

PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

and Meeting of the Anoka County Board of Commissioners**

Tuesday – October 3, 2023 – 9:00 am

Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve - Wargo Nature Center
7701 Main Street, Lino Lakes, MN 55038

Public Comments

Public comments are welcome at this time. In consideration of others wishing to speak, please limit comments to 2 minutes. Questions directed to the committee will not be answered immediately; however, whenever possible, all appropriate questions will be responded to in a timely and effective manner by county staff.

Department Updates

Informational Items

1. Notification of Grant Application – Shade Tree Program Bonding Grant
2. Service Agreement – Anoka Conservation District
3. Kordiak Park Pavilion Update
4. Contracts Processed
5. Heritage Lab Location Tour

*** Actions taken by this Committee do not bind the County Board. In addition to the County Commissioners appointed to this committee, additional County Commissioners may attend. Non-committee Commissioners may choose to participate in the discussions and/or ask questions, but they will **not** vote on any item, nor will they agree to take a specific action on business conducted by the committee. If their attendance and limited participation in the committee meeting is considered a meeting of the County Board, this shall serve as notice of a County Board meeting. This shall also serve as notice of a County Board Meeting for any committee comprised of four or more members of the board.*



ANOKA
COUNTY
PARKS

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FROM THE DIRECTOR:

One of Anoka County's most treasured natural resources is the Rum River, which flows north to south through the entire reach of central Anoka County before reaching the confluence of the Mississippi River in the City of Anoka. The Rum River happens to be one of only six state designated wild and scenic rivers in Minnesota, meaning that it harbors outstanding natural, scenic, geographic, historic, cultural and recreational values. Anoka County Parks, along with many other state and local agencies and organizations, play a vital role in conserving the Rum River through planning and implementing various projects intended to improve water quality and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

One of the most recent and unique conservation projects on the Rum River was one that started with an idea from an Anoka County resident and avid kayaker of the river. Over the summer, with the crystal clear and low water conditions, the resident noticed multiple tires in the river and crafted the idea to reach out to Andover High School to explore a potential tire removal project with the students. The resident also recorded the locations of the highest concentrations of the tires.

As a result, a tire fishing project was coordinated by Bob Ameli, an outdoor adventures and environmental science teacher at Andover High School that took place on September 18. Mr. Ameli coordinated and deployed 65 students in 28 canoes on a mission to extract tires from the river between 219th Avenue in Oak Grove down to Rum River Central Regional Park in Ramsey. Remarkably, the students extracted more than 200 tires. The tires were picked up free of charge by the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District. The tire fishing project concluded at Rum River Central Regional Park where the students enjoyed a cookout lunch to celebrate their hard work and accomplishment.

The Anoka County Parks Department is extremely grateful to the Anoka County resident who came up with idea, Mr. Ameli, and the 65 motivated students from Andover High School that made a difference on the Rum River with their remarkable cleanup project. It is meaningful efforts such as these that reinforce and strengthen the community-based environmental stewardship and teamwork that play a vital role in preserving the quality of the Rum River into the future.



MISSISSIPPI WEST TREE PLANTING

On September 7, volunteers from Cummins Inc. helped plant trees at Mississippi West Regional Park to promote riparian forest. The 21 volunteers planted, watered, mulched and placed protectors on 100 trees of 14 different native species. This event was a collaboration in partnership with Mississippi Park Connection and the National Park Service, who provided the trees and protectors, as well as coordinating the volunteers. County staff pre-dug the planting holes using department equipment, provided mulch and utilized a tanker truck for on-site water access. This planting helped the Mississippi Park Connection to accomplish one of its goals of planting 1,000 trees in 2023, more than 300 of which have been or will be planted in Anoka County Parks adjacent to the Mississippi River. The Natural Resources team looks forward to all of the benefits that these trees and continued partnership in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area will provide.



SEASONAL BLOWDOWNS – NEW AIR COMPRESSOR

With the summer quickly ending and cooler mornings becoming more frequent, the Maintenance Unit is focusing on getting the parks ready for winter. Most of the park buildings, almost 40, are seasonally winterized including many restroom and shower buildings, gatehouses, campground sites and irrigation systems. Due to the sheer number, maintenance staff begins the process of winterizing as soon as the schedule allows, beginning with Bunker Beach and ending with late season camping at Bunker Hills Campground. Over the past several years, the aging mobile air compressor from the 1980s became less and less reliable and a replacement was needed to assure timely completion of the winterization process. This year, the team is excited about a new 185 CC Sullair mobile air compressor which will provide many years of reliable service for this critical work. Thanks to the Fleet Department for helping facilitate this purchase and to the parkkeepers for utilizing it to properly prepare plumbing infrastructure for the coming winter.



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RUM RIVER REGIONAL TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

The county is proposing improvements to the Rum River Regional Trail in St. Francis at Bridge Street and the Rum River. The current crossing is at grade on a busy roadway. The proposed improvements will eliminate that crossing and build a trail under the Bridge Street bridge along the Rum River. This will provide pedestrians and bicyclists a safe crossing and eliminate vehicle and pedestrian interactions. The county is currently in the process of hiring a consultant to do the design, engineering and permitting required for the trail. Construction costs will be covered by the new transit tax implemented by the state of Minnesota and if permitting goes well, construction is expected to occur in Fall 2024.



RICE CREEK CAMPING SEASON



The Rice Creek Campground season came to a close on September 24. This campground alone brought in approximately \$236,000 in only five months. The success of the campground would not have been possible without the combined efforts of wonderful visitor center attendant staff, camp hosts, park rangers, maintenance crew and marketing team.

A special thank you to the Wargo Nature Center staff who provided a free monthly campfire program to Rice Creek Campground guests.

Thanks to everyone's hard work, Anoka County Parks are truly a great place to camp and visit.



NEW AMBASSADOR ANIMAL AT WARGO

Earlier this year, Wargo added a new ambassador animal used for educational programs. This animal, since named Wilbur, is a captive-bred western or plains hognose snake (*heterodon nasicus*). In the wild, this species is found as far east as Illinois, as far west as Colorado and Wyoming, as far north as southern Canada and as far south as northern Mexico. It is one of two species of hognose snake native to Minnesota, the other being the eastern hognose snake (*heterodon platirhinos*). Ambassador animals, such as Wilbur, allow naturalists to allow students of all ages a safe and accessible way to learn about wildlife and their unique adaptations. These ambassador animals are seen by Wargo's many visitors, school groups and participants in public programs, such as the Meet Wargo's Animals program that took place on September 23.



BUNKER BEACH WINTERIZATION



The 2023 Bunker Beach season came to a close on August 27 and staff wasted no time in beginning to winterize the facility.

Seasonal staff helped to stack deck chairs, deflate innertubes and give concessions stands a much needed deep clean. Pool technicians worked to drain the swimming pools, repair plaster and blow out the water pipes to prevent damage from freezing. On the administrative side, staff are reviewing feedback received on improvements for the 2024 season.



CHOMONIX FALL MAINTENANCE

Chomonix Golf Course completed annual fall maintenance on September 18 and 19. The primary work was aerification of the greens. This is done annually and serves many purposes that benefit the long term health of the greens. Aerification involves punching holes and removing a core of the green. The hole size is half an inch wide by three inches deep. Doing this helps oxygen and water get into the root system and relieves soil compaction after a summer of heavy play and equipment use from mowing the greens. The green is then top dressed with sand which is brushed into the holes completely filling them. Though the process looks invasive, the green will actually heal very quickly, within 7 to 12 days.





ANOKA COUNTY BOARD INFORMATIONAL ITEM

October 3, 2023

PARKS DEPARTMENT

ACTION REQUESTED	To provide information to the Committee regarding the application for grant funds from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Shade Tree Program Bonding Grant in the amount of \$500,000.
BACKGROUND	<p>The DNR has a total of \$10,063,000 available in bond dollars (\$8,400,000 in general obligation bonding and \$1,663,000 general fund bonding) to fund projects managing forest pest and disease through community forestry activities on public or tribal lands. There is no minimum to the dollar amount applicants can request. The maximum amount that will be funded is \$500,000.</p> <p>The Parks Department - Natural Resources Unit is preparing an application for a project removing ash trees from along trail corridors and in manicured areas where trees will pose a significant hazard when they are infested with Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and deteriorate. The ash removed will be replaced as part of the grant with a diverse mix of trees throughout the parks system in high priority areas. The proposed project is budgeted for the maximum amount allotted of \$500,000 with no cash or in-kind match required.</p> <p>Project Scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove ash trees that will pose significant hazard that are not good candidates for pesticide treatment.• Grind stumps of ash in manicured areas and restore turf.• Replace removed ash with diverse trees in high priority areas throughout the parks.
SOLUTIONS	N/A
FUNDING SOURCE (Levy dollars, IT fund, building fund, asset preservation, carryover dollars, etc.)	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Shade Tree Program Bonding Grant
CONCLUSION	N/A
RECOMMENDATIONS	This item is for information purposes only.



ANOKA COUNTY BOARD INFORMATIONAL ITEM

October 3, 2023

PARKS DEPARTMENT

ACTION REQUESTED	To provide information to the Committee regarding the execution of a contract with Anoka Conservation District (ACD) for cedar tree revetment on the Rum River in the amount of \$85,000 (Anoka County Contract # C0010323).
BACKGROUND	Anoka County was awarded a Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant to continue with Phase II of the cedar revetment installation along the Rum River and has selected Anoka Conservation District to complete this work. Anoka Conservation District was the installation contractor on Phase I of the project and brings the experience and expertise of installation of over 5,100 linear feet of cedar revetment in the Rum River. This phase will provide an additional 2,500 linear feet of revetment to protect the riverbank from continuing erosion and provide enhanced habitat in priority locations along the Rum River.
SOLUTIONS	N/A
FUNDING SOURCE (Levy dollars, IT fund, building fund, asset preservation, carryover dollars, etc.)	Conservation Partners Legacy Grant (CPL)
CONCLUSION	N/A
RECOMMENDATIONS	This item is for information purposes only.



ANOKA COUNTY BOARD INFORMATIONAL ITEM

October 3, 2023

PARKS DEPARTMENT

ACTION REQUESTED	To provide information to the Committee regarding the status of the Kordiak County Park pavilion and to seek guidance on next steps.
BACKGROUND	In July 2023, TKDA Engineers informed the Parks Department of structural issues with the Kordiak County Park pavilion that required it to be immediately closed and removed from use. Parks staff have reviewed various options to repair, replace, or remove the structure and seek guidance from the Committee on next steps. The most economical solution is to brace the structure, cut off the rotting wood at the bottom of the piers and replace it with a steel boot and beam. Rak Construction provided a quote of \$47,944.00 for this work.
SOLUTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. \$48,000 to remove bottom portion of wood pillars, replace with steel boot and beam.2. \$85,000 standard repair with stone pier.3. \$240,000 to replace the shelter with steel structure.4. \$15,000 to remove shelter and provide tables on the slab.5. \$50,000 for shade shelter (high maintenance).
FUNDING SOURCE (Levy dollars, IT fund, building fund, asset preservation, carryover dollars, etc.)	Parks Operating Budget
CONCLUSION	N/A
RECOMMENDATIONS	This item is for information purposes only.



ANOKA COUNTY BOARD INFORMATIONAL ITEM

October 3, 2023

PARKS DEPARTMENT

ACTION REQUESTED	To provide information to the Committee regarding contracts executed by the Parks Department since the last Committee meeting.
BACKGROUND	C0007761A - MOU with Anoka County RSVP Senior Volunteers and Wargo Nature Center C0010230 TKDA Engineering - Locke useful life survey C0010321 Lorenz Bus Service – Fall Project Tour C0010292 Keller Excavating - Island Lake Road Stabilization Project
SOLUTIONS	N/A
FUNDING SOURCE (Levy dollars, IT fund, building fund, asset preservation, carryover dollars, etc.)	Contracts are funded through various funding sources including operational budgets and grants.
CONCLUSION	N/A
RECOMMENDATIONS	This item is for information purposes only.