



Legislation Text

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PROPOSED MISCELLANEOUS ITEM OF BUSINESS

Department(s): Resource Management

Summary: The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (the “Preserves”) has won Conservation and Native Landscaping awards which recognizes sites and projects within the Chicago region that demonstrates exemplary use of native landscaping ecosystem restoration and protection. The awards are for the following sites:

Edgebrook Woods Demonstration Site

In 2007, Friends of the Chicago River partnered with the Preserves to establish long-term restoration practices at Edgebrook Woods, located along the North Branch of the Chicago River in Chicago. The partners created a site management plan to improve the riverbank and upland conditions and address the impacts of storm water runoff. Friends of the Chicago River organized volunteer workdays to remove non-native plants, create multiple rain gardens, collect and disperse local native seeds, establish new habitats, and monitor species. Since 2007, more than 1,300 volunteers have logged approximately 5,000 hours and learned simple at-home actions they can take to manage storm water.

Thatcher Woods Savanna Restoration Project

A tiny remnant with a once small and closed savanna, Thatcher Woods Savanna is now a thriving five-acre prairie and open savanna with rebounding plant populations. The Preserves restored the site by removing invasive buckthorn, conducting prescribed burns, and monitoring rare plant species. The Thatcher complex has more than 250 native plant species and includes one of the only remaining examples of quality floodplain forest left in the Northeastern Morainal Division of Illinois. For surrounding suburban communities such as River Forest and Melrose Park, Thatcher Woods provides a refuge and a place for walking and learning about nature, especially when interpreted by the naturalists at the nearby Hal Tyrrell Trailside Museum of Natural History. As habitat continues to improve, the experience will only grow richer for visitors.

Theodore Stone Preserve

After 20 years of restoration, Theodore Stone Preserve-a formerly degraded woodland and brushed-over prairie-now supports a spectacular mix of restored remnant mesic oak woodland, mesic prairie, dolomite prairie, and marshland communities. In part because of its rare dolomite prairie, the 135-acre preserve is a natural area of regional importance and is home to several threatened and endangered species. Several years ago, the Preserves worked with the Village of Hodgkins, Friends of the Forest Preserves and others to eliminate parking lot runoff that had created a 20-foot-deep erosion gully through one of the preserve’s wooded bluffs and was polluting the dolomite prairie below. The Preserves then filled the gully and restored the area. Staff, contractors, and extremely dedicated volunteers undertook intense restoration efforts, and Theodore Stone Preserve now plays a role in improved air and water quality as well as flood control, provides opportunities for outdoor recreation and respite, conserves critical habitat for wildlife, increases local property values, and raises the overall quality of life for people who live and work in the area.