



**Forest Preserve  
Foundation**

**2020  
Annual  
Report**

## FOREST PRESERVE FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Attorney  
Law Offices of Stuart A. Cohn

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Program Director  
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Forest Preserves of Cook County

**Theresa Salus**

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REI Co-op

**Dr. Stuart Strahl**

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**LeeAnn Tomas-Foster**

Chicago City Executive  
Arcadis

**Ewa Weir**

Senior Vice President, Jones Lang LaSalle

**Claire M. Williams**

Executive Vice President  
KDM Engineering, PLLC

## FOREST PRESERVE FOUNDATION STAFF

**Shelley A. Davis**

President & Executive Director  
(January – September 2020)

**Laura Perlow**

Interim Executive Director  
(October – December 2020)

**Cassandra West**

Communications manager

**Samuel Davis**

Development Associate

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



# 2020 in review

This was a year of challenges and opportunities for the Forest Preserve Foundation as it adjusted operations and fundraising expectations in the face of the global coronavirus pandemic.

Overall, the Foundation stayed focused on its mission, funding programs in its core areas, engaging the public through its donor outreach, annual symposium, blog posts, newsletters and social media platforms.

Highlights included a \$100,000 grant from the Central Indiana Community Foundation that allowed the Foundation to support increased wages for 2020 Forest Preserve Experience participants.

Our third annual symposium, moved from spring to fall and held virtually, drew more than 300 guests from around the country in a double panel discussion "Racial Equity and Access to Nature." The symposium established the Foundation as a leader in fostering awareness on the topic. Harold M. and Adeline S. Morrison Family Foundation and Walder Foundation provided generous financial support.

This year also saw changes in the Foundation's top leadership, as its first and only president, Shelley Davis, departed for a new executive opportunity. Stu Cohn, after two non-consecutive terms as board chair, also completed his tenure. The search for a new executive director is underway. In 2021, board member Jim Beck will become the new board chair.



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps Program crew members at Sand Ridge Nature Center.

The Forest Preserve Foundation provides financial support to two youth conservation programs: Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps and the Forest Preserve Experience, paid summer internships for high school age youth who reside in Cook County.

Corps engages participants in hands-on conservation projects such as invasive species removal, trail building, gardening, and nature play construction.

Crews were assigned this year to five nature sites through the Preserves system. Environmental education and job readiness training are also a key component of the Corps program.

Because of the pandemic, the Forest Preserve Experience (FPE) program transitioned from conservation restoration in the Forest Preserves of Cook County to conservation education virtually in the participants' own home and neighborhood.

The five-week FPE is managed by Friends of the Forest Preserves in partnership with the Forest Preserves of Cook County, the Housing Authority of Cook County and the Forest Preserve Foundation. This year had 96 youth and 23 adult leaders.

Work activities included 4,415 hours of facilitated environmental education and 1,300 hours of job readiness training. To eliminate any barriers to participation, iPads were provided to youth who did not have a computer or internet access.

A post-program survey reported that 40 percent of youth have never been to a forest preserve before their participation.



A participant in the Forest Preserve Experience program.

## ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

The Forest Preserve Foundation had a tremendous response to its third annual symposium on Oct. 22. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the symposium took place via Zoom.

More than 300 people from around the country joined the 90-minute program, titled "Racial Equity and Access to Nature." The program featured two panel discussions with six environmental leaders whose work and passions center on connecting people to nature, with a focus on equity and inclusion.

In her introduction, Laura Perlow, the Foundation's interim executive director, said that this year's symposium directly addresses the Foundation's mission: to "enhance the outdoor experiences for all communities."

Foundation board members, Teresa Salus a manager for REI, and Forest Preserves General Superintendent Arnold Randall also participated in the program.



*"Access to nature is a human right. It's about having a sense of connection to the natural world on which all of our lives depend... and it really should be that great equalizer. Everyone should have equitable access to the trees, to parks and green spaces."*

**–Panelist Dr. Na'Taki Osborne Jelks**, assistant professor of environmental and health sciences at Spelman College

### SYMPOSIUM FEEDBACK

*"Conservation has a long way to go in this area, but I am happy to hear of the progress in the Forest Preserves."*

– Lenore

*"This was a great symposium."*

– Gregory

*"Thank you for this important discussion."*

– Carolyn



## EVENTS

Foundation events bring together supporters and community leaders to spread awareness about the Preserves' importance to the region.



Forest Preserves of Cook County General Superintendent Arnold Randall, left, and Board President Toni Preckwinkle, second from left, join Foundation board members and supporters on the course at the 2020 Conservation Cup.

## 9th annual Conservation Cup

The Forest Preserve Foundation hosted its ninth annual Conservation Cup golf outing on September 30 with more than 100 golfers on the course at George Dunne National. This year's event raised nearly \$140,000 through sponsorships and donations.

Conservation Cup was the Foundation's largest (and only) fundraising event this year because of the coronavirus pandemic, and strong COVID-19 safety protocols were in place to ensure everyone's safety. Participants still enjoyed the helicopter ball drop, cocktails and a course-side dinner.

Funds raised during the Cup support next-generation conservation advocates and climate change mitigation efforts in the Forest Preserves of Cook County.



## GRANTS

In 2020, the Foundation granted \$255,000 to projects that benefit the Forest Preserves of Cook County. These investments help ensure the health and vitality of these treasured public lands for everyone.



Since the Foundation began in 2006, it has awarded **\$2.5 million** to core programs: restoring native ecology, fostering the next generation of environmental leaders, improving family programming and tribute gifts.

### 2020 Grant Awards

**Friends of the Forest Preserves - Forest Preserve Experience 2020 (\$90,000 via Central Indiana Community Foundation):** Supported an introductory five-week paid summer jobs program for 97 youth served by the Housing Authority of Cook County.

**Student Conservation Association - Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps (\$50,000):** Supported a six-week paid summer jobs program for 48 youth conservationists from Chicago and suburban Cook County.

**Forest Preserves of Cook County - Forest Preserve Experience 2021 (\$37,500):** Supported an introductory five-week paid summer jobs program for a minimum of 72 youth served by the Housing Authority of Cook County.

**Forest Preserves of Cook County - Cranberry Slough Restoration Phase IV (\$37,500):** To restore 11 acres of native oak woodland habitat to ecological health.

**Forest Preserves of Cook County - Spring Creek Valley Headwater Restoration (\$13,500 via Oberweiller Foundation):** To restore six acres of native wetland

habitat to ecological health.

**Forest Preserves of Cook County - Palos Trail System Restoration (\$12,330 via REI Co-op):** To restore five acres of land beside a mountain bike trail to full health, conserving native species and preventing soil erosion along an adjacent stream.

**Free Spirit Media (\$6,000):** For production of the 2020 Forest Preserve Foundation promotional video. Free Spirit Media is a social enterprise that trains and employ youth creators and filmmakers.

**Memorial and Tribute Giving Program (\$7,778)**

The Foundation's financial audit information is accessible on the website:  
**[forestpreservefoundation.org](https://forestpreservefoundation.org).**



## FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP

In 2020, the Foundation saw leadership transitions, as President Shelley Davis stepped down after seven years at the helm, and Stu Cohn completed his second term as board chair.

### **Shelley Davis**, President

When Shelley came on board in 2012, the Foundation's grants to the Forest Preserves were \$3,500. By the time she stepped down in October 2020, the Foundation's lifetime grants exceeded \$2.5 million.

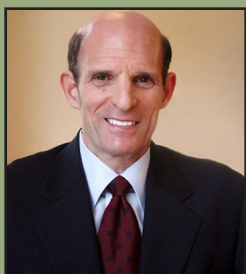
The Foundation was for all practical purposes in its infancy when Shelley joined. There was no manual for the job. She wrote the manual and then some, by greatly expanding the Board, as well as the brand and the Foundation's budget, and thereby the ability of the Foundation to fulfill on its mission.

Shelley also initiated a series of successful informal "friendraiser" gatherings and donor appreciation events, as well as the annual fall symposium. She will be long remembered for her large and lasting contribution to the Foundation and the causes it supports.



### **Stu Cohn**, Board chair

Stu's involvement with the Foundation began in 2006, when he was asked to form a non-profit public charity to support the mission of the Forest Preserves of Cook County. For a period of time, he served as counsel to the Board and eventually joined the Board and later became Board Chair, a role he held for two non-consecutive terms. In 2021, board member Jim Beck will succeed him as board chair. Stu works as an attorney and heads the Law Offices of Stuart A. Cohn.



### **Teresa Salus**, Board member

Theresa is Regional Experience Manager for REI Co-op, responsible for day programs, events, and community investment in the Upper Midwest. She joined the Foundation's board in November 2019. "Supporting the mission of the Forest Preserve Foundation, specifically through board service, allows me to share expertise and connect resources in a more intentional way," she says.



### **LeeAnn Tomas-Foster**, Board member

LeeAnn is the city executive for Chicago at Arcadis, a global design and consultancy firm, where she leads Arcadis' Chicago Big Urban Client Program. She has a background in environmental program management.



LeeAnn served as co-chair of this year's Conservation Cup Host Committee.



## FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS

Donations given or pledged from Nov. 1, 2019 to Nov. 15, 2020.

### **\$100,000+**

Central Indiana  
Community Foundation  
Forest Preserve District  
of Cook County

### **\$10,000-\$99,999**

CSX  
Enbridge  
Indigo Golf Partners  
Tom Lanctot  
The Oberweiler  
Foundation  
REI Co-op

### **\$5,000-\$9,999**

Barnes & Thornburg  
Nationwide  
People's Gas and  
Delivery  
Stuart Strahl  
The Walder Foundation

### **\$2,500-\$4,999**

Aetna  
Arcadis  
Ardmore Roderick  
Bank of America  
James Beck  
Brown & Brown  
Insurance  
Burling Builders  
Cardno  
Christopher B. Burke  
Engineering  
d'Escoto  
DeVore Radunsky Miller  
Berger  
Environmental Design  
International  
F.H. Paschen, S.N. Nielsen

The Gaylord & Dorothy  
Donnelley Foundation  
Great Lakes Advisors  
Eleanor Grumman  
The Harold M. and  
Adeline S. Morrison  
Family Foundation  
JPMorgan Chase  
The Kathleen Walsh  
Husman Foundation  
Lamar Johnson  
Collaborative  
Levin Schreder Carey  
Grace Newton  
Nixon Peabody  
Pizzo & Associates  
The Honorable Toni  
Preckwinkle  
Albert Pritchett  
R.M. Chin  
SB Friedman  
Samuel A. Ramirez  
& Co./Ramirez Asset  
Management  
Smith Group  
The Honorable Lawrence  
Suffredin  
Tallgrass Restoration

### **\$1,000-\$2,499**

Christy Webber  
Landscaping  
Stuart Cohn  
Columbia Capital  
Management  
The Honorable John P.  
Daley  
Sarah Duncan  
Generation Growth  
Capital  
IJG Golf

KDM Engineering  
Howard Learner  
Tom Livingston  
Clark McCain  
Lois Morrison  
Reignwater  
Mary Jo Schuler  
Victor Simpkins  
SP Murphy Inc.  
Union Pacific Railroad Co.  
Daryl Wilson

### **\$100-\$999**

Lisa Acker  
Theodora Anastaplo  
Arlington Heights  
Garden Club  
Peter Ascoli  
Jennifer Baader  
David Brint  
Civiltech  
Phyllis Cohn  
Shelley A. Davis  
Margaret Fahrenbach  
Mark Finger  
Janet Foutty  
Deborah Franczek  
Michelle Gage  
Garden Club of Morgan  
Park Beverly Hills  
Jeff Gray  
David Grumman  
Theresa Guen-Murray  
Michelle Halle Stern  
Steve Hughes  
Mark Ishaug  
Kim Koin  
Katy K. Krigbaum  
Stacie Kuhlman  
David Levinson  
Sarah Mayeda

## SUPPORTERS continued

Ruth McGee  
James Medd  
Chad Myers  
North Riverside Garden  
Club  
John O'Dwyer  
Candace Pantoga  
S. Neil Peck  
Arnold Randall  
Anngie Richter  
Theresa Salus  
Mary Beth Saraceno  
Carleen Schreder  
Elena Shevlyagin  
Site Design Group  
Carter Sterling  
Barbara Stoldt  
LeeAnn Tomas-Foster  
Angela Tosic  
Ewa Weir  
Cassandra West  
Wight & Co.  
Claire Williams  
Jonathan Yu

### **\$1-\$99**

Ron Adams  
Alan Anderson  
Colton Becker  
Michael Berger  
Adam Berger  
Amanda Cage  
Scott Campbell  
Melissa Chandarana  
Phil Culpepper  
Catherine Dalton  
Ross Davis  
Sam Davis  
Justin Erkfritz-Gay  
David Favaro

Richard Freebourn  
Dianne Ghaster  
Emily Graber  
Beau Greiman  
Beth Gunzel  
Laura Hruska  
Clarmarie Keenan  
Barbara Koch  
Tyler Kuligowski  
Rana Lee  
Mark Lester  
Saul Monreal  
Kara Nielsen  
Rebecca Olson  
David Parker  
Bonnie Parker  
Elizabeth Patterson  
Charles Perrecone  
Judy Pollock  
Wendy Raven  
Jordan Rowe  
Leslie Sawyer  
Jonathan Thomas  
Erik Varela  
Darlene K. White  
Jered Wieland  
Michael Witte  
Michael Young

### **Tribute Gifts**

AKA Associates  
Kathie Alexander  
Samantha & Michael  
Annunziata  
Scott Bieber  
Bernard Citron  
Mary Connaghan  
Judy Czeladnicki  
Lynn & Richard Engen  
Suzanne Farver  
Mary Pat Finucane  
Bernice Y. Firestone  
Ana Garcia-Doyle  
Kathy George  
Charles Greene  
Juliana Hellebusch  
Melissa Hornung  
Teresa Lally  
Marc S. Martinez  
Michael Mazek  
Yolanda H Montoto  
Kim Morgan  
Paul Plotnick  
Daniel T. Riley  
Cathryn Rosene  
James A. Schad  
Andrew Shapiro  
Jane Sheehan  
David Simmons  
Lawrence Stasica  
Alyce & Stephen Taxe  
Edward H. Tierney

*If we have attributed your name incorrectly, please accept our sincerest apologies  
and email [laura.perlow@forestpreservefoundation.org](mailto:laura.perlow@forestpreservefoundation.org) so that we can correct your name in our system.*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

### **Conservation Cup Committee**

Claire Williams, co-chair  
LeeAnn Tomas-Foster, co-chair  
Jim Beck  
Jason DeVore  
Rob Dmowski  
Justin Erkfritz-Gay  
Josh Geppi  
Rana Lee  
Bill Rehanek  
Larry Richey  
Anngie Richter  
Eric Rockhold  
Carleen Schreder  
Ewa Weir  
Jered Wieland  
Michael Witte

### **Forest Preserves of Cook County**

General Superintendent  
Arnold Randall  
Deputy Superintendent Eileen Figel  
Office of the General  
Superintendent  
Office of the Deputy Superintendent  
Department of Resource  
Management  
Department of Conservation and  
Experiential Programming  
Department of Permits, Concessions  
and Volunteer Resources

### **Office of the Cook County Board President**

Toni Preckwinkle, President

### **Video and Photo credits**

Free Spirit Media  
Student Conservation Association  
Cassandra West

### **Conservation Cup Event Management**

Billy Casper Golf  
Tailored Events  
Fab Photo

### **In-kind**

Brookfield Zoo  
Chicago Botanic Garden  
Hydro Flask  
International Subaru of Orland Park  
Michael Keiser  
Spikeball  
Kathy Welton



NATURE DOES THE INVITING.  
WE JUST BRING THE CREW.



At the Forest Preserve Foundation, we support  
the programs and activities that give everyone access  
to the natural treasures of Cook County.  
With your support, these efforts will make  
life better for us all.

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**[forestpreservefoundation.org](http://forestpreservefoundation.org)** 312.603.8349