

Story County Conservation Board
Monday, September 9, 2013
Story County Conservation Center, Ames, Iowa

80824512. Chair J. Pease called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS

Jim Pease – present
Ted Tedesco – present
Joyce Hornstein – present
Allen Weber – present
Craig Meyers – present
Wayne Clinton – present

STAFF

Mike Cox
Jolene Van Waus
Dustin Eighmy

GUESTS

None

3. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The chair acknowledged Park Ranger Dustin Eighmy.

4. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND HANDOUTS

There were no supplemental handouts or changes to the agenda. Pease thanked all the board members and the board of supervisors for attending today's groundbreaking ceremony at Dakins Lake.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Weber, to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2013 board meeting. MCU.

6. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS AND RECEIPTS

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

7. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND UPDATES

There were no questions or concerns about the financial reports.

8. SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS

The chair noted the disabled veterans hunt, hunter education field classes, TEAM Day, seed harvests, IACCB fall conference, and the Partners fall festival. Ranger Eighmy commented on several upcoming events at Hickory Grove Park: a Trick or Treat night at Breezy Bay Campground on September 27, a haunted trail hike on September 28, and a bass fishing tournament on September 29.

9. COMMUNICATIONS - None

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

11. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF AGREEMENTS BETWEEN STORY COUNTY
CONSERVATION AND THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR
LIVING ROADWAY TRUST FUND GRANTS

Director Cox explained that Living Roadway Trust Fund grant agreements now require signatures from the conservation board and the board of supervisors, who also must approve a resolution of support. All five grants being awarded to Story County Conservation are consolidated here in one action item for approval of the agreements and recommendation to the board of supervisors. Cox added that none of the grants requires matching funds.

MOTION by Weber, SECOND by Hornstein, to approve agreements #90-84-LR14-325, Work Zone Lighting (\$2,500); #90-84-LR14-326, Standard Loader for 100 hp Tractor (\$7,306); #90-84-LR14-327, Pesticide Storage Safety Cabinet (\$2,252); #90-84-LR14-328, Educational Sign for Story County's IRVM Program (\$3,000); and #90-00-LR14-206, I-35 Scenic Prairie View Overlook Restoration (\$5,850) and recommend to the Story County Board of Supervisors that they approve these agreements and adopt resolution #14-18. MCU.

12. CONSIDER SIGNING LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR STATE AND TRIBAL WILDLIFE GRANTS PROGRAM, AND LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

Chair Pease shared names of other agencies (of the 700+ organizations nationwide) that had signed on to this letter. Pease reminded the board that Story County Conservation has received money from many of these funds and stressed their importance to programs in Iowa.

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Hornstein to approve signing a letter of support for the federal grant programs listed. MCU.

..... Pease said he will sign and forward the letter via email.

13. INDIAN CREEK UNIT REPORT

..... Park Ranger Dustin Eighmy updated the board on the Indian Creek Unit's activities over the last year. Eighmy is starting his third year of employment with SCC. Other full-time employees are Beau Hund and attendant. Eighmy said Pritchett did a tremendous job, and the campground was very busy this year--often full for the weekends by mid-week.

- Fall 2012. In September, the beach was closed due to high e-coli readings, the fall fishing tournament had 18 teams participating, staff helped the Skunk River Unit on the Touch-A-Life Trail, and 24 schools descended on Hickory Grove for the Nevada High School cross country meet, bringing thousands of visitors to the park. In October, rangers attended the County Conservation Peace Officers Association's fall workshop, a Trick or Treat event was held at Breezy Bay Campground, staff helped Conservation Corps Iowa remove brush, and supervised United Way Day volunteers in removing honeysuckle. In November, buildings were winterized, new pickups for Eighmy and Special Projects Ranger Williams were purchased, memorial benches were ordered, risky trees were removed, and prescribed burns were done at Hickory Grove, Robison Wildlife Acres, and McFarland Park.
- Winter 2012-13. Preparations were made for installation of a new security light at the north boat ramp, the old barn site was cleaned up, a new sign was placed at Oriole Lodge, and maintenance on equipment was done in December. Staff attended Winterfest, cut and split firewood, inspected fish structure with an underwater camera, and completed staff evaluations in January. In February, staff conducted an ADA assessment of trails, ordered a new dock for Hickory Grove, checked wood duck boxes, and plowed snow.

- Spring 2013. Interviews for summer staff were conducted in March, and Story County Conservation hosted the CCPOA spring workshop. A high bid for the waterline repair project at Hickory Grove was declined. Staff is currently in the process of hiring a contractor to do the project on a smaller scale, making repairs to two or three hydrants at a time. Staff repaired picnic tables, cleared and repaired fence on the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail, and trimmed trees at Breezy Bay Campground. The spring fishing tournament had 39 teams registered. The weather was good--fishing was not. Mowing started early.
- Summer 2013. Heavy rains arrived Memorial Day weekend, and the beach at Hickory Grove was flooded. Staff received training on the tree spade and transplanted several trees. In June, Eighmy met with a Boy Scout about placing benches on the HOINT between Collins and Maxwell. A new dock was ordered and placed at Breezy Bay Campground. The Hickory Grove Triathlon brought 150-200 participants and dozens of spectators to the park. A new "Go Fish" event was held on free fishing weekend. A goose roundup in July captured 18 geese for re-location. No decision has been made for a special goose season this fall. Eighmy reported that water readings are better. Steps (old creosote) down to the beach were removed. An ISU group has been contacted to assist in designing replacement steps. All the shelters were painted, and fascia boards were replaced. Structural supports at Meadowlark shelter need to be replaced. Two memorial benches were placed near Plover Bay shelter overlooking the island. A third memorial bench was installed at Oriole Lodge. The first Hy-Vee Kids Triathlon was held at Hickory Grove. In August Hickory Grove staff assisted with paving the TALT extension at McFarland Park. Parking lot posts at Hickory Grove beach were removed and replaced, and speed bumps were installed on the main park road. The forestry mower attachment on the Bobcat was used to widen trails for the upcoming cross country meet.

Tedesco asked about park violations. Eighmy said these have decreased since rangers started writing more tickets. Also, the number of violations also decreased, and more families are coming to the beaches. Board members complimented Eighmy and his staff on the appearance of Hickory Grove Park and on jobs well done. The board thanked Eighmy for his report.

14. GENERAL UPDATES

- Cox shared photos from today's groundbreaking ceremony at Dakins Lake. He was disappointed that no media attended; however, Outreach Coordinator Cornelius took some wonderful photos that can be used for publication. About 75 people braved the hot weather, and Cox reiterated his thanks to the conservation board and board of supervisors for their presence. The Dakins family was especially pleased with the event. A location for posting updates on the project is yet to be determined. Cox said he would like to have this area located near the park but away from the construction site.
- Cox met with FEMA coordinators for site reviews of the FEMA projects, who are now in the process of writing up project worksheets. Cox reported that there are some significant damages to both the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail and Praeri Rail Trail. The damaged IRVM pole barn roof has been repaired. Costs not covered by the county's insurance will likely be reimbursed by FEMA.
- The NRCS notified Cox that a request for proposals to conduct wetland building, tile work, and seeding on the Strum parcel is open. Work will be done this fall.

- Cox is part of the task force assigned to implement Story County's Capital Improvement Plan. Building and capital assets inventories have been finished; land inventory is close to completion. Cox explained that a percentage of TIF money can be used for capital improvements. Departments will submit potential projects for review by the task force and board of supervisors for inclusion and prioritization in the budget. Cox will suggest revisions to SCC's 10-year capital improvement plan for the board to review at the October board meeting. Cox added that the Hickory Grove sewer system is a priority as well as an extension of the Praeri Rail Trail through Zearing to Dakins Lake.

15. OTHER

None.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Weber, SECOND by Tedesco, that the meeting be adjourned.
Chair Pease adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Recording Secretary

Story County Conservation Board