

Iowa County Conservation Board

September 9, 2026 ICCB Minutes

Lake Iowa Nature Center, Ladora IA

Board members in attendance: Parson, Phillips and Schumacher

Board members absent: Danaher and Montross

Staff in attendance: Slings, Minnich, Trickett and Wuebker

Public in attendance: None

Call to Order: at 6:30 by Phillips

1) Pledge of Allegiance

2) Approve Agenda - Motion for approval by Schumacher, seconded by Parsons. Motion carried unanimously.

3) Open Forum

A) Public Comment - Discussion continued regarding the long-term direction and vision for Iowa County Conservation. The Board discussed identifying what the public and Board would like to see from Conservation, barriers to future projects, use of existing properties, staffing and funding limitations, and whether additional land acquisition should be a priority. The Board also discussed ways to better understand use of conservation areas, including trail counters.

The Board agreed that a longer strategic planning session would be more productive than trying to complete the discussion during regular meetings. A winter planning session was discussed for late February, with the intent to brainstorm priorities, identify common goals and develop a clearer direction for the department.

B) Board Comment – Parsons shared positive feedback from a camper, who said Lake Iowa Park is his favorite place to camp.

4) Approval of Minutes from August 12, 2026 - Motion for approval by Parsons, seconded by Phillips. Motion carried unanimously.

5) Approval of Bills from August 2026 - Motion for approval Schumacher, seconded by Phillips. Motion carried unanimously.

6) Staff Updates: Were discussed.

7) Business

i. Lake Iowa Park -

a. Work around the park: Slings reported continued preparation for Creepy Camping, including volunteers, campsite judging, sponsorships, fundraising, pumpkins and a shooting sports activity. Beach buoys were removed for the season. A collaborative lighted paddle event with Cedar County drew more than 60 participants and received positive feedback. Conservation also participated in a Williamsburg community event with Farm Bureau, where approximately 50 children visited the fishing activity. The Nature Center air-conditioning repair has been completed.

b. Fall Kirkwood WLC Internship - Kennedy Thiessen: Slings introduced Kennedy Thiessen as a fall intern from Iowa Valley. The unpaid internship will run from September through December, with approximately three hours worked each Friday. The internship will provide exposure to conservation work and hands-on experience with department projects.

c. Homeschool Programming - Update: Minnich presented plans to begin monthly homeschool programs at Lake Iowa Park. Programs are planned for approximately one hour on the third or fourth Wednesday of the month and are intended to give homeschool families an opportunity to interact while learning about nature. Minnich is also coordinating with a private homeschool group that may bring up to 60 children for separate monthly visits using the same activities. Programs have been posted on Facebook and MyCountyParks, and additional local advertising is being pursued.

d. Fuller Lease Agreement - Discussion: Slings reported that Fuller Addition agricultural leaseholder Jeff Miller passed away in late August. His son, Colton, contacted Conservation regarding the lease. Slings contacted the County Attorney regarding updating the agreement to represent Colton as the leaseholder while otherwise maintaining the current terms. The Board

discussed reviewing the rental rate and lease terms before the September 1 deadline next year and consulting local agricultural resources regarding comparable farmland rental rates.

e. Snowplow Bids - Vote: The board reviewed bids for a new pickup-mounted snowplow to replace use of the heavier former DOT truck, which has caused damage to park road surfaces. Boss and Western plow options and trip mechanisms were discussed, along with availability, freight and installation. The Board reached consensus on the Boss 8'2" poly VXT plow from Future Line. **Motion for approval by Schumacher, seconded by Parsons. Motion carried. Unanimously.**

f. Director House - Discussion: Slings reviewed planned improvements to prepare the director house for rental use. Items discussed included approximately 1,000 square ft of flooring, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, painting, furnishings, internet service and television. The Board favored hard-surface LVP flooring rather than retaining any carpet because of cleaning and allergy concerns. Slings discussed listing the house through Airbnb and/or VRBO. A possible nightly rate of around \$200 was discussed, with the rental expected to sleep approximately six people comfortably. Work will continue cautiously as funding is available, with a goal of having the house ready by spring.

ii. Gateway Park & Preserve -

a. Project updates - A preconstruction meeting was held August 19 with the engineers, project team and Miller Excavating. Staff reviewed site layout, equipment access and ways to keep visitors away from construction activity. Substantial completion is expected by the second week of November, with final completion by mid-December. Recent rainfall has delayed some work while water levels drop. The next major step includes removing the remaining panels and completing the final cast-in-place work.

8) Next Meeting October 7th at 6:30pm at Lake Iowa Nature Center.

9) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Schumacher, seconded by Phillips. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting ended at 7:34 PM.