

O'Brien County Conservation Board

March 10, 2021

The O'Brien County Conservation Board met in regular session at the Prairie Heritage Center at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were: Royd Chambers, Kathy Luedke, Jack Wallinga and Darwin Dau.

Visitors from the community included Carolyn Bootsma, Mary Hicks, Molly Hicks, Joshua Hicks, Dave Stoll, Lydia Hansen, Claude Struve, Mari Radtke, Tom Konz, Randy Feekes, Terry Feekes, and Patty Vollink.

The minutes from the February 10, 2021 meeting were stood as presented with no objections. Monthly expenditures with the addition of the utility bills from MidAmerican Energy which are still coming were approved on a motion by Wallinga, seconded Dau. Motion carried, unanimous.

Kevin Brassler provided an update to the board on the proposed Mill Creek Park Walking Trail Interpretive Signage Project. On a motion by Dau, seconded Luedke, the Conservation Board will apply for an O'Brien County Community Foundation grant to fund the Mill Creek Park Walking Trail Interpretive Signage Project. Motion carried, unanimous. The Little Sioux Valley Conservation Association will provide the matching funds.

The board was informed that Jolene Hultgren, President of the Backcountry Horsemen of Iowa Western Chapter, has met with the Director and Assistant Director to tour the McCormack Area and provide guidance regarding the creation of bridle trails. A grant has been submitted through the Backcountry Horsemen group to provide funding for bridle trail signage and a trail identification kiosk at the parking area. On a motion by Wallinga, seconded Dau, horseback riding is a designated use of the McCormack Area. The rules for riding at the McCormack Area are as follows:

- 1) Riding is allowed from the day after the last day of turkey season to the day before youth deer season
- 2) Riding is allowed from sunrise to sunset
- 3) No riding until at least 24 hours after a rain
- 4) Please register before riding

Motion carried, unanimous.

Job duties of the Director, Assistant Director, Naturalist and Park Rangers were reviewed by the board.

The director updated the board as to the progress and current status of the Scout Island Shoreline Armoring Project.

Two summer help positions will be advertised. The director hopes to have the candidates selected by the April meeting.

Currently, there are very few volunteers willing to work at the Prairie Heritage Center on weekends. The center has been primarily staffed by Conservation Board employees on Saturdays since it was reopened after the COVID-19 shutdown. If we are unable to find more volunteers, it will become more challenging to keep the center staffed on both Saturdays and Sundays beginning in May. The chairman instructed the director to include this item on the April agenda for further discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at the Prairie Heritage Center.

