

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2016, BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, May 5, 2016, at the Heritage Shelter House in Little Sioux Park, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Suzan Boden

STAFF PRESENT

Schneider, Peterson, Stehr, Kruid, Ketelsen, Fundermann, and Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

Larry Clausen, County Supervisor

CALL TO ORDER

President Bennett called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Stockfleth, second by Dixon.

To approve the consent agenda.

VOTE: Aye: Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, & Neil Stockfleth

 Nay: None

 Absent: Suzan Boden, Chris Zellmer-Zant

Consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

ITEM C1. Approve minutes of the April 7, 2016, monthly meeting.

Minutes were amended to add Larry Clausen, County Supervisor, to the list of attendees.

ITEM C2. Approve April 2016 claims and expenditures.

ITEM C3. Receive and place on file the April 2016 financial / budget report.

ITEM C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:

1. Woodbury County Medical Society – Monetary donation (\$200).

ITEM R2. Appointment of Seasonal Park Security Guards as Temporary Peace Officers for summer season: May 27-September 5, 2016. (Schneider)

Schneider informed the board of the five individuals who will be working as Seasonal Security Guards in the parks on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day. These individuals need to be officially appointed as temporary Peace Officers for the department by board action.

MOTION by Dixon, second by Stockfleth.

To designate seasonal park security guards as temporary Peace Officers for the 2016 season (May 27 – September 5). Persons designated as temporary Peace Officers for the 2016 season include: Eric Fay, Eric Furness, Travis Hutzel, Tad Stansberry and Michael Stehr.¹³⁻¹⁶

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

ITEM R3. Approval of Bait Concession contract at Brown’s Lake-Bigelow Park. (Schneider)

Schneider reported that the campground hosts at Brown’s Lake-Bigelow Park have requested permission to sell nightcrawlers/earthworms from their campsite in the park. Schneider presented a Concession Agreement and Permit which would be in effect from May 13th through mid-October and require a \$25 payment from the concessionaire.

MOTION by Stockfleth, second by Dixon.

To authorize providing a Concession Agreement and Permit to Beth Ann and Josh Hodgen of Sioux City for the purpose of selling nightcrawlers/earthworms at Brown’s Lake/Bigelow Park for the 2016 season.¹⁴⁻¹⁶

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

ITEM R4. Recognition of retiring employees/peace officers (Peterson, Ketelsen) and approval to purchase service weapons and retain service badges as per past policy. (Schneider)

Schneider officially recognized retiring employees/peace officers, Mark Peterson, Deputy Director, and Bernie Ketelsen, Resource Manager at Little Sioux Park. He noted that the past policy has been to approve the sale of retiring officers’ service weapons to them, based on current value, and to approve them retaining their service badges. The appraised value of the service weapons is \$400 each. Their fellow officers will pay for the weapon, and the retiring employee will be issued a bill of sale.

¹³⁻¹⁶ To designate seasonal park security guards as temporary Peace Officers for the 2016 season (May 27 – September 5). Persons designated as temporary Peace Officers for the 2016 season include: Eric Fay, Eric Furness, Travis Hutzel, Tad Stansberry and Michael Stehr.

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ To authorize providing a Concession Agreement and Permit to Beth Ann and Josh Hodgen of Sioux City for the purpose of selling nightcrawlers/earthworms at Brown’s Lake/Bigelow Park for the 2016 season.

MOTION by Dixon, second by Stockfleth.

To approve the sale of service weapons to retiring employees, Mark Peterson and Bernie Ketelsen, at \$400 each, and to approve them retaining their service badges.¹⁵⁻¹⁶

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

ITEM R5. Capital Improvement Projects Update (Schneider)

Schneider reported on the following projects.

1. Southwood Cabins, Little Sioux Park Cabin Improvements

The Southwood cabins are fully enclosed, and the exterior siding will be started Friday. The inside wiring is complete, and the power will be run to the cabins on Friday as well. There is interior plumbing yet to finish. Water lines are hooked up, and the septic tank will be going in soon. Exterior landscaping and parking lot work is yet to be done. It is expected that the cabins will be ready sometime in June with the goal of opening prior to the July 4th weekend.

Discussion was held regarding the rental rates for the new Southwood cabins. These are one-bedroom cabins with a bathroom, a kitchen with refrigerator, stove and microwave, and a TV and DVD player. It was agreed that the rates will be set at \$65 for weeknights (Sunday through Thursday) and \$80 for weekend nights (Friday and Saturday), with a weekly rate of \$425 for seven consecutive nights.

MOTION by Dixon, second by Stockfleth.

To set the Southwood cabin rental rates at \$65/night on weeknights (Sunday through Thursday) and \$80/night on weekends (Friday and Saturday), with a weekly rate of \$425 for rentals of seven consecutive nights.¹⁶⁻¹⁶

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

It was noted that the concrete will be poured for the sidewalks and living area around the Little Sioux cabins soon.

2. Shooting Range Vault Latrine

The vault latrine was installed at the Little Sioux shooting range on April 22nd. A sidewalk still needs to be installed. It was noted that while it appears to sit somewhat un-level due to the landscaping not being done yet, there is only the desired 1 ½”-2” slope west to east to allow for easy cleaning.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ To approve the sale of service weapons to retiring employees, Mark Peterson and Bernie Ketelsen, at \$400 each, and to approve them retaining their service badges.

¹⁶⁻¹⁶ To set the Southwood cabin rental rates at \$65/night on weeknights (Sunday through Thursday) and \$80/night on weekends (Friday and Saturday), with a weekly rate of \$425 for rentals of seven consecutive nights.

3. Little Sioux Park beach and water control structure – final plans and specifications

The water level is very high in the pond, and covers nearly all the beach. The outlet tube was set in the early 80's. The tube should be 2-3' lower and a water control structure added to allow water to be let out as necessary. Plans for beach renovation were done a year ago with Bacon Creek Designs. Schneider recommended reworking those plans, including the addition of a water control structure. The original plans were designed to grade the parking lots to stop erosion, install a concrete retaining wall, grade the lower beach at a 10% slope, replace 1' of existing sand/gravel and with better quality sand, and provide handicap accessibility to the beach.

MOTION by Dixon, second by Stockfleth.

To approve obtaining final plans and specifications for the Little Sioux beach renovation, including a water control structure for the pond.¹⁷⁻¹⁶

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

4. Fowler Forest shelter replacement/design services

Discussion was held regarding replacing the Fowler Forest shelter. The new structure would be longer and sit on the same orientation. The main structure would be enclosed and available to rent, with an open front porch area which would be available only on a first-come, first-served basis.

Chris Zellmer-Zant arrived at the meeting.

Schneider confirmed with Assistant County Attorney, Joshua Widman, and Board of Supervisors Chairman Taylor, that the Conservation Board is not restricted to any particular architect or engineer, but that due process should be followed during selection.

MOTION by Dixon, second by Stockfleth.

To authorize Schneider to investigate architectural design services for the Fowler Forest shelter replacement project.¹⁸⁻¹⁶

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

5. Oak Ridge Conservation Area water control structure breach/replacement

Schneider reported that an old watershed structure on the original piece of Oak Ridge Conservation Area had breached around June of 2014. He suggested considering construction of a new structure downstream from there to create a pond close to the old parking lot, which could provide handicap fishing access. He contacted the NRCS office, and they will put in a request to the area office for a feasibility study at no charge. No federal cost-share is available, but the possibility of a state cost-share program will be looked into.

¹⁷⁻¹⁶ To approve obtaining final plans and specifications for the Little Sioux beach renovation, including a water control structure for the pond.

¹⁸⁻¹⁶ To authorize Schneider to investigate architectural design services for the Fowler Forest shelter replacement project.

ITEM R8. Board member / staff reports

1. Nature Center activities (Kruid)

Theresa Kruid reported on the following Nature Center activities.

- Nature Calls (September 10th)
 - Over \$5,000 in sponsorships and in-kind donations has been raised towards the goal of \$20,000.
 - The committee will get together soon to start event planning.
 - The unassigned sponsor solicitation list was reviewed.
- The last day of the traveling turtle display is Sunday, May 8.
- Volunteer work day ended up being cancelled due to inclement weather.
- Volunteer, Dean Van Roekel, has been working on the new slide project at the Nature Playscape. One slide was installed on Monday with three more to be installed in a few weeks.
- Interns will be starting soon: Two on May 16th and four on May 31st.
- Summer camps are 80% full with 286 kids registered to date.
- The Scheels “Take It Outside” event is May 21st in the Scheels parking lot. We will set up a booth and take the animals, binoculars, and a county map banner showing all of the parks.
- Nature Center visitor numbers have been climbing, especially on the weekends. Visitors who use the trails during off hours or without coming into the center are not included in counts. Comparing April 2015 to April 2016, school visitors have increased by over 300 and total visitors have increased by over 1,000. The board may want to consider adding an additional staff person on weekends.

2. Park activities (Peterson)

Peterson reported on the following Park activities.

- Campgrounds opened April 29th but had a soggy start. The Brown’s Lake septic system isn’t functioning because of the high water table. A news release was sent out and placed on website to let campers know. The Snyder Bend shower house and dump station will be available for Brown’s Lake campers, and rates have been reduced to \$12 to compensate for the inconvenience.
- The majority of the new trees have been received and planted.
- CF Industries employees and families volunteered at Snyder Bend and Brown’s Lake to help planting trees and applying linseed oil to recently installed guard posts.
- Shooting range latrine has been installed.
- Prescribed burns have slowed down due to weather but staff will try to conduct a couple small burns as time allows.
- Monarch initiative paperwork was signed and returned. Seeds should arrive in next day or two.
- New docks have been installed at the Brown’s Lake campground and boat ramp. Old docks were refurbished and installed at Southwood for a fishing pier.
- The Owego Wetland Complex water elevation is as high as it has ever been. Four beaver have been trapped out of this area, and work is being done to tear out the dam and dewater the area. Peterson described other dike and water control issues that need to be addressed in this area.
- A used disk for Little Sioux Park was purchased and is working well.

3. Administrative items (Schneider)

a. Land acquisition and grants update

The LAWCON grant scoring board originally awarded \$75,000 towards the Roberts property acquisition with an additional \$15,000 in appropriations funds anticipated. Schneider reported that the additional amount ended up being \$120,000, bringing the total to \$195,000 of the original \$200,000 request.

The Habitat Stamp grant award was \$85,501 with another \$10,000 expected later this summer.

Schneider plans to apply to the Gilchrist Foundation for a grant toward this acquisition project. He has asked a couple people from the Audubon Society to do a bird survey on the property to be used in the grant application. Other planned grant applications include the Cabela's Outdoor grant and the Turkey Federation grant.

Discussion was held about a farm possibly going up for public auction. This property would connect the river corridor all the way up to the state access on Highway 20. There are gravel pits on the property that may be mineable and could potentially be sold. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation would bid and purchase the property. We could then survey the property, purchase the desired portions, and sell off the farmland. Schneider will keep track of this potential project.

b. Camping Kick-Off Weekend

Camping kick-off weekend is May 6-8. Campers will receive a can koozie and a certificate for a free night of camping for later in the season.

c. Staffing Updates

The Little Sioux Resource Tech application deadline was yesterday. Interviews will take place after Memorial Day with a planned start date of July 5th.

d. Set date/time for June meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 1, at Southwood Conservation Area.

ITEM R9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

The above minutes were typed by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Neil Stockfleth

Board President, Cindy Bennett