

Forest Preserve Report

September 2022

By Connie Schmidt

Churchill Woods: Land donation agreement Churchill Woods – Northwest was approved.

Salt Creek Forest Preserve Commitment for Elizabeth Drive Replacement and Trail

Improvement Project: This project involves a bridge replacement which are generally expensive projects. The district financial commitment will be far less than originally anticipated because the Village of Oak Brook received a federal grant to help with the project.

License Plate Reader Cameras: A program to install license plate reader cameras was successfully implemented. For \$11,000 the district purchased equipment to gather information on license plates on vehicles in 4 popular preserves. It alerts Ranger Police if criminal offenders enter preserves. The service is solar powered too. ☺

Willowbrook Wildlife Center: Breaking ground is underway very soon. This exemplary animal care center is a standard for excellence in this field. A request for lowest responsible bidders is out for outdoor rehabilitation enclosures at Willowbrook. Much of the work being done is funded through grants and donations. A [list of grants and donations](#) for Willowbrook is available on the agenda on the August 23, 2022 meeting of the Forest Preserve website.

(Repeat)Friends of the Forest Preserve Fundraiser: Save the Date for Sept. 15 Fundraiser at St. James Farm from 5:00 – 9:00 pm. \$100/person and attendees must be 21 or over. Register at <https://dupageforestfriends.givingfuel.com/night-for-nature>.

Danada Model Farm: Structural repairs of the roof at the model Farm Barn were authorized.

West Branch Trail Project: An Easement Agreement was approved between the FPDDC and West Chicago/Winfield Wastewater Authority Providing for Easements on the West Chicago/Winfield Wastewater Authority Property. This will facilitate the trail that goes from the south of Roosevelt Rd to West DuPage Woods, north of Roosevelt also crossing the West Branch of the DuPage River.

Willowbrook Forest Preserve: A grant was awarded from Notice of State Award (NOSA) for [Open Space Land Acquisition and Development](#) for improvements at Willowbrook Forest Preserve.

Governor's Award Update on "Enhancement through Volunteerism" Award: \$1.6 Million dollars of hours was donated by the multitude of volunteers who actively worked in the forest preserve during the COVID time in "Pop Up Programs". A special program was developed where social distancing and outdoor experiences were observed. Volunteers painted fences and storage containers, removed unwanted materials, spread mulch, planted native plugs, removed debris, removed garbage, harvested native seeds, built a new prairie at St. James Farm and 8 different gardens throughout the preserves. Quality of life for preserve users, and those working were both enhanced. During Covid the use spiked from 4 million annually to 6 million! A wonderful video of "who is who" of active volunteers was shared.

Clean Energy, Resiliency and Sustainability Plan Discussion: The [Delta Institute](#) was hired to study this issue for the Preserves. Natural gas, propane, and electricity use will all be reviewed.

For resiliency they are also looking at water quality and surfaces to reduce runoff through permeable materials etc. Zero waste goals and reduction are also being investigated. The study will look at compliance of ADA and stakeholder interests as well. By December, there should be some results of this study.