

Fee Waiver/Pass Summary Report 2023



2023 Fee Waiver/Free Passes

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (the “*District*”) recognizes the value of waiving or reducing fees in certain instances for the use of District facilities or land. As set forth in Title 7 - Fees, Chapter 1 – Fee Schedule, of the District Code of Ordinances, the Fee Waiver Policy was established (*Policy Number: 02.30.00*). The policy supplemented with the Fee Waiver Form, was established for determining when fees may be waived or reduced. The policy requires an annual report to the Board of Commissioners on discounts and waivers for the sake of transparency.

This report outlines specific discount categories applied toward any district managed facility (*i.e., picnic groves, indoor rental facilities, camping etc.*). In addition, as agreed upon by active concession and land agreements, the District is provided with various passes to be issued pursuant to District Board Approved Resolution, 16-0314, dated July 12, 2016.

Definitions:

Administrative Discount: Discounts and/refunds issued to customers based on district staff booking error or customer retention.

Fee Waiver: Partial and/or full fee waivers for non-District entities/individuals that request a Discretionary Discount.

Veterans Discount: Issued to Veteran organizations as stated in Section 2-4-2 of the Ordinance.

NFP Discount: A discount provided to any nonprofit organization with a valid 501(c)(3).

School Discount: Schools that utilize Preserve trails for Cross Country events are provided a 100% discount.

Student Film Discount: Film projects for educational credit are waived at 100% once provided with school authorization.

Permit/Event (M-Thu) Discount: 25% Discount provided to all patrons for hosting events Monday through Thursday.

In 2023, the Forest Preserves of Cook County observed permit numbers that matched those of the previous year, with visitor levels returning to those seen in 2019. A total of 7,314 permits were issued, accommodating approximately 775,585 attendees. These figures are consistent with those from 2022, and we expect the total permits issued in 2024 to remain stable, similar to the reported numbers from 2023.

The District offers discounts at varying levels for different not-for-profit groups, ranging from students to veteran organizations. In 2023, the district provided discounts on 716 permits, totaling \$189,893.15. We have enhanced our procedures to improve access to the preserves and expand opportunities for not-for-profits to bring diverse community groups to these natural spaces.

The Conservation & Experiential Programming Department, operating through its six nature centers, three zone teams, outreach team, and campgrounds, distributed admission and parking passes to Brookfield Zoo and the Chicago Botanic Garden. These passes were utilized as prizes for raffles, games, and activities, encouraging participation in newsletters, volunteer hours, and other events and initiatives.

Fee Waiver Totals:

Discount Type/Name	# of Customers/Org.	Total
Administrative Discount	18	\$1,151.65
Camping 2021 Transfer Discount (100%)	3	\$333.00
Fee Waiver	22	\$12,386.50
Indoor – NFP Discount	59	\$50,670.50
NFP Discount	259	\$101,447.50
Permit/Event (M-Thu) Discount	350	\$15,300.75
School Discount (100%)	4	\$4,356.25
Student Film Discount (100%)	1	\$4,247.00
TOTAL	716	\$189,893.15

Free Pass Totals by Group:

Organization or Department	Zoo Pass	Zoo Parking	Garden Passes	Camping	Golf	Go Ape	Total Passes
Maywood Park District	15						15
Westchester Public Library	10						10

Opportunity Knocks	30						30
Bird House Building Contest (TSM)	30						30
Aztec Dance Group	20		20				40
Blackhawk Dance Group	20		20				40
Hoot and Howl Costume Winners	20		20				40
Seguin	15	15					30
Cicero School District 99- Goodwin Elementary	10	10					20
4 th District Police			10				10
Hyde Park Neighborhood Club	50						50
Cook County Presidents Office	16						16
WTTW				10			10
Lost Boyz						12	12
University of Illinois						36	36
Conservation and Experiential Programming	1307	233	720	30		24	2314
Communications	100	20	40	13			173
Permits	100	18	60				178
Resource Management	300	18	60				378
Office of the General Superintendent	100	20	60				180
Volunteer Resources	100	18	60		10		188
Forest Preserve Foundation				1			1
TOTAL	2,243	352	1,070	54	10	72	3,801

*Conservation & Experiential Programming Nature

Centers, Zone Programming Teams, Outreach, Campgrounds

Free Pass Totals with Cost Estimate:

	Zoo Pass	Zoo Parking	Garden Passes	Camp ing	Go Ape	Golf	Total Passes (\$)
Total Passes	2,246	352	1,070	54	72	10	3,804
Price Est.	\$29.95	\$17.00	\$9.95	\$36.00	\$64.95	\$200.00	N/A
Pass Total (\$)	\$67,268	\$5,984	\$10,647	\$1,944	\$4,676	\$2,000	\$92,519

***Go Ape increased by \$2.00 from 2022 to 2023**