

# 2019 Annual Report



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## FOREST PRESERVE FOUNDATION STAFF

Shelley A. Davis, President  
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Communications manager  
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## OUR MISSION

To engage in protecting and restoring the treasured natural habitats of the Forest Preserves of Cook County and to enhance the outdoor experiences of all communities.

We do this by encouraging and administering private gifts to further the Forest Preserves' mission and goals.

**Dear Friends and Supporters,**

**Thank you for making 2019 another impactful year for the Forest Preserve Foundation.**

**We continued to grow our grantmaking in core investment areas: We supported 120 acres of restoration in the ecologically important Cap Sauers Holding Preserves and 110 summer internships for underserved youth. These investments in restoration and next-generation conservation advocates help make the Forest Preserves of Cook County welcoming and accessible for everyone.**

**Our ongoing support of youth conservation internships is rooted in a commitment to bring more people of color and low-income young adults into the conservation field. Over the years, we have underwritten paid summer jobs for more than 400 young people from Chicago and the Cook County suburbs. They are mostly African American and Latinx residents served by the Housing Authority of Cook County.**

**We believe the Forest Preserves need people of all backgrounds to do vital conservation work that restores our public lands to ecological health. The internships we fund can lead to green careers and life-long environmental advocates, creating a more diverse conservation workforce.**

**As we seed the next generation of conservation advocates, we simultaneously are addressing changing climate, which particularly impacts low-income and communities of color.**

**Ecological restoration is a responsible and necessary way to combat climate change, and it goes hand in hand with our efforts to elevate diversity, equity and inclusion in all we do.**

**Shelley Davis  
President and Executive Director**

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Forest Preserve Experience/Conservation Corps



**ABOVE:** Forest Preserve Experience participants get hands on during Career Exploration Day, “Touch a Turtle, Tree or Fish,” at Tampier Lake. **BELOW:** CCLC crew members at Little Red Schoolhouse.

The Foundation again this year supported two summer jobs programs for young people in Cook County: Forest Preserve Experience (FPE) and Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps (CCLC) through grants totaling \$121,200.

FPE engages Cook County youth 14-19 years old in hands-on conservation work and education in local ecology. The 2019 FPE program brought 112 youth into the Forest Preserves of Cook County during the five-week program. Eight crews worked at six sites. All participants resided in Housing Authority of Cook County properties or were HACC voucher holders in south and west suburban Cook County.

CCLC engages high school aged youth in hands-on conservation projects such as invasive species removal, trail building, gardening, and construction of nature play areas. The program focused efforts this year at five sites: Crabtree Nature Center, Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center, River Trail Nature Center, Sand Ridge Nature Center, and Trailside Nature Museum.

This year’s crews performed invasive species removal and follow up herbicide (by certified adults) on 8.58 acres.



## Ecological restoration



In winter 2019, the Forest Preserves with help from the Forest Preserve Foundation used tracked machines (inset photo) to remove invasive brush. By spring (large photo) recovery had been rapid.

Cap Sauers Holding Nature Preserves is a 1,500-acre state-dedicated nature preserve located in the Palos Preserves. In February, the Forest Preserve Foundation awarded a \$250,000 grant to the Forest Preserves of Cook County for restoration of 120 acres in Cap Sauers, thanks to the generosity

of a Palos-area resident whose gift was inspired by seeing Preserves staff and volunteers working in Cap Sauers last summer.

The donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, expressed the hope that others will be inspired to invest in the ecological health and beauty of the Preserves.

## Family programming/Tributes



Family programming engages children and adults in activities that give them access to nature. In July, a new Nature Play and Treehouse supported with National Recreation Foundation funding opened in Dan Ryan Woods.



Memorial tributes allow families and groups to establish a lasting remembrance that honors someone in the Forest Preserves. This year, the Foundation facilitated the installation of 16 benches, and planting of seven trees.

# EVENTS

Foundation events bring together supporters and community leaders to spread awareness about the Preserves' importance to the region.



Forest Preserve Foundation 2019 Conservation Cup Host Committee members.

## Conservation Cup

The Forest Preserve Foundation hosted its 8th annual Conservation Cup golf outing on Sept. 12 at the George W. Dunne National Golf Course. More than 150 golfers and guests participated, helping to raise nearly \$210,000. JP Morgan Chase and Billy Casper Golf were Title Sponsors.

## Spring Symposium/ Summer Soiree

The Foundation's Spring Symposium on June 14 showcased the breadth of the Forest Preserves—from its recreational amenities to the ways it contributes to the region's environmental health. The symposium also underscored Foundation partnerships with REI and the Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. Wintrust hosted the symposium, which engaged nearly 100 guests from across the civic and business communities.

Hosted by several board members, the "Summer Soiree" took place June 25 on the North Shore. It highlighted the connection between the Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Foundation. It also provided a chance for guests and many civic and business leaders to hear directly from Forest Preserves leadership and young people whose lives have been touched by Foundation support.

### Spring Symposium



Left to right: Theresa Salus moderated a panel with Anely Lopez, Nicholas Brown and Ambassador Fay Hartog-Levin.

### Summer Soiree



Conservation Corps alums Jalanni Matthews and Luis Cabrales with Alice Brandon, center.

# GRANTS

In 2019, the Foundation granted nearly \$500,000 to projects that benefit the Forest Preserves of Cook County.



Since the Foundation's founding in 2006, it has awarded \$1.8 million to its core program areas: next-generation conservation leaders, ecological restoration, memorial gifts, and family programs.

## 2019 Grants

**Cap Sauers Holding Preserve Restoration (\$250,000):** For restoration work on 120 acres to reconnect critical conservation areas and create new habitat.

**Conservation Corps, Forest Preserve Experience (\$75,000 via Central Indiana Community Foundation):** To support a five-week paid summer jobs program for a minimum of 84 high school youth whose families utilize the services of the Housing Authority of Cook County.

**Student Conservation Association/Chicago Conservation Leaders Corps (\$50,000 via the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation):** To support 22 students from Chicago to participate in the six-week 2019 summer program.

**Nature as Community Engagement (\$30,000 via CSX):** A partnership with

the American Indian Center and ENLACE to use nature connections to develop culturally specific programs, recruit and train community-based nature ambassadors.

**Cranberry Slough Restoration (\$25,000):** To restore 11 acres to ecological health.

**Career Exploration (\$11,200 via Allstate):** To support participants in the Forest Preserve Experience program, the Cook County Housing Authority partnership with the Forest Preserves, to attend 2019 Career Exploration Day.

**Restoration of Palos Trail Slope (\$13,500 via REI):** Restoration of six acres on a ravine slope that lies between a new mountain bike trail and a stream, stabilizing soil and conserving rare plant species.

**Restoration of Galloping Hill Fen (\$10,000 via Oberweiler**

**Foundation):** Restoration work to remove invasive species.

**Free Spirit Media (\$7,000):** A social enterprise that trained and employed youth media makers to produce 2019 Foundation video.

**Conservation@Home (\$4,500 via Chicago Community Foundation):** To support expanding the Forest Preserves' Conservation@Home program into nine Cook County schools.

**Oak Woodland Restoration in Schubert's Woods (\$4,500 via Enbridge):** To support invasive brush removal across 20 acres.

**Tribute gifts and I Love My Preserves (\$14,510)**

**Perkins Woods Shrub Plantings (\$1,440)**

**Volunteer Recognition Program (\$1,170 via Comcast Foundation)**

The Foundation's financial audit information is accessible on the website: [forestpreservefoundation.org](http://forestpreservefoundation.org).

## FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP

The Foundation is pleased to have committed individuals on its board who devote their time and talents to accomplishing its goals. Meet two business leaders who joined the Foundation's Board of Directors in 2019.

### Jim Beck

An insurance industry executive committed to community service, Beck is active in many Chicagoland charitable and civic organizations, including Misericordia Heart of Mercy and After School Matters.

Soon after joining the board, he stepped up to co-host its Summer Soiree, which introduced North Shore residents and civic leaders to the Foundation's work. During the event, he shared ways those in attendance could become involved with the Foundation's work.

"Joining the board was important to me because of the mission, preserving and expanding this natural resource we have," he said. **"The Foundation plays a key role in giving young people opportunities to learn about the natural world, to get into the sciences and to gain work experiences they may otherwise not have."**

A former Forest Preserves employee who enjoys biking the North Branch Trail, Beck knows how much the Preserves have to offer for those who enjoy and appreciate everything from wide open spaces to natural wooded landscapes.

The life-long Cook County resident also sees his role as helping to get "more awareness to the community about the Foundation's mission."

Beck is program director for the Chicago office for the Midwest regions of Nationwide Retirement Solutions public sector division.



### Steve Friedman

An urban planner recognized as a thought leader, Friedman is active in many civic, professional and educational organizations. During Foundation board meetings, he often raises informed questions that are based on his knowledge of environmental and land-use issues.

Friedman has a deep appreciation for the Forest Preserves and what it means to the region. **"The Preserves perform a critical environmental function as a space to let the region breathe, and also to absorb storm water, perhaps increasingly"** as the region experiences more rainfall. "They provide

an opportunity for people to be able to learn about this very unusual and hard to understand ecosystem that constitutes the prairie in the Midwest."

Because the Preserves are so critical, Friedman believes "they should be promoted to people and firms considering locating in the region."

Biking the trails is one of Friedman's favorite ways to enjoy the Forest Preserves.

He is president of SB Friedman Development Advisors, a Chicago real estate consultancy, a member of the Urban Land Institute and a director of The Civic Federation and Family Focus.



# FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS

Thank you to our generous donors. This list reflects gifts given or pledged from Oct. 1, 2018 to Nov. 15, 2019.

## **\$100,000 +**

Anonymous  
Forest Preserve District  
of Cook County

## **\$50,000 +**

Central Indiana Community  
Foundation  
The Harry and Jeanette  
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## **\$10,000 - \$49,999**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The **Forest Preserve Foundation** leadership would like to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their time and talents.

## Conservation Cup Committee

Claire Williams, co-chair  
Justin Erkfritz-Gay, co-chair  
Jim Beck  
Julie Conenna  
Jason DeVore  
Jeffrey Druckman  
Josh Geppi  
Tom Livingston  
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Quinn Christine  
REI Co-op  
Romano Beverages  
Wines for Humanity



NATURE DOES THE INVITING.  
WE JUST BRING THE CREW.

At the Forest Preserve Foundation, we support the programs and activities that give everyone access to the natural treasures of Cook County. With your support, these efforts will make life better for us all.

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