

November 6, 2015

MEMORANDUM

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

Executive Director (Dan Olson)

- Thank you to Mary Ellen for getting the “Trail Towns” meeting a success. I would also like to thank Lisa, Jonathan, Brian, and Ken Konsis for helping out with the day.
- We are also strongly encouraging landowners to sign up for email blasts specific to the KRT. They will receive announcements on what is going on with the trail and general timelines of construction, etc. To get on that list, individuals would need to send an email to info@kickapoorailtrail.org with "KRT Update" in the title line.
- We have added three town hall meetings for the Kickapoo Rail Trail, specific for distributing updates to landowners along the trail. Dates and times are listed in the “Upcoming Events” portion of the packet.

Deputy Director/Grants (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- The Trail Towns and Tourism workshop was held on October 29 with about forty individuals in attendance. Amy Camp, a trails and tourism consultant from Pittsburgh, facilitated the workshop. Amy led activities and a discussion about how the towns along the Kickapoo Rail Trail can maximize tourism and economic development by working together to promote community assets and create “trail to town” linkages that encourage visitors to stop and explore.
- On the day prior to the workshop, several staff and foundation members attended the Illinois Bike Summit, held at the I Hotel in Champaign. Sessions for the 300 or so attendees included trail mapping, planning for complete streets, and an introduction to the newest e-bikes. The Friends Foundation was one of two silver level summit sponsors and staffed an informational booth throughout the day-long summit.
- Numbers have now been finalized for the 2015 River to Rail Ride. As noted at a prior meeting, 141 individuals participated in the September event, which netted \$2,747 for the Kickapoo Rail Trail. Ride participants also donated an additional \$1,320 toward the trail at the event.
- Grant activity during the last month includes 1) a \$466 request to Illinois Department of Public Health for a replacement AED for the golf course, 2) a site visit from the Lumpkin Family Foundation to tour Pt. Pleasant and interview staff about a \$14,000 grant request for a wetland conservation study, and 3) a site visit from the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois to interview staff about a \$1,600 grant request for the playscape at Lake of the Woods’ Rotary Hill.

Administration (John Baker)

- Worked with Compensation Committee on preparing the proposed 2016 Compensation Policy and charge. Finalized 2016 compensation scenario and incorporated in 2016 draft budget.
- Revised Emergency Expenditures, Debt and Capital Assets, and Purchasing policies per Board of Commissioner instructions and forwarded these to District attorney for final review. Forwarded the Tax Levy and Annual Audit policies to District accountant for review.
- Met with Dan and Jan on potential health insurance changes and how a District Health Reimbursement Arrangement will affect employees and District expenses. Conferenced

with Jan and Benefits Planning Consultants regarding Health Reimbursement Arrangements and Flexible Spending Accounts.

- Contacted Farm Services Agency regarding status of payments for the Conservation Reserve Program and the potential enrollment of additional acreage in the Pollinator program. To date the District has received \$7,190 for 2015 CRP.
- Received the final IMRF rate for 2016. The District's aggregate will be 11.45%, up from 11.21% because of changes in IMRF actuarial assumptions.
- Attended the IAPD Legal Symposium which was very informative, as usual. Takeaways include:
 - Discussing bond investments with Lynda Given of Chapman Cutler. More districts are making their bonds available for purchase by other municipalities and special districts. She suggested contacting Speer Financial regarding investing in other districts' bonds.
 - Maura Yusof presentation on Parades and Festivals liabilities included sample policies and checklists to assist Districts with preventive planning to reduce liabilities related to events.
 - Rachel Lutner presentation explained changes in state and federal compensation regulations. The Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act mandates that employers record work hours for every employee but includes no penalty for not complying. Lutner point out that there are questions about conflicts between this and other Illinois wage regulations. Lutner noted the inclusion of a greatly broadened definition of "contracts" and cautioned districts about verbal promises to employees that might be considered contract obligations under the new IWPCA.
 - Kelly Kost addressed the pending legislation for freezing property taxes. Both he and Jason Anselment, IAPD legislative counsel, told districts to expect this legislation to pass next year. Passage then will freeze the District tax-capped portion of the levy for the 2017 and 2018 fiscal years.
 - Jason Anselment noted that PARC, OSLAD, and the Public Museum grants funds were exempted from a \$1.4 billion funds sweep earlier in 2015. IAPD lobbied successfully for their removal from the sweep. Districts with these grant awards received suspension rather than termination letters.
- Attended the 2015 Paylocity Conference. Sessions were very well presented and helpful, and the conference included an "Ask the Expert" venue throughout the conference where attenders could directly question Paylocity employees in their specialty areas.
- Received notice from MediaCom that the fiber installation is delayed until November 30. It is taking some time for MediaCom to obtain an easement from IDOT to bore underneath SR 47.
- The Middle Fork farm produced 2654 bushels of soybeans this year for total revenue of \$23,608. With corn revenue of \$18,475 the farm generated \$42,083 on \$21,478 in expenses. Even with corn and soybean prices well below recent years, the District doubled its return on the Middle Fork farm investment.

Human Resources (Jan Runion)

- Received health insurance rates from Local Government Health Plan.
- Presented the different health insurance options to the Compensation Committee for a recommendation; worked with Committee and management to select best option for BOC recommendation.

- Attended the Central Illinois Focus Group Meeting held by PDRMA for downstate training options and ideas; the 2015 HR Leadership Conference for SHRM members; and the Paylocity Annual Conference.
- Continue to work with Paylocity for ACA setup.
- Met with Management Association of Illinois to use as a resource for development of policy, training, HR best practices, etc.
- Worked with Compensation Committee to develop the Compensation Policy for 2016 and make recommendation.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- We have nineteen Facebook posts, either program ads or general pictures that have reached 5,124 people. We currently have 1,093 likes on Facebook. Nine posts on Instagram were liked by 67 people and we currently have 62 followers. Find us at Champaignforests on Instagram.
- The winner of the Trek bicycle was Bobby White, who purchased his ticket at the St. Joseph Days in early August. We raised \$1,470 on the bike raffle.
- Attended the Illinois Bike Summit and the Trail Towns and Tourism workshop.
- WCIA did a news report on the Nature at Night Haunted Hike.

Natural Resources (Mike Daab)

- The Natural Resources staff held four prairie seed collection workdays this fall, with good attendance at each.
- Congratulations to Brad Nelson for taking the test and acquiring his Commercial Driver's License.
- NR staff participated in a "Past Fire and Present-Day Mesophication: Implications for Oak Ecosystem Restoration" webinar offered on October 15th.
- Mike Daab attended the "How to Communicate with Tact, Professionalism, and Diplomacy" seminar in Bloomington, IL, on October 20th.
- Mike Daab attended the Mid-America Trails and Greenways conference in Des Moines, IA. The highlight was a field trip showcasing sites where both conservation and recreation goals were being met.
- NR staff has been preparing for the the fall prescribed burn season by reviewing burn plans, establishing burn breaks, and making sure permits are in order.

Planning and Construction Department (Jon Hasselbring and Mike Fry)

- The Construction Crew built a new cover for the sand/salt bin at west maintenance, and completed concrete prep work for the Middle Fork shower stalls.
- Jon H. attended the 2015 Mid-America Trails & Greenways Conference in Des Moines. The highlights were participating in an Accessibility Workshop for Outdoor Developed Areas, and sessions led by regional experts in trail stewardship, planning, construction, and data collection.
- Jon H. attended the 2015 Illinois Bike Summit in Champaign. This summit offered sessions related to trail tourism, safe design for cycling and pedestrian transportation, and mapping strategies. Jon also participated in the Trails and Tourism workshop led by Amy Camp at the St. Joe Methodist Church. Both the Bike Summit and Workshop presented great opportunities to collaborate with local residents, business owners, and government officials interested in the Kickapoo Rail Trail, and network with local planners regarding a KRT master plan steering committee.

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

- The golf simulators are up and running. A 2-person league runs Nov. 30 to Mar. 13 featuring different formats each week. 2016 season passes are being sold now.
- Golf maintenance staff continues with leaf removal.
- IHSA Boys AA Regional Tournament – October 6th – 61 golfers.; 2-Person Better Ball Tournament – October 17 & 18 – 56 teams (112 Players)
- With the fantastic October weather (generally warm and very dry), we had 2,257 rounds on the 18 hole course this October as opposed to 1,748 rounds in 2014.
- We began the process of yellow tagging sale merchandise for the upcoming Balmoral sale in November. This allows our customers to have the opportunity to purchase our remaining merchandise at a reduced rate before taking it up to the sale.
- We sent out 100 postcards reminding customers who have Shop Credit balances to use their credit by the end of the year.
- With the Board approving golf fees for 2016, we began selling season passes for next year. Anyone purchasing a 2016 season pass in 2015 will receive a coupon for 3 complimentary 18 hole cart rides (\$45 added value). 2 passes have been purchased in the short time we have advertised this via e-mail blast.

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

- Emily Henson and Katie Riopelle participated in the Disability Resource Expo at the Fluid Events Center on Saturday October 17, 2015. Emily and Katie met with Champaign-Urbana Special Rec and scheduled several programs for them next year. Emily also set up a program for the CU Autism Network.
- The MGP hosted as part of “The Champaign County History Sampler” Saturday, October 17, an event sponsored by the Student Life and Culture Archives at the University of Illinois. Participants were asked to travel to seven different venues that preserve local history in Champaign County.
- The ME Department hired Monica David, currently the Extension Specialist and Illinois Master Gardener Coordinator for the State of Illinois, as the next Garden Program Specialist. Monica will join the staff in December.
- The MGP bid farewell to our curator Valerie Hall who took a position with the Veteran’s Curation Project in Alexandria, Virginia. We have opened the search for a new curator and have more than 40 applicants.
- Artifacts which the MGP had loaned were returned by the Chicago Botanical Garden/Horticultural Society. The attendance at the Botanical Garden during the exhibition’s run was 406,000.
- Planning is already underway for special programming during the six weeks that the Water/Ways traveling exhibit will be here next summer. We are putting a special emphasis on offering more programming during that time period, and hope to work with the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation on at least one event.
- The new Nature at Night program series and environmental scout programs have been very popular this fall.
- The Lincoln Lecture Series continued this month. One email response after the October lecture, Abraham Lincoln: Secular Saint by Barb Garvey said, “Thanks so much for the great Lincoln talk. That’s my favorite kind of subject matter when different subjects are woven together in a new way in order to see their similarities-kind of an intellectual

polyphony. Amazing!” Record numbers attended the November 1st lecture on Mary Lincoln.

- Pam Leiter and Chelsey Walsh attended the Chamber Breakfast program, *Playing Together in the Professional Sandbox*, about how to successfully navigate in a multi-generational workplace.
- Pam Leiter served on a panel of park experts for a Recreation, Sport & Tourism Department class at UIUC.
- Pam Leiter met with an individual who is developing youtube videos about the prairie. They toured Homer Lake and Pam provided video and audio for use in the videos.
- A graduate student in the Urban & Regional Planning Department at UIUC updated the ME Department staff on her project to evaluate cultural diversity among CCFPD users. Pam Leiter is working with this student on behalf of the department.

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

- The installation of the new HVAC units at Headquarters, Izaak Walton Cabin, and Rayburn-Purnell Restroom/Brides Dressing room have been completed. These units were part of the 2015 Capital Equipment/Technology budget.
- Tammy Bruehl and Doug Sanders attended the annual Rogards' Workday Connection event on October 22. This was an opportunity to network with Rogards' representatives and meet their product vendors.

Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- Brian attended three workshops this month.
 - Multi-Generational Workplaces;
 - Mid-America Trails and Greenways Conference in Des Moines,
 - Illinois Bike Summit
- We are working on the 2016 budget. Roy has been working with vendors to get equipment for us to test drive, and I have been working with Jonathan on plans for the sailboat launch project.

Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- The water has been successfully shutdown for the winter inside the campground, including the shower house and host station.
- The Construction department started the first phase of the shower renovation project. They were able to fill in the original pits with concrete and install new drains in each stall. Middle Fork staff assisted with original tile removal, and removal of partitions and benches.
- In late October I attended a professional development seminar with Mike Daab. The seminar focused on communication techniques in professional settings emphasizing on diplomacy and tact.

Volunteers (Pat Simpson)

- Recruited and trained a new volunteer to enter 2015 data for the Frog Survey Project.
- During October the Volunteer Coordinator attended three full day Master Naturalist classes to talk about various CCFPD projects requiring volunteer support.

- Facilitated a meeting with to finalize implementation of a Garden Steward Program. Michael Dale has served as the de facto “supervisor” of this program and has already worked with three volunteers.
- Working with the Champaign County Audubon Society. Pat made arrangements for a continuing education hike for CCFPD trail stewards. Our stewards were invited to attend a hike at Middle Fork Preserve that was designed to identify migrating bird species within the Preserve. Brian Stearns, President of the local Audubon chapter led the hike and the Volunteer Coordinator also attended along with our trail stewards.
- Pat supervised a team of seven volunteers from Illinois Farm Credit in turning mulch at the base of trees in the peninsula area of Lake of the Woods.
- Pat attended the Master Naturalist Board Meeting.
- Pat completed a draft of a Volunteer Coordinator Procedures Manual that will be used as the basis for training a new Volunteer Coordinator.