Our Mission
The McHenry County Conservation District exists to preserve, restore and manage natural areas and open spaces for their intrinsic value and for the benefits to present and future generations.

Our Vision
McHenry County Conservation District will be a premier public agency in the country for preserving, protecting and managing open space. Residents will have developed a personal responsibility for their local environment, gained a greater appreciation for their natural world and invested into ensuring its future protection. Achieving this vision will:

• Inspire respect for the land;
• Promote sound environmental practices;
• Promote the long-term viability of the county’s biodiversity;
• Provide opportunities for responsible use of the land in concert with natural resources;
• Promote environmental stewardship;
• Provide quality experiences that promote green, healthy and balanced lifestyles;
• Connect children to nature and;
• Foster public and private partnerships.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Stephen Barrett
President
David Kranz
Vice President
Peter Merkel
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Trustee
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County Board Liaison
Elizabeth S. Kessler
Executive Director

Upcoming Board Meetings
Dec 21 | Jan 19 | Feb 16
Brookdale Administrative Offices
18410 US Hwy. 14, Woodstock
Ph 815.338.6223
Public Session begins at 6 p.m.
Agendas posted at MCCDistrict.org.

From the Board President —

During troubling times, moments of chaos, or days of uncertainty we could all use, and have come to rely on, the peace and tranquility that the great outdoors can offer. Whether it be a solitary walk in the woods or a family outing enjoying an afternoon on the sled hill, we all need safe places to play and unwind.

There is much that we take for granted right here in McHenry County. We drive past those protected views at forty miles an hour, tackling our tasks and troubles of the day, and barely glance out the window. But without the wide open landscapes and trails in the woods, McHenry County would not be the treasured home we hold dear.

However, the Conservation District faces the challenge of maintaining and restoring district public open lands and numerous outdoor recreational amenities in a time of shrinking budgets and tax cuts. Whether your concerns are stormwater storage, carbon sequestration, easing traffic congestion, finding green infrastructure solutions, or just desire more outdoor recreational pursuits, the Conservation District’s public open lands are interconnected with our daily lives. That is why I am excited about the upcoming Conservation Congress 2018: Sustaining the Dream; Stewarding the Places we Love.

This collaboration and energy of over 100 delegates coming together to plan for the future gives me great hope for creating a county my grandchildren will also cherish. My hope is that on February 10th, the many leaders in our county will find common ground, discuss important issues facing our county from groundwater recharge and impacts to human health to geotourism—and get excited about the future.

Sincerely,
Stephen Barret — Board President

Landscapes is a FREE publication. To subscribe or update your contact info: email MCCD@MCCDistrict.org or call (815) 338-6223. The publication can also be read online at MCCDistrict.org.

Editor: Wendy Kummerer
Graphic Designer: Lora Petrak
Contributors: Education Dept., Denice Beck
Photographic Contributors: Weg Thomas, District Staff, and others as indicated.
Front Cover: Pleasant Valley Amphitheater by Lora Petrak
Back Cover: The Hollows Campground by Wendy Kummerer

Sign up for our E-newsletter at www.MCCDistrict.org

Connect with us:
**Endangered Beauty**
by Carol Freeman

**On Exhibit: through Jan. 14**

Lost Valley Visitor Center—Glacial Park

In 2003, award-winning photographer Carol Freeman set out to capture some of the 483 threatened and endangered species on camera — and it became the ultimate labor of love. “Every species I’ve photographed has a story,” she said, adding her hope is those who view the exhibit will be compelled to help save Illinois’ endangered beauty.

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**Statement of Revenues & Expenditures**

All Funds—Summarized, Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2017*

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>In Every Issue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTUAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>Corrected copy - reprinted from Fall Landscapes 2017.</strong></td>
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### Revenues:

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<td>Tax Revenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
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<td>Farm &amp; Property Leases</td>
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<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>90,132</td>
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<td>Programs &amp; Services</td>
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<td>Other Revenues</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td><strong>$22,237,037</strong></td>
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### Expenditures:

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<tr>
<td>Debt Service</td>
<td>12,004,529</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>8,369,891</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Outlays:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Acquisition</td>
<td>1,848,717</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sites &amp; Trails</td>
<td>580,226</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>299,363</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
<td><strong>$23,102,726</strong></td>
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### Other Financing Sources:

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<td>Transfers in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfers (out)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sale of Capital Assets</td>
<td>28,225</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Sources</strong></td>
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**Net Change in Fund Balances**

**$(837,464)$**

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**FY 16/17 Revenues**

- **Tax Revenue** 88.6%
- Grants 5.0%
- Farm & Property Leases 4.8%
- Investment Income 0.4%
- Programs & Services 0.6%
- Other Revenues 0.6%

**FY 16/17 Expenditures**

- Debt Service 52%
- Capital Outlays 4%
- Land Acquisition 8%
- Operations 36%
News & Noteworthy:

Senator Karen McConnaughay Hosts 3rd Annual Women’s Conference

Recognizing the accomplishments of numerous incredible women leaders, Senator Karen McConnaughay hosted a panel discussion at Elgin Community College. The evening event brought together women leaders from a variety of backgrounds to share their experiences and successes in the workplace. McHenry County Conservation District Executive Director Elizabeth Kessler, Executive Administrative Assistant Anne Basten and Trustee Carolyn Campbell were in attendance and appreciated the opportunity to strengthen relationships with other thoughtful, educated and empowered women.

Openlands Annual Luncheon Features Ed Collins as Keynote Speaker

Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources Ed Collins has the honor of being the keynote speaker at Openlands annual luncheon in November. Collins will present the inspiration and practicality of protecting the last remaining stands of oak woodlands. He will highlight the District’s efforts toward the development of the first comprehensive spatial mapping and distribution of oak loss in McHenry County, completed in 2004. This project launched Lake County Forest Preserve District to map their oak ecosystems, which eventually led to the development of the Oak Ecosystem Recovery Plan for the Chicago Wilderness region.

Have you Tuned IN Lately?

ON THE AIR with Huntley Community Radio 101.5 FM:

“WIDE OPEN SPACES with McHenry County Conservation District”

Thursdays & Saturdays at 11:30 a.m.

Listen LIVE at Huntleyradio.org or download the PODCASTS

Spend some time each month to hear behind the scenes conversations that inspire an appreciation for our natural world. Each month highlights connections in conservation through preservation, environmental education, and outdoor interests and recreational pursuits. The program is hosted by Executive Director Elizabeth Kessler.

Huntley Community Radio is an all-volunteer run, professionally guided, Internet radio station streaming 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year.

Illinois Association of Park Districts Intergovernmental Cooperation Award

Boone County Conservation District, Openlands, McHenry County Conservation District, McHenry County Division of Transportation

The resourcefulness and creativity of four agencies working together resulted in the successful addition of a new recreational amenity, the Kishwaukee River Canoe Launch at East County Line Conservation Area in Boone County. (Located at 4700 County Line Road, in Marengo. Park on the east side parking lot and launch on the west.)

Combine One Grade “A” Stream + the need for a new Recreational River Access + a Roadway Bridge in need of Replacement + Wetlands in need of Mitigation and Reconstruction + a need for a Funding Source = One Dynamic and Creative Example of Intergovernmental Collaboration and Public/Private Partnerships.

The Kishwaukee River is a grade “A” high-quality stream supporting a diversity of aquatic life. This location became popular as a put in location because it is the uppermost spot on the North Branch of the Kishwaukee River that sustains enough water to paddle all summer. Paddling, and particularly kayaking, has exploded in popularity in the past 20 years by those looking for a great outdoor experience, but want the ease of developed launches with gentle access to rivers.

When McHenry DOT needed to replace a bridge, and Boone County Conservation District could secure land, and McHenry Conservation District could provide parking, and Openlands would assist in the purchase and transfer of property, a 10-year vision for a new outdoor recreational amenity came to life.

This outstanding award was also acknowledged and recognized by proclamation in the Illinois House of Representatives offered by Representative Steven Reick “joining in the commemoration of the effort, dedication and hard work that led to success and further expresses its best wishes for personal happiness and professional achievement.”

Office of the Illinois Attorney General

In the News

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Johnsburg Students help Plant 100s of Trees via a ComEd Green Region Grant

In celebration of Oaktober, over 160 8th graders from Johnsburg Junior High School and 20 Johnsburg High School students assisted in planting hundreds of oaks, hickories and hazelnut trees at the District’s Pioneer Fen Conservation Area.

The tree planting was made possible by a $10,000 ComEd Green Region Grant that awards funds for the protection and improvement of open land in ComEd’s service area of northern Illinois that focus on conservation, preservation and improvements to parks and recreation resources. The Conservation District then secured an additional $10,000 in funds to reforest a 14-acre oak woodland complex that reconnects two existing oak woodlands, resulting in the restoration of 40-acre oak woodland.

As part of the annual Hundred Oaks for a Hundred Years event, the District hopes to draw attention to the changing forest dynamics of the region, teach about stewardship and restoration efforts in the county. Recent data illustrates current oak stands in the County are composed of aged and aging trees, with little to no natural recruitment. There are multiple working hypotheses as to the cause, but the projected effect one hundred years forward is quite bleak for future oak communities across the region. As scientists continue to search for missing links in the oak ecosystem recruitment sequence, applied ecological practitioners look to bridge future oak parent shortfalls by planting and connecting woodland blocks in an effort to preserve and improve current oak communities.

The Hundred Years planting event illustrates the evolving relationships between human culture and nature on the McHenry County landscape over time. The event remembers the past land use and history, but also celebrates the present—highlighting the promise to future generations to leave the land in a better state than we found it.

Wonder Lake Girl Scout Troop #1880 Donate Bluebird Boxes

Girl Scouts and leader Amy Anderson from Wonder Lake Troop #1880 presented five bluebird nest boxes to the Conservation District Board of Trustees. The nest boxes were constructed by the girls as part of a woodworking badge and Bronze Award project, and will be placed at conservation areas to provide nesting habitat for Eastern Bluebirds. Thanks to the girls, leaders, parents, and Amy’s husband Chris Anderson who is a District volunteer bluebird monitor!

Rare Species finds home in McHenry County Conservation Site

The Fingered Dagger moth caterpillar (*Acronicta dactylina*) was found on willow in Glacial Park. This sighting is the only recorded sighting in IL and one of only 53 verified reports of this species on the “Butterflies and Moths of North America” website. Their range appears to be more north and northeast of Illinois. Flight: May-August. Caterpillar Hosts: Alders, birches, cottonwood, poplars, and willows. Range: Newfoundland to North Carolina Mountains, west to Manitoba and Illinois.

Hurricane Irma Transports Atlantic Coast Shorebirds to Glacial Park

Hurricane Irma transported numerous species of birds far from their normal haunts. A rare encounter and potentially an after effect of hurricane Irma was the spotting of six White-faced Ibis that spent a week in the marshy wetlands of Glacial Park. These primarily Atlantic Coast residents were presumed to be caught up in the storms circulation, depositing them far from where they originated and thus provided a unique birding observation of this group of shorebirds spied hundreds of miles from their coastal range. Out of concern for the birds rest and recuperation, the Conservation District did not post any notices about their presence.

*Photos by Marty Hazel*
Wildlife Resource Center Success Stories!

Conservation Areas Provide Critical Habitat for Blanding’s Turtles—
Just driving by a Conservation Area you would never guess how important these protected sites are to different species. Did you know over 19 conservation areas contain critical habitat for State Endangered Blanding’s turtles. When staff discovers a Blanding’s turtle they will capture the individual and apply a Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT-tag) to track its whereabouts.

Since 2006, the District has captured and tagged 207 individual turtles. In addition over 348 turtle eggs were successfully incubated, head-started, PIT-tagged and released into the wilds of McHenry County. Just this past summer 24 eggs successfully hatched representing the 2017 head-start class! A good reminder of the important work done at the District and the sensitive habitats contained within these protected acres.

Great Horned Owl Rescued—
This young great horned owl flew into a back yard soccer net and became entangled. Fortunately, after WRC staff successfully removed her from the net, she only needed a few days of recuperation before she was released. Her parents were still in the neighborhood according to the family who discovered her. Please consider lowering these nets when not in use because besides owls, deer are also known to get caught up in them. Be considerate of wildlife and play on!

White Nose Syndrome and McHenry County Bats
by Cindi Jablonski, Wildlife Ecologist

White Nose Syndrome (WNS) has been responsible for serious declines in bat populations in North America. Named for the white fungus that appears on the muzzle and other parts of hibernating bats, it is a disease affecting hibernating bats and is associated with extensive mortality of bats. Smaller species such as Indiana bats, little brown bats, and northern long-eared bats in particular have suffered serious declines. The fungus appears to have been accidently introduced from Europe by spelunkers. It is another example of the devastating effect invasive species can have on native wildlife.

First discovered in Illinois caves in 2013, WNS has had a dramatic impact on our local bat populations. This is how we know: The District maintains an old barn in Glacial Park with a long history of roosting summer bats. An annual head count of bats is conducted in the barn during the summer months. In addition, the District collaborated with Eastern Illinois University in 2013 to study bats on McHenry County Conservation District sites. Because of this study, we know that 97% of the bats using the barn were little brown bats, Myotis lucifugus, and 89% of those were female—it is common for female little brown bats to form maternity colonies like this (right) in the summer months.

Glacial Park annual bat barn counts in 2013 and 2014 had over 1,000 bats. In 2017 the annual count was only 151 bats; a decline of 88% from 2014 to 2017. It is reasonable to assume many of the barn’s little brown bats did not return to their summer home because they did not survive winter hibernation. WNS has killed more than 5.7 million bats in eastern North America. In some hibernacula, 90 to 100 percent of bats have died.

What you can do to help bats:
- Don’t use pesticides in your garden or around your home. The toxins in pesticides be dangerous to bats, and also kill the insects the bats feed on.
- Preserve natural roosts. Unless they pose a hazard, leave dead or dying trees around your home instead of removing them.
- If a bat makes it into your house, use safe, humane ways to convince them to leave.
- Learn how to construct a bat house to place on your property to give bats a safe place to stay, and a better alternative than in your home.
- Do not disturb hibernating bats—if you wake them up and frighten them into flying away, they can be forced to use up the fat reserves they need to survive through the winter.
- Stay out of caves that have been closed to reduce the risk of spreading white-nose syndrome.

Hummingbird Gets A Helping Hand—
Rescued with a little help from our friends in Algonquin. Village of Algonquin Parks and Forestry staff almost stepped on this little bird who was on the ground near their shop. After contacting the Wildlife Resource Center staff for assistance, rescue efforts were underway. Fortunately, after a little rehab, rehydration, and exercise, this ruby-throated hummingbird was good to go!