

Story County Conservation Board
Monday, February 10, 2014
Story County Conservation Center, Ames, Iowa

162960512. Chair Hornstein called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS

Joyce Hornstein - present
Ted Tedesco - absent
Craig Meyers - present
Allen Weber - present
Jim Pease – present
Wayne Clinton – arrived at 5:42

STAFF

Mike Cox
Jolene Van Waus
Ryan Wiemold
Amy Yoakum

GUESTS

Steven Carter
Don Berning
Eric Phipps
Rick Sanders
Justin Platts
Mike Meetz

3. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Chair Hornstein invited guests to introduce themselves and welcomed them to the meeting.

4. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND HANDOUTS

Hornstein suggested that the Skunk River Unit program update be moved ahead of the action items on the agenda.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 20, 2014 BOARD MEETING

Weber noted he was absent at the January meeting; the minutes stated he was present.

MOTION by Pease, SECOND by Meyers, to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2014 board meeting with this correction. MCU.

6. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS AND RECEIPTS

Director Cox noted that a third distribution from the Gladys Leui Estate has been received.

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

7. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND UPDATES

Meyers noted that several sections of the update report had percentage errors. Financial Data Manager Van Waus will correct those.

8. SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS

Hornstein highlighted several upcoming programs and meetings. She reminded everyone that the March meeting will be held on Tuesday the 11th at the board of supervisors conference room in the administration building prior to the FY15 county budget hearing.

9. COMMUNICATIONS

Hornstein announced that the IACCB spring workshop will be held on April 5 at Reiman Gardens. There is also a fundraising event for the Dakins Lake fish fund that day. Cox will inform that board regarding the time and agenda for that event as they become available.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Don Berning, Story County Pheasants Forever (SCPF) habitat chair, thanked Story County Conservation for their cooperation and assistance in holding three special events last year—a disabled veterans hunt at Ketelsen Greenwing Marsh, a youth hunt at West Peterson Park, and a dog trial at Skunk River Flats. Revenue from these events will support high school shooting teams that Pheasants Forever sponsors. In addition, SCPF adopted Jennett Heritage Area and pulled garlic mustard and removed fence at the area. SCPF plans to help with habitat improvement at the new Roland Wildlife Area and has set aside PF seed for planting buffer strips throughout the county.

Board members and Director Cox acknowledged SCPF as a valuable SCC partner and thanked them for all their hard work and ongoing support.

Mike Meetz announced that the 2013 Olav Smedal award was presented to Pat Schlarbaum.

11. PRESENTATION ON ISU RESEARCH PARK DEVELOPMENT

Rick Sanders stated that the board of supervisors is focusing on economic development in the county and thought Story County Conservation could take a role in planning natural areas and providing environmental education opportunities at the ISU Research Park.

Steve Carter, director, gave an overview of the ISU Research Park. In its 25+ years, over 40 companies have started at this location, employing more than 2,500 people in Iowa. The research park is now at 96 percent occupancy, and ISU President Leath has supported its growth up to another 200 acres. Carter commented on several of the tenants providing scientific breakthroughs and business success and contributing to the growth of the research park.

Justin Platts, landscape architect, shared the research park's approach to design a "park-like" environment for research parks to provide wellness, collaboration, and spaces that feel natural so people sense that they are working in a healthy, green space. Platts showed master plan highlights including the layout using existing landform, soils, and processes to minimize development impact, regional green infrastructure system to manage storm water, and a hub square where the research park community can come together. Multiple modes of transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, auto) are considered, and the master plan extends to the entire research park, tying together old and new phases over time. Interpretative developments could be spaced throughout the park, and Platts imagines that school groups and families would enjoy spending time there.

Sanders stated it is also important to start tying county trails systems to Ames trails. He acknowledged that building these trails would incur ongoing costs and management. Sanders envisions Story County's involvement as an opportunity for the entire region which will give Story County Conservation a way to reach out to new audiences. The county now has a model for funding, but support of the concept is needed from Conservation.

Pease suggested that the board discuss this topic further at another meeting.

The board thanked Carter and Platts for their presentation.

12. SKUNK RIVER PROGRAM UPDATE

Park Ranger Ryan Wiemold presented a yearly report on the Skunk River Unit. He told the board a little about each staff member and described tasks they do on a daily basis, including park and building maintenance, habitat management, project management, and law enforcement. Wiemold added that law enforcement is focused on protecting the county's resources: land, plants, animals, and people. The park ranger aide position added last summer was successful, helping with basic law enforcement, registering campers, and providing public information.

Wiemold gave a PowerPoint presentation of the unit's accomplishments over the past year. In addition to normal seasonal tasks, highlights included:

- Remodeling the conservation center restrooms
- Supervising the installation of a picnic pad by an ISU class at West Peterson Park
- Hosting the County Conservation Peace Officers Association workshop
- Installing a culvert on the Touch-A-Life Trail and adding 1,200-feet of concrete to an extension of the trail
- Installing parking lot barriers at East Peterson Park, beach ropes and hitching posts at West Peterson Park, general park signs, and Skunk River Water Trails kiosks
- Participating in A.L.I.C.E. training with Story County Sheriff's Department
- Inspecting and closing trails after May 2013 flooding
- Seeding new areas at Dakins Lake and cutting trees for fish structure
- Helping prepare for Dakins Lake groundbreaking; assisting with fish kill of the lake and relocation of fish
- Assisting Pheasants Forever with three hunting events
- Staffing Hy-Vee Kids Triathlon at Hickory Grove
- Helping environmental education staff clean and organize the conservation center basement
- Working with staff and conservation partners on the Hickory Grove Watershed project

Wiemold said plans for 2014 include assisting with the development of Dakins Lake and the Roland Wildlife Area, continuing/finishing extensions to the Touch-A-Life Trail, and implementing computers in law enforcement. Wiemold thanked the board for their support of staff in managing the county's areas.

The board thanked Ryan for his presentation and the good work he and his staff accomplished over the past year.

13. CONSIDER RESOLUTION PROHIBITING IMPORTATION OF FIREWOOD

Pease recognized that it will be difficult to enforce this ban but feels it is important to adopt the resolution. Cox . Signs will be posted at Story County Conservation parks, and information will be sent to previous campers notifying them of the ban prior to the camping season.

.....MOTION by Pease, SECOND by Weber, to approve resolution #2014-01 prohibiting
..... importation of firewood from all locations outside of Story County. MCU.

14. CONSIDER RESOLUTION OF COMMITMENT TO THE HICKORY GROVE LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Submission of a Watershed Improvement Review Board (WIRB) grant application is planned for work outside the county on stream bank stabilization, pond construction, and livestock exclusion. The proposal would split the cost between WIRB and the Iowa DNR Lakes Program—approximately \$200,000 each. Grant applications are due the end of February.

MOTION by Meyers, SECOND by Weber, to approve resolution #2014-02 committing support to the Hickory Grove Lake Watershed Management Action Plan and the administration of grant funds. MCU.

15. GENERAL UPDATES

Cox reported that he is working with the county attorney on the resolution of endowment funds currently held with the Story County Community Foundation.

The park ranger selection is still in progress. Civil tests for the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy need to be administered before the position can be offered.

16. OTHER

Mike Meetz reported that the Story County Outdoor Alliance has received 501C status. The group has set up a web page, is updating the brochure, and will meet soon to discuss their next steps. Meetz said he would welcome a list of projects for possible funding.

Hornstein reminded board members of the Environmental Lobby Day at the statehouse on March 18 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The board is also working on the director's evaluation.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Weber, SECOND by Pease, that the meeting be adjourned. MCU.

Chair Hornstein adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Recording Secretary

Story County Conservation Board