



Human Resources Department Memorandum

TO: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director

FROM: Jennifer Clough, Director of Human Resources

DATE: September 9, 2025

RE: August 2025 Report

Human Resources:

- The District experienced no turnover in staff during the month of July. Interviews with applicants for the Deputy Executive Director resulted in the selection of a highly qualified candidate to fill this new position in early September. The department supported the onboarding for Ranger Assistants for both North and South Operations, resulting in the full staffing of the Operations Department as of early August, as well as the orientation for one part-time police officer.
- The recruitment process for the Human Resources Manager and part-time Administrative Specialist with the Police Department have continued through August. Opportunities to evaluate and refine operations in the Finance and Human Resources departments have helped to define the responsibilities and placement of open positions. If a contract to outsource payroll processes to ADP is approved by the Commission in October, the Payroll Coordinator position will be eliminated and the HR Generalist reclassified to a manager position to facilitate the new programs and processes offered through this major software migration.
- The majority of the District's seasonal positions have moved into the offboarding phase; however, recruitment is open for temporary assistance in the Finance and HR departments to provide added resources as current staff participate in demanding payroll and HRIS system conversions.
- Employee performance-based compensation adjustments and new benefit plan year premiums were communicated to staff and updated in the District's HRIS system and with its IPBC carriers in the month of July. Staff step pay changes closed the District's performance evaluation process for the fiscal year.
- The District continues its formal negotiations with the District's full-time police officers' collective bargaining unit with the Metropolitan Alliance of Police.
- Department staff participated in several ADP demonstrations and quote reviews and the IPBC benchmarking survey report.

Safety and Wellness:

There was one worker's compensation claim in August; an employee who was cutting trees and brush on the Great Western Trail contacted poison ivy and had a severe reaction. There were no new property or liability claims during the month.

- The Department officially kicked off its Work Capacity Test pilot project with Natural Resources Management hosting a communication session and the first of several on-site training opportunities. The program is a risk management and employee wellness initiative, intended to ensure that District staff responsible for prescribed burning are appropriately fit for the physically demanding and dangerous task. The District will lead its peers with a successful implementation of this initiative.
- The Safety and Wellness Coordinator participated in the PDRMA Cyber security webinar to address ongoing trends and close any gaps in the District's cyber program.
- Numerous safety inspections and maintenance activities occur during the summer months. In August, staff completed a safety audit of the Hughes Creek and Settler's Hill Golf Course facilities with the District's trades supervisor and the Senior Loss Control Consultant for Lockton Companies. Landscapes Golf Management contracted Lockton to review safety items and gaps for facility fire and loss prevention. In addition, staff completed an audit of district employee housing occupancy and agreements for PDRMA coverage. Finally, they coordinated with operations, natural resources, and public safety staff to complete the annual fire extinguisher servicing for all district



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locations. Over 200 fire extinguishers were serviced and certified for another year. The annual fire pump and suppression inspection at Creek Bend Nature Center with Anderson Fire Consultants was also addressed.

- CPR/1st aid training was provided to District volunteers and Blood Borne Pathogens training was provided to the Naturalist staff at Creek Bend Nature Center.
- An FY2025-2026 budget request provides funding for the replacement of six AED units that have reached the end of their usable life. An order was placed and units will be purchased and placed in September, completing the third of a four-year replacement program for the District's complete set of county wide District owned AED units.
- The quarterly safety and wellness committee meeting was held in August. Items discussed included:
 - Campground emergency response plans are being reviewed and weather stations/radios are being replaced at the campground offices for severe weather alerts.
 - Spill prevention and cleanup training will be conducted with all employees at locations with fuel facilities.
 - Active shooter training is being coordinated for district headquarters staff.
 - Bison enclosure signage and emergency response plans were communicated to all members.
 - Fleet management mechanics shop will be safety audited this fall. A PDRMA contracted auditor with OSHA certification will conduct the audit.
 - A PDRMA safety grant is being drafted for possible award in November for handheld lightning detectors for field staff. These are small enough to fit on a belt or lanyard and detect lightning up to 40 miles away. (photo attached)
 - The team was given an Employee Assistance Program demonstration of the resources available on the district's vendor; CommPsych. Online resources were presented and the team was shown how to set up their individual portals.



*Left: Anderson Fire Consultants completing fire pump and suppression inspections at Creek Bend Nature Preserve.
Right: Lightning detectors on trial with field staff and being submitted for PDRMA safety grant consideration.*

Volunteer Resources:

At the time of this report, in July, 1,189.25 volunteer hours at 69 events were given to the District!

- To welcome August, the District put its best foot forward at National Night Out celebrating with local public safety at Campton Hills and Kane Judicial Center August 5th.
- Staff has been hard at work putting together the 2025 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner scheduled for Wednesday, September 10th. The department has locked in the location at The Wilds and secured a bartender from the Hallowed Traveler, with a corresponding sponsorship. Décor, gifts, and award orders are taking place as the event draws closer and will ensure that the District's volunteers feel very well recognized and rewarded.



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- The Volunteer Coordinator has worked to partner with the sign shop and Robert E. on his Eagle Scout Project to install new directional and mile signage on the Great Western Trail with installation, which was completed in August.
- Other successfully events the District hosted across the county in August including seed harvests and our friends at GiantSteps and Awesome Life Academy were again made possible by donations for snacks and drinks through a new partnership with Fresh Thyme grocery store in Geneva.
- The fourth= Environmental Sustainability Team (EST) meeting was held in August and the team is starting to work on the 2025 District-wide Environmental Scorecard.
- The Illinois Math and Science Academy (IMSA) day of service took place in August, featuring two groups of students collecting native seeds at Dick Young FP in Batavia; a total of 71 students and staff participated in this impactful event.
- The Volunteer office's summer newsletter is in the works and is expected to be distributed to District volunteers in early September and will be available to others upon request. The department has also created a Pre-season Google Form Check-in to increase communication with our Natural Resource Crew Leaders as far as where prospective steward workdays will be centered this fall/winter, and have started discussing the creation of a Steward AMS.
- In coordination with staff, site visits will be conducted to help guide stewards towards projects that supplement staff work instead of volunteers working in areas that are less ideal. They will also update our steward tool agreements to make restrictions/rules more specific going forward. The team was able to attend five workdays in the month of August and fill a total of 10 tool and herbicide request.



Left: The IMSA morning crew at their Student Day of Service at Dick Young FP.

Right: Pat and Jen sport weighted vests at the Work Capacity Test training session held at LeRoy Oakes.