

Minutes of the

Warren County Conservation Board

The Warren County Conservation Board held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, July 9, 2025. The meeting was held in person at the Anette Nature Center.

Meeting called to order by Vice President Joe Schettler at 5:00 p.m.

Those present:

Joe Schettler, Vice President

Angie Croll, Secretary

Ace Hendricks

Jake Sickels

Comprising a quorum of the board.

Absent:

Mark Kickbush, President

Staff present:

Zach Hall, Director

Kelsey Longnecker, EE Coordinator

Tyler Seuferer, Park Superintendent

Kevin Brown, Conservation Tech

Mankato Stonebrook, Conservation Tech

Colton Schwenke, Maintenance Tech

Mallory Wells, Office Manager

Monty Freeman, FWCC Treasurer

Guests:

Convene

i. Call to order

ii. Agenda Review

1. Joe Schettler would like to see the mission statement posted in the top right corner of the agenda.

iii. Reading of the Minutes

1. Ace Hendricks made the motion to approve the June 2025 regular minutes as presented. Seconded by Angie Croll. All ayes. Motion carried.

iv. Public Comment

1. None

v. Friends of Warren County Conservation

1. Monty Freeman shared the quarterly newsletter. They hosted a few pop up plant sales that performed well. They will be hosting the Prairie Picnic this fall but will not be doing a live auction. They will be giving out a kayak for anyone that purchases their tickets by a certain date. They will have the "Adopt an Animal" program to support the education staff with animal care. FWCC is looking for new board members, they currently have 3 open spots. Memberships are down this year but they are looking at adding back paper mailings for memberships.

vi. Business Agenda

a. New Business –

a. New Hire – Colton Schwenke

- i. Angie Croll made a motion to hire Colton Schwenke, effective July 7, 2025. Ace Hendricks seconded the motion. All aye. Motion carried.

b. Conservation Ecologist hiring process

- i. The hiring committee went through applications and interviews. Director Hall requested to make an offer at \$62,212.80.00 per year, to provide 7 days of vacation immediately and then consider negotiating a raise after they complete their 6-month probationary period to fast track fiscal year 27 rates.
- ii. Angie Croll made a motion to hire the Conservation Ecologist at \$62,212.80 per year and provide 7 days of vacation immediately and then consider negotiating a raise after they complete their 6-month probationary period to fast track fiscal year 27 rates. Ace Hendricks seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

c. Professional Service Agreement – WHKS

- i. Bridges were inspected on the Great Western Trail and Summerset Trails. We have not had an inspection at Zo-El bridge and the entrance bridge for Middleswart Lodge. This will cost \$3,100.00. To do a max load inspection would cost an additional \$2,150.00.
- ii. Angie Croll made a motion to allow Director Zach Hall to sign a WHKS agreement, pending the agreement is amended to just address the suspension bridges at Zo-El and the entrance bridge for the Middleswart Lodge entrance. Ace Hendricks seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

d. ICCS – MOU for supporting DNR Water Trails project

- i. The Iowa DNR is working to create a map similar to Google maps' Street View of the Des Moines River. They are needing to raise \$35,000.0 for the project and are asking counties to assist with funding for their portion of the DSM River. WCCB's portion would be \$660.00.
- ii. Angie Croll made a motion to support the MOU in support of the Water Trails Project. Ace Hendricks seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

e. MidAmerican Electric Distribution Easement

- i. MidAmerican is needing to set guide wires for electric poles between our bike trail and Veterans Parkway. They are requesting a 20-foot easement from North 35th Street to Highway R45. Maintenance of the trail won't affect us, but it will be something additional to mow around. There will be a 30-foot buffer from the trail to the guide wires. There won't be any additional poles added.

- ii. Joe Schettler made a motion to approve the MidAmerican Electric Distribution Easement. Jake Sickels seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

vii. Discussion Items

1. State Rec. Trails Grant

- a. Director Hall submitted the SRT Grant on June 30th. There were a few changes to the budget, but it was finalized and sent to the committee. The preliminary results will be in September with results known in October.

2. Comprehensive List to Strategic Plan Development

- a. Director Hall created a Comprehensive List and has been encouraging staff to add items to the list as they see fit over the past year. The staff will be meeting to pull from the list and add it to a Strategic Plan. After the Strategic Plan is finalized, WCCB can focus on what we want to spend money through a guided a Capital Improvement Plan.

3. NWTF Grant due Sept 1st.

- a. Director Hall shared that the National Wildlife Turkey Federation has a super fund that county conservation boards can apply for. Funds can range from five thousand dollars to ten thousand dollars. These funds can be used for land acquisition, equipment, and Forest Management. The Board would like to see Director Hall move forward with applying for the grant.

4. Open Discussion

a. Fall conference

- a. Director Hall has signed up 2 board members and 7 staff members. In total it will cost just over five thousand dollars to attend the training. WCCB encouraged all staff to go to the Iowa County Conservation System event.

b. My County Parks

- a. Office Manager Wells shared that reservations are now live on MCP. There have been 2 reservations for the Lodge made online.

viii. Upcoming Events

1. Education staff shared upcoming events.

ix. Approval of Bills

1. Ace Hendricks made a motion to approve the bills as submitted. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

x. Financial Report

1. Ace Hendricks made a motion to accept the financial report. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

ii. Staff Reports

1. WCCB staff provided a summary of their workload.
2. EE Coordinator gave an update on the playscape.

iii. Adjournment

1. Angie Croll made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:33pm. Jake Sickels seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion Carried.