

2017 Environmental Resources Advisory Council Annual Report

2017 Initiatives and Topics of Interest

- Switchyard Park
- Trail Updates
- IU Health Construction

Integrated Pest Management Plan

ERAC members were regularly updated on the new IPM plan throughout the year. Staff trainings took place early in the year to certify chemical applicators, increasing the number on staff who are certified to nine. The IPM plan addresses both indoor and outdoor facilities and utilizes preventative management versus treatment whenever possible.

Monitoring the plan and updating with needed revisions was part of the first year of implementation. ERAC members reviewed suggested revisions that streamlined the process and corrected details. They provided valuable feedback that helped shape the updated plan including details for signage and the addition of monitoring requirements to the plan.

Trail Updates

ERAC members stayed updated on trail projects and plans for the future. The Adopt-a-Trail program continued to be an effective volunteer effort. With volunteer help, miles of trails were monitored monthly and annual service days helped with maintenance.

Upcoming trail projects were discussed, including extensions of the B-Line Trail, Cascades Trail and Jackson Creek Trail. Monroe County Parks and Recreation efforts that would connect areas south of Church Lane to Bloomington Parks and Recreation trails were also reviewed. Trail connections and development will continue to be discussed with ERAC members as BPR works on Bicentennial projects where trails are a central focus.

Griffy Lake Deer Management

ERAC members continued to be an important part of the review of the Griffy Lake deer management plans. They were updated on data collected on the property and helped with the evaluation of the data. Data collected at Griffy Lake Nature Preserve was compared to data collected at similar sites at Morgan Monroe State Forest and Brown County State Park. Sites were surveyed and results revealed fewer flowering and overall smaller plants at Griffy than at sites with hunting. Encouragingly, exclosure data and data from Brown County State Park indicate native plants can rebound from seed banks after deer pressure is reduced.

The advisory council remained supportive of the department's pursuit of a deer cull and wrote a letter of support for a deer cull to the Park Board in July 2017.

A recommendation to contract with White Buffalo to conduct a cull was presented to and approved by the park board in August and was conducted over the winter.

ERAC members will stay updated on the impacts of the cull and support continued monitoring and evaluation of the effects on vegetation.

Switchyard Park

ERAC members were kept updated on progress of the Switchyard Park plans. Early renderings of the plan and details of amenities were reviewed and later updated further in the design phase. ERAC members were especially interested in details of remediation of the site and addition of naturalization features, such as daylighting of stream sections. Discussion included the remediation work plan that details the amount of clean soil coverage over coal ash/cinder soils that will be required, and the location of "hot spots" (areas where sampling revealed higher than State allowed levels of contamination) that will be excavated, removed, and disposed of at

a regulated special waste landfill. Members will continue to be updated on the progress of this park and will hold one of their regular meetings at the site in 2018 during construction.

Goat Farm Prairie Planting

ERAC members were integral in the planning of the prairie planting at the Goat Farm property. In the early stages, they shared their support of the project with the Mayor. As the project progressed, members reviewed details of the site preparation plan, including the use of glyphosate to treat existing vegetation before the prairie planting. They also provided resources for assistance with maintenance plans such as controlled burns to maintain the prairie once it is established. Their suggestions of public education and interpretive signage have been added to the plans for community outreach as well. The project is funded by US Fish and Wildlife and DNR. US Fish and Wildlife is contributing \$2,500 for seed and herbicide and DNR is contributing \$2,000. The property was sprayed with herbicide in February, then mowed and sprayed again when the weeds came up. Seeds will be planted with a seed drill once the ground is frozen. Spot treatment, monitoring and periodic mowing will help manage the site. Use of controlled burns in the future would help maintain the prairie. ERAC will continue to be involved as this prairie develops and will review maintenance plans and help with public education and support of the prairie and its maintenance needs.

Wapehani Project

Wapehani Mountain Bike Park was discussed regularly in ERAC meetings. Members were updated on construction of trails to reconnect the loop trail after a section was lost due to a land purchase for the I-69 project. An elevated trail was built by installing a culvert and causeway at the west end of the lake. The soft surface trail will be maintained with stone over time. A seasonal trail specialist worked to maintain all of the trails and technical features of the park throughout the season.

Other discussions included the ongoing work with Utilities to address the hazard rating of the dam on the property. Options for the dam, owned by the Utilities department, were studied and it was decided to breach the dam to eliminate the hazard. Throughout the year, members were updated on the plan progress. The plan involves creating a v-shaped notch in the dam to drain the lake. It will be terraced to meet and recreate the stream channel. The trail will be rerouted to get riders across the stream channel and back onto the existing trail. The lake bottom will be left in place. Invasive species will be treated before the new plantings are seeded. The plan details the seeds and plugs that will be used on the lake bed and surrounding areas. Members reviewed the plan details and provided valuable comments and suggestions about the plant species and process. Members will continue to be updated as the project begins in the spring of 2018.

Outreach

Regular updates were given by staff on education and outreach in within BPR and the community such as Naturalist at Market and Nature Day programs. Information on partner programs such as Bug Fest and Sustaining Nature and Your Land Day was also shared. ERAC members participated in BPR programs, working as volunteers for Nature Days and coordinating student participation as volunteers. They also worked on their own outreach programs such as water monitoring and citizen science efforts that benefit and provide information to BPR.