



Preservation Foundation
of the Lake County Forest Preserves

DATE: November 13, 2019

MEMO TO: Nels Leutwiler, Chair
Preservation Foundation Board

FROM: Nan Buckardt
Director of Education

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval of a \$5,789 grant for the Conservation Explorers 2020 program.

FINANCIAL DATA: This grant would result in a \$5,789 reduction in unrestricted funds.

BACKGROUND:

Conservation Explorers (ConEx) is a collaborative program offered by the Lake County Forest Preserves and Lake Forest Open Lands Association's Center for Conservation Leadership (CCL) program. A Preservation Foundation Annual Fund grant primarily supported the District's direct costs associated with the pilot program in 2019.

The goal of Conservation Explorers is to increase students' knowledge and appreciation of the role conservation and stewardship play in their environment. The 2020 program curriculum will focus on the Lake Michigan watershed (its water, wildlife, issues and way of life) to explore the importance of conservation efforts to protect the watershed and its people.

The program is designed to be a bridge between the District's Science Explorers in Nature (SEN) program, which serves rising 6th and 7th grade students, and the CCL program, which serves rising 10th through 12th grade students. ConEx fills a gap between these two programs, providing a continuum of experiences for students designed to help them become the next generation of conservation leaders.

Unlike the District's SEN program, which is limited to students that attend schools in designated low-income school districts, this program is available for any rising 9th grade student in Lake County. Scholarships are available for all students that need assistance.

Results from the 2019 pilot program

Major lessons learned from the 2019 pilot program include: the students really enjoyed the stewardship projects and the hands-on learning associated with them; the trip to Michigan overshadowed work in Lake County; and more reflection time needs to be built into the program.

Proposed 2020 Program

The 2020 program, still in the final stages of development, will focus on the Lake Michigan watershed and will be ten days in length (two consecutive weeks, from Monday through Friday). Students will spend their first week in Lake County participating in stewardship projects and learning about wildlife, plants, and people that depend on the Lake Michigan ecosystem for

survival. In the second week, the group will take a two-night trip to the Indiana Dunes National Park. This trip will give the students a different view of the natural areas found in the Lake Michigan watershed. Both stewardship and research will be part of the program.

A maximum of thirteen students will be selected to participate in the program. The tuition fee has not been determined yet, since final arrangements are still pending. As in 2019, there will be a trip fee (\$150) for all participants. The opportunity to apply for tuition scholarships will be available for all applicants. Any SEN alumnae will automatically be given a full tuition scholarship; others will apply through the existing process.

During the Lake County portion of the program, participants will visit natural areas to learn about the Lake Michigan ecosystem. Field trip opportunities include Lake Plain Coastal Wetland sites, McCormick Ravine and Fort Sheridan Preserves and others. Support field trips may include a tour of the Center Lake County Joint Action Water Agency (JAWA) facility in Lake Bluff to learn about water treatment and an opportunity to go out on Lake Michigan on a charter to conduct water testing.

The District will supply the lead educator, and CCL will provide an additional staff person. The District will be responsible for the majority of the arrangements and curriculum development.

Project Costs:

The requested grant would support the District’s share (50%) of direct program costs for ConEx in 2020:

Program supplies: backpacks, t-shirts, journals, snacks	\$2,150
Contractuals: transportation, meals, lodging, honoraria	\$3,350
District Grant Administration fee: 5% of grant award	\$ 289
Total	\$5,789

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Chief Development Officer/Executive Director of the Preservation Foundation, Education Manager.

PRESERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD:

Date: _____ Roll Call Vote: Ayes: ____ Nays: _____
 Voice Vote Majority Ayes; Nays: _____