KENDALL COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
PLANNING AD-HOC COMMITTEE

AGENDA

TUESDAY
JUNE 24, 2014

3:30 P.M.
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE

I. CALL TO ORDER
II. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD
III. PLANNING DISCUSSION
IV. OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS
V. ADJOURNMENT
This Master Plan was approved by the Kendall County Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners in ?? of 2014. The Planning Ad-hoc Committee met monthly for 18 months to draft the Master Plan. The Board of Commissioners reviewed sections of the plan over four month period. The District greatly appreciates the time and effort that the Planning Ad-hoc Committee put towards this plan.

The Board of Commissioners and staff will refer to this plan on a regular basis for guidance in the decision making process and to develop the goals and objectives of the District. This plan will be reviewed annually and, if needed, updated through addendum.
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Section 1 Introduction

History

The Kendall County Forest Preserve District was established when residents approved a referendum in April of 1964. By the early 1970s, four forest preserves with a combined 260 acres had been created in the county. Facilities consisted mainly of picnic shelters, footpaths, and the well-known Harris Forest Preserve sledding hill. For over two decades these preserves and facilities were sufficient to meet the low demands of the still largely rural and slow growing Kendall County.

A group of residents formed the Kendall Natural Area Guardians (KNAGs) and from the 1970s to the 1990s urged the District to acquire high quality natural areas. The KNAGs created a list that identified many of these natural areas. This KNAG list, along with accompanying maps and plant species lists, were utilized by the District for many years for land acquisition purposes.

As the population of Kendall County began to grow significantly in the 1990's, Kendall County citizens desired a more active Forest Preserve District. Long-time residents urged the District to preserve open space amid a wave of residential and commercial development. Newer residents, arriving mainly from counties with well established Forest Preserve Districts, desired the same in Kendall County.

The District also began to develop additional resources during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Increased staffing and funding allowed the District to initiate environmental education programming, public outreach, and natural resource management. These efforts led to increased awareness and use of the Forest Preserve District by residents. In 2000, the District completed its first Master Plan with the assistance of a Citizens Advisory Board. This plan was updated in 2008.

In 2003, as Kendall County was one of the fastest growing counties in the United States, a $5 million open space bond referendum was approved by Kendall County residents for the District to acquire open space and to complete capital improvement projects.

In 2006 the District participated in Protect Kendall Now (PKN), an open space planning effort initiated by The Conservation Foundation. PKN combined the earlier KNAG list with municipal, county, and other open space plans to create a comprehensive vision for the preservation of natural areas and open space throughout Kendall County. The PKN effort produced the Natural Treasures of Kendall County map.
As Kendall County continued its unprecedented population growth, in 2007 voters approved a $45 million open space bond referendum for additional land preservation and capital improvement projects. These funds, combined with nearly $10 million in ensuing grant revenue, punctuated an amazing growth spurt where the District owns 5 times more acres in 2014 than it did just one decade earlier.

Many of these preserved acres contain some of the finest natural areas in Kendall County. Fox River frontage, property along streams, quality woodlands and wetlands, and expansion of existing preserves have all been added to District holdings in the past decade. This additional acreage has permitted the District to expand its facilities and offer more recreational and environmental educational opportunities to residents than ever before.

Organization

The Kendall County Forest Preserve District is governed by a ten member Board of Commissioners. The commissioners are elected officials, with five commissioners elected by the public from each of the two Kendall County Board Districts. The Board of Commissioners elects a President, Vice-President and Secretary, each of which serves a two year term. The District has its own property taxing authority, which largely funds the daily operating expenses of the District. These property tax funds are augmented by facility use fees, program fees, and farm license revenue. A yearly budgeting process determines the operating budget and tax levy to be issued by the District for each fiscal year. The District also has the ability to issue bonds for land acquisition, capital improvement projects and capital equipment purchases.

As of 2014 the staff of the District is comprised of 10 full-time and 18 part-time employees. Several seasonal employees assist with summer camps each year. The staff is responsible for the grounds maintenance, natural areas management, environmental education programming, event coordination, volunteer coordination and administration of the District.

Mission Statement and Goals

The mission of the Kendall County Forest Preserve District is to acquire, preserve and manage natural areas and open spaces, provide environmental education, and offer recreational opportunities for Kendall County residents.

More specifically, the goals of the Kendall County Forest Preserve District are to:

1. Acquire and hold lands containing forests, prairies, wetlands, streams and other natural areas in order to preserve the flora, fauna and scenic beauties of Kendall County for the enjoyment of county residents and future generations.
2. Acquire and hold properties containing lands capable of being restored to a natural condition and lands that will provide recreational opportunities and facilities.

3. Utilize the forest preserves to provide educational opportunities for county residents regarding the natural systems, natural processes and natural history of Kendall County.

4. Provide and maintain passive and active recreational opportunities and facilities for residents that are compatible with District natural areas and open spaces.

5. Provide and maintain multi-purpose event facilities for residents that are compatible with District natural areas and open spaces.

6. Implement resource management practices and policies that maintain and enhance the biodiversity of District natural areas.

7. Maintain and enhance practices and policies that promote fiscal responsibility and organizational proficiency.

8. Maintain and enhance multiple media outlets to inform Kendall County residents of District programs, properties, facilities and policies.

9. Partner with other governmental agencies, conservation organizations and private landowners to preserve natural areas, create greenway corridors, and develop linear trails.

**Master Plan Goals & Objectives**

The intense growth in recent years presents the Kendall County Forest Preserve District with many challenges. Two of the main challenges are balancing the dramatic increase in the public’s use of the preserves, facilities, and programs with the realities of current operational resources; and to acquire additional open space in the future.

While the yearly budget process and day-to-day operations focus on the short-term needs of the Kendall County Forest Preserve District, the ability to plan over a longer time span is essential. The development of a long-range plan will allow the District to best use its resources to meet its mission and goals, and better enable the District to be proactive in a rapidly changing landscape.

The goal of this Master Plan is to strengthen and focus the resources of the Kendall County Forest Preserve District so that it is most able to fulfill its mission statement and goals. This Master Plan was completed through the efforts of a Planning Ad-hoc Committee that consisted of Forest Preserve Commissioners, Forest Preserve staff, Kendall County staff, and partner organizations. The Planning
Ad-hoc Committee met for approximately one year to work on the Master Plan. The Master Plan was then reviewed and approved by the Kendall County Forest Preserve District Commission.

Master Plan Objectives (with corresponding FP Goals):

**Land Acquisition**
- Plan for future acquisition of lands containing natural areas, lands suitable for restoration, lands providing connectivity, and lands suitable for recreational facilities. (1, 2, 4, 8)

**Facilities**
- Inventory existing facilities. (4)
- Create concept plans and/or identify improvements, estimate construction costs, and estimate maintenance costs for each of the preserves. (4, 8)
- Prioritize capital improvement projects. (4, 8)

**Administration**
- Continue to develop and implement appropriate policies, organizational structure, and processes. (6)
- Evaluate budget process to meet increased demands on preserves, facilities, and programming while practicing fiscal responsibility. (6)

**Programming**
- Continue to develop, promote, and evaluate educational opportunities to reach as many Kendall County residents as feasible. (3)

**Natural Areas Management**
- Continue to actively manage and evaluate the natural areas of the District. (5)

**Marketing and Outreach**
- Continue to inform and promote the public of the programs, properties, facilities and policies of the District. (7)
Section 2 Kendall County Natural Resources

Natural Communities

When the first European settlers arrived in what is today Kendall County, they found a land dominated by prairie. Woodlands clung alongside creeks and rivers, with an occasional grove of trees interspersed among the prairie. Various forms of wetlands dotted the landscape, some held snow-melt and rainfall, while others released groundwater to the surface. Deep rooted plants acted as conduits to infiltrate water into the ground, resulting in a system of hydrology based more on groundwater than surface water. Boundaries between prairie, wetland, and woodland were not always clearly defined, and these boundaries shifted as fire and weather altered the landscape. Part of the Grand Prairie Natural Division, Kendall County has a rich natural history.

Fire shaped all of the natural communities of the region. Intense prairie fires pushed trees and shrubs from the grasslands. Slower, more moderate fires meandered through woodlands, reducing the numbers of less-protected thin barked trees. Wetlands, dried up at season’s end, also felt the singe of fire. During the spring and fall, fire left a mosaic of burned and unburned on the landscape.

The natural communities were rich in diversity of plant and animal life, with intricate webs of relationships between predator and prey, pollinator and plant, soil and water. Many of these relationships we still strive to understand to this day.

The dark soils of the prairie were rich, as they were formed from organic matter built up over centuries. As settlers quickly determined that these soils were highly productive, prairies were quickly plowed under and wetlands were drained to create some of the finest farmland in the world. The margins of woodlands were pushed back and straightened. Fires were suppressed. Remaining natural communities were fragmented, isolated, and forever altered.

In the early 1900’s a new conservation ethic began to take root. Preservation of natural areas and open space, the study of ecology, and the process to learn how to restore our natural communities began to be viewed as important subjects. Illinois, especially northeastern Illinois, has been a big player on this conservation stage. The Burnham Plan; the establishment of Forest Preserve and
Conservation Districts; and restoration initiatives at Fermi Lab, the Morton Arboretum and many public lands across the region have collectively spearheaded one of conservation’s great success stories.

**Prairies**

Prior to European settlement, tallgrass prairies were the dominant natural community in Kendall County, covering approximately 85% of the land. Tallgrass prairies in Illinois are part of the ‘prairie peninsula’, an eastward extension of this natural community that was sustained by frequent fire.

Prairies are generally classified by soil moisture (wet, wet-mesic, mesic, dry-mesic, dry) and type of soil (sand or gravel hill). Prior to settlement, most prairies in Kendall County would have been wet, wet-mesic, and mesic prairie.

Prairies are fire dependent communities. Without regular fire, trees and shrubs invade the prairies, producing shade that kills the sun-loving plants. Fires are also important to recycle nutrients, eliminate non-native herbaceous plants, allow soil warming earlier in the spring, and to create a mosaic of burned and unburned areas that many animal species depend on.

**Prairie Plants**

Prior to European settlement, more than 300 plant species grew in tallgrass prairies, a diverse mix of grasses, sedges, and forbs. While grasses such as big bluestem (Andropogon gerardii), Indian grass (Sorghastrum nutans), and switch grass (Panicum virgatum) may have been the most numerous plants on the prairie, forbs would have contributed vast diversity.

Most of the biomass of tallgrass prairie lies below the ground surface, where plant roots can reach over 15 feet in depth. These deep roots allow the prairie plants to survive the harsh prairie environment that includes drought, grazing, and fire. These roots are also important to develop prairie soil and infiltrate water into the ground.

**Prairie Animals**

Tallgrass prairie is home to an array of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects. Each animal species has its own set of requirements – other plants and animals it is dependent on, prairie structure, and size of a prairie to name but a few. If a habitat does not meet these requirements, the animal species simply cannot survive. To meet the requirements of the most number of species, large and varied grasslands are needed.

Many grassland bird species have been in decline in recent decades as the number of native prairie sites and other grasslands have been converted to other land uses or have been invaded by trees and shrubs.
**Prairie Restoration & Management**

Unfortunately, no great expanses of intact prairie remain in Kendall County today. Due to the loss of prairie habitat in Kendall County, many native species of plants and animals have either been extirpated from the county, or have very small, and possible unsustainable, populations. While a few tiny patches of prairie remnants cling alongside railroads or other out of the way locations, prairie restorations will make up the majority of future prairies in the county.

Prairie restoration on a landscape scale began in northeastern Illinois in the 1960s in efforts by Ray Schulenberg at the Morton Arboretum and at Fermi Lab in the 1970s by Dr. Robert Betz. These efforts led other land managers in the region to initiate prairie restorations of their own. Prairie restorations include soil preparation, seeding, burning, mowing, herbiciding, and restoring hydrology. While in a few short years a newly seeded site may begin to look like a prairie, the complex prairie ecosystem will take decades to become established.

Established prairies, whether a remnant or a restoration, typically require minimal management outside of a periodic controlled burn. Mechanical removal of invasive brush and control of herbaceous weeds can be performed as required.

Cool-season grasslands are a cousin of the native tallgrass prairie, but mainly contain non-native grasses and forbs. Typically, these cool-season grasslands are former pastures or hayfields. While they do not possess the great diversity of plant and animal life that a native prairie can, cool-season grasslands have proven to be suitable habitat for many native grassland bird species.

Jay Woods FP, Millbrook South FP, and Subat FP have examples of prairie restorations. Lyon FP and Richard Young FP have very small prairie remnants. Henneberry FP and Hoover FP both have cool-season grasslands.

**Wooded Communities**

Kendall County has a number of wooded natural communities that are distinct in their species makeup, tree canopy coverage, typography, and hydrology. Most local woodlands are dominated by oaks, maples, and hickories.

All of the wooded communities found in Kendall County are, to varying degrees, dependant on regular controlled burning. In general, more open canopy wooded communities require more frequent
number of shrub species and a diverse ground layer of herbaceous plants that includes broadleaves, grasses, and sedges. This layering of the woodland community – canopy, understory, shrub, and herbaceous – creates a variety of habitats that are important for wildlife.

**Savannas**
Savannas form on the boundary where the prairie meets the woodland. As large, intense prairie fires swept into woodlands, only the most fire resistant tree could survive. In the Midwest, this hardy tree is the bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*).

Bur oak savannas have tree canopy coverage of 10-50%. The dappled sunlight that reaches the ground supports prairie and woodland plants, as well as certain plant species endemic to savannas. Shrubs typically found in savannas are the American hazelnut (*Corylus americana*) and the wild plum (*Prunus americana*).

Black oak savannas can form on poor, sandy soils. Dry conditions combined with more moderate fire combine to form black oak savannas. In Kendall County, small patches of black oak savanna can be found on sites with sandy soil, mainly in the Big Rock Creek watershed and along the Fox River.

Intact oak savannas are quite rare today as fire suppression, grazing, and invasive species have led to habitat degradation. However, many oak savannas persist today in Kendall County as more closed in woodlands, waiting for when sunlight might once again reach the ground. Jay Woods FP and Millbrook South FP both contain examples of bur oak savannas.

**Open Woodlands**
In areas protected from intense fires by savannas, creeks or topography, open woodlands are to found. As the name suggests, open woodlands have fairly widely spaced trees resulting in a canopy cover of 50-80%. This allows sufficient sunlight to establish diverse shrub and herbaceous layers.

Moderate fires worked their way through the open woodlands, keeping the numbers of thin barked
maple, ash, elm, and cherry to a minimum. As a result, most of our open woodlands are dominated by oak (Quercus sp) and hickory (Carya sp), although there can be quite a diversity of trees. Shrub species typical of open woodlands include American hazelnut (Corylus americana), wild plum (Prunus americana), chokecherry (Prunus virginiana), and black haw (Viburnum prunifolium).

Fire suppression, grazing, and invasive species have led to habitat degradation in our open woodlands. Specifically, garlic mustard (Alliaria petiolata), common buckthorn (Rhamnus cathartica), and honeysuckle (Lonicera sp), three invasive plants from Europe and Asia, have ruined many acres of open woodland habitat by pushing out native plants and preventing oak regeneration.

The best examples of open woodlands occur at Harris FP and Lyon FP, although most preserves have some amount of this community.

Northern Flatwoods
Northern flatwoods are a rare type of natural community that is formed where a unique set of topography, soils, and hydrology combine to form this wet woodland. Flatwoods are characterized by having water at, or near, the ground surface for the majority of the growing season. This is usually caused by a layer of clay a few feet below the surface that forces water to slowly move laterally rather than percolating downward. Topography prevents the water from quickly draining overland and off the site.

The canopy trees of the flatwoods are spaced fairly far apart which allows adequate sunlight to reach the shrub and herbaceous layers. Tree canopy coverage is typically 20-80%. Trees indicative of flatwoods include swamp white oak (Quercus bicolor), linden (Tilia americana), black ash (Fraxinus nigra), and cottonwood (Populus deltoides). Commonly found shrubs include paw paw (Asimina triloba), blue beech (Carpinus caroliniana), and buttonbush (Cephalanthus occidentalis).

The herbaceous layer usually possesses a large number of sedge species, along with a substantial amount of forb and grass species. The herbaceous layer of flatwoods can be very diverse and include plants typical of open woodlands and sedge meadows, besides those associated specifically with flatwoods. Periodic fires through the flatwoods enhance the biodiversity by creating a balance between the various components of the community. In flatwoods, these fires are slow moving and control the number of woody plants, thereby allowing adequate sunlight to reach the herbaceous layer. Flatwoods support a variety of animal life that depends on the unique watery community for food, shelter and breeding habitat.

Mareamech FP contains the only flatwoods owned by the District, and possibly the only example of this community in Kendall County. The flatwoods in Mareamech are an Illinois Nature Preserve, which not only acknowledges the rarity of this natural community, but identifies this site as one of the best examples of a flatwoods in the state.
Forests
Forests thrive where fires are infrequent and of low intensity. Tree species that cannot tolerate the intense fires of the savanna or the moderate burns of the open woodlands find refuge in the forest. With more tree stems per acre, forests understandably have a more closed canopy, between 80-100%. Forests are typically dominated by maple, either black maple (Acer nigrum) or sugar maple (Acer saccharum), and by red oak (Quercus rubra).

Floodplain forests are a common variety in Kendall County, where silver maple (Acer saccharinum), ash (Fraxinus sp), and elm (Ulmus sp) dominate. High quality floodplain forests are uncommon as land use changes and drainage have increased flooding occurrences and altered the hydrology of these communities. Baker Woods FP alongside the Aux Sable Creek and Jay Woods FP with the Little Rock Creek both contain examples of floodplain forests.

Shrubs typical of forests include bladdernut (Staphylea trifolia) and elderberry (Sambucus canadensis). Due to lower sunlight levels on the ground, the herbaceous layer of forest is generally sparser than that of other wooded communities.

Woodland Animals
Because of the varied habitats that they possess and the diversity of their plant species, woodlands are home to many species of mammals, birds, herps, and insects. Some animal species are reliant on different layers of the woodland. For example, the red-eyed vireo feeds on insects high up in the canopy while building its nest on small trees or shrubs.

As many Kendall County woodlands are dominated by oaks, these trees are especially important for wildlife. The acorns of oak trees are an important food source for deer, turkey, and squirrels. Some species of birds time their spring migrations to coincide with the flowering of oaks and other trees so that they can feed on the insects attracted by the flowers.

The intricate web between plants, animals, and other components of our woodlands depend on maintaining diverse and healthy plant communities.

Woodland Restoration & Management
Many wooded communities in Kendall County have suffered from habitat fragmentation, fire suppression, invasive species, and changes in hydrology. As a result, our woodlands have lost some measure of plant and animal diversity, and long-term sustainability is uncertain. In many of our oak woodlands, new generations of oaks have not been able to grow due to habitat degradations. As the ‘elder statesmen’ oak trees begin to die, replacement oaks are not present to sustain this community.

To restore our woodland communities, a number of management techniques can be utilized. Brush and tree removal can permit adequate sunlight to reach all layers – canopy, understory, and ground – of the woodland. Controlled burns works to reduce the number of small trees, recycles nutrients, and controls invasive plant species such as garlic mustard. Invasive plants can also be controlled
mechanically or with the use of herbicide.

Woodlands also benefit from the re-introduction of native plant species through seeding or the planting of plugs. Habitat fragmentation can be reversed by tree planting projects that reconnect and enlarge existing woodlands.

**Wetland Communities**

Wetlands come in many forms. Some are wet year rounds, while other wetlands dry up during the dog-days of summer. Some wetlands have deep, standing water, while others have only saturated soil. Many wetlands thrive in full sun, while still others thrive under the shade of shrubs and trees. Wetlands are highly productive natural communities that support prolific plant growth and abundant animal populations. Despite the presence of water, most Kendall County wetlands are dependent on regular controlled burns.

Wetlands are important components of an area's hydrology, linking surface waters with groundwater. They capture snowmelt and rainwater, infiltrating this water into the ground. This water moves laterally through the ground, eventually discharging into streams, rivers, and even other wetlands. Water infiltration serves to lessen flooding and improve water quality of our waterways.

Most Kendall County wetlands have been completely drained or so severely altered so that they retain little of their original bio-diversity or hydrological functions. As only a limited number of wetlands remain intact, these are especially vital as refuges for plants and animals dependant on these natural areas.

**Fens & Seeps**

Fens and seeps are unique wetlands that form where groundwater emerges to the surface, typically on a slope near a stream or river. This water is highly alkaline from the calcium it has picked up as it has migrated through the limestone rich ground. This groundwater flows, or more likely, oozes to the surface continually throughout the year. Many plants cannot tolerate the mineral laden water, leaving ample space for those specialist plants that can. Because they rely on a continuous supply of groundwater, fens and seeps require recharge zones to be maintained where ample water can be infiltrated into the ground.

Fens can be graminoid – full of grasses and sedges – or sparsely vegetated. Graminoid fens rely on controlled burns to prevent trees and shrubs from closing in and pushing out the herbaceous plants. Woodland seeps are found where groundwater comes to the surface under tree cover. These shaded
sites are typically dominated by skunk cabbage (Symplocarpus foetidus) and marsh marigold (Caltha palustris).

Kendall County, and the entire Fox River valley, is rather special in regards to fens and seeps as the area contains the highest concentrations of these wetlands in Illinois. Nice examples of fens can be found at Lyon FP and Millbrook-South FP, while seeps are present in those same preserves as well as Hoover FP.

Sedge Meadows
These wetlands are flat lowlands dotted with tussocks, a bump of soil and roots created by species of sedges. The ground of sedge meadows is typically saturated, but standing water is many times present for only short periods. The soils of sedge meadows are highly organic peat. Like graminoid fens, sedge meadows depend on occasional controlled burns to keep trees and shrubs from becoming to prolific.

Sedge meadows, wet prairies, and fens contain many of the same plant species. Sedge meadows are dominated by sedges, wet prairies by grasses, and fens by an assortment of calcium tolerant plants. Sedge meadows can be found at Subat FP and at Cannonball Sedge Meadow.

Marshes
Marshes are wetlands that typically have standing water during most of the growing season. Some marshes may dry up during the late summer and early fall, while others retain water all year. Marshes are dominated by herbaceous plants, which may include both emergent and floating vegetation. Controlled burns in the fall work to maintain the plant diversity of the marsh.

Examples of marshes can be found at Subat FP and Millbrook-North FP.

Wetland Animals
Wetlands are extremely valuable natural areas as breeding grounds, nesting sites, and migratory stops for wildlife. Many species of herps, especially frogs, toads, and salamanders, depend on wetlands for breeding. These same species spend much of their adult lives in upland areas, but return to wetlands each spring to breed.

Many species of waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds utilize wetlands for rest and feed stops on their bi-annual migrations. Resident birds of all sorts nest in and around wetlands.

While dragonflies may be one of the most recognizable insects of local wetlands, damselflies, butterflies, and a host of less visible insects populate these important natural areas.

Wetland Restoration & Management
Due to the severe alterations that have been made to many wetlands, restoring these natural areas can involve more intensive planning and aggressive techniques. Planning for wetland restorations may require engineering, soil testing, and groundwater studies. Restoration work may include disabling drain tiles, earth-moving, and installation of water control structures.

Wetland restorations also may include seeding and/or planting with native plant species, control of invasive plant species such as Reed Canary Grass (Phalaris arundinacea) and Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria), and controlled burning.
Rivers and Streams

Kendall County is divided into two watersheds – the land that drains into the Fox River and its tributaries, and the land that drains into the Aux Sable Creek and its tributaries. Approximately 60% of the county drains into the Fox River, while the remaining 40% drains into the Aux Sable Creek. A significant number of waterways in Kendall County are of high quality in terms of water quality and biotic diversity. The Fox River has rebounded from many decades of pollution and indifference to become both a natural and a recreation resource. Fisherman and paddlers recreate on the river, while many others enjoy its beauty from trails and parks.

Fox River tributaries such as the Big Rock Creek and Little Rock Creek are some of the higher quality streams in northeastern Illinois. These streams possess diverse fish, mussel, and aquatic insect populations. Streams such as the Blackberry Creek, Hollenback Creek, and Waubonsie Creek have also improved in water quality over the past few decades. Dam removals on the Blackberry Creek and Waubonsie Creek have reconnected parts of those streams to improve fish habitat and spawning.

The Aux Sable Creek, for covering such a large amount of Kendall County, is much lesser known than the Fox River. While it does not currently have some of the recreational opportunities as the Fox River, the Aux Sable is a very high quality stream based on its water quality and populations of fish, mussels, and aquatic insects. While many of the headwater streams of the Aux Sable Creek have been channelized, the main stem retains its original charm and character.

Many of the waterways in Kendall County have benefitted from watershed planning efforts over the past 15–20 years. These efforts bring together open space agencies, non-profit organizations, municipalities, wastewater treatment district, businesses, farmers, and others to plan for the protection and improvement of our waterways. The Fox River, Blackberry Creek, Big & Little Rock Creeks, Blackberry Creek, Waubonsie Creek, and Aux Sable Creek have all had watershed plans created. Many challenges remain for our waterways, especially as watersheds transform from agriculture to suburban landscapes. Meeting those challenges will take the continued cooperation of all of those who reside, work, and recreate in our watersheds.
Section 3 Preserves and Facilities

From its creation in 1964 until the mid-1990s, the Kendall County Forest Preserve District consisted of a few preserves with limited facilities. By far the most popular site was Harris Forest Preserve with its picnic shelters, horse arena, sled hill, ballfield, and trails. Trails at Lyon Forest Preserve, and a picnic shelter and trails at Baker Woods Forest Preserve completed the list of District facilities. By the 1990s, many of these existing facilities were aged and in decline.

The acquisition (1994) and development (1998) of the Richard Young Forest Preserve marked the beginning of a new era for the District. In this time period, the facilities at Harris, Lyon, and Baker Woods Forest Preserves were significantly upgraded. Additional properties were acquired and construction projects at Subat Forest Preserve, Maramech Forest Preserve, and the Shuh Shuh Gah Canoe Launch added more sites for the public to use. These newer facilities largely mirrored existing facilities with their picnic shelters and trails.

As land was acquired from the 2003 and 2007 open space referendums, additional preserves were improved with public facilities. Hoover Forest Preserve and the Ellis House & Equestrian Center provided the District with opportunities to diversify its facilities with tent campsites, bunkhouses, environmental education buildings, equestrian facilities, and multi-purpose spaces. Jay Woods Forest Preserve, Millbrook South Forest Preserve, and Blackberry Trails Forest Preserve were all acquired and improved with public use facilities during this time period.
SUBAT FOREST PRESERVE

Address: 4845 Eldamain Road, Plano

Township: Little Rock

Total Acres: 68

Existing Facilities:
- Parking: Yes
- Spaces: 19
- Trails: Yes
- Miles: 0.98
- Shelter: Yes
- Number: 1
- Tables: 4
- Restroom: Yes
- V.I. Sign: Yes
- Water: Yes
- Other: Overlook deck

Acquisition History:

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Natural Communities:
- Savanna, open woodland, prairie, sedge meadow, marsh, stream

Subat FP contains oak savanna, mesic woodlands, sedge meadow wetlands, restored tallgrass prairie, and the Rob Roy Creek. The preserve is named for John and Mary Subat, who sold the property at under fair market value and made several substantial financial donations to the District.
Section 4 Capital Projects

Since 2007 the Kendall County Forest Preserve District has completed a significant capital project program. Using funds from the 2007 Open Space Referendum and numerous grants, these capital projects have opened many new acres of Forest Preserve lands to the public, significantly upgraded facilities at existing preserves, enhanced visitor experiences and restored natural areas. For a list of see Appendix #_).

Capital projects are defined using these criteria:
- Lifespan of at least 3 years
- Upgrade, repair or replacement of existing facilities
- Construction of new facilities
- Restoration or management of natural resources

Examples of capital projects range from the construction of improvements at Jay Woods Forest Preserve that includes parking lots, multi-use trails, picnic shelter, signage, restroom, overlook deck and prairie restoration with cost totaling $800,000, to the replacement of a well pump at Hoover Forest Preserve that cost $7500.

Capital projects that upgrade, repair or replace existing facilities will generally have a minimal impact on operating expenses. Construction of new facilities, especially those on a large scale, will have an effect on the operating budget as they will require additional resources to maintain.

The Forest Preserve District continues to have undeveloped properties that have little to no public access. The District will also continue to pursue acquisition of land in the future. All of these properties will eventually require capital projects in order to provide public access and preserve natural resources.

As a conservation organization, the Forest Preserve District is committed to environmentally sensitive and sustainable projects. Several District projects have included environmentally sensitive components such as using recycled materials, protecting natural areas from construction and utilizing solar and geothermal power.

Capital Project Planning

Planning for the construction, installation, and maintenance of large scale capital projects typically occur over many years. These projects generally require architectural, engineering and other professional services.

A number of factors will be considered when the District plans for capital projects. The factors include, but may not be limited to:
- Kendall County Forest Preserve District mission statement and goals
- Kendall County Forest Preserve District Master Plan
- Public input
- Capital Project Budget
- Availability of capital project grant funding
- General Fund Budget
Since 2000 the District has striven to provide a number of basic amenities at newly opened preserves or those being upgraded. These basic amenities include parking, restroom, entrance signage, visitor information kiosk, drinking water, picnic shelter and trails. The District has also transformed two sites – Hoover Forest Preserve and Ellis House & Equestrian Center – into special facilities that offer a wider array of uses and programming. As the District moves forward it will continually need to reassess the types of facilities that will meet the District’s mission and budgetary conditions, as well the public interest. A list of amenities and cost estimates is included in Appendix _.

Goals & Objectives

- Establish and maintain a five-year capital plan. Annually review and update the capital plan.
- Develop standardized construction details for use in the District’s capital projects.
- Solicit public input for capital projects.
- Develop concept plans, cost estimates, and construction documents for capital projects as needed.
- Apply for and utilize grants to maximize capital project funds.
- Develop a land use classification system to guide the location of capital improvements and protection of natural resources on District lands.
- Partner with other government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses and the public on the acquisition of multipurpose trail corridors and the construction of such trails.
- Partner with the Illinois Department of Transportation and other agencies on the construction and maintenance of multipurpose trails along state routes in Kendall County. Formally accept maintenance of such trails as feasible.
- Abide by Kendall County Planning, Building and Zoning Department codes and regulations for applicable capital projects.
- Construct and maintain facilities to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Facilitate donations of funds, goods, services, and labor for use with capital projects.
Section 5 Land Acquisition

Shortly after the Kendall County Forest Preserve District was created in 1964, it began to acquire property. A short flurry of purchases and donations ended in 1970 with the District owning just over 260 acres. Two of the early land purchases (Maremech Forest Preserve and Harris Forest Preserve) were partially funded by grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. A long land acquisition drought followed however, with the only property acquired between 1970 and 1992 being 8 donated acres.

In 1994 the District made its first significant purchase in nearly two and one-half decades with the acquisition of the Richard Young Forest Preserve, which was partially funded by a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Although it would be a few years before additional large tract acquisitions were made, the public discussions surrounding the purchase of the Richard Young FP showed that Kendall County residents were warming up to the idea of a much more active Forest Preserve District.

From the late 1990s into the early 2000s, the population of Kendall County was booming. With one of the fastest growing populations in the nation, many Kendall County residents were interested in seeing open space and natural areas preserved. In 2003, Kendall County voters approved a $5 million open space bond referendum providing the Forest Preserve District with, for the first time in its history, significant dollars to acquire open space. With the aid of grants and donations, the District acquired nearly 500 acres from 2003 to 2006. These acquisitions nearly doubled the size of the Forest Preserve District.

As the county population continued to grow at unprecedented levels, voters approved a $45 million open space bond referendum in 2007. Between 2007 and 2014 the District acquired almost 1700 acres, nearly tripling its holdings. (Numerous capital improvement projects were also completed using bond funds from the 2007 referendum). The District also secured nearly $8 million in land acquisition grant funding from 2007 to 2014.

As of 2014, the District has limited land acquisition dollars available between remaining bond referendum funds and funds acquired from the Land-Cash Ordinance.

Land Acquisition Evaluation Process

The District becomes aware of potential acquisitions in several ways:
- The District contacts a landowner directly to determine if there is interest to sell property. If there is no interest, the District does not pursue any further.
• Landowner or real estate agent contacts the District regarding an available property.
• Resident informs the District of an available property.
• District works with other government agencies, non-profits, and developers on preservation of open space.

Once a property is determined to be available, information regarding the property is gathered by staff and presented to the Board of Commissioners. Included in this information is the Land Acquisition Worksheet (see Appendix #__) that will assist the commissioners in evaluating the property based on its physical characteristics. Other factors including, but not limited to: price, threats to the property, needs of the District, and grant requirements will also be considered by the commissioners when making land acquisition decisions.

Forest Preserve Commissioners, through staff or consultants, negotiate the purchase of property. When agreements are reached with a landowner, the Forest Preserve Commission approves an Acquisition Ordinance providing the officers and staff the authority to carry out necessary due diligence and to complete the acquisition.

The District utilizes fee simple purchases for the majority of its acquisitions. The District has acquired property via donations, dedication agreements with developers, partnerships with non-profits and the Kendall County Land-Cash Ordinance.

Funding for land acquisition comes from a variety of sources including, but not limited to open space bond referendums, state and federal grants and the Kendall County Land-Cash Ordinance.

Land Acquisition History and Maps

The land acquisition history of the Kendall County Forest Preserve District can be divided into three time periods:
• 1964-2002 – This period starts with the formation of the District and concludes just prior to the first open space referendum (map on page ??). [Maps immediately follow Land Acq sect.]
• 2003-2006 – This period begins with the District’s first open space referendum in 2003 and ends just prior to the second open space referendum (map on page ??).
• 2007-2014 – This period starts with the District’s second open space referendum in 2007 and concludes as those funds have been exhausted (map on page ??).

For the complete land acquisition history of the Kendall County Forest Preserve District, please see Appendix??.

Land Acquisition Goals & Objectives

• Apply for and utilize grants whenever possible to maximize land acquisition funds.
• Create a list of high priority potential acquisition sites.
• Consider a future open space acquisition bond referendum.
• Utilize the Natural Treasures of Kendall County Plan as a guide for natural area and open space acquisitions (map on page ??).
• Expand existing preserves, especially those with limited opportunities for expansion or those
with limited access.
- Create and implement land acquisition procedures to streamline acquisition process.
- Increase public awareness regarding land preservation efforts.
- Create greenway corridors along the Fox River and the significant creeks of Kendall County.
- Work in partnership with other governmental agencies, non-profit organizations and private citizens to maximize open space acquisition and preservation.
- Educate landowners on the benefits of land donations.
- Educate landowners and attorneys on the potential benefits and values of conservation easements.
- Educate landowners and attorneys on the variety of financial and estate planning techniques that can result in open space preservation.
- Work in partnership with the Kendall County Planning, Building and Zoning Department, municipalities and developers on conservation design as a means for the preservation of open space.
## Appendix F: Capital Projects, 2007-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forest Preserve</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Grant Funding</th>
<th>Capital Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baker Woods Forest Preserve</td>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>529,500</td>
<td>Ellis House improvements, maintenance building, parking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Improvements to barn, arena, house</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>Improvements to riding arenas and pastures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>Signage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>Gravel parking &amp; tent pad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>950,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>Trails &amp; bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>Ellis House furnishings, storage, improvements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackberry Trails Forest Preserve</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>Signage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris Forest Preserve</td>
<td>2008-10</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>Picnic shelter improvements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoover Forest Preserve</td>
<td>2008-12</td>
<td>134,500</td>
<td>Upgrades to sewage system &amp; water system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Entrance Improvements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>1,850,000</td>
<td>Renovate Rookery, bunkhouses, water main, entrance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010-13</td>
<td>17,600</td>
<td>Upgrade picnic shelters and Neshnabeck Village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1,100,000</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>Trails, campgrounds, parking, restrooms, overlook decks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>260,000</td>
<td>Staff residence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>165,000</td>
<td>Maintenance building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011-13</td>
<td>2,800,000</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>Renovate Meadowhawk Lodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>7,700</td>
<td>Information kiosk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay Woods Forest Preserve</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>369,000</td>
<td>Trails, parking, picnic shelter, overlook deck, restroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millbrook North Forest Preserve</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>11,750</td>
<td>Floodplain Restoration Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millbrook South Forest Preserve</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Native Prairie Seed - 75 acres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>Parking, signage, trail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickerill-Pigott Forest Preserve</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>28,700</td>
<td>Demolition &amp; salvage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Young Forest Preserve</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Bridge replacement, electric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Preserves</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>Improve asphalt entrances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>Dog stations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>Demolition - Hoover, Baker Woods, Millington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>Signage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals**  
8,961,200  
1,630,750
## Land Acquisition Worksheet

Decisions made regarding land acquisition are the responsibility of the Board of Commissioners of the Kendall County Forest Preserve District. This worksheet is meant to assist the board, along with staff recommendations and resident input, in the land acquisition process. Other factors including, but not limited to: price, threats to the property, needs of the District, and grant requirements will also be considered by the commissioners when making land acquisition decisions.

This worksheet is numerically based, with a high score indicating a property with high value as preserved open space. For each quality that a parcel possesses, it receives the corresponding score. The total score can then be compared with scores of other parcels in order to evaluate the properties as potential forest preserves.

### Preserving Natural Features:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Quality Natural Area (prairie, wetland, woodland, stream)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox Riverfront Property</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkage between Protected Open Spaces</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streams/Lakes/Ponds</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion of Current Forest Preserve</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of Endangered or Threatened Species</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Geologic Features</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 acres or larger</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal: 56

### Recreation and Education Potential:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-purpose Trails</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Trails</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water/Fishing/Canoe Access</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic Areas/High Use Areas</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserve Access/Parking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal: 32

### Complement Existing Plans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protect Kendall Now</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kendall County Land Resource Management Plan or Watershed Plan or Municipal/Park District Plan or Trail Plan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal: 12

Total: 100
6. Management & Administration

A. Organization

i. Overview
The Downstate Forest Preserve District Act provides the statutory authority and legal requirements for the formation and operations of all Forest Preserve Districts in Illinois outside of Cook County. The Kendall County Forest Preserve District is governed by a 10-member Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners elects a President, Vice-President, and Secretary, each of which serves a two year term. The Forest Preserve Director reports to the President and the Board of Commissioners.

The Board of Commissioners is responsible for understanding and meeting the open space needs of Kendall County residents as they pertain to the Forest Preserve District. Through its actions and policies, the Board of Commissioners preserves natural areas and open space, manages natural resources, offers environmental education programming, and provides recreational facilities to the public.

To conduct the business of the Forest Preserve District, the Board of Commissioners has several meetings and committees, each with certain functions.

- Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners – These meetings are held twice monthly, consist of all ten commissioners, and are chaired by the President. Final approval for ordinances, claims, land acquisition, policies, budgets, levies, and contracts is granted at the Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners meeting.
- Forest Preserve Committee of the Whole – This committee meets once per month, consists of all ten commissioners, and is chaired by the President. Typically, most items of business are discussed and vetted at the Forest Preserve Committee of the Whole meeting before being forwarded to the Board of Commissioners meeting.
- Forest Preserve Finance Committee – This committee meets twice monthly, consists of five commissioners appointed by the President, and is chaired by a commissioner selected by the President. All claims are vetted by this committee and forwarded to the Board of Commissioners for final payment approval. The Finance Committee also oversees preparation of the annual budget and tax levy ordinances.
- Programming & Events Committee – This committee meets once per month, consists of 5 commissioners appointed by the President, and is chaired by a commissioner selected by the President. The Programming & Events Committee oversees items pertaining to Ellis House and to Meadowhawk Lodge.
Planning Advisory Committee — This committee meets annually or as needed, consists of a combination of 3 commissioners appointed by the President, and 5 members of the public appointed by the President. The Planning Advisory Committee provides input on long-term projects, reviews the Forest Preserve District’s Master Plan on an annual basis and reviews the District’s annual report.

Along with the Downstate Forest Preserve act, several ordinances and policies approved by the Board of Commissioners guide many of the activities that occur on District lands. These include the General Use Regulation Ordinance, Easement & License Ordinance, facility rental policies, and programming policies.

The Forest Preserve Director is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the District, and to implement the actions and policies of the Board of Commissioners.

The main offices of the Kendall County Forest Preserve District are located in the Kendall County Historic Courthouse, 110 West Madison Street, Yorkville, IL 60560

ii. Commission Organizational Chart – complete

iii. Staff Organization Chart – complete

B. Administration

i. Overview
   The District performs a wide variety of administrative duties typical of a governmental open space agency. Many of these tasks are internal including human resource duties, staff coordination and project administration. Other administrative duties involve the public and the Board of Commissioners.

   Many administrative duties are performed by the Forest Preserve Director, but many staff members are assigned significant administrative responsibilities.

ii. Activities (use Responsibilities instead?)
   a. Coordinate District operations, programming, and facilities.
   b. Manage land acquisition and capital projects.
   c. Conducts human resources duties.
   d. Collect all employee timesheets and process pay vouchers for part-time employees.
   e. Calculate and track employee vacation, sick, personal, banked sick and compensatory time. Provide this information to employees on a regular basis.
f. Schedule and track mandatory employee trainings.
g. Conduct annual employee evaluations.
h. Maintain employee files.
i. Provide information as needed to Kendall County Treasurer’s Office and Kendall County Administrative Services regarding human resource issues.
j. Create and post meeting agendas, packets, and minutes.
k. Process accounts payable and accounts receivable.
l. Process facility rental permits and program registration forms.
m. Process and track Freedom of Information Act requests.
n. Coordinate with county departments, outside organizations and the public as needed.

iii. Goals & Objectives
a. Update, create, and administer ordinances and policies that promote efficient operations and adhere to legal requirements.
b. Develop, review and update job descriptions as needed.
c. Update Employee Handbook as needed.
d. Provide training and equipment that promotes a safe working environment for District staff.
e. Encourage public input, participation, and feedback.
f. Create and distribute an annual report for the District.
g. Review the District’s Master Plan on an annual basis.

C. Marketing and Outreach

i. Overview
Communicating with the public is a critical component of the operations of the Kendall County Forest Preserve District. As the District is a public agency, it is paramount to produce and disseminate information about the District to residents.

The Kendall County Forest Preserve District utilizes a variety of print and electronic platforms to provide information about the facilities, programs and accomplishments of the District. While there is more to be done, in recent years the District has greatly expanded its ability to communicate with the public. Traditional sources such as a newsletter, flyers and press releases have been combined with electronic communications to distribute information in ways that are relevant to the public.

ii. Activities
a. Produce and distribute quarterly newsletter via mail and email.
b. Produce and distribute press releases promoting District programs and events.
c. Produce and distribute maps, brochures, and flyers promoting District programs and facilities.
d. Maintain Facebook pages that promote District programs and facilities.
e. Maintain email lists to provide the public with information on specific programs of the District.
f. Respond to resident inquiries via phone, email, and in person.

iii. Goals & Objectives
   a. Continuously promote District sites, programs, and accomplishments.
   b. Produce and update appropriate newsletters, brochures, flyers, maps, and electronic platforms.
   c. Encourage public input, participation and feedback.
   d. Utilize media to promote District facilities, programs and accomplishments.
   e. Provide public presentations and informational sessions as needed.
   f. Evaluate the potential of an online facility reservation system.
   g. Continue to evaluate and utilize new electronic platforms of communicating information.
   h. Partner with applicable groups and organizations to promote District sites, programs and accomplishments.
7. Finances & Budget

a. Overview
The Kendall County Forest Preserve District seeks to maintain and enhance sound fiscal practices and policies regarding collection of revenues, purchasing, contracts, payroll, auditing, insurance, investments and reporting.

District staff, in conjunction with Kendall County offices, processes payroll, accounts receivable and accounts payable. The Kendall County Treasurer is appointed every two years to serve as the Treasurer of the District.

The District maintains a general operating fund, capital funds, and special projects funds. The District’s Investment Policy guides how and where these funds are invested.

The Kendall County Forest Preserve District utilizes a variety of sources for funding operating expenses, land acquisition, capital projects, and programming. Many funding sources have restrictions on how they can be allocated or are sporadic in their availability.

*Property Tax Levy*
The yearly operating expenses of the District are funded predominately by a property tax levy. Expenses typically paid with property tax revenue include salaries, utilities, preserve maintenance, public programming, small equipment purchases, equipment maintenance, office supplies and insurance. The Downstate Forest Preserve Act prohibits property tax revenue collected for operating expenses from being used for the outright purchase of property. Property taxes collected that are to be used for operating expenses are deposited in the general fund budget.

The Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) determines the amount of revenue that can be generated by the property tax levy for operating expenses.

*Land-Cash Ordinance*
The Kendall County Land-Cash Ordinance requires that new residential developments provide for the open space needs of residents through either a dedication of property to the District or cash in lieu of land. Revenue generated through the Land-Cash Ordinance can be used for land acquisition and preserve development.

The Kendall County Land-Cash Ordinance applies only to new residences and housing developments that occur in unincorporated Kendall County. Residential developments within municipal boundaries are governed by the ordinances of that municipality and do not generate revenues for the District.

Revenues collected from the Land-Cash Ordinance are deposited by the Treasurer into a Land-Cash account.

*Bonding Authority*
The District possesses two types of bonding authority, non-referendum and referendum, which can generate revenue for land acquisition, preserve improvements and capital equipment purchases. Both types of bonds are repaid through property tax revenue.

Non-referendum bonding authority allows the District to issue a limited number of bonds determined by outstanding bond debt and interest rates. The Forest Preserve District Commission controls non-referendum bonding authority.

Referendum bonding authority allows the District to issue bonds for an amount not to exceed the statutory debt limit of the District. County residents control referendum bonding authority by voting to approve or disapprove of a referendum that is placed on the ballot by the District.

Grants
The District has been awarded a number of grants from a variety of state agencies, federal agencies and private foundations in recent years. While the vast majority of grants have been secured for land acquisition and capital improvements, grants have been utilized for staffing, programming and natural areas management. The District contracts with a grant administrator who assists with grant planning and prepares grant proposals.

Applicable grant programs include, but are not limited to:
Open Space Land Acquisition & Development – This Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) program provides matching funds for land acquisition (up to $750,000) and development projects (up to $400,000). Applicants must provide a minimum of 50% of the total project cost. Applications are typically due in July of each year.

Recreational Trails Program – This federal program is administered by IDNR and provides matching funds for trail construction and trail rehabilitation (up to $200,000), and land acquisition for trails (no limit). Applicants must provide a minimum of 20% of the total project cost. Applications are typically due in March of each year.

Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program – This IDNR program provides matching funds for bike trail construction and trail rehabilitation (up to $200,000), and land acquisition for trails (no limit). Applicants must provide a minimum of 50% of the total project cost. Applications are typically due in March of each year.

Park & Recreational Facility Construction Program – This IDNR program provides matching funds for park and recreation unit construction projects, and land acquisition for such projects. Applications are typically due in January of each year.

Public Museum Capital Grant Program – This program is jointly administered by IDNR and the Illinois State Museum and provides funds to public museums to develop or update exhibits and facilities (up to 100%).
Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation – This organization was established in 1999 as an independent foundation with a $225 million endowment provided by Commonwealth Edison and whose mission is to improve energy efficiency, advance the development of renewable energy resources and protect natural areas in communities all across Illinois. Their land acquisition grant program provides up to 80% of projects costs, with the applicant supplying the remaining 20%. Letters of Inquiries are due in January and July.

Grand Victoria Foundation – This organization was established in 1996 by the Grand Victoria Casino in Elgin, which voluntarily donates 20 percent of its annual net operating income to fund initiatives that help turn local communities into vibrant civic hubs. This organization provides funding for land acquisition through its Vital Lands Illinois program. Applications can be submitted anytime during the year.

Kendall County Transportation Alternatives Program – This program is administered by Kendall County and provides matching funds for trail and sidewalk construction and rehabilitation along federal, state and county roads (up to $50,000). Applicants must provide a minimum of 50% of the total project costs. Applications are due in April of each year.

**Program and Facility Rental Fees**
The District charges fees for certain programming and rental facilities. These fees help to offset the operational costs to provide the programming and to maintain the facilities. Program and facility rental fees are deposited into the District’s general operating fund budget. These fees are reviewed by the Forest Preserve Commission annually.

**Farm License Revenue**
The District has farm licenses agreements for several properties that have been acquired in recent years. Such licenses are authorized by the Downstate Forest Preserve Act and the revenues are deposited in the District’s general operating fund budget. These licenses are reviewed and approved by the Forest Preserve Commission annually.

b. Activities
   1. Collect, track and deposit program and facility rental fees.
   2. Collect, track and deposit farm license revenue.
   3. Collect, track and deposit grant revenue.
   4. Receive and process accounts payable.
   5. Develop annual general fund budget, annual capital budget and tax levy.
   6. Obtain quotes for goods, services and projects as needed.
   7. Request proposals for professional services as needed.
   8. Provide local, state, and federal agencies with necessary financial reports.

c. Goals & Objectives
   1. Continue to review and improve the process and format of the annual general fund budget, capital budget and tax levies.
2. Continue to review and improve multi-year budgeting for operations and capital expenditures.
3. Review and improve the District’s investment policy as necessary.
4. Develop and institute new ways to gather and review pertinent financial information from District operations.
5. Evaluate program fees and facility rental fees annually or as needed.
6. Maintain and improve standards for obtaining quotes and bids for goods, services, and projects.
7. Review District insurance purchased through Kendall County for value and cost. Determine the financial and operational effects of the District purchasing insurance coverage separate from Kendall County.
8. Review and implement recommendations of auditor as warranted.
9. Analyze the need, cost and benefit to hire financial staff.
10. Develop and implement strategy to improve fund balance.
11. Investigate and evaluate alternate revenue streams.
12. Investigate potential for an open space bond referendum.
13. Investigate potential for creating tax levies specific to employee retirement, Medicare and insurance.
14. Partner with applicable government agencies, non-profit organizations, and businesses on cost saving and increased revenue initiatives.
8. Operations & Programming

a. Grounds & Natural Resources Department
   i. Overview
      The Grounds & Natural Resources Department is responsible for maintaining all of the facilities and natural areas of the District. This department is led by the Superintendent of Grounds and Natural Resources and is housed mainly at Harris Forest Preserve. Hoover Forest Preserve and Ellis House & Equestrian Center also have maintenance equipment, facilities, and staff specific to those sites.

      The Grounds & Natural Resources Department provides visitors with a quality experience through a high standard of maintenance, cleanliness, and service. The department is also charged with performing natural areas management projects in the District woodlands, prairies, and wetlands.

      Currently, the District has no staff specifically dedicated to natural resources work. While the Grounds & Natural Resources staff performs a variety of natural areas management projects each year, the District is significantly limited in its ability to have an impactful natural areas management program on a year round basis due to staff time limitations.

      The Grounds & Natural Resources staff also maintains the District’s vehicles and capital equipment. The department possesses several trucks, trailers, mowers, and tractors. In the future, the department will require additional equipment in order to perform its duties safely and more efficiently.

   ii. Activities
      a. Manages and restores natural areas.
      b. Maintains asphalt, limestone, woodchip, and dirt trails.
      c. Maintains picnic shelters, campsites, and baseball fields.
      d. Maintains wells, sewage treatment lagoon, septic fields and restroom buildings.
      e. Maintains bunkhouses, multipurpose event buildings, education buildings, horse stable, indoor riding arena and outdoor riding arenas.
      f. Maintains various maintenance, storage and ancillary structures.
      g. Maintains turf grass, landscaping, roads, parking lots and signage.
      h. With the Environmental Education Department, maintains the Neshnabe’k Native American Village, Rookery and Nature Exploration Station.
      i. Open and close preserves daily.
      j. Interacts with preserve visitors.
      k. Prepares and maintains rental facilities for use by the public.
      l. Maintains the District’s equipment.
      m. Assists other departments.
      n. Coordinates community service workers.
o. Coordinate sheriff’s patrols.

iii. Goals & Objectives
   a. Keep the grounds and facilities of the District to a high standard of maintenance and cleanliness.
   b. Maintain District facilities for the use and safety of the public, and for protection of natural resources.
   c. Provide positive interactions with the public.
   d. Maintain District equipment and vehicles.
   e. Coordinate with the District’s volunteer programs to assist with achieving goals and objectives.
   f. Partner with other agencies, community groups and youth groups to assist with achieving goals and objectives.
   g. Continue to develop and implement a preventative maintenance schedule for District facilities and equipment.
   h. Maintain the natural resources of the District through management and restoration projects.
   i. Create natural areas maps and natural areas management plans for the preserves.
   j. Encourage public input, participation, and feedback.
   k. Evaluate the need and opportunity to hire staff specific to natural resources.
   l. Evaluate additional capital equipment purchases for efficiency and employee safety.
   m. Evaluate sheriff’s patrols, employee safety and public safety.
   n. Evaluate the ability of Harris Forest Preserve to be a viable Grounds & Natural Resources center of operations in the future.

b. Environmental Education Department
   i. Overview
      The Environmental Education Department is responsible for creating and implementing a wide variety of educational programs offered by the District. The department is led by the Supervisor of Environmental Education and is based out of the main District offices in the Kendall County Historic Courthouse. The Laws of Nature Center located in the Historic Courthouse, and The Rookery building and Neshnabek Native American Village at Hoover Forest Preserve are administered by the Environmental Education Department.

      Like other sections of the District, the Environmental Education Department has grown dramatically in recent years. The numbers of summer camps, school programs, recurring programs, and seasonal programs have expanded as public demand for these environmental education offerings has increased. The department also recently initiated an early childhood learning program that operates concurrently with the school year.
The Kendall County Outdoor Education Center (KCOEC) is located at Hoover Forest Preserve, but is not operated by the Forest Preserve District. Administered by the Regional Office of Education, the KCOEC is a cooperative of school districts that bus students to Hoover for outdoor education programming. The KCOEC also does various other programs throughout the year, including several cooperative efforts with the District.

ii. Activities
   a. Conducts summer camps.
   b. Conducts programming for school groups.
   c. Conducts recurring programs.
   d. Conducts seasonal and one-time programs.
   e. Conducts Natural Beginnings Early Childhood program.
   f. Partners with other agencies to conduct large programs and events.
   g. Maintains exhibits in the Laws of Nature Center.
   h. Maintains accession records for the Laws of Nature Center.
   i. With the Grounds & Natural Resources Department, maintains the Neshnabe’k Native American Village and Rookery building.
   j. Coordinates Hoover Volunteer Program.
   k. Assists with production of the District’s quarterly newsletter.
   l. Promotes environmental education programming via Facebook, email, flyers, events and print media.

iii. Goals & Objectives
   a. Continue to develop and offer a variety of quality environmental education programs and events to residents.
   b. Communicate environmental education programs and events to residents via print, electronic and other appropriate formats.
   c. Operate environmental education facilities to a high standard of maintenance, cleanliness and safety.
   d. Encourage public input, participation and feedback.
   e. Update interpretive signage in the preserves as needed.
   f. Continue to develop the Hoover Volunteer Program to assist with programming and facilities.
   g. Continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with traditional and non-traditional educators.
   h. Participate in applicable environmental education organizations.
   i. Evaluate potential online registration capability.
   j. Evaluate expenses and revenues of programs on a regular basis.
   k. Evaluate the location of the Laws of Nature Center as a viable, long-term education site.

   c. Ellis House & Equestrian Center
      i. Overview
The Ellis House & Equestrian Center location was acquired in 2008 and consists of 45 acres. Ellis is part of the 240 acre Baker Woods Forest Preserve that is located south and west of the house and stable. Ellis was opened in the summer of 2009.

Ellis House & Equestrian Center has two main centers of operations, house rentals and equestrian activities, although there is significant overlap between the two. House rentals involve the house, event tent and the grounds immediately surrounding the house. Operations related to rentals are administered by the Event Coordinator.

The equestrian activities involve the stable, indoor and outdoor riding arenas, pastures and hayfields. Ellis offers a variety of equestrian programming including riding lessons, children’s parties, summer camps and other special events. Ellis owns school horses that it utilizes for equestrian programming. The equestrian operations are administered by the Barn Manager.

The grounds and facilities of Ellis House & Equestrian Center are maintained by the Grounds & Natural Resources Department.

ii. Activities
   a. Conducts riding lessons.
   b. Conducts children’s parties.
   c. Conducts summer camps.
   d. Conducts recurring programs.
   d. Conducts seasonal and one-time programs.
      a. Conducts annual Reindeer Run 5K in December.
      e. Partners with other agencies to conduct large programs and events.
      f. Conducts wedding and other house rentals.
      g. Coordinates Ellis House & Equestrian Center Volunteer Program.
   h. Coordinates community service workers.
   i. Assists with production of the District’s quarterly newsletter.
   j. Promotes Ellis House & Equestrian Center via Facebook, email, flyers, events and print media.

i. Goals & Objectives
   a. Continue to develop and offer quality equestrian programs and events to residents.
   b. Continue to provide superior rental facilities and services.
   c. Publicize Ellis facilities, programs and events to residents via print, electronic and other appropriate formats.
   d. Operate Ellis to a high standard of maintenance, cleanliness, and safety.
   e. Encourage public input, participation and feedback.
   f. Continue to develop the Ellis House & Equestrian Center Volunteer Program to assist with programming and facilities.
g. Continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with other equestrian facilities and organizations.

h. Participate in applicable equestrian organizations.

i. Evaluate expenses and revenues of programs and facilities on a regular basis.

d. Hoover Forest Preserve
   
i. Overview
      At just under 400 acres, Hoover Forest Preserve is the largest site owned by the Kendall County Forest Preserve District. Acquired from 2003-07, Hoover stretches along the Fox River for .75 miles and has wooded bluffs, fens, seeps and grasslands. As a former Boy Scout camp, Hoover possesses a number of buildings, most of which have undergone significant renovation since 2007. Hoover also has its own water system and wastewater treatment system.

Hoover is the busiest of the Kendall County Forest Preserves. With bunkhouses, campsites, trails, ballfield, picnic shelters and overlook decks, Hoover has plenty of attractions for outdoor enthusiasts. Meadowhawk Lodge provides a spacious indoor event space. The Rookery and the nearby Neshnabek Village and Nature Exploration Station are the core environmental education facilities of the District.

Hoover is also home to the Kendall County Outdoor Education Center, a cooperative of local school districts that brings thousands of students to Hoover during the school year.

Hoover has a Site Manager who lives at the preserve maintains the grounds, buildings, and natural areas, with the assistance of other Grounds & Natural Resources staff. Environmental education staff members spend significant time at Hoover to conduct programming.

ii. Activities
   
a. Prepares and maintains Meadowhawk Lodge, bunkhouses and tent campsites for rental use by the public.
   
b. With the Environmental Education Department, maintains the Neshnabek Native American Village, Rookery, and Nature Exploration Station.
   
c. Maintains other structures, water system and wastewater treatment system.
   
d. Maintains turf grass, landscaping, trails, roads, parking lots and signage.
   
e. Open and close preserves daily.
   
f. Interacts with preserve visitors.
   
g. Maintains the District’s equipment.
   
h. Assists other departments.
   
i. Coordinates community service workers.

iii. Goals & Objectives
   
a. Keep the grounds and facilities of Hoover to a high standard of maintenance and cleanliness.
b. Maintain Hoover facilities for the use and safety of the public, and for protection of natural resources.
c. Publicize Hoover facilities to residents via print, electronic and other appropriate formats.
d. Provide positive interactions with the public.
e. Coordinate with the Kendall County Outdoor Education Center on a regular basis.
f. Partner with other agencies, community groups and youth groups to assist with achieving goals and objectives.
g. Continue to develop and implement a preventative maintenance schedule for Hoover facilities and equipment.
h. Maintain the natural resources of Hoover through management and restoration projects.
i. Encourage public input, participation, and feedback.

e. Volunteer Programs

i. Volunteers are instrumental in assisting the District achieve its goals and objectives, and in fostering public involvement and appreciation in District efforts. Volunteers provide experience, knowledge and time to improve the facilities, natural areas and programs of the District. The District has three distinct volunteer groups - the Natural Areas Volunteer (NAV) Program, Ellis House & Equestrian Center Volunteer Program and the Hoover Volunteer Program.

The Natural Areas Volunteer Program was started in 2009. NAVs assist with natural areas management projects, monitor District trails, and participate in regional monitoring programs such as Plants of Concern and the Bird Conservation Network. The NAV Program is led by the Natural Area Volunteer Coordinator, who handles all of the administration, training and scheduling for this group. The NAV Program utilizes an old scout staff building at Hoover Forest Preserve for storage and training space. The NAV Coordinator works with the Superintendent of the Grounds & Natural Resources Department to coordinate certain activities and goals. The NAVs work District-wide in many of the preserves. NAVs perform various resource management tasks such as native seed collection and processing, brush removal, invasive plant control, controlled burning and ecological monitoring.

The Ellis House & Equestrian Center Volunteer Program began in 2009 and volunteers assist with maintenance, programming, events and horse care. Staff members at Ellis are responsible for administering, training and coordinating the Ellis volunteers. The vast majority of Ellis volunteer time is spent on-site, with occasional time spent at other preserves or promotional events.
The Hoover Volunteer Program was initiated in 2012. These volunteers assist with the care and use of the Neshnabe’k Native American Village, maintaining the planting beds and rain gardens, and with Environmental Education programming at Hoover Forest Preserve. The Hoover Volunteer program is coordinated by one of the Naturalists in the Environmental Education Department. These volunteers work primarily at Hoover Forest Preserve.

ii. Activities
a. Collects and processes volunteer application forms, volunteer agreements, and background check forms.
b. Conducts volunteer orientations and trainings.
c. Supervises volunteer activities.
d. Communicates with volunteers regarding scheduling, projects, and volunteer related issues.
e. Tracks volunteer hours and projects.
f. Maintains volunteer files.
g. Maintains volunteer equipment and supplies.
h. Schedules and supervises volunteer workdays and events.
i. Coordinates with other agencies and organizations on projects.
j. Hosts volunteer appreciation events.
k. Assists with production of the District’s quarterly newsletter.

iii. Goals and Objectives
a. Continue to improve volunteer related forms and documentation.
b. Develop and institute District-wide volunteer orientation.
c. Continue to improve and expand volunteer trainings.
d. Provide a safe working environment for all volunteers.
e. Provide positive interactions with the public.
f. Promote the volunteer opportunities of the District to recruit additional volunteers.
g. Develop a consistent volunteer appreciation and recognition program.
h. Develop strategies and solicit input to foster volunteer retention.
i. Encourage public input, participation, and feedback.
j. Continue to work cooperatively with other agencies and organizations on projects.
k. Participate in applicable volunteer management organizations.