

Forest Trails Hiking Club



Founded in November 1942 by the late Dr. A.A. Gour

Come hike with us!

*Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.
Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows
into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness
into you, and the storms their energy, while cares
will drop off like autumn leaves.*

—John Muir

Website: <http://www.foresttrailshc.com/>

Financial Manager:

Susan Olofson

1404 Grove Ave.

Park Ridge, Illinois 60068–5542

Email: susan.olofson@yahoo.com

(for membership status and dues)

To lead a hike:

E-mail LyleKay4@gmail.com

Notices:

- Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these hikers from the swift completion of their hike. Similar to the postal service, we go in all weather conditions.
- While hiking, please stay behind the leader—or you're on your own.
- Dogs are not permitted on hikes.
- You're welcome to join us at a tailgate immediately following the hike. These are usually held at a shelter near the parking lot. (In winter, tailgates are held at a local brewery.) If you choose to attend, please bring something to share.

About Forest Trails

Forest Trails is an informal social club of adults who wish to hike as a group. Members and guests hike at their own risk and are solely responsible for their own safety and well-being. The club is not providing a service and makes no claim as to the suitability or safety of any hike location.

Hikes are on Sunday unless otherwise noted. There's no sign-up or charge for hikes. Just show up! For information on individual hikes, call the leader(s). Some things to keep in mind: Carry lunch and/or snacks and water. Wear hiking boots or sturdy shoes. Also, keep in mind that we hike in all weather conditions, usually at a fairly brisk pace (3+ miles per hour).

Please be sure that you can hike the designated distance before coming on a hike. Unless noted otherwise in a hike's description, all hikes have dropout points or opportunities to turn back. On hikes listed as "strenuous," "moderately strenuous," or "fast-paced," participation is at the leader's discretion. He or she must keep up a steady pace—geared for the majority—to finish by the planned time. Leaders are not obligated to wait for slow hikers. If you're in doubt about participating, call or email the leader at least one day before the hike.

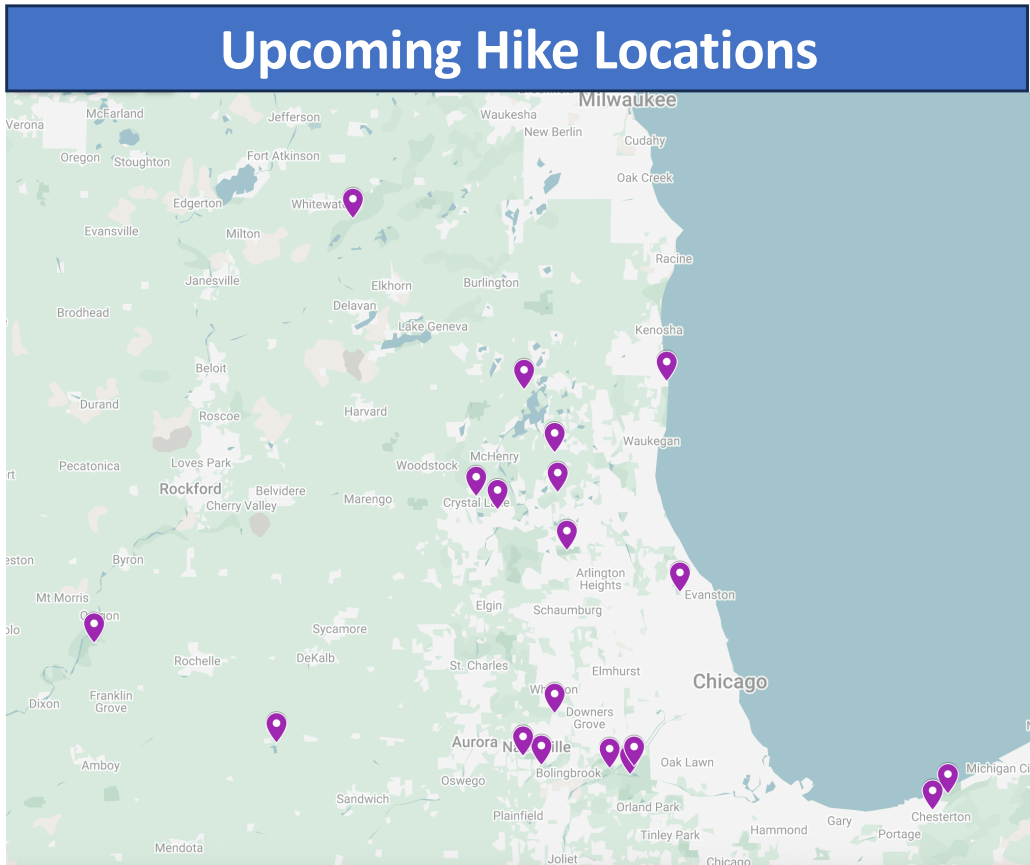
Drive times and mileage estimates are from the Chicago Loop. All hikes begin on time. Don't be late! You may miss the hike.

Upcoming Hikes		
Day	Hike Name	GPS Coordinates
Sunday, November 2	Indiana Dunes State Park	N41.657176, W87.048673
Sunday, November 9	Ice Age Trail - South Kettle Moraine, Lake LaGrange to Rice Lake, WI	N42.804690, W88.652624
Sunday, November 16	Lowden Miller State Forest	N41.960497, W89.348977
Sunday, November 23	Lakewood Forest Preserve	42.260278, -88.098222
Thanksgiving Day: Thursday, November 27	No hike is planned yet; pay attention to e-mails as we get closer to the date.	
Sunday, November 30	Nippersink Forest Preserve, Round Lake	42.34005° N, 88.10797° W
Sunday, December 7	Illinois Beach State Park–North Unit, Winthrop Harbor	N42.4816932, W87.8061324
Sunday, December 14	Danada and Herrick Lake Forest Preserves	N41.818565, W88.108349
Sunday, December 21	Knoch Knolls Park	41.713591, -88.142332
Christmas Day: Thursday, December 25	North Branch of Chicago River, Skokie	N42.062006, W87.770330
Sunday, December 28	The Hollows, McHenry County Conservation District	N42.226444, W88.261056
New Years Day: Thursday January 1	New Year's Day Hike – Saganashkee Slough	N41.696287, W87.905668
Sunday, January 4	Deer Grove Forest Preserve	GPS: N42.146022, W88.074762
Sunday, January 11	Springbrook Prairie	N41.732891, W88.191887
Sunday, January 18	Waterfall Glen Nature Preserve in Darien/Lemont	N 41.707326, W 087.959287
Sunday, January 25	Chain O'Lakes State Park	N42.466163, W88.189608
Sunday, February 1	Maple Lake Boating Center, Palos Hills Forest Preserve	N41.711735, W87.893060
Sunday, February 8	Veteran Acres Park, Wingate Prairie, Sterne's Woods & Fen, Crystal Lake	N42.25282, W88.32044
Sunday, February 15	Indiana Dunes National Park, Porter, IN	N41.6245, W87.08934
Sunday, February 22	Chili Hike–Shabbona Lake State Park	N41.7587886, W88.8583033

Save the Date!

May 4-8, 2026: Shawnee National Forest, Illinois

May 23-25, 2026: Governor Dodge and Blue Mounds State Parks, Wisconsin



November 2 – Indiana Dunes State Park, Porter County, IN

Driving info: About 1 hour, 50 miles

Leader: Barbara Endoy (773 639 9228), endoy_b@yahoo.com

Hike length: (~12 miles)

Start time: 9:30 AM CENTRAL Time

We'll hike one of the prettiest stretches of the Indiana lakeshore, over steep sand dunes and through oak and white pine forests. Take I-94 East to IN 49 North (Exit 26B). Follow IN 49 North into the State Park. Follow signs to Wilson Shelter, the parking lot is on the left.

GPS: N41.657176, W87.048673. Note: A \$12 entry fee is due at the park entrance, which is usually staffed by a single park ranger. Please allow sufficient time.

November 9 - Ice Age Trail–South Kettle Moraine, Lake LaGrange to Rice Lake, WI

Driving info: About 2.5 hours, 100 miles

Leader: Vicky Connors (847 736-6221), vconnors60@yahoo.com

Hike length: 13+ miles

Start time: 9:30 AM

We will hike a favorite segment of the Ice Age Trail. This stretch of the IAT is particularly scenic and hilly—so it may be challenging. There is a bail out after approx. 4 miles. A tailgate will follow the hike in the parking lot.

Take I-94 north to Wisconsin Highway 50. Go west on Highway 50 to Route 12. (You can also take I-355 or I-290/Route 53 North to Route 12.) Continue northwest on Route 12 through the tiny town of LaGrange, WI.

Continue approximately 3 miles west, crossing over County Road O to the parking area on the right side of the road.

GPS: N42.804690, W88.652624. Note: There is an \$11 daily parking fee. (Or you can purchase an annual Wisconsin State Park pass for \$38.)

November 16 - Lowden Miller State Forest

Driving info: About 2–2.5 hours, 105 miles

Leader: Joe Lulves (630/677-3162), lulves@att.net

Hike length: 10 miles

Start time: 9:30 AM

Lowden Miller State Forest lies in the Rock River Valley, just 3 miles south of the town of Oregon. Its 120-foot bluffs along 3.5 miles of riverfront are forested with hardwood and pine trees, many of which were planted by former Illinois Governor Frank O. Lowden. This hike is through a beautiful forest and along a river. Free hotdogs and chips following the hike!

Take the Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) to the Reagan Tollway (I-88). Take I-39 exit north. Go to Rt. 64; turn west toward Oregon. Just before Rock River/Oregon, go south (left) on Daysville Road. Go through Daysville to Lowden Road. Go south (right) to Nashua Road; go west (right) to parking lot 2.

GPS: N41.960497, W89.348977

November 23 - Lakewood Forest Preserve

Driving info: About 1 hour 15 minutes, 50 miles

Leaders: Nancy Lee and Richard Wruck (home: 847 259-8814)

Hike length: 10 miles

Start time: 9:30 AM

This is a moderately brisk hike on well-defined trails around marshes, through prairie and in forest with bailouts.

Meet at Lakewood Forest Preserve Winter Sports Area: 24069 W Ivanhoe Rd, Wauconda, IL 60084. The nearest major intersection is IL-176 and Fairfield Road, east of Wauconda in Lake County. Parking entrance is on the east side of Fairfield Road, south of IL-176.

GPS: 42.260278, -88.098222

Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 27 –

No hike is planned yet; pay attention to e-mails as we get closer to the date.

November 30 - Nippersink Forest Preserve, Round Lake

Driving Info: 1 hour, 50 miles

Leader: Steve Pales (847 770-0964), stephenpales@yahoo.com

Hike Length: 10-11 miles

Start Time: 9:30 AM

New Hike! This mostly flat, open prairie hike is out and back with some loops. Hike is within Nippersink Forest Preserve and Fairfield Park. About half the hike is on crushed stone, the other half on grass, asphalt, some sidewalk. A few short distance sections are within wooded not level areas.

Take #94 (Kennedy Expressway) north onto #94 (Eden's Expressway) north 20 miles onto #294 tollway north 19 miles. Exit 11B, turn left onto #120 (Belvidere Rd), head west 7.9 miles. Turn right into Nippersink Forest Preserve. Go .3 miles, turn left into parking lot.

GPS: 42.34005° N, 88.10797° W

December 7 - Illinois Beach State Park–North Unit, Winthrop Harbor

Driving info: About 1.25 hours, 65 miles

Leader: Michelle Chelap (847 644-7607), m.chelap@me.com

Hike length: About 12 miles

Start time: 9:30 AM

This out-and-back hike will traverse the length of the North Unit of Illinois Beach State Park at a moderate pace. The trails are flat and mostly crushed limestone and mowed grass. There will be some shorter sections of boardwalks, beach sand, and asphalt. We will hike through several ecosystems: beach, dunes and swales, marshes, prairie, and black oak savanna. We will lunch at Hosah Park before we head back. If anyone is interested in doing a 1/2 hike and leaving your car at Hosah Park, I can help you shuttle to the trailhead by start time. Let me know. Ignore all signs directing you to Illinois Beach State Park! Instead, the trailhead is at North Point Marina in Winthrop Harbor. Go east on 7th Street off of Sheridan Road. 7th Street is north of Route 173 and south of Russel Road (State Line Road). Take 7th all the way to the T at the marina, turn right and immediately right again into the first public parking lot.

GPS: N42.4816932, W87.8061324

December 14 - Danada and Herrick Lake Forest Preserves

Driving info: About 40 minutes, 25 miles

Leader: Diane Sotiros (312 925-4943), Diane_Sotiros@yahoo.com

Hike length: 10 miles

Start time: 9:30 am

This is a moderately paced hike through wetlands, woodlands, and prairies. Take I-290 west to I-88 west. Take exit north toward Naperville Road. Take Freedom Drive north 800 feet, turn right onto East Warrenville Road, go 0.3 mile and turn left onto Naperville Road. Danada Forest Preserve will be on your right.

GPS: N41.818565, W88.108349

December 21 - Knoch Knolls Park

Driving info: About 45 minutes ~ 30 miles

Leader: Rob Small (630-465-2393) rjcsml@gmail.com

Hike length: 8-10 Miles

Start time: 9:30 AM

Enjoy spectacular views of the east and west branches of the DuPage River leading to the confluence as we hike this thickly forested trail.

From Chicago: take the Stevenson Expressway (I-55) south to Rte. 53; turn right (north) on Rte. 53.; turn left (west) on Royce Rd; turn right (north) on to Washington Street; watch the signs and continue on Washington Street; turn left (west) onto Ring Road; turn left (south) onto Knoch Knolls Road; turn left (south) into the Knoch Knolls Nature Center parking lot.

GPS: 41.713591, -88.142332

Christmas Day: Thursday, December 25 - North Branch of Chicago River, Skokie

Driving info: About 30 minutes, 23 miles

Leader: Steve Pales (847 770-0964), stephenpales@yahoo.com

Hike length: 10 miles

Start time: 9:30 AM

This is a moderately paced hike along the North Branch of the Chicago River, mostly on bridle trails. Take the Kennedy Expressway north to the Edens Expressway. Continue north on the Edens to Old Orchard Road. Turn left on Old Orchard Road and head west across the Harms Road intersection directly into the Harms Woods North parking area.

GPS: N42.062006, W87.770330

December 28 - The Hollows, McHenry County Conservation District

Driving info: About 1.25 hours, 50 miles

Leader: Heidi Hanson, dix37326@duck.com

Hike length: 8-10 miles

Start time: 9:30 AM

We will hike the looping trails of The Hollows Conservation Area in McHenry County. Habitats include sand prairie, wet silt loam prairie, gravel savanna and basin marsh, as well as woodland and gravel pit lakes. Dress for the

weather and be prepared for potentially icy, wet, or muddy conditions on the trails. Pit toilets are available. Bring water and snacks. Club members can expect an email from the hike leader prior to the hike with any updates on conditions.

Take the Kennedy/Jane Addams Tollway (I-90) to Roselle Road in Schaumburg. Exit north and continue until the road ends at Baldwin. Turn right, stay to the left and turn left (north) on Northwest Highway (Route 14). Continue on Route 14 passing through Barrington, Fox River Grove and Cary. The entrance to The Hollows is on the east side of Northwest Highway, about a half mile north of Three Oaks Road.

Meet at Lake Atwood parking lot.

GPS: N42.226444, W88.261056

New Year's Day – Thursday, January 1 - Saganashkee Slough

Driving info: About 45 minutes, 25 miles

Leader: Pravin Patel, pravinpatel@ameritech.net

Hike length: 11 miles

Start time: 9:30 am

This is a moderate to hard hike through the back hills and eskers of the Palos area at fast pace. Hiking poles and microspikes are recommended for icy and snowy conditions. Please bring something to share for a tailgate party following the hike.

Take the Stevenson Expressway (I-55) to Rte. 45, then right on 107th Street. Cross over 104 Ave. (Flavin Road) to the destination. Meet in the Saganashkee Slough Boat Launch parking lot on the south side of 107th Street (1.4 miles west of the intersection of 104 Ave. and Flavin Road).

GPS: N41.696287, W87.905668 (westernmost parking lot)

January 4 - Deer Grove Forest Preserve

Driving info: 1 hour, 40 miles

Leaders: Griff Butler (847 800-2835) and Paula Peterson (847 372-3445), pwp230@gmail.com

Hike length: 10 miles

Start time: 9:30 am

Meet at Shelter 5. We will be hiking both on the main trails and on footpaths, so bring spikes and poles. Given that it will likely be cold and possibly snowy, we'll meet at a nearby brewpub after the hike for our usual tailgate. More information will be given closer to the date. Take I-90 to I-290 north (also Rte. 53) to Dundee Road (Rte. 68). Go west on Dundee Road for 3 miles to Quentin Road. Turn right (north) and go 0.5 mile to the Deer Grove entrance and turn left (west).

GPS: N42.146022, W88.074762

January 11 - Springbrook Prairie

Driving info: About 1 hour, 35 miles

Leader: Joe Lulves (630/677-3162), lulves@att.net

Hike length: 8 miles

Start time: 9:30 AM

This is a moderate hike on a predominately limestone path.

Take the Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) to the East-West Tollway (I-88) and go west to Rte. 59. Go south to 83rd Street, then east on 83rd Street approximately 0.5 mile to the entrance and parking lot on the left.

GPS: N41.732891, W88.191887

January 18 - Waterfall Glen Nature Preserve in Darien/Lemont

Driving info: 30 minutes; 25 miles

Leader: Terry Johnson, terry.johnson708@gmail.com 708.557-8292

Hike length: 9.5 miles

Start time: 9:30 AM

We'll hike the 9.5-mile crushed limestone loop that passes through prairies, savannas and oak-maple woodlands. There are mile markers every half mile; to choose your own bailout point, turn around and hike back. There are washrooms at the parking lot and a porta potty at 6 miles. We'll meet at the recently-expanded lot on Bluff Road, just east of Cass Avenue. Afterward we'll tailgate at Imperial Oak Brewery in Willow Springs, where we're allowed to bring dishes to share (501 Willow Blvd, Willow Springs 60480).

Take I-55 South (Stevenson) for about 20 miles. Exit onto IL-83 South (Kingery) for 2 miles then turn right onto Bluff Road. The driveway into the lot will be on your left, a half mile up.

GPS: N 41.707326, W 087.959287

January 25 - Chain O'Lakes State Park

Driving info: About 1.25 hours, 65 miles

Leader: Char Carle (815 276-5104)

Hike length: 10–12 miles

Start time: 9:30 AM

Chain O'Lakes State Park is in the heart of Illinois' largest concentration of natural lakes. The park has nearly 6,500 acres of water and 488 miles of shoreline. We'll hike on several of its trails. Take Northwest Tollway (I-90) to Barrington Road. Go north on Barrington Road (it merges with Rte. 59) to Rte. 12 (Rand Road). Continue northwest on Rte. 12 past Fox Lake to Wilmot Road. Turn right (north) and go to the park entrance. Drive 1.4 miles on the main park road past the horse trailer parking to the fork in the road. Turn left (north) and park in the lot south of the park office.

GPS: N42.466163, W88.189608

February 1 - Maple Lake Boating Center, Palos Hills Forest Preserve

Driving info: About 1 hour, 30 miles

Leader: Kathy Siemeck (e-mail: ksiemeck72@gmail.com)

Hike length: 10 miles

Start time: 9:30 am

This hike is in a beautiful, forested area of Palos Hills Forest Preserve. We will hike at a moderate pace. From Chicago: Take the Stevenson Expressway (I-55) west to LaGrange Road; go south on LaGrange Road to 95th Street; turn right (west) and go to Wolf Road; turn left (south) and go to the Maple Lake Boating Center (first entrance on left). We will meet at the second parking lot.

GPS: N41.711735, W87.893060

February 8 - Veteran Acres Park, Wingate Prairie, Sterne's Woods & Fen, Crystal Lake

Driving info: About 1.4 hours, 55 miles

Leader: Heidi Hanson, dix37326@duck.com.

Hike length: 10 miles

Start time: 9:30 AM

Rolling gravel hill prairie and wooded forest, grass, gravel, paved, and single-track dirt trails. Some rugged, steep paths. Moderate to brisk pace. Restrooms at the parking area and additional stops during the hike. For trail conditions, mileage, bailout, and after-hike plans, watch for pre-hike email.

Take the Jane Addams Tollway (I-90) west to IL-31 N (Exit 54B). Drive about 13 miles to IL-176/E Terra Cotta Ave. and turn left or travel west to Walkup Road. Turn right (north). Look for Veteran Acres parking lot on the right.

GPS: N42.25282, W88.32044

February 15 - Indiana Dunes National Park, Porter, IN

Driving info: About 1 hour, 50 miles

Leader: Barbara Endoy (773 639-9228), endoy_b@yahoo.com

Hike length: 10–11 miles

Start time: 9:30 am CENTRAL

We'll hike three different trails (Bailly/Chellberg, Cowles Bog and Little Calumet River) across varied terrain including tall grass prairie, black oak forest, steep sand dunes and a short stretch of the Indiana Lakeshore. Take I-94 East to Indiana. Take exit 22B and merge onto US 20E. Follow US 20E for about 3 miles. Turn left onto Mineral Springs Road. Take the first left into the parking lot.

GPS: N41.6245, W87.08934

Note: A National Park entrance pass is required. You can purchase an annual or 7-day vehicle pass in advance online at www.nps.gov/indu/planyourvisit/fees.htm or at the Visitor Center, 1215 IN-49, Porter, IN, 46304 (opens 9 am CT).

February 22 - Chili Hike—Shabbona Lake State Park

Driving info: About 1.75 hours, 70 miles

Leader: Vicky Connors (847 736-6221), vconnors60@yahoo.com

Hike length: 8–10 miles

Start time: 9:30 AM

Please note the starting location. We will start and end the hike at the "chili hut."

This is the club's annual Chili Hike. We will provide chili and a warm shelter for lunch. Feel free to bring side dishes, snacks, and beverages for yourself or to share. Electric outlets are available. There will be no bailouts.

Take I-290 (Eisenhower Expy) west to I-88 (East-West Tollway). Go west past Aurora to exit marked "56 West to Sugar Grove." Take Rte. 56 west 4.4 miles until it turns into "30 West to Hinckley." Go west 20 miles through Big Rock, Hinckley, and Waterman. When you are 4.7 miles past Waterman, you will come to a bridge over the railroad tracks you have been following. Just over the bridge is a BP station (on the left). Just before the BP station, turn left on Indian Road and go 0.4 mile to Preserve Drive. Go left 0.2 mile, then turn right. It will be the first hut on the right.

GPS: N41.7587886, W88.8583033

Membership Information

Dues are \$10 per year (per household) for membership. Be aware of your expiration date. You should also receive a renewal reminder, so be sure to check your spam folder. If your membership has expired, you will no longer receive schedules. Please send checks (payable to Forest Trails Hiking Club) to Susan Olofson, 1404 Grove Avenue, Park Ridge, IL 60068-5542. Or you may pay via PayPal or Venmo. Please select "friends/family" when initiating a payment (the club is NOT a business). We are under "Forest Trails Hiking Club"; email address is fthc.payment@yahoo.com.

Name:

Street Address:

City and State:

Zip Code:

Email Address:

For new members: If you pay by Paypal or Venmo, you need to send Susan Olofson an email at susan.olofson@yahoo.com so that she has your email address. Once we receive your dues payment, you will be sent an invitation to join fthc.groups.io. You must accept this invitation and set your password. This will ensure that you are on the club's email distribution list and that you will receive updated schedules and other information, such as hike updates, additional hikes, weather conditions, or changes to scheduled hikes. If you do not receive an invitation, please check your spam folder.

For current members: If you misplace a schedule, the current schedule can always be found on fthc.groups.io.

Beyond the Hike: In addition, Forest Trails Hiking Club offers an optional email group, Beyond the Hike, for members to exchange information that doesn't relate directly to hikes led by members. It covers such topics as carpool requests, lost and found, gear information and recommendations, gear for sale, special events that may interest club members, and other activities that fall outside hiking (e.g., bike rides, skiing). To address spam concerns, Beyond the Hike participants can control whether and how they receive emails posted to the group. To join or request additional information, contact Paula Uscian at pmuscian@sbcglobal.net