



CHAPTER 6 – OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS

In this chapter, we will reflect back on the purpose of this plan and detail action items on how to build and maintain a high-performing forest preserve system, within the District’s resources, that meet our four key principles:

- Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas
- Strengthen community connections
- Manage growth
- Plan for sustainability

We will then identify objectives based on those principles, and the action items required to meet those objectives. Some objectives may address multiple principles.

We’ve discussed the need to maintain our existing assets to continue to build and improve upon an already high-performing system, to keep up with future demands and trends within the community, and develop a plan on how the District could continue to grow, to provide for the needs of the residents. It is important that we take initial actions to secure the long-term care of our existing preserves, and also recommend actions that will accommodate new trends. This is a “living document,” meant to be changed and adjusted as the District strives to keep pace with the dynamic community character of Kane County.

Acquire, Protect and Preserve Natural Areas

The Forest Preserve District has the responsibility of planning the use of over 20,000 acres of the County’s public open space. The tremendous growth that has occurred with the development of private lands in the last 15 years has placed an emphasis on acquiring and opening more public open space areas in order to meet the needs of the residents. The rapid growth has increased the role the District plays in providing opportunities for quality outdoor recreation experiences as well as preserving the unique natural qualities of Kane County. Both the recreational experiences and natural areas are directly affected by the implementation of the site plans for each preserve. Several factors are studied during the site-planning process to ensure the proposed plans for recreational use complement the need to protect our natural resources. Preparing a carrying capacity for each preserve is necessary to ensure that the District can protect the proposed outdoor experience. Factors such as identifying existing locations of nesting grounds or wildlife habitats, strategically locating access and recreational amenities, and limiting the number of users to protect the site from overcrowding or overuse that can accelerate the deterioration of the improvements is extremely important.

Based on our principle to Acquire, Protect and Preserve Natural Areas, the following is a key objective and our action plans to meet that objective. (Note: the Natural Resources department also has a separate *Annual*

Management Schedule that is specific and mission-focused. The following objectives will be in conjunction with the *Annual Management Schedule*.)

Plan for Sustainability

It's imperative that we maintain the amenities that we already have. While we can use our "typical preserve" example to forecast future needs, it does not address the unique situations of the individual preserves each day. The Operations & Maintenance department has implemented and is currently utilizing a daily *Preserve Maintenance and Task Log*. This document tracks all staff hours pertaining to the duties assigned throughout each division. In addition to this tracking document, the District has established an electronic work-order system for completing and tracking projects considered above and beyond the normal preserve maintenance duties and tasks.

Priority should always be given to maintaining existing improvements. High-quality and safe forest preserves are the backbone of why the residents of Kane County enjoy our open spaces and amenities and continue to give the District high marks when it comes to maintaining our preserves. Maintaining our existing capital improvements should be a primary focus. We can determine the cost to maintain one asset and extrapolate that over the total number of similar assets, projecting a total yearly cost. Again, each asset within the District is unique, and although maintenance costs will differ slightly, it will provide an idea of the potential cost to maintain our assets, so that the District can ensure funding is in place to continue proper maintenance. Staff should continue to evaluate and set priorities, and obtain costs for asset maintenance to present to the board for approval, as part of the budget process each year.

The District is currently reviewing the condition and layout of existing preserves to determine if redevelopment is required to improve the safety, functionality, accessibility and maintenance efficiency of each preserve. Redevelopment due to safety and function will be an important factor in developing a plan for maintaining the District's capital assets. It will be necessary to inventory and assess each of the District's assets and develop a long-term plan for maintenance.

Capital improvements include the purchase and/or construction of amenities that provide lasting value. These include natural areas, picnic areas, parking areas, driveways, trails, facilities, etc. Planning for capital improvements enables the District to look beyond the immediate horizon and anticipate the needs for overall improvements. A Capital Maintenance Management Plan allows the District to review and adjust based on changing needs or trends within Kane County. This further allows staff to determine the long-term commitment needed to maintain proposed facilities to ensure they are properly maintained. Similar to previous public surveys, the District is seeing that bicycling, walking, nature watching and picnics are rating as the most-popular activities within the preserves. **The District will evaluate any new capital initiative to determine its necessity, and before it is approved to move forward, the District needs to ensure a commitment to the resources to properly maintain the new amenity or facility.**

In general, the preserves are maintained with designated access points. Depending on how a preserve is maintained, some afford better access than others. When maintenance of a preserve is reduced, users question the cleanliness and safety of the preserve, and their comfort level using the preserves decreases. Public input on the cleanliness and safety of our preserves has continually ranked very high, as the users feel we do a good job keeping the preserves clean. They feel safe visiting. Allowing preserves to wane in maintenance may have a direct effect on the public perception of the preserves.

Small connections to subdivisions and road stubs allow easy and safe preserve access, and are cost-effective

solutions to provide improved access to the preserves. The District will review access points — taking into consideration our obligation to maintain natural resources and protect the environment — and will review locations for possible trail-access points in all new and proposed plans. **We will also review access points to existing trails as requests are received, but we must balance the need for access to preserve property with the need to preserve and protect our natural resources.**

It is the goal of the District to ensure that all people, including those with disabilities, have the highest level of accessibility to our programs, facilities and services. The District seeks to provide that level of access in the planning, construction and renovation of buildings, facilities and in the provisions of our programs and services. The level of accessibility will be largely determined by the nature of the area and program, and will be consistent with the obligation to preserve our natural resources. The District seeks to provide the highest level of access that is reasonable in the primary design, instead of merely providing the minimum level or separate amenities, which would accommodate the legal requirements. **The District will encourage the use of innovative techniques and partnerships whenever possible and reasonable, to exceed requirements.**

The District has already completed an ADA audit of its facilities. The District has also approved the two years of Phase I improvements based on the audit results. We will continue to ask for funding to tackle these improvements, one at a time. The District will continue to work on procedures to incorporate universal design principles into renovations and new construction, and review audits to develop a long-term plan for correcting accessibility issues.

Strengthen Community Connections

The Forest Preserve District of Kane County does a good job of informing residents and visitors of preserve resources using the web, print and other media resources, but awareness and knowledge of existing opportunities can be greater. Marketing and communications is a cost-effective means of increasing use of existing facilities among residents and visitors. Our public input survey shows that once the public becomes familiar with the Forest Preserve District, they are satisfied with the programs and services we provide.

The District currently has several avenues used to provide information regarding the Forest Preserve and its services to the public, and continues to expand how we provide information. Currently, we publish a quarterly newsletter, *The TreeLine*, along with various brochures, flyers and other information that are available in print and online. We host a traditional Web site at www.kaneforest.com. We also have a strong presence on social media with pages utilizing the following platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Google+. We also partner with other agencies to distribute our information where possible (for example, through Chicago Wilderness). We will continue to look for ways to build-on and expand awareness of the preserves, programs and all they have to offer, as well as solicit feedback from Kane County residents.

Partnerships and volunteers are key elements of the current system and crucial to the Forest Preserve future. Volunteers and partner groups provide a great service to the District; as funding for projects continues to be spread out over larger areas, the volunteers and partner groups are helping the District achieve its goals of providing an excellent system. The District has volunteer opportunities in natural areas management, environmental education, cultural preservation and public safety. The countless number of volunteers help further the District's mission of restoring, restocking, protecting and preserving lands for the education, recreations and pleasure of the Kane County Citizens. The District has greatly increased the number of volunteers in the last few years and should continue to review the process and explore new ways volunteers and partners can inspire others to help and care about our natural community.

Manage Growth

The Forest Preserve District of Kane County engages the public to gain input on development. Questions are consistently raised about the effectiveness of public input prompting the need to enhance the framework of community outreach, research and engagement. The process needs to gather the opinions of the staff, board of commissioners, residents and preserve users to make the process a more-effective way of communicating the process by which decisions are made to the public.

These seven objectives and their subsequent action plans provide a way forward for the District, to evaluate what we currently have, maintain it, and continue to provide a high-performing system. By doing so, we continue to provide amenities that Kane County residents have come to rely upon, and truly Reconnecting Residents with Nature.

Objective: Improve Biodiversity across District Lands

Action	Description	Lead Department	Targets	Principle(s)
Maximize acres burned	Evaluate efficiencies in prescribed burn program to ensure maximum acreage of natural areas are burned	Natural Resources	Completion Date: December 2016	Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas Plan for sustainability Manage growth
Collect and evaluate baseline biological data	Refine Biological Assessment Needs chart to define areas lacking basic flora & fauna surveys	Natural Resources	Completion Date: December 2016	Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas Plan for sustainability Manage growth
Expand invasive species management by 25 percent	Hire additional contractors to more-widely assist with invasive control — in support of staff projects	Natural Resources	Completion Date: June 2017	Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas Plan for sustainability Manage growth
Improve biodiversity of plant life across preserves	Install native seed across 25 percent more acreage	Natural Resources	Completion Date: June 2017	Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas Plan for sustainability Manage growth
Eradicate ecologically disruptive species	Through defined and intensive burn/mow/herbicide process, eliminate buckthorn from Helm Woods FP and Canada thistle from Dick Young FP.	Natural Resources	Completion Date: December 2020	Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas Plan for sustainability Manage growth
Improve habitat for known populations of rare or listed plants and animals	Target two grants annually and outside support of habitat-enhancement projects.	Natural Resources	Completion Date: Pending grant schedules	Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas Plan for sustainability Manage growth
Improve quality of defined rare-plant communities	Improve Forested Fen FP and fen complex at Brunner Family FP/ Fox River Shores FP by removing 25% of non-native brush	Natural Resources	Completion Date: 2016 and ongoing	Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas Plan for sustainability Manage growth

Objective: Evaluate and Implement Operations & Maintenance Efficiencies

Action	Description	Lead Department	Targets	Principle(s)
Research, Acquire and Implement Cost-Tracking System	Acquire or create internally a data-tracking system to record actual maintenance functions	Operations & Maintenance	Budget: FY2017-18 Completion Date: December 2018	Plan for sustainability Manage growth
Develop fleet-maintenance management system	Upgrade of a work-order system to include existing fleet-maintenance platform	Operations & Maintenance	Budget: FY2016-17 Completion Date: December 2017	Plan for sustainability Manage growth
Upgrade fuel tracking system	Upgrade existing fuel management software to better gauge fuel use	Operations & Maintenance	Budget: FY2016-17 Completion Date: December 2016	Plan for sustainability Manage growth
Develop a level of maintenance plan for each preserve	Document current level of maintenance and recommend proposed level of maintenance for each preserve	Operations & Maintenance	Completion Date: June 2017	Plan for sustainability Manage growth
Automate entrance gates	Install solar-powered gates and reallocate staff hours formerly used to manually open and close each preserve	Maintenance & Operations	Completion Date: June 2016	Plan for sustainability
Collect and evaluate data	Input data for maintenance functions from the past two years and evaluate areas to improve efficiencies	Operations & Maintenance	Completion Date: December 2019	Plan for sustainability Manage growth

Objective: Establish a Capital Maintenance Management Plan

Action	Description	Lead Department	Targets	Principle(s)
Implement Phase I Buildings' Evaluation findings	Act on needs identified in Phase I evaluation	Planning & Development	Completion Date: June 2016	Plan for Sustainability
Complete Phase II Buildings' Evaluation	Work with consultant to complete Phase II Buildings' Evaluation of 16 structures	Planning & Development	Completion Date: April 2016	Plan for Sustainability
Develop Priorities based on Phase II Buildings' Evaluation Findings	Develop priorities based on Phase I and Phase II Buildings' Evaluation Findings	Planning & Development	Completion Date: June 2016	Plan for Sustainability
Complete Phase III Buildings' Evaluation	Work with consultant to complete Phase II Buildings' Evaluation of 16 structures	Planning & Development	Completion Date: April 2017	Plan for Sustainability
Develop Priorities and Implement Phase III Buildings' Evaluation Findings	Develop priorities based on Phase III Buildings' Evaluation Findings	Planning & Development	Completion Date: June 2018	Plan for Sustainability
Conduct full-scale Buildings Evaluation every 10 years	Research and hire consultant to evaluate all District buildings and make suggestions for maintenance and accessibility issues	Planning & Development	December 2025	Plan for Sustainability
Create an Inventory & Conditions Report for Small Capital Amenities	Inventory and evaluate the condition and life expectancy of each small capital amenity (restrooms, shelters, etc.) to determine a maintenance cost per year	Planning & Development	Completion Date: June 2017	Plan for Sustainability
Evaluate bridges to create Bridge Conditions Report	Contract with an engineer to evaluate all bridges on District property	Planning & Development	Completion Date: June 2018	Plan for Sustainability
Develop priorities and implement recommendations from Bridge Conditions Report	Develop priorities based on Bridge Conditions Report findings	Planning & Development	Completion Date: June 2019	Plan for Sustainability
Evaluate parking areas to create Parking Areas Conditions Report	Contract with an engineer to evaluate all parking areas on District property	Planning & Development	Completion Date: June 2018	Plan for Sustainability
Develop priorities and implement recommendations from Parking Areas Conditions Report	Develop priorities based on Parking Areas Conditions Report findings	Planning & Development	Completion Date: June 2019	Plan for Sustainability
Develop a Capital Maintenance Improvement Plan	Based on buildings' evaluations and inventory, prioritize capital maintenance needs for budgeting and implementation	Planning & Development	Completion Date: December 2016 Budget: FY2017-18	Plan for Sustainability

Objective: Improve Preserve Access

Action	Description	Lead Department	Targets	Principle(s)
Identify and Implement Annual Projects from ADA Transition Plan	The District completed an ADA audit in 2013 and formed a staff committee to implement the audit's recommendations	Planning & Development	Budget: FY2016-17 Completion Date: June 2017 Projects completed and budgeted annually	Plan for sustainability
Trail Connections	Review existing and possible trail connections for improvements or expanded connections in under-served areas	Planning & Development	Budget: FY2016-17 Completion Date: December 2017	Plan for sustainability Manage growth
Research trail/preserve-entrance counters	Research trail and preserve-entrance counters to determine visitor use, guide future improvements, programming, etc.	Planning & Development	Completion Date: June 2017	Plan for sustainability Manage growth Strengthen community connections

Objective: Strengthen Public Relations and Community Outreach

Action	Description	Lead Department	Targets	Principle(s)
Develop a County-wide survey	Create an electronic public-interest survey and compare data and feedback with 2006 & 2011 surveys	Community Affairs & Environmental Education	Completion Date: June 2017	Strengthen community connections
Develop a social media strategy	Identify our social media objectives	Community Affairs & Environmental Education	Completion Date: December 2016	Strengthen community connections
Evaluate sponsors/partnership opportunities for special events	Identify programs that would benefit from sponsorship/partnership	Community Affairs & Environmental Education	Completion Date: December 2016	Strengthen community connections
Research implementation of a smart phone application for reporting issues (downed trees, blocked trails, etc.)	Research an application for smart phone users to report an issue at a forest preserve	Community Affairs & Environmental Education	Completion Date: June 2018	Strengthen community relations
Redesign Web site	Improve readability and accessibility to electronic information	Community Affairs & Environmental Education	Implementation: December 2016	Strengthen community connections
Increase awareness of Public Safety efforts and related volunteer opportunities	Promote volunteer public safety partnerships (Mounted Rangers, Snowmobile Safety Patrol, Bicycle Patrol), events (National Night Out, Mooseheart Safety Fair) and make residents aware of community policing strategies. Provide a Public Safety presence (booth, remarks, flyers) at District events	Community Affairs & Environmental Education	Implementation: December 2016	Strengthen community connections

Objective: Create a Foundation

Action	Description	Lead Department	Targets	Principle(s)
Research development of a Foundation	Research existing governmental foundations for structure, minimum and legal requirements, and management options for a Foundation	Community Affairs Finance	April 2016	Plan for sustainability Manage growth Strengthen community connections
Report research findings to Committees	Report results of research, options, recommendations and potential time line, and seek Commission direction	Community Affairs Finance	May 2016	Plan for sustainability Manage growth Strengthen community connections
Finalize parameters for District Foundation based on Commission directives	Establish 501(c)3, recruit a board, create bylaws, etc.	Community Affairs Finance	TBD	Plan for sustainability Manage growth Strengthen community connections
Establish Foundation	Begin promotion and solicitation of funds for District's Foundation	Community Affairs Finance	TBD	Plan for sustainability Manage growth Strengthen community connections

Objective: Expand Volunteer Program

Action	Description	Lead Department	Targets	Principle(s)
Research business and community groups to partner with for volunteer programs	Identify potential business partners and community groups to grow our volunteer base	Human Resources	Completion Date: December 2016	Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas Strengthen community connections Plan for sustainability
Research school and community groups to partner with for volunteer programs	Identify school groups, clubs, teams and other organizations to grow our volunteer base	Human Resources	Completion Date: December 2016	Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas Strengthen community connections Plan for sustainability
Increase number of site stewards	The District currently has 17 sites. Review program to determine steward gaps. Recruit a minimum of 10 additional stewards over the next 5 years.	Human Resources	Completion Date(s): June 2016 June 2017 June 2018 June 2019 June 2020	Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas Strengthen community connections Plan for sustainability
Develop a volunteer academy	Develop a robust, formal training program for new and seasoned volunteers. Incorporate leadership skills, mission, employees' expertise (Kane County Certified Naturalists program) and provide consistent training message	Human Resources	Completion Date: December 2017	Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas Strengthen community connections Plan for sustainability
Expand Adopt-A-Trail Program	Expand existing program to cover more than 5-8 miles of trail. Expand program by 30% over the next 5 years. Identify trails in need of adoption, develop a recruitment plan, and establish workdays.	Human Resources	Completion Date: June 2021	Acquire, protect and preserve natural areas Strengthen community connections Plan for sustainability

Objective: Evaluate Service Levels and Determine Resource Needs

Action	Description	Lead Department	Targets	Principle(s)
Evaluate Community Affairs & Environmental Affairs service levels	Conduct a department-wide evaluation to determine functions and service levels, and determine options for resources	Community Affairs & Environmental Education	Completion Date: December 2017	Manage growth Strengthen community connections
Evaluate Finance service levels	Conduct a department-wide evaluation to determine functions and service levels, and determine options for resources	Finance	Completion Date: December 2017	Manage growth Strengthen community connections
Evaluate Human Resources service levels	Conduct a department-wide evaluation to determine functions and service levels, and determine options for resources	Human Resources	Completion Date: December 2017	Manage growth Strengthen community connections
Evaluate Natural Resources service levels	Conduct a department-wide evaluation to determine functions and service levels, and determine options for resources	Natural Resources	Completion Date: December 2017	Manage growth Strengthen community connections
Evaluate Operations & Maintenance service levels	Conduct a department-wide evaluation to determine functions and service levels, and determine options for resources	Operations & Maintenance	Completion Date: December 2017	Manage growth Strengthen community connections
Evaluate Planning & Development service levels	Conduct a department-wide evaluation to determine functions and service levels, and determine options for resources	Planning & Development	Completion Date: December 2017	Manage growth Strengthen community connections
Evaluate Public Safety service levels	Conduct a department-wide evaluation to determine functions and service levels, and determine options for resources	Public Safety	Completion Date: December 2017	Manage growth Strengthen community connections

Capital Improvement & Maintenance Projects

Capital Maintenance Projects:

		FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20
ADA Compliance	NA	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Bridge Replacements/Repairs*	NA	\$ 200,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Buildings Repairs	NA	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 300,000
Drainage Consulting & Repairs	NA	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
Infrastructure Maintenance	NA	\$ 115,000	\$ 126,500	\$ 139,150	\$ 153,065
Road/Parking Lot Repaving**	NA	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 165,000	\$ 170,000
Restroom Replacement***	NA	\$ 16,500	\$ 16,500	\$ 16,500	\$ 16,500
Trail Resurfacing	NA	\$ 100,000	\$ 105,000	\$ 110,000	\$ 115,000
Subtotal		\$ 1,131,500	\$ 1,048,000	\$ 980,650	\$ 1,004,565

Natural Resources Projects:

		FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20
Burlington FP- Prairie Recreation	TBD	\$ 50,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 15,000
Dick Young FP- Giant Reed Control	TBD	\$ 40,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Dick Young FP- Prairie Recreation	TBD	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000		
Fabyan East FP- Woodland Enhancement	TBD	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Freeman FP- Prairie Recreation	TBD	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 10,000
Freeman FP- Wetland Restoration	TBD	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 30,000
Freeman FP- Woodland Enhancement	TBD	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
Helm Woods FP- Woodland Enhancement	TBD	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 15,000
Muirhead Springs FP- Wetland Restoration	TBD	\$ 50,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
Pingree Grove FP Wetland Restoration	Yes	\$ 75,000			
Subtotal		\$385,000	\$270,000	\$245,000	\$175,000
Total Annual Costs- Maintenance & Restoration Projects		\$ 1,516,500	\$ 1,318,000	\$ 1,225,650	\$ 1,179,565

Rank Capital Improvement Projects:

GRANT

1	Brunner Family & Raceway Woods FPs Pedestrian Connection	
2	Johnson's Mound N/S Trail Conn.	TBD
3	Settler's Hill GC Youth Holes/Bldg.	TBD
4	Dick Young & Lake Run FP's Trail Connection	TBD
5	Burnidge FP Tyler Creek Trail Connection to Randall Rd./Ridge	TBD
6	Raceway Woods FP Parking lot Renovation	NA
7	Fabyan FP East Boathouse Renovation	TBD
8	Big Rock FP Parking/Boat Access	TBD
9	Buffalo Park FP Canoe Access & Picnic Area	TBD
10	Oakhurst FP Drive, Parking and Boat Ramp Improvements	NA
11	Big Rock FP Camp/Equest. Trail Exp.	TBD

Total Costs - Capital Projects

*15/16 Brunner -16/17 Fabyan East

**15/16 Johnson's Mound - 16/17 Burnidge - 17/18 Jon Duerr

***15/16 Fabyan East & Raceway Woods