



CONSERVATION NEWS

A Publication of the Muscatine County Conservation Board

Volume 32 No. 3 Fall 2019

Projects Update

Most of the projects on the docket for this past spring and summer are complete or almost complete. The playground at Discovery Park was finished late last spring just in time for the kids to use on summer break, and it's been a big hit.



The porta-potties by the small shelter at Discovery Park and the Stewart Road & 41st Street trail head at Deep Lakes Park were replaced with new restrooms. Yes, they are vault-style but much nicer than the porta-potties, and will be open year-round.

At the Deep Lakes Park trail head a picnic table, bike rack and message board were installed thanks to a donation from the Muscatine High School Class of 1955. A bike fix-it station was also installed that was donated by Charlie and Jean Harper.

Thanks to funding by the Board of Supervisors, another modern restroom building at Discovery Park was set in place in early September near the barn and the playground. It should be ready to

open soon, but since it has running water and no heat it won't be open during the winter.

Also, thanks to the Board of Supervisors, the existing road in the new Discovery Park addition was resurfaced, more parking was added, and a road connecting the new addition to the existing park was constructed.

One of our biggest projects, the Deep Lakes Park cabins, hasn't seen any progress thanks to the high water from the spring flood that is taking it's time to recede. With the water table being so high the contractors can't even get the foundations started. We hoped that the cabins would be up and being rented by this time.

If you have recently been to the Environmental Learning Center you may have seen a house sitting in the parking lot. That house is actually one of the cabins. On September 17-19 the Conservation Board co-hosted a state-wide conference (more about that on page 2). A tour of Deep Lakes Park, including the cabins, was on the agenda. Since there were no cabins to see, Design Homes was nice enough to bring one of our cabins here so the conference attendees could see one of them. The cabin is going back to Eldridge until it's time for it to go to it's permanent home at Deep Lakes Park.

We'll hope for a mild winter and lower water levels because plans right now (keep your fingers crossed) are to have the cabins up and ready for visitors by next spring.

We Need Your Blood!

Yes, we really need your blood! This is not for a program on bats, bugs, or blood suckers. We are hosting a blood drive for the Mississippi Regional Blood Center. So it's other people who really need your blood.

The blood drive is October 18th from 12:00-3:00 p.m. at the Environmental Learning Center in Discovery Park (3300 Cedar St, Muscatine).

To donate

- your last donation date is 8/23/2019 or earlier.
- you must be at least 17 years of age (16 with a signed parental consent form).
- you must weigh at least 110 pounds.
- you must be in good health and feeling well on donation day.
- you should eat a meal within 4 hours of your donation and drink plenty of water.
- you must bring a photo ID.

For questions concerning the blood donation itself, please call the or 1-800-747-5401 (especially if you have an "If I have ... medical condition can I still donate blood?" question).



Please consider donating blood. Even if it's for the first time! You get to lay down and rest in the middle of the day. You will get to sample a variety of drinks and snacks afterward, some super healthy, some less so, but very tasty! Conservation Board staff

will NOT be drawing any blood! You will be well cared for by staff from the Blood Center.

Finally, there is always a need for whole blood. The Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center serves hospitals in Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, and Wisconsin. Donated blood has numerous uses (most frequently as part of many cancer treatments), so please roll up your sleeve and join us!

To sign up to donate, call our office at (563) 264-5922, email Dave Bakke at dbakke@co.muscatine.ia.us, or go online at www.bloodcenterimpact.org and use group sponsor code 3700.

ICCS FALL CONFERENCE

The Muscatine County Conservation Board along with the Louisa County Conservation Board hosted the annual Iowa's County Conservation System Fall Conference on September 17-19. These annual conferences allow the hosting county(s) to show off their areas, projects, and towns. This conference brought in around 300 county conservation professionals and board members, from 51 Iowa counties, to learn about "Life Along the Mississippi."

The conference was based out of the Merrill Hotel in downtown Muscatine. Participants took a cruise down the Mississippi River, from Moline to Muscatine, on the Celebration Belle Riverboat, attended a catfish fry at the Riverview Center, a BBQ at Discovery Park, and took tours of the Big Sandmound Preserve and Langwood Education Center in Louisa County or Discovery Park and Deep Lakes Park in Muscatine County.

It was a busy hectic week for Muscatine and Louisa County Conservation staff and board members, but worth it when we received so many good comments about our areas as well as the conference itself.



Celebration Belle cruises into Muscatine with the ICCS Conference attendees aboard.

Thank You

Thank you to all those who generously gave time, talent, funding and/or materials to help make our programs, projects, and areas better than ever.



Cindy Martinez - nature artifacts for the environmental education program

Haylie Echevarria - nature artifacts for the environmental education program

Skip Hitchcock - gourds

Bob Fridley - antlers & deer skullcap

Thanks Volunteers

Thanks to **Julie Herold** for instructing our Polliwog Playtime classes.



Thanks to the following for lending a hand with summer nature camps.

Marla Kurriger
Amy Bakke
Liz Sebo

Cory White
Hannah Howard

Thanks to the following for helping with the Hunter Education classes. Seventy-five students were certified in the three classes held at the Environmental Learning Center in 2019.

Todd Stammer
Bill Sterner
Jim Amlong

Matt Madson
Gene Hammons



Memorials

Monetary donation made ***In Memory of Will Wingerter.***

Camping at Saulsbury

The Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area campgrounds are open. Camping fees are as follows.

- Main Campground \$20/night
- River Campground \$17/night
- Tent Only Area \$10/night
- Permanently Handicapped \$15/night

You can save on camping in the main campground with a coupon book for \$100—that's six nights for the price of five. Available at the Environmental Learning Center or from the park ranger and campground host.

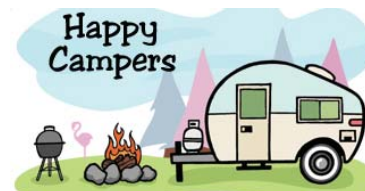
We will also continue with the "Free Wednesdays" and the "Two-for-One" camping specials.

TWO-FOR-ONE

Camping Weekends

Camp the first night in any of the campgrounds at Saulsbury and stay for the next night FREE on the weekends listed below.

October 18-19



FREE Wednesdays

Camp in any of the campgrounds at Saulsbury on any Wednesday in April-October for free.

Programs & Special Events

POLLIWOG PLAYTIME

ages 18 months through 3 years \$5.00/class

maximum 12/class

must have at least 5 signed up to hold class

Join us at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park for activities designed to help toddlers explore nature. Children must be accompanied by an adult. All classes meet on the second Thursday of the month from 9:00-10:00 a.m.

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| January 9 | “Animals in Winter” |
| February 13 | “Mr. Sun Keep Us Warm” |
| March 12 | “Spring is Coming” |
| April 9 | “Recycle!” |



KNEE-HIGH NATURALISTS

4-6 year olds \$5.00/class maximum 12/class

must have at least 5 signed up to hold class

Join us at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park for nature activities such as games, crafts, stories, and exploration. Children must be accompanied by an adult. All classes meet on the second Saturday of the month from 10:00-11:00 a.m.

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|-------------|-----------------|
| October 12 | “Bats” |
| November 9 | “Turkeys” |
| December 14 | “Wildcats” |
| January 11 | “Animal Tracks” |
| February 8 | “Amphibians” |
| March 14 | “Fish” |
| April 11 | “Plants” |



TROUT RELEASE

The Iowa DNR will release 1000 trout in Discovery Pond. Fishing can begin immediately after the release. 100 will be tagged and any tagged trout caught before 4:00 p.m. on October 26 may be turned in at the Environmental Learning Center for a prize. All state fishing regulations apply including requirement of a trout stamp.

- Saturday, October 26**
10:00 a.m.
Discovery Pond in Discovery Park



Programs & Special Events

31ST ANNUAL HALLOWEEN HIKE

Come join our cast of crazy characters for one of our most popular family events, the 31st Annual Halloween Hike. The theme this year is “Who Needs a Tree?”.

Saturday, October 12

6:30 p.m. with a new hike starting every 10 minutes until 8:30 p.m.

Discovery Park

\$5.00 per person, under 5 years of age free

Tickets are required and may be purchased beginning October 1 at the Environmental Learning Center.



Lots of volunteers are needed for a big event like the Halloween Hike on Saturday, October 12. If you love the spotlight we can give you a part as one of the crazy characters, or we have jobs for trail guides, trail maintenance, pumpkin carving, and other behind-the-scenes duties. We'd love to have you help. Contact Michelle, (563) 264-5922, if you are interested in volunteering.

NATURE'S FLOWER GARDEN ORIGAMI

Join Duffy DeFrance and learn how to make origami flowers.

Sunday, November 3

1:30 p.m.

Environmental Learning Center

Free for all ages, children must be accompanied by an adult

Preregistration requested (563) 264-5922



ANIMALS IN WINTER

Come learn about what animals are doing in the winter. We'll see animal furs and some live animals.

Sunday, December 15

1:00 p.m.

Environmental Learning Center

Free for all ages, children must be accompanied by an adult



HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

The Environmental Learning Center will be closed on November 11 and November 28-29.

Become a Friend

Thanks to all our “Friends” whose donations to the Muscatine County Conservation Foundation support the development and enhancement of environmental education and conservation projects in Muscatine County.



Ivan Lenz

Richard & Juawona Weiss

The names of all donors go into our donor book and those who donate \$250 or more receive a plaque on our donor wall. Please include the form below with your donation and become a “Friend” today.

Shelter Rentals

The Conservation Board has picnic shelters at Discovery Park, Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area, and Jack Shuger Memorial Park that may be reserved. Call the Conservation Board office, (563) 264-5922, for more information. Reservations may be made no earlier than one year in advance.

Discovery Park

small shelter	\$15.00 (no electricity)
large shelter	\$35.00

Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area

shelter #1	\$20.00
shelter #2	\$20.00

Jack Shuger Memorial Park

large shelter	\$20.00
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A Gift For the Conservation Foundation

I would like to become a Friend,
please accept my donation.

- Sponsor \$10—\$49
- Partner \$50—\$99
- Patron \$100—\$249
- Guardian \$250—\$499
- Steward \$500—\$999
- Benefactor \$1000 +
- I would like to donate my time.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Thank you for your support!

Please make checks payable to:
Muscatine County Conservation Foundation
PO Box 109, Muscatine, IA 52761



Saulsbury Lodge Rental

The Saulsbury Lodge is available for rent if you prefer air conditioning or a weatherproof venue. The building has the capacity to seat around 75 people. It's a great setting for a family reunion, small wedding reception, graduation party or birthday party. Prices vary depending on the day of the week and type of event. Call the Conservation Board office, (563) 264-5922, for more information. Reservations may be made no earlier than one year in advance.

Creature Feature

Bobcat

The highly adaptable bobcat is found throughout North America in many types of habitats, from forests to swamps to deserts to agricultural and suburban areas. These secretive creatures are solitary, except during breeding season, and nocturnal (more so in the summer than winter), preferring to spend the daylight hours holed up in a den. Dens can be in fallen trees, hollow logs, caves, rock piles or abandoned buildings. A bobcat will usually have more than one den.

Bobcats are about twice the size of an average house cat, 26-41 inches long with a short “bobbed” 4-7 inch tail, and weigh in at 11-30 pounds. Their coats are a brown to brownish red with spots and light underneath. The bobbed tail has a black tip. They have long legs, big paws and tufted ears.

Bobcats can run up to 30 miles per hour, climb and even swim, but they rely on stealth for hunting, moving carefully and quietly before making a leaping (up to ten feet) pounce and bite to the neck of the prey. They feed on rabbits, small rodents, birds, squirrels, and even deer.

Breeding can take place anytime of year, but in colder climates happens in late winter and early spring. After breeding the female gives birth in 60-70 days to one-six young. The kittens open their eyes around 10 days old, start eating solid food at about two months, and begin learning how to hunt at five months. Mom moves the kittens to other dens regularly to throw off predators. They stay with mom for 9-12 months before venturing out to establish their own territories.

Bobcats are very territorial. Territories range from a mile in size to 20 miles in size. They mark their territories with urine, feces, scents, and claw marks.

Bobcats live 7-12 years in the wild. They don't have many predators, but are on the menu in areas where mountain lions and wolves are found. Kittens are also preyed on by coyotes and owls.

In Iowa by the late 1800's, bobcats were about gone from the state due to unregulated hunting and trapping as well as habitat destruction. In 1977 the Iowa DNR put them on the endangered species list, in 2001 they were upgraded to a threatened species, and in 2003 to a protected species. It's amazing what some protective regulations can do for a species. In 2007, the Iowa DNR determined that bobcat populations had recovered and stabilized enough that a limited hunting/trapping season was approved and remains to this day.



Bobcat rubbing scent from its cheek on a log to mark its territory.



Bobcats make many sounds like yowling, hissing, squealing, purring, and caterwauling-a high-pitched wail used during mating that can be heard from a mile away.

MUSCATINE COUNTY
CONSERVATION BOARD
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MUSCATINE, IA 52761

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Jill Ziegenhorn	Office Manager
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www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com

The Muscatine County Conservation Board meets the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are held at the Environmental Learning Center, 3300 Cedar Street in Muscatine. The public is welcome to attend.

If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or handicap, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Muscatine County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240



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