

Minutes for November 19, 2025 Board Meeting over Zoom

A. Call to order/Roll call – 6:12 p.m.

X	Jack Kussmaul	X	Gary Eldred	X	Ross Shrago
X	Gary Adams	X	Becky Fernette	X	Roger Smith
X	Bob Costanza	X	Steve Querin-Schultz	O	Kay Wienke
X	Lynnette Dornak				

Guest Attendees: Mark Leonhart, Tom Hunt, Tim Gander

Acknowledgement: Formal recognition of Gary Eldred for his recent book publication.
Formal shout out to Eldred- book publication

B. Approval of minutes from September 14, 2025

- Motion to approve: Steve Querin-Schultz
- Second: Ross Shrago
- Discussion: None
- Motion carried

C. Treasurer's report - Steve Querin-Schultz

a. Unrestricted balance: \$99,339.87

Restricted balance: \$17,368.66

Note: Sylvan Road currently has a negative balance.

b. Site stewards - submit proposed budgets by 12/31/05 to LMC

c. Committee chairs - submit proposed budgets by 12/31/05 to Becky/Steve

Budget reminders:

- Site stewards must submit proposed budgets to LMC by December 31, 2025.
- Committee chairs must submit proposed budgets to Becky& Steve by the same date.
- This is a new budgeting process; stewards should over-estimate needs due to uncertainty.
- Budgets can be amended mid-fiscal year.
- Fiscal year runs April 1 – March 31.
 - Treasurer's reports run one month behind.

D. Chapter Support Representative report - Becky (Kay not in attendance)

a. Personnel changes at CS

- Deb Behrens is no longer with Chapter Support.
- Jessica B. is now acting director.
- Kelly Billig has also departed; staffing coverage is being evaluated.
- New hire: Mark Van der Linden, Operations Coordinator.

b. CS Board Succession Plan

- Site monitoring reports should be submitted to Mark (reminder prompted by Becky).
- Kay is serving on the Chapter Support Board succession planning committee—a plan does not currently exist, and the goal is to prepare future board leadership.
- New TPE merchandise is now available on the website.
- Becky has been assisting by answering phone and forwarding emails. Next Chapter Support Board meeting is scheduled for later this month.
- Next chapter support board meeting is later this month
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E. Committee updates

a. Land Management - Jack

- i. Rock Ridge proposal: Withdrawn; landowner opted to work with DALC. Ross asked if the change affects TPE; consensus was that stewardship by anyone is what matters.
- ii. Sime Bald/MVC update: Progress continues; still moving through necessary steps.
- iii. Cabela's grant: Proposal planned for Iris Drive. Bob R will outline needs; Becky will assist with the grant application.
- iv. Gift of UTV: Donor initially approached E-S Chapter, they declined. CS working with donor to gift UTV to SWC. Jessica B. is following up on the donation. Becky agreed to handle storage & maintenance responsibilities.
- v. Two donors plan to donate for the purchase of /water tank/pump to use with UTV, and to purchase additional fire equipment.
- vi. Chapter Support identified a grant to purchase PPE for burns. Our chapter requested:
 - 8 Nomex jumpsuits (4 sizes)
 - 8 Helmets
 - 8 Radios
 - Awaiting further updates.

b. Events

- i. Bat presentation - Jack/Becky
 - "Batastic!," presented by Jeff Huebschmann (UW–Platteville) and hosted at SW Tech, drew 30+ attendees.
 - Becky submitted event write-ups to local journals; awaiting response.
 - Future presentations: Possible topics include neonics; Clean Water may provide a program.
- ii. Upcoming events - Kay/Jack
 - Holiday party
 - Location: Sportsman's Lounge & Supper Club.
 - Live music option: Friend of Steve & Martha, playing 60s–80s, 1.5 hrs/\$200.
 - Meal cost: \$25 (with tip/tax).
 - Space concerns: Music would be in the bar area, not the dining room.
 - Becky suggested a fun "Ugly Sweater" theme.
 - Could offset music cost via ticket pricing.

c. Scholarship - tabled until 2026

- Scholarship discussion tabled until 2026.
- Lynnette will draft a student write-up.

- d. Barn – Becky
 - Continued work includes kitchen finishing and weatherproofing.
 - Acquired a lockable metal cabinet for PPE storage.
 - Two contractors will inspect the barn over winter to discuss foundation stabilization and security upgrades.
 - Significant volunteer help received from James Haas (free Masonite) and George (donated lumber).

F. Site steward updates

- a. Borah Creek - Steve Q-S
 - Extensive forestry mowing completed; slightly over budget but created a manageable unit.
 - Burn breaks mowed; need widening before burn season.
 - Seed spread.
 - Fuel tank for diesel now available.
- b. Bush Clover - Gray E.
 - Fire break mowed; site ready for spring burn.
 - No woody cutting/treatment needed.
- c. Double Oak
 - Work party held Nov. 15; focus on burn breaks.
 - Spring burn planned.
 - Continued seed collection and invasive control.
 - Ross assisted; burn breaks still need refinement.
- d. Eldred - Ross
 - Posted blaze-orange hunting signs.
 - Contacted Quercus & Adaptive Restoration for spring burn; both are busy.
 - Seeding planned for the far north/lower slope using seed collected earlier this year.
 - Removing “punji sticks” with help from George.
 - Considering revising hunting policy for next year.
 - Work party planned for Dec. 6; notice to be drafted for Martha.
- e. Feist
 - Ongoing seed collection with volunteers
 - Large west-side area cleared.
 - Work parties scheduled for Dec. 3 & Dec. 20 (brush pile prep & clearing).
 - Expansion will pause after Dec. 3.
- f. Iris Drive – Bob
 - Seed collecting underway.
 - Total contributions: 15 volunteers, 128 hours.
 - Nov. 10: Seed run through hammer mill by Becky, Ross, James H., and Bob.
 - Frost seeding planned for December.
 - Seeking sawdust for seed spreading.
 - Gary Adams created a trail with a tractor—will serve as a fire break but needs shaping over winter/spring.
 - Winter invasive brush control planned.
 - Located free tarps to cover brush piles to prevent snow accumulation.
- g. Sylvan Road – Tom
 - Appreciated Steve's help with tractor and grapple bucket.
 - Burn piles ready; burn pending.

- Burn breaks mowed but need improvement; large perimeter to maintain.
 - Removed a dump-truck load of wire.
 - Brush thinning ongoing in rugged oak woodlands.
 - Fencing still needs installation before freeze.
 - Over 20 hunters registered
- h. Thomas Wet – Becky
- Volunteers cleared fire breaks.
 - Burn postponed due to corn still present.
 - Consulting experts about rotating refugia areas, though no protected species may require them.
 - Reed canary grass remains a challenge due to downstream seed movement.
- i. Additional:
- Jack's property continues to progress. Recent survey and culvert installation completed. Communication with the chapter had stalled; Chris Miller responded after delays and will follow up with Jack.
- G. Other business
- a. Review of 2025 goals & 3 year plans/ **Establish new goals**
- Goals not due yet. Discussion included:
 - Operationalizing goals (e.g., barn improvements, joint work parties).
 - Progress on grants—still pending.
 - Article publication: strong progress; continue efforts.
- b. Member & volunteer recruitment update
- i. N.Richland/NE Vernon - Bob/Kay
- Coordinated by Bob and Kay.
- ii. Lone Rock – Becky
- Strong attendance (12–13).
 - Property tour + lunch at local B&B.
 - Established email listserv for local coordination.
 - Tim Gander will serve as coordinator.
 - Positive outcomes for collaboration and engagement.
- iii. Future meetups
- Planned for Prairie du Chien (Marjie Bennett).
 - Potential Gays Mills meetup.
 - Interest in engaging Iowa County members as well.
- c. Scheduling of work parties
- i. Contact Bob C to schedule.
- d. Steward photos & brief bio (Steve, Ross, James)
- i. Aim to assemble steward photos and short bios for inclusion in work-party notices. Becky and Martha will coordinate.
- H. New business - Discussion/Decision
- a. Prairie Discovery event(s) - Summer 2026
- Last year's event was successful.
 - Plan to hold 1–2 events, targeted toward people new to prairies to encourage volunteerism and support.
 - Potential locations: Iris Drive, Sylvan Road, and possibly Eldred

- b. Prairie tours
 - Offers received from Richard Graff (Potosi) and Marty Greff
 - No need to limit tours; suggestions welcome.
- c. New board member(s)
 - Need additional board and committee members.
 - Steve would like relief from some responsibilities.
 - Board encouraged to actively promote service opportunities.
 - Membership currently around 160–165.

Other:

- WisCorps Volunteer Proposal:
 - Jim Rogola (Chapter Support) exploring the option of a shared WisCorps volunteer.
 - Our chapter would receive 25% of the volunteer's time (~10 hrs/week).
 - Would begin Sept. 1, 2026; chapter would contribute to cost.
 - Becky will forward Jim's email; chapter expresses interest but will not commit yet.
- I. Action items review
 - No action items identified.
 - No additional business.
- J. Adjournment 7:24 p.m.

2025 Goals

- #1 We will continue to make improvements to the barn at Borah Creek to make it suitable to hold events there and to safely and cleanly store Chapter equipment.
- #2 We will investigate having joint work parties with other groups. #3 We will apply for and be awarded two grants this year.
- #4 We will publish 2-3 articles in local or online publications. (MET)

Three-year Plan

1. Holding 6 events/programs per year.
2. Getting 2-5 new members at each event.
3. Adding QR codes on our signs.
4. Holding fundraising events.

Upcoming meetings:

- January 21, 2026 via Zoom at 6 p.m.
- Holiday Party - Jan. 31 - Social hour 4:30, Supper at 5:30 p.m.
- February 18-20, 2026 via Whova: Annual Conference: Biodiversity from the Ground Up
- March 18 via Zoom at 6 p.m.
- May 16 - location TBD
- July 18 - location TBD