

DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
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Brian Preston, Director
Board Members:
George Davis
Mark Wagner
Jim Pfeiler
Stacy Conforti
Susan Miller

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

DUBUQUE COUNTY SOUTH AREA TOUR:

The tour began at 8:00AM. Board members present were Mark Wagner, George Davis, Sue Miller and Jim Pfeiler. Conservation staff present were Brian Preston, Nate Sisler and Lisa Schroeder. Kelsey Freiburger, Human Resources Generalist also attended. Areas visited; Swiss Valley Park to review the completed HMA paving project, Key West shop that is county shared for equipment storage, EB Lyons Interpretive Center, Massey Marina to see the aftermath of the latest flooding and how well the new bathroom partitions fared and the campground, reviewed the area where the new bank stabilization project will be happening in the next couple of months, Interstate Power Company Forest Preserve, Bowstring Wildlife Area where Nick Banwarth, Conservation Technician presented about the bare root tree plantings, Lytle Creek, air vents and upgrading native prairie. The narrow-gauge railway ran through this area and interpretive signage is in the process of being installed. McCarthy Wildlife area was the next stop that Banwarth presented about prairie planting and 30-40 different species have been identified so far. NRCS is working on designing the wetland. Next was Whitewater Canyon, which we own and manage with Jackson and Jones Counties. Viewed the new Pit Latrine that was installed last year and hiked the overlook trail. This is one of three true canyons in Iowa. Fillmore Recreation Area was a break for lunch, Ray Martin, Greens Superintendent gave an update on the stump grinding and the need for card replacement for the irrigation box. He introduced seasonal workers Matt Nauman and Jaquelyn Hochrein. Hochrein will be joining the Green Iowa AmeriCorps and working with the Naturalist and Banwarth. Toured the campground and talked about pull-through camping sites and no more low hanging power line. Locher Property is 100-acre parcel with a lake occupying 20 acres of the 100 acres. Seller is looking to discount the purchase price for the Conservation if there is no development other than a public boat ramp, parking lot, pit latrine and possibly a walking trail. This location is close to Cascade with potential to connect with local walking trails. There are opportunities for Fish Habitat Grants and Water Access Grants to make amenities ADA accessible. Last stop was the Nolan access point into the Swiss Valley Nature Preserve. Returned to Swiss Valley Nature Preserve at approximately 3:30 PM.

BREAK

Dubuque County Conservation Board meeting was called to order by George Davis at 4:00 P.M. In person meeting at the Swiss Valley Nature Center with a Zoom link, <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88180567749?pwd=y2jQQObIS27SEBdRWsmrOfxXebUFTw.1>
Meeting ID: 881 8056 7749; Passcode: 550187

ROLL CALL:

Board Members Present: George Davis, Mark Wagner, Jim Pfeiler and Susan Miller. Zoom: Stacy Conforti
Staff Members Present: Brian Preston, Nate Sisler, Jason Denlinger, Kaytlan Moeller and Lisa Schroeder.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Motion to approve the August 15, 2024, meeting minutes was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Wagner. Motion carried.

SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION:

Relay Iowa, Heritage Trail, June 8, 2025. A charity run across the state of Iowa. Heritage Trail, Epworth to John Deere Rd., estimated 16.35 miles. Motion to approve special event application for Relay Iowa, charity run on Heritage Trail June 8, 2025, was made by Wagner and seconded by Miller. Motion carried.

HERITAGE TRAIL LIMESTONE RESURFACING:

Permission to solicit bids for limestone resurfacing from Graf Rd. to Budd Rd., 4.5 miles, 1,642.5 tons of limestone. Bids would be due back by October Board meeting. Motion to solicit bids for limestone resurfacing from Graf Rd. to Budd Rd. was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Miller. Motion carried.

HERITAGE TRAIL 2025 USER FEES:

Current user fees; \$25.00 annual family pass, \$5.00 annual senior pass, \$10.00 annual individual pass and \$2.00 daily pass. Preston said very few trails charge a fee. When applying for grants they look favorable on trails that charge something to show here commitment to improving and offsetting maintenance cost. Motion to continue with the current fees for 2025 was made by Wagner and seconded by Pfeiler. Motion carried.

MOWING TO MONARCHS PLANT ORDER AND UPDATE:

Moeller gave updates on the Mowing to Monarchs program, 400 participants with buy-in options for previous participants through the Friends Group. Master Gardner's and the Iowa Extension Office have been wonderful partners with this program. Several other counties in Iowa have started to model this program. We have three bids from plant providers; RES Great Lakes/Taylor Creek \$27,793.60, multiple shipments and not able to provide all the species requested, Allendan \$44,220.00, no bulk rate and Bombus \$30,312.16, one shipment and able to provide all the species requested. Moeller said it's much easier to have participants pick up on one day and coordinate volunteers to unload and sort plants one day instead of several days. Motion to approve ordering plants for Mowing to Monarchs through Bombus was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Wagner. Motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT:

None

STAFF REPORTS:

DIRECTOR REPORT: Preston reported that Origin has completed the preliminary approval for West John Deere Rd., preliminary alignment with Old HWY 52 corridor has been approved. Estimated construction, spring of 2025. Possibly an elevated boardwalk over the wetland, hoping to have a cost estimate by October. Budget Director is requesting any old projects be completed. Need to set a public hearing for New Wine electrical upgrade. We will have \$460,000.00 for capital projects for FY2025. The Conservation Board will decide how to spend that money. Gronen is looking to donate property by Flexsteel. This is a wetland area and would remain as a wetland. Very little maintenance and is adjacent to the Heritage Trail. Army Corps of Engineers inspected Massey, Mud Lake, Dockside and John Deere Marsh on May 1st, we received the updates September 5th for violations at Massey for a trip hazard, no swimming signs and fire extinguishers. These have all been taken care of. Dockside next to Mud Lake, Brian Felderman bought W. W. Corporation. Dubuque County Conservation Board has a lease agreement with W. W. Corporation. Felderman has tiny homes that he rents, per the lease with the Army Corps of Engineers no long-term rentals. We don't own the land that Dockside resides on and per the lease agreement they only pay us \$2,000.00 annually. Preston would like to see the Conservation Board remove themselves and let Felderman lease directly with the Army Corps of Engineers. AmeriCorps NCCC team of 8 arrive tomorrow.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR REPORT: Sisler reported firearms training complete, stump removal at Fillmore is finished, fire breaks mowed in preparation for spring burning, bird strike installed at EB Lyons, sunflower plots mowed for Dove season, IPC pit latrine approach completed and New Wine well house sided, mowing and patrol.

NATURALIST REPORT: Denlinger reported Environmental Education highlights for August; 29 programs, 508 participants, field trips, kayaking, Family Friday's, women's mountain bike clinic, eco-printing, fungi foray, Heritage Classic with Izaak Walton, Wild Harvest Dinner and 5th grade Outdoor Adventures. Upcoming programs; Monarch tagging, fall BOW, take CAARE high school program, sunset hike Ringneck Ridge and Forest School.

OLD BUSINESS:

Everyone in the department received a pay increase. One exception, Pat Schwartz, park attendant at New Wine was not considered. Davis thanked the staff for a wonderful tour and hopes to see additional employees outside the Conservation Department join for a better understanding of the Conservation Departments Mission. Kayak kiosk at Mud Lake is still on hold, waiting for the Army Corps of Engineers approval.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Motion to approve the September 2024 payables was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Miller. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING:

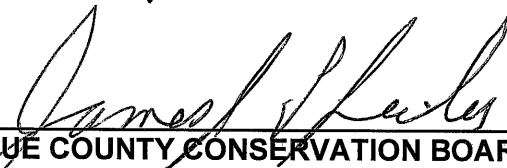
Thursday, October 17, 2024, at 8:00 A.M North Park Tour, 4:00 P.M. regular board meeting, Swiss Valley Nature Center.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn was made by Wagner and seconded by Pfeiler. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 5:11 P.M.



DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBER



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