

## **Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC) Meeting 6-22-2020**

Location: Tele-meeting (Zoom)

### **Committee Members Present:**

Steve Sass  
Andrew Tucker  
Andy Schnabel  
Ally Pudlo  
Lindsay Chadderton  
John DiTillo

### **Others Present:**

Garry Harrington – VPA Rum Village Park Supervisor  
Hannah Teshka – VPA Naturalist  
Matthew Moyers – VPA Partnerships, Community and Standards Coordinator  
Brent Thompson – City of South Bend, Forester

**Call to order – Steve Sass at 8:32 am.**

**Vote to approve the minutes from the May 11, 2020 EAC meeting.**

Motion by Ally Pudlo seconded by Andy Schnabel.

### **Discussion:**

#### **Old Business –**

##### **Mowing of Prairies and Meadows – Garry Harrington**

- Garry Harrington spoke with John Martinez (VPA) and Chris Moffit (VPA, in charge of mowing), asked to alter how we manage mowing in the parks and properties VPA maintains including not mowing prairies and prairie like properties until early to middle March.
- Currently, VPA only has 2 properties that have prairies: Rum Village and Frederickson Park.
- There is some question as to who owns the property along the river (to the west of the boat launch towards Twyckenham Drive) that was mowed last fall. It could potentially be owned by IU. However, this property is maintained by VPA. Brent Thompson confirmed that VPA does plant in that section of property.
- EAC would like a better understanding of VPA's mowing practices including education for VPA employees, mowing schedules, etc.
- Update on Action Step from May's EAC meeting:
  - Land Policies Sub-Committee would like to meet with VPA Facilities and Grounds (F&G) to discuss mowing.
  - Land Policy Sub-Committee will draft a Best Management Practice for Mowing Park Properties (including properties maintained by VPA). This will include information on best times to mow, how to mow, where to mow, continued education for VPA employees, etc.).

**Elizabeth Simeri: Wildlife Gardens – Garry Harrington**

- She is an IUSB Sustainability Major that would like to do a project on wildlife gardens. Garry is still waiting to hear back from her.

### **New Business –**

#### **Discussion of EAC Sub-committees: Education and Land Policies/Vegetation Management – Steve Sass and Garry Harrington**

- Steve shared a working draft of the 2021 NRMP which includes Integrated Ecological Principles.
- This document was worked on by Steve Sass and Amanda Smith with assistance from Matthew Moyers.
- It contains an Introduction, List of Personnel, General Principles and Considerations, Conduct of Research, General Procedures and Methods, and Natural Resource Management Areas.
- EAC has been asked to review this new draft and add comments/suggestions.
- The goal is to have this draft completed by the September EAC meeting.
- The next section that will be added is Natural Resources Management Strategies which will follow Guiding Principles (V.). This will be the work from the Sub-Committees. It will follow the framework: Strategies vs. Reasons for Strategies.

#### **“Strategies” vs “Guiding Principles” – Steve Sass**

- Strategies will lead to actionable items.
- Strategies from Sub-Committees need to be put into the 2021 NRMP by the August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

#### **Trail at Elbel Park/Golf Course – Garry Harrington**

- VPA would like to continue letting the public use Elbel for nature hikes.
- Hikes can only be done with a lead due to risk of walking on the fairway.
- To continue using Elbel for naturalist lead hikes, the trail needs to be fortified in spots that are potential hazards.

### **Miscellaneous –**

#### **Playgrounds and Centers Re-Opening – Matthew Moyers and Garry Harrington**

- Opening, cancellations, and closings for VPA programs and facilities are centrally located at: <https://sbvpa.org/updates/>.

#### **Other items:**

- Someone is dumping grass clippings at Frederickson park where there are significant native plants. John Martinez is looking into who is dumping the clippings.

#### **Mud Lake Sub-Committee:**

- Received a revised proposal to be presented. EAC needs to review the revised proposal and make recommendations. The sub-committee will vet the proposal and bring recommendations back to the full EAC meeting in August. Matthew Moyers will work with the Sub-Committee.
- John DiTillo would like to join the Mud Lake Sub-Committee.

#### **Action Step for the EAC:**

1. Land Policies Sub-Committee will meet with Facilities and Grounds to discuss mowing. After the meeting, draft a Mowing BMP to include information on best times to mow, how to mow, where to mow, continued education for VPA employees, etc.

2. Mud Lake Sub-Committee – vet and make recommendations on revised proposal.
3. Continued work on Topic of Concerns in Sub-Committees.
4. Review the 2021 NRMP and provide comments/suggestions.

**Next meeting is August 3, 2020 at 8:30 am via Zoom (<https://tnc.zoom.us/j/97983980195>).**

**Motion to Adjourn by at 10:01 am by Steve Sass.**

Minutes approved 7/14/2020

**APPROVED**