

Friends of Warren County Conservation Annual Report FY 2014

(July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015)

Introduction

The Friends of Warren County Conservation completed its 20th year of service to the Warren County Conservation Board (WCCB) and the citizens of Warren County in 2015. The general purpose of Friends is to support the mission of the Annett Nature Center and its role in the WCCB programs and services, primarily through fundraising and volunteerism on behalf of environmental education. The Friends raised \$16,450 in FY 2014 and contributed \$12,700 to programs and services. The number of volunteer hours contributed by Friends was unrecorded in FY 14, but will be tracked in the future. The Friends Executive Board decided to make the development of a 3-year strategic plan a primary partnership goal with the WCCB and Nature Center staff during this reporting period.

Membership

The Friends membership year corresponds to the calendar year with the primary membership campaign occurring in January 2015. Friends membership totaled 131 in FY 14. They contributed \$6,735 in dues payments. By category the membership breaks down as follows:

Individual (\$20)	27
Joint/Family (\$30)	41
Benefactor (\$50)	46
Corporate (\$100)	14
Lifetime (\$1,000)	1
Other	2

Executive Board

The Friends organization is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors. The Board enacted a change to the bylaws in February 2015 to establish the following officers: President, Vice-President/Secretary, and Treasurer. The following list includes the Executive Board members

elected at the general membership annual meeting in January 2015 and includes officer and term designations:

MEMBER	TERM EXPIRES
Blair Lawson	December 2015
John Krogmeier	December 2015
Donna Fink	December 2015
Randy Edwards, President	December 2016
Steve Weaver, Vice President/Secretary	December 2016
Steve Dermand	December 2016
Monty Freeman, Treasurer	December 2017
Dru McLuen	December 2017
Ashley Vanderflight*	December 2017
Judy Hendricks	December 2017
Karen Johlas-Szalkowski, WCCB Staff Naturalist	Non-Elective
Ace Hendricks, WCCB Designee	Non-Elective

*Replaced Bev Krejsa (resigned December 2014)

Meetings

The Friends normally meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Annett Nature Center. The Friends held 10 regularly scheduled official meetings and 1 special meeting in FY 2014. (The September meeting was cancelled. The November meeting lacked a quorum.) Average attendance at monthly meetings was 82 percent of the Board membership. Meeting agendas are posted on the WCCB website.

At the January 2015 annual meeting the Board elected officers for the new membership year, voted on renewal of Board member terms, and reviewed proposed bylaw changes for final approval.

Also in January four Friends board members attended the initial Warren County Conservation Board budget hearing conducted by the Board of Supervisors at the County Administration Building in support of the WCCB FY 2016 budget proposal.

On March 3 the Friends held a special meeting at the Annett Nature Center to further develop the strategic plan.

The Friends held their December meeting jointly with the Warren County Conservation Board's scheduled meeting.

Public Events

The Friends participated in or sponsored the following events in FY 14:

Event	Participants	Net Income	Expense
Photo Contest	9	--	\$ 85.00
Prairie Picnic	74	\$ 2,638.00	--
Halloween Hike	170	--	\$ 108.00
Osprey 5K	59	\$ 751.00	--
Wild Women of the Woods	40	\$ 1,153.00	--
Native Iowa Plant Sale	NA	\$ 1,914.00	--
Plant Some Shade	60	\$ 581.00	--
Geocaching Easter Egg Hunt	NA	--	--
Slither and Crawl*	150	--	\$ 190.00
Kids Fish Day	25	--	\$ 145.00
Mentor Hunt	12	\$ 224.00	--
Totals:		\$7,261.00	\$ 528.00

* Partnership with Friends of Indianola Public Library

Friends Special Projects Contributions

Project	Contribution
Live Animal Wall Prairie Artwork	\$ 111.00
ANC Dishes	\$ 241.00
Pavilion Sound System	\$ 3,879.00
25 Compasses	\$ 237.00
Mobile Pavilion Stage	\$ 528.00
Izaak Walton Donation	\$ 100.00
Geocaching Boxes & Cards	\$ 325.00
Beehive and Bees	\$ 1,132.00
Bev Krejsa Recognition Award	\$ 100.00
Picnic Tables & Benches	\$ 1,816.00
Taxidermy	\$ 195.00
Lenze Memorial	\$ 669.00
Strategic Planning Fee	\$ 2,500.00
Supplies, Mailings, Printing, etc.	\$ 339.00
Total	\$ 12,172.00

Strategic Planning

In June 2014 the Friends voted to partner with the WCCB in hiring a consultant to conduct a strategic planning seminar involving the Warren County Conservation Board, staff, and the Friends Board. To share the cost Friends authorized an expenditure of \$2,500 paid to:

Susan Radwan
Leading Edge Mentoring
Grand Ledge, Michigan

After attending a webinar orientation, the planning sessions were held on the evening of October 15 and all day on October 16 at the Annett Nature Center. The initial incomplete version of the 3-year plan was drafted and presented by the facilitator in November. (See attachment 1 for a synopsis of the final first draft.) The Friends elected Randy Edwards as the Friends representative to serve on a 3-member Strategic Leadership Committee to meet quarterly to review strategic planning progress. The WCCB and staff selected Ace Hendricks and Doug Gaumer respectively to the Leadership Committee. The WCCB, staff, and Friends continued to develop their respective portions of the plan through the end of the fiscal year. Although the final plan details were not complete, several of the goals were put into action within the fiscal year.

Technology

Social Media

The WCCB has designated a portion of their web site under a “Friends Group” heading to announce meetings, promote Friends sponsored activities, and enlist membership. Friends events are also promoted on the “Warren County Conservation and Annett Nature Center” Facebook page which achieved 541 new “Likes” during the fiscal year.

“Sign up Genius”

In May the Friends began using the “Sign Up Genius” web site to schedule events and enlist Friends volunteers.

Financial

Funding Requests

In order to better evaluate and track special interest requests for funding Friends sponsored projects, Treasurer Monty Freeman developed and the Board approved a Funding Request form in July 2014. The form is used for requests amounting to \$100 or more. (See attachment 2) The Friends considered and approved four projects during the fiscal year using the new form.

Taxes

Friends of Warren County Conservation is chartered as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. Remaining tax exempt requires the filing of an annual Federal tax return. Either Form 990 (long form) or Form 990-EZ (short form) must be filed depending on the Friends gross receipts for the year. The return is due no later than November. In August 2014 the Friends received a letter from the IRS assessing 2013 delinquent taxes in the amount of \$4,060. Al Kaduce (Al Kaduce and Company PC), the Friends volunteer accountant, submitted the delinquent filing and requested forgiveness of the assessment. Forgiveness was granted by the IRS in October 2014.

Banking

The Friends have a checking account with:

Peoples Bank
400 E Iowa
Indianola, IA

The account balance on June 30, 2015 was \$8,096. Board members Monty Freeman, Treasurer, and Karen Johlas-Szalkowski, Naturalist, are authorized signatories.

Credit Account

The Friends established a Walmart Community credit account for the purpose of buying program and event supplies for both Friends and WCCB sponsored events. An average monthly billing statement is \$407. The balance is paid in full each month. The WCCB reimburses the Friends monthly for items purchased for WCCB sponsored events.

Annual Audit

The Office of Auditor of State annually audits Warren County finances. The Friends financials are included in the County audit in a supplemental section entitled "Nonmajor Governmental Funds." On June 30, 2014, the report states the Friends assets as \$131,380. The report cites three procedural deficiencies common to small staff operations: 1) Incoming mail needs to be opened by nonfinancial person; 2) Lack of two-person review of receipts; 3) Bank account not periodically reconciled by nonfinancial person. The formal response to the cited deficiencies was as follows:

Every effort is made to ensure all receipts are handled properly. The Director is consulting with FWCC to assist with finances. The FWCC treasurer oversees the banking statements and Quicken Accounts.

Addressing item #3, the Friends Vice President/Secretary will periodically reconcile randomly selected monthly bank statements with the Quicken account entries and provide a written statement so stating.

Investments

The Friends investments are held with the following business:

Edward Jones
Advisor: Quendy Sweeney
1206 East 2nd Ave
Indianola, IA

The medium risk liquid investments include one money market fund, one unit trust, and ten diversified mutual funds. The money market fund was discontinued in March 2014 with the proceeds (\$2,167) reinvested in five of the existing mutual funds. The investment funds increased 1.14% in value during the fiscal year ending with a balance of \$123,929. The advisor meets with the Friends Board at least once a year during a regular meeting to review accounts and answer questions.

Legal

In January 2015 the Friends filed the required Biennial Report for an Iowa Nonprofit Corporation with the Iowa Secretary of State. The name of the current registered agent was changed to Karen Johlas-Szalkowski.

Conclusion

FY 2014 was a fairly typical year for the Friends in terms of fund raising, financial contributions, and volunteerism. The completion of the strategic plan will lay the groundwork for increases in marketing, membership, partnerships, and fund raising in the coming years.

Submitted by:

Steve Weaver, Vice President/Secretary
January 26, 2016

WCCB Strategic Plan Final Report

WCCB Purpose

To encourage a state of harmony between people and the land communities upon which our lives and welfare depend, through programs of conservation, preservation, recreation and education.

Our Mission

Steward the natural resources of Warren County and engage the community to appreciate and connect with a healthy and balanced eco-system.

Our Vision

Progressive leadership coupled with natural resources managed, conserved and accessible so that the people of Warren County and beyond are touched by quality outdoor experiences.

Our Desired Impact in Warren County

Fun and exciting outdoor adventures that create life-long memories and active, sustained participation in conservation and public stewardship of our natural resources.

2015-2017 Goals

- 1. Initiate and secure land development and conservation priorities**
 - a. Secure the 140 acres on Gilbert Woodland Mounds property so that it is not subject to development
 - b. Make adjacent leased Lawson acres more accessible to the public
 - c. Proactively secure “special tracts” of land through an estate planning approach
 - d. Get control of invasive species.
- 2. Enhance funding**
 - a. Optimize county funding by developing and maintaining a positive relationship with the Board of Supervisors.
 - b. Develop strategic partnerships
 - c. Engage in grant writing
- 3. Develop a strong volunteer network to serve in volunteer staff roles in conjunction with staff/staffing needs**
 - a. Open the Center on Saturdays when the public is most available to visit
 - b. Optimize use of volunteers to offset inadequate staffing needs
- 4. Increase visibility and usage of the WCCB properties**
 - a. Create an annual plan for programming and Center displays that will attract new and repeat visitors
 - b. Create traveling exhibits
 - c. Build database of visitors for marketing purposes
- 5. Establish a prioritized data collection approach and system**
- 6. Devise a solution to use technology in parks.**

Attachment 2

Friends of WCCB

Funding request
(amount over \$100.00)

Date_____

Person making request: _____

Description: _____

Cost: _____

Impact on programming: _____

Approximate completion date: _____

Board approval date: _____

Amount approved by Board: _____

Actual cost: _____