**Kossuth County Conservation Board, Regular Monthly Meeting**
**Water's Edge Nature Center**
**September 14, 2026 5:30 P.M.**

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| Present: | Eichenberger; Miller; Rasmussen; Young<br>Beenken; Fosado; Thul; Wille |
| Absent: | Ristau<br>Schmidt |
| Guests Present: | Water's Edge Nature Center Foundation Board |

Chairman Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

A motion was made by Miller and seconded by Young to approve the August meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Naturalist Wille along with the WENCF gave an update on memorial thoughts for the late Director Kendall Stumme along with the status of memorial donations estimated at $4,780. It was decided that the Foundation is comfortable waiting until something presents itself for the proper memorial for Stumme. Until then the memorial funds will be able to gain some interest.

The Naturalist report was presented by Wille: 6 public programs were given for 507+ people; 0 school programs were given, 0 other student programs were given; Facebook posts included 10 posts with 33,388 reached and 19,486 engaged. Other accomplishments included attending board and staff meetings, curriculum development, live animal maintenance, campground weekend duty, campground recycling, work and take down Kossuth County Fair booth, host NC open on weekend, Julie attended IAN, Billie attend District 2 and Soil and Water meetings, cleaned fishing line tubes and basement.

An update was given on the status of the Siems fishing jetties. Operations Supervisor Schmidt and Maintenance Technician Beenen met with Reutzel's September 10th to discuss elevation and locations. They plan to get to the project the week of September 14th.

Maintenance Technician Beenken gave an update on the Buffalo Creek Nature Preserve overlooking deck project. In partnership with the AHS Construction class work is planned to begin October 1st with KCCB staff assisting in digging supporting leg holes. Project is estimated to take about 2 weeks to complete.

Information was provided on the status of the Lake Restoration by Beenken. Shive-Hattery has enlisted the help of a subcontractor, Allander Butzke Engineers Inc (ABE), to do the Geotechnical Exploration borings on the lake dam, various areas around the perimeter of the lake, and the spoil site at Wildwood. The partnership with ABE is included in the scope of Phase 2 agreement with Shive, previously approved and signed by the late Director Kendall Stumme on June 29th. Estimated cost for the Exploration is at $31,500 which is under the budgeted costs of $40,000 for this portion of the project. That is an $8,500 cushion room for any unforeseen borings and utility location services that may arise. Liability for ABE is covered by Shive-Hattery under the General Contract Agreement. ABE has a liability limit of $50,000 with anything surpassing this amount will be covered by Shive-Hattery Engineering in the event of a claim. This information was passed to board members via email September 2nd with Chairman Rassmussen, Miller, and Eichenberger approving of signing the contract.

Chairman Rasmussen presented the legal requirements of open and closed session to review and interview applicants for the Director position. After discussion on legal requirements, it was determined that Chairman Rasmussen will contact HR Heather Cochran for any general county interview questions along with info on the interview process. Rasmussen will also reach out to Adam Shirely, CEO of Iowa County Conservation System, for interview questions used amongst other counties. Chairman Rasmussen will then combine any interview questions and send to one other board

member for review and approval. Chairman Rasmussen then informed the board that there were three applicants. A motion by Young and seconded by Eichenberger to interview all three applicants within the next two weeks. The motion passed unanimously.

Maintenance Technician Beenken updated the board on the zoom meeting held September 3rd with Shive-Hattery discussing drafting of specific areas for grants that are due. Discussion was also had on if we should be applying for grants now with the specific timeline and deadlines when funds should be used. Extensions are possible for these grants since the projects are weather dependent and are already planned. It was determined that they will have draft draws back to staff by middle of the week of September 14th. The drawings will then help support the grants for the boat ramp (Water Recreation Access Cost-Share or WRAC) and the potential new addition of the Paddle Sport Lauch and dock area by the Nature Center for the Kossuth County Community Foundation grant. The WRAC grant has a deadline of September 30th with awards being made early Jan/Feb 2027. The Kossuth County Community Foundation grant has a deadline of October 15th. The WRAC grant is coming along well with Operations Supervisor Schmidt and Assistant Naturalist Fosado working together. If successful, funds would have to be used in 2 years (similar to Fish Habitat grants) but we can ask for extension if needed. Michelle Balmer, Lake Restoration Program Lead, says that it is typically pretty easy to get any extensions. If the grant is not successful this time around we then still have time to apply again for hopes for being funded.

Maintenance Technician Beenken also informed the board of the work being done on a donor portfolio for the Lake Restoration project to give to businesses. The portfolio features brief information on the project and asks for funds to help support the project. The goal is to have to area businesses before year end with hopes of tax write-off donations and to be budgeted into area businesses budgets for donations next fiscal year.

Larry Johnson requested for use of ATV to access the Patterson property to archery hunt deer and squirrel. Maintenance Technician Beenken informed the board that his request is similar to last year and was approved at the November board meeting. There were no problems from his use of ATV on the property. He does not need a key for access to reach his hunting location. A motion was made by Young and seconded by Eichenberger to allow Johnson access for the 2026 hunting season with his ATV on the Patterson property. The motion passed unanimously. A permission letter will be sent to Larry informing him of approval.

Maintenance Technician Beenken provided an update on the status of the Eagle Scout project being completed at Siems park. Samuel Stoulil has proposed the building of a Gaga Ball pit. KCCB staff visited and viewed potential site of the pit and was determined that the location should be around the North Campground playground equipment. It was suggested the use of heavy duty, weather-proof materials to be used for little to low maintenance and is vandal resistant. Suggestions to make sure the support pilings are deep enough to avoid frost heaving and have a pea rock base inside the pit were given to the Scout.

Board Member Young presented a concern of safety to staff on the Crail Wildlife Area. In the southwest corner of the property has a sinkhole, that was previously there prior to the purchase of the property, was marked with an old laundry detergent container on a fence post. However, the concern comes from the increase of size of the sinkhole and the fact of another fence post inside the sinkhole as a potential danger. Maintenance Technician Beenken made a note of the safety concern to resolve.

The board approved of holding the October board meeting on Monday the 12th at 5:30 P.M. at the Water's Edge Nature Center. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Miller and seconded by Eichenberger to approve the 43 bills submitted for approval. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Young and seconded by Eichenberger to adjourn at 7:15pm. The motion passed unanimously.