

September 6, 2022

MEMORANDUM

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

Executive Director (Lorrie Pearson)

- Completed facilitating discussion of the book Crucial Conversations with the Leadership Team. As it equipped each of us with tangible tools to address conflict and have tough conversations, it will next be discussed in other workgroups over the coming months. Staff can also request that we bring it to their teams earlier rather than later if so desired.
- Nina Carmichael, our first Leadership in Conservation Fellow, will begin work on September 12. We are developing a schedule of projects for her that will both give her experience in many areas of our work and help us accomplish our goals.
- Orientation activities for Commissioner Hundley continued with tours of Lake of Woods facilities, meeting staff who are based at Lake of the Woods, and getting deeper dives into human resources and finance topics. Thank you, Wendy, for being so generous with your time as we show you a bit about who and what the Forest Preserves are!

Planning and Construction Department (Bridgette Moen)

- Justin and Clint continue to make progress on the HQ basement. The new HVAC system has been installed, work on the ceiling has started, and LED lights are being installed. The mini split system, which was too small to condition the entire basement, will be relocated to Izaak Walton Cabin. This will improve the energy efficiency of that facility and the reuse of equipment will result in replacement savings. There has been one change order for \$150.00 for an additional gas line.
- KRT Phase 2C construction is on schedule. The contractor has completed the asphalt and gravel surfacing and is working on final touches such as fine grading, pavement markings, and fencing. There have been no change orders since the August meeting. A ribbon-cutting is scheduled for September 15 at 5:15 p.m.



- Planning met with aQity Research and Insights Inc. to kick off the needs assessment survey process. Staff are working with the consultant to finalize the questionnaire. Results of the survey will be presented at the December Regular Meeting.

- Planning hosted an internal workshop with Museum & Education, and LOW Operations staff on the interpretive themes for the new Discovery Garden Greenhouse project. It was great to work through how the space has been used in the past, what the current challenges are, and to identify opportunities with the new space. A small working group of Museum & Education staff and Planning staff were identified to lead the design development.
- Planning met with the UIUC chapter of Design for America, a national organization that partners college students with local organizations to encourage “design-thinking for social good.” The group is interested in working with CCFPD on a project, which will continue for 2-3 semesters. The students are in the proposal formation stage, but are interested in accessibility in the Forest Preserves.
- Planning, Construction, and LOW Operations met with the contractor for the LOW Bridge Roof Replacement project to discuss logistics. The work is tentatively scheduled to begin October 3rd.

Business and Finance (John Baker)

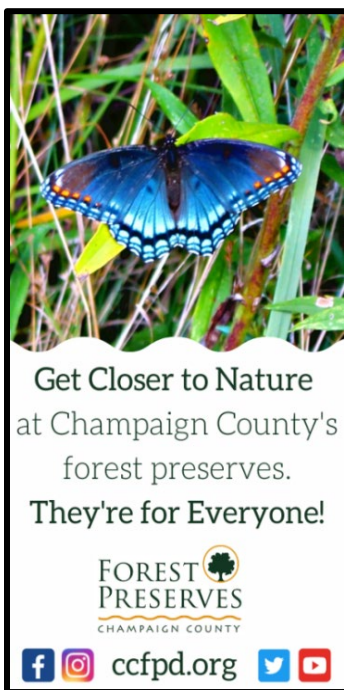
- Continued reviewing and verifying 2023 budget submissions, including meetings on 2023 Golf fees, current and future grants, compensation, utilities costing and information technology.
- Worked through upgrade process with purchasing card vendor to implement the ability to upload receipts and approve purchases electronically.
- Collaborated with pertinent parties regarding the 2023 Foundation budget preparation and potential unrestricted endowment through the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois.
- Began implementation of ClientFirst information technology agreements, including addressing Middle Fork and Homer Lake technology needs and access to the District network, review of Golf reservation system change, replacing Symantec with CrowdStrike endpoint detection and antivirus, and revising five-year information technology plan.
- Began upgrading our month end review process to include balance sheet transactions accounted for in the past during year end reviews.
- Scheduled finance-specific cybersecurity training for staff with access to District financial systems. Training is required for new cybersecurity insurance and will be met through KnowBe4, our cyber-phishing vendor.
- Completed providing audit information to the State of Illinois Grants Accountability and Transparency portal and assisted with providing grant internal controls documentation. Both documents are annually required for State of Illinois grant awards.
- Attended cyberthreats meeting sponsored by the Administration and Finance Section of the Illinois Parks and Recreation Association. The meeting included a representative from the Park District Risk Management Agency to assist parks and forest preserve districts with meeting new cyberthreat insurance requirements.

Human Resources (Dara Edgington, Mary Beck)

- During the month of August HR processed two hires, one seasonal to full-time conversion, and three separations of seasonal employees, resulting in a turnover rate of 3.73% for the month.
- As of August 31st, our total headcount was 113 employees including 48 FT, 17 PT, 47 seasonals, and 1 paid intern.
- The District documented two patron incidents and zero employee incidents with PDRMA over the month of August.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Posted a new Exploring with Lorrie on Facebook featuring interviews with the new superintendents – Rusty Maulding at Lake of the Woods, River Bend, Sangamon River and Heron View Forest Preserves and Skylar Smith at Homer Lake Forest Preserve.
- Congratulations go out to the District for receiving four Top 3 placings in the News-Gazette People’s Choice awards this year! Winners received a special recognition on September 8 at the Winners Reveal Celebration party held at Riggs Brewery.
 - 2nd place for Golf Course: Lake of the Woods Golf Course
 - 3rd place for Museum: Museum of the Grand Prairie
 - 2nd place for best walking trail: Homer Lake Forest Preserve
 - 2nd and 3rd places for Best Park: Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve and Homer Lake Forest Preserve
- Kristin Rose started as the Marketing Specialist in mid-August. This position is a 70/30 split with the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation. In her new job, she is working to increase District and Foundation presence on social media.
- Kristin developed new monthly ads for the following online publications:
 - Chabanamoms.com
 - Mahomet SJO Daily
 - News Gazette
 - SJO Record
 - Smile Politely
 - Visit Champaign



- Lisa and Kristin met with Accuraty Solutions, LLC to renew discussions on the website update and App development planned for 2022.
- Media this month included:
 - https://www.smilepolitely.com/splog/go_back_in_time_at_museum_of_the_grand_prairie_on_september_10th/
 - <http://www.sjodaily.com/2022/08/22/lake-of-the-woods-golf-course-recognized-for-environmental-excellence%ef%bf%bc/>
 - https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/parks-recreation/inside-out-museum-of-the-grand-prairie-welcomes-you/article_324d76c4-1fa6-5f01-b1c1-4507bb86046e.html
 - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/09/06/visit-river-bend-forest-preserve-mahomet/>

- Social media numbers continue to increase.

	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-	TWITTER	+/-
CCFPD	6,356	+135	3,042	+71	570	+0
KRT	4,683	+307	51	+9	139	
MGP	5,323	+663	1,260	+6	264	+3
HLIC	3,146	+56				
GC	1,874	+32	340	+3	114	+0
FPPF	560	+10				

- August Facilities Rental Report

# Rentals	Preserve	Facility	\$
10	HL	Salt Fork Center	3,700.00
6	HL	Walnut Hill Shelter	540.00
1	LOW	Botanical Garden Weddings	995.00
6	LOW	Elks Lake Pavilion	2,500.00
4	LOW	Izaak Walton Cabin	660.00
11	LOW	Lake of the Woods Pavilion	4,050.00
3	LOW	Lakeview Shelter	180.00
3	LOW	Riverview Retreat Center	360.00
7	LOW	Rotary Hill Shelter	1,180.00
3	LOW	Sycamore Hollow Shelter	160.00
1	MF	Activity Center	250.00
0	RB	River Bend Shelter	0.00
55			14,575.00

Grants and Development Specialist (Ryan Anderson)

- Foundation Grant Applications
 - Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation- Amenities
 - \$5,500 for a solar powered wheelchair charging station on the Kickapoo Rail Trail.
 - Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation- Amenities
 - \$5,500 to paint the Covered Bridge and the Suspension Bridge at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve.
 - Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation-Amenities

- \$5,500 for a shelter at Homer Lake Forest Preserve replacing the observation platform.
- The Prairie Cycle Club will host the Pedal the Preserves event on September 17-18. Participants will ride from Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve in Mahomet, IL, to the group camp at the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve (about 50 miles), with a return trip of about 35 miles the next morning. Shorter rides will also be held on September 18 only. Proceeds from the event will be donated to the FFFF.

Volunteer Coordinator (Sue Gallo)

- A new weekly group from Lincoln's Challenge starting August 2. Sixteen cadets will visit us every Tuesday for 2 hours and remove woody invasive plants north of the nature center at Homer Lake. Many, many thanks to Emily for agreeing to take on this opportunity and the NR team who are working around this. The same cadets will return every week through the end of November. There are multiple goals with this group:
 - Support NR staff in clearing an area of invasive honeysuckle for possible pollinator planting extension
 - Educate the cadets in safety and basic plant ID so that they will not require weekly CCFPD staff support on this task
 - Provide additional education to the cadets as opportunities arise
- In addition to the above goals, the DEI committee listed Lincoln's Challenge as a potential group to (continue to) collaborate with. The cadets are high school aged males, who come from all over the state. It is eye-opening to have the opportunity to work with these diverse young men who range from being very comfortable in nature to being very apprehensive. It would be interesting to learn if the cadets on a whole feel more confident or comfortable in nature after their assignment is complete. The cadets have visited 4 times this month and the 16 cadets have contributed 128 hours of service. (*Lincoln's challenges cadets are in the area they cleared in the photo on the left*)



- Americorps (*photo on right*) were out with the NR team for a week (not a volunteer department thing!) and the NR team briefly opened up these work events to the public adding 2 more volunteers and **8** more hours.
- Five volunteers helped represent the District at CU days on August 13.

- The volunteer appreciation on Sunday the 21st was attended by 34 volunteers, five staff (including myself) and the speaker Dr. Andrea Faber Taylor. Sue is super grateful to Stacey, Dara, Mike Daab and Skylar for their help making the event welcoming and enjoyable for the volunteers, and to Stacey and Emily who both readily agreed to be her emergency back-up hosts.



Above photos: Dr. Faber Taylor giving her presentation, Sue and Mike, Volunteer Michael, Volunteers and staff (and past staff!)

- Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) staff met with Sue to discuss a RSVP-CCFPD volunteer who triggered a protocol follow up.
- Sue met with Ryan and Jennifer Wick to generate event ideas for three amenities grant applications.
- Sue attended three very helpful webinars. Two on publicizing and hosting volunteer events that are welcoming to underrepresented communities and one about maximizing Volgisitics database.
- Sue attended two volunteer recruitment events and the connections generated from these events have already yielded new volunteer engagement. Additionally, one of the events was at the U of I, so it also afforded the opportunity to educate students about the CCFPD and welcome them to visit us.

Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)

- Natural Resources (NR) staff continued to remain busy with integrated pest management (IPM) of invasive plant species throughout the preserves. This included mowing, cutting brush, or foliar spraying invasive plants including:
 - White sweet clover
 - Reed canary grass
 - Chinese bush clover (lespedeza)
 - Cattails
 - Common reed (phragmites)
 - Autumn olive
 - Tree of heaven
 - Callery pear
 - Bush honeysuckle
- NR staff hosted a group of six AmeriCorps volunteers that cut woody invasive shrubs throughout a 15-acre reforestation site at Buffalo Trace Prairie for three days.
- Native trees and plugs that we planted this spring were watered on a weekly basis because of the continued drought conditions.
- Sites that were mowed/and or spraying to prep for native planting included:
 - Showerhouse prairie at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve (2.5 acres)
 - Sugar Creek prairie at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve (5.2 acres)
 - Tree tunnel prairie at Buffalo Trace Prairie (3.5 acres)
 - Ditch site at Buffalo Trace Prairie (3.0 acres)
- Staff continued to collect native plant seed for future restoration plantings.
- Peter, Mike Fry, Rusty Maulding, Skylar Smith, and Jacob Pruiett attended the Wetland-in-a-Week Workshop in Dwight, IL.
- Peter, Anna, and Eric attended the Grassland Restoration Network Conference in Barrington, IL.



Lake of the Woods Golf Course (Chris Edmondson and Joie Torres)

- August was another great month at the golf course. The weather was phenomenal and it was reflected in our play and revenue numbers. For the month, we had 6,294 players, which is well above the 5-year average of 4,971. Our revenue was the highest for a month that we can find going back 25 years (other than months that included Anniversary Pass sales). The revenue for this past month was \$161,337 (User Fees, Food & Beverage, and Merchandise). The 5-year average for August is \$105,496.
- We held several events in August. Below is a table of these events, with number of players, and overall revenue along with merchandise revenue. We also held our Club Championship on August 5th. We had 55 participants this year, which is the most for this event since we started tracking tournament participation in 2010.

Outing	# of Players	22 Total Rev	22 Actual Merch
St. Thomas More Athletic Boosters	111	\$7,283.00	\$555.00
Jason Smitley Memorial	85	\$4,250.00	\$425.00
Mahomet Community Fund	72	\$5,823.25	\$939.25
Local 149 - Plumbers & Pipefitters	72	\$4,626.00	\$900.00
David Williams Foundation	112	\$6,758.00	\$560.00
Champaign Rotary	68	\$4,509.00	\$805.00

- High School golf season began the 2nd week of August. We are once again the host facility for Mahomet-Seymour’s girls and boys golf teams. Our Head Golf Professional, David Sebestik, is in his 6th season as the coach of the boys team. The teams practice here daily and also host several meets throughout the season, which will wrap up in early October.
- With assistance from many throughout the District, we completed our recertification as a “Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary” through the Audubon International program for Golf Courses. There are many areas that we need to demonstrate a commitment to maintaining environmental quality throughout the golf course. We want to thank all that had any involvement in this process – your assistance is greatly appreciated and did not go unnoticed! The press release is attached.
- The maintenance crew worked and repaired a city water line that is located north from the clubhouse between the practice greens and 18 green. Sangamon Valley Water was called to assist on shutting the main valve to shut down the water, while our maintenance crew repair the fix.
- The maintenance crew continue to keep up the maintenance work and are doing an amazing job. We continue to receive great compliments from the patrons!
- The golf maintenance crew has reduced to six employees during the workweek and three employees on the weekends.

Museum and Education Department (Lorrie Pearson)

- The department launched its restructure on August 22, with Pat Cain, Mark Hanson, Stacey Clementz, and Barb Garvey assuming new roles as we move toward a more integrated department. Many thanks to everyone involved to arrive at this point and for working together during this period of change with the shared mutual purpose of successfully recreating ourselves.
- DeBorah Ault successfully completed her Smith Internship working on Hoskins archive oral histories. She also hosted a community program titled “Community Conversations: Exploring Oral Histories in the Doris Hoskins Archive.” This successful program was hosted at the Douglass Branch of the Champaign Public Library and occurred during the popular annual event at Champaign’s Douglass Park, CU Days. In addition to working with the Champaign Public Library and Champaign Park District, the event was also a collaboration with the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail.
- The Smithsonian renewed our contract for another Smith Intern in 2023.
- Barb Garvey completed a revision of the department’s Volunteer Manual with collaboration from Sue as well as a final draft of the department’s Inclusion Plan.
- Collections staff and volunteers have been deep cleaning the collections and exhibits spaces and preparing for our October 4-5 reaccreditation visit.

- The following loan kits were checked out this month; 1960's (Circle of Friends Memory Care Facility, Champaign-20 residents), Native American (Next Generation Elementary, Champaign with 60-5th graders)
- Youth programs taught this month: Homeschoolers Create Repurposed Masterpieces-10 homeschool students; Busy Bulldogs, Mahomet, Reptiles-81 students; Hugs and Bugs, Philo, Insects-32 students
- Stacey Clementz represented CCFPD at the Urbana Park District's first annual Climate Action event which took place at Crystal Lake Park on August 27. CCFPD is advertised as a partner on their website at <https://www.urbanaparks.org/about-us/green-initiatives/>. We hope to be more involved in next year's event.
- Barb Garvey spoke at Windsor of Savoy on the topic, "The Prairie in Paint." to 12 residents.
- Successful citizen science partnerships continue! This includes working with the IL Natural History Survey and the Illinois Bat Conservation Program and having equipment drop boxes installed at LOW and HL to make equipment drop-off/pick-up more accessible for volunteers. Also, frog call survey monitoring season wrapped up this month. Thanks to HL and LOW Ops as well as district volunteers for their help in getting this done!
- Bats at the Bridge at Lake of the Woods is gaining popularity and went very well this month. Thanks to LOW Ops for getting the road closed through the covered bridge for the program; it greatly improved the experience for participants.
- Events in the summer concert series continued this month. The Hood Family Band put on a great show in Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden and One Foot In got visitors up and dancing with their performance at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve Sugar Creek Shelter!
- MGP and HLIC experienced a busy summer in terms of visitation! As the summer ends and schools are back in session, both facilities experienced a slow in general patron attendance towards the end of August, as is typical this time of year.

Lake of the Woods (Rusty Maulding)

- After a tour of our septic systems with J&S Wastewater Systems, we discovered that the leach field behind Headquarters had become overgrown over the past 20+ years and needed to be cleared of woody vegetation to keep the system operating correctly. Operations staff cleared all small caliper woody material and cut back remaining herbaceous material. Natural Resources is planning to seed the area this fall with a dry prairie mix. This selection of plants will not seek out wetter areas and the system will be in much better shape for years to come.



- Also observed was settling in the Lake of the Woods Pavilion leach field, which can compromise the effectiveness of the system. Operations staff added soil, graded and have seeded this space with turfgrass with the help of Golf Course equipment and materials.
- Gardens staff in conjunction with Construction, repaired a culvert crossing at Sangamon River Forest Preserve. It had failed and needed work to keep the trail passable during wet periods.
- Gardens staff has also taken advantage of the dry conditions to clear and pack the Herron View trail this past month. This is a gem well worth exploring while conditions are dry!



Homer Lake (Skylar Smith)

- Homer Lake operations staff mowed the Kickapoo Rail Trail (KRT) and cut woody species away from fences.
- Troy Steinsdoerfer began working for us as a seasonal on August 9.
- Skylar attended the volunteer appreciation event and a wetland workshop.
- Switched the shop to T-Mobile small business internet, which is noticeably faster and less expensive than Viasat.
- Set up T-Mobile internet at the Salt Fork Center as a trial. Will test first for staff use and hope it is reliable to offer in some capacity to renters.
- Skylar, Roy, and Colton completed their herbicide General Standards training and exam.
- Skylar and Roy completed their herbicide Rights-of-Way training and exam.
- Began the process of grinding stumps in mowed areas.
- D-One, our new security provider, worked on updating the security systems at the maintenance shop, Salt Fork Center, and Homer Lake Interpretive Center.

Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- We had a great Labor Day Weekend at the campground with perfect weather. We also held our third cornhole tournament with the biggest turnout ever with 30 teams participating.
- We received heavy rains in late August providing much needed rain to the area. These rains also helped further fill Willow Pond, but it is still very low.
- We continue to search out best options for internet availability for Middle Fork. I have installed a Starlink system at the campground host cabin which has been working very well since installation.
- The IDNR fisheries biologist was able to shock the first two ponds the first week of September. He was happy with what Middle Fork staff have been doing as far as invasive species management along with other parts of our management plans with these bodies of water. He did take note that both ponds are quite shallow and we spoke about a possible dredging in the near future.



Audubon International

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE- August 12, 2022

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(518) 767-9051, Ext. 115
frank@auduboninternational.org

Lake of the Woods Golf Course Recognized for Environmental Excellence

MAHOMET, IL – Lake of the Woods Golf Course has retained its designation as a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, an Audubon International program. Joie Torres, Golf Course Superintendent, along with Chris Edmondson, Golf Course General Manager, led the effort to maintain sanctuary status on this course. Lake of the Woods Golf Course was designated as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary in 2002 and is one of over 900 courses in the world to hold certification from Audubon International.

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, endorsed by the United States Golf Association, provides information and guidance to help golf courses preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, and protect natural resources. Golf courses from the United States, Africa, Australia, Canada, Central America, Europe, Mexico, and Southeast Asia have achieved certification in the program.

"Lake of the Woods Golf Course has shown a strong commitment to its environmental program. They are to be commended for preserving the natural heritage of the area by protecting the local watershed and providing a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property," said Christine Kane, CEO at Audubon International.

"To reach certification, a course must demonstrate that they are maintaining a high degree of environmental quality in a number of areas," explained Kane. These categories include: Environmental Planning, Wildlife & Habitat Management, Outreach and Education, Chemical Use Reduction and Safety, Water Conservation, and Water Quality Management. Courses go through a recertification process every three years.

About Audubon International

Audubon International is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) environmental education organization dedicated to providing people with the education and assistance they need to practice responsible management of land, water, wildlife, and other natural resources. To meet this mission, the organization provides training, services, and a set of award-winning environmental education and certification programs for individuals, organizations, properties, new developments, and entire communities.

For more information, contact Audubon International at 120 Defreest Drive, Troy, NY 12180, 1-844-767-9051, e-mail at acsp@auduboninternational.org, or visit the website at www.auduboninternational.org.

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BE IT KNOWN THAT

LAKE OF THE WOODS GOLF COURSE

HAS MET THE CRITERIA SET FORTH BY THE

AUDUBON COOPERATIVE SANCTUARY PROGRAM FOR GOLF COURSES

AND HAS ACHIEVED

RECERTIFICATION

FOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

RECERTIFICATION ISSUED

AUGUST 11, 2022

CERTIFIED SINCE 2004

Christine Kane

CHRISTINE KANE
CEO OF AUDUBON INTERNATIONAL

