

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District
Sycamore, Illinois

**Forest Preserve Operations Committee Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2023**

The Forest Preserve Operations Committee of the DeKalb County Board met at Russell Woods Forest Preserve, Natural Resource Center, Genoa, Illinois on Thursday, October 26, 2023. Chair Roy Plote called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. 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, Educator Peggy Doty, and Recording Secretary Lisa Reser.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mann-Lamb 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 Domina and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2023 Forest Preserve Operations Committee Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

REPORTS OF FOREST PRESERVE OFFICIALS

Mr. Hannan reported about the origin of Russell Woods, which has been a Forest Preserve since 1942. The 126 acres of land was bought for \$500.00 per acre; some was donated by families. Deep in the woods, a building was built and owned by the Dekalb School District. Over time, the building became vacant. Mr. Hannan offered one dollar to buy the building and the school accepted the offer. The building became the Natural Resource Education Center. There have been upgrades to the building and surrounding yard and donations of animals to fill the classroom and workshop areas. A new addition was constructed last year after receiving a \$5,000.00 grant. Russell Woods provides many popular indoor and outdoor educational activities, sledding hills, playgrounds, nature trails and shelters to serve the community. To view Russell Woods Forest Preserve on the website, please visit the link below:

<https://dekalbcounty.org/departments/forest-preserve/russell-woods/>

Mr. Hannan presented an overview of his October monthly report. The 2023 tree and shrub plantings, 80 in total, for “Jeff’s Trees” at Potawatomi Woods were completed by volunteer family and friends. A future donated memorial bench will be put in place overlooking the planting site. Mr. Hannan reported that the October Pop Up Nature Educational Programs were presented at the Russell Woods Natural Resource Center by Natural Resource Managers Patrick McCrea and Damon Lubkeman. Mr. Hannan gave an update on the construction underway at the new Afton Natural Resource Management and Maintenance Building. Mr. Hannan reminded the Committee of a fundraising event with Adventure Works at Chief Shabbona Forest Preserve on November 18th, 2023. A guided hiking tour will be led by Josh Clark with the DeKalb County Forest Preserve and Peggy Doty with the University of Illinois Extension. Also, Mr. Hannan

handed out the Wildlife Highlights quarterly report prepared by Manager Patrick McCrea. To view the October 2023 and Wildlife Highlights reports on the website, please visit the link below:

<https://dekalbcounty.org/government/reports-of-county-officials/>

Peggy Doty, Natural Resource Educator, presented an update of the Natural Resource Education Center at Russell Woods Forest Preserve. The Natural Resource Center building has over 5,000 children and adults visiting every year offering learning opportunities through programs and summer camps. Ms. Doty talked about her job position and teaching responsibilities as a University of Illinois Extension employee and the grants received that further commit to the cause of Natural Resource education.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Hannan informed the Committee members that three new work vehicles, two large Ford trucks and one small Ford truck, are now being used by Forest Preserve staff. These trucks were budgeted for and recently delivered in 2023 as part of a State of Illinois fleet program.

Mr. Hannan stated three miles of the Great Western Trail has just been resurfaced with limestone over the past week, and the amount owed came in less than expected with a savings of about \$25,000.00.

NEW BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Mann-Lamb moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:47pm. Ogilvie seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Reser, Recording Secretary