



PHOTO: INDOOR DRONE TOURS

CREATING AN OPEN SPACE LEGACY

CITIZENS FOR CONSERVATION WILL PERMANENTLY PROTECT NEARLY 250
ACRES OF THE DUCHOSSOIS PROPERTY ALONG SPRING CREEK

BY PATTY DOWD SCHMITZ



PHOTO: BOB LEE

The Duchossois Family, led in Barrington by Kim Duchossois, and Citizens for Conservation, led by Board President Kathleen Leitner, worked together to preserve 250 pristine acres in Barrington Hills.



PHOTO: INDOOR DRONE TOURS

A portion of Spring Creek, a critical watershed in our area, that leads to the Fox River.

ON AUGUST 29, 2022, Citizens for Conservation (CFC) announced that it had acquired the property from The Duchossois Group (represented in Barrington by Kim Duchossois), thanks in part to initial funding that CFC received in the form of a \$4.9 million grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. It was the largest such grant awarded for a single parcel purchase.

The 246.5-acre parcel is bounded on the north by Spring Creek Road, on the east by Ridge Road, on the South by Lake-Cook/County Line Road, and on the west by residents along Meadow Hill Road. The northern portion of the farm (north of Spring Creek Road) will remain privately owned.

The land, which is bisected by Spring Creek, is considered one of the most desirable conservation-worthy properties not only in the Barrington area, but in the entire Northern Illinois region. The purchase increases CFC's owned and protected land to 777 acres in Lake, Cook, and McHenry Counties and will be the organization's 14th and largest preserve.

THE NEW HILL 'N DALE PRESERVE

The nearly 250-acre site will be named Hill 'N Dale Preserve and encompasses 4,060 linear feet of the high-quality Spring Creek, a tributary to the Fox River. The preserve honors the current name of the Duchossois property and reflects the protection of the surrounding upland bluffs (Hill) and the Spring Creek valley (Dale). The land has been identified as a priority for protection and restoration in multiple local and regional plans, including the Barrington Greenway Initiative, the Spring Creek Watershed-Based Plan, and McHenry and Lake County Green Infrastructure Plans. It will provide green space connectivity to numerous other protected lands in our area, including the 4,000-acre Spring Lake (Spring Creek) Forest Preserve and the 550-acre state dedicated Spring Lake Nature Preserve.



PHOTO: CFC

CFC volunteers plant sedges on a work day.



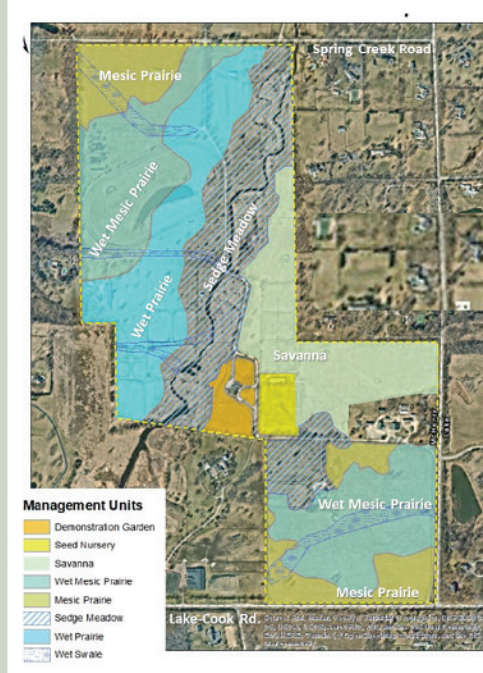
PHOTO: STEPHEN BARTEN

A family of majestic Sandhill Cranes has made its nesting place in a CFC-restored habitat.

Hill 'N Dale Preserve



Restoration Concept



◀ This graphic shows the boundaries of Hill 'N Dale Farm South and what the new Hill 'N Dale Preserve will become.

▼ CFC's dedicated volunteers are excited to spearhead the restoration of Hill 'N Dale Preserve.

"This property's high conservation value, coupled with CFC's strong history of delivering quality restoration results, will have far-reaching impacts for the entire Barrington-area community, as well as the entire Northern Illinois region," said CFC Board President Kathleen Leitner. "We could not be more pleased to have partnered with Kim and The Duchossois Group to facilitate this acquisition of the south part of their family's iconic farm near Barrington Hills. We believe that our local communities and regional partners will be ecstatic to hear that CFC has been able to permanently protect this vital open space."

A PROUD LAND PROTECTION LEGACY

Kim Duchossois agreed. "My family and I could not be more thrilled to have worked so closely with Citizens for Conservation over the past year to facilitate their purchase of the south part of our property. We know how important this land is to the community, and it was absolutely critical for our entire family to make certain that the property would be protected and maintained as open space. The key to our decision to sell to CFC was the organization's long history in the area and its promise not only to preserve the property, but also to restore it over time and return it to its natural splendor. I'm also very pleased that the Barrington-area members of our family will be contributing a significant portion of their proceeds of the sale back to the CFC campaign to protect this land in perpetuity."

The substantial grant that CFC received from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) demonstrates the significant conservation value of the vast landscape of Hill 'N Dale Farm. In order to complete the purchase, conduct ecological restoration, and manage the site for public enjoyment in the future, CFC is seeking an additional \$5 million in funding to supplement the purchase of the land.

As many in our community are aware, Citizens for Conservation is volunteer-based organization with a 50-year history in the Barrington area.



PHOTO: PATTY BARTEN

The organization stepped forward to save this land as part of their strategic focus on protection and restoration of impactful watershed and greenway areas. CFC has been a leader on these initiatives, which are vital for the ecological health of the region.

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

Nationally, this acquisition also aligns with the federal "America the Beautiful 30 by 30 Plan," which is the federal government's goal to conserve at least 30 percent of U.S. lands and freshwater and 30 percent of U.S. ocean areas by 2030. This initiative seeks to reverse the negative impacts of biodiversity decline and climate change by protecting more natural areas, and to increase access to nature for communities that lack it. The Hill 'N Dale Preserve will locally contribute significantly to this national effort, as well as to the recently announced Land Trust Alliance Gaining Ground initiative. Both these efforts were envisioned when Citizens for Conservation rolled out the Barrington Greenway Initiative.




PHOTO: INDOOR DRONE TOURS

IMPORTANT WATERSHED SUPPORT

CFC plans to permanently protect the land as open space and improve and protect this sensitive watershed area, which is highly significant to area aquifer recharge. In addition, this acquisition will provide for a critical wildlife corridor connecting to the 4,000-acre Spring Creek Forest Preserve. Restoration of the landscape's natural ecosystem will provide important habitat for native plant and aquatic communities, grassland birds (such as Bobolink, Bittern, and Henslow's sparrows), and wildlife that originally occupied this land, including endangered species such as monarch butterflies and rusty-patched bumblebees.

Initial site evaluation (partially funded by an ICECF Advancing Wetland Conservation grant) is now being conducted to create multi-year ecological management plans for the property. The open space restoration will bring back native communities and species; provide new opportunities for school children and volunteers to engage with nature; provide increased surface water infiltration; enhance the quality of local groundwater; and increase wetlands, all while protecting one of the most pristine streams in Northern Illinois (Spring Creek).

Limited public access to the preserve will be provided through CFC-sponsored activities, with the creation of walking paths being considered. No horses will remain on the property, but the possibility of horse trails will be evaluated during the preserve planning process. CFC has pledged to maintain the iconic white exterior fences that currently exist on the land.

Kathleen Leitner said, "This incredibly important acquisition is fulfilling CFC's mission of 'Saving Living Space for Living Things' through protection, restoration and stewardship of land, conservation of natural resources, and education. Our organization's history of dedicated supporters, volunteers, and community support has made this acquisition possible, and we intend to steward this land in perpetuity for the future of our entire community. We thank all who have been involved for their efforts." 

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or donating to the campaign to preserve this important landscape in perpetuity, call Citizens for Conservation at 847-382-7283.



PHOTO: INDOOR DRONE TOURS

The restoration of Hill 'N Dale Farm South will provide critical wildlife corridors for endangered species, including the monarch butterfly.



PHOTO: CITIZENS FOR CONSERVATION

This beautiful prairie landscape was restored by CFC.