

**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
August 18, 2009**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday, August 18, 2009 at the Natural Resources Education Center at Russell Woods at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were committee members, Ms. Fauci, Ms. DeFauw, Mr. Newport, Ms. Turner, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Augsburger, Mr. Walt and Superintendent Hannan. Mr. Stuckert and Mr. Gudmunson were absent. Guests included Peggy Doty, Jessica Aldis and Stephanie Jor of the NREC.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Fauci called the meeting to order and then asked if there were any changes to the June 16, 2009 minutes. Ms. DeFauw moved to approve the minutes as noted, seconded by Mr. Walt and the motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Turner moved to accept the agenda, seconded by Mr. Augsburger and the motion passed unanimously.

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Ms. Fauci extended the Committee's welcome to NREC staff members Stephanie and Jessica and noted that Ms. Doty would be arriving shortly for a brief presentation.

**FY2010 BUDGET**

Mr. Hannan began by handing out the budget documents for their initial review. He noted that the budget would be discussed by the Committee at their September and October meetings and then go before the full Forest Preserve Commissioners in October and the Full County Board in November. He noted that any questions or comments can be addressed at the September meeting or before after the members have a chance to review the document. He closed by noting that he would get the budget documents to the absent Committee members.

**FOREST PRESERVE MONTHLY REPORTS AND GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Mr. Hannan began by reminding the Committee members that their monthly reports were included in their packets. He also noted that Phase three of the wetland bank is well underway with excavation, emergency spillway and water control structure completed. He commented that the spillway is larger than prior spillways due to the recent flooding increased rain events in the past few years. The staff is also continuing the seeding and planting of the wetland on the Afton addition as well as a new parking area, shelter and trail.

Additionally, Mr. Hannan noted that when the new shelter house on Crego road was built, it was inadvertently placed two feet too close to the roadway for the County code. He has spoken with the County Zoning office and will be filing for a variance.

He noted that the Afton wetland habitat is clearly drawing a wonderfully diverse array of wildlife species based on local reports. Darryl Shambaugh, a birder from Sandwich recently noted several shore birds spotted, some very rare in the wetlands. U.S Army Corp of Engineers will do their annual inspection of the wetland bank in September.

Also it was recently discovered that the waterways at the new Afton Addition were completely washed out for lack of grass waterway from previous owners, so they made use of some of the parking lot and trail fill to re-shape and seed waterways and also cleared out the culverts that had been blocked with eroded soil.

Mr. Hannan reported that on 9-19-09, the Chicago Wilderness Society and the University of Illinois Extension will be holding a sustainable growth seminar regarding private and corporate options at the DeKalb Farm Bureau.

He commented that the District has attempted two Evening on the Prairie walks. Though one was rained out, the other was a great success. He commented as well on a photo in the monthly report showing a large flock of 17 Great Blue Herons and 5 American Egrets feeding at the Afton wetlands.

Additionally, the Sandwich Boy Scouts Eagle Scout project recently assisted with the installation of new play equipment at Sannauk Forest Preserve. This was especially helpful as it assisted the District in fulfilling a Risk Management objective as well as improving conditions at the Preserve.

Mr. Hannan also placed a call to anyone who might have old field stones that could be used for the foundation for the future relocated Ellwood Cabin. He noted that while the structure will have a new concrete foundation, the stones will be placed to mimic what would have been the foundation construction of the cabin's era and assist in making the structure appear more historically correct.

He closed by commenting that the Shelter and Camping attendance figures are in the report and that the North West Suburban Astronomers will again host a Star Party at Afton on 10-10-09

Mr. Hannan then turned the floor over to Ms. Doty to read a letter recently received by the NBREC following a summer camp. It was from a mom who was a retired attorney and was now a teacher at DeKalb High School and contained a glowing report on her sons' experiences after attending the camps this summer. Ms. Doty was so moved by the tremendous expression of gratitude by the mother that she had to have one of her staff members complete the reading. It noted that the experiences her son had were so relevant and enriching that the positive impact will serve him far beyond the week of the experience. Ms. Doty closed by noting that the mom had tried to actually pre-pay to secure her son a seat at the camps for 2010.

Ms. Doty commented that the letter particularly moved her because it served as a reinforcement, a validation of her observations of the work accomplished by her staff over the summer camp season.

Ms. Doty commented that this had been a very good year for the camps. Despite a slightly slow start, all of the camps were at full capacity and the slow start was very beneficial in allowing the new staff members to establish a good routine before things began in earnest. Ms. Doty then commented that the staff this summer have truly been incredible about their care for the campers and for the facility.

She further noted that they had recently received a letter from a 4C mother in the area who was thrilled that her child had made it through the entire week of the camp. Ms. Doty noted that the staff recognized the child's needs and by their focus and attention were able to provide a very rewarding and positive learning experience.

Ms. Fauci asked how many area children the camps served this year. Ms. Doty noted that all 6 of the camps were very close to the maximum attendance of 25, so approximately 130 children were served.

She related a story of one mother who brought her daughter, recently arrived from India, to help her in the process of assimilation into the American educational experience.

Ms. Doty then formally introduced this year's staffers, Jessica Aldis and Stephanie Jor and asked them to speak about their experiences and backgrounds.

Ms. Aldis began by noting that she had been a former camper herself and it was quite eye opening to be on the other side. She noted that as a Music Education major, she had first assumed the camp duties would be far easier than they turned out to be. However, in the end, she noted that she believed her experiences will provide her a very strong foundation when she does her official student teaching.

Ms. Jor noted that she became involved with the camp as a way to keep her skills fresh while seeking a full time teaching position. At this time she is still looking and will be staying on with the NREC through the fall. She commented that she really feels that her skills have been well and fully used and that she has had such great opportunities to learn about herself as well as the students.

She commented that the camp was a wonderful chance to have an educationally rich experience that was also fun and kindled a genuine recognition in the students of the value of the natural environment. In closing she thanked Ms. Doty for the chance to have had the opportunity to discover so many new things about herself every day.

Ms. Doty again thanked her staff for their hard work and dedication. Ms. Fauci extended the Committee's thanks to the staff and Ms. Doty for their ongoing efforts to bring a love and understanding of nature to the County's children.

Mr. Hannan closed the presentation by handing out the PDRMA newsletter and NWSA Star Party announcements.

### **CHAIR COMMENTS**

Ms. Fauci and Ms. DeFauw discussed their recent experiences researching the Master Naturalist's Program. Ms. Fauci gave the Committee a sheet outlining the program and noted that after three state-wide planning years, Rock Island and Champaign Counties are the only ones so far to have launched the program. However, she noted that four additional Counties are in serious consideration. She noted that John Horn of the U of I Extension is the ostensible head of the fund raising efforts for the program that would supply the funding to hire a part time organizer or organizers. She also noted that individuals could perform their own fundraising activities to support the costs of the program materials which can reach as high as \$125 per participant. Ms. DeFauw noted that if the part-time organizer were hired, such an individual could possibly manage a local volunteer job board for the area as well. Ms. Fauci closed by noting that she would continue to report developments in the program as they occurred.

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS COMMENTS**

Ms. DeFauw reiterated that the Evening Prairie walk hosted by Mr. Rollof was exceptionally enjoyable.

Mr. Hannan commented that the members of the Kishwaukee Sunrise Rotary have been great financial contributors to the Forest Preserves and especially with respect to the Potawatomi and Afton shelters, benches and trails. He noted that the Rotary has indicated a strong interest to partner with the District on a larger scale project every two years.

At 8:00 am on 10-3-09, there will be a dedication and a formal "thank you" to the Rotary at the Afton location. He closed by encouraging the Committee to attend.

Ms. Fauci commented that it would be good for everyone to get out to Afton and to see how much the two year old Afton Addition has been restored and how the native plants and species have grown.

### **LAND ACQUISITION UPDATE**

Ms. Fauci then asked for a motion to enter Executive Session. Mr. Anderson moved the Committee into executive session for the purpose of discussing current information on District land acquisition, seconded by Ms. Turner. A roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 7 Committee members voting in the affirmative, and none in the negative and two absent. Following the Executive Session, Ms. Turner moved to return the Committee to public session, seconded by Ms. DeFauw. A roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 7 Committee members voting in the affirmative and none in the negative and two absent.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Turner moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Augsburger and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson  
Forest Preserve District Committee  
JF:kjr