

Diamond Lake Park expands

By J.O. PARKER

Thanks to a \$250,000 REAP Grant and the generosity of several city, county and statewide organizations, Diamond Lake Park is expanding its boundaries.

The announcement was made public by Poweshiek County Conservation Director Mark Vavroch at a press conference held at the Foster Center on Wednesday, Jan. 3, one day after the deal was finalized.

The 240-acre tract of land was purchased by the County Conservation Board from Bernhart Hansen for \$432,000 or \$1,800 per acre. It's bordered by 480th Street to the north, Highway 63 to the east, Diamond Lake Park to the south and private land to the west.

“The Diamond Lake expansion project will provide two key areas of protection,” Vavroch stated. “The first being, the water quality of the lake and the second, creating a buffer zone to protect the park from future private development that may negatively impact the watershed.”

He went on to say that water quality is a very important part of the expansion

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project not only to recreational users of the lake, but also to the City of Montezuma.

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The purchase of the land almost doubles the size of the Diamond Lake Park, expanding it from 301 to 541 acres. The lake covers 91 acres and marsh area next to the lake is 10 acres.

The board's development plan will:

- Enhance the lake's watershed by establishing permanent vegetation with the planting of trees, shrubs, and native grass. By establishing permanent vegetation on this land, the board will protect the soil of this extremely hilly land, which is cur-

rently being used for agriculture purposes and exceeding 1,200 tons of soil loss per year.

- Construct additional silt ponds and repair existing ponds in this critical part of the lake's watershed. Approximately 80 percent of the water that flows into Diamond Lake crosses this land. The board would install water control structures on this land to catch silt and agricultural run-off from the remaining 2,000 acres in the watershed before they reach the lake.

- Preserve and improve part of the existing timber resource. Several thousand trees and shrubs will be planted over the next five years.

- Establish a hard surface trail that would connect to an existing trail that starts in Montezuma and traverses west along County Road F-57 to Diamond Lake.

- Develop a wildlife management plan to benefit as many species of wildlife as possible including non-game species.

- Provide a larger area for the residents of Iowa to pursue their outdoor interests, including hunting.

- Provide a diverse area for the county naturalist to utilize with students on field trips, nature hikes and workshops.

Funding for the project has come from several sources that include the County Conservation REAP Grant, \$250,000; County Conservation Board, \$18,000; Poweshiek County Board of Supervisors, \$32,000; Brownell Family Foundation, \$50,000; Poweshiek County Pheasants Forever, \$20,000; National Wild Turkey Federation, \$20,000; Ahrens Foundation, \$10,000; and the City of Montezuma, \$32,000.

Ducks Unlimited and the Poweshiek County NRCS will help fund wetland development.

The above map shows the outline of the 240-acre section of land acquired by the Poweshiek County Conservation Board this month. Plans are to take the land out of agriculture production and establish permanent vegetation and build silt ponds to reduce the flow of runoff entering the Diamond Lake Park. The map was provided by the Poweshiek County NRCS office in Malcom.

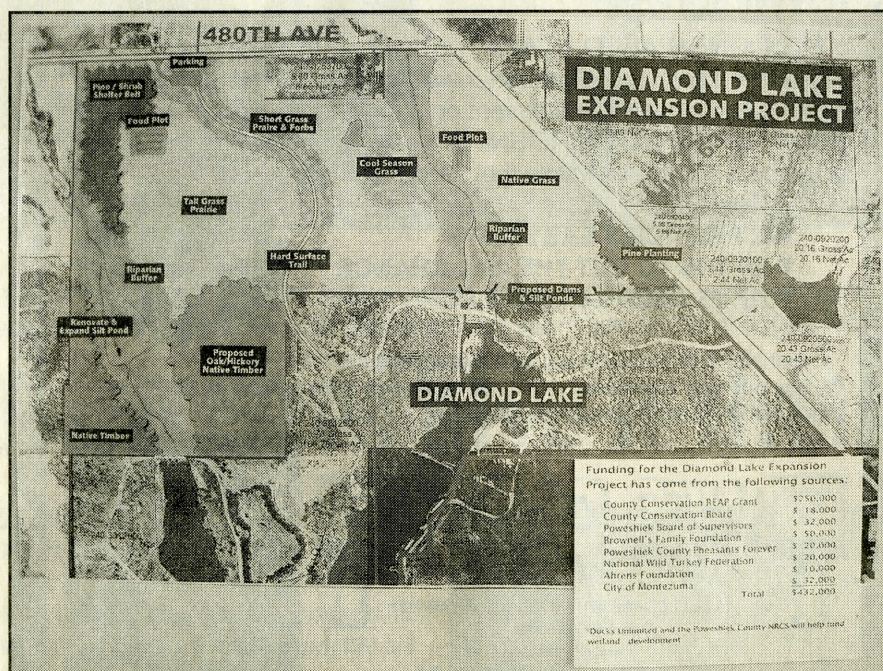
the board would be to take the land out of farming and get the ground seeded down with permanent vegetation. They also plan to develop an additional silt

pond and expand another one located on the property.

"We are looking to the future of the lake," Vavroch said. "We don't want the

land to erode any more than it already has."

Work on the project will begin in the spring.



Republican/J.O. Parker

The above map shows the detail of the proposed changes to the Diamond Lake Park expansion.