

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
May 20, 2020**

PURSUANT to written notice given all members of the Board, the above meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by President Parish.

Board members present: President Parish, 1st Vice-President White, Secretary Johnson, Treasurer Schneller, and 2nd Vice-President Bendsen

Trustee White MOVED to approve the Minutes of the April 22, 2020, Regular Public Meeting and the April 22, 2020 Budget Public Hearing as presented. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Parish, "AYE"; Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; and Trustee White, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of 105,339.04 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$ 17,955.68 as presented. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee White, "AYE"; and Trustee Parish, "AYE". Motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE: No comments.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Archery Deer Herd Management Report and Recommendations:

Ethan Snively, Natural Resource Specialist, was present to present the Archery Deer Herd Management Report for 2019 as well as recommendations for 2020. Ethan gave a summary of the program for the new Board member stating the program ran from October 18 – December 12, 2019 with a pre-season drawing being held on September 13, 2019. The total number of deer harvested was 67 (down a little from 2018) but 18 bucks were harvested, which was the largest number harvested in the past four years. Macon County's archery season harvest numbers increased from 475 to 495. The season closed without any incident. This was the first year to have a disabled blind at Rock Springs which brought positive feedback from the public as well as the hunters. Four disabled hunters participated and all harvested at least one year. Ethan hosted a get-together for the first time at the end of the season for feedback from the hunters with approximately 12 hunters showing up with homemade recipes.

Staff recommends continuing the archery deer program hunting program for 2020 season due to the high browse pressure on District holdings, relatively high numbers of deer/vehicle accidents and the tendency for deer populations to increase without hunting pressure. It is recommended that the program run from October 16, 2020 to December 11, 2020. Recommendations for 2020 include:

- 1) Hold a lottery drawing to select 5 participants for each week of the season at Rock Springs, Sand Creek, and Friends Creek Conservation Areas. In addition hold a weekly standby drawing to select 5

additional participants for each of these sites on weekends (for a total of 10 hunters) and 8 additional participants on weekdays (for a total of 13 hunters).

- 2) New -Increasing participants from 3 to 4 in the lottery drawing each week for Fort Daniel Conservation Area;
- 3) New - Permit the harvesting of coyotes and turkeys – there was much discussion concerning including the harvesting of turkeys. There would be no fee and would not be monitored very much. Harvested turkeys would have to be reported. Trustee Johnson voiced a concern about hunting turkeys at Friends Creek as he has not seen very many and would hate for the few that are there to be harvested. After some discussion, the rest of the Board members were in agreement. There was some discussion on monitoring the number of turkeys being harvested and adjusting the maximum number during mid-season.
- 4) New - Add two additional disabled hunting blinds on District property. Specific sites will be determined at a later date. All the details are still pending further discussion.
- 5) New - Participants must access hunting sites from designated hunting parking. The same penalty for not parking in designated hunger parking areas will apply.
- 6) New - Increase fees for 2020: increase Macon County Residents from \$20.00 to \$30.00; increase out of county residents from \$50.00 to \$60.00; and increase out of state from \$90.00 to \$110.00. Some discussion followed concerning the increase and Richie Wolf stated one reason for the increase is because it's been a very long time since the fees have been increased. One reason for the increase in out of state was to reward more local people and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources charges a higher fee for out of state licenses.
- 7) Finally new recommendation proposing to eliminate the “earn-a-buck” requirement. Much discussion followed concerning the pros and cons of eliminating that requirement.

Pros for keeping earn-a-buck: Reasons for keeping the requirement include it's based on scientific approach, lowers the chance for disease outbreak, reduces browse pressure on native plants, reduce tick population and lyme disease, benefits local hunters by keeping trophy hunters out of the program, reduced deer/vehicle collisions, majority of past surveys support earn-a-buck, IDNR Heritage Biologists agree with the focus on reducing the number of does, reduced conflict between the District and adjacent landowners, and the program as managed in the past has increased the quality of bucks, in turn generating more interest in the program.

Pros for eliminating earn-a-buck: New hunters must pass on bucks until harvesting a doe whereas by eliminating it hunters would kill their buck and be done hunting, reduces pressure to harvest young of the year

fawns in order to qualify for a buck, more likely to retain young hunters, buck harvest generates hunting interest and provides a more exciting program, enables District to raise the fees with trophy hunting making slots more valuable, less regulations equals less enforcement, reduced temptation to cheat, and bucks eat more vegetation.

After much discussion, the board unanimously decided to keep the earn-a-buck program for now.

Trustee Bendsen MOVED to approve recommendations 1-6 stated above with the exception of eliminating turkey hunting (#3) at Friends Creek Conservation Area. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Parish, "AYE"; and Trustee Johnson, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Bendsen MOVED to approve keeping the "earn-a-buck" requirement listed in #7 above. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the motion. Roll Call vote was as follows: Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Parish, "AYE"; Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Staff Reports:

No comments were made or questions asked in regards to the staff reports.

3. Other:

The Macon County Board approved the new trustee, Dave Castor, beginning July 1, 2020. Richie Wolf reported that he received an email from an individual inquiring if the District would have any interest in selling a part of the Kaufman Lakeside Property. Richie responded to the individual stating that the District cannot sell property as per the Illinois Conservation Act. With the Governor of Illinois ending Phase 2 the end of May and moving to Phase 3, Richie informed the Board that all staff would be returning to work on June 1st following all the proper guidelines provided by the CDC. The campground would also open as well as all outdoor restroom facilities. Groups of ten or less, masks, and all social distancing rules will be followed and enforced.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

The Board commended Richie Wolf for the fine job in managing the District through this COVID-19 pandemic.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Schneller MOVED to adjourn the Regular Public Meeting at 6:43 p.m. Trustee White SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Parish, "AYE"; Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, AYE"; Motion carried.



President

ATTEST:



Secretary