



DATE: April 1, 2019

MEMO TO: John Wasik, Chair
Planning Committee

Terry Wilke, Chair
Finance Committee

FROM: James L. Anderson
Director of Natural Resources

RECOMMENDATION: Provide Policy Direction regarding a potential collaboration between the District and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and USACE's Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) Section 206 Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration at Dutch Gap Forest Preserve.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED: Conservation; Leadership; Organizational Sustainability

FINANCIAL DATA: The District was notified that the CAP Section 206 Program through the Chicago District USACE office has received federal approval for aquatic ecosystem restoration at Dutch Gap Forest Preserve in the amount of \$15 million: \$10 million in federal dollars and \$5 million provided by the District as the local sponsor. If the District chooses to move forward with this cooperative project, the District would be able to use the value of the Land, Easements, Rights-Of-Way, Relocation, and Disposal Areas (LERRD value) of the 785 acres at Dutch Gap as its local sponsor match. District and USACE staff believe the LERRD value of the property will meet or exceed the \$5 million, meaning there will be no out of pocket cost to the District for project implementation.

As part of the project planning process the USACE and District would be required to split the cost of completing the Project Management Plan (PMP). At an estimated cost of \$250,000, the District's share would be \$125,000. If the District moves forward with this collaboration, staff recommends that funds be appropriated from the Wetland Management Fund, which currently has an available fund balance of approximately \$311,000. The purpose of this fund is to "account for and improve the long-term management and improvement of existing wetlands within the Des Plaines River watershed."

BACKGROUND: The CAP Section 206 program had \$50 million available for aquatic ecosystem restoration nationwide. The Dutch Gap project was one of many considered, but the only one supported by, the USACE Great Lakes and Ohio River Division office for federal funding. In February 2019, the USACE Chicago District office was notified that they have received funding for the project at Dutch Gap Forest Preserve at the level of \$15 million, indicating the high level of federal enthusiasm for this project.

If policy direction is given to move forward with this project the process would be as follows:

- The USACE would complete and pay for a Federal Interest Determination (FID) at a cost of \$50,000.
- After the completion of the FID the District would sign a letter of intent to work with the USACE on the project.
- The District and the USACE would collaborate on, and split the cost of, the Project Management Plan. The District's share is estimated to be \$125,000.
- A Project Partnership Agreement would be entered into and that agreement would provide that the District's LERRD value would satisfy its local share, which would be up to \$5 million.
- USACE would implement and complete the restoration project within three years and then be responsible for a five-year maintenance and monitoring period.

In summary, if policy direction is given to move forward, the District will be able to leverage an approximate expenditure of \$125,000 from the Wetlands Management Fund to receive approximately \$10 million in wetland restoration at Dutch Gap Forest Preserve.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Corporate Counsel.