

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District
Sycamore, Illinois

**Forest Preserve Committee Minutes
March 23, 2023**

The Forest Preserve Committee of the DeKalb County Board met in Sycamore, Illinois on Thursday, March 23, 2023. Chair Roy Plote called the meeting to order at 5:58pm. Those Members present were Mary Cozad, Meryl Domina, Benjamin Haier, Maureen Little, Terri Mann-Lamb, and Stewart Ogilvie. A quorum was established with seven Members present, none absent.

Others present included Forest Preserve Superintendent Terry Hannan, Lisa Reser, and Liam Sullivan.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Cozad, seconded by Domina and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2023 Forest Preserve Committee Meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

FP-R2023-002 AWARD RESOLUTION FOR THE 2023 GREAT WESTERN TRAIL RESURFACING PROJECT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$106,120.00 TO SCHROEDER ASPHALT SERVICES, INC. OF MARENGO, ILLINOIS.

Resolution FP-R2023-002 awards the project for the resurfacing 3 miles of the Great Western Trail with ag lime. The DeKalb County Highway Department assisted the Forest Preserve District with the bid specifications and bid letting. Since the trail was acquired in 1986 as an abandoned railroad right of way, about every 12 + years new ag lime has been placed on the Great Western Trail. There are DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Funds to pay for this project. Bids were opened by the Highway Department on March 22nd.

The Project received three bids and the lowest responsible bidder was Schroeder Asphalt Services, Inc of Marengo, IL, who submitted a bid of \$106,120.00 for 2800 tons of aggregate surface course (unit price of \$37.90 per ton). The Engineer's estimate for the project is \$71,960.00.

It was moved by Mann-Lamb, Seconded by Ogilvie and approved unanimously to forward FP-R2023-002 to the Forest Preserve District Board. Those voting yea were Cozad, Domina, Haier, Little, Mann-Lamb, Ogilvie, and Chair Plote. None were Opposed. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS OF FOREST PRESERVE OFFICIALS

Mr. Hannan presented and provided an overview of the monthly reports for December 2022 as well as January, February and March of 2023.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Committee Member Domina provided a summary of *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard* by Douglas W. Tallamy, which highlights the impact of planting native plants in the eco-system. To read the summary, please see Exhibit A.

Chair Plote provided some comments regarding methods of population control for Canadian geese.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Reser.

Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard
By Douglas W. Tallamy 2019, Portland, OR: Timber Press

A summary by Meryl Greer Domina, February 2023

Most urban and suburban habitats do not have enough resources to carry insects, birds, and other small species that lived there before people took over.

"The number of insects has been reduced 45% globally since 1974."

"Bumblebees have declined 96% in the last twenty years and 25% of bee species are at risk of extinction.

"Worldwide, 37% of animal species are herbivorous insects."

Most people look at nature as something separate from people. They believe that nature happens separate from human communities; that nature must not encroach on human communities. Douglas W. Tallamy rejects this idea, instead he believes that we must allow nature to live alongside us. He believes that there is not enough land for humans and nature to continue to be so separate; humans must share the planet with nature and there is room for nature right in our yards.

Tallamy discusses two important biologists and how their ideas fit into this new paradigm he advocates. Aldo Leopold, founder of The Wilderness Society studied food chains and how they were like pyramids. They have many small plant eaters at the bottom and fewer animals that eat other animals above the plant eaters. There is one major predator species at the top. He recognized that from the plants at the bottom to the top predator they all are "not simply desirable members of a community but essential to the sustainability of the ecosystem." The natural world consists of "coevolved associations that glued it together."

Tallamy leads us to see that we have severed natural coevolved associations by taking out the top predators and removing the native plants that support natural food webs.

E. O. Wilson studied ants and other insect species. Among his many important insights, Wilson was a major contributor of the concept of sociobiology and biodiversity. Wilson advocated taking emergency measures to stabilize the biosphere by reserving half of Earth for nature because, otherwise, humans will trigger the sixth great extinction when a large number of species would disappear. Tallamy reminds us that according to Wilson “the biosphere does not belong to us; we belong to it’ (2017). If we continue to ignore the health of the earth, we are dooming ourselves.”

Tallamy acknowledges the truth in Wilson’s half earth emergency plan but offers a different approach. He believes that we must welcome the native plants that form the bottom of the food chain. We must plant them in our yards so we will end their extinction. More native plants will allow more animals to live also.

Tallamy reminds us that plants are able to convert the energy Earth receives from the sun into their food through photosynthesis. He continues, “insects are the animals that are best at transferring energy from plants to other animals, and, unfortunately, most insects are very fussy about which plants they eat.” In fact, 90 percent of insects are specialists and will only eat one, or maybe a few, types of plants. Insects only eat what they have been familiar with. They want the native plants that were where our yard, our parks, and the lawns and parking lots in front of stores are now. Insects want the native plants that were around before so many people moved onto North America. Insects will not eat the beautiful plants we have introduced from Europe and Asia.

Native plants and insects and evolved together over many generations. As the plants developed defenses to keep from being eaten, the insects developed their bodies to adapt to the plants’ changes. This takes many generations. When we introduce new plants to our yards and parks, we remove native plants. We don’t think about the insects and small animals living in our yards. They don’t accept the new plants and many species die out. This is what is happening to bees and butterflies, and the many other species of insects we don’t think about.

Tallamy tells us we need to take out some of the grass and introduced plants and put in native plants again. This is the only way we can save bees, butterflies, 2

and the other insects. He notes that lawns with native plants do not have to look wild; they can be part of an attractive manicured yard. I have simplified what Tallamy explained but bringing back native plants will allow natural food chains to develop again.

Tallamy again refers to Aldo Leopold and E. O. Wilson as he discusses another problem; the insects, birds, and other small animals that live in our yards need more than just a few native plants. They have important jobs in assisting our ecosystem to remain healthy. They need enough space to move around and carry out their natural tasks. These native plants, insects, and small animals are the species that provide us with oxygen, supply clean water, and sequester carbon. They help rainwater refill aqueducts and soils replenish their mineral needs, remain loose, and limit erosion as well as providing many other tasks.

Tallamy also discussed ecologist Don Janzen who wrote “the most insidious form of extinction was not the loss of individual species, but the extinction of ecological interactions. . . . Interaction diversity is devastated by the introduction of non-native plants.” It is best when land is not fragmented into small yards because then it does not have the carrying capacity to keep food webs that begin with native plants alive. Tallamy recommends existing fragmented pieces be connected by corridors to other yards with native plants.

We need to encourage our neighbors, friends and park managers to add native plants to their yards also. It is best when there are parcels of land that are large enough to provide all the resources the interconnected species in a food chain need. Tallamy wrote, nature is resilient. We need “to change the landscaping paradigm from one that excludes the natural world to one that embraces it.”

Tallamy wants us to learn about our local native plants, our native insects, birds, and toads. For as he wrote “knowledge generates interest, and interest generates compassion and compassion generates action.” When native plants are returned to cityscapes the animals that rely on these plants return also. Our action must be to plant native species.