

From the Executive Director of Parks, requesting authorization to execute and perform all actions required to participate in the Wisconsin Agricultural Mitigation Bank program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, which will implement a wetland mitigation site, protected by a conservation easement, on park property located east of the intersection of E Puetz Rd and the railroad line in the City of Oak Creek, by recommending adoption of the following:

A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Agricultural Mitigation Bank (WAMB) is overseen by the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and administered by the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust (WWCT), through an NRCS grant received by the WWCT; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the WAMB is to provide a mitigation option to Wisconsin farmers who impact NRCS wetlands to stay in compliance with the Swampbuster Provisions of the Food Security Act; and

WHEREAS, the WAMB accomplishes this by enhancing wetlands in one location (creating credits) to compensate for impacts to wetlands in another location; and

WHEREAS, if a Wisconsin farmer identifies an impact to a wetland that NRCS determines requires mitigation, they may apply to the DNR and, if approved, purchase WAMB mitigation credits; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture (DPRC) and the DNR have identified a 20-acre site in an environmental corridor that is suitable for the WAMB program, which is located to the east of the intersection of East Puetz Road, and the railroad line in the City of Oak Creek; and

WHEREAS, wetlands are important resources for the ecological health and diversity of Milwaukee County (the County), including providing essential natural areas for fish and wildlife, contributing to flood mitigation, and reducing pollution downstream; and

WHEREAS, construction of this wetland aligns with a primary objective of the County Park and Open Space Plan, which was adopted by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors in File No. 22-132, on February 3, 2022, of protecting primary environmental corridors; and

WHEREAS, the DNR, with approval from DPRC, will construct and establish the wetland mitigation site at no cost to the County; and

WHEREAS, to allow for construction and establishment, DPRC will enter into any needed agreements with DNR-contracted professionals to allow access and restoration activities to occur; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the site will require a perpetual Conservation Easement, and long-term management, by DPRC; and

WHEREAS, typically one acre of wetland restoration will generate between 0.5-1 credit of mitigation, and prices can range from \$10,000 - \$30,000 a credit based on market demand, long-term management costs, and other factors; and

WHEREAS, these credits, once generated as determined by NRCS, will then be made available for producers to purchase to offset any wetland impacts that result from an agricultural activity; and

WHEREAS, DPRC will be the holder of the mitigation credits generated by the WAMB mitigation site, and monies from credit sales will be placed in the County's natural areas trust fund for the long-term management of the site, and for the benefit of the County's natural areas; and

WHEREAS, the Director, DPRC, requests approval to participate in the WAMB program; and

WHEREAS, the Committee on Parks and Culture, at its meeting of April 11, 2023, recommended adoption of File No. 23-422 (vote 5-0); now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors (County Board) authorizes the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture (DPRC) to participate in the Wisconsin Agricultural Mitigation Bank (WAMB) program, as administered by the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), to create a mitigation site located to the east of the intersection of East Puetz Road and the railroad line in the City of Oak Creek; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Board authorizes DPRC, the Department of Administrative Services (DAS), the Office of Corporation Counsel, Risk Management Division-DAS, Office of Economic Inclusion-DAS, Office of the Comptroller, County Executive, County Clerk, and any other department that may be necessary, to prepare, review, approve, and execute all agreements, contracts, amendments, easements, and any other document, and take all actions required for the purpose of creating and managing the mitigation site and administering the WAMB program, including any needed agreements with DNR-contracted professionals, to allow access and restoration activities to occur.

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