



**Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee (NRGC) Meeting
Tuesday, March 4, 2025
5:00 PM**

**Note: The March 4, 2025 NRGC meeting will be held both remotely and in-person at City Hall.
Instructions for participating in the meeting remotely are provided below.
Instructions for Participating in the Meeting Remotely Via Zoom**

Options for Joining the Zoom Meeting:

RECOMMENDED: Use your computer, tablet or smart phone to join the meeting by logging on to:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83269944804?pwd=qrjalkBp7VGuYD38aAJqAAAtYeFOsCi.1>

- Meeting ID: (832 6994 4804)
Passcode: 826970

Dial-in Number (to call in to the meeting)
+1 312 626 6799. When prompted, enter Meeting ID: 832 6994 4804

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Roll call: David Husebye, Susan Loomis, Kim Myhers, Elissa Thompson, Cody Kaye, Petra Brokken, Scott Hafner and Sven Risom
3. Approval of Agenda for March 4, 2025 meeting and additional agenda items proposed by members.
4. Approval of Minutes of the January 7, 2025 meeting.
5. Old Business
 - i) Belwin conversations
 - 1) Deer count – Sven
 - ii) Well testing for Nitrates and Coliforms
 - 1) Plans for 2025 - Dave
 - iii) PFAS educational forum for Spring 2025 - Susan
 - iv) NRI/Greenway Corridor - Sven
 - v) Grant for land rehabilitation project on City property west of City Hall and City Entryway – Elissa

vi) Prescribed burn – Scott

vii) Natural resources awareness program

- 1) Newsletter - Sven
- 2) Speaker program – Petra
 - a) Dark Sky
 - b) Invasive species topics

viii) NRG items for Afton’s monthly newsletter

- 1) Dark sky initiative – Petra for winter
- 2) Invasive species, resources, inspectors -- future
- 3) Buckthorn removal and post removal re-vegetation for spring
- 4) Grants for planting – for spring - Elissa
- 5) Prescribed burns – Scott
- 6) Well water testing for Nitrates and Coliforms - Dave

ix) NRG Management Organization update (from 2024)

- 1) Washington Conservation District – Elissa
- 2) South Washington County Watershed District – Kim
- 3) Middle St. Croix Water Management Organization – Susan
- 4) Valley Branch Watershed District – Scott
- 5) Washington County Water Consortium – Dave
- 6) Belwin – Sven

x) Update on CC and PC Business

- 1) Battle Creek Park to St. Croix River Regional Trail Planning Update

xi) Additional agenda items proposed by members

6. Next Meeting Date: April 1, 2025 at 5:00 PM

7. Adjourn



**Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee (NRGC) Meeting
Tuesday, January 7, 2025
5:00 PM**

**Note: The January 7, 2025 NRGC meeting will be held both remotely and in-person at City Hall. Instructions for participating in the meeting remotely are provided below.
Instructions for Participating in the Meeting Remotely Via Zoom**

Options for Joining the Zoom Meeting:

RECOMMENDED: Use your computer, tablet or smart phone to join the meeting by logging on to:

- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84315229443?pwd=VJhSBMHq3IZIS7GqBea1111L1ZK9PW.1>
 - Meeting ID: (843 1522 9443)
 - Passcode: 468906

Dial-in Number (to call in to the meeting)

+1 312 626 6799. When prompted, enter Meeting ID: 843 1522 9443

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Roll call: David Husebye (**Present**), Susan Loomis (**Present**), Kim Myhers, Elissa Thompson (**Present**), Cody Kaye (**Present**), Petra Brokken (**Present**), Scott Hafner (**Present**), and Sven Risom (**Present**),
3. Approval of Agenda for January 7, 2025 meeting and additional agenda items proposed by members. **Motion to approve by Sven, 2nd by Scott. Approved 6-0; Pass**
4. Election of Officers for 2025
 - a) **Chair: David**
 - b) **Vice Chair: Scott**
 - c) **Secretary: Elissa**

Motion to approve David; second Sven Vote 6-0; Pass
5. Approval of Minutes of the December 3, 2024 meeting. **Motion to approve Scott; Second Sven. Vote 6-0; Pass**
6. Old Business
 - i) Belwin conversations on deer count and issues, prescribed burn initiative and collaboration opportunities regarding natural resources
 - 1) **Katie and Cooper present**
 - 2) **Belwin is open to collaboration. Health natural resources beyond Belwin borders.**
 - (a) **Discussion of Natural Resource Inventory**

- (b) **Invasive Species and Deer Population**
 - (i) **Controlled hunts on Belwin Property after counts and tracking to ensure successful management. Count would be beyond Belwin Borders.**
 - (ii) **Potential partnering with Washington County Parks. Elissa to set up a meeting with Parks and Belwin to discuss options.**
 - (iii) **How many deer is a reasonable population- carrying capacity directed by the DNR.**
 - (c) **Prescribed Burn Consortium**
 - (i) **Prairie Enthusiasts (Bill Ramsden- volunteer at Belwin) Elissa to assist with coordination or NRG, Pheasants Forever, WC Parks, Belwin and TPE- Afton Burn Consortium.**
 - (ii) **Petra will connect with TPE.**
 - (iii) **MN Prescribed Fire Council meets tomorrow. Cooper will report back.**
 - (d) **Belwin will be working to serve the community they are in as well as St. Paul beginning with Stillwater Schools.**
 - (e) **Trails**
- ii) **Well testing for nitrates and coliforms**
- 1) **Plans for 2025**
 - (a) **June/ July Collection Dates**
 - (b) **Distribution and pick up sites- Horticulture? Swirl?**
 - 2) **Possible PFAS or other testing to be added**
 - (a) **Scott talked to a few labs; labs are moving away from working with individuals; want to work with municipalities and companies.**
 - (b) **PFAs are only detected in two tests not VOC. VOC cost 100. PFAS is \$350-400 per test with a lab fee of \$44. Tests for 18 compounds.**
 - (c) **Probably not an option for homeowner testing- continue to encourage residents to go through MPCA/ MDA- Spring Newsletter with QR Code this time- Elissa to update.**
- iii) **PFAS educational forum for Spring 2025**
- 1) **Susan to Coordinate**
 - 2) **Identification of specific topics to be addressed**
 - (a) **Kris Hansen**
 - (b) **Person from the MPCA/ MDA**
- iv) **NRI/Greenway Corridor**
- 1) **Sub group to represent Afton in trail development.**
 - (a) **Sven, Elissa, Cody, Susan**
 - (b) **Attend work session**
- v) **Grant for native vegetation restoration project on City property west of City Hall**
- 1) **WCD Pollinator Pathways Grant. Elissa to develop plans for Restoration.**
- vi) **NRGC items for Afton's monthly newsletter**
- 1) **Dark sky initiative – Petra for winter**
 - (a) **Dark sky ordinance- Taos Dark Sky**

(b) Motion to support an Afton Dark Sky initiative. The NRC is in agreement with the City Council passing a Dark Sky Initiative and adopting a dark sky ordinance for the city of Afton. Motion by Sven, second by Petra; Vote 7-0; Pass.

- 2) Invasive species, resources, inspectors – future
 - (a)
- 3) Buckthorn removal and post removal re-vegetation for spring
- 4) Grants for planting – for spring **Elissa to add to newsletter**
- 5) Prescribed burns – future
- 6) **Well sampling- David**
- 7) **PFAS Education- Elissa**

vii) Invasive Species Topic – group

- 1) Invasive plant database
- 2) Collaboration with Washington Conservation District and Washington County
- 3) Noxious weed inspector => future article

viii) NRC Management Organization update

- 1) Washington Conservation District – Elissa
 - (a) **Invasive Species Strategic Plan Development**
- 2) South Washington County Watershed District – Kim
- 3) Middle St. Croix Water Management Organization – Susan
- 4) Valley Branch Watershed District – Scott
- 5) Washington County Water Consortium – Dave **No January Meeting**
- 6) Belwin – Sven – **Katie and Cooper Updates**

ix) Update on CC and PC Business

x) Additional agenda items proposed by members

7. New Business

- i) Discuss natural resource awareness opportunities for Afton – Sven
 - (1) **See Handout- raise awareness of our Natural Resource Organizations**
 - ii) **Speaker Series- Outback Nursery, Dark Sky, PFAS, Etc.**
 - iii) **Elissa to send Grant's contact information to Petra to coordinate Speaker/Events**

8. Next Meeting Date: February 4, 2025 at 5:00 PM

9. Adjourn Motion by **Scott, second by Cody. Vote 7-0; Pass**

February 18, 2025 City Council Meeting Highlights

The Council:

- Approved a variance for a garage at 3322 Pennington Ave S.
- Approved a variance for a garage at 15416 Afton Hills Dr S.
- Discussed the Draft Amendment to the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance.
- Reappointed Kuchen Hale to another three-year term on the Planning Commission.
- Discussed the Parks Committee recommendations regarding Town Square Park basketball court improvements.

NRGC Committee Memo

Meeting: March 4, 2025

City of Afton
3033 St. Croix Trl, P.O. Box 219
Afton, MN 55001

To: NRGC Committee Members

From: Ron Mourse, City Administrator

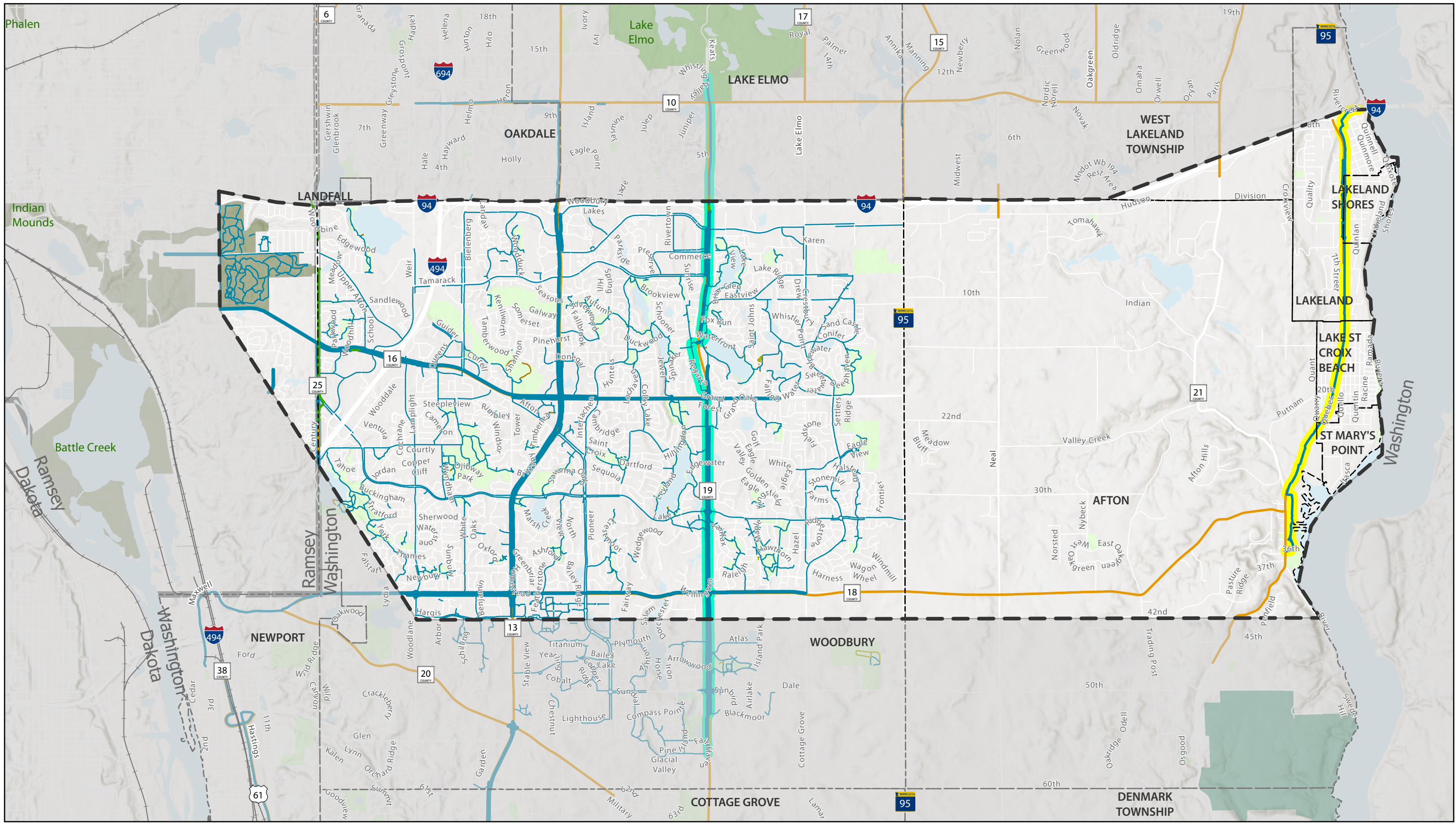
Date: February 26, 2025

Re: Battle Creek Park to St. Croix River Regional Trail Planning Update

Staff is participating on a Technical Advisory Committee to provide input to Washington County's long term planning process for a regional trail that will connect the Battle Creek Regional Park in Maplewood with the St. Croix River. Staff has prepared the list of questions below for the NRGC to consider and address to help guide staff's participation in the long term planning process.

Questions

- Should the trail be a separated trail rather than located directly adjacent to roads?
- Does the NRGC have any questions, concerns, suggestions or feedback regarding options for the location of the trail as it crosses Afton?
- Are there any areas the trail should avoid?
- Are there any locations that would be preferred in terms of an east-west ped/bike transportation corridor or in terms of connecting current and future trail corridors?
- Are there any particular areas of high quality natural resources or natural features that the NRGC would like the trail to access and/or assist in preserving?
- Are there any corridor locations that could substantially benefit or facilitate other Afton goals, such as ag conservation and open space preservation including through tools such as Preservation and Land Conservation Developments (PLCDs) and Ag Conservation Developments?
- Does the NRGC have preferences regarding where the trail should or should not connect to the downtown Old Village and to the River?



Existing Bike and Ped Infrastructure

Existing Conditions
 Battle Creek - St. Croix River Regional Trail
 Date Exported: 1/29/2025

STUDY AREA	RAIL LINE	PARKS	MIDDLE ST CROIX VALLEY EXISTING TRAILS	CITY OF WOODBURY UNPAVED TRAIL
MUNICIPALITIES	LAKES AND RIVERS	CITY	CENTRAL GREENWAY REGIONAL TRAIL	CITY OF WOODBURY PIER BRIDGE OR BOARDWALK
HIGHWAY		COUNTY	WASHINGTON COUNTY PAVED MULTI-USE TRAIL	WASHINGTON COUNTY PAVED SHOULDERS
COUNTY ROAD		STATE	LOCAL MULTI-USE TRAIL	
OTHER ROADWAY		REGIONAL	STATE PAVED MULTI-USE TRAIL	

Sources: Washington County, Ramsey County, City of Woodbury, Metropolitan Council, MetroGIS, MnDNR

