

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION
AUGUST 19TH, 2025 – 6:19PM
PRESIDENT KAI SWANSON - PRESIDING

1. Karen Kinney, County Clerk, called the roll:

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, C. Enburg, T. Foster, P. McNeil,
D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, R. Simmer,
E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

TOTAL PRESENT 16

E. Dewith, C. Layer

TOTAL ABSENT 2

President Swanson stated, "Tonight we were supposed to get a presentation from Mr. Peterson, something has intervened, no worries, we'll get to him sooner than you think, hopefully as soon as possible. I did want to call your attention to, and thank Mr. Craver for, these images that you're seeing rotating on your screens here. These are pictures of the work (inaudible) that has been happening at Niabi and I think you all should be very proud of the diligence of the staff in going after compensation from insurance companies and other things. There you see our carousel, rather heavily damaged by the 'snowpocalypse', the two successive ice storms. Looking at this one, again, these are in some of our Big Cat enclosures. These are the before's, these were improperly installed, this is why we focus on what we can do to make things better in the future. There's a new canopy for the carousel, every time you're out there-there's the new cat enclosure. I really hope you get out to see it soon. It's a totally different experience, you feel like you are right next to the Big Cats, and those Snow Leopards will sometimes let you know that they're right next to you (inaudible). This makes the animals feel a lot more present, I think they enjoy it. When I was out there with the grandkids, all of the cats were interacting, moving around. Again, you're seeing what happens (inaudible), and then, just so you know, we were waiting for the canopy but also waiting for some of the meshing that goes over the Cats, and also the Eagle exhibit. One of the problems we had, is that we were just putting in an amateur solution of chain-link fence up above, it is not industry standard and the result is the kind of chaos that has been with us now, 18 months. We're getting back on our feet, I just wanted you to take a moment to appreciate that and to thank Jeff, if you would, the staff, Lee, and his team. I've been presenting (inaudible) about the recovery efforts, but we'd sure like to hear from him."

Mr. Craver stated, "Just like he said, a thank you to all of you, for the support from the Rock Island County side of things to make this possible. As President Swanson said, it's a totally different experience. The Zoo's team just went through their ZAA inspection a couple weeks ago. There were a couple inspectors here and they were very, very impressed with what we've done. While we failed our AZA inspection several years ago, due to the lack of modern zoological design, they said we hit this out of the park. So, we continue to move the needle, the way it needs to be moved. Thank you for all of your support, and we really appreciate it. Thank you."

President Swanson stated, "Dr. Simmer, we can say something now, we'll also have a chance to get into the meeting, it's all yours."

Commissioner Simmer asked, "Is everything open, Jeff, now? I mean everything is up and running?"

President Swanson stated, "Well Pallas's Cats are not on display."

Mr. Craver stated, "Yeah, Pallas's Cats, basically the fencing that was there, was encased in concrete and it came over, and there was a lack of funds for insurance. So, yes, you are correct, everything is pretty much online that we lost January 2024, except for the Pallas's Cats."

President Swanson stated, "The reason I encourage you all to tell your neighbors to get out there, thank you Dr. Simmer, is that we're not just back, we're better. The Prairie Dog exhibit is amazingly interactive and also, if you go into the Biodiversity Hall, those Otters are amazing and you can sit there for hours and watch them. So, it's not just what we had before, we've taken a big step forward. So, thank you, Dr. Simmer for bringing that up. Thank you, Jeff, for being here, we'll be picking on you later. We're going to get to that, did you want to bring those around right now?"

Mr. Craver stated, "No. I apologize about Mr. Peterson's absence; however, I'd like everyone to know that there was an observation of the Lemon Cuckoo Bumble Bee at Amowa. So, to put things in perspective, we, out here, are using 'iNaturalist', the (inaudible). There's about 9 observations documented on that, on iNaturalist. The Rusty Patch Bumblebee, has about, a little less than 3,000 and this one has about 9,000, to put things in perspective. So, it's still a pretty uncommon bee and we have hopefully, found its home at Amowa. We continue to be surprised by the things that we find and discover there at Amowa. We were really lucky, I think we got a really great shot. Thank you for putting it in our trust."

President Swanson stated, "Thank you Jeff." Oh, did you want to say something?"

Commissioner Simmer asked, "Well I just wanted to, the cats, is there a time frame on that? Or are we just on hold for that one?"

President Swanson stated, "Pallas's Cat funds. We need funds. If it's any consolation, and it's not much, if you're out there, Pallas's Cats aren't terribly interactive. They're known because they call them 'Grumpy Cat', they always look like they're in a bad mood. They're a little more shy. I'll take those otters over the Pallas's Cats any day."

Commissioner Simmer asked, "But they just, they're on hold?"

President Swanson stated, "We can't do it. We don't have the funds for it. Thank you Dr. Simmer, I appreciate that. And, thank you Mr. Craver for mentioning my new favorite insect species, the Lemon Cuckoo Bumblebee, which will also be the name of my next punk band."

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS - (NONE)** (Three calls were made.)

3. **PRESIDENTS COMMENTS:**

President Swanson stated, "Camping season is starting to slow down, but there's still plenty of good weather to enjoy out at our Preserves. We've got a holiday weekend coming up, Labor Day, then we think things will be winding down. Most of our weather has been wonderful out there. Get out there and enjoy the amenities, get some golf in, and please, please friends, attend the Pints for Preservation on September 19th, and bring your (inaudible). It's a fun, fun time, it raises funds, and as Dr. Simmer underscored, we still have a lot of raising to do if we want to get the Pallas's Cats back on display. I'll be happy to answer questions later in the agenda, during the reports, but at this time, I'd entertain a motion to approve the FY25, FY26 Claims and Treasurer's Disbursements."

4. Commissioner Vyncke moved to approve the Forest Preserve Claims and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$595,117.39 as presented. Commissioner McNeil seconded

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, C. Enburg, T. Foster, P. McNeil,
D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, R. Simmer,
E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

TOTAL YES 16

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

5. Commissioner Woods moved to approve Transfers of Appropriation, as presented. Commissioner Enburg seconded.

Commissioner Adams moves to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Vyncke seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, C. Enburg, T. Foster, P. McNeil,
D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, R. Simmer,
E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

TOTAL YES 16

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

6. Commissioner Adams moves to waive the reading and approve the resolutions regarding the FY25 Development of Forests & Construction of Improvements Fund - Bike Path Grant project, the FY26 Niabi Zoo Fund additional appropriations – Niabi Zoo Cathouse & Eagle project, and the FY26 Development of Forests & Construction of Improvements Fund – Bike Path Grant project. Commissioner Mielke seconded.

(Note** Resolutions are in .pdf format and begin on the next page.)

RESOLUTION

FY 2025 Development of Forests & Construction Fund-Bike Path Grant Improvements

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserve District was awarded grant funds to resurface a portion of the Great River Trail in unincorporated Rock Island County, and

WHEREAS, claims and expenditures for the design and construction documents have been received, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. Funds in the amount of \$4,243.14 are available from unappropriated funds within Fund #335 Development of Forest and Construction of Improvements until the grant award is received to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$4,243.14	335-32-35 765.00 IBPG26-50-765	Construction in Progress

SECTION 3. Revenues in the amount of \$4,243.14 shall be increased from grant funds to be received to the Development of Forests & Construction Fund #335 in the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$4,243.14	335-32-35 334.70 IBPG26-00-33470	State Grants-IL Bicycle Path Grant

SECTION 4. This resolution to become effective immediately.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 19th day of August, 2025.

Kai Swanson, President
Forest Preserve Commission

Karen Kinney, Secretary
Forest Preserve Commission

RESOLUTION

RE: Niabi Zoo Fund Additional FY 26 Appropriations

WHEREAS, additional funds are required for ARPA project expenses in the Niabi Zoo Fund # 131 for FY 26, and

WHEREAS, revenue has been collected over budget including a transfer of funds to be received from the Forest Preserve General Fund & DFCI Fund to the Niabi Zoo Fund #131, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. An amount of \$126,682.04 be transferred from unappropriated additional revenue funds in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$126,682.04	131-32-35 767.00 ARPA24-60-767	Infrastructure over \$15,000

SECTION3: This resolution to become effective immediately.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 19th day of August, 2025.

Kai Swanson, President
Forest Preserve Commission

Karen Kinney, Secretary
Forest Preserve Commission

RESOLUTION

FY 2026 Development of Forests & Construction Fund-Bike Path Grant Improvements

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserve District was awarded grant funds to resurface a portion of the Great River Trail in unincorporated Rock Island County, and

WHEREAS, claims and expenditures for the design and construction documents have been received, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. Funds in the amount of \$2,410.00 are available from unappropriated funds within Fund #335 Development of Forest and Construction of Improvements until the grant award is received to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$2,410.00	335-32-35 767.00 IBPG26-50-765	Infrastructure over \$15,000

SECTION 3. Revenues in the amount of \$2,410.00 shall be increased from grant funds to be received to the Development of Forests & Construction Fund #335 in the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$2,410.00	335-32-35 334.70 IBPG26-00-33470	State Grants-IL Bicycle Path Grant

SECTION 4. This resolution to become effective immediately.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 19th day of August, 2025.

Kai Swanson, President
Forest Preserve Commission

Karen Kinney, Secretary
Forest Preserve Commission

Commissioner Burns moves to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Perkins seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, C. Enburg, T. Foster, P. McNeil,
D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, R. Simmer,
E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

TOTAL YES 16

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

Madam Clerk Kinney stated, "Kai, we don't believe that you called on the July Commission Minutes, or that you asked for a vote on those."

President Swanson stated, "Oh my goodness, thank you very much. Where would I be without you?"

Madam Clerk stated, "Teri caught it."

President Swanson stated, "Thank you, thank you very much. So, without objection, I will suspend the agenda to return to the motion to approve the July commission minutes. "

7. Commissioner Brunk moved to approve the July Commission and Public Hearing minutes, as presented. Commissioner Foster seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

8. Commissioner Simmer moved to approve the purchase of a Ventrac KN4520N & accessories at \$54,399.60, as presented. Commissioner Woods seconded.

(Note** Purchase quote is on the next page.)



Pricing Quote

Quote #: 97330-1007
Contract #: 112624-TTC

Date Quoted: July 14, 2025
Quote Expires: August 13, 2025

Prepared For:

Jay Verstraete
Indian Buff Golf Course
Rock Island County Forest Preserve

Prepared By:

MTI Distributing, Inc - Grimes
Josh Petersen
3841 SE Capitol Circle
Grimes, IA 50111

Customer's Sourcewell Membership ID: 5442

Thank you for the opportunity to quote the following Ventrac product(s) for your review. I have added the items that we feel would best serve your needs. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

QTY	Model #	Description	Sourcewell	Total
1	4520N (39.51225)	Ventrac Tractor: KN, 4520N Kubota WG972 EFI <i>Included Standard: Weight Transfer, SDLA Hand Controls, 4 Rear Weights, Front Fenders, Foot Pads</i>	32,554.20	32,554.20
1	70.4067	Accessory: DUAL WHEEL KIT Kit, Duals Field Trax Black	1,559.40	1,559.40
1	70.4140	Accessory: DIGITAL SLOPE GAUGE Kit, Slope Indicator	423.20	423.20
1	70.4164	Accessory: DUAL FRONT HYD AUX KIT, Dual Front Hyd Aux 4520/4500	598.00	598.00
1	70.4161	Accessory: 12V SWITCH & PLUG KIT, 12V Front 4520/4500	372.60	372.60
1	70.4160	Accessory: THREE-POINT HITCH KIT, 3 Point Hitch 4520	2,346.00	2,346.00
1	70.4167	Accessory: HEATED SUSPENSION SEAT KIT, Heated Suspension Seat 4500/4520	915.40	915.40
1	39.58114	Accessory: THREE-IN-ONE ADAPTER HH, 3PT 3-in-1 Hitch	515.20	515.20
1	MJ840 (39.55160)	Attachment: MOWERS - CONTOUR DECK MJ, MJ840 Contour Mower	9,273.60	9,273.60
1	70.8087	Accessory: KIT, Mulching MJ840	404.80	404.80
1	HQ882 (39.55118)	Attachment: MOWERS - TOUGH CUT HQ, HQ882 Mower, Tough Cut	4,903.60	4,903.60
1	70.8228	Accessory: KIT, Hydraulic Flip Up HQ882	533.60	533.60
TOTAL USD \$			54,399.60	

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, C. Enburg, T. Foster, P. McNeil,
D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, R. Simmer,
E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

TOTAL YES 16

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

9. Commissioner Adams moved to approve the dedication agreement between the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission and District for the Indian Bluff Hill Prairie & Buffer Area, as presented. Commissioner Moreno seconded.

President Swanson stated, "Any questions or discussion for this motion? I would like to simply add that this is a very important step forward for us. A Hill Prairie is one of the rarest forms of prairie. So, here in the Prairie State, we have less than 1/10th of one percent of our original prairie land existing, and in that tiny fraction, there's an even smaller subset. There are some species that can only grow on hill prairie. So, when we get to the point that we actually dedicate this, we keep ownership. We just dedicate it to the trust of future generations. I want you all to be very proud of that. Mr. Craver brought this around if you want to take a look at the specifics. Just so you know, procedurally, we had some questions, gave it back to the trust, gave it back to our legal, and this is what everyone is agreeing on right here. So, this is what we'll be going on. If you want to take care of that. And I do know Mr. Craver, if you do a natural ceremony and bring people from the State Trust up, we can invite the entire commission."

Commissioner Foster moves to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Morthland seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, C. Enburg, T. Foster, P. McNeil,
D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, R. Simmer,
E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

TOTAL YES 16

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

10. **Comments from Commissioners:**

President Swanson stated, "I hope you had a chance to read through the reports from various directors and department heads, and if you have any comments or questions related to those."

11. Commissioner Burns moved to approve all Routine Reports from the Director and Departments Heads of the Forest Preserve Commission, as presented. Commissioner Simmer seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

President Swanson stated, "The next meeting of the Forest Preserve Commission will be Tuesday, September 16th, 5:30pm or following the County Board meeting, in these chambers. Friends, thank you for your service, we are adjourned."

Commissioner Westpfahl stated, "No you're not, I've got a question."

President Swanson stated, "Oh we're not, I'm sorry, sorry. Let me get over to Mr. Westpfahl, please."

Commissioner Westpfahl stated, "You didn't call for comments from commissioners."

President Swanson stated, "I folded that into if you had any questions about the report-"

Commissioner Westpfahl stated, "It's not about a report. I've got a question about the Forest Preserve out there, I went out there, I'm Stan the Ice Cream man now, selling ice cream. I went out there to Loud Thunder to drive through the campgrounds and Ben came out and said you have to have a permit to go through here. I said fine. Where do I get one, what do they cost? 'Well I don't know'. So, then last, a week ago Tuesday, I went out there to the main office. I said I'd like to get a permit and find out what the cost is so I can sell ice cream. They said, 'You got to talk to Ben about that.' I said I did talk to Ben, he didn't know anything about it. I said 'Well then who knows anything about it?'"

President Swanson stated, "Mr. Craver, would you like to comment? So, just so you know, we had a couple instances of people selling items in the preserves. Our understanding was that requires a special permitting process. Mr. Craver, can you shed any light on the subject?"

Mr. Craver stated, "Yes. Per the district ordinances, we don't allow vendors in there without a license or permit. We do not have a formal application process for that. Mr. Westpfahl did inform Mr. Mills that he wishes to sell in the park. I did talk to the other staff members and ask them what they've been doing recently with vendor requests, and they denied those. So, just to make sure we crossed all our T's and dotted all our I's, Mr. Mills included that request in this month's Forest Preserve Committee packet. The subject was brought up at committee and no one at the committee moved forward with it. Pretty much, staff's recommendation is to maintain status quo that we keep food and beverage, such as ice cream vendors, and other food trucks, and what-have-you out of our parks. Folks come there for a particular reason, sometimes maybe to get away from such vendors and appreciate what we are offering and selling. So, that is where we are. We want to be told to do something otherwise, we will do so at the discretion of this board."

President Swanson, "Please stay close, we have a couple of other questions, I'll start with Mr. Morthland."

Commissioner Morthland stated, "Mr., President, I was just noticing that (inaudible), commonly known as the Lemon Cuckoo Bumblebee, probably would be a good name for a punk band, considering it is a social parasite, meaning it invades the nests of other bumblebees, kills the resident queen, and forces colony workers to raise its offspring. So, just letting you know."

President Swanson stated, "That's pretty punk, I'll admit it. Mr. Morthland, thank you. Mr. McNeil?"

Commissioner McNeil asked, "What is the last date of Niabi Zoo's season? When does it close?"

President Swanson stated, "That's the last week in October, thank you very much. Here's what we've got, we've had an issue, it's in the reports, there was no specific request, however, I will note that staff are against this. Just like, I know Dr. Simmer hates this, we don't want gas motors on Lake George. I think we've all heard that, but one of the things that we are distinctive in again, it that it's about the only place that you can go on a lake that size and not have jet skis and other things zooming around you, though. That's kind of a point of distinction. I will commiserate with the staff's idea, what they're hearing from campers is yeah, if you're in your neighborhood and you hear (ice cream truck music), that's one

thing, but if you're at a campsite on a weekend and you're trying to enjoy birdsong, that's a very different thing. If there is a strong request to have a change in policy brought before the Commission, I would ask that be directed to Mr. Craver and we'll revisit it in the September meeting. But, at this time, I see no compelling reasons to act on the matter. With that, I will thank you all for your time, and I thank Mr. Westpfahl for correcting me on the agenda. Friends, we are adjourned, thank you. "

President Swanson declared the Forest Preserve Meeting adjourned at 6:37 pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

KAREN KINNEY
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

KK: td