

Good morning to all in attendance, and before I get started I'd like to offer my thanks to the folks at Forest Preserves of Cook County that notified our Board Members of this meeting and invited us to share our reflections in this call.

My name is Breanna and I'm here on behalf of the local non-profit ; Out Our Front Door. 2023 was our 8th season leading bike adventures around Chicagoland and the surrounding region to immerse and educate folks in local history and nature. To provide brief context to what this looks like - we have volunteers that support adults, families and youth out on bike routes with camping gear to their destinations, along the way serving as tour-guides with pre-written information on the region, history and flora of the areas we're traveling through.

FPCC have, since the start of our operations, been a hugely core player in helping us achieve our mission of immersing riders in hyper-local destinations that grant access to nature and camping truly out of folks' front doors. In the last 5 years of our operations we've been able to consistently bring folks out to 3 or 4 of the campgrounds annually - oftentimes booking multiple weekends in the summer at your campgrounds.

Of special note is the consistent accessibility provided by cabins at each of the sites. I'd like to share the impact this has had on our families ; we had a youth attend an overnight at camp Dan Beard in 2022, he has a rare developmental disorder and his adventure at this camp was the first time he had stayed overnight away from family. With the support of our volunteers and the accessible facilities at this location, your campground contributed to this milestone for his family & care network.

In the same vein, the ease of access to the shared CLIC camping gear library has allowed us to break down barriers for families that want to camp but don't have the gear to do so. It makes the cycling portion more accessible for our families, as it removes the pressure to load bikes up with camping gear, and takes a lot of the fear of being unprepared out of the picture. In this way, CLIC gear directly facilitates our ability to enact our mission at CC campgrounds.

I'd like to end with a recommendation to change *nothing* about your hiring and vetting process for rangers, hosts and other campground staff. Without comparison, CC camping offers the most flexible, collaborative, gracious and responsive staff to work with for programs and bookings. Across sites and even with seasonal turnover, I am connected with folks that support our mission and go beyond expectation to make our bookings and events stress free.

I speak for the full board when I share that our organization is grateful to have the support of Cook County campgrounds, the accessibility of your facilities and support of your staff are unparalleled in our region.

Breanna Bertacchi

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Out Our Front Door - Board President