

Contribution Request for the Bassett's Creek Park Restoration and Engagement Project

February 4th, 2022



At their meeting in April 2021, the BCWMC approved a recommendation from the BCWMC Education Committee to provide \$2,300 to the Friends of Bassett Creek (FBC, formerly Bassett Creek Volunteer Stewardship Group), for a long-term, science-based management plan in Bassett's Creek Park (BCP), Minneapolis. This plan includes invasive species removal, native species restoration, and community engagement led by FBC in partnership with Bryn Mawr and Harrison Neighborhood Associations. FBC contracted ecologists at Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) to develop this plan, including necessary data collection. In August 2021, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board indicated their support for this project in writing (Attachment A).

The long-term science-based stewardship plan will guide: a) strategic removal of remaining buckthorn and other invasive species throughout BCP, and b) prevention of regrowth through cultivating native species including prairie grasses, wildflowers, flowering shrubs, and trees. This plan would improve recreation and safety, sight lines, creek access, aesthetic beauty, habitat for wildlife, birds, and pollinators, erosion control, water quality, carbon storage, and climate resilience. Grant activities during and post plan development also include building connections and relationships with volunteers and community members, and disseminating education materials on watershed and water-related subjects at park community events.

Work completed in 2021:

- \$2300 in matching grant funding from Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association (BMNA) was awarded, for a project total of \$4600. Half of this funding (\$2300) was obligated to execute the following project deliverables. The other half will be spent in spring 2022 to execute the remainder of the plan, including field work, report, and initial implementation.
 - Five site visits for initial fieldwork (vegetation surveys, photo documentation, etc; FMR)
 - Management units created based on topography, plant communities, and restoration goals, comprehensive vegetation lists compiled for each management unit (FMR).
 - Seeds for native grasses, forbs, and shrubs purchased for spring 2022 planting.
- The following events were hosted in 2021 to work towards restoration and community goals.
 - Two meetings with FBC, FMR, and MPRB Forestry staff to plan the following events.
 - May tree planting event attended by 60+ adults and children planting 115 trees (120 volunteer hours).
 - October buckthorn removal event attended by 55 volunteers (165 volunteer hours), BCWMC educational materials provided.

As FBC currently lacks the means to hold these funds, we ask that BCWMC transfer this funding to our affiliate, Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association (BMNA). BMNA has agreed to distribute funds to FMR when their work is invoiced and complete in spring 2022. Our contacts at BMNA are Jessica Wiley (jessicasusanwiley@gmail.com) and Roberta Jordan (Roberta.jordan@bmna.org). Grant funding can be sent to Roberta Jordan, Treasurer, BMNA, 2915 Wayzata Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55405.

Thank you again for providing this opportunity!

Sincerely,

Anna Peterson & Ryan Atwell
Friends of Bassett Creek
280 Vincent Ave. N.
Minneapolis, MN 55405



Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

Administrative Offices

2117 West River Road North
Minneapolis, MN 55411-2227

Northside Operations Center

4022 1/2 North Washington Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55412-1742

Southside Operations Center

3800 Bryant Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55409-1000

Phone

612-230-6400

Fax

612-230-6500

www.minneapolisarks.org

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Jennifer B. Ringold

August 31, 2021

Dear Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission;

I am writing on behalf of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) to express our support for Friends of the Mississippi River's (FMR) "Basset Creek Park Community Stewardship" project.

FMR is proposing a collaboration with the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association and the Harrison neighborhood to empower these communities by giving them the tools and knowledge necessary to restore and manage the natural areas at Bassett Creek Park - skills that they can also apply to their own yards and the community at large. Providing education, training, and a ten year stewardship plan will help residents and community members become better stewards of pollinator habitat, water quality, and natural areas.

MPRB has collaborated with FMR on projects that improve habitat along the Mississippi River for over 20 years. FMR is a trusted partner, planning and managing ecological restoration projects and organizing and training community volunteers to carry out ecological restoration and maintenance work on riverfront parkland in the MPRB system and beyond. In recent years, FMR and MPRB have seen the benefits of partnering on such planning and restoration projects, with over 30 acres restored and maintained by professional crews and community volunteers at sites including Ole Olson Park, Mississippi Gorge Regional Park, and Nicollet Island.

This particular project is directed toward creating behavior change toward improved stewardship of natural resources in these two neighborhoods, with a special focus on stewardship of pollinator habitat and water quality in Bassett Creek Park. This aligns with the following MPRB plans and initiatives:

Ecological Systems Plan

-Strategy 37. Organize and activate volunteers to enhance management of natural and naturalized areas throughout the park system), and Natural Areas Plan.

-Recommendation 38. 2. Prioritize preservation of existing habitat and restoration and enhancement of new habitat within the designated corridors, with particular focus on preserving and re-storing historic ecotypes

-Recommendation 38. 3. Work with public, private, and nonprofit partners within identified corridors to implement habitat restoration and enhancement projects, including blooming boulevards, green alleys, habitat enhancement on public lands, etc.

-Strategy 42. Increase urban forest diversity to make it more resilient to climate change and invasive pests

-Recommendation 42. 1. Continue to partner with University of Minnesota to research and pilot new tree species in Minneapolis

-Recommendation 42. 2. Increase number of tree species and reduce overall percentage of single species as replanting takes place

-Recommendation 42. 3. Educate the public on what trees to plant based on future climate forecasts

Bassett Creek Park Concept Plan

-Community Input Priority #1: Improved access to the creek

-Community Input Priority #2: Naturalized areas/native plantings

MPRB recognizes that in order to tackle invasive species and habitat restoration throughout the parks system, volunteers play a crucial role in expanding capacity. However, invasive species management and habitat restoration need to be implemented in a coordinated, science based way – information that everyday volunteers may not have access to. As stated in the Ecological Systems Plan, “MPRB contracts for these services, works with volunteers, and partners with local non-profits, such as Friends of the Mississippi River, to tackle invasive plant removal and restoration work.” MPRB sees this partnership as having the potential to reduce the costs of woodland and shoreline restoration identified in the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan, where costs for the Bassett Creek Study Area are estimated at \$150,000. We are confident that FMR can plan for and train neighborhood volunteers to carry out restoration of their local parkland, equipping residents with the knowledge, tools, and resources necessary for successful restoration and improved overall environmental stewardship . The management plan and volunteer training will ensure that the eventual restoration follows a thought-out path while creating an engaged and knowledgeable volunteer base at the park.

Funding for FMR to conduct this planning effort for community-led restoration will help to advance MPRB’s mission to improve community involvement in environmental issues and in turn to restore and maintain high quality natural areas with strong connections to the community.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Barrick
Assistant Superintendent for Environmental Stewardship
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board