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Forest Preserve District expands Freeman Kame-Meagher with 84-acre addition in Gilberts

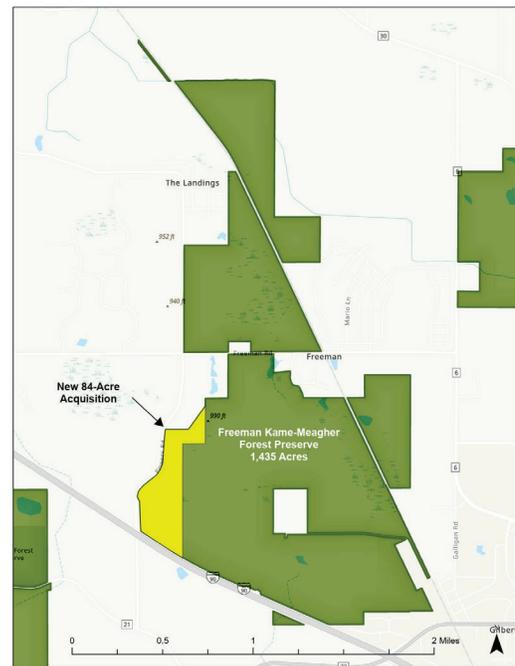
GENEVA, IL — The Forest Preserve District of Kane County is back in land-acquisition mode, and just made a long sought-after investment in Gilberts, Oct. 31.

The District closed on an 84-acre addition to Freeman-Kame Meagher Forest Preserve that includes rare species including birds, turtles, insects and numerous plant species. It also is home to the largest protected, remnant oak woodland in Kane County.

This land investment is the first after the successful passage of the 2024 Land Acquisition & Preserve Improvement Referendum and sound financial planning.

Land that has never been plowed under, either for farming or other development, is referred to as a remnant. Remnant areas are an attractive investment for the Forest Preserve District because they typically contain a higher diversity of plant and animal species.

“The Freeman Kame acquisition not only protects the impressive woodland, but also the rare plant and animal species present on the site,” said Director of Natural Resource Management Patrick Chess. “We have a number of rare and listed species present at Freeman Kame, so this acquisition aids wildlife by providing needed, additional habitat,” he said.



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The uncommon landscape features are also desirable. The topography at Freeman Kame is distinctive, with glacial landforms known as kettle kame topography. The bumpy mounds (kames) and bowl-like depressions (kettles) were formed by retreating glaciers. Chess said the mounds are comprised of gravel deposits that are covered in 200-year old oak trees. These are interspersed between depressional wetlands that contain remnant sedge meadow communities — wetland habitats made-up of sedges, grasses and wildflowers. The diversity, remnant communities, and ability to expand a large preserve add up to an important investment by the District.

Executive Director Benjamin Haberthur said the Forest Preserve District is unlocking new levels of what’s possible with the Freeman Kame addition.

“Every single piece of land the District has protected over the last 100 years has value. From the smallest property to the largest farm — it all supports life. There’s also an ecology of scale at play, here. The larger the preserve, the better the conditions, and the higher the likelihood that rarer wildlife species will return and raise young in these places. Consider birds; small preserves are useful rest stops in their annual migrations, but large, resource-rich preserves can turn a migration stop or overnight location into a home,” he said.

“As our preserves grow, we’re now seeing river otters and badgers in the preserves, as well as bobcats in the area. The return of these Kane County native species signals the successful reassembly of the supporting web of life that increases our shared resiliency,” he added.

The District invested \$3.5 million for the 84.126-acre parcel. The new addition creates a 1,435-acre preserve. Total Forest Preserve District of Kane County holdings are now 24,043 acres.

Forest preserves over 1,000 acres are somewhat rare in Kane County. The average Kane County forest preserve is 238.05 acres. There are only five preserves topping 1,000 acres in the system: Freeman Kame-Meagher, Dick Young, Virgil, Muirhead Springs, and Big Rock Forest Preserves.

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