
CHRIS ABELE, MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
JOHN DARGLE, JR., DIRECTOR OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

Date: April 24, 2017

To: Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, County Board of Supervisors

From: John Dargle, Jr., CPRP, Director, Milwaukee County Parks

Subject: Application for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Funding for Emerald Ash Borer Mitigation and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Funding for Citizen Science Program (INFORMATION)

ISSUE

Informational report regarding Milwaukee County Parks (Parks) application for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Funding through the U.S. Forest Service for funding for Emerald Ash Borer mitigation and application for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources funding for Citizen Science program.

BACKGROUND

Parks has identified two grant programs that provide funding assistance for assets and activities that support its mission "to sustain the legacy of our world-class park system by managing and conserving natural, cultural and recreational resources for the benefit of the community."

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' "Citizen-Based Monitoring Partnership Program", which seeks to expand citizen and volunteer participation in natural resource monitoring by providing funding and assistance with high priority projects. Qualifying topics include monitoring of aquatic and terrestrial species, natural communities, and environmental components such as water, soil and air. Eligibility to apply is given to individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations, tribal organizations or governments, local and county governments, and academic institutions or state agencies whose projects have direct, substantial citizen involvement or are relevant to the conduct of citizen-based projects.

Parks requested \$5,000 for "Regional Expansion of the Milwaukee County Parks Citizen-Based Wetland Monitoring Program" to continue the expansion of the award-winning Citizen-based Wetland Monitoring Program in 2017. Since its initiation in 2015, the Citizen-based Wetland Monitoring Program has engaged over 60+ volunteers that have in turn donated over 1,600+ hours towards monitoring wetlands within the Milwaukee County Park System. Volunteers range from families, high school

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environmental science classes, university students, ecology clubs, Wisconsin Master Naturalists, and retirees. If awarded, the Parks will utilize the funds to purchase additional equipment to meet program participation demands, as well as facilitate a series of "Train the Trainer" workshops in early 2018. These "Train the Trainer" workshops will encourage regional expansion of the Parks' wetland monitoring efforts by training other organizations that manage wetland habitats on how to develop, recruit, and implement a successful citizen-based wetland monitoring program on their properties following the Milwaukee County Parks model.

The Wisconsin DNR does not require a match for these funds and Parks' online application was submitted on April 6, 2017.

The interagency **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant program** targets improvements to address the most significant environmental problems within the Great Lakes Basin. Through an agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Forest Service (FS) anticipates receiving funds to support competitive projects that implement strategic, priority actions within Forest Service authorities to restore, protect, and maintain the Great Lakes ecosystem. Successful projects will address invasive species, nonpoint source pollution impacts on nearshore health, and coastal habitat restoration activities to improve water quality. Funds will be distributed across three specific program areas:

1. Mitigate Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Impacts
2. Reduce Runoff from Degraded Sites through Green Infrastructure
3. Enhance Coastal Wetland Filtration

Eligibility for funding is given to state agencies, Tribal communities, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and local governments within the Great Lakes Basin of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York.

Parks requested \$56,400 for "2018-19 Milwaukee County Parks Emerald Ash Borer Mitigation" to implement the 2018-19 phase of the Parks' Ecological Restoration and Management Plan for the Barloga Woods, which includes the reforestation of areas experiencing significant ash decline due to Emerald Ash Borer infestations in the Barloga Woods area of Falk Park (Attachment #1). Between 2018 and 2019, a diverse range of 2,850 trees will be planted on 28.5 acres in Barloga Woods. The planting of a diverse range of tree species native to southeastern Wisconsin will ultimately reduce storm water flow and soil erosion while maintaining tree cover.

The precipitous loss of green ash canopy surrounding the ephemeral wetlands and within the adjacent upland habitat can have long-term deleterious effects on species of local conservation interest (SLCI) populations at the site. Loss of canopy cover can cause altered humidity regimes on the forest floor, shorter wetland hydro-periods, and increased run off due to lack of infiltration. Mitigating the aforementioned affects will be critical in maintaining viable habitat for these SLCIs at Barloga Woods.

The goals and priorities of the EAB mitigation component of the Barloga Woods Ecological Restoration and Management Plan are:

1. Conduct an assessment of ash trees on site based on condition/health and the selective removal of infected trees to create gaps within priority habitat areas for new plantings (i.e. surrounding ephemeral wetlands and amphibian core upland habitat zones)
2. Plant native tree (overstory and understory) and shrub species to diversify species presence and structure at the site; protecting against future disease or species-specific infestations by not having one species dominating the canopy and understory of the site
3. Convert leased agricultural land to native wildlife habitat and buffer adjacent streams and ephemeral wetlands by reforesting these areas with native trees and shrubs
4. Engage volunteers in the restoration of the site including tree planting and wildlife monitoring

The U.S. Forest Service does not require a match for these funds and Parks' application was submitted on April 13, 2017.

If grant(s) is/are awarded, Parks will execute an administrative fund transfer to recognize the receipt of revenue(s) and apply it to the Barloga Woods project and the purchase of equipment for the wetland monitoring program respectfully.

RECOMMENDATION

No action requested. Informational item unless further action required.

Prepared by: Jay Burseth, Development Officer

Approved by:



John Dargle, Jr., CPRP, Director

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – GLRI Grant Application for “2018-19 Milwaukee County Parks Emerald Ash Borer Mitigation”
- Attachment 2 – GLRI Project Narrative Supplement Form for “2018-19 Milwaukee County Parks Emerald Ash Borer Mitigation”
- Attachment 3 – Aerial View of Barloga Woods

Copy:

Chris Abele, County Executive
Raisa Koltun, Chief of Staff, County Executive’s Office

Jason Haas, Chairman, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee
Marcelia Nicholson, Vice-Chair, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board
Allyson Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
Jessica Janz-McKnight, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller
Jeremy Lucas, Fiscal Mgt. Analyst, Admin & Fiscal Affairs/DAS