

Muscatine County Conservation Board 2012 At a Glance

A Message from Conservation Board Member Dave Jones

I have just completed my 10th year as a member of the Muscatine County Conservation Board (MCCB) and I have truly enjoyed my time serving the MCCB. During my tenure I have seen many changes. During the last decade, the MCCB has designed, raised funds and constructed the Discovery Park Learning Center. By locating the Learning Center in town, the MCCB has enhanced our ability to promote outdoor recreation and environmental education.

During 2012, we continued our conservation commitment to Muscatine County residents. The MCCB established a Facebook page in January in order to expand our communication regarding our programs and facilities. The MCCB continues to look for additional technology tools to deliver services and information. During the year we approved funding to add a touch screen display in the Learning Center. The computer-based interactive touch screen will allow visitors to learn about habitats and animals in Muscatine County through games and quizzes. Our touch screen display and Facebook page are another way to learn about our calendar of events; please check them out.

The MCCB staff continues to leverage grant dollars to fund programs and improve our facilities. The majority of the Discovery Pond Renovation

Project was funded this year through grant dollars. Pond shorelines were restored on the north and east sides for proper slope and depth. The project improvements will address shoreline erosion while improving fish habitat and water depth. The goal of this project is to improve the fishing experience for our youth when spending time at Discovery Pond.



During 2012, the staff applied for and received several grants to fund fishing and shooting sports programs. Programs this past year included basic fishing instruction, multi-species fishing, fly tying and casting, aquatic habitats, archery, and wood duck nest building. Many Muscatine County youth were able to participate in these newly offered programs.



Programs have been offered and supported from Discovery Park for well over a decade. Every couple of years, the MCCB continues to reinvest in our Discovery Park location. Our largest capital spending program this year resulted in a new storage building located just southeast of the Discovery Pond. The project was started and finished during the fall of 2012. The new storage building provides extra storage and electricity that was not available in our former storage building. By removing the old storage building, additional space has been made available for potential expansion of the parking lot located just south of the Discovery Pond.

During 2012, the Board of Supervisors received approval and funding to build a new bridge for access to the Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area. New bridge standards and requirements require that we replace the existing bridge. The project is expected to be completed during the spring and summer of 2013. The new bridge is another example of the County's commitment to provide access to our residents for camping, fishing, and recreation at a location so close to our community. We are grateful to the Board of Supervisors for their support of this project.

During late 2012, staff and board members began to work together on an opportunity for a significant

2012 CONSERVATION BOARD

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

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.

land donation for the benefit of the Muscatine County Conservation constituents. By late December, the MCCB officially received a donation of 425 acres of property that includes 120 acres of water from W.G. Block Company. The property is bordered on the north by 41st Street, on the south by 57th Street, on the west by Steward Road and on the east by Pettibone Avenue. While Muscatine County fishermen have great access to the Mississippi River, this project will provide the opportunity for additional inland fishing. Other Iowa communities have spent decades and considerable dollars to plan and develop this type of recreational property. The MCCB is grateful for the thoughtful donation by the W.G. Block Company.

During a January 2013 meeting, the Board authorized a \$27,500 engineering project to provide future plans for the 425 acre W.G. Block property. A steering committee, with representation from the MCCB, Board of Supervisors, DNR representatives and interested county citizens, will work together with several engineering firms to secure public input while developing a master plan for future uses of this recreational property. Potential recreational usages include fishing, swimming, camping or cabins, boating, canoeing, kayaking, and hiking. The goal of this master plan is to provide Muscatine County citizens with the opportunity to participate in expanded local outdoor recreational opportunities.

In closing, I'd like to thank the Board of Supervisors for their financial support, the MCCB staff for their hard work and dedication, the many program volunteers who assist the MCCB staff, and my fellow Board members for their commitment. While I am proud of our past accomplishments, I am very excited about our future.

Projects

Listed below are some of the larger projects undertaken in 2012.

- Constructing a new storage building at Discovery Park.
- Developing and installing an interactive touch screen display at the Environmental Learning Center.
- Acquiring 425 acres south of Muscatine that was donated by W.G. Block Company.





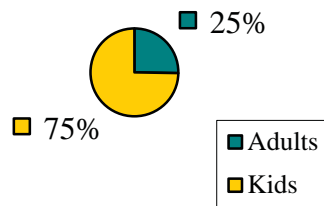
Environmental Education Programs

In 2012, Conservation Board Staff gave 713 programs to 12,531 people. Of those 12,531 people, 2,368 were participants in fishing, aquatic education, and shooting sports programs funded by a grant from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Program participants ranged in age from toddler through senior citizen.

In 2012, three-quarters of the programs were presented to children ranging in age from 18 months through high school. More than half of the programs were given at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park.



Environmental Education 12,531 people served in 2012



Nature hikes, fishing, canoeing, Native American games, eagle watching, survival, animals, archery, habitats, astronomy, fly tying/fishing, and geocaching were just a handful of the many programs presented to participants.

Some of the weekend programs held were Canoeing/Kayaking, Hunger Games, Holiday Crafts, Fishing, Raptors, Storytelling, and Monarch Butterfly Tagging.

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

- 32nd Annual Kids Fishing Seminar & 5th Annual Fishing Derby - 192
- 24th Annual Halloween Hike - 335
- Hunter Education Classes - 123
- Summer Nature Camps - 168
- Toddler/Preschool Camps - 130
- Eagle Watch - 185
- Earth Day Celebration - 105

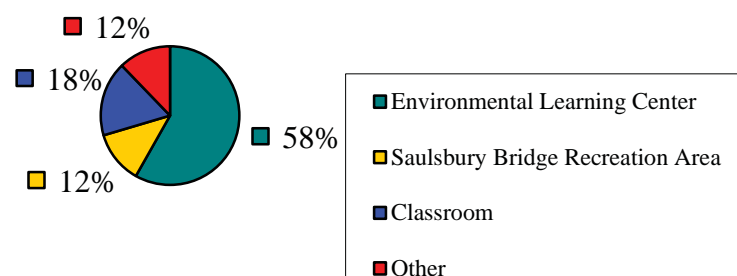
Environmental Learning Center

In 2012, approximately 5,420 visitors (not including people who participated in our programs) came to the Environmental Learning Center to view the exhibits.

Staff spent time gathering information for a new computer-based touch screen display, and changing and/or upgrading existing exhibits in the Environmental Learning Center.



Environmental Education 713 programs given at various locations in 2012





Muscatine Youth Conservation Corps

In the summer of 2012 the Conservation Board hired nine youth ages 16-18 and two crew leaders for the Muscatine Youth Conservation Corps program.

The youth worked on outdoor conservation and recreation projects for the City of Muscatine and the County Conservation Board. Projects consisted of pouring concrete pads for benches and information kiosks at Discovery Park, staining the Environmental Learning Center and Saulsbury Lodge, planting and mulching trees, painting the restrooms at Jack Shuger Memorial Park, and doing plantings and landscaping at the Riverfront and Weed Park.

They also spent a day canoeing on the Cedar River.

The program is funded entirely with donations from local industries, businesses, organizations, government entities, and individuals.



Grants

Several grants were received from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to hire staff to coordinate and present fishing, aquatic education, and shooting sports programs in Muscatine County.

A Fish Habitat Stamp Grant was received from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to stabilize shoreline around Discovery Pond. This project was started in 2011, and was completed in 2012.



Cooperative Programs

In 2012, 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 Community Y
- Muscatine Parks & Recreation
- Muscatine Arboretum Association
- City of Muscatine
- Muscatine Chapter of Delta Waterfowl
- Quad City Chapter of Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association
- Muscatine Chapter of Izaak Walton League
- Boy Scouts/Eagle Scouts
- Girl Scouts

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