



THE CITY OF LAKE FOREST
CITY HALL
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LAKE FOREST, IL 60045

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City and Lake Forest Open Lands to Partner on Land Exchange and Restoration Initiative

On Monday night the Lake Forest City Council voted to engage in a planned land exchange with Lake Forest Open Lands Association that will reassign the ownership of valuable open space parcels within the community to enhance public use and also provide a mechanism to take advantage of federal funding for the restoration and permanent protection of McCormick Ravine. Key to this proposed land exchange is the commitment by both organizations to engage in an approximately \$3.5 million program for the large-scale habitat restoration of McCormick Ravine through the Great Lakes Fishery & Ecosystem Restoration program managed by the United State Army Corps of Engineers. As part of this partner agreement, Lake Forest Open Lands will provide at least \$600,000 in required matching funds for the habitat restoration program.

"The substance behind this land exchange represents a real win-win for our community, not only for residents but for nature as well." said Donald P. Schoenheider, Mayor of Lake Forest. "My compliments to City staff and Lake Forest Open Lands for their creative partnership approach to get this program off the ground."

Specifically, the Memorandum of Understanding approved Monday night outlines a land swap whereby Lake Forest Open Lands will transfer ownership of a 1.25 acre open space parcel at the southeast corner of East Deerpath and North Green Bay Road, commonly known as Open Lands Park, to the City. Open Lands Park is a centrally-located parcel at the gateway to the City's historic business district. Lake Forest Open Lands will also transfer an approximately one quarter acre, triangular-shaped parcel contiguous to the City's Elawa Farm complex to complete the formal garden area. As part of this land exchange, once the restoration of McCormick Ravine is completed, the City will then transfer formal ownership of the 61-acre parcel and long-term

management responsibilities to Lake Forest Open Lands. Creating a mechanism to take advantage of the substantial grant funding currently available to restore the habitat and hydrology of McCormick was a key element of the agreement.

Lake Forest Open Lands has long championed the cultural, recreational and conservation value of McCormick Ravine, and has been volunteering to help manage and research McCormick for nearly 20 years now as part of the City's Master Lease agreement. "The restoration and preservation of McCormick Ravine has been a strategic priority for our organization for a long time," says John Sentell, president of Lake Forest Open Lands Association. "Our board is passionate about the potential to restore McCormick Ravine and is committed to invest the resources to get it done so our community can experience this remarkable natural wonder forever."

Sally Swarthout, Director of Parks and Recreation for The City of Lake Forest, states "Our Board is particularly excited about expanding its partnership with Lake Forest Open Lands Association and collaborating on the best plan so that Lake Foresters will enjoy both McCormick Ravine and Open Lands Park for many years to come."

The public /private partnership between the City of Lake Forest and Lake Forest Open Lands to preserve open space has had many successes over the past two decades.

"The City Council believes the action proposed tonight is one of those uniquely opportune endeavors that will result in another milestone in open space preservation for our community" stated Mayor Schoenheider. "It's really an investment in our future."

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