

**Harrison County Conservation Board**  
**Monthly Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, April 1, 2024**  
**Willow Lake**

The Harrison County Conservation Board (HCCB) held its regular April meeting on Monday, April 1, 2024, at the Willow Lake Nature Center. A short dedication for Walter Utman was held on the deck of the nature center to honor him as a past liaison to the HCCB and for his commitment to the Willow Lake Nature Center project.

President Nate Epperson called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. Those members present were Ben McIntosh, Kris Pauley, Kim Nunez, and Danelle Myer. Also present were Rebecca Wilkerson, Kenny Kline, Mara Kline, Mark Ehresman, Sarah Epperson, Sage Pothast, Natural Resource Tech Thad Pothast, Supervisor Tony Smith, and Director Scott Nelson.

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Minutes, and Bills was made by Pauly, seconded by McIntosh. Motion carried.

There were no Public Comments.

Nelson gave the following Updates:

- The Board of Supervisors allowed for a \$1/hour cost of living adjustment to department salaries.
- The HCCB has hosted several events/workshops at the new WLNC.
- The HCCB was awarded \$15,000 from the Harrison County Community Foundation towards the Doidge Property acquisition. The Harrison County Pheasants Forever has also pledged \$10,000, and the Shelby County Pheasants Forever has pledged \$5,000 – leaving \$15,000 to secure.
- The parks are all open to the public.
- McCullough Creative installed new panels at the WLNC and made repairs to other displays.
- The HCCB received a grant from the Paint Iowa Beautiful program in the amount of 5 gallons of Diamond Vogel paint for the School House at the Welcome Center.
- Upcoming Events:
  - Spring Open House on Wednesday, May 1 from 3pm – 8pm.
  - Coop Burn Week is set for the week of April 29<sup>th</sup> for a week in the northern Loess Hills.

Kenny and Mara Kline, along with Mark Ehresman presented to the Board their proposal for establishing a Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) on the north boundary of the Old Town Conservation Area, south of Missouri Valley. This facility could potentially house 1,200 cattle under roof and would have manure pits underneath the 80'x500' building. They would pump the manure out in the Fall and inject it on their farmland. The Kline's have indicated that they would need a variance on the Iowa Department of Natural Resources setback of 1,875 ft off the property line. The Board indicated that they would like to digest the information and discuss more at the May meeting. No action was taken.

Nelson informed the Board that there was no information to share concerning the Strategic Master Plan. Emily Naylor had surgery and was not able to commit a draft for this meeting. She indicated that she would have this draft by the end of the first week of April for the Board for feedback.

Nelson presented information concerning a new well for the Willow Lake Nature Center. Due to being considered a “public water supply”, a well needs to be engineered and designed by a consultant. Nelson reached out to JEO as they were involved in the WLNC building project. After discussion and review, the Board felt it would be good to get a second opinion on cost and design. This item is tabled until the May Board meeting.

The Resource Technician position at the Welcome Center is currently being advertised. Nelson and Program Manager Kathy Dirks meet and established a timeline, job description, salary, and interview team. The hopes are to have someone on staff by mid to late May to work with Larry Oliver for a week or two. A motion to approve a salary of \$40,700/year was made by McIntosh, seconded by Nunez. Motion carried.

Nelson presented the 2024 Summer Interns recommendations. Amelia Bothwell as the Naturalist Intern, returning from last year, and wage at \$14.00/hour. William Koether and Marki Bertelsen as Conservation Tech Interns at \$13.50/hour. After a satisfactory probation period, each wage would be increased by \$.50/hour. A motion to accept the 2024 Summer Intern recommendations was made by Pauley, seconded by Nunez. Motion carried.

Epperson informed the Board that he and McIntosh would like to meet with Director Nelson to further review the planning for the next Executive Director position before the May meeting.

Department Reports were reviewed.

In Other/Future: The next meeting will be May 6<sup>th</sup> at Willow Lake. Potential agenda items are WLNC Well Project and Executive Director updates. Nelson reviewed with the Board on the Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) program that the IDNR is working on with landowners within the Missouri River floodplain. There is the possibility of these landowners wanting to sell or donate these properties to the HCCB. More information as it becomes available.

With no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:41pm was made by Pauley.

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Nate Epperson, President

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Danelle Myer, Vice-President

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Kris Pauley, Secretary

