

MINUTES
STATE PRESERVES ADVISORY BOARD
Glenwood Resource Center
Glenwood, Iowa
October 5, 2007

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Scott Moats
Cindy Peterson, Chair
Armando Rosales
Deb Lewis
Diane Ford-Shivvers

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Gail Brown
Carl Kurtz

STAFF PRESENT

John Pearson
Daryl Howell

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Cindy Peterson called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM on October 5 2007 at the Glenwood Resource Center.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Add: Announcement from John Pearson regarding Paul Christiansen

<p><i>Motion was made by Deb Lewis to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Scott Moats. Motion carried.</i></p>
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Cindy Peterson thanked the Glenwood Resource Center for opening up their facility and showing great hospitality.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Paul Arthur Christiansen, 75, formerly of Mount Vernon, Iowa, died on Tuesday, October 2, 2007, at his home in retirement, Cottage Grove Place, in Cedar Rapids following a long illness.

He was born in Mitchell County, Iowa, on June 7, 1932, to Myrtle (nee Hanson) and Carl Christiansen. Following high school at Rudd, Iowa, and a term of service in the United States Navy, Paul married Barbara JoAnn Lindley on June 25, 1955. Paul taught high school biology in Humboldt, Iowa, after completing a bachelor of arts

degree at the University of Iowa. He earned a master of science degree at the University of Oregon.

In 1967 he completed the Ph.D. at Iowa State University and that same year joined the faculty of Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, as a professor of biology where his career spanned nearly four decades.

Professionally, Dr. Christiansen will be remembered for his seminal research in prairie ecology and his work in the classroom, the field, and the laboratory. He earned the recognition and respect of his peers as an expert in prairie ecology and prairie restoration. He spearheaded the research into prairie establishment in Iowa's roadsides, ultimately resulting in the establishment of the Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund. Paul subsequently served on the advisory board to the Trust Fund for several years.

He authored numerous articles and wrote an invaluable resource book, "An Illustrated Guide to Iowa Prairie Plants," with illustrator Mark Muller.

Paul was instrumental in reviving interest in The Nature Conservancy in Iowa and served as president of that organization and on the Board of Trustees for 34 years. He also served as member and president of the board of directors of the Iowa Academy of Science and was a recipient of the Academy's Distinguished Service Award in 1996.

In 1985, Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad appointed him to the Iowa State Preserves Advisory Board where he served until 1991, including serving as chair. In 1999, he was appointed by Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack to the Iowa Natural Resource Commission, a position he held until 2005.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Deb Lewis to approve the minutes (with correction of a few typo changes) from the July 12th, 2007 meeting as presented. Seconded by Scott Moats. Motion carried.

GRAZING AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL

Scott Moats discussed grazing as a management option for preserves. He would like the preserve board to consider choosing a preserve to be used a demonstration for cattle grazing.

John Pearson said that this would be a good idea, though it's sometimes viewed as a negative management tool by the public. There are certain aspects that grazing can accomplish that burning can not. I believe it is possible to develop a

grazing plan. He would recommend that we explore Scott's idea on a preserve and then expand from there.

Cindy Peterson said that we could put up a sign by the grazing area & send out a press release to educate the public on what's going on.

John Pearson and Scott Moats will work together to come up with preserve options & development of a grazing management plan to present at a future meeting.

Information Only

PRESERVE UPDATES

Cindy Peterson – A letter was sent to D.O.T. commenting on the 4F option for the Rock Island Preserve in Linn County.

Scott Moats – Ameri Corp crew working at Five Ridge Prairie.

Deb Lewis – Brushy Creek Advisory Trail Board held a public awareness day, which turned out to be a success.

Information Only

PROPOSED TRAIL AT LAMSON WOODS

John Pearson said that the Jefferson County Trails Council proposed to extend a bicycle trail along the west edge of Lamson Woods State preserve to connect to a greater network of bicycle trails in Fairfield. The proposed trail in the preserve would utilize a former roadbed of Mint Avenue and possibly re-utilize an old iron bridge.

About three years ago, another trail segment was added to the preserve. A walking trail was added that was directly parallel from the bike trail. This was called a "connection trail".

Quote from Laura McCormick's study of the preserve, describing the old roadbed:

"Path of Old road/Center area west of Old road – crossing the old bridge north of the meadow and walking north will bring one to the disappearing path of the old road. Paralleling it immediately to the east is a dry draw that serves as a veil separating the bottomland areas neat the creek from the old road and the line of trees at its edge. The north-south line of tulip poplars is just on the east side of this draw, beginning further to the north. Continuing north from the tulip poplars will lead up to the oak knoll."

“The whole center area on the west side of the old road between the culvert at the north end and the bridge where the creek crosses Mint Blvd. consists of several layers oriented more or less north-south. To the west of the old road, first there is a line of trees, then an overgrown strip containing many large bushes of cultivated honeysuckle and also bushes of prairie rose, multi-flora rose and elderberry.”

“Cream violet was found blooming in April in one area only, a low area west of the creek, just south of the oak knoll and east of the dry draw marking the edge of the old road.”

Ron Blair of the Trails Council did mention that the bridge is strong enough to handle bike traffic.

He will get counsel on where to locate in order to minimize destruction.

Cindy Peterson asked if an archeological study was done on the preserve before trails were constructed.

Daryl Howell said that there may have been a phase I archeological study. We will check further if the board decides to move forward.

Deb Lewis said that she likes to encourage access to preserve but not in a way that could degrade the Preserves integrity.

Scott Moats said that this is the second time that we have been approached in the last couple of years in regards to this property. I think there are other options that need to be explored. This is no longer going to be a pristine site; it's becoming more of a recreational area. This is only one more intrusion. This is a biological preserve.

John Pearson said that the land across the road was considered as an option but since it is privately owned and the land owner has already donated part of his land for a bike trail, the Trail Council has decided not to pursue this option.

Ron Blair with the trails council anticipated this discussion and would be willing to withdraw the “pink” walking trail if the “blue” bicycle trail was approved.

The “pink” trail has been lightly used; it could be closed off.

Motion was made by Scott Moats not to approve the trail. Seconded by Deb Lewis.

Cindy Peterson said that John Pearson could relate our thoughts to Ron Blair and for them to consider other options.

Motion was made by Scott Moats to withdraw his motion. Seconded by Deb Lewis.

Motion was made by Armando Rosales to table this decision until a tour of Lamson Woods has been taken and then a decision will be made at a future meeting. Seconded by Diane Ford-Shivvers. Motion carried.

PROPOSED TRAIL AT STARR'S CAVE

John Pearson said that the Flint River Recreation Trail is under study by the Des Moines Conservation Board, the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission, and French-Reneker Consulting to be a 16 miles long multi-use trail extending from Burlington to Big Hollow Recreation Area. The proposed route passes through Starr's Cave State Preserve.

Starr's Cave State Preserve is a 184-acre containing a rugged, semi-forested landscape and a cave. It is located along the valley of Flint Creek of the northern edge of Burlington. Beginning in 1974, the two-fold purpose of the Starr's Cave property was to offer the county and Iowa residents additional outdoor education opportunities while preserving the unique geological and scenic resources found here.

Dave Rielly, with the Des Moines County Conservation Board said that they are cooperating with Des Moines County and the City of Burlington for development of a non-motorized, multi-purpose trail and greenbelt from Burlington to Des Moines County Big Hollow Recreation Area, about 15 miles northwest of Burlington. The community considered several routes for the trail and have decided the best route included the trail connected Starr's Cave Preserve to other conservation areas in Des Moines County. Almost all of the easements needed for this project has been acquired.

He said that they are proposing to close off some of the current trails due to rough terrain and also to minimize the length of trails within the preserve should it be approved.

The trail option we are proposing today is away from Starr's Cave itself.

The proposed plan includes:

- Improve existing trails – 5,200 feet

- Portions of the existing trail network will be graded and surfaced with crushed stone or concrete. To reduce impacts to existing vegetation, no grading – thus no cur nor fill – will be done beyond the existing worn footpath. The existing trail right-of-way will not be widened. Careful engineering will ensure drainage does not initiate new erosion.

Retire Trails – 4,700 feet

These trail segments will be restored to natural area. Segments showing signs of erosion that prevents re-vegetation will be addressed as needed.

New Trail alignment – 3,330 feet

New switchback trails will bypass existing steep graded trails. These segments will consist of 15-foot wide corridors created by clearing vegetation with trunks less than 8 inches in diameter. Careful engineering will ensure drainage does not initiate new erosion.

Allow Bicycle Access on Improved Trail segments

State Preserves across Iowa allow access for various activities including walking, biking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding. Bicycle use will be restricted to trails surfaced with crushed stone or concrete.

Managers would put up signage indicating whether or not bicycles are allowed on certain trails.

John Pearson said that Mark Edwards agreed that the proposed retired trails are in poor condition. They are too steep.

Dave Reilly said that we have retained Mike Finn from Anamosa to look at any archaeological considerations.

Deb Lewis said that she's not comfortable with approving bike trails within some preserves. I'm afraid of what kind of precedence we will be setting if we were to approve this.

Scott Moats said that we need to look at each preserve on a case by case basis because each preserve is dedicated for certain aspects. Will there be any impact to the geology of this site since that is why it was originally preserved?

Dave Reilly said that the trail is nowhere near the cave. There would be little to no impact or harm to the preserve.

John Pearson said that gates could be put up to prevent bicyclists from entering on non-bike trails.

Cindy Peterson suggested that board members visit the site prior to the January meeting.

Motion was made by Scott Moats to table this decision until the January meeting so the board members can visit the site. Seconded by Armando Rosales.

John Pearson will arrange for a tour later this fall.

If there are any questions regarding this site, please forward them to John Pearson before the January meeting so the Des Moines County Conservation board is prepared to give answers at the next meeting.

Motion carried.

The board received a copy of an amendment at Starr's Cave Park and Preserves for a proposed shallow water – wetland enhancement – improvement.

The proposal is to construct a 5 acre shallow water wetland in the Groe addition of the Preserve. The design is being drawn up by the NRCS according to their specifications. It is proposed to construct during the summer/fall 2008. No decision is needed at this point.

PROPOSED GLENWOOD STATE PRESERVE

A management plan for the proposed 917 acre archeological preserve at the Glenwood Resource Center was distributed to the board members for review.

The management plan identifies the rationale for the preserve for the archeological aspect and to preserve the integrity of those features.

Kathy Gourley said that a component of the plan is to identify the activities that take place on the land that could affect the preserve. This is an important archeological site.

John Pearson said that there maybe some periodic burning and haying for management purposes.

Send any typographical errors to Cindy Peterson.

Scott Moats asked who will be responsible for implementing the management plan.

Blake Mayberry said that the Loess Hills Preservation Society is a land trust. I believe it would be very easy to coordinate a local trust and I would be willing to work on this.

Shirley Fredrickson with Golden Hills Resource Conservation development said that they are a non-profit organization and are apart of the National Scenic Byway Council. How do you educate the public on archeology? I think it's the most difficult thing to educate the public on. I believe you need an interruptive center. The Scenic Byway Council's vision is that we have an educational center

in each of the counties in the Loess Hills focused on what is unique in that county. I believe this is the perfect location for an archeological resource center.

We favor this site becoming a state preserve and we would assist in what we are able to implement the management of this resource. I am concerned with the financial resources for this site. I think there are some things that need to be worked out and funding sources explored before the decision is made by any entity. I believe there are a lot of people willing to help with the management but until you vote yes it's hard to yes on our part.

Deb Lewis said that there needs to be proper signage in place that prohibits any removal of artifacts from the site.

Department of Human Services manages the grass and the Department of Corrections is responsible for the property.

Motion was made by Scott Moats to accept the management plan with the amendment to include proper signage that prohibits any removal of artifacts. Seconded by Deb Lewis. Motion carried unanimously.

The management plan will go out for review.

Dr. Campbell expressed his support for the dedication of Glenwood as a preserve. He has been very impressed with all of those involved in this process.

Motion was made by Scott Moats to proceed with the process to approve Glenwood as being apart of the state preserves system. Seconded by Deb Lewis. Motion carried unanimously.

PROPOSED ADDITION TO EUREKA WOODS

John Pearson said that Bill McGregor, one of the owners of Eureka Woods State Preserve, is proposing to add two small parcels north of the highway to the already approved 90-acre preserve. One parcel is a 2-acre woodlot on the north (or west) side of Highway E53 containing a dry forest community on a hilltop dominated by white oak. The second parcel is a 14 acre floodplain area north of Highway E53 containing a segment of river channel and bottomland forest dominated by silver maple. Since the road controversy has been settled according to Mr. McGregor he is asking that we consider the two remaining parcels for preserve status.

The Board members discussed and agreed that the proposed parcels of land are not preserve worthy but maybe worth the protection of conservation easements or other means.

John Pearson said that he will relay this message to Mr. McGregor.

Information

OPEN DISCUSSION

Cindy Peterson thanked Blake Mayberry and Glenn Pollock for the tour of Vincent Bluff in the Loess Hills.

John Pearson said that the next step would be a biological study. Once the inventories are done and a management plan is complete, they can come back to the board to seek preserve status.

Diane Ford-Shivvers gave the following comments:

- ❖ The DNR has submitted their budget. It was asked that each department submit a status quo budget. We did ask for a few extra things such as a state ecologist.
- ❖ REAP assembly meetings are being held across the state. As always we encourage your attendance and support for a fully funded REAP program.
- ❖ Sustainable Funding initiative continues to move forward. More information can be found at our website: www.iowadnr.gov

NEXT MEETING & 2008 SCHEDULE

January 18th, 2008 – Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines

April 22 & 23, 2008 – Des Moines County - Lamson Woods

July 17 & 18 OR 24 & 25 – Blackhawk County – Hartman Reserve

October 2 & 3, 2008 - Jones County – Lost Canyon and Hartley Fort

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Scott Moats to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Armando Rosales. Motion carried unanimously.

With no further business to come before the State Preserves Advisory Board, Chairperson Cindy Peterson adjourned the meeting at 1:40 PM on October 5, 2007.

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