

DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
13606 Swiss Valley Road
Peosta, IA 52068
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Brian Preston, Director
Board Members:
George Davis
Mark Wagner
Jim Pfeiler
Stacy Conforti
Nick Callahan

JUNE 18, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

Dubuque County Conservation Board meeting was called to order by Chair George Davis at 4:04 P.M. In person meeting held at the Swiss Valley Nature Center with a Zoom link, <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88370680243?pwd=vDccZujOogXTfkFs8wxlZ5hpluaHqR.1>
Meeting ID: 883 7068 0243 Passcode: 308930

ROLL CALL:

Board Members Present: George Davis, Nick Callahan and Jim Pfeiler (arrived at 4:19 PM). Zoom: Mark Wagner and Stacy Conforti.
Staff Members Present: Brian Preston, Addy Schober, Kade Tippet and Lisa Schroeder. Absent: Nate Sisler and Ray Martin.

PUBLIC INPUT:

John Guerdet, 39949 230th Ave., La Motte IA 52054, addressed the Board regarding proposed data center developments in Dubuque County. He referenced the Conservation Board mission statement and encouraged the Board to provide input to the Zoning Commission and Board of Supervisors regarding:

- Pollution concerns
- Backup generator emissions
- Wastewater chemicals
- Heavy metals and PFAS concerns
- Noise and light pollution
- Wildlife and habitat protection

Guerdet expressed concerns regarding development near ponds, wildlife habitat, and productive farmland.

Dave Niensteadt, 38697 230th Ave., La Motte, IA 52054 said he lives approximately four-tenths of a mile from the proposed data center location. He expressed concerns regarding:

- Stormwater runoff
- Water quality impacts
- Loss of productive farmland
- Long-term environmental impacts

Niensteadt encouraged the Board to assist the Zoning Board in developing strong regulations.

John O'Brien, 5922 Airview Dr., Dubuque, IA 52003, has concerns regarding multiple proposed data center locations throughout Dubuque County, including area west of Dyersville. He expressed concerns regarding:

- Utility corridor development
- Environmental enforcement capabilities
- Adequacy of penalties and fines for large-scale developments
- Long-term impacts on county resources

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Motion to approve the May 21, 2026 meeting minutes was made by Callahan and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried 4-0.

Motion to approve the May 26, 2026 special meeting minutes was made by Callahan and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried 4-0.

SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION:

Preston presented the application for the Dubuque Scholastic Mountain Bike Race scheduled for June 26-28, 2026 at Proving Grounds. Discussion included:

- Approximately 160 participants and 300 spectators
- Request for 10 overnight camping sites near the Leaping Deer Pavilion
- Additional parking accommodation
- Insurance certificate and emergency action plan submitted

Preston noted this is the fourth consecutive year hosting the statewide event and recommended approval.

Motion to approve the special event application for the Dubuque Scholastic Mountain Bike race was made by Conforti and seconded by Callahan. Motion carried 4-0.

SET DATE FOR PUBLIC HEARING FOR DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION RT-C031(132)--9H-31 HERITAGE TRAIL BRIDGE #30 REPLACEMENT:

Preston proposed July 16, 2026 as a public hearing date for bridge #30 replacement on the Heritage Trail. Bridge #30 is located east of Cemetery Rd. near Farley. Preston reviewed:

- Plans submitted through Origin Design
- DOT review process
- State Recreational Trail Grant funding
- Engineer's estimate of approximately \$230,000.00
- Potential additional bedrock excavation costs of \$20,000.00 in the plans

Motion to approve setting a public hearing for July 16, 2026 at 4:00 PM at the Swiss Valley Nature Center regarding proposed plans, specifications and forms of contract for the Heritage Trail Bridge #30 replacement project was made by Davis and seconded by Callahan. Motion carried 4-0.

AWARD BID FOR FENCE REPLACEMENT AT WHITEWATER CANYON WILDLIFE AREA:

Preston reported that due to recent storm events and delays fencing contractors could not tour the project site.

No action taken.

APPROVAL TO PURCHASE CAMPSITE FIRE RINGS:

Preston presented a request for 24 campsite fire rings from Iowa Prison Industries. Discussion included:

- Cost per unit \$289.00
- Total cost \$6,936.00
- Preference for swing-out grate design
- Alternative suppliers did not offer preferred design

Motion to approve the purchase of 24 campsite fire rings from Prison Industries was made by Conforti and seconded by Callahan. Motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL FOR 2026 ISAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

Preston requested approval to attend the Iowa State Association of Counties Conference in Des Moines August 19-21, 2026.

- Preston serving as a conference presenter
- Participation in statewide conservation initiatives

- Attendance at safety-related sessions

Motion to approve Preston attending the ISAC annual conference was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Callahan. Motion carried 5-0.

DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOND:

Davis discussed efforts to place a conservation bond referendum on the November 3, 2026 ballot.

Discussion included:

- Previous bond referendum from five years ago
- Proposed reduced bond amount of approximately \$18 million over 12 years
- Need to broaden public outreach and decentralized campaign efforts
- Support letter from Friends of Dubuque County Conservation
- Importance of detailed project descriptions and strategic priorities
- Coordination with RDg strategic planning process
- Clarification of estimated property tax impacts
- Need for multiple public information meetings
- Timing for Board of Supervisors review
- Election filing deadline is August 26, 2026

Motion to approve a special meeting on June 24, 2026 at 4:00 PM to further discuss the conservation bond resolution was made by Pfeiler and seconded by Callahan. Motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC INPUT:

None.

STAFF REPORTS:

Staff members provided updates on various projects and activities.

DIRECTOR REPORT: Preston reported:

- Introduced Kade Tippet the new Park Ranger at Finley's Landing.
- Mud Lake Residence: Potential cabin rental, revenue opportunities and furnishing/startup cost
- Swiss Valley campground evacuation due to flash flooding June 11, 2026
- Approximately 40 trees down on Heritage Trail
- Approximately 20 trees down at Proving Grounds
- Volunteer cleanup assistance at Fillmore Recreation Area
- Temporary wage increase request planned to seasonal staff assisting with golf course operation during staffing shortages
- Finley's Landing Road project; culvert installation completed paving underway completion expected prior to July 4th weekend
- Prairie planting completed at Miller-McGrath Wildlife Area – participation in Iowa Seed Cooperative Program
- Seed dispersal planting completed at Ringneck Ridge
- Continued mowing, patrols, training and storm cleanup completed

NATURALIST REPORT: Schober reported:

Introduced Kaylee Luke, DNR seasonal and Julia Hilbun seasonal naturalist.

Program statistics for May:

- 53 programs, 2256 participants
- Programs included: Spring field trip wrap-up, Little Maquoketa River Mounds Ho-Chunk Speaker, Moth Citizen Science Program, Summer camps, kayaking and seed harvest.
- Upcoming programs: Adaptive Outdoor Adventure Day, Summer Camps, Family Friday Events, OWLS Fungi Survey, Kayaking, Sunset Herpetology Hike and Seed harvest.

No formal action was taken; reports were informational.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Chair Davis thanked staff and volunteers for storm cleanup efforts.
- Discussed potential use of managed grazing on prairie restorations.
- Shared information from watershed meeting regarding virtual fencing technology.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Motion to approve the June 2026 payables and May 2026 Procurement Cards was made by Callahan and seconded by Pfeiler. Motion carried 5-0.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, June 24, 2026 At 4:00 P.M., Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd. Peosta, Iowa 52068.

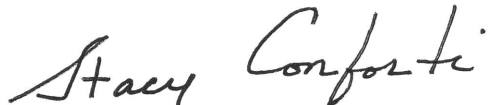
Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 4:00 P.M., Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd. Peosta, Iowa 52068.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn was made by Callahan and seconded by Pfeiler. Motion carried 5-0 and the meeting adjourned at 4:58 P.M.



DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBER



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