

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE MONDAY, DECEMBER 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 Monday, December 5, 2016, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 5:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth and Suzan Boden

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Chris Zellmer-Zant

STAFF PRESENT

Schneider, Stehr, Flammang and Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

Larry Clausen, County Supervisor

CALL TO ORDER

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

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

Schneider presented a thank-you note that he had received from Supervisor Chairman Jeremy Taylor in regard to the WCCB goals summary.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Stockfleth, second by Boden.

To approve the consent agenda.

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

Consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

ITEM C1. Approve minutes of the November 3, 2016 monthly meeting.

ITEM C2. Approve November 2016 claims and expenditures.

ITEM C3. Receive and place on file the November 2016 financial/budget reports.

ITEM C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:

1. Beverly Feiges for shell collection
2. Wray Wright for beaver & otter taxidermy mounts on loan
3. Walmart Singing Hills for \$50 gift card for Winter Fun Day
4. Walmart Floyd Blvd for \$100 gift card for Winter Fun Day
5. Garnetta Snyder for dremel tool, aquatic net, craft supplies and turkey call
6. Lonna Miller for pine cone and bagel bird feeders
7. Anne Shaner for craft supplies

8. Tiana Kruid for children's books
9. Scott Kayl – Monetary donation (\$20) for raptors
10. Kayla Nieman/Kay's Sweets & Treats for cookies for Winter Fun Day
11. Jolly Time Pop Corn for popcorn for Winter Fun Day
12. Panera for bagels for Winter Fun Day

ITEM R2. Consideration of approval of a Programmatic Agreement between Iowa DNR, National Park Service and Woodbury County Conservation Board to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act per requirements of a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant. (Schneider)

Schneider presented a Programmatic Agreement between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the National Park Service, and the Woodbury County Conservation Board. The agreement was prepared by the IDNR in an effort to obtain SHPO clearance on the 120-acre Curtin Timber addition. A Phase I archeology study will also need to be performed on the property, especially in the area where the parking lot and sign installation are planned. Any additional development of the property would require further studies. If any historically significant items are found, work must stop and the State Historical Society must be notified immediately. The agreement will also have to be approved by Iowa DNR, National Park Service and State Historical Society of Iowa.

MOTION by Boden, second by Stockfleth.

To approve the Programmatic Agreement between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service and Woodbury County Conservation Board as presented and authorize Schneider to sign the agreement on behalf of the board.³²⁻¹⁶

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

ITEM R3. Discussion of a request for response, per Woodbury County Engineer, on the Interchange Justification Report for the proposed new I-29 interchange in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. (Schneider)

Discussion was held regarding a request for response from the Woodbury County Engineer relating to a NEPA environmental assessment for a proposed new I-29 interchange between Sergeant Bluff and Port Neal Landing.

Earlier in the project, some prickly pear cactus plants were discovered behind the Sergeant Bluff rest area. Because it is a protected species in Iowa, compromises had to be made to protect it. Schneider reported that he doesn't know of anything significant in the proposed area. Stockfleth noted that the Winnie Belfrage homestead on the west edge of the study area includes a historical house and a barn that was renovated using "Barn Again!" funding. That will be noted on the response.

ITEM R4. Consideration and approval of sale of approximately 0.154 acres of Riverside Bluffs Area property to resolve an easement and boundary issue. (Schneider)

Schneider asked the board to consider selling an approximately 0.154 acre parcel of land from the Riverside Bluffs property along Military Road to help alleviate an easement and boundary issue with the neighboring landowner. Approval has been obtained from the DNR as state grant dollars were used in the initial purchase of the property. A simple appraisal and survey will be needed,

³²⁻¹⁶ To approve the Programmatic Agreement between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service and Woodbury County Conservation Board as presented and authorize Schneider to sign the agreement on behalf of the board.

but the buyer will be required to cover those costs. Schneider will check with the city to ensure that the piece can be parceled off and will work with an attorney to prepare a Quit Claim Deed.

MOTION by Dixon, second by Stockfleth.

To authorize Schneider to proceed with the sale of an approximately 0.154 acre parcel in Riverside Bluffs, subject to survey and DNR requirements, with all expenses to be borne by the purchaser.³³⁻¹⁶

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

ITEM R5. Presentation of 2016 User Fee Report. (Schneider)

The 2016 User Fee Report was reviewed. Camping revenues were down about \$13,000 (5%) from 2015, with Snyder Bend Park being the only park reporting an increase. Schneider explained that much of this was due to the temporary beach closure and flooding at Little Sioux Park and the septic issues caused by wet weather at Bigelow Park. Miscellaneous receipts increased about \$9,000 (14%) mostly due to increased cabin rentals and a full year of shooting range permits. Total receipts were \$303,408, a slight decrease from last year.

ITEM R6. Consideration and approval of proposed 2017 department fee schedule for specialized equipment items, cabins, enclosed shelters, camping, firewood, and Nature Center facility. (Schneider)

Discussion was held regarding the 2017 department fee schedule. No camping fee increase is recommended as they were adjusted in 2015.

Schneider noted that cabin rental rates were not increased to recoup fees when credit card payments were initiated a few years ago, and further fees will be incurred with the online reservation system, including payment gateway fees and a per-transaction maintenance fee for MyCountyParks.com. Additionally, the 5% Iowa hotel/motel tax will need to be included in the advertised rates rather than added on at time of purchase. A discounted weekly cabin rental rate and discounted full-day shelter rental rate will not be available through the online system.

Proposed cabin rental rates:	Weekends & Holidays	Weekdays
Little Sioux Park	\$55	\$50
Snyder Bend Park	\$125	\$85
Southwood Conservation Area	\$90	\$70

Proposed shelter rental rates:	Half Day	Full Day
Bigelow Dale Bell Shelter	\$60	\$120
Little Sioux Heritage Shelter	\$75	\$150

MOTION by Stockfleth, second by Boden.

To set the 2017 cabin and shelter rental rates as proposed.³⁴⁻¹⁶

³³⁻¹⁶ To authorize Schneider to proceed with the sale of an approximately 0.154 acre parcel in Riverside Bluffs, subject to survey and DNR requirements, with all expenses to be borne by the purchaser.

³⁴⁻¹⁶ To set the 2017 cabin and shelter rental rates as proposed.

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

Schneider noted that equipment rental rates had not been increased since 2005, and a significant amount of time is spent on paperwork and rental arrangements.

Proposed equipment rental rates:	
Truax Drill – 6’	\$12/Ac. - \$100 minimum
Truax Drill – 8’	\$14/Ac. - \$100 minimum
Truax Drill – 8’ no-till	\$15/Ac. - \$125 minimum
Truax Drill – 12’ no-till	\$20/Ac. - \$200 minimum
Cultipacker	\$5/Ac. - \$50 minimum
Terrace Seeder	\$50/day
Forester Tree Planter	\$25 suggested donation

MOTION by Boden, second by Stockfleth.

To set the 2017 equipment rental rates as proposed.³⁵⁻¹⁶

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

Schneider stated that firewood rates had not been increased since 2007, but staff was split as to whether they should be increased.

MOTION by Stockfleth, second by Dixon.

To increase the firewood fee from \$5/bundle to \$6/bundle.³⁶⁻¹⁶

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

Schneider stated that Dawn Snyder had reviewed the Nature Center facility rental rates and recommended that only the amphitheater rental be adjusted.

MOTION by Dixon, second by Boden.

To increase the Nature Center amphitheater rental rate from \$125 to \$150.³⁷⁻¹⁶

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

³⁵⁻¹⁶ To set the 2017 equipment rental rates as proposed.

³⁶⁻¹⁶ To increase the firewood fee from \$5/bundle to \$6/bundle.

³⁷⁻¹⁶ To increase the Nature Center amphitheater rental rate from \$125 to \$150.

ITEM R7. Capital Improvement Projects Update (Schneider)

1. Little Sioux Park beach & water control structure project

Schneider presented the final plans and specifications for the Little Sioux Park beach and water control structure project. The cost estimate for the entire project is \$120-125,000 (\$20-25,000 for the water control structure and \$100,000 for the retaining wall, drainage, sand replacement, etc.) The plans include replacing the asphalt where it will be removed during the water control structure replacement, but Schneider recommends putting gravel down until the rest of the roads are resurfaced. He also suggested adding fence at each end of the beach retaining wall to better delineate the beach boundaries. With the two separate projects, each one should be under the threshold requiring a public bid process. Schneider will request bids and expects to have them back prior to the next board meeting.

Brief discussion was held in regard to relocating the primitive tenting area at Little Sioux Park due to the continued wet conditions and weakened trees.

2. Park security light replacement

Schneider reported that the park security light LED conversions are complete. Rebates have been requested from MidAmerican Energy and Woodbury County REC.

3. Little Sioux Park cabin sidewalks

Schneider informed the board that the contractor did not show up to pour concrete for the Little Sioux Park cabin sidewalks, so the project will be postponed until spring.

ITEM R8. Board member/staff reports

1. Nature Center activities (Snyder)

The Nature Center programs report was distributed. Flammang reported that approximately 240-250 people attended the Winter Fun Day on Saturday. Schneider noted that the Foundation has been discussing the possibility of funding an additional habitat intern.

2. Park activities (Stehr)

Stehr reported on the following park activities.

- Southwood staff installed a new boundary fence on the southeast corner of Owego wetlands near 300th & Garner. There has been encroachment from the farmer to the south for several years, and this fence should help prevent that from continuing.
- A rock trail and bench were installed at Fowler Forest.
- Erik has been working on completing burn maps before heading to the Law Enforcement Academy in January.
- Little Sioux employees have been replacing roofs on the camper's kiosk and woodshed, replacing signs on the Union Bridge trail and replacing horseshoe pits.
- Spiral Communications has completed the Wi-Fi upgrades at Brown's Lake and Snyder Bend, and the shop at Brown's Lake finally has internet service again after being out most of the summer.
- The AGO grant work has been completed at Riverside Bluffs using the new track loader and forestry grinder. Stehr showed before and after pictures to the board.

- Stehr ordered 100 trees for the parks to be delivered next spring, including some new elm and oak varieties.
- Staff attended the annual county safety meeting held at the nature center.

3. Administrative items (Schneider)

a. Grants/land acquisition update – donor recognition ceremony

A ceremony was held on November 11th to recognize the donors for the Curtin Timber addition. Wild Turkey Federation representatives and area neighbors were present. Reimbursement from the Wildlife Habitat Stamp Fund should arrive soon. The remaining grant reimbursement won't be received until next spring.

b. Online reservations update

Schneider reported that he and Dawn Bostwick had attended an e-commerce meeting in Ames on November 10th. He explained that the payment gateway set-up had been delayed some due to new procedures needed to get Heartland Payment Systems set up as the MyCountyParks.com preferred vendor. Now that access to the e-commerce functions on the website has been granted, Dawn can begin building the facilities, calendars, and pricing. Once complete, testing will be done to ensure that reservations process correctly and payments are deposited into our account. Existing reservations will need to be added to the system calendar, and staff will need to be trained. January 1 is the targeted transition deadline.

c. Succession/strategic planning session January 28, 2017

A strategic planning meeting with the board and staff will be held on Saturday, January 28, 2017, with lunch provided. Following lunch, the February board meeting will be held.

d. Resource Technician positions – hiring progress

Schneider reported that 29 applications had been received for the two Resource Technician positions. Nine candidates will be interviewed on Monday and Tuesday of next week, and offers should be extended by the end of the week.

e. January meeting date

The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, January 5, 2017, at 4:00 p.m. at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

f. Additional items

- The WCCB budget review with the Board of Supervisors will be held on Tuesday, January 3rd.
- Schneider will be taking at least one of the three new supervisors on a tour of the WCCB properties on Wednesday, December 14th. The other two will be scheduled soon, if they cannot make it the same day.
- A decision was made to leave the Southwood cabins closed for this winter season since Don will be managing the park alone while Erik is at the academy.

- Schneider is investigating the possibility of leasing a Little Sioux River access area from the DOT near the County D50 Bridge. Plans would include moving the south boundary, replanting pollinator habitat, and improving the parking lot.
- Schneider updated the board on the three officers scheduled to attend the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy in January. One did not pass all of the physical requirements and will be retesting tomorrow. An issue arose today on a second candidate that may prevent him from being able to attend this session. The Pre-Academy testing will take place on Monday. Any candidates who do not pass will not be able to attend this session, and a \$90 fee will be assessed.
- Schneider presented a copy of the performance review given to him by Supervisor Chairman Taylor.
- Board members were invited to attend the staff holiday dinner on Friday, December 16th, at 12:00 noon.

ITEM R9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

The above minutes were typed by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Neil Stockfleth

Board President, Cindy Bennett