



DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

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Brian Preston, Director

Board Members:

Pat Rea
Jay Wickham
Stacy Conforti
George Davis
Jackie Kehr

OCTOBER 20, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

DUBUQUE COUNTY AREA TOUR:

The tour began at 8:00 AM, present: Pat Rea, Stacy Conforti, George Davis, Jackie Kehr. Staff Members: Brian Preston, Nate Sisler and Lisa Schroeder. Areas visited; Swiss Valley Park, Massey Marina, Interstate Power Company Forest Preserve, Bowstring Wildlife Area, McCarthy Wildlife Area, Fillmore Recreation Area, Miller/McGrath Wildlife Area, Heritage Trail at Graf continued along the trail to Heritage Pond, Proving Grounds Recreation Area, and Heritage Trail along Flexsteel Site, returned to Swiss Valley Nature Center at 3:50 PM. While touring each area the Board members observed projects completed within the last few years and discussed improvements to be implemented in the upcoming years.

ROLL CALL: Regular monthly meeting was called to order by Pat Rea at 4:02 P.M.

In person meeting at the Swiss Valley Nature Center with a Zoom link,

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89397151612?pwd=RTIOV0IRQjhLQjhFR3dpV2E2b29rQT09>

Meeting ID: 893 9715 1612; Passcode: 623040

Board Members Present: Pat Rea, Stacy Conforti, George Davis, Jackie Kehr and Jay Wickham

Staff Members Present: Brian Preston, Nate Sisler, Megan Willenbring and Lisa Schroeder.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Dale Leslein, 17291 Asbury Rd., Durango IA 52039 commented about an event that Sundown Mountain held called Jeeps on the Mountain. Leslein was upset about them cutting trees down driving thru the creek and the safety of the event. Leslein said he has drone footage that the DNR was reviewing at this time but would be happy to share with the board. Wickham said no formal action could be taken at this time but we would put on the agenda for November.

Ry Meyer, 22404 Mud Lake Rd., Dubuque, IA 52001, asked the board to improve the Purple Martin colony bird house at Mud Lake Park. Meyer said the need to install the pole for the bird house is immediate. The pole needs to be set before winter. The bird house could be constructed over winter and placed on the pole in the spring. Meyer lives close to the park and has his own Purple Martin colony and recorded data. Meyer would volunteer his services to install the pole and build the bird house if the Conservation Board would pay for the materials. Wickham again reminded everyone no formal action could be taken without the item being added to the agenda. Wickham felt this was worth discussing but would need to be added to the November Agenda.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Motion to approve the September 22, 2022 meeting minutes as presented was made by Wickham and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried.

SET PUBLIC HEARING FOR CATFISH CREEK RESTORATION PHASE 2:

Preston suggested setting the public hearing at the Swiss Valley Nature Center for November 17th at 4:00 PM. We had a public hearing for the project and after receiving over budget bids only approved phase 1 to start. Phase 2 was approved in the FY 2023 budget for \$225,000.00. Motion to approve public hearing

for Catfish Creek Restoration Phase 2 for Thursday, November 17th at 4:00 PM was made by Wickham and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried.

PERMISSION TO SOLICIT BIDS FOR CATFISH CREEK RESTORATION PHASE 2:

Bids would be due and opened on November 15th so RDg can review and make sure all criteria is met. Then on November 17th after the public hearing a bid tab would be presented for the board to review and decide from that point how to proceed. The playscape is an optional bid to be considered if the primary bid would come in below budget. This can be decided after reviewing the bids. Kehr would like to explore what the staff could do with the playscape to include more options. Preston said he has the permit for this project and the estimated completion time would be April 30, 2023. Wickham asked if this project would be able to be completed during winter months. Preston said most of the project involved dirt work and the weather shouldn't be an issues unless we had unusually cold or snowy months which then we would extend the completion date. This time frame allows for less disturbance during busy park months. Motion to approve soliciting bids for Catfish Creek Restoration Phase 2, with a deadline of November 15th, before 11:00 AM was made by Conforti and seconded by Wickham. Motion carried.

SET PUBLIC HEARING FOR IPC TRAILHEAD:

Preston suggested setting the public hearing at the Swiss Valley Nature Center for November 17th. Motion to set the public hearing for the IPC Trailhead for November 17th at the Swiss Valley Nature Center was made by Wickham and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried.

PERMISSION TO SOLICIT BIDS FOR IPC TRAILHEAD:

Public hearing is set for November 17th. The board would like to make sure the public has no concerns before proceeding. Motion to table approval for soliciting bids for the IPC Trailhead to the December meeting was made by Conforti and seconded by Kehr. Motion carried.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Preston went over some highlights of the Conservation Departments Annual Report for fiscal year 2022. A few suggestions were made to enhance the report. Wickham loved the volunteer section of the report. Kehr asked questions on the budgeted amounts verses actual amounts. Preston prefers to be conservative on the budget. Wickham said in the past the supervisors have offered departments carry over instead of losing the funds. Budget amendments help shift the funds where needed. Davis said he would like to see us ask for more in the future. Complete projects now instead of later. The intended use of this report is to let the Supervisors know what we have completed. Next month we will review the budget for FY2023 and FY2024. Wickham would like more time spent on the proposed budget. Davis doesn't want to hold back, let the supervisors say no. Rea said looking at wages being increased. Conforti said we need to keep people. Motion to approve the FY2022 Annual Report with changes was made by Kehr and seconded by Davis. Motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT:

None

STAFF REPORTS:

DIRECTOR REPORT: Preston thanked the board for attending the tour. Felt it was very worthwhile and good use of time.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR REPORT: Sisler reported, very busy, one ranger short, on leave for surgery. Ash tree removal at Fillmore, Miller Cabin stained, fishing dock completed at the Miller McGrath pond, cutting trees off trails, pesticide training, firearms training, finished a small lean to for firewood at Finley's, direct seeding complete at Swiss Valley Nature Preserve and Heritage Pond was stocked with trout.

GREEN SUPERINTENDENT REPORT: Preston said Mike White was not able to be here but the golfing has been great this year. We have a long way to go removing dead ash trees. Davis said he thought the course looked great.

NATURALIST REPORT: Willenbring gave an update on programs. September 1,374 participants, a majority of those participants were the 5th grade Outdoor Adventures Program. October estimate 1,168 participants. School field trips will be starting and 3rd grade Outdoor Adventures. Upcoming programs;

Halloween Hike, forest schools, outdoor survival, John Deere Health Fair, prairie work days, Senior High School career fair, and star watching. November the Naturalist will be going into the schools for 2nd grade Outdoor Adventures Program.

OLD BUSINESS:

Davis wanted to say what an amazing tour today. Enjoyed seeing areas he was not able to visit until today. Beautiful inventory of the Dubuque County Conservation Areas. Kehr shared some playscape ideas using natural things that we have. Kids get excited to touch, feel and explore. Volunteers could possibly build into the spaces that exist now in our areas. Rea felt Leslein's comments were out of line. Conforti said an aerial map would be helpful. Clarity on who owns what area, who is responsible for what areas, and a better understanding of the responsibilities of those owners. Preston said we have no jurisdiction over the stream.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Motion to approve the October 2022 payables was made by Wickham and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 4:00 P.M.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn was made by Davis seconded by Wickham. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 5:27 P.M.

DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBER