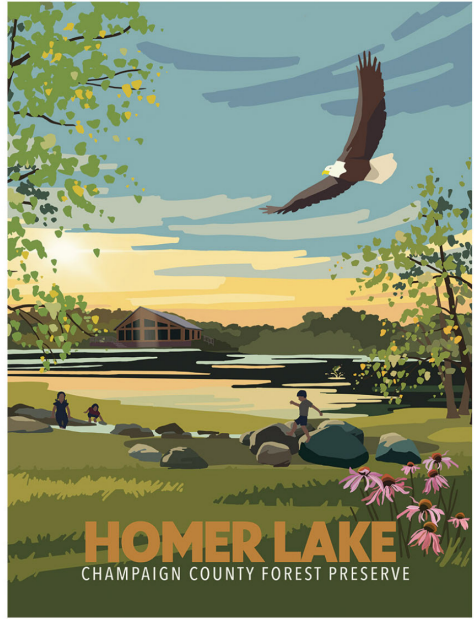


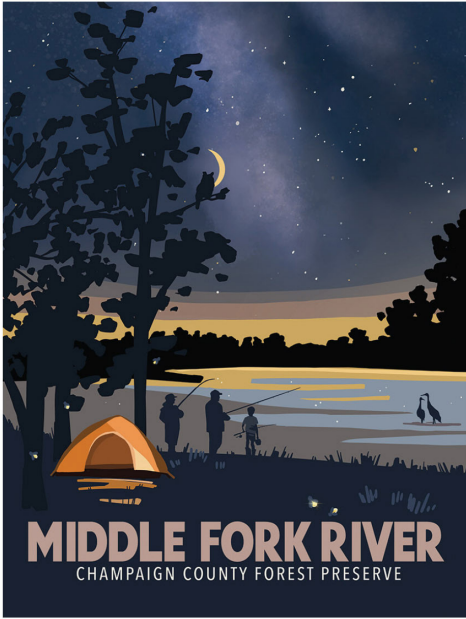
2023 ANNUAL REPORT

FOREST PRESERVES

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY



HOMER LAKE
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE



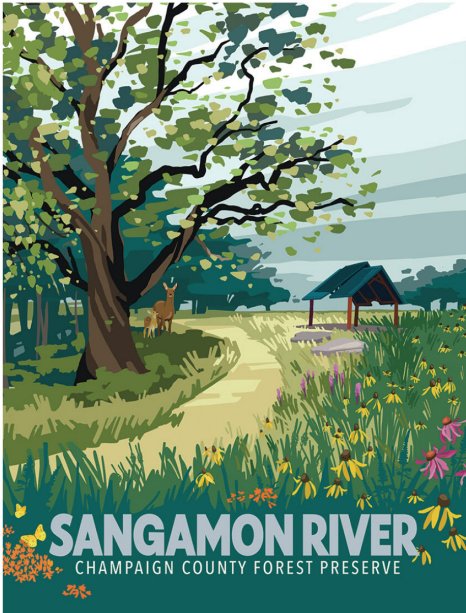
MIDDLE FORK RIVER
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE



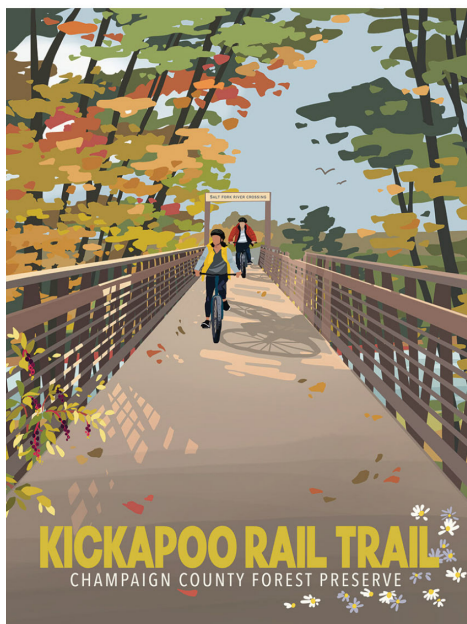
RIVER BEND
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE



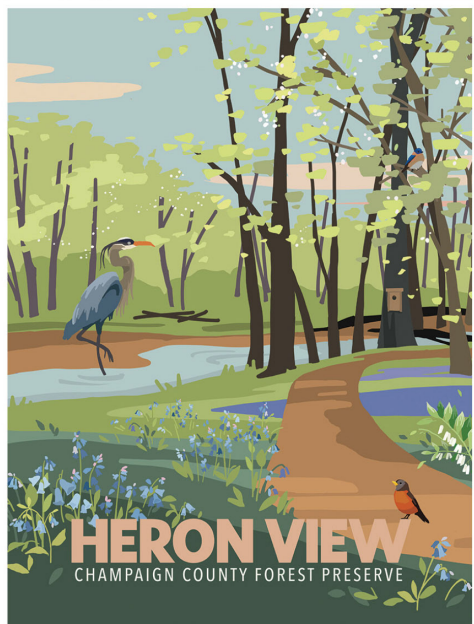
LAKE OF THE WOODS
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE



SANGAMON RIVER
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE



KICKAPOO RAIL TRAIL
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE



HERON VIEW
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE



Letter from the Executive Director



The Champaign County Forest Preserves are delighted to share the 2023 Annual Report. In 2023, we marked a milestone as we celebrated our 75th anniversary of protecting and creating recreational, natural, and educational connections for Champaign County residents. This report offers a snapshot of our achievements over the past year, illustrating our commitment to stewarding Champaign County's natural and cultural treasures while fostering a connection between people and the environment.

Our focus on maintaining and enhancing the preserves persisted, culminating in the completion of 14 capital projects, which included improvements to the two iconic bridges at Lake of the Woods and several of our buildings, as well as increased access to recreation. The execution of prescribed burns covering more than 580 acres (equivalent to one-eighth of total preserve land area), and the planting

of approximately 138 trees in 2023, including 75 trees for 75 years at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve.

Our financial foundation remains strong and includes diverse revenue streams. In 2023, we secured over \$1 million in grants; garnered over \$220,000 in private donations; nearly \$125,000 in camping revenues and \$1.2 million in Lake of the Woods Golf Course revenues.

These achievements are a testament to the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, including a mission-focused staff, residents, donors, partners, legislators, board and committee members, and the invaluable contributions of hundreds of dedicated volunteers who collectively devoted close to 10,000 hours of their time to help us achieve our goals last year. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has played a role in supporting the Forest Preserves. Your continued support fuels our commitment to protecting and nurturing the natural wonders of Champaign County for generations to come.

A Year of IMPROVEMENTS

14 capital projects completed



- Repainted Suspension and Covered Bridges at Lake of the Woods
- Replaced irrigation heads on the back 9 holes at the Lake of the Woods golf Course
- Cart path improvements/expansion at Lake of the Woods Golf Course
- Willow Pond fishing ADA access at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve
- HVAC replacement at the clubhouse at Lake of the Woods Golf Course
- Sealcoat parking lot and Peninsula area at Lake of the Woods
- Renovations to the residence at Sangamon River
- Renovation of the kitchen in the Activity Center at Middle Fork River
- Shower house updates at Middle Fork River
- Replace Fishermans Shelter at Lake of the Woods
- Installed the Pollinator Point Shelter at Homer Lake
- Expanded concrete walk in the Mabery Botanical Garden at Lake of the Woods
- Replaced the annex roof at the Museum of the Grand Prairie
- Installed an ADA Lift at the Headquarters Building at Lake of the Woods.



Foundation



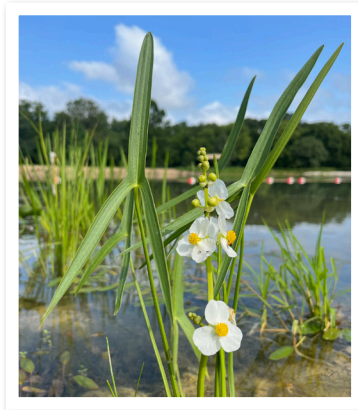
TOTAL FUNDS raised in 2023

\$221,362.35

640 Donations

\$346 Average donation

57% Donor retention rate



TOTAL GRANTS received in 2023

\$1,069,358

3 The **District** was awarded **three grants** **\$700,000**

3 The **Foundation** was awarded **three grants** **\$6,477**

LAKE OF THE WOODS Golf Course



Total Revenue
\$1,216,598

Total Rounds
40,352 { 18-Hole Course **35,219**
Par 3 Course **5,133**

\$41,777
Driving Range
Revenue

\$28,748
Par 3
Revenue

\$1,090
Foot Golf
Revenue

\$20,643 **Simulator Play** Revenue
(as we charge per hour regardless of number of players)

2023 Youth
Golf Programs

360 hours
of service

1,206
kids

VOLUNTEERS

In 2023, CCFPD was the grateful beneficiary of at least:

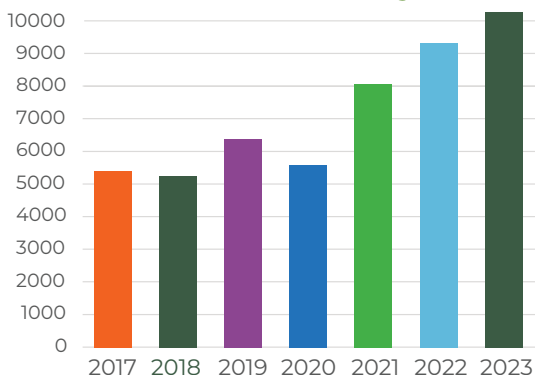
10,200 **VOLUNTEER HOURS**

25
SERVICE GROUPS

56
VOLUNTEER EVENTS

1,240
VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer Hours by Year



Museum and Education VISITATION

MUSEUM OF THE GRAND PRAIRIE	9,490 visitors
HOMER LAKE INTERPRETIVE CENTER	2,013 visitors
SCHOOL PROGRAMS	4,447 participants
SUMMER CAMP PARTICIPANTS	234 participants
PUBLIC PROGRAMS	5,642 participants



Freedom Fest & NIGHT LIGHTS

In 2023, the Champaign County Forest Preserves bid a fond farewell to an iconic tradition while embracing the success of a new and enchanting wintertime spectacle. After three decades of hosting the beloved **July 4th Freedom Fest** at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, the Forest Preserves made the difficult decision to conclude the festivities with a Grand Finale. This move underscored our commitment to conservation and community well-being, while responsibly responding to factors like declining attendance, sponsorship challenges, and logistical hurdles.

In contrast, the **Night Lights event at Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden** between Thanksgiving weekend and Christmas emerged as a shining success in 2023. Boasting a record-breaking attendance of 6,361 visitors, Night Lights captivated the community with its dazzling displays and secured increased donations totaling \$1,200.

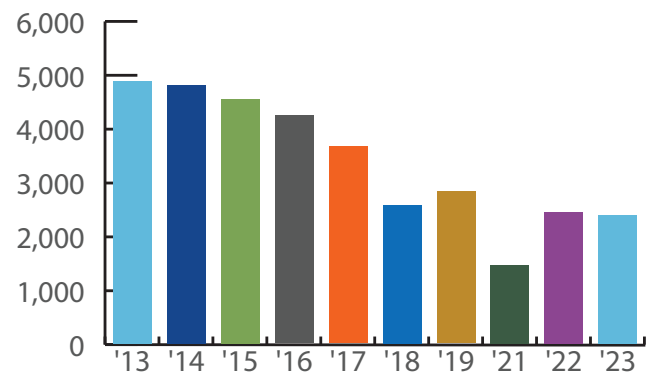
The Forest Preserves continues to navigate the delicate balance of tradition and innovation, ensuring a vibrant future for community engagement while adapting to the evolving needs of both nature and its inhabitants.



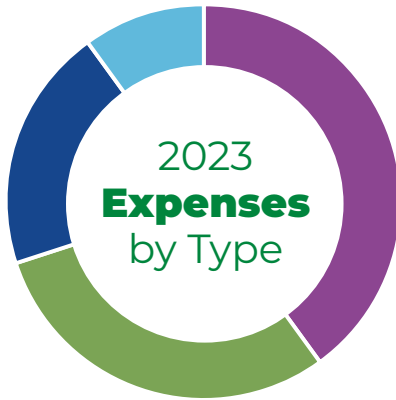
Night Lights



Freedom Fest Fireworks Attendance by Year



Forest Preserve Financials



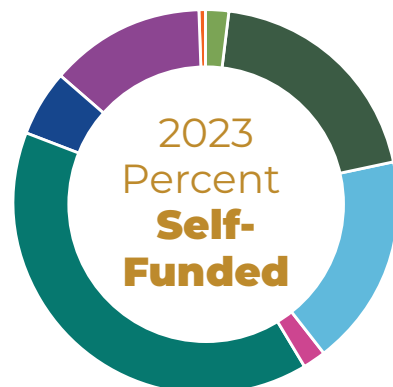
- Wages & Salary: \$3,063,443
- Other Operating: \$1,681,527
- Projects & Equipment: \$1,507,891
- Benefits: \$936,904



- Taxes: \$5,899,048
- User Fees: \$1,175,128
- Grants & Donations: \$756,776
- Merchandise: \$371,272
- Other: \$351,069



- Capital Projects: 23.7%
- Preserves: 19%
- Golf: 17.6%
- Education: 16%
- Natural Resources: 7.6%
- Rentals: 7.2%
- Camping: 3.5%
- Foundation: 3.3%
- Botanical Garden: 2.1%



Program Areas

- Botanical Garden: 5.3%
- Capital Projects: 48.3%
- Camping: 44%
- Education: 4.57%
- Golf: 96.68%
- Natural Resources: 13.7%
- Rentals: 32.2%
- Preserves: 1.2%