

DRAFT

MINUTES

ECOLOGY COMMISSION MONTHLY MEETING

Cordry Sweetwater Conservancy District

5 October, 2023

- A. The monthly meeting of the CSCD Ecology Commission was called to order by Commission Chair, Herb Benshoof, at 6:00 P.M., in the CSCD conference room.
- B. Members Present: Herb Benshoof (Board), Sunny Leerkamp (CSLOA), Shena Johnson, Brenda Maulden, and Jim Donnells (Recorder).
- C. Members Absent: Ty Cooper & Randy Brumfield
- D. Others In Attendance: 3 Guests
- E. (6:05 P.M.) ***Brenda Maulden moved to approve the Minutes of the 7 September, 2023 meeting of the CSCD Ecology Commission; Sunny Leerkamp seconded. This motion was unanimously approved.***
- F. (6:05 P. M.) **FREEHOLDER CONCERNS**: Freeholder Gary Shepard expressed concern over the amount of sediment that has accumulated in the coves on Sweetwater Lake and inquired into when CSCD would once again engage in lake-wide dredging of all coves. Commission members pointed out that CSCD did lakes-wide dredging over a 5-year period ending in 2017, at a cost of nearly \$200,000. Based on the projected huge expense to rebuild both of our dam spillways in the not-to-distant future, it is unlikely that CSCD will undertake another lakes-wide dredging effort for a number of years to come. In the meantime, freeholders who need their coves dredged, should plan on contracting for that on their own at owner's expense.
- G. (6:10 P. M.) Mr. Vince Garman and Ms. Amy Spalding, representatives from "The Nature Conservancy," made a comprehensive presentation to the Commission on how The Nature Conservancy's Forest Bank program could help CSCD better manage its forested areas and better control invasive plants. After their presentation, numerous questions were asked and answered. After commission deliberations, it was the consensus of the Commission to not pursue this program at this time. No further action on this topic was deemed appropriate other than to notify Katie Starr of the Brown County Soil & Water Conservation District of the Commission's position. Jim Donnells will handle this notification.
- H. (6:50 P. M.) **CSCD OPERATIONS REPORT** : In Nick Johann's absence, a written report from him provided updates on myriad projects of interest to ECOLOGY including:
- Cordry Lake Spillway**: Plans are ready to submit to IDEM, Corps of Engineers, and the DNR for permitting.
 - Aquatic Weed Treatments**: Aquatic Control Inc. has been notified of the widespread re-emergence of American pondweed in both our lakes. They believe this summer's unique weather pattern has brought this about. They suggest we have our lakes treated for weed control 2 weeks later in 2024.
- I. (7:00 P. M.) **OLD BUSINESS**:
- DEER HUNT 2023-24 UPDATE** (Shena): The Deer Reduction Hunt dates of 21 October-12 November 2023 (*except Halloween on 31 October*) and 6 January-14 January, 2024 were approved.
 - WAKE BOAT STUDY COMMITTEE** (Sunny): The joint ECOLOGY/SECURITY Wake-boat Study Committee is still working to develop their recommendations to the CSCD Board regarding the future of wake-enhancing boats on CSCD lakes.
 - POLLINATOR HABITAT UPDATE** (Brenda): Brenda reports that a committee has formed to further direct and manage the creation of the "CSCD Pollinator Habitat," in the spoils area across from the SW beach. The committee plans to meet soon with Katie Starr, Director of the Brown County Soil & Water Conservation District, to plot their next actions.
 - ZEBRA MUSSEL PREVENTION COMMITTEE (ZMPC) MEETING RECAP** (Jim) : Jim Donnells summarized the main points of the recent (27 September) meeting of the ZMPC:
 - Sharon Simpson and Katie Starr summarized the takeaways from their 2 years of service as "boat stewards," at the boat ramps of both our lakes. Their highlights were mostly very positive and they provided a few recommendations for boat steward employment moving forward.
 - The Committee then reviewed trends learned from the hundreds of boat/trailer inspections conducted over these last 2 years by both hired and volunteer boat stewards utilizing completed CSCD "Boat-Launch Inspection Checklist" forms collected from the boat stewards at the end of their shifts.

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- c. Next, the committee assessed the effectiveness of the “Freeholder EDUCATION PLAN,” created and implemented in 2021. It was determined that the Online “Zebra Mussel Boater Aware Course and Test” were the most effective components of the program.
- d. The committee then reviewed the effectiveness of the “Zebra Mussel Prevention ACTION PLAN, put in effect in late 2021. Many actions of the PLAN were deemed effective and worthy of continuation, but the most effective was deemed to be the installation of locked cables at all CSCD boat ramps to restrict access to our lakes to only educated (*in zebra mussel prevention*) and authorized persons, either freeholders or others doing authorized business in CSCD.
- e. The Commission agreed to the following **RECOMMENDATIONS** of the ZMPCC and **urges Board APPROVAL:**
 - (1) **Continue with the annual hire of “Boat Stewards,” to enforce ZM Prevention Rules at our boat ramps.**
 - (2) **Strategize a method of Boat Steward employment to maximize coverage during the high risk (> 55° water temp) boating season.**
 - (3) **Update and Improve the locks used at each boat ramp to keep unauthorized boaters out.**
 - (4) **Change the lock codes of locked barrier cables at the ramps and communicate them to freeholders for the 2024-2025 boating season.**
 - (5) **Better Enforcement of Contractor Barge Rules.**
 - (6) **Implement a monthly “Zebra Mussel Educational Alert” program at CSCD to provide monthly reminders of the dangers and the rules.**
 - (7) **Revise & Simplify the Online ZM Prevention Course and Test and Require ALL freeholders to retake and repass the Revised online Zebra Mussel Test each time they apply for Boat Stickers.**
 - (8) **Revise and Refine the Boat/Trailer Inspection Forms used by the Boat Stewards to better gather data.**

J. **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. (7:00 P. M.) **DREDGING APPLICATIONS:** NONE

2. **FREEHOLDER CONCERNS:** NONE

3. **COMMISSION MEMBER CONCERNS:** Jim Donnell's introduced an article from the Brown County Democrat, outlining a “Weed Wrangle Event,” taking place in Nashville along the Salt Creek Trail. Weed Wrangles are reported to be a nationwide event and are open to anyone who wants to help rid Brown County (including CSCD) of invasive species, “one stump at a time.” The Brown County Native Woodlands Project coordinates the efforts of these “Weed Wrangles.” Perhaps CSCD should look into hosting one of these events?

4. **STRATEGIC PLANNING NON-\$\$\$ ISSUE DISCUSSIONS:**

1: **“DISCOURTEOUS BOATERS”** – This issue is felt to be more of a SECURITY Commission issue and it is hoped that their plan to educate and test CSCD boaters on safe and courteous boating procedures will help.

2: **“TRASH ON HIGHWAYS”** - This is a perennial problem that is partially addressed by the annual “Trash Pickup Day,” co-sponsored by Carrie Vavul, Sweetwater Realty and CSLOA. We must rely on freeholders to do their part on roadways in front of their property to keep our community clean of trash.

3: **“STRAY DOGS”** – The following quote is taken from the BROWN COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE (9 Sept., 2021): *“A person having custody or control of a dog shall not allow such dog to stray beyond his or her premises... A person in violation of this section commits a Class C Ordinance violation and if the stray dog creates a nuisance, a Class B Ordinance violation.”* Freeholders who are chronic offenders of letting their dogs run loose should be reported to:

the **BROWN COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER** (telephone # **(812) 988-6655**)

K. **ADJOURNMENT:** *Herb Benshoof moved to adjourn the 5 October, meeting of the Ecology Commission. Shena Johnson seconded. The motion passed.* The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

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 Commission Recorder
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