

February 7, 2022

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**Executive Director (Lorrie Pearson)**

- Several staff attended all or a portion of the annual IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference January 27-29 in Chicago, where we gained practical knowledge we are able to apply to our work.
- As we continue to build on program budgeting and measure outcomes, several senior staff attended the first of a two-part online seminar on performance measurement through the Civic Leadership Academy at Northern Illinois University. The second session is later this month.
- An emergency closure of the preserves was enacted on February 2-4 due to a long duration winter storm that dropped 8-15" of snow across the county. Staff worked hard to open the preserves as soon as it was safe to do so. Middle Fork River, Homer Lake, and Lake of the Woods Forest Preserves were open by or before noon on February 4, with other sites opened as they were cleared of snow and ice. Kudos to operations staff for planning for the storm and then cleaning up after it, and to those who were able to work from home during the closure in solidarity with those working outside in the cold.
- The Snowflake Search has me exploring more trails, including those at Collins Pond, Hidden Acres, and River Bend.

**Planning and Construction Department (Mike Daab and Mike Fry)**

- The Construction Department is busy preparing for spring. Entrance sign replacements have been received, we have fabricated the frames and posts, and now await the spring thaw to complete installation.
- Risk management funds were used to purchase an eyewash station we installed in the golf maintenance building. During installation we were able to eliminate dangerous wiring and improve energy efficiency. A new on-demand water heater was installed to replace a unit that was over twenty years old.
- Coordinated with CSX on land ownership dispute in St. Joe/Ogden (ongoing)
- Kicked off "feasibility" phase of Nature Center planning with Museum, Education, and administrative staff

**Business and Finance (John Baker)**

- Filed 2022 District appropriations and bond ordinances. The bond closing took place February 3 with the Corporate Fund purchasing \$492,729 in bonds with the proceeds deposited into the Capital Projects Fund.
- Finalized the 2021 audit engagement agreement between the District and CliftonLarsonAllen. Provided CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) with documentation of financial transactions for the initial audit testing and internal controls review.

- Implemented year end closing procedures in our MSI financial system including transferring 2021 year end fund and account balances to the 2022 balance sheet. Posted the approved 2022 budget in MSI also.
- Reviewed 1099 requirements and issued 1099 NECs to applicable District vendors.
- Met with Bridgette Moen on financial reporting related to the Comprehensive Plan.

**Human Resources (Dara Edgington)**

- During the month of January HR processed zero hires and separations, resulting in a turnover rate of 0% for the month.
- Our current headcount sits at 62 employees, including 44 FT staff, 14 PT, 3 seasonals, and 1 paid intern.
- The District documented one employee incident with PDRMA over the month of January.
- Pursuant to the temporary policy approved by the Board in January, staff have now completed the second week of mandatory COVID-19 testing. Incidents of positive cases have declined since the Omicron surge, yet the weekly testing has helped the District identify one asymptomatic case of COVID-19 (thus far).

**Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)**

- Media coverage last month included:

**February CiLiving**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noSGt5NQG58&t=81s>

**Winter storm closings and cancellations - Illinois Newsroom**

<https://illinoisnewsroom.org/winter-storm-closings-and-cancellations/>

**5 Unique Reason Champaign County is a Top Tourist Destination**

[https://www.visitchampaigncounty.org/our-stories?rec\\_id=149](https://www.visitchampaigncounty.org/our-stories?rec_id=149)

**Guided Hike**

[https://www.news-gazette.com/arts-entertainment/books/mahomet-public-library-to-seek-state-grant-funds-for-expansion/article\\_b626a4b6-eb59-532d-9e52-88828d90c615.html](https://www.news-gazette.com/arts-entertainment/books/mahomet-public-library-to-seek-state-grant-funds-for-expansion/article_b626a4b6-eb59-532d-9e52-88828d90c615.html)

**Snowflake Scavenger Hunt with Champaign County Forest Preserve District**

<https://www.wcia.com/news/snowflake-savenger-hunt-with-champaign-county-forest-preserve-district/>

- Social media numbers continue to increase.

	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-	TWITTER	+/-
CCFPD	6,030	+76	2,768	+24	569	-2
KRT	3,917	+74	133	+2	139	
MGP	4,529	+26	1,205	+5	261	+2
HLIC	2,982	+17				
GC	1,773	+9	329	+3	108	+3
FPPF	505	+6				

- Staff across the district collaborated again this winter for the CCFPD Snowflake Search. Debuting on January 20, this year’s search features 40 snowflakes, an increase from last year’s 30 snowflakes, and winter themed environmental and historical fun facts. Snowflakes and facts are placed throughout the district and patrons can participate with the challenge by posting photos and videos on Facebook and Instagram using the hashtag #CCFPDSnowflakeSearch. A

big thank you to all staff in many district departments who helped with this year's project. WCIA talked to Pat Cain about the Snowflake search, helping to promote its use.



- January Facilities Rental Report

January 2022 Rentals					
Date	Facility	Center	Qty	\$	
Jan 15, 2022	Elks Lake Pavilion	Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve	50	\$250	
Jan 29, 2022	Elks Lake Pavilion	Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve	35	\$200	
Jan 8, 2022	Izaak Walton Cabin	Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve	12	\$270	
Jan 2, 2022	Lake of the Woods Pavilion	Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve	100	\$300	
Jan 11, 2022	Lake of the Woods Pavilion	Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve	40	\$0	
Jan 15, 2022	Lake of the Woods Pavilion	Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve	40	\$300	
Jan 22, 2022	Lake of the Woods Pavilion	Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve	100	\$250	
Jan 29, 2022	Lake of the Woods Pavilion	Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve	100	\$400	\$1,970
Jan 15, 2022	Salt Fork Center	Homer Lake Forest Preserve	45	\$250	
Jan 28, 2022	Salt Fork Center	Homer Lake Forest Preserve	25	\$950	
Jan 29, 2022	Salt Fork Center	Homer Lake Forest Preserve	100		
Jan 30, 2022	Salt Fork Center	Homer Lake Forest Preserve	25		\$1,200
					<b>\$3,170.0</b>

**Volunteer Coordinator (Sue Gallo)**

- Not only were staff able to provide purposeful volunteer opportunities this past year, but staff are starting to educate volunteers about the CCFPD mission. Our volunteer program can bring people to the Forest Preserves who have never visited before or know nothing about the CCFPD, and staff are doing a fantastic job of helping to make sure that these new folks are aware of what we have to offer.
- Sue wants to thank CCFPD staff for safely supporting volunteers in COVID year 2. Despite the challenges and reduced programming, 2021 saw the greatest volunteer engagement in the last ten years! There are too many variables to make meaningful comparisons among years but the record level of engagement suggests that staff were providing worthwhile volunteer opportunities for interested individuals/groups and that the volunteer coordinator was generally able to find folks interested in helping in these ways.
- Our engagement data is still very time consuming to compile. Sue is confident that this year’s numbers are representative of actual engagement and is incrementally streamlining the compiling processes.
- Sue worked with Dara to draft and distribute a reminder of our COVID expectations for volunteers to indoor volunteers and all staff who work with volunteers.
- Ten individuals completed new volunteer applications in January, and 2 new volunteers gave their first service – mostly thanks to the first meeting of Katie and Pat’s new Healing Garden Project. The Natural Resources team hosted a woody invasive plant removal event at River Bend and 54 volunteers attended! Many of these volunteers were new to us. NR signage explaining the volunteer event inspired at least one person to reach out to us to be added to our volunteer event email list.
- Lastly, Sue worked with Amanda Christenson from the East Central Illinois Master Naturalist Program to host Dr. Eric Schaubert for an event for volunteers across the state titled “Ask the State Biologist.” Ninety-eight individuals registered for the event and 50 folks attended. We received 11 requests to learn more about volunteering with the CCFPD from this event.

2021	8100
2020	over 5600
2019	6381
2018	5254.78
2017	5404.75
2016	no mention in report
2015	7026
2014	5784
2013	more than 3200
2012	3466

**Grants and Development Specialist (Ryan Anderson)**

- We plan to recognize the donors from 2021 in the April/May Leaflet as we did last year.
- We sent out 205 end of the year appeal letters just before the holidays. So far, we’ve received \$3,445 from 21 donors in checks returned in remittance envelopes that were included in the appeal.
- In total, from the donors that were sent the appeal we have received 47 donations totaling \$12,652.00 (in personal checks, cashier’s checks, donor-advised funds, Qgiv, etc). Using these figures, we had a 23% response to the appeal. (Without the remittance envelope, it’s hard to tell if donors were responding to the letter or had planned their year-end donation anyway).

## Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)

- In January, the natural resources department continued removing invasive shrubs and conducted timber stand improvement at the following locations:
  - South Waterfowl Area woods at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve (2 acres)
  - High quality lowland woods at River Bend Forest Preserve (3.5 acres)
  - Collins Pond edge at Homer Lake Forest Preserve (2 acres)
  - Golf Course high quality woods (2 acres)
- On two occasions, conditions were ideal for planting native seed in restoration projects. Planting sites included:
  - 7 acres along the stream at Buffalo Trace – this 72.9 lb mix of native woodland seed was purchased using money from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation
  - 1.7 acres planted with 17.50 lbs of native prairie seed near the headquarters building at Lake of the Woods – this area is being converted from mowed turf grass to a pollinator meadow with money from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation
- Staff spent a week and a half felling trees along the Ogden section of the Kickapoo Rail Trail to prepare the site for the next phase of development.
- On Thursday January 20<sup>th</sup>, Peter gave a virtual volunteer herbicide training to 60+ volunteer stewards throughout the east-central Illinois region.
- On Saturday January 29<sup>th</sup>, the department hosted a volunteer invasive shrub removal event at River Bend Forest Preserve. Almost half an acre was cleared in between the Dogleg trail and Sunset Lake.



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

- With no play in January and limited simulator and Pro Shop hours to save on staffing, we had a revenue of \$14,397, which is below the 5-year average of \$30,946. When you take in to account that 2 of those years had Anniversary Pass sales, we are actually above the non-pass sale years average of \$6,166. We have kept the Simulator hours this season as 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday (closed on Sundays). This has allowed us to fill the Simulator during these times (fewer available times equal higher demand), cut down on staffing hours in the evenings and on weekends, and eased the wear, tear, and repairs on the unit, extending its life/usage. If demand were to warrant the situation, we would look at extending hours in the future.

- Staff has spent much of January working on budget and audit information and spreadsheets. We completed inventory and have slowly begun to receive new merchandise and stage the Pro Shop for the 2022 golf season. As with many retail businesses, there is merchandise that is backordered or delayed in shipping, so we may be receiving items well into early to mid-summer. We have also contacted past golf outings with the new pricing formats for shotgun start events and have many of them scheduled for 2022 already!
- On January 18<sup>th</sup> the Golf Committee met virtually, over Zoom. All members were “in attendance” and it was good to debrief on the 2021 golf season, as well as discuss the upcoming projects and goals for the golf course in 2022. The committee set the Volunteer Clean-up Days for March 10 and 11, with weather back-up days as March 24 and 25. We encourage people to come out for as little or as long as they’d like to assist with general course clean-up (raking leaves, picking up sticks and fallen branches, etc.). Interested volunteers are asked to wear weather appropriate attire, bring gloves and a rake (if possible), and check-in with Pro Shop staff who will direct them to the appropriate areas on the course. This will spread people out as well as attack the specific areas on the course we see in need at that time.
- Finally, staff attended the PGA Merchandise Show the last week of January. Due to finances, travel, and the pandemic, the Show was much different this year. Most all of the major club manufacturers were not in attendance. This did not affect us, since we place all of the orders with these companies in the fall. One nice perk was with attendance down, we were able to target specific vendors without having to set an appointment or wait in lines. We looked at youth development programs which we are implementing, such as SNAG Golf and the PGA Junior League. We also explored new tee sheet and POS systems, as our current vendor, GolfNow, is going through a change in their pricing structure and software. There were a few merchandise items we are in the market for as well, which we could see and compare to one another while on the Show floor (new simulator models and programs, 2-way radios, range ball washers).
- Bud's Tree Care Service completed their tree project for the winter. Dead trees have been removed on hole # 6 left and right side of the fairways.
- Maintenance crew worked on removing dead trees on hole # 11 right side of the fairway and hole # 8 right side of the cart path.
- Maintenance crew continues to service equipment, spin grinding reels, and sharpen blades.

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

- The Museum and Education (ME) Department held its annual retreat via Zoom. At a shortened meeting to accommodate Zoom fatigue, we began to review the Strategic Institutional Plan timeline to set goals for this year.
- Jen Grove and Mark Hanson and Bridgette Moen continue troubleshooting Rankin HVAC’s inability to hold desired temperature and RH and creating condensation on the ceiling and doors.
- The geothermal furnace in the Annex building has needed service, and broken its own circuit multiple times in the last month. We are able to reset it each time, but staff is monitoring it.
- Homer Lake Interpretive Center (HLIC) staff have acquired a large format laminator. This will allow staff to laminate posters and other large items like StoryWalks at HLIC. Until now, they

have been working with LOW Ops to use their laminator. This will save staff time and improve efficiency.

- Customer Service Retail Associates have completed the annual inventory process at the Museum Store, and are reorganizing the displays.
- Jen Grove and Mark Hanson began uninstalling the woman suffrage exhibit and returning the associated incoming loans to individuals, the Spurlock Museum and the Illinois History and Lincoln Collection.
- Jen Grove and collections volunteers continue processing collections into the Rankin Center, with the HQ basement soon to be emptied.
- Mark Hanson now has three collections interns who are continuing to process the Hoskins archive.
- Jen Grove and Mark Hanson have reprioritized the development of weekly #CollectionCorner content for our social media outlets.
- Jen Grove and Mark Hanson continued to support reaccreditation process and review documentation.
- Jen Grove and Mark Hanson completed the accessioning process for the five latest new acquisitions.
- Pam Leiter delivered the salvaged dead Snowy Owl to the taxidermist; it will be about 10 months before the final piece is returned.
- Staff continue working on developing the next special exhibit scheduled to open next May, “A History of Healing: Infectious Diseases and the Community Response to Defeat Them.” Research is ongoing with the cooperation of the Champaign County Historical Archives, Rantoul Historical Society, and Champaign-Urbana Public Health.
- Pat Cain visited the Pearson Medical History Museum in Springfield and met with the museum’s curator to discuss research opportunities and potential collaboration on the museum’s upcoming exhibit on infectious diseases.
- Updates and edits to the new website: [www.museumofthegrandprairie.org](http://www.museumofthegrandprairie.org). Staff plan for hard promotion and a website scavenger hunt around Valentine’s Day to help drive traffic and attention to the new site.
- Stacey Clementz taught January’s Walk with a Naturalist at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center; eight people attended. Ci-Living attended and filmed the program and Stacey! She also continues to work with UPD and CC Farm Bureau on the Climate Change Kit.
- Planning for summer camps and recruiting Counselors-in-Training is well underway, with good hope for the future balanced with the knowledge we may need to adjust per COVID-19 conditions.
- Pat Cain kicked off this year’s Garden Speaker Series. Tied to the museum’s upcoming exhibit on infectious diseases, the theme for this year’s series will focus on medicinal plants, how humans have used them throughout history, and how patrons can start a medicinal plant garden of their own. The first program in the series featured a presentation from Kathleen Hull, MD, Professor Emerita of Pathology at the Indiana University School of Medicine and Head of the Indiana Medical History Museum’s Medicinal Garden Project. Hull discussed how particular plants have been used for medicinal purposes throughout history and how a few have led to some modern medicines used today.
- On February 3, Katie Snyder, Marina Montez-Ellis, Mike Dale, and Pat Cain virtually met with 15 interested volunteers to kickoff a project reimagining the Discovery Garden space at Lake of

the Woods. Inspired by themes present in the museum's new exhibit on infectious diseases, staff will work with volunteers design, plant, and maintain an educational and relaxing space featuring areas dedicated to a medicinal plant garden, healing and meditation garden, and sensory garden while still maintaining some space to grow vegetables and herbs.

- Barb Garvey gave her "Pearl Harbor: 80 Years On," talk at Windsor of Savoy on January 18. She had 22 participants.
- Katie Snyder prepared and delivered an Indoor Game kit to Booker T. Washington School in Champaign. This kit is currently serving 370 students.
- Katie Snyder prepared and sold 21 Winter Wonderland Miniature Garden Kits
- Katie Snyder prepared and delivered an Artifact Discovery Curriculum Kit, with a new, detailed lesson plan for teachers, to two classes and 36 students at Leal Elementary in Urbana--3rd grade General Education and 3rd grade Dual Language.
- Katie Snyder hosted "Mornings at the Museum: 25 Years with Miss Sandy Osborne," via Streamyard. The program had 171 views.
- We had hoped to offer other in-person public programs, but the resurgence of COVID-19 caused them to be cancelled.
- Jennifer Wick is attending an online course, NAI Interpretive Leadership Institute, which meets biweekly online Jan-April. The cohort consists of about 17 professionals in the field of interpretation in different states, and the focus is on identifying and developing personal leadership styles, specifically as it relates to the field of interpretation.
  - We are working on an updated job description for the HLIC assistant position, and getting ready to start posting that position as well as seasonal positions.
- Katie Snyder's intern, Emily Koch (formerly Loeffler) was recently awarded a position as a Youth Service Librarian position at Deerfield Public Library As part of her master's work in Informational Sciences at UIUC, Emily interned with Museum and Education Staff at Museum of the Grand Prairie, helping out with field trips.
- The MGP's transcription intern for the East Frisian Oral History Project Emma Olson, is now studying at Yale University and has been awarded a summer internship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Staff has been working together to create a more integrated instrument for keeping attendance statistics. The annual statistics for 2021 are as follows. Unless otherwise noted these statistics are combined across the Department:
  - MGP Visitation – 3,779 visitors
  - HLIC Visitation – 1,505 visitors
  - M&E In-person Public Programs– 55 in-person programs with a total of 3,736 program attendees
  - On-line Events – 78 total program opportunities offered online
  - Live Stream Views – 30 new live streamed programs amassing 11,471 views
  - Recorded Video Programming (Public, School, & SYS) – 32 new videos amassing 4,330 views
  - Zoom Programs – 16 Zoom Programs with 633 total attendees



### Lake of the Woods (Tammy Fry and Michael Dale)

- Attached are pictures from Snowmageddon '22. The wind and the snow were relentless on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> but persistent staff pushed back and opened late on the 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Chipped another round of recycled Christmas trees bringing the 2022 total to approximately 625.
- Recycled 193 light bulbs consisting of (34) 8' tubes, (80) 4' tubes, (64) Ballast CFL, (15) HID
- Continued to assist BG with Honeysuckle removal at LOW.
- Mike Dale was unable to attend I- Landscape Conference due to weather.



### Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- The Willow Pond project has been running smoothly for the month of January. Perfect temps and conditions accelerated the project with frozen materials helping with hauling and digging. The snow storm in early February halted the project for a couple of days, but the crew is back at it.
- The snow storm delivered about 10-12 inches of snow, but after the closures we were able to open the park on Friday.



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

- Roy and Colton attended a JULIE training that went over the safety issues related to underground utilities when doing excavation work. We've always used the JULIE locating services mainly for electric lines but now that we have the KRT with the additional utility hazards along that easement this type of training has become even more applicable.
- It was good to see people fishing in the dead of winter. The lake had about 5 inches of ice on it so we had some ice fishing for a couple of weeks. They were catching mainly small blue gill and crappie.
- We were able to drag concrete blocks and Christmas trees out on the ice for additional fish structure. We started the Christmas tree recycling program in 1991 in an effort to get trees that we could use for fish cover and we've added trees nearly every year since then. The number of trees that we get has steadily decreased over the last ten years.

## **District Cultural Competency Initiatives**

- Katie Snyder prepared ten Martin Luther King Resiliency Rock Kits. The Resiliency Rocks have the contact info for CU Trauma and Resiliency Initiative on the bottom. Patrons are asked to put an uplifting message on the rock and leave it around the community for others, thereby following the lead of MLK to care for others, as well as giving contact info for those who may be struggling.
- Katie Snyder shared a read-aloud on Face Book for MLK Day called, "Coretta Scott." The recording had 143 views.
- Mark Hanson began working with Ryan Anderson on a 2022 Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board grant application to digitize born magnetic media oral history interviews in the Hoskins archive.
- Museum staff sought the opinion and input of the DEI committee concerning the removal of the totem poles from the museum stairwell.
- Mark Hanson attended a moderated retreat concerning the development of the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail.
- Staff competed and signed the internship agreement and purchasing order for the Smithsonian Smith internship project. Mark Hanson attended Smith Internship candidate selection workshop.
- Mark Hanson and Katie Snyder are preparing to continue the "Revisiting Your Legacy" oral history project within the African American community.
- For inclusion on the new museum website, Angela Whitlock is completing research to update the online exhibits, "This Legacy is Yours" and "Your Legacy Too."