

## **Existing Public Open Space**

One of the most important countywide systems is the County's open space armature and green infrastructure. This category reflects existing ownership of property, generally over 10 acres in size, by the municipalities, townships, park districts, the Forest Preserve District, and other public bodies. These existing open space and green infrastructure areas provide a framework for the provision of additional open space and the expansion of green infrastructure.

The open space and green infrastructure areas relate directly to the various functions previously discussed in the plan. They range in size and function from small, neighborhood playgrounds providing healthy, active recreational opportunities to large and extensive forest preserves offering wildlife habitats, natural area protection, and passive recreational pursuits.

## **Institutional/Private Open Space**

This category includes a number of private and institutional property ownership. Representative areas are the McGraw Wildlife Foundation, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Mooseheart, and the various youth camps. Although these areas may not be generally accessible to the public, they do provide a number of ecological functions and the plan recommends connecting them to other open space and green infrastructure areas when feasible.

These lands include areas providing visual open space and community separation, preserving important woodlands and wetlands, protecting critical wildlife habitats, and offering important scientific, cultural, and educational opportunities to the residents of Kane County. It is important that the County communicate with the various owners of these lands regarding their proper maintenance and management.

## **Proposed Open Space**

This category includes areas recommended for both public and private open space and green infrastructure uses. The provision of additional open space and green infrastructure has historically been and continues to be a major priority of the County's planning program. The areas indicated could become either major additions to existing public open space and green infrastructure or remain private and still serve as linear connections between large areas of open space.

Open space and green infrastructure provide a number of valuable ecosystem functions. The remaining wetlands in the County are an important element of the open space and green infrastructure network. It has been recognized that wetlands provide important aquifer recharge, water quality and wildlife habitat functions. These functions become increasingly important as populations

