



Turkey River Recreational Corridor Board Meeting Minutes

April 7, 2026 | 6:30 p.m.

Elkader City Hall/Opera House – Elkader, Iowa

Present: Rod Marlatt, Chris Schoen, Kelly Shaffer, Heather Gamm (alt.), Brian Balster (alt.), Steve Doeppke, Bruce Lehmann, Jenna Van Meeteren, Roger Buchholz, Troy Schott

Not Present: Chris Wachal, Kayleen Schrader, Mallory Hanson

Others Present: Ean Popenhagen, Kaitlyn Kuehl-Berns, Sheryl Stuthers, Neil Struthers

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Chair, Rod Marlatt.

**Motion to approve the April 2026 agenda by Schott, second by Doeppke. Approved.

**Motion to approve the March 2026 minutes by Schoen, second by Buchholz. Approved.

Attendees reviewed financials.

**Motion to approve the financials, as presented by Doeppke, second by Schoen. Approved.

Project Updates:

- Coneflowers in the Corridor (TRRC) - The artists continue working on fabrication and Mallory recently ordered the recognition plaques. Still moving along with an August deadline for fabrication and installation.
- Pedal Paddle Racks (TRRC) – The rack and sign has been delivered to CCCB. FCCB is waiting until late April/early May so that they can evaluate the best location for the rack in coordination with Project AWARE.
- Clermont Trail Expansion (FCCB) - Gamm provided an update that they have altered the grant plan slightly in line with recommendations from the Iowa DOT to proceed with a State TAP grant.
- Pony Hollow Trail Expansion (CCCB) - Bid letting for the project through Iowa DOT is on track for April 21, 2026. Van Meeteren shared that County Engineer, Casey Stickfort, who had previously agreed to the CE services for the Pony Hollow Trail Extension project gave notice a month out from bid letting that he was unable to provide those services. After two consecutive meetings with the Board of Supervisors, it appears Stickfort and staff will perform the CE services at an additional cost to Conservation, and with the intent to delay a few road projects.
- Motor Mill Stabilization (CCCB & Motor Mill Foundation) - Arne Johnson, PE/SE with WJE was onsite March 27th to review the Mill structure and offer guidance on next steps.

Proposed Large Infrastructure Grant Amendment: The board was asked to consider amending their motion to previously identify the Iowa State Recreational Trail Grant, due July 1, 2026 as TRRC's FY '26 Large Infrastructure Grant to be written on Fayette County Conservation's behalf for the Clermont Trail Expansion project. Due to project changes, the board was asked to consider an amendment to identify the Statewide Transportation Alternatives Program grant, due October 1, 2026 as TRRC's FY '26 Large Infrastructure Grant to be written on Fayette County Conservation's behalf for the Clermont Trail Expansion project. The majority of the work for this application will take place within FY '26 (July 2025-June 2026) and will not change the time commitment required

*Motion to amend the motion approved at the December 2, 2025 meeting, to formally identify the Statewide Transportation Alternatives Program grant, due October 1, 2026 as TRRC's FY '26 Large Infrastructure Grant to be written on Fayette County Conservation's behalf for the Clermont Trail Expansion project by Van Meeteren, second by Schoen. Approved.

Upcoming Projects and Grants Discussion: Attendees reviewed current commitments:

- TRRC Foundation of Cornerstone Communities Report – Due May 14, 2026 (extended to Fall, 2026)
- TRRC Upper Mississippi Gaming Corporation Report – Due August 31, 2026
- Clermont Fayette County Community Foundation Report – Due January 31, 2027
- Clayton County Conservation HRDP Report – Due July 1, 2027
- *State Transportation Alternative Program Grant – Due October 1, 2026

Reports:

- Director:** Attendees reviewed the Director’s March 2026 report.
- Clermont:** Schott reported that the city is addressing soft spots in roads and are working on fixing the bike trail railing that had been damaged.
- Elgin:** Wachal sent a report by email that the city found someone to mow lawn.
- Elkader:** Buchholz reported that Ladies Day Out was a success and that the St. Patty’s Day parade was a very cool day. The Redhorse Fishery is coming up Saturday May 2nd.
- Motor Mill:** Schoen reported that the Foundation is building a storeroom on the second floor of the mill to use as a woodworking shop. An Earth Day event at Motor will take place with Central Students April 15.
- Supervisors:** Clayton County: Doeppke reported road embargos are still in place and that the supervisors are finishing the FY ‘27 Budget. A public meeting on data centers is planned on April 14 at 7pm.
Fayette County: Lehmann reported a Five-year plan for bridges and roads was recently presented. Soft spots are getting torn up with rock hauling and manure hauling. Embargos are in place. An EMS levy is being discussed to help retain Emplify Health/Gundersen and MercyOne. Juniper Rd, Great River Rd, and Dover Schoolhouse projects are moving forward. Lots of gravel hauling, bridge inspections, and closing projects. Ashley Hinson presented an overview of the Biodiesel project. Canoe Rd realignment and Cedar Rd/Filmore Rd intersection projects are coming up summer 2026-2027.
- Conservation:** CCCB: Van Meeteren and Popenhagen reported on the MM5K/10K. Upcoming events include an April 10 Pasque Flower Walk, April 23 Earth Day Event, June 1 Household Hazardous Waste Day, and June 7 Hunter Education. They also reported on staffing changes and that seasonal positions have been filled.
FCCB: Gamm reported on hiring seasonal staff and an Environmental Education Coordinator, Parks will open mid-April for the season - somewhat weather dependent. Waste Disposal needs have been a frequent discussion. The TRRC trail has been swept. The Valley Bridge received some damage – Responsible parties assisted staff to help repair the damages to the prairie nearby.

Other Business & Public Comments: Canoecopia (shared booth with Visit Decorah) was discussed. Marlatt reported blizzard like conditions during the event. Statistics are included in the Director’s report. Shaffer reported the Driftless 100 Bike Race coming up April 25th. There were no public comments.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be May 5, 2026 at 6:30pm at Elkader City Hall/Opera House.

Adjournment:

**Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:10pm by Schoen, second by Shaffer. Approved.

Respectfully Submitted – Jenna Van Meeteren