



Legislation Text

File #: 14-0328, **Version:** 1

REPORT

Department: Resource Management.

Request: Receive and file.

Report Title: Summer Youth Employment summary.

Report Period: 2014.

Summary: The Forest Preserves of Cook County (the “Preserves”) is pleased to report on several summer youth employment programs currently underway throughout the Preserves. These programs are consistent with the Preserves’ goal of creating a Conservation Corps as identified in the Next Century Conservation Plan. The Preserve and its partners are employing in excess of 300 youth this summer in the following programs:

The Preserve is partnering with Central States SER, Jobs for Progress and Friends of the Forest Preserves to engage twenty-four (24) out of school youth, ages 18-24, in paid work experience in the field of natural resource management and conservation. Youth are drawn from SER’s pool of eligible Workforce Investment Act program participants. The program is being funded through a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. The program will run from July through September of 2014.

The Preserve is partnering with the Cook County Justice Advisory Council to provide work experience to 194 at-risk youth. This project focuses on the recruitment and employment of court-involved youth on probation in suburban Cook County. There are 174 youth worker positions, ages 14 to 18, and 20 youth supervisors, ages 19 to 24. The Preserve is one of several partners collaborating on this project. The 60+ youth engaged with the Preserve will gain experience in the field of natural resource management and conservation. The program is being funded through a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources’ Illinois Youth Recreation Corps Program. The program will run from June through August of 2014.

The Preserve is partnering with the Friends of the Forest Preserves and the Student Conservation Association to employ 78 youth: 60 youth, ages 14-18, 6 youth ages 18-20, and 12 youth 21-24 through the Chicago Conservation Leadership Corp internship program. This program will engage youth in hands-on ecological restoration activities, including invasive species control through various removal methods. The program is an intensive six week paid internship that will promote stewardship of natural lands. The program provides ecologically based education activities and hands-on restoration and enjoyment of the forest preserves; these activities foster a deeper connection to nature and help to develop the next generation of conservation leaders. The program is being funded by in-kind match provided by the partners and the Preserve. The program will run from July through August of 2014.

The Preserve is partnering with Audubon Chicago Region to employ 16 youth, ages 18 and older, that will provide

support to the Volunteer Stewardship Program through implementation of ecological restoration at the many stewardship sites throughout the Preserve's holdings. Additionally, the interns will work directly with Preserve Resource Management and Trails crews to provide further experience in forestry work and prescribed fire. The program is being funded by in-kind match from the partners and the Preserve. The program will run from June through December of 2014