



City of Blaine

Natural Resource Conservation Board

November 18, 2025 | 7:00 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM.

2. Roll Call

Present – Chair Rafferty, Boardmembers Anderson, Dahl, Mereness, Panning, Truchon.

Absent – Boardmember Gramstad.

Others Present: Senior Parks and Recreation Manager Jerome Krieger, Recreation Manager Nate Monahan, Project Engineer Brent Larson and Stormwater Coordinator Megan Hedstrom.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

4. Approval of Minutes

- 4.1. 2025-596 Approval of August 19, 2025 NRCB Meeting Minutes
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

MOVED by Boardmember Anderson, seconded by Boardmember Dahl, to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2025 board meeting as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the NRCB.

6. New Business

- 6.1.** 2025-597 Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Wetland Bank Update from ISG
Sponsors: Megan Hedstrom, Stormwater Coordinator

Stormwater Coordinator Hedstrom stated ISG, the city's consultant conducting monitoring and creating a workplan for the Site 7 Wetland Bank, has completed 2025 monitoring. ISG and city staff will be meeting with the Corps and BWSR later this month to review the draft monitoring report, so that a final plan can be submitted for agency review in December. This plan will be provided to the NRCB for review once available, and ISG will be in attendance at our first meeting in 2026 to present the monitoring report and discuss the upcoming work plan for 2026. If weather allows, this will start with a controlled burn of the site this spring, followed by targeted treatments for invasive species, predominately reed canary grass. Staff provided a detailed update to the NRCB regarding the draft monitoring report and more information about planned spring work, which included a control burn as well as new and emerging herbicides.

Boardmember Truchon asked what herbicides would be tested next spring. Ms. Hedstrom explained she pass this information along to the boardmembers after speaking with the consultant.

Boardmember Truchon stated she recently went for a walk along the boardwalk. She inquired if the recent mowing was part of the management plan. Ms. Hedstrom commented this work was not contracted with ISG. Project Engineer Larson explained public works had been completing maintenance on the boardwalk and may have impacted the grasses along the boardwalk.

Boardmember Panning thanked staff for the detailed presentation and stated she looked forwarding to attending the January NRCB meeting. She asked if the council had

- 6.2.** 2025-600 Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trail System Project Update
Sponsors: Brent Larson, Project Engineer, Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

Recreation Manager Monahan stated the City Council had a discussion at a recent workshop about the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary trail project. The direction they gave staff was to delay the project because of the following factors:

Low ending balances of the 2026-2030 Open Space CIP Fund
Less than projected revenue of park dedication fees came in for 2025
No current wetland credits to sell to generate revenue from Site 7 Wetland Bank
High estimated cost of the project

Mr. Monahan report the Council expressed excitement for the project. Staff will continue to work with the NCRB and Council about alternative options that may exist to complete and fund portions of the project or the entirety if circumstances change.

Mr. Larson provided a summary of the work that has been completed to date for the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary (BWS) Trail project.

Preliminary Design - Staff walking the proposed route with Stantec to determine an appropriate location of the trail and boardwalk. The goal was to minimize wetland impacts to any adjacent properties, maximize the use of upland (thus reducing the amount of boardwalk and reducing the project cost), and provide a unique and interesting trail experience. Preliminary design included multiple route options, phasing, and neighborhood notices and public meetings.

Soil Borings - Braun Intertec conducted soil borings along the proposed route and prepared a geotechnical evaluation report. The report provided necessary data and professional recommendations for the design of the boardwalk portions of the trail.

Wetland Permitting - The previous phase of the BWS trail system constructed the east-west boardwalk through the northern part of Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. As part of that trail/boardwalk the delineations and impacts two wetland bank sites were approved (Site 7 and Branch 3). These approvals essentially locked in location for the far northern portion of the current proposed trail/boardwalk (northern section of Segment 3).

Mr. Larson explained as part of the current phase of BWS trail/boardwalk, Stantec performed wetland delineations along the entire proposed route (Segments 1-3). The wetland edges that were used during the initial preliminary design phase were outdated or non-existent in some areas. Stantec worked with the Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD), Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR) and MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and received approval of the delineations. This delineation is valid for 5 years from the date of the Notice of Decision (10/28/2025).

Final Design - Based on the soil borings, wetland delineations, neighborhood, council and staff feedback Stantec has completed the construction plans for the entire trail/boardwalk system. The plans have broken the system into three segments. Segment 1 is anticipated to be constructed first and bid as the base bid and Segment 2 will be constructed next and will be bid as an alternate with segment 1. Segment 3 is going to be a separate plan as it is not anticipated to be constructed at this time, but plans will be ready for bidding in the future. By breaking the plans and bids into segments the City will have more options to how the projects are constructed as well as flexibility in funding it. Throughout the design, dialogue of loading capacity and construction materials have been a major consideration. The designed loading capacity of the boardwalk sections are being bid as either 2500 pounds or 5000 pounds. The plans are setup to allow contractors to submit bids for either or both loading capacities. This again allows the City flexibility in the final product. The larger loading capacity would allow for easier access along the boardwalk using small UTV or other equipment to assist with medical or other emergencies and maintenance. This larger loading capacity is likely to come at a higher price. Once bids are received each product bid will need to be reviewed and evaluated to determine the best

overall value (2500 lb vs 5000 lb capacity, wood or composite vs concrete materials, pan footings vs helical, etc.).

Boardmember Panning asked why type of vehicles would be served if the trail were built to the 5000 pound capacity versus the 2500 pound capacity. Mr. Larson explained a golf cart weighs about 2500 pounds without any gear or supplies. He indicated the police and fire have ATV's that could be used for emergency responses that weighed around 2000 pounds. He was of the opinion it would be nice to have a trail that could support up to 5000 pounds.

Boardmember Truchon questioned if there had been any emergency situations on the boardwalk to date. Mr Monahan stated he was not aware of any emergency situations, but noted maintenance has occurred routinely.

Boardmember Truchon inquired if e-bikes were allowed on the boardwalk. Mr. Monahan reported e-bikes were allowed and would be within the weight limit.

Boardmember Truchon asked when the boardwalk opened. Mr. Monahan stated the boardwalk opened in the winter of 2016-2017.

Further discussion ensued regarding how residents access the boardwalk from the adjacent developments.

Boardmember Truchon stated she wanted to see improved connectivity and safety for residents trying to access the boardwalk.

6.3. 2025-598 Recommendation of the 2026 - 2030 Open Space Capital Improvement Plan Budget
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

Mr. Monahan reviewed the 2026-2030 Open Space Capital Improvement Plan Budget and requested the board make a recommendation to the city council.

Chair Rafferty requested staff speak to how park dedication fees are collected. Mr. Monahan reported the city receives \$4,800 per lot in park dedication fees and 35% of this fee was placed in the open space fund.

Boardmember Anderson thanked staff for the detailed presentation on the open space CIP. He inquired if the \$250,000 in projected park dedication fees was too high given the level of projects on the horizon for the city. Mr. Krieger stated he met with the planner and city manager to discuss this matter. He reported this item would be further reviewed by city staff noting this was a placeholders. He explained as more developments come forward the number could be adjusted. Further discussion ensued regarding the funds that would be paid back to the city for the 105th Avenue Redevelopment project.

Boardmember Anderson asked how many dollars had been allocated for the boardwalk trail project. Mr. Monahan reported the city had \$4.8 million allocated for the boardwalk project at this time.

Boardmember Panning commented on how costs have risen exponentially since the previous trail segments were installed in the wetland sanctuary.

Boardmember Anderson questioned if park dedication fees could be used for trail maintenance. Mr. Monahan stated this was not an allowed use for park dedication dollars.

Boardmember Anderson stated if and when the boardwalk project were to move forward, he believed the helical piers would be longer lasting and would require less maintenance long term. Mr. Larson discussed how the numbers presented by staff were estimates and not bids from contractors.

Boardmember Anderson supported the council putting Segments 1 and 2 out for bid in order to get a better idea where costs were for these trail segments.

Moved by Boardmember Anderson, seconded by Boardmember Panning, to recommend the City Council bid Segments 1 and 2 of the trail project as outlined in the map in 2026.

Moved by Boardmember Anderson, seconded by Boardmember Truchon, to recommend the City Council approve the 2026-2030 Open Space Capital Improvement Plan Budget.

Further discussion ensued regarding the potential timeline for the BWS boardwalk trail segments.

Motion adopted unanimously.

7. Adjournment

Chair Rafferty adjourned the meeting at 8:29PM.