire every five years, but Welz shared with the council members that the City will be more intentional with their decisions as to when and where to burn again. Utilizing contractors and progressive monitoring of plant growth will make sure that the management plan for Griffy Lake is reaching the intended goals. With reptiles and amphibians emerging from brumation earlier than before, Welz would like to have all prescribed burns completed before March 1 and will strictly enforce no prescribed burns after March 15 in future years.

C. New Business

C-1 Review of Environmental Resources Advisory Council Policies

Shoemaker shared that in the history of the Environmental Resources Advisory Council, the Council was eliminated in 1995 and reinstated in 1996. She noted that she had a copy of the policies from 1996 as well as the most recent version approved in 2020. Bill Jones shared that he believes ERAC was established originally in 1985 after the creation of the Griffy Management Plan the year prior. The Council has been unable to fill one of the special seats for a member from the Utilities Board and the previous policies show a similar situation has occurred in the past. In 1996 one of the special seats represented Indiana University's Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education programs. At some point before 2020, they must have been unable to fill the seat with a faculty member from IU and the special seat was changed to someone who possesses expertise in outdoor recreation and environmental education to broaden the candidate pool. Shoemaker suggested the Council may want to approve a recommendation to change the Utilities Board requirement to broaden the candidate pool again. Since the policies had not been changed since 2020, it was also a good time to review all policies. The Council recommended the following changes that Shoemaker will present to the Park Board for official approval.

- Change to allow regular members to be qualified electors of the City or the County.
- Change the special seat from a member of the City of Bloomington Utilities Service Board to someone who possesses expertise in water resource management.

- Updating the procedure for meetings to not make it mandatory to meet six times a year.
- Changing the definition of quorum to half of the appointed members instead of a majority of the members.
- Change to eliminate the need for formal consent from the Council in the meeting minutes for members to miss two consecutive meetings.
- Addition of the Commission on Sustainability and Resiliency to the organizations ERAC will work closely.

The Council also confirmed Adam Fudikar fills the Environmental Commission seat, Angie Shelton fills the outdoor recreation and environmental education seat, Cathy Meyer fills the natural resources management seat, and the Utilities Board seat is currently vacant.

C-2 Programming Guide Schedule and Programming Partnerships

Shoemaker shared information from the 2026 program guide production schedule with the members. The May-August program guide will be coming out on April 15, but Shoemaker had to submit the information for the guide before the end of January. If groups would like to partner with the Parks Department that would be published in the guide, talks should begin at least 9 months in advance to select dates, work on descriptions, and meet the submission deadline. There are two opportunities to proof the guide before it goes to print. The deadline for Shoemaker to enter programs for September-December is in May.

If an organization misses the deadline for a guide, there are other opportunities to continue a partnership. Programs can be promoted through social media and may still attract enough participation to take place. Shoemaker cautioned against making last minute requests as they likely will not be able to be accommodated.

C-3 Education Update

Nature Days at Griffy Lake and Leonard Springs are already halfway through the spring season. With most of the field trips taking place in the fall, there are only two field trips at each location in the spring.

Earth Day is scheduled to take place on Saturday, April 18 at Switchyard Park from 12-3:30 p.m. There will be food trucks, musical acts on the main stage, a sand mandala art project, tree seedling giveaways, face painting, electric vehicle demos, and community vendors. New for this year is the addition of recycled carnival games. Shoemaker stated that an intern and a Cox Scholar have been putting together the games which include a ring toss, bowling, checkers, and more. There is a good variety of calm activities and larger movement games all made from things that would have been thrown away or recycled.

Public programs are doing well. Maple syrup was a popular program in February. A new education staff member was hired and almost immediately taught a program on creating wildlife-friendly yards. Arbor Day is not put on by the Natural Resources education team, but the Urban Forestry team will be hosting that tree planting at the end of the month. The pollinator habitat workshop put on at Rogers Family Park last year in collaboration with the US Fish and Wildlife Service is returning this year with some changes. It will

now cover more topics and details over two Saturday mornings in May and will take place at Switchyard Park.

Griffy Boathouse opened last weekend. It was a slow weekend due to rain, but was a good opportunity for staff to get back into the season and new staff to learn the procedures. There are 50% returning staff and 50% new staff this year. Shoemaker shared that she had not heard any feedback about the increase of some of the boathouse prices during opening weekend.

Bill Jones shared some upcoming Sassafras Audubon Society events that can be added to the next Bird Town application. Aaron Stumpf from Indiana Wildlife Federation will present on landscaping for birds at Unitarian Church on May 20. Feeder cleaning is at Bloomington Hardware on Saturday, April 18. SAS will also be starting a book club. Jones also shared that the Commission on Sustainability and Resilience has drafted some ordinances for bird safe buildings and shared the drafts with SAS members to review.

Cathy Meyer shared the upcoming Brown and Monroe County Wildflower Foray will be taking place April 24-26. Welz asked if the planning committee would be willing to hold hikes at Bloomington Parks properties in the future.

C-4 Project Updates

Rogers Street crossing project has pedestrian striping, the flashing beacons are operating, and the street light should be working before the end of the day. The beacons can run on solar energy but are also hardwired for cloudy days or the winter. The soil disturbance for this project did cause an emergence of Japanese knotweed that the vegetation crew is trying to kill the knotweed without killing the turf grass.

The Power Line Trail will have an official kickoff on April 20. A press release will be going out with more details announcing the contract with Monroe, LLC. This project will include a temporary road closure on Rogers north of Switchyard Park. The plan is to hopefully be closed after school is out, but before Granfalloon and the large concerts at Switchyard Park.

C-5 June Meeting Agenda Items

Meyer suggested we may talk about changes to the Adopt-a-Greenspace program. Swift shared that the changes were new changes to protect the habitats and the volunteers. Volunteers are able to handpull invasives, pick up trash, and report areas that need staff attention. Volunteers are no longer able to use tools unless under the supervision of staff members.

C-6 Additional non-agenda item

The Commission on Sustainability and Resilience submitted a draft resolution to oppose the use of glyphosate in Bloomington. MC-Iris and ecological restoration contractors have provided feedback on the resolution. Mary Welz submitted a letter of opposition on behalf of the Operations Division. The resolution will be discussed at a public meeting on

April 14. Shelton offered to submit a letter of opposition on behalf of ERAC and the members in attendance agreed to that proposal.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, June 10, 2026

Olcott Park Young Shelter