



**COTTAGE GROVE PARKS, RECREATION AND
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

March 9, 2026

12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH

COTTAGE GROVE, MN 55016

COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 PM

- 1 Call to Order
- 2 Roll Call
- 3 Approval of the Agenda
- 4 Approval of Minutes
 - A February 9, 2026
- 5 Open Forum
- 6 Presentations
 - A New Commissioner Introduction
- 7 Action Items
 - A CGAA United Soccer Goal Funding Request
 - B Military Trailhead Master Plan
 - C Bylaw Review
 - D Peterson Park Playground
 - E Still Ponds Park Natural Resources Management Plan
- 8 Action Updates
 - A Denzer Park
 - B CG Trailway Corridor Restoration
 - C Oltman Park
 - D Mississippi Dunes Park
 - E Peterson Park
- 9 Donations
- 10 Staff Reports and Materials
 - A Staff Reports
- 11 Commission Comments
- 12 Council Comments

A Council Agendas

13 Workshop

14 Adjournment

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH
COTTAGE GROVE MN, 55016
COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 P.M

Date: February 9, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER
Meeting called to order at 7:00pm at City Hall
2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Adam Larson, Samantha Crabtree, Justin Olson, Kelly Glasford, Debra Gustafson, Shane Waterman, Justin Waterman

Members Absent: Susannah Brown

Others Present: Zac Dockter Parks Director, Noah Ranem, Council Member Dave Clausen

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve minutes from November 10, 2025, was made by Commissioner Crabtree & seconded by Commissioner Gustafson. Minutes Approved.

5. OPEN FORUM
None
6. ACTION ITEMS

A. Ponds Park Natural Resources Management Plan

We acquired Still Ponds Park Property in 2022. It has a beautiful shallow lake area and a lot of good forest habitat. We have been there clearing the undergrowth, buckthorn and things of that nature. We did warn the Commission that the pine plantation that was established there in the 1950's/1960's was pretty degraded, with very tall red pines that are starting to fall over and get diseased. We did invite a staff member from the Minnesota DNR Forestry Department, multiple people from the Washington County Conservation District, South Washington County Watershed District, and other arborists and they all agreed that the plantation needs to go over time. We are trying to take a phased approach because we realize the visual impact will be considerable. The first

step was to establish the natural resources management plan so we can collectively show what that area will look like after a full habitat restoration. The plan has been

submitted to the Commission for review. It was completed by the South Washington County Watershed District staff. It does a good job of laying out the history of the land, history of the area, what the goals are, what the estimated cost of the restoration will be, and long-term management. Commissioner Gustafson commented that the plan had the incorrect population of Cottage Grove at 35,000 and it is closer to 40,000 and needs to be amended. Commissioner Larson inquired about the total costs listed in the summary. Zac confirmed that the total cost would be all columns added up collectively and that the activity phasing page is just more detailed information from the summary page. Commissioner Olson brought to the Commissions' attention that the document states there is a conservation easement in place, however after previous discussion with Zac and research there is in fact no conservation easement in place on this property and we should make sure to have that amended. A motion was made to approve the plan with the two exceptions notes made by Commissioner Olson. Seconded by Commissioner S. Waterman.

B. Peterson Park Concept Master Plan Review

Peterson Park is an exciting new park development project southwest of Jamaica Avenue & Military Road. Like Still Ponds Park, this is one of the more significant lakes, in terms of surface area, in Cottage Grove that we are excited that we were able to obtain the land all the way around the lake. The Council wrestled a little bit last year about putting the trail all the way around the lake, but we are working with the developer to make sure this happens. This will be about a 1-mile loop lake trail. Zac walked through the design plan with the Commission, looking for feedback on the first draft of this concept plan. Commissioner Crabtree inquired how many parking spaces there will be. Zac stated there will be about a dozen right now. Commissioner Crabtree had concern about that not being enough as we anticipate this to be a heavily trafficked park. She wanted to know if there is room for additional parking spaces, or what other options people would have for parking. Zac stated that there will be an opportunity for off-street parking on the interior neighborhood roads. Zac does not anticipate this to be high destination park where there are lots of people at one time, but rather people will come and go, so additional parking spots probably won't be necessary. Commissioner Olson stated he was able to drive around a portion of the lake and is really optimistic about this park. Zac mentioned to the Commission that we will be putting in a small dock for water access, however there will not be fishing opportunities as the lake is fairly shallow. Zac mentioned there is also connection to the park from the southwest corner through Shepard Farm. Commissioner Crabtree asked if there would be rental opportunities similar to Grey Cloud Island. Zac stated we should have some sort of paddling launch and then revisit if we do a paddle share. Commissioner Gustafson received feedback from neighbors regarding the access point down at the southern point. It looks like the only access point is through the west cul-de-sac. Neighbors

wanted to know if there was any way to have the access point off of Jamaica by the east cul-de-sac as it would be easier access. Zac stated that there is a trail connection that goes out of that cul-de-sac and runs up Jamaica. It doesn't cut back directly into the park because of some drainage and other issues, but as you get further north you'll see there is that opportunity where it loops back into the park. Some of the other feedback she received was about the future playground. Neighbors would like to see more of a nature color scheme and have two different areas for older and younger kids. In terms of restroom and park shelter the feedback was that the solid side of the structure should have it on the side, not the back. The thought is if it is angled right, to make sure it is more visible from higher traffic area like Jamaica and Ravine Road so there is less opportunity for graffiti and potential crime. Zac stated that he understands the concern, but reality is, no matter where you put it, there will be a wall towards Jamaica. Zac stated we will be putting security lighting and cameras in the area to protect our assets. The playground design is almost complete, and it is a nature-based theme that he thinks people will enjoy. Commissioner Gustafson knows this is going to be a phased approach and there is grant in the packet from the DNR and would want to know if the start of the project be based on when we get grant funding. Zac stated that the plan to apply for the DNR Outdoor Recreation grant as well as local DNR Local Trail grant by March 31st. If we get those grants, we will get notification sometime in June, once the contracts are complete it would be closer to September so this would most likely be a spring 2027 construction project. In the meantime, we are working with a developer to get the trails and park graded and bring topsoil in. Commissioner Larson asked if we are doing asphalt trails. Zac stated that there are concrete trails around the active area and the trails themselves will break off into asphalt trails. Commissioner Larson asked if there was going to be any delineation to show what park property is and what private property is. Zac stated that we do a pretty good job with managing our property lines and putting up posts that say park property and addressing encroachment issues by having property owners removing their stuff they put on park property. We have already addressed a few encroachment issues on the south side of the lake that had not been dealt with in the past and got everything cleaned up last year. Commissioner Larson asked if we would be planning a multi-use trail with bike lanes or would it mostly be for walking. Zac stated it is scheduled to be an 8-ft trail right now; however, the grant actually requires a 10-ft trail. We had to be very conscious of the space we had to work with as we wanted to preserve as many large trees as we could, so we would not be able to get a 10-ft trail around the entire lake. The trail will be open to bicycling, rollerblading, walkers, runners, whatever it might be. This will be our third lake loop trail in the community. A motion to approve the master plan for Peterson Park was made by Commissioner Glasford. Seconded by Commissioner S. Waterman.

C. Grant Application Letters of Support

Now that we have approved the master plan concept for Peterson Park, we can move forward with applying for the grants as previously mentioned. Looking for a motion to accept a letter of support to use in the grant application process. Commissioner

Crabtree asked if the previously discussed 8-ft trail vs 10- ft trail will impact our chance for this grant. Zac stated that it may, but he did talk to staff and there is a reason for exception section for things like preserving habitat or not removing large trees. A motion to approve the letter of support made by Commissioner Crabtree. Seconded by Commissioner Olson.

D. Public Landscapes Initiative Program

This is something the Commission reviews almost annually. The goal of the program is to beautify the community and make sure when we remove trees from the community for development that we are taking fee from that and putting that back into replanting in the community. This can go towards things like Arbor Day tree planting, mass park planting, new park development and right of way beautification. One of the things that was talked about at the strategic planning session with City Council was that we need to get better on how we strategize right of way beautification. We have over 400 gardens in Cottage Grove, and a lot of those are in the right of way which is a dangerous spot for workers to try to maintain those. We had a heart to heart with City Council, and we want more focus on hardscapes and where we do have softscapes, have more plants, flowers, and trees and really make those areas pop and make sure we maintain those the best we can. We would like to use the Public Landscape Initiative and prioritize these projects such as the Jamaica area landscaping as many of those gardens have gotten beyond what we can maintain. 80th Street has also given us a lot of challenges but that will be reconstructed this year so we will clean that area up then. Looking for support to amend the current plan. Commissioner Crabtree asked if the new roundabout at 80th & Keats would be part of this. Zac stated yes, we have a landscape plan that is more hardscape but will have softscaping elements too. Commissioner Olson asked Zac to explain the maintenance of hardscapes as that was not included in the report. Zac stated that yes hardscapes are not free of maintenance either and depending on if you do stamp or colored concrete there is sealing every 5 years or so that comes with that. We do have trucks that go by that washes these curb areas and the reality is that the maintenance involved with that compared to trying to get out to the gardens monthly is much less and much safer. A motion to approve the Public Landscapes Initiative as recommended made by Commissioner Olson. Seconded by Commissioner S. Waterman.

E. Commissioner Term Review

One Commissioner has termed out this year; we will take care of that at the end of the meeting. Just reminding you of your terms. Commissioner S. Waterman and Commissioner Olson have offered to refill their seat. Commissioner Crabtree has termed out, so we are actively looking to fill her seat. We also still have a youth seat open that needs to be filled. No action needed.

F. Facility Use Reclassification of Special Olympics

We have an item regarding our facility use policy in regard to the Blazing Stars Special

Olympics program. This is a non-profit group we have been working with for a few years that uses a few facilities across our community for their league programming. The challenge we have had is we only have two programs we recognize as priority three associations: The Cottage Grove Athletic Association & The Eastridge Athletic Association. So, as we work down our priorities, we can't move on to our priority four groups until we've got all the field allocations for the priority three groups. As you can imagine, with the two associations being our two largest users, it takes a long time to figure out what fields are still available because they have to wait for registration numbers to come through. Historically those groups have played really well with the Blazing Stars Special Olympics program, and try to allocate the fields for their programs, but for us as a city to wait and for them to try to wait for all that allocation to play out it becomes a little cumbersome. So, with that we would like to make them a priority three group so we can get their facilities right away alongside CGA & ERAA. We think this group is a great partner that helps the community and surrounding communities and we think we should re-prioritize them. Noah Ranem coordinates our facility use and stated that in the last two years he has worked with these groups and they have been very open to moving things around. Blazing Stars is still growing, and they are adding some new fall sports, so getting them a seat at the same table makes our lives a lot easier. And so, if the Commission is supportive of that, Zac provided an amended facility use policy that they could consider for action. Commissioner S. Waterman asked if Blazing Stars would be at the field coordination meeting that is typically held in January. Zac confirmed yes. Commissioner Olson stated he raised a question with Zac earlier about our priority three association requirements and in order to do this, we have to waive conditions one and two, but the rest of them we should still require. So, his suggestion is we limit our waving to only one and two, which is what Zac did with the revision. Commissioner Larson motioned to approve, Commission approved.

7. PRESENTATIONS
None

8. ACTION UPDATES

Denzer Park

We started this project in summer 2024 and took a hiatus in 2025 as we reallocated our budgets for parks. Part of the reason we did this was because development had stopped in the area and we weren't building a park in the middle of nowhere. Now that homes have been built, and apartment complexes are interested again, we think it is time to service that neighborhood, so we are going to put the project back out to bid. We already have the playground and shelter on order, so we hope to have that park constructed this coming year of 2026.

CG Trailway Corridor Restoration

We have had a lot of timber down from diseased, dead, dying, and invasive trees that have been sitting for a long time because we were not able to burn it last winter. We were supposed to burn it this winter but have run into challenges, so we just authorized a contract to have the rest of it hauled away in the next week or two.

Oltman Park

Complete except for the picnic shelter, the playground actually got established in November. We will let the turf grow in through next year and hope to be able to play on the fields in 2027.

Mississippi Dunes Park

We have a lot of funding applications out right now. We have four or five applications for further grant funding for the road leading into the park, the building, the playground, the fishing pier, and the boat launch. Once we figure out what we will get from the 3M settlement program, if anything, then we can work back from there and figure out how we want to piece together this project. Commissioner S. Waterman asked Zac about how the grants dictate the schedule of how the park is built, and if we did get a majority or all the grants that we are applying for, would there be scheduling that would be fixed. Zac stated that there will be grant funding for probably everything in the park except for the building. Buildings are really hard to get grants for; however, we are applying for a grant for the building from LCCMR but that will probably be a 50% match.

Peterson Park

Discussed earlier in action items

Still Ponds Park

Focusing on habitat restoration

2025 Park Playground Donation

We donated Belden & Hardwood Park playgrounds to Kids Around the World last spring. We received word that Hardwood Park will be going to Jamaica & Belden will be going to Panama, and we look forward to doing this again.

Ice Arena Naming Rights

We talked to the Commission at the last meeting about entering an agreement with Front Burner Sports, well, that is now happening. They are just starting to develop their story on why people should invest in the Cottage Grove Ice Arena, so there is a concept out there but not ready to present to the Commission at this time, but more information will be presented at the next meeting.

9. **DONATIONS**
None

10. STAFF REPORTS & MATERIALS

Each division has submitted a report for the Commission to review.

11. COMMISSION COMMENTS

This will be Commissioner Crabtree's last meeting. She started on the Commission in 2016. During Sam's time on the Commission, she was a part of many major projects including the renovation of almost every single park building, expanded Hamlet Park, acquired 400 acres of park and open space, plus added 35 miles of trails. She helped guide the East Ravine Park Trail master plan, and saw the openings of Cedarhurst Meadow Park, Oltman Park, Antlers Ridge, Strawberry Fields, & Glacial Valley Park. We acquired 1900 feet of shoreline along the Mississippi River for the Mississippi Dunes project. We added unique recreation activities such as the bike park, paddle share, kayak rental program, playgrounds, interpretive signage, and trail mapping just to name a few. Sam helped preserve protect and restore hundreds of acres across the community, while also renovating existing parks like Arbor Meadows, Hearthside, Granada & Hamlet and now have plans for the Ice Arena. Sam's strongest voice was making dynamic playgrounds. Zac presented Commissioner Crabtree with a Hockey Mom parking sign.

12. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Clausen asked the Commission for feedback on the Kingston Park building versus Mississippi Dunes Park and which is more important in terms of funding. Commissioner Olson stated Kingston Park first & Mississippi Dunes Park second. Commissioner Larson stated he would be opposite and wants a working park at Mississippi Dunes before replacing the building at Kingston Park. Commissioner Glasford stated she would prefer Mississippi Dunes because it's a cool entity that we currently don't have that could draw more people to our community. Commissioner Crabtree asked what the plans for the building will be and would the building be an integral part for the usage at Mississippi Dunes or would it be more beneficial to upgrade Kingston, since that is the biggest park we use in Cottage Grove versus waiting a little while at Mississippi Dunes. Zac answered that the park would be fully functional without the building. Commissioner Crabtree ultimately agreed with Commissioner Olson that Kingston should be done first and then Mississippi Dunes as long as we can get grant money for the other things to make it functional.

13. WORKSHOP

None

14. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Crabtree. Second by Commissioner J . Waterman. Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm



To: Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission
From: Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director
Cc:
Date: February 25, 2026
Subject: Soccer Goal Funding Request

Introduction/Background

The Cottage Grove Athletic Association, via CG United Soccer, is requesting matching funds of up to \$2,500 to purchase new soccer goals. Their funding request is attached to this memo.

The City's 2026-2030 Capital Improvements Plan includes \$10,000 per year for the Commission to utilize as a "Matching Funds Program" from the Park Improvement Fund. This program allows the Commission to financially support volunteer groups who are willing to invest into the Parks and Recreational system. Historically, the majority of matching requests are about \$2,500 per project but have gone higher based on the Commission's project review and scope of financial need. A journal of the use of those funds is tabled below.

Park Commission Matching Funds Program Journal

Year	Project	Group	Value
2014	Bike Park Match to \$33,000 Grant	MN Off Road Cyclists/Bike Park Volunteers	\$3,000
2017	Dog Park Water Line/Fountain	WAG Farms Dog Park	\$2,500
2017	Hamlet Football/Soccer Scoreboard	CGAA	\$5,000
2019	Grey Cloud Softball Field Fencing	CGAA	\$2,500
2019	Kingston Soccer Nets	CGAA	\$2,500
2020	Bike Park Pump Track Paving	MN Off Road Cyclists/Bike Park Volunteers	\$2,500
2021	Bike Park Jump Line Improvements	MN Off Road Cyclists/Bike Park Volunteers	\$2,500
2021	Woodridge baseball field #1 scoreboard	CGAA	\$5,000
2022	Kingston soccer nets	CGAA	\$2,500
2022	Oakwood Disc Golf Baskets	Disc Golf Volunteer Group	\$2,500
2023	Oakwood Disc Golf Signage	Disc Golf Volunteer Group	\$2,500
2023	Pine Coulee RCA Track	RCA Track Volunteer Group	\$2,500
2023	Bike Park track realignments	MN Off Road Cyclists/Bike Park Volunteers	\$2,500

Action Requested

Receive information and provide staff direction for funding request from the Cottage Grove Athletic Association.

Cottage Grove United Soccer

February 25, 2026

Cottage Grove Parks Commission
City of Cottage Grove

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of Cottage Grove United Soccer, I am writing to respectfully request cost-share assistance for the purchase of two (2) new soccer goal standards.

As our club continues to grow, we are seeing increased participation across all age levels. In order to safely and effectively accommodate our players — and to provide the opportunity to host our own soccer tournaments — we need to expand our equipment inventory. Hosting tournaments allows us to welcome other soccer communities into Cottage Grove, increasing community engagement while supporting local businesses and showcasing our parks facilities.

The cost for one set of goal standards is **\$2,600**, bringing the total project cost to **\$5,200** for two sets. In the past, we have partnered successfully with the City on similar purchases, with the club purchasing one set and the City assisting with another.

We are respectfully requesting that the Parks Commission consider a cost-share contribution of **\$2,500** toward this purchase. Cottage Grove United Soccer will fund the remaining balance of the project.

We greatly value our partnership with the City of Cottage Grove and appreciate the Parks Commission's continued support of youth athletics and community recreation opportunities. Thank you for your consideration of this request. We would be happy to provide any additional information if needed.

Sincerely,

Sharon Kortus
Cottage Grove United Soccer

To: Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission

From: Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director

CC: Jim Forhman, Parks Superintendent

Date: February 25, 2026

Subject: Military Trailhead Master Plan Concept

Introduction

Through comprehensive park master planning, the City has identified historic military road as a future trailway. This trail would be a key artery in connecting to the local and regional trailway system. As part of the Military Trail, the southeast quadrant along current Military Road and Jamaica Avenue is sited as a future trailhead. Although this land is not currently in City ownership, it is timely to start planning for this area as surrounding land is quickly transitioning from agriculture to residential. The first step in park development is to produce a master plan. A draft of the master plan concept is attached and ready for review by the Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission.

Background

Military Trail will offer a great opportunity for Cottage Grove to showcase its trail system utilizing this historic roadway. The trailhead design includes functional resting and recreational spaces while also providing interpretive opportunities to remember the historical significance of this site. Attached with this memo are the Trailhead Master Plan concept as well as pictures of the interpretive signs along Ravine Parkway that give context to the deep history of Military Road.

Upon approval a master plan, staff will utilize this concept for future grant applications as well as for marketing and communications with future residents of the neighborhood and community.

Staff Recommendation

Provide feedback for the Military Trailhead Master Plan concept.

MILITARY ROAD HISTORIC TRAIL CORRIDOR

Construction of the Roads

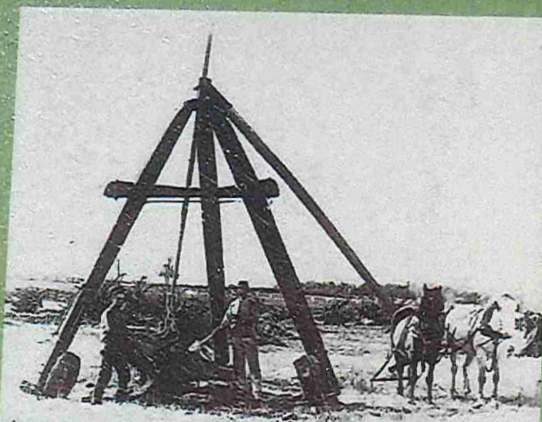
Road construction in 1850 largely followed the same process as road construction today, although modern roads must meet a much higher standard. For the typical stretch of Military Road through a wooded area, this is how construction might have gone:

CLEARING – Before anything else could start, trees would need to be cleared for the entire width of the right-of-way. In many places, this right-of-way could be up to 50 feet wide. That's about twice as wide as the trail you are standing on. Some of the cleared trees were shipped back to town to be milled for lumber, but many of them were left in place to be used later for bridges or timber trackways called "corduroy roads."

GRUBBING – Just like it sounds, grubbing was the hard and dirty work of road-building. Stumps, boulders, and brush all had to be cleared. Stumps could be particularly difficult, and were either chopped by hand or pulled by teams of workers or horses. Teams lucky enough to have access to a stump-puller could remove up to 40 stumps per day, but that was still slow going on stretches of road that are heavily wooded.

GRADING – In order to make the road level, workers needed to move dirt from the high parts of the road and lay it down on the low parts of the road, using hand-held rakes, hoes, or horse-drawn scrapers. This technique is called cut-and-fill, and in many sections of Military Road, this was the final step. Although a graded road is certainly easier to drive a wagon on than the ungraded trails that made up most of Minnesota's road network before 1850, the lack of improved surface made Military Road quick to succumb to erosion. The roads were often extremely muddy and full of potholes – so much so that in some places, they were nearly impassable except when the ground was frozen in the winter.

CULVERTS AND BRIDGES – The majority of the money that went into building territorial roads was used for bridge-building. In order to keep the roads passable in most seasons, all rivers required bridges over them. Small creeks or streams often required culverts, which are usually in the form of large stone pipes that allow water to flow beneath the roadway. Although bridges were used at most small crossings, larger rivers like the St. Croix, if crossed at all, usually utilized ferries. The Prescott-Point Douglas ferry was especially important for providing a land route into Minnesota and allowed for easier boat travel at the mouth of the St. Croix River than would be possible with a bridge.



A team of men and horses using a stump puller to clear a field.



The Last Stage over the Military Road Leaving Superior in August, 1870, Minnesota Historical Society. This photo depicts the muddy, uneven northern terminus of the Fort Douglas-St. Louis River Road.



A closer view of the Point Douglas-Fort Ripley Territorial Road

Falling into Disuse

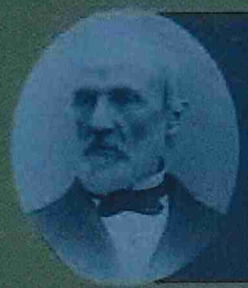
These early military roads were instrumental in opening Minnesota up to settlers and connecting its distant settlements to each other. The roads even allowed mail to be delivered regularly to the state, increasing the number of overland postal routes from 4 to 49 between 1849 and 1856. However, with the advent of the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad in 1870, a much easier and cheaper option became available for transport and most of the traffic on the early roads ceased. In 1920, when the Babcock Plan to update Minnesota's roads for automobiles was adopted, most of the state's military roads were considered too crooked or difficult to improve and were abandoned in favor of the new, straighter roads.

MILITARY ROAD HISTORIC TRAIL CORRIDOR

Historical Significance

This historic trail corridor is a piece of the old Military Road, one of five territorial roads in Minnesota established by Congress in 1850, and one of the first major roads built in the state. Minnesota's first territorial delegate to Congress, Henry H. Sibley, petitioned for the United States government to fund the five roads in 1850, one year after Minnesota joined the nation as a territory. Once built, these roads opened Minnesota up to settlers and connected the far-flung corners of this wild, western territory to each other for the first time.

The segment of Military Road you can see here is part of the Point Douglas-Fort Ripley Road, which extends from the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers near Prescott, Wisconsin, up to Fort Ripley in North-Central Minnesota. The road shares its first eight miles with another road, the Point Douglas-St. Louis River Road, which follows the St. Croix River and terminates in the north at Superior, Wisconsin. Although not all maps from the period agree on exactly where the two roads diverged, it was likely near what is now considered Old Cottage Grove. At that point, the Point Douglas-St. Louis River Road turned northeast toward Stillwater, while the Point Douglas-Fort Ripley Road continued northwest toward St. Paul.



Henry H. Sibley was Minnesota's first territorial delegate to Congress (1849-1853) as well as its first governor (1858-1860). Sibley was instrumental in securing federal funding for the Military Roads.

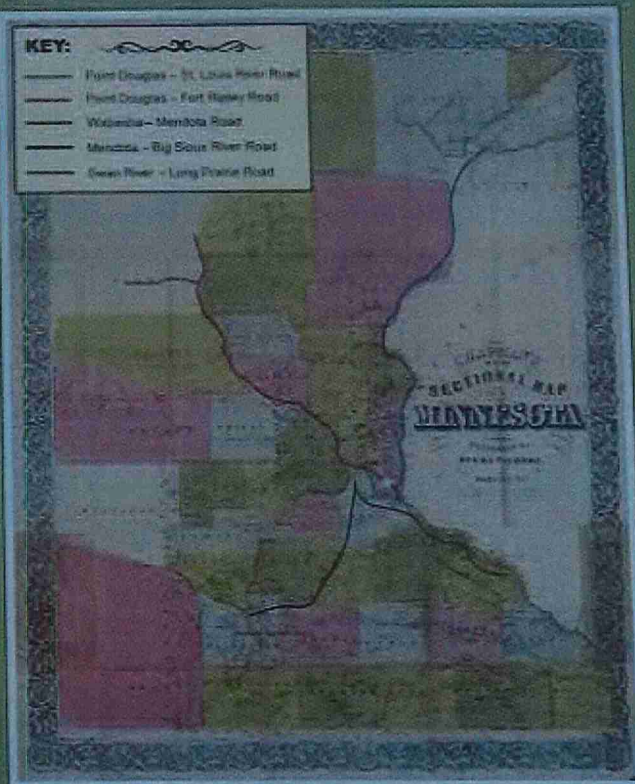
Henry H. Sibley, 1st Delegate to U.S. House of Representatives, Commissioner of Minnesota Historical Society, Under Public Domain

The Reason for the Name

The "Military Road" did not reflect the true purpose of the roads, which were built to open the territory up to commerce and civilian settlement. The project would require federal funding, however, and Congress needed a more immediate reason than settlement or trade to allocate federal dollars to a distant, sparsely-populated western territory. Eventually, Henry H. Sibley successfully made the argument that the region was ripe for conflict, both between native tribes and between natives and settlers. He asserted that the roads were needed to rapidly transport federal troops if settlements were ever threatened. Despite resistance from some eastern states, the notion that the project would help the U.S. defend its claim on this frontier territory proved to be a convincing one, and \$5,000 was appropriated in 1850 for preliminary surveys of what would become the new Military Road.

KEY:

- Point Douglas — St. Louis River Road
- Point Douglas — Fort Ripley Road
- Wabasha — Menota Road
- Menota — Big Sioux River Road
- Green River — Long Prairie Road



The five major military roads of the Minnesota Territory in 1856. The Fort Ripley and St. Louis River Roads originated at Point Douglas in Washington County and were concurrent as they traveled north until they separated just southeast of this point in Cottage Grove.

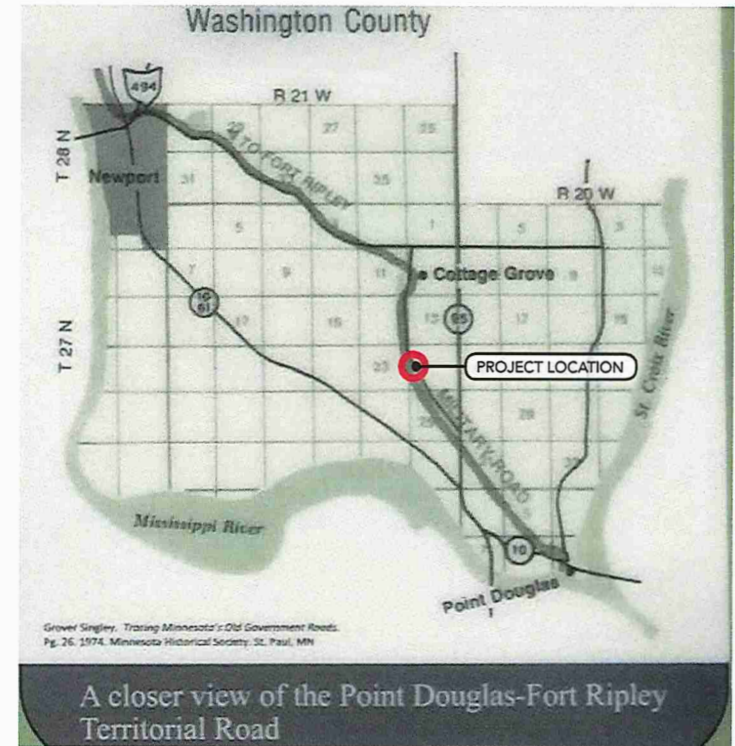
Thomas, John. Chapter's new historical map of Minnesota. Minneapolis, Minn.: The B. F. Johnson, 1856. Map. Reprinted from the Library of Congress. www.loc.gov/purl/00101127.



1850 Authorized Military Roads in Minnesota Territory



MAP: STREETS.MN; "A HISTORY OF MINNESOTA'S HIGHWAYS PART ONE" DATED FEBRUARY 9, 2018



MAP: COTTAGE GROVE INTERPRETIVE SIGN TITLED "MILITARY ROAD HISTORIC TRAIL CORRIDOR"

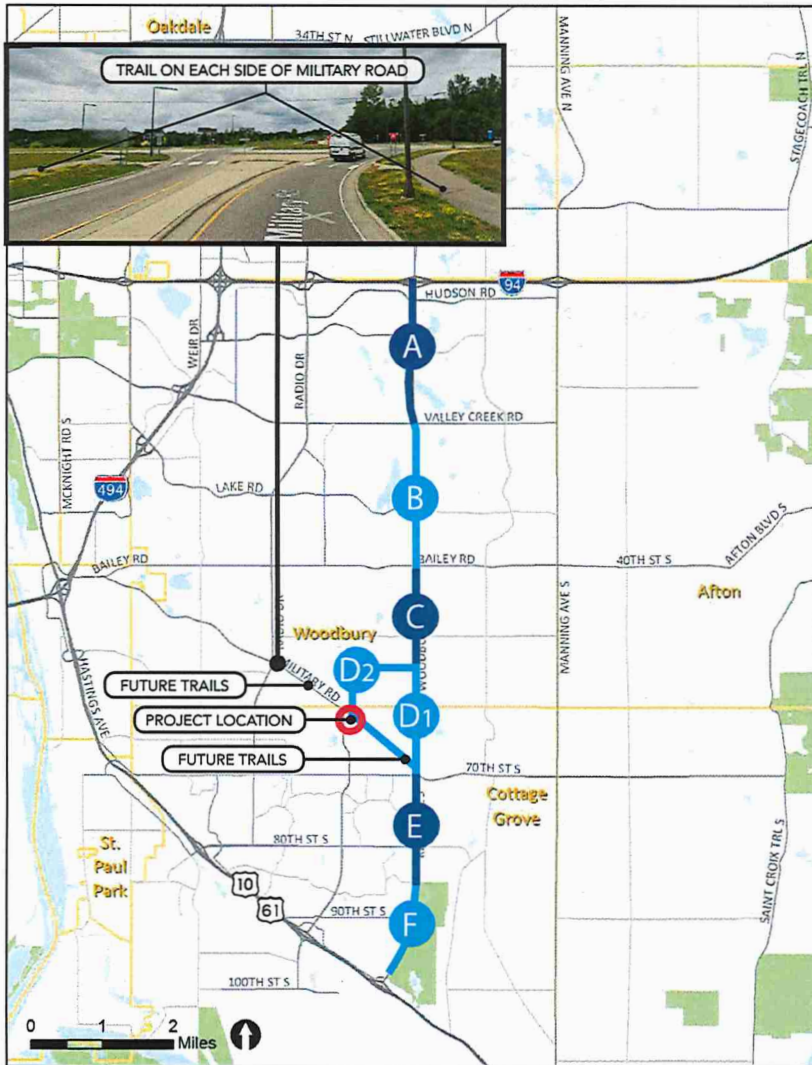
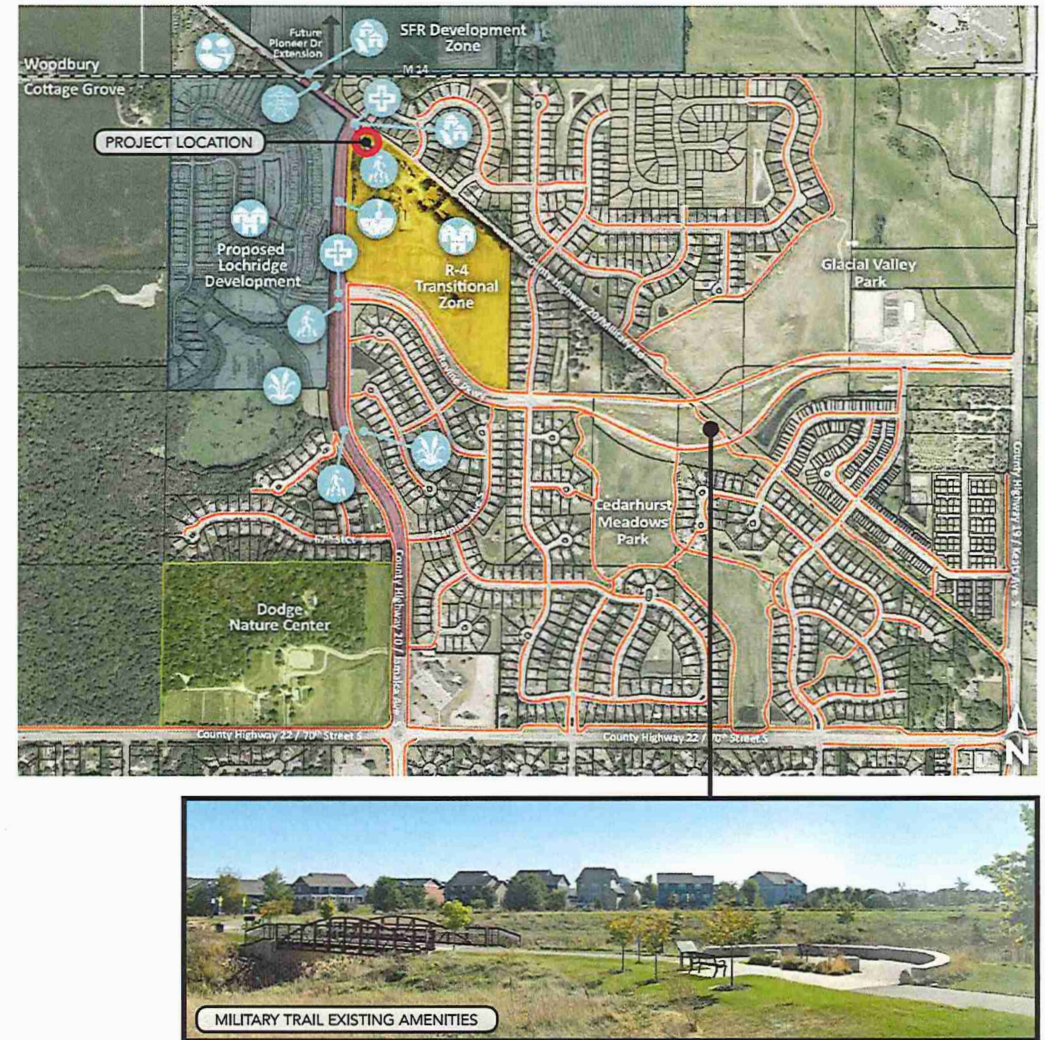
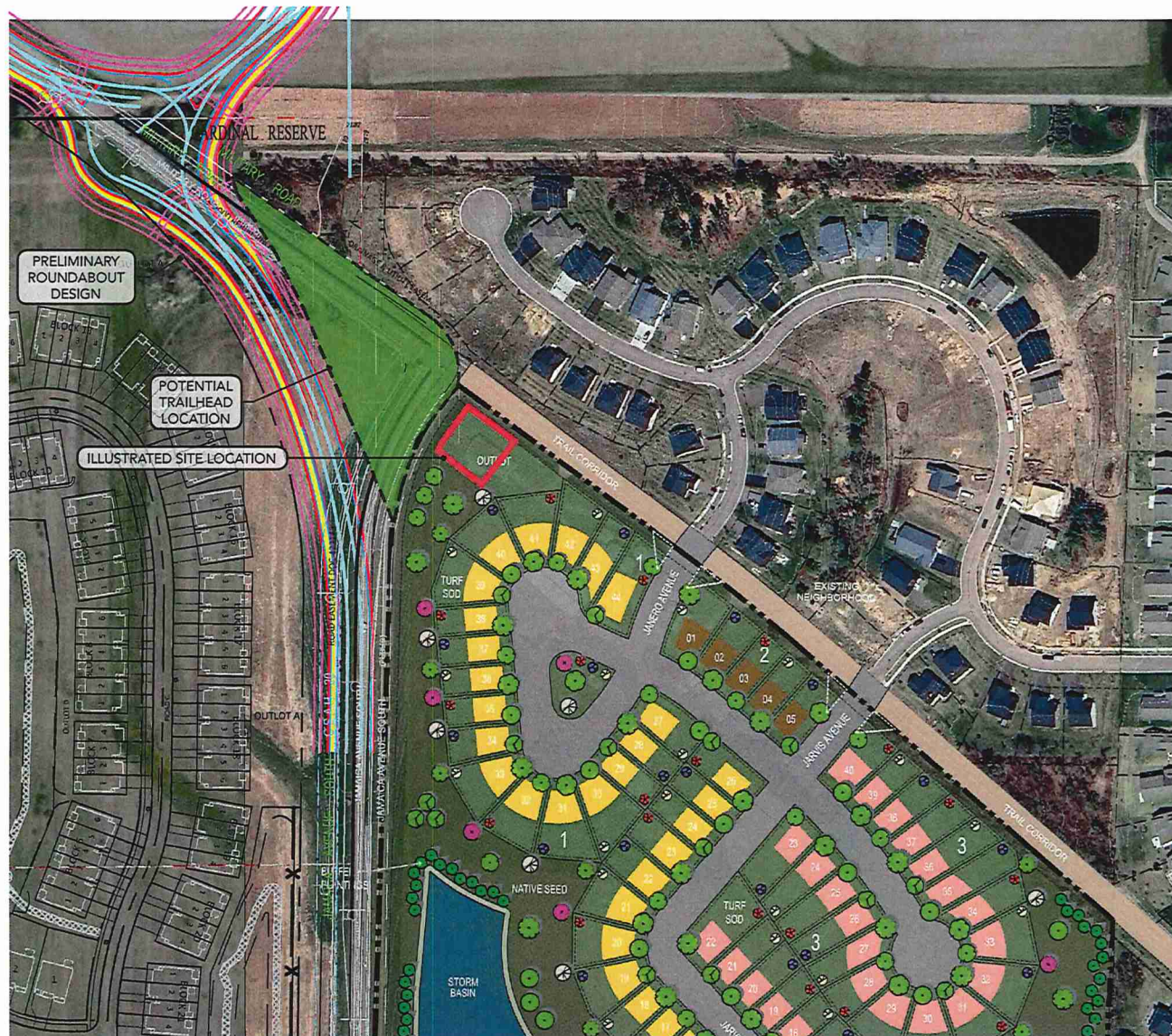
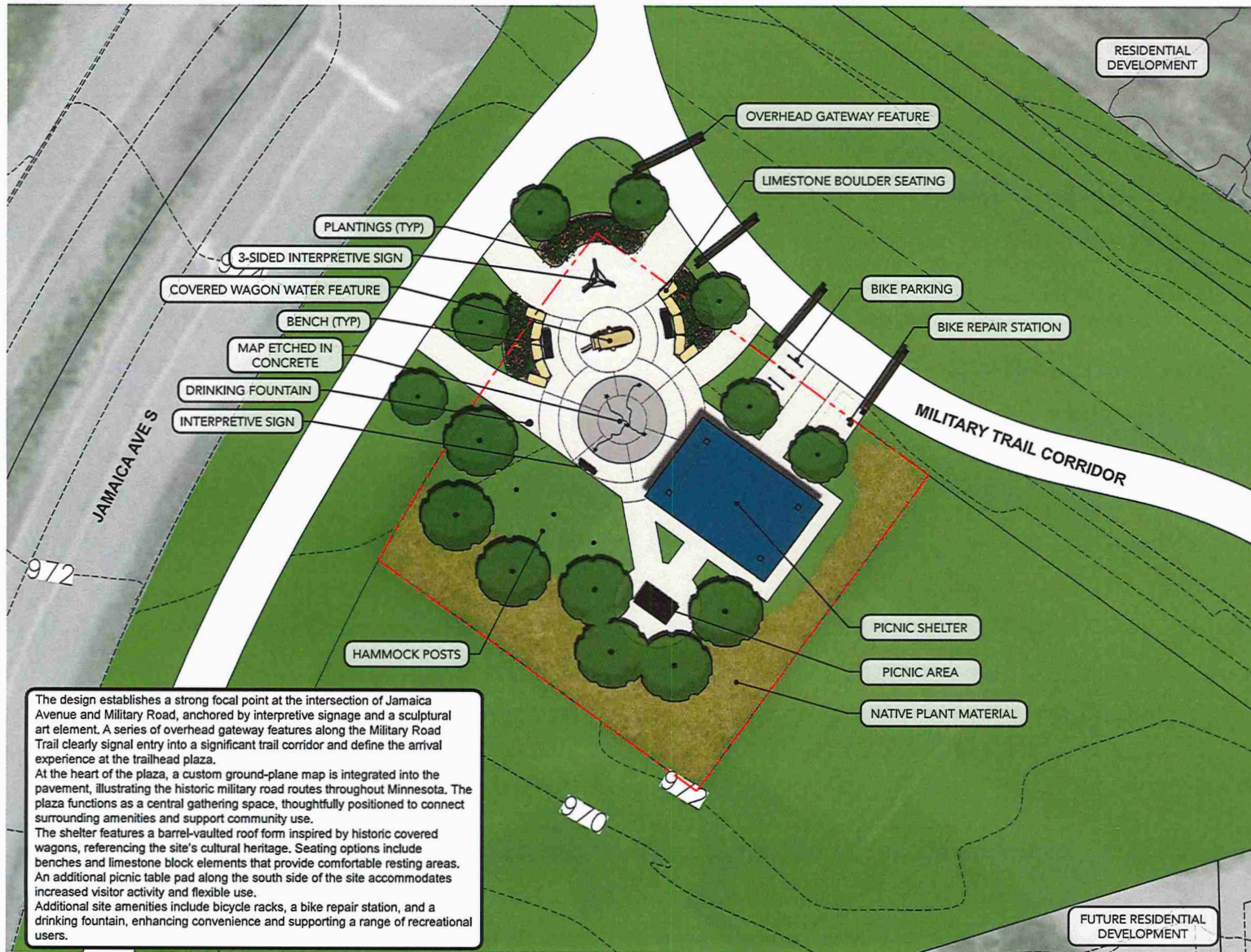


Figure II: Central Greenway Regional Trail Segment Map.

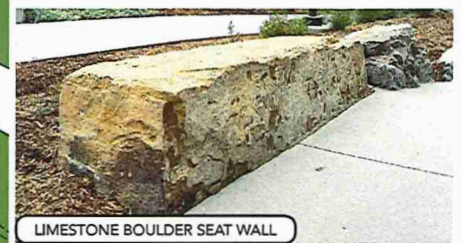
MAP: "CENTRAL GREENWAY REGIONAL TRAIL MASTER PLAN SOUTH SEGMENT: INTERSTATE 94 TO COTTAGE GROVE RAVIDE REGIONAL PARK. DATED: SEPT. 6, 2017"







DESIGN INSPIRATION IMAGES



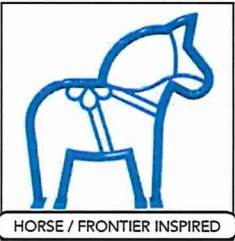
DESIGN INSPIRATION IMAGES

BIKE REPAIR STATION

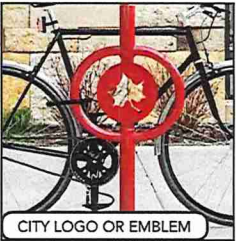


BIKE REPAIR STATION

THEMED BIKE RACKS

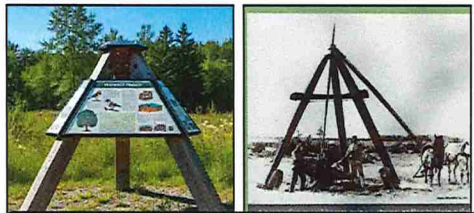


HORSE / FRONTIER INSPIRED



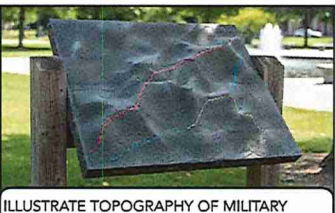
CITY LOGO OR EMBLEM

MULTIPLE SIDED INTERPRETIVE SIGN



INTERPRETIVE SIGN (SHAPED SIMILAR TO 1850'S STUMP PULLER)

CONTOURED MAP INTERPRETIVE SIGN



ILLUSTRATE TOPOGRAPHY OF MILITARY TRAIL ROUTES AND CONNECTION TO RIVERS

WAGON INSPIRED INTERACTIVE ART PIECE



PLAY EQUIPMENT STYLE ART PIECE WITH INTERACTIVE PANELS



ABSTRACT WAGON SCULPTURE

HAMMOCKING GROVE



HAMMOCKING POSTS



To: Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission
From: Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director
CC:
Date: February 25, 2026
Subject: Commission Bylaws

Introduction/Background

The Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission is governed by its bylaws. The bylaws are attached to this memo for Commission review and discussion. Any amendment to the bylaws must be reviewed and approved at two consecutive meetings. Or, if no amendments are recommended, the Commission may approve bylaws as written at its first review (present meeting).

Staff Recommendation

Consider approving the Parks, Recreation and Natural Resource's Commission Bylaws.

CITY OF COTTAGE GROVE

PARKS RECREATION AND NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION

2023 BYLAWS

A. Authority

1. State of Minnesota – Municipal Planning Act as amended.
2. Name – The official name of this Commission is the Parks, Recreation and Natural Resource Commission of the City of Cottage Grove, hereafter referred to as the Parks Commission and is authorized to adopt rules of procedure according to Title 2-1-8 of the City Code of the City of Cottage Grove, Washington County, State of Minnesota.
3. Governing Regulations – The laws of the State of Minnesota and the ordinances of the City of Cottage Grove supersede any part of these rules.
4. Rules of Order – In matters not covered in these rules of procedure, the conduct of the Parks Commission shall be guided by "Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised."
5. Open Meeting Law – The Parks Commission and all Committees thereof shall be subject to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.

B. Enablement and Amendments

1. These rules of procedure, hereafter referred to as the Rules, shall take effect upon adoption only by an affirmative vote of five (5) members of entire Parks Commission appointed at the time.
2. These rules may be amended only at regular meetings of the Parks Commission and by not less than 2/3 of the Commission members consenting to any amendment, and with any amendment to these rules receiving consideration for at least two (2) consecutive regular meetings before adoption and inclusion in these rules. Amendments will normally be given consideration at the annual Parks Commission organizational meeting.

C. Purpose

1. The primary purpose and duties of the Parks Commission shall be to:
 - A. Develop programs providing for maximum use of resources within the City as they relate to parks, recreation and natural resources.
 - B. Aid and assist the City in formulating and following sound conservation and land use management practices.

- C. Assist City staff and the Planning Commission in the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive park and open space plan.
 - D. Aid the appointed City staff liaison, park planning consultants, and others in the preparation of site plans for new and existing parks and open space areas, conservancy areas and scenic overlooks.
 - E. Make recommendations to the appointed City staff liaison and City Council regarding the care, maintenance, and development of City parks.
 - F. Review all preliminary plats for commercial, industrial, and residential development within the City, to ensure that all park and open space properties, trails, and other environmentally significant areas designated for acquisition and/or development are acquired and preserved from urban development.
 - G. Act as liaison between the Council and City organizations that provide recreational programs; provide a forum for open discussion of issues by the public.
 - H. Review all plans or applications submitted to the City that may affect any City natural resource.
 - I. Review and provide feedback and direction on existing City recreation programs and assist the Recreation Division in the development of new programs and services.
 - J. Review equipment needs of the City parks and playgrounds and make recommendations to the Council on the purchase of such equipment.
 - K. Maintain and refine the City park profile.
 - L. Assist in the development of ordinances relating to parks, recreation and natural resources.
 - M. Assist the appointed City staff liaison in the prioritization and recommendation of capital improvement projects within the parks and open spaces.
 - N. Provide a continuing analysis of programs and services to meet citizens' recreational needs, protect the environment and enhance the quality of life in the community.
 - O. Participate in the planning and development of all State and regional parks and park reserves acquired and developed within the City by the County, State, or Federal government.
 - P. Review engineering and site plans for City improvements that may in any way change the characteristics of any City park land. (1971 Code § 2-58; amd. 2000 Code)
2. The Parks Commission shall consider and report on every matter referred to the Commission by the City Council.

D. Membership

1. Number and Term – The Commission shall consist of nine (9) members, two of which are youth seats, each appointed by the City council for terms of two (2) years beginning March 1. No Parks Commission member may serve more than four consecutive terms. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be only for the unexpired portion of such vacancy; filling an unexpired term of one year or less shall not be counted against the limit of three consecutive terms.
2. Qualifications – All members of the Commission must meet the following qualifications:
 - a. Each Parks Commission member shall be a resident of the City.
 - b. Youth Commission members shall be a student enrolled in grades 9-12.
3. Attendance and Resignation
 - a. Resignation from the Parks Commission shall be in writing to the Chair of the Parks Commission who will notify the City Council and request a new appointment.
 - b. Absence From Meetings: Unexcused absence from three (3) consecutive regular meetings of the commission or four (4) meetings in any one year period (beginning March 1) shall be deemed to constitute a resignation of a member, and the vacancy thus created shall be filled thereafter. To be excused, an absence must be requested in writing by the affected member, granted by the commission chairperson (or the vice chair if the chairperson makes the request) and the council liaison and filed with the city clerk. Absences may be excused for extenuating circumstances that prevent the member's attendance, such as business demands, state of health, or personal emergencies. (Ord. 694, 5-2-2001)
 - c. Removal of Members: The council shall, by majority vote, have the authority to remove any member of the commission from office whenever in its discretion the best interest of the city shall be served thereby. A member removed from office shall, upon request, have a right of appeal before the council. (1971 Code § 2-46)
4. Ex-Officio Members – Ex officio members of the Parks Commission, who shall be nonvoting members, shall be the Mayor and members of the City Council. The Council or Parks commission chairperson may appoint ex officio, nonvoting members to the Parks commission when such appointment, in the sole discretion of the appointing authority, is deemed beneficial to aiding the Parks commission to fulfill its assigned duties, such ex officio member to serve for a term designated by the appointing authority. (1971 Code § 2-44; amd. 2000 Code)

E. Procedures

1. Meetings
 - a. Annual Meeting – The Commission shall have the annual meeting at the first regular meeting in March of each year, at which time appointments shall be received, officers

elected, rules adopted, committees appointed, and such other business transacted as the Parks Commission decides.

- b. Regular Meetings – The Parks Commission shall have regular meetings on the second Monday of the month (if the regular meeting falls on a City holiday, the preceding Monday shall be the regular meeting for that month) in February, March, May, June, August, September, November and December at 7:00 p.m. The Parks Commission may elect not to consider any item of new business on the agenda after 10:00 p.m.
- c. Special Meetings – The Commission may hold special meetings, any time outside of the regular meetings by: 1) the call of the Chair of the Commission, 2) by petition of four (4) commission members, or 3) the call of the City Council. Special meetings shall require notice to all commission members in writing and mailed at least five days prior to such meeting or personal notice at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance.

2. Quorum and Voting

- a. A simple majority of the appointed and voting members shall constitute a quorum for any meeting of the Parks Commission.
- b. A majority of the Parks Commission present and voting shall decide all questions excepting extra requirements for amending the Rules, suspending the Rules, and regulations superseding the Rules.
- c. A roll call vote shall be taken when there is division on any question. The members shall be polled with the Chair voting last.
- d. Every member shall vote for or against the motions before the Parks Commission, unless he/she has declared a conflict of interest or by a majority vote of the Parks Commission members present a member is determined to be immediately in the question, in which case the member shall not vote.
- e. When a member declines to vote on a motion, he/she shall be required to give his/her reasons. The Chair then will put the question to the Parks Commission, "Shall the member, for the reasons given by him/her be excused from voting?" which shall be decided without debate.
- f. The order of voting on the previous question shall each be voted upon in reverse order of receiving the amendments and then upon the main question.

3. Motions

- a. No motion shall be debated until there is a second to the motion.
- b. No motion shall be debated until that motion is restated by the Chair or upon the direction of the Chair restated by the recording staff from his/her notes.

- c. A motion to adjourn shall always be in order except during roll call. When a motion to adjourn is made, it shall be in order for the Chair to permit any member to state any fact to the Parks Commission relative to the condition or amount of business before the Parks Commission which would seem to render it improper to adjourn at that time. Such statement, however, shall not be debatable and shall not in any case, occupy more than two (2) minutes.
- d. A motion to adjourn shall always be in order, also a motion to adjourn to a time certain. The latter motion is debatable. When either motion is rejected, it shall not be renewed until further business has been transacted or further discussion has taken place.
- e. After a motion is stated by the Chair or read by the recording staff, it shall be considered to be in possession of the Parks Commission, but may be withdrawn by the author at any time before decision or amendment.
- f. A motion or amendment shall be written out and presented to the Parks Commission if the Chair, the recording staff, or any members so request.
- g. When a question has once been made and carried in the affirmative or negative, it shall be in order for any member who voted with the prevailing side to move for the reconsideration thereof; but no motion for the reconsideration of any vote shall be in order after the motion, resolution, report, or other official action upon which the vote was taken shall have gone to the Council, announcing the Parks Commission decision.
- h. Precedence of Motions – When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received, but:
 - 1) To adjourn to a time certain.
 - 2) To adjourn.
 - 3) To lay on the table.
 - 4) Call for the question.
Motions 2, 3, and 4 shall be decided without debate.
 - 5) To commit to committee.
 - 6) To postpone to a certain day.
 - 7) To amend, or
 - 8) To postpone indefinitely

The above motions shall have precedence in order from 1 through 8.

4. Agenda and Order of Business

- a. The business at a regular meeting shall include such items as:
 - ⇒ Call to Order
 - ⇒ Roll Call for Attendance
 - ⇒ Approval of Agenda
 - ⇒ Presentations
 - ⇒ Open Forum

- ⇒ Consent Items
- ⇒ Old Business
- ⇒ New business
- ⇒ Applications and Requests
- ⇒ Other Items
- ⇒ Secretary's Report (minutes, agenda, etc.)
- ⇒ Staff Reports
- ⇒ Committee Reports
- ⇒ Non-agenda Items
- ⇒ Adjournment

5. Initiation of Business

- a. The City Council may direct other business to the consideration of the Parks Commission for report to the City Council.
- b. The Parks Commission may initiate any business within the laws of the State of Minnesota and the ordinances of the City of Cottage Grove.

6. Types of Action by the Parks Commission

- a. All recommendations of the Parks Commission are subject to review and final action by the City Council.
- b. Adoption of and changes to the Rules. In accordance with Item B, Enablement and Amendments, noted herein.
- c. Adoption of and changes to motions of the Parks Commission with the direction or recommendation within the authority of the Commission.
- d. Initiation of studies on matters within the authority of the Parks Commission with reports to the Parks Commission required of every committee or sub-committee of all activities and results.

7. Public Participation

- a. All meetings of the Commission shall be open to the Public.
- b. If the applicant is not present, the item may be moved to the end of the agenda. If the applicant has not arrived, the item may be continued to the next available public hearing.

F. Officers

1. Officers – The officers of the Parks Commission shall be and their duties shall include:
 - a. Chair

- 1) Shall preside over the Parks Commission, and be charged with all powers and duties pertaining to such presiding officers.
- 2) Shall preserve order and decorum, and in case of disorderly conduct or disturbance in the audience, may order the area to be cleared.
- 3) Shall have general control, except as provided by rule or law of the portion of the municipal building being used by the Parks Commission at the time of Parks Commission meetings.
- 4) Shall from time to time represent the Parks Commission at City Council meetings, other organizations and to the public, subject to the implied direction set by the Parks Commission and representing both majority and minority points of view on applicable issues.
- 5) Shall appoint members to the committees of the Parks Commission, if necessary.
- 6) Shall appoint acting officers of the Parks Commission and to generally supervise and direct the work of the Commission.
- 7) May prepare and present an annual report to the City Council.

b. Vice-Chair

- 1) During the absence, disability, or disqualification of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall exercise or perform all the duties and be subject to all the responsibilities of the Chair.

2. Appointment and Election of Officers

- a. Chair – The Chair of the Parks Commission shall be elected by the City Council Liaison with ratification by the City Council.
- b. Vice-Chair – The Vice-Chair of the Parks Commission shall be elected by the Parks Commission.
- b. Term – Each officer shall be elected by the Parks Commission at the annual meeting to serve a term of one (1) year or until a successor is duly elected.
- c. Vacancy – Should any officer, other than the Chair, vacate his/her office by resignation or other valid reason, the Chair may appoint a member to act in and carry out the duties of the vacated office until the Parks Commission fills the vacancy by election.

3. Appointment of Parks Commission Members

- a. Notify other city commissions of openings.
- b. Contact and invite interested citizens.

- c. All applications of citizens interested in serving on a commission will be kept on file in the office of the Administrator for at least two (2) years and shall be shared with all other city commissions.
- d. Parks Commission Chair or appropriate Commission Officer and the City Council liaison shall interview candidates and make recommendations to the City Council.

G. Committees

1. General Provisions

- a. Types of Committees – The Parks Commission or the Chair of the Commission may direct the appointment of standing and special committees.
- b. Appointments – The Chair of the Parks Commission shall appoint members of the Parks Commission to committees subject to the approval of the Parks Commission and the consent of each member for the committee on which he/she is to serve.
- c. Substitutes – The Chair of the Parks Commission or the Chair of the Committee may appoint substitute and additional commission members subject to the appointment procedures of these Rules.
- d. Attendance – All meetings of any committees are open to any member of the Parks Commission; all members of the Parks Commission shall be notified of Committee meetings.
- e. Committee Actions
 - 1) Committees shall work on assignments as directed by the Parks Commission, the Rules Committee, or the Chair of the Parks Commission.
 - 2) All committee Chairs shall file written reports or minutes as directed by the Parks Commission or as requested by the Secretary or recording staff for historical background on issues.
 - 3) All committees may appoint special sub-committees for specific purposes.

2. Standing Committees

- a. Service – Standing committees may be appointed at each annual meeting and may serve in a permanent status during the following year.
- b. Quorum – Each standing committee must have a quorum of two (2) members to transact business.

3. Special Committees & Liaisons

- a. Special committees for specific purposes may be appointed by the Commission or the Chair of the Commission, subject to the appointment procedures of these Rules, to serve for less than a period of one (1) year or until a project is completed.
- b. The Commission shall appoint a representative to the Advisory Committee on Historical Preservation.

Adopted this 8th day of February, 2016, by the City of Cottage Grove Parks, Recreation and Natural Resource Commission.

| Amended 2/5/14
Amended 2/8/16
Amended 3/15/23

To: Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission
From: Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director
CC: Jim Fohrman, Parks Superintendent
Date: February 26, 2026
Subject: Peterson Park Playground

Introduction/Background

The Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Master Plan was approved at the February 2026 meeting. The next phase of the plan is to review the playground design. Staff received a proposal from Landscape Structures, Inc. that focuses on catering to different age groups and abilities to ensure a safe, enjoyable and inclusive play environment for all children. Key components include:

1. Age Appropriate Equipment – play features for 2-12 year olds
2. Safety Surfacing – combination engineered wood fiber and poured in place rubber to meet accessibility and safety needs
3. Play Features – swinging, spinning, climbing, sliding, balancing, social and educational spaces to meet both physical and cognitive play experiences
4. Natural Features – design compliment natural elements of the park along with a Hosta theme which gives nod to the Peterson family (which the park is named after) who were known for there vast gardens and hundreds of varieties of Hostas therein.

Playground design images and relevant information are included with this memo.

Recommendation

Approve Peterson Park playground design.















State Contract #218091



PROJECT INFORMATION

Peterson Park - 021126 Revision

TBD Jamaica Ave S

Cottage Grove, MN 55016

Contract Year: 2026

EQUIPMENT INFORMATION & PRICING

<u>Qty</u>	<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Ext Price</u>
1	111228A	Square Tenderdeck	\$1,474	\$1,474.00
1	111229A	Square Deck Extension	\$1,403	\$1,403.00
1	111403N	158"Steel Post For Roof DB	\$571	\$571.00
1	111403S	118"Steel Post For Roof DB	\$449	\$449.00
7	111404A	148"Alum Post DB	\$566	\$3,962.00
2	111404E	116"Alum Post DB	\$444	\$888.00
1	111404F	108"Alum Post DB	\$423	\$423.00
1	115222A	Slant Window Panel Above Deck	\$1,846	\$1,846.00
5	116244A	Pipe Barrier Above Deck	\$893	\$4,465.00
1	123336A	Double Wave Slide 48"Dk DB	\$3,876	\$3,876.00
1	130390A	Double Swoosh Slide 72"Dk DB	\$3,381	\$3,381.00
1	152907B	Deck Link w/Barriers Steel end panels 2 Steps	\$2,938	\$2,938.00
1	152907D	Deck Link w/Barriers Steel end panels 4 Steps	\$4,738	\$4,738.00
1	152911A	Curved Transfer Module Right 32"Dk DB	\$3,402	\$3,402.00
1	160694A	Barrier With Infill Panel	\$882	\$882.00
1	178710A	Hexagon Tenderdeck	\$4,202	\$4,202.00
1	185296A	10' PlayOdyssey Tower	\$39,341	\$39,341.00
1	185338B	10' Tower TurboTwister w/1 View	\$10,073	\$10,073.00

1	218172A	DigiFuse Barrier Panel w/Medallions Above Deck	\$2,739	\$2,739.00
1	222709A	10' Tower WhooshWinder Slide	\$9,160	\$9,160.00
1	307436A	Footprint Balance Beam DB	\$627	\$627.00
1	345276A	Storefront Panel	\$893	\$893.00
2	345282A	Bubble Panel Above Deck	\$1,214	\$2,428.00
1	345285A	Rain Sound Wheel Panel Above Deck	\$3,086	\$3,086.00
1	345286A	Chimes Panel Above Deck	\$2,122	\$2,122.00
1	345289A	Periscope Panel Above Deck	\$2,331	\$2,331.00
1	345311A	Cliff Climber 48"Dk DB	\$2,535	\$2,535.00
1	345312A	Loop Ladder 48"Dk DB	\$1,331	\$1,331.00
1	345315C	Wiggle Ladder 48"Dk DB	\$1,091	\$1,091.00
1	362348A	HomeBase Square Belt	\$2,208	\$2,208.00
1	373205A	Zoo Infill Panel	\$1,102	\$1,102.00
2	375412B	Petal Canopy Curved Post 3 Petal	\$12,031	\$24,062.00
1	152179A	Saddle Spinner DB 16"Height	\$1,010	\$1,010.00
1	168099A	Cozy Dome DB	\$6,339	\$6,339.00
1	173907A	Log Stepper 8"Height DB Only	\$1,020	\$1,020.00
2	174018A	Belt Seat ProGuard Chains for 8' Beam Height	\$179	\$358.00
1	176038A	Full Bucket Seat ProGuard Chains for 8' Beam Height	\$500	\$500.00
1	177332A	Single Post Swing Frame 8' Beam Height Only DB Only	\$1,744	\$1,744.00
1	177333A	Single Post Swing Frame Additional Bay 8' Beam Height Only DB Only	\$1,295	\$1,295.00
1	177351A	Molded Bucket Seat (5-12 yrs) w/Harness ProGuard Chains for 8' Beam Height	\$1,219	\$1,219.00
1	182503C	Welcome Sign (LSI Provided) Ages 5-12 years Direct Bury	\$0	\$0.00
1	252553A	Rhapsody Vibra Chime 5 DB	\$1,494	\$1,494.00
1	252555A	Rhapsody Vibra Chime 3 DB	\$1,494	\$1,494.00
1	252557A	Rhapsody Vibra Chime 1 DB	\$1,494	\$1,494.00

Total Standard Equipment Cost at State Contract Pricing

\$161,996.00

CUSTOM:

1	CP010299	72" LEAF CLIMBER DB Includes permalene handholds.	\$4,427	\$4,427.00
1	CP017169	30" PERMALENE CELLULAR LEAF POD STEPPER DB Top to be scored to provide better grip.	\$648	\$648.00
2	CP017170	20" PERMALENE CELLULAR LEAF POD STEPPER DB Top to be scored to provide better grip.	\$638	\$1,276.00
1	CP017171	10" PERMALENE CELLULAR LEAF POD STEPPER DB Top to be scored to provide better grip.	\$633	\$633.00
1	CP031996	72" SUNBEAM CLIMBER W/IVY/VINE PATTERN AND MARBLES At Grade .	\$3,127	\$3,127.00
1	CP031995	HOLE PANEL WITH IVY/VINE PATTERN AND LEAF SLIDERS At Grade Std Color Permalene	\$1,194	\$1,194.00

Total Custom Equipment Cost at State Contract Pricing

\$11,305.00

CONTAINER DETAILS	
TOTAL CONTAINER AREA	3692 SF
ASTM SAFETY SURFACING TYPE	ENGINEERED WOOD FIBER (ALTERNATE POURED IN PLACE SHOWN)
TOTAL PIP ALT AREA	650 SF
TOTAL EWF AREA	3692 SF
TOTAL PERIMETER	233 LF
EDGING TYPE	6"X12" CONCRETE CURB BY OTHERS
FINISH GRADE	TOP OF CURB
MAX FALL HEIGHT (5-12 YR)	120"

- *SITE PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS:
- OWNER TO PROVIDE A MINIMUM 6' WIDE APPROVED SITE ACCESS PATH TO CONTAINER AND PROTECTION OF THIS ACCESS ROUTE
 - PLAYGROUND PLAN IS BASED ON IDEAL SOIL CONDITIONS. IF THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT THE SOILS BEING SUITABLE, IT IS RECOMMEND THAT THE OWNER PROVIDE A GEOTECHNICAL REPORT OF THE SITE
 - MAXIMUM OF 1% GRADE CHANGE ACROSS CONTAINER
 - OWNER INSTALLED DRAIN TILE TO BE WITHIN 4 FEET OF CONTAINER PERIMETER
 - IF OWNER INSTALLED BORDER, DRAIN TILE STUB TO BE PROVIDED
 - DRAIN TILE BY FLAGSHIP ACCOUNTS FOR WATER WITHIN THE CONTAINER AND DOES NOT INCLUDE RUN OFF FROM SURROUNDING FLATWORK, LANDSCAPING, BUILDINGS, ETC.
 - OWNER TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE ROUTE TO CONTAINER
 - MINIMUM CONTAINER SIZE NEEDED DENOTES THE INSIDE OF CURB DIMENSION



FLAGSHIP RECREATION
11123 UPPER 33RD ST N
LAKE ELMO, MN 55082
763-550-7860
FLAGSHIPPLAY.COM



THIS PLAY AREA AND PLAY EQUIPMENT IS DESIGNED FOR AGE RANGES AS NOTED ON PLAN.

THIS DESIGN CONFORMS TO THE ADA ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES (ADAAG), ASSUMING THAT THE ENTIRE USE ZONE IS COVERED WITH AN ACCESSIBLE PROTECTIVE SURFACING, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED ON THE PLAN.

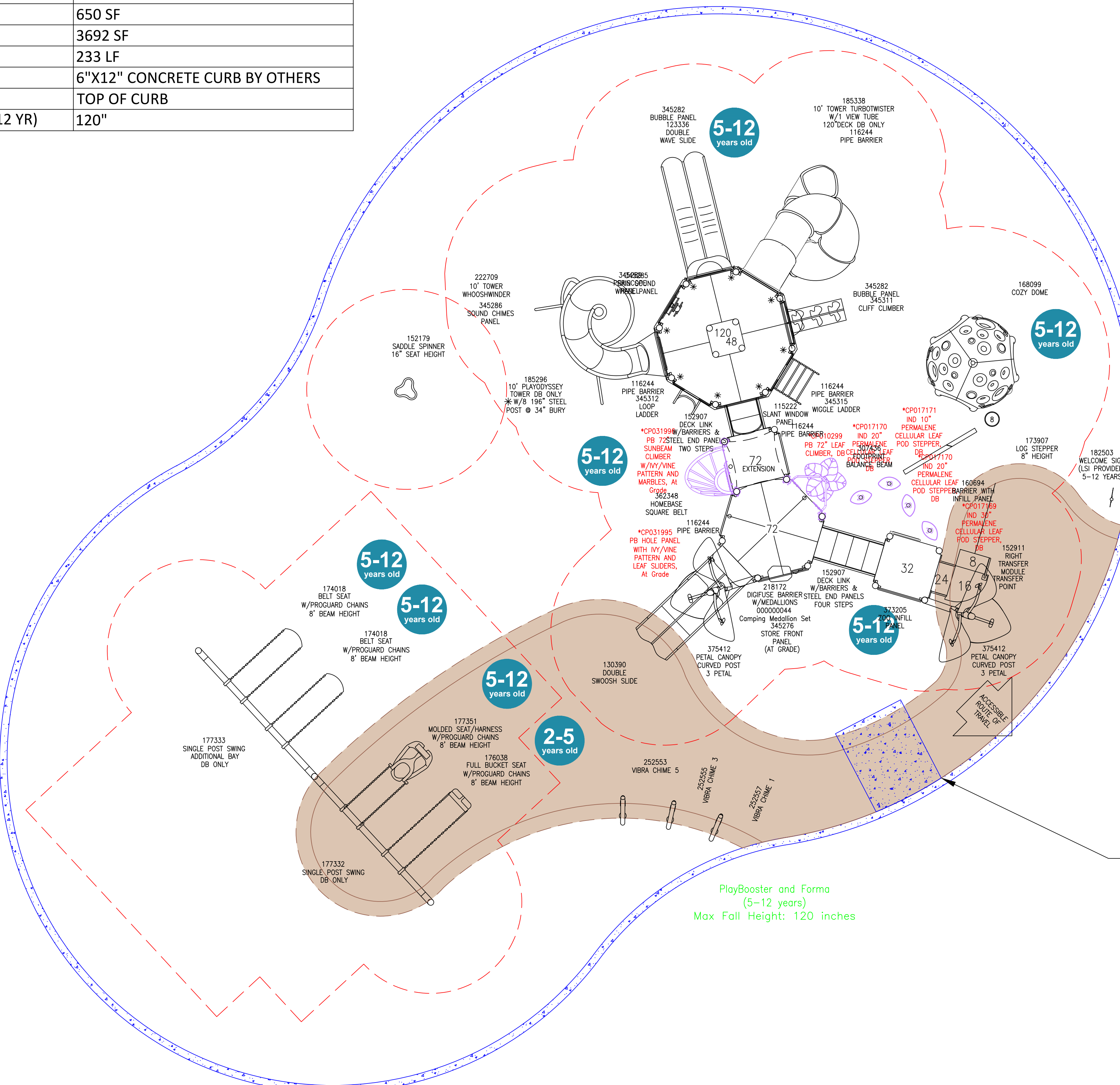
PETERSON PARK
PLAYGROUND
021126
COTTAGE GROVE, MN

SALES REPRESENTATIVE:
EMILY MALONEY

DESIGNED BY:
AO
2/12/26

1/4" = 1'-0"

SHEET
LS101

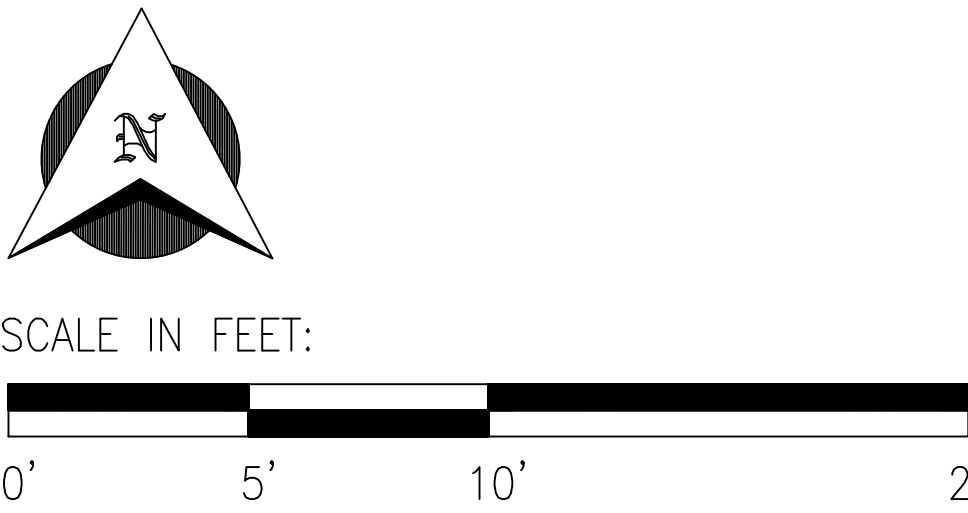


ALTERNATIVE ENTRANCE RAMP WITHOUT PIP

PlayBooster and Forma
(5-12 years)
Max Fall Height: 120 inches

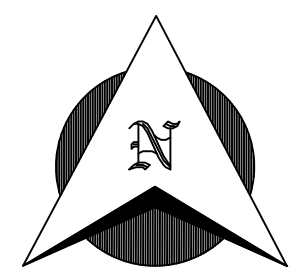
5-12 AREA

TOTAL ELEVATED PLAY COMPONENTS	15		
TOTAL ELEVATED COMPONENTS ACCESSIBLE BY RAMP	0	REQUIRED	0
TOTAL ELEVATED COMPONENTS ACCESSIBLE BY TRANSFER	11	REQUIRED	8
TOTAL ACCESSIBLE GROUND LEVEL COMPONENTS SHOWN	10	REQUIRED	5
TOTAL DIFFERENT TYPES OF GROUND LEVEL COMPONENTS	7	REQUIRED	7

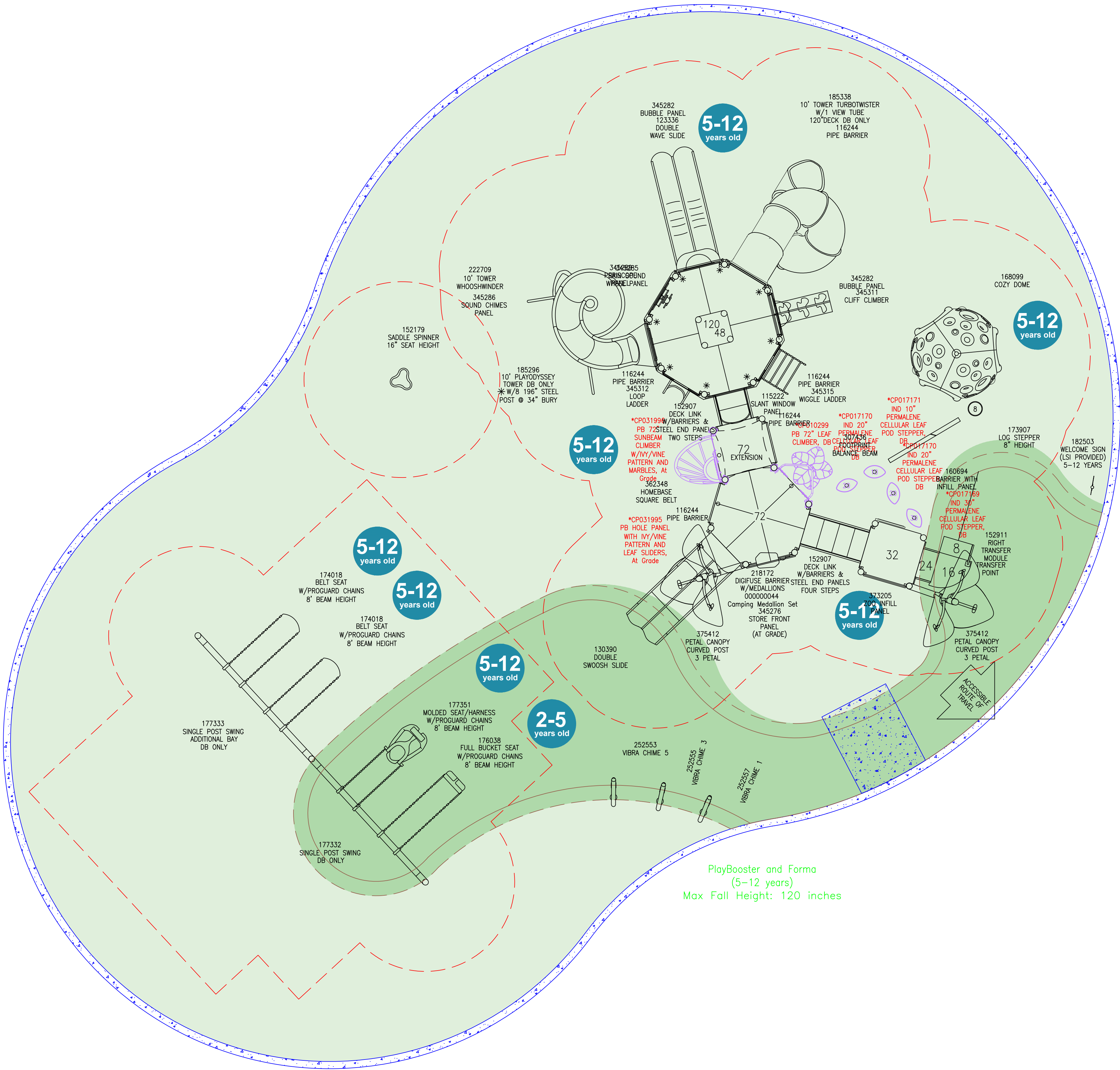
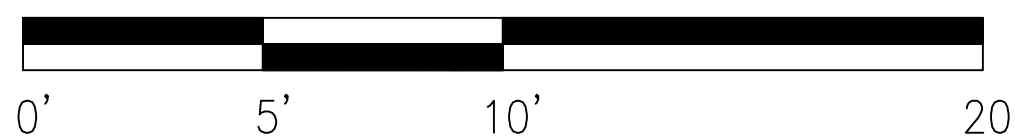


C:\Users\Alexandra\Documents\Flagship Recreation - Peterson Park\Design\021126 Rev\Design\021126 Rev.dwg

C:\Users\Alexandra\Documents\Flagship Recreation - Documents\2026 Planning\Emily\Cottage Grove - Peterson Park\Design\2026.11.26 Revision\Cottage Grove - Peterson 021026 Rev.dwg



SCALE IN FEET:



PlayBooster and Forma
(5-12 years)
Max Fall Height: 120 inches

QTY	NO	DESCRIPTION	FALL HEIGHT
1	111228A	Square Tenderdeck	32"
1	111229A	Square Deck Extension	72"
1	115222A	Slant Window Panel Above Deck	120"
5	116244A	Pipe Barrier Above Deck	72"-120"
1	123336A	Double Wave Slide 48"Dk DB	48"
1	130390A	Double Swoosh Slide 72"Dk DB	72"
1	152907B	Deck Link w/Barriers Steel end panels 2 Steps	72"
1	152907D	Deck Link w/Barriers Steel end panels 4 Steps	72"
1	152911A	Curved Transfer Module Right 32"Dk DB	32"
1	160694A	Barrier With Infill Panel	32"
1	178710A	Hexagon Tenderdeck	72"
1	185296A	10' PlayOdyssey Tower	120"
1	185338B	10' Tower TurboTwister w/1 View	120"
1	218172A	DigiFuse Barrier Panel w/Medallions Above Deck	72"
1	222709A	10' Tower WhooshWinder Slide	120"
1	345276A	Storefront Panel	N/A
2	345282A	Bubble Panel Above Deck	120"
1	345285A	Rain Sound Wheel Panel Above Deck	48"
1	345286A	Chimes Panel Above Deck	48"
1	345289A	Periscope Panel Above Deck	120"
1	345311A	Cliff Climber 48"Dk DB	48"
1	345312A	Loop Ladder 48"Dk DB	48"
1	345315C	Wiggle Ladder 48"Dk DB	48"
1	362348A	HomeBase Square Belt	18"
1	373205A	Zoo Infill Panel	32"
2	375412B	Petal Canopy Curved Post 3 Petal	N/A
1	152179A	Saddle Spinner DB 16"Height	16"
1	168099A	Cozy Dome DB	46"
1	173907A	Log Stepper 8"Height DB Only	8"
2	174018A	Belt Seat ProGuard Chains for 8' Beam Height	96"
1	176038A	Full Bucket Seat ProGuard Chains for 8' Beam Height	96"
1	177332A	Single Post Swing Frame 8' Beam Height Only DB Only	96"
1	177333A	Single Post Swing Frame Additional Bay 8' Beam Height Only	96"
1	177351A	Molded Bucket Seat (5-12 yrs) w/Harness ProGuard Chains	96"
1	182503C	Welcome Sign (LSI Provided) Ages 5-12 years Direct Bury	N/A
1	214438A	Rhapsody Animato Metallophone DB	N/A
1	252553A	Rhapsody Vibra Chime 5 DB	N/A
1	252555A	Rhapsody Vibra Chime 3 DB	N/A
1	252557A	Rhapsody Vibra Chime 1 DB	N/A
1	CP010299	72" LEAF CLIMBER DB Includes permalene handholds.	72"
1	CP017169	30" PERMALENE CELLULAR LEAF POD STEPPER DB	30"
2	CP017170	20" PERMALENE CELLULAR LEAF POD STEPPER DB	20"
1	CP017171	10" PERMALENE CELLULAR LEAF POD STEPPER DB	10"
1	CP031995	HOLE PANEL WITH IVY/VINE PATTERN AND LEAF SLIDERS	N/A
1	CP031996	72" SUNBEAM CLIMBER W/IVY/VINE PATTERN AND MARBLES	72"

- POURED-IN-PLACE SURFACING
VARYING DEPTHS (2" - 3.75")
- ENGINEERED WOOD FIBER
12" COMPACTED DEPTH

5-12 AREA

TOTAL ELEVATED PLAY COMPONENTS	15	
TOTAL ELEVATED COMPONENTS ACCESSIBLE BY RAMP	0	REQUIRED 0
TOTAL ELEVATED COMPONENTS ACCESSIBLE BY TRANSFER	11	REQUIRED 8
TOTAL ACCESSIBLE GROUND LEVEL COMPONENTS SHOWN	10	REQUIRED 5
TOTAL DIFFERENT TYPES OF GROUND LEVEL COMPONENTS	7	REQUIRED 7



FLAGSHIP RECREATION
11123 UPPER 33RD ST N
LAKE ELMO, MN 55082
763-550-7860
FLAGSHIPPLAY.COM



THIS PLAY AREA AND PLAY EQUIPMENT
IS DESIGNED FOR AGE RANGES AS
NOTED ON PLAN.

THIS DESIGN CONFORMS TO THE ADA
ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES (ADAAG),
ASSUMING THAT THE ENTIRE USE ZONE
IS COVERED WITH AN ACCESSIBLE
PROTECTIVE SURFACING, UNLESS
OTHERWISE NOTED ON THE PLAN.

PETERSON PARK PLAYGROUND DNR PLAN

COTTAGE GROVE, MN

SALES
REPRESENTATIVE:
EMILY MALONEY

DESIGNED BY:
AO
2/12/26

1/4" = 1'-0"

SHEET

LS101-DRN



Cottage Grove
12800 Ravine Pkwy S
Cottage Grove, MN 55016
Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director

Labor Rate: —————→ Prevailing

PRELIMINARY BUDGET - THIS IS AN ESTIMATE & NOT A FORMAL QUOTE

	QTY	Preliminary Budget	Possible Additions - PIP Paths and Agg Base Prep	Possible Addition - Concrete Curb	Notes
Play Equipment					
Peterson Park - 021126 Revision, EM706PP-369246066		161,996.00			2026 List Price
State Contract #218091	8%	(12,959.68)			(6% discount under \$80,000 & 8% discount \$80,000 & above)
Custom Equipment - Peterson Park - Option 1		11,305.00			2026 List Price
State Contract #218091	5%	(565.25)			(5% discount on all custom)
Sales Tax - if applicable		0.00			ST3 Certificate of Exemption must be provided by owner.
Playground Freight (Ships from Delano, MN)		1,800.00			
Mobilization		750.00			Mobilization of Installation Crew to Job Site (Trailer Skid Steer Augur, Tools, Mixer, Etc.)
Dumpster(s) - 30 Yard		750.00			Disposal of packaging material
Site work					
Excavation (new container)	0	0.00			BY OWNER - Owner to set desired finished grade by excavating 12" below it
Border Options					
Concrete Border Straight (LF)	0	0.00			Standard 6" W x 12" D.
Concrete Border Curved (LF)	233			13,275.03	BY OWNER - Concrete curb to be compelled by owner. Alternate pricing if prefer added to Playground scope.
Playground Installation (Labor & Concrete for Footings)	16.72%	26,709.22			Full professional installation by Landscape Structures Certified Installers. Prevailing Labor Rate.
Shade/Tower Rental Equipment Allowance (Lull, Lift, etc.)		1,618.59			Rental - Req'd for Shade Fabric, Roofs, etc.
Concrete Flatwork					
Concrete Flatwork (Sq. Ft.)	30	392.35			4" thick concrete
Thickened Edge (LF)	0	0.00			Thickened edge used when installing a sidewalk adjacent to playground container. Prevents stone base from washing out.
Subgrade Prep & Engineered Wood Fiber Surfacing (EWF)					
EWF - Playground Safety Surfacing (CY)	160	7,200.90			IPEMA Certified Meets ASTM, ADA & CPSC
EWF Freight		1,002.00			
Subgrade Prep & Poured In Place (PIP) or Turf Surfacing					
Compacted Aggregate Base (Recycled Concrete or Class 5) (Tons)	26		2,108.03		Class 5 Agg w/ Fines or Recycled Concrete, Material & Install 4" - 6" Compacted Required for PIP & Turf Installations
Concrete Base / mound or sloped surface (2" skim coat)	0	0.00			Concrete Skim Coating Req'd for PIP/Turf Subbase on Surfaces that are not Flat.
Drain Tile (LF)	0	0.00			BY OWNER - Drain stubs required inside container if desired.
Poured In Place Rubber Surfacing (Sq. Ft.)	650		26,321.27		50/50 mix of Standard Colors/Black Speckled (Designs & Premium Colors Extra)
Security Guard		0.00			24 Hr Site Security req'd during Installation & Cure Time. Cure Times vary with weather and thickness. Defects or damage due to trespass before sufficient cure time will not be covered by warranty. Flagship Rec not licensed for Security Services.
Site Restoration (Sq.Ft.)	0	0.00			BY OWNER - All restoration by Owner. Backfilling required to stabilize border.
LSI - Payment & Performance Bonds		0.00			Included By Request
Flagship - Payment & Performance Bonds		0.00			Included By Request
		Preliminary Total	Additions Total	Additions Total	Total w/ Additions
		199,999.12	28,429.30	13,275.03	241,703.45

Proudly Made in the U.S.A

Nearly all of our play products are made in Delano, MN* this allows us to maintain control over the quality of the play equipment you purchase. While other manufacturers are increasingly sourcing components from overseas, Landscape Structures equipment is proudly made in the U.S.A.



**Total Product
Made in the U.S.A.**

99%

Calculation includes standard play products only.

*Our fabrication, rotomolding, concrete, welding and painting operations in Delano, Minnesota, U.S.A. produce the vast majority of our standard play components.

Landscape Structures and American Forests are committed to working together to create a clean and healthy environment for future generations. We are proud to say that our partnership with American Forests has supported the planting of more than **35,000 trees per year**, on average.



Our corporate partnership with American Forests helps support the planting of trees in urban spaces where tree cover is limited, contributing to American Forests' **Tree Equity Program**. Our support also enables the **Resilient Forests** initiative, reviving forests to mitigate the impact of climate change and create a healthy future for all of us.

CARBON FOOTPRINT OF LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES PRODUCT:

Tons of CO₂: 19.35

Carbon Footprint: A measurement of the effect on the climate in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced in the Landscape Structures manufacturing process measured in units of carbon dioxide (CO₂).

RECYCLED CONTENT OF LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES PRODUCT:

Steel	3,423 lbs.
Aluminum	483 lbs.
Rubber	0 lbs.
Plastic	418 lbs.
Total Recycled Content:	4,324 lbs.
Total Post-Consumer Recycled Content:	2,911 lbs.
Total Recycled Content (%):	49%
Total Post-Consumer Recycled Content (%):	33%
Total Weight:	8,736 lbs.

Total Recycled Content: Material that has been recovered or diverted from the solid waste stream.

Total Post-Consumer Recycled Content: Material generated by households or commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end-users. This material can no longer be used for its original intended purposes.

Calculations include standard play products only.

To: Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission
From: Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director
CC: Jim Fohrman, Parks Superintendent
Date: February 27, 2026
Subject: Still Ponds Natural Resource Management Plan

Introduction/Background

The City acquired Still Ponds Park in 2022 with the intention of preserving it as a natural area. However, the area has experienced significant degradation of the plant and tree communities due to a lack of natural or cultivated disturbance and overall plant management. Staff has collaborated with South Washington Watershed District and Washington Conservation District to develop a natural resources management plan.

The park includes 42.5 acres of woodland, wetland and open water features. The management plan aims to analyze current vegetation, soil conditions and topography to develop a strategic approach to long-term land stewardship. It further recommends restorative efforts to improve overall environmental value of the site. Restoration recommendations are broken down into three units (as mapped in the report). Summary findings and recommendations for the units is below.

Units 1 and 3 – These woodland areas surround the lake and were likely Oak Savanna pre-European settlement. There is a good population of native trees such as Oaks, Maples, Hackberry, Basswood, Cherry, Chokecherry, Dogwoods and more. However, regeneration is minimal given the dense underlayer. There is a heavy population of dead and dying Ash that has been decimated by Emerald Ash Borer. These will need to be eradicated as a first step in restoration activities. Additionally, the sub-canopy of both units are a dense thicket of Buckthorn, Prickly Ash and other invasive species that will need clearing and treatment to support the health of the native tree population. As invasive species are eradicated, the sub-canopy should be planted with a combination of native woodland grasses, forbs and shrubbery (Hazelnut, Gooseberry, Chokecherry, etc.). Fire tolerant species should be chosen.

Unit 2 – This area has undergone several transitions since European Settlement. Originally a combination of Oak Savanna and prairie, it was likely cultivated for agriculture purposes for several decades. In the 1950's, the landowner transitioned the unit into a Red Pine plantation. These Pines are now in severe decline given their age and the lack of thinning to allow space for growth. The subcanopy is infested with invasive species. The plan suggests removing the Pine plantation (almost in its entirety) and transitioning to a Southern Dry Mesic Oak Woodland. This biome is a combination of native deciduous trees (such as Oak, Maple, Hackberry) with open barrens of prairie and woodland cover. This unit is perhaps the most challenging site in terms of public perception; the removal of the Pine plantation will significantly impact the park view from neighboring homes.

Summary

Native habitat restoration aims for long-term enhancement of plant biodiversity and improved ecosystems by stabilizing soil, filtering groundwater, improving water retention, increasing pollination, fostering native animal/bird/reptile/insect habitat and beautifying the landscape. Further, a diverse native habitat is able to provide natural resistance to wildfires, climate change and natural disasters.

Once the Natural Resources Management Plan is approved, staff will collaborate with partners to study potential grant programs that can help support restoration efforts. Having a restoration plan in place is typically required for grant funding applications.

Recommendation

Approve Still Ponds Park Natural Resources Management Plan.



NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

CITY OF COTTAGE GROVE
Still Ponds

Washington Conservation District
2025

Contents

Executive Summary	4
Project Description	4
General City Background and Context	4
Location	4
History	5
Overall Goal for Habitat Restoration and Enhancement	7
Still Ponds	8
General Location	8
Background and Site History	9
Pre-Settlement Vegetation	9
Post-settlement land use	10
Soils	11
Topography	13
Geology and Hydrology	14
Water Features	16
Project Site Vegetation and Habitat Assessment	17
Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS)	17
Minnesota Native Plant Community Classification and Goals	18
Restoration and Enhancement of Still Ponds	20
Management Unit 1	22
General Description and Current Conditions	22
Desired Future Conditions	22
Management Unit Goals	24
Management Unit Activities	24
Management Unit 2	26
General Description and Current Conditions	26
Desired Future Conditions	26
Management Unit Goals	27
Management Unit Activities	28

Management Unit 3	29
General Description and Current Conditions	29
Desired Future Conditions	29
Management Unit Goals	30
Management Unit Activities	30
Restoration Management Phasing & Cost Estimate Summary	32
Restoration Management Activity Phasing	32
Management Activities	36
Climate Resiliency	36
Invasive Species Management.....	38
Prevention	38
Integrated Pest Management.....	38
Public disturbance	39
Enhancement	40
Interseeding	40
Prairie Restoration	40
Restoring Ecosystem Processes	42
Prescribed burning.....	42
Grazing	42
Haying	43
Tree Removal	44
Record-keeping	44
Surveying	44
Monitoring	44
Adaptive Management	45
Information Sources	46

List of Tables

Table 1. 4-year management cost projections by Management Unit and Sub Unit.....	32
Table 2. Restoration Activities and cost estimate	35

List of Figures

Figure 1. The parks of open spaces in the City of Cottage Grove..	5
Figure 2. Historical Image of Old Cottage Grove.....	6
Figure 3. Orrin Thompson Developments that led to the rapid development of Cottage Grove in the 1950's	6
Figure 4. Regional view of Still Ponds Park in Cottage Grove.	8
Figure 5.Pre-European settlement vegetation at Still Ponds.....	9
Figure 6. Aerial Image 1937	10
Figure 7. Aerial Image 1964	10
Figure 8.Table and soil map for Still Ponds	12
Figure 9. The topography at Still Ponds.	13
Figure 10. Geological subsections surrounding Still Ponds.....	15
Figure 11. Water features at Still Ponds.	16
Figure 12. Land cover mapping at Still Ponds.	17
Figure 13.Scripus Validis at Still Ponds.....	19
Figure 14. Locations of scattered trees identified in 1937 and 1964 aerial photography on 2022 aerial imagery.....	23
Figure 15. Wet meadow on NW side of Still Ponds.	25

Executive Summary

Project Description

The City of Cottage Grove aims to enhance the quality of its existing vegetation through comprehensive ecological restoration and management strategies. Native plant communities provide essential ecological functions, including pollinator and wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, water filtration, flood regulation, and soil development and enrichment. However, increased urban development and land use intensity has significantly diminished these native habitats. The Washington Conservation District has assessed the project site in order to offer insights into the current plant community composition and structure and to develop targeted restoration strategies. Restoration of Still Ponds will enhance pollinator foraging resources, improve water quality, reduce erosion, support pollutant uptake from urban runoff, increase climate resilience, and contribute to the aesthetic and recreation use of this public outdoor space.

The project area encompasses 42.5 acres consisting of cultivated pine stands, woodland, stormwater basins with upland buffers, wet meadows, and open water features. This management plan utilized the current vegetation, soil conditions, and topography to offer strategic guidance on woody invasive species control, hazard tree removal, enhancement of the understory and ground layers, management of invasive herbaceous species, and shoreline improvements throughout all project units. The recommendations outlined for each management unit represent the initial stage in establishing a robust, long-term approach to land stewardship.

General City Background and Context

Location

The City Cottage Grove is located 10 miles southeast of Saint Paul in Washington County, positioned on the east bank of the Mississippi River, just north of its confluence with the St. Croix River. Along with adjacent suburbs, Cottage Grove comprises the southeastern segment of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area. The city features a mix of residential, agricultural, and commercial land uses with a population exceeding 38,000.

Cottage Grove maintains an extensive park system, encompassing nearly 2,000 acres of designated parkland and open space across its jurisdiction. These resources are intended to support policies, programs, and facilities that foster active living—enhancing the health, well-being, education, and vitality of the community. Park amenities also include Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, which is owned and managed by Washington County Parks. The city's natural areas act as important corridors for wildlife movement and provide protection for valuable natural resources such as habitats, wetlands, woodlands, and drainage ways.

Cottage Grove lies within the ecological subsection of St. Paul Baldwin Plains of the Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province which consists of upland terrain between the valleys of the Mississippi and St. Croix River. The city is situated within the southwest corner of the South Washington Watershed District. Located in a developing residential district, Still Ponds plays a critical role in influencing surface water dynamics and

supporting ecosystems with varying levels of functionality. Its utilization by the local community further highlights the importance of ecological restoration and sustained management initiatives.

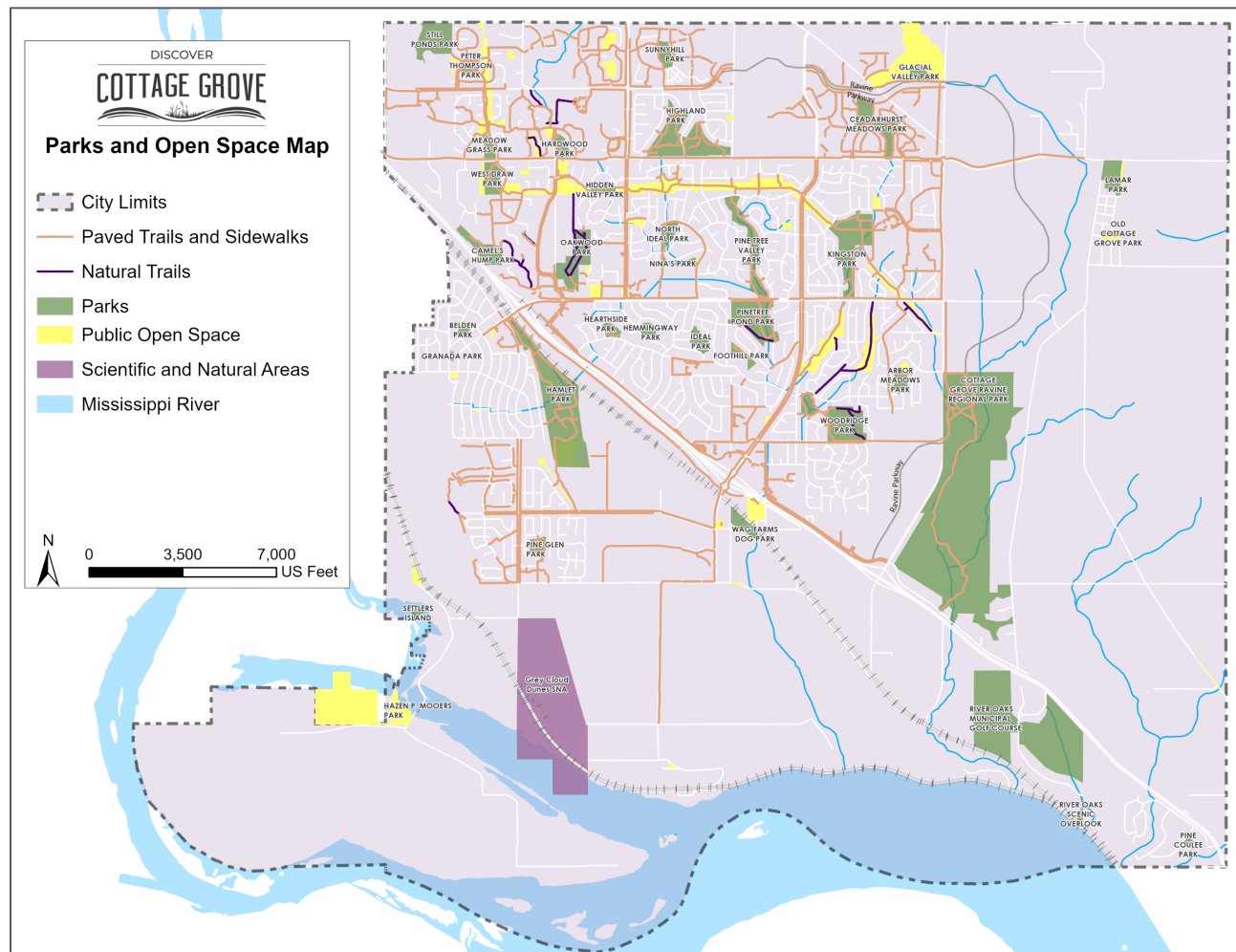


Figure 1. The parks of open spaces in the City of Cottage Grove. Still Ponds is located in the NW corner of Cottage Grove.

History

Cottage Grove, was originally inhabited by the Dakota and Ojibwe Native American tribes who were stewards of the vast prairie landscape, interspersed with oak groves. Activities such as fishing, mound building, and wild rice harvesting were an essential part of the indigenous cultures of this region. The only known indigenous settlement in Washington County was a village called Grey Cloud Island, just west of Cottage Grove, established by Chief Medicine Bottle in 1830. However, the Treaties of 1837 led to the ceding of Dakota land east of the Mississippi, resulting in their forced relocation of the settlement.

The first European settlers arrived in 1843, and the township was organized in 1858. The arrival of the railroad in the late 1800s significantly increased trade and economic growth. Cottage Grove's proximity to



Figure 2. Historical Image of Old Cottage Grove.

the Mississippi River also contributed to its economic prosperity, making it an important transportation hub. The city's population grew from about 100 residents in the 1950s to over 41,000 today. Cottage Grove continues to thrive as a suburban community with a strong sense of community and a variety of economic opportunities.

The first European settlers arrived in Cottage Grove in 1843 from New England, bringing Greek Revival architecture and establishing a government style that earned the township the nickname "New England of the West." Most were grain farmers who prospered due to fertile soil and access to markets via the Mississippi River and wagon roads.

In 1851, a road linked Grey Cloud Island to Stillwater via Old Cottage Grove and Afton. The Military Road, authorized in 1850, passed through the area from Point Douglas to Fort Ripley by way of St. Paul. Hastings Avenue connected the township with St. Paul until it was replaced by Highway 61 in the 1940s. The St. Paul & Chicago Railroad built a line through the township in 1869, establishing the Langdon station (present-day Cottage Grove), which quickly became a thriving trade center with businesses, a school, and a Catholic church built in 1873.

The 1870s saw many German immigrants arrive, leading to increased farming and a shift toward dairy production. By 1875, Langdon had one of Minnesota's first creameries, marking the rise of the local dairy industry.

Key routes like the Military Road and Hastings Avenue connected Cottage Grove with surrounding towns, enhancing its role as a transportation hub. In 1869, the St. Paul & Chicago Railroad expanded through the township, with Langdon (now Cottage Grove) developing rapidly as a trade and shipping center.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the township—including its two rural villages, Langdon and Old Cottage Grove—had an estimated population of 100. For over one hundred years, Cottage Grove retained its rural character. However, the development of Thompson Grove in the 1950s, a community of ranch-style homes initiated by real estate developer Orrin Thompson, marked the onset of suburban



Figure 3. Orrin Thompson Developments that led to the rapid development of Cottage Grove in the 1950's

expansion in the area. Thompson subsequently constructed more than half of the homes in Cottage Grove. The population increased significantly, rising from 833 residents in 1950 to over 4,800 by 1960, and exceeding 13,400 by 1970. By the year 2000, Cottage Grove had become one of Minnesota's fastest-growing communities with approximately 30,000 residents.

Due to extensive conversion of pre-European settlement land first to agriculture and subsequently to development, only a limited number of intact vegetation communities currently remain in Cottage Grove. However, the city still maintains several key natural resources including ponds, wetlands, woodlands, prairie, savanna, and the Mississippi River outflow. Many parks within the city also have preserved natural areas alongside recreational facilities. The city also promotes ecologically responsible development and establishment of greenspace within new residential and commercial developments.

Overall Goal for Habitat Restoration and Enhancement

Due to substantial changes in land use and fragmentation of the landscape, reconstructing native plant communities based solely on pre-settlement vegetation data may not be feasible. As a result, this plan references pre-settlement conditions as one data point and incorporates current vegetation, land use, soils, topography, future climate conditions and existing limitations to recommend a plant community that is ecologically functional, supports habitat, and maintains resilience over time.

Historical data on plant communities prior to European settlement indicates that Still Ponds was characterized by oak openings and barrens, commonly known as oak savanna. Given the complexities inherent to restoration within highly disturbed metropolitan areas, the primary goals for habitat restoration emphasize the establishment of diverse, climate-resilient plant communities and the creation of natural spaces that are both equitable and accessible to the public. Restoration objectives for each management unit are tailored to reflect specific land use influences and are detailed in their respective sections below.

Still Ponds

General Location

Still Ponds is a 42.5-acre park in Cottage Grove, MN, located east of Highway 61 and north of 65th Street. The park features trails linking neighborhoods through woodlands, wetlands, stormwater basins, and pine trees. The area now known as Still Ponds was previously used for agricultural purposes before becoming a community natural area. Over the last 35 years, the land cover has undergone notable changes.

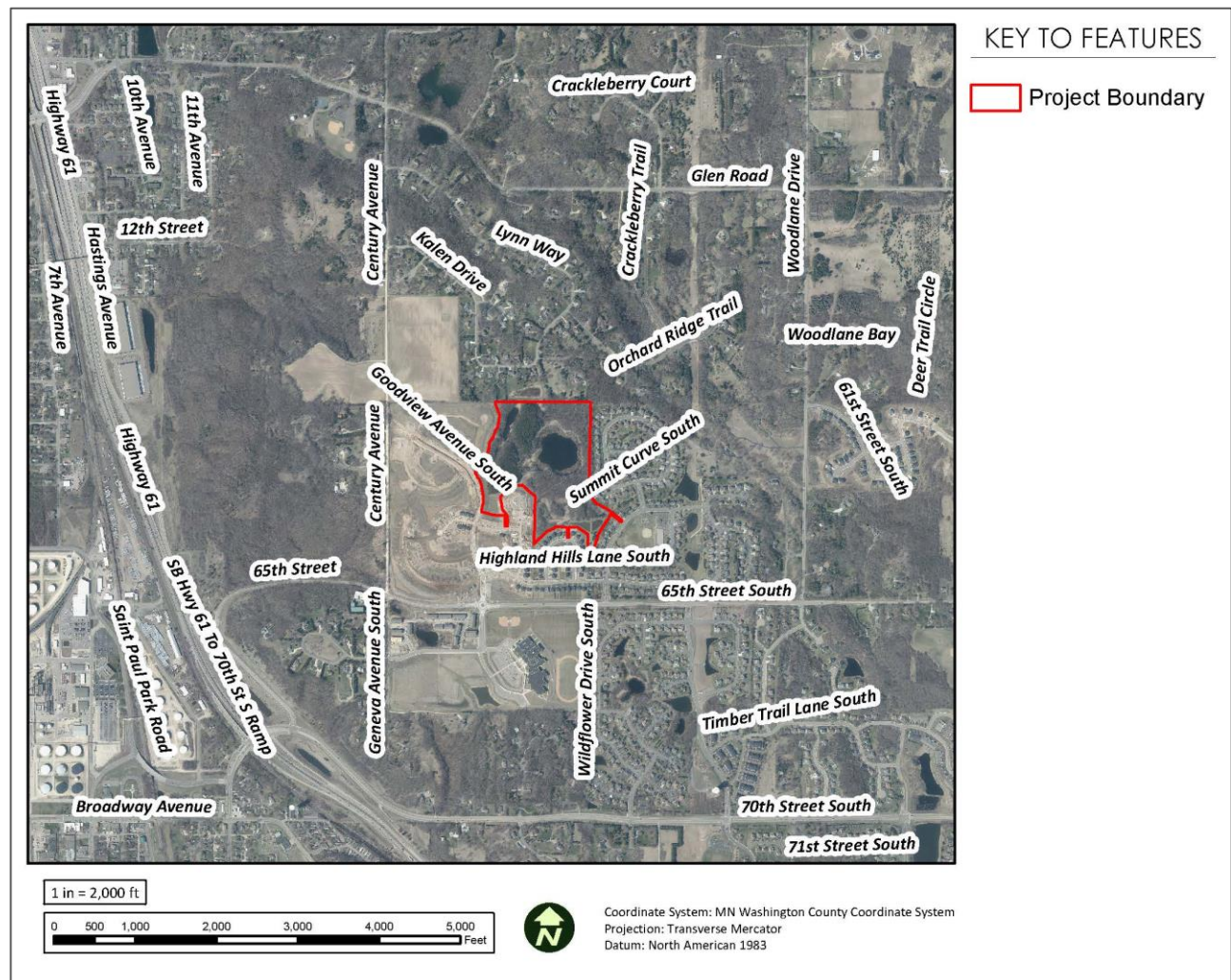


Figure 4. Regional view of Still Ponds Park in Cottage Grove.

Background and Site History

Pre-Settlement Vegetation

Surveyors with the General Land Office recorded the size, species, and distribution of trees as well as general descriptions of the physical geography of the landscape they traversed throughout 1848-1907. Francis J. Marschner interpreted these notes to create a detailed map depicting how Minnesota looked at the time of European settlement.

Still Ponds falls within the St. Paul Baldwins Plains and Moraines ecoregion. The pre-settlement vegetation surrounding Still Ponds consisted of oak openings and barrens or savanna and was likely dispersed with a complex mosaic of wet prairie and oak savanna. Oak openings and barrens consisted predominantly of scattered trees and groves of oaks in scrubby form with patches of open prairie and areas of brush and thickets. Present day communities in this category include oak savannas and woodlands.

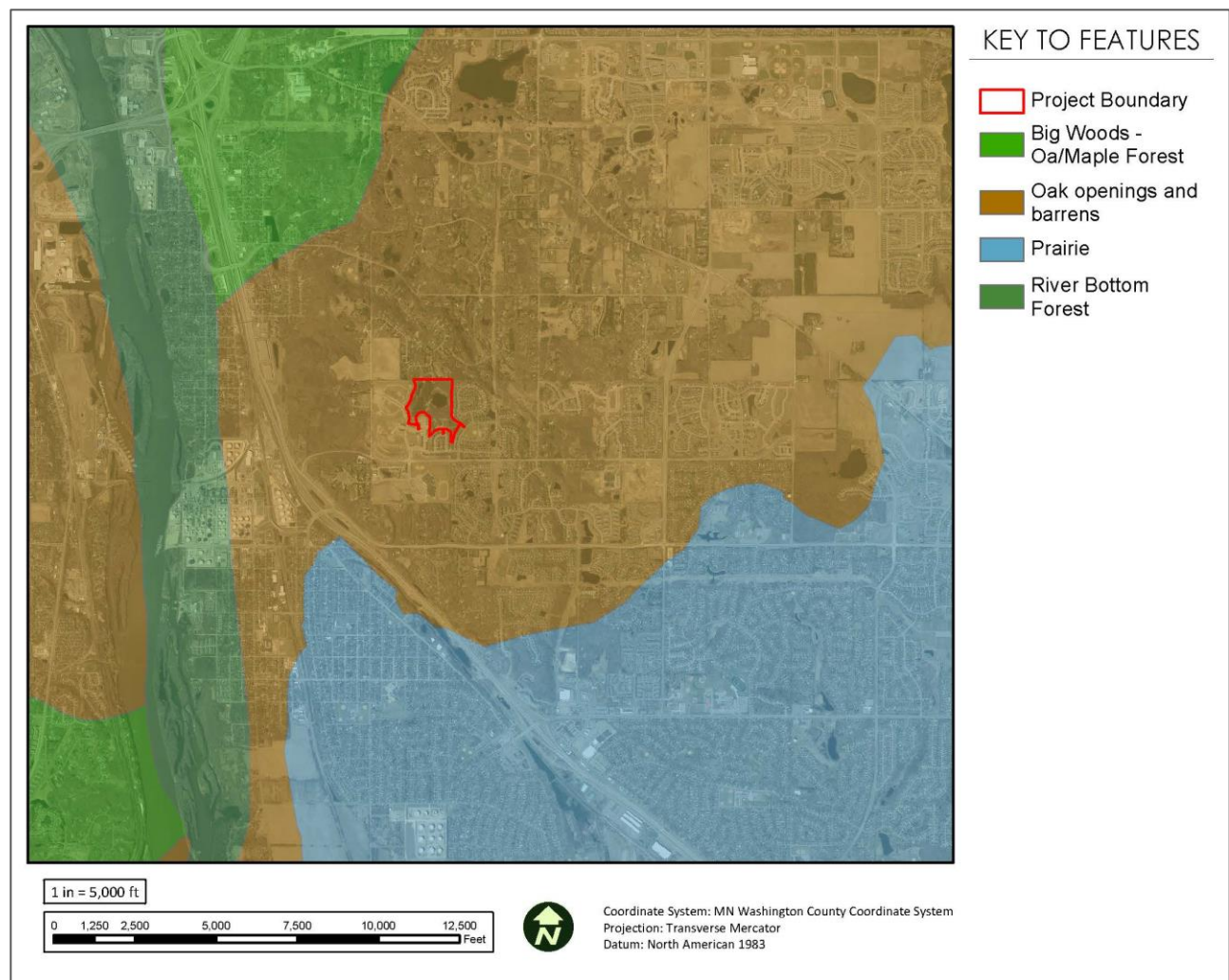


Figure 5. Pre-European settlement vegetation.

Post-settlement land use

Aerial photos from 1937 to 2024 show Still Ponds and the surrounding landscape shifting from agricultural to residential land use. Also, during this time, previous landowners planted approximately 8-acres of red pine trees in the former row-crop fields. Pine planting began sometime after 1964.



Figure 6. Aerial Image 1937



Figure 7. Aerial Image 1964

Soils

According to the USDA Web Soil Survey, eleven soil classifications occur within Still Ponds. Overall soil throughout Still Ponds tends to be a composition of silt loam and considered prime farmland. With one area of ponded soils. Major soil types include Santiago silt loam, Freeon silt loam, and Richwood silt loam, each comprising 90% of their respective map units. Minor components contribute 10% to the map units, with specific soil types like Kingsley and Freeon. The elevation for these soils' ranges from 670 to 1,950 feet, with mean annual precipitation between 28 to 36 inches. Special Line Features (SLP) are delineated on the soils map; these are narrow bands of contrasting soil areas that are too small to map but significant enough to influence land use and management due to slope or contrasting soil texture.

Soil textures range from silt loam to sandy loam, reflecting differences in drainage and nutrient retention. Dry, sandy upland soils are deep and drain quickly, while loamy upland soils offer moderate drainage and higher pH and water capacity than sandy soils. Loamy lowland soils retain moisture but do not stay saturated, and mucky swamp soils, rich in decomposed organic matter, have poor drainage and are permanently wet and acidic. A summary of soil classifications follows, with details in Appendix A.

Map Unit Legend

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
49B	Antigo silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	2.1	5.0%
49C	Antigo silt loam, 6 to 15 percent slopes	3.8	9.2%
120	Brill silt loam	1.7	4.1%
153B	Santiago silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	4.2	10.2%
153C	Santiago silt loam, 6 to 15 percent slopes	2.6	6.4%
264	Freeon silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	5.9	14.4%
266	Freer silt loam	1.6	3.9%
298B	Richwood silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	0.4	0.9%
367B	Crystal Lake silt loam, 1 to 6 percent slopes	1.8	4.3%
411B	Waukegan silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	2.7	6.5%
454C	Mahtomedi loamy sand, 6 to 12 percent slopes	0.1	0.3%
468	Otter silt loam	7.8	18.9%
1055	Aquolls and Histosols, ponded	6.3	15.2%
W	Water	0.3	0.8%
Totals for Area of Interest		41.3	100.0%

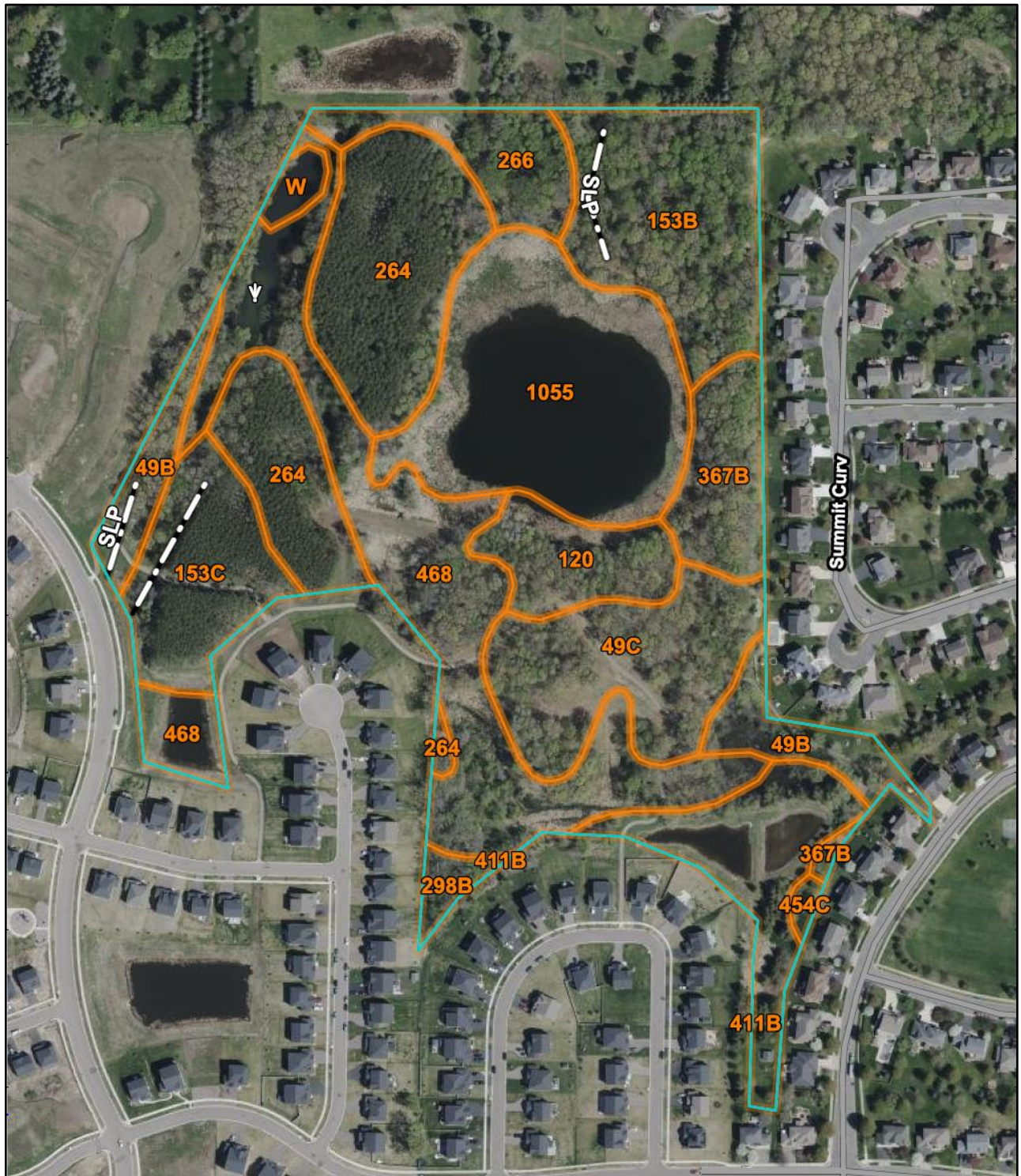


Figure 8. Table and soil map for Still Ponds

Topography

The topography of Still Ponds consists of gently rolling slopes with natural and stormwater basins in low-lying areas. Most of the terrain is flat to relatively flat with slopes ranging from 2-6% with some areas ranging from 6-15% slopes. Aspects face all cardinal directions but most of the steeper slopes have an aspect of east, southeast, or south.

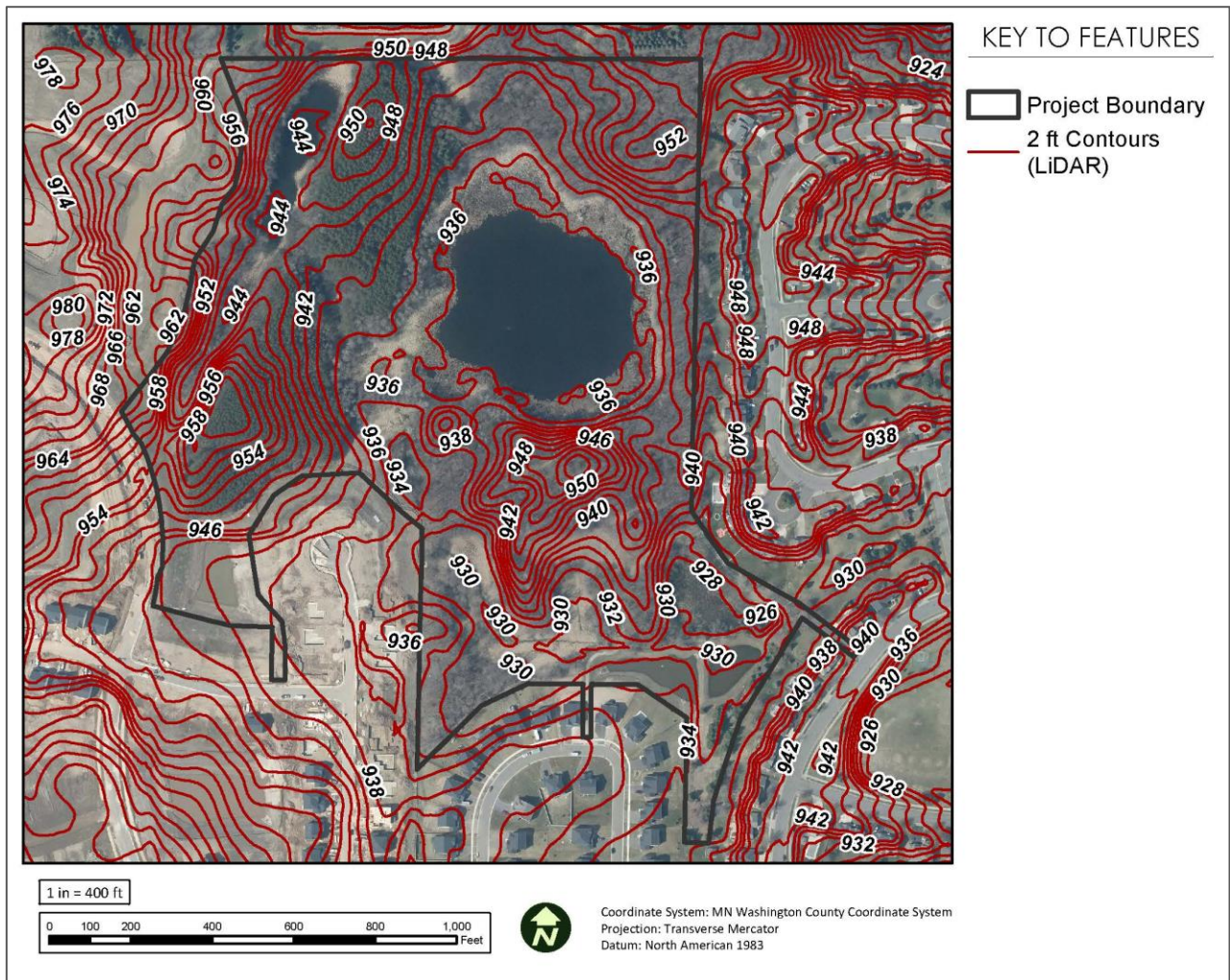


Figure 9. The topography at Still Ponds.

Geology and Hydrology

Still Ponds is located within the ecological subsection of St. Paul Baldwin Plains in the Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province. The northern boundary of this subsection is defined by a Superior Lobe end moraine complex known as the St. Croix Moraine. To the west, terraces linked to the Mississippi River mark the separation from the Anoka Sand Plain subsection. The southern boundary aligns with the southern edge of the Rosemount Outwash Plain. This subsection is small in size and extends into Wisconsin. It features a large moraine and areas of outwash plain, although it is lower in elevation compared to other regions in the state. The subsection includes part of the seven-county metropolitan area and experiences effects from urban development.

The region surrounding Still Ponds contains Paleozoic bedrock overlying a thick sequence of Mesoproterozoic rocks that formed about 1,100 million years ago and are associated with the Midcontinent Rift. The Paleozoic rocks in this area consist of relatively thin, widespread layers of sandstone, shale, and carbonate deposits formed in shallow seas approximately 500 to 450 million years ago. Throughout Washington County, bedrock units are slightly tilted (less than 1°) to the southwest, toward the central Twin Cities metropolitan area, which is part of what is identified as the Twin Cities basin. Still Ponds straddles three geological subsections: Opg and Os and Ops.

- **Opg:** Platteville and Glenwood formations (upper Ordovician) – the Platteville formation primarily consists of tan to gray, fossiliferous limestone and dolostone. This is the dominant uppermost bedrock that spans across a large extent of the southwestern part of the county. The underlying Glenwood Formation is predominantly a green-gray sandy shale. The combined thickness of these formations is approximately 30-35 ft (9-11 m).
- **OS:** St. Peter Sandstone (Middle to lower Ordovician) – The uppermost formation is primarily a white to tan, fine- to medium-grained, quartzose sandstone. Glacial sediments are thin throughout the southern half of the county, exposing patchy outcrops of this formation adjacent to Season's Park. Bedding and structures are typically absent. The lowermost section of this formation, referred to as the Pigs Eye Member, consists of white to gray feldspathic shale and siltstone interlayered with coarser sandstone. While the Pigs Eye Member is not exposed anywhere throughout Washington county, the basal contact of this formation with the underlying Shakopee Formation (Ops) has significant erosional unconformity. This buried erosional surface separates these two rock formations indicating that sediment deposition is not continuous.

- **OPS:** Shakopee Formation (Lower Ordovician)—A heterolithic unit composed mainly of light brown, thin- to medium-bedded dolostone, sandy dolostone, sandstone, and shale. It contains oolites, intraclasts, fossilized microbial mounds, chert nodules, quartz sandstone, and green-gray shale partings. Thickness of the Shakopee Formation beneath the St. Peter Sandstone is quite variable within the area of the Hudson–Afton horst, ranging from almost absent to nearly 200 feet (61 meters) thick. It appears to be thickest in the most southeast part of the county, east of the Hastings fault, where it is nearly 200 feet (61 meters) thick. On the opposite side of the horst, on the west side of the Cottage Grove fault, it reaches thicknesses of 115 feet (35 meters) and appears to progressively thin towards the northwest. Based on a limited amount of drill cuttings and geophysical data within the Hudson–Afton horst, it appears that the Shakopee Formation thins to less than 50 feet (15 meters) and may even be absent beneath the St. Peter Sandstone at several locations.



Figure 10. Geological subsections surrounding Still Ponds.

Water Features

The soil structure indicates that Still Ponds contains a mosaic of soil conditions. Soil moisture is an estimation of the fluctuating water content in soils and greatly influences vegetation types, physical properties of soils, and chemical interactions and transport. Still Ponds can generally be classified as having moderate to high infiltration rate as they consist of mainly hydrologic soil group B, with some A and C soils and combinations of C/D and B/D. Hydrologic soil groups are based on estimations of runoff potential and consider the rate at which water infiltration occurs. Approximately 15.2% of Still Ponds soils are classified as ponded, having slow or very slow infiltration rate, particularly lowland areas surrounding open water. Although flooding frequency is minimal in this area, occasional to frequent ponding occurs in soil section 1055 (Aquolls and Histosols). Ponding is defined as standing water in a closed depression. The aerial photos suggest that open water in the ponds was either rare, or was not present. This increased ponding frequency is likely due to the inflow source from residential development in combination with low infiltration rate of the soil surrounding this area. Ponding occurs at a depth of 80 inches. Still Ponds has three freshwater emergent wetlands and two freshwater ponds. There are also three stormwater detention basins on the south ends of the property.

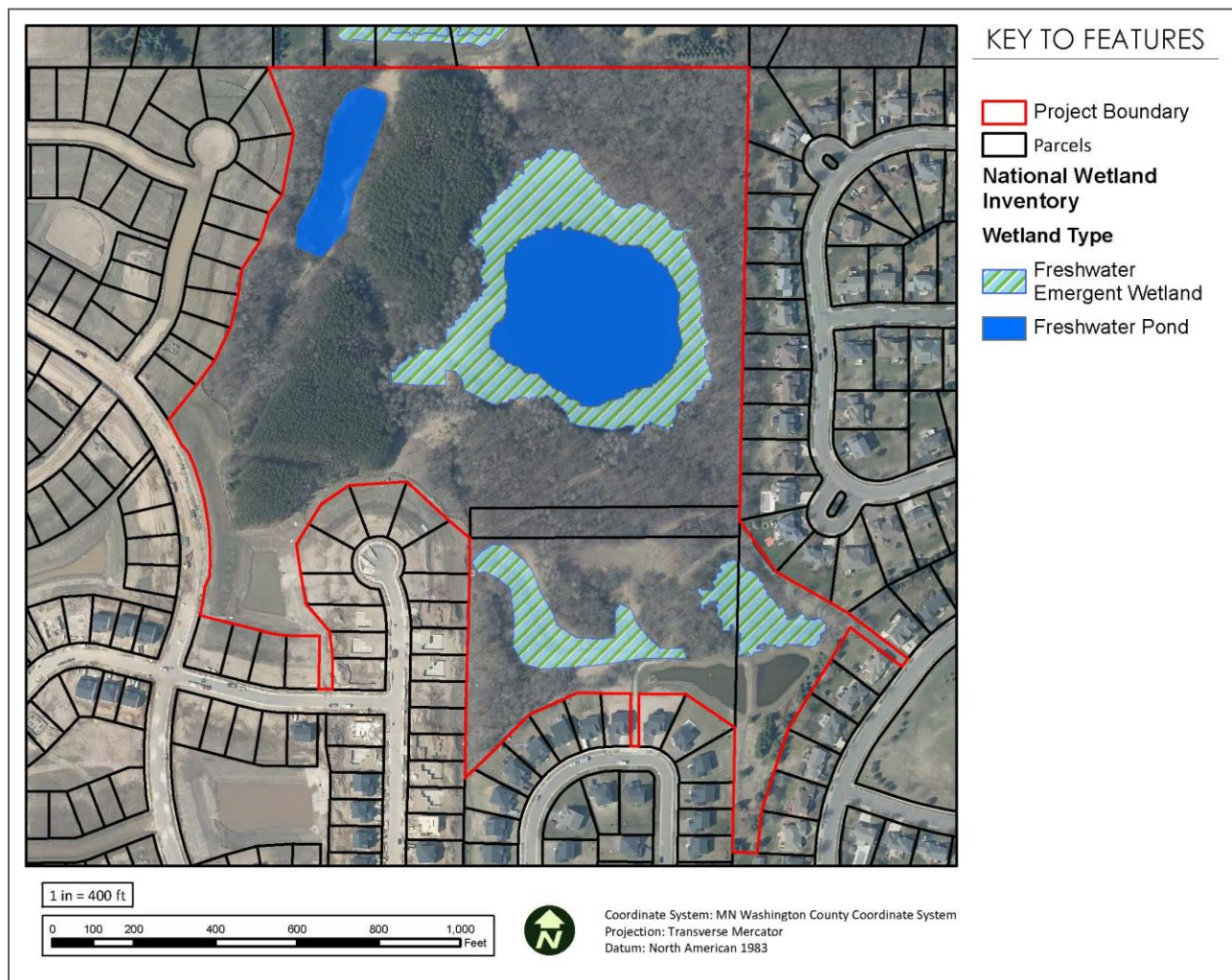


Figure 11. Water features at Still Ponds.

Project Site Vegetation and Habitat Assessment

Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS)

The Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) maps land cover based on historical plant community inventories and aerial photos from the 1990s. Because MLCCS relies on older data and past technology, it may not reflect recent land use changes, leading to differences between mapped and current vegetation. More precise descriptions of current vegetation are provided in the following Management Units Vegetation section. The MLCCS survey identified six different land cover types within Still Ponds, shown below in Figure 15. Most of the site is mapped as oak forest dry subtype, cattail marsh, and cultivated coniferous trees. The former surrounding agricultural fields have been converted to residential housing.

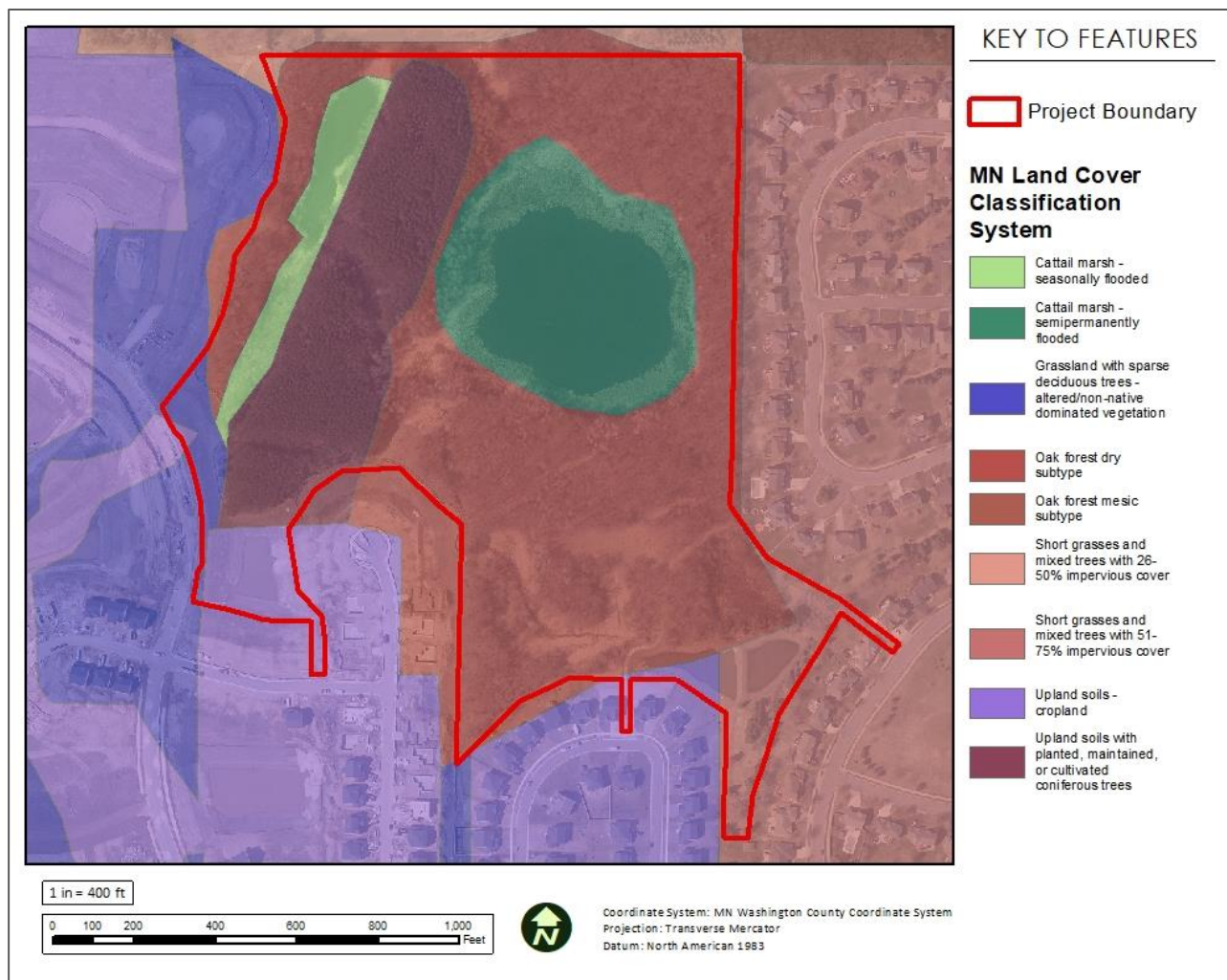


Figure 12. Land cover mapping at Still Ponds.

Minnesota Native Plant Community Classification and Goals

Similar to MLCCS mapping, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resource's Native Plant Community Classification relies on analysis of comprehensive field data collected during the 1990s, 2000s, and considers key environmental variables such as azimuth, soil composition, and hydrology. In contrast to MLCCS, this system employs a hierarchical framework, organizing vegetation according to broad, landscape-scale ecological systems and incorporating ecological processes as a guiding principle. Native plant community types are identified based on dominant canopy species, substrate variations, and detailed environmental factors such as moisture and nutrient availability. Subtypes reflect more nuanced differences in canopy structure, substrates, or additional environmental variables. Native plant community classifications are often used to describe current or desired vegetation and provide guidance for the goals and objectives of stewardship activities. More Detailed descriptions of each plant community can be found in Appendix B.

Southern Dry-Mesic Oak (Maple) Woodland (FDs37)

These dry-mesic forests are found throughout the Eastern Broadleaf Forest in the transition between the prairies which frequently burned in the southwest and the mesic hardwoods which rarely burned. Oak woodland was probably one of the most extensive community types in Minnesota, comprising much of the vegetation described as oak barrens, brushland, and thickets by the early surveyors. Often found on sand and sand-gravel soils associated with moraines, these historically occurred where there were firebreaks in fire-prone regions. The Canopy of this community is interrupted to continuous (50-100%) with dominant canopy species are either bur oak or northern pin oak, with quaking aspen often present. Hazelnuts, chokecherry, gray dogwood, and raspberries are common to abundant in the understory. Historically, disturbance in the form of fire affected these communities about every 10 years

Southern Mesic Maple-Basswood Forest (MHs39) and Southern Wet-Mesic Hardwood Forest (MHs49)

Mesic hardwood forests are present throughout the Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province in upland areas where wildfires are less common and soils have greater water retention. The canopy cover is mostly continuous from 50-100% and dominated sugar maple with basswood, northern red oak and occasionally red and American elm. Ironwood, sugar maple, basswood and Bitternut Hickory are present in the subcanopy. The shrub layer is patchy to interrupted with tree saplings, chokecherry, and gooseberry. The ground-layer varies from patchy to continuous with Virginia waterleaf, bloodroot, wild leek, blue cohosh, early meadow rue and Spring ephemerals. Wet-mesic hardwood forests MHs49 overlap with the MHs39 communities and are present in areas protected from wildfires and have high water tables. Basswood, Black ash, Sugar maple green ash, hackberry and Boxelder are common in the canopy and subcanopy. The shrub layer and ground layer are similar with waterleaf and wood nettle are often common and abundant

Northern Wet Meadow/Carr (WMn82)

Wet Meadow/Carr communities are present throughout Minnesota, and are common in wetland basins, and along streams and shorelines. Occurrences of Wet Meadows along stream courses or adjacent to lakes often have fairly constant water levels relative to Wet Meadows in depressions or basins. These communities occur on wet mineral soil, muck, or shallow peat where standing water is present in the spring and after heavy rains. However, the water table is generally beneath the surface of the soil for

most of the growing season. The Northern Wet Meadow/Carr is composed of dense, closed stands of sedges such as lake sedge, tussock sedge, beaked sedge, and grasses such as bluejoint. Forb cover is variable with species such as tufted loosestrife, marsh bellflower, and marsh skullcap. Shrub cover varies depending on the subtype; the Willow – Dogwood Shrub Swamp (WMn82a) typically has shrub cover greater than 25% with species such as willows (*Salix* spp.), red-osier dogwood, and speckled alder. This subtype tends to occur on drier wet meadow sites, or when the water-table has been lowered by drought or ditching

Northern Bulrush-Spikerush Marsh (MRn93) and Open Water

The marsh communities are common throughout the region in wetland basins or along sheltered lakeshores and streams. These are forb- and graminoid-dominated wetland communities that have standing water for most of the growing season. The water level is typically stable but can vary in marshes that are rooted into floating mats. Nutrients tend to be readily available, especially following a drawdown in the water level providing organic matter an opportunity to oxidize. The Northern Mixed Cattail Marsh (MRn83) is typically dominated by cattails with other forbs such as broad-leaved arrowhead and marsh skullcap. Graminoid cover is variable with lake sedge (*Carex lacustris*) and bristly sedge (*Carex comosa*) often present. The Northern Bulrush-Spikerush Marsh (MRn93) tends to be dominated by bulrushes (*Scirpus validis*, *S. fluviatilis*), and submergent aquatics. Floating-leaved and submergent aquatic plants are limited in cover with species like duckweeds (*Lemna* spp.), water lily (*Nymphaea* spp.), and pondweeds (*Potamogeton* spp.)



Figure 13. *Scirpus Validis* at Still Ponds.

Restoration and Enhancement of Still Ponds

To establish management unit objectives based on existing vegetation structure, vegetation surveys were conducted during the spring and summer of 2025. These surveys documented the dominant species in canopy, sub-canopy, and ground layers. Findings were compared with historical imagery and prior vegetative surveys to assess current vegetation and to identify the most appropriate native plant community goals for the site, where appropriate.

The park's location within an established metropolitan area result in varying extents of habitat modification, the presence of invasive species, alterations in hydrology, and diminished frequency of natural disturbance regimes that are essential to native ecosystems. These factors, combined with recent intensification of land use in residential development and stormwater infrastructure, have led to notable changes in vegetation that diverge from those described in Native Plant Communities (NPCs). Restoration planning should address historical, current, and potential future environmental conditions. Consequently, not all management units are assigned an NPC target, and some areas may be better suited to alternative management objectives that still provide ecological functions and recreational opportunities. Management activities to achieve desired plant community goals are detailed within each management unit and more thoroughly described in the Management Activity section.

This section provides restoration and management recommendations based on the desired Native Plant Communities and composition (referred to as Management Units), as well as recommendations for management activities that are considered priorities (Management Priorities). The following section (Management Activities) provides an overview of the implementation of specific management activities that are recommended. Management units have been identified based on the current vegetation and land cover types. The management units are labeled on maps with associated plant community goals including NPC's where applicable. A description of the current conditions of each unit is provided in addition to desired conditions. Desired conditions range from high quality native plant communities as described in the Field Guide to Native Plant Communities to reconstructed urban ecosystems. The following summary of current conditions reflects the dominant and notable species identified throughout Spring and Summer 2025 at Still Ponds and does not reflect a comprehensive survey of all species within the project site.

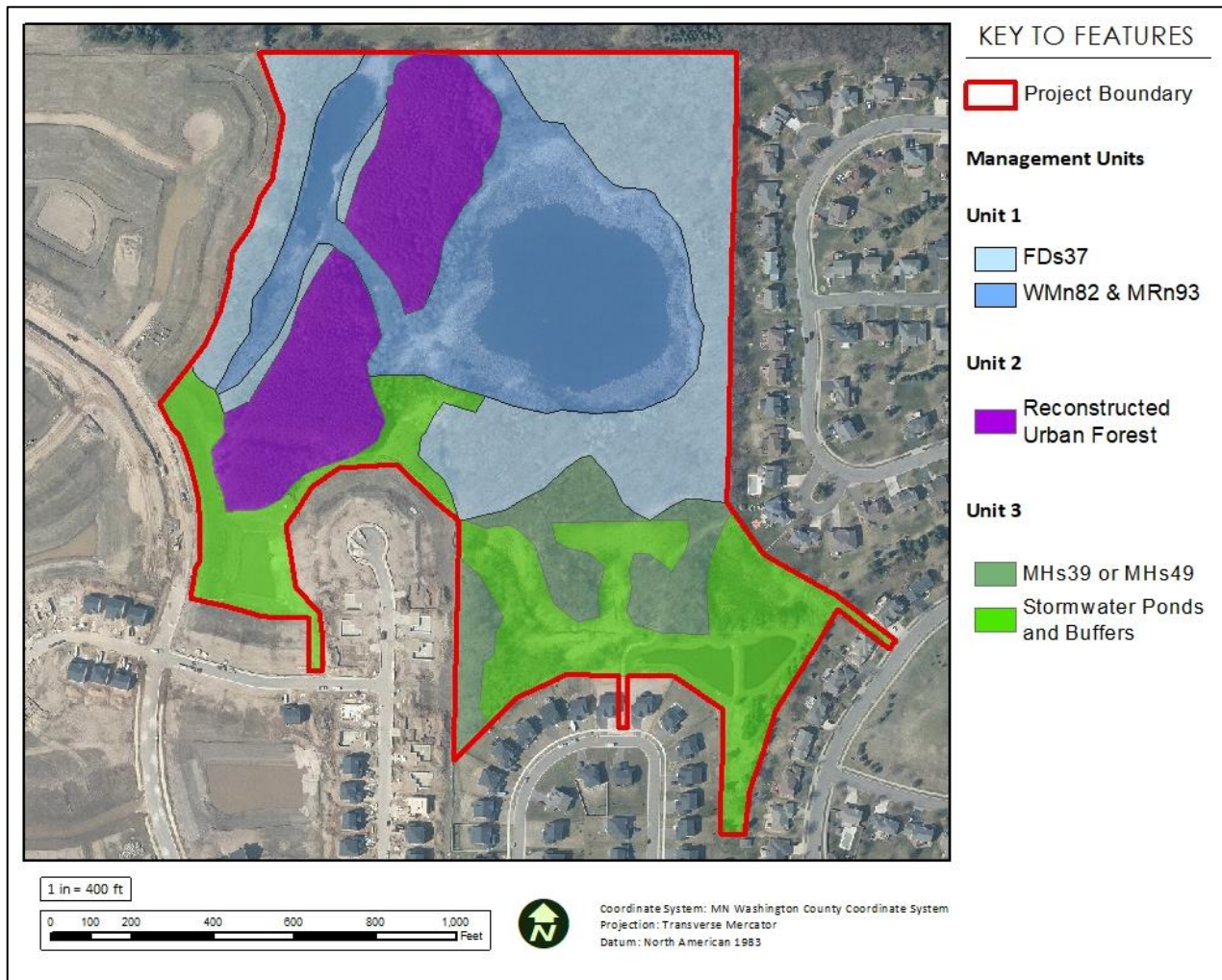


Figure 13. Management units and target plant communities at Still Ponds.



Management Unit 1

General Description and Current Conditions

Management Unit 1 consists of 11.4 acres of open water and wetlands and 8.5 acres of degraded oak woodlands. Based on the aerial imagery, the wetland basins have varied hydrologically with period of open water in present times but historic drawdowns that allowed the area to be farmed. The soils are the Otter silt loam and ponded aquasolls. Currently the open water is surrounded by wetlands that include a mosaic of wet meadow and marsh vegetation with generally high diversity and intact native species. Species such as tussock sedge, lake sedge, woolgrass, waterdock, marsh fern, touch-me-not, Joe pye weed, and sensitive fern are present. However, numerous stands of dense reed canary grass as well as scattered patches are present. Some patches of purple loosestrife and narrow leaf cattail also occur on the shoreline.

The dry-mesic oak woodland is a fire-dependent plant community that has developed on upland soils on the ridges that surround the wetland basins. Soils are silt loams (Antigo, Brill, Crystal, Freer and Santiago) with relatively shallow slopes (2-6%). The woodland has a mix of canopy species including large bur oak trees, red oak, pin oak, red maple, aspen, basswood, and black cherry. Much shrub layer in the uplands in this unit is dominated by common and glossy buckthorn, a few individuals of Tartarian honeysuckle, and native species such as prickly ash, prickly gooseberry, red raspberry, and red-berried elder. The herbaceous layer included species such as Pennsylvania sedge, graceful sedge, pointed-leaf tick trefoil, Canada mayflower, wild geranium, lady fern, Virginia creeper, wild grape, and jack-in-the-pulpit. Non-native herbaceous species also included fescue, Canada thistle, garlic mustard, dame's rocket, burdock, and bird's foot trefoil.

Desired Future Conditions

A target condition has been described for each of the management areas. The target condition is a description of a healthy plant community based on the MNDNR Native Plant Community description. Recommended restoration and management activities are designed to guide the existing community towards a plant community that resembles the target condition described. The target condition should be considered a long-term goal that will be achieved incrementally over time with sustained management effort. The desired future conditions for Unit 1 include:

- Reconstructed Southern Dry-Mesic Oak (Maple) Woodland (FDs37) Native Plant Community. Canopy cover should be interrupted to continuous (50–100%). Bur oak and northern pin oak should continue to be the most common tree species. Northern red oak, white oak, and red maple should also be maintained.
- Enhanced Northern Wet Meadow/Carr (WMn82) and Northern Bulrush-Spikerush Marsh (MRn93) Native Plant Communities.
- Restored habitat to provide provisions for humans and wildlife, such as the production of food, water, and shelter.
- Removed woody and herbaceous non-indigenous species to prevent continued habitat degradation. The shrub layer should be patchy with 25-50% cover by native shrub species typical of an FDs37 NPC. Dense non-native invasive shrub cover should be <5%.
- Increased diversity with additional ecologically appropriate trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers. The herbaceous layer should be continuous up to 100% cover such that it is sufficient to carry periodic prescribed surface fires along with oak leaf litter.
- Climate resilient woodlands and wetlands that can withstand environmental changes in an urban environment.

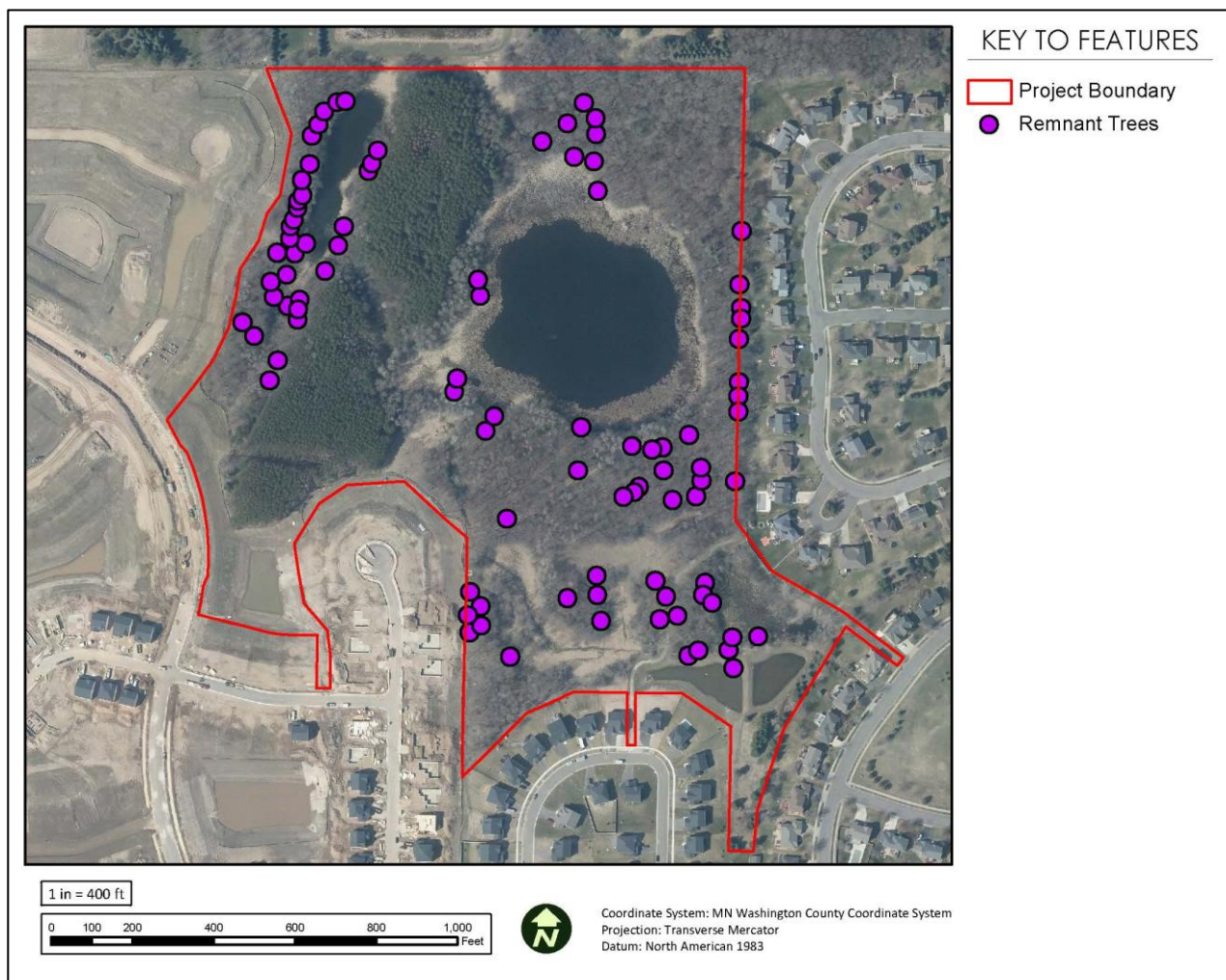


Figure 14. Locations of scattered trees identified in 1937 and 1964 aerial photography on 2022 aerial imagery.

Priority Level: High

Management Unit Goals

- Unit 1 was likely an oak openings and barrens, also referred to as oak savanna, historically. The 1937 aerial photos and map (Figure 18) show the locations of the original oaks found on site include scattered trees within the existing woodland. Currently the plant composition more closely resembles a southern dry-mesic oak (maple) woodland (FDs37) with a canopy of bur oak, pin oak, and maple and sub-canopy of cherry, chokecherry, dogwoods, and prickly ash. Long term management will need to address the ash trees that have died due to the Emerald Ash Borer; the density of buckthorn present in the subcanopy; and the die off of large canopy trees from construction disturbance. The uplands in Unit 1 need the re-establishment of a natural disturbance regime to control extensive overgrowth by non-native invasive shrubs such as buckthorn and to promote a diverse ground cover by native herbaceous species. Native tree species such as red maple, black cherry, hackberry, and basswood that would typically be susceptible to fire have been allowed to regenerate. Unfortunately, this recruitment is at the expense of oak regeneration and replacement. Periodic surface fires (every 10 years or so) and woody invasive shrub control will support better oak regeneration and native plant diversity.

Management Unit Activities

To maintain and enhance the open water and wetland plant communities in addition to the dry-mesic oak woodland, the main activities should be:

- Remove non-indigenous wetland herbaceous species such as narrow leaf cattail, reed canary grass, and purple loosestrife.
- Remove non-indigenous woody species such as buckthorn and honeysuckle and ecologically inappropriate woody species such as prickly ash.
- Remove non-indigenous herbaceous species such as garlic mustard, burdock, fescue, Canada thistle, garlic mustard, bird's foot trefoil and dame's rocket (Appendix C).
- Remove ecologically inappropriate species such as black locust and boxelder and aspen in areas. Dead ash should be removed where considered hazardous.
- Thin or remove the less desirable trees species around desirable trees, enhancing the health of the remaining trees and promoting oak regeneration. Species that are fire-intolerant in seedling and sapling stages, including box elder, birch, black cherry, hackberry, and elm should be thinned and minimized.
- Interplant with ecologically appropriate tree species from FDs37 (Appendix B).
- Maintain any native shrub species already present at the site including American hazelnut, grey dogwood, gooseberry, raspberry, and chokecherry.
- Planting a shrub layer of chokecherry, chokeberry, Juneberry, and hazelnuts would provide provisions for humans and wildlife while diversifying the structure and composition of FDs37.
- Maintain and enhance herbaceous species including the native species currently on site such as wild geranium, interrupted fern, sedge species, etc.

- Prescribed burning should be implemented after tree and shrub removal once the fuel loads will support the movement of fire through the unit. In the long-term, the implementation of burns on an approximately 8- to 10 –year cycle restores natural processes such as the cycling of nutrients and the prevention of (re)establishment of fire-intolerant woody species.



Figure 15. Wet meadow on NW side of Still Ponds.



Management Unit 2

General Description and Current Conditions

The cultivated pine stand occurs on uplands with well-drained and moderately well-drained soils including the Santiago and Freeon series. These soils were developed in loess over sandy till. Topography is relatively flat in the northern section with slopes less than 6%. The southern section has slopes ranging from 6-15% with aspects facing east and south. Pre-European settlement vegetation suggests this area was oak openings and barrens or oak savanna. Prior to 1964, the area appears to have been utilized for agricultural purposes.

Currently the unit consists of an even-aged stands of 30- to 40-year-old planted red pine. The dominant canopy species was red pine, with individual white pine and a small stand of Norway spruce in the northeast corner. Some quaking aspen, eastern red cedar, black cherry and boxelder were also present in the canopy. The subcanopy and shrub layers were heavily infested with non-native, invasive common buckthorn including both common and glossy buckthorn. While buckthorn comprised at least 50-75% cover under the pines, additional shrub cover included gooseberry, prickly ash, black raspberry, and red-berried elder. The herbaceous layer was generally lacking in areas with the lack of light due to the heavy buckthorn cover. However, some areas contained a few native herbaceous plants such as lady fern, Pennsylvania sedge, Virginia creeper, and enchanter's nightshade as well as numerous ash seedlings. Garlic mustard, an invasive herbaceous species, was found in scattered patches in the understory.

Desired Future Conditions

- Reconstructed Urban Forest that is compatible and complementary to the surrounding oak woodland communities in Unit 1. The composition of a Southern Dry-Mesic Pine-Oak Woodland (FDs27) can be used as a transitional native plant community goal. The canopy cover would be patchy (25-75%) and dominated by white pine, bur oak, northern pin oak, white oak, paper birch, quaking aspen, red oak, and basswood.
- Restored habitat to provide provisions for humans and wildlife, such as the production of food, water, and habitat.

- Removed woody and herbaceous non-indigenous species to prevent continued habitat degradation. The shrub layer should be patchy with 25-50% cover by native shrub species typical of an FDs27 NPC. Dense non-native invasive shrub cover should be <5%.
- Increased the diversity with additional ecologically appropriate trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers. The herbaceous layer should be continuous up to 100% cover such that it is sufficient to compete with woody and herbaceous species and contain species such as sweet cicely, northern bedstraw, wild geranium, heart-leaved aster, Canada mayflower, bracken fern, and Pennsylvania sedge. Climate resilient woodland that can withstand environmental changes in an urban environment.

Priority Level: Moderate

Management Unit Goals

Unit 2 was likely an oak openings and barrens or oak savanna historically. However, it is now mostly a monoculture of red pine. Overgrowth of invasive shrubs, mostly common and glossy buckthorn, have impacted the development of a diverse herbaceous ground layer. As is typical of pine plantations from this era, the even-age stand generally lacks any regeneration. Selective thinning has not occurred, and many mature trees are weak and susceptible to wind-throw during high winds or storms. Within this monoculture are pockets of pine experiencing die off and wind throws. In developing management goals and activities, the site was reviewed the DNR Forester Karl Mueller to assess the health and recovery of the pine stands. With two consulting DNR Foresters, they provided the recommendations to clearcut the pine stand and convert it to a native plant community, leaving some pine in the pine enhancement areas depicted on the map (Figure X). In these areas where thinning the pine is an option, the pine is slightly larger and spaced out more, intermixed with adjacent hardwoods. The younger pine stand at the southern end would not be a possibility for thinning as it would result in a stand prone to windthrow. However, the edge of this pine stand could be retained as there are spruce and hardwoods partially protecting them from the wind. The designated removal area is 10.8 acres and the thinning area is 1.3 acres.

Ideally, the cultivated pine stand would be removed or thinned where designated on the map and transition towards a southern dry-mesic pine-oak woodland (FDs27). This would connect to the surrounding woodland in Management Unit 1 and create a larger tract of contiguous habitat. Incorporating climate ready woods species (Appendix D) may also be advantageous as it is an urban reconstructed woodland ideally, timber harvest would utilize the pine logs for lumber or other marketable wood products. However, it is very unlikely that there would be interest given the lumber market. The size and quality of the pine is below what is desired, and the size of pine stand is not large enough to make it financially viable project in this part of the state. If a near clearcut of the pine is planned, The DNR recommends connecting with: [Call Before You Cut — Minnesota Forestry Association](#); a program between the MN Forestry Association and the MNDNR. The MFA foresters would have a better understanding of the local markets and could provide some guidance prior to removal.

Management Unit Activities

To maintain sections of enhanced pine stand or to transition to a native plant community with clearcutting with a long-term goal of connectivity to the existing FDs37 community, the main activities should be:

- Remove non-indigenous woody and herbaceous species such as buckthorn, and amur maple.
- Remove ecologically inappropriate species such as black locust and boxelder.
- Remove non-indigenous herbaceous species such as garlic mustard, burdock, and dame's rocket (Appendix C). Thin or remove the planted pine stands, enhancing the health of the remaining trees and promoting pine and oak regeneration.
- Consider coppicing aspen in the NE section of site or on fringe areas to provide valuable wildlife habitat.
- Seed and plant herbaceous material and shrubs as a transitional plant community to set the foundation for future savanna/woodland
- Interplant with ecologically appropriate species from FDs27 (Appendix B) or with ecologically appropriate species from the University of Minnesota Climate Ready Woods program [Managing woodlands in the Anoka Sand Plain, Big Woods, and St. Paul-Baldwin Plains and Moraines | UMN Extension](#). Incorporate southern species as an assisted migration model to further enhance the resiliency of the unit [Region 7: Anoka Sand Plain, Big Woods, St. Paul-Baldwin Plains and Moraines](#)
- Planting chokecherry, chokeberry, wild plum, and hazelnuts would provide provisions for humans and wildlife while diversifying the structure and composition of the cultivated pine stands.



Management Unit 3

General Description and Current Conditions

Management Unit 3 is a mosaic of constructed stormwater ponds surrounded by upland buffers of both grassland and woodland. In addition to the open water of the ponds, the soils include mostly silt loams (Freeon, Otter, Richwood, Waukegan, Crystal Lake, and Antigo) and a small amount of sandy loam (Mahtomedi). Slopes are largely flat and under 6% with a few west- and south-facing slopes ranging up to 15%. Similar to management unit 1, Unit 3 was likely an oak openings and barrens or oak savanna historically. The 1937 image and Figure x show the original oaks found on site, some of which remain today. Currently, the plant composition more closely resembles a southern mesic maple-basswood forest with canopy trees of bur oak, pin oak, and maple, ash, elm and boxelder and with a subcanopy of maple, ironwood, and ash saplings. The forest transitions to a wet-mesic hardwood system in lower lying areas along wetlands. The understory of the mesic hardwoods is dominated by buckthorn, a portion of which on the east side was forestry mowed in the winter of 2024-25. The buffers are mainly composed of non-native cool season grasses including brome, fescue and reed canary grass. Burdock and Canada goldenrod are the most common forbs present. Some southern mesic prairie species are present with sedge meadow species such as lake sedge and soft-stemmed bulrush along the water's edge.

Desired Future Conditions

- Enhanced mesic hardwoods that resemble MHs39 and MHs49 Native plant Communities and will be resilient moving into the future. Canopy cover should be interrupted to continuous (50-100%) and dominated by sugar maple, basswood, northern red oak.
- The restoration of habitat to provide provisions for humans and wildlife, such as the production of food, water, and habitat.
- Restored subcanopy structure in the forest with the removal of woody to prevent continued habitat degradation. The shrub layer should be rare to interrupted (5-75%) cover by native shrub species typical of MHs39 such as gooseberry and chokecherry. Dense non-native invasive shrub cover should be <5%.

- Removed herbaceous non-indigenous understory species in the open areas surrounding the stormwater basins and increased diversity with additional ecologically grasses, sedges, and wildflowers.
- Climate resilient plant communities that can withstand environmental changes in an urban environment.

Priority Level: Moderate

Management Unit Goals

This unit has experienced quite a bit of disturbance in the transition from oak savanna prior to European settlement, through logging and agriculture, and more recently in the construction trails and stormwater basins. Ash trees in the canopy of the forested areas are experiencing die off from Emerald Ash Borer; the sub canopy is strongly dominated by buckthorn. There is additional die off of large existing canopy trees and newly installed trees from construction disturbance. While native plant community goals have been assigned to this unit, the restoration of the structure and composition of the native plant communities will be challenging. Efforts in these areas should focus on minimizing the cover of non-indigenous species and increasing the overall diversity.

Management Unit Activities

- To enhance the southern mesic maple-basswood forest (MHs39) in the wooded areas and southern mesic prairie (Ups23) and northern bulrush-spikerush marsh (MRn93) along the stormwater basins, the main activities would be: Continued removal of non-indigenous woody such as buckthorn, honeysuckle, and amur maple.
- Remove canopy species that would be considered hazardous or ecologically inappropriate species such as ash, dead oak, black locust, and boxelder.
- Remove non-indigenous herbaceous species such as garlic mustard, burdock, dame's rocket, and cool season grasses (Appendix C).
- Interplant the forested areas with ecologically appropriate species from MHs39 or MHs49 (Appendix B) or with ecologically appropriate species from the University of Minnesota Climate Ready Woods program [Managing woodlands in the Anoka Sand Plain, Big Woods, and St. Paul-Baldwin Plains and Moraines | UMN Extension](#)
- Incorporate southern species in the forested areas as an assisted migration model to further enhance the resiliency of the unit [Region 7: Anoka Sand Plain, Big Woods, St. Paul-Baldwin Plains and Moraines](#)
- Planting chokecherry, gooseberry, and nannyberry in the shrub layer of the forested areas would provide provisions for humans and wildlife while diversifying the structure and composition of the hardwoods.
- Consider prairie and wetland restoration in the open areas surrounding the wetland basins. This would involve the removal of existing vegetation with site preparation methods such as spraying, burning, soils disturbance, and seeding. Establishment maintenance would include mowing, spot-treating and prescribed burning.



Figure 16. Stormwater Retention Pond at Still Ponds

Restoration Management Phasing & Cost Estimate Summary

Total management costs were based on 4-year management plans. Total 4-year costs for all vegetation management are \$693,050.00. Cost estimation is based on current 2025 market rates, contractor rates from 5 different companies, for a similar project, were averaged to get cost estimates. Management unit nuances may influence costs totals and should be considered. Continued Enhancement is recommended beyond the 4 year estimate.

Existing Land Cover	Acres	Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Management Unit 1		High				
Altered non-native Woodland FDs37	8.5		\$112,200	\$28,900	\$28,900	\$17,000
Open Water & Wet Meadow	11.4					
Management Unit 2		Moderate				
Pine Tree Planting removal areas FDs37	10.8		\$82,400	\$32,400	\$77,240	\$47,000
Pine Tree Planting Thinning and Enhancement FDs37	1.3		\$17,230	\$6,240	\$6,240	\$2,600
Management Unit 3		Moderate				
Stormwater Ponds and Buffers UPs24	8.9		\$33,300	\$24,400	\$23,800	\$18,900
Woodland MHs39 or MHs49	6.6		\$69,800	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$12,000

Table 1. 4-year management cost projections by Management Unit and Sub Unit

Restoration Management Activity Phasing

Total management costs were based on 4-year management plans. Total 4-year costs for all vegetation management are \$693,050.00. Cost estimation is based on current 2025 market rates, contractor rates from 5 different companies, for a similar project, were averaged to get cost estimates. Management unit nuances may influence costs totals and should be considered.

Existing Land Cover	land Cover Goals	Recommended Actions	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Notes and Assumptions
Management Unit 1							
Altered non-native Woodland 8.5 Acres	FDs37	Invasive Species Management- Woody	\$44,200				\$5,200/Acre
		Canopy thinning of unhealthy and Ecologically Inappropriate Trees & around Save Trees	\$68,000				\$8,000/Acre
		Understory Enhancement seeding and planting		\$11,900	\$11,900		\$2,800/Acre
		Continued Enhancement		\$17,000	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$2,000/Acre; 2 visits per year.
Open Water & Wet Meadow 11.4 Acres	Opn92 & WMn82	Invasive Species Management- Reed Canary Grass	\$5,000	\$5,000			2 visits per year
		Invasive Species Management- Purple Loosestrife Bio control	\$1,200	\$1,200			
		Vegetation enhancement		\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	
Management Unit 2							
Pine Tree Planting removal areas 10.8 Acres	FDs 39	Tree Removal-Canopy Removal	\$82,400				\$8,000/Acre
		Invasive Species Management- Herbaceous		\$21,600			2 visits per year

	Prairie Restoration- Site prep		\$10,800			
	Prairie Restoration- seeding			\$30,240		
	Establishment- Tree and Shrub Planting		\$15,000	\$15,000	20 trees/ Acre	
	Establishment- Maintenance		\$20,000	\$20,000		
	Establishment- Tree and shrub maintenance		\$12,000	\$12,000		
Pine Tree Planting Thinning and Enhancement 1.3 Acres	Invasive Species Management- Woody	\$6,730				
	Tree Removal- Canopy thinning of unhealthy and Ecologically Inappropriate Trees and save trees	\$10,500				
	Enhancement- Understory seeding and planting		\$3,640	\$3,640		
	Restoring Ecosystem processes- Continued Enhancement		\$2,600	\$2,600	\$2,600	
Management Unit 3						
Stormwater Ponds and Buffers 8.9 Acres	Invasive Species Management- Herbaceous	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$10,000	
	Interseeding	\$6,000	\$6,000			
	Invasive Species Management- Reed Canary Grass	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400		
	Prescribed Burning	\$8,900			\$8,900	

Woodland 6.6 Acres	MHs39/49	Invasive Species Management- Woody	\$17,000			
		Tree Removal- Canopy thinning of unhealthy and or Ecologically Inappropriate Trees and around save trees	\$52,800			
		Enhancement- Understory seeding and planting		\$12,000	\$12,000	
		Restoring Ecosystem processes- Continued Enhancement		\$13,000	\$13,000	\$12,000

Table 2. Restoration Activities and cost estimate

Management Activities

The descriptions below are intended to provide the land steward with an introduction and overview of management activities that could be implemented on the land to help achieve the objectives of the Conservation Values. These activities are specific to the land at the time this HMP was developed. If interested in implementing any of these activities, contact the Land Trust for more information or to develop an Action Plan, as necessary.

Climate Resiliency

Climate resiliency refers to the capacity of a landscape to respond, recover and maintain its structure and function under changing climate conditions such as extreme weather events, increased wildfires, or additional non-indigenous species. Washington County has historically been vulnerable to the effects of climate change and trends show that Minnesota will experience increased precipitation, hotter summers, warmer and wetter winters, and more severe weather events in the next 50 years. This threatens natural resources by adding additional stressors to native plants and giving advantages to non-indigenous species.

Many non-indigenous species benefit from the increased humidity in summers and warmer winters, extending the ranges of species that used to be limited by the colder temperatures. Non-Indigenous species also have a higher tolerance for flooding and large fluctuations in water levels. They degrade native plant communities in a variety of ways including loss of species diversity, increased erosion, reduced water quality, and altered nutrient cycling and soil health.

Non-indigenous species often employ reproductive strategies that increase dispersal whereas native species have more limited abilities to expand their range. Hindered by this inability of the natural world to adapt, scientists are concerned that natural areas will degrade to non-indigenous and generalist species and lose the ecosystem functions that intact native plant communities provide. Fragmentation and habitat loss of natural areas further limit the movement of species across the landscape.

Much of the work on climate resiliency has focused on landscape scale processes. Models incorporate geophysical characteristics such as soils, bedrock geology, landforms, and elevation with measures of how connected a natural area is to other natural areas in the landscape. Microclimates differ even with small differences on the landscape. Sites that have more diverse landscape features may allow for more species to move and persist at a local scale. The same is true for natural areas that are more connected to landscapes at higher latitudes. This work highlights the importance of protecting and creating corridors to allow for climate adaptation.

Being a city park, this land will contribute to connectedness and species adaptation to climate change on the landscape scale. There are stewardship activities at the site level that can also increase climate resiliency. Many of these activities have been mentioned elsewhere in this plan but also have importance through the lens of climate resiliency.

Climate resiliency strategies for a site:

- **Adaptation.** Natural plant communities can adapt to changing conditions through natural processes such as succession and colonization. Restoration and management goals on native plant communities should focus on native plant communities that are well suited to the conditions using historic native plant communities as a reference. However, there are sites and species that may benefit by the process of assisted colonization, or the act of moving species to a habitat where it may not have previously occurred. Using the adaptive management framework (See Adaptive Management section), management activities are adjusted based on monitoring the outcomes of an activity.
- **Restoring and Maintaining Diversity.** Species diversity plays a critical role in a healthy ecosystem. Generally, the greater the biodiversity, the more ecosystem services that are provided. Species diversity also provides greater stability and adaptability to climate change; a diverse native plant community will have more resources to help it recover from flooding, drought, or insect diseases. Species diversity can be encouraged by restoring native plant communities; reintroducing natural disturbance regimes such as prescribed burning; and enhancing species diversity by planting native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers.
- **Reduce impacts to soil and nutrient cycling.** Maintaining both soil quality and nutrient cycling can improve the resiliency of ecosystems to adapt to new conditions. Land management in combination with the effects of climate change such as fire drought and flooding can impact ecosystem processes. Best management practices have been developed to protect soil and water such as retaining coarse woody debris to maintain moisture and nutrient cycling; limiting compaction in areas used for recreation and allowing heavy equipment only under frozen conditions; and maintaining and restoring due recreational access; and maintaining and restoring native herbaceous groundcover following management activities.
- **Promoting Natural Disturbance.** Disturbances play a key role in maintaining native plant communities. Conservation grazing, selective harvesting and prescribed burning are all techniques that can be used to mimic natural disturbance. Fire, for example, was once commonplace across much of the landscape. The Suppression of fire has shifted the structure and composition of native plant communities; prescribed burning has become a common management tool for restoration purposes. It can reduce non-indigenous species and understory completion. The seasonality of these prescribed burns may need to shift to align with projected changes in seasonal precipitation. Wildfire season is expected to lengthen and become more frequent in much of the Midwest. The risk of wildfire can be reduced by using prescribed burning in those areas.
- **Managing non-indigenous Species.** Climate change is expected to increase habitat for many of these non-indigenous species. Early detection and rapid response strategies are critical for control. Special attention should be paid to highly mobile non-indigenous species. Increase monitoring for known or potential non-indigenous species to ensure early detection, especially

at trailheads and along roadsides. Quickly eradicate existing populations or seed sources of non-indigenous plants and clean equipment prior to entering natural areas to prevent the spread. Once a species has become well-established, management efforts will need to be prioritized based on species, locations, time of year, etc. Integrated Pest Management can be used to manage non-indigenous species while decreasing the use of herbicides or improving their methods of use.

Invasive Species Management

Urban sites are inherently susceptible to a variety of invasive species vectors. At Sill Ponds, several pre-existing infestations present the potential for further spread throughout the area. In addition to these established populations, seeds may be introduced via pedestrian traffic (including footwear and pets), and maintenance equipment. Wildlife can also contribute to the migration of invasive materials. Accordingly, it is recommended that site management efforts prioritize comprehensive invasive species removal, with ongoing early detection and mitigation measures forming a core component of regular maintenance activities. In the long term, establishing resilient and competitive native vegetation will provide the most effective defense against invasive species colonization, thereby reducing the risk of monoculture development.

Prevention

Preventing the introduction of invasive species that are currently not found on the land should be prioritized. Since the protected land will primarily be used for recreational purposes, “Play, Clean, Go” provides a useful framework:

- Remove plants, animals, and mud from boots, gear, pets and vehicles.
- Clean your gear before entering or leaving.
- Stay on designated roads and trails.
- Use certified materials such as firewood, straw, seed.

For more information on specific activities, visit the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website on [Invasive Species](#)

Integrated Pest Management

The goal of Integrated Pest Management, often referred to as IPM, is an approach to managing non-indigenous species that considers a suite of management options and attempts to reduce the use of pesticides. Tools include biological (such as the introduction of a biocontrol agent), mechanical (such as mowing or pulling), or chemical (such as herbicide). In order to minimize the use of chemicals and the harm to plants that are not the target, IPM strategy uses the biology of the life cycle of the invasive species to determine the best course of action. The target species at Sill Ponds include:

- Smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*)
- Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
- Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)
- Honeysuckles (*Lonicera* sp.)

- Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)
- Amur maple (*Acer ginnala*)
- Dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)
- Crown vetch (*Securigera varia*)
- Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*)
- Glossy Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula* L.)

Species that are not currently on the land but are in the area and occur in the current or desired native plant communities include:

- Wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*)
- Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)
- Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)
- Grecian foxglove (*Digitalis lanata*)
- Barberries (*Berberis* sp.)
- Roundleaf bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)

See Appendix C for more information on the species listed above. More general information on invasive species can be found online at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources webpages.

Public disturbance

As a public site bordered by development and interconnected trails, Still Ponds experiences significant pedestrian traffic. It is important to recognize that certain areas within the park have been utilized for personal purposes, such as compost dumping and the construction of a tree house. While some of these activities may have occurred prior to the park's designation and were possibly well-intentioned, they can adversely impact restoration outcomes and require attention.

Engaging local residents in restoration efforts aligned with the management objectives set by the City presents opportunities for meaningful community involvement. Examples include organized volunteer planting events and the development of City-approved soft trails using chipped materials generated during restoration activities, such as woody debris removal. Continuous communication and public engagement are essential for ensuring the sustained success of restoration initiatives.

Enhancement

Ecological restoration is an indefinite long-term commitment to a set of activities that initiate or accelerate the transition to a more integral, healthy, and sustainable landscape. The concept of restoring ecosystems has increased in importance as more natural landscapes become degraded or converted to other uses with consequences on the services they can provide, from habitat to groundwater recharge, fisheries, pollination, etc.

The activities involved in restoration are on a continuum of less intervention and disturbance to a complete overhaul of an area, such as in reclamation of a mining site. Enhancement describes an activity that focuses on improving ecological function often by increasing species diversity with planting or seeding. It is often in conjunction with a management activity, for example, interseeding a prairie after a prescribed burn.

Interseeding

Interseeding is the practice of setting back the existing vegetation to allow new seeds a chance to grow; with the goal of increasing stand diversity, reducing weed populations, and habitat enhancement. Considerations for interseeding include the following:

- Set back existing vegetation temporarily if the existing vegetation is desirable; this can be done by mowing, grazing, or burning the vegetation. If the current vegetation is undesirable, for example a weed dominated patch in or amongst a high-quality plant community, the vegetation should be set back permanently. This can be accomplished using solarization, herbicides, or physical removal.
- Thick vegetation or duff layer may need to be removed prior to seeding, most of the seed should be touching bare soil.
- If soils are compacted aeration or soil loosening may be necessary for seed to soil contact and seed germination.
- Ideal seeding times are in the spring or in fall during the dormant season. When dormant seeding, seed does not need to be raked in unless the soil is excessively compact. The winter freeze-thaw cycle will “rake” the seed in for you. When spring seeding, the seed should be lightly raked into the soil. This will prevent the seed from washing out, drying out in the sun, and predation from birds.
- For large sites, typically greater than an acre, a no-till drill will reduce seeding time and eliminate the need for soil loosening and raking soil in.
- New seeds should be seeded at the recommended rate for each new species. If possible, consider sourcing seed from nearby native plant communities.

Prairie Restoration

The goal of restoration is often returning a landscape to its condition prior to disturbance or improving ecological function at a large-scale. For the purposes of this document, it is used to describe the process of converting the landscape to a native plant community that would be appropriate to the soils, geographic location, hydrology, current tree cover, etc. The process is a more comprehensive form of

management that often involves removing the current vegetation and reintroducing the native species through seed or plants.

In the context of prairie and wetland restoration, it involves a site preparation, seeding and maintenance. The goal of the site preparation is to kill existing vegetation and prepare the surface to ensure that the seed is in contact with the soil. However, once the existing vegetation has been removed, the soil should be disturbed as little as possible to reduce the germination of any weed seed in the soil. Often land managers resolve this conflict in one of two ways:

- 1) Preparing the soil and broadcasting- vegetation is killed off and removed (often with prescribed burning); the soil surface is prepared with tilling, disking and/or harrowing; the restoration area is left to allow the weeds to germinate and be re-killed; seed is broadcast and lightly incorporated with harrowing and any erosion control is added.
- 2) Drill seeding - vegetation is killed off and removed (often with prescribed burning); this step is often repeated until the weeds are considered under control; seed is drilled into the area with a seed drill and any erosion control needed is added.

There are variations to the above strategies and each strategy has benefits and shortcomings. The decision to disturb the soil versus drill into existing soil often depends on the land use history, the type and quantity of invasive species present, the soil type, and the time of year of the seeding. The time of year of the seeding will also influence the outcome of the prairie. Spring seedings are completed prior to June 30th (see Appendix E). These seedings tend to favor the prairie grasses and provide stable, but less diverse prairie plantings. Dormant seedings occur after November 1st and freeze up; frost seedings occur when the ground is frozen. These seedings tend to have more diversity and abundance of flower species, but less germination of the native prairie grasses.

Management of the prairie installation is critical to the success of the restoration, especially for the first two growing seasons. Depending on the timing of the seeding, the 1st growing season will be the first few months for a spring seeding or the following spring and summer for a dormant or frost seeding. The flush of vegetation that emerges after seeding is often the cover crop that has been planted for erosion control and annual weeds. To ensure that the cover crop and weeds do not prevent sunlight from reaching the germinating prairie seeds, it is recommended to mow the prairie for the first two growing seasons. When the planting reaches 12-15 inches in height, the prairie is mown to a height of 6-8 inches. Typically, this is needed about 2-3 times per growing season. Prescribed burning is recommended at the beginning of the 3rd growing season and then at 3-5 year intervals, depending on the management goals. Some amount of IPM is needed every year to ensure the long-term success of the prairie.

When a retired or current agricultural field has the goal of savanna restoration, a prairie restoration will be completed first and the trees and shrubs will be planted after establishment. Often, a degraded oak woodland is the current land cover for savanna restoration. That approach often involves tree and shrub removal, prescribed burning, and enhancing with interseeding.

Restoring Ecosystem Processes

Prescribed burning

Historically, fire played one of the key ecological roles in the development of prairies, savannas and woodlands. The frequency of fire varied from annually to every 50 years and was started by lightning or was set intentional by American Indians. Fires set back the woody growth and encouraged the prairie grasses and flowers. Since European settlement, fire on the landscape has largely been suppressed. Many of the prairies and savannas that depend on fire have now become overgrown with woody vegetation.

Prescribed burning is used to mimic these historic fires and can be one of the most efficient and effective tools to manage prairies, savannas, and woodlands. On the protected land, fires could be used for the following objectives:

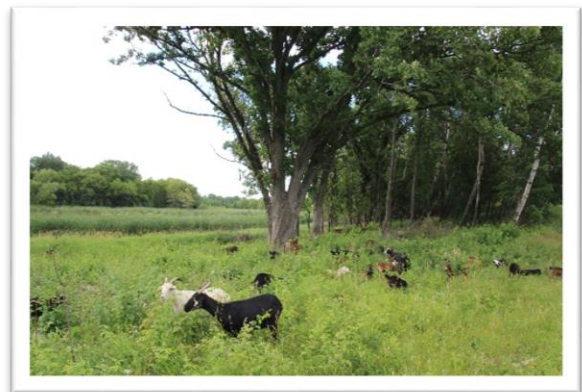
- Reduce encroachment of woody species (non-indigenous or otherwise).
- Reduce the cover of non-indigenous herbaceous species.
- Encourage growth of native grasses and flowers.
- Remove standing dead material.
- Invigorate brushlands.
- Improve wildlife habitat.



The objectives of a burn should be established to determine factors such as the location of the burn, the time of year to implement, the weather conditions and intensity of the burn. Generally, it is not recommended to burn more than a third of a given area in any one season to maintain habitat for desired species that may not be tolerant of burning. Trails are often used as firebreaks, but firebreaks can be installed and temporary if necessary.

Grazing

In addition to fire, grazing by animals such as bison or elk has long played a role in shaping the North American grassland ecosystems. Historically, grazers were responsible for creating patch disturbances on the landscape that allowed for a greater number of flowering species to flourish. Today, conservation grazing, or “managed grazing” utilizes animals such as goats, sheep, cattle, and bison to mimic historical disturbance regimes, provide weed suppression, and increase habitat diversity or “heterogeneity” on the landscape. Animals used for prescribed grazing are selected based on their grazing habits and food preference. Goats tend to target soft material from



woody species off of the ground, whereas sheep and cattle target grasses and softer herbaceous growth. Results with these different animals will have a range of results and should be selected accordingly based on desired outcomes. The feasibility or efficacy of grazing as a management tool depends on several factors, including:

- The size of the land parcel
- Number of grazable acres
- Desired type of livestock
- Allowable stocking rate based on grazable acres
- Nearby shade and water sources
- Quarantine and exclosure areas
- Perimeter fencing requirements; etc.

One common approach to conservation grazing is to use brief intensive grazing events when a non-indigenous plant is at its peak growth or when the plant may be more susceptible to defoliation. Often one of the most challenging issues in prairie restoration is the dominance of non-indigenous cool season grasses such as brome, reed canary grass, and Kentucky blue grass. These grasses can become so dominant that they start outcompeting native vegetation, eventually leading to a decline in overall plant diversity. Because cattle graze primarily on grasses, they can help reduce the cover of these non-indigenous cool season grasses and release other plants from competition. The timing of the grazing application typically occurs in spring and/or fall when the cool season grasses are active.

Conservation grazing can also enhance the structure of the grassland community by creating a diversity of cover types—from short to tall, thick duff to open ground layer, or a combination in close proximity. This diversity or “habitat heterogeneity” in turn favors a diversity of wildlife with unique habitat preferences and requirements. It is important to consult with a qualified rangeland or natural resource manager to determine if grazing is an appropriate management tool for your land.

Haying

In addition to, or in place of grazing, haying can be used to achieve many of the same management objectives in grasslands. Mechanical harvest through haying can be used to remove non-indigenous species, remove biomass and reduce nitrogen, and manipulate growth stages of habitat. The timing of the haying event is the most critical factor. Similar to grazing and prescribed burning, haying should occur when the undesirable species are at their most vulnerable stage of growth, typically peak. The following are some general recommendations:

- If grassland birds are heavily using the area for nesting, avoid haying during the nesting season of May 15th-August 1st.
- To maximize the yield of palatable forage and its protein content, cut when the warm season grasses are sending up their flower stalks, usually late July or early August.
- To favor spring and early summer-blooming flowers, hay in mid-summer. The late summer and fall blooming species are harvested before they can flower and produce seed.

- If haying before August 1st, leave corners, odd areas, or 30 to 60 foot borders along field edges from getting hayed to provide for ground nesting wildlife.
- Typically, less than 1/3 of any given site will undergo management in a single year.
- Leave all regrowth following haying for winter and nesting cover.

Tree Removal

Managing woodlands and savanna using tree removal is an important part of restoring the structure and composition of that plant community. Selective harvesting should use the following guidelines:

- Try to mimic natural disturbance patterns such as wind throws and fire. These disturbances create forest openings to provide sunlit patches.
- Ensure the presence of snags (dead standing trees) and fallen logs to provide habitat. Over 85 North American bird species feed, nest or roost in decaying trees. Many reptiles and amphibians live under rotting logs on the forest floor and feed on the invertebrates that are supported by the decaying wood.
- Limit the construction of logging roads and skid trails and favor harvest techniques that minimize soil disturbance to reduce mortality and loss of suitable habitat.
- Postpone timber harvests within or adjacent to valuable oak forests in the high-risk zone when oaks are most susceptible to infection, from April 1 through July 15.
- Practice “Come clean, Leave clean” (See Appendix F) to prevent the spread on terrestrial invasive species.

Record-keeping

Keeping accurate records of management activities will be critical in understanding how the landscape is responding. In addition to recording activities, surveying ecological conditions is critical to set a baseline while ecological monitoring provides feedback for the ecosystem response to restoration and management activities. Below are some of the surveying and monitoring activities:

Surveying

- Distribution of buckthorn– Survey data would not only include location, but information on density of coverage and size class to determine the number of years before becoming reproductive as well as the removal approach.
- Distribution of garlic mustard - Survey data would not only include location, but information on density of coverage to prioritize removal.
- Species presence absence – Vegetative sampling of species presence absence by management unit to determine ecological health and for potential seed collection sources.

Monitoring

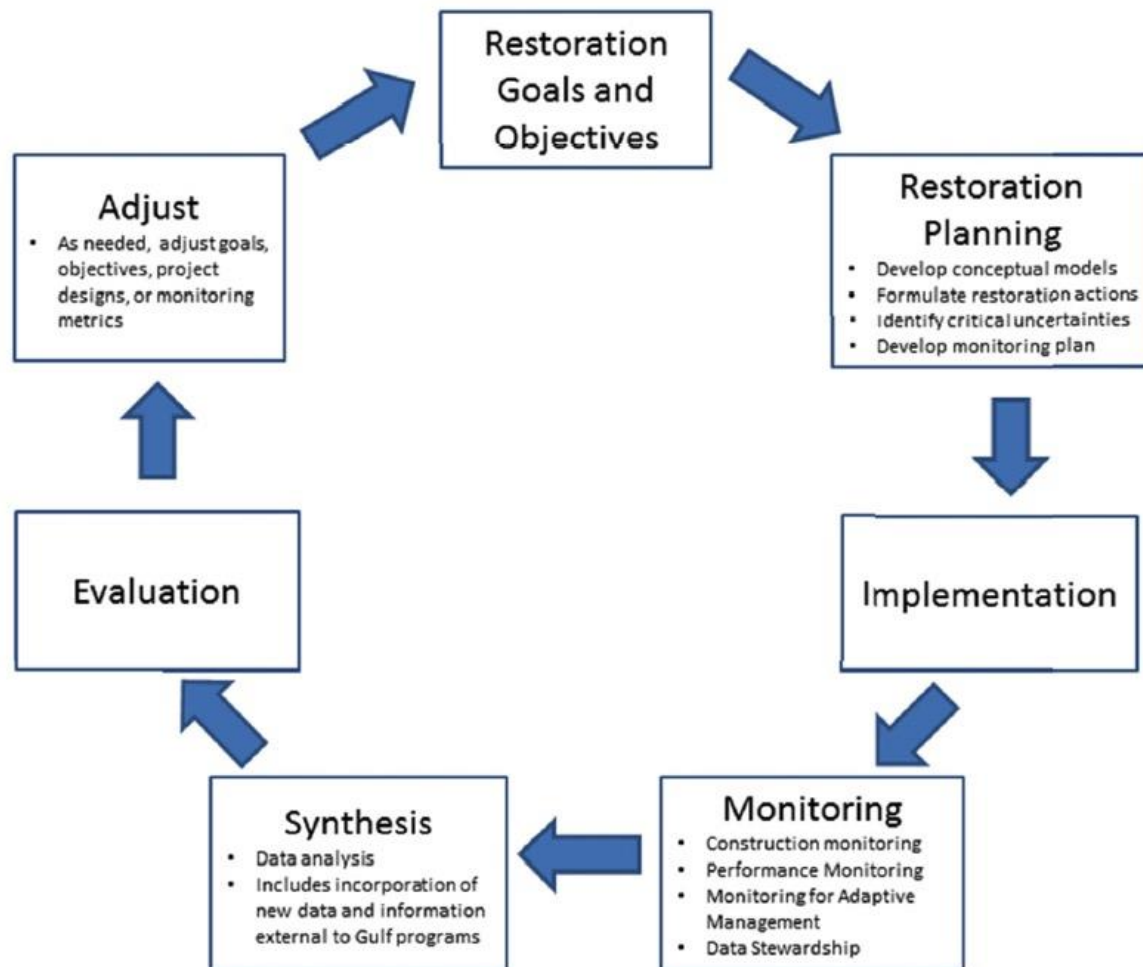
- Photo documentation – Qualitative monitoring using a photo point program uses photos at fixed reference points to document changes on the landscape. Because buckthorn is the most prominent

non-indigenous species, the recommended timing for the photos to be taken is in October when buckthorn still holding its leaves but native shrubs and trees have gone dormant.

- Vegetation plots/transects – Quantitative monitoring to determine the vegetative response to restoration and management activities. Potential monitoring data includes the percent cover of invasive species pre- and post- treatment, native species diversity pre- and post- treatment, and size and distribution of pine and oak regeneration in the understory.

Adaptive Management

While surveying and monitoring are important to document baseline conditions, evaluating response of the ecosystem using research is necessary to make management decisions considering uncertainty. Adaptive management consists of a cycle of implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment which leads to more implementation and repeats indefinitely.



Information Sources

County History | Washington County, MN - Official website. (n.d.).

<https://www.co.washington.mn.us/102/County-History>

Minnesota Planning (Agency). (n.d.). Minnesota Land use and cover: historic. MN IT Services.

https://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/land_use_historic.html

White, D. (n.d.). Level III and IV maps and descriptions. Ecological Regions of Minnesota.

https://gaftp.epa.gov/EPADDataCommons/ORD/Ecoregions/mn/mn_eco_desc.pdf

MHAPO. (n.d.). <https://apps.lib.umn.edu/mhapo/>

St. Paul-Baldwin Plains and Moraines Subsection. (n.d.). Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ecs/222Md/index.html>

Bedrock Geology. (n.d.). University of Minnesota Geological Survey.

<https://conservancy.umn.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/bde71cad-4215-44af-9cda-18c45d5cde6e/content>

Web Soil Survey. (n.d.). <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>

Generalized Land Use 2020 - Minnesota Geospatial Commons. (n.d.). <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/us-mn-state-metc-plan-generl-lnduse2020>

MNDNR. 2004. Minnesota Land Cover Classification System User Manual. Version 5.3. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Central Region.

Native Plant Community Classification. (n.d.). Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/npc/classification.html>

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. *Field Guide to the Native Plant Communities of Minnesota: The Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province*. Ecological Land Classification Program, Minnesota Biological Survey, and Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program. MNDNR St. Paul, MN, 2005.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. *Living with Wildlife: Nuisance Animals*.

https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/livingwith_wildlife/index.html

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare: An Action Plan for Minnesota Wildlife*. Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. MNDNR, St. Paul, MN, 2006.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. *Play, Clean, Go*.

https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrial/prevent_the_spread.html.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. *Terrestrial Invasive Species - Identification and Management*. <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrial/id.html>

Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Noxious and Invasive Weed Program.
<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects/noxious-and-invasive-weed-program>

St. Croix Valley Foundation. *North woods and Water of the St. Croix National Heritage Area Feasibility Study*. St. Croix Valley Foundation. 2014.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. *North American Model of Wildlife Conservation*.
<https://www.fws.gov/hunting/north-american-model-of-wildlife-conservation.html>

Wovcha, Daniel S, *et al.* *Minnesota's St. Croix River Valley and Anoka Sandplain: A guide to Native Habitats*. University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation- Official website. [Parks & Recreation | Cottage Grove, MN](#)

Washington County Historical Society- Cottage Grove- Official website [Cottage Grove – Washington County Historical Society](#)

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Soil Classifications

Appendix B: Native Plant Communities

FDs37

WMn82

Mrn93

MHs39

MHs49

Appendix C: Invasive Species

- Smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*)
- Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
- Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)
- Honeysuckles (*Lonicera* sp.)
- Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)
- Amur maple (*Acer ginnala*)
- Dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)
- Crown vetch (*Securigera varia*)
- Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*)
- Glossy Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula* L.)
- Wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*)
- Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)
- Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)
- Grecian foxglove (*Digitalis lanata*)
- Barberries (*Berberis* sp.)
- Roundleaf bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)

Appendix D: Climate Ready Woodlands

Appendix E: BWSR Recommended Restoration Seeding Dates

Appendix F: Clean Play Go; Come Clean, Leave Clean.



To: Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission
From: Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director
CC:
Date: February 27, 2026
Subject: Action Updates

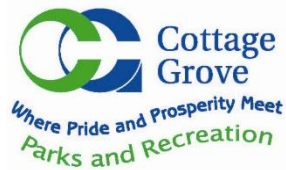
Introduction/Background

Staff will present on the following topics:

1. Denzer Park
2. Cottage Grove Trailway Corridor Habitat Restoration
3. Oltman Park
4. Mississippi Dunes Park
5. Peterson Park

Staff Recommendation

Receive information.



Memo

To: Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission

From: Molly Pietruszewski, Recreation Services Manager

Date: 2/27/2026

Re: March: Summer Supervised Playgrounds

Please feel free to call or email with any questions or comments, 651-458-3404.

The 2026 Summer Supervised Playgrounds (SP) program opened for registration at our six sites on February 10, 2026. SP is our primary summer program at Glacial Valley, Hamlet, Hearthside, Pine Tree Valley, Peter Thompson, and Highway 61 Hockey Camp, offering full-day programming for youth ages 4–12.

These programs have become very popular over the years and typically sell out within minutes. This year was no different; all sites are full, and waitlists have been closed due to high demand. We are very grateful for the opportunity to work with our summer-season staff, youth volunteers, and the families we serve each year.



Activities Included:

Arts, Crafts, Water Activities, Large Group Games, Free Play, Special Events, Sports, Board Games, Creative Play, Playground Time, and MORE!

Our on-site staff are always on their toes, whipping up a frenzy of fun to match our weekly themes! From zany games to sports showdowns, we've got you covered. But, wait for it, on these special days, we take it up a notch with our star activities:

Mondays: Special Events Tuesdays: Arts & Crafts Wednesday: Wet & Wild

Thursday: Obstacle Course Friday: Coloring Contest



To: Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission
From: Jim Fohrman, Parks Superintendent
Date: March 2026
Subject: Park Maintenance Activity Update

Below are the projects for the Parks Maintenance division. The projects are either in the process of being completed or have been completed.

February:

- Trash run
- Building maintenance
- Clean equipment and bay
- Put together benches and tables
- Ice rink flooding/maintenance
- Tree cutting- Nina's, North Ideal, Xcel, Pine Tree Valley
- Fecon- Xcel, Pine Tree Valley
- Equipment replacement
- Remove hose reel from van
- Post seasonal staff positions
- Stump grinding-Nina's, Xcel, Pine Tree Valley
- Remove hockey nets
- Building cleaning
- Remove matting from Glacial Valley
- Clean tile at Glacial Valley
- Bench removal from buildings

March:

- Floor and building cleaning
- Trash run
- Building maintenance: painting, general repairs
- New filters in drinking fountains
- Stump grinding
- Plowing
- Remove ice on W rink (3/10)
- Ice arena turf installation (3/11 and 3/12)
- Install new controller for splash pad

Tree removals

Remove tractor from Ice Arena/install drag

Remove tractor from City Hall/install drag

Trash run

RPZ's installed

Splash pad equipment cleaned

New batteries in auto flushers

Lamar snow fence removal

Playground inspections

Spring field and court supply orders



To: Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission
From: Jordan Hirman, Facility Services Manager
CC:
Date: March, 2026
Subject: Update on Ice Arena Activities

Below is an overview of Ice Arena Activities that are complete, projects/programs we are working on, and upcoming projects/programs:

COMPLETED PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

- Completed 2025/26 High School Hockey season with 34 home games scheduled.
- Scheduled shut down with contractor for the West Refrigeration on March 9th.
- Turf scheduled to install on March 12th.
- Scheduled 6 summer tournaments.
- Winter Skating Lessons with 129 participants.
- Hosted District 8 PWB1, U15B, and U12B2.
- Themed Valentine skate night February 14th with 70 skaters and 35 skate rentals.

CURRENT PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

- West Rink Ice removal is scheduled for March 12th.
- Booking Spring/Summer clinics and schools for 2026.
- Current scheduled turf time has 217 hours with over \$21,000 in revenue.
- Working with outstate Boys State High School teams coming to play in the State Tournament for practice ice.
- Planning brochure for Summer Skating Lessons.
- Spring Skate School programming with 123 participants.
- Scheduling City programs for the Fall and Winter.
- Working with past customers to book Spring/Summer/Fall ice time.
- Marketing Egg Hunt hosting at the Ice Arena March 28th.
- Marketing bounce house event partnership between Recreation and Ice Arena held on March 20th.
- Marketing Skate and Ice Paint event partnership between Recreation and Ice held on May 1st.
- Marketing a new event collaboration with Recreation to host a Mini Golf event on the turf April 3rd.
- Working with Park Boys Boosters and CGHA for a potential locker room build in CG Logistics Rink.

UPCOMING PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

- 2025 Cottage Grove Ice Show "Enchanted Toy Box" May 16th.
- Spring turf rentals.
- Removal of CG Logistics and South Rink scheduled for May 1st.
- Scheduled ice install for the West Rink the week of May 5th with first ice on May 9th.
- Install West Rink for week of April 20th.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call us at 651-458-3400.



To:	Honorable Mayor and City Council Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission
From:	Dennis Neitz, River Oaks General Manager
CC:	Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator
Date:	March 2, 2026
Subject:	River Oaks February 2026 Update

Introduction

Discover one of the Twin Cities' most scenic and versatile destinations—where exceptional golf, unforgettable events, and elevated dining experiences come together.

Golf Like Never Before

River Oaks isn't just a golf course, it's an experience. Our breathtaking 18-hole layout winds through the Mississippi River Valley, offering stunning views and unmatched playability. Whether you're here for a casual round, a competitive league, or a memorable tournament, you'll enjoy a course consistently ranked among the best municipal courses in Minnesota. Add in our practice facilities and expert lessons, and River Oaks is the perfect place to elevate your game.

Celebrating in Style

Our practical Event Center is designed to make every occasion extraordinary. With space for up to 250 guests, customizable layouts, and panoramic views, River Oaks is the ideal setting for weddings, banquets, corporate meetings, and special celebrations. Our in-house culinary team crafts menus that impress, while our dedicated staff ensure every detail is flawless. From intimate gatherings to grand events, we make your vision a reality.

Dine & Unwind

The Eagles Bar & Grill is more than a restaurant; it's a destination during the summer. Enjoy a full menu of chef-inspired dishes, and refreshing drinks in a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Step out onto our scenic patio and take in sweeping views of the golf course and Mississippi River Valley. Seasonal favorites start in February, like our famous Fish Fry!

February Update

Golf Reporting

Update	2025	2026
February Revenue	\$72,402	\$13,446*

*Number not official- COLLECTED MOST SEASON PASSES IN JANUARY INSTEAD OF FEBRUARY IN 2026.

Golf Summary

Excitement is building for the 2026 season! Leagues, lessons, and memberships are already filling up, and our pro shop will be stocked with the latest merchandise. If the snow cooperates, we're aiming for a start in March—so get ready to hit the course!

Event Center - Eagles Bar & Grill Reporting

Update	2025	2026
February Revenue	\$34,923	\$33,895*

*Number not official

Event Center - Eagles Bar & Grill Summary

We're thrilled to kick off the season with the return of our famous Fish Fry and a refreshed menu for the summer golf season. With a new look to the patio, we are excited about the upcoming season. And don't forget—March is packed with exciting winter sports events, making River Oaks the place to be all season long.

Maintenance - Summary

Our dedicated golf course team has been hard at work completing our equipment, so it is prepped and ready—and we're thrilled to introduce **brand-new Yamaha golf carts** for a smoother, more enjoyable ride. Plus, we're clearing select areas to promote better turf health and maintain the pristine beauty you expect at River Oaks. Everything we do is focused on delivering the best golf experience in the Twin Cities!



COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL
12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH
COTTAGE GROVE, MINNESOTA 55016
COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 PM

February 18, 2026

- 1 Call to Order
- 2 Pledge of Allegiance
- 3 Roll Call
- 4 Open Forum
- 5 Adoption of Agenda
- 6 Presentations
 - A Proclamation - February 18, 2026, Tibetan New Year
Staff Recommendation: Proclaim February 18, 2026, as the Tibetan New Year, also known as LOSAR in Cottage Grove.
- 7 Consent Agenda
 - A Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission Minutes (2025-11-10)
Staff Recommendation: Approve the November 10, 2025 Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission Meeting Minutes.
 - B Strategic Planning Meeting Minutes and Strategic Directions (2026-01-10)
Staff Recommendation: Accept the 2026 Strategic Directions.
 - C Appointment to Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission
Staff Recommendation: Appoint Jordan Dibich to the Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission.
 - D Fee Table Amendment
Staff Recommendation: Approve Ordinance 1107, amending the City Fee Table.
 - E Assistant City Engineer Appointment — Alanna Sobattka
Staff Recommendation: Appoint Alanna Sobattka to the position of Assistant City Engineer, at Grade 22, Step 1 of the 2026 Non-represented Pay Plan, with a start date to be effective as soon as possible.
 - F Rental License Approvals
Staff Recommendation: Approve the issuance of rental licenses to the properties listed in the attached table.
 - G SAFER Grant Application and Grant Writer Authorization
Staff Recommendation: 1) Authorize the fire department to apply for a FY26 AFG SAFER Grant to support the hiring of 8 full-time firefighters. 2) Authorize the fire department to retain Firehouse Grants to write a FY26 SAFER grant.
 - H 2026 Federal Lobbying Services Agreement
Staff Recommendation: Authorize entering into an agreement with Aurora Strategic Advisors for federal lobbying services in 2026.

- I Recreation Facility Use Policy Amendment
Staff Recommendation: Amend the Recreation Facility Use Policy to recognize Blazing Stars Special Olympics as a Priority 3 athletic association.
- J Construction Cost Share and Maintenance Agreements with Washington County for CR 74 Improvements
Staff Recommendation: 1) Approve the Cooperative Agreement between Washington County and the City of Cottage Grove for the Construction Costs of County Road (CR) 74 Improvements Project. 2) Approve the Cooperative Agreement between Washington County and the City of Cottage Grove for Maintenance of County Road (CR) 74 Improvements Project.
- K Authorization to Sell Ambulance
Staff Recommendation: Authorize the sale of a 2018 Dodge Ram 5500 ambulance (Unit Number 24-0833-18).
- L One-Year Lease Rental Agreement with MTI
Staff Recommendation: Approve the one-year rental agreement with MTI for a 16ft mower for \$15,750.
- 8 Approve Disbursements
 - A Approve Disbursements
Staff Recommendation: Approve disbursements from 01-30-26 through 02-12-26 in the amount of \$1,787,521.69.
- 9 Public Hearings
 - A Yellow Tree Development - Site Plan Review, Planned Unit Development, Preliminary and Final Plat, Tax Abatement
Staff Recommendation: 1) Hold a public hearing for the tax abatement request by Yellow Tree Development. 2) Adopt Resolution 2026-032 approving the sale of Outlot B, Frattalone's Southpoint Ridge to East Point Apartments LLC and the purchase agreement for Outlot B, Frattalone's Southpoint Ridge with East Point Apartments LLC. 3) Adopt Resolution 2026-030 approving the Preliminary Plat and Final Plat for Everwood 6th Addition. 4) Adopt Resolution 2026-031 approving the Planned Unit Development and Site Plan review for a 186-unit, six-story multi-family apartment building located on East Point Douglas Road South. 5) Approve the Stormwater Management Facilities Agreement; Encroachment Agreement, and Permanent Trail Access Agreement. 6) Adopt Resolution 2026-028 approving the Tax Abatement agreement between the City and East Point Apartments LLC.
- 10 Bid Awards
- 11 Regular Agenda
- 12 Council Comments and Requests
- 13 Workshops - Open to Public
- 14 Workshops - Closed to Public
- 15 Adjournment



COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL
12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH
COTTAGE GROVE, MINNESOTA 55016
COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 PM

March 4, 2026

- 1 Call to Order
- 2 Pledge of Allegiance
- 3 Roll Call
- 4 Open Forum
- 5 Adoption of Agenda
- 6 Presentations
 - A Annual Photo Contest
Staff Recommendation: Receive information on Annual Photo Contest winners.
 - B Firefighter/Paramedic Swearing In Ceremony
Staff Recommendation: Swearing-in and recognition of Firefighters/Paramedics Michael Dandl, Sam Anderson, and Adam Higley.
 - C Woolery Scholarship Fund Check Presentation
Staff Recommendation: Allow Justin and Kim Olsen and the Cottage Grove Lions an opportunity to present donations to the Cottage Grove Public Safety Board for the Woolery Scholarship.
- 7 Consent Agenda
 - A City Council Regular Meeting Minutes (2026-02-04)
Staff Recommendation: Approve the February 4, 2026, City Council Regular Meeting Minutes.
 - B City Council Special Meeting Minutes (2026-02-04)
Staff Recommendation: Approve the February 2, 2026, City Council Special Meeting Minutes (2026-02-04)
 - C Planning Commission Minutes (2025-12-15)
Staff Recommendation: Accept and place on file the minutes from the December 15, 2025, Planning Commission meeting.
 - D Convention and Visitors Bureau Meeting Minutes (2025-11-25)
Staff Recommendation: Approve Convention and Visitors Bureau Meeting Minutes (2025-11-25)
 - E Planning Commission Appointments - Madison and Fischer
Staff Recommendation: Appoint Bradley Madison to the Planning Commission with a term ending on February 29, 2028, and appoint Commissioner Jessica Fischer to the Planning Commission Chair position through February 28, 2027.
 - F ACHP Commission Appointments - McDermott and Doheny
Staff Recommendation: Approve the appointment of Joseph McDermott and Mary Doheny to their first terms on the Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, effective March 1, 2026, and ending February 29, 2028.

- G Lower Potency Hemp Edible Retailer License — G-Will Liquor
Staff Recommendation: Approve the Lower Potency Hemp Edible Retailer License to Cherokee Liquors (DBA G-Will Liquors) at 6999 80th Street South, Cottage Grove.
- H Temporary Gambling License - Phoenix Residence
Staff Recommendation: Authorize issuance of a single-occasion gambling permit to Corrie Lynn Kopischke on behalf of Phoenix Residence, to conduct a raffle at River Oaks Golf Course (11099 Hwy 61, Cottage Grove) on June 8, 2026, from 12:30-6:00 PM.
- I Temporary Gambling License - Accacia Lodge No. 51
Staff Recommendation: Authorize issuance of a single-occasion gambling permit, David Gene Martin, on behalf of Accacia Lodge No. 51, to conduct a raffle at 11094 70th Street South, Cottage Grove, on October 3, 2026, at 6:00 PM.
- J Washington County Wellness Grant Acceptance
Staff Recommendation: Approve the grant agreement with Washington County in the amount of \$3,000 and authorize the expenditure of the \$300 matching contribution.
- K Rental License Approvals
Staff Recommendation: Approve the issuance of rental licenses to the properties listed in the attached table.
- L Sale of Surplus Equipment - eBikes Purchase
Staff Recommendation: 1) Authorize the department to sell two ATVs (Units #5398 and 5399) to 61 Marine & Sports for \$5,000.00. 2) Authorize the department to purchase two E-bikes with the proceeds from the sale of surplus equipment. The cost not to exceed \$5,000.
- M Authorization to Purchase Replacement Squad
Staff Recommendation: Approve the purchase of a replacement vehicle for the administrative fleet.
- N Bike Park Service Agreement
Staff Recommendation: Authorize service agreement with Pathfinder Trail Building, LLC for Bike Park jump line improvements for the amount of \$73,608.
- O Kingston ECP Grant Application
Staff Recommendation: Authorize staff to apply for a MN DNR Expedited Conservation Partners grant for Kingston Park native habitat restoration in the amount of \$75,000.
- P Ice Arena Kraus-Anderson Agreement
Staff Recommendation: Authorize Construction Manager as Adviser AIA C132 contract with Kraus Anderson for preconstruction services in the amount of \$10,000 and preconstruction administration and management fee equal to 2.25% (estimated at \$91,842) of the project costs for the Ice Arena Remodel Project.
- Q 2026 Washington County Grant Agreement for Municipal Recycling
Staff Recommendation: Approve the 2026 Grant Agreement for Municipal Recycling Grant Distribution in the amount of \$60,078.00.
- R 2026 Standard Specifications for Utility and Street Construction, Standard Detail Plates, and Engineering Design Standards
Staff Recommendation: Approve the Cottage Grove 2026 Standard Specifications for Utility and Street Construction, the 2026 Standard Detail Plates, and the 2026 Engineering Design Standards.
- S 2026 Pavement Management - Approve Plans & Specifications and Authorize Bidding
Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2026-021 approving the plans and specifications and authorizing bidding for the 2026 Pavement Management Project.
- T Hamlet Pond - Change Order & Final Payment
Staff Recommendation: Approve Change Order #1 and adopt Resolution 2026-029 approving the final payment of \$169,818.48 for the 2025 Hamlet Pond – Phase 2: Bank Grading and Sediment Removal Project.

- U SCADA Integrator Professional Services Agreement
Staff Recommendation: Approve the Professional Services Agreement with In Control, Inc. and appropriate officials are hereby authorized to sign all necessary documents to effectuate these actions.
- V Water Service Repair-Assessment Waiver Agreement
Staff Recommendation: 1) Approve the Assessment Waiver Agreement for 6237 64th Street South and appropriate officials are hereby authorized to sign all necessary documents to effectuate these actions. 2) Adopt the assessment in the amount of \$6,300.00 as outlined in the agreement.
- 8 Approve Disbursements
 - A Approve Disbursements
Staff Recommendation: Approve disbursements from 02-13-2026 through 02-26-2026 in the amount of \$4,366,287.26.
- 9 Public Hearings
- 10 Bid Awards
- 11 Regular Agenda
 - A Panera – Site Plan Review and Conditional Use Permit
Staff Recommendation: 1) Adopt Resolution 2026-036 approving a Site Plan Review for the construction of a restaurant and associated site improvements to be located at 7162 East Point Douglas Road South. 2) Adopt Resolution 2026-037 approving a Conditional Use Permit for a Restaurant with a Drive-up Window to be located at 7162 East Point Douglas Road South. 3) Approve the Permanent Utility Easement, Encroachment Agreement, Permanent Drainage and Utility Easement, Permanent Sidewalk Easement, and the Stormwater Management and Facilities Agreement with DCJ Cottage Grove, LLC.
 - B New Life Church (11245 Point Douglas Drive South) – Site Plan Review
Staff Recommendation: 1) Adopt Resolution 2026-035 approving the Site Plan Review for a 5,814 square foot building addition to the existing New Life Church building located at 11245 Point Douglas Drive South. 2) Approve the Stormwater Management Facilities Agreement with New Life Community Church.
- 12 Council Comments and Requests
- 13 Workshops - Open to Public
 - A Ordinance Amendments Workshop - Code Updates
Staff Recommendation: Provide direction on proposed code updates.
- 14 Workshops - Closed to Public
- 15 Adjournment