



ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COUNCIL

City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, December 8th, 2021
4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/85854595073?pwd=L2l4WlFVeUlwK2l1QVJGcU9HYWVhZz09>
Meeting ID: 858 5459 5073

I. CALL TO ORDER

Myers called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Dan Myers, David Parkhurst, Cathy Meyer, Autumn Brunelle, Angie Shelton, Denise Gardiner, Steve Cotter, Joanna Sparks, Rebecca Swift, Emily Gardner, Christian Thiim

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 2021

Motion to approve meeting minutes was approved unanimously.

IV. AGENDA

A. Public Appearances

A-1 Public Comment Period
No public comments.

B. Old Business

B-1 Griffy Lake Loop Trail & Fishing Pier Project Update

Cotter reported that the loop trail development has begun with trees being cleared on the western edge of the causeway, and blocks being set for the accessible walkway and fishing access points. This first phase of the project will extend from the north to south shore and connect to the bridge on the south side. Stairs south of the bridge will extend to the trails on the south side of the lake. Project funding for the current contract is \$1.85 million, which will pay for the walkway on Headley Road and the stairs on the hillside on the south of the lake. An application to receive a grant through Indiana DNR's Next Level Trail program has been sent to fund phase two of this project, including the stairs from the Dunn Street parking lot and the portion of the trail going over the Griffy Dam. Spectrum Trail Design came up with a plan to reroute sections of the Griffy Lake Loop Trail located on the south side of the lake. It is estimated that the project cost for trail updates will come to \$500,000, with \$300,000 dedicated to dam improvements and \$120,000 for backwoods trail improvements on the north shore. Headley Road continues to have one way traffic due to construction. Users can still access the main parking lot and hiking trails on the property while construction continues. Completion date for phase one of this project is scheduled for July 2022.

Myers asked if the soil erosion controls were placed throughout the project. Cotter responded that there are multiple erosion controls in place, coir logs and a silt fence, due to required redundancies to be installed. Parkhurst asked what was happening to the fish when the lake is drawn down. Cotter responded that fish swim downstream as the lake drains or collect in the remaining pools around Griffy. IDNR's permit requires contractors to adhere to a strict one foot per day average to ensure levels do not drop too drastically and negatively affect the integrity of the dam.

B-2 CHAP Program Results

Cotter reported that 43 hunters participated in the Community Hunting Access Program (CHAP) this year and 47 deer were removed from the preserve. The last weekend had the fewest number of takings, which has brought up the proposal to cut back on the number of weekends for the annual hunt. Both weather and holiday weekend plans are believed to have impacted participation numbers. More deer were harvested south of the lake compared to the north of the lake. This is due to increased private hunting activity north of Griffy coupled with favorable habitats and food sources to the south of the lake.

Based on research data and recommendations from IDNR, a maximum of 10 deer are tolerable in the nature preserve for vegetation to recover. IDNR is expected to reimburse \$23,389 which will offset a majority of the \$30,000 expense of hiring a CHAP Coordinator and \$5,000 to cover security costs.

Cotter was asked if any deer were tested for chronic wasting disease this year. Cotter responded he is unsure of the status of testing this year. Myers asked if there was a population estimate prior to the hunt. Cotter responded that counts have not been conducted and are unreliable. Metrics that show plant growth, which is being monitored annually by Eco Logic, provide a more effective measure for deer browse pressure on the property.

B-3 Griffy Lake Prescribed Burn Project Updates

Cotter reported that a contract extension request was brought to the park board for the prescribed burns due to inclement weather and contractor availability. The extension was approved, giving contractors until December 31, 2022 to complete the prescribed burns over a 7 acre area on the south facing slope of the main parking lot along Headley Road. The purpose of this restoration project is to improve oak and hickory regeneration, and to provide space for air circulation and light penetration to prevent fungal growth on mature trees and promote growth of new saplings.

C. New Business

C-1 Education Update

Swift provided an update on Nature Days, which were completed in November. A total of 583 students were hosted at Leonard Springs and 510 at Griffy Lake. Programming for events throughout the year continue to be offered and encouraged ERAC members to share educational opportunities, especially free and virtual events that remove barriers to participation. Swift provided a shoutout for IU's Environmental Resilience Institute (ERI) virtual workshops.

Brunelle provided updates on Indiana Master Naturalist sessions hosted by Monroe County Parks and Recreation (MCPR) and Purdue-Extension. A total of 26 students attended over 8 sessions to begin the process of achieving their master naturalist certification. Those seeking to complete the certification require an additional 30 hours of volunteering. Brunelle continued to promote additional community-wide trainings including one to become a whooping crane ambassador scheduled for Jan 20th 2022.

C-2 Hidden River Pathway Project Updates

Cotter provided updates on the CBU project. As of November 22nd, work continued on the north side of Third Street to install new culverts. Along Third Street, the pathway is being graded to plan for paving asphalt on westbound lanes. Signaling and striping along third and Lincoln are anticipated to be completed soon to open up the street for traffic -Lincoln street from Smith Ave. to Third St. is expected to be reopened for traffic. At the November 16th Park Board meeting, the new playground design at Waldron Hill and Buskirk Park was approved with a contract with Miracle Recreation Equipment Company to

procure and install the playground. CBU will reimburse \$160,000 of the project which includes site planning and design work. The additional \$93,500 will come from the parks general obligation bond which will pay for a rubber safety surface, swings, benches, and picnic tables. The project is anticipated to be completed in spring 2022.

Parkhurst asked if the stream will be daylighted. Cotter responded that existing culverts will be replaced, and that the stream will not be daylighted. Shelton asked how this project was different from the culvert project 10 years ago. Cotter responded that this is a downstream continuation of that project replacing culverts with ones that have a higher capacity.

C-3 Lower Cascades Project Updates

In November, stream stabilization of the project begun. The footers and first rows of limestone blocks are currently being placed. Project progress can be followed on the Parks and Recreation Facebook page and website. An accessible boardwalk will be built to access the waterfall. The trail from the Sycamore Shelter to the Waterfall Shelter has been completed and is paved with asphalt. Currently construction is occurring along the stream channel. The road through Lower Cascades Park has been reopened to all motorists with several speed bumps placed along the road for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

Swift discussed the step-down design feature of the limestone blocks which will allow for individuals to safely reach the stream as well as allowing for flexible water flow, which will reduce further erosion and scouring at the bottom of the stream. Swift drew attention to the addition of native trees and landscaping used as a restoration tool which will also provide additional recreational opportunities. The waterfall shelter is accessible again and will be available for rental in 2022. Cotter mentioned that the crossing along the creek and small parking lot near the Waterfall Shelter will no longer exist once the project is completed. The existing parking lot will be converted to turf grass and replanted with native trees.

C-4 ERAC 2022 Appointments

Swift mentioned that some ERAC appointments end, and asked individuals to either renew membership or take on additional responsibilities. Dan Myers was asked to continue being VP and was given a shoutout for his work. A callout for a new president as well as new members was issued to ERAC members.

C-5 2022 Outlook

Meyers asked for updates on invasive species work and water quality at Leonard Springs. Gardiner asked for updates on the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and bringing Erin, the urban forester, to ERAC meetings. Swift asked for ERAC members to send any items for the 2022 outlook if any ideas come to mind.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH, 2022 (Tentatively)
BLOOMINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION – Conference Room**