

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

11-02-2016

Loess Hills State Forest Headquarters

Pisgah, IA

The Stewardship Committee of the LHA convened at 10:40AM with Glenn Pollock and Rich Pope presiding. Those in attendance were: Glenn Pollock, Rich Pope, Jake Holt, Nic Salick, Mike Evano, Mike Weis, Jackie Kragel, Scott Nelson, Gary Barrineau, Jack Phillips, Michelle Wodtke Franks, Graham McGaffin, Linda Herman, Tim Sproul, and Matt McClanahan.

APPOVAL OF 09/07/2016 MINUTES AND 11/02/2016 AGENDA ITEMS

A motion was made to approve the Minutes from 09-07-2016 and Agenda from 11-02-2016 by Tim Sproul, seconded by Linda Herman. Motion passed.

BUDGET UPDATE - The Loess Hills Alliance Stewardship Committee Open Funds to Obligate or Carryover is \$39,904.82. The Stewardship Committee FY 2017 Appropriations of \$32,000.00 has not yet been approved by the LHA Full Board Members.

PL POSITION

- **Harrison/Pottawattamie/Monona**

Nicholas Salick presented the Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist LHA Quarterly Report for Harrison, Pottawattamie, and Monona Counties to the LHA Stewardship Committee. Nic reported that they have experienced a high demand among farmers for CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) and FWP (Farmable Wetland Program) acres. Nic worked with landowners that signed up for CRP and FWP to create a new complex totaling 354 acres of restored wetlands. This unique area contains a former oxbow of the Little Sioux River and is adjacent to a documented Bald Eagle's nest. The report also showed a photo of land with CP42 pollinator habitat with high diverse seedings and a photo of Silver Spotted Skipper nectars on Pitcher Sage. Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist, Nicholas Salick, has celebrated his 1 year anniversary with the Loess Hills Alliance.

- **Fremont/Mills/Montgomery/Page-**

Jake Holt presented the Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist LHA Quarterly Report for Fremont, Mills, Montgomery, and Page Counties to the LHA Stewardship Committee. Jake reported that the rate of establishment for pollinator habitat on newly planted CRP fields was really good with the timely rains. The report showed a photo of land with new CRP seedings with high forb diversity and native warm-season grasses and a photo of land with pollinator seedings in their second year with lots of flowering forbs. Jake worked with a Shallow Water Wetland project in the Loess Hills, Fremont County. Objectives for this CP9 project were to control excess water, reduce sheet and rill erosion, restore hydrology, and create high quality wildlife habitat. In the future, seed mixes will be getting more expensive for landowners to buy and the racial of forbs and grasses will be changing to not represent Iowa's pollinator habitat programs. Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist, Jake Holt, has celebrated his 1 year anniversary with the Loess Hills Alliance.

The Loess Hills Alliance Stewardship Committee complimented both Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist, Nicholas Salick and Jake Holt that they were doing a great job and that their reports were very impressive. A suggestion was made to have the reports set out in the NRCS offices for the landowners to read and to post both reports on the LHA website.

Old Business

- **Future Project Funding**

The LHA Stewardship Committee held a discussion on future project funding. The 2017 Loess Hills & Heritage Week will be held on the week of September 23, 2017. Events throughout the Loess Hills will be highlighted with all 7 Loess Hills Counties represented. A music festival will be held at Blackburn's Green Hollow Center in Thurman, IA. The Heritage Week Planning Committee will be seeking a proclamation from the Governor. Other options for future funding that were discussed were updating the Loess Hills Kits for children, sponsoring Grants for permanent protection through title or easements, help fund the documented threatened & endangered species listing for the Loess Hills 12 SLA lands, and invite citizen scientists for a BioBlitz in the Loess Hills. A twisted spine prickly pear (a state-listed species) was found in an expanded right-of-way area just south of the northbound rest area of I-29 near Sergeant Bluff.

- **2017 PL Positions Renewal**

The two Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist PL Positions(\$30,000.00) for Jake Holt and Nicholas Salick have been renewed for 2017 and the paperwork is in the mail. With the prospect that future funding for the Loess Hills Alliance could be cut back, fund-raisers and Grant funding were options that the Committee suggested.

- **Naturalist School/Pottawattamie County**

Jack Phillips presented The Naturalist School 2016 report to the Stewardship Committee. The Naturalist School(held at Hitchcock Nature Center) is a Pottawattamie County Conservation program in partnership with Loess Hills Alliance, Tallgrass Prairie Oak Savanna Fire Science Consortium, Golden Hills RC&D, and New Tree School. The school is for adult naturalists and beginners who want to engage in citizen science, nature education, and conservation throughout the Loess Hills and the surrounding ecosystems. The tuition is \$75.00 for each session. Individual workshops are \$25.00 with a limitation of 20 students and faculty per workshop. Some of the workshops that were held this summer and fall were: early spring birds, upland sedges of the Loess Hills, Oaks of the Loess Hills, summer fungi, wildflower ecology & conservation, dragonfly census, aquatic plants, and sauntering the Loess Hills. Some of the goals FY2017 are: use social media and other outlets to advertise the program, increase number of program partners, add another teaching site in the Loess Hills, increase funding and grant sources, and create an on-line journal to publish Loess Hills nature writings. Future funding for The Naturalist School will be discussed at the next LHA Stewardship meeting.

New Business

- **Little Sioux Scout Ranch Pollinator Habitat Project**

Mike Evano presented the Little Sioux Scout Ranch Pollinator Habitat Project report to the Stewardship Committee. The Little Sioux Scout Ranch is a year round campground that has hiking trails, swimming, fishing, boating, and is enjoyed by approximately 5,000 – 7,000 visitors throughout the year. Since the 2008 tornado, new construction has been done including a storm shelter building, shower/bathroom building, and a new climbing structure. The Little Sioux Scout Ranch is developing Pollinator and Habitat plots(approximately 5 acres within 3 plots) for conservation curriculum programs to engage the youth. Approximately \$4,057.00 is needed to establish the Pollinator and Habitat plots, approximately \$1,725.20 is needed for the yearly maintenance cost after establishment, and future educational funding will be needed. A Motion was made by Linda Herman, seconded by Jake Holt to allocate \$1,500.00 to help fund the Educational signage for the Little Sioux Scout Ranch Pollinator Habitat Project. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cooperative Burn Week will be discussed at the next LHA Stewardship meeting.

ADJOURN A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Linda Herman, seconded by Scott Nelson at 12:28 PM. Motion passed.

NEXT MEETING To Be Announced

