



CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

June 11, 2025 at 6:00 PM
Mendota Heights City Hall
Council Chambers

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Adopt Agenda**
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Approve meeting minutes from the March 12, 2025 Natural Resources Commission meeting.
 - b. Approve meeting minutes from the April 9, 2025 Natural Resources Commission Work Session.
 - c. Approve meeting minutes from the May 14, 2025 Natural Resources Commission Work Session.
- 5. Citizen Comment Period (for items not on the agenda)**
- 6. New Business**
- 7. Old Business**
 - a. Approve Preliminary 2026 Natural Resources Budget Recommendations
 - b. Partners in Energy Update
 - c. Curb-Cut Raingarden Program Update
 - d. 2025 Work Plan Updates
- 8. Staff Announcements**
- 9. Commission Comments**
- 10. Committee Reports**
- 11. Adjourn**



**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
MENDOTA HEIGHTS CITY HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Wednesday, March 12, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Draft Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Mendota Heights Natural Resources Commission was held on Wednesday March 12, 2025, at Mendota Heights City Hall; 1101 Victoria Curve.

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Knosalla called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter called the roll. Commissioners present: Thuening, Husbands, McCaslin, Knosalla, Stein, Sheets, Daul and Student Rep Trudeau.

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff present: Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter. Councilmember Mazzitello was also present.

3. Adopt Agenda

*Motion to approve the agenda by Commissioner Stein, second by Commissioner McCaslin.
Motion passed 7-0*

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. The Commission was asked to approve the meeting minutes from the January 8, 2025 Natural Resources Meeting and the February 12, 2025 Natural Resources Work Session

*Motion to approve the minutes by Commissioner Husbands, second by Commissioner Thuening.
Motion passed 7-0*

- b. The Commission was asked to approve the meeting minutes from the June 12, 2024 Natural Resources Commission Meeting. This meeting's minutes were mistakenly missed being approved from a previous meeting. Acting Chair Knosalla and Commissioner Fahnhorst were both absent from that meeting.

*Motion to approve the minutes by Commissioner Husbands, second by Commissioner Thuening.
Motion passed 7-0*

5. Citizen Comment Period – Acting Chair Knosalla noted there were 15 attendees at the meeting this evening.

Ms. Leslie Pilgrim, 1704 Vickie Lane, Mendota Heights commended the Commission on the Tree Ordinance. It is very thorough and will be great for the community for Tree Preservation. Years ago there was a group

Natural Resources Advocates of Mendota Heights that met to address issues in the City. One of the issues they worked on was an Ordinance to straighten Landscaping Ordinance. She referred to a development that proposed a landscaping plan that was not good. She encouraged the Commission to work on the Landscaping Ordinance.

Commissioner Husbands asked the Ordinance Subcommittee to consider a Landscaping Ordinance as a guide for developers coming into the City. Commissioner Stein stated Eagan is considering a similar Ordinance.

6. New Business

a. Election of Officers

Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter reviewed the Natural Resource Commission's bylaws, set election of the roles of chair and vice chair at the annual meeting for the Commission, which takes place in February of each year. Because the February meeting was a work session, action on this item was moved forward to the March regular meeting.

If a Commissioner is interested in the position of either chair or vice chair, they are welcome to express their interest to the group as a whole during the discussion of this item. The chair and vice chair elections will be separate items.

After the chair has been selected, the new chair will take over the meeting proceedings. The chair will then ask the Commission for nominations for vice chair. Following nominations, the chair will then call the vote for the vice chair.

Vice Chair Knosalla stated she would be interested in becoming Chair of the Commission.

*Motion to approve the appointment of Lori Knosalla to be chair of the Natural Resources Commission by Commissioner Husbands, second by Commissioner Stein.
Motion passed 7-0.*

Chair Knosalla requested Commissioner Will Stein as the Vice Chair of the Commission and Commissioner Stein agreed.

*Motion to approve the appointment of Will Stein to be vice chair of the Natural Resources Commission by Commissioner Daul, second by Commissioner McCaslin.
Motion passed 7-0.*

b. Oak Awards Presentation

Coordinator Spreiter reviewed the Commission should invite each recipient to come forward to receive their award, as well as to speak to their efforts in Natural Resources if they wish to do so.

The Mendota Heights Natural Resources Commission created the Oaks Awards Program in 2023 to celebrate leadership, education and outreach, and project efforts that advance natural resources within the City. Recipients are recognized in the following categories:

- Acorn Award: Recognizes exemplary youth leadership in the advancement of our City's natural resources.
- Leaf Award: Recognizes the significant contributions of an individual, family, or company or organization that has demonstrated substantial leadership in the stewardship of our City's

natural resources.

- **Canopy Award:** Recognizes the lifetime achievement of an individual, family, company or organization that has demonstrated extraordinary leadership for the stewardship of our City's natural resources.

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter noted the recipients for their achievements in 2024 for each category. Councilmember Mazzitello and Chair Knosalla presented each with their award.

Acorn Award – Hannah Trudeau. Hannah led and coordinated a pollinator planting in Valley Park as part of her Eagle Scout project. The project included the planting of a 330 square foot plot that included the planting of 16 different6 species of native pollinator plants. Hannah designed a sign for the project site that promotes education and awareness of the project. Hannah also co-authored an essay, entitled "Creating Pollinator Pathways in Your Own Backyard", which appeared in the May 24th Mendota Heights City Newsletter. She has also served on the Natural Resources Commission as a Student Commissioner since 2023. Hannah thanked the City and Krista for all the help on completing her project.

Leaf Award – Kirsten Ramirez. Kirsten worked with City Staff to implement the program "Fresh Air Fridays" which encouraged residents to save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions on Fridays throughout the summer. She provided content for social media, newsletters, and fliers educating residents on the benefits of reducing emissions and created incentives throughout the program to encourage participation. Kirsten also helped create and coordinate the planting of an organic vegetable garden at Mendota Elementary. Kristen stated she is thankful and proud this program was able to happen. The garden was one of her favorite accomplishments in her life.

Canopy Award – Sue Light. Sue is a Dakota County Master gardener and has spent countless hours volunteering and coordinating volunteers to create and maintain native planting and pollinator projects throughout the City. Some of these include the City Hall Pollinator garden and rain garden, the Par 3 Golf Course native planting and raingarden, and the Victoria Road Boulevard restoration. She also volunteers and works with staff to plan and plant the City's curb-cut raingardens. Sue has also led the initiative to create and maintain a rain garden in her own neighborhood to help treat stormwater runoff before it enters Rogers Lake. She co-chairs the Rogers Lake Improvement Association and Sue is also a MN Tree Care Advocate. Sue showed a video of volunteers working at Rogers Lake Park on the project. She values the volunteers and would never accomplish as much without their help. They are always looking for more volunteers and Krista can be contacted directly or sign-up on website. There will be 10 rain gardens planted this Spring.

Photographs were taken.

Chair Knosalla stated it is great to honor those in the community who are doing all these amazing things. Commissioner Daul stated the City really cares about the natural resources. Commissioner Stein stated his kids went to Mendota Heights Elementary School and participated in the garden. Commissioner Thuening noted she is happy to be part of this community. Commissioner Sheets encouraged residents to help with the rain gardens and perhaps create their own.

7. Old Business

a. Geothermal Planning Grant Update

Coordinator Spreiter reviewed the Minnesota Department of Commerce is seeking proposals from local government units for geothermal project planning throughout Minnesota for the Geothermal

Planning Grant Program. The intent of the program is to provide financial assistance to local government units to examine the technical and economic feasibility for installation of geothermal energy systems.

The Sustainability Committee of the City's Natural Resources Commission recently began conversations regarding the program and how it fits with their goal of achieving sustainable initiatives for the City. The City is in the process of implementing its Energy Action Plan as part of its partnership with Xcel Energy through the Partners in Energy program. The Energy Action Plan was developed in partnership with Xcel Energy and the City's Energy Action Team, consisting of residents, business owners, students, Natural Resources Commission members and City staff. Exploring the possibility of implementing a geothermal system at one or more of the City's public facilities fits well with the goals of the City's recently adopted Energy Action Plan. The City is requesting \$130,000 from the MN Department of Commerce as part of its geothermal planning grant application.

City staff met with Darcy Solutions, a geothermal system installer, to learn more about geothermal energy and details of installation. Darcy Solutions completed a preliminary assessment of the City's Public Works facility and determined that a geothermal project would be feasible at this facility. The City has also reached out to other municipalities and government agencies that have had experience with installing geothermal systems.

The City Council approved and Mayor Levine signed a letter of authorization in support of the Geothermal Planning Grant application at its March 4th regular meeting. The application was submitted online as required before the March 10th deadline. If accepted into the grant program, project implementation would be assessed after findings of the investigation are reported to and discussed with City Council and the Natural Resources Commission.

Commissioner Stein commended Coordinator Spreiter for working on this grant application. He thanked the City Council for supporting this effort.

b. Earth and Arbor Week Update

Coordinator Spreiter reviewed the 2025 Mendota Heights Earth and Arbor Day Celebration will be held Monday, April 21st through Saturday, April 26th. The purpose of the celebration is to gain awareness and educate the community on natural resources issues and topics, as well as to encourage participation and connect with residents, businesses, and other community groups in Mendota Heights. The following events and programs are included in the week-long celebration:

Monday April 21st – Kick-Off to Lily, Find the Frog.

Tuesday April 22nd – Learn to Fish with Fishing for All at Roger's Lake Park.

Wednesday, April 23rd – Yoga in the Park at Market Square Park.

Thursday, April 24th – Eco Elsa Biologist Explorer Class at Valley Park.

Friday, April 25th – Raptor Show at Mendakota Park.

Saturday, April 26th – Kids Garage Sale – National Guard Gym and Earth and Arbor Day Celebration Event – Market Square Park.

Ms. Spreiter noted they are still waiting to hear on the No Child Left Inside Grant and whether or not it is received the plan is to go ahead with the planned activities.

Commissioner Husbands asked about the Raptor Show and Ms. Spreiter stated it is through the University of Minnesota Raptor Center. They bring 3-4 different raptors and bring an educational

program for each one. Commissioner Husbands appreciates seeing an event every day and at times when residents will be able to attend.

Chair Knosalla stated this would be a great time to kick off communications about the Partners in Energy program. She suggested Commissioners sit at a table at the events to provide information.

Ms. Spreiter stated Partners in Energy are drafting some materials that can be used for the Saturday event. Chair Knosalla suggested this be further discussed at the April meeting and who would be available to attend each event.

c. 2025 Committee Assignments

The Commission is requested to confirm committee assignments for the 2025 Work Plan.

Goal 1: Ordinance and Policy Development – Knosalla, McCaslin, and Stein.

Goal 2: Education and Outreach – Daul, Sheets, Thuening, and Student Commissioner Trudeau.

Goal 3: Urban Forestry and Restoration – Daul, Husbands, and McCaslin.

Goal 4: Strategic Planning – Husbands, Sheets and Thuening.

Goal 5: Sustainability – Knosalla, Stein, and Student Commissioner Trudeau.

Commissioner Sheets stated there may be some crossover between Committees. Any Committee with more than three attendees would have to give public notice to those meetings.

The Commission confirmed the above assignments for the 2025 Work Plan.

Ms. Spreiter noted most committees have been meeting virtually but some are also in person. She requested meeting dates be set. Commissioner Husbands asked if Ms. Spreiter attends all Committee meetings and Ms. Spreiter stated she generally attends.

8. Staff Announcements

Ms. Spreiter noted they are beginning to promote Earth and Arbor Day events along with Partners in Energy. She invited Commissioners to view the Partners in Energy items on the website. Currently the push is regarding the Resident Home Energy Audits. There are goals tied with each initiative and they are trying to hit 25 new audits per year.

9. Commission Comments.

Chair Knosalla thanked previous Chair Swank for the job done to get the Commission off and running and her helping her get up to speed on the Commission.

Commissioner Stein commented on the Eagan City Council Meeting and was interested to see they have similar initiatives in Eagan. He suggested a possible joint-meeting in the future.

Commissioner Thuening asked if there is any collaboration with the Commission and other Cities. Commissioner Husbands noted Conservation Minnesota gathers all information from organizations within Cities. Some Cities are a lot further along than we are and others behind us. Chair Knosalla suggested the Strategic Planning Committee explore that further.

10. Committee Reports

Ordinance and Policy Development Committee Report – No updates as they have not met since the work session.

Education and Outreach Committee – No updates as they have not met since the last meeting.

Urban Forestry and Restoration – No updates.

Strategic Planning – No updates.

Sustainability – No updates.

11. Adjourn

*Motion to adjourn the meeting by Daul, second by McCaslin
Motion passed 7-0.*

Chair Knosalla adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.



CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES

DRAFT

6:00 PM

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

1101 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights

1. Call to Order

Chair Knosolla called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance: Chair Knosolla, Commissioners Daul, McCaslin, Sheets, Stein, Thuening, and Student Commissioner Trudeau.

Absent: Commissioner Husbands.

Staff in attendance: Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter.

3. Discussion

a. Pollinator Awareness Month

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter gave a background on Pollinator Awareness Month, which was created in 2024 in lieu of No Mow May.

Commissioners were then invited to brainstorm ideas of ways to improve the program. Some ideas given were as follows:

- Residents sign a pledge at Earth and Arbor Day

- Create a survey to gather information on both existing knowledge and participation, as well as serve as a drawing entry
- Pollinator seed library for seed sharing of native seeds
- Support MN Seed Project: <https://mnseedproject.org/>
- Share photo features of resident gardens
- Winter seeding education
- Highlight Blue Thumb site as a resource
- Expand the program to year-long: provide a tip or educational piece once a month or quarter
- Tie importance of pollinators in food production

b. Committee Collaboration

Coordinator Spreiter reviewed the Commission's 2025 workplan, and pointed out several examples of initiatives that overlap between goals and commissions. This would be a good way to collaborate among commissions as well as achieve initiatives and goals in the 2025 workplan.

The commission discussed the Touch a Truck event and how to incorporate Partners in Energy. Also discussed incorporating PiE into other events and promoting the program either through media or in-person events. Some ideas included creating videos that could be shared on home energy-saving projects.

The commission also discussed combining events. The commission agreed the following initiatives would be opportunities for collaboration:

- Create and hold a community engagement event (Goal 2); Host Tree Planting event (Goal 3)
- Host residential energy-saving education event (Goal5); Collaborate with Sustainability Committee to implement PiE Action Plan (Goal 2)

Commission agreed the initiative 'Explore deconstruction policy for city-owned building facilities' (Goal 1) would be feasibly better incorporated into the 2026 work plan.

c. Interstate Valley Creek Stabilization and BMP Project Update

Coordinator Spreiter gave an update on the project. Currently Reach 2 (area just north of Marie avenue near playground) has been substantially completed, including stabilization using root wads and bioengineering techniques, as well as cross vanes installed. The area has been permanently seeded with native seed. Supplemental woody plantings will be added this summer.

The infiltration basin adjacent to the wetland north of the baseball field has also been completed.

The weir wall has been installed, though further reinforcement was determined to be needed after erosion occurred during a recent rain event.

The Park Place infiltration basin as well as the streambank stabilization at Reach 1 are in the process of being completed.

The Commission discussed current regulations regarding stormwater and chemical use. Also discussed opportunities for education around stormwater.

d. Potential Commission Public Outreach Event

The idea of a potential public outreach event for the Natural Resources Commission was brought forward during a committee meeting, similar to 'Coffee with Council' outreach events, in which residents and community members are invited to attend and ask questions or discuss city issues.

The Commission discussed the idea and agreed partnering with the Council at a Coffee with Council event would be a good place to start. Also discussed partnering with the Parks Commission to offer something similar outdoors or at each park. This could be a rotation at city parks, and perhaps done monthly or quarterly.

e. 2025 NRC Event Participation

The commission discussed their interest in participating in existing city events as well as creating an event. Events that the Commission agreed they were interested in attending in 2025 were:

- Trick or Teeing
- The Fishing Derby
- Touch a Truck

- Earth and Arbor Day

4. Adjourn

Chair Knosalla adjourned the meeting at 8:45pm.



CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES

DRAFT

6:00 PM

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

1101 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights

1. Call to Order

Chair Knosalla called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance: Chair Knosalla, Commissioners Daul, McCaslin, Husbands, Stein, Thuening, and Student Commissioner Trudeau.

Absent: Commissioner Sheets.

Staff in attendance: Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter.

3. Discussion

a. 2026 Budget Recommendations

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter gave an overview of the current budget. Items where there is a budget surplus, such as the Tree Canopy Program and the Tree Sale were discussed. The commission discussed options on how to improve the programs to increase participation. Discussed the option to house both programs on the same website to help better promote both. Also discussed moving surplus budget to other line items such as restoration project maintenance. As projects move into maintenance phase, more budget will be

needed in maintenance line item. Commission Thuening suggested creating a city grant program for native landscaping or raingardens. Suggestion was made to add more understory tree species to selection for those that have less space in their landscape. Commissioner Husbands suggested changing the name of the tree canopy program to 'Full Service Program'. Consensus to keep budget for tree programs the same for budget year 2026. Suggestion also made to reduce participation price for residents instead, and subsidize more. Suggestion made to put surplus budget into increased marketing of the programs. Suggestion made to advertise at Heights Fest and other city events and provide a sign-up for more information at events.

Commissioner Thuening proposed items on page 159 of the NRMP including implementing climate resilience practices and adding one FTE to support natural resources. Thuening proposed to add a line item for a climate action plan and the hiring of a consultant to complete the task. Additional staff would work on climate plan and sustainability as well as supporting Natural Resources programs. Great Plains Institute could provide a ballpark quote for a plan. Proposal to recommend a Climate Action and Resilience plan which addresses adaptation as well. Cities that have adopted similar plans: St. Paul and Duluth. Commissioner Thuening spoke with a staff person from Duluth, who conveyed that their plan cost the city \$20,000. The commission suggested that the Goal 4 Committee complete more research on cities with similar plans. Commission also proposed to add a line item for hiring a consultant to draft a Landscape Ordinance and lead the commission through the approval process.

b. Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Bonding Grant Update

Coordinator Spreiter gave an update on the Shade Tree Program Bonding grant received in 2024 for the mitigation and removal of ash trees as a result of tree loss due to Emerald Ash Borer disease. The grant provides funding for removal and replanting of shade trees on public land to mitigate for loss due to pests, disease, or storm, with the goal of establishing a more diverse community forest better able to withstand disease and pests.

\$125,000 in grant funds were received. A match was not required. The city's grant contract includes the removal of an estimated 80 trees, as well as the planting of 80 new trees, as required by the grant, which requires a 1:1 replacement. If funds allow, additional trees will be planted.

103 trees have been removed to date; predominately ash. Over 40 shade trees were planted last fall as part of the grant project in city parks and on public-owned property including Kensington Park, Wentworth Park, Marie Park, Mendakota Park, and at the intersection of Glenhill and Victoria Curve within the right-of-way. The grant expires December 31, 2027.

c. Interstate Valley Creek Stabilization and BMP Project Update

Coordinator Spreiter gave an update on the Interstate Valley Creek Stabilization and BMP Project that began in the fall of 2024 as a result of a feasibility study that identified areas of streambank erosion as well as potential stormwater treatment Best Management Practices (BMPs) within the watershed.

The project entails making stormwater infrastructure repairs, stabilizing two separate reaches within the creek where severe streambank erosion is occurring, and installing two infiltration basins, as well as installing a weir downstream of the wetland just north of the ball field in Valley Park. The project is funded by a Clean Water Grant, and is a partnership with the Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization and Dakota County.

The project has now been substantially completed, including the installation of native seed and erosion and stabilization measures. Final planting of disturbed areas as well as the infiltration basins will be completed in the fall.

d. Urban Forest Preservation Ordinance Update

Coordinator Spreiter gave an update on cases where the recently adopted Urban Forest Preservation ordinance has been used in the City. So far two permits or planning cases have been submitted in which a permit was needed and the new ordinance was put in practice.

4. Committee Reports

Individual committees gave updates on recent progress.

5. Adjourn

Chair Knosalla adjourned the meeting at 8:44pm.



Natural Resources Commission

Meeting Date:	June 11, 2025		
Agenda Item:	Approve Preliminary 2026 Natural Resources Budget Recommendations		
Item Type:	Action Item		
Department:	Natural Resources	Contact:	Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Coordinator

Action Request:

The Commission is asked to review and approve the draft of the 2026 Natural Resources Budget Recommendations.

Background:

During the May 14th Natural Resources Commission Work Session, the Commission discussed potential recommendations for the 2026 Natural Resources budget. The current 2025 budget was discussed, including Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP) priority projects, and existing programs.

The Commission agreed to include all current natural resources projects and programs that are a part of the 2025 budget in the 2026 budget, making adjustments for inflation, materials, and labor cost increases. The Commission also recognized that some priority projects will need additional funding, such as the Valley Park Pollinator Corridor, as it requires additional restoration, while other projects that were able to be funded with outside sources such as grant awards will require less than the estimates provided in the Natural Resources Management Plan. Projects that may be substantially completed within the 2026 calendar year, such as the Valley Park Forest Enhancement - South-Central, may move into the management phase mid-year, and so allowances will need to be made in the maintenance line item for these projects as well. Two new projects from the NRMP priority projects scheduled to begin in 2026 are also reflected in the 2026 budget; these are the Copperfield Ponds Isthmus Enhancement and the Friendly Hills Marsh Park Turf-to-Prairie.

Additional items were recommended for the 2026 budget, including a Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, and the hiring of a consultant for the development and facilitation of a landscape ordinance.

The Commission has received requests from residents to place a priority on developing and recommending adoption of a landscape ordinance. The Goal 1: Ordinance and Policy

Development Committee is currently working on the development of a Shoreland Management Ordinance. The Commission speculated that the development of a landscape ordinance in-house may take longer than desired. It was proposed that the hiring of a consultant may be necessary to complete a landscape ordinance for recommendation within the desired timeframe. Therefore, the Commission is recommending the hiring of a consultant as an additional item in the 2026 budget.

At the May 14th Work Session a proposal was made to include the development of a Climate Action Plan. The Commission discussed the proposal and agreed to explore a Climate Action Plan while also including a Resiliency component. Staff and the Goal 4: Strategic Planning Committee have researched the process and have reached out to consultants and cities with similar plans. A Climate Action and Resiliency Plan item has been also included in the 2026 budget recommendations.

Fiscal and Resource Impact:

None at this time.



Attachments:

1. PRIORITY PROJECTS_Budget_5 YR Phasing_NRMP
2. 2026 BUDGET

Table 24. Five-Year Phasing of Mendota Heights Priority Projects

**Mendota Heights Natural Resources Management Plan
Prioritization, Phasing & Opinions of Probable Cost**

Scenario: All in-progress ("Other") restoration projects maintained; initiate all NRMP Priority Projects in first 5 yrs; 2% annual inflation

 = Initial Restoration & Short-Term Management
 = Long-Term Management (avg. \$300/ac/yr)
(avg. long-term management costs typically decrease after ~3 years)

			Year					
Prioritized Projects	Natural Area Investments (ac)	Initial Resto & Short-Term Mgmt Costs	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total Cost
Other Restoration Projects								
Valley Park Pollinator Corridor (Xcel)	8.3	\$ 32,751	\$ 20,044	\$ 13,630	\$ 2,639	\$ 2,692	\$ 2,746	\$ 41,750
Valley Park Forest Enhancement - North (CPL, CCIM & Xcel)	14.3	\$ 51,552		\$ 32,181	\$ 21,883	\$ 4,650	\$ 4,743	\$ 63,457
Valley Park Forest Enhancement - South-Central (GRG)	7.8	\$ 27,900		\$ 17,416	\$ 11,843	\$ 2,517	\$ 2,567	\$ 34,343
NRMP Priority Projects								
Valley Park - NW Forest Enhancement	8.0	\$ 64,053	\$ 39,200	\$ 19,992	\$ 6,797	\$ 2,599	\$ 2,651	\$ 71,241
Valley Park - E Forest Enhancement	3.7	\$ 24,922	\$ 15,252	\$ 7,779	\$ 2,645	\$ 1,190	\$ 1,213	\$ 28,078
Valley Park - S Oak/Aspen Knoll Enhancement	1.5	\$ 11,087	\$ 6,785	\$ 3,460	\$ 1,177	\$ 497	\$ 507	\$ 12,425
Rogers Lake - W Savanna/Forest & N Shoreline Enhancement	7.9	\$ 54,211			\$ 34,518	\$ 17,604	\$ 23,941	\$ 76,063
Copperfield Ponds - Isthmus Enhancement	5.3	\$ 39,640				\$ 25,240	\$ 17,506	\$ 42,746
Wentworth Park - Forest Enh., Aquatic Buffer & Turf-to-Prairie	2.2	\$ 15,458				\$ 9,843	\$ 6,827	\$ 16,669
Hagstrom King Park - Oak Woodland Enhancement	0.6	\$ 6,029				\$ 3,839	\$ 2,662	\$ 6,501
Friendly Marsh - Turf-to-Prairie	1.3	\$ 6,732				\$ 4,286	\$ 2,973	\$ 7,260
Totals	60.8	\$ 334,335	\$ 81,282	\$ 94,458	\$ 81,501	\$ 74,955	\$ 68,337	\$ 400,534

	DESCRIPTION		2025 BUDGET	2026 BUDGET
	VALLEY PARK POLLINATOR CORRIDOR (XCEL)		\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
	VALLEY PARK FOREST ENHANCEMENT - SOUTH-CENTRAL		\$11,183.00	\$2,580.00
	VALLEY PARK - E FOREST ENHANCEMENT		\$12,252.00	\$1,220.00
	ROGERS LAKE SAVANNA/FOREST AND SHORELINE ENHACEMENT		\$34,518.00	\$18,040.00
	COPPERFIELD PONDS ISTHMUS ENHANCEMENT			\$25,870.00
	FRIENDLY MARSH TURF-TO-PRAIRIE			\$4,400.00
	NATURAL RESOURCE MAINTENANCE		\$37,670.00	\$40,500.00
	OHEYAWAHE/PILOT KNOB RESTORATION		\$15,600.00	\$16,000.00
	TREE SALE		\$10,000.00	\$10,250.00
	TREE CANOPY PROGRAM		\$27,000.00	\$27,600.00
	TREE REMOVAL		\$100,000.00	\$110,000.00
	TREE PLANTING		\$10,000.00	\$10,250.00
	TREE CARE (PRUNING, WATERING, DISEASE PREVENTION, ETC.)		\$52,000.00	\$53,300.00
	CLIMATE ACTION AND RESILIANCY PLAN			\$20,000.00
	LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE DEVELOPMENT (CONSULTANT)			\$7,000.00
	TOTALS		\$325,223.00	\$362,010.00



Natural Resources Commission

Meeting Date: June 11, 2025

Agenda Item: Partners in Energy Update

Item Type: Presentation

Department: Natural Resources

Contact: Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Coordinator

Action Request:

Information only.

Background:

Partners in Energy is a 24-month partnership between Xcel Energy and local communities in which Xcel Energy helps to develop an Energy Action Plan and assists with implementing that plan. Mendota Heights entered into the Partners in Energy program with Xcel Energy in January of 2024. The Mendota Heights Energy Action Plan was developed by the Energy Action Team, which included commissioners, community members, and staff to address the city's unique energy needs, priorities, and community vision. The Energy Action Plan was presented to the City Council and approved at its regular meeting on December 3rd, 2024. The Plan has three goals for Mendota Heights: Increasing energy efficiency, Decreasing energy costs, and Avoiding greenhouse gas emissions. The program is now in the 18-month implementation stage in which the community is asked to take action within four focus areas to achieve its goals:

- Residential Energy Efficiency
- Business & Municipal Energy Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Beneficial Electrification

The city began the implementation phase of the Energy Action Plan in January 2025. A work plan has been developed, identifying strategies to achieve the goals of the plan. Members of the Goal 5: Sustainability Committee have been involved in several initiatives of the work plan. They attended both the Earth and Arbor Day Celebration, as well as the Touch-a-Truck event, promoting the city's strategy and goal of doubling the number of Home Energy Audits for residents to a total of 50 audits. Staff and committee members also worked with NDC4 to create an Insight 7 issue on the Partners in Energy program in Mendota Heights. The piece is scheduled to air in July, and will be available online at the end of June.

Fiscal and Resource Impact:

None at this time.

Attachments:

1. PiE-MN-Mendota Heights-Executive Summary_V1without comments



MENDOTA HEIGHTS ENERGY ACTION PLAN

Mendota Heights City staff and community members collaborated with Xcel Energy’s Partners in Energy program to create this Energy Action Plan. The plan offers Mendota Heights residents, businesses, and the City itself a path forward to save energy, avoid greenhouse gas emissions, and manage energy costs.

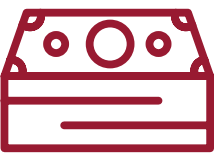
Our Energy Vision

Mendota Heights is a leader in the transition to a clean energy future. This plan guides the city, residents, and businesses to take action to increase energy efficiency and use renewable resources to create more community resilience.

Our Goals

By 2030, the Mendota Heights community will save an estimated **\$1.6 million** through energy efficiency projects and avoid 9,000 MTCO₂e of greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy Action Plan Impacts



Estimated savings of **\$1.6 million** for residents, businesses and the City through the end of 2030.



Avoid **9,000 MTCO₂e** of greenhouse gas emissions. That’s like removing over 200 gas-powered cars from the road each year through 2030.



Empowering the Mendota Heights community to make decisions about its energy future.





How We Are Going to Get There

The City of Mendota Heights with support from Partners in Energy will take actions identified in this plan to achieve our goal. These actions center on four focus areas:

- **Residential Energy Efficiency**
- **Business & Municipal Energy Efficiency**
- **Renewable Energy**
- **Beneficial Electrification**



Strategy Highlights

- Connect residents with existing opportunities for energy efficiency upgrades, including home energy audits.
- Partner with Chamber of Commerce to promote energy efficiency and help businesses manage energy costs.
- Lead by example and showcase the City of Mendota Heights' commitment to solar gardens.
- Educate and engage residents on beneficial electrification, the switch from fossil-fuel powered appliances to electricity-powered appliances.
- Explore adding EV chargers to municipal buildings and electrifying the Mendota Heights fleet.
- Showcase local residents' energy efficiency, renewable energy, and electrification projects.



The content of this plan is derived from a series of planning workshops hosted by Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy. Thank you to the Mendota Heights Energy Action Team for their many hours of service.



Natural Resources Commission

Meeting Date: June 11, 2025

Agenda Item: Curb-Cut Raingarden Program Update

Item Type: Presentation

Department: Natural Resources

Contact:

Krista Spreiter, Natural
Resources Coordinator

Action Request:

Information only.

Background:

The City of Mendota Heights Curb-Cut Raingarden Program is offered to residents that are within an active street reconstruction or improvements project. Residents that choose to be a part of the program schedule a site visit with staff to determine if their property is a candidate. Eligible properties must be at a point in the drainage system that allows for adequate stormwater treatment. A location must also be available free of obstructions such as tree roots and some underground utilities. Raingarden construction costs and materials are included and offered free of charge as part of the program. A contractor constructs the raingarden during the street improvement project, including excavation, soil remediation, and mulch installation. City Staff, area master gardeners, and water stewards then help design and plan the raingardens. Finally, raingardens are planted by residents and volunteers after construction is completed. Residents are responsible for maintenance such as weeding and watering. The City addresses any drainage or structural concerns.

The curb-cut raingardens help to protect our surface waters by capturing stormwater (rainwater and snow-melt runoff), and the pollutants it contains, such as phosphorous, nitrogen, heavy metals, and sediment, before they enter our surface waters. Raingardens have a significant, positive impact on the water quality of the lakes, streams and rivers that the neighborhood drains into.

The City has installed over 50 raingardens throughout the city as part of the program. Ten of those were planted in May of this year as part of the Emerson/Bridgeview Road Improvements project, and 16 will be installed as part of the Friendly Hills Road Improvements Project in 2025 and 2026.

Fiscal and Resource Impact:

Costs of the program are funded by the city's stormwater budget.

Attachments:

1. City of Mendota Heights Rain Garden Brochure (PDF)

Mendota Heights Resources

Rain Garden Grant Opportunities:

Landscaping for Clean Water Program:

<https://dakotaswcd.org/services/landscaping-for-clean-water/>

Lawns to Legumes:

<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/l2l>

Other Community Partners:

Blue Thumb:

<https://bluethumb.org/>

Dakota County Soil and
Water Conservation District:

<https://dakotaswcd.org/>

City of Mendota Heights:

Rain garden examples can be found at City Hall, the Par 3 Golf Course, and Two Rivers High School.

Please contact the City of Mendota Heights at 651-452-1850 for more information.



RAIN GARDEN BENEFITS

- Filter Pollution and Excess Nutrients
- Reduce Flooding and Erosion
- Recharge Local Groundwater
- Reduce Harmful Algae
- Improve Water Quality of Our Lakes, Wetlands, and Rivers
- Provide Better Water Quality for Fish and Other Aquatic Life
- Provide Habitat for Pollinators and Wildlife, Including Birds and Butterflies



For more information:

Krista Spreiter, CWD

Natural Resources Coordinator

City of Mendota Heights

Email: KSpreiter@mendotaheightsmn.gov

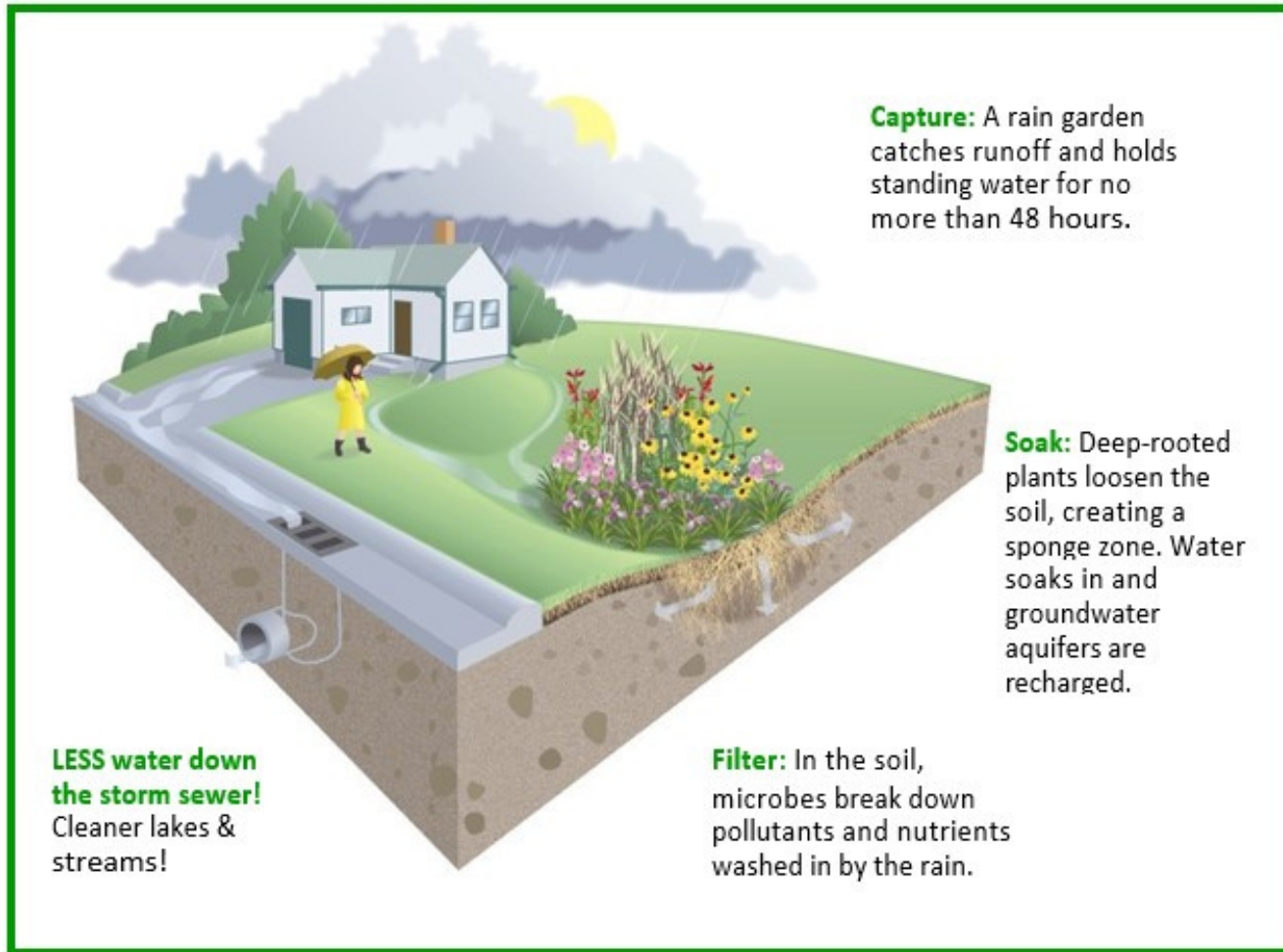
Phone: 651-255-1123



Be a part of the solution to
stormwater pollution-
Plant a Rain Garden!

WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN?

A rain garden is a depression in the landscape that is planted like a garden. Its purpose is to collect rainwater runoff and allow the runoff to infiltrate into the ground.



What happens when it rains?

In planted landscapes rain soaks into the ground, but when rain falls onto roofs, roads, driveways, compacted lawns, and other hard surfaces, it cannot infiltrate. In most neighborhoods this rain, called stormwater runoff, is directed into storm sewers. From there it makes its way to a nearby stream, wetland, pond, or lake; untreated and carrying pollutants, fertilizers, pesticides, oil, grass clippings, organic matter, litter, etc. This can negatively impact the health of aquatic plants and animals. It's important for rainwater to soak in near where it falls so it can quickly help recharge groundwater aquifers.

BLVD RAIN GARDEN PROGRAM (FOR STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS ONLY)

- Sign up for *rain garden* on the street restoration project questionnaire. An engineer will evaluate your location.
- During street reconstruction, a contractor will dig a depression and prepare the soil.
- After construction is completed, residents will select one of six different garden designs
- After construction is completed, residents plant their gardens. The City provides plants and hosts a planting day with demonstrations.
- Once the garden is planted, residents are responsible for maintaining them.
- For residents not undergoing a street restoration project, please look into grant opportunities listed on this brochure.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will I pay less if I choose not to have a garden?

No. Having or not having a rain garden will not change the amount of your street assessment. The rain gardens are such a significant part of the stormwater system that they are included in the project costs.

What if we are physically unable to plant and maintain a garden?

If you are elderly or physically unable to plant your garden, the city will help find volunteers to plant it. But the routine maintenance will be your responsibility.

Will the garden be a breeding ground for mosquitoes? No. The gardens are constructed to infiltrate in less than 48 hours after a rain event. Mosquito larvae require 7-12 days of standing water before they emerge.



Natural Resources Commission

Meeting Date: June 11, 2025

Agenda Item: 2025 Work Plan Updates

Item Type: Action Item

Department: Natural Resources

Contact: Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Coordinator

Action Request:

It is requested that the Commission approve the updated 2025 Work Plan.

Background:

The Commission utilizes its work plan to help achieve goals established annually by creating initiatives for each goal. Committees are then organized by goal to complete these initiatives.

The Commission's 2025 work plan contains multiple initiatives that create an opportunity for Committees for each goal to work together to accomplish these initiatives. Some of these initiatives are listed below as an example:

- Create and hold a community engagement event (Goal 2: Education and Outreach)
- Host residential energy saving education event (Goal 5: Sustainability)
- Host tree planting event (Goal 3: Urban Forestry and Restoration)
- Explore deconstruction policy for city-owned building and facilities (Goal 1: Ordinance and Policy Development; Goal 5: Sustainability)
- Collaborate with Sustainability Committee to implement Partners in Energy Action Plan (Goal 2: Education and Outreach)

There has been some discussion among individual committees on ways that they may be able to collaborate with other committees. The Commission discussed these collaboration opportunities and determined where committees can work jointly to accomplish their initiatives under the work plan at its April Work Session. It was also discussed to remove the initiative of 'Exploring a Deconstruction Ordinance' and add this to a future work plan. The Natural Resources Commission's 2025 Work Plan has been updated to reflect this discussion.

Fiscal and Resource Impact:

None.

Attachments:

1. 2025 Work Plan

Natural Resources Commission Work Plan 2025		Timeline			
Goal	Initiative	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Goal 1: Ordinance and Policy Development	Draft a Shoreland Ordinance for recommendation of approval by City Council	X	X	X	X
Goal 1: Ordinance and Policy Development	Review Planning Review Checklists to offer natural resources considerations			X	X
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Create and hold a community engagement event incorporating Partners in Energy		X		
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Collaborate with Sustainability Committee to implement Partners in Energy Action Plan	X	X	X	X
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Develop educational topics and event schedule for Earth and Arbor Day Celebration	X	X		
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Host site tour of natural resources site			X	X
Goal 3: Urban Forestry and Restoration	Complete a turf-to-native vegetation conversion project within a city park			X	X
Goal 3: Urban Forestry and Restoration	Host tree planting event				X
Goal 3: Urban Forestry and Restoration	Support implementation of EAB Bonding Grant		X	X	
Goal 4: Strategic Planning	Identify and explore funding sources for Natural Resources	X	X	X	X
Goal 4: Strategic Planning	Explore development of a Natural Resources Management Plan for Valley Park	X	X	X	
Goal 5: Sustainability	Implement Partners in Energy Action Plan	X	X	X	X
Goal 5: Sustainability	Host residential energy saving education event		X		