



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

FEBRUARY 19, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

Dubuque County Conservation Board meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Mark Wagner at 4:03 P.M. In person meeting held at the Swiss Valley Nature Center with a Zoom link, <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85214958823?pwd=I0RTsl61aShhgVSabgMvacIEDBLw7d.1>
Meeting ID: 852 1495 8823 Passcode: 553750

ROLL CALL:

Board Members Present: Mark Wagner, Jim Pfeiler, Stacy Conforti and Nick Callahan. Absent: George Davis

Staff Members Present: Brian Preston, Nate Sisler, Taylor Schaefer and Lisa Schroeder. Absent: Ray Martin.

PUBLIC INPUT:

None

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Motion to approve the January 15, 2026, meeting minutes was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Callahan. Motion carried 4-0.

SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION:

Preston gave an overview of the application received from Huntington's Disease Society of America.

- Fundraising walk, May 2, 2026, starting at 8:30 A.M. and ending at 12:00 P.M.
- Location: Heritage Trail at the Heritage Pond parking lot.
- Estimated attendance: 15-20 participants, 10-15 vehicles.
- Purpose is to raise awareness and funds for Huntington's disease support, facilities and research.
- Group has held similar event previously with no issues. Preston recommended approval of the special event application.

Motion to approve the special event application for Huntington's Disease Society of American on the Heritage Trail was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried 4-0.

AWARD BID FOR SWISS VALLEY ELECTRICAL UPGRADE:

Preston opened five bids for the electrical upgrade at Swiss Valley Campground.

- Germaine Electric \$85,955.00
- Biechler Electric \$73,000.00
- Runde Electric \$68,935.00
- F. L. Krapfl Inc. \$66,175.00
- Trenkamp Electric \$74,800.00

Project budget is approximately \$60,000.00. F.L. Krapfl is local and worked with us on past projects.

Motion to award the bid for the Swiss Valley Electrical Upgrade to F.L. Krapfl for \$68,935.00 was made by Conforti and seconded by Callahan. Motion carried 4-0.

SALVAGE WALNUT LOGS SALE:

- Three fallen walnut logs recovered from parks/trails.
- Seven buyers contacted; one bid received.
- Bid from R. J. Bruggeman for \$3,100.00.
- Preston noted value likely to decrease if logs remain unused.

Motion to accept R. J. Bruggeman bid \$3,100.00 for salvage walnut log sale was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Callahan. Motion carried 4-0.

IOWA DOT AGREEMENT NUMBER 24-TAP-200:

- Agreement required for federal Transportation Alternatives Program funding.
- Project involves approximately 2 miles of hard surfacing on west end of Heritage Trail.
- Agreement outlines documentation and compliance requirements.
- Preston had a meeting with WHKS on expectations of completing this project.

Motion to approve Iowa DOT Agreement No. 24-TAP-200 for project TAP-R-C031(129)-8T-31 was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried 4-0.

2025 ARMY CORPS ANNUAL REPORT:

Annual compliance report required for leased areas:

- Massey Marina
- Mud Lake Park and Campground
- John Deere Marsh (Little Maquoketa River Delta)

Report highlights:

- Covered boat slips installed at Massey.
- Gas pumps were replaced at Massey Marina.
- Wi-Fi installed at Massey and Mud Lake.
- Kayak launches installed at Mud Lake and John Deere Marsh.
- Trail grading improvements and native tree plantings at John Deere Marsh.
- ADA camping pads, fire rings and picnic tables planned or ongoing.

Motion to approve the 2025 Army Corps Annual Report as submitted was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried 4-0.

Zoom portion of the meeting ended at 4:19 P.M., the in-person meeting continued until adjournment.

TRAINING REQUEST FOR STAFF – 2026 SPRING IOWA ASSOCIATION OF NATURALIST (IAN):

Preston requested permission for Denlinger, Schober and Schaefer to attend the Iowa Association of Naturalists workshop. The workshop includes several valuable sessions and discussions about developing new programs and working with other counties. Motion to approve training request for three staff to attend the 2026 Spring IAN conference was made by Callahan and seconded by Pfeiler. Motion carried 4-0.

PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE FOR TRAIL CREW AND TRAIL CREW LEADER:

- Crew will consist of four members and one leader.
- Crew members must be 16 years of age or older.
- Duties include trail trimming and maintenance, particularly on trails.
- Schedule: 6 weeks at 40 hours per week.
- Pay rate: \$12/hour for crew members and \$15/hour for crew leader.

Motion to approve advertising for trail crew and trail crew leader was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Callahan.

PUBLIC INPUT:

None.

STAFF REPORTS:

Staff members provided updates on various projects and activities.

DIRECTOR REPORT: Preston reported:

- Ranger Hiring: Interviews are scheduled this week. Selected applicants will move to a second round of interviews followed by background checks. The background check process will be similar to what is used by the Sheriff's Office.
- Fillmore Operations Changes: The County Treasurer recommended moving from monthly to weekly collections.
 - Proposed system: Weekly reporting period: Monday through Sunday (expected by noon on Tuesday), Receipts transferred weekly with funds directly accessible, Daily tee sheets required, Accountability for all tee times, Installation of camera in the clubhouse, Online tee time system for tracking rounds played, Tracking of annual passes sold, The Conservation Office will sell annual passes and maintain a membership list.
 - Pricing typically set in November or December for the upcoming year.
 - Additional contract considerations: Bond increase from \$2,000 to \$10,000 and requirement to account for all rounds played
 - Revenue exceeding expenses may be placed in a special fund for capital improvements Additional excess revenue would go to the general fund, though approval may be sought to allocate it toward capital improvements.
 - Fillmore contract expires November 30, 2026.
 - Additional marketing for golf at Fillmore will be pursued to increase exposure.
- Heritage Trail – Dale Leslein – Fencing and Safety - Staff will obtain bids for fence replacement
- Currently three full-time staff are unavailable; Injury Update - An employee injured on February 9 had additional scans and will not require surgery. The employee is able to walk without assistance but will be out approximately three months, possibly returning with light duty.
- OSHA Investigation - OSHA conducted a site visit Tuesday related to the injury.
- Training - Staff will participate in advanced chainsaw training Monday and Tuesday.
- Seasonal staff may be starting early with supervisor approval to assist with staffing shortages.
- Upcoming Meetings tentative - March 19, Work Session: 2:00–4:00 PM, Board Meeting: 4:00–6:00 PM, Public Meeting: 6:30–8:00 PM at the Nature Center
- Board members will receive a list of additional dates by email. No more than two board members may attend each session.
- Rdg will finalize the plan and proposed meeting dates.
- Conforti requested updating the long-range plan every five years.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR REPORT: Sisler reported:

- Trees pruned
- Timber Stand Improvement work
- Annual fire extinguisher inspections
- Repaired frozen pipes at EB Lyons well house
- Repaired roof leaks at EB Lyons
- Shower buildings - Installed ADA-compliant door handles and rekeyed
- Standardized keys for shower houses and shop building
- Additional work: Prairie seeding at Fillmore, Cleared trees off trails
- Prepared maple trees for sap tapping next week

NATURALIST REPORT: Schaefer reported:

Program statistics for January:

- 37 programs, 1,363 participants
- Programs included: Preschool classroom visits, Night hikes, First grade field trips at EB Lyons and the planetarium

- Upcoming programs: Lichens, Hunter Education Course, Summer Camps, Homeschool programming ongoing, Friends Pancake Breakfast – March 29, 2026.

No formal action was taken; reports were informational.

OLD BUSINESS:

Locher Lake Property

- The property closing is complete.
- The area is now open to the public.
- Staff will install signage and regulations.

Mud Lake

- Will no longer have a resident ranger.
- Campers have requested a basketball hoop be installed.
- Plans to test a summer host position to live in the house at Mud Lake evaluate the possibility of having a resident caretaker.

Other campground hosts

- Mud Lake – host assigned
- New Wine – host assigned
- Swiss Valley – host assigned

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Motion to approve the February 2026 payables and January 2026 Procurement Cards was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Callahan. Motion carried 4-0.

NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, March 19, 2026, at the Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd. Peosta, Iowa 52058.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn was made by Callahan and seconded by Pfeiler. Motion carried 4-0 and the meeting adjourned at 5:36 P.M.



DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBER



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