

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 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, December 5, 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, Heissel, Stehr, Snyder, Lindsay, and Bostwick

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Kevin Pape, IDNR Park Ranger

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS**

Schneider shared thank you notes from the Sierra Club and the IFOPA (Lincoln's Legacy) for the donation of cabin stays and camping coupons. He also provided the most recent IACCB newsletter.

Schneider presented a commemorative plaque to Don Dixon honoring his 15 years of service on the Woodbury County Conservation Board and expressed gratitude on behalf of the board and staff members.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**ITEM R1. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION** by Zellmer-Zant, second by Bennett.

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 November 6, 2017 monthly meeting and the November 29, 2017 special meeting.**

**ITEM C2. Approve the November 2017 claims and expenditures.**

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

**ITEM C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:**

1. Rosie Kuehne for \$1,000 cash donation
2. Bill Zales taxidermy on Sharp-shinned Hawk mount
3. Rich & Sara Crawford for \$250 cash donation
4. Kevin Pape for fossils
5. Jim Utesch and Fraternal Order of Eagles Club for Golden Eagle mount donation

**ITEM R2. Board discussion and consideration of HR 3688. (Board)**

President Boden asked for discussion and a declaration of support or opposition regarding H.R. 3688 which had previously been reviewed at the October and November meetings. After some discussion, it was agreed that the board should go on record in opposition of the bill.

**MOTION** by Dixon, second by Stockfleth.

To oppose H.R. 3688 Winnebago Land Transfer Act of 2017.<sup>41-17</sup>

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

**ITEM R3. Authorization to add Deputy Director as a second signer on Board's financial accounts. (Schneider)**

Schneider reported that during the process of adding Heissel to signature cards at the banks, it was discovered that Mark Peterson, former Deputy Director, was also listed as a second signer. Schneider requested that Peterson be removed and Brian Stehr, current Deputy Director, be added as a second signer at the two banks and anywhere else an official signatory is needed.

**MOTION** by Zellmer-Zant, second by Stockfleth.

To designate Deputy Director, Brian Stehr, as an official signatory for the Conservation Board.<sup>42-17</sup>

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

**ITEM R4. Discussion on Stone State Park with Kevin Pape, IDNR Park Ranger. (Schneider)**

Kevin Pape, IDNR Stone State Park Ranger, was present upon request by the board. Pape has worked as Stone State Park Ranger for 23 years and as District Supervisor for 3 years. After working for the IDNR for a total of 33 years, Pape will be retiring effective December 28, 2017, and moving out of state. The board asked Pape his thoughts on the potential for his position being filled. He stated that the DNR typically waits for the position vacancy and then offers it for transfer requests, but none are expected. He said that there had been a hiring freeze earlier in the year, but mainly for parks with more than one employee. He expects the Stone Park position to be filled possibly next spring. In the meantime, the gates will be locked and staff from Lewis &

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<sup>41-17</sup> To oppose H.R. 3688 Winnebago Land Transfer Act of 2017.

<sup>42-17</sup> To designate Deputy Director, Brian Stehr, as an official signatory for the Conservation Board.

Clark park will take responsibility for it over the winter. There are seven vacancies in Iowa parks currently. The board thanked Pape for his years of service and wished him well in his retirement.

**ITEM R5. Presentation of 2017 User Fee Report. (Schneider)**

The 2017 User Fee Report was reviewed. Camping revenues were down about \$8,400 (3.6%) from 2016, with the biggest decrease being seen at Snyder Bend Park. Miscellaneous receipts increased by nearly \$11,400 (15.7%), with an increase in shelter rentals of 85% and cabin rentals of 20%. Net cabin and shelter rental receipts were up approximately 24%. Total receipts were \$306,407, a slight increase from last year.

It was noted that cabin and shelter reservations were moved online at the beginning of 2017 and included a slight increase in rental rates to compensate for increased fees. Parks have begun offering more activities, such as naturalist programs and movie nights. Discussion was held regarding possible canoe and watercraft rentals. Ice sales and expenses will be reviewed and a decision made on whether to continue to offer it in the parks next spring.

**ITEM R6. Review interim Conservation Reserve Fund report. (Schneider)**

Schneider presented an interim conservation reserve fund report for the months of October and November 2017. He asked for feedback from the board as to whether the report is useful and if the quarterly timing is adequate or if monthly would be preferable.

**ITEM R7. Capital Improvement Projects Update (Schneider)**

**1. Brown's Lake shoreline development progress.**

Heissel reported that the Brown's Lake shoreline development plan has been scaled back to clearing 422' of shoreline and adding a fishing jetty with rock shoals. Heissel stated that he had submitted a Fish Habitat grant application asking for \$78,013 or 60.94% of the \$128,013 project. A total of \$199,000 is available in Fish Habitat grants, with a total ask of \$229,000 being submitted. Scoring will take place next week. Other grant sources will be sought to cover the remaining \$50,000, such as the Gilchrist Foundation or MHRD. JEO will do the permitting and bid letting, with a planned start date in August of next year. The second phase will include clearing the shoreline east to the campground and adding a handicap fishing pier.

**2. Southwood road resurfacing with quartzite.**

Schneider stated that the Southwood road resurfacing has been completed and the final hauling invoice received. The project costs have reached \$75,000 of the \$87,000 budgeted. One area was not done including the scenic overlook road. Schneider requested approval to use the remaining \$10,000 to put rock on this area yet this fall or in the early spring, noting that some shaping needs to be done before the rock is added. The addition of a deck is planned for next summer.

**MOTION** by Stockfleth, second by Zellmer-Zant.

To approve adding approximately \$10,000 of rock to resurface additional roads in Southwood Conservation Area, including the scenic overlook road. <sup>43-17</sup>

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

**3. Little Sioux Park beach renovation/swan display projects.**

Heissel reported that 34 loads of sand have been hauled in and are ready to be spread on the Little Sioux beach. Brandon Deeds of Correctionville has been contracted with for the beach renovation project. He will stain the concrete mix and use pans to make the retaining wall look like rock. One wall will be shortened and black vinyl chain link fencing will be added, 4' tall on top of the wall and 6' high on the sides to the lake.

Stehr reported that the swan project area has been cleared and most of the fence posts are in. The fence can be strung anytime there is a break in the weather. Replacement shade trees will also be added.

**4. Dixon Bridge Access Improvements.**

Schneider stated that the Dixon Bridge Access improvements have been finished. Concrete was poured on the riprap and left rough.

**ITEM R8. Board member/staff reports**

**1. Nature Center activities (Snyder)**

Snyder reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- Programs numbers for November were distributed.
- Nature Calls final financial statements were provided, showing a \$10,000 increase in net profits over last year.
- Winter Fun Day will be held on Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, from 10 AM until 3 PM. Activities will include several make-and-take crafts, a scavenger hunt on the trails, and snacks. Five artists will also have booths. Several volunteers will be available to help with the event.
- WCCF membership campaign letters went to the Mail House on Friday. Funds raised will go towards the operating budget.
- Photos of the Nature Center terracing, drainage and sidewalk projects were shown. The concrete sidewalks didn't quite get finished due to the weather but will be completed early next spring.
- Scheels awarded a \$1,000 grant to the Nature Center and a \$2,000 grant to the Foundation.
- Notification was received of a potential \$2,500 donation for the Playscape.
- A fox and pheasant display case was received from former board member, Roger Martin. His sons agreed to allow the golden pheasant to be switched out for a ring-necked pheasant.

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<sup>43-17</sup> To approve adding approximately \$10,000 of rock to resurface additional roads in Southwood Conservation Area, including the scenic overlook road.

- Snyder will be attending the Loess Hills Alliance quarterly board meeting in Pisgah on December 6<sup>th</sup>. She has been asked to consider being on the executive committee.
- A Morningside College communications class led by Tony Michaels has developed a 30-second PSA for the Nature Center as part of a non-profit PSA project. It will be aired on the campus radio station and possibly a few local radio stations.

## **2. Park activities (Stehr)**

Stehr reported on the following park activities:

- Sand has been hauled to Little Sioux beach.
- The Little Sioux swan project is underway, as reported on earlier.
- Work has been done on the Curtin Timber addition to disassemble the old coral and cut down a patch of black locust.
- Snyder/Brown's staff helped remove two oak trees at Riverside Bluffs. Three huge straight logs have been saved, and the rest will be utilized as firewood.
- Southwood staff have added a temporary wall, insulation and a heater in the bathhouse to enclose the pressure tank for winter operations.
- A Conservation Corps crew, along with staff from Southwood and Snyder/Brown's, spent a week on volunteer tree and shrub removal at Owego, with approximately 300 acres cleared.
- Trees and shrubs have been ordered.
- Rifles are expected to arrive on Friday.
- Recycling dumpsters have been removed from the parks for the winter. Overall the dumpsters were being used correctly, but use was considerably lower at Snyder Bend.

## **3. Administrative items (Schneider)**

Schneider reported on the following items:

### **a. Land survey progress**

The survey has been completed on the Fleming land showing a total of 87.957 acres. A legal description will be created and approved by the attorney. It will most likely close in January.

### **b. Review of expectations/evaluations for new Director**

Schneider informed the board that Director Heissel will reach the end of his six-month probation period on May 1<sup>st</sup> and will need a performance review at the April meeting, and that his annual review will need to happen at the October meeting prior to his November 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary date. He urged the board and Heissel to maintain close and open communications, especially during this first year in order to set expectations and goals.

### **c. Review date/time for January meeting**

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, January 16, 2018, at 4:30 p.m. at the Dorothy Pecaute Nature Center. Schneider reminded the board that a strategic planning meeting with staff has typically been held on a Saturday morning in January which has also been followed by the February board meeting. If desired, a date could be set at the next meeting.

**d. Land acquisition update**

Schneider reported that the 221-acre parcel of land near Brown's Lake had been sold at auction for \$7,100 per acre. The auctioneer announced several times at the start of the auction that a bonified offer had been made by the Conservation Board and gave specifics on the three purchase options, which all included paying \$3,750 per acre on the 20 acres of wasteland and the final auction price on any remaining acres. The buyer's farm manager contacted Schneider following the sale and offered to sell up to 100 acres but at the full auction price for all acres. Various funding options were discussed by the board, such as REAP, Habitat Stamp and Fish Habitat grants. Cash renting for a few years was also discussed. It was agreed by consensus to pursue acquisition of the 20 acres of wasteland at \$3,750 and an additional 10 acres at \$7,100. Contacts will be made with the DNR and the county to possibly partner with WCCB in purchasing additional acres.

**ITEM R7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

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Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

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Board Secretary, Chris Zellmer-Zant

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Board President, Suzan Boden