

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

600 West Fourth Street
Davenport, Iowa 52801-1003

Office: (563) 326-8702
Fax: (563) 328-3285
www.scottcountyiowa.com



December 20, 2011

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Dee F. Bruemmer, County Administrator

SUBJECT: Nahant Marsh Field Station Project

The Board of Directors of the Nahant Marsh Center is planning on seeking a CAT grant of \$50,000 to complete their goal of \$200,000 to purchase and remodel a building to become the Nahant Marsh Field Station. The Nahant Board is requesting a match of \$2,500 from the County because a county match is required for the grant. Attached is Kathy Wine's letter about the project and the request. Kathy will be at COW to discuss the project with you.

The County currently supports Nahant Marsh through an annual appropriation of \$7,500 split between the Planning and Development and Conservation budgets. These funds are used for an educator from Eastern Iowa Community college to teach school children. That funding is committed through FY13. Also the Board funds the Riverway bike trail programs for \$3,232 in the capital budget through FY13.

If the Board wishes to approve the CAT grant request it would be funded in the same capital budget project for trails and CAT grants. Currently there is \$64,500 remaining of unobligated funds.

December 16, 2011

Dear Scott County Board of Supervisors Members:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Nahant Marsh Education Center to request a pledge of \$2,500 as a match for a Vision Iowa grant for the Nahant Marsh Field Station. The Campaign for the Nahant Marsh Field Station has a \$200,000 goal of which 60%, or \$120,200, has been raised as a local match to date. The Vision Iowa grant request is \$50,000, or 25% of the goal.

At no other time in our history have so many people been so separated from direct experiences in nature. There is a need to make rich outdoor education and recreation opportunities more available and accessible to your youth, families, and the general public. The Nahant Marsh and proposed field station offer that opportunity.

The mission of the Nahant Marsh Education Center is to preserve and enhance the ecological integrity of the marsh and to foster wonder, appreciation, interaction, and stewardship of the natural world through education. It is to this end that the Nahant Education Center Board launched the field station campaign.

Project Description

This is a capital fund drive to cover the purchase of the property at 3706 South Concord Street, Davenport, and the cost of improving and remodeling the property for the use of delivering more outdoor education and recreation at Nahant Marsh, specifically Carp Lake, a 44 acre lake and wetland area just north of said property. This property acts as a gateway to Carp Lake.

By doubling at Carp Lake the amount of trails accessible to the public, more programs can be offered. Programs such as fishing tournaments, eagle watching, canoe and kayak floats, day camping, fishing for kids, bird hiking, and cross country skiing or snowshoeing on designated trails will be offered.

The field station will also be doubling programs by doubling the amount of classroom space in the building at 3706 South Concord Street; more classes can be offered and more Quad City students served. Since two out of three students using classrooms pay for it via their schools, this will increase income to the Nahant Marsh Field Station at the same time it will expand curriculum and outreach. Schools presently using the center are: Davenport Schools, Western Illinois University, Augustana College, St. Ambrose University, Scott Community College, Muscatine Community College, and Blackhawk College. With an active outreach to schools, this number will only increase.

Because river access is important to understanding the watershed, wetlands, and riverine habitat, the boat ramp at the property will serve, for the first time, students and conservationists who need a hands-on approach to studying water quality in the Mississippi. An oversized garage on the property will easily store several canoes and kayaks for this purpose.

Finally, environmental organizations will find the meeting space at the field station to be suitable and available at a very low cost.

Budget

Purchase, financing and closing costs	\$115,000.
Basement work	35,000
First Floor	26,000
2 nd Floor	9,000
Garage	3,000
Parking	5,000
ADA Ramp	7,000
Total	\$200,000

Education and Curricula

The Nahant Marsh Education Center provides outdoor education for k-12 students, college and university students, and the general public. To date, over 7,000 have been served in 2011. It provides opportunities for research projects, connects people with nature through innovative programs, and now offers outreach with the following: Bird hikes, special canoe and kayak floats, critter weekends, frog nights, pond studies, wild medicines, tree and wildflower identification, solar cooking, renewable energy, GPS scavenger hunts, cross country skiing and snowshoeing on designated trails, special fishing events, and much more!

The Naturalist facilitates school curricula, field trips, and research for grades k-12, college and university students. As a naturalist, he assists the Natural Resource Manager with seasonal marsh management. He oversees daily operations, monitors wildlife migrations, and with the help of an intern, the coming and going of all of the Center's visitors and guests.

Natural Resource Manager

The Natural Resource Manager, working with the Master Plan for Nahant Marsh, monitors the conservation areas, manipulates water levels with the water control structure, manages seasonal burns and weed pulling, and oversees work crews, a combination of AmeriCorps and volunteers, to control invasive species. Sometimes these are invasive Asian carp and sometimes shrub brush or reed canary grass.

Goals and Objectives

This project will serve the entire population of Scott and Rock Island Counties. This urban field station is unique in that it is also private, one of the few in Iowa or Illinois.

1. It is a goal of the field station campaign to double the amount of publically accessible land at Nahant Marsh. This was achieved through acquiring the property at 3706 South Concord Street, Davenport, an entrance to the 44 acre Carp Lake. Additionally, it will be achieved by clearing land for parking, creating trails, and improving a gateway access road.
2. It is a goal to double classroom space at Nahant Marsh. This will be achieved by renovating the house at 3706 South Concord Street for a field station.
3. It is a goal to have boat access to the Mississippi River for students and members. This was achieved through acquisition of the property and 14' boat ramp at 3706 South Concord Street.
4. It is a goal to create space for AmeriCorps teams of seven—eight volunteers. This will be achieved by renovating the property on South Concord Street which has a kitchen, bathrooms, and sleep space for work crews.
5. It is a goal to increase programming at the marsh for kids' fishing, day camp experiences, and eagle watching. This will be achieved by renovating and improving the property at 3706 South Concord Street as described above.
6. It is a goal to increase memberships to Nahant Marsh, provide access for members to fish at Carp Lake, provide space for group meetings, hikes, workshops, fishing tournaments, guided floats, and other special programs.

As both Vision Iowa and the Nahant Marsh Education Center take great pride in offering education and recreation for young people and the general public in our Mississippi River community, we feel that a grant request of \$50,000, or 25% of the total goal, would be appropriate for the field station campaign. Financial support from the Scott County Board of Supervisors would signal buy-in from the county, something the Vision Iowa jury assesses as they evaluate grants for attractions and educational institutions.

Many thanks for your consideration in this matter. If I can add to it, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Kathy Wine
River Action, Executive Director and
Administrator to Nahant Marsh Education Center Board