

February 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM

From: Brian Taylor, Homer Lake Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Homer Lake Forest Preserve Activity Report

- Roy attended the IPRA conference and went to the following sessions: Natural Playscapes, Prevailing Wage Law, Contractors vs. Employees, and Park Bench Stories of Executive Directors.
- We had to remove the bench swing at the Maple Grove after discovering the 6x6 frame work had broken away from the concrete footers. These swings have been incredibly popular since installing them in 1994, so we will replace them as soon as weather permits.
- We met with a representative from *Blackie's Heating and Cooling* to go over options for installing a new HVAC system in the Interpretive Center. He also shared some ideas for how we can prevent or reduce the condensation problem that we have been having with metal duct work in the attic. It is interesting to note that we also contacted *Jesse Heating and Air*, but they will not do work that requires them to pay prevailing wages.
- The nice weather has allowed us to get out and burn some small areas that we do not usually get to until March or April. We have also seen bluebirds and robins already, so I hope the mild winter continues.
- We had to replace the main breaker and the primary incoming electrical wire in the circuit panel at the residence. The wire was getting so hot that the insulation was bubbling up and the copper wire became brittle and discolored. (See photo.) We had *Eastern Illinois Electric* disconnect the incoming power and they had to make the connection to the meter, while Roy and I did the inside connections.
- Maintenance on mowing equipment continues.



February 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM

From: Thomas M. Pike, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

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

- Annual mower maintenance has now been completed.
- Staff removed the two brick and concrete pillars located at the old Elk's Lake entrance off Lake of the Woods Road in early February. The Lake of the Woods Road multi-use trail will exit the roadway and enter the preserve at this point. The two pillars were obstructing the route needed for the new trail.
- Chipping will begin shortly on the very large pile of recycled Christmas trees.
- Staff has completed painting the two Lake of the Woods entrance signs using "One Shot" sign paint.
- The backhoe, tractors, and other equipment are currently undergoing servicing and maintenance in preparation for the spring season.
- Sixteen licensed district vehicles will receive new transmission filters and fluid this year. Ten more will get transmission service in 2013.
- I am preparing to get price quotes on the annual district janitorial supply order.
- Staff is currently repainting the 55-gallon trash cans from Lake of the Woods, Sangamon River, and River Bend.
- In preparation for the new marketing coordinator, operations staff shampooed the carpeting and did a thorough cleaning of her office at headquarters. Lisa Sprinkle will be moving into that space later this month.
- Janitorial work at rental buildings and public restrooms has now been completed.
- Staff continued with routine scheduled maintenance and repairs on various district vehicles and other equipment.

February 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM

From: Matthew Kuntz, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Middle Fork River Forest Preserve Activity Report

- Middle Fork staff continues to take advantage of the mild winter weather, removing downfall throughout the preserve user areas, removing debris from the trails, and graveling campsites.
- Staff also continues to service all machinery for the upcoming year's use.
- We are constructing more trail directional signs for the Middle Fork trail system. We received many compliments from visitors on the directional posts we put in place last year for the trails and hope to finish them up this spring.
- Thanks to the construction staff for helping to finish out the trim work on the new doors at the Activity Center.
- I enjoyed participating in the IPRA conference in Chicago at the end of January.
- The remainder of the month has been spent with routine maintenance throughout the preserve areas.

February 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM

From: Michael Daab, Director of Natural Resources
Daniel J. Olson, Deputy Executive Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Natural Resources Department Activity Report

- We are pleased to announce that Mike Daab was interviewed, offered, and accepted the director of natural resources position. Mike has been with us for quite a while. He interned in 2003, came back as a technician in mid 2006, and took over as the assistant director of natural resources in February 2007. Mike has been at the forefront of the campaign against exotic invasive species and his master's work examined the human perceptions of invasive species. I have had an opportunity to have several organizational meetings with Mike and have passed much of the NR director work onto him already. We welcome Mike to the position.
- Congratulations to Nathan Hudson for passing his CDL exam! Adam Rex's departure left us needing a properly licensed driver to haul equipment, and Nathan has stepped up to fill this role.
- We partnered with Grand Prairie Friends to finish up their seed cleaning for the year, and in exchange received some additional seed for our plantings.
- We continued to hand plant seed at various locations throughout the district.
- We took possession of our new utility trailer, which will be used primarily for transporting our Polaris UTV.
- We received 43 applications for our natural resources technician positions, and several of the applicants appear to be very well qualified. Interviews will begin the week of February 6.
- We have completed an annual report to the IDNR on the activities at Tomlinson Cemetery as well as a report on the Sangamon phlox population at Lake of the Woods.
- Mike's work with the Invasive Plant Task Force continues, with the majority of time spent planning for a natural areas stewardship training day and the second annual Great Garlic Mustard Hunt this coming spring.
- On November 1, 2011 the federal requirement for an NPDES permit for certain pesticide applications went into effect. Mike has worked through the process with the IL EPA and IL DNR to ensure CCFPD is compliant with the new ruling.
- Dan and Mike met with Pam Leiter and Sally Prunty to discuss the Homer Lake Natural Playscape planting.
- We have been preparing for the Illinois Prescribed Fire Council 2012 Annual Symposium, to be held at Elks Lake Pavilion on February 10.
- Much time has been spent performing annual and routine maintenance on equipment.
- Mike and Nate tested to renew their pesticide application permits.
- We continue to work with Joey Wolske, Eagle Scout, on a project to put a fish structure in Lake of the Woods.

- Dan attended the IPRA/IAPD conference in Chicago as well as the Illinois Association of Conservation and Forest Preserve District meeting during that time.
- Work continues on the Sylvester Property Plan.
- The Corps of Discovery will be moving our exhibit into the Redhed room on February 13. This will allow further installation of the new sprinkler system to be completed without exhibit components in the way. General information on the exhibit and the grand opening presentation can be found at: <http://www.museumofthegrandprairie.org/exhibits.html>.
- We have announced that the Frog Call Survey program will be coming to a close due to staffing changes. We are still allowing those that were trained to submit reports this year if they would like, but official trainings will not be held. This program had a five-year run and hundreds of data points were collected. Luckily, the education department will be holding a one-time program about frog calls this late winter that will help to encourage the public's interest in the animals. We will keep previous information on our website at: <http://www.ccfpd.org/NaturalResources/FrogCallSurvey.html>.
- Dan removed the very old CCFPD kiosk materials that were at the Farmland Rest Area on the eastbound lane of I-74 coming into the county. We contacted the IDOT regional planner to see if we still have ownership of the kiosk and they said we could continue to display materials there. Sarah Elm has offered to design new material for the display.

February 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM

From: Larry Beckett, Botanical Garden Supervisor

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden Activity Report

- The Botanical Garden's part-time staff attended the Illinois Pesticide Clinic for training and testing. The testing categories in which the Botanical Garden staff participates include 'General Standards', 'Turf', 'Ornamentals', and 'Vegetable Crops'.
- All of our seed orders have been received and we are finishing placing perennial plant orders with local vendors. All of the perennials we are ordering will be planted in existing beds within the Botanical Garden.
- We have started annual and perennial flower seed germination within the greenhouse on selected plant material. Once the plants reach the seedling stage, we transplant into pots and grow to a size suitable for planting into beds and large containers.
- We are finishing placing horticultural supply orders as needed for the spring season. This includes pesticides and fertilizers, potting soil, hand tools, greenhouse supplies, deer protection, etc.
- We have set up 6 LED grow lights in the lean-to greenhouse for seed germination. This gives plant seedlings the light required for uniform growth during the cloudy days of winter.
- Servicing the Botanical Garden power equipment is nearing completion. We change oil and filters, spark plugs, service hydraulic systems, check hoses, lubricate fittings, etc.
- We met with Mike Daab regarding the removal of four mature Colorado blue spruce within the Botanical Garden that have died or declined to the point where their death is imminent. The Natural Resource Department staff will down the trees and cut them into manageable pieces, and the Botanical Garden staff will clean up the debris.
- We have noticed increased deer movement in the Discovery Garden and in the area of the Museum's schoolhouse this winter. We are making plans for additional deer protection in the vegetable area of the Discovery Garden. There has been severe deer damage to the plantings in the Discovery Garden the past two years.

February 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM

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

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Museum and Education Department Activity Report

Monthly Department Numbers

Education:

School Programs

Onsite 30 students
Offsite 13 students

Schools served:

Countryside, Central High School

Public Programs:

Program	Location	Attendance
Senior Moments: Into the Woods - A Virtual Hike	Clark-Lindsey Village Emeritus at Canterbury Ridge Windsor of Savoy	93 total
Nature at Night	Middle Fork	11

Volunteers: Hours: 66.1

Volunteers helped with Nature at Night, painting and refreshing cases and walls in preparation for the 100 Discoveries exhibit, museum library cataloguing, archiving museum exhibits and photographs, brochure creation, and beginning the preparation of collections for movement to the new storage area in the museum addition.

Homer Lake Interpretive Center

Month Comparisons	2011	2012
General Visitation - January	35	69*
Year to Date	35	69
<i>*90% Champaign County, 7% other IL counties, 3% out-of-state</i>		
Donations at the Door	\$2.65	\$11
Year to Date	\$2.65	\$11

General:

- Pam Leiter and Barb Garvey have begun drafting 2012 priorities for the Trailside Interpretive Plan.
- Pam has begun working on online plan-your-visit information for the playscape and interpretive center. We expect an increase in group visits once the playscape opens, and will have general information as well as audience-specific resources for audiences like school groups and scouts.
- Program staff assisted Sarah Elm with inputting January-March programs into online community calendars.
- We are developing summer camp curriculum in preparation for the busy programming season, and summer seasonal job announcements were sent out to university contacts.
- Savannah Hampson has been updating our Girl Scout programs, in response to the recent revamp of badge requirements completed by the national scout office.
- Savannah also attended the IPRA conference at the end of January.

Museum of the Grand Prairie

The museum is closed in January and February. There are no monthly comparisons for these two months.

Construction Update:

After the January 22 thunderstorm that dumped ¾" of rain on the building pad, Johnston Contractors postponed the backfilling. Even with blankets down, they were not able to achieve the compaction conditions necessary to proceed with the installation of the concrete slab. At JCI's recommendation, fill material was replaced so that the site would be ready for the concrete pour on Monday, February 6. They are approximately three weeks behind schedule and hope to make up time during the framing of the building. Installation of the fire suppression system on the main floor - not including the blacksmith exhibit area - is almost complete and painters have begun to paint the pipes to match the existing ceiling components. Unpainted they are black with orange joints.



Left: Smoothing the concrete being poured as this report is being written.

Right: Pipco workers installing the fire suppression system in the galleries.

New Staff:

The museum welcomes Kaitlyn (Katie) Riopelle as the Public Program/Visitor Services Coordinator. Katie graduated from Oakland University in Michigan with a B.A. in Art History. Through her internships at the Cranbrook Academy of Art and Museum, the Loren Andrus Octagon House, and with La Pittura (an art history organization with Oakland University), she gained experience and knowledge of professional museum practices and procedures along with experience in museum education and public outreach. In addition, Katie gained her retail experience at Kate Spade New York through sales and sales development, client outreach, tracking , product merchandising, product placement and design. She also aided in training and education of new sales associates.

We also welcome Danielle (Dani) Brown as a part-time educator. Dani has a B.A. in Art and Museum Studies from Southern Illinois University. She interned at the Children's Museum of the Arts in New York City and is currently a museum associate at the Orpheum Children's Science Museum. Dani brings excellent experience and creativity to program presentation as well as curriculum planning and writing.

Interviews for the Customer Service/Retail Associate position will begin soon with the goal of having everyone hired by February 17.

February 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM

From: Dave Torrens, Director of Golf

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Lake of the Woods Golf Course Maintenance Staff Report

- Staff continues with winter maintenance on equipment.
- Staff members also spent time trimming trees on the warmer days we have had this winter.
- Dave Torrens will attend the 2012 GCSAA Education Conference and Trade Show Feb. 27 to Mar. 1, 2012. Scheduled seminars include; Soils - The Foundation of Quality Turf, Plant Growth Regulators for Fine Turf, and Reducing Chemical Use on Golf Course Turf - Redefining IPM. Other open sessions will be attended.
- Battery Specialist and Golf Cars is correcting the battery issue. The golf cars will be ready for opening day.
- The golf maintenance cart will be replaced this year. We are looking at a few different models to see which one will best fit our needs. One possible option is shown below.



Club Car Carryall 2

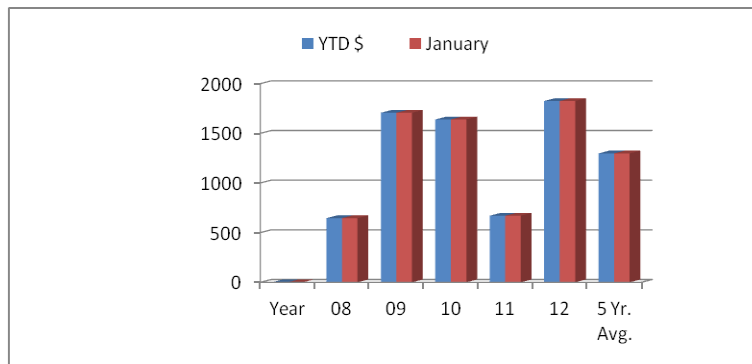
February 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM

From: Dave Huber, Golf Professional
To: Board of Commissioners
Subject: Lake of the Woods Golf Course Pro Shop Monthly Report

Operations

Revenue for January 2012 was \$1,826 compared with \$671 for January of 2011. If we can continue this level of monthly revenue increase, we will have a very good 2012. There were no players in January either year.



No Tournament or Outings for January

Other Activities

- Chris Edmondson, David Sebestik and I attended the 2012 PGA Merchandise show. As I reported last month we were looking forward to a side-by-side comparison of golf simulator equipment. The good and bad news is we have a lot of information to sort through. I did get an offer of free shipping from *True Golf* (a \$600-\$700 savings), and we are now fairly confident they will be the best fit as our indoor golf simulator vendor.
- We are progressing with the move of the golf course website from *1-2-1 Marketing* to one provided by *Fore! Reservations*, our current POS and marketing vendor, at no charge for 2012.
- The 2012 merchandise is arriving daily. Receiving, pricing, and displaying the merchandise is an ongoing process.
- *Fore! Reservations* marketing staff are working with us to set up our calendar for 2012 including pre-paid internet specials, newsletters, email templates and all promotions.

February 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM

From: John Baker, Administration

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Administration Activity Report

- Health Alliance approved the District for the HMO 100 plan at \$555 per employee per month, which was \$17 less than originally quoted. This reduced expected health insurance costs by an additional \$7100. Coverage began February 1.
- Mary coordinated the employee enrollment in the new health insurance plan, and cancelled the Local Government Health Plan coverage so that it ended January 31. Employees will receive their new cards in the next few days.
- The County Clerk confirmed the District's levy for 2012, including the new bond amount. He also confirmed the Consumer Price Index rate at 3% for 2012.
- IMRF reported that its investment returns dropped by one-half percent in 2011 which is \$2 billion short of their expected actuarial return. This will put pressure on the rates the District pays in the future.
- The cost of the District's insurance coverage through PDRMA dropped 5% for 2012.
- Mary continues to coordinate recruiting and hiring activities for the District. Lisa Sprinkle begins February 27 as Marketing Coordinator. Katie Riopelle started in the museum's Public Program and Visitor Services position February 6. Interviewing for two Natural Resources Technician positions continues and hiring has begun for part-time and seasonal positions.
- Arnold issued employee W2s, vendor 1099s and finished reconciling bank accounts for 2012.
- Jackie and I continue to review utility bills for discrepancies and potential savings. Reviewing the *Frontier* phone bills shows that all of the phone lines replaced by the PRI line have been dropped and appropriate credits issued. *Champaign Telephone* is also reviewing for us to be sure that all added services are accurate.
- *ACTServices* consulting finished the ADA review of District facilities. The report is expected in the next few days and will be integral to crafting future capital budgets.
- I attended the IAPD/IPRA conference and found the Municipal Bonding and Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) sessions especially helpful. The District is now subject to annual reporting requirements on our bonds, which *Speer Financial* will assist us in preparing annually. GASB requirements continue to change. Beyond this year's required restatement of the District's balance sheet to accurately reflect the available balance, GASB is proposing the addition of pension liabilities in 2014 which promises to require another major reworking of public agency balance sheets.
- In between attending the conference and getting over a bad sinus infection, I've been busy revising the 2012 working budget based on recent employee and benefit changes, commissioner recommendations from the January budget meeting, and updated vendor costs. Jerry, Dan and I discussed these changes, project fund transfers, and employee compensation.
- On the revenue side, Matt Kuntz and I met about campground fees which have not increased since the start of the 2009 camping season. We agreed to review campground rates and the potential for marketing the campground with Lisa Sprinkle after she comes on board.

- Dan and I discussed leaving pavilion and wedding rental rates at 2012 levels for 2013 reservations which will be starting shortly. This will allow time for comparing with other public facility rentals and looking at our market, particularly for weddings. Pavilion rental rates have increased between 3-5% annually for some years.
- I've also coordinated marketing advertising for a few advertisements the District has placed at this time of year in the past. A de facto marketing team reviews and recommends changes before the ads are placed and paid.
- We received several contract proposals this month, including the fireworks proposal, *Fore Reservation* renewal, and an intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Mahomet for the Lake of the Woods Multipurpose trail.

The District currently has more than 100 reservations for 2012. Four reservations are completely processed, another 65 are in progress with 43 of those confirmed with a reservation fee. The remaining reservations are waiting for the paperwork to be processed and sent. These figures include in-house, free and paid rentals.

Special Use Permits

The following special use permits have been submitted and approved:

Applicant	Date	Event	Location
Jackie Walk / Special Olympics	2/25/2012	Polar Bear Plunge	LOW Peninsula

February 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM

From: Mary Ellen Wuellner, Grants Coordinator

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Grant Activity Report

Grants Approved/Denied

- The application to the IDNR for its Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant was approved. The grant of approximately \$1,000 will be used to purchase plugs for the prairie grasses and wildflowers that will be planted among the features of the Homer Lake Natural Playscape. Thanks again to Pam Leiter and Sally Prunty for their considerable input into this grant. Sally and Pam will now work with Dan Olson and Mike Daab to manage the project. Some of the planting labor is expected to be donated by scouts, Master Naturalists, and other interested individuals – a factor that made our grant application more competitive.

New Grant Applications Submitted

- An application was submitted to the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois for a \$1,400 micro-grant to cover the cost of a training course entitled “Principles and Techniques of Fundraising”. I will be attending the class, which is offered by the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, in May. This micro-grant program is funded in part by the Lumpkin Family Foundation.

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 National Environmental Education Foundation (\$5,000) to help increase the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation’s capacity for fundraising and financial resources development.
- 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.

February 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM

From: Bryan Stevens, Construction Manager

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Construction Department Activity Report

- Staff installed two new main sump pumps and two battery backup pumps in the basement of the Museum of the Grand Prairie.
- The installation of new windows in Izaak Walton Cabin at Lake of the Woods has now been completed.
- Johnston Contractors, Inc. (JCI) continued work on the Museum of the Grand Prairie. Installation of the fire suppression system has started in the museum with an expected completion date of March 1. Rain, snow, and fluctuating temperatures throughout December and January prevented the contractor from obtaining the soil compaction necessary to pour the concrete slab. To keep the construction project on schedule, JCI recommended removing the top layer of existing fill and replacing it with new dry fill material. District staff concurred with this option and gave the contractor the okay to proceed. Once the soil replacement was accomplished, the contractor was able to reach an acceptable compaction level. The remaining plumbing and electrical components were then installed. Pouring of the concrete floor began on February 6 and should be completed within two days.



Concrete pour and flooring installation finally underway

February 6, 2012

MEMORANDUM

From: Sally Prunty, Planning Director

To: Board of Commissioners

Subject: Planning Activity Report

Water Trail Extension from Possibility Pier:

- We have placed an advertisement in the paper for the fishing pier addition. We hope to award that project soon.
- We need to set the elevation of the landing for the addition about 4 to 6 inches above whatever permanent water level we choose to set the lake. The distance measurements from the pier to shore have fluctuated some, but the landings should be large enough to accommodate some movement of the pier. It may be advisable to anchor the pier addition at some point along its length, as we did for the rest of the pier.

AutoCAD Database:

- I have been updating the Lake of the Woods site plan portion of the database.

CCFPD Easement Research:

- In the process of searching for an easement for *Ameren Illinois* at Lake of the Woods preserve, I have recognized that we need to update/coordinate our files regarding easements at all of our forest preserves. This is on the agenda for 2012 for the planning department. We may need to have an engineer read the legal descriptions for us and develop drawings locating the easements. We have some of the more recent easements already, such as the water easement at Homer Lake preserve, and the access easement at River Bend. However, we should have copies of the legal descriptions for all of our easements on file, and we should know their exact locations and boundaries.

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.