



May 2024

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

City of Afton Dashboard
A Summary of Current Happenings

- ◆ The council voted to indicate its interest in Washington County continuing to explore the former Century College truck driving school building and property located at 14386 Hudson Road for County uses.
- ◆ The council denied a proposal to pave the northern pedestrian entrance walkway into Steamboat Park and referred the issue to the city's engineer for further study.
- ◆ Once again, the city will be offering free well water testing for Afton residents. For details please refer to the related story in this newsletter.

-SAR

Wastewater Treatment Facility Tour

The Natural Resource Groundwater Committee (NRGC) would like to invite the public to tour Afton's Wastewater Treatment Facility. **It will be on Monday, May 6th at 5pm.** The facility is located at 2318 St. Croix Trail South, Afton, MN 55001.

If individuals would like to carpool, please meet at the Afton City Hall, 3033 St. Croix Trail South at 4:45pm.

Afton's Wastewater Treatment Facility is state of the art and other cities have toured it to learn more about the process and what is needed to efficiently treat the wastewater and keep our ecosystem healthy.

The tour will be held weather permitting with a new date TBD if it needs to be rescheduled.

METAL & TIRE RECYCLING DAY

Metal and Tire Recycling Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 18, 2024 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.

CITY MEETINGS

May 27, 2024 City Office Closed for Memorial Day

May 6, 2024

Planning Commission Meeting
7:00 PM

May 7, 2024

Natural Resources & Groundwater
Committee Meeting
5:00 PM

May 8, 2024

Heritage Preservation Commission
6:00 PM

May 21, 2024

City Council Meeting
7:00 PM

May 22, 2024

Parks Committee
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

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

In April, our Park Committee hosted a native planting event that was very well received with over 50 residents in attendance. The evening focused on ways we can all add native plantings to our properties. Thank you to the committee and Chair Grant Jensen for organizing, and Elissa Thompson from our Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee for leading the discussion. If you missed it, you can watch the video “What’s the Rush?” which was part of the presentation by going to homegrownationalpark.com. I hope we have more of these types of presentations going forward.

As you have probably noticed the road work on I94 and St. Croix Trail was pushed back several weeks. This will also delay the repaving of Hudson Road. As we receive construction timing updates, we will share them here and on our social media accounts.

-Bill

Afton Museum Speaker Series

3165 St. Croix Trail S, Afton, MN 55001



John Kaul, Photographer & Filmmaker

Presentation featuring a selection & discussion of his work

Wednesday May 22, 2024

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Wine, water & light hors d'oeuvres

Free event, Museum donations appreciated

RSVP by May 20: 651-436-3500 or

linda@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com

Don Jones, Valley Author, Historian & Sailor

Presents 18 Days: Racing Across the Atlantic

Thursday June 13, 2024

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Light refreshments served

Free event, Museum donations appreciated

RSVP by June 10: 651-436-3500 or

linda@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com

For information on giving a presentation, contact Leslie Thomas at

leslie@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com

No Mow May

In May, many bees are coming out of hibernation and need flowers to feed themselves and their babies. The main purpose of No Mow May is to encourage people to let spring flowers in their lawns bloom before mowing. Flowers you can commonly see blooming in lawns in May include dandelions, white clover, and creeping charlie. While many people view these flowers as weeds, some pollinators view them as food. Ideally, you can add to the mix and provide food for more pollinators by adding native plants. Early spring blooming native plants like violets and pussy toes can be a part of your bee lawn. **Plant diversity is key to supporting bee diversity**, so if you can, plant a wide variety of native spring blooming flowers, trees, and shrubs, like pussy willows, serviceberries, and bluebells. For blooms in your lawns after May, add self-heal, ground plum, lanceleaf tickweed, or calico American aster.

For more tips and information visit: <https://beelab.umn.edu/no-mow-may>



Event recycling made easy!

Borrow a Recycling Container from the County



Portable recycling containers are available to borrow for collecting mixed recycling such as bottles and cans at gatherings like graduation parties, family reunions, block parties, and similar events. Bags are included. Interested in reserving containers for your next event? Simply fill out and submit the online reservation form. [Recycling Container Loan | Washington County, MN - Official Website](https://www.washingtoncountymn.gov/recycling-container-loan)

Meeting Highlights

The April 2024 Planning Commission Meeting was canceled due to lack of agenda items.

April 16, 2024 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Discussed activities at Rusty Bucket Acres located at 15237 Afton Boulevard.
- Expressed its interest in Washington County continuing to explore the former Century College truck driving school building and property located at 14386 Hudson Road for County uses.
- Denied proposed Steamboat Park entrance ramp improvements and requested the city engineer to review and advise on the project.

MEETING PACKETS, VIDEOS AND APPROVED MEETING MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE AT:
www.ci.afton.mn.us

2024 Free Well Water Testing for Nitrates and Coliforms

The Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee (NRGC) will again offer free well water testing for Nitrates and Coliform bacteria for Afton residents. **June 11th and 18th** are the dates available for residents to collect a fresh sample of well water and drop it off at City Hall.

How to participate:

- ⇒ Kits will be available for pick up at City Hall on Wednesday, May 22nd and Wednesday, May 29th from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM.
- ⇒ Residents who are unable to pick up their kit on May 22 or May 29 may call City Hall to request a kit be mailed to them. Test kits will be mailed after May 30. Kits are available on a first come/first served basis as supplies last.
- ⇒ Collect your Well Water sample on June 11th or June 18th and bring it to City Hall between 7 and 9:30 AM.
- ⇒ Please do not request a kit if you are not able to drop off the kit on the available dates.

Other ways to get your water tested:

- This water testing is for Nitrates and Coliform bacteria only. Washington County offers water testing for other contaminants year-round for a modest fee. Call 651-430-6655 or visit www.co.washington.mn.us/637/Water-Tests
- Testing for PFAS is coordinated through the MN Pollution Control Agency. You can request testing here: <https://webapp.pca.state.mn.us/gw-sampling-reg/>

Septic System Maintenance

Care for your septic system should be a relatively straightforward process, but there are tips and tricks to extending the life of your tank.

1. Schedule a septic pumping every 2-3 years
2. Only flush things that are meant to be flushed
3. Do not put cooking oil down the kitchen sink
4. Save water by fixing leaking fixtures, using high-efficiency shower heads and appliances, and turning off water when brushing your teeth
5. Watch the lawn to see if the grass above your septic tank seems to be greener and healthier than the rest of your lawn, that's a sign that this area is getting more fertilizer than the rest of the yard... And that means trouble around your septic tank
6. Dispose of household chemicals properly by never putting hazardous products down the drain
7. Plant trees away from your drainfield

Additional information from the United States Environmental Protection Agency can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/septic/how-care-your-septic-system>

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Belwin Bison Festival Saturday, May 18, 2024

9:00 am: 5k "Run with the Bison" Fun Run
 10:00 am - 2:00 pm: Festival
 Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields
 15601 Hudson Rd N, Afton, MN 55001 Cost:
 \$10 per car (cash or check). Separate entrance fee for Fun Run.

This beloved annual event features the release of the 2024 Northstar Bison herd onto Belwin's Bison Prairie. In addition to the release, visitors can also enjoy fun activities for all ages, such as live music, eco-arts, and food trucks. Prior to the release, we'll also host a 5k "Run with the Bison" Fun Run so visitors can run through the Prairie before the bison arrive.

Caring for Your Trees & Woodlands Tuesday, May 28, 2024

5:30 pm - 8:30 pm
 Belwin Education Site, Hilltop Classroom 1553 Stagecoach Trail S., Afton, MN 55001 Cost: \$5 (Suggested donation)

Join Belwin Conservancy, Washington Conservation District, Minnesota DNR, and Washington County Master Gardeners for a walk in the woods during this fun, interactive workshop about caring for trees and woodlands. The workshop will start with a short introductory presentation inside the Hilltop Classroom.

Afterwards, participants will divide into two smaller groups to learn more about tree care and woodland management. Topics will include: basic tree identification, how to manage invasive species, and how to support birds and wildlife.

Morning Wetland Hike Saturday, June 1, 2024

8:00 am - 10:00 am
 Belwin Education Site, Hilltop Classroom 1553 Stagecoach Trail S., Afton, MN 55001 Sliding Scale Cost: \$24, 32, 36 Presented in partnership with Saint Paul Community Education
 The wetlands are an exciting place in the spring. We will be hiking through the Belwin wetlands taking in the rich variety of plant and animal species these distinct ecosystems have to offer.

This hike is led by Jim Rue. Prepare to hike up to 2 miles on trail and off for a good share of the time. Closed toed hiking shoes or rubber boots, long pants, tick protection, binoculars, and a water bottle are highly recommended. Participants must be 15 years and older. Registration required. To register, go to belwin.org/events.

For details and registration contact:
Belwin Conservancy
1553 Stagecoach Trail South
Afton MN 55001
651-436-5189
www.belwin.org



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

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AFTON MN 55001
PERMIT NO. 15

Valley Library Events & Important Dates

The library will be closed on **Monday May 27** for Memorial Day

Did you know you can send a print job to the Valley Library printer from your device at any time of day? No library card is necessary, just an email address. Find more information and detailed instructions at <https://washcolib.org/456/Wireless-Printing>

For Adults:

The Valley Library Book Club meets 5:00-6:00pm on the 4th Thursday of every month. The title selection for the **Thursday May 23rd** meeting is “*The Maltese Falcon*” by Dashiell Hammett.

For Kids:

Every Monday 10:30-11:00 AM Family Story time No Story Time May 20

Monday, May 13 10:30-11:00AM Super Storytime

Thursday, May 8 3:30-5:30 Brick Builder’s Club

The Valley Library Art Cart is available whenever the library is open. We provide the supplies and you provide the creativity!

For complete information and to register for programs contact:

Valley Library
651-436-5882
www.washcolib.org

Washington County Rain Barrels and Compost Bins Sale

Help yourself, your wallet, and your planet at the same time! Purchase a rain barrel and/or a compost bin at a reduced price through the Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM). Sales will remain open while supplies last. All items must be picked up at the Environmental Center within 90 days of purchase or be forfeited.

[Compost Bin and Rain Barrel Sale | Washington County, MN - Official Website](#)

PATRON AFTON, MN 55001

Online payments are now available for city permits & fees including Building Permits and Sewer Payments,
www.ci.afton.mn.us



Please recycle this newsletter after use.

WILD PARSNIP

Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*) is a noxious weed that has been found in Afton. The plant is easiest to identify when it is blooming, in June or July. It has:

- Broad, flat-topped cluster of small Yellow flowers
- Compound leaves with 5-15 leaflets, up to 18” long
- Hairless, grooved or ridged stems

Wild parsnip causes phytophotodermatitis. Always wear gloves and protective clothing when handling this plant -- **If sap comes in contact with skin, avoid exposure to sunlight and immediately wash skin!**

more information can be found on the city of Afton website or at: www.mda.state.mn.us/plants/pestmanagement/weedcontrol/noxiouslist/wildparsnip



Photo by U of MN Extension

IS THIS PLANT ON YOUR PROPERTY?

Schedule a site visit with Washington Conservation District staff to discuss control options: www.mnwcd.org/site-visit-signup-form

Mosquito Control activity has begun in the area. 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. For information see:

[MMCD-Press-Release_Season-Start-2024.pdf](#)