



DATE: February 15, 2024

MEMO TO: Nels Leutwiler, Chair
Preservation Foundation Board

FROM: Alyssa Furkus
Director of Education

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval of a \$1,200 grant from unrestricted funds to create a new, education-centered habitat for the endangered Blanding’s turtle on display at the Ryerson Welcome Center.

FINANCIAL DATA: As of December 31, 2023, the Foundation’s total of unrestricted funding was \$317,637.26. Grants paid and payable from the unrestricted funds as of February 15, 2024, include:

Year	Amount
2024 (paid)	\$ 54,527.05
2024 (payable)	\$ 52,300
2025	\$ 31,000
Total Paid and Payable	\$ 137,827.05

The requested funds would be paid as a single disbursement of \$1,200 in 2024.

BACKGROUND: The Blanding’s turtle was donated to the education department when it was deemed non-releasable due to size by the natural resources department in 2014. In the last year, the turtle has unexpectedly grown and needs a new enclosure.

While unexpected, the need for a new enclosure presents the opportunity to create an educational interpretive display highlighting this endangered species. In 2023, the Forest Preserves had 8,809 visitors to the Welcome Center and expects about 7,500 visitors for 2024.

The new interpretive display will include an enclosure optimal for semi-aquatic turtles that will allow space for swimming and basking, allowing the public to view the turtle from any part of the enclosure.

The new interpretive signage will highlight this Illinois-endangered species and what the Forest Preserve is doing to help the wild populations, including providing a link to the Blanding’s Turtle Recovery Program page on the Forest Preserves website. The Preservation Foundation will be recognized as the sponsor of the exhibit.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Executive Director of the Preservation Foundation, Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships, Director of Administration, Acting Chief Operations Officer, and Forest Preserves Executive Director

PRESERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD:

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

Voice Vote Majority Ayes: _____ Nays: _____

Exhibit A: Project Budget

Item	Cost
Tank	\$460
Stand	\$360
Filter	\$40
Heater	\$60
Lights	\$50
Platform costs	\$100
Misc	\$80
Signage (Steve)	\$50
Total	\$1,200