

**Forest Preserves of Winnebago County  
BOARD MEETING**

Wednesday, November 20, 2024 – 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 October 23 – Budget Hearing & Board Meeting

**D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, AWARDS, and PRESENTATIONS**

1. Russell Kaney
2. Ryan Scudder – Holt House

**E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS / DISCUSSION**

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

**G. ACTION ITEMS**

1. Bills for October
3. 2024 Board Meeting Schedule
4. Demolition of Corn Crib
5. Demolition of Small Barn
6. Demolition of the Holt House
7. Contract for Kishwaukee Gorge Forestry Mowing

**H. UPDATES and REPORTS**

9. Preserve Operations
13. Natural Resource Management
16. Golf
20. Marketing
21. Human Resources
22. Law Enforcement
7. Partner Groups

**I. CLOSED SESSION**

1. Land Acquisition
2. Trademark
3. Severson Dells Lease
4. Personnel

**J. ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATION**

1. December 6- Employee Appreciation & Recognition Luncheon at Klehm Arboretum from 11:30am – 2:30pm.
2. December 7 – Backpacking with Burpee at Ferguson Forest Preserve starting at 10:00am.
3. December 7 – Walk with U Guided Hike at Headquarters Forest Preserve from 9:00am-10:00am.

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

Next regular Board Meeting– 5:30 PM Wednesday, December 18, Forest Preserve Headquarters

Anyone wishing to address the Board must call 815-877-6100 or email [ewendlandt@winnebagoforest.org](mailto:ewendlandt@winnebagoforest.org) in advance of the meeting.

**Forest Preserves of Winnebago County**  
**Authorization to Process Payment of Bills**



November 20, 2024

**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 **\$ 897,318.68** 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 | 236,768.65           |
| BOTANICAL GARDEN FUND   | 3120 | 4,017.12             |
| HEALTH BENEFITS FUND    | 3185 | 41,866.27            |
| SOCIAL SECURITY FUND    | 3192 | 18,723.50            |
| RETIREMENT FUND         | 3193 | 16,917.76            |
| IMPROVEMENT & DEV. FUND | 3302 | 433,446.57           |
| CORPORATE FUND          | 3402 | <u>145,578.81</u>    |
|                         |      | <b>\$ 897,318.68</b> |

Respectfully submitted,

---

Steve Chapman, Finance Director

---

Date

## **RESOLUTION**

**No. 24-1101**

### **PAYMENT OF BILLS FOR OCTOBER**

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 October; 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 \$897,318.68 to be paid by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County for the month of October, 2024.

Voting YES \_\_\_\_\_

Voting NO \_\_\_\_\_

The above and foregoing Resolution was adopted this 20th day of November, 2024.

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

---

Jeff Tilly, President  
Board of Commissioners

## **RESOLUTION**

### **No. 24-1102**

#### **Establishing the date, time and location of each regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County for the period from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025**

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 will hold regular meetings during the year 2025 and may hold additional meetings at such other times as may be determined.

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

Section 1. That it shall conduct regular meetings at 5:30 PM in the conference room of Forest Preserve Headquarters, 5500 Northrock Drive, Rockford, Illinois on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month throughout 2025, except where indicated by asterisk:

|             |           |              |
|-------------|-----------|--------------|
| January 15  | May 21    | September 17 |
| February 19 | June 18   | * October 22 |
| March 19    | July 16   | November 19  |
| April 16    | August 20 | December 17  |

Section 2. That additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.

Section 3. That any changes, deletions or additions to times or locations in this schedule shall be posted 48 hours in advance at Forest Preserve Headquarters and distributed to any public media requesting notice of such meetings.

Section 4. That the Secretary of the Board of Commissioners is hereby directed to supply copies of this Resolution to any public media having filed an annual request for notice of the scheduled meetings of the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County.

Voting YES\_\_\_\_\_

Voting NO\_\_\_\_\_

The above and foregoing Resolution was adopted this 20th day of November, 2024.

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

---

Jeff Tilly, President  
Board of Commissioners

## **RESOLUTION**

**No. 24-1103**

### **DEMOLITION AND REMOVAL OF CORN CRIB AT SEVERSON DELLS FOREST PRESERVE**

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (Preserves) owns a property commonly known as Severson Dells Forest Preserve (Severson Dells); and,

WHEREAS, in the northeast quadrant of Severson Dells there is a former farmstead with several outbuildings including a corn crib; and,

WHEREAS, the corn crib has deteriorated shingles, the side walls that are bowing outward and it is infested with raccoons; and,

WHEREAS, the corn crib has no expected future use for the Preserves operations due to the high cost to repair it or redesign it for use; and,

WHEREAS, the continued deterioration of the corn crib will become a safety and health hazard as well as a liability to the Preserves if it remains on site in its current condition; and,

WHEREAS, the Preserves staff recommends the demolition and removal of the corn crib and have incorporated the demolition of the corn crib in the already approved FY 2024/2025 budget.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County Board of Commissioners elect to demolish and remove the corn crib from the former farmstead at Severson Dells Forest Preserve during the 2024/2025 fiscal year.

Voting YES\_\_\_\_\_

Voting NO\_\_\_\_\_

The above and foregoing Resolution was adopted this 20<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2024.

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

---

Jeff Tilly, President  
Board of Commissioners

## **RESOLUTION**

**No. 24-1104**

### **DEMOLITION AND REMOVAL OF SMALL BARN AT SEVERSON DELLS FOREST PRESERVE**

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (Preserves) owns a property commonly known as Severson Dells Forest Preserve (Severson Dells); and,

WHEREAS, in the northeast quadrant of Severson Dells there is a former farmstead with several outbuildings including a small barn; and,

WHEREAS, the small barn has deteriorated shingles, holes through the roof and a rotting upper-level floor; and,

WHEREAS, due to safety concerns the small barn is not currently being used nor does it have any expected future use for the Preserves operations due to the high cost to repair it or redesign it for use; and,

WHEREAS, the continued deterioration of the small barn will become a safety and health hazard as well as a liability to the Preserves if it remains on site in its current condition; and,

WHEREAS, the Preserves staff recommends the demolition and removal of the small barn and have incorporated the demolition of the small barn in the already approved FY 2024/2025 budget.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County Board of Commissioners elect to demolish and remove the small barn from the former farmstead at Severson Dells Forest Preserve during the 2024/2025 fiscal year.

Voting YES\_\_\_\_\_

Voting NO\_\_\_\_\_

The above and foregoing Resolution was adopted this 20<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2024.

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

---

Jeff Tilly, President  
Board of Commissioners

## **RESOLUTION**

**No. 24-1105**

### **DEMOLITION AND REMOVAL OF THE HOLT HOUSE AT SEVERSON DELLS**

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (Preserves) owns a property commonly known as Severson Dells Forest Preserve (Severson Dells); and,

WHEREAS, in the northeast quadrant of Severson Dells there is a former farmstead with several buildings including a limestone house known as the Holt house; and,

WHEREAS, the Holt house is a limestone house that has been abandoned for over 20 years and has deteriorated shingles, roof decking and rafters, several large holes in the roof, ceilings and walls that have collapsed and others that are collapsing, broken windows, rotting and buckled flooring and is infested with raccoons; and,

WHEREAS, due to safety concerns the Holt house is not currently being used nor does it have any expected future use for the Preserves operations due to the high cost to repair it or to redesign it for use; and,

WHEREAS, the deterioration of the Holt house has become a safety and health hazard as well as a liability to the Preserves if it remains on site in its current condition; and,

WHEREAS, the Preserves staff recommends the demolition and removal of the Holt house and have incorporated the demolition of the Holt house in the already approved FY 2024/2025 budget.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County Board of Commissioners elect to demolish and remove the Holt house from the former farmstead at Severson Dells Forest Preserve during the 2024/2025 fiscal year.

Voting YES\_\_\_\_\_

Voting NO\_\_\_\_\_

The above and foregoing Resolution was adopted this 20<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2024.

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

---

Jeff Tilly, President  
Board of Commissioners

## **RESOLUTION**

**No. 24-1106**

### **FORESTRY MOWING AT KISHWAUKEE GORGE FOREST PRESERVE**

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County was awarded a \$50,000 Urban and Community Forestry Grant from the Chicago Region Trees Initiative, with funding originating from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service and Illinois Department of Natural Resources; and,

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County agreed to remove invasive species from 17 acres of woodland at Kishwaukee Gorge Forest Preserve as part of the above award; and,

WHEREAS, the anticipated cost of invasive species removal in the project budget was \$38,000;

WHEREAS, six firms submitted a bid in response to bid package FP #24-1101 “Forestry Mowing at Kishwaukee Gorge Forest Preserve”; and,

WHEREAS, the qualified lowest bid was submitted by Tallgrass Restoration of Milton, WI to complete both the base bid and option one as specified in bid package FP #24-1101 for a total cost of \$37,815; and,

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County Board of Commissioners included funding for this project in the 2024-25 capital budget; and,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County accept the bid from Tallgrass Restoration to remove invasive species from 22.3 acre of woodland at Kishwaukee Gorge Forest Preserve as specified in bid package FP #24-1101 for the price of \$37,815.

Voting YES\_\_\_\_\_

Voting NO\_\_\_\_\_

The above and foregoing Resolution was adopted this 20th day of November, 2024.

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

---

Jeff Tilly, President  
Board of Commissioners



BID TAB  
 24-1101 FORESTRY MOWING AT KISHWAUKEE GORGE FOREST PRESERVE  
 BID OPENING – NOVEMBER 14, 2024 AT 10:00AM

| VENDOR  | COST<br>BASE BID<br>(17 AC.) | COST<br>OPTION 1<br>(5.3 AC.) | TOTAL       | ADDITIONAL<br>FORESTRY MOWING<br>(COST PER ACRE) | ADDITIONAL<br>HERBICIDE<br>APPLICATION<br>(COST PER ACRE) | COMPLETION<br>DATE             | ADDENDUMS |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--|---|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Central Tree & Landscape<br>Mulch, LLC                      | \$31,275.00                  | \$11,700.00                   | \$42,975.00 | \$1,178.00/acre                                  | \$750.00/acre   | Per Contract<br>Specifications | 2 of 2    |
| Stantec Consulting Services,<br>Inc.                        | \$40,531.69                  | \$13,912.20                   | \$54,443.89 | \$1,423.72/acre                                  | \$1,017.71/acre   | 9/20/2025                      | 2 of 2    |
| Tallgrass Restoration                                       | \$25,670.00                  | \$12,145.00                   | \$37,815.00 | \$1,118.00/acre                                  | \$576.00/acre   | 9/20/2025                      | 2 of 2    |
| Homer Tree Service, Inc.                                    | \$72,300.00                  | \$22,260.00                   | \$94,560.00 | \$3,000.00/acre                                  | \$1,200.00/acre   | 9/30/2025                      | 2 of 2    |
| Bluestem Ecological<br>Services                             | Bid Rejected                 |                               |             |  |   |                                |           |
| HGS, LLC dba<br>RES Environmental<br>Operating Company, LLC | \$35,990.00                  | \$11,260.00                   | \$47,250.00 | \$1,300.00/acre                                  | \$900.00/acre   | 9/31/2025                      | 2 of 2    |

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County  
 5500 Northrock Drive, Rockford, IL 61103  
 Phone: (815) 877-6100 | [FPWC@winnebagoforest.org](mailto:FPWC@winnebagoforest.org)

# **Preserve Operations**

Vaughn Stamm, Director of Operations  
Matt Weik & Scott Wallace, Preserve Managers  
Bryan Helmold, Facility & Equipment Manager  
October 2024 Activities Report

- Installed new grill at Kishwaukee River Sleepy Hollow Shelter.
- Sanded and stained Kiosk at Cedar Cliff and Funderburg preserves.
- Repaired washed out culvert along the Oak Ridge trails.
- Rerouted lower trail loop at Fuller.
- Installed new swing seats and chains at Seward Bluffs playground.
- Replaced pipe gate at lower drive at Fuller Forest Preserve.
- Painted interior of concrete outhouses at Fuller and Kishwaukee East and Pecatonica River Scout Camp.
- Installed new cable gate at Four Lakes dog training area.
- Hazardous tree removals at the Seward Bluffs playground and around the Arrowhead Shelter and parking lot.
- Repaired roadway near the Pecatonica River boat landing.
- Cleaned out the Pecatonica River study center and the house at the Funderburg property.
- Added asphalt to bridge approach on recreation path at Blackhawk Springs.
- Repaired damaged trailhead sign at Funderburg.
- Cut in snowmobile trails at Four Lakes, Pecatonica River Wetlands, and Seward Bluffs preserves.
- Removed multiple hazardous trees from the trails at Severson Dells.
- Staff assisted with volunteer tree planting workday at Blackhawk Springs.
- Trimmed trees around Pecatonica River playground.
- Continued fall cleanup of preserves and roadways.
- Patched asphalt along entry drive at Blackhawk Springs.
- Leveled off and seeded turf area at Espenscheid.
- Trimmed back and cleaned out butterfly garden at Severson Dells.
- Added gravel to section of The Grove Play Area at Severson Dells.
- Ground stumps in Sugar River Campground.

## **Preserve Operations**

### **October 2024 Activities Report – Cont.**

- Pruned back trails at Roland Olson.
- String trimmed boat launch at Macktown.
- Painted outhouse floors at Two Rivers, Olson, Kieselburg, Sugar River Campground.
- Mulched and blew leaves off of sites at Hononegah Campground.
- Blew leaves off of roadways in various preserves.
- Prepped and hosted Halloween event at Sugar River Campground.
- Replaced rectangle fire pit on site #19 at Hononegah Campground.
- Removed brush pile near boat launch at Hononegah.
- Removed dead tree on site #35 at Hononegah campground.
- Removed boat docks at Atwood Homestead.
- Tractor mowed entrance to Sugar River Attendant Building area.
- Split firewood and stocked fire wood bins weekly.
- Hauled scrap metal to central shop metal bin.
- Updated info kiosks in preserves.
- Revamped wood splitting/aggregate area at Sugar River shop.
- Prepped for Macktown Living History Frenchman's Frolic event.
- Pruned back all trails at Sugar River FP.
- Completed monthly Inspections.
- Hauled aggregate material to Sugar River/Hononegah Shops.
- Cleaned and reorganized Hononegah maintenance shop.
- Blew out water fountain lines at Headquarters.
- Area Mechanical serviced furnaces in Sugar River and Hononegah shops.
- Trimmed back trails at Ferguson Forest Preserve.
- Prepped for Macktown Living History Lincoln & Liberty event.
- Applied for and received IPARKS Power Grant for \$1,500.

# FOREST PRESERVES OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY

## Year End Totals

|                               | <u>2022-2023</u> |                 | <u>2023-2024</u> |                 |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                               | <u>Number</u>    | <u>Total</u>    | <u>Number</u>    | <u>Total</u>    |
| Small Shelter Res.            | 81               | \$5,600         | 59               | \$5,015         |
| Small Shelter N/Res.          | 5                | \$500           | 7                | \$770           |
| Large Shelter Res.            | 144              | \$14,400        | 136              | \$14,960        |
| Large Shelter N/Res.          | 18               | \$2,250         | 5                | \$675           |
| Electric Res.                 | 195              | \$22,425        | 175              | \$21,875        |
| Electric N/Res.               | 10               | \$1,450         | 14               | \$2,170         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>453</b>       | <b>\$46,625</b> | <b>396</b>       | <b>\$45,465</b> |
| <b>ONLINE</b>                 | <b>315</b>       | <b>70%</b>      | <b>273</b>       | <b>69%</b>      |
| Over 300 Res.                 | 0                | \$0             | 0                | \$0             |
| Over 300 N/Res.               | 0                | \$0             | 0                | \$0             |
| Ground Use/Tent Res           | 13               | \$325           | 14               | \$420           |
| Ground Use/Tent N/Res.        | 1                | \$40            | 1                | \$100           |
| Building Use Permits          | 6                | \$800           | 1                | \$100           |
| Commercial Photography Permit | 2                | \$200           | 3                | \$300           |
| Special Use Permits           | 19               | \$3,402         | 5                | \$1,005         |
| Rides                         | 23               | \$805           | 12               | \$480           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>64</b>        | <b>\$5,572</b>  | <b>36</b>        | <b>\$2,405</b>  |
| <b>ONLINE</b>                 | <b>23</b>        | <b>36%</b>      | <b>0</b>         | <b>0%</b>       |
| <b>Equestrian Passes</b>      | <b>Number</b>    | <b>Total</b>    | <b>Number</b>    | <b>Total</b>    |
| Yearly Tag Res.               | 92               | \$4,450         | 102              | \$5,100         |
| Yearly Tag N/Res.             | 43               | \$3,120         | 48               | \$3,360         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>135</b>       | <b>\$7,570</b>  | <b>150</b>       | <b>\$8,460</b>  |
| <b>ONLINE</b>                 | <b>38</b>        | <b>28%</b>      | <b>43</b>        | <b>29%</b>      |
| <b>Fly Field Passes</b>       | <b>Number</b>    | <b>Total</b>    | <b>Number</b>    | <b>Total</b>    |
| Yearly Pass Res.              | 42               | \$1,260         | 50               | \$1,750         |
| Yearly Pass N/Res.            | 11               | \$400           | 11               | \$495           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>53</b>        | <b>\$1,660</b>  | <b>61</b>        | <b>\$2,245</b>  |
| <b>ONLINE</b>                 | <b>11</b>        | <b>21%</b>      | <b>23</b>        | <b>38%</b>      |
| <b>Metal Detecting Passes</b> | <b>Number</b>    | <b>Total</b>    | <b>Number</b>    | <b>Total</b>    |
| Yearly Pass Res.              | 30               | \$750           | 37               | \$925           |
| Yearly Pass N/Res.            | 8                | \$280           | 7                | \$245           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>38</b>        | <b>\$1,030</b>  | <b>44</b>        | <b>\$1,170</b>  |
| <b>ONLINE</b>                 |                  | <b>0%</b>       | <b>11</b>        | <b>25%</b>      |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>            | <b>743</b>       | <b>\$62,457</b> | <b>687</b>       | <b>\$59,745</b> |
| <b>ONLINE</b>                 | <b>387</b>       | <b>52%</b>      | <b>350</b>       | <b>51%</b>      |

**FOREST PRESERVES OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY  
2021-2024  
CAMPING REVENUE COMPARISON**

|                                | <u><b>2021</b></u><br>(thru 10/24) | <u><b>2022</b></u><br>(thru 10/23) | <u><b>2023</b></u><br>(thru 10/30) | <u><b>2024</b></u><br>(thru 10/28) |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>CAMPGROUNDS</b>             |                                    |                                    |                                    |                                    |
| Hononegah                      | \$24,921                           | \$30,309                           | \$36,080                           | \$37,563                           |
| Seward Bluffs                  | 47,059                             | 37,032                             | 44,949                             | 53,186                             |
| Sugar River                    | <u>88,550</u>                      | <u>72,911</u>                      | <u>72,343</u>                      | <u>79,239</u>                      |
| Campground Revenue             | \$160,530                          | \$140,252                          | \$153,372                          | \$169,988                          |
| <b>SCOUT/YOUTH CAMPGROUNDS</b> |                                    |                                    |                                    |                                    |
| Hononegah                      | \$110                              | \$185                              | \$366                              | \$282                              |
| Pecatonica River               | 695                                | 605                                | 540                                | 577                                |
| Rockford Rotary                | 355                                | 335                                | 340                                | 331                                |
| Seward Bluffs                  | 230                                | 245                                | 135                                | 0                                  |
| Sugar River                    | <u>220</u>                         | <u>240</u>                         | <u>222</u>                         | <u>589</u>                         |
| Scout/Youth Campground Revenue | \$1,610                            | \$1,610                            | \$1,603                            | \$1,779                            |
| <b>EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUNDS</b>  |                                    |                                    |                                    |                                    |
| Oak Ridge                      | \$54                               | \$61                               | \$64                               | \$492                              |
| Seward Bluffs                  | <u>968</u>                         | <u>1,107</u>                       | <u>1,287</u>                       | <u>1302</u>                        |
| Equestrian Campground Revenue  | \$1,022                            | \$1,168                            | \$1,351                            | \$1,794                            |
| <b>FIREWOOD</b>                |                                    |                                    |                                    |                                    |
| Hononegah                      | \$2,219                            | \$1,750                            | \$1,865                            | \$3,369                            |
| Seward Bluffs                  | 3,108                              | 2,417                              | 3,737                              | 3,977                              |
| Sugar River                    | <u>11,468</u>                      | <u>7,244</u>                       | <u>9,588</u>                       | <u>8,908</u>                       |
| Firewood Revenue               | \$16,795                           | \$11,411                           | \$15,190                           | \$16,254                           |
| <b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>           | <b>\$179,957</b>                   | <b>\$154,441</b>                   | <b>\$171,516</b>                   | <b>\$189,815</b>                   |

|  |       |       |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| NUMBER OF GROUPS<br>AT REGULAR CAMPGROUNDS<br>(DOES NOT INCLUDE EQUESTRIAN AND<br>SCOUT/YOUTH CAMPING) | 2,992 | 2,464 | 2,608 | 2,723 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|

# Natural Resource Management

Mike Brien, Director of Natural Resources

Mike Groves, Natural Resources Manager

Keith Krey, Stewardship Coordinator

Liz Hucker, Wildlife Biologist

October 2024 Activities Report

## Natural Resource Staff

- Hand collected seed of asters, goldenrods, blazingstars, gentians, thimbleweed, rattlesnake master, wild petunia, turtlehead, nodding onion, quinine, and others from preserves throughout the county.
- Prepared burn equipment and installed burn breaks in preserves throughout the county for upcoming prescribed fire season.
- Applied basal bark herbicide to black locust trees at Pecatonica River, Seward Bluffs, Kishwaukee River, and Funderburg Forest Preserves.
- Forestry mowed brush in tree planting site at Blackhawk Springs Forest Preserve.
- Processed seed at Severson Dells natural resource facility as needed.
- Sandra participated in a career day at Nature at the Confluence in South Beloit, where she presented to students about her role at the District. One student joined her for a day of job shadowing.
- Eric led a Hononegah High School field trip at Sugar River Forest Preserve where students learned about the ecology of Winnebago County and helped plant trees.
- Planted potted plants grown at the District greenhouse in preserves throughout the county and watered as needed.
- Monitored plants of concern in preserves throughout the county.
- Assisted with volunteer tree planting, seed collection, and invasive species removal workdays at Blackhawk Springs and Oak Ridge Forest Preserves.
- Held departmental planning meeting at the Pecatonica River study center, where natural resource staff discussed successes and challenges over the past year and developed a list of priority winter clearing projects.
- Attended Oaktober conference at the Morton Arboretum.
- Coordinated seed collection effort at Bell Bowl Prairie with contractors employed by the Rockford Airport Authority.
- Completed the Nature Nook native landscaping project at Burpee Museum of Natural History. District staff, along with staff from Burpee and volunteers from both organizations, planted two trees, 53 shrubs, and over 1,000 native grasses, sedges, and wildflowers.
- Submitted quarterly financial and performance reports to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for the current OSLAD funded nature playground project at Klehm Arboretum. The final site plans have been approved by IDNR and the project is currently out for bid.
- Chris Evans, with the University of Illinois Extension Office, led a workshop on trees and shrubs for wildlife at Headquarters Forest Preserve, which was attended by 40 people.

## **Natural Resource Management**

### **October 2024 Activities Report – Cont.**

- Met with Alex Mills of Klehm Arboretum to discuss potential grant projects.
- Met with landowners in southern Winnebago County to discuss a potential land donation.
- Wrapped up the phragmites control project at Stone Bridge Forest Preserve. A contractor used a Marsh Master to apply herbicide and mow invasive phragmites over a 14-acre area.

#### **Wildlife**

- Assisted the Ward Lab of Ornithology, from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, with the installation of a new Motus tower at Sugar River Alder Forest Preserve. The tower will monitor the movements of radio tagged wood thrush, cuckoos, and northern saw-whet owls.
- Continued working on finding a permanent home and coordinating permits for the state endangered River Cooter that was dumped in a preserve.
- Continued tracking radio tagged Blandings turtles. Two turtles were recaptured in order to replace old transmitters that were nearing the end of their expected battery life with new two-year transmitters. Turtle traps have been closed and put away for the season.
- Participated in the Rockford Public School's Academy Expo at Mercy Health Sportscore Two. Brought two live snakes to the event and talked to students about the field of wildlife conservation.
- Continued to monitor amphibian and reptile activity ahead of fall prescribed burn season.
- Sharpshooting practice ahead of deer management season.
- Assisted with bird banding at Sand Bluff Bird Observatory.

#### **Stewardship**

- Hosted a volunteer workday at Blackhawk Springs and Oak Ridge Forest Preserves. 182 students from Christian Life came out to help plant 175 trees and shrubs, remove invasive species, and harvest native seed.
- Hosted four seed collection workdays at Cedar Cliff Forest Preserve where volunteers collected rattlesnake master and Canada wild rye.
- Staffed FPWC booth with Liz Hucker and Renee Pixler at Rockford Public Schools 205 Academy Expo for volunteer recruitment and public outreach.
- Staffed FPWC booth with Renee Pixler and Sherry Winebaugh at NIU's Internship and Job Fair for volunteer recruitment.
- Participated in the volunteer planting of the Nature Nook at Burpee Natural History Museum.
- Opened, cleaned and repaired Eastern Bluebird nest boxes at Blackhawk Springs, Cedar Cliff, Deer Run, Funderberg and Oak Ridge Forest Preserves.
- Hosted a litter pickup day at Blackhawk Springs Forest Preserve with the Jesus Christ Church of Latter-Day Saints.
- Attended several webinars to stay current on volunteer stewardship issues.



# Natural Resource Management

## October 2024 Activities Report – Cont.

### *2024 Statistics*

A total of 367 volunteers earned 3,195.25 service hours from January 2024 through October 2024.

The monetary value of these service hours equals **\$107,009.03**. 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  
October 2024 Activities Report

## **Clubhouse Operations:**

- HAM Invitational @ Ledges GC - 100 participants.
- Annual Ewing Outing @ Ledges GC - 100 participants.
- IHSA 2A Girls Sectional Tournament @ Atwood Homestead GC - 112 participants.
- 2025 Request for Rehire questionnaires issued to all seasonal staff for completion.
- Starting tee times moved to 9am.
- Took delivery of new golf carts at Macktown GC.
- Final day for play @ Macktown GC Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Accel Entertainment- Gaming machines / ATM collection scheduled.
- 1 New Hires: John Gaines- Golf Shop Cashier.

## **Golf Maintenance:**

### **Ledges**

- Hand watered localized dry spots on greens and collars.
- Continued fertility program on all putting green surfaces.
- Continued fertility program on all tee complexes.
- Continued fertility program on all fairways.
- Continued trimming low hanging limbs along property line.
- Replaced solenoids on several irrigation heads.
- Replaced several nonfunctioning fairway irrigation heads with smaller internal components and conversion kits due to parts availability.
- Daily leaf cleanup on all greens, tees and fairways.
- Tree removal and cleanup on hole #2.
- Finished power washing, waxing and servicing golf car fleet.
- Began power washing and servicing equipment fleet.
- Trimmed ponds and waterways with boom mower.
- Winterized on course restrooms.
- Winterized water wagons prior to parking in storage.
- Verti-cut all tee boxes to remove organic matter.
- Tested all irrigation stations prior to winterization.

# **Golf Operations**

## **October 2024 Activities Report – Cont.**

### **Macktown**

- Tested all irrigation stations prior to winterization.
- Cleaned all hickory nuts from around clubhouse.
- Received and inspected delivery of new golf car fleet.
- Parked golf car fleet in storage for winter.
- Winterized water wagons prior to parking in storage.
- Began power washing and servicing equipment fleet.
- Continued fertility program on all tee complexes.
- Continued fertility program on all putting green surfaces.
- Continued fertility program on fairways.
- Continued trimming low hanging limbs throughout the golf course.
- Hand watered localized dry spots on greens and collars.
- Replaced several cracked irrigation head risers.
- Swept and mulched leaves to keep playing surfaces clean.
- All golf course accessories brought in for the season.
- Tested irrigation satellites prior to blowing out system.
- Winterized irrigation pump station.

### **Atwood**

- Core aerated collars and approaches to remove thatch and reduce compaction.
- Repaired numerous irrigation heads and leaking swing joints.
- Swept and mulched leaves to keep playing surfaces clean.
- Increased the size of tee complex on numerous holes to allow for a better golfing experience.
- Continued removal of volunteer trees in restoration areas.
- Began to service golf cart fleet prior to winter storage.
- Hand watered localized dry areas on greens and collars.

**Forest Preserves of Winnebago County  
Golf Course Revenue & Sales  
Year End Totals**

|                                   | <b><u>2020-2021</u></b> | <b><u>2021-2022</u></b> | <b><u>2022-2023</u></b> | <b><u>2023-2024</u></b> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b><u>Atwood Homestead</u></b>    |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Green Fees                        | \$271,707               | \$244,423               | \$272,264               | \$312,527               |
| Foot Golf Fees                    | \$120                   | \$0                     | \$0                     | \$0                     |
| Cart Rental                       | \$210,489               | \$188,837               | \$202,573               | \$231,348               |
| Merchandise                       | \$32,624                | \$29,938                | \$34,518                | \$31,068                |
| Gift Card                         | \$377                   | \$687                   | \$725                   | \$599                   |
| Discount Gift Card                | \$64,094                | \$58,472                | \$67,466                | \$85,025                |
| Capital Improvement Fee           | \$26,628                | \$22,289                | \$23,219                | \$24,238                |
| Food & Beverage                   | \$88,332                | \$91,969                | \$111,470               | \$115,182               |
| Golf Club Rental                  | \$0                     | \$0                     | \$600                   | \$880                   |
| Video Gaming & ATM                | \$4,801                 | \$4,887                 | \$3,939                 | \$5,010                 |
| <b>Total Atwood Revenue</b>       | <b>\$699,172</b>        | <b>\$641,502</b>        | <b>\$716,774</b>        | <b>\$805,877</b>        |
| <b><u>Ledges</u></b>              |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Green Fees                        | \$272,159               | \$262,507               | \$286,575               | \$309,170               |
| Cart Rental                       | \$209,355               | \$196,833               | \$217,756               | \$232,928               |
| Merchandise                       | \$24,408                | \$25,555                | \$29,296                | \$28,287                |
| Gift Card                         | \$328                   | \$111                   | \$245                   | \$0                     |
| Discount Gift Card                | \$56,385                | \$65,078                | \$76,686                | \$86,600                |
| Capital Improvement Fee           | \$25,455                | \$24,352                | \$26,182                | \$26,746                |
| Food & Beverage                   | \$121,021               | \$123,658               | \$143,030               | \$156,539               |
| Golf Club Rental                  | \$0                     | \$0                     | \$680                   | \$820                   |
| Video Gaming & ATM                | \$4,509                 | \$5,173                 | \$2,894                 | \$5,390                 |
| <b>Total Ledges Revenue</b>       | <b>\$713,620</b>        | <b>\$703,266</b>        | <b>\$783,344</b>        | <b>\$846,481</b>        |
| <b><u>Macktown</u></b>            |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Green Fees                        | \$188,180               | \$177,854               | \$211,731               | \$218,384               |
| Cart Rental                       | \$152,739               | \$139,749               | \$167,640               | \$165,245               |
| Merchandise                       | \$17,742                | \$16,822                | \$19,453                | \$16,080                |
| Gift Card                         | \$0                     | \$25                    | \$0                     | \$217                   |
| Discount Gift Card                | \$92,952                | \$78,056                | \$97,355                | \$100,900               |
| Capital Improvement Fee           | \$19,068                | \$17,637                | \$20,401                | \$20,121                |
| Food & Beverage                   | \$93,905                | \$95,953                | \$114,607               | \$119,479               |
| Golf Club Rental                  | \$0                     | \$0                     | \$200                   | \$110                   |
| Video Gaming & ATM                | \$5,542                 | \$3,814                 | \$3,815                 | \$5,962                 |
| <b>Total Macktown Revenue</b>     | <b>\$570,128</b>        | <b>\$529,910</b>        | <b>\$635,201</b>        | <b>\$646,497</b>        |
| <b><u>Headquarters</u></b>        |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Gift Card                         | \$1,875                 | \$2,554                 | \$1,430                 | \$3,170                 |
| Discount Gift Card                | \$29,243                | \$34,072                | \$30,804                | \$32,822                |
| Golf Passes                       | \$270,015               | \$294,780               | \$315,785               | \$328,440               |
| Capital Improvement Fee           | \$29,770                | \$32,820                | \$32,338                | \$32,880                |
| Tournaments                       | \$14,455                | \$16,670                | \$18,623                | \$23,605                |
| Private Golf Cart Registration    | \$12,500                | \$11,650                | \$11,650                | \$10,150                |
| <b>Total Headquarters Revenue</b> | <b>\$357,858</b>        | <b>\$392,546</b>        | <b>\$410,629</b>        | <b>\$431,067</b>        |
| <b>Total Golf Course Revenue</b>  | <b>\$2,340,778</b>      | <b>\$2,267,225</b>      | <b>\$2,545,948</b>      | <b>\$2,729,921</b>      |

Option not available for that season

**Forest Preserves of Winnebago County  
Golf Course Revenue & Sales  
Year End Totals**

|  | <b><u>2020-2021</u></b> | <b><u>2021-2022</u></b> | <b><u>2022-2023</u></b> | <b><u>2023-2024</u></b> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b><u>Rounds Played</u></b>                  |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Atwood                                       | 27,008                  | 23,024                  | 26,596                  | 28,142                  |
| Footgolf                                     | 24                      | 0                       | 0                       | 0                       |
| Ledges                                       | 25,512                  | 22,701                  | 24,201                  | 26,023                  |
| Macktown                                     | 23,699                  | 20,156                  | 22,887                  | 24,456                  |
| <b>Total Rounds Played</b>                   | <b>76,243</b>           | <b>65,881</b>           | <b>73,684</b>           | <b>78,621</b>           |
| <b><u>Golf Passes</u></b>                    |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Premier Card Res.                            | 29                      | 31                      | 28                      | 28                      |
| Premier Card Res.-Refer-A-Friend             | 28                      | 36                      | 37                      | 47                      |
| Premier Card Non-Res.                        | 2                       | 1                       | 2                       | 2                       |
| Premier Card Non-Res.-Refer-A-Friend         | 2                       | 3                       | 1                       | 1                       |
| Player Card Res.                             | 186                     | 189                     | 164                     | 162                     |
| Player Card Res.-Refer-A-Friend              | 223                     | 252                     | 278                     | 279                     |
| Player Card Non-Res.                         | 10                      | 11                      | 9                       | 11                      |
| Player Card Non-Res.-Refer-A-Friend          | 20                      | 24                      | 20                      | 18                      |
| Student Card Res.                            | 62                      | 68                      | 73                      | 103                     |
| Student Card Non-Res.                        | 3                       | 5                       | 10                      | 10                      |
| Team Pass                                    | 19                      | 17                      | 15                      | 8                       |
| Practice Range Res.                          | 21                      | 25                      | 19                      | 21                      |
| Practice Range Non-Res.                      | 0                       | 0                       | 0                       | 0                       |
| <b>Total Passes</b>                          | <b>605</b>              | <b>662</b>              | <b>656</b>              | <b>690</b>              |
| <b><u>Private Golf Cart Registration</u></b> |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Inside Storage                               | 0                       |                         |                         |                         |
| Outside Storage                              | 4                       | 3                       | 3                       | 2                       |
| Home Storage                                 | 15                      | 15                      | 14                      | 13                      |
| <b>Total Private Golf Cart Registration</b>  | <b>19</b>               | <b>18</b>               | <b>17</b>               | <b>15</b>               |

*Option not available for that season*

# **Marketing & Communication Relations**

Renee Pixler, Communications Coordinator

## **October 2024 Activities Report**

### **Marketing/Advertising:**

- Have ads running on gorockford.com “Things to Do” pages.
  - Sports (golf)
  - Outdoor Activities
  - Family Fun
- Working with Mid-West Family Broadcasting.
  - Running digital ads and radio commercials
  - Running digital ads on Rock River Current website

### **Media Relations**

- Featured in “*A Walk in the Park: Kishwaukee River Forest Preserve offers easy access to fish, kayak*” article on Rockford Register Star website.

### **Events/Programs**

- 2024 Preserve Passport – We continue to see success and great engagement through the goosechase app! As of 11/7/24 we have:
  - **121 total teams**
    - **65 active teams**
  - **800 submissions**

### **Community Engagement**

- Attended NIU All Majors Career Fair to promote season positions.
- Presented to Audrey Johnson’s church group.
- Attended RPS 205 Academy Expo. Talked to high school freshman about careers in the conservation and wildlife biology field.

### **Miscellaneous**

- Finished designing 2025 FPWC Wall Calendar.
- Helping Sherry plan the employee Winter party.

### **Social Media**

- Social Media Stats (compared to September 2024 report)
  - FPWC Facebook: 5,047 followers (+19) 5053
  - FPWC Instagram: 1,772 followers (+53) 1788
  - FPWC Golf Facebook: 627 followers (+17) 628
  - FPWC Golf Instagram: 286 followers (+1) 289

# Human Resources

## Sherry Winebaugh, Human Resources Manager October 2024 Activities Report

In October, I focused on several key areas, including assisting employees with benefits, supporting recruitment efforts, conducting interviews, overseeing seasonal new hire orientation and safety training, and addressing various personnel matters.

- **DOT Clearinghouse Project**

The DOT Clearinghouse project has been completed, with all necessary updates and compliance measures in place. I worked closely with FigmentGroup, Inc., our third-party DOT consulting and compliance consultant, to ensure all requirements were met and the process was completed smoothly.

- **Employee Benefit Enrollment**

I assisted two employees with their benefit enrollment to ensure they selected the correct coverage for the upcoming year.

- **New Seasonal Hires**

We hired two new seasonal employees, bringing our total seasonal staff to 116. As part of their onboarding, we held orientation and safety training sessions that focused on our agency's culture, policies, and safety protocols. These sessions are essential for creating a positive, secure work environment and ensuring new hires are well-prepared for their roles.

- **IPBC Mineral Platform Training**

I attended training for the IPBC Mineral Platform, a helpful tool for managing employee benefits and HR tasks. This platform will support our efforts to streamline benefits administration and improve overall employee support.

- **Meeting with Jenny Warp, Benefits Consultant**

I met with Jenny Warp, our Benefits Consultant from IPBC, to discuss upcoming changes and initiatives for employee benefits.

- **Recruiting for Communications Coordinator**

I have started the recruiting process to fill the Communications Coordinator position. I have received several resumes and will begin setting up interviews soon.

- **Personnel Issues and Staff Relations**

I also addressed various personnel issues for both seasonal and full-time staff, focusing on our commitment to resolving employee concerns effectively while promoting a productive and positive workplace.

- **IPBC Membership Development Committee Meeting**

As an IPBC Membership Development member, I attended the monthly Zoom meeting for our committee. This meeting provided valuable insights and updates on ongoing initiatives to strengthen IPBC membership and services.

- **Christmas Party Plans**

We are *wrapping* up the final details for our Christmas party, which will take place on Friday, December 6, 2024, at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. This will be a wonderful opportunity for employees to come together and celebrate the season.

# Law Enforcement

## October 2024 Activities Report

### **Brief Activity Summary**

- There were 0 Criminal arrests
- There were 15 Calls for service inside of the Forest Preserves
- There were 6 Reports written
- There were 0 Ordinance violations (citations) written
- There were 0 Written warnings
- There were 14 Verbal warnings
- There were 0 Airfield permits
- There were 5 Equestrian bridle tags
- There were 4 Fishing license checks
- There were 44 Occupied shelter house patrols
- There were 29 Campground patrols
- There were 27 Patrols on trail systems
- There were 37 Directed patrol hours