

# The Prairie Enthusiasts

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## Board of Directors Meeting

February 7, 2008

### ACTION ITEMS IN BLUE

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#### ***Attendees***

**Directors:** Jesse Bennett, Jessica Bolwahn (representing Coulee Region Chapter), Nick Faessler, Kathy Henderson, Rich Henderson, Evanne Hunt, Jack Kussmaul, Dan Mueller, Richard Oberle, Ed Strenski (representing NIPE).

**Visitors:** Karen Strenski

**Absent:** Victoria Oberle

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. on February 7, 2008.

#### ***Old Business***

None.

#### ***New Business***

##### **1. January 9th Meeting Minutes**

There were no changes to the minutes.

Motion to accept minutes by Jack K., seconded by Rich H.

Motion passed unanimously.

##### **2. Approve Chapter Budgets**

The board reviewed budgets for the Coulee Region, Empire-Sauk, Prairie Bluff, Prairie Smoke, Southwest, and St. Croix Valley chapters. The NW Illinois budget was sent via email and was read aloud by Evanne.

The following were discussion items:

- Jack K. asked what happens if a bill is submitted to the Corp treasurer that takes the chapter over their budget.

Kathy H. said the bill will be paid, but the chapter will need to get approval from the Board for a loan. Whoever from the chapter signs the reimbursement form (chapter president or chapter treasurer) must inform the corporate treasurer immediately that the bill is out of budget.

Richard O. suggested that the chapter immediately amend their budget—as long as there is money in their accounts to accommodate the bill. The chapter then submits the

amended budget to the Board for approval.

The chapter treasurer handbook should provide a procedure for this situation. The chapter treasurer should be monitoring the situation and notify the president. TPE Policy is that Corp will not write check unless there is money; they must come to the board for approval for a loan.

- Jesse suggested we update the purchase advice form to contain a running balance.
- Empire-Sauk asked for a monthly report from Claudia. It is up to the chapter to specify the frequency of the reports. The chapter treasurer uses the reports to reconcile their records against the corp. accounts.
- Coulee: Kathy asked #579; there is nothing listed as expenses for 2008. Jessica will take it back.
- Richard O asked what is the proper way to record a negative or positive balance. Should the budget come out as zero? [Evanne will forward this question to Claudia.](#)
- RichH suggests the chapter consider putting some money in the budget for land acquisition, if it is at all likely. Then the chapter does not need to submit an amended budget if the opportunity presents itself.
- Prairie Smoke: #500 – we are reimbursing mileage for members who go to corp. committee meetings. Chapter presidents are encouraged to discuss this with their leadership councils and members. Some questions you might ask are: is this what you want to use your chapter funds for? Is it part of being a volunteer? [Evanne will ask Claudia if there are rules governing this situation.](#)

RichH asked about line #423 – what are the grants? Dan reported that one grant that remains (USFW).

Richard O asked if the chapter wants to borrow money from the corporation to buy the ATV now? Dan will take the question back to his leadership council. RichH offered advice on equipment if they need suggestions.

- Southwest: will submit amended budget.
- St. Croix Valley chapter: Kathy cautioned that the planned letters to landowners should not tie any contribution to work done on their land. As a non-profit, we cannot be paid for our services. Evanne asked Kathy and Rich to review the proposed letter for comments.

Kathy suggested that the chapter move postage currently under admin to land management/education since the postcards notify members of work parties and education opportunities.

Motion from Kathy H. to approve submitted chapter budgets assuming the amendments discussed are made; second by Rich O., motion carried.

Rich H asked that in the future that all chapters be on one sheet (each chapter is a column) and the sheet should include Corp.

Rich H. and Kathy H. will work with Claudia on a first draft of the budget. They will have it ready for discussion at the March Board meeting.

### **3. Heather Prairie Acquisition and Endowment**

Jesse B. provided background on the property: 15 yrs ago, Gary Eldred identified prairie bush clover, upland sandpiper, dickcissel, and other rare species. There has been no formal agreement with the landowners. In 2007, the Southwest chapter heard there was a sale pending, but it fell through, TPE tried to buy it, but that failed, too. The owners wanted more than the appraised value for the land. Rich commented that stewardship funds do not allow non-profits to pay more than appraised value.

The current owner plans to turn it into cropland. The SW chapter needs a purchase agreement within 75 days to prevent this from happening.

Both the Driftless Area Land Conservancy and the Mississippi Land Conservancy has offered to buy the property and turn it over to TPE. The DALC proposal is messier, requiring shifting funds from another property and their board is firm that there be a management endowment of 20% for each property they purchase. MVC has also agreed to purchase it and likely turn it over to TPE; there are no stipulations for endowment. SW chapter wants to buy the even if there is no endowment.

Rich H offered that the Natural Heritage Land Trust has credits and will be acquiring the title. DALC will do the paperwork. There is also potential more USFW money for prairie bushclover habitat.

Rich H said that it is important that the SW chapter be committed to managing the property. Getting the option signed is the critical thing; it prevents the owners from plowing and gives us the option to buy.

TPE land protection guidelines strongly recommend an endowment for each property, but value of the land as prairie is more important.

Motion to authorize Jesse and Rich to pursue protection of this property and to work with other non-profits to sign an option to buy and to keep the board informed made by Jack K., seconded by Rich O; motion is carried.

Jesse reported that MVC does not want to sign the MOU because the property falls outside their area. They are willing to take on the 173-acre portion of the property. [Action: Evanne to sign the MOU to show TPE support and mail to Doug at DALC.](#)

Rich H added that, regardless of who acquires title, TPE should get assurance that the title will eventually be transferred to TPE; managing without a title is very difficult. It is also difficult to raise an endowment.

#### **4. WDNR Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Control Grants Resolution – Mounds View application**

Resolution presented by Rich H for board approval. TPE is applying for this grant. Rich suggests other chapters look into this grant. Any property with invasives associated with aquatic areas will qualify.

Motion to approve made by Kathy H, seconded by Dan M.; motion carried.

#### **5. Pecatonica Watershed Landowner Workshop**

Amy Staffen will attend the workshop. She will staff a TPE booth and hand out brochures. This is a great outreach opportunity to landowners throughout TPE area.

Rich H. made motion that TPE Central donates \$300 to the workshop, seconded by Richard O; motion carried.

#### **6. Board Member Change**

Jim Sime is now the SW chapter representative to the Board of Directors.

It was noted that the SW chapter also needs a rep on the Land Stewardship and Fundraising & Endowment committees.

Rich H. made a motion that we adjourn; seconded by Jack K; motion carried.

*Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.*

#### **7. Future Meetings**

March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at TPE Banquet in LaCrosse. **Evanne to solicit agenda items.**

The Executive Committee met briefly after the Board meeting was adjourned. Evanne asked how we could make the process of protecting land smoother and easier to understand. The Heather Prairie acquisition needed immediate action. This seems more typical than acquisitions that take several months. Evanne wanted the next chapter to face the issue to have an easier time. Jack K. reported that the Land Protection committee wrote a policy. Action: Jack K. to find the policy and send it to Evanne for posting on the website.

Recorded by Evanne Hunt.

# The Prairie Enthusiasts

## Board of Directors Meeting

March 7, 2008

ACTION ITEMS IN BLUE

### ***Attendees***

Directors:

Nick Faessler, Kathy Henderson, Rich Henderson, Evanne Hunt, Jack Kussmaul, Dan Mueller, Richard Oberle, Victoria Oberle, Jim Rachuy, Jim Rogala, Jesse Bennett, Gary Eldred

Visitors: Victoria Oberle, Carol Benish, Bonnie Maffitt, Brad Glass, Barbara Glass, Peggy Traver, Jon Traver, Ted Cochrane, Rose Sime, Jim Sime, Tom Brock, Ed Strenski, Karin Strenski

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. on March 7, 2008.

### **1. February 9th Meeting Minutes**

Motion to accept minutes by Kussmaul , seconded by Rich H.

Motion passed unanimously, with minor corrections.

### **2. Treasurer's Report**

K. and R. Henderson developed revised draft budget for Central, mailed to Hunt. They modeled it after last year's budget. This included: six months full-time staff-person (ED or DD), plus 6 months half-time administrative assistant. Did develop a zero-based budget, with a \$30,000 membership budget, \$35,000 from annual appeal, \$5,000 unrestricted contributions. Full operating budget: \$84,600.

Action item: **Hunt** will forward the central budget to all Board members. Board members will review, and send questions and comments to R. Henderson.



### 3. Membership Report

- Hunt reports that when V. Oberle sends her new membership info, Hunt sends personally a welcome letter and packet. It is up to the chapter presidents, or chapter membership coordinators, to do follow-up contacts.
- V. Oberle needs to get feedback from chapter contacts in terms of what membership info specifically they need from her on a regular basis.
- Contact individuals for each chapter to whom V. Oberle should send membership updates (new members on a monthly basis, full chapter membership list on a quarterly basis):
  - Jim Rogala (Coulee Region)
  - Rose Sime (Southwest Chapter)
- Victoria shared a summary of active members (insert into minutes below).

### 4. Prairie Sands Chapter Proposal

- Ann Woldt is forming a new chapter in the central sands, has submitted all necessary paperwork. They currently have 10 people interested in being members, which meets the minimum requirement.
- R. Henderson recommends the name be “Central Sands” for two reasons: explains the specific geographic location, and that the initials are already ‘taken’ by Prairie Smoke chapter.
- R. Henderson moves that this issue be tabled until directors have time to review proposal (R. Oberle second).
- R. Henderson and J. Sime clarifies that they are very interested in doing initially outreach and education, and land management. Muir Park is one focus area.
- Eldred points out that they used to provide a ‘nest egg’ to newly-fledged chapters; R. Henderson recommends \$500.
- Victoria, field trips publicity...
- Rich Henderson moves that we approve this new chapter, approve \$500 as a starter package, recommend changing name to Central Sands (Jim Rachuy). Motion passed.
- Historical note from Tom Brock: John Thomson did the first prairie inventory in the central sands region. It is suggested that someone interview John to share his experiences, which could be written up by our PP Editor for an introductory article on the new chapter.

## 5. Trustees to serve on the Supporting Trust (Land Management Endowment)

- This is our only formal endowment trust, currently at approximately \$10,000. The funds are restricted. Any chapter can put money into this pool, and earmark funds for specific projects or properties. This needed to be legally designated as a 'supporting organization' with trustees. R. Henderson recommends that there be at least three trustees legally designated. Working with Johnson Block. Trustee's role is to look after money, supervise investments, ensure that it's distributed properly. Trustees will bring requests for disbursements to the Board for guidance and approval. Trustees are selected and removed by the BOD of TPE. Question: Should we designate a corporate trustee? Jon Traver clarifies that you might need a corporate trustee to ensure that no one person has too much power, represents the larger umbrella organization and not isolated interests. They could represent another 'firewall.' R. Henderson identifies restriction: Major donors to trust cannot be a trustee.
- Action item: **Kussmaul** will speak with Kristin Lee about his concern that there are rules addressing overlap of individuals being overrepresented in multiple levels of TPE governance. He will investigate. Issue will be tabled until this is ascertained.
- Hunt encourages individuals to volunteer to be a trustee.

## 6. Investment Policy Update

- Land management trust: \$110,000.
- Policy: 60% stocks, 40% bonds.
- Jon decided to 'ease into the stock portfolio,' due to current economic landscape. They invested about \$60,000, which represents about 40% of available funds to invest. Fund is up in total (\$89). Total stock market down 20% currently.
- Easement monitoring fund, \$20,000: Jon invested all bonds, half of stocks. Will be completed soon. R. Henderson says there are three significant donations to this fund that will be coming in soon. Supposed to be a long-term investment, hire someone in the distant future with this money.
- Operation & Endowment fund, \$15,000: down \$15.
- Other, \$10,000: down \$10.
- **Add copy of Jon's report to minutes.**
- J. Sime asks about restricted funds? R. Henderson requests that all chapters provide specific info to Claudia Vlisides on what funds from their chapter budgets are restricted. Eldred assumes that this info is in their past chapter meeting minutes. R. Oberle points out that if money is just sitting in a chapter checking

account, and isn't needed immediately, it would be wise to invest, at least in short-term investments. Vlisides needs to provide some type of standardized form for chapter reps to fill out that explicitly states the information she needs to make the budget more transparent. With thorough report, finance committee can then provide guidance to chapters as to how best to manage their money.

## **7. State Bank of Cross Plains Proposal**

- R. Henderson states that this bank proposes that we send out a solicitation to our members to suggest investment venues that would bring money to TPE. This would be investments through them that they would profit from, then TPE would take a percentage. He feels that it doesn't make sense to go beyond Dane County, Empire-Sauk Chapter. Hunt and Brock do not like the idea. This would involve sharing our mailing list? Henderson says 'no,' they will provide the brochures, we will mail. Bennett points out that since the percentage going to TPE is coming from member, why not eliminate the middle man? It would be different if Cross Plains is matching the donation.
- Action item: R. Henderson will ask SBCP if they will match the percentage.

## **7. Gathering Waters Membership**

- Motion to renew membership at approx. \$100 (R. Oberle, second Kussmaul). Motion approved.

## **9. 2008 Central Budget Review**

- Request

## **10. Sharing our mailing lists with other organizations**

Mississippi Valley Conservancy has requested an exchange of mailing lists. As a general policy, we do not share. Hunt explains how, for shared events, they have shared mailing labels or mailed publicity pieces on behalf of other organizations or events. Statement on membership brochure that individuals can check saying that sharing their information is acceptable or not was removed some time ago. This is already a standing policy, so this discussion served as a review of the policy. The policy will remain in place. Another note of protocol: If emails are sent out to a distribution list, email addresses should be suppressed, or blind copied.

## **11. 2009 TPE Banquet**

- NIPE chapter is next. Jim R. indicates that this will not be possible. Hunt proposes hiring an event planner to plan just a banquet/raffle at a central





location, no conference. Brock wonders if we should just focus on one event per year, that is done well; perhaps eliminate the summer picnic? He observes that a few people show up at the picnic, most show up at winter annual meeting. This would require a change in the by-laws. Hunt want to table this issue, encourages people to ponder it, put on agenda for future meeting if necessary.

- Hunt says, based on her analysis, no correlation between cost of event and number of people that show up.
- Suggestions: Dodgeville, Prairie du Chien, Epic Insurance (Madison). Bennett: Sinsinawa tri-state forestry conference.
- Action item: Amy will investigate piggyback option with IPAW in 2009.
- Action item: A vote to finalize this decision will take place via email.
- Action item: The newsletter editor will place announcement in Prairie Promoter that we are seeking an event planner.

## **12. Incidental Take Mailing List (Jim Sime)**

- The DOT has agreed to include interested parties on mailing list for Incidental Take Permit requests that are submitted to the WDNR Bureau of Endangered Resources. It is illegal to remove protected plants on government properties (which includes roadsides). We need to designate a representative to be on the mailing list. Definitely hard copies are sent, not sure about emails. Only one individual per organization is allowed. Process: DOT needs to get a release from all organizations on list.
- Motion to designate Jim Sime as representative for TPE who receives mailing and/or email, release (R. Henderson), second (K. Henderson). Motion approved.
- Craig Anderson suggests that we locate specimens on rights-of-way and get NHI rare plant report forms.

## **12. Bump up Campaign**

This campaign is being continued. Please wear the buttons, and promote as much as possible. Random drawing for bottle of vodka of all members that bumped up during banquet/conference. In 2008, we bumped up \_\_\_ members.

## **13. Board Challenge**

Renae asked all board members to make a special donation to the membership. This can be in the form of a monetary gift, a secured donation, or a raffle item. This should be stated as an expectation, not a requirement. This should be a separate budget line item. Universal support of board members present at this meeting was offered.



## 16. Future Meetings

- Thursday, May 15, 2008.
- Sunday, July 13, 2008.

13. Grant application to James E. Dutton Foundation, general interest and support. We will consider and discuss at next meeting in April.

14. Request to do research on *Campanula americana*.

15. Eldred: Project on island in the Arctic Circle to place seed bank. Would TPE be interested in submitting prairie seed? R. Henderson says that we already did provide some seed through an Illinois member that was contacted. Suggestion: Put on website?

Recorded by Amy Staffen.

Meeting adjourned 9:20 p.m.

Note to Evanne: Elect Nick Faessler as Corporate Treasurer.



# The Prairie Enthusiasts

## Board of Directors Meeting

May 15, 2008

ACTION ITEMS IN BLUE

### **Attendees**

Directors: Nick Faessler, Kathy Henderson, Rich Henderson, Evanne Hunt, Jack Kussmaul, Victoria Oberle, Jim Rachuy, Jim Rogala, Karen Wollenburg

Visitors: Jim Sime, Claudia Vlisides, Ed and Karen Strenski

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. on May 15, 2008.

### **1. March 7th Meeting Minutes**

- **Post-meeting addendum:** On May 9, Jim Sime notified Evanne of a correction to the March 7 Meeting minutes and to the Sept 29 Strategy Meeting minutes. Evanne forgot to include these corrections on the agenda:

*March 7 Minutes: "Jim Sime objected to tabling the Prairie Sands chapter proposal and made the motion (restated by Rich) to immediately vote to accept the proposal."*

*September 29 Minutes: "Jim Sime suggested that TPE consider expanding our focus beyond disturbance (fire-dependant) ecosystems. Extreme topography in the Driftless region dictates that many significant parcels also contain equilibrium and slowly evolving habitats: fens, cliffs, pine relics, climax forests, etc. Jim considers this an important component of the future for TPE. There was no further discussion on this topic."*

- Motion to accept minutes with no corrections (K. Henderson). Seconded (Rogala). Motion passed.

### **2. Central Budget**

- Note: Ignore numbers for January through April summary. Discussion during this meeting is only considering the column with 2008 budget.
- Motion to approve 2008, pending possible changes to highlighted items (Rachuy). Seconded (Kussmaul). Discussion: Hunt asks how often we should review budget. Vlisides recommends quarterly, minimum. Motion passed. Line item-specific comments and highlighted sections appear below.



- Rogala cautions that we won't have total budget amounts in-hand until the end of the year, not the beginning. Do we need to spread out budget over the course of the year? Otherwise, there is a risk of incorrectly assuming that money is there, then overspending.
- **Vlides will create a budget that shows predicted timing of income over the course of the year.**

		2008 Budget	Comments during May 15 Board Meeting
<b>Income</b>			
400	MEMBERSHIP		
	401   Membership dues	30,000	
	<b>Total 400   MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>30,000</b>	
402	CONTRIBUTIONS		
	403   Annual Fund contributions	35,000	Significantly less than last year (Rachuy), feels that we should maintain the same amount. Henderson cautions that we can't have a realistic expectation that this will happen again. This is how much we brought in with matching donations. He steps aside on issue.
	404   Board Challenge contributions	4,000	
	405   Unrestricted contributions	5,000	
	406   Unrestricted-major donations	0	
	408   Restricted for Land Management	0	
	410   Restricted for Operations Endow	0	
	412   Restricted for Education	0	
	<b>Total 402   CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>44,000</b>	
420	GOVERNMENT GRANTS		Evanne asks if this represents all grants awarded to all chapters? Prairie Sands is applying for \$5,000 grant. If they are filtered through Claudia, they are in the spreadsheet; if they're just filtered through Central, and managed by chapter, they don't appear on spreadsheet. This only represents the figure coming from grants for administrative fees (10% is suggested). We have a policy that recommends that they send grant budget to Claudia for review.
	423   Land Management gov't grants (admin)	8,000	
	<b>Total 420   GOVERNMENT GRANTS</b>	<b>8,000</b>	
450	FOUNDATION & OTHER GRANTS		
	451   Unrestricted grants	0	
	<b>Total 450   FOUNDATION &amp; OTHER GRANTS</b>	<b>0</b>	
470	SPECIAL EVENTS		
	471   Conference revenue	0	
	472   Special events revenue	0	
	474   Raffle & silent auction revenue	600	Rachuy suggests that we could make 10X this number on the raffle and silent auction. The 600 is only from those items dedicated to Central.
	<b>Total 470   SPECIAL EVENTS</b>	<b>600</b>	
480	OTHER REVENUE		
	481   Bank interest income	1,000	
	486   Technical Assistance	0	
	487   Other income	0	
	<b>Total 480   OTHER REVENUE</b>	<b>1,000</b>	
495	SALES		
	492   Books & TPE items	1,000	K. Henderson asks if we will make only \$1,000? We've already made \$3,700 this year. Increase?
	<b>Total 495   SALES</b>	<b>1,000</b>	
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>84,600</b>	
<b>Expense</b>			
500	ADMINISTRATION		
	509   Personnel		
	510   Executive director salary	20,000	We won't get 6 months of full time, the figure is too high (Rachuy).
	512   Administrative Asst	9,500	
	514   Payroll taxes	2,250	Represents a fixed percentage of salaries.
	515   Employee benefits	1,180	
	<b>Total 509   Personnel</b>	<b>32,930</b>	
	519   Professional Fees		
	520   Accounting & bookkeeping fees	22,600	\$1833/month (Rachuy); this is a lot! K. Henderson says that this is what we're currently paying. R. Henderson explains that Claudia/Jan are currently doing a lot that the new Admin Assistant will do -- revise budget? Ask Claudia for an estimate.
	525   Audit fees	3,300	
	526   Tax preparation fees	700	
	535   Payroll processing fees	700	
	<b>Total 519   Professional Fees</b>	<b>27,300</b>	Represents 35% of our budget (Sime).

	<b>560   Fees/Ins/Travel/Mtgs/Dues</b>		
	550   Licensing fees	40	
	551   Directors & officers insurance	800	
	553   Travel	1,000	
	554   Teleconference fees	1,200	Rachuy talks about cost savings with online meetings, as does Staffen. Works best as an in-house business service, but problematic (V. Oberle). Rachuy recommends the following: <a href="http://www.gotomeeting.com">http://www.gotomeeting.com</a>
	556   Meetings & conferences	600	
	557   Memberships & Fees	1,200	
	<b>Total 560   Fees/Ins/Travel/Mtgs/Dues</b>	<b>4,840</b>	
	<b>579   Office Expenses</b>		
	580   Rent & utilities	2,400	
	584   Office equipment maintenance	500	Staffen expresses need for computer network at office. Visides can help.
	585   Telephone	350	
	586   Internet charges	250	
	587   Bank charges	40	
	591   Postage & shipping	1,200	
	592   Office expenses	0	Zero? (Sime) Claudia says that this may include Datakeep. R. Henderson will investigate 2007 expenses, reconsider this zero, and the possibility of putting an amount in.
	593   Printing	0	
	<b>Total 579   Office Expenses</b>	<b>4,740</b>	
	<b>Total 500   ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>69,810</b>	
	<b>600   FUNDRAISING</b>		
	620   Fundraising items for sale	300	
	630   Membership coordinator	0	
	635   Donor software web hosting	1,400	Rachuy -- what is this? Claudia clarifies that this is the database for donors and membership (monthly fees for web hosting, annual fee for software). Web hosting = \$400-500? Rachuy adds that we could buy the software for that amount; steps aside.
	641   Postage & shipping	700	
	643   Printing	400	
	645   Other fundraising costs	200	
	<b>Total 600   FUNDRAISING</b>	<b>3,000</b>	
	<b>800   LAND MANAGEMENT</b>		
	845   Insurance	4,000	
	<b>Total 800   LAND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>4,000</b>	
	<b>900   EDUCATION</b>		
	910   Other membership costs	0	
	912   Admin Asst	0	
	914   Payroll Taxes	0	
	915   Conference hosting/sponsoring	0	
	940   Program supplies	200	
	970   Travel	300	
	991   Postage & shipping	1,000	
	993   Printing	6,000	
	995   Other education costs	300	
	<b>Total 900   EDUCATION</b>	<b>7,800</b>	
	<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>84,610</b>	
		<b>-10</b>	

### 3. Q&A with Claudia regarding TPE Corp Financial Statement and chapter financial statements.

- Vlisides points out that as they move money to State Bank of Cross Plains, they are concerned about money that may be earmarked that they don't know about it. She proposes her meeting with chapter treasurers to get the full picture. Board members expressed an interest in her doing this. **It is up to chapters to contact Claudia for this service.** Following is a summary of comments from various chapter representatives:
  - Prairie Sands: Wollenburg would appreciate a phone conversation.
  - NIPE: Rachuy likes the idea.
  - Coulee Region: Rogala would like a 15-minute phone consultation.
  - Empire-Sauk: R. Henderson proposes that she start with Empire-Sauk to pilot the process; they will share their wisdom.
  - Southwest: Sime is interested, but needs time to prepare.
- Vlisides would like this done in time for the audit report so that she can include the information in the equity section.
- Vlisides says that the audit report will be available next week.
- **Vlisides will provide the audit report to Hunt soon, so that Hunt can share copies at the annual meeting and picnic in July.**
- **R. Henderson requests that simplified, chapter-specific reports be shared. Hunt will work with Vlisides to generate these.**
- \$135,000 is our current balance for Central.
- R. Henderson: Were the raffle and silent auction proceeds distributed to chapters yet? Vlisides says yes. He requests that they get an item-by-item proceeds breakdown.
- **Rogala will distribute item-by-item conference proceeds reports to each chapter treasurer.**
- **Vlisides will send a report to all chapter treasurers for conference proceeds. (Money has been transferred to the chapters, but no reports have been sent.)**
- Vlisides explains that in the Central accounting report, category 492, we have \$3,700. This includes everything sold for entire organization: book sales, Garden expo, etc. R. Henderson cautions Vlisides to make sure that the money is going to the appropriate chapter – e.g., Southwest is selling a lot of books.
- Accounting report periodicity: Vlisides sends reports monthly to the Executive Committee, and quarterly to chapters, unless otherwise requested.



#### 4. Nominations for TPE Board

- Hunt nominates the following:
  - Nick Faessler for Corporate Treasurer (K. Henderson, second).
  - Jack Kussmaul for Vice President (Rachuy, second).
  - Jan Amberson of Saint Croix Chapter for Secretary (Kussmaul, second)
- **Post-meeting addendum: Jim Sime and Jack Kussmaul want to nominate Evanne Hunt for President. They will make this official at the next board meeting.**
- This represents a slate of nominees for these positions. Hunt will certainly entertain more nominees, if anyone has any to offer now or in the future. Voting will occur at the July membership meeting.

#### 5. Update on TPE Banquet and IPAW Conference for March 2009

- The IPAW Board approved moving forward with the concept of collaborating with TPE on a piggyback event, where the TPE banquet will occur the night of the all-day IPAW conference. The theme of the conference will be grassland invasives.
- Amy Staffen, as an IPAW Board member and Chair of the Education Committee, will serve as liaison between TPE and IPAW for conference planning. She is also the conference chair.
- Banquet/conference target date will be in late February or early March, in the Madison area.
- Rogala volunteers to arrange for event registration through the University of Wisconsin. Hunt verifies that, through her investigation, the UW does NOT require an event to take place at a campus facility in order for us to use their registration services.
- Staffen should investigate Epic Systems in Verona as a possible conference venue.
- The IPAW Board would like to offer a substantial membership discount for conference registrants. This could be handled as part of conference registration, and could involve paying an extra \$5 or \$10 (individuals who are already IPAW members will get a discount on their registration of equal value). TPE would like to consider providing a similar offer.
- **V. Oberle will reflect on the possibility of offering a TPE membership discount for conference registrants – Is it feasible? How much of a discount would be offered?**

#### 6. Hiring Staff

- Hunt has reviewed 28 resumes for administrative assistant. Hunt did phone interviews with the top five, then passed on the best candidates to R. Henderson for face-to-face interviews.





- R. Henderson and Staffen interviewed two candidates today, one of whom is perfect. Will discuss the possibility of making an offer to her during Executive Committee meeting after this meeting. There is potential for this individual to transition into a business manager, a development manager, and even executive director.

## **7. NIPE Rare Plant Nursery Project**

- Rachuy describes his chapter's nursery: They have free usage of a privately-owned greenhouse, where they are germinating seed of local genotype plants that are rare or difficult to collect. They nurture them to the size of plugs, then install them into young restorations.
- He invites other chapters to avail themselves of this service: NIPE can share the facility, resources and expertise, as long as they are provided seed that is local to the target planting area/region. They will charge \$1.50 per plug, and can do all the work. They can do 10- to 12,000 plugs per season. An article with further details will appear in the next Prairie Promoter.

## **8. NIPE Website ([www.NIPES.org](http://www.NIPES.org))**

- NIPE is updating their website to one that is password-protected, and serves as a resource for chapter members. Members will be able to upload photos, data, etc. A separate webpage with general chapter information for the public will also be maintained.
- Hunt has reservations about this update, since it excludes non-chapter members, and sets NIPE completely apart from the larger organization. Rachuy feels that they can find a way to tie the two together.
- Rachuy tried to meet desired functional goals within the confines of the current TPE website, but couldn't, so he contracted with a new server (Next Generation). This new server has twice the functionality and costs \$85 instead of \$400 annually. He feels great conviction that this could serve as the new server for TPE, and is hopeful that other TPE chapters will feel the same way. Sime agrees that this represents the wave of the future.
- Board members can contact Rogala and he will set up an account for them to enable them to view, review, and use the website.

## **8. Truax drill — status update**

- Originally purchased by Southwest Chapter, it was given to USFWS (since they provided half the money when it was purchased). USFWS has agreed to let NIPE take the equipment. NIPE put about \$1,000 into restoration and maintenance, and will use it for sowing grass seed in the spring.



## **10. Fire equipment purchase — status update**

- R. Henderson says that he got orders from two chapters: Saint Croix and NIPE. Rogala will be submitting order for plastic liners. Henderson hopes to distribute orders at July picnic.

## **11. TPE Annual Picnic (Sunday, July 13, 2008)**

- Will be at Schurch-Thomson. Barn has new floors, will have new siding. Activities will include: Board meeting, short membership meeting, prairie hikes and a barbecue / potluck dinner. The Empire-Sauk Chapter will provide brats and drinks. Camping is available at Blue Mounds State Park and Brigham County Park. People can also camp at Schurch-Thomson.
- What about a Port-a-potty? R. Henderson investigated: It costs about \$200 per month, due to cost of fuel for transporting. Rogala suggests considering the installation of a composting toilet. They may look into this possibility.

## **12. Future Meetings**

- Sunday, July 13, 2008.

Recorded by Amy Staffen.

Meeting adjourned 8:52 p.m.



## **TPE Annual Membership Meeting Minutes**

July 13, 2008 Annual Meeting of the Membership hosted by Empire-Sauk Chapter  
at the Schurch-Thomson Prairie  
Blue Mounds, Wisconsin.

The Annual Membership Meeting was called to order at 1:21 p.m. on July 13, 2008, by President Evanne Hunt. President Hunt thanked the Empire-Sauk Chapter for hosting the annual membership meeting. She announced that 70 people were in attendance. She introduced the donors of the Schurch-Thomson Prairie to everyone.

President Hunt gave a summary of Board activities from their meeting held earlier this morning. She introduced the Board members and announced the officers for 2008-2010.

President Hunt introduced the new TPE Business Manager, Carol Winge. She also introduced Amy Staffen, TPE's Restoration Ecologist.

Committee Chairs briefly reported on committee activities.

Chapter representatives briefly reported on chapter activities. Highlights of these reports were:

Empire-Sauk Chapter: Rich Henderson reported on grants their chapter has been successful in being awarded. Grants have been used in the refurbishing of the beautiful barn located on the Schurch-Thomas property. Members suggested that there be a TPE Barn Dance held at this barn.

Southwest WI Chapter: Jim Sime reported on Heather's Prairie, a 140-acre prairie, with 280 acres of buffer, about 400 total acres. This will be a new property and the project will be around \$1 million. TPE and the SW WI Chapter have been working on this project for 20 years and he was pleased that it is getting close to fruition.

Prairie Bluff Chapter: Rob Baller displayed the newest design of the Parsnip Predator noting it was for sale. He also reported that the design is not patented, this is a project waiting to happen. The tool is so popular that he believes it would be a large money maker for TPE but we need to investigate how to patent the tool.

### **Adjourn**

There being no further business the annual membership meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Winge

**THE PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS, INC.**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**  
**Schurch-Thomson Prairie**  
**Blue Mounds, WI**  
**Sunday, July 13, 2008**

**ACTION ITEMS IN RED**

**Attendees:**

Directors: Evanne Hunt, Jan Amberson, Kathy Henderson, Jim Sime, Jim Rogala, Rich Henderson, Jim Rachuy, Richard Oberle, Nick Faessler

Visitors: Rose Sime, Earl Milbauer, Ed Strenski, Victoria Oberle

Staff: Carol Winge, Business Manager and Claudia Vlisides, Accountant

Directors Absent: Jack Kussmaul, Karen Wollenburg

**1. May 15 Meeting Minutes**

Jim Sime wants the Board to understand how important he feels it is to broaden our focus beyond disturbance (fire dependant) ecosystems. Extreme topography in the Driftless region dictates that many significant parcels also contain equilibrium and slowly evolving habitats; Fens, Cliffs, Pine Relics, Climax forests, etc. Refusing to expand narrows our mission. He is concerned that the language in the May minutes stating “there was no further discussion on this topic” may be construed to mean that the door is closed to considering expanding our focus to include these habitats. It is important we don’t exclude these.

**ACTION:** The Board agreed to have an agenda item on our next regular board meeting to address broadening our focus.

Jim Rogala asked that under the last bullet of Item 8, page 7 of the minutes, the name be changed from Rogala to Rachuy and that the second Item 8 be renumbered to Item 9. Also add Minutes to the title of the document.

A motion was made by Kathy Henderson, seconded by Rich Henderson, to accept the Minutes of the May 15, 2008 Board of Directors Meeting, as amended. Motion carried.

**2. Election of 2008-2010 TPE Officers**

A motion was made by Jim Sime to nominate Evanne Hunt for TPE President for 2008-2010. The motion was seconded by Kathy Henderson. Motion carried.

With that nomination, Evanne asked that the 2008-2010 officer elections be conducted by written ballot so there would be a record of the elections on file. The Board concurred. Ballots were distributed, the Board members voted and counted by Carol Winge. Evanne announced the election results as follows:

President:	Evanne Hunt
Vice President:	Jack Kussmaul
Treasurer	Nick Faessler
Secretary	Jan Amberson

### 3. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Kathy Henderson presented the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Activities and Statement of Activities and Budget Comparison-Central Reports as of June 30, 2008.

Richard Oberle asked how much cash we have on hand. What is the bottom line cash available if we had to get our hands on it today? This was important to understand as the Fundraising Committee moves forward. Accountant Claudia Vlisides noted that if you add the balances reflected in Accounts 100, 105, 110 and subtract the balance in Account 158, this is TPE's available cash.

There was discussion about whether Chapter funds are restricted or unrestricted. Claudia recommended that the Board take action to establish a policy to designate Chapter checking accounts as either "Restricted" or "Unrestricted Board Designated" which is probably the better designation. Restricted generally means that the funds are set aside for a particular purpose. The Chapter funds are set aside for Chapter use but not specific Chapter purposes, rather more general needs of the Chapters.

Rich Henderson noted that it would seem that grants should be considered restricted because they are designated for a specific purpose.

After further discussion about Chapter Funds, a motion was made by Jim Rachuy that the TPE Board recognize that Chapter resources are currently restricted for Chapter use and that a written policy on Chapter resources be established by the Board in the near future to designate Chapter funds as temporary restricted. The motion was seconded by Kathy Henderson. Motion passed.

The Board wishes to respect Chapters' use of Chapter allocated funds but does not want to hinder future Boards if they need that money for the organization.

Jim Rachuy will write up a draft and get it to Faessler for the Finance Committee to review and recommend to the Board.

Kathy Henderson noted that she has been working to set up separate checking accounts for each chapter and that project is near completion.

Victoria Oberle asked why there was a combined account for the PSC and NIPE Chapters and noted that every Chapter should have a separate checking account. Claudia replied that because there has been so little activity on the PSC account, it has been retained as one account. Jim Rachuy reiterated that every Chapter should have a separate checking account.

Kathy Henderson referred the Board to the last three pages of the financial report, this being Central's Statement of Activities and Budget comparison. She noted that we are at 49.79% of budget as of June 30, so we are right on. She also noted that the bulk of Central's income is realized during the last quarter of the year through year end fundraising. Board members noted that the year end fundraising is raised in the current year to be spent in the upcoming year.

A motion was made by Rich Henderson and seconded by Jim Rogala to accept the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

#### **4. 2007 TPE Audit Report**

Accountant Claudia presented the 2007 Audit Report to the Board. A motion was made by Rich Henderson and seconded by Jim Sime to accept the 2007 Audit Report. Motion carried.

Rich Henderson presented a brief report on the Land Management Trust. The Trust is a supporting organization to TPE. It will have its own 501(c)(3) designation. The Trust supports TPE with specific purposes. This is where we put our money for long-term land management. Our goal is to build this Trust up for now.

He noted that item 3 on his written report should be changed to read \$11,623.45 Kalscheur Savanna (delete reference to Southwest Chapter). Item 4 should be changed to read \$69,070.94 Wade Easement (delete reference to Empire Sauk Chapter).

He noted two additional columns added to the Land Management Trust Fund; \$4,000 for lands from TNC and \$3,000 for Fox Glove Savanna.

#### **5. Addition to Mounds View Grassland Preserve**

Rich Henderson presented the proposal to purchase 33 acres of land west of County Road F in Brigham Township, Iowa County, WI. This parcel is located next to the Schurch-Thomson Prairie Unit of our Mounds View Grassland Preserve. Management costs of the site will be covered by annual CRP payments and the Schurch-Thomson endowment for the Mounds View Grassland. Miscellaneous costs associated with the acquisition that are not covered by the Stewardship grant will be covered by Empire-Sauk Chapter allocated funds. This parcel has great significance in that it is within a focus habitat core of the MRPHA; it is next to a TPE preserve; it is all grassland enrolled in CRP, with a small degraded prairie remnant (20 species) at the southern tip of the land; it has critical habitat for grassland birds and it is located on a county road along an open ridge top with outstanding views overlooking our Mounds View Preserve. The Empire-Sauk Chapter will manage the site and no money is needed from TPE—grant money will support it.

Rich Henderson presented a Resolution to the Board that would allow him to submit an application on behalf of TPE to the Wisconsin DNR for financial assistance under the Stewardship Program for the Allen Ripp Grassland.

A motion was made by Richard Oberle to approve the Resolution to move ahead and apply for State Stewardship Funds and that Rich Henderson represent TPE with this project. Motion seconded by Jim Rogala. Motion carried.

## **6. Griffiths Low Prairie in Jefferson County**

Rich Henderson informed Board members of a possible opportunity to purchase this property located in Jefferson County near Whitewater. The owner is willing to sell for half the appraised value and donate proceeds back to TPE for land management. He will keep the Board updated on activity on this proposal.

## **7. Policy on TPE Sending out Notices to our Membership about Conservation Land for Sale to Private Conservation Buyers**

Rich Henderson asked if TPE can/should publicize private land for sale. TPE may already have a policy on this. **The Board directed the Business Manager to review past minutes to see if she can locate an existing policy and report back to the Board.**

## **8. James E. Dutton Foundation Grant Update**

Evanne Hunt reported that the James E. Dutton Foundation has reviewed our grant application at their May Board meeting. Of the six projects presented in our application, the Foundation was most interested in the IHM Prairie Pasture project to purchase title to five acres of prairie pasture adjacent to a 63-acre TPE preserve. Our request was for \$27,000. They are still interested but have asked us to resubmit a grant application for a larger request for a site with possible naming rights. **Rich Henderson proposed we solicit Chapters by sending out an email. Evanne will send a detailed email to all chapters soliciting information.**

## **9. Check Signing Authority for Business Manager**

A motion was made by Kathy Henderson and seconded by Jim Rachuy that in order to facilitate timely bill payment, TPE Board authorize Carol Winge, Business Manager, as a check signer in the following situations:

1. For Central ongoing operating expenses for which agreements are in place; e.g. monthly rent, DSL service, data storage, insurance, etc.;
2. For Central expenses approved in the Central budget;
3. For chapter expense requests submitted on a Purchase Advice Form and signed by the person submitting the expense as well as the Chapter President, along with invoices and expense receipts; and
4. For grant expenses approved in the grant's budget.

Motion carried unanimously.

Because of time, the Board moved ahead to item 16 of the agenda and discussed future board meeting dates.

## **10. Future Board Meetings**

Evanne Hunt reviewed proposed Board Meeting dates through the rest of 2008 as follows:

Wednesday, August 13, 2008 (special board meeting) to discuss “Related Party Transactions” as referred to in the 2007 Audit, page 9, Item 5. She wants to review that contract.

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

Thursday, November 13, 2008

Thursday, January 8, 2009

These will all be held by teleconference. The meeting times will be 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Rich Henderson and seconded by Jim Rachuy to adopt these meeting dates. Motion carried.

Evanne reminded the Board members of their 2008 challenge. She knew that several members have made their payment but encouraged others to do so soon. She suggested that quarterly payments may be an easier way to handle meeting their challenge.

Evanne noted that handouts on interns and the volunteer fair are all items for the Board’s information.

A motion to adjourn was made by Jim Rachuy and seconded by Jim Sime. Motion carried and the July 13, 2008 meeting of the TPE Board adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Winge  
TPE Business Manager



THE PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS  
Special Board Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, August 13, 2008  
7:00 pm  
via Teleconference

ACTION ITEMS IN RED

**ATTENDEES:**

Directors: Evanne Hunt, Jack Kussmaul, Nick Faessler, Jan Amberson, Jim Rogala, Karin Strenski, Jim Sime

Staff: Carol Winge

Visitors: Richard Oberle, Jim Rachuy

The special meeting of the Board was called to order at 7:02 pm by President Evanne Hunt. She noted that Board directors Richard Henderson and Karen Wollenburg were not able to participate in tonight's meeting due to family commitments.

Related Party Transactions: President Hunt reviewed the three items noted in the 2007 Audit report regarding related party transactions. The first item referred to payments for contractor services to a company that is co-owned by a chapter president. These payments totaled \$72,316. This item refers to the Southwest Chapter receiving services from the Driftless Land Stewardship. The Board was aware of this and approved it at a board meeting.

The third item noted in the Audit under Related Party Transactions was a board member donating land to TPE of \$325,500. The Board was aware of this and approved it at a board meeting.

It is the second item noted in the Audit that was of concern. During 2007 TPE made payments of \$14,000 for ecological consulting to a company solely owned by the president of another chapter. The Board was not aware of this.

President Hunt reminded the Directors of TPE Bylaws Section 11 regarding compensation for elected officers. It states that elected officers shall not receive compensation for serving as officers. Officers may receive reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in connection with corporate matters, provided that such reimbursement is authorized by the affirmative vote of a majority of directors then in office. She also reminded the Directors of the Conflict of Interest form that all Directors sign when they are elected to office.

The newly elected Directors had not received this form as yet. Secretary Jan Amberson will send the Conflict of Interest form to the newly elected Directors for them to read and sign.

Director Jim Sime suggested that all Board members should sign this form annually. It will serve as a reminder to everyone. Board members felt that the staff should also sign this form annually.

**ACTION:** It was agreed that Secretary Jan Amberson will send the Conflict of Interest form to all Board members by email, including staff, with instructions to print it out, sign it, date it and mail it to Carol Winge for filing in the central office. It will be a policy going forward that the Conflict of Interest form will be signed immediately following TPE's Annual Board Meeting.

President Evanne Hunt urged board members to read this form carefully. Board members have the responsibility to maintain the highest level of credibility and transparency.

Director Karin Strenski noted that every month Jim Rachuy sent detailed financial reports to TPE Central. She wanted the Board to know that. Karin Strenski noted that Jim Rachuy is no longer an officer of the TPE Board nor of the Northwest Illinois Chapter.

Director Jim Sime asked what had happened to cause the Trial Balance changes. Carol Winge replied that she had talked with our accountant about that and she indicated that some chapters had not gotten their year end financial reports in on time. The delay caused her to complete a trial balance, submit it to the auditor and then make changes to the trial balance when the missing information did arrive from the Chapters. Director Jim Sime noted that Chapters with local accounts are only required to file financial reports quarterly. That would cause this information to arrive late.

**ACTION:** Treasurer Nick Faessler will review the February 1 deadline date for chapters to submit their year end reports to the accountant with Claudia and confirm that this date is correct.

**ACTION:** Treasurer Nick Faessler will ask the Chapter Treasurers to fill in any gaps for the 2008 audit.

Director Jim Sime went on to point out that the Audit Report notes that Johnson Block gives no assurance on internal controls.

**ACTION:** Director Jack Kussmaul will call the auditors to find out what improvements regarding internal controls they would suggest.

President Evanne Hunt asked if there were any questions about the services Grassroots Conservation is providing to NIPE. Services include site selection, inventory, planning and management; project design, coordination and implementation; equipment acquisition, storage, transport and maintenance; fundraising, grant writing, public relations; member communications, partner liaison and landowner contracts; vendor management, general accounting and budgeting; office, e-mail and website services. Director Karin Strenski explained that NIPE is a volunteer based Chapter but Jim Rachuy

performs ecological services and NIPE does pay him for his services. The money used to pay Jim comes from restoration projects and some comes from grants. The Chapter has income from services rendered to other nonprofit organizations, donations and the Chapter Board decides how these funds are spent. She also noted that NIPE has provided Central with income and expense reports on a monthly basis.

**ACTION: Director Jack Kussmaul will ask the auditor what a nonprofit can provide in services to other organizations.**

**ACTION: Treasurer Nick Faessler will double check with our accountant to be sure she is receiving the monthly income and expense reports from the NIPE Chapter.**

President Evanne Hunt stated that the NIPE Chapter has resolved our current situation with the resignation of Jim Rachuy from the TPE and Chapter Boards but we want to be sure we don't have these situations in the future.

Director Jim Sime noted in summary that his Chapter feels in the dark about finances. We need to do a better job in making sure Chapters are comfortable with financial reports and information.

President Evanne Hunt reminded Board members that our next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 17. We will use the same teleconference service.

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Director Jack Kussmaul and seconded by Director Nick Faessler to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Winge

THE PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, September 17, 2008  
7:00 pm  
via Teleconference

ACTION ITEMS IN RED

**1. Roll Call**

**ATTENDEES:**

Directors: Evanne Hunt, Jack Kussmaul, Nick Faessler, Jim Rogala, Richard Henderson, Karin Strenski, Bonnie Maffitt (for Dan Mueller), Jim Sime, Ann Woldt

Staff: Carol Winge, Victoria Oberle

Directors Absent: Jan Amberson, Dan Mueller, Gary Eldred

The meeting of the Board was called to order at 7:02 pm by President Evanne Hunt.

**2. Meeting Minutes**

July 13 Board Meeting Minutes: Rich Henderson noted that paragraph 6 under item #3, Treasurer's Report, be changed to read: "The Board wishes to respect Chapters' use of Chapter allocated funds but does not want to hinder future Boards if they need that money for the organization."

Evanne Hunt noted that officer positions are for two years. Change Item #2 title to Election of 2008-2010 TPE Officers and change the dates in both paragraphs 1 and 2 under this subheading.

On page 4, Item #8, Evanne Hunt noted that the language in the second sentence be changed to read: "Of the six projects presented in our application, the Foundation was most interested in the IHM Prairie Pasture project to purchase title to five acres of prairie pasture adjacent to a 63-acre TPE preserve."

A motion was made by Rich Henderson and seconded by Jim Rogala to accept the minutes of the July 13, 2008 Board meeting as amended. Motion carried.

July 13 Annual Membership Meeting Minutes: Rich Henderson changed the word "owners" to "donors" in the last sentence of paragraph 1. Evanne Hunt noted that the dates for the TPE officers in paragraph 2 needed to be changed to 2008-2010.

A motion was made by Rich Henderson and seconded by Karin Strenski to accept the minutes of the July 13, 2008 Annual Membership Meeting as amended. Motion carried.

August 13 Special Board Meeting Minutes: Jack Kussmaul noted under Related Party Transactions, second to last sentence, the word Steward should be changed to Stewardship. Rich

Henderson noted the last sentence of this paragraph and the following paragraph need to have added, “and approved it at a Board meeting.”

A motion was made by Jack Kussmaul and seconded by Jim Sime to accept the minutes of the August 13 Special Board Meeting as amended. Motion carried.

### **3. Board Appointments**

Evanne Hunt announced that there are two At-Large vacancies on the Board of Directors. Rich Henderson nominated Richard Oberle for one of the vacancies. Richard is a very active member serving on several TPE committees. A motion was made by Rich Henderson and seconded by Jack Kussmaul to appoint Richard Oberle as an At-Large Member of the Board. The motion carried unanimously.

Board members discussed possible candidates for the remaining At-Large vacancy. **Evanne Hunt appointed an ad hoc nominating committee to recommend candidates for one vacant At-Large Board position. Rich Henderson and Jim Sime volunteered to serve on the committee and encouraged other Chapters to participate as well. Evanne Hunt asked Board members to let her know in the next week if they are willing to serve on this committee.**

### **4. Appoint Trustees to Land Management Trust Agency**

Evanne Hunt noted that there are two vacant Trustee positions for the Land Management Trust Agency. Rich Henderson is the only Trustee serving at this time. A motion was made by Evanne Hunt and seconded by Jim Sime to appoint Jack Kussmaul and Earl Mihlbauer to fill the two Trustee vacancies for the Land Management Trust Agency. The motion carried unanimously.

### **5. Treasurer’s Report**

Nick Faessler asked if there were any questions from the Board regarding the August 31, 2008 Statement of Financial Position. Evanne Hunt noted that Account 120 still shows two Chapters having a combined checking account and these need to be separated. Evanne Hunt asked how much cash does TPE central have available. Nick Faessler replied \$90,000 in cash. Cash on hand for the entire organization is \$376,481.34.

Rich Henderson asked if line 311 includes field equipment. Should it be a part of 310? Should it be listed under Equity? He also noted that the amounts reflected in accounts 360, 365 and 370 do not match with Account 149 and wanted to know why.

There were no questions from the Board regarding the August 31, 2008 Statement of Activities.

Nick Faessler presented the August 31, 2008 Statement of Activities and Budget Comparison-Central Report. Evanne Hunt noted that we are really doing well in sales. Jim Sime noted that the book sales will soon drop off because we have a limited supply of “Wildflowers of Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest” remaining. Rich Henderson recommended we raise the price on the remaining books.

In reviewing the Central Check Register as of September 12, 2008, Board members asked why the “Checks” column and the “Deposits” columns seem to be reversed.

**Nick Faessler will contact the accountant to get these answers and report back to the Board.**

A motion was made by Rich Henderson and seconded by Jack Kusmaul to accept the August 31, 2008 Treasurer’s Report. Motion carried.

Report on Chapter Treasurer Meeting: Nick Faessler briefly reported on the Chapter Treasurer meeting held on Monday, September 8, 2008. There were lots of questions and Chapter Treasurers really found it helpful to have the opportunity to talk with one another. All forms they need have now been date stamped and posted on the web so that we all use one form. Nick Faessler noted the importance of all Chapters submitting all original receipts to Central. Evanne Hunt suggested that Nick Faessler have another “touch base” meeting with the Chapter Treasurers in October.

Jim Sime asked about the request from Southwest Chapter to have a local checking account. The Southwest Chapter is following the rules in the Treasurers Handbook. The Handbook states this as a rule. Rich Henderson proposed that this item be submitted to the Board for action. Jim Sime stated that the request was submitted to the Central Treasurer.

**ACTION: Nick Faessler will review the request; review the Chapter Treasurer Handbook and review Board minutes on this issue.**

Establish policy that Trust expenses be paid directly from Trust: A recommendation was made by our accountant that Trust expenses be paid directly from the Trust. She provided an expense budget for 2008 for the Board’s reference. Rich Henderson said it was his hope that monies the Trust is generating stay with the Trust. If the Trust pays these expenses, it will use all money being earned. He hopes that TPE would cover expenses so that all monies earned in the Trust would stay in the Trust for land management. Board members felt that the bank trust fees and IRS reports should be paid directly from the Trust. At some point when the Trust has large sums of money then other fees should also be paid directly from the Trust, but right now it would have a negative impact on the Trust. A motion was made by Rich Henderson and seconded by Karin Strenski that Land Management Trust expenses for legal fees, government filing fees, business management fees and accounting fees be absorbed by The Prairie Enthusiasts, Inc. Tax preparation fees and bank trust fees will be paid directly by the Trust. The motion carried.

Explore other financial institution programs: In response to concern expressed by some Board members after the 2007 audit report indicated that TPE had funds in excess of \$100,000 in one financial institution that were not covered by FDIC insurance, Carol Winge contacted some institutions to see what alternatives there might be to make sure funds were insured. The Credit Union did not offer any alternatives. Associated Bank of Madison did have a Certificate of Deposit Account Registry Service (CDARS) that allows you to invest your short-term CD funds in excess of \$100,000 and still be eligible for the security of FDIC insurance on every dollar. Your deposits will earn CD-level returns and can grow consistently at attractive rates. Nick Faessler noted he recently opened a CDAR account for another business and thought this was a very fine program. Carol Winge stated again, this was simply exploration on her part to see what is available for TPE to consider.

Evanne Hunt authorized Carol Winge and Nick Faessler to gather further information, such as costs of the program/rate of return/what other banks might offer this, etc., for insuring the security of TPE funds and report back to the Board at its November meeting.

## **6. Discussion to expand TPE focus**

Jim Sime wants the Board to understand how important he feels it is to broaden our focus beyond disturbance (fire dependant) ecosystems. Extreme topography in the Driftless region dictates that many significant parcels also contain equilibrium and slowly evolving habitats; Fens, Cliffs, Pine Relics, Climax forests, etc. He would like the Board to make some positive statement to cover these topographies. Jim Rogala felt our focus was good and there are other agencies out there that will cover other topographies. Rich Henderson suggested we not change the focus of TPE but rather review TPE ranking criteria to see if it is flexible enough to cover unusual plant communities as they come along. Jim Sime did feel that there are enough other agencies out there to cover unprotected lands. Bonnie Maffitt noted that there is a lot of agency collaboration out there especially in the bluff area so that we do not need to overlap.

**ACTION:** Jack Kussmaul will send the ranking criteria to Carol Winge. She will send it out to the Board for their review.

## **7. TPE sending out notices to membership on conservation land for sale**

Carol Winge provided the board with action taken by the Board on this subject in February of 2004. Rich Henderson indicated that we are trying to locate friendly buyers for conservation land and to reach out to our membership is a good resource. Rich Henderson recommended that the Land Protection Committee be assigned to draft a policy. In the interim using TPE tools (newsletter and website) to send out notices could be decided on a case by case basis using as our guideline the motion on record dated February 5, 2004.

**ACTION:** Evanne Hunt directed the Land Protection Committee draft a policy and bring it to the Board at its November 13, 2008 meeting.

## **8. Posting Board minutes on TPE website**

Evanne Hunt stated that the purpose of having a Board member from every Chapter is so Board members go back to their Chapters and disseminate the information from Board meetings to their Chapter members. The Board gets the agendas and minutes and they should be taking these back to their Chapters and sharing them.

Jack Kussmaul suggested that items of a sensitive nature could be handled in Closed Session and Closed Session items would not be made public, but otherwise, the minutes should be posted.

Rich Henderson stated there are three areas of sensitive information: land negotiations; personnel; and board nominations before they are appointed. He also recommended that Board Minutes not be posted on the TPE website until they were approved.

Bonnie Maffitt challenged Board members to think about the types of things that would be of a sensitive nature and better handled in Closed Session.



It was agreed that Board minutes will be posted on the TPE website. Evanne Hunt again reminded the Board that all members are invited to attend these Board meetings, unless the Board adjourns to Closed Session. She encouraged Board members to invite their Chapter members to attend.

#### **9. Membership Dues/Donations Policy**

Rich Henderson recommended that the Finance and Fundraising Committees draft a policy on how to handle donations and membership renewals. He is concerned that if we do not renew memberships when donations are made, we will begin to lose donors. The donor is always right. There are donors that believe they are renewing their membership through their donation. We really need a policy to clear up chronic confusion.

**ACTION:** Evanne Hunt appointed an ad hoc committee to develop a donor policy. Ad Hoc committee members are: Jim Rogala, Bonnie Maffitt, Rich Henderson, Victoria Oberle.

#### **10. Update on 2009 IPAW Conference/TPE Banquet**

Evanne Hunt announced that this 2009 Conference and Banquet will be on Saturday, February 21, 2009 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Madison's far west side. The event hosts are IPAW and TPE. We do not have Chapter hosts for this event. She encouraged Board members to think about the silent auction and raffle. She announced there will be a TPE Board meeting on Sunday morning, February 22, 2009. She is going to encourage all committees to try to meet on Sunday following the Board meeting as well.

Chapters and Central should be thinking about annual awards: Central honors an Outstanding Contribution to Conservation Award; Chapters honor a Volunteer of the Year Award.

#### **11. 2008 Annual Appeal**

Evanne Hunt reported that the Fundraising Committee is beginning to work on the annual appeal and will be scheduling a meeting shortly.

#### **12. Board Challenge Reminder**

Bonnie Maffitt asked what this is and Evanne Hunt explained that all Board members are challenged to give a contribution to TPE Central beyond their dues and annual appeal contribution. There is no set amount rather it is something that is personally significant. It is better for TPE to go out to donors and be able to say that our entire Board contributes to our organization. The Board Challenge is only for the Board members and the contributions go to Central only, not to a Chapter or a project.

A motion to adjourn was made by Bonnie Maffitt and seconded by Jack Kussmaul. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol A. Winge  
TPE Business Manager



# **ADDENDUM TO MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 17 TPE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Wednesday, September 17, 2008**

### **Prairie Promoter**

This issue of the promoter had a “New Membership Form” included. The newsletter was sent to all non-members as well, in the hopes that reading the newsletter and learning more about our organization would encourage them to become members – this includes 184 individuals who made donations or who purchased items (books, predators, no mow signs, etc) over the past few years. Going forward, we will only include non-members that have donated or purchased items since the last issue.

### **Membership Statistics**

Members: 1085

New Members so far this year: 70

New Members from past years (January – September):

2007 – 62

2006 – 82

2005 – 71

2004 - 67

### **Plan for Overdue Members:**

We have 255 overdue members that we are sending newsletters and counting as “active members”. I am in the process of going through these overdue members and verifying accuracy. I’d like to review these members with the chapter presidents and get their suggestion on what to do next.

### **Changes already implemented:**

- 1) We sent out 469 renewal notices 2 weeks ago, and have received 95 renewals so far (\$9145.00).
- 2) Evanne has updated the renewal notice, included as a separate attachment, that will be sent in future mailings.
- 3) One suggestion was to include the ability for members to renew more than one year at a time as this is more convenient for some members for tax purposes. We do have some members that already do this on their own, including this on the renewal notice will allow all members to know this option is available.
- 4) Starting with the previous issue of the newsletter, we are now including their renewal date above their address. In this upcoming issue, we have also included a form for them to renew their membership.

### **Gameplan:**

- 1) Verify duplicates – Sometimes a check is received under a different name and entered into the database again. There are not many, but we want to rule this out before assuming a member is overdue.
- 2) Verify donations – We’ve had a few members who think they have paid. Upon researching, it turns out that they made a donation. (Annual Fund or to some other dedicated purpose) Some members feel that a donation should also count as a membership renewal. While we try to be clear in the difference in fund allocation, we also don’t want to alienate our donors. Evanne has ok’d me to update the date on any members that think their AF donation was also a renewal, this will be a “renewal date change only” we will not be reallocating funds. Also, before sending the spreadsheet to the chapter president, I will include the date, amount and fund of their last donation, to help us determine if their membership should be renewed.
- 3) Chapter President – Once I have completed the above items, I would like to send the chapter president a list of their overdue members to help instruct me as to what to do next. If it’s someone that is well known to the chapter, perhaps a phone call or a personal letter from the president might be helpful. Or I can prepare a final appeal letter thanking them for their support in the past and asking them to renew or to inactive their account. I will send this letter to the chapter president for approval before sending it out.

THE PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, November 13, 2008  
7:00 pm  
via Teleconference

ACTION ITEMS IN RED

**1. Roll Call**

**ATTENDEES:**

Directors: Evanne Hunt, Jack Kussmaul, Nick Faessler, Jan Amberson, Jim Rogala, Richard Henderson, Karin Strenski, Jim Sime, Ann Woldt, Richard Oberle

Staff: Carol Winge, Victoria Oberle

Guests: Jim Rachuy

Directors Absent: Dan Mueller, Gary Eldred

The meeting of the Board was called to order at 7:01 pm by President Evanne Hunt.

**2. Meeting Minutes**

September 17, 2008 Board Meeting Minutes: Evanne Hunt asked if the issue from our last board meeting to consider broadening the TPE focus had been resolved. Jim Sime said this issue has been addressed to his satisfaction. Jack Kussmaul asked that the discussion of TPE sending out notices to membership on conservation land for sale be placed on the January Board agenda. Nick Faessler asked that the word “renewal” be changed to “renew” under Item 9, second sentence. A motion was made by Rich Henderson and seconded by Jack Kussmaul to accept the minutes of the September 17, 2008 Board meeting as amended. Motion carried.

**3. Treasurer’s Report**

Nick Faessler presented the September 30, 2008 Statement of Financial Position. A new addition to this report is a summary sheet reflecting totals for the major sections of the Financial Statement. Carol prepared this report in hopes that it would make it easier for the Board to understand. The new summary report was very well received by all. Nick reported that cash on hand at Central (checking and savings) as of September 30, 2008 is \$100,621.47. Nick also noted that the NIPE and Prairie Smoke checking accounts have now been separated out. Contributions are \$1,000, a bit behind the budget but noted that most come in at the end of the year so we will catch up. A motion was made by Ann Woldt and seconded by Jan Amberson to accept the September 30, 2008 Treasurer’s Report. Motion carried.

Report on Chapter Request for local checking account: Past Board action on this request was presented to the board. The Board approved a policy on September 13, 2006 that all Wisconsin chapters would close their local accounts and consolidate their checking accounts within TPE’s central account. Therefore the request by the Southwest Chapter for a local checking account unfortunately had to be rejected. Jim Sime noted that his Chapter only wants to have access to

their checking account activity on line. They want to be certain they have funds available when checks are issued for payments of bills.

Carol Winge briefly spoke about meetings she has had with Associated Bank of Madison. She met with them to discuss their CDAR program but also talked with them about their checking and savings account options. She did not have enough time to put together a formal proposal to the board for this meeting but talked about the on line service that Associated offers. If we should decide to move our accounts to Associated, aside from other benefits, one that she was particularly excited about is that their on line banking provides for us to set up different levels of access. This would allow Chapters to have read only access to their accounts so they can review activities whenever they wish. She will provide a proposal from Associated at the Board meeting in January.

Jim Sime also stated his dismay that the Treasurer Handbook he was working with was a draft and not a document adopted by the Board. Evanne Hunt apologized that Jim had a draft copy and noted that the Finance Committee is working on preparing and submitting a revised draft to the board. Carol Winge noted that a Finance Committee meeting had been scheduled but had to be cancelled. The Finance Committee does have a copy of the draft, however, and will be working on this document to present to the Board just as soon as they possibly can.

#### **4. Endowment Fund Report**

The Board members reviewed the investment report for October 30, 2008, submitted by Jon Traver.

#### **5. Membership Report**

Victoria Oberle reported that beginning January 1 we will be sending out monthly renewal notices. We tried quarterly but it was not working well. By sending notices out monthly we will have a more stable monthly revenue stream. Also membership renewals will be received in a more timely fashion. Currently we can have members whose memberships expired several months before they receive a renewal notice causing them concern that their membership lapsed.

Victoria Oberle also noted that we will not be sending notices out during the time of our Annual Appeal. We will make sure there are no membership renewal dates two months prior and three months after the Annual Appeal is taking place.

Victoria Oberle reported there are 1,099 members. Not all have renewed. She asked for feedback from the Board on what they would like to see in a membership report.

**ACTION:** Board members, please provide feedback to Victoria regarding membership report content.

A motion was made by Jan Amberson and seconded by Ann Woldt to accept the membership report. Motion carried.

#### **6. Fundraising and Endowment Committee Report**

Richard Oberle reported that so far \$8,000 has been received in response to our 2008 Annual Appeal.

## **7. Land Protection Committee**

Jack Kussmaul presented a request from the Southwest Chapter to submit an Offer to Purchase to Iowa County to purchase a parcel of land in Iowa County. The Southwest Chapter wants to purchase the land because it is becoming a degraded parcel when it could be a very good parcel. The terms of the Offer to Purchase would be that no money will be tendered with the offer. The purchase price will be whatever sum TPE receives from state stewardship funds for this purchase, which may be less than 50% of the appraised value. If no stewardship funds are granted, the offer will be void. Iowa County, at closing, would give back 20% of the sale price to be used for an endowment for the property. Jack Kussmaul also noted that there has been no mention of paying any real estate tax so at this point there is no commitment for real estate taxes. The Land Protection Committee has approved this request by the Southwest Chapter. A motion was made by Jack Kussmaul and seconded by Richard Oberle that the Board approve the request of the Southwest Chapter to proceed with their efforts to purchase the parcel of land. Motion carried.

## **8. Ad Hoc Nominating Committee**

Evanne Hunt announced she has not done anything with this as yet and asked that it be moved to the next Board agenda.

## **9. Designate Chapter Funds as Temporary Restricted**

Karin Strenski reported that this item was on the agenda in follow-up to the July 13, 2008 Board meeting where Jim Rachuy was assigned the task of drafting up a motion for the Board's consideration. Karin Strenski made a motion that the policy of The Prairie Enthusiasts corporation (TPE) be that individual chapter funds (monies raised by and for a chapter of TPE) are permanently restricted for use by that chapter, and except as may be prohibited by law or government regulation, the management of individual chapter funds is the sole duty and responsibility of the individual chapters.

Evanne Hunt felt that this issue should go to the Finance Committee for review and recommendation to the Board. Karin Strenski noted that the Finance Committee has not met on this issue.

Jim Rachuy noted that the motion is basically a restatement of our current policy. Nick Faessler stated that this is one organization and money is allocated to chapters. We have never gone to chapters to use their money. Evanne Hunt asked what does permanently restricted mean. Rich Henderson said that we need to use correct accounting terminology. Any money that comes in for a specific purpose must be used for that purpose. He would like the Finance Committee to work with Claudia on the correct terminology.

**ACTION: Rich Henderson will try to draft up the intent of this motion and get it to the Finance Committee so they can work with a written intent and bring it back to the Board with correct terminology and intent.**

**10. Update on TPE Banquet and IPAW Conference – February 21, 2009**

Evanne Hunt reported that the registration materials are out. Board members should have received the mailing. She noted that IPAW has hired Carol Winge to handle registration. There is a block of rooms reserved at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Madison, WI. Room rate is \$109 single/double. Carol Benish will coordinate the silent auction/raffle again this year. Information will be out soon. Evanne Hunt proposed that we have a board meeting on Sunday, February 22 and we meet informally at Jim Sime's home on Friday evening, February 20. BYOB.

**ACTION:** Evanne Hunt will send out a reminder email to everyone about the Friday evening informal gathering. The time will be from 7:00 – 10:00ish pm.

**11. Midwest Land Conservation Conference, March 12-14, 2009**

We have received sponsorship information from Gathering Waters for the Midwest Land Conservation Conference. With a basic \$250 level sponsorship we would receive one conference registration plus have a table-top display. Rich Henderson urged Board members to attend this conference. It is a very very good one. The Board agreed to pay the \$250 level sponsorship and that Carol Winge receive the sponsorship registration and plan to attend.

**ACTION:** Carol Winge will send conference information to the Board for their review.

Board members talked about the conference dial in service we are using. They asked that we explore other options that are available to see if we can find a better and more affordable service.

**ACTION:** Have Carol Winge check into other conference services.

Evanne Hunt reminded everyone of upcoming Board meetings. January 8, 2009 is our next scheduled meeting by telephone conference call. February 20, we will plan on an informal gathering at Jim Sime's home. February 22, we will have a formal board meeting at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Madison, WI.

February 22 would be an excellent opportunity for committees to meet also. We have meeting space set aside and Evanne Hunt encouraged that committees take advantage of being together for the annual banquet to meet. Committee chairs should contact Carol Winge to make arrangements.

A motion to adjourn was made by Rich Henderson and seconded by Karin Strenski. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Winge  
TPE Business Manager