

Story County Conservation Board  
Monday, May 17, 2010  
Story County Conservation Center, McFarland Park

1. Chair W. Clinton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS	STAFF	GUESTS
Wayne Clinton – present	Steve Lekwa	Mike & Linda Meetz (7:20)
Erin Wilgenbusch – arrived 7:05	Jolene Van Waus	Larry Sorenson (8:00)
Ted Tedesco – present		
Don Toms – present		
Joyce Hornstein - present		
3. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS  
No guests were present at this time.
4. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND HANDOUTS  
Chair Clinton noted additional discussion under "Other" and supplemental packet handouts.
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES  
MOTION by D. Toms, SECOND by J. Hornstein, to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2010 meeting. MCU.
6. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS AND RECEIPTS  
MOTION by T. Tedesco, SECOND by D. Toms, to approve all claims and receipts as submitted. MCU.
7. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND UPDATES  
Director Lekwa commented that Conservation should be able to wrap up the FY10 budget year in a good, solvent condition.
8. SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS  
Administrative staff will be unavailable on June 14, so E. Wilgenbusch volunteered to take minutes at this meeting.
9. COMMUNICATIONS  
Board members Tedesco, Hornstein, and Clinton all commented favorably on the volunteer recognition dinner held April 21 and commended Program Support Coordinator Amber Tiarks for her work on this enjoyable event to recognize and thank volunteers. Tedesco suggested that a thank you note be sent to Tiarks for her efforts on a job well done.
10. PUBLIC COMMENTS  
Mike Meetz, interested Nevada citizen, thanked the board and staff (especially Amber Tiarks) for the volunteer recognition dinner. Meetz also reported progress on a recent trails work day at Soper's Mill, that the amphibian survey he conducts for the DNR revealed average populations for this time of year, and that he and his wife Linda are looking forward to volunteering for some of the upcoming bird watching programs at McFarland Park.

11. APPROVE RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR IDNR WILDLIFE HABITAT STAMP GRANT APPLICATION FOR JENNETT HERITAGE AREA

Referring to page 37 of the supplemental packet, Lekwa explained that he and Special Projects Ranger Carol Williams are recommending deferral of the wildlife habitat stamp grant application. The grant requires a match of at least 25 percent, which Story County Conservation does not have at this time. Applications will be made for a REAP grant in July and for a habitat stamp grant in December.

Lekwa added that archeological, amphibian/reptile, and avian surveys are being conducted on the property with hopes that artifacts and/or unusual or rare plants will be discovered.

Chair Clinton announced that action on this item is deferred until a later date.

12. HEART OF IOWA NATURE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Lekwa reported that the contractor has not returned to the construction site yet. Lekwa has been consulting with the engineers, and a letter has been drafted to send to the contractor to try and pin down a day when they intend to start. Lekwa added that SCC will need to begin counting construction days again and that extensions on the access agreements (originally planned for a June 1 project completion) will need to be renegotiated. A stretch of 30 dry days will be needed to get trucks to the site to pour cement. Lekwa said that small change orders will also be necessary to address drainage engineering.

In other news regarding the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail, J. Hornstein reported on the recent trails meeting in Huxley. Approximately 40 people were attendance, and Hornstein felt the trails committee garnered useful information from a variety of southern Story County trail users. Special Projects Ranger C. Williams will put together a summary report for the board. Additional meetings were scheduled in Cambridge and Maxwell.

13. OTHER

Chair Clinton remarked that this would be a good time to have a discussion of structure and when the vacant unit ranger position might be filled.

Director Lekwa proposed that the current re-structuring experiment move forward to streamline operations for the summer months. Unit Ranger Dittmer's resignation forces some decisions a little sooner than anticipated, but Lekwa said he would definitely like to see the position filled this summer. Dittmer will be moving out of the county residence the first weekend of June; Al Hahn will assist in an inspection of the property. Lekwa does not anticipate any work needed. Lekwa added the county human resources specialist is reviewing, restructuring, and reformatting all county job descriptions and that the unit ranger job descriptions may change to a non-exempt status. Lekwa is currently working on the unit ranger job description and envisions that this position may actually be more like the existing park ranger position and will not have the current level of management authority. Lekwa said he will be looking at applicants who are already law enforcement certified, although this would not be a requirement. He anticipates applicants from other counties who have experience.

E. Wilgenbusch declared that the board needs to take a holistic view at this organization prior to six weeks from the director's retirement. She questioned where the organization wants to go in the next 10 years, if more staff is needed, and if SCC needs to look at a

different skill set for this position. Wilgenbusch added that the board needs a focus group and needs to talk to campers and other park visitors to find out what their expectations are. Also, the board needs to talk individually with staff to see what is going well, what can be done to make things better, collect ideas, and work with the human resources specialist to come up with a plan. She asked if the board could step back, look at the big picture of the organization, and come up with a plan of what needs to be done in the next six months.

W. Clinton agreed that the board should have a retreat or strategic planning meeting and then decide how to gather information.

J. Hornstein said she would like to discuss the open ranger position and stated that this is an opportunity to get some changes made. The whole issue of law enforcement needs to be addressed. She questioned if the board should jump into hiring another ranger or find people to cover ranger duties in the interim. Also, given the amount of acres that SCC is acquiring, is law enforcement going to be the emphasis, or are more natural resource staff needed? Hornstein would like the board to review the last long-range plan.

T. Tedesco commented that there was discussion at the spring board member workshop that some counties are contracting law enforcement duties and questioned if that would work for Story County. He also suggested that ranger positions be advertised for a longer period of time and in law enforcement publications to attract the most qualified applicants. Tedesco added that the board needs to move ahead now because of the director's planned retirement in 12 months.

The board discussed offering a contract position while evaluating SCC's long-term. Lekwa stated that SCC has had a ranger on duty both day and night during the summer months and that most of the current law enforcement hours are being scheduled during evenings and weekends when visitors are utilizing the parks. Lekwa added that C. Williams' duties will be limited in the next couple of months with supervision of construction on the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail.

W. Clinton said these suggestions will be considered at the June 14 board meeting. Lekwa was asked to provide options to the board re: contracting/outsourcing law enforcement duties as opposed to hiring a permanent staff person for the next few months. Lekwa will also provide a list of the three most important tasks that a contract person could/would do.

T. Tedesco suggested that E. Wilgenbusch head up a committee to look at where SCC is now, where the board wants to go, put out a survey to the public to see what expectations are, and talk to employees as the board prepares to make changes. Wilgenbusch agreed that this is her job skill and that it seems prudent to do at this time. A retreat was scheduled for June 9 at 3:30 p.m. at the conservation center. The focus of this meeting will be succession planning for Story County Conservation. SCC's five-year plan and organizational chart will be sent to the board for their review prior to the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by T. Tedesco, SECOND by J. Hornstein, to adjourn the meeting. MCU.  
Chair Clinton adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

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Recording Secretary

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