



City of Blaine

Natural Resource Conservation Board

January 20, 2026 | 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, Gramstad, Mereness, Panning, Truchon.

Others Present: Recreation Manager Nate Monahan.

3. Approval of Minutes

- 3.1.** 2026-12 Approval of the NRCB Meeting Minutes for November 18, 2025
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

Boardmember Panning reported she would like to see Section 6.1 addressed because there was a sentence from her comment that was not completed.

Boardmember Truchon asked if any action was taken with the city council on the board's recommendation from the last meeting. Recreation Manager Monahan stated he would have more information on this topic for the board during the NRCB Updates.

Boardmember Anderson stated on Page 5, he asked that the word why be changed to what in Councilmember Panning's comment.

Boardmember Anderson requested the last page of the minutes reflect both motions were approved unanimously.

MOVED by Boardmember Anderson, seconded by Boardmember Truchon, to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2025 board meeting as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented as amended adding the Florhein Property to the NRCB Updates.

5. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the NRCB.

6. New Business

- 6.1.** 2026-13 Presentation by ISG on Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Wetland Bank Monitoring
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

Recreation Manager Monahan reported ISG was in attendance to give a presentation on the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary (BWS) Wetland Bank Monitoring for 2025 and future work plan moving forward.

William Stencil, Ecologist with ISG, provided the board with a presentation on the BWS wetland bank and the monitoring that was completed in 2025. He discussed the unique landscape found within the Anoka sand plain. He commented on the rare plants and resources that have been found within the BWS and noted the invasive species that were present. He discussed the 16 plots that were surveyed within the BWS. He commented on the key findings from the survey work noting he found 122 native plant species, 14 introduced plant species and four different native plant communities were identified within the BWS. He reviewed the performance standards that have to be met within the BWS noting a light surface fire would benefit the plant community along with chemical control, physical control and potential seeding of bare areas where the seed bank has been lost. He reviewed the work that would be completed in the coming year while commenting on the long-term goals for the BWS. He stated he was excited to be working with the city of Blaine and noted he was available for questions or comments.

Boardmember Truchon questioned if Mr. Stencil was familiar with the scraping method that was used in Site 7. Mr. Stencil reported he was familiar with this type of treatment but recommended the areas of concern be treated with herbicide and fires before additional scraping be conducted.

Boardmember Truchon asked how persistent the herbicide would be. Mr. Stencil explained the herbicide was grass specific and would take three weeks to show effects.

Boardmember Truchon stated she would have concerns about use of the herbicide given how much water and wetlands were in this area. She indicated she did not want the groundwater to be impacted either. She inquired if Site 7 would be impacted when the ditch area (Ditch 5362) was cleaned out. Mr. Stencil explained he wondered how often this ditch

area was cleaned out.

Boardmember Truchon reported the Rice Creek Watershed District Board was talking about cleaning the ditch area out again. She recommended the consultant speak with the watershed about the concerns of cleaning this ditch out. She noted the City had removed the dam/blockage material. She noted the ditch issue was on her mind given the investment the city was making in the BWS. She discussed the properties to the north that were not yet developed and suggested buffer areas be considered before these areas develop. Mr. Stencel commented on how the water flowed through this area and reported the city did not want water returning from the ditch area to the wetlands.

Boardmember Panning asked if the existing tree and shrub roots were impeding the water flow. Mr. Stencel stated the city would want to keep the water level high year round. He explained if the city were to draw the level of the water down, the city would get peat in this area.

Boardmember Anderson questioned if the herbicide treatment would have an impact on the insects and amphibians within the BWS. Mr. Stencel described the experience he has had with using this herbicide, noting it was specific for grass treatment. He was of the opinion that the benefits far outweigh the negatives, noting he has seen bugs and insects come back to an area once the site was treated.

Boardmember Anderson inquired what area would have the prescribed burn. Mr. Stencel suggested the prescribed burn be held over the entire wetland. He stated if an area had to be prioritized, he would say the main central area be burned (Plots 8 and 9).

Boardmember Anderson asked how the thistle would be addressed. Mr. Stencel indicated the thistle was coming up on the northern portion of Site 7. He stated it would be ideal to have the thistle pulled or weed whipped.

Boardmember Anderson questioned how long it would be before the city began seeing results from the proposed treatments. Mr. Stencel anticipated it would take three years for the city to begin to see results. He indicated the interim two results would be realized in five or six years.

Boardmember Truchon reported a thistle removal project could be organized through the Anoka County Volunteer Group or other outside help. She noted she was always enthusiastic to avoid using herbicides and pesticides. Mr. Stencel suggested the thistle and buckthorn be the focus for volunteer groups. He indicated it only takes two years for buckthorn to be continually pulled and it will not return.

Boardmember Panning suggested staff work with Great River Greening on the thistle and buckthorn removal initiatives. Mr. Monahan stated this would be something he would have to speak with Stormwater Coordinator Hedstrom about, noting Great River Greening was involved with the city on the southern portion of the BWS.

Boardmember Anderson requested the PowerPoint presentation from ISG be forwarded to the boardmembers for future reference.

The board thanked Mr. Stencil for his detailed presentation on the BWS wetland bank monitoring.

6.2. 2026-14 NRCB Updates
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

Mr. Monahan provided the board with an update on the following items:

Open Space CIP 2026-2030 - Staff reported the Open Space CIP moved forward as presented in November without the boardwalks. It was noted the council's focus at this time was to review the monitoring report with the city working towards getting the wetlands credits realized, in order to receive more funding.

Boardmember Anderson stated it would take at least three years before 15% of the BWS was at the interim one stage. He indicated this would really push the boardwalk project back several years. Mr. Monahan explained this was his understanding at this point.

Boardmember Truchon questioned if it would be possible to go forward with a portion of the trails that would connect the one development near 109th to Lexington Avenue because it would not require a boardwalk. Mr. Monahan reviewed the portion of trail Boardmember Truchon was discussing, noting this trail would require gravel along with extensive segments of boardwalk. He suggested a joint meeting be held between the NRCB and the city council to discuss trail segments and trail timing.

Boardmember Anderson stated the New Horizons development was new and explained an outlot to the northeast corner would have allowed for a boardwalk trail system in this area of the subdivision. He believed this was a missed opportunity in the city's planning process. He expressed concern with the fact the city was not taking the initiative to get bids for segment one because there were sufficient funds available. He reported this board made the recommendation to move forward with this portion of the project because funding was currently in place. He questioned what kind of coordination was occurring between staff and the planning commission or city council regarding the BWS trail segments. Mr. Monahan described how staff works with the city council during the platting process on the placement of trail segments. He stated he understood segment one was important and should be constructed first.

Boardmember Truchon requested staff speak with the city council about holding a joint meeting in August of 2026. Mr. Monahan stated he would speak to the city manager to see if a joint meeting could be held in August.

2026 NRCB Meeting Schedule: April, June, September, November - Staff reported the NRCB would be meeting in April, June, September and November of this year.

Location Ideas for June Tour - Staff requested the Board speak with staff regarding recommendations or areas that should be visited during the June tour.

Further discussion ensued regarding the regulations that have to be followed for a

prescribed burn.

Florin Property - Staff explained the city was in discussions with Frank Florin regarding a land donation for the 10 acre parcel adjacent to the Legacy Woods property. The board supported the proposed land donation and encouraged staff to continue conversations with Mr. Florin.

7. Adjournment

Chair Rafferty adjourned the meeting at 8:11PM.