



For Immediate Release

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### **Lake Forest Open Lands President and CEO to Retire**

**Lake Forest, IL, January 18, 2022**

Lake Forest Open Lands Association (LFOLA) announced that the organization's president and CEO, John Sentell, has decided to retire in May of 2022. Sentell has led the highly-regarded conservation land trust for over 11 years and will remain with the organization in an advisory capacity and continue to serve on LFOLA's Board of Governors.

"We will miss John's steady hand, contagious energy and passionate vision leading our organization," said Fred Wacker, board chair of LFOLA. "John's dedication during his tenure has brought many successes of which we can all be proud and that will endure for decades."

During Sentell's tenure, LFOLA extended its mission to preserve threatened native landscapes and connect people with nature. Notable land achievements include the addition of several high-priority parcels to LFOLA's portfolio of nature preserves, including the permanent preservation and restoration of the iconic McCormick ravine and woods along Lake Michigan, the recently acquired 102-acre Westfork Savanna and completing the land trust's 40-year goal to link a 7-mile protected greenway at West Skokie Nature Preserve. Over the last decade LFOLA found success in engaging more people to celebrate our unique "conservation community" and proudly promoted the rally cry to "*Think Outside*" and embrace the wonder of nature. This goal to connect people with nature extended to groundbreaking programs like the Center for Conservation Leadership and the recent blessing of our historic landscapes with Native American partners. The organization also recently completed a nearly \$17 million capital campaign to help endow LFOLA's current nature preserves and to accelerate their ambitious conservation goals into the future.

"As stewards of this fine organization, we know our mission is about the land," added Wacker. "But just as important are the people that make what we do happen every day. Thanks to John's leadership and that of our incredibly professional staff, an engaged Board and the support of the community, LFOLA is positioned extremely well for its next chapter of success."

Sentell's passion for conservation runs deep. While president of LFOLA he also served as a past president of the state-wide Prairie State Conservation Coalition (PSCC) along with other positions on non-profit boards and leadership committees in the broader conservation field. Before joining LFOLA

Sentell served as Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director of The Wetlands Initiative, a leader in innovative restoration models and partnerships that advance large-scale wetland restoration throughout our state.

“It has been a privilege to serve an organization like LFOA that is recognized at the very highest level and to help to make a meaningful impact that will endure for generations,” added Sentell. “This institution is a true gem and being a part of its legacy has been a dream job for me.”

LFOA has an active search underway to identify the organization’s next Executive Director. Interested candidates are encouraged to send a letter of interest and CV to [EDsearch@lfoa.org](mailto:EDsearch@lfoa.org).

### **About Lake Forest Open Lands**

Since its establishment in 1967, Lake Forest Open Lands, the first accredited land trust in Illinois, has acquired, preserved and maintained some of the finest natural habitats in our region including prairies, savannas, ravines and wetlands. Over 14 miles of walking trails and six, soon to be nine, nature preserves are open to the public year-round. Lake Forest Open Lands Association’s vision is to engage and expand the public’s commitment to land preservation and conservation, and the organization offers robust engagement programming to connect all people to nature. As an independent conservation land trust, LFOA is supported solely by voluntary contributions, including membership dues and donations and receives no local or state government funding to support its day-to-day operations. For more information about Lake Forest Open Lands, please visit [LFOA.org](http://LFOA.org).