



## **CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS**

### **NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION WORK SESSION MEETING AGENDA**

March 11, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Mendota Heights City Hall, 1101 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Call to Order**
- 3. Discussion**
  - a. MN Department of Natural Resources Outdoor Recreation Grant Application - Valley Park
  - b. 2025 Oak Awards Recipients
  - c. Review of Pertinent Natural Resources City Documents and Plans
  - d. Shoreland Management Ordinance Discussion
- 4. Committee Reports**
- 5. Adjourn**

**Next Meeting**  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8 at 6:00 P.M.**

Information is available in alternative formats or with the use of auxiliary aids to individuals with disabilities upon request by calling city hall at 651-452-1850 or by emailing [cityhall@mendotaheightsmn.gov](mailto:cityhall@mendotaheightsmn.gov).



## Natural Resources Work Session Memo

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**MEETING DATE:** March 11, 2026

**TO:** The Natural Resources Commission

**FROM:** Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Manager

**SUBJECT:** MN Department of Natural Resources Outdoor Recreation Grant Application - Valley Park

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**ACTION REQUEST:**

Information Only.

**BACKGROUND:**

The city has applied for a MN Department of Natural Resources Outdoor Recreation grant to replace and update existing park facilities in Valley Park, including the replacement of the playground structure, updates to the picnic shelter, and the addition of a safety fence between the playground structure and creek, as well as a permanent outfield fence within the baseball field.

The proposed project is not anticipated to impact natural resources within the park. Improvements to and replacement of existing structures will require minimal soil disturbance. However, sediment and erosion control measures will still be required to protect surface waters and surrounding natural areas. The two fences to be installed may help protect surface waters by keeping trash and debris generated by park users out of Interstate Valley Creek and the wetland adjacent to the baseball field.

Natural Resources Staff reviewed the grant application, and provided necessary natural resources information for the park, including high-priority resources to be protected and measures to be taken to protect these resources during construction of the proposed project. Grant awards will be announced in June 2026. A State Historic Preservation Officer review will be conducted for recipients throughout the summer of 2026, with an anticipated project start date in the spring of 2027, if final approval and award is given.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None



## Natural Resources Work Session Memo

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**MEETING DATE:** March 11, 2026

**TO:** The Natural Resources Commission

**FROM:** Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Manager

**SUBJECT:** 2025 Oak Awards Recipients

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### **ACTION REQUEST:**

Information only.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Oak Awards program was created in 2023 by the Mendota Heights Natural Resources Commission to celebrate leadership, education/outreach, and project efforts that advance natural resources within the City.

The Oak Awards program recognizes recipients for the following 2025 awards:

- **Acorn award** – recognizes exemplary youth leadership in the advancement of our city's natural resources. For example, a youth-led native planting project or education event. Eligible youth include individuals or groups 18 years of age and younger, or a current student in 12th grade or under.
- **Leaf award** – recognizes significant contributions of an individual, family, company or organization that has demonstrated substantial leadership for the stewardship of our city's natural resources. For example, a community native planting effort or coordination of a neighborhood-wide Adopt-a-Drain effort.
- **Canopy award** – recognizes lifetime achievement of an individual, family, company or organization that has demonstrated extraordinary leadership for the stewardship of our city's natural resources. For example, an individual who has initiated several or successive natural resource stewardship efforts or an organization that leads by example and has worked overtime to cultivate natural resource stewardship in the community.

The Goal 2: Education and Outreach Committee was given the opportunity to review all applications and then score each application based on five criteria:

- Quality of the project or efforts in Natural Resources
- Public Benefit
- Longevity of the Project or Efforts

- Innovation/Creativity
- Leadership

The committee recommended the following recipients for each award:

### **Canopy Award – Meghan Bernard**

Meghan Bernard is the Sustainability Manager for School District 197. Her accomplishments and contributions include leading and overseeing the LiveGreen program at all District schools, coordinating and engaging students in natural resources events and projects, implementing the district's recycling and waste reduction program, implementing and tracking energy saving measures, planting and tree care, and converting approximately 10 acres of turf-to-native prairie. Meghan also is the recipient of the Leader in Sustainability Fellowship award, as only one of six individuals to receive the award nationally from the U.S. Green Building Council.

### **Leaf Award – Two Rivers Live Green Club**

The Live Green Club at Two Rivers High School is a student-led organization dedicated to fostering a culture of sustainability within the school and the broader Mendota Heights community. Throughout 2025, the club has demonstrated exceptional leadership through multiple initiatives contributing to environmental stewardship:

- Water quality protection. The club initiated a "Clean Rivers" campaign, combining education with direct action. Students produced and distributed informational videos to educate their peers on watershed health and organized maintenance crews to regularly clear debris from storm drains surrounding the high school campus.
- Waste reduction. Recognizing the impact of school-wide waste, the club launched an outreach campaign to audit and improve the recycling habits of the student body.
- Habitat restoration. During the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, the club engaged the community by creating and distributing "seed-bombs" consisting of native wildflower species to support local pollinators.
- Civic engagement. The leadership has extended its reach beyond the campus by communicating directly with legislators in the US Senate and Congress to advocate for environmental policies that protect Minnesota's natural resources.

### **Acorn Award – Wes Hendel**

As part of his Eagle Scout project, Wes Hendel led and coordinated a pollinator planting project by planting over 250 square feet of pollinator habitat in Ivy Hills Park. The project included over 20 volunteers and also included buckthorn removal in the area. The planting is located near the stormwater pond along the woodland edge where diseased ash had recently been removed. The project included the planting of 215 native flowers, grasses, and shrubs that provide habitat and food for pollinators.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

None



## Natural Resources Work Session Memo

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**MEETING DATE:** March 11, 2026

**TO:** The Natural Resources Commission

**FROM:** Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Manager

**SUBJECT:** Review of Pertinent Natural Resources City Documents and Plans

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**ACTION REQUEST:**

Information only.

**BACKGROUND:**

The city uses several guiding documents to guide decisions pertaining to natural resources. All of these documents are available on the city's website as well as at city hall for public viewing. These guidance documents include, but are not limited to:

**The Mendota Heights Natural Resources Management Plan Update (2022)**

The development of the Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP) Update was intended to provide a comprehensive document to address the current, past, and future conditions and needs for the protection and improvement of natural resources within the city. The document includes:

- Natural resources vision, principles, and goals
- Compilation and review of existing data
- Field assessments of the City's priority natural areas
- A City-wide woodland analysis (including on private lands)
- A City-wide heat island analysis and analysis of ecosystem services (including on private lands)
- Challenges and opportunities for the City's natural resources
- Target native plant communities to restore
- Typical restoration and management tasks
- Prioritization of short-term projects
- Identification of grant opportunity to fund the top priority project
- Management Briefs for select natural areas:
  - Priority projects in natural areas
  - Priority project costs
  - Overall project costs and phasing in a five-year implementation plan
  - A "ten-year and beyond" implementation vision for natural resources management

- Plans for other natural resources projects and actions beyond the natural areas
- Implementation:
  - SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). Management briefs, the five-year implementation plan, the monitoring program, and performance standards are SMART goals. In addition, the adaptive management approach used in this Natural Resources Management Plan is cyclical and forces goals to change. For this reason, SMART goals are presented at a programmatic level.
  - Long-term management, monitoring and reporting
  - Implementation resources, including grants, volunteers and partners
  - Public education and private lands outreach

**The Mendota Heights 2040 Comprehensive Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan is a formally adopted document stating the City's goals and policies as they relate to land use, housing, parks and open space, transportation, utilities, and other issues. The plan is updated every 10 years; and provides a future plan or "blueprint" for the community from 2020 to 2040. Specifically, Chapters 7 (Natural Resources) and 8 (Resilience) of the Comprehensive Plan address natural resources and sustainability in Mendota Heights.

**Mendota Heights City Code**

The City Code is comprised of the municipal laws adopted by the City Council in the form of ordinances and is updated as new ordinances are adopted. Specifically, Title 14. Stormwater Management, and Title 15. Environmental Standards, address natural resources.

**The Mendota Heights Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP)**

The purpose of the SWMP is to serve as a guide in conserving, protecting, and managing the City's surface water resources. This current plan is an update to the 2006 Local Surface Water Management Plan (LSWMP) and includes updates to the City's HydroCAD Model as well as the incorporation of a P8 Urban Catchment water quality model.

**The Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit and the Mendota Heights Surface Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)**

A Municipal Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is a mandatory, working document for MS4-regulated cities and entities that outlines Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize pollutant discharge such as sediment, nutrients, and toxins, from stormwater runoff into waters of the State. It must address six minimum control measures (MCMs) to comply with the MS4 permit.

**Mendota Heights Land Disturbance Guidance Document**

The Mendota Heights Land Disturbance Guidance Document provides mandatory technical standards for erosion control, sediment control, and stormwater management during construction.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None



## Natural Resources Work Session Memo

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**MEETING DATE:** March 11, 2026  
**TO:** The Natural Resources Commission  
**FROM:** Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Shoreland Management Ordinance Discussion

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### **ACTION REQUEST:**

Information only.

### **BACKGROUND:**

As an initiative of Goal 1: Ordinance and Policy Development, of the Commission's 2025 Work Plan, the Goal 1 committee continues to develop a Shoreland Ordinance for recommendation of approval by City Council. The shoreland ordinance, if adopted, would be included in Title 15. Environmental Standards, of the Mendota Heights City Code. A shoreland ordinance would help to protect natural water bodies within the city that are not already protected under current city code. The Goal 1 Committee along with the Commission as a whole has made edits, additions, and provided comments on the recommended example ordinance created by the DNR. The committee is requesting input from the commission on the draft ordinance.

The draft has been discussed at previous work sessions and meetings. The Commission should continue the discussion and provide comments and feedback on the current draft.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

None