



**From:** Toni Preckwinkle, President  
**To:** Forest Preserves Board of Commissioners  
**Date:** November 19, 2024  
**Re:** Re-appointments and New Appointment to the Conservation & Policy Council

**Re-appointments**

The terms for Conservation and Policy Council members Alan Bell, Dr. Jacqueline Samuel, and Michael DeSantiago expire on December 31, 2024. Alan and Jackie are able and willing to serve an additional term. Mike, who has served on the Council for ten years, is stepping down. In December we will be submitting a resolution to honor and thank Mike for his service. The Council Nominating Committee recommends that Alan Bell and Dr. Jacqueline Samuel be appointed to a new term beginning January 1, 2025.

**I concur with the committee’s recommendation and seek the Board’s advice and consent related to the re-appointments of Alan Bell and Dr. Jacqueline Samuel.**

**Appointment**

The Council Nominating Committee recommends the appointment of Dr. Kim Ruffin to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Maria Pesqueira. (The Nominating Committee is vetting candidates to replace Michael DeSantiago and will submit a recommendation soon.)

**I concur with the committee’s recommendation and seek the Board’s advice and consent related to the appointment of Dr. Kim Ruffin to the Conservation and Policy Council beginning January 1, 2025.**

Profiles for the proposed re-appointments and the new appointment are attached.

## Candidates for the Conservation & Policy Council

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### **Alan M. Bell (Council Chair)**

- Partner, Charity & Associates, P.C.
- Expertise: Government, Finance, Nature-oriented Development

Alan M. Bell is a partner at the law firm of Charity & Associates, P.C., focusing on municipal finance and real estate finance. He is also the founder and president of The Elements Group, which focuses on nature-oriented development projects. Alan serves on the boards of Openlands, the Land Trust Alliance, the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance and the Black Ensemble Theater, and is a member of the National Association of Bond Lawyers. He enjoys bike riding along Chicago's lakefront and hiking trails throughout the Forest Preserves.

### **Jacqueline Samuel, Ph.D.**

- Program Director of the Master of Public Administration at National Louis University
- Expertise: Urban Management, Community Development, Policymaking, Project Management, Community Psychology

Jacqueline Samuel is the Program Director of the Master of Public Administration at National Louis University. Previously, Dr. Samuel served as the Project Manager for the Housing Authority of Cook County, South Suburban Safe and Thriving Communities Program. She also facilitated and developed quality-of-life programs for 10 years in the South Chicago Area. She has served on the Health and Healing Committee/ Mayor's Commission for a Safer Chicago, the Mayor's Kitchen Cabinet Commercial Development Advisory, Advocate Trinity Hospital Community Health Council, the Community Advisory Review Council for the Institute for Translational Medicine (CARC) and the Illinois ACE's Response Collaborative. Her most recent awards include the National Louis University REACH Award, the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital Courage Award and the Chicago Police Department CAPS Award for the 4th District. Jackie was born and raised in Chicago. She has a love for the arts and has performed in numerous plays and films based in Chicago.

### **Kim Ruffin, Ph.D.**

- Associate Professor and Program Director of English at Roosevelt University
- Expertise: Education, Health & Wellness, Racial Equity/Diversity & Inclusion

Kim Ruffin is an Associate Professor and Program Director of English at Roosevelt University. Her scholarly monograph, *Black on Earth: African-American Ecoliterary Traditions*, put African-American writers on the map of U.S. nature writing. She is also a certified nature and forest therapy guide and a creative writer. Her audio-guided forest therapy walks (hosted by Emergence Magazine, the Denver Museum of Art, and the Forest Preserves of Cook County) have been enjoyed by thousands of local, national, and global listeners. Her current book project has been supported by a Kalliopeia Foundation grant, an Aldo and Estella Leopold Writing Program Residency, and a nonfiction workshop at the Bread Loaf Environmental Writers' Conference. In this forthcoming book, she recovers overlooked environmental testimony of the formerly enslaved from a federal archive. This project will offer a ceremony of environmental homecoming that both returns African-American voices to the American nature story and illuminates a pathway forward in our time of ecological upheaval. Kim Ruffin's range of work supports her efforts to celebrate the opportunities and tackle the challenges of living on Earth.