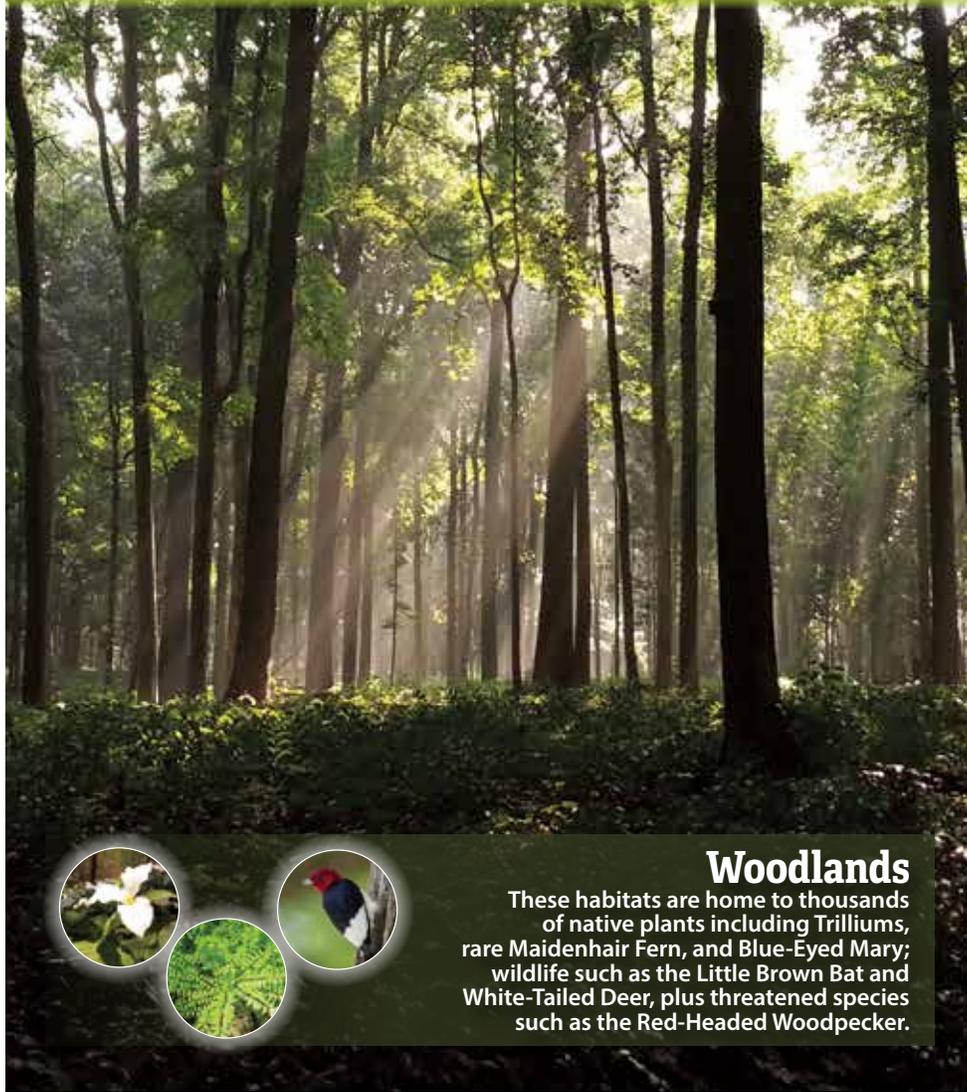




# Land Acquisition & Preserve Improvement Referendum

APRIL 4, 2017 NONPARTISAN ELECTION



## Woodlands

These habitats are home to thousands of native plants including Trilliums, rare Maidenhair Fern, and Blue-Eyed Mary; wildlife such as the Little Brown Bat and White-Tailed Deer, plus threatened species such as the Red-Headed Woodpecker.

## Prairies

A vast array of wildlife live in prairies, including grassland birds like the Eastern Meadowlark, threatened species like the Monarch Butterfly, and the endangered Rusty-Patched Bumblebee. Thousands of native and rare plants exist here.



## Forest Preserve District's mission & goal

The mission of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County is to acquire, hold and maintain lands within Kane County which contribute to the preservation of natural or historic resources and habitats, flora or fauna; and to restore, restock, protect and preserve such lands for the education, recreation and pleasure of all its citizens.

Our goal is to preserve and restore the nature of Kane County.

## What's the issue?

On April 4, 2017, the citizens of Kane County will be asked to vote on a referendum authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds for the Forest Preserve District. Approval would allow the District's land acquisition, restoration and improvement programs to continue. Proceeds from the bonds will be used to **acquire approximately 2,000 - 2,500 additional acres of open space in Kane County** and make various preserve improvements.

### April 4 Ballot Question

Shall the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, Illinois, borrow money and issue general obligation bonds in the amount of \$50,000,000 to acquire and preserve forests and natural lands, protect wildlife habitats, enhance flood control, improve hiking and biking trails and fishing and other recreational areas, provide forest and wildlife education programs and improve forest preserves, wetlands and prairies, all in accordance with the purposes authorized by the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act of the State of Illinois, as amended?

The approximate impact of the proposed increase on the owner of a single-family home having a market value of \$250,000 would be \$22 in the first year of the increase if the increase is fully implemented.

## Why should open space be protected?

Open space improves the quality of life for residents as it increases property values, cleans our air and water, and provides healthy recreation and education opportunities. We protect and connect crucial habitats so plant and animal communities can be preserved and enhanced for future generations.



### Volunteer with us

The Forest Preserve District of Kane County has a dedicated group of volunteers that help in many ways. In 2016, formal District volunteers contributed 12,485 hours in support of our mission. To be a part of this vital group, call 630-232-5980.



## Land acquisition strategy and benefits

Approval of the referendum would allow the District to invest in land at a fraction of the cost, while both land prices and interest rates remain low. We only acquire land from willing sellers. Our strategy would be to:

### Grow existing preserves

By adding acreage to our existing natural areas, we are able to more fully restore native plant communities and provide wildlife habitat. Nature education and recreation opportunities increase.

### Increase flood control and water protection

By preserving land along streams, rivers and wetlands, homes and businesses are protected while water quality and drinking-water supplies are improved.

### Preserve wildlife habitat and natural areas

Woodlands, wetlands and prairies are home to an abundance of plant and animal life. Natural areas provide oxygen and soil nutrients, reduce pollution, and help control climate. We would continue working to bring back the prairie. Restoring open space to natural prairie means returning to our natural heritage. High-quality, unprotected sites that contain existing habitat or rare plants and animals would be a priority for investment.



### **Bring back prairies and pollinator habitat**

*Wildlife such as Monarch Butterflies and native bees depend on prairies to survive.*

### Improve our renowned trail system

The Forest Preserve District has more than 211 miles of trails. Trails are used for walking, jogging, biking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, snowmobiling and more.

### Expand recreation and nature education opportunities

Options for recreation and education are expanded by the installation of preserve amenities including shelters, bathrooms, interpretive signs, trails and more. Annually, the District provides nature education to more than 16,000 people.

### Leverage dollars to maximize return

Money from referenda is leveraged with grant opportunities and intergovernmental contributions, to increase the overall available funding. The District has been able to capture millions of dollars in federal, state and local grants, helping dollars stretch further.



### **Balance development**

Too much development and sprawl could endanger the future of both open space and environmentally sensitive properties.

## **Preserve improvement projects**

The District has a numerous capital improvement projects that would move forward, if the referendum were approved. Among our priority projects:

### **Trail Connectivity**

Trail enhancements are always a goal for the District. Preserve connectivity for trails also doubles as greenways/habitat connections, so wildlife populations can expand, rather than become isolated.

### **Installation of new or updated boat/canoe/kayak launches**

Access to the Fox River for boating, canoeing and fishing ranks high amongst Kane County residents. We would install new or improved boat/canoe launches to improve recreational opportunities at numerous preserves along the river.

### **Jon J. Duerr Forest Preserve**

Parking and drive improvements are much needed at this South Elgin preserve. In addition to redesign of the boat/canoe/kayak launch, we'd realign amenities at the preserve, to make it more user-friendly, improve accessibility, and allow for increased recreation.

### **Oakhurst Forest Preserve**

This Aurora preserve would undergo a complete design overhaul, including a realigned drive and parking areas, limestone trail resurfacing around Lake Patterson, an updated boat/canoe launch, new fishing docks and trails.

### **Voyageur Landing Forest Preserve**

The boat launch would be improved at this long and linear preserve along the Fox River. Lagoon dredging is needed to improve water quality, fishing and recreational opportunities. A new picnic shelter would also be added toward the front of this Elgin preserve.



### **Recreate on more than 211 miles of trail**

*The District has 90 miles of regional trails including the Fox River Trail, the Illinois Prairie Path, and the Virgil Gilman Trail. When combined with interior preserve paved, mowed and limestone screenings trails, we offer more than 211 miles for all to enjoy. Creating trail connections will continue to be a priority.*



## What is the District's track record?

Kane County voters have been overwhelmingly in favor of open space referenda in support of the Forest Preserve District — often by a 2 to 1 margin:

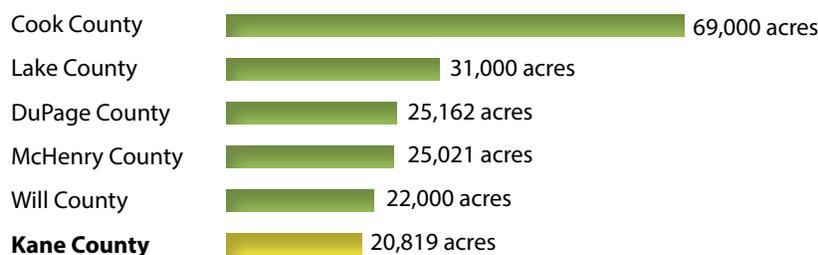
**1999** A \$70 million referendum passed with 66.5% voter approval. Money was leveraged with an additional \$36 million in non-referendum bonds, \$4.5 million in grants, and \$14.5 million in interest earnings. In total, \$125,000,000 were invested and 5,650 acres were acquired. **Total District holdings grew to 13,492 acres.**

**2005** A \$75 million referendum passed with 66% voter approval. The money was leveraged with an additional \$9.3 million in non-referendum bonds, \$11.5 million in grants/intergovernmental funds, and \$2.1 million in interest earnings. In total, \$97,975,000 were invested; 3,132 acres were acquired; and \$4,066,300 were invested in capital improvements. **Total District holdings grew to 16,624 acres.**

**2007** An \$85 million referendum passed with 64% voter approval. The money was leveraged with an additional \$9,659,900 in grants/intergovernmental funds and \$2,475,000 in interest earnings. In total, \$97,134,900 were invested; 1,500 acres were acquired along with 506 donated acres; and \$11,130,250 were invested in capital improvements. **Total District holdings grew to 18,752 acres with 92 preserves.**

**2011** A \$30 million referendum passed with 54% voter approval. This money was leveraged with an additional \$8.8 million in grants. We opened 7 new preserves, expanded 14 existing preserves, and added 1,955 acres. In total, \$36,095,491 were invested, including \$4,556,335 for capital improvements. **Total District holdings grew to 20,819 acres and 98 preserves.**

## How does Kane County's forest preserve acreage compare to neighboring counties?



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## Critical natural area enhancements

With referendum approval, the following natural resources improvements would be able to move forward:

### Dick Young habitat revitalization

Nelson Lake Marsh within Dick Young Forest Preserve in Batavia has long been a birding hot spot. Marshland birds could be spotted moving around the marsh's edge. The charismatic **American White Pelicans** used to frequently stopover in spring. Flocks of **nearly every member of the waterfowl family** that migrates along the Mississippi flyway could be spotted. However, changing hydrologic conditions have negatively affected this important habitat. The District would conduct a hydrologic study, install a variable water-control structure to maintain hemi-marsh (half water/half vegetation) conditions, and employ stronger wetland-weed control, to retain all of the diverse life found here.



### Increase waterfowl habitat

*The wood duck relies on forested wetland conditions, such as what's found at Helm Woods Forest Preserve. Restoration at both Helm Woods and Dick Young Forest Preserve would improve waterfowl habitat.*

### Helm Woods flatwoods and migratory bird habitat restoration

Kane County's only known **Swamp White Oak/Swamp Sedge northern flatwoods community**, at Helm Woods Forest Preserve in Barrington, is in need of restoration. It's home to **several species of rare plants** and more than 50 species of birds including: **Veery, Wood Duck, Orchard Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Yellow-Rumped Warbler, Yellow-Throated Vireo and Rose-Breasted Grosbeak.**

### New wetland habitat at Pingree Grove

Pingree Grove Forest

Preserve contains an 85-acre marsh that is potential habitat for **several state-listed threatened species** including the **Yellow-Headed Blackbird**. The marsh is currently crowded by cattails and non-native plants, without any significant patches of open water.



### Habitat expansion, connection at Freeman Kame

Freeman Kame Forest Preserve contains a mixture of wooded kames, prairies and numerous wetlands, diverse plant communities, and an exceptional diversity of animal species. We would reduce or eliminate invasive species threatening a unique wetland area containing **rare and state-listed plant species**. We would also create 70 new acres of prairie habitat at this Gilberts preserve.



### Create prairie habitat

*Seventy new acres of prairie habitat that would benefit nesting **turtles, grassland birds, waterfowl, pollinating insects** and other grassland-dependent species, such as the **Smooth Green Snake**.*



## Wetlands

Kane County Forest Preserve wetlands are home to the federally threatened Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid, the endangered Blanding's Turtle, and the Black-Crowned Knight Heron. In Illinois, over 60% of the vertebrates and 18% of the plants listed as threatened or endangered depend on wetlands.

## How much would this cost taxpayers?

Because of savings from sound financial management, bond payoffs and refinancings, the Forest Preserve District has a unique **opportunity to add acreage, make preserve improvements, and still provide a tax decrease** to Kane County residents.

### Planned tax decrease:

Over the next two years, the owner of a \$250,000 home is scheduled to receive a **tax reduction of \$104** from the Forest Preserve District.

### Referendum impact:

If the referendum passes, over the next two years, the owner of a \$250,000 home would receive a **tax reduction of \$82** from the Forest Preserve District. The referendum investment is \$22 per year or \$1.83 per month. (See the below chart.) Plus, the District would be able to invest in 2,000 - 2,500 additional acres and make key preserve improvements. After 20 years, the investment would be paid off.

### Projected Annual Cost Per Household

\$200,000 home	\$250,000 home	\$300,000 home
\$17 per year	\$22 per year	\$26 per year
\$1.42 per month	\$1.83 per month	\$2.17 per month

## How much does the Forest Preserve District receive from property taxes?

The below chart shows an average breakdown of property taxes in Kane County for the year 2015, collected in 2016.

