

**Forest Preserves of Cook County  
Conservation & Policy Council  
May 18, 2016**

**8:30 am to 9:30 am: Pre-meeting Visit to Deer Grove East Restoration**

Meet at Camp Reinberg, 1801 N Quentin Rd, Palatine, IL 60074 [map](#)

**10 am to noon: Council Meeting at Camp Reinberg** ▪ 1801 N Quentin Rd, Palatine, IL 60074 [map](#)

**Noon to 2 pm: Cookout and/or bike ride through Deer Grove West**

**A G E N D A**

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- |          |                                                                               |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 am    | 1. Welcome & Introductions                                                    |
|          | 2. Comments from the public                                                   |
|          | 3. Approval of minutes for 3.17.16 meeting of the Council (See attachment 1.) |
| 10:15 am | 4. Building a Community of Support                                            |
|          | a. Goals & Challenges                                                         |
|          | b. Market Research                                                            |
|          | c. Marketing Strategy                                                         |
|          | d. Making the Case                                                            |
| 10:45 am | e. Discussion                                                                 |
| 11:00 am | 5. Efficient/Effective Use of Resources                                       |
|          | a. Goals & Challenges                                                         |
|          | b. How can we increased earned revenue?                                       |
|          | c. How can we increase philanthropic support?                                 |
|          | d. Case studies                                                               |
| 11:40 am | e. Discussion                                                                 |
| 12 pm    | 6. Adjourn                                                                    |

**ATTACHMENT 1:** Minutes for 3.17.16 council meeting.

## ATTACHMENT 1

### The Forest Preserves of Cook County Conservation & Policy Council

Minutes for March 17, 2016 ▪ Tyner Center, 2400 Compass Road, Glenview, IL

**Call to Order.** Council chair Wendy Paulson called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. The following Council members and others attended:

#### Advisory Council Members

Wendy Paulson, Chair  
Falona Joy, Vice Chair  
Mark Templeton, Secretary  
Laurel Ross  
Michael De Santiago  
Rob Castaneda

*Peter Ellis, Terry Guen, Sylvia Jenkins, Linda Mastandrea, and Commissioner Robert Steele did not attend.*

#### Forest Preserve Staff

Arnold Randall  
Eileen Figel  
Cathy Geraghty

#### Presenters

John McCabe, FPCC Director of Resource Management  
Geoff Levin, Former Director, IL Natural History Survey  
Charles O'Leary, FPCC Deputy Director of Resource Mgmt.  
Troy Showerman, FPCC Resource Project Manager  
Pete Jackson, Volunteer Steward  
Tom Vanderpoel, Citizens for Conservation

Representatives of the Chicago Botanic Garden, Brookfield Zoo, Audubon Chicago, Openlands, Friends of the Forest Preserves, the Field Museum and other partners and FPCC staff also attended. A complete list of attendees is attached.

**Public Comments.** There were no comments from the public.

**Approval of Minutes.** A motion was made by Laurel Ross and seconded by Michael DeSantiago to approve the minutes of the 1.26.16 meeting; the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Restoration Goals and Costs.** Mark Templeton explained the need to look for new approaches to achieve the ambitious goal of restoring 30,000 acres to ecological health. Staff and partners discussed the following opportunities and challenges.

- **Natural and Cultural Resource Management Plan.** Geoff Levin explained that the Natural and Cultural Resources Master Plan establishes the first *system-wide* restoration strategy for the forest preserves. Many FPCC sites are considered habitat fragments, and a major objective of the plan is to create larger, more connected parcels. In addition, less disturbed areas (remnants) within these FPCC sites often contain greater natural community and species diversity and are easier to restore to high quality. These sites are, therefore, high priorities for restoration. In total, the plan identifies 30,000 acres to be restored to Illinois Natural Areas Inventory grade A or B quality.
- **Current Restoration Efforts.** Troy Showerman explained that FPCC spent \$2.08 million on restoration in 2015. This does not include partner projects (unless FPCC provided matching funds to a contractor), or the time invested by staff, volunteers, and the conservation corps. It

does include grant money received by FPCC to fund contractor work. Currently 600 acres of FPCC holdings are at grade A or B quality.

- **Estimated Cost to Restore 30,000 Acres.** The current estimated cost to restore 30,000 acres (including initial work by contractors, maintenance, prescribed fire, seeding, hydrological assessments and deer management) is \$652 million over 25 years, or \$26 million per year. (This does not include staff time or volunteer time.) At the current rate of spending and with roughly the same number of acres improved per dollar spent, FPCC will restore approximately 5000 acres over 25 years, falling far short of the NCCP goal to restore 30,000 acres.
- **Deer Grove Volunteers.** Pete Jackson described how the Deer Grove volunteers have invested 17,000 hours in the past ten years to remove invasive species, collect and sow seeds, and monitor results of their work. In addition to clearing 70 acres in Deer Grove West, the volunteers serve as ambassadors for the forest preserves by engaging churches, scouts, schools and other community groups.
- **Citizens for Conservation (CFC).** Tom Vanderpoel provided an overview of the restoration work CFC is engaged in throughout the region. In 2014, CFC completed over 100 workdays at 9 sites. They invested over 3600 hours of stewardship labor, collected over 300 pounds of seed, and seeded 565 acres. Tom described two major roadblocks to restoration efforts, including: (i) the demand for seed, both in terms of volume and diversity, and (ii) the number of volunteers.
- **Grades A and B Natural Areas.** Rob Castaneda asked for a definition of Grade A and Grade B natural areas. Geoff Levin explained that a system of five letter grades (A being best and E being worst) is used to define the quality of natural areas. Grade A includes pristine sites which are in the condition that existed prior to European settlement. Most FPCC land is Grade C and has some potential for restoration. Eileen Figel was asked to provide a brief chart summarizing these definitions. (See attached chart.)
- **Leveraging Volunteers and other Partners.** Michael DeSantiago expressed concern about the gap between resources needed and resources available. He asked how volunteers, corporations, and other partners can be tapped to help fill this gap. Benjamin Cox explained that Friends of the Forest Preserves (FoFP) works with corporations and is using Busse Woods as a pilot to expand corporate partnerships. FoFP offers corporations a workday with team building exercises. The goal is to get the corporation to adopt a site by supplying volunteers or funding the work. Council members noted that engagement of and support from surrounding communities is critical to long term success. Wendy Paulson noted that FPCC has developed a great model, but the model must be expanded. Laurel Ross added that two types of volunteers are needed—committed leaders like Pete Jackson and Jane Balaban who have broad knowledge and devote enormous amounts of time and individuals who want to participate through their church, scout group, etc.
- **Retaining Volunteers and Grooming New Leaders.** Benjamin Cox stated that there are too few empowered leaders who can move this work forward. Benjamin explained that the Centennial Volunteers program recruits and trains volunteers. The other major goal is to identify potential leaders and build their capacity. Tom Vanderpoel added that how people are treated is critical to retention. In addition, volunteers have to see success and understand how their work fits into the bigger picture.
- **Building a Community of Support.** Stuart Strahl noted that much of the funding for restoration work will come through tax payers, and many of these residents have not been introduced to the forest preserves. Visitors to the Zoo, the Field Museum, and other institutions are people

who are pre-disposed to support conservation; therefore, staff must be empowered to engage these visitors. Arnold Randall stated that restoring and maintaining the land is the most important function of FPCC. Arnold explained that FPCC has dedicated staff and volunteers. FPCC has also tapped experts across the conservation field and gathered enormous amounts of information. The next challenge is to use this information to build a community of support without overwhelming the target audiences. Wendy Paulson added that the numbers can also be demoralizing and asked if there are avenues for accomplishing the work despite the high costs.

- **Asset Mapping.** Falona Joy stated that it is helpful to see the level of expertise and rigor being applied to the restoration work, but suggests that the information needs to be more “bite size.” Falona suggests defining resources needed by region, mapping assets (such as potential funding and prospective partners) by region, then developing a model for each area to tap assets and build collaboration to raise resources needed so restoration efforts can continue to move forward over the next five years. Falona also suggests exploring the possibility of incubating a friends group for each area to support fundraising and restoration work. Eileen Figel explained that FPCC and partners have begun mapping large employers and other regional assets near Busse and this might serve as a good model. Justin Pepper described efforts to identify challenges and use resources in a coordinated and efficient way within the Palos, Busse, and Calumet regions. Justin suggested that all three of these areas may be good models.

**Optional fieldtrips.** Wendy Paulson and Eileen Figel described two optional fieldtrips which will be offered to Council members—a spring trip to Bluff Spring Fen and a fall trip to the Cal Sag trail. Eileen Figel will send Doodle requests for each trip. Laurel Ross suggested asking Doug Taron the best time to visit Bluff Spring Fen.

**Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 12 p.m.

## Attachment 1A

<b>Attendance at Conservation and Policy Council Meeting; March 17, 2016</b>	
Council Members	
Wendy Paulson	
Falona Joy	
Laurel Ross	
Mark Templeton	
Michael DeSantiago	
Rob Castenada	
FPCC Staff	
Arnold Randall	Erik Varela
Eileen Figel	John McCabe
Cathy Geraghty	Karen Vaughan
Anthony Tindall	Lydia Uhlir
Brittany Baumer	Mary Pat Cross
Chip O'Leary	Staci Stegner
Chris Adas	Steve Hughes
Cynthia Moreno	Troy Showerman
Partners	
Andrew Szwak	Openlands
Benjamin Cox	Friends of the Forest Preserves
Emily Harris	Chicago Community Trust
Geoff Levin	Prairie Research Institute
Ginny Hotaling	Chicago Botanic Garden
Greg Mueller	Chicago Botanic Garden
Jane Balaban	North Branch Steward
Justin Pepper	Bobolink Foundation
Laura Bynum	The Field Museum
Mark Bouman	The Field Museum
Patrick Blanchard	County
PC Wang	University of Chicago Law School
Pete Jackson	Deer Grove Steward
Rebecca Sanders	Audubon Chicago Region
Richard Gamble	Brookfield Zoo
Shelley Davis	Forest Preserve Foundation
Stuart Strahl	Brookfield Zoo
T.J. Bensen	Illinois Natural History Survey
Tom Vanderpoel	Citizens for Conservation

## Attachment 1B: GRADING THE QUALITY OF NATURAL AREAS

The following summary is an excerpt from the ILLINOIS NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY UPDATE GRADING HANDBOOK. A complete copy of the Natural Quality Grades is available at: [http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/files/6213/4021/9269/Pt2\\_Appendix1.pdf](http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/files/6213/4021/9269/Pt2_Appendix1.pdf)

The Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INIA) establishes grades designed to measure the effects of disturbance and/or degradation to a natural community. Several environmental indicators are used to evaluate and rate natural community quality, including species lists, presence of conservative or indicator species, community structure, observations of community function, and evidence of degradation (e.g. grazing, logging). Grades used by the INAI are summarized below.

<b>A</b>	<b>Very high quality natural community.</b> Exhibits native species composition, structure, and function with no or very minimal signs of degradation.
<b>B</b>	<b>High quality natural community.</b> A community that has (1) experienced some degradation, but whose composition and structural integrity is intact, or (2) historically experienced moderate to heavy degradation, but has recovered significantly to where it possesses the structure of a complete and functional community.
<b>C</b>	<b>Medium quality natural community.</b> Has experienced either (1) moderate to heavy degradation and may or may not be in the process of recovering its composition, structure, and function, but possesses restoration potential appropriate for a complete and functional community of that type, or (2) severe degradation and has recovered the structure and function of the community. Degradation of Grade C communities can be so great that its species composition, structure, and function have been significantly altered, but it possesses restoration potential for improvement or maintenance at this grade.
<b>D</b>	<b>Low quality natural community.</b> A Grade D community has been so severely degraded that its structure and function have been significantly altered. The community may be undergoing rapid succession, or if the disturbance is unnatural and constant (e.g. continual grazing), the community may be held in a constant degraded state. A Grade D community typically can only be rehabilitated through replacing and supplementing species composition and structure and significant management efforts.
<b>E</b>	<b>Very severely disturbed natural community.</b> In Grade E communities, the original community has been destroyed or removed. A Grade E community can only be reclaimed through total reconstruction of a community starting from scratch.