



LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES
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Preservation, Restoration, Education and Recreation

DATE: November 8, 2018

MEMO TO: S. Michael Rummel, Chair
Finance Committee

FROM: Alex Ty Kovach
Executive Director

REQUEST: Provide Policy Direction to identify projects that, in the event that the State approves a Capital Spending Bill, would be actively promoted by the District for funding.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUPPORTED: Organizational Sustainability; Public Access and Connections; Conservation.

FINANCIAL DATA: There is no financial impact.

BACKGROUND: The District has been advised by its legislative consultants, Strategic Advocacy, Inc., that there is the potential for a capital spending bill to be approved by the General Assembly this fall or early next year. They have advised the District to draft a list of potential projects that can be reviewed by the Lake County legislative delegation with the intention that one or more District projects would get funded through this process.

The attached list was put together by staff for Committee consideration. Each project has been identified and reviewed by Committees previously, with one exception. The projects identified, if funded, would have nominal, or in some cases no, increased operational costs to the District.

The projects on the list are either part of the approved 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), or are on the identified but unfunded list that was reviewed by Committees as part of the CIP process. If a project on the approved CIP were to receive State funding this would allow the District to redirect capital dollars to another project that has been identified but unfunded.

The one project on the list that is not on the approved CIP, or on the unfunded list, is the shoreline restoration project on Long Lake at Grant Woods Forest Preserve. This project was not discussed at last year's CIP Joint Committee Meeting, but was subsequently brought forward as a request by the Squaw Creek Clean Water Alliance to the Planning Committee in June of this year.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Chief Operations Officer, Department Directors, Corporate Counsel.

POTENTIAL STATE CAPITAL PROGRAM PROJECTS

PUBLIC ACCESS/IMPROVEMENT

Lake Carina Forest Preserve – Bridge and Trail Connection Gurnee, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$1,325,000.00

Currently there are portions of the Village of Gurnee and all of Wildwood that do not have direct access to the County's regional network of trails. The Lake County Forest Preserve (District), the Village of Gurnee and residents of Wildwood have been working together on a plan to address this gap in connectivity. Providing safe access over the Des Plaines River has been identified as a key component of the plan. This project includes the construction of a 1/2-mile of crushed stone trail and a 150' long pre-fabricated steel bridge. Completion of this project and sections of a shared-use path along Gages Lake Road will provide over 4,500 households and a population of over 11,000 direct access to the 31-mile Des Plaines River Trail and over 150-miles of other regional trails throughout the County.

This project has received strong support from the local community and has been identified as a top priority by the Village of Gurnee's Blue Ribbon Commission Report on pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. Currently the District does not have funding available for this project. The engineering and permitting have been completed making it 100% shovel ready once funding assistance can be secured. Construction can begin within four months after funding is available.

Van Patten Woods Forest Preserve - Equestrian and Public Parking Addition Wadsworth, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$300,000.00

The Lake County Forest Preserve District owns and operates portions of two County-wide regional multi-use trails, the Des Plaines River Trail and the Millennium Trail. When complete, these two trails will stretch over 70-miles. There is an existing equestrian trailer parking lot and an existing general public parking lot located where these two regional trails join. The recently completed connection of the two trails has increased the demand for these two parking lots which have been in overflow conditions several times of the year. Additional funding is needed to expand the equestrian parking lot from 6 to 12 spaces and the general public parking lot from 8 to 14 spaces and to re-surface the existing portion of the equestrian lot. Engineering and permitting are required and it is estimated that the construction could begin within eight months after funding is secured.

Independence Grove Forest Preserve - Playground Shade Structure Libertyville, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$55,000.00

The Lake County Forest Preserve District (District) owns and operates a very popular playground facility at Independence Grove Forest Preserve, referred to as the Children's Grove. The District has received several concerns regarding the lack of shade for portions of the Children's Grove play area. On hot sunny days, children are often forced to use other play facilities because of the lack of shade and the temperature of the rubber mulch. Funding is needed to design and construct a woven fabric shade structure over a portion of the play area. Construction could begin after an eight-month design and engineering phase.

**Millennium Trail – Round Lake Section
Round Lake and Round Lake Beach, Illinois**

Requested Funding: \$4,185,000.00

The Lake County Forest Preserve District (District) and the Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT) have partnered with several municipalities to complete sections of the Millennium Trail. When complete, the Millennium Trail will stretch over 41-miles connecting 12 Lake County municipalities, 13 schools, 18 parks and 12 forest preserves. Currently there are 31-miles complete with no funding available to complete the remaining sections. The Round Lake section will stretch 1.75-miles through the communities of Round Lake and Round Lake Beach providing over 7,600 households and a population of over 25,400 direct access to this County-wide regional trail. A preliminary engineering study has been completed and the project has received extensive support from the local communities, LCDOT and Avon Township. Once funding is secured, detailed engineering and permitting will be required which could take up to 18 months to complete before construction can begin.

**POTENTIAL STATE CAPITAL PROGRAM PROJECTS
INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

American with Disabilities Act Retrofit

Requested Funding: \$1,500,000.00

The District is reviewing their accessibility based on the most current ADA standards. An updated transition plan is being finalized to address the needed retrofits of current District facilities, communication methods, and programming. These retrofits will provide greater access to the District's public land, programs and information.

**Lakewood Forest Preserve – Maintenance Building
Wauconda, Illinois**

Requested Funding: \$ 2,525,000.00

The project consists of the design and construction of a new grounds maintenance shop at Lakewood for the Southwest Maintenance District crew. Based on evaluation of staff needs and the existing facilities at Lakewood as part of the initial Lakewood Master Plan effort, it was determined that the best course of action is to construct a new shop at Lakewood. A preliminary estimate of the appropriate size for the shop is 4,500 sf. There is a strong desire for the facility to be developed as "net zero" with respect to its energy needs, and it is expected that the project will pursue support from a Net Zero Energy Building Program grant from the IL Clean Energy Community Foundation.

POTENTIAL STATE CAPITAL PROGRAM PROJECTS

HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Edward L. Ryerson Woods Conservation Area – Brushwood Center Roof **Riverwoods, Illinois**

Requested Funding: \$400,000.00

In 2014 the Lake County Forest Preserves concerned with the age of its core buildings hired a firm to look at the distinct facilities and the existing condition of each. The recommendation by the firm was that the Brushwood Centers existing clay tile roof would have to be replaced within the next two years. The age of the tiles makes them fragile and easily breakable during summer storms.

The Brushwood Center was constructed in 1942 and is listed on the National Historic Register of Places.

Adlai E. Stevenson Historic Home - Exterior Siding **Mettawa, Illinois**

Requested Funding: \$300,000.00

In 2014 the Lake County Forest Preserves concerned with the age of its core building hired a firm to look at the distinct facilities and the existing condition of each. The recommendation by the firm was that the building's exterior siding would have to be replaced in the next three years due to the age and deterioration.

The Stevenson house and service building were both constructed between 1937 and 1939. The house is listed on the National Historic Register of Place and as of 2014 designated as a National Historic Landmark.

POTENTIAL STATE CAPITAL PROGRAM PROJECTS

HABITAT RESTORATION/NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Lakewood and Ray Lake Forest Preserve Ecological Complex – Habitat **Restoration** **Wauconda, Illinois**

Requested Funding: \$ 3,670,000.00

Lakewood and Ray Lake Forest Preserves contains a diverse assemblage of natural communities, man-made landforms, and Illinois Natural Inventory Areas. At 3,866 acres, this is the largest Lake County Forest Preserve complex. Unique natural communities such as Wauconda Bog, Schreiber Lake and Bog, and Broberg Marsh, which qualify as Illinois Natural Area Inventory sites can be found along with extensive areas of restorable oak woodlands, savanna and wetland communities, as well as important habitat for grassland and wetland bird species.

The complex is located within the Upper Fox River Watershed and restoration efforts could greatly increase retention and infiltration to lessen the impacts of precipitation events. Proposed restoration efforts would also focus on restoring depressional wetlands in agricultural lands to increase wetland habitat for native species. In conjunction with restoration of the surrounding uplands habitat for grassland and wetland bird species would be greatly enhanced. These efforts would meet the goals of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. Within the complex there is also the potential to establish a 1,000-acre oak woodland complex which has been identified as a priority by both the Illinois Forest Action Plan and the Chicago Wilderness Oak Ecosystem Restoration Plan. Funding could serve as matching funds for grants.

Hydrological restoration engineering is near completion for wetland parcels in Ray Lake Forest Preserve. Ecological plans for the remaining uplands and wetlands are completed.

Estimated Costs:	Hydrological Restoration	\$ 1,450,000.00
	Upland Restoration	\$ 1,930,000.00
	<u>Five Year Management</u>	<u>\$ 290,000.00</u>
	Total	\$ 3,670,000.00

Cahokia Flatwoods Forest Preserve – Oak Woodland Habitat Restoration Riverwoods, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$ 893,000.00

Cahokia Flatwoods Forest Preserve is a 181-acre parcel of mesic oak woodlands along the Des Plaines River just north of Lake-Cook Road. It is part of a 2,800-acre complex of oak woodlands in southern Lake County. Directly south is the holdings of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. The Forest Preserve contains large acres of a critically rare woodland type, identified as Northern Flatwoods. These seasonally wet woodlands provide critical habitat for several rare amphibian and reptile species included in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. The current condition is degraded by the presence of European buckthorn. The dense thickets of this invasive small tree is degrading native communities, and increasing erosion of sediment into the Des Plaines River. Restoration of this preserve will expand on past efforts by both Lake and Cook County along the Des Plaines River and will reduce sedimentation, improve water quality and provide significant habitat for wildlife species. Funding could serve as matching funds for grants.

North Central Grassland Ecological Complex – Habitat Restoration

Requested Funding: \$ 3,100,000.00

In north central Lake County there exists a collection of eight Lake County Forest Preserves and one Illinois Department of Natural Resources Preserve totaling 5,742-acres. Most of these acres are currently in agricultural production or have been restored to native wetlands or prairie habitats. This collection of lands provides an excellent opportunity to restore several thousand acres of habitat for grassland and wetland birds. Grassland birds have been designated as the most globally imperiled group of wildlife species as identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. Restoration efforts would restore large uninterrupted blocks of grasslands and wetlands to provide habitat for a long list of bird species. This grassland ecological complex would rival Nachusa Grasslands, Midewin National Grasslands, Horicon Marsh and Illinois Beach State Park for its size and availability of habitat. Funding could serve as matching funds for grants.

Grant Woods Forest Preserve – Long Lake Shoreline Erosion Ingleside, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$ 300,000.00

At Grant Woods Forest Preserve the Forest Preserve owns a portion of Long Lake. In the past the Forest Preserve invested funds to stabilize severally eroding lakeshore. Currently, there is 500-feet of shoreline that needs additional stabilization. The restoration effort would consist of placing riprap along a 100-foot section to protect exposed, very steep slopes that are eroding. The remaining 400 feet would receive more green infrastructure such as vegetated erosion matts and fishing nodes for local fishing.