

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021 BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, October 14, 2021, at Southwood Conservation Area beginning at 4:00 p.m.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant (via Zoom), Cindy Bennett (via Zoom), Neil Stockfleth, Suzan Boden (via Zoom)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**STAFF PRESENT**

Dan Heissel, Brian Stehr, Dawn Snyder, Erik Lindsay

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Mark Monson, County Supervisor  
Doug Chafa, Iowa DNR Biologist  
Jolene Hultgren, Back Country Horsemen  
Brent Berry, Back Country Horsemen  
Steve Miller, River City Anglers & Oxbow Bandits Fishing Club

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Gehling called the meeting to order at 4:12 p.m.

**CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS**

None

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Back Country Horsemen representatives, Joleen Hultgren and Brent Berry, were present to request designated equestrian-only campsites at Southwood. Erik Lindsay clarified that the campground is not only for equestrian campers and is operated on a first-come, first-served basis. Campsites will not be added to the reservation system at this time. He suggested arriving on Thursdays to register and get sites. Appreciation was expressed for the club's support, and they were asked to not confront other campers but take any concerns to park staff. Representatives agreed and will pass the information along to their members. Erik reported that equestrian camping use is up, noting that 7 of 19 sites are equestrian friendly. Brent asked about riding at Oak Ridge and Shagbark for a posted, organized ride once per year. Dan informed him that no horses are allowed at Oak Ridge and that staff and board would have to look into it and discuss whether they would allow a ride.

Steve Miller with the River City Anglers and Oxbow Bandits Fishing Club, was present to express concerns about Brown's Lake. Doug Chafa, Iowa DNR Biologist, was present to explain and provide an update on the lake condition. He also reported that the Snyder Bend lake is 6 1/2" from crest level, and it has been stocked with 100,000 bluegills. The DNR will be hosting a public informational meeting on October 25<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Brown's Lake shelter house.

John Remus will be speaking about the Missouri River at the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center at 4:00 p.m. on October 26<sup>th</sup>.

**ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda**

**MOTION** by Suzan, second by Chris.

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:

- C1. Approve Minutes of the September 9, 2021, Regular Meeting.
- C2. Approve the September 2021 Claims and Expenditures
- C3. Receive and Place on File the September 2021 Financial/Budget Report
- C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:
  - Mark & Susan Nielsen for \$25 memorial donation for James Cox
  - Judy Mahaney \$25 cash donation
  - Elaine Brown \$500 cash donation to Nature Center via WCCF

**ITEM R2. Southwood Assistant Resource Manager Update**

Dan reported that five candidates have been selected to be interviewed for the Assistant Resource Manager position at Southwood. Those candidates will then be narrowed down to two or three who will be required to complete physical exams for the academy prior to final selection.

**ITEM R3. Vehicle Bids**

Brian presented bids to replace three trucks in the parks.

**MOTION** by Chris, second by Cindy.

To approve and authorize the purchase of a 2022 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 4x4 truck from Knoepfler Chevrolet for \$24,402 after trade-in of a 2011 Ford F-250 pickup.<sup>25-21</sup>

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

**MOTION** by Chris, second by Neil.

To approve and authorize the purchase of a 2022 Ford F-250 XL Supercab 4x4 truck from Barry Motor Company for \$25,816 after trade-in of a 2006 Ford F-250 pickup.<sup>26-21</sup>

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

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<sup>25-21</sup> To approve and authorize the purchase of a 2022 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 4x4 truck from Knoepfler Chevrolet for \$24,402 after trade-in of a 2011 Ford F-250 pickup.

<sup>26-21</sup> To approve and authorize the purchase of a 2022 Ford F-250 XL Supercab 4x4 truck from Barry Motor Company for \$25,816 after trade-in of a 2006 Ford F-250 pickup.

**MOTION** by Aaron, second by Chris.

To approve and authorize the purchase of a 2022 Chevrolet Silverado 3500 Crew cab 4x4 truck from Knoepfler Chevrolet for \$41,717, after trade-in of a 2005 Ford F-350 diesel truck.<sup>27-21</sup>

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

**ITEM R4. Budget FY 22-23**

Dan presented the proposed budget for fiscal year 22-23. He noted increases made in Law Enforcement Equipment of \$4,800 for memory cards and \$2,000 for GPS pucks for law enforcement computers. The total increase is \$6,800 or 1.39%, not including salaries which are added by the Auditor's office. Mark Monson advised Dan to have a needs list available for the budget hearing in the event there is \$4.4 million left over in Covid funds. Dan will share via email any changes or additions to the budget as he works through it again.

**ITEM R5. Capital Improvement Projects Update**

**1. Brown's Lake Projects**

**a. Campground**

Dan gave an update regarding the sewer upgrade permitting delay and reported that the DNR has given approval to move forward on the project. Campsite pads have been laid out.

**b. Park Roads Bid**

This item has been tabled until November.

**c. Beach & Concessions**

Dan stated that there is nothing new to report. The sidewalks will be poured this fall. Bids will be sent out for the concession stand building with the hope of acting on them at the November meeting.

**ITEM R6. Board member/staff reports**

**1. Administrative items**

Dan reported on the following items:

**a. November Meeting Date**

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on November 18, 2021, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

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<sup>27-21</sup> To approve and authorize the purchase of a 2022 Chevrolet Silverado 3500 Crew cab 4x4 truck from Knoepfler Chevrolet for \$41,717, after trade-in of a 2005 Ford F-350 diesel truck.

**b. Oak Ridge Hungry Canyons Grant**

Neil advised getting confirmation that the plan meets high hazard standards. Dan will request that from Ben via email. Upon receipt of confirmation, Dan will present the grant to Aaron for signature. The board agreed by consensus to have Aaron sign the agreement if those standards are met.

**c. Briese Property – Memo of Understanding**

Dan presented the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the transfer of the Briese farm property to the conservation board upon completion of gravel mining on the property. Before approving the memorandum, the board asked for clarification and an addition to the agreement allowing WCCB input on the property design. No action was taken at this time.

**d. Peters Pit**

Dan reported that the engineer agreed to the terms of providing 500 tons of gravel and the engineering work already done for the conservation board as their payment to mine the rest of Peters Pit. This will add 15 acres to the pond, making it deep enough to hold fish over the winter.

A request received from a local farmer to pump water for a water wagon for his horses was approved by general consensus of the board. This was offered to neighbor across the road in case his pond level drops due to pumping as they gravel the Peters Pit.

**e. Grant Updates**

Dan announced the award of a \$777,500 REAP grant for the Salsness property, which will pay off all but \$60,000 on that purchase. Other grants will be pursued, including Pheasants Forever (county chapter & state council) and Whitetails Unlimited.

He also noted that a Habitat Stamp grant request of \$286,000 will be submitted in December for the Briese property.

**f. Solar Information – Nature Center Status Update**

Dan reported on his conversations with Rocky DeWitt and Kenny Schmitz about a solar system at the nature center. Mark Monson stated that it will be on the Board of Supervisors agenda for the jail site next week, and that he will support it. The board agreed that if the Board of Supervisors funds the project, they would be in support of installing one at the nature center.

**g. Old Business**

Brown's Lake-Bigelow Park campground fees were discussed. Current rates are \$25 for electric sites and \$17 for non-electric sites. It was agreed that once sewer is provided at each site, the rates should be increased.

**MOTION** by Neil, second by Cindy.

To approve and authorize increasing camping fees to \$30 per night for sites with electric, water & sewer hookups.<sup>28-21</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth & Suzan Boden

Nay: None

Absent: None

The possibility of adding a premium equestrian site at Southwood with increased fees will be discussed at the November meeting.

## 2. Nature Center Activities

Dawn reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- The programs and visitors report for September was presented.
- The Iowa Association of Naturalists statewide fall workshop will be hosted at the nature center on November 3-5. Board members were invited to the free pheasant hunt that will be held as one of the pre-workshop activities.
- Net proceeds from Nature Calls 2021 is anticipated to be approximately \$22,000, but financials have not been finalized yet.
- The nature center raised \$4,400 through the Siouxland Big Give to be used for a dog-friendly outdoor water fountain.
- Kari Sandage's one-year anniversary is October 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Theresa, Kari, & Dawn met with Sioux City School District science educators to share more about nature center programs.
- WCCB will participate with Iowa PBS on FIND (Fun Investigating New Discoveries) Iowa, funded by a REAP-CEP grant. Woodbury County/Sioux City is one of three urban schools participating in this statewide project that encourages students in grades 2-5 to virtually investigate Iowa using immersive and interactive learning content. Iowa PBS plans to come to Sioux City at least two times to shoot video with a focus on Woodbury County resources and education in the prairie.
- Materials will be ordered for the Tale Trail, and if weather allows, reading stations will be installed this fall.

(Chris left the meeting)

## 3. Park Activities

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- A photo of the Salsness property was shown.
- Park usage has been steady.
- Photos of the Snyder Bend lake were shown.
- Little Sioux Park staff has cleared the area where overburden will be piled from the gravel excavation project.
- Southwood staff hosted a Conservation Corps Crew on the week of September 27<sup>th</sup> and worked on removing fences and controlling black locust trees.
- Brown's Lake and Snyder Bend staff have completed pumping operations at Owego wetlands and were able to bring levels up on most of the cells.
- Staff has started work on the Brown's Lake campground renovation. All pads have been laid out.
- Officers attended the annual CCPOA fall workshop at Camp Dodge in Des Moines.

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<sup>28-21</sup> To approve and authorize increasing camping fees to \$30 per night for sites with electric, water & sewer hookups.

- Staff will be finishing up pesticide CEU's this fall for categories 2, 5 & 6.
- Due to supply chain issues, the AED's being provided through the Hemsley Foundation have not shipped and have been placed on a waiting list.
- Bluegreen algae bloom has formed at Midway Park and notices have been posted to avoid contact with it. It was suggested that Megan Schmidt, NRCS private lands biologist, may be able to assist with asking farmers in the area to consider buffers to alleviate the issue.
- Due to low water level and no gravel at the Briese property north of the park that Secondary Roads is graveling, Dan is hiring a contractor to do dozer work to deepen ponds and add structure.

**ITEM R7. Director's Annual Evaluation**

The board went into closed session for the Director's annual performance evaluation at 7:08 p.m. by motion from Suzan and second by Cindy. Chairperson Gehling held the roll call vote: Suzan Boden-Aye, Cindy Bennett-Aye, Neil Stockfleth-Aye, and Aaron Gehling-Aye. Chris Zellmer-Zant was absent.

The board discussed Director Heissel's performance for the past year and goals for the future. The session was recorded.

At 7:50 p.m., Suzan moved to come out of closed session, which was seconded by Neil and carried unanimously by roll call vote: Suzan Boden-Aye, Cindy Bennett-Aye, Neil Stockfleth-Aye and Aaron Gehling-Aye. Chris Zellmer-Zant was absent.

**MOTION** by Suzan, second by Cindy.

To approve Director Heissel's performance appraisal as discussed with a recommendation for a \$2,500 step increase, effective with the first day of the pay period closest to November 1, 2021.<sup>29-21</sup>

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

**ITEM R8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Snyder.

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Recording Secretary, Dawn Snyder

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Board Secretary, Neil Stockfleth

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Board Chair, Aaron Gehling

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<sup>29-21</sup> To approve Director Heissel's performance appraisal as discussed with a recommendation for a \$2,500 step increase, effective with the first day of the pay period closest to November 1, 2021.