

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 2, 2026

CONTACT:

Laurie Metanchuk, Director of Community Engagement
Brittany Kovach, Communications & Marketing Supervisor
630-232-5980 forestpreserve@kaneforest.com

Forest Preserve District of Kane County
1996 S. Kirk Rd., Ste. 320, Geneva, IL 60134
www.kaneforest.com



Forest Preserve District acquires 220 acres of Illinois' highest-quality wetlands and woodlands after 100+ years of protection by one family

GENEVA, IL —The Forest Preserve District of Kane County added two long sought-after properties to its holdings, June 26, land that hasn't been on the market for a century and that includes some of the highest quality, privately-held wetlands and woodlands in Illinois.



The District protected two separate parcels along Brier Hill Road in Hampshire Township, totaling 220.041 acres. Acquired from the Hemmer family, the properties include an Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) site — land recognized by the state for its high-quality natural areas, endangered species habitats or areas of outstanding ecological and geological significance.



— MORE —

— ADD ONE —

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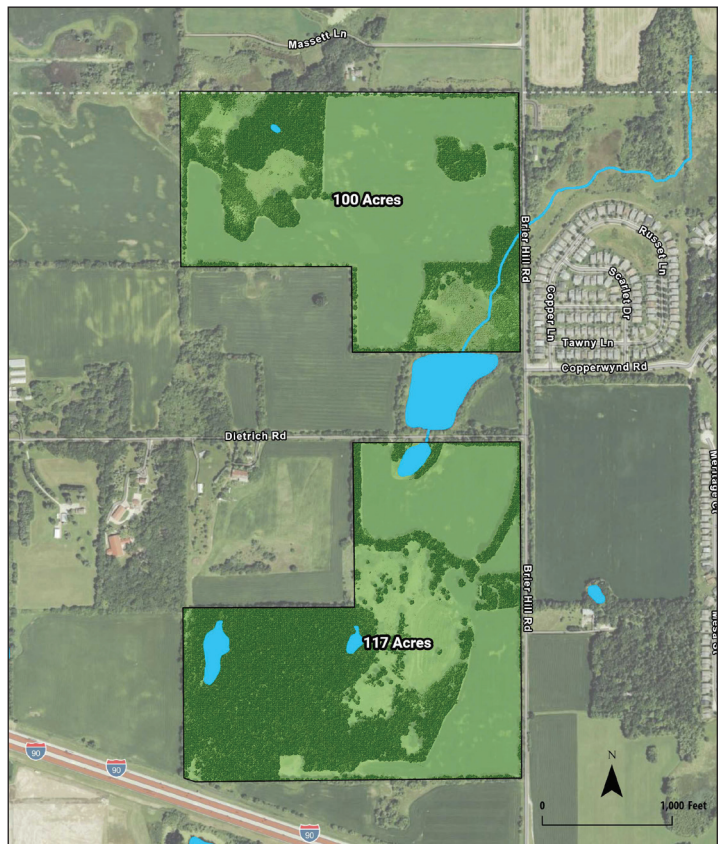
The properties include two types of rare wetland ecosystems: fen and sedge meadow. Both are biodiversity hot spots and provide critical habitat for a variety of species. In addition to high-quality wetlands, remnant, never-been-plowed oak woodlands are also present. Oaks support more plant and animal species than any other tree in all of North America.



Forest Preserve District Executive Director Benjamin Haberthur said years of caring for the lands were evident on both parcels.

“Generation after generation of Hemmer made a living from but also protected the flourishing natural areas on which they lived. Because of one family’s multigenerational love of the land, the quality of the woodlands and wetlands that exist at the site today is of a quality that rarely exists,” he said.

Haberthur added that land records from the 19th century are difficult to decipher, but Hemmer family lore is that they settled ‘where the wagon broke down’ in the 1840s.



“I’ve seen the Hemmer ownership on an 1860 map and others of that era, but legal records don’t tell the full story of who was living where, on the land. The records for the parcels the Forest Preserve District just protected have been recorded under Hemmer since at least 1920,” Haberthur said.

— MORE —

— **ADD TWO** —

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Future plans for the site include restoration of the natural areas and likely the addition of passive, recreational amenities like mowed or limestone trails, a picnic shelter and a small parking area.

The District invested \$3,141,826.92 for the two parcels, at an average of \$14,278 per acre. The addition brings total District holdings to 24,835 acres.

For more information on the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, visit www.kaneforest.com or search @forestpreserve on social media.

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