



DATE: September 3, 2026

MEMO TO: Paul Frank, Chair
Planning Committee

Gina Roberts, Chair
Finance Committee

FROM: Rebekah Snyder
Director of Community Engagement & Partnerships

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval of a Resolution authorizing the submission of a grant proposal to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency requesting \$500,000 to support hydrologic restoration at Lakewood Forest Preserve.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED: Conservation, Organizational Sustainability

FINANCIAL DATA: The 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) includes \$500,000 for Lakewood – Ravine Restoration (Project #61003) and \$4,600,000 for the Lakewood – 1,000-acre Woodland (Project #61004). Funds for the local match will be drawn from these two projects.

BACKGROUND: The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) is seeking proposals for its Section 319 Grant Program. For a project to be eligible, it must prevent, eliminate, or reduce surface water impairments originating from nonpoint sources throughout Illinois. Grant awards go up to \$4 million, depending on a proposal's size and scope, and the program requires a local match of at least 40%.

Areas of Lakewood Forest Preserve are former farmland that contain remnants of aged water control systems, including an earthen dam, underground pipes, and drain tiles, features that were originally used to divert the natural flow of water for agricultural purposes. As a result, Lakewood includes poorly functioning, man-made lakes constructed over non-wetland soil, with limited ability to filter silt. The lakes and ponds contain high levels of suspended sediment and phosphorus, which have led to a decline in water and habitat quality in the southwestern quadrant of Lakewood. The Lakewood Forest Preserve Hydrologic Restoration project aims to remove and disable these features, thereby restoring the natural hydrology. The project will reduce stormwater runoff through erosion control measures following IEPA-approved Best Management Practices at the eroding ravines and gullies, and make infrastructure improvements at two trail locations. This project will reduce total phosphorus buildup and other pollutants, improve stormwater management, increase water quality, and enhance habitat.

The proposed project is estimated to cost \$1,440,581.42. In 2025, the District submitted an IL EPA Section 319 application that requested \$775,036.88 in grant funding; \$665,544.54 was proposed in cash and in-kind match. The District was not awarded that grant but was encouraged to reapply and request a lower amount.

Staff recommends requesting \$500,000 in Section 319 grant funds from IEPA. Grant funding will provide partial support for supplies and contractual services. This grant will be matched by \$863,302.67 in supplies and contractual services, supported by referendum funding, and \$77,278.75 in staff time.

The District's Fundraising Authorization Policy requires approval of the Board of Commissioners to submit a grant proposal when District matching funds surpasses \$700,000.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Director of Natural Resources, Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Manager of Board Operations, Corporate Counsel.

STATE OF ILLINOIS)) SS
COUNTY OF LAKE)

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
REGULAR SEPTEMBER MEETING
SEPTEMBER 9, 2026**

MADAM PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Your **PLANNING COMMITTEE** and **FINANCE COMMITTEE** present herewith “A Resolution Authorizing a Grant Proposal to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to Support Hydrologic Restoration at Lakewood Forest Preserve” and request its approval.

PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Date: 8-31-2026 ☐ Roll Call Vote: Ayes: ____ Nays: ____
☒ Voice Vote Majority Ayes; Nays: 0

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

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

**LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT PROPOSAL TO THE
ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY TO SUPPORT
HYDROLOGIC RESTORATION AT LAKEWOOD FOREST PRESERVE**

WHEREAS, the Lake County Forest Preserve District (the "District") desires to undertake hydrologic restoration at Lakewood Forest Preserve (the "Project"); and

WHEREAS, in furtherance thereof, the District desires to apply to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's (the "IEPA") Section 319 Grant Program (the "Program") for a grant of funds (the "Grant") and to accept and utilize the Grant for the purpose of carrying out the Project; and

WHEREAS, the District has received and understands the Program guidelines, and has determined that the District is eligible for the Grant and can comply with all Grant criteria; and

WHEREAS, the District's Board of Commissioners has approved a Capital Improvement Plan, a Budget, and an Appropriations Ordinance that budgets and appropriates the funds in excess of \$940,581.42, for expenditure on the Project;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Lake County Forest Preserve District, Lake County, Illinois, THAT:

Section 1: Recitals. The recitals set forth above are incorporated as part of this Resolution by this reference.

Section 2: Submission of Application. The District's Executive Director is hereby authorized and directed to (i) apply to the Program for a Grant for funds for the Project in the amount of \$500,000.00 and (ii) accept any Grant funds awarded through the Program.

Section 3: Execution of Grant Agreement. If the Grant is awarded to and accepted by the District, the District's Executive Director is hereby authorized and directed to execute a Grant agreement with IEPA.

PASSED this _____ day of _____, 2026

AYES:

NAYS:

APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2026

Jessica Vealitzek, President
Lake County Forest Preserve District

ATTEST:

Julie Gragnani, Board Secretary

Exhibit No. _____