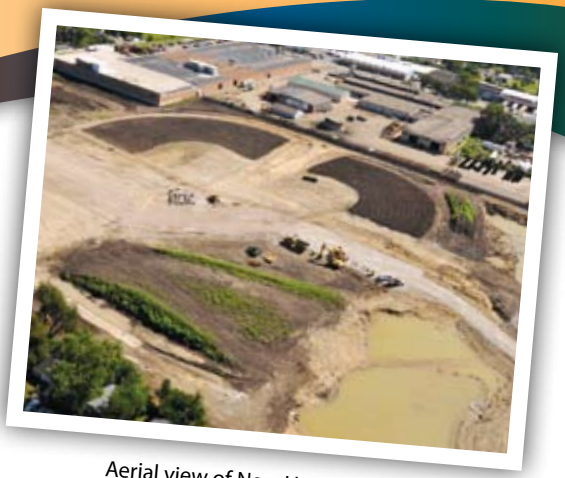
OSPRI

Open Space, Parks & Recreation Investment Plan

Fox Valley Park District

Fall 2010 Update



Aerial view of New Haven Community Park as construction plans take shape

Capital Improvement Projects

Referendum Update

Following voter approval on Feb. 5, 2008, of a $44.8 million capital improvement bond referendum, the Fox Valley Park District has carried out the interests of its residents with completion of numerous park projects and renovations. Progress is ongoing with many more upgrades, improvements and new projects planned for this fall and 2011. Reflecting residents' wishes, the District's key goals are to acquire and protect land for nature areas, open space and for park and recreation purposes, including along the Fox River; improve and develop regional trails; expand fishing access; and renovate neighborhood and community parks with improvements to playgrounds, sports fields, facilities and Blackberry Farm.

Fox Valley Park District

Where fun begins

Turning Visions into Reality

Progress continues at a brisk pace this fall with the creation of new parks and revitalization plans carried out at many other parks. Among the most notable:

New Haven Community Park – Located in the heart of a highly developed, residential area on Aurora's near west side, this once-vacant 19-acre land parcel of open green space is in the process of being converted into a hub of recreation. A groundbreaking celebration was held in May to launch construction and recognize the cooperative intergovernmental partnership between the Kane County Forest Preserve District, City of Aurora and Park District. When completed in 2011, New Haven will feature lit ball fields, soccer fields, playground, restrooms, shelter, a ½-mile asphalt trail loop and native plant landscaping.

Cool Acres Riverfront Park – A popular community gathering place for parties and picnics, this riverside favorite at Sullivan Road and Route 25 received a series of improvements this summer. The revitalization project featured major improvements to the large shelter, including a new shingle roof that replaced the metal roof, new siding, new overhead doors, a pergola, new skylights and ADA accessibility. Future plans include a new playground and an additional, 36-space paved parking lot at the south edge that will increase capacity to 70 parking spaces.

Waubonsie Creek Park – Currently 20 acres of open space, this valuable land acquisition will be converted into a vibrant community park with lit ball fields and soccer fields, a trailhead shelter, restrooms, expanded parking and regional trails on both sides of Waubonsie Creek, extending the "Emerald Strand" that starts at Spring Lake to 232 acres of greenway.

Waubonsie Lake Park – In conjunction with Waubonsie Creek Park, improvements will include new restroom facilities and shelter with fireplace, improved trail access, scenic lakeside overlooks and fishing pier and environmentally friendly parking featuring bioswales and rain gardens. Work on both projects is targeted to begin this fall.

Copley II renovation – Renovations are complete at this long-popular, 9.76-acre park, bringing modern improvements that include a new playground and shelter, ball field upgrades and refurbished basketball courts.

Fox River Trail Gap – New trail construction on the west shoreline of the Fox River is complete, running northward from the Virgil Gilman Trail and South River Street Park to Hurds Island Park, where a bridge will be constructed across the west channel. A future trail will traverse Hurds Island to the North Avenue Bridge. This project is another example of inter-governmental cooperation with the City of Aurora.

Future home for the soon-to-be-constructed Waubonsie Creek Park

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Open Space, Nature Area and Park Acquisition

Land acquisition goals include preserving and restoring nature areas, expanding public access and reclaiming scenic views of the Fox River, extending riverfront trails, and providing additional park, recreation and open space adjacent to existing park throughout the City of Aurora and Villages of North Aurora and Montgomery.

To date, the District has acquired 107.3 acres of open space since passage of the referendum. In 2010, new land acquisitions include:

- **1.91 acres at Jericho Lake**
- **2.9-acre expansion on east shoreline of Fox River near Prairie Path**
- **0.17 acres on west shoreline of Fox River, providing land for new riverside trail**
- **0.34 acres to expand Copley II Park**
- **2.07 acres at Waubonsie Lake**
- **0.1 acres expanding Lincoln Mini Park**
- **5.12 acres at Stonegate West subdivision through land/cash agreement**
- **7.46 acres at Balmorea subdivision on Aurora's west side through land/cash agreement**
- **1.37 acres at Ingham Park subdivision**

Shoreline stabilization work is nearly complete at Veterans Island

New extension of Fox River Trail running northward from South River Street Park

Regional Trail Improvements (Fox River and Gilman Trails, Illinois Prairie Path)

Work is in progress to expand the District's regional trail system and improve existing trails and trail facilities. Projects and upgrades over the last two years have added or restored 5.85 miles of trails, bringing the total to *more than 40 miles of trails* maintained by the District and enjoyed by residents.

- Completion of the **Gilman Trail overpass** at Galena Boulevard is currently being engineered and designed, with initial construction expected to begin this fall.
- Future plans for the **Waubonsie Creek Trail** include a ½-mile extension along the north side of Waubonsie Creek from west of Montgomery Road to form a loop extending to Waterford Drive.

Fox River Park and Nature Area Improvements

Objectives include renovation of District-owned river shoreline and islands to expand recreation, improve fishing access, improve parking, upgrade existing facilities, expand natural areas and restore native habitats.

- Dredging of the **Veterans Island Marina** is complete, assuring adequate water levels for many years to come. A new boat launch and floating pier make access to the Fox River easy and convenient for all types of water craft.
- Shoreline stabilization improvements are being made on the entire perimeter of **Veterans Island** that will safeguard the park against erosion and prolong its presence as a popular recreation site on the Fox River. Boulders, native plantings and limestone ledge rock retaining walls – with periodic fishing access areas – are being put in place. The project received a funding grant of $200,000 from the Kane County Fox River Trust program.
- **Lippold Park** is in Phase I of the natural area restoration plan, which began in 2009. The District also has applied for a $400,000 Open Space Land Acquisition and Development grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Neighborhood Park and Playground Improvement and Renovation Program

In an ongoing effort to update established neighborhood parks, projects include replacing outdated play areas with new, innovative play equipment; adding or replacing picnic shelters; constructing additional walking paths and planting many more trees.

- **Cherry Hill Park** will be renovated with improvements that include a new multi-age playground, new shelter and reconfiguring and resurfacing of the basketball court into two half courts.

Other neighborhood projects completed to date include:

- **Church Road Park**
- **Cowherd Park**
- **Erickson Park**
- **May Street Park**
- **Nature's Meadows Park**

Community Park Improvement and Renovation Program

Objectives are to improve recreation opportunities at the District's large, community-wide parks:

- **Simmons Park** – Renovations at the popular school/park area on Indian Trail include a community playground, large picnic shelter, improved soccer fields and baseball fields, a restroom building with utilities and an asphalt trail system. The parking lot will be enlarged to a 70-car capacity, reconfigured and built with permeable pavers, a bioswale and rain garden detention area. The project is supported by a $400,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and a $50,000 Illinois Department of Economic Opportunity grant.
- Renovations and improvements at **Jericho Lake Park** are scheduled to include replacement of the current pavilion, improved fishing access and a trail system encircling the 20-acre lake.
- **Amberwood Park** received state-of-the-industry playground equipment, resurfaced basketball courts and a new, 10-foot-wide asphalt trail traversing the park that connects to the existing regional trail along 75th Street.
- **Lebanon Park** – The revitalization project is complete, providing this popular park with renovated restrooms, upgraded shelter with a large concrete apron and flagstone seating wall and an expanded parking lot with drop-off areas and a paved walkway to the shelter.

Park District playgrounds feature modern equipment that offers a safe, fun outlet for children

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Sports Fields and Facilities

A two-year project to upgrade all of the District's ball fields is now complete, with grading and infield improvements having been performed on 49 baseball/softball fields. Each field project included adding infield mix and re-grading infields, eliminating infield/turf "lips," seeding/sod, reshaping batters' boxes and pitching mounds and reinstalling base anchors and home plate.

Blackberry Farm

A master plan developed through a public open house input process will be implemented in phases beginning this fall, bringing a series of new upgrades to the 41-year-old, iconic facility. Among the planned improvements are an adventure play area with climbing wall, boat dock with pedal and fishing boats, new restrooms, concession area renovations, events plaza and expanded group picnic shelters. These modernizations will be carried out while still maintaining the traditional, historical and interpretive themes and character that generations have enjoyed at Blackberry Farm.

Artist's rendering of the new adventure playground to be built at Blackberry Farm

Investing in a better tomorrow through other, non-referendum capital improvement projects

Beyond the voter-approved Open Space, Park and Recreation Investment (OSPRI) projects, the District also has devoted resources for other park and recreation capital improvement projects that have either been completed or are currently under way:

Community Parks

- **Greene Field Park**
- **Spring Lake Park**

Neighborhood Parks

- **Andover Park**
- **Homestead Park**
- **Remington Landing Park**
- **Stonegate Park**
- **Fairfield Way Park**
- **Moecherville Park**
- **Westwood Park**

The Fox Valley Park District appreciates the support of its residents in providing and improving park and recreation access throughout the communities we serve. We are committed to our ongoing mission to acquire and preserve open space and parkland, improve and expand regional trails and continually upgrade your parks, playgrounds and sports fields. By working together, our communities reap immeasurable benefits provided by parks and recreation that enhance the quality of life for all residents. We look forward to continuing this great partnership for current and future generations.

A peaceful summer evening at newly renovated Spring Lake Park