

Dickinson County Conservation Board meeting

5 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2019

Dickinson County Nature Center, 22785 Nature Center Road, Okoboji

Vice chair: Steve Anderson

Board members: Willia Mueske, Joan Gronstal, Kathy Kleen

Employees: Lee Sorenson, Kiley Roth

Board liaison: Pam Jordan

Public: Dale Sineknecht, Steve Sabasta, Erin Van Waus and Jessica Klough with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

Call to order at 5:01 p.m.

Agenda approval: Gronstal motion, Kleen second. Approved.

Public comment:

-Steve Sabasta and Dale Sineknecht came representing the 253rd Avenue group and asked about the survey results. The results were passed to the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors, which holds its next meeting Tuesday, Nov. 19.

Consent agenda items: Gronstal motion, Mueske second. Approved.

-Approval of past month's minutes

-Recycle report: Sorenson said that the board of supervisors discussed the county recycling program, and it was discussed putting recycling containers at the recycling center, but it is a locked facility that is only open during certain hours. Milford has stopped its recycling bins and is going directly to curbside, and Spirit Lake is talking about stopping its recycling bins as well.

-Environmental education report

-Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County minutes

Dickinson County Conservation Board areas

-Conservation easement for Brooks Golf: Van Waus has worked with Sorenson on the conservation easement for Brooks Golf to protect it from development in perpetuity. It will then be checked annually by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. The agreement will be signed tonight by Sorenson and Anderson, stepping into the chair's place in Eric Stoll's absence.

Mueske motion to approve the conservation easement, Kleen second.

Jordan asked the total acres: 224.56 acres.

Motion approved, and the agreement was signed.

-Okoboji wetland purchase: Sorenson talked with Heather Jobst with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, and the INHF is working on purchasing the “moose wetland” from the Okoboji Foundation after the grant application was rejected for REAP.

-Brooks management agreement: Sorenson has been working on the Brooks management agreement. He doesn't think there will be many changes from the 2019 management agreement. In the 2019 agreement, DCCB is responsible for structural damages. He also said there is information about periodic financial checks and reports, and he thinks annual reports are sufficient since there is no profit-sharing.

It was asked what happens if HVAC system repairs are needed, and Mueske said the board would not like to be involved in HVAC repairs because that seems like it would be equipment. It looks like in the agreement that any repairs are the responsibility of the management company, but any replacement would be the responsibility of DCCB.

Sorenson said it was in the original agreement that DCCB is responsible for ADA accessibility, but he said that should be the management company's responsibility.

Sorenson said that the annual payments should be set aside to take care of items like replacing HVAC, etc.

Operations and facility update

-Grand opening Pollinator Paradise: The grand opening celebration for Pollinator Paradise is 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 16.

-Horseshoe Bend project: The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service contacted Sorenson about an undercut shore of the Little Sioux River running through Horseshoe Bend Wildlife Area in Milford. Boulders will be placed in the undercut area, and these will also provide mussel habitat. Canoes and kayaks should still be able to get through fine, but motorboats will not. There will be a cost-share match for grant funds for the project. A similar project was done in Lyon County on the Big Sioux River.

The project would most likely be done mid-summer when the water levels are lower. Kleen asked if Lakeside Lab could do a survey before and after regarding mussel populations in that area.

Anderson said this year zebra mussels are starting to form on the rocks in Milford Creek, and they are working their way down the system. He said zebra mussels will eventually have an impact in that area as well.

-Part-time staff: The two year-round part-time staff for the IRVM program have been hired.

Approval of expenses: An additional plow for the nature center was purchased to help with keeping the nature center parking lot clear on Saturdays when the nature center is open.

Mueske motion, Gronstal second. Approved.

General discussion

-Sorenson sent out the schedule for REAP meetings. REAP is scheduled to end in 2020 unless I-WILL is passed by the State Legislature.

Adjournment: Gronstal motion, Kleen second. Approved. Adjourn at 5:46 p.m.