



McHenry County Conservation District
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gaining Ground - Conservation District protects an additional 1,388 acres

Over the past 10 months McHenry County Conservation District has acquired an additional 1,388 acres throughout the county that will remain in perpetuity as protected open space for future generations. These parcels were made possible by the support of McHenry County voters who successfully passed the 2007 Bond Referendum.

Highlights of the most recent acquisitions include Slough Creek in Woodstock, additions to Coral Woods in Marengo, Alden Sedge Meadow, in unincorporated Alden Township and along the H.U.M. trail in Marengo Township.

Slough Creek/Standlee Fen encompasses **150 acres** located west of Route 47 at Raycraft Road, north of Jankowski **in Woodstock**. This property consists of woodlands, wetlands, prairie, Seg Meadow, a high quality streamside marsh and some farmland. The District's Bystricky Prairie is directly across the street.

This property protects the Standlee Fen that is listed on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory as a high quality natural area which supports a number of rare wetland prairie species and a federally endangered orchid. It also includes the last unchannelized section of Slouch Creek, a high quality waterway and major tributary to Nippersink Creek.

Another significant factor of the **Slough Creek** parcel is that it protects **40 acres of Oak/Hickory woodlands**. The Conservation District recently completed a study of remaining oak stands in the county which found that only 2008 acres of oak woodlands remain that are over 25 acres in size - in a county that once supported 143,000 acres of oak dominated woodlands. Currently, oak trees are unprotected. Concern is growing among citizens and agencies, like the Conservation District, about the rate of oak loss and the lack of oak preservation ordinances. (The District's study indicates that oak loss has been severe across the county since settlement began with 87% of all mature oak woodlands loss to development, overgrazing or direct removal.)

Coral Woods Conservation Area was expanded to the north of with the purchase of **127-acres known as Settler's Place**. This property protects several tracts of mature old growth oak woodlands, additional wetlands, and buffers high-quality ephemeral wetlands. This purchase also completes a biological boundary which allows District staff to manage the area as one ecological complex rather than broken units restricted by real estate boundaries.

In addition, the District purchased **35 acres** along the **southern border of Coral Woods** just west of the current entrance, which will allow the District to reconfigure the entrance to allow access directly from Coral West Road rather than through the neighboring subdivision.

Alden Sedge Meadow also grew by **192 acres**. This long sought after parcel **protects valuable wetlands and a half-mile of Nippersink Creek** frontage as the stream leaves the high quality wetlands along Mud

Lake in the Alden Sedge Meadow complex. A majority of the property is agricultural land with scattered oak groves that will remain in crop production for a time, while biological inventories of the site are completed.

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