



Community Engagement Department Memorandum

To: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director
From: Laurie Metanchuk, Community Engagement Director
Date: 3/11/2025
Re: February 2025 Report

Public Relations & Marketing

CONFERENCES, MEETINGS & TRAINING

Golf Outing Kickoff Meeting: Director Metanchuk, Communications & Marketing Supervisor Brittany Kovach, and Foundation Board Member Monica Meyers met on Feb. 4 to discuss the Kane Forest Preserve Golf Outing, which will be held on Sept. 11 at Hughes Creek Golf Course. Updates to the sponsorship brochure were made, and new ideas for this year's outing were shared.

The Conservation Foundation Membership & Awards Luncheon: On Feb. 13, Director Metanchuk, Executive Director Ben Haberthur, Natural Resource Management Director Pat Chess, and Planning & Land Protection Director Jennifer Rooks-Lopez attended The Conservation Foundation Awards Luncheon at the Hyatt Regency in Lisle. Congratulations to the Kane Neighbors for Open Space & the DuPage Neighbors for Open Space, for being named The Conservation Foundation's Conservation Partners of the Year! These two volunteer groups worked to help recent open-space referenda pass in their respective counties, leading to increased land protection, conservation, recreation and environmental education.

PRESS RELEASES

We published the following press releases in February:

- Sponsor a tree to help launch the Forest Preserve District's next century: Be a part of the Johnson's Mound Centennial Project, Feb. 13
- Sweet Tradition Meets Milestones: Maple Sugaring Days are March 1-2 at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve, Feb. 19
- Registration is open for Forest Preserve District Summer Camps!, Feb. 27
- Robert Ridgway: When Amateur Bird Watching Becomes a Rigorous Science, Feb. 27

PRESS COVERAGE

The following items garnered press coverage, last month:

Forest Preserve District of Kane County

- Sponsor a Tree to Help Launch the Forest Preserve District's Next Century, Kane County Connects, Feb. 17

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Nature Programs

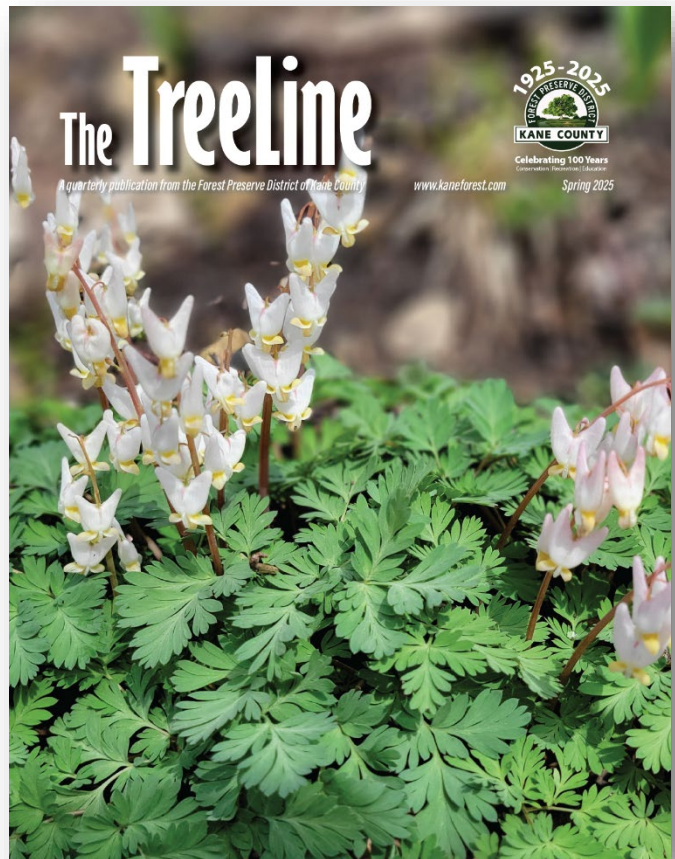
- Special maple beer to be featured at 30th annual Maple Sugaring Days March 1-2, Daily Herald, Feb. 27
- Maple Sugaring Days held this Weekend in St. Charles, St. Charles Patch, Feb. 26

SOCIAL MEDIA

The District manages social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Threads, LinkedIn, TikTok & YouTube. Find us online by searching @forestpreserve.

TREELINE NEWSLETTER

Our current print subscribers total 5,394 (+4). Current email subscribers total 15,229 (+187), for a combined total of 20,623 subscribers (+191). As always, free subscriptions to *The TreeLine* newsletter are available at: http://bit.ly/ForestPreserve_Email. The Spring 2025 edition is just out, and available online at <https://kaneforest.com/the-treeline-newsletter>



Environmental Education

FEBRUARY SPOTLIGHT

Naturalist Josh Libman was the invited presenter for February's "A River Flows through It" series organized by The Conservation Foundation and the St. Charles River Corridor Foundation. His talk, *Avian Adventures: A Guide to Identifying and Appreciating Birds of the Fox River Valley*, drew 200 attendees. Patron and organizer feedback was glowing! Read about the full slate of prestigious speakers which Naturalist Libman joined: <https://www.stcrivercorridor.org/events/A-River-Flows-Through-It.php>

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PROGRAM REACH & REVENUE GENERATION

Programs	Programs Completed (Monthly)	Attendance (Monthly)	Avg Attendance Per Program (Monthly)	Programs Completed (Total FY)	Attendance (Total FY)	Avg Attendance Per Program (Total FY)
Public	11	185	17	101	2861	28
School	4	57	14	57	1637	29
Scout	0	0	0	4	49	12
Community	2	31	16	32	1246	39
Outreach	7	567	81	30	1854	62
Learn from the Experts	2	48	24	16	363	23
Virtual Public*	1	n/a	n/a	6	n/a	n/a
Virtual School	0	0	0	1	125	125
Program Totals	27	888	34	247	8135	34
Nature Center Visitors		451			5568	
Total Attendance		1339			13703	
Revenues[^]	\$563					

*Note: Only webinars have live attendees ^Excludes LFE/KCCN partnership revenues.



“We’re so lucky to have such dedicated and knowledgeable naturalists to educate us on important topics that have an impact on our environment and how we interact with our natural environment.”

“Extirpated and Extinct Animals of Kane County” LFE participant

“Josh [Naturalist Libman] did a great job! He was very well prepared and his enthusiastic presentation kept the group enthralled. We all learned so much and enjoyed it in the process. Highly recommended.”

“Extirpated and Extinct Animals of Kane County” LFE participant

“Erica, [Naturalist Lemon] I really enjoyed the Senior Stroll yesterday even though the weather was less than desirable. I always enjoy the talks/discussions you have prepared for us seniors, especially your bag of props! Thanks again for your efforts – they are appreciated!”

Senior Stroll participant

“This was a wonderful program. My grandson was so thrilled to share the information he learned with his family, when I brought him back home. Amber [Naturalist Ross] presented the information in such an engaging and entertaining manner. Thank you!

“Wet & Wild” EcoLab participant

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“Lisa [Naturalist O’Brien] did another great job taking us on a tour. She is such a great educator as well. Even as a geologist, I couldn’t explain glacial features as well as she does to the public. I kept thinking how outclassed I was :-)”

Nurtured by Nature participant

IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

- **Public Programs:** The District’s Mushroom Monitors gathered for the 3rd annual Mushroom Monitors Workshop at Creek Bend Nature Center, at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve in St. Charles. Project leader Environmental Education Manager McKittrick, shared the success stories of the 2024 monitoring season, and led the group to brainstorm improvements for 2025. Volunteer Coordinator Rachel Carlson gave a review of volunteer hours committed by volunteers, and Natural Resource Management colleagues explained how their department uses the monitor data to help manage preserve holdings.



Mushroom Monitors shared stories about their fungal observations before the presentations began.

- **Community & Outreach Programs** – The entire naturalist team worked together to deliver five *Traveling Naturalist* programs to a total of 272 students at area schools, this month: three *Backyard Wilderness*-themed and two *Nature Detective*-themed programs. School districts supported included D301, U46 and Brightpoint Child & Family Center in Carpentersville.

Environmental Education Manager McKittrick shared the geological and cultural history of LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve with a group from Wild Ones of Northern Kane County.



Wild Ones members enjoyed the snowy trails at Les Arends Forest

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- **School Programs** – Students from Howard B. Thomas Pre-Kindergarten classes loved the Traveling Naturalist program at their school.



What Pre-K student can resist the lure of touching wildlife pets?

- **Learn from the Experts (LFE)/Kane County Certified Naturalist (KCCN) Programs** – The naturalist team led two LFEs in February: Winter Tree Identification (led by Environmental Education Manager McKittrick at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve) and Extirpated & Extinct Animals of Kane County (led by Naturalist Libman.)

Rental Facilities

Barbara Belding Lodge at Brewster Creek Forest Preserve

In February, the lodge hosted four meetings and a baby shower totaling \$800.

Creek Bend Nature Center at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve

In February, Creek Bend Nature Center hosted a baby shower totaling \$500.