

September 5, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Lisa Sprinkle, Marketing Coordinator

Re: September Staff Report

Executive Director (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- The City of Urbana is updating its comprehensive plan and asking community residents and stakeholders for feedback on city issues. In preparation for the plan update, city staff is developing a video series for its cable tv channel to educate the community on the county-wide governing bodies that impact Urbana businesses and residents. They videotaped me, along with the other government leaders, giving an overview of our organization - its purpose, governance structure, programs, and funding mechanisms.
- The IPRA task force, of which I am a member, sent out a short survey to identify ways to better serve professionals employed by Illinois' forest preserve and conservation districts. The survey is intended to identify individuals' current sources for professional development, certifications, and networking. We will use the information to make recommendations to the IPRA Board of Directors and staff on how to better support professionals in the field.

Planning and Construction Department (Mike Daab and Mike Fry)

- We have completed the bidding process for the LOW Golf Course irrigation controls installation. The previous irrigation controls were damaged in a storm, and this project will be paid for through a PDRMA insurance claim.
- The Point Pleasant water control structure installation project has also gone out to bid, with results expected for approval in time for this meeting. This project is being paid for by a combination of funds raised through an IL Clean Energy Community Foundation Community Stewardship Challenge Grant, and farm revenue funds.
- Mike is working with the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, the Champaign County Board, and the Champaign County Emergency Management Agency to coordinate an application to bring an Americorps national service program team to Champaign County in spring/summer 2021. AmeriCorps teams typically consist of 8-12 young adults age 18-24, including a team leader. Participants come from all over the country and range from high school to college graduates in terms of education. Teams typically serve in a community for 6-8 weeks, although shorter periods are possible. There is no charge for labor and teams provide their own transportation, although a place to sleep and shower should be provided along with assistance with food or kitchen facilities to cook in.
- The MoGP Large Artifacts Storage construction contract has been awarded, and a pre-construction meeting was held September 8th. Demolition of the existing structure will take place throughout September and new construction will begin in October. The project is estimated by the contractor to be completed by end of the year (weather and material availability dependent). Museum staff is in the process of relocating the last of the artifacts still stored there.
- Bridgette is reviewing existing allied agency agreements with labor unions. Initial findings show typical project labor agreements are primarily developed for large capital projects and favor labor, but do not preclude non-labor bidding. She continues to research the costs and benefits to

the District in considering future Project Labor Agreements, and is reaching out to East Central IL Building Trades to request an informational presentation.

- The construction department has been busy working on the OSLAD peninsula project this summer. Current numbers show our progress. So far, over 8,000 sq ft of concrete have been poured. This includes accessible parking, sidewalks, the boat house foundation, and accessible picnic areas. We still have a few hundred lineal feet of sidewalks remaining. We have received and moved 180 tons of topsoil. The removal of the second parking lot has allowed us to repurpose the underlying fill saving approximately \$3,000 in fill alone, not including shipping costs.
- Also in regard to the OSLAD project, structural engineers from the shelter manufacturer (EnWood) are revising the drawings for the large shelter and resubmitting them for District review; permit drawings will be submitted thereafter. A&R Mechanical Services have been awarded the contract for the large shelter concrete slab and footings. A preconstruction meeting was held September 3rd. Work will commence after the permit is issued by the county. Site furnishings have been ordered and will be installed by District staff upon arrival.
- In between concrete pours, we have also rebuilt the residence courtyard fence at the golf course.
- We spent time with Ed “the Pond Professor” from Aquascapes as he reviewed the Botanical Garden pond and waterfall after one year for his You Tube channel. He was given a tour of the surrounding Botanical Garden, which is featured prominently in the video, and after two days online, it has 17,000 views. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfJZttQdGrg>

Business and Finance (John Baker)

- Reviewed and approved the final Foundation 990 reports and the District’s final Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Reviewed 2018 GFOA recommendations from that CAFR, ensured these recommendations were addressed in the 2019 CAFR.
- Finalized the statistical section, transmittal letter, and the management discussion and analysis after receiving and approving the final financial statements from CliftonLarsonAllen.
- Posted the District’s 2019 comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) to the County Clerk as required in statute, to PDRMA for review and determination of 2021 insurance rates, to the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board to meet bond disclosure requirements, to the Illinois Grants Portal to ensure continued grant eligibility for the District.
- Worked with CliftonLarsonAllen to finalize the District annual financial report to the State Comptroller. CLA filed this along with the District CAFR on August 27. Filed the state and federal 990 reports necessary to maintain the Foundation’s 501c3 status.
- Submitted the 2019 District CAFR to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for consideration of Excellence in Financial Reporting achievement certificate. This is the District’s third year for GFOA consideration, which generally requires six months before achievement notification.
- Set up access for Blair for District and Foundation financial accounts and all databases – Municipal Systems, GolfNow, Activenet, Reservation Friend, Control Pay, and Paylocity. Reviewed purpose and use of these tools for preparing journals, reconciling with bank statements, processing purchasing card transactions and payroll.
- Reviewed several contracts and purchasing bids to ensure statute and District policy standards are met.
- Provided educational information regarding the referendum question including updating the property tax comparison with other local districts in the county, providing a simple tax

calculator for the public based on their property’s estimated market value, and the potential reductions to consider if the referendum were to fail.

- Began comprehensive review of 2020 financials now that the 2019 audit is complete. This includes taking into account 2019 accruals and their impact on 2020 transactions, as well as a careful review of transactions during the April to August transition caused by staff turnover and COVID.
- Worked to resolve several vendor issues and to update purchasing contact information for the District. Blair has already resolved several issues for the District.
- Extended advertising for the purchasing assistant position and began reviewing applications after we received five applicants. We hope to have that position filled shortly.

Human Resources (Dara Edgington)

- Site visits to Lake of the Woods, Middle Fork, and Homer Lake were conducted to preview and receive feedback on the new On-Call Policy, which will be brought before the board in October for review and final approval.
- PDRMA has canceled all on-site training for the remainder of 2020; however, through one of PDRMA’s approved vendors (Tom Gray), Mary was able to arrange for a Trailer Towing training class to take place at Lake of the Woods in October. This class will benefit our operations, construction, and natural resources teams.
- The compensation committee has begun shaping the 2021 compensation package and, in doing so, are closely analyzing potential wage compression issues. As a reminder, departmental wage compression should be monitored once it hits 80% and becomes a critical issue once it hits 95%. Luckily, departmental wage compression is not a huge concern at this time, as shown by the below chart:
 - 2020: reflects current wage compression rates
 - Scenario A: reflects compression if we proceed with 2% increases for A scale, \$1 for B
 - Scenario B: reflects compression if we proceed with minimum wage adjustments only
 - Scenario C: reflects compression if we proceed with 2% increases for A scale, \$.50 for B
 - Scenario D: reflects compression if we proceed with 1.5% increases for A scale, \$.50 for B

Dept/Staff	2020	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C	Scenario D
BG & LOW	62%	66%	62%	64%	64%
Construction	64%	67%	64%	65%	65%
GC	69%	74%	69%	72%	72%
HL	62%	65%	62%	63%	63%
HLIC	60%	62%	60%	62%	61%
HQ - 1	64%	65%	64%	65%	65%
HQ - 2	57%	58%	57%	58%	58%
Finance	66%	67%	66%	67%	67%
PN	70%	72%	70%	72%	72%
Mkting	54%	55%	54%	55%	55%
HR & Vol	71%	73%	71%	73%	72%
MGP	57%	58%	57%	58%	58%
MF	55%	58%	55%	56%	56%
NR	64%	66%	64%	65%	65%

Pro Shop	44%	42%	41%	40%	40%
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Please note, these scenarios are provided as points of comparison only; none of these scenarios is being recommended at this time.

- There are, however, some outliers the committee hopes to correct as we have the financial ability to do so. Furthermore, the committee continues to analyze compression issues created by similar roles on the A scale and B scale and will provide an update to the board on those issues once the data has been compiled.

Marketing (Lisa Sprinkle)

- Congratulations go out to the District for receiving five Top 3 placings in the News-Gazette People’s Choice awards this year!
 - 1st place for Museum: Museum of the Grand Prairie
 - 2nd place for Outdoor Amusement: Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve
 - 2nd place for best golf course
 - 2nd place for best walking trail: Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve
 - 3rd place for best park: Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve
- Worked with WCIA to develop a new 15-second commercial for CCFPD to play during Our Town Mahomet week (Sept. 14-18). Worked with WCIA anchor Paul Cicchini to set up an interview on the renovations of the waterfall/pond.
- Worked with the YES Committee to develop educational signs and flyers for distribution around the county.
- Worked with Five Foot Productions on an educational video about the needs at CCFPD.
- Developed a half page CCFPD flyer for Mary Ellen’s work with Urbana Rotary in Urbana’s Silverwood neighborhood.
- Worked with the Golf Course to develop online marketing pieces for the upcoming Anniversary Pass sale.
- Developed a poster for the Fall Virtual Speaker Series through the Museum.
- Social media monthly numbers continue to increase as individuals continue to seek online outlets to learn about District offerings and share information.

	FACEBOOK	+/-	INSTAGRAM	+/-	TWITTER	+/-
CCFPD	4,683	+202	1,906	+111	530	+2
KRT	2,973	+51	80	+0	124	+2
MGP	3,858	+47	1091	+17	219	+4
HLIC	1,822	+123				
GC	1,539	+10	269	+7	80	+0
FPPF	252	+8				

Volunteer Coordinator (Sue Gallo)

- The Nature Conservancy awarded the Volunteer department a tools grant. The proposal was a team effort with Angela, Sue, Emily and Mike. Sue is in the process of purchasing the tools.
- Mike Daab and Sue brainstormed efforts to get enthusiasm for National Public Lands Day, Sept 26.

- Sue is about half complete in the task of removing names from the Volgistics volunteer database of individuals who have never given time and are not on any department lists of volunteers. These deleted records are being archived outside of the database.
- Sue is working with Farm Credit Services to determine service opportunities for approximately 100 staff who would like to complete a day of service.
- Volunteer hours were compared for this exceptional year to past years. Approximately 3,000 volunteer hours have been given to the CCFPD since January 1 with much reduced opportunity for education and museum volunteering. The total hours recorded last year was 6,380, of which 2,700 were museum and education hours. Sue is doing very little active recruitment for new volunteers because there are so few opportunities at this time.

Grants and Development Specialist (Ryan Anderson)

- Ryan started as the new Grants and Development Officer on September 2.
- I have toured Lake of the Woods operations, the Museum, the golf course, and Homer Lake operations and the Interpretive Center.
- I am currently working on reports for the International Dark Sky Association and for the Illinois Department of Commerce CURE grant.

Natural Resources (Peter Goodspeed)

- In August, we released more bid proposals for hazardous tree removal and did site visits with contractors for the brush clearing project at Heron View.
- Staff finished clearing the weir construction area at Pt Pleasant with the removal of many low quality trees and invasive woody species.
- Annual and biennial weed control continued in our new prairie plantings with periodic mowing.
- Volunteers continue to work at removing bush honeysuckle at Buffalo Trace and a new volunteer is dedicating his time to consolidating and neatly organizing previously cut honeysuckle into small burn piles.
- Many boy scouts have been soliciting the NR department for Eagle Scout projects including boot brush construction, wood duck box construction and brush clearing.
- Giant ragweed control began in August with the mowing of ragweed along the slopes and in the right-of-way adjacent to the Kickapoo Rail Trail.
- Staff assisted the Saline Branch Drainage District by removing corn residue that was clogging a culvert underneath the Kickapoo Rail Trail.
- Our seasonal technician had her last day on August 20th and we threw a pizza party for her as a graduate school send off.
- Dalton, Matt and Nate attended the First Aid/CPR/AED training class.
- In preparation for planting seed at the newly acquired property adjacent to Old Homer Park, staff mowed in between the rows that were previously planted with bare root seedlings.



- Woodland/savanna seed collection continued with the collection of zig-zag spiderwort, bottle brush, woodland brome, and several other species.
- The entire NR department met with Mike Daab and Bridgette Moen to review current projects and discuss plans for future projects.

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

- August was quite the month for the golf course. Numbers were up across the board and some significantly, from 18-hole rounds, to Par 3 play, to driving range usage. Our revenue for the month was \$135,958. Looking back over the past 15 years, there has not been an August over \$128,000 and the average over that time was \$109,000. We had 6,678 players in August. The previous high for players in August over the last 10 years was 4,879. While golf is certainly a socially distancing sport, we believe the course conditions, weather, and COVID friendly guidelines (12 minute tee-times, pace of play, tee times required, availability of single use carts) have all played a significant role in the increases.
- At the beginning of the month, the IHSA announced that several traditional fall sports would be postponed until 2021, but golf was not one of them. David Sebestik, our head Golf Professional, is the coach of the Mahomet-Seymour High School team. He was very pleased by this news as were his players. He had 39 kids go out for the golf team this year (a larger than usual number). They will play 2-3 matches per week through the end of September. The course will host several of these high school meets. We are also the home course for the Mahomet girls team, as well as host to St. Thomas More and Fisher high schools' golf teams.
- We held a couple of events and tournaments at the course in August. The player count and revenue for each event are listed below:

○ Behnke Ryder Cup Group	28	\$2,750
○ Smitley Memorial Outing	48	\$1,970
○ Club Championship	43	\$860
○ Match Play Tournament	27	\$540

- Our Assistant Golf Professional, Jason Troyer, completed his Level 1 coursework and seminar for his PGA Professional certification. Generally, these are in-person programs that are held in Florida. Unfortunately, due to COVID, Jason had to spend eight hours a day for five days on a Microsoft Teams meeting online. There are three levels to complete to become a PGA Teaching Professional, and you are given three years to finish the program. Jason hopes to complete Level 2 and be well into level 3 by the end of 2021.
- We are looking to continue the momentum of play and revenue into the fall. We have several outings and events lined up for September, and are certainly hoping the weather continues to cooperate.
- Although the lack of rain was good for play, it was not good for the maintenance staff in August. The superintendent has been watering at night due to failure of the satellite stations that are not cooperating with the central computer in the office. Green numbers 5, 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, and 18 took a hard hit without being watered in the evenings. The greens are recovering well since the nighttime manual watering was increased. Mowing has slowed down, greens have been mowed every other day, tees mowed once a week, and fairways once a week.

- The maintenance crew has been reduced to four employees so the superintendent is in the process of hiring one more employee for fall help. Despite the lack of rainfall in August, the course remains in great shape overall.

Museum and Education Department (Barb Garvey and Pam Leiter)

- This month education staff from the Museum of the Grand Prairie (MGP) worked together with Lisa Sprinkle to place five activity signs in the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden. The topics included: Discover the Garden (sights and sounds); Sense the Garden (herbs and the scents); Yesterday's Schoolhouse (comparing past and present); Monarchs and Milkweed (in museum entry garden); What Grows in the Greenhouse (cactuses and succulents). We hope that these replacements for some of our in-person activities will be well received. We plan a set for each season.
- Katie Snyder continued her series of read-aloud books for children on Facebook and YouTube. This month she read Gail Gibbons' *Vegetables We Eat* in the Discovery Garden; Cynthia Levinson's *The Youngest Marcher* in the Suffrage Exhibit and Suzanne Slade's *Out of School and Into Nature: the Anna Comstock Story* at the newly-repainted red bridge near the Izaak Walton Cabin.
- Pat Cain concluded his virtual *Museum Mondays* programs with the following programs in August: Rock the Vote on July 27, Fun and (Olympic) Games on August 4, and Go Green on August 10. These were all conducted virtually, live on Facebook and YouTube.
- Pat Cain also continued his *Mornings at the Museum* feature on Facebook. On August 19, the museum staff talked about their favorite parts of the Suffrage exhibit. September 9 will feature a Back to School edition.
- This month, the museum Gift Shop has begun promoting Women's Suffrage merchandise through our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts. Watch for the item of the week, a product that is discounted 20% for one week only.
- The *Mahomet Daily* did an in-depth article on the MGP's Civil Rights Teacher's Activity Kit and Learning Tub. The tub features local civil rights stories in pictures and text along with artifacts and books from the era. *Smile Politely* featured that article in their *Splog* section.
- *Summer in the Schoolhouse* also happened virtually this year. On July 24 Reading and Writing was presented; on July 31 a history lesson was presented though video captured in the schoolhouse and premiered on the MGP Facebook.
- The *Soloists for Suffrage* concerts have continued. We're promoting young women artists within the backdrop of the Suffrage exhibit, as an alternative to the summer concert series. This month the MGP hosted Karen Tse on August 20 2020. There will be another by Rebecca Rego on September 17 and by Lizzie Roehrs on October 15.
- We are happy to report that all the *Camps in a Bag* have sold out! 210 bags were distributed in all. We will be preparing more such activity kits in the future for sale at our sites.
- Two final replacements for the Grand Prairie Kids camp aired recently on social media, one on *Lamb's Ear* (the plant) and another on *Log Cabins*. Both feature educator Sandy Osborne. Likewise three replacements for Garden Camp aired: the *Water Cycle, Salsa! From your Garden, and Garden Bounty* both by educator Marina Montez Ellis.
- Mark Hanson is happy to announce the hiring of an intern, Emma Olson, to process and transcribe the East Frisian audio material. This internship is funded by a grant from the Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board.

- Pat Cain is also supervising a volunteer intern this semester, Emma Fleming. Emma is working on guided tours of historical/cultural resources throughout the CCFPD using the free web application Clio.
- August saw the beginning of more open hours for the MGP and the Homer Lake Interpretive Center (HLIC). The Museum saw 250 people in August, now open five days per week for four hours per day. MGP is open Tuesday to Saturday, 1:00 to 5:00; HLIC is open Tuesday to Friday, 1:00 to 5:00.
- *A Morning with the Suffragists* was broadcast on social media on August 12. Three members of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Alliance Chapter did a first person interpretation of Susan B Anthony, Inez Milholland and Alice Paul as a program with the MGP.
- Interpretive Center and MGP staff participated in the Virtual Sweetcorn Festival this year, offering mission-related activities as part of the programs offered by the Champaign County Museums Network. HLIC offered a video about the resident turtles (pictured), and a video reprise about taking a nature investigation hike.
- *Collections Corner* has continued on Facebook. This month we took a look at the following items in our collection: an animal neck yoke, a Model T fuel measuring stick, documents from Elisabeth Hanson's Tomlinson cemetery papers, and a hay grapple.
- Collections staff has been hard at work moving artifacts out of the Large Artifact Storage building in preparation for the demolition and rebuilding. To that end, Jennifer Grove, MGP's registrar is taking a four week online course on Moving Collections through Museum Study.
- The MGP joined with other museums to celebrate the month of the passage of the 19th Amendment through a project sponsored by the Smithsonian, the National Archives and the Library of Congress. Every day throughout most of August the museum posted a local suffrage story with the hashtag #19SuffrageStories. Many of the posts were very successful.
- Thanks to the efforts of the garden staff and our garden educator Marina Montez Ellis, the Discovery Garden contains a small Solidarity Garden. This was brought about in collaboration with Sola Gratia Farm and the Urbana Free Library with whom we partnered earlier in the summer on the history of Victory Gardens.
- MGP and HLIC worked to develop a program schedule for the fall even though there will only be one in person program this year. We have scheduled a fairly full program of social media and virtual events.
- The MGP has signed on to the Values of History Statement, part of the non-profit History Relevance Initiative. The entire statement is available on www.historyrelevance.com
- Work on the HLIC conceptual plan project continues. Lake Flato is working on an economic analysis, as well as a first draft of the conceptual plan per the feedback staff gave them in August. Also, a half-day interpretive theme workshop is being planned with Taylor Studios on September 24.
- One of the HLIC's mounted owls was repaired this month; many thanks to Panther Creek Taxidermy's owner Amanda for donating her expert services!
- With help from Furat, HLIC had a wifi access point installed in the hallway, to enable stronger internet access for doing programs in the main room, as well as in the back storage room which will be used as office space for one staff member this fall to maintain social distancing.



- The 2020-2021 Expanding the Classroom booklet is complete; we are going digital this year for the most part, although we are still printing 100 hard copies.
- Stacey Clementz is partnering with Chelsea Prah (Environmental Education Coordinator at Urbana Park District) and Brodie Dunn (Champaign County Audubon Society) to create environmental education kits for every 4th grade student in Champaign County at no cost to them. These kits will provide supplies such as field guides, specimen jars, and magnifying glasses and will include standards-based activities for educators to utilize to complement their curriculum. The goals of these kits are to both support educators' science curriculums and reinforce students' empathy for nature. The first set of bags will go out to 4th graders at Champaign Unit 4, King Elementary in Urbana and Prairieview Ogden North and South. This will serve approximately 1000 students!
- Jennifer Wick held a second virtual letterboxing event (pictured top right) with participants from 12 different states, with help from volunteers Jill Robbins and Mary Voudrie. She also developed a very popular video about bats in lieu of the annual popular Bats at the Bridge program, a video in lieu of the Sunset Paddle (with pics from volunteer Fred Newport), and a video in lieu of the Starwatch (recorded by volunteer Dave Leake).
- Pam Leiter appeared on the Whys Guys segment in the WCIA morning show, with a short talk about our box turtle (pictured bottom right).
- Pam Leiter wrote an article about the Homer Lake Interpretive Center that appeared in the *Inside Out* column in the News Gazette on Aug 30; this is part of a regular rotation with other museums/nature centers/archives in the county through the Champaign County Museums Network.
- Mark Hanson, Shelly Green, Angela Whitlock, Pat Cain, George Groschen, Cathy Schneider, Stacey Clementz & Pam Leiter renewed their certification in CPR/AED/First Aid.
- Pam Leiter attended the annual Global Leadership Summit online, as well as a webinar through the IAPD Leadership Institute, Your Board and Your Strategic Plan, and finished up a 4-part webinar series entitled Powerful Planned Giving Programs.
- The museum van received a new set of shocks, struts and tires in August. It is a 2014 vehicle.
- HLIC Facebook stats: Aug 1-31: Average Daily Organic Reach: 1,236 (Sum: 38,314); Average Daily Page Engaged Users: 104 (Sum: 3,209)
- MGP Facebook stats: August 1-31: Average Daily Organic Reach: 2,209 (Sum: 69,490) Average Daily Page Engaged Users: 143 (Sum: 4,459)



Lake of the Woods (Doug Sanders)

- A big congratulation goes out to Larry DeVore for 15 years of service with the District. Even though Larry is considered a part-time employee he is a vital part of the operations department. Among his main duties is the service and repair of District's vehicles and equipment. Last year he serviced 93 vehicles! He also plays a major role on the snow removal and mowing crews.
- Staff added two NEW features to the Botanical Garden! Among these new features is a pioneer wagon accompanied by seasonal décor, providing visitors with great photo settings. Staff also created a natural sandbox. The hope is it is a feature that will attract small children to explore the Botanical Garden.
- Staff removed several hazardous trees this past month. Among the trees removed were a honey locust tree near the volleyball court at Elk's Lake Pavilion and several dead spruce trees in the picnic area between Lake of the Woods Pavilion and Hickory Shelter. The department is looking at renting a lift in November to trim several trees near roads and throughout the bike trail so that emergency vehicles will not be delayed.
- Note that Lake of the Woods and River Bend Forest Preserves moved to 7:00pm close on September 13.



Middle Fork River (Matt Kuntz)

- The campground continues to stay busy and we had a very successful Labor Day weekend. We will most likely extend the maximum stay from two nights to five nights for the remainder of the camp season.
- Work continues with the Pt Pleasant restoration project. While we had dry conditions at the site, we brought in 250 tons of large rock (RR4) that will be needed for reinforcement and drainage control.
- Budget prep work has begun for 2021.
- We have seen impressive numbers in August and into September for Dark Sky viewing. Visitors are coming from across the Midwest. We were contacted in early September by a newly designated Dark Sky Park out of Cass County, Michigan for our advice on how to best provide safety and security for their expected increase in visitors.

Homer Lake (Brian Taylor)

- The Natural Playscape was a very busy place after getting the two new pumps installed to supply water to the stream. It is always interesting when you have a group of five to ten year olds watching everything you do to get the pumps working. They are very appreciative and excited when they hear the water coming up to the pool. It provides a form of education we did not predict.

- We are still receiving good fishing reports as a visitor from Wyoming caught a seven pound bass at Collins Pond and there have been some ten inch crappie caught this summer as well. This is the first year since the saugeye were stocked that we have seen a noticeable decrease in the shad population which is one of the reasons they were introduced.

Kickapoo Rail Trail

- Union Pacific Railroad’s realty department has consented to the fact that the Forest Preserve District owns the underlying rights to the Glover Crossing east of St Joseph. This is a big concession on their part but is not the final hurdle. UPRR’s engineering department still insists it will not approve an at-grade trail crossing there. IDNR trails staff recommend that our engineers finish the design work for the crossing and they will help us push it through along with assistance from the Surface Transportation Board if necessary. The saga continues.
- We were lucky that August turned off dry so that we could take a break from mowing the park areas and finally get to the KRT. We spent an entire week mowing, string trimming and running the sickle bar along the edges. It takes an hour to cover one mile when using the sickle so we spend more than 12 hours just to mow the edges. It takes additional time to mow and trim intersections.
- Engineering Resource Associates is conducting a Preliminary Environmental Site Assessment (PESA) for IDOT review for the KRT amenities grant. IDOT will then determine if a Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) is required. CCFPD staff updated Vermillion County staff and KRT Steering Committee on amenities progress.



District Cultural Competency Initiatives

- Mary Ellen has been working with an Urbana Rotary committee to engage with the Silverwood neighborhood of east Urbana to address the high incidences of crime and racial tensions that have been plaguing that area in recent years. Rotary members are providing support to neighborhood leaders and City staff to meet some of the immediate needs they have identified – like school supplies and food giveaways. Through these connections, I am able to share District program updates with residents who may not have been aware of what the forest preserves have to offer.
- On September 9, the Stewardship Network put on a webinar entitled *Equity and Justice Training for Environmental Organizations*. The purpose of the webinar was to assist leaders and organizations in their commitment to diversity, equity, inclusivity, and justice and apply this knowledge to their everyday decisions, programs and activities.
- Boyz2Men and Girls2Women had their Back to School Bash again this year at Lake of the Woods Pavilion. Each student was provided with a backpack full of school supplies. The Foundation’s Education for the Underserved Fund covered their pavilion rental and paid for markers and other items for their backpacks.
- Pat Cain, Katie Snyder, and Jennifer Wick developed two videos to be distributed during Welcoming Week. Video versions with English, Spanish, and French voice-overs have been

created. The videos are intended as an introduction to the CCFPD - both the preserves and the educational facilities.

- Stacey Clementz participated in a webinar entitled *The Critical Intersection of Racial Injustice and Climate Change*.

CCFPD Sustainability Committee

- Stacey Clementz represented the CCFPD sustainability committee at several Champaign County Climate Coalition (C4) meetings.