

**WOODBURY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEM(S) REQUEST FORM**

**#9**

Date: October 18, 2016 Weekly Agenda Date: October 25, 2016

**ELECTED OFFICIAL / DEPARTMENT HEAD / CITIZEN:** Rick Schneider, Conservation Director

**WORDING FOR AGENDA ITEM:**

Presentation of Conservation Department FY 16 Annual Report and acceptance

**ACTION REQUIRED:**

- Approve Ordinance       Approve Resolution       Approve Motion   
Give Direction       Other: Informational       Attachments

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Code of Iowa requires the Conservation Department to submit an annual report of activities each fiscal year.

**BACKGROUND:**

The report is completed following the end of the accrual period for the last fiscal year, approved by the Conservation Board and submitted to the Board of Supervisors for acceptance.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

None

**IF THERE IS A CONTRACT INVOLVED IN THE AGENDA ITEM, HAS THE CONTRACT BEEN SUBMITTED AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR AND ANSWERED WITH A REVIEW BY THE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE?**

Yes       No

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Accept the Conservation Department FY 16 Annual Report

**ACTION REQUIRED / PROPOSED MOTION:**

Accept the Conservation Department FY 16 Annual Report



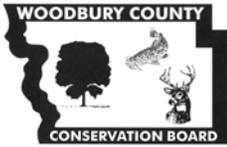
# Annual Report

## Woodbury County Conservation Board

### July 1, 2015—June 30, 2016

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**Woodbury County Conservation Board**  
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Phone: 712/258-0838  
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Board Members:  
Cindy Bennett  
Suzan Boden  
Don Dixon  
Neil Stockfleth  
Christine Zellmer-Zant

Rick D. Schneider, Director  
Mark Peterson, Deputy Director  
Dawn Snyder, Education Director

## **Executive Summary**

**MISSION:** *Woodbury County Conservation Board is a regional agency tasked with providing high quality and valuable education, recreation, enhancement and preservation of our natural resources through professional and courteous service for the betterment of current and future generations.*

### **FY 16 HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Southwood Conservation Area – Constructed two new camping cabins
- Southwood Conservation Area – Expanded playground
- Little Sioux Park – Completed and reopened Stub Gray Shooting Range
- Little Sioux Park – Installed vault latrine at Stub Gray Shooting Range
- Brown’s Lake/Bigelow Park – Installed subsurface drainage system in campground
- Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center – Remodeled classrooms

### **CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT BY THE NUMBERS:**

- Manage 16 areas totaling 5,543 acres
- Hold and monitor 15 conservation easements on 1,695 acres
- Park revenues totaled \$344,450
- Visitation to all areas was over 750,000 persons
- Over 51,000 visitors to Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center
- More than 360 volunteers logged nearly 2,425 hours
- Provided 117 public programs for more than 7,000 participants
- Staffed by 13 full time, 3 regular part time, and 25 seasonal employees

Woodbury County Conservation Board is a five-member volunteer board appointed by the county Board of Supervisors. Members are appointed for five-year terms. Meetings are scheduled the first Thursday of each month.

It has been our pleasure to carry out our mission and serve the public in this manner during the past fiscal year. We deeply appreciate the outstanding assistance and willing cooperation of so many local, state and federal agencies including the county Board of Supervisors, the Iowa Natural Resources Department, and numerous local organizations described in Section IV of this report. We also appreciate the many comments and suggestions from our visitors which help us be more responsive to our customers.

Woodbury County is blessed with outstanding natural resource and outdoor recreation opportunities supported by its taxpayers. Please explore and enjoy your county park areas. You’ll be glad you did!

Yours for Conservation,

Rick D. Schneider, Director

# WOODBURY COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

## ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016

### I. BOARD ROSTER/MEETINGS

The conservation board members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors for five year terms. Members serving in 2015-2016 were as follows:

<u>Meetings Attended</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Expiration Date</u>
11	Cindy Bennett	President	December 31, 2018
10	Suzan Boden	Vice President	December 31, 2016
5	Neil Stockfleth	Secretary	December 31, 2019
5	Mark Taylor	Member	December 31, 2019
12	Chris Zellmer-Zant	Member	December 31, 2020
12	Don Dixon	Member	December 31, 2017

Mark Taylor resigned from his term effective December 31, 2015 due to moving out of state. Neil Stockfleth of Sergeant Bluff was appointed to fulfill the unexpired term. Chris Zellmer-Zant was reappointed to a five-year term beginning January 1, 2016. Larry Clausen, Woodbury County Supervisor, attends meetings as liaison to the Conservation Department from the Board of Supervisors.

The Board held twelve regular monthly meetings during the fiscal year. Minutes of these meetings are on file in the conservation office at Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center and are available for viewing on our website [www.woodburyparks.org](http://www.woodburyparks.org).

### OTHER MEETINGS ATTENDED

One Board member and two staff attended the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of Iowa County Conservation Boards at Cedar Rapids, IA on September 17-19, 2015. The department's law enforcement officers attended the County Conservation Peace Officers Association's annual law enforcement workshop on October 5-7, 2015 at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy in Johnston, Iowa. Six staff attended the annual Winterfest Employee Workshop in Waterloo on January 19-21, 2016. The Director attended the ISAC Fall School of Instruction in Cedar Rapids on November 18-20, 2015. Staff members hosted a county conservation booth at the Woodbury County Fair in August 2015 and assisted with a district conservation booth at the Clay County Fair in September 2015. The Director attended the ISAC Spring School and County Day at the Capitol in Des Moines March 9-11, 2016.

Additional meetings attended by employees and/or board members during the fiscal year included:

- IACCB New Employee School and Friends and Foundations meeting in Des Moines
- IACCB E-Commerce Training sessions
- REAP Regional Assembly in Correctionville, IA
- Loess Hills Prairie Seminar – June 3-5, 2016 in Monona County
- Iowa Association of Naturalists Spring meeting
- Woodbury County training meetings on Active Shooter and Cyber Security
- Pesticide and Water Operator CEU training meetings
- Woodbury County Conservation Foundation meetings
- Woodbury County Department Head meetings
- Woodbury County Health Committee meetings
- Woodbury County Strategic Planning meetings
- Woodbury County Board of Supervisor joint meetings with rural towns
- Grow Siouland Committee meetings
- Loess Hills Alliance committee meetings

Western Iowa Tourism meetings  
IACCB District meetings  
National Wild Turkey Federation Chapter  
Pheasants Forever Chapter  
Department Staff meetings

The Conservation Board hosted a volunteer recognition and awards presentation soup supper on March 29, 2016 at Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center. Numerous volunteers were recognized for their many hours of service to the Board and the Nature Center. Rosie Kuehne of Sioux City was presented the Conservation Educator Award for her many years of teaching and involvement at the Nature Center. Jim Redmond of Sioux City was presented the Friend of Conservation Award for his long time involvement in the local Audubon and Sierra Club groups.

## **II. ADMINISTRATION/MAINTENANCE**

### Staffing

Department staff during the fiscal year included thirteen full time, three regular part time and numerous seasonal employees. A part time Senior Aid position through the Woodbury County Community Action Agency continued to provide valuable receptionist assistance while providing employment for previously retired individuals. Employment through this program is limited which can result in a new employee each year. Numerous temporary seasonal employees were hired from April through October for maintenance tasks in the county park and wildlife areas.

Resource Naturalist Jim Henning resigned in November 2015 and was replaced by Tyler Flammang in January 2016. Office Manager Barb Schultz retired in August 2015 and was replaced by Dawn Bostwick. The retirement of Deputy Director Mark Peterson on June 30, 2016 will result in several promotions in the next fiscal year. Long time Resource Manager Bernie Ketelsen will retire by September 2016 resulting in more promotions and changes in staff. Director Rick Schneider has announced his intended retirement the end of 2017 which will require the Board to hire a new Director before the end of next year. The Board has been working on succession planning to prepare for these anticipated changes. One new full time position was added to the Conservation budget beginning July 1, 2016, a Resource Technician at Little Sioux Park. Weekly hours for Nature Center receptionists will increase by two hours per person on July 1, 2016.

The department's five Resource Managers and Deputy Director are certified law enforcement officers who maintain their certification through the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA). These officers are also covered under the IPERS Protective Class of employees whereby the employer and employee both pay a higher rate into IPERS retirement system. With anticipated promotions in the next fiscal year, at least two persons will be appointed as peace officers and required to become certified through ILEA.

Various employment programs provided through a variety of other agencies in the community help supplement board staffing needs when available. Conservation Corps Iowa (CCI), the AmeriCorps program through the Minnesota Conservation Corps, was contracted to work a total of 12 days in July 2015. CCI crews comprising up to six persons came three separate weeks during July, August and October 2015 to work on special projects. Four naturalist interns were employed in 2015 and 2016 to assist with summer camps and programs at the nature center and parks. An "Outdoor Skills" intern was hired in 2016 to teach and promote various outdoor skills to area youth. Funding for the position came from area businesses and conservation organizations. The Woodbury County Conservation Foundation provided funding for a Habitat Stewardship intern to work on projects near the Nature Center, Riverside Bluffs, and other park areas. Interns from Briar Cliff University and Morningside College were used during the school year. Board staff uses community service workers when available. Campground host volunteers provided a valuable service and were used in most of the parks at least part of the camping season. General volunteers are an important resource and have been a great assistance at the Nature Center and in the parks. The Nature Calls fundraiser event uses over 70 volunteers each year. The Receptionist/Volunteer Coordinator position works to contact and organize volunteers. Staff continued to recruit and train volunteers to provide a wide variety of assistance with many tasks. Numerous groups including area businesses, Middle School Peer Helpers, high school students, college students, church groups, and Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, provided numerous volunteers that completed a variety of projects and tasks for the board during the year.

Positions employed/hired throughout the fiscal year were as follows:

- (1) Director
- (1) Deputy Director – Field Operations
- (4) Resource Manager
- (2) Assistant Resource Manager
- (2) Resource Technician
- (2) Administrative Secretary
- (8) Seasonal Park Ranger
- (1) Education Programs Director
- (1) Naturalist
- (2) Resource Naturalist
- (2) Nature Center Receptionist
- (1) Receptionist/Volunteer Coordinator
- (7) Summer Intern Naturalist
- (8) Security Guard
- (9) Seasonal Park Maintenance Employee
- (2) Outdoor Skills Intern
- (2) Habitat Stewardship Intern

The number of employees listed represents the various persons hired to fill these positions over a two season period. The numbers do not necessarily represent the number of authorized positions.

Grants

The Conservation Department is very active in pursuing grant opportunities each year. Numerous grant applications were written and submitted by board staff during the fiscal year including the following:

<u>Grants Submitted</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>\$ Requested</u>	<u>\$ Awarded</u>	<u>Award Date</u>
Gilchrist Foundation	Cabin Development	\$ 100,000	\$ 0	July 2015
Wildlife Habitat Stamp	Land Acquisition	\$ 231,660	\$ 85,501	July 2015
Wildlife Habitat Stamp	Land Acquisition	\$ 43,892	\$ 0	July 2015
Iowa Chapter NWTF	Land Acquisition	\$ 25,000	\$ 0	July 2015
MRHD	Cabin Development	\$ 120,000	\$ 75,000	October 2015
Water Rec. Access	Boat Docks	\$ 26,692	\$ 26,692	January 2016
Community Forest Program	Land Acquisition	\$ 214,150	\$ 0	March 2016
LAWCON	Land Acquisition	\$ 200,000	\$ 175,000	March 2016
Gilchrist Foundation	Land Acquisition	\$ 75,000	\$ 0	July 2016
Iowa Chapter NWTF	Land Acquisition	\$ 15,000	\$ 0	July 2016
Whitetails Unlimited	Land Acquisition	\$ 5,000	\$ 0	July 2016
IDED Tourism	Advertising	\$ 580	\$ 580	August 2015
U P Foundation	General Operations	\$ 10,000	\$ 0	August 2015
RBC Foundation	General Support	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	September 2015
CF Industries	Playscape	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	December 2015
Kohl's Cares Go Green	General Support	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	June 2016
IA Ornithologists Union	Raptor Education	\$ 200	\$ 200	July 2015

Conservation staff continues to seek grant dollars and leverage available funds to assist with major development projects, land acquisition, publicity, and environmental education. **During FY16, a total of \$370,273 in grants was administered and another \$493,042 in grant applications was written and submitted for funding.**

Long Range Planning

Long range strategic planning is a very important responsibility of the Board. On January 30, 2016, the Board held a strategic planning session with staff and a facilitator through Iowa State Extension. Accomplishments included creation of a new Mission/Vision Statement, future visioning and updating short and long term goals for infrastructure and education programming. Long range planning needs to be addressed every year to maintain focus and purpose by the Board and an efficient, effective and responsive department. Additional strategic planning was conducted by the Board of Supervisors for all departments

during the fiscal year in an effort to create a more cohesive team among all departments and help each department create their own Mission/Vision Statements and goals.

### Board Policies

Board policies are reviewed annually and addressed when needs arise. The Conservation Board coordinates department policies closely with other county policies and procedures. The Board updated its Uniform policy and adopted the Vehicle Use by County Employees policy approved by the Board of Supervisors during the fiscal year. A vehicle and equipment numbering/tracking system was incorporated during the fiscal year. Park rules and regulations need to be updated along with the Board's Safety Policy and Law Enforcement and Defensive Weapons Policy.

### Training

Training requirements for new and existing employees involves a large time commitment. A variety of training must be administered and received to ensure that employees are prepared to do their jobs. New full time and seasonal employees receive orientation training regarding board policies, especially safety related concerns. Training is important to ensure that employees are able to safely and efficiently do their jobs.

Staff attended numerous specialized training sessions during the fiscal year, many of which were required to maintain certifications. The Board's six Law Enforcement Officers attended various training and certification schools including the County Conservation Peace Officers Association's annual training school at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy in October 2015 to obtain required continuing education units and firearms qualification. Six employees attended the Winterfest Employees Training Workshop in Waterloo in January 2016. Training sessions on safety issues typically result in a review of Personal Protective Equipment and acquisition of items needed to keep employees safe. The annual County Safety Meeting for Secondary Roads and Conservation employees was held at the Nature Center on November 12, 2015.

Staff and board members attended the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards annual conference at Cedar Rapids, IA September 17-19, 2015. Eight staff members are required to maintain Pesticide Applicator Certification in several categories and attended several sessions during the year to obtain continuing education units for certification. The Director and Deputy Director attended classes to receive continuing education units for maintaining certification as Water System Distribution Operators for the Nature Center's public water supply system. All full time staff maintains CPR, AED and Basic First Aid certification, and recertification classes were attended during the year.

### Committees/Appointments

The Deputy Director served as a member of the statewide review committee for competitive county conservation board REAP grants. The Education Programs Director served on the REAP Conservation Education Programs statewide grant review and scoring committee and as a delegate from Woodbury County to the Loess Hills Alliance Board of Directors. The Director served as an alternate from Woodbury County to the Loess Hills Alliance Board of Directors and as a member of the Stewardship Committee, Protection Committee and the Protection Committee's grant review group, and the Deputy Director served on the Stewardship Committee. The Director and Deputy Director served on the Habitat and Executive Committees for the Woodbury County Chapter of Pheasants Forever. The Director served as Publicity Chair for the local chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, and served on the Woodbury County Health Insurance Committee. Bob Fundermann, Assistant Resource Manager, served as Chief Firearms Instructor for the County Conservation Peace Officers Association. Bernie Ketelsen, Resource Manager, served on the Woodbury County Safety Committee. Dawn Snyder and Board member Christine Zellmer-Zant served on the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation. All five Board members served on the Woodbury County Conservation Endowment Board. Two staff and Board member Don Dixon served on the Woodbury County REAP Committee.

### Agreements/Partnerships

The Board and staff continue to develop and nurture partnerships with numerous agencies and organizations for the benefit of conservation. Board staff worked with area school districts regarding incorporation of annual class field trips to the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center. The Board's Receptionist/Volunteer Coordinator and Resource Naturalist also worked with various agencies to provide after school programs

for youth and public programs in the parks. Ducks Unlimited has been a major partner through agreements with the Board to develop and enhance Owego Wetland Complex and other areas in the county. The Loess Hills Alliance has provided partnership opportunities by making available through the Board firefighting equipment to be used on private lands. The Alliance also provides continuing training for Advanced Wildland Burns whereby board staff receives refresher training. Trained individuals can be available to assist the National Park Service in fighting forest fires. An Agreement is maintained with Golden Hills Resource Conservation Development to provide for the installation and long-term maintenance of special interpretive panel signs along the Loess Hills Scenic Byway. A major partnership effort has been formed between the Board and the Natural Resources Conservation Service in developing various agreements to manage the Owego Wetland Complex.

Siouxland District Health Department provides testing services for the nature center's public water supply as required by IDNR, and conducts annual water testing on all park wells. Staff maintains nesting towers for Ospreys on the north shore of Brown's Lake and along Snyder Bend in cooperation with Iowa DNR and CF Industries.

The Board continued to nurture partnerships and agreements with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation regarding conservation easements and Woodbury County Pheasants Forever in acquiring and providing food plot and native grass seed and seeding equipment. An extremely valuable partnership is maintained with the County Secondary Roads Department. Secondary Roads has provided many hours of work with specialized heavy equipment, surveys, engineering and construction oversight on numerous conservation projects. A special Interdepartmental Agreement for maintaining specified park roads continued between the Conservation Board and Secondary Roads. In the past fiscal year, the Secondary Roads Department staff has worked on plans to improve the Dixon Bridge Access on the Little Sioux River and develop cost estimates for resurfacing asphalt roads in Little Sioux Park. The Conservation Department must also maintain a close working relationship with the Sheriff's Office. Conservation law enforcement officers depend heavily on Sheriff's Deputies to assist with problems that arise in the parks and any subsequent arrests. Cooperative promotional efforts have begun with the Rural Economic Development office.

The Board sponsored its annual Camping Kick-Off Weekend at all county campgrounds the first weekend in May which was well received. Campers received a voucher for one night free camping later in 2016 along with other small gifts. Board staff also works closely with Stone State Park staff on prairie and trail management around the nature center.

A more detailed description of various cooperative ventures is discussed in **Section IV** of this report.

### Technology

Board staff continued to make considerable use of GIS technology for better management of county parks and wildlife areas, and use in various grant and permit applications. This technology is heavily used for prescribed burn management of wildlife areas and preparing detailed maps for grants or permit applications. Erik Lindsay, Resource Technician at Southwood Conservation Area, serves as the department's GIS Specialist.

The Board's website, [www.woodburyparks.org](http://www.woodburyparks.org), provides a multitude of information for visitors and has been completely revamped to use the WordPress platform that is easier to update by staff. Available cabin rental dates for the Board's camping cabins at Little Sioux Park and Snyder Bend Park can be accessed through the website. Video clips are available showing the inside of the cabins and enclosed shelters as well as the nature center. Donations and certain sales can also be made through the website. Plans are underway to move all cabin and enclosed shelter reservations to an "online" format through MyCountyParks.com website in 2017. All four park offices are connected to the internet and the County's GroupWise email and main "U" Drive which provides an efficient method of information exchange with the main office. Most full time staff has opted to receive and access their work email on their personal cell phones. High speed internet access has been installed at all park offices, and wireless internet access for campers and park users at Snyder Bend Park and Bigelow Park. Changes have been made by the provider at these two parks to upgrade the wireless service and provide better, more reliable internet service. Public access at the Nature Center was also installed during the past year. It will be a goal of the Department to provide high speed wireless internet for park users in all four of the main developed park areas in the future. The provider for Southwood Conservation Area is in the process of installing fiber optic service to every customer, and this park may see this fast service within the next two years.

Old microfilmed office records were digitized for easier access and better storage. The merchant account provider for credit cards was switched to Heartland Payment Systems which is saving money in fees.

The Board continued to provide three outlets for the public to obtain DNR licenses at Little Sioux Park, Southwood Conservation Area, and Brown's Lake. These outlets are part of the DNR's electronic licensing system that has been operating since 2000, and these systems were upgraded in 2010. In May 2016, the Board was notified that the license outlet at Brown's Lake would be cancelled due to low sales. All IDNR licenses are also available online.

The Board is part of a statewide publicity and promotion effort for all county conservation boards through a website, [www.MyCountyParks.com](http://www.MyCountyParks.com). This advanced website provides excellent access for all county conservation boards in Iowa to promote their areas and facilities to potential visitors across the country and received comprehensive updates in 2015.

#### Environmental Education/Publicity

The Board's environmental education program continued to experience strong demand for programs and information during its twenty-seventh year. Emphasis for school class programs is centered on encouraging classes to visit the nature center and experience the outdoors in the loess hills. Students have the opportunity to view and learn from the exhibits, watch educational videos, listen to a naturalist program or participate in an educational hike. Volunteers are an immense help with the many classes that come to the center. The nature center is an excellent facility to host various types of public programs regardless of weather conditions. Board naturalists and the Director conducted numerous radio and television interviews concerning various programs and events during the fiscal year. Numerous programs were presented to various groups and organizations in the community and at the county parks. The Board cooperated with the Woodbury County Soil Conservation District in providing trees to fifth graders in rural school districts throughout the county. The Board's newsletter, "Woodbury Wanderings", continued to be a popular publication and is published three times a year and is available on the website in digital format. The Board continued to sell advertising to help support printing costs of the newsletter which is a free publication. Subscribers are encouraged to sign up to receive the newsletter electronically. Several Resource Managers, the Deputy Director, and naturalists serve or assist as Hunter Safety and Fur Harvester Instructors teaching and assisting with these classes throughout the county during the year. Several classes are held at the nature center and various park offices. Hunter Safety classes are now part of the curriculum of the three local public high schools and are assisted by Board staff with over 200 students receiving the training in the past year. The nature center Gift Shop features many items which help promote the nature center with its name and logo. Summer day camps held at the nature center were again very successful, are self-sustaining, and continue to be expanded where possible. A complete annual report of the Board's environmental education program is located at the end of this report in **Section VII**.

The Board provided an information booth at the Woodbury County Fair. Staff also assisted with a District III County Conservation booth at the Clay County Fair.

A dedicated, hard-working group of volunteers worked with the Education Programs Director and Naturalist to raise money for nature center programs and needs through the twelfth annual "Nature Calls" fundraiser. Over \$45,000 was raised at the September 12, 2015 event which was held at the Sioux City Convention Center. Proceeds help fund one summer naturalist intern and upgrades/improvements to the Nature Center.

#### Communication

Communication contacts between various conservation organizations and the Board were coordinated by the Director during the fiscal year. Maintaining close working relationships with various state, county, and federal organizations along with local organizations is a high priority. Staff continually seeks new methods to communicate through the Board's website and other electronic means.

Regular staff meetings were conducted during the fiscal year. Communication efforts among staff locations have been enhanced with the use of e-mail, high-speed internet, fax machines, and cell phones. Conservation staff conducted regular maintenance checks on major equipment, playground equipment, park facilities and vehicles during the year. Emphasis is placed on safety issues in all park areas according to the

Board's safety policy. Routine safety inspections of park shops help ensure a safe working environment for employees and compliance with OSHA regulations.

Equipment Purchases

Major equipment/furniture items purchased by the Board during the fiscal year were as follows:

	<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>
1	2016 Chevrolet Colorado Pickup Truck	\$ 22,082
1	2016 Ford ¾ T. Pickup Truck	\$ 27,301
1	2016 Chevrolet ¾ T. Pickup Truck	\$ 32,100
1	Diamond Brush Grinder Attachment	\$ 21,950
1	Slide-on Fire Fighting Unit	\$ 10,000
1	M&W Earthmaster Disc	\$ 7,000
1	Lateral File Cabinet	\$ 595
1	Mi-T-M Pressure Washer	\$ 700
3	Desk Chairs	\$ 570
1	Flatbed Utility Trailer	\$ 489
1	Stihl Leaf Blower	\$ 400

A complete equipment inventory is on file in the conservation office.

**III. FUTURE**

CIP/Revenue Requirements

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the Conservation Department is reviewed regularly by the Conservation Board. A minimum five-year improvement program is prioritized, approved annually and submitted to the Board of Supervisors as part of the annual budgeting process. The CIP is based on needs and available grants and revenues, and can fluctuate throughout the year. In **Section VI**, this report describes various capital improvement projects scheduled for completion during the next fiscal year. These include improvement upgrades to the Little Sioux Park swim beach, nature center improvements, playground renovation at Brown's Lake, providing a dust-free surface for the road at Southwood Conservation Area and numerous other projects. Of more immediate concern is the condition of asphalt roads at Little Sioux Park and Bigelow Park that have reached the end of their life span and require resurfacing within the next year or two. Longer range projects include construction of a picnic shelter at Southwood Conservation Area, renovating shelters at Fowler Forest Preserve and Snyder Bend Park, renovating the Bellamy Campground at Little Sioux Park, and constructing an accessible fishing jetty at Brown's Lake. All projects are dependent on park user fees and other revenues generated from conservation areas that are deposited into the Conservation Reserve Fund which finances these improvements. These revenues are also used as leverage to cost-share with available grant programs which provide additional funding for capital improvement projects.

Large scale projects could not be completed without the availability of various grant monies. Applications to grant programs such as LAWCON and REAP, as well as project specific grants, will be made when appropriate provided grant monies and match dollars continue to be available. Many state and federal grant sources are shrinking or disappearing completely. Construction costs continue to rise at a steady pace making it imperative that grant funds be obtained to complete necessary capital improvements. The Board and staff need to continue to look for new sources of revenue, and the county Board of Supervisors needs to be involved in this effort. User fees and other charges will continue to be monitored to ensure a competitive product and price, but these revenues will need to be supplemented with additional sources. Long range planning must be an ongoing effort by the Conservation Board and staff and should include the Board of Supervisors in dealing with this problem. The Board has collaborated in the past with the Board of Supervisors to issue bonds to finance specific projects with park revenues used to pay back the bonds. This is an innovative way to complete high-cost improvements when interest rates are attractive for borrowing. Some major projects, such as road resurfacing, are simply out of the Conservation Board's ability to repay and will need to be funded by bonds issued through the Board of Supervisor's Debt Service Fund. The Iowa Outdoor Natural Resources Trust Fund can be a significant source of revenue when it is funded.

## Land Acquisition

Land acquisition efforts continued with the Curtin Timber Expansion project. The Board began working with the landowner of a 120-acre parcel adjacent to Curtin Timber early in 2015. Property closing is expected to occur in the next fiscal year. This property contains some of the finest forest in western Iowa and will remain undeveloped open to public hunting. Easement opportunities in the County will be monitored for any attractive possibilities.

Rare opportunities for fee title acquisition occasionally arise from willing sellers and the Board should take advantage of these offers coupled with the availability of grant dollars to fund acquisitions. The Board will continue to work only with willing sellers, and potential acquisitions will be reviewed to determine their viability within the Board's system and Long Range Land Acquisition Plan. Acquisitions are usually dependent upon grants which typically fund 50% -100% of acquisition costs.

## Cooperation

As described in **Section IV**, the Board will continue to cooperate wherever possible with other agencies, departments, and private organizations to further the awareness of conservation and promote the Board's goals and objectives throughout the next fiscal year. Cooperative efforts and partnerships are critical to the success of the Conservation Board. Locally, the Board looks forward to continuing cooperation with local colleges and universities, Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, River City Anglers Club, and Siouxland Fly Fishing Club. The Board will also continue to work with the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation, Loess Hills Audubon, the Northwest Iowa Sierra Club, Stone State Park and IDNR, The Nature Conservancy and Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to promote conservation issues and projects. Collaborative efforts will continue with the Loess Hills Alliance to promote conservation and protection measures for Iowa's loess hills. The Board also looks forward to continued use of various grant programs including employment programs such as Conservation Corps Iowa and Woodbury County Community Action Agency Senior Aides program, and community service worker programs, along with interns and volunteers to complete various maintenance and educational projects throughout the Board's conservation system.

A critically important cooperative relationship exists between the Conservation Department and other county departments, particularly Secondary Roads. Many projects could not get accomplished or could cost much more without the willing cooperation of the County Engineer and his staff who assist often with a variety of maintenance and construction projects in the parks due to their specialized equipment and expertise. More cooperative ventures with the Rural Economic Development Department to promote county parks and facilities will have a positive economic impact for the County. It is imperative that these types of relationships continue among departments.

## Priorities/Strategic Planning

The Board's top priorities for the next fiscal year will be renovation of the beach at Little Sioux Park, renovating the playground at Brown's Lake, and finding a dust-free surfacing solution for the Southwood Conservation Area road. Renovation of asphalt roads at Little Sioux Park and Bigelow Park are a major concern that needs to be addressed in the next two years. The Board's policies and long range plans will continue to be reviewed and updated as necessary. Future planning efforts assist in developing the Board's budget requests, and a strategic planning meeting of the Board needs to be held annually. Board priorities continually change, but timely review of these priorities will allow needs to be efficiently matched with limited resources. Strategic planning has already proven its value within the department and has helped tremendously in dealing with retirements from key positions.

## Staff

Full time conservation staff numbers have been insufficient for many years. The Board is extremely grateful for the new Resource Technician position funded by the Board of Supervisors beginning July 1, 2016. Optimally, the department should have a minimum of three additional full time positions to operate most efficiently and responsively to the public. Discussion of additional staff continues to be addressed through strategic planning and communication with the Board of Supervisors with overall county budget concerns the limiting factor. Priorities for full time staff positions include a Natural Resources Coordinator, an additional Resource Technician position, and a third naturalist for the department. A part time Clerk

position is also needed in the Conservation Board office. The “park season” runs nearly eight months which causes difficulties with federal wage and hour regulation compliance when using temporary or seasonal employees. Increasing visitation numbers at county parks and the Nature Center has put tremendous pressure on existing employees to keep up with public needs. Increasing training requirements take more hours away from department production thereby placing even more pressure on limited manpower resources. New staff positions should be considered which can better accommodate and benefit the Board’s programs and service to the public. Additional employee retirements within the next two years will also impact staff needs. Position requests have been favorably received by the Board of Supervisors, but budget constraints have not allowed many positions to be added. It is hoped that proposed strategic planning for the entire county will place more emphasis on staffing needs to provide necessary services.

Board staff will continue to recruit, train and organize volunteers that can assist with operating and maintaining the nature center and park facilities. Campground hosts have proven to be particularly effective, and staff will continue to seek individuals willing to serve in that capacity. The Board will continue to annually recognize special individuals who have made outstanding contributions of their time and efforts to apply conservation practices and promote conservation education by conferring the "Friend of Conservation" and "Conservation Educator" awards. The volunteer recognition program will continue to reward and acknowledge those dedicated volunteers that assist the Board in various ways. The Board's outstanding environmental education program will continue to be the top promotional tool for the Board's park and conservation areas and programs.

#### **IV. COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

##### **1. Management Agreements**

The Woodbury County Conservation Board presently operates two areas totaling 46 acres under management agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural resources. These areas include Bigelow Park and the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center/Board Office area at Stone Park. The Board also operates one area under management agreement with the Iowa Department of Transportation which is the Copeland Park Access on the Little Sioux River west of Correctionville at the State Highway #31 bridge. The Bigelow Park management agreement was renewed as a 50-year management lease agreement in 2010. The Board has inquired with Iowa DOT for another river access site on the Little Sioux River near the D-50 bridge south of Anthon. This would result in another management agreement and provide an excellent public access on the river.

##### **2. Wildlife Habitat Restoration Program**

The Board maintains an active wildlife habitat restoration program by planting tree and shrub seedlings and various types of grass cover and food plots on its park lands each year. Last year, 214.31 pounds of prairie and forb seed were planted on 22.93 acres of public land. Wildlife food plots totaling 91.04 acres were planted on public wildlife areas. Controlled burns for prairie for grassland improvement as well as seed production were conducted on 81.56 acres. Staff cooperated with the Woodbury County Pheasants Forever Chapter in providing free seed for establishing food plots on public and private lands.

The Board’s undeveloped wildlife areas are managed specifically for wildlife populations. Food plots and farmlands are managed to benefit wildlife. Some lands are enrolled in USDA programs, including seven CRP contracts and six WRP contracts which the Board must maintain.

The restoration and establishment of native prairie and forbs is a popular component of the board's habitat program. The board maintains four Truax native grass drills of various sizes required to plant native grass seed, and the board's equipment and technical assistance is constantly in demand. Ranging from the small 6' drill, which is ideal for small plantings, to the large 12' no till drill which is suitable for large acre planting, the drills are made available to landowners on a rental basis and were used to plant hundreds of acres in the fall of 2015 and the spring of 2016. Depending on time and weather, staff typically harvests native grass seed each fall for use in replanting both public and private areas as well as providing a seed source for roadside vegetation management programs. No seed was harvested during fall 2015. The Board assists the Secondary Roads Department with seeding various road shouldering, regrading and box culvert construction projects throughout the county. Native grass species are used when practical.

Non-game habitat improvement programs include maintenance of bluebird house trails at Southwood Conservation Area and Little Sioux Park. Volunteers also maintain bluebird house trails along one mile of fence line at the Interstate rest area south of Sergeant Bluff, and the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center. Osprey nesting towers are maintained on the north shore of Brown's Lake and east shore of Snyder Bend Lake. Other non-game efforts include a variety of programs offered to the public. Board staff assists the local Ducks Unlimited chapter at the annual Green Wing Day for youth and assist with construction of wood duck houses for use throughout the county. These houses are installed at various sites by department staff and monitored occasionally to determine usage and condition. Representatives from the Waterfowl Association of Iowa have assisted with installing nesting structures at Owego Wetland Complex.

Special planting equipment for planting seedling trees and shrubs is made available to landowners on a donation basis. Employees work closely with landowners and Iowa DNR personnel surveying and establishing populations of wildlife species as well as enforcing fish and game regulations.

3. Water Recreation Access Cost-Share

This state cost-share program typically provides up to seventy-five percent of the cost for boat ramps, docks, and related facilities used by boaters and fishermen. The Conservation Board has obtained several boat ramp and dock facilities through this program, as well as assistance for parking lot improvements and restroom facilities. A limited amount of funds are made available to conservation boards each year for various cost-share projects. Monies in this fund are derived from a special tax on fuel sold within the state. In September 2015, Board staff submitted a grant application for cost-share funding for new boat docks at Brown's Lake boat ramp and campground and was successful in receiving up to \$26,692 toward that project. The old docks were moved to Southwood Conservation Area and repurposed for use in that pond.

4. Supplemental Environment Projects (SEP)

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division has established a process whereby monies paid as penalties in environmental enforcement cases can be directed to supplemental environmental projects, or SEPs. Instead of fines and penalties being paid into the state's general fund, the process allows for the penalties to be directed to the county conservation board in the county where the violation occurred for the board to expend on environmentally beneficial projects. An annual report is sent to IDNR to verify the amount of monies collected during the fiscal year and explain how they were expended by the county. Monies are placed in a special SEP fund and budgeted for expenditure through that fund. During the fiscal year, no environmental penalties or fund interest were received by the Conservation Board, and the fund contains a zero balance. The Conservation Board has designated Owego Wetland Complex as their main priority for expenditure of any SEP funds.

5. Naturalist Programs

The Board's environmental education program completed its twenty-seventh full year in June 2016. Please refer to **Section VII - Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center Annual Report**. Although most programs and presentations are organized by the naturalists, the Director and other staff assist in presenting programs to various groups and organizations throughout the year. Staff members occasionally participate in various publicity efforts with the media. Resource Managers are frequently requested to present programs to school classes as well as information on specific topics about their areas and careers.

6. Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts

Scouting programs in the area continue to use county conservation parks for camping and other activities. The naturalists and Resource Naturalist occasionally work with Eagle Scout candidates and Girl Scout Gold Award candidates on their community service projects. Several Eagle Scout projects were planned and completed for the nature center and some county parks during the last fiscal year. Staff will continue to work with scout groups to foster an interest in conservation ethics and careers, and to provide opportunities for smaller service projects.

7. Woodbury County Pheasants Forever

This local private organization was formed in January 1986. The group is dedicated to improving habitat to increase the number of pheasants within the county, and works with landowners and other conservation agencies to meet their goals. Since 1987, the local chapter has assisted financially in the purchase of 852 acres of additional wildlife habitat areas in the county. In two acquisitions, the local chapter was responsible for nearly 25% of the total acquisition costs.

The Chapter hosted a Youth Day at Little Sioux Park October 4, 2015 with 75 youth in attendance, and a Youth Fishing Derby June 11, 2016. In the spring of 2016, the Pheasants Forever (PF) Chapter and conservation staff cooperated in providing 300 pounds of free seed for establishment of food plots on public and private lands. Board staff assisted the Chapter by providing equipment and planting advice when possible to private landowners along with equipment for prescribed burns. The Board plans to continue cooperative efforts with the Pheasants Forever Chapter for the establishment of additional permanent habitat and food plots on private lands.

8. River City Anglers Club

The River City Anglers Club is a local organization comprised of persons interested in the betterment of fishing resources in the local and Midwest area. The group holds an annual event featuring fishing experts and a swap meet to raise monies that can be used for special projects benefiting fish resources and fishermen. The club has donated several thousand dollars to the Board for the improvement of fishing facilities and opportunities at Brown's Lake and Snyder Bend, and sponsored the 400 gallon aquarium display at the nature center.

9. Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation is an IRS 501(c) (3) organization dedicated to the conservation and preservation of natural resources in Iowa. This group can provide specialized assistance to landowners in the acquisition and protection of various types of land. The Conservation Board utilized the assistance of the Heritage Foundation in acquiring an addition to Shagbark Hills in 1987, the Hammond addition to Southwood Conservation Area in 1989, three additions to Oak Ridge in 1999, 2000 and 2006, two additions to Owego Wetland Complex in 2001 and 2002, and negotiation of fourteen permanent conservation easements. The advantages of the foundation include quicker response to seller's requests and demands, and the ability to provide specialized tax deductible options to willing sellers that cannot be provided by governmental entities. The Foundation provides their services at cost, and the Conservation Board maintains a sustaining membership with this organization.

The Board holds fifteen easements on over 1,695 acres and is responsible for annual monitoring of these easements.

10. Woodbury County Conservation Foundation

The Woodbury County Conservation Foundation was formed in January 1990. It is an incorporated non-profit organization that received tax exempt status in 1991, and is dedicated to the conservation and preservation of natural resources in Woodbury County. Similar in goals to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation concentrates on specific projects to assist the Conservation Board in completing major acquisition and construction projects. The foundation's main goals have been the acquisition and protection of native loess hill prairie areas and the establishment of a regional nature center for the conservation board. The foundation's most ambitious project, establishment of a nature center, was realized in 1995. The foundation's tax exempt status is an invaluable help in raising funds for various projects such as the nature center, and will continue to be a vehicle for future fundraising efforts. The foundation has positions for nine directors, two seats which are reserved for a county conservation board member and staff member. Dawn Snyder, Education Programs Director and conservation board member Christine Zellmer-Zant served as representatives on the foundation board of directors. Dawn also serves as Secretary/Treasurer for the Foundation. Regular meetings are held by the foundation, and its mailing address continues to be the Conservation Board office mailing

address. As a 501(c) (3) organization, the foundation provides a tax-deductible avenue for donations, contributions and grants to be used toward conservation projects including the nature center, land acquisition, and parks.

During the fiscal year, a special group of more than 70 volunteers worked on the Board's annual fundraising "Nature Calls" event, a micro brew tasting and auction event held each fall. The twelfth annual event was held September 12, 2015 and netted over \$26,000 for improvements at the Nature Center. The Foundation provided funding for a Habitat Stewardship Intern in 2016 to work on prairies and other habitats. They also provided funding for two Conservation Corps Iowa crews of six workers to conduct four days of tree and brush clearing on 8-9 acres as part of prairie restoration efforts at Riverside Bluffs and to install 1,550 feet of new fence at Riverside Bluffs. The Foundation continued to offer special incentives to boost memberships, including camping discounts, free nights of camping and nature center gift shop discounts. On February 28, 2016 the Foundation held its annual meeting at the nature center and featured a program on Galapagos turtles. The Foundation has continued to fund scholarships for needy Summer Camp children.

11. REAP

The Iowa Resource Enhancement and Protection Act (REAP) was passed by the 1989 session of the Iowa General Assembly and went into effect July 1, 1989. This legislation was to be a long-term, multi-million dollar commitment to the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of natural and scenic areas; county and state parks; upgrading environmental education programs; protection of endangered animal and plant species and wildlife habitat; halting soil erosion; and improving air and water quality.

For the 2016 fiscal year, \$16 million was appropriated by the Iowa legislature which was allocated among eight different areas, including conservation boards, which will share 20% of the appropriation. Of this 20%, sixty percent goes directly to county boards on per county and per capita basis. The remaining 40% is administered through the Natural Resources Commission for competitive grants to conservation boards. To be eligible for the per capita share and competitive grants, counties must spend at least 22 cents per thousand dollars of taxable valuation on conservation programs. During the 2016 fiscal year, Woodbury County spent approximately 43.3 cents per thousand dollars of taxable valuation on conservation programs. During the fiscal year, Woodbury County received \$9,655 for its per county share and \$31,843 for its per capita share. No interest was credited to the REAP account.

During the fiscal year, no expenditures were made from the REAP account.

Carryovers in the REAP Fund are typically obligated for future facility developments or specialized equipment. A portion of the funds may be used for cost-sharing land acquisition and capital improvement grant projects if necessary. For FY 17, the Legislature retained the REAP appropriation at \$16 million. The Board is hopeful that REAP funding may soon reach the originally legislated \$20 million per year level. Since REAP funds are used for special projects and expenditures, the board is not dependent on this special appropriation for operational expenditures. It is anticipated that Woodbury County's REAP funds in the next fiscal year will be used to assist with the Curtin Timber addition project.

12. National Wild Turkey Federation

A local chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation known as Loess Hills Longbeards was formed in January 2000. The chapter conducts an annual membership and fundraising banquet. Chapter meetings are held at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center, and the Director served as publicity chairman during the fiscal year. This group is dedicated to the preservation and establishment of the wild turkey throughout the United States. Most funds raised by chapters are forwarded to a state and national organization and used for a variety of programs to acquire and enhance habitat and promote the wild turkey. The Conservation Board received a \$7,500 grant in 1999 to assist with an addition to Oak Ridge Conservation Area. Two grants totaling \$17,000 were received in July 2005 and January 2006 to assist with a 228-acre acquisition project in Oak Ridge Conservation Area. A grant for \$10,000 to assist with a 320-acre acquisition project in Oak Ridge was received in January 2008. A grant request for assistance with the Curtin Timber

Addition project was submitted in June 2016 for \$15,000. Results will be known in July 2016. Staff will continue to work with this organization to promote their efforts in enhancing wildlife habitat and populations in the county.

## V. LAND ACQUISITION

No property was acquired during the fiscal year. The Board worked on acquiring a 120-acre addition to Curtin Timber south of Anthon. This project has required the assistance of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to step in and acquire the property on behalf of the County and hold it until the Board secures sufficient grants for funding. It is anticipated title will be transferred in the next fiscal year.

Easements, river accesses, and expansion of Snyder Bend Park will be priorities in the future. Future acquisitions will continue to be dependent upon available grants and the Board's ability to maintain areas. Acquisitions must fit into the Board's plans with priority being placed on Oak Ridge Conservation Area, Owego Wetland Complex, and existing parks. Land is acquired only from willing sellers.

At the end of the fiscal year, the conservation board managed 16 different areas comprising approximately 5,543 acres, and held fifteen easements on over 1,695 acres.

## VI. AREA DEVELOPMENT

### 1. Snyder Bend County Park

Snyder Bend County Park is located two miles southwest of the Salix interchange on Interstate 29. This 35-acre area was acquired in 1961, and is currently managed as a full service outdoor recreation park area. Existing facilities at this site include modern and tent camping areas, a camper's shower and restroom facility, playground equipment and open play areas, picnicking grounds, an open shelterhouse, restroom building, boat ramp and parking lot, paved access and interior roads, concrete trail, four modern family cabins, a residence, and maintenance shop/office and storage area.

The drain field for the water treatment system was replaced following eventual failure from effects of the 2011 flood event. Additional trees were planted in spring 2016 as staff continued to replace trees lost in the 2011 flood. These were planted with assistance from employees of CF Industries and their families. Work began by wireless internet provider, Spiral Communications, to renovate the wireless equipment in the park to ensure good, consistent service. Staff continued to receive inquiries concerning extended cabin rentals from nearby construction workers, but none were arranged. All park facility lighting was converted to LED as part of the County's initiative.

Plans for the next year include continuation of planting trees. The original open shelter needs some refurbishing and the playground surfacing material needs to be replaced with shredded rubber. The concrete access road may need repairs to the centerline saw cut area that tends to open up at times during the year. This may require filling with an appropriate material to prevent water from getting under the pavement. Other future plans include development of an accessible fishing pier jetty near the lake and application of epoxy finish to the camper shower/restroom building floors.

Visitation to the park was very strong in 2015-2016 with an estimated 165,000 visitors during the fiscal year.

### 2. Bigelow Park - Brown's Lake

Bigelow Park is located on the south shore of Brown's Lake one mile west of the Salix interchange on Interstate 29. This 36-acre state-owned area, which also contains the Dale G. Bell Memorial Arboretum, was acquired from the Department of Natural Resources through management agreement in October 1970. It was renewed in 2002, and again in 2010 for a 50-year lease period. The area is highly developed and is managed as a high-use outdoor recreation park. Facilities at this park include a 41-unit modern camping area, a tent camping area, a camper's shower and restroom building, enclosed shelterhouse with restrooms, playground equipment and open play areas,

swimming beach area, concession/restroom building, boat ramp and dock facilities, parking lots, maintenance shed/office and storage area, paved roads, and a residence.

New floating boat docks were installed in April 2016 at the boat ramp and campground. The campground had been without docks for several years. A sub-surface drainage system was installed in the campground to help remove standing water after heavy rain events. Continued wet conditions in spring 2016 resulted in saturating the drain field for the shower/restroom building which had to be temporarily closed. A new drain field was installed in time for the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday weekend. Additional trees were planted throughout the park with assistance of volunteers from CF Industries and their families. The deck on the Manager's residence was completed. All park facility lighting was converted to LED as part of the County's initiative.



Brown's Lake – Campground Drainage Issue



Brown's Lake – Septic System

Weekly water quality monitoring was conducted at the swimming beach during the summer months in cooperation with IDNR.

Plans for next year include continued tree planting and playground renovation including new surfacing material. Interim needs include repair/resurfacing the asphalt park roads. Long range improvements include a major renovation or replacement of the beach and concession building, constructing an accessible fishing jetty near the picnic area, and clearing more shoreline areas for fishing access.

This popular area experienced strong visitation numbers and an increase in camping and visitation during the fiscal year with an estimated 185,000 visitors.

### 3. Little Sioux Park

This 609-acre developed park area is located two miles southwest of Correctionville off State Highway #31. The bulk of this park area was acquired in 1965, with 118 acres of abandoned county owned gravel pits on the north and 40 acres adjacent to the south added to the park jurisdiction in 1999. Fourteen acres were added in 2004 to provide a trail connector to the town of Correctionville. Thirty-two acres encompassing an old gravel pit adjacent to the shooting range were added in 2008. Eighteen acres of river bottom greenbelt were added in 2015. The park also includes an area formerly known as the Little Sioux Greenbelt, 25 acres of river bottom timber located on the east side of the river and acquired in 1974. Little Sioux Park is currently managed as a high-use outdoor recreation and conservation park. Facilities existing at the park include two modern campground areas with shower and restroom facilities, camping cabins, picnicking grounds, playground equipment and open play areas, enclosed shelterhouse, several small open shelters, three modern restrooms, swimming beach area, shooting range, hiking trails, hard surfaced trail, non-modern campground, a ten-acre lake, historic one-room schoolhouse, maintenance shop/office and storage area, paved roads, and a residence.



Stub Gray Shooting Range

The main project for the year centered on completing and reopening the Stub Gray Shooting Range which closed in May 2014 due to vandalism and safety concerns. All improvements were the result of three public meetings held in the summer of 2014 to gather support and input for changes that would keep the range open in the future. Work began in October

2014 and finished in August 2015. A grand reopening event was held on August 29, 2015. A user fee structure of \$10 per day or \$50 per year was incorporated for this facility and has been well received. Funds will be used for future improvements to the range. In April 2016, a concrete vault latrine was installed at the range. Eight volunteer Range Safety Officers were certified and are being used to help monitor usage at the range in an effort to avoid the problems of prior years. Gates to the facility are opened and closed daily which



requires assistance of volunteers in the winter months. The facility is closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.



An engineering firm was contracted to survey and develop plans for renovating the swim beach area. Continued wet conditions raised the lake to record levels in 2016 with water going over the road and inundating the primitive campground for a second year. The high water indicated the need for a water control structure for the lake which will need to be installed as part of the beach renovation project when water levels recede. Wet conditions and high river levels resulted in new bank erosion in the picnic area. This section will need to have rip rap protection added.



Flooding - Little Sioux Beach



Flooding - Little Sioux Primitive Camping



Secondary Roads Department conducted sample borings and excavations in the old north pit area to determine if more gravel reserves were available for mining. Excellent reserves were found, and Secondary Roads intends to begin re-mining the area next fiscal year. This work will be done in coordination with Conservation staff to ensure the reclamation results in an area ready for park development. The new mining will also provide much improved ponds for fishing and other water recreation activities in the future.

Many dead and dying Scotch pine trees were removed during the year and numerous trees planted. Woodbury County Pheasants Forever Chapter hosted a fall Youth Day in October 2015 and a Youth Fishing Derby in June 2016. The annual Halloween camping event was held in October 2015 with over 1,000 persons in attendance.

Prescribed fire was applied to 36.71 acres of grasslands in the park to encourage growth of prairie species and control invasive species. All park facility lighting was converted to LED as part of the County's initiative.



Little Sioux Halloween event

Plans for next year include renovation of the swim beach area and Bellamy Campground, installation of a water control structure for the lake, installation of sidewalks and outside living spaces for the cabins, and continued tree removal and replacement. Also of immediate concern is the condition of the park asphalt roads. The 2.2 miles of asphalt have reached the end of life expectancy after 20 years and need to be resurfaced or renovated soon before the project becomes more costly. Longer range plans include addition of playground equipment near the beach, replacement of playground surfacing material, application of epoxy floors to various restroom/shower facilities, asphalt road repairs, and development of the Peters Pit area.

Little Sioux Park generated the largest amount of revenue during 2015-2016 and continued to be busy. New and renovated facilities continue to attract more users, and the Union Bridge trail continues to be extremely popular with park users and Correctionville citizens. Camping numbers dropped off slightly in 2016 but visitation was still estimated at approximately 280,000 persons during the fiscal year.

4. Fowler Forest Preserve

This attractive day-use area is located one-half mile west of Smithland on State Highway #141. The original 50-acre site was acquired in May 1965, with an additional 58 acres added to the area in 1981. In 1998, 52 acres located between the preserve and the city limits of Smithland was added to the area which now totals 160 acres. This park is managed primarily as a day-use preserve and includes an open picnic shelter, restroom facilities, hiking trails, parking lot, and playground equipment.

Work was conducted on clearing a new trail to a lookout area where a memorial bench will be installed. Staff worked with a local architectural firm to look at plans for enclosing the open shelter. Facility lighting was converted to LED as part of the County's efforts.

This area continued to be a popular picnicking and rest area stop for persons traveling along Highway 141. Future plans include continued replacement of steep trail sections with railroad tie box steps, enclosing the large open shelter, and replacement of playground surfacing material. Attendance for the fiscal year is estimated at 15,000 people.

5. Southwood Conservation Area

This mostly undeveloped conservation area is located one mile south and three fourths mile west of Smithland. A majority of the area, 463 acres, was acquired from 1978-80 with fifty percent cost sharing funds received through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. Another 160 acres was acquired in 1989 with cost sharing from the state Wildlife Habitat Stamp Fund and donations from local Pheasants Forever Chapters. The entire park now totals 623 acres. The area provides a limited amount of development along the east boundary of the property and is managed primarily as a wildlife conservation park. Facilities on this site include primitive and tent camping areas, a nineteen site modern electrical campground, hiking and bridle trails, two 7-acre lakes, boat launching area and dock, modern restroom and shower building, maintenance shop/office and storage area, and a residence.

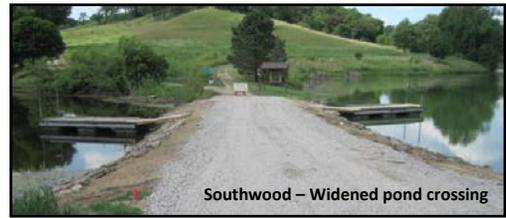
The main project during the fiscal was the construction of two new cabins. These one bedroom housekeeping units will be another alternative offered for cabin camping. Grading began in October 2015 with the hope of installing footings before snow. Wet conditions followed by cold pushed construction to spring which delayed completion of the project until summer. The cabins are located near the campground and feature locally crafted furniture made from local red cedar trees. The cabins are expected to open in July 2016. A \$75,000 grant from Missouri River Historical Development group assisted with the project.



Southwood Cabins

Excess material from the cabin grading was used to widen the crossing between the two ponds. A second culvert was installed to assist with pond level equalization, rip rap placed for protection and two new boat ramp launch areas constructed. Old boat docks from Brown's Lake were refurbished during the winter and installed for use as boat and fishing docks on the ponds. Swings and a Spring Mate were added to the playground which required installation of a retaining wall and

new split rail fence. A badly eroded gully below the dam outlet was repaired. The Resource Manager residence was remodeled after 33 years. Dust control agent was applied to the gravel road along the camping areas. Native grass seed harvest operations were headquartered at Southwood Conservation Area where seed is cleaned, dried and stored.



Controlled burns were conducted on 44.85 acres of grasslands to encourage prairie growth and deter invasive woody vegetation. All facility lighting was converted to LED as part of the County's overall project.



Plans for next year include addition of a dust-free road material to eliminate the annual need for dust control and provide sufficient road rock. Future plans include extending electrical service to a number of tent campsites,



continued renovation of trails, and application of epoxy finish to the restroom/shower floor. Southwood Conservation Area is a popular destination for people who enjoy large, undeveloped open spaces, but still have access to basic amenities. It is also a popular spot for equestrian users, hunters and campers. Cabin reservations are expected to have a big impact on visitation in the future. It is estimated that at least 40,000 people visited this conservation area during the fiscal year.

6. Shagbark Hills

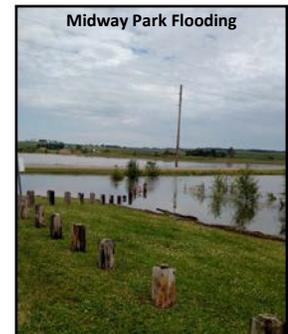
This undeveloped 379-acre natural area is located one and one-quarter miles south of Correctionville on County Road L-27. The area is managed as a public hunting area and is regularly used by hunters, hikers and birdwatchers.

This area is open for public hunting and provides good opportunities for a large variety of upland game species and contains a nice farm pond for pan fish species.

7. Midway Park

This 20-acre abandoned gravel pit site is located three and one-half miles north of Merville on State Highway #140. It contains old gravel pit ponds, a vault latrine restroom, rock ramp accesses to the ponds and picnic facilities. The area was acquired in May 1978 from the Midway Park Association of Kingsley, Pierson, Merville and Lawton. The park has been developed into a picnic area and is managed for this purpose. The gravel pit ponds also provide good fishing for many park users.

A historic rain event in June 2016 flooded most of the park and surrounding fields and put water over Highway 140 for a short period of time. After receding, the water continued to remain out of the ponds and into the road ditch. Fortunately, park facilities were not affected but the boat launch areas were rendered unusable for the summer.



8. Copeland Park Access

In January 1986, the Board obtained a right-of-way lease for a .36 acre access from the Iowa Department of Transportation located one-half mile west of Correctionville. This site will be maintained as an undeveloped river access.

9. Inkpaduta River Access

In February 1989, the Board obtained a two-acre river access by easement through a trade-off agreement involving the closing of an abandoned secondary road right-of-way and establishment of a new right-of-way to the river. The area provides a parking lot and limited access to the Little Sioux River for fishermen and canoeists. Long range plans include installing a graded and rocked canoe ramp access.

10. Inkpaduta Historical Monument

In April 1989, the Board acquired .04 acres adjacent to the county road right-of-way and State Highway #31 for a historical marker site. This area marks the location of the Sioux Indian Inkpaduta's campsite during the winter of 1856-57 where they stayed before being driven away by the white settlers. A large boulder with an 18" X 24" bronze informational plaque was erected on this site in the fall of 1989. This site preserves a small part of county history, and attracts many interested travelers as they pass on the adjacent highway.

11. Walling Access

This 13.04-acre river access on the Little Sioux River near Correctionville was purchased in 1989. The area is managed for wildlife and as an access for canoeists and fishermen to the Little Sioux River.

12. Oak Ridge Conservation Area

This large, undeveloped conservation area identified by the board in 1990 will be the Board's largest acquisition project when completed in the future totaling approximately 3,200 acres. The largest parcel containing 530 acres was added in 2000, and connected three separate existing parcels. Another 19 acres were added in 2002, 231 acres in 2005, and 315 acres in 2007. The area is located between Oto and Smithland, and presently consists of four separate Units totaling 2,082 acres.

Timber stand improvement work covering nearly 11 acres was completed in Unit 2 with the assistance of a Conservation Corps Iowa crew who worked four days on the project. The project is partially funded with a Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program grant through the NRCS and will average 11 acres per year through 2016. Prescribed burns were not conducted during the year. This area contains several CRP contracts expiring in the near future. One contract expired during the fiscal year and was not renewed.

Staff discovered that an impoundment structure in Unit 1 had breached and drained sometime after a heavy rain event in 2014. Contact was made with NRCS personnel to assist with plans to reconstruct a new impoundment downstream near County Road D-54.



Oak Ridge – Breach of structure



Oak Ridge – Drained pond

Future plans include removal of remaining interior fences and continuation of timber stand improvement work that will enhance prairie and timber resources. Existing native prairie areas as well as wooded areas will be rejuvenated through controlled burns. The Board will consider grazing in certain areas as a potential management tool. Additional parcels within the identified

boundaries of the Oak Ridge Area will be acquired from willing sellers as they become available and as grant monies are available to fund such purchases.

13. Owego Wetland Complex

This 1,330-acre area is located in the Missouri River bottoms adjacent to an abandoned town known as Owego. The original 320-acre parcel was purchased in 1999. Following the purchase of a permanent wetland easement by the federal government, the Conservation Board acquired residual rights and subsequent title to other parcels comprising the complex. Basic wetland restoration work was funded with federal Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) monies.

No prescribed burns were conducted in 2016 due to unfavorable conditions. Wet weather in 2015 created sufficient water levels so no supplemental pumping was required. A youth duck hunt was held in October 2015 sponsored by the local conservation officer. The Board was approached by a farmer about the possibility of “flash” grazing parts of the area for up to 30 days. This would be a fall management practice and staff will be researching the use of such grazing techniques.

The Owego Wetland Complex provided good hunting opportunities in the fall of 2015 and spring 2016. Continued wet conditions and rains resulted in record water levels in spring 2016. Beavers had constructed dams at the main outlet structure creating a sizable lake. This blockage was eventually removed and the water subsided. Muskrats had damaged a dike with their burrows over the years and this resulted in a complete breach in the dike. Repairs will need to be made to this dike and damaged water control structures as soon as dry conditions occur. Clean out of shallow areas and control of cattails also need to occur. A current management plan needs to be written in cooperation with NRCS for this area. The future continues to look bright for the impact this complex will have on wildlife populations as well as outdoor recreation opportunities for hunters and bird watchers.



14. Administrative Offices/Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center

The Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center is located on approximately 10 acres of land in the southwest corner of Stone State Park. The area is under management agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The nature center, completed in 1995 features a large exhibit hall, classrooms, library/resource room, gift shop, and conservation board offices. Additional features include a paved access road and parking lot, maintenance shop and a 2.5-mile hiking trail system with outdoor amphitheater.

All lighting in the Nature Center and shop was converted to LED fixtures as part of the County’s efforts to become all LED. Additional interior renovations included replacement of a new classroom divider wall. This project resulted in the need for additional dry wall repairs and painting in the classrooms and exhibit hall. The shop was repainted in fall 2015. The Kestrel Point overlook deck was replaced. Slides were added to the Discovery Forest Playscape as a volunteer project. The Nature Center celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in October 2015. A traveling display on turtles was featured in spring 2016. The Nature Center was featured as one of Sioux City’s “jewels” in a community perception review presentation by consultant Roger Brooks in 2016. Particularly noted was the welcoming signage and staff.

Future projects at this facility include trail development and work on drainage issues. Additional concerns include roof replacement and HVAC upgrades which are both reaching the end of expected life. A very detailed report on the nature center follows in **Section VII**. Continued strong visitation numbers were experienced during the twentieth year of operation.

15. Curtin Timber

This 90-acre timbered area located three miles northeast of Oto was purchased in February 1992. The area has been left in its natural state for the last 20 years, and provides excellent habitat for deer and wild turkey. A forty-foot easement for foot access to the property was also acquired from the landowner pending future acquisition of adjoining property that would provide access to the county gravel road. This area is managed as a public hunting area, and is used by many hunters, hikers and mushroom hunters.

Work continued on acquiring a 120-acre addition adjacent to the south side of this property. It is anticipated that the addition will be completed next fiscal year.

16. Riverside Bluffs Area

This 135-acre loess hill native prairie area was acquired in 1992-93 from three different landowners through a state REAP grant that was awarded in 1991. The property is separated by West 19th Street and is located in the Riverside area of Sioux City. The area features virgin loess hills prairie along with outstanding scenic views overlooking the Missouri and Big Sioux River valleys. The area provides a unique, high quality prairie within the city limits.

The Woodbury County Conservation Foundation, which played a significant role in the grant application and acquisition process, continues to raise money for improvements on the area. For the fourth consecutive year in 2015, the Foundation provided funding to contract with a Conservation Corps Iowa crew of six people for four days to conduct prairie restoration work. Working in conjunction with Conservation Department staff and equipment, and with funding from a two-year grant from the American Great Outdoors program, it is anticipated that 24.5 acres of native prairie will be reclaimed. The Foundation also provided funding for a second CCI crew to install 1,550 feet of new fencing on the south parcel. The Foundation again provided funding for a seasonal Habitat Stewardship intern who spent considerable time on this area and around the nature center.

Additional sections of fence need to be replaced or constructed to control unauthorized traffic and delineate property boundaries. Hiking access for the property is maintained and allowed. Controlled management burns of the prairie areas and elimination of woody vegetation is being planned for the north segment in the next few years. The area is managed as a prairie preserve and includes management practices such as removal of woody vegetation and prescribed prairie burns. An encroachment issue along Military Road will need to be investigated in the next year.



VII. **DOROTHY PECAUT NATURE CENTER**



**Annual Report  
July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016**

**Woodbury County  
Conservation Board  
4500 Sioux River Road  
Sioux City, IA 51109-1657  
712-258-0838  
<<http://www.woodburyparks.org>>**

## Highlights

- The Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center turned 20 and celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on October 24, 2015. The celebration included a live Bald Eagle education program, pumpkin decorating, hikes, Dutch oven cooking and release of a rehabilitated American Kestrel and two Great-horned Owls. More than 500 people attended this event.
- Nationally known tourism expert Roger Brooks critiqued the City of Sioux City and local attractions in May 2016 and listed the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center as a “world class facility.”



- The Discovery Forest Nature Playscape and Loess Falls Water Feature continued to be popular. A series of three slides was added to the hillside at the Playscape. Volunteer Dean Van Roekel assisted with design and construction and community partners State Steel and Interstate Mechanical Corp. donated materials.

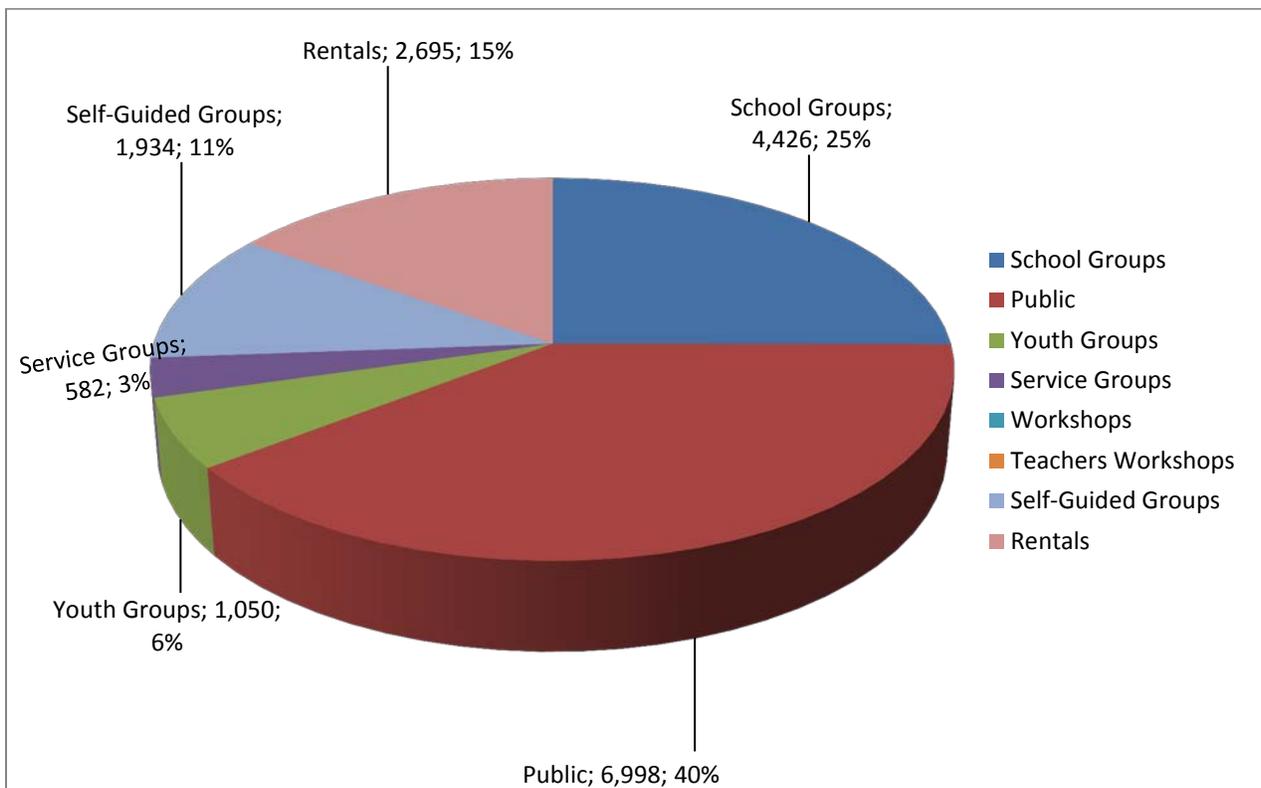
- For the fourth year, Woodbury County Conservation Foundation (WCCF) donated funds to hire a Habitat Stewardship Intern for the summer months. They also funded an Iowa Conservation Corps Crew to work on prairie management at Riverside Bluffs prairie for one week.

- The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Nature Calls Fundraiser in September 2015 continued to be popular with 530 people attending and raising \$46,000 for Nature Center projects. It was held at the Sioux City Convention Center.
- The website was revised and changed to a WordPress format to allow for ease in revisions and postings.
- Resource Naturalist Jim Henning resigned in November 2015 to accept a position with South Dakota Game Fish & Parks. Tyler Flammang was hired in January 2016 and has been doing an excellent job transitioning into his new role.
- A new movable partition wall was installed in the Nature Center’s classrooms, allowing for more flexibility in room set up and ease of use. Repairs to cracks in the sheet rock in the classroom and upper walls of exhibit area were completed as well.



## Programs

DPNC’s mission of providing quality environmental education and outdoor recreation is carried out through our educational philosophy of environmental awareness, sensitivity, knowledge, understanding, appreciation and responsible actions. Each philosophical step is considered when designing programs for different age levels. To ensure participants receive a positive learning experience our staff is committed to engaging all levels with experiential and interactive activities.



### Program Facets:

**Public and Family Programs:** A wide variety of programming is offered throughout the year for all aspects of families in our surrounding area. This past year we offered 117 public programs and had nearly 7,000 participants. In the winter of 2016, the Nature Center also cooperated with the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation (WCCF) in hosting the *Documenting the Galapagos: A Science-Based Visual Journey* program with Carlyn Iverson. The “Play in the Parks” program at Little Sioux Park over the Fourth of July weekend was another huge success. The interns provided free programs on archery, fishing, animals, etc. to hundreds of visitors. Nature Tales is a popular preschool story time with preschool children and an adult. Winter Fun Day and Summer Programs in the Parks continue to be big hits with the community. The Lunch Time for Animals is held once per month in the summer and allows the public to view the resident animals eating. This has been a popular addition to our program offerings. Our staff believes involving the entire family instills the values of our mission as well as providing quality activities for the residents of our area.



**School Groups:** DPNC is a field trip site for preschool through high school. The Center’s staff provides resources, materials, and curriculum supplements for teachers to enhance the learning process of their students. Approximately 25% of the audience we reach is school children. Within the tri-state area DPNC reaches an average of 150 schools including urban, rural, public, and private audiences. School audiences and outreach remained constant during the past year. Naturalists are working with the Sioux City School District and other schools to continue to promote our programs and facilities. DPNC continues to find new ways to reach students and teachers—an increasing challenge due to the lack of public funds for field trips.

Our Educational Programs Guide lists our offerings for school and youth ages preschool to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. It is distributed to more than 1,200 teachers in the tri-state area. Last year our direct school programs reached more than 4,425 youth. Additionally, more than 1,900 students visited the Nature Center for a self-guided experience. For Non-Woodbury County Schools, we charge a user fee of \$1.00 per student. These fees are used to provide funding for additional programs, materials, staffing and supplies. When programming demand is high in spring and fall, naturalist staff is not always able to accommodate the school groups. Additional part-time or full-time staff would help address this continued demand for programming.

**College Groups:** Professors from at least four local colleges use the DPNC as an onsite educational tool for their students. DPNC staff also provides programming and internships for students entering the natural resources field. College and University classes from around the tri-state area use our facility for meetings, classes, and field studies.

**Youth Camps & Programs:** The DPNC offers Summer Day Camps that reach an average of 300 children annually. Many campers return each year due to the current program's seven levels. This program is developed with our education program goals in mind and is extremely popular. Typically, most camps fill within a few weeks after the initial registration date and many camps have a waiting list.



The Summer Camps beginning in June 2016 were very successful with 298 children attending the 18 camp sessions. We were 96% full this year with only 12 spaces remaining open. This season included two sessions for 3-5 year olds with an adult; two sessions for 4-year old campers, four sessions for 5-6 year olds; four sessions for 7-8 year olds; three sessions for 9-10 year olds; two sessions for 11-12 year olds; and one session for 13-15 year olds. The revenue received from the camps helps to pay for the five Summer Naturalists positions. Camps are designed to offer engaging outdoor activities for ages 3 through 15. The Discovery Forest Nature Playscape continues to be a favorite component of attending camp and is a great way to help reinforce our outdoor awareness goals.

Camps ranged from 2-day session to 4-day sessions. This allows scheduling and financial flexibility for families as well as trying to offer more programming opportunities for the Education staff. We offered day trips for ages 12-15 and this was very well received. These campers were taken on a scavenger hunt around our Woodbury County parks and participated in outdoor skills activities such as canoeing, archery, pellet gun shooting, and fishing. We hope to continue this option for these age groups.



Scholarships were again provided during the 2016 Summer Camp season. The Woodbury County Conservation Foundation co-sponsored the Camps to allow this opportunity and 6 scholarships were awarded totaling \$245. The WCCF sponsorship also assisted with transportation for children ages 11-12 to visit Little Sioux Park during their camp session.

**Outdoor Program Intern:** Local partners Scheels, Woodbury County Pheasants Forever, Loess Hills Longbeards National Wild Turkey Federation, Siouxland Fly Fishing Club and River City Anglers provided money to fund this intern position in Summer 2015. In Summer of 2016 we shifted our program to include five paid naturalist interns. All of these five interns provided programs for camps, youth groups and public on a variety of topics, including outdoor skills.



On-site programming is available for schools, youth, civic and community groups throughout the year. Staff utilizes materials within our teaching collection and live reptiles and amphibians. Native American Youth, ESL youth, scouts, 4-H groups and others often request special programs from our staff. We reached more than 765 youth during our programs this year, mostly attributed to the summer programming by our interns.

**Service Learning Groups/Volunteers:** Resource Naturalists Jim Henning and Tyler Flammang had the opportunity to work with multiple service groups over the last year including; church, school and scout groups. Service groups worked on trail maintenance, put together bluebird box kits, landscaping, staining benches, roadside cleanup, playground construction and prairie rescue. This offers a good opportunity for people to help their community and learn about their natural areas at the same time.

**Service Group Programs:** Programming is also offered for groups such as Garden Clubs, Sertoma Clubs, Rotary, etc. throughout the year. A total of 582 people were reached through these meetings.



**Teacher Training:** In cooperation with Iowa's Area Education Agency (AEA 4/12) and Morningside College the DPNC staff is able to offer a variety of workshops including Project WILD, Project WET and Project Learning Tree (PLT) for teachers' continuing education and graduate credits. Pre-service workshops are offered to college students pursuing an educational degree. The past year, 2 workshops were offered, providing service to 30 pre-service teachers. Other groups use our facility for their teacher workshops as well.

**Community Development:** Staff networks with a variety of community agencies to maximize resources. Some partnerships include cooperative teaching with Area Education Agencies, schools, WIT and City of Sioux City. Snyder also was appointed to the REAP-CEP Board and scores statewide grants for educational projects twice per year on behalf of the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards. WCCB collaborates with the Sioux City Public Library and the City of South Sioux City Library for Summer Reading Program and provided programs in both Library buildings. Henning and Flammang also provided geocaching programs in cooperation with Iowa State University Extension of Woodbury County. DPNC also cooperated with Sioux City Blue Zones Project on programs and public education.

**Casual Visitors:** DPNC is open to the public 9am-4:30pm Tuesday through Saturday and 1-4:30pm on Sundays. Evening programs are available by appointment. Areas of interest include hiking trails through native prairie and woodlands, wildlife viewing area, all new interpretive displays including an interactive badger in a tunnel under the prairie diorama, working beehive, and 400 gallon native fish aquarium, resident education animals, and butterfly and herb gardens.

The Raptor House and Nature Playscape brought in several new visitors. An estimated 46,000 people visited the Nature Center last year.

**Grants:**

The WCCB and WCCF applied for 8 grants during this period, receiving a total of \$15,080.00. Total amount requested was \$25,080.00.

<b><u>Grants July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016</u></b>	<b><u>Amount received</u></b>	<b><u>Funds Targeted For</u></b>
Iowa Department of Economic Development	\$580.00	Advertising for Nature Center & WCCB parks
Kohl's Cares	\$500.00	Nature Calls
Kohl's Cares Go Green	\$1,500.00	General Support
Iowa Ornithologists' Union	\$200.00	Raptor Education
RBC Foundation	\$1,000.00	General Support/20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary
CF Industries	\$5,000.00	Playscape
Cargill, Inc.	\$6,000.00	Underground Prairie Exhibit final payment
Junior League of Sioux City Done in A Day	\$300.00	20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary supplies
<b>Total received:</b>	<b>\$15,080.00</b>	

**Nature Center**

The twenty year old facility is showing its age in some areas but improvements were made in several areas. The lighting in the facility was converted to LED in 2016. A new moveable wall partition was installed in the classroom. Drywall cracks were repaired and areas were repainted in 2016. The HVAC system and roof are approaching the end of their life span and will need to be addressed in the near future.

**Trails:** The trails provide a great interpretive asset for programs and a wonderful recreational option for park visitors. Woodchips are added to the trails when needed and possible. The decks, benches, and bridges along the trails are stained annually. Fallen trees are cut and removed as soon as possible. The buildup of sawn logs along the trails, from several years of clearing fallen trees, had reached a point of unnatural notice. In early spring of 2016, the task of gathering, removing, and further sawing of the fallen timber began. This is currently an ongoing project, as trees will continue to fall as age, weather, and health have their effect on them, but significant gains have been made. Besides the trails looking cleaner and more natural, a financial gain has been made as well; all timber gets loaded and shipped to our Woodbury County Campgrounds to be split and offered for sale as firewood.

An informational kiosk is located at each trail head and provides information on the trails, plant identification and natural history information. Student interns provide temporary display information for each of the kiosks. Prairie management, including woody vegetation removal and

prescribed fire, is coordinated by Nature Center staff. A new overlook deck was installed at Kestrel Point in Summer 2015.

**Resource Management and Maintenance:** Projects over the last year included development and implementation of management plans for the playscape and water feature; the nature center trails are an ongoing project. Nature center staff and volunteers moved wood chips onto trails and spent many hours maintaining the stairways along our trails. Other maintenance projects over the year included mowing, snow removal and exhibit troubleshooting.



**Amphitheater:** The Amphitheater provides a cozy area of seating for DPNC programming as well as rental space for the public to reserve for weddings and reunions. Maintenance included the replacement of worn, rotted, and weathered bench boards, and the replacement of rotted split-rail fencing. Future plans may include additional accent lighting around the seating area.

### **Exhibits**

The new exhibit gallery opened in April 2011. The changes have been well-received and we have had very little problems with the design and functionality. Any problems have been readily addressed by Split Rock Studios. A 5-year warranty was provided with their contract of service, which expired April 2016. Repair work on the underground prairie, badger noise button, roots banner and Prairie Shade was completed by Split Rock in January. DPNC continued to focus on outdoor exhibits—branching to outdoor exhibits with the Raptor Enclosure and Natural Playscape projects.

### **Raptor Enclosure**

The Raptor House grand opening and dedication of the Raptor House was held May 4, 2013. The facility houses two large birds of prey. In late April 2013 WCCB acquired two new raptors from Kay Neumann of SOAR. A Barred Owl and a Red-tailed Hawk were added to the live animal exhibits at the Nature Center. The public reception of the new birds, raptor house and Skye the Kestrel has been excellent. Raptors are

used for educational programs for schools, camps and the public.

Visitation has increased overall and many people stop to view the birds of prey.



The Raptor House allows visitors an up close and personal experience with animals that are otherwise distant and elusive. The installation of a wall mounted, fold away work table, allows the raptor handlers a more accessible, efficient, and safer transfer of the education raptors from their individual mews to carry crates. The installation of adjustable shelving and baskets has allowed for better organization of maintenance supplies as well as the falconry equipment needed to safely handle the education raptors.

## Discovery Forest Nature Playscape

The Playscape continues to be a visitor favorite. In early 2016, plans were made to update and expand the features of the Playscape. Updates included removing the old spider web netting and replacing it with a brand new one, the excavation and removal of sand from the sand box and replacing it with new, clean material, and finally the renovation of the “Stage” to allow for the installation of a slide designed with parents and toddlers in mind. The expansion included the design, construction, and installation of three brand new slide features on the western edge of the existing Playscape. Through generous volunteers, this expansion has become a wonderful and welcome addition.



Volunteer Dean Van Roekel assisted with design and construction and community partners State Steel and Interstate Mechanical Corp. donated materials for the slide project. CF Industries donated \$5,000 to Playscape enhancements, as well as providing 15 volunteers to assist with construction & maintenance. New wood chips were added to the fall zones at the Playscape and sand was added to the digging pit.

The Nature Playscape is a nature-based play area that allows children to climb a tree fort, clamber over logs, create natural art, wade in the water and experience safe, outdoor play. Research shows that regular time in nature reduces stress, supports creativity and imaginative play, facilitates better social and physical development and improves fitness, motor-skills and well-being. The Nature Playscape was designed to enable this process.



The Grand Opening was held October 12, 2013. The \$95,000+ project was made possible through generous

individual contributions and numerous grants. More than \$115,000 was raised.



In addition to the Nature Playscape, a Loess Falls Water Feature is located adjacent to the Nature Center and new Raptor House. The area is designed for gentle water play and observation. The upper pool has four large “stepping stone” boulders that people are able to cross to reach a quiet reflection area and

sit on a bench. The lower pool is designed for people to gradually wade into the water. There is a zero access point, even allowing mobility impaired guests to explore the water.

From the start, much of this project has been volunteer-driven. The Junior League of Sioux City played an integral part of the planning and funding process. Additional Playscape components include Tic-Tac-Toe games, a checkerboard and a swinging bench which was an Eagle Scout project.



**Maintenance Shop:** The maintenance shop provides storage for tools, county vehicles, and supplies. The ongoing organization and cleaning of the shop is never ending, as it is a constantly used building. Whether staging incoming WCCB supplies and food plot seed, being used to prepare for a volunteer group, or sheltering county vehicles from the elements, this space is used to the maximum.

## Marketing

The WCCB and Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center maintains a positive relationship with local media. The naturalists participated in more than 75 interviews for radio, television and newspaper during the past year. In addition to media releases, PSA's, articles and interviews, WCCB parks are included in two I-29 rest area kiosks. Networking with Western Iowa Tourism Region, Siouxland Chamber, Iowa Department of Economic Development, MyCountyParks, Iowa Welcome Centers and Siouxland Tourism Bureaus has allowed expanded visibility of our areas.



An advertisement was placed in the Siouxland Visitor's Guide to attract additional tours and visitors to our area. An ad was also placed in an advertising supplement for Iowa tourism. This piece reached more than 1 million households via the Des Moines Register, Omaha World Herald & Minneapolis newspapers. WCCB also participated in advertising for a map of Sioux City. The Conservation Board provided an informational booth at the Woodbury County Fair and helped staff a shift at the Clay County Fair.

### **Woodbury Wanderings Newsletter**

Our newsletter is published 3 times a year and features updates on our parks, natural history articles and our calendar of events. The newsletter is also online with the addition of our web page. The newsletter is mailed to approximately 2,200 households three times per year. Since June 2003, issues have also included a downloadable PDF version of the newsletter. Interested subscribers are encouraged to request their newsletter online or in this format to reduce mailing costs of the publication.

### **Web Page** <<http://www.woodburyparks.org>>

The website was revised and placed under a different hosting platform this year. We now are a WordPress based site, which allows easier access for staff to make updates and changes. It also is a better platform for mobile devices. The site features beautiful new photos, updated information, video clips of the cabins, shelters and nature center and the ability to donate online to the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation. Maps of all WCCB areas are available as .PDF files to download for free. We maintain a Facebook page and it continues to increase in followers.



## Rentals

The Nature Center is an attractive spot for business retreats and private rentals. The classrooms have been rented to numerous groups for anniversary parties, wedding receptions, family reunions and business retreats. More than 2,700 people (a total of 91 groups) used our rooms for a rental space. The revenue generated from these rentals goes to the General Fund for re-disbursement. Last year the Nature Center collected \$3,190.00 in revenue. The Nature Center recognizes groups such as Friends of Stone Park, Audubon Society, and Sierra Club that have a primary mission of conservation and education as “First Priority Users.” These groups are allowed free use of our meeting rooms. The number of groups using our facility at no charge was 55 groups. Rental rates for the nature center stayed the same as last year, with a price break for non-profit groups.

## Nature Nook Gift Shop

The Nature Center gift shop sells items such as shirts, postcards, books, note cards, and nature-related toys and gifts. We also feature handmade items from local artists such as handmade cards and jewelry. All proceeds from the shop go to the Nature Center.

### **GIFT SHOP FINANCIAL REPORT**

July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016

<b>INCOME</b>	
Gift Shop	\$ 4,517.63
<b>Total Income</b>	<hr/> <b>\$ 4,517.63</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
667-6102-461	
2601 Office supplies	(\$ 730.50)
2955 Unspecified	(\$ 2,215.48)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<hr/> <b>(\$ 2,945.98)</b>
<b>Total Income over Expenses</b>	<hr/> <b>\$ 1,571.65</b> <hr/>

## Staff

DPNC has a total of six staff dedicated to the operation and programs of the facility. Dawn Snyder serves as Nature Center Education Director and Head Naturalist and holds BS degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology from Iowa State University. She has more than 28 years of experience in the interpretation field, with 19 years as DPNC Director and 9 years as Head Naturalist for WCCB. She serves as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation. Snyder also serves on the state REAP-CEP grant review committee as a representative for IACCB and Loess Hills Alliance Board and Economic Development committee.

Theresa Kruid, Naturalist, has been at the DPNC for 19 years. She has 24 years of experience in the interpretation field and holds BS degree in Recreation and Park Management (Environmental Interpretation and Outdoor Education emphasis) from Pennsylvania State University. The naturalist developed DPNC's successful summer day camp program which continues to grow each year.

Jim Henning resigned as the Resource Naturalist after six years of employment. Tyler Flammang was hired in January 2016 at the Resource Naturalist. He has an Associate's Degree

from Western Iowa Tech Community College and extensive volunteer experience with birds of prey. His duties include programming, resource management and building and grounds maintenance.

DPNC Support staff includes 2 part-time receptionists, Pam Pfautsch and Marilyn Milbrodt, and a Part-time Volunteer Coordinator/Receptionist, Betty West. Summer staff for 2015 included Paige LaPlant, Becky Ryan, Katelyn Brinkerhoff and Olivia Parks. They served as seasonal employees to assist with summer programs and events in 2015. Funding from local partners allowed us to hire Jillian Lenz as the Outdoor Skills intern. Karter Keefer was hired as 2015 Habitat Stewardship Intern funded by WCCF. Interns for Summer 2016 were Katelyn Brinkerhoff, Dawn Henderson, Brianna Martens, Rae Hattan and Michelle Knaack. These five interns provided Summer Camp and public event programming. Derik Bailey was hired as the Habitat Stewardship Intern funded by WCCF. DPNC general hours are 9am to 4:30pm Tuesday through Saturday and Sunday from 1-4:30pm.



Each of the interns had a chance to experience habitat management and/or trail work for two weeks during the summer. Most of them had the chance to work with service groups and all of them were trained with chainsaws and brush cutting equipment. They each also had the opportunity to learn how to operate our John Deere Gator and Bobcat skid loader in 2015. Due to increased program requests the Summer Naturalist Interns in 2016 were primarily education interns and did not focus on habitat maintenance projects, with the exception of the Habitat Stewardship Intern.

### **Volunteers**

During the past 12 months volunteers logged more than 2,789 hours of volunteer service. Support staff at the Nature Center and WCCB is comprised of approximately 171 non-paid active volunteers, 23 of these being Junior Volunteers under the age of 18. Volunteer duties include animal care, gardening, reception & clerical, summer camp naturalist assistants, prairie rescue, educational,



curatorial, research, trail maintenance, program assistance, fund raising, gun range officers and general maintenance. 10 service groups also assisted with prairie rescue/habitat management, mulching trails, staining, playscape, water feature and several maintenance projects. Total number of volunteers equaled more than 400. Contributed service translates to an estimated \$33,808.50. Volunteers were recognized at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Volunteer Recognition and Awards Dinner in March 2016.

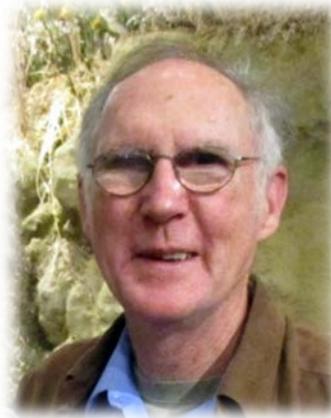
### **Conservation Awards**

This was the 27<sup>th</sup> year for the WCCB to confer awards to outstanding individuals for their dedicated service. Jim Redmond received the *Friend of Conservation* award for his support of the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center and his advocacy of the Loess Hills and Missouri River. Rosie

Kuehne was recognized for the *Conservation Educator* award for her 60 years as an environmental educator, primarily as a Pre-school teacher.



**Conservation Educator  
Rosie Kuehne**



**Friend of Conservation  
Jim Redmond**

**Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center**

**Volunteer Contributed Services July 1, 2015 –June 30, 2016**

	<b># Hours</b>	<b>\$/Hour</b>	<b>\$Value</b>
<b>Education/Interpretive (information services, docents, teachers, etc.)</b>			
Camp Assistant (18)	364.25	\$9.25	\$3,369.31
Naturalist Assistant (15)	182.50	\$9.25	\$1,688.13
Special Event (108)	574.75	\$9.25	\$5,316.44
<b>Administrative/Clerical/Maintenance (office, routine maintenance, etc)</b>			
Clerical (4)	23.50	\$9.25	\$217.38
Maintenance (50)	774	\$9.25	\$7,159.50
<b>Curatorial/Collections (research, gardens, care of objects, etc.)</b>			
Gardening (2)	32.25	\$9.25	\$298.31
Trail Maintenance (12)	116.75	\$9.25	\$1,079.94
Playscape Project (1)	4	\$25.00	\$100.00
Prairie Rescue/Habitat Management (30)	90	\$9.25	\$832.50
Animal Transport (1)	1	\$10.00	\$10.00
<b>Professional (legal, fundraising, guest speakers, consultants, etc.)</b>			
Gun Range Officers (5)	64.5	\$20.00	\$1,290.00
Fundraising Special Events (21)	344	\$18.00	\$6,192.00
Graphic Artists (2)	30	\$30.00	\$900.00
Photographer (2)	7	\$20.00	\$140.00
Consultants (3)	155	\$25.00	\$3,875.00
Accountant (1)	8	\$90.00	\$720.00
Auctioneer (2)	4	\$25.00	\$100.00
Carpentry (1)	10	\$25.00	\$250.00
Veterinarian (1)	3	\$90.00	\$270.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,788.50 hours</b>		<b>\$33,808.50</b>

## Training

The DPNC is committed to professional development and interpretive staff participates in the IAN Annual Professional Development program. Snyder attended a few Western Iowa Tourism meetings and some local fundraising sessions hosted by Association of Fundraising Professionals. Snyder, Kruid and Flammang attended the Iowa Conservation Education Coalition Winter Solstice meeting in February. Support staff is trained in computer software, First Aid, CPR and other services vital to their jobs.

## Special Projects

### Fundraising—Nature Calls 2015

A group of volunteers was recruited to assist with fundraising ideas. *Nature Calls*—a beer sampling, nature art sale and auction—was the targeted special event fundraiser. The 12th Annual Nature Calls raised an additional \$26,000 for Nature Center exhibits and educational programs. An additional \$3,305 was raised in a raffle for Summer Youth Programs. Committees worked throughout the year to plan this large event, which although it requires a tremendous amount of staff time, was considered a worthwhile endeavor. The event was held at the Sioux City Convention Center and was one of our largest crowds, boasting more than 530 people.



### Woodbury County Conservation Foundation

The WCCB maintains a close relationship with the Conservation Foundation (WCCF). Dawn Snyder serves as the Foundation's Secretary and Treasurer.

#### October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016

#### WCCF Memberships

35 Individual Memberships	\$ 705.00
62 Family Memberships	\$ 2,169.05
33 Wildlife Conservationist Memberships	\$ 1,675.00
41 Woodland Conservationist Memberships	\$ 4,910.00
9 Prairie Conservationist Memberships	\$ 2,300.00
6 Wetland Conservationist Memberships	\$ 3,250.00
4 Distinguished Conservationist Membership	\$ 5,000.00
<b>191 Memberships</b>	<b>\$ 20,009.05</b>

#### Donation Preference Breakout:

To Help Further WCCF's Mission	\$ 11,585.00
For Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center Support & Camps	\$ 5,929.05
For Loess Hills Area Habitat Support	\$ 1,380.00
For Woodbury County Park Enhancements	\$ 1,115.00
<b>Total Memberships</b>	<b>\$ 20,009.05</b>

WCCF hosted its annual meeting at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center in February 2016. The event included a presentation entitled *Documenting the Galapagos: A Science-Based Visual Journey* by Carlyn Iverson. More than 95 people attended this educational event.

The Foundation co-sponsored the Conservation Board Summer Day Camps to

provide \$245 in scholarships for underprivileged youth. They also contributed approximately \$600 in educational materials and supported the Loess Hills Prairie Seminar. They also funded a 6-person Iowa Conservation Corps crew to work at Riverside Bluffs for one week and purchased fencing materials for Riverside Bluffs. They continue conservation education and natural area protection in our area. The minutes of WCCF meetings are on file at the WCCB Office.



The WCCF initiated an annual membership campaign in 2003 to increase visibility and assist with special needs. The 2015-2016 membership campaign built upon the success of the past ten years. This year's total membership was slightly lower but the amount raised was slightly higher, showing an average gift amount of \$104.00.

Current members of the WCCF Board of Directors are: Brian Hazlett, President; Chris Zellmer-Zant, Vice President; Dawn Snyder, Secretary/Treasurer; Dianne Blankenship; Herman Schultz; Bruce Hopkins; Norbert Ruhland; Randy Kramer, Anne Shaner and Rod Tondreau. Online donations can be received via a PayPal account, allowing

more avenues to donate. WCCF is the channeling agency for the Nature Calls fundraiser and continues to be a vehicle for transfer of large donations to the Woodbury County Conservation Board.

### Endowment

In May 2012 the WCCF established an endowment fund within the Siouxland Community Foundation. This will give donors a simple and efficient way to continue supporting the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation (WCCF) while providing us with a source of lasting support. The Woodbury County Conservation Foundation Endowment Fund is designed to give donors access to the most favorable tax advantages available as well as help WCCF develop planned giving programs. A separate Special Projects Fund within the Siouxland Community Foundation was established in Fall of 2013.



### List of Donors

Numerous individuals and organizations assisted us in the past year. We would like to acknowledge them for their generous support.

<b>General Donations</b>
--------------------------

Adams Homestead & Nature Preserve  
 Alcester Hudson Girl Scout Troop  
 Avery Outdoors  
 Battle Creek Ida Grove First Graders  
 Neva Bean  
 Barbara Benson  
 Bruce & Carol Bickel  
 Carol Blair  
 Aaron Bomgaars  
 Bomgaars  
 Joe & April Bousquet  
 Causetown  
 CF Industries  
 Diane's Pumpkin Patch

Ahn Drury  
 Abby Duin  
 Earl May  
 Larry & Stephanie Fillipi  
 Shannon Fredricksen—Heidi  
 Ketelsen Van Gorp Memorial  
 Jeff & Shay Gebauer  
 Grace United Methodist Church  
 Michelle Grimshaw  
 Gary Heineman  
 Kai Herron  
 Dr. Connie Hoag  
 Jerry Hoss  
 Interstate Mechanical Corp  
 Iowa Ornithologist's Union  
 Jolly Time Pop Corn  
 Junior League of Sioux City

Scott Kayl  
 Kyle & Jackie Kelly  
 Kingsley Garden Club  
 Shirley Knight  
 Kohl's  
 Rosie Kuehne  
 Leeds Beyond the Bell  
 Marlin Lessmann  
 Literary Book Club  
 Loess Hills Audubon Society  
 Loess Hills Longbeards NWTf  
 Judy Mahaney  
 Gene & Ginger Martin  
 Marilyn Milbrodt—Deloris  
 Milbrodt Memorial  
 Ken Muller  
 Polly Murphy

Northwest Iowa Group Sierra Club  
 Panera  
 Pepsi Co.  
 Ron Perrin  
 Mark Peterson  
 Pam Pfautsch  
 Plymouth County Conservation Board  
 Donna Popp  
 Carol Probst  
 RBC Foundation  
 Ursula Runge  
 Sac County Pheasants Forever

Scheels  
 Joe Schwartz  
 Gary Shaner  
 Singing Hills Walmart  
 Sioux City Public Museum  
 Sioux Valley Sports Club  
 Siouland Fly Fishing Club  
 Barb Small  
 State Steel  
 Stone State Park  
 Summer's Canoes  
 Dr. Mark Taylor  
 The Nature Conservancy  
 Van Osdel Plastering & Drywall

Dean & Paula VanRoekel  
 Dolly Varner  
 Jeff & Beckie Wahlberg  
 Ed Walding  
 Camille Walters  
 Woodbury County Conservation Foundation  
 Woodbury County Extension  
 Woodbury County Medical Society  
 Woodbury County Pheasants Forever  
 Bill Zales

## Volunteers

Greg Anderson  
 Donovan Arwood  
 Bob Baldwin  
 Barb Barr  
 Audie Baughman  
 Julie Baughman  
 Myra Baumgartner  
 Shealee Behrens  
 Cindy Bennett  
 Rita Birke  
 Josh Black  
 Carol Blair  
 ShaiLynne Blakeslee  
 Dianne Blankenship  
 Amber Bliss  
 Kira Bliss  
 Shelby Blomberg  
 Hanna Bocian  
 Jeanne Bockholt  
 Suzan Boden  
 Abbie Boellstorff  
 Carol Boellstorff  
 Rachel Boellstorff  
 Rick Borg  
 Missy Brandon  
 Sean Brandon  
 Reid Brandon  
 Shay Brandon  
 Briar Cliff Environmental Stewardship Students  
 Briar Cliff University Women's Basketball Team  
 Katelyn Brinkerhoff  
 Maggie Brown  
 Emma Bruns  
 John Burns  
 Diana Camberos  
 Megan Carlson  
 Belen Castaneda  
 CF Industries  
 David Chapman  
 Zac Chwirka  
 Karla Claussen

Steve Claussen  
 Gretchen Cooper  
 Josie Cooper  
 Summer Cord  
 Cub Scout Troop #110  
 Mark Custer  
 Judi Deaton  
 Tracie Derochie  
 Dennis Derochie  
 Don Dixon  
 Tam Doan  
 Abby Duin  
 Tyler Flammang  
 Nick Fondoulakis  
 Bill Forbes  
 Cathy Frost  
 Sharlene Torres Garcia  
 Chris Garthright  
 Roger Gaswint  
 Tracy Gates  
 Greg Giles  
 Diana Glicke  
 Tyler Griffin  
 Brian Hazlett  
 Nate Henning  
 Rhonda Henry  
 Alexia Henschke  
 Kai Herron  
 Jane Hey  
 Shirley Hogan  
 Tammy Hogan  
 Phyllis Holzrichter  
 Bruce Hopkins  
 Sandy Horton  
 Cindy Hyndman  
 Loyanne Jensen  
 Chuck Johnson  
 Alisha Junge  
 Eric Kabisch  
 Angela Kaiser  
 Kendra Kersting  
 Meg Kfmll  
 Diana Kincaid

Laura Kinnaman  
 Teri Kjeldseth  
 Kevin Kjeldseth  
 Kohl's Cares  
 Kohl's Going Green  
 Kathy Koskovich  
 Randy Kramer  
 Tiana Kruid  
 Herb Kuehne  
 Rosie Kuehne  
 Leonard Kurtz  
 Sara Larson  
 Keri Leopold  
 John Leopold  
 Sarah Leopold  
 Kenny Leuenberger  
 Reid Linder  
 Lyle Listamann  
 Tina Listamann  
 Bianca Llamas  
 Sharese Manker  
 Brianna Martens  
 Ginger Martin  
 Courtney Massey  
 Desiree McCaslen  
 Nadine Meis  
 Jane Merritt  
 Judy Miller  
 Jill Miller  
 Kalyope Miller  
 Morningside College Into the Streets  
 Morningside College Women's Softball Team  
 Frank Moss  
 My City Volunteers  
 Candice Nash  
 Brenda Nelson  
 Erica Newbrough  
 Lori Newbrough  
 Jeff Olson  
 Ron Perrin  
 Ashley Petersen

Lynne Peterson  
 Walt Peterson  
 Annie Peterson  
 Kathy Pfautsch  
 Hillary Ping  
 Donna Popp  
 Carrie Radloff  
 Quentin Regennitter  
 Elizabeth Reiva  
 Gil Ridenour  
 Pam Ridgway  
 Kelly Ridgway  
 Jaelyn Riemenschneider  
 Becky Roberson  
 Becky Roemmich  
 Alyssa Rosenbaum  
 Lauron Rossie  
 Heidi Rouse  
 Norb Ruhland  
 Jeff Ryan  
 Becky Ryan  
 Sacred Heart School  
 Genna Salmon  
 Catherine Saulsbury  
 Pat Saulsbury

Michael Schaefer  
 Alan Schmeckpeper  
 Angie Schneider  
 Nancy Schulenberger  
 Barb Schultz  
 Herman Schultz  
 Michele Schwerin  
 Chris Schwerin  
 Gary Shaner  
 Anne Shaner  
 Ellen Shaner  
 Ben Shaputis  
 Bill Sibley  
 Mary Sievers  
 Barb Small  
 Sam Sneed  
 Stacey Snyder  
 Bennett Snyder  
 St. Luke's School of Nursing  
 Grace Stevens  
 Neil Stockfleth  
 Tracy Swanson  
 Doris Swanson  
 Mike Swanson  
 John Swanson

Tracy Swanson  
 Mark Taylor  
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 Carly West  
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 Eric Wodtke  
 Summer Wulf  
 Chris Zellmer Zant  
 Darrin Zhou



## 2015 Nature Calls Sponsors

### White-tailed Deer Sponsors

Donovan Arwood  
Hy-Vee  
Kjeldseth Design  
Dan & Kay Pecaut  
Powell Broadcasting  
Sioux City Journal

### Bald Eagle Sponsors

Dr. Luis Lebrede & Ruth M. Rose  
Wheelock and Bursick Dentistry

### Bobcat Sponsors

Broyhill Inc.  
Central Bank  
Chesterman Company  
Don & Jane Dixon  
Farrell's Heating & Air Conditioning  
Knife River Midwest  
Ollie's Little Honey Bees Honey  
Kelly & Pam Ridgway  
Rick & Angie Schneider  
Art & Eileen Silva  
Singing Hills Animal Hospital  
TNT Sales & Service  
Tyson Foods  
US Bank  
Vriezelaar, Tigges, Edgington, Bottaro, Boden & Ross, L.L.P.

### Falcon Contributors

Ag Processing, Inc.  
American Pop Corn Company  
Anonymous  
Bill & Dianne Blankenship  
Burnight Facilitated Resources  
C.W. Suter Services  
Certified Auto Inc.  
Certified Testing Services, Inc.  
Dixon Construction Co.  
Greg & Estie Dunn  
Frank & Cindy Gray  
John & Di Gray  
Heritage Bank NA  
Hinds and Associates, PLLC  
Dan & Vickie Holzrichter  
Brian & Loyanne Jensen  
Kramer & Associates, LLC, CPA  
L & L Builders  
Landscape Designs  
Mike Barkley Construction

### Falcon Contributors

Mark & Judy Monson  
Plains Boiler Service  
Rhinehart Law, PC  
Sooland Bobcat  
Mark S. & Barb K. Taylor  
Thompson Electric  
United Real Estate—Kevin McManamy  
United Real Estate—Chris Zellmer-Zant  
Wells Blue Bunny

### Bluebird Contributors

Champion Cycle  
Derek Winkel Insurance Agency, Inc.  
Earl Miller Construction  
Dr. Paul & Penny Fee  
First National Bank  
Halman Construction, Inc.  
Marvin & Karen Heidman  
ICON Ag & Turf  
Iowa - Nebraska State Bank  
John D. Kiernan, O.D.  
Raymond Kuwahara, M.D.  
Lieber Construction, Inc.  
Stee L. Maxwell DVM  
Todd & Nicki Oss

### Special Thanks

A. Gordon's Jewelry & Loan  
Arctic Ice  
Michael Bramer  
Briar Cliff University Women's Basketball  
Jack & Janice Bristow  
Candice and Josie Cooper at KSUX 105.7 FM  
Center Plate  
De De Beverage Co.  
Dennis Derochie  
Roger Gaswint, Auctioneer  
Glazer's Distributors of Iowa  
Kevin & Brenda Grieme  
Paul A. & Patrice Johnson  
Kohl's Cares  
L & L Distributing Co.  
Jane & Steve Merritt  
Morningside College Women's Softball  
Record Printing  
Sioux City Convention Center  
Garnetta Snyder  
Texas Roadhouse  
Shirley Warren  
Woodbury County Information & Communications  
Commission

## **Nature Calls 2015 Auction Donors**

Albrecht's Cycle  
B & B Cleaning  
Bass Pro Shops  
Bernie's Lawn & Garden  
Best Friends Pet Grooming  
Carol Blair  
Bloom Wild, LLC, Vanessa Wodtke  
Bob Rowe's North End Zone  
Bobier Studios  
Body Enhancement Med Spa Book People  
Brownbox.com  
Buffalo Alice  
Troy Butzlaff  
Candlewood Suite  
Charlie's Wine & Spirits  
Chick-Fil-A  
Karen & Rusty Clark  
Clay CCB  
Coldstone Creamery  
Sean Conrad  
Country Inn & Suites  
Culligan Water  
Culver's  
Dakota PC Warehouse  
Dakota Perk  
Deer Run Golf Course  
Don & Jane Dixon  
Dona W. Pince DDS, PC  
Doxx Warehouse  
El Fredo's Pizza  
Emerald Hills Golf Club  
Evolve Yoga & Wellness  
Fareway Stores, Inc.  
Amy Foltz  
Gabberts Home Furnishings  
Get Funky Gifts  
Bob Gillespie  
Greenberg's Jewelers  
Michael Griener  
Julie Grijalva  
Greg & Teri Grupp  
Gunderson's Jewelers  
Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sioux City  
Harvey's Leatherworks  
Henrich Bros. Sharpening Service  
Bev Hinds  
Bruce & Jeanette Hopkins  
Houlihan & Associates CPA  
Jack's Uniforms & Equipment  
Jackson Street Brewing  
Jimmy Johns  
Chuck Johnson  
Junior League of Sioux City Discovery Shop  
Karl's TV & Appliance  
Kings Point Water Park  
Koffee Knechtion  
Kurio Kastle Art on 16th  
Lessman Electric  
Letters by Laurie  
Julia Licht  
Joyce Linton  
Magic Carpet & Drapery  
Majolie Skin & Body therapy  
Mark Baker Taxidermy  
Gary Marshall  
Marto Brewing Co  
Marx Leasing Marx  
Mary Kay Cosmetics, Ann Meis  
Massage & Body  
Susan McCulley  
Jane & Steve Merritt  
Merry Maids  
Midbell Music  
Minerva's  
Mozak's Furniture  
Outback Steakhouse  
Palmer Candy Co.  
Petsmart  
Play All Day  
Poppin' Bottles n' Brushes  
Dr. Robert & Phyll Powell  
Promenade Cinema 14  
Rev-Tac Firearms Training  
Rocket Auto Wash  
Rudolphs Shoes  
Norb Ruhland  
Jim & Jean Salisbury  
Scheels All Sports  
Rick & Angie Schneider  
Scooter's  
Second Chance Woods, J. Mark Lary  
Shady Grove Pottery, Chaeli Kohn  
Sherwin Williams  
Sioux Air Inc., Gene & Ginger Martin  
Sioux City Convention & Tourism  
Sioux City Explorers  
Sioux City Musketeers Hockey Assoc.  
Siouxland Cyclists  
Snowflake Woods, Lynn Jarvis  
Stoney Creek Inn  
Sue Bee Honey  
Sugar Shack  
Summer's Canoes  
Target  
Texas Roadhouse  
The Feed Shed, Inc.  
Thorpe & Co. Jewellers  
Scott Toben  
Tri-State Dental, Drs. Jeff & Amber Reinking  
Valiant Vineyards  
Wellness Works Massage  
What Women Want  
Wheelock Family Dentistry  
Wild Hill Honey, Tori & Justin Engelhardt  
Wildlife Lodge & Clinic  
Wine and Other Old Things

WineStyles  
Xpedition Archery  
YLine Beads, Diane Culver  
YMCA Norm Waitt Sr.

Bill & Dotty Zales  
Zeke's Tree, Niki Faller

## Animal Adoptions Donors

Battle Creek Ida Grove First Graders  
Dick's Bait Shop  
Kai Herron  
Scott Kayl  
Gene & Ginger Martin  
Polly Murphy  
Northwest Iowa Group Sierra Club  
Sheryl Schmitz  
Dean & Paula VanRoekel  
Camille Walters



## Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center

### Staff

Rick Schneider, *Conservation Board Director*  
Mark Peterson, *Deputy Director*  
Dawn Snyder, *Education Programs Director*  
Theresa Kruid, *Naturalist*  
Jim Henning, *Resource Naturalist*  
Tyler Flammang, *Resource Naturalist*  
Barb Schultz, *Secretary*  
Dawn Bostwick, *Secretary*  
Pam Pfautsch, *Part-time Receptionist*  
Marilyn Milbrodt, *Part-time Receptionist*  
Betty West, *Part-time Volunteer*  
*Coordinator/Receptionist*  
Amelia Ziemer, *Senior Worker*

### Hours:

Tuesday – Saturday 9am – 4:30pm

Sunday 1 – 4:30pm

*Closed Mondays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.*



## *A Program of Woodbury County*

### **DPNC Mission Statement:**

To provide quality environmental education programs and outdoor recreation experiences; to manage our natural resources in an ecologically sound manner; and to conserve and interpret our natural, historic, and cultural resources.

### **Goal of the Environmental Education Program:**

- To help citizens of all ages and backgrounds develop an awareness and sensitivity toward the environment.
- To acquire knowledge and understanding for effective environmental action.
- To foster positive attitudes and patterns of conduct toward the environment.

**VIII. FY '16 FINANCIAL STATEMENT**  
**GENERAL CONSERVATION BUDGET**

RECEIPTS

Sale of Commodities	\$ 5,208.75
Nature Center Rental	3,397.39
Fuel Tax Refunds	4,856.79
Newsletter Advertising	850.00
Miscellaneous	958.25
Taxation	1,577,674.34
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$ 1,592,945.52</b>

DISBURSEMENTS

<u>Administration</u>	
Department Heads	\$ 104,566.02
Supervisory	73,727.94
Wage Plan Employees	48,029.10
Matching FICA	16,757.69
Matching IPERS	20,503.47
Emp. Hospitalization	43,987.08
Life Insurance	154.00
Dental Ins.	1,027.95
LTD Insurance	1,539.83
Gas/Oil	3,031.99
Office Supplies	2,032.03
Magazines & Books	140.02
Wearing/Safety Apparel.	468.95
Publishing Notices	61.20
Printing	6,150.86
Postage	723.39
Travel/Expense	3,861.27
Professional Services	1,632.00
School of Instruction	2,655.00
Medical Fees	400.00
Motor Vehicle Expense	3,044.93
Radio Expense	-0-
Dues\Memberships	2,890.00
Tax Allotment	5,343.22
Motor Vehicle Purchases	-0-
Office Equipment & Furn.	2,944.00
Lease Purchase Agreement	4,049.97
Sub-Total:	\$ 349,721.91

County Parks

Supervisory	\$ 174,606.96
Wage Plan Employees	169,661.77
Temporary Emp.	134,464.26
Overtime	-0-
Matching FICA	35,568.20
Matching IPERS	41,810.84
Emp. Hospitalization	91,165.92
Life Insurance	369.60
Dental Ins.	2,467.08
LTD Insurance	2,926.33
Chemical Supplies	4,983.35
Agricultural & Hort.	4,217.10
Custodial Supplies	8,700.00

Gas/Oil	24,955.35
Arms/Ammunition	1,565.23
Wearing/Safety Apparel.	6,337.25
Telephone Expense	4,071.72
Cell Phones	3,985.43
School of Instruction	-0-
Natural & LP Gas	2,403.45
Garbage	15,507.85
Electricity	58,582.91
Building Maintenance	78,518.61
Equipment Maintenance	20,296.54
Motor Vehicle Expense	9,229.68
Radio Expense	786.29
Office Equipment & Furniture	21,346.91
Lease/Purchase Agreement	-0-
Sub-Total:	<u>\$ 918,528.63</u>

Naturalist

Wage Plan Employ. PT	\$ 53,990.89
Supervisory	61,104.94
Wage Plan Employees	79,865.95
Temporary Emp.	-0-
Matching FICA	14,141.06
Matching IPERS	17,265.73
Emp. Hospitalization	38,587.84
Life Insurance	140.80
Dental Ins.	939.84
LTD Insurance	1,150.31
Gas/Oil	714.89
Office Supplies	655.60
Magazines & Books	49.95
Wearing Apparel	769.05
Printing	3,074.98
Postage	929.01
Mileage	93.24
Travel/Expense	37.69
School/Instruction	430.00
Motor Vehicle Expense	755.43
Dues/Membership	375.00
Office Equipment & Furn.	218.00
Sub-Total:	<u>\$ 275,290.20</u>

Nature Center

Janitorial Supplies	\$ 769.86
Gas/Oil	886.34
Wearing/Safety Apparel	261.98
Telephone	4,965.63
Cell Phone	2,314.52
Garbage	559.00
Electricity	9,660.36
Building Maint.	7,638.45
Equip. Maint.	1,911.22
Contractual Services	20,437.42
Sub-Total:	<u>\$ 49,404.78</u>

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS (ACCRUAL BASIS):	\$ 1,592,945.52
APPROVED BUDGET:	\$ 1,600,536.00
BALANCE JUNE 30, 2016 (ACCRUAL BASIS):	\$ 7,590.48

**257-022**

**NATURE CENTER**

**ASSETS**

Interest	\$	-0-
Contributions		24,879.91
Accrued Assets Adjustment	\$	-0-
		<hr/>
TOTAL ASSETS (ACCURAL BASIS):	\$	24,879.91

**LIABILITIES**

Transfers Out (To Reserve fund)	\$	25,352.00
Accrual Liabilities Adjustment	\$	-0-
		<hr/>
TOTAL LIABILITIES (ACCURAL BASIS):	\$	25,352.00
NET ASSETS OVER/UNDER LIABILITIES:	\$	(472.09)
BALANCE JULY 1, 2015:	\$	62,321.69
ACCRUAL ADJUSTMENT:	\$	-0-
BALANCE JUNE 30, 2016 (ACCRUAL BASIS):	\$	61,849.60

**667-610**

**CONSERVATION RESERVE FUND**

**ASSETS**

User Fees	\$	292,102.95
Nature Center Program Fees		36,099.27
Ag Rentals		46,396.28
Concession Rentals		501.67
Equipment Rentals		4,677.96
Donations		16,852.94
Reimbursements		8,813.00
Interest		657.15
Grants		580.00
Gift Shop Revenue		3,401.15
Miscellaneous		1,443.69
Transfers In (Fund 257)		25,352.00
Accrued Assets Adjustment		(54,617.34)
		<hr/>
TOTAL ASSETS (ACCRUAL BASIS):	\$	382,260.72

**LIABILITIES**

**610-1 Administration**

Land Acquisitions	\$	1,552.50
Capital Improvements		102,431.77
Accrued Liabilities Adjustment		
Sub-Total:	\$	<hr/> 103,984.27

**610-2 Nature Center Gift Shop**

Office Supplies	\$	-0-
Magazines & Books		-0-
Unspecified		2,215.48
Printing		586.50
Sub-Total:	\$	<u>2,801.98</u>

**610-3 Nature Center Programs**

Temp. Employ.	\$	23,515.50
Over Time		-0-
Matching FICA		1,798.96
Matching IPERS		-0-
Office Supplies		1,953.94
Unspecified		3,027.09
Official Publ. & Legals		1,500.00
Printing		807.01
Buildings		-0-
Office Equipment/ Furniture		11,722.72
Accrued Liabilities Adjustment		-0-
Sub-Total:	\$	<u>44,325.22</u>

**Transfers Out** (To Debt Service fund) \$ 106,770.00

**Transfers Out** (To CIP fund) \$ 239,132.67

TOTAL LIABILITIES (ACCRUAL BASIS): \$ 497,014.14

NET ASSETS OVER/UNDER LIABILITIES: \$ (114,753.42)

BALANCE JULY 1, 2015 (ACCRUAL BASIS): \$ 371,943.01

ACCRUAL ADJUSTMENT: \$ 52,478.23

BALANCE JUNE 30, 2016 (ACCRUAL BASIS): \$ 309,667.82

**266-610**

**REAP FUND**

**ASSETS**

Per County Allocation received FY 15	\$	9,655.00
Per Capita Allocations received FY 15		31,843.00
Interest		712.53
Accrued Assets Adjustment		<u>(181.73)</u>
 TOTAL ASSETS (ACCRUAL BASIS):	\$	42,028.80

**LIABILITIES**

**610-1 Administration**

Capital Improvements	\$	-0-
Accrued Liabilities Adjustment	\$	<u>-0-</u>
Sub-Total:	\$	-0-
 TOTAL LIABILITIES (ACCRUAL BASIS):	\$	-0-
 NET ASSETS OVER/UNDER LIABILITIES:	\$	42,028.80
 BALANCE JULY 1, 2015 (ACCRUAL BASIS):	\$	89,312.08
 ACCRUAL ADJUSTMENT:	\$	-0-
 BALANCE JUNE 30, 2016 (ACCRUAL BASIS):	\$	131,340.88

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Cindy Bennett, President

  
Neil Stockfleth, Board Secretary

  
Rick D. Schneider, Director