



Forest Preserve District of DuPage County  
**Herrick Lake Forest Preserve 2025 Master Plan**



**Forest Preserve District of DuPage County**

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Our thanks go to everyone who visits the county's forest preserves, especially those who helped develop this plan by participating in surveys and commenting at public meetings.





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CHAPTER 1

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County as set forth in the Downstate Forest Preserve Act is “to acquire and hold lands containing natural forests ... for the purpose of protecting and preserving the flora, fauna, and scenic beauties ... in their natural state and condition, for the purpose of education, pleasure and recreation of the public.” In 1925, pursuant to that mission, the District purchased 90 acres along Butterfield Road, establishing Herrick Lake Forest Preserve. Today, Herrick Lake spans 887 acres, combining high-quality natural ecosystems with some of the most popular recreational amenities anywhere in the county.

When the District completed its agencywide Master Plan in 2019, a key recommendation was to complete and implement individual forest preserve master plans to improve future projects and advance the Forest Preserve District’s mission. It suggested starting with sites with the highest visitation. In 2023, a consultant led the development of plans for Blackwell, Greene Valley, and Waterfall Glen. For Herrick Lake, a robust planning process was developed and implemented by District staff over 12 months, that gathered extensive input from staff, the Board of Commissioners, and the public. This planning process for Herrick Lake began in late 2024.



This report documents all phases of the master plan process, from gathering and then analyzing information from research, meetings, surveys, and site visits to developing goals and objectives specific to Herrick Lake and making recommendations and plans to turn those goals and objectives into tangible improvements. Major recommendations included:

- Complete a dredging project to improve water quality and habitat in the lake
- Improve water quality by stabilizing and naturalizing the lake shoreline while maintaining public access
- Improve accessibility throughout the preserve with additional seating, accessible kayak and fishing infrastructure, and pavement upgrades
- Address overcrowding in the north parking lot
- Improve the rental experience for staff and the public
- Provide additional educational and interpretive opportunities with signage and a nature play area



The process revealed the great appreciation visitors, Forest Preserve District staff, and the Board of Commissioners have for conditions and amenities at Herrick Lake. As such, this master plan seeks incremental improvements that enhance and build upon what currently exists in a thoughtful, precise way. The plans and budgets within will serve as the basis for future, more-detailed design work, ensuring projects uphold the mission and vision of Herrick Lake while maintaining support from staff, commissioners, and the public.









CHAPTER 2  
**PROCESS**



# PROCESS

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County has 60 preserves, each unique, with different amenities, features, and needs. This plan is the culmination of a five-phase planning process, intent on creating a master plan document specific to the future requirements and needs of Herrick Lake Forest Preserve. This plan will provide a framework for all future improvements, and by nature of a robust planning effort with sufficient stakeholder input, these proposed improvements have the support of the Board of Commissioners, Forest Preserve District staff, and the residents of DuPage County.

## **Phase 1- Information Gathering**

The information-gathering phase acquired all possible data, opinions, and information about the preserve without applying judgement or priority. It began with creating inventory maps, conducting site visits, and reviewing planning documents from the District and outside agencies. It also included meetings with staff and commissioners and a public open house supported by an online survey.

## **Phase 2- Analysis & Goal Development**

This phase looked at the gathered information with a critical eye. Staff analyzed existing conditions and inventory maps and compiled and reviewed data from meetings for patterns, commonalities, opportunities, and constraints. This analysis created a list of site-specific goals and objectives.

## **Phase 3- Master Plan Development**

Phase three began the process of turning goals and objectives for Herrick Lake into plans for physical renovations. Staff developed plans and cost estimates and grouped improvements into projects and phases of work. They then reviewed all proposed projects and identified potential grant opportunities. A draft of the full master plan document was then assembled for review.

## **Phase 4- Plan Review & Refinement**

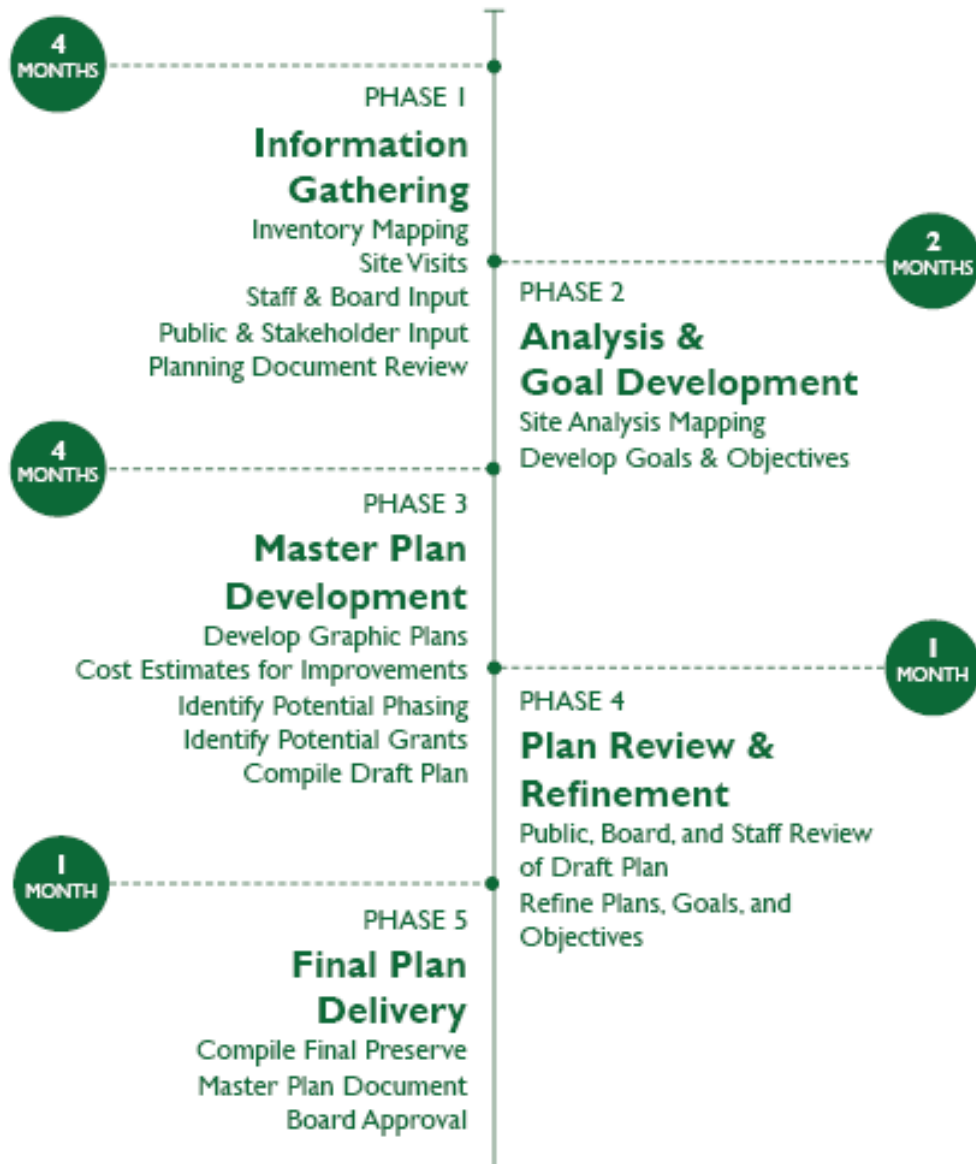
After completing the draft master plan, staff conducted a two-week internal review followed by a 30-day review when the Board of Commissioners and the public could submit additional comments. Staff compiled all comments and requests and used them to refine the plan.

## **Phase 5- Final Plan Delivery**

After final refinements, staff compiled and submitted the complete Herrick Lake Forest Preserve Master Plan to the board for approval. This complete document is the official plan for future improvements at Herrick Lake.



## Preserve Master Planning Process



### Schedule

Master planning for Herrick Lake began in November 2024. The graphic above shows the time requirements for each phase, which combined roughly created a 12-month planning process.





CHAPTER 3

# BACKGROUND

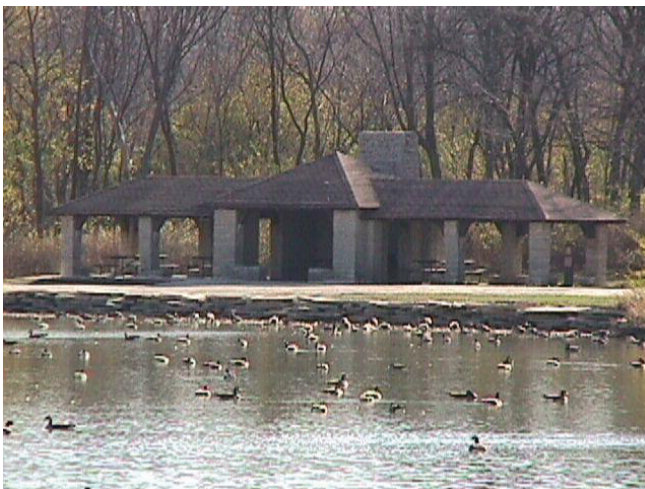


# PRESERVE BACKGROUND & HISTORY



After the retreat of the Wisconsin Glacier, the land that is now Herrick Lake Forest Preserve grew into prairies with scattered woodlands. For thousands of years, different groups of indigenous people passed through the area, some to hunt and move on, others to settle for various periods of time. The last of these groups to call this land home was the Potawatomi, who had settled in the area by the late 1600s. Their well-traveled trails served as the basis for Butterfield and Warrenville roads.

Around the time of the Treaty of Chicago in 1833, which moved the Potawatomi west of the Mississippi River, Ira Herrick moved near the small settlement of Wheaton and built his homestead in a densely wooded parcel that surrounded a small marshy lake. This marked the beginning of the land's agricultural period, which lasted more than 100 years. Old fencerows, woodlot edges and fields of European grasses still stand in the preserve as remnants of this era.



The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County established Herrick Lake in 1925 with the purchase of 90 acres of the original Herrick homestead. Throughout the 1950s to the 1970s, additional acquisitions expanded the preserve. Today, Herrick Lake encompasses 887 acres, and is a substantial link in a 3,700-acre chain of open space that includes Danada, Warrenville Grove, St. James Farm and Blackwell forest preserves. Multiple public surveys over the years confirm that Herrick Lake is consistently one of the most popular and heavily visited preserves in the County.





## Natural Features

Herrick Lake is home to an impressive variety of wildlife. Ecologists have recorded more than 254 types of year-round and migrating wildlife among the preserve's 470 different types of plants.

In the mature upland woods, stately 150-year-old white, red, and bur oaks provide habitat for animals like woodpeckers, squirrels, and owls.

White-tailed deer and coyotes roam through adjacent fields of European grasses, where dickcissels, savanna sparrows, bobolinks, and eastern meadowlarks nest among the fescues. Slowly emerging within these fields are young planted forests of American elms with understories of smaller maples, oaks, lindens, and hickories.

Viburnums, dogwoods, roses, and blackberries are common in this immature upland woods, which attracts black-crowned night herons, eastern wood peewees, and American woodcocks.

Along the forest preserve's pothole marshes and streams, silver maple and buttonbush grow. Raccoons, woodchucks, northern orioles, wood thrushes, and various frogs and toads dwell in this area, which is seasonally covered with colorful swamp buttercup and wild iris. Herrick Marsh, which lies in the middle of the forest preserve, supports community of reeds, a draw for eastern tiger salamanders, northern leopard frogs, pied-billed grebes, blue-winged teals, red-winged blackbirds, minks, and muskrats.





# SITE VISIT REVIEW

Throughout the planning process, Forest Preserve District staff visited the preserve multiple times. Two visits focused on the overall trail network, two on the area and amenities around the lake, and one on the Danada-Herrick Regional Trail along Butterfield Road and its connection to St. James Farm. Staff walked every trail a minimum of two times, which allowed them to thoroughly investigate existing conditions and note opportunities and constraints for future amenities.

Because the lake is an important recreational and ecological feature and is close to infrastructure and many amenities, staff paid particular attention to that area. Degrading shoreline and timber walls were apparent but so were opportunities for adjustments and improvements. Photos from the site visits are in the appendix and throughout this document.









# SITE INVENTORY MAPS

A critical component of the information-gathering phase was the creation of inventory maps showing existing conditions of the preserve. Maps focused on natural resources and conditions, as well as physical infrastructure and recreational amenities. The maps would help determine if areas would be suitable for new or improved amenities.

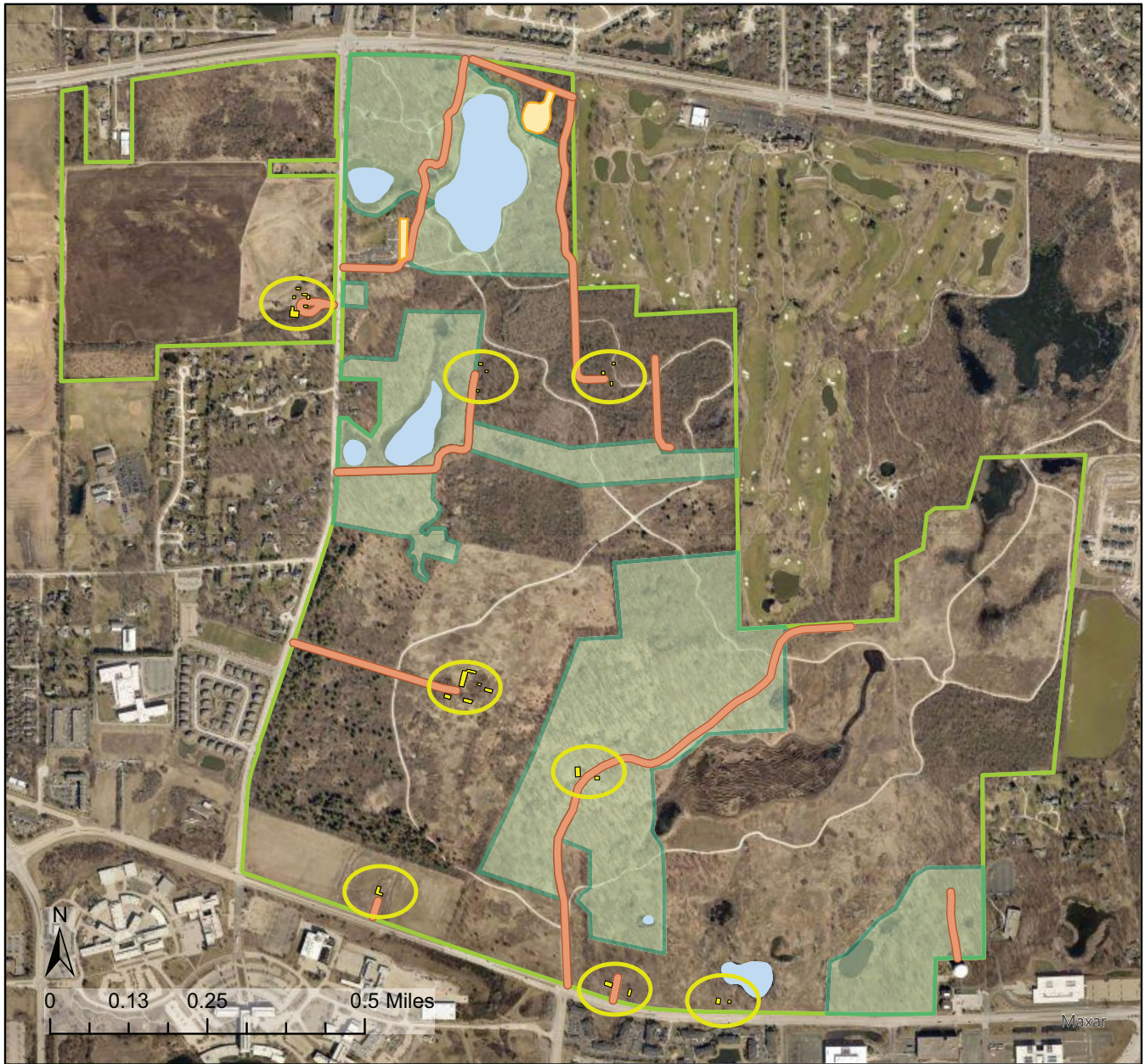


## 1939 Aerial

This 1939 map is the oldest available aerial image of Herrick Lake Forest Preserve. It shows the condition of the preserve prior to the major

development of DuPage County. The majority of the preserve was farmland with multiple areas of undisturbed woodland.



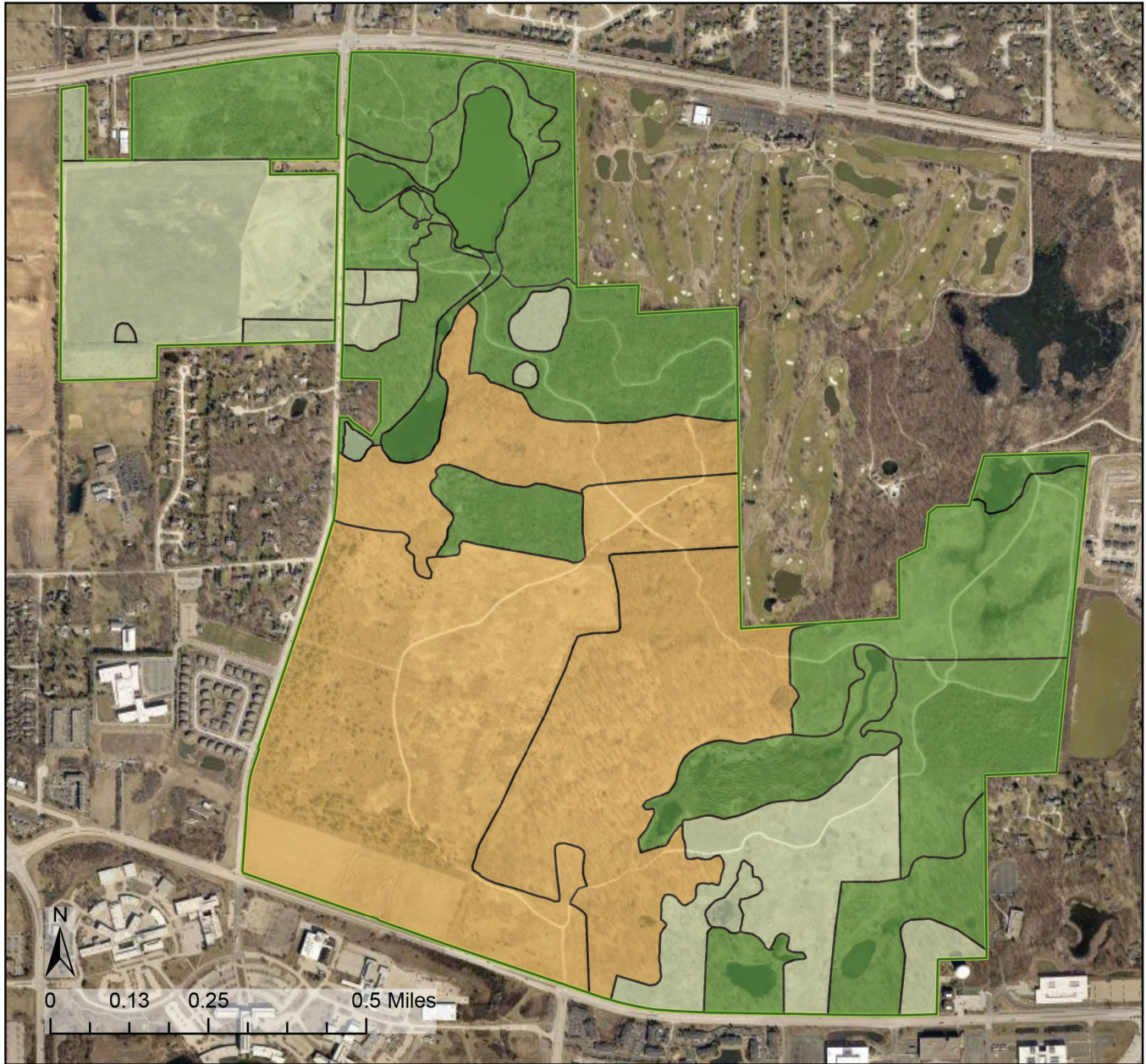


## Historic & Cultural

This map was generated from the analysis of the 1939 aerial map. It shows unfarmed and wooded land as well as buildings and individual farms (circled in yellow). It also shows two parking lots by the lake close to where lots exist today.

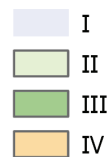
- 1939 Woods
- 1939 Buildings
- 1939 Surface Water
- 1939 Roads & Trails
- Preserve Boundary





## Ecosystems

Ecosystem classifications are internal Forest Preserve District assessments of the quality of land based on observed vegetation and wildlife. More-diverse and higher-quality plants and wildlife lead to higher classifications. Overall, Herrick Lake Forest Preserve has a high percentage of high value class 3 and 4 areas, indicating it is a vital ecological preserve. By District policy, development of these areas is restricted.



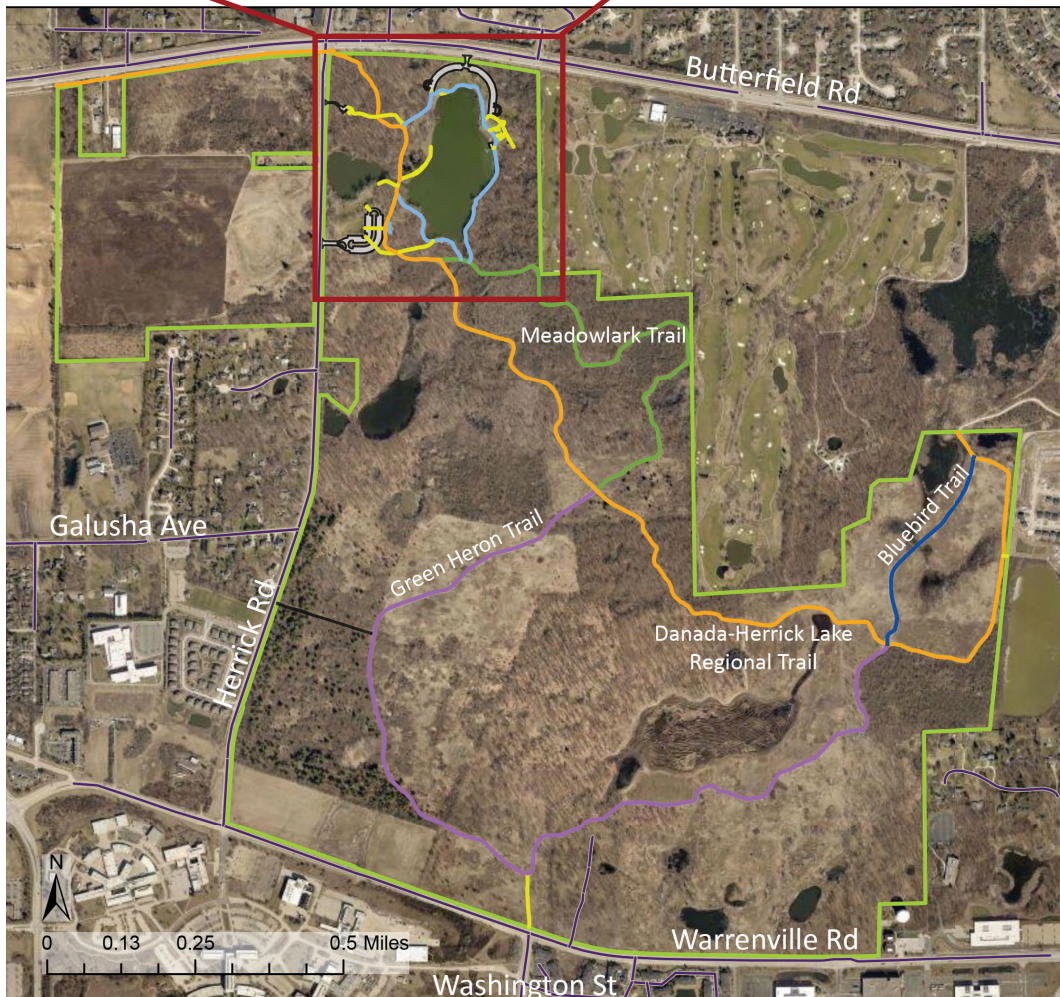




## Circulation

Herrick Lake Forest Preserve is bounded by Butterfield Road to the north, Herrick Road to the west, and Warrenville Road to the south. Washington Street ends at the southern boundary of the preserve. There are two parking lots adjacent to the lake: one off Butterfield Road and one off Herrick Road.

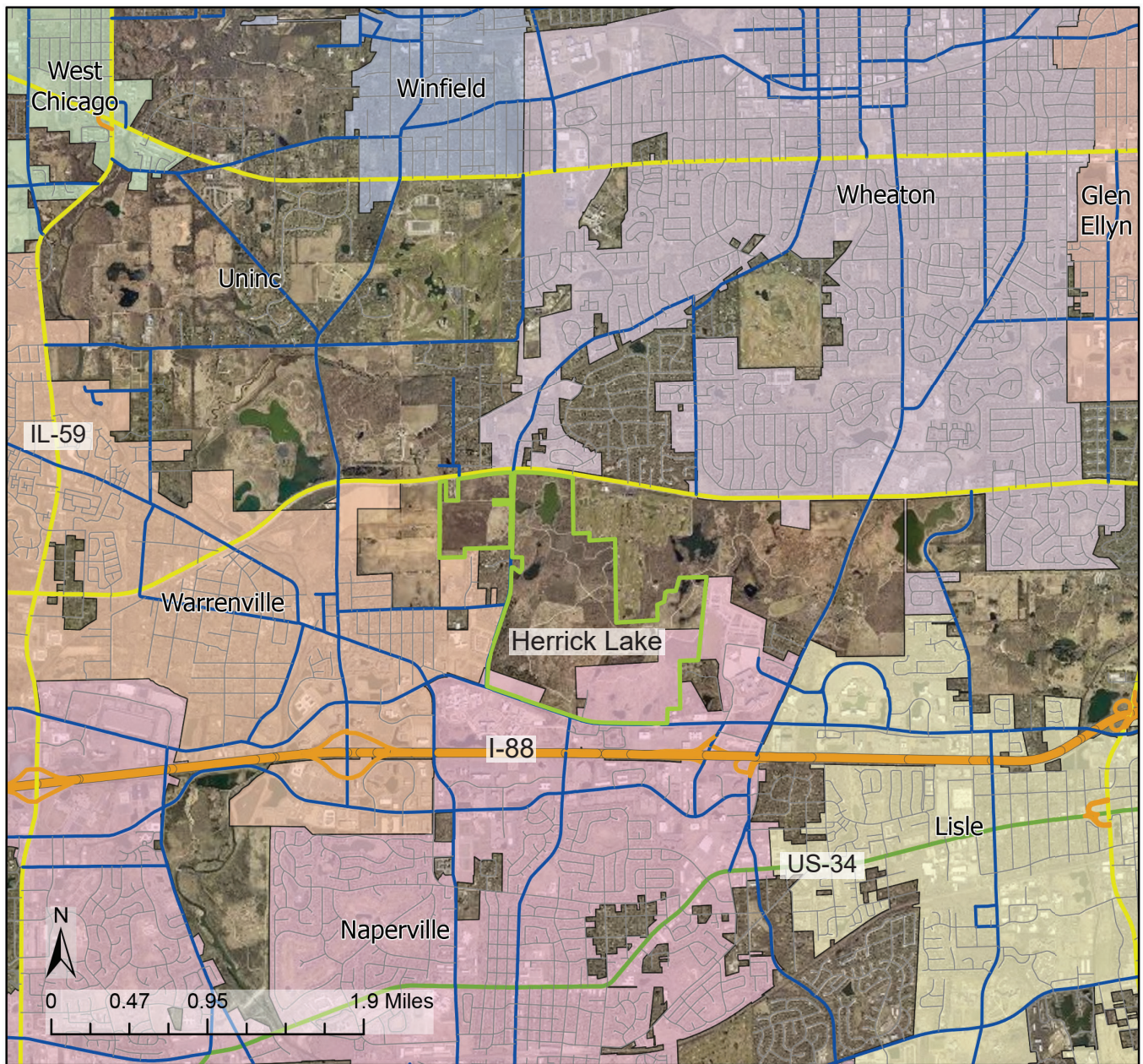
The forest preserve's extensive trail network includes the Danada-Herrick Lake Regional Trail, which starts at the Danada Forest Preserve to the east and ends at the Illinois Prairie Path-Aurora Branch and St. James Farm Forest Preserve to the west. Internal loops include the Lake, Bluebird, Green Heron, and Meadowlark trails. There is also a trail spur at the intersection of Washington Street and Warrenville Road.



### Trails

- Bluebird Trail
- Connector
- Danada-Herrick Lake Regional Trail
- Green Heron Trail
- Lake Trail
- Meadowlark Trail
- Surrounding Roads
- Preserve Boundary
- Preserve Roads and Lots





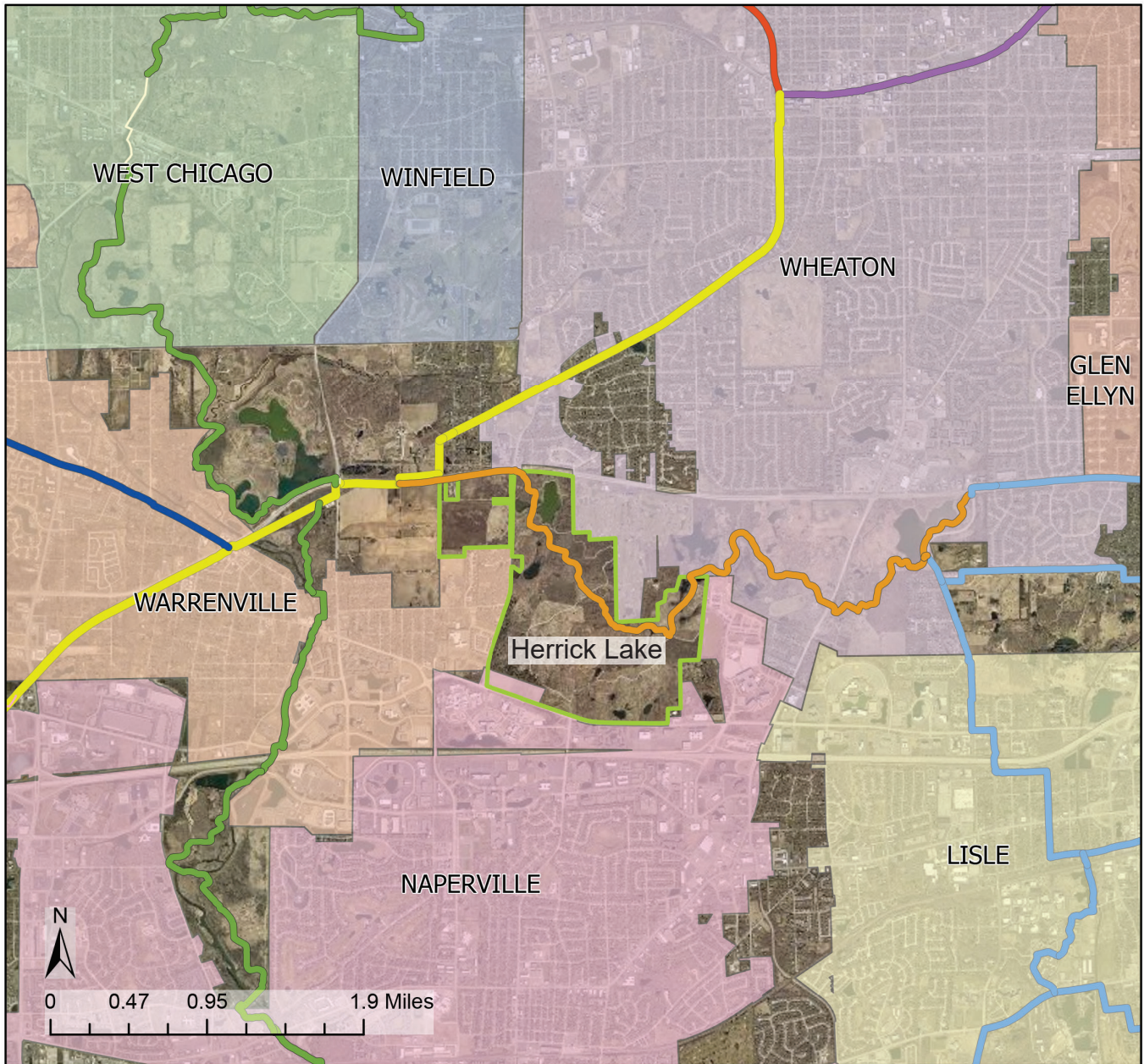
## Roads & Municipalities

Herrick Lake Forest Preserve is bordered by multiple large roads, but primary access is via Butterfield Road. I-88 to the south has exit ramps close to the preserve.

Most of Herrick Lake is unincorporated DuPage County, but it is surrounded by Warrenville, Wheaton, Naperville, and Lisle. Development and planning in these municipalities may affect the preserve.

- Interstates
- Major Roads
- Ramps
- Residential Roads
- State Routes
- U.S. Routes





## Regional Trails & Park Districts

The Danada-Herrick Lake Regional Trail, which runs through the preserve, connects to the Illinois Prairie Path-Aurora Branch and the West Branch DuPage River Trail to the west and will connect to the planned East Branch DuPage River Trail to the east.

The preserve is surrounded by Warrenville, Wheaton, Naperville, and Lisle park districts, separate government agencies that may provide

opportunities for connections and supplement amenities provided by the Forest Preserve District.

- Aurora - Naperville Trail
- Batavia Road Bike Path
- East Branch DuPage River Trail
- Forest Preserve District Regional Trail
- Illinois Prairie Path - Aurora Branch
- Illinois Prairie Path - Elgin Branch
- Illinois Prairie Path - Main Stem
- West Branch DuPage River Trail

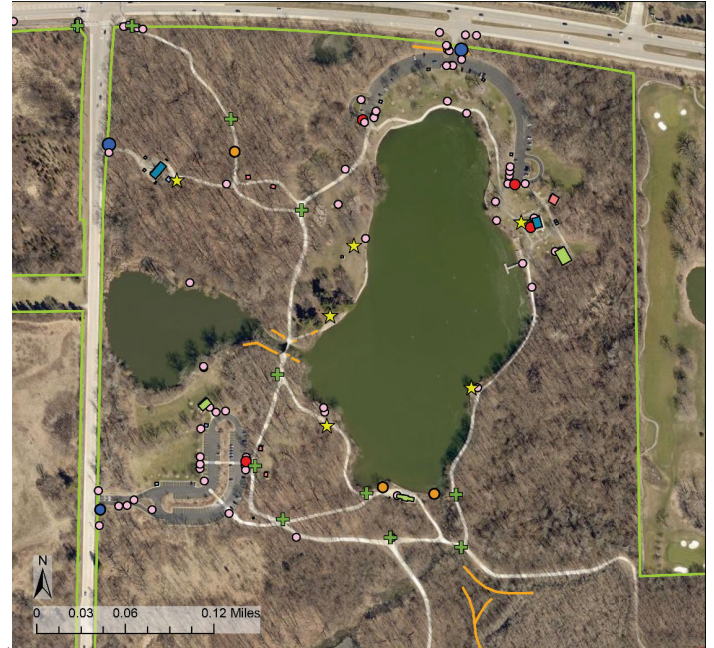


## Structures

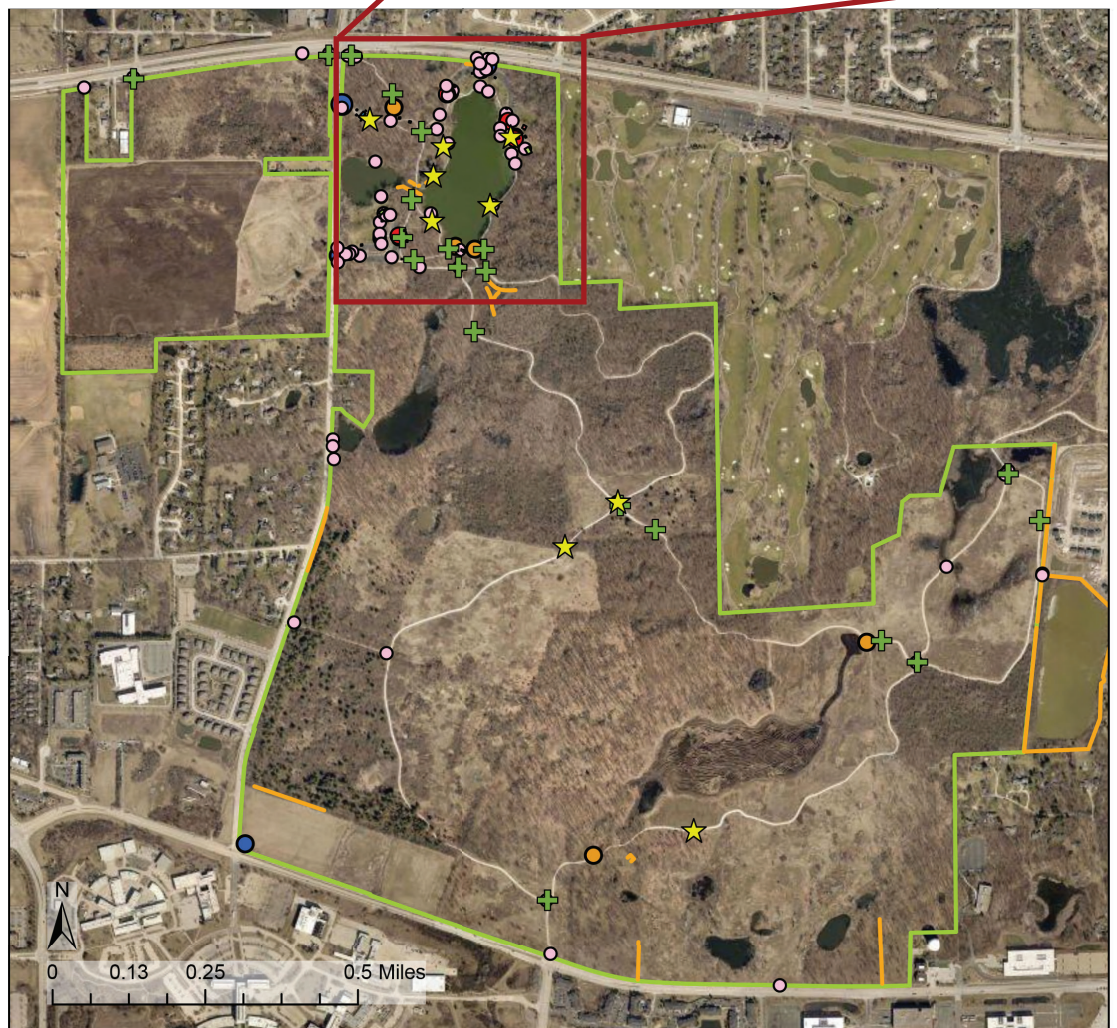
Herrick Lake Forest Preserve has a range of amenities supported by extensive infrastructure. Flush restrooms, signs and benches, a boat-rental building, a youth-group cabin, and three reservable shelters are situated around the lake. A limited number of signs and benches are located throughout the rest of the preserve.

### Structures

- Buildings
- Latrines
- Shelters
- Other Structures
- Preserve Boundary
- Fences



- ★ Benches
- ### Signs
- Title
  - Secondary Title
  - Boundary
  - Handicapped
  - Interpretive
  - Trailside Directional
  - Miscellaneous
  - Visitor Information
  - Regulatory
  - Banner
  - + Trail Markers selection



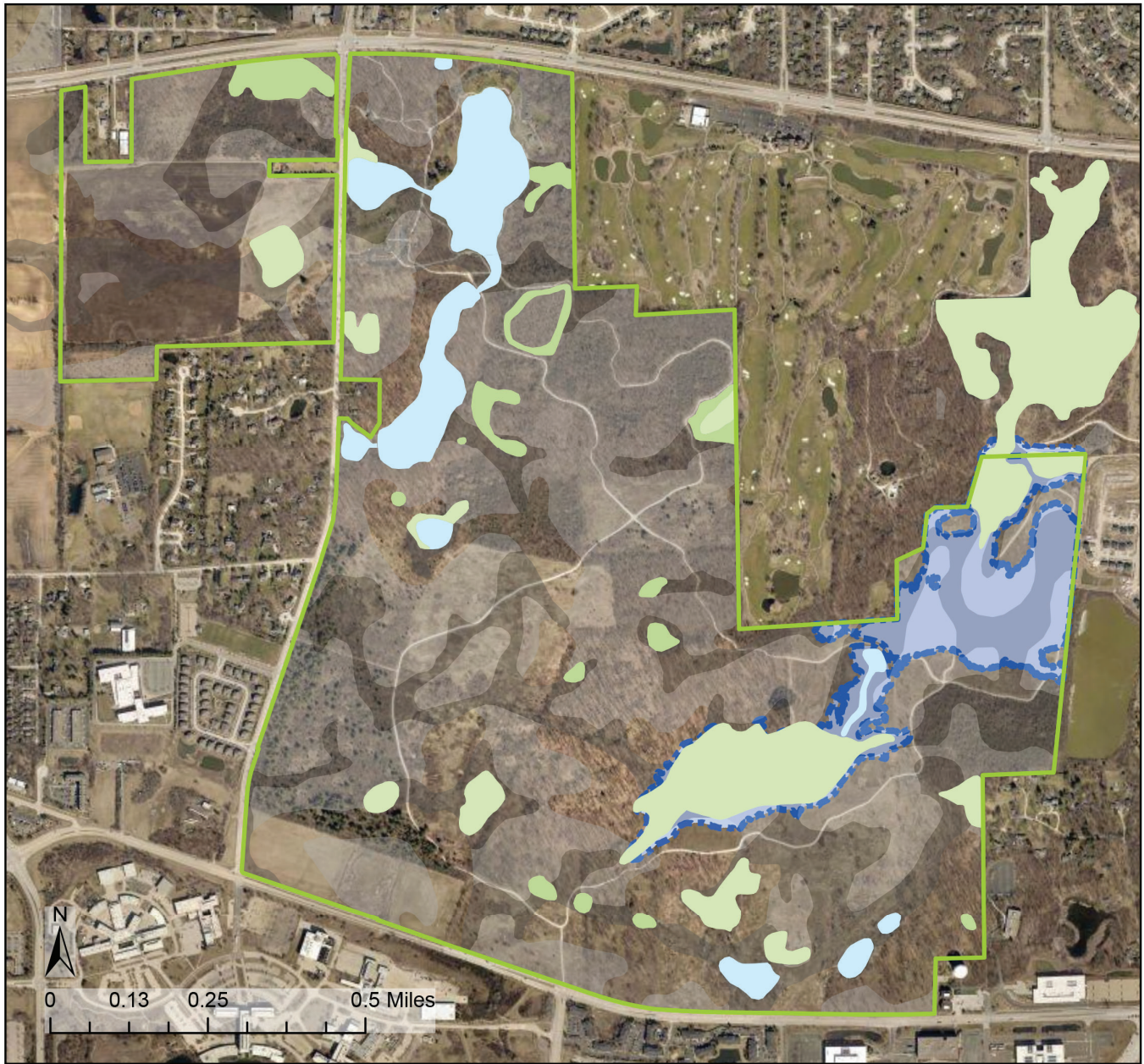




## Topography

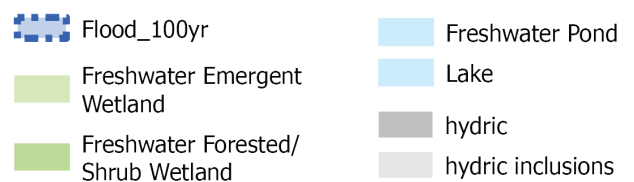
Much of the forest preserve features gently rolling topography with few excessively steep areas. There are multiple large flats. Some contain natural wetlands; two hold deposits from previous dredging operations.



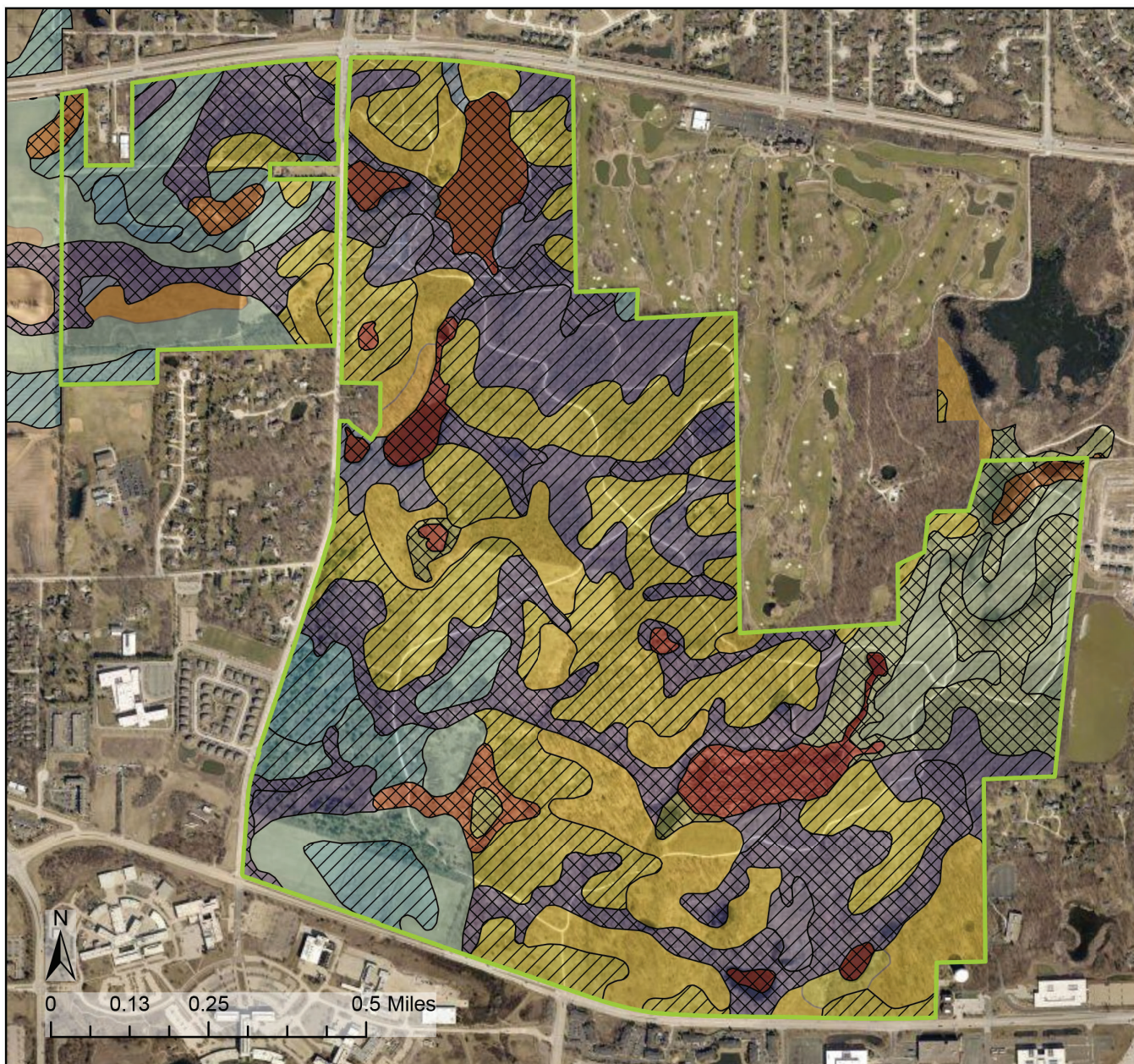


## Hydrology

This map shows wetlands, the 100-year FEMA floodplain, and hydric soils at Herrick Lake Forest Preserve. Most of the preserve is clear of wetlands and floodplain, but a large wetland complex on the east is part of the 100-year floodplain, which limits potential development.







## Soils

Soil data is used to determine the suitability of potential development and restoration potential. Soil types vary throughout the preserve but primarily consist of loams with relatively low slope. Extensive pockets of hydric and hydric inclusion soils spread throughout the preserve, indicating additional potential wetlands and soils that may be challenging for construction.

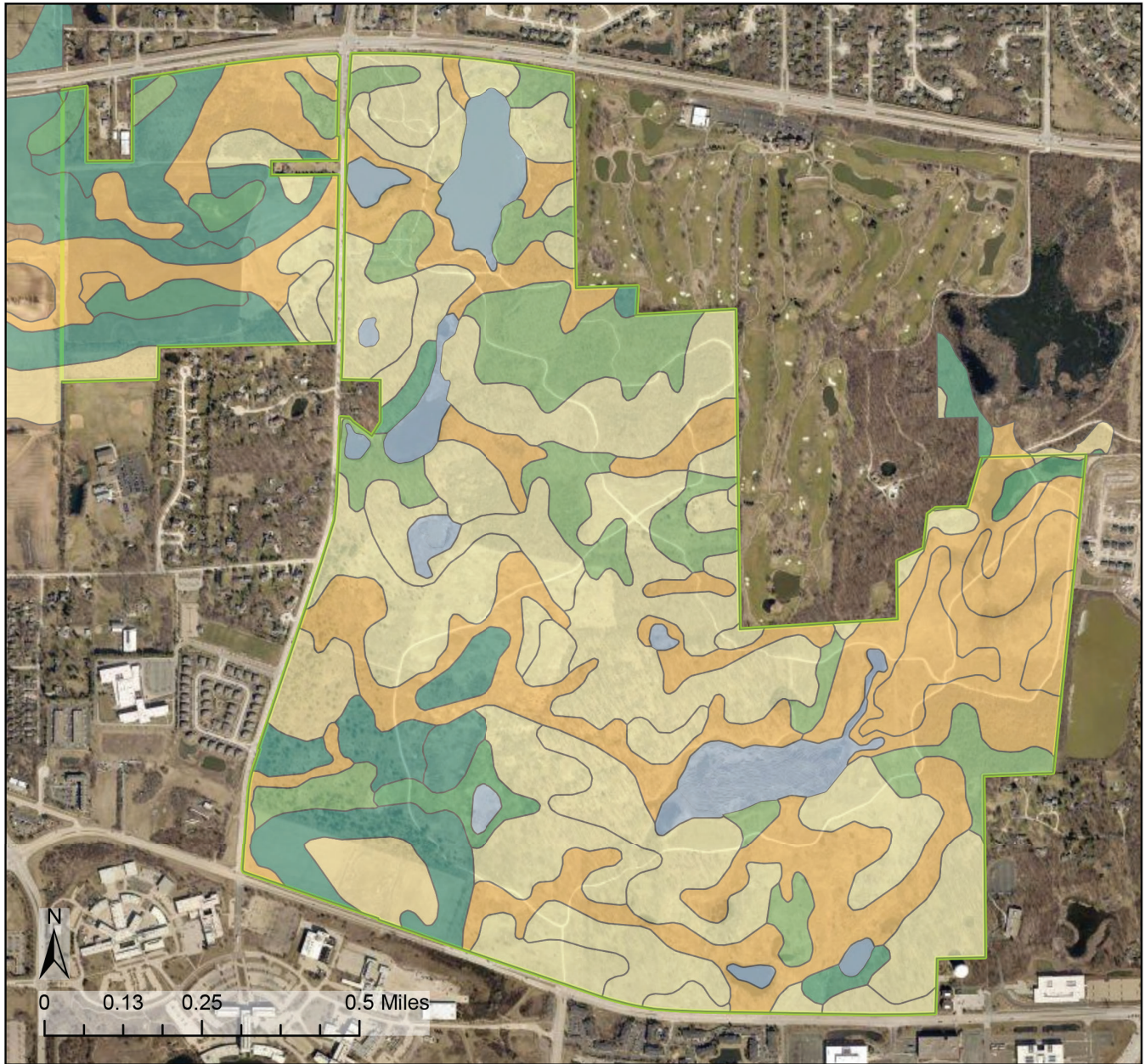
### Soil Type

Ashkum silty, clay loam, 0-2 percent slopes	Milford silty clay loam, 0-2 percent slopes
Beecher silt loam, 0-2 percent slopes	Mundelein silt loam, 0-2 percent slopes
Blount silt loam, 0-2 percent slopes	Muskego and Peotone soils, ponded, 0-2 percent slopes
Blount silt loam, 2-4 percent slopes	Ozaukee silt loam, 12-20 percent slopes
Elliott silt loam, 0-2 percent slopes	Ozaukee silt loam, 2-4 percent slopes
Elliott silt loam, 2-4 percent slopes	Ozaukee silt loam, 4-6 percent slopes, eroded
Graymont silt loam, 2-5 percent slopes	Ozaukee silt loam, 6-12 percent slopes, eroded
Markham silt loam, 2-4 percent slopes	Ozaukee silty clay loam, 6-12 percent slopes, severely eroded
Markham silt loam, 4-6 percent slopes	Peotone silty clay loam, 0-2 percent slopes
Martinton silt loam, 0-2 percent slopes	Peotone silty clay loam, undrained, 0-2 percent slopes
	Water

### Hydric Soils

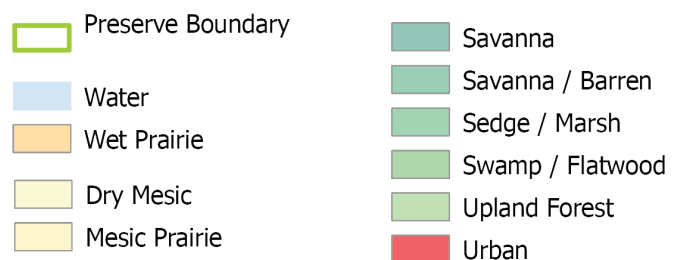
- hydric
- hydric inclusions
- Preserve Boundary





## Pre-European Settlement Soils

Pre-European settlement soil data indicates the ecosystem and plant communities that existed before major human development based upon soil types. The data for Herrick Lake Forest Preserve shows a mix of wet to dry prairies, wetlands, woodlands, and savannas, which may influence future restoration efforts.











# OUTSIDE AGENCY PLAN REVIEW

The planning process assessed outside agencies near Herrick Lake Forest Preserve and reviewed any large-scale planning documents they had produced. Reviews focused specifically on references to the Forest Preserve District and Herrick Lake and how proposed improvements or planning would affect (or be affected by) work at the preserve. Below is a summary of each of these large scale documents and their expected impacts.

## Naperville Park District 2023 Master Plan

The Naperville Park District's (NPD) 2023 Master Plan divided the Park District into eight planning areas. Each included an inventory of existing park spaces as well as considerations and recommendations for future developments. Planning areas 1 and 2 are adjacent to and include part of Herrick Lake.

### Area 1

The plan calls to “continue researching trail linkage opportunities”. Improvements to the Nike Sports Complex is included, which is 0.8 mile from the preserve's southwest corner.

### Area 2

Naper Commons Park is in the new Naper Commons development and is linked via a trail connection to the Danada-Herrick Lake Regional Trail. The plan calls to “look for opportunities to extend the trail network, whether through existing parks or partnering with other agencies” and to “continue researching trail linkage opportunities

... as proposals arise from residents or partnering agencies.” The plan references a lack of NPD parks and open space in the northern part of the area but notes that the presence of Danada and Herrick Lake forest preserves offsets that lack of NPD provided space.

### Overall Recommendations

The plan emphasizes the importance of walking trails and indicates a desire to “continue identifying trail connections and working with agencies to integrate paths into larger trail networks.” Regarding the park district's work with other agencies, the plan discusses providing “support, financially or otherwise, to initiatives spearheaded by other agencies that are consistent with the District's Mission, Vision, and Core Values.” Potential trail connections between Herrick Lake and lands near or belonging to the Naperville Park District should be discussed early in the planning process.

## Warrenville Park District 2023 Strategic Master Plan

According to a survey of Warrenville Park District residents, out of 30 items, paved multiuse trails ranked first for priority for investment. Open space and conservation areas ranked third. The survey also revealed that 76% of residents used the Forest Preserve District for outdoor recreation (the highest of any provider).





## DuPage County 2024 Trails Plan

This county plan primarily focuses on three regional trails under the county's jurisdiction: the Great Western Trail, the Illinois Prairie Path, and the Southern DuPage Regional Trail. Of the three, only the Illinois Prairie Path connects directly to trails at Herrick Lake.

The plan includes data from a November 2021 community survey. Of those who responded, 73% said they visited trails to experience nature. When asked about settings (wooded/shaded, river corridor, prairie/tallgrass, open natural/parkland, or downtown corridor), 66% said they preferred wooded/shaded, although open-ended comments indicated trail users also enjoy variety in the trail settings.

A concern for many respondents was navigation and confusion as to what trail they were currently

on. The Prairie Path splitting into spurs, and specifically the Danada-Herrick Lake Regional Trail was mentioned as a potential weak spot regarding navigation and wayfinding. In follow-up questions, 83% of respondents felt visual consistency in wayfinding signage was very or somewhat important. As a result, the Forest Preserve District should review access points where trail names and jurisdictions change and include information about other trails and systems.

There are hundreds of access points throughout the County trail system, broken into two classes. Access points are any location where trail users can access a trail. Points which have more navigational, cultural, or regional significance may be considered a "trailhead." Trailheads have additional enhancements such as wayfinding signs, restrooms, parking lots, lighting, bicycle racks, bicycle repair kiosks, dog waste stations, and sheltered seating.







# DISTRICT PLANS & INITIATIVES REVIEW

## 2019 Master Plan

The Forest Preserve District's 2019 Master Plan generated 32 certified projects prioritized by the Board of Commissioners with funding and scheduling expected over the following five years. Two of the projects are at Herrick Lake: the restoration of the prairie and savanna and restroom improvements. The restoration work has been completed, and the prairie and savanna are now in a scheduled periodic maintenance phase. Additional flush restrooms, though, have not yet been planned for or installed at the preserve.

In addition to the 32 certified projects, the Master Plan included 415 prospective natural resources, capital development, and maintenance projects, 18 of which are at Herrick Lake.

- Scout Woods Restoration
- Arrowhead Woods Restoration
- Central Woods Restoration
- Herrick Meadows Restoration
- South Savanna Restoration
- Boat Launch Improvements
- Shoreline & Boardwalk Improvements
- South Shelter (CCC) Rehabilitation
- Cabin Replacement
- Curb & Gutter Improvements
- Boardwalk Repair or Removal
- Cabin Rehabilitation
- Concession & Boat House Roof Replacement
- Latrine Exterior Replacement
- Latrine Roof & Exterior Finish

### Replacement

- Latrine Roof & Exterior Replacement
- Shelter and Fireplace Entire Roof, Chimney, and Framing Rehabilitation
- Women Flush Washroom Repairs & Interior Panel Replacements

## 2017 Public Survey

In support of the 2019 Master Plan, the Forest Preserve District completed a random-sample public survey in 2017. It received 705 mailed and 77 emailed responses.

Herrick Lake was the second-most visited preserve in the county (39%). Eight of the top 10 most-popular forest preserve activities were available at Herrick Lake: using the trails (76%), enjoying nature (63%), sitting and relaxing (40%), photography (32%), wildlife watching (23%), picnicking (16%), fishing (11%), and boating (8%). Expanding opportunities for these activities should be incorporated into the Herrick Lake Master Plan.

When asked which amenities respondents would like to see more of in the preserves, nature play spaces (20%) and rentals (cross-country skis 18%, bikes 17%, and cabins 16%) scored highly. The regularly staffed concession building at Herrick Lake may provide opportunities to accommodate these requests.

The Forest Preserve District also conducted a survey that allowed anyone to respond. The highest-requested features on that survey were





trails (52%), the restoration of natural areas (31%), drinking water (29%), restrooms (28%), and trail wayfinding signage (28%). Most respondents indicated they reached the forest preserves by driving (83%); only 11% biked and 5% walked. However, when asked how they would prefer to reach the preserves, only 60% wanted to drive. Biking jumped to 26% and walking to 12%. This combined with a desire for additional trail connections indicates a significant appetite for access via trails.



## 2023 FPDDC Clean Energy, Resiliency, and Sustainability Plan

In 2023 the Forest Preserve District hired a consultant to analyze the agency's overall sustainability and provide recommendations for clean energy, resiliency, and sustainability improvements. The plan identified opportunities that could be implemented at Herrick Lake.

- Review buildings for energy efficiency improvements, remote sensing of temperatures, and conversion of natural gas systems to electric
- Review buildings to consolidate function, and remove non-fully utilized structures
- Consider combining EV charging with solar PV parking structures
- Continue prioritizing restoration and management of natural areas
- Work with neighboring property owners such as Arrowhead Golf Course to reduce fertilizers affecting waterways
- Turf conversion to native where appropriate
- Additional green infrastructure improvements
- Impervious surface can be replaced with vegetation or other pervious surface
- Increase interest in biking to forest preserves
- Increase access to regional trail systems





### 2023 County-wide Resident Survey

In 2023 a consultant completed a random sample public survey to gauge residents' support for the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County and identify perceived strengths and weaknesses of the District. This survey also revealed the maintained popularity of Herrick Lake as it tied with Blackwell as the most visited preserve in the county (31%).

A major take-away was a high level of satisfaction with the Forest Preserve District. 82% of residents hold the district in favorable esteem, and the ratio of favorable to unfavorable ratings is over 20:1. For the overall experience at FPDDC locations, on a scale of 1-10, residents gave an average ranking of 8.2, indicating high levels of satisfaction.

Popular activities included amenities provided by Herrick Lake such as walking or jogging on trail (79%), enjoying nature (64%), biking on trails (31%), photography and observing nature (24%), using picnic areas (21%) and fishing (18%). These in demand amenities closely match the last county-wide survey in 2017, reinforcing the need to enhance these opportunities with the Herrick Lake Master Plan.

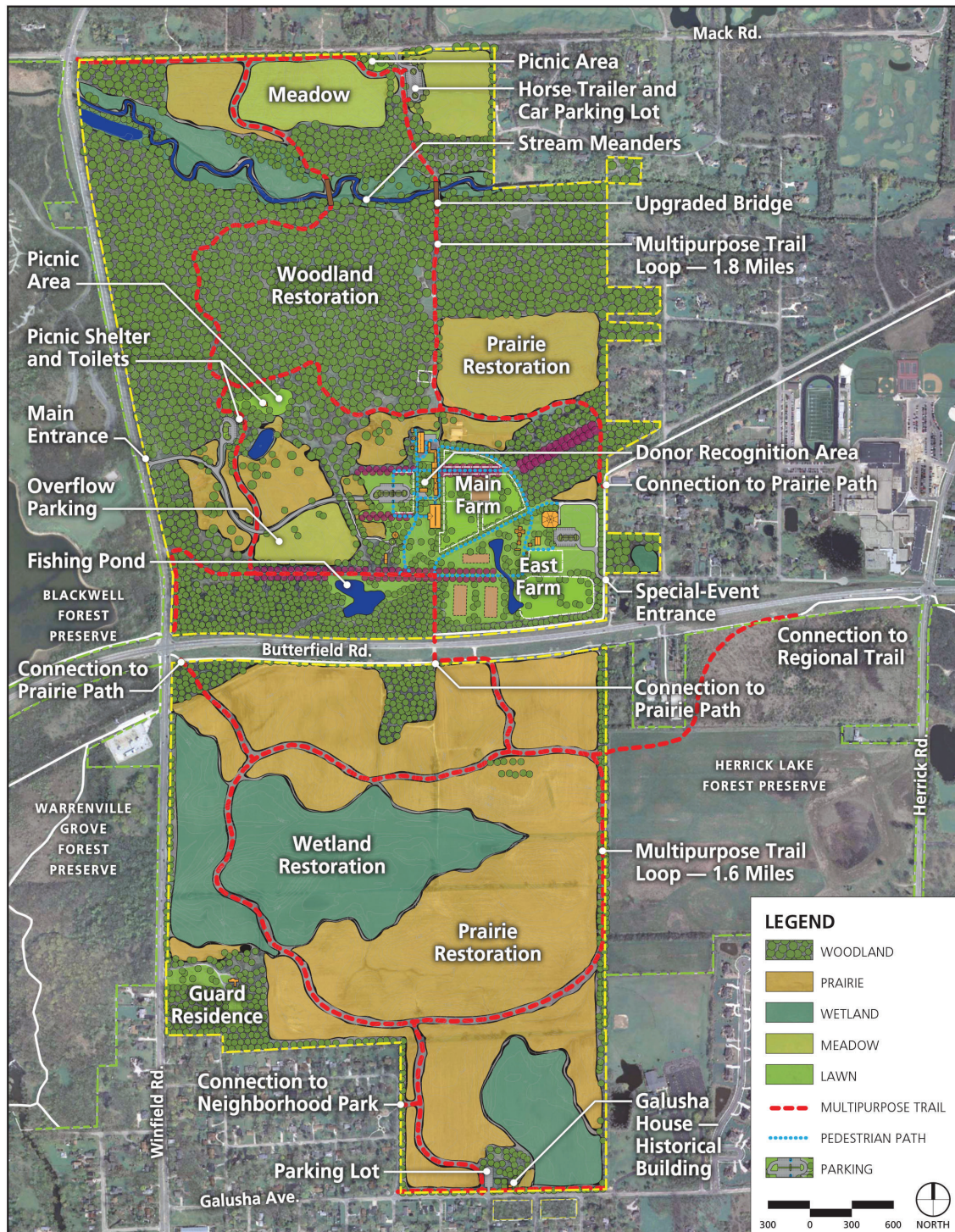
### 2010 St. James Farm Preserve Master Plan

The Forest Preserve District acquired St. James Farm Forest Preserve in 2007 and approved a formal master plan for the site in 2010.

All existing developed space at St. James Farm lies north of Butterfield Road, but the second phase of the preserve's master plan includes development of the south farm, which is directly connected to the western portion of Herrick Lake. The plan calls for a looped trail around the south farm with a connection through Herrick Lake to the Danada-Herrick Lake Regional Trail. (Trail users at St. James Farm currently reach Herrick Lake by taking the Illinois Prairie Path-Aurora Branch east along the north side of Butterfield Road to an underpass, which connects to the regional trail on the south side of Butterfield.)

Any planning for Herrick Lake west of Herrick Road should be included in an update of the St. James Farm Master Plan. Combined planning of the directly adjoining parcels will lead to more meaningful decisions and connections between those areas.





## St. James Farm Forest Preserve Master Plan

Overall Plan

January 2010







## 1992 Danada Preserve Master Plan

Proposals in the 1992 Master Plan for Danada Forest Preserve included “new regional facilities such as a new large group picnic area near Rice Lake that would include a separate preserve entrance, restrooms, and a shelter; a botanical garden staffed by volunteers; an upgraded model

farm; 3.1 miles of regional trails; and 3.5 miles of inner loop trails.” The plan also called for the restoration of natural areas, including wetlands adjacent to Herrick Lake. From that plan, though, the Danada-Herrick Lake Regional trail was the only completed project to involve both preserves.





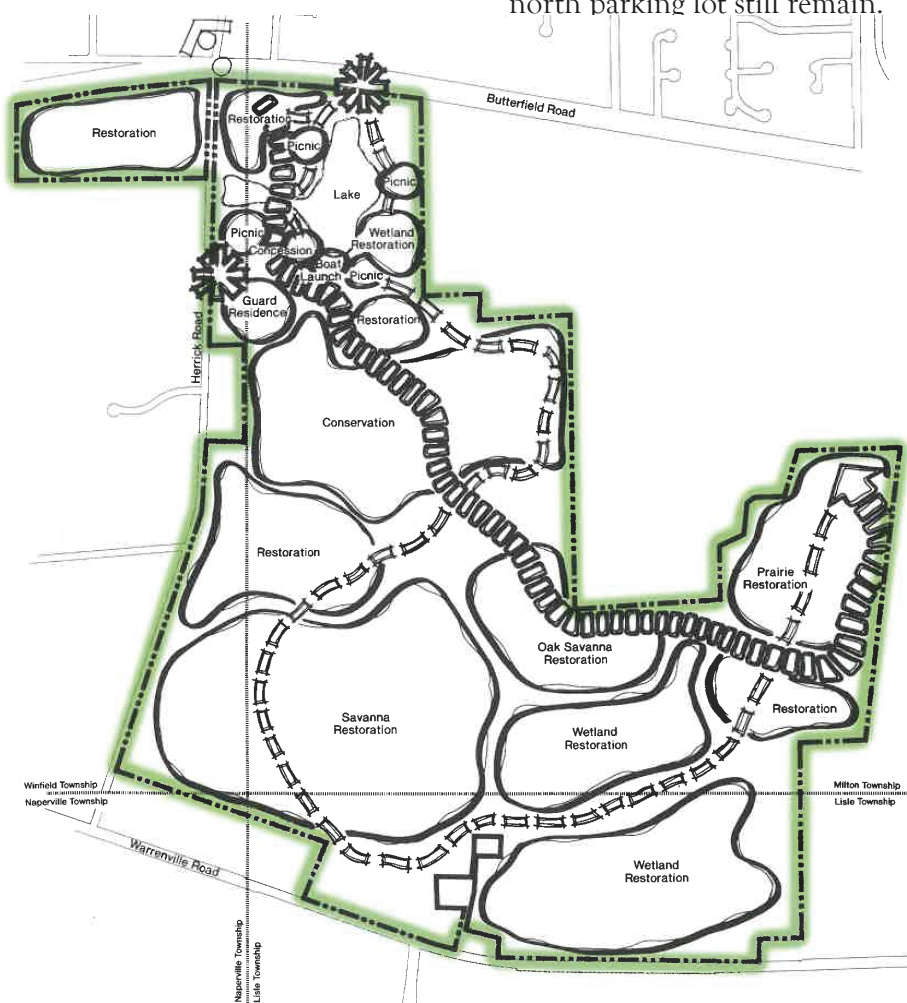


## 1992 Herrick Lake Preserve Master Plan

The 1992 Herrick Lake Master Plan proposed “expanding the parking on the western side of the lake, conducting additional restoration activities, removing the existing concession stand on the north side of the lake and building a new facility (with washroom) on the southwest side, and removing the existing youth cabin and youth group campground”.

The District slightly modified and then implemented some of the major items from the plan. It constructed new restrooms and a new boat-rental building on the east side of the lake adjacent to the east shelter and enhanced and enlarged the west parking lot, where it also built a modern picnic shelter. Much of the proposed habitat restoration work is completed or ongoing.

The main goal of many of the changes was to relieve congestion on the north side of the preserve, but concerns over the heavy use of the north parking lot still remain.









CHAPTER 4

# **STAKEHOLDER INPUT**



# STAFF INPUT SESSIONS

In early February 2025, staff from Planning & Development, Executive Offices, Ranger Operations, Facilities Management, Natural Resources, Grounds Management, Law Enforcement, Community Engagement, and Partnership & Philanthropy met at the Forest Preserve District's headquarters office to establish difficulties staff faced with maintaining Herrick Lake Forest Preserve and opportunities to improve the preserve for staff and the public.

The 26-person youth-group cabin, the District's only such cabin, was discussed at length. This is the only cabin owned by the District. Formerly available for reservation on weekends for use by Scouts and 501(c)(3) groups, the site was popular. Except for limited use during ranger-led programs, though, it hasn't been open since 2020, initially due to COVID and later due to structural issues.

Its proximity to congested trails and its entrance so close to Butterfield Road make its current location less than ideal. The potential for a new reservable structure was discussed, but maintenance, upkeep, and staffing requirements and the demand for such a space would need to be studied further. Staff determined the District should complete a cultural resource evaluation of the cabin.

Regarding vehicular access and parking at Herrick Lake, a common concern is that the north parking lot is overcrowded, frequently at capacity, and challenging to navigate, specifically for trucks and trailers. There are also several stormwater issues, such as overflow from the pond to the northwest and failing stormwater infrastructure throughout. The west lot is not used as much, so

increasing traffic to that site through signage and added amenities was mentioned. Staff discussed potential improvements to the north lot, including addressing grading and stormwater, improving the turning radii and capacity, and adjusting to the entrance to allow for larger turns and additional space for cars waiting to turn out of the lot onto Butterfield Road.

The group agreed that recreational spaces were also important aspects of Herrick Lake, mentioning in particular "Have It at Herrick" programming and the three popular reservable shelters. Shelters are frequently fully reserved with the east being the most popular, likely due to its large size, grills, and proximity to flush restrooms. There was discussion about creating an informal nature play space, possibly with access to the water and natural structures such as stones, logs, and stumps, but it would need to be thoughtfully designed with maintenance, visibility, and safety in mind.

The topic then changed to trails. Staff agreed that Herrick Lake's trail system was integral to the popularity and value of the preserve. They felt the trails were in good shape overall but did have suggestions for minor changes. The Lake Trail could have additional seating and possibly switch from limestone to asphalt to improve accessibility. The District could also add benches or shaded seating to the loop created by the Green Heron, Meadowlark, and regional trails. Because these features would be in the interior of the preserve, though, they would have to require only minimal maintenance and not interfere with restoration activities such as prescription burns.





A main topic of the meeting was the lake itself. Water quality and harmful algal blooms in particular have been major concerns.

Staff discussed the need for dredging. The lake was last dredged about 20 years ago. Staff anticipated dredging would likely be necessary every 20 years but should investigate to see if that frequency could be reduced.

They also discussed the extensive erosion and washouts along the shoreline. Potential solutions included cutting back slopes and naturalizing the shoreline, moving trails farther from shore, and armoring the shoreline with limestone slabs, which are popular with staff and anglers.

By dredging the lake and addressing shoreline issues, staff agreed that harmful algal blooms would decrease in frequency or be eliminated.

Improved access for fishing and boating was also important. Accessible fishing piers would be beneficial replacements for shoreline access lost to relocated trails. Piers at other preserves are extremely popular and would likely be so at Herrick Lake. Staff also recommended a fully accessible kayak launch like the one at Silver Lake at Blackwell Forest Preserve. Because Herrick Lake's boat-launch infrastructure in general creates difficulties for staff and visitors alike, the District should determine which type of watercraft it will ultimately rent at the lake and then design launches best-suited for their use.

The meeting with staff covered a range of topics, and thanks to everyone's experience and familiarity with the preserve, it provided an incredibly important analysis of the current state of the preserve, the needs of the employees who maintain and use it for programming, and the desires of forest preserve visitors.



# BOARD INPUT SESSIONS

The Forest Preserve District held five meetings to gather opinions from commissioners on the current state of Herrick Lake Forest Preserve and ideas for potential improvements. The meetings began with an explanation of the planning process and a review of information gathered from site visits, staff input meetings, and site inventory mapping.

A major takeaway from each commissioner was that Herrick Lake is a high-quality, successful preserve. There was agreement that planning should focus on fine-tuning the preserve and enhancing existing amenities instead of performing a complete overhaul. One-time construction costs and long-term infrastructure and natural-areas maintenance costs should be considered.

Commissioners emphasized that planning should focus on the lake and its surroundings. That area is the active core of the preserve, but it contains the infrastructure and amenities most in need of refinement. Water quality and harmful algal blooms were of utmost concern. In-depth analysis of causes and potential solutions for both should be top priority.



Improving accessibility throughout the preserve was also a popular topic. Discussions focused on increased seating throughout the preserve, especially on the Lake Trail, which could also benefit from material and grading adjustments and accessible infrastructure for fishing and boat rentals.

The youth-group cabin was mentioned by many commissioners. Overall feelings were that the cabin is in poor shape and that the current layout and location aren't ideal. Completing a cultural resource evaluation should be the first step in determining its future. There was consensus that some type of reservable space would be beneficial but that additional studies should be completed to determine the best location and potential users.



# PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

The Forest Preserve District held a public open house at the District's Headquarters in Danada Forest Preserve, directly east of Herrick Lake, on Tuesday, April 15, at 6 p.m. There were 19 attendees; 12 provided written responses on a comment form, which are included in the appendix.



The discussion focused on existing features residents liked about Herrick, things they disliked or would like to see removed, and amenities they would like to see added or expanded. Overall, attendees were pleased with Herrick Lake Forest Preserve. The high-quality natural areas, restoration work, trails, and lake access were common themes. Areas of concern varied from traffic noise and off-leash dogs to speeding bikes and pit latrines, but the main issues were algae blooms and the lake's overall water quality.

When discussing improvements to Herrick Lake and which amenities should be added, the continued enhancement of natural areas was a major theme. The restoration of prairie and savanna areas and the lake's shoreline coupled with the removal of nonnative vegetation were important to many. Others mentioned additional

seating around the lake and the trail system overall, shaded portions along existing trails, additional wayfinding and educational signage, trail connections, the purchase of any feasible inholding properties, and the addition of accessible fishing piers and boat launches. Residents also showed interest in additional guided hikes by District staff, specifically night hikes, like those at Fullersburg Woods Forest Preserve.

The public meeting and comment form concluded by asking attendees what their biggest concerns or priorities were at Herrick Lake, and for any open ended comments. Overwhelmingly, the preservation and enhancement of natural areas was important.









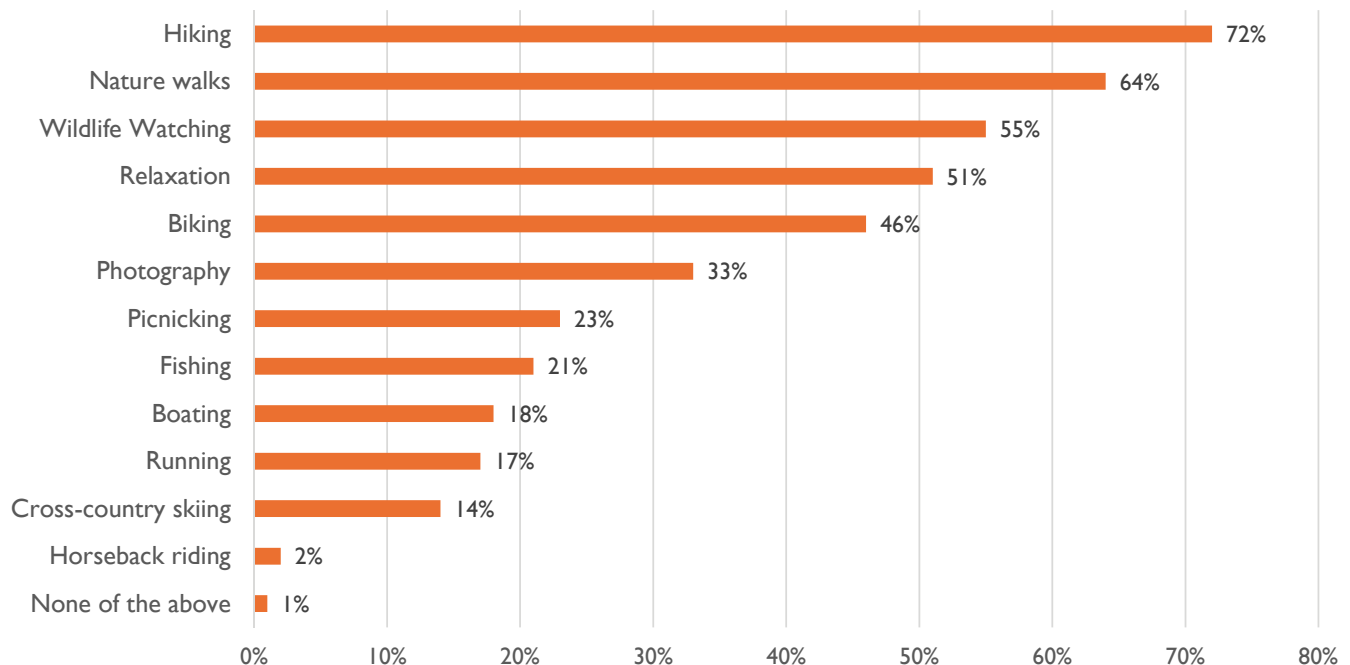
# PUBLIC SURVEY

The Forest Preserve District posted an online survey on its website to solicit feedback about Herrick Lake Forest Preserve. It received 378 responses between April 1 and May 15 of 2025. A report on the responses is in the appendix.

Respondents were overwhelmingly DuPage County residents (96%), and 99% stated they had visited Herrick Lake in the past year (52% more than six times, 22% four to six times, and 22% one to three times). Most visited to hike or take a nature walk (72% and 64% respectively), but wildlife watching (55%), relaxation (51%), and biking (46%) were popular as well. For people who took advantage of the lake itself, 21% fished and 18% boated. When asked what they liked about the preserve

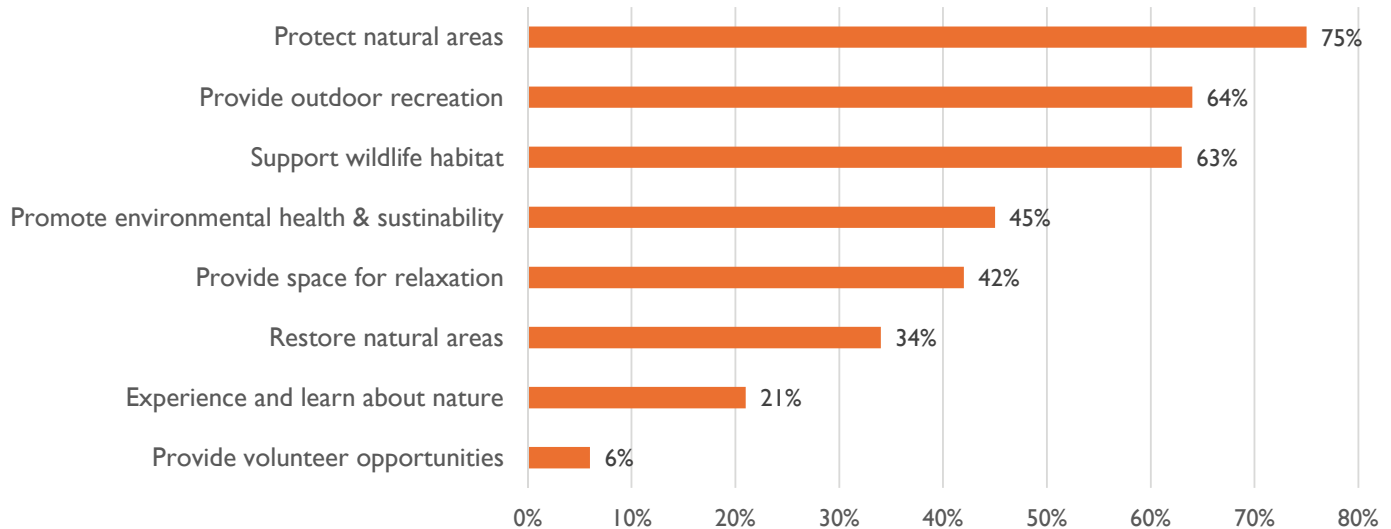
and what was most important, 75% said protecting and maintaining natural areas, and 63% said supporting wildlife habitats. Other popular responses included outdoor recreation; trails and trail connections; the lake and water access; and the diversity of trails, amenities, and ecosystems.

## What activities do you participate in at Herrick Lake?





## What aspects of Herrick Lake are most important?



As for future amenities, benches and resting areas (53%), flush restrooms (40%), educational signs (38%), wayfinding signs (30%), drinking fountains (30%), and fishing piers (21%) were highly requested. Benches, trails, and trail connections were common open-ended responses as well. Multiple people voiced support for expanding restoration efforts or focusing on existing trail maintenance and natural areas rather than expanding amenities.

When asked what they'd like to see less of at Herrick Lake, people primarily mentioned issues related to other visitors such as overcrowding, noise, off-leash dogs, and dog waste. Another concern was the amount of clearing and tree removals that have occurred at Herrick Lake.

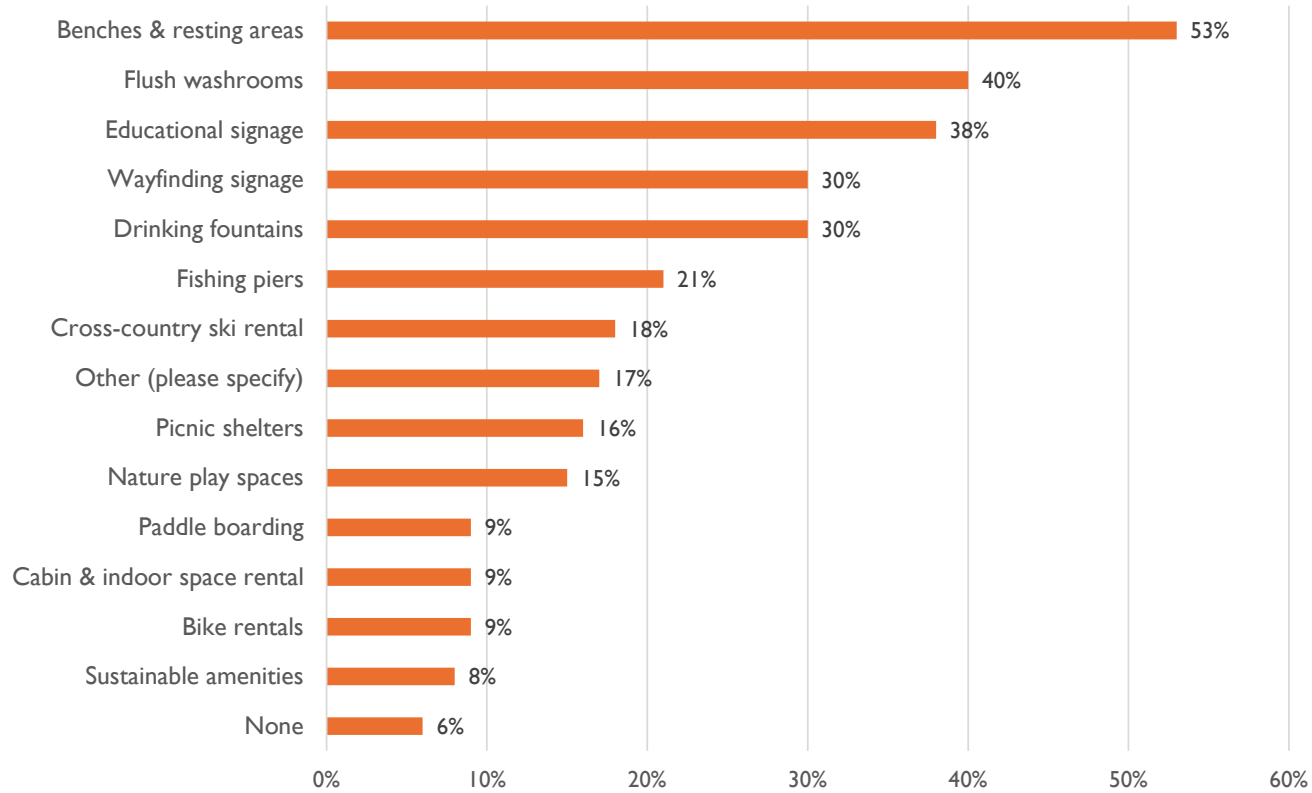




The survey concluded with an opportunity to provide open-ended comments about Herrick Lake. Major concerns included overcrowding, tree removals, and water quality, but many comments included some level of appreciation for the Forest Preserve District overall and specifically for Herrick

Lake and the preserve’s natural beauty. A report on the comments and responses to the rest of the survey is in the appendix.

What amenities would you like to see at Herrick Lake?





# YOUTH GROUP CABIN

The youth-group cabin at Herrick Lake was built in the mid-1940s by volunteer Scouts and parents from local troops. Scouts from Elmhurst led a paper drive and with the support of local business raised funds to build the cabin. It is the only cabin owned by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County.

In 2020 the Forest Preserve District suspended rentals due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It then kept it closed due to maintenance concerns. Other than occasional use as a temporary shelter during severe weather during summer camps, the cabin remains unused.

## Existing Cabin Assessment

Because of its history, age, relatively unchanged character, and location, the cabin is likely considered culturally significant. Any modifications to, removal of, or replacement of the building would likely require consultation with the State of Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. As such, per the Forest Preserve District's Historical and Cultural Resources Policy, staff contracted with McCluskey Engineering to complete a cultural resource evaluation of the cabin, documenting its construction, historical significance, and current condition. The evaluation is included in the appendix of this plan.

The cabin is in generally fair condition, but there's extensive structural deterioration to the stone masonry and damage to wooden railroad ties. Estimates to stabilize the structure start at \$70,000, but the actual cost could be higher depending

on the condition of the floor joists, roof, and chimney, which cannot be assessed without destructive testing. If stabilized, it's estimated that the annual maintenance of the cabin would be \$3,000 to \$6,000. The cabin is made of railroad ties, so future maintenance and repairs would require personal protective gear to avoid exposure to chemicals possibly embedded in the railroad ties. (These potential chemicals did not pose concerns to renters cabin due to how materials are encased in the interior.)

DuPage County building codes require that when alterations or repairs exceed 25% of a structure's value (the cabin's insured value is \$260,000), the entire structure must be brought into compliance with all current codes, including life safety, energy efficiency, and accessibility. The cost to bring the cabin into compliance would easily exceed \$500,000 in addition to the stabilization costs.

Demolishing the cabin and replacing it with a similarly sized structure would likely exceed \$1 million.

## Peer Agency and Previous Renters Research

The Forest Preserve District investigated overnight cabin rentals for Scouts and youth groups at similar organizations, either contacting agencies directly or reviewing websites.

Multiple DuPage County agencies offer indoor camping, ranging from primitive cabins, such as





the Scout cabins at Northside Park in Wheaton and the Von Oven Scout Cabin in Naperville, to rustic lodges with kitchens and bathrooms, as those of the Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana at Camp Greene Wood in Wood Ridge. Modern facilities with bathrooms or kitchens are available through the Downers Grove Park District at the Lyman Woods Visitor Center and through the Lombard Park District at the log cabin on Main Street. These facilities accommodate 15 to 100 with fees up to \$600 per night.

As to larger peer agencies, Lake and Will county forest preserves and the Fox Valley Park District do not offer overnight cabin camping. Kane and Cook forest preserve districts have multiple frequently used cabins with use seemingly driven by amenities in rustic settings surrounded by open space and access to recreational activities. Kane County has Camp Tomo Chi Chi Lodge, which accommodates 100, and the 50-person cabin at Johnson's Mound. Cook County has 36 cabins and bunkhouses that accommodate 10 to 36 and include showers and bathrooms; larger bunkhouses have kitchens.

Staff also sent a survey to youth groups who had rented the Herrick Lake cabin in the past via the Three Fires Council of Scouting America. The survey was open for 30 days and received one response.

## Forest Preserve District Staff Input

Staff discussed the cabin many times during the master planning process, generating several key points of consensus. The cabin is primitive with no amenities other than a fireplace; there's no bathroom, shower, kitchen, or running water. Traffic and location make access less than ideal for renters and staff. It doesn't comply with accessibility and building codes and doesn't have utilities critical to operating at current regulatory standards. When available, the cabin was only used on weekends roughly 40 times a year, mainly fall through spring. Prior to 2020 it generated a few thousand dollars in revenue annually. Any effort to renovate or replace the cabin would make it more flexible for year-round use, but the cost might not be practical for such a small audience.

Staff discussed a new building that could accommodate overnight camping, rentals, day camps, and programming, but it would need to accommodate at least 20 people and have water, flush washrooms, and better accessibility. Funding from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Park and Recreational Facilities Construction Program could offset some initial costs, but maintaining and managing a cabin would continue to require significant effort by maintenance staff and rangers.

## Recommendations

Based on historical reservations, continued interest from Scout troops for an overnight camping space at Herrick Lake, and the frequency of reservations at nearby partner agencies cabins, the District should continue to provide a structure to accommodate that activity but not limit reservations to 501(c)(3) groups. There is also a need for an indoor programming space for District staff. An adaptable structure that could accommodate all these uses would be the most beneficial to the District and the public. The District will need to make a separate determination regarding the future of the existing cabin, but it is apparent the structure will not adequately serve its needs.

A successful building should be versatile and combine the programming needs of District staff with the overnight camping needs of youth groups as well as the general public. A new flush washroom structure on the west side of the preserve could also include a larger meeting room with space for tables and chairs, storage, and limited food preparation facilities such as a sink, microwave, and fridge. That space would adequately serve District programming, overnight camping, and public reservations without creating separate facilities for each use. A covered outdoor space linked to the structure could add capacity and increase potential use. Additional input from the public and peer agencies will be collected, and planning completed to refine the scale and scope of this structure to ensure it maximizes value to the District and public at large.













CHAPTER 5

# GOALS & OBJECTIVES

# HERRICK LAKE MISSION & VISION



## The Forest Preserve District's Mission

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County was created and is guided by the Downstate Forest Preserve Act, which establishes the mission of forest preserve districts “to acquire and hold lands containing forests, prairies, wetlands and associated plant communities or lands capable of being restored to such natural conditions for the purpose of protecting and preserving the flora, fauna and scenic beauty for the education, pleasure and recreation of its citizens.”

Through previous strategic planning efforts the Forest Preserve District identified six guiding principles – Stewardship, Sustainability, Community Engagement, Innovation, Empowerment, and Diversity & Inclusion – to direct its decisions and actions. All planning is reviewed through these principles, ensuring consistency and compliance with established values.

## Herrick Lake Forest Preserve's Mission

Herrick Lake Forest Preserve has an abundance of recreational opportunities and exceptional ecological resources and is an incredibly important asset for county residents. Its success relies on the balance between these active and passive spaces. The area around the lake is one of the Forest Preserve District's most heavily visited sites. Sustaining and enhancing that active core while maintaining passive natural areas critical to the preserve's continued ecological importance make Herrick Lake a regional destination for residents of DuPage and as well as the surrounding counties.



## Herrick Lake Forest Preserve's Vision

*Herrick Lake Forest Preserve is a rare, biologically diverse habitat that includes protected natural resources, green infrastructure, and passive recreational amenities. It's an example of how the restoration of natural areas and recreational programming can coexist to improve the overall health of a community as a premiere regional destination for the flora, fauna, and residents of DuPage County.*

Herrick Lake is an incredibly important preserve for the residents of DuPage County, both for the abundance of recreational amenities and opportunities that exist, and for the exceptional quality of natural areas and ecological assets. Herrick Lake balances the subtle enhancement of existing recreation spaces, while ensuring the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the natural systems throughout the preserve. The variety of recreation opportunities, as well as the draw of the high quality natural areas for relaxing and wildlife viewing, has turned Herrick Lake into a regional destination for residents throughout DuPage, and the surrounding counties.

The success of Herrick Lake relies on the balance between “active” and “passive” spaces. The lake and the surrounding area are one of the most heavily visited and active recreation spaces in the entirety of the Forest Preserve District. Sustaining and enhancing that active core, while maintaining the high quality passive and natural spaces outside the lake area core is critical to the continued ecological and recreation importance of Herrick Lake.





# RESTORATION GOALS

## **Goal R1**

### **Improve water and habitat quality in the lake**

#### **Objective A**

Complete a dredging project to improve habitat and prevent harmful algae blooms

#### **Objective B**

Expand the aeration system in the west lagoon

#### **Objective C**

Reconstruct the overflow on east side of lake with ability to manipulate water levels

#### **Objective D**

Stabilize and naturalize the shoreline where feasible

#### **Objective E**

Mitigate offsite runoff currently entering the lake

#### **Objective F**

Reduce turf in close proximity to the lake

#### **Objective G**

Perform contracted vegetative management and native aquatic plantings

## **Goal R2**

### **Continue to maintain restored native areas to a high level**

#### **Objective A**

Follow up maintenance of Herrick Lake Prairie & Savanna restoration project

## **Goal R3**

### **Expand restoration efforts where feasible**

#### **Objective A**

Identify additional areas suitable for restoration



# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT GOALS

## Goal C1 Enhance the overall trail experience

### Objective A

Create or improve formal trail heads at heavily used access points

### Objective B

Improve trail signage and identification of internal and external trails

### Objective C

Create multiple areas of respite along the longer 4 mile loop trail

- Provide benches or natural seating with shade where feasible (coordinated with District-wide Bench Plan)

### Objective D

Identify potential trail linkages to outside property

- Provide walking/ biking access to trail system to maximum extent possible
- Continue to analyze development in adjacent properties for future trail connections

## Goal C2 Improve vehicular circulation throughout the Preserve

### Objective A

Address overcrowding of north lot

- Provide amenities & facilities to encourage use of west parking lot
- Expand signage to increase awareness of west lot
- Investigate expanding west parking lot if necessary in the future

### Objective B

Improve accessibility, turning radii, and entrance distance of north lot

### Objective C

Consider expanding and reorienting north lot to improve sight lines, radii, loading capacity of entrance, and overall capacity

### Objective D

Address grading and stormwater issues around north lot

- Ensure pond drainage no longer flows on parking lot surface
- Address failing stormwater infrastructure in and around the lot



### **Goal C3** **Improve programming space offerings**

#### **Objective A**

Provide flexible sheltered programming space that supports District programs and potential reserved public use

#### **Objective B**

Incorporate flush washrooms that serve the facility and the overall preserve

#### **Objective C**

Determine future need and cost options related to the existing youth group cabin

### **Goal C4:** **Improve lake shoreline and lake trail**

#### **Objective A**

Reduce conflicts between anglers and trail users

#### **Objective B**

Remove all timber wall lake edging, naturalize and stabilize while providing access points

#### **Objective C**

Relocate north trail away from lake edge

- Provide multiple fishing access points
- Stabilize and naturalize shoreline

#### **Objective D**

Improve accessibility of lake trail loop

- Install additional benches
- Convert surface to asphalt to improve accessibility and reduce erosion

### **Goal C5** **Improve accessible access to the lake**

#### **Objective A**

Construct fishing piers for improved and accessible fishing spots

#### **Objective B**

Improve existing boat launch area while minimizing future maintenance requirements

#### **Objective C**

Provide accessible kayak launch at existing dock



## **Goal C6** **Expand the Preserve when opportunities arise**

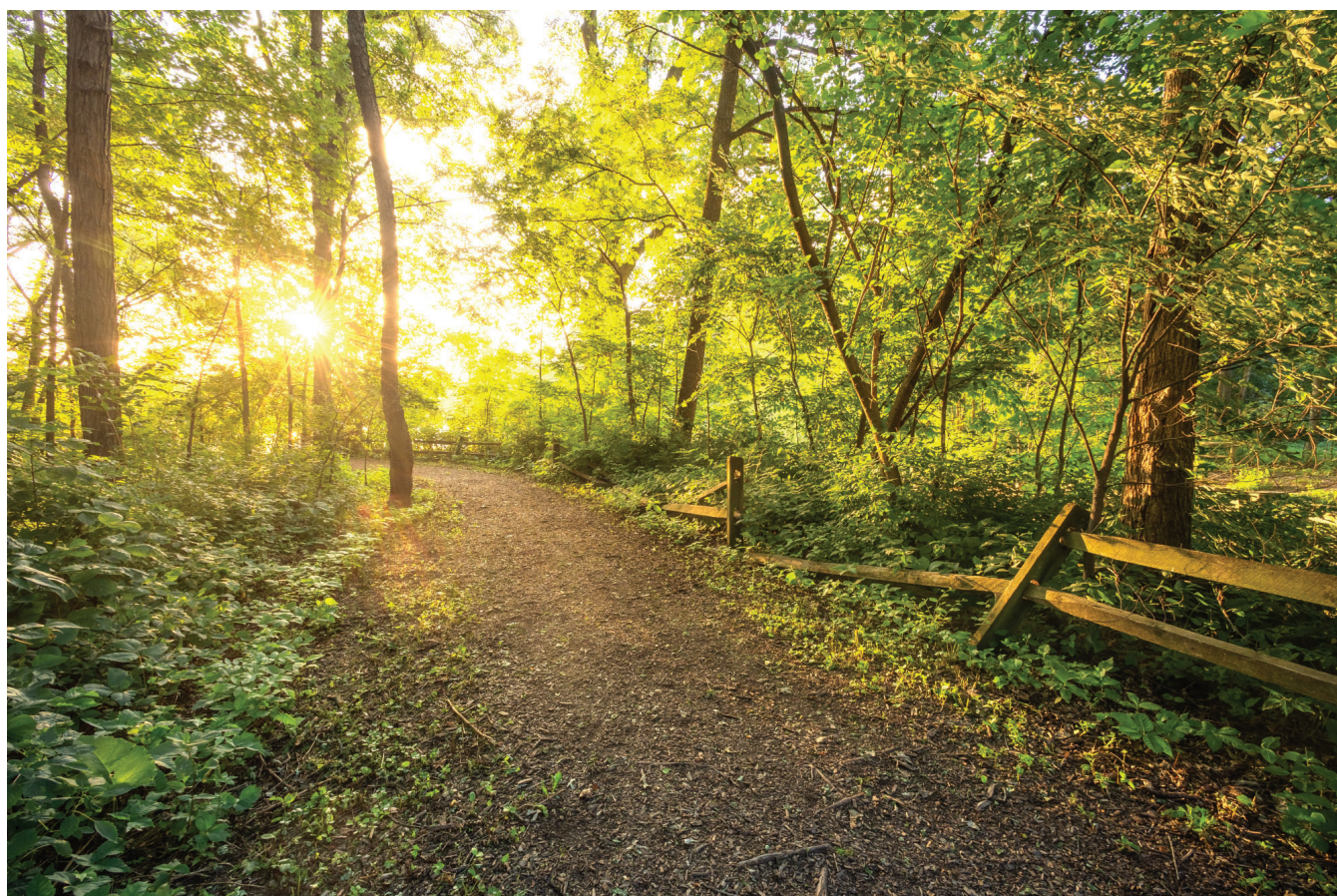
### **Objective A:**

Consider cooperative agreements to increase contiguous habitat areas

- Conservation Easements
- Right of First Refusal

### **Objective B**

Consider additional land purchases adjacent to Herrick Lake if they become available







# MAINTENANCE GOALS

## **Goal M1** **Address issues with the South Shelter**

### **Objective A**

Fix grading issues that direct water into the shelter

### **Objective B**

Consider separating shelter access from lake loop trail to minimize potential conflicts

### **Objective C**

Enhance sight lines to and from the shelter

## **Goal M2** **Make improvements to existing restroom building**

### **Objective A**

Interior upgrades to address moisture issues

### **Objective B**

Interior wall renovations

### **Objective C**

Improve ventilation and HVAC

## **Goal M3** **Enhancements to existing structures**

### **Objective A**

Add AC to concession building

### **Objective B**

Investigate energy efficiency upgrades to all structures

## **Goal M4** **Remove any unnecessary infrastructure**

### **Objective A**

Evaluate all hand pumps and remove if not beneficial

### **Objective B**

Remove all split rail fencing

### **Objective C**

Reduce redundancy of trails and pathways

- Potential removal of Bluebird trail
- Removal of duplicate latrine trails
- Removal of duplicate trails to south shelter
- Simplify walkways around concession and east shelter & improve circulation

## **Goal M5** **Improve maintenance access throughout the Preserve**

### **Objective A**

Adjust north parking lot turning radii

### **Objective B**

Ensure all bridges are drivable

- Replace wooden bridge over lake overflow with earthen structure
- Ensure future bridge replacements comply with District standards for width and capacity



### **Objective C**

Keep all infrastructure in the center of the preserve very low maintenance

### **Goal M6**

**Evaluate flood control structures for functionality, purpose, and condition**

### **Objective A**

Evaluate current condition of Hesterman drain system infrastructure in far east side of Herrick Lake Forest Preserve

### **Objective B**

Consider modifications to improve functionality and ease of future maintenance





# EDUCATION & PROGRAMMING GOALS



## **Goal E1** **Provide opportunities for Nature Play**

### **Objective A**

Include visibility and amenities to support supervision

### **Objective B**

Provide informal access to water

### **Objective C**

Include natural and low maintenance features

## **Goal E2** **Assess and refine the educational and interpretive signage**

### **Objective A**

Provide education on natural and historic amenities and features

### **Objective B**

Review interpretive signage for additional topics and opportunities

## **Goal E3** **Provide opportunities to offer guided recreation**

### **Objective A**

Provide seating and gathering spaces utilized during guided hikes

### **Objective B**

Consider additional improvements to support staff guided programming

## **Goal E4** **Enhance overall rental experience for public and staff**

### **Objective A**

Evaluate “Have it at Herrick” programming

### **Objective B**

Provide canoe/ kayak “slides” to assist staff launching vessels for the public

### **Objective C**

Improve boat launch infrastructure

### **Objective D**

Determine type of vessel rented (rowboat, canoe, kayak, paddleboat) and number required to meet demand

### **Objective E**

Consider providing new reservable indoor space











CHAPTER 6

**CONCEPTUAL PLANS**

# OVERALL PRESERVE MASTER PLAN



This master plan for Herrick Lake Forest Preserve is the culmination of research, public engagement, and input from staff, commissioners, and residents. This information was critical in developing goals and objectives, and the application of those goals to constructed amenities and improvements. The plans provide an overall framework of potential improvements on a conceptual level and more-detailed focus areas. It is starting point for detailed design work to follow.

The plan focuses exclusively on land east of Herrick Road. Although inventory maps, site visits, and site analysis included the 120 acres to the west of Herrick Road, the road is a major barrier between the two areas. The Forest Preserve District purchased the land to the west from Brooks McCormick prior to the establishment of St. James Farm Forest Preserve. Now, though, the Forest Preserve District should not only include that land in future planning for St. James Farm but also consider formally incorporating it into that preserve.

## Restoration

With the restoration of Herrick Lake Prairie and Savanna now complete, the majority of this master plan initiative has been accomplished. Maintenance of these areas must continue in perpetuity and include additional clearing and restoration where feasible and beneficial.

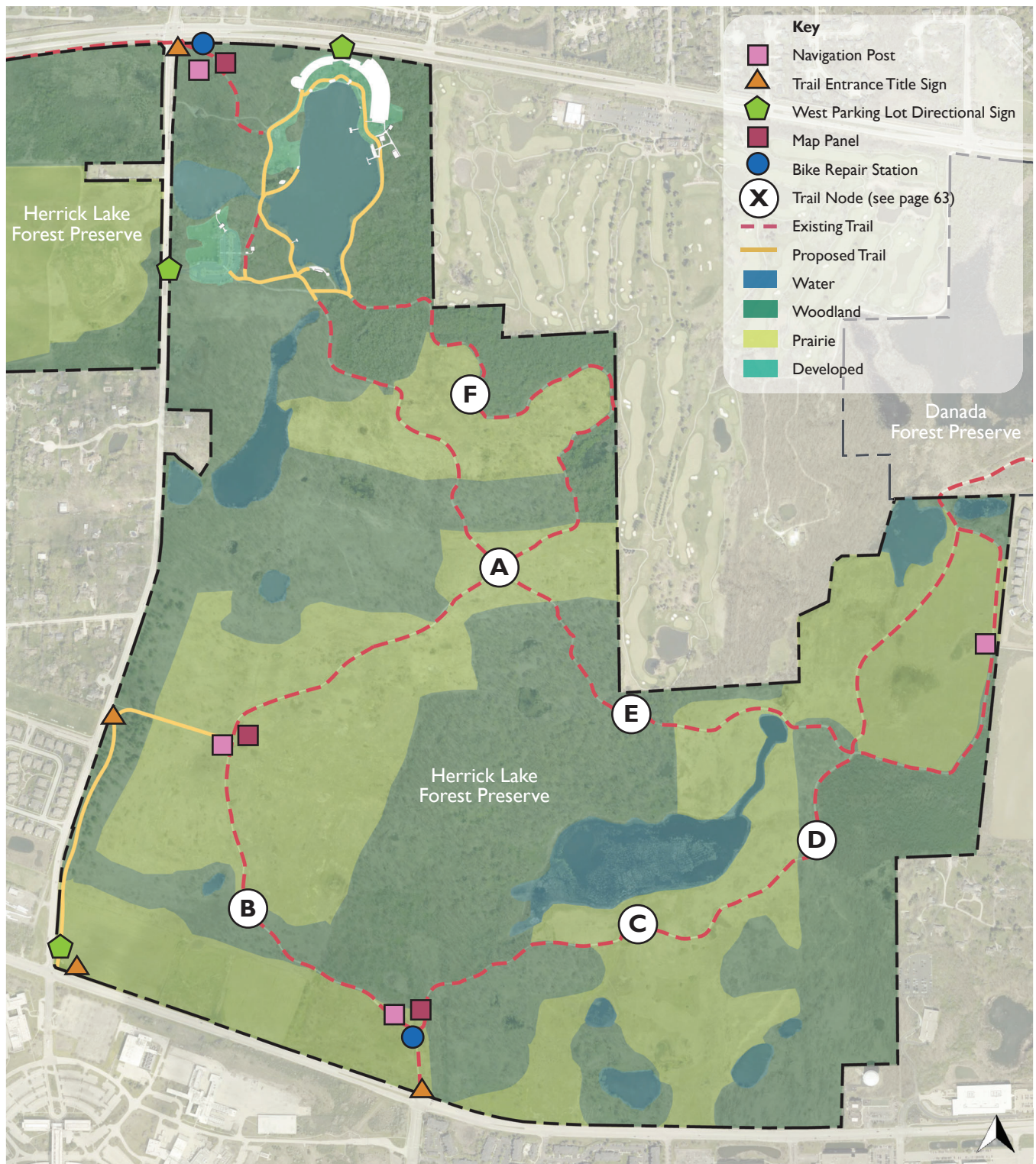
## Trails

Trails away from the lake will see little change because of this master plan. Herrick Lake has a robust, well-maintained trail network that requires little expansion.

An opportunity does exist, though, to provide a connection from the Green Heron Trail west to Herrick Road along an existing service drive. Two options are shown in the concept plans. One provides a connection running south along Herrick Road to the intersection with Warrenville Road, at which point crosswalks could be added south and west across the intersection. This could provide access to future development west of Herrick Road or to the complex south of Warrenville Road. The other option would connect the new trail directly to the intersection of Herrick Road and Huskie Highway Avenue, providing a more direct connection to the Herrick Woods subdivision and Hubble Middle School. However, this design would only be an option if a partner agency installed a traffic signal at the intersection.

Final proposed trail modifications at the preserve include several small trailhead improvements at trail entrances at Washington Street and Butterfield Road and at a proposed trailhead at Herrick Road. Each trailhead would have a small paved area with a wayfinding post and map and could include additional features such as seating and a bike repair station.









Trail Option 1

## Water Quality

As one of only two naturally occurring glacial lakes in DuPage County, Herrick Lake provides a rare and important habitat and amenity for the county's wildlife and residents. The importance of improving its water quality was emphasized throughout the planning process by staff, commissioners, and the public.

The largest undertaking will be dredging the lake to remove excess sediment and debris while increasing the depth. The removal of nutrient-laden sediment will drastically decrease turbidity, providing better habitat for fish and reducing future harmful algal blooms. (The last dredging was in 2004-2005, and; before that, 1982. A report on the process and results from 2004 is in the appendix.)

The Forest Preserve District acquired the section of Herrick Lake west of Herrick Road in 1999 with the intent of converting active farmland into a natural area to reduce erosion and prevent sediment from reaching the lake. While this likely reduced the amount of sediment in the lake, sediment, debris, and nutrients still find their way to the water, increasing the frequency of harmful



Trail Option 2

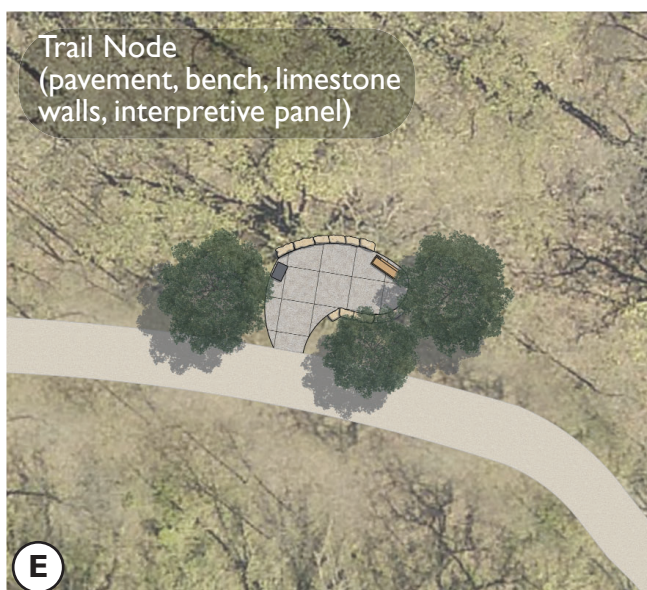
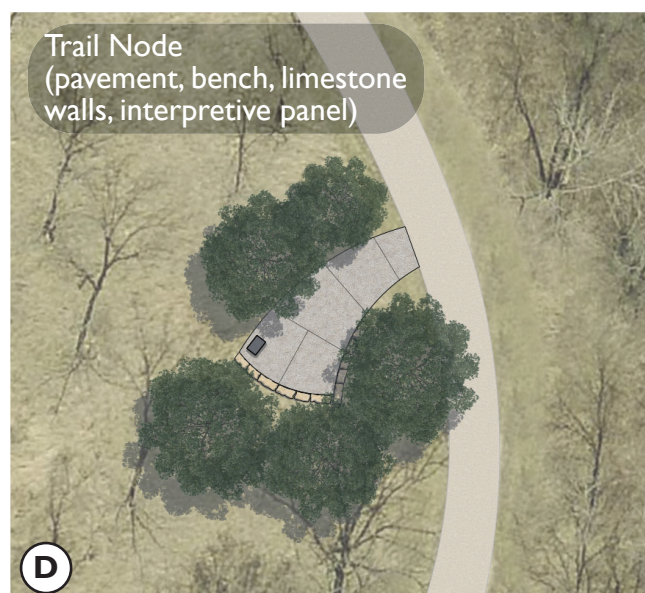
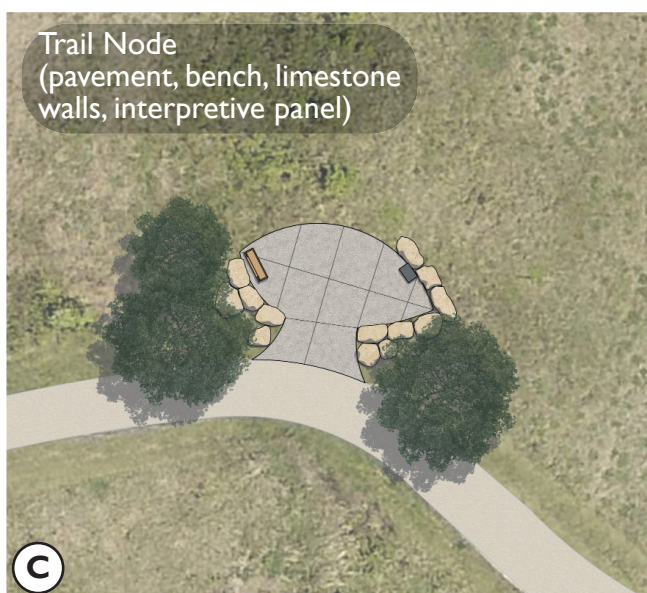
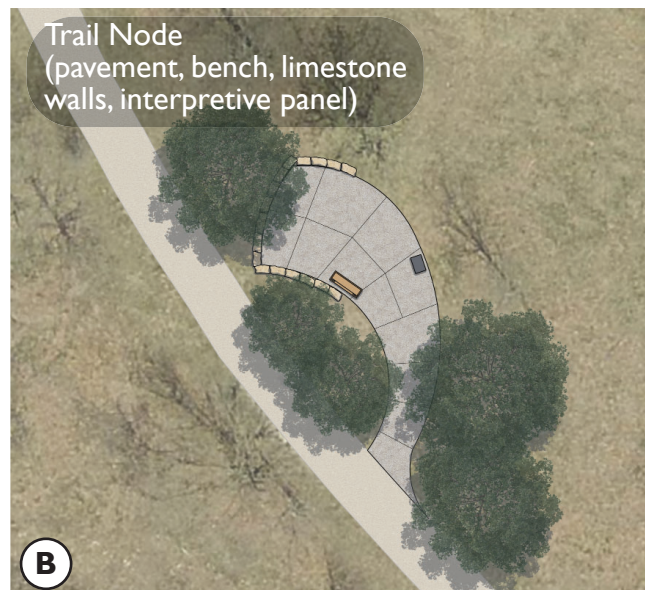
algal blooms. When the blooms die, they add more nutrients to the water and create more sediment, leading to a continuous cycle of blooms and sedimentation.

This master plan will counter that cycle by creating basins planted with native flowers and grasses that will prevent runoff from directly entering the lake untreated. Filter strips and naturalized shorelines will remove additional debris and nutrients from the water. These features will not only reduce the frequency of harmful algal blooms and dredging but also improve the overall habitat and recreational value of the lake.

## Nodes

This master plan also proposes a series of nodes and rest areas evenly spaced along the main trail system in comfortably secluded areas with scenic views. These nodes would provide space and seating for 3 to 8 people. A larger gathering space at the crossroads of the Meadowlark, Green Heron, and Danada-Herrick Lake Regional trails (node A on plan) could feature a small shade structure, seating, and space for 15 to 20 people. It would serve as a stop for everyday visitors and as a roughly halfway point on guided walks with District staff.









The proposed locations are based on where the nodes would provide the most benefit and enjoyment for preserve users, but given their distances from preserve entrances, they must be designed to minimize long-term maintenance. Final designs could include paved surfaces, educational and wayfinding signage, and shade provided by tree plantings. Seating could include natural limestone outcroppings as well as the District's standard accessible benches. Potential layouts are on Page 63.

## Signage

Public surveys revealed that wayfinding and educational signage were highly desired. Herrick Lake has navigation posts and a few educational signs, but there are opportunities for expansion and refinement. Additional educational signs could be located at trail nodes and select locations around the lake. Topics should be tailored to the location but could include ecosystems, habitats, restoration efforts, and the history of the lake and human activities in the preserve. Proposed wayfinding signs could include maps at trailheads, as well as navigation posts at trail crossings. Signs with directions to the west parking lot along Herrick Road and Butterfield Road should help boost awareness and use of the lot. Trail entrance title signs where trails enter the preserve, such as Washington Street, should increase the awareness of District trails and boundaries.









# DETAILED ENLARGEMENT PLANS

Herrick Lake Forest Preserve provides a healthy balance between the passive enjoyment of nature and active recreation centered around the lake. Its popularity is matched by few other preserves thanks to its abundant amenities and natural beauty. It currently supports dozens of activities and events, but renovations and minor adjustments and additions will add to its recreational value.

Improvements to the lake itself are integral to this master plan. A healthier lake with better habitat and fewer harmful algal blooms will support fishing, boating, and simply enjoying the beauty of the preserve. Proposed projects include dredging the lake, expanding the existing aeration system, stabilizing the shoreline, managing aquatic

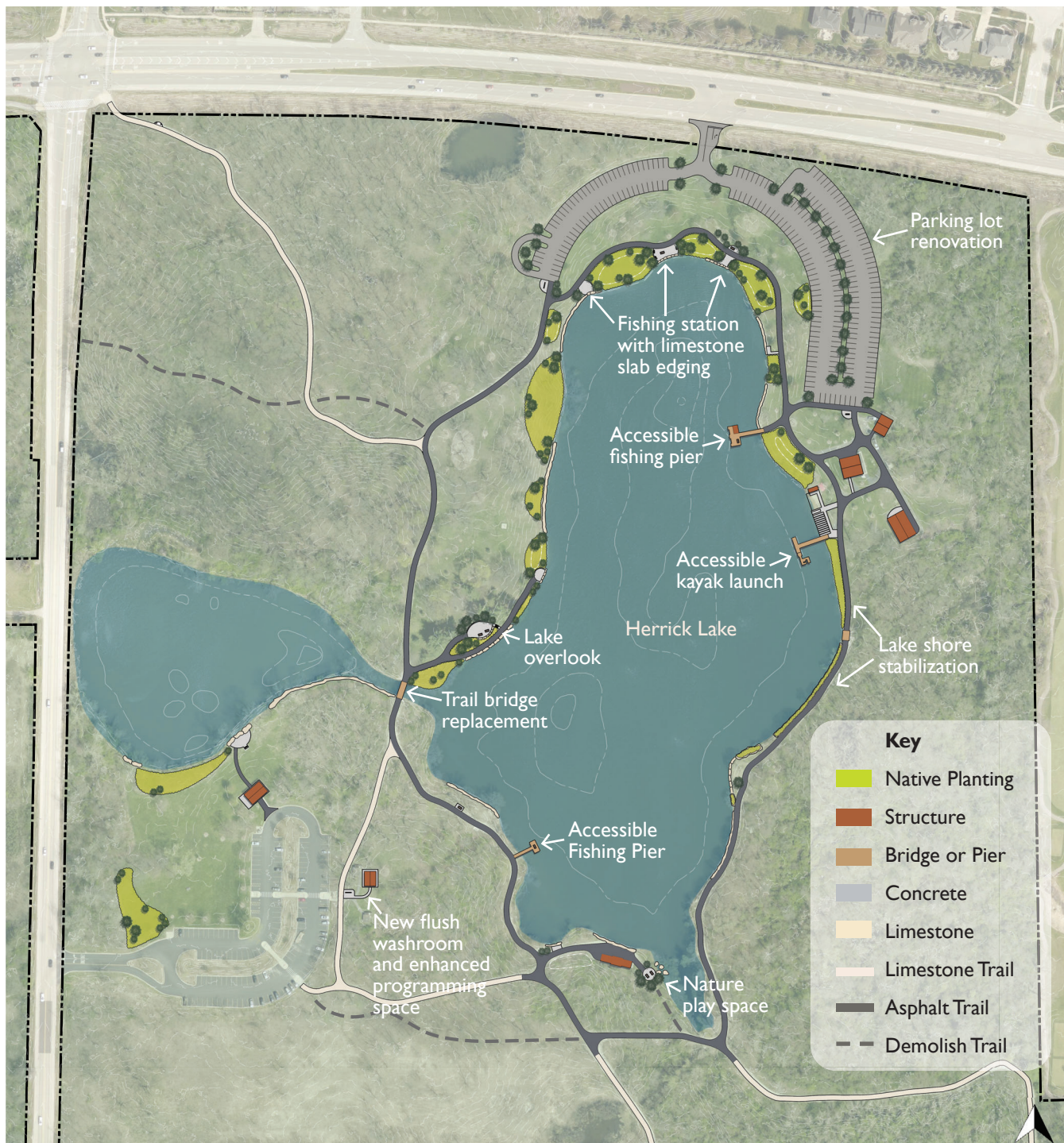
vegetation, adding native aquatic plants, and restoring the shore of the west lagoon.

Amenities at the west parking lot could lessen overcrowding of the north lot. Improved access to the west lagoon of the lake, and additional clearing and restoration of the shoreline will improve fishing access in that location.

An enhanced programming space adjacent to the west parking lot would be ideal for District programs and other reserved public use opportunities. The structure could include flush washrooms, potable water, along with potential indoor/outdoor gathering space for general preserve users as well.











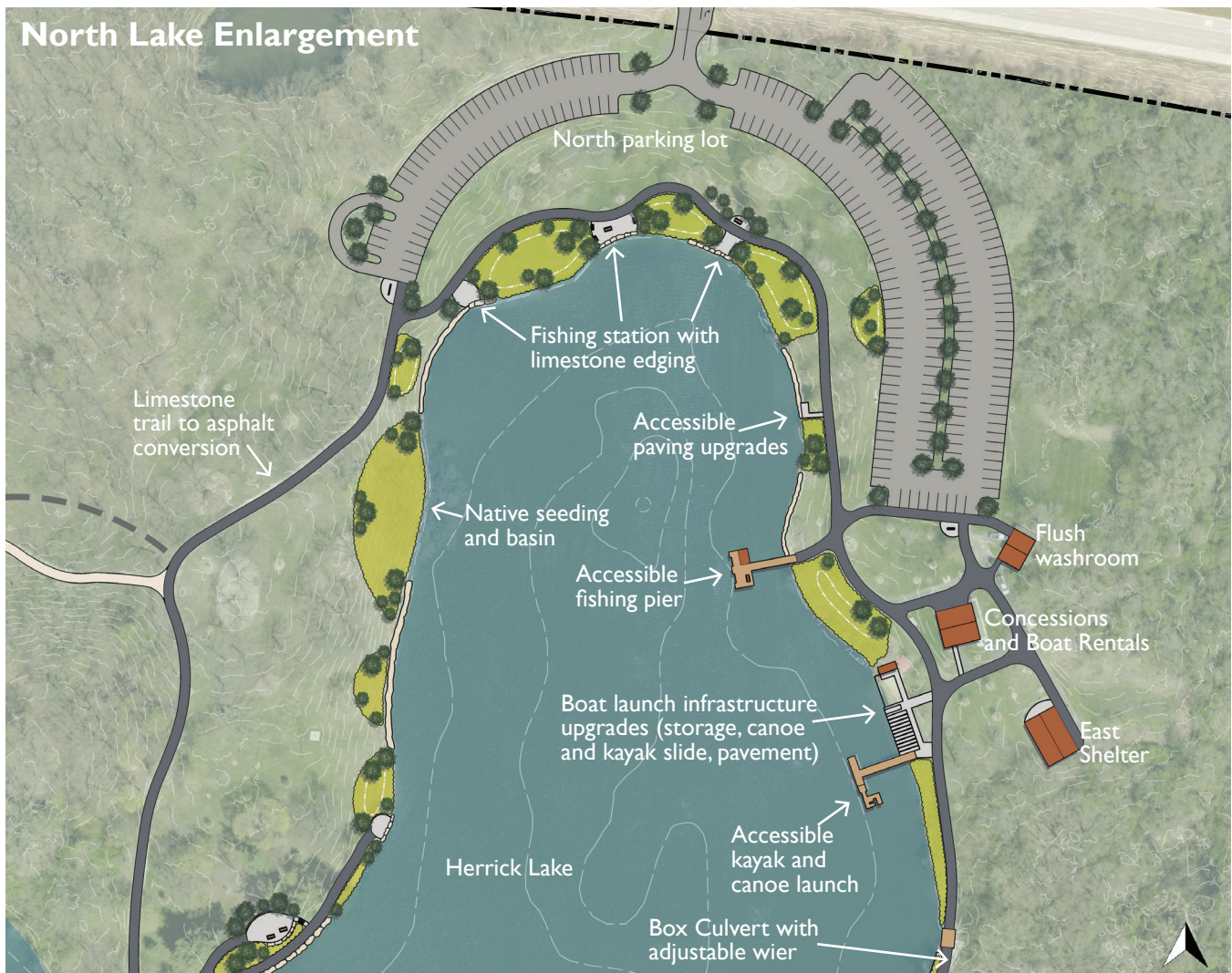
## South Lake

The southern portion of the lake will include adjustments to the trail layout surrounding the south shelter, and access from the west lot to the main trail loop. Additionally, moving the main lake loop away from the south shelter will create a simplified, more-efficient layout that eliminates potential conflicts between groups at the shelter and trail users. Other proposals for the south part of the lake include an accessible fishing pier along the Lake Trail, a highly visible nature play space near the south shelter that provides access to water with low maintenance materials, and the switch to asphalt along the Lake Trail and around benches and picnic tables. These amenities will support the goal of increased use of the west parking lot.

## North Lake

The shoreline and access to it are popular features of this side of the northern section of Herrick Lake. Improvements include relocating the trail away from the lake edge, providing multiple new fishing access points and replacing the existing failing timber wall with naturalized, stabilized limestone outcroppings. This provides space for construction of native basins which will act as a treatment train for incoming stormwater, preventing pollutants and sediment from entering the lake. Additional basins and native plantings along the lakeshore will further improve water quality.





An extensive parking lot renovation would focus on reducing congestion at the entrance and improving turning radii. A new configuration will alleviate current access issues, while providing the opportunity to increase overall capacity if deemed necessary in the future.

A new trail configuration near the boating and concession area will improve both access and accessibility. A simplified trail layout with adequate turning radii will allow easy vehicular access for staff and improve pedestrian and bike circulation. An accessible fishing pier located near the parking lot would complement the various accessible paved bank fishing locations also provided. A

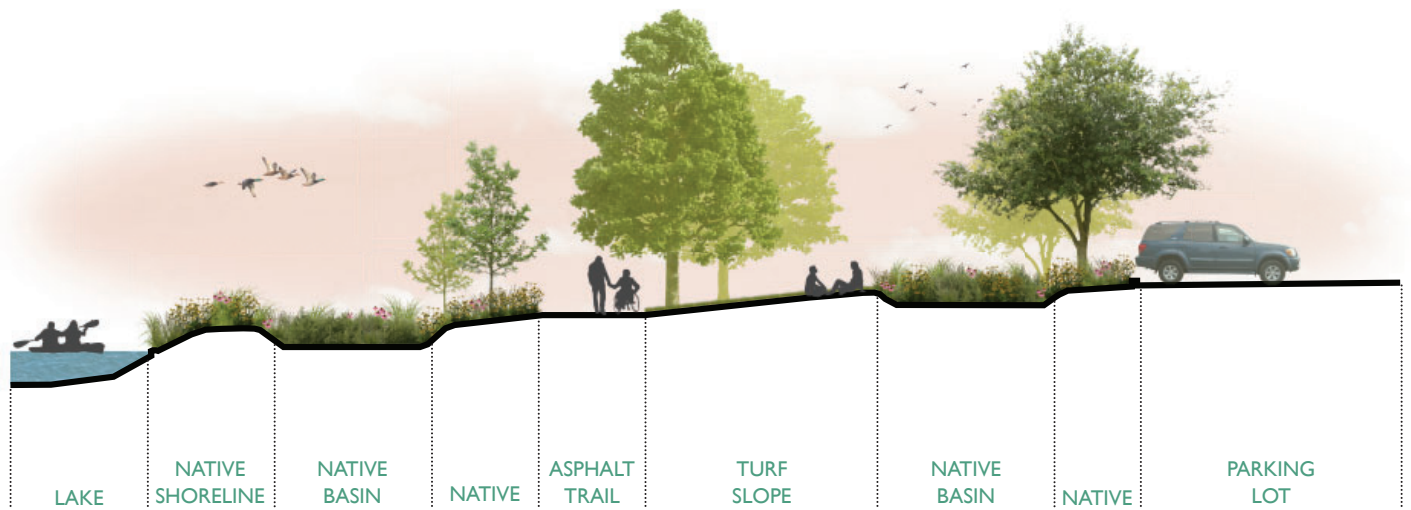
fully accessible kayak launch, similar to the highly praised launch installed at nearby Silver Lake in Blackwell, can be installed off the existing boat dock infrastructure.

Finally, improvements to the boat area will improve rental experience for both the public and District staff. Improved vessel storage on concrete pavement, and a canoe/ kayak “slide” will assist staff moving and launching multiple vessels.

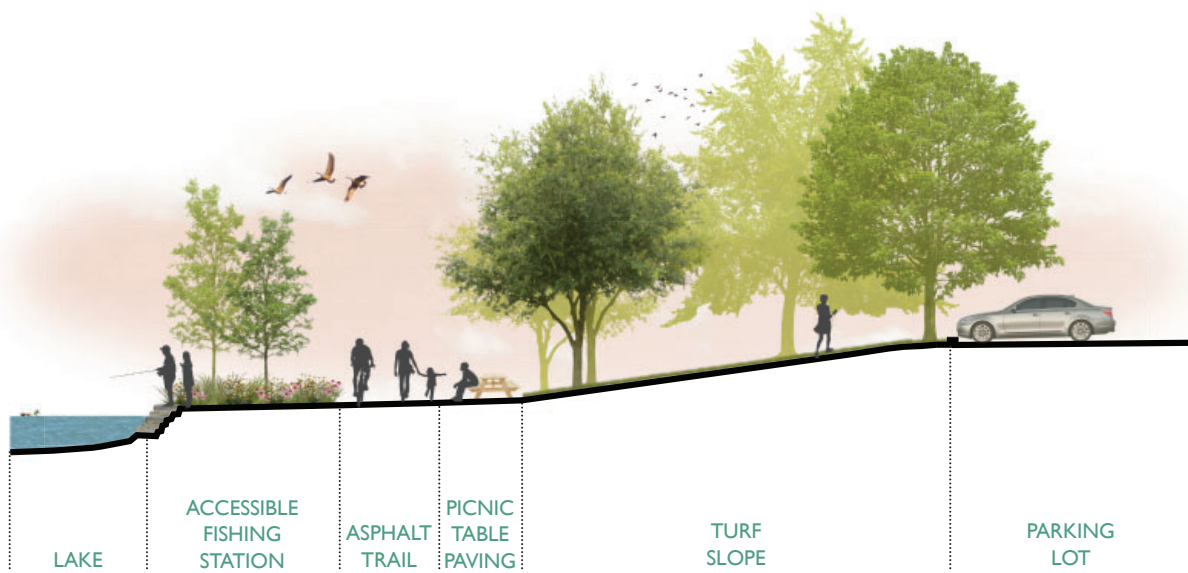




## Shoreline Section



## Fishing Station Section













CHAPTER 7

# IMPLEMENTATION





# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

## Implementation

The improvements illustrated in the master plan graphics represent the complete array of potential developments proposed for Herrick Lake Forest Preserve. Given the scale and magnitude, the Forest Preserve District will need a comprehensive budget and implementation plan.

The projects fall into three groups: capital improvements, natural resource improvements, and maintenance. Within these groups, work is broken down further into more-detailed categories and finally into smaller amenities rated as high-, medium-, or low-priority based on factors such as public need, anticipated costs, and order of operations for construction; a cost, indicated by a range of probable future construction costs; and assigned phase.

## Phasing

Because of the number of proposed improvements, this master plan also requires a phased approach that groups projects based on considerations such as current grant funding, importance, public impact, constructability, order of operations, and balancing costs. Each improvement falls into one of three phases: 1) short-term (within five years), 2) medium-term (between five and 10 years), and 3) long-term (more than 10 years). Components included in phase 1 are indicated in blue in the graphic on the following page.

These phases provide a baseline for future budgeting and planning, but the actual timing of any work should remain flexible. Future donations, grants, unforeseen maintenance, or additional development may require work to be completed earlier than planned or may push improvements beyond the anticipated timeline.



Capital Improvements		Priority	Goal	Cost	Phase	Potential Grant
Trail Improvements	Trailheads installation- Washington Street, Butterfield/ Herrick intersection, new trail from Herrick (pavement, maps, bike repair station)	Medium	C1	\$	I	RTP/ BIKE
	Resting/ respite nodes (total of 5)(pavement, limestone walls, interpretive panels, benches, landscaping)	Medium	C1	\$	I	RTP/ BIKE
	Crossroads gathering space & shelter (15-20 people)(pavement, limestone walls, interpretive panels, shelter, landscaping)	Medium	C1	\$	I	RTP/ BIKE
	Trail removals (latrine, south line from west parking lot, east of south shelter)	Medium	M4	\$	I	DCEO
	Trail connection from service drive to Warrenville/ Herrick Intersection	Low	C1	\$\$	2	RTP/ BIKE
Signage Improvements	Navigation post & map panel installation (standalone)	Medium	C1	\$	I	
	West parking lot directional signage (2)(Warrenville & Herrick, Butterfield)	High	C2	\$	I	
	Interpretive signage installation (standalone)	Medium	E2	\$	2	
	Trail entrance title signage (3)(Washington, Herrick Road, Herrick/ Butterfield)	Medium	C1	\$	2	
	VI sign installation (total of 3)	Medium	E2	\$	2	
Lake Improvements	Lake trail loop- realignment & asphalt paving	High	C4	\$\$	I	DCEO
	Concession area trail renovations	Medium	C1	\$\$	I	OSLAD
	Shoreline stabilization (reset existing loose limestone, regrading, naturalization, limestone & granite armoring)	High	C4	\$\$\$	I	DCEO
	Fishing node construction (total of 5)(pavement, limestone edging)	High	C4	\$\$	I	DCEO
	Lake overlook & trail construction	Medium	C4	\$\$	I	DCEO
	Turf to prairie conversion & native basin construction	High	C4	\$\$	I	GIGO
	Boat launch improvements (canoe/ kayak slide, boat storage paving & timber installation, beach renovation, canoe/ kayak storage rack, paving)	Medium	E4 & C5	\$\$	2	BAAD/ OSLAD
	West bridge replacement with District standard bridge	Low	M5	\$\$\$	3	
Accessibility Upgrades	Accessible kayak launch	High	C5	\$	I	BAAD
	Accessible pavement upgrades (picnic tables, limestone fishing areas)	High	C5	\$	I	OSLAD
	Accessible fishing piers (2)	Medium	C5	\$\$	I	OSLAD
Parking Lot Improvements	North parking lot renovation and expansion	Medium	C2	\$\$\$\$	3	
	North parking lot stormwater infrastructure improvements	Medium	C2	\$\$	3	GIGO
Amenity Improvements	Flush washroom & enhanced programming space construction at west parking lot	Medium	C3	\$\$\$	I	OSLAD
	Nature play space installation (pavement, landscaping, play elements)	Low	E1	\$	I	OSLAD
	South Shelter regrading & paving	Medium	M1	\$	I	DCEO

Natural Resource Improvements		Priority	Goal	Cost	Phase	Potential Grant
Lake Improvements	Native aquatic planting	Medium	R1	\$	I	
	Lake dredging project	High	R1	\$\$\$\$	2	
	Expand aeration system in west lagoon	Low	R1	\$\$	2	
	Replace overflow on east side of lake with box culvert & adjustable wier	High	R1	\$\$	2	
	Aquatic vegetation management	Medium	R1	\$\$	All	
Restoration	Follow up treatment of prairie & savanna project	Medium	R2	\$\$	All	
	Supplemental invasive clearing	Low	R3	\$\$	3	
	Supplemental native area maintenance	Low	R3	\$\$	3	

Building Renovations		Priority	Goal	Cost	Phase	Potential Grant
Flush Washrooms	Interior wall renovation & FRP replacement	Medium	M2	\$	I	
	Moisture mitigation HVAC upgrades	Medium	M2	\$	I	
	Energy efficiency upgrades	Low	M3	\$	2	GIGO
Concession Building	Air conditioning installation	Low	M3	\$	2	
	Energy efficiency upgrades	Low	M3	\$	2	GIGO
Misc.	Split rail fencing demolition	Low	M4	\$	I	
	Hand well demolition @ west parking lot	Low	M4	\$	I	



# PROJECT FUNDING ANALYSIS

As a countywide agency with dozens of preserves and widespread infrastructure responsibilities, the Forest Preserve District has extensive obligations that may limit its funding abilities. Phasing for the Herrick Lake Forest Preserve Master Plan attempts to balance the need for improvements at Herrick Lake with the realities of available funding the District has at its disposal. Phasing the improvements spreads the capital requirements over the next 10-plus years without overwhelming any one budget cycle.

Cost estimates in this plan are rough guidelines; the District will need to complete additional estimates before final budgeting. These estimates should help identify projects that can be included in future budget cycles and support long-term budget planning.



## Grant Funding Sources

Current internal Forest Preserve District funds can finance much of the proposed improvements through phasing, but the District should explore opportunities to offset costs through federal, state, and local grant programs. Specific components of the plan are in alignment with known grant programs, and could be included in upcoming application cycles. When future projects are budgeted and planned, analysis should be done to review potential grant funding aligned with the specific improvements being planned. Some potential programs include:

- Surface Transportation Program (STP)
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Recreation Trail Program (RTP)
- IL Department of Revenue Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO)
- Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Grant (OSLAD)
- Boat Access Area Development Program (BAAD)
- Illinois Bike Path Grant Program (BIKE)
- Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities (GIGO)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)



# CONCLUSION

The strength of Herrick Lake Forest Preserve comes from its diversity. Its ecosystems range from lakes and wetlands to dry woodlands and prairies. The preserve hosts hundreds of acres of completely undisturbed high-quality habitats and some of the most recreationally valuable trails and amenities in the entire Forest Preserve District.

Hearing from hundreds of members of the public, dozens of Forest Preserve District employees, and the entire Board of Commissioners reinforced the idea that Herrick Lake is an extremely popular and high-quality preserve.

As a result, the planning process sought to assess and enhance the qualities that make Herrick Lake special by preserving the amenities that residents love and building upon them in a thoughtful, precise way. With careful planning and budgeting and the execution of projects in the spirit of this master plan, Herrick Lake will continue to be a regionally important habitat for native plants and animals and destination for DuPage County residents.





# APPENDIX



## Appendix Index

Public Survey Results  
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