

The Leaflet

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES

Bridging the Generations



The Forest Preserve Friends Foundation is asking for your assistance to protect and preserve the Lake of the Woods Covered Bridge. This historic landmark of our community has served patrons at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve for nearly sixty years and has not received any significant restoration in the last twenty-five years. After all that time the bridge is in desperate need of a new roof.

The bridge was constructed in the early 1960s and is dedicated to Harold Moon, the former Superintendent of Lake of the Woods. It was designed by Dr. German Gurfinkel, a Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois, to provide a safe way for visitors to cross the Sangamon River. To this day the Lake of the Woods Covered Bridge serves as a popular destination for visitors and as one of the most photographed locations in Champaign County.

The Lake of the Woods Covered Bridge offers a safe haven for the bat population at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve. Lake of the Woods is home to six different bat species that help maintain a balanced native ecosystem and control the local insect population. With a new roof, the Covered Bridge will continue to serve our community and our local habitats for another sixty years.

The Forest Preserve Friends Foundation needs your help to raise \$55,000 for a new roof. This new roof will be sustainable and more durable than the one installed sixty years ago, all while maintaining the historic look of the bridge. Your donations to support the Covered Bridge will ensure this historic icon of Champaign County will be with us for generations to come.



Support the Covered Bridge!

Visit <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/covbri> or www.ccfpd.org for additional support opportunities.

GIVING TUESDAY



Donors who donate \$500 or more to the restoration of the Lake of the Woods Covered Bridge will receive an 8" x 10" print from local artist Marla Beyer.

GIVING TUESDAY



The Sangamon River winds through the Lake

of the Woods Forest Preserve; however, until recently, access to the water was limited. Thanks to referendum funds, District construction staff were able to install a canoe and kayak launch. The launch includes parking, ADA connector paths, a high-water launch and a low-water launch. While there are occasionally grants available for water access, they are often awarded for motorized boat projects. Better access to water for outdoor recreation is a frequent request from residents and referendum funds helped to make that possible.



PROGRAMS & VIRTUAL EVENTS

See the full program descriptions online, ccfpd.org

DECEMBER

Saturday, December 4
NIGHT LIGHTS IN THE GARDEN! OPENING NIGHT
Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 6-8 p.m.

Check out the beautiful Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden decorated for the holidays as it brims with light! FREE.

Saturday, December 4
"GINGERBREAD" HOUSE KIT: AT NIGHT LIGHTS IN THE GARDEN! OPENING NIGHT
Pickup at Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 6-8 p.m.
\$10 per kit.

Tuesday, December 7
BRING HOME HOMER FOR THE HOLIDAYS
Pickup at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center, starting December 7 while supplies last.
Reserve your kit online and pickup at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center starting on Tuesday, December 7 during open hours while supplies last. \$3 per kit.

Thursday, December 9
FROM PLEISTOCENE TO THE PRESENT: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MABERY GELVIN BOTANICAL GARDEN
Online Event, Streaming on the Museum of the Grand Prairie Facebook and YouTube pages, 7-8 p.m.
Join us as Marina Montez-Ellis, our Garden Program Specialist, discusses the natural and cultural history of the Mahomet area, the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden, and Buffalo Trace Prairie.

December 17 - March 18
EXHIBIT: POLLINATION INVESTIGATION
Homer Lake Interpretive Center, During regular open hours.

Saturday, December 18
WALK WITH A NATURALIST
Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 10-11:30 a.m.
Enjoy the crisp morning air during this month's Walk with a Naturalist.



JANUARY

Monday, January 3
WALK WITH A NATURALIST
Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 1-2:30 p.m.
Wrap up your winter break and explore a local winter wonderland during a guided walk at Homer Lake Forest Preserve.

Saturday, January 8
NIGHT LIGHTS IN THE GARDEN! CLOSING NIGHT
Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 6-8 p.m.

Saturday, January 8
MINIATURE GARDEN WINTER WONDERLAND KIT, AT NIGHT LIGHTS AT THE GARDEN! CLOSING NIGHT
Pick up at Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 6-8 p.m.

Wednesday, January 12
VOLUNTEER EVENT: ASK THE STATE BIOLOGIST
Online event via Zoom, 7-8 p.m.

Friday, January 14
MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY PAINTED ROCK KIT
Pickup at Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 1-4 p.m.
Fun for all ages! \$3 per kit. Pick up must take place during the month of January 2022.

Monday, January 17
MEET THE CRITTERS
Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 10-11 a.m. or 2-3 p.m.
School's out, so come by the Homer Lake Interpretive Center and see what's new with our resident animals

Thursday, January 20
GARDEN SPEAKER SERIES: MEDICINAL PLANTS AND THEIR USE
Online Event, Streaming on the Museum of the Grand Prairie Facebook and YouTube pages, 7 p.m.
Help us kick off our annual Garden Speaker Series with this great event!

January 20 - February 28
CCFPD SNOWFLAKE SEARCH
All Champaign County Forest Preserves, Visit www.ccfpd.org for more info on open/closed times.
Get out and explore your local winter wonderland in search of snowflakes!



Animal Advocates

The Homer Lake Interpretive Center houses multiple live animals that act as ambassadors for native Illinois species. They interact and teach hundreds of visitors, students, and program participants each year. They are an invaluable way to educate and connect people to the natural world.

Sponsoring our educational animals through the Animal Advocates program is a special way to support that goal. Donations go to their care and enrichment by improving enclosures, providing new experiences, and creating opportunities to interact. Sponsorships make a wonderful green gift for any occasion.

Thanks to our generous Animal Advocate donors, we recently created a custom, arboreal enclosure for our rat snake now on display. The new design offers more space, vertical room to climb, and better access from the back instead of the top. These changes allow our snake to practice natural behaviors, like climbing, and reduces the snake's stress. We are using other funds for a large, aquatic-turtle aquarium coming soon. The new tank will allow the water turtles to be housed together providing mental stimulation, room to explore, and even enough space for an additional animal.

Find out more information or become an Animal Advocate today on our website ccfpd.org or scan the QR code here.



KRT Charging Station

In an effort to increase the accessibility of the Kickapoo Rail Trail, the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation is seeking donations to install a solar powered wheelchair charging station between St. Joseph and Urbana. The Kickapoo Rail Trail has served as a valuable resource for those in wheelchairs during the pandemic. Access to free accessible outdoor recreation is an effective way of combating the stress of social isolation and gives people with mobility limitations a safe and enjoyable venue to connect with their community. The KRT receives significant usage for community members in wheelchairs. However, large sections of the KRT run through rural areas with no access to electricity for those in motorized wheelchairs. This leaves large sections of the KRT functionally inaccessible



to a segment of the population.

Your donations, in support of a solar charging station for motorized wheelchairs, will increase the overall distance of usable trail for people with mobility limitations. The Forest Preserve Friends Foundation needs to raise \$15,000 to help expand access to outdoor recreation for ALL members of our community. **If you would like to support this project you may donate at ccfpd.org to the KRT Accessibility Fund.**