



Benjamin Cox, editor • benjamin@fotfp.org

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Meet your fellow advocates

These folks have taken their love of the outdoors a step further. They don't just visit the preserves, they monitor the conditions, report concerns, and contribute real labor to make the preserves they love even better.

Thomas Mulcahy, age 75

By Julia Sportolari

Julia Sportolari is a Chicago lawyer who recently joined Friends and likes getting outdoors to hike, kayak and camp.

One thing has been constant in Tom Mulcahy's life: the search for wild places. Growing up in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood and Evergreen Park, he took refuge in large city parks with lagoons and took up fishing, hiking and hunting at Saganashkee Slough preserve.

"If you grow up in the city, you need to have a wild place to go," Tom said, "otherwise you are completely out of balance."

Tom, age 75, continues to find balance in nature. Now in



Douglas Chien

Thomas Mulcahy, who walks the preserves on daily basis, birding and looking for problems, surveys a healthy oak opening.

Western Springs, he wakes by 5 a.m. and heads to the forest preserves. Once there he finds peace sitting, listening and watching. Recently a pack of coyotes walked right past him until they noticed him and ran, barking. He also monitors birds in Bemis South Woods and Cap Sauers Holdings and helps locate redheaded woodpecker nests in Palos preserves.

Tom got interested in Friends of the Forest Preserves through Chicago Wilderness. He began to realize that wild places would disappear unless people looked out for them, and years ago he felt they were not being well maintained. Since District President Toni Preckwinkle took office, he has noticed that preserves are cleaner, secured at night and opened at sunrise. He also supports her efforts to get city kids out into nature.

After earning his Ph.D. in engineering sciences at the University of Illinois, Tom taught at UIC and then conducted research at Argonne National Laboratory until retirement. On vacations, he and wife Mary Jo have visited nearly every national park with sons Timothy and John, and they've traveled the world on bird-watching trips. After spotting nearly 5,000 birds, he's not done yet. But his favorite is the blue jay, common right here in northern Illinois.

"The next time you see one, really look at it," he said.

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Peter Shepherd

Volunteer advocate Chris Shepherd often walks Plum Creek Forest Preserve near Sauk Village with his dog Josie and members of his family.

News from around the District

1 More land added — again

The Forest Preserve District acquired several more parcels of land in recent months. A quarter mile of Poplar Creek, with remnants of rare fen habitat, was acquired through the No Cash Bid Program for tax-delinquent properties as part of a seven-acre addition to the Poplar Creek Preserve, which will now be linked to the Rolling Knolls property that was acquired in recent years. Another 1.5 acres that were brought in through the same program, now provide additional buffer to the adjacent Tinley Creek preserve.

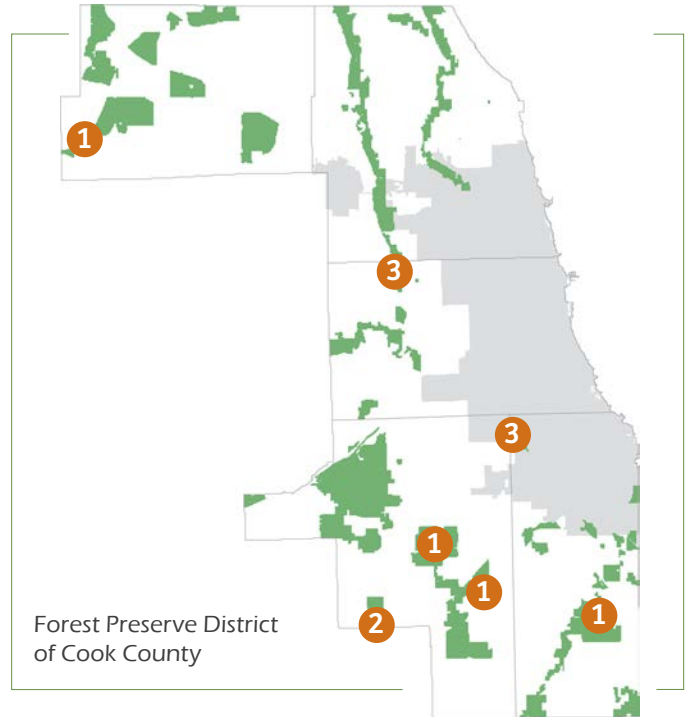
A 2.5-acre parcel was conveyed to the District by the City of Chicago. The linear parcel encompasses a stretch of the Major Taylor Trail that connects Dan Ryan Woods on Chicago's southside to Whistler Woods near Riverdale. Riders often complained about the lack of maintenance along much of the trail, while lauding the Forest Preserve District for doing an excellent job with the parts in its holdings. Now this section, between 91st and 95th streets, will enjoy the same level of care.

Another 4.8 acres have been acquired adjacent to Thorn Creek at no cost through an agreement to transfer the land from Cook County.

Finally, the District is moving to acquire 1.36 acres, owned by the Blue Park Gun Club, adjacent to the newly created Oak Forest Heritage preserve.

2 Tollway conducting \$4m mitigation at Orland site

Restoring wetlands, grasslands and other habitats and re-meandering a stream will all be part of a \$4 million mitigation project funded by the Illinois Tollway. The five-year project will be conducted at the newly-acquired Orland South preserve near Orland Park. Improvements



will also include developing trails, boardwalks, picnic facilities, restrooms and parking.

3 Historic pavilions renovated, available for rental

Extensive renovation has been completed at historic pavilions at Dan Ryan Woods on Chicago's south side and at Thatcher Woods near River Forest. Both facilities are now available for rental for private events and community meetings, along with the Volunteer Resource Center on Chicago's northwest side. Friends pushed for these shuttered facilities to be renovated and reopened. The Forest Preserve District is conducting free programs at these facilities, such as archery days and outdoor exploration events. Visit fpdcc.com for more information.

New development director joins Friends

Jon Labaschin has joined Friends' staff as the development director. Originally from New York City, Jon came to Chicago in 1993 as director of development for the Chicago region, and eventually for the Midwest, of the Anti-Defamation League after years of leadership with ADL's New York office.

Jon has held senior fundraising positions at the American Friends of Hebrew University and the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs and has recently been senior external consultant to PAWS — Chicago's largest no-kill animal rescue organization. Jon resides in Long Grove with his wife Lisa, children Zack, Sammi, Nikki, Ben, Aidan and Alana, and their dogs English Mastiff "Remi" and Akita "Kado".

Many thanks!

Friends' 2013 Golf Outing was a tremendous success with 58 golfers and more than \$12,000 raised. Many thanks to our sponsors and participants and to chair Ed Blough for all his hard work and great leadership. Join us on June 6th for our 2014 outing.



Stewards' Council underway

By Douglas Chien

The forest preserves of Cook County are blessed to have a large and dedicated cadre of volunteer ecological stewards who tirelessly work to restore and maintain healthy nature. To better support and grow the stewardship community, Friends is spearheading a new effort. Collaborating closely with volunteer leaders from existing regional stewardship groups, such as the Des Plaines Valley Volunteers and Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards, the Stewards' Council has been created.

The overarching goal of the Stewards' Council is to represent the stewards who devote countless hours in bringing back healthy prairies, woodlands, wetlands and savannas in the forest preserves. The Council will also work as a partner with District staff and commissioners. The Council will provide a unified voice for stewards and overcome the near-universal feeling of isolation described by stewards.

The Council is currently operating with a nine member organizing committee but will ultimately be overseen by an elected nine-member steering committee. Thus far the Council has conducted a survey of stewards to determine what's working, what needs fixing and how urgent each item is. The certification of new stewards was the top-ranked problem, and the organizing committee members have made it an issue to be solved at the monthly Key Stewards meetings organized by Forest Preserve District staff.

The Stewards' Council is now inviting fellow stewards and other restoration volunteers to join, so that this com-

munity can speak with a unified voice to better serve the needs of our oak woodlands, open sky prairies, tranquil wetlands and sun-dappled savannas. Contact Douglas Chien about getting involved at douglas@fotfp.org.

The Stewards' Council organizing committee drafted a survey asking fellow stewards to identify their top concerns and assess their top priorities with the volunteer stewardship program. More than 40 responses were received.

Top four problem areas:

1. Getting new stewards and stewardship sites
2. Issues with the FPD Maintenance Department
3. Issues with contractors (restoration and other)
4. (Tie) Volunteers participating in prescribed burns and issues with management schedules

Areas with the fewest problems:

1. Getting the proper equipment to conduct stewardship
2. (Tie) FPD Police Department and call list prior to workdays
3. (Tie) Workday reporting requirements and working with Audubon stewardship interns

Continued from page 1

"It's a pretty fantastic looking bird."

Just goes to show what we have here in our own backyard.

Chris Shepherd, age 34

By Douglas Chien

Chris Shepherd, age 34, of St. John, Indiana, drove by Plum Creek forest preserve for a long time before exploring it a few years ago with a young cousin. It was love at first sight.

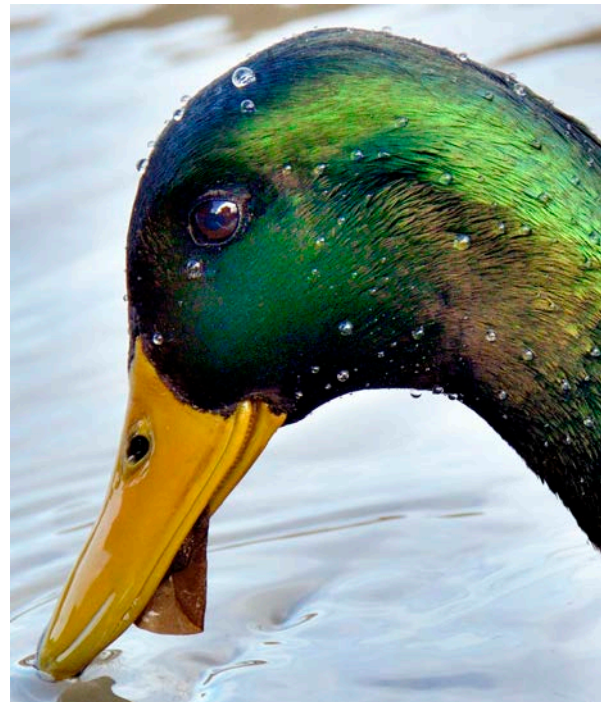
"Plum Creek is the best forest preserve in Cook County," Chris says. "It is big enough to get lost in. The air is super-charged with oxygen. It feels great to be surrounded by old-growth trees, and there are rivers, hills and bluffs."

Now the criminal defense lawyer visits frequently with his fiancée Amy, mom, cousins and dog. He likes getting kids away from video games and introducing them to nature. They enjoy running around looking for river crossings, such as newly downed trees. Chris sometimes goes

on his own to seek out a quiet place. He finds Plum Creek well-used, not over used, but it does have a litter problem. On their own initiative, Chris and Amy bag up garbage and leave it for forest preserve workers to remove.

Chris recently discovered Friends of the Forest Preserves through an online search to see if he could do anything else for Plum Creek and its garbage problem. Friends' advocacy manager Douglas Chien met with Chris and Amy and had some good news – Friends had just received a \$161,000 grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to do ecological restoration work along the creek corridor. Luckily for Friends, Chris will serve as a valuable point of contact with the contractor.

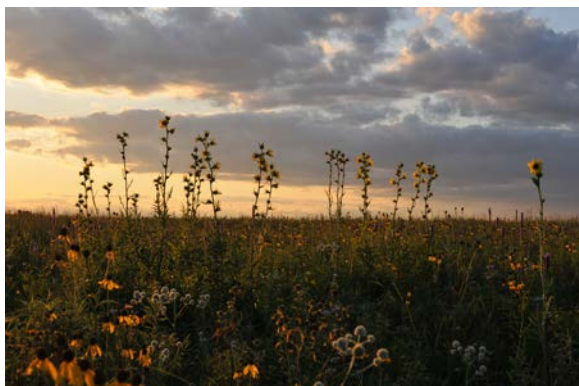
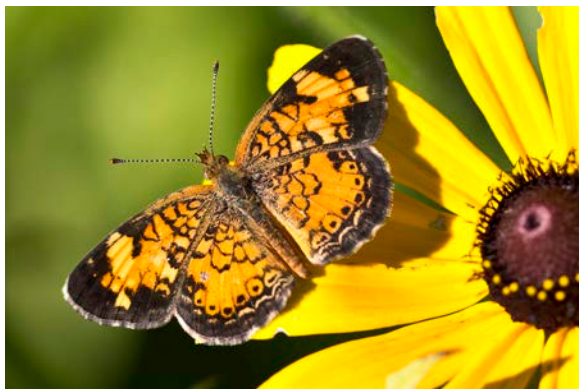
Doug and Chris will build a volunteer base for Plum Creek to clear litter, improve habitats and conduct volunteer restoration work to complement the heavier contractor work. Thanks to its advocate in Chris, Plum Creek is on its way to becoming an even more beautiful forest preserve for all to enjoy.



First Place: Bluff Spring Fen near Elgin, Kevin Rodde; **Second Place:** Fox squirrel, Shoe Factory Road Woods near Hoffman Estates, Diana Carlson; **Third Place** Split gill mushrooms, Indian Road Woods near Chicago, Ruth Metterhausen; **Best Flora:** Purple coneflowers, Bluff Spring Fen near Elgin, Chris Benda; **Best Fauna** Mallard, Chicago Botanic Garden near Glencoe, Wes Iversen.

5th Annual Friends Photo Contest

We are truly fortunate to have natural beauty all around us in Cook County.



RUNNERS UP: Smaller photos: Bluebird on burr oak, Somme Prairie Grove near Northbrook, Lisa Culp; Tangled trees at Busse Dam, Busse Forest near Elk Grove, Wes Iversen; Fern, Sagawau Canyon, near Lemont, David Allegretti; Burr oak savanna, Deer Grove East near Palatine, Daniel Suarez; Pearl crescent butterfly, Paul Douglas Preserve near Hoffman Estates, Janet Haugen; Prairie milkweed, Bartel Grassland near Matteson, John Denk; and Compass plant, Orland Grassland near Orland Park, Jeanne Muellner.

Friends of the Forest Preserves 2012 Annual Report

Letter from Charles Kierscht, Chair, and Benjamin Cox, President

In 2012, Friends of the Forest Preserves experienced growth in volunteer-driven programs, intern programs, restoration projects and our overall budget.

Friends and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County strengthened our relationship, with the District coming to rely on Friends for our recommendations and honesty on extensive planning initiatives, management improvements and more. For the first time the Forest Preserve District contributed financially to our internship programs – supporting the Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps for high school students with a \$300,000 contribution.

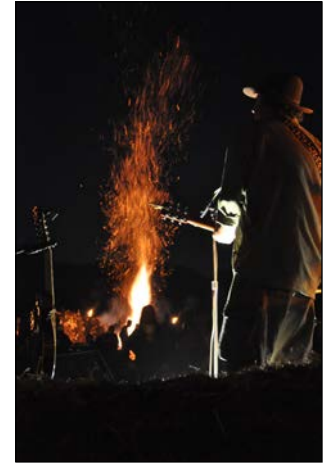
Friends continued to focus on its core work of advocacy and policy. The Advocates' Network was born, connecting the community of preserve users to Friends, their elected officials and, most importantly, to each other. We continued to push for the best resolution on complex issues such as the Quentin Road expansion at Deer Grove near Palatine.

Friends' intern programs continued to thrive and expand, with 70 interns contributing more than 17,000 hours of conservation service at sites throughout the District. We added the Forest Preserve Leadership Corps for 18 to 20 year-olds, filling the gap between our Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps crew members (15 to 18 year-olds) and crew leaders (21 and older). The FPLC allows us to help young conservation leaders expand their skills, training and understanding of the possibilities in the environmental field.

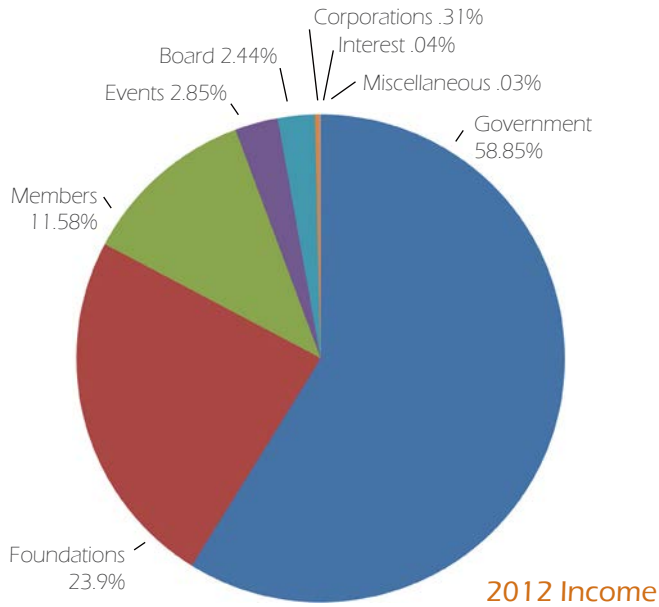
Friends' budget topped the \$1 million mark in 2012 with a small but mighty staff of seven. They amplify their efforts – and their impact – by engaging and supporting dozens if not hundreds more people, interns, volunteers and ecological restoration experts for on-the-ground work.

Friends' membership reached an all-time high with 1,962 members and more than \$145,000 contributed by individuals – a 13 percent increase. This support provides the flexibility to take on urgent forest preserve issues whenever they arise and whatever they entail – from buying a chainsaw to drafting a policy to organizing a grassroots advocacy campaign.

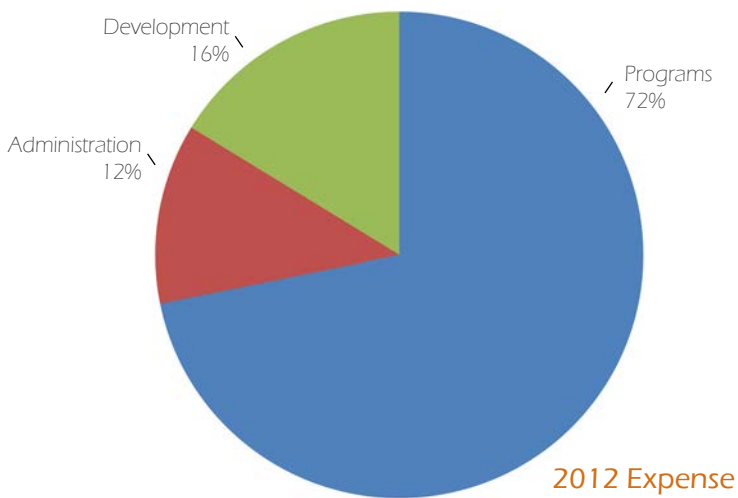
We look forward to reporting on our 2013 successes, as we know it has been even better than 2012. Thank you so much for your ongoing and essential support.



Friends of the Forest Preserves 2012 Annual Report



2012 Income



2012 Expense

Income	2012	2011
Government	681,974	155,094
Foundations	277,000	160,050
Members	134,230	107,823
Events	33,034	17,842
Board	28,300	20,430
Corporations	3,594	4,369
Interest	458	579
Miscellaneous	335	1,678
Total	\$1,158,925	\$467,865

Expense	2012	2011
Programs	799,839	385,646
Development	180,894	115,514
Administration	133,350	41,848
Total	\$1,114,283	\$543,008

Assets	2012	2011
Net Assets at beginning year	164,591	239,734
Net Assets at end year	209,233	164,591
Change in Net Assets	\$44,642	(\$75,143)

Friends Board of Directors

Charles Kierscht, Chair—Attorney; Former Chairman and CEO, Kemper Financial Services
 Stephen Schlegel, Vice President—Attorney, Stephen J. Schlegel Ltd.
 Ed Zelasko, Treasurer—General Manager, Morgan Services Inc.
 Ronald Milnarik, Secretary—D.D.S., Clinical Assistant Professor of Endodontics, University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry
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 Ginger Underwood—President, Friends of the Spring Creek Forest Preserves
 Ed Woodbury—President, McCaffery Interests, Inc.

Friends Staff

Benjamin Cox—President & CEO
 Whitney Behr—Development and Outreach Coordinator
 Alice Brandon—Conservation Director
 Douglas Chien—Advocates' Network Manager
 Daiva Gyly—Forest Preserve Leadership Corps Crew Leader
 Jon Labaschin—Development Director
 Brian Mann—Calumet Conservation Corps Crew Leader



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Mike MacDonald



Nate Otto

Join us Thursday, December 5

**A Celebration of
Art - Imagination - Sustainability**

Mars Gallery
1139 W. Fulton Market, Chicago

5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

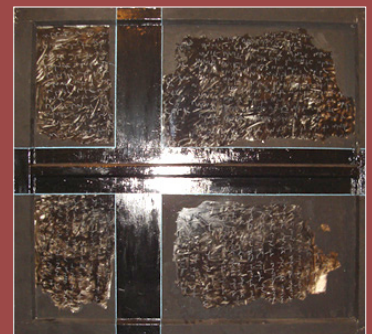
Valet Parking Available
Sushi – Beer – Wine – Soft Drinks

Tickets: \$50

Selected artwork will be available for purchase. Proceeds to benefit Friends.



Dave Rettker



Brent Young