



Annual Concessions Report 2024

Introduction

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County identifies Concessions Opportunities aimed at enhancing visitor engagement through access to recreational activities, amenities, and services. These opportunities also serve to generate non-tax revenue supporting the district's mission. In accordance with Title 6 - Business, License, and Permit Provisions, Chapter 2 – Concessions Permits and Contracts of the Forest Preserve District Code of Ordinances, this policy, alongside the Ordinance, outlines the criteria for awarding contracts or permits to concessionaires. The ordinance mandates an annual report submission to the Board of Commissioners detailing these permits and contracts.

This report provides an overview of all Concessions Permits and contracts granted by the district for 2024.

Definitions:

Applicant. Any person seeks the issuance or renewal of a Concessions Permit or Contract under this Ordinance.

Classes / Tours Contract. A contract with the District, no greater than five (5) years in length, for the provision of classes or tours conducted on District property for groups of more than five people, that will not generate more than \$25,000 in revenue to the District on an annual basis, and that otherwise meets the requirements of the District's Concessions Policy and this Ordinance.

Concessions Contract. Includes Pilot Concessions Contracts, Small Concessions Contracts, Large Concessions Contracts, and/or Classes/Tours Contracts.

Concession(s) Opportunity. The display or offer for sale of any articles, food, or tangible things; the collection of fees, admissions, or cover charges for a service; or conducting or soliciting any business, trade, occupation, or profession on District Property subject to the terms of a Concessions Permit or Contract.

Concessions Permit. A non-transferable permit, for a Concession Opportunity, issued by the General Superintendent or their designee, that authorizes the named holder to undertake a Concession Opportunity at a specified location on District property through non-permanent apparatuses including but not limited to push carts and food trucks subject to specific terms and conditions.

Concessionaire. Any Person issued a Concessions Permit or Contract by the District.

Food Truck. A motorized vehicle such as a truck, van, or mobile home licensed and insured to be legally operated on public roadways which is also equipped for preparing and vending foods, or for vending approved items or services.

Large Concessions Contracts. A contract for any Concession Opportunity that generates more than \$25,000 in revenue to the district on an annual basis. Large Concessions Contract availabilities must be posted on the district's website, competitively bid, and approved by the Board, per 1-8-2

(Contracts and Purchases) of the Code and otherwise meet the requirements of this District's Concessions Policy, the Code, and this Ordinance.

Non-Motorized Mobile Vending: A Concessionaire or their employee that personally transports and carries concession items for sale by hand without a pushcart.

Pushcart(s). A wheeled cart that transports concession items subject to the requirements and regulations of a Concessions Permit or Contract, this Ordinance, and the District's Concessions Policy.

Pilot Concessions Contract. A contract for a Concession Opportunity that is no longer than two (2) years in length, which will generate no more than \$25,000 in revenue to the district on an annual basis and otherwise meets the requirements of the District's Concessions Policy and this Ordinance. All available Pilot Concessions Contract opportunities may be posted on the district's website as available.

Small Concessions Contracts. A contract for a Concession Opportunity which is no longer than three years in duration, generates no more than \$25,000 in revenue to the district on an annual basis and otherwise meets the requirements of the District's Concessions Policy and this Ordinance. A Small Concessions Contract must be selected via the District's Request for Qualifications ("RFQ") or Request for Proposals ("RFP") process in compliance with Section 1-8-2(N) of the Code.

Types of Concession Opportunities:

Type	Revenue To the District	Term	Competitive Bid	Publicly Posted	Board Approval
Concession Permits	Per 6-2-4	1 year or less	NO	YES	NO
Pilot Concession Contracts	\$25,000 or less	2 years or less	NO	NO	NO
Small Concession Contracts	\$25,000 or less	3 years or less	YES	YES	NO
Large Concession Contracts	Over \$25,000	Varies	YES	YES	YES
Classes/Tours Contracts	\$25,000 or less	5 years or less	NO	YES	NO

Classes/Tours

Non-Traditional/Innovative Outdoor Activity Vendors

<u>Vendor Name</u>	<u>Service Provided</u>	<u>Contract Expiration Year</u>	<u>Revenue Received</u>
Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI) (Multiple Locations)	Fitness & Recreational Classes	2024	\$7,425
Total Outdoor Activity Revenue			\$7,425

Concession Permits

<u>Vendor Name</u>	<u>Service Provided</u>	<u>Location(s)</u>	<u>FPCC Revenue Received</u>
*Alsome Honeywell	Organic Honey	Swallow Cliff	\$550
All Things Ice Cream	Ice Cream Truck	Dan Ryan	\$500
Anis Bsiso Ice Cream Truck	Ice Cream Truck	Catherine Chevalier Schiller Woods	\$1000
Boo-Koose Jerk Taco	Food Truck	Dan Ryan Woods	\$500
Fade Disc Golf	Disc Golf Equipment	Rolling Knolls	\$500
Forno Pavese LLC	Food Truck	Caldwell Woods	\$500
*I Love Grill and Lemonade	Food Truck	Schiller Woods	\$550
Ice Cream To Go	Ice Cream Truck	Turtlehead Lake, Buffalo Woods, Rubio Woods, Tampier Greenway, Sundown Meadows	\$2,500
Puebla Ice Cream	Ice Cream Truck	Harms Woods	\$500
Ruby's Ice Cream	Ice Cream Truck	Robinson Woods	\$500
Scream Inc – Ice Cream	Ice Cream Truck	Bemis Woods, Brezina Miller Meadows, Thatcher Woods	\$2,000
Sunny Ice Cream	Ice Cream Truck	Busse Woods, Bunker Hill, Labagh Woods, Miami Woods, Pulaski Woods	\$2,500
Tastey Love Catering	Food Truck	Busse Woods	\$500
Total Concessions Permit Revenue			\$12,600

*Non-Cook County Resident

Small/Large Concession Contracts

Current Recreation Concession Portfolio

<u>Vendor Name</u>	<u>Contract Type</u>	<u>Service Provided</u>	<u>Contract Expiration Year</u>	<u>Estimated 2024 Revenue</u>
Go Ape Adventure (Western Springs)	Large Contract	Aerial Adventure Course and Zipline	2026	\$115,247
Chicago River Canoe and Kayak – Busse Woods (Elk Grove Village)	Large Contract	Kayak and Canoe Rental	2026	\$31,815
Chicago River Canoe and Kayak – Maple Lake (Willow Springs)	Large Contract	Kayak and Canoe Rental	2025	\$4,817
Chicago River Canoe and Kayak – Skokie Lagoons (Winnetka)	Large Contract	Kayak and Canoe Rental	2026	\$33,221
Chicago River Canoe and Kayak – Tampier Boat House (Palos Township)	Large Contract	Boat Rental	2026	\$17,255
Indigo Golf (Various Locations)	Large Contract	Golf Course Management	2035	\$2,178,348
Oak Park Tennis Club (River Forest)	Large Contract	Tennis Court Management	2031	\$6,757
PepsiCo	Large	Vending Machine	2026	\$326
Juiced by Shic (Palos Park)	Small Contract	Food and Beverage	2027	\$14,610
Recreation Concessions Revenue Total				*\$2,402,396

*The final payment for 2024 from Indigo Golf was received on February 15, 2025 per the terms of our existing Agreement.

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) concession program generated \$798,609 from an estimated \$2,422,421 in total concession revenue, with over 90% coming from two major contracts—golf and the aerial adventure course & zipline. FPDCC’s concessions are governed by five types of contractual arrangements: Concession Permits, Concession Pilot, Classes/Tours Contracts, and Large and Small Contracts.

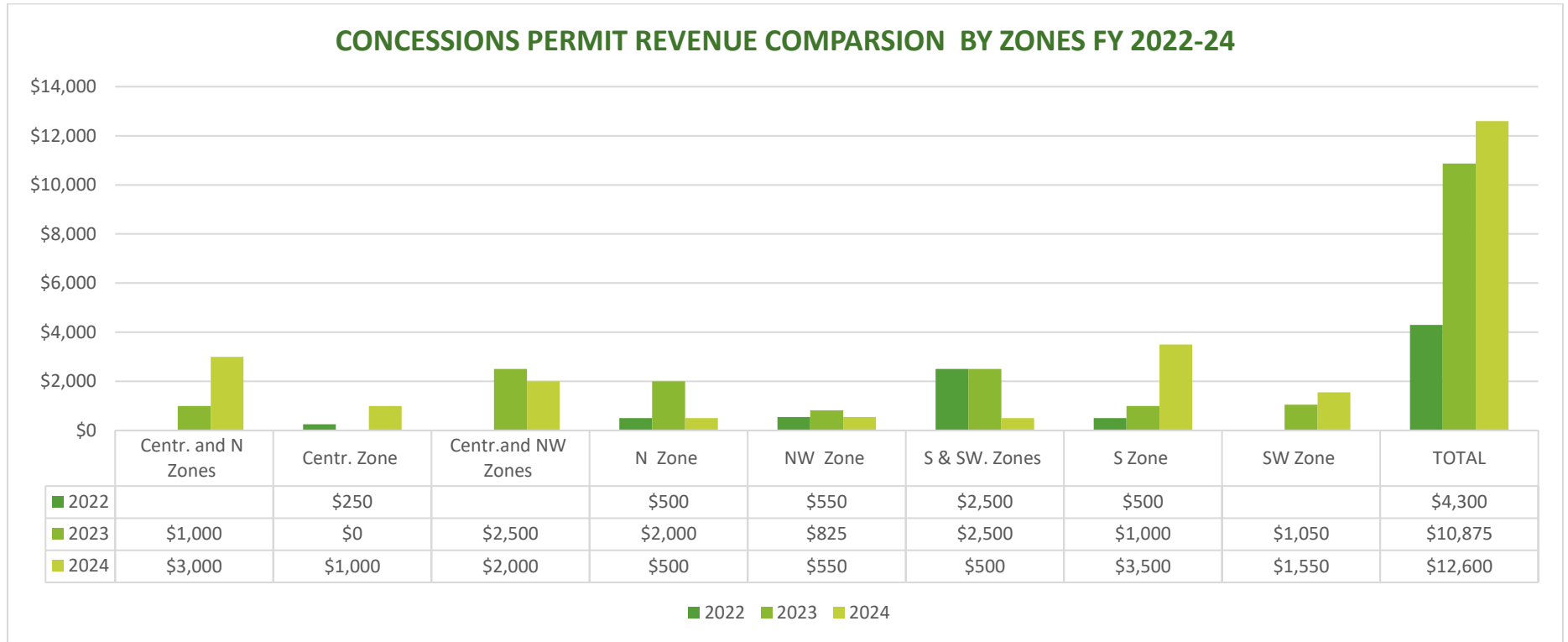
Originally limited to three regional ice cream truck contracts, the Concessions Program has grown to include a diverse mix of concessionaires and small businesses offering food, retail, and recreational services aligned with FPDCC’s mission to enhance visitor enjoyment.

In 2024, FPDCC engaged with 205 business owners, including mobile food vendors, fitness groups, and advisors from small business development centers. Through strategic outreach, the Forest Preserve built relationships with local business chambers, associations, educational institutions, and workforce centers. FPDCC participated in small business expos, delivered presentations, and hosted in-person and virtual engagements to promote concession opportunities. Presentations were also made at Illinois Procurement Technical Assistance (APEX) Centers in the spring and fall of 2024 to reach a wider audience.

The Concessions Permit Opening Day on January 15, 2024, provided small business owners with more time to apply and allowed FPDCC to market the program extensively. The first webinar on January 9, 2024, was promoted through small business expos, flyers, in-person and virtual meetings, local newspaper articles, and social media campaigns on platforms like Facebook, Forest Way, and LinkedIn.

As a result, FPDCC processed 29 concession applications, approving 25 permits and generating \$12,600 of revenue in 2024. However, the program faces competition from neighboring cities and counties with established food festivals. To address this challenge, approved vendors were invited to community events hosted by the Conservation and Experiential Programming (CEP) Department, such as Pumpkinpalooza, Insect Fest, Kids’ Fest, and Calumet Heritage Day, to attract new vendors.

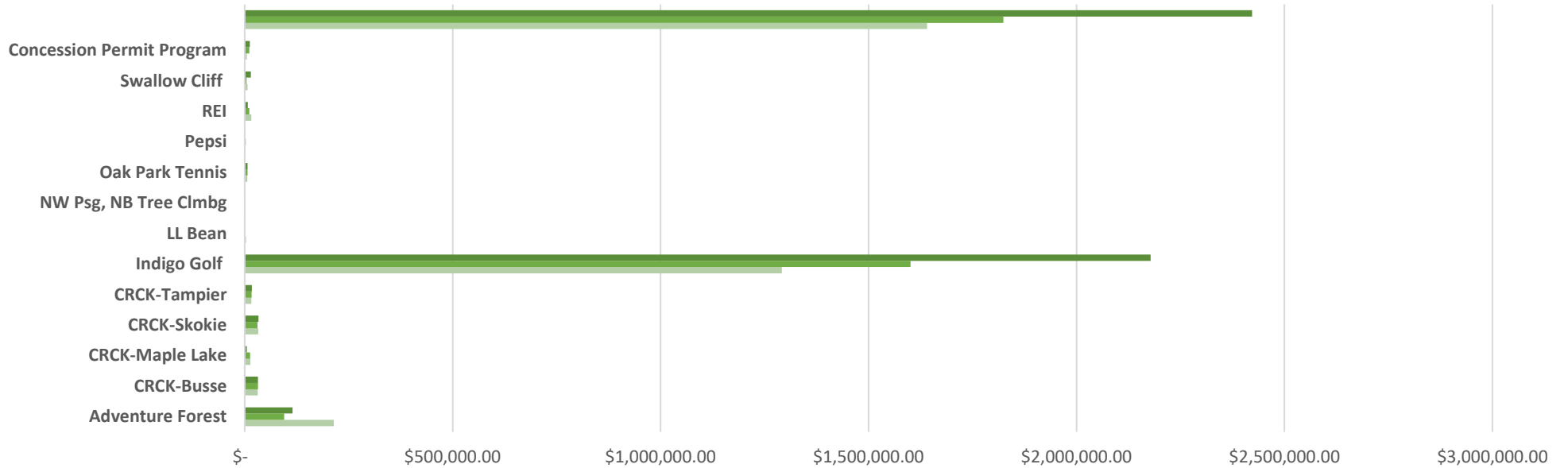
CONCESSIONS PERMIT REVENUE COMPARSION BY ZONES FY 2022-24



This segment presents statistical comparisons of concession program activities throughout Fiscal Year 2022-24. The count of concession operations, as indicated below, encompasses contracts that ended or expired within the reporting period and represents active contracts as of December 31st, 2024. Nevertheless, the revenue figures encompass all concessions that were operational during the reporting period.

The Forest Preserves of Cook County’s revenue increased by 33% in 2024.

FPCC REVENUE SHARE COMPARISON 2022 THRU 2024



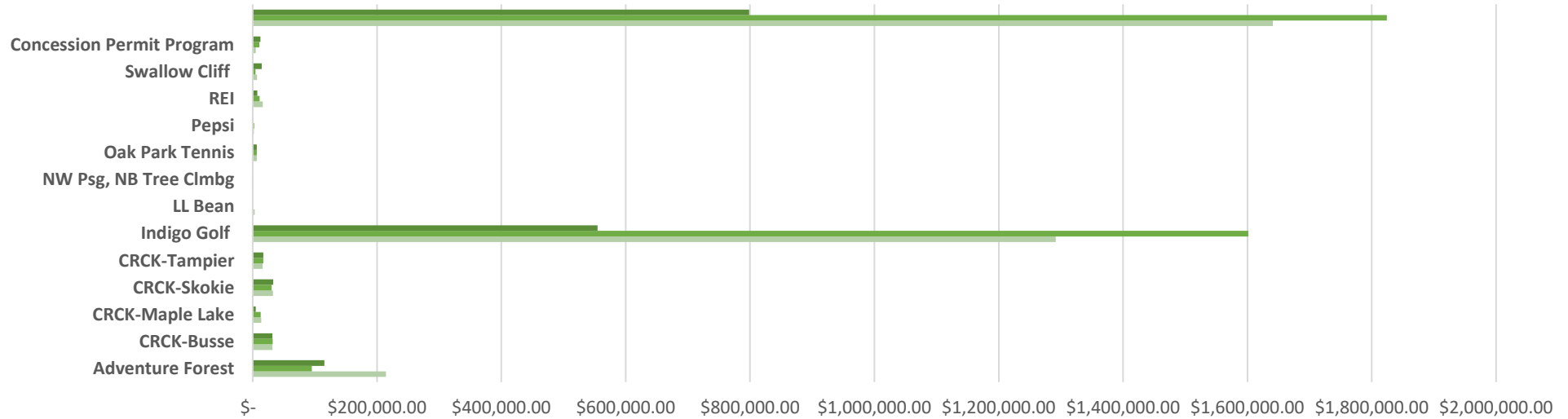
	Adventure Forest	CRCK-Busse	CRCK-Maple Lake	CRCK-Skokie	CRCK-Tampier	Indigo Golf	LL Bean	NW Psg, NB Tree Clmbg	Oak Park Tennis	Pepsi	REI	Swallow Cliff	Concession Permit Program	
■ 2024	\$115,246.7	\$31,815.31	\$4,816.76	\$33,221.25	\$17,255.28	\$2,178,348			\$6,756.96	\$325.64	\$7,425.40	\$14,610.00	\$12,600.00	\$2,422,421
■ 2023	\$95,002.81	\$32,079.77	\$12,790.29	\$30,495.82	\$16,901.71	\$1,601,223		\$415.00	\$6,624.48	\$2,395.17	\$11,068.40	\$4,320.50	\$10,850.00	\$1,824,192
■ 2022	\$214,388.8	\$31,574.15	\$13,559.94	\$32,649.13	\$15,996.57	\$1,291,770	\$3,224.03	\$975.00	\$6,494.58	\$2,076.84	\$16,198.60	\$6,981.54	\$4,850.00	\$1,640,740

■ 2024 ■ 2023 ■ 2022

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* Approximately \$1,623,812 in Concession Revenue from 2024 will be realized in 2025

FPCC REVENUE SHARE COMPARISON 2022 THRU 2024



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■ 2023	\$95,002.81	\$32,079.77	\$12,790.29	\$30,495.82	\$16,901.71	\$1,601,223		\$415.00	\$6,624.48	\$2,395.17	\$11,068.40	\$4,320.50	\$10,850.00	\$1,824,192
■ 2022	\$214,388.8	\$31,574.15	\$13,559.94	\$32,649.13	\$15,996.57	\$1,291,770	\$3,224.03	\$975.00	\$6,494.58	\$2,076.84	\$16,198.60	\$6,981.54	\$4,850.00	\$1,640,740

■ 2024 ■ 2023 ■ 2022

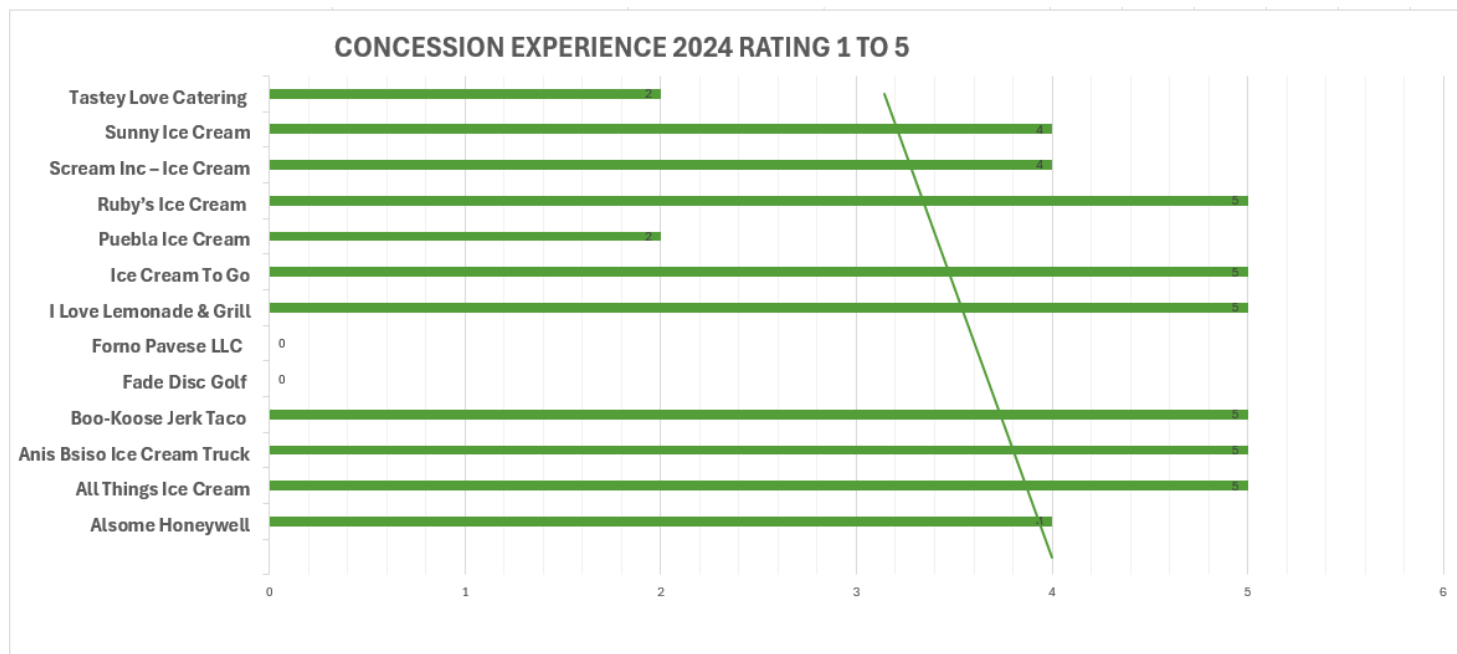


2024 Concession Permit Survey Results

The Forest Preserves of Cook County surveyed concessions permit holders—including food vendors, ice cream truck operators, and retail businesses—via email and phone from September 30 to November 22, 2024. The feedback will enable staff to assess program effectiveness, pinpoint areas for improvement, and make informed decisions about whether to continue or modify the program based on input from the 2024 permit holders. Out of 13 invited business owners and operators approved for a 2024 concessions permits, 11 responded, yielding a 71% response rate.

QUESTION 1: Concessionaires permit holders were asked to rate their overall experience in 2024 (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest). 11 out of 13 concessionaires rate their permit experience at 71% in Forest Preserve of Cook County.

- Two concessionaires gave low ratings, citing that the designated locations were too far for frequent business or that picnic goers brought their own food, limiting the benefits for their food truck operations.



QUESTION 2: How was this program beneficial to your business? Did the program help you grow your business?

- Ten out of 13 survey respondents stated that the Forest Preserve’s concession program was highly beneficial for growing their businesses, attracting new customers, and generating calls for private events and parties.
- Other survey responses mentioned if Forest Preserve should help promote businesses through social media

QUESTION 3: As a Concessionaire, did you run into any issues this year? If yes what?

- 4 out of 13 survey respondents reported to have no issues in 2024
- 4 out of 13 survey respondents reported they did have issues with unpermitted food & ice cream push carts and trucks without permits coming into their permitted preserves in 2024.
- Other survey responses: Found the FPCC could do better educating people with horses that move around Swallow Cliff.

QUESTION 4: If there are any issues, how were your issues resolved? Did you call Forest Preserve of Cook County's Police or 911?

- 5 out of 13 survey respondents reported 'NA or No' to question.
- 3 out of 13 survey respondents reported the Forest Preserve of Cook County Police were very helpful asking the vendors to leave.
- Other survey responses mentioned if Forest Preserve of Cook County Police would consider coming around on normal weekends beside major holidays to ticket unlicensed vendors at Dan Ryan Woods, would like to see police consistently on weekends

QUESTION 5: Did you find the program fees reasonably priced?

- 9 out of 13 survey respondents found the annual fee reasonably priced.
- Other survey responses mentioned if Forest Preserve of Cook County could provide discounts for veteran owned businesses and whether, the Forest Preserve of Cook County would consider prorating fees for a vendor coming less 6 months.

QUESTION 6: Would you return to the Forest Preserves as a Concessionaire next year?

- 10 out of 13 mentioned they will return to Forest Preserve of Cook County in 2025
- 2 survey respondents mentioned they were unsure or would not return to Forest Preserve in 2025

QUESTION 7: If you are not planning to return next year please explain, why not?

- The survey respondent mentioned the reason for not returning for a concession permit in 2025 is because most people who visit the Forest Preserve are having picnics and they bring their own food.

QUESTION 8: Would you recommend the program to other small businesses in your industry?

- 10 out of 13 survey respondents mentioned they would recommend the concession permit program to other small businesses offering sweets or different foods.
- Other survey comments: Didn't know other small businesses but would recommend the program to other small businesses offering sweets or different foods.

QUESTION 9: What suggestions do you have to improve this program?

- 3 out of 13 survey respondents mentioned the Forest Preserve should not change the concession program because it is organized well.

- Other survey comments: Concessionaire would like to see Forest Preserve go back to a region contracts for ice cream trucks or that the FPCC needs to push more marketing for events on social media and signage.
- Being allowed to visit the campgrounds

