

**Land Conservation Committee
Ash Creek Tour
October 30, 2018**

The Richland County Land Conservation Committee met at 3:00 p.m. at the Ash Creek Community Forest parking lot off of State Highway 80 to tour the property. Present were Steve Williamson, Chad Cosgrove, Marc Couey, Melissa Luck, Shaun Murphy-Lopez, John Turgason, Cathy Cooper, Kent Marshall, Ken Anderson, Todd Kenefick and Juli Van Cleve.

Those present got into several pickups and drove onto the property. The first stop was just past the first tree/Shrub planting. The cropland was in CRP until a few years ago. Most of the fields were planted to trees except one. Todd and Juli talked about the trees planted, future wood harvests and woodland management that needs to be done. Ken discussed the streambank protection work done and the road improvements that were done several years ago. Todd, Steve and Ken talked about the fact that DNR used to take some of the brook trout out to use the eggs and milt to stock other streams. The committee discussed what activities are allowed, that ATV's are not allowed, and the possibility about park shelters. Camping was also discussed but because of the remoteness, there is a concern with campfires.

The group then drove back to the big spring area. Items discussed included the prairie, dams, and adjacent property owners. Cathy brought up the trouble we've had with beavers and that we have had to remove the dams and have someone trap the beavers. It was asked why we don't want beavers and Cathy told the group that beavers warm up the water and warm water is bad for trout.

We then went back out to Highway 80 and traveled to the entrance off of Mutch Lane. It was noticed that all that was left of the boundary fence between Dorn's and the county are the end posts. The information sign needs to be replaced. Trail mowing, signs and publicity for the property was discussed. Many of the members didn't know about the property before being on the committee. It was suggested that some new information signs be developed. Also, that pamphlets be put together about the property to take to the visitor center. Other ideas included map boards to be strategically located on the property. John Turgason left at this time.

The group then drove to the entrance off of Hillview Drive. Todd and Juli talked about a future tree sale of some of the conifers to thin out the tree plantation. It was discussed that after the tree sale, a small parking lot could be installed to get people off of the road. We then walked down to the dam. Ken discussed the repair that is needed on the auxiliary spillway. This winter, Ken will work on a repair design. The committee will have it bid out.

The committee adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Cathy Cooper
County Conservationist