

July 25, 2014

Park Board going greener with the Ecological System Plan

Community Advisory Committee meetings begin May 15; public invited to attend

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) and the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) are preparing the first-ever Ecological System Plan. This plan will set a vision for making parks and public lands more friendly to the environment.

An appointed Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will help guide the [plan](#), with the first of several CAC meetings scheduled for 5:30-7:30 pm Thursday, August 7 at Park Board Headquarters, 2117 West River Road in Minneapolis. The public may attend CAC meetings, which feature a brief public comment period at the end of each meeting.

The Ecological System Plan will seek to first understand the ecology of the city and watershed, then plan for parks and public lands management and improvements that benefit both humans and nature. It will address specific threats such as climate change, decreasing water quality, explosion of invasive species, increasing runoff, and fragmentation of habitat. It will envision a more environmentally sound way of managing the impacts of the city, so that the city can be cleaner, greener, cooler, and more efficient.

Specifically, the ecological system plan will:

- Compile, create, and illustrate city-wide ecological data;
- Craft a vision for natural resources and public lands within the watershed and city;
- Outline guiding principles for management; and
- Challenge the community to rethink the city around them—from the local neighborhood park to the Grand Rounds to backyards—in terms of ecological function, benefit, and health.

In addition to attending the first CAC meeting, the public may provide input and stay informed about the project in the following ways:

- Visit the [project website](#) to stay up to date on the project and see some of the amazing maps and drawings we plan to create. Go to www.minneapolisparks.org/currentprojects and select “Ecological System Plan.”
- Attend the second CAC meeting scheduled for August 27 and another in October, the exact date of which is to be determined. All CAC meetings will take place from 5:30-7:30 at MPRB headquarters.
- Attend any of the planned community events that will take place in the parks over the next year and a half. More details will be made available on the [project website](#) as these events are scheduled and planned.
- Sign up to receive e-mail updates by subscribing on the project website or at www.minneapolisparks.org/subscribe or, if you are already a subscriber, by adding “Ecological System Plan” to your subscription preferences.