

May 9, 2016

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**Executive Director (Dan Olson)**

- I attended the annual IAPD Legislative Conference and it was again very informative. I am including several documents for your information.
  - The first set of documents is supporting marketing material (Power of Parks) for speaking with the public and legislators about the benefits of parks and preserves.
  - The second set is a listing of Bills being introduced during this General Assembly year. All are important, but I would like to further highlight a few of those with greater impact:
    - **HB 4536** – Public Bid Process. This Bill was vetoed by the governor last session. Back on for this year in a very similar form. A very recent amendment to the bill included that although the law may be set higher, if a board chooses to keep it lower than \$25,000 they can do so.
    - **HB 696** – Property tax freezes. Was called for and passed the house. This version does include verbiage that the freeze would be permanent – erasing the two year freeze verbiage. Oddly, it begins with the 2016 tax levy year which is already in payout.
    - **HB 4379** – Travel Expense Control – This has many items that would need to be implemented and that would lead to change in policy. In short, travel expenses would need to be approved separately for both Commissioners and staff using a roll call vote. It would also dictate using a standardized form outlined by the state.
    - **HB 5522** – More Government Transparency. Adds more items to the list of things that our agency must post on media and keep up to date.
    - **HB 4501** – Local Government Reduction. Last year I mentioned that I have been closely watching this, and one other similar bill. It gives authority to County Boards to dissolve local units of government to which they appoint people. This would include CCFPD.
- We had a good dinner and conversation with two of our legislators, Rep. Ammons and Sen. Bennett. Both were hopeful the state budget issue will be resolved soon so that the state can move forward soon.
- I attended the IACFPD quarterly meeting, meetings for the KRT, CAC, Foundation, NRPA Awards Committee, and website designers.
- Registration opens May 16 for the National Parks and Recreation Conference on Oct. 5 through 8 in St. Louis (<http://parks.nrpa.org/conference2016/?NRPAHmBox>). We have added to this packet information on hotels and blocks of rooms. The FY 2016 budget allows for one Commissioner to attend (or more if alternative funding is used such as volunteering at the conference). Because of new policy, Commissioner conference attendance will need to be an action request at a future meeting. Discussion on attendance is on the agenda.
- Beginning June 22, the peninsula at Lake of the Woods will be sacred ground as “The Wall That Heals” travelling Vietnam War Memorial will be arriving on site. The wall will be escorted by fire, police, and an honor guard consisting of several motorcycles. It will be open to the public at approximately 5:00 pm on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. An official opening ceremony will take place on Thursday evening and a candlelight vigil will be held on Saturday at 9 pm. The Wall will depart on Sunday afternoon. During the time, the Wall will be open to the public 24 hours a day.
- The Forest Preserve Friends Foundation was very pleased to receive a bequest from long-time volunteer at the museum, Frieda Mumm. Mrs. Mumm passed away in October but left a lasting memory with everyone she worked around. The bequest is specifically for the Museum of the Grand Prairie. The Foundation currently has a subcommittee working to research best practices for the bequest and will be poised to make recommendations in

the near future. We will be having a feature article in our newsletter and a press release very soon.

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

- *On May 7 Champaign Cycle hosted its third Community Used Bike Sale in support of the Kickapoo Rail Trail. We brought in about \$12,000 in sales, but a final net total will not be known until the proceeds to consignment sellers are subtracted.*
- The event committee of the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation met in May to discuss “The Way We Wore” event scheduled for August 13. Decisions were made about the garden venue, the invitation list, food and beverages, and the program details. More information will be forthcoming soon.
- The Foundation received a donation from Rosann Noel for Botanical Garden plant materials – flowers, trees, and shrubs. This donation came about as a result of a meeting Mrs. Noel had with Doug Sanders and Michael Dale of the Lake of the Woods operations staff a few weeks’ prior. Michael will lead the planting efforts, implementing the guidance and recommendations provided by Mrs. Noel.

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

- Reviewed and redrafted the budget preparation timeline for Dan’s approval. The initial 2017 staff budget discussions are scheduled for June 30 at the Museum Education Center.
- Signed up applicable District acreage for reimbursements from the Conservation Reserve Program. District acreage eligible for CRP payments will expire in 2017. The 2008 and 2012 Farm Bills removed the eligibility for CRP reimbursements from local governments which enrolled or renewed CRP contracts after those bills were passed.
- Requested information from NRCS regarding CCFPD’s eligibility for participation and reimbursement through the Pollinator Program.
- Attended the IMRF rate meeting on April 27 in Champaign. IMRF’s investment return for 2015 was 0.44%, well below the 7.5% that is annually credited to employee pension reserves. This will impact District rates beginning in 2017. The District’s pension funding ratio (for non-retired employees) as of December 31, 2015 was 78%. Including retired employees increases the funding ratio to 87.5%.
- While the District’s pension funding ratio improved slightly over 2014, District pension reserves dropped from \$2,688,042 to \$1,951,340. The primary reasons for this reduction are 1) a \$450,000 charge (because of 2015’s investment shortfall) to the District’s pension reserve and 2) \$320,000 in member annuities for three former and one current employee retirements.
- Filed state and federal 990s forms for the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation and applied for PDRMA insurance coverage for the Foundation. The insurance coverage is expected to be at little or no cost.
- Submitted and received approval for Foundation payment for “pass through” donations and reimbursement of District first quarter expenditures on behalf of the Foundation.
- Researched with Sikich, PDRMA and Meyer Capel the legal feasibility for Foundation leading and managing a capital project for the District.
- Completed evaluations for admin and finance staff for the period May 2015 to April 2016.
- Witnessed the golf cart bid opening on May 11 with Dave Torrens.
- Continued providing detailed and clarifying information to the Sikich auditors on District 2015 financial transactions.

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

- Interviewed candidates for Uintern position with Human Resources this summer.
- Revised job descriptions.
- Continue to revise Personnel policy.
- Attended Legislative Conference in Springfield.
- Attended PDRMA’s presentation of “The Buried Truth”.
- Interviewed supervisors on pertinent training for positions as outlined in the Strategic Plan.
- Attended PDRMA’s HELP training.

- Developed Anti-Discrimination and Harassment training.
- Worked with Compensation Committee on 2016 initiatives.

### Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Citizen's Advisory Committee started its outreach at the Urbana Farmers Market in May.
- Social media update: on Facebook CCFPD has 1,329 followers; Lake of the Woods Golf Course has 702; Kickapoo Rail Trail has 942; Museum of the Grand Prairie has 588. Homer Lake Interpretive Center just started a Facebook page in April and has 56 likes. CCFPD has 140 Instagram followers. Kickapoo Rail Trail has 58 followers and CCFPD has 417 followers on Twitter.
- Attended the Parks Day at State Capitol. Set up and manned the booth for the Illinois Association of Conservation and Forest Preserve Districts.
- *Continued preparations for the KRT Groundbreaking ceremony.*
- *Sent Eblast messages to the KRT Update list.*
- *Several fundraising events planned for the Kickapoo Rail Trail include: 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)

- Natural Resources Staff have spent the better part of the last month removing garlic mustard from District woodlands.

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

- *In January of 2016, the Planning Department submitted a Special Use Permit (SUP) application to the Champaign County Zoning Board of Appeals for Kickapoo Rail Trail construction in AG-1 and AG-2 zoning districts. On April 28<sup>th</sup> Jon Hasselbring and Brian Taylor attended the SUP Hearing, which also included variance requests for setbacks and parking. No decision was made and a continuation has been scheduled for July 14<sup>th</sup>.*
- *Cross Construction's tree removal subcontractor, Homer Tree Service, has mobilized and begun vegetation clearing efforts that are necessary for trail construction. Cross will follow with the installation of storm water infrastructure and earthwork as weather allows.*
- *Farnsworth Group has identified two (2) improperly designed culverts at Cottonwood Rd and one culvert in need of replacement. These will require re-engineering and change orders to the contract.*
- *New culverts will be installed at Old Police Park Road to replace those removed by an adjacent landowner. Farnsworth Group has estimated that the removed culverts will be replaced at no additional cost to the contract, due to a credit for scope of work to clean the previously existing culverts. Estimates for earthwork at these locations are forthcoming.*
- Middle Fork shower house repairs are complete (please see attached photo). Following Conco Spray Solutions' polyurea application, the Construction Department and Middle Fork staff re-installed partition doors, plumbing fixtures, vents, benches and grab bars.
- Pro Shop roof repairs were completed with the installation of new rubber roof membrane, drip edge material, gutters and downspouts (please see attached photo).
- Homer Lake Sailboat Launch / Overflow Spillway work continues with concrete sidewalk and cut stone installation by the Construction Department (please see attached photo).
- First quarter 2016 traffic and trail counts at Lake of the Woods have been collected and analyzed. The electromagnetic traffic counters at both LOW entrances have experienced some abnormal spikes in data collection. Upon correspondence with the manufacturer and review of weather data, it appears that



wind gusts are causing the abnormal spikes by moving metal gates, padlocks, power lines, etc. Fourteen anomalies have been excluded from the traffic count reports, and alternate locations are being considered. The reports, which are attached to the end of the staff report include hourly, daily, monthly totals, and averages for days of the week.



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

- We started a new local event this year with the idea coming from Ryan Heiser of Fisher National Bank. The Mahomet Business Group had lunch and played 9 holes of golf on May 3.
- Events: April 22 – EIU School of Technology – 39 players; April 23-24 – Season Opener – 148 players; May 7 – Don Willi Memorial Scramble – 29 players; Women’s and Men’s Associations began on April 27<sup>th</sup>; Mahomet PE Classes daily (April 29 through May 18);
- Staff is consulting with the construction crew for the upcoming bridge installation.
- Torrens and Weasel repaired an irrigation main-line. This is an eight inch reduced to a six inch pipe in 15 fairway. Staff completed 2 other irrigation repairs.
- The proshop roof repair is complete. No leaks have been reported to this point.



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

- With the assistance of Jon Hasselbring, the Museum of the Grand Prairie applied for a reimbursement grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for LEDs purchased. Eighty LEDs were purchased for the main exhibit gallery, completing the replacement of lamps throughout the complex. All lamps are now energy efficient fluorescents or LEDs.
- The Museum of the Grand Prairie hired Kyle Morgan for a second year as a Seasonal Day Camp Educator.
- Pam Leiter met with CAC to discuss the Interpretive Plan. Also, Mark Hanson, Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter met with the Museum Advisory Committee to discuss the Interpretive Plan as well as revisions to the Collections Policy.
- Susan Voskuil attended the Homeschool Fair at the Champaign Public Library to promote Museum and Education Department offerings.
- The Museum of the Grand Prairie, in conjunction with the Smithsonian Water/Ways exhibit, was asked to apply for and received a Youth Access Grant funded by the Smithsonian and the Gates Foundation (\$6000 dollars). The grant provides equipment and a stipend for a graduate student to assist with an oral history program regarding local residents’ thoughts on water. The interviews will be shared as part of the local “Worth of Water” exhibit and archived at the museum and the Smithsonian. Susan Voskuil, has begun work with students at University High School and local citizens to interview them about their experiences with water.

- Online registration went live in early May. Many thanks to Stacey & Angie for their tireless help with this transition.
- Our new spring season Nature at Night program series continues to be popular
- Many thanks to the Champaign County Audubon Society for sponsoring the Bird Migration Festival once again this year.
- Emily Henson, Interpretive Naturalist at HLIC, has accepted a full-time job at another agency, and will be leaving us at the end of May. We are excited for her in this well-deserved career move, and also sad to see her go. She has developed several new initiatives at CCFPD in her approximately 5 years here, including School's Out programs and the Education Expo, and she also manages the Department's Counselor-in-Training program, revived the homeschool newsletter, and is passionate about expanding our outreach to more diverse audiences, among many other things. We will miss her, but wish her well in the future.

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

- Dave Torrens and I arranged for PDRMA to hold a mower safety training at the golf course on May 6<sup>th</sup>. This involved six CCFPD staff that traditionally are responsible for mowing the golf course and grounds at LOW. The training consisted of classroom instruction and hands hold operations.
- Staff attended the “Buried Truth-Uncovered” training at the Decatur Park District. Stressing the importance of safety, Eric Giguere spoke about his incident of a trench collapsing on him while repairing a water main. His presentation consisted of a slideshow of photos taken during his accident and a question and answer period for attendees.
- In preparation for the paddle boat rental season which opens Memorial Day weekend, we replaced 84 badly worn life vests. In addition, per PDRMA’s recommendation we have added two life preserver belts for staff to wear during their shift and a throw rope/preserver.

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

- We were fortunate to have a group of volunteers from Thrivent Financial who helped us get Walnut Hill picnic area raked and picked up for the mowing season. We also had Cub Scout Troop 98 come out and help us install playground surfacing at Walnut Hill. (see picture)
- I attended the Champaign County Zoning Board meeting with Jon concerning the Kickapoo Rail Trail. They were very interested in this project, and they had several questions that Jon addressed and some that will be addressed at a future meeting.
- Roy attended a PDRMA safety training at Decatur Park District that focused on the importance of following safety practices without exception.



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

- Camping has started off with a slow pace this year, dealing with cooler temperatures and rainy weekends. Our campground hosts have started his position this year. We are welcoming him back from working at the campground in previous years.
- The shower house stall renovation was completed in time to open the building for the summer season.
- The parking lot for the Pt. Pleasant trail has been completed by Middle Fork staff. The parking lot is located on the southern end of the forest preserve property.