



## ON A BRISK AND BRIGHT WEDNESDAY MORNING IN OCTOBER, FOUR TREEKEEPERS GATHER

at Sycamore Park, a pocket park and playground in Hyde Park on Chicago's South Side. After a short stretch and review of the plan for the day, they get out their safety glasses, work gloves, saws, and pruners, and get to work. They prune trees in the park and along the neighborhood street, occasionally asking each other for feedback on which branch should be pruned. As the workday winds down, they gather, count the number of trees pruned and report back to Openlands.

For Nancy Joseph and many TreeKeepers like her, she leaves with a lot more than she came with, "We all feel so good when we leave a workday—that we've left the trees in significantly better shape than when we got here. And that's just so rewarding—that in today's world, three hours' time gives you such fulfillment. It's pretty exciting."

Openlands TreeKeepers events like that in Hyde Park have increased over the last five years, with the creation of local TreeKeeper Chapters. Active chapters exist in ten different communities in Chicago and the suburbs, and more are in the works for neighborhoods like Little Village and towns like Prospect Heights. Now in its 30th year, the TreeKeepers program is a national model for engaging people with their neighborhood trees. For Openlands, it is a program that continues to develop with passionate volunteer leadership and civic partnership.

ABOVE: TreeKeepers plant, prune, and learn tree identification in Downers Grove, neighborhoods Little Village, Hyde Park, North Park Village Center, Edgewater, and West Lawn in Chicago throughout 2021.

### 30 YEARS OF TREEKEEPER IMPACT

TreeKeepers began in 1991 and graduated the first 60-person class of volunteers educated in tree care and dedicated to caring for the urban forest. Today, over 2,000 people have trained with Openlands and are certified to prune and care for trees in the region. After graduating from the course, TreeKeepers are encouraged to participate in 20 hours of activities annually. Events and activities range from pruning, planting, inventorying, and mulching events organized by Openlands or TreeKeepers to continuing education and advocacy-oriented opportunities with Openlands and its partners. Over the years, Openlands and TreeKeepers have led the charge in monitoring and defending Chicagoland's trees, including being the only non-municipal group to help monitor the Asian Longhorn Beetle outbreak in 1998 and most recently, successfully advocating for the creation of a Chicago Urban Forestry Advisory Board.

### SEEING ALL THE WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN HYDE PARK

For Nancy Joseph, who began the first TreeKeeper Chapter in Hyde Park, what started after she took the course in 2013 has now become her passion. She began by joining workdays around the city with more experienced TreeKeepers, building her confidence in pruning trees. Before long, she was looking around her neighborhood and seeing all the ways she could make a difference. "I can't walk down the street now without looking at a tree and noticing if it needs to be pruned and what I would do to that tree, and 'Oh, I better get that on the list.' It has changed the way I move around my neighborhood significantly, and it's made me really appreciate the difference between areas that have trees and that don't have trees or have trees that are taken care of versus those that are not. It changes how a neighborhood looks and feels."





In 2018, Nancy, with other interested Hyde Park TreeKeepers began coordinating events with Openlands that gathered volunteers from all over the region. A popular event among TreeKeepers and Hyde Park residents alike, the Chapter hosted one event a month up until COVID-19 hit. At the time, Openlands, the Chicago Park District, and many others were forced to pause all events. For Nancy and others, it was frustrating not to be out working, but when permission was granted to restart very small workdays with safety precautions in place, they began running more events than ever. "It was really exciting. We pruned a huge stretch of the Midway and we pruned a lot around Washington Park which we hadn't spent a lot of time in. It was just a really nice respite for all of us—it was work that we could do when we were all so frustrated that our lives had changed so dramatically. We were able to get out and really work on something meaningful. And there's always work to be done."

Over the past two years, the Hyde Park TreeKeeper Chapter has met like this over 35 times, partnering with Jerome Scott, District Forester at the Chicago Park District and in coordination with Openlands, to prune and care for their neighborhood's tree canopy. Their work has contributed to a record-breaking year of tree care for Openlands. Openlands TreeKeepers and chapters have blown past the previous record set in 2019 of 2,000 trees pruned. In 2020, TreeKeepers doubled their impact, pruning over 4,000 trees. In 2021, they have continued at this impressive rate, again pruning 4,000 trees across Chicagoland.

#### A COMPLIMENTARY PARTNERSHIP IN DOWNERS GROVE

The establishment of a local TreeKeepers Chapter benefits more than just TreeKeepers and trees. By harnessing the flexibility and adaptability of the TreeKeepers program and empowering individual TreeKeepers playing to their own strengths, local partners like a municipality or park district can focus volunteer stewardship on its urban forestry objectives. In Downers Grove, the Park District and Superintendent of Natural Resources, Mike Stelter hopes to do just that.

"WE were able to get out and really work on something meaningful. And there's always work to be done."

As part of Downers Grove's updated urban forestry management plan, the district identified the need to have an active group of volunteers to help care for young trees. Focused on tree planting, and then caring for those trees, Mike reached out to Openlands, in hopes of engaging a committed group of TreeKeepers to help ensure the district's young trees thrive. "You know, it doesn't take everything away for Park District staff. But if we can come out and have a workday with TreeKeepers, and mulch 40 trees, that's 40 more trees than we would have gotten done. It's a great way to complement our staff by having folks that have a little bit of training and a passion for taking care of trees help us and their community at large."

LEFT TO RIGHT, BELOW: TreeKeeper Nancy Joseph; TreeKeepers group photo and pruning the Midway Plaisance in Hyde Park; new TreeKeepers finish their pruning practicum in Washington Park and Dunbar Park; a young boy helps TreeKeepers plant trees in Little Village; TreeKeepers conduct a tree inventory in Stohaker Park; a tree that exhibits proper pruning by a TreeKeeper; Downers Grove Park District and volunteers plant a tree in Hooper's Hollow Park.



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PHOTO CREDITS: above, Emily Reusswig, Al DeReu, RCK Productions, Maren Robinson

## OPENLANDS WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS



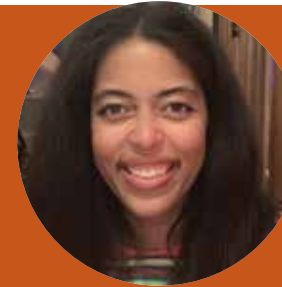
**KRISTEN JONES** serves as Director of Legal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Senior Counsel for McDonald's Corporation. In this role, Kristen supports the development and execution of the McDonald's Legal Department's DEI strategy and initiatives in the U.S. and international markets. Prior to joining McDonald's, Kristen was a Labor & Employment attorney at Goldberg Kohn where she served as pro bono counsel to Openlands. She received her B.A. from Stanford University in Political Science and Spanish and her J.D. from Northwestern Pritzker School of Law.

**What drives you to give back in conservation and the environment?**  
My very first job during the summer of my junior year of high school was with the Chicago Department of Environment. My primary task revolved around the then-Blue Bag Recycling program and exploring ways to increase participation. I also answered the City of Chicago Recycling Hotline and had the opportunity to tour one of the City's sorting centers. That job laid the foundation for my love of the environment and appreciation for the need to take additional steps to ensure conservation and protection of our home.



**PATRICK HANLEY** is a Partner at Mason Rocque, a family office investing in Illinois businesses. Most recently, Patrick served public sector executives as an Associate with McKinsey & Company, where he supported state governments on COVID-19 response strategy and implementation. Patrick serves on the leadership board of the Justice Project, a grassroots social justice movement in the northern suburbs. He also serves on the Executive Committee of the New Trier Township Democrats. Patrick holds an M.B.A. in Finance from the Booth School of Business and an M.P.P. with a concentration in Municipal Finance from the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago.

**What is your favorite place to get outside in the Chicagoland region?**  
Glacial Park in McHenry County is a staple for my family. The winding Nippersink; the ever-changing grasses and flowers of the prairies and meadows; the endlessly fascinating wetlands—Glacial has it all!



**ALEXA RICE** is a Senior Director at Handshake Partners where she oversees various client accounts and assists with providing strategic guidance to clients through research and writing. Prior to joining Handshake, Alexa spent time working in public relations and communications at BBDO Worldwide, Fleishman-Hillard, and Yoox, located in Shanghai, among others. Inspired by her experiences in Harvard Divinity School and the role of social impact in creating long-lasting change, Alexa uses her writing talents to help the private sector lead meaningful initiatives. As a born and bred Chicagoan, Alexa is passionate about working for environmental justice in the city and helping to ensure her city's green spaces are accessible to all. Alexa is a graduate from Wellesley College where she studied the History of Art.

**How did you get involved at Openlands?**  
I recently moved back home to Chicago, and I was looking for environmental organizations around town. I came across the TreeKeepers program and immediately signed up for the online course. I recently completed the course, and I can't wait to meet other TreeKeepers and get involved with Openlands!

## Why Prune Young Trees?

*While many municipalities devote resources to planting, pruning younger trees is often the first to be cut due to budgetary constraints.*

STRUCTURAL PRUNING OF YOUNG TREES is an essential step to establishing the health and longevity of trees. As TreeKeeper Nancy says, "you have to think about what you want the tree to look like five years from now." Good pruning focuses the trees' energy to grow branches that are healthy and structurally sound. For example, if there is a branch that is growing low towards the street in a way that might block cars in a year or two, a TreeKeeper may want to prune the branch now, so it does not get damaged by cars or people in the future. With that potentially hazardous branch pruned, the tree can put its energy towards the structurally functioning branches that will make it beautiful and healthy for many years to come.

**WANT TO GET INVOLVED?** Openlands' website offers a plethora of forestry events for the tree expert and novice alike and a sign up to be alerted when the next TreeKeeper course will be offered. To learn more, visit [Openlands.org/getinvolved](https://openlands.org/getinvolved)





**“Nature is not a luxury; it is essential, and it needs to be part of our lives, close to where we live.”**



# The Openlands 2021 Annual Luncheon Celebrates Civic Action and Policy Impacts

FOR THE LAST 58 YEARS, Openlands’ work in the Chicago metropolitan region has centered on connecting people to nature and engaging them in the future protection of our land, water, and wildlife. This work takes persistence, collaboration, and agility. It also takes people—residents, conservationists, business leaders, and elected officials coming together to create the kind of systemic impact that ensures a more equitable and livable future.

It was in that spirit that Openlands welcomed over 600 people in person and online for its 2021 Annual Luncheon. The event celebrated the conservation legacy of U.S. Senator Dick Durbin and raised over \$400,000 for Openlands’ mission and work in the region.

The Luncheon was co-chaired by Ambassador Fay Hartog-Levin (Ret.) and Commissioner Debra Shore, with Anne Roosevelt serving as Honorary Chair. The co-chairs kicked off the ceremony with a land acknowledgment and Commissioner Shore was also celebrated for her recent appointment by President Biden as Regional Administrator for EPA Region 5.

Openlands President and CEO Jerry Adelman spoke of the insights our world has gained over the past year and a half, and the heightened importance of preserving the natural spaces in our region at all scales: “I would argue that the last two years have been the most challenging of our generation. There has been a trifecta of health, social, and environmental crises that we’ve never experienced before. But what we have done is turned to nature in unprecedented ways, and why? Because nature gives us solace. It provides benefits for our personal and community health. Nature is not a luxury; it is essential, and it needs to be part of our lives, close to where we live.”

Jerome Scott, District Forester at the Chicago Parks District and TreeKeeper #452, ended the program with a celebration of the 30th anniversary of the TreeKeepers program and its impact over the last five years, with the creation of TreeKeeper Chapters and the monumental increase in pruning Chicagoland’s trees.

The event centered on the 2021 Conservation Leadership Award Recipient, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois, whose environmental impact spans not just Illinois but the nation and world. From conserving Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge and spearheading the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to proposing the Bronzeville Black Metropolis National Heritage Area and driving forward the RENEW Conservation Corps Act—both with Congressman Bobby Rush—Senator Durbin has been a champion for nature and people.

In his remarks, Senator Durbin spoke of the continued need to push conservation policy and protections forward. “I don’t view this recognition as a reward, but I view it as a reminder—that there is more work to be done in our nation. We need to leave for future generations a better world.”

You can view the Conservation Leadership Award video at [Openlands.org/CLA](https://Openlands.org/CLA)

LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM: Ambassador Fay Hartog-Levin (Ret.) and Commissioner Debra Shore at the Annual Luncheon; Openlands Board chair, JoAnn Seagren, Senator Dick Durbin and Openlands President CEO Jerry Adelman; leaves in Downers Grove; BELOW: Ryerson Woods

PHOTO CREDITS: above, Sarah Larson; at left, Maren Robinson; below, Stacy Meyers

## Become an Openlander. Donate Today!

Stewarding our region’s trees takes imagination, persistence, and YOU.

Support Openlands today and join in growing the region’s urban forest for a greener future.

Visit [openlands.org/donate](https://openlands.org/donate) to learn more.

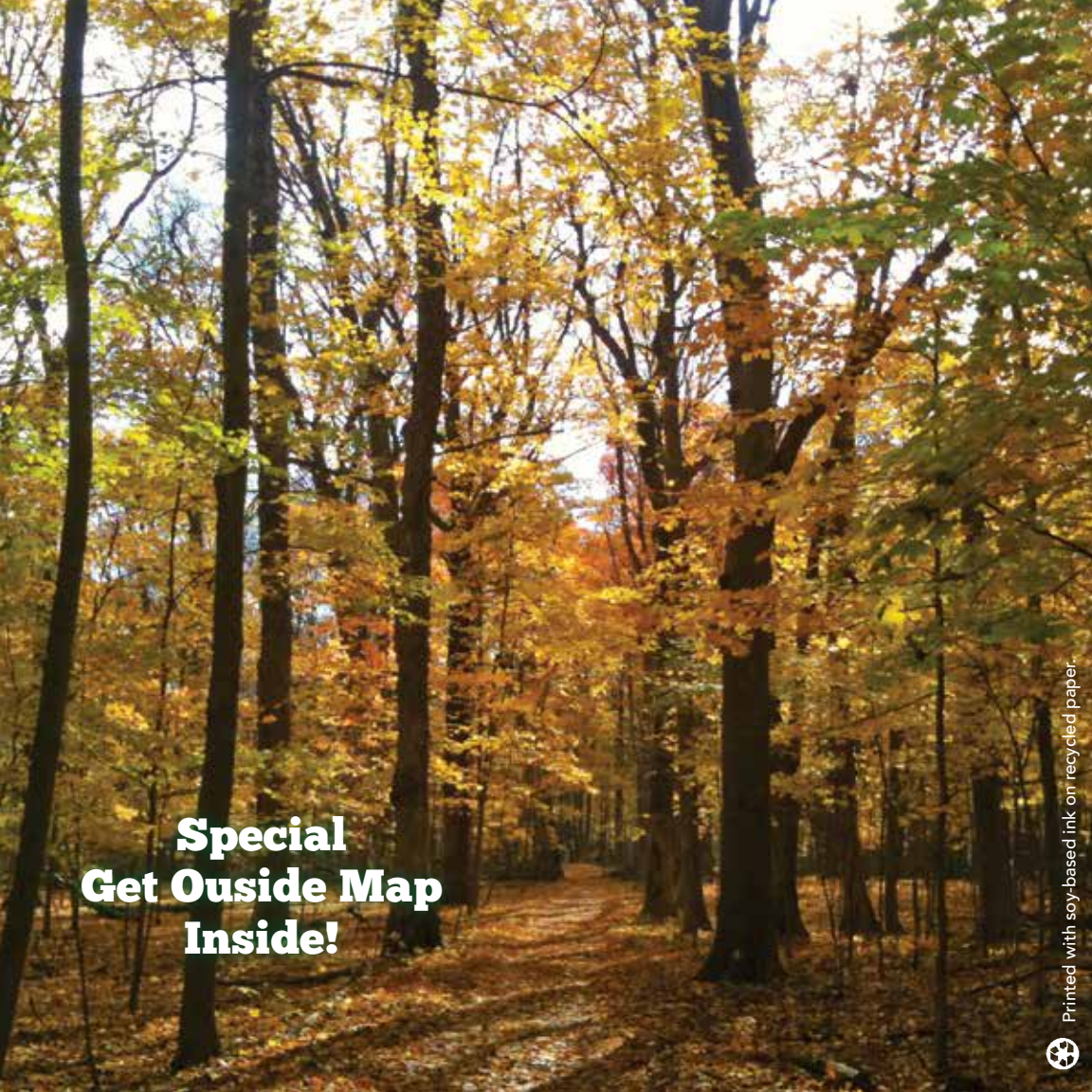
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OPENLANDS  
25 East Washington, Suite 1650  
Chicago, Illinois 60602-1708  
Telephone 312.863.6250  
[openlands.org](https://openlands.org)

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Inside!**



# Get Outside: Savor the Trees

**FALL IS NOT THE ONLY TIME TO TAKE IN THE BEAUTY** of trees. Winter can provide a fun and challenging way to test your tree identification skills. For experts and novices alike, visiting local arboreturns throughout the year is a great way to increase your knowledge and enjoyment of trees. Distinct from a forest, nursery, or park, an arboretum is like an outdoor museum of trees. It is a place where many varieties of trees are grown for research, educational, and ornamental purposes, and where trees and shrubs are cultivated for exhibition.

While not all these featured locations are arboreturns, each has special tree species, woodlands, savannas, or stands that make enjoyable and interesting places to get outside.

**Blackwell Forest Preserve 15**  
*Butterfield Road, Warrenville, IL 60555*  
Blackwell’s gently rolling hilly terrain features oak and hickory woodlands, including a rare dry-mesic gravel woodland, and attracts a variety of native wildlife, including wild turkeys, deer, bald eagles, great blue herons, coyotes, red foxes, and muskrats.

**Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve 27**  
*24329 IL-113, Braidwood, IL 60408*  
Braidwood Dunes and Savanna in Braidwood is interesting and extraordinary in any season. There are a couple of natural surface trails through the sandy-soil communities including white and black oak dominated savannas.

**Bunker Hill & Sidney Yates Flatwoods 11**  
*6819 N Caldwell Avenue, Chicago, IL 60646*  
Known for its popular picnic groves, Bunker Hill contains remarkable natural areas, including a floodplain forest, open savanna, and the Sidney Yates Flatwoods.

**Chicago Botanic Garden 8**  
*1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, IL 60022*  
The Garden has an impressive collection of oaks, and took part in establishing a an oak collection in 2007 with 20 institutions across the United States. Oaks are quintessential to Midwest landscapes and provide long-lived, large-scale components to the collection that transcend generations.

**Cranberry Slough & Spears Woods 20**  
*9600 Wolf Road, Willow Springs, IL 60480*  
Cranberry Slough and Spears Woods have some of Cook County’s highest quality oak-hickory woodlands, and with the little bit of topography, you can easily forget you are so close to an urban center.

**Dam 1 Woods 9**  
*621 W Dundee Road, Wheeling, IL 60090*  
Dam 1 Woods, part of the Des Plaines Trail System, is a great place to view sugar maples throughout the year, but especially in fall. The drive through the grove is over a mile long and the trees in many spots form a tunnel, giving you a cathedral like feel over the roadway, and inspiring awe.

**Downers Grove Park District Arboretum 16**  
*2455 Warrenville Road, Downers Grove, IL 60515*  
The district’s diverse urban canopy features 92 species including a large number of maple and oak species in addition to Baldcypress, Serviceberry, Hackberry, Kentucky coffeetree, Douglas fir, and Alder trees.

**Elmhurst College Arboretum 14**  
*190 Prospect Avenue, Elmhurst, IL 60126*  
The Arboretum boasts 850 trees and numerous varieties of shrubs and perennials, including several exotic specimens in addition to campus favorites like magnolias, redbuds, and maples.

**Glacial Park 1**  
*6705 Route 31, Ringwood, IL 60072*  
Glacial Park is McHenry County Conservation District’s most treasured open space holding, characterized by its rolling prairie, delta kames, oak savanna and the tranquil presence of the meandering Nippersink Creek.

**Goodnow Grove Nature Preserve 26**  
*27064 Dutton Road, Beecher, IL 60401*  
The section of Goodnow Grove Nature Preserve south of Bemis Road in Crete Township has stunning woodlands and ravines, and is home to several unusual plant species. The big bridge on the main trail has a spectacular view as it passes over a ravine.

**Graceland Cemetery Arboretum 13**  
*4100 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60613*  
More than 103 species of trees and woody plants grow among the cemetery’s 119 acres, which is not only a place to enjoy nature, but a valued site for art, architecture, and history, as well as birding.

**Carl R. Hansen Woods at Arthur L. Janura Preserve 10**  
*Sutton Road/Route 59, south of Shoe Factory Road, Cook County, IL 60192 (near Schaumburg)*  
Located in Hoffman Estates, Carl R. Hansen Woods is a great place to take a walk through the picturesque oak woods, through a high-quality tall grass prairie, then to the top of Shoe Factory Road Nature Preserve for perhaps one of the best views in all of Cook County.

**Hazel Crest Open Lands Arboretum 22**  
*3000 W. 170th Place, Hazel Crest, IL 60429*  
The arboretum has many tree species native to Illinois including: Baldcypress, Marmo maple, Persian ironwood, Wireless zelcova, Pear, Butternut, Bitternut hickory, Sassafras, Giant sequoia, Blue ash and Schumard, White, Black, Bur, and White oaks.

**Hickory Creek Preserve 24**  
*10537 W La Porte Road, Mokena, IL 60448*  
The trail through Hickory Creek Preserve in New Lenox/ Mokena starting at Schoolhouse Road and heading east is lovely in the fall. It goes through nice oak-hickory woodlands, savanna, and prairie openings across rolling terrain. There are a couple of unusual stands of Kentucky coffee trees, including one near the western bridge that crosses Hickory Creek.

**Hickory Grove Highlands and Lyons Prairie and Marsh 5**  
*500 Hickory Nut Grove Road (South side of the street), Cary, IL 60013*  
Hickory Grove Highlands serves as a refuge for northern Illinois wildlife and provides visitors with opportunities for hiking and horseback riding through beautiful woodlands.

**Maple Grove Forest Preserve 18**  
*Downers Grove, IL 60515*  
The sugar maples are abundant at Maple Grove Forest Preserve and provide beautiful color in the fall.

**Marengo Ridge 2**  
*2411 N. Route 23, Marengo*  
Marengo Ridge Conservation Area contains over 818 acres of oak and hickory woodlands interspersed with spruce, aspen, ash, and sumac groves.

**McGinnis Slough 21**  
*S La Grange Road, south of W 135th Street, Orland Park, IL 60462*  
McGinnis Slough is better known as a great place to spot waterfowl and shorebirds, but tree enthusiasts will love it even more for a small stand of very large bald cypress trees. Somewhat hard to find, you can find them by looking off the walking path with binoculars.

**McKinley Woods 25**  
*26932 River Bluff Drive, Channahon, IL 60410*  
In the spring, head to McKinley Woods in Channahon for a spectacular redbud display. In addition, there are a few trails that meander through the high-quality woodlands on the bluff overlooking the Des Plaines River and I&M Canal.

**Meachum Grove Nature Preserve 12**  
*S Circle Avenue, Bloomingdale, IL 60108*  
The 255-acre Meacham Grove Forest Preserve in Bloomingdale features woodland groves, meadows, wetlands, the meandering Spring Brook Creek, and the Meacham Grove Nature Preserve.

**The Morton Arboretum 17**  
*4100 Illinois Route 53, Lisle, IL 60532*  
A quintessential stop for any tree novice, The Morton Arboretum features plant collections and gardens amid natural landscapes of woodlands, prairie, lakes, and streams. Its living collections include 222,000 plant specimens representing 4,650 different kinds of plants. Additionally, guests can enjoy 16 miles of hiking trails, a Children’s Garden, exhibits, and more!

**Old School Forest Preserve 3**  
*28285 St. Mary’s Road, Mettawa, IL 60048*  
Large oaks dominate Old School’s woodlands that blend with small prairies. This landscape resembles what Lake County looked like when it was first settled.

**Pleasant Valley 4**  
*13315 Pleasant Valley Road, Woodstock, IL 60098*  
Pleasant Valley in Woodstock offers 5 miles of trails within 1,777 acres of beautiful woodlands, savanna and prairie.

**Edward L. Ryerson Conservation Area 7**  
*21950 North Riverwoods Road, Riverwoods, IL 60015*  
Rare species, rare communities, and exceptional natural areas combine to make this a very special preserve. More than half of the land is so ecologically valuable that it is dedicated as an Illinois Nature Preserve and benefits from special protection rules.

**Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve 19**  
*Lemont, IL 60439*  
At Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve there are large acreages of pine plantations (Red, White, and Jack pine) that were planted in the 1950’s when Argonne National Laboratory owned the site. The southern portion of the preserve has high-quality mesic woodland and savanna.

**Captain Daniel Wright Woods 6**  
*24830 St. Mary’s Road, Mettawa, IL 60045*  
Situated just east of the river, Wright Woods supports a rich oak and maple woodland. With large stands of maples found at few other places in Lake County, Wright Woods is a great place to view autumn colors.

**The Dr. William M. Zales Arboretum 23**  
*1215 Houbolt Road, Joliet, IL 60431*  
The 11-acre Joliet Junior College Arboretum was started in 1975 and is located on JJC’s 368-acre Main Campus. The college arboretum concept was originated by Dr. William M. Zales in 1975 as part of a master campus use plan.

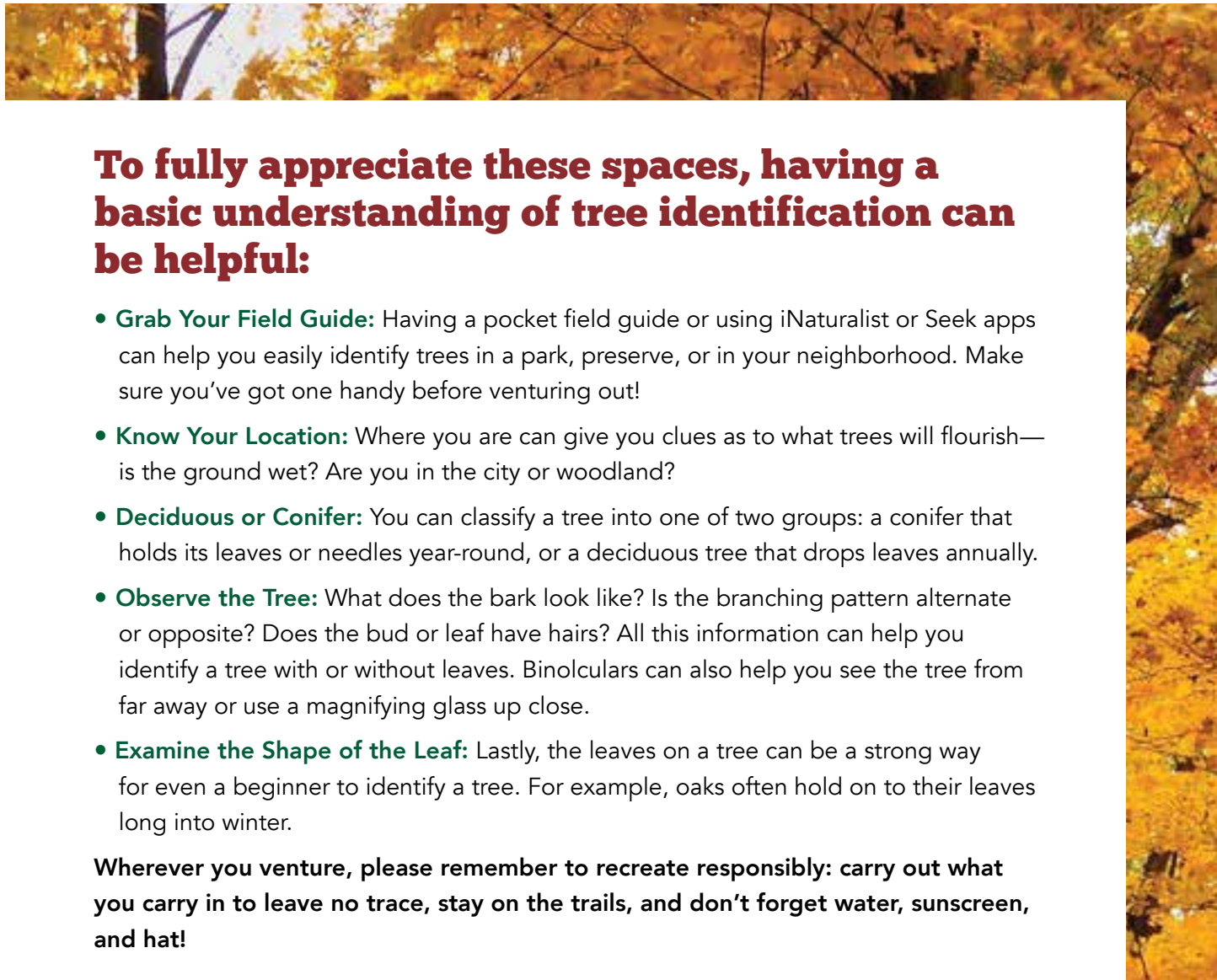
PHOTO CREDIT: Maren Robinson



## Get Outside Map: Savor the Trees

**Visit [Openlands.org/GetOutside](https://openlands.org/GetOutside)**  
for more details on these locations and hundreds  
of other places to enjoy in the region with  
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