

**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES**  
**March 15, 2011**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday, March 15, 2011 at the DeKalb County Administration Building Conference Room C at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were committee members: Ms. Fauci, Ms. Fullerton, Mr. Newport, Mr. Augsburger, Ms. Turner, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Deverell and Ms. DeFauw and Superintendent Hannan. There were no Guests.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Fauci called the meeting to order and then asked if there were any changes to the February 15, 2011 minutes. Mr. Augsburger moved to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Ms. Fullerton and the motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Fauci asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, Mr. Deverell moved to accept the agenda, seconded by Ms. DeFauw and the motion passed unanimously.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION/MONTHLY REPORTS**

Mr. Hannan pointed out a few items on the monthly reports contained in the Committee Member's packets.

He reported that he was notified the land acquisition grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation was in the final round for the recent Sparks property acquisition (Prairie Oaks Preserve). This grant, if approved, will be for approximately \$200,000.00. He also has another \$100,000.00 grant from the Victoria Foundation in process.

Mr. Hannan commented that Ms. Doty would not be able to attend tonight's meeting, but wanted to send word that the recent Maple Syrup Day held at the NREC went very well.

He noted that he had also received a letter from resident James Hovis noting that since the District had recently undertaken the moving of the Miller-Ellwood cabin that perhaps they would be interested in moving another Ellwood home located on 3rd St. in DeKalb. Following discussion on the feasibility of such a project, it was the consensus of the Committee that this would be too expensive and too much staff time for the District to undertake at this time.

Mr. Hannan noted that he has spoken to Paul Searl of NRCS regarding the Wetland Reserve Program grant partnership with NRCS for the additional 55 acre Hoppe property adjacent to Russell Woods. He noted that the funding has not yet been released from the USDA / NRCS, but that the project is still ranked as a high priority by NRCS.

He commented that there had also been several reports and complaints of dogs off leash by visitors and staff at the preserves. Tickets are starting to be given by DeKalb County

Animal Control to repeat offenders. The current fines are set at \$50.00 per offense. He noted that there are designated off-leash areas at Potawatomi Woods, Afton and Merritt Prairie. All other areas pets must be on leash. He commented that the Forest Preserve District must keep the safety the general public in mind as well as the preservation of wildlife habitat (nesting birds, mammals , etc).

Ms. Fullerton asked if there were any bags provided for owners to pick up after their dogs. Mr. Hannan replied that not at this time. He noted that the current priority was getting owners to keep their dogs on leash.

Mr. Hannan reported that last month, a resolution was passed regarding year end amendments to the 2010 budget. He met with the auditor and had received approval for all transfers to balance FY 2010 budget as well as land acquisition fund balances, the Miller-Ellwood Cabin donation fund and the Wetland Bank Fund. He then provided the figures to the Committee with a note that they will be brought to the full Board of Commissioners tomorrow night.

Mr. Hannan stated to the Committee that the Army Corps of Engineers require a \$50,000.00 reserve for maintenance and repairs to be held for the Wetland Bank, but the rest of the funds generated by the bank can be used for other needs. He noted that the current amount of the bank reserve funds exceeds the reserve minimum.

He then reported that work on the Miller-Ellwood cabin was beginning again in earnest. A group of volunteer stone masons is being assembled to work on the fireplace planned for the structure. The restoration specialist has provided the basic direction for what it should look like, and there have been expressions of interest by volunteers. Shake roof, chinking, widows and doors, fireplace, front porch and landscaping remain.

Mr. Hannan then handed out additional information regarding whether the track loader from the County Highway Department might be utilized rather than pursuing the purchase recently considered by the District. He presented a report that showed usage of the current compact loader owned by the District as well as the loader frequently borrowed from one of the District employees. He pointed out to the Committee that the usage was great enough that it would likely cause issues for the Highway Department to share their loader. Mr. Hannan noted that the purchase being considered was a 25 to 30 year investment and would be purchased using non-taxpayer dollars. He commented that this loader would be a track version, rather than wheeled so it could be used in the rougher terrain of the preserves.

He noted that he had also spoken to John Gudmunson of the Highway Committee regarding the impact of taking one of the Highway department's loaders rather than purchasing a new one. However, he did point out that a recent letter from the Highway Department indicated that the equipment could be shared, but only if the District used it occasionally, something the report indicated was not the case. The equipment is used for snow removal, storm clean ups, construction projects, tree planting, material hauling and lifting, road and parking lot grading, firewood hauling, cleaning out fire pits, brush

cutting, trail trimming, digging holes for signs and fencing, roofing projects, earth moving, and many other lifting, digging and hauling uses.

Mr. Hannan then closed by commenting that prairie and woodland burns were beginning in the Preserves and called the Committee's attention to the schedule of upcoming volunteer events. He noted that the NIU Sororities, Fraternities and a local blood bank had offered to be part of this year's clean up efforts as well as NIU Cares day. Power Adventures will be presenting a workshop on wilderness first aid at the MacQueen Lodge and will do a volunteer project after the workshop.

The NIU Cares Day volunteers is also scheduled to do some planting at the new Prairie Oaks preserve as well as assisting with clean up on the Great Western Trail.

#### **CHAIR COMMENTS**

Ms. Fauci commented that the Byron Forest Preserve is showing the Aldo Leopold film that she had mentioned at the February meeting. She noted that she hoped there might be a way to bring the film to the DeKalb area.

She then closed by commenting that the recent seed stomp was a tremendous success for the District and a very well deserved "thank you" for all the District volunteers.

#### **COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

The committee welcomed back Mr. Deverell from his recent illness.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson  
Forest Preserve District Committee  
JF:kjr