

March 8, 2021

MEMORANDUM

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

Executive Director (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- Champaign County First has set its virtual visit to legislators for April 22. The Kickapoo Rail Trail will be included in the list of regional projects in need of support. The emphasis will be on advocating with the railroads (NSRR & UPRR) to allow for completion of the existing trail and future expansion into Urbana.
- The task force that I have been serving on is now officially the IPRA Forest Preserve & Conservation District Committee – a standing committee of the organization. Bridgette Moen and Sue Gallo have also agreed to attend meetings as we set goals for the group.
- The 2021 Legislative Breakfast was held on March 8. Presenters focused on OSLAD and other grant programs, COVID’s impacts on park, recreation, and conservation agencies, the IAPD legislative platform for 2021, and funding for “special” districts under the federal COVID relief bill. Andrew Kerins spoke on behalf of the CCFPD.
- Regarding the COVID relief funding for special districts, we learned that city and county governments are included in the bill that is expected to be signed by President Biden this week. Although special districts, such as CCFPD, will not receive a direct payment, IAPD indicates that a provision for pass-through of payments is included in the bill. At this time the process for receiving a pass-through payment is not known. We will monitor updates from IAPD.
- The Freedom Fest Committee met for the first time in 2021 this month. Although it is too early to predict if gatherings of that size will be allowed by July, we are planning for the likelihood that some version of a July 4th event can be held. The group decided that May 1 would be our target date to make a decision. If we proceed, we agreed the event would be held on Friday, July 2. Most other summer celebrations are in a similar holding pattern.
- Presentations over the last month included a speaking engagement with the Urbana Exchange Club on Zoom and a luncheon with the local AMBUCS chapter at Urbana Gardens restaurant. Ryan Anderson and Will Timmons accompanied me to the AMBUCS meeting to thank them for their \$10,000 payment to the peninsula accessibility project at Lake of the Woods.
- Plans for the April 24 Friends Foundation tree giveaway are underway. Yes To Forests supporters and 2020 donors would be first to reserve trees, with the general public next in line for any that remain. Pick-up locations would be at both Homer Lake and Lake of the Woods, from 9:00am to noon.



Planning and Construction Department (Mike Daab and Mike Fry)

- The Rankin Collections Center is near 100% completion. The Construction Department has been working on interior wall finished and painting. A walk through with Museum, Construction, and Planning staff has been scheduled for March 11th.

- The Construction Department has finished the smaller "Bridgeview" shelter on the LOW Peninsula. The Natural Resources Department has native plants ordered for planting at the site this spring. Note the "thank you" sign to Champaign County voters in the photo at right.
- The contract for new AC units at Elks Lake Pavilion has been awarded to Fred's Plumbing and HVAC at \$12,557 (\$13,500 budget) after receiving three quotes. We will be receiving approximately \$700 in rebates for efficiency through the Ameren Small Business Program.
- A garage for the HLIC van has been selected and ordered after receiving quotes from four vendors. The pre-fabricated building from Bear Creek Yard Creations (Arthur, IL) is \$9,300 (\$10,000 budget), and will be delivered in April. Building permits have been submitted to the County.
- Bridgette Moen is working on a literature review for the Comprehensive Plan.
- Continuing education/professional development this month included ADA Title II and permeable pavement webinars for Bridgette Moen, and a rail trail maintenance webinar for Michael Daab.
- Michael Daab filed a witness slip in opposition to House Bill 688 on behalf of the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. The bill would restrict the rights of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC) to remove the Grau Mill dam, which is entirely owned and maintained by FPDDC. The bill would impede the agency's conservation, recreation, and education goals, as well as their ability to address Clean Water Act compliance through cost-effective solutions agreed upon by local partners. We are supporting the position of the FPDDC to oppose the intrusion of the State into local government decision making in order to prevent the setting of precedence in like matters. Additional opposition includes the Illinois Environmental Council, Sierra Club, The Conservation Foundation, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, the DuPage River Salt Creek Workgroup, and the Salt Creek Watershed Network.
- CCFPD co-hosted a Geothermal Power Hour on March 4th with partners that include the City of Urbana, the Geothermal Alliance of Illinois, and the Midwest Renewable Energy Association. Michael Daab was given time at the start of the webinar to highlight sustainability efforts at CCFPD, including our use of geothermal systems at the Museum Annex and the Sangamon River Forest Preserve residence.
- We held an in-house workshop with Museum & Education staff and other CCFPD staff stakeholders to discuss the new Homer Lake interpretive center building program priorities.
- Mike Fry has been busy obtaining estimates and ordering materials for several upcoming capital and small projects over the past month, including the Middle Fork showerhouse doors and sinks and the Golf Course Par 3 shelter.



Business and Finance (John Baker)

- Provided the Champaign County Clerk's Office with an updated list of Board members and employees involved in purchasing decisions. Illinois statute requires that all such individuals file an Economic Interest Statements with their county clerk no later than May 1 annually.
- Filed the District tax exempt properties annual report which is legally required to maintain the District's property tax exemption. Prior to this submission the District applied for tax

exemption on the Old Homer Park expansion and Heron View properties to be added for the future.

- Initiated tracking of 2021 budget savings and overages, 2021 fund projections and District cash flow. Prepared financial expense report on the 2020 COVID financial impact on the District. Led a meeting with leadership regarding potential Board commitments from reserves and possible additional projects from 2021 district savings. Staff anticipates bringing a proposal to the Board in April for reserve commitments.
- Continued working on the 2020 audit and preparing for the April field work. This included 1) working with Grants and Planning employees to collaborate on tracking and accurately reporting 2020 and future grant activity, 2) reviewing all 2020 capital project and equipment payments to determine fixed asset capitalization for the year, and 3) reconciling 2020 MSI and GolfNow financial activity. As enterprise funds, Golf and the Museum Store are accounted for on a different accounting basis, full accrual, than the rest of the District accounts.
- Met with the Treasurer for the monthly meeting, as well as discussing transfers policy and procedures with him and Commissioner Herakovich.
- Met with GovHR, the District's compensation study vendor, to discuss the Business and Finance Job Analysis Questionnaires and provide historical background on the District's compensation plans.
- Participated in PDRMA property valuation webinar, risk webinar through Protiviti and the IPRA Finance Committee meeting. PDRMA will shortly provide a new asset management tool that, in addition to supplying PDRMA with current valuation information for establishing liability insurance rates, will simplify and systematize the District's fixed asset capitalization tracking and reporting.
- Participated in Compensation, Sustainability, Risk Management and IT committees. At Risk Management, proposed method for recording time and attendance for program budgeting reporting and shared new chart of accounts tool with department heads for using new account codes. With IT committee discussed proposal from Furat Ibrahim and Mary Ellen Wuellner to prepare part time IT job description and implementation plan for this role for Executive Director approval.
- Worked to resolve several vendor issues – disputed payments with Ameren and Frontier – accounting for MetLife billing credit – reconciling MetLife and Standard billing for employee benefits against payroll deductions – reconciling United Way pledges against donations – properly procuring golf turf maintenance supplies –reviewed Realgy solar power letter of intent and GolfNow contract renewal.
- Began basement cleaning project as necessary prior to the creation of office space in the Headquarters basement later in the year. Shelly Green, one of the Museum's customer service representatives is assisting with the disposal of District financial records that are no longer necessary to retain and obsolete District electronics stored in the basement. Thank you to Shelly for her help.
- Provided information for the Census Bureau's Local Government Finances Survey.

Human Resources (Dara Edgington)

- Seasonal hiring is in full swing with 19 placements made thus far, a number that is growing every day!
- Mary met with the Safety Committee on February 11th. Their main focus for 2021 will be to develop a library of training videos covering District-specific safety protocols. These videos will

feature our very own CCFPD staff and will allow us to hone in on specific safety practices and policies that are customized for our organization. The creation of this library will help ensure our safety training practices are as efficient as possible and consistent District-wide.

- Mary completed her annual Open Meetings Act certification.
- Dara and Mary met with a representative from Paylocity to learn about new system features and discuss our various District HRIS (Human Resource Information System) needs.
- Dara attended Chicago Wilderness' webinar featuring Carolyn Finney, author of *Black Faces, White Spaces*.
- The compensation and classification study is progressing nicely. Job Analysis Questionnaires (JAQs) have been successfully completed by all staff and employee interviews have been conducted by GovHR. Furthermore, we saw a 75% response rate for the compensation surveys we sent out, receiving responses from nine of the twelve organizations. GovHR shoots for a response rate of at least 50%, so we are ahead of the curve. If all goes well, I hope to see GovHR present a finalized plan to the board in April or May.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Media coverage last month included:

Lincoln still getting out, about in Champaign County

https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/parks-recreation/inside-out-lincoln-still-getting-out-about-in-champaign-county/article_2498090f-5c13-57c8-b4f9-d6a404205276.html

Not everyone was locked down last summer and fall

https://www.news-gazette.com/opinion/columns/tom-kacich-not-everyone-was-locked-down-last-summer-and-fall/article_1b0ea32a-03ad-5f34-9ef2-a78dc025ddfc.html

Museum of the Grand Prairie and Homer Lake Interpretive Center are re-opening today

https://www.smilepolitely.com/splog/museum_of_the_grand_prairie_and_homer_lake_interpretive_center_are_re_openi/

Museum of the Grand Prairie and Homer Lake Interpretive Center back open to public

<https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/museum-of-grand-prairie-and-homer-lake-interpretive-center-back-open-to-public/>

Hiking trails for families in the Champaign-Urbana area

https://www.chambanamoms.com/2021/03/07/hiking-trails-champaign-urbana-families/?fbclid=IwAR3xZSBdX11TnyKhWJ5zA2FRF8wTimq6ZRP7LIDfIUHAz19D_fminjiHWwM

Behold the art of sisterhood

https://www.smilepolitely.com/arts/behold_the_art_of_the_sisterhood/

- Developed radio ad that will run on Mix 94.5 and Rewind 92.5 throughout March talking about the reopening of the Museum of the Grand Prairie, Homer Lake Interpretive Center and Lake of the Woods Golf Course.
- Developed graphic and postcard for the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation tree giveaway in April.
- Developed a handout focusing on OSLAD grants and COVID-19 impacts on the District for the 2021 Legislative Breakfast on March 8.



- Updated the campground map to include the primitive campground area. Updated the campground brochure and the Rules & Regulation signs with new map.
- Worked with Bridgette Moen and Ryan Anderson to develop a video update on the Lake of the Woods peninsula project for social media.
- Worked with the Golf Course to design and order six tee sponsorship signs.
- Redesigned online ads for Chambanamoms.com, Mahomet and SJO Daily, Smile Politely, and St. Joseph Record.
- Completed annual FOIA and OMA certification.
- Attended Chicago Wilderness’ webinar featuring Carolyn Finney, “Reimagining Healthy Communities for People and Nature”.
- Social media numbers continue to increase.

	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-	TWITTER	+/-
CCFPD	5,132	+64	2,306	+53	543	+4
KRT	3,145	+22	83	+1	126	
MGP	4,218	+97	1,167	+14	238	+2
HLIC	1,951	+33				
GC	1,645	+19	307	+6	85	+3
FPPF	362	+29				

Volunteer Coordinator (Sue Gallo)

- Sue has submitted new website text and photos to Lisa and is working with her to update the volunteer section of the website. Also with Lisa’s help, open volunteer opportunities are now being posted on the website’s event calendar.
- Four work groups (Daisy scouts, boy scouts, CU Young Professionals, and Illini Thaatat Foundation) have been matched with different departments to do group service activities in March! Thanks to staff for their flexibility and creative thinking to make these service opportunities possible!
- Volunteer and HR staff are working on improving processes for emergency contact and COVID waivers for volunteers.
- Sue is finishing up with trail steward contacting and assigning to trails. We currently have about 65 Trail Stewards and last year Trail Stewards gave over 1200 hours of service keeping the trails safe, trash free, and in some cases invasive-free as well. The new rugged footpaths in Buffalo Trace that are new to the Stewardship Program now have 80% stewardship coverage.
- Last month Sue attended many meetings: CCFPD Volunteer Committee, Champaign Volunteer Coordinators, DEI, Compensation Study Meetings and MAVA’s New Methods for Volunteer Recognition.
- Additionally, a meeting with Michael Dale to discuss volunteer needs for the Botanical Garden was very fruitful and should lead to improved volunteer engagement that is more beneficial to the department. It also inspired a garden volunteer ad campaign which Lisa is developing.
- Sue updated the Volunteer Information Portal and trained Mary to help with updating Volgistics records with volunteer information from before the 2017 conversion. Understanding how long volunteers have been assisting us is tremendously useful in many ways, one of which is volunteer recognition. Thank you for helping make this happen, Mary!!!

Grants and Development Specialist (Ryan Anderson)

Grants Received

- Looking For Lincoln - \$100
 - Grant to bring in a first-person Interpreter of Mary Todd Lincoln
- Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation Community Stewardship Grant- 3x match-\$25,000
 - This matching grant will be applied towards fundraising efforts for restoration along the KRT. The Friends Foundation must raise \$7,000 for us to receive the full match, and volunteers must commit 400 hours of stewardship to the project.

Grants Applications

- Ford Ridge Conservation Grant LOI – \$191,000
 - This letter of intent is for a grant to purchase a yet-to-be-identified extension to the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve. If the LOI is approved, the District would have four years to identify a parcel of land and the additional grants necessary for the purchase.

Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)

- In February, Natural Resources staff continued to remove brush in several areas throughout the preserves, including a CRP tree planting area at River Bend. The River Bend work will maintain CRP compliance for the Foundation to receive annual payments from the restoration there. Other brush clearing projects include the small island on the pond at Stidham Woods, the prairie pocket at the River Bend entrance, and along the entrance road at River Bend.
- Staff also spent time doing invasive brush clearing and timber stand improvement (TSI) in the golf course woods. Timber stand improvement consisted of the felling and girdling of many invasive black locust and aggressive eastern black cherry trees. TSI and a follow-up prescribed burn will open this area up and promote native understory growth.
- While many hazard trees are contracted out for removal, NR staff removed a number of dead/dying ash trees in areas that included the golf course parking lot and along the paved bike path at Lake of the Woods.
- On days of cold or inclement weather, staff performed annual maintenance on equipment including changing out all of the engine oil, pump motor oil, and gearbox fluid in our old Polaris UTV, a small fire engine that is crucial to our prescribed burn program.
- All staff attended a winter tree ID class that was hosted by University of Illinois Extension Forestry staff.

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

- February was a cold and snowy month, which resulted in us remaining closed to outdoor play. For the month, our revenue was \$32,265.98. This amount includes 53 Anniversary Passes sold.
- The Anniversary Pass sale concluded the first week of February. We had an internal target goal of 1,000 passes sold. We finished selling 990 for a total of \$288,420. In reality, we were closer to 1,000 because we had a few customers upgrade from Anniversary to Platinum pass when they realized those benefits were better suited to them. Of these 990 sold, 5-Day (good on Weekdays only) outnumbered 7-Day passes 528-462. We believe this mix, and the restrictions of each level of pass, will disperse play throughout the tee sheet and reduce heavy demand for specific times on a daily basis.
- With the outdoor season approaching and the reduced restrictions in Phase 4, Golf Simulator play picked up in February. We had revenue of \$2,816, which was aided by allowing foursomes

to resume playing on the Sim. For perspective, we had \$2468 in revenue from November through the end of January. Simulator play will conclude in mid-March as we open up outdoors and prepare the Clubhouse for potential rentals.

- We have been busy at the Pro Shop assembling seasonal staff, receiving new merchandise, and deep cleaning the indoor facilities. Exciting time of the year when the outdoor season is near. We look forward to a potentially less restricted 2021!
- The Golf Committee met over Zoom in early February. Items discussed were season pass sales, upcoming and future projects, financials, and a Volunteer Clean-up Day. This has been scheduled for Thursday, March 18 from noon to 6:00 p.m. Volunteers are asked to assist as much as they can that day in cleaning up brush and debris left from the winter storms on the course. This was unfortunately cancelled last year due to COVID, but we had 60 people show up to help out in 2019. We hope the weather cooperates and we can assist Joie and his staff with prepping the course for the season.
- Natural Resources staff began the process of hazardous tree removal from the golf course. The main areas of concern prior to the season were the two dead ash trees in the parking lot that were dropping limbs and damaged some vehicles. The remaining trees targeted on the golf course have been bid out and will be removed when the ground firms up in March. Our thanks to Peter and his crew for taking care of these trees in the lot prior to the golf season.
- The maintenance crew finished grinding all reels, serviced all mowing equipment, and repainted all the cautions located in the maintenance shop.
- Likewise, all sixty golf carts are currently undergoing servicing.
- At the start of March, course conditions remained wet and soft. The frost layer is down to 24 inches on some of the greens. Holes #5 and #14 green had yet to thaw. Warm, sunny weather predicted for the upcoming week should allow the course to dry out for opening day.
- Mackynzie Drinkwalter has been hired as the assistant golf superintendent. Mack brings seven years of golf course experience and two years as a seasonal assistant. He has provided great leadership to the district and he is an asset for our organization. We are pleased to have Mackynzie Drinkwalter on our team!

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

- Stacey Clementz was notified that she will be receiving this year's Malcolm D. Swan Award for Outstanding Service from the Environmental Education Association of Illinois. This Award is the Association's most prestigious honor; it is presented for long-term, outstanding service and contribution to the field of environmental education in Illinois. She will receive it at the EEAI conference on March 12; please join us in congratulating Stacey!
- The Homer Lake Interpretive Center (HLIC) reopened to the public March 2, under the same hours and guidelines from the fall. We are excited to see visitors again!
- HLIC, Planning and Administrative staff met to talk about architectural preferences, square footage, and next steps for the new nature center at Homer Lake. The 2021 Museum Capital Grant will be announced April 1, which may allow us to hire an architecture firm to develop blueprints.
- The Museum of the Grand Prairie (MGP) also reopened on March 2 with limited hours and COVID restrictions as mandated by the state. In anticipation of reopening the museum has completed the transition to a newer and simpler POS system called Helcim. Jennifer Grove and Mark Hanson cleaned exhibits just before the museum opening. Mel Wiegel restocked the Museum Store following inventory in preparation for reopening.

- Barb Garvey, Mark Hanson and George Groschen worked to resolve many building issues including mice in the Discovering Home exhibit, the condensate line freezing in the tool wing, the air compressor working overtime in the fire suppression system, ice damming, the emergency lights needing replacement, the tool wing and Lincoln emergency doors freezing up, the dampers short circuiting in the Annex furnace and the humidifier falling off the furnace in the museum basement.
- The Rankin Center inches toward completion. Construction staff installed drywall, painted the processing room, and installed the humidifier drain on the furnace in the tool wing this month. Stealth Mode is installing shades after the painting and still needs to do some landscaping. A preliminary walk-through will happen this week.
- George Groschen added to the bookshelves in the curator's office this month and Mark Hanson filled them with books that have been waiting for a home for some time.
- Barb worked on Facility Management manual, coordinating with George Groschen to be certain that all light fixtures at the MGP were included.
- Barb Garvey compiled all staff input into the ME Department Strategic Plan and reviewed it with staff. We will be presenting it to the public and interest groups in the next few months and are hoping for board approval by June.
- The Snowflake Search wrapped up at the end of February, and was a huge success! Many thanks to all who helped make this happen. Pat Cain coordinated the creation of the snowflakes by many different people throughout the CCFPD and worked with site superintendents to get them, and their signage, installed. Cathy Schneider created a video for the Snowflake Search to share on social media. Cathy, Pat and Jennifer Wick provided interpretation about snow and winter to accompany the snowflakes.



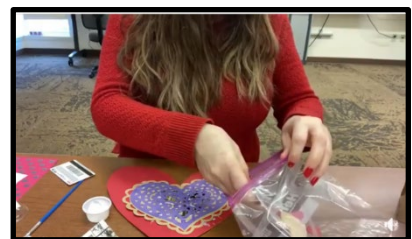
- Jennifer Wick created a video about the Great Backyard Bird Count.
- Pat Cain and Barb Garvey met with Julie Laut of CU Lockdown Trivia to organize a virtual trivia event for May focusing on local history.
- Sandy Osborne and Marina Montez Ellis are working on videos for a Virtual Spring Break and Zoom classes to offer to homeschoolers in April and May.
- Katie Snyder worked with Spurlock Museum to present two virtual programs for their *Crafts, Folklore and More* series: one on women's history and one called "To Market."
- Katie Snyder is working on a collaboration for the museum with the Urbana Free Library, a trivia night in March on the topic of women's history.

- Jennifer Wick offered two virtual programs about owls: ornithologist Tara Beveroth was our guest speaker for “Owls of Illinois” geared to adults, and staff led the “All About Owls” for all ages.



- Jennifer Wick and Cathy Schneider have started on our new HLIC Facebook series, “Bountiful Books,” where we recommend nature focused literature for all ages. Tolono and Homer libraries are partnering with us. Cathy did a read-aloud of “My Nature Exploration” by Vicente S. Harrison for Facebook.

- Animal Advocates (AA) upgrades: Cathy Schneider is working with Ryan to develop a donor page via Qgiv where credit cards can be taken for AA (this would be new for this donor program!). Pam Leiter talked to the Foundation about moving the AA funds from CCFPD’s Corporate Fund to the Foundation Fund. Cathy also revised the Animal Fact Sheets for the AA donor packets; and sent “Valentines” from the animals to year-long AA donors.
- Planning for the next At-Home Exploration Kit for schools is well underway (partners: CCFPD, UPD, Ag in the Classroom). The kits are for second graders on Changing Landforms. Stacey reports that the student worksheets have been translated into French and Spanish, and materials have been ordered. We are increasing the number of kits offered this time around to 1,500 (from 1,000) and over 1,300 are already taken (Champaign-Unit 4, Urbana #116, Rantoul School District, and Ludlow). The Forest Preserve Friends Foundation is donating \$500 towards these kits (they donated \$2200 for the fall exploration kit).
- Stacey Clementz participated in PDRMA’s Day Camp Member Action Team (one of eight agencies that were personally invited); together they assisted PDRMA in sharing feedback and best practices for them to develop materials to pass out to member organizations throughout the state.
- Stacey has finalized a scenario for in-person summer nature day camps (greatly limited in scope this summer due to COVID as compared to previous years). The plan is to make the final call on whether we will offer in-person camps at the end of March, with registration opening the first week of April.
- Pam Leiter is working on in-person programming considerations, guidelines, and waivers.
- Several online camp options are also being offered. In addition, Katie Snyder is preparing two Zoom classroom visits with Rantoul schools for this school year.
- Katie Snyder distributed Lincoln and Valentine activity bags for families. She also posted the Valentine How-To Video to encourage use of the bags. Seventy-five Valentine bags and 50 Lincoln bags were distributed.
- Sandy Osborne created a video to accompany the bags which featured Lincoln’s Farewell to Illinois speech and released it on Lincoln’s birthday on Facebook and YouTube.
- Pat Cain coordinated, promoted, and executed another event in the Garden Speaker Series. Ken Robertson of the IL Natural History Survey and Jack Zinnen of the UIUC Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences presented a



virtual talk to 100+ virtual viewers titled “How To Use the Diversity of Native Plants in Your Garden.”

- Pat Cain, Jennifer Wick, and Lisa Sprinkle met with others to discuss Champaign County Dark Sky Week plans in the community and International Dark Sky Week in general.
- Museum senior staff participated in another edition of Mornings with the Museum where the theme was “Love Stories”.
- Pat Cain and John Garvey hosted the program “Maple Sugar Days: The Virtual Edition” on Thursday, February 10 at 7:00pm broadcast on Facebook and YouTube.
- Pat Cain and Pam Brown aired a program entitled “Stories with Mary: A Special Virtual Visit with Mary Lincoln” on Abe’s 212th birthday, February 12. This program was supported with a grant from the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area.
- Pat Cain led the Champaign County Museums Network in a retreat in February where they determined short and long-term goals. Pam Leiter attended the retreat.
- Katie Snyder read aloud for this year’s virtual America Reads, *And the People Stayed Home*.
- Mark Hanson began familiarization with Omeka software for creating online exhibits and collections.
- Mark began pulling artifacts for case exhibit at the museum entitled, *Personal Resonance*, basically a “staff picks” exhibit for the four cases in the northeast corner of the stairwell. Katie Snyder has been researching hair combs; Barb is working on baseball; Pat is researching *Time* covers.
- Mark Hanson is working on the narrative for a new exhibit in the museum’s tool wing. The topic for the exhibit is corn and a projected opening date is in the fall.
- Stacey Clementz was working on sorting photographs from the District’s archive during the pandemic. As she prepares, very cautiously, for summer camp this year she has returned the photos to Mark who will steward the project from here.
- Angela Whitlock continued to transcribe the Busey letters.
- Barb Garvey researched the Quilt Research Project rights in anticipation of doing a virtual quilt exhibit during 2021 to honor Stan Rankin’s contributions to the museum.
- Katie Snyder attended Illinois Association of Museums webinar, “Rapid Change Rapid Response: Collecting and Exhibiting in an Upside Down World.”
- Barb Garvey continues to meet with intern Sara Carman about COVID collecting; Intern Emma Olson continues to transcribe the East Frisian oral histories. Pat continues his work with Emma Fleming, volunteer, to discuss her progress on the Clio online project discussing Homer Lake History. The museum is also adding another intern, Brenda Rezk to develop Clio programs for Middle Fork.
- Barb Garvey attended the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area Steering Committee meeting.
- Barb Garvey held the Lincoln Legacy Committee Meeting. She will take on the position of chair of that committee.
- Barb Garvey and Stacey Clementz worked together to get the Spring 2021 version of Homeschool Highlights put together and sent out.
- Barb Garvey wrote an article for the *Public Eye* newspaper, “Thank the Suffragists: Celebrating the Women’s Rights History of Champaign County” featuring the current MGP special exhibit.
- Jennifer Wick attended the National Association for Interpretation’s virtual conference, Forum for Interpretation in the Americas: Interpretation in a Changing World, on February 9-11.

- HLIC Facebook stats, Feb 1-28: Average Daily Organic Reach: 1,291 (Sum: 36,156); Average Daily Page Engaged Users: 44 (Sum: 1,239)
- MGP Facebook stats, Feb 1-28: Average Daily Organic Reach:3,224 (Sum 90,263); Average Daily Page Engaged Users: 143 (Sum: 4,008)

Lake of the Woods (Doug Sanders)

- Congratulations to Tammy Bruehl for successfully completing IPRA’s *ELITE Young Professional Workshop Series*. This new virtual leadership program provides career-oriented individuals an opportunity to strengthen their leadership skills in areas of communication, relationships, and branding. Tammy said, “We worked together as a large group and did several break out groups addressing issues professionally and personally.” The workshop consisted of four weekly meetings lasting 1½ hours each. Tammy earned 0.6 CEUs through IPRA.

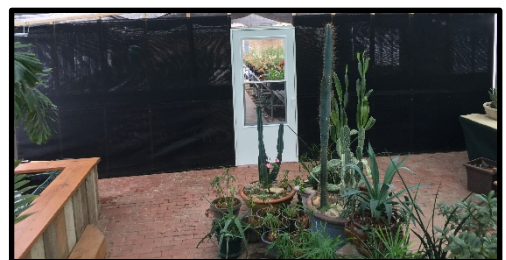


- In preparation for the upcoming season, staff serviced and deep cleaned eight paddle boats. The rental boat season traditionally runs from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

- As a follow up to last month, the garden staff have completed their project dividing the greenhouse into two sections. Next time you visit the greenhouse you will notice a fabric wall separating the propagation grow area from a public display area consisting of a variety of cacti/succulent plants, a Koi grow/feeding tank, and a new tropical themed bed. Michael commented, “We are trying to display some plants that we would normally not be able to have without keeping them in the greenhouse.” This summer the doors will be opened so the public display area will become a natural extension of the Discovery Garden.



- Doug Sanders completed a two-hour PDRMA webinar entitled *Protecting Your Property – Proactive Facility Inspections*. This refresher course focused on the importance of performing periodic assessments of facilities and property, proper documentation of these inspections, and having a standardized maintenance procedure in place to correct any issues found during the evaluation.



- As part of the department’s annual preventive maintenance program, staff continue to perform service and repair of equipment.

Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- Middle Fork staff has started prescribed fire season. Good weather conditions so far have helped accomplish several burns around the preserve natural areas.

- The HVAC contractor has started at the Activity Center replacing and installing our new system.
- Visitation to the preserve has increased with the temperature rising.
- I met with David Leake to discuss Dark Sky visitation and potential upcoming events for this year.
- Six ash trees were removed from the campground entrance.
- The Pt. Pleasant Wetland has already brought in a nice array of waterfowl to the area.

Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- Last month I reported about how fortunate we have been not to have plowed snow, so it is no great surprise that we received over 17 inches of snow for the month. The snow allowed for about three days of good sledding and cross country skiing.



Kickapoo Rail Trail

- The highlight for this month was the removal of the rail road ties in Mayview. It only took about three and half hours to get rid of an eye sore that had been there for more than 25 years. We still have some work to do prior to the restoration that the natural resources crew will undertake later this year. I am sure that the neighbors and the daily commuters on route 150 will appreciate the improvement in the next three years.



District Cultural Competency Initiatives

- The Museum and Education Department senior staff and Mary Ellen attended the most recent American Alliance of Museum’s *Facing Change* webinar, entitled “Implementing DEAI Plans Through Action Learning” and debriefed about it. Barb and Mary Ellen met with our fellow, Ann Hernandez, to assess where we are regarding our Inclusion Plan and adding Committee members.
- Mark Hanson attended the first meeting with the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail organizing committee, a group being organized by Visit Champaign County.
- The MGP is beginning a project to update the “This Legacy is Yours” and “This Legacy Too” online exhibits. This will involve doing some additional oral histories with members of the Black community. Mark Hanson has been researching up to date audio equipment for these interviews.
- Barb Garvey and Kevin Hamilton, Dean of UI Fine and Applied Arts, worked on a Thoma Foundation Digital Changemaker Grant application to assist with digitizing and making accessible the Hoskins Archive. We met with Ryan Anderson, Mary Ellen, and potential library research assistant Jamilla Gabriel. Barb and Ryan are writing a Letter of Interest for the Thoma Foundation. Grants are for up to \$100,000 and we would be requesting funds for paid internships to process and catalogue the remainder of the collection as well as a librarian to assist with designing a platform for access.

- Katie Snyder has created several “memory” kits for Prairie Winds Senior Living Center. This month’s kit was called Fun and Games and included many games that residents remembered.
- To celebrate Black History Month on Facebook/Instagram and Twitter, the museum posted items from the Hoskins archive (Barb), Collections Corner content about the Tuskegee Airmen (Mark), and Katie Snyder continued her read aloud series with Kwame Alexander’s *Undefeated*.
- Katie Snyder and Barb Garvey worked with Dani Tietz to interview Hattie Paulk for a special *St. Joe Daily/Mahomet Daily* feature on women in the “This Legacy is Yours” exhibit. It was published on February 18.
- As a result of winning the Illinois Association of Museums award, the Sisterhood Mural got renewed attention this month. An article appeared in *Smile Politely* on February 11 about the mural and WCIA did an interview with Katie Snyder about it on March 4.
- Through Katie Snyder the museum is a partner in the *Pandemics as a Portal to Change* project with Krannert Art Museum, The Urbana Free Library, Urbana Arts and Culture Program, the College of Fine and Applied Arts at Illinois, and Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center. *Pandemics as a Portal to Change* is an all age virtual art exhibition, the originals of which will become part of the Museum of the Grand Prairie Collection.
- The DEI committee watched an installment of the 1619 Project series “The Economy that Slavery Built”.
- Many DEI committee members attended a talk from Chicago Wilderness and presented by Dr. Carolyn Finney titled “Reimagining Healthy Communities for People and Nature.”
- Mary Ellen and Dara continue to work with Parkland College to identify a trainer for a future all-staff training to advance the District’s diversity/equity/inclusion work. A longer term partnership with the training team to continue DEI work is also being considered, as funds allow.

