



## **Brunner Family Forest Preserve FACT SHEET February 2017**

While a relatively new forest preserve, Brunner Family Forest Preserve in Dundee was the result of more than 20 years in the making. There's a lot of information and interest in this property. The purpose of this document is to clarify the origins and history of this unique preserve.

Long before the Forest Preserve District of Kane County's 2008 acquisition of land in northeast Kane County — for what is now Brunner Family Forest Preserve — the Forest Preserve District was aware of Kane County's plans to designate and reserve right-of-way through the privately-owned Brunner Farm for the Longmeadow Parkway Bridge Corridor. From the time of the initial coordination and planning, until the actual acquisition of the Brunner Farm by the District, the County and the District worked jointly to accomplish the acquisition of the Brunner Farm.

The Brunner Farm was the largest tract of undeveloped land with Fox River frontage in Kane County. It was coveted in whole or in part by many, primarily real estate developers, but also by municipalities, including the Forest Preserve District, the County, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). No doubt due to the interest of developers and pressure during the dramatic upswing in the real estate market, the District and IDNR were unable to afford what Fred Brunner was initially asking for his property.

The common interests of the County and the District in the Brunner Farm came to the forefront in 2000, when right-of-way planning, coordination and acquisition relative to the Brunner Farm and the adjacent Fox River Shores Forest Preserve began between the County and the District for Longmeadow Parkway. Thereafter, the County and the District concurrently pursued their respective individual acquisition interests in the Brunner Farm.

In May 2003, County representatives met with Mr. Brunner, at his request, for purposes of discussing planning for Longmeadow Parkway. During that meeting, Mr. Brunner and his commercial land planner Joe Buralli stated Mr. Brunner's preferences for commercial development of the part of the property along the proposed highway corridor, and requested acquisition and design features that would facilitate Brunner's commercial development of his property.

In October 2004, after considerable study, analysis and development, the County issued its 2030 Land Resource Management Plan which developed a planning framework for all of Kane County, and set forth countywide planning objectives and goals through the year 2030. The Plan

established as a land-use goal the Brunner Farm as open space bisected by the proposed Longmeadow Parkway.

In 2005, the District's \$75 million Land Acquisition & Preserve Improvement bond referendum was passed. Simultaneously, KDOT and the District continued to actively, separately negotiate with Mr. Brunner for the acquisition of the property. KDOT was negotiating for the part needed for Longmeadow Parkway, while the Forest Preserve District was negotiating for the remainder of the property to create a forest preserve.

In March 2007, KDOT met with Mr. Brunner's designated representative and discussed the proposed highway project and right-of-way acquisition, and made verbal and written offers for the required right of way for Longmeadow Parkway. Sometime thereafter in 2007, Mr. Brunner advised the District of a serious personal health issue. He stated his preference to deal with only one of the governmental entities, namely the District, because it could acquire the entire Brunner Farm (rather than the County which desired only a small portion of the 741+/- acre property) so that he could dispose of the entire real estate holding in one convenient, quick transaction.

Thereafter, the County (after consultation with the federal and state agencies) and the District developed a coordinated acquisition strategy wherein the County ceased its negotiations with Mr. Brunner in favor of the District which had developed a more substantial relationship and dialogue with Mr. Brunner. Ultimately, resolution of the acquisition of the Brunner Farm was accomplished through a financial partnership between the County and the District. Because of the significant overall cost of the acquisition, some the District commissioners would not otherwise approve the acquisition of the Brunner Farm without County financial participation (for the right-of-way acquisition). Other commissioners would not support the acquisition of the Brunner Farm without honoring their longstanding commitment to the County to set aside the planned and reserved Longmeadow Parkway right of way for County acquisition.

Sadly, Fred Brunner passed away in April 2008. Two months later, in June 2008, the District completed its negotiations and entered into a contract with Mr. Brunner's family for the acquisition of the entire Brunner Farm. Prior to formal approval of the purchase contract with the Brunner family, the District acknowledged that upon acquisition of the Brunner Farm, it would fulfill its commitment and convey to the County the right of way sought for Longmeadow Parkway.

On Jan. 10, 2010, the District conveyed Brunner Farm Longmeadow Parkway right of way to the County. Due to other acquisition commitments, but primarily due to the desire of the District commissioners, the District would not have otherwise been able to acquire the Brunner Farm without relying on the roughly \$2.25 million dollars that the County would pay for the Longmeadow Parkway right of way portion of the Brunner farm acquisition.