

Story County Conservation Board  
Tuesday, September 11, 2012  
Story County Conservation Center, McFarland Park

93220032. Chair J. Pease called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS

Jim Pease – present  
Ted Tedesco – absent  
Joyce Hornstein – absent  
Sandy Opstvedt – present  
Allen Weber – present  
Wayne Clinton – absent (ex-officio)

STAFF

Mike Cox  
Jolene Van Waus  
Dustin Eighmy

GUESTS

Mike Meetz

3. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Chair Pease welcomed Park Ranger Eighmy and Mike Meetz, interested Nevada citizen.

4. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND HANDOUTS

There were no changes or additions to the agenda or handouts.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Weber, SECOND by Optsvedt, to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2012 meeting. MCU.

6. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS AND RECEIPTS

MOTION by Weber, SECOND by Opstvedt, to approve all claims and receipts as submitted. MCU.

7. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND UPDATES

There were no questions on the financial reports. Expenses and revenue for the fiscal year to date are on track.

8. SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS

Pease reported that Joyce Hornstein will be unable to attend the IACCB Fall Conference. Pease will attend Thursday- Friday; Cox will attend Friday- Saturday, and Weber will attend the Saturday sessions. Cox reported that staff is assembling a gift basket for the silent auction. Pease will donate a 2-lb. jar of honey; Weber will donate a Subway gift card.

Pease also noted the dog field trial at Peterson Park on Sept. 22, prairie seed harvest on Sept. 25, *Partners* Fall Festival on Oct. 7, and the next board meeting on Oct. 8. Cox added that Operation ReLeaf is September 13 at East Peterson Park.

9. COMMUNICATIONS

The director shared a letter with the board from Josh Spaete, Nevada, complimenting Park Ranger Eighmy and Campground Attendant Dale Sloan for providing exceptional service at a geocaching event at Oriole Lodge on September 8. Visitors were very impressed with the park, and local members were proud to host the event at Hickory Grove.

93220033. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mike Meetz announced that nominations for the annual Olav Smedal Conservation Award

are due October 26. The selection committee consists of three members from the Story County Conservation Board and two members from the Ames Izaak Walton League. The committee is seeking several candidates to consider for the award's 25<sup>th</sup> year.

11. APPROVE LIVING ROADWAY TRUST FUND AGREEMENT FOR BURN EQUIPMENT AND EQUIPMENT  
MOTION by Weber, SECOND by Opstvedt, to approve Agreement No. 90-85-LRTF-301 (Living Roadway Trust Fund Grant) for burn gear and equipment for IRVM. MCU.
12. APPROVE LIVING ROADWAY TRUST FUND AGREEMENT FOR A GPS WIRELESS UPGRADE  
MOTION by Opstvedt, SECOND by Weber, to approve Agreement No. 90-85-LRTF-303 (Living Roadway Trust Fund Grant) for a GPS wireless upgrade for IRVM. MCU.

Cox noted that the GPS unit will have a service charge of \$30/month when it is used.

13. APPROVE LIVING ROADWAY TRUST FUND AGREEMENT FOR I-35 SCENIC OVERLOOK BRUSH REMOVAL  
Cox explained that Conservation Corps Iowa (CCI) will be hired (under the direction of Natural Resources Specialist Yoakum) to remove cedars and woody brush from the remnant prairie. SCC has a management agreement with the IDOT. Cox added that the area is difficult to maintain because of its proximity to Interstate 35.

MOTION by Weber, SECOND by Opstvedt, to approve Agreement No. 90-85-LRTF-304 (Living Roadway Trust Fund) for I-35 Scenic Overlook brush removal. MCU.

Cox reported that two other grants were received for IRVM from the Living Roadway Trust Fund; one is for the purchase of a batwing mower; matching funds are being identified before bringing the agreement to the board for approval next month. The other grant is for 20 acres of native ecotype seed and is administered by the University of Northern Iowa; it does not require an agreement with Story County.

14. INDIAN CREEK FIELD REPORT  
Park Ranger Dustin Eighmy gave an update on the Indian Creek Unit's accomplishments over the past year. Eighmy shared a PowerPoint presentation featuring his family, co-workers, park projects, and law enforcement violations. Eighmy said he and conservation technicians DeWall and Hoppe are a good team, and they are all excited about the planned park expansion at Dakins Lake. Eighmy summarized the unit's activities by month as follows:
  - September 2011 – Park Ranger Ryan Wiemold resigned to move to Plymouth County, staff built a section of fence on HOINT, volunteers from the United Way Day of Caring cleared honeysuckle at Hickory Grove, and a boat was purchased from Bass Pro to replace the old, flat-bottom boat. Eighmy added that the new boat has been very useful for tournaments, law enforcement, and maintenance tasks. The fall fishing tournament had 16 teams registered.
  - October 2011 - County Conservation Peace Officers training was attended, a controlled goose hunt was held (only 3 geese were taken the whole season), and a Trick or Treat night at Breezy Bay was enjoyed by campers and the public. Leaking hydrants at Hickory Grove Park were replaced, budget work for next year was started, and staff worked with the CCI crew at Robison Wildlife Acres, harvested prairie seed, removed

brush, and mowed fire breaks for controlled burns.

- November 2011 – Worked continued with the CCI crew, the Hickory Grove shop and office areas were organized, the aerator at Dakins Lake was repaired, and Newsome Plumbing diagnosed problems with the Hickory Grove water lines. All the hydrants in the campground were repaired with the correct connectors; the rest of the park still needs repairs. Staff also worked on brush removal and storage issues.
- In December, brush piles were burned, timber stand improvement was done at Robison Wildlife Acres, and repairs were made on the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail. Pedal boats were cleaned and repaired, the shop interior was painted, and Eighmy rode along with an IDNR officer during deer season.
- January 2012 – Due to an unseasonably warm winter, removal of honeysuckle at Hickory Grove continued, bushes were pruned at the campground, and ditches and the primitive camping area were burned. Staff evaluations were conducted, policies and procedures were reviewed, meetings were held re: the park ranger position, and Rick Carter resigned as head ranger.
- February – Brush removal continued behind the dam at Hickory Grove, and sediment depths were measured at Jennett Heritage Area. Meetings were held re: the management plan at Jennett, design of new campground receipts, remote camping at Robison Wildlife Acres, and the Hickory Grove watershed. Summer job applications were reviewed.
- March – Rangers attended County Conservation Peace Officers' Association training, and staff helped the IDNR place osprey platforms at Peterson Park. Eighmy was thankful for the opportunity to stay home with his infant son for seven weeks.
- April – Eighmy participated in interviews for the Skunk River park ranger position. The spring fishing tournament was held (25 teams participated), and the campgrounds were cleaned and prepared for the early onset of camping season due to the nice weather.
- May – Ryan Wiemold was hired as the park ranger at McFarland Park, and the head ranger position was eliminated. Staff worked to get Hertz Family Woods ready for the Memorial Day dedication, Skunk River Water Trail meetings were attended, and staff assisted with safety training for summer staff. Work started on repairs to the Hickory Grove Park fishing jetties—an IDNR fish habitat grant project.
- In June, Eighmy completed weapons qualification, construction started on the remote camping area at Robison Wildlife Acres, and new concrete was poured at Hickory Grove shop. Staff assisted with preparing the Lekwa Access for its dedication.
- July – Time was spent on law enforcement patrol, helping the CCI crew at Robison Acres, and developing specifications for a bid to purchase two new trucks. Hickory Grove Watershed kiosks were constructed and placed, and a security light will be placed at the north boat ramp at Hickory Grove.
- August – The Hickory Grove Triathlon was held—without the swimming portion due to high e-coli levels. Work continued on bridges and kiosks. Most of the summer staff left prior to Labor Day; permanent staff reviewed their annual performance goals mid-year. Breezy Bay campground was full almost every weekend in August.

Eighmy said that September continues to be a busy month. The fall fishing tournament was held last weekend (18 teams participating) and camping is still going strong. Indian Creek staff will help the Skunk River Unit pave another section of the Touch-A-Life Trail at McFarland Park. Eighmy and Cox will be meeting with Michelle Soupier and Aaron Andrews re: the Hickory Grove Watershed project. Eighmy is pleased to see environmental education programs at Hickory Grove and children using the park.

Plans for the upcoming year include pruning trees (utilizing a boom truck) at Hickory Grove Park, leveling campsites, and helping the CCI crew with brush removal at the I-35

Scenic Overlook. Water to Breezy Bay will be shut off at the beginning of November, and a new dock will be installed at the campground this fiscal year.

Eighmy thanked the board for their support and active role in Story County Conservation's programs and events. He added that he has enjoyed the last two years serving as a park ranger in Story County.

The board thanked Eighmy for his presentation and asked him to extend their thanks to his co-workers as well. Director Cox remarked that he receives a lot of good comments about Hickory Grove and that Eighmy's good performance is noticed.

#### 15. GENERAL UPDATES

Director Cox reported on the following:

- A new portion of the Touch-A-Life Trail will be paved this month. Developing and building the trail is a cooperative effort between SCC and Ames Town and Country Kiwanis. Beginning September 17, SCC staff and Kiwanis members will spend two weeks on this addition to the paved trail.
- Regular water monitoring at Hickory Grove has ended for the season. Park Ranger Eighmy worked with the IDNR to do additional testing around the lake. Blue green algae is present but is well below the standard. The watershed analysis has been completed, and geese have been identified as the main contributor of bacteria at the beach. Cox said it is clear that SCC must address the goose problem aggressively.
- Dakins Lake expansion – The 50 percent design plans were received a week ago. SCC will continue to work on the design plans, which have been reduced to \$2.5 million excluding contingency funds. The \$65,000 playground cost was reduced by \$20,000, additional trees in the current cornfield area were taken out, cabin utilities were removed, and prairie and turf seeding will be done by staff. The existing campground (10 sites) will remain unchanged. Once this side of the park is up and running, some decisions can be made about the facilities on the east side. A grant proposal has been submitted to hard surface the trail around the lake. Seeding, tree planting, trails, and alternate bid items still need to be addressed. The board of supervisors will certify TIF debt in early December. Cox will keep the board informed as the project moves forward.
- The land acquisition north of Roland is pending as the landowner and NRCS have not finalized the easement.
- Cox met with the farmer who cash rents a portion of the Jennett Heritage Area to identify 10 acres (the field west of the upper pond) to be taken out of production next year.

#### 16. IOWA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARDS UPDATE

Since Hornstein was absent, there was no report.

#### 17. OTHER

None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Weber, SECOND by Opstvedt, to adjourn the meeting. Chair Pease adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

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Recording Secretary

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Conservation Board

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Story County