

**Regular Meeting  
Buchanan County Conservation Board  
February 18, 2020**

The regular meeting of the Buchanan County Conservation Board was held on February 18, 2020 at the Fontana Interpretive Nature Center. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Board President Loren Hamilton. Board members present Anita Miller, Ron Wolfe and Mary Jean Blaisdell. Others present: Director Dan Cohen and Secretary Diane Johnson.

Motion Miller/Wolfe to approve January 21 strategic planning meeting, January 21 regular meeting and agenda. All Ayes motion carried.

Motion Miller/Blaisdell to approve claims as follows. All Ayes, motion carried.

Chris Hansen	\$8.00	Consolidated Energy	\$1202.41
CCDA	\$40.00	Cy & Charley's	\$638.44
Dan Cohen	\$58.59	DenHerder Vet. Hospital	\$279.18
Diane Johnson	\$514.25	ECI REC	\$594.96
Elaine Walker	\$678.56	Fareway Foods	\$15.96
Forestry Supplies	\$105.90	Iowa Communities Assurance	\$9349.40
Iowa Regional Utilities	\$277.58	JD Financial	\$152.57
Koch Brothers	\$61.18	LEAF	\$277.34
Oelwein Vet	\$43.93	Our Iowa	\$34.98
S&G Harvieux	\$35.00	Spahn & Rose	\$1388.00
Vernier	\$242.87	Vern's True Value	\$102.93
Walmart	\$64.74	Waste MGMT	\$77.75

Cohen informed the Board that Assistant County Engineer Alex Davis was not yet prepared with plans for the Dam and Spillway project, but would be available to present the plans on March 3. Motion Wolfe/Miller to hold a meeting at the Independence Public Library on March 3 at 1:00 pm. All Ayes, motion carried.

Now comes Andy Crump at 6:07.

Cohen notified the Board of a property northwest of Independence for sale. Cohen distributed aerial photos of the property and surrounding land. Most of the property is in a federal Emergency Wetland Program with use restrictions. There is a small house cabin on the property. Cohen provided information about past transactions on the property. The matter was tabled.

A Wine Tasting program is currently in the planning stage by a naturalist. Conservation Board Rules state that no vendors are allowed in County parks. Motion Wolfe/Crump to allow the vendor to sell wine during the. All Ayes, motion carried.

Naturalists would like to acquire 15 kayaks and a trailer to haul/store the boats. During their recent meeting, Friends of Fontana Park approved providing funds to cover the cost. Motion Crump/Wolfe to acquire the kayaks and trailer. All Ayes, motion carried.

The Directors report was submitted as follows:

- Attended meetings of Buchanan County Tourism Marketing; I WiLL (phone); Bird Friendly Iowa (phone); Buchanan County Safety Meeting; Buchanan County Department Heads Meeting; Buchanan County Trails Association; Buchanan County Roadside Advisory Committee; Friends of Fontana Park; Buchanan County Pheasants Forever; and Buchanan County Wildlife Association.
- Field Staff: Staff cut dead trees, continued prep work in the Jakway Clearcut for spring planting; cleared snow; checked boundaries and nest boxes; prepped doors for new latrine; cut cedars out of Grover prairie; maintained vehicles, etc. Field staff attended CCB employees' Winterfest training.
- Naturalist Staff: Naturalists were busy with school programming, including the 7<sup>th</sup> grade winter field trip with game feed. Public programs included snowshoeing programs. Michael initiated a free snowshoe rental program in the nature center. Sondra and Michael attended a regional naturalists meeting, and Michael attended Winterfest.
- Met with DNR Conservation Officer Dakota Drish to discuss potential ways to marry state code with Conservation Board rules and regulations and county ordinances. Also included input from park rangers and discussed potential rules changes.
- Responded to a request to write an article for a water quality edition of the Iowa County magazine – distributed to county departments and related associates throughout Iowa.
- Closed on the Lohman property – expanding Fontana Park by 16 acres. Recorded deeds and other documents, and paid taxes owed, revenue stamps, and abstract fees (from seller). Sent a certified letter to renter Rick Alber with information about payment for 2020 crop rental agreement (also spoke with Alber by phone).
- Met with Naturalist Michael and Benton County Naturalist to plan a late July youth wilderness trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Permits were acquired and reservations made.
- Attended the Board of Supervisors meeting along with Engineer Keierleber to discuss potential work to make the historic Iron Bridge safe for public use, with amenities (as per the January Board Meeting). The BoS approved moving forward with a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant request.
- Worked with Buchanan County Tourism on the upcoming county visitor's brochure.
- Spoke with Nate Hoogeveen about a possible stop/inclusion of the iron Bridge Access project as part of the Governor's Invest in Iowa Tour (Trust Fund).
- Attended a BoS meeting during which discussion of the Conservation Reserve account was discussed. Prepared a packet of information for BoS. Conservation Board President Loren Hamilton also attended. The BoS took no action on the topic.
- As per the January 21 Strategic Planning meeting, mailed packets to Board Members with an assignment to carefully prioritize potential infrastructure changes/improvements/additions at Fontana Park, and to sketch plans on an aerial photo if desired. Also urged staff to do the same (agenda item).
- Spoke with Paul Bachman regarding his residence adjacent to Cortright Wildlife Area (agenda item).
- Looked into property listed for sale northwest of Independence (agenda item).
- Requested and received deadline grant extensions for the Iron Bridge Project from the Black Hawk County Gaming Association and Buchanan County Community Foundation.
- Communicated with Alex Davis concerning the Fontana steps and spillway project, and Davis indicated he will be ready for the February Board Meeting (agenda item).
- Wrote employee evaluations and conducted interviews.
- Advertised for seasonal conservation technicians and naturalists. Attended the Kirkwood Community College Job Fair. Offered one seasonal technician position to returning seasonal conservation tech Jacob Schwarting.

- Received a request from Board of Supervisor Ohrt to co-chair a county committee to look into labor relations.
- Coordinated new county designations for Bird Friendly Iowa. In its first year of the program, Winneshiek, Story, and Polk counties were chosen for designation.
- Naturalists requested the county acquire kayaks for use with educational and recreational programming. A friend of Fontana Park has offered to purchase the equipment (agenda item).
- Presented during two sessions at the CCB employees Winterfest Conference – one on interpretive signage/brochures/etc.; and one on legislative process/policy (especially the Trust Fund). More than 450 people attended.

Motion Crump/Blaisdell to accept Directors report. All Ayes, motion carried.

Board members list their top 3-5 priorities as part of the strategic planning process underway for Fontana Park. These will be used as the process moves forward with assistance from a consulting group. No action taken.

Due to conflicting meetings, the regular March Board meeting date was asked to be changed. Motion Wolfe/Crump to move the regular March meeting of the Buchanan County Conservation Board to Monday, March 16 at 6:00 pm. All Ayes, motion carried.

Motion Crump/Miller to adjourn. All Ayes, meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Diane Johnson

Secretary