

Natural Area Assurance Program

Managing natural areas
and stormwater BMPs
in developments

or... **What happens after
the regulators go home?**



We Save Land.

We Save Rivers.

Quality of life

A top concern among businesses choosing a location – *Entrepreneur Magazine*

- Places to play
- Clean air, clean water
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Lots of green space
- Room to breathe





& River Protection Impact

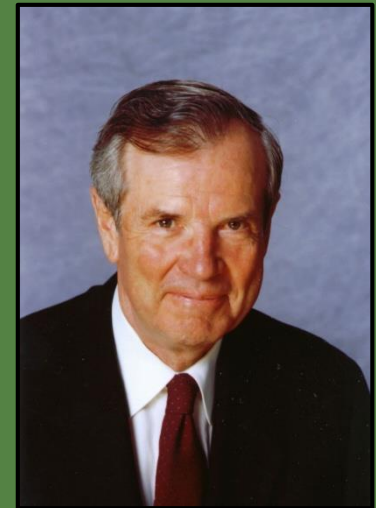
CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

- New parks and forest preserves
- Private lands preserved
- Watershed planning
- Restoration
- Environmental education
- Management of natural areas
- Strategic land conservation planning

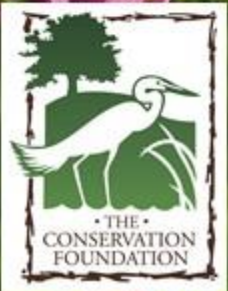
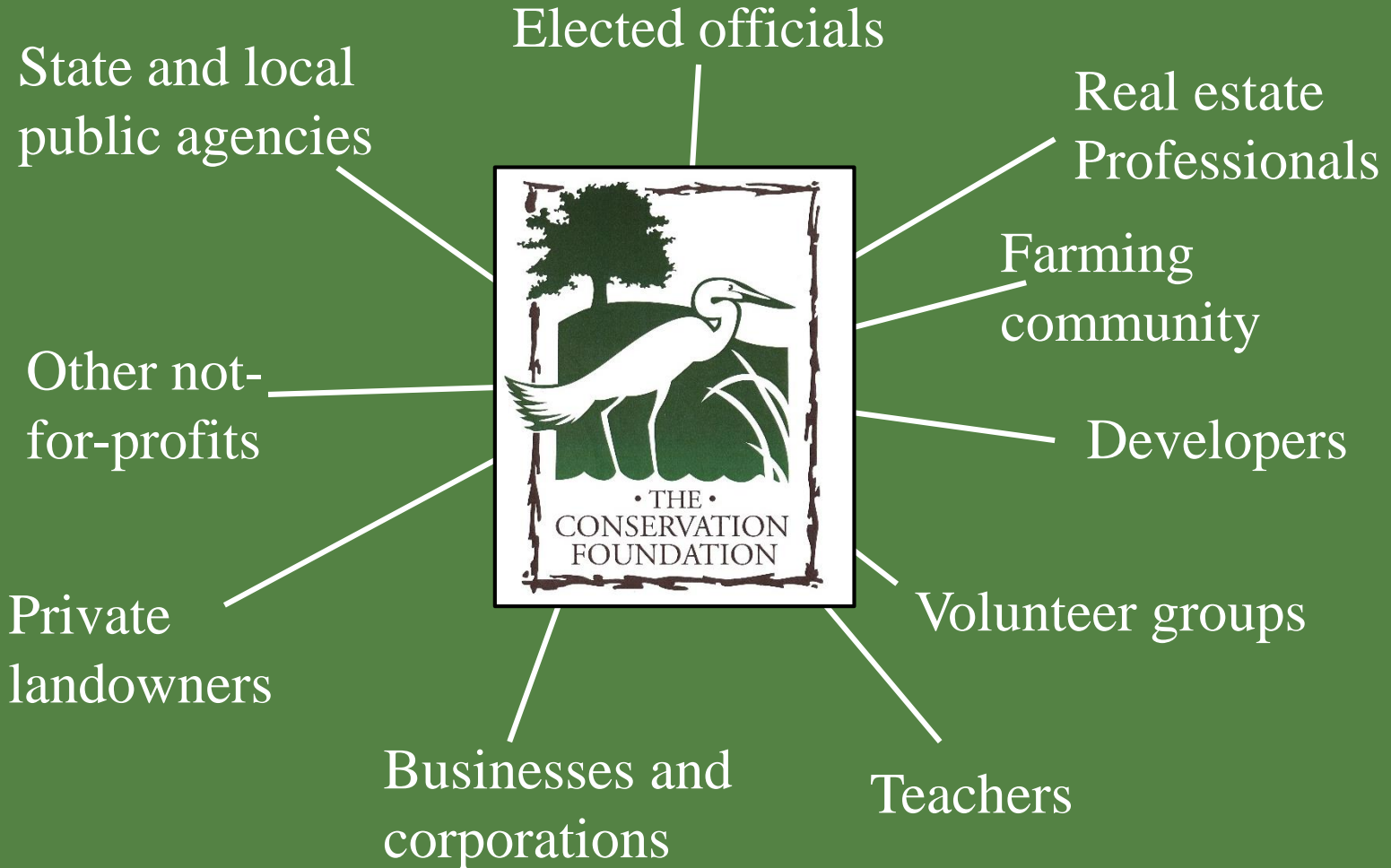


Our Beginnings

- Founded in 1972
- Business and civic leaders
- Quality of life in DuPage County



Broad Partnerships



McDonald Farm



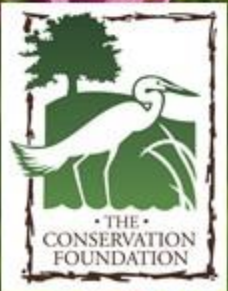
Major Programs

- Open space protection
- Watershed protection/ improvement
- Education – children, families, adults
- Conservation Works!



Conservation in Our Community

- Presentations
 - Workshops for staff
 - Citizens groups
- Rain barrels
- On the ground projects
- Public involvement
 - Storm drain stenciling
 - Monitoring
 - Clean ups



Development is coming back!

- Much of the “easy to develop” stuff is gone.
- “Problem” properties are now being considered.
- More stormwater BMPs include native vegetation as an integral component.
- Natural areas are increasingly protected and restored through the development process.



So what's the problem?

- Army Corps or other regulators sign off after initial restoration
- Long-term management turned over to homeowners associations who have little knowledge of how or why natural areas need to be managed.
- Good intentions turn into weedy headaches
- Incredibly expensive to re-restore after a period of time – a vicious cycle



Who can help?

- Homeowners associations: too little knowledge, too much turnover
- Municipalities: little knowledge, little time, lack of will and financial resources
- Park districts or forest preserve districts: limited resources
- Private firms: biased to favor more management, own company interest
- Enter the not-for-profit land conservation organization



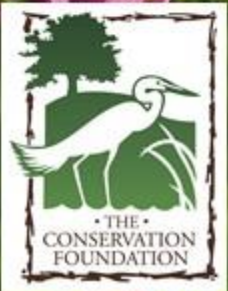
The Conservation Foundation

- Objective, unbiased perspective
- Experience and expertise managing natural areas
- Able to incorporate strong funding provisions into conservation easement documents
- Able to work within a team context with municipality, developer, regulators, community and future occupants



Natural Area Assurance Program

- Assurance for the municipality, the regulators, future residents and the community
- Permanent preservation of natural areas/open space
- Long-term, funded ecological management to keep natural areas and stormwater management areas healthy and aesthetically pleasing



TCF Roles and Responsibilities

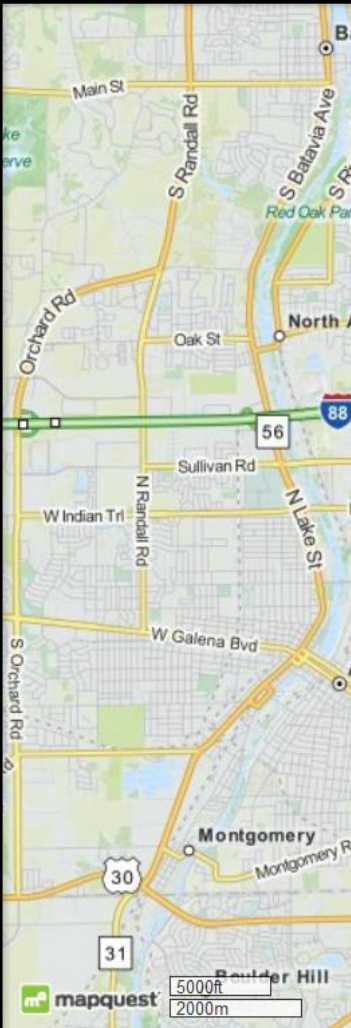
- Monitor and enforce conservation easement
- Manage contracts with ecological management firm
- Supervise management activities
- Provide educational programming
- Report back to homeowners association



Funding

- Site health is evaluated every 5 years
- Management recommendations for next 5 years
- Request for bids from qualified firms
- Homeowner assessments based on winning bid
- Assessments remain stable for 5 years
- \$0 (dormant) SSA if funding falters





Atwater Development



- 303 homes on 203 acres
- Waters flow into a tributary of Ferry Creek
- 3.8 miles of public trails
- 92 acres of natural area
- To be built in two phases

Partners

- City of Naperville
- Army Corps of Engineers
- Pulte Home Corporation
- Christopher B. Burke Engineering Ltd.
- CEMCON
- Homeowners Association (future)



Winchester Glen Preserve



Winchester Glen Preserve



- 432 homes on 300 acres in Carpentersville
- Headwaters of South Branch Kishwaukee River
- Huntley Marsh on part of property
- 122 acres of natural area including 7 detention basins

Winchester Glen Preserve

- TCF management began after Corps signoff
- Dormant SSA in place
- Initial costs per home: \$248.35/year
- After 5 years of management: \$206.27/home/year
- Village officials like the program
- Very few problems so far



Natural Area Assurance Program

Results

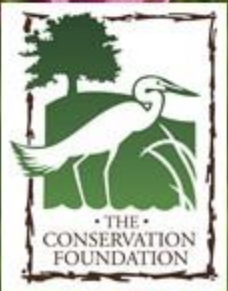
- Higher property value/resale value
- Fewer complaints
- Long-term, qualified, objective management of natural areas
- More people interacting with natural areas near their home



Natural Area Assurance Program Results

What Life's Like

Enjoy the natural beauty of the great outdoors at Atwater, where you can indulge in magnificent pond and wetland views, take a jog on the walking trails right outside your door, or let the kids play at the community parks while you catch up with your neighbors.



Natural Area Assurance Program Results

JUNE 30, 2015

Stanford researchers find mental health prescription: Nature

Study finds that walking in nature yields measurable mental benefits and may reduce risk of depression.

<https://news.stanford.edu/2015/06/30/hiking-mental-health-063015/>

Why Kids Need to Spend Time in Nature

They may prefer to stick to their screens, but here's why getting outdoors

“...nuances aside, most of the studies agree that kids who play outside are smarter, happier, more attentive, and less anxious than kids who spend more time indoors...”

<https://childmind.org/article/why-kids-need-to-spend-time-in-nature/>



In the works

- **Boulevard Project, Plainfield**
 - Commercial/retail development at I-55 and Route 30
 - Approximately 50 acres of natural area
 - Two creeks on property
 - Adjacent to future forest preserve land
- **Van Acker Project, Huntley**
 - Commercial/retail development at I-90 and Route 47
 - Approximately 160 acres of natural area
 - Headwaters of South Branch of Kishwaukee River



Key to Success

A public agency
with the power to insist
and the resolve to carry through.



More information?

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