



Community Affairs & Environmental Education Memorandum

To: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director
From: Laurie Metanchuk, Community Affairs Director
Date: 7/9/2024
Re: June 2024 Report

Public Relations & Marketing

Speed Reduction Public Awareness Campaign

We've launched a speed-reduction public awareness campaign, specifically for the bike trails in the District. As part of that campaign, we've created a new character — Max 15. Max 15 is a fun way to remind everyone of the speed limit on the trails. We've created a Share the Trail flyer that has been posted to social media and shared with local bike shops. We're also happy to see that the flyer's being shared in local municipalities and trail networks. The Public Safety department will soon be installing electronic speed signs on the trails. Once those are up, we'll issue a press release as part of the campaign. The goals of the public awareness campaign are to:

- Make the public aware of the 15-m.p.h. speed limit
- Encourage people to share the trail, as there are not only cyclists but walkers, runners, equestrians on horseback, etc.
- Raise awareness that only Class 1 and Class 2 electronic bicycles are permitted. Class 3 e-bikes are not permitted.
- Stay safe, be aware and follow all traffic laws, rules and regulations.



June 2024 Report

Press Releases

We published the following press releases, last month:

- Learn about Local Wildlife at EcoLab: Skeleton Secrets, June 3
- Forest Preserve District to Host Presentation on the National Park Service in our Region, June 10
- Help Round Up Rusty Crayfish in Kane County, June 11
- Jon J. Duerr Forest Preserve Embarks on Exciting Renovations, Starting June 24 through early September, June 21
- Stroll into Nature on a Guided Stroller Hike, June 25
- Kane Forest Preserve Foundation Presents Inaugural Golf Outing: Swing for Conservation at Hughes Creek Golf Course, June 27

Media Coverage

Campgrounds

- Kane County campsites open at forest preserves, Shaw Local, June 1

Land Investments

- Hundreds of acres in Huntley to become Kane County forest preserve – but some land set aside for development, Daily Herald, June 5
- 300 acres in Huntley to become Kane County forest preserve, Shaw Local, June 5
- Kane County forest preserves grow in two land deals, Shaw Local, June 14

Lighting Policy

- Kane County Forest Preserve District to implement new lighting policy to protect night sky, Kane County Connects, June 18

Nature Programs

- Help round up rusty crayfish in Aug. 10 ‘Rodeo,’ Daily Herald, June 13
- Take your baby along a tour-guided trek at Kane County’s Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve, Shaw Local, June 29

TreeLine Newsletter

Our current print subscribers total 4,272 (+4). Current email subscribers total 13,104 (+43), for a combined total of 17,376 subscribers (+47). As always, free subscriptions to *The TreeLine* newsletter are available at: http://bit.ly/ForestPreserve_Email.

Environmental Education

June Spotlight



The first three sessions of *2024 Week in the Woods Summer Camp* are now in the rearview mirror, with a week to recoup before the next three sessions. Themes included *Summer Unplugged* (at Camp Tomo Chi-Chi Knolls), *Nature Built Games* (at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve) and *Tracking & Survival* (at Oakhurst Forest Preserve.) These pictures tell the story of the nature education and fun generated at each unique camp!



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	17	280	16	141	5195	37
School	6	116	19	111	3535	32
Scout	0	0	0	7	118	17
Community	5	80	16	47	940	20
Outreach	5	385	77	42	2332	56
Learn from the Experts	2	53	26.5	25	753	30
Virtual Public*	1	n/a	n/a	12	n/a	n/a
Virtual School	0	0	0	0	0	n/a
Program Totals	36	914	26	385	12,873	35
Nature Center Visitors		851			10,660	
Total Attendance		1,765			23,533	
Revenues[^]	\$8,642					

*Note: Only webinars have live attendees.

^Excludes LFE/KCCN partnership revenues.



"[Naturalist Erica Lemon] Erica and her staff were wonderful with my children. ...the inclusion services and accommodations were exceptional. Erica was a great communicator beforehand and did an awesome job making sure he was included and making me feel safe sending him. He had a blast."

"Week in the Woods" Summer Camp participant

"Vincent loved this program! The counselors were fantastic and created such an amazing environment for him to learn and grow. We have tried other camps (not Kane county forest preserve camps) and he was miserable, this was BY FAR his most enjoyable camp experience. He loved every activity and came home with so many stories every day. I couldn't have asked for anything more than what was provided."

"Week in the Woods" Summer Camp participant

In-Person Programs

- **Public Programs** – The 2025 kayak season kicked off with a lake-based skills training class on a rainy day at Oakhurst Forest Preserve in Aurora. True kayakers don't let a little rain bother them, as proven by the positive attitudes and excellent program feedback of the 15 participants. Next on the paddling schedule, we moved to the Fox River at the end of June for a sold-out 4-mile trip from Voyageur Landing Forest Preserve in Elgin. The group of 15 traveled upriver to Carpentersville, then back to the launch. Naturalist and Environmental Education Manager Barb McKittrick pointed out wildlife and watershed features along the route, while a majestic bald eagle soared directly overhead!



Professional instructors from our partner Rocktown Adventures of Rockford demonstrate the proper goal-post hold for kayak paddles.

June 2024 Report

Our naturalist team made a valiant attempt to find cicadas in Kane County this month, but the cupboards were pretty bare in most preserves. That didn't prevent us from educating 60 patrons about these unusual and voicieferous insects during a series of public and outreach cicada programs. Using props, collected live specimens and pictures, we interpetred the periodical cicada phenomena at Gunnar Anderson (Geneva), Hampshire and Fabyan East (Geneva) Forest Preserves.

Naturalist Josh Libman welcomed 39 seniors to Fabyan East Forest Preserve for the June *Senior Stroll*. The program focused on a summer insect theme during the 1-hour leisurely stroll through the woods. In another one of our recurring monthly programs, Naturalist Lisa O'Brien led a meditative, *Nurtured by Nature* hike at Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve in Hampshire, immersing the 15 participants in the healing effects of nature while doing a bit of wetland mitigation interpretation.

Getting their feet into a real creek is a highlight for many Kane County residents, as proven during the *Fascinating Lives of Freshwater Mussels* program held at Tyler Creek Forest Preserve in Elgin. Naturalist Libman helped the group of 25 explore the creek to study mussels and highlighted their pivotal role in a healthy ecosystem. Naturalist Libman also led *Bird Watching* walks at Dick Young (Batavia) and Tekakwitha Woods (St. Charles) Forest Preserves, observing seasonal birds with the 30 participants and sharing some birding stories along the way.

For 18 preschoolers and their caregivers, during a *Flippin' Frogs - Little Saplings* program at Creek Bend Nature Center/LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve in St. Charles, Naturalist O'Brien started with a brief overview of frogs, their life cycle and features. The children hopped on 'lily pads' over to the Creek Bend pond to catch and study tadpoles and adult frogs. Two librarian-led *Storytimes at Creek Bend Nature Center* attracted 62 little ones and their caregivers to hear stories and play interactive games, then explore Creek Bend Nature Center.

Participants learned from Naturalist Erica Lemon the many different pollinating insects that can be found in local prairie communities, during a hike through the grasslands at Blackberry Maples Forest Preserve in Elburn. They identified many unusual species that are specially adapted to pollinating native plants.

Community & Outreach Programs

Naturalist Amber Ross welcome patrons of Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association (NISRA) Carpentersville to Camp Tomo Chi-Chi Knolls in Gilberts. The group learned about the skills needed and fun to be had while camping. They worked together to setup a tent, and finished up with a campfire and smores!



NISRA campers enjoy time together after successfully establishing camp.

June 2024 Report

Naturalist Ross also teamed up with Volunteer Coordinator Robb Cleave and our two Naturalist Interns to lead a nature education and community service project at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve in St. Charles. The group of 25 picked up trash, then explored Creek Bend Nature Center.

Aurora GreenFest at McCollough Park was well attended, and Naturalist Ross and our two Naturalist Interns manned a very popular table there. They engaged with over 250 attendees, while telling the story of local wildlife species and spreading the word about the District's public nature programs.

In a partnership program with the Messenger Public Library of North Aurora, Environmental Education Manager McKittrick welcomed 15 library patrons to Glenwood Park Forest Preserve in Batavia to learn about local wetlands and water systems. She started with a description of wetlands vs. still vs. moving water ecosystems, provided examples of each, then described the Fox River watershed, animals that make their home there, threats to the river, and ways we can all help improve the watershed.

Naturalists Librman, O'Brien and Lemon conducted *Traveling Naturalist* programs (*Backyard Wilderness* and *Illinois Wildlife* themes) at Waubensee Community College and two Kensington School Campuses, serving over 110 patrons.

Learn from the Experts (LFE)/KCCN Programs

In partnership with Jerome Johnson of the Garfield Farm & Tavern Museum, Naturalist O'Brien hosted a *Farms and Barns LFE* program. Jerome led a tour of the restored barns, exploring how each was constructed to meet the needs of crop plants, farm animals, and their human caretakers.



Picturesque barns at Garfield Farms made for a beautiful learning atmosphere.

Members of the Wild Ones of Kane County chapter led a *Start in Your Yard LFE* at the Barbara Belding Lodge, at Brewster Creek Forest Preserve in St. Charles. Instructors explained how to get started planting natives in their own yards. The 24 attendees left with the knowledge needed to transform turf grass into pollinator-friendly native plantings!

The final field trip of the KCCN Class of 2025 at Dick Young Forest Preserve in Batavia was a fitting conclusion to the program. The 32 class members are now off to generate their 30 hours of continuing education and volunteering needed to graduate.



Environmental Education Manager McKittrick and Naturalist Libman point out species of prairie plants to the KCCN class.

Nature, Virtually Everywhere/Online Programs

Apple Gall Wasps – Follow a District naturalist as they explain oak apple gall wasps, a unique parasitic insect in our preserves. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElnVn8o9a4A>

June 2024 Report

Rental Facilities

Barbara Belding Lodge at Brewster Creek Forest Preserve

In June, the lodge hosted four meetings and two special events, totaling \$1,200. Anticipated revenue for reservations to date totals \$11,325.

Creek Bend Nature Center at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve

In June, we hosted two weddings, one bridal shower and one meeting, totaling \$5,500. Our busy wedding season has begun!

Kane Forest Preserve Foundation

Kane Golf Outing

Preparations are underway for our first ever Kane Forest Golf Outing. We're currently looking for sponsors and golfers for the Sept. 12 event at Hughes Creek Golf Club in Elburn. Contact Communications & Marketing Specialist Brittany Kovach for more information:
kovachbrittany@kaneforest.com.

Additional information is online at
www.kaneforestpreservefoundation.org and also:

- Sponsorship Packet: <https://bit.ly/kanegolfsponsorinfo>
- Sponsorship Registration: <http://bit.ly/kanegolfsponsor>
- Golf Flyer: <https://bit.ly/kanegolferinfo>
- Golfer Registration: <https://bit.ly/kanegolfer>

