

Iowa County Conservation Board

October 22, 2026 ICCB Minutes

Lake Iowa Nature Center, Ladora, IA

Board members in attendance: Parsons, Schumacher and Phillips

Board members absent: Danaher and Montross

Staff in attendance: Slings, Minnich and Wuebker

Public in attendance: None

Call to Order: 6:30 p.m. by Phillips

1) Pledge of Allegiance

2) Approve Agenda

Motion to approve by Schumacher, seconded by Parsons. Motion carried unanimously.

3) Open Forum

A) Public Comment – Parsons reported receiving positive feedback about improvements and vegetation clearing at Gateway Park.

B) Board Comment – Parsons reported assisting Anthony Fisher with his Eagle Scout bench project. One bench was nearly completed, with materials prepared for three additional benches. Board members discussed the designs and placement near the fire ring.

4) Approval of Minutes

September 9, 2026 – Motion to approve by Schumacher, seconded by Parsons. Motion carried unanimously.

September 23, 2026 – Motion to approve by Schumacher, seconded by Phillips. Motion carried unanimously.

5) Approval of Bills from September 2026

Motion to approve by Schumacher, seconded by Parsons. Motion carried unanimously.

6) Staff Updates – Were discussed.

7) Business

i. Lake Iowa Park

- a. Work Around the Park** – Slings discussed fall honeysuckle control, burnbreak installation, planned work at the director's residence, and woody brush removal at Gateway to improve access and views of the water. Staff discussed the Conservation Corps Iowa work at Pilot Grove, expanded parking at Big Bend, and preparation for a prescribed burn at Gunderson when conditions permit.
- b. Creepy Camping** – Attendance increased over the previous year, with approximately six campsites remaining open. Activities included pumpkin rolling, pellet-gun shooting, mummy races, bingo, pumpkin painting, and natural-fiber witches broom craft with Master Gardeners. The shooting gallery was popular with participants of various ages. An electrical issue at a shower house was addressed by an electrician.
- c. Fall Conference** – Slings shared photographs and observations from visits to conservation facilities in Scott, Benton and Linn counties, including nature centers, cabins, shelters, restrooms and natural areas. Examples discussed included concrete restroom facilities, an ice cave, a fen, a large shelter and a cabin with glow-in-the-dark patio aggregate.
- d. E-Summit** – Slings reported on the MyCountyParks conference, including cybersecurity, marketplace features, reservable campsites and QR codes. The board discussed potentially testing reservations on the front ten campsites while retaining first-come, first-served options elsewhere. Signage, staffing and a gradual rollout were discussed; no action was taken. QR codes for facility information and educational trails were also discussed.
- e. Basement Doors** – Slings reported receiving high estimates to replace the basement doors, which no longer lock properly. A temporary locking method using bike locks on the panic bars was discussed for times when the basement is not rented. Replacement options and costs will continue to be explored.
- f. Larping 2027** – Slings reported an inquiry about hosting a live-action role-playing event for approximately 120–150 participants in September or October 2027. The group expressed interest in renting several facilities and using park grounds. Board members discussed public access, visitor interactions, insurance, law enforcement, event location, staffing, rental costs and a possible special-use permit. Members emphasized that public park areas could not be made exclusive to event participants without appropriate authorization. Slings will gather more information, including

experiences at Middle Amana, and bring the matter back for further discussion. No approval was granted.

ii. Gateway Park & Preserve

- a. Project Updates** – Slings reported a change order of approximately \$9,500 for geogrid material to stabilize the parking lot substrate over existing buried concrete and unsuitable soils. The project remained approximately \$25,000 under budget at the time of the report. Concrete parking areas and accessible parking and walkway features were shown in photographs. Plans for landscaped drainage islands, native vegetation and the accessible restroom were discussed.
- b. Fuller Lease Update** – Slings reported that lease discussions are paused pending designation of representatives for the Miller estate. Any proposed lease changes will need to be addressed by the applicable September 1 deadline. No action was taken.

iii. Pilot Grove

- a. Work Week with Conservation Corps Iowa** – Slings described forestry management intended to encourage oak regeneration, consistent with the property's 1990 management plan. Work included crop-tree release, timber stand improvement and removal of competing or undesirable trees. Photographs showed completed work and young oak regeneration in previously treated areas. Slings discussed continuing this work in stages.

8) Next Meeting

November 18, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at Lake Iowa Nature Center.

9) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Schumacher, seconded by Phillips. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.