

Allamakee County Conservation Board Minutes August 2024

The Allamakee County Conservation Board met in regular session August 6, 2024 beginning at 1 p.m. at the Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center in Lansing, Iowa. Board members who were present were: Jesse Delaney, Marilyn Clark, Steve Weymiller and Dennis Koenig. Attending from the Allamakee County Conservation Board staff was Ross Geerdes, Erin Cubbon and Emma Jacobs. Present from the Allamakee County Board of Supervisors was Mark Reiser and from the public John Hanson. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. and the day's agenda and minutes from the July 2, 2024 regular board meeting were approved with a motion by Koenig and a second by Clark with all members in favor.

During public comment Allamakee County Supervisor Mark Reiser asked about who maintains the river channel of the interior rivers including the Yellow River and the Upper Iowa River. Reiser had recently heard feedback from a resident of Allamakee County that the Yellow River from Forest Mills Road to Smithfield Road had several hazardous trees for canoers and kayakers across the channel.

The board reviewed and approved the claims with a motion by Weymiller and second by Clark. All in favor.

Dr. John Hanson with Ursus Iowa gave a presentation on the status of black bears in Iowa. Black bears are native to Iowa but have been extirpated for 150 or more years. Black bears currently have no legal status in Iowa and it is the hopes of Dr. Hanson and his nonprofit group to change that status, so they can be legally protected in Iowa. Dr. Hanson asked the board to consider supporting a county ordinance that would prohibit the harm of black bears in Allamakee County. Dr. Hanson provided a draft of a possible ordinance and Director Geerdes will add to a future agenda of the ACCB.

The Director provided information regarding the Iowa County Conservation System and the benefits of the organization. Dues for Allamakee County are \$1,500 annually. A motion was made by Koenig and second motion was made by Weymiller to pay the 2024/2025 annual dues of the ICCS. All in favor.

A quote from Solutions, Inc was provided to the board for the purchase of a new laptop computer for the cost of \$1,770. A motion was made by Weymiller and a second by Koenig to purchase a new laptop. All in favor.

In informational items and old business Director Geerdes notified the board Office Manager and Assistant Naturalist Emma Jacobs has submitted her letter of resignation. The resignation is effective August 22, 2024. Director Geerdes will begin advertising for the position as soon as possible with the hopes of conducting interviews for potential candidates in September and the new employee starting in early October. Director Geerdes showed the members of the board a photograph of the retaining wall at the shop in Harpers Ferry. During recent rain storms the limestone fill behind the wall washed out and the wall is in jeopardy of collapsing. The wall measures 24' long x 4' high. Delaney suggested putting together bid specifications for contractors to submit estimates. Elite Sprinkler will be conducting the annual inspection of the sprinkler system in the coming weeks. Director Geerdes met with Dave Ashe, District Forester with the Iowa DNR at the Waterville Farm 55 park. Ashe has suggested work that can be done to improve the forest health at the area. Option A included a timber sale of maple and bitternut hickory trees to allow for Oak regeneration while Option B was to leave the shade tolerant species of trees but perform TSI work on the understory. Members of the board suggested the ACCB move forward with timber stand improvements at Waterville Farm 55 and to continue to work with

Ashe as to the best course of action to take. Delaney commented on the fishing tournament that was held at Village Creek Boat Landing with 88 boats recently and also asked the Director to contact the DNR about sealing the pavement of the Village Creek Boat Landing like was originally included in the paving project but was never completed.

The time and date for the next meeting was set for September 3, 2024 at 1 p.m. in the Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center.

With no additional business the meeting was concluded at 1:58 p.m. with a motion by Koenig and seconded by Clark to adjourn. All in favor.