

# Forest district shoots down ranges

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DuPage County Forest Preserve District officials hope they have dodged a bullet by adopting a new recreation policy.

The policy, approved Tuesday, says all activities in preserves should be "harmonious with nature." It comes on the heels of controversy over whether a shooting range should be permitted on district land.

Commissioners have been under fire for months for not removing gun ranges from a list of possible preserve activities although they voted in 2004 against such a usage.

The new policy supersedes any previous practices.

It avoids mentioning any specific activities but states recreational pursuits should be compatible with all natural surroundings, thus preserving flora and fauna. Events held in preserves should be limited to educational, civic or cultural purposes.

Any new activities proposed will need to be scrutinized by staff and approved by commissioners, the policy says.

"In essence, it says as activities evolve, we'll bring them to the board," district Executive Director Brent Manning said.

Officials said they hoped their actions would put the topic of shooting ranges to rest.

"I think it's what the people of DuPage County want," said Commissioner Joseph Cantore of Oakbrook Terrace, who is recreation committee chairman.

The subject drew numerous calls and e-mails from the public.

Wheaton resident Ruth Najacht, who has steadfastly opposed a shooting range said she had mixed emotions.

"I hope it will work the way they say. I'm still concerned about it," she said.