

July 10, 2017

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Commissioners
From: Lisa Sprinkle, Marketing Coordinator
Re: August Staff Report

Executive Director (Dan Olson)

- The U of I ORPR and Trails for Illinois met with staff to develop the user intercept survey for the KRT. They believe they will have that survey set up and approved by the University of Illinois prior to the trail opening.
- Staff met with the Urbana Park District to further discuss Weaver Park connectivity and future granting for the KRT as it relates to timelines for the UPD.
- Staff continued KRT Take Possession meetings, Risk Management with a good vehicle sharing session delivered by Doug Sanders, Projects meetings and Direct report meetings. I continue to work with the NRPA Awards and Scholarships Committee as well. We recently held our annual employee picnic. A big thank you goes to Fran and Stacy Clementz for getting food and games set up and a thanks to chef Joe Hopper who has run the grill a couple of years now.
- A lot of staff time has been spent on final preparations for the KRT. Final punch lists have been given to Cross Construction. It is really coming together nicely.
- Staff has also spent a lot of time on audit information. Although the final product has taken a bit longer than expected, what we have received to date has been positive for both the Foundation and District audits.
- The Citizen's Advisory Committee met this month with a whole lot of updates on their agenda including:
 - They are still searching a member to fill a vacant position.
 - Their annual orientation was completed.
 - They recently sent letters of support for some of our frozen grants to local Senators and Representatives and received a response from Carol Ammons.
 - They are examining and updating their time spent doing outreach and looking to add some outreach dates. They decided that the Homer Soda Festival was not worth their time and took a vote not to have it on next year's outreach calendar.
- Fran, Mary Ellen and I continue to work towards hiring an Administrative Assistant that works jointly with the Foundation and District as part of an earlier agreement.

Deputy Director/Grants (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- Dan, Fran, and I conducted three interviews for the Administrative Assistant position on August 9 and 10. A second set of interviews, including a written exercise, will be held later this month.
- As I indicated at the July board meeting, I received word from the IDNR grant administrator in Springfield that neither the Bike Path Grant nor the Public Museum Capital Grant had been included in the recent budget passed by the state legislature. To fund those programs, an additional legislative action would be required. This leaves us without any timeline for reimbursement on the \$57,571 grant for the *Grand Prairie Story*

or the \$200,000 for the Kickapoo Rail Trail, or an executed grant agreement for Large Artifact Storage.

Human Resources (Fran Bell)

- For the past several months, Human Resources has been reviewing District personnel policies and researching the need for revisions to these policies. Several policies have been revised and are moving through a review process established by the Executive Director. Additional policy reviews and revisions will continue for the remainder of 2017 as part of the Strategic Plan.
- Searches for two vacant positions have concluded this month and Human Resources has been managing the onboarding process for the newly hired employees. There are still two vacant positions that are moving through the search process, a full-time position at Middle Fork (Assistant Site Superintendent) and a part-time position at Headquarters (Administrative Assistant). Human Resources assisted with interview scheduling for the Administrative Assistant position as well as participated in the interview process for the Assistant Site Superintendent.
- Several seasonal employees have resigned in the past few weeks for a variety of reasons, many due to relocation and/or returning to school. Human Resources provided supervisors with a refresher on the information and forms needed to process seasonal resignations.
- Human Resources planned the annual employee picnic that was held in early August. Approximately 50 staff members were able to attend the event at the Lake of the Woods Pavilion.

Administration (John Baker)

- Worked with Anna Cadmus of Sikich to finalize both the Foundation and District audit reports and recommendations. Posted update to the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board regarding the District audit. Published a Notice of Audit Availability in the News-Gazette as the Public Funds Statement issued in the past is not required when audits are completed and available no later than June 30 for the District.
- Updated job description for the Financial Assistant in preparation for new hire later this year. Arnold Blair is retiring December 18, 2017 after seven years of employment with the District. Arnold was invaluable in helping set up our current financial system in 2010 and implementing related systems like Paylocity in 2015 and ActiveNet in 2016. He provided plenty of notice so we can plan the succession including time for him to work with his successor on key aspects of the Financial Assistant tasks.
- Received initial capital and operating budget submissions from all departments and have begun inputting these in our Budget Planning database. Reviewing submissions for missing and duplicate data, new services requests, budget requests beyond the 2016 base budget and vendor increases.
- Updated fiscal projections for all District funds with actuals through June 30, 2016 and revised fund and overall reserve projections for future years.
- Met with headquarters employees about equipment and facility needs at Heritage Hall/Administration building and adjacent areas.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Social media update: on Facebook CCFPD has 1,860 (+43) followers; Lake of the Woods Golf Course has 850 (+26); Kickapoo Rail Trail has 1,926 (+34); Museum of the Grand Prairie has 799 (+18). Homer Lake Interpretive Center 142 likes (+5). CCFPD has 372 (+10) Instagram followers, Museum of the Grand Prairie has 105 (+8) followers. Kickapoo Rail Trail has 90 (+3) followers and CCFPD has 464 followers on Twitter.
- Made a presentation at the Mahomet Area Chamber of Commerce July luncheon. I spoke about the ways people can enjoy the Champaign County Forest Preserves including the best places to picnic, trails to walk, bike paths and of course, the great programs offered.
- Lisa and Angie participated in the CPR/First Aid Training on August 1.

Natural Resources (Mike Daab)

- Jacob Pruiett attended a field day to learn more about, and observe the effects of, applying herbicide using aerial equipment. The applications are made by helicopter or airplane, and timed for after native plants have gone dormant and dropped leaves in the fall, but while bush honeysuckle is still active. Initial experiments have had positive results, and this is a cost-saving technique that may be included as part of our integrated pest management program in the future.
- Brad Nelson, Jacob Pruiett, and Michael Daab attended the "Reeling in a Healthy Pond" pond management clinic on August 1, 2017. The clinic was hosted by the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, and was put together by staff with Champaign County Soil and Water, the IL Department of Natural Resources, and U of I Extension.
- Natural Resources staff assisted Homer Lake staff in cleaning up storm damage from severe weather that occurred on July 10-11th.
- Following teasel, thistle, and sweet clover management in primarily prairie and savanna areas, bush honeysuckle and autumn olive seedling and resprout treatment in the forests and savannas has been the focus of invasive plant management by Natural Resources staff over the past month.

Planning and Construction Department (Jon Hasselbring and Mike Fry)

- The Construction Department and Middle Fork staff completed the overlook and drainage infrastructure improvements at the Point Pleasant Trail.



- The construction crew repaired the Homer Lake Interpretive Center roof, and replaced windows at Hawthorne Hill and Rotary Hill restrooms.

- The Planning department coordinated HVAC replacements at the Natural Resources building and repairs to the Museum of the Grand Prairie collection storage room.
- The Planning department coordinated mud jacking repairs to sidewalks at the Museum of the Grand Prairie and Buffalo Trace Restrooms.
- Jon met with the Vermilion County Conservation District, City of Danville, and the National Park Service to discuss plans for a 4 mile rail trail connection from the Vermilion County Fairgrounds to Danville city limits.
- Installed smart thermostats at Headquarters.

Lake of the Woods Golf Course (Dave Torrens and Chris Edmondson)

- July started off hot and dry and ended cool and rainy. We had 4317 players in July, up about 300 players from 2016!
- We held our annual Junior Golf Camp July 10-14, daily from 8:00-12:00. We had 24 kids participate this year.
- Our Parent-Child Golf on the Par 3 Course on Sunday evenings has been a success. We've had anywhere from 7-12 teams per week. This program will run through August.
- On July 24th, representatives from the CDGA (Chicago District Golf Association), which is our Golf Handicap governing body, came to the course and spent the morning re-rating the golf course. This is supposed to be done every 5-7 years, but we had not had it done since the completion of the tee box reconstruction in 2008.
- Chris met with Doug Sanders on the 25th and we went over Resident Guard responsibilities, including alarm notifications, codes, locations and procedures. This was the main step in transferring the responsibility of alarm calls moving forward with his impending move to the Golf Course residence.
- On August 1st, Nick Berger, David Sebestik and Chris Edmondson attended the CPR/AED/First Aid training seminar at Elks Lake Pavilion.
- Outings and Events: July 15, Farnsworth Group – 31 players; July 20, Horace Mann – 16 players; July 27, Junior Open – 46 players; July 31, Champaign Rotary Corn Roast – 55 players; August 5-6, Club Championship – 15 players
- Golf Maintenance staff continues with many irrigation repairs, bunker renovation and preparing for 2018 projects.
- Thank you to the Botanical Gardens staff for maintaining the golf course landscape beds!

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

- A dehumidifier was placed in expansion storage (the new collections storage) of the MGP, and a new thermostat was installed so that the humidity can be more tightly controlled. Previously condensation occurred on many humid summer days.
- Mark Hanson led a tour for the Dowell family, who requested a special visit to see the World War I items donated to the MGP by Jesse Dowell, Sr. Mr. Dowell, was in Harry Truman's unit during that war. Buffalo Trace is located where the Dowell farm once existed.
- Steel doors with crash bars were installed by the Construction Department for the emergency exits of the museum: one is located on the lower level, the other at the end of the blacksmith wing. These accessible and airtight doors replace wood doors which had a hand-operated dead bolt, and a door handle.

- As part of Awesome Blossom Garden Camp, the campers painted flowers on rocks and placed them throughout the Botanical Garden. To raise awareness, each rock also included a request to relocate the rock to another Botanical Garden or CCFPD site and a request to post a picture on Facebook. It seems to be working well and has been fun for the participants and the Botanical Garden staff.
- Summer camps wrapped up at the end of July. It was a great summer, despite having fewer staff than normal for Eco-Adventures; the staff really stepped up and made for a successful summer. Everything worked so well, including our first attempt at online registration for camps this year! Once again, feedback from parents for Eco-Adventures was overwhelmingly positive.
- Homer Lake Interpretive Center welcomes Jennifer Wick as a new Public Program Specialist. Jennifer has worked with us before teaching school programs and summer camps, and is excited to step into this new role.
- Christopher Borrelli of the Chicago Tribune interviewed Barb Garvey for an article about pioneer cemeteries which was published on August 4, 2017. Borelli mentioned the Museum, and the same day a patron visited the museum because of the tribune piece.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts this month included:

- Katie Snyder taught one day and participated in the final evening of a week long program at Garden Hills Elementary School in Champaign called One People Summer Arts Camp.
- The museum hosted a tour for the Individual Advocacy group, an organization dedicated to caring for/providing for adults with developmental disabilities.

Lake of the Woods, River Bend, Sangamon River and Botanical Gardens (Doug Sanders)

- Staff have completed over 3,000 linear feet of edging around the beds in the Botanical Garden. This project had limited expenses associated with it due to the repurpose of the paver bricks that were utilized. This will improve the aesthetical look of the landscaped beds and will reduce labor in the future by creating a barrier between the turf and mulch. An online estimating application projected this task to cost approximately \$30,000 (labor and materials).
- Over the past few weeks, staff have repaired road edges at the River Bend and Lake of the Woods Preserves with recycled asphalt. In addition, they have filled several pot holes on roads and in parking lots throughout the parks.
- Thank you to all of the seasonal staff for their assistance over the summer. Their hard work over the past few months was excellent! A few of the tasks they performed included: painting, string trimming, weekly garbage pickup, trail maintenance, road repairs, pressure washing, and Freedom Fest.



Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- We installed new fishing regulation signs that include limits on saugeye which are currently under the 14 inch limit. We have had several fishermen ask about the saugeye now that they are catching them.

- A good deal of time was given to the 2018 budget process with meetings and gathering prices and doing projections.
- Jon, Mike and I drove the KRT from St Joe to Walmart to scout locations for information displays and inspect areas where additional barriers may be needed to deter motorized vehicles from driving on the trail.
- We appreciate the help that we received from the Natural Resources and Construction departments with the clean up after the wind storm. We had had several trees that had to be removed and even more tree tops that were broken off. The residence escaped serious damage after a very large limb landed on the roof. The cleanup took about two weeks.

Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- With help from the construction crew, we have finished the trail construction at Point Pleasant. Culverts with walk paths over them were built, and the overlook area was completed.
- We have started pinpointing our new lighting locations in the campground, the first phase of the Dark Sky Initiative.
- A new sidewalk has also been looked at in the shower house location. This sidewalk is being built to ease pedestrian's access to the shower house and other amenities in that location, and making it safer at night avoiding traffic on the roads.
- The Soil and Water Conservation District held a Pond Seminar at the Middle Fork on August 1st. Dave Shiley, Mike Garthaus, and representatives from Soil and Water gave a presentation to nearly fifty people on pond management best practice.

Volunteers (Kristin Tetzlaff)

- Late July saw the first edition of the volunteer newsletter being distributed. This digital newsletter was sent out to all volunteers in our system who opted "in" to receiving such correspondence, for a total of 128 of the 137 volunteers in Volgistics. It was also sent to all District staff and shared with committees (even if all members are not yet in our system).
- One highlight from this newsletter was the introduction of the "Top 'Teer" recognition program. The Top 'Teer individual(s) are selected solely based on who donated the most hours for the month as determined by them entering hours into Volgistics. Aside from the announcement to all volunteer in the monthly volunteer newsletter, a certificate, and a small token of gratitude in the form of a logoed district item are given. This program will hopefully encourage people to get in the habit of entering their hours in a timely fashion as well as recognizing some of our most active volunteers.
- Another important note from the newsletter was that a date was set for the volunteer recognition event for Wednesday, September 20 from 5:30-7:30PM. The exact location is TBD, but will be sent out in the August newsletter. As a District, we are encouraging all staff who regularly work with volunteers to attend.