

A monarch butterfly with orange and black wings is perched on a bright orange flower with a yellow center. The background is a soft-focus green and blue. The text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF WILL COUNTY

PROGRESS REPORT

2016

OUR MISSION

The Forest Preserve District of Will County is dedicated to protecting, conserving, enhancing and promoting Will County's natural heritage for the educational, recreational and environmental benefit of present and future generations. Six distinctive values guide the District in fulfilling its mission.

QUALITY

Committing to excellence in every endeavor.

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

Respecting, valuing and mentoring those who serve the District.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Being responsive to the needs of a diverse community.

COOPERATION

Working together to achieve the District's mission.

LEADERSHIP

Leading in the community and the workplace by inspiration and example.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Promoting and practicing environmental stewardship.

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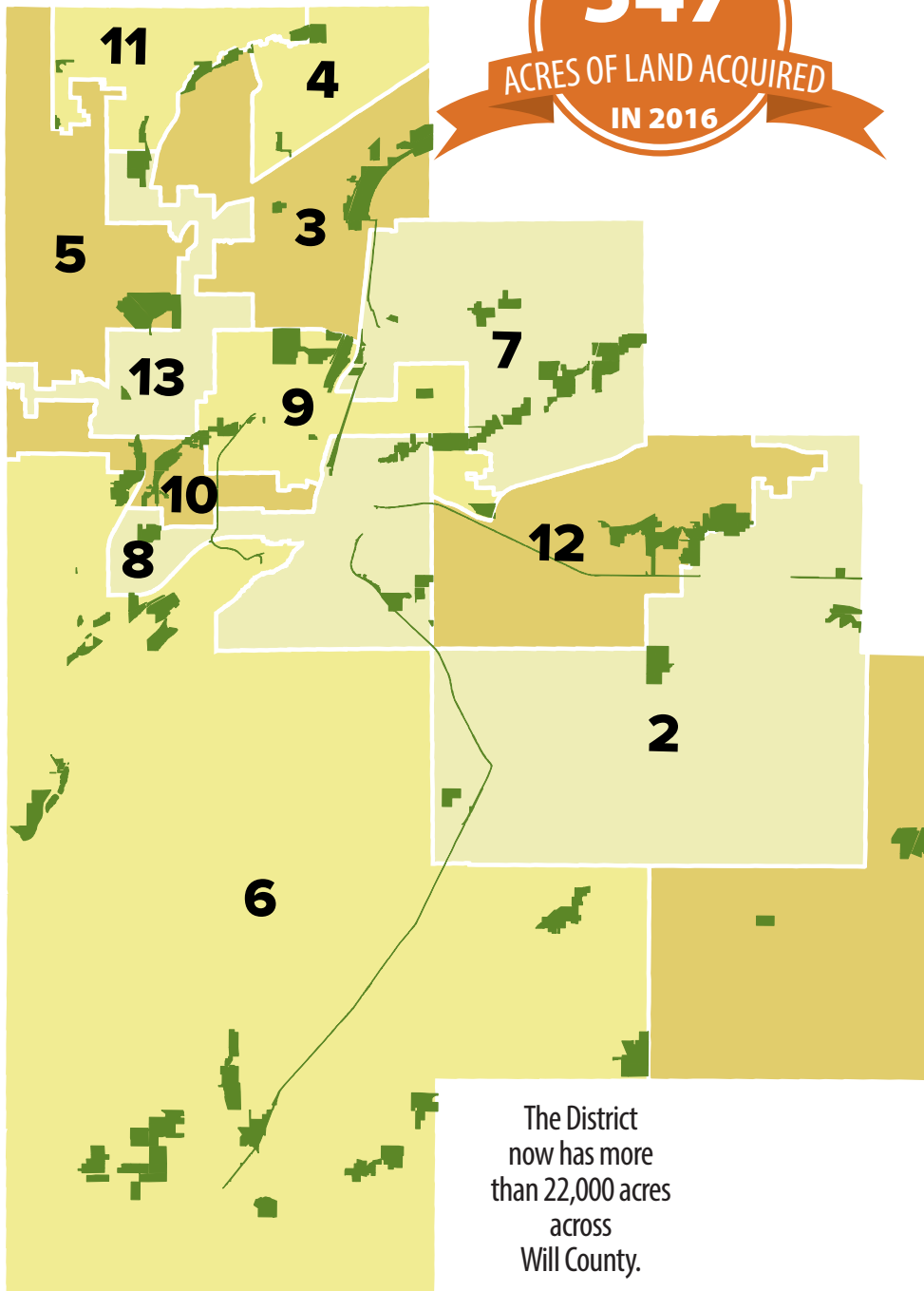
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547

ACRES OF LAND ACQUIRED
IN 2016



The District now has more than 22,000 acres across Will County.

DISTRICT 1

Robert Howard, Beecher

Judy Ogalla, Monee

Secretary

DISTRICT 2

James G. Moustis, Frankfort

Treasurer

Cory Singer, Frankfort

DISTRICT 3

Donald A. Moran, Romeoville

Elizabeth Rice, Bolingbrook

DISTRICT 4

Kenneth E. Harris, Bolingbrook

Jacqueline Traynere, Bolingbrook

DISTRICT 5

Darren Bennefield, Aurora

Operations Committee Vice Chair

Gretchen Fritz, Plainfield



DISTRICT 7

Steve Balich, Orland Park

Mike Friclone, Homer Glen

Operations Committee Chair

DISTRICT 8

Herbert Brooks, Jr., Joliet

Ad Hoc Rules Committee Chair

Denise Winfrey, Joliet

DISTRICT 9

Annette Parker, Joliet

Lauren Staley-Ferry, Joliet

DISTRICT 10

Joseph M. Babich, Joliet

Stephen M. Wilhelm, Joliet

DISTRICT 11

Suzanne Hart, Naperville

President

Charles E. Maher, Naperville

DISTRICT 12

Ray Tuminello, New Lenox

Finance Committee Chair

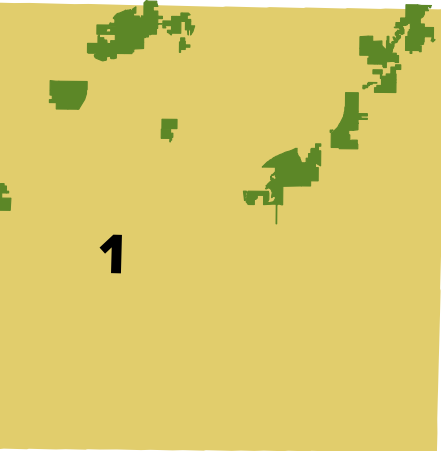
Tom Weigel, New Lenox

Finance Committee Vice Chair

DISTRICT 13

Liz Collins, Plainfield

Mark Ferry, Plainfield



DISTRICT 6

Ragan Freitag, Wilmington

Vice President

Donald Gould, Shorewood



1ST PLACE

PRESERVE THE MOMENT PHOTO CONTEST 2016

Rock Run Preserve

"Toad" by Kevin Keyes



SUZANNE HART

Entering into 2016, the Forest Preserve was in transition. The District has moved from large-scale land acquisition and multiple preserve, facility and trail openings to a greater focus on restoration, maintenance and enhancement. The transition actually began several years ago as our Board of Commissioners and staff gradually shifted from an expansion of the Forest Preserve District authorized and approved by Will County voters, to a more concentrated effort of maintaining what had been achieved over the previous 15 years. While it may sound as if we have been taking a break, that's far from accurate.

In 2016, the Forest Preserve made strides to reach into our communities, to restore and improve forest preserves and to enhance its digital and social media presence, becoming one of the most followed conservation organizations in the state. While some statewide and national conservation organizations may have a greater digital presence, the Forest Preserve District of Will County has the largest following of any of our peer organizations throughout Illinois. Some might wonder why we feel that is important. The answer is quite simple: reaching a greater number of people helps us become more responsive to our constituents. Our enhanced social media and marketing efforts also help to reveal and interpret the wonders of our natural resources, and reinforce our commitment to Will County communities and the environment, which is at the heart of why we were created some 90 years ago.

Looking ahead, the Forest Preserve has the same challenges that many public open space and conservation agencies face. I like to think that the difference for us lies in the way we have positioned this organization financially and organizationally to take on those challenges. We will continue to deliver high quality public programs, to protect our natural resources, to restore natural biodiversity and to provide safe, secure and well maintained forest preserves and trails for everyone to enjoy – either physically or virtually through our website and social media activities.

I hope that you'll take some time this year to enjoy your Will County forest preserves and regional trails. I know I will.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne Hart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Suzanne Hart, *President*



**PRESERVE THE
MOMENT PHOTO
CONTEST 2016**

2ND PLACE

*Hickory Creek
Preserve - Hickory
Creek Junction*
"Peeking Frog"
by Lauren
Dundek

3RD PLACE

*Hickory Creek
Barrens
Nature Preserve*
**"Snowy
Bridge"**
by Chuck
Medrano





RALPH SCHULTZ

2016 was a great year for your Forest Preserve District. We were able to offer new and expanded public programs, restore hundreds of acres of land and open new sites for you to

enjoy. While the Forest Preserve continued with a planned reorganization, we continued to grow and expand by offering many new and different opportunities. This was achieved by our commitment to embrace and plan for a changing and evolving economy and by our desire to meet the expectations of the community we serve. We will continue to adapt as needed, but we will always remain committed to bringing people and nature together.

In 2016 we completed an organizational adjustment, reducing staff by 10 percent over the previous 18-month period, and we are continuing our commitment to maintain and enhance your forest preserve system. We reached new heights in our social media presence, set the wheels in motion to improve our digital outreach, forged new partnerships, experimented with new public outreach programs, celebrated with our Friends Foundation that was created to support our efforts, and enjoyed the continued commitment of our hard-working, generous and focused volunteers.

Looking ahead into 2017, we plan to open two new forest preserve access areas in the eastern and southwestern portions of the County, initiate development of new connections in our regional trail system, continue with management or restoration of natural areas and provide new ways for you to interact with the environment.

2016 may have been a transitional year organizationally, but we believe that it was the fiscally responsible way to proceed. We remain committed to providing the programs, services and preserves you can continue to enjoy.

Go outside and enjoy your forest preserves!

Ralph Schultz, Chief Operating Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph Schultz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

90TH ANNIVERSARY

The Forest Preserve District marked its 90th anniversary in 2016. On Nov. 2, 1926, Will County voters approved a ballot measure that established the District as a legal entity. The referendum passed by almost a 2-to-1 margin – 16,611 people voted in favor and 8,774 voted against.

The push to establish a forest preserve district was spearheaded by Joliet Rotary members, including Dr. W. Henry Wilson, chairman of the Rotary's forest preserve committee. Wilson, a nationally known pathologist who worked at Silver Cross Hospital, stressed the benefits of preserved open space as he and his group worked to get the referendum on the ballot and approved by voters.

In the 90 years since its creation by referendum, the Forest Preserve District has grown from 143 acres in 1930 to more than 22,000 acres that are owned, leased or managed as of 2016. The actions taken in 1926 by Wilson, his Rotary colleagues and voters made a difference in the county's quality of life for all species. They stepped in as development was ramping up in Will County and provided a pathway to preservation.

WAUPONSEE GLACIAL TRAIL ACCESS LEADS TO MIDEWIN'S BISON

BOND REFUNDING SAVES TAXPAYERS ESTIMATED \$2 MILLION

The Forest Preserve District approved a \$16.7 million bond refunding measure that will save the Forest Preserve about \$2 million in debt service costs. The general obligation bonds were issued in 2008 with an average interest rate of 5 percent. The newly refunded bonds will carry an estimated interest rate of 1.74 percent. The savings from the refunding was used by the Forest Preserve to pay its portion of the cost associated with an Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) approved by the Board of Commissioners in 2014. The ERI, in turn, will result in a net savings of more than \$2 million in salaries and benefits over the next five years.

"Savings from the bond refunding and ERI program will allow the Forest Preserve to use cash reserves for capital projects that will maintain and enhance the preserves," said Board President Suzanne Hart of Naperville. "I'm very proud of the fact the Forest Preserve continues to deliver quality services to our residents in a very cost efficient manner."

In partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, the Forest Preserve District opened a new trailhead for its Wauponse Glacial Trail that provides access to the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie (MNTP) and its bison herd. The new trailhead is located south of Manhattan on Hoff Road. Just south of the trailhead, the Wauponse Glacial Trail intersects with a path that leads into the 19,000-acre MNTP. The Midewin-Wauponse Trailhead offers vehicle and equestrian parking, a latrine and a picnic table.

"By working together, the two agencies have been able to merge resources to make traveling between the Wauponse Glacial Trail and Midewin's trails more convenient and to provide easy access to view the bison herd," said Ralph Schultz, the Forest Preserve District's Chief Operating Officer.

The U.S. Forest Service introduced a herd of 27 bison into Midewin in 2015. Printed and online map options.







TRAIL SAFETY DAYS PROMOTE BEST PRACTICES

With Forest Preserve trails crisscrossing Will County, the District held a “Trail Safety Days” program to inform preserve visitors how to share the trails with other users safely and enjoyably. Offered throughout 2016 at select preserves, “Trail Safety Days” provided insights on personal best practices, trail awareness and rules of the trail. Present at these programs were Forest Preserve police, who began their “Eyes, Ears and Cell Phones” campaign in 2015. This public education effort encourages preserve users to stay aware of their surroundings and to report any concerns to the police by including the Will County Sheriff’s Police dispatch number in their cell phones. Together, “Trail Safety Days” and the “Eyes, Ears and Cell Phones” program were designed to make outings to District preserves and trails safe for all who use them.

FIRST FEMALE POLICE CHIEF NAMED

A changing of the guard occurred in the Forest Preserve's police force when Chief Bob Murphy retired and was replaced by Tracy Chapman, the District's first female police chief.

Murphy served as a District police officer for 27 years and oversaw the department for seven years, during which he initiated a new ordinance ticketing system and worked to enhance trail safety.

Chapman, in her 12 years with the force, was the District's first master patrol officer and its first K-9 handler. She also served as president and vice president of the Illinois Park Law Enforcement Association.



"We want our preserves and trails to be clean and safe for the public," Chapman said. "Having police officers who are dedicated to preserve users and employees makes a difference."

REORGANIZATION ENHANCES VISITOR EXPERIENCES AND EXPANDS OUTREACH

In 2016, the Forest Preserve's Visitor Services Department reorganized its operational structure to improve visitor facility experiences and outreach to the public. The creation of three zones – North, East and West – allows staff to more effectively concentrate their efforts and cohesively organize facility-focused programming based on geographic locations within Will County.

To increase awareness of and visitation to its visitor centers, the department offered new programs and exhibits, and enhanced facility events, including the new "Arts & Nature on the River" event held at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon as well as annual favorites such as Musher Mania at Monee Reservoir and Island Rendezvous at Isle a Cache Museum in Romeoville.

In addition, a new departmental section, Education and Outreach, was created to provide preserve-based outreach programs connecting local residents, businesses and community organizations to forest preserves in their areas.

Visitor Services also fostered partnerships with municipalities, libraries, park districts and local businesses – all with the goal of providing more program offerings and services for the residents of Will County.



LOCKPORT PRAIRIE CLOSES DURING COM ED'S DRAGONFLY HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve closed for four months beginning November 1, 2016 in order for ComEd to remove utility poles from the site to improve conditions for the Hine's emerald dragonfly, a federally endangered species. ComEd removed electrical poles from land it owns adjacent to the preserve and from Forest Preserve property within the 320-acre preserve.

The work stems from planning by a consortium of stakeholders created by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to better protect endangered species, including the Hine's emerald dragonfly.

THE CITIZEN GOES DIGITAL

In October of 2016, The Citizen, the Forest Preserve District's newsletter, went digital. For decades, the newsletter was published quarterly and mailed to some 25,000 subscribers. With the transition to digital, subscribers now receive The Citizen via email and each new edition is sent weekly, allowing for more current coverage of the news and events of the Forest Preserve. An all-digital format greatly reduces the environmental impact of print editions, and the District will save thousands of dollars each year in printing and postage fees.



WILL COUNTY BIKEWAY PLAN COMPLETED



The first ever Will County Bikeway Plan was completed in 2016 and approved by the Forest Preserve's Board of Commissioners. The result of two years of effort, the Bikeway Plan identifies areas where non-motorized opportunities exist and could be expanded throughout the county and beyond. Greenways, roadways and utility corridors were all considered as possible sites for bicycle use.

The goals of the plan are to expand transportation choices, expand connectivity, improve safety, enhance bicyclist comfort and promote bicycling benefits. The Bikeway Plan was produced in cooperation with the Will County Division of Transportation as part of its 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT GROWS BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS

 Forest Preserve District of Will County
August 4, 2016 · 🌐

Our staff continually runs across some fascinating things in the field and this one from Suzy Lyttle is no exception. This Ghost Plant at Hickory Creek Preserve lacks chlorophyll, making it completely white. Instead of getting its energy from the sun, it's a parasite on certain fungi. These fungi have a beneficial relationship with photosynthetic trees, and the energy from the tree passes through the roots, to the fungi, and finally to the Ghost Plant.



👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

👍👍👍 1.1K

Top Comments *

356 shares

66 Comments

The Forest Preserve's online following experienced explosive growth in 2016, particularly with public engagement on Facebook. District Facebook posts were seen more than 14 million times, and the Forest Preserve's main Facebook page reached a 359 percent increase in likes, growing from 4,900 likes to 22,500 and surpassing all other Forest Preserve Districts in Illinois. Other District social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram experienced steady growth, more than doubling their engagement over the course of the year. New initiatives including featured videos, 360-degree preserve photos, mobile responsive multimedia presentations, aerial photography and video, and virtual preserve tours contributed to greater overall engagement.

Additionally, the Forest Preserve's website had a total of 761,995 page views in 2016, an increase of 4.47 percent. When combined with the 19,000 page views of the District's multimedia presentations featured on the site, overall views increased to 7.1 percent.



WillCoForestPreserve ✓

@WillCoForests

Follow

In honor of National #SquirrelAppreciationDay, here are some nutty facts about these tiny wildlife wonders:

ow.ly/2UyU3089QWH

9:25 AM - 21 Jan 2017

🔙 🔄 169 ❤️ 261

LAND PRESERVATION

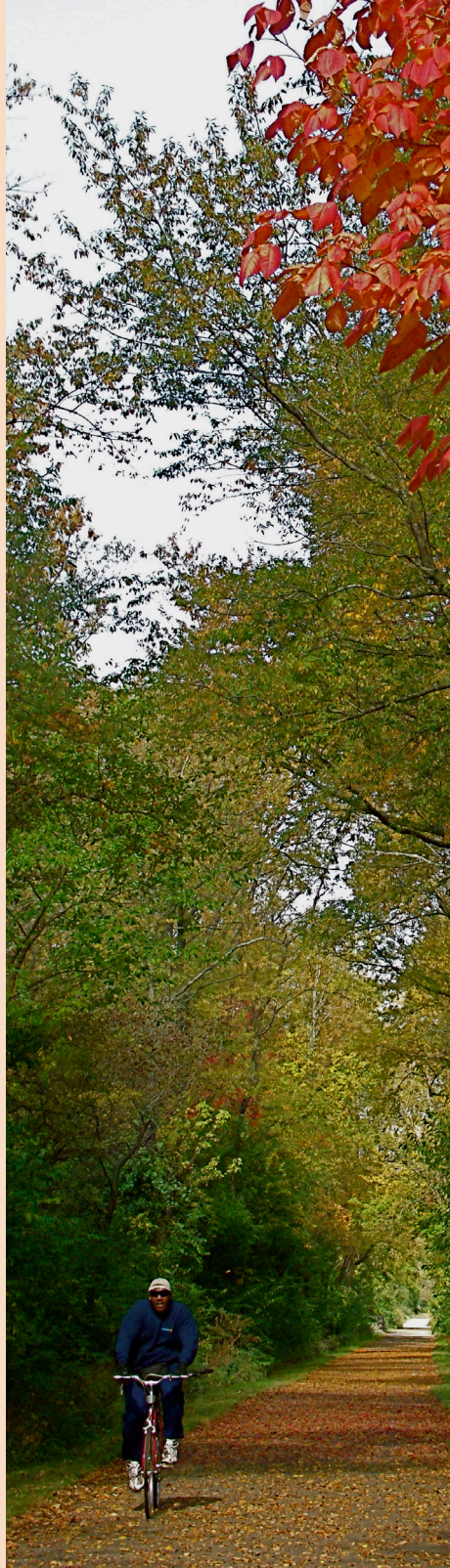
After more than 15 years of steady expansion, the Forest Preserve District slowed its land preservation activities. While the Forest Preserve acquired just under two acres of land in 2016, the parcels will provide the necessary connections which allow for expanded preserve access and future trail development.

Property acquired at Hammel Woods in Shorewood will provide access for maintenance and emergency services, while a separate donation will accommodate the development of the southern extension of the DuPage River Trail.

Nearly 1.5 acres of land aligning the Wauponsee Glacial Trail was also acquired in 2016.

Additionally, the Forest Preserve entered into a lease agreement with ComEd for the use of property to construct a multi-use trail at Kankakee Sands Preserve in Custer Township.

To date, the District's holdings of property owned, managed and leased total more than 22,000 acres across Will County.



ADDITIONAL
ACRES
PROTECTED

2004
610

2005
106

2006
1,455

2007
1,763

2009
254

2008
790

2010
132

2011
634

2012
192

2013
527

2014
144

2015
547

2016
2



PRESERVE DEVELOPMENTS

THREE KEY DEVELOPMENTS BEGAN IN 2016

1

Construction was completed on a 1-mile extension of the DuPage River Trail from 95th Street to Knoch Knolls Park in Naperville. The \$1.8 million project was the result of collaboration between the Forest Preserve District and the Naperville Park District.

Eighty percent of the project's funding came from a federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation and awarded by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). The Forest Preserve District and the Park District contributed 20 percent to the cost as well as land for the project. The link ties together many preserves, parks and cities in the region.

2

In Custer Township, work began on an access area at Kankakee Sands Preserve. The new access, located along the north side of Route 113, will include parking, a shelter and a 2.5-mile crushed limestone trail. The \$1.1 million project is expected to be completed in 2017.

3

Construction also started on the District's sixth dog park. The new access for Plum Valley Preserve will be located on Burville Road, east of Interstate 394, in Crete Township. When completed in 2017, the \$864,500 project will include the new dog park, parking and a shelter.



NATURAL AREA RESTORATION PROJECTS

District staff conducted land management activities on more than 1,876 acres at 12 preserve locations in 2016. Restoration efforts included removal of invasive plant species, seed collection, prescribed burns and planting of native species.

One of the most significant projects in 2016 is the ongoing restoration of 700 acres of sand savanna, prairie and wetland communities located at Kankakee Sands Preserve in Custer Township and Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve in Wilmington/Custer Township.

The restoration involves invasive species control as well as the collection of seed from approximately 300 species of local native plants for use on site.

The Forest Preserve's Board of Commissioners approved a contract with an excavation company in November of 2016 for work to fill in a drainage ditch that should be completed by the end of 2017. The drainage correction will enhance and expand a wetland area where high quality species already live. prairie, floodplain forest and savanna.

Restoration efforts included removal of invasive plant species, seed collection, prescribed burns and planting of native species.





WILDLIFE RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Forest Preserve District annually conducts wildlife research projects to expand our understanding of local flora and fauna. In 2016, these projects included the completion of a reptile and amphibian survey within Plum Creek Greenway in Crete Township and the initiation of a similar species survey at Messenger Woods Nature Preserve and Messenger Preserve, both in Homer Glen.

The Forest Preserve also partnered with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to continue monitoring the spread of chronic wasting disease in deer in the southern part of Will County.

Aerial deer population surveys also were completed at 13 preserves and the impact of deer browse was documented at nine preserves.

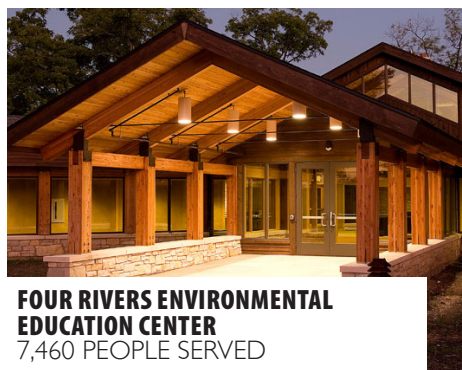


PRESERVE USE AND SPECIAL EVENTS

More than 62,000 Will County residents visited a Forest Preserve Visitor Center in 2016. Almost 55,000 thousand more camped, picnicked or enjoyed time with their dogs at one of the Forest Preserve's dog parks. The Forest Preserve also participated in a variety of outreach opportunities and held programs and events to engage, educate and entertain.



ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER
1,360 PEOPLE SERVED



FOUR RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
7,460 PEOPLE SERVED



ISLE A LA CACHE MUSEUM
14,350 PEOPLE SERVED



MONEE RESERVOIR
19,360 PEOPLE SERVED



PLUM CREEK NATURE CENTER
16,980 PEOPLE SERVED



SUGAR CREEK ADMINISTRATION CENTER
3,140 PEOPLE SERVED



PICNICKING
43,760



NON-DISTRICT
EVENTS AND
SPECIAL USE
7,000



DOG PARKS
1,730



CAMPING
2,140

FACILITY
EVENTS
5,200

EDUCATION
PROGRAMS
14,000

PUBLIC
PROGRAMS
5,300

DISTRICT
OUTREACH
10,270

**PROGRAMS
& SERVICES**
(people served)



AWARDS IN APPRECIATION OF PARTNERS

The Forest Preserve District partners with dozens of organizations each year. From these, the District selects its annual Appreciation of Partners Award honorees. Recipients are awarded a plaque before the full Board of Commissioners. Two organizations were selected in 2016 for this prestigious honor.

NAPERVILLE PARK DISTRICT

The Naperville Park District was recognized for its partnership with the Forest Preserve on construction of a segment of the DuPage River Trail linking Knoch Knolls Park and Nature Center to the recently completed 95th Street bridge. The trail segment provides a continuation in the trail system and an important link between Whalon Lake, Vermont Cemetery Preserve and Riverview Farmstead Preserve, all located in Naperville. This was the final extension to a trail system that now connects thousands of residents to these forest preserves as well as their local parks. The Naperville Park District contributed land and a cash match for construction and future maintenance of the trail and bridge spanning the DuPage River.



Naperville
Park District™

SERTOMA CENTRE

The Sertoma Centre was selected for an Appreciation of Partners Award for its volunteer efforts at Plum Creek Nature Center in Crete Township. On one of their many visits to the nature center, Sertoma Centre staff asked if they could assist the Forest Preserve in some way. From July through December of 2016, the staff and a total of nine clients helped keep the nature center's grounds looking their best, visiting twice each month to pull weeds during the warmer weather and once a month in November and December. The Sertoma Centre has taken on an important volunteer role that the Forest Preserve has been looking to fill for many years.





ALTERNATIVE REVENUE INITIATIVES

The following grants were awarded to the Forest Preserve District in 2016. Grants expand local tax dollars to enable the District to provide more amenities to Will County citizens.

Grants and Development Partnerships

| | |
|--|------------|
| Illinois Department of Natural Resources Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Program Plum Valley Preserve – Burville Road Access | \$400,000* |
|--|------------|

| | |
|--|---------|
| National Safe Boating Council Life Jacket and Safe Boating Educational Materials Monee Reservoir | \$1,600 |
|--|---------|

| | |
|--|-------|
| National Association for Interpretation Mini-Grant for River of Trash Exhibit Four Rivers Environmental Education Center | \$400 |
|--|-------|

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Total Grants for 2016 | \$402,000 |
|------------------------------|------------------|

*This grant was originally awarded in 2015 but suspended by the State of Illinois due to State budget concerns. The grant was reinstated in 2016.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

SPONSORSHIPS

A total of \$15,000 was received in 2016 through the District's Sponsorship Program.

Cabela's

Chicagoland Speedway

DNA Athletics

Folks on Spokes

Goldman Sachs

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Illinois Marine Towing

Naperville Running Company

National Safe Boating Council

Plainfield Park District

Plainfield Public Library

Prairie State Road Runners

RiverWorks Discovery

Running Excels

Sumbaum Cycle Co.

Village of Beecher

White Oak Library



DONATIONS

Nearly \$5,000 was received in 2016 through the District's Donation Program. These generous contributors financially supported the Forest Preserve District of Will County during the year, showing their commitment to the mission, values and vision of the District.



Shorewood HUGS
The Estate of Bert L. Neill
Richard Wachenheim
Donna Wilson

\$5,000
received in donations

* Sponsorships and donations listed exceed \$250 cash or in-kind value.

AWARDS

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT IN FINANCIAL REPORTING GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (GFOA)

The Forest Preserve District received the Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting in 2016 for the 21st consecutive year. The award recognized the Forest Preserve's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2015. The Certificate of Achievement, awarded by GFOA, is the highest recognition given in governmental accounting.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD ILLINOIS PARK AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION

Forest Preserve volunteer Barb Ferry was named recipient of this award for her work with staff and volunteers in all departments of the Forest Preserve District. The award is given "in recognition and appreciation of outstanding contributions and unselfish devotion for the advancement of parks and recreation and leisure in the community and the State of Illinois." 2016 marked Ferry's 14th year as a Forest Preserve volunteer.

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSIONAL AWARD UNIVERSITY OF ST. FRANCIS

Renee Gauchat, Forest Preserve volunteer services supervisor, received this award in January of 2016 for her work with University of St. Francis students and her "loyal and active" involvement with the University's Recreation and Sport Management's advisory council. The partnership between the Forest Preserve and the University includes service projects that get students involved in brush cutting and seed collection. Participants also gain field experience in recreation programs and resource management. Some students have also served as full-time Forest Preserve interns, which enabled them to experience the scope of programs and operations throughout the District.

NAPERVILLE YOUTH SERVICE AWARD CITY OF NAPERVILLE AND KIDSMATTER

A student at Scullen Middle School in Naperville, Forest Preserve volunteer Grace Xu was recognized with the Naperville Youth Service Award for her efforts to make a difference in her community. Xu assisted the District by removing invasive species from the preserves and helping out at special events. It was her enthusiasm for volunteering and her willingness to work hard that motivated Forest Preserve volunteer supervisor Renee Gauchat to nominate her for the award. The Youth Service Awards are designed " . . . to encourage all youth to get involved in community service that will give them a sense of purpose, provide them with valuable hands-on experiences, and ignite the volunteer spirit that has helped make Naperville the thriving community it is today." Xu's father, Jack Xu, and mother, Ji Wang, also volunteer for the Forest Preserve District as well as other organizations.

OUTSTANDING CITIZEN VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF PARK DISTRICTS

John Nerren, Forest Preserve volunteer, was selected for this award for his work as captain of the Isle a la Cache Brigade. A group re-enactors at the Forest Preserve's Isle a la Cache Museum in Romeoville, the Brigade portrays what life was really like during the 18th century fur trade era in "Illinois Country." Nerren has volunteered as the Brigade's captain for 15 years. Under his leadership, the Brigade's membership has grown to 18 members. The group participates in the District's annual "Island Rendezvous" at Isle a la Cache Museum and the site's monthly "Living History Demonstration" programs as well as other festivals and events throughout the area.



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In 1926, voters approved a referendum to establish the Forest Preserve District of Will County as a separate taxing body of county government. Even then, when Will County was overwhelmingly rural, its citizens realized the importance of preserving its natural treasures. In 2016, the Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners, made up of 26 members from the county's 13 elective districts, oversees all District business and approves property purchases and District expenditures. The District currently owns, manages and leases more than 22,000 acres of land.

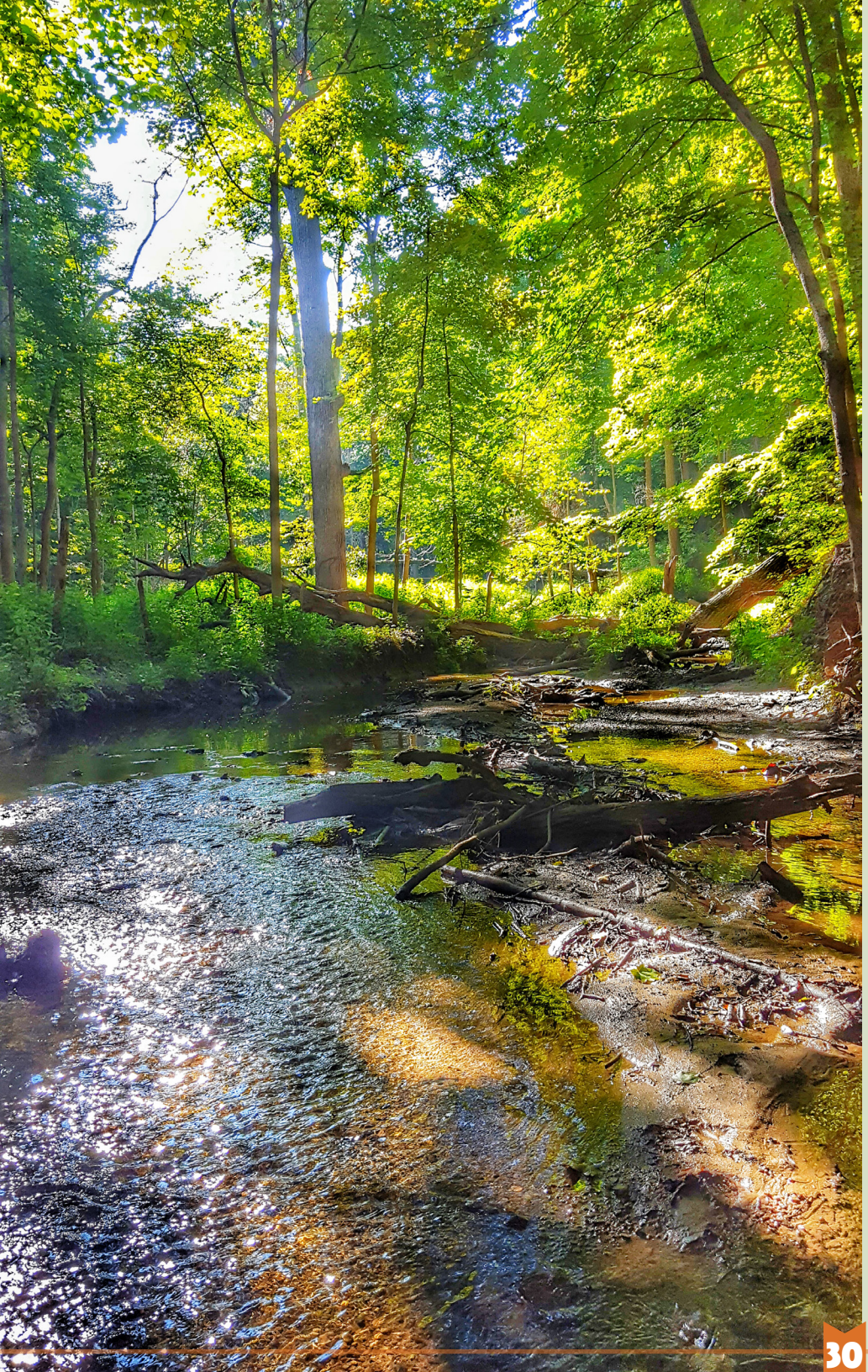
The Forest Preserve is organized financially into two operating funds. The Construction and Development Fund supports new site improvements and associated staffing costs, maintenance of existing facilities and properties, and infrastructure improvements. The Corporate Fund is used for employee salaries, benefits and general administrative costs of the Forest Preserve.

BOND ISSUES

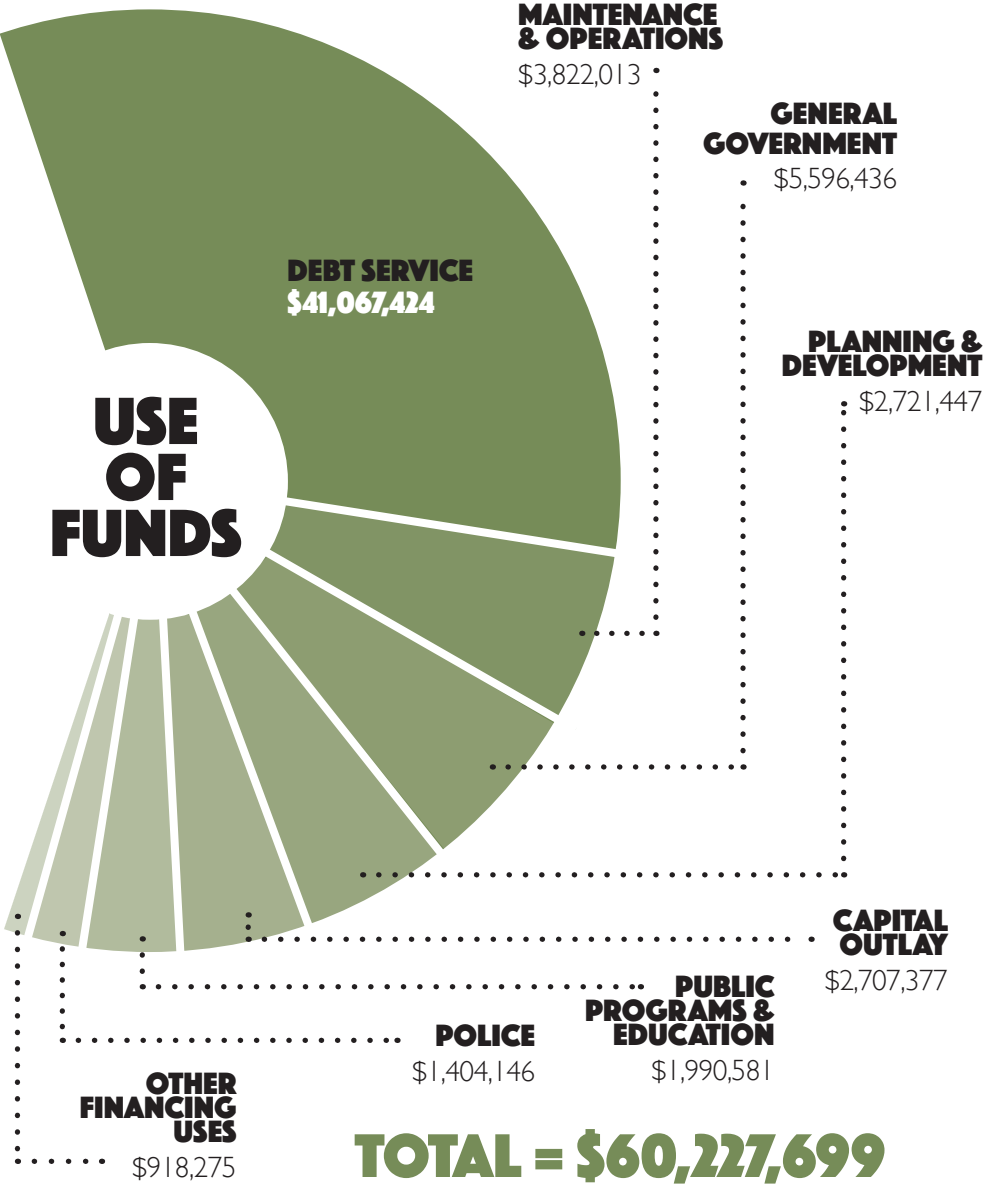
In 1999 and 2005, voters approved referendums to preserve land and improve Forest Preserve properties for public use. In both cases, voters recognized that the county was changing at an unprecedented pace and that special properties needed to be preserved before they were developed. The 1999 referendum provided \$70 million and the 2005 referendum \$95 million for land acquisition and development. These funds have led to thousands of acres preserved and dozens of properties improved.

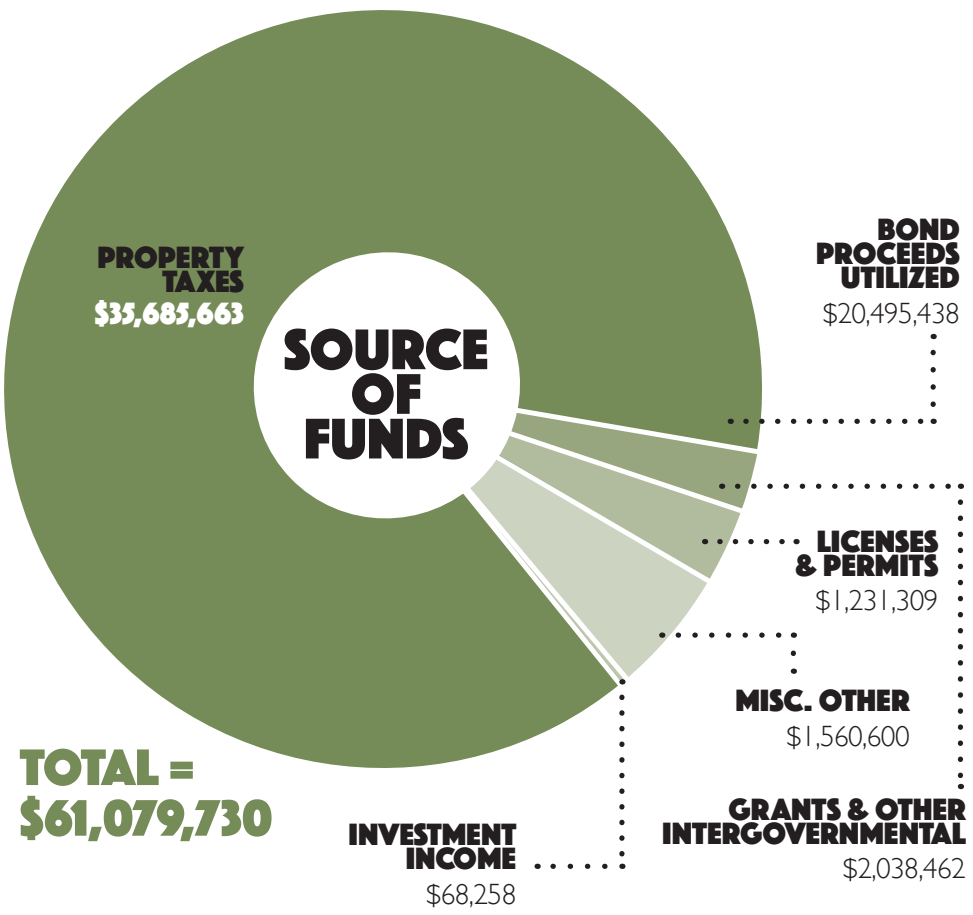
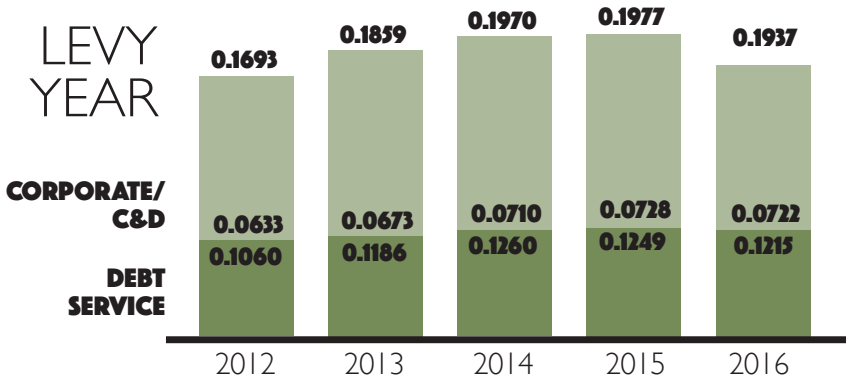
In 2007, the Forest Preserve Board of Commissioners authorized \$50 million in general obligation limited taxable bonds for the purpose of acquiring land for future use. In 2007 and 2008, the Forest Preserve issued \$10 million and \$30 million, respectively, of limited taxable bonds. The remaining \$10 million in bonds was issued during 2010. During 2012, \$66,775,000 of the 2005 referendum bonds was re-funded. As a result, the District will save taxpayers approximately \$4.8 million in interest costs over the life of the bonds.

In May 2016, \$16,705,000 of series 2008A bonds were refinanced, with an estimated savings of \$2,000,000 in interest costs over the life of the bonds. Also, \$1,495,000 of general obligation limited taxable bonds series 2016B were issued during late 2016 to finance the early retirement incentive that occurred during 2015-2016.



USE OF FUNDS







VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

In 2016, a total of 1,130 volunteers contributed 16,425.25 hours of service to assist the efforts of the Forest Preserve. Of these, 244 were Prairie People volunteers – individuals who routinely support the Forest Preserve year after year. The remaining 884 volunteers were individuals who may have participated in District volunteer opportunities for the first time or intermittently throughout the year

Whether large or small, this generous donation of time and talent made a difference in the Forest Preserve's restoration efforts as well as in the lives of those who visited the preserves and participated in Forest Preserve services and programs. The District could not accomplish its goals without the dedication of its volunteer workforce.

Division or Department

Business Administration and
Financial Services

Law Enforcement

Maintenance and Operations

Marketing and Communications

Planning and Development

Visitor Services

Grand Total

Total Volunteers

Hours

10 Volunteers

962 hours

32 Volunteers

1,850.25 hours

209 Volunteers

788.50 hours

1 Volunteer

7 hours

778 Volunteers

9,746.75 hours

100 Volunteers

3,070.75 hours

1,130 Volunteers

16,425.25 hours

2016 INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS

Diane Aigner
Olivia Amezcua
Kaylee Anderson
Gilbert Anderson
Linda Andrews
Deb Antlitz
Jim Avila
Ann Ayers
David Babich
Katherine Bader
Bandon Beddigs
Debra Bettenhausen
Mark Bettin
Gregory Bluhm
Alison Borecky
Briley Bowen
Nick Bryerton
Alan Bulava
Ardella Burke
Marc Buttice
Jenni Cain
Pete Caldwell
Therese Caldwell
Vanessa Caldwell
Rodney Campbell
Scott Carevic
Charlie Carlisle
Olive Carlisle
Chad Carson
Floyd Catchpole
Jean Christensen
Carol Cooley
Kerri Counts
Thomas Coyne
Anna Craig
Jimmy Craig
Joel Craig
Rodney Dabe
Paul Dacko
Georgeann Davis
George Dehm
Judy Dehm
Joan Dietrich
Dawn Downey
Greg DuBois

Brian Duffie
Frank Dundek
Dennis Eakright
Robert Eakright
Lee Ecker
Joan Fasanella
Joe Faviechro
Barb Ferry
Adam Ford
Cathy Foy
Pat Foy
Nikki Franzen
David Fuller
Matt Gagen
Carolyn Gann
John Gantz
Jim Garrison
Brian Gerk
Jean Golec
Tricia Golec
Jan Gonzalez
Scott Gustafson
Jan Heideman
Pat Hoffman
Cindy Hostert
Bill Huish
Dawn Ishida
Bob Jasieniecki
Marianne Jensen
Roger Jensen
Eric Johnson
George Johnson
Glenn Johnson
Debbie Jones
Matt Jordan
Jean Kadar
Ron Kapala
Katie Kaye
Ronald Kaye
Efty Kelly
Margaret Kelly
Virgil Kemp
Emily Kenny
Bill Kibler
Jackie Kibler

Will Kibler
Ed Klama
Karen Klama
Myrt Larson
Elle LeClair
Ken Lewellen
Kathryn Lewellen
Krystal Lewellen
Wayne Lezon
Phil Liput
Keith Listermann
Kyle Listermann
Chuckie Llewellyn
Richard Llewellyn
Valarie Loekle
Rita Luedtke
Madaline Mahon
Susan Malkowski
Carol Malnar
Stan Malnar
George Marshall
Alice McBride
Thomas McCafferty
Mary Anne McLean
Martin Mesewicz
Bonnie Mesewicz
Ruth Meyer
Thomas Miller
John Mittelbrun
Carra Molinare
Dee Molinare
Bill Morris
Kent Munro
Jim Murphy
Judy Murphy
Andy Neil
Don Nelson
Espie Nelson
Mark Nelson
John Nerren
Dave Nordine
Brandon Nye
Michael O'Brien
Michelle O'Connor
Michael O'Leary

Bernard O'Reilly
Paul Pawlowski
Jodie Payne
Mike Perry
Judy Petzinger
Carol Picciolo
Andrea Pletske
Diane Pool
Kristen Pool
Oliver Pronger
Theresa Przybylski
Phillip Pursley
Joan Raiger
Bruce Renwick
Rita Renwick
Bob Reynolds
Benjamin Riley
Carrie Rock
Ann Romadka
Bob Romadka
Jeff Ronspies
Roger Ross
Michael Rusniak
Rene' Russell
Mike Rzepka
Joe Sanchez
Midge Saunders
Beverly Scheidt
Janet Schleeter
Paul Schroeder
Phyllis Schulte
Max Scott-Schroeder
Samuel Scott-Schroeder
Tod Shafer
Greg Siefert
Hannah Sigler
Kelly Sigler
Carol Smith
Bob Soukup
Bailey Stevenson
Dakota Stevenson
Linda Stevenson
Pat Strange
Mary Svitek
Jerry Swift

2016 INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS (CONTINUED)

Kathy Swift
 Max Swift
 Molly Swift
 Cindy Tabor
 Theresa Tabor
 Karen Tellef
 Alan Thomas
 Alan D. Thomas
 Dick Thomas
 Edith Turkington
 Bernie Twait
 Bruce Vasa
 Dave Vasa
 Richard Wachenheim
 Penny Wakeland
 Judith Wallace
 Dave Wendt
 Marie Wendt
 Mark Wieclaw
 Sally Wieclaw
 Bill Willis
 Connie Witkowski
 Lee Witkowski
 Zoe VanZyl
 Laura Zderad
 Natalie Zderad
 Susan Zelek



16,425.25

**TOTAL HOURS OF SERVICE
FROM VOLUNTEERS**



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Boy Scout Crew 63
Boy Scout Troop 12 Eagle Scout Project
Boy Scout Troop 44 Eagle Scout Project
Boy Scout Troop 100
Boy Scout Troop 237
Boy Scout Troop 258 Eagle Scout Project
Boy Scout Troop 889 Eagle Scout Project
Cathedral of St. Raymond Nonnatus
Cub Scout Pack 9
Cub Scout Pack 26
Girl Scout Troop 70131
Girl Scout Troop 70398
Great Lakes Bassmasters
Joliet Junior College
Keepers of Mother Earth
Lewis University
Lincoln-Way East High School Key Club
Lincoln-Way North High School
Latter-day Saints Mormon Church
Plainfield Rugby Club
Plants of Concern
Sertoma Centre
St. Ignatius High School
The Siberian Husky Club of Greater Chicago
Thorn Creek Audubon Society
University of St. Francis
Will County Audubon
Will County Master Gardeners
Will County Trail Riders
Wild Ones of Will County



1,130
VOLUNTEERS

CORPORATE VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Citgo Lemont Refinery
Goldman Sachs
Harrah's Joliet
JCPenney

JULIE, Inc.
Manheim Auto
University of Chicago Lab School
Xylem





Business Administration and Financial Services

John Gerl, Chief Financial Officer

Accounting and Finance

Lisa Lukasevich, Director

Mary Borgra

Meredith Clavenna

Renee Gauchat

Lori Green

Diana Jaworski

Karen Odum

Donna Suca

Operations and Program Services

Ralph Schultz, Chief Operating Officer

Law Enforcement

Tracy Chapman, Chief of Police

David Barrios Jr., Lieutenant

Jason Allbert

Steven Bettenhausen

James Burnette

Vincent Cimino

Jeffrey Cowe

Stephen Dow

Jack Ellingham

Steven Formenti

Eric Gabrielson

Donald Gardiner

Steven Gutowski

Jennifer Hemmeger

Gregory Hidlebaugh

Shane Kelly

Dean Klier

Eric Kobe

Richard Lewandowski

Michael Liebermann

Darrell Mayle

Reginald McCrary

Jeffrey McKenzie

Daniel Olszewski

Andrew Paver

Peter Piazza

Dan Rankovich

Michael A. Reilly

Information Technology

Denise Steffen, Director

Tom Mancari

Michael Prybell

Barb Sudsberry

Eleanor Wagner



Michael P. Reilly

David Starcevich

Joseph Stubbs

Marian VanOoteghem

Bradley Veerman

Nicole Veerman

Robert Veron

James Wendt

Maintenance and Operations

John Fay, Director

Calvin Anderson

Robert Balsie

Tracy Bianco

Cole Biltgen

David Blaskey

Elise Brazzale

Scott Carevic

Rina Cheney

Steven Crobie

Todd Doran

Christopher Dowell

Benjamin Dunkman

Ian Eskridge

Cedric Foster

Terrence Garvey, Jr.

Ben Gauchat

Richard Gier

Alex Gonzalez
Gregory Griffin
Jeffrey Jaworski
Scott Kikkert
Brian Krabbe
Jeff Kure
Eric Latz
John Latz
Brian Mackey
Edward McDermott
Patrick McGrady
Michael Milligan
Arthur Moeller
Christopher Moeller
Adam Oestmann
Ryan Osman
Jon Panozzo
Justin Parks
Daniel Parthun
Alex Pasteris
James Patnoudes
Kyle Siegel
Roy Smith
Denzil Smothers
Terry Snyder
Steven Sokol
Jeffery Steichen
William Suca, Jr.
Dane Thayer
Donald Thayer
Richard Therkildsen
Sara Therkildsen
Charles Thomas
Donna VanWert
Thomas Watson
Robert Zinkiewicz

Marketing and Communications

Laura Kiran, Director
Cindy Cain
Bruce Hodgdon
Glenn P. Knoblock
Katie McCollum
Chad Merda
Rose Scofield

Planning and Development

Andrew Hawkins, Director
Juanita Armstrong-Ullberg
Andy Besette
Michelle Blackburn
Allison Borecky
Glen Buckner
Nick Budde
Jason Buss
Floyd Catchpole
Corinne Crawford
Julianne Mason
Colleen Novander
Matt Novander
John O'Lear
Karen Rinke
David Robson
Andrew Stickney
Judith Wallace

Visitor Services

Lynn Kurczewski, Director
Bob Bryerton
Catherine Caldwell
Diane Carson
Debra Descano
Erin Ecker
Mallory Fischer
Jen Guest
Christopher Gutmann
Ben Hecke
Harry Klinkhamer
Mark Loekle
Suzy Lyttle
Jenna Newcomb
Angela Opiola
Kelli Parke
Jessica Prince-Sharrar
Angela Rafac
Tina Riley
Ray Setzke
Mike Speller
Dakota Stevenson
Jason Stevenson
Kevin Stoginski
Mary Thomas
Heather VanZyl
Melissa Zanzola

Retired

Marcella M. DeMauro
Karen Fonte
Phil Gallo
James Glenn
Timothy Good
Robert Murphy
Brad Steinke



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Forest Preserve District
OF WILL COUNTY

**SUGAR CREEK
ADMINISTRATION CENTER**

17540 W. Laraway Road
Joliet, IL 60433
815.727.8700

**ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING
CENTER**

20851 S. Briarwood Lane
Mokena, IL 60448
708.479.2255

**FOUR RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION CENTER**

25055 W. Walnut Lane
Channahon, IL 60410
815.722.9470

ISLE A LA CACHE MUSEUM

501 E. 135th Street
Romeoville, IL 60446
815.886.1467

MONEE RESERVOIR

27341 Ridgeland Avenue
Monee, IL 60449
708.534.8499

PLUM CREEK NATURE CENTER

27064 S. Dutton Road
Beecher, IL 60401
708.946.2216

