

December 8, 2017

MEMORANDUM

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

Interim Director/Grants (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- Along with John Baker and Mike Daab, I attended the IAPD Legal Symposium in early November. As usual it was a highly informative day, with sessions covering new laws from the 100th General Assembly, cyber security, private use of bond financed park facilities, and labor/employment updates.
- In cooperation with Visit Champaign County, 3Disciplines Racing, a Michigan-based non-profit that puts on competitive race events throughout the country, will be holding a full-length triathlon at Lake of the Woods on the weekend of September 22-23, 2018. The open water lake swim and running route will take place within the preserve, while the bike portion will cover the rural roads surrounding it. Mahomet Police and Cornbelt Fire will manage public safety for the event.
- The Dark Sky Park project received a \$5,000 grant from the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois to continue the purchase and installation of energy-efficient, fully shielded roadway lights to replace aging fixtures at Middle Fork. This grant supports the work that staff, the CAC, and the C-U Astronomical Society have been doing to achieve provisional status, and eventually full designation, for Middle Fork as the first Dark Sky Park in Illinois.
- At an all-staff meeting on November 29, we recognized the following staff for their years of service: Jake Pruiett, Doug Sanders, Lisa Sprinkle, Betty Strom, and Gretchen Winkler (5 years); Angie Clayton and John Baker (10 years); and Sandy Osborne (21 years), Brian Decker (22 years), Roy Woodmansee (25 years), Brian Taylor (26 years), and Tom Pike (37 years).
- On behalf of the District, we would like to extend our thanks and good wishes to two employees who will be leaving us at the end of December. Arnold Blair is retiring after seven years as part-time payroll assistant in the Finance Department, and Dave Torrens will be leaving for the warmth of Arizona after 16 years as director of golf. We will miss them both and wish them all the best.
- Two recent pieces of correspondence are attached at the end of this staff report.

Administration (John Baker)

- Coordinated finalizing the 2018 budget to achieve a balanced operating budget and address the most critical capital project needs. Updated projections to confirm availability of District funds beyond the reserve for addressing large capital project and equipment expenditures discussed in the October study session.
- Distributed tentative appropriation ordinance #2017-03 for public review throughout Champaign County and posted notice of the appropriation public hearing in the News-Gazette.
- Updated all projected 2017 expenses and revenues with information from department heads and worked with them on year-end purchasing activities.

- Reviewed the IMRF projected fund balance for 2017 and cash flow for 2018 to determine to what extent the District could afford to make an additional pension contribution for employees. Budget savings will allow for a \$45,000 contribution this year.
- Reviewed 2017 projected expenses against the 2017 appropriations as approved by Board ordinance last year. All projection expense totals are well within the appropriation limits so that no Board transfer action is necessary this year to address expenditures exceeding an appropriation limit.
- Attended PDRMA's Risk Management Institute, IAPD's Legal Symposium, and webinars on OSHA reporting standards and IMRF's Funding Policy.
- Received and again reviewed the Office of Recreation and Park Resources contract for the Kickapoo Rail Trail Study. Staff expects that the contract will be finalized before year's end.
- Issued year-end closing instructions for departments and employees on purchasing, payroll, and deposit transactions and explained which year-end costs belong to the 2017 fiscal year (accruals) versus the 2018 fiscal year (prepaids).
- Filed the 2018 tax levy with the county clerk.
- Paid the 2017 principal and interest due on the 2011 bond issue that funded the Museum Collections and Education Classroom addition.
- Replaced six automated external defibrillators (AED) to replace those that were beyond their "use by" date. All District AEDs are now current.
- Initiated a voluntary Holiday Hike wellness incentive for employees using mileage between various US natural features for distance parameters.
- The United Way Combined Charities drive wrapped up with an increase in District employee participation from six last year to fourteen employee donors this year.
- Conducted employee orientation for new Natural Resources, Lake of the Woods, and Administration employees. Tammy Abramson began work November 13 and is receiving training (payroll processing, month end reconciliation and journaling) from Arnold Blair prior to his retirement December 18.
- The Emergency Response Guide review process continued. After the safety committee received final comments from supervisors, the booklet is now in final form and is being printed for distribution to employees.

Human Resources (Fran Bell)

- Human Resources has coordinated or assisted with several all-staff events during the past month.
 - A ½ day all-staff meeting was held on November 29th. The focus of the meeting was to provide staff with highlights of the previous year and/or a preview of the upcoming year at the District. Topics included the 2018 budget, compensation, and capital projects as well as updates from the Safety Committee and the Sustainability Committee. In addition, staff were recognized for years of service at 5 year intervals as well as staff who had served the District for more than 20 years.



- The annual staff winter holiday potluck was held on December 6th. Human Resources assisted in publicizing the event. Lisa Sprinkle and Angie Clayton did a fantastic job in planning and hosting the event. Approximately 50 staff members attended and enjoyed a wonderful luncheon.
- Open enrollment for 2018 employee benefits began on December 1, 2017. Human Resources provided all employees with information on the benefit plans and how to enroll during the all-staff meeting on November 29. Employees were encouraged to visit Human Resources during open enrollment for questions or to receive assistance with enrollment. Open enrollment ended December 15, 2017.
- Human Resources has been working with supervisors and department heads to revise all the District job descriptions as part of the annual performance appraisal process. During the revision process, Human Resources is ensuring that all job descriptions are consistent and follow best practices. Approximately 50% of the job descriptions for all full-time and part-time positions have been reviewed. The goal is to have all job descriptions revised, with signed copies placed in personnel files, by March 2018.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Social media update: on Facebook CCFPD has 1,948 (+22) followers; Lake of the Woods Golf Course has 947 (+62); Kickapoo Rail Trail has 2,296 (+13); Museum of the Grand Prairie has 1,197 (+10). Homer Lake Interpretive Center 201 likes (+11). CCFPD has 414 (+9) Instagram followers, Museum of the Grand Prairie has 187 (+54) followers. Kickapoo Rail Trail has 98 (+0) followers and CCFPD has 469 (+0) followers on Twitter. Lake of the Woods Golf Course just started an Instagram page, which has 81 followers, and a Twitter page with 46 followers.
- The 2018 fundraising goals were debuted on Giving Tuesday, November 28. This year's emphasis was KRT amenities, International Dark Sky Park designation at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve and habitat restoration throughout the District. We raised more than \$1,700 on Giving Tuesday.
- The final Leaflet of 2017 was sent the first week of December to nearly 5,000 homes and businesses. In addition to information about upcoming educational programs, the Leaflet also contained the Foundation's year-end *Nature's Appeal*. A complete accounting will be provided in January.

Planning and Construction Department (Jon Hasselbring and Mike Fry)

- Scott Tess, City of Urbana Environmental Sustainability Manager, presented at the all-staff meeting on Wednesday, November 29. Scott's presentation focused on energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities. The CCFPD Sustainability Committee will continue to consult with Scott to research opportunities for the District to improve energy efficiency and utilize renewable energy.

- The Construction Department completed a remodeling project at the golf course residence, which included the installation of Energy Star rated windows.
- The Construction crew finished pouring a new concrete ramp and handicap accessible parking space at the Middle Fork Activity Center. These items were addressed as part of the CCFPD Accessibility Transition Plan.
- Construction also completed a variety of small projects, including the removal of a door between the Executive Director's and HR Generalist's offices for increased privacy, the construction of an oversized Adirondack chair to be used in the Botanical Garden, and rewiring electrical supply to the Middle Fork Activity Center.

Natural Resources (Mike Daab)

- The Natural Resources Department welcomes Peter Goodspeed, our new Natural Resources Specialist. Peter has a B.S. in Biology from Wake Forest University, and a M.S. in Natural Resources and Environment: Conservation Ecology from the University of Michigan. Seasonal work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Cardno JF New, and the NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab have also given Peter good experience to bring into his new role at CCFPD.
- Michael Daab attended the IPRA Legal Symposium at Hamburger University in November. Valuable information was given on topics such as information technology safety and liability and laws affecting park and forest preserve operations.
- We have conducted prescribed burns at Tomlinson Cemetery, River Bend Forest Preserve, and Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve this fall. Weather has cooperated to make this one of our more successful fall burning seasons in recent years.
- NR field staff spent two days working at Tomlinson Cemetery removing old fence and reducing the ever-expanding hazelnut patches.
- Winter clearing of invasive trees and shrubs has begun. First on the list was an area along the multi-use path at River Bend Forest Preserve.
- We have been working with certified arborists to remove hazardous trees at the Lake of the Woods Golf Course and Homer Lake Forest Preserve.

Lake of the Woods Golf Course (Dave Torrens and Chris Edmondson)

- We had 687 players in the month of November, which is about average compared to the past 5 years. This number is actually very good when you consider that only 17 of the 30 days were considered "playable". The early portion of the month was plagued by cold temperatures and some rain. But the month finished with lots of sun and unseasonably warm temperatures! The golf course closed for the season, due to weather, on Tuesday, December 5. We had 254 players from December 1-4 ... the weather was phenomenal!
- We ran a "Black Friday" Season Pass Special again this year. We promoted this through social media and radio advertising, with David Sebestik lending his voice for another commercial. This was a one-day special that drove customers to our website on Black Friday, where they would find a form to fill out and subsequently bring in to the course with payment by the end of November. The special was \$50 off of a 2018 Season Pass. This year we sold 66 season passes as a result of this special. This is compared to 42 in 2016. Also, of these 66, twelve were to new pass holders.

- The Golf Simulators are up and running in the Clubhouse. Our 2-person Simulator league began the week of November 27. This is a twelve-week league, in which each team schedules a time throughout the week to come in and play that week's round. Course and conditions are preset by the staff and we also handle scoring and prizes. Through greater promotion, we were able to get 26 teams in the league this season. In the 5 years of play, the most we have had in a league is 14 teams. We are very excited about this increase and interest level in the simulators.
- David Sebestik and Chris Edmondson met with Lisa Sprinkle on December 5 to discuss marketing strategies for 2018.
- Chris completed his recertification of the BASSET Program in November. This is certification for "Responsible Serving of Alcohol" and needs to be renewed every 3 years. David Sebestik and Nick Berger will be working on their certification in the near future.
- We purchased a launch monitor that will greatly increase our productivity and accuracy when giving golf lessons. It will allow David and Nick to get immediate feedback and exact readings of distances, dispersions, etc., when the player hits a shot on the driving range, allowing for better diagnosis of swing deficiencies.
- Below are some of the community outreach programs we have scheduled for 2018:
 - Scheduled a PE golf class at the Mahomet-Seymour Junior High in the spring.
 - Scheduled several PE golf classes at Lincoln Trail Elementary in the winter using our new *Starting New at Golf* (SNAG) equipment.
 - Joined the B.L.A.S.T. after school program to teach golf from April 2 – May 3, twice a week at Lincoln Trail. We plan to use the new SNAG equipment.
 - Joined Mahomet Rec's Sampler Camp in July. This is a five-day camp that does a different sport/activity each day. Again, we plan to use the new SNAG equipment.

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

- David Evans researched and implemented enrichment activities for the educational animals at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center.
- Pam Leiter updated the turtles exhibit to one about Great Blue Herons in a case at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center.
- Pam updated and redesigned the self-guided trail brochures for Homer Lake Interpretive Center this month.
- Barb Garvey participated, as a member of the Lincoln Legacy Committee, in the Bicentennial Event at the Champaign County Courthouse. After a short program a high quality reproduction of an Alexander Hesler portrait of Abraham Lincoln was dedicated by the state historian. Directly thereafter the bicentennial flag was flown.
- Families in the Forest (Homer Lake Interpretive Center) and to Grandmother's House We Go (Museum of the Grand Prairie) were very well attended this year.
- Mark Hanson, Curator at the museum, gave a lecture, "Turned Loose: Chanute Field and World War I Pilot Training," on November 12 at the MGP.
- Also opening that day was one of four World War I exhibits which will run throughout 2018, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War. This

exhibit is entitled, “Learning to Fly: The Creation of Chanute Field.” Megan McCoy, volunteer, co-curated this exhibit with Mark Hanson.



- Barb Garvey and Jan Adams designed a 50th Anniversary logo for the museum based on the Museum and Education Department’s purple, green, and orange logo.
- The Construction Department installed additional weather stripping on the newly refinished/refurbished front and back doors of the museum to assist in preventing leakage and pests.
- The Museum Store launched a 20% off promotion linked to becoming a friend of the museum through Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter.
- Our final Lincoln lecture by Guy Fraker, on the 8th Judicial Circuit was very well attended, and the book signing that accompanied it was a boon for our Museum Store. Guy helped to promote the book and the museum by getting a spot on Jim Turpin’s *A Penny for your Thoughts*.

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

- OPS and NR staff finalized tree removal with the 65’ lift at LOW. This work consisted of removing 20 unhealthy ashes and pine trees near buildings and powerlines. In addition, several limbs on healthy trees were trimmed and gutters were cleaned. Staff are now in the process of stump removal and turf repair. Later this winter, we will enter phase two of tree removal, addressing trees that do not require the lift.
- A&R Electric replaced the exterior electric lines at the Sangamon River residence. These lines provide power to the cold storage shed and security light. In addition, a lightning arrester was installed on the main panel of the residence. This will hopefully absorb future lightning strikes.
- Michael Dale and staff put out holiday decorations at the main entrances, headquarters, golf course clubhouse, and other facilities. These decorations consist of snowmen and deer made from limbs trimmed in the Botanical Garden. They also have a few potted arrangements and a festive tree in the garden gazebo.
- The annual Christmas tree recycling lot has been set up near the entrance to the maintenance complex for the public.

Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- It was unusual that we were still mowing grass at the same time that we began winterizing facilities.
- Kristin had a workshop at the Salt Fork Center for those interested in becoming volunteers for the Kickapoo Rail Trail. I was glad to see many new faces and a few who have been volunteers with us for some time. I had the opportunity to express how important their role is and how much it is appreciated.

Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- Middle Fork staff has started removing ash trees from user areas throughout the preserve. We marked over 40 trees which we deemed hazardous to the public, mostly in the campground and campsite areas.
- Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative finished the Phase II electrical infrastructure project. Middle Fork and Construction staff assisted with this project.
- Work continues on the Phase III electrical infrastructure project, with the campground expansion included. I have been working with the Illinois Department of Public Health to provide updates and get feedback on this project. IDPH will provide final approval once work is completed.
- The Activity Center sidewalk and entry approach project has been completed. The new sidewalk now conforms to ADA standards.

Kickapoo Rail Trail (All)

- Homer Lake staff has finished mowing the edges of the KRT with its new sickle bar mower. The trail appears much wider now that vegetation is cut back and no longer leans in towards the trail.
- On November 18, Kristin held a Kickapoo Rail Trail Stewardship training at Homer Lake. We had eleven volunteers attend the training meaning that we have coverage, including some overlap, of the entire KRT. From this training, we have already received four reports from folks patrolling the trail. Trash and lost and found items were the most common reports, but we have had some folks prune back branches that they thought may be a riding hazard. So far, they seem to be a very engaged and detail orientated group. It was proposed that a collection site for lost and found items be somewhere in downtown St. Joseph. We are waiting to hear back on an approved location.
- As a follow up to the November meeting in St. Joseph, staff held a KRT public open house at Rose Library in Ogden on December 5. Staff in attendance included Brian Taylor, Mike Daab, Lisa Sprinkle, and Mary Ellen Wuellner. This is the first introduction to the KRT for Ogden residents in preparation for the Phase 2b design work that will begin soon. Fourteen residents attended the meeting with questions about trail surface, tree removal, property access, and safety. At least one additional meeting will be held in Ogden prior to any trail construction.
- The Balloons over Vermilion festival granted \$25,000 to the Vermilion County Conservation Foundation for that county's first KRT phase. Construction on a 2.2 mile trail section near Oakwood could begin in the summer of 2018.

Volunteers (Kristin Tetzlaff)

- On December 6, I hosted a Q and A training session for volunteers who were having trouble with the online system. This was not very well-attended, but the volunteers in attendance had good questions and I think got the clarification they were looking for. I plan on hosting an additional training for the online system in the spring after returning from my maternity leave at a different time that may accommodate more volunteers.