From the Executive Director

2019 was a year of many accomplishments at the Champaign County Forest Preserves! Within these pages, we recount the numbers of individuals, families, and schoolchildren who came to learn, discover, play, or relax among our forests, prairies, trails, and waterways. From the very young at our toddler activities to seniors at our lecture programs, there’s something for everyone at the forest preserves.

We’re very happy to report that our volunteer numbers continue to increase, which allows us to stretch our often limited resources. A corps of dedicated individuals help to conserve the rich Champaign County landscape by controlling invasive vegetation, collecting seeds from native plants, and maintaining our 46-mile trail system. Our team of natural resources experts address restoration needs at 4,000 forest preserve acres across Champaign County. Prescribed burning is one of the most visually impressive land management techniques we employ, but mowing, weeding, and hand clearing takes up most of the staff time. Controlling invasive and non-native plant species ensures that our diverse and precious Grand Prairie wildlife is able to thrive.

I’d be remiss if I did not mention our operations staff. With offices at Homer Lake, Lake of the Woods, and Middle Fork preserves, they keep all the preserves clean and inviting for the public. They are not ones for seeking the limelight; but trust me, you’d notice if they weren’t doing a wonderful job.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our donors, volunteers, and the numerous individuals who sit on our boards and committees. Without all of you, the many projects and activities we highlight in the following pages would never have been possible.

We hope you took an opportunity to visit one or more of the six preserves in 2019, whether that was to participate in a program, hike a trail, paddle a lake, or explore the museum or interpretive center. We look forward to seeing you in 2020!

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Wuellner
Executive Director

Natural Area Restoration Projects

The Champaign County Forest Preserve District is dedicated to helping sustain plant life for future generations by protecting and restoring indigenous natural communities such as prairies, woodlands, and wetlands. Restoration projects are primarily focused on the removal of invasive non-native plants and reintroducing native trees and plants.

Major Accomplishments in 2019

• Overseeded 20 acres of previously prepped and planted sites.
• Planted ~60 container trees and shrubs, four memorial trees.
• Removed ~80 trees, mostly ash.
• Finished prepping 37.38 acres for planting using methods that may have included brush clearing, mowing, herbicide application and landscape raking.
• Hosted 13 volunteer events for a total of 120 volunteers, who contributed a total of 257 hours. The department utilized volunteer help to remove herbaceous invasive plants and collect seed from native species.
• Collected native seed of 111 different species, from 142 native plant populations throughout all of the preserves.
Museum and Education

While department staff work throughout the District, they are based at two interpretive facilities: the Museum of the Grand Prairie (7 FTE) and the Homer Lake Interpretive Center (4.75 FTE). One campground naturalist (.25 FTE) works from Middle Fork during the camping season. Through volunteer efforts the ME Department enjoys efforts equal to another position, over 2,000 hours each year. The ME Department cares for 25,000 objects in its permanent collections, while the 1500 items in education collections are used throughout the preserves.

FACILITY VISITS

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MGP Visitation</td>
<td>9,324</td>
<td>10,350</td>
<td>11,618</td>
<td>12,059</td>
<td>12,576</td>
<td>12,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLIC Visitation</td>
<td>3,337</td>
<td>3,441</td>
<td>2,696</td>
<td>3,920</td>
<td>3,366</td>
<td>3,079</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- **Onsite**
  - 2014: 6,129
  - 2015: 6,833
  - 2016: 6,508
  - 2017: 7,016
  - 2018: 6,497
  - 2019: 11,187

PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- **Public and Special Request programs**
  - 2014: 4,720
  - 2015: 6,720
  - 2016: 7,527
  - 2017: 6,727
  - 2018: 10,443
  - 2019: 10,770

- **Summer Camps**
  - 2014: 356
  - 2015: 421
  - 2016: 445
  - 2017: 526
  - 2018: 530
  - 2019: 256

**GRAND TOTAL**

- 2014: 28,338
- 2015: 31,460
- 2016: 33,863
- 2017: 34,471
- 2018: 39,014
- 2019: 38,049

MGP = Museum of the Grand Prairie    HLIC = Homer Lake Interpretive Center

2019 Exhibits

**Discovering Home**

The Discovery Room has been one of our most popular museum spaces for a long time—join us as we unveil this newly renovated exhibit space! Visitors of all ages are welcome to explore the idea of home by discovering the homes of settlers and native peoples through many interactive and educational exhibit sections.

**More Than Migration: Monarchs Bring Us Together**

What is your connection to monarch butterflies? Monarch butterflies bring us together in many ways. To many people, butterflies symbolize the common human experience of transformation and new beginnings. In addition, monarchs link two countries on their annual migration, and la mariposa monarca is often incorporated into Dia de los Muertos celebrations. During World War II, U.S. civilians mobilized around milkweed plants to support the war effort. Today, citizen scientists track monarchs, and volunteers raise butterflies that will travel thousands of miles to a land they may never see.

**Bittersweet Harvest: The Bracero Program 1942-1964**

This poster exhibit is a moving bilingual exhibition that examines the experiences of Mexican guest workers and their families during the U.S. Bracero Program in the mid-1900s. It provides rich insight into Mexican American history and the historical background to today’s debates on guest worker programs.
**Golf**

Lake of the Woods Golf Course opened for play in 1951, and is consistently rated as one of the favorite courses in Champaign County. We offer an 18-hole regulation course, 9-hole Par 3 course, driving range, and a fully stocked pro shop. This par-72 golf course in Mahomet, Illinois has four sets of playing tees stretching from 5,000 to 6,500 yards to accommodate all players. We feel the manageable length of our golf course along with affordable anytime rates make Lake of the Woods Golf Course your best choice for outdoor recreation.

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**2019 Outings**
- Radliff MBA Outing
- Carle EMS
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Slumberland
- Bulldog Open
- Urbana Firefighters Local 1147
- Police Protective Association
- Golden Glove Grasshoppers
- Jason Smitley Memorial
- Mahomet Christian Church
- Edelman Electric
- Champaign Rotary
- County Girls HS Tourney
- Mahomet Chamber of Commerce
- Bulldog Gridiron Club
- Mahomet Lions Club

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**Memberships Sold**
- Anniversary (2019-2020) – 1395
- Platinum/Full Season Passes – 68

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**2019 Projects Completed**
- New handicap accessible deck, railing and entry way on front of Pro Shop
- New entry doors (North, South, East and Snack Bar)
- New control panel, pumps and platform for irrigation system
- Parking lot improvements
- Widened spaces near entrance, rocked the center island, planted trees

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**2020 Course Improvement Projects**
- New renovation on the front 9 bunkers
- Continue to repair irrigation leaks and replace irrigation heads on the greens
- Work on all the leaks and replace wiring system to apply irrigation on the Par 3 greens
- Renovate greens on Par 3 course
- Establish turf on all the low areas on fairways
- Replace old and used satellite stations with new stations throughout the course

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**Capital Improvements**

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**Botanical Garden Pond Improvements**

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**Fun Facts**
- 1,453,760 lbs of rock
- 1,950 cubic yards OR 6,318,000 lbs of sludge removed
- 486 dump truck loads of silt and debris averaging 6 tons each
Boat Rentals

Rentals of pedal boats, kayaks and rowboats are available Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend. Hours are 12-7 PM, Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, and the cost is $6 per half hour. The boat peninsula is located at 101 N. Lake of the Woods Road, at the intersection of Tin Cup Road and Lake of the Woods Road.

Facility Rentals

Whether you’re planning a wedding ceremony or reception, family reunion, business meeting or company picnic, we have a facility to accommodate you. We offer open-air shelters and enclosed buildings in beautiful settings, in styles from rustic to contemporary. Buildings and shelters are available to rent at three of our six forest preserves. Reservations will be taken up to one year prior to the event date for all rentals.

Camping and Dark Sky

Whether you choose to play hard or just relax surrounded by nature, you can create memories at Middle Fork Campground. Fish, hike, swim, watch wildlife, listen to nature, stargaze, or sit around the campfire getting reacquainted with family and friends. Each campsite is a quiet retreat shaded by large oaks, hickory and hackberry trees, and wildflowers grow in abundance.

The dedication event was very successful! 200 people attended the event held in September. Thank you to State Senator Bennett, State Representative Mike Marron, Champaign Mayor Deb Feinen, Terri Reifsteck with Visit Champaign County, Andrew Johnston from Adler Planetarium, and Commissioner Sarah Livesay for speaking. Thanks to everyone who attended and made it a special event.
Volunteers

Volunteerism is an essential part of maintaining the facilities and programs at Champaign County’s forest preserves! District volunteers develop meaningful relationships with the natural and cultural communities of the area, and aid in improving the quality of life for others in these communities.

The Volunteer Department secures and coordinates individual volunteers, large and small volunteer groups, community service workers, scouts, and visiting groups to support the District mission and operations. In many cases, department supervisors and staff oversee the volunteers on the day of volunteering efforts. Over the past few years, large numbers of volunteers have come from Lincoln’s Challenge, the East Central Illinois Master Naturalist chapter, Catholic Heart Work Camp, Fraternities and Sororities, and our own Citizens Advisory Committee.

The Volunteer Coordinator keeps statistics on volunteerism with the District, acts as a liaison between the District and the Champaign County Master Naturalist program, promotes and advertises District volunteer opportunities within the community, provides communication to the volunteer pool and provides them with networking opportunities as well as volunteer recognition.

Opportunities

- Freedom Fest
- Middle Fork Lincoln’s Challenge
- Misc. Grounds Help
- Misc. Natural Resources Projects
- Museum and Education Programs
- Trail Stewards
- Wildlife Monitoring
- Golf Projects
- Eagle Scout Projects

Human Resources

As part of the District’s administrative team, Human Resources is responsible for the management of the District’s personnel policies, procedures, and programs.

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is an essential part of maintaining the facilities and programs at Champaign County’s forest preserves! District volunteers develop meaningful relationships with the natural and cultural communities of the area, and aid in improving the quality of life for others in these communities.

Staff Accomplishments

The staff of the Museum of the Grand Prairie received four awards at the Illinois Association of Museum Annual Meeting. Submitted by Mark Hanson, an award of excellence was given in the category of Best Practices in Collections Conservation for the Digitization of East Frisian Audiocassettes. Another award of excellence was given for Frieda Mumm’s Discovering Home. In the category Best Practices in Community Partnerships, an award of merit was earned by Katie Snyder for Boneyard Arts Festival: Museum of the Grand Prairie and Centennial High School Celebrate 50 years. Another award of merit was taken home by Pat Cain for Best Practices in Special Projects for his 1968 Speakers Series.

Top ‘Teer Awardees

This award is presented to the volunteer with the most hours in the month! Volunteers receive a certificate and special CCFPD merchandise.

Elizabeth Kirby  Marianne Lippi  Fred Newport  Doug Mills  Jill Robbins  Larry Uphoff

Tops in the 217 Awards

Earlier this year the Illini Radio Group sponsored the “Tops in the 217” to determine the best places, in several different categories, in central Illinois. The Champaign County Forest Preserve was a winner or finalist (top 3) in the following Recreational categories:

- Camping – Finalist
- Driving Range – Winner
- Fireworks Display – Finalist
- Fishing Spot – Winner (Middle Fork) and Finalist (Homer Lake)
- Golf Course – Finalist
- Hiking – Finalist (Middle Fork and Homer Lake)
- Museum – Finalist
- Park – Finalist (Lake of the Woods and Homer Lake)

People’s Choice Awards

The News-Gazette held its 2nd annual People’s Choice Awards this summer and the Champaign County Forest Preserve District placed in 6 categories:

- Museum – 2nd place
- Campground – 2nd place
- Outdoor Amusement – Lake of the Woods 3rd place
- Parks – Lake of the Woods 3rd place
- Walking/Hiking Trails – Lake of the Woods 3rd place
- Golf Course – 2nd place
Foundation

The Forest Preserve Friends Foundation is a not-for-profit corporation organized for charitable and educational purposes. The Foundation supports the facilities, programs, services, goals and mission of the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. In turn, it generates grant support and collaborative relationships with other agencies.

Your contributions to the Foundation support the projects and activities at the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. Whether helping to acquire land, maintain natural and recreational areas, provide educational experiences, or preserve the County’s natural and cultural resources, your gift will touch the lives of generations to come.

CAC

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Commissioners. CAC members serve for three years on a voluntary basis, with terms expiring each year in December.

The committee advises and assists the CCFPD Board of Commissioners by:

- promoting citizen awareness of District facilities, financial needs, and issues
- studying needs of the District and the effects of programming
- providing support for studies and reports requested by the District Board
- implementing programs and new policies

2019 OUTREACH SUMMARY

In 2019, the Citizens Advisory Committee:

- Developed an outreach report sheet to evaluate the impact they have at individual events.
- Gave away branded frisbees, lip balm, water bottles, drawstring bags, and sunglasses for the KRT to raise awareness of Champaign County’s forest preserves.

12 Farmer's Markets

New this year: Homer, Rantoul and Mahomet

20 Outreach Events

175 Estimated hours

7 Community Events

Marketing

The Marketing Department creates the District publications and promotional pieces, handles customer inquiries and rentals, communicates with the media, coordinates preserve grand openings and District special events, cultivates partnership opportunities, and oversees our website.

SOCIAL MEDIA End of Year Totals

SOCIAL MEDIA Annual Additions

@champaignforestfriends 266 likes on Instagram
Finance

The Business and Finance Department supports District sites and departments by coordinating many administrative functions including preparing and managing the budget, cash management and investing, purchasing and payroll processing, internal control and accounting for all district transactions, providing current information technology, preparing financial ordinances and other administrative legal transactions, and managing the annual audit preparations and response. The Business and Finance goal is to provide a high level of internal customer service to keep field and frontline staff as free as possible to care for District resources and engage patrons in the District’s natural and cultural treasures.

(Chicago, Illinois)—The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to Champaign County Forest Preserve District by Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

Grants

The part-time grants coordinator serves the Champaign County Forest Preserve District (CCFPD) and Forest Preserve Friends Foundation as part of the Business and Finance department. The grants coordinator is responsible for enhancing the efforts of every department and the foundation by securing alternative sources of funding and through the management of goals, timelines, and technical reports related to projects and initiatives that are outlined in the strategic plan. Additionally, the grants coordinator is involved in the District’s relationship building activities related to sponsorships and donors.

2019 Year in Review – Grants Coordination

The following table outlines the grants awarded to the District in 2019 and the project and location to be covered by the grant funding. Grants marked with an asterisk (*) were awarded to the Friends Foundation as the District’s 501(c)(3) non-profit partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Agency</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IL Clean Energy Community Foundation*</td>
<td>Homer Lake Forest Preserve</td>
<td>Accessible parking and pathway at Homer Lake Interpretive Center</td>
<td>$5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL Clean Energy Community Foundation*</td>
<td>Middle Fork River Forest Preserve</td>
<td>Shelter and entrance sign replacement</td>
<td>$5,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Champaign Rotary Club</td>
<td>Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve</td>
<td>Shelter Replacement at Bayburn Purnell Woods</td>
<td>$5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumpkin Foundation</td>
<td>Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve</td>
<td>Transfer stations for accessible kayak launch</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Audubon Society</td>
<td>Natural Resources Department</td>
<td>Various tools</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU Optimist Club</td>
<td>Homer Lake Forest Preserve</td>
<td>Conceptual design for a new nature center</td>
<td>$16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Department of Natural Resources</td>
<td>Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve</td>
<td>Two new shelters, floating accessible dock, path, picnic tables, benches, etc.</td>
<td>$152,400</td>
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2019 Revenue Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>$3,903,380</td>
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<tr>
<td>User Fees</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>$772,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Donations</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>$571,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise Sales</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>$253,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$101,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$5,602,672</strong></td>
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2019 Expense Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital Projects &amp; Equipment</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>$1,127,808</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site Operations</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>$1,100,437</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Government</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>$793,584</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>$685,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>$666,733</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>$555,326</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debt Service</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>$234,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$5,163,310</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you to our 2019 donors

Tammy Abramson  
James Acheson  
Linda Alexander  
Ruth Reeder and Jae Allen  
Dimitri Almasi  
John Alsop  
Alto Vineyards LTD  
American Legion Post 1015  
Gary Apfelstadt  
Susan Appel  
Basil Auteberry  
John and Karen Baker  
Baldarotta’s Porketta and Sicilian Sausage  
Clayton and Jennifer Barnard  
Theresa Barr  
Ronald and Susan Bates  
Norma Bean  
Mary Beck  
Stacey Bennet  
Rod and Christine Bayers  
Madison Bishop  
Ryan Blackburn  
Mary Blair  
Deborah Bliss  
Sarah and Thomas Blurier  
Charles Bowerman  
Calvin Brasor  
Debra and Terry Brewer (for grandkids Ryker and Ava)  
Eugene Shel Browder  
Doug and Nancy Brumfield  
Bulldog Automotive, Inc.  
Burgwald Eye Center  
Michele Burk  
Peg and Jeremy Busch  
Busey Bank  
Peter and Colleen Bushell  
John and Julie Butler  
Catherine Capel  
Clif and Shauna Carey  
Tracy Carleton  
Dan and Marcia Carlier  
Daniel P. Caulkins  
Craig Chamberlain  
Champaign County Audubon Society  
Champaign Sportman’s Club  
Champaign-Urbana Schools Foundation  
Beth Chalo  
Chester’s BBQ  
Andee Chestnut  
Chris’ Water Gardens  
Jackie Christensen  
Angie Clayton  
Chris and Paula Clementz  
Stacey Clementz  
Clodfelder Insurance Agency  
Community Foundation of East Central Illinois  
Kay and Bryan Coulson  
Heidi Craddock  
Karl Crapse  
Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon  
John and Marie Curtis  
Mark Cushing  
Champaign Cycle  
Steve Daily  
Rick Danzl  
Alice Daugherty and Norman Stenzel  
Carolee DeArmon  
Sue and Mark Dewing  
Sharon Dieter  
Dig It of Champaign  
Andrew Dinsmoor  
Mark and Vicki Dixon  
Lorinda and George Dobrik  
Nancy Dooley  
Diana and Michael Dummitt  
Sally Duncan  
Dave and Dianda Easter  
Kathy Easter  
Steve Eisenmann  
Joyce Eisdold  
James and Diana Elder  
Robert and Mary Ann Espeseth  
WD Evans  
Dale and Joyce Ewen  
Larry Eyre  
Balazi Family  
Theorne Family  
Farm Credit Illinois  
Farnsworth Group, INC.  
Deborah Fender  
Joan Fiesta  
First Mid-Illinois Bank and Trust  
Fisher National Bank  
Joshua Fitzsimmons  
Erich Flessner  
William and Nancy Ford  
Forest Preserve Friends Foundation  
Corey Franzen  
Brynn Freed  
Beverly and Mike Friese  
Mitchell Fruehling  
Rich Furr  
Christy L. Gale  
Galen Dale DDS  
Matthew Gale (for Tannie Justus)  
Greg Gardner  
Madeleine Garvey  
Gibson Area Hospital and Health Services  
Heather and Craig Gillett  
Richard and Karen Gocken  
William and Rose Goodman  
Steven Goodreau  
Peter Goodspeed  
Diane Gottheil  
Estella Greenfield
Mission Statement
We conserve, preserve and restore natural areas. We provide cultural, historical and environmental opportunities. We provide compatible outdoor recreation experiences.

Vision
To provide excellent places and experiences for current and future generations.