



DATE: August 13, 2026

MEMO TO: Elizabeth Hough, Chair
Preservation Foundation Board

FROM: Pati Vitt
Director of Natural Resources

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval of a \$29,279 grant from unrestricted funds to fund a study of bee nutritional networks.

FINANCIAL DATA: As of June 30, 2026, the Foundation's unrestricted funding total was \$464,450.63.

The Preservation Foundation Board of Directors has awarded \$100,450 in grants that have not yet been disbursed.

Future Disbursements	Amount
2026	\$19,450
2027	\$25,500
2028 or TBD	\$55,500
Total	\$100,450

If awarded, \$29,279 will be disbursed in equal payments in FY 2026 Q4 and FY2027 Q4.

BACKGROUND: As the 501(c)3 charitable partner of the Lake County Forest Preserves, the Preservation Foundation's mission is to extend and accelerate the Lake County Forest Preserves' goals through private philanthropy to restore and preserve Lake County's natural and cultural resources in perpetuity.

In 2013, the Preservation Foundation Board of Directors adopted a policy regarding the use of unrestricted charitable gifts, which created a process for staff to submit an Annual Fund Grant request to support the priorities of the Forest Preserves, such as piloting a new initiative, extending or accelerating existing work, or securing matching funds. To date, the Preservation Foundation has awarded nearly \$1.5 million in grants from unrestricted funds.

In accordance with this policy, a request for a one-year grant in the amount of \$29,279 has been submitted for review and approval at the Preservation Foundation's August 13, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Director of Community Engagement & Partnerships, Chief Operations Officer, Director of Administration, Director of Finance, and Forest Preserves Executive Director

GRANT REQUEST:

Department	Natural Resources
Project Name	Research on bee nutritional networks
Project Lead (if not Director)	Dan Sandacz
Total Amount Requested	\$29,279
Amount needed per year	\$14,639.50
Grant Period	Two Years
Grant Purpose	Extend or accelerate an existing project
Project Description	A core goal of the Plant-Pollinator Monitoring Program is to understand the relationships between plants and pollinators to inform Natural Resources management practices. The monitoring program has identified several plant species that serve unique roles in supporting pollinator diversity in our preserves, but we do not fully understand the drivers behind these patterns. Of particular interest, how does the nutritional value of pollen and nectar affect pollinator foraging? This question is especially important when we consider that nectar and pollen are limited resources on the landscape, that can often have stiff competition between native and non-native pollinators or between common and endangered pollinators. Understanding the nutritional value of our native plants can help staff maximize the carrying capacity of plant-pollinator networks through adaptive management. This request will support a collaboration between Restoration Ecologist Dan Sandacz and Pollinator Ecologist K.C. Carter from the Illinois Natural History Survey to conduct comprehensive research on the plant-pollinator network of Pine Dunes. The project will focus on bees at Pine Dunes and quantify the nutritional value of nectar and pollen from focal plants. Extensive fieldwork and laboratory analysis are planned, with the requested funding primarily supporting the chemical and genetic assays that K.C. will conduct, research dissemination, and a temporary position to support a technician dedicated to the project to conduct field surveys, process samples, and curate data.
Project Impact	The project will extend beyond what is operationally possible with the Plant-Pollinator Monitoring Program and accelerate our understanding of the role of pollinator nutrition in the ecosystem service of pollination. The results will be applied to adaptive management strategies at the District, shared with the practitioners at the Wild Things 2028 Conference, and contribute the type of comprehensive research that is currently a knowledge gap in pollinator ecology, which could broadly advance conservation and restoration goals by understanding the nutritional landscape for pollinators.
Additional Funding	See budget detail.

<i>Impact if not funded</i>	Due to the intense nature of the field and lab work proposed, this project would not move forward without an Annual Fund grant. The strength of this collaboration is that Pine Dunes will be a case study to advance the field of pollinator nutrition and the District will receive tailored management recommendations and ecological insights that would be applied to restorations throughout the District.
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Detailed Project Budget

Supplies

Item	Number of Units	Price per Unit	Line Item Total
Bio Rad Bradford Protein Assay Kits (Bio Rad)	1	\$262.00	\$262
0.1M Sodium Hydroxide (250mL NaOH - Millipore)	1	\$24.00	\$24
18M (95-98%) Sulfuric Acid (500mL H2SO4 - Millipore) x2	2	\$22.00	\$44
14.8 M (85%) Phosphoric Acid (500mL H3PO4) x3	3	\$48.00	\$144
Vanillin (2g - Millipore) x2	2	\$35.30	\$71
Sodium Sulfate (500mL Na2SO4)	1	\$33.47	\$33
Chloroform (500mL CHCl3)	1	\$58.00	\$58
Methanol (1L CH3OH - Millipore)	1	\$54.00	\$54
Anthrone (25G - Millipore)	1	\$124.00	\$124
D-glucose (100G - Millipore)	1	\$38.50	\$39
DNeasy Plant Pro Kit (Qiagen - 250 samples)	1	\$1,581.00	\$1,581
ITS2 Primers (Eurofins)	1	\$200.00	\$200
GoTaq G2 Colorless Master Mix (Promega)	1	\$500.00	\$500
Genomic Barcode Sequencing (2-3 plates - UIUC DNA Services Core or UConn MARS)	1	\$6,000.00	\$6,000
Insect Pins (Size No.1) and Consumables (Collection Jars)	1	\$185.00	\$185
Other Misc Lab Supplies (PCR Buffer, 100% Ethanol, and Pipette Tips)	1	\$320.00	\$320
Shipping			
Research Dissemination (USPS to UConn MARS)	1	\$60.00	\$60
2028 Wild Things Conference, Chicago, Illinois			
Journal Publishing Fee	1	\$100.00	\$100
Plant-Pollinator Research Technician	1	\$1,000.00	\$1,000
Temporary position, April-October 2027, 880 hours	880	\$21.00	\$18,480
TOTAL			\$29,279

PRESERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD:

Date: _____ ☐ Roll Call Vote: Ayes: _____ Nays: _____
☐ Voice Vote; Majority Ayes: _____ Nays: _____