

Chapter 8: Implementation Plan

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Introduction

Capital improvements include the purchase and construction of forest preserve amenities that provide lasting value. These facilities include natural areas, picnic facilities, parking areas, forest preserve internal driveways and a trail system, both regional and local. Planning for capital improvements enables a district to take a look beyond the immediate horizon and anticipate the needs for overall improvements. Evaluating needs and resources over a period of years allows a district to “smooth out” the peaks and valleys that can occur in spending. The development of a capital-improvements program enables a community to anticipate major needs and to schedule them in a manner that is responsive to both demand and sound fiscal policy. When identified needs are greater than district budget revenues can accommodate, a district can evaluate and either seek alternative funding or postpone the project until funding can be obtained.

Developing Supply and Demand Analysis

First Step

Using the data from the most recent resident-interest survey, the demand for an amenity was classified as high or low depending on the public’s interest in using that amenity. An interest greater than the median use percentage (18.67 percent) received a rating of HIGH, interest less than (18.67 percent) received a rating of LOW.

Activities Rated by Public Input

Description	Popular Activities by Mail Survey	Popular Activities by Newsletter Survey	Popular Activities by Phone Survey	Average % Rating	Survey Ranking
Walking/Hiking	76.00%	91.00%	23.00%	63.33%	1
Biking	48.00%	59.00%	37.00%	48.00%	1
Picnics	38.00%	52.00%	12.00%	34.00%	1
Walking Pets	36.00%	30.00%	9.00%	25.00%	1
Fishing	25.00%	20.00%	9.00%	18.00%	0
Golf	25.00%	10.00%	3.00%	12.67%	0
Sledding	23.00%	29.00%	5.00%	19.00%	1
Bird/Nature Watching	22.00%	45.00%	4.00%	23.67%	1
Jogging	20.00%	17.00%	19.00%	18.67%	1
Nature Center Visits	16.00%	50.00%	5.00%	23.67%	1
Historic Facilities	14.00%	29.00%	1.00%	14.67%	0
Boating/Canoe Launch	12.00%	12.00%	5.00%	11.67%	0
Event Center/Stadium	11.00%	11.00%	1.00%	10.67%	0
Nature Programs	10.00%	10.00%	8.00%	19.67%	1
Cross-Country Skiing	8.00%	8.00%	3.00%	8.67%	0
Roller Blading	5.00%	5.00%	7.00%	6.67%	0
Horseback Riding	4.00%	4.00%	1.00%	3.33%	0
			Median	18.67%	

Second Step

Using the data from “The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan” and the Illinois Recreation Inventory, the District compared the inventory of facilities to similar agencies and rated them as high or low. A District inventory less than the mean of the per capita supply received a rating of HIGH, an inventory more than the mean of the per capita supply received a rating of LOW.

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF KANE COUNTY

Inventory and Comparison of Similar Agencies

Description	State Wide	Per Capita #/1000 people	State Owned	Per Capita #/1000 people	County Owned State Wide	Per Capita #/1000 people	Park District Owned State Wide	Per Capita #/1000 people	Mean Per Capita	Kane Cty. Forest Preserve	Per Capita #/1000 people	Current Supply Rating
Fishing Piers	1,981.00	0.16	168	0.013	104	0.008	574	0.046	0.013	0	0.00	1
Boat Launch	1,546.00	0.12	273	0.0220	124	0.010	540	0.043	0.022	6	0.01	1
Developed Campsites	66,055.00	5.32	7,500	0.6000	1,520	0.122	2,480	0.200	0.200	88	0.22	0
Primitive Campsites	11,722.00	0.94	688	0.0550	660	0.053	360	0.029	0.053	17	0.04	1
Equestrian Campsites	1,819.00	0.15	847	0.0682	65	0.005	30	0.002	0.005	0	0.00	1
Cabins	3,875.00	0.31	125	0.0101	72	0.006	36	0.003	0.006	4	0.01	0
Lodges	755.00	0.06	8	0.0006	3	0.000	19	0.002	0.001	0	0.00	1
Multi-use Trails	11,514.00	0.93	1,503	0.1210	2,297	0.185	2,661	0.214	0.185	2	0.00	1
Hiking Trails	5,710.00	0.46	1,040	0.0837	697	0.056	646	0.052	0.056	104	0.26	0
Bicycle Trails	3,062.00	0.25	300	0.0242	642	0.052	670	0.054	0.052	71	0.18	0
Horseback Trails	2,370.00	0.19	720	0.0580	170	0.014	303	0.024	0.024	67	0.17	0
Nature Interpretive Trails	2,330.00	0.19	55	0.0044	205	0.017	220	0.018	0.017	0	0.00	1
Snow Mobile Trails	1,400.00	0.11	390	0.0314	232	0.019	309	0.025	0.025	27	0.07	0
Picnic Shelters	9,477.00	0.76	577	0.0465	1,236	0.100	5,616	0.452	0.100	36	0.09	1
Picnic Tables	150,483.00	12.12	19,426	1.5642	36,596	2.947	55,380	4.459	2.947	300	0.74	1
Interpretive Centers	173.00	0.01	15	0.0012	45	0.004	51	0.004	0.004	1	0.00	1
Golf Courses	11,124.00	0.90	54	0.0043	0	0.000	1,854	0.149	0.004	3	0.01	0

Third Step

The third and final step was to combine the results from the first two steps to create a high-, medium- and low-priority rating.

The level of need is calculated from a high or low need from the demand analysis, and a high or low supply from the supply analysis. This analysis will allow the District to rate the need from high, medium to low as follows:

Priority Rating Chart

Description	Survey Ranking	Current Supply Rating	Priority Level
	0 = Low Priority 1 = High Priority	0 = High Supply 1 = Low Supply	0 = Low Priority 1 = Medium Priority 2 = High Priority
Walking/Hiking	1	0	1
Biking	1	0	1
Picnics	1	1	2
Walking Pets	1	0	1
Fishing	0	1	1
Golf	0	0	0
Sledding	1	0	1
Bird/Nature Watching	1	1	2
Jogging	1	1	2
Nature Center Visits	1	1	2
Historic Facilities	0	0	0
Boating/Canoe Launch	0	1	1
Event Center/Stadium	0	0	0
Nature Programs	1	1	2
Cross-Country Skiing	0	1	1
Roller Blading	0	0	0
Horseback Riding	0	0	0

This process gives the District the ability to prioritize projects targeting the more popular or under-supplied activities within the community. In a hypothetical situation, the analysis would work something like this: If the District wanted to determine if it had enough picnic areas, they would take the information from the demand analysis, which gives picnicking a (high) rating of 1. Then the District would take a look at the supply rating sheet, which shows the District has a low amount of picnic shelters and picnic tables per capita compared to other similar agencies. Adding these two ratings together creates a high-priority rating.

Activity	Demand Rating	Supply Rating	Priority 0=Low 1=Medium 2=High
Picnics	1	1	2

Once it is determined that an activity is given a high priority rating, staff can then budget for the amenities to meet the demand. For example, if staff proposed a picnic area, it would include the following amenities: picnic shelters, picnic tables, parking, restrooms, water hydrants, grills and garbage cans.

Whereas if staff proposed trails, the list of amenities would include: one mile of trail / 100 acres fabricated from: asphalt, limestone screenings or mowed turf, interpretive signage and way-finding signage.

Realizing that the majority of outdoor activities require infrastructure to be in place to allow the activity to take place, staff has taken the activities listed in the public-interest survey and listed the most-common amenities that need to be in place to facilitate the activity.

The following chart is a further example of the amenities associated with an outdoor activity:

Amenities Detail

Description	Related Amenities	Priority Level
Picnics	Picnic Tables, Picnic Shelters, Restrooms, Water Hydrants, Grills, Garbage Cans	2
Nature Center Visits	Nature/Interpretive Center, Nature Programming, Nature Interpretive Trails, Interpretive Signage/Nodes	2
Bird/Nature Watching	Natural Areas, Habitat Restoration, Nature Interpretive Trails, Interpretive Signage/Nodes, Hiking Trails	2
Jogging	Multi-use Trails	2
Nature Programs	Natural Areas, Habitat Restoration, Nature/Interpretive Center, Nature Programming, Nature Interpretive Trails, Interpretive Signage/Nodes, Shelters	2
Walking/Hiking	Hiking Trails, Multi-Use Trails	1
Biking	Bicycle Trails, Multi-Use Trails, Bike Racks, Restrooms	1
Walking Pets	Hiking Trails, Multi-Use Trails, Mutt-Mitt Dispensers, Garbage Cans, Off-Leash Areas	1
Golf	Golf Courses	1
Description	Related Amenities	Priority Level
Sledding	Sled Hill, Shelters	1
Boating/Canoe Launch	Boat Launch, Trailer Parking	1
Fishing	Fishing Piers, Boat Launch, Trailer Parking, Picnic Tables, Garbage Cans	1
Cross-Country Skiing	Multi-use Trails	1
Historic Facilities	Interpretive Trails, Interpretive Signage/Nodes, Educational Programming	0
Event Center/Stadium	Recreational Programming	0
Roller Blading	Multi-use Trails	0
Horseback Riding	Horseback Trails, Equestrian Trailer Parking, Hitching Posts, Picket Lines, Water Hydrants, Equestrian Campsites, Restrooms	0

The analysis outlined above is intended to serve as a tool for planning improvements in a manner that is systematic and reflects total community needs. However, the priority levels are not absolute. In some cases a priority level may be overridden. For example, grants that fund a particular amenity may get priority over projects with larger costs that might take years to fund. These priorities should be reviewed annually, as needed, to ensure that the District is being responsive to community needs. In order to prioritize projects, staff has evaluated each preserve and proposed

improvements that would be consistent with forest preserve uses, and then ranked the proposed improvements based on the supply and demand analysis.

The fact that the District has so many preserves in various states of completion makes it very difficult to prioritize one preserve over the other. The District has been very successful in acquiring grants to make improvements with in the preserves and the grants typically require the project to be completed within a certain time period. Projects that have secured dedicated funding should have a high priority rating. The value of grants to the District is tremendous, and in most cases, grants will fund 50-100 percent of the project costs. Using the same criteria for prioritizing projects, staff has identified a list of projects similar to projects that have, in the past, had strong support and a good chance of receiving alternative funding through grants.

The following chart identifies a 5-year grant plan showing projects that have secured alternative funding and projects recommended for alternative funding:

Preserve/facility	Alternative Funding	Completion Date	Access Level L=Limited N=None F=Full	Improvement: Type 1=New 2=Repair	Level of Use 1-10 10 =highest	Description
Dick Young	Y	Dec-07	L	1	4	OLSAD Development Grant
Pingree Grove	Y	Dec-08	N	1	1	Initial Development
Burlington Prairie	Y	Dec-08	L	1	1	RTP Grant (trail, parking, restrooms)
Fitchie Creek	Y	Dec-09	N	1	1	Initial Development
Elburn	Pr	Dec-09	F	1	2	RTP Trails and Parking Improvements
Lake Run	Y	Dec-09	N	1	1	Initial Development Trails and Parking
Muirhead Springs	Pe	Dec-10	N	1	1	Initial Development
Burnidge/Paul Wolff	Pe	Dec-10	F	1	6	RTP Equestrian Trail Improvement and Camping
Schweitzer Woods	Pr	Dec-11	N	1	1	Initial Development
Bowes Creek Woods	Pr	Dec-12	N	1	1	Initial Development
Jungels	Pr	Dec-13	N	1	1	Initial Development
Hampshire South	Pr	Dec-14	N	1	1	Initial Development
Virgil	Pr	Dec-15	N	1	1	Initial Development

The District is currently reviewing the condition and layout of existing preserves to determine if redevelopment is required to improve the safety and functionality of sites. The redevelopment of preserve amenities due to the safety and function will be an important factor in developing a five-year capital development plan. Over the next five years it will be necessary to inventory and assess each of the District's capital assets and develop a long-term plan to maintain these assets. In the interim, staff has evaluated several preserves and the assets within these preserves, to determine a capital development plan for the next five years.

The following chart identifies a 5-year plan showing proposed capital redevelopment projects:

Capital Redevelopment Projects	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
Fabyan West parking lot relocation and restoration	\$480,000				
Johnson's Mound drive relocation and parking improvements	\$130,000				
Burnidge/Paul Wolff Campground expansion	\$400,000				
Fabyan East parking lot relocation and restoration			\$300,000		
Hampshire (trail improvements)				\$167,000	
Buffalo Park redevelopment	\$275,000				
Youth Camp Area South					\$158,200
Burnidge/Paul Wolff (equestrian campground trail improvements)		\$190,000			
Youth Camp Area Central (Brewster Creek)				\$158,200	
Fabyan (Villa parking and trails improvements)					\$150,000
LeRoy Oakes (roadway redevelopment)		\$200,000			
Otter Creek parking and trail improvements (grant required)	\$182,000				
Total	\$1,467,000	\$390,000	\$300,000	\$325,200	\$308,200

The following chart identifies a 5-year plan showing proposed capital development projects:

Capital Development Projects	Grant	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
Fitchie Creek Forest Preserve Improvements	Y					
Aurora West Lake Run Connection				\$800,000		
Muirhead Springs Forest Preserves Improvements (OSLAD)	Pending	\$120,000	\$720,000			
Lake Run Bike Trail Implementation	Y	\$256,600				
Aurora West Improvements				\$373,500		
Bowes Creek Woods Improvements(OSLAD grant)	Proposed	\$80,000	\$720,000			
Elburn Forest Preserve Restoration and Trail Improvements(Bike Grant)	Proposed	\$30,000		\$245,500		
Nyman Oury (youth camping, Habitat, trails, picnic areas)						\$784,300
Schweitzer Property development (OSLAD grant)	Proposed		\$80,000	\$720,000		
Raceway Woods Improvements		\$200,000				
Big Rock Habitat and Picnic Areas					\$510,400	
Savana Creation Dick Young 30 Acres			\$75,000			
Savana Creation Johnsons Mound 40 acres				\$100,000		
Department of Natural Resource Facility					\$800,000	
Aurora West Parking Lot		\$25,000				
Nature Preserve Buckthorn Removal			\$100,000		\$100,000	
Campground South			\$800,000			
Jungels Improvements (OSLAD)				\$80,000	\$720,000	
Hamshire South (OLSAD)					\$80,000	\$720,000
Mill Creek Parking and Trail Improvements(grant required)				\$55,000		
Leroy Oakes Creek Bend and Brewster Creek Site Improvments		\$550,000				
Arlene Schoemaker(picnic and trails)		\$161,700				
		\$1,423,300	\$2,495,000	\$2,374,000	\$2,210,400	\$1,504,300

	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
Capital Redevelopment Projects	\$1,467,000	\$390,000	\$300,000	\$325,200	\$308,200
Capital Development Projects	\$1,423,300	\$2,495,000	\$2,374,000	\$2,210,400	\$1,504,300
Total	\$2,890,300	\$2,885,000	\$2,674,000	\$2,535,600	\$1,812,500

Summary

Planning Process and Priorities

Planning and prioritizing capital improvements and growth of the District is one of the most effective tools in responding to community needs. This chapter explains, in a logical sequence, the effect of growth and how the District needs to respond. Planning ahead allows the District to look beyond the horizon to anticipate overall needs. The development of a capital improvements program enables the District to anticipate major needs like staffing and equipment to maintain the additional improvements. Planning for these identified needs will allow time to evaluate the identified needs and make adjustments when the needs are greater than revenues can accommodate. The master plan is a tool for fiscal management. This plan should be used, reviewed and updated at needs and priorities change.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Afforestation: The establishment of a tree crop on an area from which it has always or very long been absent. Where such establishment fails and is repeated, the latter may properly be termed "reafforestation."

Biodiversity (Biological Diversity): The variety of life on three different levels: the variety of ecosystems (ecosystem diversity), the variety of species (species diversity) and the variety within species (genetic diversity).

Buffer: A strip of land where development is not allowed, and disturbances are closely monitored to preserve aesthetic and other qualities adjacent to roads, trails, waterways, and recreation sites.

Buffer (Natural): A space between the buildings, parking areas and uses on a lot and lot line in which numerous trees exist, cleared of all rubbish and waste material, and is sufficiently dense so as to obstruct the direct observation of the buildings, parking areas or uses on the lot by a person standing on the adjacent lot not closer than 25 feet from the lot line.

Canopy: The more or less continuous cover of branches and foliage formed collectively by the crowns of adjacent trees.

Clear cutting: A forest-management method that involves the complete felling and removal of a stand of trees. Clear cutting may be done in blocks, strips or patches.

Conservation Areas: Areas consisting of lands with recognized high-value environmental qualities that are set aside for the protection and management of the natural environment, with recreation as a secondary objective.

Ecosystem: A dynamic system of plants, animals and other organisms, together with the non-living components of the environment, functioning as an interdependent unit.

Ecosystem Integrity: The quality of a natural unmanaged or managed ecosystem in which the natural ecological processes sustain the function, composition and structure of the system.

Ecotourism: A type of tourism that focuses on nature-related experiences (e.g., bird watching).

Edge Habitat: A loosely defined type of habitat that occurs at the boundary between two different habitat types. Typically, edge habitats share characteristics with both adjacent habitat types and have particular transitional characteristics that are important to wildlife.

Environmental Assessment: A process designed to contribute pertinent environmental information to the decision-making process of forest management and other resource projects and programs.

Esker: A ridge of sediment in the form of a river course.

Fauna: A general term for all forms of animal life characteristic of a region, period or special environment.

Flora: A general term for all forms of plant life characteristic of a region, period or special environment.

Forest: A complex community of plants and animals in which trees are the most conspicuous members. A mixed forest includes both coniferous and deciduous trees.

Forest Canopy: The more or less continuous cover of branches and foliage formed collectively by the crowns of adjacent trees.

Geographic Information System (GIS): An organized collection of computer hardware, software and geographic data designed for capturing, storing, updating, manipulating, analyzing and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information.

Global Positioning System (GPS): A system of satellites and receiving devices used to compute positions on the Earth.

Habitat: The environment in which a population or individual lives; includes not only the place where a species is found, but also the particular characteristics of the place (e.g., climate or the availability of suitable food and shelter), that make it especially well suited to meet the life cycle needs of that species.

Infrastructure: The basic physical systems of a country's or community's population, including roads, utilities, water, sewage, etc. These systems are considered essential for enabling productivity in the economy. Developing infrastructure often requires large initial investment, but the economies of scale tend to be significant.

Innovation: The use of a new idea, material or technology to produce new goods or services, or to change the way in which goods or services are produced or distributed. Innovation can include improved managerial systems, new production techniques, new technology, the results of research and development, or the application of information technologies.

Integrated Resource Management: A holistic approach to resource management that entails the management of two or more resources (e.g., water, soil, timber, pasture, wildlife and recreation) and that integrates the values of the community into the design of policies or projects to use and sustain these resources in perpetuity.

Kame: A typical glacial landform of northeastern Illinois. Either a mound-like hill or a short, steep-sided ridge or terrace that is composed of sand, gravel or cobbles.

Kettle: A depression caused by the slow melting of blocks of detached glacial ice partly buried in a glacial drift.

Landscape: Areas of land that are distinguished by differences in landforms, vegetation, land use and aesthetic characteristics.

Light Traffic: Lightweight, slower moving, non-motorized forms of transportation, such as bicycles, feet, horses, wheelchairs, etc.

Management plan: A detailed long-term plan for a natural area. It contains inventory and other resource data.

Moraine (End): Low ridges of till that build up at the edges of glaciers when they melt and drop their sediment load.

Moraine (Ground): Sediments that were being carried along the bottom of the glacier when it melted.

Natural Area: An area of land in public or private ownership that either retains or has recovered to a substantial degree its original natural or primeval character, though it need not be completely undisturbed, or has floral, faunal, ecological or archaeological features of scientific, educational, scenic or aesthetic interest.

Nature Preserve: A natural area and land designation necessary for its protection to be maintained as nearly as possible in its natural condition and to be used in a manner and under limitations consistent with its continued preservation, without impairment, disturbance or artificial development, for the public purposes of present and future scientific research, education, aesthetic enjoyment, and providing habitat for plant and animal species and communities and other natural objects.

Nature Preserve Buffer: An area of land that protects, provides access to or otherwise serves as a necessary adjunct to a nature preserve. With proper protection, this area may become a natural area suitable for dedication as a nature preserve in the future.

Overstory: The upper canopy of a forest, typically formed by the branches and leaves of trees.

Prairie Pothole: A wet depression in the prairie landscape caused by glaciers.

Protected Area: A protected area by legislation, regulation or land-use policy to control the level of human occupancy or activities. Categories of protected areas include protected landscapes, national parks, multiple-use management areas and nature (wildlife) reserves.

Recreation (Active): The Forest Preserve District of Kane County defines "Active Recreation" as activities that emphasize the open space aspect of a preserve and involve a low level of development, including picnic areas, biking and multi-purpose trails.

Recreation (Outdoor): The voluntary use, understanding and/or appreciation of natural resources i.e., the land and land forms, water, air, plants and animals in their natural conditions.

Recreation (Passive): The Forest Preserve District of Kane County defines "Passive Recreation" as activities that require limited physical exertion on behalf of the participant. Examples of passive recreation activities include bird watching, walking, fishing or photography.

Reforestation: The reestablishment of trees on denuded forest land by natural or artificial means, such as planting and seeding.

Regeneration: The continuous renewal of a forest stand. Natural regeneration occurs gradually with seeds from adjacent stands or with seeds brought in by wind, birds or animals. Artificial regeneration involves direct seeding or planting.

Research and Development (R&D): A set of activities directed toward improving and innovating products and processes from a technological point of view and not from a commercial point of view. R&D encompasses basic research, applied research and development.

Riparian: An area situated on the bank of a river or other body of water.

Riparian Forest: At a large scale, it is the band of forest that has a significant influence on a stream ecosystem or is significantly affected by the stream. At a smaller scale, it is the forest at the immediate water's edge, where some specialized plants and animals form a distinct community.

Riparian Zone/Buffer Zone/Buffer Strip: A strip of land maintained along a stream, lake, road, recreation site or different vegetative zone to mitigate the impacts of actions on adjacent lands, to enhance aesthetic values, or as a best-management practice.

Savanna: A plant community characterized by a continuous grassy layer with scattered trees or shrubs that is subject to regular, severe drought and occasional brush fires.

Sedge meadow: A tract of grassland containing sedge plants that are similar to grasses except having a three-angled cross section of the stem and flowers that are smaller and missing some parts; is an important source of food for animals.

Seed Banks: Storage facilities where seed lots (or bags of seed) are stored.

Seep: A wet place where groundwater has oozed from the ground to the surface.

Stewardship: Environmentally and socially responsible use, management and development of natural resources to maintain and enhance the value of the natural area for present and future generations.

Succession: Changes in the species composition of an ecosystem over time, often in a predictable order. In forests, it refers to the sequence of one community of plants gradually replacing another.

Sustainable Landscape: A landscape enhanced and maintained to the highest degree of ecological harmony.

Sustainable Management: Management that maintains and enhances the long-term health of ecosystems, for the benefit of all living things, while providing environmental, economic, social and cultural opportunities for present and future generations.

Sustainable Planning: The planning of natural areas to meet current needs without prejudice to their future productivity, ecological diversity or capacity for regeneration.

Thinning: A partial cutting or spacing operation made in an immature forest stand to accelerate the growth of the remaining trees.

Threatened Species: A species that is likely to become endangered if certain pressures are not reversed.

Till: Ground-up rock of all grain sizes that is typically produced by glaciers and left behind when they melt.

Trail (Local): A local trail is typically a smaller trail used for local recreation or destinations. It is generally less than three miles, serving one community or single neighborhood. Another type of local trail is an internal trail within a park or forest preserve. It is not linked to a larger bikeway system, although it may offer the opportunity for linkages in the future.

Trail (Multi-Purpose): The ideal trail corridor is a 10-foot wide trail that will accommodate all users. This is the basis for establishing a primary trail system throughout a preserve into which secondary trails would tie.

Trail (Preserve): A trail designed for accessing activities within a preserve, open space area or greenway.

Trail (Regional): A regional trail is typically more than three miles in length and crosses into more than one municipal jurisdiction. A regional trail typically links bicyclists to destinations via long, street-separated trails that can be used for both commuting and recreational rides.

Understory: The lower level of vegetation in a forest. Usually formed by ground vegetation (mosses, herbs and lichens), and shrubs, but may also include subdominant trees.

Vulnerable Species: A species that is considered at risk because it exists in low numbers or in restricted ranges, due to loss of habitat or other factors.

Watershed: An area of land that is drained by underground or surface streams into another stream or waterway.

Appendix B: Bibliography

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Appendix C: District Guidelines

General Guidelines

The District has developed a general guide to protecting, preserving and managing forest preserve property. These guidelines are broken down into five categories: maintenance, environmental, facility, partnerships and programming.

Maintenance and Operational

Carrying Capacity: To prevent deterioration through overuse, maintain safety and provide for a quality visitor experience, carrying capacities or maximum numbers of visitors may be established for facilities. In natural areas and urban preserves, a wide range of management actions, including possible limitations on use, may be instituted to ensure the long-term protection of natural resources, functions and to preserve the quality of the visitor experience.

Asset Maintenance: The District shall strive to provide high-quality maintenance of preserve lands and facilities. The District shall establish a classification system and associated standards for the maintenance of its preserves and facilities. These standards shall be applied consistently throughout the District as funding permits. In the event of budgetary constraints, preserve lands and facilities will be prioritized for reduced maintenance levels. The District shall develop an asset-inventory and asset-management plan. The fiscal plans and annual budgets of the District shall reflect the requirements for maintenance of landscapes, facilities and equipment.

Wildfire: The District works cooperatively with other agencies to reduce wildfire hazards, suppress wildfires and support efforts to protect urban interface areas from the danger of uncontrolled wildfires. The District is strongly committed to implementing processes that mimic natural processes, including the use of prescribed fire, to maintain ecological functions in natural areas.

Dogs: The District recognizes the important relationship between preserve visitors and their canine companions. Through educational and training programs, educational signs and regulatory policy, the District is committed to a District-wide effort requiring responsible guardianship and well-behaved dogs. Policies on dogs in both natural and maintained lands are supported by local ordinances in order to protect the land, visitors and wildlife.

Environmental

Environmental Sustainability: The District considers the goal of environmental sustainability in all its decisions. The District will continue to incorporate these goals in planning, development and maintenance of preserves and facilities.

Environmental Assessment: The environmental effects of preserve use and improvement projects shall be considered in the public decision-making process. Local, state and federal environmental review processes will be followed when required or appropriate, and consideration of ecological systems will be incorporated into the planning process through completion of an Environmental Assessment Process.

Resource Protection and Conservation of Landscapes: The District shall protect and restore significant ecosystems and habitats for native plant and animal species on lands managed for these purposes. Promotion of biological diversity

and protection of endangered species and their associated habitat will be emphasized. The District is committed to maintaining healthy, safe, diverse and extensive plant and wildlife habitats that will perpetuate the environmental benefits. Degraded habitat may be restored and trails may be provided to limit resource damage. On lands managed for their natural and cultural resources, a balance will be maintained between low-impact recreational opportunities and the need to ensure the long-term protection and stewardship of these resources. Natural lands provide opportunities for environmental education for visitors, which enhance their understanding of resource conservation issues.

Wetlands: Recognizing that natural and human-made wetlands are valuable and provide rare and protected habitat for plant and wildlife communities, recreation amenities, and provide enhancement of water quality; the District is committed to preserve and protect, where possible, wetlands associated with properties under the District's jurisdiction. In cases where wetland destruction cannot be avoided, they shall be restored or replaced.

Wildlife: The District shall employ a full range of alternative wildlife management techniques, using best management practices based on experience, research, effectiveness and ecological responsibility. Cooperation with other jurisdictions and public involvement in management decisions will be emphasized. The District will comply with all municipal, state and federal regulations, rules and administrative policies with regard to wildlife management and habitat protection, while balancing the value of preserving the recreational opportunities provided by urban open-space lands. Landscapes and facilities must also incorporate goals of minimizing attractants (trash, compost, fruit trees) for wildlife that live in the urban interface areas. Minimizing attractants reduces the potential for conflict between wildlife and humans, encourages a policy of co-existence with wildlife species that inhabit the urban interface environments, and enhances public safety.

Storm Water Management: The District follows best-management practices as established by the Environmental Protection Agency and complies with all local and state regulations governing the discharge of stormwater during the construction phase of all projects in order to protect water quality and prevent erosion. Project design will also address the appropriate management of the rate, quality and quantity of storm water discharge from the developed site.

Recycling: The District encourages and supports recycling efforts in its facilities and at special events, and promotes the use of products and services that are durable, repairable, reusable, recyclable or otherwise represent a low-waste solution, including the recycling of organic waste.

Energy Conservation: The District will promote energy conservation through its choices of building and landscape designs, building materials and the use of renewable energy sources wherever possible. The District will choose fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles as appropriate and will pursue the latest in technological advancements in furthering the use of renewable energy sources.

Air Pollution: The District seeks to contribute to the reduction of air pollution by selecting power equipment that is energy efficient and produces lower emissions.

Environmental Education: The District supports numerous public education programs that promote an environmentally aware and sensitive attitude among visitors and encourage a strong stewardship ethic towards natural and cultural resources. The District strives for excellence in its environmental education programs in order to build understanding of natural processes and human interactions with nature, not only incorporated in the programming but also supplying educational information at local preserves and at events when appropriate.

Public Access to Public Lands: Public access to public lands shall be provided except where necessary to protect such areas from unacceptable degradation, unacceptable impact to habitat, or to protect public safety. The District strives to balance long-term protection of natural resources and functions, while providing for appropriate visitor access for education, enjoyment and low-impact recreational opportunities consistent with resource protection goals.

Alternate Modes of Transportation: The District seeks to promote the use of alternative modes of transportation, including biking and walking. By providing a system of biking and walking trails throughout the county, the District will be fighting the deterioration of air quality and relieving traffic and parking congestion around the preserves. The District will continue to coordinate with the county and other local agencies to develop specific programs that could include education, information, design features, guided bicycle tours of facilities, and incorporating alternative mode opportunities in future designs.

Facilities and Resources

Adequate Facilities and Services: District facilities and services for existing and new development should be designed, developed, renovated, refurbished and maintained consistent with the adopted District services guidelines, management plans, recommendations and priorities of the District's master plan, and financial priorities set in the District operating budget and capital improvements program. The District will work to ensure that budget requests are set at levels that are commensurate with the costs of acquiring and developing open space and facilities in order to support the provision of services to meet the demands of community growth. Before approving the development of new facilities, funds for operations and maintenance must be identified.

Facilities Locations: Forest preserves and facilities should be distributed throughout the community to the extent possible so that all segments of the population have reasonable access to services.

Encroachments: The District shall resist by all appropriate means, including legal action, any attempt by any public agency, group or individual to destroy or encroach upon any property, historical site and natural area facility under the control of the District. The District considers its responsibilities to the citizens to be in the nature of a public trust, requiring commitment to the preservation and protection of natural, cultural, horticultural and recreational resources located on forest preserve lands. The District shall enlist the aid of an enlightened and alert citizenry in support of this policy. Whenever possible, preserve boundaries should be prominently marked, fenced or designed around natural features to prevent encroachments. Encroachments into preserves from adjacent property owners will be examined and managed on a preserve-by-preserve basis.

Public/Private Partnerships

Community Responsiveness: High-use facilities to serve the needs of larger groups shall be provided in certain preserves to lessen impacts on natural areas. Typically these facilities will be located for ease of automotive and alternative transportation access and be located to best serve a broader population.

Multi-Use: Flexible and multi-purpose use of public lands and facilities shall be emphasized in evaluating the potential use of preserves as well as in the design and development.

Design Consideration: Preserves and facilities shall provide a balanced range of opportunities consistent with the sustainable and appropriate use of the site and shall be designed in a manner that responds to the needs of the intended users and the natural environment. The District will strive for design excellence in all new and redeveloped facilities. Preserve design should be sensitive to the natural features of the site and the character of the surrounding built environment, incorporating natural features and integrating the local ecology whenever possible.

Access Linkages: The District will work with the county Division of Transportation in incorporating the use of tributaries/greenways to help assure safe pedestrian and bicycle access to preserves and other destinations.

Interagency Cooperation: The District will cooperate closely and engage in joint planning efforts with other county departments, municipalities, and state and federal conservation and wildlife management agencies to coordinate land management policies, provide opportunities, and develop a coherent system of public lands to serve area residents. Regional cooperation is key to providing services and increased interconnections among communities.

Citizen Involvement and Public Process: The District recognizes the rights of citizens to play a role in government decisions that affect their lives and property. The District is committed to communicating effectively with the public, to provide opportunities for citizen participation and neighborhood involvement, and to conduct business in an open and transparent manner.

Safety: Facilities and programs shall have operating plans that dictate safety procedures. Controlled-access areas, such as special event centers, will have staff to ensure that the facility is safe to use. Staff will be trained to conduct their work assignments in a safe manner. Preserve and facility design and construction shall be guided by recommendations from a variety of sources, including the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, National Playground Safety Standards, manufacturers' instructions and other safety sources. Safety inspections of lands and facilities will be made according to District procedures and risk-management plan.

Accessibility and Inclusion: The District is committed to providing full access for all residents to its programs, services and facilities, in conformance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Necessary modifications to existing facilities will be a priority as funds are available for renovation and refurbishment. Accessibility will be emphasized when designing, developing and renovating facilities.

Preserve Use and Programming

Use of Facilities and Preserve Lands By Non-profit and Volunteer Organizations: Preserves and facilities may be used by non-profit and volunteer organizations at a discounted rate or without a fee if their event or program assists or is consistent with the District's Mission. A proposal outlining the event, its purpose, target audience, expected number of participants, fees and staffing will be submitted to the executive director a minimum of four weeks before the event.

Fund Raising: The District allows non-profit agencies to sponsor fund raising events in approved locations. Agencies must comply with all District event policies.

Volunteers: The District encourages the teamwork of paid staff and volunteers so that users of our preserves and facilities are offered the best possible service. The District shall develop and administer programs to encourage and coordinate community participation in programs, and the care and maintenance of preserves and facilities.

Special Events: The District works with groups and individuals to hold special events subject to the following guidelines:

- The frequency of events does not pre-empt regular public use of the area
- The event is held in an appropriate area for the anticipated size of the event and expected attendance, and does not affect a neighborhood on a continuing basis
- Environmental, safety and public health concerns are addressed
- Requests by District residents are given preference
- Event holders comply with all city/county special-event policies
- Events proposed for sites contiguous to natural lands will be reviewed for environmental impacts by the Department of Natural Resources and must be approved by the Executive Director
- Contracts may be required for special events and contract fees should at least cover all direct costs to the District

Use of Forest Preserves and Facilities for Private Profit/Gain: Facilities provided by the District are for the public good and are not intended for private profit. Activities for private gain will not be allowed when they interfere with the conduct of District activities or general use by the public. Such activities may be allowed through a formal agreement or permit process with an appropriate fee. These activities will not be allowed if the District is already providing or sponsoring a similar program.

Detailed Guidelines

The Forest Preserve District will continue to acquire, restore, improve and protect District-owned land and natural areas within the county. During the process of preserving and restoring this land, the District has found it necessary to develop a more-detailed set of guidelines to assist the District in protecting land. The growth of Kane County will continue to shed light on new situations that are outside the realm of the District's current guidelines, and as the growth continues, the District will continue to develop new and more-detailed guidelines to help protect and preserve the County's natural areas. The following is a more-detailed set of guidelines.

Wetland Protection and Management Guidelines

Wetlands: The term wetlands means "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support under normal circumstances the prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas."

Wetland Function: Wetlands function as natural sponges that trap and slowly release surface water, rain, snowmelt, groundwater and flood water. Trees, root mats and other wetland vegetation also slow the speed of flood waters and distribute them more slowly over the floodplain. This combined water storage and braking action lowers flood heights and reduces erosion. Wetlands within and downstream of urban areas are particularly valuable, counteracting the greatly increased rate and volume of surface water runoff from pavement and buildings. The holding capacity of wetlands helps control floods and prevents water logging of crops. Preserving and restoring wetlands, together with other water retention, can often provide the level of flood control otherwise provided by expensive dredge operations and levees.

Wetlands and Runoff: Since wetlands are typically the lowest area on the landscape, they often receive runoff from surrounding land. Runoff (sometimes called "storm water" or "nonpoint source pollution") is caused by rainfall or snow melt moving over and through the ground. Runoff carries natural and manmade pollutants into low areas, such as wetlands, lakes and streams, and eventually into groundwater. The quality of wetlands and other water resources is related to the quality of the environment contributing to these waters.

Untreated Runoff Impacts to Wetlands: Untreated runoff from agricultural land, urban areas and other sources is a leading cause of water-quality impairment. Siltation, pollutants, excess nutrients and changes to water flows, such as more-frequent inundation and increased turbidity, are responsible for most of the impacts to wetlands from runoff. Impacts to wetlands have resulted in consequences, such as changed species composition, increased pollutant loadings (e.g., heavy metals) and replacement of complex wetland systems with less-desired open water. Modifications of wetlands associated with some runoff-management practices have resulted in significant impacts to wetlands.

Wetland Uses: Wetlands have a natural water-quality improvement function, and more often they are being used to treat runoff from urban areas, agricultural lands and other pollutant sources. Care needs to be taken not to overload wetlands with more runoff than they can safely handle without contamination or reducing their ability to function. There are many ways to protect and restore wetlands and riparian areas, and one way is to address runoff. While wetlands do provide valuable water-quality protection for downstream rivers and lakes, decisions that might route runoff into wetlands, either inadvertently or by design, should be carefully evaluated, and adequate wetlands protection should be provided, including avoidance of the wetlands, use of best-management practices (BMPs) and monitoring to observe how well the BMPs work.

Management Pre-Treat Storm Water Guidelines: In an effort to continue to protect our natural resources, the following issues should be addressed before improvements can be made that might change the quality of runoff into wetlands, change in daily flow rate, change in event flow rate, change of concentration of flow, or ways to prevent nutrient overloading or contamination, and easements to manage storm water structures/improvements.

Greenway Planning Guidelines

Greenways are a linear form of natural area or open space. They are typically a vegetative buffer located along streams and water bodies used to protect water quality and prevent disturbance adjacent to these streams and water bodies. The vegetated buff also slows down water velocity allowing the water to infiltrate into the ground, thus preventing sediment and chemicals contained in the water runoff from adjacent land uses, such as agriculture or urban development from reaching surface waters.

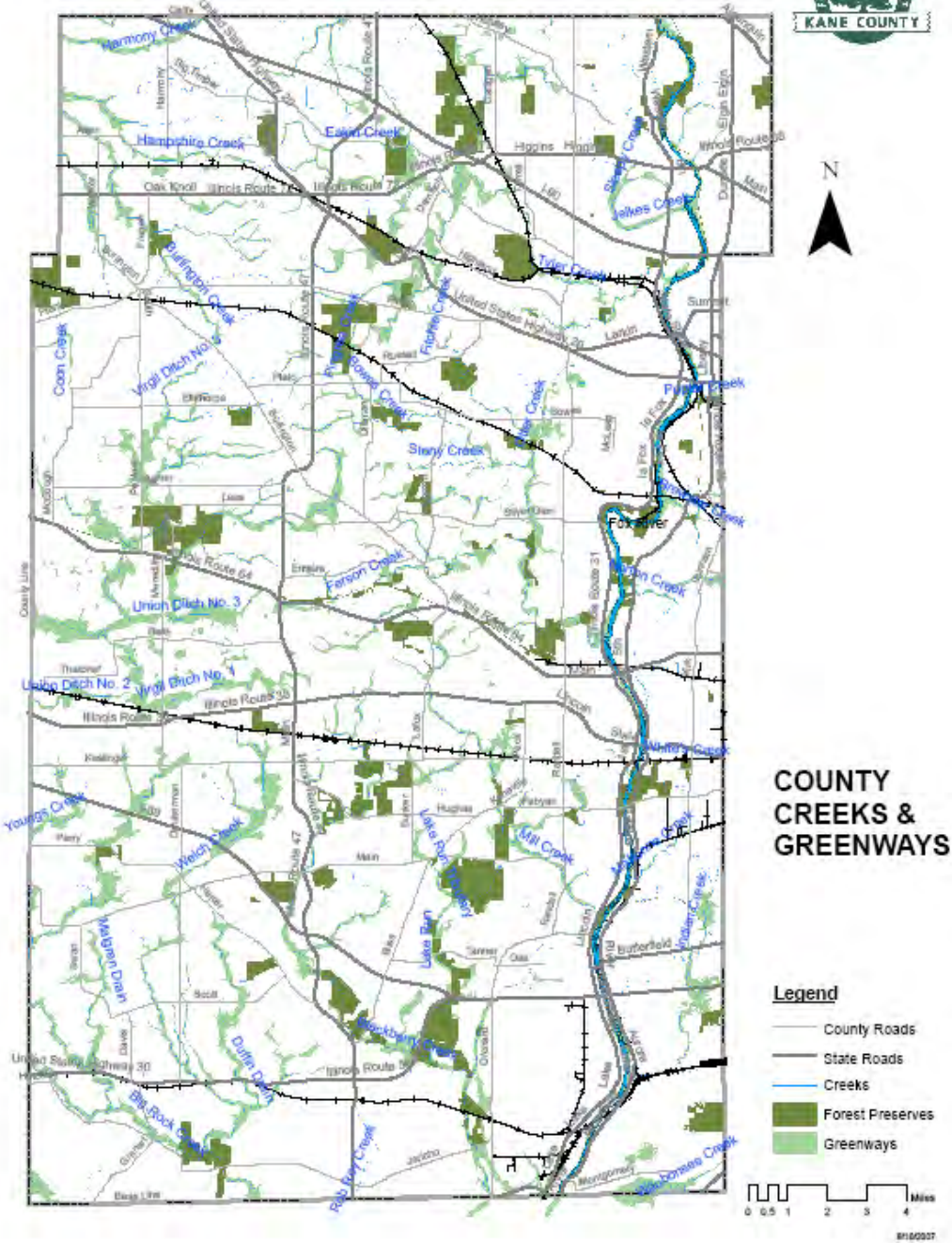
Aside from protecting these natural resources, greenways can take on multiple roles with in a community. Some greenways are created for recreational activities such as hiking, biking, in-line skating, jogging, running and strolling. Also they provide a means of getting from place to place without a car, going to school, a friend's home, the library, a restaurant or work. Greenways provide a safe alternative to streets because they are separated from automobile routes, and they provide a more scenic atmosphere for the user. Also, greenways provide a buffer from noise and air pollution for the user.

The establishment of a greenway creates the opportunity for restoration of cultural and natural resources, and creates a link between various conservation areas to allow for the movement of wildlife species. Once a greenway is created, the

resources within it receive increased protection. In many cases, these resources have been impacted by previous and continuous disturbances. Because these areas are now being protected, the benefits will be endless. Greenways also provide a great opportunity for environmental education. Learning about the natural and cultural resources in the greenway, including its' ecosystems, history and natural dynamics will educate users as to the values behind its' creation and the benefits it will provide. The purpose of greenway planning for the District is to assist city and County governments in the master-planning design-construction and management of greenways within the county while

balancing the values of preservation, restoration, water quality, recreation and education:

Forest Preserve District of Kane County



Values

Preservation: Identify and preserve valuable cultural and natural resources

Restoration: Restore sections of ecosystems damaged by adverse impacts of human activity, including invasive exotic species, previous land uses and water-management practices

Water Quality: Protect and improve the water quality of rivers, streams, tributaries and other water resources

Recreation: Plan and design recreation to allow all people the ability to experience the natural environment in a responsible manner. Construct and manage recreational amenities with minimal impact on the cultural and natural resources.

Education: Educate to increase the awareness and understanding of the importance of greenways and the protection of our natural resources

Implementation: Implement all stages of a greenway

Regional Plan_- A regional plan ensures that an individual community's master plan works with and compliments the master plans of adjacent communities. A greenway segment is an important component of a regional plan and may become a component of a larger greenway plan for the region.

Greenway Master Plan_- The greenway master plan focuses on the greenway segment and its relationship to the surrounding region. The master plan identifies areas for preservation, restoration, water quality improvements, education and recreation. The plan describes elements and facilities included within the plan, examines the relationship between the elements and their general location.

Design and Construction_-The design and construction phase involves detailed design of site elements, development of construction documents and construction of the elements within the greenway plan.

Management Plan_-The most important of the phases, the management plan should be developed concurrently with the master plan and construction documents. The management approach of the greenway may affect the design.

The District works cooperatively with Kane County and all municipal agencies in the protection of our water resources and accepting greenways. The Fox River and its tributaries along with the tributaries of the Kishwaukee River are Kane County's greatest natural assets. The District is in the process of refining its role as the landholder in the partnerships to create the greenways and water management areas as land use changes are made and development continues

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Guidelines

There are many aspects to planning and design that contribute to the successful uses of walking and bicycle paths. To promote walking and bicycling, a transportation network must take into account all modes by which people can be mobile. In the same context that a street network provides connection for people to work, live, shop and recreate using the automobile, a good path and trail network can do the same for pedestrians and bicyclists. In order for pedestrians and bicyclists to replace their cars with alternative modes of transportation, the destinations to their activities must be within a reasonable distance from their home.

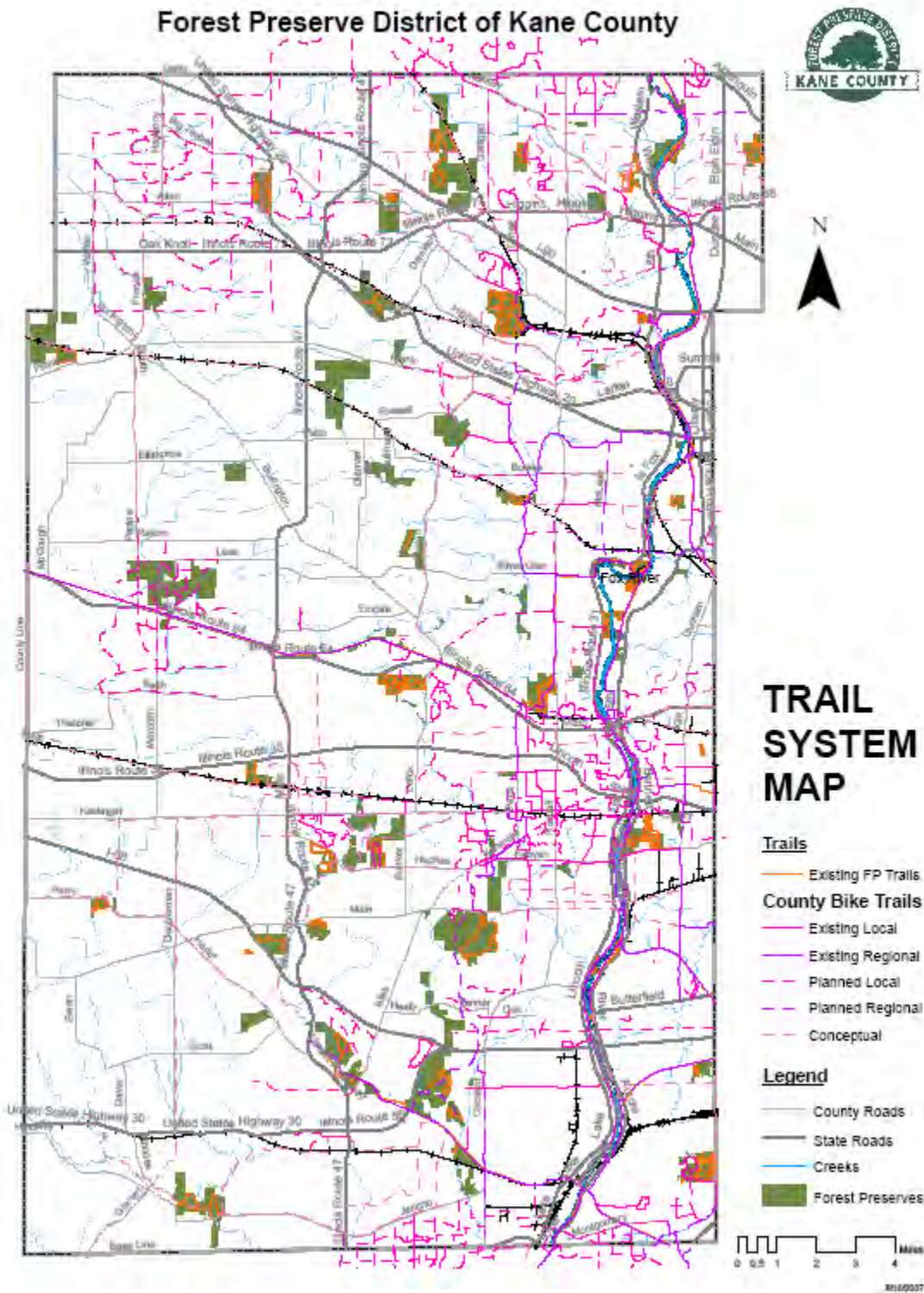
Kane County has a significant network of local and regional trails. In August of 2000 the Kane/Kendall Council of Mayors, Kane County Division of Transportation and the Forest Preserve District of Kane County initiated a bicycle/pedestrian planning study. This study recognized that the primary mode of transportation is the automobile, but that many residents elect to use alternative modes of transportation to commute to work, run errands and recreate. A wide range of users share these local and regional trails, and the residents have recognized the advantages of the trails for a variety of uses.

The bikeways in Kane County are divided into two categories for ease of classification and description. For the purposes of this master plan the trails are divided into local and regional trails.

Local Trails: A local trail is typically a smaller trail used for local recreation or destinations. It is generally less than three miles in length and serves one community or single neighborhood. Another type of local trail is an internal trail within a park or forest preserve. It is not linked to a larger bikeway system, although it may offer the opportunity for linkages in the future.

Regional Trails: A regional trail is typically more than three miles in length and crosses into more than one municipal jurisdiction. A regional trail typically links bicyclists to destinations via long, street-separated trails that can be used for both commuting and recreational rides.

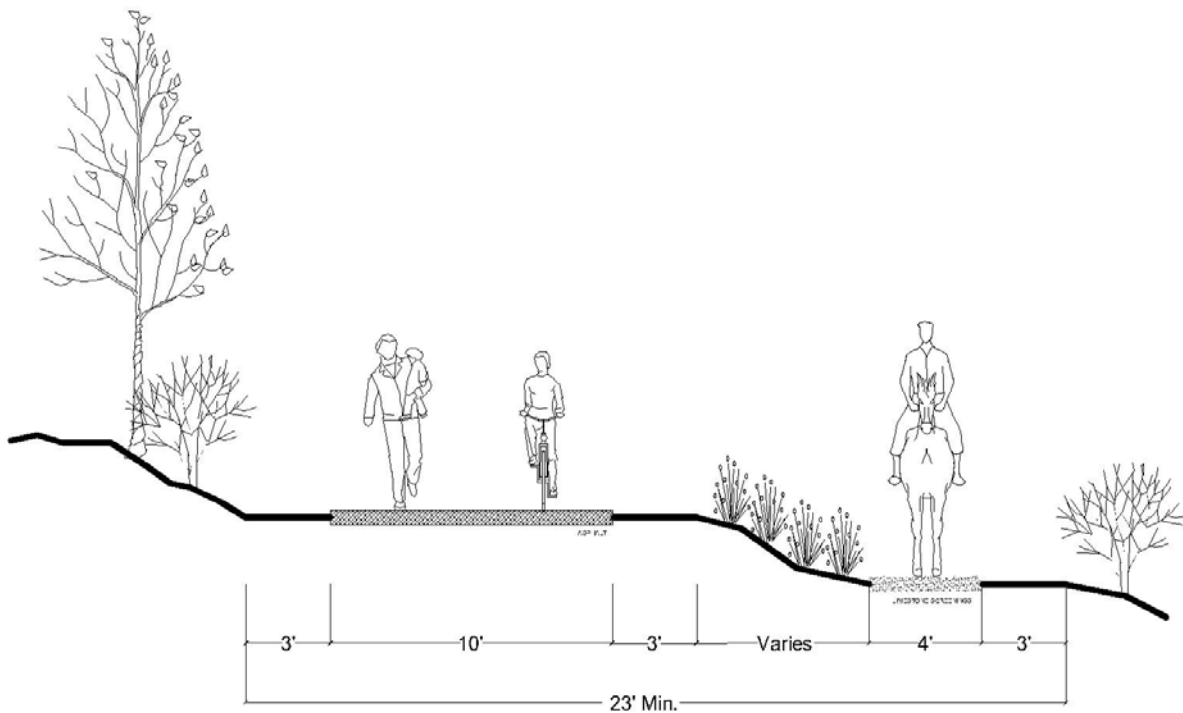
The District is a strong supporter of the Kane County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and currently hosts a quarterly meeting with all the partners to discuss the updates and progress each community is making toward the goals set out by the Kane County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan adopted in December 2002.



Proposed Trail Cross Sections

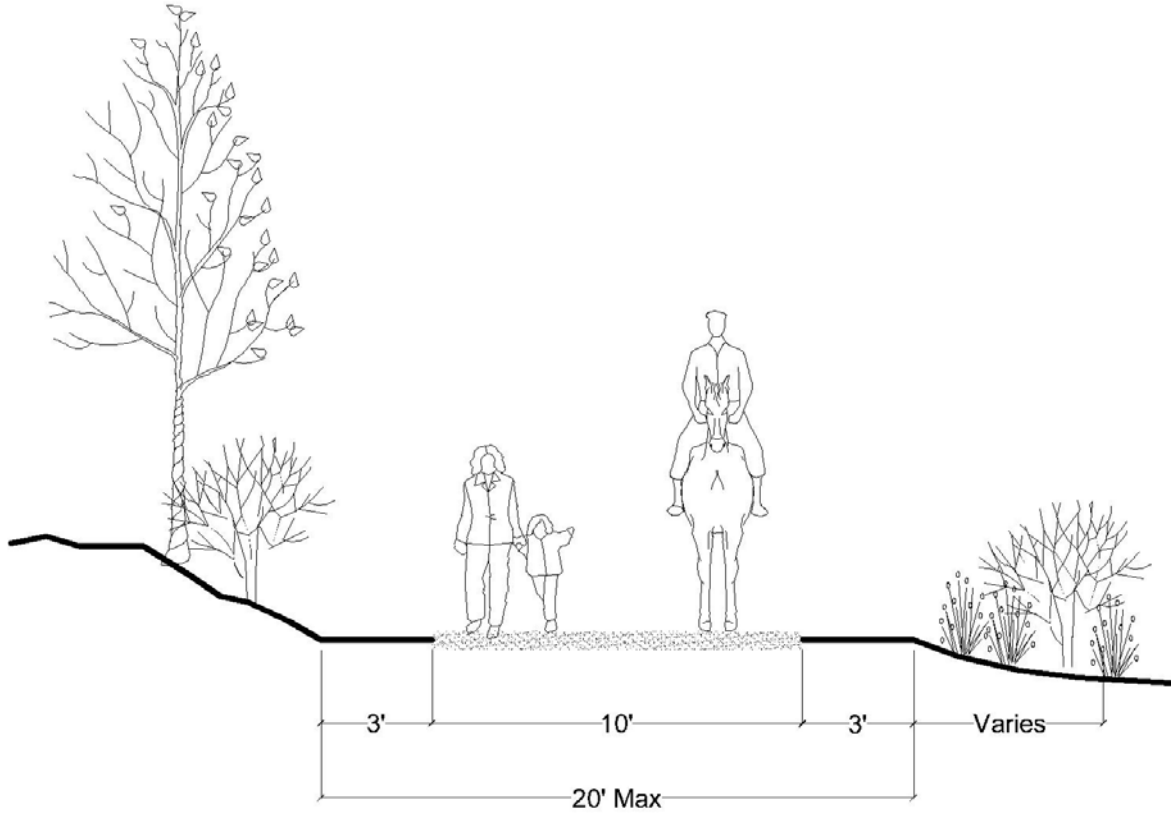
The District has developed several cross sections of the trails that show the proposed trail standard policy.

Trail Cross Section 1: The ideal trail corridor will be a minimum of 23-feet wide with a 10-foot paved trail for hikers and bikers, and a second four-foot-wide limestone screenings trail for horses. This cross section will only exist when equestrian use is adjacent to a regional bike trail.



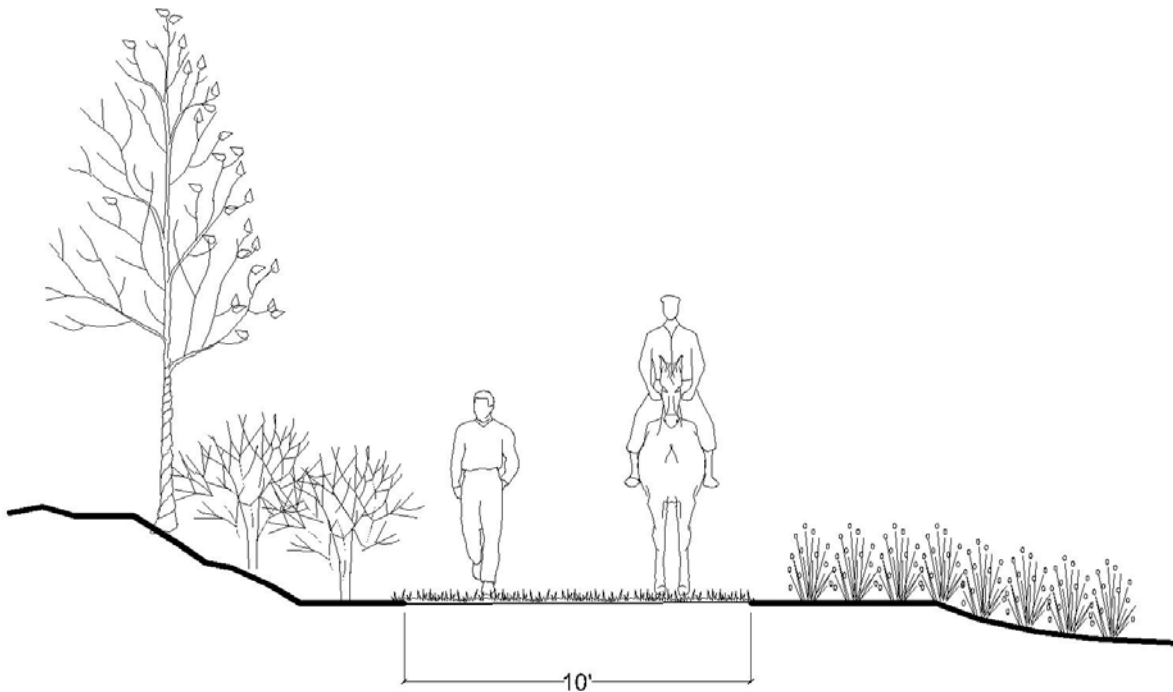
#1. ASPHALT / SCREENINGS TRAIL

Trail Cross Section 2: Multi-Purpose Trail - The ideal trail corridor will be a maximum of 20-feet wide with a 10-foot-wide screening trail that will accommodate all users of the forest preserve. This cross section will be used to establish a primary trail system throughout the preserve into which the secondary trails tie.



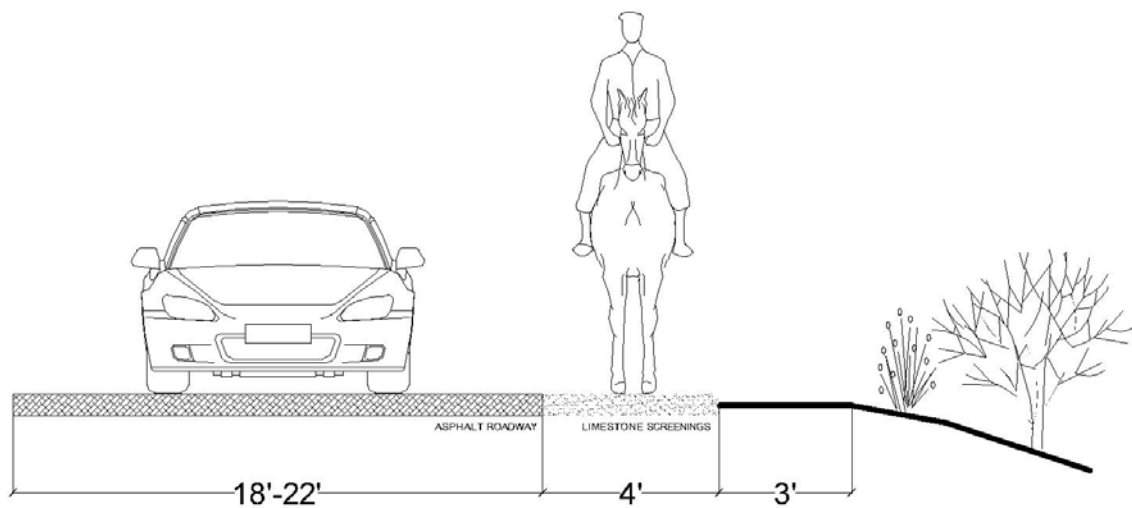
#2. MULTI-PURPOSE SCREENINGS TRAIL

Trail Cross Section 3: Secondary or Mowed Trail - The ideal trail corridor will be a 10-foot-wide mowed corridor that will allow the trail users to get closer to and view the protected natural areas within the preserves. The mowed trails will allow the District to re-route trails during parts of the year to assist in the restoration and protection of natural resources.



#3. MOWED GRASS TRAIL

Trail Cross Section 4: On-Road Trail - The ideal trail corridor will be a four-foot wide, limestone screenings shoulder that will allow the trail users to ride alongside the preserve roads when the trail runs parallel to and adjoins the road.



#4. ON-ROAD TRAIL (SCREENINGS)

This cross section will only exist when equestrian and trail use is adjacent to a forest preserve interior road.

Equestrian Trail System Use Guidelines

The District is committed to providing an open-space experience for every type of user, including visitors with horses. Before heading out to one of the preserves on a horse, please review the equestrian access guidelines below. Cooperation and compliance with the listed guidelines is essential to ensuring forest preserve resource protection and a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone using the trails.

Most horseback riders are observant of the rules, understanding that all recreational use on preserves must be consistent with natural-resource protection and preservation, whether the users are hikers, equestrians, runners, families, bicyclists or dog-walkers.

For all types of users, compliance with the rules ensures that everyone using the trails has an enjoyable experience. When horseback riders disregard the rules, they jeopardize being welcome on preserves. Horse owners that model appropriate use while on the preserves show respect for others and the land.

Sharing the Space: The District allows recreational use consistent with resource protection and preservation. Hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, runners, small children, senior citizens, dog walkers, photographers, people in wheelchairs, bird watchers and other nature-study groups are all out on the trails exploring open space. To help make this work, each user should keep in mind the needs of others. The following are guidelines to be followed during equestrian use within the District preserves:

Public Awareness

- Be friendly toward other trail users. Present a good image of equestrian trail users.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Have control of your horse at all times. If necessary, dismount and lead your horse through areas of high activity. If you remain mounted, proceed no faster than a walk.
- Respect private property. Get permission from landowners to use their land. Leave gates as you find them, and don't bother livestock. Never cut fences.
- It is recommended that all trail riders carry third-party liability insurance. Check with your agent.
- Any child under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.
- The right-of-way rule is that bikers yield to hikers, and both bikers and hikers yield to horses. Although this is considered a trail rule, common courtesy and common sense should prevail and apply on all trails.
- Please abide by all NO HORSE and NO TRESPASSING signs, and please stay on the designated trails. There are some areas where the private landowners do not permit access to horses. They have marked these areas with signs please do not abuse their generosity.
- No rough riding or racing.

Environmental Awareness

- Do not litter. What you carried in, please carry out. Also, if you have room, pick up what others have left behind.
- Do not smoke while riding.

- Do not damage crops. Access to farmland does not mean galloping across planted fields. Carefully ride single file around the edge of any crops, or stay on a path. This also applies to lawns while riding in residential areas.
- Stay on the trail path. Deviations from the path lead to unnecessary destruction of vegetation.
- Be courteous to other users. Equestrians are expected to remove their horse's manure from the trail surface.
- Clean up after yourself. We are not equipped to manage horse waste left in the parking areas, so please clean it up and pack it out with you, or place it in the dumpster, if provided.
- Never allow your horse to damage trees by chewing or pawing while tied at rest stops. If your horse does damage to a tree, you will be expected to replace the tree at a fee of \$150.

The following is from the American Horse Council State Horse Council Advisory Committee meeting, Nov. 3, 2001: "The American Equestrian Trails Community is united in the preservation of our cultural heritage of the use of horses and pack stock on wild lands. We are committed to the stewardship of lands we use, and to the practice of conservation of our natural and cultural resources. Further, we are committed to fostering land ethics that harmonize the relationship between equestrians and the lands on which we ride. As responsible equestrian trail users, we promote conservation education, encourage shared trail use and trail etiquette, practice volunteerism and work to develop and enhance positive relationships among equestrian, other trail users and landowners/managers. We influence administrative land legislative decisions that affect the equestrian trail community. We seek to enhance opportunities for trail development. We also serve as a resource for information on equestrian trail values, uses and needs."

Trail Etiquette

- Remember the trail is shared by hikers, bikers, walkers and other users.
- Keep right except to pass.
- Allow space on the left for others to pass.
- Announce passing to other users. Pass with caution.
- Slow down when approaching or passing others, give a friendly warning and pass safely. Be cautious of corners and blind spots.
- Move off paved trail when stopped.
- Please yield to law enforcement, maintenance and emergency vehicles.
- Respect private property.
- Heed all signs.
- Follow the trail's directional signs.
- Read and obey all rules and regulations posted at staging areas.
- Ride on designated open trails only and respect trail closures.
- Don't litter.
- Leave no trace. Clean up after yourself. Pack out what you pack in.
- Do not ride on trails during or after heavy rains. Do not create your own trails.
- Respect native plants.
- Do not disturb wildlife; give animals extra room.

Because trail-riding activities take place outside the confines of the training pen, many unpredictable factors affect you and your horse. This situation requires the implementation of common sense, rider etiquette, safety guidelines and trail-ride rules. All of them should be practiced whether you ride alone, with a small group or with a large number of other trail riders.

The District currently allows horseback riding to occur in several preserves, making up approximately 65 miles of trails. The some of these preserves provide places for visitors with trailers to park. The trails are currently made up of a system of old farm lanes, mowed trail and foot trails. Trails are multiple-use trails enjoyed by many other types of visitors, including walkers, runners, dog walkers and bicyclists. Each trail user is expected to adhere to the "share the trail" etiquette in yielding to other user groups. Although pedestrians and bicyclists are generally expected to yield to horseback riders, common sense should prevail, understanding that all parties should have the awareness to yield in all situations.

As equestrians share forest preserve multipurpose trails with others who want to enjoy the outdoors, please use common sense and courtesy.

Off-Leash Dog Area Use Guidelines

The District is committed to providing an open-space experience for every type of user, including visitors with dogs. Before heading out to one of the dog-friendly preserves with a dog, please review the dog access guidelines below.

Cooperation and compliance with the listed guidelines is essential to ensuring dog access resource protection, and a safe, enjoyable experience for everyone using the trails.

Most dog owners are observant of the rules, understanding that all recreational use on preserves must be consistent with natural resource protection and preservation, whether the users are hikers, equestrians, runners, families, bicyclists or dog-walkers.

For all types of users, compliance with the rules ensures that everyone using the trails has an enjoyable experience. When pet owners disregard the rules, they jeopardize dogs being welcome on preserves. Dog owners that model appropriate use while on the preserves show respect for others and the land.

Sharing the Space: The District allows recreational use consistent with resource protection and preservation. Hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, runners, small children, senior citizens, dog walkers, photographers, people in wheelchairs, bird watchers and other nature-study groups are all out on the trails exploring open space. To help make multiple-use areas work, each user should keep in mind the needs of others. Visitors with dogs should give other hikers the right-of-way. Be aware that many people are afraid of dogs. Also, give horses the right-of-way. Move off the trail far enough to allow horses to pass. Communicate with others, and keep the dog quiet and under control.

Aurora West Forest Preserve: Visitors can let their dog off-leash in the 50 acres in the center of the preserve. In this area, visitors must have a leash in their possession and their dog must be in view and under voice or hand control. **Dogs must be kept on leash to and from the off-leash area.**

Fox River Bluff West Forest Preserve: Visitors can let their dogs off-leash in the entire preserve. Visitors must have a leash in their possession and their dog must be in view and under control. **Dogs must be kept on leash to and from the parking area.**

Waste cleanup: Dog waste can pose a health hazard and a public nuisance. Do not leave waste in the preserves. Bag it and pack it out with you. Do not leave bagged waste at the preserve or outside preserve restrooms. Leaving bagged waste is considered littering.

Other: Visitors may have no more than three dogs per person within areas where dogs are allowed on District preserves. Dogs are not allowed in any District water areas, including streams or ponds.

District Regulations for Dog Use: The District follows a set of regulations that are strictly enforced by the District Department of Public Safety, including the following ordinance:

Ordinance No. FP-O-08-95-213

General Use Regulation Ordinance of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, Illinois

Chapter V - Regulation of Personal Conduct and Behavior

No person or organization, other than the District in its capacity as a municipal corporation, shall engage in the following activities, upon or in connection with any property of the District;

Section 7 – Control and Treatment of Animals.

- a. Bring in, lead or carry any dog that is unleashed or on a leash longer than ten (10) feet, except at those areas designated by the President for dog training, and then only in accordance with the rules and regulations duly promulgated for the control of such area or areas;
- b. Willfully or negligently cause or allow or release any animal or fowl, wild or domestic pet, to run or remain at large, except within those areas designated by the President, and then only in accordance with the rules and regulations duly promulgated for the control of such area or areas;
- c. Torture, whip, beat or cruelly treat or neglect any animal;
- d. Bring in, drive, ride or lead in any animal, except that horses and other beasts of burden and draft animals may be ridden led or driven ahead of vehicles attached thereto on such portions of the forest preserve, or part thereof, designated as a nature preserve or nature area or historic site, without written permission of the president unless such animal is kept confined within a closed vehicle or trailer;
- e. Nothing in this ordinance shall be construed to prohibit the controlled use of certain animals approved by the President for purposes of public safety, such as, but not limited to, the protection of District property or the protection of employees in the performance of their duties of search and rescue.

Benefits of These Basic Guidelines

Protecting Public Safety: Keeping your dog on a leash ensures that dogs will not startle other unsuspecting visitors who may also be using the preserve and helps reduce conflicts with other users. It also lessens the chance that another visitor or dog may be bitten, no matter how unlikely it may seem to occur.

Protecting Wildlife: The open space preserves provide permanent sanctuaries for native wildlife and vegetation. As pressures from the expanding human population increase, the preserves become even more important as refuges for wildlife. Nesting birds, stream life, reptiles and mammals depend on the protection of open space. Harmful interactions between dogs and wildlife have been reported on public lands. Interactions such as harassing, chasing or attacking can be very stressful to wildlife and are not allowed on District lands. Cooperating with these guidelines helps reduce the impact of domestic animals on wildlife and the environment.

Protecting your Dog: Leashes can keep dogs safe from wildlife and wildlife safe from dogs. Dogs may encounter coyote, raccoons, deer, rabbits or other animals, and behave in a way that places them in danger. Leashes also protect dogs from other dogs. For the protection of wildlife and canine companions, keep dogs on leash.

Dogs must be on leash at all times except in the designated off-leash area at Aurora West and Fox River Bluff West Forest Preserves. The leash must be held by a person responsible for the dog and must be made of material and construction sufficient to restrain the dog. Electronic or other “invisible leashes” do not meet the District’s leash requirement.

No person shall allow or have a dog on District lands, unless the dog is at all times under control and on a leash not to exceed 10 feet or on a self-retracting leash with a maximum extended length of 25 feet. The self-retracting leash must have the capability of being retracted and locked in a position not to exceed 10 feet. Within a designated area, no person shall have or allow a dog on a lead greater than 10 feet when:

- a. Within 100 feet of any parking area, trailhead, picnic area, campground, horse stable, public roadway, restroom, visitor center, ranger station or other place or structure of public assembly;
- b. Within 50 feet of any person that is not the person or persons who entered District lands with the dog; or
- c. Within 50 feet of any District protected water area.

Snowmobile Use Guidelines

Kane County winters are very unpredictable and when there's enough snow for snowmobiling, everyone is anxious to ride. Respecting others and correct safety procedures are essential if snowmobiling use is to continue to grow and give hours of enjoyment as a leisure-time recreational activity. Snowmobiles must share the same routes and areas as other trail users. Common sense and courtesy will provide a safe and pleasant experience for everyone. The following guidelines are for everyone’s benefit:

1. Respect the rights of all winter recreational users to enjoy the beauty of the winter wonderland.
2. Do not ride while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
3. Do not ride on public or private property without permission unless you are on a designated trail route.
4. Keep to the right when meeting another winter trail user.
5. Yield the right-of-way to traffic moving downhill.
6. Slow down and use caution when approaching or overtaking another.
7. Follow trail-use signs and stay on designated trails.
8. Stay on marked trails, roads or areas open to snowmobiles. Do not snowmobile where prohibited.
9. When stopping, move over to one side, and do not block the trail.
10. Do not disturb wildlife and natural areas. Please respect areas posted to protect wildlife and natural area habitats.

11. Pack out everything you packed in, and do not litter.
12. Obey all federal, state and local rules regulating the operation of snowmobiles.

The District does not plan, construct or maintain snowmobile trails. Although there are designated trail routes through forest preserves, the snowmobile trails in Kane County are the result of local club efforts. The snowmobile clubs provide the efforts in obtaining landowner permission, trail marking and trail grooming. The District acts as a land owner in this situation and allows routes to be planned through preserves for trail connections.

Accessibility Guidelines

Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan

The following document is the District's preserve and facility improvement plan to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This document is considered a transition plan, and an important step in this transition is to evaluate how the District is serving the needs of the disabled. When Congress enacted The Americans with Disabilities Act, the basic intent was clear that reasonable equal-access opportunities must be provided to those with disabilities. We are met with the responsibilities to provide a reasonable level of accessibility for individuals with varying levels of abilities. While there are no requirements within the ADA which mandate any spatial requirements relative to the size of any particular type of preserve and/or facility, the act does mandate that forest preserve areas and facilities be reasonably accessible and usable to all populations. In order to develop standards for the District, the Planning department will use the *Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines: Recreational Facilities and Outdoor Develop Areas* published by The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, Recreation Access Advisory Committee.

For state and local governments and any public accommodation that would include the District and its programs, the ADA requires that all:

- Newly constructed buildings and facilities must be readily accessible.
- Renovation or alteration of existing buildings and facilities must be readily accessible.
- Barriers to accessibility in existing buildings and facilities must be removed when it is "readily achievable."

Some of the minimum requirements include but are not limited to:

- One accessible route from site access point, such as a parking lot to a primary accessible entrance, must be provided. A ramp with a slope of no greater than 1:6 for a length of no greater than two feet may be used as part of this route; otherwise a slope of maximum 1:12 is allowed.
- One accessible public entrance must be provided.
- If toilets are provided, then one accessible unisex toilet facility must be provided along an accessible route.
- Only the publicly used spaces on the level of the accessible entrance must be made accessible.
- Any displays and written information should be located where they can be seen by a seated individual and should provide information accessible to the blind.

Removal of Barriers: The ADA requires that all public accommodations, programs and facilities of state and local governments must remove architectural and communication barriers. An architectural barrier is a physical barrier to

access, such as steps, narrow doors, etc. A communication barrier is one that is an integral part of the physical structure of the facility, including telephones mounted too high or the absence of Braille markings on signs.

In many cases the removal of these barriers is not difficult. The District needs to create an overall policy and develop a plan that will prioritize the removal of these barriers.

Outdoor Recreation Facilities: The special Programs and Populations Branch of the National Park Service working in conjunction with the United States Forest Service has published a very clear, concise document outlining the methods that can be used to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act pertaining to outdoor recreation facilities. The “Design Guide for Accessible Outdoor Recreation” contains specific guidelines for creating accessible campgrounds, restroom facilities, picnic areas, trails, equestrian centers, docks, piers and other outdoor recreation areas.

The concept that the District should adopt is that any outdoor recreational facility should be accessible consistently with the level of improvements existing or proposed at any facility. The above-mentioned guide will be used to establish a framework of direction for new and retrofitted preserve sites and facilities requiring that all visitors should have the opportunity to participate in programs and services to the highest level of access feasible for persons with disabilities, when compared to that offered other visitors.

Highly developed sites with parking lots, restrooms, structures for public gatherings and recreational facilities, such as nature centers, fishing, and cultural or historic centers should have highly developed routes for accessibility. Natural areas with limited development and limited recreational facilities should have the minimum of accessible routes to the site.

Forest Preserve ADA Transition Plan

1. The “Design Guide for Accessible Outdoor Recreation” will be the guideline used by the District in planning all new preserve facilities.
2. The District will complete an audit of both architectural and communication barriers in all existing preserves.
3. Once the audit is complete, the District will prioritize the list of improvements needed and implement a plan for the removal of these barriers

Historic Preservation Guidelines

Historic barns and agricultural structures symbolize the distinctive Kane County values of heritage, hard work, productivity and stewardship. They are witnesses to the role of agriculture in the County’s image, history and its economy, and they serve as scenic landmarks for residents and visitors alike.

The District works closely with Kane County to preserve the character of the County through the preservation of historic landscapes and structures. The District will continue to work with the County Historic Preservation Commission as it continues to acquire properties with historic landscapes and structures.

