

1-4111 Hlep

Speakers List  
Forest Preserve Botanic Garden and Zoological Committees  
10/15/2019

- |                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ✓ 1. Jean Franczyk         | Chicago Botanic Garden          |
| ✓ 2. Stuart Strahl         | Chicago Zoological Society      |
| ✓ 3. Students              | North Park Elementary           |
| ✓ 4. Benjamin Cox          | Friends of the Forest Preserves |
| ✓ 5. Sam Vergara           | Chicago Botanic Garden          |
| ✓ 6. Chris Gladwin         | Ocient Inc                      |
| ✓ 7. Nina Duenas           | El Valor                        |
| ✓ 8. Aaron Koch            | The Trust for Public Land       |
| ✓ 9. Daniel Suarez         | Audubon Great Lakes             |
| ✓ 10. Prof. Mark Templeton | Conservation Policy Council     |
| ✓ 11. Dr. Phalese Binion   | Westside Ministers Coalition    |
| ✓ 12. William Miller       | The Nature Conservancy          |
| ✓ 13. David Branigan       | Palos Restoration Project       |
| ✓ 14. Patricia Hayes       | Orland Grassland Volunteers     |
| ✓ 15. Jerry Adelman        | Openlands                       |
| ✓ 16. Patricia Provenzano  | Friends of the Forest Preserves |
| ✓ 17. John Spencer         | Chicago Model Masters           |
| ✓ 18. Jon Quail            | Friends of the Chicago River    |
| ✓ 19. Michael Diaz         | Misericordia                    |
| ✓ 20. Evelyn Barker        | Chicago Heights, Illinois       |
| ✓ 21. Brenda Elmore        | Friends of the Forest Preserve  |
| ✓ 22. Laura Stanek         | Nature Exploration Academy      |







#### Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Jean M. Franczyk
- Organization (if any): Chicago Botanic Garden
- City/Town: Glencoe
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60022

#### Q2

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

- FPD Botanic Garden meeting 10/15/2019 9a

#### Q3

Tell us the File ID number (example 17-0000) of the item on which you are registering your position. If you don't know the number, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look it up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar

19-0139

#### Q4

What do you want to do?

- ATTEND THE MEETING and SPEAK IN FAVOR of a specific item (You may still add written comments below)

#### Q5

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

The Forest Preserves of Cook County Botanic Garden Committee and Zoological Committee will meet on October 15 to hear from community members regarding a proposed referendum that will enable Cook County voters to increase funding for the Forest Preserves of Cook County.



Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Stuart Strahl
- Organization (if any): Chicago Zoological Society-Brookfield Zoo
- City/Town: Brookfield
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60513

Q2

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- FPD Zoological meeting 10/15/2019 9a

Q3

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19-0175 - General Comments about Referendum

Q4

What do you want to do?

- ATTEND THE MEETING and SPEAK FOR INFORMATION ONLY (You may still add written comments below)

Q5

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Attachments will be emailed.



Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Isabel, Violet, Peyton, Naomi, Katharine, Annie, Ms. Nelles
- Organization (if any): North Park Elementary
- City/Town: Chicago
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60618

Q2

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

- FPD Botanic Garden meeting 10/15/2019 9a

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Respondent skipped this question

Q4

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This is our future you're deciding on. We need healthy forest preserves to provide habitat for animals, provide green space for city people, give us a place to learn and volunteer and breathe fresh air. The preserves give us oxygen and will help us fight climate change. It's our responsibility to protect the earth - no one else will do it for us.





Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Sam Vergara
- Organization (if any): Chicago Botanic Garden / Windy City Harvest
- City/Town: Chicago
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60623

Q2

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- FPD Botanic Garden meeting 10/15/2019 9a

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19-0139

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#### Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Nina Duenas
- Organization (if any): El Valor
- City/Town: CHICAGO
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60608

#### Q2

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- FPD Zoological meeting 10/15/2019 9a

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19-0175 - General Comments on Referendum

#### Q4

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#### Q5

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NA





#### Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Aaron Koch
- Organization (if any): The Trust for Public Land
- City/Town: Chicago
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60603

#### Q2

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

- FPD Botanic Garden meeting 10/15/2019 9a

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#19-0139 and 19-0175

#### Q4

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I will submit written testimony separately.





October 15, 2019

Forest Preserve District of Cook County  
Board of Commissioners  
Botanic Gardens Committee and Zoological Committee  
File # 19-0139 and 19-0175

Re: Written Testimony by The Trust for Public Land

Dear Commissioners:

*Chicago Advisory Board*

Stephen W. Baird  
*Chair*

Kyle Barnett  
Solomon Barnett  
Jonathan Berger  
Paul Brouman  
Lynne F. Dinzole  
Frances R. Grossman  
Kenneth Kaufman  
Deirdre B. Koldyke  
James E. Mann  
Jeffrey T. McClelland  
Adrienne Meisel  
Marion S. Searle  
Britt Whitfield  
Elizabeth Yntema

*Chicago Field Program*

Aaron Koch  
*Chicago Area Director*

The Trust for Public Land strongly supports efforts to increase funding for the Forest Preserves of Cook County by placing a ballot measure before the voters of Cook County asking them to dedicate additional funding for the Forests Preserves. The mission of the Forest Preserves is entirely consistent with The Trust for Public Land's mission to create parks and protect land for people. The Forest Preserves of Cook County are an integral part of our community and contribute immensely to Cook County's quality of life. The Forest Preserves play an important role in helping to protect water and air quality. They give our children a place to play and explore nature safely and stay physically fit. The Forest Preserves provide summer jobs and scholarship opportunities to children in neighborhoods in all parts of the county.

The Trust for Public Land is the nation's foremost expert on creating new public funds for parks and conservation at the state and local level through ballot measures. Since 1996, The Trust for Public Land has supported 564 successful state and local ballot measures creating \$75 billion in new public funding for parks, land conservation, restoration, and stewardship. Across the country, voters have approved 82 percent of the ballot measure supported by The Trust for Public Land. We have been directly involved in twelve city, county, and special district land conservation and park ballot measures in Illinois and won ten, generating over \$469 million in new funding. In the Chicago metropolitan area, we have worked on successful land conservation ballot measures in Kendall, Kane, Will, McHenry, and DuPage Counties.

When given an opportunity to vote on dedicated funding for land conservation and parks, voters in Illinois have shown very strong support. Illinois voters have approved twenty referenda that generated over \$1.2 billion for conservation for Conservation and Forest Preserve Districts throughout the state over last 25 years. Over the last ten years, Forest Preserve Districts in all of the Chicago-area "collar" counties, including Kane, Lake, Kendall, McHenry, DuPage, and DeKalb Counties passed ballot measures providing additional funding. A number of these Forest Preserve ballot measures have received voter support in excess of 60 percent.

The Forest Preserves of Cook County requested technical assistance from the Trust for Public Land on September 6, 2016 and again July 15, 2019 in connection with your efforts to develop and sustain reliable, ongoing sources of funding for land conservation, open space, and natural area protection and stewardship.





The Trust for Public Land has conducted extensive research in Cook County to understand the finance mechanisms that are available to the Forest Preserve to increase funding and voter attitudes towards increased and dedicated funding for the Forest Preserves. Much of this research was made possible through the generous support of the Dorothy and Gaylord Donnelley Foundation.

Based on our experience over 25 years working on successful ballot measures in Illinois, in the Chicago "collar" counties, throughout the country, and our recent Cook County-specific research, we respectfully recommend that the Forest Preserve District of Cook County place a ballot question before the Cook County voters on the March 2020 presidential preference primary ballot to increase funding for the Forest Preserves.

The Forest Preserves have demonstrated a compelling need for new funding for land conservation and restoration to protect and improve water and air quality and to provide nature education for children. A ballot measure to increase funding for the Forest Preserves can be very affordable. The voters of Cook County trust the Forest Preserves of Cook County to spend new funding wisely. If you refer a measure to the March 2020 ballot, The Trust for Public Land is prepared to work with our partners in Cook County to conduct a robust voter education campaign.

We would be pleased to continue to provide our technical assistance and advice to the Forest Preserves, to answer any questions you may have, or to provide any additional information you may need.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aaron Koch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aaron Koch  
Chicago Area Director



9

#### Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Daniel Suarez
- Organization (if any): Audubon Great Lakes
- City/Town: Chicago
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60602

#### Q2

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

- FPD Botanic Garden meeting 10/15/2019 9a

#### Q3

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Forest Preserve Referendum 19-0139

#### Q4

What do you want to do?

- ATTEND THE MEETING and SPEAK IN FAVOR of a specific item (You may still add written comments below)

#### Q5

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I will speak in person in support of the Forest Preserve Referendum.



Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Dr. Phalease Binion
- Organization (if any): Westside Ministers Coalition
- City/Town: CHICAGO
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60644

Q2

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

- FPD Zoological meeting 10/15/2019 9a

Q3

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19-0175 - General Comments on Referendum

Q4

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Q5

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NA



#### Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: William M. Miller
- Organization (if any): The Nature Conservancy (IL Board Trustee)
- City/Town: Evanston
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60201-2623

#### Q2

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

- FPD Botanic Garden meeting 10/15/2019 9a

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19-0139 FPCC referendum

#### Q4

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#### Q5

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No. I will speak in support of the FPCC referendum, but am not providing a written statement.





October 15, 2019

Cook County Forest Preserves District Commissioners  
Botanic Garden and Zoological Committees joint meeting

#12

Good morning. My name is Bill Miller and I reside in Evanston.

To provide perspective, I am a professor of Chemical and Biological Engineering and the director of the Center for Engineering Sustainability and Resilience at Northwestern University.

I am speaking today on behalf of The Nature Conservancy in Illinois in my roles as a Board Trustee and the chair of the Science Advisory Committee.

I would like to ask the Commissioners to allow a referendum to be placed on the March ballot that would support expansion and enhancement of the Forest Preserves of Cook County.

My research is focused on ecosystem services provided by natural areas with an emphasis on stormwater-related flooding. Stormwater-related flooding has been increasing due to increases in the amounts of impervious surfaces associated with development and increases in the amount of rainfall, as well as the frequency of heavy rainfall events. The amount and intensity of rainfall and associated flooding are expected to continue to increase as a result of climate change.

My Northwestern colleagues and I have been monitoring water levels across Gensburg Markham Prairie (GMP) in south suburban Markham for the last 3 years. GMP is a high-quality tallgrass prairie owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy and Northeastern Illinois University. The neighborhood around GMP is subject to frequent flooding. Our results show that groundwater levels at GMP increase rapidly after a rainstorm and then gradually decrease over several days as water infiltrates into the ground and is taken up by plants. The groundwater levels repeatedly increase in response to multiple storm events. Importantly, our results suggest that none of the increased groundwater flows off the prairie into the surrounding neighborhood even after multiple summer storms.

Natural areas, such as forests and prairies, are especially effective for stormwater infiltration. The 70,000 acres owned by the Forest Preserves of Cook County represents a natural treasure for Cook County and the greater Chicago area. Acquiring an additional 21,000 acres for open

land and nature, as outlined in the Forest Preserve's Next Century Conservation Plan, would further enhance protection against flooding. Furthermore, it takes extensive stewardship to remove and control invasive species, such as buckthorn, to maintain a healthy understory that is more effective at stormwater infiltration.

Thank you.

#### Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Patricia Hayes
- Organization (if any): Orland Grassland Volunteers
- City/Town: Orland Park
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60467

#### Q2

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- FPD Botanic Garden meeting 10/15/2019 9a

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19-0139

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Please put the Forest Preserve Referendum on the March ballot.





# openlands

conserving nature for life

Suite 1650 | 25 East Washington Street | Chicago, IL 60602-1708 | Tel: 312-863-6250 | Fax: 312-863-6251 | [www.openlands.org](http://www.openlands.org)

October 15, 2019

Forest Preserve District of Cook County  
Board of Commissioners  
Botanic Garden and Zoological Committees

RE: Openlands Statement in Support of a Cook County Forest Preserves Referendum

Good morning Commissioners, my name is Jerry Adelman. I'm the President & CEO of Openlands, a 56-year old nonprofit land conservation organization that works across the greater Chicago region and with particular focus in Cook County.

Without reservation, I'm in favor of giving the voters of Cook County the opportunity to cast their vote on a referendum that would provide more public funding for the Forest Preserves.

Openlands has deep ties to the Forest Preserves dating back to our early years. For instance, Cap Sauers, your legendary General Superintendent, served on Openlands Board of Directors in the late 1960's. More recently, we co-authored the Next Century Conservation Plan, a document that you are very familiar with and which was adopted by the Forest Preserve Board in February of 2014. The Plan represents the collaborative work of many partners and participants from numerous disciplines including natural resources, recreation, public health, accessibility, economics, land acquisition, and more. They all agreed that the Forest Preserves are one of the County's most important assets and, to coin a phrase, *one of its best ideas*.

The Forest Preserves are at the intersection of our region's nature and culture. But for the benefits that they provide to be realized, their ecosystems must be healthy, their trails and campgrounds well maintained, and they must be larger and better connected.

We know that healthy ecosystems do a better job of providing the region with clean water. When we measure how much additional stormwater restored wetlands hold, the results are amazing. For example, after the restoration at Deer Grove Preserve, stormwater leaving the site was reduced by 20 million gallons. That's water that won't end up in people's basements or carry pollution downstream. And additionally, we know that for every dollar invested in restoration, 8 dollars are returned to the community.

We know that nature-based solutions contribute more than one-third (37%) of what's needed to mitigate the effects of climate change. The more land the Forest Preserves can protect and the more preserves that can be connected, the more resilient the County is to the effects of a warming planet.

We also know that the effects of climate change disproportionately impact disadvantaged communities throughout the County, something we all want to avoid.

Now is the time for you to let the voters have a voice.

Let voters decide that they want clean water.

Let voters decide that they want jobs.

Let voters decide they want inviting places for their kids to play and connect to nature.

Let voters decide to provide the funds needed to support the Forest Preserves.

Commissioners, my request to you today is simple: Let the voters decide to support the Forest Preserves. Please recommend that the Referendum be placed on the ballot for the March 2020 primary election.

Thank you.

Very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. W. Adelman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gerald W. Adelman  
President & CEO

Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Patricia Provenzano
- Organization (if any): Friends of the Forest
- City/Town: Chicago
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60607

Q2

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FPCC Bond Referendum

Q4

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None





## Cook County Forest Preserves Committee on Referendum

I would like to wish a good day to the Cook County Commissioners, staff, guests, and all attendees at this committee meeting.

My name is John Spencer, I represent a radio control model airplane club called the Chicago Model Masters. We fly our aircraft at the Kickapoo Woods Model Airplane Flying Field in Riverdale Illinois. I am the Treasurer and Event Director.

Our organization is a diverse group of people from all walks of life who enjoy a common hobby, building and flying all types of model aircraft.

In addition, we partner with several schools to expose young people to career opportunities in aviation. We participate in STEM expositions like the annual one at the Illinois Institute of Technology, and we also participate in an after school program at the local Township building where we instruct students in how to build and fly model aircraft.

Many of these groups of young people visit our flying field where we help them assemble and fly their aircraft, and we expose them to many different types of aircraft to show them what is possible if they have an interest in aviation.

I can speak for our organization in stating that all the activities available at Kickapoo Woods Park go a long way to expose the local residents to the great outdoors.

We have a very positive relationship and communicate well with the staff that maintains the park.

Our organization is in favor of placing The Forest Preserve Referendum on the March Ballot, in order to insure continued availability of facilities for everyone, especially young people.

Remember, it's all about the kids.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.



#### Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: John Quail
- Organization (if any): Friends of the Chicago River
- City/Town: Chicago
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60607

#### Q2

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19-0139

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#### Q5

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Friends of the Chicago River is advocating for a referendum for the support of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and will present testimony on this point.



#### Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Evelyn Barker
- City/Town: Chicago Heights
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60411

#### Q2

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

- FPD Botanic Garden meeting 10/15/2019 9a

#### Q3

Tell us the File ID number (example 17-0000) of the item on which you are registering your position. If you don't know the number, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look it up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar

Respondent skipped this question

#### Q4

What do you want to do?

- ATTEND THE MEETING and SPEAK IN FAVOR of a specific item (You may still add written comments below)

#### Q5

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

I wish to be heard in regards to the Forest Preserves of Cook County.



#### Q1

Please provide some basic information

- Witness Name: Laura Stanek
- Organization (if any): Nature Exploration Academy
- City/Town: Orland Park
- State: IL
- ZIP: 60467

#### Q2

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

- FPD Botanic Garden meeting 10/15/2019 9a

#### Q3

Tell us the File ID number (example 17-0000) of the item on which you are registering your position. If you don't know the number, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look it up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar

19-0139

#### Q4

What do you want to do?

- DO NOT ATTEND THE MEETING but REGISTER IN FAVOR of a specific item (You may add written comments below)

#### Q5

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

My name is Laura Stanek and I am one of the Directors of Nature Exploration Academy. I am here to speak in favor of the referendum to a tax line item for the Cook County Forest Preserve. At Nature Exploration Academy, we have the opportunity to view first hand the many benefits the forest preserves offer. Our school is nature based and having the ability to spend time in the forest has gone a long way towards making our students future stewards of the woods. Daniel Burnham stated, make no small plans. They do nothing to stir a man's soul. I think the same applies to the forest preserves. We are so fortunate we had urban planners like Daniel Burnham who helped to preserve what we have today. I believe we need to continue those efforts and Friends of the Forest Preserves are the modern day version of urban planners working to preserve and improve the forest as we know it. Our students have done many different units utilizing the forest. We have studied mushrooms, ecosystems, different varieties of trees and what they bring to the forest. Some of the best experiences come from making our way through the woods and encountering an outcropping of wild flowers or a previously undiscovered fallen tree. One of the most amazing things we experienced was after an ice storm, we saw - trees completely encased in ice - They had - melting ice flowing down the grooves in the bark - all the while being trapped by the outer layer of ice. It was truly breathtaking and something I will never forget seeing. Please consider adding this referendum to the ballot.. It will mean so much to the generations to come.





## Elaine Tinberg

159 Sheridan Road  
Winnetka, Illinois 60093

October 15, 2019

Chairman Larry Suffredin  
Members of the Botanic Garden and Zoo Committees

Dear Chairman Suffredin and Members of the Botanic Garden and Zoo Committees,

I am writing to ask you to support a question on the primary ballot for a property tax increase to support our Forest Preserves, Zoo and Botanic Garden. All of these storied institutions are a critical part of our Chicago landscape and heritage and all deserve to be maintained and preserved for our future generations.

My personal involvement is with the Chicago Botanic Garden. I have traveled the world and visited many botanic gardens, and none that I have visited compares with our own Chicago Botanic Garden. When I speak of it to friends and acquaintances, I call it "a gift to the people of Chicagoland."

I interact with the Chicago Botanic Garden in many ways, but most important to me is the science that is ongoing there. I think few people really know the depth of research on plants that takes place every day at the Plant Conservation Science Center. I do, because I am a citizen scientist working at one of the many programs there, *Plants of Concern*.

I have been a proud member of the citizen scientist-based *Plants of Concern* program for over 15 years. *Plants of Concern* is a program that monitors and collects data on rare plants in the Chicago region. Last year, citizen scientists monitored roughly 300 rare plants species at 413 sites in Chicagoland. Many of those species are at one of our critical partners, the Cook County Forest Preserves, where citizen scientists monitored 58 rare species at 46 Cook County Forest Preserve locations

These are impressive statistics!

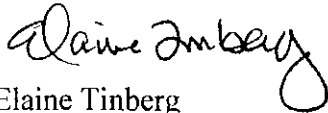
Why do we do this? Because it provides us with critical data on changes that threaten our valued Chicago ecosystems. Scientists at the Botanic Garden and at other important research sites use the data that we gather to tell us more about rare plant population trends and inform land management practices to protect these important plants.

I monitor a rare plant called *scirpus microcarpus* at Illinois Beach State Park. Before we started monitoring the plant, the plant was threatened simply because the park staff regularly mowed the site where the plant most wanted to grow. By delaying mowing until later in the summer and allowing the plant to flower and seed, my *scirpus* population is thriving, thus, in one small way, protecting this rare plant from becoming extinct in our area.

Although this is but one small example of the power of *Plants of Concern*, I hope you can understand that, multiplied by the hundreds, with the power of the citizen scientists who participate in the program, *Plants of Concern* makes a substantial impact on the health of the native Chicagoland ecosystem.

I hope that you will help ensure this program and all of the programs at the Forest Preserves, Zoo and Chicago Botanic Garden continue to thrive well into the future.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elaine Tinberg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'E' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'g'.

Elaine Tinberg  
Citizen Scientist

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# The effect of visiting zoos on human health and quality of life

Taketo SAKAGAMI and Mitsuaki OHTA

*Graduate School of Veterinary Science, Azabu University, Sagamihara, Kanagawa, Japan*

### ABSTRACT

The increased mental stress of daily life and aging of the population are serious matters in Japan. There are many studies regarding the effects of human-animal interactions on mental and physical human health, whereas there are few studies examining the effects of visiting zoos. To determine the effect of visiting zoos on human health and quality of life, two different zoos were visited by 70 participants in Experiment 1 and 163 participants in Experiment 2. In this study we administered the WHO QOL-26 questionnaire in Japanese to assess the psychological scales of participants, and blood pressures and pulse rates were measured to assess their physical scales. We also used pedometers to count the number of steps taken during zoo visits. Both zoo visits decreased blood pressure and participants demonstrated more than 6000 steps during each visit. The quality of life sub-scale scores were improved after zoo visits.

*Key words:* human health, quality of life, stress, zoo.

### INTRODUCTION

Social isolation, family breakdown, social and geographic mobility, and deterioration of neighborhood environments, events that are common during the lives of many people, may adversely affect physical and emotional health. In 2007, the Japanese government reported that the number of people who were suffering from daily stresses in their lives was sharply increasing, and that some of these individuals were developing mental disorders. Additionally, the population of the elderly people in Japan is increasing to 25 million, which represents about 20% of the entire population (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in Japan 2007). These issues represent serious problems that need to be resolved in order to maintain a healthy society.

There are many reports demonstrating the effects of human-animal interactions on human health and quality of life (QOL) (Friedmann *et al.* 1980, 1983; Katcher *et al.* 1983, 1984; Siegel 1990, 1993; Serpell 1991; Anderson *et al.* 1992). Siegel (1990) showed that the elderly who owned pets visited hospitals less frequently in a year than those who did not own pets. Another important study performed by Anderson *et al.* (1992) examined the relationship between pet ownership and the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease. The results showed that pet owners had significantly low systolic blood pressure and plasma triglycerides than non-owners. However, there are many

people who may be not able to have their own pets at their place of residence, especially in cities.

Zoos might be advantageous to people who live in stressful cities, and zoos could help those people to maintain physical and psychological well-beings for health. The historical changes in zoos arising from cultural influences and scientific developments have been well documented (Koebner 1994; Hoage & Deiss 1996). At present, zoos take care of animals in their natural environments for the benefit of both the animals and the visitors (Benbow 2000), providing a context for biophilia.

More people go to zoos than to professional sporting events each year (Wilson 2002). Visiting zoos, people enjoy the distinctive quality of combining many kinds of animals along with a natural environment. Why people keep companion animals, plants, and/or flowers and why many people visit zoos and/or go to the park may be explained by the ideas of Wilson (1984) and Frumkin (2001), who suggested the existence of biophilia.

In this study, we investigated the effects of zoo visits on human health and quality of life, focusing on changes in blood pressure, quantity of exercise, and psychological parameters.

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