

The Leaflet

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES

A New Vision for a Nature Connection

Virtual Programs

Soloists for Suffrage

Special virtual concert series! To go along with our newest exhibit, "How Long Must Women Wait? Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights in Champaign County," the Museum of the Grand Prairie presents "Soloists for Suffrage!" During this virtual concert series, we will stream intimate concerts featuring talented female solo artists LIVE on our Facebook page from the special exhibit space.

- **Karena Tse** - Thursday, August 20, 7-8:30 p.m.
- **Rebecca Rego** - Thursday, September 17, 7-8:30 p.m.



Prairie Stories: Virtual Edition

Saturday, September 12th Time TBD

Go back in time and experience what life was like in nineteenth century east-central Illinois during the virtual edition of a popular annual event! Happening on the Museum of the Grand Prairie Facebook page, the day may feature artisan demonstrations and basket weaving. Learn how you can make things at home featuring hands-on activities like candle dipping and butter churning. We may also feature American folk music, 19th century schoolhouse lessons, dancing with the Central Illinois English Country Dancers and more!

For more info: (217) 586-2612 or pcain@ccfpd.org



So many of you have found peace, restoration, and strength in this pandemic season by visiting a forest preserve and feeling the wind, hearing birdsong, and enjoying all the benefits of nature.

A connection to nature is more important than ever! Seasons always turn, as the earth teaches us - and we are ensuring that generations to come can find the same strength you have found in your connection to the earth. That's why we are taking steps toward a vision for a new nature center at Homer Lake.

More than 10,000 of you now visit our exhibits and attend our programs annually - double the number from just a few years ago! If you've been to one of our programs, you know that we've outgrown the current space. Standing room only crowds have become a common sight, exhibits must be put away to make room for programs, and there are no spaces for indoor program activities in inclement weather.

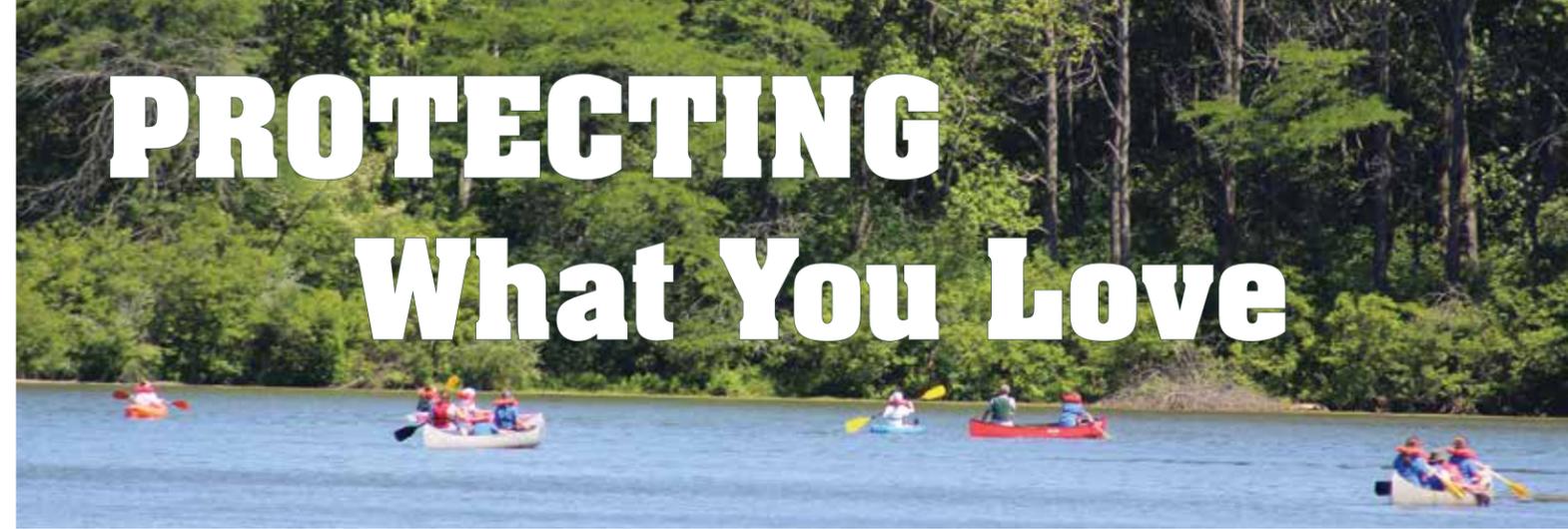
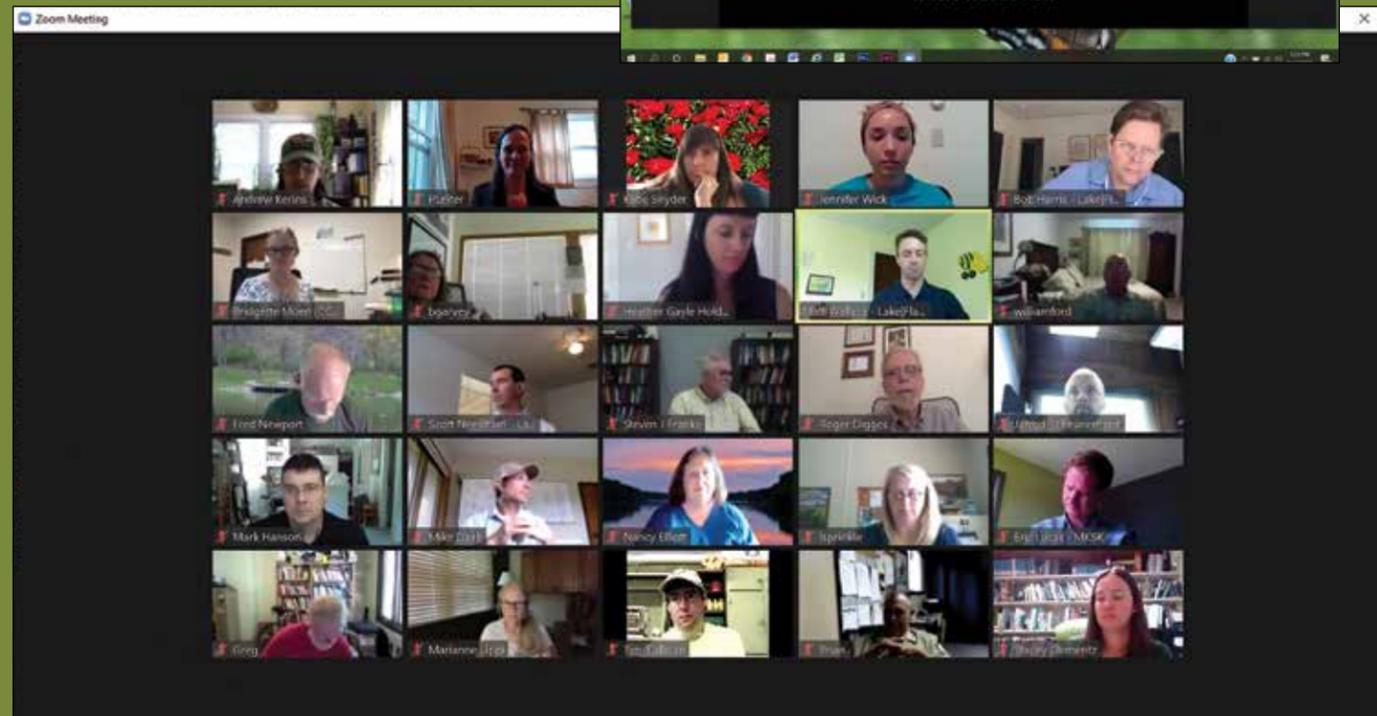
(continued)

Protecting Nature.
Creating Connections.

(cover story continued)

This summer, Lake|Flato Architects facilitated a conceptual planning process to dream about all that a visionary, state-of-the-art nature center could be. They conducted stakeholder input sessions with the public and staff, and a conceptual design will be forthcoming later this year – stay tuned! This helps set the stage for future grant seeking and fundraising.

Your past support has helped us grow to the point where this step is possible, and we can't thank you enough. Your input on this project is welcome! We'll keep you posted in future Leaflets and on the Interpretive Center's Facebook account. And if you'd like to talk to our Forest Preserve Friends Foundation about a gift toward this project, drop us a note and we will put them in touch with you. Thank you!



PROTECTING What You Love

In 2018, we began a year-long process to review and revise the Forest Preserves' Strategic Plan. Many of you took the time to tell us what you love about your preserves and where we should focus our resources over the next five years. Here is what we learned from you:

- Lake of the Woods is the most visited preserve, with Homer Lake not far behind
- Many more of you have discovered Middle Fork River Forest Preserve over the last six years
- Nearly one-third of you visit a preserve more than once a week

- Spending time in nature is the number one reason you choose to visit, but almost as many of you also enjoy hiking or running on the trails
- You strongly agree that the forest preserves provide environmental benefits like clean air, clean water, and protection of the Mahomet aquifer
- The forest preserves offer a connection to nature that is very important for you and your family
- A large majority (86%) of you emphasized the need for us to maintain our existing preserves, facilities, and buildings

Protecting Nature. Creating Connections.

In the fall of last year, the Forest Preserve's Board of Commissioners adopted a new Strategic Plan, for the years 2020 through 2024.

"We will focus on what we've been doing well, and we'll work to do it even BETTER."

- **PROTECT** our unique and dwindling prairies, wetlands, woodlands, and waters
- **CREATE** connections to nature and our rich cultural heritage
- **MAINTAIN** and improve the lands and facilities for future generations to enjoy
- **REMOVE** real and perceived barriers to all that the forest preserves have to offer
- **PROMOTE** health and wellness through outdoor recreation
- **STRIVE** for organizational excellence

To Meet the Forest Preserves' Needs and Your Expectations...WE NEED YOUR HELP

The Forest Preserve's property tax rate has remained substantially unchanged in forty years, attesting to our outstanding stewardship of taxpayers' money. But our buildings, roads, dams, bridges, lakes, and shelters are aging, and 1980 revenue can't keep up with 2020 costs.

The Champaign County Forest Preserves' Board of Commissioners will discuss asking voters for a very small property tax limiting rate increase, among other options, to meet our capital and operating needs.

Please join us at a Study Session on Thursday, August 6, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

**At Rotary Hill Shelter
Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve
450 N. Lake of the Woods Rd., Mahomet**