

August 10, 2015

MEMORANDUM

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

Executive Director (Dan Olson)

- We have executed documents for the vacating of the Ridge Creek Easement.
- The rededication ceremony for the Covered Bridge in honor of German Gurfinkle was well attended. It included an announcement that we will be seeking a landmark status for the bridge through the American Society of Civil Engineers' Historic Civil Engineering Landmark Program. The Program recognizes historically significant local, national, and international civil engineering projects, structures, and sites, through dedications, a physical plaque on site, and an online historical record open to all. The Landmark Program increases public appreciation of civil engineering contributions to the progress and development of society, provides civil engineers with an historical awareness of their own profession for both practical insights and pride, encourages the preservation of significant historic civil engineering works and fosters the inclusion of civil engineering landmark information in encyclopedias, guidebooks and maps.
- Elizabeth Striano from the Rails to Trails Conservancy visited to do a story on how Rail Trails provide habitat protection. Dave Monk (Heartland Pathways), Tim Bartlett (CCDC and UPD) and I gave a tour of the trail and spoke about conservation of prairie and woodland along it. We also discussed further financial support options for the KRT.
- I wanted to personally thank Adrienne Kizer for her talent and dedication for the short time that she was with us at the District. Many of the marketing items you have seen over the past several months were designed by her. She will be continuing on with us on a very limited hourly basis until a new hire can be secured.
- Bobbie, Andrew, John Baker and I have been working through several policies that will be presented to the board for discussion and approval over the next few months.
- I also had the chance to participate in some wonderful events this month including the CCFPD being the guest of honor at the Outside at Research Park, the CCFPD Garden Concert Series, First Aid/AED/CPR training, Freedom Fest wrap up meetings, KRT fundraising and the Duathlon in Vermilion County, a local Directors meeting, a planning time management workshop, and the Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting.

Deputy Director/Grants (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- Mike Daab and I submitted a grant application to the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation to fund a study of the Point Pleasant Wetland at Middle Fork. ICECF is offering this grant for water resources projects on lands that agencies acquired with funding assistance from Clean Energy. If approved, the \$20,000 would allow us to contract for a study of the drain tile system, hydrology patterns, and the presence of waterfowl and other wildlife. In the study, we would also ask for recommendations to improve the sustainability of the wetland.
- Cycles Plus in Danville sponsored its first annual Kickapoo Rail Trail Duathlon on Saturday, August 1. More than 100 participants chose from non-competitive, competitive, and team categories. Final totals are not yet in, but the very successful inaugural event likely raised more than \$2,000 for the rail trail.



- I have been working with Champaign County Bikes to plan a session on Trail Towns for the upcoming Illinois Bike Summit. Based on a workshop I attended at the International Trails Conference in May, the session will focus on how local communities can benefit from and maximize the tourism generated by the trail. We are also planning a half-day workshop following the Bike Summit specifically for government officials and business owners from the towns along the Kickapoo Rail Trail.
- In early August, Hannah Lake, the UIntern who worked with me for much of the summer on Forest Preserve Friends Foundation projects, left the District to return to her studies. The UIntern Program is a UI service initiative that coordinates summer internships at local organizations for students interested in serving their community while developing useful career skills. Hannah was extremely helpful managing donor data, writing appeal and thank you letters, and tracking responses to various fundraising solicitations.

Administration (John Baker)

- Met with District Department heads to outline the operating budget preparation time line, and initial capital equipment and project requests for 2016. Discussed addressing strategic planning short term tasks as part of the 2016 budget preparation.
- Met with Andrew Kerins and Bobbie Herakovich and revised financial policies for District funds, investing, purchasing, gifts and donations, and capital assets; and drafted new policies on debt management, emergency expenses, financial resources and assistance, and District insurance. Revised policies represent approximately half of the financial policies that will come to the Board.
- Worked with compensation committee to craft recommendation to achieve P20 market position by fiscal year 2017 for District salary schedule.
- Received payment of \$6,421 collected by CSX for Kickapoo Rail Trail easements after the District purchased the trail. CSX still has to deliver a current list of easements so the District can follow up billing. The KRT purchase documents contain only the names of original easement holders.
- Received notice from MediaCom that installation of the new fiber optic and provision of the 50 meg upload/download bandwidth is scheduled for October 13.
- Met with Matt Kuntz and Mike Daab about updating the farm contract to remove acreage adjacent to the Point Pleasant wetland from being farmed. The revised contract would include new acreage to replace that which is being removed. Farming acreage for the District is an important tool in preventing invasives from gaining a foothold.
- In process of updating fiscal projections for all District funds and revising projections for future years taking into account the possibility of a two-year property tax freeze, continued decline in golf rounds, current compensation recommendations and potential benefits increases.
- Conducted AED, CPR and First Aid training at Lake of the Woods.
- Revised camping deposit procedures and forms to improve cash handling and reposting.

Human Resources (Jan Runion)

- Reviewed golf personnel Position Description Questionnaires (PDQ's) for Hay Group's salary study; collected and forwarded PDQs to The Hay Group.
- Conducted District-wide audit of I-9 forms and sought missing I-9s from employees lacking this documentation.
- Reviewed insurance proposals from brokers.
- Attended the PDRMA's brainstorming session on training issues.
- Participated in multiple Paylocity webinars.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Stacey Clementz and Lisa Sprinkle participated in the live CiLiving show “Our Town Homer” on Friday, July 31. Stacey brought the black rat snack from the Interpretive Center and Lisa discussed upcoming events at Homer Lake and also highlighted the Maple Syrup Root Beer made by the Homer Soda Co with proceeds going towards the Homer Lake Interpretive Center.
- As a result, the Homer Lake Interpretive Center had 2 visitors from Hoopeston and 2 visitors from Mattoon the following week that came specifically because they saw the TV segment.
- Forest Preserve Friends Foundation is raffling a Trek bike to raise funds for the Kickapoo Rail Trail.

Natural Resources (Mike Daab)

- NR trained three volunteers in the use of herbicide and chainsaws. The new volunteers, with some help of current stewards, got right to work removing invasive brush at Sangamon River Forest Preserve. Those hours will be useful towards the Natural Areas Community Stewardship grant we received through the IL Clean Energy Community Foundation.
- Jacob Pruiett lead a field trip for a University of Illinois silviculture class at Lake of the Woods and Sangamon River Forest Preserves, showing them areas of high-quality forest, invasive brush removals, and tree plantings.
- We have been working intensively on 30 acres of land at Lake of the Woods and Middle Fork in preparation for future prairie restoration. Tasks have included tree removal, mowing, discing, harrowing, and herbicide treatment.
- NR staff assisted IL DNR Wildlife Biologists with setting up wood duck traps at Lake of the Woods. IL DNR uses information gleaned from the wood duck banding project to make assessments of population numbers and set appropriate hunting limits.

Planning and Construction Department (Jon Hasselbring and Mike Fry)

- Kickapoo Rail Trail Phase I design engineering drawings (95% complete) have been reviewed by CCFPD, and comments returned to Fehr Graham for revisions.



- Route 47 bike path construction is nearing completion. CCFPD has been coordinating with IDOT and the general contractor on concrete path installation and tree removal. Road construction, ditch shaping, and entrance drive re-paving will continue through the next several months.

- The Construction Crew began Phase I ADA improvements at the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden, with the installation of handicap accessible concrete paths at the garden’s entrance. Special thanks to Lake of the Woods Operations staff members Michael Dale, Jim Blythe, and Jeff Tokarz for teaming up with the Construction Crew to complete this work.



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

- Maintenance staff renovated three sand bunkers.
- Construction department repaired three sections of cart path.
- Both Chris Edmondson and Dave Huber were recertified in first aid and AED training.
- Champaign Rotary corn roast outing July 27th – 74 golfers; Lake of the Woods Junior open July 30th - 89 juniors ages 5 through 17; Club championship August 1st & 2nd - 32 players; Talks Mentoring Outing August 7th - 66 players.
- As the NGF report suggested we sent out an expanded email campaign with golfers not on our usual data base. The first email campaign went out last month and we received 17 coupons for the 4 for price of 3 email special.
- FootGolf is really picking up, last July we had 44 players and \$315.00 in sales. This July we had 222 players and \$1442.00 in revenue, as we were not open for foot golf all of July last year I checked the month to date for August and we are at 130 players and \$721.00 this year against 50 players and \$366.00 for the same period last August - almost double in revenue!

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

- Valerie Hall and Pam Leiter attended a 2-day orientation workshop for the 2016 Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition, *Water/Ways*, presented by the IL Humanities Council and Smithsonian Institution staff. Representatives from each hosting agency attended to learn more about the hosting process, upcoming deadlines, and the many resources available. Please see attached memo for more information about this exciting opportunity.
- Susan Voskuil, Katie Riopelle and Chelsey Walsh, along with Scott Schwartz from the Sousa Archives, presented a session, “*Mind the Gap: Creating and Adapting Programming for the 21st Century Visitor*” at the Association of Midwest Museums annual conference.
- Valerie Hall attended a Project Management Workshop offered by the American Association for State and Local History.
- We have established an internal department Volunteer Committee; staff in this committee are tasked with planning short and long-term initiatives aimed at enhancing our M&Ed volunteer core. Susan Voskuil is heading up this committee.
- The Homeschool Highlights newsletter has been revived. We are also hosting an Education Expo in early September for homeschoolers, scouts, and similar groups. Emily Henson is heading up these efforts.
- Visitation at the Interpretive Center has recently been very strong. This is likely due in large part to the recent visibility via marketing efforts.
- Museum Mondays continues apace with a large crowd attending for Adventures in Clay on July 20. Volunteer potter Geoff Bant was a big hit!
- Summer camps wrapped up at the end of July, and we are shifting gears to a busy fall program season. New in camps this year: Susan Voskuil offered the Department’s first Native American themed day camp.
- The Monarch Waystation at the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Gardens registration has been received and our official sign has arrived. This was facilitated by Cara Grabowski.

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

- Tony Sparks joined the full-time staff on August 10, 2015 as a maintenance worker II. Tony's past work history consist of 30 years as a machinist in the development lab at Vesuvius and 3 years as a custodian/grounds keeper for the Fisher School District.
- The Botanical Garden pump house repairs have been completed and the waterfall is back in operation.

Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- Brian and Roy were interviewed for WCIA coverage of Homer Lake Forest Preserve during the Our Town Homer spotlight the last week of July.
- Pam created a sign that was installed at the Natural Playscape to assist visitors on how to get water flowing in the stream.

Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- The Lincoln's Challenge Academy has proposed this fall's volunteer schedule to work at Middle Fork. A total of 630 volunteer hours will be completed, fewer hours than usual.
- The new rules and regulation sign has been placed at the swim beach. This sign replaced the original wood sign which was in place since the beach has been open. Thanks to the marketing department for the design work and having the sign manufactured.
- The campground continues to be nearly fully booked each weekend. Many reservations are being made for the 2016 year.

Volunteers (Pat Simpson)

- The major event in the month of July was the annual Freedom Fest. Seventy-six volunteers (including two groups from the Mahomet Vineyard Church) contributed 591.75 hours of work to Freedom Fest. This total includes Freedom Fest committee and administrative work performed throughout the year, as well as hours contributed on the actual day of the Fest. Staff hours spent on this event have yet to be tallied.
- The Volunteer Coordinator led a cleanup group from the Mahomet Vineyard Church the morning after Freedom Fest.
- Recruitment for the Sept. 19 River to Rail Ride was initiated in July. Among others, the APO Service Fraternity from the University of Illinois has signed on to once again help with the event.
- From July 6 through July 9, a work crew from the Catholic Heart Work Camp performed various cleanup tasks at the Museum under the guidance of Barb Garvey. Barb also attended the opening night orientation for Catholic Heart on Sunday, July 5 and the Volunteer Coordinator was present at the graduation event at St. Thomas Moore in Champaign on Thursday evening, July 9.
- A work day was held at the Natural Playscape on Sunday, July 19, from 3 to 5 pm. One overgrown area was tilled and mulch spread out. Mulch was also laid under the swinging bench. Hand weeding was done in several flower bed areas. Recruitment has begun to secure stewards to take targeted responsibility for the Monarch Waystation planted at the Playscape.