

2026 Strategic Plan Q1 Report

#	PLAN	CHAMPION	PARTICIPANTS	2026 WORK PLANNED	2026 WORK COMPLETED
1.1.1	Analyze market for programs and collect user feedback to better understand community programming needs	ME	-	M&E Department has been accepted to the MAP evaluation program, to start in late winter or early spring.	MAP evaluation has begun with holding various meetings to solicit input from staff and the Board.
1.1.2	Create a programming plan detailing current and potential audiences, core programs, program goals, and evaluation methods	ME	-	Incorporate guidance from MAP evaluation Develop Exhibit Plan	
1.1.3	Create and implement a more consistent and standardized process for evaluating educational programs	ME	-	Incorporate guidance from MAP evaluation	
1.1.4	Optimize facility hours for ease of public attendance while balancing with operational efficiency	ME	-	Open Activity Center as Temporary Nature Center by March 2026 Introduce sensory friendly hours and welcoming space at the museum	Center opened at MF on March 16 and saw 158 visitors in its first two weeks. MGP reopened on March 1 with sensory-friendly hours on Wednesdays from 4-6pm. Welcoming space opened on April 10.
1.2.1	Complete renovations and additions to Homer Lake Interpretive Center	ME	PLN	Demo interior (in house) Bid and award addition shell (contractor). NC Exhibit Development and Design	Interior demo work largely complete. Shell construction bid was above budget and staff is developing a new approach.
1.2.2	Secure funding through grants and fundraising to improve the nature education space	FIN	Foundation, PLN, ME	Coordinating contact with potential donors.	OSLAD grant approved.
2.1.1	Ensure effective use of new financial system	FIN	-	Use budget adjustments to simplify reporting on budget dollars available.	
2.1.2	Leverage legislative support	ED	Strategy Team, Board	Board and Strategy Team have been invited to attend the Legislative Breakfast hosted by Champaign Park District on February 23. Attend Champaign County First trip to D.C. and Springfield Attend Legislative Conference	Legislative Breakfast was held, with good attendance from legislators, Board, and staff
2.1.3	More clearly and consistently communicate and update staff on organizational priorities and plans and their progress to ensure engagement and alignment	ED	DED	Priorities and progress will be discussed at department meetings/huddles, bi-annual trail mixer events 2026 Strategic Plan actions to be incorporated into individual performance reviews where applicable	ED has begun visiting with departments to discuss priorities and progress.
2.1.4	Simplify, align, and improve processes, policies, and services	ED	DED, FIN, HR	Develop Ed Collection check-out procedure. Travel Expenses and Grants Management policies will be revised. Video Surveillance policy to be introduced.	Video surveillance policy has been Board-approved.
2.1.5	Update Forest Preserves' vision to an aspirational statement describing specifically what the mission will achieve and mission statement to define how to achieve vision	DED	Strategy Team, Board	Continue the discussion as part of 2026 Board retreat Include an updated vision statement in the core chapters/introduction to the Master Plan.	
2.2.1	Evaluate and implement technology where it can enhance service to the public and/or increase organizational efficiency (and provide accommodations when needed)	ME	MKT, PLN	Incorporate guidance from MAP evaluation	
2.2.2	Identify opportunities to offer services in languages other than English, such as through translated materials and using technology to assist with language differences	MKT	ME, OPS	Incorporate guidance from MAP evaluation. Continue to translate Summer Splash and Cardboard Boat Regatta flyers and look into offering Goosechase challenges in Spanish. Newly created interpretive signs will feature a QR code to translate into Spanish and other languages we decide upon.	
2.2.3	Implement an ambassador-type program	ED	DED, MKT, VOL	Establish goals, parameters, and expectations for service Identify, recruit, and schedule volunteers Communicate when/where service will be offered	ED, DED, MKT, and VOL met to establish goals, parameters, expectations, and potential volunteers. Looking to pilot the program at Homer Lake summer 2026.

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2.3.1	Expand opportunities for interdepartmental collaboration	ED	HR	Utilize Goosechase app to provide team-building experiences.	All employee training on communication held on 3/10/2026 at Virginia Theater. Champaign and Urbana Park Districts were also in attendance. Employee Engagement Committee planning Trail Mixer (all-employee event) for late June/Early July and other opportunities to connect staff.
2.3.2	Expand recruitment efforts to attract an engaged workforce with varied perspectives and experiences	HR	ED, MKT, ME	Repeat participation in the Youth Employment Services (YES) program. Establish a presence at four targeted recruitment events—including community-based and high school fairs—specifically selected to reach various experience groups and early-career talent. Staff continue to speak about career options to various audiences.	ED spoke to college students about career options. Participated in YES Program (Unit 4 high school internship program) interviews in April. Plan to have 3 H.S. interns this summer (Golf, M&E, and Planning/Marketing).
2.3.3	Better attract and retain talent by evaluating the employee experience through balanced policies, growth opportunities, and work-life balance	HR	ED	Implement short, targeted surveys at least once per year focused specifically on policy fairness, growth perception, and work-life balance. Revisit 37.5 hour workweek discussion.	HR Director has evaluated onboarding and recruiting policies and developed a retention plan.
2.3.4	Promote staff development through expanded training programs	HR	ED	Maximize ROI of current vendor partnerships by identifying no-cost and low-cost leadership and professional development modules available through Paylocity, PDRMA, IPRA, and KnowBe4 for immediate staff use. Collaborate with Champaign Park District and Urbana Park District to execute a professional development summit to create a more cost-effective and comprehensive training experience for all staff.	All employee training on communication held on 3/10/2026 at Virginia Theater. Champaign and Urbana Park Districts were also in attendance.
2.4.2	Promote capacity-building within the Foundation through member trainings and other professional development, updating the MOU to define expectations, revising bylaws and succession planning	FIN	Foundation	Update FPF MOU and Bylaws	MOU and bylaws revisions under development.
3.1.1	Continue to develop new and/or enhance popular existing self-guided activities like trail challenge, snowflake search, etc.	ME	MKT	Look for opportunities to incorporate Goosechase for "pop-up" opportunities. Updating Trails Challenge to include "Trail highlights" with a social media video component.	Egg Hunt added to Gooschase app.
3.1.2	Continue to develop virtual walks and tours of facilities and preserve amenities, especially of any spaces that may present accessibility challenges	MKT	OPS, PLN	Work with ME staff to create "trail tour" videos, highlighting different trails and sections monthly.	
3.1.3	Develop wayfinding standards	PLN	DED, MKT, OPS	Continue 2025 Work Planned	Wayfinding standards document 75% complete. Visual elements to be incorporated into branding guidelines
3.1.4	Improve trail information on website and existing recreation apps	PLN	DED, MKT, ME, OPS	Continue 2025 Work Planned	AllTrails listings updated to match Forest Preserves wayfinding/naming. Phase 1 of adding trail information to website nearly complete; more visual imagery to follow.
4.1.1	Conduct building occupation study	PLN	OPS, MKT	Review building conditions, rental history, maintenance needs. Develop chapter as part of the Master Plan process.	Initial internal review begun.
4.1.2	Develop a maintenance plan for each preserve	DED	OPS, NR	NR is developing 3 year NR management schedules for each Preserve. Discussions with respective Ops staff will occur. These management schedules may help with maintenance plan development.	

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4.1.3	Develop site master plans	PLN	DED, OPS, NR, ME	Continue 2025 Work Planned. Begin preserve-specific plans	Broke planning into five phases. Working on the first two, which include background research and compiling existing guidance. Later phases will include site-specific planning.
4.1.4	Establish a benchmark or target for the ratio of developed to natural lands managed by the Forest Preserves	PLN	DED, OPS, NR	Continue 2025 Work Planned.	Examining precedents.
4.2.1	Ensure adequate funding and staffing for current and future lands, infrastructure, and maintenance	FIN	ED, DED	Grant funding for lands and infrastructure continues with OSLAD funding to contribute to sidewalk and parking infrastructure at the Nature Center in 2026 and 2027. A Bike Path grant will cover the majority of cost to resurface a section of the main asphalt trail at LOW.	OSLAD grant awarded to cover most exterior amenities at the Nature Center, including sidewalks and parking expansion.
5.1.1	Develop communication and marketing templates	MKT	Marketing Committee	Re-establish Marketing Committee in Q1. The first project for them to tackle will be finalizing Communication and Marketing Plans for the year.	Marketing Committee volunteers have been sought.
5.1.2	Develop communication plan detailing current and potential audiences, communication methods, key messages, goals, and tracking methods	MKT	Marketing Committee	Launch reorganized committee at the same time of refreshed Sustainability and Employment Engagement committees	
5.1.3	Review and codify branding visual elements, voice, and position	MKT	Marketing Committee	Merge MGP and HLIC Facebook pages with primary CCFP Facebook page	
5.2.1	Analyze audiences and sentiment	MKT	Marketing Committee, PLN	Develop evaluations for all self-guided activities on Goosechase. Develop survey to evaluate visitors experience at the preserves.	
5.2.2	Collaborate with groups serving audiences not well-reflected in current visitation and programming to address barriers to visitation	MKT	ME, PLN	Roll out completed Hoskins archive project and modes of access especially in African-American Community.	
5.2.3	Collaborate with Museum & Education to promote programs and the Forest Preserves within programming	MKT	ME	Continuing to meet with ME staff to develop the marketing plan each quarter.	
5.2.4	Execute campaigns to convey key messaging to target audiences	MKT	Marketing Committee	Work with ME and NR staff to develop educational videos	Video of NR staff recorded for Earth Month (April) posts.
6.1.1	Initiate conversations with the leaseholding farmer to better align farming practices on Forest Preserves' lands with the Climate Commitment	DED	NR, OPS (MF), FIN	Request yield data from tenant farmer.	
6.1.2	Continue to advance practices related to the Golf Course's Audubon Certification	GC	-	Upon yearly review by Audubon International for Golf Course, we will initiate practices to include the suggestions we are provided. Planting/Seeding Milk Weed between #7 and #12 to enhance the monarch butterfly population. Building a berm toward the back of the driving range to save golf balls and planting native prairie grasses in this area for wildlife and habitat.	Built and placed 8 birdhouses, specifically targeting bluebirds, around the golf course. Installed Audubon Certified Golf Course signage along Hole #11 to be visible from the road to preserve users.
6.1.3	Enhance education and exhibits related to sustainability, conservation, and environmentalism	ME	-	Design and implement educator workshops specific to climate change Research and design exhibits for new nature center that align with conservation and sustainability Develop Exhibit Plan Continue Climate Action program series	
6.1.4	Identify known and potential impacts of changing climate conditions on natural areas, operations, programs, and the visitor experience and develop strategies to adapt	DED	OPS, NR, ME, PLN, GC, MKT (VOL)	Reorganize the Sustainability Committee	Sustainability Committee has been reestablished and is beginning to address specific projects related to recycling, education, purchasing, and more.
6.1.5	Establish climate and conservation-related metrics and targets in order to better track and report on progress	DED	OPS, NR, GC, Sustainability Committee	Reorganize the Sustainability Committee	

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7.1.1	Compile current and newly established land acquisition guidelines into a formalized document	DED	PLN	Finalize the draft strategic land acquisition plan.	
7.1.2	Create a process to evaluate land acquisition opportunities	DED	PLN	Continue 2025 Work Planned	
7.1.3	Develop strategies to maximize available funding for land acquisition	FIN	DED, PLN	Develop plan for internal funding targets for land acquisition that includes a source of funding for those targets. Continue to apply for grants for new land acquisition opportunities.	Commissioner, FPF president, and ED met with prospective donor toward land acquisition.
LEGEND: ED-Executive Director; DED-Deputy Executive Director; FIN-Finance; GC-Golf; HR-Human Resources; ME-Museum and Education; MKT-Marketing; OPS-Operations; NR-Natural Resources; VOL-Volunteer					