



March 11, 2022

The Honorable Howard Marklein, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
Room 316 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707-7882

The Honorable Mark Born, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
Room 308 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708-8952

Dear Senator Marklein and Representative Born,

I write to urge you, as co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Finance, to schedule a committee meeting to review the six proposed Department of Natural Resources Knowles-Nelson Stewardship passive review requests currently stalled in your committee due to anonymous objections, on which hearings have never been scheduled.

The objection letters you sent to the department state “An objection has been raised to this request and a meeting of the Joint Committee on Finance will be scheduled. Therefore, the request is not approved at this time.” This statement suggests that you are familiar with s. 23.0917(6m)(a), Wis. Stats. Unfortunately, the required meetings have not been scheduled on the following projects, one of which has languished in your committee for over two years due to your lack of action:

- Milwaukee Modrzejewski Park: 25% of estimated project cost for new playground equipment, playfield renovations, conversion of the wading pool to a splash pad, improvements to bike and pedestrian river access, fieldhouse reconstruction, and green infrastructure improvements. **(Received by Joint Committee on Finance February 27, 2020)**
- Jefferson County Interurban Trail: 38% of estimated project cost to design, construct, and pave a 2.4 mile segment of the Interurban Trail, a recreation and transportation trail between Watertown and Oconomowoc open for pedestrians, bicycles, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. **(Received by Joint Committee on Finance December 21, 2020)**
- West Bend Downtown Riverwalk South - West Bank Renovation Project: 24% of estimated project cost for renovations including riverbank stabilization, stormwater treatment and retention, and pedestrian infrastructure improvements. **(Received by Joint Committee on Finance February 17, 2021)**
- Caroline Lake Preserve, Ashland County: 50% of The Nature Conservancy’s acquisition cost for 34.5 acres, including shoreline, to allow for public access to the northwest corner of Caroline Lake State Natural Area, conserve upland and wetland wildlife habitat, and expand recreation opportunities. **(Received by Joint Committee on Finance May 4, 2021)**
- Forest County: acquisition in the Town of Nashville to ensure continued sustainable county forest management on highly productive forest land, enhance recreation access, and safeguard watershed and wildlife habitat on 160 acres. **(Received by Joint Committee on Finance May 19, 2021)**
- Ozaukee Washington Land Trust: 50% of acquisition cost for the 131-acre Cedar Gorge-Clay Bluffs Preserve, supporting creation of a new lakefront County Park offering Lake Michigan views, lake shore recreation and safe harbor access, and conservation of unique, critical shoreline habitat. **(Received by Joint Committee on Finance June 14, 2021)**

As always, the Department of Natural Resources stands ready to address questions or concerns committee members may have regarding these projects of significant importance to local communities, our natural resources, and Wisconsin's outdoor recreation economy.

Governor Evers and I look forward to your partnership in advancing these six projects and working together to maximize the positive impact of Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program investments in projects delivering increased outdoor recreation opportunities and natural resource conservation benefits across our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Preston D. Cole". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "D".

Preston D. Cole, Secretary

cc: Joe Malkasian, Committee Clerk
Sarah Barry
Steven Little
Sean Kennedy