



**May 2023**

3033 St. Croix Trail South  
P.O. Box 219  
Afton, MN 55001

**City of Afton Dashboard**  
**A Summary of Current Happenings**

- ◆ Washington County has set up a no-cost tree debris drop off site for residents only – Reference additional information contained in this newsletter.
- ◆ Washington County and the City continue to work to clear debris from storm damage to the trees within their rights-of-way for local and county roads. This work is expected to take at least another month.
- ◆ Afton residents are encouraged to help your neighbors with storm damage clean up - Reference additional information contained in this newsletter.
- ◆ The St. Croix River is currently projected to crest on April 27 at 690 feet. Afton's levee is at 695 feet.
- ◆ Well water testing program - Reference the information contained in this newsletter.
- ◆ Potholes / Road Damage – please report any potholes or damage to roads to Public Works at city hall so we can repair them ASAP.
- ◆ Yellow Ribbon Alliance – supporting local veterans, is seeking volunteers to assist with a fund-raising event on September 16th at the Washington County Fair Grounds. Please sign up at <https://5cityyellowribbon.com/>
- ◆ CodeRED - Washington County and the City of Afton use CodeRED as an emergency notification platform to deliver time-sensitive information via email, SMS, voice, mobile app push notifications. You are encouraged to sign up at <https://www.onsolve.com/landing/sign-up-for-codered-emergency-alerts/>

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**METAL & TIRE RECYCLING DAY**

Metal and Tire Recycling Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 13, 2023 at the City Garage, 1675 Stagecoach Trail. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Residents must unload their own vehicles— come prepared to unload.

- SCRAP METAL includes swing sets, bicycles, metal toys, etc. (NO appliances are allowed.) All fabric, rubber, wood, fluids, and anything else that is *not* metal must be removed.
- TIRES must be off the rims (metal rims can be recycled). Tire size is limited to your ability to lift them. NO large tires such as tractor tires. This is for personal disposal only. No commercial supplies of tires.

PLEASE BE AWARE: A MAXIMUM OF 4 TIRES PER HOUSEHOLD WILL BE ACCEPTED. EXCEPTIONS TO THIS MAY BE CONSIDERED BUT RESIDENTS MUST CONTACT CITY HALL PRIOR TO THE EVENT IF THEY ARE REQUESTING TO BRING MORE THAN 4 TIRES.

Please be patient and cooperate with staff by following their direction in lining up and unloading your metal items and tires.

**May 29, 2023 City Office Closed for Memorial Day**

**CITY MEETINGS**

**May 1, 2023**

Planning Commission Meeting  
7:00 PM

**May 3, 2023**

Natural Resources & Groundwater Committee 5:00 PM

**May 16, 2023**

City Council Meeting  
7:00 PM

**May 24, 2023**

Parks Committee Meeting  
6:00 PM

Public Participation Via Zoom Will Continue to be Available for City Council and Planning Commission Meetings.

Information on how to join the meetings will be posted on the City website along with the agenda and meeting packet.

**CITY COUNCIL**

Mayor: Bill Palmquist 651-308-0569

Ward 1: Annie Perkins 651-592-3007

Ward 2: Lucia Wroblewski 651-436-3982

Ward 3: Stan Ross 612-720-6478

Ward 4: Randy Nelson 651-436-2479

**CITY HALL**

651-436-5090

**CITY WEBSITE**

[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)

**IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

Animal Control 715-220-1332

Building Inspector 651-436-6469

Burning Permits 651-248-5103

Environmental Center 651-275-7475

Highland Sanitation 651-458-0043

Otter Lake Animal Care 651-426-8871

Fire Dept 651-436-7033

Sheriff's Dept 651-439-9381

**EMERGENCY 911**

## Notes from the Mayor

As you know, there has been wide spread flooding across the region. The St. Croix River reached major flood stage April 20. Current forecasts show it staying at this level for some time. Although we had high water in 2019, this is the first real test of the city's upgraded levee and pump station. So far, the system has performed very well. Even as we had rain events when the river was at flood stage the system dealt with both the storm water behind the levee and the flood water as designed. Staff continues to monitor the forecasts, both flood and weather, and we have remote monitoring of the pump station as well. As I write this, so far we are all very happy with the results of all that work to build the levee and pump system six years ago. For those of us who have dealt with several floods, I admit it is a bit unnerving to not be out doing those things we used to do; setting up the diesel flood pumps, organizing volunteers to monitor the pumps through the night and sand bagging low areas. But this is what we hoped for when we undertook that project, and though we do still have plans in case something changes and the flood gets significantly worse, it is a relief to see our investment doing that work, saving those mobilization costs, and protecting those areas at risk of flooding.

As a reminder, at these river levels I know some properties get water in their basements. It is critical that we all work to make sure that water is pumped outside of the building and not allowed to enter the wastewater system through any drains or plumbing located on the property.

The county opened a free brush disposal site to deal with the downed trees and limbs from the April 1 storm. We are trying to get this newsletter out a little early to get that information to you in time to be able to get there for the first weekend in May since the site is only open until May 31. We are also working on finding resources to help residents who need assistance dealing with the results of the storm. Please check our website and social media pages for information as we get it. Information on that free disposal site location and hours is on the back page of this newsletter.

This storm was very widespread, and staff is working to clear the street rights-of-way but it is going to take time to get to all 50+ miles of city streets done so please continue to be patient. We had to wait to approve the clean-up expenditures until the plan, cost estimates, and potential for state aid were finalized. But that was done and crews are out working on this and will most likely be for at least the next month.

-Bill

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
I-94 TO ST. CROIX CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

2023
Construction At-A-Glance: Woodbury Dr. to St. Croix River

### Traffic Impacts

- Spring 2023
  - » April 17: EB I-94 reduced to two lanes through fall
  - » Week of April 24:
    - WB I-94 reduced to two lanes through fall
    - The ramp from Hwy 95/St. Croix Trail to WB I-94 will be closed for approx. one month

★ Construction at St. Croix Rest Area (no truck parking) and temporary closure of St. Croix Weigh Station.

Visit the project website for updates:  
<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/i94oakdale-stcroix/>

### Watershed Presentation

Valley Branch Watershed District will be making a presentation to the City of Afton Natural Resource and Groundwater Committee at their May 2, 2023 Meeting, at city hall at 5:00 pm. Interested city residents are invited to attend and hear the presentation of VBWD Engineer Barr Engineering. The presentation will be about who is VBWD and what is their role as a Watershed District covering much but not all of the City Of Afton.

### Mosquito Control

activity has begun in your community. Metropolitan Mosquito Control District trucks, helicopters, and staff will be out in neighborhoods and parks this spring and summer working to reduce mosquito-borne disease and annoyance.

[https://mmcd.org/docs/press/MMCD-Press-Release\\_Season-Start-2023.pdf](https://mmcd.org/docs/press/MMCD-Press-Release_Season-Start-2023.pdf)

## Meeting Highlights

### April 3, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting

#### The Commission:

- Received information on the Middle St. Croix Regional Trail Master Planning Process.
- Reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the Planning Commission.

### April 18, 2023 City Council Meeting

#### The Council:

- Approved funding for the cleanup of storm damage to trees in the rights-of-way of city roads.
- Approved street signage for 50th St Ct South.
- Approved an update to the park donation policy.
- Authorized staff to work with WSB on a long term plan for Town Square Park.
- Approved participation in the East Metro Water Resources Education Program.
- Discussed the flood outlook and current projections.

MEETING PACKETS, VIDEOS AND APPROVED MEETING MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE AT:  
[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)

## Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

### Belwin Bison Festival

**Saturday, May 20**

9:00 am: 5k "Run with the Bison" Fun Run  
Check-in

10:00 am - 2:00 pm: Festival

Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields, 15601 Hudson Rd. N, Lakeland, MN

Cost: \$10 per car. Separate entrance fee for 5k "Run with the Bison" Fun Run.

This beloved annual event features the release of the 2023 Northstar Bison herd onto Belwin's Bison Prairie. In addition to the release, visitors can also enjoy live music, eco-arts, and food trucks. Prior to the release, we'll host a 5k "Run with the Bison" Fun Run so runners can trek through the Prairie before the festival begins.

For details and to register for events contact:

**Belwin Conservancy**  
**1553 Stagecoach Trail South**  
**Afton MN 55001**  
**651-436-5189**  
[www.belwin.org](http://www.belwin.org)

## 2023 FREE Water Testing For Nitrates And Total Coliform Bacteria

The Natural Resource and Groundwater Committee (NRGC) will offer free well testing for nitrates and total coliform bacteria for Afton residents. **June 20 or 27** are the dates available for residents to collect a fresh sample of their water and bring it to City Hall.

### HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

- ⇒ Phone City Hall at 651-436-5090 or email [jyoho@ci.afton.mn.us](mailto:jyoho@ci.afton.mn.us) and provide your name & address. A sampling kit that consists of a bottle, a sample information form, and sampling instructions will be mailed to you.
- ⇒ Collect your sample on either June 20 or 27, and then bring your fresh, full sample bottle to City Hall between 7:00 and 9:30 a.m. that day. Volunteers will deliver the samples to the Department of Public Health and Environment for analysis. Your nitrate and total coliform results will be mailed to you.
- ⇒ Deadline for signing up is June 12. Kits are distributed on a first come, first served basis.
- ⇒ Please do not request a test kit if you are unable to participate on June 20 or 27.

### OTHER WAYS TO GET YOUR WATER TESTED:

- The Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment provides well water testing services for a wide range of contaminants to county residents for a modest fee throughout the year. Visit <https://www.co.washington.mn.us/637/Water-Tests> for more information.
- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Minnesota Department of Health are offering well testing for PFAS for residents within the sampling area (THIS INCLUDES AFTON) Visit the MPCA website for details: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air-water-land-climate/well-sampling-in-the-east-metro-area>

## Afton Museum Speaker Series

The Afton Museum invites you to a presentation with author Janet Horvath on her new book **The Cello Still Sings, A Generational Story of the Holocaust and of the Transformative Power of Music**

Thursday, June 1, 2023  
6:30—8:00 p.m.

Janet Horvath, the Minnesota Orchestra's principal cello from 1980—2012, is a life-long performing classical musician, soloist, speaker, writer, anti-racism spokesperson, and advocate for injury prevention for musicians.

**RSVP by May 29: 651-436-3500**  
**vickie@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com**

Museum donations appreciated. Cash, check, Venmo or Paypal to author for book (\$24 softcover/\$29 hardcover).

Afton Historical Museum, 3165 St. Croix Trail S, Afton, MN 55001



CITY OF AFTON  
3033 ST CROIX TRAIL SO  
P.O. BOX 219  
AFTON, MN 55001

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PERMIT NO. 15

**Valley Library Events & Important Dates**

*Closed May 29 for Memorial Day*

**For Adults:**

Washington County Libraries is offering virtual programs in May. Registration is required.

Get a Financial Health Check Up - Wednesday May 3rd 6:30-7:30

Empty Nest: Right-size Your Home - Tuesday May 9 6:30-7:45

**Thursday April 13<sup>th</sup> 5:00-6:15 Photo Coasters**

Join us for Let's Make Stuff! to get crafty and learn something new. In this class each participant will create their own personalized photo coasters. *Registration is required.*

**For Kids:**

**Every Monday 10:30-11:00 am Family Story time**

**Super Storytime on May 15 10:30-11:30** – storytime plus a fun craft activity.

**Saturday, May 13** All day. Stem Saturday

**Thursday, May 18 3:00-6:00** Family Art Cart

**Valley Branch Library**  
651-436-5882  
[www.washcolib.org](http://www.washcolib.org)

**PATRON  
AFTON, MN 55001**

**Online payments** are now available for city permits & fees including Building Permits and Sewer Payments,  
[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)



*Please recycle this newsletter after use.*

**Seeking Volunteer Assistance for Storm Damaged Tree Debris Cleanup**

Because there are residents who do not have the resources, or ability to clean up the tree debris from the April 1 snow storm, the City is partnering with Community Thread to try to coordinate volunteers to provide assistance to residents in need. The assistance includes cutting fallen branches and/or loading branches into a truck or trailer and/or hauling the tree debris to the no-cost tree debris site at Belwin's Lucy Winton Bell Ballfields parking lot. Residents can volunteer for any or all of these tasks, depending on the tools, equipment and vehicles they can provide. Volunteers will need to bring their own work gear, equipment and vehicles.

The first step is for people who are willing to volunteer to go to Community Thread's website by May 8 to sign up to volunteer. Go to [www.communitythreadmn.org](http://www.communitythreadmn.org) and look for "Volunteer Center". There is a drop down menu and it will say "Volunteer in the Community". You will find a form to complete called "Afton Storm Response". Please read this form carefully and complete it and submit it.

If you are unable to complete the online form, you may call Community Thread at 651-439-7434. Please identify yourself as someone interested in volunteering for the Afton Storm Response and you will be directed accordingly.

For homeowners needing assistance, if a sufficient number of people volunteer, Community Thread will try to connect volunteers to residents. Starting on May 10, residents in need of assistance can check the home page of the City's website under Storm Damage Update to see if volunteers are available. If so, information will be provided on the website regarding how to connect with Community Thread so they can try to connect residents with volunteers.

**Temporary Tree Debris Site**

Washington County has opened a temporary tree debris drop-off site for resident use only at Belwin Conservancy. Washington County residents are invited to dispose of tree debris caused by the recent ice/snowstorm on April 1 at Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields at Belwin Conservancy, 15601 Hudson Road N., Lakeland, MN 55043. There is no cost for this service.

The site will be available on Saturdays, Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The temporary debris management site will remain open through May 31 during the days and hours listed. The site will not be available on Saturday, May 20.