

STEEP SLOPES, LONG LEGACY

Lake Forest is home to 15 ancient and incredibly unique landscape features called ravines. These tree-covered slopes are part of a dynamic landscape that defines Lake Forest as more than just a city—it is a family-friendly *community*, blessed with green lands and blue waters.

Lake Forest has grown into today's vibrant community because generations of residents have embraced our natural surroundings. The flow of our landscape, the natural highs and lows of our lands, is reflected in the curve of our streets and the architecture of our built surroundings.

Ravines aren't just beautiful landscape features. Ravines *work*. When they are healthy, ravines provide valuable and irreplaceable services for our community:

- Ravines drain rain water away from homes and basements, reducing flooding
- Ravines protect our drinking water source—Lake Michigan—from pollutants
- Healthy ravines with native trees and plants reduce erosion, keeping our land where it belongs
- Ravines provide homes to migratory songbirds, endangered plants and spawning fish



In Illinois, for every 20 acres of ravines in which protective plant buffers have been removed, 7,000 pounds (the size of a pickup truck) of valuable soil and native seeds wash into Lake Michigan, taking pollution with it!

Healthy ravines work hard and well. But damaged, unhealthy ravines, can actually cause problems, like increasing Lake Michigan pollution, eroding property and increasing flooding.



RAVINES ARE OUR LEGACY

Since the time of the glaciers, rain water and snow melt have sculpted Lake Forest's ravines. However, as we developed Lake Forest into the community we now know and love, our actions have inadvertently accelerated that natural erosion process to unnatural levels.

Over the years, the volume of stormwater runoff—rain, hose water and snow melt—has increased as homes, patios and roads replaced prairies and wooded areas. Now, more water rushes through the ravines, speeding up the erosion process and carrying pollutants.

Left unchecked, ravine and bluff erosion can cause significant damage: polluting our drinking water and swimming beaches; undermining buildings, roads, and bridges; and breaking sewer lines.

OUR ACTIONS MATTER

When restored and healthy, our ravines and Lake Michigan beaches are beautiful assets, an integral part of our community's character and part of what sets Lake Forest apart.

No matter where you live in the Lake Forest area, water you use to water the lawn or wash your car can travel through our ravines and end up in Lake Michigan, our source for drinking water. There are important actions you can take to keep Lake Forest's ravines—and our Lake Michigan beaches—healthy and beautiful.



■ Use fertilizers and pesticides sparingly and only when necessary. If you must fertilize, only use fertilizers that are phosphorous-free.



■ Reduce stormwater running off your property (and eventually into the ravine) by planting rain gardens and using rain barrels.



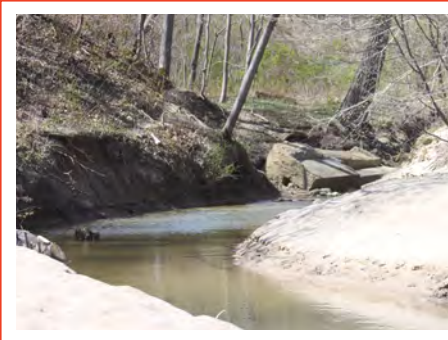
■ If you wash your car at home, wash on your grass so the hose water will soak into the ground and not wash into the street or gutters.



You can help the City of Lake Forest and partners restore and protect our unique ravine systems and Lake Michigan beaches by volunteering at a work day! These workdays are great opportunities to get your hands dirty while improving our community.

Most of our volunteer efforts will focus on Seminary Ravine, which will serve as a cornerstone demonstration site to further expand ravine education efforts. It will be a working demonstration of the important role ravines play in water quality.

To volunteer, visit the Lake Forest Open Lands Association website at www.lfola.org/getinvolved/workinapreserve.aspx.



WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT OUR LEGACY

Recent scientific research has given us even greater insight into the irreplaceable value ravines add to Lake Forest and Lake Michigan. Thankfully, the residents of Lake Forest already know how important these ravines are to the community. Results from the 2011 Lake Forest resident survey showed that 78% of our residents believe that preserving and stabilizing ravines and bluffs should be a significant priority for the City.

In response to the public demand that we preserve our ravines, key Lake Forest institutions, including the City, Lake Forest Public School Districts, Lake Forest Open Lands Association and Lake Forest College, have joined a voluntary partnership dedicated to protecting the environmental character of our community. The **Lake Forest Collaborative for Environmental Leadership** shares efforts and addresses environmental issues with a multi-faceted approach.

Through this partnership, we are planning for the future of our ravines, restoring areas, educating students and engaging residents to take meaningful environmental actions. The Collaborative applied for and received a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Coastal Management Program. This grant will help us reach restoration and education goals for these valuable resources.

