



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.



Sunflowers @ Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve

CONTENT



Board of Commissioners | 1

From the President | 2

From the Chief Operating Officer | 4

Milestones of 2018 | 6

Programs and Events | 24

Partnerships | 26

Awards | 29

Financials | 30

Volunteers | 34

Staff Roster | 40

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

DISTRICT 1

Judy Ogalla,
Monee – *Secretary*
Laurie Summers,
Crete

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 6

Donald Gould,
Shorewood
Debbie Militello,
Channahon

DISTRICT 7

Steve Balich,
Orland Park
Mike Fricilone,
Homer Glen – *Operations
Committee Chair*

DISTRICT 8

Herbert Brooks Jr.,
Joliet – *Ad Hoc Rules
Committee Chair*
Denise Winfrey,
Joliet

DISTRICT 9

Annette Parker,
Joliet – *Vice President*
Lauren Staley-Ferry,
Joliet

DISTRICT 10

Gloria Dollinger,
Joliet
Tyler J. Marcum,
Joliet

DISTRICT 11

Suzanne Hart,
Naperville – *President*
Charles E. Maher,
Naperville

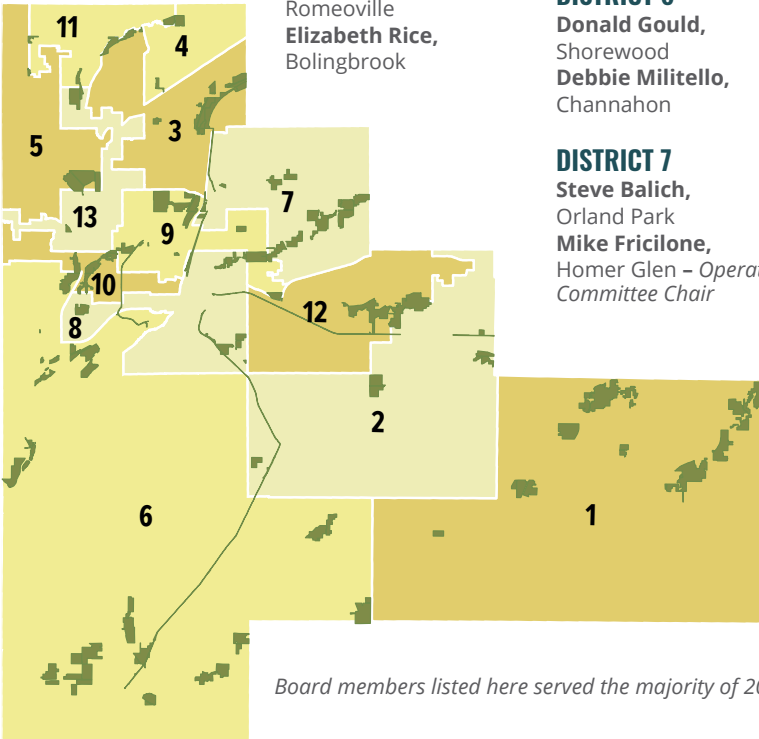
DISTRICT 12

Ray Tuminello,
New Lenox – *Finance
Committee Chair*
Tom Weigel,
New Lenox – *Finance
Committee Vice Chair*

DISTRICT 13

Mark Ferry,
Plainfield
Tim J. Kraulidis,
Joliet

NEARLY
22,000
ACRES OF LAND
PRESERVED



Board members listed here served the majority of 2018.



FROM THE PRESIDENT
Laurie Summers

In 2018, the Forest Preserve provided more than 900 public programs introducing children and adults to the wonders of our natural world and the immediate environment. These programs served to educate, inspire and cultivate an appreciation of our natural landscape as well as bring about a better understanding of our relationship to it. Whether biking while learning about the history of the I&M Canal and early industry, paddling our rivers and lakes while observing local wildlife, recording preserve visits in photographs or paintings, or trekking across the county to visit different preserves in the Woods Walk challenge, the opportunities are endless to improve health and wellness in both body and spirit through our forest preserve system.

We will continue to focus on offering you ways to interact with your preserves and to protect and restore the natural resources they contain. I'm proud of what we have accomplished together, honored to be trusted as a steward of our Forest Preserve District and I look forward to enhancing our quality of life with a continued emphasis on expanding and improving our forest preserves. If you haven't already, I encourage you to visit local forest preserves near you and see for yourself how special they really are – go ahead, get out and go wild!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie M. Summers". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.



SUNSET @ HICKORY CREEK PRESERVE
(📷 courtesy of Michael Fagan)



FROM THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
Ralph Schultz

The Forest Preserve's core mission is to protect and restore Will County's natural resources, provide public access to preserves and interpret what they contain. In 2018, the Forest Preserve continued to manage its highest quality habitats across the county and to initiate restoration of degraded sites and agricultural areas. These efforts were supported by a number of grants and unique partnerships as well as hundreds of volunteers who devoted thousands of hours working to restore Forest Preserve landscapes and improve the health and resiliency of our natural areas. We also completed construction and renovation of several access areas and trails throughout the forest preserve system, making sure to maintain the high quality that our visitors have come to expect of their Forest Preserve. Thousands of you also enjoyed our education and recreation programs as well as the special exhibitions held at our four visitor centers.

In 2019, we will continue to invest in renovating and enhancing existing forest preserve access areas and trails. We will also complete new trail linkages that connect our communities and preserves, and we will continue planning for others. In addition, you will also be able to enjoy a number of free special events and educational exhibitions of national and regional significance throughout the year. I hope you'll take the opportunity to visit our website, *ReconnectWithNature.org*, and follow us on social media to plan your next adventure in your forest preserves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph Schultz". The signature is stylized and cursive.



MILESTONES OF 2018



PLUM VALLEY DOG PARK OPENING

(by Chad Merda)



SUMMERS ELECTED NEW BOARD PRESIDENT

The Forest Preserve's Board of Commissioners elected Laurie Summers as president during its reorganization meeting in December 2018. Summers of Crete Township is a registered nurse who has served on the Board since 2016. She succeeds former President Suzanne Hart of Naperville.

A lifelong resident of Will County, Summers has resided in District 1 her entire life. She attended Zion Lutheran School in Beecher, graduated from Beecher High School, and is a graduate of the Prairie State College nursing program. Summers and her husband, Michael, have three children and four grandchildren.

Commissioners elected Kenneth Harris of Bolingbrook as vice president, Amanda Koch of Frankfort as secretary and Tyler Marcum of Joliet as treasurer.





ARMY CORPS, STATE CONTRIBUTE \$682,200 FOR RESTORATION EFFORTS

Two partner organizations agreed to contribute \$682,200 to Forest Preserve restoration efforts at four preserves located in the Crest Hill and Braidwood areas. An existing agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provides an additional \$560,000 for ongoing restoration work at Prairie Bluff Preserve in Crest Hill. And a southern Will County preserve region known as the Braidwood Sands Area received a \$122,200 grant from the Illinois Special Wildlife Fund.

Through the existing agreement, the Army Corps previously provided \$2.3 million to restore 367 acres at Prairie Bluff and the adjacent Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve. Groundwater that flows from Prairie Bluff is critical for the survival of rare and endangered species living at Lockport Prairie. The extra funds will restore an additional 67 acres at Prairie Bluff. The Army Corps is funding the work as part of its aquatic ecosystem restoration project, which began this summer.



The wildlife fund grant will be used for continued savanna restoration work at two preserves located in Custer Township near Braidwood: Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve and Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve. These are two of the five preserves that make up the larger Braidwood Sands Area, which also includes state-owned land. An additional \$265,000 in local funds will be combined with the wildlife fund grant to accomplish this portion of the ongoing restoration work.



"Inspired by the National Parks" Quilt Exhibition

ONLINE OPTION LAUNCHES FOR DOG PARK PERMITS

Forest Preserve dog park patrons looking to purchase 2018 calendar year permits had the option for the first time to do so online.

With the addition of this new convenience for the public, dog owners can now purchase a permit by visiting a District visitor center, mailing in an application or going online to *ReconnectWithNature.org*.

More than half of all dog park permits sold in 2018 were purchased utilizing this new customer-friendly offering.



BUY A PERMIT ONLINE

VISITORS FLOCK TO EXHIBITIONS

In 2018, the District hosted five exhibitions that attracted visitors throughout the region. The Forest Preserve's most expansive exhibit to date, "Inspired by the National Parks," invited the public to celebrate the National Park Service's centennial anniversary by viewing 177 quilts showcasing 59 National Parks. Unique works of art, each quilt incorporated materials and/or objects reflective of the park it represented. The collection was displayed simultaneously at four District visitor centers. In all, 5,500 National Park Service fans, quilt enthusiasts and art lovers traveled from around the region and beyond to enjoy this special exhibit.

Additionally, the Forest Preserve's Plum Creek Nature Center hosted four other exhibitions that brought in nearly 15,000 visitors! These traveling exhibits included: "A Salamander Tale" and "Bee-lieve It or Not! The Secret Lives of Bees" – both organized by the Purdue Agriculture Exhibit Design Center – and two art exhibitions featuring local artists Don Sala and Cheryl Holz. Exhibits were on display for several weeks to several months throughout the year.



FOREST PRESERVE SAVES \$905,000 WITH BOND REFUNDING

In November 2018, the Forest Preserve's Board of Commissioners approved the refunding of \$10 million in general obligation limited tax bonds, saving taxpayers \$905,000.

The yield on the bonds fell from 4.18 percent to 2.95 percent. The refunding opportunity came about because the credit market continues to look favorably on the District's bond offerings, said John Gerl, the Forest Preserve's chief financial officer.

The transaction took place in December, and the bonds will mature in 2027. Proceeds from the original bond sale were used to acquire land.

THERAPY DOG PERMIT FUND ESTABLISHED

A \$500 donation from Sheet Metal Workers Union Local 265 allowed the Forest Preserve District to offer free dog park permits for therapy dogs, including five canines that work for the Will County State's Attorney's Office.

District Commissioner Don Moran, who facilitated the donation and serves as a representative for the union, presented the donation check to the Forest Preserve during the Board's November meeting.

The funds offset the cost of dog park permit fees for qualifying therapy dogs that assist at Will County related service agencies and not-for-profits. The permits will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis until the fund is depleted.

The first free dog park permits were issued to three canines assigned to the Will County Children's Advocacy Center, which was established by State's Attorney James Glasgow in 1995 to improve investigations into cases involving the sexual abuse of children.

NEW PROGRAM, PRESENTATIONS HIGHLIGHT THE VALUE OF COMPOSTING

“Pumpkin Smash!,” a program offered in partnership with Glen Ellyn-based SCARCE, School and Community Assistance for Recycling and Composting Education, was a new offering at the Forest Preserve’s Plum Creek Nature Center in 2018. This program encouraged the public to keep fall pumpkins out of landfills by instead smashing them into a compost dumpster located on-site. The dumpster was then hauled away and the pumpkins went to their new destination – a local composting facility in Peotone. In total, more than 1,200 pounds of pumpkins were collected and smashed by 77 participants in “tons-of-fun-of-pumpkin-smashing” activities around the nature center.

Composting at Plum Creek Nature Center also was highlighted in 2018 thanks to the Link and Leverage Initiatives for Sustainability in the south suburbs. Two local conferences invited the Forest Preserve District to present on the Plum Creek Nature Center’s composting successes with area schools.

Interpretive Naturalist Kate Caldwell



PLUM VALLEY PRESERVE OPENS

The Plum Valley Preserve – Burville Road Access, which includes the Forest Preserve District's sixth off-leash dog park, opened in November in Crete Township. The access area, located at the southeast corner of Burville Road and Route 394, includes a picnic pavilion that can accommodate up to 50 people, a 9-acre dog park and a latrine. The site provides the first access area for the 455-acre Plum Valley Preserve.

In addition to the picnic shelter and dog park, the preserve also will eventually include a 1-mile section of the Plum Creek Greenway Trail. The crushed limestone trail will extend south from the new access area.





Forest Preserve
District of Will County

Plum Valley Preserve

Burville Road Access

...bringing people and nature together

**Dog
Park**



**Permit
Required**

815.727.8700

ReconnectWithNature.org



Wildlife of the Day

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS EXPERIENCE CONTINUED GROWTH

In 2018, the Forest Preserve saw ongoing growth in its digital communications while also expanding its offerings to the public.

The District garnered more than 100,000 followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram combined. A second digital newsletter, *The Weekly Five*, was launched to highlight Forest Preserve programs and events. A Will County Wildlife Facebook Group was started to provide a venue for fellow nature lovers to share photos of the amazing wildlife they see. Two additional Twitter accounts – Today's Bird (@todaysbird) and Wildlife of the Day (@wildlifeofday) – were created in partnership with Lake County Forest Preserves to showcase our best nature shots.

..... The District's Willy's Wilderness kids' webpage was
..... transitioned to its own website – **WillysWilderness.org** –
..... to shine an even larger spotlight on the value of nature for
..... children and their families.

At the same time, Willy the Woodchuck, the Forest Preserve's mascot, received his own Facebook page to further promote environmental education.

The District also experienced a 24 percent increase in website visitors when compared with 2017.



SMALL DOG PLAY AREA, WATER FOUNTAIN DEDICATED AT HAMMEL WOODS

A ribbon-cutting held in July unleashed a new era for small dogs at Hammel Woods in Shorewood. Canines weighing 35 pounds or less were given their own 2.3-acre off-leash play area at the dog park, which is located at Hammel Woods – DuPage River Access.

Hammel Woods Dog Park was the District's first off-leash play area for canines when it opened in 2002 with one 8.5-acre enclosure for dogs of all sizes. Feedback from dog park users made it clear that one large area wasn't going to work for all dogs, said Ralph Schultz, the Forest Preserve's chief operating officer. The new small-dog enclosure is located adjacent to the original dog park.

A new water fountain was also dedicated at Hammel Woods for use by campers, trail users and dog park patrons. Elkay Manufacturing of Oak Brook, working in conjunction with The Nature Foundation of Will County, donated the fountain. Company owner Ron Katz made the donation in honor of his late wife, Sandy, who was a dog lover. A plaque was placed on the water fountain to honor her memory.



LAND PRESERVATION



FIDDYMENT CREEK PRESERVE
(📷 by Ron Molk)

The Forest Preserve District acquired three parcels of land in 2018, extending existing open space. The District accepted the donation of a 28.13-acre parcel containing a portion of Thorn Creek and surrounded by publicly owned property, including Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve in Park Forest and University Park.

The Village of Homer Glen, as part of an annexation and development agreement with the District, also transferred two properties, totaling 7.83 acres. These parcels close the gap between the Forest Preserve's existing holdings at Fiddymont Creek Preserve in Homer Glen.

... Fiddymont Creek Preserve protects a diversity of habitat, including forest, prairie, savanna and wetland. Wildlife found at the preserve includes bird species such as the horned lark, turkey vulture, **sharp-shinned hawk** and ovenbird.

These acquisitions help to accomplish the District's goal of connecting open space throughout Will County. Working in conjunction with local park districts, municipalities, federal and state conservation agencies and others, the Forest Preserve continues to piece together greenways that improve the quality of life, provide access to public recreation, protect and restore habitat and provide sanctuary for wildlife.



PRESERVE DEVELOPMENTS



DUPAGE RIVER TRAIL
(📷 by Glenn P. Knoblock)



Plum Valley Preserve – Burville Road Access



Veterans Woods

Three key developments were completed in 2018.

DUPAGE RIVER TRAIL EXTENSION

A newly constructed 1.25-mile section of the DuPage River Trail that connects Whalon Lake preserve in Will County to Greene Valley Forest Preserve in DuPage County opened to the public. The new segment begins in the northeastern corner of the preserve and travels east along Royce Road and north on Greene Road to Greene Valley in Naperville. The project was a collaboration between the two forest preserve districts and Elmhurst-Chicago Stone Company, which operates a quarry adjacent to Whalon Lake. The company constructed and paid for most of the new trail segment in exchange for permission to build a floodwater diversion channel in Whalon Lake preserve as previously planned.

PLUM VALLEY PRESERVE – BURVILLE ROAD ACCESS

Construction was completed for a new preserve access, shelter and dog park at Plum Valley Preserve in Crete Township. Work also began to develop a 1-mile section of the Plum Creek Greenway Trail at this location. Both projects were supported by an Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant.

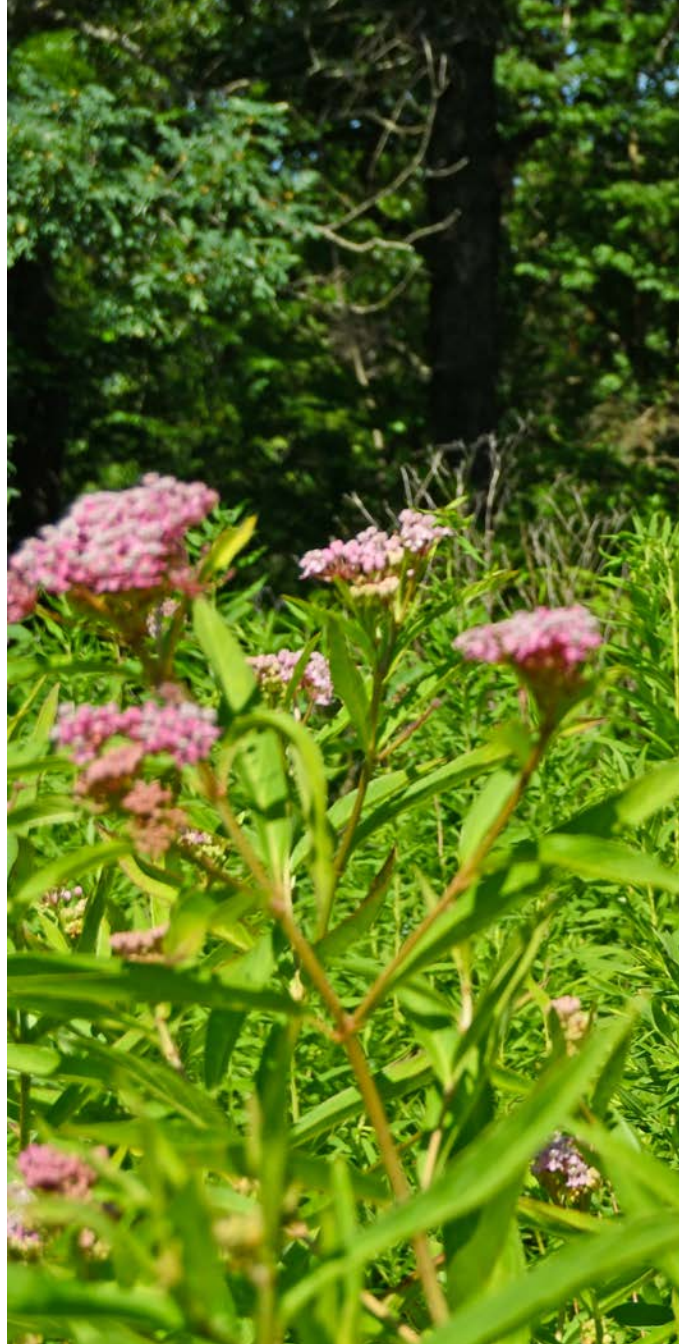
VETERANS WOODS IMPROVEMENTS

Enhancements were made to Veterans Woods that included the refurbishing of the parking lots at the preserve's two access areas – Roy F. Hassert Grove and Traders Corner – and work to improve sidewalks and the small trail connection between the two access areas. Portions of each parking lot were removed and reconstructed. The remainder of the lots had the top layer of asphalt replaced. A paved 0.33-mile trail was also built to link the two picnic groves, and internal walkways were upgraded.

Land that is preserved must be nurtured and protected. Stewardship of Forest Preserve lands is a major focus of the District's mission. Cultivating native plant species, protecting and enhancing waterways, restoring our natural heritage of woodlands, prairies and wetlands, and studying the ecological health of the region are all important priorities as Will County's landscape continues to change. In 2018, land management activities were conducted on more than 4,700 acres of the District's holdings, with efforts focused on 14 preserve locations.

One of the most significant projects is the ongoing restoration of 1,423 acres of sand savanna, prairie and wetland communities located at Kankakee Sands Preserve in Custer Township, Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve in Wilmington/Custer Township and Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve in Braidwood. In 2018, this restoration project involved invasive species control as well as the collection of seed from approximately 300 species of local native plants for use on site.

..... Kankakee Sands Preserve is home to a variety of plant species, including **swamp milkweed**.
..... The site is managed with invasive species control, prescribed burning and habitat restoration to protect
..... and enhance its natural resources.







BAT MONITORING @ FORKED CREEK PRESERVE
(📷 by Glen Buckner)

WILDLIFE RESEARCH PROJECTS

Deer Browse Survey @ Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve

Each year, wildlife research projects are conducted to monitor local flora and fauna. In 2018, one project included the completion of wading bird nesting surveys at Lake Renwick Nature Preserve in Plainfield and Rock Run Rookery Preserve in Joliet.

The District also cooperated with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in the removal of Asian carp from the Des Plaines River system at Rock Run Rookery Preserve in Joliet, and partnered with the organization to continue monitoring the spread of chronic wasting disease in deer in the southern part of Will County.

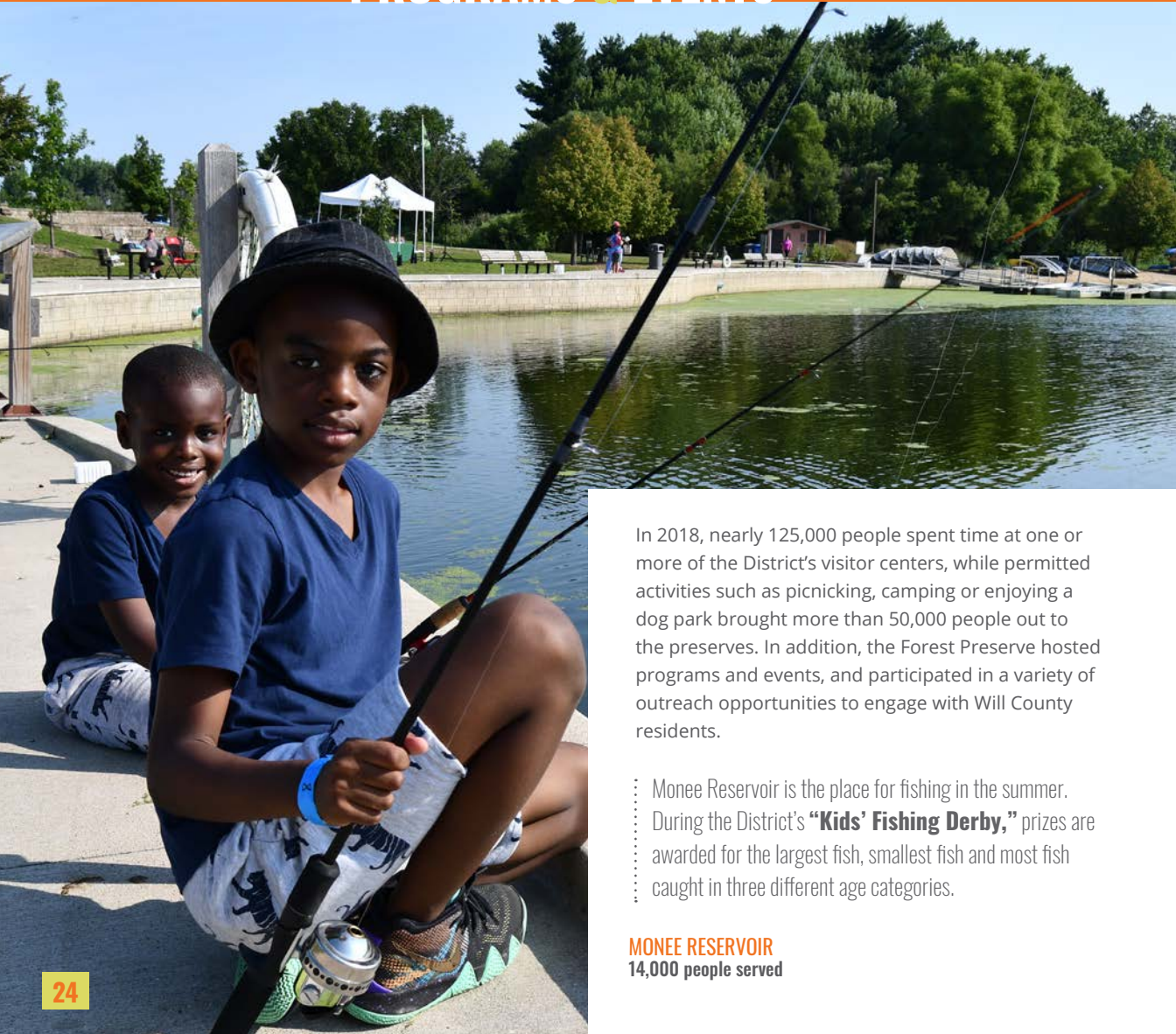
Aerial deer population surveys also were completed at 25 preserves and the impact of deer browse was documented at 12 preserves.

Another project included bat monitoring at 13 forest preserves with the assistance of volunteer citizen scientists.

There are **remote bat detectors** at a number of preserves to monitor the migration paths of bats throughout the area.



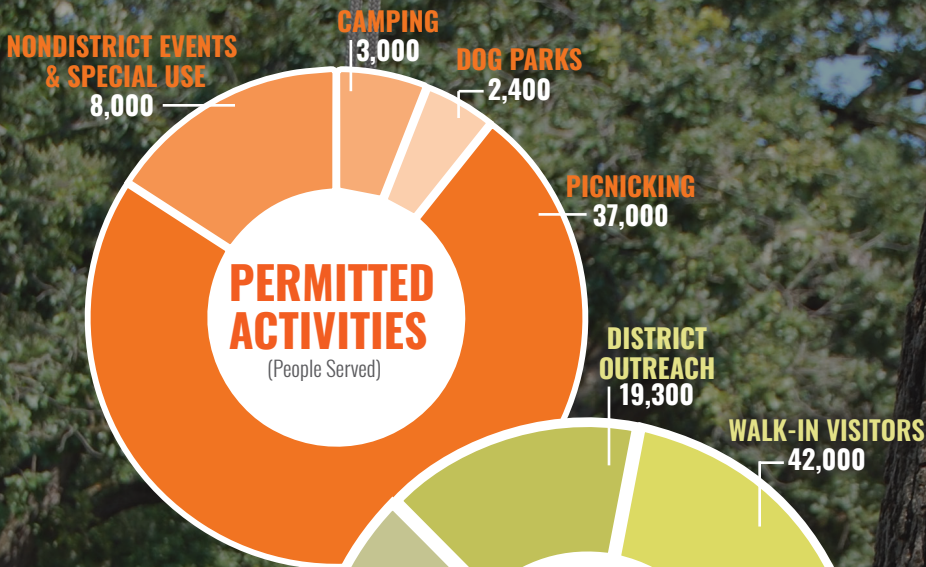
PROGRAMS & EVENTS



In 2018, nearly 125,000 people spent time at one or more of the District's visitor centers, while permitted activities such as picnicking, camping or enjoying a dog park brought more than 50,000 people out to the preserves. In addition, the Forest Preserve hosted programs and events, and participated in a variety of outreach opportunities to engage with Will County residents.

- Monee Reservoir is the place for fishing in the summer.
- During the District's **"Kids' Fishing Derby,"** prizes are awarded for the largest fish, smallest fish and most fish caught in three different age categories.

MONEE RESERVOIR
14,000 people served



PUBLIC PROGRAMS
15,000

EDUCATION PROGRAMS
17,500



FACILITY RENTALS
5,000

FACILITY EVENTS
26,000



FOUR RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
14,000 people served



ISLE A LA CACHE MUSEUM
23,500 people served



PLUM CREEK NATURE CENTER
44,500 people served



SUGAR CREEK ADMINISTRATION CENTER
3,600 people served

Hummingbird Fest @ Plum Creek Nature Center

AWARDS IN APPRECIATION OF PARTNERS

Pieces 'n Patches Quilt Guild



Two agencies received Appreciation of Partners awards for 2018 during the Forest Preserve District's Board of Commissioners' meeting in March 2019. Each year, the District selects its award honorees from dozens of partnering organizations, and the recipients are recognized and awarded a plaque by the Forest Preserve's Board.

PIECES 'N PATCHES QUILT GUILD

The Appreciation of Partners award presented to Pieces 'n Patches was earned by the Steger, Illinois, quilt guild for its assistance with the "Inspired by the National Parks" traveling quilt exhibit hosted at Forest Preserve visitor centers during the summer of 2018. Members of the guild served as docents for the portion of the collection displayed at Plum Creek Nature Center in Crete Township. The volunteers guided visitors through the exhibit, answering questions and sharing information about the process of creating these colorful and unique works of art. The guild's help was critical to ensuring that visitors to the exhibit made the most of their experience.

St. Mary Catholic Church



ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

St. Mary Catholic Church of Mokena was selected for an Appreciation of Partners award for its ongoing volunteer restoration efforts at Hickory Creek Preserve – LaPorte Road Access. For the past two years, this volunteer group has worked to remove invasive plants such as honeysuckle and buckthorn from this Mokena preserve to allow native species to thrive. The Forest Preserve is grateful and relies on dedicated groups such as this for their assistance in helping to accomplish its land management goals.



ALTERNATIVE REVENUE INITIATIVES

The following grants were awarded to the Forest Preserve District in 2018. Grants expand local tax dollars to enable the District to provide more amenities to Will County citizens.

GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation.....\$1,602,140
Land Acquisition Grant
Hadley Valley

Army Corps of Engineers.....\$560,000
Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Projects
Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve and Prairie Bluff Preserve

Illinois Department of Natural Resources.....\$122,200
State Wildlife Grant
Braidwood Sands Natural Area

ComEd and Openlands.....\$10,000
ComEd Green Region Grant
Prairie Bluff Preserve

Open Land Trust.....\$10,000
Grant for Native Prairie Restoration
Prairie Bluff Preserve

The Nature Conservancy.....\$2,210
Volunteer Stewardship Network Grant
Volunteer Supplies for Natural Area Restoration

ONEOK, Inc.....\$1,100
Program Development Grant for Water Quality Field Trip
Four Rivers Environmental Education Center

TOTAL GRANTS FOR 2018.....\$2,307,650

The Forest Preserve received a total of \$27,714 in 2018 through sponsorships and donations. Thank you to the following sponsors and donors.

- Barbara A. McCafferty Family Foundation
- Chevron Corporation
- Chew on This/Bentley's Pet Stuff
- Chicagoland Speedway
- Colette Doner
- Douglas Darin
- Family of Mary J. White
- Frankfort-New Lenox Running Club
- Friends and Family of Officer Brad Veerman
- Goldman Sachs
- Harvest House Quilting
- Madison Gill
- Richard Wachenheim
- Shorewood HUGS
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Nature Foundation of Will County
- Trisha Ludeman

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

\$27,714
RECEIVED IN
SPONSORSHIP &
DONATIONS



Shorewood HUGS Check Presentation



The Nature Foundation's Booth @ "Arts & Nature on the River" Event

AWARDS OF 2018



AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials

The Forest Preserve's digital marketing efforts were recognized with an Award of Excellence from the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials. Presented during the association's summer meeting in Nashville, the award acknowledged the achievements of the District in developing and growing a following across a number of social media platforms, two digital newsletters and its website. More than 100,000 people follow the Forest Preserve on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram combined. The Forest Preserve's main Facebook page has more followers than any other forest preserve district in the state. And videos produced by the District's Marketing and Communications Department were viewed 2.5 million times from March 2016 to February 2018.

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT IN FINANCIAL REPORTING Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)

The Forest Preserve District received the Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting in 2018 for the 23rd consecutive year. The award recognized the Forest Preserve's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2017. The Certificate of Achievement, awarded by GFOA, is the highest recognition given in governmental accounting.



OUTSTANDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT Special Olympics Illinois

The Forest Preserve's Police Department raised \$7,246 in 2018 for the Law Enforcement Torch Run, a fundraising campaign which benefits Special Olympics Illinois. This not-for-profit organization recognized the efforts of the Forest Preserve with a plaque for outstanding financial support. District Police plan to ramp up their charity work in 2019 to benefit Special Olympics. Officers will take part in several fundraisers with the goal of raising even more money than they have in the past several years for the agency.



FINANCIAL INFORMATION



MONARCH CATERpillARS @ PLUM CREEK NATURE CENTER

(by Suzy Lyttle)

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

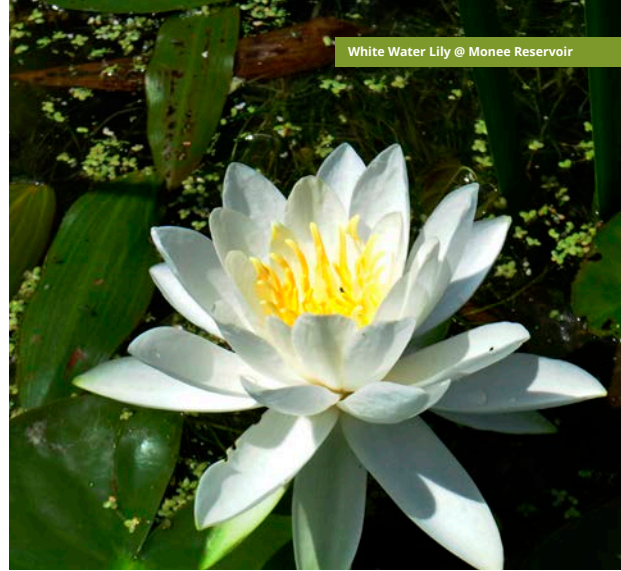
In 1926, voters approved a referendum to establish the Forest Preserve District of Will County as a separate taxing body of county government. Even then, when Will County was overwhelmingly rural, its citizens realized the importance of preserving its natural treasures. Today, the Forest Preserve District 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 nearly 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 refunded, with approximately \$4.8 million saved in interest costs over the life of the bonds.

In May 2016, \$16,705,000 of series 2008A bonds was refinanced, with an estimated savings of \$2 million 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.

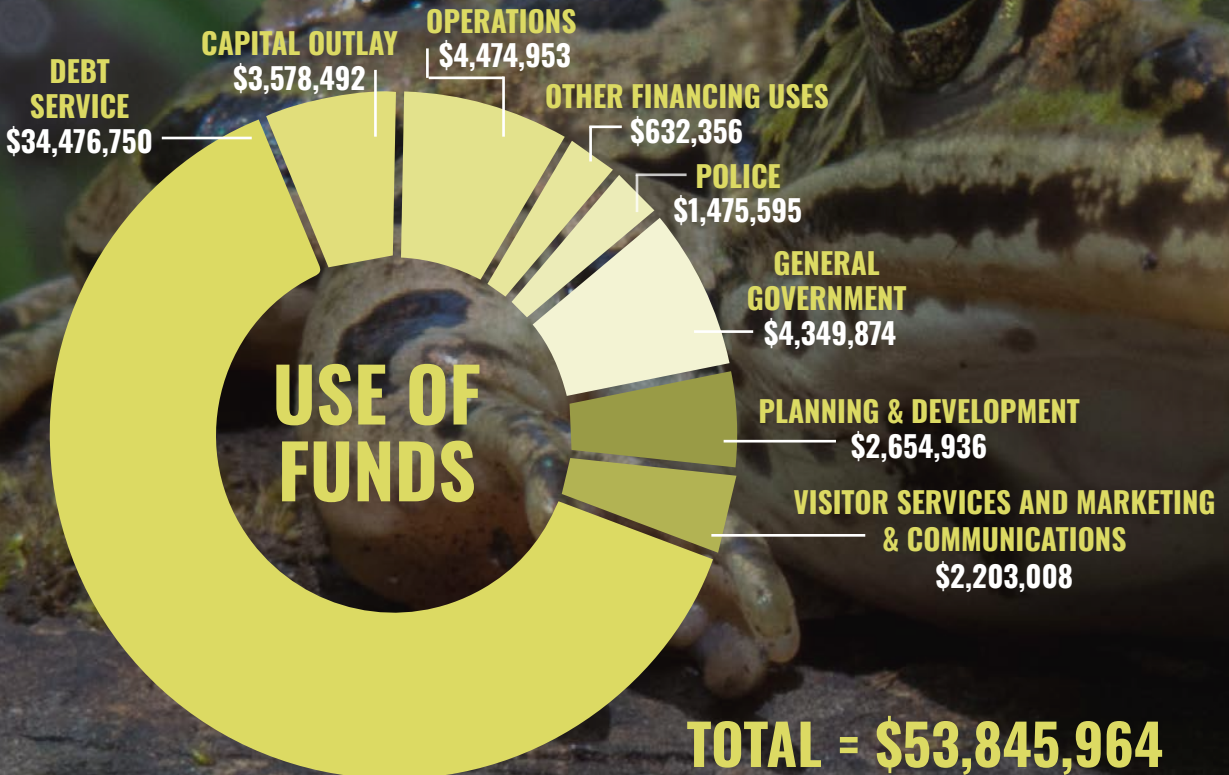
In December 2018, \$10 million of series 2007 bonds was refunded, with an estimated savings of \$905,000 in total costs over the remaining life of the bonds.

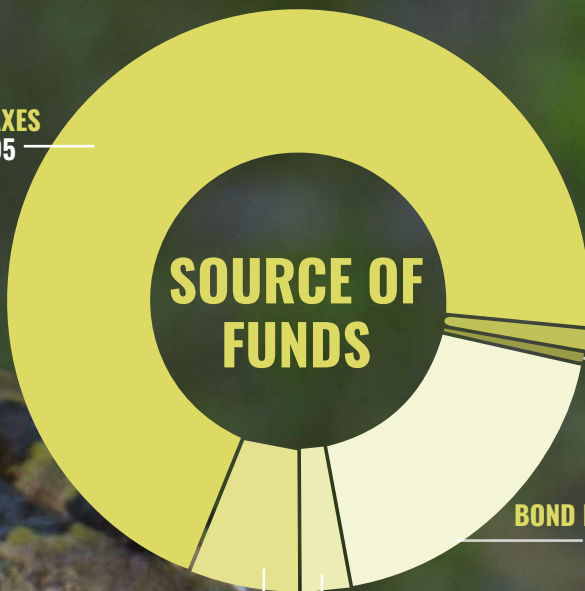
DEBT SERVICE

Each of the bond issuances requires debt service. These are scheduled to be paid down over 20 years for each.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Leopard Frog @ Centennial Trail
(courtesy of Kevin Keyes)





TOTAL = \$54,514,479

LEVY YEAR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
CORPORATE/ C&D	0.1970	0.1977	0.1937	0.1944	0.1895
DEBT SERVICE	0.0710	0.0728	0.0722	0.0702	0.0687
TOTAL	0.1260	0.1249	0.1215	0.1242	0.1208

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT



STUDENT VOLUNTEER @ HICKORY CREEK PRESERVE

(📷 by Glenn P. Knoblock)

Volunteers help the Forest Preserve District to accomplish many goals. In 2018, a total of 15,219 hours of service were generously donated by 1,168 volunteers. Of these, 192 were Prairie People volunteers. These loyal citizens regularly support the Forest Preserve year after year. The remaining 976 individuals participated in District volunteer opportunities for the first time or intermittently throughout the year. Time and talent given by these dedicated individuals contributed to monitoring the county's flora and fauna, restoring natural areas, assisting with District programs and events, beautifying gardens and shorelines throughout the preserves, and more. Without these volunteer efforts, the Forest Preserve could not accomplish all that it does in support of its mission.

Division or Department	Total Volunteers	Hours
Business Administration and Financial Services	39	817
Law Enforcement	22	1,798
Maintenance and Operations	185	770
Planning and Development	744	8,893
Visitor Services	178	2,941
Grand Total	1,168	15,219



Diane Aigner
 JoDell Albi
 Brooke Anderson
 Gilbert Anderson
 Jason Andre
 Linda Andrews
 Julie Arvia
 Erik Attaway
 Jim Avila
 David Babich
 Nicholas Bain
 Amanda Baird
 Michael Barna
 Frank Basile
 Gail Beauchamp
 Brandon Beddigs
 Georgia Benson
 Mark Bettin
 Barbara Biel
 Sebastian Biel
 June Blackburn
 Greg Bluhm
 Claudia Boothe
 Brad Bosch
 Bradley Brajkarich
 Marc Brajkarich
 Julian Branzon
 Brian Briese
 Chloe Briese
 Kristin Briese
 Ally Brooks
 Amber Brooks
 Linda Brncick
 Kay Bryant
 Ardella Burkes
 Arkayla Burkes
 Kristin Busirk
 Reese Butta
 Robert Butta

Katialla Buzzard
 Scott Carevic
 Olive Carlisle
 Pete Caldwell
 Therese Caldwell
 Vanessa Caldwell
 Carol Chiasson
 Melissa Chiasson
 Jo Chenell
 Jean Christensen
 Carol Cooley
 Kerri Counts
 Anna Craig
 Jimmy Craig
 Joel Craig
 Reese Crate
 Scotland Crate
 Tiffany Crate
 Joe Dabe
 Rodney Dabe
 Paul Dacko
 Ian Dahl
 Georgeann Davis
 Judy Dehm
 Emma Dickenscheiat
 Joan Dietrich
 Joanne DiNovo
 Matt Dolega
 Benjamin Donahue
 Dawn Downey
 Brian Duffie
 Frank Dundek
 Robert Eakright
 Lee Ecker
 Scott Ellis
 Nicholas Epley
 Corey Evans
 Danielle Fary
 Joan Fasanella

Nicholas Feracuti
 Betty Ferguson
 Barbara Friat
 Barb Ferry
 Joyce Flanagan
 Adam Ford
 Tammy Forrest
 Elaine Foster
 William Foster
 Bill Frankenberger
 Dave Fuller
 Mary Gaffney
 John Gantz
 Jim Garrison
 Sharon Gerdes
 Amy Gibson
 Anthony Gibson
 Steven Gibson
 Ben Gilmore
 Hannah Giroux
 Amy Godbey
 Jeanne Golec
 Jan Gonzales
 Jon Grainger
 Yvonne Greer
 Amy Hargis
 Tim Hayes
 Aiden Heffner
 Allison Heffner
 Jan Heideman
 Greg Hejner
 Bryan Henderson
 Sabrina Hines-Greer
 Pat Hoffman
 Lisa Hohl
 Peyton Hohl
 Liesel Honer
 Cindy Hostert
 Bill Huish

John Hull
 Nancy Humbert
 Karen Gail Ishii
 April Johnson
 Brooke Johnson
 Glenn Johnson
 Mari Johnson
 Marina Johnson
 Nate Johnson
 Reegan Johnson
 Sloan Johnson
 Debbie Jones
 Jill Juban
 Andrew Kaspas
 Hayley Kelleck
 Jessica Keller
 Phil Keller
 Efty Kelly
 Emily Kenny
 Bill Kibler
 Jackie Kibler
 Scott King
 Kristin Kirby
 Maggie Kirby
 Liam Kirschbaum
 Kistingner Family
 Ed Klama
 Karen Klama
 Sydney Koehne
 Gale Kozlowski
 Tori Kozlowski
 Trevor Kozlowski
 Mary Lee Krall
 Eric Kuehl
 Lucas Kuehl
 Matthew Lee
 Rhonda Lelice
 Kathryn Lewellen
 Ken Lewellen

Krystal Lewellen
 Carol Lewis
 Robert Lewis
 Wayne Lezon
 Dave Libby
 Phil Liput
 Keith Listermann
 Valarie Loekle
 David Lowe
 Ryan Mahoney
 Susan Malkowski
 Carol Malnar
 Stan Malnar
 Becky Martinez
 Noah Martinez
 Stella Martinez
 Victor Martinez
 Sharon Martinus
 Wyatt Martinus
 Riley Masterson
 Mohammad Mazi
 Thomas McCafferty
 Peter McLenighan
 Abby McNally
 Melissa McMillian
 Jeanne Meeks
 Elle Melishi
 Jimmy Melishi
 Kim Melishi
 Ruth Meyer
 Jas Miller
 Megan Miller
 John Mittelbrun
 Christopher Moulton
 Haley Moustis
 Bill Morris
 Kent Munro
 Joe Murphy
 Swathi Narayanan





Volunteer Workday @ Old Plank Road Trail

Brian Nelson
 Catherine Nelson
 Don Nelson
 Eric Nelson
 Espie Nelson
 Heather Nelson
 John Nerren
 Leisa Nevins
 Dave Nordin
 Michael O'Brien
 John O'Lear
 Michael O'Leary
 Izzy Opiola
 Bernard O'Reilly
 Nicole Ormsbey
 Jack Panozzo
 Jon Panozzo
 Carlie Parrish

Emma Parrish
 Jodie Payne
 Allison Perry
 Mike Perry
 Carol Picciolo
 Andrea Pleske
 Gloria Pollack
 Denise Pollworth
 Diane Pool
 Courtney Primus
 Jessica Prince
 Prince Family
 Skip Pronger
 Phillip Pursley
 Adyta Rajan
 Amrita Rajan
 Dennis Reed
 Rita Renwick
 Amy Resman
 Carrie Rock
 Isabel Rodriguez
 Roger Ross
 Michael Rusnak
 Rene Russell
 Arel Rutter
 Mike Rzepka
 Tyler Samec
 Joe Sanchez
 Mark Santangelo
 Tamara Santangelo
 Lauren Saszak
 Midge Saunders
 Dan Schatzman
 Beverly Scheidt
 Jim Schleck
 Janet Schleeter
 Jim Schlellel
 Jennifer Schmuhl
 Paul Schroeder

Phyllis Schulte
 Michael Schury
 Max Scott-Schroeder
 Samuel Scott-Schroeder
 Dave Sesterhenn
 Kim Sesterhenn
 Ray Setzke
 Stephanie Shoaf
 Larry Skisak
 Sally Skoff
 Carol Smith
 Bob Soukup
 Jeff Spanbauer
 Ashley Staszak
 Bailey Stevenson
 Dakota Stevenson
 Linda Stevenson
 Amanda Still
 Danny Sullivan
 Alan Sunday
 Alex Sunday
 Chris Sunday
 Mary Svitek
 Grace Swift
 James Swift
 Jerry Swift
 John Swift
 Kathy Swift
 Max Swift
 Molly Swift
 Chase Tabor
 Daryl Tabor
 Nancy Taylor
 Karen Tellef
 Steve Titre
 Al Thomas
 Al D. Thomas
 Dick Thomas

Brianna Toman
 Max Tomczak
 Meg Tornatore
 Bernie Twait
 Drew Ullberg
 Penny Vanderhyden
 Delia VanZyl
 Huck VanZyl
 Linus VanZyl
 Oliver VanZyl
 Patrick VanZyl
 Zoe VanZyl
 Bruce Vasa
 Dave Vasa
 Sean Villicer
 Frank Voltarni
 Richard Wachenheim
 Nicole Ware
 Jacob Weber
 Dave Wendt
 Marie Wendt
 Mark Wieclaw
 Sally Wieclaw
 Bill Willis
 Gretchen Wilson
 Rob Wilson
 Connie Witkowski
 Lee Witkowski
 Carter Wright
 Katherine Wrobel
 Jack Wszolek
 Jeff Wszolek
 Nick Wszolek
 Reese Young
 John Zalanka
 Sue Zelek



Brigade Volunteer Ken Lewellen

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Boy Scout Troop 13
Boy Scout Troop 49
Boy Scout Troop 75
Boy Scout Troop 318
Boy Scout Troop 444
Boy Scout Troop 889
Channahon Music Boosters
Earth Week Naperville Volunteers
Girl Scout Troop 70398
Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana
Joliet Catholic Academy
Joliet Central High School
Joliet Junior College
Joliet Kiwanis Club
Joliet West High School
Joliet Montessori School
Lewis University
Lincoln-Way East High School Key Club
Lincoln-Way High Schools Asset Team
Lincoln-Way West High School Air Force Cadets
Lockport Township High School
Neuqua Valley High School
Pieces from the Heart Quilt Guild
Pieces 'n Patches Quilt Guild
Plainfield East High School
Plainfield Central High School
Pride of the Prairie Quilters
Providence High School
Romeoville High School
Sertoma Centre
ShareFest Volunteers
St. Mary Catholic Church, Mokena
University of St. Francis
Western Illinois University
Will County Trail Riders



St. Mary Catholic Church Volunteers



Goldman Sachs Volunteers

CORPORATE VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Goldman Sachs
JCPenney
Xylem





Prescribed Burn @ Sugar Creek Preserve

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

John Gerl, *Chief Financial Officer*

ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

Lisa Lukasevich, *Director*
 Mary Borgra
 Meredith Clavenna
 Renee Gauchat
 Diana Jaworski
 Leisa Nevins
 Donna Suca

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Denise Steffen, *Director*
 Sheri Bembenek
 Jackie Kibler
 Tom Mancari
 Michael Prybell
 Barb Sudsberry
 Eleanor Wagner

OPERATIONS AND PROGRAM SERVICES

Ralph Schultz, *Chief Operating Officer*

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Tracy Chapman, *Chief of Police*
 David Barrios Jr., *Lieutenant*
 Jason Allbert
 Robert Baikie
 Anthony Balsamo
 Steven Bettenhausen
 James Burnette
 Russell Burroughs
 Vincent Cimino
 Cody Columbus
 Jeffrey Cowe
 Jack Ellingham
 Steven Formenti
 Eric Gabrielson
 Donald Gardiner
 James Gerdich
 Jessica Glecier
 Bradley Greenup
 Jennifer Hemmeger
 Brandon Hermann
 Gregory Hidlebaugh
 Mark Houlihan
 Shane Kelly
 Steven Kirsch
 Dean Klier
 Eric Kobe
 Joshua Lane
 Richard Lewandowski
 Darrell Mayle
 Jeffrey McKenzie
 Daniel Olszewski
 Dan Rankovich
 Michael A. Reilly
 David Starceвич

Bradley Veerman
 Nicole Veerman
 Robert Veron
 James Wendt
 Matthew Yates

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

John Fay, *Director*
 Calvin Anderson
 Tracy Bianco
 Cole Biltgen
 David Blaskey
 Elise Brazzale
 Tyler Brown
 Jason Buss
 Scott Carevic
 Justin Casillas
 Rina Cheney
 Steven Crobie
 Gerald Dawson
 Paul Doran
 Christopher Dowell
 Kelsey Eickstoedt
 Ian Eskridge
 Cedric Foster
 Sara Frederick
 Terrence Garvey Jr.
 Ben Gauchat
 Austin Guglielmucci
 William Hibler
 Eric Hummitsch
 Brian Krabbe
 Jeff Kure
 Eric Latz
 John Latz
 Brian Likar
 Amanda Mackay
 Brian Mackey
 Edward McDermott

Arthur Moeller
 Christopher Moeller
 Craig Newberg
 Ryan Nichols
 Adam Oestmann
 Ryan Osman
 Jon Panozzo
 Justin Parks
 Daniel Parthun
 Kimberly Pasch-McQuen
 Alex Pasteris
 James Patnoudes
 Brendon Phillips
 Isaiah Romo
 Kyle Siegel
 Roy Smith
 Denzil Smothers
 William Suca Jr.
 Gabe Suhadolc
 Colin Talkie
 Dane Thayer
 Richard Therkildsen
 Charles Thomas
 Nicholas Vella
 Thomas Watson
 Jonathan Wychocki
 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
Michelle Blackburn
Allison Borecky
Glen Buckner
Nick Budde
Floyd Catchpole
Corinne Crawford
Wendy Leonard
Julianne Mason
Colleen Novander
Matt Novander
John O'Lear
Karen Rinke
David Robson
Matthew Ruhter
Barbara Sherwood
Judith Wallace

Kelli Parke
Jessica Prince-Sharrar
Angela Rafac
Tina Riley
Sara Russell
Mike Speller
Dakota Stevenson
Jason Stevenson
Mary Thomas
Heather VanZyl
Allen Ward
Erin Ward
Melissa Zanzola

RETIRED

Lori Green
Greg Griffin
Reginald McCrary
Michael Milligan
Donald Thayer



Staff and Students @ Forest Invaders Restoration Program

VISITOR SERVICES

Lynn Kurczewski, *Director*
Matthew Briggs
Bob Bryerton
Catherine Caldwell
Diane Carson
Mallory Fischer
Cylee Fuller
Ashley Grynienc
Jen Guest
Christopher Gutmann
Ben Hecke
James Hurd
Mark Loekle
Nicholas Lusson
Suzy Lyttle
Jenna Newcomb
Angela Opiola



Photo credits: Juanita Armstrong-Ullberg, Mandy Bellamy, Glenn Buckner, Jackie Bueschel, Alan Bulava, Jason Buss, Cindy Cain, Lane Cameron, Paul Dacko, Mike Daley, Lisa Dinges, Michael Fagan, Barb Ferry, Renee Gauchat, Mark Hanna, Nancy Havener, Kevin Keyes, Laura Kiran, Glenn P. Knoblock, Suzy Lyttle, Chad Merda, Ron Molk, Barbara Parisi, Nathan Taylor, Joe Traina

PRESERVE THE MOMENT PHOTO CONTEST

The 2018 photo contest, the third annual, began May 1 and ended December 31. Almost 1,000 photos were entered, compared to 704 in 2016 and 724 in 2017. Winners were chosen each month, and the eight monthly finalists competed for overall contest honors via online voting in January.

Photo contest fans went nuts over the picture of a mother squirrel embracing her kit snapped in September by Channahon resident Barbara Parisi at McKinley Woods – Kerry Sheridan Grove. The fuzzy duo had the highest vote total on the Forest Preserve's Facebook page with more "likes" and comments than any of the other seven monthly finalists' photos. Almost 1,500 votes were cast to select the top three photos.

Second place in the contest went to Naperville resident Nancy Havener for a soothing sunset photo taken at Whalon Lake in December. And third place was nabbed by Romeoville resident Mark Hanna for his July photo of a green heron sporting a funky Elvis-like hairstyle at McKinley Woods – Kerry Sheridan Grove.

Contest prizes were made possible through the generous support of The Nature Foundation of Will County.

NEARLY
1,000
PHOTO ENTRIES
SUBMITTED IN 2018









The other photo contest finalists were:

- Joliet resident Joe Traina's photo of two cedar waxwings playing tug of war with a piece of vegetation at Rock Run Preserve in Joliet.
- Lemont resident Mike Daley's photo of a moist mink perched on a half-submerged log along Centennial Trail in Romeoville.
- Frankfort resident Michael Fagan's close-up of a carnivorous cannibally at Hickory Creek Preserve in New Lenox.
- Lockport resident Lisa Dinges' snapshot of a snake slithering through silvery bridge slats on the I&M Canal Trail in Lockport.
- Lowell, Ind., resident Mandy Bellamy's photo of shelf fungi hanging around at Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve in Crete Township.

..... All of the **contest's photo entries** can be viewed on the District's Flickr page (www.flickr.com/willcoforests).





**SUGAR CREEK
ADMINISTRATION CENTER**
17540 W. Laraway Road
Joliet, IL 60433
815.727.8700

**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



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