

**Item Title:** Accept and Appropriate Funding Paid to Wake County under the Agreement with the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for the Aquatic Species Propagation Facility Project at Historic Yates Mill County Park

**Specific Action Requested:**

**That the Board of Commissioners accepts and appropriates \$137,000 for payment of final design and engineering expenses related to the Aquatic Species Propagation Facility Project at Historic Yates Mill County Park.**

**Item Summary:**

**Purpose:** In accordance with the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, the Board of Commissioners must approve all budget adjustments that increase the budget for a fund.

**Background:** On November 6, 2017 the Board of Commissioners authorized the County Manager to enter into a Reimbursable Agreement with NCDOT providing for funding the Project, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NCSU to define the roles and responsibilities of each party in the development and operation of the Project. The project includes the renovation and modest expansion of the research wing of the A. E. Finley Center at Yates Mill County Park. This renovation will house and support captive breeding of aquatic species such as the endangered Dwarf Wedgemussel. This project will help ensure these species, impacted by the I-540 expansion, will continue to thrive.

On February 18, 2020, the Board accepted and appropriated the original payment of \$250,000 from NCDOT. The additional \$137,000 will cover final design, permitting, bidding, construction administration and close out for the project.

**Board Goal:** This action is related to the Board Goal of Growth & Sustainability by supporting improvement of a Wake County Park.

**Fiscal Impact:** NCDOT is providing all funding for design and construction for the project. Wake County is managing all aspects of the project including design development, solicitation of bids, and the construction of the project. Once constructed, NCSU will maintain and cover any additional operational costs for the new research wing.

**Additional Information:**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has been planning for the extension and eventual final connection of the I-540 outer loop for several years. Areas that will be impacted by the construction of I-540 contain aquatic systems that are home

to many rare and endangered species. Captive breeding and propagation are practices that aid natural ecosystems in recovery and help to restore diversity of the species living in these areas.

In response to these environmental impacts, NCDOT has agreed to certain mitigation requirements associated with construction of this final connection of I-540. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) approached Wake County and NCSU about establishing an aquatic species propagation facility at Yates Mill County Park.

With a grant provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Wake County completed a Fresh Water Mussel Propagation Feasibility Study in July 2016. The objective of the study was to confirm the feasibility of renovating the existing research wing at the AE Finley Education and Research Center at Yates Mill County Park, to house and support the captive breeding of aquatic species like the Dwarf Wedgemussel. The conclusion of the collaborative study indicated that the Yates Mill facility would be an appropriate location for a successful propagation facility. Yates Millpond and the AE Finley Center were selected for this work because of the ability of the pond to sustain aquatic species and the availability of space in the existing research wing for NCSU. The study recommended a renovation of this research wing with construction of a modest expansion space. The project scope will include an extensive amount of aquatic tank installation and associated piping, pumps, generator, a new pumphouse and other unique accommodations.

On November 6, 2017 the Board of Commissioners approved entering into a funding agreement with NCDOT and entering a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NCSU. Through the funding agreement, NCDOT is providing funding for the project at the AE Finley Center including design, permitting and construction. Wake County will serve as the Project Manager/Construction Manager for the design and construction of the project. Wake County will not be a funding partner and will have no duty or obligation to expend or advance its own funding for any aspect of the project. The Reimbursable Agreement authorized the original payment for preconstruction and design costs up to \$250,000. The additional funding of \$137,000 will cover final design, permitting, bidding, construction administration and close out for the project.

On September 8, 2020 the Board of Commissioners approved the First Amendment to the Use Agreement with NCSU and the Second Amendment to the Ground Lease with the State of North Carolina.

It is anticipated that the project will be ready to bid in the first quarter of 2021, however, that milestone and the construction schedule will be dependent on construction funding approval by NCDOT. Staff will return to the Board of Commissioners seeking approval and appropriation of further funding at that time.

**Attachments:**

1. Reimbursable Agreement with NCDOT
2. Budget Memo