

Village of Oakwood Hills Lake, Park & Fen Committee

The Lake, Park and Fen (LPF) Committee was created to protect and manage our unique natural resources and features that make our community the beautiful and peaceful place it is today. The LPF committee is responsible for ensuring that these resources remain healthy so that we can all enjoy and have fun in a clean and safe outdoor environment. The LPF Committee continually strives to balance the needs and desires of our community with the needs of these resources, and works closely with regional partners to leverage our limited financial and staff resources to achieve maximum results.

Committee Meetings

The committee meets on an as needed basis, usually within a 2 week period prior to the monthly board meeting. Meeting times and dates are posted in the village hall and on the webpage. The committee chair also sends out an email notice of meeting to any regular attendees of those meetings, or anyone wishing to receive notification by e-mail. The committee always welcomes anyone interested in participating to attend the meetings which are informal and discussion based. Opportunities to volunteer and to participate on committee projects are described below under the 'How You Can Help' section.

Our Partnerships

The Village LPF Committee has created and nurtured partnerships with several local and regional governmental and non-governmental agencies in an effort to leverage our limited economic and staff resources, expand our knowledge base, and to be able to take advantage of grant or volunteer opportunities we may not have otherwise known about. Partnerships make others aware of our Village and assist with attracting additional resources to the Village. Partnerships also raise our ability to network and collaborate regionally on issues that affect our Village resources.

Our principal partners are motivated to collaborate with the Village on issues that affect our Lake, Park and Fen resources and include:

Governmental Agency Partners

- *McHenry County Conservation District.* <http://www.mccdistrict.org/web/ge-Stewardship-Program.htm>
- *Lake/McHenry County Soil and Water Conservation District.* <http://www.mchenryswcd.org/>
- *US Fish & Wildlife Service, Chicago Field Office, Barrington IL.* <http://www.fws.gov/>
- *Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Area 2.* <http://dnr.state.il.us/INPC/index.htm>
- *Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and local technical assistance opportunities.* <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/ta>
- *IEPA Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program regionally managed through the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.* <http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/vlmp/>

- *IEPA Partners for Conservation Priority Lake and Watershed Implementation Program (PLWIP)*. <http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/conservation/plwip.html>
- *IDNR Department of Wildlife*. <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/fishing/Pages/default.aspx> ; <http://dnr.state.il.us/orc/wildliferesources/contacts/r2.asp>
- *Northern Regional Groundwater Protection Planning Committee for Winnebago, Boone & McHenry Counties*. <http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/groundwater/images/northern.html>

Non-Government Partners

- *Fox River Ecosystem Partnership*. <http://www.foxriverecosystem.org/> ; <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/pfc/Pages/default.aspx>
- *Silver & Sleepy Hollow Creeks Watershed Coalition* <http://mcdef.org/watershedinfo.html>
- *The Land Conservancy of McHenry County's Project Quercus* <http://www.conservmc.org/what-we-do/oak-conservation-project-quercus.html>

Accomplishments and Projects

2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 have seen many accomplishments and projects initiated and completed by the LPF Committee in collaboration with their partners, and other interested community volunteers.

Oakwood Hills Fen

Fen Buffer Woody Invasive Species Clearing and Trail Creation Project Phase I & Phase II in partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Service local discretionary grant program. The Village received \$12,250 in grant funds. Additional funds and in-kind services including seeding and volunteer work day supervision performed by the McHenry County Conservation District. 2011-2012

Fen Buffer Nature Preserve Dedication in partnership with the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. 2013

Fen Buffer Invasive Species Control in partnership with the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission subsequent to the addition of the Fen Buffer in the Nature Preserve. Grant valued at \$5,000. 2014

IEPA Section 319 Water Quality grant for \$171,537 to create detention and infiltration and repair the eroded stream bank that drains from North Park Road and the fields to the north into the fen. The in-kind match valued at \$126,966 is being provided by the McHenry County Conservation District and Village volunteers under a Memorandum of Understanding currently being negotiated between the Village and the District. 2014 - 2016

Silver Lake

The Village applied for and received a Partner's for Conservation Priority Lake and Watershed Implementation Program Grant for \$56,700 from the IEPA to install **2 bioinfiltration basins** at the end of 2 roads in the Village that drain directly into the lake bringing road salts and heavy metals and other pollutants into the lake. These basins will clean the water prior to it going into the lake by temporarily holding it while it slowly infiltrates through the soils and deep plant roots that assist with cleaning the water. 2013-2014

In 2011 we received a small grant from the IEPA **Lake Education Assistance Program** to host a Lake Festival for the residents of the Village. We had a fishing derby for kids 12 and under with prizes and fishing rods donated by local businesses, and demonstrations by the IDNR fisheries biologists on surveying lake fish, lots of hands on exhibits around the lake and in the park demonstrating invasive species and healthy lake plant species as well as tours of the fen by the Conservation District showcasing the work that had been completed there.

Repair of **the lake outfall pipe and concrete aprons** that drain under the earthen dam from the lake to Silver Creek. MFT funds were used for this project. 2013

The Village was a CMAP grant recipient in 2012-2013 of a **Local Technical Assistance** grant to evaluate and review our codes and ordinances to provide guidance on how we can improve and update those codes and ordinances. The grant was provided to CMAP through a three year HUD grant of \$4.25 million to implement the regions GoTo 2040 plan. The pass through award to the Village is valued at \$ [REDACTED] and was applied for through our partnership with the Silver and Sleepy Hollow Creeks Watershed Coalition. This grant was in partnership with the City of McHenry, the City of Crystal Lake, and the Village of Prairie Grove. The Village has applied for the next phase of this grant to update the comprehensive plan and to assist with updating the codes and ordinances as recommended in the review.

How You Can Help

The LPF Committee is always looking for volunteers to participate using their unique skills and interests. Whether you are an individual, a family or a group such as a scout group we have a variety of projects that you can choose from.

Fen Stewardship: The Village is seeking **volunteer stewards and their families** for regularly scheduled monthly work days. It's a come when you can event! Examples of types of work include:

- removing invasive species like the spring Garlic Mustard Pull statewide event
- clearing invasive brush in the winter with bonfires and hot dog roasting!
- putting up the project signage,
- maintaining the trails, and
- collecting and spreading seed during the fall harvest time.

Volunteers will work with the trained McHenry County Conservation District and Village appointed Site Steward who will be completing her training with the MCCD in spring of 2015 and will be setting up her network of volunteers to begin in Spring 2015. The Village will announce her appointment to this volunteer position in early 2015.

The Oakwood Hills Fen is designated as an Illinois State Nature Preserve by the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and is partially owned by the Village of Oakwood Hills and partially owned by the McHenry County Conservation District.

<http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/INPC/Pages/Area2McHenryOakwoodHillsFen.aspx>

Lake & Fishing: The LPF Committee is planning on hosting a **fishing derby for adults and children in 2015** and volunteers are needed to assist with the planning efforts. These include finding sponsors and marketing the event for Village residents. Committee trustees will be coordinating the volunteers. No experience is needed and all ages are welcome to help! Please leave your contact information with the Village Clerk if you would like to help.

Parks & Recreation: **Planting and caring for Oak tree seedlings** with *Project Quercus* is a current priority project for the Committee. Our Village is named Oakwood Hills, yet many of our oaks are old and not regenerating. We have initiated a project in partnership with the Land Conservancy of McHenry County's *Project Quercus* to plant oak tree seedlings on Village property. Oak acorns are collected by many groups around the county and a local tree nursery germinates them and grows them as a community service project and donates the seedlings. Several oak seedlings have been planted by scouts at the Village Hall and in Community Park. We are seeking family and group volunteers to continue this program and to care for the little seedling oaks as they become established. Please leave your name and contact information with the Village Clerk and someone will contact you. No experience is needed and you will be taught by *Project Quercus* everything you need to know!

Project Assistance: The Village is seeking a volunteer with **general contractor experience** to help with the 319 grant. (see Accomplishments & Projects above for a brief description of the project). This project requires a Village match which is proposed to be provided by in-kind services, and the Village is seeking a volunteer who has general contracting experience to provide guidance to the volunteer Village Project Manager. Please contact Ken Smith at the Village Hall to find out more and to leave your contact information at 815-444-9437.