
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Eastman Nature Center Tour in the Elm Creek Park Preserve

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The purpose of this tour is to provide City Council an example of amenities that could be included in the new interpretive center at Westwood Hills Nature Center.

POLICY CONSIDERATION: Does the City Council have any feedback or questions regarding the tour of Eastman Nature Center?

SUMMARY: The city hired Miller Dunwidde Architecture to create a comprehensive master plan to address development and programming goals for the Westwood Hills Nature Center. The plan included the nature center facilities, outdoor programming sites, infrastructure and programming needs. The master plan serves as the vision, guiding principles, resource allocation and action plan to meet the identified needs of the community and to assist the city in planning for future building development at Westwood Hills Nature Center. Citizen input played a key role in shaping this plan.

As part of the next step in the process, City Council expressed an interest in exploring other nature centers to fully understand some of the amenities that could be included in a new interpretive center at Westwood Hills Nature Center. Staff chose Eastman Nature Center, which is a Three Rivers Park District facility, due to the similar amenities that are noted in the Westwood Hills master plan. Eastman Nature Center was a complete demolition and rebuild similar to what Westwood Hills Nature Center would experience. Eastman Nature Center started construction in 2012 and was completed in 2013. The building cost of construction at that time was \$5.16M. It has three multi-purpose rooms that open into one large room to accommodate 150 people. The square footage of Eastman is 14,000 which is similar to what is needed for Westwood Hills Nature Center. It includes several environmental initiatives; such as, solar thermal panels, white rooftop, geothermal system, CO2 sensors, smart lights, reuse of building materials, etc.

FINANCIAL OR BUDGET CONSIDERATION: Our CIP has \$700,000 in 2018 for design fees for the Westwood Hills Nature Center and \$11,000,000 in 2019 for construction of a new Nature Center building.

VISION CONSIDERATION: St. Louis Park is committed to being a connected and engaged community. St. Louis Park is committed to being a leader in environmental stewardship.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: None

Prepared by: Jason T. West, Recreation Superintendent
Mark Oestreich, Westwood Hills Nature Center Manager
Reviewed by: Cynthia S. Walsh, Director of Operations and Recreation
Approved by: Tom Harmening, City Manager