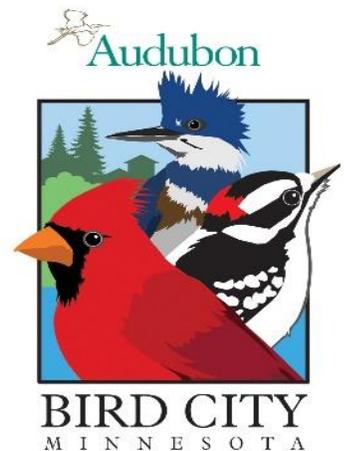


BIRD CITY MINNESOTA – Bemidji Best Practices, 2017

Program Requirements

Bird Cities are recognized for the actions they complete in 3 major categories (below). Within each category there are 5-7 best practices which can be fulfilled by completing a variety of actions. A comprehensive list of example actions for each best practice is available. Alternatively, communities may detail other actions to be considered for fulfillment of any best practice.

Instructions: To be recognized as a Bird City, communities must meet at least 7 of the 18 best practices (BP) and 1 required action and according to the specifications below.



Required of all Bird City communities (complete **1 of 1**)

- Adopt an official resolution and hold a celebration recognizing International Migratory Bird Day.**
Resolution Date: May 1, 2017 (copy attached)

- IMBD Event and Date**
The Bemidji Bird City celebration and International Migratory Bird Day event will be held June 10-11, 2017

- Register your event at <http://www.migratorybirdday.org/events.html>**

- Event description**

Saturday, June 10th

- *Bird Hike – Lake Bemidji State Park, 7:15 am – 8:30 am*
- *Minnesota Raptors at Lake Bemidji State Park, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm*

Sunday, June 11th (officially designated IMBD day)

- *Bird Hike, Bemidji State University campus, 10:00 am – 12:00 am*
- *Bird City designation event, Cameron City Park, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm*
 - *Welcome – Minnesota Headwaters Audubon Society*
 - *Presentation about Purple Martins by Dr. Brian Hiller*
 - *Award of Bird City status to Mayor Albrecht by Audubon Minnesota*
 - *Outdoor family/kids activity led by MHAS*

Category I: Educate and engage people in birding and conservation (complete at least **2 of 5**)

Bemidji Total - 5

- BP #1: Increase awareness of birds in your community**

Knowing where to find good birding areas and having signage and materials to enhance your bird hike are valuable tools to engage people in birding. Bemidji lies between two IBAs: Itasca State Park and Chippewa Plains/Chippewa National Forest; and is the regional gateway to birders heading to Big Bog and Lake of the Woods IBAs. A list of birding hot spots that include viewing locations ranging from just minutes to up to an hour from most area lodging facilities, is available from [Visit Bemidji](#) to help visitors explore.

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One of the most popular birding hotspots is Lake Bemidji State Park. A [checklist](#) is available for the park. In town, people can see and learn about purple martins at an information kiosk located in Cameron City Park on Lake Bemidji. The site has two active purple martin houses and interpretive signage about purple martins and shoreland restoration.

The Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society (MHAS) shares regular social media posts about birds and birding. BemidjiBirding Twitter and Instagram accounts are being established.

☒ **BP #2: Involve residents in conservation and stewardship projects**

Bemidji provides two very active and accessible public bird feeding stations. One is at the Lake Bemidji State Park Visitor Center with seed feeders in the winter and hummingbird feeders in the summer. Bemidji State University (BSU) maintains several feeding stations on campus along Lakeshore trail. This is part of the City's West Shore Trail. Starting at the statues of Paul & Babe, following the west shore of Lake Bemidji, this route provides an important connection from the downtown area to Diamond Point and Cameron Park. This trail offers great birding opportunities and beautiful views as you travel through the Bemidji State University campus.

This spring MSAH initiated the Bemidji ABC (Audubon Birdscaping Collaborative) Project to work with kids and the community to get habitat on the ground. Through collaboration with the Bemidji Library, educators, and local businesses MHAS will install on-the-ground native landscaping to benefit birds and pollinators in Bemidji's downtown urban landscape. This project literally spreads the seeds of diversity throughout the Bemidji Area encouraging the creation of bird and pollinator friendly urban spaces.

ABC Partners include MHAS, Bemidji Public Library, Apple Blossoms Village preschool, Beltrami County Master Gardeners, Headwaters School of Music & Art, Indigenous Environmental Network, Rail River Folk School, and Wild Hare Bistro and Coffee Shop.

☒ **BP #3: Educate and engage youth audiences**

The Headwaters Science Center's (HSC) is a facility dedicated "To provide intellectual stimulation and enjoyment for children, adults, and educational organizations in northern Minnesota using hands-on science and technology exhibits and programs". HSC's [Raptors Rule demonstration program](#) with live birds was presented 43 times in 2016 to 835 individuals, including, students and teachers. HSC hosts a weekly afterschool [Science Club](#) for students in 3rd through 5th grades with hands-on science activities covering a range of topics. It also offers a monthly [Saturday Science program](#) with presentations by local scientists, engineers, knowledgeable expert, or other professionals. The goal of Saturday Science is to encourage the idea that anyone is a scientist; it isn't limited to laboratories and serious study. Science is fun, hands-on, and done by everyone. In 2016 MHAS screened "The Messenger" – a film that explores our deep-seated connection to birds and warns that the uncertain fate of songbirds might mirror our own - at one of the Saturday Science sessions.

MHAS organizes a nature day camp, the [Young Naturalist Program](#), for students in 2nd-12th grades to learn about and explore the natural world around them. Seven 1-week sessions are offered during June, July and Augusts. YNP is held at the Neilson Spearhead Center located on a 466-acre tract of prime wilderness southwest of Bemidji, surrounding Spearhead Lake. The land and facility owned and managed by MHAS.

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BP #4: Promote citizen science monitoring and research

Christmas Bird Counts are organized and held at Lake Bemidji State Parks and at the Neilson Spearhead Center.

Lake Bemidji water quality is monitored as part of the MPCA Citizen Lake and Citizen Stream Monitoring Programs

BP #5: Ensure access to nature

The City of Bemidji has a comprehensive Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Plan that provides the City The “a blueprint for a comprehensive, balanced, and sustainable system of parks, open spaces/natural areas, trails, and affordable recreation-oriented activities/programs that promote active and healthy living, inspiration, and education for the local and regional community.

Bemidji’s North Country City Park was sited and is being developed to provide opportunities for an underserved, high density housing neighborhood. The City recently applied for and received a [2017 DNR grant](#) to construct a shelter, outdoor classroom/ nature study area and interpretive signs.

Lake Bemidji State Park provides 3 accessible trails: [Rocky Point](#), [Sundew Pond](#), and [the Bogwalk](#)

Category II: Protect, restore and enhance bird habitat (complete at least **3 of 7**) Bemidji Total - 6

BP #6: Practice conservation planning

Bemidji is a Bemidji is a [Step 3 - GreenStep City](#).

[Bemidji State University Master Landscaping Plan, 2013](#) includes provisions to use native species, protect and restore natural areas, and adopt sustainable practices

BP #7: Create and protect habitat

The recent development of the south shore of Lake Bemidji involved turning a contaminated industrial site into a community showcase for economic, recreational, and environmental development. In December 2007, the city purchased the south shore property with a goal of preserving a public right-of-way for the Paul Bunyan State Trail along the south shore of Lake Bemidji, protecting a significant portion of natural shoreline habitat as a state Aquatic Management Area, and creating a premier lakeshore development. Part of the development plan was to create a new City Park with native species landscaping. Shoreland buffer plantings were installed in fall, 2016. May 20th, 2017 will be a grand opening for South Shore City Park.

BP #8: Promote use of native and beneficial plant species

Bemidji has undertaken several new initiatives to promote the use of native and beneficial plant species:

- *[National Wildlife Federation Mayor’s Monarch Pledge](#): In 2016 the Mayor of Bemidji became a signatory to the NWF Mayor’s Monarch Pledge and established a Monarch Committee to assist the City identify and implement actions it will take to restore habitat in their community and encourage their citizens to do the same. Three demonstration pollinator gardens have been planned and are being installed this spring: one at North Country Park, Lincoln Elementary School, and City Library.*

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- *MHAS Bemidji ABC project (Audubon Bird Collaborative): This project includes 3 demonstration projects installing native plants beneficial to birds and pollinators into Bemidji’s downtown urban landscape. Community members (parents and youth) will be invited to participate in creative learning spaces as part of project planning, and also to join in the hands-on activities in planting native plants at partner locations. Participating adults and youth will be able to take home free seedlings and seeds of native plants to plant in their own back yards.*
- *Birds, Bees, & Butterflies – Bemidji: The Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society, Bemidji Monarch Project committee and several other local organizations are joining together in a campaign to promote the planting of native trees, shrubs, and flowers to benefit birds and pollinators in our community. We are calling it: Birds, Bees, & Butterflies – Bemidji. The initiative involves:*
 1. *Install “Birds, Bees, & Butterflies –Bemidji” signs in bird and pollinator-friendly plantings around town.*
 - *The Bemidji Downtown Alliance will promote planting native wildflowers and shrubs to their ‘Adopt-A-Planter’ sponsors and provide them signs to display in the planters.*
 - *Local businesses who already use native plants in their landscaping will be contacted to see if they want to display a sign in their gardens.*
 - *Bemidji State University, the City of Bemidji, MN Department of Natural Resources and other public agencies will display signs in their current or planned native plantings.*
 - *Demonstration bird and pollinator garden sites planned for this summer by the Mississippi Headwater Audubon Society and City of Bemidji Monarch Committee will display the signs*
 2. *Local garden centers will highlight native bird and pollinator plants they offer with “Birds, Bees, & Butterflies –Bemidji” signs in their greenhouses; and provide a brochure to interested customers.*
 3. *A [comprehensive list of native species to plant](#) for birds and pollinators was developed for the Bemidji area.*
 4. *A “Birds, Bees, & Butterflies –Bemidji” brochure promoting planting of native species was created for use and distribution by garden centers, businesses and other local organizations.*

BP #9: Control invasive and detrimental species

The City of Bemidji City manages two special deer hunt areas to reduce detrimental impacts of deer browse on vegetation.

Lake Bemidji State Park manages three special hunts to limit the whitetail population. LBSP also actively manages to control buckthorn, knapweed, loosestrife, etc.

The Bemidji Garden Club is hosting the DNR Regional Nongame Specialist for a presentation on native replacements for invasive garden plants in May or June.

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BP #10: Create and protect nesting opportunities

Bluebirds: The DNR maintains a bluebird trail on the Paul Bunyan State Trail adjacent Lake Bemidji. The Bogs and Logs Chapter of Master Naturalists has established a bluebird trail in North County City Park. Bemidji State University maintains several blue bird and wood duck nesting boxes on campus.

Purple Martins: The City, MN DNR, and Bemidji State University are working together to maintain and monitor several public and private purple martin houses in the Bemidji Area. Two are at the public water access site in Cameron City Park (includes an interpretive sign). The BSU campus has a purple martin house accessible from the West Shore Trail and manages one on private land at the north end of Lake Bemidji.

BP #11: Ensure best management of urban forests

Bemidji is a designated Tree City. It has four Park and Recreation staff certified as Tree Inspectors. It collaborated with the University of Minnesota, MN DNR and US Forest Service to conduct a City Tree Inventory and completed an [Emerald Ash borer preparedness plan](#).

A GreenCorps worker is currently assisting the City to:

- *Conduct an inventory of boulevard and parks trees to inform City ordinance updates and urban forestry volunteer programs.*
- *Update the City's tree ordinance by outlining existing strategies and recommending new strategies for increased diversity, pest management, invasive species, and maintenance of boulevard and park trees.*
- *Assist in planning and coordination of the 2017 State Arbor Day Celebration - hosted in Bemidji.*

BP #12: Ensure clean water in natural waterways

Category III: Reduce threats to birds (complete at least 2 of 6)

Bemidji Total - 4

BP #13: Reduce collisions with windows

MN DNR has installed window treatments at its regional office to reduce strikes (April, 2017). Results will be monitored and shared with the City and BSU for other possible applications in town and on campus.

BP #14: Reduce threats from other man-made structures

BP #15: Reduce light pollution

MN DNR installed new outdoor lighting and applied appropriate Lights Out practices at its regional office in Bemidji.

95% of all traffic signals within the City of Bemidji have been outfitted w/ LED lamps.

BP #16: Reduce disturbance and predation by free-roaming pets

BP #17: Reduce the threat of pesticides and other toxins

Lake Bemidji State Park promotes copper ammunition for youth hunt participants.

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☒ **BP #18: Reduce climate impacts**

Beltrami Electric Coop (the primary power company for the Bemidji area) offers members the option to receive [locally-produced, solar energy](#). Thirty-three percent of the company's retail energy is [wind generated](#).

The City of Bemidji was the first local government in Minnesota to work on a performance contract across the city's buildings and operations through the new statewide [Guaranteed Energy Savings Program](#) (GESP) for energy efficiency improvements.

Mayor Albrecht delivered a [presentation](#) at the January 28, 2016 [Climate Adaptation Conference: Transforming Awareness into Action](#), on how Bemidji is taking a multi-faceted approach to addressing climate change related impacts.

Bemidji State University and the Bemidji Sustainability Committee has developed a [Climate Action Plan](#) (2011) that it monitors and tracks progress towards the identified goals and objectives (see [2016 progress report](#)).

TOTAL: At least 7 of 18 Best Practices plus 1 required action

Bemidji Total: 16