

May 9, 2016

MEMORANDUM

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

Executive Director (Dan Olson)

- We were saddened to hear that Elisabeth Hanson had passed away. She was a long-time advocate of natural resource protection in Champaign County and elsewhere. Although she had a very rich and unique life, her biggest effort for the CCFPD was stewarding and protecting the Tomlinson Cemetery in the 1970's and 80's. She donated her collection of notes on her Tomlinson observations to the CCFPD. Recently, she penned a book titled "*East-Central Illinois: Exploring the Beginnings*" which describes the early natural resources and culture of the area.
- *We thank everyone that helped organize the KRT Groundbreaking ceremony and thank those that were present for this very big event.*
- *While attending a movie sponsored by C-U bike month, I was pleasantly surprised to accept an award on behalf of the Champaign County Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners. The award was given for "Support of the Cycling Community" by Champaign County Bikes. Specifically mentioned was the effort on the KRT especially for moving forward with the first phase of construction.*
- *There continues to be numerous meetings on the Kickapoo Rail Trail.*
- The Freedom Fest Committee continues to finalize items for the event. Sponsorship has been good this year.
- On June 12th, I will be installed as the next president of the Mahomet Rotary. I have been involved with this group for many years now and continue to be very impressed by the members commitment to service. Mahomet Rotary has impact throughout Champaign County and has programs in various areas around the world.
- The audit is wrapping up quickly. I am very satisfied with the response of Sikich to our concerns and with the staff's response to needs of the auditors. As laws and technology change audit findings evolve also.
- We were recognized by Champaign-Urbana Public Health in the newspaper for incorporating e-cigarettes to the same criteria of cigarettes when it comes to no smoking regulations. (Please see insert).
- *Mike Daab and I were interviewed by Jim Turpin on WDWS during "A Penny for Your Thoughts" program about the Kickapoo Rail Trail. This is a call in show, but no calls were made about the trail.*
- I have asked staff to begin compiling their updates to the strategic plan so it may be presented as planned in the August Board meeting.
- FY2017 budgeting is underway. A new timeline moving several items up in the year was presented by John and shared with the staff.
- The Dark Sky program is moving forward. Most notably is that David Leake (Stearkel Planetarium and CUAS) and David Easter (CAC) have drafted a Lightscape Management Plan for the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve - one of the first steps in achieving Dark Sky certification.
- Continued meetings including Risk Management, NRPA Awards and Scholarship Committee, and the Monthly Directors Meeting.

Deputy Director/Grants (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- *The District was given an extension of its IDNR Bike Path grant deadline, from 6/30/2016 to 6/30/2017. The \$200,000 grant was frozen by the State of Illinois in March 2015 and therefore has not been available as planned for the construction of Phase One of the Kickapoo Rail Trail. If the budget impasse can be resolved, this extension would give us one more year to use the grant.*
- *Fred Delcomyn, a local photographer, approached me at the Kickapoo Rail Trail groundbreaking about doing a photodocumentation project of the evolution of the KRT, from start to finish. His quote for the work is \$5,900 for the Champaign County side and \$4,500 for Vermilion County. I think this is a worthwhile endeavor but only if it can be grant funded. Unless directed otherwise by the Board of Commissioners, I will research possible grant resources for the work.*
- Unfortunately, grant results over the last month have not been good. We learned that we were not approved for either the Community Foundation's Stevick grant for the Botanical Garden's pond/waterfall work (\$20,000) or the *Doppelt Family Fund grant for Kickapoo Rail Trail construction (\$50,000)*. I plan to follow up with both agencies to obtain more information.
- Zhenyu Song is working with me this summer as part of his involvement with the University's UIntern program. We are migrating the Foundation's donor data onto a new software program, so Song (as he prefers to be called) will be helping me with that process, as well as other fund raising and event functions.
- In mid-June, the CCFPD submitted its annual application to The Nature Conservancy and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission for tools and equipment to support natural area preservation work conducted by our staff and volunteers. These tools help with invasives removal, seed collection, and prescribed burns.

Administration (John Baker)

- Received, reviewed, and recommended corrections to the preliminary audit report from Sikich. Provided additional supporting information to Sikich to support recommended corrections. Prepared Management Discussion and Analysis and signed off on final audit report. Reviewed Sikich' findings and prepared District response.
- Received \$3709 from the University of Illinois as a cooperative education reimbursement supporting the Homer Lake Interpretive Center staff.
- Executed contract for lease purchase of sixty golf carts.
- Filed the state and federal 990s for the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation.
- Completed surveys for the US Census Bureau and for a study on natural resources grants, provided information to the Illinois Department of Labor on District vendors.
- Paid \$145.18 in District drainage tax bills.
- Attended the Government Finance Officer's Annual Conference in Toronto from May 22 to May 25. A report on sessions will be included in the July staff report.
- Applied and received liquor licenses from the State of Illinois and Champaign County. The licenses are valid from June 1, 2016 to May 31, 2017.

Human Resources (Jan Runion)

- Investigated leadership training and customer service training for CCFPD employees.
- Worked with Compensation Committee on pay for performance recommendation.
- Performed exit interviews with staff leaving the District.
- Researched new FLSA regulations on status of employees and overtime pay.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- *The KRT Groundbreaking ceremony was a huge success! Very good attendance, speakers and treats.*
- CCFPD had a tasting booth at the 2016 Homer Soda Fest. We sampled the Maple Syrup Root Beer and informed people about our educational programs at Homer Lake and throughout the preserves.

- *On June 7, Dan Olson and Mike Daab were on Penny for your Thoughts to discuss the Kickapoo Rail Trail.*
- Social media update: on Facebook CCFPD has 1,355 (+26) followers; Lake of the Woods Golf Course has 710 (+8); Kickapoo Rail Trail has 999 (+57); Museum of the Grand Prairie has 597 (+9). Homer Lake Interpretive Center 64 likes (+8). CCFPD has 170 (+40) Instagram followers. Kickapoo Rail Trail has 62 (+4) followers and CCFPD has 429 (+12) followers on Twitter.
- *We have two MTD Bus Tail ads this month advertising the Rockin' for the Trail benefit concert for the Kickapoo Rail Trail.*
- *We are working with Peter Davis at Champaign Cycle to promote the premiere of Not 2 Bad on June 20 at the Art Theater. They will be showing the original Not Bad movie followed by the premiere of Not 2 Bad. Tickets will be \$10 and all proceeds will go to support the construction of the Kickapoo Rail Trail.*



Homer Soda Fest volunteers, Eileen Borgia and Carl Altstetter with CCFPD CAC and Bobbie Herakovich from CCFPD Board of Commissioners.

Natural Resources (Mike Daab)

- We thank NR Seasonal Jeffrey Peyton for his work with the District in 2016. Jeffrey has taken a job as Land Steward with Grand Prairie Friends.
- Volunteers planted several flats of native prairie and woodland plants at the Sangamon River Forest Preserve in areas where they had been removing invasive plants.
- NR staff has worked with volunteers to remove invasive shrubs from prairie restorations at Buffalo Trace and Homer Lake. Staff and volunteers also spent time removing wild parsnip at Buffalo Trace.
- NR staff helped prepare for KRT construction by identifying and removing trees along the route.
- Mike Daab attended the Illinois Invasive Species Symposium at the U of I Extension on May 26th. Topics of interest included updates on statewide trends, tree pests and threats, and talks on herbicide application methods, including aerial application and basal bark treatments.
- Mike Daab attended the Reforestation Tour sponsored by the Natural Resources Conservation Service on May 19th. The tour included stops at reforestation projects between 15 and 25 years old throughout Champaign County.
- Invasive plant management has greatly expanded over the past month, transitioning from pulling garlic mustard to mowing or spraying several species, including reed canarygrass, Canada thistle, crown vetch, teasels, and more.
- Seed collection has begun for the year with a good crop of seed from our expanding wood betony populations throughout the District.

Planning and Construction Department (Jon Hasselbring and Mike Fry)

- *The Planning Department continues to gather information for the Champaign County Zoning Board of Appeals continuation hearing on July 14th. In January, CCFPD requested a Special Use Permit (SUP) for Kickapoo Rail Trail construction in AG-1 and AG-2 zoning districts and variance requests for setbacks and parking. The first hearing took place on April 28th.*
- *Homer tree service has completed tree removal and moved onto stump grinding. Cross Construction is making progress with rough grading and culvert installation in St. Joseph and along Old Police Park Road.*
- The new Golf Course Bridge was installed by Custom Manufacturing. CCFPD's Construction Crew installed the base material prior to the contractor's mobilization, and compacted new asphalt approaches and rip rap for erosion control (please see attached photo).

- Homer Lake Sailboat Launch / Overflow Spillway work continues with concrete sidewalk and cut stone installation by the Construction Department. The Phase I south fishing pier is complete, and sidewalks towards the Natural Playscape parking lot and Walnut Hill are in progress (please see attached photo).
- Repairs were made to the Lake of the Woods rental boat dock (please see attached photo).
- Hey & Associates submitted a Willow Pond progress drawing set for review by CCFPD. Mike Daab, Matt Kuntz, Mary Ellen, and Jon reviewed the drawings and submitted comments and questions back to the consultant.
- The newly formed sustainability committee met for the first time, and is currently researching recycling options and programs for the District. In a coordinated effort between staff at headquarters and site superintendents, a grant application was submitted for the Keep America Beautiful recycling program. This program offers free recycling bins for government agencies that own or manage local, regional or state parks.
- Please refer to the attached spreadsheet for the 2016 Capital Projects mid-year update.





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

- Natural Resource Department removed three declining ash trees.
- Greens aerification took place June 6th and 7th.
- The new golf cars will be delivered the week of June 13th.
- Junior clinic and “Get Golf Ready” classes have started again. Participation is good.
- Met with Daniel Reagan from Golf Now regarding a new marketing platform through Golf Now.
- Events: May 25th - Mizuno Demo Day; May 26th – WDWS Golf Thursday Sports talk with Steve Kelly; June 1st – Cleveland wedge clinic and fitting; June 4th & 5th Naughtin Open 38 Players; June 7th - Mahomet Business Group.

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

- Mark Hanson traveled to Dixon, Illinois for the *Water/Ways* Smithsonian exhibit installation training; the exhibit will be installed the week of July 11-15.
- Staff completed an online Mandated Reporter training. Under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, recreation workers working with children are required to complete this training.
- The Department offered First Aid/CPR training for our staff and other CCFPD staff.
- Staff met with C-U Special Rec, and scheduled two programs to bring camp students out to Homer Lake and Lake of the Woods this summer
- Stacey Clementz joined the District Sustainability Committee with the directive of putting into place a District-wide recycling program for the public use areas
- We ran a Facebook chat for the first time on Chambana Moms Facebook page to promote our summer camps. We had 14 people in attendance; it was very fast paced.
- The MGP has begun using the Activenet Point of Sale system for the Museum Store with great success. ActiveNet program registrations are also going smoothly.
- The MGP began an Instagram account this month, named museumofthegrandprairie.
- The MGP hired Kyle Morgan as Day Camp Educator and Kristen Allen as Day Camp Assistant. Kyle will perform the role of the Garden Program Specialist for the summer while we search for a permanent replacement and Kristen will assist with Museum Mondays, Grand Prairie Kids and the Garden Camps. The HLIC hired another day camp educator, Christin Watkins, to fill in until we can hire a new Interpretive Naturalist.
- The MGP has two interns from the UI Intern program this summer. Chelsea Pokrzywinski and Ryan Wolfslayer. Both Chelsea and Ryan are Library Science students at the University of Illinois; both are working on processing the Doris Hoskins Archival material.

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

- Dan Olson and Doug Sanders met with *The Wall That Heals* organizational committee on May 12. This half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial will be on display at the LOW Peninsula between June 23 – 26, 2016. For details of this traveling memorial visit <http://www.vvmf.org/twth>.
- WCIA hosted the annual *Best of Class* community project in the Botanical Gardens on May 21. This event recognizes area high school graduates for their academic achievements. Creative services director Peter Carlson said, “the event went very well, weather cooperated, and the park looked great.” They plan to continue using this venue in the future.
- Over the past month, a number of improvements have been made to the rental boat facility. Among these upgrades are: new life vest and safety equipment, installation of a weather radio, pressure washing and repainting of the deck, and new side bumpers (recycled from fire hose donated by Cornbelt). A number of staff/departments were involved in this effort, spearheaded by Tammy Bruehl. Over a five year period, this Memorial Day weekend ranked second best with 173 rentals.

Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- The construction crew has been making progress on the sail boat launch project. The large boulders placed along the concrete pier are attractive both from the sidewalk and the water. We have also received some positive comments from fishermen about the rip rap improving the fishing. (see picture)
- *Roy and I assisted with the KRT ground breaking event in Urbana.*
- We filled two seasonal positions and we’re catching up with the mowing.
- The Memorial Day weekend was one of the busiest that I’ve ever seen.



Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- The Lincoln’s Challenge Academy finished their spring semester volunteer hours at Middle Fork, accumulating 735 volunteer hours. The cadets helped with graveling campsites, litter pick-up through the campground, and other much needed projects.
- The Memorial Day Weekend was incredibly successful, and one of the busiest weekends we have ever seen at the preserve. Staff has noticed in the last few years’ capacity issues with the grounds and user areas, subjects that will be researched and looked at for future capital projects.
- The Take Me Fishing event was held at Middle Fork on Memorial Day Weekend.
- The campground naturalist, Christy Wallace, has started her summer programs at the campground.
- Three staff members at Middle Fork have completed their First Aid/AED training. This is a two year certification.

- Just wanted to let you know that the volunteer department is still going strong...maybe not as strong as it should be, but it's going! We currently have a job posting out looking for a part-time Volunteer Coordinator (if you know of anyone that would be interested, please let me know!!) In the meantime, I have been talking with potential volunteers. One that I had recently spoke with is currently helping out the Lake of the Woods Operation (gardens staff), someone just inquired about helping in the museum, another recent one will be helping the gardens out on weekends. Today a contact from Champaign Caterpillar called about the possibility of some of their company associates doing volunteer time with the District during their work day! We have a posting with the Master Naturalist listserv for additional help on the 4th of July and recently were able to get wonderful volunteers for the Kickapoo Ground Breaking Event.