

August 11, 2014

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Lisa Sprinkle

Re: August Staff Report

Executive Director (Dan Olson)

- Three full-time positions are in the process of being filled: Construction Manager, Planning Director, and one Natural Resources Technician.
- I presented with Doug Ireland and Dirk Mol to the Vermilion County Mayor's Council about the Rail Trail. State Representative Chad Hays was also in attendance and appreciated the update on the trail.
- The Foundation members, Board of Commissioner's very own Sarah Livesay, and District staff put a lot of effort into having an informational and fundraising booth at the St. Joseph Fall Festival. We talked to many people about the trail and sold 139 bottles of specialty soda for a net profit of about \$244.00 after expenses. (Expenses include cups, fee for set-up, and soda). We thank FPF member Rod Beyers the ice.
- The summer concert series has concluded. We owe a very big thank you to those vendors who agreed to dedicate a percentage of their sales to the pond and waterfall renovation. These include Wyldewood Winery in St. Joseph, JT Walkers in Mahomet, Flip Flop Shaved Ice, and the Homer Soda Company.
- I met with IDOT, Fehr Graham, County Highway and the Village of Mahomet Representatives about the preliminary punchlist for the Lake of the Woods bike path. A few items were noted and the process of correcting them is underway.
- As a reminder, commissioners can view newspaper clippings and published announcements on the secure website.
- FPF member Bob Espeseth and I attended the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials (NACPRO) annual meeting. We were happy to accept two national awards. First, NACPRO presented Bob Espeseth with an outstanding volunteer award for his 40 plus years of service to the CCFPD. Second NACPRO recognized the Natural Playscape with its outstanding facility award.
- There will be a need for executive session.

Deputy Director/Grants (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- River to Rail Ride preparations continue. Business sponsors for the September 20 event so far include: Champaign Cycle, Durst Cycle & Fitness, Cycles Plus (Danville), Kickapoo Landing, Taylor Studios, and Casey's General Store.
- Champaign Cycle will host a Used Bike Sale as a benefit for the Rail Trail. The business will accept donated bikes through September 3 for the sale on September 6. Bike sellers

can donate the entire proceeds from the used bike sale or consign the bike and donate 20% of the proceeds.

- The Community Foundation of East Central Illinois' grant deadline is August 31. The CCFPD will be submitting a request to fund Discovery Room improvements at the Museum of the Grand Prairie. The budget is still being finalized but the grant request will not exceed \$5,000. No match is required for Community Foundation grants. More details will follow in the September report.
- Staff is preparing a Request for Qualifications is being prepared to select an engineering firm to oversee the Kickapoo Rail Trail construction project. Changes made to IDOT's local roads and streets guidelines in November 2012 require this type of selection process for engineering work on IDOT-funded trails. Statements of qualifications will be due in September with the approval of the firm set for the October board meeting.

Administration (John Baker)

- Finalized the 2013 Audit with Sikich LLP. Staff prepared the Management Discussion and Analysis once all the financials were agreed upon and verified for inclusion in the Audit Report. The District has also worked with Sikich on the Federal Single Audit requirement which applies when an agency receive more than a than \$500,000 in federal grant dollars. Last year the District exceeded this threshold for the first time.
- Met with department heads on July 22 to review District financial projections, initiate discussions on District capital projects, equipment purchases, and operating budgets.
- Finalized contracts with Chief Bauer (Homer Lake Interpretive Center heat pump), National Golf Foundation (golf study) and the National Intergovernmental Purchasing Alliance (purchasing, specifically golf aerator).
- Reviewed and commented upon draft Request for Qualification for the Kickapoo Rail Trail and Willow Pond agreement.
- Dan, Dave Torrens and John conferenced with Richard Singer and Jerry Hinckley from the National Golf Foundation to begin gathering the materials and establishing the dates for visiting Lake of the Woods to conduct the Golf Study. Singer and Hinckley will be on site August 26 and 27. The initial report is planned for presentation to the Board at its October 23 meeting.
- Mary Beck coordinated the cleanup of the flooded HQ basement, including obtaining timely restoration of internet services and contacting the State Records Center about District records damaged by the flood.
- Staff will be working this fall to address the Sikich audit findings and recommendations towards strengthening all our financial processes.
- Betty distributed purchasing cards to staff, provided training on their proper use, and obtained employee acknowledgement forms before assigning cards. She has also consulted and worked with employees on preparing their monthly transaction envelopes (in place of purchase orders) and handling electronic approvals. Betty and John are also

working with Commerce Bank and Harris to finalize the back office procedures and upload of all transaction data. This back office programming will hopefully be complete before the September Board Meeting. Employees report their delight at having the purchasing card and the general efficiency of the system.

- Applied to renew Conservation Reserve Program tracts at Sangamon River and Middle Fork River Forest Preserves.

Human Resources (Jan Runion)

- The compensation committee met and reviewed proposed increases in salary ranges; reviewed job descriptions and compensation policy.
- Interviewed candidates for Construction Manager position and submitted finalists to Executive Director for interviewing.
- Researched the legality of using unpaid interns.
- Reviewed and continue to draft revised personnel policy.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Kickapoo Rail Trail 16 oz stadium cups were purchased for the St. Joseph Festival, where the Foundation was selling Homer Soda Company specialty sodas.
- A logo for FootGolf has been developed. Double sided yard signs have been ordered.
- The final two signs for the Odle Trail at Middle Fork River have been ordered.
- Developed a label for the Kickapoo Rail Trail Root Beer.



Construction (Bryan Stevens)

- Poured Concrete for Odle Trail sign and bench pads.
- Replaced decking on Botanical Gardens Pond Bridge.
- Power washed and sealed Sangamon River, Rotary Hill, and Peninsula shelters.
- Power washed and painted Enabling Garden bridge.
- Started hauling soil from Sangamon River Forest Preserve to the golf course driving range.

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey)

- Euroclydon completed the exhibit construction and has been paid. The construction crew is adding molding and laying a floor in one area of the exhibit; Volunteer Alan Weith has been working on finishing elements as well.
- Inventory and preparation of items in Large Artifact Storage has begun in anticipation of moving artifacts out for construction of the new building.

- Another very busy summer full of day camps and programs is complete. A new day camp this year, Shutterbugs, introduced children to photography in nature. Playscape Mondays remains a very popular program. At MGP Museum Mondays continues to be wildly popular with 260 attending in July alone. The Summer Garden concert was moved indoors because of the record 7” rain the day before, but still had over 100 in attendance.
- Also, requests for programs from libraries, scout groups, schools & preschools, other day camps, and other groups remain strong each summer.
- Staff participated in the strategic planning meeting on July 17.
- We will bid farewell to Cathy Barnard, Naturalist/Garden Specialist later this month. She has opted to return to teaching as a substitute teacher. We have thoroughly enjoyed working with her over the past year; she brought a lot of initiative, energy, and new ideas to everything she did here. Her last day will be August 27.
- Valerie Hall, Kaitlyn Riopelle and Susan Voskuil attended the Association of Midwest Museums conference in St. Louis Missouri, July 14-17.
- On August 14, staff will get a behind-the-scenes tour of two LEED-certified nature/visitor centers in Chicago: the Tyner Nature Center and the Ryerson Woods Welcome Center.
- The HLIC’s HVAC replacement was completed the first week of August. Many thanks to Roy & Brian for their help with this project.
- Pam Leiter gave a tour of the Playscape to the Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana Board of Directors.

Lake of the Woods Golf Course (Dave Torrens and Dave Huber)

- Staff met with Mike Daab to discuss trees damaged from previous storms.
- Dave Huber met with Megan for the design of the Footgolf scorecard map.
- The Toro 648 greens aerifier was delivered. This process creates holes in the putting surface which helps alleviate compaction, improve water infiltration and decreases thatch. All together this creates a better growing environment for the turfgrass.
- Staff renovated three sand bunkers. Each bunker normally takes one day to complete.
- Flowers in bio-swale along entrance drive. (See picture)
- FootGolf picked up with more than 100 rounds. Staff updated the website to include FootGolf. We are holding on purchasing and providing merchandise and accessory items at this time. Future District WDWS radio commercials will include FootGolf.
- We conducted another DEMO Day promotion where golfers can try out the latest equipment from Tour Edge in July.
- Outing activities for July: July 11th – Bulldog Open – 117 players; July 21st –Champaign Rotary Outing – 96 players; July 24th – Grain & Feed Association Outing – 32 players;



July 31st – Lake of the Woods Junior Open Tournament – 110 players; August 2nd & 3rd Lake of the Woods Club Championship – 34 players.

Natural Resources (Mike Daab)

- The Champaign County Forest Preserve District says farewell and thank you to Nathan Hudson, who resigned his position as Natural Resources Technician in July. Nathan had been with the District since 2008, and brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the NR Department in his time here. We wish him the best as he pursues further interests and spends quality time with his family.
- The Natural Resources Department continues to coordinate with IDOT, their contractors, and our partners during the construction along HWY 150 between Urbana and St. Joseph.
- Mike Daab worked with partners through the Invasive Plant Task Force to introduce a Natural Areas Watch program for volunteers. The training was held at Allerton Park in July and consisted of invasive plant identification as well as training on how to report the species, in particular through the Great Lakes Early Detection Network mobile app.
- The Natural Resources Staff continues to mow younger prairies to prevent weed seed set, and spray woody invasive plant resprouts where we have cleared non-native understory shrubs.
- Seed collection for savanna and prairie planting projects is beginning to ramp up.

Lake of the Woods, River Bend, Sangamon River and Botanical Gardens Operations (Doug Sanders & Larry Beckett)

- Chris' Water Gardens installed the Enabling Garden water feature with the assistance of staff who are finishing grading and landscaping this area.



- New decking was installed on the BG pond bridge by the construction department. This is the first time the bridge has been re-decked since it was constructed.

- Staff placed promotional signage and a brochure holder near the pond in celebration of the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden's 40 Anniversary and to solicit donations for the waterfall renovation project.



- Staff are moving horticultural supplies and equipment from the Lean-To shop to SRFP for storage to make ready for the Museum's renovation next year.
- Staff assisted Tom Pike with inventorying HVAC systems and well heads at LOW, SRFP, and Middle Fork.
- Staff assisted HQ in recycling and discarding electronic equipment, paper products, lost and found items, and miscellaneous materials in the basement of HQ.
- All fulltime staff attended the Strategic Planning meeting.

Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- Staff installed a new gate at Old Homer Park to improve the looks of the area around the new information display.
- Staff upgraded the Timber Doodle trail bridge with new bridge planks. The three inch thick boards are much safer when driving equipment across the bridge, and it is two feet wider than the old one. See picture
- The Walnut Hill serving counter received a much needed make over when we installed recycled plastic boards on the bottom shelf.
- Another wind storm created a great deal of work for employees. The storm hit on a Saturday evening and the trees in Walnut Hill area sustained most of the damage, so we worked Sunday morning to get the safety hazards cleaned up in the user areas. See picture.



Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- Work continues on the ADA trail at the Odle Property. Four interpretive signs are installed along the path, the parking lot is complete, and the concrete pad and bench are in place. Two more interpretive signs are being manufactured and will be installed shortly.
- Construction is under way on the superintendent's residence addition. The contractor believes this project will be completed in early September.
- Bidding and interviewing stages for the Willow Pond project are complete. The shower house roof replacement has been out for bid.
- Camping continues to be a popular activity at the Middle Fork. Each weekend is fully booked.

- We are currently scheduling the fall class of Lincoln’s Challenge volunteer corps.

Volunteers (Pat Simpson)

- Including the contributions of Commissioners Livesay and Hult and of CAC Members Altstetter, Barickman, and Snellen, the total number of volunteer hours contributed to Freedom Fest on the day of the event was 321.75. In addition, volunteers contributed 170 hours of their time as members of the Freedom Fest Working Committee. Finally, the Mahomet Vineyard Church contributed another 12 hours of time on cleanup activity on July 5th. These hour estimates do not include the contributions of any paid staff. Thank you letters and certificates of appreciation were sent to all volunteers.
- Implementation on the Comprehensive Data Project on Volunteers is almost complete. Mary Beck has worked on putting all volunteer forms online, making them easily accessible to interested parties. The forms will always be returned directly to the Volunteer Coordinator. Reports on volunteer hours and activities will be routinely sent by the Education Department and by the Natural Resources Department to the Volunteer Coordinator to be entered into the comprehensive spreadsheet. Trail steward and contributions and those provide by special outside organizations like the Boy Scouts, Catholic Heart Work Camp, and the like will be directly tracked by the Volunteer Coordinator and entered into the spreadsheet.

- Two work crews from the Catholic Heart Work Camps visited with us the week of July 7 through 10. One crew moved materials from a Museum of the Grand Prairie storage area; cleaned the new exhibit areas post construction and cleaned and painted basement storage areas in the annex; another crew painted plant boxes, arbors and related items in the Enabling Garden and also mulched



the garden area outside of headquarters. Larry Beckett commented that his crew was one of the best youth crews he ever worked with (see photo). Pat Simpson and Larry Beckett attended the graduation on July 10 and offered brief laudatory comments about the crews to the assembled audience.

Special Projects (Tom Pike)

- Finished the land acquisition deeds files. They are posted on the shared staff drive along with filing the originals in a fire-proof cabinet.

- Researched a project from John Baker on government agencies that have joint purchasing programs.
- Researched properties along the Ridge Creek subdivision for Dan Olson.
- Scanning and filing all easements, agreements, and other land use documents is underway.
- Andrew Combes and I inventoried all HVAC systems at Lake of the Woods and Middle Fork River. All of the information has been place in the facilities inventory.
- Attended the 2015 Budget meeting with other staff.