

March 12, 2019 Go Green Illinois meeting: Forest Preserves and Open Space

- 46 people
- Henrietta Saunders
 - Lots of science behind habitat restoration - pioneered in Northbrook
 - Friends of the Forest Preserves - advocacy group
- Benjamin Cox - Executive Director of Friends of the Forest Preserves
 - 2000 members, lot of reach (especially with kids in the summer)
 - 100 years ago, folks wanted to help Chicago/Cook County be a better and more natural place
 - Free and clear lake front; parks and boulevards; forest preserves (all part of the Burnham plan)
 - Realized that if they didn't put land aside, land would be gone and there'd be no place to enjoy nature
 - Cook County Forest Preserve is the first of its kind in the nation, 1 year older than National Parks; also oldest and largest forest preserve
 - Not a park district - opposite of one
 - 80% natural - hold land for all of us to enjoy
 - From 1800 to 2015 the County has gone from mostly green with a few settlements to almost entirely settled by humans.
 - Cook County Forest Preserves has 70,000 acres spread throughout the county
 - Woodlands, savanna, wetlands, prairie (very few forests)
 - Cook is the most ecologically diverse county in Illinois
 - 112 species that are threatened/endangered that survive in the Cook Cty forest preserves (bald eagle, river otter, Blanding's turtle (large population in Deer Grove in Palatine), night heron)
 - Illinois/Iowa have the most disturbed land in the world - but we're converting it back to prairie
 - Not just about plants and animals, but about us to be able to enjoy them (trail and picnicing)
 - Camping - Camp Dan Beard, Camp Reinberg (Palatine)
 - Friends of the Forest Preserves started to help counter some of the issues facing the Forest Preserves in the 1990s.
 - The mission of Friends is to protect, promote and care for the Forest Preserves of Cook County.
 - In the 90's, political connections shut down volunteering opportunities, and some forest preserve land was sold

Big focus areas

- Stop bad policies from coming to fruition; direct studies about problems and solutions for forest preserves; financial re-organization
- Habitat restoration (remove invasive species)
- Advocacy

- Winnetka storm water (finding ways to do this well, and also will build a boathouse at the lagoons), Quentin Road (some people want a 5 lane road, FOTFP don't), FPCC Police (less expensive than normal sheriff police and different focus), Capital Bill, pension fix
 - Tax bills
 - A fraction of 1% of taxes go to Forest Preserves
- Kathy Garrity, Forest Preserves of Cook County, Director of Strategic Initiatives
 - Centennial Plan
 - Devised by more than 50 partners and staff and consultants
 - Nature: Restore 30,000 of the district's 70,000 acres to high quality health
 - People: Invite all people of CC to be part of the preserves (important for air and water quality, bonding, etc.)
 - Economy: Improve the economic vitality of the forest preserves
 - Leadership: Ensure continuing and enduring leadership around the preserves no matter who is in office
- Jennifer Lucas, Go Green Barrington, board member for Barrington Area Conservation Trust (BACT)
 - Citizens for Conservation - owns 500 acres, works with forest preserves to remove invasives and help with ecological restoration
 - BACT takes care of areas owned by easements (and some area outright); work with homeowners to plant native plants/remove invasives; work with students in and out of the classrooms
 - Partnering with the Morton Arboretum to help provide alternatives to buckthorn for homeowners
- Group Sharing
 - Liz Kunkle: Go Green Winnetka
 - From Paris to Pittsburg movie screening
 - Working on storm water program
 - Beth Drucker: Go Green Wilmette
 - 1300-1400 people at Going Green Matters
 - Working with Village on Rain Ready Project
 - Working on Greenest Region Compact (Wilmette developing sustainability programs)
 - Seema: Go Green Vernon Hills
 - Focusing on food waste (got rid of plastic straws and Styrofoam trays, but are also educating people about why food waste is such a big issue)
 - Grant from SWALCO to attend to food waste (did audit)
 - Skokie
 - Increase in solar panels and LED streetlamps
 - Meeting at June 6th at library to talk about solar
 - David - Riverwoods Preservation Council

- Working with conversation about road designs to protect endangered species
- Village received funds to create an eco-friendly village center campus
- Park Ridge
 - City council voted to accept bid for lawn maintenance and added money at behest of people to do it organically and not use glyphosate
 - Mayor has created sustainability task force
- Northfield
 - Go Green Reads!
- Northbrook
 - Trying to convince storm water commissions to replace turf grass with shrubs and trees
- Mundelein/Libertyville
 - Call of the Forest film last Sunday - 150 people attended
 - Putting up demonstration garden at village hall of native plants
- Lake Bluff - Lesley Bishop
 - Board voted to redo Route 176 from tracks to village with sustainable native plants (removing invasives) did it with IDOT and village
- Highland Park – Kim Stone
 - Police department is going to test a Ford hybrid police vehicle
- Glencoe
 - Using social media, more businesses signing up for sustainability business sticker, village bought two bins to compost (commercial and residential)
- Evanston
 - Working to teach difference between park and garden
 - Working to protect Isabella Woods
- Deerfield - Debbie Brown
 - Go Green Deerfield is up and running, actively looking at many issues simultaneously, forming committees and making plans.
- Buffalo Grove/Railroad Workers United – Rosemary Heilemann
 - There is a program on 4/3 in Lincolnshire regarding the 2013 rail disaster in Quebec that killed people and destroyed environment. She alerted members to the risks of rail cars carrying toxic materials that pass through our communities.
(<https://www.dailyherald.com/submitted/20190331/rail-disaster--could-it-happen-here--april-3-7-pm-lincolnshire>)
- Barrington - Go Green Barrington
 - 168 attendees at their One Earth Film Festival
 - Hosted Green Drinks
- Arlington Heights
 - Supporting environmentally oriented politician for election - there's a lot to do