

January 12, 2006

## **MEMORANDUM**

From: Sally Prunty, Planning Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Subject: Planning Activity Report

### **Master Plan**

Comments from staff and the consultants were incorporated into the Master Plan. On January 11<sup>th</sup>, Jan Plotner and I met with the consultants to go over the semifinal version. We agreed it was very close to completion, and that we would be able to present the final draft text to the Board of Commissioners at the February Board Meeting. The graphic coordination of the document will take at least another month.

### **Middle Fork Campground**

We will be meeting with John Borgers, engineer with Sodemann and Associates, sometime later this month at Middle Fork Preserve to finalize the scope of the campground project.

### **Golf Course Entrance**

John Cooper at County Highways has provided a cost estimate for the culvert project. They will remove and replace the culvert at the golf course entrance at no cost to us. They will extend the culvert 40 feet, as per our specifications, and backfill with road pack and topsoil at an estimated cost of \$1,700, with a not-to-exceed cost of \$2,000, unless there is a change in the scope of the project. They will complete this work prior to March.

They have also stated that the portion of the work having to do with the road itself should take no more than half a day. So, the golf course entrance will not be compromised for very long.

### **Citizens Advisory Committee**

- ❖ The Outreach Subcommittee met to discuss their proposal to develop a series of presentations about the Forest Preserve District. One of the ideas they had was to develop themes such as “The Forest Preserve District Throughout the Seasons.”
- ❖ The Floraculture Subcommittee is looking into developing a lining-out area for raising forbs and wildflowers native to Champaign County.
- ❖ The CAC would like to have a presence at the River Bend Grand Opening.
- ❖ They have also suggested that they look at the CAC Bylaws to determine whether or not they should be updated.

January 9, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Bryan Stevens, Construction Department

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Construction Department Activity Report

Over the past month, the Construction Department has:

- completed sandblasting and painting of trailhead signs for Homer Lake and started constructing post and frames for signs;
- installed new entrance sign to River Bend; and
- performed maintenance on shop equipment,

January 4, 2006

## **MEMORANDUM**

From: Daniel J. Olson, Director of Natural Resources

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Natural Resources Activity Report

### **General**

- We say thank you to Kim Cambron for her dedication and contributions to the District and the Natural Resources Dept. She will officially be leaving us on Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>. We wish her well in her future endeavors.
- On Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> the natural resources staff held a retreat to discuss future projects and streamlining of the department.
- Staff continued to do some seed collection.
- We still continue to hand cut exotics at Collins Pond that were not able to be cut with the forestry mowers. Thanks to Brian and Roy for their continued help on this project.
- We took delivery of the enclosed trailer that was on capital equipment list for 2005. It has already seen heavy use.
- We have spent many days on equipment maintenance and some larger repairs.
- We have completed staff evaluations for 2005.
- Staff has spent several days organizing and cleaning offices and shop space.
- We have been updating prices and quotes on the 2006 capital equipment purchases.

### **Meetings**

- Meetings for the East Central Master Naturalist program continue.
- Dan has met with Derek Liebert on a couple of occasions to discuss the upcoming presentation at the IPRA/IAPD conference.
- As discussed at the last Board Meeting, Dan attended the Salt Fork River TMDL meeting held in Royal. TMDL is short for Total Maximum Daily Load. It determines the greatest amount of a given pollutant that a water body can receive without violating water quality standards and designated uses. Some of the Phase 1 results were discussed by the IEPA and Tetra Tech.

January 10, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Larry Beckett, Garden Supervisor

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Mabery Gelvin Botanical Gardens Activity Report

Over the past month, botanical garden staff:

- conducted routine maintenance on the garden's greenhouses and greenhouse plants;
- completed and turned in all the plant orders for the 2006 season;
- completed all of the floral designs for the 2006 season;
- constructed over 200 temporary plant identification signs for selected perennial beds in the Botanical Garden.

January 6, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Cheryl Kennedy, Museum Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Early American Museum Activity Report

**December Comparisons and Year-End Totals**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
General visitation	390	193
<i>Year-end total</i>	<i>9,859</i>	<i>7,593</i>
School children	391	200
<i>Year-end total</i>	<i>3,701</i>	<i>3,815</i>
<i>Outreach kits year end total</i>	<i>550</i>	<i>500</i>
<i>Year-end total volunteer hours</i>	<i>2,126</i>	<i>2,494</i>
Gift Shop sales	\$695.08	\$894.47
<i>Year-end totals</i>	<i>\$14,191.78</i>	<i>\$11,734.65</i>
<i>Donation box year-end total</i>	<i>\$3,188</i>	<i>\$3,032</i>
<i>Friends year-end total</i>	<i>\$6,666</i>	<i>\$5,100</i>

Gift shop sales were down approximately \$2,500. The deficit in May was a little over \$1,000 and from a quick review, it is clear that this loss of revenue came from reduced visits to the gift shop by our school classes. The next big difference was in July. Visitation was down 300 that month and gift shop sales down over \$800. Total visitation was down 2,000 this year contrasted with the consistent number of 9-10,000 in years past. We hope the changes discussed in our promotions meetings will bring this number back up in 2006.

Attendance percentages

Champaign County	56%
Other Illinois counties	28%
Other states	13%
Other countries	3%

We had visitors from 46 of 50 states and 6 of 7 continents.

**Education**

Schools served: Lincoln Trail and First School of Mahomet; Thomas Paine and Wiley of Urbana; Holy Cross, Champaign; Ludlow Grade School and Tri-Valley Elementary, Downs. Pathways of Rantoul used the Quilt and the Illiniwek outreach kits.

### **Public Programs**

We had approximately 150 people for *To Grandmother's House We Go*. Staff used the recreation theme of the Pastimes exhibit for the take-home items this year. Children could create their own books, write stories, and make pin wheels, kites and checker sets with washers. Popular storyteller Dan Keding engaged the audience in lively stories and songs.

### **Hensley Town Hall**

The roofing project is complete and it looks good. The old shingles were removed, plywood was added to enclose the roof, and it was finished with interlocking shingles. The men worked around fog, rain and snow to get the job done. They will return in warm weather to finish trimming the edges as it was too cold to do that now.

### **Accreditation**

We received our accreditation paperwork in December. In addition to the museum profile, following are the sections we must address:

- Public Trust and Accountability
- Mission, Planning and Assessing Achievement
- Leadership and Organizational Structure
- Collections Stewardship
- Education and Interpretation
- Financial Stability
- Facilities and Risk Management

### **Looking for Lincoln**

We have received the donation for two Lincoln panels – one to be placed on the outside of the building at the front door and the other at the stairwell. The Lincoln sites committee has developed a nice list of times and places related to Lincoln and Champaign County, and I have been talking to a number of groups and individuals about the potential of this project through their involvement, including the News-Gazette.

### **African American History Committee**

We are pleased to report that we were contacted by a few members of the African American community about reestablishing our history committee. At the first meeting, we outlined a work plan for 2006 that includes publishing and distributing two newsletters, sites for the Legacy exhibit, a collaborative with the Douglass Branch Library, help organizing support for our June 18<sup>th</sup> event, and help raising funds to compile the teacher's guide to local African American history, developed by one of our teaching "fellows" last summer.

January 10, 2006

## **MEMORANDUM**

From: Wendy Israel, Environmental Education Coordinator

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Environmental and Horticulture Education Activity Report

### **2005 Program Summary**

In the past year 4,270 people were reached through environmental and horticulture education programs. In 2004, the department served 3,568. The increase in the number of people can be attributed to the addition of horticulture programs, new children's programs such as Winter Wonders and Growing Up Wild as well as an increase in scout programs. Note that spring school program numbers decreased in 2005 due to the environmental education staff teaching horticulture programs and several large scout programs. Note also that fall school program numbers increased in 2005 due in part to the Prairie Adventures program. A complete summary of 2005 programs is included at the end of this report.

In addition to program participants, 514 people visited the Environmental Education Center in 2005. This number is in addition to 574 students that visited the center during school field trips.

### **School and Public Programs**

Winter Wonders was held at Lake of the Woods on Dec. 22 with 20 children in attendance. Beginning in January, the staff will present Naturalist in the Classroom and Junior Winter Bird Feeding Challenge programs.

The department has completed a public program schedule through August 2006 for both environmental and horticulture education programs. Pam Leiter created a flyer advertising environmental, horticulture and historical education public programs from February through April. Andee Chestnut is coordinating the flyer mailing and distribution. A copy is attached.

### **Education Center**

The Fox Snake housed at the Education Center had an abscess removed. The snake will continue to be on display at the center during his recovery, but will not be used for programs.

The Education Center will continue to operate on winter hours, Monday through Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm, until April, when the center will also be open each Saturday through the end of October.

### **General**

Planning continues for the ENTICE workshop on Feb. 18. The registration deadline is Feb. 10.

Jennie Bunde presented a Project WILD and Project Learning Tree workshop with Sarah Livesay at Douglas Hart Nature Center. Jennie is certified as a Project Learning Tree facilitator and is working toward becoming a Project WILD facilitator.

# Environmental and Horticulture Education Program Summary 2002-2005

## School Programs Summary

<b>Environmental Education School Programs Attendance</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>
Spring	1,076	1,992	1,624	1,842
Summer*	20	218	0	0
Fall	1,845	1,040	1,508	1,906
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,941</b>	<b>3,250</b>	<b>3,132</b>	<b>3,748</b>

\*Excludes Eco-Adventures

<b>Horticulture Education School Programs Attendance</b>	<b>2005**</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>
Horticulture Education Spring	202	345	NA	0
Horticulture Education Fall	329	0	NA	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>42</b>

\*\*Horticulture Education moved under supervision of Environmental Education Department.

## Public Programs Summary

<b>Environmental Education Public Program Attendance</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>
Eco-Adventures & Children's Programs <sup>+</sup>	214	171	145	138
Scout Programs	447	70	20	39
Family and Adult Programs	84	77	118	121
	<b>745</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>298</b>

<sup>+</sup>Growing Up Wild and Winter Wonders

<b>Horticulture Education Public Program Participation</b>	<b>2005**</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>
Down and Dirty Garden Camp	7	13	NA	42
Family Programs	46	0	NA	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>127</b>

\*\*Horticulture Education moved under supervision of Environmental Education Department.

## Education Center Visitor Summary<sup>++</sup>

	<b>Weekdays</b>	<b>Saturdays</b>	<b>Total</b>
January – May (Open 0 Saturdays)	49	0	49
June – August (Open 13 Saturdays)	111	118	229
September-December (Open 4 Saturdays)	182	54	236
<b>Total</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>514</b>

<sup>++</sup>Excludes field trip visitors

January 10, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Andee Chestnut, Director of Public Information

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Public Information Activity Report

**Christmas Tree Recycling**

The District received a great amount of coverage this year on our Christmas tree recycling service. In addition to the News-Gazette coverage, both WICD TV and WCIA TV did stories, as well as WDWS and WHMS radio stations.

**Website**

A revamped website is in the works. I have seen the first design, and am quite pleased overall. The designer is reworking some areas, and I am anxious to see the second version. He is also incorporating user-friendly programs, such as a survey instrument, a search program and a photo display program, which will make our site much more usable. He works for another local government so he is well aware of financial concerns, and the items he is incorporating are all priced very reasonably.

**Promotions**

At this writing, finishing touches are being placed on the proposed advertising/marketing plan. Staff representing the revenue-producing facilities providing great insight, and I am working to incorporate as many of their suggestions as possible.

January 10, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Kristina Hubert, Volunteer Coordinator

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Volunteer Activity Report

- I attended the Council for Volunteerism (CFV) meeting. Unfortunately there is some question as to whether or not this organization will remain active in the Champaign-Urbana community; therefore the future of the CFV is uncertain.
- District volunteer needs continue to be updated on the *CUvolunteer.org* website.
- The Lincoln's Challenge program has proposed work dates for spring 2006, once again at the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve.
- Several inquiries have been made regarding the topic of allowing volunteers to use power equipment for District work. Conversations with Mary Beck; Garret Prince, the District's PDRMA representative; and department heads have proven insightful. The final decision on allowing this activity, however, remains undetermined.

January 12, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Jan Plotner, Interim Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Headquarters Activity Report

- ❖ Staff has been working on arrangements pertaining to the Executive Director Search.
- ❖ In preparation for the 2006 season, Mary is working on updating orientation information, applications and employment advertisements.
- ❖ Vickie is in the process of closing the books for the year, including the printing and distribution of W-2 forms.
- ❖ Tonya has been updating various brochures for the 2006 year.
- ❖ Thirteen staff members representing nearly every department participated in a recent Claims Reporting Workshop sponsored by PDRMA.

January 10, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Dave Torrens, Director of Golf

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Hartwell C. Howard Lake of the Woods Golf Course Maintenance Activity Report

- Winter maintenance on the golf cars is more than halfway completed.
- All tee signs, ball washers and trash cans have been painted.
- Requests for equipment bids were be mailed January 9, 2006, following the Facilities Committee meeting. Bid opening is scheduled for January 27, 2006.
- Staff will attend the Illinois Department of Agriculture Pesticide training February 16-17 in Urbana.
- Winter maintenance continues.

January 10, 2006

## MEMORANDUM

From: Dave Huber, Golf Professional/Manager

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Hartwell C. Howard Golf Course Pro Shop Activity Report

### Operations

The bar graphs for December don't represent the play or revenue very well, so I am including the actual numbers. If you remember, it snowed on December 1<sup>st</sup>, and we had no play for the month.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	5 Year Avg
YTD18 Hole	38,007	36,721	38,045	36,119	34,841	36,747
YTD Par 3	10,039	8,306	8,095	7,660	6,370	8,094
Play Total	<b>48,046</b>	<b>45,027</b>	<b>46,140</b>	<b>43,779</b>	<b>41,211</b>	<b>44,841</b>
December Play	386	0	7	31	0	85

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	5 Year Avg
YTD \$	\$875,584	\$852,719	\$896,616	\$884,610	\$895,294	\$880,964.64
December	\$14,243	\$14,918	\$6,696	\$7,297	\$10,209	\$10,672.73

### Tournaments & Outings

No tournament or outing activity on the golf course, but we were **open** for play Saturday and Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>! I will give you the revenue highlights next month.

### Other Activities

- I have replaced the server and moved computers around on our pro shop network so we should be in good shape with computers for 2006 at least.
- We are working to correct and fill in addresses in our database to help in marketing efforts.
- Staff completed year-end inventory and prepared reports for the upcoming audit.

January 11, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Thomas M. Pike, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve / River Bend Forest Preserve Activity Report

**Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve**

- Crews began going over the mowers to determine repair and maintenance needs.
- Crews finished rebuilding the boat dock at the main boat ramp at Lake of the Woods. When the weather gets better, we will reinstall it.
- Crews finished installing the new 6" x 6" posts throughout Lake of the Woods.
- Staff completed ongoing janitorial work at all rental building and public restrooms.
- Staff continued with routine scheduled maintenance and repairs on various District vehicles and other equipment.

**River Bend Forest Preserve**

- Due to the snowfall we had, River Bend has been closed for now.

January 11, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Don Humphrey, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Middle Fork River Forest Preserve Activity Report

- Staff has been sanding and repainting trash barrels for the upcoming year.
- Lincoln's Challenge has sent us their spring schedule for volunteer hours. The cadets are scheduled beginning in March and working through mid May.
- The new Hustler mower has arrived, we have worked on getting the mower and files prepared for the upcoming season.
- Don and Matt are working on preparing a bid packet to be sent out for the new equipment purchases.
- Matt is working on a new small engine room at the maintenance shop to hold weed eaters, chainsaws, and power pruners. This room will be used for maintenance and repair, keeping the equipment out of the elements during the winter.
- New files have been made for the upcoming season with 2005 files put in storage.
- Reservations have already been taken for the upcoming camping season, with about 75 reservations recorded.
- The remainder of the month has been spent continuing with routine operations in the user areas, and minor equipment and facility maintenance and repairs.

January 9, 2006

## MEMORANDUM

From: Brian Taylor, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Homer Lake Forest Preserve Activity Report

- Staff assisted the Natural Resources Department with exotics removal at Collins Pond. The brush grapple has been invaluable during this process.
- Staff constructed picnic tables to replace the old wood style tables that have been in use for at least 30 years. For the past eight years we have purchased five metal frame picnic tables per year in an effort to replace tables that have reached the end of their service life. This process has worked very well in terms of the budget and the winter maintenance schedule; and as the new tables are put into use at different times, they shouldn't need to be replaced all at the same time in the future. The new tables are much easier for park visitors to move, and tables for people with special needs have also been constructed (see picture).
- Employee evaluations were completed.
- Staff began research on capital equipment to be purchased in the near future. We test drove a Kubota utility vehicle and found it to be very useful, but we have several other brands to look at before making a decision (see picture).

