

# Survey Seeks Public Input on Best Uses for Two Green Space Properties in Edwardsville

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EDWARDSVILLE – The City of Edwardsville wants to hear from the public about the best ways to utilize and manage two parks prized by the City as significant green space properties. The City hired HeartLands Conservancy, a Belleville-based conservation

nonprofit, last fall to create a management plan for William C. Drda Woods and Richards Woods, two properties acquired as part of Edwardsville's commitment to preserving and protecting green space.

HeartLands has launched a survey seeking input on potential public uses and access for the two properties. The results of the survey and other public input will be considered in the development of the management plan. The Drda Woods property includes about 70 acres previously used as farmland at 5404 New Poag Road. Since 2019, the City and HeartLands have been planting trees to help reforest the property, which is adjacent to the Bohm Woods State Nature Preserve.

There are no facilities at the site; preliminary plans call for public access to be established in the near future off New Poag Road. Richards Woods was purchased in 2021, and encompasses about 35 acres of natural, timbered land on the eastern edge of town, near Marine Road and East Schwarz Street.

The property is bordered on its south side by MCT's Nickel Plate Trail. "We know our residents are passionate about preserving community spaces such as these," said Nate Tingley, the director of Edwardsville's Parks and Recreation Department. "We'd love to have their input on the crafting of these two beautiful green spaces." Unlike traditional parks, which typically are used for active recreation and sports, Drda Woods and Richards Woods would be used for more passive pursuits, such as low-impact hiking and educational purposes, said Laura Lyon, HeartLands' Vice President of Program Strategy and Impact. The character of the two properties is very different, she added, which makes public input on possible uses especially important. The survey is online now and will be available through Wednesday, June 21, the first day of summer. It only takes a few minutes and also covers general attitudes and usage of other Edwardsville Parks and Recreation properties.

The survey can be taken here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/W6CXQZ5>

A printed version of the survey will be available upon request from the Edwardsville Parks and Recreation Department by emailing [parks@cityofedwardsville.com](mailto:parks@cityofedwardsville.com). In addition to the survey, the management planning process includes a thorough examination of existing conditions and operations of the sites, development of goals and priorities and a funding assessment. There will be additional opportunities for public input, Lyon added. The City has partnered with HeartLands Conservancy on previous projects, including tree plantings in Drda Woods and other locations. HeartLands also has a tree steward program to train volunteers to help continue proper care for community nature areas. [Details are available at https://heartlandsconservancy.org/](https://heartlandsconservancy.org/)