

November 7, 2011

## MEMORANDUM

From: Brian Taylor, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Homer Lake Forest Preserve Activity Report

- The Natural Playscape has been the focus of our attention again this month. We have poured more than 500 feet of sidewalk so far. We will continue to pour concrete as long as weather permits.
- We assisted Savannah Hampson and Charlsie Tice with the Homer Harvest Eve event. Matt Kuntz and Andy Little built a hay rack that met PDRMA safety standards so Roy Woodmansee could haul people to the various stations. Even though this is not a hay rack like many rural folks are familiar with, people still seem to really enjoy this type of thing.
- We have been working on replacing windows in the maintenance facility with new ones that are much more energy efficient. This will reduce heating costs, not to mention the time it took to cover the windows with plastic each fall.
- Mulching and blowing leaves will likely continue for a few more weeks.
- Winter preparedness is now our number one priority. This includes shutting water lines down and blowing them out, posting ice safety signs, and installing snow removal equipment. Over the last few years we have closed Walnut Hill Shelter restrooms so we no longer have to purchase propane for that facility.
- A white pelican stopped by the lake for a couple weeks before moving on south. This is the first one I have ever seen here. We also spotted a bald eagle flying along the Salt Fork River.
- We finally received the solar bollards to be installed along the sidewalk at the Salt Fork Center (pictured below next to one of the smaller, temporary lights). This will be a very nice improvement that should be appreciated by rental groups here after dark. These lights are designated “night sky friendly” and are vandal-resistant.



November 3, 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 has put up boundary signs around the property lines at Sangamon River.
- Crews have been placing top soil north of the Sangamon River restrooms.
- Staff has the snow equipment ready for winter. This included changing the hydraulic oil in the snow plows; cleaning all the truck windshields and applying “Rain X”; and changing the engine oil in the walk-behind snow blower and in the salt/sand spreader.
- 2012 budget work continues.
- The mowing at Lake of the Woods, River Bend and Sangamon River Forest Preserves has all but stopped.
- Staff completed ongoing janitorial work at rental buildings and public restrooms.
- Staff continued with routine scheduled maintenance and repairs on various District vehicles and other equipment.

November 7, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Matthew Kuntz, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Middle Fork River Forest Preserve Activity Report

- The Lincoln's Challenge cadets are finishing up their fall semester volunteer schedule at Middle Fork. They worked a total of 756 hours.
- Staff continues to buck and split wood to prepare firewood for next year's camping season.
- Work continues for FY 2012 equipment and project research.
- The camping season is starting to slow as usual this fall with the cooler weather.
- The forest preserve has been winterized. We cleared out water lines, removed drinking fountains, and shut down the shower house.
- Small repairs are being made inside the shower house such as redecking shower floors and replacing hardware on the partitions.
- Staff was able to place new gravel on 15 camp sites where the existing gravel was washing out and creating mud holes. Lincoln's Challenge cadets helped evenly spread the gravel on most of the sites.
- The remainder of the month has been spent doing routine maintenance throughout the preserve areas.

November 4, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Daniel J. Olson, Director of Natural Resources

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Natural Resources and Botanical Garden Special Activity Report: Volunteer Overview Sept. 2010 - Sept 2011

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>NR Duties for Program</b>	<b>Staff Hrs/Yr</b>	<b>Vol Hours Returned/Year</b>	<b>Current NR Involvement</b>	<b>Meet Min. Criteria?</b>
Master Natualist Administration	Meetings, teaching, class set up, etc.	75	Unknown	High	Yes
Invasive Species Task Force	W/MNs, develop, programs, admin	36	Unknown	High	Yes
Herbicide Application	Training, tours, mixing, equip., license	16	145	High	Yes
Prescribed Burn	Training, equip, recruit, field work.	20	25	High	Yes
Frog Calls	Train, develop, take out, data manage	140	170	High	Yes
Lincoln's Challenge	Taking into field with close supervision	144	672	High	Yes
Trail Stewards	Trainings, tours	30	Unknown	Moderate	Unknown
Site Stewards	Available for all needs	10	200	High	Yes
Work Days (collect, invasive, etc)	In-field work days	32	40	High	Yes
Citizen Science	Administration, site location, equipment	5	95	Moderate	Yes
Sylvester Property Plan	Meetings, CAC, students, writing	30	100	High	Not complete
Training Days/Continuing Educ.	Developing, teaching, set up, marketing	35	0	High	Yes

**TOTALS**

**573**

**BOTANICAL GARDENS**

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>BG Duties for Program</b>	<b>Staff Hrs/Yr</b>	<b>Vol Hours Returned/Year</b>	<b>Current BG Involvement</b>	<b>Meet Min. Criteria?</b>
Individuals (incl. Comm Service)	Weeding, growing, greenhouse	50	40	High	No
Large Groups	Clean up, paint, mulch	48	300	High	Yes
Lincoln's Challenge	Clean up, removal, mulch	168	672	High	Yes
Catholic Heart Work Camp	Clean up, fix, replace, mulch, paint	100	480	High	Yes
Scouts (Boy)	Planter Building	3	80	High	Yes

**TOTALS**

**369**

**1572**

**Notes:** Current Involvement column indicates how involved staff is in running the program.

Meet Minimum Criteria is based on whether we believe the program is successful at its current level.

Citizen Science includes: bluebird monitoring, RiverWatch, mussel data collection, butterfly monitoring, etc.

Research on District land is not included in these totals.

November 4, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Larry Beckett, Botanical Garden Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden Activity Report

- Fall clean-up continues by removing annual flower beds, cutting down dead flower stalks and stems on perennials, cutting down ornamental grasses, and removing leaves. Ornamental grasses are cut down in the fall to remove ripening seed heads, and that material is taken to the burn pile. This eliminates the chance of ornamental grass populations emerging in prairie restorations or woodland areas.
- While mowing, we mulch the fallen leaves into the turf in small quantities. In order to keep the leaf mulch from smothering the turf, we mow and mulch twice a week. It usually takes 4-6 hours per week to mulch all the leaves on the turf.
- A motor that operates the louvers on one of the greenhouse exhaust fans was replaced after 40 years of service. Larry Beckett replaced the motor and made all the repairs.
- We are quickly filling the greenhouse with plant material taken from the Botanical Garden for winter storage. We take cuttings from many of our more desirable annual foliage plants that are hard to replace. We also store many of the tropical plants used in our garden displays, along with tubers and annual grass transplants.
- As a result of the high temperatures this past summer, several panes of glass slipped on the greenhouse roof, allowing for a leaky greenhouse on rainy days. There are a few broken panes of glass due to frame stress from heat and cold. All of our repairs are temporary for the winter and made from inside the greenhouse.
- We have drained all irrigation system water lines and removed or serviced all water pumps exposed to the cold. With the help of the Golf Course staff, the irrigation lines were blown out with compressed air to remove any remaining water.
- In preparation for the museum building addition, we have cleared a section of the Discovery Garden by temporarily removing part of the split-rail fence and removing the brick sidewalk. Next year the Discovery Garden will be consolidated to display raised bed and container gardening only. A floral display will be shown along the outside perimeter of the split-rail fence surrounding the Discovery Garden area.
- During the past 12 months, the Botanical Garden staff has planted 61 trees, 10 shrubs and 66 shrub roses. Trees were added to the Botanical Garden to replace trees that were removed for various reasons, and for additional spring and fall color. Many of the trees are Illinois natives.

November 2, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Bryan Stevens, Construction Manager

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Construction Department Activity Report

- Work continued at the Natural Playscape at Homer Lake Forest Preserve. Construction and Homer Lake staff continued forming and pouring new sidewalks. Construction of retaining walls has started in the area around the stream.
- Johnston Contractors started work on the Museum of the Grand Prairie. A temporary electrical service line was trenched into the annex. Preparations are being made to remove the annex garage.
- Otto Baum Construction has started the construction of the new bridge and concrete crossing at Buffalo Trace in Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve (pictured below).



November 4, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Cheryl Kennedy, Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter, Museum and Education Department

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Museum and Education Department Activity Report

**October School Programs**

Onsite 1,106 students  
Offsite 198 students

**Schools served:**



Dr. Howard, Stratton, Robeson, Yankee Ridge, Fisher, Middletown, Garden Hills, B.T. Washington, Barkstall, Bottenfield, Holy Cross, Judah Christian, Gifford Grade School, Unity West, Tri-Valley, Lincoln Trail and Sangamon Elementary.

Homeschool Soil Science program: 5 kids; families came from Champaign and Fisher.

*Woodland Unit with Champaign 5<sup>th</sup> graders*

**Public Programs**

- A Homer Harvest Eve Homer Lake 47
- Growing Up Wild Preschool Program: Spiders Homer Lake 9
- Lecture, Lincoln as a Lifetime Learner Museum 41



*Myron Marty presenting Lincoln as a Lifetime Learner*

**Special Presentations and Other Outreach.**

- PEO Luncheon (Cheryl Kennedy and Barb Garvey) Museum 24
- Marketing Lecture to students (Barb and Sarah Elm) EIU 16
- Junior Girl Scouts: Energy-themed hike and tour of Interpretive Center (Savannah Hampson) Homer Lake 13
- 4H Group: Wildlife (Savannah) Homer Lake 11
- Brownie Girl Scouts: Water Everywhere (Savannah) Lake of the Woods 13
- Brownie Girl Scouts: Illinois' Past (Volunteer) Museum 8
- Mahomet Girl Scouts: Terrarium Program (Ralph Bonati) Offsite 15
- Booth at Vineyard Church Eco-Expo (Pam Leiter) Offsite ~80
- Working Together to Create a Woodland Ecosystem (Stacey Clementz co-presented with Kristin Camp, Unit 4 Science Coordinator) IL Science Teachers Assn Conference Concurrent Session 9
- Project Learning Tree: How to Think, not What to Think (Stacey) IL Science Teachers Assoc. Conference Concurrent Session 3

**Volunteers Hours: 240**

Volunteers helped with A Homer Harvest Eve, Growing Up Wild, and school programs. They also shared receptionist duties, and assisted with exhibit revisions and collections research.

**HOMER LAKE INTERPRETIVE CENTER**

<b><u>October Comparisons</u></b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
General Visitation	135	273*
Year to Date	1,755	1,771
<i>*81% Champaign County, 15% other IL counties, 4% out-of-state</i>		
Donations at the Door	\$19.00	\$25.50
Year to Date	\$87.31	\$198.75

**General**

- Our fall intern, Caitlin Lill, completed collection of staff input for the Trailside Interpretive Plan. We are compiling the data she has collected and are beginning to draft recommendations.
- We developed and submitted 2012 operating budget requests.

**MUSEUM OF THE GRAND PRAIRIE**

<b><u>October Comparisons</u></b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
General Visitation	776	769*
Year to Date	8,222	7,658
<i>*65% Champaign County, 25% other Illinois Counties, 10% out-of-state/international</i>		
Gift Shop	\$1,706.64	\$1,326.16
Year to Date	\$10,860.81	\$12,203.21
Donations at the Door	\$286.30	\$356.54
Year to Date	\$2,909.91	\$2,980.15

**General**

- The museum gift shop is featuring three new consignment artists – Bill Heyduck, pottery; Barbara Dalenberg, glass jewelry; and Lucy Synk, fantasy art. Their work will be on sale through December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Johnston Contractors have secured the necessary permits, and site preparation has begun. Site clearing and demolition is scheduled for the week of November 7<sup>th</sup>, and, weather-permitting, they expect to pour concrete the first week of December.

November 4, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Dave Torrens, Director of Golf

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Lake of the Woods Golf Course Maintenance Activity Report

Preparations to winterize the irrigation system have begun. Plans are to rent an air compressor November 7<sup>th</sup> to complete the winterization process. Staff continues to clean leaves from the course and around the pro shop.

Staff continues aerification of the fairways and rough. This helps alleviate compaction, improves air and water infiltration. During the winter, the aerification holes allow water to freeze, expand and thaw, also helping with compaction. Staff is pictured below using the fairway aerator.



November 7, 2011

## MEMORANDUM

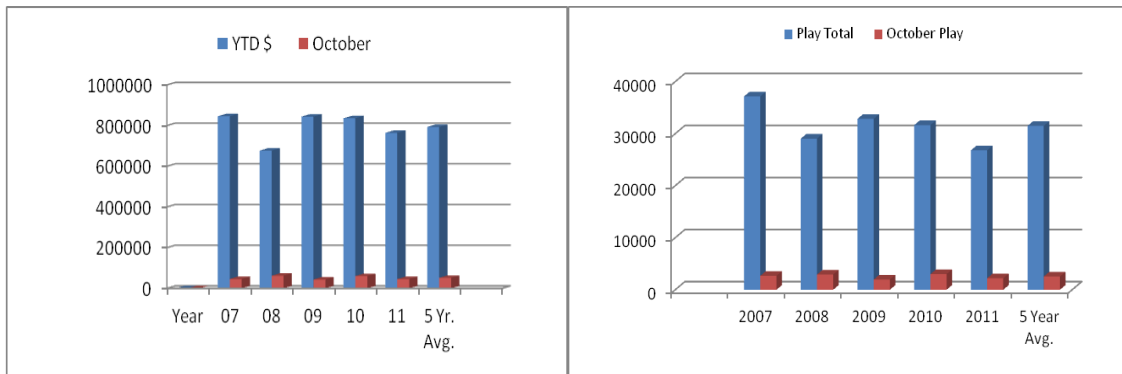
From: Dave Huber, Golf Professional

To: Board of Commissioners

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

### Operations

Revenue for October 2011 was \$46,049 compared with \$60,297 for October of 2010. The total play for October 2011 was 2,204 golfers compared with 2,995 for October 2010. We were down 791 rounds from last year.



### Tournament and Outings

October 8-9	Two-Person Better Ball	54 players
October 16 <sup>h</sup>	UI Engineering Council	52 players

### Other Activities

- Due to prior arrangements with vendors, we have now returned more than \$8,000 worth of 2011 merchandise for full credit.
- I received the CIPGA Merchandiser of the Year for public courses award at our fall PGA meeting November 7<sup>th</sup>. I will include a link to a website with the article and photos next month.
- We are again participating in the Illiana Golf Sale at Balmoral Woods Golf Course in Crete, Illinois with 15 other golf courses. This sale is an annual group sale that helps us turn over some inventory in the fall when our traffic is low. Each year we make somewhere around \$6,000 in merchandise sales.

November 7, 2011

## MEMORANDUM

From: John Baker, Administration

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Administration Activity Report

- The District received a preliminary field review score from PDRMA of 94%. After forwarding some additional documentation to them, we are hopeful we can improve upon that preliminary score.
- The District's farm operations produced 3,777 bushels of corn and 2,456 bushels of soybeans, which sold at \$6.60 and \$12.06 per bushel for total revenue of \$53,964. While yields were down because of the wet spring and dry July, gross revenues did increase approximately 2.5%.
- The Conservation Reserve Program paid \$12,711 for the District acreage enrolled in this program. In recent years we've received \$24,005 in CRP, but the 2011 CRP year-end lottery for distribution of remaining funds was not as favorable to the District as in the past.
- The Employee Recognition Event was scheduled for Thursday, November 10. All staff and Board members and their families were invited to attend this annual event. The dinner this year was to be held at the Elks Lake Pavilion.
- Mary Beck and Sarah Elm are making preparations for those staff members that will be attending the annual IPRA/IAPD conference in Chicago. At this time, Commissioners Ruth Wene and Chris White, and staff members Jerry Pagac, John Baker, Savannah Hampson, Clint Schaffer, Sarah Elm and Roy Woodmansee are planning to attend, which will be held at the Hyatt Regency, January 26-28, 2012.
- Mary attended the fall 2011 PDRMA Risk Management Institute at Tinley Park on October 14<sup>th</sup>. The main topic was Health and Safety at Work and Play.
- I attended the Illinois Funds annual symposium October 18<sup>th</sup>, IMRF training October 25<sup>th</sup>, and the IAPD Legal Symposium October 27<sup>th</sup> with Matt Deering.
- We've had several meetings related to the Museum of the Grand Prairie project, including several regarding the procurement of the collections storage system, pre-bid meetings for that system and for the HVAC component, and progress meetings with Johnston Contractors.
- Dave Huber discussed with Jerry and me a revenue-generating possibility for the golf course during the winter months, with tentative plans to start in 2012.

- The District's Employee Assistance Program vendor, Creative Care, was purchased by Perspectives. We are reviewing additional EAP services now available to determine whether the District should offer expanded EAP services, particularly in legal and financial support.
- The County Clerk notified us that the Champaign TIF II District was extended but with a reduced property base. The recovered TIF parcels, i.e., those returned to the rolls for taxing districts, add \$8,042,240 in value to the District's Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV).
- November is the month for reviewing job descriptions and employee evaluations. Mary reminded all supervisors of this, and the updated job descriptions are being reviewed, as well as evaluations of full-time and permanent part-time employees.
- All 2011 rental reservation requests received to-date have been processed. However, we are still taking reservations for the remainder of the year. More than 445 rentals have been processed thus far. This includes both in-house and paid rentals.
- 2012 reservations are being currently being entered into the rental software. Once all 2012 reservations are entered, we plan to upload the rental calendar onto the District website so the public can view facility availability.
- Two Special Use Permits have been submitted and approved at Lake of the Woods – a Walk/Run held by Meyer Capel Law Offices on November 5th, and a Walk/Run held by Mahomet Rotary for the Mahomet Library on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

November 7, 2011

## MEMORANDUM

From: Mary Ellen Wuellner, Grants Coordinator

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Grant Activity Report

### **Grants Approved/Denied**

- The District was approved for one of two USDA grant applications submitted to the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus for Emerald Ash Borer-related projects in Illinois EAB quarantined counties. An award of \$16,000 will allow the Natural Resources staff to develop a Districtwide EAB management plan and enter into a contract for the completion of a stem-by-stem tree survey of preserve user areas. Unfortunately, the second application, \$7,000 for replacement trees, was not approved. Once the management plan is in place, the District will be better positioned for tree funding in the next round of applications. A 1:1 match is required for the \$16,000 grant, with staff time serving as an eligible match component.



### **New Grant Applications Submitted**

- An application in the amount of \$15,000 was submitted to the Champaign Rotary for the annual Joseph Cannon Memorial Grant for the Homer Lake Natural Playscape. Decisions will be made in December.
- Also submitted this month was an application to Outdoor Nation in the amount of \$1,706 for the 2012 Take Me Fishing program. Grants must be used specifically for youth fishing activities. Grant awards will be announced in late November.

### **Grant Applications Previously Submitted – Decision Pending**

- An application to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (\$30,564) for a Conservation Project Support grant for the purchase and installation of a collection storage shelving system for the Museum of the Grand Prairie – Phase I addition.
- An application to the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois (\$5,000) to fund the purchase of bike racks for locations throughout the District. A board member from the Community Foundation met with me in early November to discuss the details of this request.
- The application to IDNR's Recreational Trails Program to assist with acquisition of the Kickapoo Trail railroad right-of-way. The amount now pending final state approval is \$614,275.

November 8, 2011

## **MEMORANDUM**

From: Sally Prunty, Planning Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Planning Activity Report

### **Natural Playscape**

Planning and Construction staff coordinated on elevations and layout of the central playscape area adjacent to the creek. We placed boulders on the uphill portion of the area, which will create opportunities for climbing while at the same time act as a retaining wall. We will be refining the placement of these boulders next spring to enhance rock-climbing opportunities.

### **Buffalo Trace Pedestrian Bridge**

The contractor has completed construction of the culvert at Buffalo Trace and is very close to being finished with the pedestrian bridge. We have had a complaint by some of the trail users about having an “overengineered” solution to the erosion problems there. However, if we are going to have mowed trails, we need mower crossings. If we don’t have mower crossings, we have no trails. Once the construction debris is cleaned up and the site is reseeded and recovers from the construction disturbance, the crossings will settle into the landscape, and I believe people will be happy with them.

### **Lake of the Woods Pavilion Roof Project**

We have completed the bid process and paperwork for the Lake of the Woods Pavilion Roof Project. Bryan Stevens will oversee the construction process. Depending on the weather, we may do this work next spring. It may be too late to do it this fall.

### **Water Trail Extension from Possibility Pier**

We expect the anchoring for the fishing pier to be completed by mid-November. When the pier has been firmly anchored in place, we will begin the process of ordering the pier addition and gangway replacement. To finalize the pier addition layout, we need the exact location of the fishing pier and its distance from the shore.

### **Museum of the Grand Prairie Movable Storage Shelving**

We received general specifications from museum staff for development of the bid packet for the Museum Movable Storage Shelving System. This is a system bid, which means it is difficult to compare systems to one another and still arrive at a fair, competitive, unequivocal bid result. The market for this type of system is small enough that there are only a few manufacturers who supply the type of shelving the museum needs to adequately house, organize and access the collection efficiently. The bid opening is November 17<sup>th</sup>. We will be presenting the museum storage shelving proposal to the Board of Commissioners at the November Board Meeting.

### **Miscellaneous Planning Tasks:**

- Planning continues to develop and provide various maps for District staff and members of the public.
- We continue to carry out miscellaneous CAC tasks.

November 7, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

From: Andee Chestnut, Public Information Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Public Information Activity Report

- I was interviewed by a journalism student for UI7, the public access television channel operated by the UI. The topic was Lake of the Woods, but I did manage to throw in other items about the CCFPD.
- Otherwise, I'm wrapping things up, cleaning out 20 years worth of files, and moving the Academy office to a new location.
- It has been a privilege, and that's all she wrote!