

1. **Call to Order**

Jim Steer, Chair, called the regular meeting of the Des Moines County Conservation Board to order at 5.30 p.m. at the Des Moines County Conservation Administration Building.

Those Members Present: James Steer, Jim Garnjobst, Angela Vaughan and Cathy Ziglar, LaVon Worley

Those Members Absent:

Others Present: Katherine Brakeville, Chris Lee and Office Manager Behne

2. a. **Additions and Deletions to Agenda:**

None.

3. **Delegations/Public Input:**

a. None.

4. a. **Approval of Minutes for March 04, 2015:**

#28. Motion by LaVon Worley, seconded by Angela Vaughan, to approve the minutes of the March 04, 2015 Board Meeting. Motion passed unanimously by those members present.

5. **Approval of Report of Activities for March 2015:**

#29 a. Motion Angela Vaughan, seconded by Cathy Ziglar, to approve the reports of activity for March 2015. Motion passed unanimously by those members present.

6. **Approval of Claims for March 2015:**

#30. a. Motion by LaVon Worley, seconded by Jim Garnjobst, to approve the claims for March 2015. Motion passed unanimously by those members present.

7. **Acceptance of Donations**

- a. Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church. \$40.00 to be used by Starr's Cave Nature Center.
- b. Chad Palmer 'Energy Efficient'. Lights and materials for 1st floor renovations @ SCNC. Value listed at \$1,829.00.

8. **Committee Reports:**

- a. **Shooting Range:** Jim Garnjobst reported that a meeting was held on March 18, 2015. Discussed the berm updates on the shooting range and the approved contractor Edle Earthmoving, Inc.
- b. **Flint River Trails:** Cathy Ziglar was unable to attend the meeting. Director Lee gave a brief report of where the project is currently. Nothing significant to report.
- c. **Observatory:** LaVon Worley reported that the most recent meeting was held on March 19, 2015 at the Burlington Public Library. Repairs and renovations are about completed. Members set schedule for upcoming viewing season. Anyone interested may get an annual membership. Fee is \$20.00 for an individual and \$30.00 for a family annually.
- d. **REAP:** Jim Steer had no report. Director Lee reported to the board that the past Saturday an Eggs & Issues event was held. IWILL was the major discussion. Representative Cahoon supported the idea but recognizes it will be difficult to pass. Senator Courtney was a yes on this funding issue and Representative Sands said he'd not vote for any tax increase. He would not, however, block it if it comes up. This year the opportunity for passage seems remote after the passage of the recent gas tax. The next meeting will be on April 18 and Director Lee will be in attendance.

9. Project Updates: By Director Lee

a. Big Hollow:

- Campgrounds are now opened.
- Solar has been installed in the cabin.
- The cabin, now known as the Off Grid Cabin has been rented for all of April, May and most of June.
- Crews are clearing trees for the berm project. Fences need to come down prior to April 15, 2015. 100 yard and 300 meter ranges are closed during the project for safety.
- Wood chips will be installed on the 25 yard range to help keep the mud down. Due to drainage the grass will not take as there is too much usage.
- Big Hollow Lake, fish have not yet started to bite.
- DNR water quality on Big Hollow Lake has no report to date.
- Grant and/or funding requests have been sent to the Murray, Winegard and Witte Foundations for assistance with the water/sewer infrastructure at B Hollow. Monies from these sources would be to assist with match on other grant requests when received.

b. Starr's Cave Nature Center Upgrades:

- Renovation continues to progress.
- Bathroom has been mostly completed. Finishing trim being done at this time.

Bats at Starr's Cave. The white nose syndrome has officially been found within Starr's Cave. Most probably means that this cave will not be able to be opened to the public again. A press release will be compiled by all participants before it goes to the media. A conference call has been scheduled for April 02, 2015 at 3:00 pm to discuss the issue.

c. Other: Parks.

All parks are now open.

10. Old Business:

- a. Land Management Agreement.** The Land Management Agreement as updated during the March 04, 2015 Board Meeting has been signed by the Two Rivers Drainage District.

#31. Motion by Cathy Ziglar, seconded by Jim Garnjobst, to approve Land Management Agreement with the wording changes and the 10 year duration indicated in the new document. Motion approved unanimously by all members present.

11. New Business:

a. Personnel Action – Letter of Resignation, Brakeville

Katherine read her letter of resignation to the board. She expressed her regret to leave but understood that this was an opportunity for her to move on in her life's experiences.

The Board accepted her resignation, with reluctance, but wished Katherine well in her future endeavors. A farewell dinner has been scheduled for April 22, 2015 at the Drake, 6:30 pm.

#32. Motion by Cathy Ziglar, seconded by Angela Vaughan, to approve the letter of resignation from Naturalist Katherine Brakeville and to wish her well on her new adventures. Motion approved unanimously by all members present.

b. Personnel Action – Naturalist:

Director Lee introduced the name of Frances Owen, to become the newly hired Naturalist.

Frances has come highly recommended and has recently worked for the Cerro Gordo Conservation Boards as Seasonal Naturalist. She previously worked for the Dickinson County Conservation as well. Frances has a Masters in Biology. Starting date will be April 06, 2015.

Katherine Brakeville will have an opportunity to spend two weeks working with Frances prior to her final day of employment.

#33. A motion by Angela Vaughan, seconded by LaVon Worley, to approve the hiring of Frances Owen for the recently vacant position of Naturalist. Motion approved unanimously by all

members present.

c. Camping incentives/promotions:

Fee related items are brought before the board for approval prior to changes or implementation. The funding of Big Hollow projects rely on revenue. Be it fees from camping, other related Big Hollow activities or fundraising. An incentive for bringing campers into the park or to just have them stay longer is something Director Lee would like to pursue. Be it keeping our campers on site for a few extra days at a lower fee or getting campers in by extending lower camping prices. Seasonal opportunities exist for our holiday weekends as do lower rates for mid-week stays.

#34. A motion by LaVon Worley, seconded by Cathy Ziglar, to approve the request by Director Lee to investigate incentive options and implement them as needed. Motion approved unanimously by all members present.

12. Informational Items/Correspondence:

- a. Nesting box report for Wood duck boxes were at a 25% usage rate. The lower reason is unknown but could possibly have been attributed to the flooding this past season.

Bluebird boxes are doing well as covered in the table provided for the board. 71% of boxes were used by bluebirds this year. Flint River Trail boxes were not placed until March 21, 2014 which is after the regular migration beginning date of March 21.

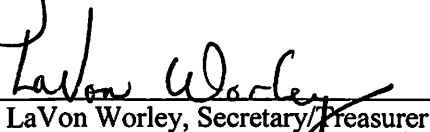
The success rate of any species was significantly lower this year, possibly due to getting boxes out late. This can be considered a very successful year and program for the bluebirds. 15 Additional boxes have been added in the Leopold Recreation Area bringing our total to 50 boxes. A thank you to Jim Garnjobst and Jim Steer for their generous donations of time and materials in installing these new boxes at the Leopold Recreation Area.

- b. LaVon Worley thanked Pat Rogge for the sign he created and placed for the prairie at the Aldo Leopold Middle School. He further wished to thank Conservation personnel, Jeremy Yost and his wife Erica. Volunteer's Patrick Moore and George Grunther. Also assisting was Burlington Fire Department firefighter personnel. All participated in the prairie burn at the school site. The prairie is already showing signs of new spring growth.

13. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6: 40 p.m.

Next meeting will be held at the Des Moines County Administration Office at 13700 Washington Road in West Burlington, IA. Meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday May 06, 2015. The public is welcome to attend.


James Steer, Chair


LaVon Worley, Secretary/Treasurer