

November 10, 2022

Memorandum

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Nina Carmichael, Leadership in Conservation Fellow

Re: November staff reports

Executive Director (Lorrie Pearson)

- Joined staff from multiple departments (NR, Planning, Museum & Education, HR) and Nina at the Chicago Wilderness Alliance Congress in Chicago, IL
- Learned about the process involved in cleaning and feeding the turtles at HLIC from Cathy Schneider.
- Attended Welcoming Week Reception to thank sponsors and participants.
- Five staff (Nina, Dara, Lisa, Mike Daab, and I) submitted applications to be part of NRPA's inaugural Equity in Practice Certificate Program. If accepted, we will participate in bi-weekly workshops from February through April and collaborate to implement what we learn.
- Sue Gallo, Volunteer Coordinator, has created a way for staff to regularly gather, learn from one another, **and** get some exercise through Walking Wednesdays. Staff who are able meet and explore an area of the preserve together on foot. We have started at Lake of the Woods and have plans to expand to the other staffed preserves next! Through Sue's efforts, some staff are experiencing areas of the preserves they have not seen before. Thank you for your idea and for making it happen, Sue!

Leadership in Conservation Fellow (Nina Carmichael)

- Finalized supervision, budget, and requirements for campground activities coordinator position in collaboration with Mike Daab, Lorrie, Pat, Stacey, and Matt.
- Completed reading *Crucial Conversations* as well as the *Crucial Conversation for Mastering Dialogue* online training
 - Began scheduling CC discussion session series with Museum and Education, Finance, and Foundation/Grants departments for late November.
- Served as a reviewer for student work in the Natural President in Planting course under UIUC department of landscape architecture where students created detail garden planting masterplans of the Botanical Garden at LOW.
- Compiled and summarized results of the Employee Engagement survey to identify areas of focus and potential EEC objectives for 2023.
- Attended the Central Illinois Human Resources Group (CIHRG) ½ day seminar
- Attended C.I.R.C.L.E. (Central Illinois Recreation Council for Leisure Experience) spring connection event in Morton IL.

Planning and Construction (Bridgette Moen)

- Construction is getting started on the cart path connections/replacements at the Golf Course.
- Construction completed the concrete for the ADA parking at Elks Lake Pavilion. It will be striped and signed once it has cured.
- Construction installed windows in the new HQ office space and applied bird frit (bird strike preventative).
- The Safe Shed has been delivered and installed at Middle Fork.
- Bridgette and Sam attended the Illinois Bike Summit in Champaign. There was a wide variety of sessions ranging from non-profit trails group organization to technical training on safe pedestrian and bicycle design.
- The Lake of the Woods covered bridge roof and gutter replacement is complete.
- Work continues on the Discovery Garden Greenhouse. Utilities have been turned off and Operations staff have cleared out the structure. The hazardous materials testing is complete. There is a significant amount of asbestos in the structure which will require abatement. As a result, staff are not pursuing a Request for Proposals from an outside party to salvage the structure for re-use. Staff will work with an abatement contractor to demolish the building.
- Bridgette attended introductory presentations of the UIUC Design for America organization. The group working with CCFPD is interested in expanding accessibility in the preserves and they have made valuable connections with the UIUC Disability Resources & Educational Services office and the (dis)Ability Design Studio at the Beckman Institute.
- Planning staff were contacted by Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) at a Village of Ogden event about a potential future trail partnership along Route 49, which is a north-south road connecting Ogden and Homer. This is a strategic route for the District because it directly connects to the KRT and is only about one mile east of Homer Lake Forest Preserve. Staff are continuing discussions with IDOT on the technical and financial feasibility of the prospective improvement and will present additional details as they emerge.



Business and Finance (John Baker)

- Secured Forest Preserve Friends Foundation approval for its 2023 budget which anticipates \$445,260 in expenditures and \$352,716 in donations and grants. Foundation support for District capital projects includes:

\$100,000	Middle Fork Dark Skies Projects
\$41,000	Natural Resources Projects
\$40,000	Museum Blacksmith Exhibit Renovation
\$34,000	Homer Lake Timberdoodle - Clean Energy Grant
\$28,000	Discovery Garden Greenhouse Replacement
\$15,000	Museum Story Walk Trail

- Received \$45,916 for the Foundation from the Conservation Reserve Program. Since 2019 the Foundation has served as the land manager for the District’s CRP properties and as such receives annual CRP payments. With this payment, the Foundation Farm Commitment has \$154,414 on hand to support natural resources projects.
- Sold 1,221 bushels of soybeans and 7,755 of corn, thus far for the 2022 Middle Fork farm harvest, for a total of \$65,547. The District Farm Fund Commitment is projected to have a \$15,705 year-end balance.
- Attended the IAPD Legal Symposium with Bridgette Moen and Mike Daab.
- Participated in the IPRA Finance Committee’s Annual Budget review meeting.
- Attended demonstrations of the foreUP golf reservations system proposed by the Golf Department for replacing the current GolfNow system. Reviewed and proposed several additions to the foreUP contract including cybersecurity and liability protections. The District and PDRMA attorneys advised staff on language to incorporate in the foreUP contract, and the Accuraty contract for the web redesign.
- Attended two demonstrations of the Municipal Systems Incorporated financial system version 10. The District currently uses MSI 7.5 for its general ledger accounting, budget planning, and accounts payable systems. Transitioning to MSI 10 will move the District’s financial system from its current server-based format to a more secure cloud-based and user-friendly solution. ClientFirst is recommending that the District move all server-based applications to the cloud for better cybersecurity, backups, and ease of user access.
- Worked with ClientFirst and Microsystems to ensure all District servers, personal computers and other electronic devices are included in the CrowdStrike Falcon endpoint detection. Endpoint detection monitoring of the District network and connected devices is now set up and ongoing.

Human Resources (Dara Edgington, Mary Beck)

- During the month of October HR processed zero hires and 11 separations of seasonal employees, resulting in a turnover rate of 11.61% for the month.
- As of October 31st, our total headcount was 98 employees including 49 FT, 17 PT, 31 seasonals, and 1 paid intern.
- The District documented two weather-related incidents of property damage with PDRMA over the month of October.
- In early October, PDRMA conducted a site visit for the first time since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our representative, Lindsey Robertson, accompanied HR staff to visit Homer Lake and Lake of the Woods. She observed and interviewed several staff performing their regular duties. Lindsey will distill her findings into a report and, once

shared, that will guide us in our next steps. Special thanks to all staff (there are too many to mention!) who interacted with Lindsey, answered her questions, and reflected such a positive light onto the District and our work.

- The annual staff appreciation event was held on October 22nd at the Sleepy Creek Winery. The event was well-attended with representatives from [almost] every department in attendance, as well as three of our five wonderful commissioners! I'd like to extend a special thank you to the following individuals, without whose help this event would not have been possible: Kristin Rose, Stacey Clementz, Pat Cain, Angie Clayton, Mary Beck, and Lorrie Pearson.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Media this month included:
 - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/09/12/champaign-urbana-area-date-night/>
 - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/09/06/visit-river-bend-forest-preserve-mahomet/>
 - https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/parks-recreation/inside-out-thinking-inside-and-outside-the-enclosure/article_22156a89-bbf7-5428-a878-495ded659a43.html
 - <https://q985online.com/dark-sky-parks-illinois/>
 - https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/community-events/top-of-the-morning-oct-15-2022/article_a97084fc-1933-52be-93f8-b60b3b8c386f.html
 - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/10/14/do-all-of-fall-in-one-day-and-with-one-hour-of-driving/>
 - <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/ciliving-stories/ciliving/archeology-owls-lincoln-and-lights-with-champaign-county-forest-preserve-district/>
- The sign committee worked on updating several interpretive signs around the District in 2022. These signs were originally installed in 2007 and the information, layout, and stands need updated to match the other interpretive signs throughout the District. The Covered Bridge sign was completed and installed with a new frame. This is a collaborative effort between several departments: Barb Garvey and Mark Hanson provided updated information,



the marketing department designed the layout, and construction installed the new frame and sign.

- Social Media Account Updates. We are updating our reporting numbers to “followers” on Facebook which explains the large jump in numbers for this month

	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-	TWITTER	+/-
CCFPD	7,355	+783	3,099	+20	570	+0
KRT	4,859	+176	157	+3	139	-
MGP	5,383	+60	1,270	+4	265	+1
HLIC	3,402	+16				
GC	2,060	+6	340	+0	114	+0
FPPF	594	+16				

- In October we gained 4 YouTube subscribers for a total of 137, had 650 views for a total of 17.4 hours.
- Updated monthly online and print ads. These ads are featured on Chambanamoms.com, Mahometdaily.com, smilepolitely.com, news-gazette.com, stjosephrecord.com, and in the bi-weekly Visit Champaign County e-newsletter.



- Facebook/Social Media posts made to Forest Preserve Friends Foundation Facebook and CCFPD page highlights:
 - Oct 4th. Roof replacement post (also shared to the CCFPD page) was the top performer on foundation fb:
 - Oct. 7th Interview with Bridgette highlighting discovery garden greenhouse project/asking for donations: <https://youtu.be/Quxrkwg3OWs>
 - Oct. 22nd Youth Climate Action post- more posts will be coming in near future to highlight our activities and



efforts related to sustainability and action against climate change (sustainability logo pictured above).

- Three Rivers Society Event for Dec. 1st:
 - Brochure, ticket, and table card are printed.

Grants and Fundraising (Ryan Anderson)

Night Lights at the Garden

- We are planning a Three Rivers Donor Society Invitation Event in coordination with the Night Lights at the Gardens, scheduled for December 1st. We sent invitations in the first week of November to targeted donors, the Foundation Board, the District Board, and the CAC.

Greenhouse Appeal

- Appeals went out via physical mail to 50 donors for the Botanical Garden greenhouse on 10/14 and was also advertised on social media.

Holiday Card

- We are collecting Foundation member signatures for a holiday card to send out to donors.

Legacy Giving

- A letter and our brochure were sent out to a select list of long-term donors. Additionally, a Facebook post was made in celebration of National Estate Planning Week.

Fundraising Trends (as of 10/24/22)

Donations 4 Year Summary

("Adjusted" numbers have transactions >\$20,000 and match grants removed)

4 year totals:	2019	2020	2021	2022(ytd)
# of donors	325	348	436*	171
Total \$	\$462,999.87	\$182,614.87	\$201,020.10	\$117,626.54
Total \$ (adjusted)	\$152,999.87	\$140,399.44	\$180,020.10	\$92,626.54

**127 first-time monetary donors in 2021*

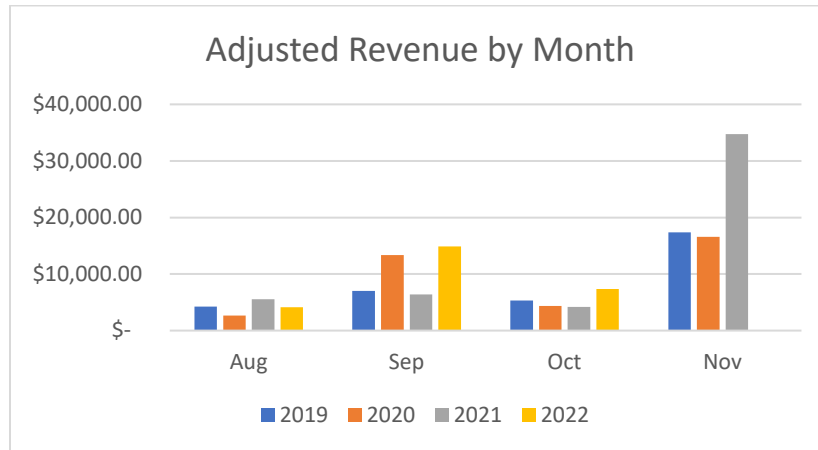
Jan-Oct 4 Year Summary

Jan - Oct	2019	2020	2021	2022
# of donors	226	234	303	171
Total \$(adjusted)	\$73,314.90	\$76,897.90	\$95,483.21*	\$92,626.54
% of year total	48%	54%	53%	

**includes major gifts to the Peninsula Accessibility Project*

Adjusted Revenue by Month (Jan-Oct)

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2019	\$ 4,243.43	\$ 7,010.79	\$ 5,300.25	\$ 17,350.12
2020	\$ 2,670.92	\$13,356.50	\$ 4,330.77	\$ 16,570.56
2021	\$ 5,570.91	\$ 6,408.10	\$ 4,207.40	\$ 34,754.29
2022	\$ 4,121.40	\$14,892.40	\$ 7,382.90	



2019 - 2022(YTD) Donations Summary by Constituent Group

	Staff	Board	FPPF	CAC	Charit-ables	Individuals	Organizations	Business
2019	\$4,471.07	\$1,400.00	\$9,660.00	\$390.00	\$53,388.92	\$318,684.80	\$11,380.50	\$63,624.58
2020	\$4,085.79	\$2,780.00	\$12,030.70	\$1,615.00	\$51,209.94	\$106,256.00	\$2,335.43	\$2,302.01
2021	\$10,049.27	\$5,003.00	\$15,862.05	\$1,382.80	\$35,107.64	\$113,107.82	\$13,791.60	\$6,715.92
2022	\$930.94	\$2,904.00	\$4,124.35	\$601.10	\$32,071.88	\$69,323.54	\$3,025.00	\$4,645.73

Volunteer coordinator (Sue Gallo)

- The CCFPD had ten new volunteer applications last month and two have already volunteered. In terms of events, the seed collection on Indigenous Peoples’ Day, hosted by the Natural Resources Department with a pre-talk by the Museum & Education Department had 34 general and regular volunteers (and a lot of staff!) help.
- Mike Dale, Bruce, Tyler and Colton worked with the 9 Phi Gamma Nu volunteers who were remarkably efficient digging canna bulbs for reuse in the Garden, saving the Garden about \$4 a bulb!
- Lincoln’s Challenge cadets continued to work in the new grant area at Homer Lake with Emily whose been crucial in facilitating this partnership and making it what it is. Lincoln’s Challenge cadets are graduating soon, but we arranged for a new cohort to start back at

Homer Lake in the New Year. Lincoln's Challenge staff reported "I have heard great things so we would love to continue."

- The Yard Goats (a youth baseball organization) had a Golf Event, with a few volunteers helping and Harvest Fest celebrated the season with the help of approximately eight volunteers. Pat, Chris and team provided a fun and welcoming to experience to the volunteers.



- Sue accomplished a lot of database troubleshooting, clean up and document archive and finally completed a (hopefully!) final draft of our trail steward manual which is in review by relevant department heads. We set a date for a volunteer tour of some of the Natural History Survey Collections (December 8) and decided on a volunteer drop-in coffee time at the Museum in January or February.

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

- Maintenance crew has done a great job on mulching leaves and keeping the course in shape for play.
- Gordon Salm Golf committee Chair donated \$3,000 towards the purchase of a cyclone leaf vacuum to help the maintenance crew on leaf litter within golf course.
- Golf superintendent is planning on blowing out the irrigation system within the next two weeks and helping assist the crew from Botanical Garden on blowing out their irrigation.
- October was a bit more normal month when it came to weather conditions. We had an ample amount of precipitation and somewhat cooler than normal temperatures, which did affect play somewhat. We had 3,054 players for the month, which is above the 5-year average of 2,352. Additionally, it is the 3rd highest total for the month of October since 2005. Revenue for the month was \$69,798, which is also above the 5-year average (\$56,680). This revenue number is the highest for October on record, other than 2020 when we offered the early Anniversary Pass renewal.
- We held our last big events for the season in early October. The first weekend of October was the annual Hubie Cup event. This tournament is named in honor of former Golf Professional Dave Huber and is a reward for the top 24 players of the season. This is determined by the number of events each individual participated in throughout the year (league play, weekend events, tournaments). We held a dinner on Friday evening,

followed by splitting up the 24 players in to 2 teams and hosting an 18 Hole Ryder Cup style event on both Saturday and Sunday.

- The second weekend of October was our annual 2-Person Better Ball Tournament. We once again had a full field of 50 teams for this 2-day event. Below is the final summary of tournaments for 2022 in comparison to 2021.

Tournament	# of Players	22 Total Revenue
Season Opener	112	\$8,400.00
Naughtin Open	38	\$2,660.00
Hartwell Match Play	28	\$560.00
Parent-Child	56	\$2,240.00
Junior Open	55	\$1,185.00
Club Championship	55	\$1,000.00
Better Ball	100	\$7,500.00
2022 Totals	444	\$23,545.00
2021 Totals	470	\$21,740.00

- Staff spent the last couple weeks of the month preparing for the renewal and sale of Anniversary and Platinum passes, which will begin on November 1st. Staff also began prepping the Clubhouse for the winter golf season and Simulator play. We are looking to have the Simulators open by December 1st.
- With the return of large group events and shotgun outings in 2022, we changed our pricing structure for golf outings. This was in large part due to player demand on the golf course. Afternoon shotgun start events require closing the course in the morning, so the fees were higher per player (\$60). Morning shotgun events don't play prior to start, so their price was slightly lower (\$50 per). And smaller groups (less than 72 players), paid the fee of \$40 per player for their events if they had a block of tee times. Below is the comparison of events, with this year's player, revenue, and merchandise counts per outing and then a comparison to last year's totals. In 2021 we held 26 events at the course.

Outing	# of Players	22 Total Revenue	22 Actual Merch
Bulldog Gridiron Club	76	\$3,900.00	\$380.00
Edelman Electric	15	\$1,080.46	\$175.00
Bulldog Open	107	\$7,428.50	\$600.00
Mahomet Rotary	41	\$2,117.00	\$340.00
Urbana Firefighters	72	\$4,941.00	\$360.00
Mahomet Golf Team Fundraiser	96	\$5,956.00	\$480.00
U of I Wrestling Team	128	\$10,081.72	\$640.00
St. Thomas More Athletic Boosters	111	\$7,283.00	\$555.00
Jason Smitley Memorial	85	\$4,250.00	\$425.00
Mahomet Community Fund	72	\$5,823.25	\$939.25
Local 149 - Plumbers & Pipefitters	72	\$4,626.00	\$900.00
David Williams Foundation	112	\$6,758.00	\$560.00
Champaign Rotary	68	\$4,509.00	\$805.00
Edelman Electric	29	\$2,070.39	\$145.00
Mahomet Chamber of Commerce	92	\$5,908.00	\$460.00
CAUSBC	72	\$4,090.00	\$436.00
AMBUCS	112	\$6,300.00	\$660.00
Mahomet Christian Church	72	\$4,140.00	\$360.00
Yard Goats Baseball	80	\$4,870.00	\$420.00
2022 Totals	1512	\$96,132.32	\$9,640.25
2021 Totals	1195	\$50,274.40	\$5,646.92
Difference	317	\$45,857.92	\$3,993.33

Museum and Education Department (Lorrie Pearson)

- We completed our 10th year of Wilderness Living Skills at the Middle Fork campground. We work with the Wild Nature Project (Bloomington, IN) to facilitate the three-day, two-night workshop. Participants learned to make cordage from natural materials, create a debris shelter, identify wild edibles and so much more. We asked the participants what was the most valuable thing you learned or experienced at the workshop. One of the responses was:



- *The most valuable thing for me was a sense of accomplishment. Many of the things we did that weekend were things that I had never done before (including camping alone). And being able to successfully do those things made me have a greater sense of confidence in what I can do.*

We also asked if their experience changed the way they see nature and if so how has it changed. Some of the responses were:

- *Yes, and I feel I get more understanding of the nature: its abundance and the power of nurturing so many lives on it.*
- *Yes, it was a good reminder of how important it is for our well-being to get out in nature. We take a lot of things for granted in modern society, so we need to remind ourselves that our ancestors relied on foraging, building their own shelters, etc. It's still important to take care of nature, and I think it's detrimental to us individually and society as a whole that we've lost so much of our connection to nature. I'd like to keep that connection more alive and treat nature with as much care and respect as possible.*
- *It has changed the way I see nature around me for the good. I even found mushrooms in my own backyard that I use to think were gross and going to poison me. Now I know that the earth is truly giving me so many gifts without me even having to ask.*
- School program registrations are continuing to increase. We have been seeing many great groups of students from across the county and beyond.
- Matthew Davis, Director of Georgia College Museums and Douglas Miller, from Historic Site Administrator Pennsbury Manor, visited the Museum of the Grand Prairie on October 5 and 6 as the assessment team for the museum's application for reaccreditation from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). They had conversations with the staff of the department, toured exhibits and collections storage areas, met with Board Members, Lorrie Pearson and John Baker. They also had a meeting with roughly 35 community stakeholders, with no museum staff present. The assessment team was pleased with their visit and have submitted their report to the AAM. The museum will be reviewed at the Feb. 8-10 Accreditation Commission meeting. The Commission's decision letter will arrive about 4 weeks after the meeting, along with a copy of the Site Visit Report. As our accreditation officer has said, "now we are in the home stretch."
- A new collections intern, Jessica Smith, has started specifically to help us prepare for the major collections reorganization project slated for January and February.

- We made significant progress toward the removal and retirement of the “totem” poles in the museum stairwell that are considered to be cultural appropriation. Multiple indigenous and museum professionals were contacted to ensure we were culturally sensitive and respectful in our handling of these objects. Removal and retirement are tentatively slated for the first week in January.
- Many successful public programming opportunities occurred this month including a Reptiles program at Champaign Public Library covered by WCIA, the conclusion of the “Homer Lake Trail Trackdown, MGP’s annual Harvest Fest event, which featured a collaboration with LOW Ops providing a hayrack ride through the preserve, and Halloween Fun at the Museum where more than 100 participants showed up with many awesome costumes!
- M&E Dept Programming staff is working with the marketing department to generate new materials and strategies to market public programs.
- Bat surveys at HL and LOW are done for the year. Thanks to HL and LOW Ops for their help with installing and using equipment lock boxes this year!

	In-Person Programming	Not In-Person Programming	MGP Visitation	HLIC Visitation
Oct-22	1890	225	984	333
YTD	8362	4356	10263	2503
	<i>Measured in number of patrons reached and includes all youth and public programming opportunities</i>	<i>Measured in number of views or virtual patrons in attendance and includes all youth and public programming opportunities</i>	<i>Measured in number of patrons visited during open hours</i>	

Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)

- In October, NR hosted its last volunteer seed collection event for the season at Buffalo Trace Prairie to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day. The event began with a presentation at the Museum of the Grand Prairie given by Marina Montez-Ellis and Peter Goodspeed on the history of Indigenous Peoples Day and how Indigenous People influenced the Illinois landscape with fire. The event was attended by 34 volunteers and seed collection in the field was led by Emily Williams and Anna Scheidel.
- Because of the dry conditions in October, Kenny Bielski and Eric Roth, along with staff from Middle Fork River, moved the pile of soil from the Point Pleasant wetland to behind the Middle Fork shop. This pile of soil was left behind by the contractor who installed the water control structure and is inaccessible during most of the year.



- Container trees were picked up from our usual tree vendor in Indiana, Woody Warehouse. These 28 trees include memorial trees and site trees to be planted in various locations throughout Lake of the Woods, Homer Lake, and Middle Fork River Forest Preserves.
- All NR staff and two MF staff members put down a native seed mix on the exposed soil around Willow Pond at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve. The seed was then covered with a coconut fiber mat that was secured in place with landscape staples. This mat will provide erosion control and protect the seeds/seedlings for three years until it naturally decomposes. Next spring, staff and volunteers will also plant thousands of native plugs into the mat.
- Staff utilized ideal burning conditions to burn off dead grass duff from a 3-acre unit they will be planting to tallgrass prairie this fall/winter in Buffalo Trace



- Development and partnerships
 - Peter supervised three prescribed burns conducted by the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) at Buffalo Trace Prairie. The burns were done as part of a training for 12 certified wildland firefighters.
 - Peter met with Jill Kostel from The Wetlands Initiative (TWI), an environmental non-profit that advances wetland restoration in the Midwest. Peter and Jill were discussing the feasibility of installing a smart wetland in the ditch at Buffalo Trace Prairie.

- Peter presented to a Planting Design class for students pursuing a degree in landscape architecture at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.
- Peter met with Jeff Yockey with the Friends of the Kickapoo Rail Trail to discuss how the native ecosystems of the KRT will be restored and maintained.

Kenny met with MF staff, a USFWS Biologist, and a Ducks Unlimited Biologist at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve to tour wetland sites and discuss necessary actions in repairing the north and south waterfowl management areas

Lake of the Woods (Rusty Maulding)

- Michael Dale and Tammy Fry have been leading the aerial and ground crews respectively for tree trimming with a 65' lift that was rented for a month. They've been prioritizing branch removal near buildings, over roads and parking lots as well as over trails that we cannot reach from the ground. We are also coordinating some work at the golf course with Joie Torres to take advantage of the lift rental. We typically have between 5 and 6 staff dedicated to this project from BG and Ops to help manage traffic and complete the work safely.
- Jaymie Huffman and Bruce Colray have been dedicated to exterior illumination duties in preparation for our Night Lights program at the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden since about the middle of October and it's looking great already! The rest of the BG staff have been performing seasonal cut backs of annual and perennial beds (including canna harvesting) and collecting evergreen needles and boughs from on site to use as part of our winter displays.
- The benches and other interior furnishings have been disassembled and removed from the greenhouse in preparation for demolition or disassembly of the structure. Utilities have also been turned off to the building including a District waterline valve that needed to be located and replaced with the help of Construction.
- In prioritizing other projects, we are a little behind on leaf litter cleanup. To help on this front, our second shift folks have been re-tasked to help clear roads, trails and parking lots when they come in. It's worked very well to have them finish clean behind the trimming crew as well.



- Exterior water fountains throughout the preserves have been shut down and winterized along with several stand-alone restrooms and other buildings without heat.

Homer Lake (Skylar Smith)

- Solar Lights were installed at the HLIC garage.
- The Walnut Hill shelter was shut down for the winter.
- The Natural Playscape stream was shut down for the winter.
- 17 volunteers from Saint Joseph-Ogden High School Honor Society cleared invasive plant species from the Salt Fork Center Gardens and along the West Lake Trail, allowing visitors to see the lake from the trail.
- Annual mowing of the overflow spillway was completed.
- Trees were planted at the North Peninsula and Hidden Acres.
- Skylar met with the construction department to discuss rental facility improvements.

Middle Fork (Matthew Kuntz)

- We wrapped up our camping season at the end of October. This year we tried for the first time to have some Halloween festivities for the campers and it was incredibly successful. We held a Halloween costume contest that had nearly 70 people attending, a wiener roast, and hayrides through the campground. We also asked the campers to decorate their sites and we took our guests on a hayride at night to see the decorations.
- Middle Fork staff had a meeting at the end of October with representatives from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and staff with Ducks Unlimited to discuss the North and South Waterfowl areas. We are investigating the gate systems that control water levels and possible replacement systems, funding sources, and engineering services.
- We would like to thank our campground hosts for their incredible service provided to the campers and the campground at Middle Fork. We can't do it without them and hope to see them back for the 2023 season.
- The Natural Resources department has started laying seed bedding down around the shoreline of Willow Pond. This is part of a naturalization process for shoreline species and will assist in erosion control in the near future.
- Middle Fork staff have started herbicide applications to honeysuckle populations throughout Middle Fork natural areas.
- I held a tour for Museum & Education Dept. staffers to show them potential sites throughout Middle Fork for programming for the upcoming year.

November 17, 2022

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Sam Ihm, Planning Assistant

Re: Comprehensive Plan Status Update – For Information Only

Background

Last year, staff began the initial phases of creating a comprehensive plan. To this point, work has mostly focused on collecting internal data, gathering community input, and reviewing precedent plans from other forest preserve districts. With this information, staff have developed a framework for the plan, created many of the supporting graphics, and have begun drafting text for several chapters.

The draft framework for the plan is as follows:

- Executive Summary and Introduction
- District Overview
- Finances
- County Demographics
- Preserves and Facilities
- Programming
- Community Input
- Recommendations

Currently, staff are focusing on drafting the Community Input chapter. In 2021, staff gathered qualitative input at community events and the County-wide Needs Assessment Survey is being collected now. In January, staff will provide an overview of all feedback gathered to this point, including the SWOT and visioning activities results from the Board of Commissions, the Citizens Advisory Committee, the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation, and staff. The Needs Assessment Survey being conducted by aQity Research and Insights, Inc.; preliminary results are expected by the December Board Regular Meeting.

In summary, the Board can expect the following Comprehensive Plan updates and progress:

- In December, aQity will present a summary of their County-wide needs assessment and nature center surveys.
- In January, staff will present a summary of all qualitative and quantitative feedback gathered.
- In early 2023, staff will distribute a draft of the Comprehensive Plan for Board initial review and comment. The draft will include all sections other than the recommendations.
- After incorporating the initial plan feedback from the Board, staff will present the proposed plan recommendations for comment, which will be developed from the inventory of the District's finances, preserves, and programming, trends in demographics, and the results of the collective community input.

Action Requested

No action is requested at this time except to complete and submit the requested SWOT analysis by Tuesday, November 22.