

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2020 BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, November 12, 2020, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett & Neil Stockfleth (In person); Aaron Gehling & Suzan Boden (Via telephone)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Dan Heissel, Brian Stehr, Dawn Snyder, Theresa Kruid, Kari Sandage, Erik Lindsay, and Dawn Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

Back Country Horsemen – Vicki Ritz, Jolene Hultgren, Dorrine Norby

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Bennett called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

MOTION by Neil, second by Suzan.

To approve the consent agenda.

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

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

ITEM C1. Approve Minutes of the October 6, 2020 Meeting

ITEM C2. Approve the October 2020 Claims and Expenditures

ITEM C3. Receive and Place on File the October 2020 Financial/Budget Report and the 1st Quarter FY21 Reserve Fund Report

ITEM C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations

- BAIRD – The Holrichter Morrison Group for \$2,000 to sponsor the 25th Anniversary
- Stephanie & Cody Kumm for \$200 donation for programs
- Rick & Angie Schneider for art prints
- Dean Johnson, volunteer beekeeper, for new bee colony & support

Siouxland Big Give 2020 Donors – Support the Animals Fund

Goal: \$4,000.00 Total Gifts: \$4,212.71

- Audie & Julie Baughman \$100
- Cindy Bennett \$150
- Jeanette Bobeen \$250
- Larry & Sandra Bradstreet \$50
- Sara Bunker \$20
- Amy Callaghan \$125
- Sierra Chapman \$20
- Judy Church \$25
- Katie and Ron Colling \$25
- Chris Delfs \$25
- Jennifer Elliott \$50
- Gregory Giles \$10
- Barbara Graham \$100
- Barbara Gross \$25
- Judy Hamer \$50
- Sally Hartley \$50
- Jeanette & Bruce Hopkins \$50
- Dennis Kluver \$15
- Jada Kurth \$65
- Gene & Ginger Martin \$750
- Susan McCulley \$25
- Robert Meis \$100
- Jared & Carol Myers \$100
- Miyuki Nelson \$25
- Mark Nielsen \$250
- Cynthia Patten \$100
- Kathie Pfaffle \$15
- Jeff & Rose Pilgrim \$60
- Karen Quirk \$100
- Dave & Alisha Riemenschneider \$500
- Rex Rundquist \$100
- Dr. Pat and Catherine Saulsbury \$100
- Randy Schoener \$20
- Alexandria Searls \$100
- Mary Shuey \$200
- Dawn Snyder, In Memory of Cathy Frost \$50
- Lucinda Mary Tryon \$100
- Alison Uhl \$50
- Angie Van Otterloo \$40
- Kathleen Weisz \$25
- Elizabeth Wiltgen \$10
- Anonymous Donors \$166.18
- Security National Bank \$11.24
- Siouxland Community Foundation - Allocated Split \$10.29

ITEM R2. Back Country Horsemen – Campground Discussion

Back Country Horsemen representatives, Vicki Ritz - President, Jolene Hultgren - Incoming President and Dorrine Norby – Secretary, were present to discuss equine camping at Southwood Conservation Area. The seven equine sites are located closest to the entrance, and regular campers tend to take those sites before checking the main campground. They are concerned that the equine campers, especially those coming from a distance, are having trouble getting those sites. They presented a few possible solutions: making those sites reservation only, holding the sites for equine campers until a certain time before opening them up for general use, or charging more for those sites.

Discussion was held regarding these options. Reservations would require extra management by staff, and there would be no way to keep other campers from reserving the sites as well. Rates would need to be increased significantly to be an effective deterrent. Installing hitching rails on a couple of the old campground sites was also suggested as an alternative. Jolene will call other campgrounds and ask how they manage their equine sites. Staff will discuss and look for solutions. It was also suggested that the organization develop a network of local people who could put up tents and pay for sites for members earlier in the week.

ITEM R3. Ionization System for Nature Center

Dan reported that the MHRD grant for the ionization system and COVID-related personal protection equipment was not awarded due to an overwhelming number of requests. Dan recommended going ahead with purchasing the system, at least for the public areas upstairs. He cited study results suggesting the ionization system is 90-99% effective in killing viruses such as COVID-19 and SARS. Some board members were unsure of the system's value and felt that sufficient safety practices are already in place. After lengthy discussion, the board decided to take no action at this time.

ITEM R4. Budget FY 21-22 & Wage Matrixes

Dan proposed new salary matrixes for three employees. Each would start at the first step and move through the six steps as usual. Job descriptions are in the process of being created and updated. Dan did a comparison with like counties regarding salaries and job descriptions and shared it with the board.

- Tyler Flammang's position will be changing to GIS/Resource Tech. The Board of Supervisors were aware of this change when they approved the new naturalist position. The new salary matrix would take effect in the current fiscal year, and the budget will be amended as necessary at the end of the fiscal year.
- Theresa Kruid would move to a Naturalist I position now that she is supervising the new Naturalist position. She has also taken on additional responsibilities as Dawn Snyder has

become more involved with administrative duties. Her new salary matrix would take effect July 1, 2021.

- Dawn Bostwick’s position would change to Office Manager to reflect the additional responsibilities taken on in the last few years. Her new salary matrix would take effect July 1, 2021.

Remaining staff positions will be looked at and adjusted as appropriate in the near future.

MOTION by Neil, second by Aaron.

To approve the proposed salary matrix changes for Tyler Flammang, Theresa Kruid and Dawn Bostwick.³²⁻²⁰

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

ITEM R5. Capital Improvement Projects Update

1. Brown’s Lake – Phase II – Update

Dan reported that tree removal and dirt work has started on phase two of the Brown’s Lake shoreline project. The engineer had forgotten to add the last 100’ of shoreline in the plans, so the contractor was unaware that it was part of the project. An additional \$3,000 will be added to the cost. Lieber is going to clear the shoreline, so Dixon can work on the pad and pilings for the pier. Completion is anticipated for this fall/winter. Deeds Construction will be installing the decking.

ITEM R6. Board member/staff reports

1. Administrative items

Dan reported on the following items:

a. December Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on December 10, 2020, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

b. Land Acquisition Opportunity

Dan led a discussion about an opportunity to purchase a 116-acre property located between Oak Ridge Units 2 and 3. They were asking \$4,000 per acre, but Dan told them appraised value is as high as the board would go. Dan asked the appraiser to perform a windshield appraisal while they are appraising the Salsness property.

If purchased at \$3,500/acre, the O’Connell property would cost \$560,000 and the Salsness property would cost \$850,000. Potential funding sources were discussed.

³²⁻²⁰ To approve the proposed salary matrix changes for Tyler Flammang, Theresa Kruid and Dawn Bostwick.

MOTION by Neil , second by Aaron.

To authorize the Director to pursue the purchase of the O’Connell and Salsness properties.³³⁻²⁰

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aye: Aaron Gehling, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth
& Suzan Boden
Nay: Chris Zellmer-Zant
Absent: None

c. Salsness Update

Discussion combined with Item 1.b. above.

d. Personnel Information – Little Sioux Park Technician

Dan reported that Tanner Petersen, Resource Technician at Little Sioux Park, turned in his resignation. His wife is being relocated to Oregon for her job, and Tanner has already found a job with a county park system out there. Dan asked for authorization to pursue rehiring for that position. He would like to open the position in December and hire in January.

MOTION by Chris , second by Suzan .

To authorize the Director to post the open Resource Tech position for Little Sioux Park.³⁴⁻²⁰

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

2. Park Activities (Stehr)

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Camping season closed for the year. Staff has been winterizing, trimming trees, and removing hazard trees.
- Southwood staff was able to help Secondary Roads with seeding on borrow pits.
- Southwood staff has been working on frost seeding at Oak Ridge to upgrade from brome to pollinator habitat. Seed for this project was purchased by the Woodbury County Pheasants Forever Chapter.
- The contractor has started work on the Brown’s Lake shoreline project.
- Staff met with the county engineer’s office at Bigelow Park to assess the condition of the park roads and look for solutions to extend the life of the road. The edge of the road is sinking, and the road is breaking away in areas. The main road through the park from the entrance to the beach is the worst. Ben Kusler said it is too far gone and will continue to sink. He recommends filling and packing with crushed concrete to get by until funds are available to replace them.
- The new McCormick tractor for Brown’s Lake is in and may be delivered tomorrow or early next week.
- The new water filtration system at Snyder Bend has been installed and is working well.

³³⁻²⁰ To authorize the Director to pursue the purchase of the O’Connell and Salsness properties.

³⁴⁻²⁰ To authorize the Director to post the open Resource Tech position for Little Sioux Park.

3. Nature Center Activities (Snyder)

Dawn reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- Kari Sandage started working on October 20th.
- The programs and visitors report for October was presented. The large number of public programs is due to tracking the Facebook live event statistics and number of views. A new category for tracking virtual contacts has been created.
- The Nature Center anniversary went as well as can be expected. The Facebook Live raptor release event has been viewed by hundreds.
- Staff has been exploring ideas for preparing craft boxes for people to pick up and do at home in lieu of Winter Fun Day. Pizza Ranch has donated chicken take-out boxes to pack them in.
- Prescribed fire was applied on the ridge at the Nature Center on November 3rd by Brian and Tyler, with help from Jake and Vianca from Stone Park. Dawn spoke with Bill & Dottie Zales and will go collect some of their seed to reinforce the forb mix on the ridge. Over the past 20 years, diversity has gone down in that area.
- Foundation meeting was held via Zoom on Tuesday. The membership letter is being prepared for mailing. The annual meeting usually includes a public event with a guest speaker, but this year it may happen via Zoom.
- Theresa, Kari, Tyler and Dawn participated in the virtual IAN fall workshop. On one of the days, they also met in person at Sioux County for networking and interaction. Woodbury County is scheduled to host this workshop next year at the nature center. A decision will need to be made by the end of December as to whether the nature center can accommodate this meeting of over 150 people next year.
- Neil asked about the status of the new website development. Dawn acknowledged that it has been taking a long time but noted that there is a lot of content and there have been delays by both parties. She has been happy with the work completed so far. She anticipates that it will be done by January or February.

4. Board

Dan reported that the DNR has been wanting to have a public meeting about the water level at Brown's Lake, but now they are looking at doing it in smaller numbers virtually. They asked if Aaron would be willing to represent Brown's Lake land owners at the meeting and relay information back to landowners. Aaron agreed to serve in that capacity. They will have a meeting next spring or summer with more people involved.

Aaron stated that a follow-up contact with Jorgensen regarding the Snyder Bend dike should happen soon as he is done with farming. Aaron will call Dan tomorrow to schedule.

ITEM R7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Suzan Boden

Board Chair, Cindy Bennett