

**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION**  
**APRIL 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 – 6:15PM**  
**PRESIDENT KAI SWANSON – PRESIDING**

1. Karen Kinney, County Clerk, called the roll:

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

**TOTAL PRESENT     17**

C. Layer, R. Morthland

**TOTAL ABSENT     2**

President Swanson stated, "Thank you very much, I am very grateful that this evening we are joined by one of our research partners, who works with our team at Niabi Zoo. I am anxious to hear about the presentation, it is my honor to introduce Dr. Gerry Zuercher from Dubuque University, whenever you're ready."

2. **PRESENTATION:** Dr. Gerry Zuercher—Dubuque University

Dr. Zuercher stated, "Thank you all, can you hear me ok? I will start with this, Mr. Swanson, you said in your invocation that we should really think about things that are larger than ourselves, and I think this is a story about that. That's really what I am here to do tonight, is to kind of tell you a story in part, because of a partnership I have with the Director of Niabi Zoo. I just want to add, I have given presentations all over the place, I've never given a presentation to a county or commission board, so this is a big one for me, definitely going on the resume, so thank you all for the opportunity. So, I want to talk about the involvement that you all actually have in Paraguay, so if we're going to get there I have to start with a little bit about why I even go there. My name is Gerry Zuercher, I am a professor of Wildlife Ecology, Vertebrate Ecology, at The University of Dubuque. I am also the Director of The University of Dubuque's Field Site—The Walter Wood Prairie. Since 1997, I have been working in the Country of Paraguay, doing wildlife ecology research and conservation work. I am in my 30<sup>th</sup> year going to Paraguay, so I am going to tell some stories basically as I go along here. My journey started when I was a graduate student at Kansas State University, and I was working at the Sunset Zoo in Manhattan, Kansas. One of my mentors discussed with me some projects in Paraguay, a place I didn't know much about at the time, and talked about the need for research. So, I went to Kansas State and built a program, ended up in Paraguay working with an entity called "Fundación Moisés Bertoni" securing

funding from local zoos in Kansas, but also from the larger AZA, Association of Zoos and Aquariums. So, I started working in Paraguay, and you might think, why would anybody go to Paraguay, and hopefully you'll get that answer. I work at a place outlined here in the department of Canindeyú, the departments are like States. Before I got there, they had taken this property and turned it in to a biosphere reserve. So, you see in green what's called biosphere reserve, it's an internationally recognized area. Then, the area in red is called a nature reserve, it's the core part of this, and why I started doing work there. We will get to the exciting part, I promise. If you take a look at a map of Paraguay, you might see why a place like this is of interest to somebody like me. This is a map of protected areas that are recognized by the federal government in Paraguay. The important thing to understand is that in Paraguay, a lot of these places they're parks on paper, there's no real support for them, no real protection for them. There are lines on a map, many of them are actually just private land, and the government drew a line and said, we're going to call this a park. The private land owners weren't really involved, Mbaracayú is different, it was purchased through a joint action with the Nature Conservancy from the global entity and a group in Paraguay, then turned in to the Nature Reserve where I have been for 30 years now. Paraguay is an extremely variable country in terms of its ecosystems. In terms of habitats, and I'm not going to read through all these, but the colors can kind of tell the story. It is a rainbow of different ecosystems. One of the unique things about Paraguay, is that there are so many different systems in the country. I work in the light green, the kind of lime green there, it's called the Atlantic Forest. This is kind of the cold heart reality of Paraguay in the time that I've been there. Starting back in about 1990, before I started working and going up until the mid-2010's, this is the sort of rate of deforestation in the country. So, everything that is red went from forested, to deforested in that period of time. So, if you'll notice in the eastern part there, it's almost all gone except for that one place where I have been working all this time, so the protection of that site has been pretty secure. If you notice in that sort of western part of the country, it's an area called the Chaco, you'll notice the deforestation has been extreme. This map is dated, I promise you there is much less forest throughout the country now than there was at the time of this map's creation. But, this isn't a story about deforestation—as I move to a slide on deforestation. You'll notice this is what happened from 1945 until 2005. All this matters to me, because that is why I was there. I was there to study wildlife, to understand how wildlife was functioning in a place under extreme deforestation, and to try to understand how they interacted with each other. I don't just do wildlife, I do the carnivores of the reserve. So, the reserve itself is also a mosaic of, sort of miniature habitats that all weave together to make that Atlantic Forest. When I first got to Mbaracayú, we were trying to understand how all of the carnivores interacted, how were they dealing with this essentially island of habitat. That's really what this is now, it's an island of habitats surrounded by an ocean of deforestation, and there's a lot of carnivores there. So, I got started because of the species in the top left there, the Bush Dog. That's really what drew me to

Paraguay, because they were poorly studied at the time, and we knew they were in Paraguay. Other canines at the reserve that are documented include the Maned Wolf, and the Crab-eating Fox. There are also Brown-Nosed Coati's and Crab-eating Raccoons, it gets better, there are also Skunks, Tayra's which are like an arboreal Minx, if you know what a Minx is, Grison which is just a South American version of an angry Badger. Neotropical River Otters, which are similar to our River Otters, and then the 7 species of cats that live in the reserve. Ranging from the Jaguars, which are the largest in South America, all the way down to the Southern Tigrina and the Geoffroy's cat, which are the small house size cats that live at the reserve. So, I was really interested in how are these things managing, and you may ask well how would you do that? Well, I spent a lot of time hiking through the forest, these were the golden days when there was no internet, frankly, we didn't have electricity when I first started working there, we did everything on foot. We went to all 7 of these places, and we spent days and days hiking through the forest looking for these things. You've probably heard of scat—feces, the term is scat, and you can call me a scatologist. I studied species by looking at what they have left behind. The real important thing, and I just want to point out to people that know what a Leatherman is, but that Leatherman is about 4 inches long, and that is a Jaguar dropping right next to that 4-inch-long Leatherman. This next one is even better, that's about a 10-inch Maned Wolf dropping. Scat tells you a lot of things, right? They tell you about what was eaten, where they dropped the scat, you know they were there. So, you get physical locations and you can understand the habitats they were in. There's a lot of information from tracking animals and picking up their poop. I am a really fancy poop collector, no other way to sugar coat that. So, what you do is you go and you analyze all this stuff, don't try and read this, I just throw these in there to kind of make your eyes go blurry, but you get a lot of numbers describing diets. You can take those numbers and you can start to describe things like their diet breadth, and their standardized diet breadth with all, which allows you to compare species regardless of how many samples you get. Sample sizes are going to vary, but you can get standardized things, and you do this for everything. You come up with a little spectrum here and it says, look Grison and Raccoons will eat all kinds of stuff, and our Tigrinas, our Ocelots, and our Geoffroy's Cats, and our Foxes were basically specialists. They really honed in on some minor things, but we want to know more than that, we want to really dig in deeper. So, we looked at their diets some more. We looked at dietary overlap, and this is important. What this is going to tell us is, how much similarity there are between 2 pairs of species. So, we create this big matrix, and from the matrix we go back and say, well, what about where they occurred? Some of them, have a lot of dietary overlap, but if you look right here, 0.972, you can think of these like percentages. So, a Margay or an Ocelot basically share about 97% of their diet. So, this is really the question that comes to mind, how do you exist in this island where you're eating basically the same thing as all your neighbors? We went back and looked at all these places where we worked, and we started realizing that they don't all occur in all the same places. We run some fancy statistics, ignore all

of this, just look at the green and the brown. The green tells you that they are there more than predicted, the brown tells you that they're there less than predicted. So, you can create these little maps like this, that tell me that the Jaguars and the Pumas really like to be in the middle of the reserve. It makes sense, it's the most protected place. Neotropical Otters are really in that west side, that's really where the rivers are. Then, over on the far right, it's more of a grassland where you'd see the Maned Wolf, they like grasslands. We could begin to sort of tease out this kind of spatial patterning, and realize that even though diets may be similar, they're not necessarily in the same places, or in the same habitats. We could look at all this and see, that was where they tend to be, this is where they tend to avoid. So, just like we saw Jaguars right in the middle, we see that Maned Wolves are avoiding the middle. It allows us to go in and kind of look at this whole complicated thing, and say some of them like to be in the middle, some of them don't. We can start to tease apart who wants to be where, and all of this goes in to a fancy matrix that geeks people like me out. You get this big graph and it tells you how this whole community is structured. I don't know if you're familiar with statistics, but if a cophenetic correlation coefficient is 0.92, it tells you that your structure is really, really sound. This is an excellent portrayal of this community. So, what this does, is it allows us to then go in there and describe them, and so all of these lines you can see about the dietary overlap. So, we can find out things that we kind of already knew, and frankly if you ask the locals in Paraguay they would've told you all of this before you start, but it's great to take the data and kind of finalize it. So, we knew that they were top predators, and the Jaguar is dominant to the Puma generally throughout South America, they're usually larger and definitely more aggressive, but these are the 2 top predators. Then, we get some specialists, and these aren't necessarily the same specialists that you saw on the list earlier, but what we're talking about here is a specialist Otter that's basically eating fish and other aquatic food, and really none of the other carnivores do. Then, a fox, this is interesting because the fox in Paraguay—this is called a Crab Eating Fox. They got that name when they were first described in Venezuela on the beaches eating crabs. In Paraguay, they eat palm fruit, a lot of palm fruit, like almost exclusively palm fruit. Just so you know, because I've eaten a palm fruit, it is basically like a sugar solution around a big nut. You can't eat the nuts, so you just suck the sugar off. They swallow the whole thing, but they're basically just eating sugar pills, and that's kind of bizarre to think about, but that's their diet down there, they have a lot of sugar. Then, you get this group of omnivores, these are the animals that will eat just about anything. Some of them are eating insects, some of them are eating birds, some of them are eating fruit. They just kind of go wherever. Then, we get to the small mammal specialist, these are eating small rats, small mice, small opossums, things like that. Again, there's this big group, but we know that we can tease them out a little bit, and find out that they were spatially separated. Actually, I am going to go back really quick here, one of the really cool things is that this guy in the middle at the top, is a nocturnal cat. Most of these are diurnal or what we call crepuscular, they're active at dawn and dusk. The one in the

middle is called a Margay, they're purely nocturnal and they're also arboreal. They're always in the trees, so they're spatially separated as well as temporally separated, so that was one of the ways that they separated out. All of this was kind of worth something, we got a publication, the Journal of Mammalogy is the premier journal, so it was a pretty cool publication, pat myself on the back. So, all of this to say is that I brought all of this as a biologist at the University of Dubuque, and when I was in Dubuque, Lee Jackson was at the River Museum in Dubuque and we met. We talked about some things over a Catfish exhibit they were hosting. I said, "Oh man, we've got some good Catfish in Paraguay." I was literally thinking about the ones that I eat when I'm in Paraguay, Lee interpreted that as they've got really cool Catfish you can find and see, and admire. I said you should come with me, and he did. So, the rest of this story will be the adventures of Lee and Gerry. This is a 20-year reflection, I don't know if you knew about this (Speaking to Mr. Jackson), but it has been 20 years. I convinced Lee to come to Paraguay 20 years ago, and we're still going and we're still doing amazing things. Something that I am going to emphasize is that you should be very proud because the work he does is hard, and it doesn't come with a lot of happy moments, because it's a changing world and particularly in our field where things generally don't improve. Another quick story, I like stories, when I first took Lee to Paraguay we went to my field site in Mbaracayú, I was doing some work and Lee was there. I thought we were going to go to a big river and catch big fish and he said, "hey, can I go catch little fish in the stream?" So, he went down, I watched him for a little bit and it seemed like he was having fun. I got in the water and the first net that I pulled up, I remember it so vividly, had these 3 species in it. What struck me about it was that I had a daughter at home, who had a fish tank next to her bed, and 3 of the species we had in her tank, were these 3 species. It hit me that I never really thought about where the connections between where things like the fish you buy your daughter at the pet store come from, and how they're doing in nature. So, my interest went from being sort of nonchalant, to being like, I really want to know more about what's going on here. Lee and I put together a project, this was back in 2006 that lasted for many years, where we went in and tried to understand what was going on in this region of Paraguay. Paraguay in general is part of something called the freshwater ecosystem. It's got a lot of habitats as we pointed out, terrestrially but also, aquatically. We know that there is a lot of fish diversity in general in South America and for Paraguay. Here's the habitat, you can see all these neat little places where we go. The other thing is, at the time that we had started there was nothing really known. In 2005, the year before we started, the documentation for the reserve included 48 species. 18 of them were not actually defined to a species, so they had 30 defined species. I don't want to bog you down with taxonomy, I just want you to remember this for reference, is that when we started they recognized 5 orders of fish, 12 families, and 48 species, not all of them were real species, but 30 of them were defined. So, really the numbers that we are going to start from is 5, 12, and 30. Lee and I started working and we started trying to look to see inside both the protected area, and outside the

protected area whether there were impacts of habitat change, the deforestation that was taking place, and it may seem obvious, but it had never been done. I didn't realize that until we got started. So, we do the statistical thing, we say, we're going to test for no difference, because we know there will be. That way you can get statistical significance and people get excited, so we did that, and we will get to that later. We spent 5-6 years really at 35 locations, 20 within the reserve, 15 on the outside. I want to emphasize, standing on the outside, you're dealing with private landowners and people don't always trust the entities that go by, or the government, or anything like that. So, when you're stopping and somebody comes outside with a shotgun and you're saying, "I just want to sample the fish" and they say no, you just move on. Those are the kind of things that we had to kind of overcome, but we found enough sites outside that we could do our work. All the purple dots are places that we sampled, so we were all over the place. It still amazes me that we got samples from all these places. Some of them were crazy, some of them were just absolutely stunning, gorgeous. I would say at this point we probably know as much about that area as really anybody, just from all the time we spent there. We spent between 2007 and 2011 doing all these surveys. From 2011 on, we spent a lot of time identifying specimens of fish. I'll just add a side note, this is just a trivial point, but the people that are in charge of naming fish, change those names on a regular basis. When you get a list of fish in say, 2015, if you go back in 2016, probably 10% of them had their names changed. So, when you're trying to work with this stuff, you're constantly having to go back and change. Good times, but what did we get? We got a lot of fish, and these are just examples of some of the species that we got out of the streams. These are all from inside the reserve here and some of them you may recognize as kind of classic aquarium fish. The one in the top right, is a real classic in the aquarium world. So again, making that connection between my daughter's fish tank and the work that we were doing. So, lots of really cool fish, it's a great reminder and I appreciate you giving me a chance to look at these for a reason, not just because I have nothing else to do at night on my computer, and my wife ask me what I'm doing, I'm just looking at pictures from 2010. I just want to point out, you guys have all heard about those fish that you have to be careful of, because they can swim up your urethra, if you're not protected, that's these little guys in the middle. So, that was an eye opener as well, Lee told me that and wanted to make sure I was aware. We found a lot of new fish for the reserve, remember 5, 12, 30. What we ended up with were 2 completely new orders that they did not have identified. Those 2 on the bottom, the Semionotiformes, and the Gymnotiformes, we literally doubled the number of families of fish that they knew about in this place. We added 57 species to the 48, but remember there was really only 30, so we should add another 18 on to that, but we topped over 100 species of fish that we identified in total. So, we went on and we said, "oh yeah these are the new ones" they did not know anything about these, which is kind of cool and exciting. All of these guys, these are my favorites, I have to be honest with you, these little electric knife fish. Some of them were not named when we caught them, then we

found out that they had been described during our study, so they were not just new, they were new to science. A lot of really cool fish. Then, we wanted to know about what is habitat change doing? Just 3 quick slides, species richness is just the average number of species per site, and it turns out, yep you get way more species in a protected area, than you do a deforested area. If we look at families, it's the same pattern. Then, if we take a look at functional diversity, I will explain that very quick. Functional diversity is basically a combination of where do they live in the water column, and where do they eat? So, you take all those things together and you get like 20 different combinations of functions. It turns out that functional diversity was also highly, significantly different depending on where we were. So, where it has been deforested, fewer species, fewer families, and essentially a simpler system of fish. This also was worthy of publication in an important journal, so that was a big moment that we spent a lot of time on. We have these great co-authors, people that have helped us in Paraguay with collections and mapping, and a bunch of students that were up there. We have a lot of partners, and this is really a story about partnerships, Lee and I have had a partnership for 20 years. My partnership in Paraguay started with the Fundación Moisés Bertoni, 30 years ago. We have worked with, and partnered with all of these different groups in Paraguay, and still maintain our relationships with all of these groups. Pretty much any time we go down, we meet with at least some of them, if not all of them. I wanted to also add some pictures before I try to wrap up here, but Paraguay is an amazing, unique place. A lot of people ask me, "why Paraguay?" and my response, instead of trying to come up with a big explanation is, why not Paraguay, it is part of our planet, and every place on our planet should be a place of value, of concern. What's happening in Paraguay is simply a representation of what happens in other parts of the world, it just happens to be the place I got a connection to. It could have been anywhere else, but it happened to be Paraguay, and I've been there for 30 years now. My wife says it's kind of my 2<sup>nd</sup> spouse, my wife and I have been married for 32 years, so I guess I started this after, so maybe I cheated in Paraguay, I don't know. She's okay with it, she's come down with me a few times. She's met my other girlfriend in Paraguay, which Paraguay is the girlfriend. It is a place where you can drive down the road and see large Ostrich like birds called Rios, you can just see them walking down the road. It is a place of untamed rivers that are undiscovered. This is a fairly recent visit, and a place that I had not been to after 30 years. It was my first time in this area, I've never seen anything like this in Paraguay before so, this was kind of an interesting, new place. Again, still protected, but under threat. Then, you get these really beautiful backwater marshes and wetlands. If you look at Paraguay today, the entire country should look like the reserve. Notice that dark green spot right there, the entire country should look that green, and so the fact that it doesn't tells you that it has been wildly deforested. If you look over here, this left half of the country, all of this is recent deforestation within maybe the last 3-4 years. All of that should be green, there are still some areas that are somewhat protected, these are the areas where Lee and I work. We try to go to these places, and continue to

protect them. I'm highlighting in yellow, really those places that are kind of the last best places in Paraguay that need attention. They need people like us to come down, they need people like you to support people like us, to go down, to be aware, to go and talk about Paraguay. All of these places are still, you know, relatively intact in terms of their habitat. But, in most of these places, there's still a lack of knowledge. There is still a lack of knowing what is actually there, this really gets to the work that Lee and I have been doing. It's the documenting, it is the measuring the ecology, trying to provide the people in the country, who have to make decisions much like you do about your county, they have to make them for their departments for their country. We try to provide them with the best data that they can have so that they can hopefully, make decisions that are good for them for the long term. I just want to make sure you know that Lee works, when I say Lee works, mind you, I'm the one taking the picture. I've got the hard job, I'm the photographer. I didn't tell you I was going to throw these in there, but I did. Lee works hard, and it is sometimes a challenge, to get him out of the water. Occasionally I entice him to do some other kinds of surveys, my kind of surveys. So, anyway, I'll just leave it with that so you can admire Lee on a horse. All of this is really to say thank you all for supporting Lee, the work Lee and I have done for the last 20 years is significant, it's important work. Obviously, I think so, but I think that if you were to measure it on any standard, we are recognized internationally for the work we do. When we go to Paraguay, we're known commodities because we've been invested, we've been committed. They know the quality of our work, and it is a reflection of us obviously, but it's also a reflection of who we work for. I work for the University of Dubuque, Lee works for the Forest Preserve District. Lee is reflecting you and you all need to know that when we go down there, you're being represented in the most positive way possible, and with all of the best intentions, and with hard work. So, if you have any questions?"

President Swanson stated, "Yeah, just going to see if any commissioners had any questions. Hold on one second Bob, we will make sure we can all hear you."

Commissioner J.R. Westpfahl asked, "What are they doing with the deforested ground?"

Dr. Zuercher responded, "It's mostly agriculture. They convert it for mostly row crops, but it really depends. Initially they would deforest for grazing land for cattle. Paraguay is actually the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest beef consuming country per capita in the world. They have a hard time, they still import, even though they produce so much. Argentina is the top beef consuming country in the world per capita. So, those 2 are just consuming beef like crazy, there's always room for beef. They have gone through the sort of typical things that happen around the world. They've gone through corn, they've gone through soy, they've gone through cotton. Right now, they're expanding in to rice, so a lot of deforestation is really to make room for agriculture. Most of that agriculture is not local farmers, this is big international

companies coming down, buying up huge swaths of land. I'm sure you all don't know anything about that here in Illinois, right? Buying up huge swaths of land, and turn it in to basically gigantic mega farms, that aren't really owned or run by locals. They're run by somebody in an office in who knows where, maybe in Brazil, maybe in Taiwan, maybe in New York. So, that is what is happening to it."

Commissioner J.R. Westpfahl responded, "Thank you."

President K. Swanson stated, "Are there any other questions? Well, then I will invite my fellow commissioners to join me in thanking you for your presentation Dr. Zuercher, and thank you to the University of Dubuque."

(\*Note—Commissioner R. Simmer exited the meeting around 6:40 PM)

3. Commissioner B. Vyncke approve the March 19, 2026 Commission Minutes, Commissioner B. Perkins seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

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

5. **PRESIDENTS COMMENTS:**

President Swanson stated, "Just a couple of quick things, the season has been off, as you can probably tell by weather, and the number of sirens you've been hearing, it's been a bit of a rough start at a couple of the parks. Staff are working hard as we've come to expect to get everything ready. Wasn't today a gorgeous day for opening day at Niabi? Just looking for a thumbs up, Lee good day?"

(Mr. Jackson gave a thumbs up)

President K. Swanson continued, "Great day at Niabi. At the end of the packet this month you're going to take a look at some great things from Niabi. Oh, my grandkids want to know when do the Axolotl's, those 6 that are on display now, how soon before they get as big as the one that was here last year?"

Mr. Jackson responded, "6 months."

President K. Swanson continued, "6 months, okay, because they were fascinated by the baby Axolotl's. If you have little people in your house, I bet they can pronounce it better than I can. Axolotl. So, head over and check out Niabi. You'll

also see at the end of the reports, the inspection report for the Lake George Spillway. I just want to remind this body that it was because of the courage of this group, back in 2017 that we passed a bond issue, to restore that spillway. By doing so, we maintained Lake George and Loud Thunder as the wonderful destination that it is. So, thank you for all those who were part of that. You will see that there's some items regarding the spillway, I don't think we're going to need any kind of bond, we will add more on this later, and I'm happy to answer any questions in the later part of the agenda."

- Commissioner L. Burns moved to approve the Forest Preserve Claims and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$253,653.44. Commissioner J. Woods seconded.

**FM100E98:Forest Preserve Committee - AP by G/L**

Invoice Due Date Range 03/01/26 - 03/31/26



Vendor	Invoice No.	Invoice Description	Status	Hold Reason	Invoice Date	Due Date	GL Date	Received Date	Payment Date	Invoice Amount
Fund 335 - Develop-Forests & Construct Impr										
Department 32 - Forest Preserve										
Sub Department 35 - Grants										
Object detail 765.00 - Construction in Progress										
108048 - INEG CONSULTANTS CORP	24006793.01-6	10% of construction admn service due	Open		03/06/2026	03/06/2026	03/06/2026			2,278.72
105358 - ROCK RIVER ELECTRIC INC	24006793.01-1	Req Application 1 for EV project	Open		03/26/2026	03/26/2026	03/26/2026			25,712.70
108048 - INEG CONSULTANTS CORP	24006793.01-7	EV Charging for Nuptoe Sites Project	Open		03/31/2026	03/31/2026	03/31/2026			2,150.00
Object detail 765.00 - Construction in Progress Totals										
Sub Department 35 - Grants Totals										
Department 32 - Forest Preserve Totals										
Fund 335 - Develop-Forests & Construct Impr Totals										
Grand Totals										
										\$241,298.06

\* = Prior Fiscal Year Activity

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A roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call:

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

**TOTAL YES            15**

**TOTAL NO            0**

Motion carried.

7. Commissioner R. Brunk moved to waive the reading and approve the transfers of appropriation, Commissioner D. Adams seconded.

**WHEREAS**, the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Illinois, has adopted Annual Budgets and Appropriation Ordinances for the fiscal period beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026, and

**WHEREAS**, it now appears desirable and necessary that certain adjustments be made between Appropriation Items in the Forest Preserve Fund and Niabi Zoo Fund in said Annual Appropriation Ordinances, and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Illinois, that the amounts set forth below are hereby transferred from the unexpended balance of certain appropriation items in the Forest Preserve Fund as contained in said Budgets and Appropriation Ordinances to certain other such Appropriation Items within the same Fund, as follows: within the same Fund, as follows:

Amount	Appropriation #	Description	Revised
\$4,056.00 from	131-32-08 528	Zoo Animals	\$15,944.00
\$4,056.00 to	131-32-10 764	Machine & Equipment over \$5000	\$4,056.00
\$10,000.00 from	131-32-08 528	Zoo Animals	\$5,944.00
\$10,000.00 to	131-32-08 768	Machine & Equipment over \$5000	\$49,307.00

Rock Island, Illinois on the 21st day of April, 2026.

The Revised Appropriations shall be in full force and effect from and after this date.

Commissioner L. Burns motioned for previous roll call, Commissioner C. Enburg seconded.

Roll Call:

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

**TOTAL YES 15**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

8. Commissioner J. Woods moved to waive the reading and approve the Resolution in the Improvement Fund pertaining to the Electric Vehicle Charging Station project, and the Resolution in the Niabi Zoo Fund pertaining to Conservation in Action Exhibit project. Commissioner E. Dewith seconded.

**RESOLUTION**

**FY 2026 Development of Forests & Construction Fund-Electric Vehicle Charging Station Grant Improvements**

**WHEREAS**, the Forest Preserve District was awarded grant funds to install electric vehicle charging stations at District facilities, and

**WHEREAS**, claims and expenditures for the design and construction documents have been received, and

**WHEREAS**, construction and construction administration claims from vendors have been received, 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.** Funds in the amount of \$30,141.42 are available from unappropriated funds within Fund #335 Development of Forest and Construction of Improvements until the grant award is received to the following:

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
\$30,141.42	335-32-35 765.00 CCFI31-00-765	Construction in Progress

**SECTION 3.** Revenues in the amount of \$30,141.42 shall be increased from grant funds to be received to the Development of Forests & Construction Fund #335 in the following:

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
\$30,141.42	335-32-35 331.70 CCFI31-00-33170	Federal Grant – Electric Vehicle Charging Station Grant

**SECTION 4.** This resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 21<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2026.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

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**RESOLUTION**

FY 2026 Niabi Zoo Fund – Conservation in Action Exhibit

**WHEREAS**, the Niabi Zoo is constructing a Conservation in Action exhibit in the Administrative Building at Niabi Zoo for the 2026 season, and

**WHEREAS**, claims and expenditures for the elements of construction have been received, and

**WHEREAS**, the Niabi Zoo Foundation will be funding the costs of construction and reimbursing the District for the costs, 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. Funds in the amount of \$328.86 are available from unappropriated funds within Fund #131 Niabi Zoo until the grant award is received to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$328.86	131-32-35 768.00 - CIA26	Mach & Equipment > \$5,000

SECTION 3. Revenues in the amount of \$328.86 shall be increased from grant funds to be received to the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 in the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$328.86	131-32-35 337.70 - CIA26	Local Grants-Culture & Rec

SECTION 4. This resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 21<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2026.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kal Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

Commissioner B. Vyncke motioned for previous roll call, Commissioner B. Perkins seconded.

Roll Call:

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

**TOTAL YES 15**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

- 9. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to approve the Ordinance establishing the compensation of members & officers of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Commissioner D. Adams seconded.

**AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS AND OFFICERS OF THE ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION**

WHEREAS, members of the County Board for Rock Island County, Illinois, are ex-officio members of the Board of Commissioners of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District as the boundaries of the District are co-extensive with the boundaries of the county as stated is the Downstate Forest Preserve Act 805 ILCS 805/3a, and

WHEREAS, in service as a Forest Preserve Commissioner, Commissioners will be compensated by means of a salary established by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission in the manner provided by the Downstate Forest Preserve Act 70 ILCS 805/et. seq., and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of 50 ILCS 145/2, the compensation of elected officers of units of government, which compensation is to be fixed by units of local government, shall be fixed at least one hundred eighty days before the beginning of the terms of the officers whose compensation is to be fixed, and

WHEREAS, the provisions of 70 ILCS 805/3a authorize the Forest Preserve Commission to establish an annual salary for such positions that shall be payable from the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District Treasury, and

WHEREAS, the provisions of 70 ILCS 805/8 provides that the person exercising the powers of the president of the board shall have power to appoint officers and such employees as may be necessary, and

WHEREAS, the provisions of 70 ILCS 805/3a state that no Forest Preserve Commissioner shall file for a per diem payment for services rendered on the same day for which he filed for a per diem payment as a county board member, and

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District, in open meeting this 16<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2024, as follows:

- 1. That members of the Rock Island County Board, who are ex-officio members of the Board of Commissioners of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District, shall receive no other compensation than that provided for them as members of the Rock Island County Board, unless otherwise herein set forth.
- 2. That the person elected by the Board of Commissioners to serve as President thereof shall serve for a term of two (2) years. The Commission President shall be paid as follows effective December 1, 2026, the salary for the first year of the term shall be four thousand eight hundred dollars (\$6,000.00). Effective December 1, 2027, the salary for the second year of the term shall be four thousand eight hundred dollars (\$6,000.00).

Payments shall be equally disbursed monthly from the Forest Preserve District Treasury. This salary is in addition to whatever compensation is provided for members of the Rock Island County Board.

3. That Forest Preserve Commissioners assigned by the President to serve on the Forest Preserve Executive Committee shall be paid as follows effective December 1, 2026, the salary for the first year of the term shall be one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00). Effective December 1, 2027, the salary for the second year of the term shall be one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00). Payments shall be equally disbursed monthly from the Forest Preserve District Treasury. This salary is in addition to whatever compensation is provided for members of the Rock Island County Board.
4. That the President of the Commission upon the first meeting of the Commission after his/her election as President of the Commission on the first Monday of December in even numbered years shall appoint the District's Officers. That the person(s) appointed by the President of the Commission and approved by a majority vote by the Board of Commissioners shall serve for a term of two (2) years.

The Treasurer of the District shall be paid as follows effective December 1, 2026, the salary for the first year of the term shall be two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00). Effective December 1, 2027, the salary for the second year of the term shall be two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00).

The Secretary of the District shall be paid as follows effective December 1, 2026, the salary for the first year of the term shall be two thousand dollars (2,000.00). Effective December 1, 2027, the salary for the second year of the term shall be two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00).

The Auditor of the District shall be paid as follows effective December 1, 2026, the salary for the first year of the term shall be three thousand eight hundred sixty dollars (\$3,860.00). Effective December 1, 2027, the salary for the second year of the term shall be three thousand eight hundred sixty dollars (\$3,860.00).

A lump sum payment from the Forest Preserve District Treasury to each officer in December of each year on or after the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month.

5. That the President of the Commission may at any time appoint any additional officer(s) deemed necessary for the operation of the District. These officers shall serve under the term of the President and shall serve at the pleasure of the President.
6. That members of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission will receive a per diem of thirty-six dollars (\$36.00) for meetings involving Forest Preserve business, not including regularly scheduled committee meetings, commission meetings or inspections. Payment shall be

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disbursed from the Forest Preserve District Treasury.

7. That members of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission will receive mileage for meetings and inspections involving District business.
8. That members of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission are subject to the District's Reimbursement Policy pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Travel and Expense Control Act.

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District this 21<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2026.

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Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve  
Commission

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Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

Commissioner B. Vyncke motioned for previous roll call, Commissioner E. Sowards seconded.

Roll Call:

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

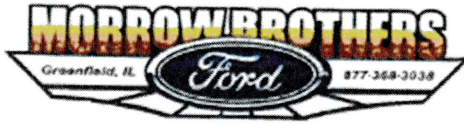
**TOTAL YES            15**

**TOTAL NO            0**

Motion carried.

10. Commissioner D. Mielke moved to approve the purchase of three vehicles from Morrow Brothers Ford in the amount of \$162,079.00. Commissioner L. Moreno seconded.

(\*Note—Agreement begins on next page.)



WWW.MORROWBROTHERSFORDINC.COM

1242 Main Street • Greenfield, IL • 62044

Phone (217) 368-3037 • Fax (217) 368-3517 • Toll Free 1-877-368-3038

**STATE OF ILLINOIS  
FORD F150 TRUCK  
GOVERNMENT PRICING**

ORDERING AGENCY: Rock Island County Forest Preserve District

CONTACT PERSON: Jeff Craver CELL: \_\_\_\_\_

FORD FLEET # \_\_\_\_\_ PURCHASE ORDER # \_\_\_\_\_

QUANTITY: #1 COST EACH: \$ \$44,487.00

ADDRESS: 19406 Loud Thunder Road

CITY: Illinois City ZIP CODE: 61259 TAX EXEMPT # E999 - 364-96

PHONE: 309-795-1040 FAX: NA EMAIL: jcraver@riefpd.org

TOTAL ORDER COST: \$ 44,487.00

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE Director

Morrow Brothers Ford Inc.  
1242 Main Street  
Greenfield, IL 62044

Phone # 1-217-368-3037  
Fax # 1-217-368-3517  
Email: [john@morrowbrothersfordinc.com](mailto:john@morrowbrothersfordinc.com)

**PLEASE SUBMIT THIS SIGNED FORM WITH ORDER**

**\*PAYMENT DUE UPON DELIVERY\***

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## F150 STANDARD EQUIPMENT

### MECHANICAL

- Electronic-Shift-On-the-Fly (ESOF) with 4x4
- Axle, Front – Independent Front Suspension (IFS)
- Brakes – 4-Wheel Disc with ABS
- Electronic Ten-Speed Automatic Transmission
- Fail-Safe Cooling
- Jack
- Electric Parking Brake
- Shock Absorbers, Gas – Heavy-Duty, Front and Rear
- Springs, Front – Coil
- Springs, Rear – Leaf, Two-Stage Variable Rate
- Stabilizer Bar, Front
- Steering – Power, Rack-and-Pinion
- 200 Amp Alternator

### EXTERIOR

- Bumper and Fascia, Front – Black
- Bumper, Rear – Black
- Cargo Lamp – Integrated with 3rd Brake Light
- Easy Fuel® Capless Fuel-Filler
- Exhaust – Single Rear
- Fuel Tank
  - Standard Range 23 Gallon (Regular Cab and SuperCab)
  - Standard Range 28 Gallon (SuperCrew®)
- Fully Boxed Steel Frame
- 4 Hooks – Pickup Box Tie-Down
- 2 Front Tow Hooks (standard on 4x4)
- Mirrors, Sideview – Manual-folding, Manual Glass
- Spare Tire Carrier – Rear Under Frame
- Spare Tire/Wheel Lock
- Stone Cuffs, Front & Rear
- Tailgate – removable with key lock
- Tires
  - 245/70R 17 BSW all-season tires (A/S) BSW 4x2
  - 265/70R 17 OWL all-season/all-terrain tires (A/S A/T) 4x4
- Trailer Sway Control
- Wheels – 17" Silver Steel
- Wipers – Intermittent speed

### INTERIOR / COMFORT

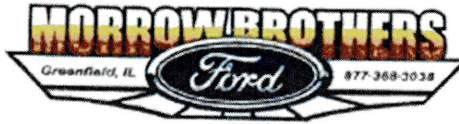
- Power Windows and Door Locks
- SYNC Bluetooth Hands Free Communications
- Black Vinyl Floor Covering
- Cupholder, deployable – under 20% seat
- Dome Light
- AM/FM Stereo
- Gauges and Meters – Fuel, Oil Pressure, Transmission Temperature and Engine Coolant Temperature Gauges; Speedometer, Odometer, Tachometer
- Grab Handles
  - Front – A-Pillar, Driver and Passenger Side
  - Rear – B-Pillar (SuperCrew®)
- Horn – Dual-Note
- Manual Air Conditioning, Single Zone
- Outside Temperature Display
- Powerpoint 12V – Front
- Rearview Mirror, Day/Night
- Scuff Plate, Driver and Front-Passenger Doors
- Seat, 40/20/40 Vinyl
- Steering Wheel, Manual Tilt/Telescoping and Manual Locking
- Visor, Driver Side; Visor with Mirror, Passenger-Side
- Cruise Control

### SAFETY / SECURITY

- AdvanceTrac® w/RSC® (Roll Stability Control™)
- Airbags
  - Driver and Passenger Front Airbags
  - Driver and Passenger Seat-Mounted Side Airbags
  - Side-Curtain Airbags 1st and 2nd row
- Halogen Headlamps
- Rear View Camera
- Reverse Sensing System
- Seat Belts, Active Restraint System (ARS), Three-point Manual Lap/Shoulder Belts with Height Adjusters, Pretensioners & Energy Mgmt Retractors on Outside Front Positions. Includes Autolock Features for Child Seats
- Tire Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS)

### DRIVER ASSIST TECHNOLOGY

- Autolamp – Auto On/Off Headlamps



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**STATE OF ILLINOIS  
FORD F150 TRUCK  
GOVERNMENT PRICING**

ORDERING AGENCY: Rock Island County Forest Preserve District

CONTACT PERSON: Jeff Craver CELL: \_\_\_\_\_

FORD FLEET # \_\_\_\_\_ PURCHASE ORDER # \_\_\_\_\_

QUANTITY: #1 COST EACH: \$ 39,307.00

ADDRESS: 19406 Loud Thunder Road

CITY: Illinois City ZIP CODE: 61259 TAX EXEMPT # E999 - 364-96

PHONE: 309-795-1040 FAX: NA EMAIL: jcraver@ricfpd.org

TOTAL ORDER COST: \$ 39,307.00

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE Director

Morrow Brothers Ford Inc.  
1242 Main Street  
Greenfield, IL 62044

Phone # 1-217-368-3037  
Fax # 1-217-368-3517  
Email: [john@morrowbrothersfordinc.com](mailto:john@morrowbrothersfordinc.com)

**PLEASE SUBMIT THIS SIGNED FORM WITH ORDER**

**\*PAYMENT DUE UPON DELIVERY\***

074

# F150 STANDARD EQUIPMENT

## MECHANICAL

- Electronic-Shift-On-the-Fly (ESOF) with 4x4
- Axle, Front – Independent Front Suspension (IFS)
- Brakes – 4-Wheel Disc with ABS
- Electronic Ten-Speed Automatic Transmission
- Fail-Safe Cooling
- Jack
- Electric Parking Brake
- Shock Absorbers, Gas – Heavy-Duty, Front and Rear
- Springs, Front – Coil
- Springs, Rear – Leaf, Two-Stage Variable Rate
- Stabilizer Bar, Front
- Steering – Power, Rack-and-Pinion
- 200 Amp Alternator

## EXTERIOR

- Bumper and Fascia, Front – Black
- Bumper, Rear – Black
- Cargo Lamp – Integrated with 3rd Brake Light
- Easy Fuel® Capless Fuel-Filler
- Exhaust – Single Rear
- Fuel Tank
  - Standard Range 23 Gallon (Regular Cab and SuperCab)
  - Standard Range 26 Gallon (SuperCrew®)
- Fully Boxed Steel Frame
- 4 Hooks – Pickup Box Tie-Down
- 2 Front Tow Hooks (standard on 4x4)
- Mirrors, Sideview – Manual-folding, Manual Glass
- Spare Tire Carrier – Rear Under Frame
- Spare Tire/Wheel Lock
- Stone Cuffs, Front & Rear
- Tailgate – removable with key lock
- Tires
  - 245/70R 17 BSW all-season tires (A/S) BSW 4x2
  - 265/70R 17 OWL all-season/all-terrain tires (A/S AT) 4x4
- Trailer Sway Control
- Wheels – 17" Silver Steel
- Wipers – Intermittent speed

## INTERIOR / COMFORT

- Power Windows and Door Locks
- SYNC Bluetooth Hands Free Communications
- Black Vinyl Floor Covering
- Cupholder, deployable – under 20% seat
- Dome Light
- AM/FM Stereo
- Gauges and Meters – Fuel, Oil Pressure, Transmission Temperature and Engine Coolant Temperature Gauges; Speedometer, Odometer, Tachometer
- Grab Handles
  - Front – A-Pillar, Driver and Passenger Side
  - Rear – B-Pillar (SuperCrew®)
- Horn – Dual-Note
- Manual Air Conditioning, Single Zone
- Outside Temperature Display
- Powerpoint 12V – Front
- Rearview Mirror, Day/Night
- Scuff Plate, Driver and Front-Passenger Doors
- Seat, 40/20/40 Vinyl
- Steering Wheel, Manual Tilt/Telescoping and Manual Locking
- Visor, Driver Side; Visor with Mirror, Passenger-Side
- Cruise Control

## SAFETY / SECURITY

- AdvanceTrac® w/RSC® (Roll Stability Control™)
- Airbags
  - Driver and Passenger Front Airbags
  - Driver and Passenger Seat-Mounted Side Airbags
  - Side-Curtain Airbags 1st and 2nd row
- Halogen Headlamps
- Rear View Camera
- Reverse Sensing System
- Seat Belts, Active Restraint System (ARS), Three-point Manual Lap/Shoulder Belts with Height Adjusters, Pretensioners & Energy Mgmt Retractors on Outside Front Positions. Includes Autolock Features for Child Seats
- Tire Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS)

## DRIVER ASSIST TECHNOLOGY

- Autolamp – Auto On/Off Headlamps

Commissioner L. Burns motioned for previous roll call, Commissioner J. Woods seconded.

Roll Call:

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

**TOTAL YES            15**

**TOTAL NO             0**

Motion carried.

11. Commissioner R. Brunk moved to go in to Closed Session per 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (5)- Discussion of the purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired. Commissioner L. Moreno seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call:

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

**TOTAL YES            15**

**TOTAL NO             0**

Motion carried.

Time is 6:51 PM

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Time is 7:19 PM

12. **Comments from Commissioners: (NONE)**

13. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to approve all routine reports from the Director and Department Heads to the Forest Preserve Commission, Commissioners D. Mielke and B. Perkins seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion Carried.

President Swanson stated, "The next meeting of the Forest Preserve Commission will be Tuesday, May 19, 2026, in these chambers following County Board."

President Swanson declared the meeting in recess at 7:20pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Kinney", written in a cursive style.

KAREN KINNEY  
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY  
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

KK: ah