



DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

13606 Swiss Valley Road
Peosta, IA 52068
563.556.6745
www.dubuquecountyia.gov

Brian Preston, Director
Board Members:
Stacy Conforti
George Davis
Jackie Kehr
Mark Wagner
Jim Pfeiler

JULY 27, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Dubuque County Conservation regular monthly meeting and work session was called to order by Stacy Conforti at 2:03 P.M. In person meeting at the Swiss Valley Nature Center with a Zoom link, <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84747987343?pwd=YmpDK2VKbWJKQ256d3R5Q2YvSDQxUT09>
Meeting ID: 847 4798 7343 Passcode: 522677

ROLL CALL:

Board Members Present: Stacy Conforti, George Davis, Jackie Kehr, Mark Wagner, and Jim Pfeiler.
Staff Members Present: Brian Preston, Nate Sisler, Kaytlan Moeller (Work Session), Jason Denlinger (Regular monthly meeting), Lisa Schroeder and Ed Raber, Planning & Development Director for Dubuque County.

WORK SESSION FOR FY 2025 PROJECT PRIORITIZATION AND LONG RANGE PLAN:

Using the long range plan as guidance the prioritization for 0-5 years was discussed and updated. Bankston pond restoration/ADA loop is in progress, need public input and possible start this fall. Finley's Landing access road improvements on hold, would like to work with the roads department when they redo Finley's Landing Road leading up to the park entrance, ADA access ability for restrooms/shower house and marina have not been started. Heritage Pond campground enhancements and development, we purchased land from Sageville so we are no longer leasing the ground. Heritage Trail – Durango parking and kayak access a priority but waiting on follow up with water trail plan, should have plan very soon. Heritage Trail – Twin Springs, tent platforms complete, kayak access waiting on water trail plan to have an opportunity to apply for grant funds. New Wine Park – cabins and electricity, money has been budgeted for electric upgrades, we also need plumbing upgrades, cabins are popular throughout the state and New Wine is one of the few campgrounds not in a flood zone. Miller Cabin is great but, no water is a limiting factor. Swiss Valley parking lot, entry and redevelopment was put on hold without the bond referendum. RDg had some alternative plans with possibly a one way, entry and exit. The parking and entry is a major safety concern for buses, events held at the center, a polling place amount of traffic at one time. Swiss Valley Nature Preserve – bridge replacement on Stream Bottom trail has not been completed, Woodland Trail improvements not complete, working on continued maintenance, we were unable to hire a trail crew this summer, tent platforms still a concern not everyone is excited about the idea, land acquisition possibly. Whitewater Canyon – pit latrine ordered, learning pavilion and land acquisition. Little Maquoketa Greenway in progress. Proving Grounds - frisbee golf not really feasible there anymore with mountain bike trails, rock climbing an issue with insurance. Interstate Power Preserve – Parking lot complete and pit latrine ordered. Park signage – updates, standardizing, DOT has to approve signage and we pay for the signs and DOT put the signs up. Staff – to manage and treat our areas. Education and cross training with the roads department. Moeller presented about media and marketing. Outreach is part of all county conservation positions. Marketing plan to narrow the focus of social media goals, objectives, other outlets. Budget for a marketing plan, social media/marketing position, partnering with outside organizations, and building relationships with neighboring land owners. Prioritization for FY 2025 as follows; Swiss Valley Nature Center – Parking, Heritage Trail/Pond/Campground – improvements, Heritage Trail Durango Access – follow up with water trail and options for funding, Heritage Trail – Twin Springs kayaking, New Wine upgrades and amenities, feasibility study for obtaining grant money, Whitewater Canyon learning pavilion, Proving Grounds expanding parking lot and adding water, Signage and Staff.

PUBLIC INPUT:

None

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Motion to approve the June 15, 2023 meeting minutes was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Kehr. Motion carried.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT PROPOSAL:

Eden Schrack, 3430 Kaufmann Ave., Dubuque, IA 52002, Troop 91. Replace shade shelter picnic tables at Heritage Pond. Eden choose the Heritage Pond because he likes to run on the trail and wanted to honor Carl Runde a scout who built the previous shade shelter picnic tables. Eden called Spahn and Rose for lumber prices and they offered him a discount. He also plans to do some fundraising. Pfeiler requested that this shelter picnic table be ADA accessible. Motion to approve Eden Schrack, Eagle Scout Project at Heritage Pond was made by Wagner and seconded by Davis. Motion carried.

SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION FOR PROVING GROUNDS:

Organization - TMBR, Proving Grounds, October 7, 2023, Fall Bicycle Festival from 12:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Would like to use the field next to the pavilion for additional parking. No fee will be charged, they will allow TMBR members to renew their membership. Motion to approve the special event application for TMBR's fall bicycle festival at the Proving Grounds on October 7th was made by Davis and seconded by Pfeiler. Motion carried.

SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION FOR HERITAGE TRAIL:

Applicant – Wayne Kenniker, Heritage Trail, September 3rd, October 1st, November 5th and December 3rd, 2023, allow ATV/UTV/Golf carts from Durango to Dyersville from 2:00 PM to 6 PM. Preston said we have never closed the Heritage Trail for a special event in the past. Kenniker asked the Conservation Board to provide insurance for the event. Preston said the insurance company said no and if we choose to proceed they would increase our rates. National Parks Service has some say over the trail use. Snowmobiles were listed as approved users in the initial purchase of the Heritage Trail. Pfeiler said he could not see the support for this type of request. Kenniker said the main reason for this event is to allow citizens that are unable to walk or bike the ability to enjoy the trail. Kenniker asked for separate dates in case of inclement weather, he is will to pay for any additional insurance requirements, this was meant to be no cost to the county. Comments were taken from the public in person and on Zoom.

In Person:

Bill Stoffel 2905 Fox Hollow Dr., Dubuque, IA 52001 spoke against the approval of this special event application. If you close the trail or not this would be a foot in the door for the use of ATV's/UTV's on the Heritage Trail. Local bike shops offer a wide variety of alternatives with no motors. Very interested in helping others enjoy the trail in different ways.

Kevin Koch 285 S Grandview Ave, Dubuque, IA 52003 spoke against the approval of this special event application. There is no way to control who would take advantage of this event, no way to secure use for only elderly or handicap.

Alaine Jamison 16163 Humke Rd., Dubuque, IA 52002 said she was walking on the Heritage Trail and a gentleman on a motorized scooter produced paper work that supposedly gave him permission to use the scooter on the trail. Preston said we have a form that may be requested by individuals for a specific date and time of use. This form must be completed and approved before using a motorized scooter on any trails in Dubuque County.

Dianne Koch 285 S Grandview Ave, Dubuque, IA 52003 spoke against the approval of this special event application. County employees take care of the trail and know how to drive and preserve the trail. Concern for managing specific use not joy riding.

Geri Buelow 2348 Spruce Wood Dr., Dubuque, IA 52002 would prefer to see a non-motorized option. Utilize dates and times during the week when the trail is not as busy. This would take time away from families on the weekend and affect out of town users. County roads offer the same views and ATV's/UTV's are allowed on most of the county roads.

Art Roche 5451 Meadow Ct., Asbury, IA 52002 firmly against the approval of this special event application. He was involved in the development of the Heritage Trail and rides it once a week. Sundays are family time. This time of the year is prime bicycling time. Offering something to handicap, Veterans and elderly is wonderful but you can't enforce that just those people will be the only ones.

Ann McDonough 2469 Whitetail, Asbury, IA 52002 speaking as a private citizens. Inbox full from citizens voicing opposition to ATV's/UTV's on the Heritage Trail. Dyersville has their own plans for Heritage Trail and possible paving. Mick Michel, City Administrator has not been contacted about this but there silence doesn't mean there in favor.

Paul Kilgore 2765 Buena Vista St., Dubuque, IA 52001 all the points have been made that indicate this is not a good idea. Access and equity are important. What about the equity in the solitude, let's not forget the other users that need the solitude and comfort knowing there is not motorized vehicles on the trail.

Ron Bensink 5415 Sun Valley Dr., Asbury, IA 52002 has experience with other options that will accommodate passengers. Electric bikes, battery operated vehicles, would be a much better option than a gasoline powered vehicle.

Zoom:

Jayne Ironside 2282 Palmer Dr., Asbury, IA 52002 spoke against the approval of this special event application. Equity and accessibility for all citizens is a win. Interested in know if there is research or evaluation done to determine the dates and times on the application is what the intended users would like. Overall this doesn't seem to be in the best interest of the trail and what its intended use is for. Taking advantage of the Conservations current resources would be a better option.

Beth Bonz 2388 Whitetail Dr., Asbury, IA 52002 sent written comments in and Preston forwarded them to the Conservation Board.

The Conservation Board is willing to keep an open mind and explore more options and other opportunities to accommodate all citizens the ability to access the Heritage Trail. Motion to deny the special event application for Heritage Trail was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Wagner. Motion carried.

AWARD HERITAGE TRAIL PEDESTRAIN OVERPASS P.C.C. SIDEWALK/TRAIL REPAIR BID:

Eight bids were received and opened Tuesday, July 25th at 3:00 P.M. Engineers estimated cost for this project was \$138,000.00. Eastern Iowa Excavating was the low bid at \$123,759.02. We received the following bids; Offset Construction \$124,542.30, Smith Dirt Work \$127,062.15, Midwest Concrete \$135,972.48, McDermott Excavating \$136,012.90, Gansen Excavating Inc. \$142,339.78, Tschiggfrie Excavating \$183,287.70, Boomerang Corp \$273,333.00. Motion to award Heritage Trail pedestrian overpass P.C.C. sidewalk/trail repair bid to Eastern Iowa Excavating for \$123,759.02 was made by Davis and seconded by Pfeiler. Motion carried.

REAP 5 YEAR PLAN:

Resource Enhancement and Protection plan. This is a fluid document that we update each year. Used a lot for land acquisitions. REAP is a very competitive grant process. To apply you must have your project listed on the plan. Motion to update the REAP plan and dates to FY24 thru FY28 was made by Wagner and seconded by Kehr. Motion carried.

PERMISSION TO ATTEND IOWA COUNTY CONSERVATION SYSTEM 2023 FALL CONFERENCE:

Permission for up to four staff members to attend the 2023 fall conference on September 19th thru September 21st in Council Bluffs, IA. Motion for up to four conservation staff to attend the 2023 fall conference was made by Kehr and seconded by Wagner. Motion carried.

PERMISSION TO FILL VACANT PARK RANGER POSITION:

Additional staff is needed in the conservation department. Discussion as to if the Park Ranger Position was the most needed at this time. Preston and Sisler recommended to not lose an approved Ranger Position. The Park Ranger position would be versatile in not only patrol but helping with grounds maintenance, programs and other assistants if needed. Motion to approve filling the Park Ranger Position was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Wagner. Motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Chuck Isenhardt 1665 Kaufmann Ave., Dubuque, IA 52001 wanted to make the board aware of the planning for Migratory Bird habitat. Grassland bird nesting season what can we do to increase habitat? Audubon Society looking at policies and formal proposal.

STAFF REPORTS:

DIRECTOR REPORT: Preston obtained two quotes for fencing along the Heritage Trail. Josh Brehm is the adjacent land owner and the terrain is very challenging. Will need a special meeting to award

quote. Disturbance at Massey over the weekend. Involved a car accident, weapons being displayed. The information has been turned into the County Attorney's office. A few of these residents will be banned from the parks.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR REPORT: Sisler – installed railings at Massey along the new patio, resurfacing at John Deere Marsh, repaired railing on boat slips, added rock around pit latrines, watered trees, Army Corp inspection at Massey, cutting trees at Fillmore, AmeriCorps cut and treated Japanese knot weed.

NATURALIST REPORT: Denlinger – 36 programs, 1,408 participants, OWLS Mississippi paddle, summer camps, family Friday's, mushroom & forage hike and Leisure Service programs. Upcoming events; Moth night, summer BOW, McCarthy species survey.

OLD BUSINESS:

Kehr – Would like to work on little pieces of the budget each month to be finished by budget time.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Motion to approve the July 2023 payables was made by Wagner and seconded by Pfeiler. Motion carried.

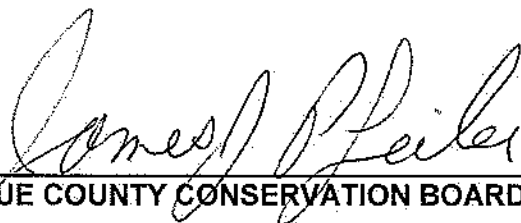
NEXT MEETING:

Special meeting Monday, July 31, 2023 at 12:00 P.M. to award fencing quotes

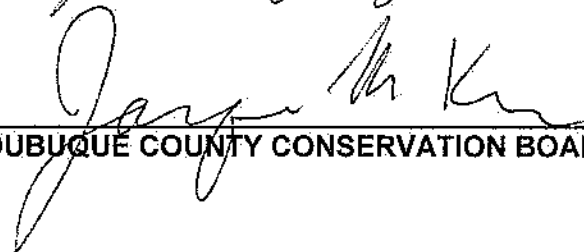
Thursday, August 17, 2023 at 4:00 P.M., Swiss Valley Nature Center

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn was made by Kehr and seconded by Wagner. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 6:01 P.M.



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