

The Leaflet

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES

Middle Fork River Forest Preserve Receives International Dark Sky Park Designation

LIVING WITH WILDLIFE

It's exciting to see bald eagles in the preserves!

We believe local nesting eagles have begun laying eggs during the past 7 to 10 days and, given the time of year, now's a good opportunity to put forth some bird etiquette reminders should you come across a nest while out and about:

- Bald eagles are sensitive to human behavior, particularly during the courtship and nest building period.
- Please do not publicly reveal a nest location. People flocking to it to see or photograph the nest could flush the birds out. Also, startling the birds could cause them to damage their eggs or injure their young.
- Do not attempt to get too close. If the bird is reacting to you, that means you're too close for their comfort. While we all appreciate a good nature shot, remember that no photo is worth risking the health and safety of these amazing birds.

Keeping these few simple tips in mind will ensure that humans and wildlife can co-exist in harmony for generations to come. If you have a question about wildlife behavior, email it to hq@ccfpd.org and we'll do our best to answer it!



PHOTO BY DAN MCHALE

Middle Fork River Forest Preserve hosts the darkest sky in Champaign County

and now has made protecting its dark sky a priority so that people can enjoy the thousands and thousands of stars in the sky. On November 19th, 2018, Middle Fork River Forest Preserve became the first **International Dark Sky Park** in Illinois. The goal of a Dark Sky Park is to preserve the skies and educate the public about light pollution and how they can make a difference.

An IDA International Dark Sky Park is a land known for its exceptionally high quality starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural, educational, and cultural heritage, as well as its public enjoyment. What many people don't realize is that light pollution affects more than just astronomers. Nocturnal animals need darkness for survival, and the circadian rhythms of humans and plants rely on an unaltered night sky.

Middle Fork River Forest Preserve is located in northeastern Champaign County. The Forest Preserve District's ownership and management of this land ensure that the preserve's rich natural resources and cultural history will be protected in perpetuity. Designation of this forest preserve as an International Dark Sky Park will now also allow for the preservation of the night sky - a natural resource vital to the health of the land and the people and wildlife that inhabit it.

Though light pollution is created by a multitude of lights, this problem can be resolved one light at a time. When an outdoor light burns out, consider it an opportunity to install a lower intensity bulb or replace the fixture with one that is more night-friendly. Shielding that directs light downward produces less glare and improves security.



Join us in protecting the night sky and celebrating this awesome achievement on **Saturday, June 1 starting at 6 p.m.!** Learn about the night sky & lighting pollution, participate in hands-on activities, create & take home special crafts, and speak with astronomy & astrophotography experts! Beginning at 9 p.m. join us and the Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society for one of our popular Starwatch programs where we will view the stars, planets, and more!



INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY PARK AND CAMPGROUND

NEW EXHIBIT

COMING SOON!



The idea of home is transcendent. Though people's homes may be very different, the basic ideas of place, purpose, family, and familiarity are the same. The place we travel away from and return to is our home. It is the place we communicate with when not there. Though they looked very different, we can see similarities in the homes of settlers moving into Illinois from the east, and the native peoples already living here. These similarities extend all the way to the places we call home today.

Keeping the central theme of home in mind, the Museum of the Grand Prairie is excited to unveil a new exhibit titled "Frieda Mumm's Discovering Home." Formerly known as the Children's Discovery Area in the museum basement, nearly all of this newly renovated exhibit space will be hands-on and interactive. Visitors of all ages will explore the idea of home by discovering the homes of settlers and native peoples through interactive play and interpretation. With this exhibit, all patrons will be encouraged to build connections with homes from the past as well as find similarities and common elements with the places they call home today.

Please join us for the **Grand Opening** of this exhibit space on **Saturday, May 18th from 1-4 p.m.** Be some of the first public visitors to view this exhibit as well as participate in many hands-on activities during this opening event. Activities will include tales of home told by a professional storyteller, and old-fashioned household chores with a historical twist. See and touch a real live horse and buggy from Marybeth Farms Carriage Services, and arts & crafts centered on the idea of home, and many more! This program is a FREE drop-in style program (no registration required) and open to visitors of all ages. For more info on this event please contact Pat Cain (217) 586-2612 or pcain@ccfpd.org. We hope to see you there!

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Details on each program and registration can be found at www.CCFPD.org

APRIL

Friday, April 5

NATURE PLAY PRE-K: FROG FOLLIES!

Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 10-11 a.m.
This program is for preschoolers ages 2-6 to learn as we play in nature! FREE. Space is limited; register by April 4 at ccfpd.org.

Saturday, April 6

EXHIBIT OPENING

MORE THAN MIGRATION: MONARCH BUTTERFLIES BRING US TOGETHER

Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
FREE.

Sunday, April 7

**BONEYARD ARTS FESTIVAL
CENTENNIAL HIGH SCHOOL & MUSEUM OF THE GRAND PRAIRIE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 1-4 p.m.
All ages.

Thursday, April 11

FROG CALL SURVEY: FIELD TRAINING

Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 6:30-8 p.m.
FREE. Register by April 10 at ccfpd.org.

Saturday, April 13

DISCOVER THE NIGHT SKY

Activity Center, Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, 7:30-10 p.m.
Join us in celebrating the wondrous night sky at one of the darkest locations in the county! All ages.

Sunday, April 14

FAIRIES & GNOMES & TROLLS, OH MY! GARDEN

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
\$10 per garden. Register by April 10 at ccfpd.org.

Friday, April 19

NATURE AT NIGHT: FOREST FORBS

Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 5:30-7 p.m.
Ages 5 & up. \$3 per person. Space is limited; register by April 18 at ccfpd.org.

Saturday, April 27

HISTORY ALONG THE RAIL TRAIL

Kickapoo Rail Trail, Urbana Walmart Access Point, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Want to learn about the rich cultural history that surrounds the Kickapoo Rail Trail area? Ages 13 and up. \$3 per person. Register by April 26 at ccfpd.org.

MAY

Thursday, May 2

HOMESCHOOLERS EXPLORE VANISHING ACTS: TREES UNDER THREAT

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 9:30-11 a.m.

Adults must accompany children. \$3 per child. Register by April 25 at ccfpd.org.

Friday, May 3

NATURE PLAY PRE-K: PAWS, CLAWS, WINGS AND THINGS

Natural Playscape, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 10-11 a.m.
FREE. Space is limited. Register by May 2 at ccfpd.org.

Saturday, May 4

MAY DAY

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 1-4 p.m.
FREE. All ages.

Saturday, May 11

11th ANNUAL BIRD MIGRATION FESTIVAL

Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
This year, we will have special guests from the Illinois Raptor Center doing a presentation with a live Snowy Owl! FREE. All ages.

Saturday, May 18

EXHIBIT OPENING: FRIEDA MUMM'S DISCOVERING HOME

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 1-4 p.m.
FREE. All ages.

Wednesday, May 22

VOLUNTEER LUNCH & LEARN SERIES: MABERY GELVIN WATERFALL & POND TOUR

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Both current and new volunteers are welcome to join us for our Lunch and Learn series!

Thursday, May 23

WORLD TURTLE DAY

Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 2-3:30 p.m.
FREE. All ages.

Saturday, May 25

TAKE ME FISHING

Activity Center, Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, 9-11 a.m.
Bring your family and friends out to the forest preserves for some free fishing fun! Kids will have the All event fishing is catch-and-release. Adult supervision of children 15 and under is required. FREE. All ages.

Weekends, May 25 - Sept 1

NATURALIST PROGRAMS AT THE MIDDLE FORK CAMPGROUND

Campground, Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, Time varies
On most weekends during the summer the campground naturalist offers a variety of programs and activities. FREE. All ages.

Saturday, May 25

HISTORY ALONG THE RAIL TRAIL

Kickapoo Rail Trail, Urbana Walmart Access Point, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

FREE. Ages 13 and up. Space is limited. Registration required at ccfpd.org.

Sunday, May 26

CAMPGROUND MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

Campground, Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, 5-6 p.m.
FREE. All ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult.