

**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
June 18, 2013**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Wednesday, June 18, 2013 at 6:00 pm at Afton Forest Preserve. In attendance were committee members: Ms. Fauci, Mr. Jones, Mr. Gudmunson, Mr. Brown, Ms. DeFauw and Ms. Haji-Sheikh. Mr. Gudmunson and Mr. Brown arrived after the call to order. Superintendent Hannan was absent. Guests: Board member Anthony Cvek, FP District Naturalist Al Roloff, Interns Shea Quinn and Lee Reinke, Donna Brown and Peggy Doty of the NREC.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Fauci called for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2013 meeting. Mr. DeFauw moved approval, seconded by Mr. Haji-Sheikh and the motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Fauci called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Brown moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Haji-Sheikh and the motion passed unanimously.

**IMRF RESOLUTION**

Ms. Fauci noted that there was an IMRF resolution being brought to the Forest preserve district in line with the current County provisions with respect to employee IMRF options. There are two documents involved with the resolution, both revolving around the issue of Military Service purchase options within IMRF.

In brief, IMRF allows participants to “buy in” their military service that occurred prior to IMRF participation to increase their IMRF service time. They also allow the purchase of military leave occurring after the employee began IMRF participation. However, employers must agree to allow the option to purchase as well. Several years ago the County had elected to allow employees to make these purchases, but the Forest Preserve staff was left out of that resolution. These resolutions seek to simply correct that omission.

Mr. Roloff noted that this has resulted from an inquiry he and 2 other staff members made regarding these purchases.

Ms. Fauci commented that since this was simply to bring the Forest Preserve staff to parity with all other County employees, this should be approved.

Mr. Gudmunson asked what additional costs this would cause for the County.

Ms. DeFauw reiterated that since this would simply allow the Forest Preserve staff the same rights as all other County employees, this is an issue of fairness.

Mr. Cvek noted that the financial burden of the purchase is borne solely by the employee making the purchase and that in the long term, they are no more costly to the County than any other employee.

Mr. Gudmunson then expressed his sentiments about pension plans for public employees vs. private individuals.

Ms. DeFauw moved to forward both resolutions to the County Board, seconded by Mr. Jones and the motion passed unanimously.

## **MONTHLY REPORTS**

Mr. Roloff began by introducing two new interns that were working with the District this summer, Shea Quinn and Lee Reinke. Mr. Roloff noted that internship experiences like these were extremely valuable to university students. Lee was recommended to the Preserve by the Honors division of the NIU Biology Dept. Shea is a Sycamore resident currently attending the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point. He will be working on an experiment comparing predation by insects on prairie and wetland grasses. He will be with the Preserve until 7-4-13. After that, he will be replaced by Christina Johnson from Southern Illinois University. He commented that they will be producing a daily log of activities as well as a summary report at the end of the month.

Mr. Hannan did attend the meeting for a few minutes.. While he could not stay long, having just been discharged, he did go over the basic monthly reporting information for the group. Ms. Fauci thanked Mr. Hannan for stopping by to let everyone know he was on the mend. Mr. Hannan thanked the Committee for their good thoughts as well as their hard work to create, maintain and expand the Preserves for the County.

Mr. Roloff then noted that this is the start of the spraying season for invasive species. He went on to note that he will explain the various techniques used during his walking tour of the Afton Prairie and wetlands that he will conduct at the conclusion of tonight's meeting. He noted the Committee will see the wetland bank area that has proven to be good financially for the District as well as the efforts that have been made to enhance the native plant communities.

Ms. Fauci commented that there was a financial report in this month's packet as well as a PDRMA report for the Committee's review.

Ms. Doty reported that there is a new Master Naturalist program that she is currently working on. She went on to add that she has a new job duty as well, creating a regularly scheduled Stewardship Program. She hopes that this will dovetail well with the Master Naturalist program and that she will be able to utilize the participants no matter where they have been trained. Currently the program is offered in a 3 County rotation, though each County encourages their participants to go back to their home communities with their new knowledge and training.

Ms Doty then reported on the May activities report for the NREC. 542 students and 82 leaders were educated at the facility in May of this year.

Ms. Haji-Shiekh noted that she would like very much to participate in the Master Naturalist training, but notes that Wednesday are a great difficulty for her due to her County Board duties. She asked if Ms. Doty would consider taking the County Board schedule into consideration when scheduling her next classes. Ms. Doty noted that if this were not possible, perhaps they could consider filing or podcasting some of the classes to expand exposure to the program information.

Ms. Doty noted that was a good possibility and also commented that she would be using a large roster of experts to provide a variety of experiences, expertise and opinions during the program.

She then noted that all of her staffing fell through this year with the exception of Connie Handel, so Ms. Doty's son was hired to assist this year. She invited the Committee members to come out and see first-hand the care and educational focus of the NREC's programs.

Ms. Doty commented that she hopes that perhaps some of the Master Naturalist participants will be able to supplement the teaching as well as the staffing at the NREC in coming years.

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Ms. Fauci thanked Mr. Roloff for his work with the District and noted that she and her husband have had the pleasure to work with him as Stewards. She commented that he was very knowledgeable and good to work with.

She also noted that there was a recent hitch on the DeKalb Trail restoration project that the District was working on in conjunction with the DeKalb Park District and Commonwealth Edison. Recently, Mr. Roloff was working with ComEd apply some spot herbicide. A resident saw the activities and misinterpreted the intention of what was being done. Unfortunately, it took some untangling through the multiple chains of command before everything could be straightened out.

Mr. Brown commented that he sees very good synergy between the District and many County departments and Board Committees and wondered if there were ever opportunities for the Economic Development Committee to get involved as well. Ms. Fauci noted that could be very beneficial given the economic advantages that come with having strong parks and preserves available to residents.

Ms. Haji-Sheikh noted to the Committee that her son and husband were at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville for a college visit. She also noted that due to this meeting, she was unfortunately unable to attend tonight's DeKalb School Board meeting where she was to receive a school board recognition.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Jones moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Gudmunson. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson  
Forest Preserve District Committee  
JF:kjr