KENDALL COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
PLANNING AD-HOC COMMITTEE

AGENDA

TUESDAY
MARCH 25, 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
Kendall County Forest Preserve District
Master Plan
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1. Introduction

A. 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.

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. A group of residents formed the Kendall Natural Area Guardians (KNAGs) and 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 many years for land acquisition purposes.

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 Citizen’s 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) 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 open space 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 2013 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 current 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.

B. 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.

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

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

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

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

9. Add goal regarding special facilities such as Meadowhawk & Ellis?

D. 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)
3. Forest Preserves and Facilities

a. Overview

From its creation in 1964 to 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. 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.

b. Preserve & Facility Chart
   Complete

c. Preserve Summaries
   Mostly complete

d. Preserve Maps
   Mostly complete
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Area (sq ft)</th>
<th>Perimeter (ft)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field 1</td>
<td>Football</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field 2</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field 3</td>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field 4</td>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Area and perimeter measurements are approximate.*

**Facility Chart**

- **Field 1**: Football, 10,000 sq ft, 2,200 perimeter
- **Field 2**: Soccer, 8,000 sq ft, 1,800 perimeter
- **Field 3**: Baseball, 6,000 sq ft, 1,600 perimeter
- **Field 4**: Softball, 4,000 sq ft, 1,400 perimeter

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**Additional Details**

- **Total**: 28,000 sq ft, 7,000 perimeter
- **Other Fields**: Baseball, 6,000 sq ft, 1,600 perimeter
- **Shared Fields**: Football, 10,000 sq ft, 2,200 perimeter
- **Other Activities**: Track, 2,000 sq ft, 1,000 perimeter

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**Note**: Some fields may have additional amenities such as dugouts, scoreboards, and spectator seating.
JAY WOODS FOREST PRESERVE

Address: 860 Creek Road, Plano

Township: Little Rock

Total Acres: 120

Existing Facilities:
- Parking: Yes  Spaces: ?
- Trails: Yes  Miles: 1.8
- Shelter: Yes  Number: 1  Tables: ?
- Restroom: Yes
- V.I. Sign: Yes
- Water: Yes
- Other: Overlook deck  Council ring  Corn crib

Acquisition History:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acquired From</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Grants</th>
<th>Acres</th>
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<td>The Conservation Foundation</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Donation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robb</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Fee Simple</td>
<td>750,000</td>
<td>750,000</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Natural Communities:

Savanna, open woodland, prairie, stream

Jay Woods FP was acquired through a donation by Arlene and Dale Robb, as the property had been in Arlene's family since the 1850s. With the assistance of The Conservation Foundation as the holder of the donated parcel and a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the District was able to acquire the 120 acres at no cost. The District repurposed the 1950s corn crib as the trail head complete with interpretative signage.

Jay Woods contains 45 acres of woodlands east of Creek Road. These woodlands contain a variety of habitat types including oak savannas, mesic woodlands, and wet-mesic woodlands. The Little Rock Creek bisects the woodlands. The 75 acres on the west side of the preserve are being restored to tallgrass prairie and also have naturalized stormwater detention areas.
4. Capital Projects

a. Overview
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 (see Appendix #).

Capital projects are defined using these criteria:
1. Lifespan of at least 3 years
2. Upgrade, repair or replacement of existing facilities
3. Construction of new facilities
4. Restoration or management of natural resources
5. A monetary value of at least $__ - $?

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.

b. Capital Project Planning
Keep it general, 'vision' instead of 'plan'
Create list of what is typical in all preserves – parking, bathroom, signage, etc.
List of items that the District would like add in general (not necessarily specific to a site) – look at Focus Groups and surveys
“These projects subject to capital funding availability and funding for operations and maintenance...”
Priority Plan – Group capital projects into A/B/C priorities so that there is some sort of hierarchy of projects moving forward.

c. Goals & Objectives
   i. Establish and maintain five-year capital plan. Review and update the capital plan annually.
   ii. Develop standardized construction details for use in the District’s capital projects.
   iii. Solicit public input for capital projects.
   iv. Develop concept plans, cost estimates, and construction documents for capital projects as needed.
   v. Apply for and utilize grants to maximize capital project funds.
   vi. Develop a land use classification system to guide the location of capital improvements and protection of natural resources on District lands.
   vii. 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.
   viii. 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.
   ix. Abide by Kendall County Planning, Building and Zoning Department codes and regulations for applicable capital projects.
   x. Construct and maintain facilities to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
   xi. Facilitate donations of funds, goods, services, and labor for use with capital projects.
5. Land Acquisition

a. Overview

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 (Maramech 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 late 2013 the District acquired more than 1830 acres, nearly tripling its holdings. (Numerous capital improvement projects were also completed using bond funds from the 2007 referendum). The District also secured close to $8 million in land acquisition grant funding from 2007 to 2013.

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

The District becomes aware of potential acquisitions in several ways:
1. 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.
2. Landowner or real estate agent contacts the District regarding an available property.
3. Resident informs the District of an available property.
4. 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 (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 and grant requirements are 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.

c. History and Maps
   Chart – complete, some updating needed

d. 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.
• 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.
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 – 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 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.
• Special Facilities 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 Special Facilities 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 X commissioners appointed by the President, and X members of the public appointed by the President. The Planning 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.

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

iv. District Guidelines – not 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 also have significant administrative responsibilities.

ii. Activities
a. Collect all employee timesheets and process pay vouchers for part-time employees.
b. Calculate and track employee vacation, sick-personal, banked sick and compensatory time. Provide this information to employees on a regular basis.
c. Schedule and track mandatory employee trainings.
d. Conduct annual employee evaluations.
e. Maintain employee files.
f. Provide information as needed to Kendall County Treasurer's Office and Kendall County Administrative Services regarding human resource issues.
g. Create and post meeting agendas, packets, and minutes.
h. Process accounts payable and accounts receivable.
i. Process facility rental permits and program registration forms.
k. Coordinate District staff, operations and projects.
l. Coordinate with county departments, outside organizations and the public as needed.

iii. Goals & Objectives
   a. Update, create, and administer 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 inquires 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.

The District currently utilizes the payroll, accounts receivable, accounts payable, and accounting systems of Kendall County. 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.

*List out grants/grantors specifically? – OSLAD, ICECF, RTP, Grand Vic?*

**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.

**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.

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. Maintain and improve standards for obtaining quotes and bids for goods,
services, and projects.
   6. 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.
   7. Review and implement recommendations of auditor as warranted.
   8. Analyze the need, cost and benefit to hire financial staff.
  10. Investigate and evaluate alternate revenue streams.
  11. Investigate potential for an open space bond referendum.
  12. Investigate potential for creating tax levies specific to employee
retirement, Medicare and insurance.
  13. 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 limited in its ability to have a focused natural areas management program on a year round basis.

      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. Maintains turf grass.
   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. Open and close preserves daily.
   h. Interacts with preserve visitors.
   i. Prepares rental facilities for use by the public.
j. Performs natural areas management.
k. Maintains the District's equipment.
l. Assists other departments.
m. 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 Neshnabe'k 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 of 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 Family Fun Night one time every month.
      e. Conducts annual Reindeer Run 5K in December.
      d. Conducts seasonal and one-time programs.
e. Partners with other agencies to conduct large programs and events.
f. Conducts weddings 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. Communicate 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.

k. Special Facilities
   i. Overview
      The District operates two special facilities – Ellis House at Baker Woods Forest Preserve, and Meadowhawk Lodge at Hoover Forest Preserve.
   ii. Activities
   iii. Goals & Objectives

l. 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 and programs of the District. The District has three distinct volunteer groups - the Natural Area Volunteer (NAV) Program, Ellis
House & Equestrian Center Volunteer Program and the Hoover Volunteer Program.

The Natural Area Volunteer Program was started in 20___. 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 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. The NAVs work District-wide in many of the preserves.

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, and in maintaining the planting beds and rain gardens at Hoover Forest Preserve. The Hoover Volunteer program is coordinated by one of the Naturalists in the Environmental Education Department. These volunteers work exclusively 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.
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 attract additional volunteers.
   g. Develop a consistent volunteer appreciation and acknowledgment program.
   h. Encourage public input, participation, and feedback.
   i. Continue to work cooperatively with other agencies and organizations on projects.
Master Plan Project List – FY14

1. Adopt Land Acquisition Procedure – Board of Commissioners

2. Restructure the various FP committees – Board of Commissioners

3. Update and adopt Employee Handbook – FP Director & Board of Commissioners

4. Update and adopt Record Retention Policy – FP Director & Board of Commissioners

5. Complete Human Resources Audit – FP Director, Board of Commissioners

6. Apply for land acquisition grant funding – FP Director & Board of Commissioners

7. Complete marketing plan in conjunction with Illinois Benedictine University – FP staff, FP Director, Board of Commissioners

8. Develop and institute new ways to gather and review pertinent financial information from District operations – FP Director, Board of Commissioners, County Finance Director

9. Review and improve the process and format of the annual general fund budget, capital budget, and tax levies – FP Director, Board of Commissioners, County Finance Director

10. Create and adopt annual report – FP Staff, FP Director, Board of Commissioners

11. Review and update Master Plan – FP Director, Planning Ad-hoc Committee, Board of Commissioners

12. Create and adopt Master Plan Project List for FY15 – FP staff, FP Director, Planning Ad-hoc Committee, Board of Commissioners