

SUBJECT: Recommendation that the City of Greenbelt create a science fund for studying the Forest Preserve

DATE: 24 May 2018

To improve our understanding of the ecology of Greenbelt's forests, FPAB would like to request that future City budgets contain a "Fund for Science" that could be used to fund ecological or historical research in the Forest Preserve.

Professors at the University of Maryland and other institutions periodically ask Greenbelt city staff for suggestions of research projects in Greenbelt forests that would assist the town and also be suitable for graduate or undergraduate student projects. In anticipation of such requests, we append a sample list of projects that we would consider worthwhile.

A small fund could have a big impact by encouraging multiple projects. For example, a Fund for Science of \$2,000 per year might be sufficient to assist several research projects with purchasing survey equipment and expendables, covering laboratory fees for testing water samples, or covering other expenses associated with fieldwork. We propose that the Environmental Coordinator at the City's Public Works Department be responsible for advertising the existence of the fund, for selecting projects to receive the funds, and for reporting to FPAB and the City Council once a year on how the funds were used.

Sample Projects

1. Survey/study forest over time to document change (establish permanent plots to study).
2. Document areas of special concern (e.g. Blueberry hill, mulch pile, orchid populations).
3. Set up a citizen science program-organize and promote existing infrastructure.
4. Conduct a survey of vegetation found within the Forest Preserve.
5. Identify and map invasive species.
6. Quantify the services the Forest Preserve ecosystem provides (ecological/ecosystem services).
7. Conduct camera trapping in the Forest Preserve areas to obtain data about wildlife and habitat.
8. Conduct surveys of invertebrate and vertebrate animal populations/communities (establish permanent plots).
9. Survey streams in the preserve-aquatic life, water quality, and identify potential sources of pollution.
10. Look at old deeds and aerial photos to further our knowledge of the history of the land use within what is now the Forest Preserve.