

August 8, 2022

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Board of Commissioners  
From: Lisa Sprinkle, Marketing Manager  
Re: August Staff Report

**Executive Director (Lorrie Pearson)**

- Met with Mahomet Mayor Widener and Village Administrator Patrick Brown and discussed potential collaborations.
- Completed interview process for Leadership in Conservation Fellow and extended a job offer. Thank you to the Commissioners and staff who participated in the process.
- Recruited a temporary administrative staff from Spherion to assist with the restructuring process of the Museum and Education Department. Kat Woods will assist us for the next few months in supporting the building of new teams.

**Planning and Construction Department (Bridgette Moen and Mike Fry)**

- Construction worked with a contractor to upgrade the electrical service at HQ. This work makes the facility safer and more functional.
- Justin and Clint continue to make progress on the HQ basement. Walls have been painted and the ceiling and carpet will be installed as soon as the HVAC upgrade is complete.
- KRT Phase 2C construction is on schedule. The contractor has begun grading and earthwork for the surfacing. There have been no change orders since the July meeting.
- Work at Willow Pond is substantially complete and billed. The Natural Resources Department will take over for project completion in the fall/spring with shoreline plantings and restoration of the disturbed area.
- Applications for the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant, administered through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), have opened. Staff are preparing to apply for improvements at Buffalo Trace in the Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve. In anticipation of the grant application opening, Sam and Bridgette reached out to the public to gauge interest in potential improvements. Respondents were most interested in improvements to existing trails, new trails, more natural areas, and a nature playground. Staff are preparing cost estimates and considering the feasibility of specific amenities. A resolution and memo with the proposed scope will be presented at the September Regular Meeting.

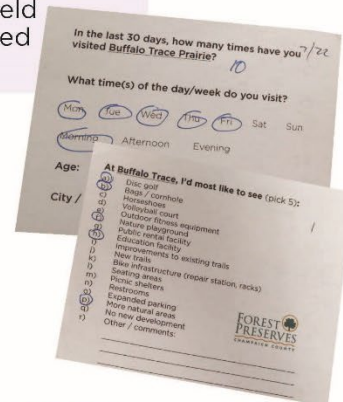


# Buffalo Trace Public Feedback

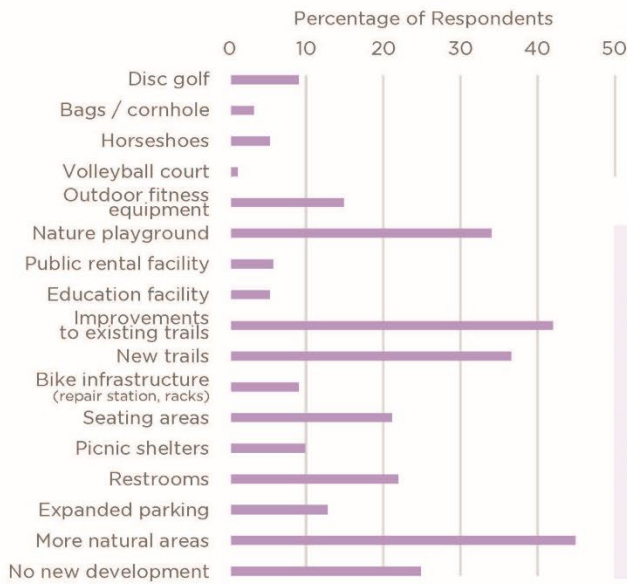
JULY 2022



To prepare for an upcoming grant application, CCFPD staff sought public input on potential improvements to Buffalo Trace, a popular hiking and natural area at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve. District staff distributed an online survey and held two in-person events at Buffalo Trace. The District received 216 online and 20 in-person responses.



## Q1 "At Buffalo Trace, I'd most like to see (pick 5):"



### TOP CHOICES

Over 40% of people want to see *more natural areas* and *improvements to existing trails*.

At least one-third want to see *new trails* and a *nature playground*.

One-quarter of people want *no new development*.

*Restrooms (22%), seating areas (21%), outdoor fitness equipment (15%) and expanded parking* were also popular.

## Q2 "In the last 30 days, how many times have you visited Buffalo Trace?"

Average: 5 times in the last 30 days with 1 in 10 saying they come at least every other day.

## Q3 "What time(s) of the week do you visit?"

Q4



People reported consistent visit days throughout the week. Online results showed the weekends are about 30% more popular.

## "What time(s) of the day do you visit?"



People indicated both online and in-person they most often visit BT in the morning.

### **Business and Finance (John Baker)**

- All staff except two have completed initial cyber threat training through KnowBe4. Employees who fail KnowBe4 simulated phishing attacks are receiving training tailored to them. HR had an actual phishing attack to change an employee's direct deposit information but Paylocity's (District payroll vendor) Risk Mitigation department checked in before payroll processing was completed.
- Met with ClientFirst on District IT priorities, particularly addressing the requirements to continue holding cyberthreat insurance through the Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) and to enable District electronic communications. Endpoint detection and response, remote connectivity and integrated cloud network with Middle Fork and Homer Lake access are among the projects discussed with ClientFirst.
- Met with the IT Committee about ClientFirst IT services and to begin addressing the 2023 IT budget needs and priorities. Microsystems (District network support provider) ended insecure remote access to the District network on August 3. Employees with the need for remote access have been notified of the new procedures for remote access.
- Began moving offices as part of the preparation for the administration offices revamp. John is now located in the former grant's office. Ryan Anderson and Tim Sullivan are now located in the Business Director's former office.
- Continued preparations for the 2023 budget, including projections, reviewing capital projects and equipment needs, providing financial reports for supervisors and meeting with employees located in the administration building to discuss 2023 budget needs specific to administration.

### **Human Resources (Dara Edgington, Mary Beck)**

- During the month of July HR processed one seasonal hire and separations for three seasonal employees, resulting in a turnover rate of 2.59% for the month.
- As of July 31, our total headcount was 115 employees including 46 FT, 18 PT, 50 seasonals, and 1 paid intern.
- The District documented five incidents with PDRMA over the month of July, including four employee accidents and one patron incident.
- The second and final AED/CPR training for 2022 was conducted on July 27.

### **Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)**

- The Champaign County Forest Preserve District is highlighted in several areas in this year's "experience guide" put out by Visit Champaign County. The following areas of the District are highlighted on these pages:

- Summer Concerts, page 24;
- Museum of the Grand Prairie, page 32;
- Middle Fork River Forest Preserve – International Dark Sky Park , page 34;
- Paddling rivers and lakes (Lake of the Woods, Homer Lake, River Bend Forest Preserve), page 35;
- Hiking at Heron View Forest Preserve and Sangamon River Forest Preserve, page 36;
- Cycling on the Kickapoo Rail Trail, page 36;
- Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden , page 39;
- Lake of the Woods Golf Course; page 39;
- Homer Lake Interpretive Center, page 45;
- Natural Playscape at Homer Lake, page 45;

Here's the link to the whole guide:

<https://www.nxtbook.com/champaigncounty/ExperienceGuide/experienceguide2022/index.php#/p/1>

- Media coverage last month included:
  - <https://www.wcia.com/news/champaign-county-re-vamping-environment-with-new-projects/>
  - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/07/13/cool-off-at-the-homer-lake-natural-playscape/>
  - <https://newschannel20.com/news/local/middle-fork-park-awarded-grant-to-improve-stargazing-trail>
  - [https://www.smilepolitely.com/splog/middle\\_fork\\_river\\_forest\\_preserve\\_is\\_improving\\_the\\_dark\\_sky\\_experience/](https://www.smilepolitely.com/splog/middle_fork_river_forest_preserve_is_improving_the_dark_sky_experience/)
  - [https://www.smilepolitely.com/culture/weekender\\_july\\_22\\_241/](https://www.smilepolitely.com/culture/weekender_july_22_241/)
  - [https://news-gazette-il.newsmemory.com/?publink=0f7ed757b\\_134855a](https://news-gazette-il.newsmemory.com/?publink=0f7ed757b_134855a)
  - [https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/parks-recreation/inside-out-sounds-in-scenery/article\\_7adc96ce-0ef3-511d-a466-373baeb8a197.html](https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/parks-recreation/inside-out-sounds-in-scenery/article_7adc96ce-0ef3-511d-a466-373baeb8a197.html)
  - <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/ciliving-stories/ciliving/update-on-capital-projects-underway-with-champaign-county-forest-preserve-district/>
  - <https://mahometdaily.com/ccfpd-working-to-reduce-carbon-emissions/>
  - <https://mahometdaily.com/lake-of-the-woods-golf-course-takes-steps-to-reduce-emissions/>

- Social media numbers continue to increase.

	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-	TWITTER	+/-
CCFPD	6,356	+91	2,971	+62	570	+4
KRT	4,376	+117	142	+2	138	
MGP	4,660	+42	1,254	+6	261	0
HLIC	3,090	+17				
GC	1,842	+34	337	+3	114	+1
FPPF	550	+4				

- July Facilities Rental Report

# Rentals	Preserve	Facility	\$
10	HL	Salt Fork Center	3,550.00
3	HL	Walnut Hill Shelter	380.00
2	LOW	Botanical Garden Weddings	1,990.00
8	LOW	Elks Lake Pavilion	2,125.00
6	LOW	Izaak Walton Cabin	1,080.00
11	LOW	Lake of the Woods Pavilion	3,350.00
1	LOW	Lakeview Shelter	120.00
3	LOW	Riverview Retreat Center	420.00
4	LOW	Rotary Hill Shelter	757.50
2	LOW	Sycamore Hollow Shelter	200.00
5	MF	Activity Center	1,350.00
0	RB	River Bend Shelter	0.00

55		15,322.50
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**Volunteer Coordinator (Sue Gallo)**

- July numbers: One service event; the local LDS Church widened overgrown trails at Homer Lake with Sue and Skylar and nine volunteers for 18 hours. 579 hours were recorded for regular volunteers, (without most museum and education hours reporting).
- Freedom Fest was a success for the volunteer department in that all volunteer shifts were filled, and the volunteers were safe, and they seemed to enjoy their service. Sue took vacation soon after to recuperate.



**Grants and Development Specialist (Ryan Anderson)**

**Grants**

- The Foundation has submitted a grant to the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation as part of their Community Stewardship Challenge Grant. As part of this grant we will be need to raise \$7,000 and generate 400 volunteer hours. ICECF will triple match those funds and volunteer hours for a total of \$25,000. This grant will support restoration activities at Homer Lake Forest Preserve.

**Fundraising Committee – met on July 20 and discussed the following:**

- Legacy Giving Pamphlet. The committee recommends including two check boxes on all future remittance envelopes that read: 1) “I have included the forest preserve in my estate planning” and 2) “I would like more information on how to include the forest preserve in my estate planning.” Sullivan produced a list of potential targets from among our long-time donors to send the pamphlet to and Wuellner narrowed the list down to 30 donors. If the FPF board approves, the pamphlet will be sent to this group of donors with a note asking for their consideration and see what responses we get.
- KRT/Greenhouse Fundraising. Anderson shared a list of names for each project to target for individual contact/appeal. This list will be presented to the FPF board to request volunteers to reach out to these donors.
- Proposed Three Rivers Donor Society. Details to decide on include annual donation level, restricted/unrestricted donation, stewardship and benefits, and when and how to roll out.
- John Baker will present more endowment information at the September board meeting.
- The committee would like to hold a fall event or hike.

**Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)**

- Natural Resources (NR) staff continued to remain busy with integrated pest management (IPM) of invasive plant species throughout the preserves.
- Because of the severe drought conditions, staff allocated time for watering recent plantings of memorial trees and native plugs.

- Seed collection continued with a focus on collecting seed from multiple species of native sedges. This seed will be an important component to wet prairie and sedge meadow restorations projects done within the next two years.
- Staff supported an ongoing volunteer effort to clear invasive bush honeysuckle between the Dogleg trail and Sunset Lake at River Bend Forest Preserve. Staff cut honeysuckle, girdled trees, did follow-up herbicide spraying, and burned brush piles.
- On July 14<sup>th</sup>, Peter held a training for 19 East Central Illinois Master Naturalist on how to use the smartphone app iNaturalist and how CCFPD uses observation data from the app for ecological monitoring. The training was followed by a hike at Buffalo Trace to practice using the app.
- Peter and Emily held an orientation for the AmeriCorps group that will be working on projects for the District in August. The group is composed of 6 volunteers that will be doing woody invasive species control at Buffalo Trace and trash/dump site removal at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve.
- Administrative tasks that were accomplished in July include:
  - Recruiting for the open Natural Resources Technician position
  - Awarding hazardous tree removal projects at Homer Lake Forest Preserve and Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve
  - Completing and submitting the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation Community Stewardship Grant application for a woodland enhancement project at Homer Lake Forest Preserve
  - Submitting a finalized order for seed to be planted along the edge of Willow Pond



### **Lake of the Woods Golf Course (Chris Edmondson and Joie Torres)**

- The hot and dry weather continued in July as we entered into a severe drought condition in Champaign County. This was a bit of a blessing and a curse for the golf course, as every day was playable, but extra attention was needed to keep the course in shape. Joie and crew once again did a fantastic job of keeping the course in great condition and that was reflected in our play and revenue numbers. We had 6,165 players in July, which is well above the 5-year average of 5,024 and only the 2<sup>nd</sup> month since 2009 that we had over 6,000 players. As a result, revenues were also very strong, with a total of \$157,464, which is almost \$50,000 higher than the 5-year average of \$108,132.
- We held our 2<sup>nd</sup> session of Get Golf Ready Adult Clinics in July. These were held over the 4 Monday nights for an hour each. Class is limited to 10 participants and this class had 8 sign up. We also held our Junior Golf Camp from July 12-15. This camp was limited to the first 25 paid entrants and was filled by April. The camp was held each of these days from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00

p.m. and covered every aspect of the game of golf, along with demonstrations from the maintenance department, as well as a presentation from Stacey Clementz and the Museum and Education Department.

- We had several outings and events in July, as well. Along with the golf outings listed below, we also hosted our annual Central Illinois Junior Golf Association (CIJGA) Junior Open on Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup>. We had 55 participants in the tournament, ranging in age from 5 to 17.

<b>Outing</b>	<b># of Players</b>	<b>22 Total Rev</b>	<b>22 Actual Merch</b>
Mahomet Rotary	41	\$2,117.00	\$340.00
Urbana Firefighters	72	\$4,941.00	\$360.00
Mahomet Golf Team Fundraiser	96	\$5,956.00	\$480.00
U of I Wrestling Team	128	\$10,081.72	\$640.00

- We also hosted a Foot Golf event, which was put on by Visit Champaign County, as part of their “New to C-U” series. There were approximately 40 attendees who enjoyed a catered meal and a round of Foot Golf.

- Finally, we received our new fleet of golf carts in July. Originally scheduled for delivery in April, there were several delays because of parts and shipping issues. The Club Car Tempo Lithium Ion electric fleet, will reduce dependence on fossil fuels, along with noise pollution. The one battery and charger per cart will also reduce maintenance (our prior electric fleet had 6 batteries and 2 chargers per unit) and get extended life out of a full charge (estimated 45+ holes on one full charge). Reviews have been very positive from patrons so far!



- The maintenance crew continues to do an excellent job on keeping the course in great condition.
- The golf superintendent sprayed all the tees and fairways for fungus control.
- The maintenance crew added more sand on the front nine bunkers and two bunkers on the back nine course.
- Greens # 1, # 3, and # 4 took a hard hit with isolated dry spots, due to the fact the irrigation sprinklers were not running at night on those holes' location. The solution required significant extra staff effort.
- The golf superintendent took training courses on water management on fairways, back lapping reels and phishing.
- In two weeks, golf maintenance will be losing two employees returning to school for the season.

## **Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Stacey Clementz)**

- The Museum and Education Department (ME) has transitioned from using Keep & Share as our calendar to Outlook calendars. We are hoping this will streamline the sharing of our calendars throughout the district.
- During the month of July, the museum welcomed nearly 1700 patrons from at least 26 different states and 6 countries. Summer is typically the busiest month for visitation at the museum, with July historically being the busiest month of the year. This year's July attendance data exceeds pre-pandemic attendance data for general museum visitation.
- Homer Lake Interpretive Center (HLIC) had two very productive Day Camp Educators this year: we say goodbye to Quinlan Carrell and Grace Hanson. In addition to their great work with campers, both did projects for the district. Grace created a Sounds in Scenery exhibit that is up at the Interpretive Center as well as writing an article about this in the News-Gazette. Quinlan created a brochure called Nature Play that is written for parents of children 3-11 years. It discusses the importance of exploring nature with children and also how to prepare them for visiting the preserves. You can find this brochure on our website (will be up soon) or at the HLIC.
- The Museum of the Grand Prairie (MGP) also had a highly motivated Day Camp Educator this year. Eric Roth created labels for most of the plants in the Discovery Garden, created several videos and assisted with museum camps and programs. We are happy to report that Eric has recently moved on to a position in the Natural Resources department, keeping his talents in the CCFPD!
- The Counselors-in-Training (CIT) program was a huge success. We celebrated all the help from the CITs by a dinner at Jupiter's at the Crossing with pizza and drinks. We then ended the night with each CIT receiving a playing card of \$10 to play games in the basement of the restaurant. All but one CIT joined us in this celebration along with their families with 65 people in attendance. We heard a lot of kind words from the CITs as well as the parents and it sounds like we are going to have a lot of them returning next year and maybe one applying to be a day camp educator. 😊
- Liam Gardner completed his internship with the MGP this month. Liam shadowed all museum personnel in an effort to understand what a museum career might look like and then researched and wrote exhibit copy for the upcoming farming exhibit in the museum's tool wing.
- Jen Grove and Rob Diehl continue to work on organizing the artifacts at the Sangamon shed for eventual movement to the Rankin Center. Two loads of larger artifacts have been brought to Rankin and heat treated, and 47 artifacts have been moved into Rankin.
- Jen Grove completed a custom storage mount for the stained glass windows acquired from Chanute Air Museum, and conducted mold remediation on several artifacts including a leather seated rocking chair.
- Collections staff and volunteers continue deep cleaning collections storage areas in preparation for our reaccreditation visit.
- Mark Hanson finalized the contracts for the Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board digitization grant.
- Mark Hanson visited the Illinois State Archaeological Survey with the collected material from Buffalo Trace. Identified as primarily early 20<sup>th</sup> century household items typical of a farm dump and archaeologically insignificant.
- Museum staff continue research for the newly renovated blacksmith/farming exhibit to be opened in summer 2023. The current blacksmith exhibit was closed by necessity when the Rankin storage building was constructed. It had been in place since 2001. Typically, a permanent exhibit in museums runs ten to twelve years.



- Mark Hanson began talking with conservators about the feasibility of working on several artifacts identified for possible deaccession as advised by the Museum Advisory Committee.
- Mark Hanson began talking with totem pole subject experts about removing the totem poles in the museum and culturally sensitive disposal options, if applicable.
- Eco-adventures day camp and Wilderness Explorers are complete. We had a great time exploring nature with all the children. Final numbers: Eco-adventures: Homer Lake: 49, Lake of the Woods: 59; Wilderness Explorers: Homer Lake: 15, Lake of the Woods: 11; Middle Fork: 6

*Here are some comments from the Eco-adventures parent evaluations:*

- *Thank you for all your hard work. My kid and I love this program.*
  - *Grandma found this program and signed the kids up. They have enjoyed it immensely and are always eager to share what they learned each week. Thank you!*
  - *The price point is amazing! Would love to be able to sign up for multiple camps in one week.*
  - *Loved camp. Hope to have these opportunities often.*
  - *The length of the program each day was perfect. I would have liked it to be 6 weeks.*
  - *Our boys loved the camp! Will sign up again!*
  - *This was a terrific nature camp for preschoolers! My daughter was so excited to come and would tell us what she learned each week. If available next summer, we can't wait for our son to try! Thank you for such a fun learning experience for the kids!*
  - *We love this. Longer (both longer time and weeks) would be great. I'm wondering about other opportunities for the rest of the summer.*
  - *Could you move it up one week - more weeks in June than July?*
- Stacey Clementz spent the day at the Middle Fork Campgrounds to watch Christy Wallace, Activities Coordinator, in action. She has an amazing rapport with the campers, and they have loved chatting with her and participating in her programs for the past 15 years. We are lucky to have her.
  - Jennifer Wick taught two library programs this month; Geocaching at Allerton Library with 2 in attendance and Reptiles at the Mahomet Library with 150 people in attendance!
  - Fred Delcomyn presented a public program at Homer Lake called the Tallgrass Prairie, 5 people were in attendance and toured the Homer Lake prairies after the indoor portion.
  - Jennifer Wick had 5 people in attendance at her July Walk with a Naturalist and over 100 people attended the Star Watch at Middle Fork.
  - All three fishing events (Middle Fork, Homer Lake, Lake of the Woods) were a success. We had a total of about 120 people attend the three events, which is lower than usual, but still good considering it was our first year back after the pandemic. We had some new volunteers this year with the UIUC subunit of the American Fisheries Society attending the Homer Lake Event and several fisheries students and faculty from EIU at the Lake of the Woods event. A huge thank you to all of the staff who helped out at these events!
  - Grand Prairie Friends borrowed *Beaver Biofacts* to be used at a tabling event and Unity East elementary borrowed our *Aquatic Invasives* and *Bird Adaptation* loan kits as well as the Insect Backpack with 28 students.
  - Barb Oehlschlaeger-Garvey presented a talk at Windsor of Savoy, "Hotter than Hades: Heat Waves in Central Illinois." On July 15, 20 residents.
  - The museum continued a special virtual speaker series tied to the new "A History of Healing" exhibit. On July 28<sup>th</sup>, Bill Handel, retired botanist and plant ecologist with the University of Illinois presented a program on Medicinal Uses of Plants by Indigenous Peoples of the Great Plains. The series is funded by a grant from Illinois Humanities and also includes funding to make programs more accessible. During this program and all future programs in the series, an

American Sign Language interpreter is available to interpret program content live and on-screen for program viewers. The video currently has more than 450 views and will continue to climb as people continue to watch the recording.

- Another series of Summer in the Schoolhouse programs took place in July. This year's series consisted of three 19<sup>th</sup> century lessons within the museum's one-room schoolhouse/Hensley Town Hall. Forty students were taken back in time with volunteer school marms during each lesson and even participated in old fashioned recess games.
- Due to many unscheduled large group visits occurring this summer at the museum, staff refined the group visit policy to make programs more efficient and manageable for patrons as well as staff. One such unscheduled visit resulted in an impromptu tour by Katie Snyder who led children through a scavenger hunt. The visit resulted in a \$150 donation!
- Museum Monday programs continued during the month of July. Each week, program participants have taken part in hands-on and engaging activities all centered on a theme related to history, culture, and/or nature. Themes for programs in July included "Adventures in Clay," "Let There Be Light," and "Fun with Fossils." 70 participants.
- Mahomet Daily (7/2/2022) and Smile Politely (7/3/2022) shared feature articles about the museum's upcoming, "Healing Hearts Community Collage." Katie Snyder was interviewed for the articles.
- On July 11, Katie Snyder worked with Carol Inskeep of The Urbana Free Library to bring a workshop called, "Healing Arts," to the Urbana Free Library. The workshop was a way of reaching residents who live in CU who find transportation as a barrier to visiting the museum. Materials were provided for people to collage and paint so that they could create a submission for our, "Healing Hearts Community Collage," which will be on exhibit here at MGP and later become part of the permanent collection, which will chronicle the experiences of the people of Champaign County. Artist Cindy Sampson, who will be compiling the submissions into one coherent piece, was on hand to help participants create. 25 people attended.
- Selena Gonzalez and Eric Roth created, "Boredom Busters Camp in a Bag," with History/Nature activities that can be done at home, for 13 campers.
- Selena Gonzalez created an instructional video teaching how to make a wind chime for our Boredom Busters Camp in a Bag with 151 views; July 19<sup>th</sup>- Eric Roth created an instructional video called, "Make a Classic Camp Craft with Mr. Eric!" where he taught kids to make a "boondoggle" with plastic string for our Boredom Busters Camp in a Bag, with 101 views. Also in July 20<sup>th</sup>- Eric Roth created an instructional video called, "Making a Solar Oven," for Boredom Busters Camp in a Bag, with 83 views.
- July 13, 20, 27<sup>th</sup> and Aug 3<sup>rd</sup>, Selena Gonzalez led Craft Camp in the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Gardens, with 12 campers.
- On July 22, Katie Snyder worked with photographer Della Perrone to bring a new special exhibit to the Education Center, entitled: *Front Step Photos: Portraits of Champaign County Residents during Covid 19 Lockdown*. The exhibit opening hosted 40 patrons, most of whom were new to the museum and the preserves.
- This month, Katie Snyder attended the Smithsonian National Education Summit and participated in the following sessions: *Exploring Women's History Through Portraiture: From Queen Lili'uokalani to Shirley Chisholm; Unseen Connections: Thinking Routines and Exploding Objects; Be Tik Tok Worthy! Empowering Teens to lead Environmental Action; Plenary: Let's Talk: Our Shared Future Through Education*
- In preparation for retirement, Barb Oehlschlaeger-Garvey continues to work on finalizing several documents for the Museum and Education Department: the department-specific Volunteer Manual, Staff Manual, and Inclusion Plan as well as a facility management manual for the MGP.

<b>HLIC Facebook stats</b>				
	<b>Daily Organic Reach</b>		<b>Daily Page Engaged Users</b>	
	<b>Average</b>	<b>Sum</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Sum</b>
<b>July</b>	397	12306	29	905
<b>MGP Facebook Stats</b>				
	<b>Daily Organic Reach</b>		<b>Daily Page Engaged Users</b>	
	<b>Average</b>	<b>Sum</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Sum</b>
<b>July</b>	695	20851	52	1527

### **Lake of the Woods (Rusty Maulding)**

- We are constantly innovating and either adding or refreshing areas of the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Gardens. Staff installed hopscotch in the children’s area this past month to add to an area that already has giant checkers and stump tic tac toe along with other features.
- Safety is always being evaluated. There is a sharp corner on the main Buffalo Trace paved trail that had become overgrown with honeysuckle and made for a blind corner that was particularly challenging for cyclists at speed. This was cleared and stumps treated to prevent resprout so visibility can be maintained for years to come.
- In October/November, the Gardens and Operations staff plan to rent a lift to clear the North Bike Trail at Lake of the Woods along with many other activities throughout the preserve. In order to maximize time with the lift, clearing of lower branches and some selective clearing within the first 10-15’ of the trail began in July.
- It has been very dry and while Gardens staff has needed to water more than usual, Operations staff have used the opportunity to park the mowers for a while and attend to facilities and equipment maintenance and repair.
- Much of our seasonal staff will be done by mid-August. Several we had hoped would continue on through this winter, however life opportunities took them elsewhere. We currently have part time positions posted for both Operations and Gardens.



### **Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)**

- With the contractual work complete at Willow Pond, staff continue to help fill the pond from the wells due to hot and dry weather. We estimate that the pond is 30% capacity, but hope for more rain in the near future.
- The campground continues to see good business through the middle of the summer. Weather is not helping, but we are still seeing fully booked weekends with slower camping numbers through the week.
- Middle Fork staff is monitoring an issue at the South Waterfowl where one of the culverts has rusted out at the gate valve. The holes in the culvert have lowered the water levels at the wetland substantially. Once dried out, we will be able to see the extent of the damage, coming up with a gameplan for a repair.

- We hosted a very successful Stargazing event during the new moon in early August. Close to 100 people attended the event, with more showing up afterwards for the stargazing.

### **Homer Lake (Skylar Smith)**

- Skylar Smith moved into the Homer Lake residence and is enjoying the short commute to work.
- An applicant for the seasonal position has accepted and began work on Tuesday, August 9.
- The construction crew repaired the stream at the Natural Playscape and it has been functioning properly for 2 weeks.
- General Forest Preserve maintenance has been going well with no major issues.

### **District Cultural Competency Initiatives**

- On July 15 Katie Snyder led Macon County Skills Camp through a tour of the museum and the gardens. 15 students and 5 adults attended. The group was working on behavioral expectations in a museum setting. The group later picnicked in the park.
- Mark Hanson attended a Daily Innovations webinar on grit as part of the Smithsonian's Smith internship project.
- DeBorah Ault has been working all summer with Mark Hanson and Pat Cain to complete the terms of her work as part of the Smithsonian's Smith internship program. DeBorah has indexed nearly 30 oral history transcription tapes from the Doris Hoskin's collection, has promoted that collection via social media, and on August 13 will host a community conversation at Douglass Branch Library about these and other oral history efforts in the county. She has arranged this program in collaboration with the Champaign Park District and the Champaign Public Library as part of CU Days, an annual celebration of African American life in the county.
- The DEI Committee is reviewing several project proposals and will determine which will get funded in 2022 by the end of August.