Protecting the rusty-patched bumble bee in Minnetonka

The City of Minnetonka and the Center for Biological Diversity have approved an agreement to help protect the endangered rusty-patched bumble bee and its habitat in Lone Lake Park.

"Preserving and protecting Minnetonka's distinctive natural environment ranks among the city's top priorities," said Minnetonka Mayor Brad Wiersum.

"With these new conservation measures for the bee, Minnetonka's setting a standard for other municipalities in the Midwest," said Tara Cornelisse, a senior scientist at the Center. "This agreement will bring real, on-the-ground conservation measures to saving the rusty-patched bumble bee."

The city has committed to numerous measures, including:

Before and during trail construction (2020)

- ✓ Enlist a bee expert to scout the trail corridor for bee activity.
- ✓ Map rusty-patched bumblebee nesting, overwintering and foraging habitat in the park.
- ✓ Use the map and survey results to protect the rusty-patched bumble bee during construction.
- ✓ Avoid tree removal, except hazard trees and small trees directly in the trail footprint, during construction.

After construction is complete (2021 and beyond)

- ✓ Coordinate with Minnetonka Off-Road Cyclists (MORC) to raise funds for addition of pollinator plants.
- ✓ Create one additional acre of habitat for the bee, and enhance pollinator plantings in other areas of Lone Lake Park.
- ✓ Collaborate with MORC and Friends of Lone Lake Park (FLLP) to engage volunteers for habitat maintenance.
- ✓ Use policies, education and action to promote bee habitat throughout Minnetonka.
- ✓ Conduct annual bee surveys, and share results on the city's website.
- ✓ Limit the use of pesticides to spot-spraying for invasive species control and maintenance of playing fields.
- ✓ During the peak flowering season, avoid removal of non-native plants that are known to provide forage for the rusty-patched bumble bee.
- ✓ Identify tree species that provide forage for the bee and avoid pruning or removal while flowering, except to prevent safety hazards.