**Section 110.190 Approval of Friends Groups for Department Sites**

a) The Department's Friends Group Program consists of Department approved groups that are dedicated to enhancing, preserving and protecting Department‑owned, ‑leased or -managed sites, including, but not limited to, providing interpretive and educational activities. Groups that participate in the Program volunteer on a regular basis for approved projects and activities to promote, support, rehabilitate, repair and further develop Department‑owned, -leased or -managed sites. Groups may also sponsor activities and outdoor recreation at the site and are exempt from activity permit, permit to sell, and facility usage fees. A Friends Group shall reinvest in, or return to, the site all profits made from:

1) fundraisers;

2) recreational events;

3) educational events;

4) the sale of all items, including, but not limited to, souvenirs and other gifts; and

5) monetary donations.

b) Application Process for becoming a Department Friends Group. A group seeking recognition as a Friends Group shall submit to the Department:

1) a letter of intent to organize an official Department Friends Group;

2) the organization's mission statement;

3) the organization's bylaws;

4) documentation of good standing as a not-for-profit corporation under the General Not-For-Profit Corporation Act of 1986 [805 ILCS 105]; and

5) documentation that the organization is a 501(c)(3) entity under federal tax law.

c) Approval Criteria. Upon receipt of a complete application packet as described in subsection (b), the Department shall consider the following when making a determination to approve or deny a Friends Group request:

1) current needs of the site;

2) the organization's experience and past accomplishments;

3) size of the organization; and

4) the organization's intent and ability to enhance, preserve and protect Department-owned, -leased or -managed sites, including, but not limited to providing interpretive and educational activities.

d) The Department reserves the right to approve or deny Friends Group applications based on the criteria listed in subsection (c).

e) Upon approval, the Department will provide the organization with a Memorandum of Understanding for execution. Violation of the Memorandum of Understanding by the approved Friends Group may result in loss of Friend’s Group status and privileges.

(Source: Added at 45 Ill. Reg. 12553, effective September 24, 2021)