

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Forest Preserve Committee at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.

DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Forest Preserve Operations Committee Minutes
July 23, 2019**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve Operations Committee met on Tuesday, July 23, 2019 at Afton Forest Preserve located at 13600 Crego Rd., DeKalb, Illinois. Chairman Stoddard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Those Members present were Ms. Maureen Little, Mr. Chris Porterfield, Mr. Craig Roman, Mr. Jeff Whelan, and Chairman Paul Stoddard. Mr. Tim Hughes arrived at 6:20 p.m. and Ms. Terri Mann-Lamb arrived at 6:10 p.m. A quorum to begin the meeting was established with five Members present and two absent at the time.

Others present included Forest Preserve District Natural Resource Manager Josh Clark, Michael Haines, Julia Fauci, and Bob Brown.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Mr. Porterfield, seconded by Mr. Whelan, and it was carried unanimously to approve the meeting agenda as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Whelan, seconded by Mr. Roman and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the May 28, 2019 Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

MONTHLY REPORTS & ACTIVITIES

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Natural Resource Manager Josh Clark updated the Committee on the Summer Natural Resource Activities that have been happening at the County's Forest Preserves. A large portion of those activities have been battling summer weeds as well as collecting seeds which save the District a substantial amount of money as opposed to buying from an outside vendor. Mr. Clark also described what a benefit it is to have volunteers and Forest Preserve Stewards assist the District with seed collection and other tasks to help maintain the County's beautiful preserves.

The Committee additionally received the [June Monthly Forest Preserve Report](#) and [Wildlife Highlights](#) for June 2019.

FOREST PRESERVE LEVY DISCUSSION

Mr. Michael Haines, former County Board Members and Forest Preserve Committee Member, provided the Committee with a historic overview of when the County Board approved the following proposition to be submitted to the voters of the DeKalb County Forest Preserve District, DeKalb County, Illinois on the 21st day of March, 2006:

Shall the DeKalb County Forest Preserve District, DeKalb County, Illinois, be authorized to establish its general corporate tax rate at .06% on the equalized assessed value on taxable property located within the district for its general purposes, including education, outdoor recreation, maintenance and operations, public safety at the forest preserves, trails, and other properties of the district, land acquisition by purchase from willing sellers and not by condemnation, the preservation and restoration of forests, prairies and wetlands, the protection and restoration of rivers, streams and watersheds, improve flood control, protection of drinking water and the preservation of wildlife habitats?

The approximate impact of the proposed increase on the owner of a single-family home having a market value of \$175,000 would be \$15.00 in the first year of the increase if the increase is fully implemented.

Mr. Haines explained the work that went into formulating the proposition and why the question on was put on the spring ballot as well as the reasoning behind not being able to put a sunset clause on it. Mr. Haines additionally shared that on this same ballot the Board also approved to ask the voters to implement a tax levy that would provide assistance to DeKalb County Veterans. Both tax levy referendums passed at the March 21, 2006 Election. Mr. Haines then questioned that if the Board is now considering placing a question on the ballot to rescind the Forest Preserve District Levy, why would they also not consider rescinding the Veterans Assistance Levy that was approved at the same time. He added that if there was some logic behind saving the tax payers \$20 per year on the Forest Preserve Tax Levy, why not make it \$40 per year for both. Mr. Haines made it very clear that he did not see the logic behind doing something like this and would not be in favor of rescinding either tax levy.

Ms. Julia Fauci, former County Board Member and Forest Preserve Committee Member/Chair, explained that she was the Committee Chairperson when the proposition was passed out of Committee and approved by the County Board in 2006. She also detailed the benefits of the County's Forest Preserves as well as outlined an evaluation list that the past Committee made to ensure that this levy was doing what it should and Ms. Fauci added that she could say yes to every single one of the evaluation questions back then and still to this day. Ms. Fauci also added that she promised her Committee that they would revisit the issue in ten years at the Committee level and that is exactly what was done under the Committee Chairmanship of Mr. Bob Brown.

Mr. Bob Brown, former County Board Member and Forest Preserve Committee Member/Chair, first and foremost thanked Mr. Haines and Ms. Fauci for their leadership and support in helping to ask he voters of DeKalb County to pass such a benefit to the Forest Preserve District. Mr. Brown continued to advocate for the continuation of the Forest Preserve District Levy and pointed out the value to the County and the public's positive view of the preserves.

Mr. Hannan's Forest Preserve District Plan was reiterated:

**Future Land Acquisition, Maintenance and Natural Resource Management
Recommendations "0.75% / 0.75% Plan"**

**3,000 acre forest preserve land preservation goal = 0.75% of land in DeKalb County
Keep tax rate at 0.75 % of property tax bill See tax rate information attached.**

Note: Over time land acquisition funds are anticipated to shift from acquiring land to taking good care of our Forest Preserves with land improvements, buildings and grounds maintenance, natural resource land management, along with recreational and environmental educational opportunities.

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Mr. Hughes arrived to the meeting and Chairman Stoddard inquired what Mr. Hughes wanted to obtain from adding this item to the Committee's Agenda. The Committee and guests discussed the District's current goal is and why certain lands are offered/donated to the District. Mr. Hughes expressed his concern about the District being landlords to farmland. It was assured that there is not much farmland that the District owns and what is farmland is currently being rented until the District has the means to turn it back into preservation land. The District also pays the property taxes on those pieces of land that are being farmed and rented currently. Mr. Hughes additionally added that when talking to his constituents, they would like to see a cap on how much land the District is going to purchase. Chairman Stoddard reiterated that Mr. Hannan has already established that plan/goal. The Chair also added that the main goal now is connectivity.

After further discussions, the Committee was thankful to their guests for the historical information and they were glad to have had the discussion. They believed that the public could be better educated on the District's land acquisition processes and goals as well as agreed to leave the District's Property Tax Levy alone.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – LAND ACQUISITION

The Committee did not enter into an Executive Session.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

TOUR

Following the adjournment of the meeting, DCFPD Natural Resource Manager Josh Clark led the group in attendance on a tour of the Afton prairie and wetland.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Hughes, seconded by Mr. Whelan and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Paul Stoddard

Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary

2019 Forest Preserve tax rates

General Fund .06000

F.I.C.A. .00145

I.M.R.F. .00015

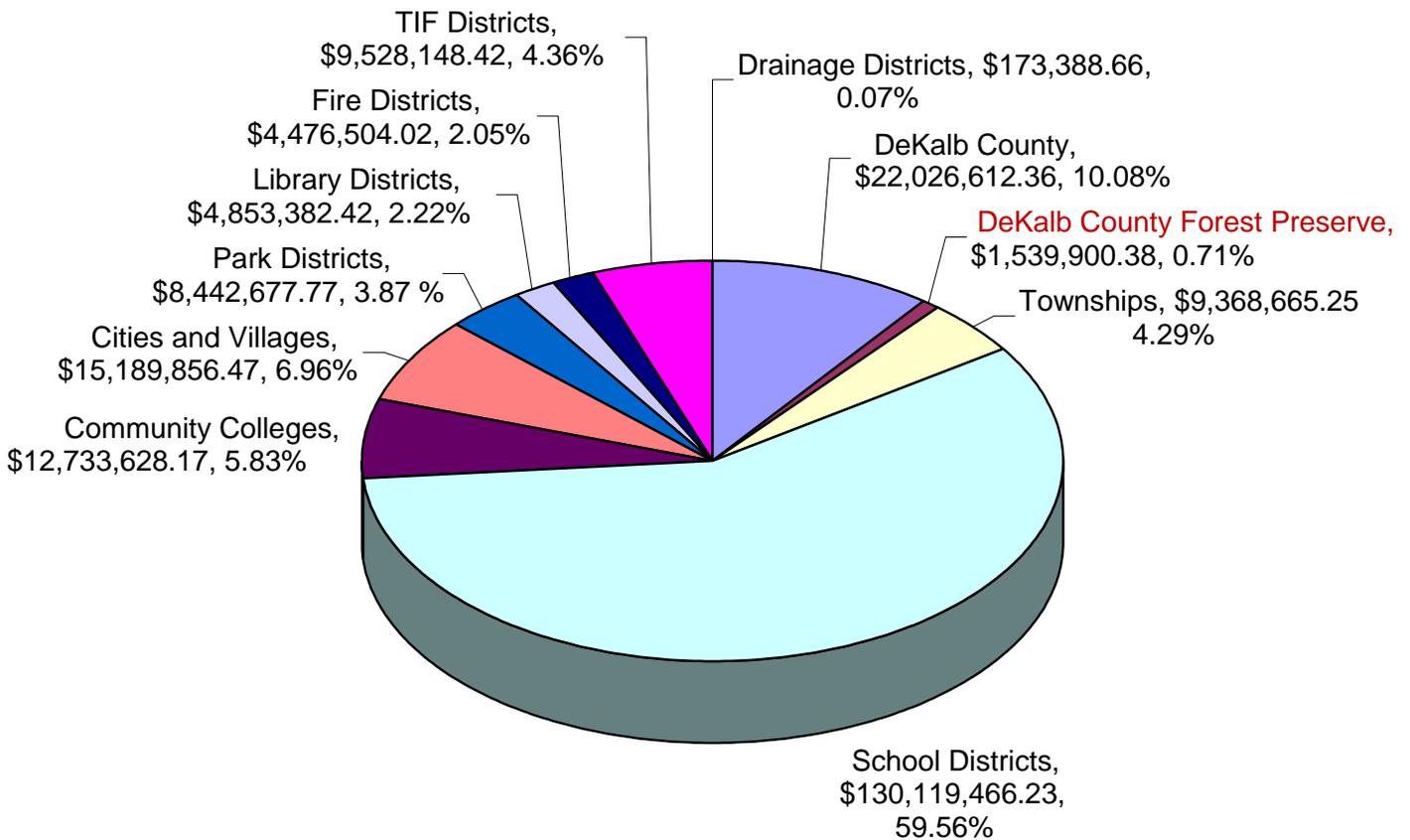
Tort and Liability .01523

Total Tax Rate = .07683

\$200,000.00 value home at 1/3 assessment and homestead exemption pays about \$48.00 per year or about \$4.00 per month in forest preserve property taxes.

\$430.00 per acre assessment for farmland pays 35 cents per acre in forest preserve tax .

Forest Preserve tax is less than 1% (0.71 %) of a home owners property tax bill



Northern Illinois Forest Preserve and Conservation District Land Information

Cook County Forest Preserve District

70,000 acres 336 sites, 6 nature centers, (11) golf courses and Brookfield Zoo

10% of Cook County in Forest Preserves

5,200,000 population

Lake County Forest Preserve District

31,000 acres 40 sites and (3) 18 hole golf courses ,2 nature centers and 2 museums

9 % of Lake County acres in Forest Preserves

704,000 population

DuPage County Forest Preserve District

25,560 acres 60 sites and (3) 18 hole golf courses, 2 nature centers

11.5 %of DuPage County acres in Forest Preserves

935,000 population.

McHenry County Conservation District

25,300 acres 50 sites 1 nature center

6 % of McHenry County acres in Conservation District areas

373,000 population

Will County Forest Preserve District

22,000 acres 84 sites 1 nature center

4.5% of Will County acres in Forest Preserves.

690,000 population

Kane County Forest Preserve District

20,700 acres 79 sites and (1) 18 hole golf course , 2 nature centers and own
minor league baseball team *Kane County Cougars*

5 % of Kane County acres in Forest Preserves

532,000 population

Winnebago County Forest Preserve District

10,300 acres 42 sites and (3) 18 hole golf courses 1 nature center

3% of Winnebago County acres in Forest Preserves

300,000 population

Boone County Conservation District

3,500 acres 26 sites , 1 nature center

2 % of Boone County acres in Conservation District.

53,500 population

Kendall County Forest Preserve District

3,000 acres 12 sites, 1 nature center

1.5% of Kendall County acres in Forest Preserves

125,000 population

Byron Forest Preserve District (*One Township*)

1,985 acres 9 sites and (1) 18 hole golf course and 1 nature center

20,000 population

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District

1,850 acres * 21 sites, 1 nature center

*includes future Chambers, Nehring Addition and Haines Prairie acquisitions

.45 % of DeKalb County acres in Forest Preserves

104,500 population

Less than 1% (7/10 of 1 %) of property tax bill