

No plans for shooting range in DuPage forest preserve

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Residents concerned about shooting ranges popping up in DuPage County forest preserves are firing blanks, commissioners said Tuesday.

There are no imminent plans to set up shooting ranges on forest district land because it already has been decided that there's no suitable place to host one, said Commissioner Joseph Cantore of Oakbrook Terrace.

He chairs a committee charged with redrafting the district's recreational policy ordinance. An initial version listed several examples of possible recreational uses, including shooting ranges.

The new version forgoes that list and simply says current recreational uses are OK, and any new ones must be approved by the forest district board first. There are no gun ranges on forest preserve property now.

Two citizens and a Sierra Club representative spoke against the idea of shooting ranges Tuesday in response to the use even being listed as a possibility.

"Why would you ever want to introduce bullets that would travel a mile if ever shot in the wrong direction?" asked Don Kirchenberg.

Ruth Najacht said shooting ranges are dangerous for animals and bad for the environment and would be an additional burden on staff.

Commissioners and staff responded that the listing of a possible use does not mean it will ever occur. Rather, the policy is a dynamic document that must meet the recreational demands of the public, such as Frisbee golf, which did not even exist in the recent past.

The policy will now go to the full forest district board for review.

Najacht left the meeting unconvinced about the future of shooting ranges in the district.

"I just hope it doesn't happen in my lifetime," she said.