

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2023, BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, September 14, 2023, at Snyder Bend Park beginning at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth, and Tom Limoges

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Aaron Gehling

STAFF PRESENT

Dan Heissel, Brian Stehr, Theresa Kruid, Josh VanVoorst, Dylan Bales, and Dawn Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Cindy Bennett called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

MOTION by Neil, second by Tom

To approve the consent agenda.

VOTE:

Aye: Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth & Tom Limoges

Nay: None

Absent: Aaron Gehling and Chris Zellmer-Zant

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

- C1. Approve Minutes of the July 20, 2023, Regular Meeting
- C2. Approve the July and August 2023 Claims and Expenditures
- C3. Receive and Place on File the June FY23 Final Accrued, July 2023, and August 2023 Financial/Budget Reports
- C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:
 - \$18,426 via WCCF from Gilchrist Foundation for Screech owl aviary and prairie root exhibit
 - \$150 Gracia Davenport Memorial from Jipp Family Living Trust for education programs
 - \$20 Loy "Greg" Dunn Memorial from Dawn Snyder

- \$100 LaVonne Corio Baker Memorial from Linda Lee Thompson for education programs
- Buttons and craft supplies from Anne Shaner and Sally Hartley
- Monarch art from Anne Nelson

ITEM R2. Truck Bids

Brian presented the bids for a 2024 one-ton extended cab diesel pickup to replace the 2005 Ford F-350 truck. Two previous orders to replace this truck have been cancelled by the dealers due to inability to fulfill the orders. Bids were received from Barry Motor Company for \$58,005 and Knoepfler Chevrolet for \$55,707. Woodhouse did not submit a bid because they are not able to order a truck at this time. Brian was told by Rob at Knoepfler that they must have a successful bid in hand before placing an order, and they won't know until the end of September if the order will be accepted. Even if the order is accepted, it could still be cancelled again. Delivery will be approximately 3-6 months from the time the order is accepted. Brian recommended going with the low bid at Knoepfler, but if they cannot accept the order, he would like to contact Ford to see if they will still honor their bid.

MOTION by Neil, second by Tom.

To approve and authorize the purchase of a 2024 Silverado 3500 pickup from Knoepfler Chevrolet for \$55,707 after trade-in of a 2005 Ford F-350 truck. Alternatively, if the order with Knoepfler is not accepted by October 10th, approve and authorize the purchase of a 2024 F-350 pickup from Barry Motor Company for \$58,005 after trade-in of a 2005 Ford F-350 truck.²³⁻²⁴

VOTE:

Aye: Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth & Tom Limoges
Nay: None
Absent: Aaron Gehling and Chris Zellmer-Zant

(Chris arrived at 4:15 p.m. and assumed chairperson duties.)

ITEM R3. Capital Improvement Projects Update

1. Little Sioux Park Campgrounds Sewer

Dan reported that the Little Sioux campgrounds sewer project is moving along very well. The engineers were concerned about there not being enough power in the park to run the system. Dan is confident that there is, but the engineers want more information. Dan has had to meet with electricians and send the engineers pictures. They should be ready to let bids this fall and start construction in the spring. Approximately 90% of the plan is done.

2. Little Sioux Park Water Level

Dan reopened discussion started at the last board meeting regarding loss of camping revenue at Little Sioux Park due to low lake levels and the beach being closed. The estimated \$100,000 of lost revenue stated at that meeting included both Brown's Lake and Little Sioux. He presented a revenue comparison for Little Sioux over the past seven years. Options for pumping from area gravel pits or the river were reviewed, but none were feasible. Dan has been talking to a University of Iowa geologist. They are developing a model for pumping from a well, but it is

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uncertain how much will be lost to the Little Sioux river. They will do a study to determine the effect of drawing from the Dakota aquifer and put together a model.

3. Nature Center Foundation & Retaining Walls

Dan reported that the engineers are going to shoot radar on all the nature center floors to determine where there are voids and cracks. They will fill those areas with foam, which will stabilize the floor but not raise it. They will monitor it for several months to see if there is any additional settling going on. If it continues to settle, they will recommend installing piers on the outside.

Morningside Plumbing came out to see if all the drainage pipes were intact. They discovered one break along the sidewalk on the north side of the nature center, but otherwise everything else looked good. Staff is looking at ways to landscape to ensure all water goes around the building.

This project will be a slow process, and they may eventually need a way to get heavy equipment down beside the building. The outdoor learning shelter retaining wall needs to be finished before the foundation project will be complete. There is a 15' green space next to the steps which will be maintained to allow access, and the gardens will be arranged to preserve that.

ITEM R4. Board Member/Staff Reports

1. Administrative Items

Dan reported on the following items:

a. October Meeting Date and Location

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on October 19, 2023, at Brown's Lake. The board decided to host an appreciation picnic for department heads following the meeting. The board will meet at Southwood in November.

b. Snyder Bend Technician Retirement

Mike Massey has reached out to Dan and Brian about his planned retirement. Dan stated that Mike may be willing to come back seasonally at some point, but he is targeting March 29, 2024, as his last day. He has been informed of the amount of vacation that must be used before his February anniversary date, and any remaining vacation will be paid out. Dan intends to start the replacement process as soon as possible. The budget could allow for a brief overlap due to difference in pay rates.

c. Land Opportunities

Dan reported on an email received from Loren Lown about his property north of Anthon. Loren is not in a hurry to do anything with it but wants to protect it from corn mining. Dan did not advise purchasing it, because the property doesn't meet any of the board's criteria or sit near any WCCB land. The board agreed that there are not funds available to purchase the land. A donation would be welcome, or Dan can help him with an easement if desired.

Dan stated that he did reach out to the landowner of the property south of Shagbark that Neil brought forward a few months ago. Dan informed him of the board's appraised value price limit and concerns about the amount of farm ground included. The landowner said there is not a good way to carve out the farm ground. They are not available until October 15 to set up a meeting. Dan and Brian drove by the property and noted that a lot of it is farmable, but

it is a beautiful piece for hunting. It is 140 acres of timber and 100 acres of crop ground. Dan is apprehensive about the upcoming budget period and limited grant prospects. Dan would like to meet with him, along with Brian and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, to hear about their intentions on the pieces and wait to see how the new budget period turns out.

d. Harvesting on Public Lands

Dan received a phone call from a gentleman in Cherokee asking for permission to harvest ginseng on county property. State law doesn't allow it. The WCCB rules require special permission for harvesting but don't expressly forbid it.

MOTION by Neil, second by Cindy.

To amend the WCCB rules and regulations to not allow harvesting of ginseng on county property.²³⁻²⁵

VOTE:

Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth & Tom Limoges
Nay: None
Absent: None

e. Old Business

Chris asked about the status of the annual report for FY22. Dan stated that it is approximately halfway done and should be finished soon.

2. Nature Center Activities

Theresa reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- The programs and visitors reports for July and August were presented. Theresa stated that the August public program numbers appear to be down because there wasn't a WCCB booth at the county fair. The naturalists did provide daily programs and more hands-on activities at the fair though.
- Nature Calls sponsor, beverage, & auction lists were provided. Sponsorships totaling \$22,700 have been received with \$8,000 more pledged. Ticket sales are above last year at this time with approximately 158.
- The program guide was sent out to new teachers in Sioux City schools, and they have been scheduling school programs.
- Information about REAP, CEP, and other programs possibly being cut in the next budget year was received through the naturalist list serve. Other programs like AmeriCorps were also included. Theresa did not submit a request for an AmeriCorps employee for next year.
- Neil mentioned that the INHF advertises prairie seed harvests across the state but don't include WCCB seed harvests. He suggested contacting them and expressing interest in partnering with them.

²³⁻²⁵ To amend the WCCB rules and regulations to not allow harvesting of ginseng on county property.

4. Park Activities

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Camping numbers were decent on Labor Day weekend considering the very hot weather, but the campgrounds were not full. Little Sioux still has the Halloween event in October.
- Brown’s Lake and Snyder Bend staff have been pumping at Owego. They finished cell F on Tuesday, and that will be it for the year. What they have pumped has held pretty well.
- Josh noted that he was down two people all summer so was just able to maintain.
- Southwood staff continued to work on some cutting projects to remove non-native undergrowth and remove cedars on prairie areas.
- Little Sioux staff has been painting cabins and replacing flashing on shelters. They also took care of graffiti on the bridge.
- Dan, Erik, Josh & Brodie are attending the ICCS fall conference in Harrison and Pottawattamie counties. Josh and Erik are very interested in the grazing program at Hitchcock Nature Center.

(Tom left the meeting at 5:37 p.m.)

5. Board Information

None

6. Other Business

None

ITEM R5. Long-Range Planning Session

Brown’s Lake and Snyder Bend staff were asked to prepare a list of their top five priorities for each property. These were presented, and discussion was held regarding their priorities for Snyder Bend Park, Brown’s Lake-Bigelow Park, and Owego Wetland Complex.

Josh VanVoorst, District Resource Manager, was acknowledged and thanked for his 20 years of service.

ITEM R6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Tom Limoges

Board Chair, Chris Zellmer-Zant