



LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES
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Preservation, Restoration, Education and Recreation

October 19, 2016

Forest Preserve District of Cook County
536 N. Harlem Ave.
River Forest, IL 60305

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Clean Cut Tree Service, Inc. of Grayslake, Illinois (Clean Cut). The Lake County Forest Preserve District (District) has worked with Clean Cut on a number of occasions throughout the last six years on various projects relating to our Southern Des Plaines River Preserves – Oak Woodland Restoration Project. As you know, oaks are considered a keystone species in the Chicago region and play an important role in maintaining the structure of the woodland community. Unfortunately, oaks are not regenerating in many areas, as seedlings and saplings are not receiving enough sunlight to survive. This Oak Woodland Restoration Project will encourage the growth of oak and other native saplings by selectively removing trees (including mature, canopy trees) and shrubs to open up the canopy to increase light reaching the ground level. These thinning efforts have been performed in the winter when the ground is frozen to minimize any soil disturbance. Furthermore, the District has required contractors performing this work to utilize equipment and methods that will accomplish the goals, without damaging surrounding desirable trees (especially oaks). Clean Cut has successfully performed the tasks required for these projects many times at several projects at MacArthur Woods, Captain Daniel Wright Woods, and Ryerson Conservation Area – all Illinois Nature Preserve sites which contain threatened and/or endangered species. Clean Cut's supervisors and staff have shown genuine concern for the quality and sensitivity of these sites and have balanced this concern with an ambitious and aggressive work strategy. For example, when working at Wright Woods, frozen ground conditions were extremely limited last winter. When conditions were conducive for work, Clean Cut incorporated a large work force and numerous pieces of equipment to complete the initial thinning/clearing work in a relatively short period of time. Their intuitiveness and ability to accomplish tasks made this a successful project, considering the site's limitations. The District sets high standards for our projects and contractors; Clean Cut has completed projects to our standards. The District and Clean Cut have a good working relationship that involved daily communication while the project was ongoing. To view Clean Cut's most recent project with the District, I'd invite you to visit Captain Daniel Wright Woods. Their work can speak for itself, as can the quality of the site, which has improved since the completion of the thinning/clearing project. I would not have any reservations about contracting future work with Clean Cut.

If you have any additional questions or would like more information about these project or Clean Cut specifically, please feel free to call me directly at 847-968-3290.

Sincerely,

Matt Ueltzen
Restoration Ecologist