

October 11, 2016

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**Executive Director (Dan Olson)**

- A total of seven staff members and one Commissioner attended the National Recreation and Park Association's annual conference in St. Louis. Please see individual reports for details on educational sessions. The conference will be held in New Orleans next year and Indianapolis in 2018.
- Staff has been working with and welcoming Fran Bell, HR Generalist, to get her up to speed on all aspects of the District. Fran is joining us at a very important time for the HR Generalist as we compile the budget, look at health insurance options, begin the next round of evaluations, and work on a compensation policy for 2017.
- We concluded the second part of orientation with new Commissioner Bill Goodman. Finalizing the orientation after board members have been through some meetings has proven to be a more efficient way to do orientation.
- I was very impressed with the staff and volunteers at this year's River to Rail Ride. Everyone worked well together. Things went very smoothly and there were many compliments from the participants. The weather was very cooperative.
- Other meetings of interest: I attended a local director's meeting with a single topic of infrastructure changes; The IPRA meeting social event at the Virginia Theatre; A meeting with the Urbana Champaign Sanitary District to plan improvements within an existing easement; The Champaign County Environmental and Land use Committee to update them on the KRT and to discuss a potential county-wide burn ban; and The C-U Urbanized Area Transportation Study group.
- I have not recommended or approved any changes to the capital projects or capital equipment list this month. Therefore September's board packet draft recommendation of capital remains the same for this month.

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

- On October 9, Peter Davis and Champaign Cycle sponsored another bike ride, the Pumpkin Pie Ride. Beautiful fall weather brought out 112 riders for a 30-mile ride beginning and ending at the Museum of the Grand Prairie. Not originally planned as a fundraiser but rather as a way to introduce cyclists to the bike paths at Lake of the Woods and Mahomet, Peter did raise more than \$200 which he will donate to the KRT.
- The sessions I attended at the NRPA conference focused primarily on leadership, fundraising, and cost recovery. More detail about the sessions will be forthcoming next month.

**Administration (John Baker)**

- Thankful to be back in the office full-time, feeling good and up to the task after my hospital adventure. Enjoying getting back in the garden during my spare time, though harvest is past, and only clean up remains!
- Received the annual estimate of the District's equalized assessed valuation. Based on this information we expect the District will realize an increase of approximately \$90,000 in property tax revenues.
- Requested department heads to double-check their 2017 operating budgets, to ensure budget accuracy.

- Received and entered proposed 2017 rates for health and dental insurance in Budget Planning database.
- Updated proposed capital projects based on supervisor feedback and reviewed funding for each project. Updated budget database to include capital projects and equipment and technology requests.
- Updated District computer inventory for determining 2017 computers due for replacement.
- Updated and presented compensation scenarios to the compensation committee.
- Prepared tentative tax levy ordinance #16-3 based on budget submissions received and upon projected cash balances for affected District funds.
- Secured \$1.17 per gallon propane pricing for the 2016-2017 winter season for Homer Lake, Lake of the Woods pavilions and remote restrooms, Headquarters, and Golf Course Maintenance.
- Worked with USBank to establish an account for Champaign County property tax transfers and federal grant payments. Presently CCFPD's two investment accounts do not allow locally or federally-initiated cash transfers into their accounts. Establishing the new account is a means of getting around this problem and ensuring that all monies are fully collateralized as soon as they are deposited.
- Responded to FOIA request on District purchasing activity. Presented draft Foundation budget at the October 11 FPF meeting, after discussions with staff.

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

- I attended both the Illinois Bike Summit and NRPA Annual Meeting. I attended session at both conferences focusing on the use of social media in marketing and fundraising. I will include a more detailed listing about the sessions next month.
- Social media update: on Facebook CCFPD has 1,506 (+47) followers; Lake of the Woods Golf Course has 735 (+3); Kickapoo Rail Trail has 1,271 (+38); Museum of the Grand Prairie has 755 (+9). Homer Lake Interpretive Center 103 likes (+4). CCFPD has 254 (+10) Instagram followers. Kickapoo Rail Trail has 81 (+2) followers and CCFPD has 445 (+1) followers on Twitter.
- Hibu/Yellowbook will use this photo for the cover of the 2017 Champaign/Urbana Directory. I took this picture in 2013.



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

- Mike Daab attended the IL Monarch Butterfly Summit in Springfield. The Summit featured a cross-section of professionals interested in the plight of the Monarch, including individuals from natural resource management, agriculture, business, education, rights-of-way management and more. Attendees brainstormed ideas on how we can all

contribute to increase Monarch populations to keep the species from being listed as Federally Endangered.

- Mike Daab submitted full proposals for funding for the Headwaters Invasive Plant Partnership (HIPP), including a request for secured funding for area agricultural producers to include conservation practices through the NRCS's Resource Conservation Partnership Program, and a request to hire a Coordinator for HIPP in order to manage the group and get more volunteer stewards working in our natural areas.
- All Natural Resources staff participated in the iHelp/National Public Lands Day seed collection event at Buffalo Trace. We collected seed from both the east and west end prairies areas with approximately 50 volunteers from the University of Illinois. (see photo)
- We have hired Rachel Bohmbach, May 2016 U of I Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences graduate, to fill a seasonal position for the remainder of 2016.



- Mike Daab traveled to the Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge to participate in the Volunteer Stewardship Network's (VSN) Network for Nature event. Participants learned about the latest information and resources available for volunteers in IL. We also received stewardship tools awarded through a VSN grant, including fire rakes, clip-and-hold pruners for seed collection, and "parsnip predator" shovels for weed management.
- NR staff continues to harvest seed as it becomes available. We are in the middle of seed collection season now, with some seed no longer available, and some plants still in flower. Staff and volunteer seed collection will continue through October.



- Mike Daab participated in the Upper Sangamon River Conservancy's Sangamon River Cleanup. The cleanup crew departed from Lake of the Woods and paddled to the Route 47 crossing on the south side of Mahomet, where a dumpster awaited for the collected trash.

- Mike Daab attended the Champaign County Sustainability Practitioners meeting hosted by the

Champaign County Regional Planning Commission. The primary topic of note was Parkland College's desire to develop a curriculum related to the effective stewardship of sustainable landscape elements. Mike Daab has offered to work with Parkland staff to develop a program that could be used by District Operational staff to learn best

management practices for mowing, tree and shrub care, invasive management, etc. This work will overlap with the Strategic Plan Mid-Term Initiative: Operational Excellence, Objective 1 - Implement internal education about best operational practices for protecting natural resources.

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

- Middle Fork Staff and the Construction Department have completed repairs to a section of the Odle trail that washed out. Please see a photo of the completed project below.
- The Construction crew has nearly completed two projects at Homer Lake. Phase 2 of the overflow spillway / sailboat launch project continues to make progress with the installation of accessible parking stalls, ramps, fishing piers, and a naturalized shoreline. Also, a new accessible concrete walk is being installed at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center to alleviate ongoing ponding water issues across the building's main entrance. Photos of these two projects are below.
- Jon H. attended the Illinois Bike Summit and visited the Constitution Trail in Bloomington, IL. Jon also attended the National Recreation and Park Association conference in St. Louis. While in STL, CCFPD and Urbana Park District staff visited the Katy Trail as well as multiple trails, trailheads, and parks with the Metro East Park District. These site visits were completed ahead of upcoming master planning efforts for the Kickapoo Rail Trail.





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

- Mike Daab arranged for Mike Poor Arborist to take down two trees on the golf course.
- Fall fairway seeding is complete. The seed is germinating and starting to spread.
- Fairway aerification is beginning along with leaf blowing and removal.
- The golf course and botanical garden's irrigation systems will be winterized Nov. 8th.

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

- The Museum and Education Department welcomes Jennifer Grove, our new registrar. Jennifer has a degree in Anthropology and Museum Studies from the University of Illinois and has worked for the last four years in the Collections Department at the Spurlock Museum.

- The final report for the Smithsonian Water/Ways exhibit and programs was submitted on September 12, 2016.
- In planning for the renovation of the Discovery Room, museum staff have devised, and promoted through Facebook, a survey to poll current users about their favorite aspects.
- School programs are well underway, with much of September dedicated to the interdisciplinary, all day program, *Prairie Adventures*. In addition, about 120 Edison Middle School 6<sup>th</sup> graders came out to Homer Lake for their third year of an all day Pond Life program. In early October Jefferson Middle School brought out about 120 students for two days as well.
- The Education Fund programming for Eastlawn elementary in Rantoul went well. We will be scheduling them for this April for the *Exploring Your Own Backyard* program
- Enjoying success this month was a new program at the Museum of the Grand Prairie, *Botanical Illustration for Beginners*.
- A new pondless waterfall was donated to the HLIC by Chris' Water Gardens; it is a beautiful addition to our wildlife viewing area!
- Many thanks to the Construction crew and Homer Lake Operations for their work installing a new sidewalk leading up to the Interpretive Center! The new sidewalk will no longer collect several inches of water during rainstorms, and has been widened so that it will be more usable by visitors and groups.



- The Environmental Education Association of Illinois (EEAI), of which Stacey Clementz is the current President, is being awarded the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Outstanding Affiliate of the Year award. She will be accepting the award on behalf of EEAI at the upcoming NAAEE conference in Madison, Wisconsin.
- Katie Riopelle attended the American Association for State and Local History conference in Detroit Michigan. She presented information about Museum Mondays in a panel session entitled "Don't Forget Us! Serving Sometimes Forgotten Audiences."
- Pam Leiter participated in a webinar offered by NRPA called *What Parks and Recreation can do About Equity*, served as a beta tester for the Eppley e-course *Interpretation for Diverse Audiences*, and attended the seminar *Long-term Trends in Midwestern Milkweeds and their Relevance for Monarchs*.
- Mark Hanson delivered a presentation on Hazardous Materials in Museum collections at our department meeting as part of our PDRMA training.

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

- Staff finished removing the sand and wooden border from the Rotary Hill Playground. To level off the area we tilled the dirt crown buildup around the board. Plans are to let this area settle and seed in the spring. Approximately 20-25 tons of sand was removed and will be used this winter on roads and for future construction projects.
- On September 24, Michael Dale supervised approximately 20 volunteers from the iHelp group. They worked in the botanical garden mulching along the bike path, deadheading plants, painting pumpkins, and general cleanup. The iHelp group is made up of University of Illinois students that donate their time to improve the surrounding communities.
- In the spirit of the fall season, staff assembled several decorative displays around LOW. These displays are made up of materials mainly grown in the in the Discovery Garden (i.e. pumpkins, gourds, Indian corn). New this year is concrete grave markers that were made in-house with says such as “Welcome to the Garden, Lake of the Woods, and Happy Halloween.”

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

- Brian attended the Illinois Bike Summit in Bloomington and attended sessions that covered topics from the history of bikes in Illinois to bike laws, and how to construct and maintain soft surface trails.
- Brian has been working with an Eagle Scout who is doing a project to improve the West Lake trail.
- The Sail Boat Launch project is nearing completion. Visitors have complimented staff on how nice it’s looking.

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

- I was able to attend NRPA Conference in St. Louis this year with several other co-workers.
- The culvert repair project located on the north end of the property has been finished. Many thanks to the construction crew with helping finish the project this fall.
- The campground hosts have finished their season at the campground. They did a wonderful job helping while operations staff stayed busy with several construction projects this year.
- Middle Fork hosted the third annual River to Rail Ride to help fundraise for the Rail Trail. It was a beautiful day for bike riding, and we had a great staff effort to help have a successful event.

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

- Volgistics, the online volunteer tracking database, has been purchased for the District. This system will be rolled out in waves beginning with the board, then past volunteers, and finally new volunteers.
- An updated list of “active” volunteers has been compiled and proofed by staff familiar with the volunteer pool. This list will be used to share the new system with once we are ready.
- Kristin attended meetings for committees/boards in which this position is active – Freedom Fest and Master Naturalists.