

Story County Conservation Board – Board/Staff Strategic Planning Meeting  
Monday, January 7, 2013  
Story County Conservation Center, McFarland Park

1. Chair Jim Pease called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.
2. Board members present: Jim Pease, Ted Tedesco, Joyce Hornstein, Allen Weber.  
Absent: Wayne Clinton

Staff present: Mike Cox, Tiffany Cornelius, Russ DeWall, Dustin Eighmy, Emily Herring, Joe Hill, Beau Hoppe, Heather Hucka, Melissa Johannes, Tyler Kelly, Jerry Keys, Jessica Lancial, Jolene Van Waus, Ryan Wiemold, Carol Williams, Amy Yoakum

3. Review Draft of Strategic Plan and Results of 2012 Survey  
Director Cox reviewed the process that the board and staff have followed in the process. A staff questionnaire was distributed in 2011, a consultant was hired to facilitate board and staff sessions in November 2011, and results from both sessions were consolidated into a draft document. A survey with questions pertaining to the draft document was sent to people on Story County Conservation's email contact list and also made available on the county's website for comments. Cox explained that the purpose of today's meeting was to review the survey results, make any changes to the draft, and prepare a final document for approval at the February 4 board meeting.

Comments from the survey were reviewed, and wording changes were made as needed throughout the document. Board members and staff then ranked the top three action items in each category, and those results were tabulated and shared.

The Conservation Board will take action on the strategic plan at the February meeting.

Cox remarked that planning efforts do not end with today's exercise. The strategic plan will be a road map to assist in determining what is included in annual work plans. Cox asked everyone to consider all the categories in the document and list one to three actions each individual could do personally to further each of the goals. He asked that these action ideas be returned to him as soon as possible.

4. Other  
None.
5. Chair Pease adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

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Recording Secretary

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Story County Conservation Board

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Story County Conservation Board  
Monday, January 7, 2013  
Story County Conservation Center, McFarland Park

1. Chair J. Pease called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS

Jim Pease – present

Ted Tedesco – present

Joyce Hornstein – present

Allen Weber – present

Wayne Clinton - present (arrived 4:35)

STAFF

Mike Cox

Jolene Van Waus

Tiffany Cornelius

GUESTS

Don Berning

Matt Ward

Lauris Olson

3. ELECTION OF 2013 STORY COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD OFFICERS

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Hornstein, nominating Jim Pease as chair.

Tedesco moved, Hornstein seconded, that nominations cease and a unanimous ballot be cast. MCU.

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Weber, nominating Joyce Hornstein as vice-chair.

Tedesco moved, Weber seconded, that nominations cease and a unanimous ballot be cast. MCU.

MOTION by Hornstein, SECOND by Tedesco, nominating Allen Weber as secretary.

Tedesco moved, Hornstein seconded, that nominations cease and a unanimous ballot be cast. MCU.

4. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Guests Matt Ward and Don Berning, representing Story County Pheasants Forever, and Lauris Olson, interested citizen, introduced themselves and were welcomed to the meeting.

5. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND HANDOUTS

The update by Outreach Coordinator Cornelius was moved ahead in the meeting prior to action items.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Hornstein, to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2012 meeting. MCU.

7. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS AND RECEIPTS

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

8. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND UPDATES

Cox stated that the budget is on track for this time of the fiscal year with the exception of overtime and vehicle fuels and maintenance. He added that the Dakins land acquisition has not occurred yet.

9. SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS

Please noted upcoming O.W.L.S. programs and the FY14 budget work session with the board of supervisors on January 14 at 1:30 p.m. Board members do not have to participate in the budget work session but are welcome to attend. The next board meeting will be February 4 at 5:30 p.m. and the March meeting will be held on the 14<sup>th</sup> at the administration building prior to the county's public budget hearing.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no additional communications.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

12. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM UPDATE

Tiffany Cornelius, outreach coordinator, gave a report on SCC's volunteer program.

Cornelius shared that some of the volunteer events that happen on a regular basis include Trail Enhancement and Management (TEAM) workdays, Ames Area Amateur Astronomers programs, prairie walks, fishing tournaments, Partners festivals, Trek the Trails Snowshoe and Trail Run, and service learning opportunities through connections at DMACC, ISU, and 4-H. Individuals also volunteer to monitor bluebird boxes, collect prairie seed, assist with environmental education, clean up parks through the Adopt-A-Park program, and serve on the conservation board, trails committee, and Partners advisory board. Cornelius is trying to stress to volunteers the importance of reporting their participation (via phone, mail, or email) to collect data for record keeping which could also help towards receiving grants. In the future, she would like volunteers to be able to input their hours directly to the internet; however, that method is not an option available at this time. Cornelius added that the new staff report format has helped with gathering and tracking volunteer hours.

In FY12, 261 individual s and 19 volunteer groups contributed 2,195 hours to SCC. To date in FY13 (July-November), 2,322 hours have been logged by 236 volunteers and 25 volunteer groups. October was a big month with the fall festival and fishing tournament. Trek the Trails is SCC's big winter event and will be held February 16.

Cornelius advertises/recruits volunteers through the website, Facebook, press releases, Prairie Horizons, and the Volunteer Center of Story County. Something new she has implemented is emailing volunteer opportunities to targeted groups, i.e. Iowa State University's Natural Resource and Management Department, 4-H, scouts, and Volunteer Center of Story County. She also sends items of interest to current volunteers.

Since being on the job since last November, one of Cornelius's goals was to get in touch with volunteers, clean up the database, and get a current list of volunteers. Cornelius enjoys meeting and interacting with volunteers and feels these contacts help with retention.

Cornelius would like to conduct a needs assessment with staff to determine where they could use volunteers, provide training opportunities, and implement an evaluation piece. She enrolled in a volunteer management class at DMACC this fall and is excited to sign up

for spring classes. After three days of training, Cornelius can use on-the-job experience and AmeriCorps credits towards her volunteer management certificate.

Cornelius has also started working on an update of the SCC brochure and will complete unfinished sections of the county website with photos she has taken over the last year.

Board members complimented Cornelius on her efforts and thanked her for a great report. Director Cox remarked that Cornelius has rejuvenated SCC's volunteer and outreach program through her enthusiasm, interaction with volunteers, and great press releases.

12. APPROVE PLACEMENT OF MEMORIAL BENCH AT WAKEFIELD WOODS  
MOTION by Hornstein, SECOND by Tedesco, to approve placement of a bench at Wakefield Woods honoring John and Anne Wakefield. MCU.

Weber asked if SCC is receiving more of these requests and if a procedure needs to be in place. Cox said that while SCC has a policy about naming memorials, there are currently no design qualifications. He added that this will be something to consider, especially with the Dakins Lake expansion project. Board members said they would like to see items that are well constructed and require low maintenance.

13. ENDORSE REQUEST TO IOWA LEGISLATURE FOR INCREASE OF STATE SALES TAX TO FUND THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND OUTDOOR RECREATION TRUST FUND

Pease explained that endorsement is requested by the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards and is in support of the IWill ballot amendment passed in 2012.

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Hornstein, to endorse the request of state sales tax to fund the natural resources and outdoor recreation trust fund. MCU.

14. DISCUSS USE OF COUNTY PROPERTY FOR EVENTS BY PHEASANTS FOREVER  
Don Berning reminded the board that two different Pheasants Forever events—a youth hunt and a dog trial--were held on SCC property last fall. Pheasants Forever is hoping to continue these events on recurring dates and locations to increase attendance. The proposed date for the youth hunt would be the second Saturday of October each year so hunter safety instructors can publicize this information to students. This event includes a safety talk, mock hunt, and clay bird shooting prior to hunting stocked birds. Pheasants Forever organizers would prefer to utilize Peterson Park for the hunt because of its proximity to the Izaak Walton League where the earlier portions of the program will be held. The park would not be closed during the hunt because interference with other park users is not anticipated. Pheasants Forever plans to change the name to “mentor hunt” to avoid confusion from the youth hunting season set the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Weber, to allow the director to work out an arrangement with Story County Pheasants for this event for up to a five-year period and then re-evaluate. MCU.

Matt Ward reported that last year's dog trial at Peterson Park had 24 participants—some from out of state. He is hoping to offer the event again this spring at a different SCC location. The board remarked that they wish to minimize conflict with other park users.

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Hornstein to allow the director to work with Story County Pheasants Forever on plans for a dog trial. MCU.

The director acknowledged Story County Pheasant Forever's \$11,000 donation towards the acquisition of the Strum property.

## 16. GENERAL UPDATES

Director Cox gave these updates:

- Purchase of the Strum property closed before the end of December. Cox was very appreciative of the Story County Attorney's office for their help. Funding for the purchase was received from both the Iowa DNR and Pheasants Forever. Due to timing of the conservation easement, the Strums will farm the property next year, and Story County will take possession next October. In the meantime, SCC will work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, which is funding all the restoration work.
- Dakins Lake Expansion – Final authorization was received from the National Park Service for conversion of the LAWCON development restrictions. This enables the sale of land to the Lincoln Township trustees and the purchase of the INHF land. Cox is drafting purchase and sales agreements.
- The Iowa DNR dam permit and joint permit (IDNR and Army Corps of Engineers) are still pending. Cox is hopeful that permits can be completed within the next month. Bid letting is on hold until all permits are received.
- SCC is co-holder of an easement with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation north of McFarland Park on the north side of Pleasant Valley Church. The owners are in the processing of selling that parcel to the INHF. SCC will need to consider amending the conservation easement to allow the church to build a fellowship hall. The board would also need to consider if SCC wants to continue to be co-holders of an easement and be willing to receive the other portion of the property from INHF—about 40 acres. (Directors note: This parcel is 31.13 acres.) Cox added that there would be no cost for the county to acquire this land.
- Staff evaluations will be completed in January with new forms developed by Springsted as part of the county's compensation study. Springsted has recommended merit increases in conjunction with staff evaluations. The county has not accepted the plan yet, but the new evaluations forms will be used in preparation if and when the merit system is in place. Clinton reported that, at this time, there have been no discussions between the supervisors and human resources director for implementing merit increases. Clinton added that the study has looked at different steps in job classifications and will be factoring in salary adjustments to bring staff up to minimum pay levels. Department heads will be informed of any updates.
- Cox announced that there will be a Conservation, Climate, Energy, and Environment forum in Ames on January 24. He will forward more details to board members as soon as they become available to him.
- Cox has been reviewing IRVM's drainage district program and working with staff to decide if any changes need to be made to the FY14 budget request.

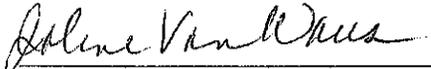
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17. OTHER

Tedesco inquired about the vacant board member position. Clinton responded that all county appointments are on hold pending information from the county attorney's office on gender balance on boards and commissions. This will be brought forward at the board of supervisor's meeting tomorrow to help establish a policy for public awareness and to evaluate candidates. Clinton will continue to communicate with board chair Pease on the status of this policy and replacement of SCC's board member.

ADJOURNMENT

Tedesco moved, Hornstein seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. Chair Pease adjourned the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

  
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Recording Secretary

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Story County Conservation Board