

The regular meeting of the Page County Conservation Board was held November 9, 2021 at the Board's office, beginning at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Rebecca Meyer.

Board members present included Rebecca Meyer, Mark Marriott, Tom Johnson and Kathy Jordan. Absent was Holly Martin.

Staff present included John Schwab, Terry Broyles and Charly Stevens.

Visitors present included Rick Leeson, Adam Huseman, Julie McAndrews, Jr. McCall, Jay McCall, Deb Ratliff, Joyce Kruse, Dave Rose, Larry Locke, Judith Blay, and Amy Toye with the Shenandoah Valley News.

MOTION: A motion was entered by Marriott, seconded by Jordan, to approve the agenda for November 9, 2021 as submitted. All in favor and motion carried.

MOTION: A motion was entered by Johnson, seconded by Jordan, to approve the Minutes of October 12, 2021. All in favor and motion carried.

CLAIMS: The large expenditures were explained by staff.

Month-end claims for October:

Phone - \$288.84 x 3 carriers – normal monthly

Custodial Supplies – Fastenal - \$194.03 – misc. supplies of light bulbs, deodorant blocks, hand towels

Repair – Vetter's Equipment - \$201.53 – repair on Cub Cadet – leaking oil rings, adjusted lift controls.

Rapp Park - \$223.28 misc. items for Halloween event

Utilities – MidAmerican Energy collectively \$850.87 for 7 meters

Mid-Month claims for November

Office Supplies – Rapid Elite - \$625.00 – camping envelopes

Fuels - \$1,038.08 -collectively from 3 vendors

Pierce Creek – Circle C Signs - \$97.08 – custom trail sign in memory of Gene Beam

LP Fuels – Sapp Bros. Petro - \$598.53 – to fill tank @ shop

Sanitation – PWWS - \$350.00 for servicing of portables at Rapp in October, \$210.00 or servicing of portables at Pierce in October. Shenandoah Sanitation- \$354.00 trash service at Pioneer, Pierce and Rapp

Utilities – SW Regional Water - \$894.71 – collectively x 6 meters

Conservation Reserve - \$1,500.00 – Beemer Fisheries for 545 Walleyes

CLAIMS: A motion was entered by Johnson, seconded by Marriott, to approve the submitted claims for month-end October and mid-month November. All in favor and motion carried.

Public comment period was then opened. No comments from the public so public comment period was then closed.

Adam Huseman representing the Clarinda Hunter Safety group, reviewed the situation from the October meeting as to the trap houses being removed due to discharge over water and property that the Conservation Board did not own and wanting to use the area for hunter safety live fire. Adam indicated the group would be using steel shot; he showed a map (attached in the Minutes) showing the sections and footage of the shooting area in question; the former trap house to the NW is approximately 517 ft. to the middle of the river. He reached out to the McCall family to ask permission to use the land and received verbal confirmation from the McCall family to utilize the ground. If the 2nd area where a trap house was, if needed to be used if we had a large group, permission to utilize that area was also given by the McCall family. This permission from the McCall family is only for usage for the Hunter Safety instructors for classes, any other usage would need permission from the McCall family, Adam indicated that the group was bringing this back to the Conservation Board to ask permission to utilize the grounds for hunter ed classes.

MOTION: A motion was entered by Marriott, seconded by Jordan, to resume the use of the grounds for hunter safety classes. All in favor and motion carried.

Joyce Kruse indicated that Iowa/Pierce Creek is being considered as a contender for the National Association Trail Ride competition with 4-5 classes of riders. She will get in touch with the committee and get more information.

Joyce talked about problems with trees and bushes being a problem at Pierce Creek. She had a contactor at her place on removal of bushes and invited John out to look at the work that had been done and see if would be considered for Pierce Creek on the trails. She also indicated that five new trees had been planted but posts needed to be put up in the campground and asked John about placing plugs on steel posts. She asked about horse pens being placed in the primitive sites, John indicated it will wait till spring. She has two to donate and inquired about a grant that the county could match to purchase more pens, she figured approximately four more with a price range of \$600-\$700.00. The Board was okay if a grant could be found. She mentioned about gravel for the floor in the equestrian campground shelter. She mentioned that several new items that had been purchased or donated for use in the campground has either been broken or stolen.

She relayed to the Board that a family may be staying longer at the equestrian campground and she is looking after the horses. She also asked why the gun range "open" signage was not used when there are special events at the range to let the riders know that it is in use. John indicated that the private range reservations doesn't need the open signage and would prefer if it wasn't due to safety reasons.

Deb Ratliff distributed photos of tree down and beaver damage and asked if they could be removed. She also requested that there is a large hole by the dike that needs filled and inquired about burning the timber at Pierce Creek due to undergrowth. John indicated that burn plans are on the work list for next season with the DNR. She asked about

spraying the grass and weeds which will also be on the spring work list. She said the horse trails looked great and thanked Joyce and Merrill for planting trees.

John requested approval to spend monies on a tiling project at Pierce Creek. The landowner to the east is working on terraces to our property line and it would flood the trails. NRCS will coordinate this fall/winter and we'd close off the portion of park when work begins. He is asking \$1,000-\$1,200 to place approximately 200 ft. of tiling thru Pierce Creek directly to the water and this would also help with the vegetation problem and prevent flooding from the neighbor.

MOTION: A motion was entered by Marriott, seconded by Jordan, to approve the tiling expense. All in favor and motion carried.

John requested approval to build a shelter at Ross Park, the footings are there from a previous shelter so those would be left in place. Looking at a 15x20 approximately \$2,500 +- as prices may go up in the spring when materials are ordered. The floor of the shelter will be grass.

MOTION: A motion was entered by Jordan, seconded by Johnson, to go ahead with the shelter house at Ross Park. All in favor and motion carried.

In park updates, John indicated that staff will be attending a District IV meeting on Thursday, November 18th in Montgomery County so the office will be closed ½ of the day.

The invasive work day at NVP went well, with John, a volunteer, 2 DNR foresters and a Trees Forever field coordinator clearing out troublesome plants at the 4 way. Plans are to do one at Pierce Creek later.

There appears to be an increase in damage and vandalism to NVP and Rapp. The big field at NVP had vehicle damage to it and the damage at Rapp Park may be curtailed by installing some large boulders and telephone poles due to off road driving.

Water is off at Rapp and Pioneer Park while the shut off is delayed at NVP and PC.

Walleye release went well – encouraged catch and release methods. The Trout event planned for November 13th from 10-2, sounds like it will be a good turnout. DNR and Green Plains are the co-sponsors.

John attended the REAP Assembly and was drafted to attend the REAP Congress on January 7 and 8th in Des Moines. One problem that was mentioned was the need for a division of grants for smaller communities for county conservation boards, as it is now, all the grants are lumped together. The IA DNR would like to modernize facilities in their parks, including Wi-Fi and the restroom updates.

John attended a BOS meeting regarding the COVID funds, he gave them a list of projects and the BOS wants our department to think bigger like non-touch features in all the bathrooms, cabins, wi-fi, etc. Marriott mentioned about primitive cabins, yurts type of tenting.

The wash out at NVP was mentioned. A contractor will need to look at it unless it can be done in-house. The wash out has caused a ravine and it will be difficult to get equipment and materials back in there for repair. The plan is next spring to build a bridge and steps and connect the trails, cut out the brush. The bridge will not be "horse safe" for crossing. We will need to add signage indicating that.

Board Communication: Kathy Jordan wanted to thank those in attendance for their service as a Veteran. She also had a prepared statement she read as follows:

I wanted to respond to the email and verbal presentation we received last month. From the Iowa Code 350, the board is a policy and decision-making body. We hire the Executive Director (John) to carry out those policies. We are to work together with the director and staff. They are considered the professionals in the field. We are instructed to rely on the staff. The board is not to contact the staff to do something, we are to go thru the Director (John). The staff are not to contact a board member directly, but to go through John.

So, if you are in the park and have questions, about a tree, some mowing, a branch – and there is someone there working; stop and tell them what your concern is. They can tell John, or you can tell John and it can get resolved quickly. Please keep in mind they have 5 parks to keep up for everyone.

Earlier this year we had some staff changes for various reasons. It was hard to get replacement help because of the number of hours they could have, the kind of work it is, and the amount of actual wage per hour. Some didn't have the greatest work ethic. The damage to the tree and then covered up, was probably done by the employee who was let go months ago. We are fortunate now to have seasonal employees who care about the parks and take pride in their work. So, before condemning the director, please get all the facts.

I don't remember any board member saying not to call them, unless it was when we told people to call John with your concern. He is the one to resolve the issue.

If you had been back to the primitive area, you would have seen that the bolts were cut off. Something the horse committee didn't tell you. The tie rails were constructed like the other tie rails in the other areas. The horse committee was contacted on the distance needed between them. If there was a miscommunication when they were being measured by both parties, I don't feel it is a total catastrophe. When you look at the posts, tie your horse on the left (east) side of the rail. No horse would be able to kick the next one or get close to the hydrant either. I don't think there are usually that many tied there at the same time, and if there are, you should be able to work it out.

The horse committee was also consulted on the rakes, etc. that were purchased for the pens. The distance from the parking area of the day use and the payment box is probably over 100 yards. It is not just a few car lengths away.

The trails are nice and wide, I had no problem telling where the trail went. I went to see the problem fence. I expected it to be mashed down and hidden in the grass and leaves. Instead, it is the perimeter fence. A deer trail leads to it, not the wide-open trail that is kept up. The top of the fence was mid-thigh on me. The other side of the fence is not park property. I'm not sure how it was mistaken for our wide trail, unless you were just exploring with your horse. But to go back while running, I don't understand why you would run into a brushy area, obviously off the regular trail, and then not see the fence, which again, is not that low. That is a question for me. I had no problem telling where the trail was at all.

If you have a \$25,000 horse, why are riding it on a trail? I would think it would be highly trained or a cutting horse, not the kind to take on a trail if you were worried about the unknowns you might come upon. John did close the trail and they cleaned a lot of things out of there, but the fence stays. That is a property line, which on the other side, in not ours.

I also went to Nodaway to see the tube that was washed out. That is a ravine! The ranger can't even get clear back to that area, let alone big equipment to fix it correctly. No one wants to bid on it, because they know they can't get in there without destroying the trail, trees and whatever else. There would be much more total damage done. We are talking about a 12-15-foot-deep and 10-12-foot-wide area. Besides being way out of budget range, the equipment can't get back there. Not even the tractor can. I would say, turn around and go another direction, there are plenty of them out there. I understand runners like that path also. John is trying to figure a way to manually put in a walk bridge. Some of the joggers have put some small fallen trees across it for now. I feel he is being very generous in doing this, because I would say – Dead end. Go Back. But, he is trying to keep them happy. Unfortunately, it is just not going to be strong enough or big enough for horses to cross it. It doesn't always end up how we like it.

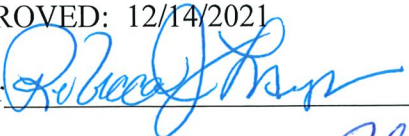
Wash outs, stick tights, poison ivy, ticks, are all part of the parks, we can't kill everything. Nothing is perfect. But all the parks can certainly be enjoyed if you allow yourself to overlook some imperfections and have some fun.

There was no further business to come before the Board, the Chair called for an adjournment.

MOTION: A motion was entered by Jordan, seconded by Johnson to adjourn. All in favor and motion carried. The meeting then adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

APPROVED: 12/14/2021

Chair



Board Secretary