

# Road Map to 2025



Lake County  
Forest Preserves

## Objective

### Steward Healthy Landscapes

*Protect and restore ecological habitats and services.*

#### Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resiliency

**Tactic:** Define and monitor six metrics that audit climate adaptation and mitigation actions that measure carbon sequestration, aquatic systems and oak ecosystems. Continue evaluation of implementation strategies.

**Tactic:** Implement regenerative farming pilot projects on 25% of our forest preserve agricultural lands.

#### Water Resources

**Tactic:** Focus on aquatic systems by continuing collaboration and reprioritizing existing staff resources to enhance the quality of our rivers, streams and lakes.

**Tactic:** Understand the unique challenges of Lake Michigan.

#### Green Infrastructure

**Tactic:** Quantify the monetary value of ecosystem services our preserves provide per acre of habitat.

**Tactic:** Prioritize action steps to implement the Green Infrastructure Model and Strategy.

**Tactic:** Increase the tree canopy in Lake County from 28% to 32% focusing primarily on oak ecosystems.

#### Conservation Plan

**Tactic:** Restore an additional 2,400 acres of forest preserve lands.

**Tactic:** Based on mEco ecological data, implement precision conservation for restoration efforts focusing on ecological complexes, large habitats and priority species.

## Objective

### Strengthen Connections

*Extend public access, brand awareness, and education and outreach.*

#### Communications

**Tactic:** Design an integrated marketing campaign using print, digital and grassroots methods to increase countywide awareness of the Preservation Foundation from 16% (2019 survey results) to 32%, and increase the donor base from 4,600 to 9,200.

**Tactic:** Grow *Horizons* magazine distribution by 20% to increase public awareness; align editorial content with Road Map to 2025 strategic priorities.

#### Healthy Communities

**Tactic:** Expand communications that promote our forest preserves as a fitness and recreation destination for physical and mental wellness.

**Tactic:** Broaden conversations with diverse audiences to increase awareness and motivate them to actively use forest preserves, participate in programs, and become a volunteer or donor.

#### Education

**Tactic:** Offer diverse and innovative educational opportunities that engage the changing population and expand our reach to and within every Lake County zip code.

**Tactic:** Empower and develop Board Commissioners, Preservation Foundation Board and Committee members, and staff to become leading experts in their fields by investing in educational training and professional development opportunities.

#### Human Interactions

**Tactic:** Train Board Commissioners, Preservation Foundation Board and Committee members, and staff and volunteers to be brand ambassadors so every public interaction delivers consistent messages.

## Objective

### Ensure Financial Stability

*Build a clear economic pathway for long-term capacity.*

#### Endowment Campaign

**Tactic:** Ensure a permanent source of revenue for tree planting, reforestation and habitat restoration through charitable financial support in the amount of \$20 million.

**Tactic:** Commit staff resources to cultivate relationships with potential donors to reach the Preservation Foundation's endowment goal.

#### Understand Capacity

**Tactic:** Prioritize investments of available resources using data-driven, performance-based decisions that consider outside trends and long-term impacts.

**Tactic:** Analyze existing and new agreements with third parties to leverage only those that are mutually beneficial toward achieving our efforts or extending our goals.

#### Secure New Funding

**Tactic:** Create a designated fund to take advantage of meeting grant opportunities that advance strategic priorities.

**Tactic:** Pursue legislative action to amend the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act to increase the statute's maximum tax rates for the general corporate levy and the development levy, each by no more than 0.02%.

## Objective

### Sustain Organizational Excellence

*Emphasize mission-centric leadership to balance organizational resources, core activities and culture.*

#### Diversity and Inclusion

**Tactic:** Enhance our cultural competency and knowledge of diversity, equity and inclusion practices so that we can best serve and engage all Lake County residents in enjoying and caring for the health of natural landscapes and cultural heritage in our county.

**Tactic:** Identify and implement actions that foster a diverse workforce across every level of the organization. Understand how we need to change in order to attract and retain a diverse workforce.

**Tactic:** Complete Phase 1 of the revised Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan.

**Tactic:** Empower and motivate staff to work at the top of their professional abilities and core work functions to collaborate on issues impacting the region. Be named one of the "Best Places to Work in Illinois" through the Daily Herald statewide competition.

#### Comprehensive Master Planning

**Tactic:** Establish components for the framework of a long-range plan that integrates operations, land use, ecosystems services, and public access projects. This will be used to guide sustainable development and management of new and existing preserves.

**Tactic:** Continue analyzing and prioritizing rehabilitation and redevelopment opportunities of preserves in which infrastructure is nearing the end of its useful life and where use patterns have changed over time. The intent is to rightsize impervious surfaces, eliminate adverse impacts to natural resources, reduce long-term operational expenses and provide improved recreational experiences.

#### Innovations

**Tactic:** Enhance our organization's digital capabilities and incorporate emerging technologies that automate and support core functions and create internal efficiencies.

#### Safety

**Tactic:** Continue to prioritize public and staff safety and reduce our safety incident rate by 71%.

**Tactic:** Educate and train all staff on applicable safety standards; conduct job safety analyses.