



**DATE:** November 2, 2020

**TO:** Jessica Vealitzek, Chair  
Operations Committee

**FROM:** Nan Buckardt  
Director of Education

**REQUEST:** Provide Policy Direction regarding the disposition of the Little Free Libraries at Ryerson Woods, Greenbelt and Nippersink Forest Preserves as the Trail Tales interpretive panels are removed.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUPPORTED:** Public Access and Connections

**FINANCIAL DATA:** There is no financial impact if the structures are removed.

**BACKGROUND:** In 2014 the District collaborated with Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods to innovate the District's Trail Tales program. The Trail Tales program engages families with young children in nature exploration while developing literacy skills. Nature-related story books were transformed into seven interpretive panels which are placed trailside. The book text is available in both English and Spanish. Trail Tales trail interpretive panels are currently located at Ryerson Woods, Nippersink and Greenbelt Forest Preserves. A Little Free Library is placed near the last panel of each trail, making books available to visitors to take, as a way to encourage reading.

The panels must be removed because the permissions from the publishers to use the books are expiring.

After the panels are removed, the Little Free Libraries along the trails will be out of context. Over the six years of the program, each of the libraries has needed major repairs, at least once, due to vandalism.

Staff recommends that the Little Free Library structures be removed with the panels and the collaborators on the project be thanked for their participation over the years. Staff seeks Committee direction on this issue.

**REVIEW BY OTHERS:** Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer, Finance Director, Superintendent of Educational Facilities, Corporate Counsel.