



ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COUNCIL

City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, December 14th, 2022

4:30 - 6:00 p.m. at Switchyard Park Pavilion

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/81481368876?pwd=ZlI4S0tlaXFJWit3aHN0RGN3QWc1Zz09>

Meeting ID: 814 8136 8876

Passcode: ERAC

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:42 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Bill Jones, Marne Potter, Angie Shelton, Jeff Ehman, Dave Parkhurst, Denise Gardiner

Staff: Rebecca Swift, Joanna Sparks, Jake Wood

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August and October 2022

IV. AGENDA

A. Public Appearances

B. Old Business

B-1 Deer management Program Update

In December 2021, the IDNR ended the CHAP program but the City of Bloomington determined that the continuation of a hunting program in GLNP was the best option to provide deer management in the park and allow for vegetation to recover. BPRD contracted White Buffalo to oversee the program. A supervised hunt was conducted during the first two weekends of the Indiana Firearms Deer Season 2022; November 12/13 and 19/20. Over the 4-day period, 46 deer were harvested. In an effort to reduce cost, recruitment was limited to existing hunters who participated in the previous program and individuals who expressed interest directly to the city. Our efforts resulted in the distribution of 87 hunt solicitations. White Buffalo received 38 hunt applications from recruiting efforts. Each new applicant was asked to sign up for a safety and proficiency screening. Overall, 29 hunters were given permission to hunt, providing 116 unique hunter opportunities. While the overall number of hunters participating decreased, the average harvest per hunter increased significantly. Harvest per hunter for the 2022 GLNP hunt was 2.0 (46 deer/23 hunters), an 82% increase over 2021. Six hunters who passed the proficiency test did not end up participating due to unforeseen circumstances.

Griffy Lake Nature Preserve was divided into 7 zones. Each zone was delineated by landmarks (i.e., roads, pathways, or waterways), property boundaries, or topographical features (i.e., ridges or valleys). Zones 2, 4, and 5 were further subdivided to provide further refinement of hunter distribution. White Buffalo assigned hunters to zones based on questions they answered on their applications and their experience level. Hunters with more experience were generally assigned closer to the developed edges of the park. Every hunter was required to check in/out of their zone each day and report their harvest. It is up to the hunter whether they test the meat for Chronic Wasting Disease and/or donate any meat they do not intend to use to the local community kitchens.

Notification of park closures for the hunt was accomplished via a media release and letters distributed to neighborhoods that surround the park. "Park Closed" placards were placed at all designated entry points and most unauthorized, but habitually used, entry points on the Friday

evening before each hunt and were removed early Monday morning before the park opened. Security personnel, included contractors from Bruce Wilds Security and Natural Resources Staff, were stationed at the main entry points to the park (i.e., Dam area, IURTP, Lanam Road, and Boat Launch) to inform park visitors of the park closure during the hunt. Each hunter was required to follow all Indiana firearms deer season hunting regulations. For example, hunters must wear “Hunter Orange” to be easily identifiable. In addition to state restrictions, we required each hunter to be a minimum of 50 yards from any developed park boundary. Moreover, each hunter was required to hunt from a treestand (using a safety line) with a minimum height of 12 feet to ensure a steep downward trajectory in the event of an errant shot. Ground hunting is not permitted.

The summary results from the Deer Browse Study conducted by Eco Logic show that the understory vegetation is starting to recover in Griffy Lake Nature Preserve but continued deer management is required due to the high population of deer residing in the park.

B-2 Griffy Lake Prescribed Burn Project Updates

BPRD contracted Habitat Solutions to conduct a prescribed burn at Griffy Lake Nature Preserve. Unfortunately, conditions were not conducive to burning on the property in the spring and in the fall this area of Indiana was under a “No Burn” advisory for most of the season so a burn was not able to be scheduled in 2022. Conditions need to be right to successfully and safely conduct a prescribed burn. BPRD will plan to coordinate two prescribed burns on the property in 2023, one in the spring and one in the fall. BPRD distributed letters to nearby property owners to provide notice of the burn window, released a press release, and coordinated with local Bloomington Fire Department to provide additional support.

C. **New Business**

C-1 Education Update

BPRD concluded the Nature Day season in October. Partners are sending out a Call for Presenters (CFP) for Region 4 Interpreters Workshop scheduled for March 20-23 at Brown County State Abe Martin Lodge. Looking for topics related to Environmental Management, JEDAI, Outdoor Education and Interpretation. Audience includes interpreters from public sector organizations and private sectors, like museums, zoos, and aquariums. The Planning Committee includes representative from BPRD, MCPR, IDNR, SLT, and IU. BPRD is working on updating interpretive signs around City parks. Focus this year is RCA Community Park and next year is Griffy Lake Nature Preserve. BPRD continues to develop self-guided hikes for OuterSpatial app. BPRD is planning to partner with the IU Learning Lab to host a multi-year program at Banneker Community Center that uses virtual technology to create environmental learning opportunities for the children who participate.

MCPR announced the Karst Farm Park ribbon cutting for new Greenway Trail was in early December. MCPR plans to continue offering Indiana Master Naturalist workshops in the fall of 2023 and is looking for regional professionals to present topics to participants. Indiana Geological and Water Survey plan to host one in the spring. The program requires participants to attend 8 three hour sessions and volunteer 27 hours. In 2022, the program hosted 22 students who passed the final exam. MCPR plans to partner with International Whooping Crane Foundation again in 2023 as well as work with the Indiana Native Plant Society to offer more opportunities for seed collection and dispersal of native plant species. Working with IDNR to install new Barn Owl boxes in Flatwood Park and improve existing installation locations.

C-2 Polly Grimshaw Trail Management

BPRD took over management of the Polly Grimshaw Trail from Public Works. The paved trail is located near Park Ridge Park along a railroad corridor. The trail will be trimmed back, include snow removal, and be kept up to BPRD standards for paved trail management. Ehman asked if BPRD could draft a letter of concerns regarding railroad herbicide application along the trail. The concern is that the railroad company does not notify BPRD before applications and the herbicide sprays onto the trail, which is a hazard for any trail users and their pets until the herbicide is dry.

BPRD has an Integrated Pest Management Plan that specifically requires advance notice and signage be displayed anytime herbicides are applied near public right-of-ways. BPRD staff will follow up with City Legal Department to discuss options to address these concerns.

C-3 7th street greenway

The construction of the 7th Street Greenway is complete. Multiple intersections have had stop signs removed and a bike lane added between IU campus and Roger's Street. While this is not a BPRD project, the City's Urban Forester shared information about the issues with managing street trees that were planted in the median between the road and bike lane. Unfortunately, trees that are located near campus and downtown are regularly subjected to vandalism. Of the 30 trees planted, 19 have been replaced (~25% survivorship). Also, the initial design of the bike lane did not include bollards, so multiple cars have driven down the bike lane and some have hit trees in the process. The Urban Forester and Urban Greenspace Manager both recommend reducing the use of green infrastructure on these medians due to the low survivorship of trees and the amount of water required to keep plantings alive during the summer. Suggested alternatives include more art installations to help beautify the median as well as act as a barrier.

C-4 Potential Leonard Springs Nature Park Update

Unfortunately, BPRD does not have enough money to buy the large property for sale located around Leonard Springs Nature Park. One goal is to purchase the pasture property located near the park entrance to be able to increase the amount of parking on site.

C-5 Interpretive Signs (RCA)

Swift created a PDF that showcases 13 interpretive sign drafts and has asked ERAC members to review the drafts and provide feedback ahead of the next meeting in February 2023. New Graphic Designer will start in January 2023.

C-6 ERAC 2023 Appointments

Appointments will be voted on at the February meeting. Currently, there is no Chair and one member vacancy. Anyone interested in applying can submit an application through OnBoard. Members are required to reside within Monroe County.

C-7 2023 Agenda Items

Management and design ideas around the city (specifically 7th Street Greenway and Griffy Loop Trail), herbicide use, railroad spraying, interpretive signs, recycling operations.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 pm.

**NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, February 8th, 2023
Cascades Golf Course– The Clubhouse**