



Enhancing Trails for Everyone: A Vision for Champaign County Forest Preserves

Trails wind through the heart of the Champaign County Forest Preserves, weaving a tapestry of exploration, relaxation, and connection to nature. They're more than just paths; they're gateways for exploration, inviting people of all ages and abilities to immerse themselves in the beauty of our nature. Trails require our care and improvements to ensure they remain accessible and enjoyable for generations to come.

Trail improvements aren't just about enhancing recreational opportunities; they're about fostering a connection to nature, promoting public health, and preserving our natural heritage. According

to Rusty Maulding, site superintendent at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, "trails provide avenues for adventure and exercise while serving as a gateway to nature for everyone, regardless of age or ability. They're vital conduits that bring people together, whether it's a group of university students, bird watchers, or families with young children enjoying a leisurely stroll."

Improvements are necessary to meet our community's diverse trail needs. Safety is a top priority. Gaps and heaving along trails, like those at Buffalo Trace, can become potential hazards. Signage and wayfinding updates are essential to guide trail users

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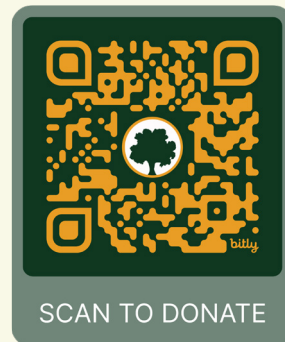
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and ensure a consistent experience across all preserves. And accessibility improvements, such as maintaining hard surfaces and paved trails, are crucial for providing inclusive recreational opportunities for everyone.

Looking ahead, the need for ongoing funding to support trail maintenance and future improvements remains, which is why the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation set a fundraising goal of \$100,000 this year. Erosion control, uniform trailhead signage, and additional amenities like playgrounds are just a few areas where continued investment is needed to ensure our trails remain safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all. Skylar Smith, site superintendent at Homer

Lake Forest Preserve, emphasizes, "even the grandest plans must be balanced with practical considerations of maintenance and sustainability."

The vision for trail improvements across the Champaign County Forest Preserves is one of inclusivity and sustainability made possible by people like you. By making a gift to support Trail Improvements, donors make this vision a reality, ensuring that our trails continue to serve as cherished assets for generations to come.



SCAN TO DONATE

GROWING STRONG:

Introducing the Stable Roots Endowment Fund

Your support has been instrumental in making Champaign County a better place to live, funding crucial projects like the replacement of the covered bridge roof, the expansion of the Kickapoo Rail Trail, native habitat restoration, and providing educational programs throughout Champaign County. To further grow the impact on our community, the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation proudly presents the Stable Roots Endowment Fund, aiming to cultivate the contributions of donors like you!

The Stable Roots Endowment Fund serves as a sustainable revenue source for the Champaign County Forest Preserves. Thanks to the contributions of generous donors like you, we've laid the groundwork for steady growth, establishing a foundation for the future. This endowment will advance the Forest Preserves' mission and deepen the community's connection to nature, by supporting various initiatives, from new

preserve projects to daily operations like maintenance and education efforts. Every contribution to the Stable Roots Endowment Fund is an investment in our collective future, empowering us to continue positively impacting our community.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to this significant endeavor and those who will contribute in the future. Together, we are planting the seeds for a brighter tomorrow.

We look forward to sharing with you the impact created by the Stable Roots Endowment Fund and your support of the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation. Thank you for your unwavering dedication to making Champaign County a better place for all!



GEAR UP FOR AN EXCITING CYCLING ADVENTURE among the extraordinary habitats of the Champaign County Forest Preserves! Pedal the Preserves, an exciting two-day cycling event, is scheduled for August 17th – 18th, 2024, inviting cyclists of all levels to discover the scenic beauty of the Champaign County Forest Preserves:

Are you a beginner cyclist? Have small children that might want to embark on this journey with you? No problem! Participants can choose from various categories, each offering different start times, distances, and fees.

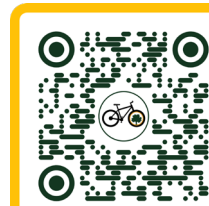
Participants are also encouraged to take advantage of the campsites specially reserved for this curated cycling event at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve. There will be music, food, and fun for all ages!

All proceeds from the event will support the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation of Champaign County, contributing to the conservation and enhancement of the county's natural areas.

To participate in this unforgettable cycling experience, scan the QR code below. The rides will start and finish at Meier Field in St. Joseph, IL*, ample parking is available.

If you are interested in a fun cycling experience immersed in the natural wonders and beauty of east-central Illinois, look no further. Join Pedal the Preserves and discover the beauty of the Champaign County Forest Preserves on two wheels! **Register by August 15.**

**All routes are subject to change.*



REGISTER HERE



The Three Rivers Society, rooted in Champaign County's natural and cultural heritage, invites you to join their cause with an annual unrestricted donation of \$1,000 or more per individual or household. By joining, members demonstrate commitment to conservation and become part of a passionate community united by a vision for a sustainable future which supports the mission of the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation and the Champaign County Forest Preserves District.

Funds from the Three Rivers Society support the foundation's critical needs, ranging from native habitat

restoration and removing invasive species to the addition, enhancement and upkeep of amenities like playgrounds, trails, bridges, and restrooms.

Membership offers exclusive benefits, including a bi-annual newsletter, invitations to members-only events, advanced notifications of district activities, and a special acknowledgement in our yearly donor recognition Leaflet.

To learn more about becoming a member and supporting the vital work of the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation and the Champaign

County Forest Preserve District, contact Ryan Anderson at randerson@ccfpd.org or visit the link through the QR code.

Join us in supporting conservation efforts and safeguarding Champaign County's natural treasures for generations to come!



SCAN TO LEARN MORE

PROGRAMS & EVENTS See the full program descriptions online, ccfpd.org

● JUNE ●

Sunday, June 2

**SUMMER CONCERT SERIES:
CANDY FOSTER AND SHADES OF BLUE**

Lake of the Woods Peninsula, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 5-7 p.m.

Help us welcome back Candy Foster and Shades of Blue! These talented rhythm and blues musicians have been entertaining crowds together for over 20 years together. Legendary front-man, Candy Foster, merges his talents with one of the best blues bands this area has to offer in providing a one-of-a-kind performance! Enjoy the beautiful garden scenery and kick-off summer with a concert you won't want to miss! FREE. For more info: (217) 586-2612 or jbien@ccfpd.org.

Saturday, June 8

DARK SKY SERIES: STARWATCH

Activity Center, Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, 8-11 p.m.

Join the Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society for an evening with the stars at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, a designated International Dark Sky Park by the International Dark-Sky Association. We'll meet at the Activity Center for a presentation, then proceed outside where volunteers will have telescopes set up to view the stars, planets, and more! Weather-permitting, the program will go until midnight, but you may leave when you wish. You may wish to bring insect repellent and something to drink, as well as a lawn chair or picnic blanket for star gazing after the presentation. FREE. All Ages. Children must be accompanied by adults. No cloud date. Call (217) 351-2567 for weather updates. For more info: (217) 896-2455 or jwick@ccfpd.org.

In the event of inclement weather/overcast skies, cancellation notices will be posted at least two hours before the program on the William M. Staerke Planetarium's (217) 351-2567 phone line and on CCFPD & Homer Lake Interpretive Center Facebook pages.

Monday, June 10

**HOMES ACROSS HISTORY:
THE FIRST ILLINOISANS**

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Long before Euro-American settlers arrived in Illinois, the region was home to many native peoples. What was life like for these first Illinoisans? How have things changed? Come learn about the lives of the Indigenous people who lived in Illinois! FREE. All ages. Children must be accompanied

by an adult. Space is limited; registration required by June 6 at champaignforests.org. All attendees (adults and children) must register in advance. For more info: (217) 586-2612 or jbien@ccfpd.org.

Saturday, June 22

TAKE ME FISHING: HOMER LAKE

Walnut Hill Shelter, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 9-11 a.m.

Join us for a morning of free fishing fun for the whole family! Ages 15 and under will have the chance to win awards and prizes. Basic fishing instruction will be available for beginners. Cane poles and bait will be available to use, but you are welcome to bring your own. All event fishing is catch-and-release. Anglers 16 and over must possess a valid fishing license. FREE. All Ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult. For more info: (217) 896-2455 or jwick@ccfpd.org.

Note: Per the Illinois Department of Natural Resources regulation, a fishing license is required for fishing in all Illinois waters. Licenses are not required for anglers who are under the age of 16, blind or disabled anglers, or residents on active military service. The adult accompanying a child fishing will need a license if they are assisting in fishing. For information on purchasing an Illinois fishing license, visit takemefishing.org.

Sunday, June 30

**SUMMER CONCERT SERIES:
HOT IRON STRING BAND**

Harry L. Swartz Campground, Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, 5-7 p.m.

Hot Iron String Band is back, performing original songs and classic favorites in their lively modern bluegrass style. Drawing inspiration from Bill Monroe's driving tempo and Django Reinhardt's free-spirited jazz, this band's unique sound is sure to please your soul. Enjoy this band in the county's largest forest preserve and first International Dark Sky Park in Illinois! FREE. For more info: (217) 586-2612 or jbien@ccfpd.org.

● JULY ●

Monday, July 1

**CULTURAL COLORS:
RED, WHITE, & BLUE DAISIES**

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 3-4 p.m.

With Independence Day right around the corner, one is sure to see a lot of red, white, and blue! But what do these colors mean? What do they symbolize? Come learn about the history behind America's highly recognized colors and participate in a fun

flower-dye activity! FREE. All ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Space is limited; registration required by June 24 at champaignforests.org. All attendees (adults and children) must register in advance. For more info: (217) 586-2612 or jbien@ccfpd.org.

Monday, July 8

**HOMES ACROSS HISTORY:
EARLY SETTLERS OF CHAMPAIGN COUNTY**

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

A lot can be learned about the early settlers of Champaign County by examining their homes. What was life like for Champaign County residents over 100 years ago? How have things changed? Come take a closer look and learn about local history! FREE. All ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Space is limited; registration required by July 4 at champaignforests.org. All attendees (adults and children) must register in advance. For more info: (217) 586-2612 or jbien@ccfpd.org.

Saturday, July 20

**SUMMER CONCERT SERIES
MUSIC ON THE LAKE: MID-OCTOBER**

Walnut Hill Shelter, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 5-7 p.m.

Help us welcome Mid-October! This local duo from Urbana performs alternative and indie music. With heartfelt lyrics and vocals, combined with incredible harmony, listeners will feel the passion! Enjoy one of the many great bands Champaign County has to offer in a beautiful setting. FREE. For more info: (217) 586-2612 or jbien@ccfpd.org.

Saturday, July 27

SUMMER SPLASH!

Boathouse Peninsula, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.

The Forest Preserves is partnering with the Upper Sangamon River Conservancy for an exciting and new family friendly event at Lake of the Woods! The day will begin with our annual "Take Me Fishing" event at the peninsula starting at 9am. Activities throughout the day include fishing, canoeing, kayaking, educational exhibits, and more! Stop by for these fun activities and pick up lunch or a treat from a food truck while you're here! A detailed event schedule can be found at ccfpd.org. No rain date. For more info: (217) 586-3360 or hq@ccfpd.org.

[More programs >>](#)

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES PROGRAMS IN THE COMMUNITY

For more info on each program, interested participants are encouraged to reach out to libraries directly.

● JUNE ●

Monday, June 3

Remarkable Reptiles

Allerton Public Library District

4000 Green Apple Ln., Monticello, IL 61856

10:30-11:30 a.m.

Come meet some local Illinois reptiles with a naturalist from the Champaign County Forest Preserves! This program will consist of a brief lesson on reptiles, along with interesting facts about what species of reptiles can be found in Champaign County. Attendees will also have the chance to meet some live reptiles in person! Recommended for ages 3 and up. To register, visit www.allertonpubliclibrary.org/calendar.

Monday, June 10

Remarkable Reptiles

St. Joseph Township Library

201 N. 3rd St., St. Joseph, IL 61873

2-3 p.m.

Come meet some local Illinois reptiles with a naturalist from the Champaign County Forest Preserves! This program will consist of a brief lesson on reptiles, along with interesting facts about what species of reptiles can be found in Champaign County. Attendees will also have the chance to meet some live reptiles in person! Recommended for ages 3 and up. No registration is required.

Monday, June 17

Remarkable Reptiles

Tolono Public Library District

111 E. Main St., Tolono, IL 61880

10:30-11:30 a.m.

Come meet some local Illinois reptiles with a naturalist from the Champaign County Forest Preserves! This program will consist of a brief lesson on reptiles, along with interesting facts about what species of reptiles can be found in Champaign County. Attendees will also have the chance to meet some live reptiles in person! Recommended for ages 3 and up. No registration is required.

Friday, June 21

Remarkable Reptiles

Mahomet Public Library

1702 E. Oak St., Mahomet, IL 61853

10-11 a.m.

Come meet some local Illinois reptiles with a naturalist from the Champaign County Forest Preserves! This program will consist of a brief lesson on reptiles, along with interesting facts about what species of reptiles can be found in Champaign County. Attendees will also have the chance to meet some live reptiles in person! Recommended for ages 3 and up. No registration is required.

Monday, June 24

Birds of a Feather

St. Joseph Township Library

201 N. 3rd St., St. Joseph, IL 61873

4-5 p.m.

Join a naturalist from the Champaign County Forest Preserves as we explore the world of birds! Discover interesting facts, learn about different species, and practice your bird watching skills during this engaging program designed for youth and adults. Recommended for ages 10 and up. No registration is required.

● JULY ●

July 8

Birds of a Feather

Allerton Public Library District

4000 Green Apple Ln., Monticello, IL 61856

10:30-11:30 a.m.

Join a naturalist from the Champaign County Forest Preserves as we explore the world of birds! Discover interesting facts, learn about different species, and practice your bird watching skills during this engaging program designed for children. Recommended for ages 5 and up. To register, visit www.allertonpubliclibrary.org/calendar.