



DATE: May 1, 2023

MEMO TO: Jessica Vealitzek, Chair
Operations Committee

FROM: Pati Vitt
Director of Natural Resources

REQUEST: Provide policy direction regarding an amendment to the current Cooperative Services Agreement between the Lake County Forest Preserve District (District) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to include the provision of office space and other amenities for USDA personnel at the Operations and Public Safety Facility.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED: Leadership; Conservation; Organizational Sustainability

FINANCIAL DATA: There is no financial impact at this time.

BACKGROUND: The District has been managing populations of whitetail deer and other wildlife for 35 years to reduce ecological and other property damage and to ensure public safety. These activities have been conducted with the cooperation of the USDA with Board approval since 2002. Under a Cooperative Service Agreement already in place, in exchange for financial consideration (~\$25,000 per year), USDA acts as the District's contractor assisting District personnel in performing the District's wildlife management programs, including (i) the urban deer management program, (ii) sensitive species recovery efforts, including, for the Blanding's turtle program, helping to reduce nest predation and monitoring individual turtles, and (iii) mitigating the impacts of beaver damage, including flooding of trails, roadways and neighboring properties.

The USDA would like to increase the capacity of the Cooperative Service Agreement by embedding an Assistant District Supervisor (ADS) and other personnel within the Operations and Public Safety facility (Operations Facility) in Lindenhurst, IL. Specifically, USDA is requesting (i) a private space for the ADS and other USDA employees who would periodically visit the Operations Facility for employee consultations, evaluations, and onboarding, (ii) space for a desk, printer, and filing cabinet, (iii) internet access, (iv) space to secure a safe for the storage of firearms used by USDA in the course of their duties, (v) outdoor parking for a truck, trailer, and UTV, and (vi) storage space for equipment.

Providing office space in support of the collaborative efforts with the USDA is likely to result in benefits to the District, including reduced travel time for USDA (which would save the District money) and other associated expenses when the ADS are conducting District-related wildlife management activities. Specifically, the reduction of ADS expenditures for transportation from

the USDA base of operations at O'Hare Airport will allow a greater proportion of District contract and grant (e.g. GLRI) funding to be directed to Blanding's turtle recovery. In addition to increased opportunities for collaboration, other benefits are likely to include greater capacity for the evaluation and monitoring of wildlife damage management and expediting USDA assistance when emergency assistance is required.

The Natural Resources Department is seeking policy direction whether to amend the current USDA Cooperative Services Agreement to include office space and other amenities at the Operations and Public Safety Facility for the ADS on an ongoing basis.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Director of Operations & Infrastructure, Director of Public Safety, Corporate Counsel