



Forest Preserve District of Will County

WOODS WALK

September 1 – November 30

2024 Hiking Guide

Welcome to Woods Walk 2024

- 1** Start with the *2024 Hiking Guide* or download the Goosechase iOS or Android app with your smartphone and sign up for a free account. For more guides, visit our visitor centers (see opposite page) or access them online at ReconnectWithNature.org, where you'll also find preserve directions. Trails are listed by length, shortest first.
- 2** Hike seven of the 10 designated trails between September 1 and November 30 to receive a collector's medal. Look for the Woods Walk signs along all designated trails.
- 3** Turn in your *2024 Hiking Guide* with the back inside page completed at one of our visitor centers, mail in the form on the back inside page or log your hikes through Goosechase. All submissions must be received by December 8, 2024, to receive your medal.

For a digital version
of the route maps,
scan this QR code:



Questions? Call 815-727-8700 or visit:

Sugar Creek Administration Center • 815-727-8700

17540 W. Laraway Road, Joliet

Hours: Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Four Rivers Environmental Education Center • 815-722-9470

25055 W. Walnut Lane, Channahon

Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. & Sunday noon-4 p.m.

Isle a la Cache Museum • 815-722-9301

501 E. 135th Street, Romeoville

Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. & Sunday noon-4 p.m.

Monee Reservoir • 815-722-9303

27341 Ridgeland Avenue, Monee Township

Hours: Tuesday-Sunday March: 8 a.m.-4 p.m., April: 7 a.m.-6 p.m.,
May-August: 6 a.m.-7 p.m., September-October: 8 a.m.-4 p.m.,
November-February: Closed

Plum Creek Nature Center • 708-946-2216

27064 S. Dutton Road, Beecher

Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. & Sunday noon-4 p.m.

This program is brought to the Forest
Preserve through funding provided by





Forsythe Woods Nature Trail Loop ***Forked Creek Preserve–Forsythe Woods***

Surface type: Natural turf

Woods Walk route round trip: 0.5 mile

Double your adventure and swing out to Braidwood Dunes
for another 0.5 miles of nature trail.

Forked Creek Preserve–Forsythe Woods

Location

Forsythe Woods is located on Kahler Road, west of Barr Road, in Florence Township.

Notable Features

- The 951-acre Forked Creek Preserve was acquired between 1974 and 2007. The preserve is part of the Forked Creek preservation system, which conserves more than 2,400 acres. This preserve has three access areas, all in Wilmington: Ballou Road Access, Butcher Lane Access and Forsythe Woods.
- Forked Creek Preserve protects a diversity of habitats, including forest, wetland and a portion of Forked Creek.
- Wildlife found at the preserve includes a variety of bird species, such as the spotted sandpiper, yellow-billed cuckoo, dickcissel and ovenbird.
- The preserve is also home to a variety of plant species, including redbud, Kentucky coffee tree, glade mallow and smooth blue aster.



Evans-Judge Nature Trail Loop
Evans-Judge Preserve

Surface type: Natural turf

Woods Walk route round trip: 1.5 miles

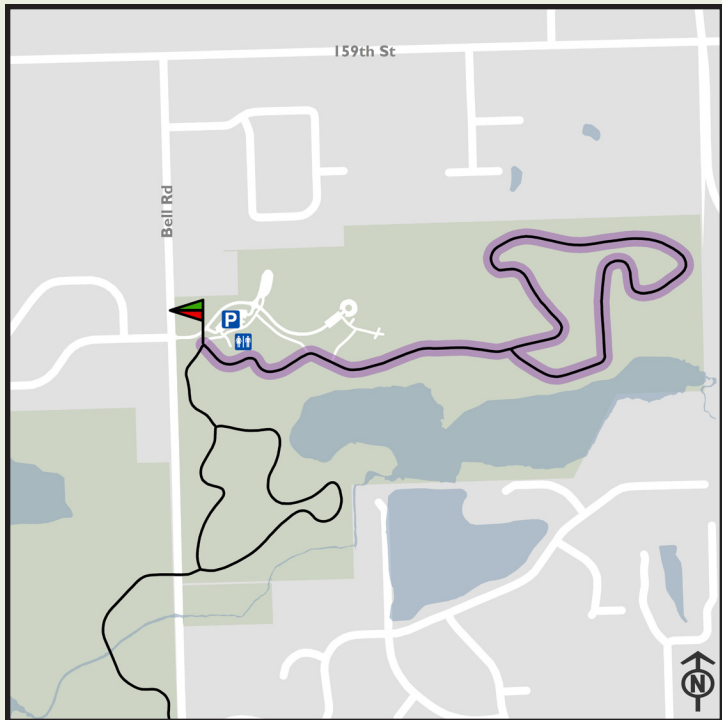
Evans–Judge Preserve

Location

Evans–Judge Preserve is located on Route 113, south of the Kankakee River and west of Kankakee River State Park, in Custer Township.

Notable Features

- The 182-acre Evans-Judge Preserve was acquired between 2002 and 2003. The preserve is part of the Kankakee River preservation system, which conserves approximately 340 acres.
- Evans-Judge Preserve protects a diversity of habitats, including forest, savanna, wetland and a portion of the Kankakee River.
- The preserve offers access to shoreline fishing on the Kankakee River. State and District regulations apply.
- Because the preserve was originally an island, the trail may get muddy at times due to flooding and may be periodically closed for safety.



Spring Creek Greenway Trail *Messenger Marsh*

Surface type: Limestone

Woods Walk Route round trip: 2.2 miles

Extend your walk on the Spring Creek Greenway Trail throughout the preserve.

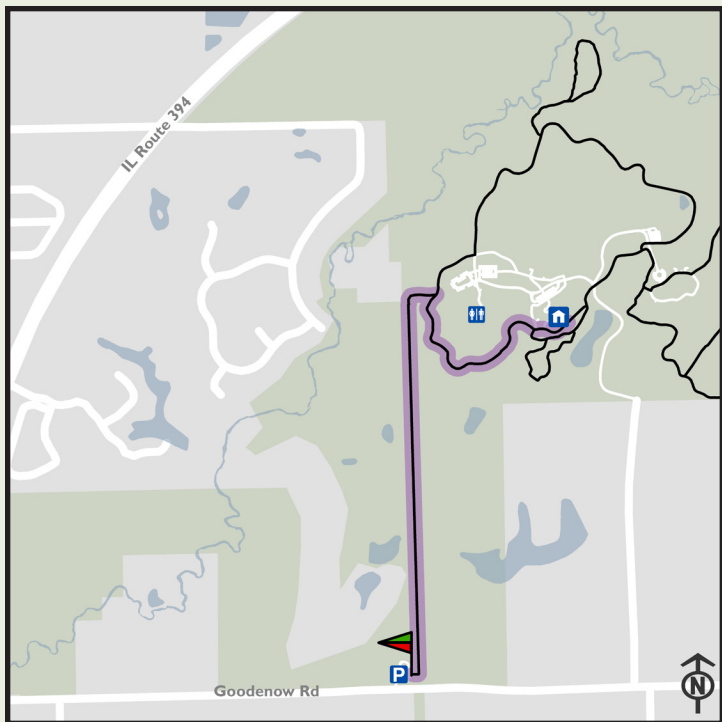
Messenger Marsh

Location

Messenger Marsh is located on South Bell Road, south of Route 7/159th Street, in Homer Glen.

Notable Features

- The 620-acre Messenger Marsh was acquired between 1989 and 2000. The preserve is part of the Spring Creek preservation system, which conserves more than 2,000 acres.
- Messenger Marsh protects a diversity of habitats, including forest, savanna and a portion of Spring Creek. Wildlife found at the preserve includes the wood frog, brown snake and 110 bird species. The preserve is also home to a variety of plant species, including the hairy beardtongue, hispid sunflower, great white lettuce and sunshine rose.
- The site is managed with habitat restoration to protect and enhance its natural resources.
- The preserve is also part of a tree mitigation project funded by the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority that has planted more than 10,000 trees and shrubs at the preserve.



Plum Creek Greenway Trail ***Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve***

Surface type: Natural turf

Woods Walk route round trip: 2.2 mile

Extend your walk on trails surrounding
Plum Creek Nature Center at Goodenow Grove.

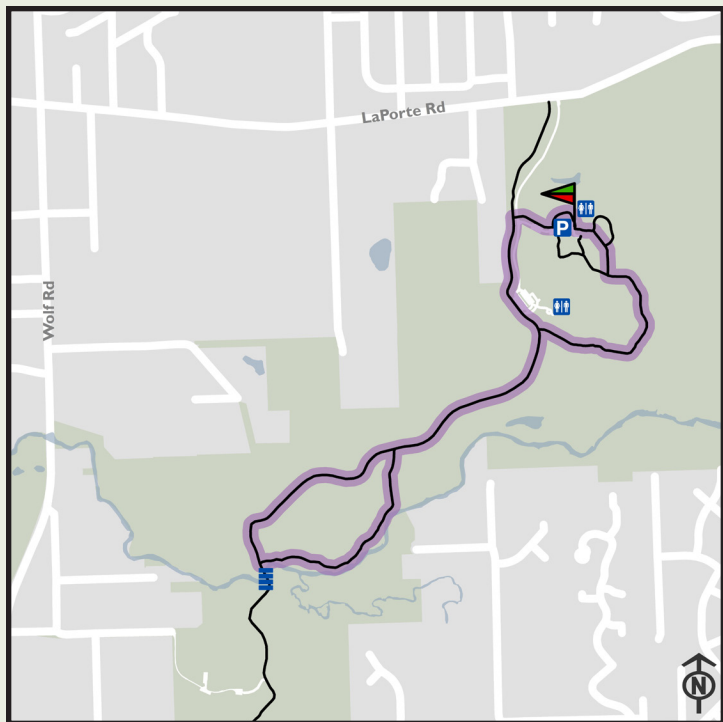
Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve

Location

Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve is located on Dutton Road, north of Goodenow Road, in Crete Township.

Notable Features

- The 891-acre Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve was acquired between 1938 and 2007. The preserve is part of the Plum Creek preservation system, which conserves more than 2,300 acres. The site was previously used as a Boy Scout camp.
- Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve protects a diversity of habitats, including forest, prairie, wetland and a portion of Plum Creek. Wildlife found at the preserve includes several state-threatened or endangered animal species, such as the Kirtland's snake.
- The feeders outside Plum Creek Nature Center also offer ample opportunities to spot some of the wide variety of birds that live in the preserve.
- Goodenow Grove is also home to several state-threatened or endangered plant species, including the spotted coral-root orchid and ear-leafed foxglove.



**Hickory Creek Bikeway and Hickory Creek
Preserve–LaPorte Road Nature Trail**
Hickory Creek Preserve–LaPorte Road Access

Surface type: Asphalt & natural turf

Woods Walk route round trip: 2.2 miles

Extend your walk on the Hickory Creek Bikeway.

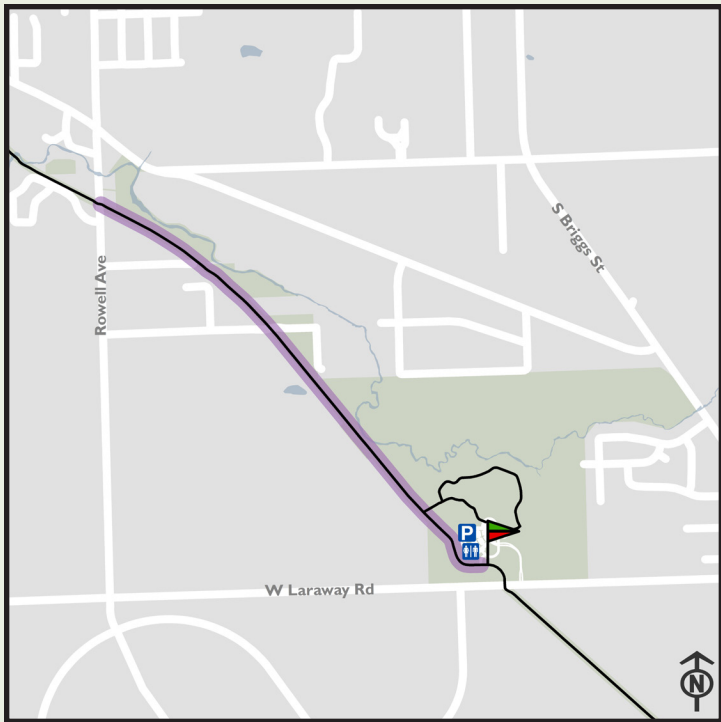
Hickory Creek Preserve–LaPorte Road Access

Location

Hickory Creek Preserve–LaPorte Road Access is located on LaPorte Road, east of Wolf Road, in Mokena.

Notable Features

- The 1,541-acre Hickory Creek Preserve was acquired between 1942 and 2010. The preserve is part of the Hickory Creek preservation system, which conserves more than 2,000 acres. It is the District's largest individual preserve.
- Hickory Creek Preserve protects a diversity of habitats, including forest, prairie, savanna, wetland and a portion of Hickory Creek. Wildlife found at the preserve includes more than 50 bird species, such as the pileated woodpecker, yellow-rumped warbler, brown creeper and hermit thrush.
- The preserve is also home to a variety of plant species, including lead plant, beechwood sedge, yellow trout lily, prairie gentian and wild senna. The nature preserve is home to the largest population of the state-threatened savanna blazing star in Illinois, as well as the federally-threatened Mead's milkweed.



Wauponse Glacial Trail ***Sugar Creek Preserve***

Surface type: Asphalt

Woods Walk route round trip: 2.6 miles

Extend your walk on the Wauponse Glacial Trail.

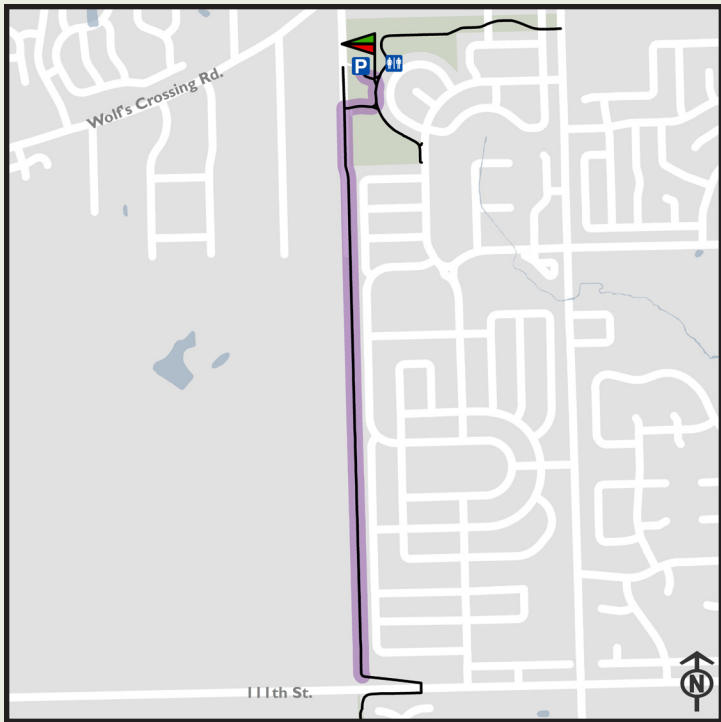
Sugar Creek Preserve

Location

Sugar Creek Preserve is located on Laraway Road, east of Route 53 and west of Route 52/Manhattan Road, in Joliet Township.

Notable Features

- The 317-acre Sugar Creek Preserve was acquired between 1972 and 2011. The preserve is part of the Sugar Creek preservation system, which conserves more than 320 acres.
- Sugar Creek Preserve protects a diversity of habitats, including forest, prairie, wetland and a portion of Sugar Creek. Wildlife found at the preserve includes the mink, dickcissel and northern harrier. The preserve is also home to a variety of plant species, including cream wild indigo and downy sunflower.
- The Wauponsee Glacial Trail is a 22.29-mile paved/crushed limestone linear trail consisting of two segments. The northern segment of the trail is paved and travels 2.8 miles from Sugar Creek Preserve north to Rowell Avenue in Joliet. The southern segment of the trail is crushed limestone and extends an additional 19.49 miles from Sugar Creek Preserve south to the Kankakee River.



Normantown Trail
Vermont Cemetery Preserve

Surface type: Asphalt

Woods Walk route round trip: 2.9 miles

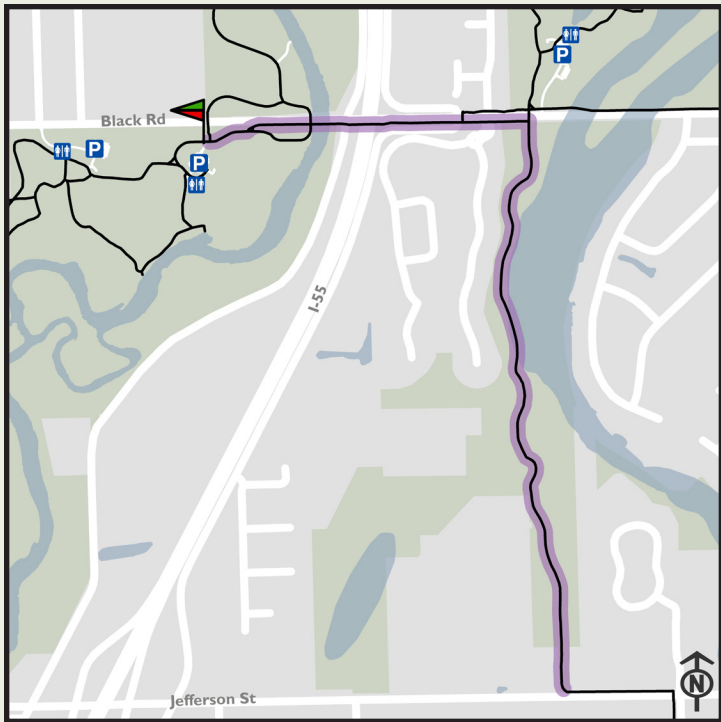
Vermont Cemetery Preserve

Location

Vermont Cemetery Preserve is located on Normantown Road, south of Wolfs Crossing Road, in Naperville.

Notable Features

- The 38-acre Vermont Cemetery Preserve was acquired between 1998 and 2012. The preserve is part of the DuPage River preservation system, which conserves more than 1,500 acres.
- Prior to the District's acquisition of the land, it was a cemetery for early settlers of Wheatland Township. The cemetery has since been preserved, along with the prairie that surrounds it.
- Vermont Cemetery protects prairie habitat.
- The portion of the preserve containing the historic cemetery protects a small prairie remnant with a long history of scientific studies and preservation.
- The preserve is home to the federally-threatened and State-endangered Mead's milkweed.



Rock Run Greenway Trail

Hammel Woods–DuPage River Access

Surface type: Asphalt

Woods Walk route round trip: 3.2 miles

Extend your walk into Hammel Woods
on the DuPage River Trail.

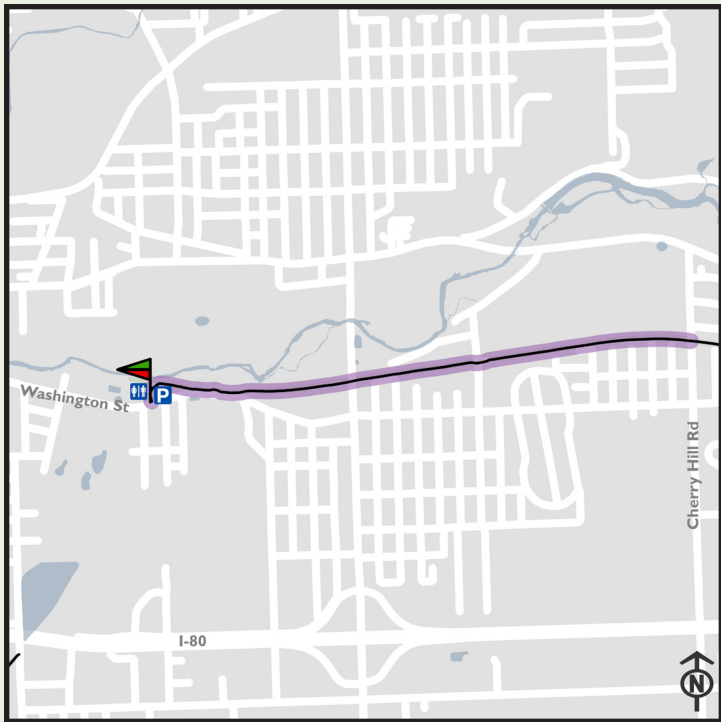
Hammel Woods–DuPage River Access

Location

Hammel Woods–DuPage River Access is located on Black Road, west of Interstate 55, in Shorewood.

Notable Features

- The Rock Run Greenway Trail travels 11.29 miles from Crest Hill south through Joliet.
- The 445-acre Hammel Woods was acquired between 1930 and 2011. The preserve is part of the DuPage River preservation system, which conserves more than 1,500 acres.
- The first 147 acres of Hammel Woods were the District's second and third acquisitions in 1930. The preserve is located at the site of the historic Grinton Mill and was named in honor of American soldiers who fought in the World War I battle in Hamel, France.
- Hammel Woods protects forest and wetland habitats. Wildlife found at the preserve includes the long-tailed weasel and least weasel. The preserve is also home to a variety of plant species, including swamp thistle, bitternut hickory and white baneberry.



Old Plank Road Trail

Old Plank Road Trail–Washington Street Access

Surface type: Asphalt

Woods Walk route round trip: 3.2 miles

Extend your walk on the Old Plank Road Trail.

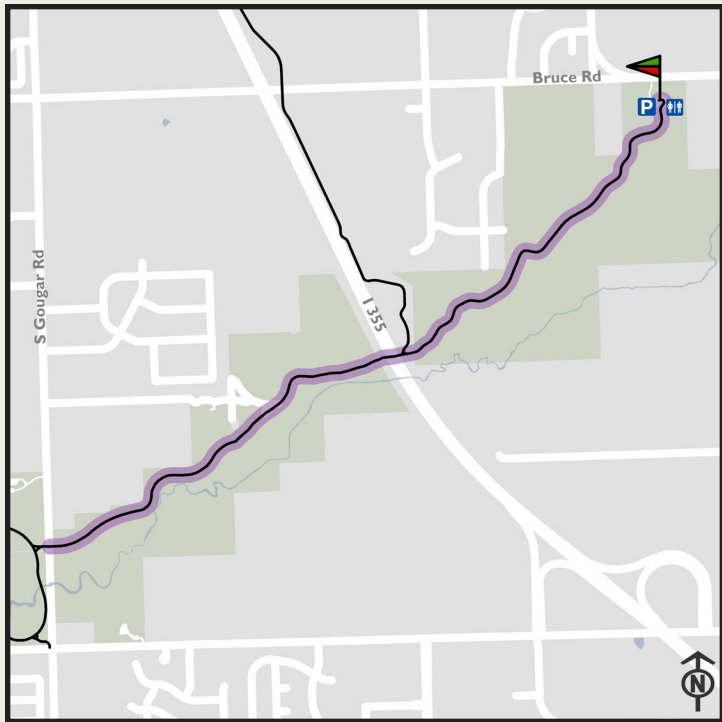
Old Plank Road Trail

Location

Old Plank Road Trail–Washington Street Access is located on Washington Street, east of Logan Avenue, in Joliet.

Notable Features

- The 135-acre Old Plank Road Trail was acquired between 1992 and 2006.
- Prior to the District's acquisition of the land, it was an abandoned railroad. Before the railroad's construction, the corridor had originally been secured to build a wagon and horse road using wood planks, but the road was never built.
- The Old Plank Road Trail travels 22 miles from Joliet east through New Lenox, Frankfort, Matteson, Park Forest and Chicago Heights.
- The trail is owned by several agencies who together form the Old Plank Road Trail Management Commission, including the Forest Preserve District, the Village of Frankfort, Rich Township, the Village of Park Forest and the Village of Matteson. The Forest Preserve District owns and manages 11.5 miles of the 14.1 miles of trail in Will County.



Spring Creek Greenway Trail ***Hadley Valley–Bruce Road Access***

Surface type: Asphalt & limestone

Woods Walk route round trip: 4.4 miles

Extend your walk at Hadley Valley–Gougar Road Access.

Hadley Valley–Bruce Road Access

Location

Hadley Valley–Bruce Road Access is located on Bruce Road, east of Interstate 355, in Homer Township.

Notable Features

- The 854-acre Hadley Valley was acquired between 2000 and 2014. The preserve is part of the Spring Creek preservation system, which conserves more than 2,000 acres.
- Hadley Valley protects a diversity of habitats, including forest, savanna, wetland and a portion of Spring Creek. Wildlife found at the preserve includes hundreds of species of insects, birds, aquatic invertebrates, fish, mammals, amphibians and reptiles. The preserve is also home to a variety of plant species, including tall swamp marigold, wahoo, great angelica, yellow avens and shingle oak.
- The preserve is also the location of the largest restoration effort in the District's history, a stream de-channelization, wetland restoration and wildlife habitat restoration project of 500 acres, performed in partnership with the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority, Openlands, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the O'Hare Modernization Program.



INDIGE-FACTS

Traveling Exhibit



Saturday, Sept. 21, to Sunday, Dec. 8
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays to Saturdays
and noon to 4 p.m. Sundays.

Isle a la Cache Museum, Romeoville



“Indige-Facts” features facts about contemporary Native Americans. The traveling exhibit covers topics ranging from accepted terminology and population size to the sovereign rights of Native people. “Indige-Facts” is a great way to educate yourself on contemporary Native

life in the United States. This exhibition is on loan from the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian in Evanston and is brought to Isle a la Cache Museum through the generous support of The Nature Foundation of Will County.

Interested in Volunteering?



What Type of Volunteer Are You?



Public Offered Volunteer

- Shorter-term commitments
- Dates, times and locations of volunteer opportunities at ReconnectWithNature.org
- Limited options available
- Waiver good for calendar year

Prairie People Volunteer

- Longer-term commitments
- Complete an application
- Background check
- Orientation and additional trainings



Waiver



Application

For more information, visit ReconnectWithNature.org

FOREST
PRESERVE
DISTRICT
WILL COUNTY



SHOP OUR MERCH



Choose from
nature-themed
T-shirts, hats
and more!



SHOP OUR ONLINE STORE

To receive your Woods Walk collector's medal, participate using the Goosechase iOS or Android app with your smartphone or visit one of the Forest Preserve visitor centers (see Page 2) with this completed form or fill out this form and mail it to:

Woods Walk
c/o Sugar Creek Administration Center
17540 W. Laraway Road
Joliet, IL 60433

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Please check the trails you hiked:

- Forsythe Woods Nature Trail Loop
- Evans-Judge Nature Trail Loop
- Spring Creek Greenway Trail (Messenger Marsh)
- Plum Creek Greenway Trail
- Hickory Creek Bikeway & LaPorte Road Nature Trail
- Wauponsee Glacial Trail
- Normantown Trail
- Rock Run Greenway Trail
- Old Plank Road Trail
- Spring Creek Greenway Trail (Hadley Valley)

Did you know that you can also participate in the Woods Walk Challenge using the Goosechase app? Just download the Goosechase iOS or Android app with your smartphone and sign up for a free account.

Then, starting September 1, search for *Will County Woods Walk Challenge* to get started!

Preserve hours 8 a.m. to sunset

ReconnectWithNature.org



In providing programs and services to the public the Forest Preserve District will make reasonable modifications to ensure that all people have an equal opportunity to enjoy District offerings. For more information, visit ReconnectWithNature.org/ADA.

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
WILL COUNTY

Bringing People and Nature Together

