

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2025, BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, October 9, 2025, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Aaron Gehling, Cindy Bennett (via phone), Neil Stockfleth, and Tom Limoges

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Chris Zellmer-Zant

STAFF PRESENT

Dan Heissel, Theresa Kruid, Dawn Bostwick, Josh VanVoorst, Dylan Bales, and Skyler Foley

OTHERS PRESENT

Mark Nelson, County Supervisor/Conservation Board Liaison (via phone)

Nick DeRoos, CF Industries General Manager

Jeff Schultzen, CF Industries EHS Manager

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Limoges called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

MOTION by Neil, second by Aaron.

To approve the consent agenda.

VOTE:

Aye: Aaron Gehling, Neil Stockfleth & Tom Limoges

Nay: None

Absent: Chris Zellmer-Zant & Cindy Bennett

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

C1. Approve the Minutes of the September 11, 2025, Regular Meeting

C2. Approve the September 2025 Claims and Expenditures

C3. Receive and Place on File the September 2025 Financial/Budget Report and 1st Quarter FY 25-26 Reserve Fund Report

C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:

- Four crocheted black bears for Nature Calls from Hailey Siepker
- \$3,750 Gilchrist Foundation micro grant (via WCCF) for 30th Anniversary Celebration Event

ITEM R2. CF Land Management Agreements

Dan presented two agreements between the Woodbury County Conservation Board and CF Industries Nitrogen, LLC, which will permit the WCCB to establish and maintain a native grass buffer area on two pieces of property owned by CFN. Nick DeRoos and Jeff Schultzen, representatives of CF Industries Nitrogen, LLC, were present to sign the agreements. Dan noted that the agreements had been nearly a year in the making. The County Attorney's Office reviewed the agreements and requested a wording change, which CFN agreed to.

(Cindy joined the meeting by phone at 4:10 p.m.)

MOTION by Aaron, second by Tom

To approve and authorize the director to sign the land management agreements with CF Industries Nitrogen, LLC, as presented.

VOTE:

Aye: Aaron Gehling, Cindy Bennett & Tom Limoges

Nay: None

Absent: Chris Zellmer-Zant

Abstaining: Neil Stockfleth

(Cindy left the meeting at 4:13 p.m.)

ITEM R3. Side-By-Side Bids

Dan presented the bids for a new 4x4 UTV for Little Sioux Park. He noted that the item has been part of the replacement plan and sufficient funds remain in the motor vehicle budget. Bids were received from Midwest Kubota, AgriVision John Deere, and Sioux City Yamaha, Kawasaki, Can Am. Dan recommended accepting the low bid of \$12,305 for the 2026 Kawasaki Mule.

MOTION by Neil, second by Aaron.

To approve and authorize the purchase of a 2026 Kawasaki Mule from Sioux City Yamaha, Kawasaki, Can Am for \$12,305 after trade-in of a 2018 Kubota RTV.²⁵⁻²⁴

VOTE:

Aye: Aaron Gehling, Neil Stockfleth & Tom Limoges

Nay: None

Absent: Chris Zellmer-Zant & Cindy Bennett

²⁵⁻²⁴ To approve and authorize the purchase of a 2026 Kawasaki Mule from Sioux City Yamaha, Kawasaki, Can Am for \$12,305 after trade-in of a 2018 Kubota RTV.

ITEM R4. Department Reports

1. Nature Center Activities

Theresa reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- The programs and visitors report for September was presented. Numbers were lower than in previous years, because Nature Calls had lower attendance this year.
- Nature Calls:
 - Net proceeds have not yet been determined, as the convention center invoice is still pending.
 - Next year's event is scheduled with the convention center for September 19th and will coincide with Art Splash again. Dan noted that once final numbers are in, the board can evaluate whether to hold the event in its current format.
 - No one used the QR code survey during the event. However, 33 responses were received after it was emailed to attendees. A summary was shared.
- School of the Wild was held last week at Southwood Conservation Area with 41 fifth graders from Woodbury Central.
- Nature Center's 30th Anniversary:
 - The hike-a-thon began on October 1st with approximately 90 registrants. The finish line event will be November 1st.
 - Dawn Snyder will present a nature center history on October 15th at 10:00 a.m. as part of the Coffee & Conservation series.
 - The anniversary celebration is scheduled for Saturday, October 18th, 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., featuring a variety of family activities and a live bald eagle presentation.
- The nature center received a \$3,750 Gilchrist micro-grant, with an additional \$500 from the foundation, to support the 30th anniversary celebration (e.g., shuttle service, bald eagle program, face painting, and supplies).
- The WCCF has been awarded \$5,000 through the CF Industries grant program for the new raptor house.
- The bluegill 3D model has been replaced. Final exhibit updates are complete, although one section of the forest diorama vinyl is detaching and will need repair.
- The foundation board is planning its annual meeting for February 21, 2026, with Wildlife Encounters scheduled for a program. The venue may be Briar Cliff University or Western Iowa Tech, rather than the nature center.
- A CCI crew will be working at the nature center October 20-23.

2. Park Activities

Dan reported on the following park activities:

- Nine officers attended the CCPOA workshop this week.
- Little Sioux Park's Halloween event is scheduled for October 18th.
- Parks will remain open until November 3rd this year. Since October 31st falls on a Friday, campers can stay until Sunday, November 2nd.
- Southwood staff are continuing maintenance mowing on the newly converted prairies.
- Erik is working on a forest resiliency partnership program, which is a \$200,000 80/20 grant focused on timber stand improvement at Oak Ridge Unit 2.
- Little Sioux staff have worked on road shoulders and graded the area behind the beach concession stand to address drainage issues; reseeding is complete except where sidewalks need to be poured.

- Josh reported on Brown's Lake and Snyder Bend.
 - It was a challenging summer with the seasonal staff shortage, and staff spent most of their time mowing, cleaning, and taking care of campers.
 - The beach was busy again. Rentals were up nearly 9%, and gross sales increased by 15%. One person managed both rentals and concessions, with 200-500 visitors during weekends.
 - Dylan added that camping was slow at Snyder Bend with only about 15 sites filled on good weekends. Many regulars have shifted to Brown's Lake due to full hookups.
 - Aaron asked if staff had been given any direction as to the management at Snyder Bend since the land transfer, but no formal direction has been received. Tribal officers patrol the area and have been very cordial. Doug Chaffa posted a sign and marked the boundary with buoys, generally following the county/state line.
- Dan emphasized the seasonal staff shortage significantly impacted operations. Seasonal positions were defunded but not deauthorized for last budget period. He plans to request the return of the ranger and maintenance seasonal positions during the upcoming budget season, citing liability risks and full-time staff burnout.

ITEM R5. Capital Improvement Projects

Dan reported on the following items:

1. Little Sioux Park Road

The road striping has been done, and staff have added dirt along the shoulders, with a small amount of seeding remaining.

2. Little Sioux Park Internet

Quality Telecommunications has been contracted to install Wi-Fi throughout Little Sioux Park at a cost of \$24,000, starting this fall. Schoon Construction will handle trenching for an additional \$10,000. Base-level internet will be free for campers, with a premium option available for a fee.

3. Little Sioux Outlet Cleanout

The contractor will begin the outlet cleanout project at Little Sioux Park after the Halloween event. The area will be cleaned out with a long-reach excavator. Spoils will dry over the winter and be moved in the spring to fill low spots in the area west of the road. Dying cottonwoods in the area will eventually require clearing for future use.

4. FEMA

The Board of Supervisors agreed to front the funds for trail paving and boat ramp repairs at Little Sioux Park. Boat ramp work is pending lower river levels. The trail project awaits FEMA's archaeological study and tribal review. The deadline for both projects is December 24th. While FEMA said work could start, Dan will wait for official approval and request an extension if needed. FEMA's requirement to restore the trail to its original state is complicated by an 18" tube installed under the trail by Secondary Roads for flood prevention.

ITEM R6. Board Member/Staff Reports

1. Administrative Items

Dan reported on the following items:

a. Set Next Meeting Date and Location

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on November 13, 2025, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

Supervisor Nelson shared a budget update.

- The county is continuing to pursue cost-savings measures.
- Some benefits provided to retired employees have been reduced.
- A forensic audit of healthcare insurance has been commissioned and is expected to yield savings.
- The jail is exceeding inmate levels needed to make bond payments without using taxpayer funds, and the sheriff's office is exploring increasing the bed rate with the U.S. Marshals.
- He is hopeful that it will be a more positive budget process this year.

Nelson encouraged board members to:

- Attend a December legislative roundtable to discuss concerns, particularly about potential property tax reform restrictions on funding for services not required by law, such as parks and EMTs.
- Contact legislators to express support for local control over tax spending.
- Encourage the public to share feedback about park experiences with the Board of Supervisors.

Tom suggested reaching out to conservation groups in the area.

b. Budget FY 26/27

The only change from the previous month's version of the FY26/27 budget was the re-inclusion of six seasonal positions.

c. Endowment Update

Dan and Theresa had a positive meeting with Dan and Kay Pecaut regarding the potential nature center addition. The Pecauts were supportive but expressed concern about preserving green space. Dan reassured them that the mission of the nature center would not change. Theresa noted that Dan P. encouraged exploring zero-energy options like those used in Goodwill's new building.

Dan and Theresa plan to attend the foundation board meeting on October 28th to discuss the potential nature center addition. This could be a good opportunity for the joint meeting they have been requesting if enough board members can attend. If three or more board members attend, public notice is required.

d. CMBA Letter of Agreement for Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center

Dan requested board action on a CMBA letter of agreement for design and concept planning. The cost is \$5,000 for a basic layout and \$10,000 for a 3D model to aid in fundraising. Tom will ask the donor about covering those costs.

MOTION by Neil, second by Aaron.

To approve and authorize the director to sign the letter of agreement with CMBA Architects as presented.²⁵⁻²⁵

VOTE:

Aye: Aaron Gehling, Neil Stockfleth & Tom Limoges

Nay: None

Absent: Chris Zellmer-Zant & Cindy Bennett

e. Needs Assessment Survey Questions

The final survey link was emailed to board members. A brief mission statement will be added at the beginning. Postcards with QR codes will be sent to 2,000 randomly selected residents. After two weeks, hard copies will be mailed to non-respondents. The results are expected in December.

Mark suggested compiling nature center outreach and park usage data to present along with survey results at the legislative roundtable. He recommended sending annual updates to local legislators.

f. HUD Funding

Dan met with the JEO engineer regarding HUD funding for Little Sioux Park bank projects not eligible under FEMA. No charges will be incurred unless an agreement is signed with HUD. HUD is exploring whether they can also cover the 10% FEMA match for the boat ramp project.

2. Board Information

Tom shared that the Woodbury County Pheasants Forever Youth Day was held at Little Sioux Park and praised the park and shelter conditions.

3. Other Business

Dan reminded the board that his annual review is due next month. He will provide information to Tom, who will coordinate with other members.

Dan also shared that Bedrock Gravel, the contractor currently mining north of Little Sioux Park, wishes to move operations to Peters Pit after their current contract ends. They propose expanding and deepening the pit, including removing and replacing overburden.

²⁵⁻²⁵ To approve and authorize the director to sign the letter of agreement with CMBA Architects as presented.

They would pay the board \$1/ton for sand they would sell. This is all in the talking stages right now. More details will be provided next month.

4. Old Business

None

ITEM R7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Neil Stockfleth

Board Chair, Tom Limoges