

NEWS

Champaign County Forest Preserve District
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“Celebrating 60 Years”

Middle Fork River Forest Preserve • Homer Lake Forest Preserve • Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve • River Bend Forest Preserve

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FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT ANNOUNCES **ORDINANCE CHANGES** **Dogs now required to be on leashes**

Mahomet, IL, Feb 27 – Champaign County Forest Preserve District officials have announced several changes to the District’s Rules and Regulations Ordinance. The most significant change is a clarification that all dogs must be “on a leash at all times” while in the forest preserves. This was done for several reasons, but particularly for the safety of all visitors.

“As the owner of two very friendly dogs, I know that some people do not particularly care for dogs or may actually have a fear of them,” said CCFPD Executive Director Jerry Pagac. “Some visitors may be intimidated by a dog no matter how socialized it may be. We have had parents with small children who became terrified when a loose dog simply ran up to them.

“Keeping dogs on leashes will avoid startling unsuspecting bicyclists, hikers and runners,” Pagac continued, “and of course, we are concerned about impacts a free-running dog may have on wildlife living in the preserves.”

For people who need to train dogs off-leash to point or retrieve, the CCFPD has established an area at its large Middle Fork River Forest Preserve near Penfield in northeast Champaign County for that purpose. The training area is away from areas frequented by the general public. It provides varied terrain and conditions that fit the needs of those training dogs off-leash.

Other ordinance changes involve geocaching, an outdoor treasure-hunting activity gaining in popularity. Searching for geocaches is allowed; placing a geocache on CCFPD property is allowed, but requires a permit.

Permits will be required for scientific research, and there are specific regulations pertaining to River Bend Forest Preserve in Mahomet, which were a requirement of the property sale by the original owners. The Ordinance document in its entirety is available on the District’s website or by calling (217) 586-3360.

The Champaign County Forest Preserve District provides conservation, education and recreation for the citizens of Champaign County and manages 3,500 acres of open space located at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, Mahomet; River Bend Forest Preserve, Mahomet; Homer Lake Forest Preserve, Homer; and Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, Penfield. The CCFPD includes the Early American Museum, Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden and Lake of the Woods Golf Course in Mahomet and the Middle Fork Campground in Penfield.