

May 10, 2021

MEMORANDUM

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

Executive Director (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- The Forest Preserve District will be submitting a request to Champaign County for a portion of the funding it will be receiving under the American Rescue Plan Act. Approved by the US Congress on March 11, APRA provides funds to states, local governments, tribal governments, and other municipalities based on a complex formula of population and other demographics. Although heavily advocated by NRPA, the final language in the bill does not include special districts such as forest preserves or park districts. However, it does note that units of local government may transfer funds to these special districts. IAPD encouraged park and forest preserve districts to request funds from their cities and counties. As of 5/13/21, an amount has not been determined for our ask. The county is set to receive \$40 million under APRA.
- The next step in the research study among UIUC, EIU, SUNY Brockport, and CCFPD will be to hold one or more focus groups with the individuals who played key roles in the educational campaign leading up the 2020 referendum. The first is planned for May 24.
- More than 190 trees were given to donors, volunteers, and other District supporters on April 24. Many of the remaining saplings were given away at the Middle Fork campground the following weekend and any leftovers went to local non-profits. All told, nearly 300 new trees can now be planted in or near Champaign County, thanks to the Friends Foundation and Living Lands & Waters.
- The Friends Foundation has made a significant push to raise the remaining \$45,000 needed to match the OSLAD grant for the Lake of the Woods peninsula accessibility project. A sizable gift from AMBUCS, a direct mail effort, several Facebook posts and email solicitations, and a recorded message from Jean Driscoll were among the appeals that were made. As of May 10, the balance remaining to raise is about \$1,500.
- Only one congressional representative in Illinois did not submit projects to the Congressional Transportation and Infrastructure earmark process. Unfortunately, Rep. Mary Miller’s district includes the Kickapoo Rail Trail, which was the subject of our request. See Tom Kacich’s article from the Sunday, May 9, News-Gazette: https://www.news-gazette.com/opinion/columns/tom-kacich-congress-brings-back-earmarks-one-illinois-rep-isnt-on-board/article_449a248d-57e6-5943-9d76-1cea915585df.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share
- Champaign County First’s virtual advocacy day took place on April 22. Representatives of the cities, villages, park districts, UIUC, Parkland College, Visit Champaign County, and Willard Airport met with Senators Durbin (shown) and Duckworth, Congressional Representatives Davis and Miller, State Senators Rose and Bennett, State Representative Marron, and representatives from IDOT and DCEO. A variety of projects were discussed from the Curtis Road underpass to



improving Amtrak's on-time service. The CCFPD and Urbana Park District made a push for continued support for both east and west extensions of the Kickapoo Rail Trail.

- At this time, we are planning to hold the June meeting at Homer Lake, but we will not be providing a meal this year. Hopefully by 2022, we can enjoy the staff-prepared dinner once again. We will also plan to assemble at Middle Fork for the July meeting as usual.

Planning and Construction Department (Mike Daab and Mike Fry)

- Planning staff coordinated with the County to finalize plans for the crossing at Lake of the Woods Road and Tin Cup Road. The County has recommended striping the crosswalk, installing "pedestrian ahead" signage in both directions, and installing rapid flashing beacons (similar to those along Route 47 at Buffalo Trace). The District and County will be cost sharing the improvements and the County will lead the installation. In the meantime, the County has requested that we keep the entry sidewalk closed until the improvements are complete. The County is working on a plan for installation and timeline, and will keep District staff updated.
- Kayak rack installation, rip-rap placement, and grass seeding were also completed this month.
- At the Rankin Collections Care Center, furnishings have been installed by Museum and Construction staff.
- Air conditioning units at Elks Lake Pavilion were replaced with high efficiency units. We will be receiving a rebate of \$700 through the Ameren Small Business Efficiency Program.
- Planning staff discussed a potential facility construction request with IDNR staff. IDNR staff verified that because the future Homer Lake Interpretive Center will support outdoor recreation and will be located in a part of the preserve which is currently semi-developed, CCFPD does not need to complete the process of a formal Department of Interior conversion request. IDNR staff were excited to hear about the project and encouraged the District to pursue State grants for support.
- Planning and Middle Fork staff met to discuss updates to Willow Pond engineering design plans. Planning, Natural Resources, and Middle Fork staff also met with Mike Garthaus, IDNR fisheries biologist, to discuss the wildlife and fisheries impacts of draining and refilling the pond as part of the rehabilitation process. Due to our existing lake management agreement, the completed pond would be stocked by IDNR.
- Planning staff has also been updating fleet and mobile equipment information for PDRMA.
- Tim Sullivan from the Construction Department inventoried decades of master plans and other planning documents authored by CAC, CCFPD staff, UIUC, RPC and other groups. This inventory will help the planning staff reference site history before implementing new improvements and it will also be a great resource for the Comprehensive Plan. Thanks, Tim!
- Bridgette Moen attended a PDRMA Playground Inspector webinar and UIUC "Wild Zones" symposium on the intersection of landscape architecture, biology, and policy. Michael Daab attended the National Wildlife Federation's National Town Hall on Creating Safe Spaces.
- Michael Daab led three tours of the Heron View Forest Preserve for CCFPD Board of Commissioners, members of the CAC Heron View/Hazen Bridge subcommittee, and members of the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation. All were impressed with the new preserve, with the



Virginia bluebells and great blue heron rookery leading the way in awe-striking floral and faunal beauty at the site.

- The Planning Department is happy to welcome Sam Ihm as our intern for the summer. Sam brings incredible experience to the position, including a B.S. in advertising and working toward a Master of Urban Planning at the University of Illinois. He has worked with the City of Urbana in a similar role, and his coursework and assistantships have an environmental focus.
- The Construction Department has completed the Par 3 shelter at the Golf Course.
- Construction worked with the Lake of the Woods Operations Department to install over fifteen hundred feet of split rail fencing throughout Lake of the Woods. Included in the picture is approximately two-hundred and fifty feet of new fence installed to increase safety by creating a barrier between educational program participants and Rte. 47.
- In another effort to increase public safety, drainage improvements were made at Buffalo Trace. Construction installed a storm drain to eliminate a dangerous area where water tends to collect on the trail.



Business and Finance (John Baker)

- John attended the May 4 IMRF rate meeting webinar. IMRF's 2020 investment gain was 14.98%, or \$5.1 billion. The CCFPD employer pension reserve increased in 2020 from \$3.45 million to \$3.97 million. The CCFPD pension contribution rate will decrease from 7.93% this year to 7.37% for 2022. The CCFPD pension funding rate (active members only) at year end was 111% (market basis) and 90% on an actuarial basis.
- We received the District's levy extension from the County Clerk with the referendum rate of .1033 for the non-bond funds and .1089 for all funds. Last fall the District levied \$4.8 million and will receive \$4.6 million in 2020 property tax distributions this year. Property taxes levied in the bond ordinances will produce another \$248,474 for District projects.
- We also received the District's final 2020 EAV which had decreased from last fall's projection by nearly two percent to \$4.4 billion. As a consequence, expected property taxes will fall short of the 2021 budget by approximately \$90,000. Compared with the 2019, the District EAV increased three percent.
- Finance staff finished preparations for and hosted District auditors for the 2020 audit field work. As occurred last year all communications and documentation were electronic. Field work was completed April 21.
- Finance staff also began interviewing for the part-time accounts payable clerical position.
- The District's annual liquor license was renewed for the golf course.

Human Resources (Dara Edgington)

- Hiring for the 2021 season is getting closer to completion. Year-to-date 48 offers have been extended and 36 employees have been successfully onboarded. Recruiting continues for one full-time position and three permanent part-time positions. Districts across the state are finding this to be an especially challenging year for recruitment.
- Last month I updated you regarding the District's participation in Unit 4's Youth Employment Services summer program. The initial plan had to be adjusted slightly, so thanks to Michael Dale for sponsoring this opportunity in the Botanical Gardens. The virtual career fair will be held May 12th at which point we hope to be matched with a student.
- I attended the U of I Recruiter's Forum on April 7th, which included a very helpful breakout session regarding students' experiences with micro-aggressions in the workplace. Students shared their perspective on some of the most troubling behaviors they have witnessed and provided insight on how we can make our recruiting process as inclusive as possible.
- The preliminary review of the compensation and classification study results is now completed. These results will be shared and reviewed by the Compensation Committee on May 13th. The committee will provide feedback and propose adjustments as appropriate before GovHR makes the final presentation to the Board.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Media coverage last month included:
 - Inside Out | Spring things bring a shift**
https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/parks-recreation/inside-out-spring-things-bring-a-shift/article_11d6f853-2557-54f7-bcbc-83170001302b.html
 - Volunteer with Champaign County Forest Preserve District for Earth Day**
https://www.smilepolitely.com/splog/volunteer_with_champaign_county_forest_preserve_district_for_earth_day/
 - Things for teens and tweens to do during summer break in Champaign-Urbana**
<https://www.chambanamoms.com/2021/05/09/things-to-do-for-tweens-and-teens-this-summer-in-champaign-urbana/>
 - Migration Fest coming to Homer Lake Forest Preserve**
<https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/migration-fest-coming-to-homer-lake-forest-preserve/>
 - Whys Gals| All about toads**
<https://www.wcia.com/the-morning-show/whys-gals-all-about-toads/>
 - Enjoy a wildflower walk at Homer Lake Forest Preserve**
<https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/enjoy-a-wildflower-walk-at-homer-lake-forest-preserve/>
 - New species of frog in Champaign County**
<https://www.wcia.com/news/new-species-of-frog-in-champaign-county/>
- I recorded a video about the preserves being open and ready for people to visit for Visit Champaign County to include in a larger video:
<https://www.facebook.com/visitchampaign/videos/219286373296190>
- We are advertising the campground at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve as a place to stay when people are in the area for sporting events at the newly opened Rantoul Sports Complex,
<https://www.rantoulsportscomplex.com/plan/stay/>

- I worked with staff and Accuraty, Inc. to update the Animal Advocates webpage, <https://www.ccfpd.org/get-involved/adopt-an-animal>, the District finances page, <https://www.ccfpd.org/About/District-Finances>, and the Foundation webpage, <https://www.ccfpd.org/illinois-forest-preserves/foundation>.
- The marketing and volunteer coordinators collaborated and purchased two customized tents for use at public events and volunteer events. We got a great deal through Chamber Signs of \$399/tent. Sue and I had been pricing these tents earlier this year and they averaged close to \$1,000/tent.
- Social media numbers continue to increase.



	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-	TWITTER	+/-
CCFPD	5,296	+74	2,407	+56	553	+6
KRT	3,223	+45	86	+2	128	+0
MGP	4,323	+39	1,172	+2	242	+1
HLIC	2,748	+765				
GC	1,693	+25	311	+1	98	+10
FPPF	440	+64				

Volunteer Coordinator (Sue Gallo)

- This past month has been extra busy for volunteer activity! We had 15 new ‘regular’ volunteers and at least another 70 one-time, ‘event’ volunteers. Event volunteers helped in nine organized events in the Garden, the Golf Course, in Natural Resources’ events, and in the independent Garlic Mustard Hunt. Moreover, about 30 new volunteers completed our waiver and helped remove Garlic Mustard from the District.
- Many thanks to staff for working with volunteers from Phi Gamma Nu, Mahomet Area Youth Club, C-U Young Professionals, Ryan Dallas Realty, and various scouting and church groups!
- Our KRT Earth Day Volunteer Help event was postponed due to the weather, but will hopefully have good weather this May 15/16 weekend. Many thanks to Emily and Natural Resources staff for collaborating to make this happen!
- Sue participated in an interview with the UI’s Office of Volunteer Engagement to outline some of the District’s background to help inspire prospective student volunteers.
- Sue met with M/Ed staff and reminded them how to access their volunteers’ emergency contact information, and also discussed M/Ed’s upcoming volunteer appreciation ideas. Additionally, Sue got out to meet and take photos of some individual volunteers. Pictured: Daisy group in the garden, photo by N Swanson (left), and Buffalo Trace volunteer M



Lambert putting our new Nature Conservancy Stewardship Network tool purchases to use!
Photo by SGallo (right).

Grants and Development Specialist (Ryan Anderson)

- Grant Updates
 - IDNR OSLAD Peninsula Project
 - CCFPD staff and the FPFf recorded a video with Jean Driscoll to help raise the remaining funds for the Peninsula. We will post this video on social media as well as sending an email appeal to donors who have not donated this year. We are very close to closing the remaining match gap.
 - ICECF Pollinator Meadow Grant- \$6,800
 - Our application for the ICECF Pollinator Meadow Grant was accepted. We will be installing two pollinator meadows at Lake of the Woods. The first will be near the Headquarters building. The second meadow will be located near the spillway.
 - Thoma Foundation Digital Changemakers Grant- Doris Hoskins Archive Digitization
 - Our grant application to the Thoma Foundation was denied. This grant sought funds to finish the digitization of the Doris Hoskins Archive and develop a means of making this digital archive available to the community. We are researching additional funding opportunities for this project.
- Tree Giveaway
 - The Forest Preserve Friends Foundation held a Tree Giveaway on April 24th. We had around 10 volunteers from the FPFf Board, the Community Advisory Committee, and the CCFPD Board assist with the event. 190 people signed up for the event and we gave away additional trees at the event. The remaining trees were given away at Middle Fork the weekend of Arbor Day (April 30th) and a few last unspoken for saplings went to non-profits.
- May/June Fundraising Appeal
 - The Fundraising Committee of the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation has chosen to focus its fundraising appeal in June on raising funds for the Illinois Clean Energy Foundation Triple Match for habitat restoration along the KRT. This appeal will be in early June to correspond with the end of Bike Month (May) and National Trails Day (June 6th).

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

- It was a good start to the season having April golf once again (we were completely shut down this month last year due to COVID). In April, we had 3,804 players, which is the highest player count for that month since 2006. It is also the only April with more than 3,000 players since 2010. 373 of these rounds were on the Par 3 course, which is the highest total there since 2008. Course conditions and consistent weather certainly helped our cause.
- Our April revenue was \$85,425. Removing 2020 from the equation, the prior five-year average for revenue was \$72,258. (We were just under \$5k for 2020 due to no play/COVID). This was also the highest revenue total for April since 2014. We saw strong use of the driving range, carts, and the Par 3 course, as previously mentioned.
- April also saw the return of several norms that were missing in 2020. We opened the snack bar on April 24th and plan to have it operating 7 days a week this season, as opposed to only 4 days per week due to restrictions last season. The beverage cart began running on this date as well, and we hope to have that more available this season with lessened restrictions. The plan is to

have the beverage cart on the course for our Men's Association play on Wednesday evenings, as well as Friday through Sunday weekly, plus any other scheduled events throughout the season.

- Speaking of Men's Association, they, along with the Women's Association began their league play on Wednesday, April 28th. We have seen an uptick in Women's members so far, and our Men's Association had a strong turnout on week one, despite some iffy weather.
- Get Golf Ready adult lessons began on Monday, April 26th. This a 4-week lesson program, taught by David and Jason. This session is filled, with the max of 10 participants having registered!
- We held our annual Season Opener tournament, after a one year hiatus due to COVID, on April 24-25. The weather held out for us and the tournament was once again full (60 two-person teams) for the Ryder Cup style event (each 9 holes was a different format of play).
- April also saw the course near completion on budgeted projects and small equipment purchases. Larry Denton completed the next phase of bunker renovations, which were ten of the most needed for improvement on the back 9. All that remains is sodding around a few of the bunkers, once the weather allows for sod to be delivered. The Construction crew completed the new Par 3 pavilion (pictured). We also purchased/installed/received our new ice machine for the cart shed and beverage cart, along with our "new" caged maintenance cart (these items are also pictured). These items will make the beverage cart and Pro Shop maintenance positions job tasks operate more efficiently. The new maintenance cart will also allow the driving range to remain open at all times, since we will be able to safely pick range balls as needed.



- Maintenance crews aerated the greens, top dressed, and fertilized. A wetting agent was applied on the greens to absorb water into the soil to prevent the greens from drying out.
- Four seasonal crew members were hired. Two are returning from last season and two are new hires.
- The bunker project was completed with the help of volunteers offering to lay sod alongside our crew members.
- Volunteers still continue to help the staff with course clean-up. These efforts are much appreciated.

Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)

- The Natural Resources staff completed their final prescribed burn at Buffalo Trace in April, burning an additional 7.2 acres.
- The department finished burning several large burn piles at Buffalo Trace from winter clearing projects. (below left) Two of these sites will begin the next phase of weed control, which includes mowing, herbicide application and cover crop planting.
- Although IDNR is responsible for stocking the larger bodies of water, NR staff stocked the smaller ponds with channel catfish. (below right) These ponds include Elks Lake, Collins Pond, and the pond at Hidden Acres.



- In mid-April, NR began its annual Canada goose population control program. Staff visited nests on the island at Stidham Pond at Lake of the Woods and on the island at Willow Pond at Middle Fork. Eggs in each nest were added following the protocol developed by the Humane Society. Activities were carried out under a Class E Nuisance Wildlife Control Permit issued by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.
- Staff are working to control the basal rosettes of herbaceous weed species including garlic mustard, poison hemlock, and wild parsnip.
- As garlic mustard began to bolt and flower, staff pulled this biennial weed throughout many woodland sites, prioritizing the highest quality areas.
- We hosted three volunteer work days in which volunteers removed garlic mustard from natural areas at Middle Fork, Homer Lake, and Lake of the Woods. (above center)

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

Facilities and Exhibits

- Progress continues with the Rankin Collections Care Center. Mark Hanson continued “big ticket” ordering for Rankin Center; shelving and other equipment was delivered as well as partly installed by staff.



Efforts continue to get a security system installed, and Mark led a tour of the facility for the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation.

- We have a new carved duck head display at the Interpretive Center; these were donated to us by the Huber family. Dave's father-in-law was a very talented carver in his retirement days!



- The Museum of the Grand Prairie debuted a new exhibit titled "Personal Resonance: Favorite Artifacts from the Collections" featuring items handpicked by MGP staff, the stories behind these objects, and why they were chosen. The exhibit includes stone tools, arrowheads, & projectile points, artifacts related to baseball, some unstable & flammable hair combs, and historic TIME magazine covers.



- Pam Leiter convened a new nature center strategy session with HQ staff to outline a project timeline, identify fundraising steps and questions, a positive messaging strategy for HLIC/HL, and action steps related to those.
- On May 5th, after lots of preparation, "Pandemics as a Portal to Change: A Community Exhibition" debuted online. This virtual art exhibition features more than 70 entries from community artists who generated works using a variety of artistic mediums all in response to current pandemics taking place (COVID-19, racial injustices, and climate change). It was organized by numerous community organizations including Krannert Art Museum, Urbana Arts and Culture Program, Museum of the Grand Prairie, Champaign County Forest Preserve District, The Urbana Free Library, College of Fine & Applied Arts at the University of Illinois and Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center.
- Department staff continue to create a welcoming and safe atmosphere for patrons as they visit the Museum and Interpretive Center. Visitation seems to be increasing as the weather warms and COVID conditions improve in the community.
- Museum reception staff continue to navigate the complexities of the new museum store POS system, but are feeling more confident in the new software as its use increases.

Programs and Outreach

- Museum staff continue to host virtual field trips and public programs with area students and other interested visitors via Zoom, and provide companion activity kits that visitors pick up in advance of the programs. Topics have included Native American history, butter churning, old fashioned toys & games, “Going to Market,” “Oxcart Man,” “Botany Basics,” 19th century schoolhouse lessons, “Seed Safari,” garden seed share bag, “Wagon’s Ho”, and immigration.
- Stacey Clementz and Cathy Schneider taught several in-person school programs in April – the first in over a year! Jennifer Wick also had her first in-person program since the pandemic - frog call survey field training with nine volunteers in attendance. In-person summer camp registration went live online!
- Stacey and her UPD/Ag in the Classroom partners finished delivering all 4th grade Exploration Kits; 1,492 4th grade students in Champaign County received the kits. Schools that received kits: Barkstall, Bottenfield, Carrie Busey, Dr. Howard, International Prep Academy, Kenwood, Robeson, Southside, Stratton, Booker T. Washington, and Westview in Champaign; Eastlawn, Northview, Pleasant Acres, and Broadmeadow in Rantoul; Ludlow Elementary; Dr. Preston William, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Thomas Paine, Wiley, Leal, and Yankee Ridge in Urbana; Fisher Grade School; Gifford Grade School; and Heritage Elementary.
- Museum staff have received numerous requests from local teachers who are looking to check out artifact lending tubs to supplement history and culture education in local classrooms.
- M/Ed staff, Lisa Sprinkle, and Dave Leake worked together to publish a Dark Sky Resource and Activity Guide during International Dark Sky Week 2021. Hard copies are available at MGP, HLIC, and the Campground, and a digital copy is available on the district website. Pat worked with Dave Leake to present the virtual program “Light Pollution: How it Affects You and What You Can Do About It” during International Dark Sky Week 2021.
- Jennifer’s self-guided Wildflower Walk at Flicker Woods was very popular! Stacey put together the Fairy Houses StoryWalk that went up at the beginning of May at Homer Lake.
- Jennifer hosted botanist Jamie Ellis with INHS for a spring beauties virtual program via Facebook/YouTube live.
- Pam Leiter did a WCIA Morning Show Whys Gals about Toads, wrote an Inside Out article for the News-Gazette “Spring Things Bring a Shift,” was filmed by ciLiving for a story about the wildflower walk, was filmed by Channel 3 for a story about the leopard frogs at the wetland.
- Mark and Pat worked together to write an article for the News-Gazette as part of the Champaign County Museums Network weekly “Inside Out” column. The article is about the new “Personal Resonance” exhibit at the museum.
- M/Ed staff participated in the next edition of the virtual program series titled “Mornings at the Museum.” Staff discussed a theme of “Natural Wonders” during the course of the program.
- Museum staff is working with Thomas Paine elementary to produce a series of videos for use during their summer school programs.
- Pat worked the Central Illinois English Country Dancers and The Flatland Consort to produce some virtual May Day related content.



- Pat and Pam each met with Fred Newport to discuss the museum and ways CAC can help highlight Museum and Interpretive Center initiatives in a future Letters to the Editor campaign.

Collections

- MGP collections staff scheduled and hosted assessors as part of the Collections Assessment for Preservation Program (CAP). Assessors analyze collections at MGP in the lead up to reaccreditation.
- Mark and museum intern Emma are wrapping up digitization work of oral histories from the East Frisian Oral History Collection as part of a grant fund by Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board (ISHRAB)
- Mark continues to work with a vendor on digitization work of the Doris K. Wylie Hoskins Archive for Cultural Diversity.
- Cathy setup and trained staff on new filter system for the red-eared slider, made an oriole feeder, worked with Lisa Sprinkle to revise the Animal Advocate webpage, helped set up the enclosure and a PastPerfect file for the new educational American toad. We discovered that our new toad sometimes sings in his aquarium on rainy afternoons; he even responds to recordings of toads. He's a character!

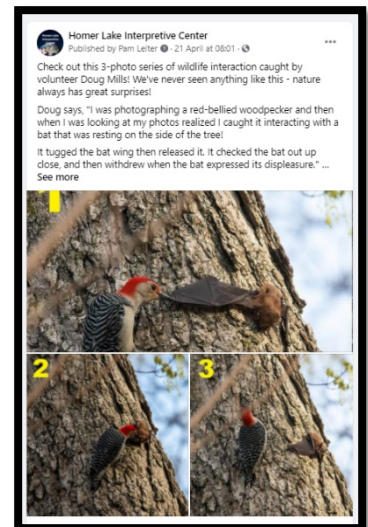


Staff

- MGP staff have been working to interview, on-board, and plan to host 3 interns during the summer season
- Pat wrapped up his ISU graduate class for the semester. The class was titled “Global History of Forced Migration, Refugee, Asylum, and Human Rights” which culminated with Pat submitting a final research paper titled “The Impact of Community Based Organizations in Creating a Welcoming Community for Immigrants & Refugees: Featuring a Case Study of Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.”
- Mark worked with Furat and other district staff as the district email accounts were transferred from district servers to a cloud-based system.

Social Media:

- The Homer Lake Interpretive Center’s Facebook post about the red-bellied woodpecker & bat interaction, caught by volunteer Doug Mills, went viral! In three days, we got over 380 new page followers! David Sibley (*The Sibley Guide to Birds* author) shared the woodpecker-bat Facebook post to his page!
- HLIC Facebook stats, April 1-31: Average Daily Organic Reach: 25,425 (Sum: 762,737); Average Daily Page Engaged Users: 2,431 (Sum: 72,941)
- MGP Facebook stats: April 1-31: Average Daily Organic Reach: 1,527 (Sum: 42,815); Average Daily Page Engaged Users: Average 54 (Sum: 1,605)



Lake of the Woods (Doug Sanders)

- Lake of the Wood operations staff is pleased to announce that Dennis Birge has filled the fulltime maintenance worker position. Dennis comes to us with many years of experience, including pest control, and custodial and preventive maintenance work at Unit 4 School District.
- Congratulations to Tammy Bruehl for successfully completing the four week *Leadership, Innovation, Teamwork (L.I.T.) Workshop Series for Recreation & Event Professionals*. This workshop is an interactive virtual workshop built with a solid foundation of research, a framework of energy and engagement, and constructed with practical strategies to add to one's professional toolkit. Tammy said, "It was a great experience to meet new people in the parks and recreation profession and learn different ways to bring a team together and get results."
- Staff continue winter cleanup and preparation of the grounds for the spring/summer season. This includes mowing, plantings in landscaped beds, replacement of split-rail fences, mulching and leaf cleanup, picking up sticks, and filling potholes.
- All restrooms and rental facilities that were closed over the winter have been re-opened. There has been a steady increase in facility rentals over the past 2-3 weeks.
- Even with the frequent spring showers, Lake of the Woods remains very active with fishing, kids on the playgrounds, family picnics, visitors at the botanical garden and regular walkers/runners.



Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- The campground was quite successful in April for our soft opening. Other than some weather woes, bookings in April were quite high compared to previous years.
- The campground and campground host office has now fully opened for the summer. Much like April, bookings for the month of May are at an all-time high.
- Seasonal staff have returned or started with us for the summer season.
- We continue to see incredible wildlife arriving at our Pt. Pleasant Wetland. Plover, greater and lesser yellow legs, a wide variety of duck species, and of course flocks of sandhill cranes continue to utilize this wonderful area daily.

Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- A special thanks to Joe Hopper for his hard work and dedication, serving 15 years as a seasonal employee here at Homer Lake. We look forward to having him for many more.
- I tagged along with Mike and Bridgette when they attended the Ogden Village board meeting. It was interesting to hear about the plans, as well as the excitement and concerns shared by residents as they anticipate the arrival of the Kickapoo Rail Trail.
- We continue to get very good reports about fishing even though the weather has not been the most cooperative for most fishing



activity yet. The saugeye that were stocked a few years ago are growing very well as you can see in the picture.

Kickapoo Rail Trail

- As noted above, Planning and Homer Lake staff met with Village of Ogden representatives and residents regarding KRT development and discussed construction timelines, desirable future amenities, and maintenance logistics.
- Planning staff prepared a proposal for Federal Transportation earmarks and submitted it to Congresswoman Mary Miller's office.
- A study session with an update on the KRT is planned for the June board meeting at Homer Lake.

District Cultural Competency Initiatives

- Mark and Mary Ellen attended the latest meeting as part of MGP's participation in the Facing Change Initiative led by the American Alliance of Museums.
- Jennifer, Katie, Mark, and Pat continued work with the weekly United Way Equity Challenge.