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Spring Time Reveals Plans for Romeoville's Isle a la Cache

Isle a la Cache is a 101-acre preserve and museum located at 501 E. Romeo Road and they have some big plans for 2019. Read on to learn about the additions in the works as well as some of the wildlife that is currently on site.

Seed Savers: The Isle is now an official retailer for Seed Savers Exchange heirloom garden seeds. This is an international initiative to preserve and distribute heirloom (pre-hybrid/GMO) seeds. Heirloom seeds are able to adapt to extreme weather conditions brought on by climate change, including cold, storms, droughts, and floods. There is a belief among many that food systems will have to go back to heirloom seeds. The program is using the past to protect the future.

Amphitheater Garden: One of the major initiatives in the Forest Preserve District this year is awareness of pollinators and Monarch butterflies. As such, the Isle will be converting their amphitheater to a large pollinator/butterfly garden this spring. It will be used as a teaching garden for topics like Monarch butterflies, native landscaping, pollinators (bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and bats), and conservation in general. They hope to have the garden done by June.

The Loghouse: Renovations will continue on their Native American longhouse. One of the marquee school group attractions on the Isle, it has outlived its life expectancy by a number of years. They are working with a representative of the Forest County Potawatomi and White Earth Ojibwe to restore the house and make it sturdier and more water resistant. They will be using indigenous techniques to accomplish this, including burning fires inside the house. The heat dries out the wood and the smoke deters insects. Following the renovation, the Isle hopes to open



the house to the general public more often. The loghouse will be open during their annual Island Rendezvous event, which will be on June 8th this year from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Event Shelter: The area that once housed a maintenance barn will be used for a 150 person outdoor shelter with picnic tables and grills. It will be larger than your typical forest preserve shelter, which is sure to attract groups, and will give the Isle more options on what kind of events they can host. Construction on the shelter is slated to begin this summer

Spring Migration: Migratory birds have arrived at the Isle, including Eastern blue birds, sparrows, black birds, hummingbirds, and osprey. Romeoville is right in the middle of a migration route, so all kinds of birds stopover on the Isle for a break. Sometimes the flock of migrating birds is so large that it shows up on Doppler radar!