

# Minutes of the Warren County Conservation Board

The Warren County Conservation Board (WCCB) held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, January 8, 2025. 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:

Absent:

Mark Kickbush, President

Ace Hendricks, Vice President

Joe Schettler, Secretary

Sue Boll

Angie Croll

Comprising a quorum of the board

Also present:

Zach Hall, Director

Tyler Seuferer, Natural Resource Specialist

Mallory Wells, Office Manager

Nathan Reinke, Cons. Tech

Monty Freeman, FWCC Treasurer

Kelsey Longnecker, EE Coordinator

Hannah Hernandez, Naturalist

Kevin Brown, Cons. Tech

Mankato Stonebrook, Con. Tech

Guest:

Shannon Anderson

Bryan Dodson

Kirby Stott

Martin Wells

## i. Convene

### a. Agenda Review

- i. Mallory Wells asked to add Jesse's Sanctuary to the agenda, under new business.
- ii. Angie Croll moved to accept the agenda with the addition of Jesse's Sanctuary. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

## ii. Reading of the Minutes

- a. Sue Boll made a motion to accept the December 2024 Minutes as written. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

- iii. Public Comment
  - a. Shannon Anderson, Warren County resident, voiced his concerns for public hunting at Medora Prairie.
  - b. Kirby Scott, Warren County resident, voiced his concerns for public hunting at Medora Prairie.
  - c. Bryan Dodson, Warren County resident, voiced his concerns for public hunting at Medora Prairie.
- 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. Remove Mark Wilson from payroll.
      - a. Ace Hendricks made a motion to remove Mark Wilson from payroll effective December 31, 2024. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion Carried.
    - 2. Elect WCCB officers
      - a. Director Zach Hall informed the board that Joe Schettler's application for reappointment was accepted, and he will serve another 5 year term.
      - b. Joe Schettler made a motion for Mark Kickbush to serve as President, Joe Schettler to serve as Vice President, and Angie Croll to serve as secretary. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.
    - 3. By-Laws
      - a. Director Zach Hall received a few amendments for the by-laws and made those changes.
      - b. Ace Hendricks asked for clarification on some of the wording within the by-laws.
        - i. Does the president of WCCB need to attend the Friends of WCC board meetings?
          - 1. FWCC has aligned their by-law with WCCBs, so Director Hall doesn't believe there is an obligation from WCCB to attend the meetings. Director Hall always plans to attend just to keep that connection.
        - ii. On page 5 "The ability to stay levelheaded with a diverse array of assignments and a busy workload."
          - 1. Director Hall discussed that every position has some sort of stability. This comment was here

prior to him so this was already in the by-laws and did not make any changes to that section.

- iii. Page 7 mentions a 50-pound weight limit for job descriptions. Do staff have to test that they can push, pull, or lift 50 pounds?
  - 1. Director Hall discussed what they did in IDA County. He couldn't comment on the WCCB policies since he has not been here long enough to weigh in.
- iv. Reading the Environmental Education Coordinator, it looks like they are responsible for Leadership, designing plans, making sure staff stay on task, but they aren't responsible for programs. It seems like we need to put in that they can do some programs.
  - 1. Director Hall pointed out that there were bullets added to differentiate between the EE Coordinator and the Naturalist.
- v. What is the difference between Educational Theory and practice related to development of lessons
  - 1. EE Coordinator shared Educational Theory has to do with developing lesson plans and Educational Theory has to do with learning styles and having to translate that to meet curriculum.
  - 2. EE Coordinator will provide a description of Educational Theory for Director Hall to put in the by-laws.
- vi. Some positions require staff to get fire certification. What are S130/190
  - 1. S130 and S190 are the industry standard required by the DNR, Feds, and County Conservations to be certified in prescribed fires. All WCCB have attended those training courses and are certified.
- vii. Joe Schettler made a motion to approve the by-laws with the changes suggested. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

#### 4. Medora Prairie

- a. Before Director Mark Wilson retired, he wrote up the history of the prairie and how he came to know the area. TNC was able to purchase the property and manage it for several years.

They did not have the resources to be effective, so WCCB gradually began managing the area working with TNC to put policies into place. TNC changed management objectives and express the desire to switch management to WCCB in 2021.

- b. In December TNC requested a report of the property from Director Hall. This report is asked for each year. They would like to know what is going on with the area, how is it going. TNC is supportive of what the WCCB decides to allow for this property.
- c. Craig Boltman was contracted to provide a survey of the property. We must go out and do GPS coordinates to check the exact line and boundaries of all our signs and locations. We do need to do a better job of putting up more signs in specific areas. The surveyor provided us with GPS coordinates of the entire property boundary coordinates. So, we know the neighbors' access, or where we put a sign will be accurate.
- d. We will be working with Brandon Lane, Warren County GIS Coordinator, to use the survey GPS coordinates with his unit to make sure that we are on our property when group signage occurs.
- e. The conservation board, according to Iowa Chapter 350.5, has the legal authority to determine the policies that are implemented on that property. There are no grant restrictions on this property. It was not funded through REAP, Wildlife Habitat Stamp, Land and Water Conservation Fund. It was direct transfer from one agency to another.
- f. Joe Schettler asked Natural Resource Specialist, Tyler Seuferer, about the fence line along the property. The south edge does not have a fence. The first half on the East side is in good condition, then the quality goes downhill.
- g. If the areas is opened to public hunting there will be more signage. Typically, signage is placed within sight of each other, but staff could put up more signs closer together. The Board would like to make sure that there is plenty of signage that shows private property vs. public property.
- h. This property needs to be updated via the website and Google maps. This will take some time, but staff will work to get it updated on the Website as well as through Google.
- i. The mission of the WCCB is "To provide environmental education programs, maintain parks, trails, and natural areas for recreation and connect citizens with the outdoors". Our

Vision is “To protect and enhance the natural resources of Warren County”. Joe Schettler shared that he grew up hunting public grounds and had that public ground not been there he might not be interested in the outdoors. There are fewer and fewer people interested in the outdoors with less than 2% of our ground is held publicly in the state of Iowa. So Joe would be in support of expanding opportunities.

- j. The board discussed the different options that could be allowed on this property. The board’s job is to make opportunities for the whole community vs. the few.
- k. Mark Kickbush does not want the board to make a snap decision. He would like the board to do a sight visit to the different properties then Director Hall can work on writing up policies for the property to submit to the board to vote on at a future meeting.

5. Set Rental Rates

- a. Office Manager Wells presented on the rentals of 2024 and asked the board to increase the weekend package rate for the upcoming year.
- b. Joe Schettler made a motion to set the weekend package rate to \$1,500.00. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

6. Jesse’s Sanctuary

- a. Minoo Spellerburg and Sheila Allbee presented the board with their non-profit Jesse J Sanctuary. They asked me to utilize Middleswart Lodge at a discounted rate to host a Mother’s Day Brunch fundraiser.
- b. Joe Schettler made a motion to allow the use of the Middleswart Lodge at half the Sunday rental rate. No second.
- c. Angie Croll made a motion to allow the use of the Middleswart Lodge for free with proof of 501c3 status. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried

b. Discussion Items

1. REAP Grant

- a. Director Hall is working with the assistant County Attorney. She missed that there’s transfer tax due on the property sale before we can get the title transfer into WCCB’s name. So, there is a claim submitted to cover that cost. The current County Attorney’s Office will donate the exact cost of the claim back to us.

- b. The contract for the REAP Grant has been submitted back to the DNR. For us to get our \$490,000.00 reimbursement, we have to have our appraisal approved by their staff. The appraisal was completed last fall and submitted to the DNR. As soon as we get the transfer tax paid for as the title is in our name, we should get getting the grant wrapped up.

2. Iowa Bicycle Coalition

- a. Luke Hoffman, with the Iowa Bicycle Coalition, reached out to Director Hall regarding an impact study. He would like WCCB to pay \$5,000.00 to participate in the economic impact study that they are currently doing. The last study was completed in 2012. This study will help when writing a grant. This will give us Warren County specific data.

3. Nature Playscape

- a. EE Coordinator Kelsey Longnecker shared that they are moving along with the plans shown at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. They are hoping to have all their dimensional numbers given to Snyder & Associates in the next 2 to 3 weeks. Then they can put together the final pretty design, create a budget, and the extra designs that include the dimensions.
- b. EE Coordinator will create an informational page that will state all the benefits of the Playscape for fundraising purposes.
- c. Director Hall and EE Coordinator Longnecker have been in discussions about getting awareness of our parks and trails and organization in general. They have discussed adding a seasonal position that would be a marketing, content, and social media intern. They are looking for alternative ways to fund this position.

c. Approval of Bills

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

d. Financial Report

- i. Joe Schettler made a motion to approve the financial report. Ace Hendricks seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

e. Upcoming Events

- i. Extended Hours
- ii. Homeschool Wednesdays
- iii. Macrame with Indianola Parks and Rec
- iv. Hidden Heart Hike
- v. Owl Prowl in February

f. Staff Reports

- i. Office Manager Wells shared a few public outreach opportunities she participated in. Inflatables holiday drive through in Carlisle, Holiday Tree decorated in Norwalk, and Giant Candy Cane at Blue Flag Marsh for Norwalk's Holiday Bingo.
- ii. Natural Resource Specialist Seuferer was asked to be on a review committee for the Habit Stamp Grant. They meet once a year to approve the submitted grants. It was interesting to see what goes into the review of the grant and how projects get approved.

g. Adjournment

- i. Joe Schettler made a motion to adjourn at 6:54pm. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.