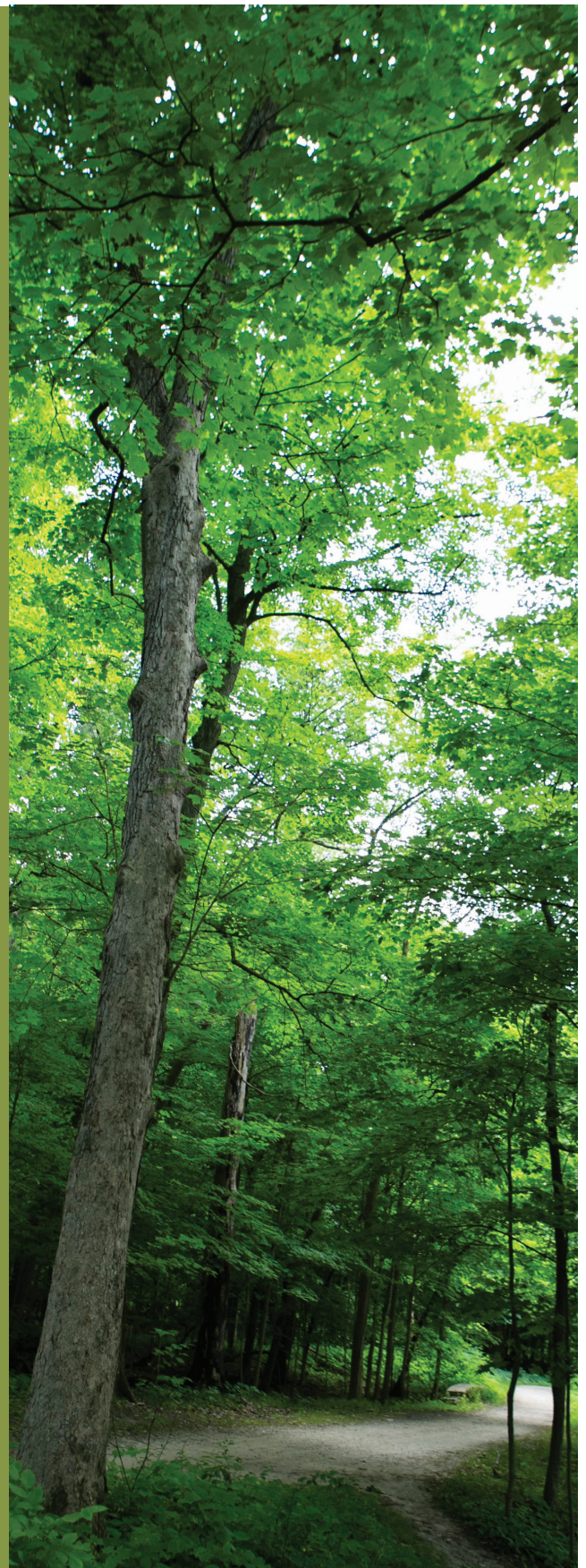


# Implementing *the* Next Century Conservation Plan

2023 PROGRESS REPORT



Approved by the Conservation and Policy Council on **August 30, 2023**

Submitted to the Forest Preserves Board of Commissioners on **October 17, 2023**



# Implementing the Next Century Conservation Plan 2023 Progress Report

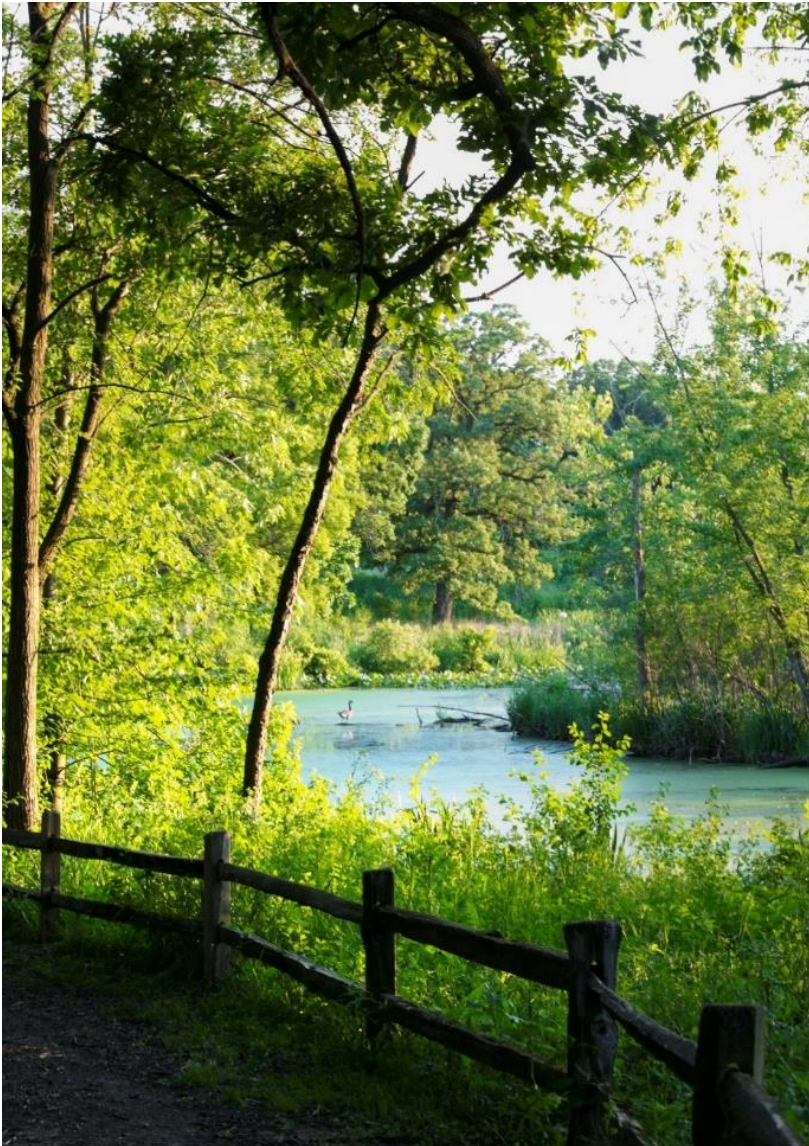
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# Background

*In 2014, President Toni Preckwinkle and the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners adopted the Next Century Conservation Plan (NCCP), an ambitious plan to restore the Forest Preserves to health and sustain them as a world-class treasure for the people of Cook County. Each year, the Council presents to the Board a report documenting progress being made towards achieving NCCP goals and highlighting any major roadblocks or challenges to success.*

*In past reports, the Council expressed deep concern about the lack of resources needed to scale up the District’s work. While a few major challenges remain, we are happy to report that the passage of the 2022 referendum has enabled the District to finally begin scaling up. Over the next few years we expect to see significant progress towards major goals.*



## Phased Implementation Strategy

### **Phase 1 (2016 to 2020): Learn, share and implement best practices**

More than 70 partners worked with the Forest Preserves to implement priority programs which could be advanced with limited new resources. As detailed in the Conservation & Policy Council’s 2020 Annual Report, the first phase of implementation represented a healthy balance of steady progress, adaptability, and risk taking. However, additional resources were needed to stabilize the Forest Preserves’ finances and fully implement the NCCP.

### **Phase 2 (2021 to 2025): Build support and secure resources**

Advocates and partners promoted a referendum to secure resources needed to achieve the Forest Preserves’ long-range goals and address its structural budget deficit. The referendum was approved by voters in November 2022. Additional phase 2 priorities include ensuring transparency regarding the investment of new funding and implementing the Council’s position papers.

### **Phase 3 (2026 to 2030): Stewardship**

Phase 3 will focus on scaling up stewardship and volunteerism throughout the preserves.

### **Phase 4 (2031 to 2035): Expansion**

Phase 4 will focus on acquiring and protecting land.

### **Phase 5 (2036 to 2040): Plan for next 25 years**

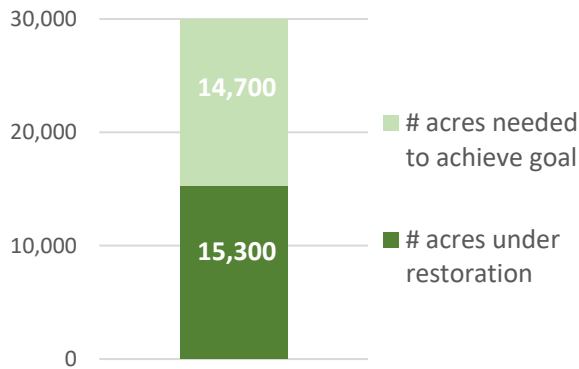
The Forest Preserves will work with partners to develop strategic priorities for the next 25 years.

# Overall Progress: Key Performance Indicators for the Next Century Conservation Plan

Section 1 of this report presents four key performance indicators (KPIs) developed to track progress towards priority goals outlined in the Next Century Conservation Plan related to acquisition, restoration, and engagement. These indicators are intentionally high level; they are designed to tell the story of progress to date (or lack of progress to date) in a concise and easy to understand way. These key performance indicators are being incorporated into an on-line performance dashboard to be launched this year.

## Goal 1. NATURE

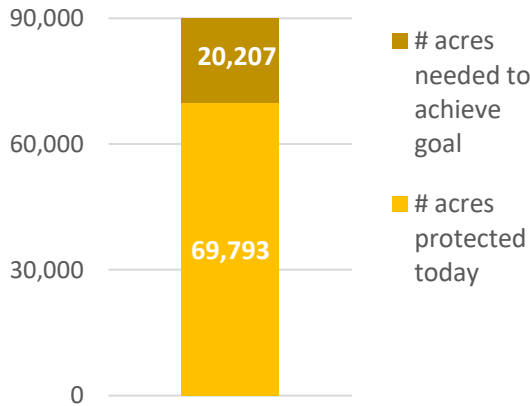
Restore 30,000 acres to ecological health.



*With sustained funding from the recent referendum, the overall goal of restoring 30,000 acres to ecological health and actively managing restored sites is on target to be achieved by 2040.*

## Goal 1. NATURE

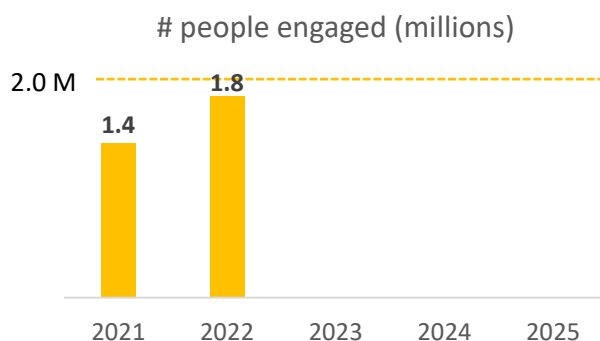
Expand the Forest Preserves to 90,000 acres.



*Land acquisition is by far the costliest NCCP goal; the estimated cost to acquire 21,000 additional acres is \$1.7 billion. **Even with the referendum funding, it will take more than 100 years to achieve this goal. District staff will aggressively pursue grants and other opportunities to acquire and protect as much of the remaining natural land as possible. Staff will also work with the Council, partners, and advocates to explore other creative methods to protect natural lands.***

## Goal 2. PEOPLE

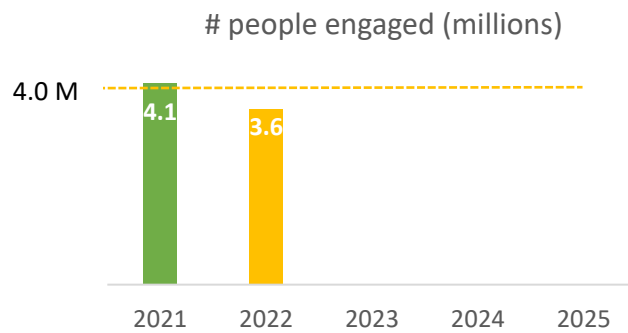
Engage 2 million per year in programs, events, and special activities at the preserves.



*Includes participants at District events and Nature Center programs; visits to pools, camps, golf courses and other special amenities; and participants in permitted picnics and events. Note: In 2021, many on-site programs and activities were canceled due to COVID.*

## Goal 2. PEOPLE

Generate 4 million engagements per year via social media, newsletters, tabling events, and visits to schools.



*Includes #website hits, Facebook impressions & engagements, Twitter impressions & engagements, Instagram followers, newsletter subscribers, and participants in off-site school programs & community meetings.*

The primary NCCP goals related to ECONOMY and LEADERSHIP are now completed. While there are no KPIs reported for these goals, additional work is on-going. Updates are presented in the following section.

## Progress towards Phase 2 Goals (2021 to 2025)

In addition to the key performance indicators, the District has also developed metrics to measure progress towards a range of priority goals as presented in this section.

### Goal 1. NATURE

#### Native landscapes will thrive for generations.

The mission of the Forest Preserves is to preserve and protect native flora, fauna, and ecosystems for current and future generations. Its nearly 70,000 acres contain some of the most unique habitats on earth, but these lands have deteriorated due to pollution and runoff, competition from invasive species and climate change.

#### Relevant Plans:

1. **Next Century Conservation Plan.** The Next Century Conservation Plan calls for 30,000 acres to be restored to health and for the preserves to expand to 90,000 acres. (For progress to date, see key performance indicators presented in Section 1.)
2. **Position Papers.** Three position papers—Land Acquisition & Development (LAAD), Nature-Compatible Recreation, and Scaling Up Volunteers (SUV)—establish strategies related to protecting and restoring nature.
3. **Sustainability and Climate Resiliency Plan.** The Sustainability Plan lays out strategies to reduce the District’s greenhouse gas emissions and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.



#### Phase 2 Goals & Progress

**Develop and follow guidelines to limit land disposition to rare and extreme instances.**

The 2020 position paper, [Acquisition and Disposition of Land](#), recommends convening a land use task force to develop guidelines to strictly limit land disposition (via conveyance or functional disposition), and to further study other unresolved land use issues.

In 2021, the Land Use Task Force was convened with representatives from the Conservation & Policy Council, Friends of the Forest Preserves, Openlands, and District staff.



2021 to 2022	2023	2024 to 2025
By 2022, a Land Use Task Force consisting of Council members, advocates, and Forest Preserves staff will complete draft guidelines.  ✓ <b>Completed.</b>	A legal team will draft revisions to the District’s code and to the state enabling act to codify the new land use policies.  <b>Pending.</b> The legal team is developing draft guidelines.	Enact changes to the code and state legislation.  <b>Pending.</b>

## Phase 2 Goals & Progress

The Land Use Task Force recommends that the District track and report total holdings over time to ensure no net loss of land. (Note: 2023 acreage shown is as of August 2023.)

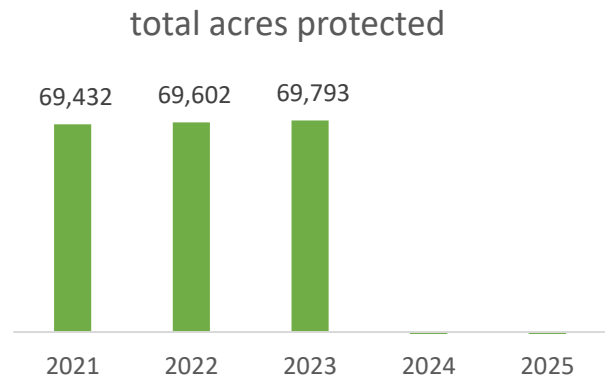
In 1929, an advisory committee recommended that the Forest Preserves maintain an 80/20 balance in its land use, with at least 80% of the land to be kept in a natural condition (including 5% for water recreation areas in rivers, lakes and marsh lands), and 20% to be available for “active play such as boating, bathing, camping, athletics and golf” (including 2% for a zoo and arboretum).

The Nature-Compatible Recreation position paper affirms the 80/20 principle, and the Land Use Task Force recommends current holdings in a natural state be documented and reported annually.

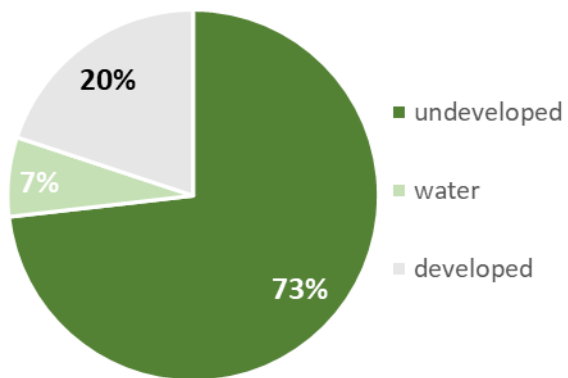
The [Scaling up Volunteers](#) position paper calls out the critical need for volunteers who play leadership roles in the preserves; progress towards recruiting volunteer stewardship leaders is presented here. Thousands of additional volunteers are needed to improve trail safety, monitor threatened species, and more. **In 2022, volunteers logged 78,925 hours—equivalent to 47 full-time employees at a value of \$2.5 million.**



### Ensure no net loss of land over time.



### Ensure 80% of holdings remain in a natural state over time.



undeveloped	50,509 acres	73%
water	4,765 acres	7%
developed	13,745 acres	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,013 acres</b>	

### Recruit 50 volunteers per year from communities throughout Cook County for leadership roles in ecological stewardship.



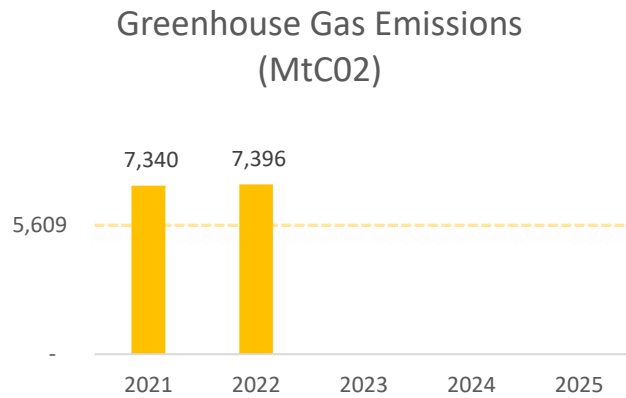
## Phase 2 Goals & Progress

The [Sustainability & Climate Resiliency Plan](#) (as amended) calls for the Forest Preserves to achieve a carbon reduction of 45% by 2030 (based upon 2016 as the baseline) and carbon neutrality by 2050. This translates to a 22.5% reduction in phase 2 which would achieve GHG emissions of 5,609 metric tons by 2025.

To achieve full carbon neutrality, the Council will continue to work with staff and partners to determine consensus on a path forward.

Energy efficiency improvements are underway, and the District is converting to a green fleet; these improvements will be phased in over time. The District is also conducting a feasibility study to develop an on-site solar field to fully meet its energy needs.

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions 4.5% per year.



Note: GHG reductions in 2021 are largely due to pool closures and less use of fuel and electricity during the pandemic.

## Goal 2. PEOPLE

Everyone in Cook County will feel welcome at the forest preserves—and will seek them out for discovery, renewal, and fun.

When the Forest Preserves were created in the early 1900s, Chicago was the fastest growing city in America. The founders' intent was to create a surrounding greenbelt, forever protected from development, where city dwellers could escape their urban environment and connect to nature.

Today, the Forest Preserves offers opportunities to bike, run, hike, walk, boat, camp, and more. Residents make an estimated 62 million visits to the preserves each year. (During the peak of the pandemic in 2020, an estimated 100 million visits occurred.) While most of these visitors are taking a walk or ride along 350+ miles of trails, hundreds of thousands are also visiting Nature Centers, enjoying a picnic, or engaging in organized programs and events convened across the preserves each year. Forest Preserves staff also travel to schools and community events to educate thousands of students and residents about and nature and the forest preserves, and the Forest Preserves' website and social media platforms generate millions of engagements annually.





**Relevant Plans:**

- 1. Next Century Conservation Plan.** The Next Century Conservation Plan calls for an expansion of programs and outreach to welcome all the people of Cook County to the forest preserves. (For progress to date, see key performance indicators presented in Section 1.)
- 2. Position Papers.** Three position papers establish strategies and guidelines to welcome everyone to the preserves—especially those who have historically been excluded. These include [Moving Towards Racial Equity](#), [Amplifying Diversity and Inclusion](#), and [Nature-Compatible Recreation in the Forest Preserves](#).

*Position papers developed by the Conservation and Policy Council explicitly acknowledge that the Forest Preserves exists within a pervasive culture of structural racism that has produced deep inequities. The papers call for the Forest Preserves to engage residents from communities that have historically been excluded, and to build a staff that is diverse and promotes racial equity.*

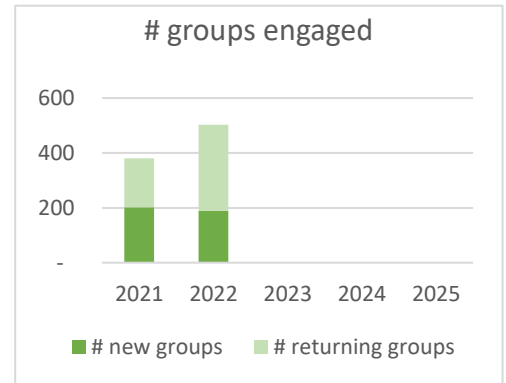
*Note: Additional information on all Forest Preserves REDI initiatives is available [here](#).*



**Phase 2 Goals & Progress**

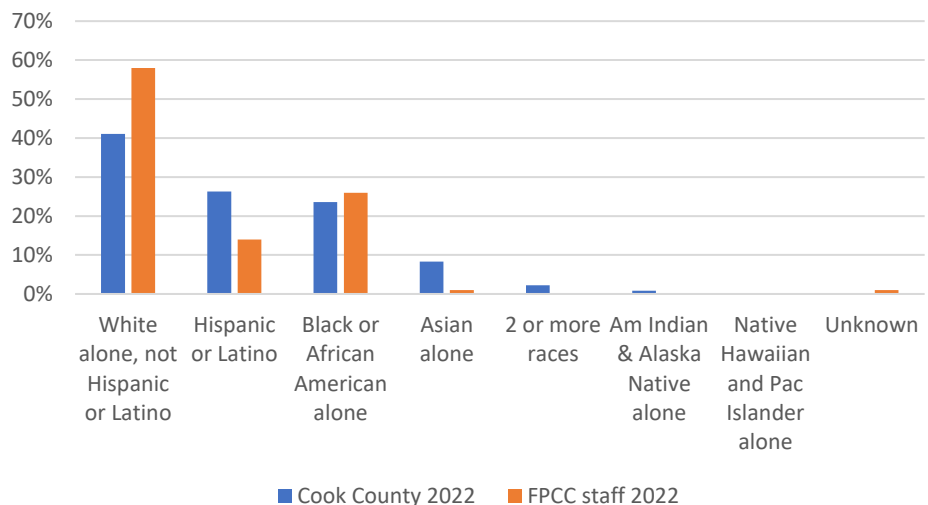
**Continue to engage more people who have been historically excluded.**

- The CEP team continues to explore strategies to engage communities, including a camping gear library, day hike leadership trainings, and tabling at community events. New tools such as the Nature Express Bus, Challenge Site Pop-Up activities, and the Partnership Program Proposals continue to evolve to connect more people to nature.
- The Mighty Acorn school program is developing not just students who have a lifelong connection to nature, but also educators who see the outdoors as an exciting classroom opportunity.
- Public programs, ambassador animals, community-based events and community partners are all tools for connecting people to nature and creating a lifelong relationship to nature and the Forest Preserves.



**Build a workforce that reflects the diversity of Cook County.**

Diversity of Forest Preserves Employees Compared to Cook County



Phase 2 Goals & Progress

The Nature-Compatible Recreation position paper recommends transforming or re-purposing “legacy uses” which are not nature-compatible.



**Complete pilot studies for golf courses, pools, and model airplane fields to re-align these sites as nature-compatible uses**

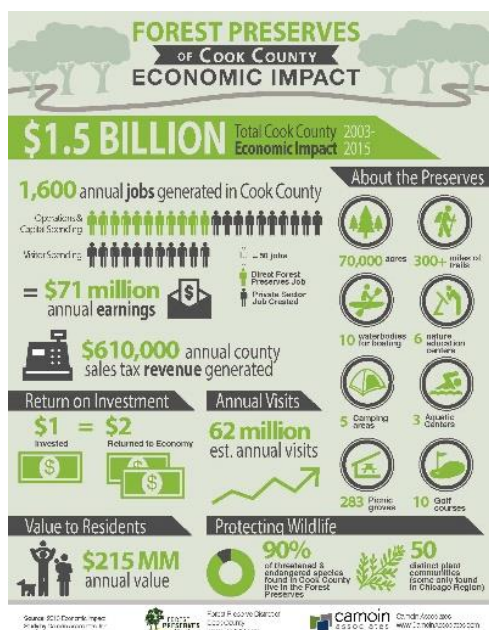
2021 to 2022	2023 to 2024
<p>Complete studies for River Oaks, Burnham, and Edgebrook golf courses.</p> <p><b>Status:</b> Concept plans are completed. There is support to convert Burnham to a natural use. Calumet City is interested in operating River Oaks.</p>	<p>Complete study and adopt long-range plans for model plane fields and pools.</p> <p><b>Status:</b> UIC study recommends closure of 4 model plane fields. Pools will be studied in 2024.</p>

## Goal 3. ECONOMY

### Communities will value the benefits of protected lands.

*With 70,000 acres of protected nature, the Forest Preserves are critical to both the economic health and the quality of life throughout Cook County. In the first phase of NCCP implementation, the Forest Preserves worked with the Brookfield Zoo and Chicago Botanic Garden to build the case for nature, worked with local economic development officials to promote nature-compatible business development, and worked with World Business Chicago to market the preserves as an iconic element of the region.*

*Key findings from an economic impact report, an ecosystems valuation study, and other studies completed in phase 1 have been incorporated into Forest Preserves presentations and educational materials.*



The priorities for goal 3 were largely completed in phase 1. (See below.) Progress reporting for the work which remains on-going is incorporated into the key performance indicators related to engagement and outreach as presented in goal 2; there are no additional performance indicators for goal 3.

#### Build the economic case for nature.

- The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) documented the \$469M annual regional benefit generated by the Forest Preserves via flood control, water recharge and purification, and carbon storage.
- Camoin Associates completed an economic impact study documenting \$1.5B economic impact to the region (2003 to 2015).
- Forest Preserves staff and partners have presented this information to more 90 village boards and civic organizations. (This work is on-going and captured in a key performance indicator for goal 2.)

#### Market the Forest Preserves as an iconic element of Metropolitan Chicago.

- To encourage tourism to areas beyond the City, in 2023, Cook County will launch Outside Chicago, a multi-media marketing campaign to promote outdoor experiences in the forest preserves and other natural assets of suburban Cook County.
- Billboards, radio, TV, the new Wild & Wonderful children's video series, and an Emmy-award-winning documentary are used to promote the Forest Preserves.
- Forest Way and social media campaigns are on-going. (Progress related to this work is captured in a key performance indicator in Section 1.)
- 44 municipalities and villages actively promote nearby forest preserves as a quality-of-life asset.
- World Business Chicago incorporated information into promotional materials used to attract corporations and other major employers, and smaller convention and visitors' bureaus regularly promote the Forest Preserves.
- The Zoo and Garden promote the Forest Preserves through newsletters, member magazines, social media and new signage.

## Goal 4. LEADERSHIP

Visionary conservation leaders will safeguard, expand and bring increased resources to the Forest Preserves.

*The 2022 referendum secured the resources necessary to successfully implement the Next Century Conservation Plan, and professional and accountable management have helped rebuild public confidence in the Forest Preserves. But these gains can quickly be lost if there are changes to the current administration, board, or Forest Preserves leadership team. The Conservation and Policy Council was created to establish focused conservation leadership that endures across such changes with enough strength to safeguard the preserves.*

### Phase 2 Goals & Progress

#### **Secure resources needed to achieve NCCP goals and solve the Forest Preserves' structural budget deficit.**

After the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to bring a referendum to voters in November 2022, a broad network of partners led by the Friends of the Forest Preserves, The Nature Conservancy, and the Trust for Public Land ran a highly successful campaign that resulted in overwhelming voter support for the referendum. The new resources are being used to stabilize the Forest Preserves' structural budget deficit and significantly scale up its work to achieve the ambitious goals of the Next Century Conservation Plan.

#### **Provide enduring conservation leadership.**

##### **Status: Significant progress made.**

The ability of the Council to endure a significant change of direction from the administration, board, or Forest Preserves leadership is difficult to measure and has not yet been tested. Nonetheless, significant process has been made to ensure enduring conservation leadership by engaging key stakeholders and ensuring mission alignment as follows:

- Since it was convened in 2015, the Conservation and Policy Council has engaged with elected officials, staff, partners, volunteers and advocates to raise awareness of the Forest Preserves' mission and build support for the Forest Preserves. The Council invites key partners to participate in Council meetings and has helped forge new relationships with stakeholders (such as the League of Women Voters, community colleges, etc.) Going forward, the Council plans to have a representative attend all board meetings.
- With its position papers, the Council has continued a legacy of civic leadership by addressing key issues facing the Forest Preserves and developing a set of principles and recommendations for each issue.

#### **Provide increased accountability.**

The Council plays an important role in ensuring transparency and accountability—including its on-going work to monitor progress towards goals and to ensure public funds are being used efficiently and effectively. The increased accountability was a critical factor in the success of the referendum.

## Update on 2023 Referendum Funds

In 2022, voters overwhelmingly approved a referendum to bring more than \$40 million in additional funding each year to the Forest Preserves and to its partners, the Chicago Zoological Society, and the Chicago Botanic Garden. The funds will be used to:

- Expand habitat restoration work to protect wildlife and clean our water and air.
- Acquire and protect more natural open land in Cook County for future generations.
- Continue to increase and improve programs and events, including more outreach to all Cook County residents.
- Address deferred maintenance and capital improvements in the Preserves, including making amenities more energy efficient and accessible to all.
- Fully fix the Forest Preserves' pension shortfall.
- Provide support for capital needs at the Brookfield Zoo and Chicago Botanic Garden.

In 2023, \$41.5 million in new referendum funding was allocated across these funding priorities as described in this section. This report describes progress to date for each funding priority. The progress report covers seven months of the first year with substantial new funding. As described in this section, the Forest Preserves, the Zoo and the Garden are rolling out new programs, initiatives and capital improvements; other new and improved programs, initiatives and amenities are still to come. A full account of 2023 expenditures will be presented to the Council and Board in 2024 after all 2023 invoices are processed and accounts are closed.

### Forest Preserves

As a government agency, the Forest Preserves of Cook County is committed to transparency and accountability. Prior to the voters' decision to make additional funds available, District staff was unable to fully advance plans, bids, and contracts to expend the 2023 referendum funds. Efforts to scale up work began in earnest at the beginning of 2023, but it will take time to get there as District staff follow standard and important procedures for procurement, hiring, and expenditures. That said, it is exciting to see critical work beginning to scale up, and new programs and initiatives rolling out. This includes expanding ecological restoration work at priority sites; hiring more graduates from the Conservation Corps programs; new summer camp programs and local partnerships for events; more outreach to diversify who visits the Preserves; the start of a slew of maintenance and capital improvements; and tools and equipment to make the Preserves cleaner and greener. The information provided in this report is not intended to be comprehensive; it is designed to highlight some of the key activities and events now underway. Apart from land acquisition, which is being funded by donations and grants, the projects and initiatives highlighted here would not be happening without the 2023 referendum funds.

#### **Ecological restoration: \$7,252,760 additional funding from the referendum**

More than \$300,000 of ecological restoration work has been completed at priority sites like Sauk Trail Woods, Jurgensen Woods and Busse Woods. Another \$600,000 is committed and planned in the upcoming months for clearing and prescribed fire on more than 2,800 acres at Orland Grassland, Deer Grove, Country Lane Woods, and other preserves.

The District hired 10 resource management crew aides—seven of which are graduates of the Conservation Corps programs—as well as adding a wildlife field laboratory technician and assistant resource project manager. These new staff will help the Forest Preserves address storm damage and invasive pests, increase capacity for trail management, and expand Conservation Corps programs. The District invested more than \$1 million to date in new resource management equipment, as well, including trailers, chippers, skid steers, utility vehicles and track loaders.

More native plants are growing in the Preserves thanks to the 2023 referendum funding. The District planted 130 trees this spring, primarily in the North Branch region, with another round scheduled for the fall. A seed banking and propagation partnership with the Chicago Botanic Garden was expanded and a new in-house seed nursery for native plants was established. Plug planting has already begun to increase biodiversity in Spears Woods.



*(Left) Seed collection, propagation and production were increased in collaboration with the Chicago Botanic Garden and partners such as Rodeo Farms. (Right) Plants were installed at Spears Woods and other locations to increase biodiversity and enhance selected natural areas with native plant material.*

**Land Acquisition: \$7,300,000 additional funding from the referendum**

The District expects to complete several acquisitions this year including two parcels in central Cook County and two parcels in south Cook County as follows:

Region	Site	Acres	Acquisition	Funding	Status
Central	IDNR Wolf Road Prairie Donation	57.0	\$0	Donation	Completed
Central	STPS 10 Hickory Lane Donation	5.0	\$0	Donation	In-process
South	DCC Phase I Archdiocese Parcel	104.1	\$1,040,000	Grant	Completed
South	Archdiocese Parcels Addition	25.6	\$255,000	ARPA	Completed
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>191.7</b>	<b>\$1,295,000</b>		

With the acquisition of 191.7 additional acres, the total holdings of the Forest Preserves of Cook County will be 69,793 acres. (The District also expects to complete the acquisition of several additional parcels in 2023, but these acquisitions have not yet been approved by the Board and detailed information cannot be disclosed publicly at this time due to the confidential nature of negotiations for land transactions.)

The District will utilize pre-referendum funds and grants to complete these acquisitions and will bank the 2023 referendum funds to build up the Real Estate Acquisition Fund. This will allow the District to: (a) identify, evaluate, and potentially acquire higher cost parcels which it previously could not pursue, and (b) be opportunistic in the event an attractive opportunity suddenly becomes available.

**Public Engagement: \$2,754,216 additional funding from the referendum**

The District hired four laborers at Nature Centers, opening up the schedules of the naturalist staff to concentrate on engagement activities. This summer that has included hosting Hyde Park Neighborhood Club Summer Camp field trips at nature centers; kayaking, fishing, archery, and environmental education for a camp focused on health and wellness hosted by the Calumet City Park District; and an expanded partnership with the Summit School District for teacher training and cultural programming.

A new full-time administrator has created similar opportunities for the department of Conservation and Experiential Programs (CEP) Zone Teams to partner with local groups that will add programs in yoga, paddling, African and Irish dance performances, accessible activities for people with disabilities, forest bathing and more.

A pilot program, the Beaubien Woods Youth Outdoor Ambassador Program, now has funding to be ongoing. Ten youth from communities on the South Side of Chicago work at the local preserve in a paid internship with a focus on restoration, trail work and learning the interpretation for the African American Water Trail that starts at Beaubien Boat Launch.



*The Beaubien Woods Youth Outdoor Ambassador Program now has funding to offer paid internships on an on-going basis.*

for the Nature Express Bus Program which provides free transportation to Forest Preserves events for community groups.

The District doubled the annual advertising budget for summer and fall outreach to encourage more people to visit and enjoy the preserves. Approximately a third of the budget is dedicated to media that primarily reaches BIPOC audiences, with another third geographically targeted to economically disconnected areas.

**Public Amenities: \$7,253,000 additional funding from the referendum**

More than \$3.5 million in contracts are in place for repairs on the Salt Creek and North Branch paved trails, beginning this summer, and on five unpaved trail systems launching this fall. Repairs for 34 picnic shelters—from fresh paint to roof and other structural repairs—will also begin in the fall. This winter, a three-year initiative for major renovations of restrooms at 60 buildings starts at Busse Woods and Dan Ryan Woods. Feasibility studies are underway for accessibility upgrades at nine canoe and kayak launches.



*(Top left) Improvements to Salt Creek and North Branch trails will be completed in fall 2023.*

*(Top right) Repairs to unpaved trails at Deer Grove, Beverly Lake, Bemis Woods-South, Des Plaines River Trail, Thorn Creek trails to begin fall 2023.*

*(Left) Feasibility studies are underway for ADA upgrades at nine canoe/kayak launches throughout the Preserves.*



**Public Safety, Permits and Landscape Maintenance: \$4,659,293 additional funding from the referendum**

The District is replacing and updating tools and equipment to improve landscape maintenance. New stand-in blowers and hot water pressure washers have been purchased, and new wide-area mowers will replace some that are more than 30 years old. Electric weed whackers and leaf blowers are replacing old gas-powered equipment.

A waste removal modernization plan has started, replacing the old metal garbage cans with new larger carts that won't rust, have a lid to keep animals out and garbage in, and can be emptied more efficiently. For most locations, there will be more recycling containers out, as well. A dozen new carts are in the field now as a pilot for placement and use. By this fall, 600 to 700 carts will be out in the Central Region, with further roll-out coming across the Preserves.

Battle Motors, a heavy-duty truck manufacturer, is designing and building the District's first all-electric garbage truck and the first combination recycling and refuse trucks. The District has purchased two of the four trucks that will be used to handle the new containers and improve efficiency in waste pick-up.



*A District employee using a new, battery-powered line trimmer.*

**Capital Investments in Fleet and Support Facilities: \$5,380,000 additional funding from the referendum**

The District continues its transition to a green fleet with the purchase of its first all-electric, Ford F150 Lightning truck and installation of an EV charging station. Nine additional EV chargers are being ordered to service District vehicles throughout the forest preserves with installation beginning this winter and completion in the spring.

Architectural and engineering services are underway for various building energy-efficiency and clean energy projects. These include:

- Engineering design for replacement of boilers serving the Central Warehouse and two other buildings with all-electric, high-efficiency heat pumps that will also provide more efficient cooling in the summer.
- Planning and design is in process for ground-mounted and rooftop solar panels to offset 80% of the electricity needs for Central Maintenance Compound buildings, and for building envelope upgrades at other Landscape Maintenance field offices. Unused 2023 referendum funds will be rolled over to pay for construction and installation in 2024.



*Central warehouse prior to HVAC upgrades.*

And to move projects forward now without waiting for the District to expand its internal capacity to support planning, design, and construction management, the District contracted with the Public Building

Commission (PBC) to supplement existing staff capacity. The PBC is managing the design of three new metal storage garages to protect vehicles and equipment.

**Pension Obligation: \$0 additional funding from the referendum**

State law prohibits the District from allocating additional funding to its pension fund in 2023. (However, the state legislature amended the pension code to allow the District to increase its annual allocation to fully meet its pension obligation beginning in 2024.) For the FY 2023 budget, the additional tax revenue from the referendum that in future years will be allocated to the Forest Preserves pension fund has been reallocated to high-priority initiatives in the other referendum-supported categories.

**Administrative: \$642,129 additional funding from the referendum**

The District added a new IT Manger to better utilize SharePoint and other technology to streamline processes and records management. A new Purchasing Agent is expanding the capacity to process contracts as the District issues more requests for bids to scale up its work.


The District is also retaining consultants to streamline the procurements and contracting processes and to explore new and expanded partnerships with the Native American community.

**Chicago Zoological Society**

**Capital Maintenance: \$3,880,000 additional funding from the referendum**

The Chicago Zoological Society will utilize new revenue generated by the referendum for capital maintenance at the Brookfield Zoo.

**Referendum-Funded Infrastructure Project List**



Chicago Zoological Society

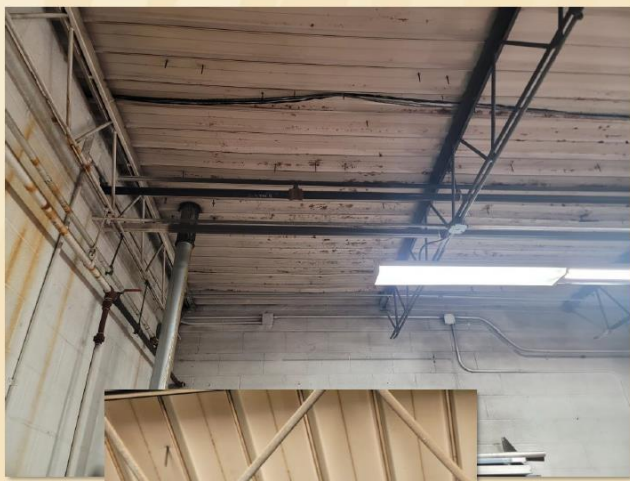
Project #	Project Name	Budget
1	PINNIPED AND DOLPHIN OZONE GENERATOR	\$ 50,000
2	PEACOCK HOLDING AND PARAKEET BREEDING STRUCTURE	\$ 500,000
3	REPAIR EXPOSED FIBERGLASS - LIVING COAST	\$ 100,000
4	31ST STREET UNGULATE YARD/BARN'S FENCELINE INSTALLATION & REPAIR	\$ 100,000
5	ANIMAL AMBASSADOR UNIT GARAGE	\$ 100,000
6	NETWORK SAN REPLACEMENT, SECURITY, AND STORAGE	\$ 315,000
7	AIR COMPRESSOR REPLACEMENT - DIVING UNIT	\$ 25,000
8	FALL PROTECTION INSTALLATION - EXHIBIT AND PLANT	\$ 100,000
9	FIRE ALARM PANEL MIGRATION AND SYSTEM UPGRADE	\$ 750,000
10	EMERGENCY GENERATOR REPLACE - MOUSE HOUSE	\$ 20,000
11	TUCKPOINTING (SEVEN SEAS, FRAGILE KINGDOM, GST SVS BLDG)	\$ 75,000
12	KALWALL REPLACEMENT - GIRAFFE	\$ 50,000
13	ROOF REPLACEMENT - ROUNDHOUSE	\$ 250,000
14	HVAC REPLACEMENTS (PLAY ZOO, DISCOVERY CENTER, SMALL ANTELOPE)	\$ 500,000
15	GREAT BEAR WILDERNESS ELECTRIC HEATERS	\$ 40,000
16	BAS CONTROLS - HVAC MONITORING	\$ 30,000
17	STANLEY ELECTRICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT	\$ 100,000
18	PAVING, WALKWAYS, PARKING LOT SURFACE	\$ 500,000
19	ADA COMPLIANCE - AUTO DOOR REPLACEMENT	\$ 65,000
20	NORTHGATE VOLUNTEER REPLACEMENT	\$ 30,000
21	ROOSEVELT FOUNTAIN IRRIGATION, LIGHTING, LANDSCAPE	\$ 300,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$4,000,000</b>



**BROOKFIELD ZOO**  
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33 x 7.50 in

**Capital Maintenance: \$2,328,000 additional funding from the referendum**

The Chicago Botanic Garden will utilize new revenue generated by the referendum for capital maintenance at the Garden. Key projects are highlighted in this section.



## Chicago Botanic Garden 2023 Capital Maintenance Projects

- Esplanade, Boardwalk & Terrace Repairs: *\$65,000*
- Circle Garden Brick Replacement: *\$270,000*
- McGinley Pavilion & Enabling Garden replace paving stones: *\$40,000*
- Serpentine & Arched bridges replace decking: *\$150,000*
- Regenstein Center – switch replacement: *\$78,000*
- Cellular Boost project: *\$30,000*
- Burnstein Hall – AV project: *\$27,800*
- Gatehouse: accessibility improvements: *\$85,000*
- Regenstein Center – carpet replacement: *\$44,000*
- Equipment: snowplow; articulated power hauler utility vehicle, sidewalk snow vehicle; stump grinder, tractor, and two Chevy pickup trucks: *\$487,629*

