

	POLICY PROCEDURE GUIDELINES	POLICY NUMBER: 01.40.00.	PAGE NUMBER: 1 of 12
		SUBJECT: Partnership Policy	Adopted: 3/17/2014 Latest Revision: 04/15/2016 Next Review:

01.40.00. POLICY STATEMENT

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (the “District”) recognizes that developing collaborative relationships with public and private entities is a viable and appropriate way to increase the variety and quality of conservation, restoration, educational, recreational, and programming projects and initiatives. To better support such collaborations, the District has recently developed a Partnership Policy. This Policy provides guidance regarding the manner and ways in which the District desires to interact with other organizations or individuals that support the Districts mission, values and goals. The District welcomes partnership ideas and proposals as they are brought forward and will actively pursue partnerships as deemed appropriate.

01.40.01. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to outline for staff and the public, principles and procedures to be followed as the District considers partnership opportunities with public and private entities.

01.40.02. REFERENCES

Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Protection of Natural Features & Wildlife
 FPDCC Code Section 2-2: 1-4

Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Trespass and Use of Property
 FPDCC Code Section 2-3: 1-9

Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Recreation in Forest Preserves
 FPDCC Code Section 2-4: 1-8

Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Advertisements
 FPDCC Code Section 3-3-8

Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Fee Schedule
 FPDCC Code Section 7-1-1

01.40.03. DEFINITIONS

Partnership: A partnership is a working relationship with another entity that has compatible goals or priorities, and supports the mission of the District. It can involve a single event or may be long-term and multi-faceted. Recognized partnerships between the District and other entities will be formalized in a Partnership Agreement.

Types of Partnerships

Conservation & Restoration Partner: This partner is an entity that supports the District in the implementation of strategies that help accomplish goals of restoring our lands to health through ecological conservation, restoration, and stewardship.

Corporate/Foundation Partner: This partner is a for-profit entity, charitable foundation, or similar entity that collaborates with the District to accomplish the Preserves' mission of protecting nature for the education, pleasure, and public recreation of all.

Education/Research Partner: This partner is an entity that supports the District's goal to connect diverse audiences with nature through environmental education, outreach programs, stewardship or through collaborating, directing, or facilitating academic/research related projects and initiatives.

Event/Programming Partner: This partner is an entity that supports the District through collaborating, directing, or facilitating educational, recreation and other programming opportunities, events, and programming related actions or initiatives.

Strategic Partner: This partner is an entity that operates in many capacities for an extended period of time to support the District's goals of conservation, education, and recreation. Strategic partners often collaborate with the District in many different capacities and fall under multiple partnership types, strategic partners also include government entities.

Partnership Agreement Form: A formal agreement between the Districts and partners. Forms may also include, but are not limited to, land use agreement forms, intergovernmental cooperative agreements, and other legal documents.

Partnership Assessment Form: This document provides key analytical questions that can assist District staff in deciding whether or not to pursue a particular partnership, and can help in negotiating a formal partnership agreement. The criteria fall into four categories: **(1)** how the proposed partnership aligns with established District mission, goals, and policies; **(2)** benefits the proposed partnership will provide District and/or the public; **(3)** budget considerations; and **(4)** community relations. (Appendix A)

Partnership Principles: The following principles have been established in order to ensure that proposed agreements are mutually beneficial, and align with the priorities of the District. Partnership Agreement Principles should include, but are not limited to:

- Partnerships are expected to bring in one or more of the following: new resources, ideas, programming, training, technologies, and partners to address District needs and demands, or new revenues.
- Partnerships should demonstrate financial sustainability if there is any financial component to the agreement. In addition to monetary or capital investments, in-kind resources such as services, property, volunteer time, equipment, and supplies

are also valuable contributions. Partnership proposals must clearly specify what each party is contributing.

- The proposed collaboration must clearly explain how the interests and objectives of each party converge, and will produce clearly defined positive social, environmental, cultural, or financial impacts benefiting the residents of Cook County.

Post- Implementation Partnership Assessment Checklist: A tool to monitor on-going partnerships and evaluate their success. (Appendix B)

Relationship Manager(s): The District operating department(s), or staff person(s), responsible for creating and managing the partnership, external participation, or teaming opportunity to ensure compliance with the terms of any agreements and District rules and policies.

Public Benefit: An activity or service that accomplishes a public purpose promoting the needs, interests, environmental, social, economic, and cultural well-being, and health and safety of a community.

01.40.04. SCOPE

The scope of this policy applies to all District staff, and others, in relation to establishing a partnership with the District.

01.40.05. RESPONSIBILITY

Operating Departments: District operating departments shall: **(1)** initiate and facilitate the partnership agreement process with other entities; **(2)** help communicate the relevant District codes and policies to entities seeking a partnership when appropriate, such as: **(a)** the Protection of Natural Features and Wildlife; **(b)** the Trespass and Use of Property; **(c)** the Recreation in District; and, or **(d)** Advertisements; **(3)** ensure that all partnership agreements have been thoroughly vetted by the completion of the partnership criteria and assessment checklist; and, **(4)** complete the Post-Implementation Partnership Assessment Questions Checklist.

Office of the General Superintendent: Shall **(1)** serve as a liaison to partner entities; **(2)** provide comment to partnership agreements before being forwarded to the General Superintendent, or Board, for review and or approval within five (5) business days; **(3)** work to ensure that the collaboration between the District and the partner entity align with the expectations as drawn out in the partnership agreement; and, **(4)** will ensure that partner entities contact information is current and up-to-date in Districts database systems.

Finance & Administration Department: Shall **(1)** provide guidance to District staff in the execution of partnership agreements involving a financial impact to the District; and, **(2)** review all final partnership agreements before being forwarded to the General Superintendent for his/her final review and or approval within five (5) business days.

Legal Department: Shall (1) provide legal counsel to District staff in the execution of partnership agreements; and, (2) review all final partnership agreements before being forwarded to the General Superintendent for his/her final review and or approval within two (2) business weeks.

The General Superintendent: The General Superintendent, or designee, shall: (1) approve all partnerships; and (2) approve all permit/fee waivers or reductions.

District Board of Commissioners: Board approval will be necessary for partnership agreements exceeding \$100,000.00 (cash or in-kind contributions). (Appendix E)

01.40.06. PROCEDURES

Partnerships with the District:

1. **General:** The Partnership Program of the District recognizes and supports entities that support nature and the local community through the mission, the vision, goals, and/or priorities of the District. The program provides numerous opportunities for valued stakeholders to support and/or collaborate with the District.
2. **Steps to Becoming a Partner:** Entities seeking to partner with the District generally go through the following process:

A. Request Stage

1. The potential partner submits a copy of the completed “Declaration of Partnership” form to the appropriate District operating department(s).

B. Review Stage

1. The potential partner collaborates with District operating department(s) in order to:
 - a. Discuss the submitted Declaration of Partnership form;
 - b. Get more information about District goals and priorities; and,
 - c. Request any additional information from District staff that would benefit the possible partnership relationship.

C. Approval Process Stage

1. Entities selected at the approval process stage will need to complete and submit the Partnership Agreement form to the designated operating department(s).
2. District operating department(s) will submit the agreement to the District Partnership Review Team (The Office of the General Superintendent, the Finance Department, and the Legal Office). The Partnership Review Team

has two (2) business weeks to review and or provide comment to the agreement documents.

D. Execution Stage

1. Upon completion of the approval process final approvals will be submitted by the District operating department to the General Superintendent, or the Board, for execution.
3. Relationship Manager(s): Every approved partner will be assigned a relationship manager(s) (District employee) that will serve as the official point of contact between the organization and the District. Partners can have multiple District contacts depending on the scope of work.
4. Reporting: Every approved partner will be responsible for fulfilling the terms of the partnership agreement. From time-to-time, the District may request additional information regarding the agreement.
5. Additional Considerations: Approved District partners receive the benefits as described in the partnership agreement. In addition to these benefits, District partners may also be allowed other opportunities as approved by the General Superintendent.

01.40.07. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

N/A

01.40.08. ACTION PLAN TO COMMUNICATE/DISSEMINATE

- (1) This policy should be distributed to all District department heads, senior staff, and other direct reports to the General Superintendent and Deputy General Superintendent.
- (2) This policy should be added to the District shared drive, intranet, and website.
- (3) Department Heads should work to ensure that all necessary staff are knowledgeable about this policy.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions concerning District policies, please contact:

Forest Preserve District of Cook County
Office of the General Superintendent
Attn: Anthony D. Tindall, Policy Director
69 W. Washington St., Suite 2040, Chicago, IL 60602
Office: (312) 603-8351; Email: Anthony.Tindall@cookcountyil.gov



APPENDIX A:

Declaration of Partnership

Forest Preserve District of Cook County

Mission Statement

“To acquire, restore and manage lands for the purpose of protecting and preserving public open space with its natural wonders, significant prairies, forests, wetlands, rivers, streams, and other landscapes with all of its associated wildlife, in a natural state for the education, pleasure and recreation of the public now and in the future.”

As partners, we share the vision laid out for the District in 1914. Together we work to restore Cook County’s natural areas, educate the public, advocate for the expansion of the preserves, and build awareness and increase opportunities for recreation in the preserves. Together we form a movement to create a culture of conservation and collaboration in Cook County.

Partners for the Preserves

Champions for critical habitats: The FPDCC maintains 68,000 acres of preserves which host many endangered species, restored natural habitats, and migratory paths for birds. Our partnership works for the expansion of preserves, to eliminate invasive species, to protect endangered species, and to conduct scientific inquiry on the health of species and environment in Cook County.

Connectors to nature: Receiving an estimated 40 million visits each year, together we introduce people to the unique environments in Cook County. Through a variety of education and recreation opportunities, people become stewards of the environment. Together our efforts as partners help us reach new groups of individuals by providing programming opportunities in the preserves.

Supportive of our work: As a group, we can work together to fulfill our District’s mission. With more than 40 partnerships in place, organizations have the opportunity to interact with other groups that share the goal of restoring and maintaining public spaces so current and future generations will have the opportunity to educate, recreate, and enjoy the preserves.

Partner Information

(Please update as needed)

Name of Organization: _____
Primary Contact: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Secondary Contact: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Street Address: _____

Why do you want to become a partner with the FPDCC?

- Advocacy
- Recreation
- Education
- Stewardship
- Trails
- Research
- Other: _____

Briefly describe how the Forest Preserves of Cook County currently supports your work or relates to your organization's mission?

Briefly describe your goals and expected outcomes of this partnership:

Please estimate the number of people your organization brings to the Preserves each year:

Would your organization like to receive the Forest Preserves' E-Newsletter? _____

(Name of organization) _____ agrees with the goals and mission of the Forest Preserves of Cook County and commits to supporting this vision.



**APPENDIX B:
Partnership Assessment Form**

Partnership Assessment Form: This document provides key analytical questions that can assist Forest Preserve staff in deciding whether or not to pursue a particular partnership, and should be used in negotiating a formal partnership agreement.

#1	Alignment with Forest Preserve mission, values, and policies	Yes	No	N/A	Response/Notes
A.	Support the Forest Preserves' mission and priorities? If yes, how?				
B.	Align with Forest Preserves related master plans?				
C.	Align with Forest policies?				
#2	Benefits to the Forest Preserves and the General Public	Yes	No	N/A	Response/Notes
A.	Expand the Forest Preserves holdings?				
B.	Conserve biological diversity?				
C.	Eliminate invasive species?				
D.	Protect endangered species?				
E.	Add to scientific knowledge?				
F.	Improve quality of programs and services?				
G.	Improve physical improvement or added amenities to facilities, preserves, groves, etc.? How will these be maintained?				
H.	Increase safety?				
I.	Enhance quality of current programs/services?				
J.	Target different audiences? (Examples: youth, seniors, underserved, and or diverse populations)				
K.	Increase variety of programs/services?				
L.	Increase capacity that will expand access by diverse user groups?				
M.	Increase public access to the Forest Preserves?				
N.	Provide transportation?				
O.	Add programs/services- reduce/free of charge opportunities?				
#3	Budget Considerations	Yes	No	N/A	Response/Notes

A.	Provide a financial benefit to the Forest Preserves?				
B.	Bring in additional revenue?				
C.	Potentially reduce Forest Preserve operating, maintenance, or capital costs?				
D.	Provide in-kind resources: services, property, volunteer time, equipment, supplies, etc.?				
E.	Compliment efforts by other Forest Preserves partners?				
F.	Leverage existing resources?				
G.	Potentially increase or decrease the Forest Preserves legal liability?				
#4	Community Relations	Yes	No	N/A	Response/Other
A.	Provide a programmatic opportunity/event/service that the Forest Preserves could not present on its own?				
B.	Provide a free event or service that is open or accessible to the general public for the citizens of Cook County?				
C.	Has the potential to showcase Forest Preserves and its assets to new business?				
D.	Require marketing or communications support? If yes, please describe.				
E.	Have the potential for controversy? Why or why not?				
F.	Have a potential for negative impact to the communities in which the project/event/initiative will be located?				
G.	Increase traffic, noise, or reduced available parking?				
#5	Other Considerations	Yes	No	N/A	Response/Other
A.	Will this proposal require review and approval of the Board of Commissioners?				



APPENDIX C: Post-Implementation Partnership Assessment Checklist

It is important to monitor ongoing partnerships and evaluate their success. Please complete the following questionnaire after the partnership event, project is completed, or, in case of an ongoing partnership, fill out on an annual basis. Forest Preserve operating departments and partners are each requested to fill out a post-implementation evaluation and submit it to the Office of the General Superintendent.

Each should write a summary (no more than 1 page) of the partnership that addresses the following:

1. Did the Partnership result in expected benefits to the Forest Preserves and/or the public?
2. Were the desired goals achieved?
3. Are there positive measurable outcomes?
4. Is there data to support outcome achievement?
5. Have overall expectation and goals of Forest Preserves staff been satisfied?
6. Were the terms and conditions of the partnership agreement between the potential partner and Forest Preserves met and to the satisfaction of both parties?
7. Did the Partnership add value to taxpayers without costing additional Forest Preserve funds?

Community Relations

1. Was there adequate marketing or public involvement?
2. Was there public feedback about the partnership? (i.e., complaint boxes, recreation coordinators' feedback, informal survey, etc.)
3. Are the majority of users/ participants satisfied with the partnership program/services, or gave no substantial negative feedback?

Post Partnership Questionnaire (Did This Project....)	# s	Other comments
Expand the Forest Preserves holdings? If yes, by how many acres?		
Improve the health of the preserves? If yes, number of acres impacted.		
Bring more people out to the preserves? If yes, how many?		
Add programs/services- reduce/free of charge opportunities? If yes, how many?		
Bring financial resources to the Forest Preserves? If yes, how much?		



**APPENDIX D:
Partnership Review & Approval Process Chart**

