



LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES
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Preservation, Restoration, Education and Recreation

DATE: January 6, 2020

MEMO TO: Adam R. Didech, Chair
Legislative Committee

FROM: Alex Ty Kovach
Executive Director

REQUEST: Provide Policy Direction to update previously identified projects that will be actively promoted by the District for funding through the State's recently approved Capital Bill.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED: Organizational Sustainability; Public Access and Connections; Conservation.

FINANCIAL DATA: There is no financial impact.

BACKGROUND: In November, 2018, the Finance Committee approved a list of capital projects for which to seek State funding through the Capital Bill that was at that time still working its way through the legislative process. Since that time the Capital Bill has been signed into law, and funds will become available through several grant programs over the next several years. To that end staff has reviewed and revised the attached list, which, if the Legislative Committee concurs, will be shared with the Lake County delegation of State Representatives and Senators asking them to support the District in funding these projects.

The projects on the list are either part of the approved 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), or are on the identified but unfunded list that was reviewed by Committees as part of the CIP process. If a project on the approved CIP were to receive State funding this would allow the District to redirect capital dollars to another project that has been identified but unfunded.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Chief Operations Officer, Department Directors, Corporate Counsel.

POTENTIAL STATE CAPITAL PROGRAM PROJECTS

PUBLIC ACCESS/IMPROVEMENT

Lake Carina Forest Preserve – Bridge and Trail Connection Gurnee, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$1,325,000.00

Currently there are portions of the Village of Gurnee and all of Wildwood that do not have direct access to the County's regional network of trails. The Lake County Forest Preserve (District), the Village of Gurnee and residents of Wildwood have been working together on a plan to address this gap in connectivity. Providing safe access over the Des Plaines River has been identified as a key component of the plan. This project includes the construction of a 1/2-mile of crushed stone trail and a 150' long pre-fabricated steel bridge. Completion of this project and sections of a shared-use path along Gages Lake Road will provide over 4,500 households and a population of over 11,000 direct access to the 31-mile Des Plaines River Trail and over 150-miles of other regional trails throughout the County.

This project has received strong support from the local community and has been identified as a top priority by the Village of Gurnee's Blue Ribbon Commission Report on pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. Currently the District does not have funding available for this project. The engineering and permitting have been completed making it 100% shovel ready once funding assistance can be secured. Construction can begin within four months after funding is available.

Van Patten Woods Forest Preserve - Equestrian and Public Parking Addition Wadsworth, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$300,000.00

The Lake County Forest Preserve District owns and operates portions of two County-wide regional multi-use trails, the Des Plaines River Trail and the Millennium Trail. When complete, these two trails will stretch over 70-miles. There is an existing equestrian trailer parking lot and an existing general public parking lot located where these two regional trails join. The recently completed connection of the two trails has increased the demand for these two parking lots which have been in overflow conditions several times of the year. Additional funding is needed to expand the equestrian parking lot from 6 to 12 spaces and the general public parking lot from 8 to 14 spaces and to re-surface the existing portion of the equestrian lot. Engineering and permitting are required and it is estimated that the construction could begin within eight months after funding is secured.

Independence Grove Forest Preserve - Playground Shade Structure Libertyville, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$55,000.00

The Lake County Forest Preserve District (District) owns and operates a very popular playground facility at Independence Grove Forest Preserve, referred to as the Children's Grove. The District has received several concerns regarding the lack of shade for portions of the Children's Grove play area. On hot sunny days, children are often forced to use other play facilities because of the lack of shade and the temperature of the rubber mulch. Funding is needed to design and construct a woven fabric shade structure over a portion of the play area. Construction could begin after an eight-month design and engineering phase.

Millennium Trail – Round Lake Section Round Lake and Round Lake Beach, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$4,185,000.00

The Lake County Forest Preserve District (District) and the Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT) have partnered with several municipalities to complete sections of the Millennium Trail. When complete, the Millennium Trail will stretch over 41-miles connecting 12 Lake County municipalities, 13 schools, 18 parks and 12 forest preserves. Currently there are 31-miles complete with no funding available to complete the remaining sections. The Round Lake section will stretch 1.75-miles through the communities of Round Lake and Round Lake Beach providing over 7,600 households and a population of over 25,400 direct access to this County-wide regional trail. A preliminary engineering study has been completed and the project has received extensive support from the local communities, LCDOT and Avon Township. Once funding is secured, detailed engineering and permitting will be required which could take up to 18 months to complete before construction can begin.

Edward L. Ryerson Conservation Area – Education Classroom Building Riverwoods, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$175,000.00

This funding would provide for a space needs analysis, site assessment and pre-design services for a potential education classroom building as replacement of the current classroom cabins. The two cabins currently used as classroom buildings are repurposed from their initial intent as weekend family use and are approaching 80 years old and the end of their use lives. In addition, the current cabins have many ADA issues, many of which are difficult and costly to resolve. The new facility will provide four classrooms that will accommodate 25 students and teachers, adequate storage for program supplies and materials, and ADA accessibility. Ryerson Woods has been a major environmental education facility for the District since it became a preserve in 1972. Education staff is housed at the Welcome Center at Ryerson Woods and will have easy access to the classroom facility and the teaching resource.

POTENTIAL STATE CAPITAL PROGRAM PROJECTS INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

American with Disabilities Act Retrofit

Requested Funding: \$1,55,000,000.00

The District ~~is~~has ~~reviewed~~ing their accessibility based on the most current ADA standards. An updated transition plan is being finalized to address the needed retrofits of current District facilities, communication methods, and programming. These retrofits will provide greater access to the District's public land, programs and information.

Lakewood Forest Preserve – Maintenance Building Wauconda, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$ 2,525,000.00

The project consists of the design and construction of a new grounds maintenance shop at Lakewood for the Southwest Maintenance District crew. Based on evaluation of staff needs and the existing facilities at Lakewood as part of the initial Lakewood Master Plan effort, it was determined that the best course of action is to construct a new shop at Lakewood. A preliminary estimate of the appropriate size for the shop is 4,500 sf. There is a strong desire for the facility to be developed as "net zero" with respect to its energy needs, and it is expected that the project will pursue support from a Net Zero Energy Building Program grant from the IL Clean Energy Community Foundation.

POTENTIAL STATE CAPITAL PROGRAM PROJECTS HISTORIC STRUCTURES

~~**Edward L. Ryerson Woods Conservation Area—Brushwood Center Roof Riverwoods, Illinois**~~

~~**Requested Funding: \$400,000.00**~~

~~In 2014 the Lake County Forest Preserves concerned with the age of its core buildings hired a firm to look at the distinct facilities and the existing condition of each. The recommendation by the firm was that the Brushwood Centers existing clay tile roof would have to be replaced within the next two years. The age of the tiles makes them fragile and easily breakable during summer storms.~~

~~The Brushwood Center was constructed in 1942 and is listed on the National Historic Register of Places.~~

Adlai E. Stevenson Historic Home - Exterior Siding Mettawa, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$30650,000.00

In 2014 the Lake County Forest Preserves concerned with the age of its core building hired a firm to look at the distinct facilities and the existing condition of each. The recommendation by the firm was that the building's exterior siding would have to be replaced in the next three years due to the age and deterioration.

The Stevenson house and service building were both constructed between 1937 and 1939. The house is listed on the National Historic Register of Place and as of 2014 designated as a National Historic Landmark.

POTENTIAL STATE CAPITAL PROGRAM PROJECTS

HABITAT RESTORATION/NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Greenbelt Forest Preserve – Habitat Restoration **Waukegan/North Chicago, Illinois**

Requested Funding: \$498,125.00

Greenbelt Forest Preserve’s 595-acres is located in the North Chicago/Waukegan portion of the Lake Michigan watershed. The Preserve is characterized by a mix of upland prairie, wetland, oak woodland and successional shrub thickets. Small pockets of high quality native plant and animal communities occur within the 80-acre project area. The goal of this habitat restoration project is to expand the acreage of native plant and animal communities, improve its diversity and resiliency through proven restoration and management methods. Among the site’s most unique biota are the eleven species of birds ranked so rare that the US Fish and Wildlife and Illinois’ Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and Strategy plan (IWAP) list as “Species in Greatest Need of Conservation.” These species are found in the site’s shrubland habitat; a rare combination of prairie interspersed with patches of native shrubs and small trees. The IWAP-listed birds found include: yellow-breasted chat, blue winged warbler, willow flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo, eastern kingbird, northern flicker, prairie warbler, American woodcock, field sparrow, marsh wren, and brown thrasher. This habitat restoration project will improve habitat for many rare species and build upon the community-based volunteer restoration efforts.

Lakewood Forest Preserve – Oak Woodland Ravine Habitat Restoration **Wauconda, Illinois**

Requested Funding: \$2,264,625.00

The 2,809-acre Lakewood Forest Preserve contains a diverse assemblage of natural communities, including Illinois Natural Areas Inventory sites, as well as dedicated and proposed Illinois Nature Preserves such as Wauconda Bog, Broberg Marsh, and Schreiber Lake and bog. Numerous endangered and threatened species have been documented here, including several birds that the US Fish and Wildlife and Illinois’ Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and Strategy plan (IWAP) list as “Species in Greatest Need of Conservation.” This project has the potential of establishing a 1,000-acre woodland complex, which has been identified as a priority by the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan and the Chicago Wilderness Oak Ecosystem Restoration Plan. Within the 1,000-acre complex is a former Oak woodland ravine system that would be restored by removing a dam structure and restoring the historical natural habitats indicated by the 1939 aerial photo.

Lakewood and Ray Lake Forest Preserve Ecological Complex – Habitat Restoration

Wauconda, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$ 3,670,000.00

The project will be implemented in three phases:

<u>Phase 1</u>	<u>\$ 1,450,000.00</u>
<u>Phase 2</u>	<u>\$ 960,000.00</u>
<u>Phase 3</u>	<u>\$ 1,260,000.00</u>

Lakewood and Ray Lake Forest Preserves contains a diverse assemblage of natural communities, man-made landforms, and Illinois Natural Inventory Areas. At 3,866 acres, this is the largest Lake County Forest Preserve complex. Unique natural communities such as Wauconda Bog, Schreiber Lake and Bog, and Broberg Marsh, which qualify as Illinois Natural Area Inventory sites can be found along with extensive areas of restorable oak woodlands, savanna and wetland communities, as well as important habitat for grassland and wetland bird species.

The complex is located within the Upper Fox River Watershed and restoration efforts could greatly increase retention and infiltration to lessen the impacts of precipitation events. Proposed restoration efforts would also focus on restoring depressional wetlands in agricultural lands to increase wetland habitat for native species. In conjunction with restoration of the surrounding uplands habitat for grassland and wetland bird species would be greatly enhanced. These efforts would meet the goals of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. Within the complex there is also the potential to establish a 1,000-acre oak woodland complex which has been identified as a priority by both the Illinois Forest Action Plan and the Chicago Wilderness Oak Ecosystem Restoration Plan. Funding could serve as matching funds for grants.

Hydrological restoration engineering is near completion for wetland parcels in Ray Lake Forest Preserve. Ecological plans for the remaining uplands and wetlands are completed.

Estimated Costs:	Hydrological Restoration	\$ 1,450,000.00
	Upland Restoration	\$ 1,930,000.00
	<u>Five Year Management</u>	<u>\$ 290,000.00</u>
	Total	\$ 3,670,000.00

Cahokia Flatwoods Forest Preserve – Oak Woodland Habitat Restoration Riverwoods, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$ ~~893,000.00~~ 1,871,875.00

Cahokia Flatwoods Forest Preserve is a 181-acre parcel of mesic oak woodlands along the Des Plaines River just north of Lake-Cook Road. It is part of a 2,800-acre complex of oak woodlands in southern Lake County. Directly south is the holdings of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. The Forest Preserve contains large acres of a critically rare woodland type, identified as Northern Flatwoods. These seasonally wet woodlands provide critical habitat for several rare amphibian and reptile species included in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. The current condition is degraded by the presence of European buckthorn. The dense thickets of this invasive small tree is degrading native communities, and increasing erosion of sediment into the Des Plaines River. Restoration of this preserve will expand on past efforts by both Lake and Cook County along the

Des Plaines River and will reduce sedimentation, improve water quality and provide significant habitat for wildlife species. Funding could serve as matching funds for grants.

North Central Grassland Ecological Complex – Habitat Restoration

Requested Funding: \$ 3,100,000.00

In north central Lake County there exists a collection of eight Lake County Forest Preserves and one Illinois Department of Natural Resources Preserve totaling 5,742-acres. Most of these acres are currently in agricultural production or have been restored to native wetlands or prairie habitats. This collection of lands provides an excellent opportunity to restore several thousand acres of habitat for grassland and wetland birds. Grassland birds have been designated as the most globally imperiled group of wildlife species as identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. Restoration efforts would restore large uninterrupted blocks of grasslands and wetlands to provide habitat for a long list of bird species. This grassland ecological complex would rival Nachusa Grasslands, Midewin National Grasslands, Horicon Marsh and Illinois Beach State Park for its size and availability of habitat. Funding could serve as matching funds for grants.

Grant Woods Forest Preserve – Habitat Restoration

Ingleside, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$712,500

Grant Woods Forest Preserve (1,126-acres) contains biologically diverse plant and animal communities of bog, marsh, prairie, and oak woodland and savanna; with large portions dedicated as an Illinois State Nature Preserve. The goal of this habitat restoration project is to expand the high quality core by removing dense thickets invasive trees and shrubs in an adjacent 75-acres block of degraded habitat. This habitat restoration work will improve habitat connectivity for several animal species listed as “Species in Greatest Need of Conservation” by Illinois' Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and Strategy plan (IWAP).

Grant Woods Forest Preserve – Long Lake Shoreline Erosion

Ingleside, Illinois

Requested Funding: \$ ~~300,000.00~~ 350,000.00

At Grant Woods Forest Preserve the Forest Preserve owns a portion of Long Lake. In the past the Forest Preserve invested funds to stabilize severally eroding lakeshore. Currently, there is 500-feet of shoreline that needs additional stabilization. The restoration effort would consist of placing riprap along a 100-foot section to protect exposed, very steep slopes that are eroding. The remaining 400 feet would receive more green infrastructure such as vegetated erosion mats and fishing nodes for local fishing.