

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2021 BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Saturday, January 23, 2021, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 12:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Aaron Gehling, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth, and Suzan Boden

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Chris Zellmer-Zant

STAFF PRESENT

Dan Heissel, Brian Stehr, Dawn Snyder, and Dawn Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Bennett called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

MOTION by Suzan, second by Aaron.

To approve the consent agenda.

VOTE: Aye: Aaron Gehling, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth
& Suzan Boden

Nay: None

Absent: Chris Zellmer-Zant

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

ITEM C1. Approve Minutes of the December 10, 2020 Meeting

ITEM C2. Approve the December 2020 Claims and Expenditures.

ITEM C3. Receive and Place on File the December 2020 Financial/Budget Report.

ITEM C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations

- Larry & Becky Williams for \$100 cash donation
- Premier Bankcard for \$100 cash donation
- Julie Delperdang for \$500 cash donation for animals
- Bill Zales for 11 – 50pound bags of prairie seed
- Dan Holzrichter for \$2,000 cash donation for 25th Anniversary
- Friends of FM90 for \$19.20 for raptors
- Scheels for \$1,000 cash donation for interns

- Jason Wolfe for \$200 cash donation for animals
- Kelly & Pam Ridgway for \$1,250 donation for interns
- Teresa & David Hawkinson for \$100 cash donation for animals
- Marilyn Milbrodt \$100 memorial donation for Jackie Larson for interns
- Fran Jackson Memorial Gifts:
 - Vernon & Charlene Peterson \$25.00
 - Blanche Schol \$20.00
 - Greg & Judy Thousand \$20.00
 - Dirk & Barb Reek \$25.00
 - Tom & Robin Miller \$20.00
 - Dianne Modlin \$20.00
 - Janet Weakland \$20.00
 - Judy Krull \$100.00
 - Marcia Munger \$50.00
 - Bruce & Ardy Hinds \$25.00

ITEM R2. Election of Board Officers and Committee Assignments for 2021

Dan stated that, following the traditional rotation of officers, Aaron Gehling would take the position of Chair, Suzan Boden would move to Vice Chair, and Neil Stockfleth would serve as Secretary.

MOTION by Neil, second by Suzan.

To accept the slate of officers for 2021 as presented.¹⁻²¹

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

Aaron Gehling and Neil Stockfleth were sworn in by Dan Heissel as it was noticed that they weren't officially sworn in at the time of their reappointments.

Aaron assumed the role of Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Dan noted that Chris Zellmer-Zant currently serves on the county REAP committee and the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation. Reappointment was deferred until Chris is present and can confirm her desire to continue in that capacity. Dan noted that all board members serve on the Endowment Fund Committee. Brief discussion was held regarding the status of the endowment.

ITEM R3. Authorize Director to sign Memorandum of Understanding with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) for purchase of the Salsness Property – Action

Dan presented the standard repurchase agreement with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to be executed for purchase of the Salsness property. The INHF purchased the property, will prepare the title opinion, and will hold the property until it is repurchased by the WCCB.

MOTION by Suzan, second by Neil.

To approve and authorize the Director to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Iowa Natural Heritage as presented for the purchase of the 230-acre Salsness property.²⁻²¹

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

ITEM R4. Campground Fee Increase Discussion (Dan/Brian)

¹⁻²¹ To accept the slate of officers for 2021 as presented.

²⁻²¹ To approve and authorize the Director to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Iowa Natural Heritage as presented for the purchase of the 230-acre Salsness property.

Dan noted that the annual report is in process and will be forthcoming.

Dan stated that the board had discussed raising campground fees in the past, but no action was ever taken. The board agreed that rates should be raised at this time and addressed every couple years going forward. Dan informed the board that a camping survey is currently being done by the state association and should be complete by end of February. He will bring the survey results to the March meeting to aid in setting the camping rates.

ITEM R5. Capital Improvement Projects Update

1. Brown's Lake – Beach & Road Projects – Bonding Option – Action

Dan reported that the Board of Supervisors had indicated that any park road replacement would need to be done through bond, as it was for the Snyder Bend roads. The bond would then be repaid over 10 years with CIP funds. The board discussed bonding for the Brown's Lake roads, beach, concession stand and playground projects depending on the projected costs. The maximum threshold without requiring a public vote is \$1.2 million. Neil asked that storm shelters be added if possible to do so and stay under the \$1.2 million threshold.

MOTION by Cindy, second by Neil.

To authorize the Director to begin pursuing a bond option for the Brown's Lake beach, roads and playground projects.³⁻²¹

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

2. Brown's Lake Shoreline & Pier Update – Informational

Brian reported that the pilings and beams are in place and that the decking should be started in the next week or two. Seeding will need to be done there yet also. Dan and Brian will meet with the engineer from JEO to review the checklist. It was supposed to have been a 4:1 slope, but they did 3 ½:1 on most of it. This will be addressed at the meeting with JEO. Aaron noted that he has a video of the whole shoreline and will send it out to the board members.

ITEM R6. Board member/staff reports

1. Administrative items

Dan reported on the following items:

a. February Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on February 11, 2021, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

³⁻²¹ To authorize the Director to begin pursuing a bond option for the Brown's Lake beach, roads and playground projects.

b. Donation

Dan reported that a very generous donation had been received from Mark Wetmore. Mark called to talk to Dawn regarding his annual Foundation donation but ended up talking to Dan because Dawn was out of the office. During that conversation, Dan talked to him about the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and their assistance in purchasing the Salsness property. In the end, Mark donated \$5,000 toward the repurchase of the Salsness property, as well as \$1,000 to the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation for educational programs.

c. FY22 Budget Update

Dan met with the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday for the department's budget review. A \$30,000 increase was requested under the motor vehicle line item due to increased vehicle prices and maintenance costs. Brian had updated the motor vehicle schedule through 2027 and compiled maintenance records for a few of the vehicles proposed to be replaced, which helped substantiate the request. The budget proposal was accepted as presented.

Dan stated that he would be meeting with new Supervisor, Justin Wright, on Monday at the Nature Center to get to know him better and familiarize him with Conservation Board activities. Jeremy Taylor is the appointed liaison to the Conservation Board this year, but he will be deployed overseas for several months. They plan to appoint a temporary replacement for Jeremy during that period.

d. Other

Dan announced that the WCCB was awarded \$146,438 through the Habitat Stamp grant program and will be responsible for a 45% match which can be covered with local REAP money. This will complete the repurchase of the Zook property.

2. Nature Center Activities (Snyder)

Dawn reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- Several Nature Center employees have recently celebrated anniversaries or will in the next few months: Pam Pfautsch - 25 years, Theresa Kruid - 24 years, Marilyn Milbrodt - 24 years, Betty West - 13 years, and Tyler Flammang - 5 years.
- The website designers were onsite last week to provide training on maintaining the site through WordPress. They will still be available for support as needed.
- Summer positions for naturalist and habitat stewardship interns have been posted, and applications are due on February 8th. WCCF will once again fund the habitat stewardship position.
- Summer programming will focus on smaller groups and being outside most of the time.
- There have been no in-person programs with schools, but some virtual programs have been provided. A few preschools have allowed in-person programming.
- The Nature Center is promoting the 1000 Hours Outside challenge, an initiative created to reduce screen time for kids. Programing will be offered to help with that goal. Tracker sheets will be collected next January, and participants will be entered into a prize drawing.
- The Nature Center is also partnering with the Iowa DNR and the Sioux City Art Center in the 20 Artists 20 Parks event. The Stone Park exhibit will be held at the Sioux City Art Center. A photo contest will be held for photos taken at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center or Stone State Park in the last year, and they will be displayed at both the Nature Center and the Art Center.
- Dawn will be visiting with Nature Calls committee members to figure out alternative ways to safely host the event this year.

- Tyler has been creating a Dutch door for the gift shop to provide more safety and allow visitation with guests.
- The WCCF annual meeting will be held virtually on February 28th. Kari Sandage will be presenting on her experience as Peace Corps volunteer in Nicaragua.

3. Park Activities (Stehr)

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Summer positions have been posted.
- Little Sioux staff has been using the forestry grinder at Shagbark to remove cedars and other woody vegetation from the remnant prairie on the ridgetops.
- Brown's Lake and Snyder Bend staff have been performing cabin maintenance.
- Two large cottonwood trees by the large shelter at Snyder Bend recently blew down. One was completely rotten. Staff will proactively take down some of those trees that were under water during the flood and are felt to be a safety issue.
- Southwood staff has been going through fire equipment. They are building a second fire rig with spare pieces from reconfiguring the main rig last winter.
- All staff has been working on fire plans and food plot plans.
- Supply inventories have been done. Pricing has stayed the same except for nitrile gloves, which has almost tripled in price since last year. Brian will order just enough to get through June initially in the hope that prices come down.
- Electrical work is done on the Southwood storage building except for the outside lights above doors. The electrician is waiting on parts.
- Due to COVID, the annual CCPOA conference was not held last fall. The state association will be sending out several online training modules which peace officers must complete to keep their certification.
- Tyler Knight has been attending virtual classes for the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy. He will begin in-person training on February 1st.

Aaron asked that the CDC guidelines regarding flat surface transmission be reviewed. Dan stated that the WCCB is following the Siouxland District Health COVID guidelines. He also noted that he had learned that the county does have ionization systems in the jail and the courthouse and that the Building Services manager believes they are a good thing. However, the county doesn't have money available for one to be installed at the Nature Center.

ITEM R7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Neil Stockfleth

Board Chair, Aaron Gehling