

## Asking Marquette inquiry

Recent proposals by the Illinois Department of Conservation to "harvest" so called fire-damaged timber on almost 350 acres in Pere Marquette Park is another step in relinquishing the department's principles and obligations as guardians and stewards of the public woodlands and resources.

I have cruised the entire area in question. But I would say that there are more dead and damaged trees along the roads through the main part of the park from the old Nike base road to the Lodge Hill.

While not a college or industry-trained forester, I have more than 40 years of observation and practical experience from which to render an opinion.

In years before the park was established — and on many occasions since — I have seen the area around Grafton, including the present park, burned over two and three or more times a year.

If trees were damaged at those times and left subject to disease, they somehow recovered without any removal other than the natural dying and falling of certain trees.

I have logged and cut stave bolts throughout the area and never noticed any permanent fire damage anywhere even though the area had burned over numerous times.

Thanks to better fire protection and fewer careless people, we have had few fires in the past several years. The last of

any consequence, almost 15 years ago, burned over some of the area now under discussion as well as the timber around Mason Hollow.

The most damage I have since observed in the area was from the saw and the dozer.

Numerous others agree with me that we are getting a fast shuffle from the department.

I am asking two legislators to investigate this surrender of public resources to the forestry and logging people.

SLATEN BRAY,  
P. O. Box 305,  
Grafton