

January 8, 2018

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Lisa Sprinkle, Marketing Coordinator

Re: January Staff Report

Interim Director/Grants (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- The News-Gazette ran two very informative back-to-back articles about the proposed Dark Sky Park project on January 5 and 6. Tracy Crane, the paper's outdoors writer, met with David Leake from the C-U Astronomical Society and CCFPD's Lisa Sprinkle and Matt Kuntz at Middle Fork to view the newly installed light fixtures and discuss the project. An article by Rob Kanter about the effects of artificial nighttime light on nature should be forthcoming.
- On January 10, the Friends Foundation submitted a grant letter of intent to fund the next step in the Point Pleasant wetland restoration plan. If we are selected, the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation would match each dollar raised by our foundation, up to \$7,000, with \$3 in grant funds. The triple-match funds would cover engineering work necessary to address hydrological fluctuations that disturb the wetland's natural processes. Stream re-meandering and agricultural tile modifications, without adversely affecting adjacent farmland, would be part of the engineered solution.
- About a dozen people have signed up so far for September's Lake of the Woods Triathlon, sponsored by 3Disciplines and Visit Champaign County. With many months to go before the event, organizers are pleased with this early registration number. Most people wait until much closer to the event to register.
- I have been working with Fran Bell to review job responsibilities at both headquarters and the Golf Course in light of recent open positions to identify opportunities to increase efficiency and best meet workload demands.

Administration (John Baker)

- Implemented year end closing procedures in our MSI financial system and set up the new year financial balances and codes for financial reporting.
- Made \$45,000 additional IMRF pension contribution as approved by the Board in December.
- Filed the 2018 budget and appropriation ordinances with the County Clerk and posted on the District website along with the 2017 pay 2018 tax levy.
- Posted the approved 2018 budget in our financial database and on the District website, and posted departmental budgets along with the total 2018 budget for supervisor use.
- While paychecks were accurately processed, staff is working with Paylocity on two leave issues. First, a glitch in the system inaccurately reset a few employees' sick leave balances to zero at year end. Second, the new floating holiday leave is not accurately reporting employee available balances. Staff manually corrected the sick leave balance for employees affected by the first glitch but are waiting for Paylocity to fix the holiday leave balance reporting.
- Prepared the Open Meetings Act compensation report with 2018 wages and benefits and posted on the District website.
- Reviewed District W2s prior to their issuance by Paylocity. Began reviewing 1099 requirements and their applicability to District vendors in preparation for 1099 issuance.
- Reviewed and approved the bond counsel agreement with Chapman Cutler for the 2018 bond issuance. Depending on when the official Consumer Price Index is issued, the 2018 bond ordinance may come to the Board at the January or February Board meetings. The bond

ordinance must be approved before the end of February for the bond levy to apply to 2017 property taxes paid to the District this year.

- Reviewed and approved the 2018 Health Alliance contract.
- Began issuing 2017 audit tasks to administration and other employees in preparation for the audit field work and to give a full and accurate picture of District finances and obligations as of December 31, 2017. Met with new golf supervisors to discuss the audit review as it relates to the Golf Fund.
- Attended the Government Finance Officer Association workshop on preparing the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the District Audit.
- Received a \$1500 cash award from PDRMA in recognition of District loss prevention efforts and PDRMA accreditation.

Human Resources (Fran Bell)

- Following the December approval of the 2018 Pay Scale and Compensation Plan, Human Resources prepared and sent compensation letters to all full-time and part-time staff. In addition, wage increases were processed in the payroll system to be effective for the first pay cycle of 2018.
- Open enrollment for 2018 benefits ended on December 15, 2017. Human Resources reviewed all enrollment materials for accuracy and sent enrollment materials to various benefit vendors. Human Resources updated all benefit deductions in the payroll system based on open enrollment changes submitted by employees.
- Human Resources, in preparation for seasonal hiring to begin in February, provided supervisors with information regarding the hiring process. Three seasonal positions have already been posted for the 2018 seasonal hiring cycle.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Social media update: on Facebook CCFPD has 1,954 (+6) followers; Lake of the Woods Golf Course has 947 (+1); Kickapoo Rail Trail has 2,308 (+12); Museum of the Grand Prairie has 1,218 (+21). Homer Lake Interpretive Center 216 likes (+15). CCFPD has 427 (+13) Instagram followers, Museum of the Grand Prairie has 209 (+22) followers and Lake of the Woods Golf Course 93 (+12) followers. Kickapoo Rail Trail has 100 (+2) followers, CCFPD has 475 (+6) followers, and Lake of the Woods Golf Course has 47 (+1) followers on Twitter.
- Recruitment for the Illinois Marathon is ongoing. Marianne Lippi from the CAC attended the training kickoff event at Body N'Sole to inform runners that the KRT is a Charity Running Partner. She talked with 10 attendees about running for the KRT. We also ran an ad [shown here] in Second Wind Running Club's January newsletter.
- Matt Kuntz, David Leake and I met with Tracy Crane from News-Gazette to talk about the Dark Sky Park project at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve. The article was published on the front cover of the News Gazette on Friday, January 5.

Run for the trail!

In 2018 the Kickapoo Rail Trail is teaming up with the Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon as a charity running partner to add more miles to the trail. We'd love you to consider running for the KRT!

CHRISTIE CLINIC | ILLINOIS marathon | FOREST PRESERVE FRIENDS FOUNDATION CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

www.ccfpd.org/KRT

Planning and Construction Department (Jon Hasselbring and Mike Fry)

- The Planning Department, together with Middle Fork staff and Construction, has completed plans for Phase 3 of the electrical infrastructure improvements at Middle Fork. Work will commence as weather allows.
- Planning is underway with construction documents for the Headquarters reroof project and Botanical Garden pond & waterfall reconstruction. Plans will be issued for bidding in February.
- The Construction crew has begun work related to the secure storage room in the headquarters basement. [Pictured left.]
- Construction repaired weather-stripping and door seals at the Museum.



Natural Resources (Mike Daab)

- The Natural Resources Department welcomes Emily Williams as our newest Natural Resource Technician. Emily has been working with us as a seasonal since October, 2017. She has a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a concentration in Ecology, Conservation, and Environmental Biology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and has spent field seasons in California and Florida with AmeriCorps.
- We wish Brad Nelson well, as he departs the Natural Resources department after over 3 years as a Technician with us.
- Mike Daab, along with Matt Kuntz, attended the Champaign County Farm Bureau-hosted Landowner Workshop on December 13th. The morning was full of information regarding the intersection of conservation and agriculture in our area.
- Natural Resources staff, assisted by LOW Operations, is working to get donated Christmas trees onto the ice at the lakes of River Bend for fish habitat.
- As the acting Chair of the Headwaters Invasive Plant Partnership, Mike Daab wrote an application for funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Resource Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). HIPP has been awarded \$436,000 for use toward our proposed project. The RCPP award listing follows:
 - **Illinois Headwaters Conservation Partnership**
Proposed NRCS Investment: \$436,000 (State)
Lead Partner: Headwaters Invasive Plant Partnership
Number of Initial Partners: 12
Participating States: Illinois (Lead State)
The Headwaters Invasive Plant Partnership (HIPP) was formed to address the threat of invasive plants in conservation areas across jurisdictional boundaries in east central Illinois. Healthy forests and prairies are essential for reducing soil erosion, protecting water quality and reversing pollinator decline. Much of the conservation land covered by HIPP is held for public use through ownership by government entities or non-profit organizations, but private landholders must be engaged in order to reduce the impact of invasive plants. By providing

technical knowledge and financial assistance, this project will help ensure that private and public landowners are more effectively working together to implement best management practices across the landscape.

- Michael Daab also led the application process for a grant of \$75,000 that has been awarded to HIPP through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Pulling Together Initiative. Through the Pulling Together Initiative, the Headwaters Invasive Plant Partnership (HIPP) will accelerate the current invasive plant education and management efforts of a young cooperative weed management area (CWMA) into a high performing CWMA. The outcomes of this project will include: a further developed CWMA, complete with strategic and operating plans, established committees, a paid, part-time coordinator, and increased media presence; creation of a network for prevention, early detection, and rapid response (EDRR); and a network of trained volunteers available to assist land managers with ecological restoration projects.

Lake of the Woods Golf Course (Chris Edmondson)

- We were open for play outside for 9 days in the month of December and had 345 players. We closed for the season outdoors on December 22nd (after reopening on December 17th). Looking at the past five years, we had no play in December in three of those years and approximately 350 players the other two years.
- With play slowing and coming to an end outside, the play on the Simulators has really increased. Our league play continues weekly and we are seeing several new players, along with high school teams and individual lessons continuing to fill the Simulator tee sheet daily. The Simulators open at 8:00 a.m. daily and are usually filled until at least 6:00 p.m. each evening.
- We have just concluded our year-end merchandise inventory. Staff is now focused on getting all of our 2018 information up to date. We have secured all sponsorships for 2018, which include 18-Hole Scorecard advertisers: Bankco Overhead Door, Busey Bank, Remax Realty, JT Walker's Restaurant and Brewery; Par 3/Footgolf Scorecard Advertiser: Sunset Landscaping; and Driving Range Sponsors: Fisher National Bank and State Farm/Darwyn Boston. We have redesigned and purchased new scorecards for the 2018 season. We have also added No Limit Fitness as a sponsor and its business name will appear on our golf pencils.
- 2018 brochures and website information have been updated and have been or are in the process of being printed.
- Staff has been busy scheduling Golf Outings, Tournaments and Fitting Days (Mizuno, Callaway and Titleist have been scheduled as of today) for the upcoming season.
- Staff are washing, waxing, and detailing the golf carts in preparation for next season. They currently have 40 of the 60 carts finished.
- Staff are also in the process of performing maintenance on equipment (mowers, sprayers, and sand rakes). This mainly consist of sharpening blades, fluid and filter changes, lubrication, and a general cleaning.
- All part-time seasonal staff have been let go with the exception of Frank Johnston. Frank is assisting full-time staff a couple of days a week with equipment repairs and service.
- Darin Weasel and Zach West Douglas have renewed their annual *Illinois Pesticide Licenses*.
- In preparation for PDRMA's Loss Control Inspection, staff are in the process of organizing and cleaning the shop and office areas.
- And finally, we want to wish our long time Superintendent, Dave Torrens best of luck as he leaves us to be with his family and start a new position in Arizona. Dave worked very hard to maintain the course and made sure we worked as a team over his 17 years here. Dave will be truly missed.

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

- Homer Lake Interpretive Center put up the *A Place for All People* exhibit, which officially runs Feb 1 – March 23. It celebrates African American History Month by providing a taste of what you can find in the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.
- Staff at HLIC created a hide box for the black rat snake with a removable exterior interpretive sign so patrons can look inside.
- Homer for the Holidays (Homer Lake) is always a hit; To Grandmother's House We Go and Party Like It's 1900 (MGP) had record numbers this year!



- The Museum and Education Department held its annual departmental staff retreat at Homer Lake, where we reviewed 2017 accomplishments, and discussed 2018 goals for programs, volunteers, cultural competency, publications, and exhibits.
- Pam Leiter and Lisa Sprinkle worked with UIUC student, Abbey Blankensop, last fall to develop a short video about Homer Lake. Now complete, it includes aerial footage, video of the Interpretive Center, Natural Playscape, bicyclists, and other shots of the preserve. It is now running on Facebook and has also been uploaded to the District's website.
- The Museum of the Grand Prairie continues its year-long commemoration of World War I by participating in the US National Archives' "Remembering WWI" online experience. Mark Hanson uploaded photographs from a Chanute air field scrapbook to the Archives website. The Archives is collecting local experiences into a national database through the "Remembering WWI" app with help from The Library of Congress, National Museum of American

History, National World War I Museum and Memorial, and various other institutions around the country. The content can be viewed here:

<https://www.historypin.org/en/rememberingww1/chanute-field-illinois/geo/>

- The Museum of the Grand Prairie welcomes a new intern in the Doris K. Wylie Hoskins Archive, Jessica Mason. Jessica is a graduate student in Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois iSchool.

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

- Doug Sanders and Michael Dale completed FEMA's Emergency Management Institute *ISC-100 Introduction to Incident Command System* training. The Incident Command System is a standardized approach to incident management that enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and agencies.
- Doug Sanders, Michael Dale, Tammy Bruehl, Jim Blythe, and Tony Sparks have renewed their annual *Illinois Pesticide Licenses*.
- Brian Decker and Larry DeVore have finished the spillway cleanup project. This consisted of leaf and debris cleanup, cutting and removal of volunteer saplings, and spraying of stumps.
- Staff have been in the process of winterization, service, and repair of mowers and hand-held equipment (i.e. string/hedge trimmers, blowers, chain saws).

Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- Illiana Insulation Company applied spray foam insulation along the rim joist at the residence to reduce the effects of thermal tracking which causes the drywall to become discolored where framing is located.
- Mike Daab coordinated the removal of four hazardous trees by Michael Poor's Tree Service. The equipment they used makes tree removal look much easier than what we are familiar with. (see picture)



Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- Staff continues to remove dead or dying ash trees throughout the preserve areas. We have removed just over 40 trees to date, mostly taken from the campground and other user areas.
- More research continues on our Phase III electrical project scheduled for 2018.

Volunteers (Kristin Tetzlaff)

- To troubleshoot the need for occasional last minute volunteers for education programs, an education volunteer sub list was created. After contacting our volunteer pool, a group of 12 individuals (to date) signed up to be on our "call list". Staff from all preserves are able to access this list on our shared drive to call in additional volunteers that may be needed once they get a better idea on program registration numbers.