



Connections in Conservation

Grand Openings



Lake in the Hills Fen Conservation Area

Despite the cool, rainy temperatures, forty people ventured out to cut the ceremonial ribbon as the Conservation District opened its newest site, Lake in the Hills Conservation Area. Lake in the Hills Conservation Area is a 229 acre upland/wetland complex. Adjacent the site is the 211 acre Lake in the Hills Fen State nature Preserve, co-owned by the Village of Lake in the Hills and Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The Conservation District manages the entire 436-acre complex.



High Point Conservation Area Dedication & Woodland Hike

**Saturday, May 7
10 - 11:30 a.m.
10250 Reese Rd., Harvard**

High Point Conservation Area is a 253-acre site. Notably, High Point contains the highest glaciated point above sea level in the state. The site is noted for its oak and hickory woodland, while the understory also boasts numerous spring wildflowers.

**Grand Opening
Winding Creek Conservation Area
Saturday, June 4 10 a.m.- 1 p.m.
8415 Johnson Rd. Hebron**

This 359 acre site is graced by an oak and hickory woodland and a stretch of Nipperinsk Creek. Tour the site, go on a scavenger hunt, fish the small pond, bring a lunch and picnic at the shelter.



News and Noteworthy:



Federal Grant Money Awarded for 3.5 mile extension of Ridgefield Trace

The Conservation District was awarded \$934,930 as part of the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), a federally-funded grant program that promotes alternative means of transportation. The ITEP Grant will fund Phase III of Ridgefield Trace bike path project along US Highway Route 14 from McHenry County College to West Lake Shore Drive in Woodstock. This 3.5 mile section will be built in conjunction with IDOT's widening of the highway tentatively scheduled for 2012, where many economies of scale will be realized, making the project less expensive than if accomplished itself. The news came last November when Governor Pat Quinn's announced nearly \$90 million in federal transportation enhancement funds dedicated for bike paths and other improvement projects throughout the state.

The first 2-mile phase of the trail was complete in 2009 and runs from McHenry County College to near Oak St. in Crystal Lake. The second phase will be constructed this fall and will run from Oak St. to Veteran's Acres in Crystal Lake, funded in part by a \$440,900 CMAQ grant from Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Lost Valley Visitor Center named Outstanding Facility

The Lost Valley Visitor Center in Glacial Park won the "Outstanding Facility Award" from the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA). The award honors public agencies for outstanding and unique

achievements in design and development of parks or recreation facilities completed over the past year.

The District's commitment to renovate the Lost Valley Visitor Center as an adaptive, reuse facility resulted in creating a purposeful and multi-faceted destination, unique to the region. The vision was to create a distinct building that would make connections with people well beyond the walls of the building; such that, visitors would be impressed upon to explore our natural resources in greater detail and find ways to make their lifestyles more sustainable.

Conservation District receives National Award for Financing Excellence

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada awarded McHenry County Conservation District *The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting* for its comprehensive annual financial report. This Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of government accounting and financial reporting and it represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. Andy Dylak, Director of Finance for the Conservation District was also recognized individually by the government as primarily responsible for preparing the award-winning financial report. The Government Finance Officers Association is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 17,500 government finance professionals.

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

Gaining Ground: Land Acquisitions

The Conservation District currently owns or manages 24,84694 acres.

Recent Highlights:

In October 2010, the District acquired 75 acres, located directly north of the end of River Ranch Road west of Marengo. The property is along the Kishwaukee River, in Marengo Township and is in the Kishwaukee River watershed.

In November 2010, the District acquired .71 acres off Deep Cut Road, just north of the curve in the road and adjacent to Brookdale Conservation Area. The property is in Hartland Township and is in the Kishwaukee River watershed.

In December 2010, the District acquired 93 acres along the Kishwaukee River north of Route 20, and abuts the Kishwaukee Corridor Conservation Area. The property is in Marengo Township and is in the Kishwaukee River watershed.

Also in December 2010, the District acquired 302 acres along Pleasant Valley Road and abuts the existing Pleasant Valley Conservation Area. The property is in Seneca and Coral Townships and is in the Kishwaukee River watershed.

In January 2011, the District acquired 46.7 acres in Richmond Township, east of Route 31, south of Route 12 and just north of Glacial Park Conservation Area. The north branch of Nippersink Creek runs through the property which is also adjacent to land that is under a conservation easement with the Village of Richmond.



CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

McHenry County Conservation District's Citizen Advisory Committee 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. The group recently completed a task force study on Community Gardens, which can be found on the District's web site under publications.



Current Members: Harold Abramson, Barbara Anderson, Dick Arsenaeau, Susan Begley, Adrienne Burman, Bill Clow, Fred Durrenberg, John Engebretson, David Gervais, Don Giese, Bill Howenstine, Bill Kreznor, Larry Lane, Ed Laumbacker, George Mann, Bob Paine, Tom Paulsen, Harold Rail, Mike Salkas, Jeff Varda, and Dan Wilson.

Conservation District Seeks Citizen Advisory Committee Candidates

McHenry County Conservation District is currently accepting applications for a new nine member Citizens Advisory Committee that will serve staggered three-year terms. Applications can be found on the District's website mccd.org under get involved, and are due June 3.

Applicants should have a background relevant to the environmental issues of the District and be able to attend quarterly and special call meetings. Recent projects completed by the advisory committee task force include completing a wind energy feasibility report and community gardens report, as well as input to the Master Plan process for Lake in the Hills Fen, High Point, Winding Creek, and Kishwaukee Headwaters Conservation Areas.

1971 40 YEARS 2011
McHENRY COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

A GROUP OF ECOLOGICALLY CONSCIOUS CITIZENS
PLANTED A SEED OF AN IDEA AND FROM THERE IT GREW...



Sandhill Cranes photo by Bob



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

Created by a group of ecologically conscientious citizens in 1971 and supported by the Illinois Conservation District Act of 1963, McHenry County Conservation District began with the mission to preserve open space and to provide environmental education programs and recreational opportunities to the public.

Forty years later, the District remains dedicated to protecting and restoring our natural areas to create wide open spaces for the protection of waterways and wildlife habitat. We promote stewardship, respect for the land, and sound environmental practices.

Today, McHenry County Conservation District manages 24,894 acres of open space graced with woodlands, prairies, wetlands, and savannas. Numerous trails and recreational amenities have been added within 32 conservation areas where the public can enjoy hiking, biking, fishing, canoeing, picnicking, nature viewing, camping, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

We hope you are pleased with the progress we have made. As the District continues to move forward we hope you will take advantage of the wide open places and gain a greater appreciation of our natural world.

We are proud to provide all these things for the residents and communities of McHenry County. We couldn't have done it without your foresight, vision, and continued support.

THANK YOU!



40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Saturday, July 9 • 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Lost Valley Visitor Center – Glacial Park, Ringwood

• Music • Guided Nature Hikes • Kids Activities • Storytelling •

It's been forty years in the making & we couldn't have done it without you!

Come out for a day of celebration and appreciation to our residents for helping the Conservation District protect and preserve 24,894 acres of wide open places.



A HISTORY OF Protecting Open Space

SITES OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- 1973 Harrison Benwell
- 1973 Beck's Woods
- 1974 Marengo Ridge
- 1974 Rush Creek
- 1975 Glacial Park
- 1981 Hickory Grove
- 1981 Nippersink Canoe Trail
- 1982 Thomas Woods Campground
- 1986 Piscasaw North
- 1987 The Hollows
- 1987 Prairie Trail South
- 1988 Prairie Trail North
- 1988 Coral Woods
- 1992 Wiedrich Education Center
- 1993 Wildlife Resource Center
- 1999 Entire 26-mile Prairie Trail
- 1999 Prairievew Education Center
- 2000 Stickney Run
- 2000 Exner Marsh
- 2000 Fel-Pro
- 2001 Silver Creek
- 2003 Hebron Trail
- 2003 Research Field Station
- 2004 Dufield Pond
- 2004 Marengo Ridge Campground
- 2004 Fox Bluff
- 2005 Pleasant Valley
- 2005 Elizabeth Lake west side
- 2006 H.U.M. Trail
- 2007 Elizabeth Lake east side
- 2007 County Line Road Access
- 2008 Boger Bog
- 2008 North Branch
- 2009 Stone Mill Trail
- 2009 Ridgefield Trace
- 2010 Nippersink Canoe Base improvements
- 2010 Kishwaukee Headwaters
- 2010 Lost Valley Visitor Center

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1971 Voters of McHenry County support a referendum to create a Conservation District
- 1972 Ken Fiske selected as the first Executive Director (Served 1972-1985)
- 1973 First parcel purchased; 50 acres in Beck's Woods, Chemung
- 1973 Harrison Benwell, Wonder Lake is the first site open to the public.
- 1975 Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education project started
- 1976 1st publication of the District's public newsletter, *Landscapes*
- 1976 1st Land & Facility Ranger hired
- 1976 1st Interpretive Naturalist hired
- 1979 1st Festival of the Sugar Maples
- 1986 1st District prescription burn
- 1986 District Police Dept. formed
- 1987 Natural Resource Dept. formed
- 1989 1st Kames Rendezvous—now Trail of History
- 1993 Wild Turkeys are reintroduced
- 1993 Blanding's turtle research project begins
- 1995 Candlelight Ski program started
- 1996 Powers-Walker House restoration begins
- 1999 Dechannelization of Nippersink Creek
- 1999 McHenry County Conservation Foundation is chartered
- 1999 Communications Dept. formed
- 2001 Voters approve \$68.5 million referendum for land acquisition
- 2004 Camp Algonquin is purchased
- 2006 Land acquisition tops 20,000 acres
- 2007 Voters approve \$73 million referendum for land acquisition, wildlife habitat restoration and recreational improvements
- 2007 Comprehensive Site Development & Access Plan created
- 2007 Natural Areas Protection Guide presented to municipalities
- 2008 Preservation of Oak Ecosystem research data released
- 2008 Ecological Restoration Certificate Program created
- 2009 PDRMA (Park District Risk Management Association) accreditation
- 2010 District awarded nearly \$3 million in grants
- 2010 Framework for long range planning

LAND ACQUISITION

- January 1980 = 2,610 acres
- January 1990 = 4,946 acres
- January 2000 = 12,879 acres
- January 2010 = 23,757 acres
- January 2011 = 24,846 acres



McHenry County Conservation District Outdoor Adventures



Paddle in the Park

Saturday, May 21 • 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
The Hollows, 3804 U.S. Hwy. 14, Cary



- Take a canoe or kayak paddling clinic.
- Test-paddle water crafts from retailers to find the one that is right for you.
- Paddle a voyageur canoe.
- Learn about local paddling clubs, outfitters, and adventures available right here in the Midwest.
- \$5.00 fee for all clinics and/or to test water crafts.



Powers-Walker House Living History Events

Glacial Park, Ringwood

Open House

May 15, July 9 & August 21

Come visit this Greek Revival 1854 restored house and learn about the Powers and Walker families that called this area home. Volunteers in historical attire will be your hosts.



Ice Cream Social of 1858 Sunday, June 12

12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Take a break from your hectic modern life and enjoy the simple pleasures of an old-fashioned ice cream social. Sip lemonade, eat ice cream, play frontier games, and chat with your neighbors while visiting the historic Powers-Walker House in the summertime. Various historical characters will stop by to tell you about their lives.

Hooked on Fishing!

SATURDAY, JUNE 11
Rush Creek, Harvard

SUNDAY, JUNE 12
The Hollows, Cary

9 a.m.–Noon



Co-sponsored by the Crystal Lake Anglers

Family Camping Sampler

Saturday, June 25, 2–11 p.m.

Marengo Ridge Conservation Area
Immerse yourselves in nature through good old-fashioned family camping! Come celebrate "Leave No Child Inside" month. A variety of fun camping activities have been planned to help you and your family explore the great outdoors and tips on how to enjoy a future camping experience to the fullest. No registration is required!



"Ready, Set, Camp" 2:00-5:00 p.m. "Let's Get Cooking" 5:00-8:00 p.m. "Eventful Evenings" 8:00-10:00 p.m. "Star Party" 8:00-11:00 p.m.

Make a weekend of it -- camp out on your own at Marengo Ridge's Thomas Woods Campgrounds; make reservations by calling (815) 338-6223.

— Summer Day Camps —

Hike - Bike - Camp - Canoe - Explore

Register Today for a Summer of Fun...MCCDistrict.org



McHenry County Conservation Foundation's

Pedal - Paddle

through the Prairie

June 12 Glacial Park, Ringwood

12K or 25K bike ride or 2 hour paddle

(815) 759-9390 www.mchenryconservation.org



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