

# Minutes of the Warren County Conservation Board

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

Meeting called to order by Vice President Ace Hendricks at 5:00 p.m.

Those present:

Ace Hendricks, Vice President

Joe Schettler, Secretary

Sue Boll

Angie Croll

Comprising a quorum of the board

Absent:

Mark Kickbush, President

Also present:

Mark Wilson, Director

Tyler Seuferer, Natural Resource Specialist

Mallory Wells, Office Manager

Nathan Reinke, Cons. Tech

Kelsey Longnecker, EE Coordinator

Zach Hall, Director

Hannah Hernandez, Naturalist

Kevin Brown, Cons. Tech

Mankato Stonebrook, Con. Tech

Monty Freeman, FWCC Treasurer

Guest:

Shannon Anderson

Bryan Dodson

Martin Wells

## i. Convene

### a. Agenda Review

- i. Angie Croll moved to accept the agenda as written. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

### ii. None

## ii. Reading of the Minutes

### a. Ace Hendricks had two corrections to November 13, 2024 minutes.

- i. Under Attendance Kelsey Longnecker, EE Coordinator and Kevin Brown, Cons. Tech were present. Mankato Stonebrook was not.
- ii. Under Discussion Items, Trail Markers, it should read tabled not trails.

### b. Angie Croll made a motion to approve the minutes with the corrections stated. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

- iii. Public Comment
  - a. Shannon Anderson was in attendance to learn more about the possibility of public hunting at Medora Prairie.
  - b. Bryan Dodson is also interested in knowing more about the work being done at the Medora Prairie as well as the possibility of it being opened to the public for hunting.
- iv. Friends of Warren County Conservation
  - a. They moved their meeting to December 17<sup>th</sup> due to the Christmas holiday. Monty Freeman has been working with Zach Hall to make sure when it comes to FWCC working with WCCB and vice versa that both sets of by-laws match.
- v. Business Agenda
  - a. New Business
    - 1. Staff Salary/Benefit certifications
      - a. Director Zach Hall composed a letter for salary certification to justify employee worksheets that get handed into Human Resources at the county level. HR can then use the letter to adjust compensation.
      - b. Joe Schettler made a motion to approve the salary certification sheet. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.
    - 2. Director Mark Wilson's retirement date.
      - a. Ace Hendricks abstained from voting.
        - i. "Rather than vote no because I don't want you to leave, I'm going to abstain my vote. I've been an officer at various levels during the time that you have been here. I have been here almost as long as you have. I came just after you did. I've watched things evolve over time. The building of the ANC and the lodge and lots of projects. The greatest progress and reward of being on this board has occurred over the last few years of your tenure as director. You were able to see things in the future that made transitions to tasks and to make that work possible. To be able to get Zach Hall to appear before our board and to get him hired was one monumental achievement, and we, WCCB, are better for it. If I voted no, Mark like I said you are leaving anyway, so he deserves his retirement. A good friend would never hold someone back that deserves good things. Enjoy your retirement."
        - ii. Joe Schettler made a motion to accept the retirement of Mark Wilson effective December 31, 2024. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion Carried.

### 3. Firewood Salvage Permit

- a. Currently there is a firewood salvage permit that allows citizens to drive on bike trails to collect and cut their own firewood. It is of the opinion that our county attorney does not favor anybody that is not county employed, to be on our property with their own personal equipment running their own personal machines. Director Hall would like to annex this permit to get rid of it permanently.
- b. Joe Schettler would like to remove the firewood salvage permit. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

### b. Discussion Items

#### 1. By-Laws

- a. Director Hall provided the board with copies of the By-Laws to review. He would like the board to review them and provide any suggestions before January. This will allow Director Hall to review the suggestions and have them integrated before January, so they are ready to be voted on in January.
- b. The primary changes were under the directors' job description. The transitions between Director Wilson and Director Hall and their primary skills sets and responsibilities. There was a slight teasing apart between EE Coordinator Longnecker and Naturalist Hernandez. Then integrating a park superintendent and a conservation ecologist.

#### 2. USFWS Future Partnership

- a. The same team that did the work at Medora Prairie is looking to do the same work at Rolling Thunder. We are trying to get some GIS work done to digitize some of our ecology maps that are in that management plan that they will use.

#### 3. REAP project

- a. The county attorney informed Director Hall that she will be cutting checks to purchase the Gilbert addition next to Woodland Mounds State Preserve. They will be hand delivered to the landowners. The grant money for the resource enhancement in protection grant that is funding the project, the contract has been received. Director Hall will work to process it in the next month or two.

4. WCCB Officers and reappointments
  - a. Director Hall received Joe Schuettler's application to renew his position on the WCCB. He will get that submitted to the Mikayla, with the Board of Supervisors. He wanted the board to know that in the January 2025 meeting the board will need to reestablish their positions and he will make sure that it's on the agenda.
5. Eckoff Nature Preserve
  - a. Director Wilson shared that staff is planning to sign it the week of Christmas and have a soft opening.
6. MCP.com
  - a. Director Hall and Office Manager Wells are working together to get the site set up. We received the clear from Tom Hazelton, the website administrator, that we can start working with our electronic card processing company, so we can start taking online payments. This will allow staff to receive online payments for rentals and events. At this time there will be no camping fees taken online.
  - b. There will be contracts in the future that the board will need to sign.
- c. Approval of Bills
  - i. Joe Schettler made a motion to approve the claims. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.
- d. Financial Report
  - i. Director Hall provided the board with a snapshot of the monthly financials and will do so each month. This will show the board where the budget is each month.
  - ii. Joe Schettler made a motion to approve the financial report. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.
- e. Upcoming Events
  - i. WCCB is done with events for the 2024 season.
- f. Staff Reports
  - i. Director
    1. Director Wilson took Director Hall to walk the Medora Prairie since he had not had a chance to see that area.
  - ii. Natural Resource Specialist Seufferer
    1. Tyler worked with USFWS to remove all the cedar trees to help bring back the native grasses in the Medora Prairie.
    2. Carlisle reached out to Tyler to see if we could help with a spring burn at the trail head on the west side of Carlisle.

- iii. Environmental Education Coordinator Longnecker
  - 1. She partnered with Indianola Parks and Rec. to host a class on easy to transplant house plants. She got the plants donated from Busy Bee Garden. Each attendee received a plant to take home in a mason jar. She also shared how to take care of these plants vs succulents.
  - 2. Norwalk Parks and Recreation department has a new staff member, Courtney. She wanted to touch base with Kelsey since she is new and figuring out how to set up programs with WCCB. They have set up 6 different programs between now and the summer of 2025.
- iv. Naturalist Hernandez
  - 1. The students at Carlisle Middle School love the archery program. With two staff members plus the PE teachers the program runs smooth. A lot of the kids are already involved in archery due to their parents being hunters. The kids typically comment that their bow at home is different than the bows we use.
- v. Conservation Technician Stonebrook
  - 1. He has been working on removing honeysuckle at Otter Creek park. Removing it has really opened the park. He has done the South and East fence line and is planning to burn it to help reduce the growth. He will add chemical the area in the spring as well to help rid the area of the honeysuckle.
- vi. Conservation Technician Reinke
  - 1. Nathan was provided with three videos to watch regarding the quail from Director Hall. They then discussed some strategies as a team to improve the quail habit on our properties.
- vii. Wells Office Manager
  - 1. She attended the Home for the Holidays lighted parade in Indianola and presented photos of the parade route. There were quite a few people along the route, and it was a great outreach opportunity for WCCB.
- viii. Sue Boll congratulates and thanks the staff for the success of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It's appreciated the hard work that they put into presenting conservation to our community.
- g. Closed session pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 21.5, section i.
  - i. To evaluate the professional competency of an individual whose appointment, hiring, performance, or discharge is being considered when necessary to prevent needless and irreparable injury to that individual's reputation and that individual requests a closed session.
  - ii. Joe Schettler made a motion to move into closed session at 5:56pm. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

- iii. Joe Schettler made a motion to move out of closed session. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

h. Adjournment

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