

Citizens for Conservation Acquires 246.5-Acre Hill 'N Dale Farm South from The Duchossois Group

Acquisition Will Create Hill 'N Dale Preserve to Protect and Restore Critical Spring Creek Watershed Property

BARRINGTON, ILLINOIS, USA, August 29, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Barrington-based Citizens for Conservation and The Duchossois Group are pleased to announce today that long-term conservation protection has been provided for the 246.5-acre Hill 'N Dale Farm South property. CFC has acquired the parcel from The Duchossois Group; it is located in

unincorporated McHenry County and surrounded by Barrington Hills, 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.



Citizens for Conservation Has Acquired the 246.5-acre Hill 'N Dale Farm South in McHenry County, Illinois

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This property's high conservation value, coupled with CFC's strong history of delivering quality restoration results, will have far-reaching impacts for Barrington and the Northern Illinois region.”

Kathleen Leitner, CFC Board President

This previously privately owned land in the Spring Creek watershed is 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 246.5-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 is 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 Spring Lake Nature Preserve.

The purchase will permanently protect the land as open space and improve this sensitive watershed area, which is highly significant to area aquifer recharge. In addition, this acquisition will provide 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, including endangered species such as monarch butterflies and rusty-patched bumblebees.

Citizens for Conservation (CFC), a volunteer-based organization with a 50-year history in the Barrington area, 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. 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.

"This property's high conservation value, coupled with CFC's strong history of delivering quality restoration results, will have far-reaching impacts for the Barrington-area community as well as



Kim Duchossois of The Duchossois Group and Kathleen Leitner of Citizens for Conservation Celebrate the Acquisition of Hill 'N Dale Farm South



the entire Northern Illinois region,” said Kathleen Leitner, CFC’s Board President. “We could not be more pleased to have partnered with The Duchossois Group and Kim Duchossois 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.”

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 Hill ‘N Dale Farm. 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.”

Initial funding for the purchase came in the form of a \$4.9 million grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, the largest such grant awarded for a single parcel purchase. This substantial award demonstrates the significant conservation value of this important property. CFC is seeking an additional \$5 million in funding to supplement the purchase of the land, conduct ecological restoration, and manage the site for public enjoyment in the future.

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).

Future public access to the preserve will be provided through CFC-sponsored activities. No horses 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 for the future of our entire community.

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