

Story County Conservation Board
Monday, February 14, 2011
Story County Conservation Center, McFarland Park

1. Vice-Chair W. Clinton called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS	STAFF	GUESTS
Ted Tedesco – absent	Steve Lekwa	Rose Danaher
Wayne Clinton – present	Jolene Van Waus	Mike & Linda Meetz
Jim Pease – present		Jeff White
Erin Wilgenbusch – arrived 5:39		Cindy Barrowcliff
Joyce Hornstein – present		
3. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS
Guests were welcomed and invited to introduce themselves.
4. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND HANDOUTS
The agenda was reviewed with no changes or additions.
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
MOTION by J. Pease, SECOND by J. Hornstein, to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2011 board tour. MCU.
6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
MOTION by J. Pease, SECOND by J. Hornstein, to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2011 board meeting. MCU.
7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
MOTION by J. Hornstein, SECOND by J. Pease, to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2011 conference call meeting. MCU
8. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS AND RECEIPTS
MOTION by J. Pease, SECOND by J. Hornstein, to approve all claims and receipts as submitted. MCU.
9. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND UPDATES
Lekwa mentioned that SCC received another distribution payment in the amount of \$10,000 from the Gladys Leui estate. He confirmed that most of the bills for the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail have been received. The final walk-through and approval of the completed project are anticipated this spring. Approval from FEMA has been received on the first of five small projects. SCC will be reimbursed for 85 percent of the costs; the remaining 15 percent will come from the trust fund.
10. SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS
J. Hornstein announced that a ribbon cutting for the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail will be held on Saturday, June 4 at 11:00 a.m. (National Trails Day). Thanks to a donation from the Iowa Trail Riders Association, signs to inform equestrian users to stay on the grass are being developed. Lekwa added that SCC is working with Story County Planning and

Zoning to develop and place location indicator signs every ½ mile along the trail; the Saylorville Snowmobile Club is helping sponsor that cost. Lekwa confirmed that traffic control signs were all in place prior to the contractor turning the trail over to Story County.

11. COMMUNICATIONS

Lekwa read the following correspondence he had received:

- 1) A letter from Chris Severson, coordinator for Conservation Corps Iowa, thanking Story County Conservation for serving as a host county for their program.
- 2) An email from Jeff White re: the proposed closure of primitive camping at the Safly Tract.

Lekwa also reported on a phone conversation he received earlier in the day complaining about snowmobile activity in Maxwell. Lekwa determined that the area in question is on city property. Ranger Williams also talked to the caller and will be going down to the trail to check out the complaint.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jeff White addressed the board about the proposal to remove primitive camping at the Safly Tract. White said he has taken his kids camping at McFarland Park for 20 years. He added that the Bear Creek site was a wonderful place to camp, and he was surprised when that area was closed. Unfortunately, parties are still occurring there as evidenced by the trash left behind. White feels that the Safly camping site is used quite a bit (including by canoers) and hopes the board does not eliminate this camping opportunity. White agrees there are problems with sanitation but feels those problems can be solved and that the site is a valuable asset to the county.

Lekwa stated several problems that led to the proposal to remove the camping sites: lack of sanitation, underage drinking, use by homeless people, methamphetamine activity, inability to get to the area with an enforcement vehicle, and poor (or no) radio or cell phone reception. Lekwa said he wished SCC could identify some areas to provide a manageable wilderness camping experience, but the more inaccessible the sites are, the more attractive they become for underage drinking and meth labs. All were in agreement that simply closing the site does not stop bad behavior and that there are always going to be issues somewhere.

Discussion continued on how other counties and the state manage their primitive camping areas. White stated that some parks have systems where campers must identify their vehicles, so there is a way for staff to know who is there without even having to go to the site. Signs instructing campers that they are responsible for sanitation or providing some type of latrine unit were also mentioned.

Clinton asked for additional input to determine if it is feasible to keep this area (or another site) open to primitive camping. He asked Lekwa to report back next month and suggested that this portion of policy revisions be postponed until the March board meeting.

Mike Meetz thanked the staff and board for allowing him to use wildlife mounts, hides, etc. for hunter safety classes. He said these are very valuable learning tools.

13. APPROVE ESTIMATES FOR CONSERVATION CENTER WINDOW REPAIRS

Lekwa reviewed the three options from the same construction company. Option 3 is for Pella Impervia fiberglass windows with two fixed picture windows, two picture windows with sliders, and brown trim. J. Pease inquired if the slider windows would cause security concerns. Lekwa replied that these windows will have locks and outside screens. Pease was also concerned about fiberglass choice because the windows are south-facing. Wilgenbusch commented that Anderson windows are better quality and suggested that the board look at additional brands.

Lekwa will solicit more estimates for the board to consider at the March board meeting. Lekwa added that he would like to finish the project this budget year. Vice-Chair Clinton deferred action at this time, adding that a conference call can be arranged if time is an issue.

14. APPROVE LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN STORY COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD AND DUSTIN EIGHMY

Lekwa explained that the proposed agreement is an adaptation of one used by the Story County Sheriff's Department and fairly standard with all law enforcement agencies. Decatur County Conservation was reimbursed for Eighmy's remaining contract, and the agreement with Story County is prorated accordingly.

MOTION by J. Hornstein, SECOND by E. Wilgenbusch, to approve the law enforcement training agreement between Story County Conservation and Dustin Eighmy. MCU.

15. APPROVE FIRST READINGS OF REVISIONS TO SCCB BYLAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS, HANDBOOK FOR CHILD SAFETY, PERSONNEL POLICY, AND OPERATIONS MANUAL

MOTION by J. Pease, SECOND by E. Wilgenbusch, to approve proposed revisions with the exception of removal of primitive camping at the Safly Tract (discussed in Public Comments). MCU.

16. HICKORY GROVE LAKE WATERSHED ASSESSMENT

Rose Danaher, Hickory Grove watershed coordinator, updated the board on the project to improve water quality and control runoff at Hickory Grove Lake.

In the past year, Danaher has been talking to landowners and studying the park. She distributed a map showing the Hickory Grove watershed. About ten people farm the majority of the land, with three individuals managing almost 75 percent of the property. Virtually all the farm fields are tiled. The east half of the watershed is in one drainage district (2,200 acres) that discharges through a 36-inch tile that creates the stream coming into the lake. Grass waterways, buffers on creeks, etc. are conservation practices being considered for economic feasibility.

Danaher conducted a gully assessment this past summer to pinpoint where water is coming into Hickory Grove Lake. She shared an aerial map showing bank erosion and location of active gullies—mostly on park property. Danaher would like to see an erosion control structure at the largest gully, adding that problem areas on park property would be the easiest to address first. Danaher compared photos taken in August after 7 inches of rain with full crop cover and in September after a week with no rain.

Danaher commented that the tail waters of the lake are very shallow and silted in and have basically lost all recreational value. The lake itself hasn't lost a lot of depth over the last 40 years. The road on the east side of the park slows down the flow of silt, causing the east side of the lake to function as a sediment pond.

In several areas, honeysuckle and autumn olive have encroached, shading the ground and preventing vegetation from holding the soil. Danaher suggested experimenting in a couple spots to see what could be grown under the big oaks to hold the soil. There are also some areas where there could be silt basins, and Danaher is working with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to get design work done. Although money is tight, Danaher hopes to apply for smaller state grants this summer. Once the watershed plan and improvements are done, recreational issues can be addressed.

Iowa State University will continue to gather data for a different grant focusing on water quality monitoring and modeling through the summer. Automatic water samplers are set up on several spots on the lake, and the plan is to submit a federal grant for funding to help with implementation of practices for landowners.

The board thanked Danaher for her update.

17. REVIEW TIMELINE FOR DIRECTOR VACANCY

Clinton remarked that four applications have been received to date, with the expectation that many more will arrive by the March 4 deadline.

The board discussed the need to formulate interview questions. Clinton has questions from the recent county auditor vacancy and will email those to board members as a starting point. Pease offered to work on a ranking system/scoring matrix with Hornstein. Hornstein, Pease, and Tedesco will review applications and select interview candidates.

Clinton will contact board members to schedule any meetings needed prior to the regular March meeting. The March 14 meeting is at 5:30 p.m. and precedes the county budget hearing at 7:00 p.m.

18. OTHER

Clinton announced that he will submit an application to serve on the NACO Environmental Land Use and Steering Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by J. Hornstein, SECOND by J. Pease, to adjourn. MCU. Vice-Chair Clinton adjourned the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

Recording Secretary

Story County Conservation Board