

# The Leaflet

*Special Edition: NATURE'S APPEAL*

Donate to the **Dark Sky Trail at Illinois' Only International Dark Sky Park**

## Three Rivers Society

**In January, the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation is launching the Three Rivers Society.**

The Three Rivers Society is a giving society created to protect and preserve Champaign County's natural and cultural resources via a strong, proud, and generous group of people that consistently donate funds dedicated to our mission. Donors receive membership with an annual unrestricted gift of \$1,000 or more. Members will receive access to a special biannual newsletter, invitations to special members' only events, advanced notice of district events and project openings, and will be featured in a special category in our yearly donor recognition in our Leaflet. **For more information, contact Ryan Anderson at [randerson@ccfpd.org](mailto:randerson@ccfpd.org).**



**GIVING TUESDAY**

**Support your Champaign County Forest Preserves!**

Visit [www.ccfpd.org](http://www.ccfpd.org) for support opportunities.

**F**our years ago Middle Fork River Forest Preserve was designated an International Dark Sky Park by the International Dark Sky Association due to its exceptionally high quality starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is protected for its scientific, natural, educational, and cultural heritage, as well as its public enjoyment. At the time it was one of 72 parks worldwide to hold that designation and the only one in Illinois.

Now, it's still the only Dark Sky Park in Illinois, and the Champaign County Forest Preserve District (CCFPD) is making improvements that will enhance the dark sky viewing experience in the preserve. CCFPD received an Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) in September 2022 to support the construction of a dark sky trail and supporting amenities at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve.

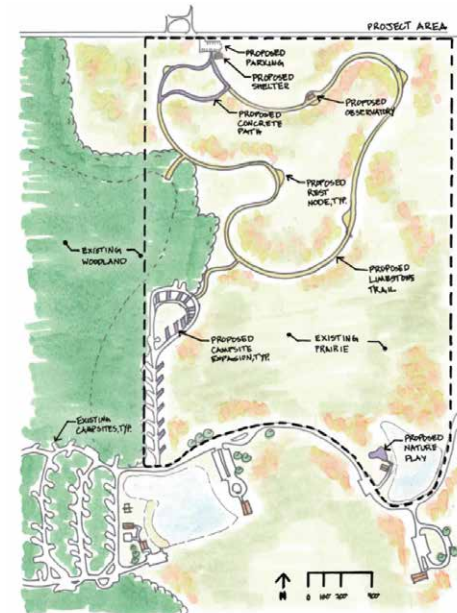
The trail will improve accessibility at Middle Fork by providing new, ADA-compliant campsites, paved trails, and accessible seating. The existing campground at Middle Fork has been a popular destination. Nearly every weekend, all sites are fully booked.

The project will not only appeal to dark sky viewers, but will be popular among regular patrons of the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve. The trail will loop through the tall grass prairie at the preserve offering new educational and recreational opportunities. The nature

playground will be a draw for campers and families visiting the preserve and the expanded campground will alleviate our peak demand issues and prevent the District from turning away campers.

The Forest Preserve Friends Foundation needs donations to help accomplish this goal. On Giving Tuesday, November 29, we will be raising funds for the construction of the Dark Sky Trail.

Gifts from visitors like you have made so many projects a reality – the new roof on the Covered Bridge, the Willow Pond renovation, and numerous prairie restoration efforts. **On Giving Tuesday, November 29, support Illinois' only Dark Sky Park, Middle Fork River Forest Preserve.**



Dark Sky Trail and Amenities

## PROGRAMS & VIRTUAL EVENTS

See the full program descriptions online, [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org)

### ● DECEMBER ●

**Saturday, December 3**  
**TO GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE WE GO!**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 4-7 p.m.*  
FREE.

**December 5-8**  
**ESCAPE THE MUSEUM**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, Various Evening Time Slots*  
Do you have what it takes to "Escape the Museum?" Sign up for a slot to participate in the museum's first ever Escape Room-style program.

**Saturday, December 10**  
**HOMER FOR THE HOLIDAYS**  
*Salt Fork Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 1-4 p.m.*  
FREE. All ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**Wednesday, December 14**  
**WINTER HOLIDAYS OF CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOR HOMESCHOOLERS**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 10-11:30 a.m.*  
Available for homeschoolers ages 6 to 9. \$5 per child. Space is limited. Registration required by December 7 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**Friday, December 16**  
**WALK WITH A NATURALIST**  
*Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 10-11:30 a.m.*  
Meet at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center. All ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult. FREE. Space is limited. Registration required by December 15 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**Saturday, December 17**  
**WINTER HOLIDAYS OF CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOR KIDS**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 1-2:30 p.m.*  
Available for kids ages 6 to 9. \$5 per child. Space is limited. Registration required by December 7 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

### ● JANUARY ●

**Fridays, January 6-27th**  
**HISTORICAL KNITTERS CLUB**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, Every Friday 5-6:30 p.m.*  
Knitting needles and yarn will be provided. Available for kids ages 12 to 14. \$15 per child. Space is limited. Registration required by December 30 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**Wednesday, January 11**  
**CRAFTERS WORKSHOP: WINTER EDITION FOR HOMESCHOOLERS**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 10-11:30 a.m.*  
Available for homeschoolers ages 6 to 9. \$5 per child. Space is limited. Registration required by January 4 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**Saturday, January 14**  
**CRAFTERS WORKSHOP: WINTER EDITION FOR KIDS**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 1-2:30 p.m.*  
Available for kids ages 6 to 9. \$5 per child. Space is limited. Registration required by January 7 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**Monday, January 16**  
**MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY CELEBRATION FOR KIDS**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 1-2:30 p.m.*  
Ages 5-12. \$5 per child. Adults must accompany children. Space is limited. Registration required by January 9 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**Thursday, January 26**  
**OWL PROWL**  
*Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 5-7 p.m.*  
Recommended for ages 4 and up. Children must be accompanied by an adult. \$5 per person. Space is limited. Registration required by January 25 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org). All attendees (adults and children) must register in advance.

**Friday, January 27**  
**HOMESCHOOL POTPOURRI CABIN CREATION**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 11-12:30 p.m.*  
\$6 per child. Children do not need to be accompanied by an adult. Ages 6-15. Space is limited. Registration required by January 23 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**Saturday January 28**  
**POTPOURRI CABIN CREATION FOR KIDS**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 11-12:30 p.m.*  
\$6 per child. Children do not need to be accompanied by an adult. Ages 6-14. Space is limited. Registration required by January 23 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**January 19 - February 28**  
**CCFPD SNOWFLAKE SEARCH**  
*Champaign County Forest Preserves, Visit [www.ccfpd.org](http://www.ccfpd.org) for more info on open/closed times*  
We've hidden creative snowflakes and winter fun facts throughout the Champaign County Forest Preserves. Bundle up and find as

many as you can! Take a picture of your finds and share them with us on our Facebook and Instagram pages using the hashtag #CCFPDSnowflakeSearch. For more info: (217) 586-2612 or [pcain@ccfpd.org](mailto:pcain@ccfpd.org).

### ● FEBRUARY ●

**Wednesday, February 8**  
**19TH CENTURY HISTORY THRU ARTS FOR HOMESCHOOLERS**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 10-11:30 a.m.*  
Available for homeschoolers ages 6 to 9. \$5 per child. Space is limited. Registration required by February 1 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**Thursday, February 9**  
**OWL PROWL**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 5-7 p.m.*  
Recommended for ages 4 and up. Children must be accompanied by an adult. \$5 per person. Space is limited. Registration required by February 8 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**Saturday, February 11**  
**19TH CENTURY HISTORY THRU ARTS FOR KIDS**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 1-2:30 p.m.*  
Available for homeschoolers ages 6 to 9. \$5 per child. Registration required by February 4 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**Saturday, February 18**  
**CCFPD FROG CALL SURVEY TRAINING**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 2-4 p.m.*  
Attend this training session to learn about how frog monitoring works and how to participate in the survey. FREE. Ages 18 & up. Register by February 17 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**Monday, February 20**  
**LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION FOR KIDS**  
*Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 1-2:30 p.m.*  
For ages 5-12, \$5 per child. Adults must accompany children. Registration required by February 13 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

**Saturday, February 25**  
**MAPLE SUGAR DAYS**  
*Homer Lake Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 10-11:30 a.m. & 12:30-2 p.m.*  
Explore the science and history behind maple sugaring, learn how to do it yourself, and even take home a sample of syrup made from our very own trees. All ages. \$5 per person. Space is limited. Registration required by February 23 at [ccfpd.org](http://ccfpd.org).

## Botanical Garden to get a new greenhouse



In 2023, CCFPD will be starting a new and exciting project at the Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, the **Discovery Garden Greenhouse**. The space will feature improved garden areas and an indoor greenhouse conservatory for both public strolling and scheduled programs.

The existing greenhouse shows its age at over 50 years old. Staff see this project as an opportunity to replace an old, inefficient building with something more engaging and energy-efficient. One of the goals for the new design is to provide a

more interactive educational space where people can learn about the natural world both on their own time and through the many classes and activities the District offers. Unlike the existing facility, the new greenhouse will be fully ADA-accessible and have conveniently located public restrooms. The project will also support the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden with added greenhouse production space.

Staff are excited by how the new design will help unify the Museum of the Grand Prairie, Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden, and Discovery Garden into a more connected and vibrant environment. Construction is expected to start in early 2023.

## WHAT IS LEGACY GIVING?

You can leave a lasting legacy to Champaign County's forest preserves by naming the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation in your will or trust. These gifts allow you to make a significant future contribution to the forest preserves without affecting your current quality of life. Your legacy gift will help to restore wildlife habitat, fund educational programs, provide recreational opportunities in nature, and support the mission of the Champaign County Forest Preserve District for generations to come.

Have you already named the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation in your will or trust? Contact us at the Friends Foundation and let us know. This helps us plan for the future and keep you informed about what is happening across the preserves.

### Legacy gifts can be made:

- With language in your will or trust
- By naming the Foundation as a beneficiary of retirement assets or insurance policy
- By transferring real estate
- By establishing a charitable remainder trust

### Sample language for your will

"I give to the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation, with Tax Identification Number 37-1111088, a charitable organization located in Mahomet, IL, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ [or \_\_\_\_ percent (\_\_\_\_%) of the rest of my estate] to be held and applied for the use of the Champaign County Forest Preserve District for its general purposes [or to be applied for the following purpose: \_\_\_\_\_]."



*There are many legacy giving options available to achieve both your present and future goals. We recommend that you consult your tax attorney for guidance on the best option for your situation.*

### Testimonial

*"Few recognize the generous gift of the Champaign County Forest Preserves that enriches our lives. These thousands of acres of prairie, woods and water make Champaign County a far more desirable place to live. This natural cathedral of land welcomes all people regardless of income and heritage to enjoy activity, harmony and grace. My life certainly would be for the lesser without it and I plan to remember it in my estate."*

*— Rich Warren, Champaign County Resident*