

September 8, 2016

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**Executive Director (Dan Olson)**

- Several staff members have stepped up to help me and others in the past month to make sure that the duties of several vacant or temporarily absent positions at HQ get completed on time and correctly. I continue to be impressed by the willingness of employees here at the District to step up in times of need.
- We are currently seeking to fill three CAC member positions. Four members terms will be coming to an end in Dec. One member has asked for reappointment. If you know of good candidates, please let me or Lisa know. You may recall, CAC member Eileen Borgia had announced her resignation during the Joint Board Meeting in June. However, she will be back on the Committee after plans changed for her.
- I Attended the IPRA quarterly meeting reception at the Virginia Theatre, a law enforcement meeting, CC Zoning, CC Regional Planning, All Employee meeting, the St. Joseph Festival, the KRT Open House, and had a great time at the very creative “The Way We Wore” event.

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

- I have been developing a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign with the help of our DonorPath and Network for Good mentoring team. Peer-to-peer fundraising leverages individuals who already support our organization to raise funds from their network on our behalf. The concept is also known as social fundraising, personal and/or team fundraising. If the foundation approves the idea, the goal of the P2P campaign would be to raise the \$50,000 needed to match the Recreational Trails Program grant for KRT phase 2a by the end of 2016.
- The webinar, “Trails and Towns Together: How Communities Capitalize on Trail Tourism”, developed by the American Trails organization, was shown in St. Joseph at La Luna Café on Monday, September 12.

**Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)**

- Social media update: on Facebook CCFPD has 1,456 (+22) followers; Lake of the Woods Golf Course has 732 (+10); Kickapoo Rail Trail has 1,233 (+68); Museum of the Grand Prairie has 747 (+135). Homer Lake Interpretive Center 99 likes (+7). CCFPD has 241 (+19) Instagram followers. Kickapoo Rail Trail has 79 (+6) followers and CCFPD has 444 (+4) followers on Twitter.
- The 2016-2017 Expanding the Classroom was distributed to area schools. The September-October Leaflet was completed and mailed. The September –December Program Guide is available.

**Natural Resources (Mike Daab)**

- Natural Resources staff planted a 7 acre site at Buffalo Trace with winter wheat. This cover crop will help prevent weeds and soil erosion as we prepare to plant the site following the fall 2017 seed collection season.
- NR Technicians continue making the rounds treating seedlings and sprouts of invasive trees and shrubs in areas that have been cleared over the past several years. Some areas have needed an additional mowing due to the extent of sprouting.

- Mike Daab's organizational board work over the past month included helping prepare for mussel surveys and a river clean up, scheduled for September 10, with the Upper Sangamon River Conservancy, as well as helping with the process of hiring a new Coordinator for the Midwest Invasive Plant Network. Additionally, Mike took the lead in submitting a Pulling Together Initiative (PTI) grant application for the Headwaters Invasive Plant Network (HIPP). Mike also wrote a pre-proposal, and now HIPP has been chosen to submit a Full Proposal, for Resource Conservation Partnership Program funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. PTI funding would be used to hire a HIPP coordinator and develop a stronger volunteer stewardship base for managing invasive plants, while RCPP funding would help landowners in the area manage invasive plants on their land through NRCS programs.
- Seed collection is in full swing, with staff collecting from several IL Nature Preserves and railroad rights-of-way for the Kickapoo Rail Trail, as well as collecting from throughout CCFPD sites for Buffalo Trace and Middle Fork prairie restorations.

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

- Illiana Construction Co. completed the 2016 sealcoating project at Lake of the Woods.
- Middle Fork Staff and the Construction Department are nearly complete with repairs to a section of Odle trail that washed out in 2015.

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

- Golf course maintenance continues with irrigation repairs throughout the course.
- Thank you to Doug Sander and his staff for allowing the golf course to use their 4000D rough mower while ours was being repaired.
- Natural Resources staff consulted with the golf course maintenance staff on problematic trees.
- Greens aerification is scheduled for Sept 12th and 13th.
- Increased our Bloomington / Normal advertising efforts with a radio commercial on WBNQ.
- Several golfers mentioned they heard our WDWS radio commercials about the Labor Day pro shop merchandise sale.
- Each fall we host Mahomet Seymour and Judah Christian high school golf teams for play, practice and tournaments. Longtime employee Mark Tate coaches the St Thomas More boys golf team.
- An unusually large number of our seasonal and part time staff took other employment or returned to school early in August. We have added some new hires recently and we will try to finish the season reasonably well.
- Golf Outings: August 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> – Lake of the Woods Mens Club Championship – 19 players; August 9<sup>th</sup> Halpin Foot Golf Outing – 16 players; August 13<sup>th</sup> Jason Smitley Memorial Golf Outing – 96 players; August 27<sup>th</sup> Local #149 Plumbers and Steamfitters Outing – 20 players; August 28<sup>th</sup> Mahomet Christian Church Golf Outing – 48 players

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

- The Smithsonian Water/Ways exhibit ended successfully with an overall 20% increase in daily attendance at the museum. Several programs including, “The Way We Wore,” our swimsuit fashion show, and a community forum on the Mahomet Aquifer were part of the additional programming done to accompany the exhibit. Overall, including adaptations of our regular programming we had 18 water related programs this summer (9 additional).



- About 20 volunteers attended the Department's Volunteer Luncheon in August; we provided food, fun, and a short program about historical bathing suit styles, using the swimsuits from the Water/Ways program.
- Pam Leiter and Barb Garvey worked together to create cultural and natural history signage for the Kickapoo Rail Trail meeting in St Joseph on August 24<sup>th</sup>. Pam represented the department and answered questions about interpretation.
- Pam Leiter participated in a webinar series on graphic design offered by the National Association for Interpretation.
- Barb Garvey attended Certified Interpretive Guide Training at the Cincinnati Nature Center, August 23-26.
- Pam Leiter represented the District's volunteer opportunities at the Master Naturalist welcome dinner on the evening of Aug 17.
- Barb Garvey spoke to the Urbana Exchange Club on September 1 about "What's New in the Museum and Education Department."
- The Museum of the Grand Prairie said goodbye to three UInterns: Chelsea Pokrzywinski, Ryan Wolfslayer and Suzanne Ayers. Chelsea and Ryan worked on processing the Doris Hoskins archive, while Suzanne organized the Education and Programming supplies and improved one of the traveling kits.
- The Museum and Education Department welcomes three new staff members. Katie Snyder, the new Education Program Specialist at the Museum of the Grand Prairie, has taught in Champaign and Urbana Schools for over 20 years and has already begun developing new programs. David Evans, formerly a Seasonal Naturalist, has now taken the part-time permanent position of Interpretive Naturalist in the Department. HLIC also welcomes Jennifer Wick as our Seasonal Naturalist; she will be helping with programming and other duties during our busy fall season.
- The frog call season has ended; Chelsey Walsh, with the help of volunteers, is compiling data. Many thanks to Chelsey for taking a lead on this project this year due to the recent turnover in the volunteer department.
- Many thanks to Ender & Isabella Howard for their substantial donation in the HLIC's donation box.

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

- As part of the 2016 equipment budget, the department has received the F450 1-ton truck and Quality Truck and Equipment has installed the snow plow accessories. The old 1-ton truck has been transferred back to the golf course maintenance department.
- Doug Sanders renewed his CPRP certification through NRPA. To maintain this certification, 2.0 hours of CEUs are required every two years. Sanders accumulated 3.1 hours of CEUs this past cycle. He has held his CPRP certification since 1999.
- The department is currently working with the Regional Planning Commission to recruit part-time staff through their Work Experience Program (WEX). This program allows young adults between the ages of 16 – 24 to gain valuable work experience and possibly future job placement. The program is part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.



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

- We hosted the August all staff meeting at the Salt Fork Center.
- Unusual for this time of year, we are still mowing every week when we would typically be able to skip a week to get other things done.

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

- We have been in contact with the Lincoln's Challenge Academy discussing the fall and volunteer schedule. The teams will begin in September running through mid-November.
- Work continues with the Dark Sky certification at Middle Fork. Jon Hasselbring and I are researching street light and parking lot lighting alternatives for next year's budget and smaller inexpensive fixtures are now being replaced throughout the preserve.
- Several tile holes have been repaired at Middle Fork, mostly located near or around the Pt. Pleasant area. A major tile break located at the North Waterfowl is still under review. This tile is a secondary source of water for the waterfowl area.

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

- Kristin Tetzlaff began working for the District on August 22. Her past relevant work includes managing volunteer students at Bloomsburg University in PA and creating the first formal volunteer program at Naples Zoo in FL.
  - She has begun meeting with staff throughout the district to identify needs and learn more about how volunteers have been utilized historically.
  - She is compiling a master list of where we advertise our volunteer needs externally and outside organizations we regularly work with.
  - She has signed up for a trial account to adopt an online-based volunteer record system, Volgistics, for the District.