

**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 20, 2012**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Wednesday March 20, 2012 at 6:00 pm at the County Administration Building. In attendance were committee members: Ms. Fauci, Mr. Anderson, Ms. DeFauw, Mr. Augsburger, Mr. Deverrell, Ms. Turner and Superintendent Hannan. Mr. Newport arrived after the meeting had come to order and Ms. Fullerton was absent. Guests included Al Roloff, District naturalist, Peggy Doty, Director of the NREC, Tom Micetich and Frank Ostling from the IDNR, and Mr. Tim Bagby.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Fauci asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2012 meeting. Mr. Augsburger moved approval, seconded by Ms. DeFauw and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Fauci noted that the Committee would need to go into Executive Session pursuant to state Statute section 5 ILCS 120/2 regarding the purchase or lease of real property by a public body. This section allows for an Executive Session to be called without publication if the circumstances warrant it. She then asked for an approval of the evening's amended agenda. Mr. Anderson moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Turner and the motion passed unanimously.

IDNR/CWD Discussion

Mr. Hannan noted that he had invited Tom Micetich and Frank Ostling from the IDNR to come back in to respond to questions from citizens who had contacted the Forest Preserve District. Mr. Hannan was under the impression that the citizens would be attending tonight's meeting, but at this time no one has appeared. He asked if the gentlemen from the IDNR had anything they wished to report to the committee.

Mr. Ostling noted that a very sick deer was located in Potawatomi Woods about 2 weeks ago. They noted that it was exhibiting several symptoms of CWD. This was an approximately 5 year old male. The tissue sample taken appeared very necrotic and did test positive for CWD.

He noted that sharpshooting finishes statewide this week and they will be clearing equipment and closing up the reporting stations next week. He noted that due to weather and budget constraints, the season is actually ending a week earlier than in prior years. He noted that the summary data reports will be provided, as usual, after they have the results. They will also be sending the results of their deer count flights over the County. He noted that the northwestern block of the County shows about 500+ deer in areas of that section of the County.

Mr. Augsburger asked if they had any contact with a citizen named Wiley. Mr. Micetich and Mr. Ostling noted that they had. Mr. Hannan commented that it was Mr. Wiley he had invited to the meeting this evening.

Mr. Anderson noted that he had been contacted by a man named Espy from Wisconsin who wanted to speak to the Committee. Ms. Fauci noted that the Committee is happy to hear from anyone on either side of the issue to assure they receive fair and accurate information.

Ms. Fauci thanked the gentlemen from the IDNR.

BID OPENING

Mr. Hannan noted that there are 39 acres at Potawatomi Woods that are currently leased for conservation no-till farming. Since the lease expires this year, a new bid opening for a lease period of April 2012 to April 2016 was published and bids were received.

Bid #1 came from Denny Rehn. He bid \$134 per acre with the specified no till conservation farming for a bid total of \$5226.00.

Bid #2 came from Mike Exner. He bid a total of \$171 per acre with the specified no till conservation farming for a bid total of \$6669.00

Ms. Fauci noted that this was an exception to the general "low bidder" rule. Mr. Hannan noted that as long as the bidder abides by the requirement of the no till farming, the Committee can take the higher bid.

Mr. Augsburger moved to accept the bid from Mr. Exner, seconded by Mr. Deverrell and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Fauci asked if there needed to be any additional due diligence performed to assure the payment is met. Mr. Newport commented that the rent must be paid in advance in April, so if the individual did not make the appropriate payment, the Committee could defer to the other bidder.

MONTHLY REPORTS/GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mr. Hannan noted that the usual reports are included in the Committee packets. There is also a very good article in the Chronicle about Maple Syrup Day at the NREC. He asked Ms. Doty from the audience if she had any additional comments.

Ms. Doty noted that she agreed the Maple Syrup event went very well despite the strangely warm weather.

She also reported that she is seeing 8 classes of NIU juniors and seniors who are just beginning in Elementary Education as well as a mixed group of those who have and have not student taught at this point.

She will be working on a program that will be available next year for a Green Ribbon School program as an enhancement in the three Counties she now covers. She has been asked to participate in the first nominating committee for the awards. She commented that 32 to 36 states have taken this program on despite the fact there is no funding attached. The focus of the program is to turn out 100% environmentally literate students by their 12th grade graduations. She noted that this will complement NIU's new Environmental majors as well and should be attractive to the local school administrators.

Ms. Doty closed by commenting on the Master Naturalist Program and reported that there will be a three county spring/summer program. Currently there are 4 adults who have identified themselves as interested in the program.

Ms. Fauci asked if Mr. Roloff wished to report anything to the Committee. He noted that it has indeed been a strange spring regarding how early warm weather has come to the County. This has necessitated moving quickly to address planting and exotic species control. He also commented that they seem to have much larger numbers of volunteers this well to assist with the work. He closed by noting that graduate student, Patty Ruback will be working with him on a Preserve mapping project.

Mr. Hannan noted that the District would host NIU's Lifelong Learning Program for 3 upcoming tours at the NREC as well as Afton and Prairie Oaks Preserves.

He also noted that the staff has begun annual woodland and prairie burns . There are also three to four current Eagle Scout projects plans for projects at the Preserves. Ms. Doty noted that she had been contacted by another Eagle Scout from Genoa who would like to work on improvements to the Russell Woods canoe launch.

Mr. Hannan commented that the SE Asian student program will be back again to help and learn about Afton Preserve this year as well as the Kelly High School group from Chicago. NIU will also be sending several groups to assist with preserve projects.

Ms. Fauci noted that the District is very grateful to the citizens who volunteer their time and expertise.

Mr. Augsburger asked if the IDNR staffers had responded to the citizen inquiries he brought to the Committee last month. Mr. Hannan replied that they had and will be sure to forward the copy of the response to Mr. Augsburger.

DOG ORDINANCE

Ms. Fauci noted that there was a desire to get a few additional housekeeping items on the Ordinance resolved before the warmer weather brought more walkers and their pets to the Preserves. Following some discussions regarding the language of the Ordinance, Ms. DeFauw moved to forward the Dog Ordinance to the next full board of Commissioners meeting, seconded by Mr. Deverell. The vote was 7 in favor and Mr. Newport opposed.

TRUCK DISCUSSION

Ms. Fauci noted that when last they visited this subject, three members of the Committee had abstained with 4 voting on the motion to allow Manning Ford to withdraw their truck bid due to an error in the pricing they discovered.

Since that last action, Mr. Anderson spoke directly to Pat Manning and got an agreement to have Manning honor the original erroneous bid price.

Ms. Fauci commented that she then sought advice from the State's Attorney regarding how to bring this back to the table. She noted that one of the four members who voted to allow the bid withdrawal must move to reverse that motion and another of the four must second that motion to reverse.

Mr. Augsburger asked if Mr. Manning had done this willingly or if there was any undue or concerning pressure brought to bear. Mr. Anderson replied that he had simply spoken to Mr. Manning. He commented that Mr. Manning had indicated that he would be handling any action regarding the employee who made the error.

Mr. Augsburger moved to rescind the previous motion to accept the Morrow Bros. bid and to return to accepting the Manning truck bid and to forward that recommendation to the full board of Commissioners, seconded by Mr. Deverell and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Fauci noted she will handle explaining this action to the Commissioners at the next meeting.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Ms. Fauci commented on how wonderful it has been to visit and enjoy the very clean and well maintained preserves so early this year and extended her thanks to the Forest Preserve staff.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Anderson noted that he had spotted an eagle the prior Sunday near I-88.

Mr. Bagby from the audience noted that he was a prior County Board member and had some questions on the proposed Somonauk to Sannauk trail. He asked if Somonauk was going to be assisting with the funding on the project. Ms. Fauci noted that they have agreed to assist the preserve with maintenance, mowing and patrolling.

Mr. Hannan recalled a humorous moment from Mr. Bagbys' board member days 20 years ago when on a previous roll call vote regarding raising dog license fees, he had voted "woof".

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Fauci then asked for a motion to enter Executive Session. Ms. DeFauw moved the Committee into executive session for the purpose of discussing potential District land acquisitions, seconded by Ms. Turner. A roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 7 Committee members voting in the affirmative, none in the negative and 1 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, none in the negative and 1 absent.

ADJOURNMENT

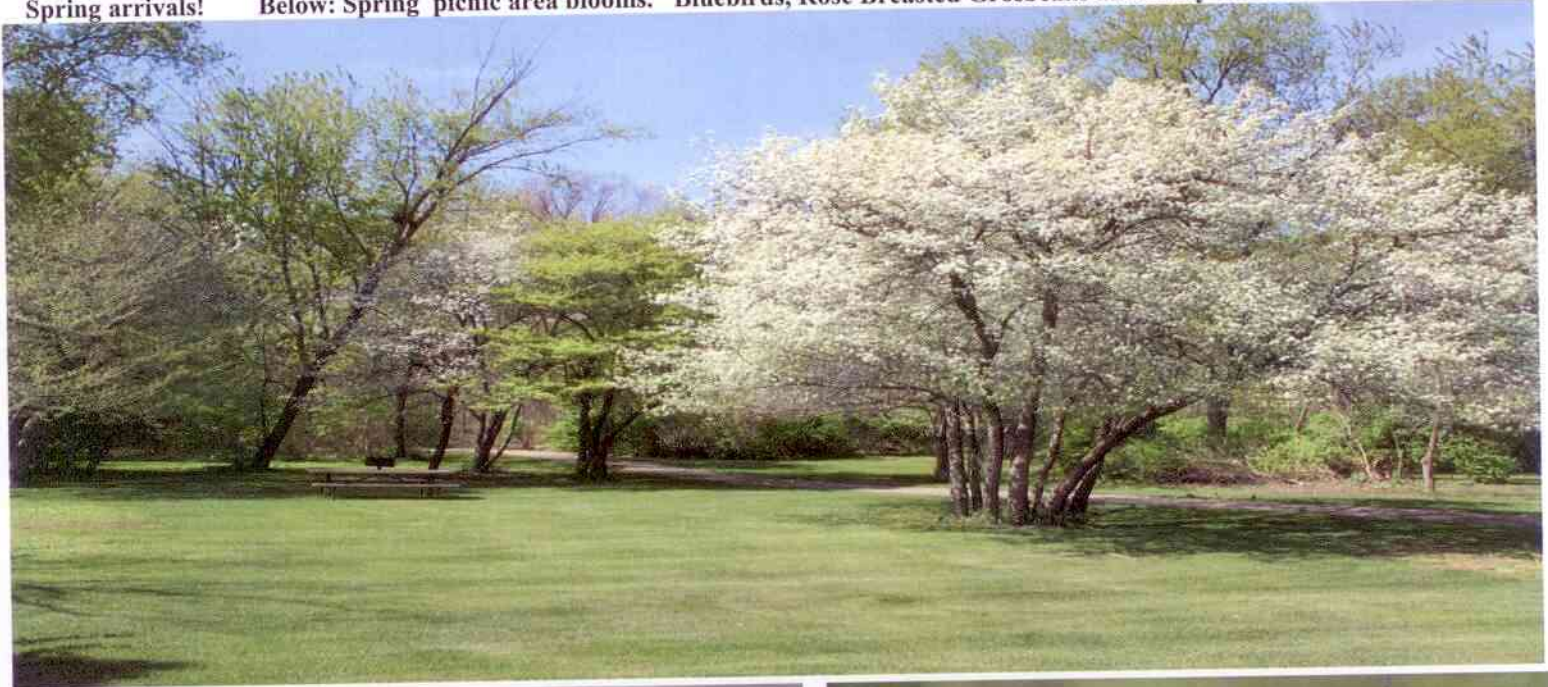
Ms. Turner moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Augsburger. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson
Forest Preserve District Committee
JF:kjr

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District March Staff Maintenance and Projects Report

General maintenance of buildings and grounds with seasonal mowing/trimming and fire wood cutting and splitting, shelter house and outhouse cleaning, garbage, litter pick up and disposal, road grading, trail maintenance, building and equipment maintenance, storm clean-ups, scheduling shelter rentals and collecting shelter and camping fees, and water safety testing. Shelters houses and the lodge at forest preserves are used every weekend by scouts, families and other groups. Other projects: The FP District Natural Resource Environmental Educators are now teaching Spring student programs at Russell Woods. Maple Syrup Day was well attended on March 3rd. Hoppe Farmstead and Miller Ellwood cabin work continues, chinking, windows and doors and fireplace planned for 2012 along with parking area and final landscaping. Another 55 acres of floodplain adjacent to Russell Woods will be acquired with USDA / NRCS grant partnership with the landowners and Forest Preserve District in 2012 and planted into prairie, trees, trails and wetland habitat. This land will also be an important link in the future planned Genoa / Kingston Trail. Spring clean up, road improvements, tree planting, preserve maintenance, firewood cutting, splitting and stacking for shelter house and lodge rentals continues. PDRMA risk management training and improvements in progress. Afton farm house and barn improvements near completion. New firewood storage sheds planned for construction at Sannauk and MacQueen. Record warm weather had forest and prairies "greening up" very fast. The burn window was short in 2012 and about ½ the planned woodland and prairie burns were completed. Good to hear and see the migratory song birds, shorebirds, and waterfowl Spring arrivals! Below: Spring picnic area blooms. Bluebirds, Rose Breasted Grosbeaks and many others birds return.



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Schrader: Different creatures of the Kish river

Created: Tuesday, April 10, 2012 5:30 a.m. CDT

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Our local Kishwaukee River ecosystem is a fascinating place to search for species that most of us overlook. We may have fished the Kish, canoed or even swam it in our younger days, but there are other aspects of the river beside recreation and sport.

Al Roloff, natural resources manager for the DeKalb County Forest Preserve District, recently shared some findings from a survey he and others from the Kishwaukee River Ecosystems Partnership and Open Lands researchers have documented.

I never knew what species reproduce without ever meeting its mate. They just lie in wait for the sperm of the male to float by, impregnating the female. Later, the female expels the fertilized eggs (larvae) into the water where they seek out passing fish to attach



Open Lands project scientist Roger Klocek gathers mussels from the Kishwaukee River as part of an ecosystem survey to identify different species in the river. (Provided photo)

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If you already noticed the accompanying photo of the scientist collecting mussels in the river, you know I am talking about clams. Roloff gave me some of the colorful names they are known by – fatmuckets, creepers, elktoes, slippershell, threeridge, wabash pigtoe, plain pocketbook, giant floater, pimpleback and white heelsplitter, which describes the shape or pattern of their shell. If you ever stepped on a heelsplitter underwater, you know why its sharp edges were given that name.

I found out they are now all a protected species, so don't go on a hunting expedition. Only raccoons and other small mammals are allowed to forage for them.

The clams spend their life in sandy or gravelly river bottoms, opening up to catch plankton and algae for sustenance, occasionally reaching out with a protruding wormlike appendage to attract a fish so they can eject their eggs toward the unsuspecting host.

Roloff explained some 14 species of mussels have been found alive in the river during the last two years, so it is testament to the fact our local river's water quality is improving. Barring any major pollution spills, it can sustain many forms of wildlife. Their research also could mean more grant money for this ecosystem, with the knowledge the river is thriving and worth protecting.

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Natural Resource Management Activities

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District

March 2012

Primary activities for the month of March included:

1. Prescribed fires in forest preserves. Prescribed fire is a critical tool for ecological restoration in all of our forest preserves – prairies, woodlands and wetlands. Our managed fires mimic the processes that occurred for thousands of years prior to European settlement in this area. Each year, we select priority areas for prescribed fire based on various resource management objectives. For example, we may want to remove dead vegetation duff in order to more effectively apply herbicides on invasive species in a wetland. In woodlands, we often want to kill early rosettes of Garlic Mustard, or control woody shrubs such as Honeysuckle, Buckthorn or Multiflora Rose. In prairies, spring fires impede the growth of cool season non-native grasses while returning nutrients to the soil. The charred detritus and ash allows the sun to warm the soil earlier, and encourages growth of native prairie species.

This year, the spring fire season was early and short. The record temperatures in March warmed the soil very early in the season and forced the emergence of spring native woodland flora a month earlier than average. We had a very limited window for woodland fires (usually our earliest fires) before switching to prairies and wetlands. Then, early emergence of the desirable native species in those habitats cut short our burn season there. Heavy winds prevented burning on a few otherwise opportune days. It just happens that way sometimes. Our burn season was ended in less than half of the usual season.

Prescribed fires were carried out in three woodland units at Prairie Oaks, one wetland unit at Hoppe, one wetland unit at Potawatomi Woods, two prairie units at Afton South Prairie, one unit in the Afton Wetland Bank and one unit in the Afton central prairie.

2. Continuation of GIS and GPS training and mapping. Patty Ruback, our GIS trainer from NIU, continued assisting us with the acquisition of GIS skills and use of GPS hardware and software for conservation applications. Patty also continues her trail map production for the forest preserve web site. She is providing this service to us free, as a part of her graduate studies program at NIU.

3. Initiation of spring herbicide application to invasive species. We began spraying Reed Canary Grass in March this year, a month earlier than usual. Use of the Bobcat utility vehicle and the mounted boom sprayer (as well as backpack sprayers, when needed,) has made this a very efficient process.

4. Coordination, scheduling and initiation of spring volunteer activities. Northern Illinois University service organizations and classes, Boy Scouts, Southeast Asian Youth Leadership Program, Opportunity House, Kishwaukee College, Sycamore Lions Club, and Kishwaukee Kiwanis are some of the groups that have volunteered to help with spring activities in the forest preserves. NIU Outdoors Adventures program started the spring work in March by fertilizing and mulching trees at Afton.

5. Early season planting or transplanting of wetland and woodland plants. Some plants are best transplanted in a dormant state or in early spring before significant growth begins. With little frost in the soil over this past winter, plants began growth even earlier, so we scrambled to get some of our earliest transplanting done. Marsh Marigold, Great Angelica and Iris were the primary species.