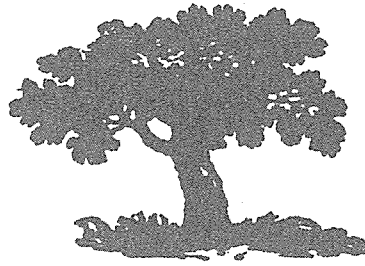


FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
of Cook County, Illinois

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS



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536 NORTH HARLEM AVENUE, RIVER FOREST, ILLINOIS 60305
773-261-8400 / 708-366-9420 / 800-870-3666 TDD 708-771-1190

Steven M. Bylina, Jr., GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT

April 21, 2009

Marie Tipsord, Hearing Officer
Illinois Pollution Control Board
100 W. Randolph St., Suite 11-500
Chicago, IL 60601

PC#187

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CLERK'S OFFICE
APR 24 2009
STATE OF ILLINOIS
Pollution Control Board

Re: Comment on Rule Making R08-09

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County supports the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's proposed amendments to improve water quality standards in the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS). Improved water quality would help protect biological diversity and improve outdoor recreational opportunities.

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County is the largest and oldest forest preserve district in Illinois with over 68,000 acres held in the public trust. Nowhere in the United States is there such a large area of publicly owned native landscape as fine and readily accessible to so many people. The Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners is authorized by law:

To acquire and hold lands containing natural forests for the purpose of protecting and preserving the flora, fauna and scenic beauties, and to restore, restock, protect and preserve said lands as nearly as may be in their natural state and condition, for the education, pleasure and recreation of the public.

Much of the Forest Preserve holdings encompass the major waters ways of the Chicago-land area. These waters are important sanctuaries for native flora and fauna, and important recreational areas for the general public; activities such as boating, canoeing, kayaking, fishing and nature studies are enjoyed by millions on a weekly basis.


In a study conducted by the USDA Forest Service one of our preserves was monitored for public attendance; the results found that more people enjoyed this preserve that year than any national park site but one; that site being Yosemite National Park.



In addition to being an important refuge, providing rare habitat for local flora and fauna, the preserves provide first rate outdoor recreational opportunities for the public. Improvements in water quality have shown an increase in biodiversity, and an overall improvement in the health of the native landscape. The District is currently studying river otters that are returning to waterways throughout Cook County. River otters are one among many species that could benefit from water quality improvements.

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County has been and will continue to be a leader in the protection and management of open lands in the Chicago-land area.

Sincerely,


Steven M. Bylina, Jr., D.P.A.
General Superintendent

C.c. John Therriault, Clerk