

May 11, 2015

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**Executive Director (Dan Olson)**

- The IACFPD worked very quickly over the past six months to put together the “Trail Safety” brochure. We recognized a lack of updated trail safety outreach pieces in the state and worked cooperatively with all other Conservation and Forest Preserve agencies to craft the piece. The intention was to provide a state-wide brochure that showcased trail safety items that were similar across all agencies and to include information on our own agencies as well as other not-for-profits in the state that have trail related charges. The pamphlet was designed to have a minimum of a five year shelf life before needing to be updated. The IACFPD has funded the printing costs.
- Mid-year reviews are being completed by supervisors at this time. This is the mid-year review system that was implemented last year to help improve consistency in our annual review process.
- As was noted last month, we have completed our 2014 Annual Financial Report. This month we are distributing the color copies. A limited run of copies will be given to certain donors, granting agencies, and others that request copies.
- Dan presented on the Kickapoo Rail Trail to the Urbana Rotary Club.
- The IDOT kicked off a series of statewide listening meetings in Champaign. The public meeting was well very well attended by local agencies. Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn as well as Representative Chad Hayes, Senator Scott Bennett, the University of Illinois’ Mike DeLorenzo and Clark Deitz, Inc. Vice President Chip Craddock discussed as a panel the local transportation needs. There was a very short input and Q and A session and a request to put our personal needs on maps placed throughout the room. The meetings will continue around the state for a few months.
- The long awaited construction on Rte. 47 has officially begun. Throughout the summer, there will be brief and periodic closings of the Lake of the Woods Main Entrance as well as our West Maintenance Complex entrance that is just north of Riverview Cemetery. We have been told the entrance closings will not be longer than a day, and that both entrances will not be closed at the same time. We would like everyone to know that we will do our best to keep you updated, but if you ever find the main Rt. 47 entrance closed, the public can still use our West Maintenance Complex entrance and drive through. As always, the main entrance on Lake of the Woods Road will be open all summer. The preserve, botanical garden, museum, golf course and all other amenities will remain open during our regularly scheduled hours.

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

- We were very pleased to receive a \$50,000 corporate donation in early May to the Kickapoo Rail Trail from The Andersons, Inc. Charitable Foundation. The gift will be made over three years. This is the largest corporate contribution to the project to date.
- Other fundraising activities impacting the trail project in May include the Used Bike Sale held on May 2 at Champaign Cycle. From early indications, the sale raised about \$6,000 for the KRT. Also, all proceeds from C-U Bike Month t-shirt sales will come to the Friends Foundation for the KRT. At the time of this writing, ~\$3,000 had been raised with a goal of \$10,000 by month’s end.
- Grant applications submitted over the last month include: 1) Fund for Wild Nature (\$1,890) for assistance with Frog Call Survey data collection and reporting, 2) National

Environmental Education Foundation's Every Day Capacity Building (\$2,388) to cover one year of donor development consulting with DonorPath, and 3) Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation's Community Stewardship Challenge (\$25,000) for Sangamon River Forest Preserve restoration efforts.

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

- Danielle Caldwell with Sikich finished the field work portion of the District audit on April 16. Staff fielded several follow up questions to assist Danielle in the preparation of the financial statements.
- John attended the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund rate-setting meeting on April 22. IMRF provided an overview of the pension plan, the impact of 2014 IMRF investments on local agency pension plans, and the future audit requirements for reporting pensions funding. IMRF's 2014 investment return was 6.1%, less than the assumed actuarial return of 7.5%.
- IMRF also provided the preliminary employer rate notice for 2016. The preliminary rate is 11.45% which is almost a quarter of one percentage point more than the 2015 rate. Several factors contributed to this increase:
  - Market investment returns of 6.1% were below the 7.5% interest annually credited to employee accounts.
  - Employee retirements reduced the District's contribution pool. At retirement, an amount expected to fully fund the employee for the remainder of his or her life is removed from the District's reserve fund and placed in IMRF's pool for retirees.
  - Changes in actuarial assumptions about life expectancy and future economic factors.
- Betty and John have also reviewed and prepared liquor license permits applications (State and county) for the golf course. We received the Champaign County liquor license permit the first week in May.
- Arnold prepared and John reviewed and approved several reports for the Foundation. These include the Internal Revenue Service's Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, the Illinois Charitable Organization Annual Report (AG990-IL) to the Attorney General and the Not for Profit Annual Report to the Secretary of State. These are both standard reports that the District files for the Foundation each May. The first two reports document the Foundation's financial activities while the latter report provides the status of the Foundation and its members.
- We received 2014 pay 2015 property tax bills for some of the Kickapoo Rail Trail parcels in Champaign County. Last year the District filed for tax exemption for these parcels, so John investigated and the County Assessment corrected the parcels to exempt.

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

- Attended the 2015 SHRM Legislative Conference in Springfield, which included:
  - House and Senate panel discussion
  - Governor's Rauner office agenda update
  - Directors from IL Departments of Employment Security, Worker's Compensation, Human Rights, Labor
  - Lobbyist update – Illinois Chamber of Commerce
- Attended the IAPD Legislative Conference with Dan Olson.

### Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Champaign Surplus donated \$735 towards the Kickapoo Rail Trail in April which included \$125 from their January / February bag credit program. They also held an Earth Day Coloring contest; for every coloring page turned into the store they donated \$5. They received 122 coloring pages for a \$610 donation.
- On April 28<sup>th</sup> Lisa attended and staffed a booth at the capitol building during Parks Day. For the past couple of years we have partnered with the Illinois Association of Conservation and Forest Preserve Districts (IACFPD) and set up our booth. At Parks Day, the IACFPD premiered our Trail Safety brochure which is detailed in Dan's special report.

### Natural Resources (Mike Daab)

- We are happy to welcome Austin Haskett as the newest Natural Resources Technician. Austin is a graduate of the Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences program at the University of Illinois, and has recently been getting experience on the job at the Davey Tree Expert Company. He has a brief history with the District, as Austin helped introduce chainsaw safety and operation to our volunteers at a training event in January 2014.

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

- KRT Design Engineering by Fehr Graham is ongoing. Mary Ellen and Jon met with Farnsworth Group to discuss Construction Engineering scope of work and IDOT bid letting procedures.
- RT 47 Construction begins this week. Jon spoke with the contractors Project Superintendent, and is communicating schedule of entrance drive closures for Staff and Public notification.
- Construction Crew completed the installation of two (2) handicap accessible grills; one at Lake of the Woods Pavilion (P-1) and another at Elks Lake Pavilion (P-2).



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

- The golf maintenance staff is following the NGF recommendation to increase the fertility on the fairways and tees. This will enhance playability and improve the overall health of the turfgrass plants.

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

- The 2015 annual exhibit at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center, *This Living Soil*, opened on April 4, 2015.



- The 2015 special exhibit at the Museum of the Grand Prairie, *Hidden Underfoot: Historical Archaeology in Illinois*, opened on April 19.
- The small special exhibit at the MGP, *The Lamented Lincoln*, opened April 14, 2015 and will run through Memorial Day.
- The M&E Department is partnering with the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center to provide a Stream Discovery teacher training in Champaign County. We will be providing the staff of NGRREC a space to teach the program as well as helping them advertise to area educators. The training will take place August 5 from 9-4pm at the Izaak Walton Cabin. Thanks to Stacey Clementz for setting this up.
- The MGP's "Farewell to Lincoln" event was quite popular. Nine community leaders including Don Owen, Superintendent of Urbana Schools and TJ Blakeman Champaign City Planner, read passages about Lincoln. UI Marching Illini Band Leader Barry Houser conducted students on Civil War Era Instruments.
- Stacey Clementz and Chelsey Walsh attended the Environmental Education Association of Illinois conference.
- Pam Leiter participated in webinars offered by the National Association for Interpretation on Cultural Competency and a 3-part series on Engaging Latinos in the Outdoors, and shared these with staff.
- Susan Voskuil presented a paper at the Historic Administration Program Association Symposium. "Beyond Cutesy Names: Relevance and Authenticity in Museum Education Programs." She spoke about STEM and STEAM and how partnerships with museums, through after school programming and onsite programs, are bringing the humanities back into the classroom.
- Katie Riopelle wrote a technical insert for the Illinois Heritage Association March/April newsletter entitled, "Shopping to Support: A Guide to Today's Museum Store."
- Homer Lake Operations staff installed new seating at the outdoor classroom.



- The M&E Department welcomes Cara Grabowski as Garden Program Specialist. Cara worked previously as a seasonal naturalist at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center and also as a seasonal garden worker in the Botanical Garden in 2014. She has recently completed her studies at the University of Illinois in biology.



- We would like to thank two local residents, who together have donated 3-4 bags of birdfeed every month so far this year to the Homer Lake Interpretive Center.
- We would also like to thank another local resident, who donated 2 large bags of winter hats to the Interpretive Center this month. These will be used during cold-weather months for students who don't come dressed for the weather.

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

- The annual IDNR trout season opened the weekend of April 4 & 5 at LOW. Crystal Lake Fisheries of Ava, Missouri stocked the lake with 1,155 pounds of rainbow trout on March 23(approx. 1,242 rainbow trout). Lake of the Woods is the only stocked lake in Champaign County.
- We assisted the MGP staff in the relocation of four diorama displays, on loan from the ISAS, for the *Hidden Underfoot* exhibit. Each display weighed between 100 – 300 pounds and required disassembly/reassembly.
- The spring eBay postings closed on April 16 and buyers are in the process of picking up their items.
- Jim Blythe was hired as a maintenance worker II this past month. After working as a seasonal worker for the past two years, Jim brings to the department a familiarity of LOW, an associate's degree in horticulture, and working knowledge throughout the BG. We are currently in the process of evaluating applicants for the assistant site superintendent grounds and a second maintenance worker II positions.

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

- Brian and Roy attended a training seminar, Service Delivery Scorecard, at Urbana Park District. The seminar discussed a budgetary technique for agencies to evaluate programs and services that are provided so that they remain cost effective. The system allows agencies to track the real cost of a program so that they can evaluate it objectively and explain to the tax payers why they offer a service that might not be cost effective.

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

- The first phase of the pond renovation has been completed. We have had test cores drilled around the perimeter of the pond and in the north prairie identifying blue clay deposits for construction material. (See Picture) Results of the coring should be in by the end May.
- The shower tower has been installed to ADA standards at the shower house thanks to the help of the construction department.



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

- Pat attended the East Central Illinois Master Naturalist Strategic Planning Session on Apr. 10 at Kennekuk County Park.

- The University of Illinois' Office of Volunteer Programs hosted its annual Service Recognition Award Lunch. The CCFPD nominated the Alpha Phi Omega (APO) service fraternity for an award. Along with other groups, APO received a recognition award.
- Members of the Freedom Fest Planning Committee, staffed a table at the Mahomet Chamber of Commerce Get Up & Go event. In addition to publicizing Freedom Fest, we recruited four volunteers that day to help us.
- Pat attended the East Central Illinois Master Naturalist Advisory Board Meeting.
- Pat set up and staffed an informational table at the University of Illinois' Environmental Expo.