

April 5, 2021

MEMORANDUM

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

Executive Director (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- A research team consisting of faculty at the UIUC and SUNY Stonybrook, along with Andrew Kerins in his role on the Eastern Illinois University faculty, will work with staff to undertake a research proposal related to our successful referendum. Here is the proposal summary: *The purpose of this project is to examine CCFPD's 2020 referendum campaign to identify elements of the campaign that secured support from voters. Specifically, the project aims to understand what factors or types/elements of messages contributed to the campaign's success. The study will conduct in-depth interviews with the campaign committees, CCFPD staff, interest groups involved in the campaign, community organizations, and Champaign County residents, supplemented by a content analysis of campaign materials/social media posts. Insights gained through this project can be invaluable for similar ballot initiatives for park conservation and outdoor recreation.*
- The Forest Preserve District of Cook County is working with the Trust for Public Land to plan for its next referendum effort. TPL reached out to learn more about our effort - specifically how the one-year limiting rate increase would work and why we chose that option.
- Yes to Forests supporters, 2020 donors, and 2020 volunteers had first dibs at reserving a tree for the April 24 Friends Foundation tree giveaway. The giveaway has now been opened to the general public in hopes that the remaining trees will be reserved. Any trees not requested by the public will be planted by our natural resources department or given to other non-profits to plant. The April 24 pick-up locations are at Homer Lake and Lake of the Woods, from 9:00am to noon.
- We have been in contact with staff from the Urbana Park District and City of Urbana to plan one or more proposals for submission to the Congressional Transportation and Infrastructure earmark process. The federal process favors projects that have broad community support, are included in the local metropolitan planning organization's transportation plans, have already received an allocation of federal funding, and are shovel-ready. The KRT fits these criteria.

Planning and Construction Department (Mike Daab and Mike Fry)

- The construction of the new Par 3 shelter and picnic area at the Lake of the Woods Golf Course is underway. This shelter will match the newer shelters at Rayburn-Purnell, the first pond at Middle Fork, and Oak Ridge at Homer Lake.
- Construction department staff worked with Lake of the Woods operations staff to install new split rail fence at the peninsula, and will continue replacement throughout the preserve this spring.
- All seeding is done at the peninsula. Natural Resources will complete planting when plugs ship from vendors.
- The new Lake of the Woods peninsula dock with accessible kayak launch is now open to the public. Initial response is very positive. The dock was featured in a recent News-Gazette article.
- Light fixtures for the new Lakeview Shelter at the LOW peninsula have been installed.

- Bridgette Moen is developing pedestrian crossing plans from the peninsula across Lake of the Woods Road for approval by the County.
- The washer, dryer, and sink have been installed at the Rankin Collections Center. Furnishing orders have been submitted.
- Staff met with CAC members to develop plans for Heron View Forest Preserve and the Hazen Bridge. The new CAC subcommittee plans to meet on site to tour the area on the evening of April 22nd. We have picked up an avian expert, Tara Beveroth with INHS, who will help us document the birds of the new preserve as well as develop appropriate standards for protecting the existing heron rookery.
- We have been working on an agreement with Kingfisher Kayaking, a new non-profit formed to offer paddling trips on local rivers. The group has routes planned for the Sangamon River and Salt Fork River that utilize CCFPD launch and/or take-out points. The agreement is in the hands of the District's legal counsel.
- Mike Daab and Brian Taylor met with a representative of Rent.Fun, a software startup with experience in bikeshare programs that is expanding to include contactless kayak rentals (see example at right). We are exploring ways to offer recreational amenities to visitors while acknowledging staffing and safety issues.
- Mike Daab participated in a roundtable discussion for CEOs, managers and key contact persons through the Mahomet Area Chamber on April 26th.
- Staff have been working to determine the best use of District savings to address infrastructure needs throughout the preserves.
- The KRT map has been updated for the website, and Land and Water Conservation Fund restrictions are being researched for the potential new nature center at Homer Lake.



Business and Finance (John Baker)

- For program financials reporting:
 - Prepared format for departments to provide first quarter labor allocations by program
 - Clarified how to report program information when activities overlap multiple program areas
 - Collected labor allocation information to prepare first quarter program budget for May meeting
 - Resolved electric utility reporting issue for the Middle Fork Campground
- Met with the IT Committee to finalize the District's cloud backup solution and to review and approve the job description for a half-time IT Technician. In the discussion of new and needed services with the District's IT vendor, Furat Ibrahim requested the District consider having a part-time IT tech similar to that which Champaign Park District has to provide general IT support to its employees. Under this arrangement MicroSystems manages the network and higher magnitude IT tasks while coordinating support services through the district's part-time IT staff. The estimated support cost for the rest of 2021 is \$11,755. Increased costs for IT services were included the 2021 budget and are sufficient to provide for this support staff cost.

- Confirmed the District’s 2020 pay 2021 tax levy with the County Clerk’s office. All totals matched the District’s bond and tax levy ordinances. The confirmation is a standard, but required, check prior to the annual tax levy extension which hopefully will be provided to us by the April 15 Board meeting.
- Arranged for “[5 Voices](#) Foundation Session” on Zoom for twenty-one District employees. Each participant had completed a personality assessment identifying the “voices” which each individual naturally uses and those which are difficult for each. Jerris Duncan, a local business coach, provided insights into what each voice brings to the team, how voices interact and see each other, and pitfalls to avoid when using any of the voices.
- Continued preparations for the 2020 audit. Field work will be conducted beginning April 12.

Human Resources (Dara Edgington)

- The HR and volunteer departments completed goal-setting meetings as part of the annual Coaching for Success cycle.
- Lindsey Robertson was appointed as the District’s new PDRMA field representative; Mary and Dara met Lindsey via Zoom and chatted about PDRMA’s new Risk Management Review process, which replaced the Loss Control Review. Many particulars are still unknown at this time, however PDRMA plans to have the District participate in a slip/trip/fall assessment via its new online platform later in the fall.
- Dara attended a few different webinars this month including the COVID Relief Bill & American Rescue Plan Act sponsored by Paylocity, 5 Voices training put on by Jerris Duncan, as well as Centering Equity in Parks & Recreation co-sponsored by IAPD and NRPA.
- Mary also attended the Centering Equity in Parks & Recreation webinar, as well as the Tick Host Seeking Behavior session sponsored by the Illinois Natural History Survey.
- The District has registered to be a participating employer with Unit 4’s Youth Employment Services summer program. This program, established in 2011, seeks to provide job training and skills development opportunities for high school freshmen through seniors in Champaign’s Unit 4 School District. Whether or not we will be matched with a participating student remains to be seen, but we are working towards that goal. Many thanks to the M&Ed department for being willing to sponsor a position!

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Media coverage last month included:
 - Top of the Morning, March 28, 2021 – Lake of the Woods Golf Course**
https://www.news-gazette.com/news/top-of-the-morning-march-28-2021/article_fc0bc3c1-d463-58ed-8ee1-bc38a0175c2e.html?fbclid=IwAR2sW5enkYxHbRMbJKx2hzCKanHrSLmFaGdFnCO-H7Ti_icatxwsQ6ERsE#utm_campaign=blox&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social
 - Top of the Morning, March 31, 2021 – Trout Fishing**
https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/parks-recreation/top-of-the-morning-march-31-2021/article_73bb1958-c8b5-5b14-9cec-81f02770b782.html
 - WCIA Whys Guys**
https://www.wcia.com/morning-show-features/whys-guys-international-dark-sky-week-2/?fbclid=IwAR0GzWls6_T6fp8udhmp4Pv_I33far-ThH4-DCZIL7_CtcUa8eAjUufqufE
 - Grand Prairie Museum is ready to welcome your family as you step back in time**

https://www.chambanamoms.com/2021/03/14/grand-prairie-museum/?fbclid=IwAR3hoanuORR861uS88UZ3dkIPgO5WBf4LB_q-iENSnN7CszzS5JKDHyNKhM

Matching Grant Funds still needed for Lake of the Woods accessibility project

https://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/parks-recreation/matching-grant-funds-still-needed-for-lake-of-the-woods-accessibility-project/article_6097a436-6937-500e-afa5-9254a7bf340f.html

Enjoy a Wildflower Walk at Homer Lake Forest Preserve

https://www.wcia.com/ciliving-tv/enjoy-a-wildflower-walk-at-homer-lake-forest-preserve/?fbclid=IwAR3G4ntLCdpQ05xx4TNMku_B7ae5MrbSpUZa0Gx0KWI_L8gG90pE88ssB4U

- The Champaign County Forest Preserve District was mentioned in the History section of the News Gazette on Tuesday, March 23. On that day in 1971, the District received a \$1/year lease on Homer Lake from the Illinois Department of Conservation to operate Homer Lake under a 20-year agreement and a state grant to help operate the preserve.
- Lisa attended a few webinars this month including Centering Equity in Parks & Recreation co-sponsored by IAPD and NRPA and 5 Voices training put on by Jerris Duncan.
- Preparation of the Champaign County Dark Sky Week, April 5-11 included development of the Dark Sky Resource & Activity Guide. Lisa worked with Pat Cain, Jennifer Wick, and Dave Leake to compile educational material and fun activities to incorporate in the 20-page booklet. The Resource Guide is available online and printed copies can be picked up at the Museum of the Grand Prairie, Homer Lake Interpretive Center and outside the campground host cabin at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve.
- This year for the Egg Hunt the garden staff included a “golden egg” which will be moved around and “hidden” more than the other eggs at Lake of the Woods. People that find this egg are encouraged to take a picture and send it to hq@ccfpd.org to be entered into a drawing to win a CCFPD gift package. The package includes a thermal lunch tote, stainless steel travel mug, and journal.
- Every year the District participates in Illinois’ Spring Trout fishing season, as one of 57 lakes that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources stock with trout. This year our delivery included “golden” trout. This was a marketing dream, something new and different! In an effort to engage the fishermen at Lake of the Woods, I spoke with Jim Rossow at the News-Gazette and said anyone that catches one of the Golden Trout stocked this year would win a CCFPD gift package. This was printed in the News-Gazette “Top of the Morning” section on Wednesday, March 31. I had three people share pictures of their catch with me on opening day, Saturday, April 3.



- Social media numbers continue to increase.

	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-	TWITTER	+/-
CCFPD	5,222	+90	2,351	+45	547	+4
KRT	3,178	+33	84	+1	128	+2
MGP	4,293	+75	1,170	+3	241	+3
HLIC	1,983	+32				
GC	1,668	+23	310	+3	88	+3
FPPF	376	+14				

Volunteer Coordinator (Sue Gallo)

- Dara and Sue worked with the M&Ed staff to have policies and waivers in place for volunteers to return to help with programming or the collections.
- Sue met with M&Ed staff for their volunteer committee meeting, discussed volunteer return and appreciation ideas and reminded staff how to access their volunteers' emergency contacts.
- Sue coordinated with Emily, the staff at Homer Lake, Ryan, the Village of St Joseph, Walmart and the Earth Day 4 Everyone committee about the volunteer help event on April 24 for the KRT. Next steps involve Lisa and hopefully folks at the Wheelhouse in St Joseph!
- Sue met with this year's cohort of Master Naturalists at Homer Lake.
- We had 26 volunteers apply last month, which is the highest volume in one month since Sue started! Many of these prospective volunteers were from Jen W.'s frog call training. Thanks to Jen for working with Sue to ensure all volunteers complete their waiver and application. Sue is working to find long term volunteer roles for each of these prospective volunteers.
- Thanks to Troop 25 who came out and helped clean up at LOW on trout opening day. And thanks to Bridgette who helped an Eagle Scout complete a project terracing a sloped path at Buffalo Trace.



Troop 25, Photo by Sue Gallo



Colin D.'s Eagle Scout project and helpers
Photo by Bridgette Moen

Grants and Development Specialist (Ryan Anderson)

- Grants Submitted
 - Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation- \$12,000
 - We requested \$12,000 from the Christopher Reeve Foundation for a new solar powered wheelchair charger on the KRT. This will be located between Urbana

and St. Joe (exact location TBD). If accepted the foundation will need to provide \$3,000 for a grant match. Donation funds are currently available in the foundation's KRT Accessibility Fund.

- Grant Updates
 - Ford Ridge Wind
 - Our letter of intent for the Ford Ridge Wind Grant was accepted. We have been invited to submit a full grant application. This application is to purchase an extension to the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve. This grant would require an additional \$1,159,500 to be raised, with Illinois Clean Energy and IDNR funding identified as likely sources of the match. The District would have four years after grant approval to identify a parcel of land. Mike Daab and Matt Kuntz have developed a list of potential land in the Middle Fork vicinity owned by willing sellers.
 - American Academy of Dermatology
 - The shade structure grant was denied. Homer Lake Interpretive Center staff have asked that we seek additional funding. We are looking into other grant opportunities and seeking private donations. If we do not find an appropriate funding source before the end of the year we can apply for the next round of the shade structure grant.
 - IDNR Boat Access Area Development Program
 - Our application for the BAAD grant to fund the installation of an accessible boat launch on the Sangamon River at Lake of the Woods was denied. This project was moved to the capital projects budget for this year and will be covered by the District.
 - IDNR OLSAD- Peninsula project
 - The News Gazette published an article about the peninsula project and highlighted the remaining fundraising gap. To date (4/2/21) we have a remaining balance of \$34,382. We raised \$830 the day the article was posted.

Tree Giveaway

- Our tree order for 300 trees (100 bur oak, 100 red oak, and 100 hickories) for the April 24 tree giveaway was confirmed. Tree signup is on-going.
- Sign-up
 - The sign-up is currently live:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c49aeaf2ea2face9-tree>

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

- The golf course opened for play on March 5th. This is a pretty average date for opening (we've opened as early as February 15th and as late as March 22nd since I've been here). The weather was typical for March, but it seemed people were anxious to get out and play once again! We had 2,421 players for the month, between the 18-hole course and the Par 3. Looking back, this is the most players in March since 2000! The next closest was in 2012 with 1,944 players. The five-year average for play in March was 751 players. The amount of play was also reflected in the revenue numbers. March revenue for Golf was \$57,988. The five-year average for March revenue was \$33,827. This is the highest revenue total since 2016 (\$56,974), when we had an incredible month of weather and sold a majority of season passes for that year.

- With the weather turning and the outdoor facilities opening, we took down the indoor golf simulator for the season and prepped the clubhouse for rentals. For the season, we brought in \$5,454 from simulator play. This is a bit higher than we expected at the beginning with all of the COVID restrictions that were in place. We are exploring different options for indoor play next winter. There are several things we are looking to change to make the operation more efficient and not as taxing on the limited staff we have in the off season.
- Jason Troyer, our Assistant Golf Professional, completed his Food Service Sanitation Manager certification through Parkland College. This certification is good for five years, and we now have three certified staff members, with David and Chris having completed the course in 2019.
- The Construction Department continued work on the new Par 3 patio and pavilion, as weather allowed. The project is expected to be completed by mid-April. Photo shown below, left.
- We held our annual Volunteer Clean-up Day on March 25th. This had been rescheduled from the 18th due to heavy rains, yet we still had 45 volunteers come assist with raking, piling branches and cleaning around the Pro Shop and Clubhouse. We are so appreciative of each and every one of the volunteers that gave their time to help improve the aesthetics of the course and take some of the burden off of Joie's staff! A couple of pictures of the day are shown below (middle and right) and several more have been posted to the Lake of the Woods Golf Course Facebook page.



- Commercial Irrigation completed the Hunter satellite controllers on the course.
- Golf course maintenance staff aerated and seeded the tees and fairways. The greens have now been fertilized at a half rate.
- So far, the golf course site superintendent has hired two new crew members and one returning member for the seasonal maintenance team.

Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)

- The department welcomed our new seasonal natural resources technician, Kayla Myers, to the team. Kayla has a background in landscape architecture and has experience in contract native ecosystem installation.
- Activities in March included brush pile burning, spraying basal rosettes of herbaceous invasive species, attending virtual trainings during rainy days, and performing routine equipment maintenance.

- We had a highly successful spring burn season. In March, NR staff conducted prescribed burns in all of CCFPD’s properties except Heron View and the Kickapoo Rail Trail. Staff conducted a total of 11 burns averaging 15 acres in size. Burns were conducted in the following units:

Preserve	Ecological Unit	Size (Acres)
Homer Lake	Flicker Woods	18
Sangamon River	SE Prairie	22
Lake of the Woods	Headquarters Woods	11
Lake of the Woods	Entrance & Elks Lake Woods	10
Lake of the Woods	Golf Course Woods	5
Middle Fork River	SW Pt Pleasant Prairie	40
Lake of the Woods	Crowley Rd Savanna Clearing	12
Lake of the Woods	Phase 1 Prairie	1
Lake of the Woods	Phase 7 Prairie	7
River Bend	Prairie Pockets & 9/11 Grove	5
Homer Lake	NW Prairie	39
	Total	170

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

- The Homer Lake Interpretive Center (HLIC) and the Museum of the Grand Prairie (MGP) have lots of milkweed seed packets to distribute to the public and they are popular as ever! Mahomet first graders are using 60 packets of the milkweed seeds for their remote learning classes.
- HLIC staff gave a tour of the center to Vermilion County Conservation District education staff – they loved all the in-house exhibit tips & tricks, our animals, etc.
- The Museum of the Grand Prairie’s Rankin Center edges closer to completion. Finish work on the processing room has been completed. Washer, dryer, sink, CAT-5 cable for IT have all been installed by CCFPD staff. Shelving and supplies are on order for finishing out the room. The handicapped space was striped by the contractor, Stealth Mode. Ameren still needs to hook up the electric service to the center. During routine building inspections it was noted that the compressor for the dry-pipe fire suppression system was running quite frequently. A leaky valve in the main system has been repaired.
- Mark completed a Sketch Up drawing of the Blacksmith/Tool Wing as it will be renovated this year with an exhibit about farming, particularly farming corn. He continues to work on case exhibits and plans for next year’s special exhibits.
- Barb and Pam are working on revising donation giving options directed at the Museum and Education Department. Ryan is using new online donor software, called Qgiv, to create individual giving software pages for the MGP and HLIC respectively.
- Barb and Pam worked to complete the Museum and Education Department Strategic Plan. Barb reformatted the plan for public presentation. Those presentations will be happening in the next two months.

- Barb and Katie presented “Women’s History in Champaign County” to the Woman’s Executive Club via Zoom on March 18.
- On Wednesday, March 10, Pat, Barb, and Sandy presented “Mornings with the Museum: Springtime Tales”. Sandy talked about spring lambing, wool gathering, spinning, and weaving—especially as it relates to the museum’s collection. Barb found many examples in the collection from which to talk about the language of flowers.
- On March 16, Katie distributed around 100 spring break craft bags with free child-sized masks at the MGP. These bags provided activities for area families to do in lieu of those they would ordinarily have seen demonstrated at the museum during Spring Break.
- On March 18, Pat Cain oversaw the presentation of “How-To Plant a Garden for Pollinators” by Master Gardener Jill Taylor as part of this year’s Garden Speaker Series. There were over 150 people present continuously during this Facebook Live/YouTube presentation.
- This month, Katie debuted a read-aloud, "Gloria's Voice: The Story of Gloria Steinem," by Aura Lewis in honor of Women’s History Month. The museum also posted several local women’s history facts on social media.
- On March 25, the museum and the Urbana Free Library sponsored an online trivia event with Julie Laut from Lockdown Trivia via Zoom. Entitled, “Reclaiming Our Time: Women's History Month Trivia Night!” it featured questions on local to global women’s history.
- Cathy Schneider is working on a plan for additional animals at the HLIC, as well as improved animal enrichment and care. She created a “tree” for the snake to use for enrichment and in programs (pictured top right), and is also working with Ryan to set up a Qgiv page for Animal Advocate donations. She also collected youth volunteer ideas from other district staff.
- Stacey Clementz created a Spring Activity Guide which was released this month. It can be found outside of the Museum, Interpretive Center and Campground Host Cabin as well as on our website. It will be available in printed copy until May 3 but will be available online indefinitely.
- Stacey, Chelsea (UPD) and Sarah (Ag in the Classroom) delivered the At Home Exploration Kits. This round of kits was for second graders on Changing Landforms. Student worksheets were translated in French and Spanish. Schools receiving the kits:
 - All eleven elementary schools at Champaign Unit 4
 - All six elementary schools at Urbana #116
 - All four elementary schools at Rantoul School District (pictured below right are the 199 kits for Rantoul schools)
 - Ludlow elementary school
- Summer camp registration went live April 1! HLIC staff are offering very limited in-person summer nature camps this year since they can now be offered outdoors according to CDC and IDPH guidelines. Pop-up programs are also a possibility.
- Registration also began for three separate Camp in a Bag programs being offered by museum staff: Garden Camp in a Bag, Nifty Needlework, and Boredom Busters. These will be accompanied by instructional videos released on social media.



- Cathy and Stacey met with Chris Edmondson and David Sebestik at the Golf Course. They had a great conversation on how we can partner together and provide environmental education type opportunities at the golf course. One of the outcomes is that Stacey will be presenting a Reptiles as well as a Flint and Steel program during the Junior Golf Camp. We look forward to working with them.
- The HLIC staff have four in-person environmental education field trips scheduled for April and May! We are so excited to go back to in-person teaching outdoors.
- Museum staff have been scheduling and creating specialized Zoom curriculum for the Rantoul School District. In addition they have created several homeschool Zoom classes and recently had a special request for a Native American homeschool class.
- Jennifer Wick partnered with East Central Illinois Master Naturalists to help recruit Frog Call Survey (FCS) monitors; a rep with the Master Naturalists attended the March 6th training and helped run the program. Currently we have a total of 38 monitors; 17 of whom are first-time FCS volunteers!
- Jennifer worked with Lisa and Pam to create her self-guided “Spring Wildflower Walk” signs. This year they will be put up along Flicker Woods trail April 9-30, but could be used at any location in the future.
- Pat and Jennifer worked with Dave Leake and Lisa Sprinkle to create a Dark Sky Resource and Activity Guide. Volunteer Doug Mills will share his blog posts about the HL wetland on the HLIC Facebook page [Homer Lake Wetland Blog](#).
- Pat continues to work with Emma Flemming on Clio entries for Homer Lake. He is also working with Brenda Rezk, volunteer, on researching for Clio entries at Middle Fork with a current focus on Tomlinson Cemetery.
- Pam did a Whys Gals segment on WCIA, conducted HLIC spring cleanup, and pulled together in-person programming/volunteer considerations & guidelines and waivers.
- Pam was accepted into the 2021 Leadership Illinois Fellowes program. Leadership Illinois is a professional and personal support network that brings together a diverse group of women from all sectors of society to educate, energize and connect, so that each can be a catalyst for positive change. The program features three conferences: Power of Government, Power of the Marketplace, Power of the Individual.
- Cathy, Stacey & Pam attended the virtual Environmental Education of Illinois annual conference, during which Stacey received the Malcolm D. Swan award! Stacey also presented a session with Chelsea of Urbana Park District during the conference on their partnership for the At-Home Exploration Kits
- Jennifer attended the National Association for Interpretation’s NotaConference Virtual Meet up for the Heartland Region.
- Museum and Education staff attended a *StreamYard* virtual training session presented by the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area Staff. *StreamYard* is software designed to improve the live streaming experience for viewers.
- Pam recertified as a Certified Interpretive Guide through the National Association for Interpretation and attended an NRPA webinar on organizational culture.



- HLIC Facebook stats, March 1-31: Average Daily Organic Reach: 755 (Sum: 23,405); Average Daily Page Engaged Users: 42 (Sum: 1,296)
- MGP Facebook stats: March 1-31: Average Daily Organic Reach: 893(Sum:27697); Average Daily Page Engaged Users: Average 55 (Sum:1725)

Lake of the Woods (Doug Sanders)

- EGGSTRAVAGANZA is back for the fourth year! Michael Dale and staff have been constructing and painting more “Spring Eggs.” New this year are Crewmates from the game Among Us, Where’s Waldo, and SpongeBob SquarePants. See if you can find all 36 eggs strategically placed in five preserves.
- Staff took the department’s trucks in for their six month safety inspections. This assessment involves checking various parts of the vehicles and trailers, such as brakes, lights, horns, mirrors, windshield wipers, and tire tread.
- On March 23, Crystal Lake Fisheries of Ava, Missouri delivered 1,155 pounds of rainbow trout to the main lake. New this year were ten Palomino trout. Known as the “swimming banana”, this rare breed can grow up to 30 inches in length and up to 13 pounds. The official Illinois Trout Season opened on April 3, at 5:00 a.m.
- As mentioned in last month’s report, the construction of the miniature beach house is complete and has been placed in the garden sandscape. The structure is great for photo ops and also serves as a storage area for sand toys.
- All fulltime staff attended the Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute’s Shop Talk webinar “Overview of Common and Early Detection Invasive Species.” This session focused on tips to identify invasive plants and the importance of reporting findings on platforms such as iMapInvasives and iNaturalist. Sanders and Bruehl also attended IAPD’s webinar “Preparing for the Future: Centering Equity in Parks and Recreation.” This was an overview of NRPA’s framework for DEI and implications in the field.
- Now that the weather has started warming, staff are in the process of winter cleanup and preparing the grounds for the spring/summer season. This includes mulching landscaped beds, leaf cleanup, picking up sticks, filling potholes, and replacement of split-rail fences. Opening of facilities and cleanup efforts will continue throughout the months of April and May.



Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- Middle Fork staff have been working on prepping user areas for the upcoming season. Sidewalk repair, fencing replacement, dead tree removals, and campground site inspections are a few of the tasks completed.
- The egg hunt has been quite popular at Middle Fork. We have met many folks that have never been here before that stated they really enjoyed the egg hunt idea district wide.

- Work continues with the Pt. Pleasant wetland project. We are monitoring how the new structure is handling the flooding events we have received this spring. The wetland has brought in large populations of ducks, sandhill cranes, and other waterfowl species already.
- Middle Fork staff conducted spring prescribed burns this month.
- The campground soft opening began the first of April with a nice crowd and nice weather.
- All state and local public health licenses have been received for the 2021 season.
- Jacob Pruiett and I continue to attend via webinar a habitat management seminar held by the University of Kentucky. This is a four-week course with topics ranging from oak decline, wetland management, invasive management, and river and stream corridor management.
- The HVAC replacement at the Activity Center has been completed. It seems to be a wonderful system and the contractors did a great job with the installation. Thanks to the construction department for finishing some of the patchwork on the interior of the building.

Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- We received a total of eight applicants for the full-time maintenance II position, and we expected to interview three candidates, but one declined after finding other employment and another declined after going through the interview process. We ended up interviewing and extending an offer to Colton Carr who has worked for us for the past three years as a seasonal. He will graduate from Saint Ambrose College in Iowa this May and begin his employment soon afterwards.
- We completed a few prescribed burns in addition to the more extensive areas that the Natural Resources crew did. Many of the areas that we burn are to reduce leaf litter that piled up after removing them from user areas in the fall.
- We appreciate the spring eggs that Michael Dale installed for us again this year. This has become a very popular activity. We often see young children getting a picture taken with the eggs that they find, and if folks cannot find all six eggs they are not afraid to stop us to ask for help.



Kickapoo Rail Trail

- Staff have reviewed construction documents from ERA for the KRT Amenities grant.
- Planning staff met with a Farnsworth engineer on site to discuss construction design questions for KRT Phase 2B, St. Joseph to the county line. Farnsworth is currently incorporating CCFPD comments for the final construction plan set.

District Cultural Competency Initiatives

- The DEI committee watched another installment of the 1619 Project series “The Birth of American Music”.
- Barb Garvey and Mary Ellen Wuellner reviewed candidates for the UIUC Community Academic Scholars program and accepted Hannah Elizabeth Caraway. Hannah will be working

remotely this summer to determine ways to assist the CCFPD to expand our outreach and provide opportunities for greater connections with historically underrepresented communities.

- In conjunction with Mary Ellen and the DEI Committee, Dara continues to work with the Parkland Community Education Training Team to develop customized Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training for the District. Our desired training/facilitation team has been identified and provided us with their proposal. We are currently soliciting feedback on the proposal from the DEI Committee; if all goes well, we hope to have a signed agreement by the end of the month.