

Dickinson County Conservation Board

2279 170th St., Okoboji

7 p.m. Tuesday, March 14, 2017

Chair: Joan Gronstal, via phone

Vice chair: Steve Anderson, presiding

Board members: Kathy Kleen, Eric Stoll, Willia Mueske

Employees: Lee Sorenson, Kiley Roth

Board of supervisors liaison: Pam Jordan

Others: Lezlie Pohlman, Kae Luchtel, Debbie Albright, Deb Travis from the Saddle Club

Call to order at 7 p.m.

Agenda approval: Kleen motion, Mueske second. Approved.

Approval of past month's minutes: Stoll motion, Gronstal second. Jordan asked to clarify what the Pollinator Paradise cap of \$45,000 covers for Cannon Moss Brygger, but there wasn't more information to add for what was known regarding the project in February. Stoll motion, Gronstal second. Approved.

Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County update: Kiley Roth will be adding more T-shirts for the gift shop, this year with a bee theme. The architect for Cannon Moss Brygger for the Pollinator Paradise addition asked for an additional hourly rate past the originally presented \$45,000 for the contract. That was raised to \$48,000 for a maximum on the contract without an hourly additional rate. The timeline for the Pollinator Paradise addition is tight, with fundraising to hopefully be completed by the end of May. Donations were given to Okoboji Elementary for the Nature Nook and to decrease the Master River Stewards program registration fees.

Environmental education update: The new environmental education coordinator will begin on March 20, and Mary Petersen is still working part-time with programs. Sorenson is still working on hiring an intern for the summer season as well. The osprey camera is ready to go when the raptors arrive.

Dickinson County Conservation Board areas

-Saddle Club land donation: Sorenson invited members of the Saddle Club back to talk through the land donation. Heather Jobst with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation was concerned that restrictions on the Saddle Club land could impede receiving funding for pieces of adjacent land that would be bundled for grants.

"The people that look at both ends of it, if it's not posted 'no hunting,' we've been down in there and people have shot a turkey off the road. It's got to be posted or someone will get shot down there," Deb Travis said.

"Archery may still work," Stoll said.

Anderson said last time the Saddle Club was in the meeting that there wasn't definite details from the Saddle Club. "Initially it sounded like we could do a few things and we would get some money to manage the arena, and then that changed. We questioned if you were going to shut off the power or we were going to shut off the power. I think we need something in writing before we move forward."

Sorenson added that there was confusion about what direction things were going. The power has been shut off. Lezlie Pohlman said the Saddle Club could get together with the county attorney to draw up specifics, in writing.

The board has also showed concerns that locking in the stipulations that the horse arena has to be kept and maintained locks in future boards. Pohlman said the biggest stipulation is that the land is maintained for horse use, whether it be an arena, horse camping, etc.

Anderson said the board wants people to utilize the trails at Horseshoe Bend, but there isn't great camping for horses at the Milford park. This area could be a potential solution for that.

"Is there a concern with riding on the road?" Stoll asked, but the ladies said that they have not had issues reaching Horseshoe Bend on the blacktop.

Sorenson asked for terms that would not be locked in for future boards, perhaps making an agreement for five-year terms in case of new board members not agreeing with terms in the future. Anderson suggested the possibility of creating a conservation easement on the land through the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, which would ensure its use for conservation in the future, even if it is sold in the future. Sorenson said he could help the Saddle Club make an appointment with the INHF to go through some of these options.

Mueske asked if the club disbanded, and they have not because of 4-H'ers competing at the fair and Pony Express rides.

Sorenson suggested going through the INHF with the land donation agreement.

Pohlman said the Saddle Club has gotten bids for renovating the arena, and they will look at the life of the arena to have that useful life in the agreement.

-Ainsworth-Orleans Beach bathroom: The project has started. The trees on the jetty have been taking out, and the rocks have been rip-rapped. Diamond Concrete received the bid for the project, which includes redoing the concrete spillway sidewalk. The park will be closed for 90 days, including the parking lot on the bathroom side, with a hopeful reopening date of July 4 weekend.

-Horseshoe Bend shop: The new maintenance shop project has encountered a variety of roadblocks with trying to get specs because the board is a government organization and can't guarantee a bid.

-Abbie Gardner Cabin agreement: Sorenson requested that we increase cabin docents to \$12.25 per hour. Kleen motion to re-enter annual agreement of care of the Abbie Gardener Cabin with the Iowa Historical Society. Mueske second. Approved.

Operations and facility update

-Recycling center: An increase in hazardous materials is expected as people begin spring cleaning, and large amounts of trees are also coming in. Clean-up work has been done on the property due to ashes from the fire and mulch. Sorenson thinks the Dickinson County Landfill Commission should look into getting a compost separator to get the garbage out of the compost so that people will want to use the compost. Jordan asked if it was sifted and certified if the compost could be bagged and sold. Manager Charles Vigdal is looking into the process. Sorenson also suggested putting a loading fee instead of selling the compost itself.

-Marketing plan: Roth went through the 2017 marketing plan.

-Trail maintenance update: The Dickinson County Trails Board is looking to put bathrooms along the trails in the county, but Sorenson talked with trails director Erin Reed about who would maintain them. In the last meeting it was noted that cities plan to take over the maintenance of these new bathrooms.

-2018 budget: The budget was approved by the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors.

Approval of expenses: Stoll motion, Kleen second. Approved.

General discussion

-Sorenson passed around an article that IWILL has reached the floor of the State House of Representatives. Eleven Republican co-sponsors signed on to the bill.

-Kleen is encouraged that Sorenson and new Iowa Lakeside Lab director Mary Skopec have met and are looking to work together in the future.

-Kleen suggested providing local conservation news on our media outlets for the interested local public.

Mueske motion to adjourn, Kleen second. Approved. Adjourn at 8:42 p.m.