

**BROWN'S
CREEK
WATERSHED
DISTRICT**

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Minutes

**Brown's Creek Watershed District
Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting
Monday, February 13, 2023 at 6:30-8:00 p.m.**

Stillwater Library Conference Room and Hybrid Zoom Option

CAC Members Attending:

Jyneen Thatcher
George Vania
Yihong Gao (attended virtually)
Anne Maule Miller (attended virtually)
Steve Merchant (attended virtually)
Ron Johnson
Patty Johnson

Others Attending:

Cameron Blake, BCWD Assistant
Todd Rexine, Great River Greening
Celia Wirth, BCWD Board Liaison

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- 1) Called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.
 - 2) Approved Agenda.
 - 3) Approved Minutes from December 12th, 2022 with one minor typo.
 - 4) Education Topic: Brown's Creek Conservation Area/110th St. Property Restoration Grant Update (Todd Rexine, Great River Greening).
Todd Rexine explained the district received \$52,000 in grant funds in 2017 for restoration work at the Brown's Creek Watershed District Conservation Area (BCCA), also referred to internally as the 110th St. property. The grant funds need to be spent by June of this year. The initial focus of the restoration done with this grant was a focus on invasive species removal and woodland restoration activities such as buckthorn removal and cedar thinning. The details of the restoration work are in the BCCA management report. The plan for the remaining grant funds this year is to purchase native seed and shrubs, to do two seeding applications, to do some shrub planting in unit 3, and to do some mowing in the upland prairie knob in unit 4.
The CAC asked what kinds of restoration activities should be conducted moving forward. Todd explained that buckthorn seed can remain viable for 5-7 years and so new seedlings should be removed as they come up. This could be a potential event and volunteer opportunity. There will also be continued buckthorn pressure from neighboring properties so

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this work will be ongoing. Prescribed burning could also be used as a management technique. The CAC discussed goat grazing as a strategy but some drawbacks could be cost, the amount of time on a wait list, and dogs in the neighboring property to the northeast.

Overall Todd said the property is looking as expected with the restoration work done so far. He is seeing a healthier understory in Unit 3 which benefited from the cedar thinning and buckthorn removal. The CAC asked about the residual buckthorn stumps and Todd explained they are breaking down on their own and should be completely rotten in a couple years. The BCWD plans to send soil from the burn scars to the UMN for some basic testing. Todd explained the burn piles end up destroying the microbial life in the soil directly under them but that this life can restore itself and return to the soil with plant growth returning after that.

Cameron will send the BCCA biological survey database access instructions and add Steve, Ron, and Patty so they can also access this database. Jyneen said she would be adding plant information from the last year and a half to the database, but that there were not significant new species in that timeframe.

5) Welcome new CAC members!

The CAC welcomed new members Ron and Patty Johnson, and Steve Merchant who were approved to the CAC at last week's board meeting. Ron and Patty live near Brown's Creek Park and regularly use the state trail. They have a raingarden and are interested in what they can do as homeowners to be good stewards. Steve lives in Grant and owns about an acre including a wetland. He has retired from the MNDNR wildlife department, is a trout fisherman, and is interested in local conservation issues.

6) 2023 Newsletter

The CAC suggested some potential topics: featuring CAC members, an update on the stewardship grant program after its first year, a discussion of lake water quality in the district with any significant changes highlighted, an update on the status of City of Stillwater smart irrigation controller program, highlighting Brown's Creek fish and macroinvertebrate surveys if they were completed in 2022, and updating on the BCCA restoration work.

The CAC would like the newspaper distributed after approval at the April CAC and board meetings. Ron and Patty Johnson said they did not recall receiving the BCWD newsletter in years past. Cameron will confirm with property data to make sure they are not missing from the county parcel database which is where the newsletter mailing is selected.

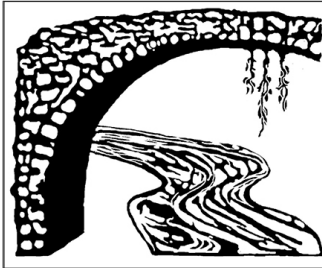
7) 2023 Event Planning

- Open Yard Series

Month	Date/Time	Event	Location	CAC Member
April	4/29 8am	Long Lake West Trail Birding	End of 62 nd St	George/Anne

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	April or when conditions allow	Long Lake boxes/posts	Long Lake Walking Trail	Anne
May	5/17 6:30pm	Wildflower Walk	Schulenburg Park	Jyneen
June	6/21 6:30pm	Millbrook Restoration Tour	Brown's Creek Park parking lot	George
July	7/19 6:30pm	Fly Fishing Workshop	Brown's Creek Park parking lot	Steve
August	8/9 6:30pm	Brown's Creek Tributary Restoration Project Tour Part 2		Jyneen, Patty, and Ron
September 16th	10am-1pm	Community Event	Brown's Creek Park	All CAC
September	9/23 9am-12pm	Long Lake Buckthorn Brigade	End of 62 nd St	Anne
October	10/7 9am-12pm	Brown's Creek Conservation Area Buckthorn Brigade	St. Croix Ballet Studio parking lot if permission is received	Yihong/Jyneen

Anne asked if Jyneen could assist with a common native plant and weed flyer that could be added to the Long Lake walking trail boxes. The CAC discussed the photos used for the bird flyers and how QR codes should be added to any photos used that are not owned by the BCWD. George explained that the majority of the photos were taken and used with permission by local birders but that he would likely ask for more to replace any external images used. George would also like a QR code added that would go to an electronic version of the flyer hosted on the BCWD website. This could also be used for the plant flyer. The CAC would like to distribute buckthorn information in the boxes in late summer and fall.

Promotion for events was discussed and George asked for postcards to hand out for the Millbrook restoration tour. Cameron will distribute post cards for each CAC lead for their events.

- 2023 Community Event

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The CAC agreed to partner with Sustainable Stillwater (SSMN) on the BCWD Community event this year to coincide with their annual bird festival as part of Stillwater's designation as a bird city. Allison McGinnis from SSMN noted in her memo to the CAC that the topic for the 2023 World migration days is water. The CAC concluded that they would like to create a press release for the community event this year. Celia said she would follow up with the Stillwater Gazette. There will be additional promotion from SSMN on the event. The CAC would also like to use the new BCWD Nextdoor account to link between the BCWD website and BCWD Facebook page to where community event information will be posted. Cameron will ask Andy Weaver if he could still provide birding materials for the event even though he is retiring from the Stillwater Area high school at the end of this school year. The CAC would also like to borrow the water themed mini golf course from the Minnehaha Watershed District again this year.

- 2023 Event list from other organizations

No list received yet from SSMN or Master Gardeners.

Anne volunteered to attend the Sally Manzara nature event again that occurs on the first Saturday in June.

Wild Ones Landscape revival (Oakdale location): June 3rd 9am-1pm.

Pollinator Friendly Alliance (dates have not been set):

A spring weed and seed at St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park on a site they have been converting from crop to native prairie.

In the summer they will have a weed and mulch day at Lake Elmo Park Reserve at the pollinator plant corridor they planted last year.

8) CAC Position Updates

- Graphic Design and Promotion

Celia will select an image to be used to represent CAC open yard events on the new BCWD website.

The BCWD has a new website with work in progress by Celia and Karen Kill. Feedback is welcomed by the CAC as work continues!

- Education and Community Engagement
- Habitat Restoration
- BCWD Board Activities

The BCWD board has been discussing improvements to the single family permitting process.

- BCWD Apparel Order

Cameron will send the webstore link which will be open through 2/21/23 for BCWD CAC members to select one item.

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9) The meeting was adjourned at 7:55PM.

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