

**Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
BOARD MEETING**

Wednesday, August 19, 2026 – 5:30 PM
Forest Preserve Headquarters



A G E N D A

A. ROLL CALL

B. PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE

C. APPROVAL of MINUTES

Minutes for July 15

D. PUBLIC COMMENT

E. PRESENTATIONS

1. Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget Presentation – Steve Chapman

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G. NEW BUSINESS

H. ACTION ITEMS

1. Bills for July
2. Acceptance of Land Adjacent to Kilbuck Bluffs from Natural Land Institute - Ordinance
3. Authorizing the Purchase of Land Adjacent to Ferguson Forest Preserve - Ordinance
4. Approval of Change Orders for Natural Resources Building
5. Approval of Addition to Board Annual Calendar – Strategic Plan Kick-Off

I. DISCUSSION

1. Abatement of Bond Levy
2. Budgeting for Sponsorships
3. Community Foundation Agreements
4. Local Election Candidate Endorsements

J. UPDATES and REPORTS

9. 1. Preserve Operations
14. 2. Natural Resource Management
17. 3. Golf
23. 4. Marketing
25. 5. Human Resources
6. Partner Groups

K. CLOSED SESSION

1. Land Acquisition
2. Closed Session Minutes Review

L. REGULAR SESSION

1. Approval of closed session minutes dated:
 - a. Jan. 21, 2015
 - b. Feb. 18, 2015 – Land Acquisition
 - c. Feb. 18, 2015 – Personnel
 - d. Mar. 18, 2015
 - e. Apr. 15, 2015 – Land Acquisition
 - f. Apr. 15, 2015 – Personnel Labor Negotiations
 - g. May 20, 2015 – Land Acquisition
 - h. May 20, 2015 – Personnel Labor Negotiations

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- i. June 19, 2015 – Personnel Labor Negotiations
- j. Aug. 12, 2015
- k. Oct. 21, 2015
- l. Nov. 18, 2015 – Land Acquisition
- m. Nov. 18, 2015 – Personnel
- n. Dec. 16, 2015

26. 6. Approval of resolution to release closed session minutes and destroy verbatim recordings.

M. ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATIONS

- 1. August 21 – Steward Volunteer Day – Moth Sheeting at Deer Run Forest Preserve starting at 8:30pm.
- 2. August 29 – Guided Hike with NLI at Kishwaukee Gorge North Forest Preserve started at 10:00am.
- 3. September 12 – Steward Volunteer Day – Invasives Removal at Kilbuck Bluffs starting at 9:00am.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Next Special Board Meeting – 5:30 PM Wednesday, August 26, Forest Preserve Headquarters, Strategic Planning

Next regular Board Meeting – 5:30 PM Wednesday, September 17, Forest Preserve Headquarters

If you require assistance while attending our meetings, please call 815-877-6100 or email ewendlandt@winnebagoforest.org no less than 48 hours prior to the Board meeting.

Anyone wishing to address the Board must call 815-877-6100 or email ewendlandt@winnebagoforest.org in advance of the meeting.

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
Authorization to Process Payment of Bills



August 19, 2026

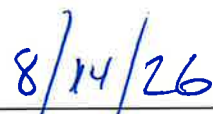
**TO: THE AUDITOR AND TREASURER OF THE
FOREST PRESERVES OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY.**

Your Forest Preserves of Winnebago County Board of Commissioners, to whom were referred the following bills in the amount of **\$ 939,545.72** against the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County, have reviewed and approved and therefore respectfully request that orders be drawn on the account of the Forest Preserve District for their payment:

CORPORATE FUND	3001	269,585.99
BOTANICAL GARDEN FUND	3120	6,112.61
HEALTH BENEFITS FUND	3185	49,835.33
SOCIAL SECURITY FUND	3192	23,609.08
RETIREMENT FUND	3193	20,559.18
LIABILITY RESERVE FUND	3194	17,047.00
IMPROVEMENT & DEV. FUND	3302	312,094.95
LAND ACQUISITION FUND	3307	25,000.00
CORPORATE FUND	3402	<u>215,701.58</u>
		\$939,545.72

Respectfully submitted,


Steve Chapman, Finance Director


Date

RESOLUTION

No. 26-0801

PAYMENT OF BILLS FOR JULY

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserve incurs annual and monthly operating and capital expenditures during its budget cycle; and

WHEREAS, the Winnebago County Finance Department compiled the attached invoices relating to Forest Preserve expenditures to be paid for the month of July; and

WHEREAS, our Finance Director, Steve Chapman, has reviewed the invoices and avows them to be accurate and appropriate for payment; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board authorizes the payment of the attached compilation of bills totaling \$939,545.72 to be paid by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County for the month of July, 2026.

Voting YES _____ Voting NO _____ ABSTAINED _____

The above and foregoing Resolution was adopted this 19th day of August, 2026.

That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect immediately upon its adoption.

Jeff Tilly, President
Board of Commissioners

Gloria Lind, Secretary
Board of Commissioners

Winnebago County Forest Preserve District

ORDINANCE

26-0802

Accepting Donation of Land Adjacent to Kilbuck Bluffs Forest Preserve

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners (the “Board”) of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District (the “District”) have determined that it is advisable, necessary, and in the best interest of the District that the District acquire land in and for the District, with said lands, together with all lands heretofore acquired, not to exceed 55,000 acres; and

WHEREAS, the Natural Land Institute (“NLI”) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and accredited land trust dedicated to protecting and restoring land throughout Illinois and southern Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the NLI owns a 4.6 acre parcel of land (the “Property”) along Kilbuck Creek, adjacent to Kilbuck Bluffs Forest Preserve, that they wish to transfer to the District; and

WHEREAS, the Property has been evaluated by District staff and it has been determined that the Property is a suitable addition to Kilbuck Bluffs Forest Preserve; and

WHEREAS, the NLI Board of Trustees has executed the required approvals to transfer the Property to the District; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED that the Board of Commissioners of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District as follows:

Section 1. The Board of Commissioners hereby authorize and approve the acceptance of the donation of the real property commonly known as “the Property” (PIN 15-35-100-007). The District shall pay for all fees required to warranty and close on the Property. Such authorization and approval are contingent upon the NLI and the District finalizing and memorializing in writing the terms and conditions of the transfer of the Property. To the extent the NLI and Winnebago County Forest Preserve District are unable to finalize and memorialize in writing the terms and conditions of the donation, the authorization and approval provided for in this Ordinance shall be automatically rescinded, without further action of the Board.

Section 2. That the Board of Commissioners of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District hereby authorize the Executive Director of the District to execute any and all documents necessary to acquire title to and possession of the Property.

Section 3. That pursuant to the District Land Classification and Use Policy adopted May 27, 1982 lands contained in this acquisition shall be classified as reserve area and/or recreational area.

Section 4. That upon closing, the Property shall be incorporated in to and henceforth be known as

“Kilbuck Bluffs Forest Preserve”.

Section 5. That upon receipt of notice from the District Executive Director, the District’s Director of Finance, Auditor, and Treasurer are hereby authorized and directed to execute appropriate District payment orders required for the closing authorized herein, which payment orders shall be drawn upon the District’s Land Acquisition Fund – 2025a (3307).

Section 6. That the Secretary of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District is hereby authorized to prepare and deliver certified copies of this Ordinance to the Executive Director, Auditor, and Treasurer.

Section 7. That this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect immediately upon its adoption.

Voting Yes	Voting No	Abstained
Judith Barnard	Judith Barnard	Judith Barnard
Mike Eickman	Mike Eickman	Mike Eickman
Gloria Lind	Gloria Lind	Gloria Lind
Cheryl Maggio	Cheryl Maggio	Cheryl Maggio
Jerry Paulson	Jerry Paulson	Jerry Paulson
Emily Porter	Emily Porter	Emily Porter
Jeff Tilly, President	Jeff Tilly, President	Jeff Tilly, President

The above and foregoing Ordinance was adopted this 19th day of August, 2026.

Jeff Tilly, President

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County

ORDINANCE

26-0803

**Authorizing the Purchase of +/- 162 Acres Adjacent to
the Calvin and Sophia Ferguson Forest Preserve
and Authorizing an Access Easement**

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners (the “Board”) of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (the “District”) have determined that it is advisable, necessary, and in the best interest of the District to acquire and protect land, especially land with significant natural resource value; and

WHEREAS, on April 16, 2025 the Board authorized the issuance of \$2,000,000 of General Obligation Limited Tax Bonds for the purpose of acquiring additional lands within the District; and

WHEREAS, +/- 162 acres of land (the Property) directly adjacent to the Calvin and Sophia Ferguson Forest Preserve and along the Sugar River in northwestern Winnebago County was made available for sale by owners; and

WHEREAS, the Property has been evaluated by staff and it has been determined that the Property meets the Board of Commissioners intent to utilize the Land Acquisition Funds to increase the District’s holdings.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED, that the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County as follows:

Section 1. The Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes and approves the purchase of the real property commonly known as “the Moate Property” (PINs 06-09-400-003; 06-09-400-005; 06-16-200-001; 06-16-200-002; and a portion of 06-10-300-009 that was formerly a railroad bed which consists of approximately 5.02 acres) for a total purchase price of \$1,130,000 plus customary closing costs. Such authorization and approval are contingent upon the Seller and the District finalizing and memorializing in writing the terms and conditions of their Purchase Contract. To the extent the Seller and Forest Preserves of Winnebago County are unable to finalize and memorialize in writing the terms and conditions of the Purchase Contract, the authorization and approval provided for in this Ordinance shall be automatically rescinded, without further action of the Board.

Section 2. That the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County hereby authorize the Executive Director of the District to execute any and all documents necessary to acquire title to and possession of the Moate Property.

Section 3. That pursuant to the District Land Classification and Use Policy adopted May 27, 1982 lands contained in this acquisition shall be classified as reserve area and/or recreational area.

Section 4. The Board of Commissioners also hereby authorizes and approves to enter into a permanent,

non-exclusive easement across the portions of the driveway located on PIN 06-10-300-009 (that used to be railroad bed) shall be granted by Seller to District.

Section 5. That upon receipt of notice from the District Executive Director, the District’s Director of Finance, Auditor, and Treasurer are hereby authorized and directed to execute appropriate District payment orders required for the closing authorized herein, which payment orders shall be drawn upon the District’s Land Acquisition Fund – 2025a (3307).

Section 6. That the Secretary of the Forest Preserve District is hereby authorized to prepare and deliver certified copies of this Ordinance to the Executive Director, Auditor, and Treasurer.

Section 7. That this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect immediately upon its adoption.

Voting YES

Voting NO

Abstained

Judith Barnard

Judith Barnard

Judith Barnard

Mike Eickman

Mike Eickman

Mike Eickman

Gloria Lind

Gloria Lind

Gloria Lind

Cheryl Maggio

Cheryl Maggio

Cheryl Maggio

Jerry Paulson

Jerry Paulson

Jerry Paulson

Emily Porter

Emily Porter

Emily Porter

Jeff Tilly, President

Jeff Tilly, President

Jeff Tilly, President

The above and foregoing Ordinance was adopted this 19th of August, 2026.

Jeff Tilly, President
Board of Commissioners

Gloria Lind, Secretary
Board of Commissioners

RESOLUTION
No. 26-0804

**AUTHORIZATION OF CHANGE ORDERS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW
NATURAL RESOURCES FACILITY**

WHEREAS, the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners awarded the contract to construct a new facility for the natural resource department at Funderburg Forest Preserve to Schmeling Construction Co., for the cost of \$2,511,00.00 through Resolution 25-1202; and,

WHEREAS, the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners approved Change Order #1 on April 15, 2026 via Resolution 26-0406, which increased the contract amount with Schmeling Construction Co. to \$2,531,787.49; and,

WHEREAS, State law (720 ILCS 5/33E-9) requires that any change order, or change orders in aggregate, which change the contract price by more than \$10,000 require board approval; and,

WHEREAS, the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District's purchasing policy permits the Executive Director to approve all change orders up to 25% over the approved contract price in advance of Board Approval; and,

WHEREAS, the Executive Director has approved the following proposed changes to the contract:

1. Changes to fuel pad (add \$163.80)
2. Adding electrical work for security systems by Per Mar (add \$20,227.20)
3. Changing electrical and HVAC to single phase power (add \$88,690.48)
4. For using fiber (concrete) reinforcing in lieu of rebar (deduct \$4,580.00)

WHEREAS, these proposed change orders have been incorporated into Change Order #2, AIA Document G701; and,

WHEREAS, these changes will increase the contract price by \$104,501.48, for a total contract price of \$2,636,288.97, and sufficient funds are available in the project budget to accommodate the proposed change;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District approve Change Order #2, which will increase the contract price with Schmeling Construction Co. by \$104,501.48 for the construction of the natural resource facility.

Voting YES _____ Voting NO _____ ABSTAINED _____

The above and foregoing Resolution was adopted this 19th day of August, 2026.
That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect immediately upon its adoption.

Jeff Tilly, President
Board of Commissioners

Gloria Lind, Secretary
Board of Commissioners

RESOLUTION

No. 26-0805

ADDITION OF SPECIAL BOARD MEETING STRATEGIC PLANNING KICK-OFF

WHEREAS, under the provisions pursuant to Sec. 2.02, the Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/2.02 (1992), the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County is required to provide public notice of the date, time and location of its regularly scheduled meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners established the 2026 Board meeting dates during the November 19, 2025 Board meeting; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners would like to add a Special Meeting for Strategic Planning with facilitators DJ Case and Associates to their calendar of meetings.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County that a Special Meeting will be added to the calendar for August 26th at 5:30 pm CST to be held at 5500 Northrock Rd., Rockford, IL 61103 and that updated calendars be distributed.

Voting YES_____

Voting NO_____

ABSTAINING_____

The above and foregoing Resolution was adopted this 19th day of August, 2026.

That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect immediately upon its adoption.

Jeff Tilly, President
Board of Commissioners

Gloria Lind, Secretary
Board of Commissioners

Preserve Operations

Vaughn Stamm, Director of Operations
Matt Weik & Scott Wallace, Preserve Managers
Bryan Helmold, Facility & Equipment Manager
July 2026 Activities Report

North Area

- Hung new shelter signs at Roland Olson, Kieselburg and Atwood.
- Helped Macktown Golf Course with storm cleanup.
- Completed storm cleanup in preserves after 4th of July weekend storm.
- Completed monthly inspections.
- Cleared all trail systems of down limbs and trees after 4th of July weekend storm.
- Sprayed preserves as needed.
- Met with Boy Scouts about building a bigger wood bin at Sugar River Campground.
- Weekly mowing and trimming of preserves.
- String trimmed canoe/boat launches and river edges before 4th of July weekend.
- Fixed broken playground part at Roland Olson playground.
- Pulled and sprayed weeds in playground.
- Removed dead tree on back loop at Atwood Homestead.
- Installed new mower blades on all mowers.
- Mowed and trimmed trails at Paula Swanson Forest Preserve prior to dedication.
- Met with Mike Brien regarding washed out trail at Sugar River Alder.
- Removed hazardous broken limb on gate to Sugar River Forest Preserve.
- Added new gravel around Roland Olson Equestrian kiosk.
- Collected camping fee signage information for change to 2027 fees.
- Frinks pumped back outhouse vault at Hononegah Campground.
- Repainted floor and walls in back outhouse at Hononegah Campground.
- Added Ag Lime around various outhouses in North Area.
- Removed dying Silver Maple tree near Atwood boat launch.
- Removed half dead Hackberry tree in picnic area at Atwood.
- Staff assisted in set up and clean-up of Paula Swanson Forest Preserve dedication.
- Pot hole patched roadways at Kieselburg, Roland Olson and Macktown.
- Took water samples from Roland Olson and Colored Sands Canoe Launch.
- Received new front deck mower and turned in old mower for auction.
- String trimmed and sprayed around Central Maintenance Shop.
- Trimmed trail edges at Sugar River.

Preserve Operations

July 2026 Activities Report – Con't.

- Trimmed back trail edges at Kieselburg.

South Area

- Pressure washed memorial benches along Blackhawk Springs recreation path.
- Repaired broken windows at the Funderburg barn.
- Pruned pine trees around the Highview Shelter at Pecatonica River.
- Prepped and inspected the canoes and trailer for return to Severson Dells.
- Replaced GFI outlets at Indian Springs shelter.
- Pressure washed picnic tables in the shelters at Kilbuck Bluffs and Blackhawk Springs.
- Cleaned out campfire rings at Seward Bluffs Campground.
- Restocked firewood at Seward Bluffs Campground and Pecatonica River Scout Camp.
- Pruned trees and shrubs and cleaned out gutters at the Severson Dells Deer Lodge.
- Cut back edges of trails at Espenscheid.
- Pressure washed playground equipment at Blackhawk Springs.
- Completed monthly safety inspections.
- Pruned back edges of Fuller trail system to prepare for the Winnebago High School cross country season.
- Added six yards of certified mulch to the Blackhawk Springs playground.
- Cleared back shrubs at the Deer Run canoe launch.
- Removed dead tree from near the Espenscheid concrete outhouse.
- Ongoing mowing of preserves and trail systems.
- Removed multiple large trees from the trails at Pecatonica River Forest Preserve.
- Storm damage cleanup at Seward Bluffs and Pecatonica River Forest Preserves.
- Trimmed back trees along roadway edges at Seward Bluffs Campground.

Central Shop

- Received notice of retirement on July 20th, for Facility & Equipment Maintenance Manager, Bryan Helmold, whom had worked for the District for 28 years. His last day worked was August 3rd.
- The vacant position has been posted and we will be reviewing and screening applications for potential candidates to interview.
- The Director of Operations has assumed day to day oversight and management of the Central Shop team of employees until a new manager can be put in place.
- The annual inspections of all equipment trailers are being conducted along with repairs of any noted deficiencies.

Preserve Operations

July 2026 Activities Report – Con't.

- The annual inspections and service for all preserve fleet trucks are being conducted.
- Structural repairs and re-staining of shelter houses at Roland Olson and Severson Dells were completed.

FOREST PRESERVES OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY

November-August

	<u>2024-2025</u>		<u>2025-2026</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total</u>
Small Shelter Res.	47	\$3,995	43	\$3,655
Small Shelter N/Res.	6	\$590	1	\$110
Large Shelter Res.	119	\$13,090	91	\$10,010
Large Shelter N/Res.	9	\$1,215	11	\$1,485
Electric Res.	156	\$19,500	149	\$18,625
Electric N/Res.	20	\$3,100	9	\$1,395
TOTAL	357	\$41,490	304	\$35,280
ONLINE	293	82%	209	69%
Over 300 Res.	0	\$0	0	\$0
Over 300 N/Res.	0	\$0	0	\$0
Ground Use/Tent Res	14	\$440	10	\$320
Ground Use/Tent N/Res.	2	\$145	2	\$90
Building Use Permits	5	\$500	3	\$300
Commercial Photography Permit	2	\$200	0	\$0
Special Use Permits	6	\$600	15	\$1,935
Rides	20	\$800	7	\$280
TOTAL	49	\$2,685	37	\$2,925
ONLINE	25	51%	8	22%
Equestrian Passes	Number	Total	Number	Total
Yearly Tag Res.	88	\$4,400	80	\$4,000
Yearly Tag N/Res.	35	\$2,450	33	\$2,310
TOTAL	123	\$6,850	113	\$6,310
ONLINE	49	40%	31	27%
Fly Field Passes	Number	Total	Number	Total
Yearly Pass Res.	38	\$1,330	37	\$1,295
Yearly Pass N/Res.	12	\$540	10	\$450
TOTAL	50	\$1,870	47	\$1,745
ONLINE	16	32%	15	32%
Metal Detecting Passes	Number	Total	Number	Total
Yearly Pass Res.	36	\$900	35	\$875
Yearly Pass N/Res.	9	\$315	7	\$245
TOTAL	45	\$1,215	42	\$1,120
ONLINE	14	31%	17	40%
GRAND TOTAL	624	\$54,110	543	\$47,380
ONLINE	397	64%	280	52%

FOREST PRESERVES OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY
2023-2026
CAMPING REVENUE COMPARISON

	<u>2023</u> (thru 7/30)	<u>2024</u> (thru 7/29)	<u>2025</u> (thru 7/28)	<u>2026</u> (thru 7/27)
CAMPGROUND				
Hononegah	\$20,252	\$20,471	\$22,933	\$17,546
Seward Bluffs	30,350	35,776	39,939	32,854
Sugar River	<u>49,670</u>	<u>51,529</u>	<u>50,371</u>	<u>47,232</u>
Campground Revenue	\$100,272	\$107,776	\$113,243	\$97,632

SCOUT/YOUTH CAMPGROUNDS

Hononegah	\$180	\$131	\$45	\$150
Pecatonica River	490	435	325	495
Rockford Rotary	245	174	145	165
Seward Bluffs	50	0	0	0
Sugar River	<u>170</u>	<u>336</u>	<u>151</u>	<u>70</u>
Scout/Youth Campground Revenue	\$1,135	\$1,076	\$666	\$880

EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUNDS

Oak Ridge	\$34	\$227	\$280	\$50
Seward Bluffs	<u>922</u>	<u>695</u>	<u>1,080</u>	<u>700</u>
Equestrian Campground Revenue	\$956	\$922	\$1,360	\$750

FIREWOOD

Hononegah	\$1,274	\$2,104	\$1,802	\$640
Seward Bluffs	2,219	2,396	2,245	1,806
Sugar River	<u>4,744</u>	<u>4,260</u>	<u>5,232</u>	<u>4,120</u>
Firewood Revenue	\$8,237	\$8,760	\$9,279	\$6,566

TOTAL REVENUE	\$110,600	\$118,534	\$124,548	\$105,828
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NUMBER OF GROUPS AT REGULAR CAMPGROUNDS (DOES NOT INCLUDE EQUESTRIAN AND SCOUT/YOUTH CAMPING)	1,595	1,559	1,638	1,623
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Natural Resource Management

Mike Brien, Director of Natural Resources

Mike Groves, Natural Resources Manager

Keith Krey, Stewardship Coordinator

Taylor Joray, Wildlife Biologist

July 2026 Activities Report

Natural Resource:

- Chemically treated invasive multiflora rose, silky bushclover, Japanese knotweed, bird's foot trefoil, crown vetch, sweet clover, and teasel in preserves throughout the county.
- Chemically treated invasive brush in forestry mowed areas at Stone Bridge, Cedar Cliff, Funderburg, Pecatonica River, Seward Bluffs, and Sugar River Alder Forest Preserves.
- Wicked woody plants at Deer Run, Sugar River Alder, Ferguson, and Four Lakes Forest Preserves.
- Hand pulled sweet clover at Kishwaukee Gorge Forest Preserve.
- Treated invasive purple loosestrife along the Rock and Kishwaukee Rivers.
- Repaired a section of berm through a wetland at Deer Run Forest Preserve.
- Tractor mowed new prairie plantings at Funderburg Forest Preserve.
- Removed fence between Funderburg and Severson Dells Forest Preserves.
- Transplanted and weeded plants from greenhouse.
- Cleaned and processed harvested seed as needed.
- Watered newly planted trees as needed.
- Assisted with the Paula Swanson Forest Preserve dedication event.
- Harvested seeds of sedges, white and red baneberry, marble seed, solomon's seal, blue joint grass, bottle brush grass, Canada anemone, spiderwort, shooting stars, great angelica, figwort, and cow parsnip.
- Trained volunteers on seed processing equipment.
- Added native seed mix to agricultural buffer areas at Paula Swanson Forest Preserve.
- Cleared beaver blockages from water control structures at Deer Run and Pecatonica Wetlands Forest Preserves.
- Coordinated rerouting of trails at Deer Run Forest Preserve to avoid areas prone to flooding and sensitive habitats.
- Continued project coordination for the construction of the new natural resource facility.
- Coordination of various utility projects in preserve throughout the county.
- Continued working on the 2026-27 budget.

Natural Resource Management

July 2026 Activities Report – Cont.

Wildlife

- Blanding's turtle monitoring:
 - Continued sampling for turtles and other aquatic organisms in preserves throughout the county
 - Continued weekly VHF telemetry of all turtles with transmitters
 - Recaptured an adult male Blanding's Turtle during our sampling efforts
 - Met with the Forest Preserve District of Kane County's wildlife team to learn more about their head start program and visited occupied turtle sites to observe habitat preferences
- Conducted a bee inventory at a remnant pickerelweed colony, in search of rare pickerelweed specialists, in collaboration with the Illinois Natural History Survey.
- Participated in a mussel survey in the Kishwaukee River as part of a multi-year study led by the Illinois Natural History Survey and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.
- Smooth Greensnake Monitoring:
 - Continued sampling preserves with historic records of smooth greensnakes
 - Discovered and monitored several nests; collected data is being shared as part of a multi county effort coordinated by the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum
 - Performed ex situ incubation of a clutch of four eggs; The clutch initially contained six eggs, but two of them were already depredated by the time the nest was discovered. All four hatchling snakes successfully hatched, were processed, and released at the site at which the nest was found.
- Continued pilot water quality study across trap sites to begin documenting the impact of environmental changes/trends in preferred habitat of monitored aquatic species across sampled populations.
- Continued camera trapping efforts to document presence/absence of species in the preserves; notable observations include coyote pups and bobcat at Colored Sands Forest Preserve.
- Continued monitoring of artificial cover arrays for snake species of conservation concern.
- Monitored AH Drift camera trap system at Sugar River Alder Forest Preserve to document smaller-bodied wildlife; Notable observations include a milksnake, garter snakes, Henslow's sparrow, Baltimore oriole, and thirteen-lined ground squirrel.

Stewardship

- Hosted six volunteer seed collection workdays for spiderwort, bottlebrush grass, and brown fox sedge at Four Lakes and Funderburg Forest Preserves.
- Maintained and monitored bluebird nestboxes as needed.
- Worked with an Eagle Scout to install a little free library at Headquarters Forest Preserve.
- Met with Kelly Lafferty from University of Illinois Extension to discuss volunteer opportunities and programming.

Natural Resource Management

July 2026 Activities Report – Cont.

- Assessed status of 4H tree plantings at Funderburg and Laona Heights Forest Preserves.
- Submitted final report for The Nature Conservancy's 2025 Volunteer Stewardship Network grant.
- Hosted volunteer seed cleaning event at the Severson Dell's native plant nursery.
- Attended the Paula Swanson Forest Preserve dedication event.
- Led a bat monitoring hike at Kishwaukee Gorge Forest Preserve.
- Judged 4H forestry projects at the Winnebago County Fairgrounds.
- Community Science Snapshot
 - Eastern Bluebird Monitoring: 12 volunteers logged 55 hours
 - Bat Monitoring: 13 volunteers logged 38 hours
 - Calling Frog Survey: 10 volunteers logged 26 hours
 - Bumblebee monitoring: 1 volunteer logged 9 hours
 - Butterfly monitoring: 1 volunteer logged 7 hours
 - Odonate (dragonfly) monitoring: 1 volunteer logged 7 hours

2026 Statistics

A total of 285 volunteers have completed 3,117.50 service hours in 2026.

The monetary value of these service hours equals **\$112,666.45**. As of April 2026, the estimated national value of each volunteer hour is currently \$36.14 (based on the Independent Sector, April 21st 2026).

Golf Operations

Vaughn Stamm, Director of Operations
Bobby VanSistine, Golf General Manager
Rose Mathews, Golf Food & Beverage Manager
Tyler Knapp & Mark Freiman, Golf Maintenance Managers
July 2026 Activities Report

Clubhouse Operations:

- Cash control
 - Weekly cash deposits
 - Restock change bags at three courses
 - Monitoring cash over/shorts
- Headquarters Meetings
 - Branding Meetings
 - Board Meeting
 - Food and Beverage Manager
 - Outing food and beverage
 - Weekly scheduling
- Schedules completed using When to Work software
 - Outside Attendant
 - Cashier
- Winnebago County-Am Tournament (90 Players)
 - Tee times
 - Scoring
 - Announcement of winners
- PGA Junior League
 - Atwood Team season champion and end of year tournament champion
 - Had 18 members of our inaugural season
- Outings
 - Harlem-Roscoe Firefighters (110 players)
 - FOP (100 players)
 - Harlem Boosters (90 players)
 - Venetian Club (250 players)

Golf Operations

July 2026 Activities Report - Cont.

Food & Beverage:

- I covered 12 shifts for July. Most of the shifts were at Ledges as one of the employees had her baby.
- There were four large golf outings in July.
- Continuing to order food, beer, etc. but this will begin to slow down as we are on the back end of the season.
- County Health Department came to Atwood on July 2, 2026. The only issue was the hot water was only at 112 degrees and needed to be 120 degrees. I explained we had just gotten a new water heater. Mark and I turned the temperature up on the water heater as the Health Department was returning in 2 weeks to do a re-check. They did return and the temperature was satisfactory.
- Did some Food & Beverage related planning for the upcoming outings in August.
- Attended the Strategic Planning Discussion meeting on July 31 with Daniel and Jody.

Golf Maintenance:

Ledges

- Updated expense report for the 2026 season to ensure accurate, up to date tracking of all expenses.
- Mowed all waterways and pond edges using the boom mower to maintain visibility and enhance course appearance.
- Applied plant protectants on greens, tees and fairways in response to prolonged heat and humidity projections.
- Scouted for signs of plant pathogens on greens, tees and fairways during the periods of prolonged heat and humidity.
- Adjusted irrigation cycles daily in response to unusually high dew points and temperatures.
- Cleaned screens on irrigation heads that supply water to greens and tees.
- Completed storm cleanup after high winds, removing numerous fallen trees and clearing debris from across the golf course to restore playing conditions.
- Performed daily hand watering on putting greens to correct and prevent localized dry spot to ensure consistent turf quality.
- Removed woody vegetation around the pond on hole 5, 8 & 11, improving aesthetics while opening the line of sight.
- Repaired non-functioning irrigation heads on numerous tee complexes.
- Irrigation repairs including pilot valves and drive motor replacement.
- Continued fertility program on greens, tees, and fairways.
- Edged bunkers to improve definition and overall aesthetic appeal.
- String trim all trees on the golf course.
- Mechanic performed repairs and maintenance on equipment.

Golf Operations

July 2026 Activities Report - Cont.

Macktown

- Updated expense report for the 2026 season to ensure accurate, up to date tracking of all expenses.
- Applied plant protectants on greens, tees and fairways in response to prolonged heat and humidity projections.
- Scouted for signs of plant pathogens on greens, tees and fairways during periods of prolonged heat and humidity.
- Adjusted irrigation cycles daily in response to unusually high dew points and temperatures.
- Completed inventory of all trees that were damaged or lost during the July 3rd storm. Documented the location, size, and extent of the damage to provide the information needed for a potential insurance claim.
- Completed storm cleanup after high winds, removing numerous fallen trees and clearing debris from across the golf course to restore playing conditions.
- Continued fertility program on greens, tees, and fairways.
- Performed daily hand watering on putting greens to correct and prevent localized dry spot to ensure consistent turf quality.
- Repaired a broken irrigation mainline near the 10th green complex.
- Completed repairs and reinstallation of irrigation faceplates in numerous pedestals.
- Replaced broken irrigation heads on the 9th and 14th green.
- Replaced irrigation risers in numerous green and tee heads.
- Edged bunkers to improve definition and overall aesthetic appeal.
- Mechanic performed repairs and maintenance on equipment.
- Tournament preparation for Winnebago County Amateur.
- Repaired and tested all irrigation satellites after severe storms.
- String trimmed all trees on golf course.
- Pumped water and relocated eroded sand to proper playing depth in bunkers after severe storms.
- Burnt multiple brush piles several times due to surplus of debris from severe storms.
- Tee markers cleaned and new decals applied.

Golf Operations

July 2026 Activities Report - Cont.

Atwood

- Asphalt paving project completed on golf course cart path areas and parking lot section.
- Scouted turfgrass daily for plant pathogens during adverse weather conditions.
- Hand watered greens to maintain consistent moisture and protect against localized dry spots.
- Removed several fallen trees and clean debris after severe weather event.
- Continued edging bunkers and adjusting sand depth for improved playing conditions.
- Continued fertility and plant protectant programs on greens, tees and fairways.
- Repaired and replaced multiple irrigation heads and swing joints.
- Removed undesirable vegetation and volunteer trees between #3 tee and #13 fairway.
- Hauled excess soil from asphalt project with dump trucks to end of driving range.

**Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
Golf Course Revenue & Sales
November - June**

	<u>2022-2023</u>	<u>2023-2024</u>	<u>2024-2025</u>	<u>2025-2026</u>
<u>Atwood Homestead</u>				
Green Fees	\$102,666	\$130,972	\$142,883	\$129,100
Cart Rental	\$81,709	\$104,523	\$107,321	\$108,338
Merchandise	\$14,765	\$14,153	\$15,261	\$19,158
Gift Card	\$575	\$599	\$498	\$128
Discount Gift Card	\$32,054	\$43,234	\$51,799	\$51,965
Capital Improvement Fee	\$10,126	\$10,979	\$10,955	\$12,679
Food & Beverage	\$42,919	\$45,145	\$52,654	\$66,314
Range Balls/Golf Club Rental	\$200	\$280	\$30	\$8,129
Video Gaming & ATM	\$1,304	\$1,975	\$288	\$0
Total Atwood Revenue	\$286,318	\$351,860	\$381,687	\$395,811
<u>Ledges</u>				
Green Fees	\$109,507	\$116,677	\$148,808	\$126,397
Cart Rental	\$87,793	\$91,392	\$116,154	\$100,911
Merchandise	\$14,367	\$11,757	\$15,992	\$15,790
Gift Card	\$245	\$0	\$650	\$0
Discount Gift Card	\$38,950	\$40,446	\$49,156	\$42,905
Capital Improvement Fee	\$11,150	\$11,454	\$12,304	\$12,860
Food & Beverage	\$58,708	\$58,460	\$70,008	\$61,882
Range Balls/Golf Club Rental	\$160	\$160	\$410	\$4,244
Video Gaming & ATM	\$414	\$2,995	-\$347	\$0
Total Ledges Revenue	\$321,294	\$333,340	\$413,134	\$364,989
<u>Macktown</u>				
Green Fees	\$82,112	\$85,770	\$97,839	\$103,087
Cart Rental	\$67,647	\$67,119	\$76,214	\$79,360
Merchandise	\$8,875	\$7,449	\$8,664	\$9,878
Gift Card	\$0	\$144	\$250	\$0
Discount Gift Card	\$45,003	\$44,315	\$54,622	\$48,409
Capital Improvement Fee	\$8,574	\$8,584	\$8,381	\$11,354
Food & Beverage	\$50,622	\$51,660	\$49,731	\$55,868
Golf Club Rental	\$80	\$80	\$120	\$180
Video Gaming & ATM	\$1,629	\$390	\$0	\$0
Total Macktown Revenue	\$264,540	\$265,511	\$295,820	\$308,135
<u>Headquarters</u>				
Gift Card	\$1,430	\$3,120	\$1,100	\$2,300
Discount Gift Card	\$26,402	\$26,625	\$26,736	\$30,711
Golf Passes	\$314,585	\$326,735	\$352,405	\$402,800
Capital Improvement Fee	\$32,338	\$32,820	\$35,400	\$40,680
Outing/Tournaments	\$12,175	\$14,445	\$14,385	\$17,886
Private Golf Cart Registration	\$11,650	\$10,150	\$9,500	\$9,500
Total Headquarters Revenue	\$398,580	\$413,895	\$439,526	\$503,877
Total Golf Course Revenue	\$1,270,732	\$1,364,605	\$1,530,168	\$1,572,813

Option not available for that season

**Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
Golf Course Revenue & Sales
November - June**

	<u>2022-2023</u>	<u>2023-2024</u>	<u>2024-2025</u>	<u>2025-2026</u>
<u>Rounds Played</u>				
Atwood	10,780	12,769	14,303	15,509
Ledges	10,559	10,629	13,020	12,517
Macktown	10,083	10,040	10,515	11,866
Total Rounds Played	31,422	33,438	37,838	39,892
<u>Golf Passes</u>				
Premier Card Res.	28	28	33	35
Premier Card Res.-Refer-A-Friend	37	47	50	70
Premier Card Non-Res.	2	2	3	4
Premier Card Non-Res.-Refer-A-Friend	1	1	4	7
Player Card Res.	164	161	173	178
Player Card Res.-Refer-A-Friend	278	279	294	345
Player Card Non-Res.	9	11	15	13
Player Card Non-Res.-Refer-A-Friend	20	19	18	26
Student Card Res.	73	102	112	107
Student Card Non-Res.	10	10	7	6
Team Pass	0	0	0	0
Practice Range Res.	19	20	0	25
Practice Range Non-Res.	0	0	0	0
Total Passes	641	680	709	816
<u>Private Golf Cart Registration</u>				
Outside Storage	3	2	2	2
Home Storage	14	13	13	12
Total Private Golf Cart Registration	17	15	15	14

Marketing & Communication Relations

Sarah Lorenz, Communications Coordinator
July 2026 Activities Report

Marketing/Advertising:

- General and targeted golf (Mid-West Family targeted display ads running seasonally).
- GoRockford advertising (Outdoor Activities, Family Fun).
 - Events and programs included in free community calendar
- Beloit Daily News (1/8th page ad, targeted towards golf).

Media Relations:

- Paula Swanson Dedication event picked up by Channel 17/WTVO (attended), WIFR (attended), Rockford Register Star, and MyStateline.
- August digital newsletter to be sent to subscribers on 8/20.
 - September digital newsletter scheduled for 9/24

Events/Programs:

- Past: Paula Swanson Dedication 7/23, Bat Hike 7/23.
- Upcoming: Guided Hike of Kishwaukee Gorge North with Natural Land Institute 8/29.

Presentations & Tabling:

- Past: National Night Out 8/4, Winnebago County Health Fair 8/5.
- Upcoming: Winnebago County Fair 8/19-8/23, Collins Aerospace Health/Wellness Fair 9/16, Lifescapes Senior Expo 9/19, Four Rivers Sanitation Authority Wellness Fair 10/2.

Print & Signage:

- Banners, signage, and informational boards completed for Paula Swanson Dedication.
- County preserve map updated to include Paula Swanson Forest Preserve; Visitors Guide & Map reprinted with updated map.
- Preliminary development of 2027 wall calendar underway.

Digital:

- Project kickoff meeting for website redevelopment 8/7.

Professional Development:

- IPRA Lunch & Learn: Telling Your Data Story and Leveraging Data to Measure Impact 7/28.
- Mid-West Family Lunch & Learn: AI & SEO 7/29.

Marketing & Communication Relations

July 2026 Activities Report – Cont.

Miscellaneous:

- Assisted in implementation of Employee Appreciation Picnic 8/6.

Social Media (July 6 – August 7, 2026)

FPWC Facebook: 6,741 followers (+261)

- Reach: 21,140 (-56.9%)
- Engagement: 2,433 (+-32.8%)
- Views: 86,635 (+38.6%)

FPWC Instagram: 2,233 followers (+110)

- Reach: 9,207 (-77%)
- Engagement: 1,035 (-35.3%)
- Views: 38,321 (-73%)

Human Resources

Jody Kennay, Human Resources Manager
July 2026 Activities Report

Full-Time New Hires	0
Full-Time Open Requisitions	2
Seasonal Hires	5 new
Resignations	1
Orientations	5 Orientations (seasonal employees)

Projects and Progress:

Employee Appreciation Picnic - at Hononegah Shelter on August 6 from 11:30 - 1:30. Lunch: hamburgers, brats, chicken, potato salad, veg. pasta salad, chips, brownies. Games to follow: corn hole, lawn golf, giant Jenga, bocce ball, bingo, etc.

Seasonal Employees - Orientations began the week of March 9 and will continue, as needed. All new hires are required to attend Orientation and take the Illinois Anti-Harassment training. Open seasonal positions posted on website.

Compensation Study - Analysis includes current state, pain points, research, compensation comparisons with similar agencies/organizations, recommendations for roll out, etc.

Budget - Completed spreadsheet reflecting insurance costs for all full-time employees and retirees. Steve Chapman and Dan Olson use for 2027 budget of personnel costs.

Staff Postings - open full time and seasonal positions (2 full time). Interviews will begin August.

Began **Training** needs for Staff and employees and decide method of delivery (on-line, in-person, etc.) and timeline. Sent two trainings to employees for completion by the end of August. Trainings are: Slips, Trips and Falls and Preventing Heat Exhaustion. More trainings will be delivered to employees in September.

Coming: Begin working with Strategic Planning consultants. Kick off meeting tentatively scheduled for Aug. 17th. Visited 4 sites with Dan to highlight what Strategic Planning is and what we will need from employees for a solid Plan.

RESOLUTION
No. 26-0806
RELEASE OF CLOSED SESSION MINUTES AND
DESTRUCTION OF VERBATIM RECORDINGS

WHEREAS, pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2.06(d), the Forest Preserve District of Winnebago County Board of Commissioners (the “Board”) has met and reviewed the minutes of all meetings of the Board dated below that are presently closed to the public; and

WHEREAS, the Board hereby finds and declares that the minutes for closed sessions held on certain dates no longer require confidential treatment; and

WHEREAS, section 2.06(c) of the Open Meetings Act allows for destruction of closed session verbatim recordings more than eighteen (18) months old; and

WHEREAS, District staff and legal counsel have reviewed and made recommendations to the Board about the minutes of all meetings dated below.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT IN ILLINOIS, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION ONE: The recitals set forth herein above shall be and they are hereby incorporated as if said recitals were fully set forth within this Section One.

SECTION TWO: The Board finds and hereby declares that closed session minutes or parts thereof of the following dates no longer require confidential treatment and can be released at this time:

Jan. 21, 2015
Feb. 18, 2015 – Personnel
Mar. 18, 2015
Apr. 15, 2015 – Personnel Labor Negotiations
May 20, 2015 – Land Acquisition
May 20, 2015 – Personnel Labor Negotiations
June 19, 2015 – Personnel Labor Negotiations
Aug. 12, 2015
Oct. 21, 2015
Nov. 18, 2015 – Land Acquisition
Dec. 16, 2015

SECTION THREE: The Board finds and hereby declares that the closed session minutes or parts thereof for the following dates cannot be released at this time because it remains necessary to protect the public interest or the privacy of an individual to keep said minutes confidential:

Feb. 18, 2015 – Land Acquisition
Apr. 15, 2015 – Land Acquisition
Nov. 18, 2015 – Personnel

SECTION FOUR: The Board finds and hereby declares that the verbatim recordings of closed session minutes for the following dates may be destroyed by the recording secretary, as approved written minutes exist for those sessions:

Jan. 21, 2015
Feb. 18, 2015 – Land Acquisition
Feb. 18, 2015 – Personnel
Mar. 18, 2015
Apr. 15, 2015 – Land Acquisition
Apr. 15, 2015 – Personnel Labor Negotiations
May 20, 2015 – Land Acquisition
May 20, 2015 – Personnel Labor Negotiations
June 19, 2015 – Personnel Labor Negotiations
Aug. 12, 2015
Oct. 21, 2015
Nov. 18, 2015 – Land Acquisition
Nov. 18, 2015 – Personnel
Dec. 16, 2015

SECTION FIVE: Any and all motions, policies or resolutions of the Forest Preserve District of Winnebago County in conflict with the provisions of this resolution shall be and are hereby repealed.

SECTION SIX: This resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.

PASSED THIS 19th day of August, 2026.

Voting YES _____

Voting NO _____

ABSTAINING _____

Jeff Tilly, President
Board of Commissioners

Gloria Lind, Secretary
Board of Commissioners