

Dickinson County Conservation Board

2279 170th St., Okoboji

7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2016

Chair: Kathy Kleen

Vice chair: Willia Mueske

Board members: Eric Stoll, Steve Anderson, Joan Gronstal arrived at 7:30 p.m.

Staff: Lee Sorenson, Kiley Roth

Board liaison: Pam Jordan

Others: Deb Travis, Mike Travis, Rod Sheldon, Rachel Schoelerman, Al Maser, Delores Maser

Call to order at 7 p.m.

Agenda approval: Mueske motion, Stoll second. Approved.

Last month's minutes: Anderson motion, Mueske second. Approved.

Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County update: Minutes from the meeting were sent out to the board.

Environmental education update: Summer programming went very well, with Nature Tots as the most popular program. All the sixth-graders in the county participated in a soil and water conservation field day. The Bee & Butterfly Festival was successful with approximately 600 people tallied.

Operations and facilities update

Saddle Club: Rachel Schoelerman and three others from the Iowa Great Lakes Saddle Club were present to discuss their 22-acre property on 195th Avenue in Milford. The club will be dissolved, and it offered to donate the property to the conservation board, which includes a building, outhouse and horse arena as well as a forested area along the Little Sioux River and another piece of former cropland on the west side of the river. Electricity is approximately \$31 per month base fee through Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative.

Some of the members of the community asked to consider keeping the horse arena and money in the club's accounts could go toward management of the area. The fence around the area needs repaired, and the sand in the arena would need some work.

Deb Travis said horse traffic often goes to Horseshoe Bend because the saddle club is currently only open to saddle club members.

The saddle club board would have to check by-laws to see how to dissolve the group and how to go about resolving itself of the land. The board would like Sorenson to go to the area to see the buildings and the forested area. The goal would be to meet again at the October meeting.

Butterfly House: Sorenson has taken plans for a new Butterfly House to Consumers Lumber in Spirit Lake for a cost estimate but the company has not responded to with a quote yet. A 42-by-60 Morton Building would cost approximately \$50,000 with a concrete floor. This would replace the plan to build a storage building in place of the barn that was demolished. The current Butterfly House would become a garden storage shed for the Pollinator Paradise gardens.

The idea was also presented to the Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County and the new building received an enthusiastic response. Masers would be willing to work with the fundraising effort for a new Butterfly House, and CFDC president Becky Peters said the foundation would be willing to put together a concentrated campaign.

Jordan said a well-thought-out plan with community funding and support would merit the attention of the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors but the campaign would need to be led by the conservation board and the CFDC. Jordan and supervisor Mardi Allen took a tour of different county properties this fall with Sorenson and the philosophy of the conservation board and its future was discussed.

Gronstal said she would like to see the CFDC get involved in this project, because the foundation has looked to get involved in a larger campaign such as this. Submitting a grant application to the Okoboji Foundation was also suggested. Anderson said the conservation board has outgrown the original Butterfly House, and he would like to see a new building that matches the nature center. The importance of pollinators has also grown in the public eye which makes this building even more prominent and important.

Support was shown for the new Butterfly House instead of just building a storage building. A cost estimate will be awaited, and Mueske suggested having a special meeting to discuss the board's priority list and then bring that list to the CFDC and then the supervisors.

The Maser family foundation would supply \$100,000 toward the new Butterfly House in addition to what money is raised and would like to see construction begin this spring with fundraising done this winter. Gronstal suggested perhaps utilizing the \$100,000 number as a matching gift.

Gronstal moved to work with the CFDC and go forward with the new Butterfly House plan, Anderson second to move forward as soon as possible. Approved.

The idea of paving the driveway and parking lot during the Butterfly House construction was discussed, and Mueske brought up concerns that the paving would need to be environmentally friendly and that would increase the cost of the project. Anderson said that the prairie here would soak up plenty of runoff if the water was funneled to the right spot and there are plenty of other options, so creating an environmental parking lot might not be as difficult as it would seem. "I'm going to make sure it's done right," Anderson said.

Recycling center: Allen and Jordan stopped at the Dickinson Recycling Center during the conservation board tour and saw the new bathroom, which was being painted. The tractor caught fire and had about \$5,000 worth of damage but was not totaled, so the insurance company will pay for a loaner tractor while the repairs are being made. The chipping company also has equipment breakdowns, so the brush has piled up quickly.

Iowa DOT Agreements: Vegetation specialist Aric Ping submitted grants to the Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund for equipment and was awarded the following awards:

1. **42" Diamond Flail Boom Mower \$15,000**
2. **Kestrel 3500 Weather Meter \$309**
3. **Bowie Victor 1100 Hydro-Seeder \$24,000**
4. **2001 Spray Truck \$8,000**
5. **Dickinson County IRVM \$194**

Gronstal motion to approve the acceptance of these grants, Anderson second.
Approved.

Dickinson County Conservation Board Areas

Horseshoe Bend proposal for sled hill: Sorenson is working on a PowerPoint presentation regarding the sled hill costs and revenues to present to the board of supervisors. The average temperatures also show possible operating times of December-March because temperatures stay low enough to make snow.

REAP grant: A Resource Enhancement And Protection grant application was submitted for the third year to cover costs to purchase the Knudtson property on the south side of Milford from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, and the grant was tentatively awarded, dependent on approval by the funding board.

Andrea Waitt Carlton offering: Sorenson presented the CFDC with some offerings of how to honor the AWC's contribution to the nature center, including creating an annual scholarship or an educational program series name. The CFDC instead suggested creating a scholarship to send a child to the Dickinson County Conservation Board summer camps. Anderson brought up that naming an educational series after the AWC foundation could prove problematic if for some reason that program was discontinued in the future.

The board suggested putting forward two naming options to the AWC board: 1. A camp scholarship program; 2. The naming of the prairie and a possible educational prairie walk through the Kenue Park prairie.

Approval of expenses: Anderson suggested asking the city of Spirit Lake to charge the regular rate instead of the increased rate for the residents of the city of Orleans. Anderson motion, Mueske second.
Approved.

Gronstal motion to adjourn, Mueske second. Approved. Adjourn at 8:54 p.m.