

Harrison County Conservation Board
Monthly Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 5, 2024
Welcome Center

The Harrison County Conservation Board (HCCB) held its regular February meeting on Monday, February 5, 2024, at the Welcome Center. President Nate Epperson called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Those members present were Ben McIntosh, Danelle Myer, and Kris Pauley via phone. Also present were Rebecca Wilkerson, Operations Supervisor Mike Weis, Supervisor Tony Smith, and Director Scott Nelson.

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

There were no Public Comments.

Nelson gave the following Updates:

- We survived the blizzards and brutal cold snap.
- There were some issues with the HVAC unit that controls the Classroom at the Nature Center. Efforts were and are being made to rectify the problem.
- Nelson is working with Boyer Valley Pheasants Forever (BVPF) with partnering on the Doidge Property acquisition from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.
- Staff attended the annual Winterfest seminar in Coralville.
- Nelson has been attending department head insurance committee meetings.
- Nelson attended the HF 2104 hearing at the Capital in Des Moines. This was introduced legislation to inhibit land acquisition opportunities by the Iowa DNR. This fight has been going on for years and will continue. Only one group was in attendance that supported the legislation, and that was the Farm Bureau. Ultimately, the committee voted to kill the proposal due to overwhelming support to do so.
- Strategic Planning is continuing, slowly.
- The HCCB will be hosting the Western Regional CCPOA workshop for County Park Rangers on March 20th.
- The new mower arrived.
- The closing of sealed bids for the Kawasaki Mule and Toro Grounds Master is Friday, February 9th.

Nelson presented for consideration the 2024 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the department. This is a roadmap of projects identified to complete during the year. After review and discussion, a motion to approve the 2024 CIP was made by Pauley, seconded by Myer. Motion carried.

Nelson presented the 2023 Economic Impact Statement to the Board for review. The entirety of the HCCB's program has a \$4,572,643 spinoff into the regional and local economies, resulting in a \$5.70 return on investment, based on the tax support provided to the department. After review and

discussion, a motion to approve the 2023 Economic Impact Statement was made by Myer, seconded by McIntosh. Motion carried.

Nelson presented the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Annual Report for consideration. This report is for the Board of Supervisors and is required by Chapter 350 of the Iowa Code. The report is a synopsis of the fiscal year and includes a recap of the year's projects, budget breakdown, and departmental reports. After review and discussion, a motion was made to approve the FY22/23 Annual Report by McIntosh, seconded by Pauley. Motion carried.

Nelson updated the Board that postings have been made to solicit individuals to apply for the 2024 summer seasonal positions. It is the intent to find individuals over the age of 18, to fill two Conservation Aid positions, and one Naturalist Aid. The wage range will be \$13.50 - \$14.00 per hour. Due to the lack of applications in the past few years, staff decided not to have a due date, and instead will be "open until filled".

Nelson submitted a proposal that would push a WIFI signal from the WLNC to the West Deluxe Cabins. The cost would be in the \$1,800 range and would be for equipment and labor from Western Iowa Wireless, the provider for our current internet service. This proposal/recommendation is to allow access to cellular users at the cabin site, in which most phone services do not work due to the location. Safety is the first concern, and this is a viable solution. If this proposal works the way it is intended to, then further research will be done to push the WIFI signal to the campgrounds and cabins on the east side of the park. After discussion, a motion was made to accept Western Iowa Wireless proposal to provide internet service to the West Deluxe Cabins by Myer, seconded by McIntosh. Motion carried.

Department Reports were reviewed.

In Other/Future Business – the next meeting is Monday, March 4th at the Welcome Center. Also, a committee of two HCCB members, Nate Epperson and Ben McIntosh, was established to begin working with Nelson on recommendations for the future endeavor of searching for a new Executive Director. Nelson is retiring at the end of December 2024.

With no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 pm by Pauley.

Nate Epperson, President

Danelle Myer, Vice-President

Kris Pauley, Secretary

