

The Mahaska County Conservation Board (MCCB) held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, June 1, 2023, at the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) at Caldwell Park. Board Vice-Chair Steven Dixon called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Also present at the meeting were Board Members Linda Fox and Jennifer Peterson. Board Members Henry (Willie) VanWeelden and Curt Jager were absent. The members of the staff present were Director Chris Clingan, Naturalist Laura DeCook and Administrative Assistant Dorothy Wedgewood.

Board Vice-Chair Dixon asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Clingan stated he had one addition to the agenda, Debbie Stevens, William Penn University, Career Services. Fox made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Peterson seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Minutes were discussed.

- I. Fox made a motion to approve the Minutes of the May 4, 2023, board meeting as presented. Dixon seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Expenditures were reviewed.

- I. Clingan discussed several items on the expenditures listing including but not limited to the ASCO invoice for the repair of the generator.
 - A. Clingan advised the Board that the generator is for backup for the county courthouse.
 - B. Clingan told the Board that the gentlemen from 3E Kohler and ASCO were working to get this covered under warranty, however ASCO stated that even though this was an ongoing problem during the warranty period, the work was completed after the warranty expired, so it was not covered.
 - C. Clingan explained that the money to pay for the ASCO generator expenditure will have to come out of money to maintain the parks. Clingan then asked what the Board would like to do moving forward. The Board agreed that conservation monies should not be spent on maintenance of this system as it do is not a conservation item unless specific money is dedicated to cover cost of maintenance.
- II. Fox made a motion to approve the expenditures as presented. Peterson seconded this motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Caldwell Park was addressed.

- I. ELC
 - A. Clingan informed the Board that the Friends of Mahaska County Conservation (FMCC) has agreed to fund the base and the glass cover for the bobcat display.
 - B. Clingan advised he will be submitting a request to FMCC to finance flying Canada goose now displayed at the ELC.
 - C. Clingan shared that KayLynn Sieber and Charles Figy have been working on the prairie around the ELC. They are removing invasive species and trees.
- II. The Mammoth Display was discussed.
 - A. Clingan told the Board that the mammoth replica arrived yesterday, May 31, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. Clingan also said that he would like to thank Steve Dixon and recognize him for all his help getting the mammoth put together and placed. Clingan said that Dixon went above and beyond assembling the mammoth.
 - B. Clingan further stated that Oskaloosa Glass would be at the ELC first thing Friday, June 2, 2023, to place the glass surrounds in the mammoth display.
 - C. Peterson addressed that Wedgewood was not present to assemble/witness the mammoth because she was delivering board packets. Peterson asked why the board

- packets aren't just emailed. Wedgewood advised that not every board member has a working email that they can read and print the material from. Peterson and Dixon would like their board packets emailed.
- D. Discussion ensued using the mammoth for seasonal promotion for the ELC. Some suggestions were to display a heart the size of a mammoth's heart for Valentine's Day and dressing the mammoth or the area in the appropriate clothing/item for the holiday such as a Santa's hat etc.
 - E. Peterson talked about selling yearly Christmas ornaments.
- III. Fall conference was addressed.
- A. Attached to the board packet was information regarding Iowa's County Conservation System 2023 Fall Conference.
 - B. The Board was advised that to receive the reduced cost for the conference, their registration information would need to be collected by the July 2023 regular monthly meeting. Dixon said that he and his wife, Kim, would be attending the full conference and the pre-conference History Tour in Council Bluffs.
 - C. Dixon stated this year there will be no lectures or sessions. There will be tours. Pottawattamie and Harrison Counties have gone together to put on the fall conference and tours will be scheduled for each county. Dixon went on to say there will be keynote speakers at the morning meal.
- IV. The Cabin Donation Request was discussed.
- A. The Board considered the request for a gift certificate for a two-night stay at the Eveland Access cabins submitted by Deann DeGroot, the Mahaska Chamber and Development Group. The Chamber collects donations to raffle to fund the "Painting with the Lights" which illuminates the buildings around Oskaloosa's downtown square.
 - B. Fox made a motion to approve the request for a two-night stay gift certificate. Peterson seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
- V. The Public Safety Update given.
- A. Eveland Access Campgrounds
 - 1. Clingan told the Board that there was an increase in the campground revenue. Based on our spreadsheet for the campgrounds, MCCB grossed approximately \$10,170 in revenue. However, the revenue summary from the auditor's office included approximately \$3,000.00 more in revenue. Clingan said he believes that is due to the sale of coupon books.
 - 2. Clingan stated Brooke Sells has been doing a fantastic job as campground host. Sells' brother is providing firewood for sale. Sells is selling eggs and has planted a vegetable garden in pots. Sells has kept the shower house clean. Clingan said Sells would like to get an ice machine to sell ice at the campgrounds. Sells has asked Clingan to continue in this position next year.
 - 3. Clingan also said that Sells will be driving the tram for the Summerfest that is to be held at the Eveland Access campgrounds, Saturday, June 3, 2023.
 - 4. Peterson mentioned she was in Idaho and visited Yellowstone last weekend. There is a luxury campground there and they had a pickle ball court, rented, and various other activities. She thought added different things as a draw to the campgrounds.

5. Clingan said that there is room for expansion on the west side of the campground. He thought about adding a maintenance shop where the house used to be.
- B. Issues and Concerns
1. Clingan informed the Board that there were forty (40) calls for service ranging from routine fishing license checks to a gentleman with a warrant for theft 2nd.
 2. Clingan stated there was one issue concerning a fight at the Eveland Access campgrounds over the holiday weekend.
 3. Clingan notified the Board he received an \$18,000.00 grant from the Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau. This is the first time any county conservation board has received this grant.
 - i. This grant will provide one in-car camera system (put in Ryan's truck), one hand-held lidar for speed enforcement which will be \$7,500.00 of the monies. The rest will be used for overtime to allow the park rangers to not only add extra patrol under general enforcement, but primarily patrolling for specific things such as distracted driving, seatbelts, and drunk driving.
 - ii. Clingan would like to focus on drunk driving. He said that he has someone lined up to train the park rangers in this area.
 - iii. Clingan stated this will help increase public safety and clean up the parks.
- VI. Debbie Stevens, Career Services, William Penn University addressed the Board.
- A. Stevens discussed partnerships for the AmeriCorp program. MCCB cost for the partnership is \$2,500.00.
 - B. Stevens described the projects that MCCB would have access to through the partnership. These include but are not limited to workers to help with projects such as pollinator gardens, bio retention cells, conservation tasks etc.
 - C. Stevens described some of the projects they are working on now.
 - D. Stevens also offered her services grant writing and talked about the McQuiston Trust grant. Steven stated Clingan has already sent her the information needed to start on the McQuiston Trust grant and she will be focusing on outdoor learning labs/MCCB's playscape plans.
 - E. Stevens advised the three programs that go under the Green Iowa are the Land and Water Stewardship, Energy and Community, and Sustainable Schools.
 - F. Stevens said that they are looking for wetlands to restore for water quality. Clingan told her he would like to discuss several areas with her.
 - G. Wedgewood asked about replacing the poor gravel filled soil in the retaining walls with good soil.
 - H. Stevens said she would like to help market the mammoth display.
 - I. Peterson asked about a person who works with bees. Stevens mentioned Aubrey Brown.
 - J. Discussion ensued.
- VII. The NCCC was updated.
- A. Clingan advised the Board that the initial concept has been received and approved.
 - B. Clingan also stated he has completed approximately half of the application. It is due next Tuesday,
- VIII. The Natural Resources Update was discussed.

- A. Clingan said he has been in contact with Travis Gay for the custom mowing on the Vos property. Caldwell Park prairie and spots at Cedar Bluffs will also need mowed.
 - B. Clingan advised the Board that all the food plots have been planted except for the piece at Cedar Bluffs. Cedar Bluffs would have been planted but the planter broke down.
- IX. The Externship Update was addressed.
- A. Clingan notified the Board that Stephanie Visser will start June 12, 2023. Visser will be working with DeCook and programs.
 - B. Clingan further stated that Nicole Craig will start June 14, 2023. Craig will work restoring the Eddyville Dunes Sand Prairie.
 - 1. Clingan addressed best practices to enhance the habitat for the turtles at the Eddyville Dunes Sand Prairie. He talked with Don Becker, herpetologist, regarding this topic.
 - i. The number one task to enhance the habitat is to get rid of the racoons that dig up and eat the turtle eggs. Racoons will decimate the turtle population.
 - ii. Becker also advised that the prairie would need to be disced/the soil disturbed, but this should not be done until fall after the turtles have dug down approximately four feet to hibernate.
 - iii. Search for nesting sites, focusing on the wetland/reproduction sites of the turtles.
 - C. Visser will be working with DeCook on summer camps.

Setting the July Board meeting was addressed.

- I. The July Board meeting is currently set for July 6, 2023.
- II. The Board agreed that if a special board meeting was needed in June for the end of the year budget expenditures Clingan could call and set one up.

In Other Business:

- I. Clingan addressed a couple of items.
 - A. Clingan said in talking with Ashley Schultz of the Muse Music Store, sponsorships for the Summerfest at Eveland fell through. Schultz is requesting help from MCCB. Clingan recommended using a percentage of camping funds from Memorial weekend through the event to help offset the cost. The Board concurred.
 - B. Clingan advised the Board that VanRenterghem’s vehicle needs new tires.
- II. Peterson talked about displaying John Lacey items at the ELC.
 - A. Peterson was asked by Jeannie Berry if MCCB was going to have a display for John Lacey. Berry has quite a bit of items on Lacey.
 - B. The Board asked for this to be placed on the agenda for the July regular monthly meeting.

Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Fox seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Chairman _____ Secretary _____

Date _____ Date _____