



2026 ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The Nature Foundation of Will County is a 501(c)3 charitable organization dedicated to celebrating and supporting the Forest Preserve District of Will County's preservation, conservation, education, and recreation priorities that protect nature, inspire discovery and bring people and nature together.

Long Range Planning

2025 marks the Foundation's eleventh year of operations.

Take action to ensure that The Nature Foundation of Will County continues to grow its impact.

Mission

We work to create a legacy of giving that supports and celebrates the preservation, conservation, educational and recreational priorities of the Forest Preserve District of Will County in perpetuity.

Vision

We envision a vital, dynamic and self-sustaining foundation that is committed to cultivating relationships and forging solid partnerships within our community that benefit and support the District's ability to protect, conserve, enhance and promote Will County's natural heritage for the educational, recreational, and environmental benefit of present and future generations.

Values

- Support high quality, mission-focused projects and programs
- Fiscal responsibility, transparency and accountability in all endeavors
- Cultivate and maintain positive, sustainable relationships with our donors and supporters



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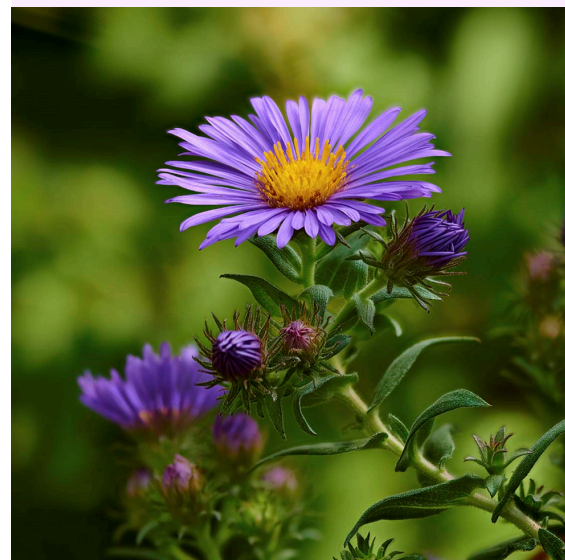
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2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Nature Foundation of Will County successfully navigated through a critical transition year in 2025. We broadened the organization's focus to include new engagement and fundraising activities to increase awareness of our mission and each new donors.

The Board of Directors worked with the University of St. Francis Center for Nonprofit Excellence to execute a team-building exercise and member survey. The results confirmed our organizational strengths and identified areas where more attention is needed.

Since operations began in 2014, the Board has evolved from an operational to a governance board. More time will be invested to ensure Board expectations are clear and members feel their contributions are valued.

So many successes! We developed new fundraising, donor appreciation and VIP events. The Foundation brought together a group of native plant proponents to collaborate on events and experiences, learning activities, and shared messaging.

The Foundation began working more closely with the District's volunteer services supervisor and prioritized deepening our relationship with the Village of Romeoville. We will replicate this strategy with municipalities where the District has Visitor Centers.

In The Foundation's short 11-year history, we have secured \$2.1 Million for the Forest Preserve District of Will County's priorities.

2025 Projects

\$52,525 Provided For:

Animal Ambassadors Care

Be A Trailblazer Challenge

Bird Feeding Station & Supplies

Bike Rack & Repair Station

Exhibitions at Visitor Centers

Interpretive Signs & Supplies

Restore Will County Land Stewardship Grant

Serve Will County Youth Service Grant

STEM & STEAM Nature Education Supplies

Willy's Wilderness Website

Woods Walk Program



2025 Corporate Partners and Sponsors

ONEOK sponsored the Teacher Appreciation events at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon.

Bass Pro Shops & Cablea's Outdoor Fund sponsored fish stocking for three derbies Hidden Lakes Trout Farm in Bolingbrook.

The Sgt. Thomas M. Gilbert Memorial Foundation helps Hidden Oaks Nature Center continue Sgt. Tommy's legacy by helping children learn about nature and discover the joy of the great outdoors.

Earthrise Energy supported the installation of a shade structure at Monee Reservoir's Visitor Center in Monee Township with a \$50,000 grant through its RISE Grant program.

Citgo Petroleum supported ecological management at Romeoville Prairie Nature Preserve in Romeoville with a \$35,000 grant through its Caring for Our Coast program and Sponsored Pollinator Party at Isle a la Cache Preserve and Museum.

Union Pacific Railroad supported invasive species removal at the Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve with a \$20,000 grant.

Vulcan Materials Company Foundation provided \$5,000 to expand the native plant garden and install educational signs at Hidden Oaks Nature Center in Bolingbrook.

Pembina Pipeline Corporation supported wildlife habitat improvement, STEM/ STEAM education and a scholarship program for schools to access fireld trips and in-school educaiton session with a \$15,000 donation.

Constellation Energy Foundation supported invasive species control near the Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve in Braidwood with a \$5,000 grant.

Nicor Gas supported natural areas management at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon with a \$5,000 grant.

Old National Bank sponsored the Fun & Food Trucks series this summer.

The Volunteer Services Program received support from **ComEd** Dollars for Doers and **Target Corporation**.

Partners that supported The Nature Foundation's fundraising and events include: **AJ Dralle, Brent Hassert Consulting; Christopher B Burke Engineering, Ltd., Cultivate Power, Davey Resource Group, Earthrise Energy, Village of Romeoville, Village of Romeoville Mayor John Noak.**



2026 FUNDING REQUESTS

Forest Preserve District

\$2,000	Animal Ambassadors Care at Visitor Centers
\$7,500	Be a Trailblazer Challenge
\$3,000	Challenge Giveaways
\$4,000	Adirondack Chairs at ICM
\$2,000	Hat Shop Clothing & Hat Replacements at ICM
\$3,000	IDNR Rules/Regulations Season/Hours Signs at HLTF
\$4,000	Outdoor Bird Seed Storage Bins at HONC
\$5,000	Interpretive Campus Signage at HONC
\$2,000	Interpretive Items & Exhibit Cases at ICM
\$3,525	2027/2028 Exhibit Deposits for FREEC
\$10,000	Monofilament Wayside(s)
\$1,000	Museum Collection Supplies & Archival Materials at ICM
\$500	Shipping Federal Duck Stamp Exhibit at PCNC
\$5,000	STEM/STEAM Education Funds at Visitor Centers
\$6,000	Exhibit Rentals & Fabrication at ICM
\$1,000	Willy's Wilderness Website
\$3,500	Woods Walk Booklets & Commemorative Medallions
\$63,025	Total Requested

HLTF - Hidden Lakes Trout Farm, Bolingbrook

HONC - Hidden Oaks Nature Center, Bolingbrook

FREEC - Four Rivers Environmental Education Center, Channahon

ICM - Isle a la Cache Museum, Romeoville

PCNC - Plum Creek Nature Center, Beecher



2026 PRIORITIES

Organizational Development

Strengthen Board Relationships:

Increase communication with Board members and with the District

- Create opportunities for board members to get to know each other
- Match talents and interests to specific opportunities – and recognize contributions
- Incorporate District presentations at board meetings
- Evaluate and ensure committee engagement is occurring

Improve Collaboration with the District:

The District and the Foundation work together to elevate the Foundation's profile.

Focus on Volunteerism

Align with District staff and volunteer programs

- Corporate/Employee Volunteers
- Forest Preserve District Volunteers
- Serve Will County and Restore Will County grant programs
- Focus on business, civic, and philanthropic organizations

Foundation Board of Directors and District staff champion the Foundation's mission

- Consistently market the Foundation as the District's philanthropic, fundraising partner
- Serve as Foundation Ambassadors at community events
- Continue building relationships in and with the Village of Romeoville (ICM)
- Execute plans in and with eastern Will County communities (PCNC/ MR)
- Create Engagement Plan in and with the Village of Bolingbrook (HONC/ HLTF)
- Create Engagement Plan in and with the Village of Channahon (FREEC)
- Create Engagement Plan in and with the City of Joliet (SCAC)

Increase Fundraising Events & Activities:

- Partner with District to increase corporate and individual giving
- Execute new fundraising activities, in addition to trivia night and the native plant sale
- Provide donor/partner appreciation events based on District programs/activities
- Transition sponsorships, including District Tree and Bench donations, to the Foundation
- Develop District's 100-year Anniversary (2027) Sponsorship Packages



2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Outreach Events

Eagle Watch

Saturday, January 10, 2026
Four Rivers Environmental
Education Center, Channahon

Earth Day Fest

Saturday, April 25, 2026
Hidden Oaks Nature Center,
Bolingbrook

Pollinator Party

Pop Up Native Plant Sale

Saturday, June 13, 2026
Isle a la Cache Museum,
Romeoville

Surf-N-Turf Concert

Friday, July 17, 2026
Monee Reservoir, Monee

National Night Out

Tuesday, August 4, 2026
Monee Reservoir, Monee

Fall on the Farm

Saturday, September 19, 2026
Riverview Farmstead Preserve,
Naperville

Festival of Arts Through Nature

Saturday, September 26, 2026
Plum Creek Nature Center,
Beecher

Pumpkin Jam

Saturday, October 3, 2026
Hickory Creek Preserve, Mokena

Board Meeting Dates

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Sugar Creek Administration Center

Wednesday, January 28, 2026
Wednesday, March 25, 2026
Wednesday, May 27, 2026
Wednesday, July 22, 2026
Wednesday, September 23, 2026
Wednesday, October 28, 2026 - Planning
Wednesday, December 2, 2026 - Annual

Check Presentations

County Office Building

9:00 a.m.

Thursday, February 12, 2026
Thursday, May 14, 2026
Thursday, July 9, 2026
Thursday, November 12, 2026

Volunteer Banquet

Tuscany Falls Banquets

Mokena

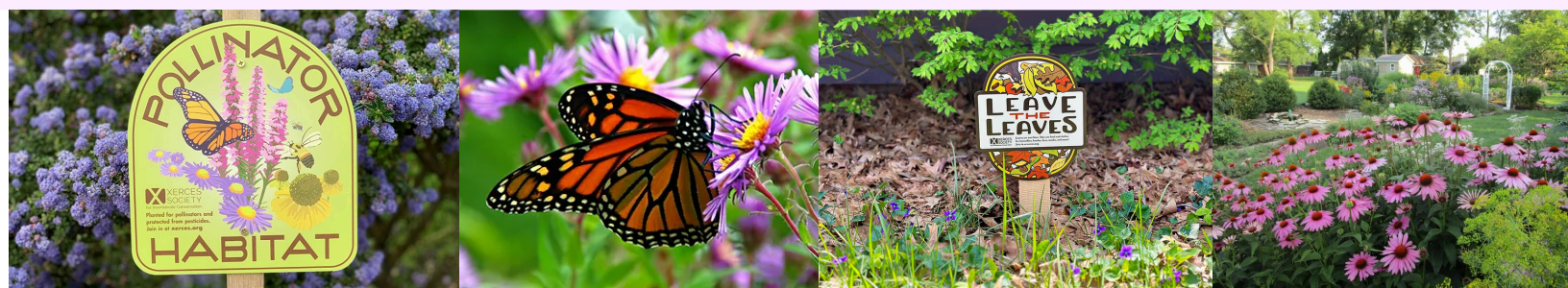
Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Donor Appreciation

Fun & Food Trucks

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Friday, June 12 - Whalon Lake Shelter, Naperville
Friday, July 17 - Monee Reservoir, Monee
Friday, August 7 - Forsythe Woods, Wilmington



2026 EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO COLLABORATE

District Collaboration

- Forest Preserve District
Be A Trailblazer Kickoff
January - TBD
- Hidden Oaks Nature Center
Possible Big Helpers: Mutualism
VIP Event - April 14
- Isle a la Cache Museum
Our Storytellers Exhibit
VIP Night - July 1
- Plum Creek Nature Center
Possible Hummingbird Banding
VIP Event - Sept 19
- Four Rivers Environmental
Education Center
Day & Night Exhibit
VIP Event - November 1

Community Collaboration

- Forest Preserve District & NP
Partners - Discussion about a
Preserve Photos Calendar
- Bolingbrook Fundraiser
TBD
- Village of Romeoville
Bluebell Celebration - TBD
Plein Air Paint & Sip - TBD
Trivia Night - TBD
- Crete-Monee-Beecher Fundraiser
Plein Air Paint & Sip - TBD
Trivia Night - TBD
- Channahon Fundraiser
Mocktails/Beer Trail - TBD

Native Plant Collaboration

- Forest Preserve District
 - Field Experience
- The Conservation Foundation
 - Native Plant Garden Tour
- Wild Birds Unlimited - Joliet
 - Special Event
- Will County Audubon Chapter
 - Birding Field Trip
- Wild Ones-Greater Dupage
 - Native Plant Tour or Online
Learnin Opportunity
- Sag Moraine Native Plant
Community
Illinois Audubon Society
Xerces Society
 - Online Learning Opportunity



@Sandra_Rust_Photo

2025 BUDGET PROGRESS

2025 Revenues

Gifts	\$187,802
Merchandise Sales	\$25,091
Fundraising Events & Activities	\$21,825
Interest Income	\$1,777
	\$236,495

2025 Expenditures

Administrative Costs	\$7,446
Contractual Services	\$39,600
Fundraising & Development	\$6,796
Plant Sale Commodities	\$6,792
FPD Reimbursements	\$80,777
TIO Merchandise Costs	\$11,350
Sales Tax Paid	\$2,504
	\$155,269

Financial Position Summary

\$900,460	Total Assets
\$487,311	Donor Restricted Assets
\$42,857	Remaining Reimbursements
\$63,025	2026 FPD Funds Awarded
\$65,000	2025 Fundraising Revenue
\$1,200,000	Legacy Gift (Expectancies)

As of November 15, 2025

