

February 10, 2023

## **Memorandum**

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Nina Carmichael, Leadership in Conservation Fellow

Re: February staff reports

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

- Began series of appreciation lunches with departments, starting with Homer Lake Ops and Pro Shop/Golf Maintenance.
- Began talking to groups about our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, starting with a discussion with City of Champaign staff on January 12. There I learned about other places we could display and sell our 75th-branded merchandise.
- A total of nine staff: Blair, Lisa, Nina, Sam, Bridgette, Rusty, Skylar, Kristin, and myself and Commissioner Kerins attended the IPRA/IAPD conference. My most valuable session was on Becoming a Values-Driven Organization and the most valuable other organized event was the meeting of the Illinois Association of Forest Preserves and Conservation Districts (IAFPCD). I also took the opportunity to get to know Sarah Sandquist, Champaign Park District's new Executive Director, better over lunch. Staff all enjoyed getting to know our colleagues better as we continue to build our CCFPD team. We shared highlights from the conference at the February Risk Management meeting so that all staff can benefit from our take-aways.



- Organized and attended first of what will be a regular meeting of executive directors from UPD/CPD/CCFPD.
- Attended breakfast of area women who lead organizations (including Commissioner Sarah Livesay) to welcome Sarah Sandquist to the community.

### **CCFPD Fellow (Nina Carmichael)**

- Assisted with the Museum storage re-organization by entering photographs of artifacts into the museum database (PastPerfect)

- Participated in the training with Patrick (new hire) facilitated by Stacey and Catherine on school programs, summer camps, and animal care at the Homer Lake Interpretive center.
- Scheduled dates for additional department heads to begin *Crucial Conversations* discussion sessions.
- Continuing to work with Dara, Lorrie, and Mike on restructuring the DEI committee so its efforts can be more active and streamline for the members and the District.
- Began the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Equity in Practice Certificate Program (02/14).

## Planning and Construction (Bridgette Moen)

- Sam and Bridgette attended IPRA. Highlights below:
  - **Interactive Mapping:** Learned methods for using GIS interactive maps that staff can use to locate utilities and other preserve features. Also learned how to make maps where the public can see what trails look like before they use them, learn what amenities are available, and read information about different sites.
  - **Dredging:** Learned about different dredging methods and alternatives to full lake dredging. Comprehensive planning for lake management District-wide is needed both for maintenance and budgeting. Need to identify potential large-scale capital projects and smaller in house work to ensure long-term sustainability of water bodies.
  - **Cooperative purchasing:** Reminder to regularly check for cooperative purchasing options, which could save significant staff time in procurement, and to vet the cooperative's bidding process before utilization. Learned of an IPRA portal of recommended cooperatives that follow State procurement laws.
  - **Bidding:** Helpful reminders to check for State minimum bonding requirements for construction. Recommendations to develop a consistent substitution process for bid submittals.
  - **Net zero construction:** Learned of the importance of dedicated facility managers if net zero is desired because of the highly complex mechanical systems.
  - **Land acquisition:** Learned alternative acquisition strategies which may incentivize the seller such as phased payment sales, lease-purchases, and option contracts.
- Sam, Bridgette, and Ryan have started the application for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Recreational Trails to renovate a portion of the Lake of the Woods Bike Path. Sue is coordinating with volunteers to conduct usage surveys, which will help us verify trail counter data and support the grant application.
- The well at the Sangamon Residence has been fixed and carpet for the bedrooms has been ordered. Painting is complete and work on refinishing the hardwood has begun.
- Clint and Jake prepared the forms for the Storywalk signs to be installed at Lake of the Woods.
- Construction is working on bathroom improvements at the Middle Fork residence.
- Clark Dietz, on behalf of the Village of St Joseph, contacted Planning about the potential need for an easement for substantial sewer improvements which will require temporary closure of the KRT. Planning met with the engineer to request more information and we anticipate presenting a request for approval to the Board for the easement in late spring.

## Business and Finance (John Baker)

- Initiated year end closing and review procedures in preparation for the annual audit.
- Held budget debrief session with the Lorrie, Mike, and Dara to identify achievements and improvements to be considered in the 2024 budget preparation.
- Participated in phase one of the Museum artifact cleaning and cataloguing project, Employee Engagement and two Crucial Conversations meetings.
- Revisited information technology priorities with ClientFirst and the IT Committee. The priority is connectivity, connectivity, connectivity! Future IT improvements are dependent on good connectivity at remote sites. One IT security issue still to be addressed is a remote air gap back up which is invulnerable to hacking. Currently, the District has remote and on-site backups. PDRMA requires the three backups to ensure a quick and thorough system recovery from hacking.
- Reviewed 1099 requirements and issued 1099 NECs to applicable District vendors.

## Human Resources (Dara Edgington, Mary Beck)

- During the month of January, HR processed one hire and one separation of a seasonal employee, resulting in a turnover rate of 1.35% for the month.
- As of January 31, our total headcount is 74 employees including 51 FT, 16 PT, six seasonals, and one paid intern.
- The District documented one incident with PDRMA over the month of January.
- On January 19, all operations, construction, golf course, and natural resources staff attended an interactive safety training session. Sponsored by PDRMA and conducted by Athletico, this hands-on training focused on ergonomics, back safety, and minimizing risk of injury (pictures below).

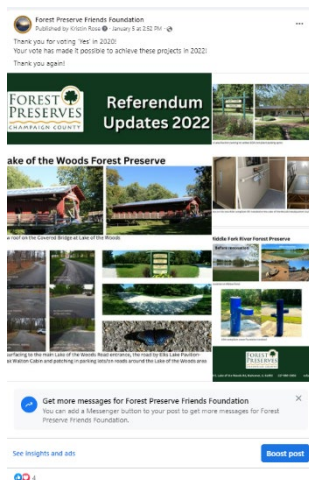


- Barb Oehlschlaeger-Garvey’s last day of work (February 1<sup>st</sup>) coincided with Walking Wednesday – a dedicated time held biweekly for staff to walk and talk together in our beautiful preserves [headed up by Volunteer Coordinator Sue Gallo]. A number of staff turned out for Barb’s last day and we enjoyed a sunny walk down the “museum meander” trail, where we spotted a lovely “Barb” owl, a special variety of the barred owl.



## Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Highlighted projects from 2022 that were made possible by the passing of the 2020 Referendum



*"We worked really hard on our internal collaborations; each department crossing over and helping each other, understanding our needs, looking at how we can support each other to develop the district identity."*

Cheryl Kennedy

See insights and ads

Boost post



- Highlighted Cheryl Kennedy’s presentation at the Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> board meeting, on FPF FB page with a post, and shared an audio recording with FPF members.
- Created a pin for Three Rivers Society.
- Generated a first draft of a newsletter for Three Rivers Society, “The Tributary.”
- Developed FPF Marketing Goals:
  1. Increase FB followers to 800 by end of year 2023
  2. Raise public awareness of the relationship between FPF and CCFPD via social media marketing efforts (to be measured via online surveys)
  3. Contribute toward marketing campaigns that educate the public about, and help raise funds for district projects.
  4. Generate engaging marketing material for the Three Rivers Society that garners retention (i.e. newsletter and communications).



- Documenting all 3 phases of the artifact re-organization project at Museum of the Grand Prairie.
- Met with Mike Daab to discuss details of a social media campaign for 2023 to highlight major district projects throughout the year.
- Generated monthly ads as well as marketing material for social media and CCFPD website related to snowflake search.
- Media this month included:



- [https://www.news-gazette.com/local-events/?\\_evDiscoveryPath=/event%2F1503733-dad-time-winter-hike-at-homer-lake-forest-preserve](https://www.news-gazette.com/local-events/?_evDiscoveryPath=/event%2F1503733-dad-time-winter-hike-at-homer-lake-forest-preserve)
- <https://www.smilepolitely.com/splog/get-ready-to-search-for-snowflakes-in-the-forest-preserves/>
- <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2023/01/10/champaign-urbana-open-closed-martin-luther-king/>
- <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/robert-bert-gray-obituary?pid=203742198>
- [https://mahometdaily.com/barb-oehlschlaeger-garvey-retires-from-ccfpd-after-22-actually-32-years/?fbclid=IwAR1F-AcUJrkYBAw14F-xCkn6TYfnr-OSRzSkVp6hFVsRkyHo03HrELBS\\_c](https://mahometdaily.com/barb-oehlschlaeger-garvey-retires-from-ccfpd-after-22-actually-32-years/?fbclid=IwAR1F-AcUJrkYBAw14F-xCkn6TYfnr-OSRzSkVp6hFVsRkyHo03HrELBS_c)
- <https://www.aam-us.org/2023/02/02/museum-colleague-shoutouts-for-2023/>

Social media followers update.

	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-	TWITTER	+/-
CCFPD	7,513	+55	3,199	+52	570	+0
KRT	4,985	+32	161	+2	139	-
MGP	5,354	+14	1,292	+4	265	+1

HLIC	3,419	+9				
GC	2,078	+6	340	+4	114	+0
FPPF	630	+4				

- Facility Rentals

2022		2023		JANUARY	
# Rentals	# Rentals	Preserve	Facility	2022 \$	2023 \$
4	3	HL	Salt Fork Center	\$1,200.00	850.00
0	0	HL	Walnut Hill Shelter	\$0.00	0.00
0	0	LOW	Botanical Garden Weddings	\$0.00	0.00
2	1	LOW	Elks Lake Pavilion	\$450.00	comp
1	2	LOW	Izaak Walton Cabin	\$270.00	480.00
5	4	LOW	Lake of the Woods Pavilion	\$1,250.00	1,250.00
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	0	MF	Activity Center	\$0.00	0.00
0	0	RB	River Bend Shelter	\$0.00	0.00
<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,170.00</b>	<b>\$2,580.00</b>

## Grants and Fundraising (Ryan Anderson)

**Three Rivers Foundation Contacts** – Foundation members have signed up to be primary contacts with the members of the Three Rivers Society throughout 2023.

**Recapture Mailer** – We received 24 responses to the recapture mailer sent in December 2022 for a total of \$3,835.20. The mailer was sent to 400 donors.

### Donor Thank-you

- All donors from 2022 were sent an email of appreciation the last week of January.

### Fundraising Campaigns as of 1/23/23:

- Night Lights - \$1,440.
- Greenhouse - Complete
- Dark Sky Trail - \$24,252 toward goal of \$100,000

### Fundraising Trends (as of 1/23/23)

#### Donations 4 Year Summary

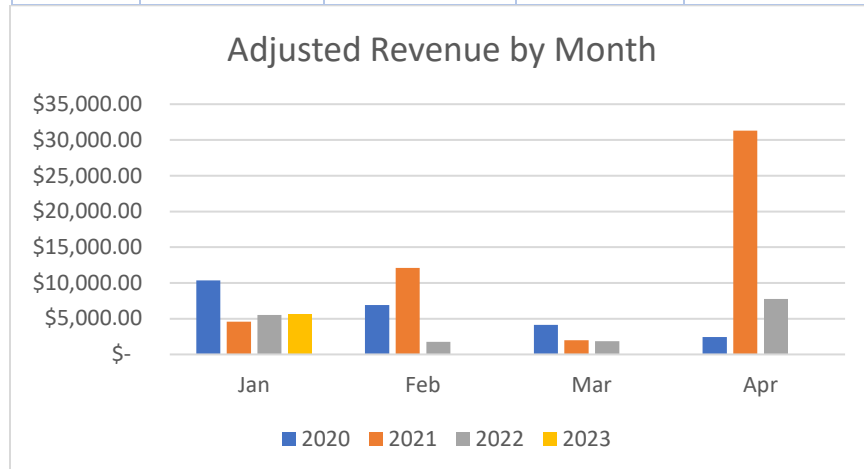
4-year totals:	2020	2021	2022	2023(ytd)
<b>Total \$</b>	\$164,219.10	\$209,832.74	\$207,053.66	\$5,648.12
<b>Total \$ (adjusted)</b>	\$111,738.24	\$174,725.10	\$175,731.78	\$5,648.12
<b># of donors (adjusted)</b>	341	407	345	32
<b># of 1<sup>st</sup> time donors</b>	134	165	87	5

\*"Adjusted" numbers have grants and bequests removed;

Updates to Bloomerang (our donor tracking system) have altered how these figures are calculated

#### Adjusted Revenue by Month (Jan - Apr)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
<b>2020</b>	\$ 10,332.76	\$ 6,919.31	\$ 4,141.05	\$ 2,425.00
<b>2021</b>	\$ 4,575.11	\$ 12,096.66	\$ 1,972.00	\$ 31,291.41
<b>2022</b>	\$ 5,510.12	\$ 1,777.62	\$ 1,836.38	\$ 7,774.04
<b>2023</b>	\$ 5,648.12			



### Volunteer Coordinator (Sue Gallo)

- We received seven new volunteer applications in January.
- I have been in conversation with three schools and five service groups, mainly from the U of I. We have a few group service dates booked, and these groups showed up in force at the Natural Resources Invasive removal event.
- I am excited to report that the Homer Lake Restoration Crew (mentioned in the December report) met for the first time! Thanks to Anna and Eric from Natural

Resources for getting the group started. They have now met twice, and I believe the group will have the momentum to continue.

- Because more staff now include volunteers in their plans we have 3 new projects in which the volunteers can be involved.
- In January, I attended meetings with the 75th anniversary program committee, an optimizing newsletter marketing committee, a meeting with Museum and Education staff on youth volunteering, and two webinars explaining details of our volunteer and e-newsletter platforms.
- Lastly, hours from 2022 show that we are continuing to expand volunteer contributions with 179 regular volunteers giving 6,046 hours recorded in the volunteer database and roughly 700 event volunteers giving an additional 2,163 hours.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Count</b>
2022 (excluding USRC events on CCFPD property)	8209	~880
2021 (excluding USRC events on CCFPD property)	~7400	~820
2021 w/ USRC numbers	8100	~930
2020 w/ USRC numbers	5842	
2019 w/ USRC numbers	6380	

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

- January was a month of transition at the golf course. After 26 years of using Fore Reservations/GolfNow point-of-sale and tee sheet software, we made the switch to ForeUp. The decision to change providers is due to cost, lack of customer service from the previous service, and timing. We are looking to save up to \$12,000 per year and gain back control of our tee sheet (GolfNow controlled 2 trade tee times per day, which they received all profit for, in return for use of their service) with this switch.
- January kicked off a strong month of simulator play bringing in \$6,200 in revenue on the simulators and league play.
- We have spent the past month intensely training on all ForeUp has to offer, from simple transactions at the point of sale to daily and monthly reporting. They are also the new provider for our website, which went live in mid-January, and is much more user friendly for staff and patrons as well. ForeUp is also Cloud based, so no more need to install software on multiple computers and work stations.



- We may look to move forward with replacing the TruGolf simulator with another Foresight simulator in the next year. This would allow us to expand league play (having 2 of the same operating modules) and increase availability and revenues.
- The league has 10 teams of 2 players, and they can schedule their 9-hole round anytime during the week.
- David and Jason spent the final week of January teaching the BLAST golf unit at Lincoln Trail Elementary school in Mahomet. Classes were taught daily, with David and Jason working with over 800 students in Grades 3-5 during the week. The class uses Velcro targets, oversized plastic clubs, and tennis balls to engage and teach the students various aspects of the game of golf. We have seen an increase in youth participation in our clinics and lesson programs and are planning to expand the program into the Rantoul schools next year.
- Total revenue for the month of January was \$29,022. We will be continuing to offer the 2-year Anniversary 5-Day and 7-Day Pass specials, for 2023-2024, through the end of February.
- Staff has begun prepping the Pro Shop for the 2023 season. We have received a fair amount of inventory already and continue to price and stage the shop with all the items as they arrive.
- Assistant Superintendent and Equipment Manager have completed all maintenance services on equipment, including grinding all reels and sharpening blades.
- Ball washers, tee blocks, benches, and driving range yard markers have been painted.
- Golf Superintendent will be attending the Golf Trade Conference Show in Orlando from Feb 5th-10<sup>th</sup> for continued education programs.



### Museum and Education Department (Lorrie Pearson)

	<b>In-Person Programming*</b>	<b>Outreach**</b>	<b>Not In-Person Programming*</b>	<b>MGP Visitation</b>	<b>HLIC Visitation</b>
Jan-23	78	423	302	Closed	40

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

- We welcome Patrick Ahasic, Education Program Specialist II, to the team!
- Katie Snyder and Stacey Clementz represented CCFPD at the Homeschool Fair hosted at the Champaign Public Library. We talked with 273 homeschool families and acquired 49 new emails for our Homeschool newsletter, *Homeschool Highlights*.
- We are recruiting for a seasonal naturalist, nature day camp educators, and museum day camp educators. If you know of anyone that might be a good candidate for these positions send them our way.
- The Museum Storage Reorganization project is underway and going exceptionally well! Given the time constraints prior to the museum reopening, this project is the singular priority for collections and exhibits staff. In addition to eight volunteers, 27 CCFPD staff members outside of collections and exhibits staff signed up to work with and learn about collections management as part of the project. LOW Ops and Construction have also done great work installing new lighting and painting inside the museum storage space. The physical artifact handling aspects of the project are slated to end on February 16. All told, approximately 1,700 artifacts were directly involved in the project. A huge thank you to all for supporting this herculean effort to improve artifact preservation!
- Sadly, we say goodbye to Barb, retiring after being a part of CCFPD for the past 22 years. Barb shared some parting words with us on her last day, “I have had such a wonderful opportunity to pursue my own passion to tell the stories of those who have gone before us, and to open eyes to the wonders of nature. To you all I say, keep fighting the good fight, keep working hard. I will miss you.” Barb will be missed but I know we will continue to see her in the community and possibly volunteering with us in the future.
- The Snowflake Search is up in 5 out of 7 preserves. There has been a great response on social media with people posting pictures of the snowflakes they find. At the Homer Lake Interpretive Center there is a mini-indoor snowflake search available which is good on very cold days.
- We hosted the Region 6 Public Health Administrators Group at Lake of the Woods and Pat provided a tour of the History of Healing exhibit at the Museum.



## Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)

- The NR team did a lot of winter chainsaw work in January that included:
  - Timber stand improvement (TSI) at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve: TSI work involved girdling or felling mesophytic (moderate moisture needing) trees that were crowding out oaks and hickories throughout a 12-acre woodland known as Prairie Dock Savanna.
  - Invasive woody plant control:

- Staff removed invasive autumn olive from a 7-acre section of prairie at Homer Lake Forest Preserve
- Bush honeysuckle was cut and burned in piles in several smaller areas at River Bend Forest Preserve
- Tree of heaven was removed from the Land & Water Reserve section of River Bend Forest Preserve
- Autumn olive and sweet gum was removed from two ephemeral pools at Homer Lake Forest Preserve in the Middle Meadow wetland complex
- With some significant snowfall events, staff had the opportunity to plant two prairie restorations by hand in January:
  - 3.5-acre prairie/savanna south of the “tree tunnel” at Buffalo Trace Prairie
  - 2.5-acre prairie south of the shower house at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve



- NR hosted a volunteer woody invasive species removal event at Homer Lake Forest Preserve. 124 volunteers cut invasive autumn olive and aggressive gray dogwood from a 10-acre section of prairie on the northwest side of the preserve.
- Mike Daab registered CCFPD as a sponsor of the Prairie State Conservation Coalition Conference coming up at Starved Rock State Park in March. Focusing primarily on collaboration with partners and legislators regarding land conservation and restoration.



## Lake of the Woods (Rusty Maulding)

- All staff have been going to town removing honeysuckle in forested areas as well as clearing undesirable trees such as alder, mulberry and osage orange along Lake of the Woods Rd and trails.
- Botanic Garden staff have begun refurbishing eggs in preparation for their placement in early March as part of Egg Hunt program.
- Operations staff assisted with the Museum project to refurbish artifact storage in their basement including removing undesirable shelving and painting. Some of the shelving removed from the Museum has been repurposed as a bench as well as additional storage in West Maintenance.

## Homer Lake (Skylar Smith)

- Purchased and received a 6 ft. snowblower for the utility tractor. This implement will enable us to more efficiently remove snow from parking areas and some sidewalks.
- Purchased and installed new tires for one of our RTV's.
- Cut down 35 hazardous dead trees along roads and trails to prevent accidents and lessen future storm cleanup.
- Skylar attended IPRA's Soaring to New Heights conference in Chicago for the first time.
- Installed a baby changing station in the men's restroom at SFC.
- Kept the roads plowed and the preserve open to visitors during the January 25<sup>th</sup> snow event.
- Forestry mowed along parts of the West Lake Trail and the Oak Ridge Trail in order to push back encroaching invasive shrubs and promote the growth of native vegetation.

## Middle Fork (Matthew Kuntz)

- With several days of inclement weather MF staff have been inside completing some renovations to some of our facilities. Mostly lighting updates, paint, and repairs have taken place.
- Staff continue to work on invasive removal throughout the preserve, with primary focus on the Miner's Trail area in the North corridor of Middle Fork.
- It was nice to see so many people in the preserve on the first weekend in February. Temps almost reached 50 degrees and the sun was out which seemed to bring life back to the preserve.
- Willow Pond continues to slowly fill with the weather we have been receiving



this winter. The pond has a long way to go so every rain is appreciated.