



May 2026

3033 St. Croix Trail South
P.O. Box 219
Afton, MN 55001

City of Afton Dashboard

A Summary of Current Happenings

- ◆ The restricted pedestrian bridge crossing Valley Creek at Putnam Blvd is being closed pending bridge inspection by the city’s engineers. This bridge originally carried vehicular traffic but was restricted to pedestrians for safety reasons approximately 20 years ago.
- ◆ The Council approved plans by the city’s engineers to obtain quotes for micro-surfacing of additional local roads. Last year, the city micro-surfaced roughly six (6) miles which has proven to be successful. This process, which is significantly less expensive than the mill and overlay process, should add an additional 7 to 10 years to the life of those roads.
- ◆ The Council has approved re-establishing the high-speed internet citizen task force, with the goal of improving high speed internet connectivity and addressing existing phone and internet service quality and reliability issues. The task force will begin to meet in the coming months. Anyone interested in joining the task force is encouraged to please contact the city at 651-436-5090 or by email to jmoore@aftonmn.gov

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4th of July Parade

Afton’s 4th of July Parade is funded mostly through private donations. As the costs of the parade increase, more funding is needed. The non-profit Afton Parade Committee is in search of volunteers to help raise funds to cover the operating costs of the parade. If you can help with fundraising or volunteer for other parade related activities, please contact Stan Ross, President of the Afton Parade Committee, at stan@aftonparade.com.

METAL & TIRE RECYCLING DAY

Metal and Tire Recycling Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 16, 2026 at the City Garage, 1675 Stagecoach Trail. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Residents must unload their own vehicles— come prepared to unload.

- **SCRAP METAL** includes swing sets, bicycles, metal toys, etc. (**NO** appliances are allowed.) All fabric, rubber, wood, fluids, and anything else that is not metal **must be removed**.
- **TIRES** must be off the rims (metal rims can be recycled). Tire size is limited to your ability to lift them. **NO** large tires such as tractor tires. This is for personal disposal only. No commercial supplies of tires.

PLEASE BE AWARE: A MAXIMUM OF 4 TIRES PER HOUSEHOLD WILL BE ACCEPTED. EXCEPTIONS TO THIS MAY BE CONSIDERED BUT RESIDENTS MUST CONTACT CITY HALL PRIOR TO THE EVENT IF THEY ARE REQUESTING TO BRING MORE THAN 4 TIRES.

Please be patient and cooperate with staff by following their direction in lining up and unloading your metal items and tires.

City Office Closed

Monday, May 25

Memorial Day

CITY MEETINGS

May 4, 2026

Planning Commission Meeting
7:00 PM

May 5, 2026

Natural Resources & Groundwater
Committee
5:00 PM

May 11, 2026

Parks Committee
6:00 PM

May 13, 2026

Heritage Preservation Commission
6:00 PM

May 19, 2026

City Council Meeting
7:00 PM

Livestreaming is available for City Council and Planning Commission Meetings.

Information on how to view will be posted on the City website along with the agenda and meeting packet.

City Council

- Mayor: Bill Palmquist 651-308-0569
- Ward 1: Annie Perkins 651-592-3007
- Ward 2: Lucia Wroblewski 651-436-3982
- Ward 3: Stan Ross 612-720-6478
- Ward 4: Randy Nelson 651-436-2479

City Hall

651-436-5090

City Website

aftonmn.gov

Important Numbers

- Animal Control 715-220-1332
- Building Inspector 651-436-6469
- Burning Permits 651-436-7033
- Environmental Center 651-275-7475
- Highland Sanitation 651-458-0043
- Otter Lake Animal Care 651-426-8871
- Fire Dept 651-436-7033
- Sheriff’s Dept 651-439-9381

EMERGENCY 911

Notes from the Mayor

At its April meeting, the council voted to fully close the bridge on Putnam Boulevard over Valley Creek while our engineers assess its structural safety. The bridge has been closed to motorized traffic for many years, but the engineers recommended that it be closed to pedestrians as well until its condition can be determined.

The City is reestablishing the high speed internet and cell service task force to look into issues we continue to face regarding the quality and reliability of service in some areas of the city. If you are interested in serving please contact city staff at 651-436-4090.

We will be doing crack sealing and microsurfacing of roads again this summer. Depending on the quotes we get we hope to improve more than 20 miles between the two projects. The good news is these are relatively quick projects and will not involve any extended road closures. We also hope to get these going early this year, so we will provide updates on timing and the areas being worked on as we move forward this spring.

Speaking of spring, it is a great time to get out and join your neighbors at two volunteer planting days being coordinated by our Natural Resource and Groundwater Committee. The group will be planting the levee at Steamboat Park (May 14th from 5-7pm) and City Hall (May 21 from 5-7pm). Everything is provided so please join in if you are able. To sign up or learn more, please email Elissa Thompson at ethompson@mnwcd.org.

Memorial Lutheran Church (15730 S Afton Blvd) is hosting a reading May 7th that I thought many of us here in Afton would be interested in. Authors Josephine Marcotty (former Star Tribune reporter) and David Hage will discuss their book *Sea of Grass*, which explores the history, exploitation, and restoration of the American prairie. There will be an opportunity to view the prairie restoration work done by the church beforehand. It starts at 5pm with the author's talk at 6pm.

-Bill

4th of July Parade

Afton's 4th of July Parade will now be charging \$50 per parade entry. This change is necessary to cover the significant increases in operating expenses. Please go to www.aftonparade.com and register to enter the parade and pay the new entry fee.

Sea of Grass authors to speak in Afton

Authors **Josephine Marcotty** (former *Star Tribune* reporter) and **David Hage** will discuss their book **Sea of Grass**, which explores the history, exploitation, and restoration of the American prairie. Prior to the talk, attendees are invited to explore Memorial Lutheran Church's prairie restoration efforts, including invasive species removal, native prairie seeding, and the site of the planned labyrinth.

When: May 7

5:00 Labyrinth and prairie tour

6:00 Sea of Grass authors Lecture

Where: Memorial Lutheran Church 15730 S Afton Blvd, Afton, MN 55001

Mosquito Control activity is underway for 2026!

People in bright yellow safety vests with "Public Health Mosquito Control" written on them may be coming to your area! Seasonal staff at the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District have begun working throughout the seven-county metro area to reduce the overall number of mosquitoes and protect people from diseases caused by mosquitoes and ticks. Based on weather forecasts and other data, **MMCD predicts that 2026 will be an average year** with a high number of cattail mosquitoes emerging in early July. Field mosquito technicians will be working in coordination with the entomology lab to determine which areas are the "hot spots" for mosquito activity.

Each year the start of the mosquito season depends on snowmelt, rain, air temperatures, and several other factors. This year, seasonal field staff begin working in April 13th, and residents of the seven-county metro area may notice green or white trucks with the MMCD logo or staff on bikes or on foot wearing brightly colored "Public Health Mosquito Control" vests. Helicopter treatments are likely to begin the week of April 20th, but may begin sooner depending on weather.

At times MMCD employees may need to cross private property to access and check areas for mosquito larvae. If you have questions about mosquito control activities or concerns about an employee, please call the MMCD front desk at (651) 645-9149 or visit MMCD.org.

Meeting Highlights

April 6, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for a Variance application for an accessory building at 5698 Oakridge Court S.
- Reviewed a sketch plan for a 4-lot Subdivision at the east end of 10th St S.

April 21, 2026 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Approved a Minor Subdivision application to create one additional lot at 1010 Stagecoach Tr S.
- Denied a Variance application for an accessory building at 5698 Oakridge Court S.
- Approved road maintenance projects for 2026.
- Voted to close the pedestrian bridge on Putnam Blvd until a structural safety assessment can be done.
- Reviewed a sketch plan for a 4-lot Subdivision at the east end of 10th St S.
- Directed the Planning Commission to look at options for the size and number of accessory buildings on lots of less than 5 acres.

MEETING PACKETS, VIDEOS AND APPROVED MEETING MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE AT:
aftonmn.gov

Afton State Park Events May 2026

SATURDAY, MAY 2

10 a.m. - 12 p.m. **Osprey Watch!**
Meet at the front of the Visitor Center.

SATURDAY, MAY 9

2-3 p.m. **Motifs and Mascots; Minnesota's State Symbols**
Meet in the Visitor Center.

SATURDAY, MAY 16

9-11 a.m. **Meet Minnesota's Mammals**
Meet at the Visitor Center.

SATURDAY, MAY 23

10-12 a.m. **Osprey Watch!**
Meet at the front of the Visitor Center.

SATURDAY, MAY 23

2-3 p.m. **Fantastic Fossils**
Meet at the Visitor Center.

SATURDAY, MAY 30

9-10 a.m. **Nature Walk**
Meet at Upper Picnic Area.

For event details see https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/events.html?location=spk00100

If you need an accommodation, please contact Carolyn at Carolyn.kocken@state.mn.us or 651-242-4977, two weeks prior to the event.

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Nature Journaling: Signs of Spring
May 03 2026 10:00am - 12:00pm

Frog Walk (SPPSCE)

May 04 2026 07:30pm - 09:00pm
Sliding Scale of \$10, \$18 or \$25 / Person

Honoring the Buffalo Pipe Ceremony with Kevin Smokyday
Saturday, May 16

8:00 am – 10:30 am Indigenous Learning Site
2612 St. Croix Trail South,
Cost: FREE Registration required.
Please note: This event is separate from the Belwin Bison Festival and Bison Release.

Belwin Bison Festival

May 16 2026 10:00am - 02:00pm
15601 Hudson Rd. N, Lakeland, MN
\$10, \$20 or \$35 per car

5k "Run with the Bison" Fun Run-

May 16 2026 10:00am - 11:30am
15601 Hudson Rd. N, Lakeland, MN
Advanced Registration: \$20 per runner
Day of Registration: \$25 per runner
Free for runners under 12 years of age

Frog Walk

May 18 2026 07:30pm - 09:00pm
Sliding Scale of \$10, \$18 or \$25 / Person

For details and registration contact:

Belwin Conservancy
1553 Stagecoach Trail South
Afton MN 55001
651-436-5189
www.belwin.org

Volunteer Planting Events Join Us to Make a Greener Community!

The Natural Resource and Groundwater Committee welcomes you to join our upcoming volunteer planting events. We'll be working together to plant native trees, shrubs, and flowers at Steamboat Park and City Hall. Everyone is invited, regardless of age or experience, and all tools and materials will be supplied.

Afton Levee Volunteer Planting

When: Thursday May 14th from 5-7
Where: Meet at Steamboat Park

City Hall Volunteer Planting

When: Thursday May 21st from 5-7
Where: Meet at City Hall

By joining us, you'll help beautify our city, promote environmental sustainability, and connect with neighbors who share your passion for nature. To sign up or learn more, please email Elissa Thompson at ethompson@mnwcd.org. We look forward to planting with you!



CITY OF AFTON
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AFTON, MN 55001

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Valley Library Events & Important Dates

Library Closed:

Monday May 25, 2026 for Memorial Day

Did you know: There will be a **Storytime Break** at all Washington County Libraries from **Monday, May 18 to Sunday, May 31** so that staff can prepare for summer programming. On a different note – Miss Teresa (Valley children’s librarian) will be retiring on May 31st after 36 years with Washington County Library. Miss Teresa and Little Bear will do their last storytime on Monday, May 11th. There will be treats after storytime that day.

For Adults:

The Valley Library Book Club meets **5:00-6:00pm** on the 4th Thursday of each month. This book club meets in person in the Valley Library Conference Room. The title selection for the **Thursday May 28th** meeting is *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead.

For Kids:

Mondays 10:30-11:00 am Storytime

Monday, May 11th 10:30-11:00 Music and Movement Storytime

Thursday, May 14 6:00 pm Pajama Storytime

Thursday, May 14th 2:30-4:00 After School Activity: Shrinky Dinks

For complete information and to register for programs contact:

Valley Library 651-436-5882
www.washcolib.org

Spring Projects? Remember to Contact GSOC before you Dig!

Call: 811

Click: gopherstateonecall.org



PATRON AFTON, MN 55001

Online payments are now available for city permits & fees including Building Permits and Sewer Payments,
aftonmn.gov



Please recycle this newsletter after use.

2026 Free Well Water Testing for Nitrates and Coliforms

The Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee (NRGC) will again offer free well water testing for Nitrates and Coliform bacteria for Afton residents. **June 9th and 16th** are the dates available for residents to collect a fresh sample of well water and drop it off at City Hall.

How to participate:

- ⇒ Please call City Hall (651-436-5090) starting May 4th to reserve a test kit package.
- ⇒ **The kits will be available to be picked up from May 18^h to the 27th at City Hall during regular office hours (9:00 – 2:00 Mon-Thur). Late hour pick up is available on May 27 until 6:00 PM.** Those kits not picked up by the 28th will be mailed to residents.
- ⇒ Collect your Well Water sample on **June 9th or June 16th and bring it to City Hall between 7 and 9:30 AM.** Please remember: this is for well water samples only, make sure to fill both sample bottles and tightly close the top while keeping the sample cool until it is dropped off.
- ⇒ Please do not request a kit if you are not able to drop off the kit on the available dates.

Other ways to get your water tested:

- This water testing is for Nitrates and Coliform bacteria only. Washington County offers water testing for other contaminants year-round for a modest fee. Call 651-430-6655 or visit www.co.washington.mn.us/637/Water-Tests
- Testing for PFAS is coordinated through the MN Pollution Control Agency. You can request testing here: <https://webapp.pca.state.mn.us/gw-sampling-req/en/pfas>