

FOREST PRESERVE ADVISORY BOARD
REPORT TO COUNCIL

Report # 2018-03

SUBJECT: Response to a letter in the Greenbelt News Review about prohibited activities in the Forest Preserve

DATE: 18 September 2018

BACKGROUND:

The Forest Preserve Advisory Board has been made aware of a letter printed in the Greenbelt News Review on March 22, 2018 entitled "Illegal Hunting" that was submitted by Ms. Lynn Slater. During the June meeting of the Forest Preserve Advisory Board Ms. Slater discussed the incident and answered questions from board members. It was decided that a letter should be drafted by the Forest Preserve Advisory Board in response to the actions detailed in Ms. Slater's letter. The Forest Preserve Advisory Board requests that City Council approve the following letter to be printed in the Greenbelt News Review as a letter to the editor.

RESPONSE LETTER BY THE FOREST PRESERVE ADVISORY BOARD:

This letter is a reply from the Forest Preserve Advisory Board (FPAB) to a previous letter entitled "Illegal Hunting" on March 22, 2018 that was submitted by Lynn Slater. FPAB appreciates having these issues brought to the awareness of Greenbelt residents. The previous letter recounted the distressing experience of seeing two boys, approximately 9 – 10 years old, harassing and possibly killing a raccoon in the Forest Preserve or GHI Woodlands. Such actions violate county and state regulations. If these activities occurred in the Forest Preserve, then they also violate the Greenbelt City Code (section 12-156, "Prohibited activities – hunting, trapping, fishing, driving, harassing or otherwise capturing or harming wildlife."). Such actions stand in opposition to the vision of stewardship that was embraced by Greenbelt residents when they chose to acquire and protect the lands that make up the Forest Preserve. It is a vision of residents caring for Greenbelt's forests and protecting them from adversity.

Stewardship is the acceptance of responsibility to shepherd and safeguard the valuables of others. The raccoon incident illustrates that it is not enough for the city to act responsibly toward the Forest Preserve, it is also necessary for each resident to act responsibly toward the wild animals and the rest of the ecosystem in the Forest Preserve. We ask parents and caregivers to foster these attitudes in children. Please tell them about the history of the Forest Preserve and how lucky we are to have this beautiful gem in our city. If unauthorized activities take place in the Forest Preserve, please inform the City Code Enforcement office at 301-345-5417. For immediate response, contact the Greenbelt City Police at 301-474-7200.