



**TWO  
RIVERS**  
WISCONSIN

# ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Council Chambers - City Hall, 3rd Floor  
1717 E. Park Street, Two Rivers, WI 54241

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## MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 pm by Shannon Derby

2. **ROLL CALL AND CHECK ON REMOTE PARTICIPANTS**

Board Members: Douglas Brandt, Shannon Derby, Donald DeBruyn, Tracey Koach, Corinne Weis

Staff and Others: Matthew Heckenlaible, Mike Mathis, Darla LeClair

Newly appointed members: Laura Prellwitz and DeeAnna Laine

Introductions were made by all individuals present.

3. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the January 20, 2026, Environmental Advisory Board meeting

Corinne Weis made a motion to accept the January 20, 2026, Environmental Advisory Board Meeting minutes, seconded by Donal DeBruyn. Motion carried.

4. **PUBLIC INPUT – N/A**

5. **NEW ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION, AS NEEDED**

**A. Community Shoreline Clean Up Project**

This event is being planned for April 25<sup>th</sup> with a rain date of May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

People, Earth, Water (PEW) will assist with the shoreline clean-up from the water side utilizing kayaks and canoes. Team leads were identified for the three (3) targeted locations as follows: Veterans Boat Launch – Kyle Kordell, Paddlers Park – Laura Prellwitz, and Washington Park – DeeAnna Laine.

0. **ONGOING ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION, AS NEEDED**

**A. EAB Educational Series Update**

Shannon provided an overview of the 2025-26 winter education series and we will look at starting the planning for the 2026-27 series in May. It was noted that the EAB Webpage still has the 2024-25 education series schedule listed. We should also look at posting the schedule on the “Explore Two Rivers” calendar to draw more attention to boost participation in these events.

## 7. EAB OUTREACH

### **A. EAB Community Flyer and Handout**

Consider utilizing Cool City Connect in the future to help promote upcoming events and activities and increase community awareness and participation.

### **B. Educational Opportunities**

1. "Did you know..." informational blurbs were suggested as a good addition to the Cool City Connect communications.
2. Shannon will contact high school science teachers to explore student participation opportunities with the EAB committee and volunteer activities at events.
3. Discussion occurred regarding ways to increase community involvement and public exposure, including:
  - a. Participating in community events like National Night Out
  - b. Utilizing the "I Love TR" Facebook page for outreach and promotion

## 8. PARK AND REC UPDATES AND ACTION, AS NEEDED

**\*\*\* Mike Mathis provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the following agenda items; see attached. \*\*\***

- A. Forestry Update
- B. Rec Updates
- C. Environmental Project Updates
- D. Bird City USA

## 9. OTHER ITEMS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE BOARD, WITH CONSIDERATION AND ACTION, IF NEEDED – N/A

## 10. SET DATE, TIME AND LOCATION FOR NEXT BOARD MEETING

Proposed for Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at 5:30 pm

## 11. ADJOURNMENT: 7:45 pm

Tracey Koach made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Laura Prellwitz. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by: **Matthew R. Heckenlaible**

Public Works Director/City Engineer



**TWO  
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WISCONSIN

# Environmental Advisory Board Meeting 4/21/26

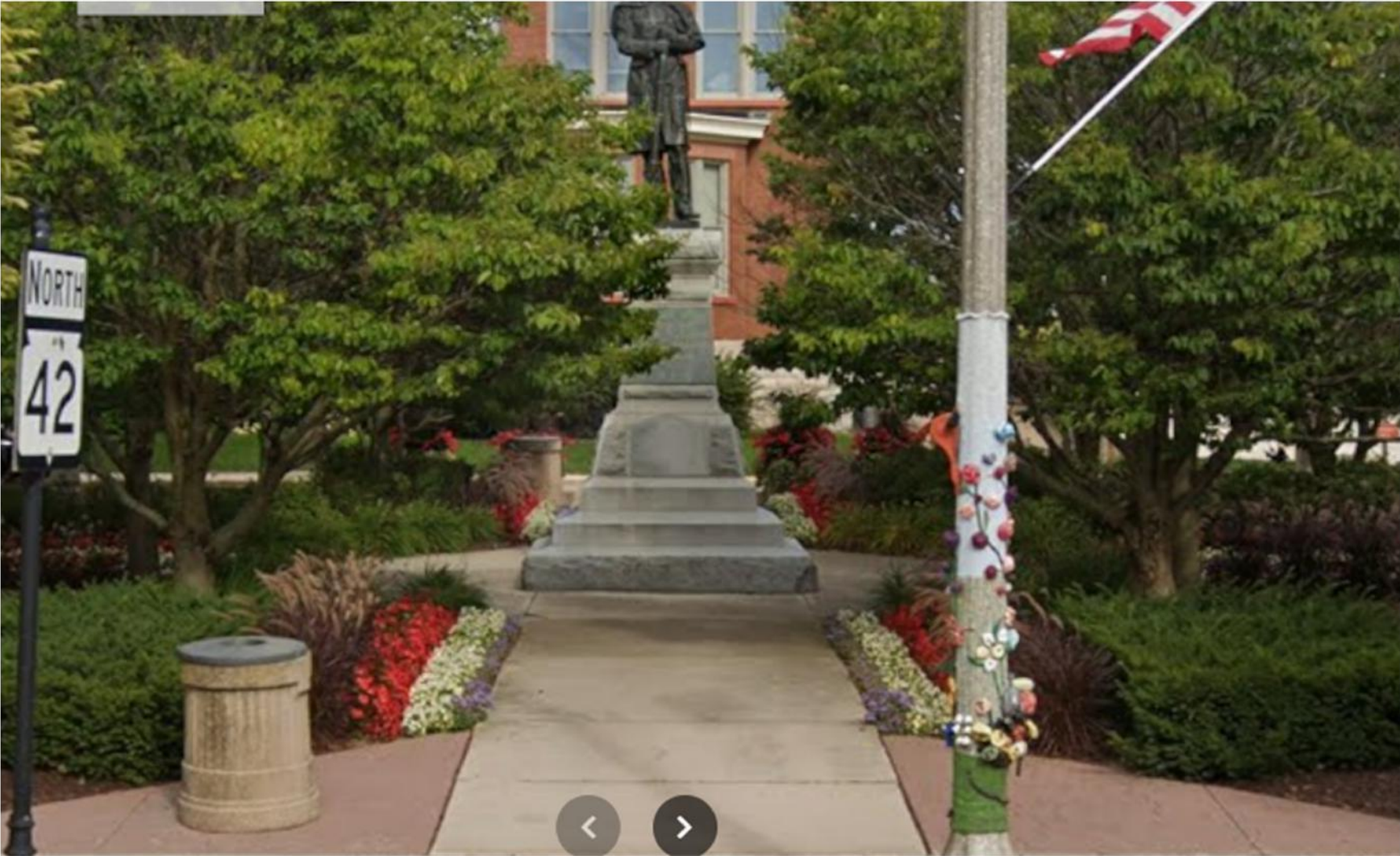


Mike Mathis, Director of Parks and Recreation

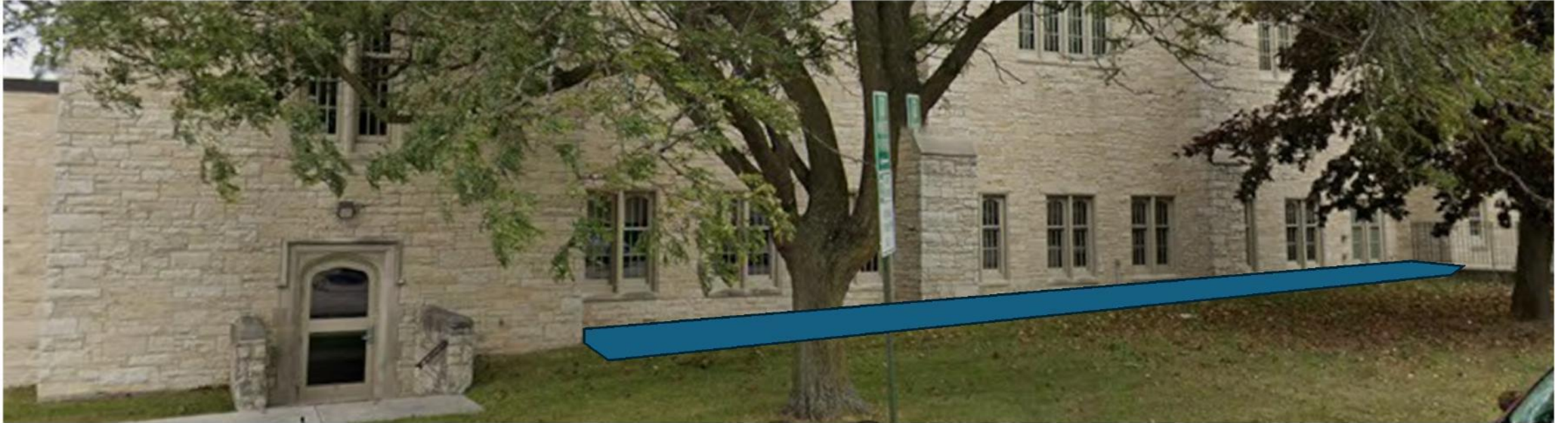
# Senior Center Garden



# Central Park East Flower Beds



# Community House Native Plant Area



# General Forestry Updates

- The City will continue covering the cost of sidewalks pushed up by City terrace trees
- 45 dead, dying, or storm damaged trees removed in 2026
  - Stump grinding will primarily take place in fall
- Priority Removal Areas
  - New Cemetery
  - Old Cemetery
  - Lakeshore Park
  - Neshotah Park
- Kevin Drossart working towards Certified Arborist designation
- Youth Apprentice, Tahlia Seefeldt, currently grant funded through summer in partnership with Grace Congregational Church
- Tree Planting
  - 40, 2" caliper trees arriving next week for the Cemetery & Neshotah
  - 50, 2'-3' whips being delivered for gravel bed nursery
  - High School students are building the gravel bed

# DNR Non-Point Source & Storm Water Grant Resolution for Application

- Project will execute storm water management solutions along Mariners Trail
- Resolution does not commit us to accepting the grant
- 50% cost share with a total possible project cost of \$150,000
- Local match funding will be secured through additional grants, donations, in-kind match, and/or 2027 capital borrowing
- City Council must approve any city contributions as a part of the 2027 budget



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# Perpetual Care Flowers

- Traditional geraniums have been ordered and will be planted this year as always.
- The Lakeshore Community Foundation will be visiting with City Council on April 27<sup>th</sup> to learn more about the possibility of creating an investment fund for the program.
- P&R is planning to start a trial of perennial plants that may be used to gradually phase out annual plants over a few years.

## EXAMPLE PLANTS



Yarrow



Wild Indigo

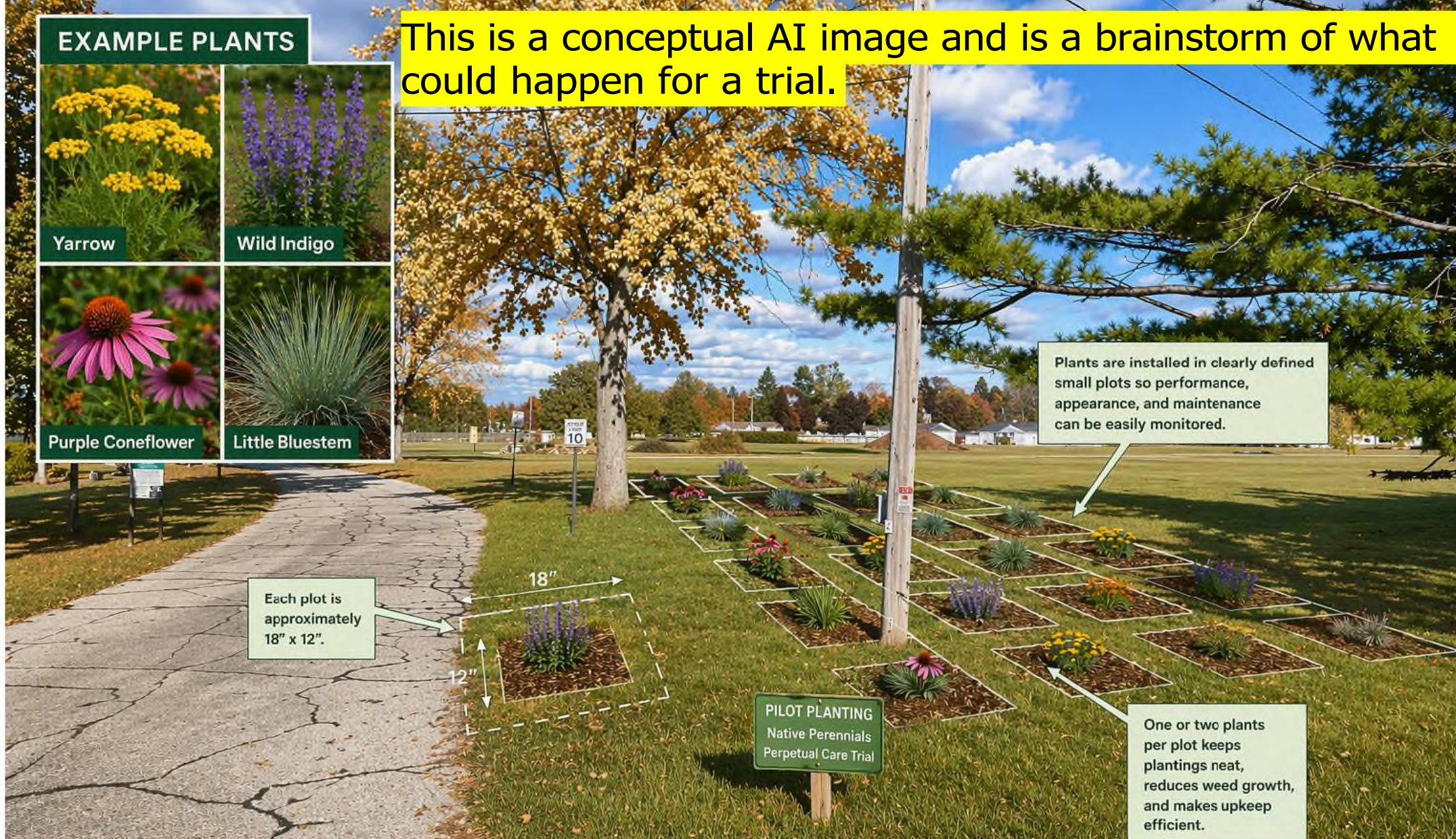


Purple Coneflower



Little Bluestem

This is a conceptual AI image and is a brainstorm of what could happen for a trial.



## Perpetual Care Flowers Trial – Layout Detail

Native Perennial Plantings in Open Turf Areas

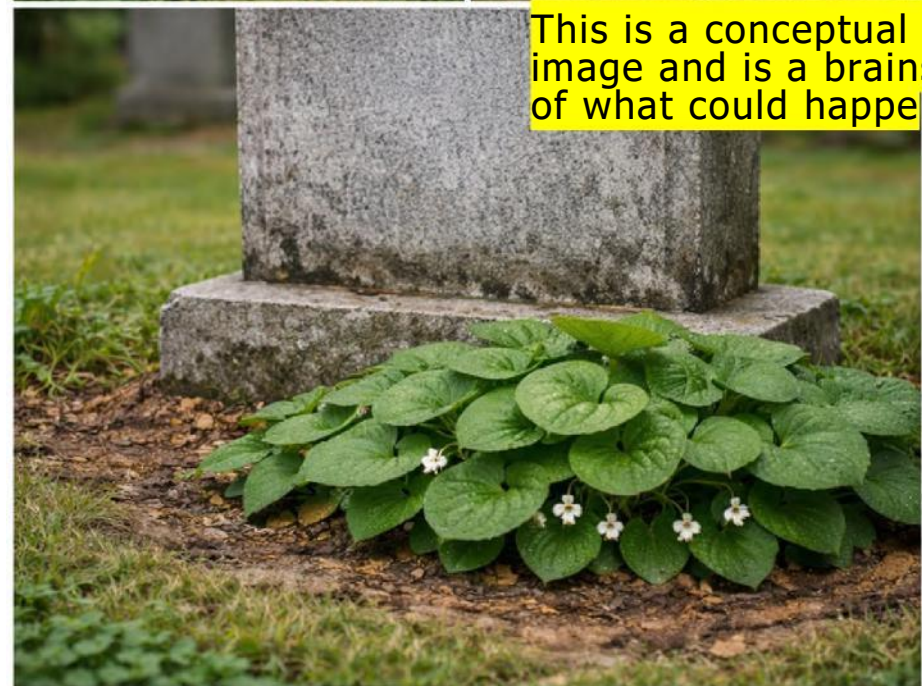
Pilot plots will be installed in a grid layout with one or two native perennial plants per 18" x 12" space to evaluate plant performance, maintenance needs, and community response.

# Cemetery Perpetual Care Flowers Trial

- **Pilot Locations Identified** – Install native perennial plantings on graves of interested families and in select “side”/common areas to test appropriate placement and design.
- **Species Selection & Installation** – Utilize low-maintenance, regionally appropriate native perennials selected for durability, appearance, and compatibility with cemetery conditions.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation** – Track plant health, maintenance time, costs, and public feedback throughout the growing season to evaluate performance.
- **Report Back & Next Steps** – Provide a summary to the Advisory Recreation Board and City Council with recommendations for expansion, modification, or continuation of the program.

# Flower Examples

- The full list of possible plants has over 40 species with a range of condition tolerance.
- Wild Geranium (Geranium maculatum) Ht: 1-2' Spread 1' Part-full shade Clumping shape Color: purple-pink Blooms: May-June
- Wild Stonecrop (Sedum ternatum) Ht: 6" - 1' Spread: 1' Part-shade Spreading ground cover Color: white Blooms: May-June
- Wild Ginger (Asarum canadense) Ht: 6-12", Part-shade, low spreading, Color: green with small white flowers Blooms: April - May



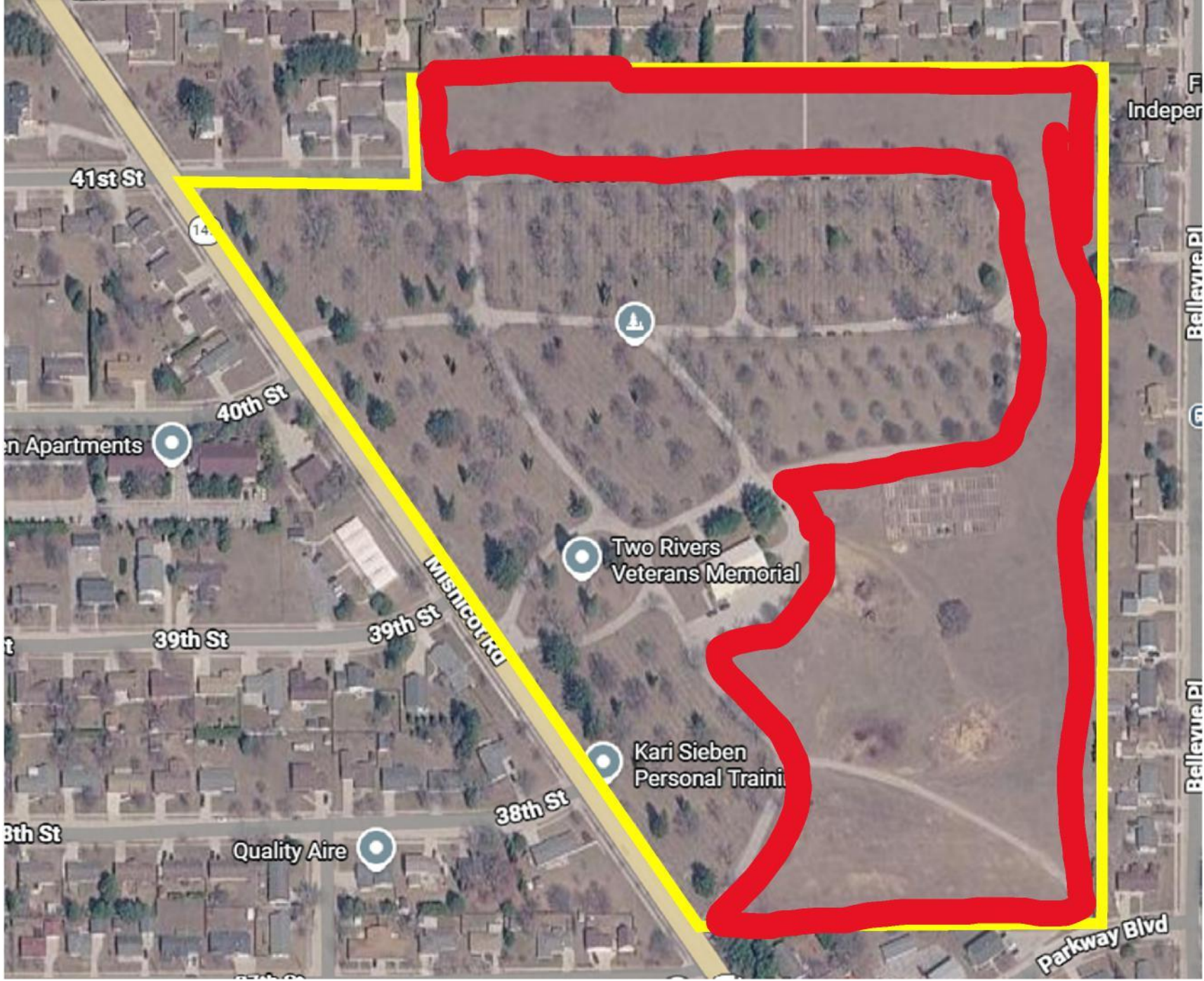
This is a conceptual AI image and is a brainstorm of what could happen.

# Flower Math

- Perennial Wild Geranium – Plant once with life span of ~10 years
  - \$5.50 per plant X 2000 planting sites = \$11,000
  - No watering required
- Annual Geranium – Planted annually
  - \$3.00 per plant X 10 years X 1000 planting sites = \$60,000
  - Watering required to keep in good condition
- Annual Labor Costs
  - We will have an accurate cost of labor in spring 2026. The labor for planting annuals will likely transition to some maintenance of watering and trimming plants in fall. There is a potential for cost savings on the maintenance.

New Cemetery  
37 acres –  
15 acres of  
turf grass  
without  
graves or  
trees

Old Cemetery  
10 acres



<https://www.chicagobotanic.org/blog/plant-science-conservation/how-scientists-are-rethinking-lawns>

**Cemetery Initiative**

P&R is considering leading long-term land-use planning for the cemetery that will reduce operating costs, increase community benefit, support sustainability, and preserve heritage.

**Ideas**

- Reduce turf grass areas with a variety of well maintained and curated native zones
- Plant groves of trees
- Reconfigure paths and drives
- Walking path
- Promote quiet recreation such as walking, birding, dog walking
- Open new section for burials

**RETHINKING LAWNS**

**Testing Options for Alternatives to the Standard Mowed Grass**

Adding up the mowing, watering & weeding lawn takes, it's a lot for people & the environment. Lawns are the largest irrigated crop in America at 63,000 square miles. This experiment is testing out some options for imagining what lawns could become.



**Low-Growing Fescue Grass**

Fine fescue grass may not be native, but it looks "normal" In theory, it grows slower & shorter, meaning less mowing.

Non-Native Plants

Less Mowing

**White Clover Mixes**

Of our region's weeds, white clover is considered a happy medium between something people AND bees can like. Clover also helps soil by pulling nutrients into the soil.

Non-Native Plants

Pollinator Friendly

**Native Lawn**

Our sedge lawn mix combines three species native to our region. In theory, they have deeper roots, need less water, and supports native species.

Native Plants

Less Mowing

**Native Mini Meadow**

Our custom mix of native grasses & wildflowers that our local pollinators love. Plants were selected because they tend to be short, almost like a tall lawn.

Native Plants

Less Mowing

Pollinator Friendly

**Short Prairie**

We know prairie is great for pollinators and soils. The problem is people don't want tall plants for their yards! We have prairie here to compare with our other plots.

Native Plants

Less Mowing

Pollinator Friendly



# Long-Term Cemetery Planning

## Land-use Planning outcomes include:

- **Reduced long-term maintenance costs and labor** by replacing high-maintenance turf and annual flower plantings with durable, well-designed perennial and native plantings. This includes transitioning away from the City's annual geranium program, which requires yearly purchasing and labor.
- **A well-maintained, park-like setting for quiet recreation**, including walking, reflection, and passive use, particularly for nearby residents and seniors. Design will prioritize a clean, intentional appearance that fits community expectations.
- **Clearly defined and managed planting areas** that prevent the appearance of overgrowth or neglect. Conservation zones will be thoughtfully designed with buffers, edges, and sightlines to ensure the space looks cared for and orderly.
- **Strategic buffers to reduce nuisance concerns**, using plant design and layout to discourage unwanted wildlife near homes and active areas while directing habitat benefits to appropriate parts of the site.
- **Preservation of cemetery traditions and respect for loved ones**, ensuring that all improvements maintain the dignity, accessibility, and cultural expectations of a municipal cemetery.
- **Improved drainage and reduced wet or unusable areas**, making the property easier to maintain and more accessible for visitors.
- **Long-term sustainability of the cemetery system**, ensuring the City can continue to provide high-quality care while adapting to changing needs, including reduced burial demand and increasing maintenance costs.

# Paddlers Park – Work starting in April

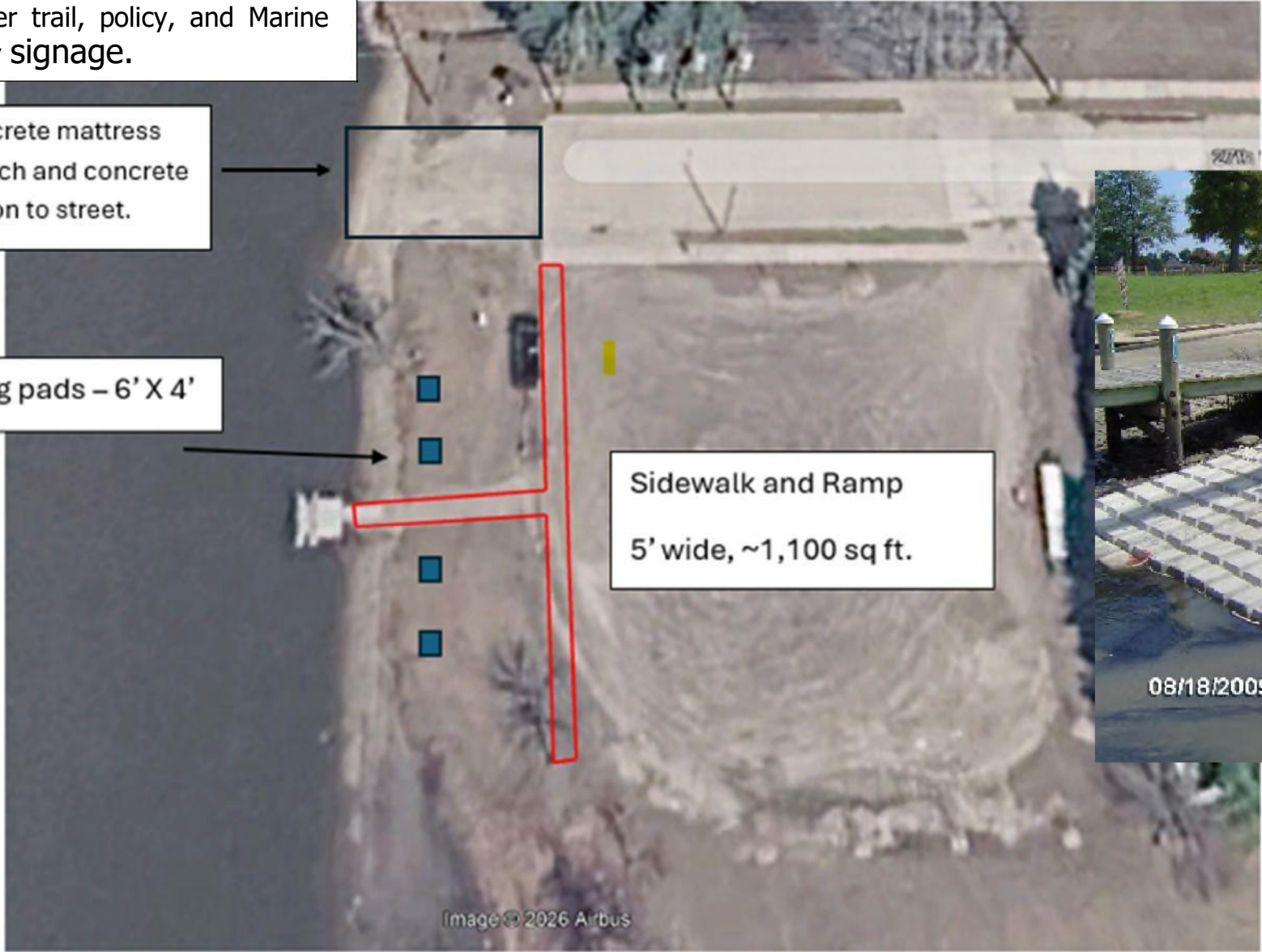
Funded 50% with WI Coastal Management Grant and 50% 2025 city capital budget.  
Construction starting in April.

New water trail, policy, and Marine Sanctuary signage.

New concrete mattress boat launch and concrete connection to street.

Fishing pads – 6' X 4'

Sidewalk and Ramp  
5' wide, ~1,100 sq ft.



# Bird City USA

- <https://birdcity.org/>

## The Benefits of Birding

- **Significant Economic Driver** – Birding contributes millions annually to Wisconsin’s economy through spending on lodging, dining, gear, and local services, especially in coastal and rural communities.
- **Extends Tourism Seasons** – Spring and fall migrations draw visitors during shoulder seasons, helping stabilize revenue beyond peak summer months.
- **Attracts High-Value Visitors** – Birders tend to stay longer, travel farther, and spend more per trip compared to average tourists.
- **Supports Local Businesses & Jobs** – Outfitters, guides, festivals, lodging providers, and nature centers all benefit from birding-related visitation.
- **Strengthens Conservation Investment** – Birding tourism creates demand for habitat protection and trail access, supporting funding for parks, wildlife areas, and Great Lakes coastal restoration.



**BIRD CITY  
NETWORK**



# Recreation Economy for Rural Communities

- <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/recreation-economy-rural-communities>
- Save the date, Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>

The Recreation Economy for Rural Communities planning assistance program helps communities identify strategies to grow their outdoor recreation economy and revitalize their main streets.

Outdoor activities are increasingly popular across the United States, and many communities are seeking to grow their outdoor recreation and tourism economy, while investing in their main streets and conserving forests and natural lands. Encouraging growth on main streets while promoting outdoor recreation can help foster community revitalization, protect air and water quality, create jobs and support economic diversification, and offer new opportunities for people to connect with the natural world.



# CELEBRATION

**Saturday, April 25, 2026**

**10am - Noon**

**Holy Cross & Forest View Cemetery**

Join us for a FREE, family-friendly event featuring tree plantings!

**Don't forget your gloves & helping hands!**



# EARTH DAY COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP

Join the City of Two Rivers Parks & Recreation Department for a community-wide Earth Day Clean-Up on April 25th to help keep our parks, neighborhoods, and public spaces beautiful.



We invite families, students, and community members to help the Parks & Recreation Department pick up litter in parks, streets, and public spaces. Volunteers will meet at one of three rally sites. Trash bags and some grabbers will be provided—wear clothes that can get dirty and bring gloves if you have them.

**Rally Locations:**

- Central Park West (Bandstand)
- Lakeshore Park (Lester Public Library - Playground)
- Riverside Park (Skatepark)

Holy Cross & Forest View Cemetery  
3801 Mishicot Road, Two Rivers

Scan QR code to volunteer!



# BEACH CLEANUP

# DUNE GRASS PLANTING



FRIENDS of the  
**74n/titters**  
WATERSHED

Stantec



Join Us!

LOVE YOUR LAKE THIS EARTH DAY!

Be part of restoring our Lake Michigan Shoreline! Join the Friends of the Twin Rivers on Saturday, April 18 from 9AM - 12 PM for a hands-on morning of beach cleanup and dune grass planting.

Native dune grass helps build habitat, hold sand in place, and protect Memorial Drive from wind and wave driven sand movement.

• Saturday April 18<sup>th</sup>

9 AM - 12 PM

• Meet at the beach area south of Lighthouse Inn

Register now at: [www.wisconsin.gov](https://www.wisconsin.gov)



# ADVENTURE AWAITS!

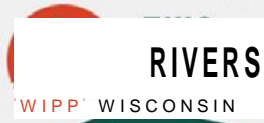
May 12 & 13, 6pm - 7pm

Shinrin-Yoku (Forest Bathing with Two Rivers Parks & Rec)



## FEATURED EXPERIENCES:

- **Slow Down & Reconnect**  
This gentle 2-day series invites you to immerse yourself in nature through mindful walking, sensory awareness and quiet reflection
- **Progressive**  
Learn about Forest Bathing and tools to reduce stress, restore balance, and deepen your connection to the natural world - no experience or special fitness required
- **Showing up**  
Come as you are. Leave feeling grounded, refreshed, and renewed



\$25 investment in your health  
Further details sent via email after registration  
Scan the QR Code to register or at [reconnect.com](https://www.reconnect.com)

Contact Info:  
[Reconnect.com](https://www.reconnect.com)  
(920) 793-5594