

Minutes of the Warren County Conservation Board

The Warren County Conservation Board held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, August 11, 2021. The meeting was held in person at the Anette Nature Center. Meeting called to order by President Kickbush at 5:58 p.m.

Those present:

Absent:

Mark Kickbush, President

Ace Hendricks, Vice-president

Ron Miller, Secretary

Joe Schettler

Sue Boll

Comprising a quorum of the board,

Also present:

Karen Johlas-Szalkowski, Co-Director/Naturalist II

Mark Wilson, CO-Director/Operations Coordinator

Mallory Wells, Officer Manager

Tyler Seuferer, Natural Resource Specialist

Kelsey Longnecker, Naturalist I

Guest(s):

- i. Reading of the Minutes
 - a. Warren County Conservation Board meeting minutes from the regular July meeting were reviewed. Ace Hendricks noted a correction to July's minutes. The minutes should state that Joe Schettler approved the July minutes and Ace Hendricks seconded. Joe Schettler moved to approve minutes with the correction. Ace Hendricks seconded. All ayes. Motion Carried.
- ii. Staff Reports for June were presented.
 - a. Operations Coordinator/Co-Director
 - i. Mark Wilson was to meet with the City of West Des Moines and the county Attorney. The city sent an easement and the county attorney looked over it. There were some concerns with the easement not specifying about the trail construction. The Attorney sent several revisions to the City of West Des Moines and has yet to hear back. After contacting Jay Cowen, it appears there was some confusion with the City of West Des Moines thinking the Warren County Board of Supervisors had already approved the easement. Warren County is now waiting on the city to look over the revision sent so a decision can be made.
 - ii. Mark had seeded an area at Ike's. They decided to put in a bow range and asked Mark to come back and help reseed the area around the range.
 - iii. There's a ditch that runs parallel to the road and we placed a culvert about ten years ago and it's since washed out. We have replaced it and Kato was down there digging

out silt. Now we can get across the low water crossing to put in our food plot that we were unable to earlier this year.

- b. Naturalist II/ Co-Director
 - i. Karen helped with Day camps when one of the staff was having medical issues. Cricket Campers are aged 4 and 5 years old, Discovery Campers are aged 6 and 7 years old, Kestrel Campers are 8 and 9 years old, and Challenge Campers are 10 to 12 years old.
 - ii. Westley Acres and The Village hosted Karen and the owls at their facilities. Both programs were well received by the residents of each facility.
 - iii. Contract updates for the Lodge now have instructions on how to shut off the alarms, how to unlock the doors, and how to stack the chairs. We are waiting on one more cart to hold the tables the new contract can sent to the Fire Marshall to sign off on.
 - iv. To finish exhibit phase one, we received the plants and taxidermy animals for the underground display on the east side of the exhibit hall. We just need to set up a time for the installers to come back and install the items. Once those are installed, phase one will be complete.
- c. Naturalist I
 - i. The Butchering program was going to teach participants how to butcher rabbits. Each participant would receive their own rabbit to butcher. Any meat they harvested would be theirs to keep. Unfortunately, we had to cancel as we didn't have enough register by the deadline.
- d. Natural Resource Specialist
 - i. The Wheat Plots will get sprayed down, so everything is dead. Then the plots will be burned. So, all the seeds are there for September first. Then two weeks before in the sunflower plots we will take the boom mower and grind everything down so there's a bunch of seed sitting there. People have been visiting the sunflower plots and they have enjoyed it.
- iii. Business Agenda
 - a. Friends of Warren County Conservation Board (FWCC)
 - i. FWCC has listed the deer tag and will go to the first person to bid \$20,000.00. They must pass a background check as well. If no one bids \$20,000.00 FWCC reserves the right to sell at a lower cost. The tip tag is still out for bid but once that closes, we may see more bids come in on the deer tag.
 - ii. Prairie Picnic will be held September 18th. With the online auction items listed September 11th through the 19th.
 - b. Middleswart Lodge Update
 - i. Mark Kickbush met with the Indianola Fire Chief Chia. After conversations with Chief Chia, he has reengaged with the State Fire Marshalls office and will try and help us get the building switch from an A2 to an A3 building.
 - ii. The board would like to open the building for rentals. We can remove the stove until we figure out if we can have it or not. Staff would like to keep the stove, so we don't lose money selling it then purchasing another.

iv. New Business

a. Website

- i. Karen received three different proposals for updating the website. Web Solutions came in between \$9,000.00 and \$12,650.00. Gradient9 Solutions came in \$5,000.00, and Nolasoft Development came in at \$11,200.00. Included in these estimates are Program registration and rental registration for the Middleswart Lodge and Annett Nature Center, Two separate calendars for programs and rentals, 360-degree videos of rental space as well as outdoor conservation areas. This would also include having the website ADA compliant and would make the site mobile friendly. Staff would also be able to do mass mailing for those registered for a specific program.
- ii. Before the board votes on the website update. Karen would like to crunch numbers to know the funds we will be working with. It was brought to our attention that each county office must pay the licensing fees for the programs that they use. Every two years we will be updating our licenses.

b. Great Western Trail (GWT)

- i. Snyder and Associates got the final report to Mark. The report explains how they got to the decisions they did. This packet will also include what needs to be done on each section for the Great Western Trail and the Summerset Trail. For the GWT they recommended option 2 which would cost \$ 4,487,000.00 to replace the entire trail and Summerset Trail would cost \$3,874,000.00 to replace the entire trail.
- ii. Mark will send out the report that Snyder and Associates drew up. Rich Volker will be at the September meeting to go over the report with the board. He will let us know the phases they will be repairing the trail.
- iii. The review committee for the Covid-19 Relief Recreational Trails Program has recommended WCCB receive \$637,000.00 to put towards the GWT. It will still need to go before the commission to be approved. There were 83 grants and Warren County scored 4th.
- iv. The State Recreation Trails Grant will let us know in September if we will be awarded any funds.

v. Discussion Items

a. Mask update

- i. Polk County is going back to requiring masks in doors if you have been vaccinated or not. WCCB will revisit each month to see what is in the best interest of staff and visitors.

b. Special Use Permits

- i. Karen emailed Polk County and Story County to see what they have. Both responded with copies of their permits. There is a lot of helpful information on the permits. The board would like to base Warren County's permits off Polk and Story's.

c. ANC Roof

- i. Jose Contreras will be replacing the roof on the ANC. Mark is working on getting an invoice so he can be paid as close to the install date as possible.

d. Strategic Planning

- i. The board would like to set a date to work on setting short term and long-term plans. November would be a good month for staff as they don't have as many programs.

e. Budget discussion

- i. The board would like the co-directors, office manager, and one board member draft the 2023 budget. Then it would go before the board and finally to the Warren County Board of supervisors for final approval.

f. National Wild Turkey Federation

- i. They have opened their grant program. It's for habit building and land purchase.

vi. Financial Report

- a. Joe Schettler made a motion to approve the financial reports. Sue Boll seconded. All ayes. Motion carried.

vii. Approval of Bills

- a. Joe Schettler made a motion to approve the August Claims. Sue Boll seconded. All ayes. Motion Carried.

viii. Adjournment

- a. Ace Hendricks made a motion to adjourn at 7:02pm. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.