

Aug 3, 2020

Mr. Aaron Perri, Executive Director  
South Bend Venues, Parks & Arts  
Mr. Mark Neal, President  
Ms. Consuella Hopkins, Vice President  
Ms. Aimee Buccellato  
Mr. Dan Farrell  
South Bend Board of Park Commissioners  
219 S. St. Louis Blvd.  
South Bend, IN 46617

Dear Mr. Perri and Commissioners,

The Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC), at the recommendation of the EAC's Mud Lake Subcommittee, has reviewed a revised "Proposal for the City of South Bend Venues Parks & Arts Department to commit to pursuing protection for Mud Lake." The revised proposal was submitted to the EAC for our June 22 meeting by Chris Cobb, Mark Blassage, and Jen Betz on behalf of the collective known as Elbel 4 Everyone.

We support the intent of the proposal "to ensure that Mud Lake and its contributing watershed are protected and restored," and we especially appreciated the authors' summation of the ecological significance of Mud Lake. ***We recommend that the VPA Board of Park Commissioners establish a working group consisting of VPA staff and interested citizens to "pursue opportunities to ensure that Mud Lake [is] protected and restored."***

We note that the proposal is consistent with language in the 2020 "Natural Resource Management Plan," the guiding document for the Board of Park Commissioners with respect to management of natural resources within VPA's purview. Regarding "Sensitive natural zones" not directly under VPA control, the NRMP states,

*"The operations of South Bend Venues Parks & Arts operate on several spaces not under our direct control. Operations along the riverbanks, especially on those properties not formally owned by the city or by the South Bend Venues Parks & Arts, are one example. In these areas we will act as responsible partners and ensure our own operations are compliant with all regulations and the guidelines. We will work to form cooperative partnerships to coordinate guidelines with other municipal, county, state, and federal agencies."*

Mud Lake is one of the most significant ecological resources in the VPA park portfolio and the protection of Mud Lake, in perpetuity, is consistent with EAC's vision to "ensure availability of natural resources for future generations." The time and resources that VPA contributes to

pursuing the preservation and restoration of this unique ecosystem will be a worthwhile investment that will benefit the people of South Bend for generations.

Respectfully,

Steve Sass (chair)  
Jo Borrer  
Lindsay Chadderton  
Alicia Czarnecki  
John DiTillo  
Allison Pudlo  
Andrew Schnabel  
Andrew Tucker