

Forest Preserve Report

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By Connie Schmidt

Maple Grove Forest Preserve: An agreement has been signed with the [Downers Grove Sanitary District](#) which will help facilitate the Maple Bridge replacement project. The trail helps to connect the preserve to a suburban area, a school, and youth ball fields. The bridge is over 100 years old, and it is the foundation that is the primary problem. It was originally created to create a sanitary sewer over the river. It currently tends to create debris blockages during flooding situations. This river tributary flows into St. Joseph's Creek, one of our highest quality waterways. This discussion was to begin the permitting process for the bridge replacement alternatives.

Willowbrook Wildlife Center: Details continue to be secured for the Willowbrook Wildlife Center. Several items have gone out to bid for completing the project. A fire alarm and security monitoring system have been approved for installation. A presentation was made to share how humans will be able to view animal rehabilitation, educational programs.

Resident relocation, exhibit development, educational programs and operational changes were all discussed. A video of the [new flight enclosure area](#) with the individual housing area was shared. There is much fresh air and room to move. The animals that are currently on the nature trail such as owls, hawks, and the beloved bobcat will be moved to this new facility. Some major policies will be changing on what animals are accepted for rehabilitation and incoming animals that require long term housing will be rehomed to other facilities in the future.

Churchill Woods: A lease agreement for Churchill Woods in Glen Ellyn has been issued for two uses. Glen Ellyn will continue to use a fleet management building on the property for storage and use of village equipment. In addition, it allows Glen Ellyn to enter into an agreement with [Midwest Soaring Foundation](#) to use the [McKee House](#) as a nature and cultural arts center to teach and maintain the traditions of Native American Indians. This is a great forward step for DuPage public lands.

What's the BUZZ? Honey Bees in Agriculture and the Preserves: The food supply in IL was initiated when the honey bees were imported from Europe for their wax and honey resources. By the 1930s as agriculture practices changed, an increased need from honeybees to pollinate became essential. Now, honeybees pollinate 1/3 of the food we eat. Concentrated agriculture requires the honeybees because most native bees are solitary and can't support large operations.

At [Kline Creek Farm](#) "Wanda's Honey House" was built with the help of Dr. DuBose, a local beekeeper advocate who got the program going both financially and with his many volunteer hours and passion. It is used for education, meetings and honey processing.

To balance the care of bees with the District, Andre Ortega explained the district policy on no honey bees hives anywhere on district property outside of Kline Creek Farm. He explained that [honeybees often out compete native bees in food resources](#). [Disease transmission](#) is an additional concern from honeybees to native bees. Andre went on to offer alternatives where those who want to [increase bee populations](#) to do so at their home with planting native species and improving their home habitats.

Greene Valley Forest Preserve: An agreement with DuPage County for the sanitary sewer from the landfill in this area will be covered by an easement for the sewer to move leachate off the property. This easement and sewer line will reduce the cost for the disposal of the leachate.

Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve: In Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve there is a pedestrian bridge over Sawmill Creek in need of replacement. The bridge is in the far south end of the preserve. The previous bridge was constructed very low and frequently an ice dam occurred damaging the bridge. A temporary bridge has been in place with the commitment that a new study bridge will be constructed with more durability. The bridge will be higher and wider to conform with ADA and flooding situations.

Willowbrook Wildlife Center: The District will be applying for a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Public Museum for the Willowbrook Phase II Master Plan improvements. They can apply for up to \$750,000 for aspects of the project. Classroom and indoor exhibit space will be the focus of the grant.

Danada Forest Preserve: At Danada there is a support group called [The Friends of Danada](#) Inc for operation of the [Danada House](#) and [Danada Model Farm Complex](#) across the street on the west side of Naperville Rd. The contract agreement has been extended until April 2024 when the House site will be closed for remodeling. This has been a very successful partnership for the district and the care of these two programs at Danada.

Capital Projects Review: About 50 projects across the District are in progress currently. Labor shortages and supply chain difficulties have created some difficulty in execution of some projects. In 2022, 13 Preserves were improved with projects such as building improvements, trail extensions and trail amenities such as parking lots and flush toilets.