

We save land.

We save rivers.



Kendall County

Best Places for Nature Rx By County

Established in 1972, The Conservation Foundation is a non-profit land and river protection organization working primarily in Kendall, DuPage, Will, and Kane counties. Our volunteer advisory councils compiled these lists of their favorite local places to get into nature.

Nature has a special place in all of our hearts and its natural healing benefits on our minds and bodies are unmatched, and we hope this compilation will help you and your family experience these benefits, what we like to call Nature Rx, yourselves!

Richard Young Forest Preserve (8225 Rt. 71, Yorkville)

A beautiful natural area trail surrounded by prairie amid woodlands and bluffs, ravines, creeks, and overlooks. Portions are ADA friendly.

Lyon Forest Preserve (8300 Van Emman Rd., Yorkville)

A scenic natural trail surrounded by woodlands with ravines, creeks, fens, and boardwalks.

Hoover Forest Preserve (11285 Fox Rd. Yorkville)

A variety of natural areas to enjoy and hike including frontage on the Fox River, woodlands, fens, and prairie. Equipped with facilities for group camping, indoor events, and other activities. ADA friendly.

Jay Woods Forest Preserve (860 Creek Rd., Plano)

Prairie and wooded sections with a trail and overlook of Little Rock Creek, large native trees, and historic farm site/display. Portions are ADA friendly.

Hudson Crossing Park (65 N Harrison St., Downtown Oswego)

Off the Fox River & Waubonsie Creek frontage with a pedestrian bridge and trail access. Picnic shelters and playground equipment are ripe for the using!

Silver Springs State Fish and Wildlife Area (13608 Fox Road, Yorkville)

1,350 acres of Fox River frontage with lakes and scenic natural paths through wooded and prairie areas, hilly terrain, scenic spring native flower shows with bluebells and Dutchman's breeches, lake fishing, and snack shops.

Baker Woods Forest Preserve + Ellis House/Equestrian Center (2939 Rt. 52 + McKanna Rd./ Minooka)

Wooded and prairie path with frontage on top-rated AuxSable Creek. Group events and picnic shelters available.

Harris Forest Preserve (10460 Rt. 71, Yorkville)

Serene wooded trails with access to fishing ponds and picnic shelters.

Violet Patch Park (1425 Rt. 25, Oswego)

A wooded park off the Fox River with a pedestrian bridge spanning the width. Picnic shelter and Memorial to "The Fox" also present.

Maramech Forest Preserve (14780 Griswold Springs Rd., Plano)

A unique natural area with flatwood wetlands and spring flora with a beautiful overlook. Enjoy both a prairie and wooded ADA friendly trail.

Fox River Trail (3.1 miles along Rt. 25)

A perfect hiking and biking trail along river from Hudson Crossing Park to Kane Co. line going through Violet Patch Park. Connects to Fox River Trail going north into Kane County. ADA friendly.

Millbrook South Forest Preserve (Fox River Dr., Millbrook)

An open prairie trail with access to a wooded bluff along the Fox River.



Salt Creek Greenway Trail (accessible through Cricket Creek Preserve on the north side of Fullerton Avenue)

A 30-mile trail extending from Busse Woods Forest Preserve through 12 communities to Brookfield Zoo passing through beautiful county forest preserves and the rolling prairie grass hills of Eldridge Park.

Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve (Lemont, entrance on Northgate Road)

A 2,503-acre preserve with 11 miles of trails meandering through Bluff Savana, Poverty Prairie, and an oak-maple woodland.



Fullersburg Woods Forest Preserve (3609 Spring Road, Oak Brook)

Located along Salt Creek, this preserve is home to a visitors center and the historic Graue Mill. Experience oak woodlands, wildlife variety, and a wildflower trail near the visitor center. Snow shoes available for rent.

Lyman Woods Nature Center (901 31st Street, Downers Grove)

Catch a glimpse of hawks and owls as you meander through oak woodlands, prairie, or marshland on a scenic boardwalk. This site features a 19-acre oak woods that has remained undisturbed since 1869.

Greene Valley Forest Preserve (accessible from Greene Road in Naperville, off of 75th street)

The East Branch of the DuPage River passes through this preserve rearded with plush oak woodlands and a navigable savanna. The scenic overlook (open weekends May-Oct) is perfect for observing migrating birds.

Lincoln Marsh Natural Area (Harrison Ave + Pierce Ave, Wheaton)

Enjoy a trail of woodlands, savannas, and prairies surrounding an open water marsh. The Lincoln Marsh office rents snowshoes for you winter adventurers!

Illinois Prairie Path (accessible at multiples points throughout central DuPage County)

This 61-mile trail crosses central DuPage County connecting Kane and Cook County. This was the first U.S. rail-to-tail conversion in the nation providing the ability to go long distances without crossing a road.



Great Western Trail (accessible through Timber Ridge Forest Preserve and throughout the county)

This 12-mile crushed limestone trail links with the Illinois Prairie Path and passes through a variety of habitats and scenic county forest preserves.

Cantigny Park (15151 Winfield Rd., Wheaton IL, 60189)

Discover beautifully manicured gardens accompanied by paved walkways. Enjoy a meal at the visitors center and tour the First Division Museum and a 35-room mansion. There is a parking fee to enter the park.

The Morton Arboretum (4100 Rt. 53, Lisle)

The mission of the Arboretum is to collect and study trees, shrubs, and plants from around the world. Visitors have the opportunity to wander through these natural landscapes. You can rent cross-country skis and showshoes to enjoy the great outdoors. There is a parking fee to enter.



DuPage
County



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Messenger Woods Forest Preserve (13800 Bruce Rd., Homer Glen)

The oldest forest preserve in Will County, this 441 acre preserve has two trails perfect for exploring with a plethora of spring wildflowers.

Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie (30239 Rt. 53, Wilmington)

Just North of Wilmington lies one of the greatest gems of Illinois. A former army ammunition plant, Midwin features 20,000+ acres of pristine prairie inhabited by a growing herd of bison. While bison are scattered, a stroll around these grounds will sure yield some beautiful sights. Visitor center open 8am-4:30pm Mon-Sat, April-October. 8am-4:30pm Mon-Sat, Nov-Mar



Lockport Prairie Forest Preserve (Division St, East of Rt. 53 in Lockport)

This charming dolomite prairie is home to a variety of plants and insects found few other places. A dolomite prairie is one with a thin layer of topsoil atop the bedrock that supports only a select group of species and this preserve's trails allow a front row seat to all of them.

Goodenow Grove Forest Preserve (27064 Dutton Rd., Beecher)

Home to a nature center, campground, and about 3 miles of trails, this preserve is perfect for hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing through prairie, wetlands, and woodlands with spectacular views of ravines.

Centennial Trail (Romeoville, access located where 135th st. crosses the Des Plaines River)

A fantastic 3.25 mile straight, flat trail perfect for bicycle enthusiasts that connects to surrounding trails and continues across the Cook County border up to Willow Springs Rd.

Braidwood Dunes Forest Preserve (Braidwood, on Rt. 113, East of Rt. 53)

If you thought cactus only grow in the desert, think again! This preserve yields a unique mix of habitats including prairie, savannah, and wetland situated alongside sand dunes formed by the shoreline of historic Lake Wauponsee. Although the trail is only 0.5 miles long, see if you can catch a peek of the wildlife that calls this place home.

Heritage Quarry Recreation Area (1001 Main St, Lemont)

The limestone trails running through this natural area offer a tour of this historic site. Once a neglected quarry, this site has been given much needed love from The Conservation Foundation thanks to support from Lemont High School and the Village of Lemont through grants from Citgo.

Mather Woods (25032 Kenwick Rd., Plainfield)

This beautiful 67 acre preserve with about 2 miles of woodchipped trails offer exposure to picturesque woodlands connecting to Creekside North Park. Two pavilions are available for rent by the Plainfield Park District.

McKinley Woods Forest Preserve (Channahon, off McKinley Woods Rd., South of Rt. 6)

With trails that run along flat upland areas, down steep wooded ravines with spring blooming redbuds, to floodplain areas with breathtaking views along the canal, this natural area is perfect for a stroll. Camping and picnicking opportunities available.



Hickory Creek Forest Preserve (New Lenox, across from Lincoln-Way Central at Schoolhouse Rd. and Rt. 30)

Massive restoration efforts have made this woodland prairie a treat for all. A bench overlooking a portion of the property affords a stunning view of tree swallows and bluebirds as they compete for nest boxes. A paved trail is inviting for biking and walking alike.



Will
County



Kane County

The Fox River Trail (accessible off W. State Street in Aurora and throughout the banks of the river)

A long trail throughout Kane County with many access points and fantastic river scenery. The trail itself is paved and runs through many public parks. Take in the views of wildlife and beautiful greenery as the seasons bring out a variety of blooms.

Trout Park (576 Trout Park Blvd, Elgin)

A mostly shaded natural space with many wet areas to support beautiful spring wildflowers. Though the park is right off I-90, the ecological marvel of this space makes it feel like an isolated oasis.

Bluff Spring Fen (Spring Grove Ave, Elgin)

Featuring beautiful native displays and a delightful walk through meadow-like surrounding, this space is home to a natural spring that supports a variety of animal and plant life. Take a winding footpath up and around a gravel kame graced with rugged old bur oaks, delicate wildflowers, the melody of birds and subtlety of butterflies.

Tekakwitha Woods (35W076 Villa Maria Rd, St. Charles)

The natural features of Tekakwitha Woods include an oak-maple forest on the uplands, floodplain forest along the river, and a restored prairie in former farm fields. In spring, these woods are carpeted with wildflowers and trees alongside a network of foot trails that wind through fields and forested ravines.



Corron Farm (7N761 Corron Rd, St. Charles)

A series of marked trails are accompanied by a quaint woodland with dazzling spring wildflowers and a wonderful savanna trail with bur and white oaks. This hidden gem is also home to wildflower gardens, picnic areas, historic farmstead, and goats! Who doesn't love goats?

Norris Nature Preserve (Johnor Avenue + 3rd Avenue, St. Charles)

This preserve is equipped with two trails, one along the river and another along a municipal sewer line that meet at the boundary of the Nature Preserve property. Home to majestic red oaks, gorgeous uncommon wildflowers and abundant birds, this restored natural space is perfect to explore.

Hickory Knolls (3795 Campton Hills Drive, St. Charles)

With ecological diversity from oak woods to prairie to fen, this space and its trail is perfect for a brisk jog or calm walk as you take it all in. With labeled native plantings, rare wildflowers, and a nature center Hickory Knolls provides great learning opportunities for the novice environmental enthusiast.

Johnson's Mound (41W600 Hughes Rd, Elburn)

Johnson's Mound provides a great place to hike any time of the year. Whether it be up the mound on a paved road, through the wooded areas, or within the beautiful restored prairie, this space is a wonderful opportunity to get away from it all.

Dick Young Forest Preserve (39W115 Main St, Batavia)

This preserve features some of Kane County's finest wetlands, woodlands, and prairie and it is an excellent place to stroll in nature. This space has a lot to offer including marsh, oak woods, reconstructed prairie, pristine trails, and an abundance of birds for your viewing (including white pelicans!).

Virgil Gilman Trail (accessible off Kedeka and Bliss Road, Sugar Grove)

This segment from Kedeka Road to the Waubonsee Community College campus offers a quiet open space among tall grasses. It's a place to be almost alone with nature and wildlife. A great area to walk or bike!



Fine Line Prairie and Nature Area (37W570 Bolcum Rd, St. Charles)

A 2.5-acre restored prairie landscape bordered on the north by beds of the prairie plants and a 2.5-acre wetland and wildlife habitat. The parcel is bisected by a flowing stream. The adjacent Fine Line Creative Arts Center classes have used the prairie as a resource for class materials including basketry, paper making, and textile dyeing. While there, one can view the artwork on display in the two Fine Line buildings.