

# Minutes of the Warren County Conservation Board

The Warren County Conservation Board held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, September 8, 2021. The meeting was held in person at the Anette Nature Center. Meeting called to order by President Kickbush at 6:00 p.m.

Those present:

Mark Kickbush, President  
Ace Hendricks, Vice-president  
Ron Miller, Secretary  
Joe Schettler  
Comprising a quorum of the board,

Absent:

Sue Boll

Also present:

Karen Johlas-Szalkowski, Co-Director/Naturalist II  
Mark Wilson, CO-Director/Operations Coordinator  
Mallory Wells, Officer Manager  
Tyler Seuferer, Natural Resource Specialist

Guest(s):

Rich Volker, Snider & Associates

- i. Reading of the Minutes
  - a. Warren County Conservation Board meeting minutes from the regular July meeting were reviewed. Joe Schettler approved the August minutes and Ron Miller seconded. All ayes. Motion Carried.
- ii. Staff Reports for August were presented.
  - a. Operations Coordinator/Co-Director
    - i. Mark and Ace met with Zach from Native Iowa Trees & Shrubs. He picked out about 900 different trees and shrubs including 18 different species. The last week of October first week of November staff will be planting 700 trees and Shrubs along Veteran's Parkway and the edge of the Great Western Trail. Zach will hold back 200 for us to plant. We will plant everything this fall but the 200 as he couldn't supply all 900 at once. They are planning on using the skid loader since they are decent sized.
  - b. Naturalist II/ Co-Director
    - i. Forest Therapy at the state fair had a few participants in their 20's and 30's and a few in their late 40's early 50's. She felt a lot were just fair goers who stopped to enjoy the program and were amazed that you could do Forest Therapy anywhere. Especially at the State Fair with all the noise and smells around. Overall, it was a well perceived presentation.

- iii. Business Agenda
  - a. Friends of Warren County Conservation Board (FWCC)
    - i. They sold the deer tag for \$20,000.00. FWCC will get half and the rest will go to Iowa DNR.
    - ii. FWCC is working on the prairie picnic to be held on Saturday September 18<sup>th</sup>. They will also have an online Auction this year running from Sunday September 12<sup>th</sup> through Sunday September 19<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. Middleswart Lodge Update
    - i. Karen and Mallory worked on the final rental draft. It's ready to be sent to the Fire Marshall. The board would like for it to go to Chief Chia with the Indianola Fire Department.
    - ii. Mark has been working on a "Middleswart Lodge" sign for the end of the driveway. It's two sheets of steel and a sheet of green treated plywood that was spray painted gray. Stainless steel bolts were used to give it that industrial look. Once complete it will be placed at the drive entrance along 118th Ave.
- iv. New Business
  - a. Great Western Trail (GWT)
    - i. Rich Volker presented the summary of Snyder & Associates GWT Analysis.
    - ii. Snyder & Associates provides more of a statistical type of analysis using the PAVER System. They use a rating system based on what they see over the entire trail. They are looking for things that will affect a bicyclist directly such as longitudinal cracks or shoulder drop offs.
    - iii. Trail Pavement Maintenance & Rehabilitation Curve helps determine existing pavement conditions. You want to catch your trail maintenance early to keep it at or above the good condition. If you get below into the fair, poor, or failed it's more costly to bring it back up to very good or excellent.
    - iv. The GWT is currently sitting at 0% excellence, 12% very good, 10% good, 50% fair, 9% poor, and 19% failed.
    - v. With over 78% of the trail rating from fair to failed, minor maintenance and rehabilitation methods will not raise the TCI to good or better conditions. More significant rehabilitation such as patching, and overlay is need or reconstruction. Therefore, they decided to apply for the Covid-19 Recreational Trails Program grant. This will allow WCCB to repair the areas in need of the most repair.
    - vi. The unofficial numbers on the Covid-19 Grant are WCCB scored 4<sup>th</sup> out of 83 applicants. The board should know by September 14, 2021, if they will receive their funds.
    - vii. Once notification of successful funding from the DOT, Snyder & Associates can get WCCB an engineering agreement for the design, plan, and productions for getting this reconstruction to happen through the state. This agreement could possibly be ready for the board by the October board meeting.
    - viii. Snyder & Associates did do a bit of a looking at the culverts and bridges. They recommend WCCB looking at the bridges to make sure they are all still functioning and keep on top of the repair.

- b. County Line Road Temporary Construction Easement
  - i. Construction is being done to fix where County Line Road comes onto Veteran' Parkway. It currently comes in at an angle and the construction will fix it to come in at a right angle. Construction will come roughly 500 feet onto Warren County's portion of the trail. They will construct a temporary trail to keep bike traffic flowing. Once up into Polk County they will create a tunnel for the bike trail so there will not be an at grade crossing.
  - ii. Ron Miller moved to approve the temporary construction easement and Joe Schettler seconded. All ayes. Motion carries.
- c. Half Rental for FWCC Membership
  - i. Ron Miller made a motion to table this item. Joe Schettler seconded. All ayes. Motion carried.
- d. Removal from Payroll
  - i. Joe Schettler made the motion to remove Monty Freeman, effective August 18, 2021, Nick Reinert, effective July 23, 2021, and Justin Delay, effective August 13, 2021. Ron Miller 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.
- v. Discussion Items
  - a. American Rescue Plan Act Funds (ARPA)
    - i. Mark and Karen met with Crystal McIntyre from the Warren County Board of Supervisors to discuss how Conservation could use some of the ARPA funds coming to Warren County.
    - ii. Camping is one possible use for the ARPA funds as it gets people outside of their house, reduces the stress of being cooped up, and gets people out in a natural area. They discussed running electricity to campsites at Grants and Hickory Hills. Having electricity at the campsites and possibly adding water for modern toilets and showers would allow WCCB to charge \$20.00 to \$25.00 per night for camping, generating a revenue funding stream. This revenue would allow WCCB to create matching funds for renovations of the trails, first and foremost, but could be used towards other projects as needed.
    - iii. WCCB could create up to 15 campsites at Grant. With current staff they could manage a pay for camping campground. Anything much bigger would be a cause to hire law enforcement which in turn could cut into revenue.
    - iv. Crystal was surprised to learn that staff did not have access to broadband which would connect them to programs, like Eden. She stated staff needed to have access to their budgets at any time.
    - v. Karen also mentioned that WCCB was looking to update their website and wondered why Conservation had to pay for their website update if no other county offices had to pay. Crystal said she would bring it up at the next work session to see if the county could pay at least half the cost for the update.
    - vi. Mark and Karen attended the fall ISAC meeting held in Des Moines. They were able to meet with other Conservation Directors and were informed many conservation boards have a fund set up in which they can keep their rental and camping fees. This fund allows boards to carry over any funding year to year, to be used as matching funds for grants, roof repair, or any project they have.

- vii. The exhibit hall was also mentioned. Crystal thought it would be a great use of funds to get the hall finished.
    - viii. Mark and Karen plan to attend the September work session with all three Warren County Board members.
  - b. Lease Property
    - i. Blair Lawson needs to submit an invoice to be paid for the land rental each year. Mallory Wells has an invoice to be paid with the September claims.
- vi. Financial Report
  - a. Ron Miller made a motion to approve the financial reports. Joe Schettler 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. Joe Schettler made a motion to adjourn at 7:02pm. Ron Miller seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.