

Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve Timeline

Base Closure 1989-1993

1989

January 1989, Fort Sheridan closing officially announced

1991

Congressman Porter leads reuse plan considering open space, outdoor recreation, housing & economic development

Forest Preserve expresses interest

- 1990 & 1991 Resolutions of interest & \$10 million offer
- 1992 Forest Preserve Concept Plan developed that includes 18-hole golf course

Joint Planning Committee 1993-1995

1993

- Base closes
- Joint Planning Committee (JPC) formed to plan Fort Sheridan reuse; comprised of two elected officials from each governing body of Lake County, Lake Forest, Highland Park & Highwood
- Forest Preserve referendum allocates \$1.75 million for Fort access & restoration

1994

- Forest Preserve leases golf course for \$1 per year. Golf course opens for public play
- Lands-to-Parks application submitted to U.S. Department of Interior National Park Service
- Joint Planning Committee Concept Plan adopted includes signature 18-hole golf course concept
- Army concurs with JPC Concept Plan

1995

President signs federal land transfer legislation

- District must protect & enhance open space in accordance with Fort Sheridan JPC Concept Plan
- Cemetery must be maintained. Endangered or threatened species must be protected

Land Transfer 1997-2000

1997

Four ordinances passed

- Finalizing Fort agreements with Local Redevelopment Authority, Highwood and Highland Park
- Memorandum of Understanding with Army
- Forest Preserve agreement with Catholic Charities
- Clean-up agreement with Town of Fort Sheridan Company

1999

Forest Preserve Referendum

- Public approves \$3.75 million for restoration, roads, parking, trails and other facilities along Lake Michigan; total amount allocated to Fort Sheridan from the 1993 and 1999 referendums was \$5.5 million
- Land acquired in three phases 1999, 2000 and 2001 with final deed transferring in 2002

Detailed Planning & Bidding 2002-2004

2001

- Board approves natural resource & environmental engineering contracts
- Forest Preserve Master Plan approved that includes reconstructing 18-hole golf course, creating public access roads, parking, three miles of trails, restoring ravines & lakeshore, improving storm water drainage & erosion problems, building multipurpose visitors center with clubhouse, nature & history exhibits, classrooms, public meeting space & food service

2002

- Golf Course architect hired

2003-2004

- Board approves demolition & filling of Nike missile silos
- Golf Course closed October 1, 2003; anticipated reconstruction to start in 2004; course condition had been worsening while awaiting land transfers and reconstruction; irrigation system on greens only & equipment very old

2004

- Bids rejected November 12, 2004 by Finance & Administrative, Development, Restoration & Planning, & Revenue Facilities Committees meeting in joint session
- Longstanding District policy to not pay golf construction & operating costs with tax dollars
- Staff directed to revise golf plan; investigate implementing public access & restoration

2004-2005

Golf Course funding & cost reduction options analyzed

- Bent grass vs. fescue; shorten course length; reduce number of tee boxes; 18-hole vs. 9-hole; reduce irrigation system; financial scenarios & projections compared; high green fees for self-support; many cost reduction options adversely affect potential net revenues

Public Access & Restoration 2005-2009

2005

October 26, 2005: Forest Preserve files lawsuit against Town of Fort Sheridan, LLC, developer of adjacent residential area for violating agreement by refusing to remove dirt piles & complete demolition

Trails & parking opened

- 1.3 miles asphalt trail from preserve entrance to lakeshore, 0.75 miles shoreline access, 0.3 miles wood chip trail, trail bridge over ravine, new parking area & fencing

Natural Areas Improved

- Hutchinson Ravine restoration nearly completed; South bluff began; multi-year restoration effort

2006

- Educational curriculum completed developed with assistance of area teachers
- Military cemetery improvements: new fencing, new entrance, improved grounds
- Trailside exhibits installed & grand opening celebrated June 2006

2007-2008

- Remedial Action Plan prepared by District; approved by Lake County Health Department & Illinois EPA.
- **August 8, 2008:** Lawsuit settled following 3-years' negotiations.
- Dirt piles processed & earthmoving completed; grading designed to support a golf course or other public use; Janes Ravine restoration begins; upland buffer restorations begins

2009

- January and March: Committee of the Whole meets regarding Fort Sheridan planning
 - Hear consultant's report on golf course feasibility. Listen to public comment
- May and July: Board decides not to pursue rebidding of golf course construction
 - Board directs formation of Master Plan Advisory Committee and confirms appointments
- Upland buffer restoration completed; lakeshore bluff restoration begins