

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## Monica A. Meyers retires after 18 years leading the Forest Preserve District

GENEVA, IL — After 18 years at the helm of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County as executive director, Monica A. Meyers is looking forward to time working for the District in an unofficial capacity — as a volunteer.

Meyers is retiring from the District at the end of the month. The Forest Preserve Commission took time during their Dec. 12 meeting to publicly acknowledge her work on the District's behalf, over the past 18 years. President Christopher W. Kious read aloud a resolution of commendation. The resolution lauded Meyers' various accomplishments including:

- Oversight of four successful land acquisition and preserve improvement referenda, investments that more tripled the District's land holdings to 23,173 acres.
- Skillful application for grant funding that afforded the District millions in additional dollars to make conservation, education and recreation dollars stretch further



Monica A. Meyers smiles as she receives a standing ovation and commendation for her work, during her last official Forest Preserve Commission meeting, Dec. 12. Pictured with her are her successor, Executive Director Benjamin Haberthur (left) and Forest Preserve Commission President Christopher W. Kious (right).

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- Construction of professional work facilities for all District departments
- Earning Illinois Distinguished Agency Accreditation status — the first forest preserve district in Illinois to achieve such recognition
- And, managing countless projects including preserve openings, trail expansions, creation of Big Rock Campground, Creek Bend Nature Center, and a recent multi-million redesign of Settler’s Hill Golf Course

After Kious finished reading the resolution, Meyers received a standing ovation from the Commission as well as staff and members of the public, in the gallery.

“My time at the District has been my favorite part of my entire career,” Meyers said. “As a kid, I grew up next to a state park and I was always outside. I went to college in the mountains, where I received my degree in parks and recreation management. My career started in active-recreation management, but I always wanted to be involved in conservation and outdoor recreation. I feel this is what I was meant to do. I’ve been blessed to be a part of this great organization,” she said.

In addition to her last official Commission meeting on Dec. 14, she also attended her last two committee meetings, on Dec. 15. Afterward, she took some time to reflect on the totality of her work at the Forest Preserve District.

“When I look back over the 18 years, the biggest changes I see are the growth in our land holdings, the increase in administrative standards as well as staff specialties, how we’ve met the needs of the community, and our overall land restoration. You don’t see the changes year to year, but when I look back to the early 2000s, there are major differences,” she said.

“Building a good team throughout the whole organization is what I’m most proud of. One person can’t take credit for all of this. You put a qualified team together to accomplish the goals set forth by the Commission. Everyone working together is what makes that happen. I’ll miss the people and the relationships that have been developed,” she said.

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— ADD TWO —

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Kious reflected on working relationships, as well. “Monica has always been very generous with her time and energy. Her pleasant, personal demeanor and can-do spirit has been inspiring to us, the board members, the volunteers and staff, alike. She has been, quite simply, fun to work with,” he said.

“She has been the heart and brains of the preserves. She led the forest preserves during a time of unprecedented growth — from roughly 7,000 acres when she first started to the more than 23,000 acres it is, today. It wasn’t just growth but a strategic acquisition of natural areas that were important to preserve our natural history in Kane County.

“Her keen negotiating and no-nonsense analytical skills have served the forest preserves well. The District has had a strong advocate in business and in budgeting. She has made informed decisions and forged agreements that have significantly improved the District over the years. She has cemented connections with professionals, state-wide officials, fellow forest preserve districts and local park districts. You can see the positive results in every area of the Forest Preserve District from having her lead the District for almost two decades. Her contribution of time and talent leaves us in a very good position, as she moves on to the next phase of her life, and we move this organization into the future,” Kious said.

Meyers said she’s looking forward to being in the preserves as a volunteer. She also plans to travel and spend time with family and friends. Her last day in the office will be Dec. 29.

Benjamin Haberthur was promoted to executive director on Dec. 1. Haberthur was formerly Director of Natural Resources for the District.

For more information on the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, visit [www.kaneforest.com](http://www.kaneforest.com) or find the District on social media by searching @forestpreserve.

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