



**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF COOK COUNTY**  
**Cook County Building, Board Room, 118 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois**

**New Items Agenda**

**for the**

**Meeting of the FPD Board of Commissioners**

**Tuesday, November 17, 2015, 10:00 AM**

**15-0664**

**Presented by:** LARRY SUFFREDIN, County Commissioner

**REPORT**

**Department:** LARRY SUFFREDIN, County Commissioner

**Request:** Receive and File

**Report Title:** 2015 Forest Preserve Permit Users Survey Summary Report

**Report Period:** 6/1/2015 - 10/4/2015

**Summary:**

**2015 Forest Preserve Permit Users Survey Summary Report**

**I. Overall Information**

**Purpose**

To conduct an informal survey of constituents using the Forest Preserves in the 13<sup>th</sup> District for picnics in order to measure user satisfaction and identify needed Forest Preserve improvements.

**Survey Goal**

The goal was to collect and summarize a wide range of data spanning the 2015 picnic season. Surveys were conducted with people holding permits from June 1, 2015 to October 4, 2015.

**Target Audience**

Oral surveys were administered to people with valid picnic permits for groves located in preserves in the 13<sup>th</sup> District.

**Methods for Conducting Surveys**

Surveys were conducted over the phone. More than 400 calls were initiated for surveys with most people declining or unavailable to participate, but most of those surveyed expressed a positive experience.

**Surveys Completed**

A total of 151 surveys were completed.

<b>Surveys Completed</b>	<b>Location</b>
5	Blue Star
43	Bunker Hill
12	Caldwell
4	Edgebrook
5	Erickson
7	Forest Glen
1	Forest Way
17	Harms
6	Irene Hernandez Woods
18	La Bagh Woods
7	Linne Grove
4	Matthew Bieszczat Community Room
3	Miami
1	Somme Woods
9	St. Paul Woods
1	Thaddeus Lechowicz
5	Turnbull
3	Wayside Grove

**II. General Observations**

**Typical Users**

The typical users are families hosting summer picnics, family reunions or birthday parties for children, as well as other family events such as baby showers throughout the summer. Next, most common users are churches, schools, day camps, sport groups, and other civic groups. There were some special events that were corporate events such as corporate challenge days that were held at forest preserves in the 13<sup>th</sup> district this summer.

**Overall Conditions**

The majority of the people who used the 13<sup>th</sup> District Forest Preserve reported that they had a positive experience and that they would return again next year. Some complimented the staff and the improvement of the facilities, while some said the cleanliness of the restrooms still needs to be improved.

Some users reported that they would like to see recycling bins and electricity in shelters in the future.

**Grove Conditions**

The overall grove conditions were rated as good. There were some complaints however about dirty and leaky shelters.

**Picnic Tables**

The visitors that used the Forest Preserve were pleased with the pavilions and the picnic tables. There were a couple complaints that they were not cleaned after the previous occupants.

### **Trash Cans**

A number of visitors complained that there were not enough garbage cans available close to the picnic areas and that they had to use the dumpsters in the parking lot or drag them from other picnic areas.

### **Restrooms**

A large number of users had an issue with the cleanliness and smell of the restrooms. There were also requests for more toilet paper and soap in the restrooms.

### **Parking**

There were few problems with the amount of parking available, except for large groups. Very few reported that guests arrived by bicycle.

### **Water**

There were no real issues about the lack of water because most brought their own water, but some reported that they would like to see water pumps working in the future.

### **Permit Application Process**

The vast majority of users used the online process, while only a few went in person. Those who went in person did so because they had to apply for a special permit or they had trouble with the new system.

There were some issues with the online process. Some had trouble navigating around the website.

### **Additional Amenities**

Guests were asked if they would like to see any additional amenities such as bicycle rentals, list of local convenient stores, charcoal for sale, bug spray, liquid hand sanitizer, electricity at shelters and recycling bins. Most commented favorably about having recycling bins and electricity at their shelter.

## **III. Specific Forest Preserves**

### **Blue Star (5)**

Two respondents noted that there were not enough garbage cans available. All respondents replied that they would return to this Forest Preserve again next year.

### **Bunker Hill (43)**

Every respondent rated this Forest Preserve very highly, reported that the staff and workers were very friendly and helpful. However one guest complained that it was very difficult to get anyone on the phone. He suggested they staff be available via text or online chat. Several stated that the garbage cans were located too far from the picnic shelter.

**Caldwell (12)**

The respondents who visited Caldwell rated their experience as positive. One guest complained that women's restroom stalls didn't have doors. More garbage cans were needed.

**Edgebrook (4)**

The overall response from those that used this Forest Preserve was positive. One guest complained that the women's restroom stalls didn't have doors. All reported that they would all return again next year.

**Erickson (5)**

Overall the respondents had a positive experience with this Forest Preserve.

**Forest Glen (7)**

Guests had a positive experience with this Forest Preserve, would like to see more garbage cans.

**Forest Way (1)**

This Forest Preserve had only 5 applications for permit. The only survey obtained rated the preserve as good overall.

**Harms (17)**

This Forest Preserve was rated as good but several respondents requested more garbage cans.

**Irene Hernandez Woods (6)**

Concerns were expressed about the distance to garbage cans and the poor condition of the women's restroom.

**La Bagh Woods (18)**

The overall rating for this Forest Preserve was positive. As in last year's report there were problems with the restrooms with complaints that they were locked and/or out of order. One respondent reported that FPD staff came in and cleaned off the picnic tables that had been left a mess by previous guests.

**Linne Grove (7)**

Some responders reported that the restrooms were in terrible condition, one complained that there wasn't any tp. There were also requests for garbage cans closer to the picnic area.

**Matthew Bieszczat Community Room (4)**

The response about this community room was very positive; there were no complaints about the facility. An American Legion group requested that the fees be lowered since they rent on a monthly basis and their resources are limited.

**Miami Woods (3)**

The overall response for this Forest Preserve was positive, there were no specific complaints and the users were satisfied with the facilities.

**Somme Woods (1)**

There was only one respondent that used Somme. The shelter was clean and in good condition, no specific issues.

**St. Paul Woods (9)**

In spite of repeated complaints that the site was dirty and filled with litter from previous parties, guests were satisfied with their overall experience. Several requests for more garbage cans closer to the site. One respondent that hosts for 2,000 people said that every year there is an issue with the water pump.

**Thaddeus Lechowicz (1)**

There were no major concerns about this Forest Preserve and the facilities were in good condition.

**Turnbull (5)**

This Forest Preserve was in good condition and the guest had a very positive experience.

**Wayside Grove (3)**

Respondents requested more garbage cans and also requested the water pump be repaired.

**IV. Updates and Improvements**

Many of the requests for updates and improvements are repeats from last year.

More garbage cans closer to the picnic areas were requested by several guests.

Restroom cleanliness continues to be an issue.

When asked about potential additional amenities many guests asked for recycle bins next to the garbage cans and electric power at the shelters.

There seemed to be more difficulty with the online permit application this year. One first time guest suggested pictures on the FPD website would make it easier to select a picnic grove. Another guest had difficulty finding a grove that was available on the date he was requesting, he suggested that the website show only the available sites for any given day.

Perhaps signage should explain why water pumps are out of commission. It appears to many guests that it is a maintenance issue.

This annual survey is conducted by telephone and it has been suggested that an online survey be offered automatically to all guests that make their reservations online thereby the FPD would receive a larger sampling of guest's experiences.