

**EFFICIENCY REPORT FOR THE  
FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT  
OF COOK COUNTY**

**DRAFT**

**APPROVED BY THE FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT'S  
COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY  
ON \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT DATE]**



## **I. Purpose**

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (“Forest Preserve District”) formed its Committee on Local Government Efficiency on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, to study efficiencies and report recommendations regarding those efficiencies and increased accountability pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1, *et seq.* (the “Committee”).

DRAFT

## II. Committee Membership

The Committee consisted of the following individuals:

Commissioner Scott Britton, Chairman

Commissioner Frank J. Aguilar

Commissioner Alma Anaya

Mr. Alan Bell

Commissioner John P. Daley

Commissioner Dennis Deer

Commissioner Bridget Degnan

Commissioner Bridget Gainer

Commissioner Monica Gordon

Commissioner Bill Lowry

Commissioner Donna Miller

Commissioner Stanley Moore

Commissioner Josina Morita

Commissioner Kevin B. Morrison

Commissioner Sean M. Morrison

Commissioner Anthony Quezada

~~General Superintendent Arnold Randall~~ Interim General Superintendent Eileen Figel

Commissioner Tara Stamps

Mr. Mark Templeton

Commissioner Maggie Trevor

### III. Committee Meetings

The Committee met as follows:

Meeting Date and Time	Meeting Place
May 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2023	Sagawau Environmental Learning Center 12545 West 111th Street, Lemont, IL
December 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Room 569, Cook County Building 118 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL

**Public Surveys:** Per the 50 ILCS 70/20, “[a]t the conclusion of each meeting, the committee shall conduct a survey of residents who attended asking for input on the matters discussed at the meeting. A survey conducted via email to all residents who attended the meeting and provided a valid email address will be sufficient to satisfy the requirements of this paragraph.”

- May 23, 2023 meeting: For the May 23rd meeting, an email with survey questions was planned for those who signed up at meeting to receive survey and for those who signed up for public comment. There were no signups for either, so no survey results from the first meeting of the Decennial Committee.
- December 12, 2023 meeting: For the December 12 meeting, an email with survey questions was available for those who signed up at the meeting to receive the survey and for those who signed up for public comment. There were no signups for either, so no survey results were collected from the second meeting of the Decennial Committee.

Minutes of these meetings are available on the Forest Preserve District’s website via the following link: <https://fpdcc.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

## IV. General Overview of Governing Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, Procedures, Powers, Jurisdiction

### Mission

*“To acquire, restore and manage lands for the purpose of protecting and preserving public open space with its natural wonders, significant prairies, forests, wetlands, rivers, streams, and other landscapes with all of its associated wildlife, in a natural state for the education, pleasure and recreation of the public now and in the future.”* (Source: <https://fpdcc.com/about/mission-history/>)

### Background

“On November 3, 1914, the residents of Cook County voted in favor of establishing a forest preserve district whose boundaries would be analogous to the boundaries of Cook County. The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (generally referred to herein as the Forest Preserves of Cook County or Forest Preserves) was established on November 30, 1914 and the first meeting of the Board of Forest Preserve Commissioners was February 11, 1915.

On June 25, 1916 the first lands were obtained—500 acres of what is now known as [Deer Grove](#)—and by the end of the 1930s, the Forest Preserves held a total area of 33,000 acres. During this time, the Forest Preserves also worked to expand services for patrons. By 1920, the Forest Preserves created a special “Golf Committee” charged with setting aside land for golf courses and hiring concessionaires to serve golfers, and by the early 1930s, the Forest Preserves had begun construction on roads, walking trails and recreational facilities.

During the Depression, the influx of funds and labor through the New Deal’s Civilian Conservation Corps, Public Works Administration, and the Works Progress Administration increased the pace of these improvements. In the [WPA Guide to Illinois, The Federal Writers’ Project Guide to 1930s Illinois](#), the authors wrote, “Within [the Cook County Forest Preserves] lie more than 150 miles of hiking trails, 40 miles of bridle paths, and special facilities ranging from ski and toboggan slides to swimming pools. Only a few minutes out of the city, they are extensively used by picnickers, hiking and nature study clubs, and those merely seeking a brief respite from the roar and clamor of the metropolis.”

In 1934, the [Chicago Zoological Society opened the Brookfield Zoo](#) on land donated to and purchased by the Forest Preserves, and in 1972 the [Chicago Horticultural Society opened the Chicago Botanic Garden](#) on Forest Preserves land in Glencoe. Both the Zoo and Garden remain close partners with the Forest Preserves, which helps support the institutions and shares their mission of preserving and providing education about the natural world.

The Zoo grounds are located on 216 acres and include outdoor and indoor habitats for a vast array of animals, some of which are critically endangered. With its world-renowned plant collections and displays, the Garden is one of the most visited public gardens in the world. Both are preeminent centers for learning and scientific research.

Over the decades, as the scientific community’s understanding of native ecosystems evolved, the Forest Preserves has also expanded its commitment to protecting and [restoring the habitats in our](#)

[care](#). After World War II, the Forest Preserves created the Department of Conservation (now the Department of Resource Management), influenced by [Aldo Leopold's land ethic](#), which outlines the human responsibility to the natural world. [The first prairie restoration](#) was implemented at Camp Sagawau in 1965, and in 1996 the Forest Preserves helped found Chicago Wilderness, a coalition dedicated to protecting nature in the region.

In 2014, the Forest Preserves released the [Next Century Conservation Plan](#) (NCCP), an ambitious blueprint for making Cook County a national leader in urban conservation. The NCCP calls for massive restoration and expansion of protected lands, as well as a commitment to making the preserves more accessible to the diverse people of Cook County. The following year, the Forest Preserves released the [Natural and Cultural Resources Master Plan](#), which provides the guidance needed to implement the NCCP's natural resource goals. It also lays out a natural and cultural resources framework for future land acquisition, recreation development and capital improvement.

Much has changed in the more than 100 years that the Forest Preserves has been serving the residents of Cook County, but we continue our commitment to the county's natural wonders and the "education, pleasure and recreation of the public now and in the future." (Source: <https://fpdcc.com/about/mission-history/>) .

## **Governance**

### **Statutory Framework**

The Forest Preserves is governed by its enabling statute, 70 ILCS 810/0.01 et. seq. There are other Illinois statutory provisions applicable to the Forest Preserves, such as, without limitation, the Illinois Pension Code, Property Tax Extension Limitation Law, and Forest Preserve District and Conservation District Design-Build Authorization Act.

### **Board of Commissioners**

The Forest Preserves of Cook County is governed by the President and its Board of Commissioners. Per 70 ILCS 810/5, "[t]he county board of commissioners of the county in which a forest preserve district is located shall be the forest preserve district board of such district and the president of the county board shall be the president of the forest preserve district board. The members shall act without any other pay than that already provided by law." Thus, the elected President and seventeen (17) commissioners of the Cook County Board of Commissioner are by virtue of their offices also the President and Board of Commissioners for the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Commissioners must reside within the boundaries of their district. The President and Commissioners are elected for their Cook County offices every four (4) years, with the next election to be held in 2026. Upcoming meetings of the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners are available [here](#). The Board operates subject to the requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

### **Tax Structure**

The Forest Preserves of Cook County is a separate and distinct taxing body within Cook County (see 70 ILCS 810/22). Because the Forest Preserves of Cook County is a separate unit of local government, the revenues it generates can only be used for Forest Preserves of Cook County

purposes. This assurance is contrasted with general purpose governments like cities, villages, and counties that provide a multitude of services such as fire, public works, economic development, etc.

## Referendum

In November of 2022, Cook County voters authorized a 0.025% increase in the preserves' property tax levy, raising an additional \$40 million to be used to expand and improve the benefits of the Forest Preserves, including the following:

- Acquire and protect more natural open land for the enjoyment of generations to come.
- Protect and restore wildlife habitat that is home to native plants and animals, some of which are threatened or endangered.
- Increase programs and events for the public and schools, including more outreach to communities from every part of Cook County.
- Expand and maintain trails, improve signage, and make amenities more energy efficient and accessible to all.
- Resolve the Forest Preserves' pension shortfall.
- Address the deferred capital needs of the [Brookfield Zoo](#) and [Chicago Botanic Garden](#).

## Good Governance and Best Practices

The Forest Preserves receives an estimated 62 million visits each year, providing an escape into a world teeming with wildlife and rich with [outdoor recreation](#) and [environmental education opportunities](#)<sup>1</sup>. As part of good governance and implementing best practices in the management of day-to-day operations, the Forest Preserves has adopted the following ordinances, rules, policies, and procedures:

- General Operations:
  - [Code of Ordinances](#), including, without limitation, the following:
    - Board Rules
    - Ethical Conduct
    - Use of Cook County Office of the Independent Inspector General
    - Ordinance Enforcement
    - Vehicle Steering Committee Rules
    - Establishment of Conservation and Policy Council
  - General Policies/Plans
    - [Communications Tower & Other Tall Structures Policy \(PDF\)](#)
    - [Concessions Policy \(PDF\)](#)
    - [Dark Sky Friendly Policy \(PDF\)](#)
    - [Drone Usage Policy for Forest Preserve Employees \(PDF\)](#)
    - [Drone Usage Policy for the General Public \(PDF\)](#)
    - [Electronic Communications & Technological Use Policy \(PDF\)](#)
    - [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\) Policy](#)
    - [Fundraising Policy \(PDF\)](#)
    - [Key Control Policy \(PDF\)](#)

- [Mobility Device Usage Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Permanent Naming Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Pickets, Protests, & Demonstrations Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Prescribed Burn Management Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Salvage Disposal Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Seed Source Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Service Animal Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Signage & Wayfinding Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Smoking Restrictions Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Social Media Policy for District Managed Accounts \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Teaming Opportunities & Temporary Naming Rights Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Tree Risk Management & Removal Policy \(PDF\)](#)
- Strategic Planning:
  - [Next Century Conservation Plan](#)
- Budget & Financial Policies
  - [Annual Budgets](#)
  - [Cash Handling Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Employee Gift Restrictions Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Fee Waiver Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Purchasing Card Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Technology Reimbursement Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Billing Guidelines for Outside Counsel \(PDF\)](#)
- Human Resources
  - [Alcohol & Controlled Substances Usage Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Domestic/Sexual Violence & Harassment In The Workplace Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Nepotism & Fraternization Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Non-Discrimination & Harassment Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Overtime-Compensatory & Additional Time Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Reasonable Accommodations Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Religious Accommodation Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Telecommuting Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Unpaid Internship, Fellowship & Administrative Volunteer's Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Workplace Anti-Bullying Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Workplace Violence Policy \(PDF\)](#)
- Emergency and Safety
  - [Aggressive Dog Ban Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Emergency Safety Response Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Identity Protection Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Inclement Weather & District Closures Policy \(PDF\)](#)



- [Police/Law Enforcement Policy Manual](#)
- Travel
  - [Employee Travel Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Incident Review Board Policy \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Vehicle/Equipment & Parking Placard Policy \(PDF\)](#)
- Building, Land Preservation & Use<sup>2</sup>
  - [Capital Improvement Plan](#)
  - [Trail Master Plan](#)
  - [Natural and Cultural Resources Plan](#)
  - [Land Acquisition Plan](#)
  - [Southeast Cook County Land Acquisition Plan](#)
- Recreation Plans
  - [Recreation Master Plan](#)
  - [Camping Master Plan](#)
  - [Gateway Master Plan](#)
- Annual Report – On an annual basis, the [Conservation and Policy Council](#) on the Forest Preserves progress in accomplishing the goals of the [Next Century Conservation Plan](#).

## V. List of Shared Services and Partnerships

The Forest Preserves, through its Conservation & Experiential Programming (CEP) department makes great strides to partner with community organizations, schools, parks and other entities. CEP works with hundreds of new and repeat partners every year in a variety of ways. We count many collaborations and partnerships all with the goal of connecting the people of Cook County and beyond to nature. We support partners in many ways including event and programming partnerships, funds, transportation to Forest Preserves events and programs, and education permits for spaces in Forest Preserves so groups can independently host their own programs and activities.

In 2022 we had 530 partnerships recorded. Below are several lists that show examples of partnerships, programs and engagement activities.

1. Sampling of groups who have partnerships and/or collaborations with the Forest Preserves. These orgs bring out groups. Come to our sites and/or are actively planning and programming at Forest Preserves events
2. Groups who received a Nature Express Bus for a group to come to a Forest Preserve site, the Chicago Botanic Garden or to the Brookfield Zoo
3. Applied for and receive Education Permits

4. A list of partnership tools we use to invite people to be active with us in connecting their community to nature.

### **Forest Preserves of Cook County Engagement Partners:**

1. Acero de la Cruz School, Chicago – Mighty Acorn School
2. Adaptive Adventures
3. Advocate Aurora Health Services
4. Alliance for Early Childhood
5. Altgeld Gardens LAC/CHA
6. American Indian Center
7. American Indian Health Services
8. Association House
9. Bach to Rock
10. Back Yard Nature Center
11. Barrington School District
12. Bellwood School District 88
13. Bernard Zell Academy
14. BSA (various groups)
15. Chicago Academy – Mighty Acorns
16. Chicago Adventure Therapy
17. Chicago Agriculture High School
18. Chicago Botanic Garden
19. Chicago Police Department District 4
20. Chicago River Canoe and Kayak
21. Chicago Voyager
22. Chicago Zoological Society
23. Clemente Acero – Mighty Acorn School
24. Cub Scouts (Various Troops)
25. Des Plaines River Canoe and Kayak Marathon
26. East Side Chamber of Commerce
27. Elk Grove Bike Shop
28. Elk Grove Public Library
29. Faith in Place
30. Field Museum
31. Filament Theater
32. Forest Schools for Illinois
33. Friends of Chicago River
34. Friends of the Forest Preserves
35. Get Hooked
36. Gigi Tonye' Arts and Fitness
37. Izaak Walton League
38. Girl Scouts (various Troops)
39. Glenview Youth Services
40. Harper College
41. ICNA (Islamic Circle of North American) - Chicago

42. IKES
43. Illinois Department of Natural Resources – ENTICE program
44. Illinois Paddling Council
45. Illinois Science Teaching Association
46. Imani Village
47. Indo-American Center
48. ISteam
49. Izaak Walton League
50. Kaleidoscope: Foster Care Group
51. Kellogg School – Might Acorns
52. Kenwood Academy
53. Korean Performing Arts Center
54. La Casas – Mighty Acorns
55. Lemont High School
56. Light of Loving Kindness
57. Little Bits Workshop
58. Little Calumet Underground Rail Road Project
59. Little City Foundation
60. Major Taylor Trail Bike Club
61. Mandala Arts
62. Mighty Acorn Regional Group – family campout
63. Misericordia
64. Moraine Valley Community College
65. Najwa Dance Company
66. Near North Montessori
67. Neighborspace
68. NEIU
69. Niles Main Public Library
70. Northwest Special Recreation Association
71. Oak Park River Forest High School
72. Openlands
73. Opportunity Knocks
74. Out Our Front Doors
75. Outdoor Afro
76. Palos Park Village Parks and Rec
77. Polonia Polish Folk Song and Dance Ensemble
78. PP4H
79. REACH
80. Read & Run Chicago
81. Refugee Education & Adventure Challenge (REACH
82. Seguin
83. Solorio Academy
84. Southeast Youth Alliance
85. Southeast Environmental Task Force
86. Special Olympics Chicago
87. Summit School District

88. Tamayo Elementary School – MA
89. TCA Health
90. The Seldoms Dance Company
91. Trail Bound Trips
92. Trickster Gallery and Cultural Center
93. U of I 4H
94. U of I Extension
95. We Keep You Rollin’
96. Westchester Public Library
97. Wilderness Inquiry
98. Willow Springs School District
99. Xochitl-Quetzal Aztec Dance

### **Nature Express Bus to Forest Preserves or Chicago Botanic Garden or Brookfield Zoo**

1. Heartland Alliance Refugee Health
2. Prospect Heights Park District
3. Chavez School
4. Heartland Health Outreach
5. Back of the Yard Prep School
6. Parview Seniors
7. Garden House
8. Tu Casa Guanajuato en Chicago
9. Oak Lawn Garden Club
10. Refugee Community Connection
11. The Learning Center
12. Goethe School

### **Education Permits**

1. Advocate Christ Medical Center
2. Advocate Christ Medical Center, South Suburban Hospital, & Trinity Hospital
3. CIMBY - CPS
4. Circle Ceremonies at Annual Equinoxes & Solstices
5. Circle Ceremonies at Annual Equinoxes & Solstices
6. DePaul College Prep
7. Elmwood Park High School
8. Field Museum
9. Friends of the Forest Preserves
10. Harper College
11. ICNA Relief + Crosstown Exotics

12. Kenwood Academy
13. Maine East High School
14. McAuley High School
15. Nettlehorst School
16. North Shore Country Day School
17. Northridge Prep School Bugs and Bunny Camp
18. Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum
19. Refugee Educaiton & Adventure Challenge
20. SAIC Environmental Chemistry Class
21. Saint Viator High School
22. Shedd Aquarium Summer Road Trip
23. Solorio Academy HS
24. St Viator Elementary School
25. Tinkgarten
26. University of Illinois Extension
27. Waters Elementary
28. We Keep You Rollin’
29. Wilderness Inquiry
30. WTTW Kids Learn and Play

### **Partnership Tools**

1. Program Event and Partnership proposal process
2. Activity Request for Qualifications
3. Community Liaisons
4. Target Cultural Art/Food
5. Pop Up Challenge
6. Nature Express Application
7. Local Community Programs
8. Education Permits
9. School visits field trips and programs at schools
10. Gear Library
11. Community Leadership Partnerships
12. Experience.Nature email

### **Forest Preserves Engagement Activities**

Public Programs at the Forest Preserves are held at Nature Centers, Campgrounds and other Forest Preserve locations. These programs are mostly free (some require a small fee to help cover expenses). Some of these program require registration and space can be limited. Activities include:

1. Walks
2. Arts in Nature
3. Birding

4. Camping
5. Large Events
6. Music and other performing Arts
7. Night Sky Programs
8. Story Telling
9. Seasonal
10. History
11. Archery
12. Restoration activities
13. Gardening
14. Teen Exploration Days
15. Out of School Time
16. Paddling
17. Family Camp Outs
18. Fire Programs
19. Snow Shoeing
20. Cross Country Skiing
21. Camping 101s

Special Events focus on the seasons, holidays, history, arts and cultural. These large events are at locations all over Cook County and are featured on our annual wall calendar. Some of these events are:

1. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service
2. Underground Railroad Hikes
3. Maple Syrup Festival
4. Spring Celebration
5. Spring Festival
6. Flower Festival
7. Earth Day
8. Arbor Day
9. Nature Block Party
10. Explore the Forest
11. Beaubien Woods Celebration
12. Juneteenth Celebration
13. Kids Fest
14. Outdoor Block Party
15. Back to School Adventure
16. Hummingbird Festival
17. Summer Bonfires
18. Art in Nature
19. Migrating Monarchs
20. Party for the Preserves (Public Lands Day)
21. Arts Fair
22. Fall Festival
23. Sand Ridge Heritage Days
24. Winter Bonfires

25. Holiday Past
26. Winter Solstice

Schools or other Organizations can contact the Forest Preserves for guided talks, walks and programs. FPCC primarily provides programming for school at its sites but can do some in school programs as well. FPCC's Mighty Acorns program is part of a regional initiative to develop environmental educators who use the outdoors as a classroom. The Mighty Acorns program is a five year program focused on grades 3-5. These activities include:

1. Field Trips (Lead by staff or self-lead)
2. In School Programs
3. Virtual Programs
4. Mighty Acorns Programs

Outreach Activities take the Forest Preserves to community sites and working in partnership with community leaders and agencies. The Forest Preserves can come to your event to promote your neighbors coming out to the Forest Preserves. We bring information and sometimes an activity to highlight what people may experience in the preserves. Some events that the Forest Preserves engage in are:

1. Health Fairs
2. Back To School Events
3. Farmers Markets
4. Job Fairs
5. Teen
6. Community Leadership Workshops
7. Teacher Training

Gear Library Trainings and Programs are an opportunity for group leaders to get trained in camping, paddling and hiking. Once trained and certified, these leaders can check out gear and take their group camping, kayaking or hiking. These programs include:

1. Camping Leadership Immersion Course
2. Greater Maywood Paddling Program
3. Day Hike Leader Training

The Forest Preserves runs a Conservation@Home program that encourages gardeners and other landowners to use forest friendly gardening techniques when managing their properties. Together with the University of Illinois Extension we host workshops, tabling events, a plant sale and a program where Cook County residents can get advice and their garden certified as a Conservation@Home garden. There are 166 gardens in Cook County certified as Conservation@Home. The Nature Conservancy Foundation started the Conservation@Home Program.

## **VI. Other Examples of Efficient Operations**

### **Conservation Corps**

Conservation Corps programs provide paid employment for youth and adult participants from across Cook County's diverse communities—including those with barriers to employment, those who have suffered from historical disenfranchisement, and those whose communities are

disproportionately impacted by environmental justice issues. Conservation Corps programs receive financial and/or training support from the Forest Preserves to engage the next generation of conservation leaders in hands-on ecological restoration work. Programs feature environmental education and soft skills training to prepare participants for future employment and connect communities to nature.

These programs engage approximately 300 participants annually. In 2023, a total of 289 participants logged over 57,108 service hours. Cumulatively, since 2005 the Conservation Corps have engaged 3,365 participants who have provided 795,208 service hours to the Forest Preserves.

### **Program partners**

1. Friends of the Forest Preserves
2. The Student Conservation Association
3. Chicago Department of Transportation
4. Openlands
5. Audubon Great Lakes
6. Cook County Bureau of Economic Development
7. Forest Preserve Foundation
8. Housing Authority of Cook County
9. Americorps

### **Partnerships**

Managing the Forest Preserves' nearly 70,000 acres of natural lands requires unprecedented levels of collaboration with other government agencies, contractors, public interest groups and community organizations. Over the past decade, we've forged hundreds of partnerships for cooperative land management, intergovernmental training, native seed enhancement, archaeological protection initiatives, and much more. Some of our most prominent partnerships have been in the field of wildlife research, including the Urban Coyote Research Project – North America's longest running urban coyote research program—and more recently the inaugural Illinois Zoological and Wildlife Health Management Residency program. Other partnerships have resulted in the development of major defining moments in the Forest Preserves' land management policies, such as the development of the Natural and Cultural Resources Master Plan, which initiated the comprehensive assessment and prioritization the Forest Preserves' open spaces.

1. Audubon Great Lakes
2. Barrington Countryside Park District
3. Bird Conservation Network
4. Bobolink Foundation
5. Buffalo Grove High School
6. Chicago Area Mountain Bikers
7. Chicago Botanic Garden
8. Chicago Park District



9. Chicago Region Trees Initiative
10. Chicago Zoological Society
11. Citizens for Conservation
12. City of Park Ridge
13. Cook County Department of Animal and Rabies Control
14. Field Museum
15. Forest Preserve District of Kane County
16. Forest Preserve Foundation
17. Friends of the Chicago River
18. Friends of the Forest Preserves
19. Hoffman Estates Fire Department
20. Illinois Department of Natural Resources
21. Illinois High School Association
22. Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
23. Illinois Prescribed Fire Council
24. Illinois State Archaeological Survey
25. Lake County Forest Preserve District
26. Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
27. Lincoln Park Zoo
28. Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation
29. McHenry County Conservation District
30. Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
31. Morton Arboretum
32. Nazurus Foundation
33. Northbrook Park District
34. Ohio State University
35. Openlands
36. Prairie Research Institute
37. Resource Environmental Solutions
38. Riding Club of Barrington Hills
39. St. Charles Park District
40. Sweet Beginnings, LLC
41. The Conservation Foundation
42. The Nature Conservancy
43. Underwriters Laboratories
44. United States Department of Agriculture APHIS
45. University of Illinois
46. University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine
47. University of Wisconsin
48. US Fish and Wildlife Service
49. US Geological Survey
50. Village of Elgin
51. Village of Elk Grove

52. Village of La Grange Park
53. Village of Palatine

### **Cooperative interagency training partnerships or exchanges**

1. Hoffman Estates Fire Department
2. Morton Grove Fire Department
3. University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point
4. The Nature Conservancy
5. Illinois Department of Natural Resources

### **Premises Sharing**

The Forest Preserves selectively issues licenses to share facility workspace with several other governmental entities. These mutually beneficial relationships promote intergovernmental collaboration and efficiency pertaining to natural and culture resource regulations and offer state conservation police a base from which to better enforce species-protection laws in our region.

### **Workspace/facility sharing partnerships**

1. Illinois Department of Natural Resources
2. Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
3. Illinois State Archaeological Survey
4. North Cook Soil and Water Conservation District

### **Environmental Education Programs**

The Forest Preserves coordinate and host a series of environmental education programs aimed at providing ongoing training and enrichment opportunities for staff. These programs feature a wide range of conservation topics, including equipment use, best management practices, and often provide continuing education units (CEUs) for upkeep of professional licenses or certifications. Certain programs are made available to volunteers, partners, and the public. In 2023, the Department of Resource Management hosted 244 programs reaching over 4,000 people. That number expands to 2,147 programs since 2015. Some of our common educational programming and training partners include:

1. Chicago Botanic Garden
2. Chicago High School for Agricultural Science
3. Chicago Region Trees Initiative
4. Illinois Arborist Association
5. Illinois Department of Agriculture
6. Morton Arboretum
7. National Weather Service
8. Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum
9. University of Illinois
10. University of Illinois Extension

## 11. West Cook Wild Ones

### **Program recipients and conferences**

1. American Veterinary Medical Association Chicago
2. American Zoo and Aquarium Association
3. Arlington Anglers
4. Barrington Area Conservation Trust
5. Barrington Natural History Society
6. Brookfield Zoo
7. Cabela's Fishing and Outdoor Expo
8. Carle Hospital
9. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
10. Chicago Academy of Science
11. Chicago Botanic Garden
12. Chicago Outdoor Sports Show
13. Chicago Park District
14. Chicago Veterinary Medical Association
15. Chicagoland Fishing, Travel, and Outdoor Expo
16. Concordia University
17. Conrad Fisher Elementary School
18. Cook County Animal and Rabies Control
19. Cook County Animal Control
20. Cook County Department of Public Health
21. DePaul University
22. East Prairie Elementary School
23. East Prairie School
24. Eden Place Nature Center
25. Elk Grove Public Library
26. Elk Grove Rotary Club
27. Elmwood Park Elementary School
28. Field Museum
29. Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
30. Forest Preserve District of Kane County
31. Great Lakes of Association of Veterinary Pathologists
32. iLandscape Conference
33. Illini Muskie Alliance
34. Illinois Arborist Association Conference
35. Illinois Association of Conservation Districts
36. Illinois Department of Natural Resources
37. Illinois GIS Association Annual Conference
38. Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
39. Illinois Odonate Society

40. Illinois Parks and Recreation Association Conference
41. Illinois Prescribed Fire Council
42. Illinois State Archaeological Survey
43. Illinois State Bar Association
44. Illinois Trappers Association
45. Indiana Academy of Sciences
46. Indiana Department of Natural Resources
47. Indiana Nature Conservancy
48. International Society of Arboriculture Conference
49. Journal of the American Medical Association
50. Judson University
51. Kenya Animal Ministry
52. La Grange Public Library
53. La Grange Flower Club
54. Lake County Forest Preserve District
55. Lake County Junior College
56. National Audubon Society
57. Lemont High School
58. Lewis University
59. Lincoln Park Zoo
60. Lombard Sportsmen's Club
61. Loyola University Chicago
62. Loyola University - Corboy Law Center
63. Loyola University Medical Center
64. McHenry College
65. McHenry County Audubon
66. McHenry County Conservation District
67. McHenry County Junior College
68. Midwest Garden Pollinators Association
69. Midwest Prescribed Fire Conference
70. Midwest Trappers Association
71. Moraine Valley Community College
72. Morton Grove Garden Club
73. Muskie Expo Chicago
74. National Association of Wildlife Pathologists
75. National Recreation and Parks Association
76. New Trier High School
77. North Park University
78. North Shore Senior Center
79. Northeast – Midwest Regional Prescribed Fire Science and Management Workshop
80. Northeastern Illinois University
81. Northwestern University
82. Northwestern Memorial Hospital

83. Oak Lawn Community High School
84. Oakton College
85. Ohio State University
86. Openlands
87. Partners in Community Forestry Conference
88. Poplar Grove Middle School
89. Prospect Heights Library
90. Purdue Fisheries Society
91. Purdue University
92. Randall School
93. Raptor Research Foundation Conference
94. Riverside Fishing Club
95. Riverside Library
96. Rush University Medical Center
97. Schaumburg Christian School
98. Schaumburg High School
99. Schiller Park Elementary
100. Shedd Aquarium
101. Sierra Club
102. Society of Scientific Microscopy
103. Soil & Water Conservation Conference
104. South Side Muskie Hawks
105. South Suburban College
106. Southwest Conference of Mayors
107. Spring Valley Nature Center
108. Spring Valley Nature Club
109. The Nature Conservancy
110. Tinley Park High School
111. University of Minnesota
112. Urban Wildlife Institute
113. US Fish and Wildlife Service
114. US Forest Service
115. Village of Northbrook
116. Village of Prospect Heights
117. Village of Rolling Meadows
118. Village of Schaumburg
119. Western Springs Flower Club
120. Wheaton College
121. Wheeling Rotary Club
122. Wild Things Conference
123. Will County Audubon Society
124. Will County Forest Preserve District
125. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

## **Research**

The Forest Preserves feature wondrous natural habitats that support a wide variety of flora and fauna—including over one hundred threatened and endangered species. Our region is extremely biodiverse, making the Forest Preserves an ideal destination and natural laboratory for researchers studying nature in an urban environment.

Hundreds of students and scientists have focused their studies on Forest Preserves property or collaborated directly with the Forest Preserves to advance our knowledge of the natural world. Research investigations include any monitoring, collecting, testing, study, observation, investigation or other related activity that benefit the Forest Preserves, public education or the community.

## **Research Permits**

1. American Indian Health Services of Chicago
2. Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University
3. Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative
4. Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists
5. Audubon Great Lakes
6. Austin Peay State University
7. Bremen High School
8. Buffalo Creek Clean Water Partnership
9. Calumet College of St. Joseph
10. Chicago Academy of Sciences
11. Chicago Botanic Garden
12. Chicago Ornithological Society
13. Chicago Park District
14. Chicago Zoological Society
15. Citizens for Conservation
16. Davee Center for Epidemiology
17. Urban Wildlife Institute
18. Delta Institute
19. DePaul University
20. Des Plaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District
21. Dominican University
22. The Conservation Foundation
23. DuPage River-Salt Creek Work Group
24. Field Museum of Natural History
25. Friends of the Chicago River
26. Friends of the Somme Preserves
27. Governors State University
28. Habitat Research, LLC
29. Harry S. Truman College
30. Harvard University

31. Heirloom Apple Rescue Project
32. Homes4Monarchs
33. Illinois Arborist Association
34. Illinois Department of Natural Resources
35. Illinois Department of Public Health
36. Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board
37. Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
38. Illinois Mycological Association
39. Illinois Native Plant Society
40. Illinois Natural History Survey
41. Illinois River Watch Program
42. Illinois State Archaeological Survey
43. Illinois State Geological Survey
44. Illinois State Museum Society
45. Illinois State University
46. Illinois State Water Survey
47. Illinois Natural History Survey
48. Illinois Wesleyan University
49. Indiana Department of Environmental Management
50. Indiana Geological and Water Survey
51. John G. Shedd Aquarium
52. Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
53. Lake Forest College
54. Lesley University
55. Lewis University
56. Lincoln Park Zoo
57. Living Habitats
58. Lower Des Plaines Watershed Group
59. Loyola University Chicago
60. Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation
61. Midwest Biodiversity Institute
62. Monarch Joint Venture
63. National Great Rivers Research and Education Center
64. North Branch Chicago River Watershed Workgroup
65. North Shore Country Day School
66. North Shore Water Reclamation District
67. Northeastern Illinois University
68. Northwestern University
69. Ohio State University
70. Pathway to Adventure Council
71. Pollinator Partnership
72. Prairie Research Institute
73. Purdue University

74. River Watch
75. Roosevelt University
76. Sertoma Centre
77. Shedd Aquarium
78. Sierra Club
79. South Cook County Mosquito Abatement
80. The Swamp School
81. Texas Tech University
82. The Children's School
83. The Morton Arboretum
84. The School of the Art Institute of Chicago
85. The University of Connecticut-Hartford
86. Triton College
87. United States Army Corps of Engineers
88. United States Environmental Protection Agency
89. United States Fish and Wildlife Service
90. United States Forest Service
91. United States Geological Survey
92. Unity College
93. University of Alabama at Birmingham
94. University of Chicago
95. University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
96. University of Illinois at Chicago
97. University of Illinois, Wildlife Epidemiology Lab
98. University of Minnesota
99. University of Notre Dame
100. University of South Dakota
101. University of Tokyo
102. University of Wisconsin - Madison
103. University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point
104. Urban Rivers Inc
105. Urban Wildlife Institute
106. USDA APHIS PPQ

Staff in the Department of Resource Management additionally host field practicums for college and high school students on the topics of wildlife research, prescribed fire, and advanced aquatic ecosystems. These programs allow students to work alongside the Forest Preserves' biologists to gain hands-on training and field experience.

### **Field Workshop Partnerships**

1. Ohio State University
2. University of Illinois
3. North Park University



4. Purdue University
5. University of Wisconsin
6. University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point
7. Elk Grove High School
8. Tinley Park High School
9. New Trier High School
10. Lemont High School
11. Thornton High School

## **Volunteers**

Last year, the Forest Preserves recorded 21,443 volunteer engagements which in turn logged 98,487 hours of volunteer service to the Forest Preserves.

## **Partnerships with non-profits**

1. Adler Planetarium
2. Audubon Great Lakes
3. Barrington Greenway Initiative
4. Bird Conservation Network
5. Bobolink Foundation
6. Chicago Area Mountain Bikers
7. Chicago Botanic Garden
8. Citizens for Conservation
9. Clean Up Give Back
10. Deer Grove Natural Areas Volunteers
11. Field Museum
12. Friends of Bluff Spring Fen
13. Friends of Busse Woods
14. Friends of Cycling - Elk Grove
15. Friends of the Chicago River
16. Friends of the Forest Preserves
17. Izaak Walton Foundation
18. North Branch Restoration Project
19. One Tree Planted
20. Openlands Tree Keepers
21. Palos Restoration Project
22. Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum
23. Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards
24. Riding Club of Barrington Hills
25. Shedd Aquarium
26. Singing Insects Monitoring Project
27. United States Geological Survey
28. University of Illinois Extension

The Forest Preserves, through its Conservation & Experiential Programming (CEP) department, makes great strides to partner with community organizations, schools, parks and other entities. CEP works with hundreds of new and repeat partners every year in a variety of ways. We count on many collaborations and partnerships to meet our goal of connecting the people of Cook County and beyond to nature. We support partners in many ways including event and programming partnerships, funds, transportation to Forest Preserves events and programs, and education permits for spaces in Forest Preserves so groups can independently host their own programs and activities.

The Conservation & Experiential Programming Department has over 500 recorded partnerships. Below are several lists that show examples of partnerships, programs and engagement activities.

**Forest Preserves of Cook County Engagement Partners:** a sampling of groups who have partnerships and/or collaborations with the Forest Preserves. These organizations bring out groups. Come to Forest Preserve sites and/or are actively planning and programming at Forest Preserves events.

#### **Forest Preserves of Cook County Engagement Partners**

1. Acero de la Cruz School, Chicago – Mighty Acorn School
2. Adaptive Adventures
3. Advocate Aurora Health Services
4. Alliance for Early Childhood
5. Altgeld Gardens LAC/CHA
6. American Indian Center
7. American Indian Health Services
8. Association House
9. Bach to Rock
10. Back Yard Nature Center
11. Barrington Area Council on Aging
12. Barrington School District
13. Bellwood School District 88
14. Bernard Zell Academy
15. BSA (various groups)
16. Chicago Academy – Mighty Acorns
17. Chicago Adventure Therapy
18. Chicago Agriculture High School
19. Chicago Botanic Garden
20. Chicago Police Department District 4
21. Chicago River Canoe and Kayak
22. Chicago Voyager
23. Chicago Zoological Society
24. Clemente Acero – Mighty Acorn School

25. Cub Scouts (Various Troops)
26. Des Plaines River Canoe and Kayak Marathon
27. East Side Chamber of Commerce
28. Elk Grove Bike Shop
29. Elk Grove Public Library
30. Faith in Place
31. Field Museum
32. Filament Theater
33. Forest Schools for Illinois
34. Friends of Chicago River
35. Friends of the Forest Preserves
36. Get Hooked
37. Gigi Tonye' Arts and FitnessIzaak Walton League
38. Girl Scouts (various Troops)
39. Glenview Youth Services
40. Harper College
41. ICNA (Islamic Circle of North American) - Chicago
42. IKES
43. Illinois Department of Natural Resources – ENTICE program
44. Illinois Paddling Council
45. Illinois Science Teaching Association
46. Imani Village
47. Indo-American Center
48. ISteam
49. Izaak Walton League
50. Kaleidoscope: Foster Care Group
51. Kellogg School – Might Acorns
52. Kenwood Academy
53. Korean Performing Arts Center
54. La Casas – Mighty Acorns
55. Lemont High School
56. Lewis University
57. Light of Loving Kindness
58. Little Bits Workshop
59. Little Calumet Underground Railroad Project
60. Little City Foundation
61. Major Taylor Trail Bike Club
62. Mandala Arts
63. Mighty Acorn Regional Group – family campout
64. Misericordia
65. Moraine Valley Community College
66. Najwa Dance Company
67. Near North Montessori

68. Neighborspace
69. NEIU
70. Niles Main Public Library
71. Northwest Special Recreation Association
72. Oak Park River Forest High School
73. Openlands
74. Opportunity Knocks
75. Out Our Front Doors
76. Outdoor Afro
77. Palos Park Village Parks and Rec
78. Polonia Polish Folk Song and Dance Ensemble
79. Proviso Partners for Health
80. REACH
81. Read & Run Chicago
82. Refugee Education & Adventure Challenge (REACH
83. Seguin
84. Solorio Academy
85. Southeast Youth Alliance
86. Southeast Environmental Task Force
87. Special Olympics Chicago
88. Summit School District
89. Tamayo Elementary School – MA
90. TCA Health
91. The Seldoms Dance Company
92. Trail Bound Trips
93. Trickster Gallery and Cultural Center
94. U of I 4H
95. U of I Extension
96. We Keep You Rollin’
97. Westchester Public Library
98. Wilderness Inquiry
99. Willow Springs School District
100. Xochitl-Quetzal Aztec Dance

**Nature Express Bus:** Groups who received a Nature Express Bus for a group to come to a Forest Preserve site, the Chicago Botanic Garden or to the Brookfield Zoo.

**Website:** <https://fpdcc.com/nature/nature-express-bus/>

### **Nature Express Recipients 2023**

1. Palatine Township Senior Center - 505 S. Quentin Rd. Palatine, IL
2. Grace Park Senior Club - 9355 W Irving Park, Schiller Park
3. Oak Lawn Garden Club - 4625 W 110th St, Oak Lawn
4. Ida B. Wells Preparatory Academy - 249 E 37th Street, Chicago
5. Schiller Park Autumn Leaves Senior Club - 4501 N 25th Ave, Schiller Park
6. Sacred Heart Fun Club - 8245 W 111th St, Palos Hills
7. Chicago Public Library Back of the Yards Branch - 2111 W 47th St, Chicago
8. Polish Scouting Organization of Illinois - 6434 W. Belmont Ave, Chicago
9. World Relief Chicago Education Department - 3507 W Lawrence Ave, Chicago
10. UNION Impact Center - 4747 S. Marshfield Ave, Chicago
11. Chicago Youth Centers- 21st AVE Program - 249 E 37th Street, Chicago
12. Light of Loving Kindness - 936 N. Ashland (1600W), Chicago
13. NEIU - Center for College Access and Success - 4707 W Marquette Rd, Chicago
14. Heartland Alliance Health - 4750 N Sheridan Rd, Chicago
15. Martha Washington Senior Apartments - 2324 W Irving Park Rd, Chicago
16. Urban Christian Academy - 3039 S Normal Ave, Chicago
17. Bilingual Parent Action Committee - 1040 N Keeler Ave, Chicago
18. Family Focus Englewood - 6727 S. Western Ave, Chicago
19. Chicago BIPOC Birders - 1440 N. Humboldt Blvd. Chicago, IL
20. Praise City Church - 1241 S. Oak Park Avenue, Berwyn
21. The Early Childhood Alliance at Niles Township - 5255 Lincoln Ave. Skokie, IL
22. Rising Stars Daycare - 6515 W Pershing Rd. Stickney, IL
23. Budlong Woods Public Library - 5630 N. Lincoln Ave, Chicago
24. Kenwood High School - 5015 S Blackstone Ave, Chicago
25. Feminist Bird Club Chicago - 2009 W Schiller St, Chicago

## **Education Permits**

An Education Access Permit is required for all school/educational activities, such as class field trips, practices or other group education visits to a forest preserve or nature center, for all groups of 25 or more, and/or when requesting assistance from Forest Preserve staff. The Permit is granted for the day(s) of the field trip or activity. There is no fee for the Education Access Permit.

**Website:** <https://fpdcc.com/downloads/permits/FPCC-Education-Field-Trip-Daily-Access-Permit-040423.pdf>

## **Education Permits 2022**

1. Advocate Christ Medical Center
2. Advocate Christ Medical Center, South Suburban Hospital, & Trinity Hospital
3. CIMBY - CPS
4. Circle Ceremonies at Annual Equinoxes & Solstices
5. DePaul College Prep
6. Elmwood Park High School

7. Field Museum
8. Friends of the Forest Preserves
9. Harper College
10. ICNA Relief + Crosstown Exotics
11. Kenwood Academy
12. Maine East High School
13. McAuley Hight School
14. Nettlehorst School
15. North Shore Country Day School
16. Northridge Prep School Bugs and Bunny Camp
17. Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum
18. Refugee Educaiton & Adventure Challenge
19. SAIC Environmental Chemistry Class
20. Saint Viator High School
21. Shedd Aquarium Summer Road Trip
22. Solorio Academy HS
23. St Viator Elementary School
24. Tinkgarten
25. University of Illinois Extension
26. Waters Elementary
27. We Keep You Rollin'
28. Wilderness Inquiry
29. WTTW Kids Learn and Play

## **NeighborSpace**

The Forest Preserves, along with the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District, establish NeighborSpace as a non-profit in 1996 in order to preserve and expand open space for all residents in the city to enjoy. These founding groups charged the organization with the mission to acquire vacant lots and other properties to ensure their continued survival and use by community gardeners. These three governmental agencies continue to provide leadership and financial support to protect community-managed open spaces in Chicago. NeighborSpace is the only nonprofit urban land trust in Chicago that preserves and sustains gardens on behalf of dedicated community groups.

## **Community Gardens in the City of Chicago**

1. 1800 South Troy Block Club Garden
2. 1900 S. Avers Block Club Garden
3. 1900 S Ridgeway Enabling Garden
4. 2100 South Central Park Block Club Garden
5. 3228 W Palmer Garden
6. 3317 West Walnut Garden
7. 3800 Fillmore Block Club Garden of Hope

8. 42nd Street Garden of Joy
9. 4400 Maypole Block Club Garden
10. 5th Avenue Orchard
11. 500 West 103rd Place Garden
12. 6062 Trees: Sembrando Bajo el Sol
13. 62nd Street Garden
14. 6900 South Dante Garden
15. 69th and Stewart Block Club Garden
16. 71st & Crandon Organic Garden
17. 7900 South Lowe Block Club Park
18. Addison and Avondale Mural Garden
19. African Heritage Garden
20. Ann Sather Garden
21. Artist's Garden
22. Ashford Annie Beck Garden
23. Belmont Cragin Garden
24. Betty Swan Community Arboretum
25. Bowmanville Community Garden
26. Bowmanville Gateway Garden
27. Brickyard Garden
28. Bronzeville Neighborhood Farm
29. Burling Park 2931 N Burling Street
30. Bush Children's Community Garden of Hope
31. Bush Community Garden of Hope
32. Caldwell and Estes Triangle Garden
33. Calumet Heights Community Association Garden
34. Campbell Co-Op Community Garden
35. Cedillo's Fresh Produce (Formerly Known as Eat 2 Live)
36. Chicago FarmWorks
37. Children's Garden of Hope
38. Churchview Park
39. Community Exchange Garden
40. Crystal's Peace Garden
41. Dorchester Community Garden
42. Drake Garden
43. Dunning Community Garden
44. Eagle Park
45. Edgewater Gateway
46. Edna White Century Garden
47. El Coqui Garden
48. El Jardín de las Mariposas
49. El Paseo Community Garden
50. El Yunque Community Garden

51. Emerald Triangle
52. Enrique Gonzalez Memorial Garden
53. Ferd Kramer Memorial Garden
54. Frankie Machine Garden
55. Fulton Flower and Vegetable Garden
56. Ginkgo Organic Gardens
57. Global Garden Refugee Training Farm
58. GreenHouse Garden
59. GrowUptown
60. Harambee Community Garden
61. Hermitage Street Community Garden
62. Hermitage Triangle Community Garden
63. Honore Street Urban Farm
64. Howard Area Community Garden
65. Independence Park Community Garden
66. Island Oasis Nature Play Garden
67. Jardin Esperanza de La Villita
68. Jardincito Nature Play Garden
69. Jelly Bean Garden
70. Joe-Ella Williams Memorial Garden
71. KeHoMaCoCo Garden
72. Kenwood Gardens
73. King Drive Community Garden
74. La Huerta Roots and Rays
75. LaPointe Park
76. Las Semillas de Justicia Garden
77. Lawndale Heritage Garden
78. Lawndale Triangle Garden
79. LeClaire Community Garden
80. Lion's Garden
81. McKinley Community Play Garden
82. Merchant Park Community Garden
83. Mercy Garden of Peace and Healing
84. Mindful Living Community Garden
85. Monticello Community Garden
86. Montrose Metra Community Gardens
87. Morganway Community Garden
88. Mozart Community Garden
89. Oakland Museum & Garden
90. Old Town Triangle Park
91. Olive's Garden for the Hungry
92. Paradise Garden
93. Paradise Garden Logan Square



94. Peerless Garden
95. preServe Garden
96. Pullman Gateway Garden
97. Riverbank Neighbors
98. Rosie's Peace in the Valley Garden
99. Sawyer Street Garden
100. Sherwood Peace Garden
101. South Chicago Peoples Park
102. South Merrill Community Garden
103. Space Park
104. SRB Community Spirit Garden
105. Stockyard Gardens
106. Super Block Park
107. The Bucktown Green
108. Thomas Street Garden
109. Tranquil Garden
110. Turtle Park and Garden
111. UBAM Park
112. Ujima Garden
113. Unity Garden
114. Unity Park
115. Velma Johnson Memorial Garden
116. Vedgewater Community Garden
117. Veteran's Peace Garden
118. Victory Garden
119. Warner Park and Garden
120. Whipple Community Garden
121. Whipple Street Garden
122. Windy City Harvest Kenneth Street Farm
123. Windy City Harvest Youth Farm in North Lawndale
124. Winthrop Family Historical Garden
125. Winthrop Harmony Arts Garden
126. Xochiquetzal Peace Garden

**Partnership Tools:** These are the mechanisms for schools, NGOs and other groups to access the Forest Preserve resources through partnerships through the Conservation & Experiential Programming Department

1. Program Event and Partnership proposal process
2. Activity Request for Qualifications
3. Community Liaisons
4. Target Cultural Arts groups and food vendors

5. Pop Up Challenge
6. Nature Express Application
7. Local Community Programs
8. Education Permits
9. School and other group visits field trips and programs at schools
10. Gear Library
11. Camping Leadership Immersion Course
12. Greater Maywood Paddling Program
13. Day Hike Leader Training
14. Community Leadership Partnerships
15. Experience.Nature email

### **Forest Preserves Engagement Activities**

Public Programs at the Forest Preserves are held at Nature Centers, Campgrounds and other Forest Preserve locations. These programs are mostly free (some require a small fee to help cover expenses). Some of these programs require registration and space can be limited.

1. Walks
2. Arts in Nature
3. Birding
4. Camping
5. Large Events
6. Music and other performing Arts
7. Night Sky Programs
8. Story Telling
9. Seasonal
10. History
11. Archery
12. Restoration activities
13. Gardening
14. Teen Exploration Days
15. Out of School Time
16. Paddling
17. Family Camp Outs
18. Fire Programs
19. Snow Shoeing
20. Cross Country Skiing
21. Camping 101s

### **Special Events**

Focuses on the seasons, holidays, history, arts and culture. These large events are at locations all over Cook County and are featured on our annual wall calendar.

1. Martine Luther King Jr. Day of Service

2. Underground Railroad Hikes
3. Maple Syrup Festival
4. Spring Celebration
5. Spring Festival
6. Flower Festival
7. Earth Day
8. Arbor Day
9. Nature Block Party
10. Explore the Forest
11. Beaubien Woods Celebration
12. Juneteenth Celebration
13. Kids Fest
14. Outdoor Block Party
15. Back to School Adventure
16. Hummingbird Festival
17. Summer Bonfires
18. Art in Nature
19. Migrating Monarchs
20. Party for the Preserves (Public Lands Day)
21. Arts Fair
22. Fall Festival
23. Sand Ridge Heritage Days
24. Winter Bonfires
25. Holiday Past
26. Winter Solstice

Schools or other Organizations can contact the Forest Preserves for guided talks, walks and programs. FPCC primarily provides programming for schools at its sites but can do some in school programs as well. FPCC's Mighty Acorns program is part of a regional initiative to develop environmental educators who use the outdoors as a classroom. The Mighty Acorns program is a five-year program focused on grades 3-5.

1. Field Trips
2. Lead by FPCC staff
3. Self-Lead
4. In School Programs
5. Virtual Programs
6. Mighty Acorns Programs

Outreach Activities take the Forest Preserves to community sites and working in partnership with community leaders and agencies. The Forest Preserves can come to your event to promote your

neighbors coming out to the Forest Preserves. We bring information and sometimes an activity to highlight what people may experience in the preserves.

1. Health Fairs
2. Back To School Events
3. Farmers Markets
4. Job Fairs
5. Teen
6. Community Leadership Workshops
7. Teacher Training

Gear Library Trainings and Programs are an opportunity for group leaders to get trained in camping, paddling and hiking. Once trained and certified, these leaders can check out FPCC gear and take their group camping, kayaking or hiking.

1. Camping Leadership Immersion Course
2. Greater Maywood Paddling Program
3. Day Hike Leader Training

### **Conservation@Home**

The Forest Preserves runs a Conservaton@Home program that encourages gardeners and other landowners to use forest friendly gardening techniques when managing their properties. Together with the University of Illinois Extension we host workshops, tabling events, a plant sale and a program where Cook County residents can get advice and their garden certified as a Conservation@Home garden. There are 166 gardens in Cook County certified as Conservation@Home. The Nature Conservancy Foundation started the Conservation@Home Program.

Our current code allows for us to participate with other municipalities and or purchasing consortiums that have publicly solicited opportunities, that being said we could not piggyback off of a sole source contract that the County has approved since it was not solicited.

## **Contracts and Purchases Section 1-8-2**

**AA; Consortium and Group Procurements:** Procurements may be made pursuant to the district's membership or participation in a purchasing consortium, in order to obtain advantageous pricing and other efficiencies for the district. Procurements made through a purchasing consortium shall be approved and executed as set forth in this Procurement Code.

Common piggybacks are with the following:

1. Cook County

2. City of Chicago
3. Sourcewell
4. OMNIA Partners Group & Cooperative Purchasing
5. GSA: U.S. General Services Administration

## **VII. Transparency to the Community**

### **Forest Preserves of Cook County: Transparency and Community Engagement**

The Forest Preserves of Cook County is committed to open communication and transparency with Cook County residents. We believe a well-informed community is essential to the continued success of our mission to conserve natural landscapes and connect people with nature.

#### **Performance Management Dashboard and Open Data**

The Forest Preserves prioritizes data-driven decision making and public accountability. To that end, we have implemented a comprehensive performance management dashboard. This online resource provides residents with real-time access to key performance indicators (KPIs) that track our progress towards achieving the goals of the Next Century Conservation Plan. These KPIs include:

1. **Acres Under Active Restoration Management:** At the heart of the Forest Preserves' plan is an ambitious goal: the restoration of 30,000 acres of natural habitat including prairies, wetlands and woodlands.
2. **Forest Preserves Acres Acquired:** The plan calls for an expansion of the Forest Preserves to 90,000 total acres.
3. **People Engaged in Onsite Programs, Events & Activities:** Striving to increase engagement with nature, the objective is an annual involvement of 2 million visits through a variety of diverse onsite programs, events and activities at the Forest Preserves.
4. **People Engaged via Offsite Programs and Outreach Efforts:** The goal is to achieve 4 million yearly engagements via offsite Forest Preserves programs and activities, as well as online communications available to the diverse communities of Cook County.

#### **Communication Channels and Engagement**

The Forest Preserves utilizes a variety of communication channels to keep residents informed and engaged, including but not limited to, the following resources:

1. **Forest Way Newsletter:** Monthly newsletter featuring upcoming events, conservation news and stories about the Forest Preserves.
2. **Topic of the Month:** Access monthly media kits with in-depth information on relevant environmental topics.

3. **Social Media Networks:** Various social media platforms for the latest news, updates and opportunities in the Forest Preserves.
4. **Quarterly Guide:** This guide features events and opportunities across all of Cook County, publishing seasonally.
5. **Press Releases:** Monthly updates about important announcements and initiatives in the Forest Preserves.

## Website Updates

The Forest Preserves website is a valuable resource for residents in Cook County. In 2023, we launched several new features, including:

1. **Prescribed Burn Map:** This interactive map allows residents to track the location and activity status of prescribed burns.
2. **Performance Management Dashboard:** Access real-time data on our progress towards achieving conservation goals.
3. **Fall Foliage Filter:** Plan your next visit with the assistance of a filter highlighting areas with peak fall colors.

Further website enhancements are planned, including upgraded event listings, departmental KPIs for specific programs and a champion tree registry.

## Website Content

The FPDCC website offers wide array of features for visitors and residents:

1. Latest news and announcements.
2. Calendar of upcoming events and programs.
3. Interactive map of all Forest Preserves locations.
4. Detailed information on ecosystems and restoration projects.
5. Permit information for various activities within the Forest Preserves.
6. Volunteer opportunities to contribute to the conservation effort.
7. Contact forms for inquiries and feedback.
8. Web Map for interactive exploration of the Forest Preserves.

## Contact Forms

The Forest Preserves hosts three public contact forms on [fpdcc.com](https://fpdcc.com), including:

1. Contact: <https://fpdcc.com/contact>
2. Requests for New or Improved Facilities, Amenities & Infrastructure:  
<https://fpdcc.com/about/plans-projects/requests-for-new-or-improved-facilities-amenities-infrastructure/>

3. Event & Programming Partnerships: <https://fpdcc.com/about/doing-business-partnerships/programming-partnerships/>

The general contact form offers a means for the public to submit inquiries to Forest Preserve staff. Included in the form is a category dropdown, segmented by department/topic which automates responses to pre-selected recipients. The Forest Preserves aims to respond to inquiries in two business days.

We encourage you to visit our website and explore the wealth of information available. The Forest Preserves is committed to continuous improvement and welcomes your feedback on how we can better serve the community.

### **Financial Information**

The Forest Preserves of Cook County is committed to financial transparency. Via its public website, the Forest Preserves makes available its annual Appropriation document and Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) reviewed by independent auditors.

For 16 consecutive years, the Forest Preserves ACFR has received the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting and represents a significant accomplishment by a local government.

The Forest Preserves' monthly Board and Committee meetings are open to the public. Members of the public have the opportunity to attend in person or online via the Forest Preserves website. During each meeting, members of the public are provided the opportunity to comment on Forest Preserves business. During the Forest Preserves annual budget process, special public hearings are held specifically geared towards providing an opportunity review and comment prior to the Board voting process. The results of all agenda items presented to the Board are made available on the Forest Preserves public facing legislative page.

## **VIII. Benefits and Services**

The Forest Preserves receives an estimated 62 million visits each year, providing an escape into a world teeming with wildlife and rich with outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities.

The Forest Preserves, through its Conservation & Experiential Programming (CEP) department makes great strides to partner with community organizations, schools, parks and other entities. CEP works with hundreds of new and repeat partners every year in a variety of ways. We count many collaborations and partnerships all with the goal of connecting the people of Cook County and beyond to nature. We support partners in many ways including event and programming partnerships, funds, transportation to Forest Preserves events and programs, and education

permits for spaces in Forest Preserves so groups can independently host their own programs and activities.

Public Programs at the Forest Preserves are held at Nature Centers, Campgrounds and other Forest Preserve locations. These programs are mostly free (some require a small fee to help cover expenses). Special Events focus on the seasons, holidays, history, arts and cultural. These large events are at locations all over Cook County and are featured on our annual wall calendar.

Schools or other Organizations can contact the Forest Preserves for guided talks, walks and programs. FPCC primarily provides programming for school at its sites but can do some in school programs as well. FPCC's Mighty Acorns program is part of a regional initiative to develop environmental educators who use the outdoors as a classroom. The Mighty Acorns program is a five-year program focused on grades 3-5.

Outreach Activities take the Forest Preserves to community sites and working in partnership with community leaders and agencies. The Forest Preserves can come to your event to promote your neighbors coming out to the Forest Preserves. We bring information and sometimes an activity to highlight what people may experience in the preserves.

Gear Library Trainings and Programs are an opportunity for group leaders to get trained in camping, paddling and hiking. Once trained and certified, these leaders can check out gear and take their group camping, kayaking or hiking.

The Forest Preserves runs a Conservaton@Home program that encourages gardeners and other landowners to use forest friendly gardening techniques when managing their properties. Together with the University of Illinois Extension we host workshops, tabling events, a plant sale and a program where Cook County residents can get advice and their garden certified as a Conservation@Home garden. There are 166 gardens in Cook County certified as Conservation@Home.

Conservation Corps programs provide paid employment for youth and adult participants from across Cook County's diverse communities—including those with barriers to employment, those who have suffered from historical disenfranchisement, and those whose communities are disproportionately impacted by environmental justice issues. Conservation Corps programs receive financial and/or training support from the Forest Preserves to engage the next generation of conservation leaders in hands-on ecological restoration work. Programs feature environmental education and soft skills training to prepare participants for future employment and connect communities to nature. These programs engage approximately 300 participants annually. In 2023, a total of 289 participants logged over 57,108 service hours. Cumulatively, since 2005 the Conservation Corps have engaged 3,365 participants who have provided 795,208 service hours to the Forest Preserves.

Managing the Forest Preserves' nearly 70,000 acres of natural lands requires unprecedented levels of collaboration with other government agencies, contractors, public interest groups and



community organizations. Over the past decade, we've forged hundreds of partnerships for cooperative land management, intergovernmental training, native seed enhancement, archaeological protection initiatives, and much more. Some of our most prominent partnerships have been in the field of wildlife research, including the Urban Coyote Research Project – North America's longest running urban coyote research program—and more recently the inaugural Illinois Zoological and Wildlife Health Management Residency program. Other partnerships have resulted in the development of major defining moments in the Forest Preserves' land management policies, such as the development of the Natural and Cultural Resources Master Plan, which initiated the comprehensive assessment and prioritization the Forest Preserves' open spaces.

The Forest Preserves selectively issues licenses to share facility workspace with several other governmental entities. These mutually beneficial relationships promote intergovernmental collaboration and efficiency pertaining to natural and culture resource regulations and offer state conservation police a base from which to better enforce species-protection laws in our region.

The Forest Preserves coordinate and host a series of environmental education programs aimed at providing ongoing training and enrichment opportunities for staff. These programs feature a wide range of conservation topics, including equipment use, best management practices, and often provide continuing education units (CEUs) for upkeep of professional licenses or certifications. Certain programs are made available to volunteers, partners, and the public. In 2023, the Department of Resource Management hosted 244 programs reaching over 4,000 people. That number expands to 2,147 programs since 2015.

The Forest Preserves feature wondrous natural habitats that support a wide variety of flora and fauna—including over one hundred threatened and endangered species. Our region is extremely biodiverse, making the Forest Preserves an ideal destination and natural laboratory for researchers studying nature in an urban environment. Hundreds of students and scientists have focused their studies on Forest Preserves property or collaborated directly with the Forest Preserves to advance our knowledge of the natural world. Research investigations include any monitoring, collecting, testing, study, observation, investigation or other related activity that benefit the Forest Preserves, public education or the community. Staff in the Department of Resource Management additionally host field practicums for college and high school students on the topics of wildlife research, prescribed fire, and advanced aquatic ecosystems. These programs allow students to work alongside the Forest Preserves' biologists to gain hands-on training and field experience.

Last year, the Forest Preserves recorded 21,443 volunteer engagements which in turn logged 98,487 hours of volunteer service to the Forest Preserves.

The Forest Preserves, along with the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District, establish NeighborSpace as a non-profit in 1996 in order to preserve and expand open space for all residents in the city to enjoy. These founding groups charged the organization with the mission to acquire vacant lots and other properties to ensure their continued survival and use by

community gardeners. These three governmental agencies continue to provide leadership and financial support to protect community-managed open spaces in Chicago. NeighborSpace is the only nonprofit urban land trust in Chicago that preserves and sustains gardens on behalf of dedicated community groups.

The Forest Preserves of Cook County is committed to open communication and transparency with Cook County residents. We believe a well-informed community is essential to the continued success of our mission to conserve natural landscapes and connect people with nature. The Forest Preserves prioritizes data-driven decision making and public accountability. To that end, we have implemented a comprehensive performance management dashboard. This online resource provides residents with real-time access to key performance indicators (KPIs) that track our progress towards achieving the goals of the Next Century Conservation Plan.

The Forest Preserves utilizes a variety of communication channels to keep residents informed and engaged, including a website with an interactive map listing all of the amenities that the Forest Preserves provide. The map can be found at [map.fpdcc.com](http://map.fpdcc.com).

The Forest Preserves of Cook County is committed to financial transparency. Via its public website, the Forest Preserves makes available its annual Appropriation document and Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) reviewed by independent auditors. For 16 consecutive years, the Forest Preserves ACFR has received the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting and represents a significant accomplishment by a local government. The Forest Preserves' monthly Board and Committee meetings are open to the public. Members of the public have the opportunity to attend in person or online via the Forest Preserves website. During each meeting, members of the public are provided the opportunity to comment on Forest Preserves business. During the Forest Preserves annual budget process, special public hearings are held specifically geared towards providing an opportunity review and comment prior to the Board voting process. The results of all agenda items presented to the Board are made available on the Forest Preserves public facing legislative page.

Below is a list of amenities that the Forest Preserves provides:

1. Algonquin Woods
2. Allison Woods
3. Andrew Toman Grove
4. Arie Crown Forest
5. Arrowhead Lake
6. Axehead Lake
7. Bachelor's Grove Woods
8. Baker's Lake Nature Preserve
9. Baker's Lake Overlook
10. Baker's Lake Younghusband Prairie

11. Barrington Road Pond
12. Bartel Grassland Land and Water Reserve
13. Beaubien Woods
14. Beaubien Woods Boat Launch
15. Beck Lake
16. Belleau Lake
17. Belly Deep Slough
18. Bemis Woods-North
19. Bemis Woods-South
20. Bergman Slough Land & Water Reserve
21. Beverly Lake
22. Big Bend Lake
23. Billy Caldwell Golf Course
24. Black Partridge Woods
25. Black Partridge Woods Nature Preserve
26. Blandings Grove Family Picnic Area
27. Blue Beech Family Picnic Area
28. Blue Star Memorial Woods
29. Bluff Spring Fen
30. Bluff Spring Fen Nature Preserve
31. Bobolink Family Picnic Area
32. Bobolink Meadow Land & Water Reserve
33. Bode East
34. Bode Lake
35. Bremen Grove
36. Brezina Woods
37. Brookfield Woods
38. Brookfield Zoo
39. Brownell Woods
40. Buffalo Woods Family Picnic Area
41. Buffalo Woods-Central
42. Buffalo Woods-North
43. Buffalo Woods-South
44. Bullfrog Lake
45. Bunker Hill
46. Bur Oak Woods
47. Burnham Prairie
48. Burnham Prairie Nature Preserve
49. Burnham Woods Golf Course
50. Busse Forest Elk Pasture
51. Busse Forest Main Dam

52. Busse Forest Nature Preserve
53. Busse Forest-Central
54. Busse Forest-North
55. Busse Forest-South
56. Busse Forest-West
57. Busse Lake Beisner Road Access
58. Busse Lake Boating Center
59. Caldwell Woods
60. Callahan Grove
61. Calumet City Playfield
62. Calumet City Prairie & Marsh Nature Preserve
63. Calumet Woods
64. Calvin R. Sutker Grove
65. Camp Alphonse
66. Camp Bullfrog Lake
67. Camp Dan Beard
68. Camp Ground Road Woods
69. Camp Kiwanis Equestrian Staging Area
70. Camp Pine Woods
71. Camp Reinberg
72. Camp Shabbona Woods
73. Camp Sullivan
74. Cap Sauers Holding Nature Preserve
75. Carl R. Hansen Woods
76. Carlson Springs Woods
77. Catalina Grove Family Picnic Area
78. Catherine Chevalier Woods
79. Cermak Family Aquatic Center
80. Cermak Woods
81. Che Che Pin Qua Woods
82. Cherry Hill Woods
83. Chicago Botanic Garden
84. Chicago Portage National Historic Site
85. Chick Evans Golf Course
86. Chipilly Woods
87. Chippewa Woods
88. Clayhole Woods
89. Columbia Woods
90. Cooper's Hawk Family Picnic Area
91. Country Lane Woods
92. Crabtree Nature Center

93. Cranberry Slough Nature Preserve
94. Crawdad Slough
95. Crooked Creek Woods
96. Cummings Square
97. Dam No. 1 Woods-East
98. Dam No. 1 Woods-West
99. Dam No. 2 Woods
100. Dam No. 4 Woods-East
101. Dan McMahon Woods
102. Dan Ryan Woods Visitor Center
103. Dan Ryan Woods-91st Street
104. Dan Ryan Woods-Central
105. Dan Ryan Woods-East
106. Dan Ryan Woods-North
107. Dan Ryan Woods-South
108. Deer Grove
109. Deer Grove West Woodland & Wetland Nature Preserve
110. Deer Grove-East
111. Deer Grove-West
112. Dixmoor Playfield
113. Dolton Avenue Prairie
114. Edgebrook Golf Course
115. Edgebrook Woods
116. Eggers Grove
117. Elizabeth A. Conkey Forest-North
118. Elizabeth A. Conkey Forest-South
119. Elizabeth Conkey Woods Nature Preserve
120. Erickson Woods
121. Evans Field
122. Flossmoor Road Bicycle Lot
123. Forest Glen Woods
124. Forest Way Grove
125. Forty Acre Woods
126. Fullerton Woods
127. Fullerton Woods Family Picnic Area
128. G.A.R. Woods
129. General Headquarters & Permit Office
130. George W. Dunne National Golf Course
131. Glenview Woods
132. Glenwood Woods-North
133. Glenwood Woods-South

134. Goeselville Grove Family Picnic Area
135. Grassy Ridge Meadow
136. Great Egret Family Picnic Area
137. Green Lake Family Aquatic Center
138. Green Lake Woods
139. Halsted Woods
140. Harms Flatwoods Nature Preserve
141. Harms Woods Nature Preserve
142. Harms Woods-Central
143. Harms Woods-North
144. Harms Woods-South
145. Harry H. Semrow Driving Range
146. Henry De Tonty Woods
147. Hickory Hills Woods
148. Hidden Pond Woods-East
149. Hidden Pond Woods-West
150. Highland Woods Golf Course
151. Horizon Farm
152. Horsetail Lake
153. Indian Boundary Family Picnic Area
154. Indian Boundary Golf Course
155. Indian Hill Woods
156. Irene C. Hernandez Family Picnic Grove
157. Iroquois Woods
158. Irving Park Road Canoe Landing
159. Jens Jensen Grasslands & Woods Land & Water

Reserve

160. Jerome Huppert Woods
161. Joe Louis "The Champ" Golf Course
162. Joe Orr Woods
163. Joe's Pond
164. John E. Traeger Family Picnic Area
165. John Husar I&M Canal Bicycle Trail Parking Lot
166. Jurgensen Woods
167. Jurgensen Woods North Nature Preserve
168. Kickapoo Woods
169. Killdeer Wetlands
170. King's Grove
171. Kloempken Prairie
172. LaBagh Woods
173. LaGrange Park Woods

174. Lake Avenue Woods-East
175. Lake Avenue Woods-West
176. Lansing Woods
177. Linne Woods
178. Lions Woods
179. Little Calumet Boat Launch
180. Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center
181. Maple Lake Boating Center
182. Maple Lake Overlook
183. Maple Lake-East - Mountain Bike Staging Area
184. Mary Mix McDonald Woods
185. Massasauga Family Picnic Area
186. Mathew Bieszczat Volunteer Resource Center
187. Maywood Grove
188. McClaughrey Springs Woods
189. McCormick Woods
190. McGinnis Slough
191. McGinty Slough
192. McMahon Woods and Fen Nature Preserve
193. Meadowlark Golf Course
194. Miami Woods
195. Michael J. O'Malley Preserve
196. Midlothian Meadows
197. Midlothian Reservoir
198. Miller Meadow Model Airplane Flying Field
199. Miller Meadow-North
200. Miller Meadow-South
201. Morrill Meadow
202. National Grove-North
203. National Grove-South
204. Ned Brown Meadow
205. North Creek Meadow
206. Northwestern Woods
207. Oak Forest Heritage Preserve-East
208. Oak Forest Heritage Preserve-West
209. Old Stover Trailhead
210. Orland Grassland Land and Water Reserve
211. Orland Grassland South
212. Orland Grove
213. Ottawa Trail Woods-North
214. Ottawa Trail Woods-South

215. Paddock Woods  
216. Palos Fen Nature Preserve  
217. Palos Park Woods-North  
218. Palos Park Woods-South  
219. Papoose Lake  
220. Paw Paw Woods Nature Preserve  
221. Penny Road Pond  
222. Perkins Woods  
223. Pioneer Woods  
224. Plank Road Meadow Boat Launch  
225. Plum Creek Meadow  
226. Poplar Creek Bicycle Lot  
227. Poplar Creek Equestrian Parking  
228. Poplar Creek Land and Water Reserve  
229. Poplar Creek Model Airplane Flying Field  
230. Possum Hollow Woods  
231. Potawatomi Woods  
232. Powderhorn Lake  
233. Powderhorn Prairie and Marsh Nature Preserve  
234. Pulaski Woods  
235. Pulaski Woods-East  
236. Pulaski Woods-South  
237. Quercus Woods Family Picnic Area  
238. Red Gate Woods  
239. River Bend Family Picnic Area  
240. River Oaks Golf Course  
241. River Trail Nature Center  
242. Robinson Homestead Family Picnic Area  
243. Robinson Woods-South  
244. Rolling Knolls  
245. Rubio Woods  
246. Sag Quarries  
247. Sag Valley Equestrian Parking  
248. Saganashkee Slough Boat Launch  
249. Saganashkee Slough-Central  
250. Saganashkee Slough-East  
251. Sagawau Canyon Nature Preserve  
252. Sagawau Environmental Learning Center  
253. Salt Creek Woods Nature Preserve  
254. Sand Ridge Nature Center  
255. Sand Ridge Nature Preserve



256. Sauk Trail Woods-Central
257. Sauk Trail Woods-East
258. Sauk Trail Woods-North
259. Sauk Trail Woods-South
260. Schiller Model Airplane Flying Field
261. Schiller Playfield
262. Schiller Woods-East
263. Schiller Woods-South
264. Schiller Woods-West
265. Schubert's Woods
266. Schuth's Grove
267. Shoe Factory Road Prairie Nature Preserve
268. Silver Creek Family Picnic Area
269. Somme Prairie Grove Nature Preserve
270. Somme Prairie Nature Preserve
271. Somme Woods
272. Spears Woods
273. Spring Lake Equestrian Parking
274. Spring Lake Nature Preserve
275. St. Mihiel Woods-East
276. St. Paul Woods
277. Stony Ford Canoe Landing
278. Sundown Meadow
279. Sunset Bridge Meadow
280. Sunset Ridge Woods
281. Swallow Cliff Woods-North
282. Swallow Cliff Woods-South
283. Sweet Woods
284. Tampier Greenway Family Picnic Area
285. Tampier Lake Boating Center
286. Tampier Lake-North
287. Tampier Lake-West
288. Teason's Woods
289. Thaddeus S. "Ted" Lechowicz Woods
290. Thatcher Woods
291. Theodore Stone Forest
292. Thomas Jefferson Woods
293. Thorn Creek Greenway
294. Thorn Creek Model Airplane Flying Field
295. Thornton-Lansing Road Nature Preserve
296. Tinley Creek Model Airplane Flying Field

297. Tinley Creek Woods
298. Tower Road
299. Tower Road Boat Launch
300. Trailside Museum of Natural History
301. Tryner's Pond
302. Tuma Lake
303. Turnbull Woods
304. Turtlehead Lake
305. Twenty-Sixth Street Woods-East
306. Twenty-Sixth Street Woods-West
307. Vollmer Road Grove
308. Wampum Lake
309. Wampum Lake Nature Preserve
310. Watersmeet Woods
311. Wayside Woods
312. Wentworth Prairie
313. Westchester Woods
314. Whealan Pool Aquatic Center
315. Whistler Woods
316. White Eagle Woods-North
317. White Eagle Woods-South
318. White Oak Woods
319. Willow Springs Woods
320. Wolf Lake Overlook
321. Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve
322. Wolf Road Woods
323. Woodland Meadow
324. Yankee Woods
325. Zoo Woods

## **IX. Recommendations for Increased Accountability and Efficiency**

The Forest Preserves of Cook County is dedicated to the principles of government transparency and efficient use of taxpayer dollars. In 2022, voters showed their trust in the Forest Preserves to adhere to these good government principles by overwhelmingly voting to increase their own property taxes to provide the Forest Preserves with additional revenue.

Below is a list of recommendations that would increase the accountability and efficiency of the Forest Preserves of Cook County:

1. Allowing more time to provide a response to FOIA requests
2. Limiting unfunded mandates placed on the Forest Preserves
3. Restricting applicants with certain criminal backgrounds from working with children
4. Creation of a state agency that provides local governments with administrative services, such as cybersecurity and payroll
5. Creation of a local government grant clearinghouse that lists all available grants to local governments and creates a standardized application process
6. Refining strategies to reduce the amount of paper used without impacting operational efficiency
7. Allowing the units of local government to directly levy to other funds, such as real estate
8. Tying the levy year to the subsequent budget year
9. Penalizing transportation agencies if they do not maintain their rights-of-way and allow debris to end up in the Forest Preserves
10. A concerted effort by the state and federal government to reduce the cost of electric vehicles for local government agencies
11. The creation of an authority to create a regional plan for prescription fire and weed control
12. Limiting the availability of invasive species for the public to purchase

## X. Other

Below is a select list of awards and honors presented to the Forest Preserves of Cook County and its employees, partners and collaborators over the past 10 years.

### 2024:

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County's Youth Outdoor Ambassador Program** received a *Project Excellence Award* from the **Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals**. The award is presented annually at the National Outdoor Recreation Conference to exemplary outdoor recreation projects.

### 2023:

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County nominated partner organization Friends of the Forest Preserves** for the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials Award Program** in the Friends of Parks and Recreation category in which they were selected as an *Outstanding Support Organization*, presented to an organization that has made a significant contribution to benefit park and recreation programs, facilities, operations or organizational support.

The Forest Preserves of Cook County's **Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee** received an award from the **National Association of Counties** in the *Personnel Management, Employment and Training* category for demonstrating strategic ways to recruit county employees, encourage professional development and maintain a first-class workforce.

**The Palos and Sag Valley Restoration** received a *Silver Ribbon* from the **Chicago River Blue Awards** for supporting a thriving Chicago and Calumet River system that is clean, ecologically healthy, and accessible to all and contributes to resiliency for people across the region.

Retired Chief Financial Officer, **Stephen Hughes**, was recognized as a *2023 Crain's Chicago Business Notable CFOs* for chief financial who led their companies through COVID and continued to handle pandemic-related financial situations including navigating supply chain disruptions and labor challenges by managing relief funds to cushion the blow of revenue declines and the burden on employees.

**Nancy Joseph** received an *Outstanding Citizen Volunteer Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts' Best of the Best Awards Program** for her dedication and commitment as a Site Steward at Sand Ridge Nature Center in South Holland, IL.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County, the Chicago Zoological Society and the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine**, received a *Partnership Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts' Best of the Best Awards Program** for their collaboration on the Illinois Zoological and Wildlife Health Management Residency Program.

**Cathy Geraghty**, Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Forest Preserves of Cook County, received a *Force of Nature Award* from the **Chicago Wilderness Alliance** as one of the region's most ardent champions of biodiversity and an advocate for nature who focuses on building partnerships and spearheading collaborative initiatives to protect and preserve open space for the people of Cook County.

**Raquel Garcia-Alvarez and Xochitl Lopez**, Site Stewards at Possum Hollow Woods forest preserve, received a *Force of Nature Award* from the **Chicago Wilderness Alliance** for their work to engage Latino communities and building a culture that includes both Spanish and English speakers in caring for nature.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County's Youth Outdoor Ambassador program** received a *Force of Nature Award* from the **Chicago Wilderness Alliance** for its successful strategies to engage youth. The Youth Outdoor Ambassador program, which has grown and evolved since it began in 2014, uses a peer-to-peer engagement strategy that has been successful in forging the next generation of advocates, stewards and conservationists for nature.

**2022:**

**Jenny Flexman** received the *Outstanding Citizen Volunteer Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park District's Best of the Best Awards Program** for her dedication and commitment to restoring native habitats in northwest Cook County as a founding member of the Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards. Jenny leads by example and inspires others to protect and care for natural areas.

**Beaubien Woods Gathering Space** received an *Arts in the Park Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** for a community-designed integration of art and culture intended to be a convening ground and rest area for people exploring Beaubien Woods.

**St. Charles Park District with the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission in cooperation with the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, Forest Preserves of Cook County and McHenry County Conservation District** received the *Intergovernmental Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** for providing native seed to a fen restoration project.

**The Palos Preserves Urban Night Sky Place** received a *Park and Recreation Facility – Class IV Category Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** which recognizes excellence in park and recreation areas, recreation facilities, and operational facilities for population service areas of over 500,001.

**The Palos Preserves Urban Night Sky Place** received the *Innovation in Conservation Award* from the **National Recreation and Park Association** which recognizes a park and recreation agency leading an innovative project that creates localized solutions for addressing global or regional environmental challenges.

**The Greater Maywood Paddling Program** received a *Park and Recreation Achievement Award* from the **National Association of Counties** which seeks to recognize innovative county government programs.

**General Superintendent, Arnold Randall**, was selected as a *Legend* in the field of parks and recreation by the **American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration**.

Partner organization **Friends of the Chicago River** received the *President's Fishery Conservation Award* from the **American Fisheries Society** for playing an active and important role in a wide variety of issues for aquatic resource conservation, including many projects and initiatives with the Forest Preserves.

## **2021:**

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County's Cranberry Slough Nature Preserve** received a *Platinum Accreditation* from the **Chicago Wilderness Excellence in Ecological Restoration Program**. This 380-acre site is distinguished by its peat bog, remnant woodland, oak savanna,

and natural prairie communities and it contains glacial kettlehole depressions that support vernal ponds, marsh, and sedge meadow habitats.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County's Greater Maywood Paddling Program** received a *Force of Nature Award* from the **Chicago Wilderness Alliance** which recognizes individuals and organizations whose conservation, restoration, advocacy or educational activities in the region are inspirational examples for others.

**The Wildlife Connections Ambassador Program** received a *Removing Barriers Initiative Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** for creating opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities to deliver nature programming to school groups and visitors to River Trail Nature Center.

**The Forest Preserves' Racial, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee** received a *Social Justice Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** for demonstrating an outstanding commitment to social justice through leadership and collaboration.

**Kathy and Dave Branigan** received the *Outstanding Citizen Volunteer Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts' Best of the Best Awards Program** for their dedication and commitment to volunteering in many roles with the Forest Preserves. Their volunteer activities include trail watch, wildlife and plant monitoring, environmental education, habitat restoration and more.

**General Superintendent Arnold Randall** was honored with the *Cornelius Amory Pugsley Medal for Parks and Conservation* from the **American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration**. This prestigious award recognizes outstanding contributions to the promotion and development of public parks and conservation in the United States.

The Forest Preserves' **Interactive Web Map** received a *Technology Innovation Award in the Citizen Category* from the **Special Districts Awards Program** sponsored by AT&T and Government Technology magazine. The award program recognizes innovation and leadership within special district agencies across the country.

The Forest Preserves' **Rolling Knolls** building located in Elgin, IL received the *Honor Award for Design Excellence in High-Performance Buildings* from the **American Institute of Architects in Illinois** and co-sponsored by **Illinois Green Alliance** which is awarded to buildings that exceed code-minimum energy performance and do not burn fossil fuels. The AIA Illinois Honor Awards recognizes people and projects epitomizing the contributions of the architecture profession, the transformative power of design, and the dedication of individuals to service and excellence.

**Jane Balaban**, volunteer steward for the Forest Preserves, received *Second Runner up for the Midwest Region* for the **Cox Conserves Heroes** program. The program, a partnership between Cox Enterprises and The Trust for Public Land, recognizes volunteers nationwide who create, preserve or enhance shared outdoor spaces in their local communities.

The Forest Preserves of Cook County's **Dan Ryan Nature Play Area** received the *Jens Jensen Award* from the **Illinois Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects** which recognizes projects that exemplify the ideals and values of Jens Jensen using native plants, ecological processes, and reconnecting people to the landscape with harmonious design.

## 2020:

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County's Tree Protection and Preservation Specifications Manual** received the *Public Natural Areas Award* from the **Chicago Region Trees Initiative's Urban Forestry Awards program** which celebrates stewardship and advocacy for natural areas on public property.

**Hoffman Estates Park District with the Village of Hoffman Estates and the Forest Preserves of Cook County** received the *Intergovernmental Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** for the intergovernmental agreement to improve and maintain the paved trail along Shoe Factory Road.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County** received the *Public Service Award* from the **Illinois Archaeological Survey** for its work in instituting programs that promote, protect, and preserve cultural resources within Illinois.

**June Webb** received the *Outstanding Citizen Volunteer Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** for her dedication and commitment to restoring natural ecosystems at Kickapoo Woods and Whistler Woods. She has dedicated over 1200 hours to the Forest Preserves as a steward, trail watch volunteer, and dragonfly monitor.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County, Brushwood Center and Project Onward** received the *Arts in the Parks Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** for their collaboration on the *Fresh Air* exhibition showcasing artwork inspired by local nature.

**Lorrie Ward** received the *Non-Formal Environmental Educator of the Year* from the **Environmental Education Association of Illinois** which recognizes individuals for exhibiting innovative and exemplary effort in providing environmental education opportunities for general audiences.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County's Southeast Cook County Land Acquisition Plan** received a *Green Ribbon Award* from the **Friends of the Chicago River's Chicago River Blue Awards** recognizing river-sensitive projects for exceptional contributions to continuing the improvement of the waterway.

**The Interpretive Trails at Deer Grove East and Killdeer Wetlands** received a *Merit Award* from the **Society for Experiential Graphic Design's (SEGD) Global Design Competition** in

the Placemaking and Identity category. SEG D is an organization of global design professionals focused on teaching and highlighting the best of communication design in the built environment.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County's Southeast Cook County Land Acquisition Plan** received the *Healthy & Active Community Award* from the **Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association** which recognizes the best in planning across Illinois.

## **2019:**

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County's Deer Grove West Wetland and Woodland Nature Preserve** received a *Platinum Accreditation* from the **Chicago Wilderness Excellence in Ecological Restoration Program**. This important site features rich remnant oak woodlands and small wetlands dot the rolling and rugged terrain. More than 300 plant species have been recorded here.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County** was selected as the *2019 Clean Fuels Champion* by the **Chicago Area Clean Cities Coalition** recognizing those who have demonstrated exemplary dedication and leadership in paving the way for a clean transportation future.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County's Six Nature Centers** received the *Sustainable Landscaping Award* from the **Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago** for their native plantings, demonstration gardens, and outreach and programming around sustainable landscaping and native gardening.

**John Navin** received the *Outstanding Citizen Volunteer Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** for his dedication and commitment to restoring natural ecosystems. John has volunteered for over 20,000 as a steward at Poplar Creek Forest Preserve.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County** received the *Best in Green Practices Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** for its Sustainability and Climate Resiliency Plan, demonstrating its commitment to environmentally friendly policies and practices.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Housing Authority of Cook County** received the *Intergovernmental Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** for their partnership and work together on the Conservation Corps' Forest Preserve Experience Program.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County** received the *2019 BusCon PERC Award* from the **Propane Education & Research Council** for its work utilizing the clean fuel source propane for its vehicles and equipment.



**The Forest Preserves of Cook County's Conservation Corps** received a *Force of Nature Award* from the **Chicago Wilderness Alliance** which highlights bold and exceptional work being done on behalf of nature in our region.

**Flora of the Chicago Region** by Laura Rericha and Gerould Wilhelm received a *Force of Nature Award* from the **Chicago Wilderness Alliance** for the most complete record of vascular plants of the Chicago region. The Chicago Wilderness area is fortunate to have such a guide to the natural world.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County Website** received a Gold *Davey Award* in the Government Websites category from the **Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts**.

**Arnold Randall** received the *Agency Leadership Award* from the **Public Lands Alliance** which recognizes a land management agency employee for outstanding accomplishments in championing, cultivating and leading a partnership.

The **Greater Maywood Paddling Program** received the *Project Excellence Award* from the **Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals** at the National Outdoor Recreation Conference. The award is presented to exemplary outdoor recreation projects.

**Friends of the Forest Preserves' Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps** received the *Urban Forestry Award-Youth Engagement Award* for the **Chicago Region Trees Initiative**. The Urban Forestry Awards recognizes people, public and private organizations, and communities that are leaders in protecting, expanding and enhancing the tree canopy in the Chicago Region.

**The Greater Maywood Paddling Program** received a *Park and Recreation Program – Class II category Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** for providing a unique and exceptional program.

**Flora of the Chicago Region** received the *Award of Excellence* in the category of Botany and Flora from the **Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries' Annual Literature Awards** which recognizes work that makes a significant contribution to the literature of botany or horticulture.

**Jeff Nelson's photo "Pick a good one"** received *First Place in the Wildlife Category* for the **Illinois Association of Park District's Give Us Your Best Shot Photo Contest**. His photo captured a sandhill crane picking a berry with its beak at Crabtree Nature Center.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County's Nature Play Guidelines** received a *Merit Award* from the **American Society of Landscape Architects** in the Planning and Analysis category. The guidelines were written and designed to reflect the Forest Preserves' mission and commitment to nature, children, creativity, fun, and learning.

## 2018:

**The Conservation Corps** received the *Innovation in Conservation Award* from the **National Park and Recreation** recognizes and honors the latest advancements in the field of parks and recreation and showcases the inspiring park and recreation agencies that have improved and empowered their communities through innovative practices in park design, health and wellness, environmental conservation, and social equity. The Conservation Corps was specifically recognized as a creative and original set of programs that created a localized solution to address regional environmental challenges.

**The Field Museum and the Forest Preserves of Cook County** received the *Partnership Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts**. The Field Museum and the Forest Preserves have been working together since the early 1990s to conserve and restore the Chicago Wilderness region's natural communities and provide programs and resources to connect people to nature.

**Kris DaPra's photo "Winter Reflection"** received *First Place in the Nature/Landscape Category* for the **Illinois Association of Park District's Give Us Your Best Shot Photo Contest**. Her photo captured a beautiful winter scene at Busse Woods.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County** received the *Public Agency Conservation Award* from the **John Muir Association** for outstanding achievement by a public agency that promotes environmental protection or demonstrated significant achievement or leadership in the advancement of environmental protection or conservation

**Mighty Acorns** received the *Environmental Education Award* from the **John Muir Association** for outstanding to environmental education, whether in a classroom or otherwise.

**Judy Pollock** received the *Leadership Award* from **Partners in Flight** which honors an individual or group that demonstrates outstanding guidance and direction that contributes, or has contributed, to advancing PIF conservation efforts. Judy was nominated by the Forest Preserves of Cook County for her organizing, innovating, and inspiring generations of bird conservationists in the Chicago Region.

**Forest Preserve Experience** program via the **Housing Authority of Cook County** received an honorable mention in the *Resident Service Large Agency Award category* from the **Nan McKay & Associates Housing Awards**.

## 2017:

**Arnold Randall** received the *Motorola Solutions Foundation Excellence in Public Service Award* from the **Civic Federation** which honors a non-elected government employee who has

made an extraordinary impact on the quality of government services in state and local governments.

**Chicago's True Nature: The Forest Preserves of Cook County – Documentary** received an *Achievement Award* from the **National Association of Counties** which seeks to recognize innovative county government programs.

**Cal-Sag Trail** received the *Burnham Award for Excellence in Planning* from the **Metropolitan Planning Council** which recognizes provocative and innovative planning.

**Barbara Birmingham** received a *Best of the Best Outstanding Citizen Volunteer Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** for being an exceptional force for the Forest Preserves and a tireless advocate for nature. Barbara has volunteered as a dedicated Site Steward at Theodore Stone Prairie, lovingly protecting and restoring this preserve.

**Cook County Department of Public Health and the Forest Preserves of Cook County** received the *Best of the Best Intergovernmental Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** for their partnership to connect residents to the physical, emotional and mental benefits of spending time in nature.

The **Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards and the Forest Preserves of Cook County** received the *Excellence in Ecological Restoration (Platinum Accreditation)* from **Chicago Wilderness** for their habitat restoration and management of Shoe Factory Road Prairie Nature Preserve and Carl Hansen Preserve.

**Arnold Randall** received the *Individual Service Award* from the **Society of Recreation Professionals** which is presented to individuals who have made significant and lasting contributions to the outdoor recreation profession. Arnold was recognized for his remarkable sense of integrity, openness, leadership and enthusiasm for collaboration and for empowering staff, partners, and volunteers to work together to protect nature and improve outdoor recreation

**Arnold Randall** received the *Outstanding Public Official Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** for significantly contributing to recreation, leisure and open space programs in one of the largest urban conservation districts in the nation.

**Bird the Preserves** received the *Marketing Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** for its unique approach and exceptional outcomes. Bird the Preserves is an initiative that connects diverse communities to nature through expanded birding programs and events.

**The Camping Leadership Immersion Course (CLIC)** received the *Park & Recreation Program – Class II Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** for its innovative approach to connecting people to nature. CLIC is a weekend-long course for community group leaders to familiarize them with camping equipment, nature-based education, and recreation activities so that they have the knowledge and confidence to bring large groups camping in the preserves.

## 2016:

**Chicago's True Nature: The Forest Preserves of Cook County – Documentary** received an Emmy® award in *Outstanding Achievement for Informational/Instructional Programming – Program/Special/Series* from **The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' Chicago Midwest Chapter**.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County** received the *Illinois Governor's Sustainability Award* from the **Illinois Sustainability Technology Center** honoring their commitment to sustainable business and operations.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County** received the *Best of the Best Green Practices Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** which is presented to a park district, forest preserve, conservation, recreation or special recreation agency that has taken the initiative to incorporate and encourage environmentally friendly business practices and policies.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County** received the *Take Pride in America Award* from the **Governor of the State of Illinois** in recognition of outstanding volunteer efforts contributing to the stewardship and conservation for future generations of the natural and cultural resources that are integral to the Illinois public lands system.

**Dick Riner** received the *Outstanding Volunteer Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** in recognition of his significant contribution to the Forest Preserves' volunteer community. His creativity, positive attitude and nuanced understanding of complex ecosystems have made him a natural leader in local restoration and outreach efforts.

**Susan Dombro** received the *Non-Formal Environmental Educator of the Year* from the **Environmental Education Association of Illinois** which recognizes individuals for exhibiting innovative and exemplary effort in providing environmental education opportunities for general audiences.

**Cal-Sag Trail** received the *Green Ribbon Award* from the **Friends of the Chicago River Blue Awards Program** because it set a new standard for river-sensitive development and contributed to the ongoing transformation of this amazing natural, recreation and economic resource.

**Henri Jordan** received the *Illinois Job Honor Award* which recognizes those who have overcome significant challenges, and the companies who hire them.

## 2015:

**The Cal-Sag Coalition** received the *Best of the Best – Intergovernmental Cooperation Award* from the *Illinois Association of Park Districts* which recognizes successful intergovernmental agreements or partnerships that maximize tax dollars and benefit residents throughout the community. The Cal-Sag Trail Coalition represents the successful collaboration among federal, state, local and community organizations and individuals that has resulted in a 26-mile multi-use path from Lemont in the west to Burnham in the east.

**Kathleen Garness** received the *Best of the Best -Outstanding Citizen Volunteer Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** which recognizes citizens' volunteer efforts to enhance forest preserves, parklands and other open spaces. Kathleen was selected for her exceptional contributions to nature and conservation efforts on behalf of the Forest Preserves.

**The Forest Preserves of Cook County** received the *Best of the Best – Anniversary Award* from the **Illinois Association of Park Districts** in recognition of the Forest Preserves' Centennial and its reaffirmation to ensure that the forest preserves continue to protect the natural diversity and provide the residents of Cook County with the many benefits that come from spending time in nature.

**Joe Neumann** received the *Outstanding Volunteer Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** which recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution of personal time and talent to a NACPRO member agency. Joe received the award for his continued support of the Forest Preserves' mission and for sharing his skills and love of nature to build the next generation of conservation leaders.

**It's Cooler in the Forest** received the *Program Awards Class II Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** for its innovative approach to introducing nature and outdoor recreation to new audiences. "It's Cooler in the Forest" brings young people out to the Forest Preserves to experience both the educational and recreational opportunities available to them in the natural settings of Cook County.

**Chris Anchor** and **Stan Gehrt** received a *2015 Chicago Audubon Society Award* for their work on the **Urban Coyote Research Project**. The award recognizes protectors of the environment.

**Lake Cook Road Bike Path** received a *Merit Award* from the **American Council of Engineering Companies**.

**Lake Cook Road Bike Path** received the *Project of the Year Award* from the **American Public Works Association Suburban Branch** which recognizes excellence in the management and administration of public works projects.

**Forest Preserve District of Cook County – Volunteer Resources** received an *Urban Forestry Award* from the **Chicago Region Trees Initiative** which recognizes landowners, land managers, and individuals who have gone above and beyond on behalf of the area's regional forest.

## 2014:

**Forest Preserve District of Cook County** received the *Public Leadership Award* from **Active Transportation Alliance** which honors Chicagoland's leaders in bike commuting.

**Toni Preckwinkle** was honored by the **Society of Architectural Historians** at the *SAH 2014 Awards Gala* for the **Next Century Conservation Plan**. The Society honors people who played key roles in conserving the Chicago areas built and natural environments.

**The Forest Preserve District of Cook County – Finance & Administration Department** received the *Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting* from the **Government Finance Officers Association** for their Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ending 12/31/2013. The award is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

**Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and Thomas Jefferson Woods and Thatcher Woods** received the *Conservation & Native Landscaping Award* from the **U.S. EPA and Chicago Wilderness**.

**Somme Nature Preserve Restoration** received the *Conservation & Native Landscaping Award* from the **U.S. EPA and Chicago Wilderness**.

**Bartel Grasslands Restoration** received the *Conservation & Native Landscaping Award* from the **U.S. EPA and Chicago Wilderness**.

**Bluff Spring Fen** received the *Excellence in Ecological Restoration Award – Platinum Tier* from the **Chicago Wilderness Commission on Excellence in Ecological Restoration** which recognizes high-quality restoration sites and excellent professional standards in natural resource management and ecological restoration. The award was received because the site and practitioners – Friends of BSF, volunteers, INPC, FPCC – were recognized for demonstrating success with the restoration of the site and the use of best practices for planning, implementation, and monitoring of restoration.

**Camp Master Plan** received the **Urban Land Institute's** *Vision Award* which honors vision and creativity in land use and development. The Plan was recognized for its high standard of excellence in design, economics, construction, marketing and management and for creatively solving complex land use challenges including the preservation of open space and is a visionary effort that will contribute to the growth and vibrancy of the communities of Cook County.

**Next Century Conservation Plan** *Burnham Award for Excellence in Planning* from the **Metropolitan Planning Council** which recognizes provocative and innovative planning. The award was received for the Plan being visionary in scope, scale and process and for its emphasis on community engagement and outreach, and its commitment to connecting residents with the natural world.

**Gary Morrissey** received the *Outstanding Volunteer Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** which recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution of personal time and talent to a NACPRO member agency. The award is limited to one per year. Gary received the award for being an invaluable asset to the Forest Preserves volunteer program and playing an important role in educating and inspiring youth.

**Chicago Area Mountain Bikers** received the *Outstanding Support Organization Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** which recognizes an organization that has responded in an exceptional manner by making a major contribution to benefit park and recreation programs or facilities. CAMBr received the award for their outstanding contribution to trail improvements, cycling safety, and support of the mission of the Forest Preserves.

**Wild Indigo Nature Explorations** received the *Park & Recreation Program Class I* award from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** for its innovative outreach approach and as an excellent example of how to better connect urban communities with nature and how to build advocates for biodiversity conservation. The award is presented to an agency for providing a unique and exceptional program, activity, or event that provides an outstanding example for others to follow. Limited to two per class.

**Next Century Conservation Plan** received the *Planning Initiative Award* from the **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials** for its collaboration and engagement of civic leaders from a variety of disciplines and for creating a plan that is both visionary and practical. The award recognizes a planning initiative that has provided the agency with important information to aid in decision-making and which contributes to a body of knowledge that will be valuable to other agencies.

