

November 1, 2016

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**Executive Director (Dan Olson)**

- The Commissioners will be in their annual retreat with Lorna Geiler at the Meyer Capel Law offices at 6:00 pm on the evening of Monday Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>. Dinner will be provided.
- The Freedom Fest has requested administrative items to align themselves better with the needs of the District. These items will initially include a discussion of possible bylaws, certification with the OMA, and job descriptions for the volunteer positions.
- A good friend and long-time volunteer to the District, Mr. Bruce Colravy, was awarded the Prairie Rivers Network River Steward of the Year Award. This is a statewide honor. Bruce has been incredibly active in District programs and activities including River Watch, Mussel Sampling, and introducing people to recreational opportunities on the Sangamon River, just to name a few. Bruce also served on our CAC a handful of years back.

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

- Over the last couple weeks, I have been focusing on year-end fundraising appeals. Lisa Sprinkle and I have been discussing a plan to combine the annual Nature's Appeal with the final Leaflet of the year. We will review that proposal with the Foundation board at its November meeting
- The "50 in 50" Campaign is now in its third full week, with nearly \$5,000 raised toward the KRT.
- I am also working on a mailing to previous donors to the Botanical Garden project. It has been a few years since some donors' gifts were made. The mailing will provide an update on fundraising and a request for a renewal of their previous gift.

**Administration (John Baker)**

- Met multiple times with Fran Bell and the Compensation Committee towards preparing the proposed 2016 compensation package and policy.
- Prepared and submitted "Black Box" advertisement for the District's tax levy. Drafted the annual tentative appropriations ordinance and mandated public notice documents and requirement.
- Received and approved contract quotes for upgraded burglar and fire alarm services from FE Moran. This includes implementing 4G service before 2G cell towers are phased out in January.
- All Kickapoo Rail Trail leases have been paid through the 2016 contract year.
- Received \$7,190 in Conservation Restoration Program payments from the Farm Services Agency. Because the 2008 Farm Bill began phasing out CRP payments to government entities, the District will be losing this revenue source beginning in 2018.
- Received the final IMRF rate for 2017. The District's aggregate will be 10.48%, down from 11.45% for the current year. Rates had been going up annually since 2009, so it is good they are starting to decline.
- Attended the 2016 Paylocity Conference. Sessions were very well presented and helpful. I attended sessions on Affordable Care Act reporting, Internal Revenue Service changes in reporting taxes to the federal government, advanced usage of Paylocity HR, using Paylocity Onboarding to comprehensively track employee issues and events, using Paylocity impressions and notifications for evaluations and personnel documentation, advanced reporting, and Paylocity's new implementing year-end closing module. The Paylocity conference included an "Ask the Expert" venue throughout the conference where attendees could directly question Paylocity employees in their specialty areas. I spoke with Paylocity experts resolving unemployment tax issues, reporting tips, reporting taxable benefits and implementing enhanced security through the Paylocity application. Many improvements and time-saving measures have been added to WebPay and WebTime. Fran Bell and I are evaluating

improvements to the District's system to improve communications, tracking and documentation for human resources while making time and attendance more efficient for employees and supervisors.

- The Middle Fork farm produced 1230 bushels of soybeans this year for revenue of \$11,700 and 14,575 bushels of corn for \$47,500. The farm should net about \$32,000 this year on its operations.

### **Human Resources (Fran Bell)**

- I assumed supervisory responsibilities for the Volunteer Coordinator position in mid-October. Moving forward, I will be working with Kristin to refine and implement various ideas that she has to improve our volunteer program.
- The Compensation Committee has had several meetings in which I have participated over the past month. I contacted several local and/or comparable park/conservation districts to obtain information on other district's pay structures to ensure we are remaining competitive within the market. I also provided the committee with survey information obtained from the Illinois Department of Employment Security regarding wages in Champaign County.
- As part of my orientation, I received an overview of the CCFPD Strategic Plan. Dan and I reviewed the strategic plan to identify the Short-Term and Mid-Term Initiatives that relate to human resources and I have begun developing plans to tackle several major areas including the development of a district-wide and position-specific training matrix and a review/update of the personnel policies.
- Annual performance reviews for permanent staff began in October and will continue through November. I will be reviewing all performance evaluations as they are filed and working with supervisors to address any areas of concern or training needs.

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

- Social media update: on Facebook CCFPD has 1,525 (+35) followers; Lake of the Woods Golf Course has 739 (+4); Kickapoo Rail Trail has 1,285 (+14); Museum of the Grand Prairie has 757 (+2). Homer Lake Interpretive Center 105 likes (+2). CCFPD has 265 (+11) Instagram followers. Kickapoo Rail Trail has 82 (+1) followers and CCFPD has 445 (+0) followers on Twitter.
- Ran ad in the St. Joseph Leader "Total Market Coverage" edition on Nov. 3 showcasing events at HLIC in November/December.
- The new website is in the final stages of editing and should be live by middle of November.

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

- Michael Daab attended the Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. The conference was full of great information on invasive plants, animals, and pathogens that we must manage or keep a look out for at CCFPD. The Midwest Invasive Plant Network, of which Mike is a board member, is one of the major sponsors of this biennial event, which has become the largest invasive plant conference in the world.
- NR Seasonal, Rachel Bohmbach, recently passed her IL Pesticide Applicators Test, and we are glad to have her help this fall.
- The NR crew has planted several trees and shrubs in areas that have been cleared of bush honeysuckle and autumn olive. These plantings will help diversify the areas, provide additional food and habitat for wildlife, and add to the aesthetic appeal.
- Seed collection for prairie restoration projects at Buffalo Trace, Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, and the Kickapoo Rail Trail has continued throughout the fall. NR staff hosted a very productive seed collection workday at Sangamon River Forest Preserve on October 17th. It is a testament to the quality of the restoration work at SRFP that it has now become a seed source for additional CCFPD plantings.
- NR staff and volunteers, led by Elizabeth Kirby, have been busy planting woodland plants like wild geranium, Solomon's seal, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, and more at Lake of the Woods and Sangamon River Forest Preserve.

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

- The Construction crew recently completed the new accessible sidewalk at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center, and etched the existing concrete stoop of the Middle Fork Activity Center for better slip resistance. This week they began Phase 2 of accessible sidewalks in the Botanical Garden, a project funded by the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois.



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

- I met with several sales people for spring merchandise ordering and redistribution or credit for existing unsold stock.
- Lisa Sprinkle, Dave Torrens, Chris Edmondson and I met regarding marketing for fall through early spring. Daniel Regan from Golf Now called in and reviewed the Golf Now Marketing Plus and the Ride Discount Purchasing Programs Golf Now offers. We agreed on trying a “Black Friday” season pass sale this year.
- Chris Edmondson and I reassembled the golf simulators upstairs in the clubhouse this week and are in the process of updating and upgrading software and drivers for the winter season. Interest in the Simulator golf league is increasing, we hope to have the most teams ever this year.
- Events: Mahomet Business group – 16 players; Ladies Team golf – 16 players; Mahomet Chamber Outing – 60 players; Big Merchandise Scramble – 108 players; Ladies Fun day – 24 players; Night Golf – 30 players; Golden Glove Grasshoppers – 40 players; Mahomet Business group – 90 players; Mahomet Lions Club Outing – 30 players; Lake of the Woods Better Ball Tournament – 96 players
- Maintenance staff continues with leaf removal, completed three irrigation repairs and is preparing for winterization.
- Fall fairway aerification is underway.

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

- Once again this year, all of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes in the Champaign Unit 4 school district visited Homer Lake for their annual Woodland field trips with us, complementing the woodland science unit in their district curriculum.

- Homer Lake Interpretive Center is working with a UI researcher on hosting a couple ‘pop-up’ bird banding demos in Nov & Dec. Dates are Nov 5 (during the Families in the Forest program) and Dec 2. These are last-minute additions to our public program calendar.
- We had a very successful Wilderness Living Skills workshop once again this fall; this year it had an international feel! A visitor from Puerto Rico, and one from France included this workshop in their visit to the United States.
- Stacey Clementz attended the North American Association for Environmental Education conference in Madison, Wisconsin. She attended several highly engaging sessions and workshops including; Welcoming Diversity and Inclusion, Every Student Succeeds Act, Inclusive Early Childhood Environmental Education and a medical center’s Unique Outdoor Classroom Links Nearby Nature with Better Health.
- The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Lincoln Lecture Series at the Museum of the Grand Prairie opened on October 2, 2016 to great success with reenactor and former Abraham Lincoln Library Director Kathryn Harris portraying Elizabeth Keckley, followed by State Historian Samuel Wheeler on October 23, talking on the Lincolns as parents.
- Barb Garvey attended the second meeting of a newly formed Local History Consortium, with the Champaign County Archives, Champaign County Historical Museum, the Rantoul Historical Society and the Homer Historical Society.
- The burglar and fire systems in the Museum annex have been upgraded as a result of the 2 G cell towers and their networks, which the old equipment employed, being retired. New equipment will communicate with 4G networks.
- During our annual inspection of the fire suppression system, Pipco Company recommended the replacement of the jockey pump; this was completed in October.
- Nathan Alderman from Henneman Engineering came to the MGP to look at the condensation from overhead air ducts that has been occurring in the Collections Room. He will research the HVAC unit and see if it needs some adjustment to suit the size of the room and the typical settings.
- Barb Garvey attended a training in Bloomington IL offered by PDRMA, Risk Management for Supervisors on October 19.



- The Museum of the Grand Prairie had record numbers at our Harvest Fest. Shown here are kids enjoying shelling corn and making a corn husk doll.

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

- Michael Dale was interviewed by Ryan Burk, WCIA’s CiLiving, on October 27. The spot was filmed on location at Lake of the Woods and is scheduled to air on November 3. The segment consists of “fall tree colors” at several local agencies.
- Staff have been cleaning up around the west maintenance complex. A total of 6 tons of scrap metal was hauled to Mervis Recycling in Urbana. The majority of this material was collected over the past year from maintenance repairs and construction projects.
- As part of the requirements for the Freedom Fest committee, Doug Sanders and Tammy Bruehl completed the *Opens Meeting Act* on-line training.

- The majority of seasonal facilities, drinking fountains, and water features have been winterized. Those remaining will be left active as long as weather permits.

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

- I attended a PDRMA training session in Bloomington that focused on the supervisors roll in risk management.
- Roy attended the NRPA conference in St Louis with several other district employees.
- We continue to mow on a weekly basis during a time when we normally would be preparing for cold weather.

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

- The Lincoln's Challenge cadet volunteer teams continue to help with small projects throughout the preserve user areas. Projects include campground litter pickup, laying gravel at campsites with drainage issues, and trail maintenance.
- Staff will be preparing to shut our water supply off for the winter season inside the campground.
- With the great camping weather, the campground had a very successful October, with the busiest Halloween weekend we have ever seen. It was similar a tailgate atmosphere with the World Series and Illinois football weekend.
- I met with our construction manager and planning director to review remaining projects at Middle Fork, which include renovation of the Activity Center entry, trail construction, and drainage issue at the North Waterfowl area.
- I met with the drainage contractors that were working on the Pt. Pleasant tile exploration project. The team completed the initial project within three days, with minimal impact to the land.

### **Volunteers (Kristin Tetzlaff)**

- I am actively reviewing our old files and past volunteer manuals to build a more comprehensive, user friendly, up-to-date manual.
- An internal volunteer request form to streamline the way requests are handled and processed within the district has been developed.
- I attended a seed collection event to see volunteering in action and meet with additional staff.