

Dickinson County Conservation Board

2279 170th St., Okoboji

7 p.m. Aug. 14, 2018

Chair: Willia Mueske

Vice chair: Eric Stoll

Board members: Kathy Kleen

Board liaison: Pam Jordan

Employees: Lee Sorenson, Kiley Roth, Aric Ping

Call to order at 7 p.m.

Agenda approval: Kleen motion, Stoll second. Approved.

Approval of past month's minutes: Kleen motion, Stoll second. Approved.

Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County minutes: Two new board members were approved: Barbara Tagami and Penny Wilson. The August meeting also included an annual meeting. A membership drive was suggested. The payment for the next phase of exhibit construction for Pollinator Paradise was approved.

Environmental education update: The summer program and visitor numbers have been successful.

Dickinson County Conservation Board areas

-Grazing management: Vegetation specialist Aric Ping returned to discuss grazing at Judd Wildlife Area, as discussed during the July meeting. He has talked with Iowa Lakeside Lab about doing water quality, vegetation, and wildlife monitoring on the property during the grazing. It would cost about \$1,000 per season for water quality monitoring, but Ping thinks that a grant could possibly pay for those expenses.

Ping also talked to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to do a fish survey in the creek to see what species live in that area. They would also pay for fencing in the park. Ping recommends a high-tensile electric fence, and it would not be electrified if the cattle were not there. "Hopefully it will show people we're doing good stuff and using scientific methods to management it," Ping said.

Monitoring would begin next summer to establish a baseline, and then grazing would begin fall and spring.

The grazing would help reduce invasive species, increase vigor of native plants and expand those communities as well as helping wildlife populations on these 80 acres.

Kleen motion to go ahead with grazing management at Judd Wildlife Area, with set monitoring stipulations and with education with the community. Stoll second. Approved.

-Land scoring/acquisition: This scoring criteria would help to make decisions about possible land acquisitions in the future. Kleen asked why the ranges were 1-10 and suggested doing 1-5, where each number is definitely different than the slimmer margins between say 7-8 in a 1-10 scale. Sorenson would like to set up a work retreat on a Saturday to hash out all of this.

-REAP grant approval: REAP sunsets in 2020 and has no guaranteed to be renewed. The grant application is requesting \$182,000 for a \$197,000 project for acquisition of three parcels along the Little Sioux River. Stoll motion to approve the grant, Kleen second. Approved.

-Non-toxic shot resolution: The district is asking which counties have made a regulation for non-toxic shock on county lands. Sorenson will look back to see what the conservation board has agreed upon in the past.

Operations and facility update

-Recycle center: Ammonia refrigerators cost us \$150 per refrigerator to recycle, and all must be taken to Scott County because there is no other recycle center. It has been recommended to stop taking these refrigerators, but then what would people do with their refrigerators? Would they just dump them in a ditch? The board said the costs have to be passed on to the consumer.

Landscapers are using compost from the recycling center, and Jordan and Kleen asked if the loading fee should be raised. The past shows that people will skirt the system when costs are raised.

-Horseshoe Bend shop: With the large amount of water on the construction site, a lot of gravel has been needed to backfill and level the area. The project is behind schedule, and a budget amendment will have to be made.

-County home update: Two plans are still in the works for the future of the former Pride Group. Sorenson said one of the plans, about 10,000 square feet, is probably too large for the conservation board's rental needs, so a smaller plan may be warranted. A plan will hopefully be decided upon by winter to decide if the current building needs to be heated over the winter, dependent on if it will be saved or not.

-Future planning: An update to the geothermal system is needed, which could cost \$10,000. It's possible a thermostat could be put in instead of the computer system, and that may cut down on costs. The walking bridge at Horseshoe Bend will also begin its replacement planning process.

-Imagine Iowa: Many public agencies are endorsing the project, and Sorenson asked if the conservation board wanted to endorse the project. Mueske said it doesn't necessarily fit in our criteria, because the Dickinson County Nature Center is not located on Highway 71.

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

General discussion

-The county is planning an ATV training, and Sorenson would like to do it in Kenue Park. The program would be for all county entities.

-The Kenue Park wetland restoration is going forward. Materials have been delivered, and construction will begin this fall.

-Mueske asked about any possibly land acquisition with neighboring property, but Brooks National Golf Club does not wish to sell any property.

Adjournment: Stoll motion, Kleen second. Approved. Adjourn 8:32 p.m.