

January 3, 2011

MEMORANDUM

From: Brian Taylor, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Homer Lake Forest Preserve Activity Report

- We met with engineers from Eastern Illinois Electric to determine the best possible route for the underground electric service that will be installed for the Natural Playscape and Walnut Hill Shelter.
- Staff installed programmable thermostats at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center, and we repaired a leak in the attic.
- We replaced the handle set and panic exit device on the rear door of the Salt Fork Center.
- Roy Woodmansee and I completed the certification requirements to become prescribed burn managers as set forth by the new Illinois Prescribed Burning Act. This will allow us to continue our prescribed burns and help Natural Resources and other departments in the future.
- The main activity this month has been plowing snow. We are extremely grateful for the new plow truck.
- Ice fishing in December is unusual, but this year fishing has been good with reports of a five-pound catfish being caught, along with several nice-sized bluegill.

January 10, 2011

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 is working on preventive maintenance and repairs to all mowing and utility equipment.
- We are repairing and painting all trash and recycle barrels.
- Crews are working on stripping the restroom floors at Headquarters and the West Maintenance shop and then waxing them.
- A transmission failure happened on Christmas Day to the 1997 Ford F350 four-wheel drive as staff was plowing snow. It had to be taken in for repair. We are happy to report that it is back in service.
- Clint Schaffer, the District's Certified Playground Safety Inspector, has completed the Fall Playground Safety Compliance Audit.
- I have ordered the boom mower that was approved at the December Board Meeting.
- Staff 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 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

From: Matthew Kuntz, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Middle Fork River Forest Preserve Activity Report

- The kitchen in the Activity Center has been somewhat refurbished. We have replaced the countertop and sink, removed the original wallpaper, and painted the walls and cabinetry.
- Staff is currently making improvements to the women's restroom inside the Activity Center. New walls are being installed, along with new fixtures and new paint on the existing partitions.
- The sights of winter are everywhere at Middle Fork; we have watched sleds and cross-country skiers go through the preserve for most of December.
- I am currently working on new directional posts for all of our trails inside the preserve. There have never been directional signs on the trails; hopefully this will end confusion for our hikers.
- The Construction Department has finished our new sandblasted signs for trail heads and buildings. They look wonderful and will be a great addition to the preserve user areas.
- Plans are being made for this year's projects that include new curtains and entry doors into the Activity Center.
- Reservations are now being made for the 2011 camping season. I have noticed many more online reservations have been made so far, much more than phone-in reservations or office reservations. Memorial Day weekend is already almost at half capacity.
- The snow plow and truck has been getting quite the workout this past month. The remainder of the month has been spent splitting wood, maintaining equipment, and taking reservations for camping.

January 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

From: Daniel J. Olson, Director of Natural Resources

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Natural Resources Activity Report

- This past month invasive removal has been concentrated on woody shrubs at River Bend.
- We have placed some recycled Christmas trees on Elks Lake for fish structure.
- We continue to work on the Sylvester Property Site Plan with two volunteers from the Citizens Advisory Committee. Additionally, we are working with a UI restoration ecology class on development of a site plan as part of their coursework.
- The contractors have completed their portion of the Natural Resources/Botanical Garden storage building. We continue to work with the Construction Department on putting in the access to the building.
- Equipment repair and maintenance has been a big priority this month, as well as inventory updates and seasonal paperwork, with updating of some records.
- We have finished up seed cleaning for the year and are preparing for planting in late winter.
- We are working with Mary Ellen Wuellner on two different grants to help with Emerald Ash Borer tree replacement.
- Larry Beckett and I are working with the local Corps of Discovery groups to develop the temporary museum exhibit for 2012.
- Mike Daab continues to attend Master Naturalist chapter meetings and the Invasive Plant Task Force meetings as well as the Sustainability Practitioner's Group meetings.
- Mike is working with Mary Ellen Wuellner and Sally Prunty to work on revitalizing some of the needs set forth in the Environmental Assessment Plan.

January 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

From: Larry Beckett, Botanical Garden Supervisor

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Botanical Garden Activity Report

- We have started placing plant orders for annuals, perennials and tropical plants to be used in the Botanical Garden, the Mindy Harrington Memorial Garden and the Discovery Garden.
- Planning and design of existing and new landscape areas and gardens within the Botanical Garden is nearly completed.
- Greenhouse work continues with plant propagation, planting ornamental seed, potting and cleaning.
- Staff has been organizing horticultural supplies and materials, taking inventory for placing orders.
- The Botanical Garden staff and Plant Science staff will be attending the Mid-America Horticulture Trade Show in Chicago January 21st.
- I winterized the greenhouse shop area by insulating windows and openings, and replacing cracked greenhouse glass.
- A heat exchanger is being replaced in one of the greenhouse furnaces due to a crack in the unit. If left unrepaired, the furnace will emit carbon monoxide gases into the greenhouse.
- Servicing of the Botanical Garden Department's gas-powered equipment has begun.

January 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

From: Bryan Stevens, Construction Manager

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Construction Department Activity Report

Over the past month, the Construction Department:

- completed sandblasting and painting the trail signs for the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve with the assistance of the Middle Fork Operations staff;
- installed new lighting in the Activity Center at the Middle Fork Forest Preserve;
- completed plumbing repairs at the Sangamon River Forest Preserve residence;
- installed a new service door in the Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve Operations shop; and
- completed a major clean-up in the Construction Department shop with the assistance of a volunteer.

January 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

From: Pam Leiter, Assistant Director, Museum & Education Department

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Activity Report

YEAR-END SUMMARY

2010 Education Programs Summary

Total school program attendance for the past two years:

	2009	2010
Environmental Education-specific programs <i>(includes on-site and outreach)</i>	2,042	2,185
Plant Science-specific programs <i>(includes on-site and outreach)</i>	315	735
Homeschool <i>(Environmental Education & Plant Science)</i>	82	62
Cross-curricular*	953	1,201
TOTALS	3,392	4,183

*Cross-curricular programs include those where teachers chose to participate in two programs in multiple disciplines in one day (i.e. environmental, plant science or cultural), or that participated in Prairie Adventures. Reported numbers may overlap with the museum's report.

December Education Programs (241 students)

Programs served Lincoln Trail Elementary and Hugs & Bugs Preschool. Sandy Osborne also held the homeschool program By the Books. Families came from LeRoy, Tilton, Urbana, Gibson City, Villa Grove, Tuscola, Champaign, Homer, Downs and Mansfield.

Sandy is working with Champaign School District's Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator to bring all their 2nd grade classes each year for a program about colonial life. Teachers voted to choose CCFPD as the site for this field trip. Programs for the 2010-2011 school year are being scheduled for February and March (programs for the 2011-2012 school year will likely be more spread out). We are excited to add these programs to our work with Champaign schools; as it stands now, the 2nd graders, most of the 3rd graders, and the 4th graders will come to a CCFPD site for a field trip. In the course of these three years, students will gain an excellent grasp of natural and cultural history while visiting multiple locations in the preserves.

2010 Other Programs

Total program attendance at Environmental Education & Plant Science programs in the following categories is:

	2009	2010
Family, Children and Adult programs and events	1,273	1,501
Summer Youth Programs	247	220
Campground programs	424	749
TOTALS	1,944	2,470

December Programs (14 participants)

Programs included Kids Garden Club: Holiday Decorations for the Birds at Lake of the Woods and Remarkable Reptiles at Homer Lake.

2010 Volunteer Hours

Total Departmental Education Support: 536.00 hours

Total Environmental Education Special Event Support: 255.50 hours

Total Environmental Education Nonprogram Support: 372.75 hours

This month, volunteers helped with Kids Garden Club, researched Dutch doors, and repaired our cane poles. Staff assisted Kim Horbas by distributing Volunteer Brochures to local libraries and other community information centers; approximately 650 brochures were distributed.

Homer Lake Interpretive Center

Visitation:

Total general visitation for the past few years has steadily increased, with 2010 showing a 150% increase compared to 2009:

2009	2010
1,284	1,893

This year, 85% of our visitors were from Champaign County. The top five cities represented, from highest to lowest, were Champaign, Urbana, Homer, St. Joseph and Ogden. Approximately 11% of visitors were from other Illinois counties, and 4% were from other states (Michigan, California, Florida, Pennsylvania, Wyoming, Colorado, Ohio, Tennessee, Washington, Wisconsin, Maryland, Virginia, Indiana, North Dakota, Kansas, Texas and Arizona).

Donation Box:

2009	2010
\$128	*\$170.12

**includes some donations at programs*

We also received seven large bags of birdseed as in-kind donations this year.

Adopt an Animal:

2009	2010
\$210	\$510

Now in its second year, the Adopt an Animal program has grown substantially. Several families renewed their adoptions this year, and one has already renewed for 2011. We are very grateful!

Homer Lake Natural Playscape

- The Natural Playscape project has taken tremendous strides this year. I coordinated public input, worked with the playscape committee to develop the design, and developed a webpage complete with images and video. Installation is slated to begin next year.
- Several groups have served as community partners for the project, including C-U Fit Families, Cub Scout Pack 42 (Homer), Girl Scout Troop 2335 (St Joseph), the UI Recreation, Sport and Tourism Department, PACE Center for Independent Living, CCFPD's CAC, and families and individuals throughout the community.

Other 2010 Support and Collaboratives

- The Champaign County Audubon Society and the Environmental Education Association of Illinois provided funds to bring storyteller Brian “Fox” Ellis to Migration Fest.
- Stacey Clementz worked with the Community Stewardship class offered by the UI NRES Department and their middle-school classes to develop an educational brochure on aquatic invasive species (to be posted at CCFPD sites) and a podcast on invasive species to be posted on the District’s website.
- Stacey also worked with the Champaign School District’s Science Curriculum Coordinator to develop and pilot a new field trip to complement their 4th-grade woodland unit.
- Savannah Hampson worked with the CU Astronomical Society to present two Starwatches at Middle Fork and one at Homer Lake.

Additional Accomplishments:

- We installed interpretive signage about landscaping with native plants outside the Homer Lake Interpretive Center.
- We completed a self-guided trail, complete with numbered boulders, for Timberdoodle Trail outside the Interpretive Center.
- I assisted with the Gift of Trees exhibit by brainstorming ideas, providing display items and developing text and images.
- I developed and distributed a brochure highlighting the Environmental Education Center and its programs.
- Stacey coordinated education staff as they developed the Education Department’s new volunteer handbook.
- With the help of Kim Horbas and the Catholic Heart Work Camp, the Homer Lake Interpretive Center was painted.



A Beautiful December Snowstorm

January 10, 2011

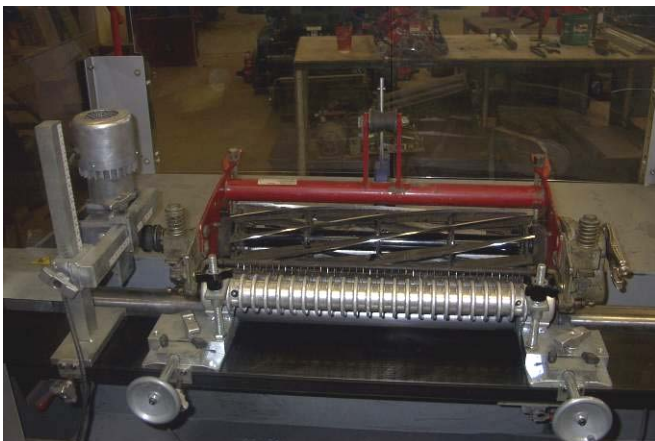
MEMORANDUM

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. This process is much shorter and less expensive with the electric golf cars.
- Staff will attend the Illinois Department of Agriculture Pesticide training January 26th and 27th in Urbana. This training and testing is required every three years.
- Staff continues with winter service of equipment. Each piece of equipment is thoroughly washed and waxed. The reel mowers have each reel completely disassembled, cleaned, new bearing installed, and reassembled. The reel and bedknife are sharpened, adjusted to proper cut, and set to the required height.
- I will attend the GCSAA Conference in Orlando, FL February 7th to the 11th. Scheduled seminars include: Cool-Season Turfgrass Nutrition, Fertilizers and Programming; Water Conservation and Energy Efficiency Management for Golf Irrigation Systems; and Rules of Golf for the Superintendent. Many other open educational sessions involving turfgrass management issues will be scheduled.
- Golf maintenance staff plans to remove ash trees throughout the golf course. We will remove only certain trees to ensure that the visual appearance of the tree lines will not change. Leaving certain ash trees will also help with safety issues from errant golf shots. Where trees are removed, others species will be planted



Reel Grinder



Bedknife Grinder

January 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

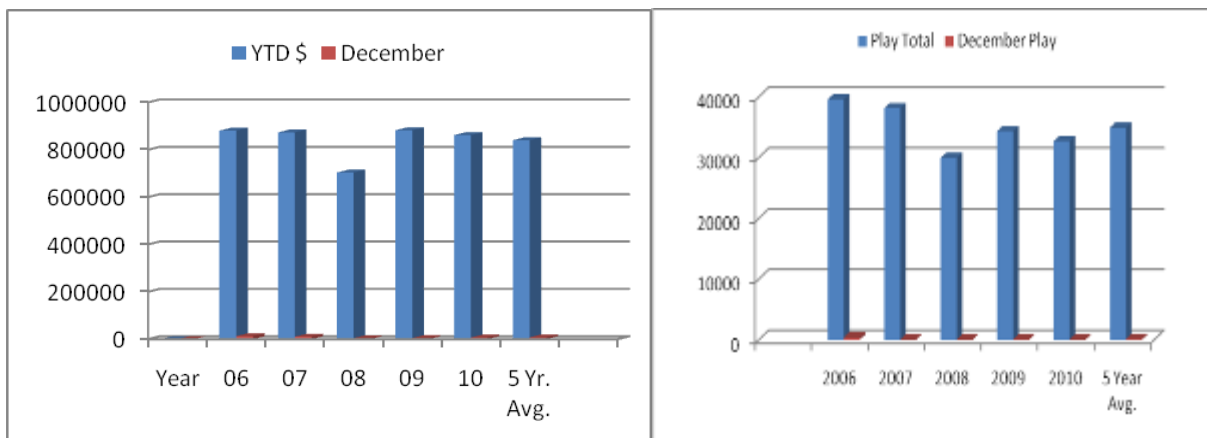
From: Dave Huber, Golf Professional

To: Board of Commissioners

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

Operations

December 2010 revenue was \$6,694.00 compared with \$4,550.00 for December of 2009. Player count was 0 vs. 0 golfers from December of 2009. I will note that we have only had players in December two of the last five years. The five-year revenue average for December is \$7,585. Total revenue for 2010 was \$861,897.00 compared with \$882,477.00 in 2009.



Tournament and Outings

No tournaments or outings

Other Activities

- We have completed a physical inventory of the Pro Shop merchandise and are preparing year-end reports.
- At the beginning of each year, we roll over our tee time schedule from the previous year and double check holiday and weekend dates and times for continuity.
- This is an off year for the January PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando, FL. We only attend every other year for budgetary savings.
- In an attempt to reduce overall paper, I am emailing the requested comparative local fee information spreadsheet along with some national play information and last three years of reports of Lake of the Woods data.

January 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

From: John Baker, Administration

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Administration Activity Report

- We hired Arnold Blair to serve as the Payroll Assistant. He retired from his job as controller with a Chicago-area YMCA last year but wanted to get a part-time position. Arnold has worked with the District already through Manpower. He fits in well in our office and was very helpful last year with our move to the new financial system. Arnold and I have reviewed the applications and will be interviewing for the Accounts Payable Assistant role. Mary Beck has been training him to take over payroll responsibilities.
- End-of-the-year activities continued throughout last month including closing out the 2010 payroll, preparing accurate W2s and 1099s, inputting pay increases for employees, and making necessary deduction adjustments for 2011. The budget is updated in MSI and transferred to our 2011 general ledger. We are now reviewing and reconciling last year's budget transactions for our pre-audit preparation.
- The Foundation Financial Committee met and drafted the 2011 budget for the Foundation's approval. We also discussed sharing financial risk with Foundation investments across their funds except for the pass-through donations which support a District department's annual budget, for example the Museum Friends donations.
- We are gearing up for the seasonal hiring process which will begin shortly. Announcements for temporary, seasonal positions will be posted on the District website along with other appropriate employment websites within the next month.
- Mary is finalizing travel arrangements for staff members who will be attending the IAPD/IPRA conference in Chicago later this month and is coordinating reservations for staff who will be attending the Great Lakes Park Training Institute in February. She is also coordinating with the state and county to schedule herbicide/pesticide training and testing for staff and interested volunteers.
- The District's PDRMA representative will be on site in February to meet with staff and begin his risk management field review of all facilities.
- I've worked with Jerry Pagac on finalizing the 2011 budget to add the most critical projects using available funds above our planned reserves and with Kurt Froehlich on the 2011 annual bond ordinance.
- I've also discussed a potential phone replacement system for Lake of the Woods departments with local vendors. The estimated costs were a bit more than anticipated so one update to the 2011 budget was to roll over unexpended dollars from the computer fund.
- We've worked with Fraud Prevention Services to identify several transactions not made by District employees and to order a replacement credit card. The transactions were attempted in California. No fraudulent transactions were charged to the District.
- We contacted ten county banks for bond issuance rates. Eight of the banks, including some who issued bonds for the District in the recent past, indicated no interest this year.
- Angie Clayton has processed several 2011 facility rentals using the new EventPro software. One Special Use Permit was requested and approved for a wedding in September 2011. That wedding party will be using the grassy area near the Covered Bridge at Lake of the Woods.

January 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

From: Mary Ellen Wuellner, Grants Coordinator

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Grant Activity Report

Grants Approved/Denied

- The Subaru Healthy Sprouts grant application in the amount of \$500 for Discovery Garden supplies and educational materials was denied. Grants were awarded this year primarily to school gardens.

New Grant Applications Submitted

- A grant application in the amount of \$5,000 was submitted to the LEGO Children's Fund for the Homer Lake Natural Playscape. The District cleared the first step in the two-step approval process and was invited to submit a full application. Final award decisions should be made within 30 days.
- A request was made to the Health Alliance Medical Plans Foundation for \$1,000 in funding for the playscape. A response is expected prior to the end of this month.
- The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and the Morton Arboretum are administering two separate US Department of Agriculture grants for Emerald Ash Borer-related projects in Illinois counties that are listed in the EAB quarantine zone. One grant provides up to \$10,000 in funding for the replacement of ash trees that have been or will be removed to slow the spread of ash borer and encourage sustainable urban forest management. Funding under this grant will allow communities to purchase replacement trees on a 1:1 basis for every tree removed. The second grant provides technical assistance funding up to a maximum of \$20,000 to organizations that would like to undertake stem-by-stem tree surveys and/or develop EAB management plans for their communities. Both grants require a 20% match.

The District plans to submit applications for both grants by the January 21 deadline. Natural Resources staff is interested in completing both a tree survey and an EAB management plan. If that grant is awarded, much of that work could be contracted out, saving the District a significant amount of staff resources. The second grant, if approved, would allow the District to purchase 35-50 trees of a variety of species to replace ash trees that have been or will soon be removed. This grant application will focus primarily on trees removed from the golf course and user areas at Lake of the Woods, Middle Fork and Homer Lake preserves.

Grant Applications Previously Submitted – Decision Pending

- A Captain Planet Foundation grant (\$2,500) for the playscape project.
- The IDNR Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant (\$119,000) to reimburse the District for the purchase of an in-holding to the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve.

January 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

From: Sally Prunty, Planning Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Planning Activity Report

Sangamon River OSLAD Grant Project

The picnic shelter is up, but not quite finished. It looks nice; unexpectedly, it is tall enough to be seen peeking above the hilltop by those approaching the preserve from the south. It gives travelers on the road a clue that something interesting is behind that hill.

CCFPD Furnace Projects

I have processed the paperwork, including contracts, insurance and contract bond, for the furnace projects, and work has begun on the pavilion furnaces. We expect work to begin soon on the museum furnaces.

Natural Playscape

This project is currently on hold due to weather. I will be reviewing the topography to ensure accurate and functional placement of sidewalk elevations and creek crossing points.

Homer Lake Dam Sluice Gate Study

We have signed an agreement with Fraenhoffer and Associates to provide us with a design solution for the sluice gate apparatus. A very rough estimate of the cost of construction is \$70,000.

Homer Lake Sailboat Ramp

Jerry Pagac, Brian Taylor, Pam Leiter and I met with a representative of the architecture and design firm, Ratio Architects, to discuss redesign of that area, so that it will connect well functionally and aesthetically with the playscape access.

Miscellaneous Planning Tasks:

- Planning continues to develop and provide various maps for District staff and members of the public.
- I reviewed budget information for the past year.
- Work with the CAC on miscellaneous tasks continues.

January 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

From: Andee Chestnut, Public Information Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Public Information Activity Report

Website

We are in the final stages of the conversion to the redesigned website and should be on schedule to make the switch prior to January 30th. Sarah Elm has been able to handle all the elements necessary with the exception of one – the capability to have people enter their e-mail addresses online to subscribe to our electronic mailing list. We are working to have someone develop that for us. Thanks to Sarah, this process has gone much more smoothly than I originally thought it would.

Miscellaneous

- Work continues on developing the promotions plan for 2011, and information is being entered on the numerous community calendar websites. Other things being scheduled are print newsletter deadlines, e-newsletter deadlines, paid advertising, PSAs that go to the weeklies, and brochure development.
- The main District brochure is printing! This has been a long work in progress, and I am thrilled to have it completed. We can now focus on all our secondary brochures to make sure we are promoting or providing information for all areas.
- The newsletter that was scheduled to go out in December has been held up because of the museum and education center name changes. This newsletter will go out in February, and instead of doing the usual eight-page publication, I will make it 16 pages to cover the additional information. I've also had to arrange for some additional promotions for the January-February programs so their attendance doesn't suffer.

January 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

From: Kim Horbas, Volunteer Coordinator

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Volunteer Activity Report

This time of year is very slow with volunteer activity, which leaves time to prepare for group projects and the upcoming Stewardship Workshop and Orientation.

General

- Staff will participate in the Parkland Volunteer Fair January 19th promoting upcoming opportunities.
- We're pleased to welcome Tiffany Giles to the museum team. Tiffany has an extensive museum background including experiences with the Smithsonian.
- CCFPD will host the annual Stewardship Orientation and Workshop on Saturday, January 29th. Originally, this event focused on Trail Stewards. This year, it will encompass all volunteer opportunities throughout the District. Staff members were encouraged to participate and share their volunteer needs along with a brief department overview. After the presentations, each department will host an information table for potential volunteers to gather additional details and an opportunity to have questions and concerns answered. The event will be promoted to the Champaign County community through several media postings.

Upcoming Group Events

March 16	UT's Alpha Phi Omega Service Fraternity
April 16	Annual Spring Clean Up at CCFPD
April 29	IMPACT Day, UI College of Business
May TBD	Mahomet Conference of Girl Scouts

Volunteer Hours Reported

Trail Stewards	22
Community Service	34
Miscellaneous	11