

Muscatine County Conservation Board 2010 At a Glance

A Message from Conservation Board Vice-Chairperson Larry Wolf

Each year a member of the Muscatine County Conservation Board takes a turn at writing a message for the Annual Report. I believe I have a unique perspective as a Board Member due to the fact that I was the City's Parks and Recreation Director for 28 years. In that position I had the interesting experience of working with Director Curt Weiss and the staff to incorporate a County facility within the limits of the City. The County staff has obviously done a wonderful job of achieving that goal. The citizens of the County now have the luxury of experiencing a top notch Environmental Learning Center and a complete, up-to-date nature park in a semi-urban area that is easily accessible and attractive for holding various public events.

Even during a time of a difficult economy and financial restraints the staff, with support from the Board of Supervisors, have worked extremely hard to maintain and improve existing programs and facilities and to continually explore new opportunities. The Naturalists have conducted dozens of programs and special events with literally thousands of students and interested members

of the public participating every year, with attendance steadily increasing. Volunteers are a critical component to the success of the programs.



In an effort to improve and add to our facilities we have opened the restroom facility and shelter that were completed in late 2009 for public use in Discovery Park. These additions have been used extensively and hopefully can be used even more. Staff also installed two climbing toys (a frog and a turtle) adjacent to the shelter for youngsters to enjoy.



Six kayaks were purchased and are now available for the public to rent. This was done to compliment the successful

existing canoe rental program. Our existing wildlife and flora exhibits have been improved and more exhibits have been added inside and outside of the Environmental Learning Center. The staff strives to take advantage of every opportunity to improve and expand services and existing and new facilities. Our website was professionally updated and improved in an effort to make our information more accessible. With the increased usage that we have experienced in Discovery Park and the usage of the Arboretum in the Park, the trail system underwent a complete crack seal repair, improving the existing hard-surfaced trails for the thousands of users. Through available grants from various sources, many projects can be completed. One such major project is the upcoming repair of the shoreline along Discovery Pond.

One unusual use of the pond occurred in November of 2010 in a project co-sponsored by the County Conservation Board and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The release of 500 11"-12" rainbow and brook trout was done in an effort to offer and promote trout fishing to anglers of all ages that may not have had the opportunity to trout fish before. As an additional

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2010 CONSERVATION BOARD

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

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.

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incentive 100 trout were tagged. Prizes were given to the anglers that were lucky enough to catch a tagged trout. The event was so successful that another trout release is planned for the spring of 2011.

Board Members encourage you to experience these many amenities that Discovery Park has to offer. In addition, explore and enjoy the other County Conservation areas including Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area. The lodge has been remodeled including new flooring and improved restroom facilities to encourage and compliment increased usage.

Our staff has been helped tremendously in the maintenance of our nature areas and facilities by members of the Youth Conservation Corps, administered by the Director to assist staff from the County and City. Youth from the County are hired for the summer and are given an opportunity for a positive work experience.

As residents of Muscatine County, Board Members and department staff encourage you to explore, enjoy and protect these attributes.



Projects

Some of the larger projects undertaken in 2010 were replacing the bathroom and kitchen floors in Saulsbury Lodge as well as other updates to the bathrooms.

The boat ramp on Chicken Creek at the Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area was upgraded.

Major brush clearing at the Cedar Bluffs Recreation was done and prairie will be planted on the cleared areas.

Six kayaks and a trailer were purchased for our environmental education program, but are also available for the public to rent.

Two climbing toys in a sand pit were installed near the large shelter at Discovery Park.

Five trailside exhibits were installed along the hard-surfaced trail in Discovery Park.



Environmental Education Programs

In 2010, Conservation Board Staff gave 568 programs to 11,380 people. Program participants ranged in age from toddler through senior citizen.

In 2010, more than three-quarters of the programs were presented to children ranging in age from 18 months through high school. More than half of those programs were given at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park.

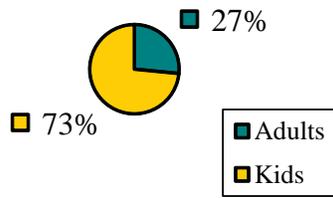
Nature hikes, fishing, canoeing, Native American games, survival, animals, weather, habitats, and geocaching were just a handful of the many programs presented to participants.

Some of the weekend programs held were Raptors, Canoeing/Kayaking, Geocaching, Holiday Crafts, Discovery Park Clean-up Day, and Monarch Butterfly Tagging.

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

- 30th Annual Kids Fishing Seminar & Derby - 149
- 22nd Annual Halloween Hike - 349
- Hunter Education Classes - 96
- Weekend Programs - 351
- Summer Nature Camps - 135
- Toddler/Preschool Camps - 119
- Tagged Trout Release - 154

Environmental Education 11,380 people served in 2010



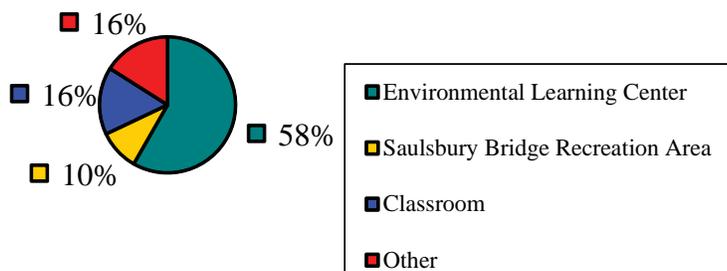
Environmental Learning Center

In 2010, approximately 4,986 visitors (not including people who participated in our programs) came to the Environmental Learning Center to view the exhibits.

Staff spent time changing and/or upgrading existing exhibits in the Environmental Learning Center.



Environmental Education 568 programs given at various locations in 2010





Muscatine Youth Conservation Corps

In the summer of 2010 the Conservation Board hired six 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.

The youth worked on outdoor conservation and recreation projects for the City of Muscatine and the County Conservation Board. Projects consisted of pouring cement, installing playground equipment, mulching trees, and laying sod.

They also spent a morning banding geese with the Iowa DNR and canoed on West Lake in Scott County.



Grants

A grant was received from the Monsanto Foundation for five trailside exhibits at Discovery Park. The exhibits are located at different points of interest along the hard-surfaced trail. Topics in the exhibits currently include Trees, Urban Wildlife, Prairie Wetlands, and the Cemetery.

A Fish Habitat Stamp Grant was received from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to stabilize shoreline around Discovery Pond. This project is scheduled to start in 2011.

Cooperative Programs

In 2010, 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
- Muscatine Parks & Recreation
- Muscatine Arboretum Association



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