Discover NATURE

Long ago, ice-age glaciers shaped the landscapes of Mt. Forest Island, the beautiful habitat between the Des Plaines River and Col-Bug Valley. In the Palos region you'll discover one of the most scenic parts of Cook County, with almost 100 lakes, ponds and sloughs nestled within tall woodlands.

Thousands of acres of forest preserves beckon you to explore some of the finest scenery in Illinois. Seasonal change adds dimension to the delight of the park visitor. Bird songs, woodland breezes, and advanced bird watching with the arrival of spring. Summer days filled with the color of blooming flowers, the buzz of crickets, and the chirp of grasshoppers. Woodlands and prairies alive with life abound from subtle purple shades of grapes to the intense reds and oranges of maple and oaks. From cooler temperatures ziren in a walk. The bare branches of winter miss and double reveal the secret hiding places of bird and insect nests. Look for tracks in snow that capture the stories and sounds of wildlife activity.

From Palos Run to the east to Red Gum Woods in the west, and bounded by the Des Plaines River and Cal-Bug Valley, the Palos Hills area harbors a wealth of historic and natural wonders including the I & M Canal, which connected Chicago with the developing west by rail, and the original site of Argonne Ledge, which housed the world's first nuclear reactor during World War II. Dan McMillan Woods and the Palos Run area home to rare habitats for everyone. Freshwater marshes and upland woodlands are homes to mammals and ponds teeming with frogs, birds and other wildlife. Prarie remnants in this predominantly wood region are small, but they are a distinct feature of Illinois’ natural heritage.

Exercise your mind as you exercise your body. Your ears are your eyes, ears, nose and tongue. Like the wildlife finding in your forest preserves, pay as much attention to the sounds as to the sights. The more you notice the better you will be able to enjoy yourself. Look at the colors around you. Are they green or brown? Where are birds and insects different colors? What different shapes and patterns can you see? Listen! Bird and insect songs, frog calls, leaves rustling in the wind – nature is full of music.

Preserves are open sunrise-sunset 365 days a year
Website: www.fpdcc.com

ACTIVITIES & FACILITIES

PIECING: Picnicking is the most popular use of the preserves. From quiet family gatherings to large group outings, Diamond picnic areas are an invitation to enjoy the outdoors. Each picnic area in the region provides parking, picnic tables, trash receptacles and a meadow for play. Many areas have picnic shelters.

Group of 25 or more must have a picnic permit. Forest permits may be obtained from the District’s website at www.fpdcc.com or at the District’s headquarters located at 336 N. Harlem Avenue, River Forest, 400/31, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Please observe regulations posted on the permit.

TRAILES: Are you looking for a short break or an all day adventure? There’s a trail for you in the forest preserves. Stress relief and healthy exercise await you at your doorsteps on miles of trails meandering along streams, forests and meadows to reveal wonders of nature. Fresh air and exercise are only a few steps away.

All trails are open for Hiking, Dog Walking and Cross-Country Skiing (with suitable snow cover). Region 6 offers multi-use trails through a variety of terrain. Dogs may be leashed.

Bicycling is permitted on designated paved and unpaved roads. Trails not specifically designated are closed to bicycles. The John Hauer 68A Trail bicycle trail is paved; the Antioch bicycle trail is unpaved. A riding area for a single track mountain bike trail at the Palatine Woods-South.

HORSEBACK RIDING: Region 6 has many unpaved trail loops available for horseback riding. Horse trail parking is available at Country Line Woods, Dan McMillan Woods, Camp Keweenaw Equine Accessing Area and Hidden Pond Woods-East.

FISHING AND BOATING: Boat rentals and a boat launch ramp are available at Maple Lake and Sagamore Slough in a favorite fishing destination, and several smaller lakes are also managed for fishing. State fishing regulations apply. For information on size and daily catch limits, visit www.fpdcc.com. Fishing is prohibited in Diamond lakes and ponds.

ICE FISHING: Ice fishing is permitted on designated lakes and ponds. Check the website or call for a list of designated waters each winter.

SHOWMOBLING: Montri Meadow is a designated snowmobile area. A minimum of four inches (4") of snow cover is required snowmobiles must be treaded and use the trail.

BIRD WATCHING: The District is renowned for its nesting, migratory and overwintering bird life—nearly 300 species of birds have been seen in the woodlands and wetlands of the Palos region. The Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center offers bird walks and other programs and information about birds and wildlife.

KITE FLYING: Many designated picnic groves have large open meadows that are ideal for flying kites. The Bigging Lake-Wolf Road Woods area is an excellent location.

GOLFING: While there are no golf courses in Region 6, the Forest Preserve offers ten (10) golf courses and four (4) driving ranges in regions nearby. Golfing information can be found on the “golf” link at www.fpdcc.com or by visiting www.willowgrovegolf.com.

MODEL BOATING: Lake Ida in Sandburn Meadow is designated for model boating.

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Volunteer OPPORTUNITIES

Everyday the District offers firm, exciting paid educational and volunteer services to work in the Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center, is enriched by the effort of active volunteers. Call the Volunteer Resources Team at (708) 631-2799 or visit our website at www.fpdcc.com for a wide range of opportunities available throughout the region.

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MISSION AND PURPOSE

The State of Illinois passed legislation in 1914 allowing Cook County to establish a forest preserves system. In 1915, the FPDC acquired its first natural area and since then has acquired, restored and managed natural forests, prairies and other lands, to protect and preserve their flora, fauna and natural beauty for the education, enjoyment and recreation of the public.

Today, the District manages a dynamic network of approximately 68,000 acres of land, 80 per cent of which remain in a wild or semi-wild natural state, and hundreds of miles of shorelines, all of which are beautiful scenes.

The District continues its mission of acquiring and preserving additional land in the Cook County area. The District is committed to managing its land in a way that is consistent with the needs of the public and the environment.

The District is committed to the preservation and conservation of Illinois’ forest preserves. The District is determined to continue to provide excellent service to its customers by providing a variety of programs and activities.

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FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF COOK COUNTY
General Headquarters:
336 N. Harlem Ave., River Forest, IL 60305
Phone: (800) 876-3666
User: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
Emergency Services: 911
Volunteer Hotline: (708) 631-1790
Website: www.fpdcc.com

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
To learn more about the Board of Commissioners, visit us online at www.fpdcc.com.

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