

January 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Sally Prunty, Planning Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Planning Activity Report

Middle Fork Well

The contractor will begin work the week of January 15th or 22nd, weather permitting. He cannot work if the temperature is below freezing. We expect the project to take approximately two weeks – again, weather permitting.

Middle Fork Land Acquisition

We met with Andy Brorsen, appraiser for the Middle Fork acquisition, and expect to have an appraisal in hand by late January or early February.

Vault Toilets for Middle Fork Preserve

Staff is currently putting together bid documents for the vault toilets.

Golf Course Water Line

Clark Plumbing and Heating has completed the installation of the water line at the golf course for the quoted price of \$9,685.

Golf Course Clubhouse Landscaping

Elevations have been shot, and the landscape design concept for the clubhouse north entrance has begun.

January 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Bryan Stevens, Construction Manager

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Construction Department Activity Report

Miscellaneous

The Construction Department worked on the following over the past month:

- continued work on the Lake of the Woods peninsula restrooms;
- continued, with the assistance of the Operations Department, demolition of the Botanical Garden south greenhouse; and
- performed routine maintenance on shop equipment.

Early American Museum Annex Project

The contract for the washroom and conference room remodeling was awarded to Doug Moore Construction. Construction has started and will take approximately 60 days to complete.

January 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Daniel Olson, Director of Natural Resources

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Natural Resources Activity Report

General

- Unfortunately this month we say goodbye to Jeremy Shafer. Jeremy has been instrumental in several large projects over the past two years, including River Bend and some of our larger restorations. We would like to thank Jeremy for his time and talent here at the District. He will certainly be missed.
- Staff has spent a significant portion of time removing and treating bush honeysuckle and autumn olive at Homer Lake and Lake of the Woods. Some of this has been along trails, which has improved trail use. We were very happy to have Kim DeLong complete some Master Naturalist volunteer hours helping us do this work.
- Hidden Acres Nursery completed the planting project on Homer Lake's west wildlife area. A total of 41 trees were planted. Staff, along with a community service volunteer, spent numerous hours on tree care and protection.
- We have completed and presented the Natural Resources Large Project Schedule to staff supervisors.
- We are working with Rantoul Ducks Unlimited and several Rantoul scout leaders on a large wood duck nest box project. Several boxes have already been built, and a date has been set for a large workday.
- Dan has been working with Kim Horbas on a trail steward training to be held on Jan. 20th.
- Natural Resources staff has been working in the Botanical Gardens to help remove storm damaged and dead trees. We have also been helping to remove hazard trees District-wide.
- Dan has been working on capital equipment purchases including the bid process for the track loader unit.
- The Master Naturalist Program is in full swing for the new year. Please see the 2006 executive summary of the program in this packet.

Natural Resources Activity Report
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- I met with, and received a year-end report from, UI researcher Courtney McCusker on the bird and honeysuckle research she has been doing at Homer Lake.
- Staff has tried out a few different models of skidsteer in preparation for the bid process.
- We have been working with Don Koerberlein to topographic map the Homer Lake wetland area. In addition, we have spent some time getting informational signs and flyers out to the public about the wetland work.
- Announcement has gone out about our new Natural Resources Technician position. The closing date has been set at Feb. 2, 2007. Likewise, we have started to work on the announcement for the Assistant Director of Natural Resources position that was vacated by Jeremy.
- Equipment repair and building maintenance continues.
- I have been working with some writers from The Nature Conservancy of Illinois. This summer they will showcase Patton Woods in a “50 Years and 50 Places Saved” article.

Meetings

- Dan has met with Tom Pike, Sally Prunty and Executive Director Pagac to discuss a possible location for an off-leash area.
- Meetings have been held with Botanical Garden staff about upcoming planning and projects.
- Dan met with Phil Hult about upcoming Buffalo Trace plantings and potential signs for the newly-named area.
- The Salt Fork River Steering Committee is nearing completion of the Salt Fork River Watershed Plan. I will present information on the first draft of the plan in future meetings.

January 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Larry Beckett, Botanical Garden Supervisor

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden Activity Report

- Larry made arrangements with Ameren IP to relocate the gas meter for the greenhouse, to accommodate only the north greenhouse.
- Larry has met with Bryan Stevens and the Construction Department staff on the order of removal of the south greenhouse.
- We have moved all equipment, benches, etc., away from the walls of the north greenhouse for easier removal of the greenhouse skirting.
- We have started turning in plant orders for this growing season and designing a renovation project for a new perennial entry bed. This bed is located at the garden entrance near the restrooms. It will display native plant material in an ornamental setting.
- Larry has been meeting with the horticulture education staff involving ideas and things we can do to make summer education for youth more exciting and fun.
- Larry has been working with the Parkland Radio staff, and they have donated their time and equipment to record the messages that will be placed within the Eco-Box Self Guided Audio Tour System. This machine will be placed within the Miriam Davies Enabling Garden so visitors will be able to obtain a better understanding of how enabling gardens are used and why the Champaign County Forest Preserve District built this enabling garden.

January 7, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Cheryl Kennedy, Museum Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Early American Museum Activity Report

Comparisons	2005	2006
<i>December Visitation</i>	193	388
<i>Year's Total</i>	7,593	7,578*

**Champaign County residents represent 55% of the 2006 total*

<i>Schoolchildren Year's Total</i>		
<i>Onsite</i>	3,815	3,390
<i>Outreach</i>	500	500
<i>Year's Total Volunteer Hours</i>	2,494	2,492
<i>December Museum Store</i>	\$894.47	\$1,324.97
<i>Year's Total</i>	\$11,734.65	\$13,059.62
<i>Donation Box Year's Total</i>	\$3,032	\$3,439
<i>Friends</i>	\$5,100	\$5,545

Education

Schools served in December: Holy Cross, Robeson, Thomas Paine, Wiley, Tri-Valley/Downs

Receptionist Retires

Jane Collins, receptionist at the museum since the mid-80s, is retiring this year. Jane has been an excellent representative for the District as she met and assisted all who came to visit the museum - or stopped to ask questions or directions to other activities throughout the preserve. Aside from the year she took off to take care of her mother, Jane has been an integral part of our operation the past 20-plus years. She loved meeting and talking to the people who visited, and we loved to tease her as she told us each week that she thought she had the best visitors ever that weekend. Jane will be 78 this year and says she has been working 55 of those years. She is very excited about the Christmas present her granddaughter gave her this year - a trip to Washington DC this June. We have scheduled a reception for Jane for Sunday, January 21st from 2-4 p.m. and hope all will come to thank her and wish her the best in her retirement.

Illinois Association of Museums Grant

We received word that we were awarded a grant from the Illinois Association of Museums in the amount of \$363 to purchase gold DVDs for the transfer of our WWII oral history tapes. We have approximately 300 tapes, originally collected by the News-Gazette for their special report on D-Day and V-J Day. Bob Espeseth has begun expanding on this collection of tapes with new oral histories as his time allows.

Public Programs

Our final programs of the year were To Grandmother's House We Go, with storyteller Dan Keding, and an advertised night to shop in the museum store. To Grandmother's House drew 90 people, and we had 50 come shop in the store with sales of approximately \$400.

January 4, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Wendy Israel, Environmental Education Coordinator

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Environmental and Horticulture Education Activity Report

2006 Environmental and Horticulture Education Summary

In the past year, 4,774 people were reached through Environmental and Horticulture Education programs compared with 4,270 in 2005. Overall program numbers increased in 2006, though some individual program areas (i.e. fall school programs, Eco-Adventures and scout programs) decreased. A complete summary of 2006 programs is included at the end of this report.

In 2006, 1,040 people visited the Environmental Education Center compared with 514 in 2005. Of the 1,040 visitors, 698 were adults and 342 were children. In addition to these visitors, 601 students visited the Education Center while on a field trip to Homer Lake compared with 574 students in 2005.

The increase in Education Center visitation is due in part to the center's new hours. Beginning in April 2006, the center was open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 5:00pm, as well as Saturdays from 10:00am to 4:00pm from April to October. Public hikes were offered at 10:30am and 1:30pm. In 2005, the center was open on Saturdays from only from June 4 to August 27. Weekday hours remained the same. In 2007, the hours will remain the same; however, public hikes will be offered only once per day at 1:00pm.

Additional department accomplishments in 2006 include:

- Developed self-guided garden map with University of Illinois graphic design professor
- Trained eight volunteers to regularly assist with programs and to staff center on Saturdays
- Completed 2007 public program schedule by December 2006
- Received Audubon Mini-Grant (\$100) for Children's Garden tools and gloves
- Received Audubon Mini-Grant (\$100) and National Audubon Grant (\$500) to support the 2006-07 Junior Winter Bird Feeding Challenge program
- Received C2000 Grant (\$7,890) to fund 2007 educator workshop, *Making Good Choices: Cross-Curricular Teaching of the Environmental and History in Champaign County*.

Environmental and Horticulture Education Program Summary 2002-2006

School Programs Summary

Environmental Education School Programs Attendance	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Spring	1,590	1,076	1,992	1,624	1,842
Summer*	112	20	218	0	0
Fall	1,752	1,845	1,040	1,508	1,906
Total	3,454	2,941	3,250	3,132	3,748

*Excludes Eco-Adventures

Horticulture Education School Programs Attendance	2006	**2005	2004	2003	2002
Horticulture Education Spring	251	202	345	NA	0
Horticulture Education Fall	540	329	0	NA	42
Total	791	531	345	NA	42

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

Public Programs Summary

Environmental Education Public Program Attendance	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Eco-Adventures & Children's Programs ⁺	193	214	171	145	138
Scout Programs	25	447	70	20	39
Family and Adult Programs	196	84	77	118	121
Total	414	745	318	283	298

⁺Growing Up Wild, Winter Wonders and Spring Break Day Camp

Horticulture Education Public Program Participation	2006	**2005	2004	2003	2002
Down and Dirty Garden Camp	10	7	13	NA	42
Family and Adult Programs	105	46	0	NA	85
Total	115	53	13	NA	127

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

Education Center Visitor Summary⁺⁺

	2006	2005
Weekdays	677	342
Saturdays	363	172
Total	1,040	514

2006 Visitation by Season	Weekdays	Saturdays	Total
Jan-March (0 Saturdays)	164	0	164
April-Oct (31 Saturdays)	440	363	803
Nov-Dec (0 Saturdays)	73	0	73
Total	677	363	1,040

⁺⁺Excludes field trip visitors

January 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Andee Chestnut, Public Information Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Public Information Activity Report

Promotions & Publications

Now that the program brochure has gone out, focus has turned to revision of the preserve maps, specifically the Homer Lake map. Public service announcements have gone out, or are scheduled to go out, for the January/February programs that include:

- Winter Wonders children's program on January 12th and January 15th
- Growing and Caring for Houseplants on January 18th
- Training for the Trail Stewardship Program on January 20th
- Jane Collins' retirement reception on January 21st
- Create Your Own Terrarium (Kids' Garden Club) on January 27th
- Owl Prowl on February 6th
- Dino-Might (Growing Up Wild Preschool Program) on February 12th and February 17th

Thanks to a seasonal employee, all programs for 2007 have been entered into community calendar websites managed by the News-Gazette, the Pantagraph, WCIA TV, WICD TV, WAND TV, WRSP TV, and the Convention & Visitors Bureau, along with several tourism sites. This is a very time-consuming task, and the help in completing it is very much appreciated.

Media Coverage

Our Christmas tree recycling service received quite a bit of coverage this year. Executive Director Pagac was interviewed about it on the WCIA Morning Show; the News-Gazette and the Citizen covered it several times; and I did an interview with WDWS/WHMS radio stations. In other areas, Kirby Pringle of the News-Gazette wrote a column in tribute to Don Humphrey, which captured him quite well, I believe. Most recently, Dan Olson and I talked to Rob Kanter from WILL radio, who did his weekly broadcast Thursday, January 11th about River Bend Forest Preserve.

January 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Kim Horbas, Volunteer Coordinator

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Volunteer Activity Report

- Preparation for the Trail Stewardship Orientation is in full swing. To date, 15 individuals have registered. The Volunteer Department is working in conjunction with Dan Olson and the Natural Resource Department to facilitate the training program. We are also working with federal and state agencies that have this type of program in place for details and strategy plans.
- We were recently contacted by the UI Education Department, inquiring about opportunities within our Environmental Education Department. We are looking to develop a partnership beginning this March for ongoing projects and volunteer programs.
- Community service volunteers are completing miscellaneous tasks at Homer Lake and Lake of the Woods.
- CCFPD received a donation of organizer boxes from Hobbico through United Way. They will be forwarded to the Environmental Education Department for supplies.

January 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Jan Plotner, Deputy Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Administration Activity Report

- Staff has been working on the changeover of health insurance and the addition of the flex plan to the full-time employee benefits.
- The Champaign County Chamber is looking at implementing an energy co-op to combat the rising electric costs; we will be attending a meeting at the chamber offices to learn more about this.
- Staff has been working on changes to the Rules and Regulations Ordinance, which should be discussed at the January and/or February Board Meetings.
- With the end of the fiscal/calendar year, we are now in the beginning of the audit season for staff.
- A staff training session was presented by Dr. Richard Clark, Assistant Dean for Professional Development at the University of Illinois, regarding generational differences in the workplace. Those attending agreed it provided some great insight into the various age groups and would be helpful in workplace interactions.

January 9, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Dave Torrens, Director of Golf

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Lake of the Woods Golf Course Maintenance Activity Report

- Winter maintenance on the golf cars is complete.
- All tee signs, ball washers and trash cans have been painted.
- Staff will attend the Illinois Department of Agriculture Pesticide Training February 26-27 in Urbana.
- Clark Plumbing and Heating installed new water service to the pro shop and clubhouse. This replaced an old water line which had required many repairs.
- Winter maintenance continues.

January 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Dave Huber, Golf Professional/Manager

To: Board of Commissioners

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

Operations

I have included the actual numbers for the last five years because the graphs do not represent the data as well for December. As you can see it was a good month, bringing us almost back to the five-year average and about 15K behind last year.

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	5 Year Avg.
YTD \$	\$852,719	\$896,616	\$884,610	\$895,294	\$880,679	\$881,983.57
December	\$14,918	\$6,696	\$7,297	\$10,209	\$12,463	\$10,316.70

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	5 Year Avg.
YTD 18 Hole	36,721	38,045	36,119	34,841	33,242	35,794
YTD Par 3	8,306	8,095	7,660	6,370	6,283	7,343
Play Total	45,027	46,140	43,779	41,211	39,525	43,136
December Play	1,033	1,292	890	1,230	1,247	1,138

Tournaments & Outings

There were no tournaments or outing activity on the golf course, but we were **open** for play nine days this December compared to zero days last December.

Other Activities

- We are working on our point-of-sale database as much as possible to help facilitate 2007 marketing.
- I am working with Ric Rose to coordinate improvements to our golf course web page.
- We have completed year-end inventory and are producing reports requested for the 2006 audit. Our ending inventory value was very close to last year's.
- Chris Edmondson, Mark Tate and I will be attending the PGA merchandise show January 22nd-29th.

January 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Thomas M. Pike, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

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

Staff did the following over the past month:

- installed new 10-pound ABC fire extinguishers in Lake of the Woods Pavilion rental area, Elks Lake Pavilion rental area, Rotary Hill Kitchen area, Sycamore Hollow rental area and Riverview rental area;
- assisted the Construction Department on the disassemble of the south greenhouse;
- assisted the Natural Resources Department with the cutting down of a tree in the Rayburn-Parnell area;
- started the rebuilding of the boat dock by the ramp on the peninsula;
- continued winter repair of mowers and tractors;
- completed ongoing janitorial work at rental buildings and public restrooms; and
- continued with routine scheduled maintenance and repairs on various District vehicles and other equipment.

January 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Matthew Kuntz, Acting Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Middle Fork River Forest Preserve Activity Report

- Planning has continued for the year as far as capital equipment and capital projects.
- We met with the Facilities Committee concerning the preserve's pit toilet situation. Topics discussed were pricing, locations of new facilities, and different models available. Tom Pike, Brian Taylor, Sally Prunty, Jerry Pagac and I were present.
- We are getting ready to complete yearly servicing on all tractors, including finish mowers and three point attachments.
- As of January 2nd of this year, reservations are being accepted for the campground. We have had a steady amount of reservations made.
- Thanks to Lake of the Woods Operations for hosting the holiday luncheon.
- Middle Fork would like to thank Jeremy Shafer for all of the hard work he has done at the forest preserve. He is a valued employee who will be missed, and we wish him luck for the future.
- We were all very sad to lose Don Humphrey. He was a true friend and mentor who always went out of his way to work for the people of Champaign County and beyond. He will be missed.

January 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

From: Brian Taylor, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Homer Lake Forest Preserve Activity Report

- We assisted the Natural Resources Department with staking and mulching of several trees planted by Hidden Acres Nursery. This grove of trees made an immediate improvement to the restoration area on the west side of the lake.
- We were pleased with our first experience with selling equipment on eBay and we were glad to finally get eBay items loaded up and out of the way. The Hustler mower didn't sell, but we plan to try again in the spring when the market should be better for mower sales.
- Staff continues to cut exotics and assist Natural Resources in this effort. This project has greatly changed the appearance of the preserve, and it has provided many opportunities to educate visitors about exotics. Comments from the public have been very positive.