

February 10, 2014

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Lisa Sprinkle

Re: February Staff Report

Executive Director (Dan Olson)

- Again this month, we owe a big thank you to the operations staff at all the sites for keeping ahead of the snow and ice. During the most recent weather event, all preserves were open and running prior to my expectation. Sledding was especially busy at Homer Lake and Lake of the Woods when the schools had snow days. Additionally, Natural Resources, Construction, and Botanical Garden staff have been spending a lot of time outside in the cold.
- We will be producing an annual financial report again this year for public distribution. A limited number of copies will be made.
- John and I attended a Community Leaders Luncheon that was organized by the Mahomet Busey Bank. We met new village employees as well as others we have partnered with in the past.
- Joe Lamb from our Foundation and I attended the Gifford community meeting where several agencies and businesses came together to discuss what they can do for the Village. Joe and I will be presenting one new item to the Foundation Board, in an area that I think staff and Foundation can help.
- IPRA/IAPD was well attended by staff this year. I attended several of the annual and regular meetings that occur during this time. I always find the Illinois Association of Conservation and Forest Preserve District meetings very informative. Two highlights from the conference included receiving the Facility award for the Natural Playscape and having items in the Agency Showcase and placing with our “We’ve Been Looking for You” animal bus advertisement. I personally found the sessions to be very informative and well done, with one exception.
- We have started our regular project meetings this year. They are a bit longer early in the year as we have many newly budgeted projects.
- The public survey for the strategic plan will be mailed out the week of 2/17/14. I put into the survey agreement that at least 30% of the returns come from selected rural communities in Champaign County. This may slow the response time, but we will most likely have a preliminary report within 4 weeks and a final report shortly after that. Upon survey completion, Ron Vine will be presenting the findings to the Board of Commissioners at a meeting.
- I attended a seminar by Speer Financial Group on preparing for referendum for public agencies.
- We will have executive session for land acquisition and personnel.

Please save the date on the following items:

- Volunteer Appreciation Recognition May 17, 2014 at 5:00 to 8:00 pm at Elks Lake Pavilion.
- Rail Trail Who’s Who Meeting on Thursday March 13th at 6:00 pm at Lake of the Woods Pavilion, Mahomet, IL We will have a short social following an update on the trail.

- Annual Tour of CCFPD Sites – The Rail Trail Tour. Sat. April 12, Both Counties starting at 8:30 ending at 1:00 pm at Salt Fork Center with a boxed lunch. Watch for an RSVP.

Deputy Director/Grants (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- An application was submitted February 3 to the IL Department of Natural Resources for a Public Museum Capital grant in the amount of \$238,200. If approved, the grant would fund the demolition and reconstruction of a new Large Artifact Storage wing on the existing museum. The existing storage room, attached to the eastern end of the museum where the lean-to greenhouse is located, is prone to considerable temperature and humidity fluctuations, bird/mice intrusion, and termite issues. A shop space for exhibit construction work would be a part of the new construction.
- The OSLAD project for the development of the Sangamon River Forest Preserve has now been completed. A grant reimbursement request has been sent to IDNR in the amount of \$102,747.
- On its website at: <http://www.illinoiscleanenergy.org/ph-natural-areas/>, the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation is now featuring two recent grants that it provided to the District. The two grants allowed us to expand our Middle Fork acreage with the addition of a 41-acre parcel, which includes a portion of the Pt. Pleasant wetland, and a 5-acre parcel at the southern edge of the preserve.
- Fundraising for the Rail-Trail is coming along well. I have been working with Megan to create a fundraising brochure and with the trail fundraising committee to develop a list of donor prospects. I sat in on a webinar sponsored by *American Trails* entitled “Effective Fundraising for Greenways and Trails” that was very useful. Developing a public identity for the project and setting out a fundraising plan are the first steps in the process.

Administration (John Baker)

- Filed the 2014 Final Appropriation ordinance with the County Clerk’s office.
- Worked with Kurt Froehlich and Dave Phillips to finalize Bond ordinance.
- Engaged Sikich, LLP as the District auditor. Chad Lucas from Sikich Springfield Office is the lead, with Katy Long as support. We had two preliminary meetings and provided considerable documentation already regarding 2013 District actions and financial transactions. The audit fieldwork is scheduled for February 18 to 24.
- Imported the approved Working Budget into our 2014 General Ledger and posted the same on the Board and employee secure website.
- Posted and advertised the Human Resources Generalist position announcement for hiring in March.
- Received official notification that the bond levy will increase 2.7% in 2014 to make up for lost property tax revenues from the past five years, including the Carle property exemption last year.
- Began preparing the procurement card training and implementation pending Board approval of the Commerce Bank contract.
- Implemented the Applitrack online application system for 2014 District recruiting. Applicants for District jobs will apply online in a standardized process that supervisors can access during the recruitment period to review applications as they arrive. Training for supervisors is scheduled for February 19.

- Verified accuracy of District tax exempt properties. We also received property assessment notices for the Kickapoo Rail Trail parcels. Before year end staff will apply for tax exemption for these parcels.
- Attended the Soaring to New Heights Conference, including sessions on IRS tax guidance and audits, public agency investing options, Governmental Accounting Standards update, Affordable Care Act impact, and application of the Prevailing Wage Act and procurement regulations to Illinois public Districts
- Met with the District insurance brokers, Jim Barham and Terrin Krantz about voluntary Short Term Disability insurance for employees and a consolidated insurance carrier option for the District that has multiple voluntary insurance options and online sign ups. We then surveyed employees on potential insurance options presented by Barham.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- The Jan/Feb issue of The Leaflet was mailed in late January.
- The newly formatted Feb-April Program Guides are printed and available at HQ, Homer Lake Interpretive Center and Museum of the Grand Prairie.
- We will be running a bus advertisement on two MTD busses February 15-March 15 for Homegrown: Gardening Yesterday and Today - the 2014 Special Exhibit at the Museum of the Grand Prairie.

Construction Department (Bryan Stevens)

- Assisted Lake of the Woods operation staff with snow removal.
- Completed the demolition and the District's part of the new construction of the Museum Grand Prairie Story exhibit.
- Assisted district staff with the specifications and drawings on the contracted portion of the Grand Prairie Story exhibit.

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey)

- Museum of the Grand Prairie mounted an exhibit on the local struggle for Civil and Human Rights in the D wing of Parkland College.
- Upcoming exhibits for the department include the special exhibit for the year at the Museum of the Grand Prairie opening March 9, and an exhibit on the Passenger Pigeon at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center opening in April.
- School's Out programs continue to be popular, with 53 people attending January's Arctic Illinois program at the Interpretive Center.
- John Marlin gave a lecture on Superbowl Sunday to 30 people on "Gardening with Wildflowers."
- Stacey Clementz presented at a U of I NRES class on environmental education as a career.
- The summer camp mailer will go out at the end of Feb; registration starts March 1.
- Cathy Barnard completed an online IDNR ENTICE training entitled *Prairies 101*.
- Stacey Clementz and Pam Leiter submitted articles for the Grand Prairie Friends newsletter (GPS Units and Passenger Pigeons, respectively)

- Artifact donors Jane and Dennis Stubblefield and Len Stelle signed the Deed of Gift for the Nine Gal donations at a ceremony on Thursday January 30, 2014 with coverage in Mahomet Citizen, Mahomet Daily and on WCIA ciLiving.
- The Interpretive Center had its highest visitation ever in 2013, while the Museum of the Grand Prairie saw its visitation increase by 10%. Museum Gift Shop proceeds were up 30% in 2013 (over 2012). A full report will be included in the Museum & Education Department's annual report next month.
- The Museum and Education Department is working with the UI Learning in Community (LINC) class to conduct an initial needs assessment for the Homer Lake Interpretive Center. Pam Leiter is the main contact for the department, with Barb Garvey and Mary Ellen Wuellner also providing input into the project. The students toured Homer Lake at the end of January and are now working to develop a profile of their partner (the Interpretive Center in the context of the District) and an analysis of the issue (space needs and facility concerns). They will submit a project proposal to staff for review by the end of February. Upon receipt of the proposal, staff will compile an informational memo for the March board packet.

Natural Resources (Mike Daab)

- We wish to thank Grand Prairie Friends interns Will Wright and Joe Boise for the time they spent working at CCFPD sites in 2013. Their primary tasks with us included pulling invasive plants at Buffalo Trace and Tomlinson Cemetery and some seed collection.
- The Natural Resources crew worked to get a second round of approximately 200 Christmas trees out on the ice for fish structure. This year, efforts were directed toward Lake of the Woods and Elks Lake. We were able to use the majority of donated trees this year.
- Stidham Woods has been the focus of invasive tree and shrub removal throughout January and early February. Nearly fifteen acres have been cleared at the site, and we have cleared approximately 25 total acres for the winter of 2013-2014 so far.

February 7, 2014

MEMORANDUM

From: Sally Prunty, Planning Director
To: Board of Commissioners
Re: Planning Department Yearly Overview

Description:

The Planning Department operates out of District Headquarters at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve and is currently staffed by two people:

Planning Director (Sally Prunty): This position handles infrastructure planning for grounds, buildings and facilities at the CCFPD. The Planning Director prepares plans, project specifications and bid documents for district-wide projects, and assists with grant applications as needed.

Special Projects Assistant (Tom Pike): This position is responsible for organizing and assisting with a variety of tasks, including assisting with and coordinating project development as needed, updating the Facilities Inventory and coordinating the district-wide vehicle and large equipment inventories and replacement schedules.

Responsibilities:

Construction Projects:

The challenges Planning faces in this area vary significantly from year to year, depending on the construction projects list each year. For each construction project, the planning process involves a series of steps, as follows:

- 1) Project Scope Development.
- 2) Site Development Planning.
- 3) Specification Development.
- 4) Bidding Process.
- 5) Construction (This is handled jointly by Planning, Construction and the Site Superintendents).
- 6) Billing and Reporting Procedures.

Project Scope Development:

This step involves taking a simple project idea, and fleshing it out through discussions with staff and community participants, if applicable, into a construction project that can be taken into the site development phase. This portion of the process involves clarifying the goals to be accomplished through a particular project, determining the budget for the project, the project components, and the size of the facility.

Site Development Planning:

Site development planning consists simply of fitting a project onto a site so that it works, and does what we need it to do. This involves development of an accurate base map and/or floor plan by drawing together existing drawings and data, making measurements, and shooting

elevations. Once the base map or plan has been developed, we site the proposed new facility onto the base map in the most effective way possible in terms of elevation, pedestrian access, vehicular access, optimized function of the facility and aesthetic values.

Specification Development and Bidding:

The specification development phase of the project takes the site development data and finalizes it, putting it into very clear drawings with dimensions and scale, as part of the specifications for the project. The purpose of this specificity of detail is to communicate clearly with the contractors so there are no misunderstandings during and after the bid process. The drawings and specifications are then attached to a legal document which contains the start and completion dates for the project, and all of the legal language which protects the District. This is by far the largest portion of the final bid packet.

The Construction Process

This portion of the project is jointly handled by the site superintendents, Construction and Planning. The goal is to ensure that the project gets completed as designed, on time, with quality workmanship.

Projects Handled by Planning in 2013:

- Activity Center Deck and Patio at Middle Fork Preserve.
- Museum of the Grand Prairie Project Closeout (gathering all warranties, owner's manuals, and appliance information (including model numbers) into a single binder and computer file folder on the server.
- Museum Painting Project.
- Middle Fork Residence Addition.
- Homer Lake Spillway Repair.
- Sangamon River ADA Trail.
- Odle ADA trail (scope development and site development planning; this project will not be bid out).
- Radio Tower Removal
- Mahomet Rotary Picnic Shelter
- Greenhouse Roof Repair

Information Management:

Facilities Inventory Database:

The purpose of the Facilities Inventory is to provide a single archive for all District facilities that lists repairs and modifications to the facility or to any of its systems. For this project, Planning first set up the database structure using a template developed by the Great Lakes Park Training Institute, which lists every facility in the District, and defines a series of data points to be included for each facility, such as the age of the structure (year built), original cost, materials used, and renovations completed. To provide the data for this database required a significant amount of research into District archives, from the Business Office budget records, and also from Construction records. This project is now essentially complete, with respect to buildings and other structures, and will be updated as changes occur.

AutoCAD Map Database:

This is an electronic map archive which provides scaled base maps of the District parks and floor plans of all District buildings. It has taken a number of years to build, and we are still making revisions as needed.

Additional Planning Responsibilities

- Act as ADA Coordinator for the District.
- Act as liaison between the engineer and IDNR for Dam Inspections and Bridge Inspections.
- Assist staff in developing maps for grant applications.
- Provide staff with detailed scaled floor plans of District buildings as needed.
- Assist the public with District aerial and topographic maps as needed.
- Act as liaison for the District with the Greenways and Trails initiative at the CCRPC.
- Continue to stay abreast of changes in the AutoCAD computer program, continuing to advance my knowledge of the program.
- Coordinate land acquisition files.
- Coordinating District-wide vehicle and large equipment inventories and replacement schedules.
- Order District janitorial supplies.
- Coordinate computer inventory.
- Help develop miscellaneous cost estimates for projects and purchases.

February 10, 2014

MEMORANDUM

From: Dave Torrens, Director of Golf
Dave Huber, PGA Golf Professional
To: Board of Commissioners
Subject: Golf Course Department Overview

Lake of the Woods Golf Course is made up of two departments, Golf Course Proshop and Golf Course Maintenance.

Who We Are

The Golf Course Pro Shop Department is located within the Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve.

The staff consists of two full time regular employees: Head Golf Professional/Manager David Huber and the Assistant Manager/Outing Coordinator Chris Edmondson, one full time seasonal PGA Assistant Professional James Helbling as well as a variable number of part time seasonal employees. Pro Shop part time seasonal positions include Cashiers, Starters, Rangers, Golf Cart /Range /Janitorial maintenance personnel. Snack Bar part time personnel include Cashiers, Beverage Cart attendant, and outing catering personnel.

In addition the Golf Professional/Manager also acts as the “Resident Guard” responding to alarms and emergencies within Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve.

Assistant Manager/Outing Coordinator Chris Edmondson completed his undergrad work at MacMurray College and graduated with a Masters in Public Parks and Recreation from the University of Minnesota. Chris has excellent organizational skills and his attention to detail has been a big part of the pro shop operation.

James Helbling our PGA assistant professional is new to the PGA training program working to achieve his class A membership in the PGA, but is not new to us. James worked for us while attending high school, Parkland College and Eastern Illinois University, where he received a BS in Business Administration. After taking a full time job at Horizon Hobby, he still worked weekend shifts at the Pro Shop. The PGA program is much like a CPA training program with the addition of the specific skills associated with the golf industry such as teaching, merchandising, club repair, club fitting, golf cart fleet management, and basic turf grass science.

Our Mission & Vision

Our mission is to promote the game of golf at the Champaign County Forest Preserve District Hartwell C. Howard Golf Course so that the pursuit of the game is an important part of the public’s recreational enjoyment, by consistently delivering a recreational value that exceeds the golfer’s expectations

Our Vision is to hold a valued and vital place in the lives of Champaign County Residents, and be recognized for innovation, leadership and excellence.

What We Do

Each year the Pro Shop collects green fees and related purchases for an average of 36,500 rounds of golf including 5,400 rounds on the nine hole Par 3 course. Retail sales run year round even when the golf course is closed for play. The official “Season” for season pass holders is March 1 through November 30. Additionally pro shop cashiers use the Illinois DNR equipment to sell Hunting & Fishing licenses and distribute information supplied by IDNR regarding Illinois Hunting & Fishing Rules & Regulations.

We have an AED device located in the Pro Shop with several staff trained in its use. The only time we have been called on to use our AED, Chris Edmondson revived golfer Jim Brandenburg who had no respiration or pulse when Chris arrived. Jim has made a full recovery and still enjoys playing golf at Lake of the Woods.

Merchandise

Included in the Pro Shop sales is a golf merchandise operation. The Head professional and pro shop staff give input in the Merchandise selection. Both full time staff as well as the assistant professional are involved with inventory purchasing & receiving, invoice management, inventory control, special orders, and product display and rotation.

Most pro shops have stopped taking trade-in merchandise because the slow turnover of used clubs ties up all the profit from the new club sales. We still offer golf club trade-in to our customers with three options 1) Consignment of their clubs with full net sale applied to new club purchase 2) EBay their clubs with full net applied to purchase or 3) Wholesale value from third party website such as PGA trade-in network or 2nd Swing applied to new club purchase. This “extra mile” customer service creates more club sales while eliminating the District tying up cash in used equipment. With the help of the entire staff Dave Huber has twice received the Central Illinois PGA Merchandiser of the Year for Public Course award, in 2007 & 2011.



Professional Services

Teaching golf is an important part of the PGA training program and we have offered individual golf lessons for all 24 years Dave Huber served here at Lake of the Woods GC. Currently, Huber retains 100% of the revenue from individual lessons and all fees are run through the POS system, so the

District is appraised of my total compensation. As part of the Golf Pro's regular salaried compensation he teaches adult group lessons and Junior golf clinics that CCFPD receives 100% of the revenue for. In 2013, this process generated \$3950.00 for CCFPD vs. an individual teaching revenue of \$1805.00. The last few years the CCFPD adult lessons have been the "Get Golf Ready" series, a national initiative of the USGA and PGA of America to promote and grow the game. We also offer club fitting to any golfer interested in buying new equipment. We use the Mizuno fitting system which allows us determine the proper club length, lie, shaft, shaft flex, and set make up to optimize a players game. We do not charge for this professional service if clubs are purchased through our shop. This "value added" extra service enhances our merchandise operation. We perform all types of golf club repair from reshafting to grip installation.

Associations

Men's Association – Our men's league runs from late April to early October and meets every Wednesday with tee times blocked from 3:30-5:30 on only one 9 to ensure public access to the course. Some benefits to joining include a CDGA handicap, hole in one administration, entrance into the club championship and a fall dinner. The league consists of individual weekly games with some partner games mixed in occasionally. For the 2013 season we had 157 members, with 50-60 playing each week.

Below is some additional information on our Men's league:

Fee: \$30

Event (prize fund): \$5 each week plus green fees

Schedule: April 30th – October 8th (Wednesdays)

2013 Officers

President	Roger Odle	Sec/Tres.	Gary Winans
Tournament	Dave Huber	Handicap	Pat Nelson

Women's Association – We have both an 18 and 9 hole women's association here at Lake of the Woods GC. Our 18 hole league runs from late April to the end of September and meets every Wednesday morning at 8:00 am. The 9 hole league runs from early May until late September and also meets every Wednesday from 8:30-9:00 am. Both leagues consist of individual weekly games with some partner games mixed in from time to time. To cap off the season both leagues combine for a "Fun Day" on the course with lunch following.

Below is some additional information on both Women's leagues:

18 Hole

Fee: \$35

Event Fee: Taken from \$35 plus green fees

Schedule: April 21st – September 26th

Officers

President - Nancy Ard

1st Secretary - Bev Becker

9 Hole

Fee: \$35

Event: Taken from \$35 plus green fees

Schedule: May 2nd – September 26th

Officers

President – Barb Rusk

1st Secretary – Anita Specht

Outings and Tournaments

Chris Edmondson coordinates all outside outings included in the list below.

Outing	# of Players	13 Total Rev	13 Actual Merchandise
Twin City Grasshoppers	23	\$579.50	\$0.00
Mahomet Rotary	68	\$3,050.50	\$300.00
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	97	\$4,950.00	\$776.00
McLean County Seniors	136	\$4,657.50	\$0.00
Carle EMS	59	\$3,023.00	\$472.00
U of I Police	30	\$1,541.24	\$240.00
Gold Glove Grasshoppers	34	\$875.50	\$0.00
Larry Harvey Memorial	64	\$4,433.50	\$512.00
Bulldog Open	108	\$5,358.00	\$864.00
U of I Employees Credit Union	28	\$1,280.00	\$160.00
EIU Football	63	\$3,250.00	\$504.00
Champaign Rotary Club	64	\$2,408.00	\$200.00
The Prep Tour	21	\$390.00	\$0.00
TALKS Mentoring	64	\$2,880.00	\$512.00
Class of '73 Reunion	20	\$690.00	\$0.00
Urbana Tiger Kick-Off Classic	82	\$2,050.00	\$0.00
Mahomet Chamber Of Commerce	60	\$2,972.00	\$480.00
Local #149	32	\$1,480.00	\$200.00
Mahomet Christian Church	36	\$1,120.00	\$0.00
U of I Vet Med	34	\$1,680.00	\$272.00
2013 Totals	1123	\$48,668.74	\$5,492.00

2012 Totals	1655	\$75,361.02	\$12,237.31
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Difference	-532	(\$26,692.28)	(\$6,745.31)
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Tournament	# of Players	13 Total Rev
2-Person Season Opener	130	\$6,500.00
Naughtin Open	62	\$4,340.00
Parent-Child	67	\$2,680.00
Junior Open	90	\$1,460.00
Club Championship	35	\$525.00
Big Scramble for Merchandise	145	\$12,325.00
2-Person Better Ball	74	\$3,700.00
2013 Totals	603	\$31,530.00
2012 Totals	613	\$30,395.00

We offer additional outing services as needed including: Rules administration, score boards, handicap application, flights, pairings, and tee times administration.

Clubhouse Rental

The Golf Course Clubhouse is available to rent for golf outings, parties and many other events from April 1 to October 15. The facility has a capacity of 80 people seated. The Clubhouse is furnished with chairs and rectangular tables and has a kitchen with a refrigerator, sink, oven, coffee maker, and microwave. There is also a unisex restroom along with heat and air conditioning. Facility rental hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Golf Car Fleet Management

We record outgoing cart numbers and check hour meters on carts to shift specific cart usage around to help even out total fleet hours. Club car has a new battery water fill system that much improves battery life.

Practice Areas

We have a large grass tee driving range area with synthetic mats on a new concrete pad at the back of the grass hitting area. Our range ball prices are \$12 for a Large bucket \$8 for medium and \$6 for a small. We also have two practice putting greens and one pitching green with a practice bunker. The putting greens and pitching area are open to the public and free of charge for any golfer who wants to improve their game.

Indoor Golf Simulator

Features include:

- 36 Modes of Play Scoring Styles – Stroke Play, Scramble, Skins, etc.
- Handicap Score Adjustment
- Customized Hole Play – select which holes to play and in which order
- Choice of Pin Position
- Green Conditions Options – adjust hardness and speed
- Wind Conditions Options – both direction and velocity
- Weather Conditions Options – from blue skies to *rain*
- Time-of-Day Customization – experience the beauty of the course
- Closest to Pin and Longest Drive Competitions
- Elevation Adjustments



Simulator

The photos above show the simulators in their new home upstairs in the Clubhouse and the check in counter at the island. The two simulators are steadily picking up momentum through this January. The league and practice range usage have both increased.

The logistics are a little confusing but it takes about 1 hour per person per 18 holes for the simulator. One foursome would take 4 hours to complete an 18 hole round on average. With one simulator we could get 3 foursomes per day (12 green fees) maximum in about 13 hours, so if we were open from 8:00AM to 9:00 PM and were fully booked with 3 groups that would be 100% +. With two simulators that would double for 24 green fees per day maximum. Realistically we would only achieve that goal occasionally even with very high demand. Simply put we have 1 tee time every 9 minutes outside on the 18 hole course and inside on the simulator we have one tee time every 4 hours.

Here are some YTD revenue numbers for the simulators:

Total fees only for practice, 9 and 18 hole rounds and league fees on the simulators = \$15,274.00 from October 15 2012 (first day with one Simulator) through February 10, 2014. Our second simulator was installed in December 2013. Additional Food and Beverage fees over prior years w/o the simulator(s) for the same period = \$476 vs. \$854 and merchandise sales were \$14,585 w/o simulators vs. \$20,696 with simulators in place.

Marketing

We have set up our own golf course website through Fore! Reservations, our point of sale system and automated tee sheet provider. We manage and maintain the site with current calendar of events, tournament and association information, and all other golf course news and information that the public will need.

Lake of the Woods was among the first courses to use the automated tee sheet. We accept tee-times one week in advance via telephone, internet, or in person. There is also a QR code on our scorecard which, when scanned by a smart phone, links directly to our mobile booking page. This is just another avenue for customers to book a tee time.

We compose and send out our own email promotions, which advertise upcoming events, sales, and other important information we need to attract customers. In general, we send out a monthly newsletter via e-mail, then any specific holiday, tournament, or sales promotions go out in a separate, more detailed e-mail.

We write and record our own radio advertising, which allows us to gain more exposure throughout Champaign County and surrounding communities paid for with a ½ price promotion campaign administrated through WDWS.

We offer tee-time specials and discount fees at off peak times. This year we ran a Tuesday promotion of \$25 per player with a cart for 18 Holes after 11:00 a.m., if the customer gave us an e-mail address. This allows us to collect more e-mails for advertising and promotions, while also filling the tee sheet during a time of historically minimal play. As the weather declines, we have offered our twilight fee all day to promote additional play.

Snack Bar Operations

We have a profitable Snack Bar operation run out of the area just under the clubhouse from April through early October at which time we move food and beverage service to the Pro Shop area for savings on personnel costs. I have the required Food Service Sanitation Certificate issued through the Department of Public Health and am recertified regularly as required.

We have been fortunate to have some continuity throughout our part-time snack bar staff which allows the operation to run smoothly. The snack bar serves hot dogs, sandwiches, chips, crackers, cookies, candy and a variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. We also run snack bar specials on weekends, when play is generally at its greatest.

We offer catering for golf outings and tournaments, with a small menu of options for groups to choose from.

We have a beverage cart which delivers all of our drink options, along with a small collection of snacks and merchandise to golfers on the course daily weather dependent, from April through October.

Overview

It is important to point out that 2013 had the fewest number of rounds we have ever had in my 24 seasons here at Lake of the Woods GC. The chart below with the last 18 years of play numbers will point out how very low the play numbers were last year. This was due to the extremely poor spring and fall weather combined on either side of an almost average summer. We had less play in 2013 than in 2008 when we had most of the tees closed for renovation!

Number of Rounds

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
18 Hole	38579	41834	35415	35693	38091	38007	36721	38045	36119
Par 3	8341	9477	10531	11276	11355	10039	8306	9085	7660
Grand Total	46920	51311	45946	46969	49446	48046	45027	46140	43779

Number of Rounds

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
18 Hole	34841	33242	31801	25708	30439	29382	24951	26402	23212
Par 3	6370	6283	6259	4185	3854	3242	2582	2388	2306
Grand Total	41211	39525	38060	29893	34293	32624	27533	28790	25518

Industry Information

Below is some additional information on the overall decline in play for the month of December 2013 as well as 2013 YTD numbers by region.



PGA PerformanceTrak in cooperation with NGCOA, the joint financial benchmarking initiative of the PGA of America and the National Golf Course Owners Association, supports the National Rounds Played Report by supplying data included in this report.

NATIONAL GOLF ROUNDS PLAYED REPORT



	DEC	YTD		DEC	YTD
PACIFIC	18.5%	4.1%			
CA	24.4%	5.0%			
Los Angeles	10.0%	-0.2%			
Orange County	16.4%	4.5%			
Palm Springs	7.3%	0.6%			
Sacramento	56.1%	7.3%			
San Diego	17.2%	6.7%			
San Francisco/Oakland	54.2%	10.0%			
HI	-9.3%	3.0%			
OR	-16.4%	2.0%			
Portland	-24.5%	0.3%			
WA	-21.8%	1.2%			
Seattle	-20.3%	-2.2%			
MOUNTAIN	-7.0%	-4.4%			
AZ	-1.7%	-0.3%			
Phoenix	-0.6%	-0.3%			
CO	-8.9%	-14.2%			
Denver	-11.7%	-13.2%			
ID, WY, MT	-75.9%	-1.7%			
NM	-28.6%	-5.2%			
NV	-12.4%	-3.5%			
Las Vegas	-10.4%	-4.1%			
UT	-34.3%	-3.7%			
WEST NORTH CENTRAL	-51.4%	-11.9%			
IA	-67.3%	-15.2%			
KS	-38.4%	-16.1%			
NE	-41.2%	-6.3%			
ND,SD	-72.2%	-14.3%			
MN	-77.4%	-9.6%			
Minneapolis/St.Paul	-74.9%	-11.7%			
MO	-54.2%	-10.4%			
St Louis	-54.1%	-11.0%			
Kansas City	-54.5%	-16.5%			
UNITED STATES	-9.0%	-4.9%			
PUBLIC ACCESS	-6.2%	-3.6%			
PRIVATE	-16.8%	-9.7%			
EAST NORTH CENTRAL	-62.7%	-8.8%			
IL	-64.6%	-10.9%			
Chicago	-55.8%	-9.3%			
IN	-56.4%	-9.2%			
MI	-54.3%	-6.4%			
Detroit	-54.9%	-7.4%			
OH	-60.2%	-8.5%			
Cincinnati	-46.3%	-8.3%			
Cleveland	-74.1%	-11.5%			
Columbus	-62.0%	-7.2%			
WI	NA	-9.9%			
Milwaukee	NA	-10.7%			
SOUTH CENTRAL	-26.5%	-7.0%			
AL	-22.5%	-6.7%			
Birmingham	-29.3%	-10.4%			
AR	-55.9%	-19.7%			
KY	-44.5%	-8.2%			
LA	-17.1%	-6.1%			
MS	-16.1%	-8.5%			
OK	-34.0%	-10.2%			
Oklahoma City	-30.3%	-10.3%			
TN	-30.2%	-8.3%			
Nashville	-20.8%	-6.5%			
TX	-23.7%	-4.1%			
Dallas/Ft. Worth	-33.7%	-5.8%			
Houston	-21.0%	-2.5%			
San Antonio	-13.3%	-2.1%			
SOUTH ATLANTIC	-4.0%	-2.8%			
DE, DC, MD	-25.8%	-3.1%			
Washington/Baltimore	-29.4%	-6.7%			
FL	3.3%	0.7%			
Jacksonville/Daytona	1.0%	-0.4%			
Orlando	-1.3%	2.7%			
Tampa	0.9%	-1.3%			
Palm Beach	-1.2%	-0.9%			
Sarasota	12.0%	-1.2%			
Naples/Ft Myers	7.1%	1.6%			
Miami/Ft.Lauderdale	4.6%	2.8%			
GA	-21.6%	-9.5%			
Atlanta	-24.8%	-8.6%			
NC	-15.9%	-5.9%			
Greensboro/Raleigh	-14.1%	-5.9%			
SC	2.6%	0.0%			
Charleston	5.1%	0.8%			
Hilton Head	2.5%	-1.1%			
Myrtle Beach	4.0%	0.7%			
VA	-27.0%	-8.5%			
WV	-47.3%	-6.8%			
MID ATLANTIC	-43.1%	-6.7%			
NJ	-25.3%	-5.9%			
New York City	-30.6%	-5.3%			
New York City	-23.7%	-4.8%			
PA	-60.7%	-8.6%			
Philadelphia	-46.7%	-7.3%			
Pittsburgh	-68.6%	-9.8%			
NEW ENGLAND	-47.3%	-3.0%			
CT	-48.9%	-4.0%			
Hartford	-55.6%	-1.8%			
MA, RI	-31.1%	-3.9%			
Boston	-27.5%	-4.1%			
ME, NH, VT	NA	-0.7%			

The percentages represent the differences in number of rounds played comparing December 2013 to December 2012.
For more information contact Golf Datatech, golfroundsplayed@golfdatatech.com or call 407-944-4116

Local Market Comparison

We called several other area courses to get last two years play numbers and I have included the summary below. Four of the courses had no staff on duty but I will get the additional information and include it with next month's board information. For the most part the courses were down 10 to 12% as the regional information in the report above shows. U of I courses had the closest match to us on bad weather and were down 5000 rounds per 18 hole facility. The Decatur facilities were up 1000 rounds split between 3 courses and Railside was up the most percentage wise but still had only 19,000 rounds total, 6,500 less than Lake of the Woods.

Area Course Comparison

Course	City	2012	2013	% Up/Down
Lake O/T Woods	Mahomet	28,790	25,518	11% ↓
Brookhill	Rantoul			No Staff available
Willow Pond	Rantoul			No Staff available
	Gibson			
Railside	City	17,500	19,000	8.6% ↑
UOI Orange & Blue	Savoy	?	?	↓ 10,000 Rounds from 2012
Red Tail Run	Decatur	26,289	27,981	6.4% ↑
Hickory Point	Decatur	26,052	31,802	22% ↑
Scovill	Decatur	26,840	20,033	25% ↓
ISU	Normal	25,600	23,300	10% ↓
Turtle Run	Danville			No Staff available
Iron Horse	Tuscola			No Staff available

Golf Course Maintenance (Written by Dave Torrens)

Who We Are

The golf course maintenance department has three full-time employees, Dave Torrens, Director of Golf and two Assistant Golf Course Superintendents, Darin Weasel and Clint Schaffer. This department hires nine seasonal employees who work from March until December.

What We Do

Daily golf course maintenance comprises golf course set-up, includes moving tee locations, emptying trash and changing cup locations, mowing putting greens and raking sand bunkers. Three times per week fairways, tees and approaches are mowed. Cutting height for putting greens is five-thirty seconds of an inch, tees and approaches three-quarters of an inch and fairways seven-eighths of an inch. Rough mowing takes place every day, mowing height two and one-half inches. Twice per year the putting greens are aerified. This process involves creating holes in the putting surfaces which decreases compaction, improves water infiltration and gas exchange. During aerification, sand is spread onto the putting surface. This helps with water infiltration, putting surface smoothness and helps break down organic matter build up. Monthly, during the growing season, the putting greens are topdressed with a fine layer of sand. This sand is worked into the turf canopy using a large brush dragged behind a golf maintenance cart. The sand helps fill low spots, creating a smooth putting surface. These applications of sand break down organic matter preventing the buildup of a thatch layer.

Equipment

Our equipment includes: two greens mowers, two tee/approach mowers, two fairway mowers, three rough mowers, two sand bunker rakes, two chemical sprayers, sand topdresser, bank/slope mower, leaf blowers, slit seeders, loader, maintenance golf carts, string trimmers, fertilizer spreaders and many hand tools.

During the winter months the staff performs maintenance on each piece of equipment. This involves cleaning, disassembling reels, replacing bearing and seals, and sharpening the reels. All oil and filters are changed.

Irrigation System

The irrigation system is an automatic computer controlled system. It was installed from 1998 to 1999. As the system ages, we have many irrigation problems. The pump station consists of three pumps, one twenty horsepower pump and two sixty horsepower pumps. This allows us to water at fourteen hundred gallons per minute. The irrigation system waters the putting greens, tees, approaches and fairways. Each irrigation head can be independently adjusted to increase or decrease the amount of water depending on the areas need. Irrigation cycles are used, only as needed, to avoid drought stress.

Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary

In 2004, Lake of the Woods Golf Course became a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary by Audubon International. To achieve this certification we documented our environmental efforts in each of six categories: Environmental Planning, Wildlife and Habitat Management, Outreach and Education, Chemical Reduction and Safety, Water Conservation, and Water Quality Management.

One of our main projects was the creation of the bio-swale along the entrance drive. Previously, the runoff from the golf parking lot drained directly into the Lake of the Woods. During the parking lot renovation, the water was diverted into the bio-swale. Contaminants from the parking lot are filtered before they enter the lake, protecting the water's quality.

Lake of the Woods Golf Course was recertified as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary in 2013.

Master Improvement Plan

A Master Improvement Plan was implemented in 1998 to improve the playability and aesthetics of Lake of the Woods Golf Course. Core areas of improvement were: Adding multiple tee system, lake placement and water quality, bunker placement and condition, cart path routing, tree planting, converting maintained areas to low or zero maintenance areas, and redesign pro shop grounds and parking area. Each of these core areas has been addressed. In the near future a new Master Improvement Plan could be drafted to help guide the future of Lake of the Woods Golf Course.

January 15, 2014

Dave Torrens
Lake of the Woods Golf Course
405 North Lake of the Woods Road
Mahomet, IL 61856

Dear Dave,

Thank you for your continuing efforts to enhance wildlife habitat and protect environmental quality through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program! Your commitment and positive attitude places you at the forefront of golf management. Your experience is a valuable asset to others, and we hope you will share it as your schedule allows.

Melanie Manner from Urbana (Volunteer Stewardship Network, retired) was impressed with your golf course and facilities during her site visit this past June. She thought the course was an excellent example of how golf courses can provide wildlife habitat, and was especially impressed by the natural areas and overall environmental stewardship on the course. As a result of Melanie's helpful comments and observations during her site visit, we are pleased to recertify Lake of the Woods Golf Course as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

Melanie was impressed with your continuing efforts to create naturalized areas on the golf course, which provide valuable water, food and habitat for local and migratory wildlife in the area. In particular, she noted extensive shoreline buffers of native vegetation, good habitat for birds and wildlife, and management of hardwood trees. She noted multiple species during her visit including red-winged blackbirds, deer, and cabbage white butterflies. She was also impressed that the course staff are planting trees to replace ash, and noted that the staff is adding hackberry, an excellent wildlife tree. One recommendation she provided was to add more native nectar plants in your gardens to attract butterflies and other pollinators. Overall, Lake of the Woods can take pride in preserving the natural resources in its backyard.

Your commitment to implementing natural buffer zones around water features was of particular note to the reviewer and is another excellent method of ensuring proper water quality on the golf course. These buffer areas are a simple, yet very effective method of helping to slow and filter course runoff prior to entering surface water. Native aquatic vegetation also provides important habitat and food for wildlife. One issue raised by the reviewer was the past planting of Lotus in one of the ponds, as well as the presence of other invasive species around the course. She said you were aware of the issue and would attempt at least monitor spread of these species, and potentially reduce them, when time and budgets allowed.

Your pest management methods at Lake of the Woods are exemplary, and we applaud your use of scouting and setting thresholds for turf diseases and pests. This is a critical component of integrated pest management and contributes heavily to enhanced water quality and the beauty of the course. Melanie recorded all your appropriate IPM methods, and noted your rotation of low toxicity pesticides.

We applaud these efforts and consider them good role models for other facilities. In addition, Melanie was impressed by your comprehensive turf management practices and attention to soil health.

Melanie noted that your efforts to use water more efficiently are enhanced by your careful attention to weather patterns, targeted irrigation heads, routine irrigation system maintenance, past and ongoing upgrades, and computer controlled systems. Once again, these are exemplary practices.

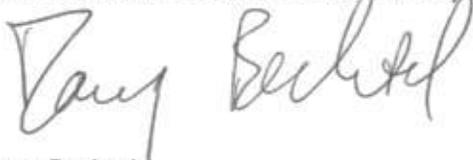
Melanie applauded your efforts to engage club members, employees, and the community through your ACSP display and signs in the clubhouse and on the property. We encourage you to continue these projects and consider additional ways to highlight your environmental values, perhaps with birding tours, or posting about wildlife sightings on social media and the website. You may be interested in purchasing one of our brand-new official Audubon International Certified Property signs, available for a low introductory price at our online store: <https://www.auduboninternational.org/promotions-products>.

Your Junior Golf programs and working with an Eagle Scout are excellent examples of community involvement! Another great way to increase your involvement with the community is by participating in First Green, which uses golf courses as environmental learning labs for school groups. You can watch a video on getting started with First Green at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/p0k1662cf0i5sfj/FG%20How%20To%201.mpg>. Through First Green, local golf course superintendents and/or representatives host students on field trips where they test water quality, collect soil samples, identify plants, design plantings, assist in stream bed restoration and are involved in the ecology and environmental aspects of the golf course. The students are also introduced to many other aspects of golf. Community organizations may also be helpful in managing nest box projects and updating signs that can help further spread the word about the unique natural areas at Lake of the Woods and your remarkable golf course stewardship practices.

Information on a variety of topics, including how to implement environmental projects and species information is provided in the Resources section of the member-only website and in A Guide to Environmental Stewardship on the Golf Course, 2nd edition, which was sent to you previously. Log in to the member-only website from our website at www.auduboninternational.org using your email address. You can also upload digital documents and photos, saving both paper and postage. Don't forget to check out our fact sheets on outreach and education ideas and more, at our website's resource library page: <https://www.auduboninternational.org/factsheets>. This list is constantly being updated, so be sure to check back soon for additional materials.

There are now over 2,200 golf courses enrolled in the program and 873 are currently designated as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. Thanks for setting such a fine example for others to follow! We look forward to another successful year and are glad to know that Lake of the Woods will continue to be part of that success.

From all of us at Audubon International, we commend you for your efforts.



Doug Bechtel
Associate Director of Environmental Programs

MEMORANDUM

From: Doug Sanders, Site Superintendent

To: Board of Commissioners

RE: Operations and Maintenance for Lake of the Woods (LOW), River Bend (RB), and Sangamon River (SR) Annual Report for 2013

Facilities and Staff

The Operations and Maintenance (OPS) department is housed on the west side of the Lake of the Woods Preserve in a 9,307 square foot building. Directly to the east of the main complex is a 6,095 square foot storage shed used to store vehicles and large equipment. Both of these facilities are cooperatively utilized by the OPS and Construction departments. In addition, there is a 3,298 square foot storage shed located at the Sangamon River Forest Preserve residence that is used to store seasonal equipment, supplies, and other miscellaneous items.

The OPS department is comprised of a site superintendent (Doug Sanders), three full-time maintenance II workers (Tammy Bruehl, Andrew Combes, and Brian Decker) and one part-time staff member (Larry Devore). In addition, throughout the year there are a number of seasonal workers that assist the full-time staff in their daily operations.

As an extension of the OPS department, the Botanical Gardens' staff works under the direction of the site superintendent. Their staff consists of one full-time Garden Supervisor (Larry Beckett), two permanent part-time staff members (Kim Delong and Tina Mink), and a number of seasonal workers. The garden has submitted a separate report this year.

Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of the OPS department include the general maintenance, service, and upkeep of the District's facilities and grounds at the LOW, RB, and SR preserves. This also includes the facility and grounds at the Riverview Retreat Center. Normal recurring duties include:

- Opening and closing procedures of grounds and facilities;
- Trash pick-up and grill clean up;
- Mowing, trimming, and spraying of common areas and trails;
- Tree pruning and removal;
- Trail maintenance and development;
- Snow and ice removal on roads and sidewalks;
- Janitorial duties at rental facilities, free shelters, restrooms, and office buildings;
- Rental facility and *Special Use Permits* preparation and clean-up (seven facilities);
- Administration of boat rental program;
- Monthly playground and facility inspections; and
- Vehicle service and maintenance (27 vehicles).

Jurisdiction

The jurisdiction of the OPS department entails the facilities and grounds within the LOW, RB, and SR preserves. This excludes the Golf Course and the Museum of the Grand Prairie. The OPS department does provide assistance to these facilities when requested by department personnel.

Lake of the Woods

Originating in 1948, Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve is the oldest preserve within the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. It consists of 900 acres that provide a number of natural resources, educational opportunities, and recreational activities. The OPS department inspects, services, and maintains the following amenities:

- Lake of the Woods Pavilion (200 capacity enclosed rental facility)
- Elk's Lake Pavilion (200 capacity enclosed rental facility)
- Izaak Walton Cabin (32 capacity enclosed rental facility)
- *River View Retreat Center (35 capacity enclosed rental facility w/kitchen)
- Swiss Valley Shelter (90 capacity rental facility)
- Rotary Hill Shelter (116 capacity rental facility w/kitchen)
- Sycamore Hollow Shelter (60 capacity rental facility)
- HI-Tower Bell Carillon
- 6 restroom facilities, including the Rayburn-Purnell RR/Bridal Dressing Room and Buffalo Trace RR
- 6 Open Shelters (Peninsula, Old Hickory, Fisherman, Hawthorn, Rayburn-Purnell, and Mahomet Rotary)
- 4 playgrounds
- 4 volleyball sand pits
- 4 fishing piers
- 9.25 miles of bike paths and nature/multi-use trails

*River View Retreat Center is located at 428 Country Rd 2500 N, approximately 2 miles north of LOW.

River Bend

Developed in 2001, the River Bend Forest Preserve is a 280 acre site, containing 130 acres of lake water, 2.5 miles of forest along the Sangamon River as well as a 1-mile nature trail and 1.2-mile multi-purpose trail. Amenities maintained by the OPS department include:

- River Bend open shelter
- 1 restroom facility
- Possibility Pier
- 2.2 miles of nature/multi-use trails

Sangamon River

Purchased in 2007, Sangamon River Forest Preserve provides a 160-acre area for a variety of natural resource activities. In addition, it includes the historic residence that was built in 1919. The OPS department cares for the following amenities:

- Sangamon River open shelter
- 1 restroom facility
- 2.3 miles of nature/multi-use trails
- Canoe launch along Sangamon River and Wildcat Slough
- 450' accessible trail with shade structure

Affiliation with District Staff and General Public

In relation to the District's mission to provide conservational, educational, and recreational experiences for the county, the OPS staff supports the District's staff in their daily functions. This support comes in the form of providing general housekeeping of offices and common areas, facility maintenance, and special request.

Since the OPS staff works throughout the grounds and patrols the parks, during opening and closing procedures, they are often the District's frontline responders to the general public's needs and questions.

February 10, 2014

MEMORANDUM

From: Larry Beckett, Botanical Garden Supervisor

To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden Annual Report for 2013

Facilities and Staff

The 10-acre Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden (BG) was dedicated to the wife of H.I. Gelvin in 1974. It is located along IL Rt. 47, adjacent to the Museum of the Grand Prairie. 2014 marks the 40th Anniversary of the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden. The BG is made up of smaller gardens and landscaped areas with a garden pond and 12-foot waterfall as its focal point. Other structures include an award winning Enabling Garden with an extensive arbor and water feature, a 24-foot octagonal Gazebo, a 25' X 60' greenhouse adjacent to a 3,200 sq. ft. Discovery Garden, a 10' X 30' lean-to propagation greenhouse, and an historic one-room School House maintained by the Museum. A section of the 3.5-mile Lake of the Woods bike trail runs through and adjacent to the south end of the BG with the Enabling Garden joining to it. Features of the BG include:

- an All-America Selection garden;
- Xeric garden;
- Prairie Sampler garden;
- perennial beds displaying native hybrids of selected prairie plants; and
- many diverse plantings of perennial beds, shrub beds, and annual floral displays.

In conjunction with the Garden Clubs of Illinois and the Mahomet Garden Club, the BG staff assists in maintaining the Illinois Blue Star Maker landscape site located at the Buffalo Trace east parking lot.

The garden is a component of the Lake of the Woods Operations Department. Botanical Garden staff consists of one full-time garden supervisor (Larry Beckett), two permanent part-time staff members (Kim Delong and Tina Mink), and seasonal staff. The BG staff is responsible for the grounds maintenance and operations of the BG and seven landscaped sites within the Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve. In addition, staff oversee 10 to 20 garden weddings each year, maintain the department's power equipment and infrastructure.

Duties and Responsibilities

Winter is a time for designing a new season's floral displays, ordering plant material and horticultural supplies, and planning inter-departmental projects. Our propagation and greenhouse work is in full swing; with rooting cuttings, planting flower and vegetable seed, transplanting and repotting plant material, and making minor greenhouse repairs. Winter is also a time for servicing all power equipment, taking horticultural chemical inventory and attending the Illinois Department of Agriculture Pesticide Clinic. Proper pruning of trees and shrubs plays a big part with winter jobs for the BG staff in addition to organizing shop areas and researching plant material for the newest varieties. This winter, we are moving horticultural supplies, tools and equipment out of the lean-to greenhouse shop and storage area in preparation for the removal of that greenhouse allowing the museum to use this space for additional artifact storage.

Spring work usually starts in late February or early March with applying turf fertilizer w/ pre-emergent herbicide and finishing up winter tree pruning. Greenhouse work continues with repotting transplants, making cold hardy vegetables ready for moving into the Discovery Garden, and planting late season vegetable and flower seed. Outdoor activities include removing leaves from landscaped beds, picking up fallen sticks from turf areas, and begin applying hardwood bark mulch around trees and shrubs. As spring temperatures continue to increase and the danger of frost is over, less time is spent in the greenhouse and outdoor work dictates our activities. Flower bed preparations, opening irrigation systems, startup of the waterfall, herbicide early weed populations in the turf and landscape beds, removing deer protections from smaller trees, and re-grading washed out areas of the gravel walkways are some of our mid-spring tasks. Late spring involves removing and planting all of the greenhouse plants into flower beds and Discovery Garden vegetables. Plant orders are being received and planted at this time, and new trees and shrubs are added to landscaped areas in the BG and Park. This is also a time when the greenhouses are shut down and closed for the summer.

Summer in the BG involves more routine work than any other time of the year. Mowing/string trimming, weed control (hand pulling and herbicide), irrigation (landscapes, flower beds, raised beds and containers, turf, etc.), dead heading, mulching, removing and treating volunteer trees, and repairing irrigation leaks make up much of what we do during this time. Irrigation consists of moving garden hoses and small sprinklers around the garden where needed, using the existing irrigation system and water tanks. Small and/or medium size projects that can be accomplished within the BG department are worked on by staff and occasional volunteers. This is a time for ongoing staff training to continue on equipment use and general safety. From the last weekend in May through the first weekend in October, is the garden wedding season. The BG usually has 10 to 12 garden weddings per season near the waterfall, but it is not unusual to have as many as 18 to 20 weddings during the summer. We provide a staff person to be available to answer questions during the rehearsal, and to be present and oversee the wedding.

Fall starts our second busiest time of the year with the shortest period of time to quickly get the BG ready for winter. Mowing is still taking time out of our work schedule well into November, except it gives an opportunity to mulch fallen leaves back into the turf for added nutrients. Making sure high value tender plants, divisions, and cuttings are moved into the greenhouse for winter is a high priority. After the removal of the BG's deer fence in 2007, individual fencing of over 100 trees is installed annually for protection. In early spring, we start removing the fencing as deer antlers begin to drop. As temperatures decrease, garden staff begins the removal of all annual and perennial vegetation, ornamental grasses, draining the irrigation system, and winterize the waterfall pumping system. Golf Course staff assists in blowing out excess water in the Garden's irrigation system for winter, and BG staff drains six bladder pressure tanks within the well house located on the north edge of the Rayburn-Purnell Woods. Fall is also a time when turf renovations and reseeding occurs.

Botanical Garden Equipment

We utilize large and small equipment in the management of the BG and preserve landscape plantings. Staff use Lake of the Woods Operations' large equipment and occasionally borrow

equipment from the Golf Course grounds department. Smaller power equipment such as mowers, utility vehicles, tillers, powered hand tools, etc., are stored and maintained in the shop.

The BG is responsible for a 2013 Ford pickup, three Kawasaki Mule utility vehicles, and two mulching/grooming zero turn Toro riding mowers. Other small powered tools that the BG maintains and uses include string trimmers, power pruner, two leaf blowers, reciprocating vegetation cutter, various sizes of garden tillers, push mower, and various types and numbers of hand tools. Equipment maintenance is ongoing and is performed as needed and as suggested in equipment manuals.

Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden Visitation

The BG, located in the Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve, is one of the most visited areas within the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. Numerous educational programs presented by the Museum and Education Department bring hundreds of students, teachers and parents to view and utilize areas of the BG, annually. Many of the “Museum of the Grand Prairie” events bring visitors directly into the BG or as a secondary visit to the Museum. With the bike trail winding through the south end of the BG, large numbers of visitors stop daily to wander through the garden. The BG is rented for garden weddings that bring in hundreds of visitors annually to the waterfall/pond area; and the pond attracts many grandparents with their grandchildren to feed the large Koi fish. A 3,200 square foot “Discovery Garden” was developed adjacent to the greenhouse in 2006 that brings a variety of visitors to that location to view and learn about vegetable and flower gardening methods. This area is also heavily used by education staff, bringing school classes into the Discovery Garden for programs. At any given time throughout the year, daily walkers and mothers with strollers are seen moving about the BG; especially on the paved walkways. Since 1983, the BG has been the host site for the WCIA filming of “Best of the Class”, honoring the area’s high school valedictorians. Over the years, this event has brought thousands of visitors to the BG.

Additional Information

- Staff serves as a resource for District staff and the public regarding plant identification along with cultural information for native, exotic, and cultural flora of Champaign County and this region.
- The BG is an institutional member of the “American Public Gardens Association”, and a display garden and member of “All-America Selections” plants.
- The waterfall/pond and irrigation system in the garden are now showing signs of age, with both infrastructure systems requiring significant man hours of maintenance.
- Combating deer and other critter damage in the gardens is a constant struggle. The addition of the deer fencing around the Discovery Garden in 2013 should alleviate this problem in at least a portion of the Botanical Garden.
- The gardens lack a consistent system of accessible walkways; however we have been addressing this on a section-by-section basis through the annual budget process.

February 10, 2014

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Brian Taylor, Homer Lake Site Superintendent

Re: Summary of Homer Lake Operations

Facilities and Staff

Homer Lake Operations and Maintenance department is located on the north east side of the park just off of South Homer Lake road. The facility is a 5,848 square foot metal shed that houses all the maintenance equipment, vehicles, work areas and offices for the staff.

The residence of the site superintendent is located adjacent to the maintenance facility and is 600 feet east of the main entrance to the park. The maintenance drive separates the house property from the maintenance facility. The location of the house allows the site superintendent / resident guard to monitor traffic and it also provides easy access for park visitors should they need assistance.

The staff consists of a site superintendent and an assistant site superintendent and three seasonal employees. Brian Taylor has served as Site Superintendent for twenty three years, and Assistant Site Superintendent Roy Woodmansee has twenty two years of service. We also have three seasonals, Joe Hopper has been with us for seven seasons, and Devyn Roy and Skylar Smith will begin their second season.

Duties and Responsibilities

The staff is responsible for the general maintenance, service and upkeep of the District's facilities, grounds and waters at Homer Lake, Collins Pond, Old Homer Park, Sylvester Woods, and recently acquired Kickapoo Rail Trail. Normal recurring duties include:

- Opening and closing of the park and facilities
- Trash pick up and removal
- Mowing, trimming, spraying of common areas and trails
- Maintenance of landscape areas, shrub beds, flower beds, and prairie plots
- Tree planting, pruning and removal
- Trail maintenance and development
- Snow and ice removal on roads and sidewalks
- Janitorial duties at rental facilities, pit toilets, and maintenance building
- Rental facility, Special Use Permit and Special Program preparation and clean up
- Monthly playground and facility inspections
- Vehicle and equipment service and maintenance

Equipment

- Vehicles – Ford Escape hybrid, Ford F - 250, Ford F - 450 dump bed and snow plow
- Mowers – Kubota 6ft mower, John Deere 6ft mower, 3 point bush hog mower
- Tractors – Kubota 31hp general utility, John Deere Backhoe
- Implements – 5 ft tiller, box scraper, gill, turf aerator, grader blade, brush grapple
- Utility Vehicles – 2 Kubota RTV's with dump beds
- Skid Steer – Bob Cat with forestry mulcher, brush mower, and loader bucket

- Trailers – 3 equipment trailers for mowers, tractors, and skid steer
- Patrol Boat – 14ft flat bottom with 25hp outboard motor

Scope of Responsibilities

Homer Lake

Homer Lake Forest Preserve has been managed by the District since 1971 but was not under District ownership until 1992 when the IDNR transferred the title. The preserve consists of an 828-acre tract and an 80-acre lake with more than 5 miles of shoreline. The staff maintains, services, and inspects the following park features:

- Homer Lake Interpretive Center
- Salt Fork Center rental facility (115 capacity) - Most rented facility in the District (1999 Award of Excellence from IDNR Best Facility Award)
- Salt Fork Center amphitheater – Used mainly for weddings and photography
- Walnut Hill Shelter rental facility (60 capacity) - Open air with indoor rest rooms
- Walnut Hill playground and sand volleyball court
- Park residence – 1,465 square feet constructed in late 70's
- Homer Lake – 80 acres of water, IDNR manages and stocks fish annually
- Oak Ridge picnic area has 2 small shelters open to the public
- Sail Boat Launch shelter open to the public
- Sail Boat Launch concrete boardwalk (300')
- Natural Playscape & Stream (2013 IPRA Best Facility Award)
- Observation Tower over looking a prairie restoration site
- Lincoln wayside exhibit
- 900 foot dam and spillway – constructed in 1968, annual inspections for PDRMA,
- 1.5 miles of Salt Fork River frontage
- 3 rest room facilities
- 4 boat ramps
- 5 fishing piers
- 10 picnic areas with tables, grills and benches
- 10 plus miles of hiking / multi use trails with 1 interpretive trail system
- 4 trail bridges
- 1 sled hill
- 4 swinging benches

Collins Pond

This 28 acre parcel and 3 acre pond was purchased by the District in 1974. It has one of the oldest oak and hickory woodlands in the area with an excellent variety of native woodland plants. This park area is approximately 3 miles south of Homer Lake and it offers a more secluded outdoor experience.

- .62 mile trail
- 3 picnic tables
- 1 grill

Old Homer Park

When this old historic park site was donated to the District in 1998 it was reported to be a 28 acre tract with Salt Fork River frontage. The total acreage has not been surveyed but it appears to be less than 15 acres. This tract is located 2 miles south east of Homer Lake and State Route 49 runs thru the property. Old Homer Park operated from about 1905 to 1929 and it was one of the largest recreation areas in central Illinois. Most of the acreage is in the flood plain so very little has been done in terms of providing amenities for visitors. An Eagle Scout installed an information display and a bench near the old bird bath which is the only remaining historical artifact from the park's existence. This spring we plan to install a very nice interpretive sign that will give visitors information about the park's rich history.

Sylvester Woods (2013)

This 6.7 acre parcel is located 2 miles west of Homer Lake. The property is a very high quality natural area that borders the Salt Fork River. This summer we installed a beautiful maintenance free sign that recognizes the Sylvester family as the original owners since 1854.

Kickapoo Rail Trail (2013)

The acquisition of the 24 mile CSX rail trail from Urbana to Danville was finally completed in October after nearly two decades. The Forest Preserve will manage 12.2 miles of this 175 acre linear parkway that begins just east of Urbana and ends east of Ogden. When developed the 10 foot wide crushed limestone path will provide a variety of recreational and educational opportunities. Construction of the first 6 mile section from Urbana to St Joe is scheduled for this summer.

Public Service Responsibilities / Activities

The Homer Lake staff provides excellent public service to our visitors and we respond to a variety of requests from the public, rental groups, and volunteers. The following list is representative of the additional public service activities:

- U of I held the national concrete canoe races which drew over 600 people from all over the world (2013)
- Richard Louv was here during TACO week (2013)
- SFC wedding - retrieved a wedding ring from underneath the deck after removing several boards to locate it (2013)
- Trail Stewards - assisting them with trail issues
- Take Me Fishing-assisting the Interpretive staff
- Canoe Programs-assisting the Interpretive staff
- Audubon Programs & Bird Counts
- U of I Natural History Survey long term studies
- Bass Tournaments
- Catfish Tournaments
- U of I crew team
- Special Use Permits – Walk and Run Events, Search and Rescue Events, Several School related events, Card Board Boat Race, Car Shows, Bike Rides

2013 Accomplishments and the Year Ahead

This year presented challenges in terms of weather-related events that created a great deal of unexpected work. We had three storm events that took down more than two dozen trees, and the frequent rains led to a longer mowing season than the past few years. The water level in the lake finally receded in late fall allowing the spillway project to be completed in November. The expansion joints in the floor and the walls as well as other stress cracks were repaired. The spillway has been in operation since 1968 and is in very good shape.

The other original infrastructure component that remains at Homer Lake is the sailboat launch adjacent to the Natural Playscape. The launch area, which also serves as a secondary lake overflow, was built in 1970 and consists of a concrete boardwalk supported by railroad ties. Due to erosion of the shoreline and deterioration of the support ties, the concrete is cracking and deteriorating in sections. We continue to repair the cracks and shore up the support system as we can, but the entire launch area is in need of re-design and renovation. A plan for the renovation was developed a few years ago by RATIO Architects with the cost estimated in the \$300,000 range. At that time, a grant application was submitted to IDNR to fund the project; but unfortunately it was denied. Funding in the amount of \$5,000 is included in the 2014 capital budget to continue addressing repairs until a more permanent solution can be identified.

The first year of the Natural Playscape being open was a great success and as expected, it increased our work load. We completely reworked the pool to improve safety by eliminating the possibility of a child getting their foot stuck between the rocks. We installed a concrete crawl thru log for toddlers and a swinging bench for the adults. The Playscape was so busy that we had to wait until school was back in session before we installed the remote control stream flow device. This improvement allows the kids to turn the stream on by stepping on a sensor that is mounted near the old pump handle at the top of the waterfall. The stream will automatically shut off after thirty minutes if no one is there to turn the water on. This will save electricity, wear and tear on the pumps, and it should also reduce the amount of algae by allowing the stream to dry out more often. Throughout the summer we were called out to remove cobblestone dams that caused the stream to overflow.

This year, we responded to the playscape after someone reported that the stream stopped flowing. We had to pull the pumps out to find that small rocks were lodged in the impellers causing the pumps to stop. In order to retrieve the pumps we have to wade out into the lake and carry the pumps and hoses to the shoreline. One of the capital improvements that we are looking forward to this spring is the installation of a wet well and filter system that will reduce the amount of maintenance that is required to install the pumps and retrieve them at the end of the season. The new system will also reduce wear and tear on the pumps.

February 10, 2014

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Matthew Kuntz, Site Superintendent

Re: Middle Fork River Forest Preserve 2013 Annual Report

Background

The Middle Fork River Forest Preserve consists of 1702 acres in northeast Champaign County, approximately five miles north of Penfield. The preserve contains a mix of hardwood forests, mixed lowland and upland prairies, and waterfowl management areas. Within the user areas of the preserve is a 65 site campground holding electric and non-electric camping, two group areas for larger camping groups, swim beach, four miles of the Middle Fork River, an enclosed rental building used for multiple applications, and three ponds for recreational use. Camping is available to the public all year, with its busiest time running May through October.

Staff and Responsibilities

Staffing at the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve consists of two full time employees, site superintendent Matthew Kuntz and assistant site superintendent Andy Little. Also, we typically employ three seasonal positions helping with day to day operations and a campground host who runs daily office operations for the campground. Responsibilities in general include grounds maintenance and general upkeep of all user areas and properties owned by the district. Along with the campground host, full time staff maintains a campground reservation system used by staff and public. Other duties include management of waterfowl areas, wetlands, river corridors, and trails.

2013 Year in Review

2013 was a busy but great year for the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve. Following national averages, the campground was packed all year with more and more new visitors to the preserve. Also, campers are taking good hold of the online reservation system making it quite simple to book their reservations at their home. Our campground naturalist, Christy Wallace, once again made a name for herself at the campground with her programs being some of the most requested activities during campers' stay. A capital improvement we were able to make inside the campground was installing new electrical pedestals at each electric campsite, improving maintenance requirements and down time for campers. Also, more 50 amp campsites were added to keep up with the camping demand of larger camping units and trailers.

Other improvements made at the Middle Fork were the renovation of the patio area at the Activity Center rental building. The old porch was replaced with a fully accessible patio area with pergola, new tables, and accessible walkway. This was completed by our construction crew and Middle Fork staff, and has received many compliments so far. Another addition was new information kiosks located throughout the user areas, mostly at trail heads. These were installed with new trail signage and display case to better inform the user of location and information on the areas they would be visiting. Thanks to Lisa Sprinkle and our sign committee on deciding content and display of these signs.

The drainage issue at the Odle Property was resolved in late summer by clearing broken tile and rip-rap from the access road and replacing it with a new culvert and side dressing. This washout was our only access point in reaching the property and will be a crucial fix for the new trail which will be complete in 2014. Work has been continuous on this property to fulfill OSLAD requirements with new trail signage and trail construction.

Other projects completed in 2013 include:

- Renovation of observation platform at north waterfowl area
- Replacement of light fixtures throughout preserve areas for energy efficiency

The Year Ahead: 2014

In the upcoming year, we have many expectations and goals to complete for the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve. One new plan is for the purchasing of firewood for the campground. Typically we have produced all of our firewood in house, which had a significant impact on staff time and other priorities throughout the preserve.

Two accessible trails are to be built at Middle Fork by end of 2014. The trail previously mentioned at the Odle Property, and the Pt. Pleasant trail to be built on the south end of the preserve. Staff has designated locations and signage requirements for these trails and once the weather clears this spring ground breaking will begin. Each trail will average close to two miles in distance with parking lots, signage, and accessible walkways.

Other improvements include shelter rehab, sidewalk construction, and the addition of a shower tower at the beach. The installment of the tower and new drinking fountain at the shower house will make that location much more user friendly for the preserve users and cut down on maintenance requirements.

The Future

As far as vision with the future of Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, we have big eyes. With the removal of the firewood operation for staff, two pole barns will sit mainly idle at the North Waterfowl Area parking lot. Discussion will include possible restoration of those sites or need for storage for operations staff. Also, campground expansion will be a topic of discussion for our 5 year plan. Adding more electrical sites to the campground, and looking at our potential of adding cabins or yurts available for public use will also be in the mix. Campground cabins are becoming quite a draw across the nation for campground owners and I believe we have the client base to make it a great addition.

Shop space needs may have to be addressed in future years as the operations building is reaching its capacity. I also see potential for the development of additional visitor amenities at Middle Fork as I believe this preserve continues to remain underutilized by area residents, despite excellent marketing efforts by the District. As we look to improve the accessibility of our preserves, additional accessible trails could be considered particularly in and around the campground, as funding allows.