

April 21, 2016

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**Executive Director (Dan Olson)**

- Spoke to the local chapter of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE). The presentation was titled “What’s New at the Champaign County Forest Preserve District”.
- Attended the regional monthly Director’s meeting. Robin Hall and Matthew Lansing attended from the Office of Recreation and Park Resources. Other meetings included the Director’s Roundtable in Washington, IL, a two day President Elect Training Seminar for Rotary, audit meetings, website improvements, CAC, and Foundation.
- Directed individuals to complete twelve of the actions given by the Board of Commissioners to the District during my evaluation process last month. Two of those items will change the format of the board packet. They include:
  - **Action:** Provide a strategic plan update twice a year.  
You will notice that we have changed the annual calendar to indicate we will be having two strategic plan updates per year to be presented in February and August instead of July.
  - **Action:** Provide KRT update monthly at board meetings.  
Supervisors were encouraged to include items about the KRT in their reports to you. Items specific to the KRT will now be italicized in the Board Packet for easier viewing.
- Provided a tour of facilities and grounds to Mr. Alexandru Bulacu, of the World Wildlife Fund of Romania and Kenneth Buel from Champaign Rotary, during a group study exchange. Alexandru is the European Bison herd manager for Romania and has made tremendous strides to restore the herds there.
- Doug Ireland is our final recipient of an IAPD/IPRA Community Service Award Nomination. The presentation will be in Vermilion County but is a joint nomination involving the CCFPD, the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation and the Vermilion County Conservation District and their Foundation. The nomination reads:

*The Champaign County Forest Preserve District, Vermilion County Conservation District, and the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation would like to recognize Mr. Doug Ireland for considerable contributions to the Kickapoo Rail Trail efforts in Vermilion and Champaign Counties.*

*Doug has been a tireless advocate for the construction of the trail. He has helped educate individuals and businesses about the community benefits of regional trails and has been an integral part of the KRT fundraising committee by being a very active liaison and spokesperson to major donors. He has opened the door for the VCCD and CCFPD and their respective foundations to meet with business owners and other foundation representatives. Thanks to Doug, Cycles Plus, a Danville business, recently donated a bicycle to be raffled off with the proceeds going to trail construction.*

*Doug has also been an on the ground volunteer for fundraising and awareness events for the trail. Doug worked with the Danville Dan’s to get a Kickapoo Rail Trail game night this past summer. He also organized a very*

*successful KRT Duathlon; an event that he believes will be annual, with proceeds going to trail construction. He has helped with the annual River to Rail Ride at CCFPD's Middle Fork River Forest Preserve. Doug personally lives his message as a cycling advocate and frequently brings the cycling community together in the Danville area.*

- The FFFF approved the final version of the MOU between the CCFPD Board of Commissioners and the Foundation thus completing the process.
- *Attended the initial KRT Construction meetings with IDOT, Farnsworth and Cross Construction, and an initial walkthrough of the KRT Phase 1 site with Farnsworth and Cross last week.*

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

- *On March 31, we received a letter from IDOT announcing an additional \$139,588 in Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) funding had been awarded to the CCFPD for Phase One of the Kickapoo Rail Trail. A **status update on Phase One fundraising is provided in a separate memo.***
- At its April meeting, the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation agreed to: 1) sponsorship of the CCFPD's 2016 public programs at the Steward Level of \$1,000, 2) a Roman Candle level sponsorship of Freedom Fest at \$150, and 3) a \$300 level sponsorship of C-U Bike Month, May 2016. These amounts were all included in the Foundation's 2016 budget.
- Submitted and application to the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois, Stevick Foundation in the amount of \$20,000 for restoration work on the Botanical Garden's pond and waterfall. Grant decision is expected within 90 days.
- Attended the Fund Raising School provided through the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, see attached report.

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

- Finalized audit preparations for Sikich field. This work and responding to field work testing and inquiries have dominated our work in the past month. Audit preparations have included reconciling all transactions generated through vendor systems, such as Reservation Friend (camping), Event Pro (pavilion rentals), Golf Now (golf user fees and sales) and GiftWorks (donors). This also included significant work reconciling employee payroll deductions against benefit vendor's billing.
- Filed the 2016 Bond ordinance with the County Clerk's office and coordinated the bond closing with Chapman Cutler. This included transferring the \$283,566 from the Corporate Fund (bond investment) to the Capital Projects Fund (bond proceeds).
- IMRF reported that the tentative employer pension contribution rate for 2017 is 10.48%. This is a reduction from the 11.45% rate for 2016. The 2017 rate will be finalized in November.
- Consulted with MediaCom to square away District long distance service. The District contract with MediaCom excludes long distance services as Touch Tone Communications already provides these at greatly reduced rates. Currently MediaCom is providing and billing for long distance service from Lake of the Woods departments which are on the fiber optic network.
- Worked with Health Alliance and Benefit Planning Consultants to get the District's electronic feed between these two vendors working.
- Met with FE Moran, Jon Hasselbring and Tom Pike to address pending upgrades to many of the District's alarm systems. 2G cell phone service will shortly be discontinued and several District alarms operate on this system and will have to be upgraded. We are also updating our alarm call lists.

- Continued processing payroll and vendor payments, handling bank transfers, reporting department budget activities and providing support for Forest Preserve Friends Foundation meetings.

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

- Conducted exit interview.
- Performed a job analysis for position.
- Drafted revisions to employee handbook and met with Dan Olson, Mary Ellen Wuellner, and John Baker to discuss changes.
- Attended downstate Illinois PDRMA safety meeting with Mary Beck.
- Reviewed numerous articles and discussed performance management.
- Attended a Health Fair to consider possibilities of sponsoring one for CCFPD employees.
- Participated in I-9 webinar.
- Attended seminar on Emotional Intelligence with Mary Ellen Wuellner, Barb Garvey, and Doug Sanders.

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

- Social media update: on Facebook CCFPD has 1,305 followers; Lake of the Woods Golf Course has 695; Kickapoo Rail Trail has 844; Museum of the Grand Prairie has 585. Homer Lake Interpretive Center just started a Facebook page this month. CCFPD has 126 Instagram followers. Kickapoo Rail Trail has 56 followers and CCFPD has 415 followers on Twitter.
- Dan and Lisa met with Accuraty to assess progress on the new District website
- *Mailed invitations for the KRT Groundbreaking ceremony.*
- *Sent several Eblast messages to the KRT Update list.*
- *Several fundraising events planned for the Kickapoo Rail Trail include: Community Used Bicycle Sale at Champaign Cycle on Saturday, May 7; 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Kickapoo Rail Trail Duathlon on Saturday, June 18; Rockin' for the Trail Benefit Concert at The City Center on Saturday, July 9; and 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual River to Rail Ride on Saturday, September 24.*

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

- Held volunteer invasive brush cutting events at Homer Lake and Buffalo Trace. Volunteers helped cut and treat autumn olive, Callery pear, and bush honeysuckle in areas of prairie suffering from heavy encroachment.
- Natural Resources seasonal employee, Jeffrey Peyton, attended the Society for Ecological Restoration - Midwest/Great Lakes Chapter meeting in Bloomington, IN. Jeffrey also completed his introduction to wildfire online training and field day.
- Brad Nelson attended the Illinois Indigenous Plants Symposium in Southern Illinois.
- Mike Daab, Matt Kuntz, and Jon Hasselbring met with potential firms on site to discuss the Point Pleasant Wetland drainage project.
- The Natural Resources Dept. burned approximately 530 acres during the spring burn season, including 10 acres burned along the Kickapoo Rail Trail. Nearly all department goals for prescribed fire are already met with the rest to be completed in the fall. Thanks to Middle Fork and Homer Lake staff for their assistance on District burns.

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

- *A pre-construction conference for the Kickapoo Rail Trail took place at IDOT regional headquarters in Paris, Illinois on March 29. CCFPD met with representatives from Farnsworth Group, Cross Construction, and IDOT to discuss the tentative construction schedule and due diligence items such as utility marking, erosion control, and safety measures. Tree removal is the first controlling work item, which is projected to carry on through the end of May. The estimated project completion date is July 7, 2017.*
- With coordination efforts led by Middle Fork Staff, Conco Spray Solutions is underway with the Shower House Polyurea installation. The Construction Crew will re-install shower partition doors, plumbing fixtures, vents, and new benches prior to the Shower House reopening on May 1.
- Middle Fork Staff has constructed a new gravel parking lot for the Pt. Pleasant trailhead, complete with a corrugated metal culvert for storm water conveyance, accessible parking, gate, bollards, and split rail fence (see photo on right).
- Hey & Associates is underway with construction plans for Willow Pond renovations.
- The Construction Crew completed repairs to the Golf Course Pro Shop roof framing and siding, ahead of contracted services to replace portions of the roof materials. Freedom Roofing and Construction has completed membrane roof repairs and will move to edge metal installation next. Dalton & Son will follow with seamless gutter and downspout installation.
- The Construction Crew completed repairs to the Golf Course chemical storage room which included the following: one hour fire rated walls, ceiling, and door; improved lighting, storage shelves, and insulation. The Planning Department worked with Golf Course staff and the Cornbelt Fire Protection District to identify stored chemicals and determine necessary signage for the building's exterior. The same efforts were coordinated with departments throughout the district, in order to appropriately sign facilities with chemical storage.
- Homer Lake Staff is leading the charge with Phase 1 (south half) of shoreline naturalization at the Sailboat Launch / Overflow Spillway. Concrete boardwalk demolition, tree removal, rough grading, and rip-rap placement are complete for Phase 1. The Construction Crew will mobilize next for fishing pier and concrete sidewalk construction. Phase 2 (north half) is tentatively scheduled for fall of 2016.



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

- Club Car and Yamaha golf cart companies have provided golf cart demos for golfers and staff to evaluate.
- Proshop staff is working through the mechanical issues with the golf carts.
- Staff adjusted mowing patterns of the approaches to improve playability.

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

- Stacey Clementz, Chelsey Walsh and Emily Henson attended the EEAI Conference. Chelsey presented a concurrent session entitled: *Sixth Sense: How to Adapt Activities for Different Ages*.
- Susan Voskuil participated in *Engaging the Volunteer of the Future*, a webinar presented by Volunteer Match.
- Barb Garvey attended a Fred Pryor workshop, *Developing Emotional Intelligence*.
- The professional staff participated in an American Association for State and Local History Association webinar, *Are You Ready for Volunteers*, the PDRMA training module, *Distracted Driving* and the Employee Assistance Program Skillbuilders 2.0 program, *Applying Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace*.
- The annual volunteer luncheon was held on March 19, 2016. Attending volunteers received lunch and were present for the opening of this year's special exhibit at the MGP, *The Worth of Water: Water's Importance in Champaign County*.
- The Interpretive Center's 2016 annual exhibit, *Fawnsfeet & Fatmuckets: Freshwater Mussels of Illinois*, opened April 2. The exhibit features the ecology & beauty of mussels, history including Native American uses of mussels and the button industry in IL, and modern science related to mussels.
- For the first time this year the MGP offered a different hands-on activity for kids each day of Spring Break including soap-felting, candle making, quilting, butter churning and games. It was a great success!
- The Museum of the Grand Prairie hosted the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area's workshop, *Building and Sustaining a Successful Volunteer Program*. Barb Garvey was a panelist on a discussion about sustaining volunteers.
- Stacey Clementz represented the Department at the Read Across America event at Lincoln Square Mall. Around 200 people stopped by to try their hand at quill writing and see some hands-on educational artifacts.
- Homer Lake Interpretive Center hired seasonal naturalist, David Evans and two Nature Day Camp educators for the Eco-adventures summer camp.
- Chelsey Walsh was interviewed by News Gazette about Woodcock Walks. Stacey & Chelsey were also interviewed about letterboxes at Homer Lake.
- Museum and Education staff have been assisting the District with setting up the ActiveNet online registration system, tentatively going live in May. Angie Clayton, Mary Ellen Wuellner, Lisa Sprinkle and John Baker are also working on this project.
- *Hidden Underfoot: Archaeology in Illinois*, the 2015 special exhibit at the Museum of the Grand Prairie has been borrowed by/moved to Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site and will be on view there during 2016.

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

- Staff cleaned up the annual Christmas tree recycling lot and removed signage and snow fence, mulched approximately 700 trees and reseeded grass. The amount of trees we received was a drastic increase in 2015 when 300 trees were recycled.
- The IDNR spring trout season opened the weekend of April 2. Crystal Lake Fisheries of Ava, Missouri stocked the lake with 1,250 pounds of trout on March 25 (approx. 1,524 fish). In 2016, IDNR stocked 50 sites throughout Illinois with 80,000 rainbow trout. Lake of the Woods was the only location stocked in Champaign County.
- For the past 12 weeks, Michael Dale attended the Master Gardeners training provided by the University of Illinois Extension. Mike was 1 of 40 individuals that completed their course work in Champaign/Vermilion Counties.
- Doug Sanders completed NRPA's online Certified Playground Safety Inspector course and exam. This extends his CPSI certification into 2019.

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

- Homer Lake staff conducted prescribed burns in addition to the areas that the Natural Resources crew burned this spring.
- Staff opened Walnut Hill shelter and turned on the water pumps for the Natural Playscape stream.
- Dan and I met with the Upper Salt Fork Drainage commissioners to discuss the log jam at the St. Joseph trestle bridge.
- Staff completed the demolition of the south half of the Sail Boat launch walkway and naturalized the shoreline. (see pictures) The Construction Crew will begin preparations for pouring sidewalks leading to Walnut Hill shelter. The north half will be done later this fall.



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

- All three ponds were stocked with approximately 600 fish. Species included were largemouth bass, crappie, sunfish, bluegill, and red ear.
- Middle Fork staff is constructing the parking for the Pt. Pleasant Trail on the south end of the Forest Preserve. This portion of the trail development should be complete by late April.
- Conco Spray Solutions began rehabbing the shower stall and should complete the project by end of month.
- Middle Fork staff is repairing the failed culvert at the north end of the Forest Preserve this spring as weather allows. The only task remaining on this project will be applying a chip fill grout to the corners of the culvert, which will have to wait for dry conditions.
- The campground officially opened April 1. Eager campers have braved the cold so far, but with the weather we are seeing lower numbers than usual.