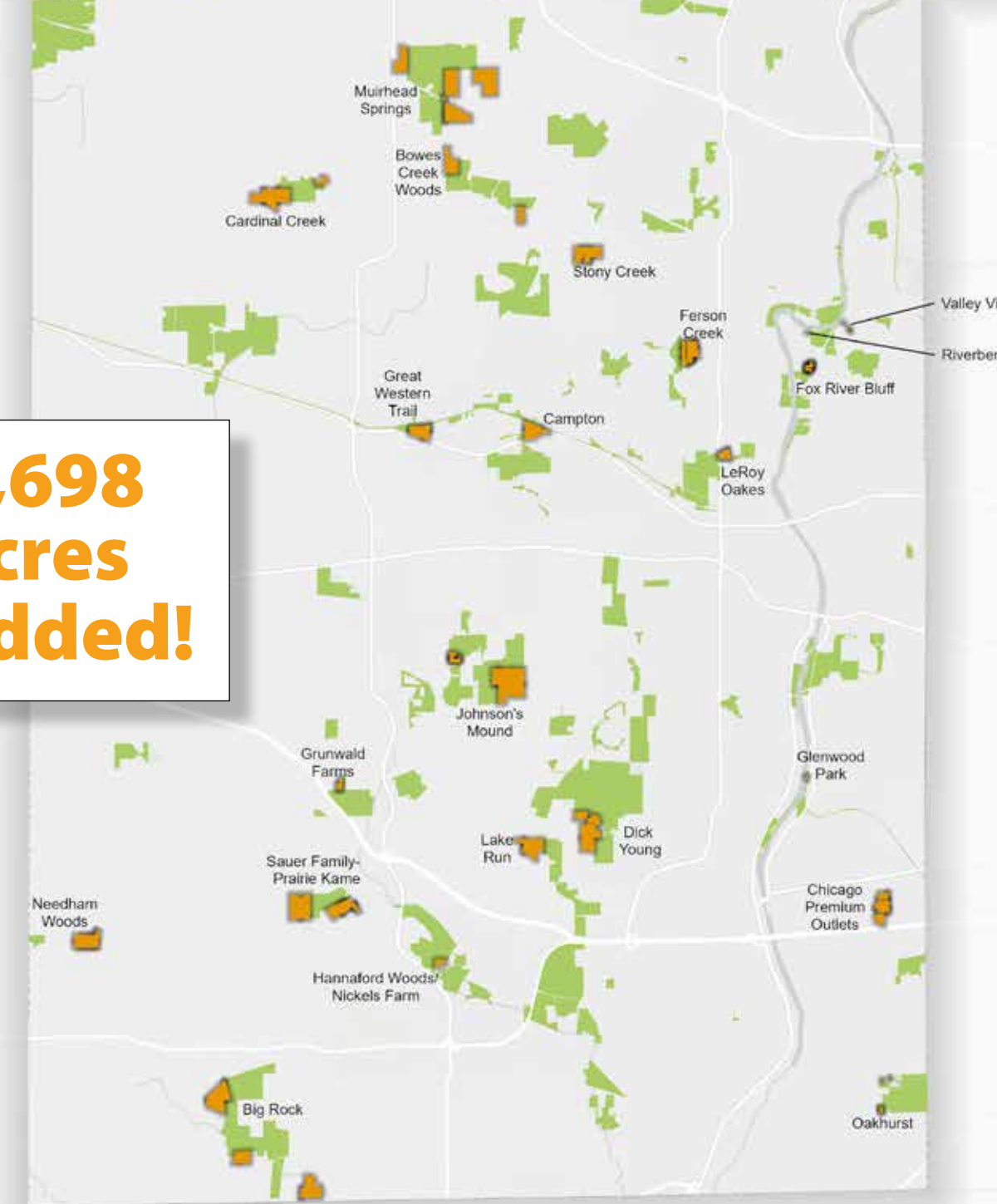


Forest Preserve District of Kane County

Current Holdings: 23,517 Acres



2,698 acres added!

■ 2017-2024 Acquisition
■ 1927-2016 Acquisition

The Forest Preserve District of Kane County is committed to recycling and green printing methods. This brochure is printed on recycled stock with soy-based ink. When finished, please pass along to another reader or recycle this material.

Natural Area Enhancements

Nelson Lake Marsh Revitalization Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia

The District conducted an engineering study aimed at maintaining delicate hemi-marsh (half water/half vegetation) conditions present within Nelson Lake Marsh. A water control structure was installed at the outlet to secure the aquatic balance and protect the diverse life found here. To ensure and monitor the success of the project, marsh birds and vegetation were inventoried before and after installation, and invasive species were controlled across the area.

Flatwoods & Migratory Bird Habitat Restoration

Helm Woods Forest Preserve, Barrington Hills

The understory of this high quality woodland had been choked by invasive woody species like Buckthorn and Honeysuckle. These invasive shrubs out-compete native plant species and degrade the habitat value for native birds. To combat this invasion, the District completed mechanical control across 52 acres in the northern half of the preserve in the winter of 2018. An additional 40 acres of clearing in Phases II & III is helping the entire system recover to a healthier state by reducing the amount of habitat edge and removing a large source of potential re-invasion.

Preserve Improvement Projects

Oakhurst Forest Preserve Redesign

The redesign of Oakhurst Forest Preserve in Aurora was completed in 2021. The remodel included a new shelter, restroom, fishing outcropping, ADA-accessible boat launch with dock, new parking and limestone trail improvements.

Jon J. Duerr Forest Preserve Improvements

Scheduled for construction in Summer 2024, improvements at Jon J. Duerr Forest Preserve in South Elgin include parking lot and trail reconfiguration,

Our Mission

Organized in 1925 by public referendum, the Mission of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County is to acquire, hold and maintain lands within Kane County that contribute to the conservation of natural and historic resources, habitats, flora and fauna; and to restore, restock, protect and preserve such lands for the environmental education, recreation, pleasure and well-being of all its citizens.

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New Wetland Habitat

Pingree Grove Forest Preserve, Pingree Grove

Pingree Grove Forest Preserve contains an 85-acre marsh that lacked significant patches of open water due to dense growth by invasive species. Open-water conditions are critically important for migratory waterfowl, as well as the state endangered species already present in the marsh. The District constructed three wetland scrapes, totaling approximately two acres within the marsh. The creation of these open water areas and emergent wetland vegetation will benefit migratory waterfowl, marsh birds, and reptiles. Habitat for several endangered species are enhanced by this project.

Turtle Habitat Creation

Freeman Kame-Meagher Forest Preserve, Gilberts

This prairie restoration project converted 62 acres of agricultural field to prairie, and in-turn, provided quality habitat for nesting turtles. The soils that are favored by the turtles are already present, so staff carefully selected native species that would allow sufficient openings and sun exposure to create viable nesting habitat. Providing quality nesting habitat adjacent to our wetlands helps reduce the exposure of female turtles to mortality sources during their search for nesting habitat.

replacement of two shelters and a restroom, new accessible boat launch and more than 25 acres of prairie restoration.

Installation of New/Updated Boat/Canoe/Kayak Launches

A new ADA-accessible boat launch with floating pier was installed as part of improvements at Oakhurst Forest Preserve in 2021. A new accessible boat launch will be installed at Jon Duerr Forest Preserve in Summer 2024. The District will be applying for a grant application for a remodel of Glenwood Park Forest Preserve in Batavia, in Summer 2024.



2024 Progress Report

Following the 2017 Land Acquisition & Preserve Improvement Referendum



FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF KANE COUNTY

Big Rock Forest Preserve Addition

Referendum Recap

Thanks to the foresight and generosity of Kane County voters in 2017, a Land Acquisition & Capital Improvement Referendum was approved. The Forest Preserve District of Kane County has now fully invested or committed the bond proceeds from that initiative, and we're proud to present this final 2024 Progress Report detailing land and capital investments made.

The Forest Preserve District of Kane County has successfully protected 2,698 additional acres of public open space. We were able to acquire the additional land at an average cost of approximately \$15,017 per acre.

The District now owns and manages more than 100 properties at 23,517 total acres of protected woodlands, wetlands & prairies, including Kane County's only bog!

Land Acquisition Strategy

- Expand existing core natural areas
- Create wildlife habitat and corridors
- Expand recreation and nature education opportunities
- Increase flood control and groundwater protection
- Improve our renowned trail system
- Leverage grant dollars to maximize acquisition investment

Accomplishments

- With 32 acquisitions, we increased the size of 24 forest preserves and added 3 new preserves to the system. By focusing on enlarging preserves, versus creating new ones, we were able to boost acreage without requiring additional capital improvements, such as parking lots, shelters, roadways, bathrooms and more. Larger preserves mean a better habitat ecosystem/environment for plant and animal communities.
- Increased forest preserve acreage equates to additional areas for native plants and wildlife to grow and thrive.
- Larger preserves also mean improved flood protection for surrounding communities.
- Additional acreage helps us make trail connections. More than 116 acres were added alongside the Great Western Trail in Campton Hills. Work is also being done to connect the Great Western Trail to the Fox River Trail.
- The Forest Preserve District is a statewide leader in grant awards for land protection and preserve improvements. We regularly receive Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)-managed grants for Open Space Land Acquisition & Development. We've also received U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grants, Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation grants, and more. Since 2017, we've received \$5,990,146 in grant funding. These grant awards help land acquisition & capital project money stretch even farther.

2017 Referendum Progress Report

Voter-Approved 2017 Referendum Funds	\$50,000,000
Intergovernmental and Grant Funds Received	\$5,990,146
Interest Earned	\$1,302,437
TOTAL LAND ACQUISITION FUNDS	\$57,292,583

Funds Invested as of May 31, 2024

Land Investments Made:	\$38,079,822
Land Investments Committed	\$3,445,775
Preserve Improvements Accomplished:	\$11,370,765
Preserve Improvements Committed:	\$4,396,221
TOTAL INVESTED FUNDS	\$57,292,583



Land Investments Made

ACQUISITION HIGHLIGHT

Big Rock Forest Preserve, Big Rock 245.45 Acres Added

- **Baumez parcel (82.77 acres):** Red, White and Bur Oaks are the real stars of this acquisition. Part of the investment includes riparian corridor alongside Big Rock Creek, the highest quality creek in Kane County.
- **Gwinn Oaks parcel (113 acres):** This is the epitome of Forest Preserve District land protection. This idyllic location is full of centuries-old, mature oaks and some of the mightiest Shagbark Hickories in all of Kane County. The property includes habitat for numerous birds including Pileated Woodpeckers, Red-Headed Woodpeckers, and the largest breeding population of wild turkeys in Kane County.
- **Breon parcel (49.68 acres):** Currently in agriculture, this property provides a southern buffer, and extends the protected wildlife corridor to Kendall County.



Big Rock Forest Preserve addition

Binnie Forest Preserve, West Dundee 331.28 Acres Added

- **Lueth (82.66 acres), Stade (67.73 acres), Belom (100 acres), Reedy (79.54 acres) and Plote parcels (1.35 acres).** These four land investments make up "Binnie North." This wetland complex is a waterfowl haven.

The property is loaded with Wood Ducks and Sandhill Cranes. A portion of this was a grant purchase. That parcel has already been restored to prairie and wetland. The prairie potholes and complex of wetlands provide habitat for various ducks, turtles, beaver and more wildlife.

Bowes Creek Woods Forest Preserve, Elgin 78.6 Acres Added

- **Winkleman parcel (55.60 acres):** this property adds a significant amount of Bowes Creek to the preserve, along with greenway.
- **Siljestrom parcel (23 acres):** Currently in agriculture, this parcel expands the preserve for additional wildlife habitat.

Campton Forest Preserve, Campton Hills 116.52 Acres Added

- **Hawkins (60.16 acres):** This connects to the Great Western Trail and provides more contiguous open space. The site will be restored to wetlands and prairie. It helps improve water quality.
- **Tangelos (56.36 acres):** An extension of the Great Western Trail, this parcel also includes a remnant, never-plowed sedge meadow.

Cardinal Creek Forest Preserve, Hampshire 133.17 Acres Added

- **Faber (12.25 acres) & Lenkaitis (120.92 acres):** Currently in agriculture, these parcels expand the preserve for additional wildlife habitat. They also form a greenway along Cardinal Creek. Plans are to restore the entire preserve to a mix of oak savanna, prairie and wetland.

Chicago Premium Outlets Wetland, Aurora 75 Acres Added

- **Donation (75 acres):** Green Herons are breeding in the wetland, and you'll see large swaths of diverse wetland vegetation here.



Photo courtesy Jay Aldige Stock

Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia 140.24-Acres Added

- **Reckinger (21.84 acres), Dow 1 (23.80 acres), Dow 2 (94.60 acres):** Current and former farms, some of these parcels are adjacent to Lake Run, provide more creek corridor and help provide a buffer to Nelson Lake Marsh. Plans are to restore prairie habitat. Part of these acquisitions will also help create the future Mid-County Trail. South of Seavey Road, the Dow 2 parcel helps us move toward connecting Dick Young and Lake Run Forest Preserves.

Ferson Creek Forest Preserve, St. Charles 77 Acres Added

- **THG Properties LLC (17 acres) & Riemer (60 acres):** Creeks love to meander. With the 17-acre purchase, we give room for Ferson Creek to get curvy and reconnect with its historic floodplain. The investment also provides flood protection for nearby residents. Along with the direct acquisition of the creek, the District also acquired the entire associated riparian corridor. Riparian corridors offer flood control by providing areas to hold water during high-water events. These areas are also extremely valuable for wildlife because they provide food sources, shelter and migration corridors. The District has already begun the restoration of the upland areas by seeding a diverse prairie across approximately five acres.

Fox River Bluff Forest Preserve, St. Charles 12.5 Acres Added

- **The Conservation Foundation/Pheasant Meadows (12.50 acres):** This provides development protection in St. Charles.

Fox River Shores Forest Preserve, Carpentersville 86.5 Acres Added

- **Besinger (86 acres), Urban (0.24 acres) & Bischoff (0.26 acres):** Part of Lake Marion Road Woods, this was an Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site (a ranked listing of the best examples of intact nature across the State of Illinois). The area has been identified as a quality natural area since the first modern

vegetative inventory of Kane County in 1978. Lake Marion Road Woods, with its oaks, hickories and native wildflowers, was identified as one of these special, surviving places. While much of the woods was lost to development in the intervening years, the District has been able to protect the remaining 20 acres of high-quality natural area.

Freeman Kame/Meagher Forest Preserve, Gilberts 12.78 Acres Added

- **Kane County (0.60 & 0.81 acres) & Johnson Little Acres (11.37 acres):** These critical fill-in acquisitions help us manage the entire hydric lobe. Endangered wildlife species are also present, and are now protected by these acquisitions.

Glenwood Park Forest Preserve, Batavia 1.92 Acres Added

- **Basler Montessori School (1.92 acres):** This investment adds Fox River shoreline to District holdings and provides permanent floodplain and habitat protection along the Fox River Trail.

Grunwald Farms Forest Preserve, Elburn 11.70 Acres Added

- **Sisko (11.70 acres):** This acquisition is adjacent to South Operations maintenance facility, and allows for potential facility expansion.

Hampshire South Forest Preserve 130.33 Acres Added

- **Colby/Scarpelli (30.68 acres) & Doetsch (99.65 acres):** Currently in agriculture, these acquisitions add more open space to the preserve and include parts of Burlington Creek.

Hannaford Woods/Nickels Farm Forest Preserve, Sugar Grove 13.18 Acres Added

- **Knierem Property (13.18 acres):** This addition to the preserve includes a prairie restoration and quality turtle habitat. Prairie wildflowers abound at this modest, but beautiful parcel that was quickly restored after its legal protection. Today, the unique plant assemblage at the site is providing quality turtle habitat.

Helm Woods Forest Preserve, Barrington Hills 14.40 Acres Added

- **Holzer (14.40 acres):** This is an expansion of the oak woodlands that make up Helm Woods, where there's already an Illinois Nature Preserve, mesic woodland, Swamp White Oaks, and flatwoods. This unique habitat is a wet woodland, year-round, which fosters rare plant communities. There is also a thriving Eastern Tiger Salamander population here.

Johnson's Mound Forest Preserve, Elburn 237.03 Acres Added

- **Cloonlara/Hughes (150.38 & 61.67 acres) & Ulrich (24.98 acres):** These properties are a future woodland to expand the Illinois Nature Preserve already on site. This is also the site of our forthcoming Centennial Celebration in 2025. Currently in agriculture, the parcels include shoreline along Blackberry Creek, which includes a mid-range diversity of fish, including Common Shiner, Bluntnose Minnow, Green Sunfish, Creek Chub, Johnny Darter, and Western Blacknose Dace. Protection of these parcels provide a good buffer for both the Nature Preserve and creek.

Lake Run Forest Preserve, Sugar Grove 88.11 Acres Added

- **Norris (88.11 acres):** Long cared for by the Norris family, they protected this land for generations. There is a small, remnant wetland on this parcel that has never been plowed. The property also includes former nursery land and a small section of woods.

LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve, St. Charles 22.24 Acres Added

- **Imhoff/Kelley (22.24 acres):** This property is now restored prairie. It includes an incredibly diverse wooded corridor along Ferson Creek with a large mussel population, including Spike, Elktoe, and Ellipse. Endangered Rusty Patch Bumblebees have also been spotted here in the restored prairie. This acquisition helps toward connecting LeRoy Oakes East, in the future.

ACQUISITION HIGHLIGHT

Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve, Hampshire 265.06 Acres Added

- **Chicago Title Land Trust (53.18 acres), Butts Family Farm (110.84 acres), Roberts Huerth Trust & Vogel Trust (81.18 acres & 79.86 acres):** These additions include part of a wetland and stream mitigation bank and also restored prairie. The varied ecosystems have led to incredible bird-watching, here, with shorebird diversity, Black Terns, Trumpeter Swans, endangered Whooping Cranes, Sandhill Cranes and more all spotted. Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve is located in the central-northwest part of the county, identified as the critical growth area where development expansion is increasing. Part of the District's plan is to perform the County's first ever native freshwater mussel reintroduction into the creek on this parcel.



Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve addition

Photo courtesy Kevin Hatcher

Needham Woods Forest Preserve, Big Rock 85.24 Acres Added

- **Baldridge/Huiner Holdings LLC (28.40 acres), Baldridge/Ernest & Martha Baldridge (28.44 acres) & Baldridge (28.40 acres):** These properties include a remnant Oak woodland where majestic, old-growth, centuries-old Oaks have escaped the plow. White-tailed deer are present. The remnant wooded areas are also stopovers for migratory birds, and provide a refuge in an area surrounded by farms. The District also created a woodland on the farmstead that was previously here.

Oakhurst Forest Preserve, Aurora 5.15 Acres Added

- **Strzlecki (4.69 acres), Sanchez (0.29 acres) & (Hoffer Living Trust (0.17 acres):** These acquisitions are fill-in pieces that help expand the preserve.

Raceway Woods Forest Preserve, Carpentersville 7 Acres Added

- **Besinger (7 acres):** This property is contiguous with Raceway Woods which is filled with natural and cultural history. Acquisition of this piece creates opportunities for future preserve access.

ACQUISITION HIGHLIGHT

Rutland Forest Preserve, Hampshire 172.52 Acres Added

- **Harrigan Farm/Rutland Farm LLC (172.52 acres):** If you're looking for a highlight of our recent acquisitions, this is it. This has been called the most-important investment of the entire 2017 referendum. The Rutland Bog is a real ecological gem. There are incredibly rare plant communities here. This is the *only* location some of these rare species are found in Kane County, and they are rare throughout Illinois. While there are other oak woodlands in Kane County, there are no other bogs. One in every five species on the site is considered rare, and one in every 10 is considered endangered or threatened, according to a 1970s plant survey. The site was purchased with the help of a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)



Waxcap Mushrooms

Photo by Plant Technician Monika Kastle

The uniqueness of this parcel cannot be overstated. The District has been working on this acquisition for decades. Efforts to protect the bog date back 100 years.

grant, and was also submitted for an OSLAD development grant. The northern part of the acquisition includes a fishing pond.

Sauer Family/Prairie Kame Forest Preserve, Elburn 189.83 Acres Added

- **Cutsinger (71.48 acres) & Shaw (118.35 acres):** Currently farmed, these parcels will eventually be an expansion of the restored prairie, surrounding the Prairie Kame remnant. By making the preserve bigger, it provides larger, improved wildlife habitat.

ACQUISITION HIGHLIGHT

Sleepy Hollow Ravine, West Dundee 7.25 Acres Added

- **Spiegler Trust (7.25 acres):** Adjacent woodland to the ravine barrens. This is a buffer to the Illinois Nature Preserve, but will likely be added to the Nature Preserve in the future. A decades-long dedicated effort by local volunteer conservationists has kept this area pristine. Ravine ecosystems are rare, and there are rare plant species records for this property.



Sleepy Hollow Forest Preserve

Photo by Community Affairs Director Laurie Metandruk

Stony Creek Forest Preserve, Plato Township 77.89 Acres Added

- **Edwards donation (25.74 acres) & Neville (52.15):** Stony Creek runs through this gorgeous oak woodland. The wetlands along Stony Creek have a vibrant Skunk Cabbage meadow in early spring. Both parcels have restored prairies. Further woodland restoration is underway. Surrounded by development, this is a much-needed respite for wildlife. After decades of loving protection, knowledge and restoration by two Kane County families, these two parcels along Stony Creek, comprised of beautiful remnant sedge meadows and prairie restorations are now permanently protected for all, and are open to the public.