

Dickinson County Conservation Board

2279 170th St., Okoboji

7 p.m. Tuesday, July 10, 2018

Chair: Willia Mueske

Vice chair: Eric Stoll

Board members: Kathy Kleen, Steve Anderson, Joan Gronstal arrive at 7:04 p.m.

Board liaison: Pam Jordan

Employees: Lee Sorenson, Kiley Roth, Aric Ping

Call to order at 7:03 p.m.

Agenda approval: Kleen motion, Anderson motion. Approved.

Approval of past month's minutes: Correction made to not list Willia Mueske twice. Sorenson had June 12 written on special meeting minutes from June 21. Change heading from "Agenda" to "Minutes". Anderson motion, Gronstal second. Approved.

CFDC minutes: The annual meeting will be held during the regular meeting 7 p.m. Monday, Aug. 13, prior to the regular meeting. Membership letters have been sent out to prior members. The Pollinator Paradise designs were shared. Painting/staining on the addition has been completed. Fundraiser ideas have also been shared. Erika Leupold shared that a trivia night in Omaha, NE, brought in almost \$1 million, and she was going to look into how that was done. An obstacle/mud run was also suggested.

Environmental education update: A volunteer in Black Hawk County is sending 25 monarch eggs per week, and the survival rate has been high. Atlatls have been purchased to use for camps and programs.

Dickinson County Conservation Board areas

-Grazing management on county properties: Vegetation specialist Aric Ping was on hand to discuss the options. Not many counties have explored the option of grazing. Judd Wildlife Area is a remnant prairie complex, and prairie fires and wildlife helped the ecosystem. The area has been burned for three years, but decreases in cool season invasive grasses have not been seen. The wildlife grazing is missing in this native prairie.

The proposed plan is to introduce cattle in the spring on the east side of Judd Wildlife Area, not including a wetland or endangered prairie bush clover, to graze down the cool season invasive grasses. Ping said it would increase diversity, reduce invasive plant numbers and increase education about the importance of public lands. He said public lands are sometimes seen as a waste by those in the agricultural field if not grazed or tilled.

Water quality and biodiversity would also increase on the grazing lands that would rest while cattle would be on the county's land. The going rate is approximately \$85 per acre for a full season. This would be for a shorter season. Kleen said, "Are there people who have shown interest? It seems like it would be sort of a hassle for a short season to have cattle in and out." Ping said those in the

NRCS field said the grazing land would be in demand, even for a short term. He put together a bid package, because he thinks there will be several people interested. It hasn't been done extensively in Iowa, more in Nebraska and South Dakota, but it is a rather newer idea.

The Fish & Wildlife Service may have money for partnerships to set up fencing on county land, that would then be maintained by the county.

Mueske asked if this would be annual or a part of a three-year system. Ping said the system would be patch-burn grazing that would rotate burning and grazing in different sections throughout the wildlife area.

Kleen asked about the water quality of the creek running through the land, and Ping said the cattle most likely will not be in the water as much during spring grazing as they would during summer grazing. He said perhaps an option could be to create a water source off channel or to fence off the creek, but that would be a large investment, and the area also would not be a simple area to fence.

Anderson said cattle could also bring weed seeds in their systems, but the cattle are supposed to be set aside for a period before coming to the land to help negate this potential issue.

Sorenson said it would also have been looked into whether the area can produce revenue because it was funded with a REAP grant.

The concept will be tabled and discussed again at the August meeting.

-Pollinator design concepts: The final, colored preliminary designs are finished and will be released to the public. The design is now entering Phase 2 with costs to be supplied for each exhibit.

-Road name change: The 170th Street name change was taken to the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, July 10, and was approved 4-1. The anticipated date of change is set at November, and the house numbers will then change to a five-number system instead of a four-number system, which the 9-1-1 board wanted to change anyway. The CFDC has agreed to pay for the change for each house along the roadway.

-Land scoring/acquisition: As future lands may come the way of the Dickinson County Conservation Board, how is it decided whether to purchase/accept lands. Sorenson presented a ranking system weighing cost/work/maintenance/restoration/etc., may help to make future decisions, based off of scoring criteria for REAP land acquisition requests.

Anderson suggested looking at what other counties have for staffing versus public areas.

Operations and facility update

-Recycle center: Sifting is needed again because landscapers are utilizing the compost pile. About a quarter of the pile is left. Once the area dries out, the sifting will begin again. Chipping also went well. Manager Charles Vigdal also said the center might also need a claw to move brush when funding allows.

-Horseshoe Bend shop: The footings are poured. Gravel backfill is needed due to the extra moisture. The engineer's office is hauling 180 tons of class C gravel to the location to backfill. A trench was also dug to take care of the excess water at the site. A tile will be run to the west, and costs will be

shared with the engineer's office. The construction insurance will not cover floods, so ruined materials may need to be turned into FEMA.

-County home update: Two plans have been presented, a renovation by Poppema-Sikma Construction of Sheldon or a tear-down/rebuild by Diamond Concrete. Poppema-Sikma has yet to provide final estimates. Diamond Concrete is estimating the project at \$843,000. The board said to provide options to the anonymous donor.

Approval of expenses: Stoll motion to pay bills, Gronstal second. Approved.

General discussion

-The nature center will have a float in the Pioneer Days and Sweet Corn Days parades.

-Jordan said a bridge report was presented to the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors, and the walking bridge in Horseshoe Bend is limited to 10 people at once. The recent flooding has affected the bridge, but it is slated to be repaired at the same time as the 195th Avenue road bridge.

Adjournment: Motion by Anderson, second by Kleen. Approved. Adjourn at 9:03 p.m.