



DATE: February 10, 2021

MEMO TO: Nels Leutwiler, Chair
Committee of the Board

FROM: James L. Anderson
Director Natural Resources

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval of a \$36,000 grant, payable over three years, from unrestricted funds to expand capacity for native plant and seed production to benefit the Forest Preserves and partner agencies.

FINANCIAL DATA: The requested funds will be matched, over a three-year period, by \$36,000 from the District's General Fund and \$108,000 from Citizens for Conservation.

BACKGROUND: The Barrington Greenway Initiative (BGI) is a collaborative effort of seven conservation organizations: the Lake County Forest Preserves, Audubon Great Lakes, Bobolink Foundation, Citizens for Conservation, the Friends of the Forest Preserves, McHenry County Conservation District, and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. BGI's goal is to acquire, preserve, protect, restore, and maintain the natural features of the Flint Creek and Silver Creek watersheds.

BGI partners are particularly focused on accelerating the pace and increasing the scale and quality of restoration efforts in the region. They also prioritize reintroduction of species of greatest conservation need and Chicago Wilderness Priority Species on BGI lands. These strategies improve the ecological health and connectivity of the habitat at a landscape scale, which is one of the Forest Preserve's current 5-year objectives.

Access to the appropriate native seed and plant materials is critical to ensuring success of these endeavors, yet purchasing seed and plant material on the open market can be prohibitively expensive. For the past three years, a \$36,000 Annual Fund grant from the Preservation Foundation helped address this need by increasing production of plant materials for use in restoration by BGI partners. It was matched by funding from the District General Fund and from Citizens for Conservation and provided the capacity to:

- Increase collaboration of BGI partners' involvement with plant and seed supply and sharing
- Propagate approximately 13,000-14,000 native plant species
- Collect seed of five rare orchid species for propagation
- Produce ferns and aquatic plants for use in reintroduction and restoration projects
- Grow difficult to propagate species, which serve as the building blocks for restoring the composition of our native plant communities, including hoary puccoon and violet wood-sorrel

- Substantially increase the plant materials for reintroduction efforts of those building block plant species such as low bind weed and moonseed vine by performing cuttings on plants provided by LCFPD ecologists
- Undertake germination tests on hard to establish species
- Increase seed collection efforts for LCFPD needs
- Increase volunteer workdays
- Increase greenhouse yield overall
- Increase seed processing
- Facilitate seed swaps between the partners to increase the genetic diversity of our native plant materials

REQUEST

The Forest Preserves requests a renewed grant to continue and expand upon these successes over the next three years. Specifically, we seek funds to establish new populations of the “Sought After Sixty” species in new Forest Preserve locations. These are species that tend to be habitat specialists and are either rare or currently absent from Forest Preserves and partner properties and serve as building blocks of native plant communities.

Funding from the Preservation Foundation will be matched by District and Citizens for Conservation funds and will ensure our capacity to collect and propagate these species. It will also provide leverage to obtain funding from other sources, such as the Garden Club of Barrington, which will be asked to support propagation efforts for Fire Pink, a “Sought After Sixty” species.

In addition to collecting and propagating the “Sought After Sixty” species, funding will support new efforts to identify and propagate woodland, prairie and savanna warrior sedges. Warrior sedges are those sedges that successfully compete with invasive plants during the initial stages of habitat restoration and serve as building blocks for plant communities. These sedges can out-compete invasive species and provide a fuel matrix for prescribed controlled burns.

Wetland-specific warrior sedges have already been used by BGI partners to successfully restore sedge meadows. Expanding our knowledge of woodland, prairie and savanna species capable of out-competing invasive plants will provide a powerful defense against one of the most challenging aspects of woodland restoration.

BGI Partner Roles and Responsibilities

Citizen’s for Conservation: CFC will provide an annual scope of work for the ecological seed technician; including nursery maintenance, schedule of volunteer workdays, plant propagation targets (species and numbers), and native seed collection goals. CFC will provide funds to support ~\$36,000 plus benefit costs annually for three years to support the ecological seed technician as an employee of the Friends of the Forest Preserves.

Lake County Forest Preserves: LCFPD will provide \$12,000 over three years. LCFPD will provide an annual scope of services for the ecological seed technician to accomplish, plant propagation targets (species and numbers) and native seed collection goals. LCFPD will provide

space within the nursery for new bed development, propagation space in the greenhouse and wild planting areas at Cuba Marsh and Grassy Lake Forest Preserves

Friends of the Forest Preserve: FOTFP will provide a qualified skilled ecological seed technician capable of identifying and propagating native plants. FOTFP will provide all the necessary insurance coverage for this individual to work across partner properties, including at nursery facilities and in natural areas.

BUDGET

Expenses

Item	Notes	Amount
Labor: Ecological Technician	Full-time, three-year contract position	\$ 175,000
Staff Management (Friends of the FP)	HR, administration, insurance (estimated)	\$ 5,000
Total Expenses		\$ 180,000

Revenues

BGI Partner Agency	Notes	Amount
Preservation Foundation	Pending: 1/3 of labor cost * 3 years	\$ 36,000
Lake County Forest Preserves	Secured: 1/3 of labor cost * 3 years	\$ 36,000
Citizens for Conservation	Secured: 1/3 of labor cost + benefits * 3 years	\$ 108,000
Total Revenues		\$ 180,000

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Board President, Preservation Foundation Executive Director.

COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD:

Date: _____ Roll Call Vote: Ayes: ____ Nays: _____

Voice Vote Majority Ayes; Nays: _____



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Staff

Luke Dahlberg
Julianne LaRocque
Kevin Scheiwiller

Nels Leutwiler

Preservation Foundation

21950 Riverwoods Rd

Riverwoods, IL 60015

Cc: Rebekah Snyder

Re: BGI Seed Technician Funding for 2021 through 2024

Citizens for Conservation is writing in support of the continued funding for the BGI Seed Technician position. Since the inception of the position in 2018, Luke Dahlberg has proved to be a great asset to the multiagency effort to restore diverse plant communities to the natural areas located throughout the Barrington Greenway Initiative. Luke has provided technical expertise and hands-on techniques to reintroduce many difficult to establish species at CFC, Lake County Forest Preserve, and other partner sites. Plant material propagated by Luke at the Native Seed Nursery has allowed many wetland restoration projects to flourish including the Flint Creek Corridor and Grassy Lake Sedge Meadow.

The renewed contract would allow all BGI partners to continue to add to the diversity of restorations throughout the region. For the 2021-2024 term, the BGI Seed Technician will focus on:

- Continued reintroduction of the "Sought After 60" species
- Propagation of Warrior Sedges
- Expand the volume collected of native matrix species that provide the anchor for new restoration projects
- Increasing the genetic pool of native plants, following each partner's guidelines, to ensure climate resiliency in restorations

The BGI Seed Technician will receive a salary and benefit package valued at approximately \$60,000 annually. Citizens for Conservation will provide \$108,000 towards this contract. Matching funds from the Preservation



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Luke Dahlberg
Juliann LaRocque
Kevin Scheiwiller

Foundation and Lake County Forest Preserves would create the following package for the position:

<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Annual Contribution</i>	<i>3 Year Contribution</i>
<i>Citizens for Conservation</i>	\$36,000	\$108,000
<i>LCFP Operations Budget</i>	\$12,000	\$36,000
<i>Preservation Foundation</i>	\$12,000	\$36,000

Citizens for Conservation and the Bobolink Foundation have provided the funding for many important BGI projects including the Grassy Lake Sedge Meadow Restoration and Reintroduction of Smooth Green Snakes. Citizens for Conservation is pleased to coordinate and contribute to this ongoing position as the BGI Seed Technician will continue to be a critical need to meet all BGI partners' needs towards upgrading and restoring the native ecosystem health of the BGI target areas.

Respectfully,

Kevin Scheiwiller
Restoration Manager

Steve Smith
Board of Directors