

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

AUGUST 20, 2024 – 6:38PM

PRESIDENT KAI SWANSON - PRESIDING

President Swanson stated, "I ask the Members to please stay here, our speaker has come quite a distance to be with us and get her on the road as quickly as possible, I sure appreciate and I am sure she would too. I will call the Forest Preserve Commission Meeting to order. And, I ask Mr. Nelson, to please call the roll."

1. Jim Nelson, Assistant to the County Administrator called the roll: (Record)

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, B. Vyncke, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

TOTAL PRESENT 19

TOTAL ABSENT 0

Mr. Nelson stated, "We have a quorum."

2. President Swanson stated, "Thank you very much. At this time, friends, I have the pleasure of introducing to you Lorraine Foelske from the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission. And, Lorraine is a graduate of Augustana College and had the pleasure of working with, and now she is doing great things all over the State of Illinois. Lorraine, the floor is yours."

Ms. Foelske stated, "Thank you. So, I work for the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. I cover nine counties in the state....there are 10 of us, so we each cover between 9 and 15 counties. Before I was hired in October, Angel Moorehouse had the position and you might remember her. I believe she presented to the Board in 2022. She was covering before someone could fill that position. Well, here I am now. So, what I would like to talk about is Indian Bluff hill prairie. So, this site is located near the golf course...the Indian Bluff Golf Course. So, if you are coming up the main road, there is a hill to your left side, that is considered a hill prairie, a remnant hill prairie. it is largely well-preserved and it really has a target on its' back for a good reason by conservationists because of its rare qualities and diverse salvage of plants. So far, there is 144 species that have been recorded. It's got small acreage, about four acres and counting. And then with those species, there is also the same danger of Downey Painted cup...and there is quite a bit of species there. That land has been tracked for I believe...let's see...yeah, around 2000 it started being recorded annually. So, I will briefly go through this hand-out...so, in the first paragraph here I will explain why it's important. So, there is only .08 acres; which is actually large for a hill prairie...a grade A hill prairie. In our field of work, we grade on hill prairies. Grade A is the

best, then Grade B and C and I think it goes down to E; which is like a mowed field. There is very little bad to say since this is quite a gem here. Like I said, it's been a target for quite a few decades. I guess back in the 1970's, if they are not getting golf course crews they are annually burned in the brush clearing; which is what we do today to the hill prairies. But, because of that...it's really intact and it's in good shape. And, as I mentioned, State employees were keeping track of that endangered species; which in (inaudible) try to use today. And, in 2011 and 2012, there was some funding from a Federal Grant that allowed us to clear the species that we didn't want there, such as invasive or exotic species. In (Jalla) I haven't been working much with Jeff since I just started doing Jallas. I've been working with him and explaining the role that nature preserves can have and assist the Park District. And what I am here today for is, to talking about the possibility of dedicating this hill prairie as an official Nature Preserve. Currently, there are over 400 Nature Preserves in the State and all sorts and types of ownership from a private land owner or park districts to forest preserve districts...you name it, non-profits. So, this isn't something that's....um, you need to...in Rock Island Forest Preserve District. I live in Bureau County, and I work with Princeton Park District...they own a Nature Preserve and so, I help them out with that site. So, ownership is retained by the land owner. The Park would stay with the Forest Preserve District. What happens is, the owner gives up the right to develop on the land or do something that would endanger the prairie like this rare plant. And you give up that right in exchange for assistance from the Nature Preserves Commission. So, it's a permanent easement we help with financial assistance and technical assistance. So, one of the steps we look for in this process...a base-line report is created. That shows what you have there and what is special there. It's like an environmental assessment and that is free of charge to you because that is paid with State funds. And, then the other assistance...I know the Forest Preserve District currently burns there, but you can also get State resources and personnel to help burn. I help burn with many partners and so like me or Jalla can help with that and we can also get financial assistance. So, there are internal grants that we apply for. Sometimes, its seed funding and sometimes it's for bigger projects if there isn't funding for the land owners. So, we can help financially support the property. On the second page, I created a map...you may have already looked at that. So, that road coming down from the South is the entrance into the Golf Course. The orange boundary is what the Forest Preserve District owns, and then the blue hash marks represent...this is just something that Angel and I have come up with...could be the most current Nature Preserve. And if you look at the aerial, so, the west side of that boundary is the Hill Prairie and that's the highest quality part of the site. But, to include a buffer and to just for ease of surveying purposes, we notched it out and included that boundary of the Forest Preserve District. One more thing that forward land owners need to think about if we go through with the land dedication is, what your reserve rights are...so, what rights do you want to retain? Just from what I gathered right now, we would want to retain that gravel loop. So, there is a loop out there and I think there is a picnic table...um, you want to make sure you are able to maintain that drive and there is a gravel parking pad

and also a boat area to access the Hill Prairie. So, those are probably the only things that you'll want to retain the right to continue to do in this Nature Preserve. Let's see...I believe that might be all. There are some details here on what exactly is an Illinois Nature Preserve System that you can look at on your own. I will take any questions."

President Swanson stated, "As my colleagues are preparing their questions, I did have one...I know of one other Hill Prairie in Rock Island County at the Collinson site."

Ms. Foelske answered, "Yes."

President Swanson stated, "Are there...I know we have only a tiny fraction of the original Native Prairie in Illinois, but I understand that this is an even infinitesimal (inaudible), there is very little remaining Hill Prairie in the Prairie State. Do you know about how much?"

Ms. Foelske answered, "Yes. I wish I knew that acreage because it is like very small. Yes, I don't know that but Hill Prairies are so small that they can easily be swallowed up if the land is burned and cleared...yeah, they are very vulnerable."

President Swanson asked, "Let's see if any of my colleagues have any questions here. Dr. Simmer let me get you...(turned his mic on) there you go."

Commissioner Simmer was recognized.

Mr. Simmer asked, "Just really quick about woodland clearancy, you have to keep trees out of these things, correct?"

Ms. Foelske answered, "Yes."

Mr. Simmer stated, "Because the trees are all around and they are always trying to appropriate themselves and so..."

Ms. Foelske answered, "Exactly."

Mr. Simmer asked, "Now, when they are looking to do more of this, are they actually going to clear more of this timber possibly?"

Ms. Foelske answered, "Yes, probably. And so, the focus is on Hill Prairie, but the buffer...that forest area, it will also be cleared out a bit as I am sure there are a lot of invasive species there..."

Mr. Simmer stated, "Oh, sure."

Ms. Foelske added, "...that are feeding the prairie. So, if we can clear some of that out, it will make things a lot easier."

Mr. Simmer asked, "These are plants that are in the ground until they are burned to give it a chance to take off and grow or is it something we have to put in there? Because I know there are a lot of seeds in the ground that just lay there, but the less you give those the opportunity to grow..."

Ms. Foelske added, "Sure...sure... We wouldn't be adding any more seed, we would just be releasing some of those....opening up some of those areas to let the seeds that lay there grow."

President Swanson added, "And if I could, I want to shed some light on this. It would be clearing some of the forest on that Eastern side, getting rid of invasive species, but that buffer...uh, if it is a more natural woodland, would help to protect the Hill Prairie where it is. It's not about pushing that prairie restoration further to the East."

Ms. Foelske stated, "Yeah, that's right. And, if you think about the topography where it slopes...so, the Hill Prairie is on this side and faces West; which is common. They either face the West or the South. They are drier sides and was likely burned more often. So, the Hill Prairie is on the West side and the mowed spot is on top and then as you dip down, it's forested. So, right...we would be enhancing the forest. We wouldn't be converting that to prairie because it's likely been forested for many years."

Mr. Simmer asked, "How is a Hill Prairie different from a regular flat prairie?"

Ms. Foelske answered, "Good question. So, Hill Prairies are regulated to be a part of a forest system. So, they are smaller. They are little pocket and on steep slopes."

President Swanson stated, "So, if I remember correctly, they are also home to certain species that won't grow any other kind of prairie like the one at Collinson had Hills Thistle; which is a very specific kind of plant...if I recall correctly, it doesn't grow in any other prairies only in a Hill crest."

Ms. Foelske answered, "Yeah, that's probably right because when I think of where I have Hill Thistle on my sites...there and there is one at Hill Prairie in Marshall County."

President Swanson stated, "Okay."

Ms. Foelske stated, "So, yeah..."

(Overlapping between Ms. Foelske, President Swanson and Mr. Simmer inaudible)

President Swanson asked, "Are there any other questions for Ms. Foelske? Well, we are not able to take any action on this, this evening, but this was very helpful and I assume staff will be preparing something for the Commission to consider in the future months. But, I think we are very grateful for participation with your partnership and I hope we can move forward."

Ms. Foelske answered, "Thank you."

President Swanson asked, "Are there any other questions for Ms. Foelske? Alright, well hopefully, we'll get you home before it gets too dark. It was very nice to see you."

Ms. Foelske replied, "Yes. It was nice to see you too."

3. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to approve the July 16th, 2024, Commission Minutes, as presented. Commissioner Vyncke seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS - (NONE)** (Three calls were made.)

5. **PRESIDENTS COMMENTS:**

President Swanson stated, "Just briefly under president's comments, the Parks are very busy...the weather has been wonderful and we are starting to get to the slower part of the season. Of course, staffing gets constricted as the schools are start opening up. If you have not yet gone to NiabiZoo.com, you have time to get your tickets for PINTS for Preservation; which is September 13th...lucky Friday the 13th. I really hope you do so, or if you would be interested in volunteering, our Commissioner, Edna Sowards, is always been a stellar volunteer, but she's much in demand these days and so, I understand she is not going to be able to. If you would like to volunteer for the zoo, they would be very happy to see you there. I will note one other thing...it was released on Friday, figures from Governor Pritzker on tourism investment in the State. And, I have some good news for you. They grinded down and direct spending by visitors to Rock Island County last year was \$326.9 million dollars. That's from outside the county, coming into the county. And, that's more than a 7% increase over the previous year. And, the reason we get those figures is, that this Commission has the stewardship of Hotel/Motel Taxes from the two hotels at the Quad City Airport property. And so, we donate...we contribute a portion of those revenues to Visit Quad Cities. So, in a way, we are promoting tourism...like I said, we brought in over \$327 million dollars to our

community. Two other President's Comments and you will see more of this later in the Reports from Directors and Department Heads, but last month...Ben Mills and his team at Loud Thunder had a \$30,000 month, at Loud Thunder. I am saying that to salute you, as Commissioners. Some years ago, I had to make a judgement call on investing and getting after deferred maintenance at Loud Thunder, we did...we made that investment. We predicted there would be an uptick in revenues due to RV Camping and overseeing that so, thank you for your foresight. Just as important, we also have a corroborated sighting of a very rare Bee at...guess where? AMÔWA; which was named for Bees. And it was part of your decision to acquire that land in the public trust as an aid for pollinators...and, I am gonna butcher it...Protandrena Bancrofti is a mining bee and its only located at four other places in North America. And now that's here in Rock Island County because you all had the foresight to create a Forest Preserve and create a habitat for little suckers like that. I thank you for the foresight and keep up the good work."

6. Commissioner Simmer moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2024 Forest Preserve Claims and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$101,769.46, as presented. Commissioner Woods seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

TOTAL YES 18

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

7. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2025 Forest Preserve Claims and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$374,892.77, as presented. Commissioner McNeil seconded.

Commissioner Vyncke moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Mielke seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

TOTAL YES 18

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

8. President Swanson stated, "Now, looking around the room, if without objection, we will take the next two together as one. This is to waive the reading and approve the FY 2024 Transfers of Appropriation and a motion to approve the FY 2025 Transfers of Appropriation, as enumerated in your packet. First, I see no objection to that move and a motion to adopt by Mr. Layer. Commissioner L. Moreno and Mielke seconded."

Commissioner Burns moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Vyncke seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

TOTAL YES 18

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

9. Commissioner Burns moved to waive the reading and approve the Resolutions regarding FY24 Illiniwek Recreation Trail Grant Appropriations, FY25 Niabi Zoo Improvements, ARPA Grant Appropriations, FY24 Niabi Zoo Fund Appropriations-Zoo Foundation Donation for the shipping costs, Receipt of Grant Funds-Woodard Community Grant Fund, and Development of Forests & Construction of Improvements Fund Loan FP General Fund, as presented. Commissioner Vyncke seconded.

(Note** The Resolutions are in .pdf format and begin on the next page)

RESOLUTION

RE: FY 24 Illiniwek Recreation Trail Grant Appropriations

WHEREAS, Illiniwek Forest Preserve was awarded \$200,000.00 from the Illinois Recreation Trail Grant program to construct a new restroom facility and make trail improvements, and

WHEREAS, the Illinois Recreation Trail Grant program is a reimbursable grant, and

WHEREAS, while construction of phase 2 has begun with the design and installation of the lift station, construction of the restroom and site modifications, and

WHEREAS, construction continues on phase 2 that addresses the water, sewer and restroom, and

WHEREAS, payment is required for work completed, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. Expenditures in the amount of \$867.52 shall be increased partially from grant revenue to be received & the balance from unencumbered funds to provide the required matching funds in the Development of Forests and Construction Improvement Fund #335 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$867.52	335-32-35 767 RTP 23	Infrastructure over \$15,000

SECTION 3. This resolution to become effective immediately.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 20th day of August, 2024.


Kai Swanson, President
Forest Preserve Commission


Karen Kinney, Secretary
Forest Preserve Commission

RESOLUTION

FY 2025 Niabi Zoo Improvements ARPA Grant Appropriations

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserve District was granted funds from Rock Island County for improvements at Niabi Zoo, and

WHEREAS, design and engineering for the improvement projects has been performed, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. Expenditures in the amount of \$18,214.69 shall be increased from grant revenue to be received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:


AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$18,214.69	131-32-35 767 ARPA24-60	Infrastructure over \$15,000

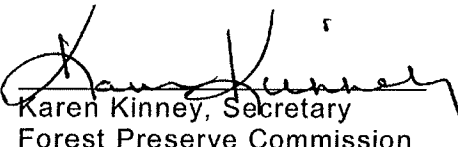
SECTION 3. Revenues in the amount of \$18,214.69 shall be increased from grant revenue to be received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$18,214.69	131-32-35 331.10 ARPA24-00	Federal Grants-General Government

SECTION 4. This resolution to become effective immediately.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 20th day of August, 2024.


Kai Swanson, President
Forest Preserve Commission


Karen Kinney, Secretary
Forest Preserve Commission

RESOLUTION

FY 2024 Niabi Zoo Fund Appropriation – Zoo Foundation Donation for the Shipping Costs

WHEREAS, Niabi Zoo conducted an online auction fundraiser and incurred \$106.50 in shipping costs, and

WHEREAS, the Niabi Zoo Foundation has agreed to reimburse the District for the cost of the shipping in the amount of \$106.50, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. Revenues in the amount of \$106.50 shall be increased from the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:


AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$106.50	131-32 364.10	Contributions from Private Sources

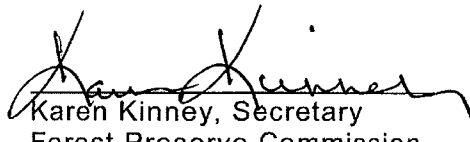
SECTION 3. Expenditures in the amount of \$106.50 shall be increased from the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$106.50	131-32-10 632	Communications

SECTION 4. This resolution to become effective immediately.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 20th day of August, 2024.


Kai Swanson, President
Forest Preserve Commission


Karen Kinney, Secretary
Forest Preserve Commission

RESOLUTION

RE: Niabi Zoo Fund Receipt of Grant Funds-Woodward Community Grant Fund

WHEREAS, additional funds are required in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to increase the budget for the purchase of observational equipment and increase security throughout Niabi Zoo, and

WHEREAS, (WCGF23) Woodward Community Grant Fund in the amount of \$16,000 was awarded to Niabi Zoo in October of 2022, and

WHEREAS, funds are available from grant funds already received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. An amount of \$2,019.87 be transferred from unappropriated funds within the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$254.87	131-32-35 522.00 WCGF23	Operating Supplies
\$1,765.00	131-32-35 524.00 WCGF23	Small Tools & Equipment

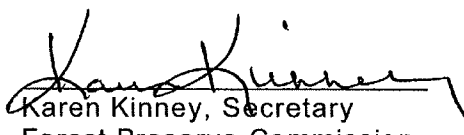
SECTION 3. An amount of \$2,019.87 be transferred from grant funds already received to unappropriated funds within the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$2,019.87	131-32-35 337.70 WCGF23	Local Grants & Culture

SECTION 4. This resolution to become effective immediately.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 20th day of August, 2024.


Kai Swanson, President
Forest Preserve Commission


Karen Kinney, Secretary
Forest Preserve Commission

RESOLUTION

RE: Development of Forest & Construction of Improvements Fund Loan from the Forest Preserve General Fund

WHEREAS, additional funds are required in the Development of Forest & Construction of Improvements Fund #335 for the necessary expenses incurred in the 2024 Fiscal Year, and

WHEREAS, funds are available from unappropriated funds within the District's General Fund #130 to loan to the Development of Forest & Construction of Improvements Fund #335, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. An amount of \$83,000 be loaned from the District's General #130 to the Development of Forest & Construction of Improvements Fund #335.

SECTION 3. The above amount to be repaid to the District's General Fund #130 as funds become available.

SECTION 4. This Resolution to become effective immediately.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 20th day of August, 2024.


Kai Swanson, President
Forest Preserve Commission


Karen Kinney, Secretary
Forest Preserve Commission

Commissioner Mielke moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Vyncke seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J. Woods

TOTAL YES 18

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

10. Commissioner Vyncke moved to approve the Quad Cities Power Station Real Property Tax Assessment Settlement Agreement, subject to final revision and approval by counsel, and authorize Commission President Swanson to provide direction, as necessary, to finalize the Settlement Agreement, as presented. Commissioners Mielke and L. Moreno seconded. (Inc. by Ref. 50 pages)

Commissioner Dewith moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Layer seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

TOTAL YES 18

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

Commissioner Adams asked, "Did you miss the Item for the purchase of a..."

President Swanson stated, "I do apologize, Mr. Adams...I meant to inform the Commission, that due to circumstances beyond our control, we are removing that from the Agenda for this month. And, of course, that is a form of necessary equipment, and so, we will likely be seeing something like that coming back in the future. But, thank you for bringing that to my attention."

Comments from Commissioners: (ONE)

President Swanson stated, "Are there any Comments from Commissioners? Hopefully, you are out enjoying our public lands. Mr. Vyncke."

Commissioner Vyncke was recognized.

Mr. Vyncke stated, "Thank you. I was just gonna...as a former camper and future long-term camper...I wanted to congratulate Loud Thunder for their wonderful

facilities out there and the great month that they had. I would like to hope in the future a chance for some full-service campground upgrades at the facilities out at the Illiniwek Park. I know I have talked to Mr. Craver about that before. This is just something to plan and see. If you go up the river out there...there are very few, if any campgrounds, full-service campgrounds out there, including the Corps of Engineers facility; which is our neighboring facility and as a camper...I know not everybody uses those facilities...I don't know why. But, as far as our own camping facilities...when they have full hook-ups, believe me...I love to use my own bathroom, as opposed to a public bathroom. Although, I am not objecting against the bathrooms as I know at those facilities, they are very well kept. So, I appreciate that, but I just wanted to say a little piece on that. Thank you."

President Swanson answered, "Mr. Vyncke, I appreciate that very much. Thank you. Are there any other questions or comments? Alright."

11. Commissioner Woods moved to approve all Routine Reports from the Director and Departments Heads of the Forest Preserve Commission, as presented. Commissioner Enburg seconded. (Record)

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

President Swanson stated, "Friends, seeing no further business. I will announce that the next meeting of the Forest Preserve Commission will be Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at 5:30pm, in these chambers, following the meeting of the Rock Island County Board in the Rock Island County Office Building, 1504 Third Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois. Friends we are adjourned."

President Swanson declared the Forest Preserve Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



KAREN KINNEY
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

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