

Interactive Play and Learn

Lee Sorenson, Executive Director

The Pollinator Paradise exhibit is in its second year of allowing visitors to interactively play and learn about pollinators.

The grand opening of the Pollinator Paradise addition to the Dickinson County Nature Center in Okoboji was held on Saturday, Nov. 16, 2019.

Pollinator Paradise is a \$1.2 million donor-funded project that began at the Dickinson County Nature Center in 2017 with Al & Delores Maser working with us and heading up a fundraising campaign. This project is a passion of Delores and would not have happened without her dedication and support.

Inside Pollinator Paradise, visitors will see a life-size apple orchard where kids can dress up as a blue orchard mason bee and collect faux pollen to launch into the stigma of a flower and watch as it moves from tree to tree with the

help of bees. Then they are able to play the role of cook inside a food truck to create faux meals using pollinated ingredients.

In the Magic Monarchs exhibit, guests are able to see the live

colorful tiles and a mirror.

The human-sized honeycomb climber has been a hit since it was installed. Additional education about honeybees along with the live bee hive are also great experiences.

The Build a Pollinator exhibit features a butterfly, moth, beetle and bee body that visitors will finish by selecting antennae, wings, legs and even a proboscis, which is what pollinators use to drink nectar.

Save the Pollinators is a digital game where people of all ages can create a pollinator garden. They will select the type and amount of flowers and grasses for a garden plot and watch how those choices impact the population of pollinators throughout the seasons.

Open Tuesday through Saturday
10 a.m.—4 p.m.



monarch life cycle in the summer and also create symmetrical butterfly wing designs using



Environmental Ed Alive and Well

Bryanna Kuhlman—Education Coordinator

Although the weather was a bit chilly and unpredictable this winter, we managed to enjoy our time inside and outside with school groups and community programming. Our Family Nature Nights continue to be a huge hit with our community members and with the addition of the Maser Monarch Lodge, we are able to facilitate Covid safe

Continued on page 2

Environmental Ed Alive and Well continued

programming indoors. Our themes for this program have included learning about the magnificent polar bear as well as learning about enchanting animals. The community has loved learning through experiments and art in our new space. Our school programs have been quite successful as well. We were so excited to host all of the 4th graders from Okoboji and Spirit Lake for some snow fun. Students were able to learn how to snowshoe as well as learn about how winter animals survive by building animal dens. We are looking forward to warmer weather and are excited to offer multiple summer camps and programs for our community to enjoy!

Check out our website! <https://dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com/>



Summer of Roadside Improvements

Douglas Todey—Roadside Manager

The Dickinson County Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) Department is gearing up for a major planting season. The Dickinson County Conservation Board has tasked us with planting 3% of the county roadside to native prairie on an annual basis. We have 90 acres of high-quality prairie seed ready for planting this spring along M27 and A34 in the western half of the county. We have plans for planting the entirety of A34 in the spring of 2022 and continuing from there. This process will involve planting in April

Hydro seeding native forbs and grasses to the roadways.



and May, keeping it mowed throughout the year, spot mowing problem areas the second year, and letting it mature in the years after. By the third year, most of the planted species should be expressing themselves and will require occasional burning in the subsequent years. This will provide roadside beautification, habitat for pollinators and small mammals, erosion control, and water filtration.

Our summer will primarily involve spot spraying for invasive species in the right-of-way. These species include Canada thistle, crown vetch, leafy spurge, as well as biennial species like musk and bull thistle. Our goal once again is to cover all of the county roads before mid-July when those species start to go to seed. After that is done, we will transition to prepping A34 for planting next year, as well as spraying brush in the right-of-way which will continue until October. Last year we sprayed approximately 40% of the county roads for brush and we aim to cover another 40% this year. Once the growing season is over, we will transition to cutting and trimming trees and brush found within the right-of-way.

In 2020, we were able to purchase a second flatbed truck and spray rig to ensure faster coverage of the county for spraying. This truck also has a removable box that we can chip brush and trees into when we're not using it for spraying to allow for safer and more efficient tree trimming. We continue to have prescribed fires in the right-of-way to help control woody vegetation, negatively impact invasive species, and stimulate native species. We also work with secondary roads to follow up some of their projects with a hydromulch mix to help stabilize the soil and also plant native species in those areas.

Mussel Enhancements & Bank Improvements

Brian Cuperus—Natural Resource Manager

As each new season begins, plans for improving our wildlife areas are developed and completed. Last year was no different as we were able to partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Iowa DNR to complete a mussel enhancement project and restore riverbank benching on the Little Sioux River at our Horseshoe Bend property. Both projects were tied together to address water quality and sedimentation issues along a steeply banked oak savanna directly on the Little Sioux River.

The mussel enhancement was done by placing boulder clusters directly in-stream on the Little Sioux River. This technique creates habitat for native mussels, while also being able to slightly slow down and deflect water. Native mussels are an important and overlooked species that help improve water quality by filtering water as they breathe and feed. The boulder clusters were placed so they would alleviate some of the heavy flow of water that continuously pushes against a steep curve that is starting to erode an oak savanna after recent heavy flooding. We were able to accomplish both of our goals of improving water quality and reducing sedimentation into the river.

The other issue that had some influence in eroding our steep oak savanna was the sedimentation buildup along the inside bank of the river. The buildup was not

allowing water to get out of its bank during high water or flooding events which put more force along our steep slope. We were able to remove material along the bank to lower it to match other heights along that stretch of river. By lowering the inside of the bank, it will allow the river out of its bank at its normal height...

Continued on page 7



Large Boulders alleviate heavy water flow & create perfect habitat for native mussels



Banking allows high water to flow over land reducing erosion into rivers

Household Hazardous Materials 411



Charles Vigdal—Regional Collection Manager

Is hazardous waste in your home? The answer is yes. Every home has some sort of hazardous waste in it. Hidden under the sink, in the bathrooms and even in the garage. Common household hazardous waste, or HHM, is used by everyone and come in the form of cleaners, batteries, lawn care or automotive products. Many of these products make chores and housework easier but they can also pose a threat to

public health, safety, and the environment if they are not disposed of correctly. If disposed of incorrectly, they can end up in the landfills, sewer/septic systems or just out in the environment. Many cleaning products contain the same chemicals found in industrial factories but in lesser amounts, however these amounts can still cause health concerns and chronic issues if used over time. Children can also be affected and are more susceptible to toxins in HHM's. In fact, the leading cause of child poisoning is caused by household hazardous products.

There are a lot of hazardous products out there and they are hard to tell apart. So how do you know if it is hazardous or not? Look on labels for warning signals such as: Warning, Caution, Poison, and Danger. Those words can tell you if the product is one of the following:

Continued on Page 6



2021 Summer

Some things to note

While these are currently the dates and times set for the programs, they are subject to change and other restrictions. Due to COVID –19, our rules and guidelines are constantly changing. We would like to thank you for your patience in advance. Feel free to double-check days and times with the front desk.

Contact information:

Dickinson County Nature Center: (712)-336-6352 | 22785 Nature Center Road, Okoboji, IA 51355
 EE Coordinator/Naturalist Bryanna Kuhlman: 712-336-6352 Bkuhlman@dickinsoncountyiowa.gov
 Naturalist Ashley Hansen: 712-336-6362 Ahansen@dickinsoncountyiowa.gov
 Website: <https://dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com/>

Dickinson County Conservation Board
Dickinson County Nature Center
 Kenue Park
 22785 Nature Center Road
 Okoboji, IA 51355
 712 336-6352

2021 SUMMER PROGRAM SCHEDULE

For Free Family Fun exploring nature!

“Special Events” June 3 at 9 a.m. OR June 5 at 10 a.m.; Spirit Lake Massacre Caravan Tour
**5 car maximum per tour, call to register*
 September 3; Dee’s Bee & Butterfly Festival
 October 29; Howlin’ Halloween

“New in 2021”

Nature Playdate June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 10:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.
 July 7, 14, 21, 28 10:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.
 August 4, 11, 18 10:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.
 Supervised unstructured play in playscape, you may either drop off or stay for ages 5+
**Must stay for ages below 5*

“Nature Tots” The second Tuesday and Wednesday of each month.
 Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. & Wednesday 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.
 Ages 2-5, pre-register

Program Schedule



“Nature Explorers” June 10, 24, July 8, 22. August 5, 12
10:30 a.m.—11:30 am
For elementary aged students, pre-register

“Family Nature Night” 5 p.m. & 7 p.m. the Fourth Friday of the month

April 23: Fire on the Prairie
May 28: Mystery Animal
June 25: Gone Froggin’
July 23: Gone Camping
Aug 27: Prehistoric Animals
Sept 24: Wild West
Oct 22: Night Time Walk
Nov 19: Rock Kitchen
Dec 17: Christmas Spiders
**some dates moved due to holidays*



All Artwork Copyright Emma Metcalfe 2011

“Adult kayaking” June 15-16 & July 13-14
2 people/session, 2 sessions/ day
9 a.m.-11 a.m. & 12 p.m.-2 p.m.

“Birding on the Green” May 3, June 7, July 12, August 2 & Sept 13
7 a.m. at Brooks Golf Course

Other things to take in while at the nature center

Butterfly Gardens, Children’s Garden and Nature Playscape. The gardens will be full of colorful flowers that attract butterflies, birds and a host of insects. Enjoy the serenity and observe the abundance of wild-life in this lovely area.

Kenue Park Attractions. Hike natural trails, ride the bike trail, interact with our Rock Sculpture area, go on a geo-treasure hunt, climb the Kame for a bird’s eye view of the area, walk through the tallgrass prairie and view wetland wildlife.

Westport Schoolhouse. Take a step back in time with a visit to our hundred year old one-room school-house.

Continued from Page 3

Toxic: Can be poisonous and cause long-term illness. Look for words like “harmful”, “fatal if swallowed”, or “use only in well-ventilated areas”. Examples are pesticides, paint thinners, automotive products and some cleaners.

Flammable: Can burn easily. Look for words like “combustible” and “do not use near flames”. Examples are oil-based paints, automotive products, thinners, and solvents.

Corrosive: Can eat through materials. Look for words like “cause severe burns” and “can burn eyes, skin or throat”. Examples are acid, oven cleaners, drain cleaners, toilet bowl cleaners and lead batteries.

Reactive: Can spontaneously ignite or create poisonous vapors when mixed with other products. For that reason, household products should never be mixed. Some reactive materials can explode when exposed to heat, air, water or when shaken.

How can you dispose of your household hazardous wastes? First, you need to determine if you have a product that is hazardous. If it is hazardous, bring it to your local regional collection center. With all hazardous products, it is best to use them as directed and try to avoid buying excessive amounts. There is almost always a safer alternative to household cleaners that are much safer to use and safer for the environment.

News Updates

Daria Mather—Community Relations Coordinator

We are finally open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 to 4 p.m. which means our volunteers are coming back! We are so excited to be having more volunteers join us. We would have a hard time without our volunteers, and we appreciate their help very much. Especially those who volunteered throughout the months we were open on Wednesdays and Fridays. We are also planning to open the Westport Schoolhouse this summer which means we will have volunteers over there as well. If you or anyone you know would like to volunteer at the Nature Center, we always appreciate hearing from the community.

The Maser Monarch Lodge is also open for rentals now. There is a booking calendar on our website for the beautiful, 6,000 square foot Maser Lodge and shelter. With accommodations of a catering kitchen, conference

room, and bathrooms, you can't go wrong booking it for your next event. The 2,900 square foot main room features a chandelier, a fireplace and a state-of-the-art projector for all your presentations. Take your pick of where the focal point should be for your event. Use our catering kitchen with a refrigerator and freezer for all your needs. It's the perfect space for your next event.



Become a member—be an important part of this natural legacy

Thank you for renewing your Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County membership! If you haven't become a member in 2021 yet, there is still time. Your membership will get you discounts in the gift shop and reduced rates for programs held at the Nature Center. Your membership also helps support the many projects and programs. The Foundation partners with the Dickinson County Conservation Board to improve facilities and environmental education opportunities for everyone in Dickinson County!

Currently the Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County is finalizing construction efforts on the Maser Monarch Lodge located at Kenue Park. Upon completion, the Foundation will transfer the ownership of the property to the Dickinson County Conservation Board. This facility will provide a beautiful, year-round meeting space for groups.

This spring the Foundation will begin exterior landscaping around the building to enhance the space further. Your membership and donations will help these projects move forward. Membership and donation information can be found at dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com/foundation.

There are many more exciting projects that the Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County and Dickinson County Conservation Board will be partnering on in the near future.

Animal Ambassadors (sponsorships)

Hey young nature explorers, you have some friends at the Nature Center that would like you to come and visit them, but first they are providing you with an opportunity to sponsor one of our ambassadors. So what does a sponsor do? They receive a laminated banner on the animal's enclosure for six months, picture of participant and animal next to the animal's enclosure, paper adoption certificate, bookmark, quick fact sheet and the picture of you and your animal.

Irwin is a 4 year old Snapping Turtle. This snapping turtle was found as a hatchling in Kenue Park in 2016.

Ada and Darling are Red Eared Sliders. This species of turtle is not native to Iowa but are popular in the pet trade.

Teddy is our ornate box turtle! Sometimes he is hard to see as he enjoys burrowing under his substrate.

Annie is a painted turtle and one of our first animal ambassadors at the Dickinson County Nature Center.

Pinki is Chilean Rose Hair Tarantula. Although they are not native to Iowa, Pinki helps to teach people that spiders are essential part of our ecosystem.

Courtney is our Albino Corn Snake. Corn snakes are very popular pets and come in many different color morphs.

Rosie is also a Corn Snake. She is almost 25 years old and helps to teach people about why snakes are important.

Olive is our Western Hognose Snake! Hognose snakes are native to Iowa and are essential animals to maintaining a balanced ecosystem.

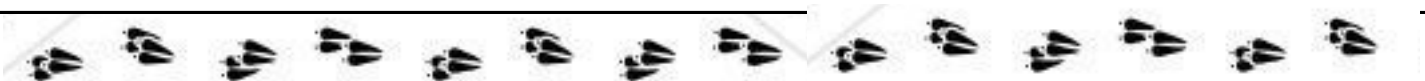
Al and Wally are our Great Plains Toads. These toads are native to Iowa and are actually the main prey of Hognose Snakes.

Luna is an African Pygmy Hedgehog. These animals are not native to Iowa but she helps to teach about the diversity of the animal kingdom.

Bindi is a Mini Rex Rabbit and a visitor favorite! Although they are not native to Iowa, this domesticated rabbit has a lot of similarities to our native Cottontail rabbit.

Sy and Manny are our wonderful Tiger Salamanders! These guys are often times hiding under their substrate!

Speedy is a Blue Gill! He is a wonderful little fish who loves to eat worms!



Mussel Enhancements & Bank Improvements continued

... before putting force into the steep slope. It also gave us the ability to get rid of the reed canary grass dominating the plant community and plant natives along the river which will also help with sedimentation. It was a very fun and important project for us.

Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County Board Members

Tom Maser— President
Rebecca Peters— Vice President
Mary Kay Donovan – Treasurer
Erica Leupold – Executive Secretary
Penny Wilson – Membership Chair
Barbara Tagami – Member
Leah Streeter—Member
Kim Stroud—Member
Kate Mendenhall—Member
Jim Tuel—Member



Dickinson County Conservation Board Staff

Lee Sorenson— Executive Director
Bryanna Kuhlman – Environ. Ed Coord./Naturalist
Ashley Hansen— Naturalist
Daria Mather—Community Relations Coordinator
Brian Cuperus—Natural Resource Manager
Clay Pavelko—Natural Resource Technician
Charles Vigdal— Regional Collection Center Manager
Doug Todey—Roadside Manager
Cameron Arnold-Roadside Technician



Dickinson County Conservation Board Members

Willa Mueske—Chairperson
Kathy Kleen—Vice Chairperson
Steve Anderson—Member
Joan Gronstal—Member
Eric Stoll—Member
Steve Clark-BOS Liason

Mission Statement: To provide a peaceful retreat for visitors where natural, scenic and historical resources come together to create a living classroom to explore, learn, and foster an appreciation for our natural world. Enhancing the Quality of life in the Lakes region through: Outdoor Recreation, Environmental Education & Conservation Enhancing our Quality of Life through Outdoor Recreation, Environmental Education & Conservation.

Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for all citizens and visitors by providing diverse opportunities for outdoor recreation, caring for and protecting valuable natural areas using excellence in environmental education to foster respect and responsible use of natural resources and caring for and protecting valuable natural areas.

