

Minutes of the Warren County Conservation Board

The Warren County Conservation Board held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, September 11, 2024. The meeting was held in person at the Anette Nature Center.

Meeting called to order by President Mark Kickbush at 5:00 p.m.

Those present:

Ace Hendricks, Vice President

Joe Schettler, Secretary

Angie Croll

Comprising a quorum of the board

Absent:

Mark Kickbush, President

Sue Boll

Also present:

Mark Wilson, Director

Tyler Seuferer, Natural Resource Specilist

Mallory Wells, Office Manager

Mankato Stonebrook, Cons. Tech

Monty Freeman, FWCC Treasurer

Zach Hall, Director

Kelsey Longnecker, EE Coordinator

Hannah Hernandez, Naturalist

Nathan Reinke, Cons. Tech

- i. Convene
 - a. Agenda deletions
 - i. None
- ii. Reading of the Minutes
 - a. Office Manager Wells presented updated August Minutes. The minutes sent with the board packet were missing the discussion of My County Parks under Business Agenda, New Business, item 4, My County Parks checking account.
 - b. Joe Schettler made a motion to approve the August 2024 minutes as written. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.
- iii. Staff Reports
 - a. Director - Wilson
 - i. The water feature in the butterfly garden has been leaking and Director Wilson has been working with Ted Lare to get it resolved. Staff from Ted Lare came out to inspect the pond and found a hole in the liner. The liner will be repaired and should be working as it should be.
 - b. Director – Hall
 - i. Declined to pursue the NWTf grant due to the property having to be hunted and the grant won't fund projects back-to-back. He will try applying later.

- c. Natural Resource Specialist – Seuferer
 - i. He has been working with a landowner that is wanting trees along the shared property line of his and WCCB. WCCB staff follow state law and will only cut the trees vertical up from the property line.
- d. Conservation Technician – Stonebrook
 - i. He explained that he did maintenance on one of the trucks and will continue to spray for lespedeza.
- e. Environmental Education(EE) Coordinator – Longnecker
 - i. She has been working with Julie Spotted Eagle Horse Martineau on the Indigenous Display. Julie came to visit the Annett Nature Center to see the artifacts in person. She was very excited about the artifacts and is interested in being a voice for the display. She did mention some artifacts that should be taken off display.
 - ii. Kelsey also met with Gary Valen to video record his knowledge of Woodland Mounds and what artifacts he found.
- f. Naturalist – Hernandez
 - i. She is working on the 50th anniversary to be held at the Annett Nature Center. It will be a conversational program for visitors to walk through the ANC and visit with employees discuss the past, present, and future of WCCB. Ace mentioned that he will be in contact with individuals to get some photos from past years of WCCB.
- g. Office Manager – Wells
 - i. She presented to the Studebaker Car club. The group met at the Annett Nature Center to hear an overall view of what Warren County Conservation does. In addition to presentations, she tries to track visitors as they come to the Annett Nature Center. This will come in handy for grant writing.
- iv. Friends of Warren County Conservation
 - i. Prairie Picnic
 - 1. They are continuing to gear up for the Prairie Picnic. The group is planning to launch their new logo, do an adopt-an-animal program, have a guest speaker, as well as live music.
 - 2. The State Auditor came and met with Monty and Mallory to discuss the financials. All went well.

v. Business Agenda

a. New Business

i. My County Parks

1. Office Manager Wells shared there is a start up fee associated with My County Parks and the board will see that included with the claims. The cost is a onetime payment of \$1,000.00 and includes online support for staff. Having MCP up and running will allow staff to start taking online payments for reservations and programs.

b. Discussion Items

i. Nature Playscape Update

1. EE Coordinator Kelsey Longnecker met with Snyder & Associates so see what can be done with the expanded area. Staff from S&A came to the Annett Nature Center to see the area firsthand and to discuss what Kelsey would like to see where.
2. Director Mark Wilson contacted the Shala Llewellyn with Environmental Health to discuss a septic system for a restroom to be put near the playscape. She informed him that the septic system for the Annett Nature Center would need to be updated to accommodate another restroom, since this area is at maximum capacity for septic. S&A suggested adding a restroom to the plans so the infrastructure for the restroom could be done first.
3. Kelsey is hoping to have a new blueprint soon, but the customized pieces are taking quite a while which is slowing the process down. S&A has been reaching out to the providers to try and push the blueprint along.

c. Policy Review

- i. Director Wilson and Director Hall have been discussing policies for Warren County Conservation. They are working to create a policy manual.
- ii. EE Coordinator Kelsey and Director Hall met regarding Environmental Education policies.

d. Grant Review

- i. Director Hall stated that he did not apply for the NWTf grant and he should know the outcome of his REAP Grant by October 1st.

e. Fiscal Year 25-26

- i. Director Hall and Office Manager Wells have been working on a tracking spreadsheet. This will be updated each month so the board and staff will know where the budget stands each month. This will help guide future projects that may pop up unexpectedly.
- ii. Director Hall is also working on a prediction budget. This would help him see where funds need to be pulled from towards the end of the fiscal year.

f. Fiscal Year 26 Proposed Budget

- i. Director Hall discussed a Conservation Ecologist as an industry standard. He would like to add this position to the team. This position would be in charge of writing plans for all our different areas.
- ii. Director Hall is going to push for a 6% wage increase for all staff. These increases will bring staff up to the percentages seen across the state.

g. By-Laws Analysis

- i. Director Hall's goal is to have these done by December. He has been going through them as he works through his FY 26 budget.

h. Data for Decisions

- i. Director Hall has been looking at counties like Warren County and how Warren County Compares. Director Hall has been working with EE Coordinator Longnecker to compile program data.

i. Approval of Bills

- i. Joe Schettler made a motion to approve the claims. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

j. Adjournment

- i. Joe Schettler made a motion to adjourn at 6:31 pm. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.