

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF WILL COUNTY

PROGRESS REPORT

2015

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

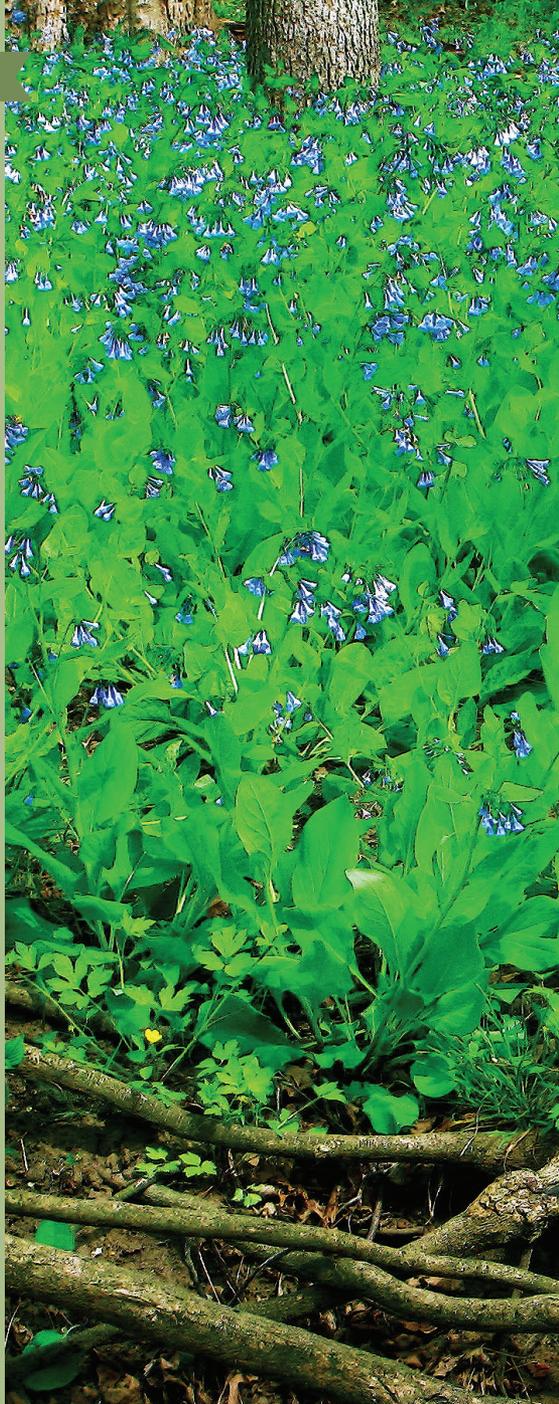
Promoting and practicing environmental stewardship.

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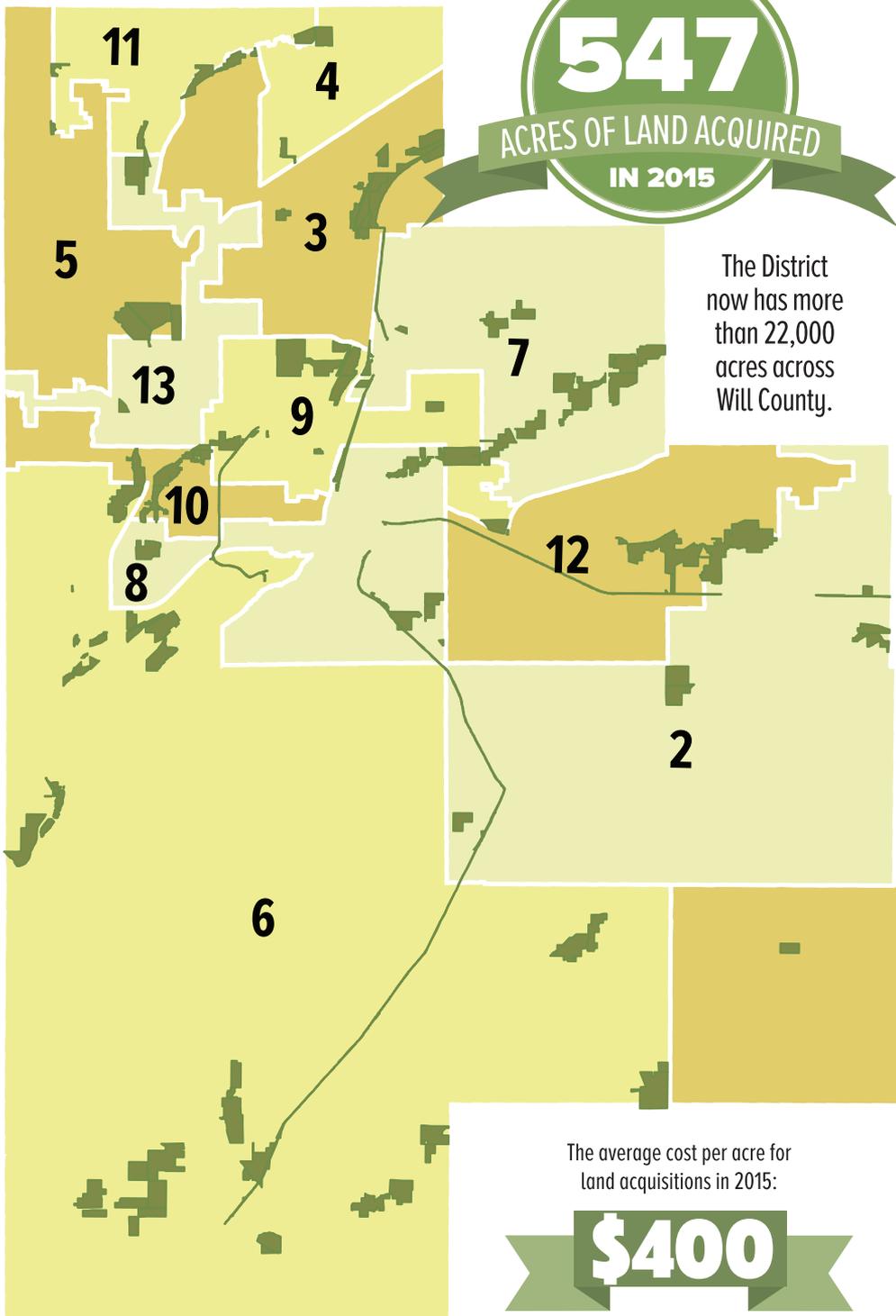




547

ACRES OF LAND ACQUIRED
IN 2015

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



The average cost per acre for
land acquisitions in 2015:

\$400

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. Wilhelmi, Joliet

DISTRICT 11

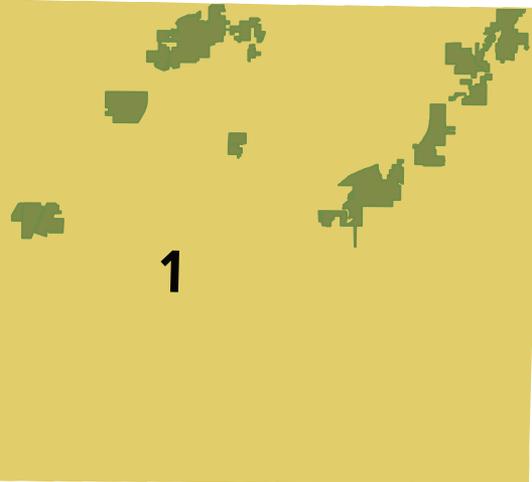
Suzanne Hart, Naperville
President
Charles E. Maher, Naperville

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

WOODS WALK PHOTO CONTEST 2015

Raccoon Grove Nature Preserve

“Color Changes” by Karen McGinnis



SUZANNE HART

Working together, we can achieve more. The Forest Preserve has a long history of working with our local park districts, townships and municipalities to preserve open space, extend trails and enhance the quality of life for our residents. By pooling resources we can create and improve recreational offerings and provide environmental benefits that last for generations.

In 2015, the Forest Preserve worked alongside the Bolingbrook Park District to extend the DuPage River Trail and link two popular community facilities, the Hidden Lakes Historic Trout Farm and Whalon Lake preserve. Not only did we meet our goal of connecting the sites, but we also continued our ongoing challenge to connect forest preserves with all of our Will County communities and the residents that call them home. In 2016, we'll continue our activities in the DuPage River Greenway by working in partnership with the Naperville Park District to create another critical link along the trail – combining our mutual open space and financial resources to reconnect people with nature.

These are only two of the most recent examples of our commitment to our residents. As an organization, we will continue to be fiscally responsible by seeking grants and forging community partnerships that supplement our resources.

I hope you enjoy reading about some of our other accomplishments in 2015 outlined in this report. Rest assured, they are only a few of the many wonderful things that your Forest Preserve has to offer.

Sincerely,

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

Suzanne Hart, *President*



2ND PLACE

**WOODS
WALK
PHOTO
CONTEST
2015**

*Hadley Valley
— Gougar Road
Access*

By Laura Morgan



3RD PLACE

*Sauk Trail
Reservoir
“Twisty
Branches”
by Megan
Rasmussen*



RALPH SCHULTZ

The year 2015 kicked off a period of transition at the Forest Preserve. Major land preservation and capital improvement programs were completed or entered their final stages, and, as part of a planned organizational restructuring, the Forest Preserve began reducing its professional staff. When complete in 2016, the Forest Preserve will realize a 10 percent reduction in full-time professional staff, affecting nearly every department but allowing us to reposition critical financial resources. With these reductions, a few changes have been made to program offerings and event schedules but the Forest Preserve remains committed to offering high-quality recreational sites and a wide variety of opportunities throughout the county for our residents to enjoy nature.

Our preserve improvement and land stewardship activities continued in a number of your communities, with many projects being funded in partnership with other governments or not-for-profit organizations. Our volunteer program also remained vibrant and our Visitor Services staff reached thousands of our youth through in-school and field trip programs.

As we continue to reimagine the Forest Preserve and its programs and services, we promise that our commitment to our residents to provide first-rate forest preserves and greenways will remain unchanged. We hope that you will continue to see the Forest Preserve as playing an integral role in enhancing the quality of life in Will County.

If you haven't yet this year, go out and enjoy an afternoon in one of your many forest preserves. You'll be glad you did.

Sincerely,

Ralph Schultz, *Chief Operating Officer*

BIKEWAY PLAN GETS ROLLING



In 2015, the Forest Preserve District's Board of Commissioners selected Chicago-based AECOM Technical Services Inc. to craft a countywide bikeway plan. The bikeway plan, due for completion in 2016, will identify areas where nonmotorized transportation opportunities can be expanded throughout Will County and beyond. The bikeway plan will look at greenways, roadways and utility corridors as potential sites for improvements. The Will County Division of Transportation also hired AECOM to draft its 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan. By hiring the same company, the Forest Preserve helped to ensure that the bikeway plan and the transportation plan complement each other.

Welcome to the Forest Preserve District of Will County's interactive map. Select an action below to get started.

Forest Preserves

Forest Preserves protect natural resources and offer recreational opportunities.

Find Forest Preserves >

Visitor Centers

Visitor Centers feature information, programs, and friendly staff to assist you.

Find Visitor Centers >

Regional Trails

Regional Trails offer miles of recreational opportunities.

Find Regional Trails >

Activities

Activities such as biking, camping, picnicking, and more are available.



INTERACTIVE MAP DEBUTS

In an effort to help Will County residents “reconnect with nature” more easily than ever before, the Forest Preserve District debuted a new interactive map feature on its website in the spring of 2015. The new online map option allows users to measure routes on trails, roads or sidewalks and view amenities, upcoming events and recreational activities. Interactive map users can generate printable maps with notes, drawings and measurements. Maps can be shared with friends on social media or in emails and instant messages. The interactive map is a modern and much needed addition to the District’s existing printed and online map options.

WELCOME SPOT THE SALAMANDER AT PLUM CREEK NATURE CENTER

Two exhibit map panels were installed at Plum Creek Nature Center in 2015 to introduce the new Spot the Salamander mascot, who invites visitors to explore his playground and forest. The inside map panel gives detailed information regarding amenities, trail guidelines, camping, and unique locations at Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve. The outside map shows the nature play areas where children can move and explore with Spot as he and his nature friends visit Beaver’s Lodge, Rabbit’s Run Tunnel and Raccoon’s Peekaboo.





PARTNERING TO SAVE THE POLLINATORS

In 2015, Plum Creek Nature Center in Crete Township served as an educational and environmental haven for three important pollinators: monarchs, hummingbirds and bees. Staff received a grant to attend a weeklong training at the North American Monarch Institute. The training included more than \$500 in equipment and materials to implement new programs and exhibits. Additionally, the Forest Preserve received notification in 2015 that the Nature Center was certified as an official Monarch Watch Registry way station. The Forest Preserve will continue to promote productive monarch habitats by educating the public on their importance through new innovative programming and exhibits.

FOR INSTANCE, 158 STUDENTS ATTENDED "POLLINATOR PALS," A NEW OUTDOOR FIELD TRIP LAUNCHED IN THE FALL OF 2015.



Nature Center staff partnered with the Thorn Creek Audubon Society to support another local pollinator in presenting "Hummingbirds Up Close." The program educated the public about these tiny birds and showed how they are banded for research purposes. Attendees also were encouraged to adopt a hummingbird by donating \$5. Also, in late 2015, the Nature Center's live indoor bee exhibit expanded to include semimonthly "Meet a Beekeeper" sessions with certified beekeepers who are members of the Will County and Illinois State beekeepers associations. The live hive, as well as the "Meet a Beekeeper" and "Introduction to Beekeeping" programs, provided a wealth of information for both novice and expert beekeepers.

MURALS INSTALLED AT ISLE A LA CACHE MUSEUM



In 2015, two murals illustrating the French fur trade era were installed at Isle a la Cache Museum. Both murals were **created by California artist Jeanine Hattas**. The first colorful mural, installed in March, shows a flurry of activity as voyageurs unload a canoe of goods and supplies onto shore while now-extinct passenger pigeons darken the sky above.

The second mural, installed in October, tells the story of the final destination for fur pelts, a Quebec port. This dazzling work, which ties in with the Museum's dock and hat shop exhibits, provides delightful details to fuel children's scavenger hunts and inspires questions from even the most historically knowledgeable adults. The two murals are a wonderful addition to the Museum's educational exhibits and 18th-century ambiance.



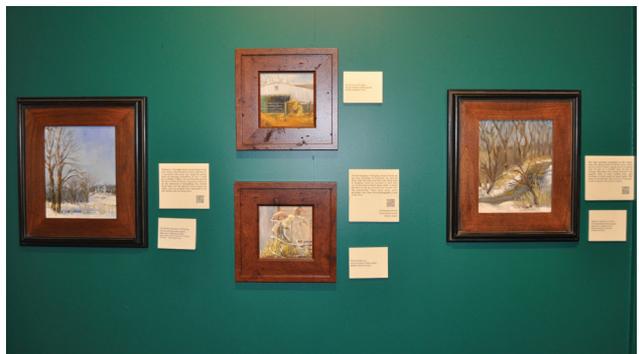
POLICE LAUNCH SAFETY CAMPAIGN

Forest Preserve Police launched an “Eyes, Ears and Cell Phones” campaign in 2015. The public education effort was designed to encourage preserve users to use their ears and eyes to detect emergencies and to report them quickly on their cell phones. For life-threatening emergencies, people were instructed to call 911. For other concerns, they were told to call the Will County Sheriff’s Police dispatch center at 815.727.6191, which dispatches for Forest Preserve Police. Preserve users were encouraged to program the dispatch number into their cell phones. The campaign also was designed to have people call Forest Preserve District Police for assistance while in a preserve, no matter where that preserve is located in the county. Sometimes, precious minutes are lost as people scramble to find a phone number for a local jurisdiction’s police department. “Eyes, Ears and Cell Phones” was created to get preserve patrons to be aware and to call the right number the first time whenever they need help in a preserve or on a trail.



HADLEY VALLEY ART EXHIBIT TRAVELS THROUGHOUT DISTRICT

Artist Maggie Capettini was so captivated by the “vast and open” beauty of Hadley Valley Preserve located across the street from her Joliet home, she spent 18 months painting the preserve in the French “plein air” style, which means open air. Capettini started painting in August 2013 and continued to paint all of the seasons and many of the natural features in Hadley Valley, ultimately creating 30 pieces of art. In 2015, a rotating mixture of her Hadley Valley



paintings were displayed from April through October at three Forest Preserve visitor centers: Sugar Creek Administration Center in Joliet, Isle a la Cache Museum in Romeoville and Plum Creek Nature Center in Beecher. Capettini thoroughly enjoyed her outdoor artistic adventure. “Often, the beauty of the landscape took my breath away,” she said of the project.



FOREST PRESERVE WORKS WITH CHILDHOOD OUTDOOR INITIATIVE

In 2015, the Forest Preserve District continued to participate in the 10 Million Kids Outdoors initiative created by the National Wildlife Federation. Many Forest Preserve programs encourage children to discover the great outdoors including “**Introduction to the Art of Slacklining,**” a new program, and “Discovery Isle,” “Nature Play Days” and “Discovering Your Wetlands.”

As part of the 10 Million Kids Outdoors effort, the District will continue to record how many children participate in these types of programs and the numbers will be reported annually to the initiative.





LAND PRESERVATION

The Forest Preserve District of Will County acquired 547 acres of land in 2015, bringing total holdings of property ownership, management and easements to more than 22,000 acres across Will County.

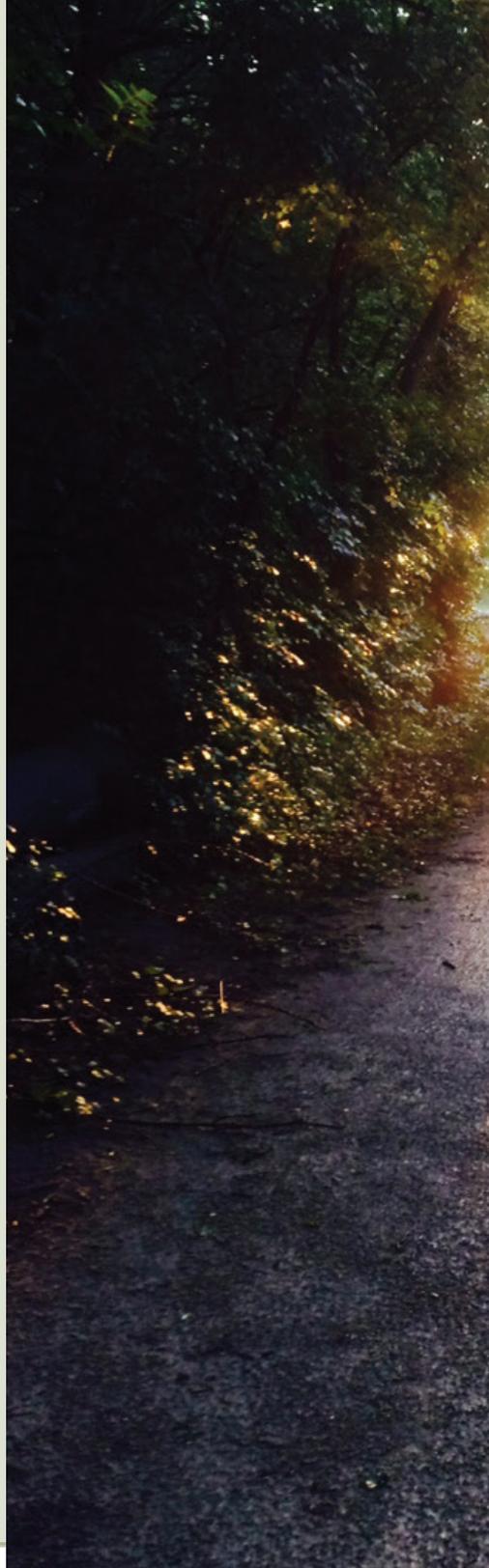
The most significant acquisition was the transfer of 558 acres of land, formerly a part of Stateville Correctional Center, from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to the partnership of the Forest Preserve District and the Lockport Township Park District. The District received 476 acres that make up a large part of Prairie Bluff Preserve, and the Park District 82 acres that expanded Brent Hassert Park, both properties accessible from Renwick Road in Crest Hill.

Government dignitaries from around the state gathered at Prairie Bluff Preserve in October to celebrate the land transfer. Preservation of Prairie Bluff Preserve was critical to the Forest Preserve to protect groundwater flow into the District's nearby Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve.

Another key acquisition was the transfer of 28.39 acres from the County of Will to the Forest Preserve District to expand Moeller Woods in Crete Township. This undeveloped preserve protects forest habitat and a section of Plum Creek.

The land acquisitions of 547 acres in 2015 expanded the District's holdings at seven preserves.

BECAUSE ALL BUT ONE CAME AT LITTLE OR NO COST TO THE DISTRICT, TOTAL ACQUISITION COSTS WERE ONLY \$219,044, OR AN AVERAGE OF \$400 AN ACRE.





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



PRESERVE DEVELOPMENTS

THREE KEY DEVELOPMENTS WERE COMPLETED IN 2015

1

At the 75-acre **Lambs Woods** in Lockport, new concrete walkways were added and the existing gravel parking lot was reshaped and paved with asphalt.

2

The eastern branch of the **Hickory Creek Bikeway** in Mokena was improved with the replacement of a bridge over Hickory Creek and new asphalt surfacing of the bikeway. A grant of \$100,000 from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity provided nearly half the funds for the Hickory Creek Bikeway improvements.

3

And in Naperville, two long-requested trail connections from **Whalon Lake** were completed in 2015. These connections greatly improve pedestrian and bicycle access to an extensive trail system in northern Illinois.

One extension runs north from Whalon Lake to Royce Road where an existing bicycle lane connects to Greene Valley Forest Preserve in DuPage County. The other extension goes south from Whalon Lake and connects to the Bolingbrook Park District's Hidden Lakes Historic Trout Farm. Bolingbrook Park District contributed \$110,600 to the \$456,000 improvement project at Whalon Lake, which also included enhancements to the shoreline by the fishing wall.

NATURAL AREA RESTORATION PROJECTS

Of the more than one dozen area restoration projects the District managed in 2015, the most significant was the Enbridge Line 78 Mitigation project at Forked Creek Preserve in Wilmington.

Enbridge Inc., an international company based in Canada that transports, distributes and generates energy, made the first major donation to the Friends of the Forest Preserve District of Will County at the end of 2014. The donation of \$266,400 to the District's foundation was provided as voluntary mitigation for work associated with Line 78, a new pipeline that will expand the company's crude-oil pipeline from Illinois to Indiana.

With the donation, 42 acres of Forked Creek Preserve are being converted to prairie, floodplain forest and savanna.

In all, District staff oversaw 2,165 acres of active land management in 2015.

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





WILDLIFE RESEARCH PROJECTS

Year after year, Forest Preserve specialists assist with research projects that benefit our understanding of local flora and fauna.

These projects include the inventorying and mapping of plant communities, monitoring reptile and amphibian species, and surveying deer populations and documenting deer browse damage at 26 preserves.



A **reptile and amphibian survey** spanned 1,095 acres at Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve, Kankakee Sands Preserve and Sand Ridge Savanna Preserve.

A separate reptile and amphibian survey also was completed within the Plum Creek Greenway.

Wildlife research projects sometimes are done in concert with other organizations to provide broader perspectives.

In 2015, such partnerships included the District's **monitoring of 14 species of threatened and endangered plants** as part of the Chicago Botanic Garden's "Plants of Concern" program and working with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to monitor the spread of chronic wasting disease in deer in the southern part of Will County.



PRESERVE USE AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Thousands of Will County residents visited a District Visitor Center in 2015, while thousands more camped, picnicked or enjoyed time with their dogs at one of the Forest Preserve's dog parks. The District also participated in a variety of outreach opportunities and held programs and events to engage, educate and entertain its public.



ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER
2,720 PEOPLE SERVED



FOUR RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
9,000 PEOPLE SERVED



ISLE A LA CACHE MUSEUM
13,890 PEOPLE SERVED



MONEE RESERVOIR
22,260 PEOPLE SERVED



PLUM CREEK NATURE CENTER
11,160 PEOPLE SERVED



SUGAR CREEK ADMINISTRATION CENTER
3,584 PEOPLE SERVED



PICNICKING
40,890



NON-DISTRICT
EVENTS AND
SPECIAL USE
4,240

**PERMITTED
ACTIVITIES**
(people served)



DOG PARKS
2,250



CAMPING
2,370

SPECIAL EVENTS
(people served)

1,200

RIDE THE ROCK

500

MUSIC AT MCKINLEY
OUTDOOR CONCERT
& CAR SHOW

425

HUGS FOR HOUNDS
EASTER EGG HUNT

60

CELEBRATION
OF PRAIRIE BLUFF
LAND TRANSFER

45

DUPAGE RIVER TRAIL
EXTENSION
RIBBON CUTTING

FACILITY
EVENTS
5,000

EDUCATION
PROGRAMS
18,960

PUBLIC
PROGRAMS
4,050

DISTRICT
OUTREACH
10,500

**PROGRAMS
& SERVICES**
(people served)

AWARDS IN APPRECIATION OF PARTNERS

The Forest Preserve District of Will County partners with dozens of organizations each year. From these, the District selects annual Appreciation of Partners Awards. Honorees are awarded a plaque before the full Board of Commissioners. Two organizations were selected in 2015 for this prestigious honor.

LINCOLN-WAY HIGH SCHOOLS T.E.A.M ASSET

Once a month, students at all four Lincoln-Way High Schools learn about one of 40 internal and external developmental assets that the Search Institute of Minneapolis has identified as helping students grow to be healthy, caring and responsible adults. The Forest Preserve works with the high schools to offer opportunities for students to work alongside adults during restoration and recreation activities where they learn skills such as customer service, plant identification, and the protection and appreciation of the natural environment. In 2015, students from the high schools assisted at two Forest Preserve Programs, “Musher Mania” and the “Kids’ Fishing Derby,” and at a number of resource management workdays.



BOLINGBROOK PARK DISTRICT

For years, the Forest Preserve and the Bolingbrook Park District have been working together on planning, preserving and developing the DuPage River Greenway. Recently the two organizations partnered to develop a trail connection from the Forest Preserve’s Whalon Lake to the Park District’s Hidden Lakes Historic Trout Farm. The Park District contributed \$110,600 toward the cost of the trail extension. This linkage that crosses the DuPage River would not have been possible without the funds provided by the Bolingbrook Park District. This ongoing partnership between the two agencies furthers the missions of both and helps meet the needs of visitors to our forest preserves and local parks.





ALTERNATIVE REVENUE INITIATIVES

More than \$2 million in grants was awarded to the Forest Preserve District in 2015. 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 \$400,000*
Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Program
 Plum Valley Preserve – Burville Road Access

U.S. Department of Transportation..... \$1,664,630
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program
 Black Road Bridge Trail – Segment 2

////////////////////////////////////
TOTAL GRANTS FOR 2015 **\$2,064,630**

*Grant awarded but suspended by the State of Illinois due to State budget concerns.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

SPONSORSHIPS

A total of \$68,989.66 was received in 2015 through the District's Sponsorship Program. The Forest Preserve District of Will County welcomed both new and returning sponsors in 2015.

- Addus HealthCare, Inc.
- Advanced Family Dental, PC
- Applebee's Neighborhood Grill and Bar
- BIMBA Manufacturing
- BMO Harris Bank, N.A.
- BP Foundation, Inc.
- Cabela's
- CARCARE Collision Centers
- Catholic Holy Family Society
- CenterPoint Properties
- Christopher B. Burke Engineering, LTD
- CITGO Petroleum Corp.
- Claassen, White & Associates
- Coastal Pet Products
- Comcast Cable Communications
- Cornerstone Media
- Cumulus Radio
- D. Construction
- D'Arcy Auto
- Darryl Dupre, Inc.
- Earthbath / SHEA
- Enbridge Energy
- Exelon Generation
- Exxon Mobil Pipeline
- Feel So Good Canine Massage
- First Community Bank
- Game 7 Films
- Goldman Sachs
- Hawk Joliet Auto Group
- Heroes West Sports Grill
- Hollywood Casino Joliet
- Hometown National Bank
- I-55 Auto Salvage, Inc.
- Integrity Restoration, Inc.
- Joliet Junior College
- Joliet Tent Company
- JULIE, Inc.



\$68,990
received in sponsorships



- Kavanagh, Grumley & Gorbald, LLC
- Ken Marks Agility
- Kriser's Natural Pet
- Landmark Engineering, LLC
- Merchants & Manufacturers Bank
- MTI Adventurewear
- National Safe Boating Council
- Nicor Gas Energy Efficiency
- Northeast Chapter of Illinois Professional Land Surveyors
- NuMark Credit Union
- Oak Brook Kennel Club
- PetRageous Designs
- Presence Saint Joseph Medical Center
- Providence Bank
- Pullara Inc.
- PurrFurred Mobile Grooming
- Ray's Collision Center
- Republic Services
- River Valley Supportive Living Residence
- Riverside Medical Center
- Robert E. Hamilton Consulting Engineers, Inc.
- Rosalie D'Andrea & Associates, LTD
- Rosario Cibella LTD
- Saratoga Specialties
- Service Sanitation, Inc.
- Sheet Metal Workers 265
- SPAY Illinois
- Strand Associates, Inc.
- Sumbaum Cycle Co.
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Pooper Scoopers, Inc.
- Three Rivers Construction Alliance
- Thrivent Financial
- Tod Shafer
- TransCanada
- Turk Furniture
- Vitas Healthcare
- Voyager Media Group
- Walgreens
- Wermer, Rogers, Doran & Ruzon, LLC
- Wight & Company

DONATIONS

A total of \$18,972.58 was received in 2015 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.

\$18,973
received in donations

- Comcast Cable
- Communications
- James and Karen Kabat
- JORA Composter
- Kristine Mackey
- Mike Weiland
- Riverworks Discovery
- Shorewood H.U.G.S.



- The National Safe Boating Council
- Thomas McCafferty

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

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT IN FINANCIAL REPORTING

GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (GFOA)



The Forest Preserve District received the Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting in 2015 for the 20th consecutive year. The award recognized the Forest Preserve's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2014. The Certificate of Achievement, awarded by GFOA, is the highest recognition given in governmental accounting.

OUTSTANDING CITIZEN VOLUNTEER

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF PARK DISTRICTS

Aura Duke of Park Forest was named "Outstanding Citizen Volunteer of the Year" by the Illinois Association of Park Districts in October 2015. Duke, who was 92 at the time, has been active with the Thorn Creek Audubon Society for almost 25 years. She monitors two important bluebird trails at the Forest Preserve's Monee Reservoir and Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve in Beecher. Duke also oversees the monitoring of 68 bluebird nesting boxes weekly during the spring and summer. And she works with volunteers to clean the boxes annually and to perform necessary repairs. Under her leadership, the number of bluebird boxes and active bluebird trails has grown.



BEST FRIEND OF ILLINOIS PARKS ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF PARK DISTRICTS

Enbridge Inc. was named a “Best Friend of Illinois Parks” in the large business category by the Illinois Association of Park Districts in October 2015. Enbridge is a Canada-based company that transports, distributes and generates energy. The company’s partnership with the Forest Preserve District began in 2012 with a \$500 donation for a bike ride event. More donations followed for special events, information boards and habitat restoration. In April 2015, Enbridge made its largest donation to date – \$266,400 to the Friends of the Forest Preserve District of Will County, the District’s nonprofit fundraising foundation. The money is being used to restore 42 acres of former agricultural fields at Forked Creek Preserve in Wilmington.



MASTER FRONTLINE INTERPRETER AWARD

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERPRETATION

Angie Opiola, an interpretive specialist for the Forest Preserve, was named a Master Frontline Interpreter by Region 5 of the National Association of Interpretation during the organization’s March 2015 conference in Ames, Iowa. Opiola has been instrumental in expanding the District’s kayaking and snowshoeing programs. She also has created offerings that feature bat-related activities, bird walks and a Halloween event for dogs. Opiola attributed much of her success to mentors she had in her life.



AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS

Cindy Harn, the District’s director of Public Programs and Education, was the 2015 recipient of the Malcolm D. Swan Award for Outstanding Service presented by the Environmental Education Association of Illinois (EEAI). The award is the group’s most prestigious honor and is presented for long-term, outstanding service and contributions to the field of environmental education in Illinois. Harn said her involvements with EEA helped her advance quality environmental education in Will County and the region.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In 1927, 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 2015, 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.

22,000

Acres of land the District currently owns, manages and leases.

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 District.

BOND ISSUES

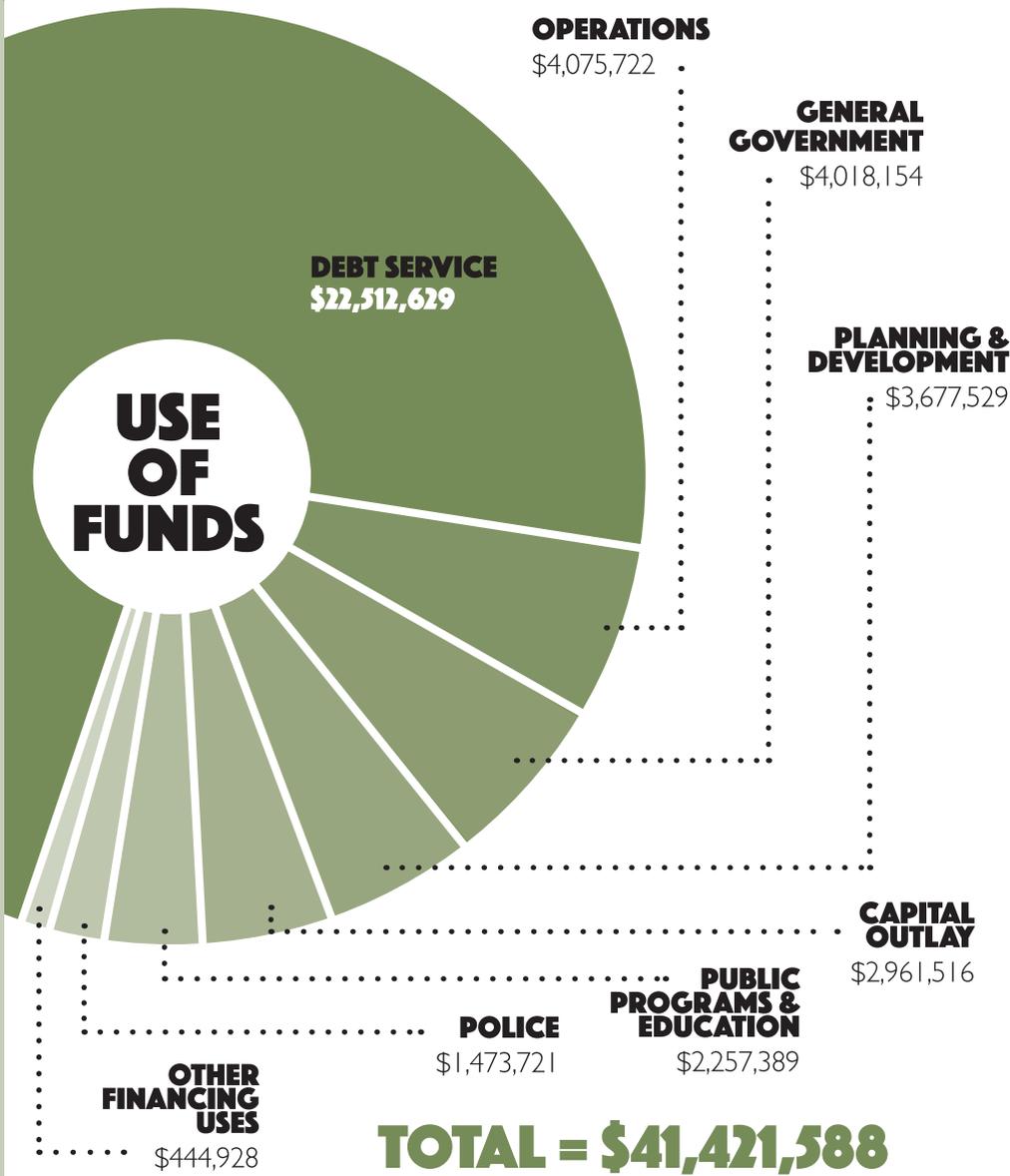
In 1999 and 2005, voters approved referendums to preserve land and improve District properties for public use. In both cases, voters recognized that the county was changing at an unprecedented pace and that special properties needed to be preserved before they were developed. The 1999 referendum provided \$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.

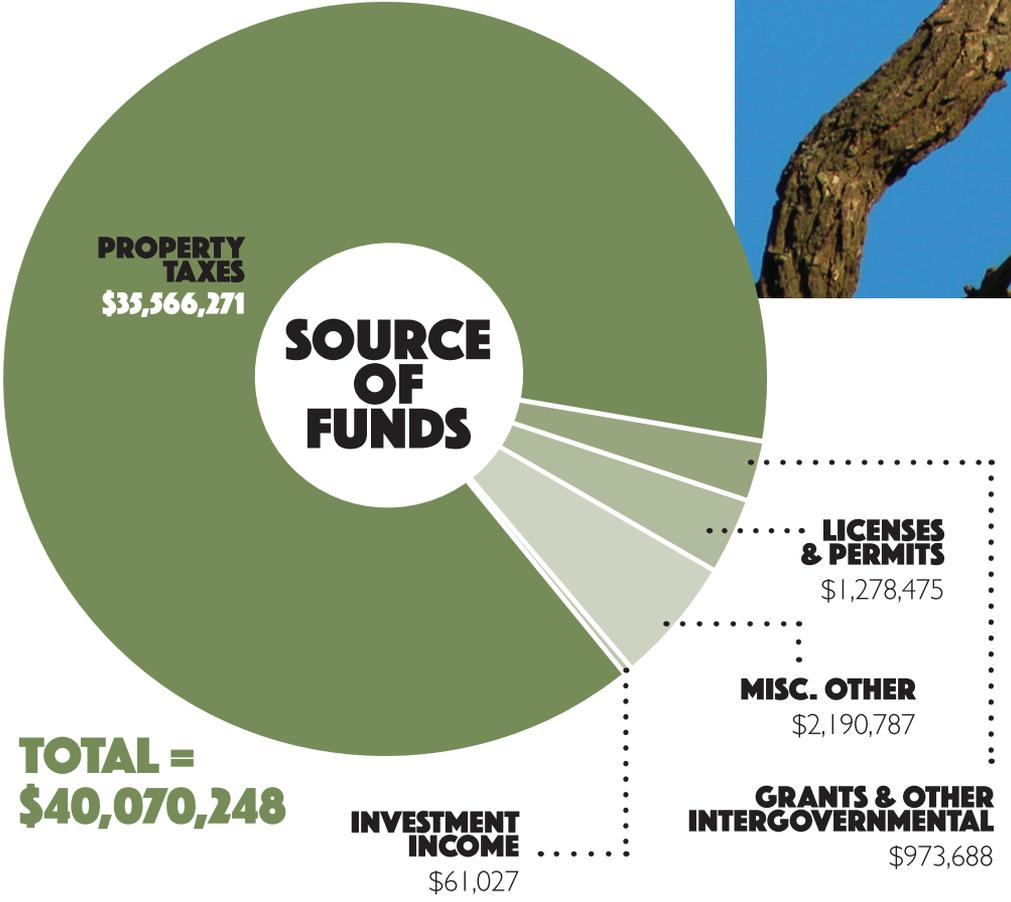
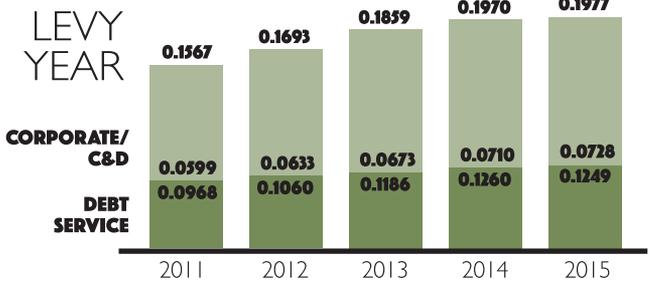
In 2007, the Forest Preserve Board of Commissioners authorized \$50 million in general obligation limited tax bonds for the purpose of acquiring land for future use. In 2007 and 2008, the District issued \$10 million and \$30 million, respectively, of limited tax bonds. The remaining \$10 million in 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.

DEBT SERVICE

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









VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

In 2015, volunteers contributed 14,890.95 hours of service, which greatly assisted the efforts of the District. During the year, the Forest Preserve had a total of 232 Prairie People volunteers. Prairie People volunteers routinely provide programs and services to the District. The Forest Preserve had an additional 916 individuals participate in District volunteer opportunities in 2015. These volunteers make a difference in the lives of those who visit the preserves and participate in District services and programs. The Forest Preserve could not accomplish its goals without this dedicated volunteer workforce.

Division, Department or Section

Division of Administration and Finance
 Division of Public Affairs and Education
 Division of Planning and Operations
 Law Enforcement

Total Volunteers

25 Volunteers
 143 Volunteers
 953 Volunteers
 27 Volunteers

Hours

1,072 hours
 3,927.95 hours
 7,704.75 hours
 2,186.25 hours

GRAND TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

1,148 VOLUNTEERS

14,890.95 HOURS

2015 INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS

Tom Allison
Ray Amezcua
Olivia Amezcua
Gilbert Anderson
Linda Andrews
Jim Avila
Ann Ayers
David Babich
Katherine Bader
Jake Bean
Francis Beck
Bandon Beddigs
Debra Bettenhausen
Mark Bettin

Audrey Claire
Kayla Claire
Carol Cooley
Kerri Counts
Jimmy Craig
Joel Craig
Joe Dabe
Rodney Dabe
Paul Dacko
Taduez Dauksza
Georgeann Davis
George Dehm
Judy Dehm
Joan Dietrich

Roger Flees
Adam Ford
Cathy Foy
Pat Foy
Matt Gagen
John Gantz
Jean Golec
Tricia Golec
Jan Gonzalas
Maggie Hackett
Tommy Hartnett
Tom Hawk
Jan Heideman
Pat Hoffman

Jackie Kibler
Will Kibler
William Kibler
Ed Klama
Karen Klama
Lily Klinkhamer
Cody Kreisl
Myrt Larson
Ken Lewellen
Kathryn Lewellen
Wayne Lezon
Phil Liput
Keith Listermann
Kyle Listermann



Michelle Blackburn
Sydney Blackburn
Pat Bluhm
Gregory Bluhm
Janice Bodinet
Alison Borecky
Nick Bryerton
Alan Bulava
Marc Buttice
Pete Caldwell
Vanessa Caldwell
Rodney Campbell
Scott Carevic
Chad Carson
Floyd Catchpole
Jean Christensen

Bill Doolin
John Dorien
Dawn Downey
Greg Dubois
Dawn Downey
Brian Duffie
Aura Duke
Sid Duke
Frank Dundek
Benjamin Dunkman
Lee Ecker
Keith Eichorst
Joan Fasanella
Barb Ferry
John Field
Joyce Flanagan

Cindy Hostert
Bill Huish
Ryne James
Eric Johnson
George Johnson
Glenn Johnson
Debbie Jones
Matt Jordan
Jean Kadar
Ron Kapala
Katie Kaye
Ron Kaye
Efty Kelly
Margaret Kelly
Emily Kenny
Bill Kibler

Chuckie Llewellyn
Richard Llewellyn
Rita Luedtke
Susan Malkowski
Carol Malnar
Stan Malnar
CJ Marshall
George Marshall
Noah Marshall
Thomas McCafferty
Mary Anne McLean
Martin Mesewicz
Bonnie Mesewicz
Ruth Meyer
Michael Michael
Bonnie Miller

2015 INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS (CONTINUED)

Jim Miller
 Thomas Miller
 Gabrielle Mitchell
 John Mittelbrun
 Bill Morris
 Kent Munro
 Jim Murphy
 Judy Murphy
 Andy Neil
 Don Nelson
 Espie Nelson
 Mark Nelson
 John Nerren
 Michael Nork
 Brandon Nye
 Michael O'Brien
 Michelle O'Connor
 Michael O'Leary
 Bernard O'Reilly
 Paul Pawlowski
 Jodie Payne
 Mike Perry
 Karen Pesce
 Lorenzo Pesce
 John Peterson
 Judy Petzinger
 Carol Picciolo
 Andrea Pletske
 Diane Pool
 Kristen Pool
 Pronger Oliver
 Theresa Przybylski
 Phillip Pursley
 Angelina Ramirez
 Janet Ramirez
 Rita Renwick
 Bob Reynolds
 Danny Rich
 Kevin Rich
 Mary Rich
 Benjamin Riley
 Carrie Rock





Ann Romadka
Bob Romadka
Jeff Ronspies
Roger Ross
Michael Rusniak
René Russell
Mike Rzepka
Angela Salvaggione
Joe Sanchez
Midge Saunders
Beverly Scheidt
Janet Schleeter
Michael Schnell
Paul Schroeder
Phyllis Schulte
Max Scott-Schroeder
Samuel Scott-Schroeder

Tod Shafer
LeShaun Singleton
Carol Smith
Bob Soukup
Bailey Stevenson
Dakota Stevenson
Linda Stevenson
Julienna Stickney
Pat Strange
Reilly Styx
Karen Tellef
Alan Thomas
Dick Thomas
Bernie Twait
Bruce Vasa
Dave Vasa
Randall Verink

Richard Wachenheim
Penny Wakeland
Brandon Ward
Sarah Welz
Dave Wendt
Marie Wendt
Linda Westberg
Flo White
Mark Wieclaw,
Sally Wieclaw
Bill Willis
Connie Witkowski
Lee Witkowski
Earl Zastro
Laura Zderad
Natalie Zderad
Susan Zelek

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Beecher High School	Joliet West High School
Bolingbrook High School	Lewis University
Boy Scout Troop 44 Eagle Scout Project	Lincoln-Way East High School Asset Team and Key Club
Boy Scout Troop 91 Eagle Scout Project	Lincoln-Way North High School Asset Team
Boy Scout Troop 100 Eagle Scout Project	Lincoln-Way West High School Asset Team and Environmental Club
Boy Scout Troop 107 Eagle Scout Project	Lockport Township High School
Boy Scout Troop 258 Eagle Scout Project	Nequa Valley High School
Boy Scout Cub Scout Pack 49	North Central College Varsity Soccer Team
Boy Scout Cub Scout Pack 91	Plainfield North High School Interact Club and Environmental Club
Boy Scout Cub Scout Pack 131	Plants of Concern
Campus Evolution Villages	Project Pride
Cathedral of St. Raymond Nonnatus	Royal Rangers
First Assembly of God Church	S.T.E.P. Program
Girl Scout Troop 21	St. Ignatius High School
Girl Scout Troop 920	The Siberian Husky Club of Greater Chicago
Girl Scout Troop 50563	Thorn Creek Audubon Society
Girl Scout Troop 70398	U.S. Coast Guard
Girl Scout Troop 70765	University of St. Francis
Girl Scout Troop 70680	Will County Audubon
Great Lakes Bassmasters	Will County Trail Riders
Governors State University	Wild Ones of Will County
Heart Haven OutReach	
Joliet Junior College	
Joliet Kiwanis	

14,890.95

**TOTAL HOURS OF SERVICE
FROM VOLUNTEERS**

CORPORATE VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Caterpillar	Goldman Sachs	JULIE, Inc.
Citgo Lemont Refinery	Harrah's Joliet	Razorfish
Comcast Cable Communications	Home Depot	Saratoga Foods Specialties
ConAgra Foods	JCPenney	



1,148

VOLUNTEERS





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Marcella M. DeMauro
(Retired January 2016)

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION & FINANCIAL SERVICES

John Gerl, Chief Financial Officer

ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

Lisa Lukasevich, Director
Meredith Clavena
Renee Gauchat
Lori Green
Diana Jaworski
Karen Odum
Donna Suca

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Denise Steffen, Director
Tom Mancari
Michael Prybell

OPERATIONS & PROGRAM SERVICES

Ralph Schultz,
Chief Operating Officer

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Robert Murphy, Chief of Police
Tracy Chapman, Lieutenant
Jason Allbert
David Barrios, Jr.

Steven Bettenhausen
James Burnette
Vincent Cimino
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
Reginald McCrary
Jeffrey McKenzie
Daniel Olszewski
Andrew Paver
Peter Piazza
Michael A. Reilly
Michael P. Reilly
David Starceвич
Joseph Stubbs
Marian VanOoteghem
Bradley Veerman
Nicole Veerman
Robert Veron
James Wendt

MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

John Fay, Director
Calvin Anderson
Robert Balsie
Tracy Bianco
Cole Biltgen
David Blaskey
Elise Brazzale
Scott Carevic
Rina Cheney
Steven Crobie
Todd Doran

Ian Eskridge
Cedric Foster
Phillip Gallo
Terrence Garvey, Jr.
Ben Gauchat
Richard Gier
James Glenn
Alex Gonzalez
Gregory Griffin
Jeffrey Jaworski
Brian Krabbe
Jeff Kure
Eric Latz
John Latz
Brian Mackey
Edward McDermott
Patrick McGrady
Michael Milligan
Arthur Moeller
Christopher Moeller
Scott Nielsen
Adam Oestmann
Jon Panozzo
Justin Parks
Daniel Parthun
Alex Pasteris
James Patnoudes
Kyle Siegel
Roy Smith
Denzil Smothers
Terry Snyder
Steven Sokol
Jeffery Steichen
Brad Steinke
William Suca, Jr.
Dane Thayer
Donald Thayer
Richard Therikildsen
Sara Therikildsen
Charles Thomas
Donna VanWert
Thomas Watson
Robert Zinkiewicz

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Laura Kiran, Director
Mary Borgra

Cindy Cain
Morgan Drdak
Bruce Hodgdon
Glenn P. Knoblock
Katie McCollum
Jim McFarland
Rose Scofield
Barb Sudsberry
Eleanor Wagner

VISITOR SERVICES

Lynn Kurczewski, Director
Bob Bryerton
Catherine Caldwell
Diane Carson
Erin Ecker
Jen Guest
Christopher Gutmann
Harry Klinkhamer
Mark Loekle
Suzy Lyttle
Jenna Newcomb
Angela Opiola
Kelli Parke
Jessica Prince-Sharrar
Angela Rafac
Tina Riley
Ray Setzke



Mike Speller
Jason Stevenson
Mary Thomas
Melissa Zanzola

RETIRED

Cynthia Harn
John Janssen
Cecelia Kanellakes
Terry Lorenz
Scott Marco
Jim Nachel
Richard Princko
Deborah Specht



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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



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