



Community Engagement Department Memorandum

To: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director
From: Laurie Metanchuk, Community Engagement Director
Date: 8/12/2025
Re: July 2025 Report

Public Relations & Marketing

PRESS COVERAGE

We published the following press releases in July:

- Cast a Line and Learn New Skills at Free Open Fishing Clinics, July 3
- District Hosts Youth Kayak Fishing Program for Young Anglers, July 9
- Come Wrangle Invasive Crayfish at the 7th Annual Rusty Rodeo, July 23

We received the following media coverage, last month:

Forest Preserve District of Kane County

- New Viewing Platform Proposed for Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve, Kane County Connects, July 21

Nature Programs

- Fishing clinics to be held at Oakhurst Forest Preserve in Aurora, Chicago Tribune, July 4
- Cast a line and learn new skills at free fishing clinics, Daily Herald, July 7
- Kane County Forest Preserve Hosts Youth Kayaking, Fishing Program, St. Charles Patch, July 11
- Kane County Forest Preserve District to offer kayak fishing program, Shaw Local, July 12
- Come wrangle invasive crayfish at the seventh annual Rusty Rodeo, Daily Herald, July 23

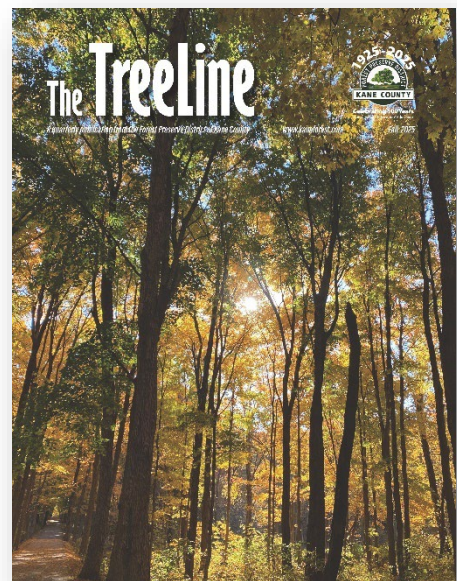
TREELINE NEWSLETTER

Our current print subscribers total 5,407 (+0). Current email subscribers total 15,716 (+14), for a combined total of 21,123 subscribers (+14). As always, free subscriptions to *The TreeLine* newsletter are available at:

http://bit.ly/ForestPreserve_Email.

The Fall 2025 issue is out! See it at

<https://kaneforest.com/the-treeline-newsletter> or pickup a copy at District Headquarters or Creek Bend Nature Center.



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STAFF

Public Relations Intern: On July 1, we welcomed Public Relations Intern Jacob Purser to the Community Engagement team. Jacob is a senior at Michigan State University studying business and marketing. Intern Purser's role will be to take pictures, post to social media, table events, and other work to help promote the District.

Environmental Education

JULY 2025 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION REPORT



July Spotlight: That's a wrap on another successful *Week in the Woods Summer Camp* season! Over the summer, our team of naturalists and naturalist interns led five full weeks of nature-themed camps at LeRoy Oakes, Camp Tomo Chi-Chi Knolls, Burnidge and Johnson's Mound Forest Preserves, concluding with the *Tools of the Trade* camp in July. In total, 65 campers from ages 6-12, explored woodland wonders, got their feet wet in preserve streams and learned new skills. We are full of gratitude to have spent time helping to develop these future conservationists. July camps are pictured below.



Art in Nature campers created nature-themed art in the perfect studio.



During Fun and Fit in Nature camp, campers thrived in the great outdoors.



Middle schoolers learned naturalist skills during the Tools of the Trade 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	14	291	21	14	291	21
School	3	35	12	3	35	12
Scout	1	20	20	1	20	20
Community	8	242	30	8	242	30
Outreach	1	65	65	1	65	65
Learn from the Experts	1	22	22	1	22	22
Virtual Public*	1	n/a	n/a	1	n/a	n/a
Virtual School	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a
Program Totals	29	675	24	29	675	24
Nature Center Visitors		1,121			1,121	
Total Attendance		1,796			1,796	
Revenues [^]	\$6,969					

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



"As a family, we understand the importance of getting outside in nature, but our daughter is a little more hesitant. By offering the Art in Nature Program, you encouraged her to get outside and make art, while also enjoying the benefits of being out in nature."

Parent of an "Art in Nature" Summer Camper

"Our grandson was enthusiastic about the presentation and shared with his whole family. Wonderful. [Naturalist Amber Ross] Amber does a wonderful job with these presentations. We feel fortunate to live in Kane County so we can benefit from all that the KCFP offers."

"EcoLab: Glow Chemistry" participant

"I tell every one of my family and friends about my walks with the fabulous Naturalists of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County! They are always fun and informative...[Naturalist Lisa O'Brien] Lisa is always full of energy and great information about the sites we visit!"

"Nurtured by Nature" participant

IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

- **PUBLIC PROGRAMS** – During *Eco-Labs: Glow Chemistry* at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve, Naturalist Ross let patrons on an exploration of the wonders of luminescence after dark! She explained the different types of luminescence we encounter in our day-to-day lives, then hit the trail to discover bioluminescence at work in nature. For the finale, the 15 attendees created a glow-in-the-dark craft to take home.

In our second session in a four-part series, partners from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Urban and Community Fishing Program joined Naturalist Ross for an *Open Fishing Clinic* at Oakhurst Forest Preserve in Aurora. With poles in hand and smiles on their faces, 27 anglers of all experience levels practiced their casting and harvesting



For many patrons, this was their first time ever fishing. Every fisherperson pulled in a successful catch!

techniques and discovered the special features of inland lake ecology. Participants also learned about the fish native to Illinois waters. The most fish caught were Bluegill, so patrons got up close and personal with that species.

Along with consulting Mycologist Crystal McAllister, Environmental Education Manager McKittrick teamed up with Mushroom Monitor Bill Becker and colleagues from the Illinois Mycological Association to lead a joint *Mushroom Foray* at Brunner Family Forest Preserve in Dundee. The 25 mushroom enthusiasts scoured the woodlands to collect (under scientific permit) and identify over a hundred species of mushrooms, before returning all collected specimens to the ecosystem. Knowledge gained will further improve the District's mushroom monitoring program and data.

Attendees were able to show off their creativity as they fashioned temporary art along lovely trails at Leroy Oakes Forest Preserve during Naturalist O'Brien's *Trail Art* program for 20 patrons. During this outdoor class, they gathered natural items to create pretty designs or inspirational words for all to see and admire.

During this month's *Kayaking the Fox River* program, 12 patrons joined Environmental Education Manager McKittrick and Naturalist Josh Libman for a beautiful naturalist-led paddle down the Fox River. The group put in at Jon J. Duerr Forest Preserve in South Elgin and kayaked about 6 miles downriver to Ferson Creek Park in St. Charles. Sightings of Egret and Great Blue Herons were abundant.

To attract return patrons and build a loyal following of citizen conservationists, we offer several series of programs that meet on a recurring basis. All are popular, and together this suite of serial programs serves a wide range of target audiences:

- *Bird Watching Walks*: Naturalist Libman's monthly walks celebrate the changing seasons as he leads patrons on a hike to look and listen for birds and covers basic bird identification skills. In July, 15 attendees joined him at Lake Run Forest Preserve.
- *Senior Stroll*: Started at Tekakwitha Woods Nature Center in St. Charles, decades ago, this is one of our longest-running public programs and it draws a large and devoted group of active adults. This month, Naturalist Erica Lemon welcomed 33 attendees to Fabian West Forest Preserve in Geneva to learn about the cultural and natural history of the land. After strolling the grounds and visiting the Japanese Garden, the group enjoyed refreshments and social time.
- *Yarn Art*: Naturalist Lemon invites crafters of all ages to bring their own yarn art project to work within a group of like-minded yarn enthusiasts. This month, 10 fiber artists joined the circle at the Barbara Belding Lodge at Brewster Creek Forest Preserve in St. Charles.
- *StoryTime at Creek Bend Nature Center*: Every month, our patrons join a librarian from the St. Charles Public Library for read-aloud stories, finger plays, and songs, staying to enjoy the interactive exhibits in the Nature Center following the program. We welcomed 47 folks in July.

- *Little Saplings*: This monthly program, developed for 3-5 year olds by Naturalist O'Brien, explores seasonal themes in the natural world using a combination of stories, nature hikes, songs, games, and/or crafts. For July's *Woodland Wonders* theme, 11 children and their adults learned about trees. In the field at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve, they matched leaves to trees, made leaf rubbings, counted the rings of tree cookies and rolled logs to look for insects.
- *Nurtured by Nature*: Naturalist O'Brien invites adults to experience the healing effects of nature. During this monthly series, she incorporates gentle stretching, deep breathing and a focus on awareness during hikes designed to nurture the mind, body and spirit. July's program at Grunwald Farms Forest Preserve in Elburn drew 24 patrons.
- *Trek with a Naturalist*: Environmental Education Manager McKittrick designs and leads this monthly program for those who like active hiking, all year long. We visit different preserves each month, with July's being at Fox River Shores Forest Preserve in Carpentersville.



You never know what will happen on a Trek with a Naturalist. Otto Engineering was filming a corporate video with a military theme near the old Carpenter Dam site and these 17 Trekkers took full advantage of the camouflaged vehicle props.

- **COMMUNITY & OUTREACH PROGRAMS** – A significant portion of the naturalist team's efforts involve traveling to and educating community groups, school classes and partner library patrons. Community programs are given at or for private organizations like garden clubs, service

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organizations, church groups, private school/day care centers and senior centers. In July, Naturalist Ross welcomed 19 Rising Lights special needs adults to LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve to explore the different ecosystems there. For Awesome Life Academy, she led a short hike along the river at Fabyan Forest Preserve for 25 participants, sharing a brief overview of Fabyan history (boat house, island features, sun dial/rose garden). Director of the Fabyan Villa Museum and Japanese Gardens Vivien Lasken provided the group with a tour of the Villa. Naturalist Ross provided similar Fabyan experiences for 29 special needs adults from two different Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association (NISRA) programs. For the younger set, Naturalist Ross led a Discovery Hike at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve for 13 KinderCare students and Naturalist Lemon traveled to the Geneva Kensington School to share a *Backyard Wilderness Traveling Naturalist* program with 60 children.

Our entire naturalist team was proud to improve the summer camp experiences of two local park districts by leading their campers through nature experiences at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve. The Geneva Park District brought 55 campers for a *Discovery Hike* and the Park District of Oak Park bussed in 41 campers for a *Discovery Hike*, lunch and Creek Bend Nature Center visit.

Outreach programs are given at public schools, day care centers and libraries. Naturalist Lemon visited 65 students at Brightpoint Child & Family Center (Carpentersville) with a *Traveling Naturalist Nature's Superheroes* program, explaining the "powers" (adaptations) of local animals and how superheroes get inspiration from the natural world.

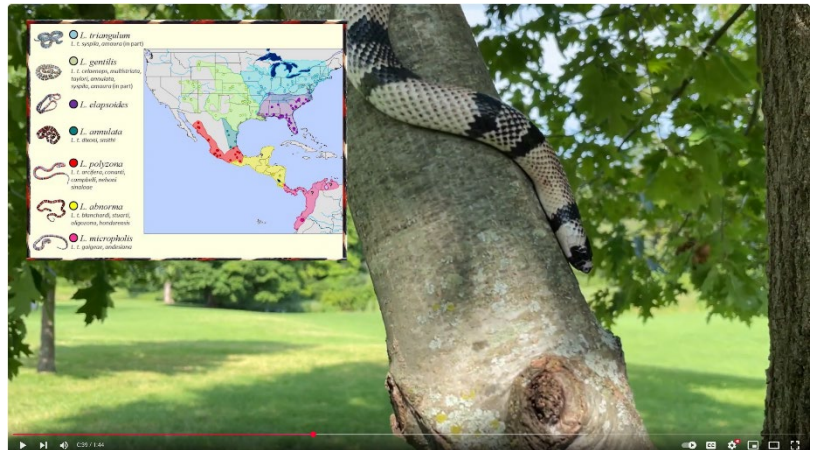
- **SCHOOL PROGRAMS** – Summer is a slow time for organized school field trips. Naturalist O'Brien continued her *Mighty Acorns* program for Sunny Hill Elementary students into July, with a trip to Helm Woods Forest Preserve in Barrington Hills to explore archaeology and fossils. The group dug for bones, made fossils with clay and dissected owl pellets to simulate a fossil dig. Naturalist Libman led two *Homeschool Hikes* for a total of 26 kids from two different homeschool networks at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve.
- **SCOUT PROGRAMS** – Naturalists Lemon and Ross welcomed 20 American Heritage Girl scouts to LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve for a *Discovery Hike*.
- **LEARN FROM THE EXPERTS (LFE)/KANE COUNTY CERTIFIED NATURALIST (KCCN) PROGRAMS** – During the *Bumble Bees of Kane County LFE*, invited speaker Valerie Blaine led 22 patrons on an exploration of the 12 species of Illinois bumblebees, collectively known by their genus name *Bombus*. Indoors, she explained bumblebee diversity, ecological niches, and efforts to preserve and protect this important group of pollinators. Afterward, they headed out to the prairie to find different species at work.

Nature, Virtually Everywhere! Online Programs

For patrons that can't come to the forest preserves, or choose not to gather in groups, the Environmental Education team continues its innovative work to bring high-quality nature programs to folks via live virtual hikes, videos, and webinars. In July, we released:

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- **Petra the Milk Snake** – Each year, we put the Naturalist Interns to work digitally memorializing their time at the District. This month, Naturalist Intern Marc DaVall starred in a snake video, produced and edited by Naturalist Libman: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2AMog_JDTM



Petra is one of the animal ambassadors at Creek Bend Nature

PARTNERSHIP EVENTS: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

Environmental Education Manager McKittrick served as a reviewer for the *Regenerative Grazing Project RFP* submissions. She also participated in interviews of the single RFP submittal group and co-hosted the executive leadership of that group on a tour of the Burlington Prairie Forest Preserve.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Environmental Education Manager McKittrick attended the all-day *Rooted: Ancestral Knowledge & Ecological Futures* workshop at the American Indian Center in Chicago.

Rental Facilities

BARBARA BELDING LODGE AT BREWSTER CREEK FOREST PRESERVE

In July, the lodge hosted four meetings and two special events, totaling \$1,700.

CREEK BEND NATURE CENTER AT LEROY OAKES FOREST PRESERVE

In July, Creek Bend Nature Center hosted two special events, totaling \$5,250.

Kane Forest Preserve Foundation

NATURE PLAY SPACE PROJECT

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Staff Planning Meeting: On July 2, Director Metanchuk, Environmental Education Manager McKittrick, and staff from various departments met to discuss the Nature Play Space project at District Headquarters. Staff discussed time frame, maintenance, planning, order and delivery of the various elements. All but the climbing structure are slated to be completed by November 2025. The Foundation won a grant of \$22,800 from the Grand Victoria Riverboat Foundation for a Nature Play Space at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve. The project will include six outdoor “rooms” with the following focuses:

- soundscape/music; shelter/fort building; excavation;
- contemplation; mud kitchen; and balance/climbing.

The funds awarded were less than the amount requested. There are also additional expenses required for accessible trails and climbing structure safety. The Kane Forest Preserve Foundation has committed to contributing additional funds to complete the project with proceeds from the 2025 Native Plant Sale and the 2025 Golf Outing going to the Nature Play Space project.

GOLF OUTING

Golf Outing: We’re about a month out from the Foundation’s second annual Golf Outing! The fundraiser is Thursday, Sept. 11 at Hughes Creek Golf Course in Elburn. We currently have 20 teams signed up. If you’d like to sponsor the event or register your foursome, visit the Foundation website at:

<http://www.kaneforestpreservefoundation.org>.

KANE FOREST PRESERVE
GOLF OUTING SPONSORED BY LOVE, TITO'S
FORE! KANE FOREST PRESERVE FOUNDATION

Check in at 9 a.m.
 Breakfast sponsored by Chick-Fil-A Elgin
 Bloody Mary Bar sponsored by Love, Tito's
 Beverages (7 Drink Tickets)
 Tee-Off at 10 a.m.
 Boxed Lunches on the course
 Golfing Ends at 3 p.m.
 Steak Dinner
 Raffles & Auction

**THURSDAY
 SEPTEMBER 11
 AT HUGHES CREEK GOLF COURSE
 1749 SPRING VALLEY DR., ELBURN**

**Registration includes 18-holes
 of golf, free on-course contests,
 gifts, food & drinks.**

**\$500 Per Foursome (After 7/1)
 \$150 Per Single Golfer**
 Scan the QR Code to register!

Proceeds from this charity golf outing go towards a Nature Play Space at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve

www.kaneforestpreservefoundation.org

**Sponsorship Opportunities available.
 Email KovachBrittany@kaneforest.com**

JOIN US FOR A DAY OF FUN, AND GOLF FOR A GREAT CAUSE!