

POSITION PAPER

Nature-Compatible Recreation

in the Forest Preserves of Cook County

Adopted by the Forest Preserves Board of Commissioners
on February 24, 2021



Nature-Compatible Recreation

in the Forest Preserves of Cook County

Adopted by the Conservation and Policy Council on July 10, 2020

ISSUE

Over time, recreational programs and/or facilities that do not align with the Forest Preserves mission and are not financially sustainable have been developed throughout the preserves. Even today, there is constant pressure to develop new uses which are more appropriate to municipal parks. The Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC) should support recreational facilities and programs which provide all residents a connection with nature, oppose new uses which are not aligned with its mission, and phase out existing recreational programs and facilities which are incompatible and/or unsustainable.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY

Recreation is a central part of the mission of the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Recreation that facilitates the enjoyment and engagement of nature, such as bird watching, fishing, or walking and hiking, reflects the heart of the mission. Other forms of recreation can be more challenging. Baseball diamonds and soccer fields focus participants and observers on the game, not on nature. Ziplines and sledding both involve nature, but do they change it too much? Careful consideration of how recreation connects people to nature and how it impacts nature should be at the core of decision-making for where to focus resources.

There has long been debate about how much land within the Forest Preserves should be developed for recreation and the types of recreation that are (and are not) compatible with nature. In 1929, an advisory committee recommended that the Forest Preserves maintain an 80/20 balance in its land use, with at least 80 percent of the land to be kept in a natural condition (including 5 percent for water recreation areas in rivers, lakes and marsh lands), and 20 percent to be available for “active play such as boating, bathing, camping, athletics and golf” (including 2 percent for a zoo and arboretum). It is this 20 percent set aside for “active play” that was the origin of the concept of nature-compatible recreation.

Nature-Compatible Recreation:

Opportunities for residents and visitors to engage in recreational activities within the Forest Preserves of Cook County that support and further the Forest Preserves’ mission. These are educational and recreational experiences that foster human health, wellness, and a lifelong love of nature and outdoor activity while minimizing detriment to the Preserves’ natural habitats and properties. The Forest Preserves’ mission of environmental awareness, open space advocacy, and active stewardship is to be achieved through nature-compatible recreation participation where possible.

Impacted Communities: Communities within Cook County that are impacted by a history of racial inequity. As defined by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), these include communities which are: *(i) economically disconnected areas with concentrations of low-income and minority households AND (ii) disinvested areas with long-run decline in employment and weak commercial markets.*

The 80/20 principle has remained in effect for decades and was recently reaffirmed in the Forest Preserves' 2013 Recreation Master Plan, which estimated that the Forest Preserves maintains 81.5 percent of its holdings in natural condition with 18.5 percent developed as parking areas, trails, structures, utilities, picnic groves, mowed play areas, the Brookfield Zoo, the Chicago Botanic Garden, and various recreation areas. **In this position paper, the Council affirms the 80/20 principle once more and offers further guidelines on the types of recreation that should be considered compatible with the mission of the FPCC.**

Today the Forest Preserves offers more than 350 miles of trails, 283 picnic groves, 10 golf courses, six nature centers, five campgrounds, three aquatic centers and a broad range of nature programs and special events throughout the year (See Appendix 1). In general, we believe the Forest Preserves is on the right track. However, some current uses are not nature-compatible, and some are not sustainable. Other uses have only a small, exclusive set of users.

Over time the Forest Preserves should transform or repurpose locations that host incompatible, unsustainable and exclusive uses to natural spaces or nature-compatible recreation.

The Forest Preserves' recreational assets were developed over many decades. In its early years, the Forest Preserves focused on acquiring land and developing paths and roadways for public access, and visitors were encouraged to use all areas of the Forest Preserves for recreation. As the automobile became more available, millions of visitors would drive to (and through) the Forest Preserves. In the 1920s and 1930s, dams were constructed along the Des Plaines River to create swimming holes. Historical photos from these years show parking lots jammed with cars as city dwellers escaped to the forests for picnicking and swimming.

During the Great Depression, an influx of federal funds from President Roosevelt's New Deal allowed the Forest Preserves to build the Skokie Lagoons and to construct and renovate hiking trails, picnic and toilet facilities, swimming pools, toboggan slides, and golf courses throughout the preserves. Following WWII, the Forest Preserves opened five nature centers (in addition to the Hal Tyrell Trailside Museum, which opened in 1931) to promote a greater understanding of native plants and animals.

Throughout its history, the Forest Preserves sometimes acquired recreation facilities, such as baseball fields and tennis courts, that are more commonly associated with park districts. Other facilities

Sustainability, as used in this position paper, includes three components:

Environmental sustainability requires that no lasting harm is caused to the native plants and animals that live in the Forest Preserves of Cook County.

Financial sustainability refers to the District's ability to secure resources to develop, operate, and maintain a program or service over time. The full cost (both upfront and long-term) must be justified by benefitting nature, connecting residents to nature, or generating revenue to support the Forest Preserves' mission.

Social sustainability focuses on providing equitable nature access to and for all Cook County residents. Nature access supports healthy lifestyles for individuals and provides communities with resources (nature-based education, programming, gathering spaces, etc.) to help build social cohesion.

An Exclusive Use limits the use of the preserves to a small group of users, often involves closing off an area, and may require a fee or permit for entry or use.

began as nature-compatible recreation but evolved over time to be less compatible. For example, when runoff from surrounding development polluted swimming holes, the Forest Preserves made a decision to construct aquatic centers. As model planes grew larger with more powerful engines, the Forest Preserves agreed to develop paved runways in the grassy fields that had been used by flying clubs for decades. And as golf technology advanced, courses became more managed and manicured.

Many Forest Preserves assets warrant re-evaluation based on the current interpretation of its mission. While the definition of nature-compatible recreation has evolved over the years and no doubt will continue to evolve as habits, technology and attitudes change, the Forest Preserves' goal is to promote recreational activities that support and further its mission. Baseball, for example, does not match because the fields are detrimental to natural habitats and with a focus on the game, it does little to promote a love of nature.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- Placement of facilities and implementation of programs should not harm nature. High value ecologically sensitive areas must be protected from disturbance.
- The vast majority of FPCC's holdings should remain in a natural state with no more than 20 percent developed for active recreation or other uses.
- Everyone should have access to recreation and programs which promote healthy lifestyles and connect people to nature.
- Operation and maintenance of facilities and programs must be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.
 - o The Forest Preserves must balance two competing priorities—the need to maintain existing facilities and the need to welcome more people via investments in new facilities and programs. The Forest Preserves has been and must continue to be mindful of both needs.
 - o Programs that are fully aligned with the Forest Preserves' mission and broadly accessible to the public (such as nature centers) may be fully subsidized. Programs that have low mission fit and/or serve a very limited number of users should have low or no subsidy. (See Pyramid Test in Appendix 4.)
 - o Revenue from concessions in strong market areas may be used to subsidize/support concessions in weak market areas.

- o In limited situations, non-compatible uses that generate revenue to support the Forest Preserves' mission may be considered (for example, a banquet facility at a golf course or a new facility in an area that has already been disturbed).
- Residents must have an opportunity to have meaningful impact on plans for recreation programs and facilities within the Forest Preserves, and participation should be broad enough to include those who lack formal organization or influence. If elimination of a facility or program harms a specific community, the Forest Preserves should seek ways to provide alternative benefits or otherwise mitigate the harm. Special concern should be paid to communities impacted by a history of racial inequity and other marginalized communities addressed in recent and future position papers.

POSITION STATEMENT

The Forest Preserves of Cook County and its partners should prioritize “Nature-Compatible Recreation” and oppose new uses that are not aligned with the Forest Preserves’ mission. Over time, existing recreational programs and/or facilities that do not align with the Forest Preserve mission and are not financially sustainable should be transformed to natural spaces or repurposed for nature-compatible recreation. The Forest Preserves should support facilities and programs that provide all residents a connection with nature—with intentional consideration for communities impacted by a history of racial inequity and other marginalized communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Ensure all residents have access to nature-compatible recreation.

- 1.1 Ensure major recreational facilities are well-distributed across the Forest Preserves, accessible and well-maintained. An initial assessment of major recreational facilities indicates that Forest Preserves facilities are, for the most part, equally distributed throughout the Forest Preserves. However, special attention should be paid to sites south of I-80 where no major facilities currently exist. (See Appendix 1.1.)
- 1.2 Continue building partnerships and offering special programs and outreach to connect residents located far

EVALUATION PROCESS

Pools. In developing this paper, a preliminary evaluation of pools explored three options: (i) Repurpose existing pool pumps and plumbing into a nature themed splash pad and “water jungle gym,” (ii) Maintain pool as an amenity to adjacent campground and nature center, and (iii) Repurpose the pool site to a nature-compatible use. The preliminary evaluation should be vetted with stakeholders to develop a final plan for each pool site. (See Appendix 4.2.)

Golf courses. A 2018 study by the National Golf Association (NGA) assessed capital needs and overall demand for Forest Preserves golf courses. Use the selected evaluation tool to analyze the consultant’s proposals and engage stakeholders to develop a final recommendation for each site. (See Appendix 4.3.)

Exclusive uses (dog parks, model plane fields, etc.) Using a Forest Preserves site for an exclusive use gives much more to some citizens than to others and creates a precedent that attracts further attempts to divide and develop the preserves. When significant investment is required to continue an exclusive use, the Forest Preserves should instead return the area to a natural state or transition to a broad public use rather than perpetuate the exclusive use. The Forest Preserves should work with user groups to explore how exclusive uses can become more aligned with the Forest Preserves mission and draw more visitors to the preserves (See Appendix 5).

from Forest Preserves—especially those within impacted communities—to nature. Make people feel safe and welcome visitors with signage, nature ambassadors, and other approaches. Maintain a highly visible public safety presence of ambassadors and other staff throughout the preserves and expand opportunities for people to recreate in groups so they feel safe and become comfortable visiting the preserves on their own.

- 1.3 Utilize NeighborSpace and Conservation@Home, and partner with other like-minded organizations to promote the importance of protecting native habitats at small sites within impacted communities.
- 1.4 Evaluate on-going efforts and use lessons learned to replicate and scale up the most successful and cost-effective initiatives.

2 Transform or repurpose programs and facilities that are incompatible or unsustainable to nature-compatible uses.

The Council reviewed several tools to evaluate programs and/or facilities for nature-compatible recreation and cost sustainability. The evaluation process must be rigorous and incorporate a comprehensive list of key criteria. Tools reviewed include the Forest Preserves’ “pyramid” fit test, the MacMillan Matrix, and the DeSantiago evaluation worksheet (See Appendix 4).

- 2.1 Select and customize an evaluation tool that incorporates key criteria related to mission alignment, impact to nature, community benefit and economic impact.
- 2.2 Use the selected tool to engage stakeholders—including those who would benefit from future reuses—and conduct assessments for pools, golf courses, parking lots and other existing facilities that are not nature-compatible, are not sustainable, and/or that exclusively serve a limited number of users.
- 2.3 Develop and implement a nature-compatible reuse plan or habitat restoration plan for any existing facility that is determined to be incompatible or unsustainable.

3 Ensure all future investments support nature-compatible and sustainable uses.

Priority should be given to new investments that (a) promote access to impacted communities, (b) improve geographic distribution of facilities or programs across the Forest Preserves, (c) are located at sites well served by transit, and (d) leverage external investment such as private philanthropic support.

- 3.1 Use the evaluation tool to assess all new proposals for recreation facilities and programs, as well as any proposed investments in existing facilities and programs. Donors supporting investment in higher income communities should be encouraged to promote equity by matching investment in a program or site benefiting an impacted community.
- 3.2 Engage stakeholders to determine how to transition incompatible and exclusive uses to more compatible uses over time.
- 3.3 Continue to develop strategies to shrink and maintain parking lots and service roads that are not currently economically sustainable. Furthermore, many parking areas are unused much of the time. For each area to be repaved, the Forest Preserves should assess current and projected demand for the parking and evaluate whether each parking area should shrink, by how much, and by what process. Continue and expand the current initiative to decrease mowing throughout the preserves.

4 Throughout the planning and decision-making process, engage stakeholders to help plan and implement programs and new facilities, and to develop re-use plans for incompatible and unsustainable uses.

- 4.1 Explore new community engagement techniques designed to build participation, understanding and trust over time.
- 4.2 Continue to promote equity by intentionally engaging people from impacted communities and other marginalized communities.

Position Paper

This position paper is one of four published in 2019 by the Conservation and Policy Council of the Forest Preserves of Cook County (Forest Preserves). Each of these documents outlines a set of principles and recommendations about key issues that face the Forest Preserves today and in the foreseeable future. It is our intention that these papers will set clear guidelines for the actions and direction of the Forest Preserves staff, its Board of Commissioners, and its partners and supporters.

These position papers continue an important legacy of civic leadership related to the Forest Preserves. While natural areas no longer remain in many Midwestern counties, in Cook County, natural communities have survived because of the vision of civic leaders.

From the beginning, the Forest Preserves has struggled, at times unsuccessfully, to uphold its mission and protect its land. Earlier Advisory Committees provided published reports in 1929, 1952 and 1959 to guide land acquisition, development plans, protection, operation and public use of lands, and methods of finance. These early advisory reports provide an important foundation to build on. The 1959 Advisory Committee, for example, wrote, “The Board has kept in mind the fact that the great holdings of the District are the property of all the citizens of Cook County and has refused to dissipate them for community, municipal or other purposes not in the interest of the general public,” and that it takes “vigilance, effort and courage” to sustain and enforce these policies with firmness and resolution.

The Council thanks the following for their assistance developing this paper: *Terry Guen, Michael DeSantiago, Maria Pesqueira, Benjamin Cox, Eileen Figel, Cynthia Moreno, Kristin Pink, and Karen Vaughan.*

APPENDICES

Nature-Compatible Recreation

in the Forest Preserves of Cook County

Nature-Compatible Recreation Appendices

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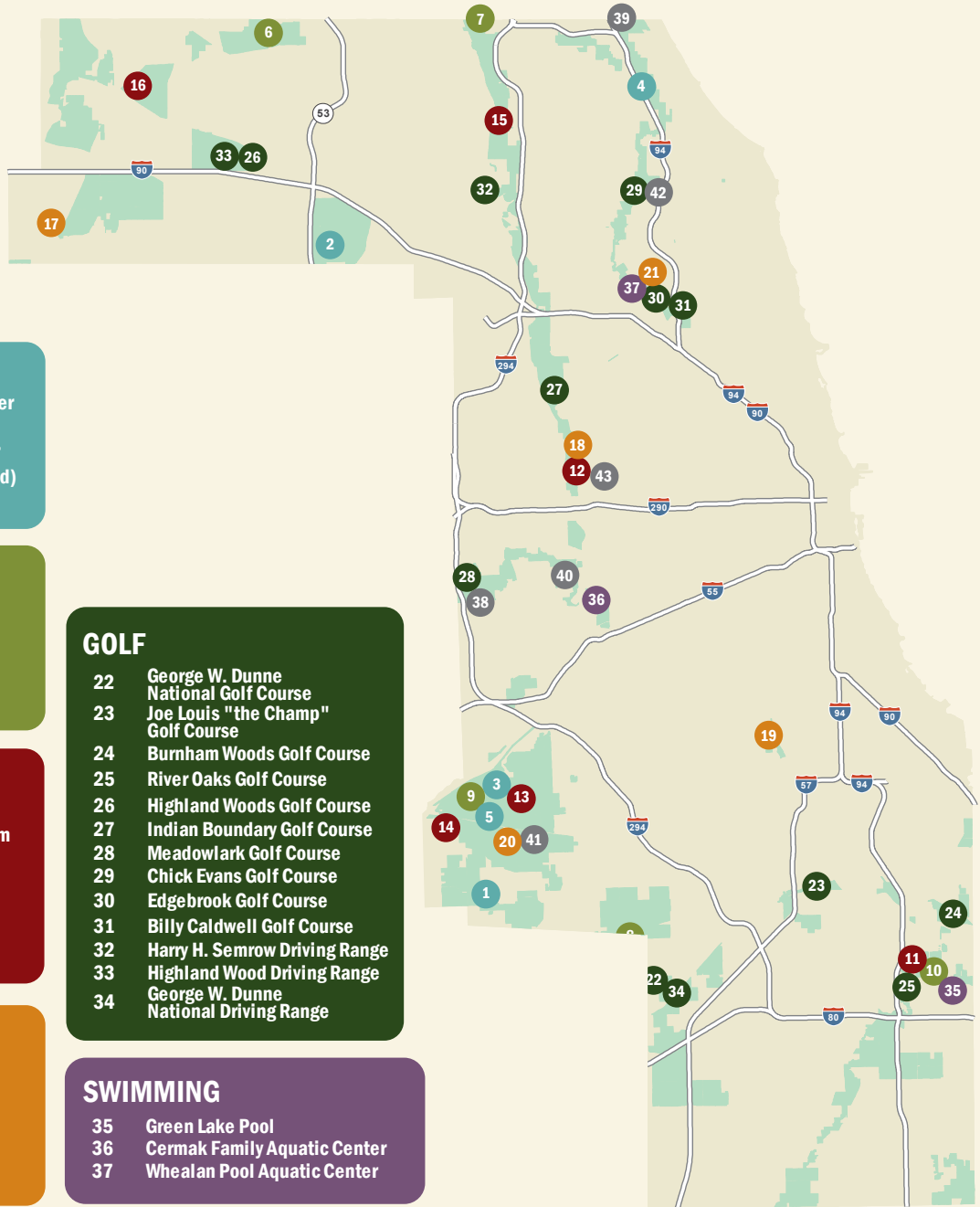
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FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY

Popular Attractions



BOATING

- 1 Tampier Lake Boating Center
- 2 Busse Lake Boating Center
- 3 Maple Lake Boating Center
- 4 Skokie Lagoons (Tower Road)
- 5 Saganashkee Slough

CAMPING

- 6 Camp Reinberg
- 7 Camp Dan Beard
- 8 Camp Sullivan
- 9 Camp Bullfrog Lake
- 10 Camp Shabbona Woods

EDUCATION

- 11 Sand Ridge Nature Center
- 12 Hal Tyrrell Trailside Museum
- 13 Little Red Schoolhouse
- 14 Sagawau Environmental Learning Center
- 15 River Trail Nature Center
- 16 Crabtree Nature Center

EVENT FACILITY

- 17 Rolling Knolls Pavilion
- 18 Thatcher Woods Pavilion
- 19 Dan Ryan Visitor Center
- 20 Swallow Cliff Pavilion
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GOLF

- 22 George W. Dunne National Golf Course
- 23 Joe Louis "the Champ" Golf Course
- 24 Burnham Woods Golf Course
- 25 River Oaks Golf Course
- 26 Highland Woods Golf Course
- 27 Indian Boundary Golf Course
- 28 Meadowlark Golf Course
- 29 Chick Evans Golf Course
- 30 Edgebrook Golf Course
- 31 Billy Caldwell Golf Course
- 32 Harry H. Semrow Driving Range
- 33 Highland Wood Driving Range
- 34 George W. Dunne National Driving Range

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- 35 Green Lake Pool
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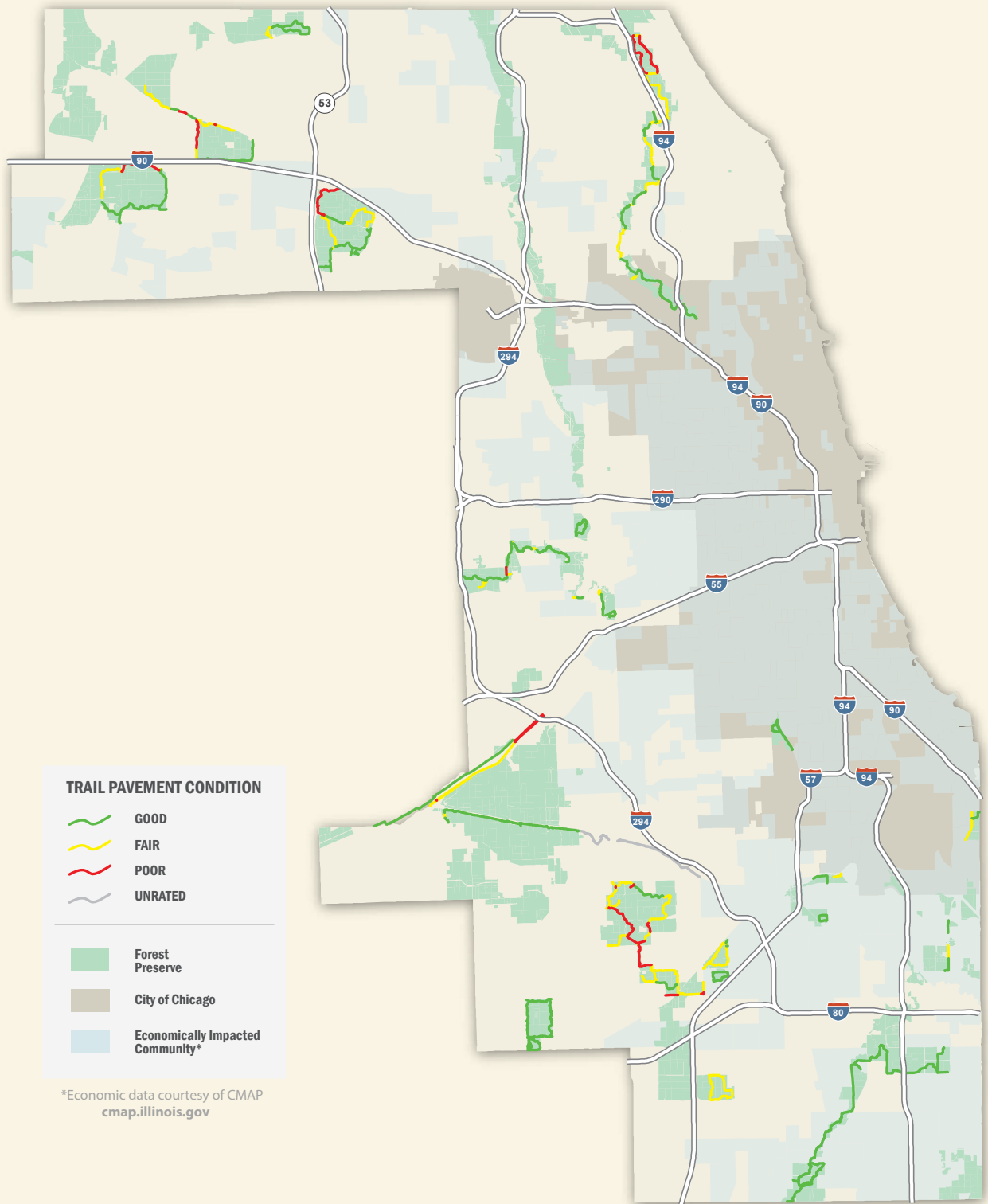
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- FOREST PRESERVE
- COOK COUNTY

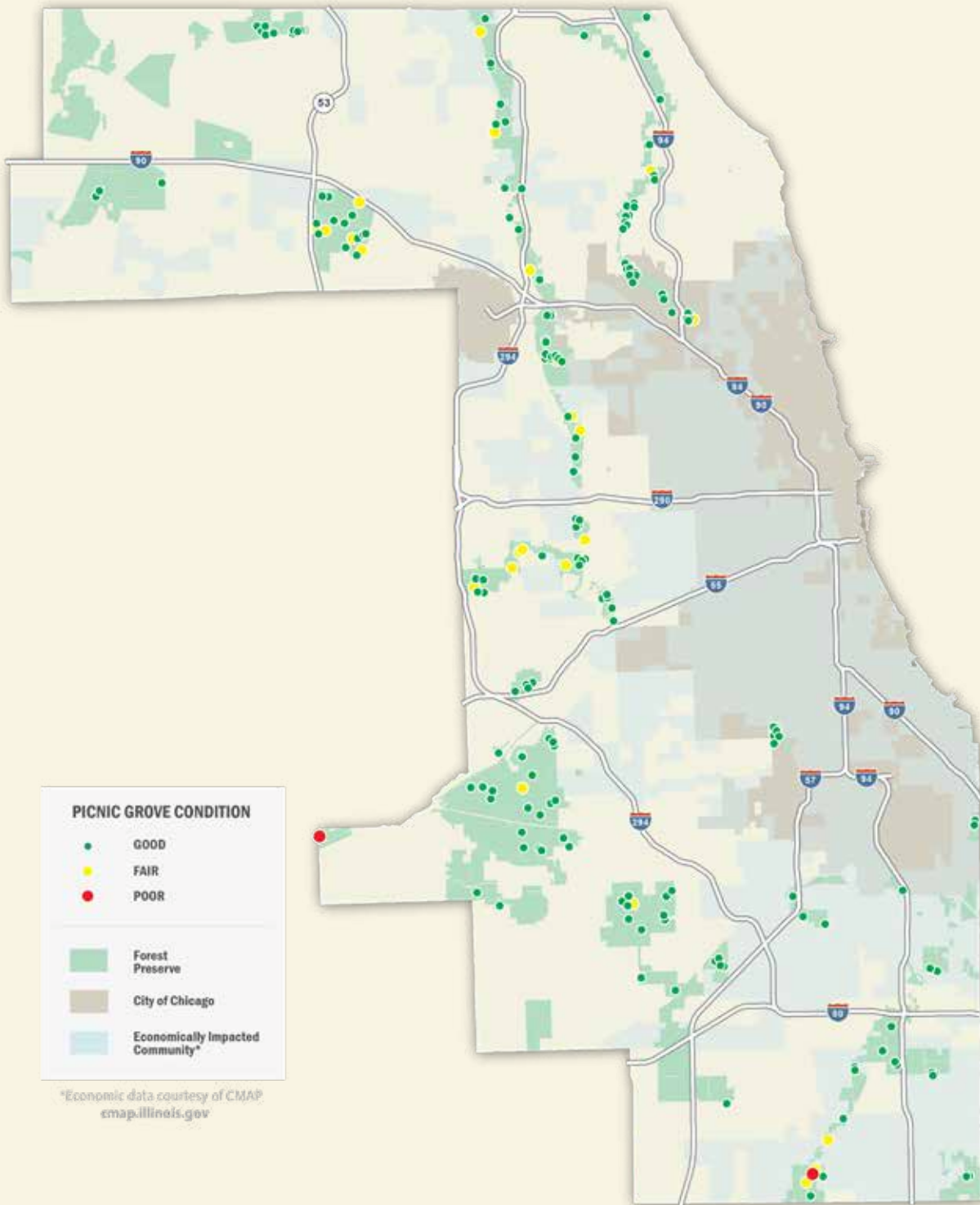
FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY

Paved Trail Condition Assessment



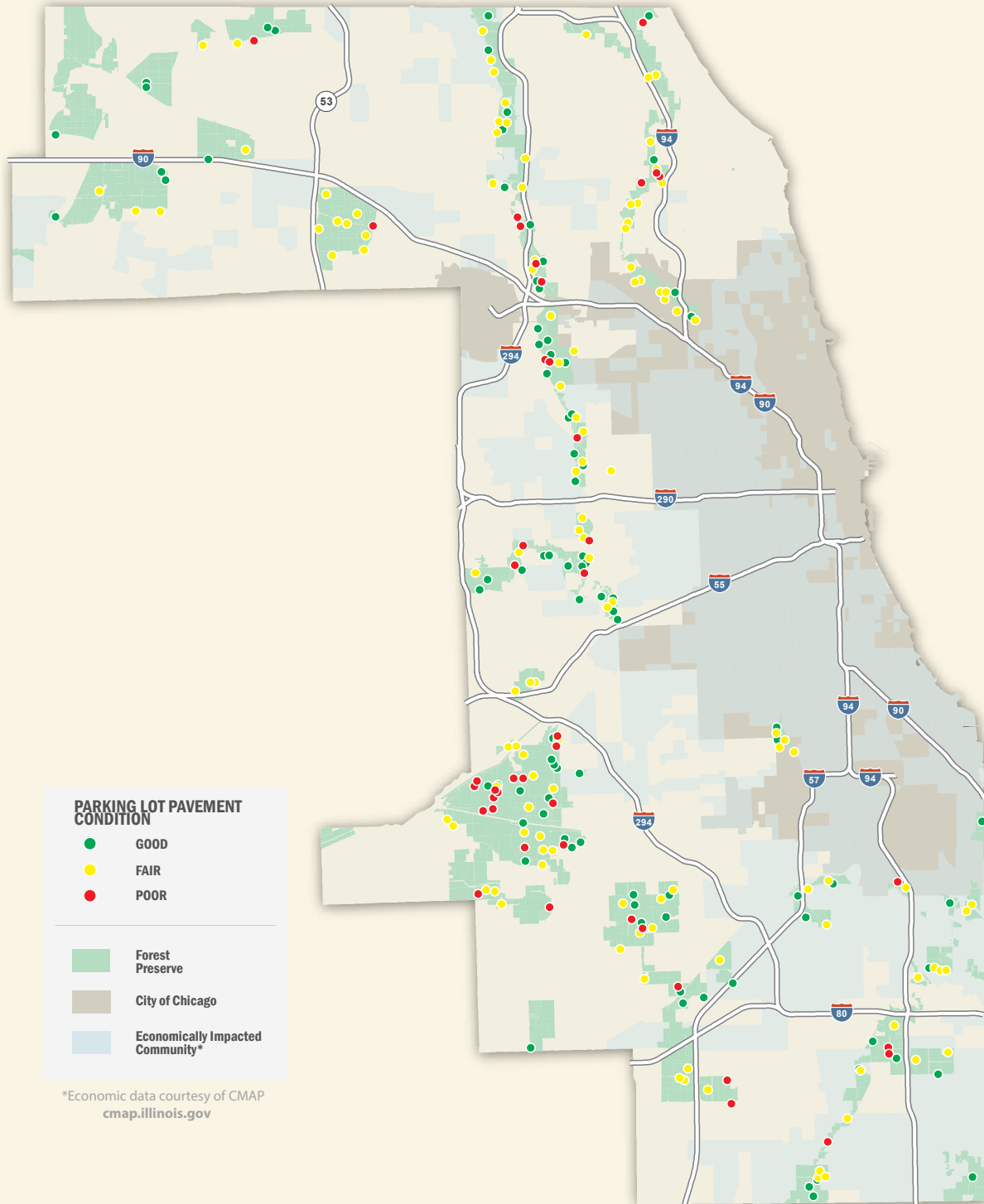
FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY

Picnic Grove Condition Assessment



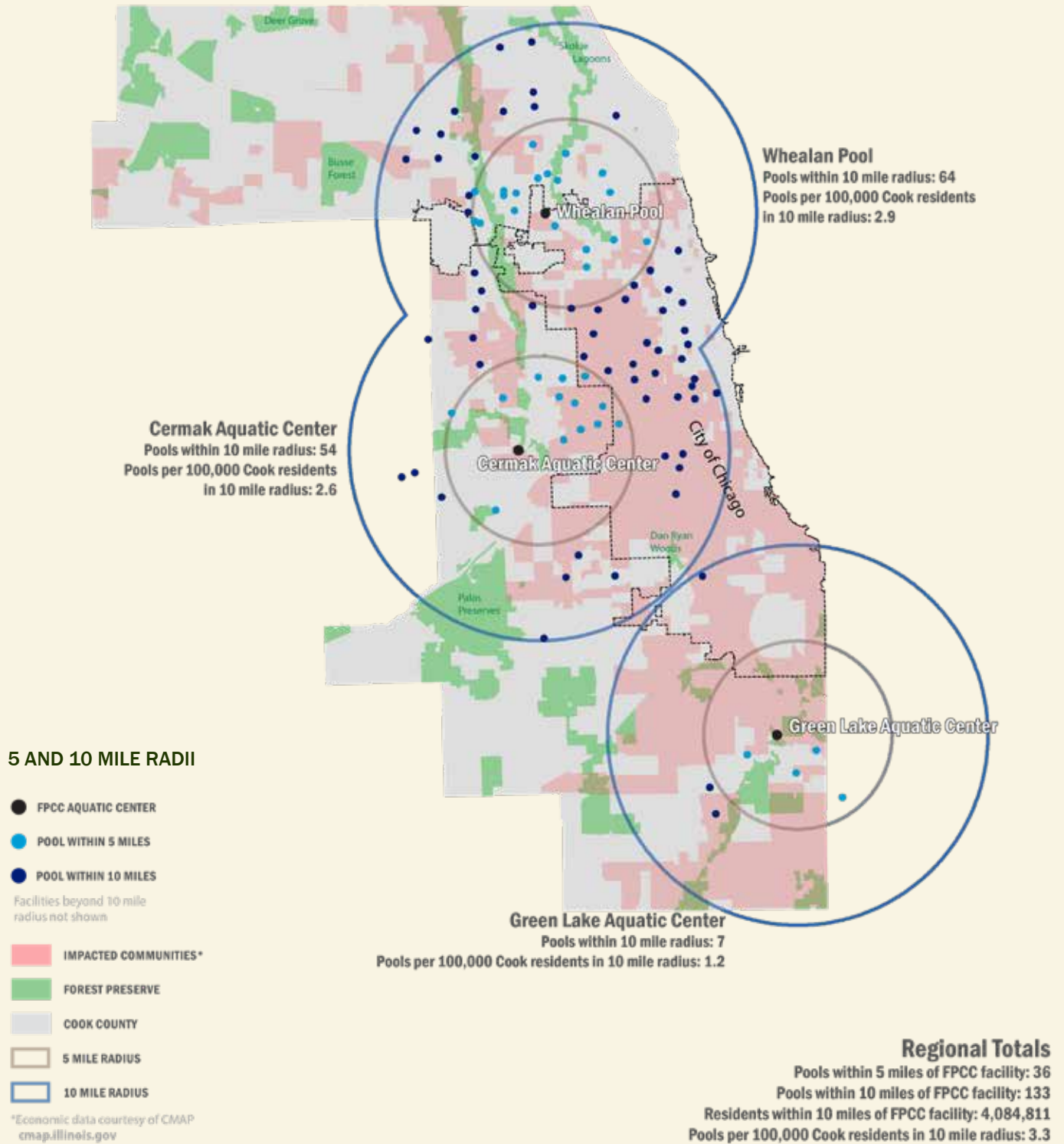
FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY

Parking Lot Condition Assessment



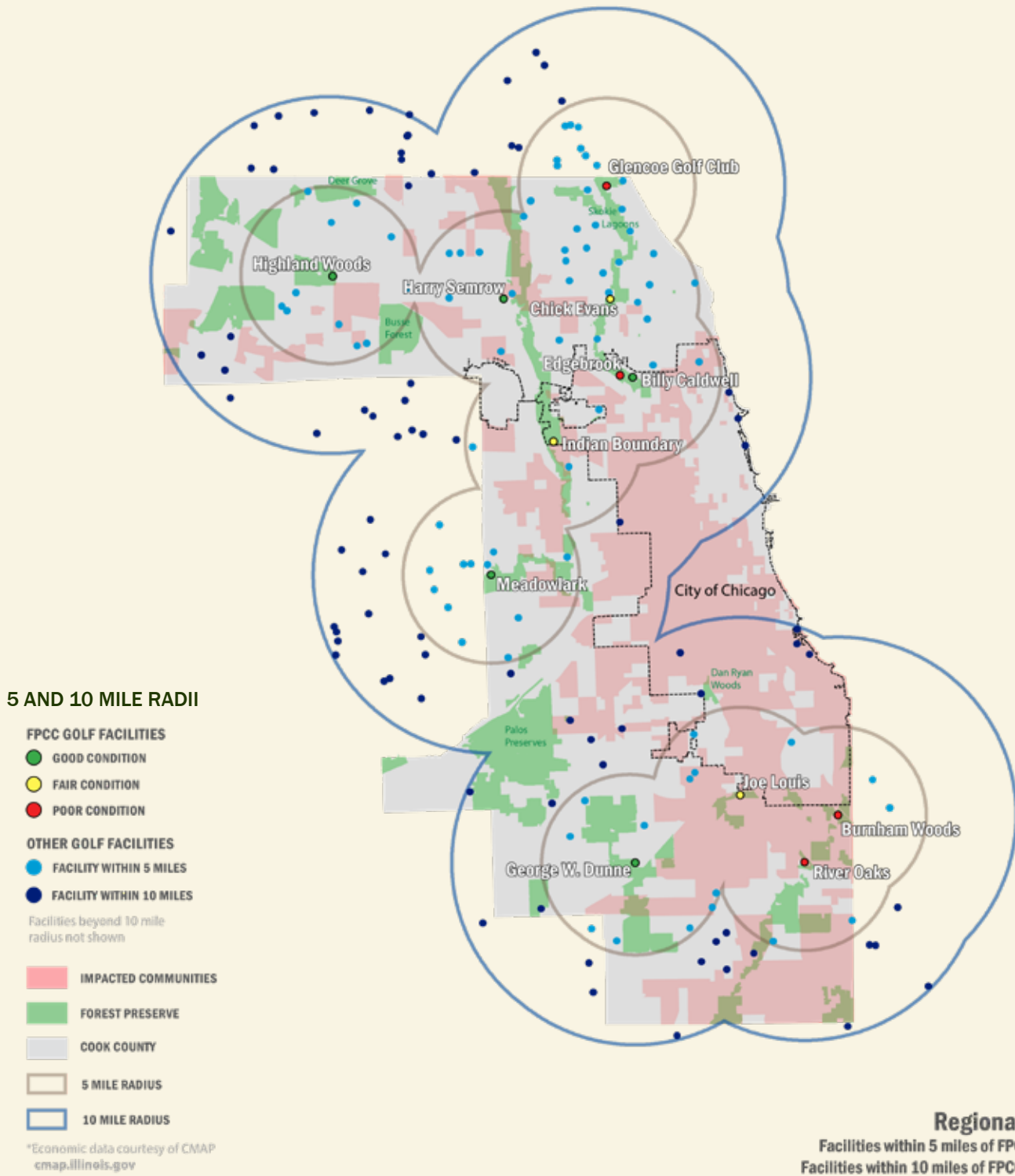
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Public Swimming Pools



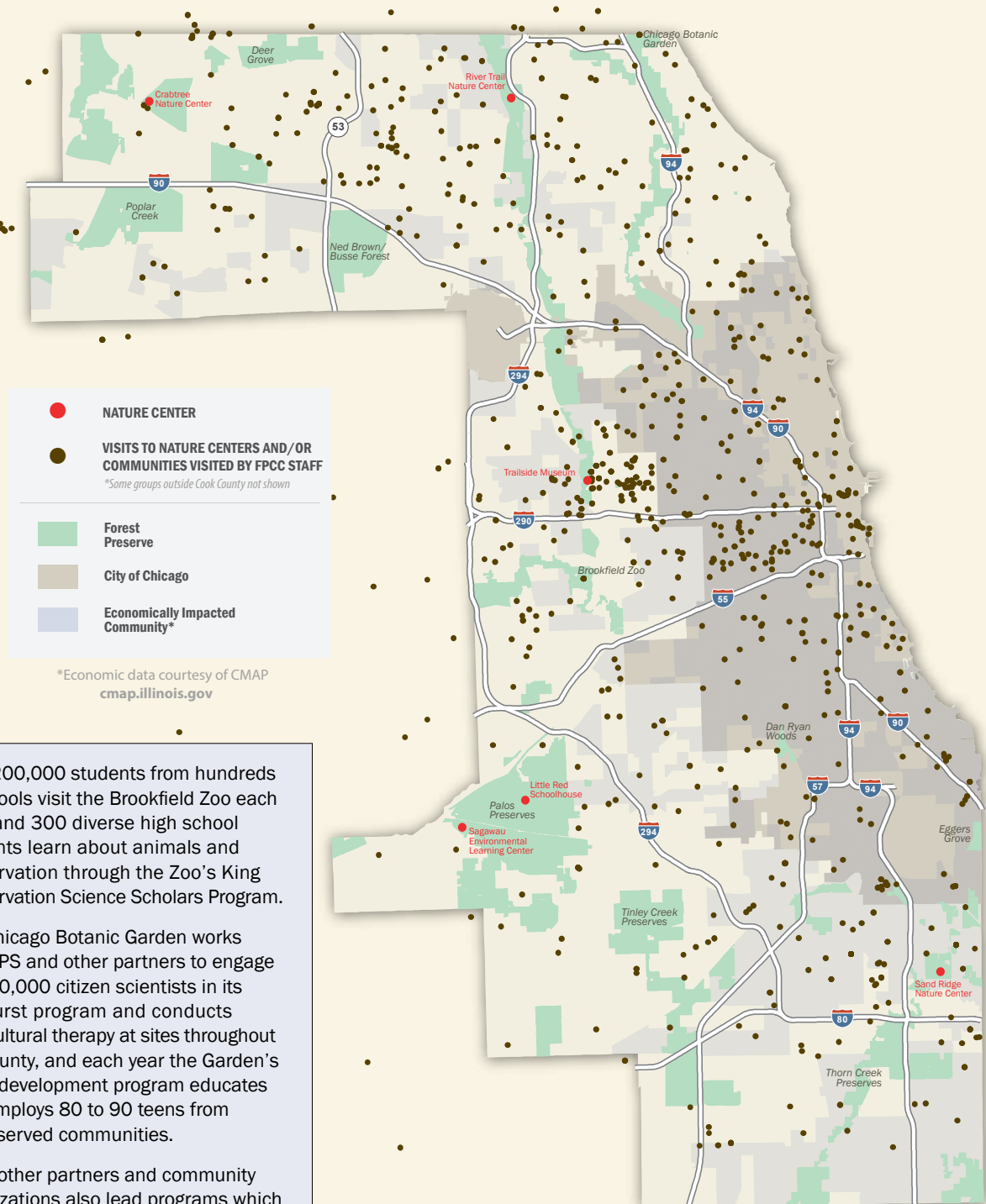
FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY

Golf Facilities



FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY

Programs and Community Outreach



Over 200,000 students from hundreds of schools visit the Brookfield Zoo each year, and 300 diverse high school students learn about animals and conservation through the Zoo's King Conservation Science Scholars Program.

The Chicago Botanic Garden works with CPS and other partners to engage over 10,000 citizen scientists in its Budburst program and conducts horticultural therapy at sites throughout the county, and each year the Garden's youth development program educates and employs 80 to 90 teens from underserved communities.

Many other partners and community organizations also lead programs which bring thousands of residents to the Forest Preserves throughout the year.

Appendix 2:

Case Studies

Making Nature Accessible to All

To ensure all residents have access to nature-compatible recreation, facilities throughout the preserves must be well distributed, well-maintained, and ADA-compliant. In communities which have no nearby forest preserves, partnerships with NeighborSpace and Conservation@Home help promote the importance of protecting native habitats at small sites within impacted communities.

2.1. REIMAGINING BEAUBIEN WOODS

The 257-acre Dan Ryan Woods on 87th and Western is one of the oldest Forest Preserves in the system, and for many residents on the South Side of Chicago, it's also the most accessible. While the Dan Ryan Woods has long been a popular site for organized family picnics, prior to the last decade, investment at the location was minimal, and there were lingering concerns about public safety. The FPCC developed a new Master Plan to reimagine the Dan Ryan Woods through physical improvements, expanded programming and additional access to core services, such as obtaining picnic permits. Altogether, more than \$4 million has been invested over the last eight years to transform the preserve to a premier destination for fitness, family celebrations, and environmental learning.

2.2 HELPING PARTNERS CONNECT CONSTITUENTS TO NATURE

The Forest Preserves Conservation & Experiential Programming team is working with two community agencies to develop plans and processes to better connect their specific communities to nature. FPCC is working with ENLACE Chicago, a social service organization in the Little Village community on Chicago's southwest side, that convenes, organizes, and builds the capacity of community stakeholders to confront systemic inequities and barriers to economic and social access; and The American Indian Center (AIC), the primary cultural and community resource for nearly 65,000 American Indians in Chicagoland's six county region, serving the third largest urban Native American population in the country with a variety of social, cultural and economic services.

The Forest Preserve has worked with these two organizations



Image 2.1, New programs, services and amenities are drawing visitors to Dan Ryan Woods.

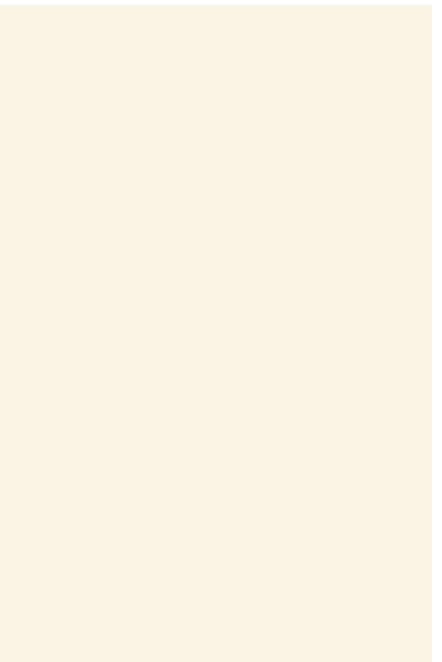
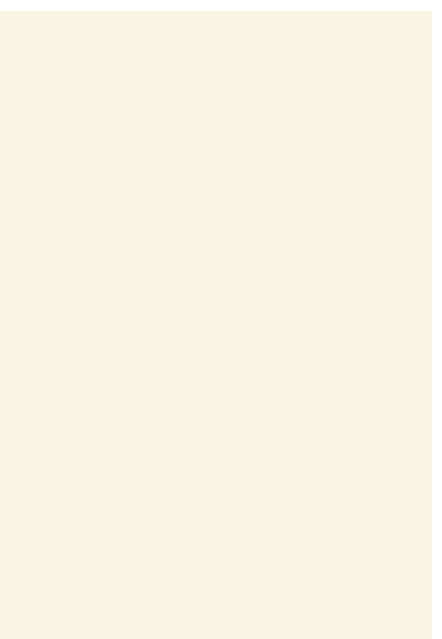
in the past supporting trips to the Preserves for youth and family activities as well as being a partner on large events like the AIC annual Pow Wow and working with them on the Serpent Mound project.

This new initiative provides planning time and resources, training and programming and project development with these two groups that will support the needs and goals of both organizations and as well as the Forest Preserves.

FPCC and ENLACE are developing initiatives that use nature as a tool for youth development, for violence prevention, and to support their health and wellness initiatives. The Forest Preserves hopes to develop Nature Ambassadors/Leaders who can support FPCC staff at Little Red School House Nature Center with nature-based programming that has a Spanish language component.

With AIC, FPCC is building on the success of the Serpent Mound project by using the public art piece, the river, paddling programs, stewardship and ecological and cultural interpretation to develop ongoing programs that highlight and connect Native American history and current culture to the Forest Preserves.

Through partnerships with ENLACE and AIC, the Forest Preserves seeks to develop long-term systems and processes that provide ongoing community engagement strategies.



2.3 **PRIORITIZING ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE PRESERVES**

The FPCC recently hired a technical advisor and launched internal ADA working groups as well as an external ADA advisory group. A comprehensive review and prioritization of accessibility improvements needed has been completed and ADA improvements are incorporated into new capital investments throughout the district. In 2016, FPCC staff participated in ADA training at the Brookfield Zoo and established a process for requesting adaptive assistance. In 2017, all FPCC staff completed customer service training related to working with persons with disabilities. In 2019, the FPCC completed accessibility improvements to 33 picnic groves, installed three accessible canoe and kayak launches, and upgraded the FPCC website to conform to level “AA” of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

2.4 EXPANDING YOUTH PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY AT BROOKFIELD ZOO

In 2019, the Chicago Zoological Society's Zoo Camp, which serves nearly 2,000 children each summer, became the first program in the nation to receive accreditation from the National Inclusion Project. Campers explore animals and the natural world in fun, engaging, and age-appropriate settings through activities, encounters, games, art, and science inquiry.

An estimated 7 percent of all Zoo Campers have special needs, including physical disabilities, autism, sensory processing disorders, and attention deficit disorders. The Zoo Camp team worked closely with the National Inclusion Project for the past four years to support a Zoo Camp inclusion specialist, a counselor who works with children with disabilities and serves as an information resource for other camp counselors. This partnership continues to help ensure that Zoo Camp meets the needs of all children, regardless of ability, and allows them to develop a passion for wildlife and nature.



2.5 EXPANDING THE FUNCTIONAL BORDERS OF THE PRESERVES WITH CONSERVATION@HOME

Through the Conservation@Home program, residents of Cook County are encouraged to adopt "Forest Preserves Friendly" practices while providing habitat for birds, butterflies and other beneficial wildlife in residential, school and workplace gardens. Certified homes receive yard signs which will help educate others about the importance of native habitats. In 2017, the program expanded to include the Field Museum's Urban Monarch Project, and a Community Leadership Workshop was convened to introduce NeighborSpace gardeners to the Forest Preserves and to explore using natural elements for play at NeighborSpace sites. The Conservation@School program was launched in 2018 and nine schools received scholarships through the Levy donation to purchase native forbs, grasses, trees and shrubs to enhance or build a native garden. More than 100 home and school gardens have been certified.



Image: 2.5, Conservation@Home expands the functional borders of the preserves by encouraging homeowners to plant native vegetation.

2.6 CONNECTING CITIZEN SCIENTISTS TO NATURE THROUGHOUT COOK COUNTY

Chicago Botanic Garden's Budburst program brings together researchers, educators, gardeners, and citizen scientists on a shared journey to uncover the stories of plants and animals affected by human impacts on the environment. Budburst currently engages over 10,000 community scientists, including schools in Chicago and Waukegan. Budburst also works with non-formal audiences through partnerships with natural areas including the Chicago Park District and the Forest Preserves of Cook and Lake Counties. In the coming year, Budburst will collaborate at Forest Preserves of Cook County campgrounds and nature center visitors more deeply with the natural environment. Six nature centers, five campsites, and Conservation@Home expands the functional borders of the preserves by encouraging homeowners to plant native vegetation outreach activities together reach over 260,000 individuals annually. Each campsite and nature center will be provided with Budburst activity backpacks including activity guides, plant ID guides, and data collection instructions, protocols, and data collection sheets.



Image: 2.6, Conservation Corps

Transforming Programs and Facilities to Improve Mission Alignment and Sustainability

Strategies will be developed to transform or repurpose existing facilities which are not naturecompatible, or which may be unsustainable due to cost. A preliminary assessment conducted for the aquatic centers suggests repositioning the Green Lake aquatic center as an amenity serving the adjacent nature center and campground as described below. Additional assessments for the remaining aquatic centers, golf courses, and other facilities will be conducted and vetted with stakeholders to develop final plans for each site.

2.7 CREATING A NATURE CAMPUS IN SOUTH HOLLAND

The Sand Ridge nature center and nearby campground and aquatic center represent significant amenities within the Forest Preserves, but too often visitors to one did not cross over to explore the other. In 2017, the FPCC developed a plan to create a cohesive and welcoming Sand Ridge Nature Campus designed to encourage visitors to explore and create their own nature adventures. The plan calls for better way-finding

and connections between the aquatic center, the Sand Ridge Nature Center, Camp Shabbona Woods, the Burnham Greenway Trail, Green Lake and Clayhole picnic groves, and Green Lake fishing lake. The plan also calls for expanded nature play, new indoor and outdoor interpretation, art and trail improvements. The nature campus serves the southern part of Cook County including Calumet City, the far south side of Chicago (primarily East Side, Hegewisch, Pullman, and Roseland), South Holland, Dolton, Lansing, Riverdale, Lynwood, Glenwood, Homewood and Thornton. Many of these municipalities struggle to maintain public facilities and infrastructure as population declines result in higher taxes for the remaining residents. Several of these communities do not have municipal park districts and struggle to provide quality outdoor recreation to their residents; others have park facilities which suffer from deferred maintenance. The Forest Preserves has an opportunity to serve the residents of these communities by providing opportunities for outdoor recreation and high-quality programming. Nature Center staff are working with community members to identify stories and themes that will resonate and create a welcoming and inclusive campus.

Appendix 3:

Advocacy/Work Plan

	TASK	LEAD(S)
2020	1 Research relevant models and develop best practices for community engagement at the FPCC, including strategies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance the needs of special user groups with the overall needs of the FPCC by bringing multiple stakeholders to the table—including those who would benefit from future reuses—and avoiding a process where the loudest voice wins. • Identify the voices needed (youth, seniors, LatinX, etc.), then work with organizations who represent these targeted audiences to gather input. • Engage teachers at CPS and other districts to connect students to nature. • Engage user groups (such as flying clubs, biking clubs, etc.) to develop programs, spread the word, and connect with schools or other organizations to bring more visitors to the preserves. Engage these groups to develop strategies to transform unsustainable or incompatible uses. (See Appendix 5 for input from stakeholders' roundtable.) 	Lydia Uhlir
	2 Select and customize an evaluation tool which incorporates criteria related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compatibility with nature and alignment with mission • Community benefit (Does it serve an impacted community without alternate coverage? Is it easily accessible via transit?) • Competitive position (Is there unmet demand for the program or facility?) • Ecological impact (What is the impact to natural areas, native plants and animals? What is the impact to ecosystem services such as stormwater detention, carbon sequestration, etc.?) • Economic attractiveness (Is it easy to attract resources to support the use?) • Economic Impact (What is the cost to construct, operate, and maintain the use? What is the ability to generate revenue from the use?) • Political viability 	FPDCC Staff
	3 Utilize best practices identified in #1 above to engage stakeholders and conduct second phase assessment for proposed investments at River Oaks and Burnham Woods golf courses.	Karen Vaughan
	4 Report on 3-year gains by Department of Conservation & Experiential Programming and goals for upcoming year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas to reach baseline equitable programs within 3 years based on current staff and funding • Identify areas which are underserved by FPCC nature programs • Identify degree of geographic/cultural/socioeconomic/educational barriers/constraints • Identify gap to goal program funding • Utilize FPCC case studies (examples to include Rolling Knolls and Beaubien Woods) to further understand Facilities and Program Distribution future opportunities • Seek internal and external expertise to analyze and create programming equity strategies 	Jacqui Ulrich
	5 Increase the use of multiple languages, targeted marketing, and social media to reach target audiences.	Carl Vogel
	6 Convene a racial equity impact assessment training for the senior team.	Deputy Superintendent

2020-2021 Ongoing



Appendix 3:

Advocacy/Work Plan

	TASK	LEAD(S)
2020	6 Explore new and improved signage, differentiated from FPCC's traditional red signs, to highlight and promote the zip line course, boating facilities, and other special attractions.	FPCC Sign Committee
	7 Explore opportunities to partner with DIVVY or other bike share providers to connect residents near bike sharing hubs to the FPCC trail system.	Jean Sheerin
	8 Complete phase 1 of pavement reduction study (evaluation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete GIS mapping and evaluation of all parking lots, driveways, trails, and other pavement • Complete research, data collection, and implement new Pavement Management Program (best practices, vehicle counters, decision tools) • Complete cost-benefit analysis for single-site versus large scale, multiple-site pavement reductions • Identify & prioritize pavement reduction candidates 	Aren Kriks
2021	9 Engage stakeholders and conduct second phase assessment for aquatic centers.	Brian Arnold
	10 Engage flying clubs to develop a long-term strategy for model plane flying fields and runways. Note: This position paper recommends phasing out exclusive uses which are not nature compatible; input from the 2.3.20 Stakeholders' Roundtable recommends modifying these uses to make them more sustainable and compatible. (See Appendix 5).	Jacqui Ulrich
	11 Complete phase 2 of pavement reduction study (programmatic approach) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize capital investments and seek grants for priority lots • Develop age in place strategy for selected sites • Draft sustainable development policies for new paved surfaces 	Aren Kriks Karen Vaughan
	12 Develop a donor equity program which encourages donors supporting investments in higher income communities to provide a corresponding "matching" benefit to an impacted or other marginalized community.	Shelley Davis, FP Foundation and Michelle Uting
	13 Develop a plan for recreational facilities south of I-80. Prioritize investments in new programs and facilities serving this region.	FPCC Planning & Development
	14 Develop strategies to provide nature-compatible recreation opportunities for residents living far from the forest preserves. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the AIC and Enlace pilot programs. How are these groups connecting their constituents to the FPCC via the Camping Leadership Workshops, gear library, Greater Maywood Paddling Program, etc.? Consider expanding the pilot to new partners. • Evaluate the Nature Express bus program. Is the program connecting groups to FPCC sites and programs and/or to the Zoo and Garden? Should the program be expanded or modified? • Explore partnerships with park districts to bring children attending day camps to a fieldtrip at the FPCC. 	Jacqui Ulrich and FPCC Planning & Development
	15 Use the selected evaluation tool to assess all new proposals for recreational facilities and programs.	FPCC Recreation Cmte
	16 Engage key stakeholders and develop long-term strategies to transition exclusive uses such as dog parks and model plane fields to a natural state or transition the site to a broad public use, rather than invest significant capital resources to perpetuate the exclusive use.	FPCC Recreation Cmte

2020-2021 Ongoing

Appendix:

Sample Evaluation Tools

4.1 DESANTIAGO QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS TOOL

Over the years the FPCC developed and acquired recreational facilities such as golf courses, pools, ziplining facilities, baseball diamonds, tennis courts and model airplane fields. A key recommendation of the Nature-Compatible Recreation position paper is to evaluate the various recreational activities to determine which are compatible with the mission of the FPCC and should continue to be supported and invested in. Other factors related to ecological impact, economic sustainability, and community benefits must also be considered. In the past, the assessment of FPCC recreational facilities was often based upon limited considerations.

The position paper recommends a much more rigorous evaluation process which incorporates a comprehensive list of key criteria.

In developing this position paper, several evaluation tools were reviewed. The DeSantiago Quantitative Analysis Tool (DQAT) was used to conduct preliminary analysis of several golf courses and all three aquatic centers. The process helped identify key criteria which should be considered in future evaluations, regardless of the final tool selected. As indicated on the following pages, the DeSantiago Quantitative Analysis Tool identifies four evaluation categories. Evaluation teams should incorporate key criteria into each category as needed.

MISSION ALIGNMENT	ECOLOGICAL IMPACT	COMMUNITY IMPACT	ECONOMIC IMPACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is it nature compatible and consistent with the founders' vision? ▪ Does it advance FPCC's mission by adding acreage or restoring land? ▪ Does it complement an existing FPCC asset? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the impact to natural areas, native plants and animals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does it serve an impacted community without alternate coverage? ▪ Does it draw visitors? ▪ Is it well-served by transit? ▪ Is it ADA accessible? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the cost to construct, operate, and maintain the use? ▪ What is the ability to generate revenue from the use? ▪ Is it easy to attract resources to support the use? ▪ Is there unmet demand for the program or facility?

Evaluation teams will also assign a weighted score to each criterion. The tool is then used to evaluate various options for a specific site or facility. For example, one option might be to expand and modify a specific golf course and a second, competing option might be to close that golf course. At the end of the scoring process, each of the competing options will have a total weighted score. The higher the total, the more favorable the option. This appendix includes examples of the input and scoring sheets for aquatic centers and for the George Dunne Golf Course. While the scores provide a helpful quantitative comparison and ranking, they are not the sole determining factor. The value of this process is the rigorous dialogue and analysis it requires to complete the scoring. This process enabled the evaluation team to make well-informed initial recommendations for each recreational facility and activity evaluated.

Owner Input Sheet

Step 1: Owner (CCFPD) Identifies the Criteria that will be evaluated.

Step 2: Owner assigns a Weight Factor to each Criterion.

Criterion Weight	Attribute Weights
(1 - 5)	(1 - 5)

Criterion #1	Economic Impact	3	
Attributes			
Attribute 1	First Cost (Lower Cost = Higher Score)		5
Attribute 2	Operating Cost (Lower Cost = Higher Score)		2
Attribute 3	Financially Self-sustaining		5
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)		0

Step 3: Owner & Team determine the attributes of each criterion that will be

Step 4: Owner & Team assign a Weight Factor to each Attribute. The more important, the higher the Weight Factor.

		Criterion Weight	Attribute Weights
		(1 - 5)	(1 - 5)
Criterion #2	Ecological Impact	5	
Attributes			
Attribute 1	Neutral or positive impact on natural area		5
Attribute 2	Neutral or positive impact on native species		5
Attribute 3	Poses no threat to endangered species*		3
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)		0

*Any program that negatively impacts threatened or endangered species is disqualified.

Criterion Weight	Attribute Weights
(1 - 5)	(1 - 5)

Criterion #3	Community Impact	5	
Attributes			
Attribute 1	Recreational resource to impacted community		5
Attribute 2	Attracts community members to FPDCC		2
Attribute 3	Highly regarded by community		5
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)		0

Criterion Weight	Attribute Weights
(1 - 5)	(1 - 5)

Criterion #4	Alignment with Mission	5	
Attributes			
Attribute 1	Consistent with Founders' vision		5
Attribute 2	Increases FPCC Size		5
Attribute 3	Adds restored acres		4
Attribute 4	Part of Nature Campus/Complements FPCC Assets		5

Quantitative Analysis Tool Copyright Proxima Consulting 2019

4.2. SAMPLE SCORING FOR GOLF FACILITY

Recreational Asset		George Dunne	
Step 1: Owner (CCFPD) Identifies the Criteria that will be evaluated.		Step 2: Owner assigns a Weight Factor to each Criterion.	
		Criterion Weight	Attribute Weights
		(1 - 5)	(1 - 5)
Criterion #1	Economic Impact	5	
Attributes			
Attribute 1	First Cost (Lower Cost = Higher Score)		5
Attribute 2	Operating Cost Lower Cost = Higher Score)		4
Attribute 3	Financially Self-sustaining		5
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)		0
Step 3: Owner & Team determine the attributes of each criterion that will be		Step 4: Owner & Team assign a Weight Factor to each Attribute. The more important, the higher the Weight Factor.	
		Criterion Weight	Attribute Weights
		(1 - 5)	(1 - 5)
Criterion #2	Ecological Impact	3	
Attributes			
Attribute 1	Neutral or positive impact on natural area		5
Attribute 2	Neutral or positive impact on native species		4
Attribute 3	Poses no threat to endangered species*		3
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)		0
*Any program that negatively impacts threatened or endangered species is disqualified.		Criterion Weight	Attribute Weights
		(1 - 5)	(1 - 5)
Criterion #3	Community Impact	5	
Attributes			
Attribute 1	Recreational resource to adjacent community		4
Attribute 2	Attracts community members to FPDCC		2
Attribute 3	Highly regarded by community		5
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)		0
		Criterion Weight	Attribute Weights
		(1 - 5)	(1 - 5)
Criterion #4	Alignment with Mission	5	
Attributes			
Attribute 1	Consistent with Founders' vision		5
Attribute 2	Increases the size of the FPCC		5
Attribute 3	Adds restored acres		4
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)		0
Quantitative Analysis Tool Copyright Proxima Consulting 2019			

Scoring Sheet for Option 1: Repair/Leave As Is				
<div> <div>Step 5: Team discusses/scores each Attribute.</div> <div> <div>Option</div> <div>Repair/Leave As Is</div> </div> </div>				
<div> <div>Asset</div> <div>George Dunne</div> </div>				
<div> <div>Attribute</div> <div>Attribute</div> </div>				
<div> <div>Criterion #1</div> <div>Economic Impact</div> </div>				
<div> <div>Weight</div> <div>Score (0 - 10)</div> <div>Points</div> </div>				
Attribute 1	First Cost (Lower Cost = Higher Score)	5	5	25
Attribute 2	Operating Cost Lower Cost = Higher Score)	4	5	20
Attribute 3	Financially Self-sustaining	5	7	35
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
Total Points				80
Criterion Weight				5
Total Weighted Score				400
<div> <div>Criterion #2</div> <div>Ecological Impact</div> </div>				
<div> <div>Attribute</div> <div>Attribute</div> </div>				
<div> <div>Weight</div> <div>Score (0 - 10)</div> <div>Points</div> </div>				
Attribute 1	Neutral or positive impact on natural area	5	6	30
Attribute 2	Neutral or positive impact on native species	4	6	24
Attribute 3	Poses no threat to endangered species*	3	6	18
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
Total Points				72
Criterion Weight				3
Total Weighted Score				216
<div> <div>Criterion #3</div> <div>Community Impact</div> </div>				
<div> <div>Attribute</div> <div>Attribute</div> </div>				
<div> <div>Weight</div> <div>Score (0 - 10)</div> <div>Points</div> </div>				
Attribute 1	Recreational resource to adjacent community	4	6	24
Attribute 2	Attracts community members to FPDCC	2	5	10
Attribute 3	Highly regarded by community	5	6	30
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
Total Points				64
Criterion Weight				5
Total Weighted Score				320
<div> <div>Criterion #4</div> <div>Alignment with Mission</div> </div>				
<div> <div>Attribute</div> <div>Attribute</div> </div>				
<div> <div>Weight</div> <div>Score (0 - 10)</div> <div>Points</div> </div>				
Attribute 1	Consistent with Founders' vision	5	5	25
Attribute 2	Increases the size of the FPCC	5	0	0
Attribute 3	Adds restored acres	4	0	0
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
Total Points				25
Criterion Weight				5
Total Weighted Score				125
<div> <div>Step 6: Review/Compare Total Score for each Option.</div> <div>Note: While scores provide an objective means of comparing the Options, they should not be</div> </div>				
Total Score for				1,061

Scoring Sheet for Option 2: Invest in Banquet Facility				
Step 5: Team discusses/scores each Attribute.				
Option	Invest in Banquet Facility			
Asset	George Dunne	Attribute	Attribute	Weighted
Criterion #1	Economic Impact	Weight	Score (0 - 10)	Points
Attribute 1	First Cost (Lower Cost = Higher Score)	5	3	15
Attribute 2	Operating Cost Lower Cost = Higher Score)	4	7	28
Attribute 3	Financially Self-sustaining	5	10	50
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
Total Points				93
Criterion Weight				5
Total Weighted Score				465
Criterion #2	Ecological Impact	Weight	Score (0 - 10)	Points
Attribute 1	Neutral or positive impact on natural area	5	6	30
Attribute 2	Neutral or positive impact on native species	4	6	24
Attribute 3	Poses no threat to endangered species*	3	6	18
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
Total Points				72
Criterion Weight				3
Total Weighted Score				216
Criterion #3	Community Impact	Weight	Score (0 - 10)	Points
Attribute 1	Recreational resource to adjacent community	4	7	28
Attribute 2	Attracts community members to FPDCC	2	5	10
Attribute 3	Highly regarded by community	5	8	40
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
Total Points				78
Criterion Weight				5
Total Weighted Score				390
Criterion #4	Alignment with Mission	Weight	Score (0 - 10)	Points
Attribute 1	Consistent with Founders' vision	5	2	10
Attribute 2	Increases the size of the FPCC	5	0	0
Attribute 3	Adds restored acres	4	0	0
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
Total Points				10
Criterion Weight				5
Total Weighted Score				50
<p>Step 6: Review/Compare Total Score for each Option.</p> <p>Note: While scores provide an objective means of comparing the Options, they should not be considered to be the absolute final determinant.</p>				
Total Score for				Invest in Banquet Facility 1,121

Owner Input Sheet			
Step 1: Owner (CCFPD) Identifies the Criteria that will be evaluated.		Step 2: Owner assigns a Weight Factor to each Criterion.	
		Criterion Weight	Attribute Weights
		(1 - 5)	(1 - 5)
Criterion #1	Economic Impact	3	
Attributes			
Attribute 1	First Cost (Lower Cost = Higher Score)		5
Attribute 2	Operating Cost (Lower Cost = Higher Score)		2
Attribute 3	Financially Self-sustaining		5
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)		0
Step 3: Owner & Team determine the attributes of each criterion that will be		Step 4: Owner & Team assign a Weight Factor to each Attribute. The more important, the higher the Weight Factor.	
		Criterion Weight	Attribute Weights
		(1 - 5)	(1 - 5)
Criterion #2	Ecological Impact	5	
Attributes			
Attribute 1	Neutral or positive impact on natural area		5
Attribute 2	Neutral or positive impact on native species		5
Attribute 3	Poses no threat to endangered species*		3
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)		0
*Any program that negatively impacts threatened or endangered species is disqualified.		Criterion Weight	Attribute Weights
		(1 - 5)	(1 - 5)
Criterion #3	Community Impact	5	
Attributes			
Attribute 1	Recreational resource to impacted community		5
Attribute 2	Attracts community members to FPDCC		2
Attribute 3	Highly regarded by community		5
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)		0
		Criterion Weight	Attribute Weights
		(1 - 5)	(1 - 5)
Criterion #4	Alignment with Mission	5	
Attributes			
Attribute 1	Consistent with Founders' vision		5
Attribute 2	Increases FPCC Size		5
Attribute 3	Adds restored acres		4
Attribute 4	Part of Nature Campus/Complements FPCC Assets		5
Quantitative Analysis Tool Copyright Proxima Consulting 2019			

4.3. SAMPLE SCORING FOR AQUATIC CENTER

Scoring Sheet for Option 1: Keep Pool B Open				
Recreational		Pool B		Step 5: Team discusses/scores each
Option	Keep			
		Attribute	Attribute	Weighted
Criterion #1	Economic Impact	Weight	Score (1 - 10)	Points
Attribute 1	First Cost (Lower Cost = Higher Score)	5	7	35
Attribute 2	Operating Cost (Lower Cost = Higher Score)	2	0	0
Attribute 3	Financially Self-sustaining	5	0	0
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
		Total Points		35
		Criterion Weight		3
		Total Weighted Score		105
		Attribute	Attribute	Weighted
Criterion #2	Ecological Impact	Weight	Score (1 - 10)	Points
Attribute 1	Neutral or positive impact on natural area	5	0	0
Attribute 2	Neutral or positive impact on native species	5	0	0
Attribute 3	Poses no threat to endangered species*	3	0	0
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
		Total Points		0
		Criterion Weight		5
		Total Weighted Score		0
		Attribute	Attribute	Weighted
Criterion #3	Community Impact	Weight	Score (1 - 10)	Points
Attribute 1	Recreational resource to impacted community	5	9	45
Attribute 2	Attracts community members to FPDCC	2	2	4
Attribute 3	Highly regarded by community	5	8	40
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
		Total Points		89
		Criterion Weight		5
		Total Weighted Score		445
		Attribute	Attribute	Weighted
Criterion #4	Alignment with Mission	Weight	Score (1 - 10)	Points
Attribute 1	Consistent with Founders' vision	5	3	15
Attribute 2	Increases FPCC Size	5	0	0
Attribute 3	Adds restored acres	4	0	0
Attribute 4	Part of Nature Campus/Complements FPCC Assets	5	8	40
		Total Points		55
		Criterion Weight		5
		Total Weighted Score		275
Step 6: Review/Compare Total Score for each Option. Note: While scores provide an objective means of comparing the Options, they should not be considered to be the absolute final determinant.		Total Score for		Keep 825

Scoring Sheet for Option 2: Divest Pool B				
Recreational		Pool B		
Option	Close & Re-use			
		Attribute	Attribute	Weighted
Criterion #1	Economic Impact	Weight	Score (1 - 10)	Points
Attribute 1	First Cost (Lower Cost = Higher Score)	5	3	15
Attribute 2	Operating Cost (Lower Cost = Higher Score)	2	5	10
Attribute 3	Financially Self-sustaining	5	5	25
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
		Total Points		50
		Criterion Weight		3
		Total Weighted Score		150
		Attribute	Attribute	Weighted
Criterion #2	Ecological Impact	Weight	Score (1 - 10)	Points
Attribute 1	Neutral or positive impact on natural area	5	4	20
Attribute 2	Neutral or positive impact on native species	5	4	20
Attribute 3	Poses no threat to endangered species*	3	0	0
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
		Total Points		40
		Criterion Weight		5
		Total Weighted Score		200
		Attribute	Attribute	Weighted
Criterion #3	Community Impact	Weight	Score (1 - 10)	Points
Attribute 1	Recreational resource to impacted community	5	4	20
Attribute 2	Attracts community members to FPDCC	2	4	8
Attribute 3	Highly regarded by community	5	2	10
Attribute 4	Attribute #4 (If needed)	0		0
		Total Points		38
		Criterion Weight		5
		Total Weighted Score		190
		Attribute	Attribute	Weighted
Criterion #4	Alignment with Mission	Weight	Score (1 - 10)	Points
Attribute 1	Consistent with Founders' vision	5	5	25
Attribute 2	Increases FPCC Size	5	0	0
Attribute 3	Adds restored acres	4	4	16
Attribute 4	Part of Nature Campus/Complements FPCC Ass	5	0	0
		Total Points		41
		Criterion Weight		5
		Total Weighted Score		205
Total Score for			Close & Re-use	745

4.4 MACMILLAN MATRIX

The MacMillan Matrix was developed by Ian MacMillan of the Wharton School of Business to help organizations decide which programs are most needed in their communities, which programs they are in the best position to provide, and which programs they should outsource or rely on some other entity to provide.

The MacMillan Matrix is based on the following assumptions:

- Nonprofits should avoid duplicating services to ensure that limited resources are used well and quality of service is maximized.
- Nonprofits should focus on a limited number of high-quality services, instead of providing many mediocre services.
- Nonprofits should collaborate so that a continuum of service can be provided with each partner focusing on specific pieces.

The MacMillan Matrix, therefore, helps organizations think about some very pragmatic questions:

- Are we the best organization to provide this service?
- Is competition good for our clients?
- Are we spreading ourselves too thin, without the capacity to sustain ourselves?
- Should we work cooperatively with another organization to provide services?

Using the MacMillan Matrix is a fairly straightforward process of assessing each current (or prospective) program according to four criteria: alignment with mission, program attractiveness, alternative coverage, and competitive position.

Source: dummies.com/business/business-strategy/redo-business-competition-with-the-macmillan-matrix/

The MacMillan Matrix was used to assess FPCC camps, golf courses, nature centers and pools. For each program, staff created a profile indicating the program purpose, target audience, primary activities, etc. A matrix worksheet was completed for the programs and the preliminary results were analyzed as indicated on the following page.

*** SAMPLE MACMILLAN MATRIX *** PRELIMINARY DRAFT ***

2. Complete MacMillan Matrix Worksheet

Program	Fit		Economic Attractiveness		Alternate Coverage		Competitive Position	
	Good	Poor	High	Low	High	Low	Strong	Weak
Camps	X		X			X	X	
Golf Courses		X		X	X			X
Nature Centers	X			X		X	X	
Pools		X		X	X			X

High economic attractiveness = easy to attract resources for support; low economic attractiveness = hard to attract resources for support.

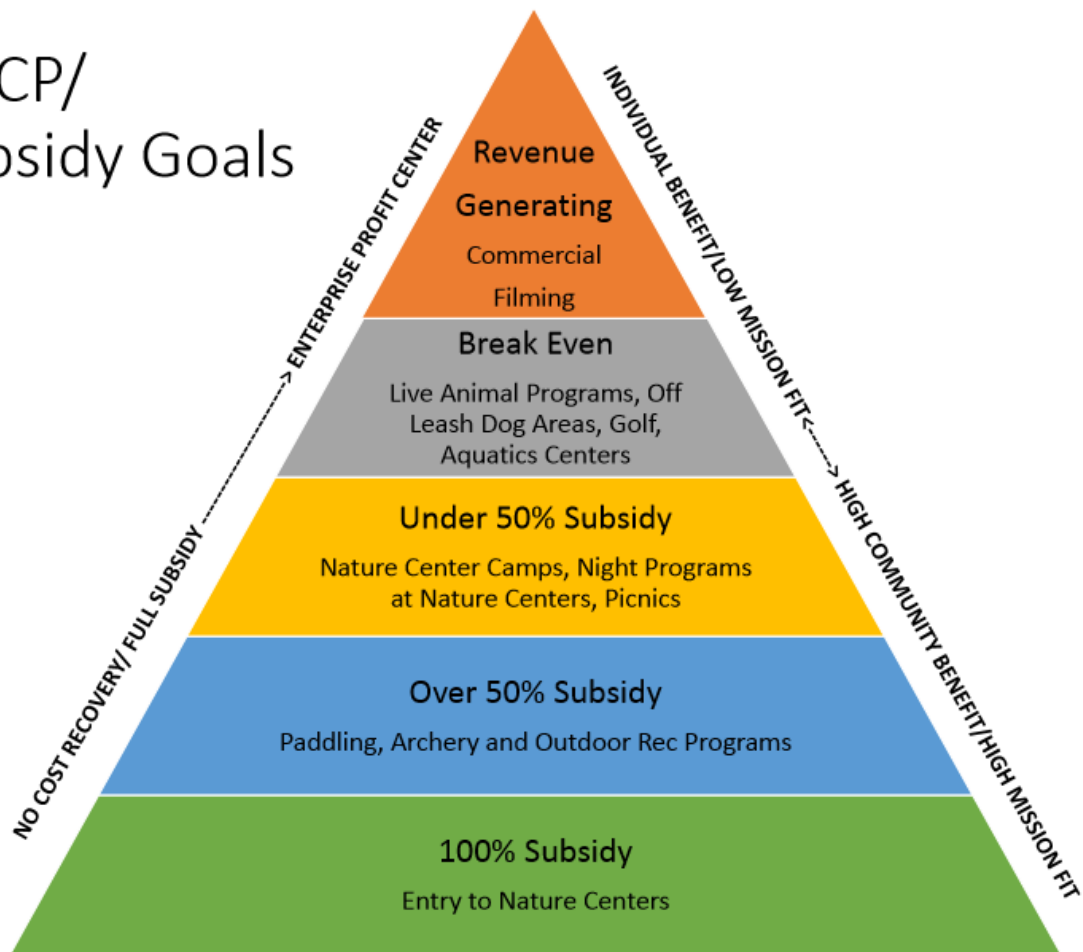
3

3. Analyze Results

	High Economic Attractiveness (Easy to attract resources)		Low Economic Attractiveness (Difficult to attract resources)		
	Alternate Coverage HIGH	Alternate Coverage LOW	Alternate Coverage HIGH	Alternate Coverage LOW	
Strong Competitive Position	1. Aggressive Competition	2. Aggressive Growth CAMPS	5. Reinforce Best Competitor or Find Partner	6. "Soul of the Agency" NATURE CENTERS	GOOD FIT
Weak Competitive Position	3. Aggressive Divestment	4. Invest, Find Partner or Divest	7. Consider Partner or Divest	8. Find Partner or Divest	
	9. Aggressive Divestment		10. Orderly Divestment GOLF COURSES, POOLS		POOR FIT

4.5. FPCC PYRAMID TEST

NCCP/ Subsidy Goals



Appendix 5: Stakeholders' Roundtable

Nature-Compatible Recreation in the Forest Preserves of Cook County

A discussion with key stakeholders facilitated by Caroline O'Boyle of the Trust for Public Lands and Bob Megquier of Openlands

February 3, 2020



Nature-Compatible Recreation in the Forest Preserves of Cook County

A roundtable discussion with key stakeholders

February 3, 2020

The Conservation and Policy Council is a group of civic leaders appointed by President Preckwinkle and the Board of Commissioners to guide efforts at the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC) to protect and restore nature and to ensure everyone feels welcome at the Forest Preserves. For the past year, the Council has been working with staff and partners to develop four position papers which address issues related to racial equity, land acquisition, nature-compatible recreation, and volunteerism. Each of the papers will set clear guidelines for the actions and direction of the Forest Preserves staff, its Board of Commissioners, and its partners and supporters.

On February 3, 2020, the Forest Preserves convened a roundtable discussion to solicit input on the Nature-Compatible Recreation draft position paper. The Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Conservation and Policy Council thank the roundtable participants for their frank input and constructive suggestions to promote nature-compatible recreation in the Forest Preserves of Cook County.

Roundtable Participants

Stakeholders		Moderators	
Abigail Garofalo	University of IL Extension	Bob Megquier	Openlands
Andrew Johnson	Forest Preserves Camping	Caroline O'Boyle	Trust for Public Lands
Dave Simmons	Ride Illinois	Conservation & Policy Council and FPCC Staff	
Greg Hipp	Chicago Area Runners Assoc.		
Jacqueline Otto	Go Ape	Arthur Mathews	FPCC
Laura Barghusen	Openlands	Eileen Figel	FPCC
Laura Derks	Flybird Experience	Jacqui Ulrich	FPCC
Matt Mulligan	The Nature Conservancy	Karen Vaughan	FPCC
Paul Mose Rickey	Village of Palos Park	Michael DeSantiago	C & P Council
Robert Larsen	Tri Village Flying Club	Pam Sielski	FPCC
Sara Halladay	Sarah's Ponies	Stephen Defalco	FPCC
Sue Gasper	University of IL Extension		
Susan Collins	Palos Hills Horsemen's Assoc.		

The roundtable covered discussion topics related to four recommendations presented in the draft position paper. A combined summary of the discussions within two breakout groups follows.

Recommendation 1: Ensure all residents have access to Compatible Recreation opportunities.

Discussion questions:

- a) How do we make sure people have access if they don't live near a forest preserve? The committee developed recommendations 1.2 and 1.3 to address this. Is this the right approach? What else can we do to get there?

Caroline O'Boyle explained that the ultimate goal is to get people out to the Forest Preserves, but she also noted that there are many ways to access nature—through transportation, communication and education. Other participants discussed emotional elements—such as, “Do I feel safe and welcome there? Do I feel like it's a place for me?” Some participants noted that many people of color don't feel like it's a place for them. The perceived isolation also makes people feel unsafe—especially people who have not spent much time outdoors. Another noted that some people will participate in a group activity within the Forest Preserves, but would not feel comfortable doing the activity alone. The following issues were discussed:

Connecting with local communities. Participants discussed the need to build bridges between the Forest Preserves and local communities. Staff explained that the FPCC is trying to partner with existing networks that can help amplify the message and invite people in. One FPCC employee added, “We can be very effective when we partner with the organizations that have existing relationships with their communities.” Participants offered several suggestions:

- ✓ Continue to create programs that provide opportunities for people to recreate in groups. Encourage grassroots efforts to do the same.
- ✓ Invest in community engagement by staffing locations where there aren't many Forest Preserves. This can help deepen the connections throughout the County and help bridge gaps in the map.
- ✓ Create more Spanish language videos to promote the Preserves to non-English speaking communities.
- ✓ Better marketing helps. Consider Google AdWords.
- ✓ Differentiate the signage for recreational opportunities (people fail to notice the traditional red Forest Preserves signs.)
- ✓ Increase use of social media, especially on Instagram.

A lot of the high priority areas in the southwest suburbs are ranked the highest for restoration services. Some of the key people we want on board are nowhere near this area. Nature put the preserves where they are – how do we bridge that gap?

- Mike DeSantiago
Conservation & Policy Council

Engaging user groups to help spread the word. One participant asked how the FPCC develops messages to connect with people of color. Staff explained that the FPCC messaging is built on a combination of national research and local surveys. The surveys were conducted in English and were supplemented by a series of Spanish-language roundtables. A participant suggested there may be a need to broaden outreach efforts. Specific suggestions include:

Recommendation 1: Ensure all residents have access to Compatible Recreation opportunities.

Discussion questions:

- a) How do we make sure people have access if they don't live near a forest preserve? The committee developed recommendations 1.2 and 1.3 to address this. Is this the right approach? What else can we do to get there?

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- ✓ Invest in community engagement by staffing locations where there aren't many Forest Preserves. This can help deepen the connections throughout the County and help bridge gaps in the map.
- ✓ Create more Spanish language videos to promote the Preserves to non-English speaking communities.
- ✓ Better marketing helps. Consider Google AdWords.
- ✓ Differentiate the signage for recreational opportunities (people fail to notice the traditional red Forest Preserves signs.)
- ✓ Increase use of social media, especially on Instagram.

A lot of the high priority areas in the southwest suburbs are ranked the highest for restoration services. Some of the key people we want on board are nowhere near this area. Nature put the preserves where they are – how do we bridge that gap?

- Mike DeSantiago
Conservation & Policy Council

Engaging user groups to help spread the word. One participant asked how the FPCC develops messages to connect with people of color. Staff explained that the FPCC messaging is built on a combination of national research and local surveys. The surveys were conducted in English and were supplemented by a series of Spanish-language roundtables. A participant suggested there may be a need to broaden outreach efforts. Specific suggestions include:

- ✓ Ask partners and various user groups (bikers, horseback riders, etc.) to help spread the word.
- ✓ Ask users to help engage more residents. For example, can Trail Watchers host a walk or a field trip?

Connecting with schools. Several participants suggested strengthening connections with local schools by providing information directly to teachers and seeking input from them. One participant noted, “I’ve never seen CPS or any school district represented at any FPCC meeting. The CEP team does reach out to schools, but we also need their direct input. If they are not showing up, why is that?” Suggestions include:

- ✓ Develop a 15-minute video that teachers can show to their students (but be realistic about who may or may not make time for this in classrooms.)
- ✓ Engage with teachers and CPS staff directly to seek their input.

Helping residents without cars connect to nature. Participants noted that many County residents don’t have cars, and many of the Forest Preserves are not easily accessible by public transportation. Participants in one breakout session asked if the FPC staff is working with CTA and Pace to extend lines to FPCC sites. Staff explained that transit agencies are struggling to serve the highest demand routes and are unlikely to extend lines to sites which generate high demand on weekends during the summer, but not throughout the week or throughout the year. A participant stated, “Most of the preserves that have public boat launches are not accessible by public transit. That is why the Forest Preserves put in a launch at Kickapoo. It is important to place facilities at sites that are transit accessible. If a vendor will be renting canoes, make sure people can get there easily.” Both breakout groups noted that bikes may be an effective way to get people without cars to the Forest Preserves. One participant noted that the FPCC’s 300-mile trail system is not shown on the Popular Attractions map included in the draft paper. She noted that trails are important ways to access the preserves, and a bike is a relatively inexpensive mode of transportation. Another participant suggests promoting the Forest Preserves as a way to take people from Point A to point B in order to get to think differently about how they can use the Forest Preserves. For example, someone could ride to work through the preserves. Specific suggestions include:

People probably aren’t going to take a bus to go the FP – maybe if they can put their bike on the bus. How realistic is it for people to take 90 minutes of public transit to get there? Focus on what is realistic.

- Greg Hipp
Chicago Area Runners Assoc.

- ✓ Direct investment in new facilities to sites which are accessible by transit.
- ✓ Explore a partnership with DIVVY to get people from DIVVY hubs to the Forest Preserves.

Recommendations 2 and 3: Transform or repurpose programs and facilities which are incompatible or unsustainable to nature-compatible uses. Ensure all future investments support nature-compatible and sustainable uses.

Discussion questions:

- a) This was a very difficult issue which the committee struggled with. We do believe we need a tool to evaluate uses in a fair and objective manner. Are the criteria listed in 2.1 the right factors to consider? Are we missing anything?
- b) What would this look like? Can we transition a pool to a nature-based water park? Can we re-position model airplane fields to a nature-compatible use?
- c) Is the primary concern how we use tax-payer funding, or is this about ensuring that all recreational opportunities offered in the preserves are compatible with FPCC's mission? (For example, 3.2 asks if FPCC would continue to invest in model airplane fields if the investments were funded by user fees.)
- d) Pavement is very expensive to maintain AND parking lots throughout the preserves are unused most of the year. We cannot afford (and do not want) the amount of pavement required to meet peak demand.

Bob Megquier explained that there is a big space within the Forest Preserves where nature and people can coexist. Others noted that recreation is not only part of the FPCC's mission, it is the lure that brings people into the Forest Preserves. Once they are in the door, the FPCC can create programs and offerings that deepen their understanding and enhance their relationship with nature. The following issues were discussed:

Nature compatibility. As a mission-based organization, the Forest Preserves needs to determine whether recreational activities like golf align with its mission. Is making golf accessible part of the FPCC's purpose? If so, it is appropriate for the higher revenue courses to subsidize the activity in other parts of the County. Even if it is not part of FPCC's mission, golf may still make sense as part of a revenue strategy. However, if it's not part of the mission and it's not financially sustainable, the FPCC needs to transition away from it. In that case, it's important to have a strong vision of what the repurposed area could be, and to sell that vision. For example, repurposing golf to natural areas could lead to greater flooding mitigation.

Work with users to explore options for transitions to nature compatible uses. Staff explained that flying fields started as grass fields, but over time they became paved runways. Does it make sense to add and maintain pavement for special uses such as this? This is a costly improvement; is it justified? Even if model plane clubs were willing and able to pay for runways, is that something we want in the Forest Preserves? A participant noted that some flying clubs still use grass fields. His club is on a field surrounded by land the FPCC leases for farming. He suggested that more of the site could be transitioned to a natural area and users would be very open to exploring this.

Recreation is part of the mission! It is the lure that brings people in.

-Andrew Johnson
FPCC Camping

Economic sustainability. Participants recognize that the FPCC has limited resources and must prioritize how and where those resources are invested. One participant noted that there are nine flying fields throughout the Forest Preserves and each field has a club. He suggested that flying clubs and other user groups could help make special uses economically self-sustaining. For example, his flying club pays about \$5000 per year to maintain the grass around the field. He suggests that fees from clubs or other user fees could help make dog parks and other special uses self-sustaining. A participant added, “I like the idea of having the groups that benefit from these facilities contribute. But it is a slippery slope. How soon does it become a special interest where the people who have more available funds win out?” A participant noted that paying for access to some facilities and programs is already part of the Forest Preserves’ model. He noted, “You can’t camp without a fee.”

Evaluation tool. Participants agreed it is helpful to have established criteria and a tool for evaluating existing and proposed uses and programs. This helps achieve “apples to apples” comparisons. Bob Megquier noted that the evaluation tool places community impact at the same level as ecological impact, and this is a significant change from past practice. A participant suggested adding a criterion for carbon-neutrality. (For example, golf courses could be a place for more trees.) Another participant noted that the tool should take into account multiple users of sites and facilities. (For example, horse trails are also used by hikers.) A participant noted that the sample tool doesn’t fully capture potential public benefits. She explained, “My impression is somehow it doesn’t get at the diversity of users. People are looking for places where they can take their little kids and let them loose in an area where they can explore, with logs they can crawl through and trees they can climb. The Tree Top course is cool, but expensive. Nature play spaces for kids could be a really cool use if golf courses or other sites are being transition.” One participant noted that the evaluation tool only works if members of the impacted community participate in the process, and there needs to be a protocol in place to ensure that everyone is at the table. That, she noted, cannot happen without the significant pre-work of building relationships. Others noted that it is important to make sure lots of different interest groups are represented in that process, including groups who would benefit from the proposed reuse. One participant stated that even a poorly performing recreational asset will have its supporters and the FPCC should not create a situation where the community meeting is “won” by the loudest voice. Specific suggestions include:

- ✓ Build relationships to ensure all stakeholders—including groups who would benefit from repurposing a site—have a seat at the table when deciding whether to reinvest or transition to a new use.
- ✓ Review Purdue University’s public space evaluation program (“Enhancing the Value of Public Spaces”), which utilizes Appreciative Inquiry and the Community Capital model.
- ✓ Consider incorporating other criteria into the evaluation tool, including carbon-neutrality and multiple users. Also consider whether some other organization can or does offer the amenity.

Shrinking parking lots. Participants agreed that the FPCC should not build or maintain massive parking lots which are filled only a handful of days per year. One participant asked if the FPCC has explored

We’re more than a business; we are a government agency. We offer something to the public even when a business might not be able to make it . . . We are serving the whole community. That’s why economic impact is just one of the four criteria.

- Stephen Defalco, Director of Sandridge Nature Center

permeable paving. Staff explained that the FPCC recently received a grant from MWRD to rebuild a parking lot at dam 4 with permeable pavers. Participants suggest:

- ✓ When people obtain permits for picnics or special events, educate them about limited parking and encourage them to organize carpools for their events.

Exclusive uses. One participant noted that exclusive use is not an inherently negative term. Something like a model airplane field is a creative use of space. Just because everyone doesn't utilize the exclusive use space, that doesn't mean it's not a valid use of Forest Preserve land.

Recommendation 4: Throughout the planning and decision-making process, engage stakeholders to help plan and implement programs and new facilities, and to develop re-use plans for incompatible and unsustainable uses.

Discussion questions:

- a) What are the best community engagement techniques to build participation, understanding and trust? What is your honest assessment of our efforts to date? What can we do better?
- b) How do we balance economic realities with community desires? What happens when the community wants us to support a use that is unaffordable? How do we resolve this?

Participants from both breakout sessions urged the FPCC to commit to engaging stakeholders early on in frank conversations about these difficult decisions. Many participants believe people will understand the need to prioritize future investments and will want to help. One participant noted that people use and view the Forest Preserves differently. He stated, "We have walking, biking and flying clubs. There are a lot of different perspectives on how things should be used. Acknowledge that not everyone sees it the same way." The following issues were discussed:

Seek input early on. Participants stressed that user groups care deeply about the Forest Preserves and want to have a voice in deciding how to prioritize future investments. One participant suggested, "If there are specific changes being considered for a site, issue an 'all hands on deck' to welcome feedback." Caroline cautioned that not all Forest Preserves users have an organized, vocal group to represent them, and it is important to keep this in mind when seeking input. Participants suggest:

- ✓ Bring stakeholders in early and let them be part of the solution.

Explain the evaluation process. Participants suggested that a version of the evaluation tool be used to walk stakeholders through the evaluation process to help them understand the hard decisions that need to be made. For example, years ago

"Let the public and stakeholders know early in the process so they can be involved with the solution. In the end, commissioners get to decide. But if you get stakeholders involved and ask them to be part of the solution, and they have the parameters of what the real problem is, people will be more willing to cope with it because they will understand."

- Susan Collins, Palos Hills Horsemen's Association

the FPCC closed the toboggan sledding hills. The decision pulled at people's heart strings, but when they understood why the facilities had to be closed, they supported the decision. A participant acknowledged that some people may not care about the economics. Another participant suggested creating some type of game to help people understand. For example, give each person a limited amount of "dollars" and then have him/her to decide how to spend the limited resources on various competing needs.

Be creative and open-minded. Participants urged the FPCC to be both creative and open-minded and to work with user groups who are eager to help save amenities. A participant suggested users can help engage more visitors and connect more residents to nature. For example, a flying club can help bring students to the Forest Preserves and teach them about science and nature. Another participant noted that, "sometimes having lots of uses at a site—flyers, bikers, paddlers—makes it a very happening place." Participants suggest:

- ✓ Work with user groups to make special uses more nature-compatible and more economically sustainable, and to use special uses to connect more people to nature.

Note: Input provided from the roundtable discussions will be shared with the position paper committee and incorporated into the revised draft.

Roundtable participants discuss nature-compatible recreation in the Forest Preserves of Cook County



Appendix 6:

6.1. 80/20 LAND USE ANALYSIS FROM 2013 RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Source: **Forest Preserves of Cook County Recreation Master Plan (March 2013)**

As part of the Recreation Master Plan, an evaluation of the current ratio of land allocated to certain categories of use and management was conducted. The basis of this allocation lies within the history and mission of the District.

In 1929, an advisory committee put forward a recommendation for recreational development policy in the forest preserves based on a survey of current land use at the time:

- 75% of the forest land be kept in their natural state;
- 5% be maintained as water recreation areas in rivers and lakes, including marsh lands;
- 18% be developed for recreation uses, including playfields, parking areas and golf courses; and
- 2% for a zoological park and an arboretum.

This early recommendation is still used today as a guideline, but has been more loosely stated as an 80/20 policy: that 80 percent of the forest land should be kept in as natural a condition as possible, and 20 percent developed for recreational uses.

The FPDCC owns and/or manages over 68,000 acres of land. It was not feasible within the scope of the Recreation Master Plan to conduct a detailed field study and assessment of this amount of land, so an approach was developed that combines the use of existing data with detailed study of a representative sampling of lands to estimate the current proportions of land within each of the categories described above. The result provides an estimate of the ratios within a reasonable margin of error to be useful for the purposes of the Recreation Master Plan. It also provides a new GIS layer that can be updated over time and used for future calculations and decision-making.

The overall approach was to look closely at the District's existing GIS data to determine what information could be used to identify lands within each of the categories identified in the District's policies. Field visits to selected sites were also conducted as a

way of ground-truthing the GIS information and gaining a better understanding of what the relationship was between the information in the GIS and the actual conditions in the field.

A series of locations within the District were identified and a team of District staff and consultants visited the sites over a period of several days in late spring and early summer of 2012. In all, more than 100 identified locations were visited, including golf courses, activity areas, trails, water bodies, nature centers, and aquatic centers.

The process above suggests that using the existing GIS, and making adjustments for parking areas, trails, structures, utilities, and athletic and recreation areas is a reasonable way to estimate the current proportion of land in each of the categories described. Doing so yields the following results:

- **Water** = 7.5%
- **Natural Lands** = 74.04%
- **Developed** = 18.46% (includes zoo and botanic gardens and 3.4% undetermined)

Comparing the percentages to the original policies of the District, it is seen that water covers slightly more than the five percent originally allocated, and Natural Lands cover slightly less than the original 75 percent allocation. The “developed” category is below the original 20 percent allocation. (A detailed report of this analysis can be found in Appendix E of the plan.)

The analysis shows that the District is likely within a reasonable range of meeting its stated policy at the current time. If a more precise measurement is needed, it will require a more elaborate and extensive study.

6.2. SUMMARY OF MARKET RESEARCH, PUBLIC SURVEYS AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT (2018)

The Forest Preserves gathers input from a range of market research, surveys, and roundtables conducted in recent years. This appendix contains key findings from the following market research and survey data:

1. 2019 research by the Trust for Public Lands and Anzalone Liszt Grove assessing likely voters level of awareness and support for FPCC.
2. 2017 research by the Trust for Public Lands and Anzalone Liszt Grove assessing likely voters level of awareness and support for FPCC.

3. 2016 message house research by Marj Halperin based upon input from FPCC visitors, partners and staff regarding what they think about the FPCC and what matters most to them.
4. 2015 survey of residents conducted by C. B. White and commissioned by Openlands to gather input from likely supporters and those not-interested in FPCC.
5. 2016 Spanish-language roundtables facilitated by Miguel Palcio to assess awareness and perceptions of forest preserves amongst Latino communities.
6. 2013 surveys of 6000+ residents and visitors to assess demand for various recreational facilities and programs in support of the FPCC 2013 Recreation Master Plan.

A summary of key findings from these sources follows.

Group 1: Picnickers 2018 Customer Service Survey

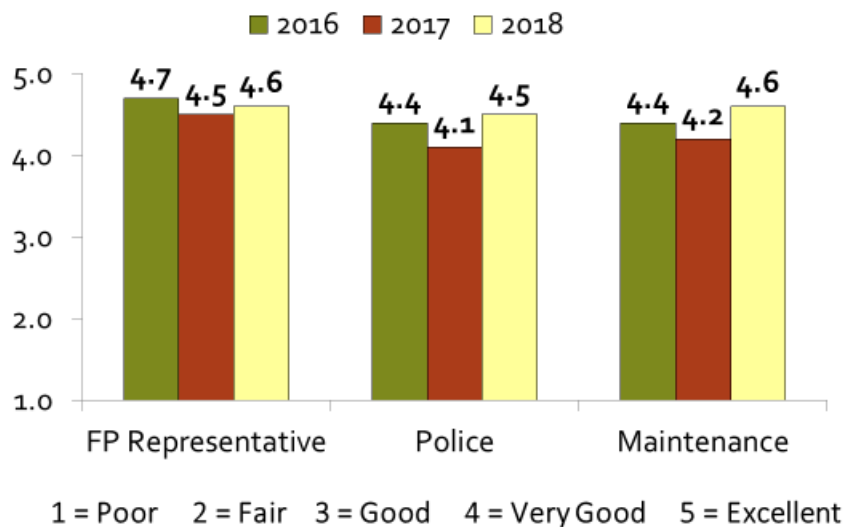


472,000 attended picnics and other permitted events

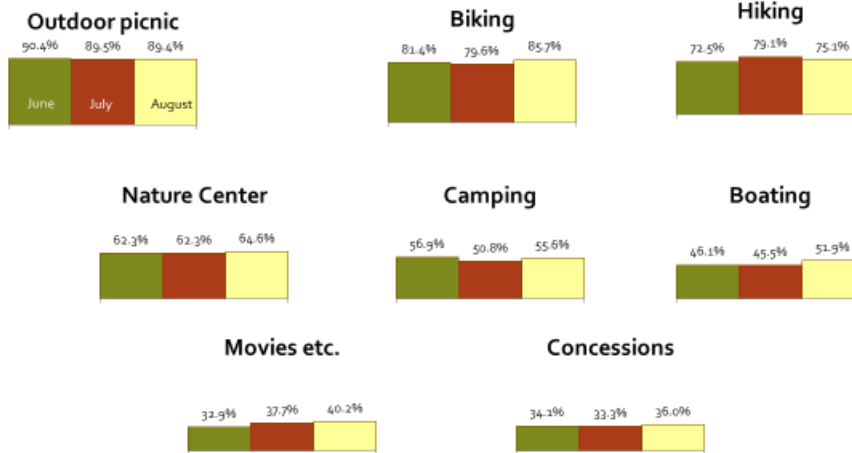


- 35% interacted with Police
- Customer service ratings for Police and other staff are exceptionally high

Interactions with Forest Preserves Personnel



Awareness of FPCC Services and Activities



Customer Satisfaction Survey 2018
Final Presentation, September 25, 2018

Group 2: Likely Voters in Cook County 2017 and 2019 Trust for Public Lands Surveys

- Voters trust the Forest Preserves and like what we do
- Not ready to support a tax hike in 2017
- Strong support for a modest tax hike in 2019



Don't you sometimes just want to escape?
Explore the natural beauty of Cook County for an hour, a day or even a night.
When you're surrounded by 70,000 acres of wild and wonderful, there's no better place to feel free.

It's a place where you can create your own adventure.	It's a place where plants and animals thrive.	And you won't find a more peaceful place to make ourselves and our communities healthier.
FOUNDATION NARRATIVE		
In our Forest Preserves, you can boldly explore 300 miles of trails or join a group learning archery - the adventure is yours to create within 70,000 acres at six nature centers, five campgrounds, 40 rivers and lakes, and 10 golf courses.	We protect native species and their homes. Our volunteers help us conserve, preserve and restore—and, no those are not all the same. Enter this world of prairies, woodlands and wetlands, and see why we're so committed to nature.	The Forest Preserves are more than a getaway. Whether you exercise here, or just breathe the fresh air, they can make you stronger. Across city and suburbs, they help keep the air, water and ecosystem in balance.
FOUNDATION PROOF POINTS		
Biking • Boating • Camping • Celebrations Fishing • Golf • Nature Centers • Pavilions Picnics • Traditions • Zip Lining	Conservation • Preservation • Restoration Animal Habitat • Biodiversity Migratory Corridor • Professional Expertise Rare & Endangered Species Stewardship & Volunteerism	Personal Health Economic Value and Quality-of-Life Regional Health (stormwater retention, air quality) Agency Health (fiscal and resource management) Proximity

Message House 2016

Group 3: Staff, partners, visitors

Optimism: *Staff, partners, visitors take great pride in Forest Preserves*

Professionalism: *Widely regarded as professional & passionate*

Wide Support: *Partners ready to step up*

Low Awareness: *People don't know enough about Preserves*

Lack of Focus: *Stop trying to be all things to all people*

Message Clarity: *Need compelling message*

Don't you sometimes just want to escape?
Explore the natural beauty of Cook County for an hour, a day or even a night.
When you're surrounded by 70,000 acres of wild and wonderful, there's no better place to feel free.

KEY MESSAGES - THE ROOMS		
It's a place where you can create your own adventure.	It's a place where plants and animals thrive.	And you won't find a more peaceful place to make ourselves and our communities healthier.
FOUNDATION NARRATIVE		
In our Forest Preserves, you can boldly explore 300 miles of trails or join a group learning archery - the adventure is yours to create within 70,000 acres at six nature centers, five campgrounds, 40 rivers and lakes, and 10 golf courses.	We protect native species and their homes. Our volunteers help us conserve, preserve and restore—and, no those are not all the same. Enter this world of prairies, woodlands and wetlands, and see why we're so committed to nature.	The Forest Preserves are more than a getaway. Whether you exercise here, or just breathe the fresh air, they can make you stronger. Across city and suburbs, they help keep the air, water and ecosystem in balance.
FOUNDATION PROOF POINTS		
Biking • Boating • Camping • Celebrations Fishing • Golf • Nature Centers • Pavilions Picnics • Traditions • Zip Lining	Conservation • Preservation • Restoration Animal Habitat • Biodiversity Migratory Corridor • Professional Expertise Rare & Endangered Species Stewardship & Volunteerism	Personal Health Economic Value and Quality-of-Life Regional Health (stormwater retention, air quality) Agency Health (fiscal and resource management) Proximity

**BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF
SUPPORT FOR THE NEXT CENTURY
CONSERVATION PLAN**
FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY

Market Research Findings prepared for Openlands
August 2015

CBwhite

Market Research & Strategy

**Openlands/
C.B. White
2015 Survey**

Group 4: Potential Supporters v. Those Not Interested

Who is most likely to support the
Forest Preserves?

How do we best reach them?

What messages are most
important?

2015 Openlands NCCP Survey (continued)

- Differences between Supporters v. Non-Supporters
- 5 messages really resonate



Group 5: Spanish-language Focus Groups 2016 Latino Dialogo Roundtables

Reinforced Openlands' Study

- ✓ value benefits of Preserves
- ✓ lack information
- ✓ difficult to access w/limited public transportation



Added Key Latino Perspective

- ✓ opportunities for family bonding at celebrations, picnics



"It's just empty; what's there to do?"

"It's spooky."

Group 6: Random Survey of County Residents for 2013 Recreation Master Plan

3 out of 4 visited the previous year

Participated in the following activities:

- Hiking or walking (37%)
- Bicycling (34%)
- Picnicking (24%)
- Running (12%)
- Golf (11%)



National Research

Americans value nature in many ways (holds true across age, race, gender, educational attainment, income level, and residential location)

Widely shared interest in fishing, walking, visiting nature centers

Big differences for camping and hiking



Key Findings

1

Although millions of people visit the preserves each year to picnic, hike, bike, and camp, too many are not aware of what the preserves have to offer.

2

Visitors and partners give staff exceptionally high ratings for service and professionalism. (This remained true even after the Caldwell Woods incident went viral.)

3

People of all races care about:

- ➡ Protecting nature for future generations.
- ➡ Water quality
- ➡ Wildlife habitat
- ➡ Outdoor programs for children

6.3. FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY MASTER PLANS

The Forest Preserves has developed and is implementing a wide range of plans for nature-compatible recreation facilities throughout the preserves. Links to the most relevant plans are included in this appendix. A full list of master plans is available a fpdcc.com/about/plans-projects/#master.

Gateway Master Plan (2015)

fpdcc.com/preserves-and-trails/plans-and-projects/gatewaymaster-plan/

The Gateway Master Plan promotes 12 signature sites throughout the Forest Preserves' as major destinations where visitors can take advantage of free outdoor activities and healthy recreational opportunities. The plan includes recommendations for signage, wayfinding, access and amenities.

Next Century Conservation Plan (2014)

nextcenturyconservationplan.org/

This Plan lays out a set of bold actions to make Cook County a national leader in urban conservation. It highlights the preserves as one of the region's greatest assets for the environment, the economy, and quality of life, but suggests that its fragile native ecosystems are at risk. The Plan calls for the County to make a massive commitment to restoration, expand protected lands by at least 30%, and to make the preserves more accessible to the diverse people of Cook County.

Recreation Master Plan (2012)

fpdcc.com/recreation-master-plan/

The Recreation Master Plan was developed with public stakeholder input and will provide the District with a blueprint to enhance existing recreation opportunities and identify new ones with its mission. Its goals are to get people active outdoors, create destinations, engage new users, and foster stewardship to promote healthy, active lifestyles, natural immersion and ecotourism.

Trail Master Plan (2014)

fpdcc.com/trail-master-plan/

The overarching goal of the Trail Master Plan is to improve the user experience and identify opportunities to ensure a safe and easy-to-navigate trail system. This plan provides baseline information on the current trail system, recommends new

policies for managing trails, creates a process for assessing requests to improve unrecognized trails, and prioritizes future capital improvement projects to enhance the system. It also describes the need for further information gathering, as well as, additional staff and volunteers to adequately fund, maintain and police the system as it continues to expand.

Capital Improvement Plan (*updated annually*)

fpdcc.com/cip/

In addition to increasing pressures on its operating budget, the Forest Preserves also face urgent capital needs. Older facilities and an expansive network of parking lots and roadways throughout the Forest Preserves suffer from years of deferred maintenance. While the district has addressed a wide range of urgent capital needs in recent years, a significant backlog of deferred maintenance remains. FPCC partners the Brookfield Zoo and the Chicago Botanic Garden also have significant capital needs which are addressed in separate capital improvement plans.

6.4. ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE FOR RECREATIONAL USES AT THE FPCC

Source: FPCC Planning Staff

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Parking Lots											
Picnic Shelters											
Trails											
Equestrian											
Paved											
Dance Platforms											
Dams (swimming holes)											
Aquatic Centers											
Golf Courses/Driving Ranges											
Tobogan slides											
Sledding Hills											
Cross Country Skiing											
Fishing											
Shore											
Boating											
Campgrounds											

6.4. ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE FOR RECREATIONAL USES AT THE FPCC *(continued)*

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Group											
Family											
Dog Trailing Fields											
Snow Mobile Fields											
Model Airplane Fields											
Model Boat Lakes											
Boat Rentals											
Sailboats											
Row											
Canoes											
Kayaks											
Boat/Canoe Launches											
Off Leash Dog Parks											
Zip Lines											
Disk Golf											
Ski Jump											
Nature Play											
Nature Centers											

6.4. ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE FOR RECREATIONAL USES AT THE FPCC *(continued)*

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Movies in the Park											
Zorbing											
Ice Skating											
Baseball Fields											
Mountain Bike Trails											

- Construction, Maintenance or Acquired of Facilities
- Use of Facilities
- Demolition of Facilities

6.5. RESEARCH REVIEW: HOW PEOPLE RELATE TO NATURE

(Similarities and Differences by Race, Culture, Gender, Age, Income, and Ability)

Prepared for: Conservation & Policy Council Committee on Nature-Compatible Recreation.

Submitted: 11.30.18 by Eileen Figel

The committee requested a review of academic literature relevant to the following questions:

1. **Do people of different cultures, ages, genders, abilities, relate to/experience nature in the same way?**
2. **Do some believe any outdoor recreation (including swimming and golf) are strong experiences with nature? (Maybe there is a known learning curve and nature-entry experiences are more valuable than we are assuming?)**
3. **Are there cultural biases with some groups if they originate in a 'natural' location etc. Is there a way to find out if there are biases in Chicago as to perceptions about nature within certain geographies of Chicago?**

This appendix presents a summary of key findings.

The Nature of Americans 2017 report finds:

Americans value nature in broad, diverse ways—a pattern that holds across demographic differences of age, race and ethnicity, residential location, educational attainment, income level, and gender.

However, differences emerge across and within race and ethnicity, residential location, and age as follows:

1. By age.
 - 1.1. Adults and children differ in how they value nature.
For children, it is right outside their door, but adults tend to set a high standard for what they perceived to be “authentic” nature, believing that it requires solitude and travel to faraway places.
 - 1.2. Enjoyment of nature interests grew steadily among 18–30-year-olds: for many of these younger adults, interest in nature switched from being merely among their more enjoyable interests to being their most enjoyable one. Interest in nature was highest for respondents in their 30s, then it declined steadily among older adults in our sample

2. Interest in activities like camping and hiking differs dramatically across groups (while interest in activities like fishing, walking outdoors, and visiting nature-education centers is more widely shared).
 - 2.1. Hispanic adults were especially inclined to perceive contact with nature as among their most enjoyable interests relative to other groups. 36% held this view, compared with 24% of white respondents, 22% of Asian respondents, and 20% of black respondents.
 - 2.2. Those who placed their interests in nature as their most enjoyable were likely to be urban residents: 37 percent did so, compared with 18 percent of suburban respondents and 19 percent of rural ones.
 - 2.3. Fishing. Hispanic adults comprised the largest proportion of adults with “a lot” of interest in fishing (34 percent). About one-third of urban and rural adults reported “a lot” of interest in fishing, in contrast to approximately one-quarter of suburban respondents. Adults in their 30s reported the greatest level of interest in fishing (Figure 4.14). Adults over about age 50 expressed the least interest in fishing, with 45–50 percent reporting no interest at all. Nearly 70 percent of men had at least “some” interest in fishing, compared with 55 percent of women. Interest in fishing was lowest among adults from low-income households and highest among adults from high-income households
 - 2.4. Birds & Wildlife. The largest proportions of adults with “a lot” of interest in feeding or watching birds or other wildlife were Hispanic or white (Figure 4.16). Black and Asian respondents reported relatively lower levels of interest—30 percent and 27 percent, respectively.
 - 2.5. Interest in exploring the outdoors was relatively high across all adults surveyed: 89 percent expressed “some” or “a lot” of interest in this nature-related activity. Figure 4.19 shows the strongest interest in exploring the outdoors occurred among Hispanics (56 percent reported “a lot” of interest), followed by white (52 percent), Asian (48 percent), and black adults (39 percent). About one-fifth of black adults (19 percent) reported no interest at all in exploring the outdoors—about twice the percentage found among Hispanics (11 percent) and whites (10 percent). Roughly similar interest in exploring the outdoors occurred among

urban (54 percent), rural (51 percent), and suburban} (47 percent) residents (Table 4.11). By age, interest in exploring the outdoors was highest among adults in their 20s (nearly 60 percent reported “a lot” of interest) and lowest among Americans over 50-years-old (about 40 percent reported high interest) (Figure 4.20). Interest in exploring the outdoors was virtually identical among women and men: one-half reported high interest (Table 4.12). Interest in exploring the outdoors crossed household income levels, with strong interest remaining stable at around 50 percent.

- 2.6. **Camping.** Almost one-half of Hispanic adults expressed high interest, compared with one third of white adults, one quarter of Asian adults, and one-fifth of white adults. Nearly onehalf of black respondents expressed no interest in camping at all. Interest in camping was highest among urban residents (43 percent indicated they have “a lot” of interest), suburban residents (25 percent), and rural residents (31 percent) (Table 4.13). Interest in camping was highest among adults in their mid-20s to mid-30s, and then declined among older adults
- 2.7. **Hiking.** Almost half (45 percent) of Hispanic adults indicated strong interest in hiking, followed by Asian (39 percent) and white adults (34 percent). By contrast, 19 percent of black adults reported “a lot” of interest in hiking. Also, 43 percent of black adults indicated no interest at all in hiking, a figure roughly double the proportion reported by white, Hispanic, and Asian respondents. Interest in hiking was highest among urban residents: 38 percent indicated they have “a lot” of interest, followed by suburban (32 percent) and rural residents (31 percent) (Table 4.15). Across all residential locations, one-quarter of the respondents reported no interest at all in hiking. Among adults surveyed, interest in hiking was highest among adults in their late teens and 20s, with onehalf reporting strong interest (Figure 4.26). This interest swiftly declined, with 20 percent of adults in their late 50s and early 60s reporting “a lot” of interest in hiking. Women and men were nearly indistinguishable in terms of their interest in hiking.
- 2.8. **Walking.** In contrast to substantial differences among groups in hiking interest, very few differences emerged among ethnoracial groups in interest in walking outdoors.

2.9. Interest in Visiting Nature-Education Settings (zoos, aquariums, nature centers, natural history museums, and botanical gardens). Members of all ethnoracial groups surveyed expressed a high degree of interest in visiting these settings. More than one-half of Hispanic adults (53 percent), 46 percent of white, 44 percent of Asian, and 42 percent of black adults expressed interest in visiting these places. Just under 90 percent of urban, suburban, and rural respondents expressed at least “some” interest in visiting nature-education centers (Table 4.19). Young adults reported the greatest interest in visiting nature-education centers (around 60 percent), with this figure declining by about 20 percentage points among older adults (Figure 4.32). With respect to gender, women were far more likely to report a good deal of interest in visiting nature-education centers: 53 percent indicated “a lot” of interest, compared with 38 percent of men (Table 4.20). Across incomes, interest in visiting zoos, aquariums, nature centers, natural history museums, and botanical gardens was stable

3. Barriers.

3.1. Hispanic, black, and Asian adults felt more aversion to being alone in nature or the outdoors. Black adults were especially concerned about allowing their children to be outdoors on their own. Large portions of nonwhite respondents said they prefer to stay on paved paths when they are outdoors.

3.2. Black children had participated in far fewer nature-oriented trips (such as hiking or fishing) than white children had.

Sasidharn’s 2004 study finds:

4. African-American, Hispanic/Latino or Hispanic American, Korean or Korean American, and Chinese or Chinese American respondents indicated higher propensities to visit parks and forests in larger groups than Anglos or Whites.
5. Backpacking/hiking, pleasure driving, camping, boating/canoeing, fishing, and swimming were very popular among Hispanic/Latino or Hispanic Americans. Several researchers report that blacks prefer open, developed, urban, managed scenery over undisturbed natural areas, but Taylor’s 2018 research finds:
6. Like whites and other minorities, black college students tend to prefer naturalistic landscapes over urbanized and managed landscapes.

7. Instead of the generalized fear of the environment reported in earlier studies, this study found that students from all racial backgrounds expressed fear in particular situations.

The 2015 NGF report found:

8. A much lower percentage of non-Caucasians play golf than Caucasians (roughly 7% vs. 12%, respectively).
9. Most millennials agree that golf is fun, time well spent, and a good way to enjoy the outdoors.
10. But millennial golfers are much more inclined to think that golf is elitist and exclusionary, and that the social environment is stuffy.
11. Nearly half of millennial golfers suggest the game takes too long, and almost a third believe the policies and rules are too restrictive. More than a third disagree that golf is “money well spent”.

Sources

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Pregitzer, C.C., Charlop-Powers, S., McCabe, C., Hiple, A., Gunther, B., Bradford, M.A. **Untapped Common Ground: The Care of Forested Natural Areas in American Cities**. 2019. 46pp. Published by: Natural Areas Conservancy.

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Taylor, Dorceta E. **Environmental Justice: Racial and Ethnic Differences in Connectedness to Nature and Landscape Preferences Among College Students**. Jun 2018.

6.6. REPORTS BY PREVIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Four position papers have been developed by the Conservation and Policy Council in 2020 to articulate the Council's position related to key issues. This effort continues an important legacy of civic leadership related to the District's on-going efforts to protect its mission and its land. Like the Conservation and Policy Council of today, earlier advisory committees also produced reports which attempted to strike the proper balance between preserving the natural beauty of the land and developing recreational amenities for public use.

The 1929 advisory report and the 1959 advisory report provide important foundations which the Council built upon; links to these historical reports are provided in this appendix.

1929 Advisory Committee Report

Davis, Abel, Burnham, Rufus C., Brown, E.E., Brummel, D.H., Dawes, Fred W., Elliott, Wm. S., Gale, Paul C., Haugan, Henry A., Lewis, John C., McCutcheon, John T., Penfield, Frederick W. Recommended Plans for Forest Preserves of Cook County, Illinois. Prepared by the Advisory Committee, January 1929.

fpdcc.com/downloads/plans/historical/FPCC-1929-Advisory-Committee-Report-010220.pdf

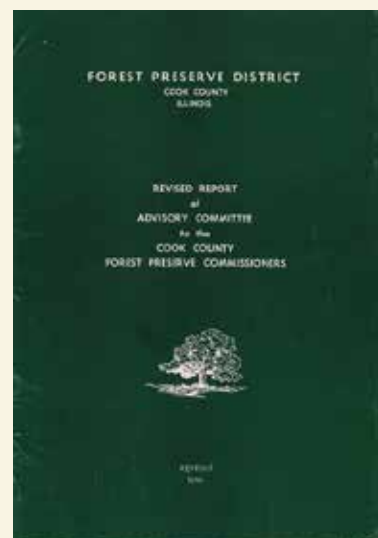
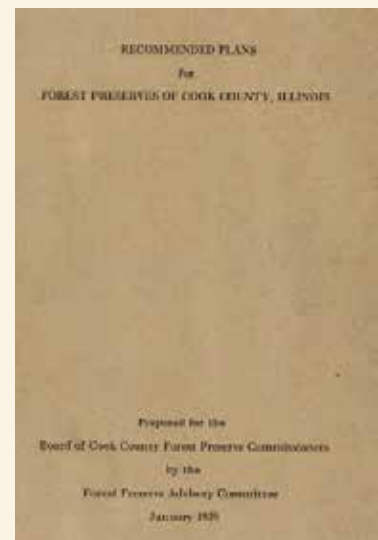
The 1929 report recommends that “adequate provision must be made for active recreation in certain of the open spaces, so that the remainder of the native woods may be preserved for our future citizens.” The commission established what became known as the 80/20 rule, recommending that 80% of the land remain as native woods and waterways, and 20% be developed for “active play such as boating, bathing, camping, athletics and golf.”

1959 Advisory Committee Report

Scribner, Gilbert H. Jr., Brown, Edward Eagle, Burnham, Daniel J., Cox, Walter J., Davis, Chester R., Rathje, Frank, Turner, C.L., Seabury, Charles W., Smith, Harold Byron, Olson, Howard R. Revised Report of Advisory Committee to the Cook County Forest Preserve Commissioners. 1959.

fpdcc.com/downloads/plans/historical/FPCC-1953-1959-Advisory-Committee-Report-010220.pdf

By 1959, the District was under pressure to provide land to growing municipalities seeking space for schools, parks and other development. The 1959 advisory committee strongly opposed developing Forest Preserves for local municipal



purposes and recommended that overall development be strictly limited to avoid high operating costs. Their report states: “The Board has kept in mind the fact that the great holdings of the District are the property of all the citizens of Cook County and has refused to dissipate them for community, municipal or other purposes not in the interest of the general public. The Board has refrained from developments which would have required heavy capital outlay and greatly increased the cost of operations and maintenance. We propose that this simplicity in development and operations be continued; that the integrity of the lands be maintained against division and encroachment; that studied land acquisition plans be followed by well-controlled purchase procedure; and that there be a limited increase in tax income to meet problems of development, forestry and construction repair.” The 1959 Advisory Committee also recognized that it takes “vigilance, effort and courage” to sustain and enforce these policies and any suggested change which is not in the public’s interest must be resisted with firmness and resolution.