



FOREST PRESERVE FOUNDATION
ANNUAL REPORT
2016

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OUR MISSION:

To engage in protecting and restoring the treasured natural habitats of the Forest Preserves of Cook County and to enhance the outdoor experiences of all communities.

We will do this by encouraging and administering private gifts to further the Forest Preserves' mission and goals.



Dear Friends,

It has been a productive year for the Foundation. We set to work implementing our first strategic plan, and are excited to share with you the progress we have made in each of our four goal areas:

Identity and Brand: Our goal is to strengthen identity and increase brand visibility. We made progress on this goal with the help of a generous gift from Leo Burnett. We now have an updated logo and new messaging that we're excited to unveil this holiday season. We also increased our visibility in the press with commentaries that were published in the Chicago Tribune and Crain's Chicago Business.

People and Programs: Our goal is to increase access to the Preserves. This will expand the diversity of visitors to the Preserves and deepen their commitment to the Preserves' health. Toward this goal, we made \$250,000 in grants in 2016. While this amount is comparable to the last year's giving, we were able to allocate a greater proportion of our total grants to the Forest Preserve District. For instance, in 2014 we made several grants, totaling \$80,000, to community-based organizations that participated in Conservation Corps programming in the Preserves. In contrast, this year we granted \$50,000 to one community-based partner, the Student Conservation Association, for the express purpose of supporting the Conservation Corps. We believe that this grant aligns more closely with the directives of our strategic plan.

Resources and Relationships: We are diversifying our funding and expanding community and donor relationships. This year, we engaged more families and residents, which led to an increase in memorial gifts. We continued working with companies that encourage their employees to volunteer in the Preserves, and we also welcomed new corporate donors, including BP; Recreational Equipment, Inc.; Waste Management, Inc., and Allstate Corp. We strengthened relationships with our returning corporate sponsors at our 5th annual Conservation Cup golf outing, which met its fundraising goal of \$175,000. This is 75 percent more than the Cup raised in its inaugural year.

Leadership and Leverage: We are expanding and enhancing our board of directors. After we thanked Stuart (Stu) Cohn for his gracious service as chair, he assumed the role of board secretary. We welcomed Tom Livingston as our new chair. Under his leadership, we began implementing our first strategic plan. We also welcomed two new board members: John Atkinson of Willis Group Holdings and Leslie Fenton of PricewaterhouseCoopers. Our bylaws also were updated to formally include on the Board the General Superintendent of the Forest Preserves, which will ensure that our work is consistently aligned with the priorities of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

We are energized by the successes of this amazing year of growth and opportunity, and look forward to carrying this momentum into 2017.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Livingston".

Tom Livingston
Chair, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shelley A. Davis".

Shelley A. Davis
President and Executive Director



Conservation Corps crew members put logs in place for a check dam to control water runoff in the Ted Stone Forest Preserve.

OUR STORY

The Forest Preserve Foundation, founded in 2006, had its genesis in the belief that tax dollars would need to be supplemented in order to realize the visionary goals of the Forest Preserves of Cook County.

In 2012, the Foundation actively started raising private funds, hosting the first Conservation Cup, its annual golf benefit. That year the Foundation granted \$3,500 to the Forest Preserves.

Because the Foundation's mission so clearly resonated with local businesses and community leaders, it has been able to continually increase its grant making with their support. In 2015, the Foundation awarded nearly \$250,000 to support opportunities that allow families and children from a diversity of backgrounds to enjoy the forest preserves. Foundation grants underwrite youth conservation leadership programs, camping courses, gear rental programs and capital improvements that welcome and engage visitors to the preserves.

The Foundation looks back on another strong year of grantmaking in 2016, with total lifetime grants in excess of \$685,000.

This year the Foundation began implementation of its first strategic plan, designed to set it on a strong and steady course and well positioned to meet its primary goal: increasing access for all to the Cook County Forest Preserves.



Camperships allow youngsters to experience overnight camping trips and other close-to-nature activities offered in the forest preserves.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Picture first-time camper Myla lighting up at the sight of a peppered moth. Or imagine her eyes bright with wonder and delight as she takes an evening hike through the woods near Camp Sullivan. It is in moments like these that nature comes alive — and the Forest Preserve Foundation’s mission is reaffirmed.

The Foundation funds and supports programs designed for youth and families to connect with nature and become empowered through new experiences, introduction to skills and a lasting commitment to the health of the Preserves. These programs educate participants in an outdoor classroom like no other. Participants gain knowledge and skills that will inspire and motivate them to make sound choices that will enhance the environment for years to come.

CAMPERSHIPS

On a moonlit night in late June, Damara Saddler and her four kids camped under the stars at Camp Sullivan. It was their first overnight, outdoor camping experience. Saddler said she wanted “to see how it is to sleep outdoors.” Her two young daughters, especially, were all too happy to try a night in a tent.

Wild Indigo Nature Explorations, a group that organizes free outdoor field trips and activities in southeast Cook County, facilitated the family’s introduction to camping. Wild Indigo’s outreach fellows run the overnight camping excursions.



Exploring nature up close at Camp Sullivan in Oak Forest.

The fellows must first participate in the Forest Preserves' Camping Leadership Immersion Course (CLIC), which certifies and trains them to lead the campouts. The Forest Preserve Foundation provides financial support for CLIC.

This year the Foundation granted \$25,000 to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County for family camperships, or scholarships for camping. The support ensures that no family is prevented from experiencing camping because of financial challenges. The program provides reduced rates, camp gear rental, meals, and guided outdoor activities.

"I HAVE ALSO LEARNED TREE, PLANT, AND ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION, WHICH GIVES ME THE KNOWLEDGE TO CONTINUE ADVOCATING FOR NATURE,"

- LUIGI

CONSERVATION CORPS

The Foundation continued its support of the Student Conservation Association and the Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps Program with grants totaling \$100,000 grant this year. The program runs in partnership with the Forest Preserves of Cook County, Friends of the Forest Preserves and the Student Conservation Association.

During the six-week hands-on program, participating teens receive extensive and specialized conservation training from highly skilled field leaders before they are assigned to work on habitat restoration projects in the Preserves. They learn how to safely handle forestry tools, the proper and safe clothes to wear, and how to identify native plants. Their work mulching trails, removing invasive buckthorns and building small dams to control water runoff has a huge impact on the health of the Preserves.

"This was my second year with the program, and it has really helped me to stay open minded about jobs in the environmental and



Conservation Corps members listen to instructions from a crew leader.

conservation work fields,” said Luigi, a high school junior. “Since I’ve joined the program, I’ve learned to work with different types of people and have gained many qualities that a leader exemplifies through team building exercises.”

This year’s overall program supported 70 high school and college students while providing employment experience, science education and an enriching summer. The Foundation’s grant underwrote the expenses of 10 crew members and two leaders assigned to the Ted Stone Preserve.

2016 EVENTS

Foundation events bring together enthusiastic supporters and community leaders for a great cause and a fun time.

The 2016 Conservation Cup Host Committee, board members and Cook County Forest Preserves General Superintendent Arnold Randall (fifth from left).



CONSERVATION CUP

The Forest Preserve Foundation held its 5th Annual Conservation Cup Golf Outing on Sept. 15 at the George W. Dunne National Course in Oak Forest. More than 170 golfers and guests enjoyed a beautiful day on the greens, all while helping to raise \$175,000 in support of the Foundation's mission and programs. Many of Chicago's major corporations help underwrite the event through a variety of sponsorship levels. This year's Executive Sponsor was BMO Harris Bank. CSX and J.P. Morgan were

Title Sponsors, and BP the Tent Sponsor.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Arnold Randall, general superintendent of the Forest Preserves of Cook

"I LIKE THE MISSION AND I LIKE THE FOUNDATION'S IDEA OF PROVIDING ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY."

—OSCAR JOHNSON, CONSERVATION CUP HOST COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR,
BMO HARRIS EXECUTIVE

County, joined golfers for pre-tournament festivities and photos. After a fun day of play, golfers and Foundation supporters gathered under a large tent for the reception, followed by a short program, prize presentations and a live auction and raffle.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION



Members of the Young Professionals Association and their guests at a spring fundraising and networking event in the forest preserves that included kayaking and a nature hike.

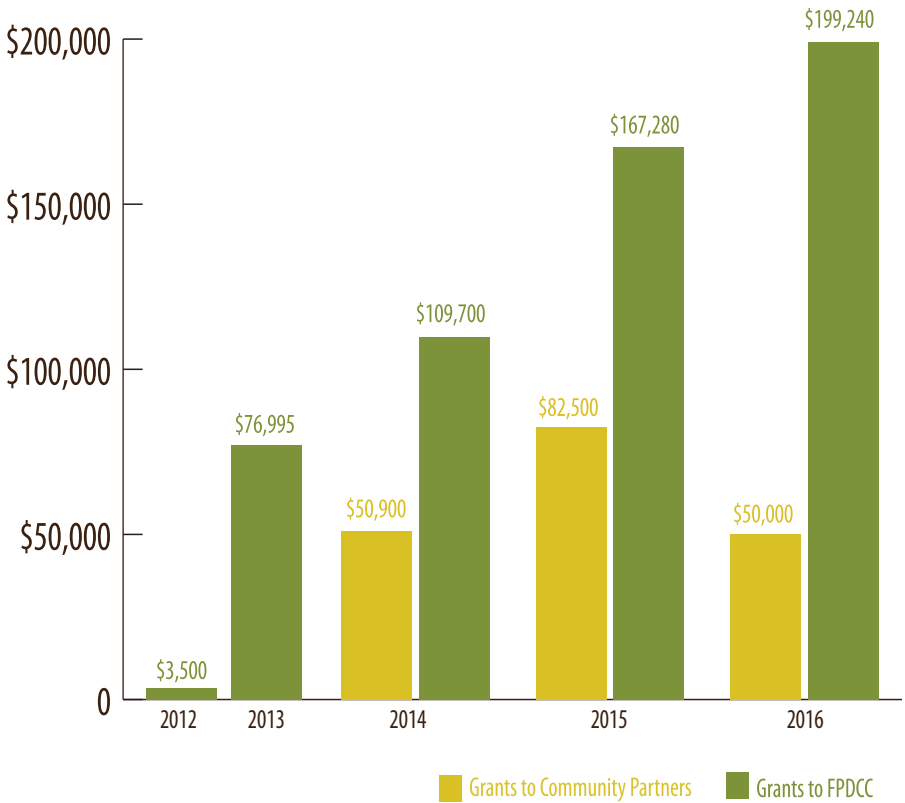
In early June, the Foundation’s Young Professionals Association hosted an afternoon of kayaking and canoeing on the Little Calumet River in Kickapoo Woods. Before journeying on the river, members and their guests went on a nature walk to explore the surrounding woodlands.

Employees and volunteers from Openlands, Friends of the Chicago River and Illinois Paddling Council offered instruction and shared their knowledge of the region’s waterways. The event also raised funds for the Foundation.

GRANTS

The Forest Preserve Foundation granted \$249,240 in 2016. Since 2012, the Foundation has granted over \$712,240. The Foundation's financial audit information is accessible at www.forestpreservefoundation.org/financial-information.html.

FOREST PRESERVE FOUNDATION GRANT AWARD HISTORY



FOREST PRESERVE FOUNDATION 2016 GRANTS AWARDED

Program	Recipient	Purpose	Amount
Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps	Student Conservation Association	To continue the conservation corps high school program in the southeast Cal-Sag region of the preserves. This grant underwrites the costs of an additional summer crew including 10 members and 2 leaders.	\$50,000
Forest Preserve Leadership Corps: A Conservation Corps Program	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To engage successful graduates of other conservation corps internships who wish to advance and deepen their conservation and leadership skills. Conservation work includes managing invasive species, collecting and dispersing native seed, and assisting with prescribed fires.	\$50,000
Developing Nature Play Elements at Dan Ryan Woods	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To add recreation and environmental education features to this preserve on Chicago's south side. They will include an outdoor nature classroom, a treehouse/nature viewing platform, and a play area with artistic elements.	\$48,641
Youth Public Art Program	Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Conservation and Experiential Programming	To support a public art project that engages youth in three preserve sites in the Oak Park-River Forest area (Cummings Square, Thatcher Woods, and Trailside Museum).	\$40,000
Bird the Preserves	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To implement the second phase of a program that introduces people to birding in the preserves. The initiative connects diverse communities through expanded birding programs.	\$25,000
Family Campout and Camperships	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To ensure that no family is prevented from experiencing camping due to financial challenges. The program provides reduced rates, camp gear rental, meals, and guided outdoor activities.	\$ 25,000 (Second installment of 2015 grant)
Palos Trail System Signage Grant	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To install signs along the Palos trail system to better orient trail users within the District's single largest preserve.	\$ 18,000

Program	Recipient	Purpose	Amount
Memorial Tree and Bench Dedication	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To create a special place for donors to celebrate a loved one or an important event.	\$4,692
Preserving Shoe Factory Farm	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To maintain the ecological integrity of this preserve by removing trees that threaten native prairie plants and replanting native seeds.	\$4,500
Restoration of Paw Paw Woods in Palos Reserves	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To restore 14 acres in Paw Paw Woods to ecological health by removing invasive brush and carrying out prescribed burns.	\$4,500
Volunteer Recognition Program	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To honor the important contributions of the 4,500 registered Forest Preserve volunteers. The program gives volunteers meaningful rewards every time they donate 100 hours of service.	\$1,859
Documentary Screening	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To screen the documentary Chicago's True Nature: The Forest Preserves of Cook County.	\$ 1,000
I Love My Preserves	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To direct donations towards restoration, education, trail maintenance, and volunteer work within a donor-designated preserve or nature center.	\$ 626
Forest Preserves Camp Gear Library	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To provide equipment and training for youth groups and families who do not have the experience or resources to try camping on their own.	\$450
Forest Preserve Experience	Forest Preserve District of Cook County	To analyze survey data from the program's participants. The initiative engaged high school youth from low-income families in environmental education and job training over four weeks in the summer.	In-kind support: data compilation and analysis

2016 DONORS

The Foundation relies on support from businesses and individuals who are committed to maintaining the health of the preserves and keeping them accessible to all.



Board members Eleanor Grumman and Tom Livingston (chair).

Connecting to the mission

CSX Transportation is the Foundation’s largest supporter and has given generously since the Foundation’s beginning. The Foundation is proud to have CSX as a forward-thinking ally in keeping the Preserves healthy, accessible and widely enjoyed.

Foundation Board Chair Tom Livingston, who is Midwest vice president of government and public affairs for CSX, recognized a common connection between both organizations. “Through our corporate giving philosophy, we’re looking for educational and environmental opportunities in Chicago,” Tom says. “Lo and behold, we found one organization that really spoke to us in terms of a mission. And it was all in the same organization—both the opportunity to provide access to the Forest Preserves and to create something that is sustainable.”

A leading transportation supplier with a network that spans 23 states, CSX operates a major rail yard and intermodal terminal in Chicago.

Sustaining a legacy

Evanston native Eleanor Grumman joined the board three years ago. Her affinity for the Preserves runs deep, as she has long family ties to them. Her grandfather, the architect and planner Dwight Perkins, was influential in establishing the Cook County Forest Preserve system.

Eleanor, whose professional background includes finance and banking, is an enthusiastic supporter of the Conservation Cup and the forest preserves. She sees a “renewed appreciation for nature” and a growing interest in the environment. “It’s so great in a large metropolitan area to have access to such outdoor space and access to nature paths, bike paths, says Eleanor, who enjoys biking through the preserves with her family. “I really believe in supporting the forest preserves.”

When she looks back at the Foundation’s 2016 accomplishments, she says, “It’s been a good year.”

THANK YOU

Thank you to our generous donors. This list reflects gifts given or pledged from Jan. 1 through Nov. 1, 2016.

\$50,000+

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In Honor of

Mr. William Dale Andrews Jr.
Mr. Jack Lawlor
Mr. Ron and Ms. Mary Ellyn Simmons
Mr. George Van Slyke

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Forest Preserve Foundation leadership would like to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their time, talent and thoughtfulness.

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Volunteers with Friends of the Chicago River assist with equipment during a Young Professional Association's paddling trip on the Little Calumet River.





NATURE DOES THE INVITING.
WE JUST BRING THE GUESTS.



69 W. Washington • Suite 2040, Chicago, IL 60602

www.forestpreservefoundation.org