

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: ADA HAYDEN PARK LAKE AND WETLANDS

BACKGROUND:

On September 16, 2008, the Ames City Council held a workshop with a number of researchers who had conducted investigations in Hayden Park and others whose fields of expertise are in managing land use practices in order to protect water quality. At their subsequent meeting on September 23, 2008, Council gave staff the following direction:

"Begin exploring improvements to the Southern and Central Wetlands directed to mitigate phosphorus contamination of Ada Hayden Lake, which also considers the control of invasive species, such as carp."

Staff is proposing to initiate the following course of action in response to this Council directive.

- **Targeted Public Education.** In early spring 2009, staff will provide direct mail pieces promoting the environmental improvements that could be gained by using zero phosphorus fertilizer. While this is a public education message that applies to all properties, particular emphasis will be placed on properties within the Ada Hayden Park watershed, including properties outside the Ames corporate limits. Funding for this mailing, estimated at \$2,000, would come from the water conservation education program.
- **South Wetland Stormwater Investigation.** Earlier monitoring by Dr. Downing revealed a periodic presence of caffeine in the water entering the south wetland complex. Caffeine is used as an indicator to distinguish between waste with a human origin as opposed to that coming from livestock or natural sources. Staff from Public Works and Water and Pollution Control is initiating an investigation to try and determine the source. Because the high caffeine levels were not consistent, it could take several months before the source is identified, if ever. Testing for caffeine cannot be performed by the W&PC Laboratory and will be sent to an outside laboratory at a cost of approximately \$100 per sample. The funds for this evaluation, estimated at \$1,500, will come from the Water Plant's outside professional services budget specifically identified for work in Ada Hayden Park.
- **Carp Control.** Staff has arranged a late December meeting with experts from Iowa State University and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to explore possible options to limit carp migration from the lakes into the wetland complexes. No

expense is anticipated to develop the conceptual plan. Depending on which option is identified as the most appropriate solution, additional capital funds may need to be designated at a later time. Once some form of fish exclusion method is in place, the fish populations already in the wetlands will need to be removed at an estimated cost of \$3,500.

- **North Wetland Performance.** Even though the Council directive was limited to the southern and central wetland complexes, staff is proposing to investigate concerns that have been raised about the design and performance of the northern wetland complex. In particular, staff plans to bring back the original design team from Bonestroo, Rosene, Anderlik, and Associates to compare the initial design concept to the final construction. The cost of having the design team evaluate the finished wetland construction, estimated at \$1,500, will be funded from the Water Plant's outside professional services budget specifically identified for work in Ada Hayden Park. Corrective actions, if any, will require additional capital funds to be designated at a later time.

If the staff response outlined above addresses all of the issues Council intended in its directive, the Council could give its approval to the plan. If there are additional issues that Council would like to see addressed that are not included, staff would welcome clarification.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the staff plan to explore improvements in the Ada Hayden Park lake and wetlands.
2. Approve the staff plan to explore improvements in the Ada Hayden Park lake and wetlands and direct staff to include additional areas of improvements.
3. Direct staff not to proceed at this time.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff has developed a four-pronged course of action in response to Council's directive to begin exploring improvements to the Ada Hayden Park lake and wetlands. Funding for all proposed investigative activities, which totals \$8,500, can be absorbed into existing budgets using monies already targeted for closely related activities.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby approving the above plan to explore improvements in the Ada Hayden Park lake and wetlands.