



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

Wednesday, April 20th, 2022
4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/85396145582?pwd=Mmt3MFNRREVHeEMzM3Y1SnNTK2VVdz09>

Meeting ID: 853 9614 5582
Passcode: ERAC

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:46PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Autumn Brunelle, Dave Parkhurst, Jeff Ehman, Cathy Meyer
Staff: Steve Cotter, Joanna Sparks, Tim Street, Rebecca Swift, Christian Thiim
Public: Deborah Hill

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 2022

Parkhurst moved to approve to the meeting minutes, Cathy Meyer Seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. AGENDA

A. Public Appearances

A-1 Public Comment Period

No public comments were submitted this meeting.

B. Old Business

B-1 Election of Officer

Swift noted that election of officers will wait until more members are present.

Brunelle asked when membership opportunity closes. Swift responded that the deadline is initially at the beginning of the year, but now is open until a qualified individual applies. The applicant will be brought to Park Board for approval and will need to meet certain qualifications, including being within city or county limits. Swift asked for applicants to be suggested for approval.

B-2 Clear Creek Trail Extension Updates

Cotter provided updates on the extension of Clear Creek Trail. Cotter mentioned ongoing efforts to extend Clear Creek Trail from the Rail Trail and stated interest in connecting the Clear Creek Trail to the Jackson Creek Trail in the future. Cotter noted that the owners at the Mill have built a small stretch that could potentially connect from the Clear Creek Trail to the Duke Trail. This would extend from Rogers Street to Weimer Road and connect to Thompson Park. Cotter also stated an interest in extending from Weimer Road to Twin Lakes Recreational Center. The big goal is to go all the way around the city.

Parkhurst asked for clarification as to the location of Weimer Road. Ehman and Cotter described the location and explained the goal of connecting Clear Creek Trail to Wapehani Mountain Bike Park.

B-3 Griffy Loop Trail Project Updates

Cotters provided updates to the Griffy Loop Trail, describing the six mile trail with construction occurring on the Eastern leg. It will connect to the south shore trails and the north shore trails which will both eventually connect to the western portion of the Loop Trail on the dam. A grant was approved to help fund the final trail construction along the dam. The construction of the new walkway along N Headley Rd is nearly finished. Limestone blocks were originally specified to contain the trail but were deemed too expensive for the available budget so natural-looking precast concrete blocks were used instead. The fishing pier is nearly complete, and the pedestrian crosswalk only requires traffic lines before being complete. They are working on connecting the bridge at the southern end of walkway to a staircase that will lead to a newly constructed trail that parallels the south shore of the lake. A contract with Spectrum is already established, and Spectrum will be working on a power project from the dam. The plan is to hire Spectrum again next year to complete the trail. The trail consists of both preexisting and new segments that need to be connected. A major challenge to the project is the transportation of equipment and materials to the steep ravines.

Ehman asked about traversing the hill. Cotters replied that they will only go up about a third of the distance of the hill. Ehman asked how they will build that section of the trail. Cotters responded that machines would build a more sustainable trail that will have proper drainage.

Brunelle asked if there will be a barricade on the hillside to prevent falling rocks. Cotters responded that there will probably not be a barrier build in this section.

Meyer asked if there will be any trees planted along the causeway. Cotters replied that there is some plans to plant a few shade trees in the fall but assume Sycamore trees will naturally return.

Cotter asked when the road will be paved to open back up for two-way traffic. Street estimated a two to three week time frame for finalizing the pavement. The goal is to open back up to two-way traffic by the end of May after guardrails are installed on both sides of the causeway.

Swift added that there will be a celebration for the finalization of the project at the end of July. More details to follow.

B-4 Climate Action Plan Implementation

Swift provided updates on CAP Implementation. The team continues to meet and is working on a document focusing on what Parks and Recreation currently measures, and how that can be translated into climate action. This includes facility management, equipment use, and communication among staff

towards climate action measures. Each BPRD division is represented on the BPRD Climate Action Team.

C. New Business

C-1 Education Update

Swift said that the season for Nature Days had wrapped up and all thirteen schools made it to the events. The department released the summer program guide and informed that the OuterSpatial platform would be celebrated at the Innovation Celebration. Pop-up programs and community events continue at various locations throughout the city. Creek cleanup programs were planned at many areas, including an event co-hosting by MCSWD and MCPR.

Brunelle added information about the garden season, which was pushed back due to rain. Day camp was in progress with no updates. The Karst Farm Greenway Trail has about 0.6 miles left and should be finished by August. This trail will extend to Ellettsville and hopefully connect to Flatwoods Park. Summer programming and events were in progress. Facilities management progressed at Karst Farm Park. Multiple climate education virtual events were described.

Sparks shared updates on work removing Callery Pear around county and city parks. Weed wrangles were in progress monthly but work still needs to be done on removing Callery Pear. BPRD staff are assessing safety and logistical measures to remove large trees on city properties. Sparks gave an update on BPRD monthly weed wrangles. 42 weed wrangles had been completed thus far. Over 500 volunteer hours at various locations had been clocked. BPRD plans for a tree planting event at the Earth Day Celebration at RCA Park. In addition to the First Saturday Weed Wrangles that happen once a month, there are weekly weed wrangles every Thursday from 1-2:30 at Lower Cascades Park and every Friday from 1-2:30 at Latimer Woods. Weed wrangles will continue into November.

Brunelle added that both MCSWD and MCPR departments will join BPRD and CBU at the Jackson Creek Cleanup event on April 30th hosted at Jackson Creek Park.

Street and Sparks noted an Arbor Day tree planting event scheduled for April 30th at Rev. Butler Park. Goal is to reduce low mow lawn and increase forest habitat. Sparks also informed that trees and bareroots would come from local genotyping options. Street added that there will be continual bicentennial tree planting efforts throughout the city this spring and fall.

C-2 Griffy Reptile, Amphibian, and Avian Inventory Survey Results

Cotters described the September 2020 to October 2021 Reptile, Amphibian, and Avian Inventory Survey process and results from Griffy Lake Nature Preserve. WEST Inc. used 18 cover boards to inventory reptiles and amphibians. WEST also used visual/audio surveys and aquatic nets for frogs and turtles. WEST found 28 of the 51 species of amphibians and reptiles that are possible within the range. WEST did not find any Fowler's toads or Four-Toed salamanders that have previously been found on the property. WEST identified two species of concern: the Eastern Box Turtle and the Blanchard's Cricket Frog. Threats to amphibians and reptiles include fragmentation from roads and trails, degradation from invasive species, and disease. Climate change is believed to have amplified these threats. While conducting visual and audio surveys, 103 species of birds were found. WEST identified four species of special concern: Bald Eagle, Greater Yellowlegs, Osprey, and Solitary Sandpiper. Threats to birds include habitat fragmentation from edge effect and predation, outdoor cats being the primary concern. Additionally, noise from nearby neighborhoods may disrupt birds' ability to

communicate. Recommendations to improve habitat at Griffy include temporary speed limits or speed bumps to protect crossing wildlife along the causeway and an underpass for wildlife.

Meyer asked if there was any concern about park visitors' collection of species such as box turtles. Cotters responded that this was a concern and may be combatted with education efforts. Swift added an increase of turtle shells along shorelines at Griffy, indicating possible hunting or collection patterns.

C-3 Switchyard Park Wetland and Stream Mitigation Annual Monitoring Report

Sparks described the efforts to revegetate and repopulate the area with native species. BPRD are 15 months into the monitoring process since construction. The annual monitoring contract was awarded to Ecologic and subcontracted with Little Rivers Consulting. The consensus is that the area is an improving wetland with challenges to address storm surges and invasive pressure.

C-4 Bicentennial Bond Tree Planting Project Updates

Swift tabled the project update until June when the City's Urban Forester, Erin Hatch, could attend.

C-5 Invasive Plant Management Updates

Sparks gave an update for the year on invasive plant management. The vegetation team focused on Butler Park, along the B-Line from Adams Street to Rogers clearing non-invasive wood material and moved to larger scale management. Site line work faced issues with illegal camping, especially towards the community gardens. BPRD will focus on opening the space and managing the vegetation. The green team mowed small items and is working on converting turf area to vegetation on a large scale without disturbing habitat throughout all parks. BPRD continues restoration work along Jackson Creek, the Goat Farm, Park Ridge East, and Switchyard Park. In March, the team focused on garlic mustard and poison hemlock removal. Public Works does not have an active management plan for poison hemlock, so they are assisted by the Park's vegetation team.

C-6 Lower Cascades Project Updates

Street described the final steps for the project. Creek restoration was almost finished, but still needed to reseed some surrounding areas and finish the new crossing bridge. Waterfall Shelter remains closed for rentals but is still accessible. The area along the creek is safer and more sustainable due to the new "staircase" design, however we had to remove many large trees along the road. Tree installation plans will begin in the fall, followed by secondary restoration of the grounds around the construction site. So far the new creek channel is responding well to flood events. The new accessible boardwalk was not officially open yet but members were able access the trail all the way to the waterfall.

C-7 June 2022 Meeting Agenda items

Winslow Woods Park Updates, Bicentennial Tree Planting Updates

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:56pm.

**NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8th, 2022
WINSLOW WOODS PARK– Winslow Shelter**