



Steele lifts moratorium

President Bobbie Steele deserves great credit for her fine leadership in ending the 10-year moratorium on ecological stewardship on the last five sites in the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

District staff and volunteers who spent as many as 20 years restoring these sites to good health had to watch on the sidelines as much of their hard work was gradually lost. Native plants and animals declined. Forest Preserve commissioners heard increasingly from people who visit the preserves that wildflowers and animals were disappearing as their habitat was slowly destroyed by invasive brush.

President Steele gave strong direction to District staff at the Oct. 3 board meeting.

"I hereby order, effective immediately, that the general superintendent of the Forest Preserve District, Mr. Steve Bylina, adopt and implement broadly-accepted

best management practices on all our natural lands, insofar as is possible," President Steele read. "These practices have been endorsed by land management agencies across the country at every level of government, including local park districts, neighboring forest preserve and conservation districts, and the National Park Service."

In today's sometimes overly political climate, it is refreshing to see county government taking positive steps to serve its taxpayers and making decisions based on good judgment.

After reading her presidential order, she received a standing ovation from a packed gallery and praise for her leadership was repeated by speaker after speaker.



Steve Mayberry

District volunteers Mary Busch, Sue Witkowski, and Jane Balaban present a book and painting to President Bobbie Steele thanking her for lifting the restoration moratorium.

Thank you, President Steele.

We look forward to working with incoming President Todd Stroger to ensure that best management practices continue to be implemented District wide.

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CHICAGO WILDERNESS

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

DuPage threatens nature preserve

By Benjamin Cox

A DuPage County plan to expand the Busse Woods Dam threatens populations of nine Threatened and Endangered Plant Species as well as wood frogs and blue-spotted salamanders found in the 440-acre Busse Woods Nature Preserve. DuPage County wants to increase the frequency of flooding and the amount of time the water is held on site.

The Busse Woods Nature Preserve lies within the Ned Brown Forest Preserve, and **(please continue on page 2)**



John Sheerin

As seen from I-90, trees in Busse Woods were killed when they were flooded as a result of a dam installed to help downstream flooding. Friends fears more of the same if the planned expansion is allowed.

Power to the public

By Claire Carlson

Yes, it's important to have good staff and good commissioners. But nothing replaces an informed and supportive constituency. Politicians may lead, but they only lead where people are willing to follow.

When Dwight Perkins and Jens Jensen set out to establish the forest preserves a century ago, they established support groups like "Friends of Our Native Landscape" and the "Prairie Club" to advocate for the proposed preserves. They led hikes and tours for influential people, elected officials, and the general public. Politicians signed on after the demand had been created. Legendary early Forest Preserve District General Superintendent Cap Sauers wrote that an "educated public" was the preserves "best friend" – and that if you waited to find support until it was needed, you'd be too late.

When the Forest Preserve District was in decline in the '80s and '90s, some of us worked to rebuild that constituency – leading to both Chicago Wilderness and Friends of the Forest Preserves.

At the heart of the preserves' support base are the stewards, birders, plant monitors, nature educators, photographers, neighbors, and others who are knowledgeable about the preserves and willing to go to bat for them when needed.

Fishermen and golfers are effective constituencies, and the push they provide is why the District realized that they had to hire fish biologists and managers – and why they needed to privatize the golf courses when they were going down hill.

But who cares about the woods, wetlands, and grasslands? For a long time the birders were nearly alone in this. But the growing community of restoration stewards has become one of the District's most important support groups.

People who have contributed "sweat equity" into

caring for some forest preserve ecosystem feel invested in the health of that woodland, wetland, or prairie. These are the people who support the general superintendent when he asks the Board for new staff positions or new equipment to control the invasives and conduct controlled burns.

When you look at the growing professional staff of technical and on-the-ground ecological restoration staff, you have to give a lot of the credit to the bird and plant monitors and the stewards who have been bringing this need to the attention of the general superintendent and his staff. The Forest Preserve District is an institution of our democracy.

With all its imperfections, it's a powerful and wonderful thing that can be better with public support.

Legendary early Forest Preserve District General Superintendent Cap Sauers wrote that an "educated public" was the preserves "best friend" – and that if you waited to find support until it was needed, you'd be too late.

Nine T&E species threatened by proposal

(DuPage, continued from page 1)

is also a U.S. Congress National Natural Landmark. At the request of DuPage development interests, parts of Ned Brown were destroyed when a dam was permitted in the '70s which has caused water to back up into Busse Nature Preserve during and after large storm events.

The generosity of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to the previous request was made on the assurance of DuPage County that 1) precautions would be taken to prevent significant damage to the nature preserve and 2) that building in DuPage would be restricted in the floodplain downstream beyond what would be safe given the

new dam. The DuPage interests failed in both of these promises.

Now DuPage wants to do more damage to the nature preserve, by an increase in the frequency of the floods from once every five years to more than once per year.

All of the T&E plant species will likely be killed by this increase in floods, which will occur when they are in bloom or setting seed. Wood frogs and blue-spotted salamanders, both attractive and rare in Cook County, and their tadpoles will most likely be damaged by the increase of polluted waters. More than 4 million people visit Ned Brown every year – more than Yellowstone National Park.

DuPage County has alternatives, they just cost more. It could build detention ponds and small reservoirs on its own land as well as institute best management practices to control stormwater.

Friends is calling for Cook to require a new study and hydrologic analysis of the site that takes the nine T&E species into consideration. Unfortunately, the decisions that have been made thus far are based on analysis that fail to do so.

Friends asks you to contact your county commissioner (contact info available at www.fotfp.org) to let them know that this plan is not good for Cook preserves – taxpayers did not spend their tax dollars to create detention ponds for DuPage.



Thank you to everyone who shared their photos.



One of Friends' newest board members Ginger Underwood (above right) led the charge to rid a burr oak grove of a nasty farm dump and buckthorn on National Public Lands Day. Ginger is a tireless steward leader who is also very involved with the Barrington Hills Riding Club.

Volunteers spring oak woods

By Ginger Underwood

A rare and magical grove of old burr oaks was liberated on National Public Lands Day thanks to great staff, volunteers, and donations. The Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Friends, Audubon-Chicago Region, Sierra Club, Spring Creek Volunteers, Riding Club of Barrington Hills, and mostly E. C. Bode Tree Care all came together in a splendid effort aimed at increasing habitat for native plants and animals and removing a long-abandoned hideous farmer's dumpsite and a creepy little hideout.

A huge amount of buckthorn was removed freeing many of the oaks and allowing the sun to enter so young oaks and

other woodland plants can grow. Volunteers picked up glass, plastic, wood, and anything non-metal for the dumpster.

But the biggest hero was Eric Bode who started a couple weeks earlier, along with other volunteers, cutting and clearing buckthorn and brush so that he could get his equipment to the dump. On NPLD, Eric used his trucks, trailers, bobcat, and other heavy machinery to take truckload after truckload of metal materials to a recycling company. Beds, sinks, toilets, tractors, drums, cars, and literally tons of metal junk were hauled away.

Many thanks to John Sheerin, Ben Cox, Steve Packard, Bill Koenig, Greg Stolzer, Jim Wagner, and all of the many generous volunteers who pitched in and made it such a success.

Calumet stewardship reborn

By Alice Brandon

Beaubien, Dan Ryan, and Powderhorn, our next stop is Zander, and then onward.

Friends of the Forest Preserves, in partnership with Friends of the Parks, The Field Museum, the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, is working hard to reenergize volunteer groups in the Calumet Region.

Some of the best sites in the region are located in Calumet. Powderhorn Woods, located on the Chicago and Burnham border, has one of the District's best remnant prairie and marsh complexes.

Unfortunately, the site had begun to degrade under an onslaught of buckthorn and invasive trees due to lack of management. This is all about to change with the reintroduction of workdays at the site. Volunteers got back to work in September with 10 adults and 20 students from George Washington High School joining forces with District staff to cut brush and burn a brushpile.

Marlene and Joe Nowak, long-time stewards in Calumet, have been instrumental in helping the new stewards, Alice Brandon and Doug Chien, learn



Benjamin Cox

Alice Brandon, Marlene Nowak, Steve Packard, and Justin Pepper recently toured Powderhorn Prairie to help update the ecological management plan for the site. The group also toured other important sites in the Calumet region, including Zander Woods, Sand Ridge Nature Preserve, and Wentworth Prairie (also known as Thornton Fractional North High School Prairie). Friends is working hard to revitalize stewardship in the region.

the history and management priorities of the sites.

Many thanks to the Nowaks!
Regularly scheduled workdays are on

the third Saturday of every month from 9 am to noon. For more information about the sites please call (312) 356-9997 or email alice@fotfp.org.



Field Museum

Friends of the Forest Preserves, Friends of the Parks, The Field Museum, the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, and local volunteers are working with the District to revitalize and expand stewardship efforts in Calumet.

Calumet Stewardship Schedule

Beaubien Woods

First Saturday of each month

Contact: **Laurel Ross**

(312) 665-7432 or lross@fieldmuseum.org

Dan Ryan Woods

Second Saturday of each month

Contact: **Benjamin Cox**

(773) 398-1178 or benjamin@fotfp.org

Powderhorn Prairie

Third Saturday of each month

Contact: **Alice Brandon**

(312) 356-9990 or alice@fotfp.org



Friends' picnic great success

Thank you to the more than 75 members and friends, including FPDCC General Superintendent Steve Bylina, who attended our Celebratory Picnic at Theodore Stone Woods in September. The picture perfect day was a huge success with Site Stewards George and Barbara Birmingham (also a Friends' board member), leading tours of the site's beautiful dolomite prairie and soon to be gone Apathy Canyon.

Superintendent Bylina (top left with Friends' President John Sheerin, far left), graciously took questions and comments from the crowd. Friends' Executive Director Benjamin Cox shared the Apathy Canyon success story. And everyone enjoyed great food and drink. We hope to see you at next year's picnic!



*Photos above and left by George Birmingham
others by Benjamin Cox*

Board meeting kudos for Friends

Friends' staff and board members were given great kudos at the October Forest Preserve District Board meeting.

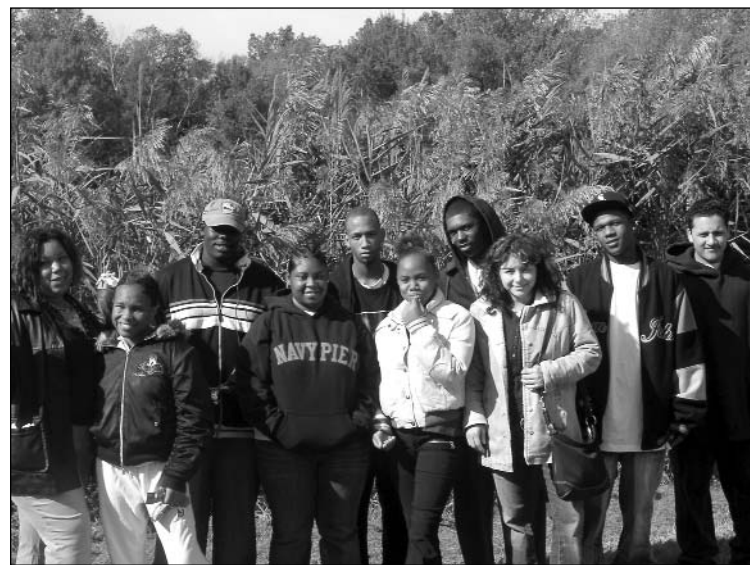
Board Member Barbara Birmingham and her husband George were recognized by Commissioner Mike Quigley for their persistence in fighting Apathy Canyon at their stewardship site, Theodore Stone Woods in suburban Hodgkins. Stormwater dumping from a neighboring shopping mall created a large erosion canyon that is damaging the globally-rare dolomite prairie there.

The Birminghams, together with Friends' Executive Director Benjamin Cox and local experts, were able to bring a solution that will end the problem. Benjamin was also publicly recognized at the meeting by General Superintendent Steve Bylina for his efforts in helping find a solution.

Benjamin gave a presentation to the Commissioners on the District's new volunteer website: fpdccvolunteers.org. The site brings all of the various volunteer activities together in one place where people can now go to get information on workday calendars, individual groups, volunteer roles, project ideas, and more. Friends' staff is now working on training materials that will be posted on the site.

Friends and the District are partnering on the website, which was designed and created by Sandbox Studios. We feel it is an excellent resource, as well as important recognition and appreciation for the District's dedicated volunteers.

fpdccvolunteers.org is the one-stop shop for forest preserve volunteers in Cook County – job descriptions, a workday calendar, maps, group descriptions, and training materials (coming soon) are on the site.



Alice Brandon

Students from B.E.S.T. High School and Carver Military Academy joined Friends' and Field Museum staffers at Beaubien Woods on National Public Lands Day. The 45 students joined a dozen adult volunteers to pick up litter and fly-dumped construction debris. Many of these students had never been in "nature" of any kind and were initially scared of the woods thinking reindeer and crawfish might hurt them. By the end of the day they had collected over 40 bags of trash and had dispelled much of their fears, finding much to enjoy in the woods. Friends also helped with NPLD events at Whistler, Spring Creek, and Cermak Woods.

Encroachers losing!

Friends' members and District staff fought encroachers and won. Our network of eyes and ears is growing.

Greg Grankowski contacted Friends' staff earlier in the year to report that a company was running equipment and pipes on forest preserve land in Thorn Creek. The company was pumping water for their own uses and excavating land to influence rainfall drainage.

Friends' staff forwarded Greg's reports and photographs to District staffer Dan Weber, who helped investigate the situation. In the end, Dan reported that the company didn't have permission and Greg followed up with a utility to see if the company had permission from it. They didn't. The result, no more abuse of preserve lands and trails.

At the other end of the county, a member, who asked to remain anonymous, reported that a half-acre chunk of Blue Star Memorial Woods had been bulldozed, fenced, and planted with a garden, shrubs, and lawn grass. Again, Friends worked with Dan Weber to investigate.

When the member reported that the home where the violation was occurring was being sold, Dan notified the new owners. Shortly after, the fence and shrubs came down. Please keep the reports coming in.

Friends' staff doubles

Friends' staff recently doubled in size ... to two!

Friends is happy to announce the addition of Alice Brandon to the staff. As the Friends' constituency director, she will be working to increase Friends' network with other organizations and its membership, as well as planning nature walks and other events for members.

Alice lives in Evanston and has a Bachelor's in Conservation Biology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Master's of Science in Botany from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. Alice grew up living adjacent to the Shawnee National



Alice Brandon

Forest, inspiring a life-long passion for protecting and enjoying Illinois natural areas.

She has lived all over the state working for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources as a land use planner, Illinois Natural History Survey in the EcoWatch Program, and most recently at Friends of the Parks where she focused on forest preserve issues.

"Cook County is so lucky to have the forest preserves," Brandon said. "I am so excited to be part of an organization that protects these vital places for native plants and animals as well as for the human spirit."

Recommend your friends

Friends of the Forest Preserves is getting serious about membership and we need your help. Strong support from members is an essential component for the success of any non-profit organization.

Even more important than financial support, is the voice of the public. We work hard to ensure the preserves are protected for us and future generations to enjoy. And to be even more effective, we need more voices and members to help us connect with the Forest Preserve District and the Board of Commissioners.

This is where you come in.

Recommend a friend for membership to Friends. Provide us with their address and we'll send them an informational pack (only once and we won't share the information with anyone else). "Recommend a Friend" is at least 20 times more effective than direct mail.

Email your contacts to alice@fotfp.org or mail this form to:
Alice Brandon, Constituency Director
Friends of the Forest Preserves
28 E. Jackson Blvd., Ste. 1102
Chicago, IL 60604-2330

Thank you!

1) Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

3) Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

2) Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

4) Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____



FRIENDS

OF THE FOREST PRESERVES

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We moved!
AGAIN →



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Friends' Holiday Party

Mars Gallery

1139 W. Fulton, 2nd Floor, Chicago

6-9 pm Thursday, December 7



Tis the season of red & green

Please come & join our social scene

Tell your Friends of your favorite preserve

*While you drink Goose Island, good wine
& enjoy hors d'oeuvres*

Oh, and there'll be great live music, too



**Tickets available at www.fotfp.org
\$35 in advance, \$40 at the door**

Give the gift of membership

Give a Friends' membership this holiday season and you'll be giving our newsletter, action alerts, and invitations to Friends' events, in addition to the benefits shown below. Cook County owns 68,000 acres of Forest Preserves and Friends works to preserve, protect, and restore every acre.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 – Student/Senior | <input type="checkbox"/> \$136 – \$2 per 1,000 acres
Bonus preserve tour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 – Active | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 – Contributing | <input type="checkbox"/> \$680 – \$10 per 1,000 acres
Bonus private preserve tour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$68 – \$1 per 1,000 acres
Bonus Friends' logo hat | <input type="checkbox"/> ____ – other |

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Thank you! All donations are tax deductible, greatly appreciated, and will be put to good use.