



Connections in Conservation



Gaining Ground:

The Conservation District manages 25,021 acres.

The Conservation District recently took over the management of **138 acres adjacent to The Hollows Conservation Area in Cary**. The property is being purchased by the District via an installment agreement. The former farmstead is located at the northeast side of The Hollows, bringing the Conservation Area to 478 acres.

Private donations aid recent purchases.

- In **April, 13 acres of oak and hickory woodland** zoned for residential development and **directly north of the Wildlife Resource Center** was acquired. A \$400,000 donation in memory of Harvey J. Rosen was instrumental in the preservation of this site. There is now a Preservation Covenant on the property that ensures that the site will be maintained and preserved in its natural condition in perpetuity. The site is in Hebron Township and will be part of Grundstrom Woods Conservation Area within the Nippersink watershed.
- In **June** the Conservation District acquired **43.7 acres located at 13703 Rt. 173, in Hebron Township**. It includes nearly ½ mile stretch of Nippersink Creek and is part of the newly opened Winding Creek Conservation Area. A bequest from the estate of Earl G. Smith was used to fund roughly 70% of the purchase.
- A second parcel, **21.8 acres** in size, was also acquired in **June, located at the northwest corner of Harts Road and Rt. 31 at the main entrance to Glacial Park, in Ringwood**. A bequest from the Louis E. Marchi Declaration of Trust totaling \$266,666, designated for land acquisition, was applied to assist with part of the acquisition. The site is in Richmond Township in the Nippersink watershed and will be considered part of Glacial Park.

News and Noteworthy

Four areas submitted for Nature Preserve Dedication

The Conservation District submitted four sites for preliminary approval for dedication as Illinois Nature Preserves due to their ecological significance and their protection of endangered and rare species, namely; 71 acre addition to Barber Fen located in Wonder Lake; 39 additional acres located near the intersection of Allendale and Greenwood Roads know as Lind Forest; 122 additional acres to Bystricky Prairie located south of the intersection of Jankowski and Route 47; and 40 acres known as Slough Creek Fen, near the intersection of Raycraft and Route 47.

Top Cops @ Motorcycle Competition

Police Officers Ben Wolfe and Ryan Stewart earned top awards in Flint, MI Law Enforcement "Bikes on the Bricks" competition competing against 75 others motorcycle officers from across the Midwest. 1st place awards were received in the categories of skills, partner ride, challenge, slow ride, last man standing and overall Points Grand Champion "King of the Bricks 2011" second year in a row.

New solar lit X-C ski trail at Hickory Grove Highlands

Hike or ski at night until 9 p.m., Nov. 6 – March 11. The 1.25 mile looped trail is suitable for intermediate skiers.

Go for the GOLD —

It's official, the "green" improvements made to the Lost Valley Visitor Center in Glacial Park received the Gold Level of LEED Certification as outlined by the United States Green Building Council's program that recognizes Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a distinction carried by a select group of sustainable and innovative buildings.

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McHenry County Conservation District

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

By the year 2020, McHenry County Conservation District will be a premiere 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.

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McHenry County
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

In the Works

Transportation throughout the County

The District continues to work closely with MCDOT, IDOT and local municipalities on the following transportation projects within McHenry County: IL Rt. 31, Western Algonquin Bypass, County Line Road Bridge Project, IL Rt. 31 Richmond Bypass and the IL Rt. 47 Study.

ADA Audit & Transition Plan

The District is working with Recreational Accessibility Consultants, LLC of Hoffman Estates to create an ADA Transition Plan of District sites and facilities by the compliance deadline of March 2012. Once completed, the ADA Transition Plan will establish the actions the District must take to move from its current level of accessibility to one that complies with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). ADA is a Federal civil rights law that ensures equal opportunity for people with disabilities. Required as part of ADA legislation, the Transition Plan establishes a systematic process to evaluate, prioritize and budget accessibility improvements to conservation areas, programs and services. When completed the document will provide specific actions, priorities and timelines and budgets to address deficiencies. The goal is to eliminate barriers to access which will in turn increase participation in programs and services creating awareness of the District's offerings.



Site Master Plan: Fox Bluff Conservation Area

The District will begin the Master Planning process for the Fox Bluff Conservation Area this November 2011. Key stakeholders have been identified to participate in the planning process including McHenry County, MCDOT, Village of Algonquin, Village of Cary, Cary Park District, Village of Trout Valley, Village of Barrington Hills, Cold Springs Subdivision and Riverview Subdivision. The First Draft of the master plan is expected to be released in the Spring 2012.

New CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE named

McHenry County Conservation District's Board of Trustees appointed nine new members to the Citizens' Advisory Committee; namely Charles Dubsy of Wonder Lake; Mark Healy from Wonder Lake; Christine Grimm from Hebron; Adrienne Burman from Crystal Lake; Tim Scotellaro from Cary; Bob Paine from Crystal Lake; James Albright from McHenry; Beverly Dow from Harvard; and Elaine Ramesh from Barrington Hills.

Members serve as advocates for the District in a volunteer capacity. They are updated regularly on the numerous preservation, restoration and site improvement projects underway so that they can help communicate the mission of the District.

In the past the committee provided input to the Master Plan process for Lake in the Hills Fen, High Point, Winding Creek, and Kishwaukee Headwaters Conservation Areas. In addition, the Board of Trustees directed them to complete a task force study on Wind Energy feasibility and another on Community Gardens, both of which can be found on the District's web site under What's New/publications.



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Referendum Recap

Land Acquisition, Wildlife Habitat Preservation and Recreational Improvements made possible by the voters of McHenry County

When McHenry County Conservation District successfully passed a voter approved \$73 million Bond Referendum in 2007, the goals were to first purchase and protect natural areas, significant wetlands, endangered and threatened species habitats, and link existing sites. The second goal was to restore essential habitat and the third goal to make recreational improvements and open new sites and trails to provide the public with access to natural areas and opportunities for passive recreation.

The Conservation District now protects 25,021 acres of open space throughout the county. Over the past four years, the District has acquired 4,140 acres. The \$62.5 million of the bond proceeds principal, and an additional \$1.9 dollars of investment income has been expensed on land acquisitions; \$2.8 million of investment income remains unexpended and is designated toward future land acquisitions. The final amount of acres that will be protected will depend largely upon on-going land acquisition decisions and strategies which may include land gifts, donations, easements, or grants. In essence, the acquisition of another 200–400 acres should be realized.

Linking McHenry County's Last Great Places and Protecting the Best of the Last Remaining High-Quality Ecosystems

Reconnecting remnant ecosystems and creating larger parcels linked by greenway corridors are key tenets of land protection philosophy at the Conservation District. Recent land acquisition purchases and their ecological significance include:

- 13 acres in Wonder Lake. Significance: A high-quality, white oak dominated woodland. The site was protected from a slated subdivision development by a generous private donation. — *Acquired 2011*
- 248 acres in Woodstock were added to Brookdale Conservation Area; Significance: Protects 1/2 mile of the N. Branch of the Kishwaukee River and allows for the removal of a small impoundment, bringing this branch of the Kishwaukee River one step closer to being a free-flowing waterway, improving fishing opportunities and allowing rare mussels to reproduce. A fish passage study is being conducted at the final remaining dam located at the Brookdale pond. Oak woodlands and wetlands also exist on the site. — *Acquired 2010*
- 302 acres added to Pleasant Valley Conservation Area; Significance: The acquisition will make it possible to restore nearly 800 acres of a stream side marsh complex along the Kishwaukee River. — *Acquired 2010*
- 31.7 acres at Lake in the Hills Conservation Area; Significance: Protects the viewshed east of Randall Road and provides a buffer for the high-quality ecosystems within the site.—*Acquired 2009*
- 14.5 acres in Richmond; Significance: Connects the two parcels of Elizabeth Lake Nature Preserve Varga Archaeological Site to create one contiguous area of 345 acres. — *Acquired 2009*
- 58 acres added to Queen Anne Prairie; Significance: protects populations of a state endangered plant and several archeological sites and due to its high ecological quality of habitat, a portion was submitted for approval as a buffer to the "Lind Forest" State Nature Preserve. — *Acquired 2009*
- 150 acres in Greenwood Township; Significance: protects populations of a federally threatened plant species and a large block of oak woodlands. It is now part of the Queen Anne Prairie and a portion has been proposed to create a new state nature preserve called Slough Creek Fen. — *Acquired 2008*
- 29 acres protected in Greenwood Township; Significance: Due to its high ecological quality of habitat, a portion has been submitted for approval as an addition to the "Barbara Fen" State Nature Preserve. — *Acquired 2008*
- 127 acres in Greenwood Township; Significance: Due to the high-quality ecological communities, including a 1/2 mile of Nippersink Creek which exists on site, a portion has been submitted for approval as an addition to the Illinois Nature Preserve, Lind Forest. —*Acquired 2008*
- 105 additional acres protected at North Branch Conservation Area; Significance: allowed for the cleanup and restoration of Monteloma Springs Fen. — *Acquired 2008*
- 57 acres in Cary; Significance: This was one of the last remaining unprotected high-quality natural areas in the heavily populated southeastern portion of McHenry County. It was slated for subdivision development. It is now part of the Fel-Pro RRR Conservation Area. — *Acquired 2007*

2007 Bond Referendum Status Report

- Total # of acres the District protects to date = 25,021 acres
- Total # of acres protected with the 2007 bond funds = 4,140 acres
- Of the \$62.5 million of the bond proceeds principal and an additional \$1.9 million of investment income has been expensed on land acquisitions, while \$2.8 million of investment income remains unexpended and is designated toward future land acquisitions. An additional 200–400 additional acres may be acquired with bond funds.
- Of the \$2 million set aside for Wildlife Habitat Preservation \$1.66 million of the bond proceeds principal has been expensed and \$331,178 of bond proceeds remain unexpended and are designated for future restoration projects.
- Of the \$8.5 million set aside for Recreational Improvements \$6.3 million has been expensed and \$2.3 million remain unexpended. This includes an additional \$250,000 of investment income that has been designated for future site and trail improvements.



Pictured above clockwise: High Point Conservation Area, Harvard; new fire pit at Nippersink Canoe Base Conservation Area, Spring Grove; boardwalk at Kishwaukee Headwaters Conservation Area, Woodstock; and ribbon cutting at Kishwaukee Headwaters

Site & Trails Improvements

Since 2007, recreational improvements have been made on numerous sites with the approved bond funds. Of the \$8.5 million set aside for Recreational Improvements \$6.3 million has been expended and \$2.3 million remain unexpended. This includes an additional \$250,000 of investment income that has been designated for future site & trail improvements. In addition, having bond referendum funds available allowed the District to seek grants that require matching dollars. Over \$631,000 in matching grants were received for site and trail improvements, thus stretching the use of the monies, allowing the District to accomplish more.

Site improvements add numerous hiking/nature trails, picnic shelters, bike trails, ADA accessible trails and facilities, fishing access, fire rings, scenic outlooks, fishing piers, restrooms, and parking lots. Thus far the District has opened nine new sites to the public and 3.5 miles of regional trails. These sites include: Boger Bog, Bull Valley; North Branch, Richmond; Kishwaukee Corridor County Line Road Access, Marengo; An improved Nippersink Canoe Base, Spring Grove; Kishwaukee Headwaters, Woodstock; the H.U.M. Trailhead, Marengo; Lake in the Hills Fen Conservation Area, LITH; High Point, Harvard; and Winding Creek, Hebron.

In addition two regional trails, the Stone Mill Trail (Harvard to Chemung) and Phase I of Ridgefield Trace (Woodstock to Crystal Lake) were added. Phase II of Ridgefield Trace will open late this year.

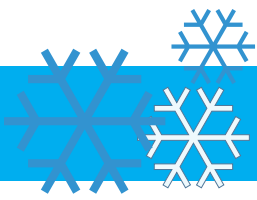
Improvements are currently in progress at Fel-Pro RRR, Cary, Dufield Pond, Woodstock and Boone Creek, Bull Valley.



Pictured above: site tour at the Grand Opening of High Point Conservation Area, Harvard; biking on the Stone Mill Trail, Chemung



Left: Winding Creek Conservation Area, Hebron; fishing at the Grand Opening of Winding Creek



Site & Seasonal Closures

The majority of the Conservation District sites are open year-round; however, some sites require seasonal closings.

LOCATION	CLOSING DATES/CONDITIONS
☉ Hunting – site closed for short periods of time to ensure maximum safety for our visitors.	
Fox Bluff	November 1–January 15
Glacial Park & Lost Valley Visitor Center	December 1–4
Hickory Grove Riverfront*, Lyons Prairie & Marsh, Silver Creek	November 1–January 15 *Open for fishing til first ice, campground & trails to Silver Creek closed
Pleasant Valley	November 18–20
Stickney Run	November 5–13
Beck’s Woods, Coral Woods, Brookdale (trails), Marengo Ridge, and Rush Creek	November 18–20, December 1–4
❄ Weather Related – weather permitting most sites are scheduled to reopen April 2. Call or check the	
Beck’s Woods & Piscasaw North, Chemung	First significant snowfall
Boger Bog, Bull Valley	First significant snowfall
Brookdale/Paulsen Road Parking Lot, Woodstock	First significant snowfall but site remains open
County Line Road Access, Marengo	October 1
Dufield Pond, Woodstock	First ice and stays closed
Elizabeth Lake Nature Preserve Varga Archeological Site, Richmond	First significant snowfall
Exner Marsh/Miller Road Parking Lot, LITH	First significant snowfall but site remains open
Fox Bluff/Cold Springs Rd. Parking Lot, Cary	November 1– April 1, parking lot closed. Site is open after January 15.
Hickory Grove Riverfront, Cary	First ice and stays closed. Campground & trails to Silver Creek closed Nov. 1–Jan. 15.
High Point, Harvard	November 1
Huntley-Union-Marengo (HUM) Trail Parking Lot, Marengo	First significant snowfall
Kishwaukee Headwaters, Woodstock	First significant snowfall
Nippersink Canoe Base, Spring Grove	November 1
North Branch/Parking Lot, Richmond	First significant snowfall
Pioneer Canoe Landing, Richmond	November 1
Prairie Trail/Meyer, Algonquin & Hillside Road Parking Lots	First significant snowfall
Thomas Woods at Marengo Ridge, Marengo	October 28
Winding Creek/Main Parking Lot, Hebron	First significant snowfall but site remains open



Christmas Tree Recycling

December 26–January 15

Drop-off Sites:

- Glacial Park, Ringwood (off Harts Rd.)
- Rush Creek, Harvard (at twin oaks parking area—west of pond)
- Algonquin Township Headquarters

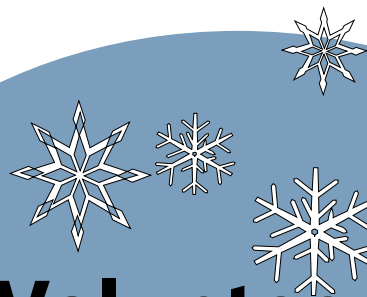
Tinsel and decorations must be removed. If trees are transported in a bag, please remove the bag. Commercial drop-offs are prohibited. Trees are processed into mulch, which will be available free of charge at a later date. For details call (815) 338-6223.

Teen Volunteering

Do you know a teenager looking for some volunteer hours or a place they can make a difference?

Send them to the Conservation District info meeting:
Sunday, December 4, 1:00–2:00 p.m.
Prairieview Education Center

Teens looking for volunteer hours for college applications or those wishing to explore the conservation field can learn about volunteer opportunities at the Conservation District. A parent is asked to attend with the teen since some positions require an adult participate as well.



Snow Way we are Staying Indoors!

Explore & Discover McHenry County Conservation District



**~ Hike or Ski at Night ~
Nov. 6 – March 11**

Trails close at 9 p.m.

With the sun going down so early, there's no time to play! Fear not... "Weekend Warrior" no more, now you can get out on the trails everyday after dark. Hike or cross country ski along solar lighted trails. Visitors should sign in.

Pleasant Valley (Closed Nov. 18–20)
13315 Pleasant Valley Rd., Woodstock

A 1/2 mile looped trail with flat terrain, perfect for beginners or shorter outings.

Hickory Grove Highlands
500 Hickory Nut Grove Lane, Cary
This 1.25 mile looped trail travels through a newly restored savanna, offering a longer scenic route suitable for intermediate skiers.



SNOW DAY!!

The snow has fallen and it's time to drop everything and enjoy it! Sign up to receive an e-mail or phone call that will let you know when and where we will be in the next 24 hours to take advantage of the SNOW!! Will it be...

- ...a Cross-Country Ski Lesson at Prairieview?
- ...a Snowshoe Hike at Pleasant Valley?
- ...Night Sledding at Glacial Park?

Sound good? Send an e-mail address or phone number to education@mccd.org or call (815) 479-5779.

Nature at Night

Friday, Jan. 27 6:30–9:30 p.m.
Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake

Storytelling • Night Hikes • Explore the Night Sky with Telescopes • Children's Activities • Hot chocolate around a campfire • Learn about nocturnal animals like bats, owls and more! Dress for the weather.

Cross-Country Candlelight Ski

Two Candlelight Skis will be held — Friday and Saturday from 5–9 p.m. Bring your own skis and enjoy refreshments around the campfire.

1st significant snowfall in Jan.: The Hollows, Cary

2nd significant snowfall in Feb.: Marengo Ridge, Marengo

Check the front page of the website for updates, or sign up for e-mail notification at MCCD@MCCDistrict.org.

Winter Camping

Take in the sights and sounds of the great outdoors and sleep under star filled skies. Explore over 5 miles of hiking and cross-country ski trails. Make reservations 10 working days in advance, 815-338-6223.

To find out more visit us @ MCCDistrict.org • 815.338.6223

