

July 9, 2015

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Lisa Sprinkle, Marketing Coordinator

Re: July Staff Report

**Executive Director (Dan Olson)**

- It was another very busy 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. We hosted thousands of visitors throughout all of our sites. The weather was very good all weekend which led to a steady stream of visitors over all the days. I continue to be incredibly impressed with the staff during these weekends. They take pride in all the sites looking and running their best and spend a whole lot of extra time prepping, restocking, and making each place look great. I would like to share with everyone something Stephanie Wissmiller wrote after Saturday's Freedom Fest. The reason I would like to share it is because *the sentiment is fitting for all our preserves and facilities*. Knowing that staff is typically busy taking care of everything behind the scenes, Stephanie wrote, "I get a different perspective of the event than most of you since I am by the crowd most of the time. I am able to see the family's cooking out and playing games. I get to see the smiles and hear the laughs. I also get the comments after the event, and, just like every year, I heard "Thank You", "You guys do an amazing job with this event", and "We had a great time and will be back next year." I wanted to make sure that all of you know how much fun the community has at this event and how much they, and I, appreciate everything that all of you do to make it such a success." Thank you to Commissioners Sarah Livesay and Phil Hult for volunteering at Freedom Fest.
- We have been working with a few groups including the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department at the U of I on a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Covered Bridge at Lake of the Woods in honor of the original engineer German Gurfinkle who is still very active at the University of Illinois. The event will include a presentation on campus, followed by a rededication of the bridge on site on August 3, 2015.
- Chris and I met with County Board Chair Patsi Petrie for an update of relevant issues that the County and the District will be facing in the future. Discussions included the KRT, getting groups together to discuss referenda, and potential expert volunteers.
- The Public Art League has unveiled their picks for artwork around Champaign County, including the piece sponsored by the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation to be placed in the garden. The piece is in the Rococo Nouveau style and will be revealed very soon.

**Deputy Director/Grants (Mary Ellen Wuellner)**

- The Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation awarded a grant of up to \$25,000 to the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation for restoration work at Sangamon River Forest Preserve. To access the grant, the FPF will need to raise private donations totaling \$7,000. For each dollar raised by the FPF, ICECF will match it with \$3. If we can also allocate 400 volunteer hours to the restoration efforts, ICECF will provide an additional \$4,000 in grant funds.
- In late June, the Vermilion Healthcare Foundation requested a meeting to discuss our grant application for the Kickapoo Rail Trail. I submitted the application on behalf of the Vermilion County Conservation Foundation, in the amount of \$50,000 over two years, to benefit the trail project. The meeting, which was attended by Ken Konsis, Doug Ireland, and I, went very well and we hope to have some positive news by the end of July.
- Also at the end of June, we received a \$10,000 donation to the Kickapoo Rail Trail from a Champaign family that wishes to remain anonymous. June donations have been steady as a result of May's publicity and additional efforts by our CAC and other volunteers to keep the community's focus on the trail.

- Based on current KRT donations and the revised construction estimates recently derived by project engineers (see the Planning portion of this staff report), the remaining Phase I fundraising goal is now down to about \$125,000. Once this amount is raised, construction could begin on both Phase I West (Main Street, Urbana to Main Street, St. Joe) and Phase I East (Vermilion County fairgrounds to Oakwood).

### **Administration (John Baker)**

- The 2014 District audit was filed with the State Comptroller, Champaign County Clerk, the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB) and the Park District Risk Management Association. The MSRB filing is a federal requirement for state and local government agencies that issue tax-exempt bonds. Published a Notice of Audit Availability in the News-Gazette as the Public Funds Statement issued in the past is not required when audits are completed and available no later than June 30 for the District.
- Met with Andrew Kerins and Bobbie Herakovich to begin revising and proposing new District financial policies where these are dated or needed. We agreed to use the Finance and Business Operations Section from the IAPD Distinguished Park and Recreation Accreditation Standards as the organizing framework for District financial policies.
- Finalized MediaCom contract for fiber optic internet connectivity to be installed no later than early fall
- Reviewed Hay Group contract for compensation study of Golf course full-time and part-time employees.
- Paid \$174.22 in property taxes to County Treasurer for Kickapoo Rail Trail parcels that include drainage assessments. Drainage taxes are not included in the District's tax exemption.

### **Human Resources (Jan Runion)**

- Received proposals and met with three insurance brokers on District's health insurance.
- Attended numerous webcasts on ACA reporting.
- Reviewed compensation study with golf personnel and requested their job information to be included in Hay Group's salary study.

### **Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)**

- The Marketing Department now has a spinning "prize wheel" to take to events and promote the CCFPD. The wheel was made by our construction crew and will be taken to outreach events throughout the county.
- Another great year for Freedom Fest. Total admission fees collected were \$4,541.92. The boat rentals for the day brought in \$870. Thank you to Commissioners Sarah Livesay and Phil Hult for volunteering on the 4<sup>th</sup>!
- Lisa attended a series of marketing seminars put on by the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce each Tuesday morning in June. Topics and speakers included: June 2: Realistic about who you are, Kathrine Wright, Roundtable; June 9: Establishing a strong company image, Rod Roberts, Thunderstruck Design; June 16: Allocating marketing dollars most effectively to reach your target, Katherine Smith, DCC Marketing; June 23: Conveying your company's story, Jennifer Hendricks-Kaufmann, Carle; and June 30: Harnessing the power of digital marketing, Corey Buttry, U of I Extension.



### **Natural Resources (Mike Daab)**

- The Natural Resources Department would like to say thank you and good luck to Patrick Shea. Patrick, who graduated from Urbana High School in December 2014, has worked with NR since January. His help has been greatly appreciated as he assisted with invasive tree and shrub removal, prescribed burning, and spring invasive plant management. Patrick will take his knowledge and experience gained at CCFPD this year and apply it toward his study of forestry and ecological restoration at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. Patrick will also be playing soccer on a scholarship at Northland.

### **Planning and Construction Department (Jon Hasselbring and Mike Fry)**

- Staff attended a Kickapoo Rail Trail design engineering progress meeting at Fehr Graham. Drawings and construction cost estimates were presented at 95% completion for Phase I East and West. The \$54,000 amendment to the Phase I preliminary engineering should result in an estimated construction cost reduction of around \$800,000
- Jon attended a Champaign-Urbana Urban Area Transportation Study (CUUATS) Policy Committee meeting, organized by the Regional Planning Commission. Jon updated the committee on KRT progress, and invited members to participate in the upcoming master planning process.
- The Construction Crew completed repairs to the asphalt bike path at Buffalo Trace and Lake of the Woods up to the covered bridge. Surplus crack filler material will be used to repair additional paths and sidewalks as required.

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

- The golf course received new driving range mats. The golfers really like the feel compared to the old mats.
- The one week long Junior golf camp started Monday July 6<sup>th</sup> 8:00 AM – 12:00 Noon. Twenty-five participants are registered, ages 10- 15.
- The wettest June ever recorded only put us off about 20% in revenue.
- The new snack bar is still getting a lot of compliments - people like the photos and new graphics.
- As the NGF report suggested we are proceeding with an expanded email campaign with golfers not on our usual data base.
- Freedom Fest sponsor signs got lots of views with Friday July 3, being one of our biggest weekdays this year with 271 players between the 18-hole course, Par 3, and FootGolf!

### **Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)**

- MGP opened a new small temporary exhibit, “Coming Home: Allied Victory and the End of WWII placing local stories about the end of World War II in the national context, to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- Four Catholic Heart Work Camp volunteers and their leader assisted with weeding the Discovery Garden, cleaning out Large Artifact Storage and the Museum Annex Basement in early July.
- Newly introduced programs Teeny Tots Garden Camp and “Oh! What a Vision!” (History of Photography Camp) are proving successful.
- Museum Mondays are proceeding at the same high level of interest as last year. Mahomet Area Youth Club, St. Thomas Philo Child Care and La Petite Academy have all attended at various times.
- HLIC exceeded its maximum number of people for the Wild Edibles program in June! Participants got to taste nettle iced tea, daylily flowers, cattails, fried lambsquarters, berries, sorrel, purslane, and common milkweed.

- We had a second Take Me Fishing of the season. Chelsey runs this event, and Pam, Stacey and Sara helped with the event. The biggest fish was a 22-inch catfish!
- The ME Department held its first ever Concert on the Lake at Homer Lake. Chelsey Walsh and Pam Leiter assisted Katie Riopelle with this exciting and well-received event.
- Next Generation school planted milkweed plants in the Natural Playscape's Monarch Waystation as part of a program conducted by Pam Leiter.
- Cara Grabowski (Garden Education Specialist) has submitted an application for the Monarch Waystation at Mabery Gelvin Botanical Gardens to be registered.
- Emily Henson and Katie Riopelle are researching programs made for people with special needs; They have contacted local organizations via email that serve individuals with special needs (Autism Network, The Alzheimer Organization, RCCSEC, Parkinson Disease Network, Parkinson Support Group (at Savoy United Methodist Church). Katie has scheduled several tours with groups experiencing memory loss this summer.
- MGP renewed a relationship with Hardy's Reindeer Ranch and hosted 2 adult bus tours during June.
- Pam Leiter attended a local Fred Pryor professional development workshop entitled Dealing with Difficult People.
- Valerie Hall and Megan McCoy attended the Paper Conservation Workshop offered by the American Association for State and Local History at the Indiana State Historical Society, June 22 and 23.

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

- Michael Dale joined the fulltime staff on June 17 as the new Assistant Site Superintendent – Grounds. Michael has a degree in Agriculture Business with a horticulture sequence from Illinois State University. He has worked as a landscape supervisor/installer and most recently a contractor for Mahaffey Fabric Structures.
- Due to the heavy rains in June several trees have fallen and required cleanup. Two noteworthy instances happened on the bike path and near the Big Oak restrooms. In both cases the trees fell on power lines and required repairs by Ameren. Staff promptly responded to both taking proper safety precautions to keep the general public safe.
- Kudos to seasonal staff Kip Crozier and Zach Vilven. I received a phone call from a park patron complimenting them on how courteous and polite they were in assisting their family with a boat rental.

#### **Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)**

- Hosted the ribbon cutting for the 28-acre parcel of land near Sylvester Woods.
- Hosted the June Board Meeting with the Board of Commissioners, CAC members and Foundation members. Brian and Roy prepared a fish fry for dinner.

#### **Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)**

- With the rain holding off we had an incredible 4<sup>th</sup> of July at the campground. Now with a quick turnaround starting mid-week, the campground is booked for the tractor show being held in Penfield.
- The rainfall amounts have slowed operations down for the summer. We are spending a lot of time trying to gravel campsites due to flooding and run-off.

#### **Volunteers (Pat Simpson)**

- A Natural Playscape cleanup day was held. More plugs were planted in the Monarch Waystation. Also, one of the flower and shrub beds nearest the willow arbor was thoroughly

weeded and mulch was spread over the area. In addition to the Volunteer Coordinator, three other volunteers participated in this event. Three volunteers also continued with weeding work at the Natural Playscape on Sunday, June 28, from 3 to 5 pm.

- With the combined effort of Mary Ellen Wuellner, Lisa Sprinkle, Mary Beck and the Volunteer Coordinator, the June Volunteer/Donor Recognition Event was held on June 7. Approximately 50 people – volunteers and donors alike – attended. Rob Kanter of the U of I was the highlighted speaker. His topic “Finding Nature in Your Own Backyard,” pictures and comments concentrated on CCFPD sites.
- Working with Mike Daab, a special Trail Steward training hike was scheduled for July 11. The hike will cover Buffalo Trace with Mike identifying wildflowers in bloom.
- In the hour before the hike, Certificates of Appreciation signed by Chris White on behalf of the Board of Commissioners will be presented to all stewards who have been associated with the program for 5 or more years. The individuals will also be given a gift, “Kaufman’s Field Guide to the Nature of the Midwest.”
- A new volunteer was trained to help with maintaining the comprehensive volunteer tracking system.