

**Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
Board of Directors Meeting
July 21, 2026 • 5:30 p.m.
Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Headquarters, Board Room**

The Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County board of directors will conduct its meeting in person at the Danada headquarters building, located at 35580 Naperville Road in Wheaton.

Call Meeting to Order – Jeanette Wells, Chair

Roll Call – Joe Suchecki, Secretary

Chair Comments – Jeanette Wells, Chair

Public Comments – Jeanette Wells, Chair

Action: Motion for Approving and Placing on file Meeting Minutes from May 19 – Joe Suchecki, Secretary

Mission Moments

- Anamari Dorgan, Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Executive Director
- Hine's Emerald Dragonfly Program Update, Audra Bonnet, Donor Relations Coordinator

New Business – Jeanette Wells, Chair

- Inform: National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association Symposium 2027 -- Jeannine Kannegiesser, Chief Partnership and Philanthropy Officer, FPDDC
- Inform: Event Planning Updates – Lulu Hertenstein, Corporate and Community Giving Officer

Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Tom Murphy, Treasurer
 - Action: Motion to Accept Financial Dashboard Summary Report through May 31
- Development Committee – Tom Williams, Committee Chair
 - Auction Update (Note: Donated items and in-kind forms due on Aug. 17)

Ex-Officios and Staff Liaisons Report

- Jeff Gahris – District Commissioner and Ex-Officio Liaison
- Jeannine Kannegiesser – Chief Partnership and Philanthropy Officer, FPDDC

Adjournment – Jeanette Wells, Chair

**Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2026**

The Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County met at the District Headquarters at 35580 Naperville Road, Wheaton, July 21, 2026.

Call to Order

Chair Jeanette Wells called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call:

Secretary Joe Suchecki called the roll. In attendance were Chair Jeanette Wells, Carl Alston, Mike Dyer, Ashley Guest, Denise Krohn, Larry Larson, Tom Murphy, Carl Shultz, Dave Stang, Joe Suchecki, and Tom Williams. District Commissioner Jeff Gahris, and staff members Audra Bonnet, Lulu Hertenstein, and Jeannine Kannegiesser also attended. New Executor Director of the Forest Preserve of DuPage County, Anamari Dorgan, also attended.

A quorum of the Board was present.

Chair's Welcome

Chair Wells welcomed the public, board members and staff to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending as well as for their time and efforts on behalf of the Friends. Chair Wells provided a special welcome to new Friends Board member Carl Alston and congratulated him on joining the Friends Board.

Public Comment

Chair Wells asked those attending the meeting if there were any public comments. Mary Lou Wehrli of Naperville asked to speak. Ms. Wehrli provided comments that the District and the Friends should provide increased visibility and support for DuPage's cultural resources. She reminded the Board that the District owns and maintains many significant properties and lands of historic and cultural importance in addition to natural areas. The Friends needs to include the opportunity to support those cultural resources to the public. Ms. Wehrli encouraged the Board and staff to more openly promote and support the many cultural resources in DuPage County.

Chair Wells thanked Ms. Wehrli for her comments. Chair Wells then recognized Ms. Jill Henry of Naperville to speak. Ms. Henry provided information to the Board on the proposed sale of a piece of property by the DuPage Water Commission to a private developer. The property is 32 acres of woodland that is adjacent to the Green Valley Forest Preserve. Ms. Henry indicated that the land holds some significant natural resources including many old oak trees that would be destroyed if the property is sold to the developer for a new subdivision. She encouraged the Friends to help save the property.

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Next, Chair Wells recognized Rita Treonis of Naperville who also provided comments on the 32-acres parcel of land. She also indicated that the land is a valuable natural resource that would be a great addition to the Green Valley Forest Preserve. She indicated the site has valuable wetlands, an old growth savannah and is home to several endangered species of bats. She asked that the District work to purchase and protect the land and encouraged the Friends to help in any way possible.

There were no other public speakers.

Approval of Minutes.

Chair Wells recognized Secretary Suchecki to discuss approval of the meeting minutes from the May 19, 2026 Friends meeting. Secretary Suchecki asked if there were any corrections to the draft minutes of the last meeting. There were no comments on the draft minutes. Mr. Suchecki entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Motion to approve May 19, 2026 meeting minutes was made by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mr. Larson. Upon voting, the motion to accept the draft minutes was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Mission Moment

Chair Wells introduced Annemari Dorgan, the recently appointed Executive Director of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. Ms. Dorgan thanked the Friends for the opportunity to speak to the Board. She also thanked the Board members for their service and dedication to the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County.

Executive Director Dorgan then talked about the partnership between the District and the Friends. She indicated that she is very excited about the opportunities ahead to work with the Friends to fulfill the District's mission to protect and restore the county's natural resources. Together, the District and Friends form a powerful partnership, and Ms. Dorgan looks forward to strengthening that partnership and working with the Friends in the coming years.

Following Executive Director Dorgan's presentation, Chair Wells introduced Audra Bonnet to provide an update on the District's Hines Emerald Dragonfly program. Ms. Bonnet indicated that the team was unable to collect additional eggs in the field this year instead concentrating their work on release and field work. Although program changes have occurred due to issues with the federal government, the District is still managing the program and has put additional efforts into raising the current cohort of Hines Emerald larvae.

Chair Wells thanked the speakers for their presentations.

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New Business

Chair Wells recognized Ms. Kannegiesser to present information on the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association Symposium that will be held here in February 2027. The DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center is serving as the host organization for this national event. The host committee for the meeting is continuing to plan for the event and is organizing the scientific and technical presentations. The District will ask for some local volunteers to help at the event, which will take place in Itasca. Approximately 450 people are expected to attend. Ms. Kannegiesser will share additional details on the symposium as they become available.

Ms. Lulu Hertenstein provided the Board with an update on upcoming events. The Duck Race will occur on August 1st at Fullersburg Woods. Duck sales are going well, but Ms. Hertenstein asked Board members to promote the Duck Race to encourage more sales. She also asked that Board members attend the event to thank sponsors and greet attendees. Members who attend were asked to meet at Fullersburg at 9:30 am

Ms. Hertenstein then talked about the Night for Nature Event at St. James Farm on September 17th. The planning for the event is going well. The Friends needs more items for the silent auction this year, and Board members were encouraged to contact local businesses in their area to ask for auction items. Any auction item should be brought to District headquarters by August 20th. A spreadsheet with information on auction items is available online for people to review.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tom Murphy presented the treasurer's report, including the financial dashboard for the period ending May 31, 2026. He reported total assets of \$916,973 including \$757,654 in unrestricted funds and \$159,319 in restricted funds. The net revenue through May 31, 2026 was \$32,601 reflecting a transfer of funds to the District of \$206,797 during the period. Treasurer Murphy asked if anyone had any questions on the Financial Dashboard. There were none. Mr. Murphy entertained a motion to accept the financial dashboard summary through May 31, 2026. Mr. Larson made a motion to accept the Financial Dashboard as presented. Second by Ms. Guest. There being no further discussion, the motion to accept the March 31 financial dashboard was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Development Committee Report

Mr. Tom Williams, Chair of the development committee, provided an update on the committee's work. Mr. Williams indicated that the committee investigated some options to provide experience trips as auction items for A Night for Nature. They have arranged to work with a company that offers trips to nonprofit organizations for such purposes. He summarized three trips available through the company that were chosen for consideration, including a Glamping trip to Michigan, a trip to Jackson Hole, Wyoming and Yellowstone National Park, and a wine tasting trip to the Napa Valley. Mr. Williams explained that these are consignment adventures so that the Friends has no obligation to pay the company in cases where there are no auction bids above the minimum. Board members generally thought that this was a good

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option to try for the upcoming Night for Nature event. Mr. Williams indicated that he would work with staff to finalize the details for those experience auction items.

Ex-Officio Reports

Chair Wells recognized Commissioner Gahris to provide a report on recent activities by the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Gahris indicated that several key projects were coming together including, after a delay, the construction of the final leg of the West Branch DuPage River Trail. Commissioner Gahris provided information on a list of topics that the Commission is working on including better utilization of the DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center, smoking in the preserves, programs regarding the cultural heritage sites that the District owns, and highlighting conservation partnerships with other organizations such as the Shedd Aquarium. The latter item should provide some positive public relations press for the District.

Chair Wells recognized Friends Executive Director Kannegiesser. Ms. Kannegiesser presented a short report on the status of fundraising activities and donor information to the Board. She indicated that fundraising is going well with donor retention holding at about 45%.

Chair Wells thanked the speakers for their presentations.

Adjournment

Chair Wells asked if there was any other business before the board. There was none.

There being no other business, Chair Wells called for adjournment of the meeting. Mr. Dyer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Second by Mr. Williams. The motion to adjourn was approved by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 pm.