

The Thompson Road Farm

About Boone Creek



The Thompson Road Farm was the homestead for the Thompson Family dating from the late 1800's and has been used for farming since then. Over the years, the property changed hands to several different families. It was most recently home to the Jung Family. In the late 1950's the wetland areas around the headwaters of Boone Creek were tiled, greatly increasing production on the farm. That tile system is aging and breaking down, presenting a rare opportunity to preserve and restore one of the largest wetland areas in the County, and protect the quality of Boone Creek, one of the most important ecological treasures in Northeast Illinois.

Boone Creek is a high quality cold water creek that drains 23 square miles in McHenry County and is fed by the state's largest concentration of privately owned Illinois Nature Preserves, primarily fens, seeps and springs. The Nature Preserves represent some of the most unique natural heritage sites remaining in Illinois. Preservation of the Thompson Road Farm will safeguard the water quality found in the creek today by restoring a functioning wetland system to filter and manage the water that eventually flows into the creek. This will enhance not only the quality of Boone Creek, but in addition the overall water quality in the area.

According to scientists, restoration of degraded peatlands is one of the highest priorities for mitigating the effects of climate change. Peat soils naturally absorb and retain large amounts of carbon, and even soils that have been degraded by drainage and hydrologic changes hold great potential to recover once a healthy water cycle is re-established. Given that peat soils comprise just 3% of the Earth's land area, a project that preserves and restores over 100 acres of peat is ecologically significant.

The Thompson Road Farm

Bull Valley Riding Club Trails



The Thompson Road Farm has a rich history in McHenry County, beginning as part of the Thompson Family homestead in the late 1800's. More recently it was home to the Jung Family, including Bull Valley Riding Club organizer Nancy Jung.

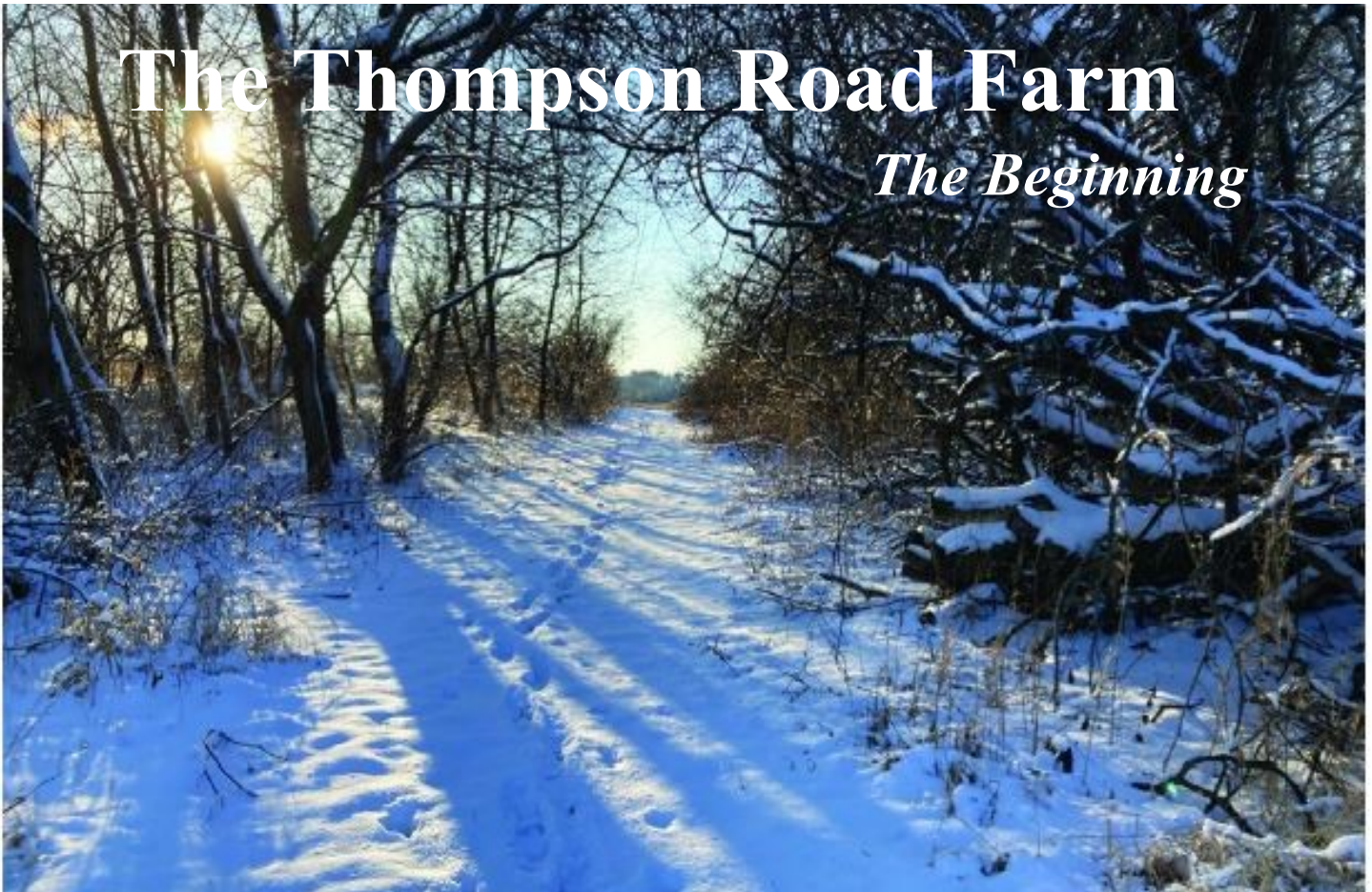
The Bull Valley Riding Club was founded on this property and the farm's "heritage trail" network is the original network of bridle trails dating back to the club's origin in 1963. The property has been farmed for generations and horses have historically been part of the fabric of the land. Over five miles of equestrian trails currently on the property will be preserved, and maintained as public multi-use trails for future generations.

The BVRC is a unique, historic organization which manages one of only a limited number of private bridle trail systems in the United States, and pre-dates the incorporation of the Village of Bull Valley. The Thompson Road Farm is our foundation story.



The Thompson Road Farm

The Beginning



In September of 2020, a small group of local residents representing a variety of interests, formed the Thompson Road Farm Project (TRF) to acquire and protect the 324-acre farm located on Thompson Road west of the convergence of Thompson Road, Illinois Route 120 and Fleming Roads in McHenry County.

With a combination of grants, private donations and a loan, the group, through its fiscal sponsor The Land Conservancy of McHenry County (TLC) closed on the property in March 2021. The Thompson Road Farm Project has plans to restore the wetlands and woodlands, recreate the prairies, and preserve the trail system for public recreation.

Approximately 197 acres of wetlands and 35 acres of forested areas will be restored and managed by TLC under conservation easements. Another 60 acres of farmed land will be restored to native short-grass prairie, for a total of 274 acres restored in a scenic rolling glacial topography with unimpeded natural vistas.

The site will incorporate almost 6 miles of permanent trail easements for equestrian and other public uses and recreation. Uses that have been considered include horseback riding, hiking and walking trails, 5k trail runs, birding, snowshoeing and educational outreach events.

Access will be through a public parking area that will be established along Thompson Road, offering panoramic views of the restoration area and Boone Creek headwaters. The entire acreage will become a nature park in the Bull Valley Park System.