

CHAPTER 350 - COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARDS

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SEC 350.1 Purposes.

The purposes of this chapter are to create a county conservation board and to authorize counties to acquire, develop, maintain, and make available to the inhabitants of the county, public museums, parks, preserves, parkways, playgrounds, recreational centers, county forests, wildlife and other conservation areas, and to promote and preserve the health and general welfare of the people, to encourage the orderly development and conservation of natural resources, and to cultivate good citizenship by providing adequate programs of public recreation.

SEC 350.2 Petition — board membership.

Upon a petition to the board of supervisors which meets the requirements of section 331.306, the board shall submit to the voters at the next general election the question of whether a county conservation board shall be created as provided for in this chapter. If at the election the majority of votes favors the creation of a county conservation board, the board of supervisors within sixty days after the election shall create a county conservation board to consist of five bona fide residents of the county. The members first appointed shall hold office for the term of one, two, three, four, and five years respectively, as indicated and fixed by the board of supervisors. Thereafter, succeeding members shall be appointed for a term of five years, except that vacancies occurring otherwise than by expiration of term shall be filled by appointment for the unexpired term. When a member of the board, during the term of office, ceases to be a bona fide resident of the county, the member is disqualified as a member and the office becomes vacant. Members of the board shall be selected and appointed on the basis of their demonstrated interest in conservation matters, and shall serve without compensation, but may be paid their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties. Members of the county conservation board may be removed for cause by the board of supervisors as provided in section 331.321, subsection 3, if the cause is malfeasance, nonfeasance, disability, or failure to participate in board activities as set forth by the rules of the conservation board.

SEC 350.3 Meetings — records — annual report.

Within thirty days after the appointment of members of the board, the board shall organize by selecting from its members a president and secretary and such other officers as are deemed necessary, who shall hold office for the calendar year in which elected and until their successors are selected and qualify. Three members of the board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The board shall hold regular monthly meetings. Special meetings may be called by the president, and shall be called on the request of a majority of members, as the necessity may require. The county conservation board shall have power to adopt bylaws, to adopt and use a common seal, and to enter into contracts. The county board of supervisors shall provide suitable offices for the meetings of the county conservation board and for the safekeeping of its records. Such records shall be subject to public inspection at all reasonable hours and under such regulations as the county conservation board may prescribe. The board shall annually make a full and complete report to the county board of supervisors of its transactions and operations for the preceding year. Such

report shall contain a full statement of its receipts, disbursements, and the program of work for the period covered, and may include such recommendations as may be deemed advisable.

SEC 350.4 Powers and duties.

The county conservation board shall have the custody, control and management of all real and personal property heretofore or hereafter acquired by the county for public museums, parks, preserves, parkways, playgrounds, recreation centers, county forests, county wildlife areas, and other county conservation and recreation purposes and is authorized and empowered:

1. To study and ascertain the county's museum, park, preserve, parkway, and recreation and other conservation facilities, the need for such facilities, and the extent to which such needs are being currently met, and to prepare and adopt a co-ordinated plan of areas and facilities to meet such needs.

2. To acquire in the name of the county by gift, purchase, lease, agreement, exchange, or otherwise, in fee or with conditions, suitable real estate within or without the territorial limits of the county for public museums, parks, preserves, parkways, playgrounds, recreation centers, forests, wildlife, and other conservation purposes and for participation in watershed, drainage, and flood control programs for the purpose of increasing the recreational resources of the county. The natural resource commission, the county board of supervisors, or the governing body of any city, upon request of the county conservation board, may transfer to the county conservation board for use as museums, parks, preserves, parkways, playgrounds, recreation centers, play fields, tennis courts, skating rinks, swimming pools, gymnasiums, rooms for arts and crafts, camps and meeting places, community forests, wildlife areas, and other recreational purposes, any land and buildings owned or controlled by the department of natural resources or the county or city and not devoted or dedicated to any other inconsistent public use. In acquiring or accepting land, due consideration shall be given to its scenic, historic, archaeological, recreational, or other special features, and land shall not be acquired or accepted unless, in the opinion of the board, it is suitable or, in the case of exchange, is suitable and of substantially the same value as the property exchanged from the standpoint of its proposed use. An exchange of property approved by the county conservation board and the board of supervisors is not subject to section 331.361, subsection 2.

3. The county conservation board shall file with the natural resource commission all acquisitions or exchanges of land within one year.

4. To plan, develop, preserve, administer and maintain all such areas, places and facilities, and construct, reconstruct, alter and renew buildings and other structures, and equip and maintain the same.

5. To accept in the name of the county gifts, bequests, contributions and appropriations of money and other personal property for conservation purposes.

6. To employ and fix the compensation of a director who shall be responsible to the county conservation board for the carrying out of its policies. The director, subject to the approval of the board, may employ and fix the compensation of assistants and employees as necessary for carrying out this chapter.

7. To charge and collect reasonable fees for the use of the parks, facilities, privileges and conveniences as may be provided and for admission to amateur athletic contests, demonstrations and exhibits, and other noncommercial events. The board shall not allow the exclusive use of a park by one or more organizations.

8. To operate concessions or to lease concessions and to let out and rent privileges in or upon any property under its control upon such terms and conditions as are deemed by it to be in the public interest.

9. To participate in watershed projects of soil and water conservation districts and the federal government and in projects of drainage districts organized under the provisions of chapter 161F and chapter 468, subchapter I, parts 1 through 5, and subchapter II, parts 1, 5, and 6, for the purpose of increasing the recreational resources of the county.

Any agreement for such participation by or with a board of supervisors or trustees concerning drainage districts shall be in writing, shall be duly adopted by a resolution of the board of supervisors or trustees and shall be spread in its entirety upon the permanent records of the drainage district or districts affected.

10. To furnish suitable uniforms for the director and those employees as the director may designate to wear uniforms, when on official duty. The cost of the uniforms shall not exceed three

hundred dollars per person in any year. The uniforms shall at all times remain the property of the county.

SEC 350.5 Regulations — penalty — officers.

The county conservation board may make, alter, amend or repeal regulations for the protection, regulation, and control of all museums, parks, preserves, parkways, playgrounds, recreation centers, and other property under its control. The regulations shall not be contrary to, or inconsistent with, the laws of this state. The regulations shall not take effect until ten days after their adoption by the board and after their publication as provided in section 331.305 and after a copy of the regulations has been posted near each gate or principal entrance to the public ground to which they apply. After the publication and posting, a person violating a provision of the regulations which are then in effect is guilty of a simple misdemeanor. The board may designate the director and those employees as the director may designate as police officers who shall have all the powers conferred by law on police officers, peace officers, or sheriffs in the enforcement of the laws of this state and the apprehension of violators upon all property under its control within and without the county. The board may grant the director and those employees of the board designated as police officers the authority to enforce the provisions of chapters 321G, 461A, 462A, 481A, and 483A on land not under the control of the board within the county.

SEC 350.6 Moneys -- contracts -- bonds.

Upon request of the county conservation board, the board of supervisors shall establish a reserve for county conservation land acquisition and capital improvement projects. The board of supervisors may periodically credit an amount of money to the reserve. Moneys credited to the reserve shall remain in the reserve until expended for the projects upon warrants requisitioned by the county conservation board. The interest earned on moneys received from bequests and donations in the reserve account which are invested pursuant to section 12C.1 shall be credited to the reserve account.

Annually, the total amount of money credited to the reserve, plus moneys appropriated for conservation purposes from sources other than the reserve, shall not be less than the amount of gifts, contributions, and bequests of money, rent, licenses, fees, charges, and other revenues received by the county conservation board. However, moneys given, bequeathed, or contributed upon specified trusts shall be held, appropriated, and expended in accordance with the trust specified.

Grants provided by the natural resource commission from its county conservation board fund shall be expended solely for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of this chapter.

The county auditor shall keep a complete record of the appropriations and shall issue warrants on them only on requisition of the county conservation board. The county conservation board is subject to the contract letting procedures in section 331.341, subsections 1, 2, and 4. Upon request of the county conservation board, the board of supervisors may issue general county purpose bonds for the purposes in section 331.441, subsection 2, paragraph "c", subparagraph (2), as provided in chapter 331, division IV, part 3.

SEC 350.7 Joint operations.

Any county conservation board may co-operate with the federal government or the state government or any department or agency thereof to carry out the purposes and provisions of this chapter. Any county conservation board may join with any other county board or boards to carry out this chapter, and to that end may enter into agreement with each other and may do any and all things necessary or convenient to aid and co-operate in carrying out the chapter. Any city, village or school district may aid and co-operate with any county conservation board or any combination of boards in equipping, operating and maintaining museums, parks, preserves, parkways, playgrounds, recreation centers, and conservation areas, and for providing, conducting and supervising programs of activities, and may appropriate money for such purposes. The natural resource commission, county engineer, county agricultural agent, and other county officials shall render assistance which does not interfere with their regular employment. The board of supervisors may be reimbursed to the credit of the proper fund from county conservation funds for actual expense of operation of county-owned equipment, use of county equipment operators, supplies, and materials of the county,

or for the reasonable value for the use of county real estate made available for the use of the county conservation board.

SEC 350.8 School property used.

The governing body of any school district may grant the use of any buildings, grounds, or equipment of the district to any county conservation board for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this chapter whenever such use of the school buildings, grounds or equipment for such purposes will not interfere with the use of the buildings, grounds, and equipment for any purpose of the public school system.

SEC 350.9 Advice and assistance.

The natural resource commission and the department of education shall advise with and may assist any county or counties in carrying out the purposes of this chapter.

SEC 350.10 Statutes applicable.

Sections 461A.35 through 461A.57 apply to all lands and waters under the control of a county conservation board, in the same manner as if the lands and waters were state parks, lands, or waters. As used in sections 461A.35 through 461A.57, "natural resource commission" includes a county conservation board, and "director" includes a county conservation board or its director, with respect to lands or waters under the control of a county conservation board. However, sections 461A.35 through 461A.57 may be modified or superseded by rules adopted as provided in section 350.5.

SEC 350.11 County conservation boards created.

Notwithstanding the referendum specified in section 350.2, the board of supervisors of any county in which a county conservation board has not been established as of January 1, 1989, shall create a county conservation board to become effective July 1, 1989. The membership of a county conservation board created pursuant to this section, shall be appointed during the month of January 1989, for the purposes of organizing, planning, and budgeting for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1989. A county conservation board created as provided in this section shall become fully operational as of July 1, 1989.

SEC 350.12 Iowa's county beautification program.

1. A county conservation board may establish an Iowa's county beautification program to encourage the prevention and cleanup of litter in public areas of the county. The county conservation director shall prepare and implement the program which is designed to employ persons from fourteen years of age to eighteen years of age in a six-week summer program. The program may include public informational activities, but shall be directed primarily toward encouraging and facilitating involvement in litter prevention and cleanup. The program shall also include weekly instruction on safety in the workplace while employed with an Iowa's county beautification program. Financial assistance for an Iowa's county beautification program may be received through the county conservation account pursuant to section 455A.19. County matching funds shall not be required for eligibility for funding an Iowa's county beautification program.
2. A county conservation board shall coordinate its Iowa's county beautification program with the county engineer or director of the county secondary road department and with the district highway engineer of the state department of transportation. The respective county and state highway authorities, within time and budgetary limitations, shall cooperate with the county conservation board in implementing the litter program in regard to the rights-of-way of primary and secondary roads when requested by the county conservation board.