



## Bassett Creek Watershed Management

### MEMO

To: BCWMC Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners  
From: Laura Jester, Administrator and Education Committee  
Date: April 7, 2021

**RE: BCWMC Education Committee Recommendations**

The BCWMC Education Committee met on March 22<sup>nd</sup> to discuss education needs, programming and budget for 2021. The committee reviewed educational activities already included in the 2021 operating budget (see budget/workplan, page 3). They also discussed and recommend the following additional activities (also included in budget/workplan, page 3).

**\$500 Training for Commissioners**

Recommended for reimbursement of registration fees for Commissioners, Alt. Commissioners, or Committee members to attend workshops, trainings, and other events. Pre-approval from the Commission is required for each expenditure and funds are used to reimburse individuals with proper receipts and documentation. Typically, these funds are for registration expenses only but are sometimes used for travel expenses (lodging and mileage for out-of-town events). Funds are distributed on a first come, first serve basis until depleted. In 2018, \$1,008 of this fund was used. In 2019 \$0 were used. In 2020 \$160 were used.

**\$250 Dog Waste Bag Dispensers (150)**

These are a popular item at events. Inventory is low and there may be in-person events later this year or early next year.

**\$6,000 "Making Connections" Educational Videos – see attachment**

Committee recommends continuation of monthly videos with focus on interviews with BCWMC residents, staff, and volunteers for "Making Connections" campaign. See proposed education/videos list attached.

**\$1,000 Review Existing Education Programming**

The committee discussed the importance of reaching children with water-related education. It was acknowledged that the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) implements a popular 4<sup>th</sup> grade in-classroom (or via video) education project on watersheds. BCWMC is a member of WMWA and financially contributes up to \$13,000 per year. BCWMC also supports the Children's Water Festival and the River Watch Program, which is aimed at high school students. The committee wondered what type of summer camps or youth programming with a water focus might already exist in the BCWMC and if there are opportunities to collaborate with or augment existing programs. The committee recommends that Dawn Pape spend up to \$1,000 of her time researching existing programs and collaboration/augmentation possibilities.

\$2,300 Bassett's Creek Park Restoration and Engagement Project – see attachment

The Bassett's Creek Park Volunteer Stewardship Group is developing a long-term plan for invasive species removal, native species restoration, and community engagement with Bryn Mawr Neighbors and adjacent neighborhoods in Minneapolis. The group is working with a professional restoration ecologist to develop the restoration plan for Bassett's Creek Park. They recently received grant funding from the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association and are likely to receive funding from a Hennepin County Green Partners Grant. They are seeking partnership and \$2,300 from BCWMC to help fund their project. Commissioner Welch and I have met with the group's leaders and support their efforts. The BCWMC Education Committee reviewed their proposal (attached) and recommends approval of the funding. The committee also conveyed the need to connect with the volunteers, provide education on water-related subjects, and solicit their assistance with disseminating educational materials such as the Salt Smart cards. Further, the committee requests documentation of the project including before, during and after photos.

Future 2021 Education Committee Items:

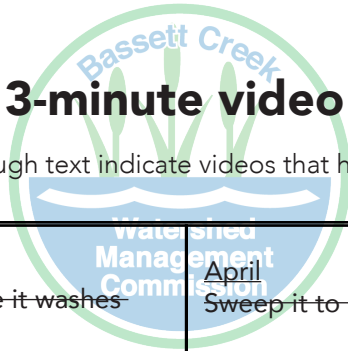
- Exploring possibility of using remaining education funds of up to \$3,770 to
  - Help fund a BCWMC intern from Dougherty Family College as requested by Alternate Commissioner McDonald Black; or
  - Provide water education to children through camp programming or other venues
- Planning for possible watershed tour in fall 2021
- Development of AIS prevention signage per Hennepin County AIS Prevention Grant
- Ideas to help market Annual Salt Symposium
- Purchase of additional creek crossing signs for major roads

**Recommended 2021 Education and Outreach Budget and Work Plan**

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Recommended Budget</b>	<b>Budget Notes</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Publications/Annual Report</b>	<b>\$1,300</b>	As set in operating budget	Existing line item in operating budget to develop Commission's Annual Report
<b>2</b>	<b>Website Hosting/Maintenance</b>	<b>\$1,800</b>	As set in operating budget	Existing line item in operating budget for website maintenance and hosting
<b>3</b>	<b>Public Communications</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	As set in operating budget	Existing line item in operating budget for required public notices.
<b>4</b>	<b>Watershed Education Partnerships</b>			
	a. Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program	\$6,840	Set in operating budget for \$7,000	This program through the Met Council sponsors volunteer monitors on several BCWMC lakes. This year there are volunteers lined up for ten lakes sites. Agreement with Met Council to be executed in April
	b. River Watch Program	\$2,000	As set in operating budget	BCWMC has sponsored this program coordinated by Hennepin County for many years. High school students collected water quality data on local creeks. Agreement with county recently executed.
	c. MetroWaterShed Partners	\$3,000	As set in operating budget	BCWMC provides funding to support the Clean Water MN Media Campaign. Watershed organizations our size are asked to contribute between \$3,000 and \$5,000.
	d. Children's Water Festival	\$0	Set in operating budget for \$300	This event educates 4th grade students about water resources and presents ways they can help ensure a future where water resources are protected and managed wisely. Funding contributions are not being solicited this year due to budget surplus from last year
	e. Metro Blooms Workshops	\$1,500	As set in operating budget	Workshops are geared toward planting resilient yards including alternative turf, raingardens, and native plants. BCWMC cities coordinate with Metro Blooms to schedule an event.
	f. Metro Blooms Harrison Neighborhood Project Support	\$3,500	As set in operating budget	This is for local match for projects coordinated by Metro Blooms in the MPLS Near North Neighborhoods; previously under Education and Public Outreach
	<b>4. Subtotal</b>	<b>\$16,840</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>Education and Public Outreach</b>			
	a. West Metro Water Alliance	\$6,000 - \$13,000	Set in operating budget for \$13,000	Contract approved by BCWMC 2/19/15 for annual \$13,000 contribution. First half (\$6,000) to be paid in April 2021. Very likely the remaining \$7,000 will not be invoiced due to WMWA fund balance. Administrator attends monthly WMWA meetings and is involved with this organization and its activities.
	b. Prairie Moon Native Seeds	\$0	Committee recommendation	Don't recommended purchasing this year as events are unknown and seeds are perishable.
	c. Training for Commissioners (registrations, fees)	\$500	Committee recommendation	Recommended for reimbursement of registration fees for Commissioners, Alt. Commissioners, or Committee members to attend workshops, trainings, and other events. Pre-approval from the Commission is required for each expenditure and funds are used to reimburse individuals with proper receipts and documentation. Typically, these funds are for registration expenses only but are sometimes used for travel expenses (lodging and mileage for out of town events). Funds are distributed on a first come, first serve basis until depleted. In 2018, \$1,008 of this fund was used. In 2019 \$0 were used. In 2020 \$160 were used.
	e. Purchase of dog waste bag dispensers	\$250	Committee recommendation	These are a popular item at events. Inventory is low and there may be in-person events later this year or early next year. \$250 should purchase 150 dispensers
	f. Creek crossing signs	\$0	May be considered later in 2021	Currently have signs at 7 crossings in Plymouth and Golden Valley. Don't recommend purchasing more at this time.
	g. Chloride Education	\$0	May be considered later in 2021	No specific chloride education planned in 2021
	h. Social Media	\$3,990	Already set in contract with Dawn Pape	Previously in Administrative Services Budget. Contracted with Dawn Pape for this amount
	i. Educational column writing	\$3,240	Already set in contract with Dawn Pape	Previously in Administrative Services Budget. Contracted with Dawn Pape for this amount
	j. "Making Connections" educational videos w/ interviews	\$6,000	Committee recommendation	Committee recommends continuation of monthly videos with focus on interviews with BCWMC residents, staff, and volunteers to create "Making Connections" campaign. See proposed education/videos list attached.
	k. Review and/or collaborate with existing education programming	\$1,000	Committee recommendation	Committee recommends that Dawn Pape reach TRPD, MPRB, and Westwood Nature Center to understand existing water-related education and determine possible collaboration
	l. Bassett's Creek Park Restoration and Engagement	\$2,300	Committee recommendation	Committee recommends funding and notes need for connections with volunteers and education outcomes. See Bassett's Creek Park Restoration Proposal
	<b>5. Subtotal</b>	<b>\$23,280 - \$30,280</b>		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$44,220 - \$51,220</b>		<b>TOTAL EDUCATION BUDGET in 2021 OPERATING BUDGET = \$47,450</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Unassigned Education Funds</b>	<b>up to \$3,770</b>		If WMWA dues are only \$6,000 in 2021

# 1 to 3-minute video ideas

Strikethrough text indicate videos that have been done



<p><u>March</u> Timing is Everything! Sweep salt up before it washes into nearby water 2021</p> <p>Similar theme of careful timing (can't reuse this video due to date references)</p>	<p><u>April</u> Sweep it to keep it 2020</p> <p>No video for 2021, but Adopt-A-Drain for 2022?</p>
<p><u>May</u> What's your water footprint? 2020</p> <p>Introduce "Making Connections" theme web showing the connections between our actions and the impacts on water, climate, land, species; and then the connections between water, climate, land, and species to other things and then back to us.</p>	<p><u>June</u> Alternative Lawns 2020</p> <p>What does climate change look like in Minnesota? Wetter, warmer —&gt; Increased flooding, gully washes, insect-borne illnesses</p>
<p><u>July</u> Pay it forward: Raingarden 2020</p> <p>Harrison Neighborhood Showcase or poor yard management = water pollution = degraded habitats = degraded fishing and swimming</p>	<p><u>August</u> Boaters to the Rescue! Clean, Drain, Dry 2020</p> <p>Zebra mussels in depth, Brady the zebra-mussel sniffing dog.</p>
<p><u>September</u> Bee kind 2020</p> <p>Children's Water Festival or Dock removal</p>	<p><u>October</u> CAMP video 2020</p> <p>Leave the leaves in gardens, but not on streets</p>
<p><u>November</u> Why wetlands are important 2020</p> <p>Highlight CIP with interview or energy use = impacts climate = more storms/flooding = health/safety concerns</p>	<p><u>December</u> Please salt smart (to the tune of Jingle Bells) 2020</p> <p>Repeat this "classic"</p>
<p><u>January</u> Salt smart because fish can't sweep 2021</p> <p>Clean Water Resolutions (tips) or Climate change = more freeze/thaw cycles = more need for deicers = degraded water quality (surface water and drinking water)</p>	<p><u>February</u> Which deicer is safe for pets? 2021</p> <p>Salt Smart—Keep it 3-inches apart Change culture around salting</p>

# Bassett's Creek Park: Long-Term Plan for Invasive Species Removal & Native Species Restoration, Technical Support, Revegetation Resources

**Coordinators.** Anna Peterson and Ryan Atwell, Bassett's Creek Park Volunteer Stewardship Group Coordinators, Bryn Mawr Residents, 280 Vincent Ave. N., Area 7  
Alex Roth, Ecologist, Friends of the Mississippi River

**Background.** Bassett's Creek Park (BCP) connects Bryn Mawr with the more culturally and economically diverse Harrison Neighborhood of North Minneapolis. As part of a public input process informing the North Service Area Master Plan (NSAMP) adopted by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) in 2018, residents of both neighborhoods identified their top priorities for BCP as: 1) improved creek access, and 2) naturalized areas / native plantings.

Currently, the creek corridor and woodlands throughout BCP are dominated by buckthorn, an invasive shrub species. Thick buckthorn growth blocks access to the creek, outcompetes native vegetation, and minimizes visibility in the park, decreasing safety and aesthetic beauty. The result is a degraded natural community that is a barrier to human recreation, is susceptible to erosion, and provides poor habitat for wildlife, birds, and pollinators.

Since 2013, the BCP Volunteer Stewardship Group has been working to remove buckthorn, garlic mustard, and other invasive species from BCP. Informal groups of neighborhood residents have been working on this problem even longer. In 2020, 31 residents donated 215 volunteer hours to this project. In addition, Bassett's Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) is currently in the process of implementing two projects in BCP in the next five years aimed at improving stream access and ecological function in riparian and wetland areas.

While these efforts have the potential to assist MPRB in working towards its stated goals of removing invasive species and managing BCP for native plant communities and high-quality recreational opportunities, MPRB faces limited resources. Additional partnerships, resources, and a long-term plan agreed to by all parties involved is needed to ensure the cooperation, continuity, and maintenance necessary for the success of these interrelated efforts.

**Proposed.** To build on the history of hard work by resident volunteers and ensure coordination among partners working in BCP, the BCP Volunteer Stewardship Group proposes contracting Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) to develop a long-term science-based stewardship plan that 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.

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) has created over 80 management plans for 9,000+ acres throughout the Twin Cities Metro Area, including volunteer-led plans for other Minneapolis parks in partnership with MPRB. Their ecologists use efficient, effective methods for buckthorn

removal and native species restoration, and are actively restoring over 30 sites in the metro. FMR is committed to long-term continuity, success, and maintenance of projects they plan.

FMR would create this plan and provide long-term guidance, support, and resources. The BCP Volunteer Stewardship Group would continue to implement the work laid out in the plan through volunteer efforts, education, and outreach focused in the Bryn Mawr and Harrison neighborhoods. This proposal also includes funding for technical support from FMR, equipment, seeding, and planting to guide continuing work by the BCP Volunteer Stewardship Group during the 2021 season to build on 2020 momentum while the long-term plan is being developed.

Upon its completion in Fall of 2021, this plan would result in a partnership and written MOU among the BCP Volunteer Stewardship Group, FMR, MPRB, and BCWMC. Project coordinators have approached Jeremy Barrick, Assistant Superintendent of MPRB who oversees the Natural Resources division, and Laura Jester, Administrator of BCWMC, both of whom have indicated support for this partnership and MOU. This plan would guide joint and complementary restoration activities in BCP among partners over the next decade. It would provide a clear path that would empower partners to work together for success of mutually shared goals.

**Budget. Total \$5800** (*priorities in order of importance*)

\$4000 (*\$1700 BMNA*) 10-year plan developed by FMR staff ecologist Alex Roth to guide long-term volunteer-led removal of buckthorn and restoration of native species in BCP.

\$1200 Technical support from FMR to guide volunteer work in spring and summer 2021 while long-term plan is developed, including timing of buckthorn removal, planting, and reseeding, as well as participation in the public input process.

\$600 (*\$600 BMNA*) Native plantings (mostly shrubs) and seed mix. Plantings would complement 2021 planting of 180 trees in BCP by MPRB to replace Ash trees removed in 2019-2020.

**Leveraging Additional Funding**

Project coordinators have identified additional funding through Hennepin County Green Partners Grants (applications due May/June 2021, funds available Aug/Sept 2021), and local businesses to match BMNA and BCWMC funds. Additional funding from these sources would be used for outreach, education, public input, events, and supplies in the Bryn Mawr and Harrison neighborhoods to support implementation of this plan and its partnerships.

This includes citizen education and outreach to determine ideal future forest, grassland, and stream corridor plant communities, as well as whether some mature trees should be removed to facilitate long-term health of native species in target communities. It also includes intentional engagement of communities of color, renters, and other underrepresented populations to engage and consider the perspectives of as many park users as possible.

Once the 10-year plan is finalized in winter 2021-22, coordinators will work with partners to seek funding for ongoing project implementation through Hennepin County's Natural Resources Grants and other funding sources to support and augment volunteer efforts. Having a plan in place and official partnerships established would make the Bassett's Creek Park restoration effort competitive in attracting larger scale implementation funding. Such funding would be beneficial in most efficiently achieving the desired future conditions outlined in this proposal.

### **Project Coordinator Bios**

Anna Peterson, Ph.D., Conservation Biologist, NatureWerks

Anna has worked for twenty years as a bird migration biologist, habitat ecologist, and educator with organizations such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The National Park Service, University of Minnesota, and several other colleges and universities. Her love of teaching and birds has found her in varied roles including running remote bird research stations, consulting on wind turbine and cell tower placement in bird migration corridors, leading citizen science efforts, and facilitating field-study courses. Anna and her spouse Ryan are coordinators of the Bassett's Creek Park Stewardship Group and residents of Bryn Mawr, Area 7.

Ryan Atwell, Ph.D., Environmental Sociologist, NatureWerks

Ryan brings two decades of experience as a social-ecological systems scientist leading public outreach, education, and input processes with organizations including the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, the US Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, The Nature Conservancy, and several colleges and universities. Ryan loves teaching and mentoring people of all ages and walks of life in environmental science, including facilitating citizen science efforts. His work includes evaluation of ecological restoration efforts.

Alex Roth, Ph.D., Ecologist, Friends of the Mississippi River

Alex has ten years of experience in ecological restoration. He obtained his PhD in Forest Ecology in the Natural Resources Science and Management at the University of Minnesota. He also holds a minor in Risk Analysis for Invasive Species and Genotypes. Alex has a breadth of experience in both research and land management, having spent time with organizations such as the Ohio EPA, the University of Notre Dame, and The Nature Conservancy. Alex serves as the ecologist on a variety of FMR projects, surveying natural communities, writing natural resource management plans, designing restorations, overseeing contractors, and helping with volunteer projects. He also works to engage research partners and establish citizen science monitoring programs.