

Monticello Express Dam Articles

ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN 2-10-16 EDITION

Note: The conservation director of the JCCB informed Donald Bohlken, in a telephone conversation on September 12, 2017, that no announcement was made of the January 28, 2016 meeting in the Anamosa Eureka newspaper until the day of the meeting, due to an error by the newspaper. He also claimed that announcements were placed in the January 20, 2016 and January 27, 2016 editions of the Monticello Express. Mr. Bohlken went to the Express office on two occasions and, twice on each occasion, examined all editions of the Express for the month of January 2016. No announcements of the meeting could be found. According to conservation director, the meeting was announced on the JCCB Facebook and web pages, and the Cascade local access TV channel. The landowners in the immediate area of the dam and the two canoe rentals were also notified.

Public input points to removal of Mon Maq Dam

By Kim Brooks
Express Editor

"This project is important to the community and river system in Jones County."

Those words were spoken by Jones County Conservation Director Brad Mormann in connection with the Mon Maq Dam removal project.

On Jan. 28, roughly 15 people attended a meeting in Monticello that discussed the future of Mon Maq Dam.

Conservation hosted the public meeting, which was intended to get people's input on whether it was feasible to modify or completely remove the dam.

Mormann has been working with Barr Engineering, based out of Minnesota, on studying existing structure and what the effects of modifying/removing the dam might happen if we took the dam out," explained Mormann.

He said the basic issue would be the water level of not just the Maquoketa River, but also the tributaries that feed off the river, including Kitty Creek.

"What we think will

(cont'd on page A4)



A recent public input meeting in Monticello outlined plans to modify/remove a portion of Mon Maq Dam in Monticello. The plans would allow for less barriers along the river route, increased safety at the dam site, and improved fish passage. (Express file photo)

Mon Maq dam -

(cont'd from page A1)

happen is a medium lowering of the riverbed," Mormann explained. "Most of the lowering would occur within a mile of the dam, with a 10-foot drop at the dam in the water level." Mormann added that the river area near Walnut Acres Campground would see "almost no bed lowering."

"Most people won't notice a difference," he said.

Should Mon Maq Dam be removed, Mormann said we would see a continuous flow of 70 miles of the river between Delhi and Maquoketa, plus almost 500 miles of tributaries.

"This could mean an increase in recreation and fish passage," Mormann said.

Boaters and paddlers could potentially start in Delhi and travel the length of the Maquoketa River on down to Maquoketa without having to portage in between.

Mormann said if the 440-foot dam were modified, the idea would be to take out about 300 feet.

"We would leave about 100 feet in place as part of the historical value of the structure," said Mormann. The catwalk and overlook

structures would also remain in place, as part of a river project Jones County Conservation took on between 2009-11. The entire river restoration project actually stems back to 2006.

"It's time to make something happen," Mormann said.

Several issues were considered at the public input meeting, especially in connection with river restoration and long-term maintenance.

Mormann said removing the dam would eliminate and/or reduce the safety concerns at the dam site. He said those who float the river from out of town might not know of the hazards associated with a roller dam like Mon Maq.

The project would also improve fishing opportunities, including upstream fish passage.

"The dam is hurting the fish population upstream," Mormann said. "This could improve the quality of fishing throughout the river."

Along those same lines, Mormann said river restoration efforts would also attract more natural fish species to the area.

As mentioned before, the river would then become a continuous passageway. Mormann said it would improve the natural aesthetics of the river as well.

"Once the dam comes out, we'll let the river do its thing," he said in terms of how the river will flow. It would take a few years for the sediment and river to adjust to a constant course and flow.

Looking at other similar river restoration projects in Manchester, Charles City and Quasqueton, Mormann said this proposal seems to be the most cost-effective alternative.

"The maintenance and future maintenance would significantly drop," he explained. However, in a flood event, maintenance would be needed. But, Mormann said removing the dam, even a portion of the dam, could also reduce flooding.

"A vast majority of the public, including neighboring landowners, are fine with the dam coming out," Mormann surmised. "It's been all positive."

Now that some initial engineering and concept drawings have been completed, Mormann estimates this project to cost around

\$1 million.

"The cost could go up and down as we progress with engineering and feedback from the Corps of Engineers," he explained.

This project is part of the Parks to People Grant Wood Loop's "Maquoketa River on the Move," which encompasses Dubuque and Jackson counties as well. The total project estimate for Maquoketa River on the Move is \$2,421,768. As of Jan. 12, \$1,718,409 has been committed for the region. The dam project would need to be contracted by June 30, 2017, in order to be considered for Parks to People funding.

"I feel the timeline is very doable," remarked Mormann.

Mormann has also secured \$318,000 for the DNR for low-head dam projects, and another \$120,000 for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife group. He encourages anyone with an interest in the river and the future of the community to consider donating toward this project.

For more information or to voice your thoughts on the Mon Maq Dam project, contact Mormann at 563-487-3541, ext. 2.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR PUBLISHED 2-17-16

To the Editor:

I see that the taxpayers are being asked to spend \$1 million dollars to destroy a thing of beauty, the Maquoketa River Dam. One must wonder if the alleged benefits are worth the cost. Will upstream fishing actually be improved \$1 million worth? Is a very short portage from upstream that much of a hindrance to canoeists? If safety is a concern, why not post a warning upstream? Also post a warning and explanation of the dangers of the dam at the overlook.

Who has determined that there is majority public support for the dam? Is this based on that poll, reported several years ago, where the majority of respondents were not taxpayers, but high school students?

If we really have to spend \$1 million on improved habitat, why not partner with Pheasants Forever, and spend it so that today's young hunters can have the same wonderful experiences hunting pheasants and quail that I had in my youth?

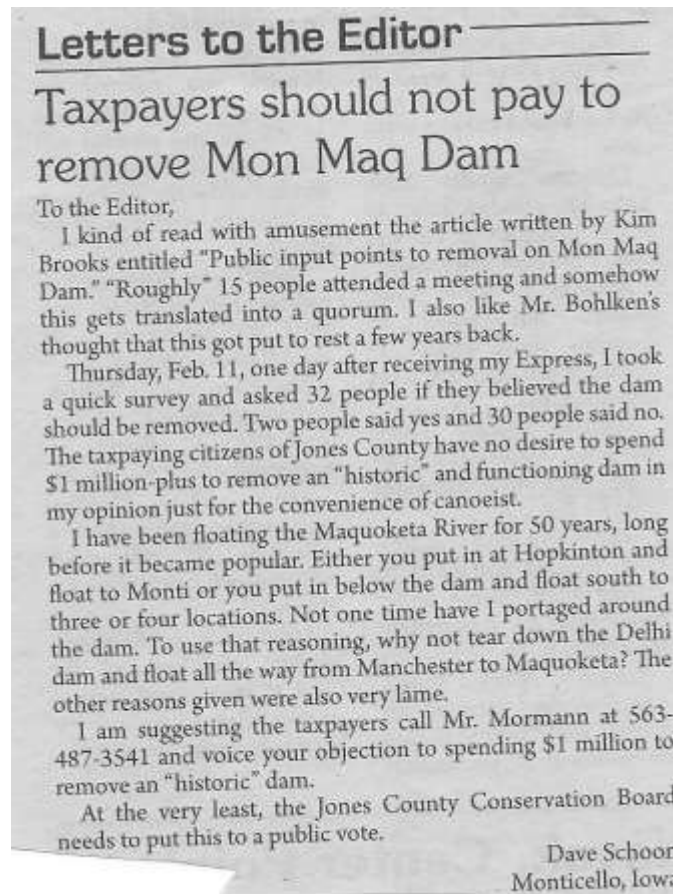
Remember, once the dam is destroyed, it is gone forever. It's beauty will only be a memory.

Sincerely,

Donald W. Bohlken
9792 Inwood Street
Indianola, IA 50125

(Former Monticello resident)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR PUBLISHED 2-24-16



LETTER TO THE EDITOR PUBLISHED 2-24-16

Mon Maq Dam revisited

To the Editor,

Not everyone is eager to have the Mon Maq (Dam) destroyed. To say that it would improve fishing and our lives, is an out right adventure from the truth. Here's why.

Orian Love is one of the best outdoor writers – ever. In last Sunday's Cedar Rapids Gazette (Feb. 14, 2016), he ranked his top five rivers in Iowa. He started by naming the Maquoketa River as his #1 – until the Delhi dam burst. He was, of course, referring to the great small-mouth bite – just below the Delhi dam. He went on to say that when Walleyes are stocked (and they are in the Maquoketa River), in the Cedar River, the best place for walleye bite is just below the dams. Many of Monticello's fishermen can attest to that. I can think of Josh Null, Dave Wren, Harvey Johnson, my son Evan Intlekofer, to name a few. The fishing is good there because the dam is there. Everyone who fishes knows this.

A bureaucrat would like one to believe that it's a good idea to make it natural again (blow it up). If that is the case, why are they rebuilding the Delhi dam north of us? Don't the same arguments apply? Below us, Maquoketa has a dam and a fish ladder. Why can't the citizens of Monticello? Talk of spending \$1 million to \$3 million to destroy the dam is a sheer waste of money. A fish ladder would be built for less than \$100,000 and it moves fish too. Better yet, it can also stop fish movement too. Read on as to why this is necessary.

Talk of portages as a bad thing is talk by one who hasn't canoed or kayaked much. Most of the time, a person is ready to stretch after 7-10 miles of canoeing. Then to be able to fish off the dam, where the fish are, is a second treat of that canoe trip.

Let's not forget the problem DNR discovered several years ago. The quality of the river water above the Mon Maq Dam was poor. High in bacteria. While the DNR has made an effort to get the Delhi cabins to put in septic tanks, it has always been an assumption that the high bacteria count came from cabins above us. Perhaps it was runoff from cattle operations, or pig palaces? The river is labeled as damaged by the feds. What is the source of the bacteria? We don't know. We should know before we blow up the dam.

Why is that important? A roller dam such as we have, rolls the water, infusing air into 100 percent of that which goes over the dam. Exactly the same thing most cities do to bring the bacteria count down in their wastewater, before being ultra-violet-treated. They pay a lot for that – we have it for free. (The water is actually cleaner – once it rolls over the dam – cleaner for fishing, cleaner for swimming, cleaner for canoeing.) Last time I checked, that is a good thing.

If the dam is gone, there is no roller action, no infusion of oxygen into the water. It will smell like a sewer in July, August, and maybe even in September if we destroy the dam. One canoe business (or more) will be lost and all the 7 percent sales tax revenue with it. Who wants to canoe down a smelly, bacteria-swollen river? Nobody I know. And won't that business have a cause of action against the owners of the dam? Yes they would. (Who owns the dam – taxpayers. See the Iowa drainage law.)

Only a fool would consider getting rid of the dam these days. It's a natural stop for invasive species. The people along the Mississippi are spending millions to stop the spread of the Asian carp and the silver buffalo. Fishing water above the dam may be all we have left that is not polluted with these invading species. It's a natural barrier. At that point you could still catch game fish stranded above the dam if you have a dam. If not, there will be no fishing.

If the county supervisors or the city fathers are so dead set on destroying Monticello's iconic landmark, why not sell it to a non-profit who will keep and maintain it – even expand it? It would not be unreasonable to see a camping area on the north side of the river from the bridge to the dam. Think of the revenue it could bring into the county – all outside money, 7 percent at a minimum on all the camping fees. Those could be

Intlekofer -

(cont'd from page A8)

The Mon Maq Dam should not be destroyed - as one old-timer once said, "That's horse and buggy thinking." Developing something - that's a far better solution. Only a fool, old or otherwise, would destroy something as magnificent as the Mon Maq Dam without further study. Perhaps a bureaucrat knows more about fishing than Orlan Love, but I doubt it. To Orlan, dams are a treasure trove of fish. Ask your elected officials why they want to destroy something that has such a positive influence on our life here and now. Are they just sheep willing to follow weak arguments for its destruction? To me, there does not seem to be even

one strong argument for its destruction, while there are so many strong arguments which support keeping it.

Can anyone guarantee, we the citizens, will be able to canoe down the Maquoketa - one of Iowa's most scenic trips, if you destroy the dam? Sales tax revenue will be lost and hurt the county - upwards of \$70,000 per year... Why risk losing that amount of money on speculation of what could be when we have so much now?

A few years ago, I was asked to donate to the Pictured Rocks/Mon Maq beautification. I was told my \$10,000 was the base for a grant of \$350,000 and more to do what's been done already. At that time, I made it clear my donation (in

remembrance of my father - who loved the beautiful appearance of the dam) was to save the dam. At this point, I am supposed to forget the reason I donated? NO, I haven't forgotten. While the conservationist person in charge is pushing for this, I'm still not sure who is behind it. In any case, to remove the dam would be a breach of our contract and actionable. It takes four years for a filing to make it to the Supreme Court in Iowa. I should live that long, and I firmly believe others are willing to fight to save the dam. Let's find out where the high bacteria counts are coming from before we travel down this adventure from the truth.

Stephen J. Intlekofer
Monticello, Iowa

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/mon-maq-dam-meeting-planned-may-18>

\ Mon Maq Dam meeting planned for May 18

Published by admin on Wed, 05/10/2017 - 8:56am



Jones County Conservation will be hosting a public meeting Thursday, May 18, to share information on the Maquoketa River Water Trail Mon Maq Dam Project. The meeting will take place at the Central Park Nature Center at 6:30 p.m. The Jones County portion of the Maquoketa River and associated water trail is an exceptional resource that provides a diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Over the past 10 years, stakeholders have reviewed several modification and removal options for the Mon Maq Dam. These options will be presented in the context of the county's ability to fund the project while considering river ecology and recreational interests along with the dam's eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

For more information, call 563-487-3541, ext. 2.

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/meeting-outlines-future-mon-maq-dam>

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Meeting outlines future of Mon Maq Dam

Published by admin on Wed, 05/24/2017 - 12:27pm





A public meeting was held on May 18 to discuss the future of Mon Maq Dam in Monticello. Whatever is done to the site, Conservation wishes t fish passage, as well recreational use of the Maquoketa River. (Express file photo)



Conservation Director Brad Mormann addresses a full house inside the Nature Center. Mormann outlined several options for Mon Maq Dam. (Photo by Kim Brooks)

By:

Kim Brooks

Express Editor

The opposition was palpable in the room with roughly 60 people present for the public Mon Maq Dam meeting. The event was held on May 18 in the basement of the Nature Center at Central Park.

Not everyone in the room was opposed to modifying the dam in Monticello. The audience also included Conservation Board members, County Supervisors, DNR representatives, Jones County Historic Preservation members, and other county officials. Also on hand were those offering professional opinions about the dam, as well as providing funding for any type of project here: Iowa DNR, DOT, and Barr Engineering.

Many of those opposed questioned the need to remove a portion of the dam, didn't feel the fishing habitat would be improved at all, and were concerned about the increased traffic on the river. If a portion of the dam were removed, that allows the Maquoketa River to continuously flow. Those who utilize the river for recreational purposes would not have to get out to avoid the dam.

"Out-portages are like rest stops on the interstate. You have to get out and walk around. Why tear a dam out just so somebody doesn't have to portage?" questioned Monticello resident Harvey Johnson, who joked that perhaps a retired person might enjoy driving people around for the money.

"I guarantee you this (project) will change the behaviors of paddlers in and around Monticello," said Hoogeveen.

Johnson also questioned the funds that were spent on building the boat ramp at the dam several years ago, as well as the catwalk and overlook that were built allowing people to walk out above the Maquoketa River to see the dam. He said if the dam were taken out, the improved infrastructure serves no purpose. Mormann clarified that Conservation does have plans to replace the boat ramp "so that traffic and go up and down.

This project actually started 10 years ago when Larry Gullett was conservation director. Over time, and leading up to now, six different alternatives have been developed:

• A – No action would be taken, and the dam would remain in place and continue to impede fish and wildlife movement, limiting population growth. Paddlers would also continue to portage. Mon Maq Dam would also continue to deteriorate.

• B – The dam would be converted to a rock-arch rapids. This would improve fish passage during low water levels. For those wishing to see the historical structure remain, a large portion of the dam would be kept in place. This costly option would also reduce the passage for paddling, and no impact on flood reduction.

• C – This would entail partial dam removal with a tiered drop. This would lower the dam to about 5.5 feet, with a tiered drop of 4 feet. This option would improve fish and paddling passage. However, it could cost in the neighborhood of \$2.4 million, and result in long-term maintenance and liability.

• D – This would mean partial removal of the dam with tiered drop and multiple drops upstream. This project would include three additional rock structures in the river between Highway 38 and the dam. The cost here is about \$3.1 million with continued liability and maintenance.

• E – Modify/remove portion of the dam. This, Mormann said, is the Conservation Board's preferred option.

It would entail removing 340 feet of the dam, while preserving 100 feet or so to the north attached the former mill site. Fish habitat features would be installed within the river, with access added onto the river's edge for fishing, paddling and wildlife observation. Sediment would be removed upstream of the dam. This option would completely restore the fish and wildlife passage, and restore the natural function of the Maquoketa River. Mormann indicated this would also mitigate some of the negative effects of the Kitty Creek sewer pipe, while also providing further stabilization. Also, funding for this alternative has also been secured, which may not happen again in the near future.

"We see a lot of use on rivers without dams," said Nate Hoogeveen with the DNR.

This project is expected to cost about \$1.5 million, with no local dollars going to this project. Most of the funding stems from state and federal grant programs.

Mormann stressed to the crowd that nothing has been decided in terms of the future of Mon Maq Dam. The reason for the public meeting was to hear from all sides concerned, gather information, and put a plan together that works for the majority.

A little over a year ago, a public meeting was held in Monticello concerning the future of the dam. Mormann said from those present, four priorities were established:

- Improve the river for fish/mussels
- Provide good fishing and access for anglers
- Build a stabilized structure with low maintenance
- Public safety/reduce drowning

Throughout this 10-year process, Mormann said, "In 2010, the DNR released a document saying that the Mon Maq Dam was one of their top dams for potential removal based on biological and recreational issues."

The DNR fish and wildlife experts on hand, Hoogeveen and Dan Kirby, both shared positive outcomes from all or partial removal of any dam. Kirby said structures, such as a dam, are treats to the wildlife ecosystem.

He said the DNR has been studying fish passage in the Maquoketa River in Manchester since the dam was completely removed and a white-water system was built in its place. He said the fish are seen both upstream and down since the dam was removed.

With 89 species of fish found in the Maquoketa River in Iowa, about 40 of those are seen locally here in Monticello.

"So you can expect the modification of the dam, or the removal of the dam, to affect about 40 fish species," he said. "But these fish adapt. They adapt better to a system where they can move around compared to those they can't."

Rose Rohr with Historic Preservation said their group's goal is to preserve history. The group would like to see the dam remain intact; but Rohr said if a portion of it has to come out, she would hope both groups could work together to continue to preserve local history.

Mormann said interpretive signage, much like what is already on display near Mon Maq Dam already, would be added to signify and tell the dam's story.

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/save-dam>

Save the dam

Published by admin on Wed, 07/12/2017 -

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

The (Mon Maq) Dam is in need of repair. No one has got an estimate of how much it will cost.

A company in Minnesota will take it out for \$2.4 million, which will come from (free) grant money. They will even pay the \$150,000 we borrowed from the DOT to do the removal study.

The water behind the dam will drop 13 feet The new boat ramp above the dam will be 13 feet above water. What will it do to the ponds on the golf course?

P.S. There is a meeting at Central Park on July 17 at 6:45 p.m.

Thank you,

Harvey Johnson

Monticello, Iowa

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/county-residents-seek-supervisors%E2%80%99-opinion-dam>

County residents seek supervisors' opinion on dam

Published by admin on Thu, 07/27/2017 - 8:29am



Board of Supervisors

By:

Kim Brooks

Express Editor

With the Jones County Conservation Board meeting the night before, one of the topics of discussion during the July 18 Board of Supervisors meeting included the future of Mon Maq Dam in Monticello.

Mike Davies, a resident of Anamosa, explained to the board that Jones County Historic Preservation presented results from a survey they put together concerning the options for the dam. Mike said the results showed that 93 percent of the residents of Jones County "don't support removal of the dam.

"They (Conservation) lost support because they (Conservation) changed the project from what was initially presented," explained Mike. He said several years ago, former Conservation Director Larry Gullett presented a project for the dam site that "created something versus just tearing the dam out."

Mike asked the supervisors what their thoughts were on the project, proceeding without county support, with the Conservation Board members being appointed by the county. The ultimate decision lies with the Conservation Board.

Supervisor Joe Oswald commented that the 93 percent who oppose the dam project represent 93 percent who took the survey, "not the whole county."

Mike said Historic Preservation had a booth set up in Monticello on the Fourth of July, handing out surveys to people.

"They got over 400 responses," Mike said. "And they talked to people in the community."

Supervisor Ned Rohwedder, who attended the July 17 Conservation Board meeting, said he felt the survey wasn't complete enough to warrant true results.

"There were no costs presented with the survey," he said of the options explained, "no economic details to help people decide based on the financial ramifications of the different options. I couldn't make a good decision based on the information I had."

Rohwedder also questioned the survey results representing Jones County as a whole.

"How can you say the responses represent the county," he asked Mike, "when the majority were from Monticello, at least 75 percent?"

Cindy Davies said Conservation Director Brad Mormann quoted a previous survey Gullett conducted in years' past, with the majority of responses coming from Monticello at that time.

When it comes down to it, Mike said, "The vast majority of residents don't support tearing out the dam."

Supervisor Lloyd Eaken said he is bothered by the fact that the only people speaking out are those who are opposed to the Conservation project.

"We have not heard from those who are in favor of it," Eaken said. "What about the 19,000 other people in Jones County? How do they feel about it? Four hundred people are not representative of Jones County."

Eaken said he doesn't feel he would be able to make a decision based on the information presented thus far.

"Why let this project go through then?" questioned Cindy.

Rohwedder said the decision does not lie with the board of supervisors, but with Conservation.

"You do have influence with what decisions are made," said Mike.

In other county business:

- The board approved updating various documents related to the Title VI Non-Discrimination Plan, naming County Engineer Derek Snead coordinator and the County Attorney's Office as an alternate. The documents will then be filed with the state.

- The board approved a quote from MAC Concrete Construction for \$21,400 for a sidewalk project around the courthouse.

The county received three bids; MAC was the lowest.

- The board approved a quote of \$2,091 from Monticello Carpet & Interiors for new carpet in the Recorder's Office.


- Snead and the supervisors discussed installing gates on Ely's Stone Bridge to allow bike and walking traffic to utilize the bridge, which is closed to through traffic. The final decision was to install staggered gates on the north end of the bridge for now.

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/mon-maq-dam-decision-tabled-meeting-come>

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Mon Maq Dam decision is tabled; meeting to come

Published by admin on Thu, 07/27/2017 - 8:37am

SHARE 



The future of Mon Maq Dam will be decided at a yet-to-be-scheduled future meeting of the Jones County Conservation Board. (Photo by Kim Brooks)



About 40 people attended the meeting of the Jones County Conservation Board July 17, during which the fate of Mon Maq Dam was debated, but not finalized. (Photo by Pete Temple)

By:

Pete Temple

Express Associate Editor

A decision on the future of Mon Maq Dam was pending, then rescheduled, then postponed, in a series of Jones County Conservation Board developments last week.

The board held its regular meeting on Monday, July 17 at the Central Park Nature Center, during which one of the agenda items was "Mon Maq Dam Project: Project Direction Determination."

At issue was whether or not the board, which has been working on plans regarding the dam off and on for 10 years, would ultimately decide on its current plan – to remove 90 percent of the dam, leaving a portion of it intact on the north end.

The idea would be to allow a continuous flow of the Maquoketa River, and remove the need for portages around the dam.

But with a large majority of the 40-some people in attendance Monday opposing dam removal, and with the results of a survey of county residents coming to light, the board decided to table the decision for a few more days to have more time to study the issue.

"I'm willing to consider this a little longer," said board member Russ VonBehren, who first suggested tabling the issue.

Board members struggled to find a date when all would be available, but eventually scheduled a meeting for Friday, July 21. On Thursday, Mormann announced that the Friday meeting would be postponed. At press time, no new meeting date had been scheduled.

Three people spoke formally at the Monday meeting. Harvey Johnson asked, among other things, why there has not been a bid on what it would cost to repair the dam.

"The dam is in very good shape; but it needs a little tender loving care," Johnson said.

Mike Davies read from a prepared statement, asking the board to save the dam.

"From the surveys that will be presented here tonight, it will become apparent that public opinion has shifted away from removing the dam," Davies read.

The statement went on to address some of the reasons that had been given to removing the dam. Among those was concern about future maintenance cost and liability to the county if the dam fails.

"It could use some minor repairs but it has stood since it was built in 1841, withstanding 100-year floods and the dam breach at Delhi... Tearing the dam down because it might fail in the future will definitely deny future generations the benefit of experiencing the dam site."

James Krapfl, a member of the Jones County Historic Preservation Commission, brought forward a survey taken by the commission between July 1 and 14, polling people on which was the best of three options: preserving the dam, removing the dam to restore natural channel, and a compromise. The survey, which Krapfl acknowledged was not scientific, received 436 responses. 405 of those, or 93 percent, voted for preserving the dam.

Several others spoke during the meeting against removing the dam. Some asked whether the issue could be put up for an election; others wondered why grants weren't pursued with the idea of repairing, rather than tearing down, the dam.

Others were concerned about the fishing, believing that it would be diminished, not improved, by dam removal.

Jones County Conservation Director Brad Mormann repeatedly urged the board to act. The board has access to 11 grants totaling \$2,031,487, but some of those may not be available if they are not utilized soon.

"We have the funding there," Mormann said. "If we delay, money will be an issue."

Mormann, in an email sent July 21, urged people to visit the county website to learn more about the project options. That site is <http://www.jonescountyiowa.org/current-projects-and-news>.

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/it%E2%80%99s-dam-near-unanimous>

It's dam near unanimous

Published by admin on Thu, 07/27/2017 - 8:02am



Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

Recently the Jones County Preservation (Historical) Society took a survey of 483 Jones County citizens. The survey asked citizens to decide if destroying the Mon Maq Dam without water park-type activities, just to let fish move up and dam the river, was worth doing. Ninety-seven percent of Jones County citizens were opposed. The margin of error on the polling was just 3.3 percent.

Essentially, the Conservation Board, over the last 10 years, was sold a bill of goods by the DNR, the previous conservation leader, and the current leader. For 10 years the clandestine meetings barely advertised and stacked with persons who would benefit from such craziness have encouraged the conservation board members to proceed. It's not the board members' fault; they were led by two conservation leaders who were both very good salesmen.

However, it will be the conservation board members' faults if they continue to promote the idea after 97 percent of Jones County citizens say NO! Leave the dam alone.

What good is free funding paid by other groups for a project nobody wants? Deadlines or not. Mr. Board member, vote NO to continue the project at your next meeting. It's what the people who you represent would prefer. Your obligation is to them and not the conservation leader of the DNR. There certainly does not seem to be a consensus at this point for destroying the dam.

With regard,

Stephen J. Intlekofer

Monticello, Iowa

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/save-our-dam>

Save our dam

Published by admin on Thu, 07/27/2017 - 8:02am



Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

I am writing this letter to inform the people of Monticello of the plans of the Jones County Conservation Board to destroy the Mon-Maq Dam.

This board, I'm guessing, is appointed and is supposed to represent the people of this county. So far, along with a ton of misinformation, promises with questionable results, and a pinch of just plain old crap, we have been entertained with the ongoing drama about one of our most important pieces of Monticello's history. The statements about how dangerous this "drowning machine" is, the hindrance of fish passage, their (Conservation Board) comments on how bad the shape our dam is in, all go a long way to enable them to destroy something so important to a huge part of Monticello's heritage.

A survey conducted by the Monticello Historical Society showed 93 percent (436 people) of the respondents wanted the dam to remain.

Also very important is the possible destruction of wet lands above the dam, Smith's pond, Walnut Acres, Monticello Golf Club ponds and Riverside Gardens are all going to be affected along with the birds, flowers and whatever wildlife were to disappear to have their only response be "whoops."

The date for their next meeting is set tentatively for Aug. 14, and it would be in the best interest to have that meeting in a large forum rather than in the basement at Central Park. It would be great if the date and time of this meeting were published well in advance and to allow citizens to attend.

I would ask all citizens to please show up at this meeting and express their opinions. Thank you!

Larry McDonald

Monticello, Iowa

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/save-our-dam-o>

Save our dam

Published by admin on Thu, 07/27/2017 - 8:03am



Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

Should the Jones County Conservation Board vote to remove most of our dam, the Mon Maq Dam at Monticello, we need to know what options are on the table to do with what's left. There WILL NOT be a whitewater park, as was the thought years ago. There WILL NOT be walking/biking trails along the river, cost and other factors eliminating that option. There WILL BE an irreversible hole in our dam that we don't want or need.

A grassroots group of local citizens and the Jones County Historical Preservation Commission presented the Conservation Board with a recent survey, completed on July 14, 2017, indicating a vast majority, 93 percent, of people want to save our Mon Maq Dam. Out of 436 folks surveyed, just 1 percent was in favor of removing our dam.

RESULTS OF THE MON-MAQ DAM SURVEY:

- 93 percent – Option A: Preserve Dam
- 1 percent – Option B: Restore Natural

Channel (remove our dam)

- 6 percent – Option C: Compromise (minor alteration for fish passage)

The board should only vote for actions that have the support of the majority of Jones County residents, before moving forward with roughly \$2 million of taxpayer-funded grants to remove our dam.

We can SAVE OUR DAM by calling the Conservation Board members and sharing your reasons for keeping our dam intact:

Larry Pisarik at 563-853-7229

Russ VonBehren at 319-540-3969

Dean Zimmerman at 319-465-3764

Dave Tabor at 563-357-1075

Ron Roman at 319-462-4107

Sincerely, and with regard and respect

to the Conservation Board members,

Tom Osborne

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/dam-elimination-includes-many-benefits>

Dam elimination includes many benefits

Published by admin on Thu, 07/27/2017 - 8:01am



Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

The residents of Jones County have an opportunity to re-connect to their river in a proactive, positive manner. Consider the factors associated the existence of the Mon Maq low-head dam:

- **Safety Liability:** The elimination of the low-head dam safety issue. Low head dams are called “drowning machines” for good reason – loss of human life. Low head dams in Iowa have claimed 160 lives since 1900. Very successful low head dam remediation projects have been completed on the Des Moines river at Boone and on the Wapsipinicon river at Quasqueton eliminating their “drowning machines.” The elimination and/or modification of the Mon Maq low-head dam would remove the potential costly litigation and liability associated with the low head dam.

- **Financial Liability:** Like any concrete structure, a low head dam has continuous and long-term maintenance costs. The Mon Maq Dam currently has severe structural issues that require fixing and then will require continued maintenance. And the river has the ability to increase the maintenance costs or create new refurbishment costs on a seasonal basis. Funding has been secured to eliminate/remediate the low-head dam and its maintenance/refurbishment costs. Refurbishment of the low-head dam would result in committing future Jones County residents the burden of any future dam maintenance costs.

- **Restoration of the river ecology:** The elimination or modification of low-head dams will result in the re-establishment of a natural river environment in terms of both fauna and flora. Successful low-head dam remediation projects at Charles City, Manchester and Elkader have resulted in improving the fishing and recreation opportunities for those communities. Elimination and/or modification of the low head dam would provide additional recreational benefit for the Jones County residents and local community.

The investment in low-head dam mitigation activities has resulted in tremendous benefits for many Iowa communities. I highly encourage the residents of Jones County to approve a Mon Maq low-head dam elimination/remediation project and enjoy the benefits other Iowa communities have realized.

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/it%E2%80%99s-rite-passage>

It's a rite of passage

Published by admin on Wed, 08/02/2017 - 8:35am



Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

The Monticello Dam has been a part of the lives of every child that has grown up in and around Monticello. We have all been down there swimming, playing in the water, fishing, and walking the apron. The first time across the apron is a sort of rite of passage that will stay in our memories forever. It makes me sick to think that it could be torn out for no good reason.

We should save and maintain the dam for our grandchildren and their children to love and enjoy like we do.

I've signed the petition to save the dam, hope you do too.

Tammy Barton

Monticello, Iowa

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/help-save-mon-maq-dam>

Help save Mon Maq Dam

Published by admin on Wed, 08/02/2017 - 8:34am



Letter to the Editor

To the Editor and Jones Co. residents,

con·ser·va·tion, kănsər'vāSH(ə)n/

noun

1. The action of conserving something, in particular: preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife.

Synonyms: preservation, protection, safeguarding, safekeeping; preservation, repair, and prevention of deterioration of archaeological, historical, and cultural sites and artifacts.

Disposable lighters, disposable flashlights, disposable diapers and now disposable dams. Studies show this, studies show that, it is also thought by some studies our dam was designed to last just so long. Sometimes studies that are "paid for" tend to lean in the direction from which the money is coming.

I've been in front of the dam, on top, on the sides and on the sea wall when water use to flow on both sides. I have yet to find an expiration date anywhere.

Some believe that it has out lasted its usefulness. Some believe it is dangerous, yet there is no record of an injury. I believe that by removing a part of the dam it would compromise the integrity of the remaining portions?

Another observation, when the river level is high, (not when out of its banks) the water levels in close proximity such as Riverside Gardens, wetland areas, Golf Course pond, Jellystone Lake and Smiths' pond rise and fall with the river.

By leaving the dam and maintaining it, we can continue to enjoy the beauty of the dam, still admire its historical value, enjoy the quiet pool above the dam to paddle upstream, and still have an excellent "walk-in" fishing area, untouchable by canoes, tubers and kayaks.

The dam is not just used by Monticello residents. I've met many people from all over Jones County as well as surrounding counties, people from Dubuque, Linn, Jackson, Clayton, and Delaware come to fish, enjoy the sights and sounds.

I invite you to drive to the dam to look and listen for yourself. Then ask yourself if \$2 million dollars wouldn't be better spent somewhere else. Maybe the Conservation Board should finish other projects that were started and not finished. An example is the river access at Eby's Mill Bridge, located northeast of Scotch Grove.

Grant dollars come from tax dollars. There are also grants available to maintain our dam. This information was made known by the Jones County Historical Society.

Your voice counts as a Jones County resident, whether by phone to a conservation board member, a name on a petition or by voting on a ballot. Once we ring this bell to remove the Mon Maq Dam, there are no do-overs. It will be gone forever.

In closing, I'd like to share the opinion of one person who spoke at the May conversation board meeting. He spoke the least and said the most. George Schneider stated, "Man has always found a way to screw things up, 'IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT.'" Maybe there is something to be learned from this.

If you feel the way many Jones County residents do, please use your voice. With your help we can save the Mon Maq Dam.

Jones County Conservation Board Members: Larry Pisarik at 563-853-7229, Russ VonBehren at 319-540-3969, Dean Zimmerman at 319-465-3764, Dave Tabor at 563-357-1075, Ron Roman at 319-462-4107.

With Respect to All,

John E. Null

Scotch Grove, Iowa

Lifelong Jones Co. resident

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/get-rid-monticello-dam>

Get rid of the Monticello dam

Published by admin on Wed, 08/02/2017 - 8:33am

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

I was never asked to take a survey about the Monticello dam. I think it should be torn out. It's not really good for anything unless you want to drown someone.

I also don't see why Jones County needs to spend good money maintaining a useless dam built back in the 1800s. It's just a waste. When other dams in Jones County wear out, get rid of them too. Let the rivers flow naturally.

Thomas Lee Hamilton

Olin, Iowa

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/residents-question-mon-maq-dam-project>

Residents question Mon Maq Dam project

Published by admin on Wed, 08/02/2017 - 10:48am



Board of Supervisors

By:

Kim Brooks

Express Editor

Residents throughout Jones County, specifically Monticello, filled the Jones County Board Room the morning of July 25 for Conservation Director Brad Mormann's discussion with the supervisors regarding Mon Maq Dam.

Mormann said this has been an ongoing project for the Conservation Board over the past 10 years. In that timeframe, and more recently, the board has reviewed numerous options for the dam site, bringing ideas to the public's attention as well.

Mon Maq Dam was built in 1913-14. Mormann said the age of the dam is of utmost concern, as well as its lifespan in the years ahead.

Before any comments were made, however, Supervisor Jon Zirkelbach commented that the board of supervisors does not dictate how the conservation board operates.

"They know more about this than we do," he said.

Mormann outlined multiple options the conservation board has looked at thus far, with Option A being presented as something the board is favoring today.

"It's a compromise after hearing from the public," said Mormann. "It allows fish access to remain, similar to what you have out there today.

"The main component is to share the river system with fishing and recreation," added Mormann.

This involves removing a large portion of the dam (roughly 80 percent) and adding arching boulders across the channel. These boulders will allow paddlers, tubers, and boat passage during normal flow times. This will be done by lowering the elevation of the boulders directly above the scour hole and near the fishing access points. The scour hole will be developed and maintained by the river current, attracting and holding fish.

The plans also call for the development of an ADA accessible sidewalk for fishing access, something Mormann said they do not currently have at the dam.

Mormann said they would also leave "a fully intact portion (100 feet or so) of the dam" in place on the north side for historical interpretation, in addition to signage explaining the site's history.

At the Kitty Creek site, an arch rapids structure would also be constructed to protect the City of Monticello's Kitty Creek sewer line crossing.

This option comes at a cost of \$1.7 million, of which grant funding has been secured for.

Of the seven options, Option A is also the least expensive, ranging from \$1.7 million to \$5.3 million.

Total funding to date (July 25), for both engineering and construction, comes in at \$2,031,287.

"This is not a new thing," said Mormann. "Cities across the country are all looking at options of what to do with similar structures like this."

He said as the dam ages, they have to look at and consider the long-term costs of upkeep and maintenance of the dam.

"The funding is not always there as issues occur," explained Mormann.

He said low-head dams like Mon Maq cause hydraulic issues such as blocking fish passage and increase flooding upstream.

"That's why the conservation board started looking at this," he said. "They wanted to eliminate long-term costs."

He said Option A not only maintains and improves fishing at the dam site, but allows paddlers and boaters access of the entire stretch of the Maquoketa River.

In terms of safety, Mormann said some of the grants Conservation was awarded were specifically because Mon Maq Dam poses a safety threat.

Time is also of the essence with this project. Mormann said with some of the grants he was awarded, they have to be spent/used within a certain timeframe. The \$250,000-plus Parks to People grant requires a construction contract awarded by June 30, 2018.

"We have to make a decision soon," he said. "The money may not be there forever."

Supervisor Lloyd Eaken asked whether removal of the dam would affect the water level upstream.

"If the rock structures are put in, that would raise the water level slightly," said Mormann.

He said at Jellystone Campground, north of the dam, they would see the water level decrease by mere inches, not feet.

"It'll be a gradual change," said Mormann.

Mike Davies of Anamosa asked about the river's impact on area wetlands if the dam were removed, as well as future costs associated with the dam.

"Nothing has been spent on the dam since the '60s," said Davies.

Joy Claussen questioned the need for a dam project at all.

"If you didn't have the grants, would you even consider messing with the dam?" she asked.

Economic Development Director Dusty Embree praised Mormann and the conservation board for being proactive with this project.

"I don't want my taxpayer dollars going to something we have the money for now," she said.

Others in the crowd said if this project is intended to increase traffic at the dam site, more parking options would need to be provided.

Tom Osborne of Monticello said if allowing for ADA access is a problem that needs fixing, that could be remedied without taking out the dam.

Osborne was also concerned with removing a piece of local history, a tourist attraction.

"It could have a negative economic impact on Jones County and Monticello," he said. "There's growing public opposition."

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/another-perspective-monticello-dam>

Another perspective on the Monticello dam

Published by admin on Wed, 08/09/2017 - 10:39am



Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

I served on the Jones County Conservation Board for 17 years in the '70s and '80s. The dam was a topic of discussion during my tenure on the county board. During this time, the Army Corps of Engineers became involved in what I remember as an informal study of the Kitty Creek flooding. It was thought at the time that removal of the dam or part of the south end would lower the water level in the river and allow the creek to drain faster and alleviate some of the flooding problem on the east end of Monticello. Now with the reconstruction of the Delhi dam and elimination of homes and businesses in that flood plain (in Monticello), that problem is probably solved.

To set the record straight, I am neither for or against removal of the dam, but would like to point out a topic that has been mentioned but not discussed adequately.

Fishing from or walking on the dam's apron can be very dangerous as it can be slippery and falling off into the backwash (turbulence) can be deadly even for an accomplished swimmer, especially during increased river levels. Stories have been told of young people during real low river levels ducking under the apron and going up inside the dam. The Corps of Engineers told us the dam is a concrete cap poured over the original log dam. And there are possible voids inside the dam.

My point is if the dam is to stay, it needs to be repaired to eliminate this hazard and also baffles installed below the apron like incorporated in the design of the new spillway at Delhi. This breaks up the turbulent and dangerous water below the apron.

What is more important? The nostalgic value of a 100-year-old dam or the safety of it? Let's not wait until there is a loss of life and then say why didn't somebody do something.

Larry Behrends

Monticello, Iowa

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/overwhelming-public-support-favors-saving-dam>

Overwhelming public support favors saving dam

Published by admin on Wed, 08/09/2017 - 10:41am



Letter to the Editor

Dear members of the Jones County Conservation Board, the Jones County Board of Supervisors and the public,

I am an attorney, a retired administrative law judge for the State of Iowa, and a former resident of Jones County. I grew up about 1.5 miles east of Monticello on Highway 151. My dad, Chuck Bohlken, ran Chuck's Repair Shop. My mom was a nurse at John McDonald Hospital. The Maquoketa River flowed through our property, which was immediately downstream of Monticello Canoe Rental, near the Monticello Maquoketa Dam. During my life, I have canoed the river, and hiked or hunted along it, many times.

For some time, I have been aware of a controversial proposal to destroy a large portion of the Monticello Maquoketa Dam. There has been an effort, by some members of the Jones County Conservation Board (JCCB), and its staff, to perpetrate this act of destruction against our beautiful and historic dam at a time when there is overwhelming public opposition to it.

To the JCCB's credit, however, it has now twice delayed a final vote in response to public opposition to the dam's destruction.

I would submit the following evidence of overwhelming public opposition.

There was a survey in July on public sentiment toward modification or destruction of the dam by the Jones County Historic Preservation Commission. 405 of the 436 respondents to the survey wanted to "keep the dam" in preference to all other named alternatives. The survey states, "If it is assumed that survey is representative, the Jones County results can be generalized (with 99 percent certainty) to all county residents, with a margin of error of (plus or minus) 3.3 percent."

In fairness, I would note that the survey asks for the assumption that the survey is representative. I would ask, why would this survey not be representative of the entire county? It was based on survey forms handed out to people in Monticello during the Fourth of July activities. It is no secret that people from throughout the county attend these activities. Although this may have resulted in a higher percentage of persons living in and near Monticello being respondents to the survey, the worst that can be said is that persons who were likely to be familiar with and knowledgeable of the dam were more likely to be respondents.

For the sake of argument, let us assume that the survey overstates the numbers opposing the destruction of the dam by a whopping 20 percent. This would mean that 73 percent of the county residents oppose the destruction of the dam. Even if we lopped off another 20 percent (which seems unreasonable) we would still find a majority of 53 percent of the county opposed to the destruction of the dam.

According to the Express, the JCCB apparently relied on a past survey, showing support for the Board's proposal, which had the majority of respondents from Monticello. So an overrepresentation of Monticello residents was not a problem then. I believe this was also the survey that had a severe overrepresentation of high school students.

According to articles in the Express and KCRG-TV9, a majority of the public was opposed to the dam's destruction at the May 18 and July 17 meetings of the JCCB. I understand this was also the case at the Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Eaken "was bothered by the fact that the only people speaking out are those who are opposed to the Conservation project." That is what happens when the majority is opposed. They speak out!

Another source we can look to is letters to the editor. In the July and Aug. 2 editions of the Express, eight out of 10 letters were against the destruction of the dam. One of the two letters supporting the proposal was from a Cedar Rapids resident who did not say he had ever been a resident of the county. These two letters are the only ones I ever seen supporting the project.

In 2016, I wrote a letter to the Express opposing the destruction of our beautiful dam and questioning whether the then-estimated \$1 million cost was worth the supposed benefits. At that time I was joined by other letter writers who noted:

1. The fishing editor of the Cedar Rapids Gazette had pointed out that the area immediately downstream of dams often provides excellent fishing. He must know what he is talking about as I have seen people fishing below the Monticello dam on numerous occasions.
2. The Monticello dam aerates the water. By adding oxygen to the water, the dam counters pollution, particularly pollution coming from legacy sewer upstream.
3. A letter writer took an informal poll of taxpayers, not high school students, who were overwhelmingly opposed to the dam's destruction or modification.
4. One writer's father had given a very substantial sum of money, I believe it was \$10,000, for the preservation of the dam.

In addition to overwhelming public opposition, we must remember:

1. Due to the reduction of water levels, farmers and others who have made significant financial investment in wetlands along the Maquoketa would see those areas dry up.
2. I understand the Maquoketa would become a wider and shallower river. Its depth, at least at points, would vary from 6 inches to 13 inches. I had the experience of "canoeing" the Maquoketa from Monticello to Pictured Rocks during a drought or period of low rain many years ago. This consisted of a little floating and a lot of dragging the canoe over shallow sandbars. A significant lowering of the downstream depth of the Maquoketa River would destroy or deplete the level of canoeing now done. This would not only hurt the Monticello canoe rental business, but the many many people who take their own canoes, kayaks, inflatables, and even flat-bottom boats, to float down the river. The dollars those people spend in the Monticello area, and other areas of Jones County, would never be spent.
3. I am now informed that it is questionable whether any repair of the dam is necessary. What some thought was a crack in the dam is apparently just a cold seam which was where the two sections of the dam were joined. A hypothetical concern exists with respect to the earthen berm on the Monticello side of the dam. The dam and the berm, however, have repeatedly withstood extreme flooding, including complete submersion of the dam, without giving way. The 2010 River Dam Inventory rated the condition of the dam as "Good." Why fix it or destroy it if it isn't broke?

4. In addition to its beauty, the dam has historical value. It is over 100 years old. It was a former source of hydroelectric power for Jones County. It is the only dam in Iowa with an apron structure at its base. Has the JCCB investigated and complied with any legal requirements for maintaining our historic dam?

In a July 21 e-mail to the Monticello Express, Conservation Director Mormann advised the public to visit the webpage listing the seven proposals for the dam. This document overstates the number of options actually available. Options D and E, refer to "whitewater" development, which the public has been informed is now not a viable option. Also, while navigation without portaging is mentioned as one of the project goals, if you examine the illustrative photo for option C, the rock arch rapids, it is clear that neither motorboats nor canoes nor tubes could safely navigate such a structure.

The only remaining real options are option F to save the dam with no cost estimate provided or to implement the one of the two options for which the JCCB has funding and which, according to the JCCB's document, it so far prefers: "Option A. Remove a large portion of the dam and add arching boulders across the channel" at a cost of \$1.7 million and "Option B. Remove a large portion of the dam and install fish habitat components" at a cost of \$1.5 million." Please note the costs have gone up at least 50 percent above the \$1 million cost estimate given in 2016. Will they continue to go up?

In the Aug. 2 issue of the Express, Conservation Director Mormann now says the JCCB prefers Option A. Mormann made three illogical and contradictory statements concerning Option A. Based on the drawing and the illustrative photo on Option A in the JCCB's document, the "arching boulders" will, in effect, create a new dam, composed of boulders instead of concrete, with a big hole to allow passage of boats. First, Mr. Mormann expects us to believe that Option A, a boulder dam with a big hole in it, would "raise the water level slightly" upstream in comparison to the current concrete dam with no hole. Really? Second, he also states, however, that the water level would decrease by "mere inches" upstream at the Jellystone Campground. So the new structure will, according to Mr. Mormann, both raise and lower the upstream level of the river. Amazing!

Third, Mr. Mormann also claimed that low-head dams like ours "increase upstream flooding." This will, of course, be cured by a structure which will (take your pick) raise the upstream water level in comparison to the current dam or only lower that level by "mere inches." Now that makes sense! Of course, if it is actually a problem, maybe we could reduce upstream flooding by opening the gates when flooding occurs.

I find Mike Davies' conclusion that, given the soil type in the river, the cutting of a new channel after removal of the dam will cause "the water level will drop in all wetlands... along the river" to be far more believable.

The Board's presentation mentions ongoing costs for maintenance of the dam if it is not destroyed. There is no estimate of such costs. Apparently, no attempt was made to obtain an estimate for such costs during the 10 years the project has been under consideration. I understand the county has never paid a dime for actual maintenance of the dam, as opposed to construction of the boat ramp and the overlook. How do the actual maintenance costs compare to the \$1.5 million and upward cost of destruction?

The proposal mentions safety. It appears there has never been a drowning at the Monticello Dam attributable to low-head dam "drowning machine" problems. It may be that these problems are reduced by the dam's apron structure at its base. In any event, warning signs would be a much cheaper option than destroying the dam.

There will always be a risk in swimming, boating or canoeing, no matter what option the JCCB selects. Rock climbing and hiking are, for example, allowed at Pictured Rocks despite the risk. No place can be made perfectly safe and the JCCB has no duty to do so.

I understand that, at the last JCCB meeting, it was proposed that the gates next to the dam could be lifted, modified or removed, allowing fish to navigate the river without destroying the dam. Perhaps this is the best alternative.

I would like to note that all members of the JCCB are undoubtedly hard-working, public spirited individuals, but I think those favoring destruction of the dam are mistaken. We need to remember that "free" money from federal grants is never really free. It comes from federal taxpayers, including taxpayers in Jones County. How will we ever get the national budget under control unless we realize there is no free lunch?

I was surprised to see that the Board of Supervisors' July 25, 2017 agenda stated the Supervisors would be addressing the "Conservation Board's Mon Maq Dam Project which may include a major modification to the Mon Maq Dam" and "possible action to support the proposed project." It was amazing to think the Supervisors would contemplate voting to support the "project" (apparently the "project" contemplating destruction of the dam) before the Conservation Board had taken a vote on which alternative, including leaving the dam in place, it was going to select.

While no action was taken on July 25, I now understand the Supervisors are again scheduling a possible vote to support the "project" next Tuesday, Aug. 8. This is being done even though the Conservation Board will have taken no final vote on the seven alternative proposals and will not meet until Aug. 24, 2017. How can the Supervisors vote to support the Board's "project" when they don't even know if the Board supports the "project?" Have the Supervisors been issued crystal balls so they can predict the Conservation Board's vote before it occurs?

I have never heard of a higher level of government authority voting to support a lower authority's action prior to the lower authority even deciding what it wants to do. By way of comparison, I have never heard of the governor signing legislation before it is passed by the legislature or of the Administrative Rules Review Committee reviewing agency rules before an agency has proposed them.

If you wish to save the Monticello Dam, please politely contact the Conservation Board and the Board of Supervisors as follows: Conservation Board phone number, 563-487-3541; Board e-mail, conservation@co.jones.ia.us; Chairman Lawrence Pisarik, 563-852-7229; Vice Chairman Dean Zimmerman, 319-465-3764; Secretary Dave Tabor, 319-465-3893; member Rob Roman, 319-462-4107; member Russ VonBehren, 319-484-2849. Board of Supervisors: Wayne Manternach, Dist. 1, 319-465-4257 supv1@co.jones.ia.us; Joe Oswald, Dist. 2, 319-465-3888 supv2@co.jones.ia.us; Jon Zirkelbach, chairman, Dist. 3, 319-480-9550 supv3@co.jones.ia.us; Ned Rohwedder, Dist. 4, 319-484-2693 supv4@co.jones.ia.us; Lloyd Eaken, vice chairman, Dist. 5, 319-480-4365 supv5@co.jones.ia.us.

Sincerely, Donald W. Bohlken

Indianola, Iowa

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/change-must-occur-be-proactive>

Change must occur to be proactive

Published by admin on Wed, 08/09/2017 - 10:40am



Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

I am writing to express my support for the Jones County Conservation Mon Maq Dam project. I think a couple of things are important to bring to the public's attention.

The Jones County Conservation Board (JCCB) has been researching alternatives for the dam for 10 years. This isn't a project that just started and is following the funding.

We should applaud the JCCB for having a proactive approach to the dam's future. It is, and has not been, serving the purpose for which it was created. The JCCB knows that at some point it will fail. Water always wins. It is not a matter of IF it will fail, it is WHEN.

Whether we are proactive and remove a part of the dam or wait until it fails, it will cost taxpayer money. Currently, there are grant dollars in place to cover the costs associated with full or partial removal, and there would be no additional tax levied on Jones County citizens to pay for the dam project. Are the taxpayers of Jones County paying for the removal? Yes, of course, but so are the taxpayers of all of the other states. Using the grant dollars we have now spreads the cost over many. If we have to pay for removal and other expenses once it fails, the burden will be put on Jones County taxpayers alone. Projects all over the nation are taking advantage of your federal tax dollars with these types of grants. If we don't take the money, another project definitely will. I, for one, think it is wonderful that some of those federal tax dollars come back to Jones County for our projects from time to time.

Conservation Director Brad Mormann has done an excellent job providing facts, alternatives and compromises for the dam. The compromised alternative that leaves a piece of the dam is a wonderful way to provide a historical monument, while still allowing for fish and floater passage on the river.

I hope that the JCCB understands that the voices in dissent are generally always louder than the non-vocal majority. The petitions that are being circulated show very little information and facts about the project. Most residents of Jones County realize that in order to grow and evolve, government must be proactive and change must occur.

Sincerely,

Brad Hatcher
Stone City, Iowa

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/no-valid-reasons-remove-mon-maq-dam>

No valid reasons to remove Mon Maq Dam

Published by admin on Wed, 08/16/2017 - 10:54am



Letter to the Editor

To the Editor,

Removal of the Mon Maq Dam is in a word-UNNECESSARY! It appears County officials are busy chasing grants, which is putting pressure on them to hurry things through to meet a grant deadline, rather than exploring other options such as historic preservation. Grants continue to be purported as "free money" but taxpayers know there is no such thing and we will be paying the bill! It is a disservice to rush to destroy the dam and do something the majority of the community does not want to do, without first going through proper procedures of evaluation of an historical site. Through the years there have been many proposals. But there has never been a study as to what it would take to restore the existing dam nor any option presented for preservation. Riverside Gardens and surrounding wetlands will be another loss from the dam removal and accompanying drop in river levels. Who will pay for clean up of the muddy mess if the ponds and wetlands dry up? Removing the dam is purported by county officials to be necessary for the following reasons and premises:

1. To save maintenance and upkeep: Jones County has neglected the dam and I believe officials have provided essentially NO maintenance for the 50 years since they owned it.
2. Dam failure and increased costs: If maintained properly this is less likely to happen. It has been able to survive all floods thus far without any maintenance.
3. Dams are dangerous: There have been no drownings at the dam in over 100 years. Why aren't we looking at improving the Dam in Anamosa where several drownings are documented if safety is the concern?
4. Blocking of fish passage: We do not have any species in the Maquoketa that require movement and upstream spawning such as salmon.
5. Dam has a 50-100 year lifespan: Although this dam is 100-plus years old, it has the potential with proper care and maintenance to be a landmark and a site of beauty for many years to come.
6. Navigation impediment: This is a very short portage around the dam. Canoeists and tubers have great opportunities on the stretch between the Mon Maq Dam to Eby's Mill where hundreds travel the river weekly. We want this to continue.
7. Angling success: Local fishermen attest to the fact that fishing will be depleted or destroyed with dam removal.
8. Increased flooding upstream can occur due to presence of dams: I am not sure of this but have not heard that Mon Maq Dam was a major factor in any flooding in the past.

These premises offered by the Jones County Conservation Director and Conservation Board just do not justify Mon Maq Dam removal. We must weigh the choices. County officials have not provided valid compelling reasons and justification to remove an historic structure that with proper care and maintenance can continue to be a landmark for Jones County.

Cindy Brokens

Scotch Grove, Iowa

Supervisors vote to support Conservation in dam project

Published by admin on Wed, 08/16/2017 - 11:29am



Board of Supervisors

By:

Kim Brooks

Express Editor

Showing support for the appointed members of the Conservation Board, the Jones County Supervisors voted 4-1 to back Conservation in their endeavors as they move forward with their Mon Maq Dam project, which at this point entails partial removal. Supervisor Lloyd Eaken was opposed.

Supervisor Jon Zirkelbach prefaced the discussion by informing the 20-some people in attendance that the board did not wish to rehash what has already been brought up concerning the dam. There have been numerous public meetings regarding the project before now.

"We've all heard everything," said Zirkelbach. "It's gone through the papers and meetings. Only new information will be offered here today to discuss."

Each of the five supervisors also offered their thoughts concerning the Mon Maq Dam project.

Supervisor Wayne Manternach said he supports Conservation concerning the process they've gone through to come to a conclusion.

"It's not an easy decision either way," he said. "But their process has been top of the line. They heard discussion and put together the plans."

Eaken said he agrees, but finds it hard to support removing the dam when the majority of those he's talked to or heard from are opposed.

"I find myself between a rock and a hard place," shared Eaken. "I support the Conservation Board; they're all volunteers and I'm sure they're catching a lot of heat. I support the work of the Conservation Board and what they've done and what they're doing. They've done a lot of hard work and spent a lot of time on this. I'm not sure I would want that job."

Supervisor Ned Rohwedder said he was not a county supervisor when the dam project started roughly 10 years ago. But after attending a number of Conservation meetings and other public forums about the project, he's in full support of the work Conservation is doing.

"The end result is dam removal," he said. "I support that because, looking at the financial ramifications, if the dam should ever fail, the grant money will not be there."

Rohwedder said at the end of the day, Mon Maq Dam is county property, and if anything should happen to the dam, the residents of Jones County would have to pay for any damage associated with a levy breach.

Rohwedder said he also felt the petition that has been circulating the county is inadequate. "I would be unwilling to sign it because it didn't include the costs at all or funding that had been raised," he said. "It totally eliminated financial information."

He added that he's impressed with the newest proposal for the dam project, which would require minimal maintenance.

"Brad (Mormann, Conservation director) presented a good case," said Rohwedder.

Supervisor Joe Oswald acknowledged both sides of the issue: those passionate about saving the dam and those who feel strongly that it should be removed.

"This project has been going on for 10 years," he said. "It's not just something that happened in the last six months."

Oswald said if Conservation chose to leave the dam in place, they would then have to return all of the grants and contributions.

"That would not go well for us in the future if we applied again," explained Oswald. "That'd be a negative for us."

Zirkelbach seemed to echo Oswald's sentiments. "There is money there to do the project under controlled circumstances." He said if the dam were to fail and wash out, there would not necessarily be any funding to help with mitigation.

He added that the current proposal calls for leaving a "decent stretch of the dam" in place, which Zirkelbach said should satisfy those fighting for the historical value.

"There is money there to improve the area," he said. "Look at how Central Park transpired. If we pass this opportunity up, you got what you got. That's why I prefer to support the Conservation Board."

Ultimately, the final decision lies with the Conservation Board.

"We'll support any decision they make," said Rohwedder.

Tom Osborne of Monticello voiced that he felt of support sends the wrong message.

"I encourage the Board of Supervisors not to make a motion and hold off until after the Aug. 23 public meeting," he said.

However, the board felt their support was warranted.

Judy Skay of Monticello, a volunteer at Riverside Gardens, was worried about the water levels affecting the wetlands at the gardens.

"The wetlands will change," said Rohwedder, "but they'll still be there, just in a different form."

Mormann said their engineer surveyed Riverside Gardens and the Monticello Golf Course pond to see just how the river levels would affect both sites.

"There will be changes," said Mormann. "Some wetlands will also be added."

Mike Davies of Anamosa said if the county had maintained the dam before now, this would not be an issue.

"It's wrong to deny the residents enjoyment of the dam because there is a concern it might fail in the future," he said. "If you take it out, it's gone forever."

Cindy Johnson of Monticello voiced her concerns as well as a lifelong resident. "I'd like to see the dam stay. Monticello will go downhill, stores will close."

Several in the crowd also asked to see cost estimates of what it would take to save and maintain the dam in its current state.

Jerry Muller of Monticello felt the same. "The impact to the city will be tremendous."

The Conservation Board plans to vote on the project during their Thursday, Aug. 24 meeting at Central Park at 6:45 p.m.

AD PUBLISHED IN 8/16/17 EDITION

It's not too late to
SAVE OUR DAM

→ You can help by: ←

* **SIGNING THE PETITION** - Petitions are located at
businesses throughout Jones County.

Call 319-610-2803 to locate one near you.

* **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

STATE/FEDERAL REVIEW

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23
10:30 AM**

Monticello Community Building



CONSERVATION BOARD

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 24
6:45 PM**

Central Park Nature Center

NOW is the time to stand up and be heard!

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/preservation-commission-hosts-panel-discuss-mon-maq-dam>

Preservation Commission hosts panel to discuss Mon Maq Dam

Published by admin on Wed, 08/30/2017 - 10:57am





Dan Higginbottom, an archaeologist the the State Historic Preservation Commission, addresses the crowd on Aug. 23 during a panel discussion on Mon Maq Dam. Roughly 60 people or more were present for the meeting to offer their thoughts on the future of the dam. (Photos by Kim Brooks)



Marv Rickels of Monticello speaks to the five-member panel invited by Jones County Historic Preservation to hear comments from the public concerning the dam in Monticello. Rickels asked why the dam was in need to repairs when other areas of the county have been left "unfinished." Public opinion is a part of the process Conservation has to go through in their efforts to move forward with the dam project.

By:
Kim Brooks
Express Editor

Prior to the Aug. 24 decision by Jones County Conservation to move forward with partial removal of Mon Maq Dam, the Jones County Historic Preservation Commission (JCHPC) held a public consultation meeting. This meeting was held the morning of Aug. 23 at the Community Building in Monticello.

Over 60 people were present, along with members of the JCHPC. The consulting panel consisted of representatives from the various agencies working with the JCCB on the dam project: Paula Mohr, State Historical Preservation Commission; Dan Higginbottom, archaeologist with the State Historical Commission; Brant Vollman, Army Corps of Engineers; Brennan Dolan, Iowa DOT; and Mike LaPietra, Federal Highway Administration.

Brad Mormann, Conservation Director, commented that the JCCB typically works with all of these entities, but not until a decision is made concerning a particular project.

Part of the meeting was spent discussing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). With the Mon Maq Dam utilizing federal funds, they are required to look into the effect this project could have on potential historic properties. The dam, though, is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, though it was eligible at one time.

"We rely heavily on historic preservation commissions," said Higginbottom. "They are our eyes around the state."

He said general public input is also a requirement in securing federal funds on projects like this. Numerous people repeatedly addressed the panel during the meeting, which lasted for several hours.

"We are just charged with making sure the Section 106 process is being followed," added Higginbottom.

He said there are four steps in the process:

- Identify the area that could be potentially affected.
- Identify the historical area.
- Assess the effects based on the types of activity that the agency will be doing.
- Look at the mitigation measures to minimize/avoid the area that could be affected/destroyed.

"In an ideal situation," said Higginbottom, "you would go through each of these steps without any problems."

LaPietra echoed, reiterating what Higginbottom said, involving the public is part of the process to move the project along.

"Especially if you have controversy," he said.

Dolan agreed. "Public opinion with regard to its (the structure) significance is an important part of the project."

The panel thanked the many people in the room for attending the meeting, saying they are part of the required process.

"There are different levels of significance," explained Higginbottom. "Significance at the local level is where public opinion comes in."

Don Bohlken, a former Monticello resident, questioned the environmental impact when taking out the dam. Dolan said the project is just in the pre-application stage, so nothing is known yet regarding impacts the ecological environment and which permits would be needed.

"It depends on the project," said Dolan. "There are multiple levels of permits required."

It was asked whether the JCCB could return the grants they've been awarded without any future negative effects in applying for funding again down the road.

"The money can be returned," said LaPietra. "They (JCCB) can apply for other grants, but not the same ones for 10 years."

He said there is a difference between having the funds committed toward the project and having the funds released.

Mike Wells commented on the supposed rife of Conservation. "Conservation does not mean destroy," he said. "We need to pay the men who built that dam a compliment and leave it there; it's not hurting anything."

Marv Rickels, a local resident, questioned why Mon Maq needed to be "fixed" when other sites such as Eby's Mill and Pictured Rocks "have been left unfinished?"

Dolan reminded the crowd that, as a panel, they were asked to be present to address Section 106, the role public opinion has in the process, and the historical factors associated with the project, not to sway JCCB one way or another.

"There was money JCCB pursued through grants," said Dolan. "The ultimate decision is with the JCCB. When the grants are awarded, we then work with the local entity on developing the plans."

Jerry Muller, a longtime Monticello resident, spoke to the loss of the local water table if the dam were removed.

Vollman answered, "Things can be done depending on the level of impact." However, he said at this point without JCCB having voted on which alternative they wish to pursue, there's no telling how the project would affect the City of Monticello's water levels.

To that topic, Judy Skay also felt that dam removal would impact the pond at Riverside Gardens, which has been there since the early '90s.

"A lot of people put a lot of work and money into that pond," she said. "We want to keep it."

With many people opposed to the removal of the dam due to its historical significance, including Tom Osborne, Dolan said, after studying the various alternatives JCCB put together, a couple of the options "would not adversely affect the historical significance of the dam.

"However, no final decision has been made," he said. "Your feedback is critical in guiding this process forward."

Higginbottom added, "There is no preordained outcome here. They have to consider all of the alternatives; that's part of the legal process. It's up to the federal agencies to weigh the public benefit and the cost. We don't know how this will end up; there's no guarantee." He said with so many people speaking out and against removing the dam, those comments will be taken into consideration.

"Your local voice is what matters," Higginbottom said. "It's your history."

He said public opinion could surely lead to the project being modified from start to finish.

LaPietra said the Federal Highway Administration has been a part of several projects that have been canceled due to several factors throughout the course of the project.

"This has been absolutely community driven," said Rose Rohr, JCHPC, concerning the opposition and drive to save the dam.

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/jccb-votes-4-1-remove-portion-dam>

JCCB votes 4-1 to remove portion of dam

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Jerry Pasker of Monticello addresses the Conservation Board during their Aug. 24 meeting. Several people spoke their peace before the board voted 4-1 to move forward with removal of the dam. The members of the board are, from left, Conservation Director Brad Mormann, Larry Pisarik, Dean Zimmerman, Russ VonBehren, Rob Roman, and Dave Tabor. (Photo by Kim Brooks)

By:

Kim Brooks

Express Editor

A 4-1 vote by the members of the Jones County Conservation Board (JCCB) favored proceeding with the process of removing roughly 80 percent of Monticello's Mon Maq Dam.

The motion was made to reflect the notion of reconnecting and restoring the Maquoketa River as a continuous water recreational trail.

After numerous public meetings, and an ongoing 10-year process that involved two Conservation directors, the board felt that the most recent option, Option A, was the right way to go.

This alternative, one of many, calls for partial removal of the 100-plus-year-old dam structure, adding arching boulders across the channel. According to the plans, the boulders would be positioned to allow paddler, tube, and boat passage during regular flow seasons. This would be done lowering the elevation of the boulders directly above the scour hole and near fishing access points. Development of a handicap accessible sidewalk would allow all visitors the opportunity to move closer to the cascading water and fishing access.

A fully intact portion of the dam would remain on the north end for historical interpretation, in addition to signage explaining the history of the site, some of which is currently on display.

The project would also benefit Kitty Creek in Monticello. A rock arch rapids structure would be constructed below the City of Monticello's sewer line crossing in the creek. Four arching rows of large boulders would be placed on the surface to increase surface roughness and add structural stability.

Option A comes at a total cost estimate (engineering and construction) of \$1.8 million. Total funding to date in grants and donations/contributions is over \$2 million.

With over 40 people in attendance at the Aug. 24 Conservation meeting, including two county supervisors, each member of the board shared his thoughts on how he intended to vote. Dean Zimmerman was the lone vote against proceeding with the current proposal.

Zimmerman was primarily concerned with the preservation of wetlands that could be affected by dam removal, a sentiment that was also shared by Jerry Pasker of Monticello.

"If the Corps of Engineers determines that the wetlands are negatively affected, they're very unlikely to stop a project because of that," said Zimmerman. "They're more likely, at that point, to prescribe some type of mitigation. They would require us to create a similar wetland or other wetlands elsewhere. What I don't know is the cost of that."

Conservation Director Brad Mormann said the JCCB would work with the Corps to put together a wetland monitoring plan "to see if or what would happen." Mormann said some of the current wetlands may change; there would be some losses, and some gains.

"We do have it in our budget to monitor this and go from there," said Mormann.

Rob Roman, JCCB, wanted to note and thank the Board of Supervisors for their support, which was voted upon during their Aug. 8 meeting. This was also a 4-1 vote in support of Conservation's efforts to raise money and remove a portion of the dam.

"It's important to note that the \$2 million is available now, as of today," said Roman.

Zimmerman questioned whether removal of the dam would negatively impact the environmental habitat of the Maquoketa River where the wildlife is concerned.

"I don't believe the fish and wildlife service, with their interest specific for that sort of activity (fishing), would grant money if they believed it would hurt the fish and wildlife resources."

Roman said some have questioned whether JCCB is staying in line with NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act). He said the goal of that act is to foster excellent action that protects and enhances the environment.

"I appreciate all of the comments on cultural issues, but this, in my opinion, is a bit different," said Roman. "This is not a building, bridge or road. This is a dam, a cultural resource, and river, a natural resource. As I look at balance, what comes to the top is a natural resource. And that's where I'm at on this issue."

Zimmerman said he just wants to honor the 3,000-plus people who signed petitions that circulated throughout Jones County, signing in support of saving Mon Maq Dam. "I don't think we've taken a serious look at not removing the dam," he said. "And I think that's what these people are asking."

Dave Tabor, JCCB, acknowledged the differing of opinions concerning the future of the dam.

"They are based on different priorities, different assumptions," he said. "It's the recognition or non-recognition of some pertinent facts."

Tabor said his vote in support of the project was the conclusion of public input and rational review of the facts.

"This is not just something we dreamed up in our sleep," continued Tabor. "We had input from many agencies."

Russ VonBehren, JCCB, said he was initially against tearing out the dam. But after numerous meetings and hearing from those involved in the project, he sees things differently now. He also pointed out that this process has been ongoing for a decade.

"It took nine years to get you people in front of us," he said to the crowd.

VonBehren said while his vote won't make everyone happy, "this process is far from over.

"Could the dam be saved after this vote?" he asked. "Absolutely."

He said many things in the process are unanswered right now, but the JCCB won't know what the future holds if they don't pursue the project.

"We're sitting here with this opportunity and the money there," he said.

Larry Pisarik, who's been on the JCCB the longest, said they've put in many hours of research and consideration into this project over the past 10 years.

"We've consulted several agencies," he said. "This is not something we concocted ourselves. We haven't taken this lightly, and have had to set aside our personal feelings."

Pisarik said the vote does not mean the project is a done deal.

"There are a lot of hoops to jump through," he said. "The project could come to a halt at any place along the way. But we are responsible for making the decision."

The board also heard from several people in the audience, allowing them a few minutes each to address the public.

Don Bohlken, former Monticello resident, asked those present to raise their hand if they were in favor of keeping the dam. Based on the majority of hands in the air, he said it looks as though the majority of Jones County is in favor of saving the dam.

"Are we a government of the people, by the people, and for the people? Or are we a government for the people by the government of the government?" questioned Bohlken. "I think that this is pretty representative of Jones County right here in terms of what they want."

Tom Osborne of Monticello addressed public opinion.

"You have fast growing public opposition," he said.

Osborne also referred to a countywide survey where 93 percent favored keeping the dam.

"If you move forward," he said, "I would hope that your vote recognizes public opposition."

Quinn Phelan, also of Monticello, spoke of Mon Maq's historical reference in Monticello.

"It's an historical fixture in the community," he said. "It's a great backdrop for a city park."

Phelan said the excuse that it's inconvenient to portage around the dam is not valid, as people have been portaging around the dam for 100-plus years.

"I would just ask the Conservation Board to maintain and keep the dam in good condition," concluded Phelan. "It's has a unique profile in this community."

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/supervisors-table-private-offer-buy-dam>

Supervisors table private offer to buy dam

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Board of Supervisors

By:
Kim Brooks
Express Editor

Since the Jones County Conservation Board took action on Aug. 24, by a 4-1 vote, to proceed to partial removal of the Mon Maq Dam, a new situation has presented itself.

During the Aug. 29 Jones County Supervisor meeting, the board shared a proposal they received from Steve Intlekofer of Monticello to purchase the dam for \$50,000.

While Intlekofer was not present at the meeting, his letter to the board stated that he would intend to purchase the structure on the public Maquoketa River "as a private non-profit corporation" known as the "Friends for the Mon Maq Dam Association."

The \$50,000, Intlekofer explained, would pay for the land and the dam. Furthermore, he stated the transaction would be completed by Jan. 1, 2018. Intlekofer also submitted a \$1,000 down payment to prove his intentions.

"The reason for the offer is that 97 percent of us in Jones County want to keep the dam and are willing to step up to save the dam," stated Intlekofer. "This offer then should alleviate the lame excuse that the county 'may have to pay' later to demolish it. The association will take it as is or broken." Intlekofer added this would be a way for the county "to escape the controversy" surrounding Mon Maq Dam's future.

With four of the supervisors present for the meeting, they each shared their thoughts on the offer. Supervisor Joe Oswald said the river is public property, and he couldn't see accepting a private offer to purchase property on the river. "I wouldn't even be open to accept bids," he said of following the legal process of selling county property. (Jones County owns the dam.) "I'm not in favor of accepting an offer at this time."

County Auditor Janine Sulzner said the county has a process they must follow when selling property, and that includes scheduling and holding a public hearing, and seeking sealed bids. "A lot has to be researched on this," she said.

Supervisor Wayne Maternach agreed. "We can't deviate from the process."

Maternach also felt there was no need for the board to take action on Intlekofer's offer, suggesting they send his down payment back with an explanation regarding their sentiments at this time.

Supervisor Lloyd Eaken said while he didn't object to it, he questioned whether the county could legally sell the dam without advertising for bids.

"We don't know what the legal ramifications would be," said Eaken. "Not that I'm opposed, but we have to find out if we can do such a thing."

Oswald felt the board needed to seek County Attorney Phil Parsons' thoughts on the matter.

Supervisor Jon Zirkelbach asked if someone is asking to purchase Mon Maq Dam, "what's next? Central Park? Pictured Rocks?"

"This opens up a huge can of worms," added Zirkelbach. "We can't just offer it to one person."

"There could be a huge liability if someone private owns the dam," suggested Oswald.

In the end, while the supervisors did not seem in favor of the idea, they decided to table the vote until Parsons and Conservation have time to offer their thoughts as well.

There were several people in attendance at the meeting to offer their input as well, urging the county to not dismiss Intlekofer's proposal.

"I think this is a pretty good option that has not been discussed before," said Tom Osborne of Monticello. "Perhaps non-profit ownership is also an option. I think it's a direction worth pursuing."

Mike Davies of Anamosa suggested the area around the dam could also be maintained and treated as public park, much like it is now.

"This would remove the liability from the county and turn it over to private ownership," said Davies.

It was mentioned that the supervisors "sold" Ely's Stone Bridge to Historic Preservation; how would this proposal be any different. Maternach clarified that they didn't sell the bridge, but merely allowed it change management, not ownership.

"Tabling this vote leaves the issue neutral for the moment in my opinion," said Zirkelbach.

In other county business:

- The board approved a contract with the Area Substance Abuse Council (ASAC) for a \$2,000 grant to fund a substance abuse program. The partnership is between ASAC and Jenna Lovaas, Jones County Public Health.

- The board abated property taxes as requested by the City of Monticello for property at 516 N. Cedar St. in the amount of \$1,186.

• County Engineer Derek Snead presented a list of seven deficient bridges/structures throughout the county that Secondary Roads is prepared to add to its five-year plan. Those structures include: Freemont Rd. over Silver Creek, 145th St. over Mino Creek, 140th Ave. over Bear Creek, 25th Ave., Buffalo Rd., Landis Rd. over the Wapsipinicon River, and Bunker Hill Rd. over Bear Creek.

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/county-refuses-private-offer-buy-dam>

County refuses private offer to buy dam

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Board of Supervisors

By:

Kim Brooks

Express Editor

About a month ago, the county received a \$50,000 offer from Steve Intlekofer of Monticello to purchase Mon Maq Dam on the Maquoketa River in Monticello.

At the Sept. 12 Jones County Supervisor meeting, the board unanimously voted against Intlekofer's offer. The reasoning, offered by legal counsel County Attorney Phil Parsons, was based on the fact that the county cannot sell property like the dam without considering all other offers or opening it up to other interested parties.

Parsons also urged the board members to come to a solid conclusion on this matter.

"I encourage you to fish or cut bait on this as soon as you can," he said. "If you're not going to accept any proposals, I encourage you to let the public know where you're at on this."

Parsons said a lot of people have put in time and money into saving the dam up to this point in time.

Supervisor Wayne Manternach said if the Conservation Board wanted to pursue other options with the dam, they would have brought to idea to the Board of Supervisors' attention by now.

Parsons told the board selling Mon Maq Dam wouldn't be any different than the county selling the former Edinburgh Manor/county home.

"It's your property," he said. "You have the authority to sell it." He explained dam was deeded to the county; Conservation provides the maintenance.

Parsons said the Iowa DNR and Corps of Engineers do not have authority over the structure, despite its location on a public waterway.

"Future owners would have to follow the same laws that we do," he said.

However, because the county received a DOT grant for the improvements made to the dam site by the former Conservation director, the new owner would have to abide by those DOT restrictions. The grant was for a 20-year timeframe, and right now the county is seven years into the grant, with 13 years remaining. Parsons said under the DOT, the public must be granted access for the duration of the grant.

"If a flood wipes out the look-out," suggested Parsons of the dam site, "the owner may be obligated to have it fixed. They would bear the full burden of that, not the county. If it doesn't get done, then the public suffers."

However, Parsons said he wasn't sure how insurance would handle a situation where a private citizen owned a dam on public water, and had to allow public access.

Parsons said if the county wanted to open it up to additional proposals, it would be wise to see plans for how the site would look several years down the road.

"You could use these proposals as insurance when putting the (sale) contracts together," he suggested. "This gives the county teeth in the game to ensure that things happen."

Supervisor Jon Zirkelbach asked Parsons if the dam would revert back to the county if the owner left it in disarray and the site became a nuisance. Parsons said, simply, "Yes."

Tom Osborne of Monticello asked whether the county would consider a proposal by a non-profit organization. He said he was there at the meeting, representing such a group made up of county residents with an interest in saving the dam.

"We want to ensure free, public access and property development," said Osborne, "for historical and recreational uses."

He said many in this group are "willing to put their money where their mouth is" for the good of the county.

As a non-profit, Supervisor Joe Oswald asked where they would get the funds for the maintenance of the dam site. Osborne said they've looked into insurance policies and developing a trust account.

Parsons said it's not out of the norm for governing bodies and non-profits to work together on instances like this.

Manternach said he's not in favor of accepting any offers at this point and continuing with the plans Conservation laid out.

"Conservation made their decision and we voted to support their decision," echoed Zirkelbach.

In other county business:

- The board congratulated Kathy Koerperich, JETS manager, on her recognition from ECICOG and the Iowa DOT as the "Most Improved Rural Transit System" for 2017.

- The Olin City Council voted to not participate in the county's E-45 resurfacing project.

County Engineer Derek Snead said the City of Olin's portion is roughly 380 feet at an estimate of \$55,000.

- Snead informed the board that while county crews were out ditching along 130th Street in the central part of the county, they hit a Medicom fiber line.

"It was not marked," reported Snead of the utility line.

He said crews did call 811 before ditching began, but had to hold off due to other pertinent work. When they started up ditching again, it was past the 14-day 811 timeframe. He said cost is just over \$10,000; however because the line wasn't marked and wasn't buried at the right depth in the ditch, Snead is working on a resolution.

<http://www.monticelloexpress.com/content/county-formally-turns-down-sale-dam>

County formally turns down sale of dam

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Board of Supervisors

By:
Kim Brooks
Express Editor

Over the past few months, the Jones County Board of Supervisors have discussed amongst themselves and offered opportunities for the public to share their thoughts on the future of the Mon Maq Dam in Monticello. During the Sept. 19 board meeting, the board took unanimous action against considering the sale of the dam for private or non-profit ownership.

Supervisor Joe Oswald complimented the effort and excitement out there in saving the dam, but admitted he had some reservations in selling the structure.

"Long after we're all gone, will our kids and grandkids continue to care for the dam or allow it to go downhill," asked Oswald. "If no funds are raised, who does the dam go back to?"

He said he would be in favor of considering the sale of Mon Maq should the City of Monticello show some interest, though.

Supervisor Ned Rohwedder agreed. "Monticello would be the only people I'd consider (selling to) because they have a vested interest with their sewer plant," said of the sewer plant's vicinity to the Maquoketa River and Kitty Creek.

"I don't think private ownership is a good option for us at this time," added Rohwedder.

Oswald also offered that he heard if the dam were under private ownership, in the event of a flood, that person/organization would not be eligible for FEMA funding.

"I'd also hate to slow the progress that's already in the works," concluded Oswald.

In other county business:

- The board approved a \$4,020 change order for the courthouse sidewalk project.

- Michele Lubben, Land Use administrator, informed the board on matters coming before the Board of Adjustment at their Sept. 19 meeting.

Dean Wood, Anamosa, applied for a variance because the signs on two separate buildings on his property violate the county's sign ordinance. He has two wall signs and wishes to add additional square footage to what's already installed.

Lubben later reported that the BOA approved Wood's variance request to keep both wall signs and, allowed for 2-by-8-feet of additional signage.

Arvin Daniels, Wyoming, has plans to build a new house on the same parcel as an already existing older home, and applied for special permitted use. He intends to turn the older home into a seasonal dwelling.

The BOA also approved the permit.

- Lisa Mootz, IT coordinator, met with the board to provide a quote from REM Electric for new flat-screen TVs for the Board Room and Community Room within the courthouse.

Mootz sought two quotes from local retailers, and said she only received information back from REM.

The board approved the purchase of two 75-inch TVs from REM for \$8,399. The equipment will be used for presentations to the board.

- The board offered their support for Kathy Koerperich, JETS director, to move a part-time driver/office staff to full-time.
- The board appointed Darrick Hall of Anamosa to represent the supervisors on the Jones County Compensation Board. This is a four-year term.

Kris Gobeli of Monticello also serves as a supervisor compensation representative.
