

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
COOK COUNTY
ILLINOIS

REVISED REPORT
of
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
to the
COOK COUNTY
FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSIONERS



REPRINT
1959

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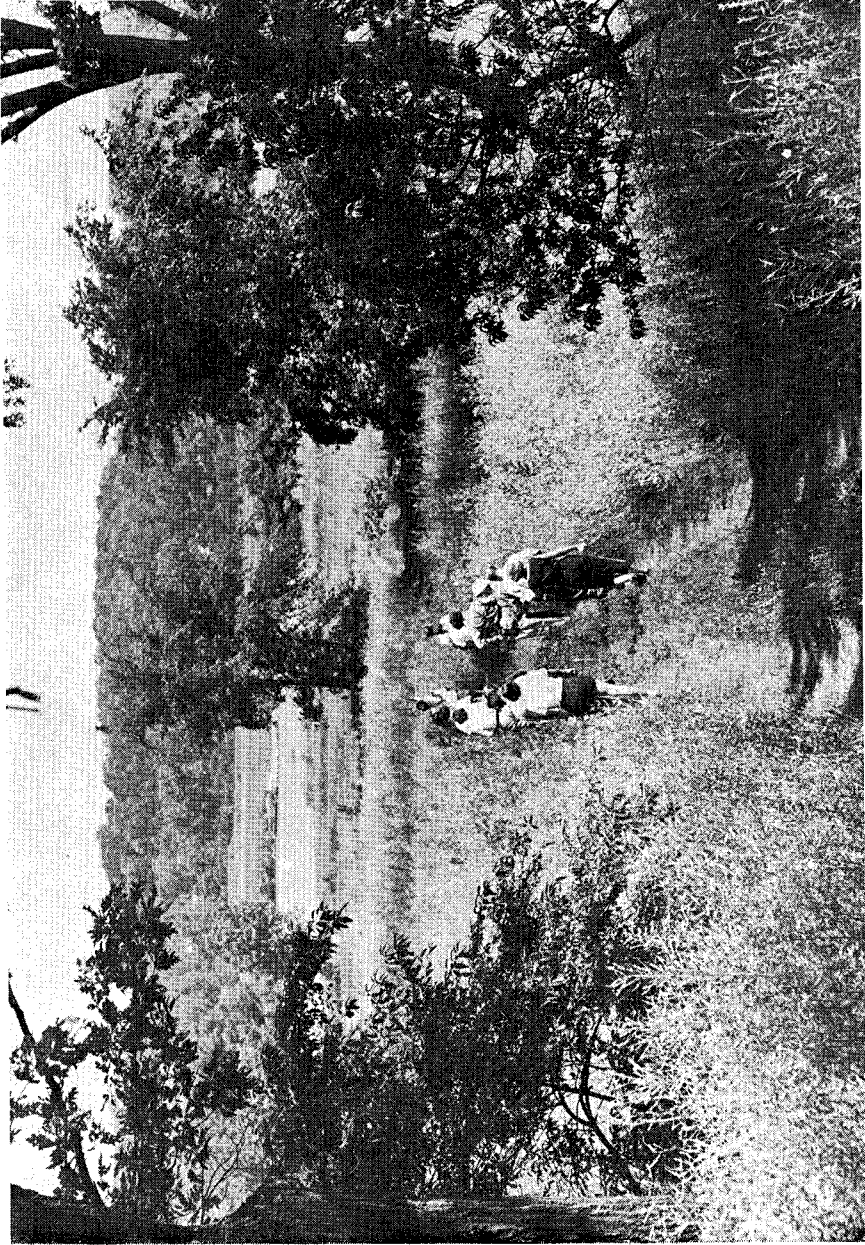
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**Forest Preserve District
Cook County, Ill.
536 North Harlem Avenue,
River Forest,
Illinois**

April - 1959



"For the purpose of the Education, Pleasure and Recreation of the Public."

FOREWORD

The Forest Preserve District is governed by a board of fifteen commissioners, ten of whom are elected at large from the city of Chicago and five at large from the area outside the city, including cities, towns, villages and unincorporated areas. They are elected as county commissioners but also compose the Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners. The District is a separate and distinct municipal government so, as Forest Preserve Commissioners, they have no legal connection with the County. The chief executive officer is the President of the Board and the chief administrator is the General Superintendent. The President holds the power of all personnel appointments, subject to civil service rules.

The policies and plans, proposed by the Advisory Committee and approved by the Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners, have been and are the guide of the District staff. They are maintained and executed by the administrator with constant and detailed reference to the Board for approval. The Advisory Committee, appointed first in 1926, has confined its activities to policy, land acquisition and financial resource problems. It has not entered into any administrative matters except on the direct request in 1929 to recommend a General Superintendent.

Robert Kingery was secretary to the Advisory Committee from its inception until his death in 1951 and the prime mover in its work. Much benefit came from his vision, tenacity of purpose, and wide experience.

The policies of administration over more than thirty years have been thoroughly tried and well seasoned. Department heads are given full authority and responsibility. They are permitted to operate in their own manner and methods. Responsibility is **definite**. Department heads are encouraged to bring only policy and apparently insoluble problems to the General Superintendent.

The departments are—Engineering, including Landscape Architecture, Comptroller, Maintenance and Operations, Forestry, Conservation, Legal, Real Estate, and Secretarial. Work centers are the general headquarters, garages and shops (known as the warehouse), and nine division headquarters strategically dispersed over the forty-five thousand acres.

The Forest Preserve Commissioners are elected officials, trained in evaluating public requests and needs within legal budgetary limitations. In a county with a population of nearly 5,000,000 the work of the elected official is difficult and complex with never ceasing demands. The General Superintendent maintains constant official contact with the Commissioners. His policy is to confine this contact largely to himself. The requests of the Commissioners are met without undue delay, procrastination or equivocation. If they are within the District policies and practicable they are completed with dispatch. If they are not, the justification for inability to comply is carefully given. In the cases where requests must be refused, proposals are always made to write or call on the originator of the request to explain the cause for refusal.

The work of the General Superintendent includes keeping the President informed, maintenance of discipline, protection and insurance of policies, origination of ideas and methods, criticism and approval of development plans, establishing good tempo in all operations, development of land acquisition plans, much trouble shooting, and appearance at board meetings.

To sustain and enforce the policies of the District requires vigilance, effort and courage from the Board of Commissioners, the Advisory Committee and the district staff. Many requests affecting policy are handled by telephone and conferences by the administrator or staff members.

All employees are thoroughly inculcated with policy standards. Any suggested change or deviation is carefully analyzed. That which is deemed inimical to public interest is resisted with firmness and resolution. See "Land Policy", Forest Preserve District, 1950; reprints available from the District upon request.

* * * **NOTE** * * *

This revised report of the Advisory Committee contains material from the writings of Robert Kingery, John Barstow Morrill and Charles G. Savers. Roberts Mann prepared the first draft which contained expanded material on design and maintenance of picnic groves (see Parks and Recreation, March, 1953), outdoor education and other subjects. This draft was revised in 1953 then again in 1959 to include only material applicable to policy recommendations.

Following is a transcript, with up-to-date revisions, from the Proceedings of the Forest Preserve District for February 11, 1953.

FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

January 19, 1953

To the Honorable, the President
and Members of the Board of
Forest Preserve Commissioners
of Cook County.

Dear Madam and Gentlemen:

On October 3, 1952, President Erickson wrote to the Chairman of your Advisory Committee proposing a review and revision of the original report of that Committee, presented in 1929 and adopted by the Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners. That report set forth recommendations for land acquisition, development plans, policies governing protection, operation and public use, and methods of finance.

Appended hereto is the revised report which we recommend for your approval.

The report calls attention to the fact that your Board, adhering to well-made policies and plans, has pursued a conservative program oriented to conform to the letter and the spirit of the law. The Board has kept in mind the fact that the great holdings of the District are the property of all the citizens of Cook County and has refused to dissipate them for community, municipal or other purposes not in the interest of the general public. The Board has refrained from developments which would have required heavy capital outlay and greatly increased the cost of operation and maintenance.

We propose that this simplicity in development and operation be continued; that the integrity of the lands be maintained against division and encroachment; that studied land acquisition plans be followed by well-controlled purchase procedure; and that there be a limited increase in tax income to meet problems of development, forestry, and construction repair.

We wish to commend the Board for establishing a staff of able administrators and technicians, and for having given that staff the requisite authority along with the responsibility to accomplish their work. The Forest Preserve District is nationally recognized in the field of development of natural landscapes for the use of the people.

Your Advisory Committee has worked with the Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners for twenty-five years—since 1927. It has been a serious and pleasant association.

Yours very truly,
Advisory Committee to the Cook County
Forest Preserve Commissioners,
(Signed) E. E. BROWN, Chairman.

Report of the Advisory Committee to the Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners.

The original report of this committee was adopted by the Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners on January 23, 1929. It had been prepared under the direction of the late Robert Kingery after two years of careful study during which the committee had familiarized itself with the holdings then existing, and the usages of them by the public. The committee adhered and still adheres to a basic policy which follows the letter and the spirit of the statute under which the Forest Preserve Commissioners are authorized:

"TO ACQUIRE . . . AND HOLD LANDS . . . CONTAINING ONE OR MORE NATURAL FORESTS OR LANDS CONNECTING SUCH FORESTS OR PARTS THEREOF, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROTECTING AND PRESERVING THE FLORA, FAUNA AND SCENIC BEAUTIES WITHIN SUCH DISTRICT, AND TO RESTORE, RESTOCK, PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE NATURAL FORESTS AND SAID LANDS TOGETHER WITH THEIR FLORA AND FAUNA, AS NEARLY AS MAY BE, IN THEIR NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION, FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE EDUCATION, PLEASURE, AND RECREATION OF THE PUBLIC."

The committee had come to the conclusion that the purpose of the act must be interpreted broadly enough to provide appropriate forms of active recreation, primarily picnicking, in certain of the open spaces, and preferably along the fringes or highway borders, in order that the bulk of the native landscape might be preserved intact. The committee further recommended and here restates the principle that, fundamentally, no single living tree should be removed from any part of the Forest Preserves unless exceedingly careful study discloses some urgent necessity for its destruction. The forest, with its cultural, sociological and spiritual values is paramount.

In 1929 the holdings of the Forest Preserve District totalled approximately 31,000 acres and the legal maximum which could be acquired was 35,000 acres. The population of Cook County was approximately 3,982,000, including 3,376,000 in the City of Chicago. Since that time, the maximum has been increased to 50,000 acres, and the holdings of the District have been increased to approximately 46,000 acres.

The program of land purchase, in accord with carefully developed plans, has required keen foresight and genuine courage on the part of successive Boards of Forest Preserve Commissioners.* In this, as well as in their administration governing the development and operation of the preserves, they have adhered to sound policies. As a result, the holdings of the District constitute one of the finest examples of intelligent planning and use of land in a metropolitan area. Nowhere in the United States is there such a great area of publicly owned native landscape as fine, and so easily accessible to such a huge population.

Meanwhile, the population of Cook County has increased to approximately 5,100,000 including 3,750,000 in the City of Chicago and 1,350,000 in the 112 suburban municipalities and the rural or unincorporated sections of the county. In the period from 1940 to 1959, especially, there has been an accelerated growth of population in many outlying portions of Cook County which has resulted in the occupation of large areas, adjacent to or surrounding Forest Preserve District holdings, by residential, business and industrial developments and there have been similar developments in outlying portions of the City of Chicago adjacent to certain preserves. There have been major highway and waterway developments constructed or proposed which vitally affect the preservation and use of Forest Preserve areas.

It is deemed appropriate, at this time, to review the original report of this committee and propose the plans and policies which it believes should govern future acquisition, development and operation.

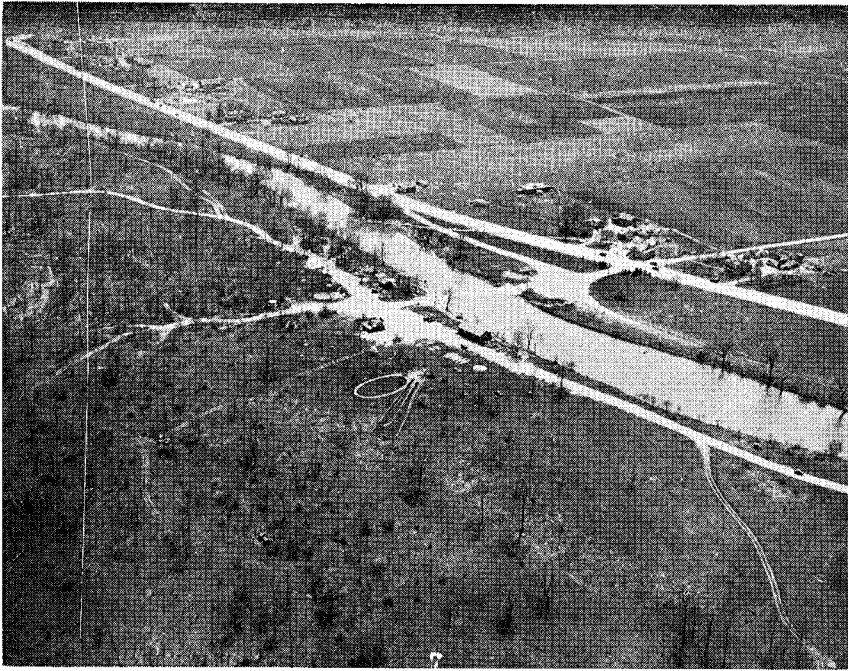
Master Control Plans

The orderly development of the Forest Preserve District and the facilities provided have been in response to public need but in accordance with comprehensive master control plans. Such plans should include or be prepared for all future acquisitions. While providing the framework for a continuing development policy, they should retain sufficient flexibility to permit modifications dictated by public need—not public demand—and by metropolitan development.

Fundamental Considerations

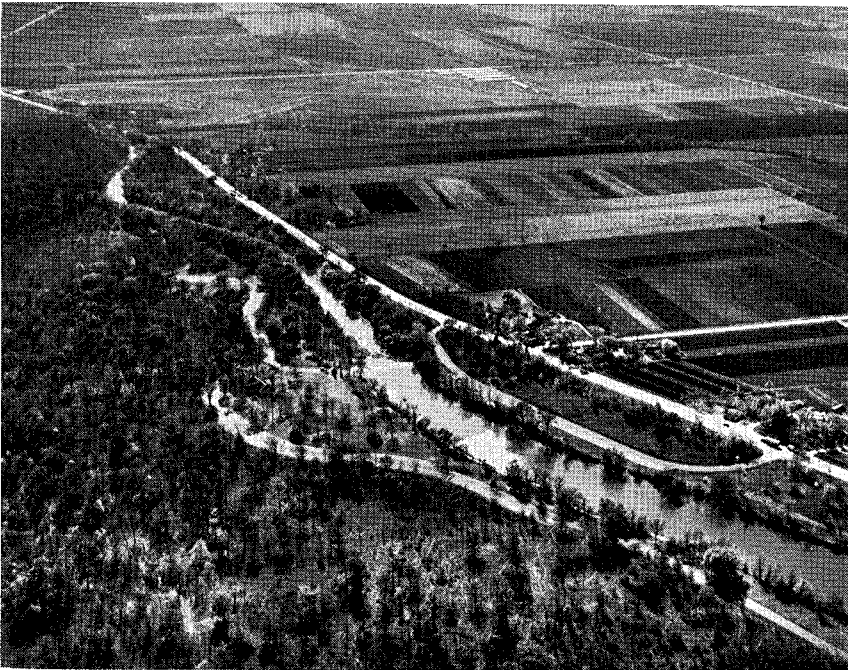
Fundamentally, the Forest Preserve District is not a park, as that term is commonly employed in urban areas, nor is it a group of outer parks. It is a naturalistic reservation and a forested sanctuary throughout, with recreational facilities for appropriate forms of intensive use on the fringes. The interiors have been made and should be kept inaccessible except by walking, bicycling, or by horseback riding on the established trails, in order that the bulk of the holdings, as nearly as possible, shall be maintained in a primitive state.

(*) The provision for real estate acquisition in the Forest Preserve District of Cook County is well adapted to the problem. The acquisition program is limited by two controls—total acreage and the limit of bonded indebtedness—both established by action of the Illinois Legislature. Currently the District may acquire up to a total of 50,000 acres and must stay within the limit of bonded indebtedness—\$42,000,000.00. The total bonds outstanding on March 1, 1959, were \$6,925,000.00.



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

1931—Dam No. 1, DesPlaines River South of Wheeling. Unplanned Recreation Structures and Innumerable Man-made Roads.



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

1953—Dam No. 1, Same View as Above. Orderly Planned Development.

People are becoming more outdoor-minded. There is a growing interest in natural history and in conservation of our natural resources. There is increasing need and demand for accessible facilities which will enable them to enjoy unregimented voluntary outdoor activities, and the freedom and peacefulness of native landscape. The first need is for space, for elbow room, for freedom from man-made and man-handled environment; where freedom of will and movement meets no interference, and where there is a feeling of closeness to the soil—a sense of return to the ancestral state.

Despite the best efforts and results of planners, a great metropolitan area inevitably must be crowded, noisy, bustling and artificial. Its citizens are subjected to high nervous tension and live at a fast tempo. "Natural scenery furnishes the contrasting element to the artificiality of the city. All of us should often run away from the works of men's hands and back into the wilds, where mind and body are restored to a normal condition, and we are enabled to take up the burden of life in our crowded streets and endless stretches of buildings with renewed vigor and hopefulness."*

Relatively few people have the time and money to seek relief in frequent vacations and trips. The standard two-week vacation is inadequate and too often cluttered up with duties and activities which preclude any emotional rest. It is imperative that we segregate areas of native landscape, accessible for a few hours or a day, where most of Cook County's population may find peace and relaxation, change of pace, and avocational outdoor interests. The forest preserves meet those needs.

Cook County is one of the richest and greatest of the world's metropolitan areas. Chicago has taken magnificent advantage of its lake front, devoting it largely to public use and giving high character to the physical city. Similarly, due to the foresight and public spirit which created it, the Forest Preserve District constitutes a notable instance of metropolitan publicly-owned land planning. The considerable extent of our forested areas, large meadows and water areas, serves to dress the metropolitan scene with dignity and character.

The preserves have become unique for their accessibility. Conditions are vastly different from those which existed when the Forest Preserve District was envisioned as becoming "a great wooded wilderness, difficult of access, with the fertile hinterlands of Illinois rolling far beyond it."** *

In the period from 1903 to 1909, such an outer belt of "parks" as conceived by the various commissions and planners, was a connected system of forest, streams and meadow lands unimproved, with parkways and even trolley lines to them but only a few paths and winding country roads **through** them. There the people from Chicago's crowded districts might have summer outings and freely camp, boat, fish, bathe, swim, pick and eat nuts and wild fruits, gather the flowers of the field and forest, see and hear the birds and other forms of wild animal life—close to the heart of Nature.***

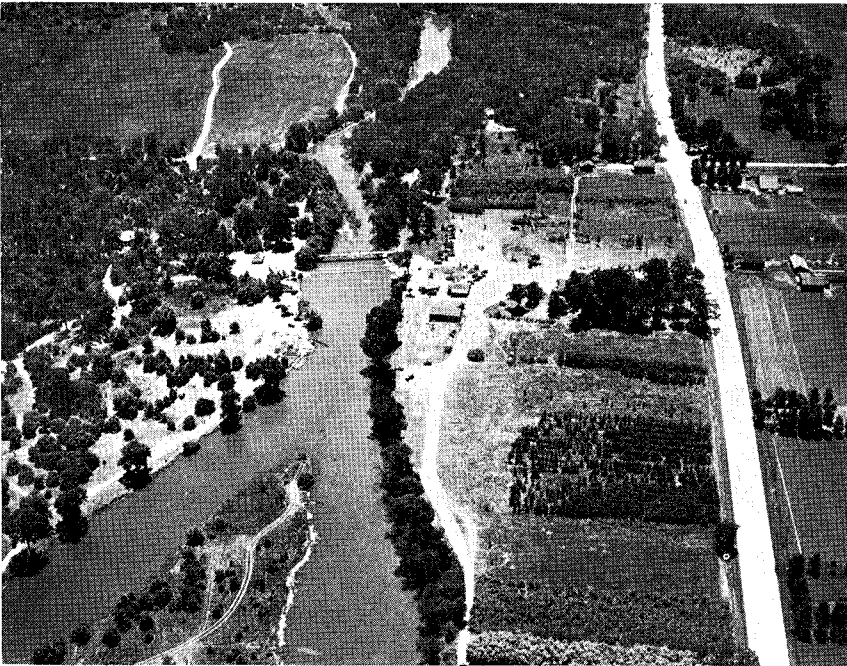
At that time there were practically no automobiles, but few roads, the country was difficult to get to except by railroad and electric lines, and the population of Cook County was only 1,838,375. Now the District's lands have over two hundred miles of highway frontage, there are 1,434,064 automobiles registered in the county, and much of the holdings can be reached by some form of public transportation, as well as by automobile. In fact, many areas lie within the corporate limits of Chicago and a number of suburban towns. Accessibility is no problem.

(*) Plan of Chicago, prepared under the direction of the Commercial Club, by Daniel H. Burnham, Sr. and Edward H. Bennett, (1909).

(**) Robert Kingery.

(***) President Henry G. Foreman's address to the outer Belt Park Commissioners, April 21, 1904.

Report of the Special Park Commission to the City Council of Chicago on the subject of a Metropolitan Park System, compiled by Dwight Heald Perkins, 1904.



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

1931—Dam No. 2, Foundry Road North of Des Plaines. Rustic Foot Bridge, Hodgepodge of Buildings, Boat Dock and Bathing Beach.



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

1953—Dam No. 2, Same View as Above. Note Improvement in Vegetation with Elimination of Uncontrolled Use. Camp Pine Girl Scout Area in right foreground.

FOREST WAY—In 1929, when the original report was prepared, the parkways and other developments of Westchester County, New York, were considered the finest in design and most effective in meeting the problems of a metropolitan area. It was felt that similar automobile roads belonged in the plans of the Forest Preserve District. The original report therefore proposed relatively broad parkways connecting each tract with the other, and circuit drives close to the borders of the preserves. At the suggestion of the late John T. McCutcheon, a member of the committee, this was christened the Forest Way.

Fortunately, the District never embarked upon this construction. The annual costs of maintenance and policing, alone, would have been excessive and absorbed funds needed for more essential purposes. The Forest Way would have occupied many acres of land valuable for other uses, would have necessitated the destruction of countless trees, and much of it would now be obsolete. Expressways and superhighways, such as the Edens Expressway already constructed and others projected, parallel the route of much of the Forest Way originally planned, almost entirely without pre-empting District lands.

AVIATION LANDING FIELDS—One of the recommendations in the 1929 Report is repeated verbatim: airports or landing fields for airplanes are wholly out of keeping with the purpose of the Forest Preserves. The use of any forest preserve property for such purpose is in direct violation of the law.

ZOO AND ARBORETUM—The original report recommended the allocation of two percent of the acreage for special educational areas such as a zoological park, an arboretum, and natural history areas. The Chicago Zoological Park, on Forest Preserve property but operated under contract by the Chicago Zoological Society, has become one of the finest in the world. The funds for its operation are provided by the District. The magnificent character and the proximity of Morton Arboretum, near Lisle in DuPage County, has rendered superfluous any such development in the Forest Preserve District.

BUILDINGS—A principal recommendation in the 1929 report was for the construction of forest lodges of two stories or more. Another was for the construction of a system of field houses where people might gather, find shelter, food and comfort facilities, and which would provide places for community and organization activities. These were to be large enclosed buildings requiring heat, light, usually special water and sewage facilities, entailing expensive operation and maintenance. The cost being too great, and the need uncertain, it was decided that such use was not in strict interpretation of the intent of the preserves, and these developments were never attempted.

The forest preserves may not be successfully devoted to community use. They belong equally to all of the 5,100,000 people in Cook County. To provide community facilities would give much more to some citizens than to others and serve to originate further attempts to divide and dismember many areas.

The 1929 report recommended a characteristic type of architecture, perhaps utilizing native limestone and similar materials, adaptable to all Forest Preserve Buildings; and that these should be designed and built under the supervision of a competent architect. Experience has shown that standard materials, more easily obtained and less expensive to use, may be employed to produce low sturdy structures which are pleasing to the eye and require a minimum of maintenance. The success of the steel and concrete picnic shelter recently constructed in National Woods—severely simple, functional and unobtrusive—justifies the employment of such designs in other use-areas.

PROTECTION—Protection of the flora, fauna and scenic beauties has been and should be a basic consideration in any policy and any program of the Forest Preserve District, including its development program. The language and intent of its charter, as contained in the enabling statute, is clear. Rigid protection against the picking of wildflowers, and the mutilation or destruction of trees, shrubs and other flora, has been effective. The wildlife populations have been maintained or increased by habitat improvement and protection against hunting, trapping or molestation. The woodlands have been protected against fire, and automobile control in all picnic areas, and by various types of permanent barriers along all highways, has been and always will be a prime necessity.

With the accelerated trend toward decentralization bringing more large industries, innumerable small factories, extensive housing developments and major shopping centers into the outlying sectors of Cook County, there has developed very real need, and increasing pressure upon the Forest Preserve District, for the provision of additional areas for intensive use. Regardless of pressure, the interiors should be kept primitive and inviolate, with a connected system of trails through them but otherwise accessible only by walking. The truest and greatest values of our forest holdings are in their ample size, their freedom from development, their spaciousness and their naturalness. Major developments for more diversified recreational use by great numbers of people may be developed to serve adjacent areas of dense population, but these should be located on those flat unforested tracts which the District now holds, or will acquire in connection with other properties, for such purpose. A fortunate characteristic of such tracts is that they possess deep fertile soils supporting good turf, and producing vigorous trees of considerable height within 20 years after being planted. Future purchases of such lands should be so selected as to widen present narrow tracts.

Additional acreage should be acquired in areas easily accessible to people who do not have the facilities and funds to travel farther. Some of their need will be provided if the Forest Preserve District can acquire in the lower DesPlaines River valley, ownership or control of certain land now the property of the Sanitary District of Chicago. This idle land straddling the Sanitary and Ship Canal, between Willow Springs Road and Ill. Route 83, heavily wooded and bordering the river, is accessible by bus and railroad transportation from Chicago. With the contiguous section of the abandoned Illinois and Michigan Canal, property of the State of Illinois, it would provide ample space, ideally situated.

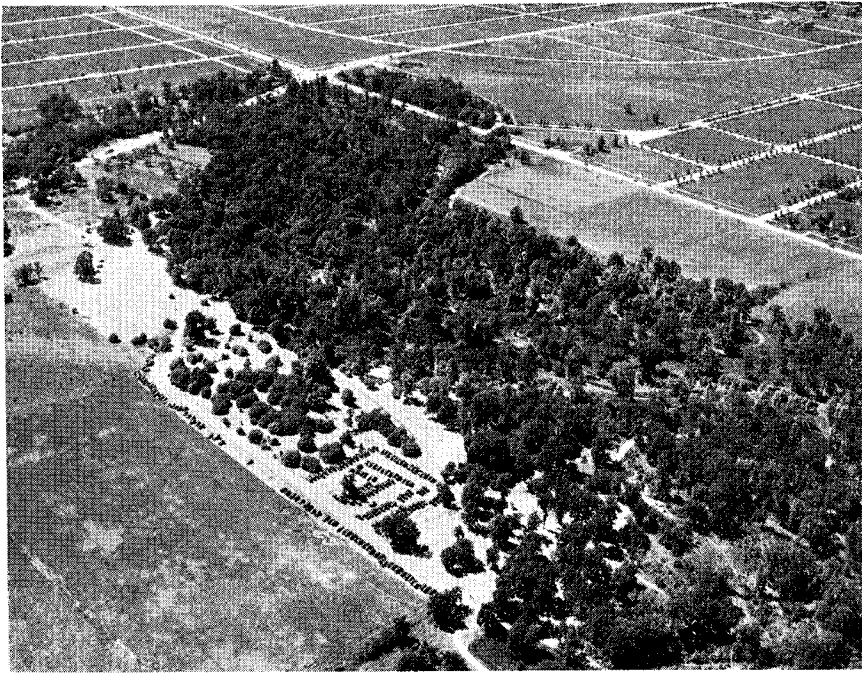
The Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners has been and will be from time to time, importuned by communities or special groups to provide space and facilities for forms of recreation which are incompatible with the purpose and proper functions of the District, as well as contrary to the letter and intent of the statute under which it operates. No facilities of the playground nature have been provided, such as apparatus, running tracks, tennis courts or archery; soft ball diamonds have been and should be kept to a bare minimum; spectator games, specialized sports, and regimented recreational activities have not been sanctioned; commercialized picnics have been discouraged and largely constrained to patronize private picnic groves. The Board has wisely taken the position that all such requests and activities are beyond the scope of the Forest Preserve law and are not within its legal powers to grant or provide; that it should not provide such facilities for purely local populations, and that their provision is the responsible duty of the cities, villages and neighborhoods—**on their own lands.**

Similarly, there are numerous requests from organizations of all kinds for special privileges allotting to them a building for their exclusive use, or a tract of land upon which to erect a building, or a site reserved for their specific activities. Although there are some worthy causes among those for which special arrangement is asked, such as group camps, **none should be allowed on Forest Preserve property.** There is available land adjacent to the preserves which may be acquired for such uses and buildings, so that those seeking benefit may have full use and enjoyment of the preserves without usurping public property.

There have come urgent petitions for the severance of Forest Preserve lands for public purposes such as schools, federal laboratories, parks, playgrounds, parking lots, armories, pumping stations and sewage treatment works. Faced with a dilemma, the municipalities ill-advisedly turn to adjacent Forest Preserve property for a solution, regarding it as a reservoir of "unused" land from which can be carved such portions as required for their purposes.

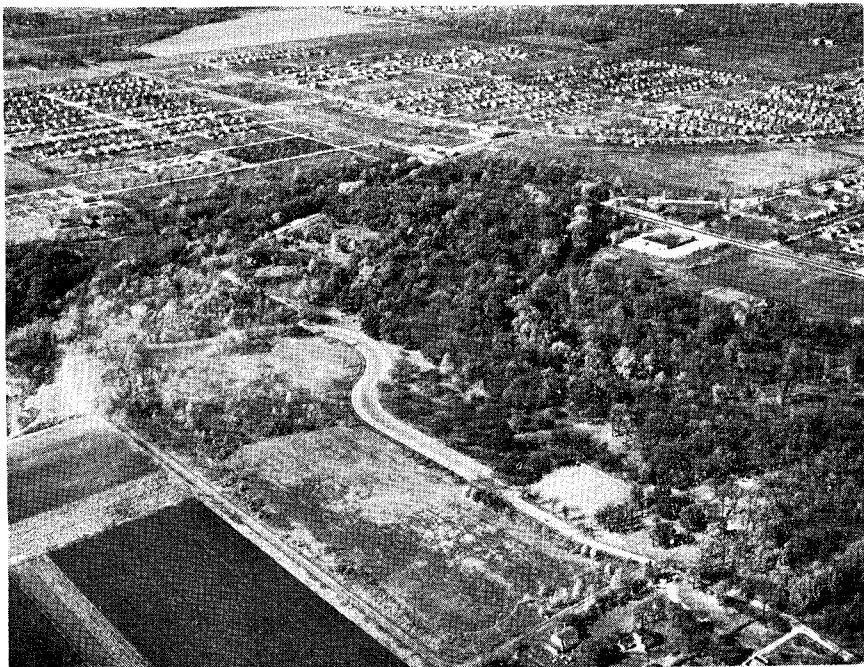
Allegations that such lands are unused or not intensively used, as justification for the transfers of ownership, utterly fail to recognize the intent and purpose of the holdings as prescribed by statute, and ignore their tangible, intangible and future values. Should the Board release lands indiscriminately to other public bodies, it would only serve to mutilate and gerrymander what is a fine and precious thing.

The assembly of approximately 46,000 acres of property—acre by acre and lot by lot, by purchase or condemnation over a period of 43 years—has required adherence, on the part of successive Boards of Forest Preserve Commissioners, to well-made policies and a



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

1936—Brezina Woods, Salt Creek at 22nd St. and Mannheim Road. Barren Forest Floor and Partially Controlled Use.



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

1953—Brezina Woods, Same View as Above. Picnic Area and even the Ball Diamond show grass sod, and the Forest Floor no spots of bareness.

carefully developed, comprehensive plan. They have considered themselves as trustees of these magnificent public holdings and recognized that the severance of one parcel in the interest of a special group or a relatively small suburban municipality, is rarely, if ever, compatible with the general benefit of all the people of Cook County.

As the country's population increases and expands, more and more residential, commercial, and industrial developments will be created which will, in turn, require more modern highway developments and public and municipal utilities overhead, on the surface and underground. Rights-of-way or easements bordering or through the Forest Preserve holdings will be requested. The general superintendent and his technical staff must thoroughly examine all such proposals, determine their merit and, if essential, insure that the route chosen and the manner of construction will do a minimum of damage to the flora, fauna and scenic beauties of the preserves. When it is manifest that such highways, super-highways, public utilities, sewers or drains, water lines, pipelines or other utilities are essential and in the interest of all the people, the District may accede to such grants, in court or otherwise, on the basis of the full, fair value of the property required or damages incurred, provided that adequate bonds be furnished to insure proper performance in conformity with the District's stipulated requirements.

Planning Design and Operation

PICNIC CENTERS—Picnicking is by far the most popular outdoor recreational activity by adults in Cook County. Many thousands never visit the Forest Preserves for any other purpose. Permits are issued to all groups of 25 or more, each of which is thus assigned to a designated location with specified facilities for that group on a given date. Many of these are annual affairs by various types of organizations—national, racial, religious, business, industrial or political—and are attended by hundreds or thousands.

The District acquired, along with essential lands, a number of picnic groves each having a large dance pavilion and a hodgepodge of buildings for bars, concessions, and the like. With these, it also inherited many huge annual commercialized picnics, organized and conducted for profit. By removing the undesirable buildings and enforcing Forest Preserve District ordinances prohibiting liquor, gambling and the sale of merchandise, such picnics have been constrained to patronize privately-operated picnic groves. The Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners is to be commended for abolishing these and other activities which were detrimental to the landscape, unduly increased the costs of maintenance, worked a hardship on the personnel, granted extraordinary privileges to special groups, and were in fact contrary to the intent of the law.

With few exceptions, the picnic centers are located on or near the highway borders of the preserves. The District has established these picnic centers and should establish others, at strategic locations throughout its holdings but, with few exceptions advisedly made, provides only the simplest of essential facilities: enclosed parking spaces, potable water supplies, sanitary conveniences, table-and-bench combinations, picnic stoves, and receptacles for trash and garbage. Most of the major picnic centers have one or more dance platforms; a number of the principal areas each has a shelter; and all have open spaces such as a meadow for play.

The simplicity, functional appearance, durability and low maintenance requirements of the facilities developed by the Forest Preserve District—such as table-and-bench combinations, picnic stoves, privies, barriers, signs, dance platforms and the new type of shelter—deserve commendation. They are so constructed as to facilitate mass production in the District's shops by its own forces, and simplify repair or replacement in the field. They are frankly utilitarian but as unobtrusive as their functions permit.

Where municipal sewers are not conveniently available, some of the larger, more heavily-used picnic centers have been provided with comfort stations, of adequate capacity and pleasing appearance, which have Imhoff tanks beneath them. They require a minimum of maintenance and more of this type should be built in many of the other major use-areas. Elsewhere, the sanitary conveniences consist of a type of dry pit latrine. Their primitive nature is in keeping with the character of the preserves and critics may well consider a statement by Lewis Mumford: "Crude sanitation is not necessarily bad sanitation."



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

**Skokie Marsh—Twenty Years Ago
at Start of Reclamation**



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

**Skokie Marsh—Twenty-six Years Later
Marsh and Water Landscape with Flood Control**

The masonry shelters with one or two large fireplaces and open on the sides, with timber trusses supporting a gable roof of cedar shakes, are extremely popular in the several locations where built, and they have certain advantages, particularly in inclement weather and in spring and autumn, but it is questionable whether any more of this type should be erected. They are susceptible to vandalism and destruction of the roofs, and they create a vexing fuel problem which frequently results in damage to the adjacent woodlands.

It is recommended that the Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners give serious consideration to a graduated scale of fees for picnic permits. These should be based upon the kind and number of facilities assigned to given picnic group, without favor or discrimination, payable in advance and not subject to refund. Such regulation would eliminate inequalities, abuses and criticisms; it would tend to improve the quality of public use; special facilities for special groups should not be provided at the expense of the general public; people have more respect for and better appreciation of facilities for which they have to pay even a small fee.

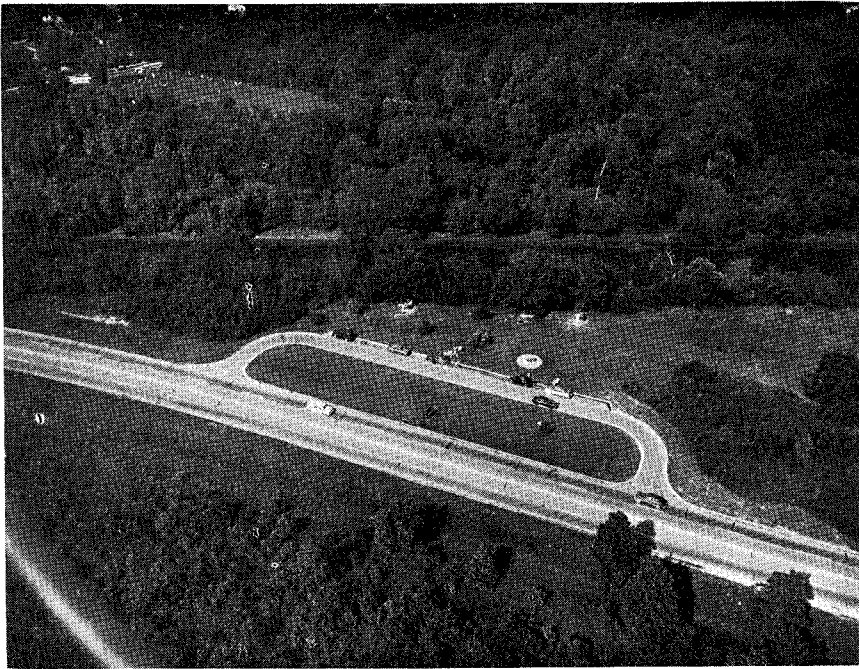
ROADSIDE AREAS—The District has recently experimented with roadside parking spaces, notably along River Road, to facilitate the use of openings suitable for the casual motorist, family groups, and the nongregarious. Each area has been provided with a well, a few tables, picnic stoves, and trash receptacles. They have served a genuine need and been extensively used by the public. Also, a considerable number of fixed table-and-bench combinations, massively constructed of lumber treated with a preservative, have been placed singly at pleasant locations along the highways in preserves throughout the country. It is recommended that more of these two types of facilities be provided.

TRAILS—The trail system was originally conceived as a means of access to the interiors of the preserves, automobiles being excluded, for use by people walking, riding bicycles, or riding horses. It was to be a skeletal framework tying together the Forest Preserves and serving the hiker in much the same manner as the Forest Way was to serve the motorist. The trails serve as an inducement for people to walk—"the best and cheapest form of recreation"—and enjoy the interiors. Accordingly, routes along the banks of rivers and creeks, through the wilds of the Palos Hills, and leading to points of scenic, historical and biological interest, were chosen, marked, and shown on trail maps distributed to the public without charge.

The intelligent employment of the plethora of labor and materials furnished by CCC and WPA enabled the Forest Preserve District to complete the trail system and improve it for multiple use by the District's maintenance and fire suppression vehicles, as firebreaks, and by pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians. Bridges and culverts were built, since drainage was a prime consideration, and many portions were surfaced with cinders or sand. Within a few years, 101 stables were established on private lands adjacent to the trails, with over 4,000 horses, most of them for hire. Equestrians monopolized the trails to the extent that maintenance and policing became difficult, costly and constant problems. The Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners established a corps of mounted rangers, purchased special tractor-operated equipment for trail maintenance, and adopted an ordinance requiring that all horses and all riders be licensed and a fee paid for such license.

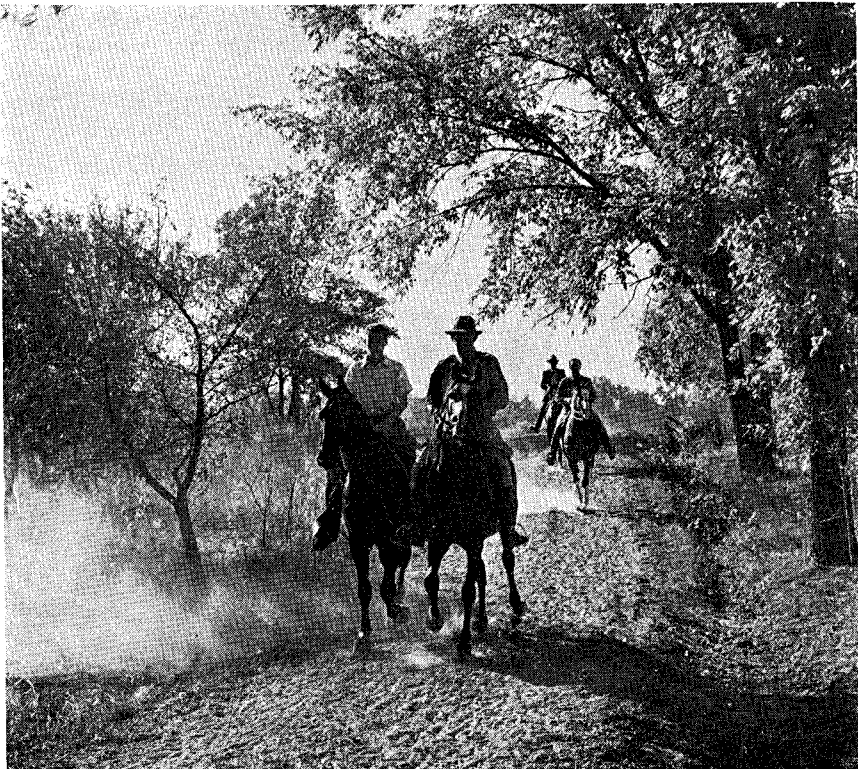
It is recommended that only those trail sections which have constant and heavy use be given complete maintenance. Trails for hikers only may be maintained on a simpler and less expensive basis.

GOLF COURSES—The District now operates six daily fee golf courses. Golf being exceedingly popular in Cook County, these courses provide healthful recreation for great numbers of people on a relatively small acreage of what was open land, and return considerable revenue. They have been constructed to facilitate the type of play characteristic of publicly-owned daily fee courses and to expedite their use by large numbers of players. Contrary to the recommendations in the original report, however, it was found that club-houses with shower and locker rooms, lounges, dining rooms and kitchens are not used sufficiently on a daily fee course to justify their cost and maintenance. Less elaborate facilities, commensurate with the actual requirements, have been provided.



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

Typical Roadside Family Picnic Area



185 Miles of multiple use trails wind through the natural landscape.

SWIMMING POOLS—At the time the original report was prepared, the pollution of rivers and creeks in Cook County was increasing rapidly and it was obvious that swimming in those waters controlled by the Forest Preserve District would have to be forbidden in the interest of public health. After a few years this became necessary, and likewise in the three large forest preserve lakes where swimming had been permitted and facilities provided. At that time there were no swimming pools within reasonable distance of many heavily populated suburban areas and outlying sections of Chicago. For these reasons, the original report recommended that the District build swimming pools, with bathhouses, convenient to those areas. Three were built but the costs of operation and maintenance are high. Inasmuch as there are now sufficient municipal and privately-operated swimming pools in the county to meet the public needs, it is recommended that the District build no more of them and discontinue these when they become obsolescent.

GROUP CAMPS AND OVERNIGHT CAMPING—In the public interest and as measure of forest protection, no overnight camping by adult groups has been permitted anywhere in the Forest Preserves for many years; and for the same reasons, youth groups may not camp overnight except in the established centers. The Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners adopted these regulations in recognition of the certainty that, in a county of 4,500,000 people, visited by large numbers of motoring tourists, the preserves would otherwise be over-run with unauthorized and unsupervised campers, would suffer serious damage from fires, cutting of trees, and vandalism, and the enjoyment of many areas by the general public would be impaired.

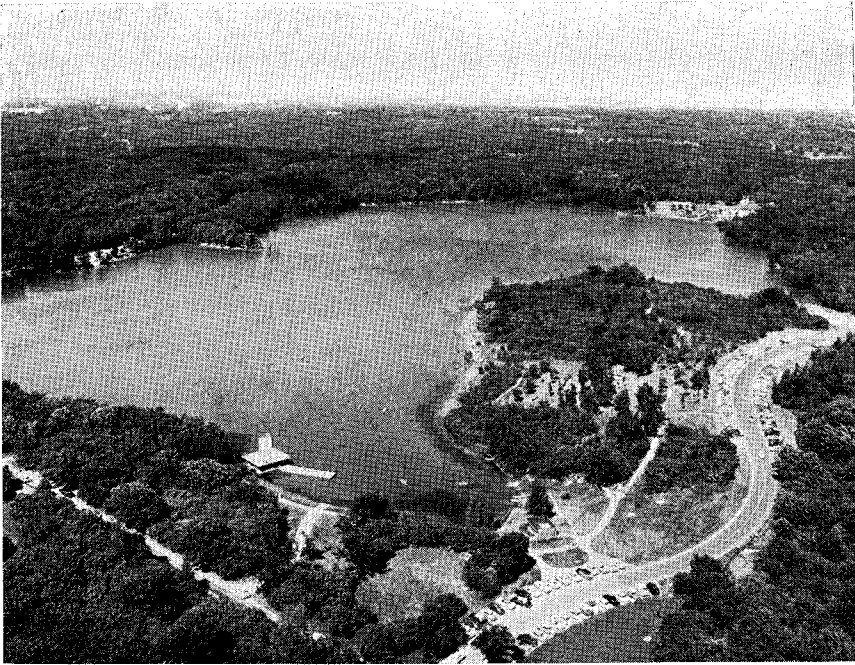
A number of group camping centers operated in the preserves by youth organizations were gradually abandoned as the buildings deteriorated or the organizations purchased property elsewhere, and only eleven remain. Five of these are operated and maintained by Boy Scout organizations, five by Girl Scouts, and one by a Sokol organization. Six of these allocate the use of their camps to an approved group for a limited period of days, as recommended in the original report. The Forest Preserve District's policy correctly states that the allocation of buildings, areas or other special privileges for the exclusive use of one organization—however worthy—to the exclusion of the general public, constitutes improper use of public property. Youth organizations are required to do their own maintenance and development. They have been urged to purchase property and erect their own camps, adjacent to the preserves if feasible, and some have done so with more satisfactory results for all concerned.

There are also three other large group camping centers. Camp Reinberg is operated and maintained by a nonprofit association of social agencies which allocates its use for limited periods to underprivileged children and needy youth organizations during the summer season, and to school camps in spring and fall. Camp Sullivan is maintained by the Forest Preserve District and allocated for limited periods during the entire year to youth organizations. Camp Sagawau, recently acquired, is maintained by the District and devoted to educational projects such as school camps, teachers' institutes emphasizing outdoor education and training courses in field biology and techniques for teachers and youth group leaders.

It seems advisable that the District assign a competent employee, with special talents and training, to supervise all camping in the preserves and insure conformity to the recognized standards for health, safety, leadership and program.

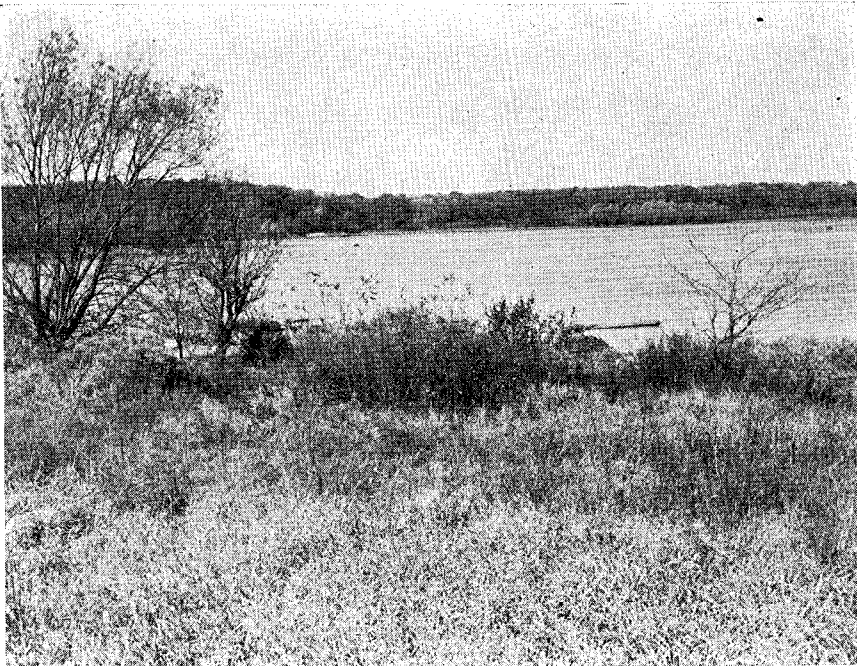
WINTER SPORTS, FISHING AND BOATING—The District built and operates six toboggan slides, sled slides for small children, and a warming shelter at the Swallow Cliff Winter Sports Center in the Palos preserves, which attract large crowds of participants and spectators. The old ski jump was removed because it was unsafe structurally, usable by only a few experts, expensive to operate, and largely an attraction for spectators—a wise decision. Toboggan and sled slides are maintained in four other preserves. Skating is authorized only on certain ponds and lagoons which are shallow, safe, and not maintained as wildlife refuges. The District would not be justified in providing more facilities for these or other winter sports because of the uncertainty of weather conditions in the Chicago region.

Fishing is second only to walking in being the cheapest form of outdoor recreation, and hence the great demand for more water areas which will supply good catches of



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

Maple Lake—Bank and Boat Fishing



5% of the total acreage is made up of Rivers, Lakes, and Marshes.

usable fish. The Palos region particularly, because of its glacial history and topography, abounds in locations where lakes, ponds and sloughs may be created or restored. There are several excellent fishing lakes in the Palos preserves, a few needing improvement by modern techniques of fish management. Two lakes have been completed and others are proposed for construction financed by state and federal funds. The Skokie Lagoons and portions of the DesPlaines River are other major fishing waters in the preserves.

Much of the DesPlaines River and other streams in the Forest Preserves, are still badly polluted by sewage and industrial wastes. The Forest Preserve District sponsored Citizens' Clean Streams Committee, cooperating with the Sanitary District of Chicago and other local and state agencies, is working actively toward the elimination of this pollution. The Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners, with admirable acumen, secured the construction of a series of low dams in the DesPlaines River, some of which have been completed, by the Illinois Division of Waterways. These will improve boating, canoeing and fishing.

CONCESSIONS—In 1929 there were 95 concession stands in the Forest Preserve District, some of them at busy highway intersections in competition with private enterprises on adjacent property. Most of them were operated in flimsy ugly structures. The Board took cognizance of the serious situation and approved the elimination of most of them. Those retained have been replaced by well-built structures or housed in other buildings, such as at the pools and golf courses, designed for this purpose. The Board also created a Department of Special Services to operate certain concession stands dispensing food, beverages and other merchandise to the public. It revised the form of contract with concessionaires and specified what should be sold, its quality, and the maximum prices. Now concessionaires operate, by contract, food and beverage concessions at five of the six golf courses, one of the pools, and at two other locations in the preserves—notably Dan Ryan Woods.

The District, through its Department of Special Services, now operates the food and beverage stands at one golf course, two pools, and three of the major picnic centers. It also operates the boats for rental at Maple Lake and rents toboggans at the Swallow Cliff and Jensen Winter Sports Centers. This committee recommends that the District try out, as it is doing now, various types of operation in order to make a decision as to the best method from the standpoint of the public, and that consideration be given to the use of specially-designed concession trailers which can be moved as desired to locations where large crowds are scheduled.

FORESTRY AND FOREST PROTECTION—The forest is the backbone of the Forest Preserve District. The preservation or restoration, protection and care of its woodlands is the paramount function of the District. It not only provides places for pleasure and recreation—using the terms in a limited sense—but also places where children, their teachers, or anyone may learn the meaning and the importance of the forest to them, and the significance of Theodore Roosevelt's phrase: "A people without children would face a hopeless future; a country without trees is almost as hopeless". Therefore, in accordance with the mandate of the charter, the woodlands should be left "as nearly as may be, in their natural state and condition".

Dead trees have been allowed to remain standing and, when they fall, to rot and return to the soil—putting back into it the food a healthy forest must have—in the meantime furnishing a home for many kinds of familiar animals, both large and small, and millions of tiny organisms equally important. The only exceptions now permitted are in picnic groves and other special use-areas, along highways and drives—where dead trees or limbs endanger the public—and where necessary to combat a deadly tree disease. In this policy, the District has wisely deviated from the suggestions made in the original report.

Considerable acreage of open land which had been farmed has been reforested: much of it with labor supplied by the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission, CCC and WPA; in recent years with modern tree-planting machinery. Since the construction of a 60-acre nursery by CCC, the planting stock has been obtained from that source.



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

**Labagh Woods—Picnic Woods and Field Recreation
Enclosed parking areas for automobile control**



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

**Caldwell Woods—Mass Picnic Concentration
Where there are cars there are people**

The Forestry Department has been staffed with men trained in the science of forestry, who apply that science in its many phases such as forest plantings, landscape planting, tree-nursery operation, insect and disease control, fire prevention and suppression, line clearance for public utilities, tree surgery, turf maintenance, and control of noxious weeds.

It is recommended that this department be enabled, by sufficient personnel and equipment, to increase the scope of its operations. As the population of the county grows and expands outward, the problems of protection have become more difficult. Fire prevention and fire suppression are of immediate importance. As use-areas are developed, forestry problems will become more numerous. The program of controlling the growth of hawthorns in meadows and clearings important for their scenic values, or their distinctive prairie character, or for recreational purposes, should be augmented. The program of reforestation in the thousands of acres of land formerly under cultivation should be accelerated until 75 percent of the District's holdings become wooded.

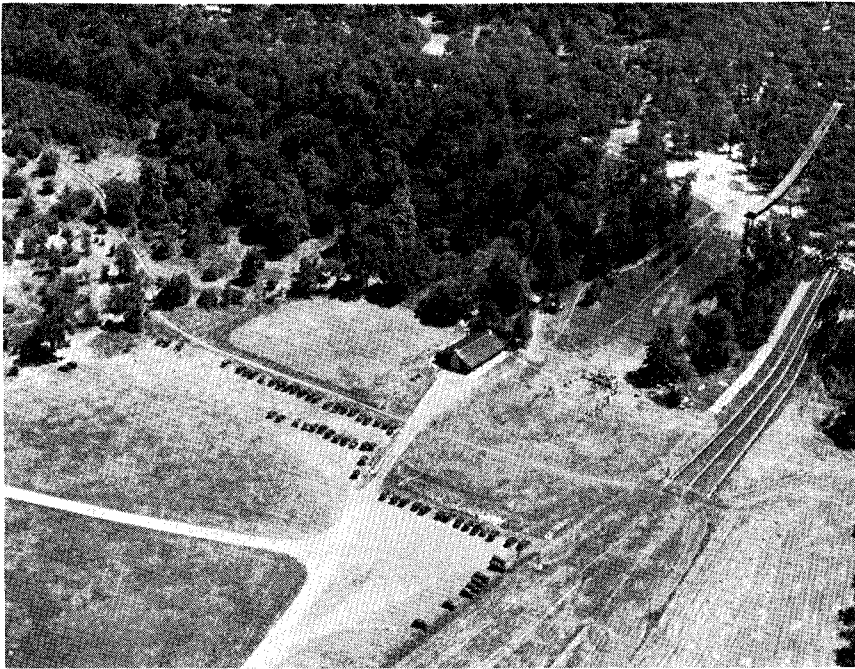
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT—Wildlife management in the Forest Preserve District, exclusive of its program of fish management, has consisted almost entirely of habitat improvement and rigid protection against hunting, trapping or any molestation, and fires. The entire District is a wildlife and wildflower sanctuary. No attempts have been made to remove surpluses, control diseases, or otherwise influence the cyclic fluctuations in any animal population. The District, in accordance with its charter and the precept which hold that "Nature left alone is always orderly," has permitted the many forms of wildlife to work out their own systems of checks and balances. The Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners has advisedly denied all petitions urging the destruction of foxes, crows and other predators alleged to be responsible for reduction in populations of game animals or birds.

In the Palos preserves particularly, where glacial moraines, potholes and valleys afford many favorable sites, the program of creating or restoring 86 aquatic areas varying from a few acres to 325 acres in extent and totalling about 1050 acres—more than 10 percent of the area in those preserves—has been so successful and provided so much enjoyment for the public that it should be carried on to completion. Saganashkee Slough in the Sag Valley—restored by the Illinois Department of Conservation as a part of its statewide program to provide more fishing—McGinnis Slough, and Longjohn Slough, have become nationally known as important resting and feeding places for thousands of wild ducks, wild geese and shorebirds on their migrations along the Mississippi Flyway. They also serve as homes for those birds which remain here to nest and rear their young. The District should develop all possible areas for fishing, an exceedingly important and popular form of recreation—pastoral, restful, inexpensive, and enjoyed by people of all ages—when it may be secured by the construction of simple structures requiring little or no maintenance. The Skokie Lagoon system should be completed from Dundee Road to the Lake County line.

The Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners may take great pride in the statements by authorities of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the effect that the Forest Preserve District contains a greater diversity and a greater density of wildlife population than most state parks or forests, however isolated; and in the statement by a Regional Wildlife Inspector of the National Park Service: "Here, within a county of 4,000,000 inhabitants, wilderness areas exist, and not at the expense of denying the public the use of the land. This is due to control of the public within the areas by planning and management".

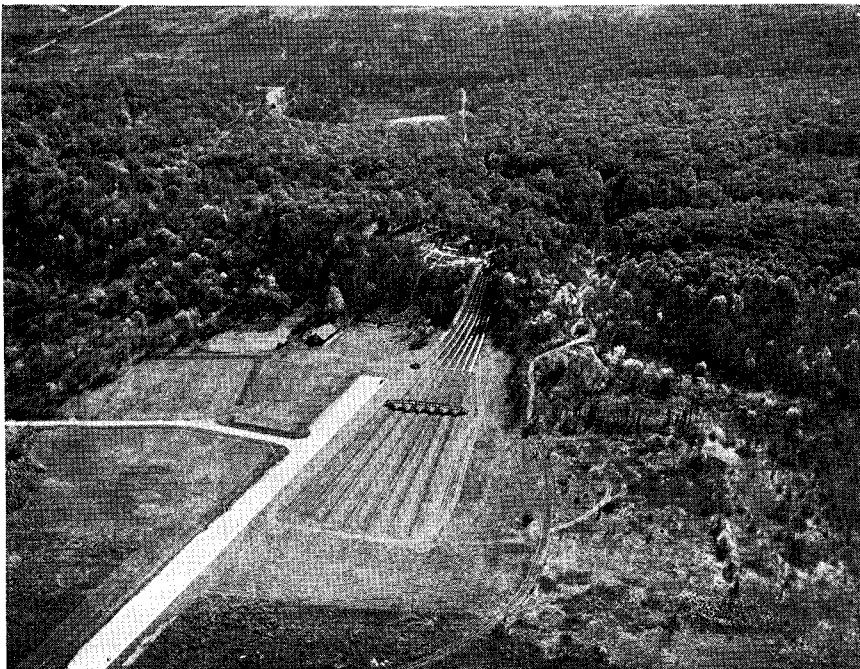
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM—A Department of Conservation was created by the Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners in 1945. Its function, in addition to fish and wildlife management, is to conduct a program of Outdoor Education, which includes natural history, nature appreciation, conservation, and outdoor living—good outdoor manners, what there is to see, and how to enjoy the forest preserves.

This department has developed a comprehensive program in the field of child education which has attracted national attention. Its staff has taken a prominent part in local, state and national movements concerned with day camps, school camps, the training of youth leaders, teacher training, and all media of outdoor education. Its weekly nature bulletins, radio program, television programs, illustrated programs for school assemblies, and nature programs in day camps utilizing the picnic centers in summer, have—as intended—created a



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

1936—Swallow Cliff Winter Sports Area. Early Development with Ski Jump—(A One Day per Year Spectator Sport), with a few Toboggan Slides for Active Public Use.



Courtesy of Chicago Aerial Survey Company

1953—Swallow Cliff Woods Sports Area—Same View as Above Ski Jump Removed and Area Developed to Meet the Demands of Active Winter Sports Enthusiasts.

greater demand for such services than the department's staff can, or should supply. It is believed that this demand by the children, their parents and their teachers will become so widespread and urgent that school administrators will be constrained to employ naturalist-teachers and include field trips, school camps, and more classroom work in natural science in their curricula.

The educational program of the District is indicated by the statute. However, this work should not attempt to make direct contact with all children. The program might well be limited to the training courses for public and parochial teachers, youth group leaders and the use of publications, newspapers, radio and television. Certainly it was not intended that the District create a large staff to amplify the public school system. Several more nature study centers like the Little Red Schoolhouse, River Trail Nature Center and Trailside Museum are warranted in suitable areas. Those constructed in the future should also have self-guiding trails.

RANGER DEPARTMENT—The Forest Preserve statute provides policing powers to the Board and the ranger force is the means employed for protecting both the public and the forest. To keep the peace is a ranger's first duty but there is much more he can do in developing the best uses of the District's holdings. Rangers need to have primary knowledge and training in outdoor education. Their training needs to be as conservationists as well as policemen.

The number of rangers on the force should be kept to the minimum essential for the keeping of the peace. Cook County has many police—state, sheriff's, Chicago, city and village, auxiliary defense, and others. The Chicago, state and sheriff's forces are staffed and equipped for apprehension, identification and prosecution of criminals. The rangers of the Forest Preserve District should confine their duties to prevention and apprehension, particularly concerned with violations of the District's ordinances. The long, technical and time-consuming procedures after apprehension of criminals should be left to the sheriff's, city or municipal police, so that the ranger may return to his fundamental job of protection within the forest preserves. The law upon which the District is founded indicates this by providing that where the District's holdings lie within a municipality, the municipal police shall have jurisdiction.

The Board of Commissioners has established a good ranger staff and it is hoped that, in further selections for the force, the need for men who are conservation-minded shall be the policy. Further, it is recommended that the present and future rangers be given more thorough and constant training in conservation education.

TENANT HOUSES AND LANDS—As recommended in the original report, all buildings which have been or may be acquired in the purchase of property, and which cannot be devoted to actual use for Forest Preserve purposes, should be immediately demolished or otherwise disposed of. All fences or other signs of habitation should be removed. A legitimate use recommended is the assignment of such houses as residences for employees who will protect the neighboring preserves from fire, hunting or other encroachment and be available for such emergencies at all times, thus affording emergency service at no added cost.

The rental of lands should be confined to property formerly under cultivation, and then only for farming purposes in areas where the kind of crops produced will not materially diminish the beauty of the landscape. These areas, before the termination of such tenancy, should be sown to hay crops which will eliminate noxious weeds and eventually revert to meadowland.

MAINTENANCE—One of the admirable accomplishments of the Forest Preserve District has been the development of its Maintenance Department. It has become nationally known and has contributed much toward the improvement of facilities and maintenance in parks and naturalistic recreational areas throughout the United States. In considerable degree, although seldom appreciated, the enjoyment of the forest preserves by the public depends upon the facilities perfected and constructed by this department, and its year-round operations.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING—In-service training courses should be conducted annually for all Forest Preserve employees concerned with field operations. The instruction should deal with the duties, work and problems of the respective classifications of employees, with the history and purpose of the Forest Preserve District, with its developments in all divisions of the District, with its flora and fauna, and especially with the proper attitudes and methods in meeting, handling and serving the people. Similar training courses should be conducted for the Rangers who, with the caretakers, have most direct and frequent contact with the public. Their efforts should be directed toward improving the quality of public use. Special training courses should be conducted for employees who operate trucks, tractors, mowers and similar equipment.

CIVIL SERVICE—The law provides that the District shall follow the rules and regulations of the county civil service department, and that the procedure be administered by the county civil service board. This avoids duplication of staffs.

The District requires the work of various professionals and skills—public administrators, landscape architects, foresters, engineers (civil, mechanical and sanitary), accountants, architects, naturalists, carpenters, masons, electricians, plumbers, woodworkers, mechanics, welders, equipment operators, greenskeepers, nursery propagators, and others. Men following these professions and trades look for employment which is fairly paid and where tenure is secure. If tenure is not assured, then only the less able men are available and poor return is received.

Currently, the majority of administration, technical and supervisory personnel have civil service standing. It is recommended that, semiannually, the personnel records be reviewed and steps taken to call examination so that an eligible list of qualified persons is always available.

Finances

The definite, simple and well-oriented policies held and practiced by the Board of Commissioners and the District staff have resulted in a conservative financial history. The president of the Civic Federation, in a recent article shows that, in the City of Chicago, the District levied but \$104,107 more in 1951 than in 1927 and received 26% less of the tax dollar in 1951. Real estate acquisition has proceeded within effective controls.* Construction has been simple, strong and only to meet demonstrated need. Substantial aid has been secured from federal and state work programs.

The 72 miles of Forest Way and 20 lodges and field houses originally proposed and not constructed, would now impose an annual cost of \$600,000.00.

(*) The orderly process of land acquisition is as follows:

1. Preparation of general plans for land acquisition from studies and reconnaissance by Advisory Committee, using the District staff.
2. Presentation of this acquisition plan to the Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners for their study and action.
3. Passage of General Acquisition ordinance, following Board approval.
4. Real Estate Department assumes responsibility for negotiation and purchase of properties within the acquisition plan.
 - a. Ascertainment of ownership and preparation of plats.
 - b. Negotiation Ordinance for each land parcel presented to the Board for approval.
 - c. After approval, ownership plats, inspected by the Secretary of the Advisory Committee, and then sent to the Chicago Real Estate Board for appraisal.
 - d. Negotiation between real estate agent and property owners at or near the appraisal value.
 - e. In case of failure of negotiation, request to the Board for a Condemnation Ordinance, and action by the Chief Attorney.
 - f. The final action in all acquisition, either by negotiation or condemnation, is the presentation to the Board by the Chief Attorney asking approval for payment.

Commissioner Ashenden moved that the foregoing Revised Report of the Advisory Committee be approved and made a matter of record. Which motion was duly seconded and decided in the affirmative by the following vote of Yeas and Nays:

Yeas: Commissioners Ashenden, Conkey, Miller, Nixon, Ryan, Smith, Sneed, President Erickson—8.

Nays: None.

ERRATA

In the 1953 Revised Report there followed an explanatory financial section and recommendations on "Construction and Development" and "Corporate Funds". These two sections have been omitted for they are now out of date.



Forest Preserves border along 88 miles of Rivers and Creeks that flow through the County.



Natural Areas lend themselves to the simple forms of Outdoor Activities.

