



ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COUNCIL
City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation
Regular Meeting

Olcott Park – Young Pavilion
Wednesday, April 12th, 2023
4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/86085400556?pwd=VVEwdjJiQW5XVmg5MkJwMFZQOHE3Zz09>
Meeting ID: 860 8540 0556
Passcode: ERAC

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I. CALL TO ORDER at 4:38pm

II. ROLL CALL –

Denise Gardiner, Cathy Meyer, Kim Brackemyre, Bill Jones, Marne Potter, Jeff Ehman, Dave Parkhurst
Staff: Steve Cotter, Joana Sparks, Rebecca Swift, Haskell Smith, Sasha Kuznetsov

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 2023 approved

IV. AGENDA

A. Public Appearances

A-1 Public Comment Period
None.

B. Old Business

B-1 Griffy Loop Trail Project – Phase II Updates

Cotter provided updates on the Griffy Loop Trail Project. The construction design for the dam crossing was done by Mader Design LLC and the Park Board approved a contract with Scenic Construction Services in March to complete the crossing. Trail route suggestions for the south section of the Loop Trail were made by Spectrum Trail Design LLC. A contract with Spectrum will be brought before the Park Board on April 25. The dam portion and southern trail routes should be done by the end of 2023. Funds from the Bicentennial Bond will be used for this project. Construction of the south section of the Loop Trail will cost \$210,625 for approximately 4 miles of trail. Spectrum previously constructed the natural surface pilot trail project that begins at the south end of the Headley Rd. causeway. They are the only certified trail builders in the state of Indiana and have a lot of experience, including developing trails in Brown County State Park. The surface of the south section of the Loop Trail will be native soil and the dam trail crossing will be crushed limestone. Where possible, the new Griffy Loop Trail alignment will avoid going up and down steep ravines, avoid sensitive areas, and be easier to navigate once directional signage is added. The North section of the Griffy Loop Trail will be the focus next year in 2024.

C. New Business

C-1 Education Update

Swift provided education updates for BPRD as well as shared updates on behalf of MCPR. Nature Day season has concluded for the school year. In total, Nature Days hosted over 800 sixth graders and 800 fourth graders from all 13 Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC). BPRD, along with partners from CBU, MCPR and MC-IRIS, hosted the annual Adopter Orientation for the Adopt-a-Stream, Adopt-a-Trail, and Adopt-a-Greenspace programs at the end of March. There were over 70 volunteers who joined the virtual orientation. Staff will continue to meet volunteers on site to help acclimate them before the official season starts in May. Moving into the summer series, BPRD is partnering with the Indiana Geological Survey at Indiana University to host an Indiana Master Program related to water. Participants will learn how to gather water quality data and adhere to Hoosier Riverwatch standards. MCPR plans to partner with Purdue Extension to provide another Indiana Master Naturalist program in the fall. BPRD and MCPR plan to host a Basic Hoosier Riverwatch training opportunity sometime in early June. Focus will be training our new Adopt-A-Stream volunteers but others are welcome to attend.

Get Outdoors Day will be hosted June 10th at Switchyard Park. Bug Fest will be hosted on September 23rd but will be moved to a different venue because the IU Woodland Initiative planted several trees in an area outside of Hilltop that was previously used for event parking. Sassafras Audobon Society has postponed BirdFest until the fall but have no additional details to share at this time.

C-2 Bicentennial Bond Tree Planting – Phase II Updates

Urban Forester, Haskell Smith provided updates on Bicentennial Bond tree planting. In 2022, the first round of plantings included ~265 trees and was considered successful. Round two will add ~90 trees in the downtown area. The annual spring tree plantings started on April 12th. Canopy Bloomington partners with Urban Forestry to conduct maintenance prunings and mulching. Smith hopes to grow that partnership to include more parks in addition to the trees being maintained at Switchyard Park. Smith also hopes to develop a fall tree planting opportunity for volunteers. BPRD Staff will be planting 6 additional trees at Switchyard Park and 70 more trees at the Arbor Day Celebration on April 29th. In order to plant trees, they must be 10 feet away from gas, electric, and sewer lines. This might be closer to 5 feet soon as Smith works with staff in Planning & Transportation and CBU to update codes involving plantings near utilities.

C-3 Griffy Lake Nature Preserve Prescribed Burn Updates

Cotter provided updates regarding the prescribed burn at Griffy Lake Nature Preserve. The prescribed burn occurred on March 9th. BPRD contracted Habitat Solutions to conduct the burn and worked with Bloomington Fire Department to ensure everything was controlled. The 5.5 acre burn unit is located above the main parking lot near the boathouse. Conditions were a bit more moist and cool than ideal but the evening rains helped extinguish any remaining embers. The purpose of the burn is to encourage oak and hickory forest growth on the south facing slopes and improve habitat for the understory plant populations. Currently, maple and beech trees that do not provide as much benefit to wildlife, are outcompeting the most producing trees that support more insects. BPRD conducted a burn in April of 2020 and have tried to do one every spring and fall since. Unfortunately, weather conditions and contractor schedules did not allow a burn to occur in 2021 or 2022. BPRD plans to conduct another burn by the dam on the north side of the lake this fall.

C-4 Trail System Master Plan for Griffy Lake Nature Preserve – Spectrum Trail Design

Cotter provided updates regarding the Trail System Master Plan for Griffy Lake Nature Preserve submitted by Spectrum. Spectrum is recommending closure of most of the current trail system and the creation of new trails that consist of multiple loops. Many of the trails were built and designed in the 1980s or built by deer and people going where they want. Increased rainfall and overuse accelerates the erosion of the trails. Some steep sections are dangerous for people to hike where roots are exposed. After the Griffy Loop Trail project is complete rerouting other existing trails will be considered. BPRD is also asking Spectrum about the feasibility of developing an accessible loop trail route that follows the Wetland Trail and is accessible for wheel chairs and other mobility aids. Spectrum also recommended a system of directional trail signs that would help orient people on the trail. BPRD Staff have asked ERAC members to review the report again before the next meeting so there will be an opportunity to share additional feedback.

C-5 Goat Farm Park Restoration & Construction Updates

Swift provided updated on the Goat Farm Restoration and Contruction Project. There are still some final steps before the project will be complete, but all major amenities have all been installed. BPRD contracted Mader Design to create a concept that aligned with the park's original purpose of providing publicly accessible recreation and greenspace. The construction contract was awarded to Scenic Construction Services. The project includes adding a 10-spot permeable paver parking lot, a new paved trail and boardwalk, a new picnic shelter, benches, interpretive signs, 5 additional acres of native prairie, and the installation of a new public art sculpture near the barn by local artist Jonathan Racek titled "FLEET/ing." The project also involves exterior repairs to the barn and silo, including new roof, siding, soffit, and gutters. The bluebird boxes are being moved further away from the trails, but the chimney swift towers are staying where they are. BPRD plana to re-install bat boxes on the barn once construction is complete. There will be no restrooms or water fountains installed on site. There are also no plans to restore the inside of the barn at this time.

The official ribbon cutting event will be held in June. A that time the property will be renamed Rogers Family Park. ERAC members were invited to tour the Goat Farm Property at the end of the meeting to see how construction is progressing.

C-6 June 2023 Meeting Agenda Items

Griffy Trail System Updates, Park Ridge East Management Plan, Miller-Showers Management Plan, Lesser Celandine Management, Management Plan Goals

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 pm.

**NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14TH , 2023
LOWER CASCADES PARK– Sycamore Shelter**