



Conservation News



A Quarterly Publication of the Muscatine County Conservation Board

Volume 34 No. 2 Summer 2021

Deep Lakes Park Cabins

After some unforeseen delays, the Deep Lakes Park cabins are finally open and available to rent. We opened the cabins in early May and rentals are going well despite the fact that we haven't heavily advertised them yet. Only two and a half months in and we've already had some repeat customers.

Cabins 1 & 3 have one bedroom and can sleep up to four people. Cabins 2 & 4 have two bedrooms and can sleep up to eight people. All four cabins are fully furnished, and have a few pots and pans, plus some knives and cooking utensils in the kitchen. They have TVs with local stations and Wi-Fi is coming soon.

All the cabins have a picnic table, fire ring, and two chairs on the deck. There are also two handicap accessible fire rings, one shared between Cabins 1 & 2 and one shared between Cabins 3 & 4.

Renters need to bring their own bedding, towels, toiletries, and tableware, eating utensils, and drinkware. A full list of amenities plus suggestions as to what you should bring is on our website at www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com.

The website also has a calendar that shows cabin availability as well as photos and other information like how to reserve a cabin and the cabin rules and regulations. At this time we are not able to take reservations online so you need to call us at (563) 264-5922 or send an email to cabins@co.muscatine.ia.us.





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.

Sandy Romer - hornets nest in a display box

Quad City Women's Outdoor Club - monetary donation

Cutler Family - willow cuttings to feed Mourning Cloak caterpillars

Nancy Mathis - deer skull & vertebrae, raccoon skull, goat skull



Memorials

An Adams Crabapple tree was adopted in Discovery Park **In Memory of James 'Jim' Heuer.**

A Skyline Honeylocust tree was adopted in Discovery Park **In Memory of Misty Dawn Buckley.**

A Japanese Crabapple tree was adopted in Discovery Park **In Memory of Mendi Bueno.**

A Northern Redbud tree was adopted in Discovery Park **In Memory of Richard L. Crooks.**

A Donald Wyman Crabapple tree was adopted in Discovery Park **In Memory of Sara Holtz.**

A Donald Wyman Crabapple tree was adopted in Discovery Park **In Memory of Porfirio & Guadalupe Lopez.**

A Donald Wyman Crabapple tree was adopted in Discovery Park **In Memory of Patricia Grosjean.**

A picnic table was installed in Discovery Park **In Memory of Charles 'Dave' Curry.**



Holiday Closings

The Conservation Board offices and Environmental Learning Center will be closed on Monday, September 7.

Summer Extern Eric

Hello! My name is Eric Yerington, and I am happy to say I will be working as an extern with the Muscatine County Conservation Board this summer. The externship program is sponsored by the University of Northern Iowa and takes science, math, and technology teachers and places them at various businesses and organizations to work for the summer. The purpose is two-fold: 1) the business or organization receives extra help and assistance with their programming or work load and 2) the extern learns what that business or organization does for the community and how they can support them. They also learn what science, technology, and engineering principals are used at the job site. The externs also write lesson plans based on the topics they work on over the summer and use those when they return to the classroom in the fall.

When I'm not working as an extern in the summer months you will find me at McKinley Elementary School where I teach 6th grade science and social studies. The 2021-2022 school year will be my third at McKinley and I taught 6th grade science at West Middle School (now Susan Clark Junior High) for 20 years before that. I have lived in Muscatine my entire life and enjoy riding my bicycle, reading, and watching TV.

I will be assisting Dave and Michelle with most of the nature camps as well as doing various other programs both here at Discovery Park and off site. I will also be working on other projects that need to be done around the Environmental Learning Center. So far, I have helped with nature camps and programs off-site. I also helped clean up the creek in Discovery Park in preparation for some of our camps. I am really looking forward to learning more about what goes on here at the Environmental Learning Center and meeting many new people so, if you stop by this summer, be sure to stop and say hello!

Become a Friend

Thank you 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.



Linda Stoddard

Helen Atkinson

Nancy Grunder

Dan & Diane Olson

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

A Gift For the Conservation Foundation

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

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

Name _____

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Thank you for your support!

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

Programs and Special Events

Animal Encounters

Come meet and learn about some of our education animals.

Monday, July 19 10:30-11:00 am Meet a Salamander
Monday, August 2 10:30-11:15 am Meet Amphibians & Reptiles
Environmental Learning Center
Free, children must be accompanied by an adult



Hunter Education



Anyone born after January 1, 1972 who wants to purchase a hunting license in Iowa must have successfully completed a Hunter Education course. The minimum age for certification is twelve. Each class is limited to 50 students.

Classes are free but, you must register on-line at www.goutdoorsiowa.com. After registering you must pick up a workbook at the Environmental Learning Center. The chapter review questions at the end of the workbook should be completed prior to coming to class. Students will need to bring their completed workbook and a sack lunch.

Saturday, August 21 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Environmental Learning Center
Saturday, August 28 (females only class) 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Environmental Learning Center

Family Bike Ride

Meet Naturalist Michelle Berns for a family bike ride from Discovery Park to Deep Lakes Park and back.

Saturday, August 14 9:00 a.m. Discovery Park
Free family event, children must be accompanied by an adult
Helmets are recommended



Monarch Tagging

Come to the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park and learn about migrating monarch butterflies. Naturalist Michelle Berns will present a short program on tagging monarchs. Then we'll head out to the prairie and try our luck at catching monarchs to tag. Please wear long pants and tennis shoes as we will be walking through tall grass. If you have a butterfly net, please bring it as we have a limited number of nets.

Saturday, September 18 1:00 p.m. Environmental Learning Center
Free family event, children must be accompanied by an adult



Shelter Rentals

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

Discovery Park

Discovery Pond Shelter (#1) \$15 (no electricity)

Learning Center Shelter (#2) \$35

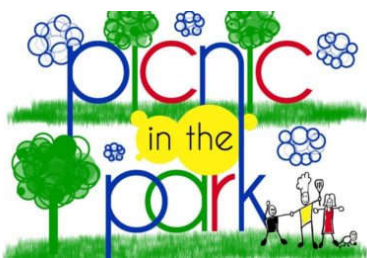
Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area

Chicken Creek Shelter (#1) \$20

Boat Ramp Shelter (#2) \$20

Jack Shuger Memorial Park

Shelter \$20



Saulsbury Lodge Rental

The Saulsbury Lodge is available for rent. This enclosed building is air conditioned and has the capacity to seat around 75 people. It's a great setting for a family reunion, small wedding reception, graduation or birthday party. Prices vary depending on the day of the week and type of event. Contact the Conservation Board office at (563) 264-5922 or conservation@co.muscatine.ia.us for more information. Reservations may be made no earlier than one year in advance.

Camping at Saulsbury

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

- Main Campground \$20/night
- River Campground \$17/night
- Primitive Campground \$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.

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

TWO-FOR-ONE Camping Weekends

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

July 16-17

August 6-7 & August 19-20

September 3-4 & September 17-18

October 1-2 & October 15-16



FREE Wednesdays

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

Creature Feature

Iowa's Venomous Snakes

By Eric Yerington

OK, let me start off by saying I LOVE snakes. No, I mean it – I really do. I know many of you out there aren't fans, but I think snakes are absolutely amazing critters. The strength of their muscles, the way they slither around, the way they smell with their tongue!! I mean, come on!! Snakes are totally snake-tacular! Now, that being said, there ARE four species of snakes that I really wouldn't want to come across or pick up and try to make my friend. In this article I will tell you about the only four snakes in Iowa that happen to be venomous – yep, these are the ones to stay away from folks!!

By the way, before we go much farther - I was just reading an article today while researching this one that made me think. The writer was saying he is often asked "Does Iowa have any poisonous snakes?" to which he responds "No!" You see, the term 'poisonous' is used to describe organisms that release toxins when you touch or eat them, whereas the term 'venomous' refers to organisms that bite or sting to release the toxins. Now that we know that, let's turn our attention to the venomous snakes of Iowa.

The four venomous snakes of Iowa are the Timber Rattlesnake, the Massasauga, the Copperhead, and the Prairie Rattlesnake. In this article I'll tell you a little bit about each one, including where to find them (so you can stay away from those areas!)

Timber Rattlesnake

This snake is the most common venomous snake in Iowa, as well as the largest and most dangerous. Doesn't that put your mind at ease? Timber Rattlesnakes, also called the American viper, black rattlesnake, and canebrake, usually grow between 30-60 inches long. They live in a variety of habitats including forests, swamps, and river floodplains. Timber Rattlesnakes are quite adept at climbing and have been spotted in trees as high as 80 feet up! In the wild Timber Rattlesnakes eat small to medium sized rodents such as mice, shrews, chipmunks and squirrels. They may also eat birds, lizards, and amphibians.

When threatened, the Timber Rattlesnake may shake its rattle to warn before it strikes. However, it should be noted that the Timber Rattlesnake is much more docile than other members of its family and may simply coil or stretch out motionless when



encountered. Do keep in mind, however, that a timber rattlesnake's venom is potent enough to kill a human so a bite is a medical emergency.

Prairie Rattlesnake

The prairie rattlesnake is mostly found in the Loess Hills region of western Iowa, along the Missouri River. (I wish I had known that when I visited the Loess Hills. On second thought, maybe I was better off NOT knowing this!) They live in forests, shrub land, grassland or desert areas. Prairie rattlesnakes generally live on land, but can sometimes climb trees or bushes. Some may even occupy burrows of other animals that have vacated their burrow or been eaten by the snake!



Prairie rattlesnakes grow between 35-45 inches long and are usually a greenish gray, olive green or

greenish brown. Prairie rattlesnakes feed on small mammals such as ground squirrels, ground nesting birds, mice, rats, small rabbits, and prairie dogs. Prairie rattlesnakes are generally not considered aggressive, but will defend themselves if they are threatened or injured.

Massasauga

The Massasauga is, essentially, a small rattlesnake. Once again the Massasauga has a limited range in Iowa, and have been spotted right here in Muscatine County in the Cedar River Valley south of Highway 22. The good news is, once again, the Massasauga is a very meek and docile snake and rarely attacks humans. The Massasauga is also known as a swamp



rattlesnake. The Massasauga is found in prairies, swamps and woodlands. The Massasauga is typically between 18 to 30 inches long. Massasauga feed on small vertebrates including mammals, lizards, and other snakes as well as invertebrates such as centipedes.

Copperhead

The Copperhead grows 22-36 inches long and lives in woodlands and bushy meadows near woodlands. They feed on cicadas, small birds, frogs, toads, lizards and other snakes. Copperheads bite more people in most years than any other snake in the United States. However, although their bite is painful, it is very rarely fatal to humans. (That being said, if you are bitten by any snake you should seek medical attention!) It's important to note that unlike most of our venomous snakes in Iowa, the

copperhead generally gives NO notice that it is about to strike. Copperheads are only found in the southeast corner of Iowa which is the very northern part of their range. They are listed as endangered in Iowa.



In summary, you can see that most of the venomous snakes in Iowa are rather timid and, if you happen to encounter one, will slither away from you before you really even notice them. So, not much to worry about here in Iowa. Remember, snakes are our friends!!

Fun Facts

- The Native American word, "massasauga", means great river-mouth in the Ojibwa language and was probably given to describe grasslands surrounding the river deltas in Ojibwa country.
- Juvenile copperheads have bright yellow tips on their tails, which they wiggle enticingly to draw the attention of potential prey animals that think the tail tip is a juicy worm or caterpillar.
- Timber rattlesnakes don't lay eggs. The foot-long baby rattlers are born encased within a membrane that they immediately shed. They are born with venom in their hollow fangs and a small "button" rattle.
- The Prairie rattlesnake itself is prey as well. A number of predatory birds such as the Red-tailed Hawk will prey on rattlesnakes. Badgers too will feed on prairie rattlesnakes.

MUSCATINE COUNTY
CONSERVATION BOARD
3300 CEDAR STREET
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MUSCATINE, IA 52761

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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, gender, 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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