

May 9, 2023

## **Memorandum**

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Nina Carmichael, Leadership in Conservation Fellow

Re: May staff reports

### **Executive Management (Lorrie Pearson, Michael Daab)**

- Lorrie spoke to C-U Sunrise Rotary (approx. 18 attendees) and the local chapter of Philanthropic Education Organization (PEO) (25 attendees) about the District and how to help us celebrate our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Received suggestions for community members to serve on the upcoming Efficiency Committee from C-U Sunrise.
- Staff from throughout the District are participating in a 6-part online series: Effective Supervisory Practices through the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).
- Lorrie attended IAPD's Legislative Conference, including a group dinner with State Rep. Mike Marron (with thanks from Urbana Park District for organizing), stressing the importance of OSLAD, internet connectivity in rural areas to serve the preserves, and support needed in working with the railroads to complete the KRT. She also presented framed 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary artwork to the offices of each of our six legislators. While at the Capitol, she ran into (almost literally) Champaign City Council member and Champaign Black Chamber President Will Kyles, allowing the opportunity to reconnect.
- Lorrie and Sam Ihm attended a bike tour of a portion of the Constitution Trail, a rail-to-trail, in Normal, Illinois. The tour highlighted restoration efforts along the trail and complementary uses that are adjacent to the trail, including an arts center and a 16-acre natural playground/park as part of an elementary school.
- Peter Goodspeed and Lorrie were interviewed for the [Chambana Proud podcast](#), a joint effort between the Economic Development Corporation and Visit Champaign County. (full link also under Marketing section)
- Lorrie met with County Executive Steve Summers about the appointment process for new Commissioners.
- Lisa Sprinkle and Lorrie visited each site and distributed 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary t-shirts and hats to all permanent staff who ordered one.
- Kamryn Suttinger (she/her) will officially join our staff as the next Director of Museum and Education Department on June 15. Prior to that full-time start date, she will visit on May 15 for the May department meeting, a department lunch, to observe a program, and learn about our collections. She is also participating in the Effective Supervisor Practices online training and in some Zoom meetings to start to get her up to speed prior to her official arrival.
- Michael Daab, Sam Ihm, and Lisa Sprinkle met with Sandy Kaczmariski, the Hike App Manager for the Prairie State Conservation Coalition, to discuss adding CCFPD trails to the organization's Hike App. Grand Prairie Friends and the IL Department of Natural Resources are two example organizations that currently have trails in the app, which is available to purchase through app stores for \$0.99. The initial licensing fee for adding unlimited trails is \$200, and a \$100 annual fee will help to cover software updates. Trail

experiences can be custom built to include unlimited stops and information on ecology, history, and other items of interest. Sam Ihm will work with Natural Resources, Museum and Education, and Site Operations departments in order to build enriching trail experiences that can be experienced in person or virtually.

- Michael met with Scott Hays, President of the Illinois Paddling Council, to discuss local river recreation and water trail development at CCFPD.
- Michael, Peter Goodspeed, Matt Kuntz, and Jacob Pruiett met with consultants from CQI and Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative Staff to discuss options for solar energy installation at Middle Fork and Homer Lake.

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

- Acquired a scientific permit from IDNR to legally capture and handle aquatic invertebrates which will be used for the monitoring and surveying portions of the Sangamon River at various CCFPD preserves.
- Led April's Employee Engagement Committee meeting which focused on coordinating our second quarterly connection happening on June 8.
- Attended (virtually) ICMA's professional developmental event *Grant writing Tips & Tricks for Beginners* led by Jared Walkowitz, Chief Accountability Officer with Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity. This live session focused on best practices for writing winning proposals for Illinois State grants.
- Will begin shadowing Carron in late May to develop an understanding of the finance and accounting aspect of management.

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

- The Construction Department has:
  - finished the Activity Center kitchen renovations.
  - regraded an area near west maintenance at Lake of the Woods prior to the sealcoat work to help reduce standing water near the shops.
  - completed the updates at the campground shower house.
  - painted hoist way for the ADA lift.
  - hung sound baffles and a TV in HQ conference room.
  - repaired the fireplace at Elks Lake Pavilion, damaged by renters. The renters have been notified and have 30 days to pay for damages before being reported to a collection's agency for the cost of the repair.
  - repaired the electric line providing power to the Homer Lake Interpretive Center.
  - started work for the new shelter to replace the observation deck at Homer Lake, to be named "Pollinator Point."
- Planning has:
  - purchased a greens roller for the Golf Course. Staff found no electric ride-on greens rollers for sale within budget. In addition to being \$17,000 over budget, the only model currently available ships from Australia and staff have concerns about servicing the machine locally.

- ordered the emergency storm shelter for Lake of the Woods. Due to lead times, it will be installed later in the year near west maintenance.
- updated vehicle and equipment records with PDRMA.
- been preparing for upcoming KRT construction phases. Letters to update neighbors have been sent to adjacent property owners. Draft talking points, press release, and a RFQ for Owners' Representative Services has been shared with UPD and VCCD for review.
- Additional Updates:
  - Asbestos abatement at the greenhouse has been completed.
  - Skylar and Roy mounted directional, donor, and branding signage along the KRT.
  - Bridgette sat for and passed her NRPA Certified Park and Recreation Professional exam.
  - Bridgette wrote [an article](#) for The *Illinois Parks and Recreation* magazine about the on progress of the KRT. (full link also under Marketing section)



## Business and Finance (John Baker)

- Finished preparations for the audit field work. Carron Johnson and Kathleen Hourigan have been great helps respectively in reviewing audit standards and how the District addresses these, and in preparing the District's financial schedules and reports for the auditor's review.
- Met with ClientFirst and the IT Committee to reallocate the 2023 IT budget to address remote site connectivity. Before progress on cloud sharing, program streaming, and cloud-based communications can occur, Homer Lake and Middle Fork require adequate broadband connectivity to participate in these services. Middle Fork and Homer Lake operations have adequate connectivity at present, but the Homer Lake Interpretive Center presents a unique challenge for broadband connectivity. ClientFirst has worked with vendors who have service in the Homer Lake area but none of the satellite providers have proven consistently effective for the Interpretive Center's needs. ClientFirst continues to advocate with a cable company to provide broadband service to HLIC. This may require the laying of fiber optic cable at District expense, hence the budget reallocation.
- John and Carron attended the IMRF rate meeting webinar. IMRF's 2021 investment loss was 12.8%, or \$7.6 billion. The CCFPD employer pension reserve decreased in 2022 from \$5.13 million to \$2.12 million, largely because of the 2022 investment losses. The CCFPD pension contribution rate will increase from 5.92% this year to 6.41% for 2024.

Despite 2022's poor market performance, the CCFPD pension funding rate (active members only) at year end was 94% on an actuarial basis.

## Human Resources (Dara Edgington, Mary Beck)

- During the month of April, HR processed 5 hires and 1 separation.
- As of May 1<sup>st</sup>, our total headcount was 108 employees; including 48 FT, 16 PT, 43 seasonal, and one paid intern.
- The District documented 1 employee injury report and 1 patron incident during the month of April.
- Annual uniform shirts and hats have been received and are ready for operations seasonal staff!
- Seasonal hiring is about 65% complete, with job postings being shared and posted in as many ways as we can think of!



## Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Media this month included:
  - <https://www.wcia.com/news/champaign-co-forest-preserve-asking-for-help-removing-invasive-plants-volunteers-needed/>
  - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2023/04/16/dark-sky-visiting-middle-fork-river-forest-preserve/>
  - <https://www.wcia.com/news/northern-lights-put-on-a-dazzling-display-in-central-illinois-sunday-night/>
  - <https://www.smilepolitely.com/splog/did-you-see-the-aurora-borealis-last-night/>
  - <https://www.wcia.com/news/ticks-diseases-increasing-champaign-co-forest-preserve-shares-prevention-treatment-tips>
  - <https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/ciliving-stories/ciliving/champaign-county-forest-preserve-district-making-sustainability-efforts/>
  - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2023/05/01/plant-lovers-champaign-urbana/>
  - <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2023/04/27/hiking-trails-families-champaign-urbana/>
  - <https://chambanaproud.podbean.com/e/episode-15-75-years-of-conservation-education-and-compatible-recreation/>

- <https://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pnun=15&edid=c08d099f-c2d8-46b2-85b3-771c7ed9b692&isshared=true> (written by Bridgette Moen)

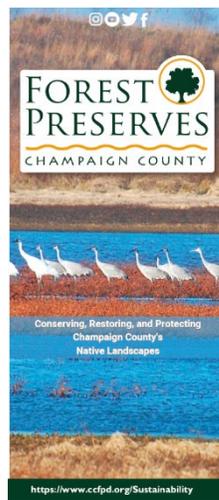
- Lisa and Lorrie met with Jenna Kurtzweil, a writer for Smile Politely, to discuss CCFPD's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The article will be posted on May 12.
- Social media followers update.

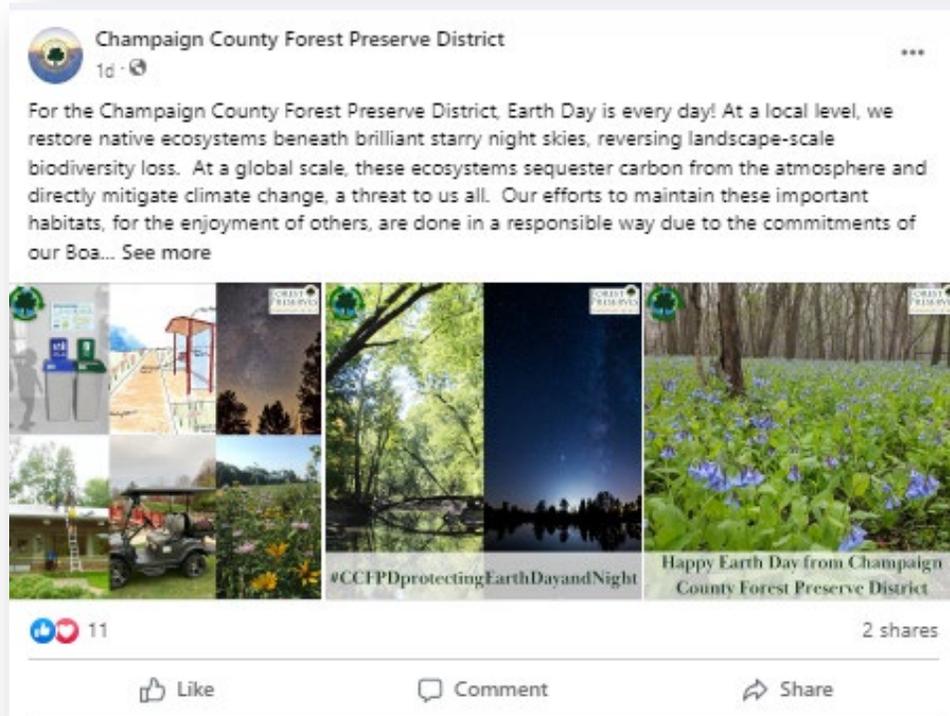
	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-
CCFPD	7,774	+88	3,448	+131
KRT	5,155	+102	165	+4
MGP	5,395	+31	1,315	+4
HLIC	3,490	+27		
GC	2,118	+18	353	+5
FPPF	676	+1		

- Created two brochures for the District. Museum and Education department distributed them at Earth Day for Everyone event at Meadowbrook (4/22/23):
  - Environmental Sustainability at CCFPD



Environmental Sustainability at  
Champaign County  
Forest Preserve District





○ Conserving, restoring, and protecting Champaign County’s Native Landscapes

- Met with the Dark Skies Committee (4/3)
- Attended a seminar on Social Media at the Chamber of Commerce (4/18).
- Made yard signage for Middle Fork prior to the Dark Sky Celebration Event.
- Ran a social media campaign: #CCFPDprotectingEarthDayandNight (4/15-4/22), which displayed CCFPDs environmental sustainability efforts and showcased Middle Fork River Forest Preserve International Dark Sky Park, in honor of International Dark Sky Week.
- Facility Rentals

2022	2023	April		2022	2023
# Rentals	# Rentals	Preserve	Facility	\$	\$
7	10	HL	Salt Fork Center	\$2,000.00	\$4,250.00
0	0	HL	Walnut Hill Shelter	\$0.00	\$0.00
1	0	LOW	Botanical Garden Weddings	\$995.00	\$0.00
7	9	LOW	Elks Lake Pavilion	\$2,300.00	\$2,993.00
4	3	LOW	Izaak Walton Cabin	\$420.00	\$440.00

8	5	LOW	Lake of the Woods Pavilion	\$3,826.00	\$1,800.00
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
1	1	MF	Activity Center	\$300.00	\$300.00
0	0	RB	River Bend Shelter	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,783.00</b>	<b>\$9,841.00</b>

## Grants and Fundraising (Ryan Anderson)

**Three Rivers Launch Event** – We had 36 attend the event on April 8 and we had a great time! Thank you to all the Foundation members who attended and helped make this event a success! “Thank you” postcards were sent to attendees, golf committee, and staff. “Sorry we missed you” postcards were sent to those not able to attend.

**April/May Leaflet** –Thanking and acknowledging our 2022 donors has been sent out. These included a special highlight to the Three Rivers Society members and our perennial donors. The Jun/July Leaflet is in the design phase and will include articles about the Timberdoodle, Dark Sky Trail, and Homer Lake Boat Launch fundraising campaigns along with a remittance envelope.

**June Donor Appreciation Kayak Event** – Planning has begun for this event. **\*\*Please reserve June 17 on your calendars for a fun day at Homer Lake! \*\***

### Fundraising Campaigns as of 4/30/23:

- Dark Sky Trail - \$24,902 of our goal of \$100,000 has been met to date.

### Fundraising Trends (as of 4/30/23)

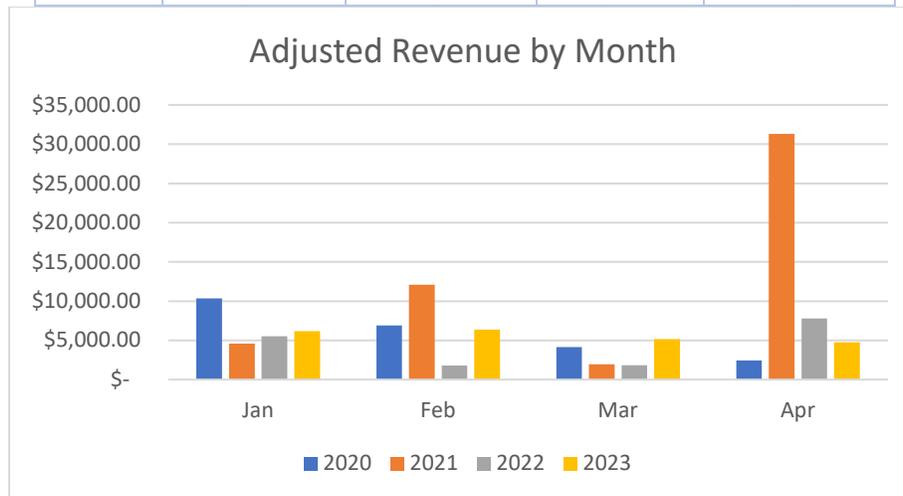
#### *Donations 4 Year Summary*

4-year totals:	2020	2021	2022	2023(ytd)
<b>Total \$</b>	\$164,219.10	\$209,832.74	\$207,053.66	\$30,587.42
<b>Total \$ (adjusted)</b>	\$111,738.24	\$174,725.10	\$175,731.78	\$23,829.42
<b># of donors (adjusted)</b>	341	407	345	105
<b># of 1<sup>st</sup> time donors</b>	134	165	87	23

*\*Adjusted" numbers have grants and bequests removed) Updates to Bloomerang (Donor tracking system) have altered these figures.*

### *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>	\$ 6,164.72	\$ 6,365.14	\$ 5,137.02	\$ 4,767.94



\*April 2021 included Peninsula Project, John Garvey Memorial, Greg & Ruth Smith Memorial.  
 \*\*March & April 2023 is largely Freedom Fest sponsors.

## **Volunteer coordinator (Sue Gallo)**

- 50 National Honor Society Students from Central High School removed invasive shrubs from the grounds around the Salt Fork Center and along the West Lake trail.



- We also had 3 groups cancel their service events last month, inspiring Sue to start tracking group service requests vs attendees because this number more accurately reflects

the number of touchpoints made and work devoted to event coordination regardless of cancelations and no-shows.

- 7 Phi Gamma Nu students helped in the Botanical Garden on a super-cold day as well as 7 volunteers from Centennial and Rotary in honor of Austin Cloyd, a former Centennial student and member of Rotary Interact, who was killed in the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting.



- Volunteer Appreciation Week was marked with an email of thanks an invitation to celebrate the accreditation success of the museum, and the distribution of volunteer t-shirts! Big thanks to Project T who were instrumental in making the t-shirts available.
- Sue met with Kristin and Ryan about our e-newsletters, contributed to the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary display preparations as well as the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and marketing committee obligations.
- The spring rush for service hours is diminishing – with only 7 new applicants in April and 3 requests for group service.
- 15 volunteers attended the KRT Clean-Up event which happened on April 8. This event was postponed twice due to weather which greatly impacted attendance (over 60 people signed up for the original date). However, the mighty 15 removed a lot of trash! Sue and volunteer Jill Robins have organized a second ‘make up’ day which will take place in St. Joseph on May 13.



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

- In April we had 4,389 players, which is nearly double the 5-year average (2,216) and the highest since 2004. Revenue was similar, with a total of \$107,870 (5-year average of

\$52,533) and a record for the month of April since 2010. Essentially, if there was not precipitation falling from the sky, we were busy!

- Larry Denton completed the bunker project in April. Staff has neared completion of laying sod around the renovated areas. This project has been a 4-year process of removing unnecessary bunkers, renovating and reshaping many others, with the goal of easing difficulty and speed of play for all abilities.
- April is the start of outings, tournaments, lessons, clinics and events on the golf course and in the community. David and Jason spent Monday and Wednesday afternoons (in April) at Lincoln Trail Elementary School teaching the basics of golf through the BLAST program.
- Our Associations began play the final Wednesday of April with 24 women and 120+ men registered to play in the District's Associations. These Association members play a different event each week, through the end of September which staff score and flights (assess and divide) players by ability.
- On Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, we hosted the Three Rivers Society kick-off event in the Clubhouse. This event served as an opportunity for donors to interact with staff and learn the different things involved in day-to-day operations at the golf course. Several members of the Golf Committee, along with Joie, Mack, and myself held a Q&A session after having lunch where we were able to inform the 40 attendees of the many improvements made around the facility, and updates on the programs and community outreach we continue to grow. The event closed with Foot Golf, Par 3, and Driving Range availability for those who were interested.
- Cleveland Golf hosted a wedge fitting clinic on Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup> on our driving range. This event featured a short clinic by Golf Professional David Sebestik, followed by a wedge fitting for each participant. We had 8 participants and sold over \$1,200 in Cleveland wedges through this event.
- The annual 2-Person Season Opener Tournament was held the last weekend of April. We had a full field of 62 teams for the event which has a different format for the teams on each 9 holes (Better Ball and Alternate Shot on Saturday, Scramble and Total Combined score on Sunday). This has become one of our most popular events, and registration was full this year by the end of March!
- Golf Course Operations:
  - Maintenance crew repaired irrigation leaks on hole # 7, # 9 tee, #10 cart path and a 10" mainline on hole #10 tee.
  - Superintendent aerated all the greens. Maintenance crew top dressed the greens with mason sand and fertilized.
  - Superintendent aerated all tee boxes, overseeded to thicken turf and address any bare areas, and fertilized all tees and fairways.
  - Pre-emergence has been sprayed on all the greens and sprayed first fungicide application.
  - Maintenance crew continues to water sod around the bunkers, keeping the course in great shape.

## Museum and Education Department (Lorrie Pearson)

- Staff, volunteers, and community members came together on May 5<sup>th</sup> at MGP to celebrate the Museum’s recent reaccreditation by the American Alliance of Museums.
- Cross-training between museum Customer Service Retail Associates (CSRAs) and the HLIC Office Specialist began this month and will continue through the month of May. So far, it’s going very well.
- School field trips (including homeschool programs) are almost back to the numbers we saw pre-COVID!
- We welcome a new volunteer Schoolmarm, Camille Born, to help with programs in the one-room schoolhouse.
- We will be seeing all 6<sup>th</sup> graders in Champaign Unit 4 for the Pond Life field trip starting in April and going into May.
- George Groschen retired on May 12<sup>th</sup> after 10 years as the Museum’s custodian. He will be difficult to replace. Staff have begun the hiring process and are working to meet custodial needs in the interim.
- HLIC staff came together to clean out the prairie bed outside of the Interpretive Center building.
- With last month’s approval of a lengthy deaccessioning memo, collections staff have begun the arduous relocation and disposition process.
- Collections staff are prepping for restarting the tool wing gallery renovation, and Mark Hanson has initiated dialogue with outside exhibit designers.
- Mark Hanson hosted a site visit with representatives of the Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board (ISHRAB) to discuss our current Hoskins archive oral history digitization project.
- To celebrate International Dark Sky Week, a program for all ages was held at the MF Activity Center. Hands-on activities, telescope viewing, and a special presentation on supernovas from UIUC Astronomy student, Erica Alrbrigo, all helped draw attention to the wondrous natural resource, the dark night sky.
- Other programming highlights include: Walk with a Naturalist held at Hidden Acres, a program on Urbana’s Landscape Recycling Center for the Garden Speaker Series, participating in the “Earth Day for Everyone” program organized at Urbana’s Meadowbrook Park, a presentation by volunteer Doug Mills on his “Wonders of the Wetland” exhibit presently at HLIC, and much more.
- **Patrons Served**

	In-Person Programming*	Online Programming*	Outreach**	MGP Visitation	HLIC Visitation
<b>Jan-23</b>	78	302	423	Closed	40
<b>Feb-23</b>	286	92	35	Closed	48
<b>Mar-23</b>	246	150	90	707	167
<b>Apr-23</b>	1312	0	210	830	274

YTD	1922	544	758	1537	529
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- \* Includes all youth and public program opportunities \*\* Includes loan kits and tabling events

## Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)

- In April, the NR staff completed its final seeding project with the interseeding of a recently burned 40-acre section of old field in the Homer Lake NW prairie complex. This old field section was never 100% restored but contains a lot of tallgrass prairie plant species. Additional seeding will boost the species diversity and abundance of plants in this area, enhancing the overall native plant community.
- Staff utilized a window in April in which the basal rosettes and early shoots of many invasive plants emerged from the ground while the native plants remained dormant. Herbicide was applied on these species at their respective locations:
  - Poison hemlock at Lake of the Woods, Sangamon River, KRT, Homer Lake, Middle Fork River
  - Garlic mustard at Lake of the Woods, Homer Lake, Middle Fork River
  - Reed canary grass at Lake of the Woods and Sangamon River
  - Canada thistle along the KRT
  - Teasel along the KRT
  - Wild parsnip along the KRT
- Several memorial trees were planted in April which involved staff picking up trees from our vendor, planting them, mulching them, installing deer fencing around them, and watering them regularly for establishment.
- The invasive biennial herb, garlic mustard, began bolting (growing upward) and flowering in April. Staff spent a large amount of time hand pulling garlic mustard at various locations throughout all the preserves and hosted the following volunteer events:
  - Volunteer event at MF North Waterfowl Area savanna
  - LOW staff event on LOW Hawthorn Hill
  - Volunteer event on LOW Hawthorn Hill



- NR staff removed limbs and trees from a row of silver maples near the site for a new picnic shelter adjacent to Windsong Prairie at Homer Lake FP.
- Emily and other NR staff members continued to host Lincoln's Challenge Academy work groups at Homer Lake FP to clear invasive bush honeysuckle north of the Interpretive Center.
- Eric completed his ISA Arborist Certification training in April.
- Peter reviewed and approved a high number of scientific research and collection permits as researchers are getting ready for data collection season.
- Peter led a tour for an ecological restoration class from the University of Illinois' Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences department. The tour covered several ongoing projects at Homer Lake Forest Preserve and explored the practices of engaging volunteers, leveraging external funding for projects, and restoring oak savanna ecosystems.

## **Lake of the Woods (Rusty Maulding)**

- Garlic Mustard
  - Botanical Garden staff have been pulling garlic mustard from cleared woodland areas to continue the restoration of those spaces. So far, we've filled up one pickup truck.
  - The Girl Scouts hosted a garlic mustard hunt at their camp adjacent to LOW and asked if they could drop off their removals at the operations burn pile. Much to our delight, they unloaded 16 large paper leaf bags full of garlic mustard! In the process, the scouts learned about why the weed needed to be controlled as well as how it traveled to other properties. How neighborly is that!?
- Repairs & Renovations
  - The 2008 Kubota RTV had an engine bearing go bad and metal shaving were found in the oil. Replacement of the engine is cost prohibitive. We are looking to use savings from the capital budget from both the LOW Polaris UTV and F250 as well as sales of the Chevy cargo van and failed Kubota to cover a replacement purchase this year.
  - There have been 2 waterline main breaks so far this spring. One from the well that feeds the Botanical Garden and another that connects to the Sangamon Valley Public Water District near the rentals at LOW. There were several breaks identified when turning the water on at the Peninsula restrooms after the winter closure. In the process of fixing them, a plumber made some modifications to alleviate future freeze damage problems.
  - Operations staff have begun renovating the median at Lake of the Woods Pavilion parking lot prior to the sealcoat being completed. The median will have a native style planting installed in May with some late additions in the following months as plants become available.
- The BIG CHAIR is back! This time around we will have two big chairs to use as focal points, photo ops, or furniture for Paul Bunyan. One will be dedicated to Lake of the

Woods, the other will be moved around other west side preserves. Thanks to Victor Yelaska for constructing them and Jaymie Huffman for painting logos and lettering them.

- In cooperation with Natural Resources, the I-74 trail at Buffalo Trace (BT) is now a loop instead of a dead end. NR staff forestry mowed a path and Ops and Botanical Garden (BG) staff completed some minor grading adjustments and tree branch clearing as well as other trail improvements throughout BT.
- Staff installed 475 bare root trees largely in restored woodland areas to help further that process. Tyler Courson selected the trees and identified placement in consultation with NR.
- Many thanks to Joie Torres and Gary Williams for sharing the golf course's slit seeder and operating the equipment to help renovate the turf at much of the LOW west entrance.
- This has been a very windy spring...and that came with a lot of branch pickup. We hope to settle into a more stable weather pattern soon. Because it has been dry, Heron View and several Sangamon River trails are in unusually good shape and prime for walking.

## Homer Lake (Skylar Smith)

- Ace sign company installed a new African American Heritage Trail sign at Old Homer Park. A ribbon cutting-type ceremony will be scheduled soon. Lisa has not yet heard back from Visit Champaign County about the event but did suggest some dates to them including June 15 when CCFPD commissioners will hold a board meeting at HL.
- The Walnut Hill Shelter and the stream at the Natural Playscape are now open for the season!
- We welcomed Joe Hopper back to the preserve to kick off spring and start mowing.
- Skylar Attended a two-day PDRMA training for supervisors called Essentials of Human Resources.
- We had a busy month on the KRT! We performed some vegetation control along intersections and fences, installed trail boundary signs, replaced damaged road signs, began installing wayfinding and information displays, installed all donor signs, and assisted Sue Gallo with the KRT cleanup day in Urbana.



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

- The Harry L. Swartz Campground fully opened the last weekend of April. The campground hosts have started, and water and facilities have been opened to the public. For the month of April camping numbers were below average due to the unfavorable weather conditions.
- Middle Fork staff are starting several native landscape projects throughout the user areas as time allows. We hope to install more native landscaping, which will reduce mowing efforts while improving the user experience.
- We are working with our internet provider to find improvements in our connectivity inside the campground, focusing on the campground cabin office. New radios will be installed for point-to-point services for that office and we should see much faster speeds. With these improvements we also hope to install a VOIP system for the campground office, moving away from the troublesome landline system that is currently in place. This VOIP system should increase networking between the cabin office and operations facility.
- Lisa Sprinkle and I are currently looking into SMS Messaging for the campground. This should help with the communication between staff and the guests. Messages could be provided to campers or guests of the preserve notifying them of activities, programming, and other alerts as we see fit.

## **Equity in Action**

- This month Lorrie completes the Equity in Practice certificate program through NRPA and plans to work with Nina, who has also completed the program, the Leadership Team, and the DEI committee to continue to make progress on the equity front.
- Nina drafted the framework, mission, objectives, and structure for the DEI committee for feedback and relaunch by mid-June.