

October 5, 2015

MEMORANDUM

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

Executive Director (Dan Olson)

- Staff installed the Public Art League piece, “Throne Rococo Nouveau”, the District’s first public art piece, on September 29 in the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden. Artist Suzy Hendrix from Tennessee delivered the piece and then applied the finishing touches. The Public Art League will provide a standard plaque identifying the work and artist. The PAL program made it very easy to bring public art onto CCFPD lands. Thanks to our Construction, LOW Operations, and Planning Department, Lisa and Mary Ellen for laying the groundwork and securing this artwork.
- The Nature Conservancy’s Legacy group toured the Izaak Walton Cabin and surrounding areas.
- Staff, Commissioners and I continue to work on policy updates and formulation of new policy for accreditation. I have also been working on other aspects of the accreditation process unrelated to policy. Commissioners will continue to see items coming to them for approval.
- The District hosted Visit Champaign County for a tour of River Bend, the Museum of the Grand Prairie, Lake of the Woods and FootGolf. Approximately 15 individuals including their Board, were able to enjoy the day.
- The Museum of the Grand Prairie continues to showcase several local artisans each year in the museum store. Many high quality artisans have pieces for sale and on display. I am once again extremely impressed with local artist Dwight Crane of Crane Woodworks. He works with local wood and is an expert wood turner.
- Meetings in the last month included budget, projects, Museum Advisory Committee, and Orientation with new Foundation member Roger Laramee. In addition, I participated in the River to Rail Ride as a course monitor.

Deputy Director/Grants (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- I enrolled in two on-line philanthropy classes provided at no-charge by the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley. *Organizational Capacity: Assessment to Action* began in late September, and *Fundraising: How to Connect with Donors* will begin on October 13.
- The District received word that it was approved in the first round for two grants – People for Bikes for the Kickapoo Rail Trail (\$10,000) and the Lumpkin Family Foundation grant for the Pt. Pleasant wetland conservation study (\$14,000). Full applications are due October 9 and October 16, respectively.
- In early October, the Vermilion County Conservation Foundation received a \$10,000 donation from a long-time individual contributor. That leaves a match balance of only about \$25,000 to have funds fully secured for phase one – 6.7 miles in Champaign County and 3.3 miles in Vermilion. However, the large IDNR contribution to the Middle Fork River bridge section in Vermilion County will not be released until the state budget is passed. This may delay the construction.

Administration (John Baker)

- Updated and reduced the 2015 Capital Projects list based on additional input from staff.
- Working with staff to update our five year capital plan, and discussed estimating costs for building a base capital budget and for catching up deferred maintenance.

- Completed entering budget and requested department heads to double-check their portions of the 2016 operating budget.
- Proposed a consolidation of the District's pay grade schedule to incorporate the grades identified in the Hay study for the golf course employees.
- Prepared 2015 health insurance rate comparisons for the compensation committee. For budgeting purposes we are still estimating a ten percent increase for next year.
- Prepared tentative tax levy ordinance #15-3 based on budget submissions received and upon projected cash balances for affected District funds.
- Reviewed new EMV credit card requirements and finalizing information about 1) current facility rental and program registration software options and 2) Museum store point of sale system by January 1.
- Met with staff on 2016 golf fees and golf projections.
- Met with Administration and Educator team reviewing potential software vendors for facility rentals, programs, and point of sale system.

Human Resources (Jan Runion)

- Met with Red Cross representative about possible community blood drive at the District.
- Received results from The Hay Group on the Golf Course compensation study.
- Preliminary review of Human Resources Manager's Manual with Dan and Mary Ellen.
- Met with Barb Garvey, Valerie Hall and Megan McCoy to discuss Curator position at the Museum.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Four interpretive signs along the Point Pleasant trail at Middle Fork and two trailhead signs at Buffalo Trace were installed. The Second Wind Running Club sponsored the Buffalo Trace signs.
- CCFPD signed up on Instagram as another social media outlet and have posted 19 pictures since the end of August and we currently have 47 followers.
- We have posted nine Facebook posts, either program ads or general pictures that have reached 2,553 people.
- Two news articles in the Mahomet Citizen this month. First featured a write up from the Visit Champaign County's Board of Director's tour of Mahomet and included pictures from their time at the Museum of the Grand Prairie and playing FootGolf at Lake of the Woods Golf Course and the second one showcased the new sculpture in the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden.

Natural Resources (Mike Daab)

- Brad Nelson, Matt Kuntz, and Mike Daab delivered channel catfish, purchased through the Champaign County Soil and Water District, to four CCFPD ponds: Collins Pond at Homer Lake, Elks Lake at Lake of the Woods, and Emerald and Cypress ponds at Middle Fork.
- Mike Daab joined the Upper Sangamon River Conservancy on September 19 to remove trash from the Sangamon River from the Sangamon River Forest Preserve to the Riverview Retreat Center. We were also joined by University of Illinois Natural Areas Coordinator, Steve Buck and a group of students from the Wildlife Society. We thank all who participated for helping to clean up the river, as well as Homer Lake staff for supplying additional canoes. The 170 volunteer hours logged for the day will be applied toward the IL Clean Energy Community Foundation grant for ecological restoration efforts at the Sangamon River Forest Preserve.
- The Natural Resources Department once again joined Unity West Elementary School in Tolono to plant trees in the West Woods area on school grounds. This year we helped

plant five trees, three for incoming kindergarten classes and two for new students to the school in various grades.

- Austin Haskett attended a prescribed fire training in Marengo, IL, in order to earn his Basic Wildland Firefighter certificate.
- The Natural Resources Department has hosted three successful volunteer prairie seed collection days recently. We thank Phil Hult for helping to lead and the Master Naturalist program for continuing to provide so many quality volunteers.

Planning and Construction Department (Jon Hasselbring and Mike Fry)

- The Construction Crew installed Interpretive Signs at Middle Fork's Point Pleasant trail. The signs feature prairie and wetland restoration, native bird species, and history of the Point Pleasant Post Office.
- Jon and Lisa presented on the Kickapoo Rail Trail to a Danville Area Women's Philanthropic Educational Organization (PEO). This group of about 20 members was very supportive, and made a donation to the KRT the next day.

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

- Recent outings included: Mahomet Chamber outing September 10th – 72 golfers; IESA Girls Sectional - 16 junior golfers; University of Illinois Veterinarian Medicine Outing - 24 players; Big merchandise Scramble - 150 players.
- Hosted Mahomet High School PE classes, this semester we received \$600.00 for facility usage for the classes.
- The Big Merchandise Scramble has really grown. This year was the biggest ever with 30 – 5 player teams for 150 players, generating \$12,750.00 for a one day event in entry fees alone plus additional food and miscellaneous sales. Due to the overwhelming demand and facility restrictions we plan to hold two- separate shotgun events for 2016.
- We have reached an agreement with *Golf Now*, our current point of sale, reservations and web site provider, to expand our marketing reach and provide us with new golfers.
- An e-mail blast sent to golfers in the NGF database, generated four responses to a two-for-one special.

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

- HLIC updated the Interpretive Center's forest display case. The new display, titled *Forest Wildlife of the Grand Prairie Region*, features a flying squirrel, deer fawn, mink, chipmunk, 9 species of birds and 3 nests.
- Edison Middle School 6th graders came out to the Homer Lake Interpretive Center for their second year of full day Pond Life programs at Homer Lake. Jefferson Middle School heard about how much fun the Edison student had so they signed up for this same program this October.
- The programming for Thomas Paine and Prairie went so well that the ME Department will schedule for the Exploring Your Own Backyard program in April.
- Emily Henson and Katie Riopelle are working with Champaign Urbana Special Recreation to explore future programming possibilities. They are also planning to host a table at the "disABILITY Resource Expo" on October 17.
- Pam Leiter attended a presentation sponsored by Illinois Humanities Council, entitled *The Long Journey Home: The History of Latino Migration in Central Illinois*.



- Prairie Stories at the MGP was again a success. Jerry Sievers demonstrated use of his hand-made spring pole-lathe and barking horse; Geoff Bant demonstrated the use of a kick-powered potter's wheel; Illinois State Archaeology Survey staffers assisted with a host of archaeology activities.
- Susan Voskuil began a new BLAST class with the Mahomet Schools on the history of photography.
- Christian McWhirter, Assistant Editor of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln, spoke at the Museum of the Grand Prairie, "Music in the Life of Abraham Lincoln." on September 27.
- With regrets we say goodbye to our Curator Valerie Hall. In preparation for her family's return to suburban Maryland, she has accepted a position with the Veteran's Curation Program in Alexandria Virginia.

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

- Tammy Bruehl attended the *Crash Course for the First-Time Manager or Supervisor* training on September 24 in Bloomington, IL. She provided the following notes: Speaker was Pete Folch. He was very sensible and great stories to back up the information. He touched on all aspects of supervising, being a leader not a manager, developing your staff, delegating, communicating, motivating, team building. I especially liked the part about DISC personalities and people development. Favorite quote from the day...." A lot of people have gone further than they thought they could because someone else thought they could" – Zig Ziglar
- The Botanical Garden hosted its final wedding on October 3. This season there were a total of seven wedding rentals that took place between March and October. There are already seven reservations for 2016.
- Staff installed a bench and landscaped the east side of the berm in the Botanical Garden. With homecoming photos, this spot has already become a popular destination point. All of the materials that were used for this job were left over from past projects. (see attached photo)

Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- Construction and Homer Lake staff completed the Salt Fork Center ADA parking area.
- Staff aerated and fertilized most of the turf in the park. This should improve the health of the grass that gets heavily compacted in high traffic areas.

Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- Middle Fork staff would like to thank our campground hosts for an incredible season this summer. It is always a challenge for the hosts' first summer and they both acclimated quite well to all of the challenges a campground can create.
- Staff will start removing the original tile in the shower house stalls preparing for a concrete pour. Currently the pits are covered by planking that is in pretty bad shape. Filling in the pits of the stalls will prepare for a possible new wall renovation, but also enhance the user accessibility in each shower stall.

Volunteers (Pat Simpson)

- In cooperation with Katie Riopelle, approximately twenty volunteers were recruited for the Prairie Stories.
- Continued recruiting volunteers and confirming assignments for the River to Rail Ride. Seventeen volunteers were recruited, including a group from APO, a U of I volunteer fraternity.
- Sponsored a picnic for Natural Playscape volunteers on Sept. 25 to offer a special thanks to this hardworking group. Afterwards, the Volunteer Coordinator met with the Homer

Lake site superintendent, Brian Taylor, to discuss future approaches to organizing the work of Playscape volunteers.

- Working with Michael Dale to initiate a new garden steward program. Three volunteers have been recruited. In addition, a group of twenty-two students from the iHelp! Program at the U of I was recruited and worked under the supervision of garden staff on Sept. 19.
- Recruited and trained a student volunteer, Yu Tian, to help Deputy Director, Mary Ellen Wuellner, develop a list of invitees for an upcoming workshop on the economic benefits of the Kickapoo Rail Trail to businesses in towns along its path.
- Working with Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter, to develop an new approach to the Frog Survey Project. Nancy Snellen, a volunteer, will administer the project under the supervision of the Volunteer Coordinator and in cooperation with Chelsey Walsh. Chelsey will continue to deliver the project training in 2016.
- Attended the meeting of the Advisory Board of the East Central Illinois Master Naturalist Program and a special meeting of the Communications Committee of this group.