



## Outraged, but not defeated

By Benjamin Cox

Good news, bad news – times two.

Often from the conservationist's point of view it is easy to see what is exactly right for the cause: don't give land away, direct resources to ecological management, be a good steward of creation, and so on and so forth.

On the other hand, here we are in the middle of Chicagoland with all of its blessings and compromises. Politics is at the core of so many decisions. We are a part of that politics, but only one part. Decisions aren't simply based on what's right or wrong, but what's necessary and possible.

With that in mind we must lament and celebrate at the same time.

We must be outraged that the Board of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County voted to take \$13.3 million from the Preserves to give to the apparently mismanaged County government. It wasn't legal, and a lawsuit seeks to establish that it wasn't.

We spoke out, but we weren't numerous enough or loud enough.

We must also lament that state politicking

forced the District to give 16 acres of land to one of the most-difficult-to-swallow-pills of a "government": the Illinois Tollway Authority. This mistake swayed even some of the public's best advocates on the Board.

Commissioners heard loud and clear from Friends board, staff, and members. They heard from many partner organi-

zations. Unnecessarily giving away land or money for a non-forest-preserve use is just plain wrong. It doesn't jibe with the oath of office that the Forest Preserve Commissioners take to further the mission of the District.

But we're talking about current reality here. There were too many other forces, and we did not prevail. We must be bigger and stronger next time. However, our efforts mitigated the damage.

Yes, the County raided \$13.3 million from the Forest Preserves, but five Commissioners voted against the raid. (Thank you Commissioners Forrest Claypool, John Daley, Mike Quigley, Timothy Schneider, and Larry Suffredin.) Even the majority in favor of the raid recognized that it had to soften the blow; language was added to the resolution that requires the County to give the District land of equal value by the end of 2008. And, it just so happens that the County has some land (as many as 200 acres) that the District would like to acquire in order to connect existing District holdings.

We can also celebrate the fact that Tollway representatives didn't just walk into a Board meeting last summer, ask for the land, and get it, as has happened in the past. Their initial demands were rejected. They had to sit down with Friends and our allies to revise and improve their proposal. We will be working together as they design the



Photo by Chris Geovanis

Commissioners John Daley (D), Mike Quigley (D), and Tim Schneider (R) voted against the \$13.3 million County raid on Forest Preserve funds, along with (not pictured) Forrest Claypool (D) and Larry Suffredin (D).

bioswales that will contain and filter Tollway runoff. They have agreed to have the swales evaluated for effectiveness by an independent third party.

Our current reality is that the District is run by the same Commissioners who run Cook County. They have to think about jails and courts, hospitals and healthcare, roads and police, economic development ... and then Forest Preserves.

We have to be strong and organized in order to demonstrate to the Board of Commissioners that citizens expect the Forest Preserves to be managed properly.

We're still a fairly young organization. Outrage gives us strength, and our love of the Preserves gives us staying power. As one Commissioner recently put it, "The Commissioners act differently when the Friends are around."

Friends is here to stay and will keep advocating for nature and the millions of people who care. Please help us grow to "be all that we can be." Cook County's natural areas depend on all of us.

As one Commissioner recently put it, "The Commissioners act differently when the Friends are around."

# *2006 FOTFP Annual Report*

## *A letter from our President and Executive Director*

Sincerest thanks to everyone who so generously supported Friends last year through membership gifts, donations, and by attending our events. Thank you also to our Foundation and Corporate supporters who give us such strong support. We couldn't do what we do without your contributions to our work. Thank you to those of you who have supported Friends for years, and welcome to all the new members who recently joined us!

The last year has been a momentous one for the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Friends has been there through it all, advocating for the positive changes and battling the threats to our natural areas.

We accomplished many things with your support:

1. We worked with Interim Board President Bobbie Steele, volunteers, and other groups to help finally get the 10-year restoration moratorium lifted so that volunteers can get back to work preserving and protecting prairies, savannas, and woodlands that have suffered all too long.
2. We protected a globally-rare dolomite prairie at Theodore Stone Forest Preserve where we negotiated a stormwater management alternative for a shopping mall that was dumping polluted stormwater on fragile land.
3. We continued to promote ecological restoration throughout the county. By partnering with the District, we got fpdcc.org, the comprehensive resource and referral website for Forest Preserve volunteers, up and running. We also led regular workdays at Dan Ryan Woods and Powderhorn Prairie and helped organize major clean-up events on Earthday and National Public Lands Day at Beaubien Woods and Spring Creek.

Friends will be tackling some tough issues in 2007:

1. We are looking forward to great changes as Executive Director Benjamin Cox and three Board Members are serving on Forest Preserve District Board President Todd Stroger's transition team.
2. We are leading a task force that is exploring the best method for separating the Forest Preserve and Cook County Boards. We believe that it is essential that the District, as a separate government entity with a separate taxing authority, has its own leadership that can be focused solely on the Preserves and their users. We have also asked the Attorney General and State's Attorney to pursue legal action that would void the \$13.3 million raid on Forest Preserve finances. These are complex issues that will require our sustained attention over the next several years.

In the meantime, we will continue the fight to protect the Preserves against land grabs, encroachments, and misuse.

We will continue to promote volunteerism and improved land management county-wide. And we will keep working to reinvigorate stewardship groups in the southern part of Cook County where some of the highest quality natural areas in the state can be found.

Friends of the Forest Preserves is the only non-profit solely focused on the Forest Preserves of Cook County. With your continued support we will continue our efforts to improve and protect the 68,000-acre natural legacy.

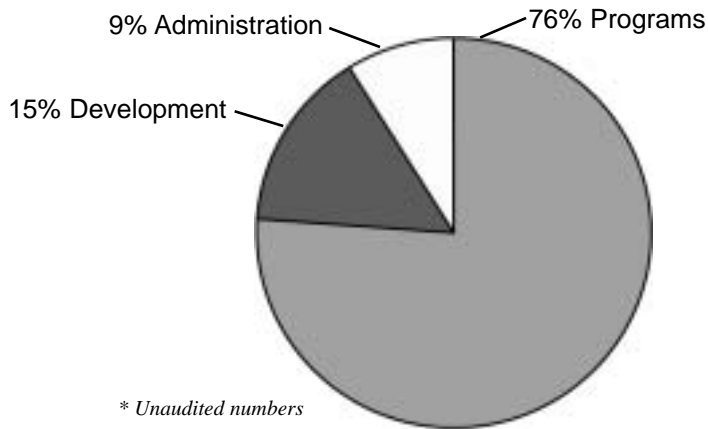
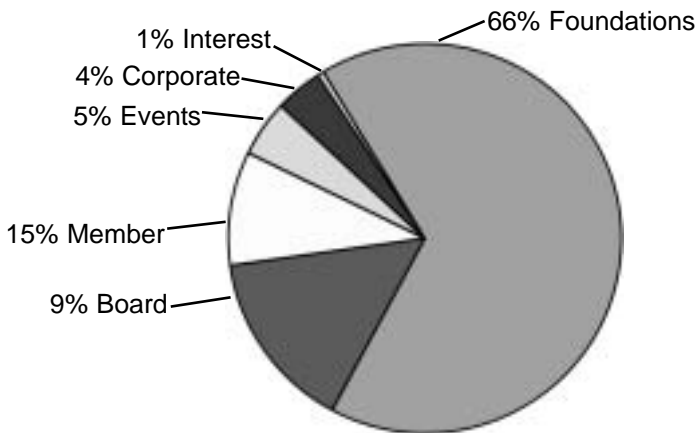
Sincerely,

  
John Sheerin  
President

  
Benjamin Cox  
Executive Director

# 2006 FOTFP Annual Report

## Financial Statement\*



\* Unaudited numbers

### Income

Foundations .....	\$81,000
Members .....	18,352
Board .....	11,369
Events .....	5,750
Corporate .....	4,720
Interest .....	724
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$121,915</b>

### Expense

Programs .....	\$76,974
Development .....	15,192
Administration .....	9,115
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$101,281</b>

### Assets

Net assets at beginning of 2006 .....	\$36,288
Net assets at end of 2006 .....	\$56,883

## Friends Board of Directors – 2006

**John Sheerin** – President  
Retail Environmental Manager, Bridgestone Firestone

**Carl Birkelbach** – Treasurer  
President, Birkelbach Investment Securities, Inc.

**Barbara Hill** – Secretary  
Political Chair, Sierra Club Northwest Cook County Group

**Barbara Birmingham** – Director  
Regional Steward, Des Plaines Region, FPDCC

**Margaret Frisbie** – Director  
Executive Director, Friends of the Chicago River

**Jeremy Hojnicky**, Director  
Attorney, McGuire Woods, LLP

**Keith Holt**, Director  
Community Liaison, Chicagoland Bicycle Federation

**Kappy Laing**, Director  
Legislative Consultant

**Margaret Littman**, Director  
Author and Journalist

**Stephen Packard** – Director  
Director, Audubon–Chicago Region

**Judy Pollock** – Director  
Projects Manager, Audubon-Chicago Region

**Jay Readey** – Director  
Attorney, Sonnenschein, Nath and Rosenthal, LLP

**Debra Shore** – Director  
Commissioner, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District

**Ginger Underwood** – Director  
Steward, Spring Creek Stewards, Barrington Hills Riding Club

## Friends Staff – 2006

**Benjamin Cox** – Executive Director

**Alice Brandon** – Constituency Director



*Photo by Alice Brandon*

*Emma Hetnar, Project Coordinator, and Jean Sellar, Ecological Restoration Programs Director, both recent additions to Friends' ranks, enjoy a chuckle before the Friends' "New Office" party.*

## *Growing again: new staff, new office*

Friends has a new office – with windows! We've added a great new staffer and have the blessing of working with a regional expert on a new program. While we loved our old office and will miss our officemates, (many thanks to the Chicago Environmental Law Clinic for hosting us) our new space is much larger and brighter.

The new space is modest, but has tons of natural light and even a sliver of a lake view. We are grateful that almost all of the office furniture, equipment, and supplies were donated. Many thanks to our movers who donated their time and backs!

Thanks also to our great donors. Gerald McLaughlin of Questel Edital donated a printer, copier, server, refrigerator, and microwave, in addition to thousands of dollars of office supplies and hours of pro-bono IT support. The Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, Steve Pazol of nPhase, and MAC Cosmetics donated furniture. The Nature Conservancy in Illinois donated computers. Jean Sellar donated plants to help us decorate.

We had a great party with over 50

members and supporters stopping by to help us celebrate our new digs.

Friends is pleased to announce that Emma Hetnar joined our staff in January and will be with us for six to eight months as Project Coordinator. The project is a component of her Master's program in Environmental Science at American University in Washington, DC.

Emma wanted to work with Friends because after interviewing with many local groups, she felt that we "were a small but highly effective advocacy organization on the cutting edge of urban ecological protection and management issues."

Jean Sellar, who recently retired from her stellar career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has also joined Friends' ranks. Jean is helping us plan and implement ecological restorations within Forest Preserve holdings, especially those centered around wetland and aquatic plant communities. Many of these will be funded through Corps wetland mitigation projects, but Friends will also apply for grant monies from the state and other sources. Jean will also provide pro-bono technical assistance on other Friends projects and campaigns.



*Forest Preserve District Commissioner Mike Quigg with Friends' board members Carl Birkelbach and*



*Phyllis and Jack Bone, Friends' Executive Director, Barbara Sutherland (Benjamin's parents).*



*Ecological stewards Dave Lloyd, Larry Jakus, and*



ley (center)  
Steve Packard.



Forest Preserve General Superintendent Steven Bylina (center)  
with Tom Conway and Friends' Executive Director Benjamin Cox.



Friends' President John Sheerin with Sari and Clark Maxfield.



Photos by John McMullen  
for Benjamin Cox, and Harold and

## Friends' Holiday Party rockin' good time

**B**oy do we know how to throw a party!

Friends' Holiday Party at Mars Gallery was a resounding success with more than 120 people attending including Forest Preserve District Commissioner Mike Quigley and General Superintendent Steve Bylina, along with Friends' founding board member and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Debra Shore.

Many thanks go to everyone who attended and donated to our event. Guests enjoyed great art and excellent music



Margaret Littman  
Event Committee Chair

from The August, while partaking in fantastic appetizers, desserts, beer, and wine.

Friends' board member Steven Packard gave a stirring speech about Friends' history and the state of the preserves today.

Thank you to John McMullen for donating his talent and serving as our photographer for the evening.

We raffled dozens of great prizes that were donated by local business and many individuals. Thank you to all those who generously donated

raffle items, food, drinks, and more, including: Goose Island Beer Company, Eli's Cheesecake, First Slice Pie Café, Mars Gallery, Adobo Grill and Vinci, Bespoke Cuisine, The Beverly Arts Center, Bubbles Academy, The Chicago Architecture Foundation, Entourage Restaurant, Unique So Chique, Vermilion Restaurant, The Book Cellar, Ellie's Party, Eva Penar, Loosetooth.com, and Poise.cc. An anonymous benefactor donated the fabulous wine for the evening.

Special thanks must go to Friends' Event Committee Chair Margaret Littman for doing such a wonderful job of organizing the event and searching out donations for all of the raffle prizes.

Mark your calendars for our next Holiday Party which will take place on Thursday, December 6 at a yet-to-be-determined location downtown. We hope to see you there!



Tom Borchard.



The August rocked the house as people chatted and knoshed on delicious appetizers, deserts, and enjoyed wine and Goose Island Beer.

## Save the date for tours, events



Join us in sampling what the Forest Preserves have to offer. As a benefit for members, Friends will host guided trips that highlight some of the best places to see plants and animals in the Chicago region. Meet new people and get some exercise as well. Choose an event near you or explore a new area.

Some of these unique places can only accommodate a limited number of people. Therefore, RSVPs are required. For more information, directions and to RSVP please contact Alice Brandon, Constituency Director at (312) 356-9990 or [alice@fotfp.org](mailto:alice@fotfp.org).

### ***Camp Sagawau Canyon Wildflower Walk***

*Saturday, May 5, 10 am - noon*

Forest Preserve Staff will guide us on a tour of this 100,000 year-old canyon in Lemont, which is the only one of its kind in Cook County. We should see all sorts of ferns as well as an amazing showcase of spring ephemeral wildflowers and unique frogs and fish. \$5 members; \$10 non-members

### ***Friends Summer Solstice Member Picnic!***

*Saturday, June 23, 2 - 6 pm*

Celebrate the longest day of the year with fellow Friends at Theodore Stone Woods (located in Hodgkins). We will serve burgers, brats, and veggie burgers from the grill along with delicious salads, beer, wine, and other cold drinks. Bring the family and see the beautiful prairie on a tour with Friends Board Member Barbara Birmingham, the site's volunteer steward. \$10 members; \$15 non-members

### ***Powderhorn Prairie Walk***

*Saturday, July 21, 10 am - noon*

Join us for a mid-summer tour of this rich prairie and savanna complex, which is up for Nature Preserve dedication. Butterflies and wildflowers abound and we may even see an osprey on this tour on Chicago's southeast side. \$5 members; \$10 non-members

### ***Bluff Spring Fen Walk***

*Saturday, August 25, 10 am - noon*

Don't miss this opportunity to visit a 91-acre fen located in Elgin that was recently acquired by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. This site hosts a stunning variety of habitats that are home to over 400 species! \$5 members; \$10 non-members

### ***Harms Woods Fall Hike***

*Saturday, October 20, 3 - 5 pm*

Enjoy the fall colors and get some fresh air and exercise as we hike a rare woodland where fall wildflowers and grasses have rebounded after controlled burns. The 160-acre oak woods is located along the North Branch of the Chicago River in Glenview. \$5 members; \$10 non-members

*Watch for more details to come on our Fall Hayride and Bonfire on October 6, which will take place Spring Creek Forest Preserve, and our Third Annual Holiday Party on December 6, which will take place downtown.*

## Celebrating life of Wayne Toussaint

Wayne E. Toussaint (1918-2007) grew up in Chicago and River Forest enjoying hiking and bird watching in area forest preserves. From these childhood experiences he developed a life long passion for nature and the outdoors. He was an avid fisherman and bird hunter.

Wayne's family asked that memorial donations be made to Friends in celebration of Wayne's life. We are pleased to share that we received many generous donations in his memory.

Wayne met Frances Cooper Toussaint, his wife of 67 years, at Northwestern University. They have two daughters, Jacqueline Rapp of Arlington Heights and Laurel Toussaint of Carbondale. He is also survived by three granddaughters, including Friends staffer Alice Brandon, two-great grandchildren and two wonderful sons-in-law as well as his loving caregiver of 18 years, Bobbie Schmit.

Frances and Wayne lived in Park Ridge for 35 years. Wayne was President of The Frederick Post Co. and then became owner and C.E.O. of Vance Industries until his retirement in 1978.

Wayne and Fran were known for their generous and loving hospitality, welcoming visitors to their home as family.

Friends extends its best wishes and sympathy to Wayne's family, friends, and to all those who knew him. The generous contributions made in his memory will go a long way toward furthering our mission of preserving, protecting, and restoring the Forest Preserves.

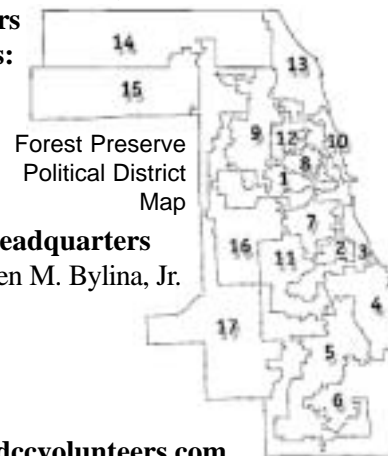
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## Contact your officials

If you have kudos or concerns, please send them to your Forest Preserve District of Cook County Commissioner. *They enjoy hearing from you!*

**You may write President Todd Stroger and all of the Commissioners at their downtown address:**

118 N. Clark St., Room 567  
Chicago, IL 60602  
phone: (312) 603-6400  
fax: (312) 603-4397



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536 N. Harlem Ave.  
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phone: (708) 771-1511  
fax: (708) 771-1181

[www.fpdcc.com](http://www.fpdcc.com) [www.fpdccvolunteers.com](http://www.fpdccvolunteers.com)

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<b>16th District</b> Anthony J. Peraica (R) phone: (312) 603-6384 fax: (312) 603-4744 peraicalaw@aol.com ajperaica@cookcountygov.com www.peraica.com	10001 W. Roosevelt Rd. Westchester, IL 60154 phone: (708) 345-5808 fax: (708) 345-5838  6257 S. Archer Rd. Summit, IL 60501 phone: (708) 728-1616
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**Save the Dates**  
*and remember, we throw great parties*

<b>Summer Solstice</b>	<b>Fall Hayride</b>	<b>3rd Annual</b>
<b>Member Picnic</b>	<b>and Bonfire</b>	<b>Holiday Party</b>
<b>Ted Stone</b>	<b>Spring Creek</b>	<b>Downtown</b>
<b>June 23</b>	<b>October 6</b>	<b>December 6</b>

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Editor: Benjamin Cox  
 email: [benjamin@fotfp.org](mailto:benjamin@fotfp.org) phone: (312) 356-9990

*Mission: Friends of the Forest Preserves works to preserve, protect, and restore the Forest Preserves of Cook County for the benefit of people and nature.*

*Friends is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and a member of the Chicago Wilderness consortium.*

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