

**Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
BOARD MEETING**

Wednesday, June 18, 2025 – 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 May 21
- D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, AWARDS, and PRESENTATIONS**
- E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS / DISCUSSI**
- F. NEW BUSINESS**
1. Holt House Letter
- G. ACTION ITEMS**
6. Bills for May
8. Architectural Services
- H. UPDATES and REPORTS**
9. Preserve Operations
13. Natural Resource Management
15. Golf
20. Marketing
22. Human Resources
23. Law Enforcement
- Partner Groups
- I. CLOSED SESSION**
1. Land Acquisition
2. Personnel
- J. ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATIONS**
1. June 19 – Preserve Pop Up with Rockford Public Library at Headquarters Forest Preserve from 1:00pm–3:00pm.
2. June 20 – Calling Frog Hike at Pecatonica Forest Preserve starting at 5:30pm.
3. June 22 – Butterfly Hike at Kieselburg Forest Preserve starting at 1:00pm.
4. July 12 & 13 – Winnebago County Amateur at Macktown Golf Course.
- K. ADJOURNMENT**

Next regular Board Meeting – 5:30 PM Wednesday, July 16, Forest Preserve Headquarters

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

Subject: Holt house letter of Eligibility

Andrew Heckenkamp

Dear Andrew,

I represent a group of citizens called "Save the Holt House"(STHH). The group was organized to stop demolition of the Elijah Holt House owned by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (FPWC). Essential to our request is the context of the history and participants involved in the Holt Home. The Winnebago County Forest Preserve District received the property from the family of Harry A. and Fannie B. Severson in 1975. Harry A. Severson was co-partner with Howard D. Colman in the Barber-Colman Company in Rockford, Illinois. In 1924 Severson and Colman jointly purchased the Dells property. The adjacent Dells Dairy Farm was purchased by Severson in 1929 to be used for his prized Guernsey dairy cows. After Harry A. Severson died in 1957, the Dells property was divided between both families. The Severson Dells Farm included the Severson Deer Lodge that was built between 1952-54, and the Elijah Holt farmstead. The Deer Lodge served as the Severson's summer home. The Deer Lodge became the Severson Dells Nature Center and has been in existence for 50 years.

The property and structures east of the nature center were part of the homestead acquired by David Adams Holt in 1835. He was from New York state and built his log cabin on Section 34. A brother William Holt came in 1836 and settled in Section 26. Another brother Elijah Holt settled in Section 35 in 1837 and built his limestone farmhouse ca 1842. The limestone was quarried from behind his brother David's home in Section 34. The Elijah Holt home is one of the first stone houses built in Winnebago County. The Holt family has deep roots in this nation and the Holt family was one of the earliest families to settle in Winnebago country.

The Holt house is a two-story limestone structure of Italianate design. The Limestone and mortar joints are in excellent condition. The French doors and transoms on the first floor are all original materials and are in good condition. The front door and sidelights and transom are original materials. The second floor double-hung windows are also original materials. The exterior cornice, frieze, and brackets all remain and are in good condition.

On the interior, most of the door and window trim is original and in good condition, as are the doors. Much of the original flooring remains. The basement foundation is in good condition. The bathroom and kitchen are not original and are both in very poor condition.

The roof is in extremely poor condition. It was allowed to deteriorate with no repairs made to holes in the roof. The STHH group asked the FPWC to intercede to verify the building condition and seek alternatives to demolition. In November 2024 we were successful in receiving a one-year reprieve on the demolition of the Holt Home from the FPWC. In February 2025 we presented to the FPWC the STHH's alternative plans and

use for the Elijah Holt farmstead. In January 2025 the STHH group installed temporary roof repairs to prevent further deterioration of the Holt Home.

Because of its contributions to the history of Winnebago County, we feel that its history and architectural style is significant enough, that this building should be recognized and be placed on the National Register under the criterion established for A and C. We have created a plan to redevelop and restore this structure, and financing could be enhanced utilizing the State and Federal Historic Tax Credit programs.

In addition to this home structure, the outbuildings may also be eligible for placement on the National Register. From our understanding, the barns and corn crib were constructed in the 1930's. The large barn is a continuous arching system of bent roof joists and is in excellent condition. Severson raised his Guernsey cows in the large barn and the small barn housed horses on the farm. The condition of the small barn is not as good. The corn Crib is also a significant structure with its dormers and perforated sheet metal siding. Between 1936-37 Aldo Leopold, the founder of professional wildlife management, conducted one of his first studies on deer forest management in the U.S. on the Colman-Severson Properties. Leopold was influential in the development of environmental ethics and wilderness conservation.

The FPWC had voted to demolish the small barn and corn crib . We requested a temporary delay and reconsideration since their removal may negatively impact the nomination process. We feel the house could stand on its own as a nominated structure. However, we need your determination as to whether the house and barns are integrally connected, or are they separate. The HTC 's could provide significant financial incentives to restore them both and could be beneficial to the entire project.

From our initial investigations and due diligence, we feel that this project has lots of potential in saving a very important part of Winnebago County's history. Our work to date has included informing and solicitating our County Board Chairman to support our team to save this historic structure. We have also been able to recruit supporters from the Forest Preserve Board to reconsider and consider alternatives to demolition.

We have attached materials and photos to assist in seeing if this building and or site is eligible to be considered for the National Register. Upon receiving a positive response, a nomination would be forthcoming as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call.

Sincerely,

Gary W. Anderson, Architect AIA
Studio GWA, Founder

Brief Account — Elijah Holt Home - Severson Dairy Farm 1837-2002

I. Early Settlement — Elijah Holt and Alonzo Hall.

According to H. F. Kett's *1877 History of Winnebago County*, the first person to settle in Winnebago Township on what is now the Severson Dells Forest Preserve, was David Adams Holt who came from New York state in 1835. He built a log cabin in Section 34. William Holt, a brother, came in 1836 and settled in Section 26. Elijah Holt, another brother came in 1837 and settled in Section 35. Elijah Holt built his Italianate limestone farmhouse ca. 1842 from a quarry behind David Holt's home in Section 34. Elijah Holt's home is one of the first stone structures built in Winnebago Township and west of the Rock River.

The quarry from which the 22-inch dolomitic limestone blocks was quarried is located on Hall Creek in Section 34. Hall Creek is named for Alonzo Hall who came from London, Ontario in 1844 and settled in Section 34. Hall homesteaded 1,500 acres and became a successful farmer. Hall had at one time had 600 acres under cultivation and grazed 1,500 sheep between 1846-1849.¹ The land west of the Forest preserve on the Perk's property was known locally as Hall's meadow. In 1849 Hall lost 300 acres to wheat rust and abandoned wheat farming. In 1850 the lure of the California Gold Rush enticed Hall to travel west for his fortune. In 1850 he died near Mount Shasta, California, and was buried in an unknown grave. After his death, the original homestead was divided between his four children. Alfred, the oldest, fell heir to the original home on Montague Road, which included a large timber tract in the southwest ¼ of Section 35.² The Dells acreage remained in the Hall family until 1917, when Alfred Hall's widow, Emily McFarland Hall, sold the Hall land to C. Herbert Lewis.

II. 20th Century Land Transactions.

J. C. Rippentrop and C. Herbert Lewis

By 1905 J. C. Rippentrop was owner of the major part of the NW and SW ¼ of Section 35 in Winnebago Township. Rippentrop charged groups to use the Dells as a picnic area, a common practice before the development of forest preserves. C. Herbert Lewis built a log cabin on 10 acres of the J. H. Jeffery property acres in the SE ¼ of Section 34. It was used as a residence for the Carl Johnson family until 1928 when Harry A Severson purchased the land

Howard Colman and Harry A. Severson

Beginning in 1924 the entire Dells area was purchased jointly between Howard D. Colman and Harry Ashton Severson. The Severson Dells Dairy farm was purchase from C. Herbert Lewis in 1929. Mr. Severson used the farm for his prized Guernsey dairy cows. Tenant farmers lived in the Holt Home from 1929 on.

Between May 1928 and January 1929 the Thomas A. Craig property located near the present Severson Dells Nature Center was purchased by Harry A. Severson. The "Craig" house was used as a summer home by the Severson's until 1952 when the Severson family built the Severson Deer Lodge.³ After Mr. Severson died in 1957, a division was made of the Dells area between the Colman and Severson families.

¹ Most of the Severson Dells Forest Preserve is located on Hall's farm in Sections 34 and 35.

² In the 1839 federal land track records for Section 35, surveyor William S. Hamilton noted a large "Timber" tract in Section 35 and the Dells along Hall Creek.

³ The current site of the Severson Dells Nature Center.

III. Winnebago County Forest Preserve District Acquisition and Development 1976 — 1979

In December of 1973 Robert Millard, chair of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee, wrote a letter to Mrs. Fannie B. Severson asking for a meeting with Leland Fetzer, chair of the District's Land Advisory Committee, Seth B. Atwood and himself to discuss Mrs. Severson's offer of donating the Severson Dells Farm to the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District (WCFPD). In January 1974 Mrs. Severson met with Robert Mahnke, executive director of the District, and Robert Millard in further discussion of her offer. In January 1975 a memorandum between Mrs. Severson and the District was written for the development of a nature program on her estate and the donation procedures. On March 7, 1975, an agreement was signed by Mrs. Severson and Frank St. Angel, chair of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve Commission, outlining the conditions and agreement that the Severson Trust and District had determined for the development of the donation. In the agreement the Severson family indicated their expressed desire that the Severson Farm, including the dairy farm and deer lodge, be used as an outdoor educational center.

On March 13, 1975, the Forest Preserve Commission passed a resolution accepting the donation of the Severson Farm from Mrs. Severson and execution of the March 7 agreement. On April 30, 1975, the warranty deed for the Severson Farm was conveyed to the WCFPD. On March 11, 1976, the Forest Preserve Commission created the Severson Dells Advisory Committee (SDAC) to advise the District on the development of the Deer Lodge educational programs and use of the Deer Lodge Educational Fund (precursor to the Severson Dells Education Foundation). The Advisory Committee would develop and implement the property master plan. On June 26, 1976, The Severson Dells Forest Preserve (SDFP) was formally dedicated.

Severson Dells Master Plan

On July 6, 1976, Gerald Paulson, chair of the SDAC presented to the Forest Preserve District Executive Committee the initial master plan for the SDFP.⁴ The report outlined the objectives, methodology and timetable to implement the master plan for the development of the SDFP. The master plan would develop policy, guidelines and recommendations for the use and development of:

- Land use;
- Educational programs;
- Operation of the dairy farm complex;
- Use of the Deer Lodge and;
- Public use and facilities.

Severson Dells Education Foundation — 1976 - 1977

In 1976 the SDAC recommended a private funding source to finance the development of the Severson Dells Environmental Education Center. In that same year Jo Severson Haag and Peter Damby created the Severson Dells Education Foundation (SDEF). Private contributions obtained by the Foundation were transferred to the Forest Preserve District to staff a full-time naturalist and provide material and equipment for the ongoing development of the Education Center. By 1978, \$15,000 had been received to fund the Center. On April 14, 1977, the Forest Preserve Executive Committee presented a resolution that was adopted by the Forest Preserve Commission, establishing the position of

⁴ The report was written by Mark Keister, landscape architect for the WCFPD.

Coordinator-Naturalist. The resolution authorized a contract between the SDEF and the District for the Foundation to provide funding for the naturalist's salary. On May 12, 1977, Victoria Nuzzo was hired as the first Coordinator-Naturalist.

Severson Dells Future Improvements — 1979

In March 1979 the WCFPD provided a list of future improvements and projects to be implemented in the Severson Dells Forest Preserve. These improvements were in three areas:

I. Severson Dells Environmental Education Center

- Remodeling of the Deer Lodge garage to create a 60-seat cinema and lecture auditorium;
- Convert main bedrooms into a library and main meeting room;
- Living room to be converted into an exhibition hall and;
- Kitchen area to be used for book sales.

II. Forest Preserve Physical Improvements

- Improve existing trails and placement of trail markers;
- Design and construct a nature trail for people with specific needs;⁵
- Build entrance gates and resurface roads and;
- Begin the Severson Dells Arboretum and initiate a prairie restoration program.

III. Severson Dells Farm and Land Use Development

- Construct a concrete feed lot, fence perimeters and silo;
- Building of a visitor's addition to the dairy barn;
- Development of a waste management system;
- Terrace farming practices in cooperation with USDA Soil Conservation Service;
- Use the farm for educational programs and;
- Restore the *Elijah Holt* farmhouse as a historic site.

National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Dedication - 1981

On September, 11 1981, the Elijah Holt Home was dedicated as a NSDAR site with a bronze plaque. Robert Millard represented the WCFPD. The dedication of the Holt Home earned first place as a newspaper article at the local, regional and third at the national level. At that time it was the oldest continuously-occupied dwelling in Winnebago Township.

Elijah Holt Home — 1979-2002

Between 1979 and 2002 the Elijah Holt Home was used as a residence for tenant farmers. After the death of the last tenant, the Holt Home was vacated. It has remained vacant to the present. On April, 2, 2002, architect, Michael A. Dixon, conducted an architectural survey of the Holt Home, noting its interior and exterior details:-

⁵ The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law July 26, 1990.

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
Authorization to Process Payment of Bills



June 18, 2025

**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 **\$815,410.61** 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	303,039.35
HEALTH BENEFITS FUND	3185	42,356.05
SOCIAL SECURITY FUND	3192	32,451.05
RETIREMENT FUND	3193	32,812.63
IMPROVEMENT & DEV. FUND	3302	113,773.50
CORPORATE FUND	3402	<u>290,978.03</u>
		\$ 815,410.61

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve M. Chapman". The signature is written over a horizontal line.

Steve Chapman, Finance Director

6/13/25

Date

RESOLUTION

No. 25-0601

PAYMENT OF BILLS FOR MAY

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 May; 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 \$815,410.61 to be paid by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County for the month of May, 2025.

Voting YES_____

Voting NO_____

The above and foregoing Resolution was adopted this 18th day of June, 2025.

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

Jeff Tilly, President
Board of Commissioners

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County

RESOLUTION

No. 25-0602

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT FOR THE DESIGN OF THE NEW
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FACILITY**

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County's Board of Commissioners appropriated funding for the construction of a new natural resource management facility in the FY 2024-2025 budget; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Local Government Professional Services Selection Act (50 ILCS 510), the Forest Preserves solicited Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) for architectural services for the design of the new facility; and

WHEREAS, four firms, out of the 12 firms that submitted qualifications in response to RFQ # 25Q-2399, were determined to be most qualified and invited to interview with the selection committee; and

WHEREAS, after completing the interview and reference check process, Blakemore Architects, Inc., of Rockford, IL, was determined to be the most qualified and the firm was contacted in order to negotiate a contract; and

WHEREAS, Blakemore Architects, Inc. has agreed to provide design and construction administration services, which include developing the scope of work, budget, and schedule; all required civil, structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing engineering; and the preparation of all necessary schematics and documents required to bid the construction phase of the project for the price of \$181,250.00; and

WHEREAS, staff recommends an additional \$18,125.00 be provided as contingency; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County authorize the Executive Director to enter into contract with Blakemore Architects, Inc. for professional services pertaining to the design of the new natural resource management facility, for an amount not to exceed \$199,375.00.

Voting YES____

Voting NO____

The above and foregoing Resolution was adopted this 18th day of June, 2025.

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

Jeff Tilly, President
Board of Commissioners

Preserve Operations

Vaughn Stamm, Director of Operations
Matt Weik & Scott Wallace, Preserve Managers
Bryan Helmold, Facility & Equipment Manager
May 2025 Activities Report

- Removed hazardous pine tree from Sugar River Campground near site #34.
- Cut down hazardous limb over picnic area at Atwood Homestead.
- Replaced batteries in alarm systems and smoke detectors at Macktown Living History buildings.
- Cleaned up tree at Hononegah boat launch that was removed by Sisson's Tree Service.
- String trimmed Primitive Campground and pressure washed picnic tables.
- String trimmed river edges at Sugar River and Two Rivers picnic areas.
- Painted soccer goal posts at Towering Pines picnic area (Hononegah).
- Ross Renton started as Hononegah Campground Host May 12th.
- Removed hazardous dead limbs from cottonwood tree near Hononegah boat launch.
- Conducted interviews for vacant full-time North Area Ranger position.
- Seeded and laid erosion mats down at Headquarters new drinking fountain area.
- Met with Norwest Construction about potential 2026 asphalt project at Sugar River preserve entrance.
- Installed fresh mulch around Atwood Homestead entrance sign.
- Mulched playgrounds at Atwood, Roland Olson and Hononegah.
- Conducted trail maintenance at Clayton Andrews.
- Coordinating plumbing repairs at Sugar River Campground Shower House (Pearson Plumbing).
- Completed 2026 Capital Budget information.
- Sanded shelter by Sugar River Playground.
- Removed remaining hazardous trees by Hononegah Boat Launch.
- Replaced broken border timbers around Atwood playground.
- Removed stray logs from Atwood Boat Launch.
- String trimmed Macktown Historic District.
- Repaired broken cable at Blackhawk Springs playground.
- Added gravel to Oak Ridge Equestrian entrance drive and the Espenscheid Canoe Launch drive.
- Sprayed herbicide around entrance signs and gates and parking lots.

Preserve Operations

May 2025 Activities Report – Cont.

- Repaired the reservation sign at Seward Bluffs Oak Ridge Shelter.
- Conducted annual low frequency playground inspections.
- Cleared viewing areas along river banks at Espenscheid, Deer Run, Kishwaukee River, and Pecatonica River Preserves.
- Stocked additional firewood at the Seward Bluffs Campground for the holiday weekend.
- Weekly mowing of the preserves and trail systems.
- Ground stumps throughout various preserves.
- Replaced damaged campground site post.
- Removed storm damaged tree from the Espenscheid entrance drive.
- Tree removals along trail systems after multiple high wind events.
- Repaired holes in asphalt roadways in numerous preserves.
- Hired new full-time South Area Ranger.
- Cleaned out manure bins at Oak Ridge and Seward Bluffs Equestrian areas.
- Repaired damaged gate at Kilbuck Bluffs.
- Added stone to holes in dike at Four Lakes.
- Painted entrance sign post(s) at south area preserves.
- Added gravel to washed out trail at Deer Run.
- Painted grills at Pecatonica Wetlands Arrowhead Shelter.

FOREST PRESERVES OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY

November - May

	<u>2023-2024</u>		<u>2024-2025</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total</u>
Small Shelter Res.	32	\$2,720	32	\$2,720
Small Shelter N/Res.	6	\$660	3	\$330
Large Shelter Res.	90	\$9,900	76	\$8,360
Large Shelter N/Res.	3	\$405	4	\$540
Electric Res.	119	\$14,875	112	\$14,000
Electric N/Res.	8	\$1,240	14	\$2,170
TOTAL	258	\$29,800	241	\$28,120
ONLINE	170	66%	202	84%
Over 300 Res.	0	\$0	0	\$0
Over 300 N/Res.	0	\$0	0	\$0
Ground Use/Tent Res	6	\$180	10	\$320
Ground Use/Tent N/Res.	0	\$0	1	\$45
Building Use Permits	0	\$0	5	\$500
Commercial Photography Permit	2	\$200	2	\$200
Special Use Permits	2	\$600	8	\$2,410
Rides	9	\$360	13	\$520
TOTAL	19	\$3,192	39	\$3,995
ONLINE	12	63%	16	41%
Equestrian Passes	Number	Total	Number	Total
Yearly Tag Res.	82	\$4,100	80	\$4,000
Yearly Tag N/Res.	34	\$2,380	30	\$2,100
TOTAL	116	\$6,480	110	\$6,100
ONLINE	41	35%	44	40%
Fly Field Passes	Number	Total	Number	Total
Yearly Pass Res.	38	\$1,330	31	\$1,085
Yearly Pass N/Res.	6	\$270	7	\$315
TOTAL	44	\$1,600	38	\$1,400
ONLINE	12	27%	12	32%
Metal Detecting Passes	Number	Total	Number	Total
Yearly Pass Res.	30	\$750	33	\$825
Yearly Pass N/Res.	7	\$245	8	\$280
TOTAL	37	\$995	41	\$1,105
ONLINE	7	19%	12	29%
GRAND TOTAL	474	\$42,067	469	\$40,720
ONLINE	242	51%	286	61%

FOREST PRESERVES OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY
2022-2024
CAMPING REVENUE COMPARISON

	<u>2022</u> (thru 5/30)	<u>2023</u> (thru 5/29)	<u>2024</u> (thru 5/27)	<u>2025</u> (thru 5/27)
CAMPGROUND				
Hononegah	\$5,238	\$7,065	\$8,537	\$8,231
Seward Bluffs	13,097	17,702	21,055	21,629
Sugar River	<u>23,549</u>	<u>24,798</u>	<u>28,208</u>	<u>28,992</u>
Campground Revenue	\$41,884	\$49,565	\$57,800	\$58,852

SCOUT/YOUTH CAMPGROUNDS

Hononegah	\$160	\$180	\$131	\$45
Pecatonica River	375	440	398	325
Rockford Rotary	180	220	127	145
Seward Bluffs	125	50	0	0
Sugar River	<u>110</u>	<u>145</u>	<u>289</u>	<u>150</u>
Scout/Youth Campground Revenue	\$950	\$1,035	\$945	\$665

EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUNDS

Oak Ridge	\$0	\$34	\$177	\$265
Seward Bluffs	<u>149</u>	<u>314</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>450</u>
Equestrian Campground Revenue	\$149	\$348	\$177	\$715

FIREWOOD

Hononegah	\$539	\$581	\$842	\$712
Seward Bluffs	679	1,148	860	1,036
Sugar River	<u>946</u>	<u>1,902</u>	<u>1,644</u>	<u>2,312</u>
Firewood Revenue	\$2,164	\$3,631	\$3,346	\$4,060

TOTAL REVENUE	\$45,147	\$54,579	\$62,268	\$64,292
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NUMBER OF GROUPS AT REGULAR CAMPGROUNDS (DOES NOT INCLUDE EQUESTRIAN AND SCOUT/YOUTH CAMPING)	704	743	1,230	838
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Natural Resource Management

Mike Brien, Director of Natural Resources

Mike Groves, Natural Resources Manager

Keith Krey, Stewardship Coordinator

Liz Hucker, Wildlife Biologist

May 2025 Activities Report

Natural Resource Staff:

- Burned brush piles at Funderburg Forest Preserve.
- Boom sprayed weeds in new planting fields at Funderburg Forest Preserve.
- Treated invasive weeds, including reed canary grass, poison hemlock, teasel, day lilies, and callery pear in preserves throughout the county.
- Tractor mowed invasive weeds and new prairie plantings at Severson Dells, Cedar Cliff, Funderburg, Seward Bluffs, Pecatonica Wetlands, Four Lakes, Hononegah, and Atwood Forest Preserves.
- Started seeds in the greenhouse.
- Installed prairie seed using seed drill in fields at Funderburg Forest Preserve.
- Hand seeded new and enrichment plantings at Macktown, Deer Run, Funderburg, Kilbuck Bluffs, Blackhawk Springs, Seward Bluffs, Pecatonica Wetlands, and Crooked River Forest Preserves.
- Watered and mulched newly planted trees as needed.
- Monitored plants of concern in preserves throughout the county.
- Assisted with wildlife surveys as needed.
- Harvested seed from dutchman's breeches, cut leaf toothwort, marsh marigold, leatherwood, hepatica, bloodroot, pasque flower, and others from preserves throughout the county.
- Led bluebell seed harvest work day at Deer Run Forest Preserve.
- Mike Groves and Sandra Vaughn Pottorff led a hike as part of the Natural Land Institute / Severson Dells Wildflower Walkabout series.
- Interviewed several architectural firms as part of the professional services selection process for the design of the new natural resource facility.
- Submitted Land and Water Conservation Fund grant application for partial funding of a land purchase in the Sugar River corridor.
- Staffed FPWC tent at Klehm Arboretum's Garden fair.
- Worked on FY25 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to acquire 168 acres along the Sugar River.
- Continued oversight of several open contracted projects, including installation of nature playground at Klehm Arboretum, tree removals at Atwood Forest Preserve, follow-up herbicide treatments at Kishwaukee Gorge and Funderburg Forest Preserve, building demolitions at Severson Dells Forest Preserve, and drone spraying of reed canary grass at various preserves.

Natural Resource Management

May 2025 Activities Report – Cont.

Wildlife

- Continued telemetry work of radio tagged turtles.
- Partnered with Conservation Dog Collective to use trained working dogs to survey for ornate box and Blanding's turtles in northwestern preserves.
- Scouted new locations for aquatic trapping of Blanding's turtles.
- Deployed and monitored camera traps for badgers and other taxa at Colored Sands Forest Preserve.
- Completed cover board surveys for snakes and removed unauthorized cover objects from preserves.
- Continued monitoring kestrel nesting boxes; two have active nests.
- Assisted with banding operations at Sand Bluff Bird Observatory.
- Downloaded data from the Motus tower at Sugar River Alder Forest Preserve to assist University of Illinois's Ward Lab of Ornithology in monitoring northern saw-whet owls and wood thrush.

Stewardship Coordinator:

- Held restoration workdays at Blackhawk Springs, Pecatonica River, Macktown, Deer Run, and Kishwaukee Gorge Forest Preserves.
- Removed bluebird nest boxes from Sugar River Forest Preserves due to a lack of monitors.
- Maintained volunteer equipment as required.
- Staffed FPWC booth at Rockton Pelican Fest.
- Assisted with wildlife surveys.

2025 Statistics

A total of 164 volunteers earned 1,728 service hours from January 2025 through May 2025.

The monetary value of these service hours equals \$57,887.33. As of April 2024, the estimated national value of each volunteer hour is currently \$33.49 (based on the Independent Sector).

Golf Operations

Vaughn Stamm, Director of Operations

Rich Rosenstiel, Clubhouse Manager

Tyler Knapp & Mark Freiman, Golf Maintenance Managers

May 2025 Activities Report

Clubhouse Operations:

- Atwood Golf Course used-cart return area completed.
- Re-striped Atwood parking areas.
- U.S. Kids Golf Tournament hosted at Atwood with 55 junior participants.
- Security golf cart parking area camera @ Macktown re-installed.
- Continue hiring additional seasonal employees.
- Starting tee times adjusted for peak season.
- Hole-in-One page launched on website.
- Preparations for upcoming tournaments / outings.
- Hosted Nic-10 Conference meeting (Ledges).
- Extremely busy Memorial Day weekend at all 3 courses.
- Training & Daily Operations.

Golf Maintenance:

Ledges

- Completed all nitrate and bacteria water samples and submitted for testing.
- Verti-cut and applied top-dressing sand to greens.
- Replaced old landscaping with new plant material and mulch at the clubhouse and added new landscaping surrounding the flagpole.
- Mowed all waterways and ponds with boom mower.
- Trimmed all low hanging branches next to greens, fairways and tees.
- String trimmed around all trees.
- Edged all bunkers.
- Applied granular fertilizer to the fairways.
- Trained new seasonal employees on safe and proper mower operation.
- Continued fertility program on greens.
- Started fertility program on tees.
- Hand watered localized dry spots on greens.
- Irrigation repairs including pilot valves and drive motor replacement.
- Installed irrigation conversion assembly on #6 fairway.

Golf Operations

May 2025 Activities Report – Cont.

- Obtained and submitted capital equipment and project quotes to Director for review.
- Removed invasive trees from prairie restoration area between #2 tee and #4 green.
- Mechanic repairing and servicing Ledges and Macktown equipment.

Macktown

- Interview and hire new seasonal employee.
- Replace irrigation timing mechanism on # 5 satellite, and several others.
- Conducted tree and debris clean-up after severe storm.
- Installed flowers, perennial plants, and hardwood mulch for clubhouse landscape.
- Repaired and replaced multiple cracked irrigation heads throughout golf course.
- Continued interviewing candidates for seasonal employment.
- Trained new seasonal employees on safe and proper mower operation.
- Burned brush pile.
- Completed all nitrate and bacteria water samples and submitted for testing.
- Started edging bunkers.
- String trimmed around all trees.
- Removal and cleanup of wind damaged trees on holes #8 and #9.
- Continued fertility program on greens.
- Started fertility program on tees.
- Applied granular fertilizer to the fairways.
- Hand watered localized dry spots on greens to maintain turfgrass health.
- Obtained and submitted capital equipment and project quotes to Director for review.
- Replaced irrigation risers in numerous green and tee heads.

Atwood

- Verti-cut and top-dress greens to remove excess thatch and smooth putting surface.
- Repair clubhouse irrigation system with new valve and multiple heads.
- Hire and train new seasonal employees.
- Improve clubhouse landscape by planting annual flowers, perennial plants, trimming bushes, edging beds and adding hardwood mulch.
- Applied fertilizer to fairways.
- Submit water samples to county health department.
- Repaint irrigation pump station platform to prevent rust and corrosion.
- Submit capital projects for FY 25/26 Budget process.

Golf Operations

May 2025 Activities Report – Cont.

- Fertilize green surrounds and heavy traffic areas to aid in turf recovery.
- Begin tee fertility program.
- Spray and edge bunkers.
- String trim all trees on golf course.
- Mechanic repairing and servicing Atwood and Macktown equipment.

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

	<u>2021-2022</u>	<u>2022-2023</u>	<u>2023-2024</u>	<u>2024-2025</u>
<u>Atwood Homestead</u>				
Green Fees	\$56,491	\$63,253	\$80,941	\$101,220
Foot Golf Fees	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cart Rental	\$45,841	\$52,515	\$64,014	\$74,272
Merchandise	\$7,278	\$8,967	\$9,783	\$16,158
Gift Card	\$355	\$525	\$224	\$143
Discount Gift Card	\$18,114	\$21,594	\$28,229	\$35,071
Capital Improvement Fee	\$5,632	\$6,398	\$6,837	\$7,683
Food & Beverage	\$18,063	\$25,538	\$26,359	\$31,449
Golf Club Rental	\$0	\$80	\$120	\$0
Video Gaming & ATM	\$601	\$179	\$718	\$288
Total Atwood Revenue	\$152,374	\$179,048	\$217,225	\$266,283
<u>Ledges</u>				
Green Fees	\$52,766	\$63,101	\$71,034	\$99,817
Cart Rental	\$41,215	\$52,163	\$58,314	\$74,015
Merchandise	\$6,269	\$8,612	\$7,389	\$14,673
Gift Card	\$0	\$95	\$0	\$150
Discount Gift Card	\$16,193	\$22,814	\$24,841	\$30,416
Capital Improvement Fee	\$5,604	\$6,588	\$7,022	\$7,944
Food & Beverage	\$19,375	\$33,821	\$32,110	\$40,837
Golf Club Rental	\$0	\$80	\$0	\$0
Video Gaming & ATM	-\$10	\$150	\$2,355	-\$347
Total Ledges Revenue	\$141,412	\$187,424	\$203,065	\$267,504
<u>Macktown</u>				
Green Fees	\$33,098	\$44,299	\$49,082	\$60,508
Cart Rental	\$27,777	\$38,580	\$41,578	\$45,450
Merchandise	\$4,197	\$5,646	\$4,588	\$8,755
Gift Card	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$100
Discount Gift Card	\$18,126	\$26,363	\$28,285	\$30,924
Capital Improvement Fee	\$3,310	\$4,799	\$5,044	\$5,000
Food & Beverage	\$19,944	\$27,051	\$26,694	\$26,683
Golf Club Rental	\$0	\$0	\$80	\$0
Video Gaming & ATM	\$798	\$303	\$277	\$0
Total Macktown Revenue	\$107,249	\$147,039	\$155,629	\$177,420
<u>Headquarters</u>				
Gift Card	\$2,430	\$1,350	\$3,000	\$1,100
Discount Gift Card	\$25,701	\$23,466	\$24,463	\$24,638
Golf Passes	\$290,440	\$312,005	\$323,901	\$349,155
Capital Improvement Fee	\$32,700	\$32,218	\$30,900	\$35,220
Tournaments	\$3,820	\$5,500	\$12,130	\$9,980
Private Golf Cart Registration	\$11,650	\$11,650	\$8,850	\$9,500
Total Headquarters Revenue	\$366,741	\$386,189	\$403,244	\$429,593
Total Golf Course Revenue	\$767,776	\$899,699	\$979,162	\$1,140,800

Option not available for that season

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

	<u>2021-2022</u>	<u>2022-2023</u>	<u>2023-2024</u>	<u>2024-2025</u>
<u>Rounds Played</u>				
Atwood	7,132	6,941	12,783	9,949
Footgolf	0	0	0	0
Ledges	4,353	6,294	9,820	8,242
Macktown	3,581	5,788	8,318	5,998
Total Rounds Played	15,066	19,023	30,921	24,189
<u>Golf Passes</u>				
Premier Card Res.	31	28	29	33
Premier Card Res.-Refer-A-Friend	36	37	45	50
Premier Card Non-Res.	1	2	2	3
Premier Card Non-Res.-Refer-A-Friend	3	1	1	4
Player Card Res.	187	164	163	170
Player Card Res.-Refer-A-Friend	252	277	272	294
Player Card Non-Res.	11	8	12	15
Player Card Non-Res.-Refer-A-Friend	24	20	16	18
Student Card Res.	62	69	97	107
Student Card Non-Res.	4	8	10	6
Team Pass	0	0	0	0
Practice Range Res.	24	19	18	0
Practice Range Non-Res.	0	0	0	0
Total Passes	635	633	665	700
<u>Private Golf Cart Registration</u>				
Inside Storage				
Outside Storage	3	3	2	2
Home Storage	15	14	11	12
Total Private Golf Cart Registration	18	17	13	14

Option not available for that season

Marketing & Communication Relations

Sarah Lorenz, Communications Coordinator
May 2025 Activities Report

Marketing/Advertising:

- Hooked on Fun ad in newsletter and on Facebook through Stateline Kids.
- 1/8-page Hooked on Fun ad in Stateline Connection summer edition.
- General visitorship (Mid-West Family targeted display ad running seasonally).
- GoRockford advertising (Outdoor Activities, Family Fun).
- Upcoming: developing a social media ad to run the weekend of Ironman (6/19-6/23) to attract out-of-town visitors to sites.

Media Relations:

- Executive Director Mike Holan quoted in article about tick awareness/safety by WREX.
- Live interview with WIFR for First 4 at 4 time slot about Hooked on Fun Kid's Fishing Derby.
- Four Lakes featured as a top spot to fish in the Rockford area by Rockford Register Star.
- May digital newsletter sent to subscribers on 5/22.
- June digital newsletter scheduled for 6/18.

Events/Programs:

- Bluebell Seed Collection 5/23, Partner Guided Bird Hike with Nature at the Confluence 6/6, Moth Night 6/6, Walk With U at Roland Olson 6/7, Hooked on Fun Kids Fishing Derby 6/14.
- Upcoming: Calling Frog Hike 6/20, Butterfly Hike with Natural Land Institute 6/22, Moth Night 7/11, R.E.A.P. Day 7/12, Walk With U at Headquarters 7/12.
- Attended GoRockford 815 Day planning meeting 5/29.
- Tabled at Garden Fair 5/31 & 6/1 (interacted with 375 individuals total).
- Presented as part of a panel to Alpine Kiwanis Club about connecting with nature 5/17.
- Upcoming: tabling at NLI Family Nature Adventures 6/28 & Winnebago County Fair in August.

Print/Signage:

- Wildlife research in progress signs developed and sent to printer.
- Designing summer edition of Nature's Notebook.
- Continuing to develop signage and social promotions to highlight golf capital improvement projects from 2024 and spring 2025.

Marketing & Communication Relations

May 2025 Activities Report – Cont.

Social Media:

- Social Media Stats
 - FPWC Facebook: 5,417 followers (+110)
 - Reach: 26,180 (+68%)
 - Engagement: 1,511 (-27.6%)
 - Views: 66,989 (+19.5%)
 - FPWC Instagram: 1,925 followers (+25)
 - Reach: 2,584 (+60.3%)
 - Engagement: 895 (-13%)
 - Views: 12,885 (-5.1%)

Human Resources

Jody Kennay, Human Resources Manager
May 2025 Activities Report

Orientations May 16 - June 11	6 Sessions
Seasonal and Full Time Hires Attending Orientation	12 Attended (Total since March 18th is 129)
Full-Time Open Requisitions	4 (Executive Director, Golf Course Mechanic, Golf Course Maintenance Teach and Trades Tech I)
New Hires	3 Seasonal 2 Full Time
Resignations	1
Open Enrollment June - July	Process Input System closed 5/28 34 total employees enrolled Review Retiree Options and Dependent Age Out Effective date 7/1/2025

Law Enforcement

May 2025 Activities Report

Brief Activity Summary

- There were 0 Criminal arrests
- There were 16 Calls for service inside of the Forest Preserves
- There were 6 Reports written
- There were 2 Ordinance violations (citations) written
- There were 0 Written warnings
- There were 10 Verbal warnings
- There were 3 Airfield permits
- There were 6 Equestrian bridle tags
- There were 9 Fishing license checks
- There were 32 Occupied shelter house patrols
- There were 32 Campground patrols
- There were 51 Patrols on trail systems
- There were 21 Directed patrol hours