

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District
Sycamore, Illinois

**Forest Preserve Committee Minutes
January 26, 2023**

The Forest Preserve Committee of the DeKalb County Board met in Sycamore, Illinois on Thursday, January 26, 2023. Chair Roy Plote called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Those Members present were Mary Cozad, Meryl Domina, Benjamin Haier, Terri Mann-Lamb, and Stewart Ogilvie. A quorum was established with six Members present, one absent.

Others present included Forest Preserve Superintendent Terry Hannan and IDNR Wildlife Biologist Luke Garver.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Cozad moved to approve the agenda as presented. Ogilvie seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Cozad, seconded by Ogilvie and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2022 Forest Preserve Committee Meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

IDNR REQUEST FOR SHARPSHOOTING ACCESS AT POTAWATOMI WOODS

FOREST PRESERVE FOR CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD) PROGRAM

The Committee welcomed Mr. Luke Garver, Wildlife Biologist, from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Garver thanked the Committee for allowing him to be present and share his report along with once again formally requesting to enter Potawatomi Woods Forest Preserve in Kirkland, Illinois in order to manage (in the form of sharpshooting) resident deer to conduct Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) testing.

Garver further explained that management using sharpshooting to supplement hunter harvest allows the Department to conduct localized, focused deer reductions in small areas known to have CWD. The IDNR's goal is to reduce disease transmission rates by lowering densities in infected areas, to reduce environmental contamination from infected deer, and to remove sick deer from the population at a higher rate than deer are becoming newly-infected. Advantages of sharpshooting include: (1) reductions are limited to areas with disease, so healthy populations in the remainder of a county are not impacted as they would be if we relied solely on hunting for management; (2) sharpshooting can be conducted on properties that do not normally allow hunting (or allow only very limited hunting), so management can occur in areas that normally serve as refuges to hunting; (3) focused sharpshooting has been shown to remove sick animals at a higher rate than hunting programs; and (4) sharpshooting can target specific high-risk deer social groups known to have CWD. Sharpshooting also provides detailed, localized surveillance information about disease distribution and prevalence rates within infected areas.

The Potawatomi Woods area is of great concern to the IDNR. This area has produced a large number of positive tests of CWD infested deer. Following the close of deer hunting seasons in January, teams of IDNR staff that are trained/certified for sharpshooting begin culling deer wintering in or around known CWD locations. All IDNR sharpshooting activities are carried out between now through March on Monday – Thursday evenings.

Sharpshooting areas are generally limited to locations within a 2-section buffer zone around each known CWD-positive section (1 section = ~1 mile²). Sharpshooting is only conducted with the permission of the landowner. All animals (including fawns) from which suitable tissue samples could be collected are tested for CWD. Additional tissue samples are collected for genetic testing and evaluation of reproductive status at the University of Illinois Champaign/Illinois Natural History Survey. All deer with negative CWD test results are processed and donated to the Feeding Illinois Food Pantry Network.

Depending on the relative success of a given area dictates how much time the IDNR will spend in that area as well as the prevalence of the disease in that area. Last year, the prevalence rate for all adult deer was 4.5% (males – 5.4%, females – 3.5%). DeKalb County prevalence was 3.75%; this year, 4 of 81 harvested adult deer tested positive. CWD has been detected in 19 counties. As a comparison, last year Wisconsin's prevalence rate for adult deer was 7.7% (1,327 cases/17,146 samples analyzed). Their agency culling program ended in 2007.

Mann-Lamb moved to approve allowing the IDNR into Potawatomi Woods Forest Preserve to continue their Chronic Wasting Disease Sharpshooting Management Program. Cozad seconded the motion. All Members present voted yea. The motion carried unanimously.

MONTHLY REPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Superintendent Hannan reviewed the monthly wildlife highlights and staff activities from the months of October, November, and December 2022.

Superintendent Hannan shared that the Forest Preserve District received a generous donation from a neighbor. This is not their first time donating and Hannan expressed that the donation will go towards more prairie seed.

ADJOURNMENT

Cozad moved to adjourn the meeting. Mann-Lamb seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Liam Sullivan