

**MINUTES  
STATE PRESERVES ADVISORY BOARD  
FORT ATKINSON, IOWA  
OCTOBER 15, 1999**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Diane Ford-Shivvers, Chair  
Gary Phillips  
Timothy Sproul  
Jonathan Steege  
Lois Tiffany  
Paul Johnson

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Kathy Gourley

**ADVISORS PRESENT**

Robert McKay

**ADVISORS ABSENT**

Dorothy Baringer  
Rebecca Conard  
Jan Nash  
Shirley Schermer  
Daryl Smith

**STAFF PRESENT**

Mike Carrier  
Ruth Herzberg  
Daryl Howell  
John Pearson

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the State Preserves Advisory Board was called to order by Chairperson Ford-Shivvers at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, October 15, 1999. She thanked Scot Michelson for making the meeting arrangements.

**NEW BOARD MEMBER**

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers introduced and welcomed new Board member, Timothy Sproul.

### **APPROVE AGENDA**

The following adjustments were made to the agenda:

Add Item #4-A – Option for Planted Prairie at Toolesboro

Add Item #5-A – Seed Collection

Add Item #7-A – Preserves Personnel and Budget Discussion Update

Add Item #7-B – Dennis Schlicht Letter Regarding Prairie Burning at Cayler

***Motion was made by Lois Tiffany to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Gary Phillips. Motion carried unanimously.***

### **APPROVE MINUTES**

***Motion was made by Lois Tiffany to approve the meeting minutes of July 8, 1999, as presented. Seconded by Jonathan Steege. Motion carried unanimously.***

### **ROCK ISLAND PRESERVE**

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers reported that she, Shirley Schermer and Daryl Howell attended an environmental scoping meeting at Rock Island Preserve in September. She noted that there were 27 people in attendance and the wetlands ecologist, Scott Lyler, said he did not see any problems with impacts on the wetland within the preserve. She related that she got mixed signals in regard to the noise abatement issue and the placement of a wall, in that the sentiment expressed by DOT was that they usually place noise abatement in residential areas rather than a natural area. Chairperson Ford-Shivvers noted that they did not think there would be any impact on Hanging Bog. She stated that DOT will re-evaluate the middle of next year and there will be a public comment period. She related that the Board would need to keep involved in this matter.

### **OPTION FOR PLANTED PRAIRIE AT TOOLESBORO**

John Pearson stated that there has always been a small, planted prairie in front of the property at Toolesboro Mound Preserve and it has been neglected for years. He added that it has lots of tree and shrub encroachments. He noted that

Steve Ohrn would like some direction on what to do with the prairie. Jim Rudisill and Tom Wahl, Louisa County Conservation Board, outlined three options as follows: 1) Rehabilitate existing prairie; 2) Replant prairie; 3) Convert prairie to trees. Mr. Pearson related that Kathy Gourley would like to know which option the Board would want to do.

Paul Christiansen stated that he was the one responsible for the prairie when it was installed in 1974. He noted that the State Historical Society provided care for it the first few years. He related that he had not seen it for quite a long time, until last spring, and it was in pretty bad shape then. He said he would recommend it be kept as a prairie.

Brief discussion followed.

Lois Tiffany asked what advantage there would be to having a prairie there.

Paul Christiansen stated it would serve as information and education to the public.

Director Johnson commented that if the Board goes with Option 1, they might want to look at managing the whole thing individually rather than divide it into thirds.

Paul Christiansen stated that it would be best to get the woody plants out and then do a burn.

Jonathan Steege commented that would be a good time to introduce additional species.

***Motion was made by Jonathan Steege to recommend going with Option 1 with the stipulation that additional species be added as part of the management plan, and to manage the area as one whole unit rather than dividing it into smaller sections. Seconded by Paul Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.***

## **RESEARCH REQUESTS**

John Pearson stated that staff received a request from Dr. John Brejda, USDA Agricultural Research Service, to collect seeds and specimens of legumes and soil samples from 25 prairie preserves in Iowa as part of a multi-state research project. He related that an understanding was previously established that if a researcher wanted to conduct research of a nondestructive nature, and it would have to begin before the next Board meeting, the staff could grant permission. He added that he approved the request from Dr. Brejda.

Lois Tiffany stated that if staff has no concerns with it she would see no problem with it either.

Gary Phillips commented that he agrees with staff on granting permission for this research, adding that is one reason for the preserves, to provide information through research.

### **SEED COLLECTION**

John Pearson distributed copies of an update on Jaime Edwards's seed collection project she presented to the Board last Spring. Mr. Pearson also distributed copies of the Seed Harvest Policy on State Preserves. He reported that the project was so successful that they did not have to harvest seed on three of the five preserves. He expanded on details of the harvesting on Kalsow and Steele prairies. Mr. Pearson related that since Jaime did not get to Rolling Thunder prairie, Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge expressed an interest in stepping in, in Jaime's place, and taking the seed. He related that he just learned that the CCB has already been harvesting on Rolling Thunder, so Walnut Creek said they will not harvest it, but the CCB related they would share the seed with Walnut Creek. Mr. Pearson stated that he advised the CCB they should have requested permission from the Preserves Board prior to harvesting seed on the preserve. He related that they indicated they would request permission in the future. He stated that the DNR Wildlife Bureau has begun a project with a goal to harvest enough native prairie seeds, grassy and forbs, within five years to provide all local ecotype plantings on state lands. He related that Jaime Edward's project is the first year of a five-year effort. Mr. Pearson expressed concern that as other groups will become interested in harvesting seed, the problem it presents is that it could create a bottleneck in the request procedure. He suggested to keep it from becoming a bureaucratic burden on the overall process, he would ask that the Board formulate a general policy that if there is not time to wait for another Board meeting that permission be granted at the staff level, similar to what is done on research requests. Mr. Pearson noted that this would only be done with general, routine requests that are not on wet or sensitive areas.

***Motion was made by Gary Phillips for staff to grant approval on routine seed harvest requests that must be handled prior to the regular Board meeting.***

Jonathan Steege asked if the staff would still require a written application to do seed harvest.

Mr. Pearson indicated that they would have to provide written information on what they plan to do. He related that staff is looking for a way to expedite what seem to be obvious approvals.

***Lois Tiffany seconded the motion by Gary Phillips. Motion carried unanimously.***

Discussion followed regarding types of management regime such as late season cutting on prairie areas and running the bales through a stationary combine to provide another source of seed. Also discussed was using the bales for mulch and allowing CCB's and DOT to use the mulch in roadsides.

### **PRESERVES GUIDE UPDATE**

Ruth Herzberg displayed a draft copy of the new preserves guide she has been working on for the past 18 months. She showed the type of maps used and related that they are adding one color to clarify which roads to take to get to the preserve. She related that would have cost \$52,000 but the funds were not available for that. Ms. Herzberg noted that I & E Bureau contacted Bur Oak Press, who indicated they could do the project for \$1,000 if the Department would guarantee them 500 copies. She further explained specifics of the guide noting that she hopes to have all revisions completed by the end of October.

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers asked what the cost, per guide, would be to the public.

Ms. Herzberg responded that it would probably be less than \$15.

Tim Sproul asked if this is a DNR project with free distribution to the public.

John Pearson stated that the last time the preserves guide was printed 5,000 copies were printed and paid for from DNR funds, and they were given away to the public at no charge. He noted that this time there is an increased amount of text and color was added to the maps, which increased the cost, so it will be sold at a set amount.

Director Johnson suggested asking Diane, in her new position as volunteer coordinator, to help find funding for the guide. He added that the cost of the book should be kept as low as possible in order to get it into the hands of the public. Director Johnson commended Ruth for the good work she has done on the preserves guide. He stated that it would be nice to put it on the web so CCB's and other entities could print out specific pages to hand out to the public.

Tim Sproul expressed concern with a \$15 price tag, noting that it is difficult to sell even small guides at a low cost.

### **WILD PLACES PROGRAM**

John Pearson stated that he distributed a paper about a Wild Places Program, and further explained that the program is an idea to encourage landowners to take measures to preserve their land even if it's not becoming a preserve. It gives them public recognition and provides some financial incentives for conservation easements, and could also allow the land to be considered for designation as a state preserve. Mr. Pearson noted that to make it an official program of the preserves system it would require a minor change in the existing Code, which would be to change the reference to management of "wild parks" to "wild places."

Director Johnson commented that, nationwide, the focus for a long time has been on public lands in setting aside places for preservation. He stated that the next real challenge is the wildness between those wild places, adding that there could be a lot more. He related that one of the Board's goals should be to encourage private landowners to look at ways they can enhance and protect wildness, and he expanded on how that could be done. Director Johnson stated that he would like to ask the legislature to look at some way to reimburse counties to make the program work. He suggested that the Board begin to discuss this issue with other groups across the state to put wildness back into the landscape.

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers distributed copies of other states similar programs and discussed the Illinois and Minnesota programs.

Discussion took place about a backyard prairie stewardship program with private landowners, and registration of wild places.

Timothy Sproul asked if there are possibilities for Loess Hills Alliance and similar organizations to work in conjunction on this type of program, adding that his concern is how many registry programs are needed.

Director Johnson related that the registry is a way of recognition but if people do not want to register, the DNR needs to service them anyway.

John Pearson commented that maybe a working group of interests is needed to coordinate all of the different registries and to determine which areas qualify.

Director Johnson urged the Board to continue to talk about this issue in the future.

***Motion was made by Jonathan Steege for the Preserves Board to pursue the development of a Wild Places Program. Seconded by Gary Phillips. Motion carried unanimously.***

## **PRESERVES PERSONNEL AND BUDGET DISCUSSION UPDATE**

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers reviewed that at the last meeting the Board discussed positions they would like to add. Among those were another botanist, an archaeologist, geologist, historian, and four regional managers and \$125,000 per year to increase the survey and research funding.

Director Johnson stated that the Department's budget request was presented including the SPAB budget. He related that the General Fund is in poor shape as revenues are no where near what was expected. He noted that he just received notice last week that more budget cuts may be needed from the General Fund. Director Johnson stated that the Department is proposing two major initiatives for next year that would be funded from the Infrastructure Fund, which includes REAP and the Iowa Waters Initiative. He related that where fees can be raised the Department can make a request to the legislature. He noted that the Governor is very supportive of environmental issues and will focus new spending on water quality. Director Johnson related that it would be almost impossible to get funding for new FTE's as there is not a lot of wiggle room in the budget.

Gary Phillips asked if the federal funding on nongame comes through, if there would be money for the preserves.

Director Johnson said it is a very good possibility and it would be a big boost for the state and nongame if it comes through.

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers stated that Mike Carrier indicated he was giving thought to possibly adding a botanist through a PEO position. Director Johnson related that Mike Carrier is also looking at using 14 AmeriCorp workers to be used in the parks.

Director Johnson reported that the Livable Iowa initiative would expand opportunities in some state parks, taking them to a higher level. He related that Mike Brandrup is looking at expanding forests and prairies, adding that he is bringing on five new people as part of last years budget and they will do some work in regard to prairies and preserves.

## **DENNIS SCHLICHT LETTER REGARDING PRAIRIE BURNING AT CAYLER**

Daryl Howell stated that all Board members received a letter from Dennis Schlicht regarding the Dakota Skipper. He related that Mr. Schlicht had some ideas about management on the preserves and the need to use less fire. Mr. Howell stated that has been discussed by the Board over the years and there is still a lot of differences in opinion by the experts. He noted that he sent Mr. Schlicht an E-mail inviting him to go along to Cayler to take a look at the

area. He related that he would also ask Jerry Selby to go along and possibly look at long term management on the area.

Paul Christiansen stated that he agrees more management diversity would be a good thing. He related that haying late at Hayden would be good.

Brief discussion followed regarding prairie management.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN – FINAL DRAFT**

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers reported that she spoke with Carl Kurtz and he will provide a photo for the front cover of the Strategic Plan. She asked for comments or recommendations for change.

Gary Phillips commented that strategic plans are not designed to be stagnant and changes will come as the plan is used.

Discussion took place on periodically reviewing and updating the plan.

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers stated that she appreciates all the time and effort the Board has put into this project.

***Motion was made by Gary Phillips to approve the Strategic Plan as presented. Seconded by Paul Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.***

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers stated that she would like to develop an action plan and asked if a subcommittee is needed at this point in time. She related that maybe a work session would handle it.

Gary Phillips suggested that since there is no field trip at the winter meeting that a work session take place following the regular Board meeting.

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers stated that another thing to address soon would be finishing up the Long Range Plan.

John Pearson noted that the Long Range Plan is getting close to completion but there is some work remaining to be done.

Gary Phillips stated that it would be good to have a draft copy of the Long Range Plan for the winter work session.

### **PLANNING CALENDAR – PRESERVES BOARD**

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers stated that she would like to develop a planning calendar for the four meetings held each year. She related that there is a need for planning time for seminars and forays. She suggested that in January the Board could think about what they want to do as far as a foray, given there has been low attendance. She also noted that the Board would need to form a Nominating Committee in January for officers to be elected in April. She related that in April the Board could look at research grants and also at budget requests. In July, planning could begin for issues in the upcoming legislative session.

Discussion took place on the following topics:

- Foray in recent years and the concept falling by the wayside
- Participation in Loess Hills Seminar
- Participation in Mines of Spain seminar .... similar to Loess Hills Seminar
- Developing strategy for presence at other annual meetings, such as Audubon, INHF, etc., and displaying SPAB materials at each.
- Field school from a biological standpoint.

### **RESIGNATION – DIANE FORD-SHIVVERS**

Chairperson Ford-Shivvers reported that she sent a letter to the Governor stating that she was resigning her position on the Preserves Board due to a conflict of interest, since she has accepted a position at the DNR. She stated that it has been an honor to work with all of the Board members and she has learned a lot. She noted that Robin Fortney has been appointed to fill out her term on the Board. She told the Board she would be interested in serving as an advisor to the Board.

Gary Phillips, on behalf of the Board, expressed appreciation for the leadership Ms. Ford-Shivvers provided to the Board.

Director Johnson presented Ms. Ford-Shivvers a plaque and thanked her for her service to the Preserves Board. He related that it is good to know she is going to continue to work with the Board.

Ms. Ford-Shivvers yielded the Chair to Vice-Chair Jonathan Steege.

***Motion was made by Lois Tiffany to appoint Diane Ford-Shivvers to serve as an advisor to the Board. Seconded by Gary Phillips. Motion carried unanimously.***

Acting Chair, Jonathan Steege, mentioned that someone would need to be appointed as liaison between the Preserves Board and the Brushy Creek Trails Advisory Board (BCTAB).

***Motion was made by Paul Johnson to appoint Robin Fortney as the Board representative to the BCTAB.***

Brief discussion followed in regard to waiting until Ms. Fortney comes on Board to appoint a representative to BCTAB.

***Director Johnson withdrew his motion.***

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

- Director Johnson reported that the REAP assemblies will be held around the state in February and March. He related that Earth Year 2000 will be launched on January 21, 2000 and there will be a host of related activities around the state throughout the year. He added that the Board might want to be visible at the January 21 kickoff. Director Johnson stated that the new director of DOT wants to be involved in the roadside vegetation management program and he is very much concerned with the environment. He related that he has been invited to attend the next DOT Commission meeting to discuss mutual projects such as the roadside vegetation program.
- John Pearson stated that the Statewide Fire Management Meeting will be held November 12-13, and he distributed a letter relating to the meeting.
- Daryl Howell spoke about the Pilot Grove Management Endowment and related that the Board considered looking at some archaeological and historical studies there, and staff now has a contract with the State Archaeologists Office to do a Phase I survey on it. The Department has also worked with the Iowa County Conservation Board to do a floristic study on the preserve.
- Scot Michelson reviewed the issue of cutting of trees in the St. James Preserve area and noted that he has a contract to have the work begin next week. He related that he only received one bid and the work will be completed within the next several weeks. He stated that in regard to the two properties next to St. James Preserve, the owner on the East end would donate the land to the preserve. He related that he is working with the city in regard to the property on the West end, and they are going to sell it to the DNR for one dollar plus the cost of handling the legal papers. He noted that

he is also working with a neighbor on the back side of the Fort to purchase that property.

- Daryl Howell reported that the Witrock Indian Village riprap project has been completed.
- Ruth Herzberg pointed out that the original spelling of the village was Witrock (not Wittrock) and that has been changed in the preserves guide.
- Bob McKay stated that in relation to the statement that DOT wants to work with the Preserves Board on roadside vegetation, some of the best exposures of geological sections in the state are on some of the state highway road cuts, but they have been vegetated over and concealed the rock strata. He related that Jean Prior has suggested placing interpretive signage at these locations.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held Thursday, January 20, 2000 at the Wildlife Research Station in Boone. A work session will be held in the afternoon, following the regular meeting. Instead of a tour the Board will attend the Earth Year 2000 kickoff on Friday, January 21, 2000 in Des Moines.

### **BOARD TOUR**

The Board canoed the Upper Iowa River between Kendallville and Bluffton, and toured the Bluffton Fir Stand State Preserve by foot on Saturday, October 16, 1999.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the State Preserves Advisory Board, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m., Friday, October 15, 1999

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