

## Minutes of the Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC) Meeting on February 15, 2021

### Committee Members Present:

Emily Alderton  
Ally Pudlo  
Charlene Allison Rountree  
Steve Sass  
Andy Schnabel  
Andrew Tucker  
Amelia Weller

### Others Present:

Garry Harrington – VPA, Rum Village Park Property Manager  
Matthew Moyers - VPA, Partnerships, Community and Standards Coordinator  
Hannah Teshka – VPA, Pinhook Center Manager

#### I. Call to order – Steve Sass at 8:34 am.

#### II. Approval of minutes

Vote to approve the minutes from the January 11, 2021, EAC meeting.  
Minutes will be submitted to VPA secretary and then will appear on the city's website as official minutes.

#### III. Old business

##### A. Howard Park Bioswale – Andy Schnabel

Seeds for 16 species were purchased. Seed stratification for 11 started. Other species will be germinated directly. John DiTillo would also like to have his students involved at some point in the project, and Amelia is also interested in joining this project. Timeline of activities is uncertain and will depend on when plants are ready for transplant. A suggestion was made to hold an onsite visit with EAC members in April or May. Possible activities for EAC members, citizen volunteers and students: weeding, clearing and planting, monitoring of bioswale biodiversity (insects, birds), create dichotomous keys.

##### B. NRMP Update and Discussion – Steve Sass and Matthew Moyers Prior to EAC meeting, Steve and Matt created this list of action items:

###### A1. Application of Chemicals

A1a. Develop BMP Guidance (Andrew, Emily, Lindsay lead)

###### A2: Aquatic Resources Inventory and Assessment

A2a: Map aquatic resources (Andrew, Emily, Lindsay lead)

###### A3: Vegetation Buffers

A3a: Map/characterize existing buffers (Andrew, Emily, Lindsay lead)

A3b: Create BMPs for existing buffers (Andrew, Emily, Lindsay lead)

###### A4: River Windows

A4a: Research and review standards and existing policies (Andrew, Emily, Lindsay lead)

A4b: Submit recommendations

###### A5: Slopes, Banks, and Shoreline Stabilization

A5a: Develop BMP guidance (Andrew, Emily, Lindsay lead)

###### A6: Ecologically Sensitive VPA Properties

- A6a: Review and update property list (easy)
- A7: Park Specific Management Plans
  - A7a: Create comprehensive site-specific management plans (six: Fredrickson, Woodlawn, Ravina, O'Brien, Potawatomi, Veteran's, Riverside are all good candidates )
- A9: Outdoor Lighting
  - A9a: Inventory exterior lights on VPA property (F&G if they're still willing to help with things)
  - A9b: Create exterior lighting BMPs (Chuck Bueter)
- B1: Monitor Wildlife
  - B1a: Develop wildlife monitoring protocol (Steve, Garry, etc.)
- B3: Nuisance Wildlife Management
  - B3a: Create Nuisance Wildlife Management plan (committee established)
- C3: Native Trees — Educational Materials
  - C3a: Develop marketing materials to promote the use of native trees (Pinhook underway...maybe)
- C6: Arbor Day Tree Giveaways
  - C6a: Select and distribute only native trees for Arbor Day and other events (easy)
- C7: South Bend City Code
  - C7a: Review and suggest revisions to Chapter 19 of municipal code (Brent, Steve, etc.)
- C9: State Listed Plants
  - C9a: Compile a list of "state-listed" plants on VPA properties. (Steve)

Comments from EAC members:

- Could create educational materials to generate volunteers
- For particular activities, there are organizations, such as master naturalists, that have volunteer lists; could put together a list and get list of opportunities
- Suggestion to block off time for discussion of priority items at March meeting

- C. Mud Lake Working Group Update – Matthew Moyers  
Matt provided a history of this effort and noted that the current task force, which includes some EAC members, is just getting its business underway. Involving IDNR in discussions; considering perhaps some type of lake association to monitor preservation efforts.
- D. Nuisance Wildlife Committee Updates – Charlene Allison Rountree  
Letter was drafted regarding the beaver at Leeper Park and EAC's plans to develop a comprehensive wildlife management plan for VPA properties. The letter was approved by EAC with the intent that it would be distributed to the VPA Board of Park Commissioners for review. A subcommittee on the nuisance wildlife plan (Emily, Amelia, Charlene) has started meetings and will begin with native wildlife (fauna only). A secondary priority for future will include invasive species.

**IV. New business**

- A. Pinhook Park Native Tree Trail and Arbor Day Event  
Graphic design team needs website content for self-guided native tree trail. Would like as many EAC members as possible present at the April 24 Arbor Day event (9 am - noon).
- B. Coal-line trail  
Information from John Martinez: "Rails to trails" type project; old spur line that delivered coal to ND; now abandoned; Phase I project this year with VPA; put in some hardy prairie grasses and some basic interpretive signs

C. River Celebration

PBS and WNIT have created a documentary on the St. Joseph River. The plan is to have simultaneously occurring projects in all communities along the river on the day the documentary debuts (August 28). More information to come as plans develop.

D. Other business

- Question about how the city is dealing with snow and ice along river trails. City policy is to have trails open 365 days each year and procedures are still being worked out. Matt indicated that he will keep EAC updated as these procedures develop.
- SB 389 update: EAC was considering how to contribute to discussion. Mayor's office has already sent a letter downstate opposing this bill. Matt requested small presentation from EAC at 2/15/21 Park Board meeting so that the board has an opportunity to take action independently of the city. Letter from EAC on this topic approved by EAC and will be read by Steve at Park Board meeting. Would be useful to have several members of EAC at meeting.

**V. Next meeting: Monday, March 29, 2021, 8:30 am**

**Meeting was adjourned at 10:12 am.**

Minutes submitted by Andy Schnabel, EAC Secretary 2021

**APPROVED**

Minutes approved 3/29/21