



Natural Treasures of DuPage County

Open Space and Natural Areas Plan

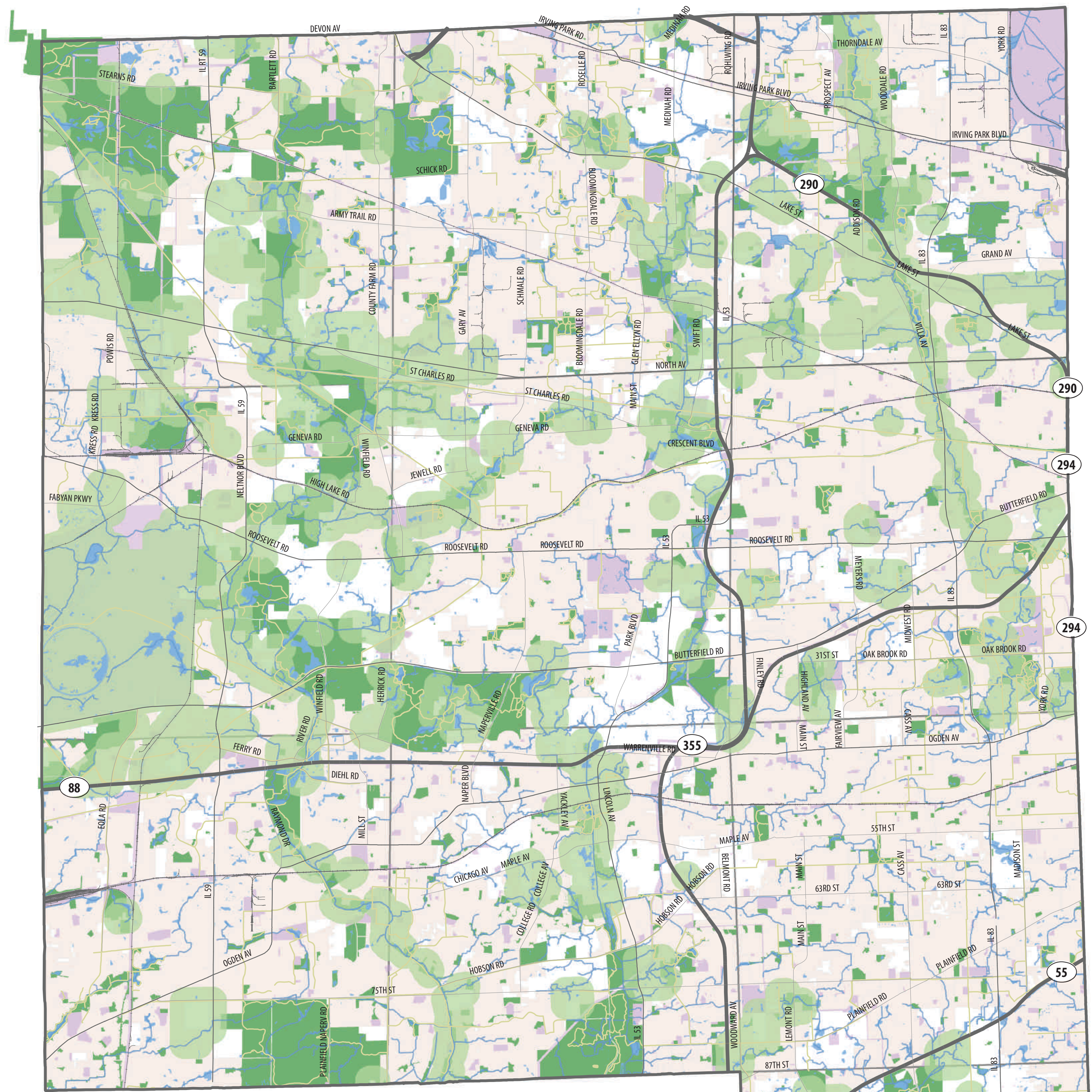
Steering Committee

Addison Park District
 Addison Park District
 Carol Stream Park District
 City of Elmhurst
 City of Naperville
 City of Warrenville
 The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
 DuPage County Division of Transportation
 DuPage County Division of Transportation
 Elmhurst Park District
 Elmhurst Park District
 Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
 Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
 Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
 FORWARD DuPage County Health Department
 Fox Valley Park District
 Glen Ellyn Park District
 Glen Ellyn Park District
 Glen Ellyn Park District
 Glen Ellyn Park District
 Guerard, Kalina & Butkus
 Illinois Prairie Path
 Village of Itasca - Retired Nature Center Director
 Keller Williams Realty
 Lisle Park District
 Naperville Park District
 Private Citizen
 Former DuPage County Board Chairman
 Sierra Club
 The Conservation Foundation
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 Village of Lisle
 Village of Lombard
 Village of Winfield
 Village of Woodridge
 Warrenville Park District
 West Chicago Park District
 Wheaton Park District
 Woodridge Park District




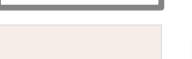





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 and
the Grand Victoria Foundation



Legend Natural Features Inventory

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|---------------------|
|  | Open Space Opportunities |  | Political Townships |
|  | Existing Open Space |  | Incorporated Areas |
|  | Other Public Land |  | Streams and Rivers |
|  | Trails and Bikeways |  | Open Water |
| | |  | Rails |

Existing Open Space

Forest Preserves, Park District Open Space, State, Federal, County, and Local Preserves, conservation easements, and other public lands as located and digitized by DuPage County GIS and the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County.

Open Space Opportunities

Natural areas and open spaces digitized by the US Census. Open spaces digitized by Hitchcock Design Group and approved by the Steering Committee.

Other Public Land

Publicly-owned land as digitized by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County.

Trails and Bikeways

DuPage County trails and bikeways as digitized by DuPage County GIS.

Streams, Rivers, and Open Water

Streams and rivers as digitized by the US Census. Open bodies of water as digitized by DuPage County GIS. Wetlands from the US Fish and Wildlife's National Wetland Inventory.



The Purpose

of this open space and natural areas plan is to coordinate the efforts of all local and regional open space organizations in the acquisition or protection of property that will benefit and improve the quality of life for the residents of DuPage County.

- Identify and prioritize parcels of property in DuPage County that will provide trail and greenway linkages, expand existing open space properties, buffer existing open space, and protect forests, woodlands, prairies, wetlands, watersheds, streams and river corridors.
- Identify natural areas that will promote protection and preservation of endangered and threatened wildlife and plant species.
- Create a plan that various agencies in DuPage County can use to protect the identified remaining open space, and foster cooperation and partnerships in implementing the plan over time.

Why Now?

In the late 1970s, DuPage County was a national leader in land use planning. Our leaders realized suburbanization was quickly growing west into the county. They wanted to be prepared and make sure DuPage County remained a great place to live, conduct business and raise a family. To that end, vast amounts of interconnected open spaces were a key piece of that future land use vision. Many of these open spaces were to be greenways along our rivers and streams, creating linear parks and forest preserves for trails and outdoor recreation.

Over the past several decades, as DuPage County grew and more people moved here, decision-makers did a good job of ensuring open space remained part of the county's landscape. But, it was not easy. The pressure to develop as much land as possible was strong. Thankfully, forest preserves, parks and other types of open space were set aside in accordance with this early vision.

Today, many pieces of this original vision or "puzzle" remain missing. Key linkages for trails, open space greenways and river corridors have not been connected or protected. This open space master plan gets us to that original vision of an interconnected system of parks, forest preserves and trails to enhance the quality of life in DuPage County. **This plan completes the vision.**

Benefits of OpenSpace

The largest open space landholder in the county is the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. We are also privileged to have extensive public parks and private acres, such as The Morton Arboretum, Cantigny, and numerous golf courses that provide open space. We can see the benefits from open space on a daily basis as we drive by the parks and preserves. Even if we do not have an opportunity to go to one of these sites, we get visual relief from the asphalt, concrete and manmade structures that surround us. The benefits of open space are:



Environmental

- Provides habitats, migratory corridors, and water and food sources for wildlife and threatened and endangered species.
- Protects forests, prairies, savannahs, wetlands and various plant communities.
- Provides natural flood control and improves the quality and quantity of surface and underground runoff.
- With the preservation of trees, there is a reduction in air pollution since plants absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen.
- Provides areas where rainwater can infiltrate into the soil and recharge our groundwater aquifers.



Recreational

- Provides access for active recreation, education, and research.
- Trail linkages and greenways allow people to walk, run, bike, or horseback ride to various locations, improving health and reducing automobile dependence.
- Rivers, streams, lakes and ponds allow boating, canoeing, and fishing.
- Protects historical, cultural and archaeological significant sites.



Health

- By providing more outdoor recreational opportunities people can improve their physical and mental health.
- The Active Living Research organization reported that with "every \$1 spent on trails, there was almost \$3 in savings in direct medical costs."



Economic

- Properties surrounding open space increase in value and provide an economic benefit to the community.
- Communities receive increased tax revenues because of the increased property values of homes and businesses surrounding the open space areas.
- Increased business revenue from the sale or rental of recreational equipment to residents and tourists.



Growth Management

- Planned open space provides communities a way to manage and channel future growth into appropriate areas, helping to avoid flooding and traffic congestion.
- Open space provides a balance with other land uses that improves our quality of life and attracts new business and residents.



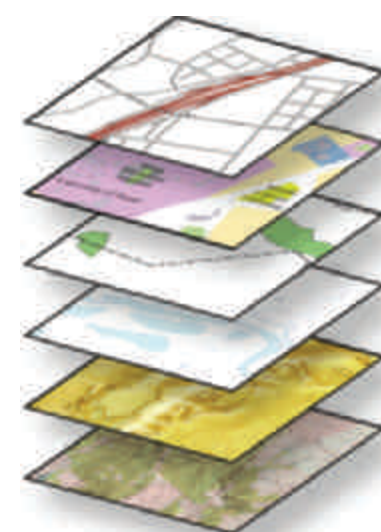
What is OpenSpace?

In a county setting, protected public open space is typically in the form of a Forest Preserve. In a municipal setting, it is typically a park. This Plan includes both types. An inclusive definition of open space is: Lands in an open or natural state, recreational lands, or areas already permanently protected. Examples of areas that fall within this definition are prairies, nature preserves, floodplains, wetlands, forests, parks, and greenways. Open space can be passive or active. Passive areas may include floodplains, wetlands, greenways and other natural areas that offer protection to the region's flora and fauna. Active open space may include recreation areas such as ball fields, parks, playgrounds, trails, community recreational buildings, golf courses and equestrian facilities.

In the development of this plan, not only were important natural open space areas, trail connections and river corridors identified, but we also looked at sites that would not typically be viewed as park sites. We looked at sites that have the potential to be restored and provide a benefit to the community and its citizens. In article after article, there is evidence of the benefits of getting outside and playing in a natural setting. We hope that some of these sites will provide the opportunity to simply play and interact outside, close to home.

Creating theMap

We are fortunate that DuPage County's Information Technology Department has advanced Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping capabilities and we were able to utilize their information in the development of this plan. The GIS data provided by the County and by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County identified existing parks, preserves, conservation easements, public property and large, private open space areas. The existing open space information was expanded upon with the proposed open space opportunity areas that the Steering Committee identified. This generalized information shows the network of greenways and waterways that would interconnect the parks and preserves.



Source: http://webhip.east.com/geodatas/9/2/public_images/Layers_Landmarks.gi



ActionPlan

This DuPage County Open Space and Natural Areas Plan was developed through the collaboration of members of the Steering Committee whose goals were preservation and protection of open space and natural areas in DuPage County, and developing a network of trails and interconnected greenways. This long range plan can guide future acquisitions and aid agencies in applying for grants. In the short term, The Conservation Foundation will work with members of the Steering Committee and other open space organizations to contact property owners on their behalf. In many instances, The Conservation Foundation will be the lead agency in making the initial contact. In order to implement this open space plan, we intend to keep the communication ongoing between the agencies that have participated.

We found large expanses of open space remaining in the western portion of DuPage County, but in the eastern portions of the County, they do not have the large areas of open space. To address this, we have to think "outside the box" and look at vacant lots, vacant buildings and sites that could be redeveloped or turned into park land; thereby, providing much needed outdoor recreational facilities for densely populated communities. All of the agencies that participated in the development of this plan are in the "forever business." This is a long term plan and if a property in this plan should become available by a willing seller, it should be acquired if possible.



"This Plan is a step towards increasing the amount of open space in DuPage County."



ThankYou

The Conservation Foundation would like to thank **The DuPage Community Foundation** and the **Grand Victoria Foundation** for providing the funding necessary to complete this open space plan.

We would also like to thank: **Hitchcock Design Group** for donating their staff, time, and design skills to complete the open space map.

Wheaton Park District for offering the use of the Wheaton Community Center for our monthly meetings.

We would also like to thank the following agencies for their financial assistance:

- City of Warrenville**
- DuPage County**
- Elmhurst Park District**
- Forest Preserve District of DuPage County**
- Illinois Prairie Path Not-For-Profit Corporation**
- Naperville Park District**
- Warrenville Park District**
- Woodridge Park District**



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