



# Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes

Date: January 18, 2024

Location: Virtual

**Meeting began at 9:00 a.m.**

**Quorum not established**

### **Roll Call**

Present for BIPAC

Attending remotely:

Michele Hodges, Chair; Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Michael Curis; Detroit, Michigan

Angela Lugo-Thomas; Highland Park, Michigan

Megan Elliott; Detroit, Michigan

Sommer Woods; Detroit, Michigan

Excused

Lonnie Peek

DNR Staff Present

Ron Olson

Tom Bissett

Karis Floyd

Gail Fitch

Amanda Treadwell

Barbrea Young

Erika Compton

Lt. Todd Szyska

Barbara Graves

Marie Kaphengst

Madison Janes

Deborah Jensen

Griselda Trevino

Others Present

Genevieve Rattray, Belle Isle Conservancy

Maud Lyon, Belle Isle Conservancy

Amy Greene, Nature Center Director, Detroit Zoological Society

Chair Hodges started the meeting by asking those on the call to introduce themselves and from where they are calling from. She also welcomed newest committee member Meagan Elliott, who then introduced herself.

## **General Updates**

### Parks and Recreation Update

Chief Olson reported that Meagan Elliott is replacing Brad Dick, a mayoral appointment. Replacements are being sought for Bud's and Michele's positions on the committee. The state budget will be put forth in February. Belle Isle projects are underway. The \$23 million in funds must be obligated by the end of 2024 and spent by 2026.

Park Update – Thomas Bissett, Karis Floyd, and Gail Fitch gave the following updates:

- Visitation increased to 5.5 million with 2 park closures. Staff at Belle Isle was able to handle the volume increase in park visitors.
- Recreational passports have increased as of 01/01/2024.
  - Resident Annual Permits - \$14
  - Non-Resident Annual Permits - \$40
- Seeking to fill a lead ranger and 2 seasonal ranger positions.
- The Aquarium is closed due to the extreme cold temperatures and heating system needed repairs. \$10 million has been designated to upgrade the system.
- Received over 2,000 replies and 500 questions for the Boathouse survey through the online form. The Q & A page will contain previously asked questions and will be updated soon. Will be asking the community and business leaders for redevelopment ideas.
- Currently running the winter operations.
  - Bus Stop #7 is the only open restroom.
  - The Belle Isle Casino's restrooms are closed due to construction.
  - There are Porta Johns in various locations around the park.
- Rangers are building additional picnic tables.
- Full-time janitor position has been filled.

Member Elliott asked about the opt-out legislation for the Recreation Passport and the timing of it. Chief Olson said the legislation will be proposed for the fiscal 2025 year, with two legislators planning to introduce the amendment. Discussion is most likely to begin in the spring.

Member Curis commented about the increase in park visitation and thanked Karis Floyd for his leadership and efforts.

Chair Hodges expressed concern about the ARPA funds allocated to the boathouse and the deadline for when those funds are committed. Additionally, there was a concern regarding the process for receiving ideas for plans for the boathouse and the process for vetting interested vendors and business owners.

Tom Bissett said the DNR is working towards finalizing the process for finding viable candidates, as well as receiving ideas for plans for the boathouse. It is possible that the process will be extended to June. However, the timeline may be tight to meet the APRA funds commitment deadline.

Chief Olson said there will be a predetermined criteria to determine if ideas are viable. The candidates are required to demonstrate a process to generate the necessary funding. The State of Michigan has already obligated additional funding to other projects.

Member Elliott inquired if there is a more detailed cost estimate breakdown to review and how the City of Detroit can be of more support for the process.

Chief Olson said they intend to keep the City of Detroit properly informed. And it is the intent to commemorate the history of the building.

Infrastructure Updates; Amanda Treadwell, Urban Area Field Planner, DNR

Amanda Treadwell provided infrastructure updates including updates on the Shelter #9 closure, Belle Isle capital outlay projects, the Hazardous Material Study, the former zoo MSU survey updates, the Multimodal Study, and the James Brady statue restoration. (Presentation attached).

Law Update –Lt. Todd Szyska

- Several accidents on Belle Isle due to the weather conditions.
- The white-tailed deer herd population has increased on Belle Isle. Reminder to keep a safe distance, especially with the giant bucks. Had the first car-deer accident reported within the past 10 years.
- Reminder to maintain the posted 25 MPH speed limit.

Belle Isle Conservancy Updates – Genevieve Rattray

- Belle Isle Aquarium closed this weekend due to the weather conditions.
  - Xeloda Love Valentine’s Day celebration on 02/14/2024. Ages 21 and older.
- Keep Belle Isle Beautiful (KBIB)

- April - September – Kick-off is Earth Day, April 22.
- 2023 saw 1,928 volunteers to support the cleanup initiative.
- Single-use plastic bags are one of the top littered items that makes its way into the Belle Isle waterways.
- World Ocean Day Exhibition – June 9-18, 2023
  - The exhibition saw 6,881 viewers, including Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist, II
- Elevating KBIB cleanup in 2024 with BeBot Robot.
  - Beach cleanup

## **Public Comments**

Debbie – Asked if all of the windowpanes, or just the rotted panes in the Flynn Pavilion will be replaced. Also had a question about if kayaks are provided when participating in the canal cleanups and whether Belle Isle will own the BeBot Robot.

Stephen Malbouef - Concerned about the cost figures that are listed on the DNR informational webpage for the boathouse. In addition, there was a concern raised regarding the photos that are posted to the webpage and if they can be replaced with more recent photos of the building in its current state.

## **BIPAC Comments**

Angela Lugo-Thomas inquired about the photos of the boathouse that are uploaded to the online site and asked if there can be a video uploaded to show the current condition of the structure. She also raised concern that the BeBot Robot has the Meijer's logo on the back when Meijer promotes the use of single use plastic shopping bags, when noted earlier, that was one of the most litter items found in Belle Isle's waterways.

Chair Hodges suggested that since it is likely that there will be a quorum at the next meeting, that the DNR brings forth a resolution to amend the bylaws on the next agenda to ensure that the body has voting power while virtual. Moreover, urges everyone to visit Belle Isle Park during the winter season to enjoy some of the scheduled events and to enjoy the beautiful scenery.

With no further business the meeting ended at 10:10 a.m.

Next regular meeting: Thursday, February 15, 2024.



# Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Updates

January 18, 2024



# Belle Isle Capital Projects

## Shelter #9 Structural Repairs

- Shelter closed until repairs can be made.
- Design Build Contract with DTMB to ensure timely repairs of shelter.



*Shelter #9 – closed to the public for repairs*

# Belle Isle Multimodal Mobility Study

## Study Status

- Evaluating options to keep one-way vehicle traffic intact, while addressing the overall goals of improving safety and enjoyment for all park users.
- To accommodate ongoing work and ensure alignment with key partners, we've extended the mobility study completion timeline to spring 2024
- DNR and MDOT are working together to implement study recommendations.



BELLE ISLE MULTIMODAL STUDY

PROPOSED MULTIMODAL NETWORK | DETROIT, MI | NOVEMBER 2023  

*Proposed multimodal routes in review*

# Belle Isle Capital Projects - Underway

## Construction Projects

- Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory Dome stabilization – Phase 2
- Casino Roof and Drainage Replacement
- Casino Elevator Modernization
- Belle Isle Aquarium, Boiler Room structural Repairs
- Flynn Window Restoration
- **Wilson Trail Phase 2**
- Wet Mesic Flatwoods
- Belle Isle Sawmill



*Door submittals approved*

# Belle Isle Flynn Pavilion

## Window Repairs

- Front elevation framing complete at event area.
- Row of windows – sashes and windows installed, sills repaired & primed
- East Elevation - Mechanical Room - New Window Installed (temporary glazing) IGU's on order
- Rear Elevation – Carpentry for restoration underway



*Window framing replacement is being custom made on site.*

# Belle Isle Flynn Pavilion



*Rotted window framing is being replaced*



*Single glass panes to be replaced with insulated glass*



# Belle Isle Sawmill

## Project Status

- New drain lines and trench drain have been installed.
- Concrete wall bases and ramp will be poured when weather improves.
- New barn doors to be installed when concrete work complete.



*Trench drain installed*

# Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail

## Phase 2 bid package

- Revised phase 2 bid package will be complete this week
- Plans revised to coordinate with upcoming MDOT projects and mobility study recommendations.
- Construction anticipated to begin this spring through end of the year.

## State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources Belle Isle Park Wilson Trail City of Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan FILE #751/22189.MNB

UTILITY CONTACTS		
UTILTY SERVICE	AGENCY	CONTACT
WATER & SEWER	DETROIT WATER & SEWER DEPT.	ROBERT BOUQUA (313) 224-2272 rbouqua@detroit.gov
ELECTRIC	SITE ENERGY	NOVA NAY (313) 226-4510
GAS	SITE ENERGY	NOVA NAY (313) 226-4510
TELEPHONE & INTERNET	AT&T	
ROADS	MDOT	ROBERTA STEVENS (313) 224-2266 rstevens@mdot.gov
FIRE DEPARTMENT	CITY OF DETROIT	CAMPUS ROSSIGNOL (313) 224-2266 CITY FILE
SEC	DTMS	2 WOODWARD AVE. 4TH FLOOR, RM 4011 CHRISTOPHER MCCABERT (313) 224-2266 mccabert@detniger.gov

BELLE ISLE CONTACTS		
FACILITY	NAME	CONTACT
WOODS/MEADOW	JOEL STONE	2333-2336
BELLE ISLE NATURE CENTER	AMY GREEN	amygreen@dnr.mn
BELLE ISLE BOAT HOUSE	TODD PLATT	tplatt@dnr.mn
DETROIT YACHT CLUB	ROCK PRICE	rockprice@ycc.com
BELLE ISLE GOLF RANGE	BRANDON CHYZANDOWSKI	brandon@belleislegolf.com
MARKET AND BIKE RENTALS	TIFFANY VANDERHEY	tiffany@belleislepark.com
FRIENDS OF DETROIT RIVER	STEVE ZIEMKA	sziemka@foadr.com



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Bid documents to be complete January 19, 2024

# Belle Isle Casino

## Project Status

- Light fixture replacement under review for loggia and eave lighting
- Ceiling repairs under mechanical room complete
- Repairs of 2<sup>nd</sup> floor steel lintel windows underway
- Screen wall for new mechanical units underway



*Window steel repairs and replacement, & masonry repairs.*

# Belle Isle Casino



*Structural repairs and patching completed*



*Grouted block base course for new screen wall*

# Belle Isle Casino

## Lighting review



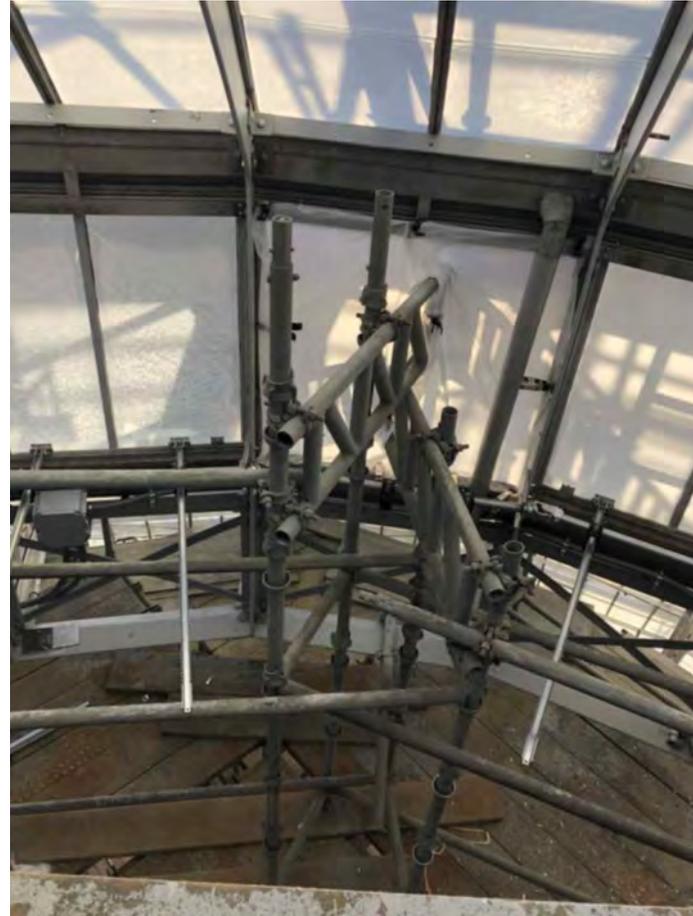
*Reviewing lighting distribution of new lights*



# Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

## Project Status

- Dome glass installation is complete and glass is being cleaned and buffed
- RSI continues replacing broken panes of glass on the fourth floor.
- Scaffolding will start removing the shrink wrapping and wood framing around the exterior, then begin removing exterior scaffolding.



*Rack and pinions being installed being installed .*

# Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

## Project Status

- Ideal is enclosing the openings in the cupola where the ladder trusses go through the vent windows to prepare for the upcoming extreme cold weather.
- Rack and pinions being installed being installed for cupola vent windows
- New electric lines installed to power window vents
- Structural supports to stabilize upper cupola with new tie rods/clevises to be added



*Rack and pinions being installed being installed .*

# Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

## Project updates

- New roof and skylight for vestibule under design
- New flooring for show room under design
- DNR reviewing new lighting in dome to help with operations.



*Deteriorated walls removed in show room and vestibule roof repairs under review.*

# Belle Isle Capital Projects

## **ARPA – New projects for 2024**

- Belle Isle Aquarium and Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory
  - Facility planning
  - Aquarium HVAC Engineering and Upgrade
- Former zoo building removals
- Hazardous material abatement and structural repairs
- Boathouse Health, safety and welfare
- Scott Fountain Structural Repairs
- Wayfinding signage
- Parkwide development plan



*Zoo removals expected to be underway in 2024*

# Belle Isle Hazardous Material and Structural Study Master Document

## Draft reviewed:

- Final report delayed to February 2024.
- Report will guide prioritization for addressing hazardous removal throughout park.
- Abatement and structural repairs will be executed with PFC ARPA funds.



### PRELIMINARY STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY SURVEY REPORT

#### WOODSIDE RESTROOMS/COMFORT STATION

Belle Isle Park  
Detroit, MI 48207

Prepared for:  
Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
525 W. Allegan Street  
PO Box 30028  
Lansing Michigan 48909  
Client Reference: Hazardous Material and Structural Study

Prepared by:  
Beam, Longest, and Neff  
51151 West Pontiac Trail  
Wixom, MI 48393  
BLN Project ID: 230022  
May 24, 2023



### HAZARDOUS AND REGULATED MATERIALS INSPECTION REPORT

#### WOODSIDE COMFORT STATION

Belle Isle Park  
Detroit, MI 48207

#### Prepared for:

Department of Natural Resources  
525 W. Allegan Street  
PO Box 30028  
Lansing Michigan 48909  
DTMB File No.: 751\_22133.MNB

#### Prepared by:

Beam, Longest, and Neff  
51151 West Pontiac Trail  
Wixom, MI 48393  
BLN Project ID: 230022  
July 28, 2023

*Draft Report submitted for Structural Integrity Assessment and Haz. Mtls. Testing records.*

# Belle Isle Former Zoo

- Removals - consultant will prepare permit plans and bid documents for the 20+ structures.
- Future use - cost estimates will be prepared for options to incorporate passive recreation and visitor amenities in alignment with public input and mobility study recommendations.



*Trail signage being finalized for flatwoods*

# Wet Mesic Flatwoods Restoration

## **Contractor wrapping up:**

- Construction work to be complete early 2024.
- Vehicular gates to be installed on posts in Central Ave. and Oakway this winter.
- Final Grading and as-builts under review



*Contractor regrading Staging area to original elevations*

# Wet Mesic Flatwoods Restoration

## Contractor wrapping up:

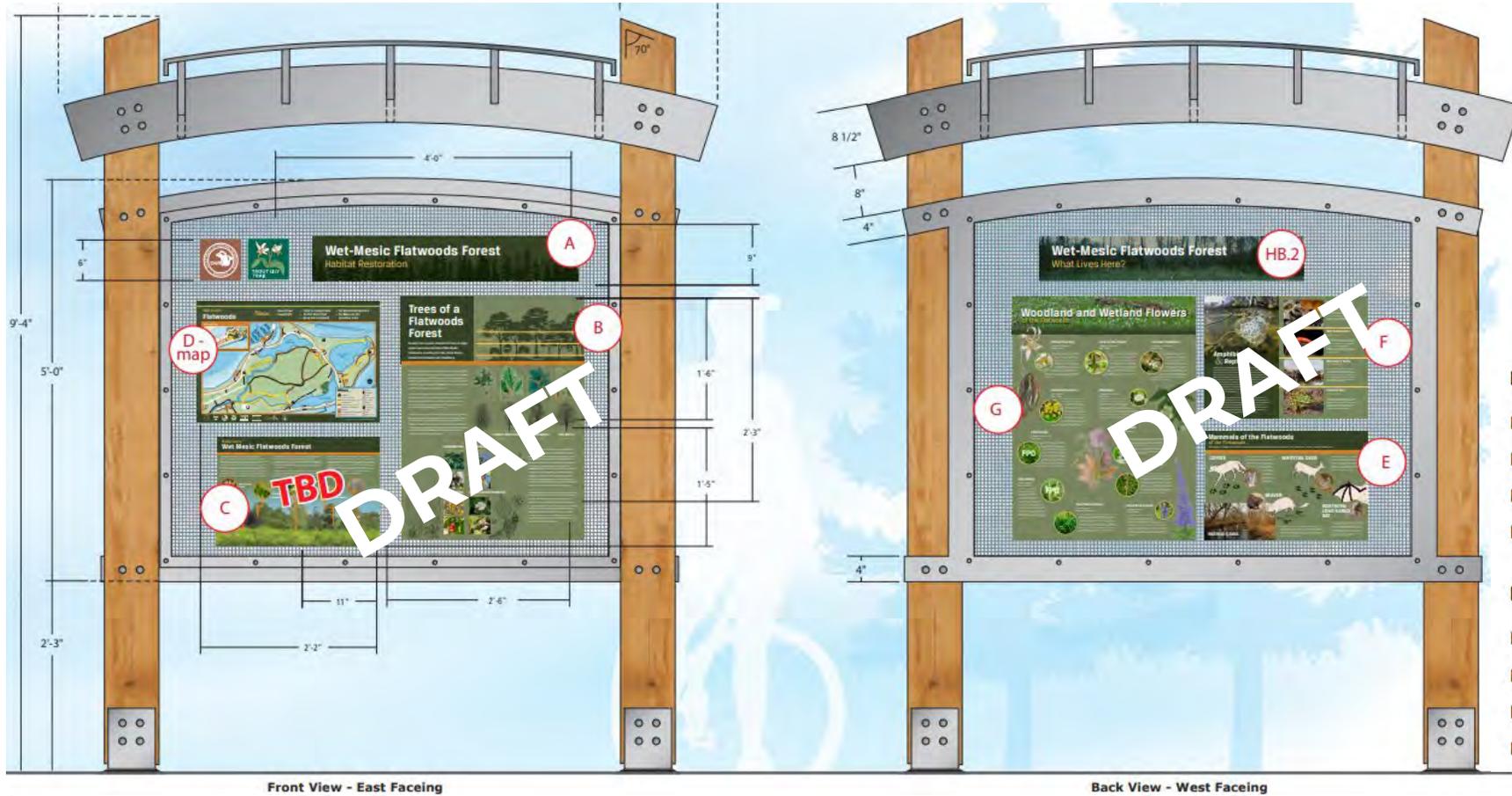
- Interpretive signage being finalized.



Trail signage being finalized for flatwoods

# Wet Mesic Flatwoods Restoration

## Interpretive Signage Oakway east: Trees & Mammals



### K1.02 : FRONT

Panel A: Header - image: Deciduous Trees (same as K1.03)

Panel M: Map - Flatwoods TRAIL MAP w/ partners (same as K1.03)

Panel B: Flatwoods Tree ID – canopy, sub-canopy and ground layer

Panel C: Wet mesic flatwoods description

### K1.02 : BACK

Panel HB.2: Header - WHAT LIVES IN OUR FLATWOODS FOREST

Panel E: Spring flower ID

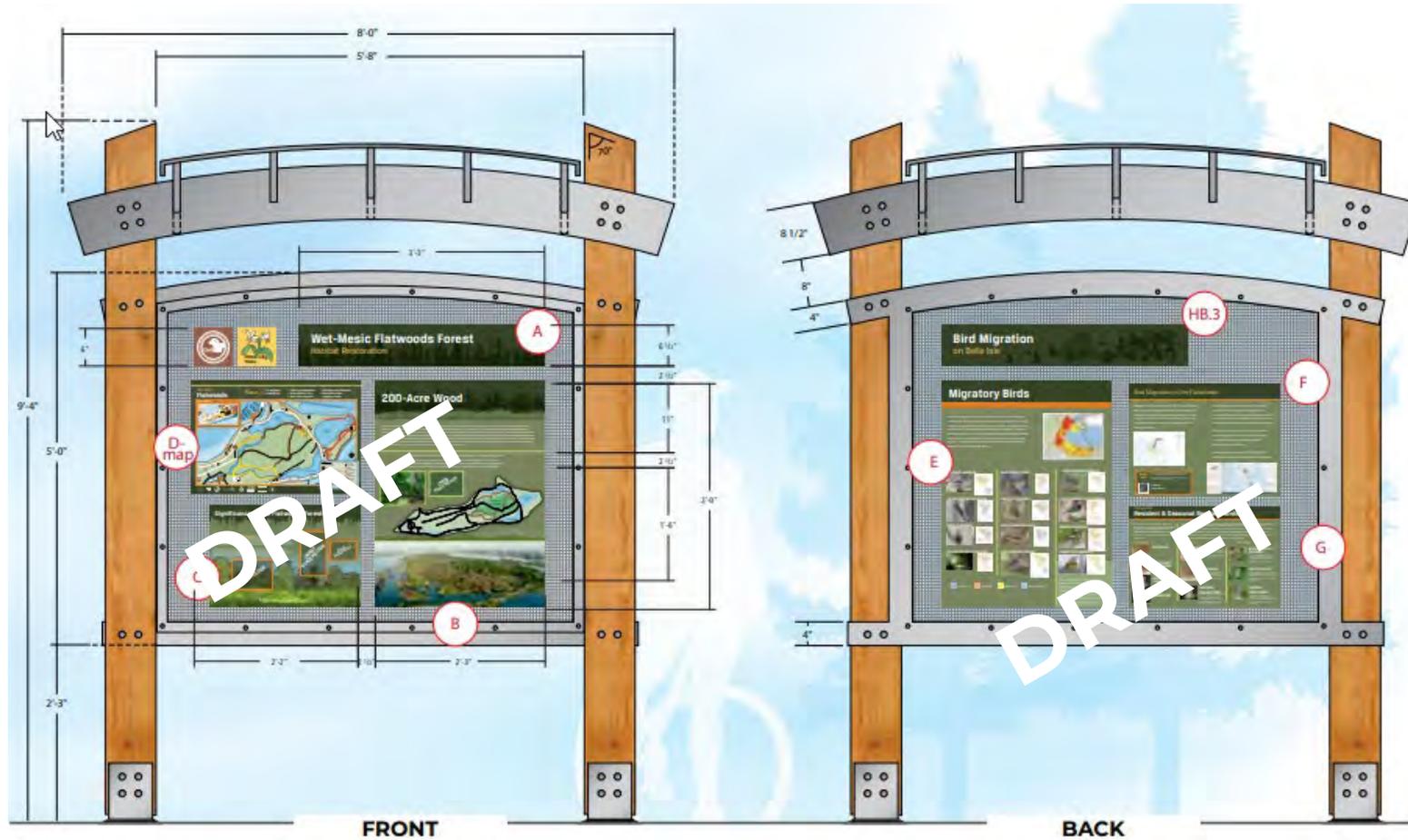
Panel F: Herps/terps ID: Eastern Fox Snake, Red Salamander, Leopard Frog

Panel G: Mammals ID : Coyote, Beaver, Whitetail deer

DS

# Wet Mesic Flatwoods Restoration

## Interpretive Signage Oakway west: Wet Mesic Flatwoods & Bird migration



### K1.03 : FRONT

**Panel A:** Header - image: Deciduous Trees (*same as K1.02*)

**Panel M:** Map - Flatwoods TRAIL MAP w/ partners (*same as K1.02*)

**Panel B:** Wet mesic flatwoods description - glacial Maumee Lakeplain

**Panel C:** Additional - Wet mesic flatwoods description

### K1.03 : BACK

**Panel HB.2:** Header - BIRD MIGRATION ON BELLE ISLE

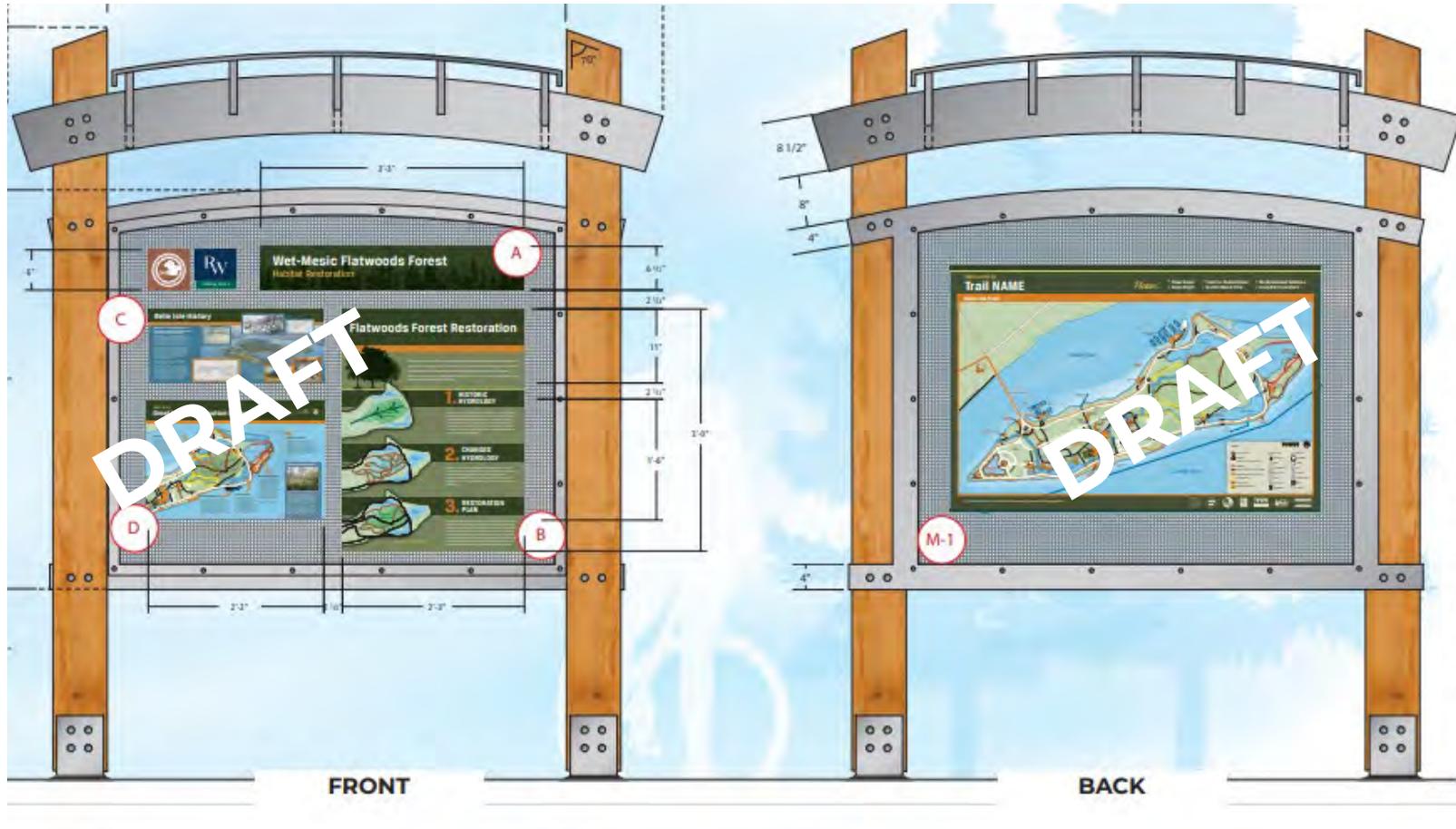
**Panel E:** Migratory Bird ID

**Panel F:** Significance within the hemisphere/ lower Great Lakes

**Panel G:** Resident & Seasonal Resident Birds

# Wet Mesic Flatwoods Restoration

## Interpretive Signage Nashua Canal: Wet Mesic Flatwoods & Park Map



### K1.05 : FRONT

Panel A: Header - Wet-Mesic Flatwoods Forest Habitat Restoration

Panel B: Great Lakes Restoration Projects

Panel C: Belle Isle History

Panel D: Flatwoods Forest Restoration - Hydrology

### K1.05 : BACK

Panel M-1: Master Bell Island Map

# James Brady Statue

## Restoration donated by Detroit Goodfellows



*Restoration specialists removing statue*

# Belle Isle Capital Projects

Total projects currently Funded: \$53,687,000

## Projects Underway Now

**\$29,254,000**

- Engineering Phase
  - # 5 Projects
  - \$2,855,000
- Construction Projects
  - #8 Projects
  - \$ 26,399,000

## New Projects Funded - To begin 2024

**\$ 24,433,000**

- Engineering and Construction
  - #10 new projects
  - \$23,000,000 ARPA
  - \$ 1,433,000 – DNR PRD CO



*Scaffolding around Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory*

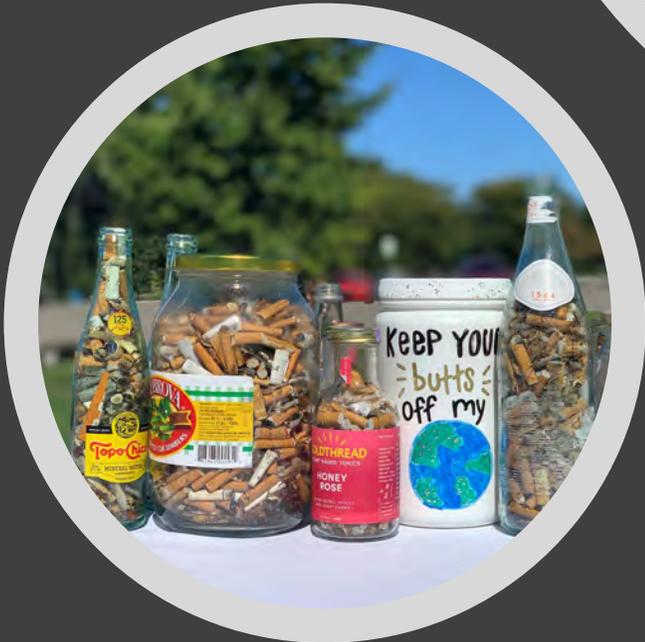


## BELLE ISLE CONSERVANCY

Our anti-litter campaign, *Keep Belle Isle Beautiful (KBIB)*, is a park-wide, partnership initiative between the BIC and MDNR that launched in 2017. It has educated thousands on the dangers of single-use plastic while removing tens of thousands of littered plastic and microplastics from Belle Isle and its waterways, preventing it from reaching the Detroit River and Michigan's Great Lakes.



# KBIB through the years



# Analytics

<b>Pounds removed</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
April	3,400						
May	114						
June	1,840						
July	1,563						
August	646						
September	1,005						
October	368						
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8,936</b>	<b>8,557</b>	<b>8,302</b>	<b>4,087</b>	<b>4,491</b>	<b>2,412</b>	<b>No Data</b>

# Analytics

<b>Number of Volunteers</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
April	896						
May	50						
June	388						
July	240						
August	112						
September	183						
October	59						
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,928</b>	<b>1,572</b>	<b>1,208</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>2,077</b>	<b>1,956</b>	<b>1,909</b>



**New in 2023, Citizen Science and Data Collection at Public Kayak Cleanups in the Canals of Belle Isle.**

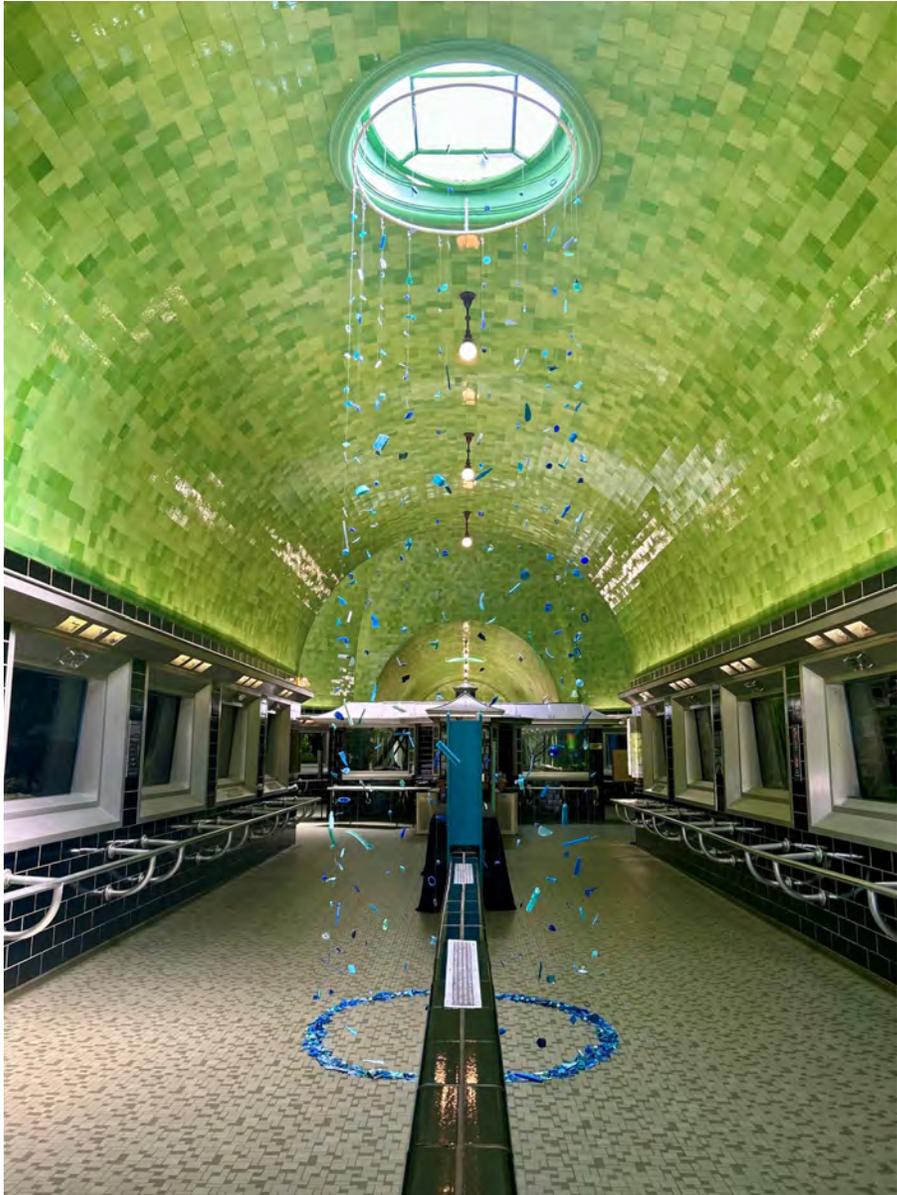


***Keep Belle Isle Beautiful***  
**& join the movement for**  
**plastic-free waters**

Third Saturday of each month from May - Sept.  
9:30 AM - 12 PM | Belle Isle Aquarium







**JUNE 9-18**

# WORLD OCEAN DAY EXHIBITION

BELLE ISLE AQUARIUM



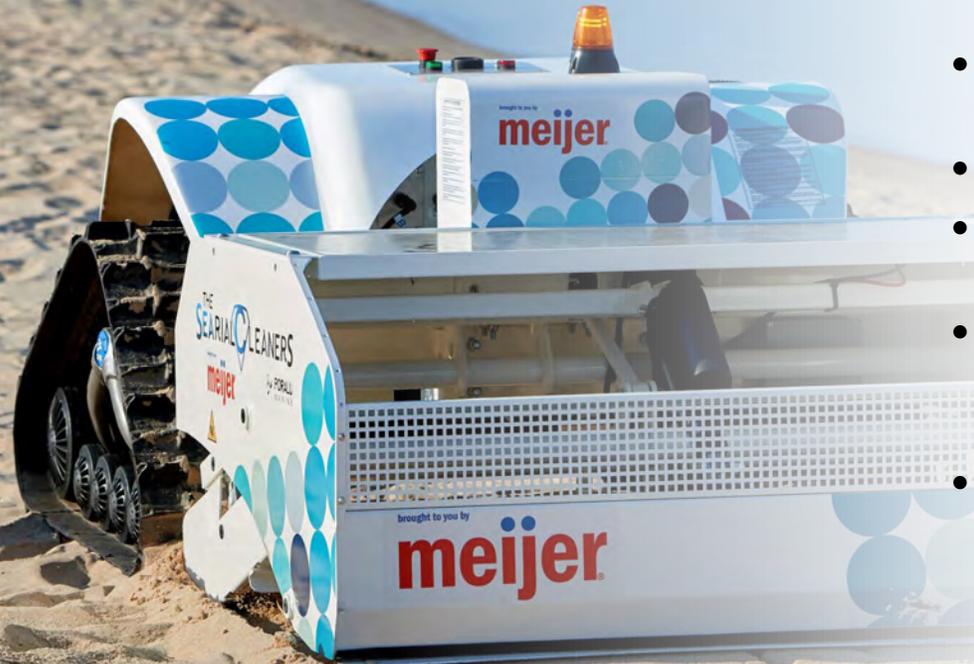
WELCOME

EST. 1904  
BELLE ISLE  
AQUARIUM  
DETROIT MI.

BELLE ISLE  
CONSERVANCY

# Elevating KBIB cleanups in 2024

- BeBot robot
  - Partnership with the City of Detroit, Office of Mobility Innovation, and the Council for Great Lakes Region.
  - MDNR is in support and will be our partner in the initiative.
  - Innovative technology in litter removal.
  - Currently used on Great Lakes beaches in NY and West and Upper Michigan.
  - With cleanups (excitedly) gaining popularity in the region, this gives us a strong point of difference.
  - Currently planning an Earth Day partnership launch and demo.



A long, arched tunnel with a green tiled ceiling and wooden pillars. The ceiling is made of small, square green tiles. The walls are made of dark wood. The floor is polished and reflects the lights. The tunnel is empty, and the perspective is from the center, looking down the length of the tunnel. The text "Thank you!" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Thank you!