

Story County Conservation Board  
April 10, 2017  
Story County Conservation Center, Ames, Iowa

1. Chair Nancy Franz called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS

Nancy Franz – present  
Jim Pease – present  
Craig Meyers – present  
Ted Tedesco – present  
Rick Sanders - present

STAFF

Mike Cox  
Jolene Van Waus  
Erica Place

GUESTS

Mike Meetz

3. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND HANDOUTS

Franz suggested the outreach program update be moved ahead of the action items.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mike Meetz remarked that he enjoyed the joint Partners and Outdoor Alliance of Story County gathering last week.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Meyers, to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2017 board meeting. MCU.

6. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS AND RECEIPTS

Pease inquired about budgeted revenue from the Gladys Leui estate. Director Cox reported that the 2016 distribution of \$90,000 was received in one payment last week.

MOTION by Pease, SECOND by Meyers, to approve claims and receipts. MCU.

7. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND UPDATES

Budget amendment requests were submitted to the auditor last week. In the Conservation budget, Cox reported there were additional operating expenses in buildings maintenance for improvements to ISU Research Park houses and in grounds maintenance for repairs on the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail and at Ketelsen Marsh. Capital accounts were reduced in both expenses and revenue due to funding changes in the shoreline stabilization project at Hickory Grove Park. IRVM budget amendments reflected a slight increase in expenses and a decrease in revenue due to a delay of drainage district payments.

8. SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS

Chair Franz noted numerous spring events and meetings. Outreach Coordinator Place provided additional details on the fly tying program.

9. CONSIDER EMPLOYMENT OF SEASONAL STAFF

MOTION by Pease, SECOND by Meyers, to approve employment of Tracy Christiansen, Seth Dicks, Megan Dohrman, Jacob Harmon, Jamey Kuehn, Wiley Schatz, and Matthew Shanklin effective April 11, 2017. MCU.

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10. CONSIDER GRAZING LEASE AGREEMENT

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Pease, to approve a grazing lease agreement between Story County Conservation Board and Finch Livestock Exchange for goats in 2017. MCU.

11. OUTREACH PROGRAM UPDATE

Erica Place reported on the outreach program, which encompasses volunteers as well as outreach activities.

On February 10, 2017, Story County Conservation was certified as a Service Enterprise—one of 10 currently in the state of Iowa. Selected staff and volunteers attended training and created an action plan, which Place distributed to the board. Some items have already been completed, while others are ongoing. “Learn.Know.Go.” is the catch phrase to involve volunteers in everything SCC does, and training will continue at all staff meetings. Place feels that staff perceptions have changed, and she is pleased with increased leadership from staff as well as feedback from volunteers. Place would like to use apps to document invasive species, expand the Wasp Watchers program, and empower volunteers to lead workdays.

Almost 240 individuals and groups logged 3,800 volunteer hours to date in FY17. Place is currently using Excel to track volunteer hours but is researching other software programs. Meyers offered his assistance in developing a database.

The volunteer appreciation dinner will be held on April 26. The event was moved to Prairie Moon Winery to allow for more space.

During the coming year, Place would like to focus on outreach. SCC’s Facebook page is still growing, and Place sees a lot of engagement and interaction. She would like to increase use of Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube to reach a different audience. The Prairie Horizons newsletter will feature a new, color format starting with the fall edition. In addition to 1,850 newsletters mailed to individuals and 555 copies delivered to local businesses/organizations, 1,646 copies were emailed to individuals, volunteers, and all Story County employees.

Place would like to establish better, ongoing relationships with ISU clubs/groups/classes, media outlets, and welcome centers/visitors bureaus. She would also like to see consistency in SCC’s brand and message. The possibility of having a marketing/communications intern assist with social media accounts, create promotional and orientation videos, and expand and update marketing contacts is an option Place is considering.

The board thanked Erica for her informative report and great work.

12. GENERAL UPDATES

Director Cox gave these updates:

- Construction on the shower house at Hickory Grove is progressing with a mid-May opening anticipated. Franz suggested an official opening/ribbon cutting.
- The drawdown of Hickory Grove Lake is still planned for fall 2017; however, Cox is waiting for the IDNR to confirm cost estimates on the procedure to be used.
- A review committee meeting for the Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor was held today with 60% designs presented. Cox said that Phase I of the project should be ready

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for bid in late May or early June with substantial completion anticipated before the end of 2017. Work continues on the design to reduce costs or ways to increase funding. Cox will apply for a REAP grant for phases 2 and 3 of the project which includes amenities to the park. Cox said the City of Ames may also apply for a REAP grant.

- The vault toilet for Dakins Lake will be arriving for installation this week.
- Cox stated that the design portion of the plan to pave the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail is identified in the FY18 budget. Slater is interested in paving a mile of the trail between R38 and the High Trestle Trail, and Cox said he is considering applying for grants to pave the trail to Cambridge. \$800,000 in energy transfer funds is designated for the HOINT, and Cox would like to see that money used as matching funds for grant projects.
- Water Trail grants were awarded for improvements to the Peterson Park and Askew Bridge accesses. The City of Ames also received a grant for the Riverside Road access and to re-configure the low-head dam.
- The IDNR will collaborate with SCC on streambank stabilization work at Peterson Park; SCC will provide materials, and the IDNR will provide labor. Trees with root balls will be moved from the ISU Research Park to Peterson Park (hopefully this fall) for the project. The IDNR is also interested in working with SCC on Hannum's Mill mitigation. Cox added that SCC is only one of three agencies in the state serving as a water trail sponsor.

#### 13. BOARD REPORTS

- Franz reported that the trails committee held "tool time" in March where they purged, inventoried, and repaired tools. The April TEAM Day will be at Robison Wildlife Acres.
- Pease shared results of a report on the pre-restoration assessment of the fisheries at the ISU Research Park. Creek chubs were the most common fish found. Pease added that this report will serve as a good baseline.
- Meyers has not heard anything from Colo regarding a potential partnership on the Hickory Grove sewer project. Sanders will follow up with Supervisor Chitty.
- Tedesco remarked that he appreciates all the activity and enthusiasm occurring in Story County Conservation—the best he has seen in his 8 years on the board.
- Sanders reported that six candidates have applied for the vacant conservation board member position. He anticipates that the new member will be appointed at the April 25 board of supervisors meeting and attend the May conservation board meeting. The supervisors will discuss land acquisition at their April 11 meeting and a teleconference is scheduled with the Army Corps of Engineers on April 13.

#### 14. OTHER

Mike Meetz reported that dumping is occurring in the parking lot at Jordan Wildlife Area.

#### ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Meyers, to adjourn. MCU.

Chair Franz adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

  
Recording Secretary

  
Story County Conservation Board

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