

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2017, BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Tuesday, March 14, 2017, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 4:30 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth and Suzan Boden

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Schneider, Snyder, Stehr, and Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

President Boden called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

Schneider distributed copies of the February 2017 issue of *The Iowa County* magazine, which showcased the County Conservation system and the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, and an article from the Des Moines Register about GOP backing the bill to fund the trust fund.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Bennett, second by Stockfleth.

To approve the consent agenda.

VOTE: Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth & Suzan Boden

 Nay: None

 Absent: None

Consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

ITEM C1. Approve minutes of the January 28, 2017 monthly meeting.

ITEM C2. Approve February 2017 claims and expenditures.

ITEM C3. Receive and place on file the February 2017 financial/budget report.

ITEM C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:

1. PEO Chapter GZ – Monetary donation (\$100) to Nature Center.
2. Carol Blair – Monetary donation (\$20) for snake food.
3. Scott Kayl – Monetary donation (\$20) for raptor food.
4. Rob McClary – Deer skull.
5. Siouxland Fly Fishing Club – Fly Tying program.

ITEM R2. Consideration and acceptance of lease agreement for Iowa DOT property located at IA Hwy. 31 and County Road D-50 comprising approximately 2 acres for use as a public river access. (Schneider)

Schneider presented a lease agreement provided by the Iowa Department of Transportation regarding an approximately 2-acre parcel south of Anthon, near the D-50 bridge, to be leased and maintained as public river access. Plans would include reseeding the current farm ground to native pollinators and improving a parking lot and signage. A “hold harmless” clause in the lease was noted to be of concern, but a determination by the County Attorney hasn’t been made yet. Any changes to the agreement would need to be approved by the Attorney General which could take several months. A suggestion was made to post a “use at own risk” disclaimer on the property. There was a consensus to proceed according to the County Attorney’s recommendation.

ITEM R3. Review and action on quotes for replacement of mower unit. (Stehr)

Stehr presented details and quotes on three mower replacement options:

Icon Ag Solutions – John Deere 1550 Terrain Cut 4WD – \$15,852
Midwest Turf & Irrigation – Toro Groundsmaster 3280D 4WD – \$19,067
Icon Ag Solutions – John Deere 1570 Terrain Cut 4WD – \$20,800

He recommended the John Deere 1550 from Icon Ag Solutions at a cost of \$15,852, after trade-in of the 2007 Toro 3280D currently at Snyder Bend Park.

MOTION by Stockfleth, second by Dixon.

To purchase a 2017 John Deere 1550 Terrain Cut 4WD mower from Icon Ag Solutions at a cost of \$15,852 after trade-in of a 2007 Toro 3280D.⁷⁻¹⁷

VOTE: Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth & Suzan Boden
Nay: None
Absent: None

ITEM R4. Capital Improvement Projects Reports (Schneider)

- a. Nature Center fiber optic access.

Schneider presented a quote obtained from Nebcon, Inc. for installation of fiber to the nature center from the intersection of Riverside Blvd. and Military Road at a cost of \$81,119, plus an estimated \$24,350 in materials. Data transport from the courthouse to the Riverside Blvd./Military Road intersection would need to be negotiated with the City of Sioux City or Long Lines, LLC. Schneider stated that the service provided by the T1 line from CenturyLink is extremely slow, and with the loss of staff time and productivity, there would only be a two-year payoff on the fiber installation project. The project was submitted as a CIP request to the Board of Supervisors but not approved this year. The board agreed that funding for the project should continue to be pursued.

⁷⁻¹⁷ To purchase a 2017 John Deere 1550 Terrain Cut 4WD mower from Icon Ag Solutions at a cost of \$15,852 after trade-in of a 2007 Toro 3280D.

b. Little Sioux Park bank stabilization project.

Schneider reported that the bank stabilization project at Little Sioux Park should be completed in a couple weeks if the river water flows remain consistent.

c. Little Sioux Park water control structure.

Schneider stated that Kevin Heck, the contractor currently doing the bank stabilization project, will also install the water control structure at a cost of \$4,500. The road has already been cut, and all of the materials will be picked up soon. The project is expected to be finished this month. The beach renovation has been postponed until the fall.

ITEM R5. Discussion and consideration of engineering services to design shoreline armoring protection and fishing access on Brown's Lake in Bigelow Park. (Schneider)

Schneider reported that he has met with the Iowa District Fisheries biologist about some hazardous dead and hollow trees along the Brown's Lake shoreline and was told there would be no objection to taking them down or even dropping some in the water for fish habitat without a permit as it would be considered routine park maintenance and management.

Schneider also stated that erosion along the shoreline has undermined the bank, and armoring is needed to prevent further erosion. An engineering firm in Omaha, recommended by the DNR, has been contacted about designing a plan for the shoreline armoring and fishing access. A proposal will likely be ready by the next board meeting. Fish Habitat, REAP and other funding sources may be available for the project.

ITEM R6. Board member/staff reports

1. Nature Center activities (Snyder)

Snyder reported on the following nature center activities:

- Invitations to the Volunteer Banquet were distributed.
- Greg Leonard (Summer's Canoe Rental of Correctionville) has offered to sell his canoe inventory for \$5,000. The inventory includes 11 aluminum canoes, 1 plastic canoe, 1 kayak, and 2 trailers, as well as paddles and personal floatation devices. Snyder estimated that aluminum canoes would cost approximately \$1,200 each if purchased new. The equipment would all be stored at Little Sioux Park and used for summer camps and other programs. The nature center has borrowed these same canoes for summer camps each year. Program funds or REAP funds could be used for purchase.

MOTION by Dixon, second by Zellmer-Zant.

To approve the purchase of canoes, trailers & equipment from Greg Leonard of Summer's Canoe Rentals in Correctionville for \$5,000.⁸⁻¹⁷

VOTE: Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth & Suzan Boden
Nay: None
Absent: None

⁸⁻¹⁷ To approve the purchase of canoes, trailers & equipment from Greg Leonard of Summer's Canoe Rentals in Correctionville for \$5,000.

- Summer day camp registration will begin on April 5th for Foundation members and on April 12th for non-members.
- Former board member, Greg Grupp, has initiated a project to attract peregrine falcons to Sioux City and has asked for assistance. Snyder participated in a meeting at the Ho-Chunk Centre to discuss whether the roof of that building would be a suitable location for a nesting box. Ho-Chuck is receptive and interested in exploring the idea. Snyder reported that there are only 14-15 nesting pairs of peregrines in Iowa.
- Nature Calls sponsorship contact lists were distributed, and board members were asked to review the lists and make any necessary changes. A few volunteers staffed a booth at the recent Steins & Vines event to promote Nature Calls.
- The nature center has been selected as a benefactor of the final show of the season, “*On Golden Pond*”, on Friday, May 5th. Tickets will be sold at a reduced price of \$10 per person, with all proceeds going to nature center programs.
- Woodbury County will soon be transitioning to Office 365, and Outlook will replace GroupWise for email. During this process, the department has the option to change employee email addresses to the woodburyparks.org domain which would be consistent with our website address.

2. Park activities (Stehr)

Stehr reported on the following park activities:

- Interviews and job offers have been completed for summer rangers. Maintenance and security position interviews will start soon.
- Park staff has been finishing up equipment and park maintenance in preparation for spring.
- Tire barricades have been installed at the shooting range but need to be filled with sand.
- Fundermann is hosting a Hunter Safety class in Anthon this week. Twenty-five students are registered.
- Installation of the new radios was finished today. These are dual-band radios, which allow the two current radios to be combined into one. The new statewide system will be going live in a couple months.
- Staff spent 5 hours grinding trees at Owego, and a large amount of woody encroachment was cleared. Stump treatment with Rodeo was done right away, but spraying will need to be done again to catch any willows that were missed. Periodic fire and grinding will be needed for maintenance.
- Permission was obtained from the Sheriff’s department to use their law enforcement policy, which is a much more extensive policy than that used by most county conservation boards. Stehr is reviewing the policy and documenting exceptions for topics already covered by existing policies or that do not apply due to differences in equipment. It should be ready for review at the next board meeting.
- Cleaning supplies and pesticides have been delivered. Table planks and grills have not yet arrived.
- Five officers attended the CCPOA spring workshop in Pocohontas, with training on drug interdiction by drug recognition experts with the Iowa State Patrol and the Iowa DNR, as well as vehicle stop training with simulation.
- Five employees attended the commercial ag pesticide refresher course at the Iowa State extension office.

- Stehr researched options for recycling in the parks. Western Disposal doesn't pick up as far south as Snyder Bend and Brown's, and the contractor at Little Sioux isn't interested. Gill Hauling may be interested, but stated that generally 80% ends up being unusable at unmonitored collection points. Recycling centers are available in Correctionville and Smithland for the park office recycling to be dropped off. Recycling receptacles with small holes for cans and slots for cardboard are \$500 each and would require quite a bit of staff time to sort. Stehr was encouraged to continue pursuing options.

3. Administrative items (Schneider)

Schneider reported on the following items:

a. Resource Technician positions status

Two officers have less than five weeks left at the Law Enforcement Academy and will be graduating on Friday, April 14th. A third officer will start at the academy on May 1st.

The new resource technician started at Snyder Bend/Brown's Lake on February 13th; however, the candidate for the Little Sioux resource technician position fell through. Another qualified applicant has been chosen and is currently going through pre-employment requirements with an expected start date of April 3rd.

b. Riverside Bluffs sale of parcel progress

The Riverside Bluffs parcel was surveyed last week. Once the plat and legal description are done, the appraiser will be able to finish up. There are three large dead or dying oak trees on the property that need to be taken down to reduce liability.

c. LWCF grant update

A quote of \$12,600 was received from Bear Creek Archeology for a cultural resources study on only the sites deemed necessary, however, it may be possible to get by with a programmatic agreement. The Upper Sioux Community Tribal Historic Preservation Officer will do a walk through site survey and pinpoint specific areas of concern to further reduce the cost. The grant agreement has been received, but there won't be reimbursement until SHPO clearance is awarded.

d. Park residences remodel progress

The Snyder Bend residence remodeling is done except for replacing the basement windows. The contractor is starting on the kitchen at the Little Sioux residence. The materials have been purchased for the Southwood residence deck.

e. Set April meeting date/time

The next meeting was set for Thursday, April 6, 2017, at 4:30 p.m.

f. Miscellaneous items

Impromptu discussion was initiated by Zellmer-Zant in regard to getting trumpeter swans for Little Sioux Park. A breeding pair can be obtained through the DNR for no charge. They would need to be contained for a month and then would stay on their own. An estimate for fencing was presented for \$21,000. The Board expressed interest in pursuing this project for spring 2018 due to timing.

Snyder announced that the department would be participating with the Soil & Water Conservation District in distributing trees to fifth graders again this year. High-bush cranberry shrubs will be given to out to approximately 215 fifth graders.

ITEM R7. Closed Session of the Board requested by employee for annual evaluation of employee's performance. (Iowa Code 21.5 (1)(i)).

Schneider informed the board that his anniversary date was March 1st and requested a closed session for his performance evaluation.

MOTION by Dixon, second by Zellmer-Zant.

To go into closed session for employee evaluation.

VOTE: Roll call: Suzan Boden – aye, Cindy Bennett – aye, Don Dixon – aye, Neil Stockfleth – aye, Chris Zellmer-Zant – aye

Director Schneider's performance for the past year and upcoming goals were discussed. The session was recorded.

MOTION by Zellmer-Zant, second by Bennett.

To come out of closed session.

VOTE: Roll call: Suzan Boden – aye, Cindy Bennett – aye, Don Dixon – aye, Neil Stockfleth – aye, Chris Zellmer-Zant – aye

ITEM R8. Succession Planning discussion for Conservation Director position. (Conservation Board)

Discussion was held in regard to succession planning for the Conservation Director position following Schneider's planned retirement in December, 2017.

The proposed time schedule beginning with advertising the position and including training overlap was discussed and adjusted by the Board. Job descriptions from other county conservation boards were noted. Schneider will work with Human Resources to update the Director position for Woodbury County. The Board believed the current organizational chart represented the department well and no changes were needed prior to hiring a new director. Initial discussion was held regarding advertising the position (Midwest region), makeup of the interview team (entire Board, current Director, perhaps 1-2 management employees and a former board member), development of interview questions and the interview process, compensation package, and overlap training time with the current Director. It was also noted that special meetings of the Board will probably need to be held to deal with certain aspects of the interview and hiring process apart from regular monthly board meetings.

ITEM R9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

The above minutes were typed by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Chris Zellmer-Zant

Board President, Suzan Boden