

Boone County Conservation Board regular meeting
Tuesday, March 11, 2025
Boone County Courthouse, 4th floor conference room

Members present: Randy Johnson, Jennifer Schieltz, Pat Hagan, Gary Nystrom, Lisa Kobernusz
Members absent:

Employees present: Chelsie Wilson, Cooper Sanor, Zach Stevens, Kyle Neuendorf, Larry Shoop

Chair Nystrom officially called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Hagan made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Johnson. Motion passed.

Hagan motioned to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, seconded by Johnson. Passed.

The board opened the floor for any public comments. There were none.

Executive director Wilson presented the monthly bills totaling \$40,087.96. Bills this month included a payment to 10Fold Architecture for design of the new clubhouse. This money will come out of ARPA funds. Carson Electric completed work at the Don Williams shop. The shop is now considered up to code and safe. Sharpening of cutting units for multiple golf mowers was also needed. Kobernusz made a motion to approve the monthly bills, seconded by Schieltz. Passed.

Old Business:

Don Williams new clubhouse update: Member Nystrom talked with 10fold architecture this morning. They are about 85% done with the bid documents and think they will be finished by the first week in April. It would then be ready to put out for bid ~mid-April. They suggest leaving the bidding process open for 3-4 weeks. The board discussed potential timing for when construction could happen. The septic system will be done separately, and may need to happen in the fall after the building is put up.

New Business:

Naturalist Kyle Neuendorf presented his quarterly report, covering programming from December through February. Kyle hosted several Li'l Naturalist programs at Swede Point, Don Williams, and the Ericson and Madrid libraries. He also had a booth at the Iowa Prairie Network winter seminar at Ames High School. Young Stewards will be returning for summer 2025 and people have already expressed interest in participating. Kyle received a grant from the Lowrey Foundation to purchase hand tools and PPE for this program. Due to low numbers in the past, Kyle is not planning to run camps this summer and instead focus on other programming and helping more with natural resource management. Ogden High School is partnering with growing milkweed for us. On June 14, the Prairie State Mushroom Club from Iowa City is coming to do a mushroom foray at Swede Point Park. Soon to come: spring prescribed burns, a trash bash at Grants Woods, outdoor classroom events, school fieldtrip season, and the county fishing derby.

A special event request was received from the Iowa bicycle coalition for their Pigtail Ride from Ankeny to Woodward on May 17. This will be a bike ride of 500-700 participants. Staff

discussed perhaps coordinating rangers to do extra patrols of the bridge during the event. Hagan made a motion to approve, seconded by Johnson. Passed.

Position offer for golf manager: following applications and interviews, the hiring committee selected Randy Johnson as the candidate they want to offer the position to. Hagan made a motion to formally extend the offer, seconded by Kobernusz. Passed. If he accepts the position, Randy will need to resign from the conservation board.

2025 recreation season rules modification: Ranger Cooper Sanor shared proposed edits to the park rules and regulations document. These changes should provide greater clarity to the public and help with enforcement. Sections or additional wording were added related to boat speed and boat ramps, firearms and archery, and camping. Schieltz made a motion to approve these changes, subject to approval by the County Attorney. Seconded by Johnson. Passed.

Boone county foundation proposed projects: there is an upcoming foundation meeting on Thursday to get things back on track, talk about membership, review the finances, and discuss possible projects. Ex. Dir. Wilson reviewed a list of possible projects we have discussed or staff would like to see, and asked if there are any items we would like to add to this list to share with the foundation.

Changes within the conservation department: the board of supervisors have directed that some changes be made to how the conservation department operates, including no more free camping or golf memberships for employees. They want the conservation department to operate more like a business and are concerned about tax implications of these benefits. Ex. Dir. Wilson is very concerned that this is going to affect our workforce, in terms of fewer applicants or fewer people willing to take positions with us. The board discussed the potential need to raise pay for some of our positions in response. This would likely require a budget amendment and we would have to talk to the supervisors for this. Chair Nystrom will work Ex. Dir. Minor on some options to bring back to the board.

Other Discussion: Ogden High School golf team will have 4-5 home meets. Johnson will send out dates once he knows them. The next meeting will be April 15.

Hagan moved to adjourn, Schieltz seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.

Gary Nystrom, Acting Chair

Jennifer Schieltz, Secretary

Action Items

- Gary follow up with 10Fold
- Cooper check with county attorney about rec season rules modifications
- Confirm if Johnson wants to accept golf course manager position
- Chelsie check with HR about employee benefits rules, mileage
- Chelsie and Gary discuss options for increasing pay or otherwise making up for the loss of free camping/golf