

Dickinson County Nature Center

2279 170th St., Okoboji

7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 8

Chair: Kathy Kleen

Board members: Willia Mueske, Eric Stoll, Steve Anderson

Employees: Lee Sorenson, Kiley Roth

Call to order at 7 p.m.

Agenda approval, motion by Mueske, second by Anderson. Approved.

Approval of past month's minutes: Anderson motion to approve, Mueske second. Approved.

Environmental education update: The fancy rats have been replaced with a hedgehog. The Audubon sanctuary has had trees removed with the Spirit Lake sixth-grade has plans to rejuvenate the area. Naturalist Mary Petersen is focusing on making programs align with Iowa Core.

Operations and facility update

Pollinator Paradise update: Cannon Moss Brygger has drawn up floor plans for the Pollinator Paradise addition to the nature center. It would include a main floor that would have exhibits and meeting space and a lower level that will begin as storage but gives options for the future.

Saddle Club land donation: The Saddle Club and attorney working with the entity need more time to gather information on how the donation might work. The transaction is on hold for the moment.

Recycling center: The tractor was repaired after the fire, with costs paid for by the Dickinson County Landfill Commission. Sorenson is looking for a front-wheel loader that would help with work at the recycling center. The center is in the black for the fiscal year, and it may be possible to lease a tractor.

Anderson asked if Emerald Ash Borer would cause issues in the future with giving away wood chips, and Sorenson said that the pest cannot be spread by chips. However, people are not allowed to come and take wood or cut wood to take, only chips are allowed to be used.

Tobacco-nicotine free: A worker from Compass Pointe asked if we were interested in making our areas all tobacco- and nicotine-free. However, DCCB has not had any issues with tobacco use on its properties and it would be very difficult to enforce on the properties.

Dickinson County Conservation Board areas

Knudtson NAWCA agreement: The purchase of the new Milford property was awarded a \$25,000 in NAWCA funds, and the agreement was received from the Department of Natural Resources.

Anderson motion to approve the NAWCA agreements, Stoll second. Approved.

The REAP grant agreement for the property was also received.

Audubon land update: The Audubon courtyard east of Spirit Lake schools was cleared out by the Spirit Lake sixth grade in preparation for future rejuvenation. The sixth-grade class came to the nature center to talk to Sorenson and vegetation specialist Aric Ping about the plan for the area, which will include fruit trees, a grazing area and bird habitat. The former Audubon club has questioned the clearing of the trees and brush, but this is temporary and there is a three-year plan in place to refresh the courtyard.

Approval of expenses: Stoll motion, Mueske second. Approved. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation also sent in a bill requesting a donation of \$300. That will be on next month's bills.

General discussion

-The conservation board is cooperating with the engineer's office and used the new hydroseeder to seed the lawn outside the new county shop. Ping is working on getting the new county engineer's employee to contact him when a ditch cleanout is done so the conservation board can then seed the ditches with native species.

-Supervisor Pam Jordan talked with the East Okoboji Beach development about the rain garden there, and there have been no recent complaints about how the rain garden and bio-swale have been maintained.

-Stoll's term ends as of December and in order to renew he must submit a new application for the board seat.

-Anderson attended his first state meeting as an IACCB board member. There was an in-depth discussion about the Natural Resource and Conservation Trust fund. The fund appears to have a chance of going through the State Legislature this year, but the percentages of funding will be changed. The legislature is looking at giving more funding to agriculture and less to conservation practices. IACCB would like to have people support keeping the formula that was slated when voters approved funding the trust in 2010.

IACCB will also be charging its users for using the booking and reservation aspect of the website. Each transaction will cost the county that is utilizing the service \$2.

-Stoll asked if the entrance to the nature center was still going to have street lights installed, because the driveway is very dark in the evening.

Anderson motion to adjourn, Mueske second. Approved. Adjourn at 8:15 p.m.