

Story County Conservation Board
Monday, September 12, 2011
Story County Conservation Center, McFarland Park

1. Chair T. Tedesco called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS	STAFF	GUESTS
Ted Tedesco – present	Mike Cox	None
Wayne Clinton – present	Jolene Van Waus	
Jim Pease – present	Jerry Keys	
Erin Wilgenbusch – present		
Joyce Hornstein – present		
3. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS
There were no guests present.
4. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND HANDOUTS
The chair noted supplemental packet information.
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
MOTION by J. Pease, SECOND by W. Clinton, to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2011 meeting. MCU.
6. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS AND RECEIPTS
MOTION by W. Clinton, SECOND by J. Hornstein, to approve all claims and receipts as submitted. MCU.
7. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND UPDATES
There were no questions or comments regarding financial reports.
8. SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS
No additional events or meetings were noted.
9. COMMUNICATIONS
Chair Tedesco congratulated staff involved with the Jennett Heritage Area dedication on September 8. He said that it was a first class event and well received by the large crowd in attendance. Tedesco added that he would like to acknowledge the staff into the written record for their hard work.
10. PUBLIC COMMENTS
None
11. APPROVE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPLICATION FOR A STORY COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT TO REPLACE PLAY EQUIPMENT AT DAKINS LAKE
MOTION by W. Clinton, SECOND by E. Wilgenbusch, to approve the resolution authorizing application for a Story County Community Foundation grant. MCU.

12. APPROVE RESOLUTION TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING THE REFUGE STATUS AT HICKORY GROVE PARK FOR A CONTROLLED GOOSE HUNT
MOTION by J. Pease, SECOND by W. Clinton, to approve a resolution for a controlled goose hunt at Hickory Grove Park for the period of October 1-16, 2011 and October 22, 2011-January 11, 2012.

Director Cox explained the selection of days that hunting will be permitted, elimination of zones and permanent blinds, and limiting the number of hunters. There was discussion about changing the number of hunters to accommodate adult supervision of youth hunters.

Pease amended his motion proposing that hunters be limited to three per day unless a mentored youth hunt, at which time hunters be limited to four. Motion was seconded by Wilgenbusch. MCU.

13. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATE

Jerry Keys, environmental education coordinator, gave this update on the environmental education program.

- Story County Conservation provides environmental education programming to all the schools in the county, with the exception of Maxwell Middle School. The naturalists work with teachers to follow the Iowa Core Curriculum. Team building is a new activity which has been well received, and the naturalists are also involving students in service learning projects (cutting honeysuckle, harvest prairie seed, and pulling garlic mustard).

- Nature camps continue to be well attended, and a backpacking trip to the Black Hills for 8-12 graders was offered this summer in conjunction with Plymouth County Conservation. Other than encountering some nasty poison ivy, the trip went well. Adult day trips around Iowa (utilizing the 15-passenger van) were held in the spring and fall.

- Amy Yoakum wrote two successful Wildlife Diversity Management Grant proposals. She has been instrumental in getting goats at Robison Acres and will submit a third grant proposal this fall. Yoakum and Heather Hucka submitted and received a REAP-CEP grant for all Iowa naturalists to go to the National Association of Interpretation conference in Minnesota. All four naturalists from Story County are attending the conference.

- Jerry Keys is working on plan for a natural play area at McFarland Park utilizing funds given in memory of Frank Vance. A similar playground is being considered at Dakins Lake. Jerry is also working on a "Guide by Cell" program in which interpretive signs placed in various areas instruct park visitors to hear recorded messages via cell phone. This new program has been well received in Polk County, and survey data is still being collected.

Keys plans to apply for a "copy" grant through REAP for a similar program in Story County.

- Naturalist Linda Zaletel has announced plans to retire at the end of the school year. The EE staff will be looking at the programming this winter and consider changes, philosophy, and focus before her replacement is hired.

14. GENERAL UPDATES

Director Cox reported on the following:

- Reiterating comments from board members earlier in the meeting, Cox stated that the Jennett dedication was a tremendous event. He especially acknowledged Special Projects Ranger Carol Williams and Anita O’Gara from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation for their extraordinary efforts. Cox reported that he has met with the farmer, and they agreed on the next area to come out of production.
- Photos were shared from the United Day of Caring at Hickory Grove on September 9. The volunteer group from Alliant Energy did a great job clearing out honeysuckle!
- Photos in the board packet showed FEMA repairs on the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail (interstate mile). Cox reported that the surfacing material did not pack well, and some complaints were received. A roller was rented to remedy the situation, and rain afterwards helped. Other FEMA projects with slight changes in scope are awaiting approval before proceeding with repairs.
- IRVM’s brush control contractor completed work in four townships as planned. IRVM staff is doing some drainage district work, which is reflected in higher summer salary totals.
- Cox distributed a summary of responses from questionnaires given to staff in July. Cox has had one-on-one meetings with all staff, and everyone is on board to look at SCC’s programs and mission and move forward. Cox questioned how the board would like to accomplish this and in what format and timeline to proceed.

W. Clinton suggested a partial day of strategic planning followed by a second meeting to tie things up. The need for a facilitator was suggested. J. Pease added that with new leadership and staff changes, it might be useful to have a facilitator from outside the organization. He would like the board to be involved and feels that staff should be predominately involved. Some efficiencies in the budget will need to be identified, but Pease believes the expense is well worth it at this time of change.

T. Tedesco suggested scheduling a meeting later in the month with board members after they have had some time to review the summary provided, followed by separate meetings with the director and with staff and a facilitator. J. Hornstein said she like staff to review strategic plan(s) from past years. She feels the board’s input would be general in nature. Cox said he would like staff to look at each of their own programs plus some cross-review of other units. Then, once staff has had a chance to do that, a staff/board work session would be facilitated simply for impartiality. The board scheduled a work session for October 3 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss strategic planning expectations and timeline. Staff meetings will be planned for October and November.

- Cox reminded the board of a presentation by Gary Thein re: wetland mitigation banks. Cox has had some discussions with an engineering firm interested in developing SCC's own wetland mitigation bank. A financial outlay would be required for this—but there are potential returns. Cox distributed information on potential sites for the board’s review.
- Cox met with Supervisor Rick Sanders and Zearing Mayor Jim Jantz re: potential Tax

Increment Fund (TIF) projects for Dakins Lake. If the Story County Board of Supervisors sets up a TIF for Dakins Lake, there would be funds for development that could potentially complete the land purchase, build an embankment, and perhaps a new campground. Cox met with Fox Engineering; they will work up some conceptual plans, including camping sites and additional silt retention so we have better cost estimates. W. Clinton anticipates having more information on TIF in the next three weeks.

- Cox toured the Hertz Woods area south of Nevada. The Hertz family has discussed adding this area to Story County Conservation's land inventory. Cox invited Tom Hertz to come to a SCC board meeting later this fall to share the family's ideas and update the board on his thoughts.

15. OTHER

District representative J. Hornstein reported that things are still going smoothly with the staff transition in the IACCB organization and that Tom Hazelton and Julie Moss are working very hard. Hornstein stated that Hazelton is an avid promoter of tourism and marketing, and he is currently working on changing the look of the website. Hornstein added that a basket from Story County was provided for the silent auction at fall conference with several donated items as well as some purchased through budgeted funds in the marketing account.

Tedesco asked that a report from Hornstein be added to future SCCB meeting agendas.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by J. Pease, SECOND by J. Hornstein, to adjourn the meeting. Chair Tedesco adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Recording Secretary

Story County Conservation Board