



Forest Preserve District
of DuPage County

20
25

CITIZENS GUIDE TO
FOREST PRESERVE
DISTRICT
FINANCIAL REPORTS

FISCAL YEAR
JAN. 1 – DEC. 31, 2025
WHEATON | ILLINOIS





OUR MISSION

To acquire and hold lands for the purpose of preserving the flora, fauna, and scenic beauty for the education, pleasure, and recreation of DuPage County citizens

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Daniel Hebreard, Woodridge
President

Marsha Murphy, Bloomingdale
District 1

Tina Tyson-Dunne, Lombard
District 2

Linda Painter, Hinsdale
District 3

Jeff Gahris, Wheaton
District 4

Barbara O'Meara, Naperville
District 5

Rick Gieser, Carol Stream
District 6

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I look back on the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County's accomplishments from 2025, I'm proud of how each upheld the high standards fans of the forest preserves have come to expect. Many of these efforts are featured in this report, which although condensed, presents financial information that conforms to generally accepted accounting principles and related reporting standards. This report summarizes the District's financial activities but is not intended to replace the full-disclosure financial statements in our annual comprehensive financial report, which you can link to from dupageforest.org under "About Us" and "Transparency Portal."

During 2025, in line with our core mission to restore forests, prairies, and wetlands for the protection and preservation of the county's flora, fauna, and scenic beauty, we actively managed habitat improvement projects in over half of the District's 26,000 acres. Forestry crews augmented this work by planting over 1,000 trees, and to give visitors the best access to these areas, grounds crews resurfaced over 20 miles of trails. To support these dedicated field employees who work in tandem year-round in all weather, we also broke ground on a new maintenance campus, where natural resources technicians, arborists, and trails, streams, and road crews can expand and better stage operations.

Many of the year's endeavors would not have been possible without our partners. In 2025 the state solicited bids on the final link of the West Branch DuPage River Trail. When open in 2027, this stretch will complete the 26-mile multiagency pedestrian and bike path connecting northern DuPage with Will County.

Of course 2025 also marked the opening of the new animal hospital at the DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center at Willowbrook, the Forest Preserve District's first net-zero-designed facility. As this goes to print, the visitor center is also welcoming wildlife fans with behind-the-scenes looks at the science of wildlife rehabilitation and exhibits on ways we can coexist with native wild animals in our own backyards.

I hope in the months to come you are able to experience many of these features firsthand and, like me, can be proud of all they add to the quality of life in DuPage County.



Daniel Hebreard, President, Forest Preserve District of DuPage County



Left to right: Jeff Gahris, Barbara O'Meara, Rick Gieser, Daniel Hebreard, Marsha Murphy, Tina Tyson-Dunne, and Linda Painter

2025 BY THE NUMBERS



TOP FIVE MOST
VISITED PRESERVES

479,405

Blackwell

437,704

Fullersburg Woods

426,532

Waterfall Glen

423,066

Herrick Lake

356,024

Greene Valley



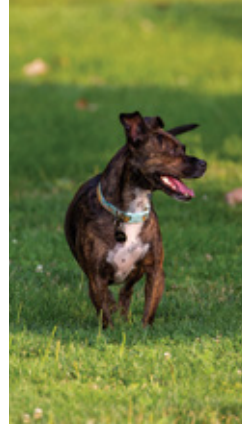
5,643,217

Total Visitors



2,482

Program Registrations



9,588

Annual Off-Leash
Dog Area Permits



5,263

Watercraft Rentals



822

Summer Campers



953

Annual Private Watercraft
Permits



1,143

Picnic Area Permits



1,030

Adaptive Recreation
Adventure Day Guests



2,050

Family and Youth-Group Camping Permits

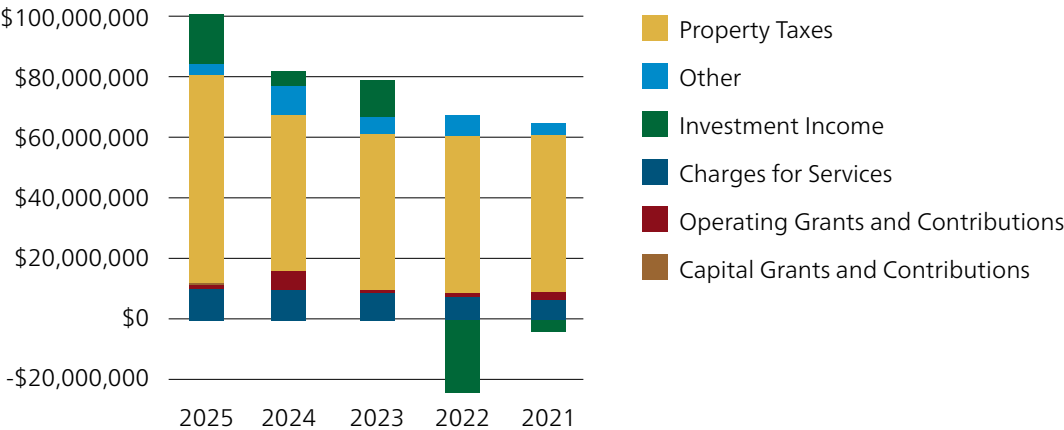
REVENUES

The Forest Preserve District continues to have strong reliable revenue sources.

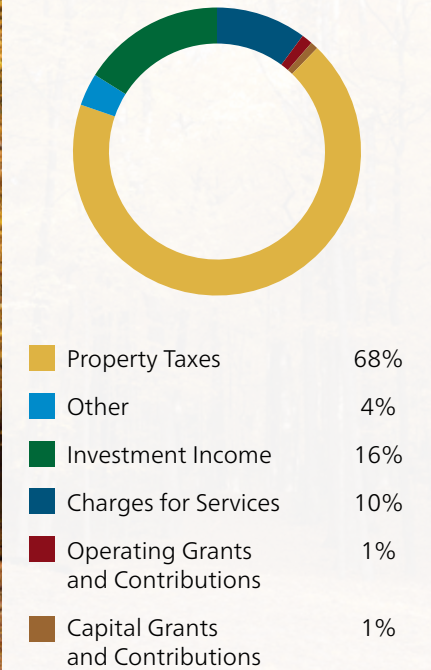
Its overall revenue profile looks different from last year due to the passage of the 2024 tax levy referendum, which increased the amount the District received in fiscal year 2025.

Its investment income is “marked to market,” which means assets and liabilities are valued based on what they could be sold for in the current marketplace versus what their eventual sales price might be. It’s like checking your investment portfolio’s value on any given day. This approach gives the District a real-time snapshot of its financial worth. This marked to market approach explains the negative interest earnings, called “unrealized losses,” in fiscal year 2022. At that time, the interest rate of District-owned investments was below the available market rate. These “paper losses” are not uncommon in markets with rising interest rates because Illinois law limits how the District can invest, preventing it from having certain products and accounts that many retirement plans, publicly owned companies, or DuPage County residents have in their own portfolios.

FIVE-YEAR REVENUE TREND



FISCAL YEAR 2025
REVENUES



REVENUES

GRANT AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMITMENTS

Transportation Alternatives Program Funding Administered by the Chicago Metro Area Planning Agency and the Illinois Department of Transportation
\$2.4 Million West Branch DuPage River Trail

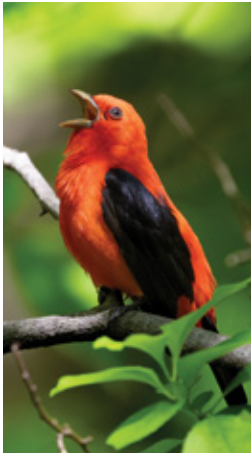
Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program
\$1.06 Million Blackwell Cenacle Bridge

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Grant
\$600,000 Greene Valley Recreational Improvements

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Grants
\$500,000 Herrick Lake Shoreline Stabilization Project
\$475,000 Native Plant Nursery Building
\$170,000 Grounds and Natural Resources Complex Utilities
\$75,000 Native Plant Nursery Greenhouse
\$52,044 Herrick Lake Improvements

U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service Eastern Region State, Private, and Tribal Forestry Grant Through the Chicago Region Trees Initiative
\$50,000 Waterfall Glen Bluff Savanna

ComEd Green Region Grant Through Openlands
\$10,000 Native Plant Nursery Greenhouse



DISTINGUISHED BUDGET PRESENTATION AWARD

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada presented a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to the Forest Preserve District for its budget for fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2025. To receive this award a governmental unit must publish a budget document that meets program criteria as a policy document, financial plan, operations guide, and communications device. The award is valid for one year.

MORE BY THE NUMBERS



1,492
Scout Program Attendees



9,100
Mowed Acres



18,276
Plants Sold at Spring and Fall Sales
\$148,400
Net Sales



786
Long-Term Volunteers
Donated 57,217 Hours



96,500
Rounds of Golf
\$5.3 MILLION
Green Fee Sales
\$8.9 MILLION
Total Golf Revenue



311
Annual Model-Craft Permits



9,800
Tons of Limestone Laid Over
20 Miles of Trails



7,149
Pop-Up and Outreach Program Visitors



5,474
School Program Attendees



953
Annual Archery Permits

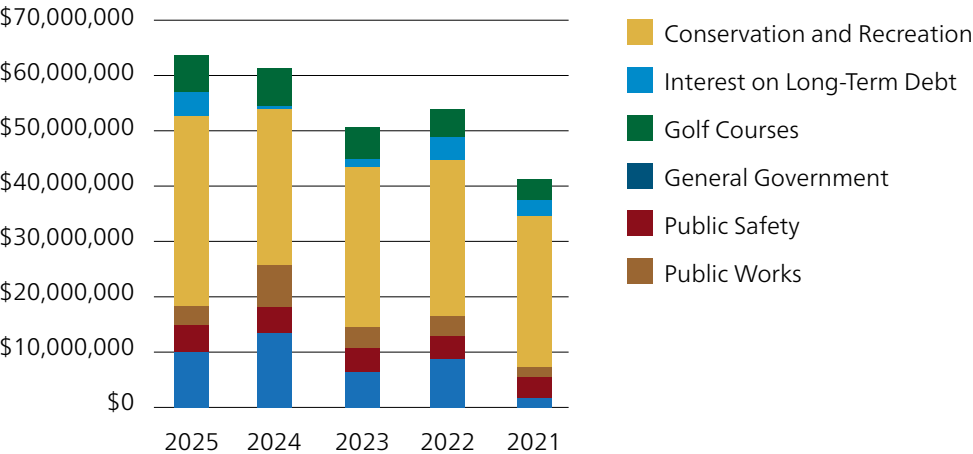
EXPENDITURES

In fiscal year 2025 the Forest Preserve District used just over 50% of its resources on conservation and recreation. General government, public safety, and public works expenditures further supported the District’s mission and provided safe environments at its properties and programs.

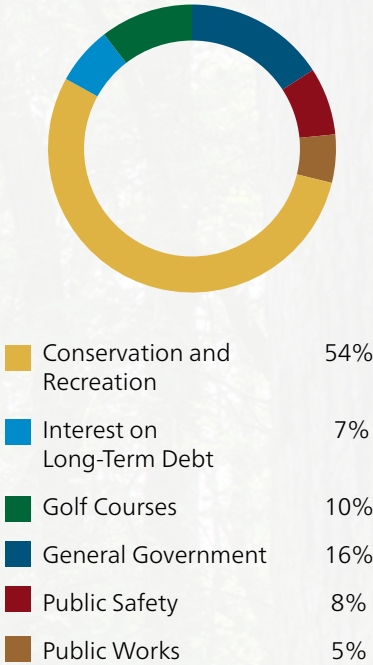
The interest it paid on long-term debt was associated with previously issued debt (the sale of general obligation bonds), which funded major capital improvements, infrastructure, and other projects, several of which are highlighted in this report.

The District’s three golf courses accounted for 10% of its expenditures, but the courses continue to generate revenues that exceed this amount. In fiscal year 2025 golf course revenues were \$2 million more than expenditures.

FIVE-YEAR EXPENDITURES TREND



FISCAL YEAR 2025 EXPENDITURES



IN SUPPORT OF OUR MISSION

The Forest Preserve District's mission is to hold lands it can restore to natural conditions to protect and preserve plants, wildlife, and scenic beauty. To that end, it works to improve thousands of acres of prairies, wetlands, and woodlands to provide healthy homes for the animals that live there. It also works to boost populations in jeopardy — Hine's emerald dragonflies, Blanding's turtles, and freshwater mussels — to give the species a better chance of survival.



↑ 5,000
Trees Growing at the Nursery



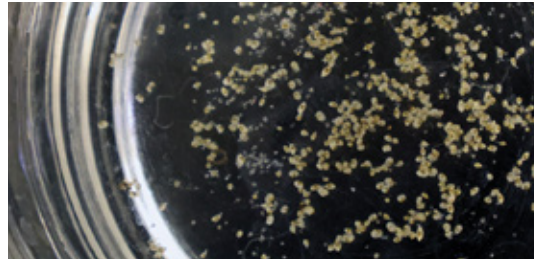
↑ 946
Acres Treated by Prescription Burns



↑ 13,000
Acres Under Restoration



↑ 250
Captive-Reared State-Endangered Blanding's
Turtles Released Into the Wild



↑ 7,258
Captive-Reared Freshwater Mussels Released
Into Eight Waterways

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR EXCELLENCE IN FINANCIAL REPORTING

The Forest Preserve District's annual comprehensive financial report for fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2025, received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. This is the highest form of recognition for excellence in state and local government financial reporting. To receive this certificate a government unit must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized annual comprehensive financial report whose contents conform to program standards. Such a report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements. The certificate is valid for one year.

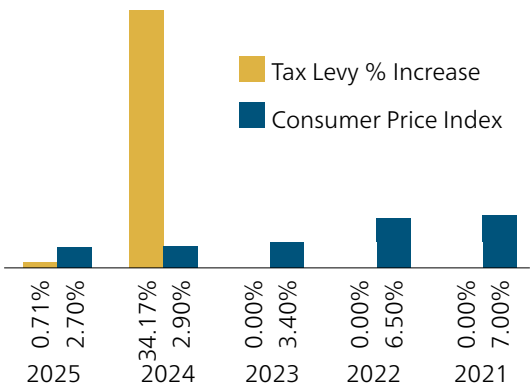
TAXES

Each fall the Forest Preserve District’s Board of Commissioners approves the agency’s tax levy for the following year. That’s the dollar amount the District intends to raise through property taxes. The District takes a fiscally conservative approach to this process, one that’s reflective of the responsible spending practices it employs year after year. It also continually looks for efficient ways to use financially sound strategies to limit future increases. Over the past five years the tax levy has increased 34.88%. Comparatively, the consumer price index, the average change in the price of goods and services over time, increased 22.50%.

In November 2024 DuPage County voters approved an increase to the Forest Preserve District’s property tax rate, raising it 0.035% above the limiting rate. This increase will allow the District to keep pace with rising costs associated with conservation and recreation and to acquire more land.

Below is a breakdown of how DuPage County property tax dollars are distributed. It uses \$100 of equalized assessed property value as the basis. The District is a small part of the total yet provides a high level of open spaces, services, and experiences for residents and businesses to enjoy. This analysis is for DuPage County as a whole, so refer to your individual property tax bill for your exact amounts.

FIVE-YEAR TAX LEVY VERSUS CONSUMER PRICE INDEX



DUPAGE COUNTY PROPERTY TAX DISTRIBUTION

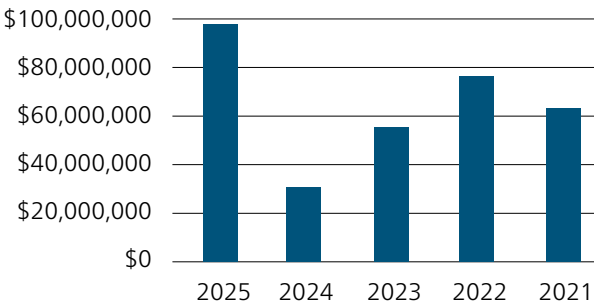


Schools	\$73.94
Cities and Villages	\$9.00
Park Districts	\$5.20
Fire Protection Districts	\$4.44
DuPage County	\$2.07
Other Taxing Bodies	\$3.54
Forest Preserve District	\$1.81

DEBT SERVICES

Like other government agencies, the Forest Preserve District issues general obligation bonds to fund significant, long-term capital projects. Investors purchase the bonds, and the District pays them back over time with interest. It's a way to pay for large expenditures without significantly affecting the tax levy. "Debt services" is the term used to describe the amount needed to cover interest and principal payments over a given period. In the case of general obligation bonds, it's based on their "official statements," the documents that describe the bonds' terms, interest rates, and maturity dates.

OUTSTANDING PRINCIPAL BY FISCAL YEAR



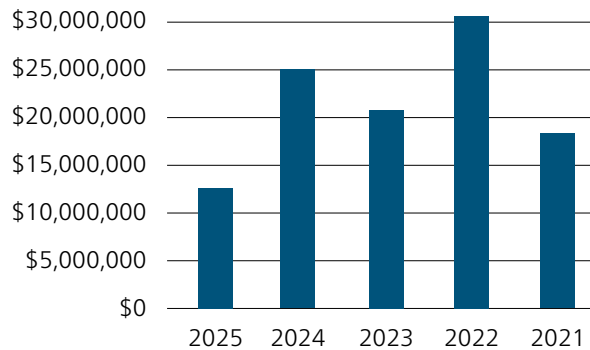
OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN POPULAR ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORTING

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada gave an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting to the Forest Preserve District for its popular annual financial report for fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2024. The District has received this award for the past four years. It is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports. To receive this award a government unit must publish a popular annual financial report whose contents conform to program standards of creativity, presentation, understandability, and reader appeal. The award is valid for one year.

DEBT SERVICES

In fiscal year 2025 the Forest Preserve District had three open bond series. It paid over \$12 million in principal on those issuances and retired, or paid off, one of the series in November. The bonds are funding projects such as improvements to Mayslake Hall, the construction of the new Grounds and Natural Resource Maintenance Campus, and land acquisitions.

DEBT RETIRED BY FISCAL YEAR



OUTSTANDING GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND DEBT as of Dec. 31, 2025

Bond Series Issued Fiscal Year	Outstanding Principal	To Be Paid Off End of Fiscal Year
2022	\$26,795,000	2031
2025	\$70,975,000	2033
Total	\$ 97,770,000	

S&P AAA RATING

The Forest Preserve District is AAA rated by Standard and Poor's. This is the highest rating of credit worthiness attainable by any agency or business in the financial industry. This rating reflects the District's strong financial management, fiscally responsible reserves, actively managed operations, pension funding, and oversight of its debt and liabilities. The rating also translates to savings when debt is issued as lower interest rates directly correlate with the low default risk associated with AAA-rated agencies.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



DISTRICT BREAKS GROUND ON NEW GROUNDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES CAMPUS

Work began at Blackwell on a 112,900-square-foot facility that will serve as the main hub for crews who maintain and restore the county's 26,000 acres of forest preserves.

The campus replaces aging, scattered maintenance buildings with a centralized, energy-efficient complex designed to improve safety, operational efficiency, and environmental sustainability. Features include an on-site solar array for renewable energy, rainwater harvesting systems to conserve water, and native bioswales and basins that support both stormwater management and habitat restoration.

The campus will also include a new native plant nursery support building and greenhouse, expanding the District's existing nursery and potentially quadrupling native seed collection and distribution efforts, further reducing reliance on outside suppliers.

Construction is expected to be substantially completed by February 2027 with final completion by December 2027. The \$36.4 million endeavor is the largest of the 32 certified projects outlined in the District's 2019 master plan.

ANIMAL CARE MOVES TO NEW CENTER AT WILLOWBROOK

In April staff and wildlife patients moved into the new 28,000-square-foot net-zero-designed DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center at Willowbrook. The state-of-the-art facility is the largest of its kind in Illinois. Nearly 30% of the cost of the \$30 million facility was offset by grants and private donations.

The visitor center offers behind-the-scenes looks at the science of wildlife rehabilitation as well as exhibits on native wild animals and ways residents can coexist with wildlife in their own backyards.

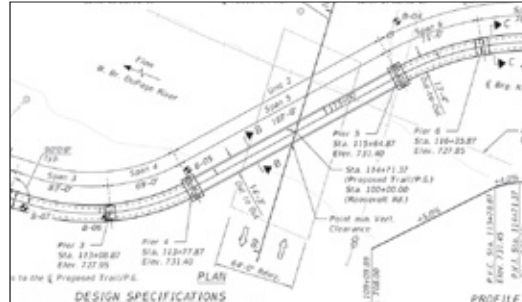
Work continues on optimizing the geothermal system and 625kW solar array. The journey to achieving net zero is expected to continue through 2026.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS CONTINUE ALONG SALT CREEK AT GRAUE MILL AND MUSEUM

In spring the Forest Preserve District completed \$150,000 in landscape improvements at the Graue Mill and Museum at Fullersburg Woods. Work included restoration of brick pathways, a new agricultural crop demonstration garden, outdoor seating, and interpretive overlooks highlighting the recent restoration of Salt Creek and the history of the mill.



WORK BEGINS ON FINAL LEG OF WEST BRANCH DUPAGE RIVER TRAIL

After nearly 11 years of planning, designing, and permitting, work on a 0.7-mile pedestrian and bicycle trail and 920-foot bridge over the West Branch DuPage River and Roosevelt Road is underway. When completed, the segment will join Blackwell and West DuPage Woods and be the last link in the 26-mile West Branch DuPage River trail connecting northern DuPage with Will County.

The Illinois Department of Transportation is lead on the project, which should begin in March 2026 and wrap up in June 2027. The \$8.5 million project has received \$6.8 million in federal funding.

TREES AT MALLARD LAKE CONTINUE TO IMPROVE RETIRED LANDFILL OPERATIONS

The Forest Preserve District – and the environment – continued to reap the benefits of specially planted trees at the retired landfill at Mallard Lake.

Leachate is the liquid that forms when rainwater passes through waste in a landfill. It's usually collected in tanks and trucked to a water-treatment facility, but an automated irrigation system at the Mallard Lake site distributes the leachate to more than 8,500 poplar and willow trees on 14.7 acres. The trees soak up the leachate, use chemical compounds in the liquid to fuel growth, and then release clean water through their leaves via evapotranspiration.

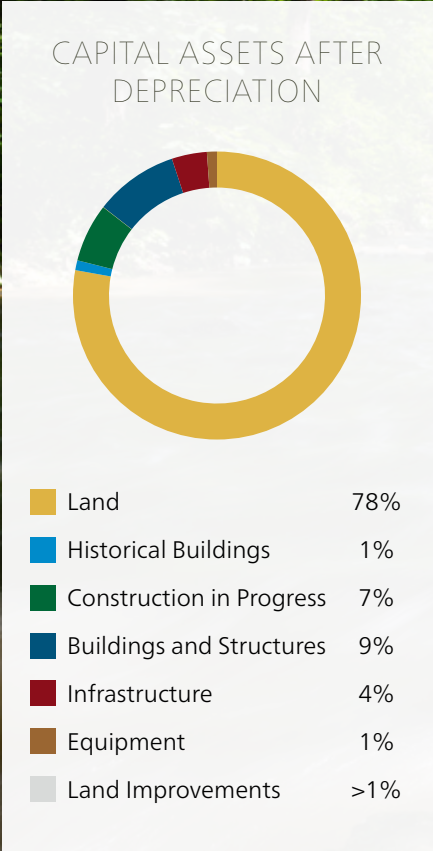
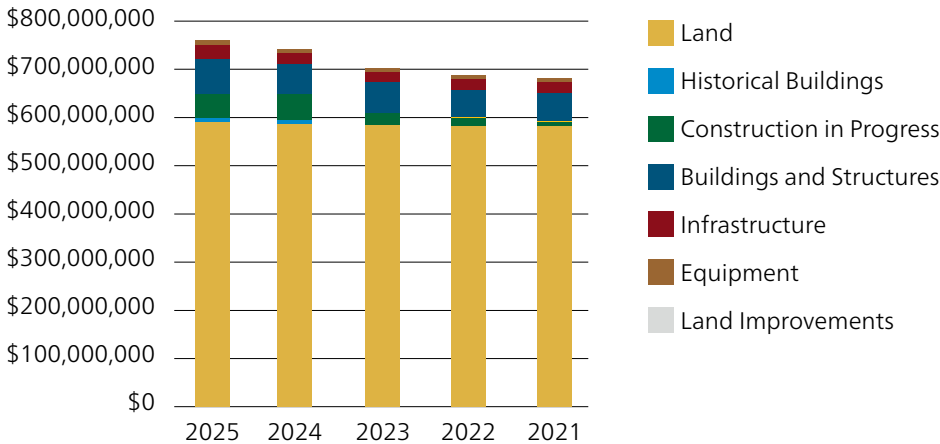
This “phyto-utilization system,” the largest on a landfill in the world, not only reduces the facility’s carbon footprint but also cuts costs by 25% to 50%. By absorbing and treating approximately 6 million gallons of leachate onsite, in 2025 the system saved the District roughly \$200,000 in disposal costs.



CAPITAL ASSETS

Forest Preserve District capital assets are extremely land-driven, with all but 22% in the land category. When you add buildings and structures, you’ve accounted for 88% of the District’s capital assets. The remaining 12% is in infrastructure, equipment, land improvements, and construction in progress. Land improvements and construction in progress fluctuate year over year based on how they progress and are most likely added to either the land or the buildings and structures category once completed.

FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL ASSETS TREND



SPECIAL DESTINATIONS

In addition to trails, picnicking, fishing, and open natural areas, the Forest Preserve District has seven special destinations within the preserves, each with its own distinct exhibits and buildings that focus on the county's natural or cultural history. Each has scheduled programs for kids, families, and adults as well as activities and points of interest for casual visitors.

DANADA EQUESTRIAN CENTER

- 164,860 visitors
- Hosted two-day Fall Festival with 11,169 attendees
- Held four "Horsin' Around" days with 1,080 visitors
- Offered signature programs including lessons, wagon rides, barn tours, "No-Rush Brush," and nine weeks of summer camp
- Harvested 4,296 bales of hay (over 200,000 pounds) from our fields to feed the animals at Danada and Kline Creek Farm

GRAUE MILL AND MUSEUM

- 13,761 visitors
- Hosted 984 students from 16 schools
- Added programs on the art of spinning wool, heritage gardening practices, and holiday customs



FULLERSBURG WOODS NATURE EDUCATION CENTER

- 24,165 visitors
- Hosted 76 rentals and special-use permits
- Introduced accessible tram tours of the preserve
- Hosted over 1,100 students from 20 schools and 225 Scouts from 17 troops

MAYSLAKE PEABODY ESTATE

- 28,726 visitors
- 5,839 open hours attendees
- Hosted native plant sale, 10 art exhibits, six evening artist receptions, and 102 private rentals



KLINE CREEK FARM

- 40,347 visitors
- 7,737 house tour guests
- Hosted summer camps, themed activities for dairy month, and the new "Nature Study Explorers" program

SPECIAL DESTINATIONS

ST. JAMES FARM

- 159,042 visitors
- Hosted fall native tree and shrub sale, five equine trail sports competitions, and the District’s volunteer appreciation picnic
- Accommodated 310 equestrians at the indoor riding arena
- Issued 106 permits for weddings, cross-country meets, picnics, and other events



DUPAGE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CENTER

11,267
Total Admissions

2,136
Most Admissions in One Month (May)

200
Different Species

14,397
Phone Calls

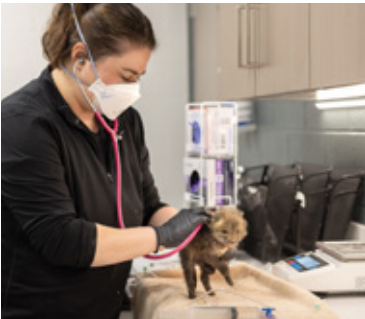
TOP FIVE ADMITTED SPECIES

Eastern Cottontail 1,818 | Opossum 945
American Robin 881 | Mallard 747
Eastern Gray Squirrel 693

INTAKE BY SPECIES



Birds	64%
Mammals	35%
Amphibians and Reptiles	1%



PLACES TO GO

HEADQUARTERS

3S580 Naperville Road | Wheaton
630-933-7200 | TTY 800-526-0857 | forest@dupageforest.org

SPECIAL DESTINATIONS

Danada Equestrian Center
3S507 Naperville Road
Wheaton | 630-668-6012

DuPage Wildlife
Conservation Center
525 S. Park Blvd.
Glen Ellyn | 630-942-6200

Fullersburg Woods Nature
Education Center
3609 Spring Road
Oak Brook | 630-850-8110

GOLF

The Preserve at Oak Meadows
900 N. Wood Dale Road | Addison | 630-595-0071

Maple Meadows Golf Preserve
272 S. Addison Road | Wood Dale | 630-616-8424

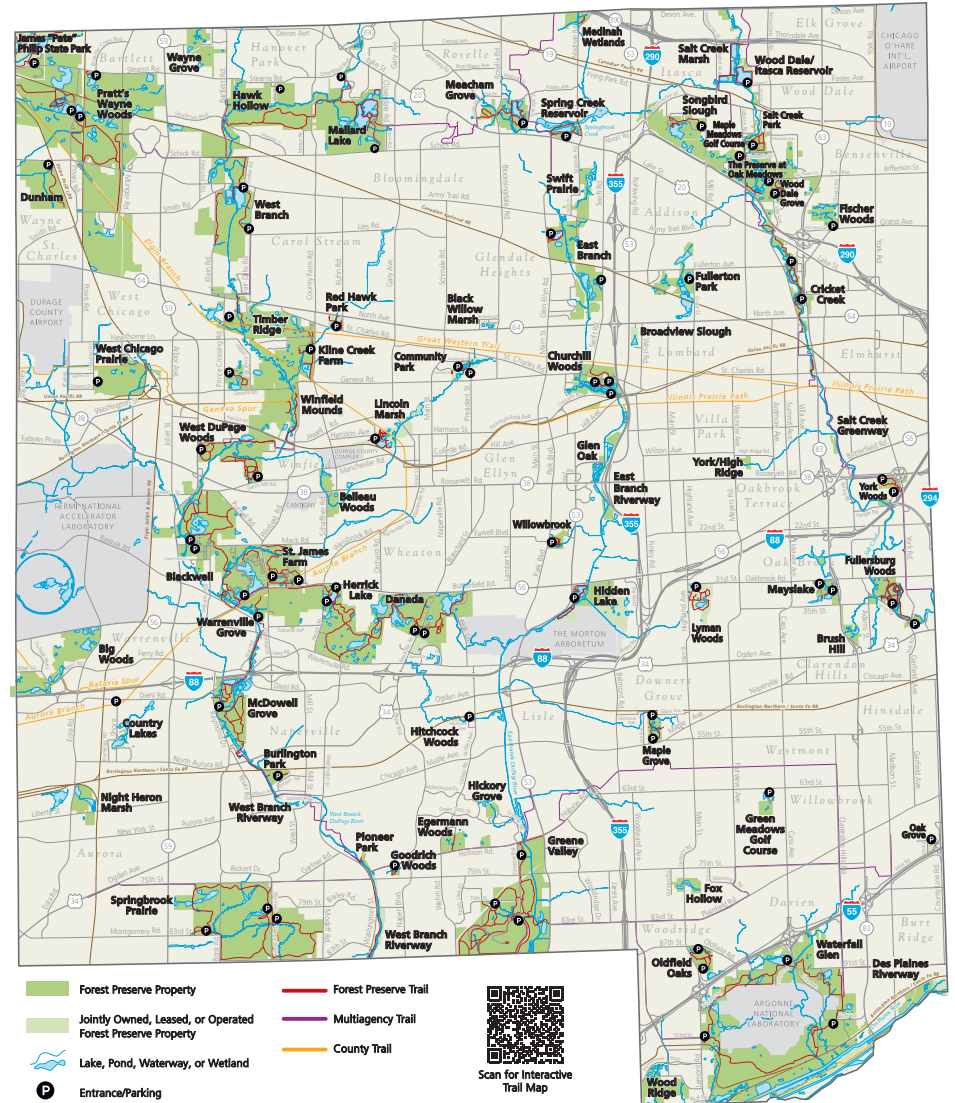
Green Meadows Golf Course
18W201 W. 63rd St. | Westmont | 630-810-5330

Graue Mill and Museum
3800 York Road
Oak Brook | 630-451-3430

Kline Creek Farm
1N600 County Farm Road
West Chicago | 630-876-5900

Mayslake Peabody Estate
1717 W. 31st St.
Oak Brook | 630-206-9566

St. James Farm
2S541 Winfield Road
Warrenville | 630-580-7025





ABOUT US

DuPage County's 60 forest preserves contain 26,000 acres of woodlands, prairies, wetlands, and waterways — natural areas that contribute to cleaner air and water, help with flood control, create vital habitats for wildlife, and provide safe spaces where people can boost their physical and mental health. Forest Preserve District employees work to maintain and create high-quality habitats, acquire land, and maintain and improve the recreational features, including 175 miles of trails, that attracted nearly 6 million people throughout the year.



Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

3S580 Naperville Road | Wheaton
630-933-7200 | TTY 800-526-0857 | forest@dupageforest.org

