

January 6, 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: Sally Prunty, Planning Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Planning Activity Report

River Bend Accessible Fishing Pier

The fishing pier was installed the third week of December. The contractor constructed the pier and placed it out in the lake away from the shore to prevent vandalism. The gangway, the roof for the second platform, and the anchoring and final installation will be completed in the spring.

Lighting Grant

Final billing was submitted for the lighting grant. The project is complete.

Miscellaneous

Planning staff is currently working on developing a sign template for Middle Fork Campground.

January 5, 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: Bryan Stevens, Construction Manager

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Construction Department Activity Report

Miscellaneous

Over the past month, the Construction Department:

- planned a route for trenching the new fiber optic cable that will connect facilities at Lake of the Woods; and
- continued the installation of new windows and insulation at Lake of the Wood Pavilion; and
- modified the cupola at Headquarters to prevent water from entering. Water had been collecting in the attic and seeping through the ceiling.

January 5, 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: Michael Daab and Daniel Olson, Natural Resources Department

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Natural Resources Department Activity Report

- Mike Daab has completed his Master of Science in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois and will be presenting some of the results of his research into public awareness and attitudes regarding invasive plant species at the January Trail Stewards meeting.
- We continued removal of invasive Callery Pear trees at Buffalo Trace. Trees not adjacent to trails were girdled and left as habitat for cavity nesting birds.
- We attached artificial fishing structure to the new fishing pier at River Bend to increase habitat in the Sunset Lake.
- County Concrete in Champaign has donated two pallets of concrete blocks to us for use with fish structure. This has a value of about \$400.00.
- We helped prune and clean up ice- and wind-damaged trees at Middle Fork and Homer Lake.
- We have been cleaning and sorting prairie seed in preparation for some major plantings in 2009. Additionally, all seed that we have requested from vendors has arrived and been checked for accuracy.
- We completed our direct seeding of hardwood trees for 2008.
- Winterization and maintenance of equipment continues.
- Dan has continued to work on the East Central Illinois Stewardship Manual. It has now gone to a technical review committee, which includes Mike. It will then be passed to an editorial review committee that includes Andee.
- We received nice letters and photos from the group at Unity West again this year for helping with the West Woods plantings.
- We are scheduling Lincoln's Challenge again this semester with Natural Resources and in the Botanical Garden.

January 6, 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: Daniel Olson

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden Activity Report

- Larry Beckett will have some features in the winter issue of Illinois Steward Magazine as part of his Master Naturalist and Allerton Corps of Discovery trainings.
- Planning and design for all beds throughout Lake of the Woods has begun for 2009.
- Staff has been doing general cleanup around the garden as well as in the greenhouses and lean-to area.
- An order has been placed for contract-growing the 2009 All American Selection flowers and vegetables.
- Staff has completed lots of greenhouse work that included transplants and potting of tropicals, a few woody species, and several varieties of coleus.
- As is done each January, staff has been receiving and placing orders for materials for 2009.
- Equipment and tool maintenance cleaning and repair continues.
- Luckily there was no storm damage to trees in the garden compared to other areas in the preserves.

January 5, 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: Cheryl Kennedy, Museum Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Early American Museum Activity Report

Year-End Comparisons	2007	2008
<i>Visitation</i>	7,791	7,246

58% of our visitors were from Champaign County; 86% were Illinois residents; 43 states are represented with the highest numbers recorded from Indiana, California, Wisconsin, Ohio, Iowa, Florida, Michigan, and Minnesota – in that order. International visitors include Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Indian, Jordan, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Prague CR, Russia, South African, and Taiwan.

<i>School attendance, onsite</i>	3,937	3,660
<i>Home school</i>	169	195
<i>Outreach</i>	670	535

In addition to Champaign County schools, students came from: Bement, Catlin, Chatsworth, Chenoa, Chicago, Cissna Park, Danville, Deland-Weldon, Farmer City, Forrest, Georgetown, Gibson City, Gilman, Hoopeston, Lincoln, Melvin-Sibley, Milford, Monticello, Normal, Oakwood, Onarga, Rossville, Saybrook, and Tilton.

<i>Volunteer hours</i>	2,465	2,645
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Volunteer projects included: oral history tape duplication, exhibit construction, interactives, collection work, education programs, period clothing care, Wednesday receptionists, maintenance tasks, construction projects, painting, exhibit and storage area cleaning, and installation of security system throughout the museum. This does not include the volunteer hours of painting the museum and annex that benefited us thanks to Kim Horbas.

<i>General Store</i>	\$11,761.50	\$12,111.71
<i>Donations at the door</i>	\$3,396.00	\$3,402.50
<i>Friends</i>	\$4,976.00	\$3,660.00

A 2007 group donation of \$500 was specified for the Lincoln exhibit instead of the Friends program in 2008. Many of our consistent annual donors are retired; a couple passed away; some reduced their giving; and a few have yet to respond to the renewal notice.

2008 Grants

American History Teachers Collaborative – Lincoln Workshop	\$8,000
Illinois Humanities Council Road Scholar Program – 2 speakers	\$100
Illinois Humanities Council – Goose Pond Lecture Series	\$3,550
Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission – EAM Lincoln exhibit	\$17,680
Institute of Museum and Library Services – Courthouse exhibit	\$116,500
<i>All the above were submitted by Mary Ellen Wuellner.</i>	
Individual donation for the cost of glazing the Hensley Town Hall windows	\$1,575

Collaboratives

Champaign County Board – Lincoln Exhibits Committee

American History Teachers Collaborative – workshops and teaching fellows

Area Libraries – summer reading program activities

Convention and Visitors Bureau & Hardy's Reindeer Ranch – motor coach tours

Regional Office of Education – temporary exhibit on school architecture

December Public Programs

Charlie and her volunteers entertained the last motor coach group of the season. Groups schedule through Hardy's Reindeer Ranch, and a visit to the museum is part of their package. The visit includes a tour of the museum, a program with artifacts from Grandmother's Trunk to trigger a sharing of memories around the room, and some type of refreshments, depending on the group.

The locals continue to support the program "To Grandmother's House We Go." We are one of many programs and events during December, and typical of the past, 75% of our audience (134) was from Mahomet.

This year's attendance at our shopping evening was so sparse that we have decided to remove it from next year's line up. Attendance had been steadily increasing each year, but this year we attracted about 6-10 people at the most. We know this was a tough year with the economy, but decided we will look for other ways to promote Christmas sales in 2009.

December Education Programs

Sandy combined several programs into one for a group of 70 school children from Carrie Busey this past month, and she presented her homeschool program "By the Books" to 18 families (39 children) from Champaign, Urbana, Allerton, St. Joseph, Mahomet, Farmer City, Saybrook, Tilton, Rossville, Oakwood, Catlin, and Chicago. The Chicago children were staying with their grandmother.

January 5, 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: Pam Leiter, Coordinator of Environmental Education and Interpretation

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Environmental and Horticultural Education Activity Report

2008 School Programs Summary

This year, we saw an increase in the number of students served. The total for both Environmental Education and Horticulture Education programs was 4,626 (versus 3,553 in 2007).

Environmental Education School Programs Attendance	2008	2007	2006	2005
Spring	955	1,476	1,590	1,076
Summer*	254	18	112	20
Fall	2,262	1,274	1,752	1,845
Homeschool	19	15	0	0
TOTAL	3,490	2,783	3,454	2,941

*Excludes summer camps

Horticultural Education School Programs Attendance	2008	2007	2006	**2005
Spring	293	194	251	202
Fall	818	559	540	329
Homeschool	25	17	0	0
TOTAL	1,136	770	791	531

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

2008 Public Programs & Summer Camps Summary

Public programs also saw an overall increase in attendance this year. Total Environmental Education and Horticulture Education attendance was 1,748 (versus 1,297 in 2007).

Environmental Education Public Programs Attendance	2008	2007	2006	2005
Eco-Adventures and other children's programs ⁺	294	229	187	214
Scout Programs	60	25	25	447
Family and Adult programs	⁺⁺ 495	172	196	84
Campground programs	398	342	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	1,247	768	408	745

⁺Includes Growing Up Wild and Winter Wonders

⁺⁺First year for the Take Me Fishing programs

Horticultural Education Public Programs Attendance	2008	2007	2006	**2005
Garden Adventures & Tiny Tot Garden Adventures	46	29	10	7
Scout programs	14	0	0	0
Family and Adult programs	221	297	105	46
Artisan Series	220	203	0	0
TOTAL	501	529	115	53

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

December Public Programs 15 participants

- The Decorate for the Holidays programs had 15 participants total.
- Staff is preparing for the upcoming winter 2009 public programs

Environmental Education Center December Visitation: 20 (16 adults, 4 children)

Visitation was up this year. Total general visitation for the past few years:

2008	2007	2006	2005
1,250	1,134	1,040	514

In addition to these numbers, many school students, and their teachers and chaperones, visited the center as part of a scheduled field trip.

Volunteer Hours December: 2 hours (2008 total: 852 hours)

Our 2008 total (852) was much higher than last year (249 in 2007). Staff is strategizing ways to recruit and train more volunteers in 2009, with a focus on school program and summer camp volunteers.

Grants and Donations Received in 2008:

- Donation from Dwain Berggren to support EE programs \$200.00
- Audubon Society mini-grant for campground program supplies \$98.90
- Scholarship to the NAI National workshop \$500.00
- New Education Center's donation box \$86.13
- Herb Society mini-grant for plants \$75.00
- Take Me Fishing support from Meier \$250
- Take Me Fishing support from IGA \$1,000

Other businesses also gave in-kind donations.

Additional Department Accomplishments in 2008:

Over the past year, staff:

- completed the Interpretive Plan;
- implemented the new Take Me Fishing programs at three locations;
- completed the expansion of the children's Discovery Garden;
- installed, marketed and evaluated the new Education Center exhibits;
- implemented the new summer camp Counselor-in-Training volunteer program; and
- developed Insect Investigation loan backpacks for the public to borrow.

January 6, 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: Andee Chestnut, Public Information Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Public Information Activity Report

- The printed newsletter went out at the end of December and is posted on the website. Kirby Pringle is working on the next electronic newsletter, which will go out in late January or early February.
- Work continues on entering all the 2009 program information in the various community calendar websites. This is a rather tedious process as each media outlet has its own website. A grant application has been submitted by OJC Technologies to develop one calendar system for the entire community. I am extremely hopeful they get it and can streamline this process!
- The article I wrote for Community Concierge Magazine about the forest preserve offerings will be published in the issue that comes out in early February.
- We have received good coverage for our annual Christmas tree recycling service. I believe this is the 18th year we have offered this to the public. Drop-off sites are at Lake of the Woods, Homer Lake and Middle Fork.
- A meeting with OJC Technologies is scheduled for January 12. We plan to discuss this year's website enhancements that include the ability to make online reservations and online payments; an internal page for commissioners, staff and volunteers to be able to access; and various small tweaks to make the website more user-friendly.

January 6, 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: Kim Horbas, Volunteer Coordinator

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Volunteer Activity Report

Internship

The CCFPD will be partnering with UI's School of Business in their student internship program this spring semester. The proposal submitted was recently accepted by Professor Jeffrey Kurtz who teaches a Business Consulting Class on campus. The intern selected to work with us will focus on Facilities Assessment and Inventory. The program will be coordinated and directed by John Baker and Sally Prunty. We were honored to be selected for this semester's project. Work should begin in early February.

Trail Stewards

Plans are in the works for the upcoming Trail Steward Orientation and Workshop. This will be our third year! One challenge we now face is to keep the program valuable, fresh and informative for both returning stewards, and new individuals to the program. After a brief presentation to the entire group, the volunteers will break down to two groups so that the balance of the workshop will address their specific needs. Current stewards will also be available to share their experiences and best practices to new team members. Natural Resources staff is planning an excellent agenda for the workshop. Orientation is scheduled for 9:30 AM-12:00 PM, Saturday, January 31st at the Golf Course Clubhouse.

Volunteer Hours

December Volunteer Hours: 21

January 5, 2008

MEMORANDUM

From: Mary Ellen Wuellner, Grants Coordinator

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Grant Activity Report

Grants Approved/Denied

- No new grant decisions have been received since the December Board Meeting. Phone calls and e-mail messages to both the Bank of America Charitable Foundation and the Motorola Foundation have gone unreturned. Decisions on both of these Lincoln exhibit grants were expected in late fall, yet the District has received no information. Therefore, we are left to conclude that those funds will not be forthcoming. The grant requests were \$15,225 and \$19,500 respectively.

New Grant Applications Submitted

- A letter of intent to apply for grant funding was submitted to the Marajen Stevick Foundation on December 30. The Early American Museum would like to request funding in the amount of \$12,725 to create a school curriculum on civic engagement centered on the Lincoln exhibits. If the Stevick Foundation board decides that the project sufficiently meets its funding criteria, the museum will be asked to submit a full proposal by February 1.
- As noted in the December staff report, a proposal was submitted on January 2 for \$16,629 to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Tourism. If funded, the grant would cover several high-tech components of the museum's Lincoln exhibit, including the audio-visual equipment and the production of videos that will be featured in the exhibit. A decision is expected within 75 days.

Grant Applications Previously Submitted – Decision Pending

- A decision is pending on a proposal to the National Gardening Association and Home Depot for a 2009 Youth Garden Grant. If awarded, up to \$1,000 in grant funding would be used for improvements to the children's Discovery Garden. Notice is expected by February 16.
- Two grant awards are pending that would support the development of the Grand Prairie Educational Plot. A \$1,500 proposal to the Captain Planet Foundation should be decided within a few weeks, while a \$500 application to the Wild Ones Foundation is pending a decision by February 15.
- An award decision is expected very soon on a grant to the Champaign Rotary Club in the amount of \$19,200 for Lincoln exhibit funding. Decisions were to have been made in December; however no information has yet been received.
- A grant application is also pending in the amount of \$4,500 to the American Hiking Society's National Trails Fund. The grant would allow the District to purchase and install two new interpretive signs and six directional markers for a 1.2-mile extension of trail through the Sangamon River Preserve. Award notification is not expected until spring 2009.

January 5, 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: John Baker, Administration

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Administration Activity Report

- Diann Reed with the Illinois Local Government Health Plan walked full-time staff through our new health insurance plan on December 16. With Mary's guidance, staff completed all the necessary paperwork within a very short timeframe so the insurance could take effect on January 1, 2009. Mary also took care of the related benefits programs (deductible reimbursements and flexible medical spending accounts) impacted by our move to the LGHP health insurance.
- Vickie and Mary worked hard to get all of the pay increase, health insurance and other necessary benefit changes recorded in our financial software for the first payroll of the new year on January 2. Year-end budget closing, and opening a new fiscal year typically create a hectic holiday season for Headquarters staff. Vickie, in particular, is extraordinarily busy this time of year.
- Sarah assisted Matt Kuntz and Andy Little on January 2 with the 2009 campground reservations. She will be coordinating the move to a new online campground reservation system so taking the first camping reservations of the year using the current paper process was good background. Our plan to begin the year using the online system was hindered when the vendor with the best reservations product did not respond to our questions before the holidays.
- Jerry, Andee, Cheryl, Mary Ellen, Sarah and I met to discuss fundraising issues for 2009 and how the District can best seek support from its friends, grants from potential partners, and how we can focus our efforts on the Board's three priorities as identified during the referendum process. The discussion included asking the Foundation's assistance to best coordinate all fundraising efforts. Cheryl suggested a follow-up meeting with program staff, who are eager to seek sponsors for various programs, to make sure that we coordinate our fundraising efforts and reduce the duplication of requests to supporters.
- The Final Budget and Appropriation Ordinance was filed with the County Clerk as was the official tax levy publication (black box ad) verification from the News Gazette. The only remaining financial posting for fiscal year 2009 will be the Bond Ordinance which must be in to the clerk before March 1.
- Through December 31, the Patton family heirs, at Mildred Beadle's behest, have donated \$3,700 to support the purchase of the property addition to the Patton Woods tract at Middle Fork. The District also received the \$8,000 donation from the Foundation for this purchase.

- The District's \$98,000 CD with the Illinois Park District Liquid Asset Fund matured December 30 with interest of \$1,935.85. We reinvested \$150,000 (now that the FDIC limit is \$250,000) in a one-year CD at 2.5% interest.
- Employee evaluations were completed and reviewed with employees. All were received in the Human Resources office prior to the end of the year so that pay raises could take effect with the January 2 payroll.
- IPRA/IAPD conference registrations and accommodations were made for the January 29-31 conference for all attendees.
- For 2008, rental reservations totaled more than 530. This number covers both in-house as well as paid rentals. 2009 rental reservations are now being taken, and paperwork has been sent out to more than 100 prospective renters.

January 7, 2009

MEMORANDUM

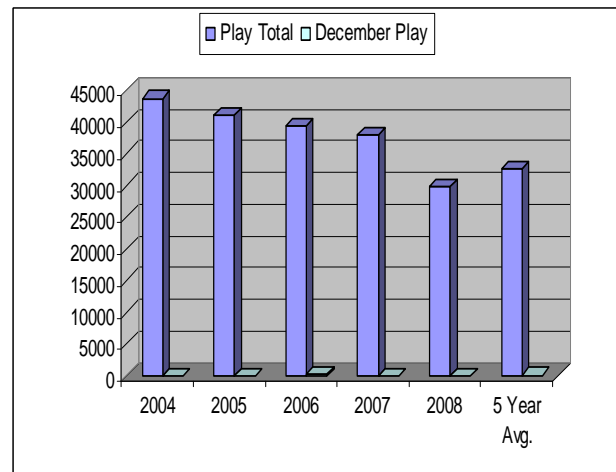
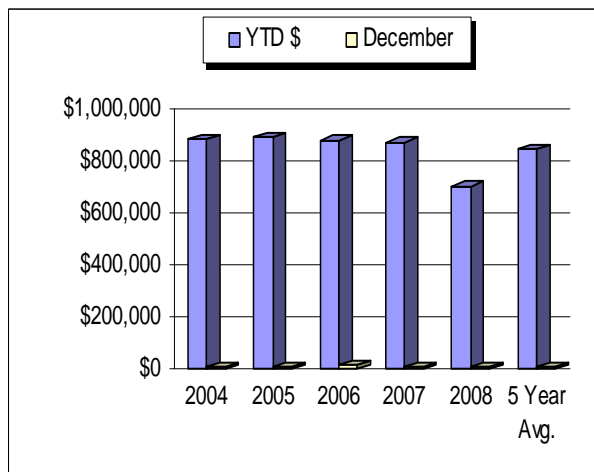
From: Dave Huber, Golf Professional/Manager

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Lake of the Woods Golf Course Pro Shop Activity Report

Operations

By holding the line on golf fees, combined with the improvements we have made to the golf facility, I am very optimistic about 2009.



No tournaments or outing activity this month

Other Activities

- We are currently working on year-end reporting of merchandise inventory, food and beverage inventory, outstanding credit balances with vendors, and gift card balances in preparation for our annual audit.
- We have completed our National Golf Foundation golfer survey program, and I will report on the results in my next report.
- Now that the work has been completed on the golf course, we will need to have the course re-rated for Course Handicap and Slope for 2009.
- Chris Edmondson and I completed a recertification for BASSET - Beverage Sellers & Servers Education and Training through PDRMA – Park District Risk Management Association. This also includes the TIPS program – Training for Intervention Procedures. We received some very good material for improving our training of the serving staff, and I was able to include three acronyms in one bullet point of my report.

January 5, 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: Thomas M. Pike, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

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

- Staff continues repainting equipment such as trash cans for the upcoming spring season.
- The mowers are undergoing their winter preventive maintenance and repair.
- The ice event we all had to deal with made the roads, parking lots and walkways very treacherous and dangerous. I hope we are over this icing for a while!
- Staff is in the process of picking up the tree limbs and chipping the bigger ones that came down in the icing conditions.
- Staff completed ongoing janitorial work at rental buildings and public restrooms.
- We continued with routine scheduled maintenance and repairs on various District vehicles and other equipment.

January 5, 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: Matthew Kuntz, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Middle Fork River Forest Preserve Activity Report

- We had a good first day of taking camping reservations. In total we took about 65 reservations by phone and walk-in.
- The first window was installed at the Activity Center last week by Arrow Glass. The installation went very well with the Construction Department assisting. The remaining windows are being made now and should be installed within the next month.
- Thanks to Natural Resources staff for helping us with cleanup from the ice and wind storms from December. We had quite a mess but were able to take care of the majority of limbs and trees within two days. Once the preserve was finished, we helped our neighbors clean up their yards also.
- Very special thanks to Tom Pike and staff for helping us during the Christmas week salting the Activity Center parking lot. We had a rental on Christmas day, and the roads and parking lot were in horrible shape, so Tom Pike sent Brian Decker up with the salt truck to get the parking lot in better condition.
- More winter jobs continue such as painting grills and barrels, equipment maintenance, and other work in the shop.
- Work continues with capital equipment and projects for 2009. We have a meeting this month for playground research, and we are awaiting quotes from different companies with other projects and equipment.

January 5, 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: Brian Taylor, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Homer Lake Forest Preserve Activity Report

- All trail signs have been repainted, stained and sealed.
- Two weather events that involved ice created additional outside work as some trees required pruning, and several limbs were removed from the grounds.
- Six employees from the Urbana Park District maintenance staff came to Homer Lake for a tour of our facilities and to share ideas.
- We have seen an incredible number of geese on the lake this year. Some have estimated several thousand resting on the lake at one time.
- We have been working on equipment maintenance which involves everything from changing fluids and worn-out parts to repainting (see pictures).

