

The Leaflet

APRIL - MAY 2025

Spring Ephemerals are Arriving!

Whether you're on the North bike trail at Lake of the Woods, Old Miner's Trail at Middle Fork River, Maple Sugar Grove at Homer Lake, or really any healthy woodland, you'll surely see spring has arrived.

Spring ephemerals are the first plants to flower in the forest, taking advantage of the available sunlight before the tree canopy

closes up with new leaves. Our native ground-dwelling bees depend on these nectar sources once they emerge after winter and need to gorge themselves on food. Many of the

resulting seeds contain nutritious fatty-rich structures (elaiosomes) that trick ants into bringing them back to their nest for a snack, only to have a new plant sprout shortly.

The delicate pink Virginia springbeauty can cover the forest floor, each flower only blooming for a few days. Jack-in-the-pulpit looks more like a green tube than a traditional flower.

(continued inside)



Virginia springbeauty



Jack-in-the-pulpit

Spring Ephemerals *continued*

Prairie trillium is hard to miss with its maroon petals and distinctive three leaves. Dutchman's breeches are certainly an oddity with their white flowers resembling pantaloons. Bloodroot, named for its reddish sap, blooms before any of its leaves fully emerge. Virginia bluebells create a knee-high carpet of sweet-smelling blossoms.

Better see them soon before they're gone!



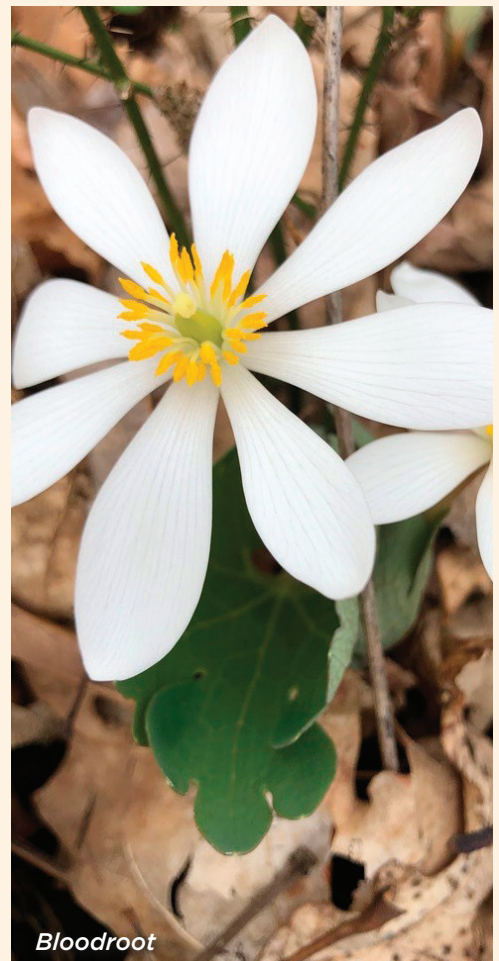
Virginia Bluebells



Dutchman's Breeches



Prairie Trillium



Bloodroot

DISCOVER ADVENTURE AT **SUMMER CAMP!**

Looking for an unforgettable way to keep your child engaged, active, and learning this summer? Our summer camps are the perfect mix of fun, education, and adventure! Kids will explore the great outdoors, dive into history, and make exciting discoveries—all while creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Led by passionate and knowledgeable educators, each camp is designed to spark curiosity and creativity in young minds. Campers will immerse themselves in

nature through guided hikes, thrilling wildlife encounters, and hands-on activities. They'll uncover the secrets of the forest, meet native animals up close, and step back in time to experience life as people from the past. Whether it's interactive storytelling or uncovering hidden treasures of nature, every day offers a new opportunity to inspire a deeper connection to the world around them.

With a variety of camp themes tailored to different age groups, there's something for every budding

explorer. From discovering the wonders of local ecosystems to reenacting history, these camps encourage both learning and play. Beyond the activities, campers also build friendships, confidence, and a love for adventure.

Don't miss out—spaces fill up quickly for these enriching summer experiences. Give your child the gift of discovery and a summer full of outdoor fun. Visit champaignforests.org today to learn more and reserve your spot. Let the adventure begin!

Visit champaignforests.org for details and secure a spot today!



PROGRAMS & EVENTS

See the full program descriptions online at champaignforests.org

April

Saturday, April 12 **FREE**

OUTSIDE IN CHAMPAIGN FORESTS

Sangamon River Forest Preserve, 10-11:30 AM

For more info, email Chelsea at cprahl@ccfpd.org to receive location updates and monthly reminders!

Saturday, April 12 **FREE**

RELICS AND REVELATIONS: CIVIL WAR STORIES

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 1-4 PM

Children must be accompanied by an adult. No registration required.

Saturday, April 19 - Monday, April 28 **FREE**

A BOTANICAL EXCURSION INTO FASHION

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 1-5 PM

Join us on **Friday, April 18 from 5:30-7 PM** to kick off the showcase of this collection! Meet the designer and enjoy some light refreshments.

Saturday, April 19 **FREE**

GARDEN SPEAKER SERIES: HOUSEPLANT CARE AND PROPAGATION

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 2-3:30 PM

No registration required.

Tuesday, April 22 **FREE**

VOLUNTEER EVENT EARTH DAY INVASIVE REMOVAL

*Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve,
Specific location TBD; 4-6 PM*

All ages welcome. All experience levels welcome; instruction provided. Volunteers under 14 years old must be accompanied by an adult. No need to sign up, but please contact Sue (volunteer@ccfpd.org) if you wish to bring a group of more than 5 people.

Friday, April 25 **FREE**

ARBOR DAY - PLANTING FOR SUCCESS!

Salt Fork Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 10 AM

All are welcome! No registration required.

Saturday, April 26 **FREE**

WONDERS OF THE WETLAND WITH DOUG MILLS

Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 10 AM - 12 PM

No registration required. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Saturday, April 26 **FREE**

INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY CELEBRATION

*Middle Fork River Forest Preserve,
Dark Sky Trail, 8 PM*

Join us at 7:30 PM as we unveil our new Dark Sky Trails with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, featuring an observatory, hammock stands, and concrete spaces for telescopes.



Register here for programs

Scan the QR Code or go to champaignforests.org.

Programs may be altered or canceled due to weather.



May

Saturday, May 3 FREE
**MUSEUM DOCENT WORKSHOP/TRAINING
 (FOR BEGINNERS)**

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 2-3:30 PM

This workshop is highly encouraged for beginners and anyone interested in the field of public history. Ages 16 and up. Register by May 1 at ccfpd.org.

Cost	Registration Deadline	Code
FREE	May 1	6791

Friday, May 9 FREE
ARTIFACTS AND HISTORY TRIVIA NIGHT

The Literary, Downtown Champaign, 6:30-8 PM

All ages. No registration required.

Saturday, May 10 FREE
**INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY -
 MIST NETTING DEMO**

Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 8:30-10:30 AM

All ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Saturday, May 10 FREE
**OUTSIDE IN CHAMPAIGN FORESTS -
 ALL ABOUT BIRDS!**

Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 8:30-10:30 AM

All are welcome!

Saturday, May 24 FREE
TAKE ME FISHING

Activity Center, Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, 9-11 AM

Participants 15 and under do not require a fishing license. All fishing is catch-and-release. Adult supervision of children 15 and under is required. All ages.

Thursday, May 29 FREE
WALK WITH A NATURALIST

Buffalo Trace Prairie (E. Parking Lot), Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 6-7 PM

No registration required, Meet at Buffalo Trace Prairie (E. Parking Lot).

Saturday, May 31 FREE
**HISTORICAL GAMES:
 KOREAN AND AMERICAN EDITION**

Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, 2-5 PM

No registration required



EGG HUNT

Through the Forest Preserves



Spring has arrived, and so has the much-anticipated Egg Hunt Through the Forest Preserves! From **March 22 to April 27**, adventurers of all ages are invited to explore the stunning natural landscapes of **Lake of the Woods, River Bend, Middle Fork River, Sangamon River, and Homer Lake**. Along these picturesque trails, **40 vibrantly painted concrete eggs** are cleverly hidden, waiting to be discovered.

This self-guided hunt is the perfect opportunity to immerse yourself in nature while embracing the excitement of the season. To get started, download a checklist at champaignforests.org and begin your

adventure. Whether you're a seasoned egg hunter, a family looking for some spring fun, or simply seeking a serene walk surrounded by the beauty of the preserves, this event has something for everyone.

As you explore, take in the fresh scents, vibrant colors, and lively sounds of spring awakening all around you. Each found egg adds a sense of accomplishment and joy to your journey. Whether you're in it for the thrill of discovery, the peaceful escape, or quality time outdoors, this unique hunt promises to be a delightful experience for all.

Don't wait—get outside, soak in the beauty of spring, and happy hunting!

Thank You

To Our 2024 Donors

The lasting impact of our multi-year donors is denoted by 🌼 Daisy - 5 Year 🌼 Daffodil - 10 Year 🌹 Rose - 15 Year

Three Rivers Society



The Three Rivers Society is a community of donors giving an unrestricted gift of \$1,000 each year to the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation. The financial stability these gifts help to create protects natural spaces, enhances public programs, and ensures continued access to outdoor education and recreation for generations to come.

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