

October 30, 2024

### **Call to Order**

The Tama County Conservation Board met in regular session on Wednesday, October 30, 2024 at the Tama County Nature Center. The meeting was called to order at 6:29 pm by Chair, Keenan.

**Board Members present:** Keenan, Kenkel, Wacha, Allen

**Staff Members present:** Conrad, Horne, Genaw, Behrens

**Public present:** None.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Minutes from the October 2024 meeting were reviewed. It was moved by Kenkel, seconded by Wacha, to approve the minutes as written, all voting aye.

### **Approval of Bills**

Bills were presented for October 2024 totaling \$15,420.15. Deposits were made totaling \$2,018.25. It was moved by Wacha, seconded by Kenkel, to approve payment of the bills, all voting aye.

### **Public Comment**

N/A

### **Reports & Updates**

**Environmental Education Report:** Thank-you notes for Fall Fest were passed around to sign. Behrens did not sign, saying he would do so later. Genaw reported that she carried out 9 programs in October with a total attendance of 564. Returned Smokey Bear suit to State Forest Nursery in Ames. Met with Kasey Hutchinson about outreach and education possibilities for Middle Iowa Watershed Management Association. Assisted with Poweshiek County's Trunk or Treat by bringing snake & cockroaches for roving program. Met with Haley Princehouse to discuss possibility of doing Envirothon with senior WHEP team and coordinate WHEP kick-off event. Assisted with archery registration and DNR registration for STC archery club. Visited STC elementary special ed class, read Fletcher and the Falling Leaves & made nature sensory bottles. Purchased supplies for WHEP kickoff. Visited Ms. Lacy's Preschool, read Fletcher and the Falling Leaves & made nature sensory bottles. Prepared bird-skinning guide sheet for Fall IAN. Vacuumed & swept NC for WHEP kickoff & assisted with kickoff. Sent IAN meal count to caterer. Met with Mel Bro & Haley Princehouse to further discuss Envirothon. Brought projector to auditor's office so they could use it. Prepared for wild edible program by baking food & updating foraging PowerPoint. Delivered wild edible program for Brown Bag Bunch in Marshall County. Did lots of cleaning & reorganizing in NC

basement. Sent out rental codes & responded to emails and voicemails from public. Handled Ike's passes & greeted visitors in NC. Prepared for & delivered Homeschool Adventures program on adaptations. Cared for animals. Edited mycountyparks site, removed old news posts and files. Researched STEM Externship host possibility & filled out online interest form, set up meeting time to discuss. Wrote & sent thank-you note to Wildthunder for presenting at OWLS program. Continued preliminary planning & communication about OCLAP map project with Keith Summerville. Looked into kiosks for OCLAP entry. Responded to various questions throughout the month regarding Fall IAN conference, including: camping, catering, hotel fees, hotel reservation, set-up, vendor tables, presenter coordination, meeting spaces, presentation equipment, and more. Tested sound system & projectors for IAN. Ordered mice for animals. Thawed & skinned bird in preparation for IAN. Met with high-school student about conservation & wildlife careers. Made flyers & Facebook posts to advertise programs. Wrote thank-you notes for Fall Fest.

**Maintenance report:** Horne reported that he put new alternator in F-150, took deer for EHD testing, winterized showerhouse, forest mowed at OCLAP, rebuilt spindle & bearings of Kubota, went to pesticide refresher class, received new gator, bladed west side roads, started removing old cable & fencing by far shelter, helped finish burn break at Heritage Wetland, shut water off at parks. Forestry mowed along spillway & NC roadway and by far shelter. Cleaned equipment. Put new door hinge on dump truck.

**Park Officer's Report:** Conrad reported that he collected camping fees and filed them. Responded to shower house fire. Worked Pheasant Opener (did 26 license checks & wrote two salvage tags). Winterized showerhouse. Forestry mowed along spillway & NC roadway and by far shelter. Moved logs and brush into pile. Cut down and moved trees. Moved logs by tent section. Cut up firewood and started splitting it. Got parts for picnic tables and other tasks from Marshalltown. Found multiple dead deer at OCLAP, took fresher ones to the DNR office for testing. Checked Ike's, Columbia, and IRNA for dead deer. Found close to 20 at OCLAP. Shut off water to campgrounds on both sides of park. Cleaned equipment. Did maintenance on chainsaws. Got new parts and chain for 211. Got log splitter working properly. Hand-harvested prairie seed. Started tearing out old downed barbed wire fence by far shelter. Put new door hinge on dump truck. Cut a trail/burn break along the dikes at heritage wetlands.

**Director's Report:** Behrens reported that he did the following: Budgeting & weekly deposits. Answered a few calls & emails, rental coordination, Ike's sales. Worked on new planting outside NC. Chatted with supervisors, HR, auditors, etc. Ordered new uniforms for staff. Coordinating new phone systems. Attended new director's summit in Marion County. Did GPS and mapping of trails. Worked on insurance issues for showerhouse fires. Planning District I meeting. Researched grants for OCLAP. IDALS updates. Worked on Oxbow and Columbia management plans. Did tree removal at OCLAP and Heritage Wetlands.

### Old Business

**Campground utility shut down for winter:** Utilities shut down at OCLAP and TF Clarks. Posted new rates online.

**Brush & tree cleaning around Otter Creek:** Have been using skid-steer to clear out brush & honeysuckle. Honeysuckle will resprout next spring but will be easier to deal with.

**Sign updates:** Have been taking down & repainting signs. Planning to make some new signs as well for directions at OCLAP.

### **New Business**

**Furnace repair & replacement:** Furnace downstairs died & was replaced.

**Shower house fire:** Minor fire happened in shower house. Seems like someone may have thrown a cigarette into the pit & caused a fire. Power-washing and an ozone machine were discussed as ways to clean out the smoke. Bottom of collection pit was burnt in fire & will need to be replaced. Behrens presented estimate for cleaning, new composter, and other repairs. Would have to hire a company with confined space permit for installation. Horne mentioned that liquid pit would also need to be drained for work, which is not included in Behrens's estimate. Behrens also suggested upgrading shower facility in future & presented a quote for a new building totaling \$170,000- \$270,000. Cost does not include plumbing. Horne estimated that shower house was put up in the 1980s and is not ADA. Board members discussed desire for cabins in future. Behrens & Horne suggested putting new shower house in between the 2 camping loops in the RV section. Wacha suggested west side of lake for eventual cabin. Kenkel suggested making a capital improvements plan in future to determine necessary projects, locations, prioritization, and budget planning. Kenkel suggested having a special meeting early next year to brainstorm capital improvements. Many expressed support for developing a capital improvement plan. Picnic point was discussed as possible area for cabin. Wacha discussed possibility of working with other businesses & organizations to tackle big projects in future. Behrens said he would bring up future improvement plan in December.

**Auditor's bill:** Bill for state auditor's investigation for \$44,927.50 was presented. Behrens said county auditors and BOS said TCCB is responsible for the bill. Wacha wondered if previous instances of county investigations have been billed to respective departments, and if county insurance may help cover this fee. Desire to pursue charges was discussed, along with questions of who would be able to pursue the matter. Bill has been tabled until questions are answered. Behrens said he will discuss with BOS and auditors.

### **Floor Discussion**

Behrens showed preliminary work on management plan for Oxbow Bottoms. He said he has been working on basic mapping on AllTrails & made some basic maps in MS Word. Board members remarked on how well the lake has been looking. Allen inquired about how often staff check Manatt's landing because he has seen lots of folks there. Conrad said he doesn't check often due to the construction, but Tama PD patrols it.

### **Adjourn**

With no further discussion items, it was motioned by Kenkel, seconded by Wacha, to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m., all voting aye.

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**Board Chair**

**Tama County Conservation Board**