



**JUNE 2017**

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

"The Afton Museum is delighted to partner with Belwin Conservancy and The Phipps Center for the Arts during its 2017 exhibit. This year we are featuring photography captured at Belwin's restored Prairie and Oak Savanna. We are thrilled to offer this opportunity to learn more about these complex and stunning ecosystems that covered much of Minnesota's past landscape. In addition to the ongoing exhibit, we will host two special evening events.

Please join us for our opening evening event!

"Discovering Belwin Conservancy" - Youth Photography Project Exhibit Opening, and Prairie and Oak Savanna Restoration Talk Presented by Justin Sykora, Land and Facilities Manager

**Tuesday, June 6, 2017**

**Opening at 6:30 p.m., Talk at 7:00 p.m.**

**Afton Historical Museum  
3165 South St. Croix Trail  
Afton, Minnesota 55001**

Light refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP at 651-436-3500 or [Leslie@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com](mailto:Leslie@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com)

The photographs in this exhibit were created by five students who participated in a 2015 Summer Art Camp class offered by The Phipps Center for the Arts and their teacher, local photographer Deanna Grigus. The class met at the Belwin Conservancy with naturalist Lynette Anderson and took the photos as they explored the restored prairie.

Enter a drawing at the museum to win a Membership to Belwin Conservancy at the \$500 level!! This membership entitles the recipient to monthly programs, member events, and a private Bison Buggy ride for eight. Drawing is on July 19th and you do not need to be present to win!

**Save the date! Our next evening presentation will be July 19th, from 7:30pm - 8:30pm with David Hartwell. Details to follow."**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 11, 2017

The Lower St Croix Valley Fire Department is pleased to announce the hiring of Deputy Chief Jim Stanley as Fire Chief effective July 15, 2017. Jim was selected by a hiring committee including members of the department and five city District Fire Board, as well as an outside Chief Officer from a neighboring department. The hiring recommendation was then sent to the Fire District Board for ratification on Wednesday, May 10, 2017. Jim will be stepping in for retiring outgoing Chief Kris Peterson who will be retiring on July 14th on his 40 year anniversary with the department

Jim's resume boasts 39 years of fire department service entirely with the Lower St Croix Valley Fire Department. He has served in the capacity of Deputy Chief and Fire Marshal for the better part of 30 years. He currently is serving consecutive terms as President of the Washington County Fire Chief's Association – a position that is elected by his peers within Washington County. He has remained active in many organizations, including regional and statewide, in both the fire industry and EMS industry.

Congratulations to Kris on his retirement! Congratulations to Jim on his new position!

**CITY MEETINGS**

**June 5, 2017**

Planning Commission Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

**June 6, 2017**

Natural Resources and Groundwater  
Committee  
5:00 P.M.

**June 20, 2017**

City Council Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

**June 21, 2017**

Heritage Preservation Commission  
5:00 P.M.

**June 28 2017**

Parks Committee  
*(Will be cancelled if no agenda items.)*  
6:00 P.M.

*All meetings are held at City Hall  
unless otherwise noted.*

**CITY COUNCIL**

Mayor: Richard Bend 436-7684

Ward 1: Bill Palmquist 308-0569

Ward 2: Joe Richter 436-1819

Ward 3: Stan Ross 436-1346

Ward 4: Randy Nelson 436-2479

**CITY HALL**

Monday — Friday

9:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

651 - 436 - 5090

**CITY WEBSITE**

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

**IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

Animal Control 715-386-7789

Building Inspector 436-6469

Burning Permits 248-5103

Environmental Center 430-6655

Highland Sanitation 458-0043

Hillcrest Animal Hosp 484-7211

LSCV Fire Dept 436-7033

Sheriff's Dept 439-9381

**EMERGENCY 911**

## A Letter from the Mayor ~ Are you sure you know what you are killing?

In my last two newsletters I described managing the first natural resource layer above the soil and how to manage it to reduce invasive plants, shrubs and trees without in the process unintentionally killing natural vegetation or reducing the diversity of species. This month I am going to discuss the next level, insects, reptiles, amphibians and rodents. As with plants, it is not uncommon for people moving from the suburbs to mistakenly group all of these into two categories: pests and varmints. Just as they mow fields at the wrong times, killing all the diverse species of native forbs and grasses, they apply fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides to kill pests without realizing the destruction that follows.

Here are some species I've seen destroyed in Afton through inadvertent killing. While Salamanders were once everywhere in Afton, it is now very difficult to find them. Their highly permeable skins make them very vulnerable to pesticides and to a lesser extent even to herbicides and fertilizers.

Both reptiles and amphibians are threatened by the same chemicals and also suffer from diminished food supply resulting from destruction of non-harmful insects including among others, all of the pollinators such as butterflies, moths and the more than 4000 species of native bees. When I was a boy there were huge numbers of all these, including even the species that had evolved protective disguises such as moths with clear wings and bodies striped black and yellow to imitate bees and wasps. I haven't seen one in years.

Among rodents, our natural prairie and woodland aerators, people have almost entirely killed off moles, pocket gophers and thirteen-lined ground squirrels that used to be everywhere and served as prey for hawks, weasels and snakes. With no native poisonous snakes, I and most of my childhood friends enjoyed catching and releasing the garter snakes found everywhere.

Eastern Hognoses were the comedians among our catch. Their antics were remarkable: when picked up they flattened their heads, hissed like cobras then struck without touching us. When this didn't scare us, they rolled over on their backs and played dead, flipping upside down again when rolled right side up, and even rolling upside down when hung over a tree branch. Hognoses, along with most of their most common food, toads (*Bufo americanus* especially), are gone now along with most of the once ubiquitous bull snake, often called the gopher snake after its primary prey.

Nature involves food chains. If you kill insects, you kill the plants they pollinate; if you kill insects, you kill frogs and salamanders and birds and skinks that eat them; if you kill gophers, you kill hawks, snakes, weasels and badgers that eat them. Do you keep track of what you or your service spray. Do you really know what you are killing?

I recently listened to a neighbor describe the gophers he intended to eradicate. I was amazed to discover upon being shown a couple of the "gophers" the first Richardson's ground squirrels I had ever seen in Afton. They are common in native prairies out west and are usually referred to as Flickertails. He didn't know what he planned to kill, do you?

### Hardrives, Inc., will do St. Croix Trail pavement project in Afton

Hardrives, Inc., will replace the pavement on a segment of the St. Croix Trail along County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 18 in Afton, from 30<sup>th</sup> Street to the Interstate 94 bridge in Lakeland, after the Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$340,251 contract with the company May 9. The trail along CSAH 18 has not been resurfaced since it was constructed and has deteriorated. The length of the project will be just more than four miles. Work includes removal of aging bituminous, constructing a new pavement surface and concrete pedestrian ramps, and replacing bridge railing and trail signing. The work is anticipated to take five weeks.

The board also approved cooperative agreements with the cities of Afton and Lakeland. Afton will pay for the replacement of handrails on the bridge, and replacement of pavement for the trail within the city right-of-way, using Lower St. Croix Valley Community Foundation funds.

An agreement with the City of Lakeland calls for it paying for the pavement within the Minnesota Department of Transportation right-of-way near I-94 and pedestrian ramps.

### Washington County Board appoints Chief Deputy Starry as county sheriff

The Washington County Board of Commissioners appointed Chief Deputy Dan Starry to the post of Washington County Sheriff, after Sheriff Bill Hutton announced his intent to retire from the office effective April 30. Sheriff Hutton's term of office runs through Jan. 7, 2019, as will Starry's term. It is expected that Starry will be sworn in in early May. Under Minnesota law, an appointment to a vacancy in the Office of Sheriff is made by the County Board for the balance of the exiting sheriff's term.

Starry has worked in law enforcement in Washington County since 1993 in numerous capacities in the Sheriff's Office. He became chief deputy under Sheriff Hutton in October 2010. Other positions he has held include patrol deputy, crime prevention officer, field training officer, DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) officer, Explorer advisor, narcotics officer, youth unit investigator, K9 officer with companion Smokey, sergeant, commander, and chief deputy. His work has allowed him to develop experience in financial administration, program development, strategic planning, leadership, crisis management, overseeing training of staff, and relationship building.

As chief deputy, Starry serves in the capacity of the sheriff in his absence. Starry also is the coordinator between the divisions in the Sheriff's Office, and manages the office's budget and community contracts. As a Sheriff's Office commander, Starry was responsible for the office's special services division.

Starry has a bachelor of science degree from St. Mary's University. He has attended the FBI National Academy and the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Association program.

### Washington County Library kicks off summer reading program for children and teens June 10

Washington County Library kicks off "Bookawocky," its annual summer library reading program for children and teens on Saturday, June 10. The program runs through Saturday, August 12. All programs are free and open to the public. Bookawocky is brought to you by Washington County Library, Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA), and the Minnesota Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund. For additional information, including a complete schedule of summer events, visit a Washington County library, call Washington County Library at 651-731-1320, or see [www.washcolib.org](http://www.washcolib.org).

Dawn LaBrosse, Youth Services Coordinator, 651-275-8522,

[dawn.labrosse@co.washington.mn.us](mailto:dawn.labrosse@co.washington.mn.us) or

Amy Stenftenagel, Digital and Media Services Librarian, 651-275-8521, [amy.stenftenagel@co.washington.mn.us](mailto:amy.stenftenagel@co.washington.mn.us)

## May 1, 2017 Planning Commission Meeting Highlights

- As part of its process of updating the City's Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission discussed the comments of each member regarding the sections of the Plan they reviewed.
- The Commission requested a copy of the 2012 Park Plan to assist in the update of the Parks and Open Space section of the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Commission requested that staff obtain updated demographic information and transportation system information from the Met Council.
- The Commission discussed the development of an environmental scorecard, and requested staff to obtain a template for an environmental scorecard from the Met Council.
- The Commission requested input from the Park Committee and the Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee regarding relevant sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

## May 16, 2017 City Council Meeting Highlights

- The Council directed staff to send letters of appreciation to Judy Seeberger and May Bend for their outstanding contributions and dedicated service to the City as a member of the Planning Commission and the Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee respectively.
- The Council approved the payment of Pay Voucher No. 1 from Geislinger and Sons, Inc. for the Downtown Village Improvement Project in the amount of \$1,141,927.15, and requested staff to provide information regarding specific funding sources for future pay voucher payments.
- The Council approved the Lower St. Croix Valley Fire Department Relief Association's request for a pension benefit increase from a one-time lump sum benefit of \$3,250 per year of service to a benefit of \$3,500 per year of service.
- The Council approved the proposed budget for a Town Square Park Restroom in the amount of \$122,200 and authorized the execution of construction contracts within the budget amount.
- The Council approved Payment Request No. 2 for the Wastewater Treatment System Project in the amount of \$259,801.62.
- The Council approved the adoption of the audited financial statements and financial information in the 2016 Audit Report for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2016.
- The Council approved a Deferred Assessment Policy and Procedures with the determination of financial hardship based on the annual assessment payment exceeding 1% of annual household income.
- The Council scheduled a Special Council meeting for 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 23, and a work session for 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 23.
- The Council approved additional engineering fees for construction staking for the 2017 Pavement Management Project base bid streets in the amount of \$31,955, and for the topographic survey for potential additional streets to be added to the Project in the amount of \$15,483.
- The Council authorized Council members Richter and Ross to authorize plan changes and related costs recommended by the City Engineer during the 2017 Pavement Management Project to avoid prolonged work stoppages to address drainage and erosion control issues or unforeseen circumstances, up to an aggregate amount of \$40,000, subject to agreement by both Council members.
- The Council approved the payment of an invoice from Xcel Energy for upgrading the electrical service to serve the sanitary sewer and storm sewer lift stations that are a part of the Downtown Village Improvement Project, in the amount of \$10,195.94
- The Council accepted a grant from Afton Residents for Preservation and Conservation, in the amount of \$1,500, in recognition and support of the City's continued efforts to conserve and protect Afton's natural and scenic assets.
- The Council directed the City Attorney to draft a noise ordinance specific to motor vehicles that provides for a \$1,000 fine for violations.

## EXPLORE YOUR PARKS DAY: WASHINGTON COUNTY PARKS HOST A VARIETY OF FREE PROGRAMS, OUTDOOR DEMONSTRATIONS COUNTYWIDE JUNE 3

The Washington County Commissioners invite the public to Explore Your Parks Saturday, June 3.

Bike, hike, fish, run, swim, read, view wildlife, visit playgrounds and do much more.

The vehicle fee is waived this day in all Washington County Parks.

Free outdoor recreation demonstrations and nature programming will be offered at park locations county-wide, including celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Washington County Historic Court-house.

All programs are free and equipment will be provided, unless stated otherwise.

All children younger than 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

Events will be held rain or shine; however, in the case of severe weather, programs will be cancelled.

Find Washington County Parks on Facebook at Washington County Parks | Official, on Twitter @WashCoParksMN and @WashCoTrails, and on Instagram @WashCoParksMN.



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



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**Valley Library calendar of events for June**

Bookawocky Blast-Off with the Splatter Sisters

Saturday, June 10, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Blast-off into Bookawocky with the Splatter Sisters and their musical program "30 Books in 30 Minutes." Make sure to pick up your Bookawocky forms for kids, teens, and adults. There will also be chalk art and special treats.

STEM Saturday

Saturday, June 17, from 11 a.m. to noon

Explore STEM through hands-on activities and creative projects! Slither into the world of reptiles by meeting live reptiles up close! At this hands-on program you'll get to touch, hold, and even feed some of the reptiles! Presented by Snake Discovery. All ages.

Stories Sing with the Minnesota Opera

Monday, June 19, from 10:30 to 11:15 a.m.

Join us for a special storytime with teaching artist and Minnesota Opera member, Alisa Magallon. She will lead a lively and interactive opera storytelling program for preschool age children. Ages 2-8 and siblings are always welcome.

Button, Button, Who's Got the Button?

Tuesday, June 20, from noon to 2 p.m.

Join artist Ella Thomson in making elegant button necklaces. Learn basic jewelry-making techniques while re-purposing material in a creative way! Sign up online, at the library, or call 651-436-5882.

A Journey Through Africa

Friday, June 30, from 11 a.m. to noon

Take a tour through the African desert, savanna and tropical rain forest, meeting live plants and animals from these areas along the way. Presented by naturalists from Como Park Zoo and Conservatory. All ages.

**Children's Events**

Dog Gone Reading

Saturday, June 3, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Children in grades K-7 may practice reading aloud to a certified therapy dog and its owner/trainer. Reading sessions are 15 minutes in length. Sign up at Info Desk or call 651-436-5882.



Family Storytime

Mondays, June 5, 12, from 10:30 to 11 a.m.

Join us for stories, songs, fingerplays and more to encourage the development of early literacy skills. For all children and their families.

**PATRON  
AFTON, MN 55001**

You may view this newsletter  
***IN COLOR***  
on the city website.



*Please recycle this  
newsletter after use.*

**More Events at the Library**

Outer Space Drawing Lesson

Thursday, June 22, from 3 to 4 p.m.

Come join us while we explore the universe. In this fun lesson, you'll learn how to draw a rocket and planets. You will use chalk pastels to create a cool, bright special effect that makes your art stand out. Ages 5-12. Sign up online, at the library, or call 651-436-5882.

STEAM Storytime

Monday, June 26, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Explore, learn and play through various hands-on experiments! Experiments will include "Fizzing Colors," "Tactile Balloons" and "Glitter Slime." Ages 3-8. Sign up online, at the library, or call 651-436-5882.

**Teen Event**

DIY Day at the Library

Wednesday, June 14, from 2 to 6 p.m.

Stop in anytime during the day to enjoy a fun, self-directed activity. June's activity is creating "Clothespin Messages." Ages 7-17.

**Book Club**

Valley Library Book Club

Thursday, June 22, from 5 to 5:55 p.m.

The group that gathers will discuss the book "Say You're One of Them" by Uwem Akpan. Visit Valley Library to pick up a copy of the book. Just read the book, come and discuss. Open to all.