

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
May 15, 2019**

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

Board members present: President Jensen, 2nd Vice-President Schneller, Treasurer White, Secretary Johnson and 1st Vice-President Parish
Board members absent: None

Trustee Parish MOVED to approve the Minutes of the April 24, 2019, Public Meeting and Budget Study Session Meeting as presented. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Trustee Parish SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and Trustee Parish, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Parish MOVED to approve the monthly Disbursements in the amount of \$107,937.51 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$66,138.17. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and Trustee Parish, "AYE". Motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE: No audience.

PRIOR BUSINESS:

1. ECO Center Upgrades

At this time, Paul Marien didn't have much to report from Taylor Studios except that a conference call was scheduled for May 20th and that the schematic design would be delivered this Friday (May 17th). Paul will update the Board at the June meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Archery Deer Herd Management Report and Recommendation

Ethan Snively reviewed the Archery Deer Herd Management report and commented that overall the program went well with no problems encountered. He reported that the number of hunters in the program decreased while the number of deer harvested increased. He attributed this difference to the penalties that were added last year to breaking the rules losing some poor hunters while maintaining the good ones. Ethan briefly reviewed the changes made last year for the new Trustees. Trustee Schneller wondered if the deer in this area were healthy and Ethan responded that they are relatively healthy for now as the chronic waste disease has been more north of this

area. Trustee Parish inquired if Ethan knew the population of deer in each area. Ethan has no specific number but stated that there is no danger of over harvesting deer. The report stated that harvested deer from the Conservation District accounted for 15% of the total archery harvest in Macon County. Ethan reviewed the different charts in the Board packet with the Trustees. He reported that the number of deer harvested in the County increased from 459 to 475 while the District's increased from 53 to 72. Browse surveys show 50% or greater browse at all four Conservation areas and reported deer/vehicle accidents increased 28% from 2017 and all deer-related vehicle accidents occurred within two miles of the four Conservation areas open to hunting. Staff recommend continuing the program with the following changes being made:

- Participants will only be able to draw in for two additional hunters besides themselves in the weekly drawings. District permits will not need to be shown during the drawing but participants will be required to buy one prior to the drawing. A current list will be generated before each drawing for verification.
- District will offer a hunting area for individuals with disabilities via the lottery drawing that runs concurrently with the deer management program allowing hunters with disabilities the opportunity to hunt in Macon County from an accessible platform. The proposed hunting site will be located at the end of Brozio Lane and will be gated off when hunting is in effect. *(Ethan provided a map detailing the change)*. (Harvest rules have not been finalized at this point in time). Disabled hunters will be exempt from the rule requiring a doe to be harvested before an antlered deer.
- Adding an additional 31 acres into the hunting at Rock Springs *(map provided with details)*. This will help space out hunters and eliminate possible conflicts.

A question was raised as to how to determine if someone was officially determined to be disabled and Ethan stated that he thought it was required to be stated on the State of Illinois ID.

Trustee White MOVED to approve continuing the Deer Herd Management Program for 2019 with the changes presented above. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Ash Tree Removal on Bike Trail:

Shane Ravellette reviewed the effect the Emerald Ash Borer has had on the ash trees in the District, particularly along the Bike trail. In late winter Shane and his staff noticed several trees with missing bark and discovered that there were many ash trees that had died from the Emerald Ash Borer. With so many being along the bike trail, staff wanted to be proactive and remove the dead trees for safety purposes. Staff wanted the Board to be aware of the removal of these trees for the safety of the public and that they will try to save some of the wood for the Homestead stove, firewood and for program use. Shane felt that it would be rare to see any ash tree that didn't exhibit some signs of the Ash Borer. The ash tree population is about 50% as compared to other species. Paul Marien stated that the positive side of the removal of the trees is that it will change the forest in providing more light for the undergrowth. Ethan

Snively also stated that there were plans to plant more trees in the bottomland such as pin oak, pecan, black walnut, etc. Trustee Jensen felt that the public should be notified and Paul stated that an announcement about closing the bike trail for the tree removal would be posted in Facebook as well as a press release. The plans were to begin the project as early as tomorrow (Thursday). This project was for informational purposes only and no Board decision was required.

3. Staff Reports:

Paul Marien reported that he met with the City manager and offered the District's technical resource knowledge if they need any help in developing a Natural Resource Management Plan for the upper Sangamon River Watershed. Paul attended a Decatur Legacy luncheon and workshop to bring various not-for-profits together to collaborate. The District received several donations recently with one being \$6,000.00 from a long time donor and a \$1,000.00 for a leaf on the legacy tree and the Foundation received a donation of \$500.00 and one for \$3,750.00. The County Board approved the new Trustee to begin in July.

Pam Smith reported that most of the month was spent on preparing for the annual audit. Two auditors were on site for three days for testing and review. They will send a rough draft for review. When they left, they stated that everything look good and didn't foresee any issues. Pam explained that the Buena Vista certificate of deposit had been redeemed after they could not offer a competitive rate. The funds were used to purchase a certificate from Busey bank in the amount of \$108,000.00 at a rate of 2.35% for 15 months, which was comparative to current rates. The certificate of deposit at First Bank of Pana was renewed for a six month rising rate certificate whereby the rate increases every six months with the maturity options at every six months. The rate begins at 2.16%, then increases to 2.26%, then to 2.46% and the final six months to 3.01%. After reviewing the investment policy and investment formula, the Conservation Foundation Finance Committee decided to transfer \$68,000.000 from the local bank accounts and invest with the Fidelity Investment.

Shane Ravellette reported that staff at Rock Springs removed some troubled trees near the Nature Center and playground area. They were able to utilize the stump grinder. Friends Creek Campground officially opened May 1st. Shane recognized the operations staff at Rock Springs, Jeff and Matt, for the excellent work they have done in keeping the grounds looking great. Shane and Natural Resources staff took a long range look at plans for each conservation area. As part of the planning, staff has already begun on the waterway in the "76" prairie near Rock Springs entrance removing several trees.

Richie Wolf reported that the Volunteer Recognition Dinner had an attendance of 110 individuals. The Festival of Spring had about 500 visitors despite the unfavorable weather conditions. Most activities were moved indoors. Summer Camp kicks off on June 3rd with the numbers looking good with at least 20 per session enrolled at this point. The Summer Concert series begins June 2nd and Stifel Investments has already sponsored half the cost of the concerts. Audubon is once again helping by funding buses for the school field trips.

4. Other:

Paul Marien included in the Board packet a report on the Illinois Assessment of Parks and Conservation Funding Needs and Economic Benefits. The District participated in an IAPD (Illinois Association of Park Districts) survey. Paul encouraged Board members to speak with local legislators concerning funding the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Grant.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

Trustee White asked Paul Marien if there had been any new development on the Conservatory at the Oglesby Mansion. Paul stated that there was no progress to report and that he has been trying to get in touch with the architect.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Johnson MOVED to adjourn the Regular Public Meeting at 6:30 p.m. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.



President

ATTEST:



Secretary