



Connections in Conservation

Spring 2008

A Publication of McHenry County Conservation District

Balancing Site Improvements with Land Preservation

Conservation District approves Site Development & Public Access Plan

McHenry County Conservation District has been applauded for preserving open space and protecting wildlife habitat. But at the same time, they have been scrutinized for not allowing public access to these properties.

The Board of Trustees recently approved **the Comprehensive Site Development and Public Access Plan** which will address public concern as well as protect the county's most treasured resources.

This plan specifically identifies and prioritizes **the top 42 projects that will receive funds and staff resources over the next 5 years. Twenty-four of these projects involve public access and trail improvements.**

"While balancing needs was a critical part of the planning, the desire to make connections between citizens and Conservation District sites, as well as providing amenities geographically throughout the county were major factors that were incorporated when determining which projects will receive priority at this time," said Executive Director, Elizabeth Kessler.

Land preservation and restoration maintained a priority status throughout the process. However, a number of recreational needs, such as camping, hiking and general site improvements, surfaced as "most desirable" and thus served as the organizing framework for the list. Other criteria that formed the list included those projects in progress, if a master plan was already completed, if grant funding had been secured, if a need for replacement existed and if the necessary resources were available.

"These improvements are not just strategies to create a more sustainable physical environment - they are opportunities to strengthen McHenry County's economic, social and cultural environments as well. They were generated by and for the residents of the county who will be the primary beneficiaries of this planning endeavor," said Board President Bonnie Leahy.

Details of the Site Development and Public Access Plan, as well as a complete list of planned projects can be found on the District's website at:

www.MCCDistrict.org/ne-planning-development.htm

"It is with this spirit of collaboration that the Board of Trustees and staff now advance the recommendations toward implementation."

Highlights of upcoming Site Development and Public Access Projects

- Harvard to Boone Regional Trail
- Boger Bog, Bull Valley
Opens June 21, 2008
- Nippersink North Branch, Spring Grove - Opens July 26, 2008
- H.U.M. Trail Re-Opens July 2008
- Crystal Lake To Woodstock Regional Trail Phase I
- Glacial Park Conference Ctr.
Public Access & Ed. Programs
- Kishwaukee Headwaters, Woodstock
Public Access, Trails, Ed. Programs.
- LITH Fen Rothschild, LITH
Public Access and Trails.
- Bailey's Wood, Hebron
Public Access and Trails.
- Highpoint, Alden Township
Public Access and Trails.
- Nippersink Canoe Base, Spring Grove
Public Access, Fishing, and Trails.
- Dufield Pond, Woodstock
More Access, Fishing, and Trails.
- Boone Creek, Bull Valley
Public Access and Trails.
- Pleasant Valley, Woodstock
More Access and Trails.
- Marengo Ridge, Marengo
Alternate Access and Trails.
- Fel-Pro Addition, Nunda Township
Site Improvements, Access & Trails
- Relocate Prairie Trail, CL/LITH
- Hebron Trail Repairs, Hebron



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

McHenry County Conservation District is a highly motivated and fiscally responsible organization composed of professional staff, volunteers, and Board of Trustees.

We aspire

to promote the long-term viability of the county's biodiversity while encouraging and providing opportunities for responsible use of lands in concert with the natural resources.

We inspire

respect for the land community by exposing people to the wonders of nature and the knowledge of sound environmental practices.

We recognize

that accomplishing these efforts requires working cooperatively with both public and private initiatives to promote sound stewardship practices.

Board of Trustees

Bonnie Leahy, President
Marengo - Union

Kim Hankins, Vice President
Crystal Lake

John Green, Treasurer
Fox River Grove

Nancy Williamson, Secretary
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David LaGue
Marengo

Kevin Ivers
Bull Valley

Martha Carver
Hebron

Pete Merkel
County Board Liaison

Elizabeth S. Kessler
Executive Director



On the Drawing Board...

An update on recreational amenities throughout the District

The Conservation District has the opportunity to develop and restore a number of new properties within the next five years. During 2008-09 the District will be developing Master Plans for five sites which will allow for future public access. The Master Plan process involves hydrology analysis, natural resource inventory, permitting and public involvement to create the best balance of public amenities and protection of high-quality natural areas. Typical improvements may include an access road, parking lot, picnic shelter, bridge, scenic views, interpretive signage, and trail systems. **Public viewing and opportunities to provide input are part of the process and dates will be announced on the Districts website and via the media.**

The Five Master Plans scheduled for this year are:

- **Bailey's Woods**, near Hebron - 584 acres, located near Johnson Rd. and Route 173
- **High Point**, Alden Township - 253 acres, east of Reese Road, west of Wright Road and south of Hebron Road.
- **Kishwaukee Headwaters Conservation Area**, Woodstock - 146 acres, south of Route 14, east of Dean St.
- **Lake in the Hills Fen/Rothschild** parcel in LITH - 198 acres, east of Randall Rd. north of Miller Rd.
- **Nippersink Canoe Base**, Spring Grove - 347 acres, east of Route 12, north of Sunset Rd.

Tour de North

NIPPERSINK NORTH BRANCH CONSERVATION AREA

Saturday, July 26

9 am - Noon Ride starts at 9:30 am

Meet at Glacial Park, Harts Road Shelter

All Ages, Online Registration Code: 308700

LEG 1:

Bike the Prairie Trail to the new Nippersink North Branch trail extension! Stop for a tour of the site.

LEG 2:

Trek back to Glacial Park for a 13-mile loop, or continue west another 5 miles along the Hebron Trail.

FINISH LINE

Join us back at Glacial Park for refreshments and giveaways at the Harts Road Shelter starting at 11 am. Hosted by the Prairie Trail Safety Watch.

Opening June 21st!!

Boger Bog Conservation Area
2100 N. Cherry Valley Road,
Bull Valley



Experience nature in an intimate setting.
Gather around the council ring.
Walk along the boardwalk.
Picnic at the shelter.
Relax and Enjoy the natural surroundings.

Brookdale Administrative Offices
18410 US Highway 14, Woodstock
815-338-6223

Prairieview Education Center
2112 Behan Road, Crystal Lake
815-479-5779

Research Field Station in Glacial Park
6512 Harts Road, Ringwood
815-678-7644

Wildlife Resource Center
815-728-8307

Gaining Ground: Land Acquisitions



Over the past 10 months the 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 for successfully passing the 2007 Bond Referendum.

Highlights of the most recent acquisitions include additions to:

- Coral Woods - 34.5 acres added on the southeast portion.
- Alden Sedge Meadow - 192 acres added on the east side of the existing site.
- Rush Creek - 49 acres added east of Windy Hill Road
- Along the H.U.M. trail - 73 acres added on the north side in Marengo

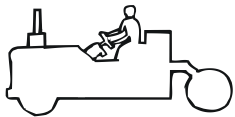


Another featured purchase includes a 150-acre parcel, consisting of oak woodlands, wetlands and farmland, located west of Route 47 at Raycraft Road, north of Jankowski and across the street from Bystricky Prairie.



McHenry County Conservation District maintains over 21,500 acres of open space.

Twenty-six sites are open to the public including four educational facilities, 80 miles of trails, seven camping sites, 16 fishing locations and 14 picnic shelters available to reserve.



Under Construction

The H.U.M. Trail that extends 3.5 miles between Marengo and Union will reopen in July

After experiencing heavy flood damage last fall, the trail was re-graded and re-surfaced to create a new and improved asphalt trail for bikers, hikers, strollers and rollerbladers to enjoy.



Restoration Projects

Lake in the Hills Fen
Gravel Spoil Repair
Location: Algonquin Twp..
Time Frame: May-June

Scope of Work: Grading of former gravel mining area, seeding of prairie, invasive brush removal.

Pleasant Valley Wetland Restoration
Location: Grafton/Dorr Townships
Time Frame: July-August
Scope of Work: Invasive brush removal, wetland hydrology restoration, seeding of prairie and savanna areas.

Nippersink Wetland Restoration
Location: Burton Township
Time Frame: August-September
Scope of Work: Invasive brush removal, wetland hydrology restoration, seeding of wetland and prairie areas.

North Branch Hill Reconstruction
Location: Richmond Township
Time Frame: May-June
Scope of Work: Grading of old farmstead area and reconstruction of original hill contour, prairie seeding, invasive brush removal.

High Point Prairie Restoration
Location: Alden Township
Time Frame: May-June
Scope of Work: Seeding of tallgrass prairie.



Marengo Ridge Prairie Restoration
Location: Marengo Township
Time Frame: May-June
Scope of Work: Seeding of tallgrass prairie

Aerial Control of Common Reed Grass
Locations: Glacial Park, North Branch, Elizabeth Lake (**Richmond**), Silver Creek, Cotton Creek, Stickney Run (**Nunda, Algonquin**) Alden Sedge Meadow (**Alden**), Kishwaukee Headwaters (**Dorr**)
Time Frame: August
Scope of Work: Control of invasive common reed grass on multiple sites.

Preservation, Education, Recreation



Municipal Resources

Natural Areas Impact Evaluation Policy - The District provides outreach to municipalities by completing a natural areas impact evaluation for sensitive areas slated for development. The District's role is to offer information on best conservation practices in an effort to enhance and protect the unique resources in the area.



The District can also provide municipalities with copies of **McHenry County Natural Areas Inventory** which identifies where threatened and endangered species reside in the county. In addition, the District's **Natural Areas Protection Plan** specifically describes the best of the last remaining natural areas, the existing threats to these areas, and a resource list of local protection agencies and organizations.

Get Connected @ www.MCCDistrict.org

View the Interactive Map & Calendar

Sign up for a variety of Education Programs, Camps & Activities

Get the latest news on Trail Development & Land Acquisitions

Download the Environmental Education Opportunities for Educators

Download Maps, Brochures, Employment Applications & Internships



Celebrate Summer with MCCD!



Hooked on Fishing

June 7 @ Rush Creek

June 8 @ Hollows

9 a.m. - Noon

Held during Illinois Free Fishing Days!

Ice Cream Social of 1858

Sunday, June 8 Noon - 4 p.m.

Powers-Walker House, Glacial Park

Enjoy ice cream and games of the past with historic reenactors.



Let's Go Camping Saturday, July 26

Marengo Ridge 4 p.m. - Midnight

Camp set-up tips, fire building, camp cooking, Children's crafts, guided hikes, Search the Skies with Northwest Astronomers.



"Tour de North" Bike Ride

13-mile ride from Glacial Park to Nippersink North Branch

Saturday, July 26 9 a.m. - Noon

Site tour, lunch & giveaways - Call 815-479-5779

