



## Legislation Text

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### REPORT

**Department:** Office of the General Superintendent

**Request:** Receive and File

**Report Title:** Walking Green: Developing an Evidence-base for Nature Prescriptions in the Forest Preserve District of Cook County

**Report Period:** July 2015 - January 2018

**Summary:** Dr. Teresa Horton, Department of Anthropology at Northwestern University, was the principal investigator for the study “Walking Green: Developing an Evidence-base for Nature Prescriptions.” The study was partially funded by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (the “Forest Preserves”) and compares the health effects of walking in the Forest Preserves property as compared to walking on a suburban sidewalk.

The purpose of the study was to gather data essential for the development of nature prescriptions, which can be recommended by doctors to patients to encourage them to get outdoors, connect to nature, enjoy, and support the Forest Preserves. The study demonstrates that the benefits of exercising in nature exceed those of an equivalent amount of exercise in other conditions, such as walking on a suburban sidewalk. The study also shows that there are significant mental health benefits including improved mood, reduced anxiety, and reductions in perceived stress that can be gained from taking a 50-minute walk on a Forest Preserve trail.

This study advances the Forest Preserves’ Next Century Conservation Plan’s priority to provide programs that emphasize health benefits and inspire the people of and visitors to Cook County to seek out the Forest Preserves for discovery, renewal, and fun.