



City of Burnsville

100 Civic Center Parkway, Burnsville, MN 55337

Phone: 952-895-4400

Fax: 952-895-4404

www.burnsville.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 25, 2014

Contact:

Caleb Ashling

Natural Resources

952-895-4543

BLUEBIRDS CALL BURNSVILLE'S CIVIC CENTER PRAIRIE HOME

If you build it, they will come!

Sometimes all it takes to attract wildlife is a little patch of the right habitat. Take, for example, the pair of Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) that took up residence this spring in one of the newly installed bluebird boxes at the prairie planting along Nicollet Avenue and Civic Center Parkway. This area, which was previously maintained as turf grass, was converted to prairie in 2010 to reduce maintenance costs, reduce the need for fertilizers and herbicides, filter runoff water and provide wildlife habitat.

City staff added two bluebird boxes to the prairie on May 1, 2014. Within a week, a male bluebird had staked claim to one of the boxes, and was singing away trying to attract a female. A City volunteer who was monitoring the boxes soon noticed nesting material in the box, and on May 25, the first eggs were visible.

Despite a cold spring, the diligent bluebird parents managed to hatch four chicks, and were busy throughout June catching insects to feed their young. By July 1, the youngsters had grown large enough to leave the nest.

Bluebirds are one of the more colorful types of wildlife that benefit from native plantings, but they aren't the only ones. Butterflies, bees, dragonflies and other beneficial insects are attracted to the area due to the high abundance of wildflowers. Birds, in turn, are attracted to the area to feed on the insects. Ruby-throated hummingbirds also visit the flowers for sugar-rich nectar. Goldfinches feast on the abundant seeds during the fall and winter. Song sparrows hide their nests in the thick grassy vegetation.

While not everyone can add a several-acre native planting to their property, even a small native plant garden can attract an impressive array of colorful wildlife. Adding a bluebird or wren box can further encourage wildlife to visit your yard.

For more information on starting a native planting that can attract birds and beneficial insects visit www.burnsville.org/nativeplants. To see pictures of the Civic Center Prairie planting during its first few years of development visit www.burnsville.org/civicprairie.

***(Photos Below.
High Resolution Images Available Upon Request.)***



Cutline: Female bluebird incubating eggs at Civic Center prairie. (photo credit: Rich Doll)



Cutline: Male and female bluebird holding insects to feed the hungry chicks. (photo credit: Rich Doll)

###