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**DATE:** August 15, 2024

**MEMO TO:** Nels Leutwiler, Chair  
Preservation Foundation Board

**FROM:** Alyssa Firkus  
Director of Education

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend approval of a \$2,000 grant to support *Photography in the Forest Preserves* program series through 2025.

**FINANCIAL DATA:** As of March 31, 2024, the Foundation's unrestricted funding total was \$320,611.95. Grants paid and payable from the unrestricted funds as of June 30, 2024, include:

Year	Amount
2024 (paid)	\$ 94,468
2025	\$ 84,268
2026	\$ 53,268
<b>Total Paid and Payable</b>	<b>\$ 232,004</b>

The requested funds would be disbursed in two payments: \$400 in 2024 and \$1,600 in 2025.

**BACKGROUND:**

In partnership with the Communications & Design team, the Education Department seeks the Foundation's support to relaunch the *Photography in the Forest Preserves* series. This quarterly outdoor workshop is geared toward beginning and intermediate amateur photographers and combines photography with natural history.

Scott McNeill has been a Forest Preserves volunteer photographer since spring 2023. He is a member of the North Shore Camera Club and has produced several award-winning images of insects and flowers. Scott has a wide range of photography skills, from wide landscapes to action shots of wildlife in motion to macros (close-up images). His crystal-clear macros of snowflakes were featured in the award-winning winter 2023 issue of Horizons. Soon after that, he taught a related workshop on snowflake photography techniques for the Forest Preserves in February 2024.

A \$2,000 grant will fund the photographer's speaking fee for five programs between October 2024 and December 2025. The Foundation's support provides an opportunity to pilot a full series and build an audience for the program before determining if it should be included in the department's budget. The first program will be on October 12 at Ryerson Conservation Area and will focus on techniques to photograph fall colors along with the plant processes that create these beautiful autumn hues.

**SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS:** As a sponsor of the Photography in the Forest Preserves series, the Foundation will be mentioned in the program description and in the program's introduction as a sponsor.



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**REVIEW BY OTHERS:** Executive Director of the Preservation Foundation, Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships, Director of Administration, Chief Operations Officer, and Forest Preserves Executive Director

**PRESERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Roll Call Vote: Ayes: \_\_\_\_\_ Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

Voice Vote Majority Ayes: \_\_\_\_\_ Nays: \_\_\_\_\_