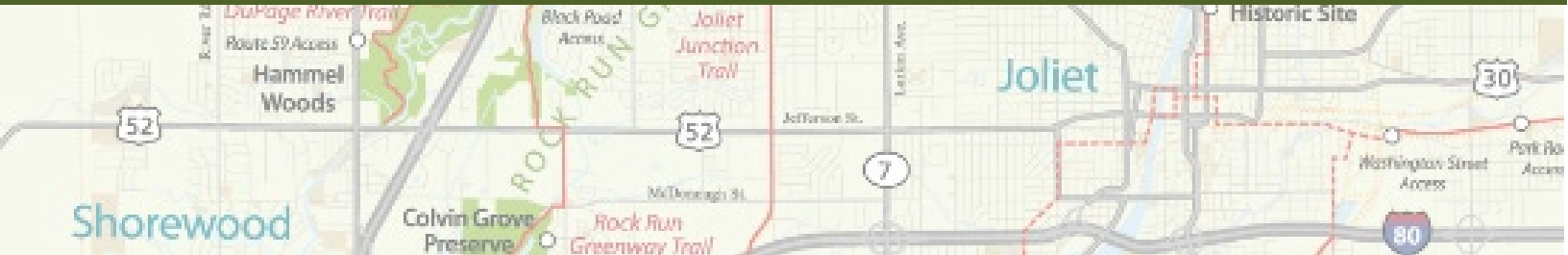




# Decennial Committee Local Agency Efficiency Report

Forest Preserve District of Will County





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## I. The Forest Preserve District of Will County

The Forest Preserve District of Will County (Forest Preserve) was created by referendum July 25, 1927, as a separate legal entity and taxing body with boundaries coterminous to the County of Will. In accordance with the Statutes of the State of Illinois, the affairs of the Forest Preserve are managed by a Board of Commissioners, who are the current County Board Members. As provided by law, each member of the County Board of Will County is a member of the Board of the Forest Preserve.

Organized under the Downstate Forest Preserve Act, the purpose of the Forest Preserve is *“To acquire ... and hold lands ... for the purpose of protecting and preserving the flora, fauna and scenic beauties within such district, and to restore, restock, protect and preserve the natural forests and such lands together with their flora and fauna, as nearly as may be, in their natural state and condition, for the purpose of the education, pleasure and recreation of the public.”*

In simpler terms, the purpose of the Forest Preserve is to protect and enhance Will County’s natural and cultural resources for the benefit of current and future generations. As of January 1, 2023, the Forest Preserve owned, leased, or managed approximately 23,120 acres or 4.25% of all lands in the County.



## II. Organizational Information of the Forest Preserve District of Will County

- **Population:** 697,985 (July 1, 2021)
- **Number of Employees:** As of January 1, 2024, the Forest Preserve had 22 Commissioners, 105 Full-time, 58 Part-Time and 6 Seasonal positions. The number of seasonal positions fluctuates throughout the year. In 2023, more than 13,900 hours of service were also generously donated by 840 individual volunteers.
- **Organizational Structure, Programs and Services:** The Forest Preserve is organized into nine distinct departments which carry the responsibilities of day-to-day operations and administration. Each department is supervised by a director who reports to the Executive Director and Deputy Director/Public Safety Administrator who, in turn, reports to the Board of Commissioners.
  - i. The **Human Resources Department** supports the Forest Preserve by recruiting, retaining, and supporting qualified staff. It actively manages all aspects of the human resource function including compensation, payroll and benefits administration, employment/recruitment, employee relations, safety, and training. This department also includes and supports Volunteer Services.
  - ii. The **Finance Department** serves as the Business Office of the Forest Preserve, including the direction of all accounting, financial reporting, budgeting, policy making and financial controls.
  - iii. The **Information Technology Department** is responsible for the overall operational success of the IT infrastructure, its functions, and IT-related activities, ensuring alignment with the overall strategy and objectives of the Forest Preserve and to ensure functionality and security of related hardware and software to support all Forest Preserve functions.
  - iv. The **Marketing & Communications Department** oversees the planning, development and implementation of comprehensive public relations and marketing functions for the Forest Preserve. These actions include digital, print and in-person communication with individuals and groups regarding the current and past activity of the Forest Preserve and its programs, events, and promotions.
  - v. The **Visitor Services Department** connects and engages with the public through diverse programming including educational programs for students and youth groups, public programming for families and adults, and community outreach. It also creates engagement opportunities with interpretive exhibits, events, and exhibitions at six visitor centers located throughout the county and manages permitting for dog parks, picnics, camping, program registration and facility rentals.
  - vi. The **Planning & Land Preservation Department** oversees the acquisition and improvement of all Forest Preserve property including the physical development of our facilities, preserve access areas and trails. It also

- maintains all real estate information and is responsible for the issuance of any permits or licenses for use of Forest Preserve lands by others.
- vii. The **Conservation Programs Department** oversees Forest Preserve natural resource management activities and its agricultural program including the restoration of previously converted landscapes and care of remnant or re-created habitats.
  - viii. The **Maintenance & Operations Department** oversees the maintenance of all preserves, buildings, fleet, and equipment owned by the Forest Preserve.
  - ix. The **Police Department** is charged with safeguarding the visitors, employees, and properties of the Forest Preserve. Protection of properties includes the Forest Preserve's natural and cultural resources and its wildlife.
- **Purpose and Principles:** Similar to a mission statement and organizational values, the Forest Preserve developed a series of guiding principles that are rooted in its statutory purpose and approach to bringing people and nature together. These principles include:
    - i. **Staying true to the purpose.** The Forest Preserve District protects and enhances Will County's natural and cultural resources for the benefit of current and future generations.
    - ii. **Being a good steward.** We preserve, manage, and restore significant natural and cultural resources to encourage a community-wide respect of nature and to support an environmental legacy.
    - iii. **Connecting people to nature.** We provide multiple avenues for people to connect with nature and inspire changes in their daily lives that positively affect themselves, the environment, and their community.
    - iv. **Focusing on wellness.** We provide opportunities that are inclusive of everyone and support their mental and physical health.
    - v. **Working with others.** We collaborate with residents, public agencies, and other organizations to maximize the efficiency and collective impact of our services.
    - vi. **Promoting sustainability.** We manage the Forest Preserve's physical, financial, and human resources to protect past investments and ensure future success in achieving our mission.
  - **Forest Preserve Statistics as of January 1, 2024**
    - i. Number of Preserves: 80
    - ii. Preserve Acreage: 23,120
    - iii. Number of Visitor Centers: 6
    - iv. Developed Preserves: 48 (includes regional trail corridors)
    - v. Preserve Access Areas: 56
    - vi. Miles of Trail: 135 (includes regional trails and inter-preserve trails)



- vii. Number of Education Programs: 319 (2023)
  - viii. Number of Public Programs: 343 (2023)
  - ix. Number of Outreach Programs: 51 (2023)
  - x. Annual Visitor Facility Visitation: 60,500
  - xi. Programs and Services Attendance: 65,200
  - xii. Annual Permitted Recreational Activity Attendance: 62,100 (includes camping, dog park, picnicking, non-District use, volunteer and special use permits issued)
- **Forest Preserve Annual Budget (FY2024)**
    - i. Operating Budget: \$21,595,614 (includes fund reserve transfers)
    - ii. Capital Replacement Funds: \$1,992,431
    - iii. Capital Improvement Program/Grants & Partnerships: \$17,283,619
    - iv. Debt Service: \$15,125,750
  - **County EAV (Less Exemptions)**
    - i. \$27,445,398,165 (2023 Estimate)
  - **Levies for Year Ending December 31, 2024**
    - i. General: \$11,677,496
    - ii. Construction & Development: \$4,329,258
    - iii. IMRF: \$430,519
    - iv. FICA: \$458,056
    - v. Liability: \$242,000
    - vi. Audit: \$5,000



**III. Membership of the Decennial Committee**

As required by Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act (50 ILCS 70/) the Forest Preserve Decennial Committee is comprised of the current Board of Commissioners, members of the public (Forest Preserve Citizens Advisory Committee) and the Forest Preserve’s Executive Director. The following individuals are members of the Decennial Committee:

**Forest Preserve District of Will County Board of Commissioners**

Annette Parker, President  
Meta Mueller, Vice President  
Sherry Newquist, Treasurer  
Raquel Mitchell, Secretary

Katie Deane- Schlottman	Denise Winfrey
Joe VanDuyne	Natalie Coleman
Judy Ogalla	Vince Logan
Frankie Pretzel	Mica Freeman
Daniel Butler	Mark Revis
Steve Balich	Destinee Ortiz
Jim Richmond	Julie Berkowicz
Sherry Williams	Elnalyn Costa
Janet Diaz	Jacqueline Traynere

**Citizens Advisory Committee**

MaryAnn Deutsche, Chair	Barbara Parker
Stephen Baker, Vice Chair	Jeanne Tewes
William Bromer	Carol Zelenski
Chris Cartwright	

**Forest Preserve Staff**

Ralph Schultz, Executive Director  
Tracy Chapman, Deputy Director/Public Safety Administrator

#### IV. Awards and Recognition

The Forest Preserve has been recognized by national, state, and local organizations for work in financial reporting, ecosystem restoration and management, environmental education, and trail/preserve improvements. Since 2010 the Forest Preserve has received the following awards:

- Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting, Government Finance Officers Association, annually 2010-2022
- Naperville Youth Service Award, City of Naperville and KidsMatter, 2010
- Assisted Vocational Program Certificate of Appreciation, Lincolnway Central High School, 2010
- Spring Creek Master Plan Implementation Award, American Planning Association – Illinois Chapter, 2010
- National Planning Excellence Award for Implementation, Spring Creek Greenway Master Plan, American Planning Association, 2011
- Outstanding Program Award, Lincolnway High School Freshman Restoration Learning Program, Illinois Park, and Recreation Association, 2011
- Outstanding Sustainability/Conservation Award, Forest Preserve District of Will County Land Stewardship Program, Illinois Park, and Recreation Association, 2012
- Excellence in Ecological Restoration, Braidwood Dunes & Savanna Nature Preserve, Chicago Wilderness Alliance, 2013
- Trail of the Month, Old Plank Road Trail, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 2013
- Excellence in Ecological Restoration, Hickory Creek Barrens Nature Preserve, Chicago Wilderness Alliance, 2014
- Excellence in Ecological Restoration, Lockport Prairie East, Chicago Wilderness Alliance, 2017
- Award of Excellence, Digital Marketing, National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials, 2018
- Excellence in Ecological Restoration, Hadley Valley Preserve, Chicago Wilderness Alliance, 2019
- Environmental/Conservation Award, Kankakee Sands Preserve, National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials, 2019
- Outstanding Achievement in Marketing, “Don’t be a Jerk”, National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials, 2020
- Excellence in Ecological Restoration, Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve, Chicago Wilderness Alliance, 2021
- Outstanding Achievement in Marketing, “The Buzz”, National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials, 2021
- Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Parks and Recreation, Black Road Trail Connection, National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials, 2022
- Excellence in Ecological Restoration, Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve, Chicago Wilderness Alliance, 2023



## V. Intergovernmental Agreements

The Forest Preserve established its Capital Improvement Program in 1998 in preparation for a voter referendum that ultimately provided \$70,000,000 for land acquisition, preserve improvements and trail development. Since that time, the Forest Preserve has continued to fund the program through both referendum and non-referendum bond issues of an additional \$170,000,000. The program has allowed the Forest Preserve to enter into more than 150 Intergovernmental Agreements with various State agencies, local municipalities, park districts and other entities to directly benefit the acquisition, improvement, or management of the Forest Preserve District of Will County or to indirectly benefit the organization through the assistance to others for programs, developments, or land purchases that are consistent with its purpose, plans or initiatives. The following intergovernmental agreements were approved between 2010 and 2023.

- MOU 10-01, executed September 9, 2010, between the Forest Preserve and the Elgin, Joliet, & Eastern Railway Company for a temporary construction and trail pavement license.
- IA 10-02, executed May 20, 2010, between the Forest Preserve and the County of Will regarding a trail crossing at Black Road.
- IA 10-03, executed June 10, 2010, between the Forest Preserve and the Channahon Fire Protection District regarding the improvement and use of the McKinley Woods Marina.
- MOA 11-01, executed February 14, 2011, between the Forest Preserve and Active Transport Alliance to support development of the Veteran's Memorial Trail.
- IA 11-02, executed April 24, 2011, between the Forest Preserve and IDOT for the creation of a bike trail on Route 30 in Frankfort Township.
- IA 11-03, executed April 24, 2011, between the Forest Preserve and IDOT for the creation of a bike trail on Route 30 at Hickory Creek Preserve.
- MOU 11-04, executed August 3, 2011, between the Forest Preserve and the IDNR authorizing a cooperative prescribed burning agreement.
- MOU 11-05, executed April 14, 2011, between the Forest Preserve, Northeastern Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership, and multiple governmental and non-governmental organizations for an invasive plant control agreement.
- IA 11-06, executed September 13, 2011, between the Forest Preserve and the Village of Shorewood regarding the extension of the DuPage River Trail.
- IA 12-01, executed March 8, 2012, between the Forest Preserve and the City of Joliet regarding funding for trail repairs at Rock Run Preserve.
- IA 12-02, executed April 12, 2012, between the Forest Preserve and the Naperville Park District for the construction and operation of a trail extension within the Tallgrass Greenway.
- IA 12-03, executed December 17, 2012, between the Forest Preserve and IDOT for a Wetland Mitigation Project at Thorn Creek Headwaters Preserve.
- IA 12-04, executed August 12, 2012, between the Forest Preserve and the County of Will regarding 95th Street improvements.

- IA 14-01, executed June 17, 2014, between Forest Preserve and IDOT for a permanent bridge easement at I-80/Old Plank Road Trail and Tree Mitigation.
- IA 14-02, executed April 10, 2014, between the Forest Preserve and the Naperville Park District for the construction of an extension of the DuPage River Trail.
- MOA 14-03, executed April 10, 2014, between the Forest Preserve and Wild Ones of Will County for the formation of an environmental education partnership.
- IA 14-04, executed June 10, 2014, between the Forest Preserve and IDOT regarding an easement along 159th Street and tree mitigation.
- IA 14-05, executed July 10, 2014, between the Forest Preserve and the Village of New Lenox for habitat restoration at Hadley Valley Preserve.
- IA 14-06, executed September 11, 2014, between the Forest Preserve and the Village of Mokena regarding a municipal utility license across the Old Plank Road Trail.
- IA 14-07, executed September 11, 2014, between the Forest Preserve and the City of Joliet regarding a sewer line and McClintock Road Dedication at Lower Rock Run Preserve.
- MOA 15-01, executed February 11, 2015, between the Forest Preserve and the Friends of the Forest Preserve District of Will County Foundation initiating the relationship between the organizations.
- IA 15-02, executed February 11, 2015, between the Forest Preserve, Village of Channahon, the Board of Education of Channahon School District No. 17, the Board of Education of Minooka Community High School District No. 111, the County of Will, the Channahon Park District, the Channahon Fire Protection District, Community College District 525, Channahon Township, the Channahon Township Road District, and the Three Rivers Public Library District regarding a property development & tax rebate.
- IA 15-03, executed March 12, 2015, between the Forest Preserve and the Bolingbrook Park District for the design and construction of a trail connection from Whalon Lake to Hidden Lakes Trout Farm.
- IA 15-04, executed March 12, 2015, between the Forest Preserve, Village of Woodridge, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County to authorizing ingress and egress for the Veterans Memorial Trail.
- IA 15-05, executed March 12, 2015, between the Forest Preserve, the City of Joliet, and the County of Will for extension of sewer and water services at Sugar Creek Preserve.
- MOA 15-06, executed July 9, 2015, between the Forest Preserve and Friends of the Forest Preserve District of Will County to transfer funds for a mitigation project.
- IA 15-07, executed August 13, 2015, between the Forest Preserve and Crete Township Fire Protection District for maintenance and operation of a tornado siren at Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve.
- IA 15-08, executed October 20, 2015, between the Forest Preserve, IDNR, and the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission regarding natural community and hydrologic restoration at Kankakee Sands Preserve.

- IA 15-09, executed December 9, 2015, between the Forest Preserve and the County of Will, for the design, construction, and operation of Veterans Memorial Trail and 135th Street improvements.
- IA 16-01, executed March 16, 2016, between the Forest Preserve and the Village of Homer Glen regarding a utility license and bike trail at Fiddymont Creek Preserve.
- IA 16-02, executed April 14, 2016, between the Forest Preserve and the City of Joliet regarding a utility license and water main at Joliet Junction Trail.
- MOA 16-03, executed October 13, 2016, between the Forest Preserve and the Lower DuPage River Watershed Coalition regarding the Hammel Woods Dam Removal Engineering Assessment.
- IA 16-04, executed June 9, 2016, between the Forest Preserve and the Village of Frankfort regarding trail construction at Jackson Creek Preserve.
- IA 16-05, executed July 14, 2016, between the Forest Preserve and the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority regarding the construction of Veterans Memorial Trail.
- IA 16-06, executed October 17, 2016, between the Forest Preserve and the Village of Plainfield regarding Normantown Trail improvements.
- IA 16-07, executed November 10, 2016, between the Forest Preserve, the City of Joliet, and the Village of Shorewood for a public bikeway along Black Road.
- IA 17-01, executed January 1, 2016, between the Forest Preserve and the Villages of Beecher, Crete, Frankfort, Manhattan, Mokena, Monee, New Lenox, Peotone, Rockdale, Romeoville, Chicago Heights, Steger, University Park, Braidwood, Fire Protect Districts of Beecher, Crete, East Joliet, Frankfort, Manhattan, Mokena, Monee, New Lenox, Peotone, Steger, and the Sheriff Office of Will County, to establish the Laraway Communications Center for 911 Communication.
- IA 17-02, executed March 9, 2017, between the Forest Preserve, the City of Joliet, and the Village of Shorewood, for a public bikeway along Black Road.
- IA 17-03, executed June 8, 2017, between the Forest Preserve and the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County regarding the recovery of Blanding's Turtle populations.
- IA 17-04, executed June 19, 2017, between the Forest Preserve, Village of Channahon, and various other taxing districts regarding tax abatements to Crossroads 55, LLC.
- MOA 17-05, executed June 8, 2017, between the Forest Preserve and Elmhurst Chicago Stone Company regarding flood control and bicycle trail construction at Whalon Lake.
- IA 17-06, executed June 8, 2017, between the Forest Preserve and the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County regarding an expansion of the DuPage River Trail.
- IA 17-07, executed October 18, 2017, between the Forest Preserve and IDNR regarding land management at Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve.
- IA 17-08, executed December 29, 2017, between the Forest Preserve and the County of Will regarding radio communications.
- IA 18-01, executed November 8, 2018, between the Forest Preserve and the City of Lockport regarding the construction and operation of Veterans Memorial Trail from Spring Creek to 159th Street.

- IA 08-02, executed November 8, 2018, between the Forest Preserve and the Channahon Fire Protection District regarding the improvement and use of the Marina at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center.
- IA 19-01, executed January 10, 2019, between the Forest Preserve and the City of Joliet regarding Houbolt Road improvements at Lower Rock Run Preserve.
- MOA 19-02, executed February 14, 2019, between the Forest Preserve and Naperville Kayak LLC granting a concession license for kayak rental and instruction at Whalon Lake.
- MOA 19-03, executed April 11, 2019, between the Forest Preserve and the Lower DuPage River Watershed Coalition regarding the Hammel Dam removal.
- IA 19-04, executed April 11, 2019, between the Forest Preserve and IDNR regarding land management at Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve.
- IA 19-05, executed June 6, 2019, between the Forest Preserve and the County of Will, for the construction and operation of Veterans Memorial Trail from Spring Creek to 159th Street.
- IA 19-06, executed May 9, 2019, between the Forest Preserve and the City of Crest Hill for the construction and operation of a sidewalk connection between Prairie Bluff Preserve and Arbor Glen subdivision.
- IA 19-07, executed April 15, 2019, between the Forest Preserve and the Village of Plainfield regarding 143rd Street improvements.
- IA 19-08, executed October 10, 2019, between the Forest Preserve, County of Will, the Village of Minooka, the Village of Channahon, and the Channahon Township Bridge and Road District regarding engineering services for McEvelly Road Trail Extension.
- IA 19-09, executed February 14, 2020, between the Forest Preserve and Homer Township regarding the construction and operation of Veterans Memorial Trail from Spring Creek to 159th Street.
- MOU 20-01, executed May 21, 2020, between the Forest Preserve, JMC Operations, and Vulcan Materials for an encroachment agreement at Keepataw Preserve.
- IA 20-02, executed June 12, 2020, between the Forest Preserve and the Wilmington Island Park District for assistance with land acquisition in the Lower Forked Creek Resource Plan.
- MOU 20-03, executed July 9, 2020, between the Forest Preserve and Naperville Kayak regarding kayak rentals and instruction at Whalon Lake.
- MOA 20-04, executed November 18, 2020, between the Forest Preserve and the Lower DuPage River Watershed Coalition regarding the Hammel Woods Dam modification and construction oversight.
- IA 20-05, executed October 14th, 2020, between the Forest Preserve and the US Forest Service to cooperatively grow and distribute native plant plugs and harvest and distribute native seeds.
- MOA 21-01, executed January 7, 2021, between the Forest Preserve and the Lower DuPage River Watershed Coalition for Hammel Dam removal.
- IA 21-02, executed February 11, 2021, between the Forest Preserve and the City of Joliet, for a public bikeway along Essington Road & Theodore Street.

- MOA 21-03, executed March 18, 2021, between the Forest Preserve and the US Forest Service regarding prescribed burning on Wauponsee Glacial Trail.
- IA 21-04, executed March 15, 2021, between the Forest Preserve, Village of Plainfield and various other taxing bodies supporting the extension of the Village of Plainfield Downtown TIF District.
- IA 21-05, executed August 6, 2021, between the Forest Preserve and the Plainfield Township Park District regarding the development of a segment of the DuPage River Trail.
- IA 21-06, executed October 20, 2021, between the Forest Preserve and Joliet Junior College regarding Natural Areas Volunteer Days.
- IA 21-07, executed May 15, 2018, between the Forest Preserve and the Government Insurance Network to establish membership.
- IA 21-09, executed November 18, 2021, between the Forest Preserve and the Bolingbrook Park District regarding the operation of Hidden Oaks Nature Center and Hidden Lakes Trout Farm.
- IA 22-01, executed August 11, 2022, between the Forest Preserve and the Village of Romeoville for wetland mitigation at Romeoville Prairie Nature Preserve.
- IA 22-02, executed October 13, 2022, between the Forest Preserve and the University of Illinois authorizing a license for aquifer monitoring at Veterans Woods Preserve.
- IA 22-03, executed November 10, 2022, between the Forest Preserve and the Village of Homer Glen regarding a trail connection at Messenger Marsh.
- IA 22-04, executed November 10, 2022, between the Forest Preserve and the County of Will regarding Route 53 bike path funding.
- IA 23-01, executed February 9, 2023, between the Forest Preserve, Village of Minooka and Village of Channahon for engineering, construction and land acquisition for the McEvelly Road trail extension
- IA 23-02, executed May 11, 2023 between the Forest Preserve and the City of Wilmington regarding a grant application, funding, and development of the Kankakee River Canoe and Kayak Launch at North Island Park.
- IA 23-03 executed July 13, 2023 between the Forest Preserve and the Manhattan Park District regarding development of a trail connection between Wauponsee Park and the Wauponsee Glacial Trail.
- IA 23-04, executed September 7, 2023 between the Forest Preserve and City of Joliet regarding installation of ground water monitoring wells at Isle a la Cache.
- IA 23-05, executed September 25, 2023 between the Forest Preserve and the City of Joliet regarding a trail extension to the Rock Run Greenway Trail at Olympic Boulevard.
- IA 23-06 executed September 17, 2023 between the Forest Preserve and the Village of Manhattan for a trail extension to the Wauponsee Glacial Trail at Marion Street.
- IA 23-07, executed September 18, 2023 between the Forest Preserve and the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority for landscaping along the Veterans Memorial Trail from Hadley Valley Preserve to 163<sup>rd</sup> Street.
- IA 23-08, executed November 9, 2023 between the Forest Preserve and the City of Lockport regarding funding for he Lockport Loop Trail Feasibility Study



- MOU 23-09, executed November 9, 2023, between the Forest Preserve and V3 Wetland Restoration for the wetland mitigation bank at Thorn Creek Headwaters Preserve
- IA 23-10, executed November 9, 2023, between the Forest Preserve, Village of Plainfield and Wheatland Township Road District for the extension of the DuPage River Trail between 119<sup>th</sup> and 127<sup>th</sup> Street.





## VI. Interagency Associations, Organizational and Professional Memberships

The Forest Preserve and its professional staff belong to a wide variety of professional organizations that provide opportunities to engage with peers, stay abreast of changing trends, participate in statewide and regional planning issues, forge connections with partners and provide professional development opportunities. The Forest Preserve or individual staff members belong to the following:

- AAM – American Association of Museums
- ACA – American Canoe Association
- ANCA – Association of Nature Center Administrators
- APBnet – Realtime Alert and Information Sharing for Law Enforcement
- ASLA – American Society of Landscape Architects
- CRTI – Chicagoland Regional Tree Initiative
- CWA – Chicago Wilderness Alliance
- DAVA – DuPage Association of Volunteer Administration
- EEAI – Environmental Education Association of Illinois
- GFOA – Government Finance Officers Association
- IACD – Illinois Association of Conservation Districts
- IACFPD – Illinois Association of Conservation and Forest Preserve Districts
- IACP – International Association of Chiefs of Police
- IAPD – Illinois Association of Park Districts
- IGFOA – Illinois Government Finance Officers Association
- ILACP – Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police
- ILEAS – Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System
- IPLEA – Illinois Park Law Enforcement Association
- IPRA – Illinois Park and Recreation Association
- JRCC – Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce
- LEXIPOL – Public Safety Policy Management
- NAAEE – North American Association of Environmental Education
- NACPRO – National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials
- NAI – National Association of Interpretation
- NRPA – National Recreation and Park Association
- OPRTMC – Old Plank Road Trail Management Commission
- PCAWC – Police Chiefs Association of Will County
- PDRMA – Park District Risk Management Agency
- PLEA – Park Law Enforcement Association
- PLI – Police Law Institute
- SORP – Society for Outdoor Recreation Professionals
- TCWMC – Thorn Creek Woods Management Commission

## VII. Grants and Partnership Funds

The Forest Preserve regularly applies for State, Federal and Local grants to assist with program delivery, land acquisition, preserve improvement, habitat restoration and management. Between 2010 and 2023, the Forest Preserve received more than \$27,630,400 in grants from various sources to supplement the Capital Improvement Program or general operating funds.

<u>Grant Location</u>	<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date</u>
Monee Reservoir	IEPA	\$498	2010
Veterans Memorial Trail	IDOT – TCSP	\$439,920	2010
Monee Reservoir	NRPA – Take me Fishing	\$4,000	2010
Keepataw Preserve	USFWS	\$15,600	2010
Monee Reservoir	IEPA	\$498	2010
Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve	ICECF	\$332,657	2010
Veterans Memorial Trail	Active Transportation Alliance	\$69,444	2010
Veterans Memorial Trail	IDOT – ITEP	\$594,630	2010
Wauponsee Glacial Trail – Ballou Access	IDNR – OSLAD	\$400,000	2011
Keepataw Preserve	USFWS	\$29,000	2011
Lockport Prairie East Preserve	USFWS	\$33,000	2011
DuPage River Trail	CMAQ	\$1,372,000	2011
Veterans Memorial Trail	IDOT – TCSP	\$652,200	2011
Hadley Valley Preserve	USFWS	\$75,000	2012
Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve	USFWS	\$18,000	2012
Thorn Creek Headwaters	IDOT	\$1,040,000	2012
Volunteer Services Program	Exelon	\$5,000	2012
Recreation Program Support	IDNR	\$4,320	2013
Dellwood Park West	Lockport Township Park District	\$8,000	2013
Lockport Prairie East Preserve	USFWS	\$33,000	2013
Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve	USFWS	\$18,000	2013
DuPage River Trail	IDOT – ITEP	\$963,220	2014
Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve	ComED Green Region	\$10,000	2014
Hadley Valley Preserve	OMMA	\$425,000	2014
Hammel Woods	IDNR	\$2,000	2014

<u>Grant/Location</u>	<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date</u>
Isle a la Cache	IDNR	\$270,000	2014
Messenger Woods Nature Preserve	OMMA	\$275,000	2014
Recreation Program Support	IDNR	\$11,520	2014
Whalon Lake Preserve	IDNR – Bike Path Grant	\$151,000	2014
Plum Valley Preserve	IDNR – OSLAD	\$400,000	2015
DuPage River Trail/Rock Run Trail Connection	CMAQ	\$1,664,630	2015
Four Rivers Environmental Education Center	NAI	\$400	2016
Monee Reservoir	National Safe Boating Council	\$1,600	2016
Four Rivers Environmental Education Center	ONEOK, Inc.	\$4,000	2017
Hammel Woods Dog Park	Petsafe	\$10,000	2017
Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve/Prairie Bluff Preserve	USACE	\$2,300,000	2017
Four Rivers Environmental Education Center	ONEOK, Inc.	\$1,100	2018
Braidwood Sands Area Preserves	IDNR	\$122,200	2018
Hadley Valley Preserve	ICECF	\$1,602,140	2018
Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve/Prairie Bluff Preserve	USACE	\$560,000	2018
Prairie Bluff Preserve	Open Land Trust	\$10,000	2018
Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve	IDNR	\$112,500	2019
Veterans Memorial Trail	CMAQ	\$5,353,791	2019
Four Rivers Environmental Education Center	NEH	\$1,000	2019
Various	Monarch Watch	\$1,314	2019
Various Programs & Projects	TNFWC	\$62,890	2019
Braidwood Dunes & Savanna Nature Preserve	ICECF	\$208,000	2020
Four Rivers Environmental Education Center	IDNR – Public Museum	\$750,000	2020
Various Programs & Projects	TNFWC	\$65,360	2020
Hadley Valley Preserve	ICECF	\$1,520,000	2021
Braidwood Sands Natural Area	IDNR – Habitat	\$92,000	2021
Various Programs and Projects	TNFWC	\$20,392	2021

<u>Grant/Location</u>	<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date</u>
Joliet Junction Trail	Youth Service of America	\$100	2022
Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve/Prairie Bluff Preserve	USACE	\$281,935	2022
Various Programs & Projects	TNFWC	\$30,634	2022
Plum Creek Greenway Trail	CMAP	\$3,089,500	2023
Jackson Creek Greenway	ICECF	\$1,079,784	2023
Wolf's Crossing Road / Normantown Trail	ICC	\$760,000	2023
Kankakee Sands Preserve	IDNR – Habitat	\$92,000	2023
Various Programs & Projects	TNFWC	\$100,664	2023
Lake Chaminwood Preserve	IDNR – Boat Access	\$80,000	2023



## VIII. Key Statutes, Ordinances, Policies and Procedures

While many State of Illinois laws apply to the operations of the Forest Preserve, a few stand out related to transparency, accountability, purpose and function. Over the years the Forest Preserve has also drafted and adopted guiding polices and ordinances which dictate order, process, and accountability. These key statutes, ordinances, policies and procedures include the following:

- i. Downstate Forest Preserve District Act (70 ILCS 805/)
- ii. Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/)
- iii. Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/)
- iv. Forest Preserve District of Will County Organizational Rules
- v. Forest Preserve District of Will County Ethics Ordinance No. 295
- vi. Forest Preserve District of Will County Procurement Ordinance No. 625
- vii. Forest Preserve District of Will County General Use Regulation Ordinance No. 124
- viii. Forest Preserve District of Will County Land Acquisition Policy and Procedures Resolution No. 20-12





## IX. What Have We Done Well?

While the Forest Preserve has been in existence since 1927, beginning in 1989, the Forest Preserve has been engaged in a concerted effort to bring people and nature together. Since that time more than a quarter of a billion dollars has been directly invested by the citizens of Will County in preserving, restoring, and improving lands to make them more beneficial to our environment, sustainable, accessible to people, and serving as a legacy to our future.

The Forest Preserve has continually sought outside funds from state, federal and other sources and worked with dozens of municipalities, park districts and other agencies to further its mission. By focusing on its mission, funding its capital improvement program, and working with others, the Forest Preserve will continue to flourish for years into the future. In addition, an emphasis on excellent financial practices has allowed the organization to grow operationally, keeping pace with its expansion and providing services and value to its citizens.





## X. Committee Recommendations

The Committee recommends the Forest Preserve continue on the path its set by focusing on its core principles of:

- i. **Stay true to the purpose.** The Forest Preserve should continue to protect and enhance Will County's natural and cultural resources for the benefit of current and future generations.
- ii. **Be a good steward.** The Forest Preserve should continue to preserve, manage, and restore significant natural and cultural resources to encourage a community-wide respect of nature and to support an environmental legacy.
- iii. **Connect people to nature.** The Forest Preserve should continue to provide multiple avenues for people to connect with nature and inspire changes in their daily lives that positively affect themselves, the environment, and their community.
- iv. **Focus on wellness.** The Forest Preserve should continue to provide opportunities that are inclusive of everyone and support their mental and physical health.
- v. **Work with others.** The Forest Preserve should continue to collaborate with residents, public agencies, and other organizations to maximize the efficiency and collective impact of its services.
- vi. **Promote sustainability.** The Forest Preserve should continue to manage its physical, financial, and human resources to protect past investments and ensure future success in achieving our mission.