

July 12, 2018

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Lisa Sprinkle, Marketing Coordinator

Re: July Staff Report

Executive Director (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- The 2018 training budget will allow us to cover all NRPA conference expenses for two members of the Board and the conference fee only for one additional member. Based on communications with Commissioners, Sarah Livesay and Andrew Kerins would have all expenses covered, while Bill Goodman has agreed to cost-share his conference expenses with his place of employment. Bobbie Herakovich will attend at her own expense and Scott Hays will not be attending this year's conference. If this information is accurate, Mary Beck will contact Commissioners to make arrangements, and staff will add approval requests to the August agenda.
- The Champaign County Forest Preserve District hosted another successful Freedom Fest on July 4. The heat and humidity and/or the mid-week date were likely factors in a lower than normal attendance. Gate revenue put the number around 3,000 this year rather than the 5,000 we might see in a typical year. Members of the operations, marketing, construction, education, volunteer, and administration staff braved the high temperatures to ensure that a safe and enjoyable time was had by all. A full report of staff time, expenses, and revenue figures will be provided for the August board meeting.
- Middle Fork's campground was also booked to capacity on July 4 and on the weekend after the holiday. My thanks to everyone who worked or played a role in making July 4 a successful holiday for preserve visitors again this year.
- Mike Daab, Matt Kuntz, and I met on June 27 with Larry Roberts and his son, Corey. The Roberts family has been farming District-owned land near Middle Fork for more than three decades. This was my first meeting with Mr. Roberts and his son. I learned a good deal about the history of the area and the Middle Fork community's relationship with our preserve. We also talked briefly about the results of the S.T.A.R. assessment that was completed for our site and some of the sustainable practices that might be investigated in the future.

Business and Finance (John Baker)

- Painstakingly responded to Sikich questions as we finalized the District audit report including the statistical and introductory sections required in a comprehensive annual financial report.
- Received the final Forest Preserve Friends Foundation audit report and board communications reports. Chad Lucas of Sikich attended the Foundation's July 10 meeting to share the audit information with board members.
- Processed accelerated payroll on July 3 because of the July 4 holiday, to ensure all employees were paid on July 6. Any discrepancies between estimated and actual hours worked for July 3 will be adjusted on the July 20 payroll.

- Prepared 2019 budget timeline and materials for the June 25 budget kick off meeting. Due to parental emergency illness, I had to miss this meeting, but thanks to Jon and Mary Ellen the capital portion of the meeting was addressed, with the operating portion becoming part of the July 11 capital projects meeting.
- Updated fiscal projections for all District funds with actuals through June 30, 2017 and revised projections for future years.
- Documented and recycled obsolete computers and other no longer used electronics, with the assistance of the Catholic Heart Work Camp volunteers.

Human Resources (Fran Bell)

- Fran attended the National Society of Human Resource Management conference held in Chicago from June 17-20. There were over 22,000 individuals in attendance from all over the world, so there were many opportunities for networking with other human resource professionals. In addition to the general sessions, Fran attended sessions on the following topics: creating a coaching culture, succession planning, cultural competency, emotional intelligence, onboarding, dealing with difficult people, and the power of stay interviews. Fran will be working to implement some of the ideas that she gained during these sessions over the next year. During the vendor expo, Fran had the chance to meet a variety of vendors to see new ideas for employee recognition, wellness initiatives, and other various topics.
- Several sections of the personnel policy have been revised and are in stages of the review process. Fran will provide several portions of the personnel policy manual to the Board of Commissioners for review and action over the next few months.
- The Compensation Committee has been meeting monthly to review and propose changes to the longevity bonus policy and the mobile phone allowance as well as issues related to the District’s on-call procedures.
- The Safety Committee has begun working on a District-wide safety manual in response to the recommendations from the PDRMA Loss Control Review.
- Human Resources and other administrative staff have begun visiting departments to deliver frozen treats on Fridays (Frozen Fridays) as a small token of employee appreciation throughout the month of July.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Social Media Numbers

	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-	TWITTER	+/-
CCFPD	2,348	65	642	30	504	8
KRT	2,394	16			104	0
MGP	1,508	44	320	24		
HLIC	458	90				
GC	1,044	16	168	8	55	29

- Marketing and education staff participated in the Working Women’s Expo on Thursday, June 21. The Expo is put on by the Illini Radio Group at the I-Hotel and averages over 3,000 attendees each year. Pat Cain, Angie Clayton, and I were able to talk with several women about all different aspects of the District. We passed out District sunglasses, cinch bags, and Frisbees.



- Twelve MTD busses are carrying the message “Plug into Nature! It’s Closer Than You Think” throughout July. Facebook posts are also carrying that message with information about each of the six preserves.

Grants (Jarrod Schuenemann)

- Close-out reports were submitted for three of the four Clean Energy amenities grants: Patton Woods, Hidden Acres, and Point Pleasant. We secured an extension for the Sangamon River Forest Preserve amenities grant to allow for delay delivery and installation of dark sky light fixture.
- Post-completion reports were submitted to the Department of Natural Resources for Land and Water Conservation grants for land acquisition at the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve including the campground. These reports are due every five years.
- We updated the District’s information on the State of Illinois grant portal, which is necessary annually before any grant awards or other state grant action may be taken on CCFPD grants.

Planning and Construction Department (Jon Hasselbring and Mike Fry)

- The planning department welcomed a GIS Intern, Aaron Hoyle-Katz. Aaron is majoring in Geography and GIS at the University of Illinois. His tasks this summer will focus on mapping trails, natural resources, and amenities throughout the District.
- The construction crew has completed structural repairs to the administration building roof, and has begun fascia board replacement. This work is being completed ahead of the re-roofing project.
- Light pole construction was completed for future dark sky fixture installations.
- Rayburn Purnell shelter was removed after recent storm damage. Location for a new shelter is under consideration.
- We completed a status report on 2018 Capital Projects. The update is provided for Board review.

Natural Resources (Mike Daab)

- NR Staff worked with volunteers from the Catholic HEART Work Camp to remove invasive plants and plant some native wildflowers at Point Pleasant during the week of June 18th. We thank these volunteers for their service, especially during such hot weather!

- Several flats of native plant plugs, including New Jersey Tea that was contract grown from local sources, were planted by NR staff at Middle Fork, the Kickapoo Rail Trail, and Homer Lake. Volunteer Elizabeth Kirby also planted several trays at Sangamon River Forest Preserve. Elizabeth has planted many plugs, trees, and shrubs this year, and we are thankful for her dedication to Sangamon River Forest Preserve.
- Michael Daab has met and conference-called with Ameren Illinois officials regarding plans to replace power poles within a stand of state endangered Sangamon phlox at Lake of the Woods. Ameren staff has been accommodating in adjusting their plans to minimize impact on the rare flowers.
- The Headwaters Invasive Plant Partnership is pleased to announce the hiring of our first employee, a part-time coordinator. Kaleb Lukens will spend time coordinating our Regional Conservation Partnership Program and Pulling Together Initiative funding and tasks. The District has provided office space in the Natural Resources building for this position, which will be used as a matching contribution for funding.
- In the first year of management since construction, NR staff has spent several days treating invasive plants on the Kickapoo Rail Trail. The site is a challenge, as it has not been managed for weeds in many years, and it contains species of invasive plants that we have not yet had to manage at other District sites. Weed management continues at all sites.

Lake of the Woods Golf Course (Chris Edmondson and Doug Sanders)

- Staff have been extremely busy over the past month with normal course maintenance. This consists of daily mowing, rotating cups and tees, turf treatments, raking bunkers, and preparation for golf outings/tournaments.
- Staff have been repairing several irrigation issues. Hole #10 required replacement of a section of the six inch main and #16 required a new shut off valve. The Par 3 has had several leaks on the poly irrigation line requiring patching. All of these repairs are time consuming and have a huge impact on the visual aesthetics and play of the overall courses.
- Staff have also been cleaning up the shop, storage areas, and getting their office in order for the PDRMA field review on July 25. In preparation, Chris Edmondson, Joie Torres, and Doug Sanders met on June 26 to review and discuss aspects of the evaluation outline.
- June was a difficult weather month for the course. We had 3,494 players, down about 500 from 2018. Considering we only had 19 playable days out of 30 (100 players or more), this is actually pretty good. A big positive though, our total revenue for June was \$100,421, which is \$6,000 more than 2017. As stated last month, any month that we are over \$100,000 is a great month financially. From June 10 to June 24, we received just over 13 inches of rain on the grounds. We had two days in which we were not able to open due to flooding or weather conditions, and another 5 days that were walking only (no carts due to the saturated grounds). This puts a large dent into our player count and revenue stream.
- Our on-course warning sirens (sounded in times of impending severe weather to alert golfers) malfunctioned on a couple of different occasions, and we needed a tech from FE Moran Security come out to manually shut each siren off, as they would not shut down after being

sounded. One of these times was at 12:30 a.m. and another was midday. The sirens have been temporarily deactivated and service has been scheduled in July to determine what is causing this problem, which is a nuisance to the surrounding homes near the course.

- Staff recorded a new television commercial with WCIA in late May, which began airing during the PGA tournaments in mid-June. The commercial that had been airing was several years old, and it was time for a fresh look.
- We held our annual Junior Golf Clinics in June. These are one hour of instruction, broken down by age group, every Tuesday in June (4 total sessions). We had 48 kids between the age of 8 and 17 participate this year.
- We also held our adult “Get Golf Ready” lesson program in June. These are 90 minute sessions, which were conducted every Tuesday evening in June. The class is limited to ten, and we had seven participants this session.
- We had several outings and tournaments in June; the table below shows total players and income from the events. The Naughtin Open tournament was reduced to one day due to aforementioned severe weather and flooding. The Bulldog Open was also washed out, but we did give rain checks to those who attended the meal and raffle, which were paid for by the outing (which is the reason it shows 89 players). The Central Illinois Junior Golf Tour (CIJGT), is a new event this year that makes a stop every couple weeks at a different local golf course. It is a more relaxed atmosphere for the juniors, as it is a partner event and a scramble, instead of stroke play. We had 30 juniors (15 teams) in this year’s inaugural event. The Carpenters Council outing was our big money maker in June. We host this regional event every 4 years.

Outing	# of Players	2018 Revenue
Golden Glove Grasshoppers	30	\$802.50
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	60	\$2,359.24
Regional Carpenters Council	262	\$16,064.39
Bulldog Open	89	\$3,080.00
Carle EMS	47	\$2,459.00
Naughtin Open	34	\$2,380.00
Parent-Child	37	\$1,480.00
CIJGT	30	\$600.00

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

- The Department completed summer staff training, and Homer Lake staff completed orientation for the Counselors-in-Training. Summer camps are in full swing, and we had multiple public programs as always. June is always a busy month!
- Take Me Fishing at Homer Lake is always a big success! A couple photos from the day are provided below.



- Department staff completed (or renewed) their CPR/First Aid certification.
- Pam Leiter participated in a webinar entitled *5 Steps to Creating an Engaging Video* offered by the National Association for Interpretation, and a webinar on Collecting Milkweed Seeds.
- Pam has also been taking the lead on developing a smartphone tour, via the Prairie State Conservation Coalition's Hike App, for Grand Prairie Friends. Her experience with this project offers the opportunity for the District to develop a similar type of smartphone tour for our trails.
- Lifelong Learners from Bradley University arranged a tour of the museum and gardens with staff.
- Mark Hanson gave a talk to the Champaign County Genealogical Society on The Doris K. Wylie Hoskins Archive for Cultural Diversity and other resources available at the Museum of the Grand Prairie.
- The Catholic Heart Work Group assisted museum staff with reorganization of the program supplies areas in the education room and Annex basement storage areas on June 20-21. As usual, they did an excellent job.
- A sump pump in the Museum Annex was replaced, fortunately just before the unusually heavy June rainfall. The Museum experienced some flooding during the recent heavy rains - in Large Artifact Storage, the Blacksmith Exhibit, and the Lincoln Exhibit.
- Mark Hanson gave a presentation about the Horses and Tractors exhibit to the Blaford/Blaisdell/Gray family. They are the donors of the glass plate negatives in the museum collection.
- IDNR has experienced numerous retirements and layoffs in the grants section that administers the Museum Capital Grants. This, in combination with the irregularity of administering grants that have been frozen, has delayed communication about the release of funds. We continue to wait for more news, and have been assured there will be some 'in the next few weeks'.
- Katie Snyder participated in the 100th anniversary of the Urbana Free Library celebration by providing 100+ year old games and toys.
- The museum welcomed three new volunteers working in collections this month: Charlie Smith is cataloguing; Emma Diers is inventorying; and Pat Boze is working with the library collection.

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

- Michael Dale and Jim Blythe took a field trip to the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis. Founded in 1859, the Garden is the nation's oldest botanical garden in continuous operation and maintains 79 acres of horticultural displays. Since their return, Mike and Jim created a small Japanese style Zen bed in the garden. This bed is a trial version of a larger project they hope to undertake in a couple of years. (see below)

- On June 1st, the LOW Operations Department met with PDRMA's risk management consultant Jenny Porrevecchio for its three-year field review. Overall the evaluation process went very well and we received an initial score of 88.03 percent. In the next few months staff will be addressing Jenny's recommendations related to playground signage, sledding hill restrictions, and revised department policy documents in hopes of raising the final score.
- As a continuation of last fall's ash/hazard tree removal project, Sangamon River Arborist removed three trees leaning over the Rayburn-Purnell restroom/bride's dressing room. Unfortunately, a few days after the removal LOW incurred a storm and three different healthy, mature trees were uprooted and fell on the Rayburn-Purnell shelter. For safety purposes, Operations and Construction staff removed the remains of the shelter.



Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- Maintenance and repair issues with the Natural Playscape cropped up again early this season. The pump that supplies water to the stream had to be replaced, and we also had issues with the touch pad that starts the flow of water down the stream bed. We have discovered that visitors sometimes use small cobble stones on the pad instead of their feet so we moved the pad to reduce the risk of further problems.
- We finally had favorable weather conditions so that we could spray the two-foot strip along the edge of the KRT. Vegetation has been creeping into the aggregate and making the trail appear much narrower than it is.
- Roy, Joe, and Mary did a great job with the taco bar for the annual board meeting here at Homer Lake.
- With over six inches of rain this month staff was still able to keep up with the mowing.

Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- After a stellar start of the camping season, the hot temperatures have slowed down camping reservations a little bit. With two July 4th weekends (one preceding and one after the 4th) in the campground this year, we noticed some no-shows the first weekend. However, we enjoyed a fully booked campground the second weekend due to more comfortable temperatures.
- After the rupture of a pressure tank, which is part of our water system in the preserve, staff is working with contractors on the fix. A water main just outside the building feeding the rest of the preserve had also broken within the same week. That break was fixed and the water main was operational within a few hours.
- On July 5, Middle Fork received substantial rainfall, up to 3.5 inches within a few hours, and along with several other communities, had a power outage for more than three hours. With the

campground at 70% capacity during this storm and outage, staff spoke with campers at each site making sure all was well.

- On July 7 the C-U Astronomical Society hosted another Starwatch event at Middle Fork. We had wonderful attendance, close to 65 guests for the event, and the skies were perfect for viewing.

Kickapoo Rail Trail (All)

- The Urbana Park District was awarded an IDOT planning grant in the amount of \$100,075 to conduct a feasibility study linking the Kickapoo Rail Trail to downtown Urbana and destinations to the west. Carle Foundation Hospital has agreed to fund the \$25,000 match for the grant, as The 217 (its working name) would directly serve hospital staff, patients, and visitors.
- Mary Ellen and Jon met with design engineers and Village of St. Joseph administrative and public works staff to discuss plans for Phase 2a (0.3 miles from Main Street through Seventh Street). The tentative schedule is for plans to be completed in July, bidding in August, and construction taking place from September through November. Engineers believe that construction can still be completed within the calendar year.
- The planning department issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for wayfinding signage.

District Cultural Competency Initiatives

- Pam Leiter participated in a webinar entitled *Addressing Gender Inequality in Conservation Organizations* offered by The Land Trust Alliance.
- Katie Snyder hosted a weekend event at the Museum of the Grand Prairie for the Boyz2Men Mentoring Program as part of its end of the school year Father/Son Retreat. The group also rented a pavilion for a communal meal, fished, and rented boats.
- At this month's meeting of the Champaign Community Coalition, the Unit 4 School District and the Champaign-Urbana Area Project shared information about a new initiative, the Parent Comm-University. PCU is designed to engage more parents in their children's education and emotional development. At the meeting, Mary Ellen was approached by the CU Peace and Resiliency Champions' committee chair about partnering in the identification of a tree to symbolize resiliency in the face of childhood trauma. More on this effort in the months to come.