



Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: August 15, 2024
Location: Flynn Pavilion

Meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present for BIPAC

Michele Hodges, Chair
Angela Lugo Thomas
Meagan Elliott
Michael Curis

Virtual

Sommer Woods, Detroit

Absent

Dr. Lonnie Peak

DNR Staff Present

Tom Bissett
Gail Fitch
Amanda Treadwell
Lt. Todd Szyska
Cynthia Boggerty-Craft
Erika Compton
Darlisa Terrell
Anthony Olshansky

Chair Hodges opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and opened the floor for colleagues to introduce themselves.

Chair Hodges then asked for a motion to approve the July 18, 2024, meeting minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Member Curis, supported by Member Elliott, and passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the Parks and Recreation update. Tom Bissett, Urban District Supervisor, reported that they are currently working through the capital outlay priorities for 2025 and should be hearing soon on how Belle Isle and the Urban District fared. Two successful proposals were submitted for the boathouse and the DNR will be reviewing them for the

criteria that was set forward. After review, they will be presented to the Conservancy, the Committee, the rowing club and the sailing club.

Gail Fitch, Park Supervisor, gave a park update that included the status of shelter reservations and event spaces, and the giant slide schedule which will run through Labor Day weekend.

Lt. Todd Szyska, DNR Law, then gave the law update with a presentation of the enforcement statistics on the island that included number of contacts, complaints, arrests, warrant arrests, warnings, assists, and tickets, as well as the year 2023 summer and year 2024 summer comparison.

Member Curis asked if Michigan State Police's numbers are comparable to the DNR's and asked how many speed signs are on the island. Lt. Szyska said he believes that MSP's numbers would be lower and that there are four speed signs on the island.

Amanda Treadwell, Urban Field Planner, then gave the infrastructure update. The presentation included updates on the conservatory, casino, shelters, the mobility study, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail, and the Wet Mesic Flatwoods Trail (presentation attached).

Public Comment

Richard Rybicki – Would like to see progress on the police station building, and mentioned that in four years, they will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of police radio, which began in Detroit.

Member Comment

Member Elliott urged anyone to reach out if they have community meetings where it would be beneficial to come speak.

Member Woods expressed that she was excited that the Flynn is open.

Chair Hodges wished Sommer Woods a happy birthday.

Member Elliott said they will be celebrating the aquarium's 120th anniversary on Sunday.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Next regular meeting: Thursday, September 19, 2024 at 9 a.m.

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Infrastructure Updates

August 15, 2024



Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory



Floor replacement in Showroom underway.



Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory



Floor replacement in Showroom complete.

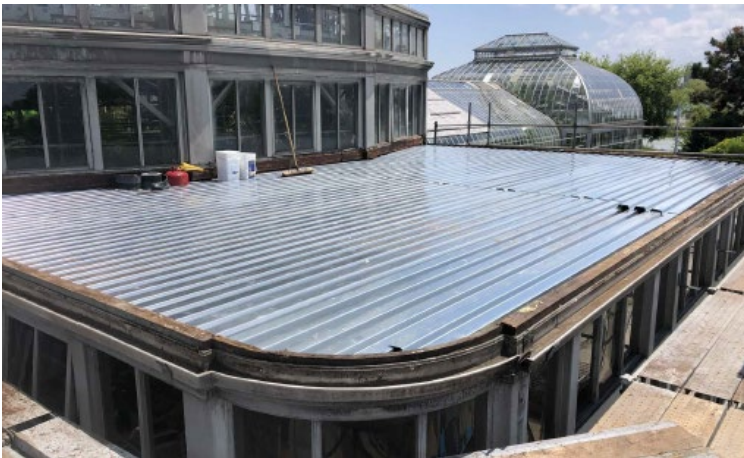


Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory



Lake Tacoma overlook to has new concrete paving.

Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory



New roof on vestibule underway.

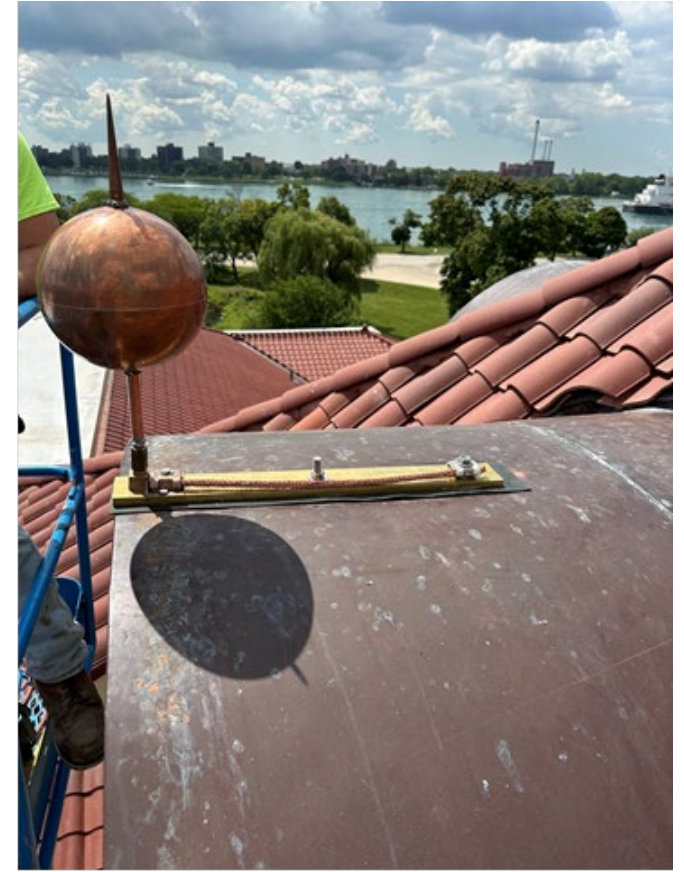


Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory



Contractor removing brick around steel supports in preparation of repair/replacement.

Belle Isle Casino



Copper ornament acting as lighting protection placed on towers.

Belle Isle Casino



Clay roof tiles installed on towers.

Belle Isle Casino



Casino roof, masonry repair and copper flashing installation underway.



Belle Isle Casino



Porch ceiling repairs underway. Damage due to leaks from mechanical room



Belle Isle Casino



Porch ceiling repairs underway. Damage due to leaks from mechanical room



Shelter #9



Shelter #9 structural repairs underway



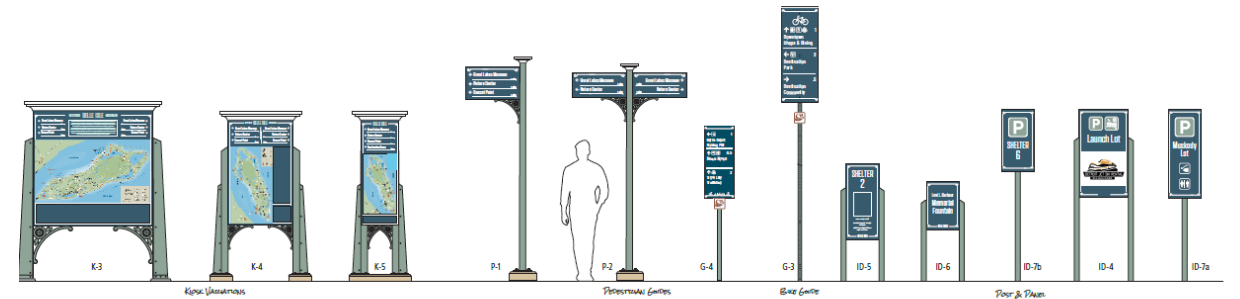
Multimodal Mobility Study

I. Working through Phase 1 Wayfinding

- Bridge entry and toll booth signage final revisions underway.
- Signage to be contracted this year. Install may be in 2025.

II. Final Report to be issued this month

III. Final recommendations to be published in September and invitation to public to participate in next phase, The Belle Isle Strategic Development Plan.



Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail

Interim circulation recommendations

- Increase pedestrian circulation
- Increase bicycle circulation
- Improve vehicular circulation

- Phase 2 Wilson Trail, 2024
- 2-Way Cycle Track, 2024
- Central Ave. Conversion, 2025
- Vista Ave. Reconnection, 2026



Wet Mesic Flatwoods Trail

Bird Migration on Belle Isle



Kiosk Location: WEST End of Oakway Trailhead (beach)

K1.03 : FRONT

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

Panel D: Map - Flatwoods TRAIL MAP w/ partners

Panel B: Ecology, Geology, Significance

Panel C: Changing Forreast

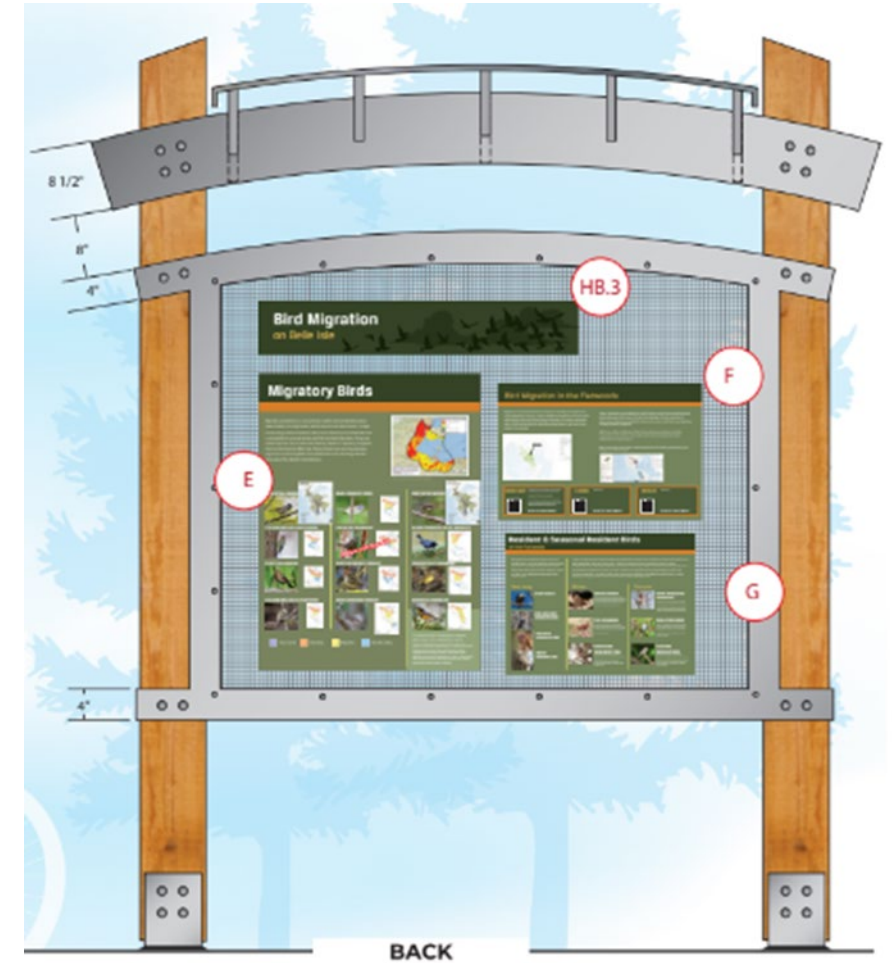
K1.03 : BACK

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 Trail

Bird Migration in the Flatwoods

Migration is heaviest in fall and spring between early September through October, and again from mid-April through the third week in May. Many birds winter in central and South America and make long-distance migrations back to northern forests, using stop-over habitat such as the Flatwoods en-route. Flying occurs for most species at night, leaving day-time for resting and re-fueling.



On Belle Isle, migrating birds rely on the midges and berries as a food source. In spring midges hatch from the flatwoods and river when surface water is around 60°. These non-biting insects are smaller than a Mayfly and only live 5 to 10 days. Shrubs and vines, such as dogwood, Virginia creeper and even poison ivy, are relied upon for berries in fall.



Migratory songbirds are most often detected by listening for their songs in spring. Cool and rainy days can also be good for observations when birds tend to be lower in the canopy.

Today, scientists are collaborating with birders across the hemisphere and the globe, using advanced technology to track the migration of many bird species. A wide-range of online tools are available for identifying, learning about and keeping records of bird sightings. Many even utilize your sightings to contribute to ongoing scientific projects. Here are three that can be useful for your visits to Belle Isle.

BIRD CAST <https://birdcast.info>

Scientists from BirdCast use weather radar data and other tools to study and track bird migration, turning it into real-time forecast migration maps.



E-BIRD <https://ebird.org/home>

eBird is an online database of bird observations providing scientists, researchers and amateur naturalists with real-time data about bird distribution and abundance.



MERLIN <https://merlin.birds.org>

What's that bird? Merlin Sound ID can listen to the birds songs and calls around you and shows real-time suggestions for who's singing. Or use their ID tool by uploading a photo.



The Cedar Waxwing is one of the few North American birds that specializes in eating fruit. It can survive on fruit alone for several months. These vocal birds call constantly, particularly when in flight, sounding off with high-pitched, cricket-like whistles and buzzy trills, often described as "sree."

Photo by Jessica J. Caron



Scan the QR code
to Learn More!

Migratory Birds

Belle Isle's Flatwoods Forest is host to a remarkable bi-annual (spring and fall) songbird migration. Below are 12 out of more than 50 long-distance migrants that can be found here, next to each species is a map illustrating their migration throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Migrating songbirds are dependent on natural habitats along coastal water bodies which offer food and shelter during their journey between breeding and wintering grounds. As a significant island forest in the Detroit River, habitat protection and restoration on Belle Isle is crucial for the survival and continued presence of these and other migratory birds.



Map Migration For 12 species maps provided by Audubon. Breeding data were generally shared to numerous researchers from studies shared on Woodcock and White-throated Sparrows and several of species were derived from data by eBird of the Cornell Lab and eBird International. Visit the eBird migration database for more info.

