



## **Benton County Conservation Board Meeting**

**Monday, September 11th at 5:30 PM**

**Benton County Nature Center 5718 20<sup>th</sup> Ave Dr, Vinton**

**Members present:** Dan Hill, Mike LaGrange, Denni Randall, Randy Scheel, Becky VanWey, Liaison Tracy Seeman

**Staff present:** Shelby Williams, Faith Hunt

**Call to order:** 5:30pm

**Guests or public participation:** None

**Consent Agenda (previous minutes, expenditures, revenues):** Motion made by Hill second by LaGrange. All aye, motion passed.

### **Organizations**

- a. TriCounty Snowmobile Association - None
- b. Wildcat Disc Golf Volunteers - Have one more event in October. Large disc golf tournaments are being split between Wildcat and Shaver Park (Cedar Rapids), helping with crowd flow. Wildcat is still well ranked. Anticipation for higher use after the shower house is installed.
- c. Foundation - Next meeting: Tuesday November 7th at 6:30pm - Policy discussion about recommended donations from vendors at events.
- d. OCNT Committee
  - i. Vinton Trailhead – Waiting on other party writing up deed for land.
  - ii. Other - LaGrange suggested an agreement with power company to clear out some trees to open up the trail. Plant prairie grass instead of all the trees which will help with maintenance.
- e. Winegar Equestrian Volunteers - None
- f. REAP Committee – next meeting: Tentatively April 2024 - Next meeting in Benton County, Williams will be meeting with cities in the county and walking them through the application process.
- g. REAP Assembly: Wednesday, October 25th, 2023 at 1:00pm at Bloomsbury Farm Party Barn #1 - Benton county will be hosting REAP ASSEMBLY for REGION 10: Benton, Iowa, Jones, Washington, Linn, and Johnson counties. Every city in every county, soil and water districts, and the general public are invited to join. At this meeting we will discuss priorities within the counties to use for legislation. Hill suggested we contact the media about the assembly.

### **New Business**

- a. Benton County Water Trails – Looking to create a water trail along the Cedar River through Benton County. The Trail would pick up at Winegar Tobin Area where Black Hawk County's trail end and continue to Wildcat Bluff Recreation Area. Water trails would include mile markers from park to park with local resources and aid in tourism. BCC would need to adjust parking at



boat ramps but as of now, no money commitment. This will provide improvement to signage and advertising.

- i. LaGrange motioned to sign the letter of support, seconded by Van Wey. All aye, motion passed.
- b. Volunteers – A new, one-time shortened volunteer form was created.

#### Old business

- a. Animal Shelter - VFW Post Lease: Received a signed lease termination from VFW Post Lease. Waiting on the County Attorney for deed to tell BCC what we can/can't do with the area. LaGrange feels it doesn't suit conservation. Hill asked to discuss changing hands at a Board of Supervisors meeting.
- b. City of Atkins - Atkins Roundhouse:
  - i. Lease - No movement. Haven't heard from the Mayor since the tree canopy grant discussion.
  - ii. Canopy Grant - We are not allowed to do anything until bid letting is done. Recent meeting was made clear that it is not to be managed until cleared by surveys. ECOG will help with bid/contract. Board of Supervisors signed the agreement with ECOG. Grant ends September 2026.
  - iii. Cross-county Meet - BCC offered Hannen as a site for the cross-country meet. Meet was held somewhere else.
- c. Hannen Lake:
  - i. Shop - Ceiling is being installed. To date with all the work done, we are on budget and timeline schedule.
- d. Wells:
  - i. Engineering - Working on prices for well pit removal at Rodgers to put into Rodgers old shop.
  - ii. Samples – Public water source samples have been coming back great, we have routine and understand needs. For study purposes, looking at a potential agreement with Iowa Geological Survey and Iowa Flood Center.
- e. Wildcat Bluff Recreation Area:
  - i. Funding/Outreach - Scheel is talking at a regional Title Company meeting about acquisition and county conservation. Iowa pheasants forever upped their donation of \$50,000 to \$60,000. Benton County received \$100,000 tribal funds which we are looking into for Wildcat. Hill attended the Linn County Pheasants Forever meeting – Linn will be discussing funding for Wildcat acquisition at the next meeting.
  - ii. Development - In communication with DNR Engineer for permits on Wildcat shower house, dump station and host site.
  - iii. REAP Grant - Wednesday, 9/13/23 Williams has an interview panel with the committee to hear if we received REAP funds.



- f. Garrison Paha - Parameter is getting updated numbers for next Board meeting. Jorgensen's want to work on gates/fences. We have ordered signs.
- g. One-Acre Parcels – None
- h. Conservation Easement - None

**Environmental Education** - Naturalists are working on a REAP CEP grant for IAN scholarships to attend a conference. They have created a field trip guide for teachers. Naturalists are starting in-school programming. Newsletter coming out within the next week.

**Law Enforcement**

- a. Structuring - Law Enforcement Coordinator (LEC) as the new position, working on requirements.

**Director Updates** – Tobin Lane easement information needs updated, we may have to make another easement. Discussion about creating a different road/ path to cabin. Advertising for new Board member in November. Looking for board and county balance. Looking at positions within the department and what much needed additions will look like. Discussed upcoming events in the parks: Fall Family Fest at Rodgers and Chili Cook-Off at Hannen.

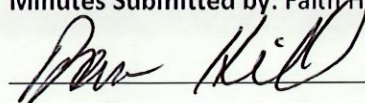
- a. Annual Report is to be submitted to Board of Supervisors.
- b. Director & Employee reviews - New policy for counties that all Department heads must do Employee reviews every October, looking at policy amendment for conservation board.

**Set up special meeting** - Monday, October 9, 2023 food at 11:30pm at Rodgers Grilling Garden, Benton County (Conservation Tour), load bus by 12pm. Food provided by staff with the Rodgers Pizza Oven for brick oven pizzas - must have RSVP for food and bus. BCCB Regular Meeting starting directly after the tour at the Nature Center.

**Set next meeting** – Monday, October 9, 2023 at immediately following tour at Benton County Nature Center.

**Adjourn** – motion to adjourn at 7:40pm by Van Wey, seconded by Randall. All aye, motion passed.

Minutes Submitted by: Faith Hunt

  
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Approved

10-9-2023

Date

