

November 12, 2021

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**Executive Director (Lorrie Pearson)**

- Lorrie surveyed Commissioners about and began discussing with staff the format of the monthly staff reports. Commissioners noted that reports help keep them updated and feedback ranged from requesting more specific data to providing information in a more summarized and prioritized fashion. Staff feedback touched on redundancy of entries, time spent compiling information, and feeling like it was necessary to provide updates of daily activities that are not necessarily noteworthy. Staff will try to tighten things up a bit to provide the most useful information to the Board. As an example, everyone made a concerted effort to include more data in their entries for this month's report.
- On November 5, IDNR and IDOT held a small ribbon cutting for the trestle bridge and adjacent parking lot in Vermilion County as part of the Kickapoo Rail Trail. I attended to represent CCFPD. It is hoped that a larger public event will be scheduled in the future so that more can participate. (Photo provided by IDOT)
- I connected with the Central Illinois Directors Roundtable group for their quarterly meeting. Many attendees throughout the region reported that hiring part-time staff continues to be a challenge.
- The Botanical Garden staff will debut a bright new event next month: Night Lights in the Garden. On Friday and Saturday nights between December 3 and January 8, festive lights will greet visitors to the garden between 4-8pm. Visitors are to enter and park at the Museum of the Grand Prairie to accommodate the Lake of the Woods closing time of 5pm. The Museum will host extra festivities the opening and closing weekends (on December 4 and January 8). The event plans to be open on December 24, 25, 31, and January 1, setting us apart from some other area light displays that are not open on holidays.



**Planning and Construction Departments (Mike Daab and Mike Fry)**

- Bridgette Moen, with assistance from ED Lorrie Pearson, led a planning workshop for staff regarding a future nature center based on Simon Sinek's "Find Your Why" on Friday, October 29th. Staff from Museum and Education, Natural Resources, Marketing, Grants, and Homer Lake Operations were engaged in the process, contributed great thoughts and some stirring anecdotes throughout the morning, and have come closer to a solid philosophical foundation for the more technical aspects of planning that will be upcoming.
- Planning staff attended several online continuing education sessions, including the Champaign County Stormwater Conference on October 20th, and the IAPD Legal Symposium on November 4th. The Stormwater Conference provided some good information on green infrastructure that is directly applicable to the Lake of the Woods Spillway project, and the Legal Symposium was a good review of laws that may affect personnel, liability, and the bidding and contracting process.

- The Illinois Department of Natural Resources Natural Resources Damage Assessment staff have agreed to grant a two-year extension to the current IGA for Salt Fork River watershed projects, which expires on December 31st, 2021. They have also agreed to contribute an additional \$40,000 to current land acquisition and restoration projects. Those commitments are documented in the attached letter and an agreement for CCFPD Board of Commissioners approval will be presented at the December 2021 regular meeting.
- The Construction Department installed new decking at the Salt Fork Center with assistance from Homer Lake Operations. The composite decking looks great and will last a long time with less maintenance. The composite deck boards are made up of recycled pallets, carpet padding, and approximately 400,000 plastic shopping bags, making it a sustainable choice.
- Staff worked with Jett Morris, prospective Eagle Scout from St. Joseph to install a bike fix it station along the KRT near Fulls Siding, which will be a nice complement to the additional amenities being installed at that location.



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

- Prepared the draft 2022 district budget including working with departments on the program budget narratives and strategic plan outcomes to be addressed in 2022.
- Prepared and submitted the “Black Box” advertisement for the District’s tax levy. Prepared the annual tentative appropriations ordinance and mandated public notice documents.
- Met with the Foundation and its Fundraising Committee about District 2022 capital projects and where the Foundation can help with grant matches. We anticipate that the Foundation budget, currently being drafted, will include fundraising targets of
  - \$136,480 for the Kickapoo Rail Trail Ogden project,
  - \$ 55,000 for the covered bridge
  - \$ 20,000 for land acquisition.
  - Other projects are still under discussion.
- 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 the CRP payments. With this payment, the Foundation Farm Commitment has \$127,434 on hand. Foundation members expressed willingness to provide \$86,480 for the Willow Pond project which with funds already committed by the Board of Commissioners will meet the estimated expense.
- Sold 1,676 bushels of soybeans and 4,077 of corn, thus far for the 2021 Middle Fork farm harvest, totaling \$41,428. One field of soybeans planted this year, flooded this fall, has not yet been harvested and may not have any harvestable crop remaining.
- Attended the IAPD Legal Symposium, and participated in the IPRA Finance Committee’s Annual Budget review meeting.
- Worked with KnowBe4 and MicroSystems to set up phishing tests and related individualized cyber-threat training for the District.

**Human Resources (Dara Edgington)**

- During the month of October Human Resources processed zero hires and eleven terminations. Our current headcount sits at 89, including 43 FT staff, 16 PT, 29 seasonals, and 1 paid intern.
- The monthly turnover rate for October was 11.79%. This represents seasonal-only terminations, there was 0% turnover for PT and FT positions.
- The District documented five incidents with PDRMA over the month of October: two employee injuries, one vehicle accident, and two patron incidents.
- Our annual United Way campaign kicked off on November 4<sup>th</sup> and will run through November 18<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to Mary Beck for once again serving as our trusted campaign coordinator! A big thank you also to Lorrie for providing an additional incentive this year: she is contributing \$100 per every new donor.
- OSHA issued an emergency temporary standard (ETS) regarding COVID-19 vaccination and testing. The ETS establishes minimum vaccination, vaccination verification, face covering and testing requirements for employers with 100+ employees. With a headcount of 89 employees, the District is not currently subject to this ETS, however we will become subject to it once our seasonal hiring starts in the spring. HR is currently making the appropriate preparations and has established a target compliance date of March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

**Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)**

- Media coverage last month included:  
**Several emergency crews searched for a missing toddler at Homer Lake**  
<https://www.wcia.com/news/several-emergency-crews-searched-for-a-missing-toddler-at-homer-lake/>  
**Beyond the Boardroom: Champaign County Forest Preserve District’s Lorrie Pearson**  
[https://www.news-gazette.com/business/entrepreneurs/beyond-the-boardroom-champaign-county-forest-preserve-districts-lorrie-pearson/article\\_24b595ce-4a07-5005-a93b-613fbf78d6d6.html#utm\\_campaign=blox&utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=social](https://www.news-gazette.com/business/entrepreneurs/beyond-the-boardroom-champaign-county-forest-preserve-districts-lorrie-pearson/article_24b595ce-4a07-5005-a93b-613fbf78d6d6.html#utm_campaign=blox&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social)  
**Busy Fall at Champaign County Forest Preserve**  
<https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/busy-fall-at-champaign-county-forest-preserve/>  
**Trestle bridge, parking lot officially open on Kickapoo Rail Trail**  
[https://www.news-gazette.com/news/trestle-bridge-parking-lot-officially-open-on-kickapoo-rail-trail/article\\_7a56a7a3-7034-527d-826f-2b7c3163e23d.html](https://www.news-gazette.com/news/trestle-bridge-parking-lot-officially-open-on-kickapoo-rail-trail/article_7a56a7a3-7034-527d-826f-2b7c3163e23d.html)

- “Exploring with Lorrie: Looking for Fall Color at Homer Lake” was released on Wednesday, November 3. After two days it was viewed 504 times and shared 7 times.
- The most popular Facebook post was about not feeding the koi fish now that the air and water temperatures were lower. It was shared 29 times and reached over 3,300 people.
- Developed online ads for the Foundation’s Paint Like Me Party to raise money for the new roof on the Covered Bridge. As well as yard signs to display in Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve around the Covered Bridge with a QR code and website for donations.
- Social media numbers continue to increase.



	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-	TWITTER	+/-
CCFPD	5,726	+58	2,660	+31	566	+3
KRT	3,458	+35	126	+3	135	+4
MGP	4,478	+64	1,194	+1	252	+2

HLIC	2,927	+5				
GC	1,755	+3	324	+2	103	+0
FPPF	485	+4				

### Volunteer Coordinator (Sue Gallo)

- New applications in October – 8, only 1 new applicant gave their first service, but it is challenging to place regular volunteers right now with the cooling temperatures because of limited variety of need for regular volunteering. New groups connected: informal group U of I group, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), Hack 4 Impact.
- Harvest Fest had help from eleven SHPE and Rotaract volunteers. Many thanks to Pat Cain for making a meaningful and fun volunteer experience and for connecting us to SHPE volunteers!
- Kudos to Michael Dale and Garden staff who supported a volunteer opportunity for six U of I friends who were not affiliated with a service group but wanted to do service on really short notice!
- Natural Resources staff organized and hosted a seed collection event along the KRT with 19 new and existing volunteers attending as well as a tree planting with Mahomet Rotary with 22 mostly new volunteers. Special thanks to NR for making these things happen on their own initiative!
- Save the date! Sue organized a Zoom event for volunteers “Ask the State Biologist” on January 12 from 7-8pm. We will host it in collaboration with the East Central Illinois Master Naturalists and open it to other volunteers from like-minded area organizations.
- A “Meet our new director” event was hosted for volunteers and select donors at the Riverview Retreat Center in fulfillment of the event portion of an ICECF amenities grant. It was great to have an opportunity to really chat with the thirteen folks who attended. Super thanks to Lorrie for agreeing to be the focus of this event and to Ryan Anderson and Lisa Sprinkle for their help.



### Grants and Development Specialist (Ryan Anderson)

- The District was awarded an ICECF Land Acquisition grant in the amount of \$647,525 for the purchase of land on the Salt Fork River. The land is located near Homer Lake Forest Preserve and would expand the existing Old Homer Park area. Exact price and boundaries are being negotiated but the purchase of the property can occur in 2022 pending Board of Commissioners approval and staff could then begin preparing the site for restoration.
- Barb has provided us with updates on the Stanley Rankin Collections Center:
  - The virtual quilt exhibit is just about ready. We are hoping to meet with Jennifer Gunji-Ballsrud soon to get her approval for the site, which will feature 30 of Dorothy and Stan’s quilts, and then it will go live—we hope in November.
  - Moving artifacts into the Rankin center is moving apace. Pieces have been moved from inside the museum so that the Discovering Home exhibit could open again; artifacts are being moved from headquarters’ basement right now. The heat tent has gone through three cycles, so that permanent storage for compromised pieces can be secured. The

furnace was zoned so that the permanent artifact storage area has a more even temperature whereas the workroom area can fluctuate.

- The sign will be ordered this winter and put in place in early spring. This timing exposes the sign to one less season for the sign to weather, and just in time for a look at how much work has been completed in the Rankin Center.
- On Sunday, November 7, the Forest Preserve Foundation Friends held a fundraiser with local business, Paint Like Me Party, to raise money for the new roof on the Covered Bridge. People paid \$50 to paint a custom picture of the covered bridge through step by step instructions from the business owner, Elizabeth.
  - We had 28 people sign up for the event.
  - We had 3 raffle items to give away:
    - Two greeting card sets from Marla Beyer
    - Angie Clayton donated a fall pumpkin sign and winter jingle bells
  - Between tickets, raffles, and sponsorship we raised a little over \$1200 for the new covered bridge roof.
- This year in place of the annual KRT fundraiser at Sleepy Creek Vineyards in Oakwood, we are holding an online auction where people can bid on over 30 items including Illini Basketball and Football tickets, gift certificates to local businesses such as The Wheelhouse, The Ribcage BBQ, The Vermilion River Beer Company, plus an overnight stay at the beautiful Bed and Wine Lodging at Sleepy Creek Vineyards, and so much more! You can find a complete list of auction items at: <https://www.biddingowl.com/Auction/home.cfm?auctionID=28441>  
The online event is live from Thursday, November 4 through Thursday, November 18! The event supports fundraising for the continued development of the Kickapoo Rail Trail across Champaign and Vermilion Counties!
- Fundraising trends in October ended slightly lower than average for revenue and number of donors. But you can see from the 4 year summary (below) that we are ahead of the last three years for yearly revenue at the end of October. We have \$43,410 to raise before December 31 in order to meet last year's adjusted total.
- 50 New Donors for 2021 Goal – After filtering out memorials and in-kind donations, we have 90 new donors this year in the system, mostly from Buffalo Trace & KRT triple match. Ryan believes we will exceed last year's donor numbers by December 31, once we've heard from all of the end of the year givers.



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

- Mowing at the golf course slowed down with the many days of frost in the first week of November. The greens were mowed twice a week, fairways, and tees once a week. The maintenance crew mulched leaves on the course, blew leaves off the cart paths, and cleaned up the clubhouse area.
- Joie Torres, Mackenzie and Gary Williams, attended the chainsaw and equipment lift training sessions.
- Joie blew out the irrigation on November 10 and winterized the pumps station. Additionally, he sprayed the greens for snow mold control and fertilized the greens, tees, and fairways for the season.

- October was a month where Mother Nature was certainly in control. We had everything from record warm temps the first week of the month, to flooding rains the last couple of days and weeks (5.5 inches the 3<sup>rd</sup> week and 4.5 inches on the 24<sup>th</sup> alone), to much cooler temperatures than average the last half. This definitely affected play, as we had 4 days of complete closure, along with several other days when we could not run golf carts or had to pull them midday due to course conditions. We even threw in an 18 hour power outage (tree limb blew down on a power line), which affected our ability to run transactions and take tee time bookings. All being said, we still managed 2716 players, which is above the 5 year average of 2288. Revenue for the month was \$50,515, also above the 5 year average of \$44,693.
- With daylight hours decreasing and inconsistent weather setting in, we have also closed the snack bar, discontinued beverage cart service, and begun to cut back staffing and hours as needed. We continue to operate food and drink service on a smaller scale, out of the Pro Shop, as needed.
- The month also concluded the end of events, tournaments, and outings for the 2021 season. We held our annual Hubie Cup event, Better Ball Tournament, and several other small group outings. Thankfully, the weather held out for all of these events and they were all well attended or full to our capacity allowed. Below is the listing of events, player totals, revenue, and merchandise purchased for each event and the comparisons to 2020. We look to continue to build upon these numbers with the return of shotgun start events in 2022.

<b>Outing</b>	<b># of Players</b>	<b>21 Total Rev</b>	<b>21 Actual Merch</b>
Bill Klingman Group	19	\$999.00	\$239.00
UIUC American Legion	24	\$720.00	\$0.00
Slumberland	15	\$518.22	\$143.22
Pasfield Golf Group	15	\$390.00	\$0.00
Ladies Team Golf	24	\$384.00	\$0.00
Urbana Firefighters	44	\$1,945.00	\$220.00
Big Brothers Big Sisters	80	\$3,425.23	\$625.23
Bulldog Open	96	\$4,085.00	\$480.00
Edelman Electric	24	\$1,543.75	\$45.00
Mahomet Rotary Club	59	\$2,837.50	\$340.00
Lanz Plumbing	16	\$841.00	\$185.00
Grasshoppers	36	\$936.00	\$0.00
MSHS Golf Fundraiser	88	\$3,960.00	\$440.00
Champaign Central Football	48	\$2,074.00	\$240.00

STM Athletic Boosters	96	\$4,370.00	\$480.00
Hildreth Group	48	\$1,440.00	\$0.00
Elder Group - BSF	16	\$815.23	\$51.00
Jason Smitley Memorial	68	\$3,110.00	\$340.00
Mahomet Christian Church	50	\$1,750.00	\$0.00
Piatt County FS	20	\$754.00	\$154.00
Mahomet Chamber of Commerce	72	\$3,290.00	\$360.00
AMBUCS	92	\$4,440.00	\$660.00
Grasshoppers	32	\$832.00	\$0.00
Mahomet Lions Club	84	\$3,439.47	\$499.47
Yard Goats Baseball Club	29	\$1,375.00	\$145.00
<b>2021 Totals</b>	<b>1195</b>	<b>\$50,274.40</b>	<b>\$5,646.92</b>
<b>2020 Totals</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>\$31,704.98</b>	<b>\$5,499.98</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>\$18,569.42</b>	<b>\$146.94</b>

<b>Tournament</b>	<b># of Players</b>	<b>21 Total Rev</b>
Season Opener	118	\$8,850.00
Naughtin Open	39	\$2,730.00
Hartwell Match Play	35	\$700.00
Parent-Child	39	\$1,560.00
Junior Open	60	\$900.00
Club Championship	37	\$740.00
Apollo Conference Boys	42	\$1,260.00
Better Ball	100	\$5,000.00
<b>2021 Totals</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>\$21,740.00</b>

<b>2020 Totals</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>\$6,380.00</b>
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### Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)

- In October, the NR Department hosted volunteer events including:
  - A seed collection event along the Kickapoo Rail Trail – On Indigenous Peoples Day, NR collaborated with Museum and Education by beginning the event with a brief talk about the Native American people of Champaign County
    - 22 volunteers participated
    - Several pounds of native seed for three different plant species were collected
  - A tree planting event with Rotary Club at Buffalo Trace
    - 25 volunteers participated
    - 40 container trees were planted with t-posts and deer fencing
- In addition to the 40 container trees planted at Buffalo Trace, staff planted an additional 20 trees at Middle Fork River, Homer Lake and Lake of the Woods. 12 of these additional trees were memorial trees.
- Staff attended a 2-day chainsaw safety and directional felling training put on by PDRMA at Homer Lake. This included a classroom and field component.
- Staff made some final improvements to the drain pipe at the Pt. Pleasant wetland for the season so hopefully water levels will be easier to regulate in the future.
- With flooding and other extreme weather events, staff did some work in October clearing down trees over trails.
- Other notable activities in October included the following:
  - Peter led a group of 20 donors on a hike a Buffalo Trace, highlighting the projects that were made possible by their contributions
  - Peter conducted a slip, trip, and fall assessment throughout the NR facilities
  - All staff attended the 2021 Virtual Natural Areas Association Conference
  - Peter and Emily Williams worked on recruiting a new natural resources technician



### Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

- The Museum and Education department (M and E) held two public listening sessions on the current draft of its Strategic Plan that has been publicized on social media and in our facilities for the last month. The plan has previously been reviewed by volunteers, the CAC, the



Foundation, the Museum Advisory Committee and a variety of community stakeholders. Barb Garvey, Pat Cain, Katie Snyder, Mark Hanson and Cathy Schneider presented at a morning session on Facebook/YouTube with about 31 viewers. A sign-up Zoom meeting was arranged for an evening session with three participants. Stacey Clementz, Jennifer Wick, Barb Garvey, Mark Hanson and Marina Montez presented at 7 p.m. Both sessions occurred on October 27. After participant's comments are incorporated, the board and CCFPD staff will be sent a draft with approval sought in December.

- Barb Garvey continued to work on the M and E department Ethics Statement and Statement of Commitment which will also be brought to the Board in the coming months.
- The Rankin Center experienced flooding during the deluge of October 4. Jen Grove and Mark Hanson hastily cleaned the area up. Doug Sanders assisted with new gutter guards. Planning is working with museum staff on a series of solutions.
- The Museum staff reviewed both the collections care and building assessments from the Collections Assessment Program and will be sharing those results with the CCFPD Board in December.
- Jen Grove has continued processing, cleaning, photographing, and assessing artifacts entering Rankin. Cataloguing and inventory continues. Mark Hanson and Jen Grove have begun removing artifacts from the headquarters basement.
- School programs are returning for the Environmental Education staff but not for the museum staff, as school groups are comfortable with outdoor programs. Stacey, Cathy and Quinn saw 274 students onsite and 56 students offsite in October, with 19 children served in homeschool programs. As museum educators adapted several programs to be outdoors for homeschool, Sandy Osborne and Marina Montez-Ellis served 40 students.
- Jennifer Wick continued to work with volunteers and INHS to coordinate the bat monitoring citizen science program at Lake of the Woods.
- Jen Wick put together several posts for the HLIC Facebook page in celebration of Oaktober.
- Jen Wick worked with volunteer Jill Robbins to help co-host a fall Letterboxing event at Walnut Hill Shelter. The rat snake made an appearance, and we collected over \$100 in donations from attendees to go into the Animal Advocates Fund.
- The museum hosted a successful *Harvest Fest* event this year. A beautiful fall day included outdoor activities associated with the history of the harvest season such as pumpkin carving, apple peeling, and corn shelling. Mike & Tammy Fry also provided a hayrack ride through Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve. 12 UIUC student volunteers from the Society for Hispanic Professional Engineering and Illini Rotoract helped staff the outdoor activities. Many thanks to the staff, volunteers, and patrons who made this year's program a safe and successful one!  
Attendance: 110
- Barb Garvey kicked off the museum's 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Lincoln Lecture Series with an online program titled "The Audacity of Abraham Lincoln." The program featured a presentation from Richard Striner, historian and author, where he discussed major arguments and themes from his recent book *Summoned to Glory: The Audacious Life of Abraham Lincoln*. Attendance: 32
- Pat Cain hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> program in the museum's 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Lincoln Lecture Series. The program centered around the new documentary film *Lincoln & Douglas: Touring Illinois in Turbulent Times*. Pat hosted a virtual panel discussion of the film with Dr. Graham Peck, Co-Director and Wepner Distinguished Professor of Lincoln Studies at the University of Illinois-Springfield, Nathan Peck, Co-Director and Associate Professor of Art & Design at St. Xavier University, and Sunshine Clemons, Film Contributor and Co-Founder/Co-Director of the Springfield, Illinois Chapter of Black Lives Matter. Prior to the virtual panel discussion, the

public was encouraged to view screenings of the film on Urbana Public Television, a local public access channel available on local cable stations and streaming around the world. Attendance: 27

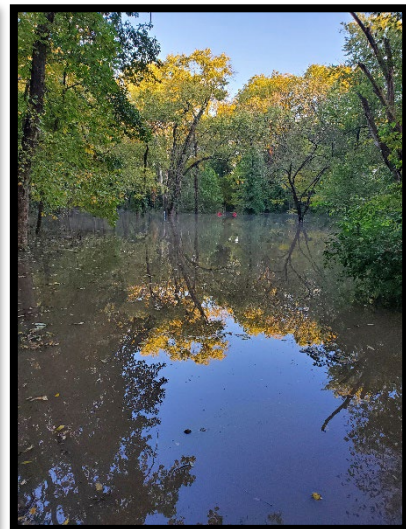
- The museum has begun welcoming back patrons for small museum tours. A tour was conducted with seven members of a local chapter of the Colonial Dames, a national organization that promotes US heritage through preservation of historic properties, patriotic service projects, and educational programs. Another tour was organized with Minds in Motion, for eleven people in an organized group offered through the Wellspring Health and Wellness Ministries at the First United Methodist Church of Champaign. This program uses research-based interventions designed for mature adults to improve or maintain memory and mental functioning, physical abilities and functioning, including balance and leg strength, and positive mental outlook (decrease or allay depression & loneliness).
- Barb & Pat are putting the finishing touches on the new museum website set to debut in November.
- Katie Snyder led the drop-in, free, outdoor program for all ages, *Halloween in the Mabery Gelvin Garden*, for roughly 96 kids.
- Mark Hanson conducted and processed oral history interview with Dr. German Gurfinkel (engineer for LOW covered bridge). His Facebook post about the interview was shared 77 times!
- Mark Hanson is currently working on next year's special exhibit, with the exhibits team, which will focus on Champaign County's public health and the community response to various diseases of the past.
- Mark Hanson wrote an article as part of the Champaign County Museums Network weekly *Inside Out* column. The article is titled *Celebrating Champaign County's East Frisian Legacy*.
- The East Frisian travelling exhibit, *Part of the Community* will be going out for the first time to the American Lutheran Church in Rantoul; Mark Hanson & Pat Cain hosted a virtual program by the same name on Facebook and YouTube on November 4 with 54 participants.
- Mark presented the East Frisian project on panel at 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference on Illinois History in Springfield, Illinois.
- Barb Garvey spoke to 12 Windsor of Savoy residents on the topic of "Scary Stories and Halloween's Past, Champaign County Style." On October 26.
- Stacey Clementz created a new frog costume for our Frog Follies program (we now have a child size and adult size).
- Stacey rehoused the animal pelts at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center, added activated charcoal in bags to help eliminate odors. Stacey and Mark Hanson worked together to clean pelts properly.
- The Sustainability Committee is debuting an educational PR series on climate change starting next year. Greg Walburg, Marianne Lippi and Stacey Clementz are spearheading this project with the assistance of Lisa Sprinkle.
- Booker T. Washington Elementary in Urbana reached out to our department to help them with programming for their new weekly *Fabulous Friday* event that will provide STEM based learning activities for their students. We will be going out there starting in December to teach the students about hibernating and migrating animals.
- Cathy Schneider took the Interpretive Center's new painted turtle to the veterinarian for a wellness check and sexing (it's a male).
- Cathy submitted an article for the Leaflet Newsletter on the Animal Advocate program.
- Cathy closed out the pilot year for animal enrichment volunteers.



- Katie Snyder and Marina Montez-Ellis attended the webinar, “Ethnobotany of the Prairie-Cultural Use of Native Plants”, Illinois Natural History Survey/Kelly Kindscher. University of Kansas
- Katie Snyder attended the webinar, “Building Better Boards,” with Community Foundation of East Central Illinois.
- Pam Leiter graduated as a Leadership Illinois Fellow, with the ceremony taking place in the Capitol Building! This was while attending the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final Leadership Illinois conference of the year, Power of the Government, in Springfield. Presenters included an impressive slate of political leaders: state senators, representatives, lobbyists, an IL State Supreme Court justice, the Mayor of Springfield, and more.
- Connor Monson rounded out his season with us helping staff the Interpretive Center. Thank you, Connor, for stepping in during our time of need!
- HLIC Facebook stats, October 1-31: Average Daily Organic Reach: 441 (Sum: 13,666); Average Daily Page Engaged Users: 31 (Sum: 955)
- MGP Facebook stats, October 1-31: Average Daily Organic Reach: 2127 (Sum: 65,947); Average Daily Page Engaged Users: 108 (Sum: 3351)

**Lake of the Woods, River Bend, Sangamon River, Heron View (Doug Sanders)**

- OPS and GCM staff attended the annual in-house training for automotive lifts, provided by the Automotive Lift Institute and the American National Standards Institute. This training focused on four areas, spanning from the different types of lifts, best practices, general maintenance and an exam. At the end of the session each participant received a lift operator’s certificate. Thank you to Tammy for facilitating the training and providing homemade caramel corn.
- Additional training this month, completed by staff, consisted of two DO Race Workshops (T. Fry and D. Sanders) and PDRMA’s Slip, Trip and Fall Assessment (D. Sanders).
- Due to the heavy rainfall the weekend of October 23-24, Lake of the Woods experienced several flooded areas. A portion of the 3.3 mile bike trail and a section of Trillium Drive, north of the Covered Bridge, had to be shut down for several days. Other areas that were impacted by the rise of the Sangamon River were the canoe launch area and the area surrounding the spillway (see photos).
- Botanical Garden staff have been busy digging up seasonal plants and cutting back perennials. In the coming months, staff will



process approximately 20,000 plants ranging from elephant ears, canna lilies and annual grasses. Volunteers have been assisting staff with cleaning and trimming the canna bulbs seen in the photo.

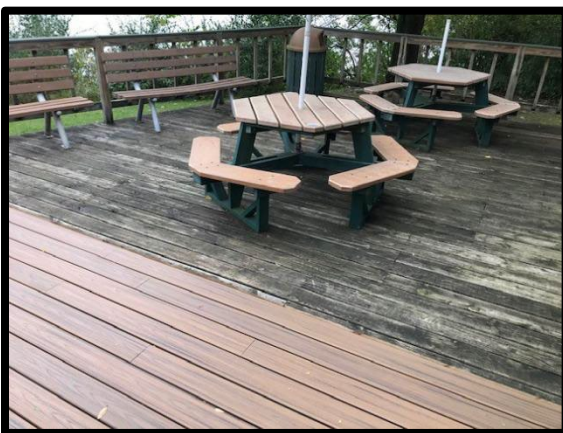
- In the process of shutting down seasonal facilities, restrooms, and drinking fountains this past month, staff removed pedal boats from the lake and shut down the boathouse. The new dock and boathouse were well received this summer by visitors. There were a total of 1,203 individual rentals (91% pedal boats and 9% kayaks). There was also an increase in group rentals. In years past, there have been 1-2 group rentals, this season there were a total of eight.

### **Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)**

- With the 2021 camping season wrapped up, we saw record numbers come in this year achieving our highest revenue year yet. Previously our record year in sales came to \$75,806. 2021 total revenues came in at \$124,424. These totals include campground store commodity sales, which totaled \$13,182.
- We are trying to wrap up capital expenditures for 2021 which include window replacement for the residence facility, replacement of shower house sinks and faucets, and a flooring replacement project.
- The new wetland built in the Pt. Pleasant corridor has been completed and is working as it should. This was a cooperative effort between the USFWS and District staff paid for by grant money. Middle Fork staff worked with USFWS representatives as part of the "sweat equity" portion of the grant.

### **Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)**

- The highlight this month was the installation of the new deck boards and stair treads at the Salt Fork Center. The construction crew and Roy Woodmansee removed the twenty three year old decking and replaced it with Trex recycled composite boards. It looks fantastic and it will require less maintenance while lasting much longer than treated lumber. It's interesting to also note that most things on the Salt Fork Center deck, picnic tables, benches, trash receptacles, and the information display are also made from recycled plastic. (See pictures)



### **District Cultural Competency Initiatives**

- A targeted group of staff comprised of the Risk Management group and DEI Committee completed the final two rounds of DEI workshops on October 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. These workshops, as first reported in the July Board report, were led by Sam Smith, the Krannert Center's Director

of Civic Engagement and Social Practice, and Emily Laugeson, Co-Director of Engagement. This targeted group emerged from these workshops with several SMART goals, which will be incorporated into the DEI Organizational Equity Plan draft that was submitted for Board review in August 2021.

- The Museum of the Grand Prairie received notice that they will be the recipients of a Robert F. Smith Internship through Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History next summer. The museum will receive a full time intern, a person of color, who will process and promote Hoskins Archive oral histories. This intern's stipend and expenses, including technology are fully paid for by the Smithsonian. We applied for this internship in September.
- Katie Snyder is working with Mark to log and index Revisiting Your Legacy oral histories. These oral histories are additions and updates to the This Legacy is Yours online exhibit on the museum's website. Katie will oversee the collection of more oral histories in the near future.
- Barb Garvey, Katie Snyder and Mark Hanson attended sessions of the virtual American Association for State and Local History Conference. The theme of the conference, [\*Doing History/Doing Justice\*](#), was reflected in the many useful sessions attended including, "Answering the Call: Steps toward Decolonizing Your History Organization/Museum" "Engage Diverse Audiences with Inclusive Content", AASLH; "Public History for Traumatic Times", "Circulating Justice Inside, Outside and All-Around Museum Spaces", "Deep Dive into our Local History of Racism and Discrimination" and several others.
- Katie Snyder attended the webinar, "Introduction to Racial Equity," by Chicago Wilderness.
- Jennifer Wick attended a listening session by the Department of the Interior on increasing diversity, equity, and access as it relates to getting outdoors in public lands
- On Indigenous Peoples' Day, Pat Cain & Marina Montez-Ellis provided a short presentation that acknowledged topics associated with local Native American history at the beginning of a volunteer Seed Collection event with the Natural Resources Dept. on the KRT. (25 in attendance).
- Pam Leiter presented with Elsie Hedgspeth (Urbana Park District) on cultural competency in parks at an EIU Recreation Programming class.