Minutes of the
Natural Resource Commission
Meeting

June 11, 2026

Best Western Holiday Lodge
2023 7th Ave N, Clear Lake and
Teleconference

Approved by the Commission on July 9, 2026.

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Meeting Minutes

Call To Order

The meeting of the Natural Resource Commission (Commission or NRC) was called to order by Acting Chairperson Uriah Hansen at 9:30 am on Jun 11, 2026 via video/teleconference attendees.

Commissioners Present

Laura Kudej
Bill Moritz
Tammi Kircher
Collin Brecher
Uriah Hansen

Commissioners Absent

KR Buck
Tom Prickett

Public Comment

None

Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda

Motion was made by Bill Moritz to approve the agenda and consent agenda as presented. Seconded by Tammi Kircher.
The Acting Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda by saying aye. There were no nay votes.

Approved as Presented

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Laura Kudej to approve the May 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Tammi Kircher.
The Acting Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda by saying aye. There were no nay votes.

Approved as Presented

Director's Remarks

- Director Lyon started her remarks by thanking staff for the Clear Lake tour on June 10th, noting the excellent representation and partnerships across the Conservation and Recreation division.
- Director Lyon also reported that Governor Reynolds signed Executive Order 19 on Monday at Lake Ahquabi State Park, establishing the Iowa Office of Outdoor Recreation. Director Lyon highlighted the partners present at the event and noted that the DNR had the ability to showcase Lake Ahquabi lake restoration, campground renovations, and recent facility renovations. The purpose of the Office of Outdoor Recreation is to create a more centralized structure for public/private partnerships on recreational opportunities in the state of Iowa. Iowa is the 25th state to establish an Office of Outdoor Recreation and it will be held within the office of Iowa Economic Development and Tourism. Director Lyon also highlighted the next steps to getting the order implemented.

Division Administrator's Remarks

- Division Administrator (DA) Pete Hildreth started his remarks by echoing Director Lyon's remarks on the excellent cross-divisional partnerships highlighted on the Clear Lake tour.
- DA Hildreth announced that Mike Cox has accepted the position as the new Bureau Chief of the Parks, Forests, and Preserves Bureau, and will start his role on July 6th. Mr. Cox has most recently served as the Story County Conservation Board Director, and also has a background working in leadership and law enforcement roles in Alaska and Vermont.
- DA Hildreth invited Commissioners to attend one of eighteen different REAP assemblies that are being held throughout the state during the month of June and July. REAP assemblies help set the focus of REAP funding. The REAP program has funded nearly 430 million dollars' worth of projects since it began in 1989, covering various efforts such as water quality improvement, habitat protection, conservation and education, wetland restoration, and more.
- DA Hildreth turned it over to Chris Ensminger to provide a brief summary of the hunter listening sessions held throughout the state in March of 2026:
    - 672 members of the public attended; received almost 800 comments
    - 284 comments were related to deer with four different focuses: 1) population is too low 2) suggestions on season changes 3) privilege changes/adjustments 4) general regulation changes
    - 26 comments were related to turkeys; primarily in regards to population
    - Waterfowl comments focused primarily around season dates
    - Upland comments focused primarily related to the pheasant season and population
    - Furbearer comments have three different focuses: 1) additional counties to be added to the harvest, 2) increase otter harvest, 3) requested a bounty program for nuisance furbearers
    - Sessions included discussions on trail cameras on public land and nonresident small game hunting

Chapter 51, "Game Management Areas"-Notice of Intended Action

Chris Ensminger requested Commission approval for the Chapter 51 Notice of Intended Action. Mr. Ensminger responded to questions on current regulations on the use of trail cameras on public hunting lands.

Public Comments – None

Written Comments-None

Motion was made by Bill Moritz to approve the item as presented. Seconded by Collin Brecher.
The Acting Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda item by saying aye. There were no nay votes.

Proposed County Antlerless Quota Changes for the 2026-27 Seasons

Chris Ensminger presented the proposed county antlerless quota changes for the 2026-27 seasons as information to the Commission.

Public Comments – None

Written Comments-None

Information

2026-2027 Deer Management Hunt Zones

Andy Kellner requested Commissioner approval for the 2026-2027 deer management hunt zones. Mr. Kellner noted a couple of late changes to the proposal.

Public Comments – None

Written Comments-None

Motion was made by Tammi Kircher to approve the requested sharp shoot. Seconded by Bill Moritz.
The Acting Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda item by saying aye. There were no nay votes.

APPROVED AS PRESENTED

SMALL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS: ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT LACEY-KEOSAUQUA STATE PARK, BOAT RAMP/ADA IMPROVEMENTS AT LACE-KEOSAUQUA STATE PARK, WETLAND RESTORATION PROJECT AT SILVER LAKE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, FROG HOLLOW BRIDGE REDECKING PROJECT AT VOLGA RIVER RECREATION AREA.

Travis Baker presented a pair of small construction projects to the Commission as information items.

Public Comments – None
Written Comments-None

INFORMATION

LARGE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT-BACKBONE STATE PARK, WASTEWATER IMPROVEMENTS-DELAWARE COUNTY

Travis Baker requested Commission approval for a wastewater improvement project at Backbone State Park. Complex.

Public Comments – None
Written Comments-None

Motion was made by Bill Moritz to approve the item as presented. Seconded by Laura Kudej.
The Acting Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda item by saying aye. There were no nay votes.

APPROVED AS PRESENTED

LAND ACQUISITION-SAYLORVILLE WMA, BOONE COUNTY-IOWA NATURAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Travis Baker requested Commission approval to acquire 250 acres of land from Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, located in Boone County. Mr. Baker confirmed that the property acquired is part of a former 4H camp.

Public Comments – None
Written Comments-None

Motion was made by Collin Brecher to approve the item as presented. Seconded by Tammi Kircher.
The Acting Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda item by saying aye. There were no nay votes.

APPROVED AS PRESENTED

LAND ACQUISITION-SEARRYLS CAVE STATE PRESERVE, JONES COUNTY-IOWA NATURAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Travis Baker requested Commission approval to acquire 231.38 acres of land from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, located in NE Jones County. Mr. Baker clarified the location of the access easement on the property.

Public Comments – None
Written Comments-None

Motion was made by Bill Moritz to approve the item as presented. Seconded by Laura Kudej.
The Acting Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda item by saying aye. There were no nay votes.

Approved as Presented

Land Acquisition-Red Rock WMA, Warren County-Alec and Stephen Pendry

Travis Baker requested Commission approval to acquire 8 acres from Alex and Stephen Pendry located adjacent to the Red Rock Wildlife Management Area.
Public Comments – None
Written Comments-None

Motion was made by Tammi Kircher to approve the item as presented. Seconded by Collin Brecher.
The Acting Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda item by saying aye. There were no nay votes.

Approved as Presented

Land Acquisition-Spur Island WMA, Louisa County-The Nature Conservancy

Travis Baker requested Commission approval to acquire 31.87 acres from The Nature Conservancy located adjacent to Spur Island Wildlife Management Area.
Public Comments – None
Written Comments-None

Motion was made by KR Buck to approve the item as presented. Seconded by Laura Kudej.
The Acting Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda item by saying aye. There were no nay votes.

Approved as Presented

Land Acquisition-Heritage Hills WMA, Madison & Clarke County-Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation/Pheasants Forever

Travis Baker requested Commission approval to acquire 422 acres from Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and Pheasants Forever, located adjacent to Heritage Hills WMA.
Public Comments – None
Written Comments-None

Motion was made by Collin Brecher to approve the item as presented. Seconded by Bill Moritz.
The Acting Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda item by saying aye. There were no nay votes.

Approved as Presented

Land Acquisition-Iowa River Corridor WMA, Iowa County-Marvel Schafbuch; Charles and Kandy Johnson, Darrel and Margaret Johnson, Elizabeth and Lawrence Thompson

Motion was made by Uriah Hansen to approve items 11.6, 11.7, and 11.8 into one decision item. Seconded by Tammi Kircher. The Acting Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda item by saying aye. There were no nay votes. Motion passes.

Travis Baker requested Commission approval to acquire 17.1 acres from Marvel Shafbuch, and 18.38 acres and an easement from Charles and Kandy Johnson, Darrel and Margaret Johnson, and Elizabeth and Lawrence Thompson. All acquisitions are located adjacent to the Iowa River Corridor WMA.
Public Comments – None
Written Comments-None

Motion was made by Laura Kudej to approve the item as presented. Seconded by Tammi Kircher.
The Acting Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda item by saying aye. There were no nay votes.

Approved as Presented

Contract with the Kossuth County Conservation Board (Smith Lake Park)

Michelle Balmer requested Commission approval for a contract with the Kossuth County Conservation Board for the Smith Lake Park Restoration Project.
Public Comments – None
Written Comments-None

Motion was made by Laura Kudej to approve the item as presented. Seconded by Bill Moritz.
The Chairperson asked for the Commissioners to approve the agenda item by saying aye. There were no nay votes.

Approved as Presented

General Discussion

- Commissioners thanked staff for the great June field tour.
- Commissioners shared about their recent wildlife encounters and future outdoor activities planned for the summer.
- Commissioners thanked staff for their hard work on the Clear Lake area tour.

Adjourn

Acting Chairperson Uriah Hansen adjourned the Natural Resources Commission meeting at 10:38 am on June 11, 2026.

Adjourned