

DAN RYAN FOREST PRESERVE

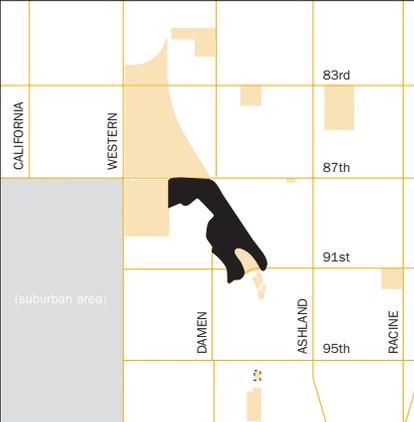
The Dan Ryan Forest Preserve, like many of Cook County's preserves, is a mix of deep woods with a closed canopy that keeps much from growing in the understory; more open edges where oaks preside over a mix of native and non-native flowers and grasses; small wetlands; mowed fields for sports, picnicking and other active recreational pursuits; and paved parking lots.

southeast corner. The best woodland communities are found south of 87th Street; wild geranium, jack-in-the-pulpit, Virginia waterleaf and other spring ephemerals can be found in abundance.

Wood-chipped trails wind through the Dan Ryan Forest Preserve, and a two-mile section of paved bike trail traverses it from north to south along the eastern edge. It is part of the Major Taylor bike trail, which has another stretch of four miles of paved, dedicated trail a couple miles to the south; between those two points, the City's recommended bike route goes past Ridge Park Wetland (site 70, p. 109) and Hurley Park Woodland (site 37, p. 63), two other natural areas described in this document.

The western-most edge of the Dan Ryan Forest Preserve has a geological feature of interest. Here, the relatively flat terrain pitches steeply upward toward Western Avenue. This is the northern-most tip of a dramatic piece of Chicago topography known to geologists as "Blue Island." (The suburb called of the same name forms the south end of Blue Island.) Over 10,000 years ago, most of Chicago was submerged in a vast glacial lake. Where the majority of Chicagoans now live was once the bed of this lake. But people in Beverly and Morgan Park and the Dan Ryan Forest Preserve occupy a zone that was above water; the neighborhoods were on a literal island.

In presettlement times, Dan Ryan Woods was part of an oak grove surrounded by open prairie on all sides. Today Dan Ryan woods is managed as oak woodland dominated by bur, white and red oak, with swamp white oak communities in the



Dan Ryan Forest Preserve



ADDRESS 8700 S Western Ave
OWNER Forest Preserve District of Cook County
ACREAGE 60.50

HABITATS
1 Forest/Woodland

DIRECTIONS Turn east on 83rd Street off of Western Avenue; turn immediately right into the parking area.

