

Range shot down by forest preserve board

By Ann Hanson
staff writer

WHEATON — DuPage County Forest Preserve Commissioners voted Tuesday to concur with a committee's conclusion that there is no suitable place within the forest preserve system for a shooting range.

The motion made stated that this was because of "noise concerns" and "incompatibility with natural resources."

The Special Committee for Recreational Activities, composed of Joe Cantore, R-Oakbrook Terrace, Roger Kotecki, R-Carol Stream, and Carl Schultz, R-Aurora, determined in June that a shooting range wasn't feasible on existing district property or land being considered for acquisition. The committee was acting on a recommendation made by district staff.

The idea for a shooting range was first floated by Cantore, a recreational shooter, in July 2003.

At Tuesday's regular meeting of the board, Darien resident Don Evans said he was disappointed that it had taken them so long to formally agree with the committee. Evans, a Democrat, is running against Commissioner Wally Brown, R-Downers Grove, in the November general election.

"It's a shame three and a half months have passed since then," Evans said.

Brown said the issue has been discussed for so long because the board had to consider the interests of all people involved, including both those who opposed the range proposal and those who supported it.

"It's the right thing that we're doing here," he said, "it just took a little longer. ... You have to go through all the right steps."

Evans and Wheaton resident Ruth Najacht urged the board to go even further and remove shooting from a district recreation policy that lists possible uses for its land.

"Anything less than that is unacceptable," Evans said.

Shooting is on the third tier of possible activities. According to the policy, those uses have limited appeal and "the impact on the land could be significant." The issue of removing shooting from the list of activities will be addressed at a future meeting.

Commissioner Gwen Henry, R-Wheaton, agreed that shooting should be taken off the list of possible recreation uses. Cantore, however, said he thinks the policy should be considered as a whole.

"I think before wasting our time taking one thing off we should look at every single thing," Cantore said.

10/06/04