

HARDIN COUNTY CONSERVATION ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY 1, 2019 TO DECEMBER 31, 2019

The Hardin County Conservation Board held twelve-regular meetings, two-special meetings and two-closed session meetings during the year.

The following is the annual report for the Hardin County Conservation Board and Director for the calendar year January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019. The five members of the Conservation Board are as follows:

HARDIN COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD	
Name	Term Expires
Allen Kadolph, Chair	December 2019
Jessica Lara, Vice-Chair	December 2022
Sandy Trampe	December 2020
Verl Duncan	December 2021
Kirk Rice	December 2023

HARDIN COUNTY CONSERVATION STAFF	
Wes Wiese	Director
Craig Boomgarden	Maintenance/Operations Supervisor
Nick Baumgarten	Natural Resource Manager/Full Time 11/27/2017-1/2/2019
Kit Paper	Natural Resource Manager/Full Time 3/14/2019
Cody Barloon	Conservation Technician/Full Time 12/11/2017-1/9/2019
Brennen Reysack	Conservation Technician/Full Time 4/29/2019
Chris Barber	Interpretive Park Manager/Full Time
Luke Wagner	Interpretive Park Ranger/Full Time 11/8/2012-1/1/2019
Danita Wheatley	Interpretive Park Ranger/Full Time 2/11/2019-10/31/2019
Davis Horton	Interpretive Program Assistant/Full Time
Becky Frerichs	Office Assistant/Permanent Part Time
Martin Steiner	Seasonal/Headquarters
George Haefner	Seasonal/Headquarters & Calkins
Camryn Grubic	Intern/Calkins
Clair Psantz	AmeriCorps Intern/Calkins

HIGHLIGHTS

January 2019

- ❖ The resignation letters from Nick Baumgarten, Natural Resource Manager and Cody Barloon, Conservation Tech. were discussed by the Board.
- ❖ A “Welcome” was given to HCC’s newest board member, Kirk Rice.

- ❖ The Board approved the nomination of Allen Kadolph as 2019 Chair and Jessica Lara as 2019 Vice-Chair.
- ❖ Dale Brass was present to discuss with the Board the Iowa Wireless Amateur Radio Network. It is a club of amateur radio enthusiasts who were interested in locating an event at the Sac/Fox Overlook. It was determined by the club that the area would not work for the club's event as there needs to be a 200-foot separation between radios. They are still looking at other conservation areas that might work and would be in contact with the Board.
- ❖ Director Wes Wiese discussed with the Board the Hardin County Mobile Wildlife Observatory trailer that will be used for viewing birds and other wildlife in Hardin County. The trailer is fully funded in partnership with Bob Gunderson, Charles Ruby, friends, family and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.
- ❖ The Director discussed with the Board updates on the various projects and improvements that are planned for 2019. Also discussed, were possibilities of user-fees for conservation areas in Hardin County, the promoting of Pine Ridge and Daisy Long campgrounds, as well as the Tower Rock cabins.

February 2019

- ❖ The 2019 park mowing contracts were awarded to LaVelle Lawn Care of Eldora, Iowa and Weiland Lawn Care Service of Garden City, Iowa.
- ❖ The Board approved the 2018 Hardin County Conservation Annual Report.
- ❖ The employees of Greenbelt Bank & Trust of Iowa Falls, Iowa were seeking a donation of a stay at the Tower Rock Cabins for their Relay for Life Fundraiser. The Board approved a donation of a two-night stay at one of cabins in Tower Rock. The Tower Rock Cabins Donation Policy must be followed with exceptions.
- ❖ Other items discussed by the Board and Director were running specials for reservations at the Tower Rock Cabins, the status of the 2019/2020 budget, and if a new shower house would be built this year at Pine Ridge Campground. Also, the March 11, 2019 HCC Board meeting will be held at Calkins Nature Area.

March 2019

- ❖ The Monday, March 11, 2019 joint special meeting of the Hardin County Conservation Board and the Hardin County Supervisors was called to order at Calkins Nature Area. Discussion was held on the feasibility and implementing of park-user fees for all the parks and wildlife areas. Director Wes Wiese presented examples of what other counties in the state that have implemented park-user fees. The Costs, fee schedules, conservation policy, county ordinances and law enforcement were discussed. Other items discussed by the Board and the Supervisors were the 2019/2020 budget, Gruis Park in Cleves and Ruempers Trail in Radcliffe.
- ❖ Lucas Smith of Pine Lake Saddle Club presented to the Board the club's 2019 schedule of trail rides. The Board approved dates as presented.
- ❖ Discussion was held by the Board as to changes that might be needed as far as the board's meeting dates and the day of week that the meetings would be held on.
- ❖ The Tower Rock Cabins Donation Policy was reviewed and approved by the Board.

April 2019

- ❖ Randall Copeman and Steve Priske of the Pine Ridge Rifle Club were on hand to discuss with the Board the lease renewal of the Pine Ridge Rifle Range. Approval was made by the Board for the 2019 Lease Agreement.

- ❖ Director Wes Wiese brought to the attention of the Board that FEMA had announced federal disaster assistance for the state of Iowa. Several counties including Hardin county are included in the cost-sharing public assistance. The Board approved amending the budget and the use of conservation resources to make needed repairs and replacements with the resources being reimbursed by FEMA.
- ❖ Discussion was held on equipment needs in the 2019/2020 fiscal year. Director presented to the Board prices from two dealers in Hardin County for a 2019 Ford Super Duty F-350 SRW Pickup. The Board approved accepting the quote from Dale Howard, Iowa Falls and to take delivery after July 1, 2019.
- ❖ Other items discussed were the John Gruis Park sale, the status of Hardin City Access, updating the HCC website and a new logo for Hardin County Conservation.

May 2019

- ❖ IT/GIS Director Micah Culter gave a project proposal presentation on the upgrading of Hardin County Conservation's website and the use of MyCountyParks.com for e-commerce. The Board approved changing the present web host to CivicPlus.
- ❖ The Board reviewed different quotes for a track loader. Approval was made on the quote for a T870 T4 Bobcat Compact Track Loader with bucket and forestry cutter from Wilcox Equipment, Tama, Iowa with delivery after July 1, 2019. Also discussed by the Board was the purchase of a utility vehicle.
- ❖ It was discussed by the Board, dates and times for a tour of Hardin County Conservation's various parks and wildlife areas.
- ❖ Lori Simmerman of Hubbard and the Radcliffe Girls Scouts proposed a butterfly garden at Meiers Wildlife Refuge.
- ❖ Director Wes Wiese has scheduled bird watching in the Hardin County Mobile Wildlife Observatory trailer on Sunday, May 19, 2019 weather permitting at the Legacy Wildlife area.
- ❖ The Director also discussed with the Board an aerial video contest using a drone that is under development with further information to follow.
- ❖ It was the consensus of the Board to schedule board meetings on the second Tuesday of each month until further notice.

June 2019

- ❖ Two Hay Mowing bids were submitted to and approved by the Board: Russ & Mindy Rodamaker bid \$65.00-per-acre for Anders Wildlife Area; Steve Schnormeier bid \$40.00-per-acre for Arthur Hilker Wildlife Area.
- ❖ The Director Wes Wiese spoke with Doug Freese, who has crop ground adjacent to the Sac/Fox Overlook driveway, and Doug is requesting an easement for a driveway to his field. After discussion, it was the consensus of Board that if Doug Freese pays and maintains the driveway to his field, they saw no problem with the arrangement.
- ❖ The Board reviewed the Tower Rock Cabin Rules and Rental Agreement and approved it as presented.
- ❖ Discussion by the Board was held on the various HCC logos submitted by Interp. Park Manager, Chris Barber. The Board made its final decision via email.
- ❖ Updating the Hardin County Conservation brochure was discussed by the Board. The brochure was last printed in 2015. There have been many updates to Calkins Nature Area and other areas in the county. Approval was given to update the brochure and to acquire bids from area printing companies.

- ❖ Other items discussed were:
 - Purchasing new kitchen appliances for Calkins Nature Area.
 - The dedication of the HCC Mobile Viewing Trailer on Thursday, June 13, 2019 at the Gunderson Nature Park in Eldora, Iowa.
 - Purchasing wooden planks from the Hardin County Engineer for the Pine Ridge Park bridge.
 - Director discussed with the Board the meeting with FEMA.
 - The ICCS Fall Conference.
 - The repairs needed for the Case IH tractor.

July 2019

- ❖ Calkins Nature Area held a Donor Appreciation Dinner on September 28, 2019.
- ❖ The Board approved the CD rate from Hardin County Savings Bank at 2.37% APY for 24-months on a balance of \$102,569.36.
- ❖ Director Wes Wiese presented to the Board information on the Aerial Greenbelt 2019 Aerial Footage Contest which will be held from July 15th thru November 15th. The purpose of the contest is to acquire legally recorded aerial footage of Hardin County that can then be utilized in marketing the area; for use on area websites to nationwide tourism campaigns. The Board approved a \$750.00-sponsorship for the contest.
- ❖ Approval was made to have Ross Excavating & Drainage of Eldora, Iowa to apply 12-loads, at 16-tons each, of reclaimed rock on the access road of Leverton Timber.
- ❖ Approval was made to the purchase of kitchen appliances for Calkins Nature Area from Jones Appliance & TV of Iowa Falls. Also discussed was a waterline at Calkins Nature Area.
- ❖ Eddie Reichenbacher of Compass Forestry Consulting, based out of Eldora, was on hand to discuss with the Board his consulting business which includes timber stand improvement, wildlife habitat, tree planting and grove maintenance.
- ❖ On Sunday, July 28, 2019 the Pine Lake Festival of Eldora and the Hawkeye Archeological Society of Eastern Iowa had a non-sanctioned artifact show. Special Guests included collector Jeff Ulrch, Naturalist from the Iowa DNR and the State Park as well as Director Wes Wiese and Interpretive Park Manager Chris Barber representing Calkins Nature Area.
- ❖ Also discussed was dead or dying tree removal at Eagle City Park.

August 2019

- ❖ Douglas Freese of Steamboat Rock was present to discuss with the Board about creating an easement for the Sac/Fox driveway to his farm ground.
- ❖ Approval by the Board was given to the Ackley Saddle Club (consisting of 12-riders) to ride at Headquarters on either the weekend of September 7th or September 14th, 2019 (weather permitting).
- ❖ Director Wes Wiese presented to the Board three policy documents from FEMA. The Board approved the Hardin County, Iowa Procurement Policy, Fraud Reporting Policy, and Conflict of Interest Policy, Resolution 2019-1.
- ❖ Other items discussed by the Board were dust control at David Bates Memorial Park, the rental of Calkins Nature Area Apartment, the ICCS Fall Conference and Director Kaitlyn Bartling will be leaving the Ellsworth College Foundation Office.

September 2019

- ❖ The Brekke Family will have the waterline repaired at Brekke Memorial Park and requested that the Board take-over paying the monthly water fee from Iowa Regional Utilities Association (IRUA). The Board approved the request.
- ❖ Approval was given by the Board for the trenching of the new waterline from the well to the new building at Calkins Nature Area with HCCB's contribution of \$1,570.00.
- ❖ The Board approved the purchase of a gate for the entrance to Leverton Timber.
- ❖ Approval was made by the Board for a rental fee of \$250.00-per-day for renting the Sac/Fox Overlook shelter (any event already scheduled is grand-fathered in).
- ❖ The Board and Director discussed items for an up-coming Strategic Planning Meeting.

October 2019

- ❖ The Board approved the Sac & Fox Easement Agreement with Doug Freese of Steamboat Rock, Iowa with one correction in paragraph 10 that should say "and not for personal or commercial purposes".
- ❖ Approval was given by the Board to have Director Wes Wiese research the possibilities in the sale of Twin Elms, located near Alden, Iowa.
- ❖ The Board set the Strategic Planning meeting for Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 1:00 pm in the Hickory Cabin at Tower Rock, Steamboat Rock, Iowa.
- ❖ Director Wes Wiese informed the Board that the Hardin County Supervisors will be opening bids for lease of county agricultural land on Wednesday, October 9, 2019. Hoover Ruby Land is included with other county agricultural land.
- ❖ The REAP Assembly was scheduled for December 2, 2019 in Marshalltown, Iowa.
- ❖ Discussion was held on adding two more cabins at Tower Rock, Steamboat Rock.

November 2019

- ❖ Director Wes Wiese brought to the Board's attention an interest by individuals in removing dead and downed trees for personal use from various Hardin County Conservation parks. Further research into policies and liabilities was needed.
- ❖ Director Wes Wiese researched into the sale of Ruempers Trail, Radcliffe, Iowa and discovered it is owned by Hardin County and not by Hardin County Conservation.
- ❖ Discussion was held by the Board on possibly adopting new policies for the Sac & Fox Overlook.
- ❖ Director Wes Wiese shared with the Board the extension of the Aerial Greenbelt 2019 Aerial Footage Contest through November 2020.
- ❖ The Strategic Planning meeting was rescheduled from Tuesday, November 19, 2019 to Monday, November 18, 2019. Also, the regular monthly Hardin County Conservation Board meeting was rescheduled for Tuesday, December 10th at 12-Noon which includes a Holiday Potluck.
- ❖ A Special Closed Session Meeting of the Hardin County Conservation Board was held on Friday, November 15, 2019 at the Hardin County Attorney's Office, 1201 14th Avenue, Eldora, Iowa
- ❖ The Strategic Planning Meeting set for Monday, November 18, 2019 was canceled.
- ❖ A Special Meeting of the Hardin County Conservation Board was held on Thursday, November 21, 2019 at Headquarters to Review Requested Document/Proposal "Agreement to Convey Easement" for Sac & Fox Overlook.

December 2019

- ❖ The Board approved the 2020/2021 Hardin County Conservation Budget with an amendment of a \$45,000.00 REAP Expense line-item for the possibility of infrastructure for the addition of two more cabins at Tower Rock.
- ❖ A big “*Thank You*” and recognition was given to Allen Kadolph for his Ten-Years of service to the Hardin County Conservation Board.
- ❖ The Board approved the purchase of a smart phone for on-call duties on weekends and holidays.
- ❖ The Board discussed and reviewed with the Director his 2019 job performance. Approval by the Board was given on the Director’s 2019 job performance.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca Frerichs".

Rebecca Frerichs
Office Assistant