

April 20, 2023

Memorandum

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Nina Carmichael, Leadership in Conservation Fellow

Re: April staff reports

Executive Management (Lorrie Pearson/Michael Daab)

- The CCFPD will be required to establish an Efficiency Committee by June 9. The IAPD just issued guidance on how to comply with the new state law. The May board meeting will need to include a vote to establish that committee, including naming two community members to the committee. We would welcome ideas for those committee members.
- Lorrie Pearson, Michael Daab, Peter Goodspeed, and Ryan Anderson attended the Central Illinois Region Land Conservation Meeting organized by the Prairie State Conservation Coalition and Grand Prairie Friends and hosted at the Museum of the Grand Prairie on March 22nd. It was a valuable day of information sharing and networking with regional conservation professionals and volunteers as we all seek to take advantage of available resources to institute best management practices in ecological conservation and restoration.
- Michael Daab completed IL Parks and Recreation Association's Financial Sustainability Certification Program. The three-day training offered an excellent opportunity to engage with peers from other agencies as well as strengthen the lens through which we will assess District pricing, programs, and projects in the future.
- Lorrie spoke to about 40 undergraduates in urban and regional planning at the University of Illinois about the forest preserves and careers in the preserves
- Lorrie and other staff attended the ICMA psychological safety workshop
- Michael and Bridgette met with staff from Engineering Resource Associates to discuss design and permitting for several projects along the Sangamon River, including the replacement of the eroded sea wall along Trillium Drive (the main road through Lake of the Woods) and paddling access points at Heron View and River Bend Forest Preserves.
- Lorrie participated in Illinois Office of Broadband's listening tour hosted by the Champaign County Farm Bureau on April 12.

CCFPD Fellow (Nina Carmichael)

- Completed a 6-hour habitat and biological survey training through Illinois Riverwatch alongside Brennan Watson from NR. The focus for these surveys targets aquatic macroinvertebrates, many of which are indicator species, used to assess the water quality of non-ephemeral watersheds which we will be sampling between May and June in previously unmonitored spots throughout CCFPD preserves.

- Attended the United Nations World Water Film Festival held at Columbia University as the featured volunteer in Jason Lindsey's 'Mussel Grubbing: A Citizen Science Treasure Hunt' and celebrated a win for Best Documentary Film!
- Concluded Crucial Conversations Discussion groups with leadership staff across departments
- Will begin as chair of the Employee Engagement Committee next meeting leading the restructuring (form and function) of the DEI committee based on feedback from past members and best practices in the field.



Jason Lindsey (Cinematographer) & Nina Carmichael at WWFF

Planning and Construction (Bridgette Moen)

- Construction has begun on the Shower house improvements at Middle Fork. The crew has been prepping the interior to be repainted.
- The ADA lift at HQ was inspected and the paperwork for the certificate was filed with the State.
- Construction has finished the interior improvements at the Sangamon River Residence.
- Bridgette and Sam attended a webinar hosted by UIUC on public electric vehicle charging options.
- Bridgette has been working on the construction documents for the Dark Skies trail at Middle Fork.
- Sam has been synthesizing data and text for a draft of the Comprehensive Plan, to be presented to the Board for comment in May.
- The kitchen renovations at the Activity Center are nearly complete. The expanded footprint has been framed, sheet-rocked, and painted. A custom serving area was installed as well as paneling to match the existing interior. The room was re-wired and a stove hood was installed. New flooring, countertops, and appliances will be installed next.



Q1 Planning and Construction Update 2023.04.20

Capital Projects

Site	Projects	% Complete	Timing	Labor Type	Budget	Current Notes
BG	Replace Remaining Gravel Walks	100	Q1	Contractor	\$7,757	Complete
BG	Enabling Garden Shade Sails and Planters	10	Q2	In House	\$25,000	Materials delivered, to install after shelter concrete work is complete
BG	Replace Greenhouse and Restrooms	5	Q2-Q4	Contractor	\$750,000	Working w/engineer for construction documents
GC	HVAC	5	Q2	Contractor	\$30,000	Requesting quotes
GC	Irrigation Bid Back 9	15	Q3	Contractor	\$90,000	Approved in March; work to be completed in fall due to supply issue
GC	Cart Path Improvements/Expansion	25	Q4	In House	\$25,000	16 done, 17 excavated
GC	Automated Gate at Entrance	0	Q3	Contractor	\$30,500	
HL	Observation Deck Shelter Replacement	15	Q2	In House	\$15,000	To pour concrete pad soon
HL	HLIC Architecture & Engineering Design (survey)	100	Q1	Contractor	\$50,000	Complete
HL	Timberdoodle Trail	0	Q3	In House	\$34,000	
HL	SFC Sound and Light Improvements	5	Q4	In House	\$11,500	Met with HL Ops 3/31 to discuss options
HL	North Boat Ramp	0	Q4	Contractor/ In house	\$126,100	Grant agreement received; may install in 2024
HL	Collins Pond Fishing Dock	5	Q4	In House	\$11,500	Met with HL Ops 3/31 to discuss options
HQ	Basement Offices and Computer Room	95	Q2	In House	\$87,680	Lift installed, passed inspection, waiting on certificate from State
HV	Canoe & Kayak Access	5	Q3	In House	\$55,000	ERA working on permits
KRT	St Joe - Ogden	5	Q2-Q4	Contractor	\$2,780,166	Working with DCEO on agreement
LOW	Replace Fisherman's Shelter	15	Q2	In House	\$5,000	To demo existing shelter and pour concrete pad soon
LOW	Replace Gate Pillars	50	Q2	In House	\$5,000	Delivered
LOW	Replace West Maintenance Building Roof	50	Q2-Q3	In House	\$15,000	Materials delivered, to install
LOW	Sealcoat	15	Q2	Contractor	\$275,000	All alternates approved at Feb Board meeting
LOW	Storm shelter	10	Q4	In House	\$10,000	Sent quotes to Lorie and John for Approval
LOW	Stream Barbs near Covered Bridge	5	Q3	Contractor	\$320,000	ERA working on documents
LOW	ADA parking	0	Q2	In House	\$5,000	P1
LOW	Hawthorne and Hickory Shelters	15	Q2	In House	\$30,000	Materials delivered
LOW	LOW Dam Spillway Repairs	5	Q3	In House	\$150,000	Working with DCEO on agreement
LOW	Repaint Bridges	0	Q3	In House	\$6,000	Repaint covered bridge and suspension bridge
LOW	BT Wetland	0	Q3-Q4	Contractor/ In house	\$5,000	
LOW	P2 Kitchen/Bathroom	0	Q4	In House	\$25,000	
LOW	Pump House and Irrigation	0	Q4	Contractor/ In house	\$80,000	Dependent on Budget
MF	Shower House updates	20	Q1	Contractor/ In house	\$12,000	Work has begun, to be complete before full campground opening
MF	Activity Center Kitchen	60	Q2	In House	\$16,000	Framing/painting/serving counter complete
MF	Dark Skies Trail	5	Q2-Q4	Contractor/ In house	\$588,000	Working on revised drawings, some areas wetter than anticipated
MF	W/P Fishing access	0	Q2	In House	\$10,000	
MF	Willow Pond Restoration	0	Q2	In House	\$7,000	
MGP	Renovate Blacksmith Exhibit	0	Q4	In House	\$40,000	
RB	Sidewalk Repairs & Adjustments	0	Q2	Contractor	\$10,000	
RB	Canoe Access	5	Q4	In House	\$55,000	Dependent on Budget; ERA working on permits
SR	Replace Second Story Windows	20	Q2	In House	\$11,000	Ordered
SR	Residence Upgrades	90	Q1	In House	\$40,000	Interior complete, may replace gutters if there are funds remaining

Equipment

Site	Projects	% Complete	Timing	Labor Type	Budget	Current Notes
BG	Electric UTV	10	Q3	Vendor	\$38,000	On hold, availability issues
CN	Mini Excavator	100	Q1	Vendor	\$70,000	Feb Approval, delivery in March
GC	Greens Roller	80	Q1	Vendor	\$20,000	April approval
GC	Work Cart	60	Q1	Vendor	\$35,000	April approval
GC	Pro Shop Vehicle	50	Q2	Vendor	\$40,000	Working on quotes
LOW	Electric Van	80	Q1	Vendor	\$65,000	Approved in March
LOW	4x4 Truck	5	Q3	Vendor	\$55,000	On hold, availability issues
MF	Electric Vehicle	80	Q1	Vendor	\$54,000	Approved in March; dealer identified a vehicle

Plans

Site	Projects	% Complete	Timing	Labor Type	Budget	Current Notes
District	Equipment Inventory	100	Q1	In House	n/a	Complete
District	Comp Plan	50	Q3	In House	n/a	Sam developing draft for Board review
HL	Nature Center Feasibility Study	100	Q1	In House	n/a	Complete; presented to Board at March meeting
LOW	BIKE Application	10	Q2	In House	n/a	Due May 15 - LOW Bike Trail Milling
LOW	RTP Application	100	Q1	In House	n/a	Complete

Small Projects

Site	Projects	% Complete	Timing	Labor Type	Budget	Current Notes
GC	Run new cat 5 in clubhouse	100	Q1	In House	n/a	Complete
GC	Chemical Bid	80	Q2	In House	n/a	Board approved - waiting on delivery
HL	HLIC Garage Power	0	Q2	In House	n/a	Power out at garage and the pond
HL	SFC Ridge Cap Repair	0	Q2	In House	n/a	Damaged in storm
LOW	Storywalk Trail Signs	10	Q2	In House	n/a	To be installed after Activity Center is complete
LOW	MGP Schoolhouse Window	100	Q1	In House	n/a	Damaged in storm, repaired
MF	Residence shower	100	Q1	In House	n/a	Complete
MGP	Annex Roof Leak	5	Q3	In House	n/a	Air quality tests conducted, soliciting estimates on roof replacement
MGP	Paint Barb's Office	100	Q1	In House (Ops)	n/a	Complete

Business and Finance (John Baker)

- Confirmed the District's 2022 pay 2023 tax extension with the County Clerk's office.
- Pulled District 2022 vendor list with contact information and total vendor payment last year for Freedom Fest sponsorship consideration.
- Began working with Kathleen Hourigan, new temporary employee, toward addressing financial transaction backlog and systematizing ongoing financial operations and reporting previously handled by the Assistant Finance Director. Toward this end focused on updating all District financial procedures as needed.
- Resolved a credit card transaction discrepancy between Golf financial reports and vendor credit card processing. Met with Finix reservation system representative to review the new settlement process. This review provided the needed information to reconcile the February Busey Bank deposits with the District's financial records for the month. This discrepancy was the reason for the delayed February treasurer's report.
- Met with the Foundation Financial Committee toward crafting an endowment vehicle and policy as an additional donor option.
- Met with CliftonLarsonAllen to revise the audit field work schedule which will now begin May 8.
- Attended a PDRMA workshop on the new process for obtaining cybersecurity insurance. All districts will have to apply by July 1, 2023, for this coverage. PDRMA has contracted with [KYND](#) to assess and assist districts with meeting ten new premium requirements for this coverage. The District IT Team is currently addressing these requirements. KYND will test District systems for vulnerabilities and survey and review District IT practices. KYND provide feedback on the extent to which the District meets the new requirements and recommend actions to address any identified cyberthreat vulnerabilities.
- Received the MSI contract counterproposal for upgrading the District's financial system. The initial contract did not address cybersecurity, so staff had proposed PDRMA recommended additional language. PDRMA is now reviewing the counterproposal.

Human Resources (Dara Edgington, Mary Beck)

- During the month of March, HR processed 11 hires and 0 separations.
- As of April 5th, our total headcount was 97 employees including 49 FT, 16 PT, 31 seasonal, and 1 paid intern.
- The District documented 3 employee injury reports (no-medical needed) and 2 patron incidents over the month of March.
- On March 27th our first Quarterly Connection was held at the Activity Center at Middle Fork. There was a chili, dessert and side dish competition that brought a lot of friendly competition, and a lot of wonderful food! During the event, staff were able to network with other departments, learn and see about what all new is going on (or soon to be!) at Middle Fork including: Willow Pond Restoration/Baermann Restoration Work (Peter and Jennifer Wick), Activity Center updates (Mike Fry), OSLAD Dark Sky Improvements (Bridgette), new staff were introduced, and work anniversary recognition took place.



- On March 29th HQ and Museum staff members (and Museum staff family members) helped do a little cleanup along Lake of the Woods Road by the main entrance during Walking Wednesday. A half hour of time filled a large garbage bag!

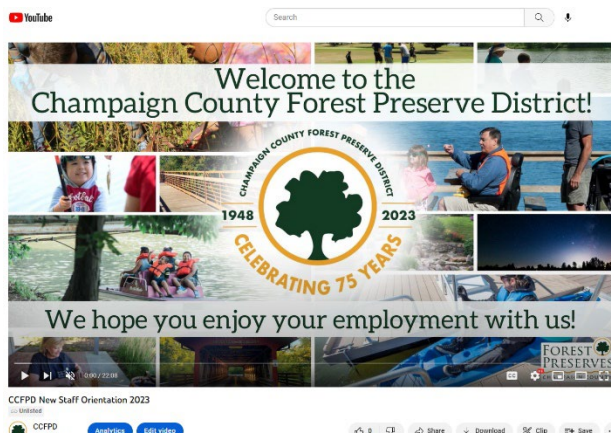
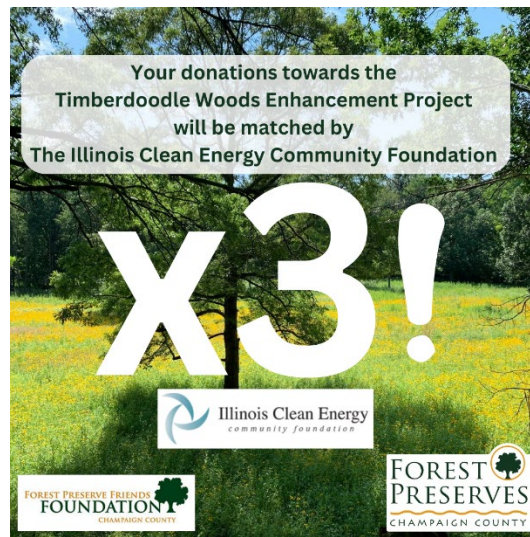
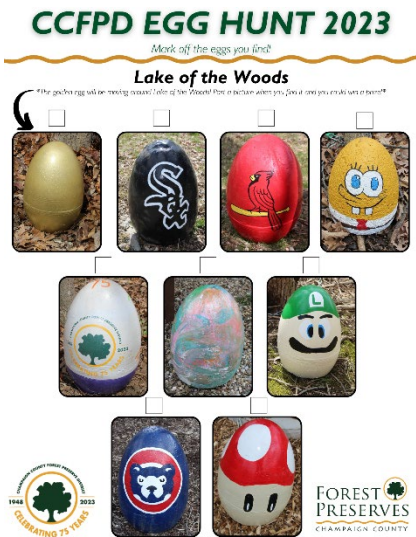
Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- **Media this month included:**
 - <https://www.smilepolitely.com/splog/museum-of-the-grand-prairie-received-the-highest-national-recognition/>
 - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2023/03/26/hunt-for-eggs-champaign-county-forest-preserve-district/>
 - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2023/03/28/fishing-fun-for-families-champaign-urbana-area/>
 - <https://www.wcia.com/news/mahomet-museum-receives-national-recognition-for-50-years-straight/>
 - <https://mahometdaily.com/museum-of-the-grand-prairie-receives-highest-national-recognition/>
 - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2023/03/22/think-warm-thoughts-champaign-urbana/>
 - https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/parks-recreation/inside-out-spring-is-here-at-last/article_2debbf0d-2ed4-50a0-9dda-2530fb2b97d4.html
 - <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/ciliving-stories/ciliving/champaign-county-forest-preserve-district-to-celebrate-75th-anniversary/>
 - <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/ciliving-stories/ciliving/unique-egg-hunt-with-champaign-county-forest-preserve-district/>

CCFPD 75th Anniversary

- Lisa discussed CCFPD's 75th Anniversary stickers and upcoming events on the WCIA Morning Show, March 22.
 - Lisa worked with Pinnacle Promotions to order 75th Anniversary bags for distribution at events this year.
 - Kristin met with the 75th Anniversary exhibits committee to discuss details on the panel design for the exhibit.
 - Lisa worked with a local business, Winderson's Custom Apparel, to get 75th Anniversary t-shirts made for staff and Imperial to get 75th Anniversary hats designed.
- Kristin helped place eggs around the preserves for the CCFPD Egg Hunt, tracked their general locations, and helped to promote the hunt by developing online and print ads as well as social media posts and an Egg Hunt Checklist.
 - Marketing worked with Museum and Education staff to develop online "commercials" for Summer Camp registration and the first Walk with a Naturalist program.
 - Kristin revamped the staff orientation video to help with onboarding new staff.
 - Kristin met with the Sustainability Committee to discuss sustainability efforts and ideas for new strategies to implement/marketing efforts and ideas to use.
 - Lisa worked with the Community Engagement Committee to set up outreach dates for 2023.

- Completed the April/May Leaflet.
- Created a newspaper ad for a new section, Mahomet Directory, in the News-Gazette.
- Lisa sent out an online Freedom Fest Sponsorship link to local businesses and CCFPD vendors. Secured a singer for the National Anthem and trumpet player for TAPS.
- Lisa attended a focus group at Surface 51 for Visit Champaign County and Champaign County Economic Development rebranding efforts.
- Completed and sent out a newsletter (The Tributary) and an invite to an event on April 8 for the Three Rivers Society.



- **Social media followers update.**

	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-	TWITTER	+/-
CCFPD	7,686	+108	3,357	+131	566	-4
KRT	5,053	+41	161	+0	137	-2
MGP	5,364	+26	1,311	+5	258	-7
HLIC	3,463	+33				
GC	2,100	+22	348	+4	117	+3
FPPF	675	+45				

- **Facility Rentals**

2023	2022	March		2023	2022
# Rentals	# Rentals	Preserve	Facility	\$	\$
9	4	HL	Salt Fork Center	\$2,650.00	\$650.00
0	0	HL	Walnut Hill Shelter	\$0.00	\$0.00
0	0	LOW	Botanical Garden Weddings	\$0.00	\$0.00
5	6	LOW	Elks Lake Pavilion	\$2,200.00	\$1,900.00
3	2	LOW	Izaak Walton Cabin	\$360.00	\$240.00
15	4	LOW	Lake of the Woods Pavilion	\$2,450.00	\$1,700.00
0	0	LOW	Lakeview Shelter	\$0.00	\$0.00
0	0	LOW	Riverview Retreat Center	\$0.00	\$0.00
0	0	LOW	Rotary Hill Shelter	\$0.00	\$0.00
0	0	LOW	Sycamore Hollow Shelter	\$0.00	\$0.00
0	1	MF	Activity Center	\$0.00	\$350.00
0	0	RB	River Bend Shelter	\$0.00	\$0.00
32	17		TOTAL	\$7,660.00	\$4,840.00

Notes:

- Activity Center - has been blocked most of the month for the kitchen renovation.
- Lake of the Woods Pavilion - early voting & election creates a higher # than usual.

Grants and Fundraising (Ryan Anderson)

Three Rivers Launch Event – As of 3/23, we had 27 RSVPs including staff, foundation, and two golf committee members. Joie Torres and Mack Drinkwalter are planning a presentation on the impact of the golf course for the Forest Preserves, the improvements that have been made, improvements that are needed, and volunteer opportunities. Gordon Salm, chair of the golf committee may speak to some of these areas also. Lunch options will be expanded to include non-red meat options. Most of the RSVPs from Three Rivers members have mentioned that they are not golfers.

Timberdoodle Woods Fundraising – Social media posts and emails were sent on 3/22 and donations have been coming in. As of 3/27, we have received \$327 of the \$7,000 goal.

- **Dark Skies and International Dark Sky Week** – A Dark Sky Committee has been created from staff and Foundation members to strategize marketing, fundraising, and advocacy to raise the remaining of the Foundation’s \$100,000 commitment for 2023. So far, about \$25,000 has been raised. Staff will create a “case for support” with talking points and photographs. International Dark Sky Week is April 15-22. Staff will send out an appeal during that week. The Champaign Urbana Astronomical Society included the project in their most recent newsletter. Lisa worked with Project Te to design shirts for Middle Fork River staff to sell at the campground store this year. Proceeds to go toward the Dark Sky Trail and Amenities.
- **Champaign County African American Heritage Trail-** The Forest Preserve Friends Foundation purchased a brick for the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail’s latest fundraiser, with a contribution of \$250. The brick, which will be located at Skelton Park in Champaign, will recognize the contribution of the FPF. We believe this will serve as an advertisement for the Foundation in a community we are trying to expand into. The District has a stop on the Heritage Trail: Old Homer Park.
- **Fundraising Campaigns as of 3/23/23:**
 - Dark Sky Trail - \$24,835, goal of \$100,000

Fundraising Trends (as of 3/23/23)

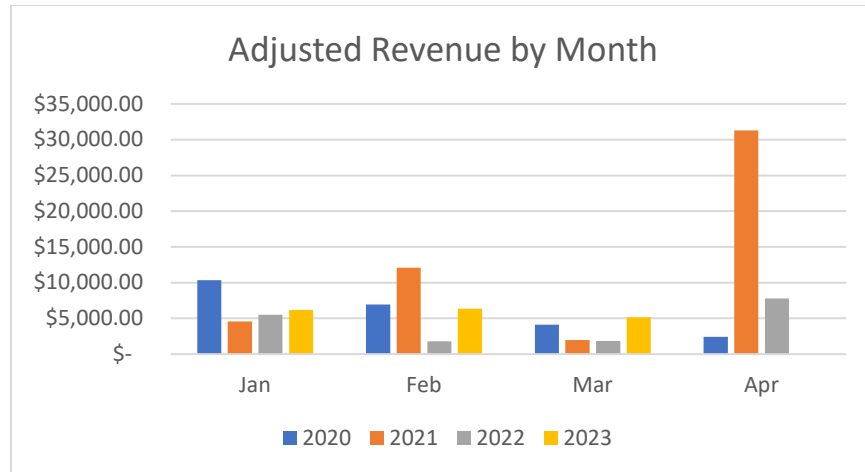
Donations 4 Year Summary

4-year totals:	2020	2021	2022	2023(ytd)
Total \$	\$164,219.10	\$209,832.74	\$207,053.66	\$25,545.88
Total \$ (adjusted)	\$111,738.24	\$174,725.10	\$175,731.78	\$18,787.88
# of donors (adjusted)	341	407	345	96
# of 1st time donors	134	165	87	20

* “Adjusted” numbers have grants and bequests removed Updates to Bloomerang have altered these figures.

Adjusted Revenue by Month (Jan - Apr)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
2020	\$ 10,332.76	\$ 6,919.31	\$ 4,141.05	\$ 2,425.00
2021	\$ 4,575.11	\$ 12,096.66	\$ 1,972.00	\$ 31,291.41
2022	\$ 5,510.12	\$ 1,777.62	\$ 1,836.38	\$ 7,774.04
2023	\$ 6,164.72	\$ 6,365.14	\$ 5,137.02	



*April 2021 included Peninsula Project, John Garvey Memorial, Greg & Ruth Smith Memorial.

**March 2023 is largely from Freedom Fest sponsors.

Volunteer coordinator (Sue Gallo)

- The Golf course's annual spring Volunteer Clean-up event took place in March. We had 42 volunteers and several employees participate in raking, clearing debris from fairways, and piling sticks and branches for the Maintenance crew to relocate. This event helps immensely to get the course in prime shape for the season and was very much appreciated by Golf staff and patrons. Many volunteers associated with the golf course answered David's request for help, but only a couple of our general volunteers seemed to participate. This is an ongoing challenge that Sue will continue to work with the Golf Committee and GC staff to improve.
- March continued to be busier than past years with 12 new applications and a few group service inquiries. Natural Resources staff have been busy with burning, but they managed to make time to start weekly stewarding with this term's Lincoln Challenge Cadets! The same 12 cadets will return each Tuesday for three months for about 2.5 hours to remove woody, invasive, understory plants along the Timberdoodle Trail. Their efforts alone will ensure we surpass the volunteer service hour requirement for the IL Clean Energy Community Foundation stewardship grant.
- The KRT clean-up was postponed twice. Thanks to Kristin for posting and reposting all the changes to Facebook! A Cornerstone Youth service event was postponed as well. Fortunately, volunteers were able to help with a brief trail counter project of Bridgette's.
- Sue attended two webinars, one about 'Spring Cleaning' the volunteer database by Volgistics and the other 'How We Connect: Hopeful and Helpful Data from Today's Volunteers' by VolunteerMatch.com.
- Sue met with Museum and Education supervisory staff to create expectations and procedures for staff requesting volunteers to yield increased engagement and retention.

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

- The month started off unseasonably mild and we had a strong first week of play before things got relatively cold, windy, and wet. We had 1,504 players, which is 500 players above the 5-year average for March. Revenue was strong as well at \$47,461 which is well above the 5-year average of \$33,571.
- March 19th concluded Golf Simulator season and began preparation for Clubhouse and rentals for April. Total revenue for the simulators this winter season (December 1 – March 19) was \$18,190. This is the highest total we've seen in the 10 years of simulator operation at the course. The new Foresight simulator was a huge hit this season for its ease of use, shot reading accuracy, and minimal technical issues. We hope to move forward with selling our old TruGolf unit and adding a second Foresight simulator prior to next offseason. This will allow us to increase revenue, expand the indoor league, and have consistency between the 2 simulators.
- Registration for Junior Clinics, Camps, Academy, and Adult "Get Golf Ready" Lessons opened at the beginning of the year. All programs, with the exception of the Junior Clinics, are filled with waiting lists for this season! We look forward to continuing to grow the game in 2023.
- Larry Denton is finishing the bunker renovation. He has installed the drainage tiles and added sand and is awaiting the delivery of sod to complete the project.
- Maintenance crew has mowed the tees, greens, and fairway. The crew has worked hard on keeping the course in shape after bad weather over two weeks.
- Kudos to Mack Drinkwalter (Assistance Superintendent) on obtaining an Illinois Commercial Pesticide Applicator's License.
- Golf Course Maintenance has a full staff to start the season.

Museum and Education Department (Lorrie Pearson)

Patrons Served

	In-Person Programming*	Online Programming*	Outreach**	MGP Visitation	HLIC Visitation
Jan-23	78	302	423	Closed	40
Feb-23	286	92	35	Closed	48
Mar-23	246	150	90	707	167
YTD	550	544	458	707	255

* Includes all youth and public program opportunities ** Includes loan kits and tabling events

- Staff received news that the Museum of the Grand Prairie was successfully reaccredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the highest national recognition afforded the nation's museums. Accreditation signifies excellence to the museum community, governments, funders, outside agencies, and the museum-going public. The Museum of

the Grand Prairie has been an accredited institution since the accreditation program began in 1972 and is one of only nine Illinois museums outside of the Chicagoland area to receive accreditation. A celebration event is scheduled for May 5 from 6-7:30 pm at the museum and all are invited to attend.

- Collections staff completed the last few loose ends from the Museum Storage Reorganizations project.
- Collections staff completed the assessment of a large number of artifacts identified for potential deaccessioning and crafted a lengthy deaccessioning recommendation.
- George Groschen is wrapping up the new security camera installation at the museum.
- Mark Hanson is coordinating with our selected summer Smith intern and the National Museum of African American Heritage to finalize arrangements for our summer internship project.
- Stacey Clementz and Mark Hanson finalized arrangements for the installation of the new trees exhibit at the Interpretive Center.
- Environmental and cultural field trips are fully booked for April and May. Loan tubs are also very popular with area teachers.
- The department took part in second interviews for the M&E Director position.
- Interviews for summer seasonals are underway for the department.
- Jennifer Wick and Selena Gonzalez are collaborating on a program for the summer reading topic through local libraries that will incorporate both cultural and natural history.
- We had a great turnout at the first Walk with a Naturalist of the year at River Bend. Thanks to Eric Roth from Natural Resources for attending and helping answer patron questions!
- Working with other District staff, Jennifer Wick presented a short talk about frogs and frog calls at the CCFPD Quarterly Connections.
- Jennifer Wick worked with an ornithology class at UIUC to coordinate two dates for the class to meet at HLIC and band birds at the feeder area.
- Pat Cain held the first of several trainings with volunteers interested in helping with a new docent program at MGP. During the training, volunteers got an overview of the program, received several exhibit study sources, and learned tips and tricks to help lead engaging museum tours. Docents will help provide guided tours for visitors during the busiest attendance days at MGP: Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays during the summer months.
- Other programming highlights included the return of popular programs such as the Garden Speaker Series, a Woodcock Walk, & Mini-Garden programs. Staff continued Naturalist in the Classroom visits to local schools, homeschool programs on a variety of topics, additional programming at Champaign Park District's Marten's Center, and much more.

Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)

- In March, the NR team conducted 19 prescribed burns in ecological management units at every preserve except Heron View and the Kickapoo Rail Trail. The burns ranged in size from 1.6 acres to 100 acres. The total acreage of burns accomplished in March by NR was 313 acres. Some notable burns accomplished include:
 - South loop prairie at Middle Fork River (100 acres)
 - Northwest prairie complex at Homer Lake (76 acres)
 - 6 prairie/savanna restoration units at Buffalo Trace (46 acres)
- Staff finished seeding pollinator turf conversion projects at Middle Fork River.
- Controlling invasive herbaceous plants began in March with spot applications of herbicide on the basal rosettes of poison hemlock along the Kickapoo Rail Trail and at various locations in Lake of the Woods.
- Brennan, Emily, and Eric passed their exams for the Illinois Commercial Pesticide Applicator's License
- Other tasks completed by NR in March include the following:
 - Burning brush piles made by volunteers at River Bend and Homer Lake.
 - Prepping prescribed burn units
 - Vehicle and equipment maintenance
- Emily began leading weekly volunteer work days with cadets from Lincoln's Challenge Academy. The group has continued to work on removing invasive bush honeysuckle north of the Homer Lake Interpretive Center and has also helped with storm debris cleanup in the preserve.



Lake of the Woods (Rusty Maulding)

- The Egg Hunt is well underway. Thank you to HQ staff who lent their artistry to several eggs, to my fellow Site Superintendents for hosting eggs at their preserves and Lisa Sprinkle and Kristin Rose for marketing the program so well. A special thanks to Jaymie Huffman for creating new designs as well as retouching most of the eggs and of course, the rest of the BG crew for lugging 40+ lbs eggs all over the District!

- To increase visibility and deter after-hours activity, the front vestibule paneling was removed at the entrance to the Peninsula restroom. It seems much more inviting now with the entrances more visible.



- Self-produced wood chips have been added around utility areas to lessen maintenance needs throughout the season. Landscape garden

beds are being topped off with a higher quality bark mulch that lessens nitrogen draft and decomposes quicker to enrich the plantings as well as deter new weeds, reduce water needs and better regulate soil temperatures.

- With nighttime lows climbing, all standalone restrooms without heat have had water turned back on and are open except Peninsula where some winter damage is being addressed. All rental facilities without heat are on schedule to be reopened by April 15. We are now awaiting the well sample approval to come back from Public Health before changing the status.
- Seasonal clearing of woody invasive plants is about to end. Botanical Gardens and Operations staff took full advantage of very few snow days and above normal temperatures throughout most of the winter. More than 10 acres of dense honeysuckle, mulberry, hedge and pear was cleared by hand and stumps treated to prevent regrowth. This work was largely in higher visibility areas and along trail edges. We also completed approximately 4.25 acres of timber stand improvement where staff worked with Natural Resources to determine which species and sizes of trees should be thinned to help restore a more natural ecological balance.
- Tyler Courson and Bruce Colravy attended a field burn class in March and they have assisted NR in several burns as they continue towards earning their prescribed burn manager certification.
- Over the winter about 5,000 sq ft of turf along the west edge of the Botanical Garden was identified to transition to bed space. That work began with killing the turf recently. This opens opportunities to move perennial plants from Discovery Garden during construction, and helps create a future location for further screening material to help buffer road noise from Rt 47.
- Planning for fall plant installations has begun. As one example, we are planning to convert some difficult to maintain turf on the north side of the hill by the Botanical Garden waterfall to a pollinator style planting that



will improve the aesthetic for wedding pictures once established, decrease maintenance needs in this steep and very compacted location as well as improve safety for staff.

Homer Lake (Skylar Smith)

- Assisted NR with prescribed burns near the natural playscape and the northwest prairie.
- Performed a prescribed burn on the south side of the dam to prevent the growth of woody species.
- Forestry mowed along the West Lake Trail to widen edges.
- Assisted with Central High School NHS students who cleared honeysuckle at the Salt Fork Center and along the West Lake Trail.



- Met with Planning to discuss capital improvements around the Preserve.
- Serviced mowers in preparation for mowing season.
- Hired two seasonal employees: Jack Setterdahl and Rowan Denmark-Collins.
- After a 16 month wait we finally received a new RTV from Birkey's. This new RTV is going to be excellent for KRT maintenance as it has a full cab and travels slightly quicker than the old RTV's.

Middle Fork (Matthew Kuntz)

- The Harry L. Swartz campground has started its soft opening for the month of April. Camping has been slow due to weather on the weekends but is picking up as the temperature rises.
- Middle Fork staff have been prepping the campground for the upcoming season as well as several natural landscape areas at the preserve.
- A much anticipated fully electric Polaris vehicle should be arriving by the end of the month.

Equity in Action

- As of 04/11 Nina is one session shy of completing the NRPA Equity in Practice certificate training and plans to share what she's learned at the Risk Management team.