



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0610, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED GRANT AWARD

Department: Department of Resource Management

Grantee: Forest Preserves of Cook County (the “Forest Preserves”)

Grantor: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (“DCEO”), Springfield, Illinois

Request: Authorization to accept grant and permit the General Superintendent authority to execute the grant agreement on behalf of the President of the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners.

Purpose: Authorization is sought for the Forest Preserves to accept and enter into a grant agreement with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for comprehensive infrastructure upgrades and restoration of the Palos and Sag Valley trail systems in southwest Cook County.

Grant Amount: \$10,000,000.00

Grant Period: 10/1/2023 (retroactive) - 9/30/2025

Fiscal Impact: N/A. The project will be conducted at no direct cost to the Forest Preserves, which may provide in-kind staff support for the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the project.

Accounts: N/A

Concurrences: The Chief Financial Officer has approved this item. Final agreement is subject to legal review and approval.

District(s): 17

Summary: The Forest Preserves has been awarded \$10,000,000.00 in grant funding from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity as part of the 2019 Rebuild Illinois Capital Plan (as reappropriated) to design and reconstruct portions of the Palos and Sag Valley unpaved trail systems. The proposed improvements include erosion mitigation and accessibility upgrades, installation of sustainable drainage structures, and improved wayfinding markers. The improved trail system will enhance public safety and navigability from key destinations near the Swallow Cliff Woods and Red Gate Woods priority areas, connecting to recreational amenities such as the Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center, Camp Bullfrog, the Swallow Cliff stairs, and area lakes.

The project will also feature approximately 1,100 acres of ecological restoration to bolster the sustainability of the rehabilitated trails, open sight lines, and improve the quality of the nature experience for trail users. The Palos area is a

major regional outdoor recreational hub and serves as one of the top hiking and mountain-biking destinations in northern Illinois. This project advances the goals of the Next Century Conservation Plan and the Natural and Cultural Resources Master Plan, which identified Palos as the Forest Preserves' highest priority landscape for conservation and ecological restoration.