

June 9, 2014

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Lisa Sprinkle

Re: June Staff Report

**Executive Director (Dan Olson)**

- This month's Risk Management meeting involved the Cornbelt Fire Department, fire extinguisher training was completed by all staff and a quick overview of tornado safety was given.
- Construction Supervisor Bryan Stevens has set a retirement date of mid-July. I would like to thank Bryan for many years of service to the District. Bryan began with the District in 1997 in the construction department. He has been here through several major projects and has helped built award winning areas and amenities throughout the District. I have had the opportunity to work very closely with Bryan have been impressed with the quality of the work he puts into projects.
- Kickapoo Rail Trail meetings included: Invited to attend and speak at the Cycles Plus open house and the Vermilion Mayors Council meeting in Oakwood and Fundraising subcommittee meetings, and future city planning for the trail.
- The Illinois Association of Conservation and Forest Preserve Districts held a meeting of the smaller Forest Preserve Districts in Byron County Illinois to talk about issues directly affecting small agencies. We conferenced with IAPD Legal counsel and had a very productive meeting on various topics. The day concluded with a tour of Byron County FPD's restaurant facility, some of their operations facilities and two natural areas.
- I have completed the new mid-year evaluations of my direct reports. Jan has designed a simple but thorough system for completing the mid-years that is based on the goals and objectives of the annual evaluations that are completed in November.
- We had a successful first Garden Concert. We were able to secure two vendors, Wyldewood Wineries in St. Joseph and J.T. Walker's in Mahomet. The proceeds from their sales will be going to the Foundation to help with the fundraising for the waterfall and pond renovation. We are sincerely thankful for both of them helping out on such as short notice. We receive many compliments.
- I spent a considerable amount of time this month continuing to work on strategic planning initiatives with the vendor, staff, and the Board of Commissioners. Staff will continue the Board's process in July.

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

- As of June 9, the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation has received nearly \$119,000 in pledges, of which more than \$59,300 has been remitted, toward the construction of the Kickapoo Rail Trail. The pledged amount remains at \$179,775 for the Botanical Garden.
- I have been working with Natural Resources and Site Operations staff to assess the mowed hiking trail system at the Buffalo Trace section of Lake of the Woods. We are

recommending minor modifications to a few trail segments that are subject to heavy erosion or are located in close proximity to other existing and more heavily used trails. Doug Sanders and I met with track and cross country coaches from Mahomet High School to apprise them of the planned changes and get feedback on how they use the trails. Representatives from the Second Wind Running Club also offered their suggestions on trail adjustments. The Buffalo Trace mowed trail system is heavily used and highly valued by the community. Visitors are very complimentary about the site and how well the trails are maintained by staff. Signs showing trail routes are planned when modifications are finalized.

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

- Developed a PowerPoint presentation for training on performance management and conducting a mid-year review for employees. Presented the training to all supervisors on May 27 and 28, 2014. In addition, created a review form for supervisors to use when reviewing performance with staff.
- Attended a Central Illinois Government Training conference on May 9, 2014 regarding Cybercrime, Organizational Ethics, Audit Update and Health Care Reform.
- Attended the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) monthly meeting on presentation of new regulations on Affirmative Action.
- Attended a webinar on May 29, 2014 on the new Affordable Healthcare Act.
- Attended a CCFPD projects meeting to familiarize myself with ongoing District projects.
- Participated in the Risk Management training of fire extinguishers.
- Participated in a webinar demo for the MSI HR module.
- The Compensation Committee met and it was decided that the job descriptions would be reviewed, condensed for better understanding, and then presented to legal counsel to assure proper FLSA classification. The committee also decided to use the term “pay for performance” rather than “merit” pay and to research the possibility of implementing a pay for performance compensation plan. Began the process of revising the job descriptions and developing a compensation policy for 2015.

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

- Received the preliminary audited financial statements from Sikich for all funds except for the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation. Researched and responded to several Sikich information requests related to the District and Foundation financials. We are now in process of reviewing all the financial data against District records before accepting the report. We are also preparing the Management Discussion and Analysis section of the audit report. The final audit is expected to be presented at the July 17 Board meeting.
- Finalized and executed contracts for the Museum Roof (Jackson Quality Construction), Middle Fork Residence Addition (Myers Construction), Benefits Planning Consultants (Lifelock) and the Enabling Garden Fountain Replacement (Chris’ Water Gardens). Also reviewed and approved minor contracts related to the July 4<sup>th</sup> Freedom Fest event.
- Continued working with Euroclydon on several payment items for the Museum exhibits work, including supplying lien waivers and correcting payments to properly reflect the retainage and employee hours worked.

- With Jan reviewed MSI HR module and requested price quote from Harris Computers. The HR module is a companion to the Payroll module the District already uses. The HR module will provide several functions that do not exist within the Payroll module, including tracking employment, leave and wage history, managing training and evaluation of employees, and interfacing with the District's online applicant recruitment and tracking system. This module will move HR recordkeeping and management from a paper-based to an electronic system. The 2014 budget includes \$5,000 for an MSI upgrade to add the HR module. Harris quote for purchase, installation, and training of MSI HR totals \$4900.
- Updated the Open Meetings Act (OMA) Compensation Report and requested its posting on the District Finances website along with past audits, financial ordinances and budgets already posted there. The Illinois Attorney General had issued her opinion that OMA reports shall be posted on public agency webpages. Previously these documents have been posted at the District Administration office.
- Distribution and training of District procurement cards has begun.
- Coordinated implementation of a new backup system for the District's financial data.
- Worked with Microsystem, District IT support, to replace or upgrade all computer systems with Windows XP operating system.
- We are working with Dan Noel, Foundation Treasurer, with historical expenditure and revenue information as Dan is drafting a budget for the Foundation. One special advantage to having a Foundation budget is that PDRMA extends agency liability coverage to Foundations that support park and forest preserve districts, provided they have an annual budget.
- Prepared and filed the Federal and Illinois 990s for the Forest Preserve Foundation for 2013.
- Provided historical background to Dan and Jan on several human resources policies and procedures.
- Applied and received liquor licenses from the State of Illinois and Champaign County. The licenses are valid from June 1, 2014 to May 31, 2015.

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

- Spoke to the Urbana Exchange Club about the Champaign County Forest Preserve District on June 5.
- Will begin working with Q96 to promote our programs on their new segment – Kids Corner. Friday mornings I will promote weekend and week ahead programs happening around the District on air.

#### **Construction (Bryan Stevens)**

- Poured concrete pad for the Old Homer Park information display at Homer Lake Forest Preserve.
- Completed the construction of the new office and computer storage closet at headquarters.

- Construction of the ADA trail and parking lot on the Odle property at the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve.

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

- Construction on the new exhibit at MGP continues to make good progress. All walls are framed, nearly all drywall is hung, and priming of the walls is getting underway. The glacier is nearing completion and will be painted soon.
- The 2013-2014 school year marked our first partnership with Project Success at Giacoma Elementary in Westville (just south of Danville), where we offered environmental afterschool programs at their school. Project Success is a federally funded afterschool and summer program throughout the United States. We conducted 6 programs for them including Junior Winter Bird Feeding Challenge, Reptiles, Science Experiments, and others. Each program served approximately 25-30 students in grades K-6<sup>th</sup>. They may also bring their students to Homer Lake for a field trip this summer. We look forward to continuing these afterschool programs next school year.
- At MGP, Susan Voskuil hosted a field trip from the Pavilion School, tailored to their needs. They liked the museum so much they stayed 2 hours longer than expected! Also, BLAST and First School, both afterschool programs, were quite successful again.
- The Archaeology Lecture series wrapped up with Madeleine Evans and Andrew Fortier presenting on the East Central Illinois Archaeological Project which documents stone tools held in private collections, and Tom Emerson, State Archaeologist and Director of the State Archaeological Survey, presenting on red goddess figurines found at Cahokia. Thirty five attended each lecture.
- Campground programs kicked off for the summer Memorial Day weekend, and run each weekend through Labor Day.
- Several staff took on a leadership roles in this year's Environmental Education Association of Illinois conference. Stacey was on the steering committee for the conference; Pam, Emily, Chelsey & Dan Olson led a presentation and field trip to the playscape; and Pam & Emily each presented a concurrent session.
- Summer day camp staff training started May 28, and as part of that we hosted a day of CPR and First Aid training. Several Education Department staff participated, as well as staff from other departments. Day camps start the week of June 9.
- The final report for the HLIC Needs Assessment, conducted by the Learning in Community (LINC) students, is available for the board's review on the secure site. As a next step in the process, we have identified several nature centers to visit.
- Artifacts from the collection were featured in CI Living's *Our Stories* segment highlighting local history and in an article for the Mahomet Daily about the Jahr Hardware Store (presently J.T. Walker's Brewery building).

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

- The golf course had three trees fall during the storms last week. Several large branches fell from trees.
- Irrigation repair continues. To date, golf course staff have spent seventy one and one-quarter man hours and \$3,164.00 in repair materials.
- Staff met with Gerrit for our PDRMA field review. He will schedule another visit to monitor our on course work. Staff attended the fire safety training with Cornbelt Fire Dept.
- 57 players played in the 2014 Naughtin Open.
- We were on the “Golf Thursday” sports talk radio show with Steve Kelly Thursday May 15<sup>th</sup>, we covered several golf related topics as well as upcoming CCFPD events.
- The second series of “Get Golf Ready” adult lessons and the Lake of the Woods Junior Clinic are both filling up.

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

- Mike attended the Illinois Invasive Species Awareness Month Symposium and Awards in Springfield on May 29<sup>th</sup>. The symposium included presentations on several important invasive species topics for the state, and the award ceremony featured Marilyn Leger, Co-Chair of the Invasive Plant Task Force, winning the Volunteer of the Year award.
- NR staff has been very busy managing the spring flush of invasive plants throughout the District.

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

- Over the past couple of weeks facility rentals, garden weddings, and boat rentals have picked up considerably. The facility rentals have consisted of graduation parties, wedding receptions, reunions, and corporate picnics. Garden reservations kicked off on May 10 with “Best of Class” and for the past three weekends have entertained weddings near the waterfall basin. The paddleboats opened on Memorial Day Weekend. There has been a huge interest the first two weekends-grossing \$1,447 (compared to \$300 in 3013).
- Tammy Bruehl, Andrew Combes, and Brian Decker attended National Seminar’s training on “Bad Communication Habits.”
- Most of the annual planting in the Botanical Gardens is coming to an end and staff are starting to mulch the gardens and various beds throughout LOW.

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

- We assisted the Natural Resources staff with the CCDC tree planting along the Kickapoo Trail, and we participated in the dedication ceremony that took place on Sunday, May 4<sup>th</sup>.
- The roof on the small shelter at the Sail Boat Launch has been replaced with a blue canopy. The shelter is now water proof instead of just being a shade shelter.
- Thanks to the Construction Crew we now have new deck boards and railings at the observation tower. This structure was built in the early eighties and some of the deck boards had deteriorated enough to cause safety concerns. They also replaced the door on

the pit toilet at the North Boat Ramp, and they poured the concrete for the Old Homer Park info display. (See pictures)



The new observation deck at Homer Lake.



Old Homer Park informational sign has been installed.

- I worked with Pat Simpson to get ready for the volunteer work day that she organized to assist us with getting the landscape beds spruced up at the Natural Playscape.

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

- Work continues with the accessible trail at the Odle Property. The parking lot has been built and the accessible trail section has been completed by staff.
- The construction manager and I met with the contractor for the house addition project. The contractor is planning on starting the project the third week of June, hoping to finish mid-August.
- The campground had a very successful Memorial Day weekend this year.
- Mike Daab and I met with engineer firms for a pre-bid meeting for the Willow Pond study to take place this summer.

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

- Much of May was spent in final preparation for the May 17 Volunteer Recognition Event. Mary Beck was especially generous in helping me with setup and picking up the food on the day of the event. Fifty-two people attended the event. Many people were complimentary – especially of the presentation by Brian Stearns, Co-Chair of the Champaign County Audubon Society. Brian offered a slide show of his photos of the birds of Middle Fork.

Here is the text from an email from the President of the Illinois Heritage Society on her reaction to the event:

*Hi Pat. I just wanted to thank you and the other staff for all of the work that went into the recognition event. My daughter and I had a great time. We loved the music and the food, and were amazed to find the scope of bird life that is right in our backyard. Such fantastic images - I felt I could reach out and touch the birds.*

*Thanks very much.*

*Pat*

*Patricia L. Miller, Executive Director  
Illinois Heritage Association  
602 1/2 E. Green St., Champaign, IL 61820  
217-359-5600*

- I worked with the Natural Playscape Stewards and others on the first group work day for the stewards. Each volunteer or volunteer family will be responsible for maintaining the area over a single month; in October, there will be another group work day. The group also trimmed shrubs, clearing weeds, and laying out mulch throughout the Playscape.
- I also attended the Migration Fest and set up a volunteer recruitment table at this event

- I continued to work on recruiting volunteers for Freedom Fest. I had already contacted almost all of the identifiable community groups and churches in Mahomet, but without much success. I have also posted flyers recruiting volunteers at the Mahomet Administration Building and at the public library. Vickie Thompson took over twenty of the flyers I put together for purposes of recruitment and is posting them in other likely sites throughout Mahomet. I also contacted the *Mahomet Citizen* and Lisa Sprinkle and I sat down with this paper's editor who agreed to run a story in early June focused on recruiting volunteers. Finally, emails were sent to all individuals on my current volunteer list who live in the Mahomet area.

### **Special Projects (Tom Pike)**

- Researched ADA canoe/kayak boat launches.
- Upon request put together a list of statistics on peninsula at Lake of the Woods.
- Continued to update the facilities inventory.
- Researched and found the parcel identifier for Matt Kuntz on the land at Middle Fork where the residence is located.
- Under took a project on putting together in an orderly fashion all land acquisition paperwork, title and deeds on lands the district owns.