



# Friends NEWS

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## Bringing back the Calumet

Alice Brandon, Conservation Director

Calumet stewards once faced enormous threats with little support. Not any more. Friends of the Forest Preserves is the proud recipient of two grants totaling over \$1 million for a great deal of critical work in the Calumet Region. These grants will allow us to conduct restoration on a much larger scale than ever before. It says something about Friends' track record that these agencies have entrusted us with these projects. The Calumet region is recognized as one of the hot spots for biodiversity in the United States.

Sustain Our Great Lakes Program (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) has awarded Friends a \$500,000 grant to restore nine rare dune and swale sites in the Calumet. Government agencies and environmental organizations will collaborate to remove the invasive species that threaten these beautiful sites, many of which are critical habitat for 200 species of migratory birds that forage and nest here. Over 600 acres will be restored at Beaubien Prairie, Sand Ridge Nature Center and Kickapoo Prairie, among others. Friends is managing the efforts of volunteer stewards, professional staff and landowners to accomplish the project goals. This project would not be possible without our project partners: Forest Preserve District of Cook County, The Field Museum, Shirley Heinze Land Trust, The Nature



*Milkweed: The beautiful Prairie Milkweed is threatened by invasive species at the Calumet project sites.*

Conservancy, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Calumet Memorial Park District and the Illinois Natural History Survey.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has funded a two-year project with \$518,000 to employ a five member crew to remove invasive species, which threaten the native plants and wildlife at Eggers Woods, Kickapoo Prairie, Beaubien Prairie and Dolton Prairie. Crew members will gain valuable job

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## Advocacy needs Friends, too

Benjamin Cox, Executive Director



Benjamin Cox

This \$1 million+ in restoration grants is great news, and we're really excited. I am not exaggerating when I say there was some jumping up and down in the office. This is important work and a central part of Friends' mission: to work to preserve, protect, and restore the forest preserves of Cook County for the benefit of people and nature. To do that, we work in two ways: (1) restoration and (2) policy and advocacy. We can restore all the natural areas we want, but if we do not advocate for the preserves (and the people who enjoy them) and influence good policy, those efforts will be for nothing in the end.

So I'm a little worried right now. We are doing really well with getting grants for restoration projects, both from government agencies and private foundations. But it is really hard to fund advocacy and policy, which I might argue is the work that makes the biggest difference for the

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## News from around the District

### 1 Political Contact Log required

Much discussion by Commissioners took place at the May Forest Preserve District of Cook County board meeting surrounding the new requirement that all employees of the District, including Commissioners, now are required to document all contacts by or on behalf of politically-related persons or organizations regarding employment or an employee. The Political Contact Log will be maintained by the Cook County Office of the Inspector General.

### 2 Parcel added near zoo

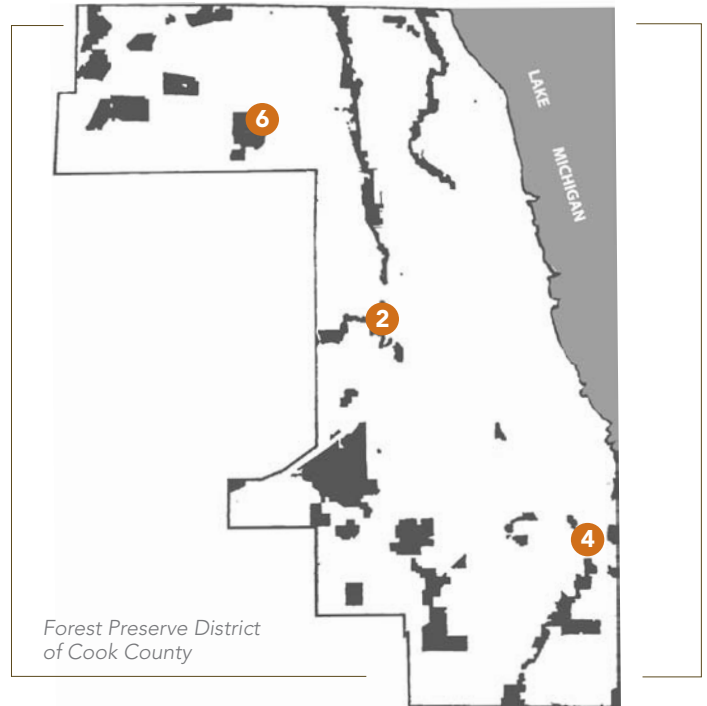
A small 323-acre parcel of land was donated by the Chicago Zoological Society (Brookfield Zoo) to the Forest Preserve District. The property is located south of and adjacent to the Zoo. The District owns the Zoo and its property, while the CZS operates the zoo.

### 3 Minority and Women-Owned Business Code enacted

The Forest Preserve District enacted a new Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises Code which will help ensure that the District will not “passively participate in discrimination.” The goal of the program is that not less than 25 percent of the annual total dollar amount of District contracts will be awarded to minority-owned businesses and not less than 10 percent will be awarded to women-owned businesses.

### 4 100 acres acquired

Nearly 100 acres will be added to the District’s holdings with its newest acquisition at a cost of \$3.05 million. The Burnham Prairie Annex will provide public access to the previously land-locked Burnham Prairie Nature Preserve, “one of the District’s finest natural area properties,” near Burnham, Illinois. The land includes significant acreage of wetlands and bird habitat, including frontage on the Grand Calumet River. The District received \$427,500 through the State of Illinois’ Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Grant program to help fund this acquisition.



### 5 Preserves legalize juggling and cross-dressing

It is no longer illegal to tell fortunes, indulge in acrobatic feats, juggle, and dress in clothing of the opposite sex in the forest preserves, after the Board of Commissioners voted to update the District’s ordinances at their July meeting. Fines for many offenses were increased, many ordinances were cleaned up and updated, and ordinances were added. For example, operating a bicycle in undesignated areas can now result in a fine of up to \$500.

### 6 Annual Fishing Derby established

The Forest Preserve District’s 15th Commissioner District held its first Annual Fishing Derby in June at Busse Woods. Commissioner Timothy O. Schneider reported that the event was a great success with about 100 anglers. Prizes were given for largest and smallest fish.

## Harris awards Kozlowski, who awards Friends

Mary Kaiser, Development Manager

Marianne Kozlowski, a longtime friend of Friends, was given the Volunteer Recognition Award by her employer, Harris Bank, for her long, dedicated and extensive efforts with restoration in the forest preserves along the North Branch of the Chicago River. The award came with a \$1,000 check for the organization of her choice, and, as she wrote, “I designate – the Friends of the Forest Preserves!”

Benjamin Cox, Executive Director, attended the volunteer recognition breakfast on May 3 with Marianne and her colleagues. A good time and good breakfast was had by all. Many, many thanks to Marianne for allowing us to share in this well-deserved recognition and for all that she does for the preserves. Well done!



Marianne Kozlowski chose Friends as her nonprofit of choice to receive her \$1,000 Volunteer Recognition-Environment award from Harris Bank.

## Vote against gun club permit sets the right precedent

Benjamin Cox, Executive Director

As reported in Friends' Action Alerts by email, the May request for a private gun club to operate on public forest preserve land was effectively denied in early June. The permit request was sent back to committee where it's expected to stay indefinitely (or forever, whichever comes first). This would not have happened without the strong support of all of us – congratulations!

The gun club's request for a permit would have granted exclusive use of public land to a private entity. The Forest Preserve District of Cook County Commissioners and President did the right thing in denying this request. To be very clear, please know that our objection to the permit issue was about giving exclusive use of public land to a private entity.

By law, once any land becomes forest preserve property, it must be protected in perpetuity for the people of Cook County. If allowed, this permit would have set a slippery precedent, where agencies and groups could expect to ask for land from the Forest Preserve District and get it.

This is not uncommon, unfortunately.

Just two years ago, the Village of Hinsdale came to the District asking to use forest preserve land for their park district. That use was denied too, but only with a great deal of work and input and protest from Friends, our members and coalition partners. Attempted "land grabs" keep coming – and have since the District's founding in 1914.

Please know that the Forest Preserve District of Cook County is a separate government from Cook County, and yet they are run by the same elected Commissioners. In this case, the District came to own land the gun club had been leasing from the County in a weird land-for-money transfer. This issue could have been avoided with a little creative problem-solving.

### Our objection to the permit issue was about giving exclusive use of public land to a private entity.

But once it was transferred to the District, by state law, it must be protected and preserved in its natural state for the people of Cook County.

While the Cook County government has serious budget issues, the Forest Preserve District has a very solid budget, with a self insurance fund and a fund balance. The District has not had to raise your taxes in four years. With a lot more oversight from Friends and other coalition partners, it is run much better than it was just a few years ago. And it has done the right thing by denying this permit.

This is the kind of issue that Friends must always watch for, and for which we need your help. It's a good example of advocacy: a happy ending to what could have been an unfortunate story without Friends, and you.

## ... Bringing back the Calumet

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Lilies: Michigan Lily with Culver's Root is a common sight in restored areas in the Calumet.

skills for conservation careers and emphasis will be placed on hiring diverse community members from the Calumet region. Part of the work will focus on detecting and eradicating new invaders that have small – and still easily controllable – populations at the project sites. Detecting and eradicating these species before they become established is the most effective, least expensive way to control invasive species.

This project will be implemented in partnership with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and the Student Conservation Association.

These projects will take Friends' Restoration Program to a new and exciting level and will go a long way towards restoring these sites to health.

## ... Advocacy needs Friends, too

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forest preserves. And, it is certainly our core work here at Friends.

This year, with the entirely new political landscape at the District, advocacy work commands more of our attention and effort than ever. A new commissioner, a new president, new superintendent, new collaborations – it's a lot of moving parts, and we want to make sure that movement is forward, not backward.

Our members' contributions - yours, in fact - are what support Friends' staff in advocacy work. Our ability to be effective here absolutely relies on you - both for your voice and for your financial support. Thank you.

# Friends of the Forest Preserves 2010 Annual Report



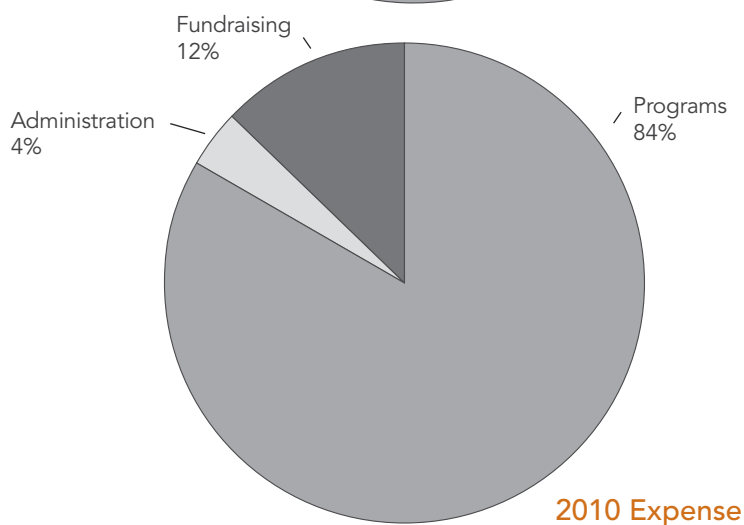
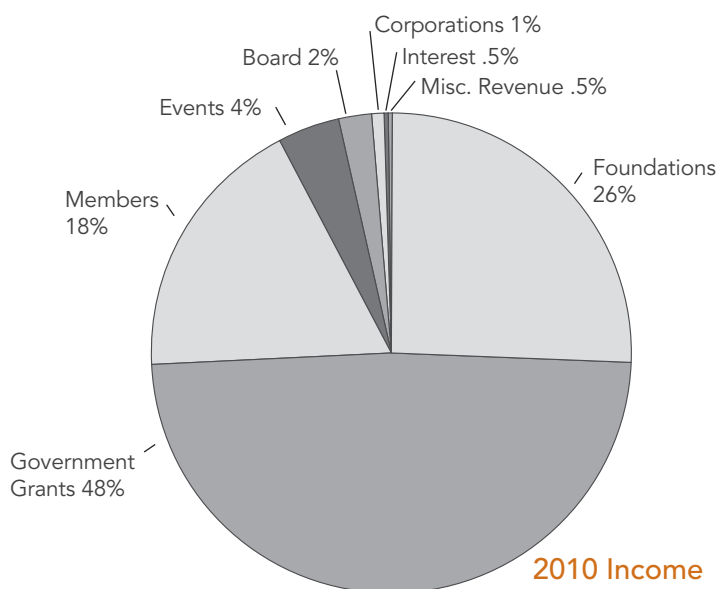
(left) Thatcher Woods near River Forest, Dave Coulter; Sand Ridge Nature Preserve near Calumet City, Alice Brandon; Leopard Frog, Sand Ridge Nature Center near Calumet City, Karen Garrett

*A letter from Carl Birkelbach,  
President, and Benjamin Cox,  
Executive Director*

2010 was a year of change for Friends of the Forest Preserves. The political landscape at the District shifted almost completely after the November election, bringing new challenges and opportunities for the preserves and for Friends. Here are the highlights of 2010.

- Friends builds all new relationships (actually getting started early, shortly after the February primary election) and serves as advisor to newly-elected Forest Preserve District president Toni Preckwinkle and three new commissioners.
- Friends leads the coalition of six nonprofit organizations to create the *Green Paper on Key Policy Issues for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County*, setting the agenda for the new administration.
- The board separation legislation is put on hold by its sponsors in the Illinois state legislature, per then-Alderman Preckwinkle's request.
- The internship program has its biggest year ever, employing 85 interns in seven crews – 66 high school students, 12 adult crew leaders, five adult fall interns and two program interns.
- Friends adds to its organizational capacity in events and fundraising by welcoming Keith Williams, Events Manager, and Mary Kaiser, Development Manager.
- The board of directors adopts a four-year Strategic Plan to guide Friends' growth at this turning point in its history: no longer a small organization, Friends is now the region's recognized leader on forest preserve issues.
- Friends completes the hydrology restoration project at Salt Creek Nature Preserve. Now, water remains in the wetlands long enough in the spring for frogs and salamanders to reproduce, improving their populations.
- A land grab in Hinsdale that would have turned forest preserve land into a soccer field is halted by Friends and its dedicated group of members and coalition partners.
- Friends almost, but not quite, balances the budget. The impact of investing in a growing organization means a slight operating deficit in 2010.
- Members come through again, with 10 percent growth in participation and an 8 percent increase in membership and annual fund revenue. For perspective, Friends had 389 members in 2006. In 2010, it has 1,804 – more than quadrupling its supporters in five years.

# 2010 Financial Report



Income (Listed in \$ dollars)	2010	2009
Foundations	139,084	374,626
Government Contracts	n/a	n/a
Government Grants	263,549	77,500
Members	97,233	75,975
Events	23,748	40,056
Board	11,153	7,770
Corporations	5,150	3,000
Interest	853	3,123
Miscellaneous Revenue	1,053	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$541,823</b>	<b>\$582,115</b>

Expense	2010	2009
Programs	484,879	471,091
Administration	22,108	35,682
Fundraising	73,311	81,247
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$580,298</b>	<b>\$588,020</b>

Assets	2010	2009
Net Assets at beginning year	278,209	284,114
Net Assets at end year	239,734	278,209
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>(\$38,475)</b>	<b>(\$5,905)</b>

## Friends Board of Directors

**Carl Birkelbach**, *President* – Chairman and CEO, Birkelbach Management Inc.

**Charles Kierscht**, *Vice President* – Attorney; Former Chairman and CEO, Kemper Financial Services

**Stephen Schlegel**, *Vice President* – Attorney, Stephen J. Schlegel Ltd.

**Jay Readey**, *Treasurer* – Executive Director, Chicago Lawyers' Committee on Civil Rights

**Margaret Frisbie**, *Secretary* – Executive Director, Friends of the Chicago River

**Barbara Birmingham** – Regional Steward, West Suburban Region, FPDCC; Co-Steward Theodore Stone Forest Preserve

**Stephen Christy, Jr.** – Landscape architect

**José Colón** – Senior Associate, Jameson Real Estate

**Barbara Hill** – Political Chair, Sierra Club Illinois Chapter

**Jeremy Hojnicky** – Attorney, private practice

**Liesel Lavery** – Conservationist, Northbrook

**Akilah Martin** – Ph.D., Resident Faculty Member, DePaul University

**Ronald Milnarik** – D.D.S., Clinical Assistant Professor of Endodontics, University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry

**Stephen Packard** – Founding Director, Audubon-Chicago Region

**Jennifer Pfeiffer** – Director of Sales and Marketing, The Sutton Place Hotel

**Ginger Underwood** – President, Friends of the Spring Creek Forest Preserves

**Ed Zelasko** – President & CEO, Modagraphics, Inc.

## Friends Staff

**Benjamin Cox** – *Executive Director*

**Whitney Behr** – *Development Associate*

**Peter Bermes** – *Water Policy Intern*

**Alice Brandon** – *Conservation Director*

**Rachel Fasiang** – *Development Associate (past)*

**Mary Kaiser** – *Development Manager*

**Jean Sellar** – *Restoration Programs Director*

**Keith Williams** – *Event Manager*



Left: An intern takes the bark off a log to use it as a check step for erosion control on a trail at Dan Ryan Woods; Right: High school interns Ida Harden, Giovanni Gonzalez, Gloria Orozco and Yasmine Khazneh.

## High school interns work, learn, commit

Alice Brandon, Conservation Director

The Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps, a partnership of Friends, Student Conservation Association and the Forest Preserve District, had its most successful year to date in its summer high school intern program. For six weeks in July and August, youth from all over Cook County built trails in several forest preserves, removed old fencing, controlled invasive species, cared for wildlife, and built bridges, just to name a few of their many contributions to four nature center sites and at Dan Ryan Woods on Chicago's south side. In all, the teens gave 6,000 hours of conservation service and participated in 1,000 hours of environmental education through hands-on experiences like canoeing the Skokie Lagoons.

On August 4, 55 Ernst & Young employees joined the Dan Ryan Woods crew for a restoration workday. In just one day, this hardworking team of adults and students cleared invasive plants from about one acre of land, building ten huge brushpiles and

opening up beautiful views through the woods. Company workdays like this are a great way for the interns to learn about career options and for adults to learn restoration techniques from enthusiastic young people with loppers.

The good news this year is that, for the first time ever, all 46 interns successfully completed the program – a 100

percent retention rate! This is a first for the program (usually the CCLC reports 90-95 percent retention) and is head and shoulders (and knees and toes) above similar youth programs, which typically have 60 percent retention. In addition, the teens share an amazing experience with other young people who care about nature, too. Most importantly, we believe this program helps to foster a life-long stake in caring and protecting the

forest preserves. Over 78 percent of our interns reported in their exit surveys that they plan to volunteer in the forest preserves in the future. From past experience, we know that they actually do.



The Dan Ryan Woods crew with volunteers from Ernst & Young after they cleared over an acre of invasive species from the woods.

## Summer fun in the sun.... and in the preserves!

Keith Williams, Events Manager

Friends commemorated the 95th anniversary of the date that the first forest preserve land was acquired in Cook County in 1916 on Saturday, June 25. This event gave guests an opportunity to learn about the reasons we work so hard to restore, preserve and protect the forest preserves of Cook County and to have fun amidst the natural beauty our own backyard. Dozens of members with their families and friends shared this year's festive summer event with us.

They all enjoyed a sunny day and a delicious spread of barbeque-style food catered by our good friends at Chuck's Café in Burbank. Friends' board member and volunteer steward Barbara Birmingham and her husband George led tours through the woods and the rare dolomite prairie at Theodore Stone Preserve, where there is plenty of great restoration work underway. The day was packed with fun activities like volleyball, musical chairs for children and adults, scavenger hunts in the woods and making new friends with other people who love nature.

This year's Summer Fest was the first of its kind for us, one that our members can enjoy while supporting the much-needed restoration work in the forest preserves and the essential policy that helps protect them, too. We look forward to hosting next year's Summer Fest, and to seeing you there!



*Musical chairs is still as much fun as when you were a kid. Just a few examples of the great time we had at Summer Fest 2011*

## Fourth Annual Photo Contest



*2011 First Place Photo Contest Winner: Sandhill Cranes, Somme Prairie Grove near Northbrook, Lisa Culp*

Capture the beauty of the forest preserves of Cook County by entering Friends' Fourth Annual Photo Contest. Anyone with a camera is encouraged to submit images of feature landscapes, flora, wildlife, recreation or education. Ten winners will receive Friends hats and pocket nature guides. Friends will use the winning photos in communications pieces and on its website. Franklin Framing will host a reception featuring the framed winning entries.

### Contest Rules

1. Photographs must be taken in a forest preserve in Cook County.
2. Invasive species must not be prominent.
3. Submit entries via email to: [benjamin@fotfp.org](mailto:benjamin@fotfp.org). If files are large, please submit them individually.
4. Please identify the forest preserve.
5. The deadline for entry is January 15, 2012.



Friends of the Forest Preserves  
28 E. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1102  
Chicago, IL 60604-2330

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## Upcoming Events

### Photo Contest Cocktail Party

Saturday, October 29, 3:00p – 7:00p  
Franklin Framing  
13019 S. Western Ave  
Blue Island, IL 60406

Enjoy this reception honoring the winners of Friends' 2011 Photo Contest. The photos will be framed and in full-color!



Join us for the annual Holiday Party, Saturday, December 3

*Back by Popular Demand!*

### Holiday Party

Saturday, December 3, 6:00p – 10:00p  
Mars Gallery  
1139 W. Fulton Market  
Chicago, IL 60607  
\$50 per person

This fun event with music, open bar and hors d'oeuvres doubles as a fundraiser for Friends. Bring a friend or six!

*Save The Date*

### 2nd Annual Friends Perennial

Saturday, March 31, 2012  
At Brookfield Zoo

Last year's Perennial dinner-dance sold out, so make your plans to attend this event right away!

*Ignite the Night* and its fabulous bonfire will return next year, on September 29, 2012.

Most, but not all, of our events make it into the newsletter. Contact Keith Williams at 312.356.9990 or keithw@fotfp.org with your email address for event announcements, or for sponsorship, donations and underwriting opportunities.