

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2023, BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, January 12, 2023, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 4:00 p.m.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth, and Tom Limoges

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Aaron Gehling

**STAFF PRESENT**

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

**OTHERS PRESENT**

None

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Stockfleth called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

**CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS**

None

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda**

**MOTION** by Tom, second by Cindy.

To approve the consent agenda.

**VOTE:** Aye: Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth & Tom Limoges

Nay: None

Absent: Aaron Gehling & Chris Zellmer-Zant

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

- C1. Approve Minutes of the December 15, 2022, Regular Meeting
- C2. Approve the December 2022 Claims and Expenditures
- C3. Receive and Place on File the December 2022 Financial/Budget Report and 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter FY23 Reserve Fund Report
- C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations
  - Scheels for \$4,000 cash donation for Summer Interns
  - Rosie Kuehne for \$3,000 cash donation for Outdoor Learning Shelter
  - Rosie Kuehne for \$200 for Winter Fun Day craft box supplies
  - Lawrence L. and Juliann P. Delperdang for \$600 for bird seed/animal food
  - Jerry Von Ehwegen for \$50 cash for bird seed
  - Greg Pranke and Julie Miller-Pranke for \$25 cash in memory of Bonnie Brown
  - Dawn Snyder for \$40 cash in memory of Bonnie Brown
  - Jan Null for \$10 cash donation for programs

- Rosie Kuehne, Donna Popp, Mary Siepker, Carol Probst, Helen Anderson, Linda Bockelman, Anne Shaner, Cindy Bennett, Theresa Kruid for craft supplies for winter craft boxes
- Pizza Ranch Sioux City for 200 boxes for winter craft boxes
- Norb Ruhland for gift shop tree stand repair
- Connie Hoag for \$25 cash donation in honor of Cathy Hayes
- Jean Gill for \$300 for HILLarious Trail Race proceeds for trail maintenance
- Missouri River Runners for \$100 for HILLarious Trail Race proceeds for trail maintenance

(Chris arrived at 4:12 p.m.)

**ITEM R2. Election of Board Officers and Committee Assignments for 2022**

Neil reviewed the traditional rotation of officers stating that Chris Zellmer-Zant would take the position of Chair, Cindy Bennett would move to Vice Chair, and Tom Limoges would serve as Secretary.

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

To accept the slate of officers for 2023 as presented.<sup>23-1</sup>

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

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

The board approved by consensus that Chris would continue serving on the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation Board and the Woodbury County REAP Committee.

**ITEM R3. Land Acquisition Discussions – Closed Session**

**MOTION** by Neil, second by Tom.

To go into closed session for land acquisition discussions pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 21A.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

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

**MOTION** by Cindy, second by Tom.

To come out of closed session.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

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

---

<sup>23-1</sup> To accept the slate of officers for 2023 as presented.

**MOTION** by Neil, second by Tom.

To approve and authorize the director to work with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to purchase the 32-acre parcel discussed in closed session.<sup>23-2</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth & Tom Limoges  
Nay: Chris Zellmer-Zant  
Absent: Aaron Gehling

Dan will contact the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and the realtor.

**ITEM R4. Hay Contract – Shagbark**

Dan explained that the last haying contract at Shagbark Hills and Little Sioux Park expired this year. Dan and Brian recommended converting the Shagbark area to native grasses and possibly continue the haying program in the park. Burn plans were discussed.

*(Tom left the meeting at 5:14 p.m. and rejoined by phone at 5:16 p.m.)*

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

To approve and authorize converting 10 acres at Shagbark Hills to a native grass mix and to develop a rotating haying program in Little Sioux Park.<sup>23-3</sup>

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

**ITEM R5. Capital Improvement Projects Update**

**1. Brown's Lake**

a. Water Levels & Condition

Dan reported that the Brown's Lake water level is currently at the 1069 level and is considered full at 1070 as it starts overflowing at the control structure. He stated that two days ago, MidAmerican started diverting some of the water into the wetland to the southwest. When the wetland fills, the water flows through a ditch to Snyder Bend lake. They are going to see if it will hold at 1069 as they split some of the flow and try filling from the original pumping area.

b. Concession Building Update

Dan stated that the contractor has some paint touch-up and baseboard installation left to finish up the concession building. Staff will then be able to start outfitting it to prepare for a spring opening. A cement bollard has yet to be poured and attached to the dock for kayaks and paddleboards. Additional landscaping will be done in the spring.

---

<sup>23-2</sup> To approve and authorize the director to work with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to purchase the 32-acre parcel discussed in closed session.

<sup>23-3</sup> To approve and authorize converting the 10 acres at Shagbark Hills to a native grass mix and to develop a rotating haying program in Little Sioux Park.

## 2. Nature Center

### a. Nature Center Shelter & Restroom Update

Dan reported that the dirt work is done for the shelter, and a contractor has been lined up to pour the concrete in early spring. Plans to prevent washout was discussed.

He stated that the restroom addition estimates, including electrical, plumbing and general construction, came in at under \$20,000 with current pricing. The general contractor can start in March, and funding is available through a previous bequest.

Dawn stated that she has also submitted grant requests for these projects with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway and Canadian National Railway at \$10,000 each. She noted that Union Pacific Railway also has a grant opportunity with an April deadline. Other funding may also be available through a MRHD grant and/or CF Industries donation. She stated that a donor plaque should be added for these projects.

*(Tom left the meeting at 5:34 p.m.)*

### b. Nature Center Office Area Floor Settling Issue

Dan stated that he has been working with Kenny Schmitz from Building Services on the nature center floor settling issue and that a couple companies have inspected it. Major foundation work with pillar installation will be needed which will require heavy equipment access through the current flower bed area to the lower level. The garden walls need to be replaced anyway, so that will be included in the project. Dan added that this won't happen this year, but it will hopefully be worked into next year's budget.

## 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 9, 2023, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

#### b. Strategic Planning Meeting Date

Dan sent out the project list from the last strategic planning session and marked off items that have been completed. He has asked for input from staff members, and management staff will also take part in the meeting.

#### c. ARPA

Dan announced that he emailed the county's consultant directly and received confirmation that the park water and sewer projects meet the criteria for use of ARPA funds. He has informed Jeremy Taylor and asked him to update the Supervisors in his report. Shane from Baker Group called and told Dan that the money has already been allocated and gave him approval to proceed. Dan will contact the contractor to get started. Plans are to prioritize Little Sioux Riverside and Southwood Conservation Area campgrounds first. Little Sioux

Bellamy campground will be done last because it will require much more work and include redesigning the pad layout. The DNR will also need to be involved with that one because of the septic field.

**d. User Fees Report**

Dawn B. presented the 2022 park user fees report and a 2021/22 winter cabin occupancy report. The board agreed that it is worthwhile to keep the cabins open in the winter. Dan will work on a compensation plan to cover on-call park staff.

**2. Nature Center Activities**

Dawn reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- The programs and visitors report for November was presented.
- Dawn expressed that she is very pleased that Theresa will be succeeding her. She noted that Theresa just celebrated her 26-year anniversary and that they have been working together for a number of years and have similar goals and vision.
- The Naturalist I position has been advertised.
- Theresa will also replace Dawn as the employee representative and treasurer for the Foundation. She will also be added as a signer on the two Foundation checking accounts.
- The WCCF annual meeting will be held on February 18<sup>th</sup> and will include both public and members-only sessions of a Wildlife Encounter presentation.
- Theresa coordinated a great training event with about 25 northwest Iowa naturalists, including representatives from Blank Park Zoo.
- Summer naturalist internships have been advertised, and the habitat stewardship intern will again be a shared position with Stone Park.
- Dawn is working to get Theresa introduced to various groups. Channel 9 did a piece on Dawn's retirement, and the Journal is preparing an article also.
- Theresa announced that Tyler and Pam have anniversaries this month.
- Theresa stated that Kari is working on a small grant with Audubon society regarding an idea Tyler had for a screech owl habitat that looks like a tree. This will allow the screech owl to be on display but the enclosure would look more like the other gallery exhibits and provide a more conducive habitat for the owl.
- Nature Calls proceeds split information was provided.

**3. Park Activities**

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Little Sioux:
  - Staff has been burning brush piles from habitat improvement projects while there is snow and time available.
  - The Fleming sign was completed with the plastic material.
- Bigelow Park:
  - Staff has been working on the old shop to convert it into a storage building, which has been in the long-range plan. They ripped out the old office and will have three bays for equipment.
  - Herbicide and pesticide chemical storage that was in that building should really be in its own building and vented to the outside. A Conex storage container was purchased and will be insulated, ventilated and temperature controlled for seed and chemical storage. If it works well, containers will be added at other parks.
- Southwood:

- Brody is at the Academy and says he is enjoying his time there.
- The main entrance sign needs to be replaced as the wooden letters are cracked and falling apart. The yellow plastic material was cost prohibitive, so a quote was obtained from Creative Steel in Salix and came in at half the cost.
- NCIC training is required to access the system on the laptops for running criminal history etc. Training was provided at the academy but must be renewed every two years. Officers will need to complete the initial certification and online recertification every two years.
- The Ford F250 should be delivered next week.
- The half-ton truck for Snyder Bend and the Bobcat skid loader have been delivered.
- The chassis-cab that was reordered in June is still outstanding. The dealer had questions about the axel specs and had to do a towing package to get the right axle.

**4. Board Information**

None

**5. Other Business**

Neil commented on an interesting DNR presentation about the history of Iowa drainage districts.

**ITEM R7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

---

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

---

Board Secretary, Tom Limoges

---

Board Chair, Chris Zellmer-Zant