

January, 7 2022

## **Memorandum**

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Nina Carmichael, Leadership in Conservation Fellow

Re: January staff reports

### **Executive Director (Lorrie Pearson)**

- Networked with community leaders and the incoming executive director of the Champaign Park District (CPD) at CPD's outgoing director's retirement celebration.
- Assisted with the planning of retirement celebration for our own Barb Garvey (scheduled for January 17).
- HR launched the search for a new Director of Museum and Education, and we are reviewing applications.

### **Leadership in Conservation Fellow (Nina Carmichael)**

- Completed the NWCG S-190 introduction to wildland fire behavior course online
- Attended the Find Your Voice: A Public Speaking and Improv Workshop with Dara, Lisa, Sam, Mary.
- Prepared holiday letters of appreciation to our volunteers along with Angie, Sue, Millie, Dara, Mary, and Sam.
- Assisted Natural Resources with a 60-acre prescribed burn at Middle Fork
- Attended a walk with a naturalist program led by Jennifer at Homer Lake which doubled as a birthday party for Lorrie and last farewell to Seasonal Naturalist Quinn. Selena, Dara, Ryan, Cathy, Jennifer, Kristin, Skylar, Sue, and a few patrons were there as well!



### **Planning and Construction (Bridgette Moen)**

- The HQ ADA lift was started by the contractor. Unfortunately, one of the doors to the lift was damaged during shipping. As a result, the installation will not be finalized and operational until the new door is delivered. Furnishings were ordered for the new conference space at Headquarters.
- Construction started work on the Sangamon Residence updates. Justin, Clint, and Jake have insulated the attic and started painting. One of the bathrooms will be renovated,

carpet in one of the bedrooms will be replaced, and a contractor will resolve an issue with the well.

- Mike Fry, Justin, and Tammy prevented a safety hazard by resolving an electrical short of the outdoor lighting line at Lake of the Woods. Thanks to Operations and Construction for quickly identifying and correcting the issue!
- Construction helped assist and repair a broken city water line behind the clubhouse.
- A new procedure for Small Projects Tracking was developed and issued to staff to improve communication and allow for more effective project prioritization. The new system will allow planning and construction to better track resources spent on small projects to more accurately anticipate budget and time needs for this work.
- Sam has been coding SWOT results from the Board, staff, CAC, and the Foundation for the Comprehensive Plan.
- Sam was trained to assist with bids/procurement and will be leading equipment procurement this spring.
- Bridgette completed the PDRMA HELP for New and Part-Time Supervisors training program which includes a series of webinars and a workshop on recruitment/hiring, equal employment opportunity, reasonable accommodations, and performance management.

### **Business and Finance (John Baker)**

- Communicated with CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) about the 2022 audit and initial financial data (updated internal control procedures, bank confirmations, purchasing samples) to provide reviewers. Full fieldwork is scheduled for the first two weeks in April.
- Issued audit assignments to employees and departments which handle financial transactions. Began reviewing submissions, journaling accruals and responding to CLA requests.
- Implemented year-end closing procedures in our MSI financial system including transferring 2022 year-end fund and account balances to the 2023 balance sheet. Transferred the 2023 budget data into the general ledger and closed the budget planning and accounts payable modules for 2022.
- Shared the approved 2023 budget with department heads and budget managers.
- Worked with Dara and Mary for the first January payroll to ensure accuracy of all employee pay rates, benefits, leave, and other updated data to eliminate payroll errors and minimize the related financial reconciliation needed to “balance the books.”

### **Human Resources (Dara Edgington, Mary Beck)**

- During the month of December, HR processed one hire and 14 separations of seasonal employees, resulting in a turnover rate of 17.87% for the month.
- As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, our total headcount was 74 employees including 49 FT, 17 PT, 7 seasonals, and 1 paid intern.
- The District documented zero incidents with PDRMA over the month of December.
- The annual United Way campaign was held throughout November and ended early December. This year’s campaign saw donor participation decrease from 32% of staff to

22%. Total contributions also decreased from \$4,292 to \$3,436. While a decrease to community giving is a bit disheartening, it is not unsurprising given the current levels of inflation.

- Once again, the District has received the \$1,500 cash incentive from PDRMA (letter attached) in recognition of our excellent loss control numbers. Thank you to all staff for making safety a top priority, and a special thank you to our fabulous Risk Management Coordinator, Mary Beck, for leading the way.
- On December 7<sup>th</sup>, HR conducted a supervisory training for all people managers. Twenty-nine members of staff convened at the Salt Fork Center to review legal & compliance updates, foundational principles of supervision, and engage in discussion about the sorts of leadership behaviors we want to promote amongst our team.
- Staff participated in an engagement survey—administered by the Employee Engagement Committee—throughout the month of November. The committee is in the final stages of compiling results into an accessible yet comprehensive format(s) for wider review. In the interim, we can share that two of the largest take-a-ways from the survey were a) staff would like to see us improve internal communication and b) would like more opportunities to gather for teambuilding and camaraderie. Addressing these issues will require a multiple-pronged approach, but immediate next steps include establishing quarterly all-staff events in 2023 and issuing baseline communication standards for staff. Staff will keep the Board apprised of employee engagement efforts throughout 2023.

## Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Media this month included:
  - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/12/06/holiday-photos-around-champaign-urbana/>
  - <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/ciliving-stories/ciliving/holiday-happenings-with-champaign-county-forest-preserve-district/>
  - <https://letscampsmore.com/middle-fork-campground/>
  - [https://www.news-gazette.com/news/big-10-whos-your-pick-for-2022s-person-of-the-year-part-3/article\\_325be11e-bcaa-5e4a-9b83-4d408282fd3c.html](https://www.news-gazette.com/news/big-10-whos-your-pick-for-2022s-person-of-the-year-part-3/article_325be11e-bcaa-5e4a-9b83-4d408282fd3c.html)
  - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/12/15/winter-break-things-to-do-champaign-urbana/>
  - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/12/28/happy-new-year-champaign-urbana/>
  - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/12/27/christmas-tree-collections-champaign-urbana/>
- Created templates/panel designs, and a video for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibit.
- Created print material and social media content that focused on year-end fundraising, thanking donors, and reviewing achievements the district made with the help of donors:

### *Throughout 2022, your donations have....*



- Replaced the damaged roof on the Lake of the Woods Covered Bridge
- Restored native habitats across the 7 preserves
- Added 10 amenities to trails throughout the preserves
- Hosted 11 summer concerts
- Completed 12 capital projects
- Digitized valuable archival materials in the Doris K. Wylie Hoskins Archive
- Constructed a new 1.5 mile stretch of the Kickapoo Rail Trail
- Restored Willow Pond at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve
- Created a new accessible recreation area at the Lake of the Woods

*Thank you!*

Your donations have contributed so much to Champaign County Forest Preserve District. One project that you helped complete this year was construction on the Covered Bridge at Lake of the Woods. The Covered Bridge is a monument of Lake of the Woods and in early October of 2022 you made it possible to completely renovate the roof. Thank you for keeping this important landmark in tip-top shape. Champaign County Forest Preserve District

### *All Thanks to You!*






Forest Preserve Friends Foundation

December 21 at 9:39 AM · 🌐


...

Before the year ends, we wanted to recap some of the capital projects that we were able to work on this year!

- 1) Opened a new stretch of the Kickapoo Rail Trail in Ogden.
- 2) The renovation of Willow Pond at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve.
- 3) Nine new, ADA compliant water fountains were installed at the Harry L. Swartz Campground at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve.
- 4) Resurfacing to the main Lake of the Woods Road entrance, the road by Elks Lake Pavilion, and up to Izaak Walton Cabin, and patching has been done to the Museum parking lot, and Hawthorn Hill parking lot.
- 5) A new roof on the Covered Bridge at Lake of the Woods.




Before renovation



After renovation





Forest Preserve Friends Foundation

Yesterday at 8:59 AM · 🌐


...


The year is quickly coming to an end! We wanted to give one more thank you to our donors and to all who have made contributions to the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation and Champaign County Forest Preserve. If you are considering a donation, there is still time!

<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/ccfpff...>




Choose how you donate:


- 1) The Foundation's Greatest Need: when you make a donation under this category, your c... See more





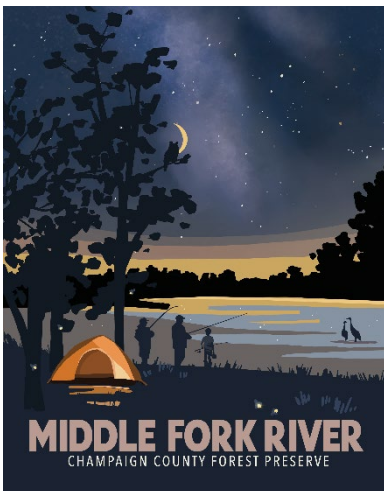
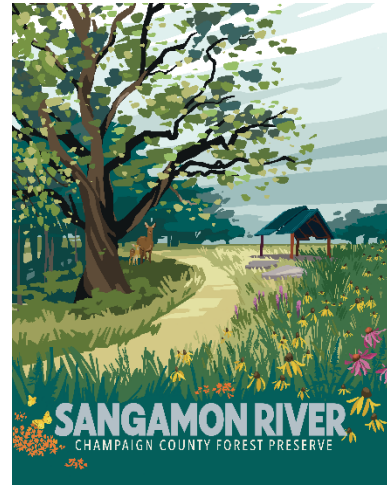
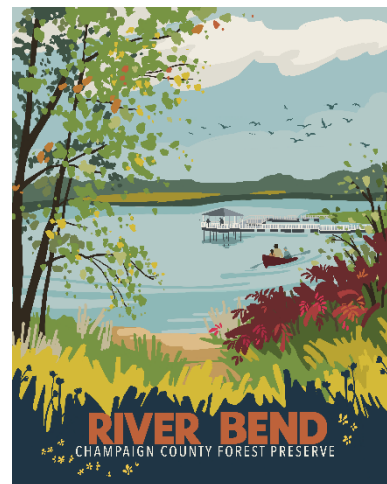
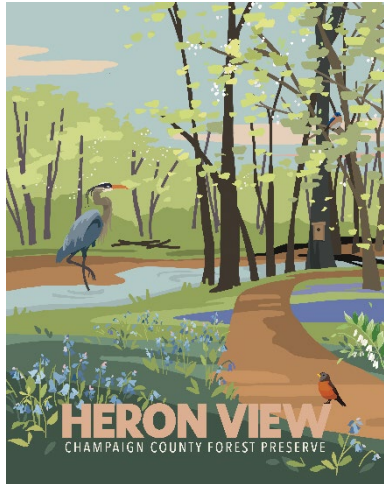
The Foundation's Greatest Need





- Lisa worked with a local artist, Marla Beyer, to design posters of each preserve to help celebrate the District's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2023. The designs will be used on various marketing materials throughout 2023 as prizes and posters will be sold online and in the Museum store.



- |       | FACEBOOK | +/- | INSTAGRAM | +/- | TWITTER | +/- |
|-------|----------|-----|-----------|-----|---------|-----|
| CCFPD | 7,458    | +49 | 3,147     | +30 | 570     | +0  |
| KRT   | 4,953    | +43 | 159       | +2  | 139     | -   |
| MGP   | 5,398    | +15 | 1,288     | +10 | 265     | +1  |
| HLIC  | 3,438    | +26 |           |     |         |     |
| GC    | 2,072    | +12 | 336       | +0  | 114     | +0  |
| FPPF  | 626      | +14 |           |     |         |     |

- | Nov-22                        |          |                            |                 |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| # Rentals                     | Preserve | Facility                   | \$              |
| 7                             | HL       | Salt Fork Center           | 1,450.00        |
| 0                             | HL       | Walnut Hill Shelter        | -               |
| 0                             | LOW      | Botanical Garden Weddings  | -               |
| 9                             | LOW      | Elks Lake Pavilion         | 2,275.00        |
| 9                             | LOW      | Izaak Walton Cabin         | 1,730.00        |
| 14 *                          | LOW      | Lake of the Woods Pavilion | 1,275.00        |
| 0                             | LOW      | Lakeview Shelter           | -               |
| 0                             | LOW      | Riverview Retreat Center   | -               |
| 0                             | LOW      | Rotary Hill Shelter        | -               |
| 0                             | LOW      | Sycamore Hollow Shelter    | -               |
| 1                             | MF       | Activity Center            | 525.00          |
| 0                             | RB       | River Bend Shelter         | -               |
| <b>26</b>                     |          | <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>7,255.00</b> |
| * 9 are early voting/election |          |                            |                 |
| Dec-22                        |          |                            |                 |
| # Rentals                     | Preserve | Facility                   | \$              |
| 6                             | HL       | Salt Fork Center           | 1,950.00        |
| 0                             | HL       | Walnut Hill Shelter        | -               |
| 0                             | LOW      | Botanical Garden Weddings  | -               |
| 1                             | LOW      | Elks Lake Pavilion         | 200.00          |
| 4                             | LOW      | Izaak Walton Cabin         | 690.00          |
| 4                             | LOW      | Lake of the Woods Pavilion | 1,700.00        |
| 0                             | LOW      | Lakeview Shelter           | -               |
| 0                             | LOW      | Riverview Retreat Center   | -               |
| 0                             | LOW      | Rotary Hill Shelter        | -               |
| 0                             | LOW      | Sycamore Hollow Shelter    | -               |
| 0                             | MF       | Activity Center            | -               |
| 0                             | RB       | River Bend Shelter         | -               |
| <b>15</b>                     |          | <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>4,540.00</b> |

		2019	N/C	2020	N/C	2021	N/C	2022	N/C
LOW	P1	51	23	26	11	45	11	68	47
	Receptions	8	0	7	0	9	0	15	0
	P2	45	71	12	51	44	22	68	30
	Receptions	12	0	3	0	13	0	16	0
	IWC	46	15	11	5	38	5	53	16
	Receptions	0	0	0	0	4	0	3	0
	RRC	23	1	1	0	13	2	22	1
	Receptions	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	LVS					7	4	15	3
	RHS	28	4	14	5	32	7	39	2
	SVS / RBS	8	0	3	2	3	0	1	0
	SHS	15	1	6	0	6	1	12	1
	TOTAL	236	115	84	74	214	52	312	100
HL	SFC	59	26	19	8	60	17	78	26
	Receptions	15	0	4	0	19	0	8	0
	WHS	31	29	5	0	29	10	30	17
	TOTAL	105	55	28	8	108	27	116	43
MF	ACC	31	24	5	5	23	15	13	14
	Receptions	1	0	1	0	2	0	6	0
	TOTAL	32	24	6	5	25	15	19	14
BTG		1		1		8	0	12	3
Totals	Subtotal	373	194	103	87	308	99	411	160
	Weddings	36		16		47	0	48	0
		409	194	119	87	355	99	459	160
	Grand	603		206		454		619	

N/C = No Charge Rentals (Includes: Complimentary / Programs / Employee Rentals)

## Grants and Fundraising (Ryan Anderson)

- The District received an award through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Boat Access and Area Development (BAAD) grant program for \$80,000. This will help fund a new accessible dock and improvement to the existing boat launch at the north end of Homer Lake. The Foundation has committed to raise \$20,000 for this project as grant match.
- The Foundation was featured in the News-Gazette, along with other non-profits, as part of their year-end charity highlights. The feature discussed the new Greenhouse project and solicited donations.
- Fundraising Campaigns as of 12/30/22:
  - Night Lights - \$ \$1400 (tentative)
  - Greenhouse - \$15,620, goal of \$23,100.
  - Dark Sky Trail - \$21,686, goal of \$100,000
  - Three Rivers - \$27,560 (includes donations over \$1,000)

## Volunteer coordinator (Sue Gallo)

- We had six new volunteer applications again last month. December was focused on year-end tasks and writing up reflections for Coaching for Success.
- Purchased volunteer T- shirts! Many thanks to Lisa for helping with the logo. Additionally, this year's volunteer appreciation gift was purchased (it's a secret!) again with Lisa's collaboration.
- Updated several sections of our volunteer database to ensure all information is current. Final service numbers will be included in next month's board report.
- The Night Lights event had a turnout of 18 volunteers! Many stated that they would happily participate again. One volunteer said:  
"I helped out 2 Saturdays... Both nights were absolutely delightful! The folks that came through the walk were happy and loved the light display. I heard no negative comments either night. The fires at both ends of the walk were warm and comforting. Your Lake of the Woods staff were great! I will be happy to help out again in the future!"
- Lastly, the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) collection tour for volunteers had 11 volunteers register and was really appreciated by the attendees: "We so enjoyed the tour



yesterday. We are still talking about it all and we may have overloaded our family dinner guests last night as we described the highlights....”



Photos: Dr. Enrique Santoyo Brito and Dr. Tommy McElrath educate CCFPD volunteers about the world-class collections at the Illinois Natural History Survey

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

- December concluded a record-breaking year for us financially. For the first time, we finished with revenue of over \$1 million for the year. Our December revenue was \$76,959 bringing the yearly total to \$1,230,716. Removing the 2023 early bird season pass sales, we finished the year of 2022 at \$965,269 (not including the pass revenue from the previous sale). As of the end of 2022, we have sold 639 Anniversary passes (2023-2024) and 68 Platinum passes (2023).
- Despite the weather, we managed to stay open until December 14<sup>th</sup> and had 137 rounds played. In total, we had 36,213 rounds played in 2022, which is almost identical to the numbers of 2021, yet, nearly 10,000 rounds above the 5-year average of 26,703.
- We opened the golf simulators for play in December. Located in the Clubhouse, we currently have 2 simulators operational. We still have the TruGolf simulator, which was purchased in 2019 and operates using sensors and an overhead light which are connected to the E6 Connect computer software. The usage for this simulator is \$25 per hour. The newly purchased “Sim in a Box” is from Foresight Sports. It is operated through a launch monitor, which is more accurate reading of the swing, and is also connected to the E6 Connect software for practice or play. This simulator is \$35 per hour for use. David and Jason have already had numerous lessons and fittings on the simulators and will begin our Simulator Golf League in January. The Simulators will be operational through early March, with hours being 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Friday through Sunday.
- David, Jason and I spent the majority of December preparing and training (via Zoom) for the transition of our Tee Sheet/Point of Sale system from GolfNow to ForeUp. We had increasingly become dissatisfied with the customer service and use of our tee times by GolfNow and decided to explore making a switch last year. ForeUp had the most impressive demo presentation along with the features that we were looking to utilize. This will take some time for staff to get used to, since GolfNow (originally Fore Reservations) has been our only POS system since 1997. We are excited for this change and it should make the entire process (sales, check-in, reservations, online bookings, etc.) for staff and patrons much more user-friendly. It will also save us a nice chunk of change



from year to year and allow us to have full control of our tee sheet. The ForeUp software went live on January 3, 2023.

- Golf Course Assistant and Equipment Manager completed painting benches, golf tee blocks, ball washers and driving range signs.
- The crew continues to work on grinding reels, sharpening blades, and servicing equipment.

## Museum and Education Department (Lorrie Pearson)

	<b>In-Person Programming</b>	<b>Not In-Person Programming</b>	<b>MGP Visitation</b>	<b>HLIC Visitation</b>
Oct-22	1,890	225	984	333
Nov-22	716	0	548	112
Dec-22	414	0	560	56
YTD	10,786*	4,356	9,201	2,725
	*Measured in number of patrons reached (includes all youth and public program opportunities)	*Measured in number of views or virtual patrons in attendance (includes all youth and public program opportunities)	*Measured in number of patrons visited during open hours	*Measured in number of patrons visited during open hours

*\*YTD In-Person Programming Numbers includes a large increase from last month. This is due to the inclusion of programming numbers now included from MF Summer Campground programming.*

- The carved poles in the museum stairwell have been removed and retired. Thanks to Mike F. and the construction crew for their quick and clean work! They were not mission relevant and stood as examples of cultural appropriation. As recommended through expert consultation, they were burned out of respect to indigenous worldviews. A position paper outlining the decisions, process, and outcome is on file with collection staff. This paper also includes talking points.
- The Museum Storage Reorganization Project is underway. The project reorganizes 1,600 artifacts, includes all three storage locations, and relocates 900 artifacts to new storage locations. The project facilitates the continued removal of artifacts from the Sangamon shed, addresses issues outlined in the Collections Care Plan, and improves collections preservation and management overall.
- District staff response to the opportunities provided to participate in the Museum Storage Reorganization Project have been widespread and generous. Thank you! There are still slots for anyone interested. The sign up may be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/t2m5hduf>.
- We say goodbye to Quinn Powers, Seasonal Naturalist. We have been very lucky to have him the past two years assisting with school programs, summer camp and animal care. We wish him luck with graduate school.

- We also say good bye to Christy Wallace, Activities Coordinator (April-November). This has been her 15<sup>th</sup> year working for the CCFPD and we will miss her.
- Cathy Schneider held her second Animal Advocates open house with ten people in attendance. Animal Advocates is a program that supports the education animals housed at the Interpretive Center. All proceeds go toward the care and feeding of the animals.
- Other program happenings this month included Winter holiday programs at local libraries, a return of two popular holiday programs, “To Grandmother’s House We Go!” and “Homer for the Holidays,” and participation in local YMCA programming titled “Y on the Fly.” Thanks to all staff involved in these internal and external collaborations!
- For the first time, the museum hosted “Escape the Museum,” an escape-room style program utilizing museum exhibit spaces and content. Participants from the public were tasked to solve a mystery through a series of puzzles all placed throughout the museum. The escape room was put on in collaboration with students and instructors from the University of Illinois’ iSchool, CU Community Fab Lab, College of Fine & Applied Arts, and Department of Theatre. Staff hope to reopen the escape room for future programming seasons as well internal team building opportunities among district staff.
- Earlier this month, Pat Cain successfully graduated with an M.S. degree in History from Illinois State University. Pat would like to thank the district for supporting him as he furthered his education. This achievement would not have been possible without the help of many district staff members along the way and the district’s Tuition Reimbursement benefit.

### **Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)**

- The NR team completed its last prescribed burn of the year on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The prescribed burning program was very successful in 2022 with a total of 503 acres burned, of which 281 acres were burned in the fall.
- As more wet and humid weather arrived in east-central Illinois, NR burned several brush piles that had accumulated during the growing season.
- Staff planted a turf conversion site along the road near the museum at Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve. Once fully restored, this area will be a showy pollinator prairie lining a high traffic area.
- The department began transitioning to more winter chainsaw work and began cutting and treating invasive woody shrubs and trees.
- NR hosted a Winter Solstice volunteer day at Homer Lake Forest Preserve where many volunteers and staff from other departments cut and burned invasive bush honeysuckle.



### Lake of the Woods (Rusty Maulding)

- The successful Night Lights program at Mabery Gelvin Botanical Gardens concluded on December 31. We appreciate all the staff, volunteers (including Commissioners) who helped make the event special for the thousands of patrons that attended. Below are a few items of note.
- Total attendance was 3205 – down somewhat from last year, but due to extreme weather we had to cancel the event over the Christmas weekend - which was by far our best attended weekend last year. Our best attendance night this year coincided with the Museum and Education event “To Grandmother’s House We Go!” Thank you to Pat Cain for coordinating with us to strengthen both programs.
- The program ran for 6 weekends from Black Friday through New Year’s Eve. There were 3 dates cancelled due to weather which was 1 more than last year.
- Planning for 2023 is already underway. After-Christmas sales provided a great opportunity to continue expanding and refining the program and many materials were purchased at steep discounts in preparation for next year.
- Weather was excellent in early December for invasive honeysuckle clearing. Botanical Garden and Operations staff have already cleared out 3.5 acres of dense invasives. Stumps were treated to prevent regrowth. The crew is almost giddy to continue that work over the winter.



### Homer Lake (Skylar Smith)

- Homer Lake staff began the process of forestry mowing along the West Lake trail, as invasive species have narrowed the path and obstructed views of the lake.
- We prepared our trucks and tractors for snow removal in anticipation of the winter storm.
- Time was available for some much-needed workshop organization, which is creating more efficient work spaces.
- Trees and invasive shrubs were pruned back along the roads and guardrails throughout the preserve.

### **Middle Fork (Matthew Kuntz)**

- Continuing education has been a theme at Middle Fork for the last month. Webinars, training, and license renewals have taken place with all staff.
- We have continued invasive removal on the northern portion of the Middle Fork around the Miner's Trail System.
- Staff met with Planning to discuss the OSLAD Trail System project slated for 2023.
- The preserve and its facilities survived the frigid temperatures during the Christmas season. Very little snow accumulated.
- We are looking into SMS Messaging systems to hopefully have in place for the camping season this year. I feel this will be a valuable communication tool to our campers and guests during their stay and to advertise potential programs taking place.

### **Equity in Action**

- An all-staff event, organized by Mike Daab, was held on December 14<sup>th</sup> at the Elks Pavilion to view an IAPD sponsored webinar on the Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) strategies recently implemented by the Forest Preserves of Cook County. After the webinar, staff joined together in a cross-departmental discussion on how to better identify tangible steps we could take here at CCFPD to advance our DEI efforts.
- Lorrie, Dara, and Nina met about refreshing the DEI committee and began identifying objectives for action and participation.
- Nina was accepted into the extremely competitive first cohort of NRPA's Equity in Action program. Lorrie was invited to participate in the second cohort, starting in April.
- The contract and purchase order for our 2023 [Smithsonian \(NMAAHC\) Smith internship](#) are fully signed. Intern recruitment begins in February and work will start in early June. The intern will continue processing the oral history collection contained in the Doris Hoskins archive.