411 S. Wells St.
Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60607

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Crew Leader, Forest Preserve Experience Program
Reports to: Youth and Engagement Corps Manager
Open until filled | Start Date: June 15, 2026
Hourly Rate: $23.50 per hour

- 30 hours paid training, June 15-18 & June 22-25, 2026
  8am - 3pm, Monday-Thursday
- 28 hours per week, June 29 through July 30, 2026
  7:15 am to 2:15 pm, Monday-Thursday

Organization:

Mission: We unite people to protect, promote, and care for the forest preserves in Cook County.

Our community advocates for the responsible management of the nearly 70,000 acres of forest preserves in Cook County through advocacy, engagement, and stewardship of the land. Some of the best natural areas in Illinois are right here in Cook County, right outside your urban backdoor. Join our team and help us ensure they are here for the next 100 years.

Friends is an organization that gets things done with our members, volunteers, staff, board, and partners. We believe in work-life balance and are here for the marathon, not the sprint (not that we don't sprint on a regular basis).

Operating Budget: $3,750,000

Summary: Friends of the Forest Preserves seeks Crew Leaders to be part of the Forest Preserve Experience (FPE) leadership team. FPE is a five-week summer program for teens, focused on job skill development, restoration training and work, environmental education, and exposure to the forest preserves and jobs in conservation. For many participants, this program serves as a first job, so Crew Leaders excel in relating to and guiding youth through the program. Successful candidates have strong communication skills, experience leading high school aged students, and a passion for environmental conservation.

Responsibilities:

- Co-supervise, motivate, coordinate, and mentor 12 high school youth (ages 14-19) employed in the FPE program
- Plan and lead a variety of hands-on ecological conservation and restoration projects (such as invasive species removal and litter pick-up) in forest preserves in Cook County

board of directors
Thomas Greenhaw, Jr., Chair | Corryn Antonizio, Vice Chair | Cory Chaplin, Treasurer | Michelle Thom, Secretary
Pilar Audain | Carmen Scott Boria | Kathleen Bruch | Walter Burlack | Dr. Charles D. Dillon | Barbara C. Hill
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Benjamin Cox, Executive Director

- Lead educational activities as well as team building exercises and games
- Demonstrate safe tool usage and ensure safety procedures are followed
- Teach basic invasive plant identification to crew members
- Evaluate and document crew attendance, work activities, and performance
- Positively represent Friends of the Forest Preserves at work site and while participating in recreational activities

Required Qualifications:

- 21 years or older
- Ability to arrive at forest preserve locations and community colleges in south suburbs of Cook County on time
- Must be able to attend mandatory training June 15 - June 25 in addition to being able to serve entire length of program
- Experience working with diverse groups of youth and strong interest in working with and mentoring youth
- Ability to foster strong work habits, environmental ethics, leadership, and team unity
- Experience teaching in classroom and/or field setting a plus
- Ability to maintain an inclusive, safe, productive, and enjoyable work environment
- Excellent communication, organizational, and interpersonal skills
- Outdoor skills, plant identification skills, knowledge of Midwestern ecology is preferred but not required
- Current basic First Aid and adult CPR certifications or willingness to obtain one (Training provided)
- Willingness to obtain a Illinois Alternative Herbicide license (Training provided)
- Ability to lift and move heavy objects (50 lbs.) and work outside in inclement weather and extreme temperatures

To apply: Submit cover letter, resume, and two references via the Friends' website at https://fotfp.org/who-we-are/jobs/ . Incomplete applications may not be considered. Please NO calls, faxes, office visits, or emails.

Friends of the Forest Preserves strongly encourages people of all identities to apply. We strive to include people of every race, color, religion, creed, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital or veteran status, and/or sexual orientation. Friends is an equal opportunity employer, in addition to observing all legal protections of special status, promoting diversity in the conservation community.