

**MINUTES
STATE PRESERVES ADVISORY BOARD
MCFARLAND PARK CONSERVATION CENTER
AMES IOWA
SEPTEMBER 24, 1997**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Shirley Schermer, Chairperson
Diane Ford-Shivvers
Joel Hanes
Gary Phillips
Jonathan Steege
Lois Tiffany
Larry Wilson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Diane Ford-Shivvers
Joel Hanes
Gary Phillips
Shirley Schermer
Jonathan Steege
Lois Tiffany
Larry Wilson

ADVISORS PRESENT

Dorothy Baringer
Rebecca Conard (arrived at 9:00 a.m.)
Kathy Gourley
Robert McKay
Daryl Smith

ADVISORS ABSENT

Jane Hey
Jan Nash

STAFF PRESENT

Daryl Howell
John Pearson

STAFF ABSENT

Mike Carrier

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Schermer called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

APPROVE AGENDA

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Item #11 - Cultural Resource Management Panel Follow-up (to be taken up
when Rebecca Conard arrives)
- Item #12 - Critique on SPAB Conference held yesterday

Motion was made by Larry Wilson to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Jonathan Steege. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion was made by Larry Wilson to approve the meeting minutes of June 10, 1997, as presented. Seconded by Lois Tiffany. Motion carried unanimously.

STAFF ACTIVITY REPORT

Daryl Howell and John Pearson reported the following staff activities for the period of June - September 1997.

- **Long-term Plan** - Information presented at the Preserves Reunion and Conference.
- **Preserve Management Plans** - No progress during this quarter
- **Attendance at the dedication of Ames High Prairie** - The Nature Conservancy and the Ames School Board dedicated the preserve on August 18, 1997.
- **Preserve Inspections** - Brushy Creek; Casey's Paha; Sheeder Prairie; Bixby; Fish Farm Mounds; Dinesen Prairie; Hayden Prairie; Brush Creek Canyon.
- **Fauna Surveys** - Surveys for small mammals (including bats) and reptiles were conducted in Bixby and Brush Creek Canyon State Preserves in June. This work was done in conjunction with Mr. Terry Van DeWalle' fauna surveys of these areas. His completion report was submitted at the end of June.
- **Gitchie Manitou Preserve** - Tour of preserve with YMCA and Preserves Board in June to discuss the use of preserve by YMCA. Return to preserve in July with Big Sioux Wildlife Unit and The Nature Conservancy to control brush and trees on prairie.

- **Database Management** - Algific slope site information continues to be incorporated into the database. This project should be completed later this year.
- **Contract Administration** - Final reports for FY 97 projects were submitted to the Department in late June. Contracts for the six FY 98 approved studies have been signed and these studies have been started or will be in the next few weeks.
- **State Preserves Board Reunion and Conference** - Arrangements for the event have taken a little more time than originally thought.
- **Other Duties** - GIS training course, work on E and T list revision, Iowa Prairie Conference, Midwest Oak Savanna Conference, Wildlife Society conference, deer exclosure measurement in Ledges State Park, Rock Creek State park and Volga River Recreation Area ecoplans, State Fair booth, inspect Eurasian water-milfoil problem at Sweet Marsh Wildlife Area, hill prairies at Fish Farm/Blackhawk Point Wildlife Area, tour Kauten Fen.

Mr. Howell and Mr. Pearson noted they had nothing to add to the above, which was provided for informational purposes.

RESEARCH REQUESTS ON STATE PRESERVES

- 1) Dr. Erik Wild, University of Dubuque requests permission to conduct long-term monitoring of wetlands and amphibian populations at the Mines of Spain Recreation Area and Catfish Creek preserve.
- 2) Dr. Peter Graham, University of Minnesota requests permission to collect several specimens of Dalea purpurea and Amorpha canescans and a surrounding soil sample for each plant at Hayden Prairie.
- 3) Mr. William Weaver, a Ph.D. soil science student at Iowa State, requests permission to collect 12 soil cores from both Cayler Prairie and Freda Haffner. A number of tensiometers will be installed and monitored weekly during the 1998 and 1999 growing seasons. The soil cores will be 3 inch cores and the tensiometers are 1-inch in diameter. The results from the preserves will be compared with several other land uses.

Mr. Howell stated that Dr. Erik Wild is requesting permission to do some long-term monitoring of amphibian populations at Mines of Spain and staff would recommend approval. He related that staff could get some good long-term information from this project.

Mr. Pearson stated that Dr. Graham would like to collect a volume of soil around some plants at Hayden Prairie. He noted that the impact would be leaving a few holes in the ground.

He stated that Mr. Weaver would like to collect soil cores from Cayler and Freda Haffner and it will involve driving a truck mounted core on to the prairie. Mr. Pearson noted that as long as it is done during dry weather and won't leave ruts it should be okay. He recommended approval of the projects.

Discussion took place in regard to filling the holes with sand, vermiculite, or soil from gopher mounds on the same area. Mr. Pearson stated that he will advise Dr. Graham to fill in the holes.

Motion was made by Lois Tiffany to approve the three research requests as presented. Seconded by Gary Phillips. Motion carried unanimously.

CANDIDATE PRESERVES FOR GEOLOGICAL DESIGNATION

Robert McKay reviewed that, as part of a housekeeping inventory, he and Jean Prior prepared a list of existing preserves currently not designated as geological, which should be considered for this designation. He related that he was also asked to consider if any preserves currently designated as geological should have the designation removed. Mr. McKay noted that he and Jean Prior reviewed the existing preserves and listed the following recommendations:

- Should not remove any preserves from current geological designation.
- Preserves that should be designated as geological are Cayler Prairie State Preserve; Doolittle Prairie State Preserve; Kalsow Prairie State Preserve; Little Maquoketa Mounds State Preserve; Pilot Grove State Preserve; and Rolling Thunder Prairie State Preserve
- Preserves that should receive further consideration as to whether they should receive geological designation are Indian Bluffs Primitive Area and Miller State Preserve.

Mr. McKay stated that after he and Jean developed the list they visited a couple of the preserves and have changed their thoughts on one of them. He related that after visiting Pilot Grove he and Jean feel it should not deserve the geological designation. He related that they need to go back and look at Indian Bluffs Primitive Area more extensively.

Chairperson Schermer asked what would need to be done to give these areas the geological designation.

Mr. Pearson stated that the difficult way to do it would be to go back and amend the dedication statements, then re-file the papers with the county recorder. He added that the best way to handle it would be, in the next Preserves Guide, to simply describe the preserve in the terms the Board chooses.

Joel Hanes asked Bob McKay if he feels there is anything that should be changed in the management to give better protection of the geological aspects.

Mr. McKay replied that he is not familiar with the management plans for any of these particular preserves, adding that he did not see anything that looked like it would be a management concern from the geological resource point. He stated that Kalsow Prairie is significant in that it sits right over the center of a 22 mile diameter, meteorite impact structure. He noted that it is an incredibly unique structure which is buried and hidden.

Motion was made by Joel Hanes to add a geological designation to Cayler Prairie, Doolittle Prairie, Kalsow Prairie, Little Maquoketa Mounds, and Rolling Thunder Prairie. Seconded by Larry Wilson. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Schermer asked that the management plans for those preserves be given to Robert McKay so he can review them to see if anything needs to be updated or changed.

GITCHIE MANITOU - YMCA USES

John Pearson reviewed that earlier in the year YMCA approached staff about using Gitchie Manitou for proposed activities which they listed at that time. He related that following a subsequent meeting with DNR staff, several Board members, the YMCA, and Doug Harr, the YMCA has simplified the list to include the following four items only: 1) the restoration of the vandalized shelter; 2) the installation of a canoe boat ramp at the south end of the preserve; 3) to allow continued day use by the YMCA to support their educational programs; and 4) move the entrance to the south end of the preserve. Mr. Pearson noted that this plan was acceptable to the Board members who were present at that meeting, but he would like to formalize agreement by the full Board.

Chairperson Schermer commented that regarding the shelter it could be restored with a roof that would meet Federal Register Guidelines or build a structure over the shelter to help preserve it.

Mr. Pearson noted that staff and the YMCA need to know whether the Board agrees in principle that these are worthwhile activities and that details can be worked out later on.

Motion was made by Joel Hanes to direct staff to move forward in negotiations for the four areas of recommended improvement, and details be brought to the Board as they are worked out. Seconded by Gary Phillips.

Discussion took place in regard to repair of the CCC structure

Mr. Pearson gave a slide presentation of Gitchie Manitou and pointed out the areas of concern. He discussed brush control, tree removal, and prairie management and related that he had a lot of help from Gary Phillips, DNR wildlife personnel, and the TNC with tree and brush removal from the area. Further discussion centered on problems with the use of the parking lot and enforcement of traffic violations, and on moving the entrance to the south.

Vote on the motion carried unanimously.

Gary Phillips commented that he talked to Doug Harr about parking spaces in close proximity to preserves and noted that with the acquisition of the new wildlife area at Cayler it might be wise to move the parking lot to the north end of the preserve, which would put it into the south end of the new wildlife area. He related that due to the heavy use of the area, the trails at the parking area and through the preserve are heavily compacted.

CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PANEL FOLLOW-UP

Chairperson Schermer noted that Rebecca Conard is now present, so she asked that Item #11 on Cultural Resource Management be taken up at this time.

Rebecca Conard discussed, as a follow up to one of the comments yesterday, in terms of trying to put together some workshops for managers that have archaeological and historical resources on their properties, the possibility of having OSA, the State Historical Society, DNR, and maybe some other agencies pool resources and provide workshops, not just for managers of state preserves but other state areas and CCB's.

Ms. Conard mentioned Galen Jackson who has been very active in Iowa Historic Preservation and lives up in the northwest area of the state. She related that he would be willing to work with DNR to arrive at some management strategies or work on some restoration in cultural and historic resources in that area. She related that there is some interest by local area people who are knowledgeable about this kind of restoration. She noted that she did not know there was a problem at Ft. Atkinson until she listened to Scot Michelson yesterday. Ms. Conard added that it might be useful to have a brainstorm session with some of the people who are involved in the on-site management. She related that they could possibly do 2 - 3 case studies in an all day workshop and develop a short range plan.

Discussion followed regarding a possible workshop and funding for same.

Director Wilson commented that he would not identify what Scot Michelson described as a problem, but more as a misunderstanding. He related that he does not think there is going to be any money put into Ft. Atkinson to re-create anything because of fiscal constraints. He added that perhaps better direction should be provided to on-site employees on how to respond to the public when they have ideas on what should be done in their areas. He noted that this could be provided to employees at the various statewide bureau meetings.

Considerable discussion followed regarding needed repairs observed when the Board visited Ft. Atkinson several years ago; how repairs would be funded; Restore the Outdoors Program; appropriations for CCC structures and for other structures as well; and assessment and prioritization of parks and preserves needs.

Director Wilson noted that the department will look at Ft. Atkinson.

Diane Ford-Shivvers asked if the Board could be provided with the priority list for parks and preserves. Joel Hanes asked for a list of preserves that have structures on them.

Discussion followed regarding the parks priority list and how the prioritizing is done.

Chairperson Schermer commented that it would be good to develop a needs assessment for non-state owned properties.

Chairperson Schermer suggested that she, along with Kathy Gourley and Rebecca Conard, meet to discuss ideas in setting up some workshops and which routes to pursue, and to work with Daryl Howell and John Pearson on it. She related that she would like to include both archaeological and historic resources, which would entail above ground and below ground resources.

Consensus was to have Shirley Schermer, Kathy Gourley and Rebecca Conard develop some workshop ideas. Chairperson Schermer suggested that the Board have a session on cultural resource management following the December meeting and invite some of the unit managers.

SEED COLLECTION REQUESTS

1) John Pearson stated that The Nature Conservancy and the Big Sioux Wildlife Unit would both like to harvest seed at Cayler Prairie this year. He noted that the seed collected by Big Sioux Wildlife Unit would be planted on some old crop fields, on the new addition to the prairie area. The Nature Conservancy would

use a portion of the seed to plant on Freda Hafner preserve, which is a continuation of a previously approved project. TNC will provide the harvesting equipment.

Jerry Selby of TNC expanded on details of the project. He noted that the request is for a three year period of seed collection.

Discussion followed regarding the type of harvesting equipment to be used.

Motion was made by Joel Hanes to approve the seed collection requests for one year, and that they come back before the Board for approval each year. Seconded by Diana Ford-Shivvers. Motion carried unanimously.

Daryl Smith inquired about possibly taking another pass or two to get some seed for reconstruction restoration at Lakeside campus, and how the Board felt in working with other state agencies and whether that type of request would be viewed favorably.

Chairperson Schermer suggested that the details be put in a formal proposal and be submitted to the Board.

2) John Pearson stated that the Story County Conservation Board is requesting permission to collect seed at Doolittle Prairie Preserve to do restoration on the disturbed southern portion of the preserve.

Carol Williams, Unit Manager - Western Story County, noted that Story County CCB manages Doolittle Prairie. She introduced Joe Pfeiffer, Roadside Vegetation Manager, and distributed color maps of the area showing ownership and vegetation types. She provided details of the prairie quality and areas where there are thistle problems. Ms. Williams related that they are hoping to combine one-third of the good quality section and replant it in the not so good section, where they are having thistle problems.

Director Wilson asked how much seed is needed and how much they propose to collect.

Ms. Williams stated that she does not know how much they will get off the area but are trying to collect enough seed to do a 4-acre re-seeding.

Motion was made by Larry Wilson to approve the seed collection request on Doolittle as presented. Seconded by Jonathan Steege. Motion carried unanimously.

STRASSER WOODS

Daryl Howell stated that the Gray's Woods Neighborhood Association is interested in placing 2 or 3 benches next to the foot trail on the preserve. He related that they want to know if the Board is interested in the bench project but do not want to spend the time, money, and effort if it is not a possibility. He noted that the Neighborhood Association feel it would encourage more family use of the area.

Motion was made by Larry Wilson to approve the bench installation contingent on the location or placement of the benches being approved by Daryl Howell or John Pearson. Seconded by Joel Hanes. Motion carried unanimously.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Joel Hanes stated that he and Shirley Schermer, as members of the nominating committee, would like to place in nomination for Chair - Diane Ford-Shivvers, and for Vice-Chair - Jonathan Steege.

Motion was made by Joel Hanes that nominations cease and ballots be cast as recommended by the Nominations Committee. Seconded by Lois Tiffany. Motion carried unanimously.

Shirley Schermer yielded the Chair to Diane Ford-Shivvers at this point. Chairperson Ford-Shivvers asked if a decision has been made for the December meeting format.

Discussion followed in regard to having some of the managers, from preserves that have cultural resources, in for discussion on that issue.

Director Wilson commented that he is not sure he wants to pull all of those managers in for a planning meeting.

Shirley Schermer noted that the Board needs to hear from those managers to get feedback on problems in their areas and what they perceive as their needs.

Director Wilson remarked that he is concerned that would be one person's perception as to what the problems are, and it is also necessary to look at financial resources for correcting the problems.

Shirley Schermer stated that she is talking about the following two issues: 1) actual management problems with the resources; and 2) informational/interpretive dealing with the public about what is there and what can be done.

Daryl Howell suggested sending out a survey to managers about their concerns, then possibly pull in one manager from each specialized area such as Parks, Wildlife, etc. Director Wilson agreed that is a good idea to do a survey and then bring in managers only from the appropriate areas.

Shirley Schermer suggested identifying the areas that are archaeological and historical, and target those areas for initial surveys. It was decided to have the December meeting on Tuesday, December 16, in the morning, then have the discussion on cultural resources in the afternoon.

CRITIQUE OF SPAB REUNION

Jonathan Steege commented that it would have been nice to have taped the first few speakers who addressed the history of the Board.

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers noted that she asked the speakers to send her a copy of their speech and she also took extensive notes, adding that she will compile it into a complete report.

Joel Hanes remarked that he visited with Dr. Galen Smith, who related he had the feeling nothing much would happen after the Board was created, and he was absolutely delighted about what is being done with the preserves.

Discussion followed regarding the recent appropriation for parks and preserves.

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers asked how Board members could get involved in the budgeting for preserves.

Director Wilson explained the budget process, the 5-year plan, and Natural Resource Commission approval of the budget.

Considerable discussion took place on the following topics: Board members needing to identify themselves to local legislators; management needs for preserves; responsibility for management of areas; staffing for preserves; identifying needs of specific preserves areas; Teaming with Wildlife Initiative; volunteer efforts for preserves and difficulties in recruiting volunteers; the public's lack of knowledge of the preserves; Board members taking on responsibility to take a look at certain preserves and report on same; initiate an Adopt-A-Preserve program; the Farm Bureau's addition of a staff person to work on environmental issues; media coverage/new releases for preserves events; use of TNC interns; maintenance needs and additional staff; planning session between regular Board meetings; status of updating the Preserves Guide; adding new preserves to web page; digital maps on GIS; completing long-range plan through a two day retreat; and develop a matrix to identify gaps in the preserves system.

John Pearson expressed thanks to Gary Phillips and TNC for their part in the Gitche Manitou project.

Diane Ford-Shivvers commented that Daryl Howell and John Pearson did a wonderful job on the SPAB Reunion and symposium.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, December 16, in the morning; cultural resources discussion will follow the meeting.

BOARD TOUR

The Board and DNR sponsored a conference about State Preserves on Tuesday September 23, as part of the SPAB reunion. The Board will tour the Ames High Prairie following today's meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Jonathan Steege to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Gary Phillips. Motion carried unanimously.

With no further business to come before the State Preserves Advisory Board, Chairperson Ford-Shivvers adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m., Wednesday, September 24, 1997.

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