

The Greater Maywood Paddling Program (GMPP) in Partnership with the Westchester Public Library

FAQ Sheet



What is the GMPP?

The GMPP is an initiative of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) whereby Forest Preserve staff train leaders from other Maywood-area institutions to become proficient kayakers. In turn, these leaders can take their constituents on kayaking trips down the Des Plaines River.

Who does the GMPP benefit, and how does it benefit them?

The GMPP offers multi-dimensional benefits to Maywood-area residents, the FPDCC, and the institutions that host their own paddling excursions. It provides individuals with a healthy, outdoor activity that, under normal circumstances, they would otherwise lack the knowledge and equipment to pursue on their own. Also, through their partnership with neighboring institutions, the GMPP brings new users with the FPDCC's facilities and recreation programs. Likewise, it helps partnering institutions make new inroads with the communities they serve. For example, the Westchester Public Library has engaged over one hundred new users through paddling trips. The GMPP also benefits groups that are not directly involved with the program. For instance, the GMPP's goals align with the goals of the Cook County Department of Public Health's "Healthy Hotspot" initiative, which is designed to increase the number of places that make healthy living easier in and around suburban Cook County.

Why is the GMPP centered on the Maywood area?

The GMPP is centered on the Maywood area for two principal reasons. First, the Cook County Department of Public Health designated Maywood, Illinois as a "priority area" in the aforementioned "Healthy HotSpot" initiative. Maywood Grove is a location within the community that offers residents a venue to live healthier lives through physical recreation and opportunities to connect with nature. Second, the boat launch at Maywood Grove is significant because it fills an 11-mile gap between boat launches at located Irving Park Road and Plank Road Meadow in Lyons, Illinois. The GMPP allows Maywood residents and other area visitors to have easier access to exciting water-based recreational opportunities along the Des Plaines River.



What is the GMPP's demographic reach?

The GMPP cuts a very wide swath demographically, from children as young as seven to teens to seniors. It has also successfully engaged users from the Latino, African American, Eastern European, and various special needs communities. Because these are experience-based programs in the context of a new activity, GMPP kayaking events provide all participants a fair and equal chance of enjoyment and success.