



Legislation Text

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REPORT

Department: Conservation and Policy Council

Request: Receive and File

Report Title: Position Paper: *Nature-Compatible Recreation in the Forest Preserves of Cook County*

Report Period: N/A

Summary: This is the third of four (4) position papers prepared by the Conservation and Policy Council to provide guidance regarding key issues that face the Forest Preserves. These position papers continue an important legacy of civic leadership related to the Forest Preserves. In 1959, an Advisory Committee paper stated, “The Board has kept in mind the fact that the great holdings of the District are the property of all the citizens of Cook County and has refused to dissipate them for community, municipal or other purposes not in the interest of the general public,” and that it takes “vigilance, effort and courage” to sustain and enforce these policies with firmness and resolution. This position paper reinforces and builds upon previous efforts. It recommends that the Forest Preserves prioritize nature-compatible recreation and oppose new uses that are not aligned with the Forest Preserves’ mission. The paper also recommends that existing recreational programs and/or facilities that do not align with the Forest Preserves’ mission and are not financially sustainable be transformed to natural spaces or re-purposed for nature-compatible recreation.

Upon approval of the position paper by the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners, the Forest Preserves shall take steps to implement the recommendations, including creating or revising policies, ordinances, and other documents as necessary, as well as obtaining any required board approval related to such actions.

The paper was developed by Terry Guen (Council member), Michael DeSantiago (Council member), Maria Pesqueira (Council member), Benjamin Cox (Friends of the Forest Preserves), Eileen Figel (Forest Preserves), Cynthia Moreno (Forest Preserves - retired), Kristin Pink (Forest Preserves), Jacqui Ulrich (Forest Preserves) and Karen Vaughan (Forest Preserves).