



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 19-0002, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **RECOGNIZING THE FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY, FRIENDS OF THE FOREST PRESERVES, STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION, GREENCORPS CHICAGO, AND AUDUBON GREAT LAKES FOR RECEIVING THE NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION'S INNOVATION IN CONSERVATION AWARD FOR THE CONSERVATION CORPS PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS**, on September 26, 2018, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) honored the Forest Preserves of Cook County Conservation Corps program with the Innovation in Conservation Award at its annual conference in Indianapolis, Indiana; and

**WHEREAS**, the NRPA Innovation Awards recognize and honor the latest advancements in the field of parks and recreation and showcase 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; and

**WHEREAS**, the Innovation in Conservation Award specifically recognized the Conservation Corps as an creative and original set of programs that create a localized solution to address regional environmental challenges; and

**WHEREAS**, the Conservation Corps was developed in order to mobilize people to restore nature to health, and to train the next generation of conservation leaders and forest preserve advocates by providing paid, hands-on restoration experiences on the Forest Preserves' nearly 70,000 acres of public land; and

**WHEREAS**, the Conservation Corps strives to break down geographic and racial barriers by creating a network where people of all backgrounds work together for a common cause and ensures that participants gain an understanding of local ecology and become nature ambassadors within their communities and among their peers; and

**WHEREAS**, the program has grown significantly since its inception, from 15 interns in 2005 to 303 participants today; and in 2018 alone helped to improve more than 2,200 acres of public land through restoration activities with Corps members providing over 54,742 restoration service hours; and

**WHEREAS**, the Conservation Corps program engages participants from across Cook County, including people with barriers to employment, and plays a critical role in reconnecting people and nature and diversifying the conservation workforce and community; and

**WHEREAS**, the Conservation Corps program was developed in collaboration with and is coordinated and implemented by several organizations including the Forest Preserves of Cook County, Friends of the Forest Preserves, the Student Conservation Association, Greencorps Chicago, and Audubon Great Lakes, demonstrating that strong partnerships result in effectively leveraging resources and expertise; and

**WHEREAS**, the Conservation Corps is one of the Forest Preserves' main priorities and one of the Next Century Conservation Plan's key recommendations in achieving the goal of ensuring native landscapes will thrive for generations.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Toni Preckwinkle, President, and the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners thank and congratulate the Friends of the Forest Preserves, Student Conservation Association,

GreenCorps Chicago, and Audubon Great Lakes for their commitment to the success of the Conservation Corps and dedication to the mission of the Forest Preserves and the goals of the Next Century Conservation Plan; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a suitable copy of this Resolution be presented to the above-referenced partners as a token of appreciation for their service to the Forest Preserves and the residents of Cook County.