

Muscatine County Conservation Board 2009 At a Glance

A Message from Conservation Board Chairperson Jenny Paetz

As an elementary teacher in the Muscatine School District for the past twenty-two years I have benefited from the work of the Conservation Board. So, when I was able to join the Conservation Board, I jumped on the opportunity to give back for the all the help and support I had received over the years to bring the important topic of conservation into the classroom.

The naturalists and AmeriCorps volunteers have thrilled hundreds of students from little ones in summer camps through high school age. The fifth grade students of Franklin School where I teach are thrilled when the owls or hawk come to visit or we get to hear about Iowa Endangered Species.

The naturalists work to tailor their presentation to include the topics and curriculum needed for each grade level. The district's curriculum has changed over the past few years and Mr. Bakke and his staff work to match our needs. Most teachers in the county benefit from the naturalists and I hope more will come on board as one way to bring "green" into the classroom, or head outside!!

I can call Mr. Bakke with the request for a "Survival Day at Saulsbury"! We end up canoeing, building shelters and fires, learning about how to use a GPS to geocache, and having an amazing day. When you talk to former students their best memories of elementary school are the field trips. We even head out in cold weather to the Environmental Learning Center to learn about eagles and help us prepare for the ITBS test in February.



To conclude, from the educational viewpoint, our Muscatine County naturalists and their programs are the best in the state, my opinion of course, but again I have benefited from the work of the Conservation Board for over twenty years in the classroom.

The educational system benefits from the work of the Muscatine Conservation staff, but it doesn't stop there. Fisherman, dog walkers, bikers, birdwatchers, and someone just wanting to go for a walk use the Discovery Park ponds and trails. Having the arboretum as part of the park extends all these outdoor activities while learning about the trees of Iowa.

Each year the board tries to complete a large project. This year a new shelter and restroom are now complete by the Environmental Learning Center. The new shelter will be available for rental for picnics. The restroom will be there for that needed restroom break during your walk.

We are hopeful for good weather this year so last year's project of the restrooms and showers at the Saulsbury campground will get a lot of use. Also, the Saulsbury Lodge had the air conditioning upgraded with the hope of increasing the comfort level while using that facility. Don't forget all our county parks. Fisherman, boaters and hunters know of how wonderful the wildlife areas are and we hope many will take advantage of these beautiful areas.

continued on page 2

2009 CONSERVATION BOARD

Chairperson Mike Hartman
Vice-chairperson Jenny Paetz
Member Dave Jones
Member Larry Wolf
Member Jim Goedken

continued from page 1

I would to thank and acknowledge our director and staff. Our park areas are maintained efficiently and ideas for improvement are ongoing. All the projects are possible through the expert management of our budget. Also, check out the new website www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com.

I can't forget our present board members. I feel we have a good mix of diverse talents that will ensure a promising future for conservation in Muscatine County.



Conservation Board Members and Staff were pleased to see that people were happy with our programs and activities for kids when they voted Discovery Center as having the *Best Kids Activities* in 2009.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Muscatine County Conservation Board is to preserve and enhance natural areas and resources in Muscatine County for the use and benefit of the community; to preserve sufficient natural habitats in Muscatine County; to ensure the survival of native plants and animals; to acquire, develop and manage land for public hunting, fishing, camping and recreation; and to promote public appreciation and responsibility for the environment through education.

Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area

By the time warm weather arrived in 2009 most of the Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area area was cleaned up and ready for business after being closed for most of the last half of 2008 because of flooding and wind damage. The new shower building was opened and camping was back in full swing.

The Saulsbury Lodge became a favorite winter "camping" spot for Scouts, as well as a place for wedding receptions, family reunions and birthday parties. The picnic shelters were busy most weekends, and our canoes were back on the river.

We were very happy to see things getting back to normal at Saulsbury after 2008 and hope that 2010 will be even better.

To rent the Saulsbury Lodge or a shelter at Saulsbury or to schedule a canoe float trip call the Conservation Board office at (563) 264-5922.



Projects

A new shelter and restroom facility at Discovery Park were the largest projects carried out in 2009. To rent the new shelter at Discovery Park call (563) 264-5922.

Other projects included installing a tank to house our live turtles in the Environmental Learning Center's exhibit area and having a new website built that is now online and can be found at www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com.



Environmental Education Programs

In 2009, Conservation Board Staff gave 673 programs to 13,062 people. The number of programs given in 2009 is a 34% increase over 2008, and the number of people programs were presented to is a 16% increase over 2008. Part of the increases can be attributed to the economy with local schools taking field trips closer to home. Plus, our current AmeriCorps Intern is qualified to give environmental education programs allowing us to provide more programs and serve more people.

In 2009, more than three-quarters of the programs were presented to children ranging in age from 18 months through high school. Almost half of those programs were given at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park, with another quarter of the programs given in school classrooms.

Nature hikes, fishing, canoeing, Native American games, survival, animals, weather, habitats, and geocaching were just a handful of the many programs presented to children.

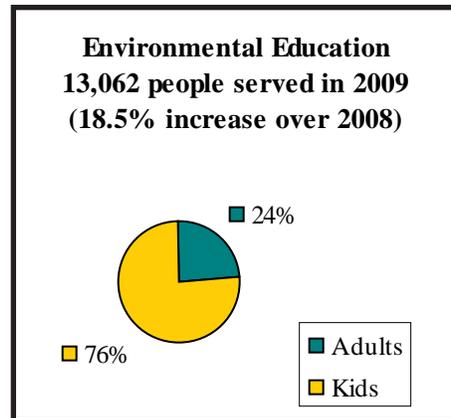


Bird feeding, nuisance animals, County Conservation Areas, and recycling were among the programs presented to adults.

Some of the weekend programs held were Wild Cats, Raptors, Birdhouse Building, Bird Banding, Canoeing/ Kayaking, Geocaching, and Monarch Butterfly Tagging.

Below is a list of some of our larger programs with their attendance.

- 29th Annual Kids Fishing Seminar & Derby - 297
- 21st Annual Halloween Hike - 253
- Hunter Education Classes - 155
- Weekend Programs - 296
- Summer Nature Camps - 125

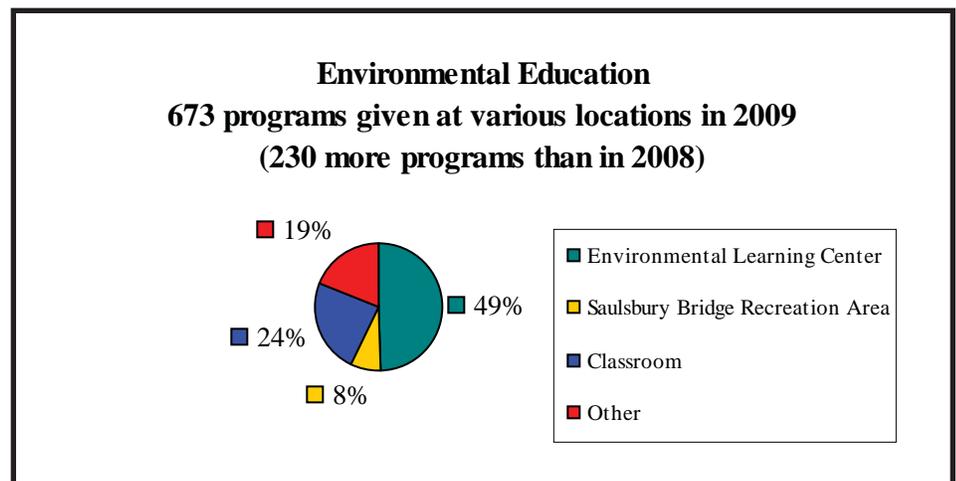


Environmental Learning Center

In 2009, approximately 5463 visitors (not including people who participated in our programs) came to the Environmental Learning Center to view the exhibits.

Staff spent time changing or adding to existing exhibits such as the *Wickiup* and the *Inviting Wildlife to Your Backyard* displays.

Several new displays/exhibits were also added, including a turtle tank for our live turtles and a WentzScope.





Muscatine Youth Conservation Corps

In the summer of 2009 the Conservation Board hired eight youth ages 16-18 and a crew leader for the Muscatine Youth Conservation Corps program.

The program is funded entirely with donations from local industries, businesses, organizations, government entities, and individuals. Due to the poor economy, donations were down significantly from previous years so we were only able to hire eight youth and one crew leader instead of the usual ten youth and two crew leaders.

The youth work on outdoor conservation and recreation projects for the City of Muscatine and the County Conservation Board. Projects consisted of landscaping, planting trees and shrubs, staining, pouring cement, and removing and resetting bricks.



Grants

In 2009, the Conservation Board received several grants. The request was for technology items for our environmental education program. Funding for microscopes, a WentzScope, a Videoflex, and GPS units was provided by the Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust, Monsanto, and the Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine.



Cooperative Programs

In 2009, the Conservation Board partnered with many other groups for various programs and projects.

- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa State Extension Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Monsanto
- Mid-American Energy
- Musser Public Library
- Young Professionals Network
- Muscatine High School Young Ambassadors
- United Way
- Muscatine Community Y
- Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust
- Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine



Muscatine County
Conservation Board
PO Box 109
Muscatine, IA 52761
(563) 264-5922



conservation@co.muscatine.ia.us

www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com