



CLAYTON COUNTY CONSERVATION

Promote the health and general welfare of the people; to model and encourage preservation, conservation, education and recreation through responsible use and appreciation of our natural resources and cultural heritage.

April 14, 2026
Board Minutes

Chairman Daryl Landsgard called the meeting to order at 8:30am. Members present included Daryl Landsgard, Dave Asche, Gary Kregel, Larry Stone, Kris Lau, Deputy Director Ean Popenhagen and Office Manager Molly Scherf. Guests present were Brian Fankhauser (IANHF), Dr. David Connell (local land-owner), and Dr. Ken Zichal (Motor Mill Foundation)

Stone motioned to approve the agenda with the addition of Forest Reserve Legislation in the discussion, seconded by Asche. All voted in favor, agenda approved.

Stone motioned to approve the April minutes, seconded by Kregel. All voted in favor, minutes approved. Kregel motioned to approve the claims, seconded Stone. All voted in favor, claims approved.

The board reviewed the financial statement provided by the county auditor.

New Business

1. Consider Awarding FY27 Forest Resiliency bids --
 - a. Tree Planting: Two bids came in for this portion; Pinter Landscaping and Brown Forestry. Pinter Landscaping bid was \$35,798.50. Brown Forestry \$19,353 (additional \$90/acre spray after planting)
Kregel made a motion to accept the bid of \$19,353 from Brown Forestry, seconded by Lau. All voted in favor, motion approved.
 - b. TSI work: Two bids came in for this portion; Derrybawn Ecology LLC and Brown Forestry. Derrybawn bid was \$16,750. Brown Forestry bid was \$32,350.
Kregel made a motion to accept the bid from Derrybawn Ecology LLC for \$16,750, seconded by Lau. All voted in favor, motion approved.
2. Presentation on Conservation Easements, guests Dr. Connell & IA NHF Brian Fankhauser --

Dr. Connell has property west of Millville and the Becker Property on Lantern Rd that is all in CRP (CP25). He is looking to get his estate in order and is looking into a conservation easement or donation to the CCCB at the time of his death. He showed a map of the 50 acres within 5 parcels. They are surrounded by timber ground owned by another landowner. He would like this property available for public hunting and not farmed.

Fankhauser with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation gave a presentation on the difference between donation with reserve option estate & conservation easement. He explained the positives and negatives of each, tax benefits, rules, etc. The board and Connell were able to ask questions as well.

The CCCB would like to discuss and think over the decision of this land before making any commitment to Connell. They will discuss further at the next meeting.

3. Motor Mill Foundation Projects 2026+ with Dr. Ken Zichal --

Zichal presented to the CCCB the risk/hazards of not having a railing along the sidewalk going to the 2nd floor of the Motor Mill Inn. He explained how it is steep and some visitors need a railing to help navigate that as well as in the winter it is a very slick spot. He did not have quotes or

examples of what type of railing the Motor Mill Foundation (MMF) would like so the board requested that he bring that information to them before they can decide who will be paying for this project. After they see quotes it can be determined if the CCCB or MMF will pay or split between them.

4. Consider approval to enter into agreement for Fish Habitat Grant Funds Award #26-18F –
Kregel made a motion to approve entering into this agreement, seconded by Lau. All voted in favor, motion passed.
5. Consider approval to enter into agreement for Wildlife Habitat Stamp Grant Funds Award #2608W –
Kregel made a motion to approve entering into this agreement, seconded by Lau. All voted in favor, motion passed.
6. Authorize Ean Popenhagen as signatory on all CCCB Bank Accounts and remove signatories –
 - a. FreedomBank XXX771 (Add Popenhagen, remove Pollock and Kraus)
 - b. FreedomBank XXX275 (Add Popenhagen, remove Pollock)
 - c. FreedomBank XXX283 (Add Popenhagen, remove Pollock)Kregel made a motion to approve all above signatory, seconded by Stone. All voted in favor, motion passed.
7. Discuss fulfilling staffing needs within the department –
Popenhagen filled the CCCB in on the two positions that have been advertised: naturalist and resource/maintenance technician. Interviews for naturalist have begun and will hopefully be completed this week. The resource/maintenance technician position is open until May 4th.

Popenhagen asked the board to consider opening the deputy director position internally to fill his spot when he takes over the director position July 1. The deputy director would also do patrolling and help make a three-person rotation instead of the two-person it is currently. This wouldn't be adding any additional staff, just filling current vacancies. The board would like to see how the two new employees work out before another change.
8. Consider Appointments to Turkey River Recreational Corridor Board –
Kregel motioned Popenhagen and/or his designee be the TRRC appointee, seconded by Stone. All voted in favor, motion carried.

Old Business

1. Staff present on Annual Event Concept --
Popenhagen delivered an outline of what the staff have come up with for an event concept. They would like to continue the event with strategic changes to improve the efficiency, reduce costs, and ensure long-term sustainability. It will remain on the same weekend as a two-day event and incorporate more recreation with new partnerships from organizations. We will continue to allow vendors that are local artisans as well as the remaining demonstrators that attended Heritage Days in the past.

The board was happy with this outline and gave the staff committee the go-ahead to begin planning as they see fit. Kregel made a motion to approve, seconded by Ashe. All voted in favor, motion passed.

2. Pony Hollow Trail Extension update –

Bid letting is still on schedule for April 21st. Van Meeteren and Popenhagen had gone to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) last month to confirm that the county engineer would still be doing the construction engineering for the project or if we would need to look into a budget amendment to possibly hire a private construction engineer for the project. The BOS approved the county engineer would be doing the project for \$95,000 which is an increase from the original agreement of \$35,000. It is believed that the additional funds will come from the engineer's budget and not conservation.

3. Motor Mill Stabilization Update –

WJE Associates/Arnie Johnson took a look at each level of the Mill and did an assessment of the building. He then met with the MMF and CCCB members that were present. His assessment was that monitoring with a laser going forward would be sufficient in determining if there is any significant movement. (At this time the MMF has already purchased a laser to do this.)

He also recommended a more specialized geo-tech to test the basement but says what has already been done there for the pillars looks good.

There are a couple beams/pillars that could be reinforced due to twisting.

The board made no decision on his recommendations at this time.

Upcoming Programs/Events available at www.claytoncountyconservation.org

March 21 – Motor Motor 5k/10k – 10 Year Anniversary Trail Race

Director's Report/Updates/Communications

Welcome Center numbers included 105 individuals and 27 groups in March.

Env. Edu. Numbers for March included 73 presentations to 1312 youth and 184 adults, 51.75 hours

Discussion – Forest Reserve Legislation –

Stone brought up the legislation around forest reserve land. The board discussed the two current proposals.

Meeting Adjourned: MOTION_Lau, Second_Asche_: Vote_yes_

Next meeting scheduled: May 5, 2026