

**ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COUNCIL  
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION  
REGULAR MEETING**

Wednesday, August 14, 2019  
4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

Olcott Park

**CALL TO ORDER**

Parkhurst called the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Cathy Meyer, Dan Myers, David Parkhurst, Dorothy Granger, Denise Gardiner

Staff Present: Steve Cotter, Rebecca Jania, Jon Behrman, Joanna Sparks

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Myers moved approval of the June minutes, Parkhurst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**A. PUBLIC APPEARANCES**

No public appearance comments

**B. OLD BUSINESS**

**B-1 Griffy Lake Aquatic Vegetation Management**

Jania decided to wait to discuss this during the new business portion of the meeting.

**B-2 Education Update**

(Should have been under the new business portion of the agenda). Jania reported that planning and preparations have started for the upcoming 2019-2020 Nature Day season out at Leonard Springs and Griffy Lake. The first LSND is scheduled to start on Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup> followed by GLND on Thursday September 12<sup>th</sup>. We have had crews out at each park to cut back the overgrown trails, treat poison ivy around station locations, and mow picnic areas. We plan to have over 800 students visit the parks this season and hope to continue attracting volunteers to the program. Jania thanked Meyer for her continued support facilitating the stations at all Nature Days and asked that ERAC members also consider volunteering some of their time during one of our program dates. Meyer brought a few flyers to pass around and reported that there will be a Tree Stewards class related to urban forestry and soil. Also the Detmer Park Garden will be hosting an open house event in September. She also brought the Monroe County's Parks and Recreation Department newsletter created by John Robertson, Assistant Director which includes trail updates, just opened the Limestone Greenway which goes south from Church Ln. connecting to existing COB trails moving south for 1.7 miles. Gardiner confirmed that the new trail is beautiful and Meyer seconded that it is nicely shaded. Cotter asked if there were plans to extend the trail farther south and Meyer responded by saying yes but that the problem is that the trail ends at a mitigation property that is owned by INDOT by in the process of being transferred to Monroe County but there is a bridge missing on site that would allow the trail to pass over the existing creek. So until something can be developed, the trail ends there. However, there are plans to continue the trail across Fluck Mill Rd. into Indiana Limestone property and make a loop trail there to direct people back up the trail, so the trail will eventually be

even longer. Gardiner asked if sanitation crews plan to still use the drying beds that are next to the extension, because it did not smell when she was just out there walking. Meyer confirmed they would be and that this location is next to the Dillman Treatment Plant. Jania asked if Meyer would be able to provide electronic copies of the flyers she brought to be shared with the rest of the members, both present and not in attendance. Cotter then asked Meyer how many people showed up to her Hoosier River Watch Workshop, to which Meyer responded with 12 or 13 people. Then, Jania asked how the Karst Day Camp went to which Meyer responded by saying it went well, lasted 10 weeks, a lot of rain early on, but had a lot of returning staff so that was helpful, and most of the sessions were full.

## **C. NEW BUSINESS**

### **C-1 Aquatic Vegetation Management Update (LARE)**

Jania reported that the Tier II study was completed on July 29, 2019. Aquatic Control surveyed 50 points around Griffy Lake and only found Eurasian Milfoil present at two of those points. This is the best documented treatment results since 2009. The surveyors estimate that less than one acre of the target was present, which is down from the initial 23 acre infestation. Jania stated that this is an encouraging success story since we were able to almost eradicate the target using much less herbicide than years prior. The plant inventory also included the documentation of prevalent native species found around Griffy Lake including the dominant coontail plant, American pondweed, American water willow, arrowheads, and spadderdock. Aquatic Control mentioned that overall diversity was down but that this is typical of other Southern Indiana reservoirs. Additionally, secchi depths were measured to be less than normal but surveyors are seeing this in many water bodies across the state. There are a few theories as to why this is occurring, potentially related to excess rain fall, sedimentation runoff from the construction occurring on the golf course, or higher overall temperatures caused by climate change. This is something boathouse staff will continue to monitor and collect measurements on monthly. Behrman stated that the soils coming off the golf course are packed with nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen from years of fertilizer applications so the runoff likely includes high concentrations of these nutrients which can be a trigger for algae growth. This led Jania to mention that we continue to monitor the lake with the help of the Clean Lakes Program at IU to watch for signs of blue-green algae blooms at Griffy Lake.

### **C-2 CHAP Program**

Parkhurst started by asking for the meaning behind the acronym to which Cotter responded with Community Hunting Access Program. This is a program for the deer hunt being planned at Griffy Lake in November through the first week in December. Cotter reported that the contractor White Buffalo just completed their first proficiency screening this past Saturday, August 10<sup>th</sup>. They had 25 slots and had 18 people pass the test. White Buffalo plans to have another one on Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, so Cotter is confident that we should have plenty of hunters this time. COB has benefited from a new registry that IN DNR created, similar to an existing one they had to connect farmers with hunters who may have a deer they need removed from their property, they now added a CHAP column which has already had over 700 people register for the program in the state, 170 of those are either in Monroe or adjacent counties and will be receiving invites in the mail soon. COB had roughly 50 applicants before the first proficiency screening, so the word is getting out and people are eager to help. COB is working with

IU on access points to help get hunters in and help get the deer out, so looking into parking options and access trails for walking into the park and getting equipment in. COB has also had a request for allowing archery, but the contractor does not think we would be able to get down to the numbers we are hoping for with archery at this time but it is possible down the road if firearms are able to get the deer browse low enough then archery could be considered. And that is something too that IU could think about because allowing archery wouldn't be as difficult as firearms because of the restrictions on firearm use on campus property. So this is something we are keeping an eye on and considering but for now we are committed to using only firearms this November.

Cotter transitioned the discussion to reporting on the vegetation survey recently completed by Eco Logic. He said that Eco Logic representatives plan to present their findings at the Park Board meeting on September 17<sup>th</sup> to give an update on the deer browse monitoring being conducted at Griffy Lake Nature Preserve.

**C-3 October 2019 Meeting Agenda Items**

Education update, Switchyard Park update, Rail Trail management update, CHAP program update, Miller-Showers vegetation management update, Cascades Loop Trail update, First-Saturdays workday results

**C-4 Goat Farm Prairie Restoration**

Behrman started by speaking about the vegetation and appreciation for the funding from the State and US Fish and Wildlife to support the restoration work at the Goat Farm. COB landscape crews did the seed installation in January 2018 with a broad range of native seed mix purchased from Spence Restoration but also collected odds and ends of seeds from several city parks and nature preserves, including Olcott Park, because a lot of the surrounding vegetation is naturally occurring and no restoration work has been done. Moreover, there has been minimal grazing from previous land use at Olcott. Also, when this natural landscape was recovering there were no deer left on the landscape, so this benefited the floral diversity found on site. On the other hand, the Goat Farm property was in fact a functioning goat farm. To which Behrman reported to have sold goats to the owner back in ~1984. This caused the existing plant diversity to be very low due to the browsing pressure from goats since they prefer broadleaf plants over grasses. But Behrman continued on to say that there were still some remnant plants on site that were worth protecting, like common milkweed and blue mist flower as well as some stands of native grasses. So landscape crews performed very targeted and timed herbicide applications to preserve as much of the existing diversity as possible. Furthermore, species specific herbicides were used, such as grass specific herbicides and directed broadleaf specific herbicides to target composites and legumes while still protecting the existing milkweeds and penstemons. Behrman then reported that this past spring the site flooded "like the dickens" to the point where the water levels were over the park benches, so roughly 3 ft. of water. There were parts that experienced sheet flow of water across the fields but the areas that did not flood grew back with much more diversity. Behrman is hopeful that the flooding only set back the establishment time for the introduced seeds and not the diversity levels because the plants are still there, they just aren't as mature or as showy as the plants in the unflooded areas. Fortunately, the seed mix used during the install included a lot of species that aren't afraid of some flooding. Behrman continued on to tell the group about a recent meeting with a representative from State F&W, Julia, who was very happy with the way the install went and the diversity of plants she saw while they walked around the site. Behrman and Julia also noted various caterpillars and tons of monarchs using the swamp milkweed, which

Behrman pointed out was not initially on the site prior to restoration efforts and now there is a nice healthy stand of swamp milkweeds throughout the site which is an integral food source for this species of caterpillar. Monarchs were definitely a priority species but the goal was to provide good habitat for all kinds of pollinators. Lastly, the continued focus is on managing the woody plants and invasive grass species on site using the species specific herbicides mentioned above at least twice a year as well as plans to mow parts of the field in the dormant season. Behrman hopes to get the management plan down to selected treatments and utilize control burns on selected parcels to control invasive and promote the native population of plants while still leaving some stands of dormant plants to provide shelter and food sources for wintering wildlife, like ground nesting birds. Also, crews are trying to only schedule low mow maintenance during the dormant season instead of during the growing season like what has been done in the past due to scheduling constraints of seasonal staff. To finish, Behrman offered to take ERAC members on a short hike around the Goat Farm property to look at the volunteer tree planting site that Eco Logic helped with in the spring, which included the planting of over 200 containerized trees and 200 bareroot, including oaks and hickories. Sparks chimed in to report that all 200 containerized trees were also caged, which was labor intensive but was made easier with the help of Eco Logic staff and eager volunteers. Eco logic donated all the plant material, while COB funded the caging materials as well as the rental of a bobcat with an auger. Overall, the event was a good community building experience because of all the different groups/volunteers represented while also getting a lot of trees planted in an area that was in need of maintenance and reforestation. Parkhurst asked if trees would be going in at the Southeast Park as well? To which Sparks confirmed more trees will be planted along the riparian corridor. Behrman than echoed that statement and continued to explain the long-term plan of reusing existing cage materials once trees are mature enough to no longer require the added protection, then the cages would be rotated to younger saplings since the cages are costly and labor intensive. Sparks then reported that last year roughly 5,000-6,000 sapling trees were planted and COB has plans to plant another 5,000 trees this year. Sparks ended by bringing up a volunteer workday coming up on October 5<sup>th</sup> around Olcott/Goat Farm property. This is part of the First-Saturdays invasive plant awareness volunteer opportunities and is happening from 1- 4 pm and meeting at Sherwood Oaks shelter. COB partners with MC-IRIS, Monroe County Identify and Reduce Invasive Species to host a workshop on the first Saturday of every month during the growing season. These workshops are intended to educate the community on invasive identification and management techniques to be used on their own private property. Parkhurst asked a question relating to his personal prairie that is about 10-15 years old and includes one of his favorite plants, *Silphium terebinthinaceum* or prairie dock, and he was able to get seeds off of it and he wanted to know if COB would be interested in using the seeds for restoration work. Behrman replied that he would not want to use a non-local genome at the Goat Farm property but would be willing to use it at a weedier site like the Rail to Trail site that is already highly invaded. So Behrman or Sparks would find a home for Parkhurst's seeds somewhere. Parkhurst then went on to explain that his dissertation was on the optimal leaf size in relation to its size and he was interested in prairie docks large leaf size for something that grows low in the tall grass prairie but then puts out a large tall flower stalk that grows above the other vegetation and where the insects could still get to it. Behrman went on to describe how off 11<sup>th</sup> street at Maple Heights Naturescape on the corner near Upland, Duke Energy had these contractors with large trucks parked out there for months and really compacted the soil, so a lot of the native vegetation was destroyed but the prairie dock was un phased by the compaction, thus showing how understructure and resilient the root system are to disturbances. In

conclusion, Behrman again offered to hike around the property with any interested members to further discuss the plant life present on site.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

**The next ERAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 9, 2019  
at RCA Park in the Small Shelter.**