

Blue Water Nature Notes

Board Vs. Board?

By Lee Sorenson

Sometimes people get the Dickinson County Conservation Board and the Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County confused. This is really easy to do as they are very closely connected.

The Dickinson County Conservation Board (DCCB) is a 5-member board that is appointed by the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors. Once they are appointed by the Board of Supervisors, they serve a 5-year term with one member term ending every year. After their fifth year they need to submit another application and again be appointed by the Board of Supervisors. This 5-member Conservation Board is regulated by Iowa Code Chapter 350 which is designated for County Conservation Boards. Chapter 350 goes over their power and duties, regulations, responsibilities, and other assistance on how to fulfill their commitment to the Dickinson County Conservation Board.

The Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County (CFDC) is an independent, non-profit organization whose purpose includes charitable, educational, preservation and scientific endeavors which benefit and support conservation activities in Dickinson County. The CFDC is a board that is composed of 11 members including a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer along with Members. The CFDC mission is "to encourage environmental awareness among visitors and residents while fostering appreciation, preservation and conservation of the Iowa Great Lakes region's unique cultural history, glacial geological formations, native species and natural habitats through education and action." The CFDC is an organization that offers memberships and accepts donations that they disburse for conservation projects. Foundation members serve 3-year terms and may be approved to stay on as long as they are active with the board.

These two boards work together in multiple ways, board members and volunteers step up to help with special events such as Dee's Bee & Butterfly Festival. The CFDC also helps with discounted camp payments to the Conservation Board for those individuals that just need a little assistance to join in one of the many Conservation Board camps. If you are a member of CFDC, you get a 10% discount on items in the Nature Center gift store for purchase. The CFDC supports the Dickinson County Nature Center programming and exhibits, including the exciting Pollinator Paradise room, land acquisition projects, re-establishment of wildlife habitats and native's species. One of their latest endeavors has been to 50% cost share of the purchase of the new augmented sand table with the Conservation Board that is one of the newest exhibits at the Nature Center.



Nature Center Hours:
Tuesday-Saturday 10-4

Closed :

New Year's Day
President's Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Day
Friday After Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve Day
Christmas Day

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Dickinson County Regional Collection Center

Accepted Materials

- Yard Waste
- White Goods
- Electronic Waste
- Tires
- Household Hazardous
Materials

Regional Collection Center

2260 220th St

Milford, IA 51351

712-338-2549

rcc@dickinsoncountyiowa.gov

Each town has different
requirements and facilities
available to them for
waste. Contact your city's
administrator for policies in
your town.

Should I Recycle?

By Charles Vigdal, RCC Manager

Disclaimer: Before reading this article, please be aware that the Dickinson County Regional Collection Center does not collect and is not in charge of any collection of tin, cardboard, glass, or plastic recyclables. Contact your city or garbage provider for more information on how to recycle those items.

"Should I recycle?" is a question that has been asked and talked about a lot recently. After discussing the topic with the Recycling Commission and others in the community, I have concluded that it is a complicated and misrepresented topic. The short and obvious answer is absolutely, you should recycle, but it is a more complicated answer than yes or no. The real question is, does it work? Again, that is a complicated question. After all the tough questions I started looking into the topic of recycling and discovered a lot of misconceptions and flat out lies about what is perceived as recycling. Here is a little of what I learned, broken up into a few categories of recyclable materials. These material summaries begin with the most efficient to less efficient recycled household items.

Metal

When recycling household items, nothing beats metal. The most common metal items that you can recycle are the food and pop cans. Metal can be washed, melted down and made into new products indefinitely. This process can be repeated without any damage to the metal's quality multiple times. It also helps prevent more damage to the environment via mining to obtain new sources of metal. For these reasons, this makes metal the best and most efficient household recyclable item.

Cardboard/Paper

Paper products, including cardboard, are a close second when thinking about recycling. Cardboard has fast become the most recycled waste in America with almost 70% of products recycled. Cardboard and paper can be broken down efficiently and made into various products including insulation, tissues, writing paper, and once again shipping boxes. Recycling cardboard and paper items can help conserve trees, even though tree harvesting can be renewable when done sustainably which many operations currently are. However, precautions should still be taken before throwing it in the bin. Make sure any plastic bags, tape, packaging materials or styrofoam is removed from the box before you dispose of it. Also, boxes that contain grease, like pizza boxes, should be put in the trash as they can contaminate clean recyclables.

Glass

Glass can be a difficult item to recycle. Some towns do not allow it in regular recycling and some have it separated entirely. Glass can come in many assorted colors and compositions, can be contaminated, and can also pose a danger to recycling handlers. Make sure when you are recycling glass it is only bottles and not window/windshields, mirrors, ceramics, or non-see-through glass. Those glass items must be disposed of in the garbage. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 31% of glass is recycled in the USA. When broken down, glass can be recycled indefinitely and includes products like bottles, insulation, and additives to concrete.

Plastic

Lastly, the hardest and most difficult to recycle is plastic. Plastic is everywhere and most of it cannot be recycled. Plastics come in a variety of compositions depending on what they are used for. Most plastic items have an arrow triangle with a number in it that indicates the type of resin the plastic is made of. Many people confuse this arrow and triangle to be a recycling symbol, but it is not. Most plastic items with this displayed cannot be recycled. Most local recycling programs only pickup plastics with the 1 or 2 label on the bottom. According to the EPA, in 2018 only 8.7% of plastic was recycled and plastic waste accounted for 18.5% of all landfilled materials. That is a lot of plastic! And even when plastics are recycled, they can only be made into one other product and then thrown away. Also, plastic film, baggies and styrofoam cannot be put in curbside recycling and can be hard to find alternative recycling options. The same is true for plastic shopping bags. They must be taken to the store you received it from to be recycled correctly. Because of all the non-recyclable types of plastic, overuse in products, and short reusable lifespan (unable to recycle over and over), this makes plastic the worst recyclable item.

Take-aways

There are good items to recycle, like metals and cardboard products, that can be reformed for use repeatedly. Other items like glass and certain plastics are worse, they are recycled sometimes and can be reformed a limited number of times. The best thing you can do to reduce your waste is to reduce the amount you are buying. Stop buying pre-packaged plastic food items and buy in bulk. Stop buying bottled water and fill up your metal water bottle. Use your re-usable shopping bag. Minor changes like these in your lifestyle can add up to a significant difference when it comes to waste!



Reuse

You can also reuse and repurpose household waste. This tin can tree ornament is a great example!



Adult Programs

Birding on the Green

Brooks Golf Okoboji, IA

- May 1 7 AM
- June 5 7 AM
- July 10 7 AM
- August 7 7 AM
- Sept 11 7 AM

Kenue Coffee Hour

Maser Monarch Lodge Okoboji, IA

- Jan 5 10:30 AM
Plant This, Not That!
- Feb 2 10:30 AM
Habitat for Native Mussels
- Mar 2 10:30 AM
Can I Throw This Away?
- Apr 6 10:30 AM
Audubon Certification
- May 4 10:30 AM
Snakes of Iowa
- June 1 10:30 AM
Blandings Turtle Research
- July 6 10:30 AM
Okoboji Tourism
- Aug 3 10:30 AM
Little Sioux Apple Orchard
- Sept 7 10:30AM
West O Brewery
- Oct 5 10:30 AM
Trails of Dickinson County
- Nov 2 10:30 AM
Insects of the Midwest
- Dec 7 10:30 AM
Live Raptor Program from BV
County

Patch Burn Grazing

by Brian Cuperus

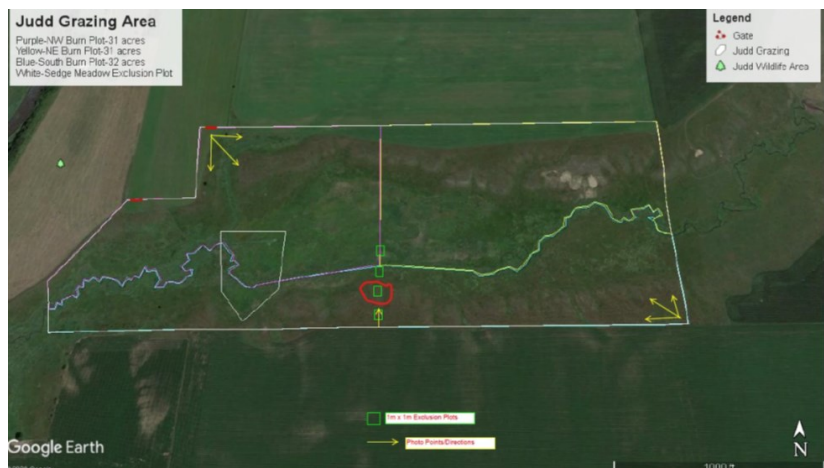
Patch-burn grazing is a technique used to diversify the native grass, sedge, and forb communities. This technique was utilized on our Judd Wildlife Area. Patch-burn grazing was implemented to improve the remnant prairie habitat diversity and function to benefit native pollinators and migratory birds. It is also used to demonstrate the benefits of conservation grazing techniques to other grazers in the Little Sioux River Watershed.

The grazing strategy for this property has two main objectives; to reduce cover and vigor of cool-season invasive grasses and to increase vegetative heterogeneity throughout the site. These objectives are tied to our habitat objectives. Reducing the vigor of cool-season invasive grasses will provide a competitive advantage to native forbs and warm season grasses which in-turn directly improves habitat for wildlife dependent on native prairie vegetation. The creation of vegetative heterogeneity will improve and diversify available habitat for wildlife throughout the site by creating a variety of niches needed specifically by wildlife throughout their lifecycles. These niches will ideally include everything from tall dense stands of vegetation to short sparse areas with a mix of everything in between.

We will achieve our Grazing and Habitat Objectives through the following strategy: We will implement a modified patch-burn grazing system in which 1/3 of the site will receive dormant season prescribed fire followed by mid to high intensity grazing for the spring growing season. As has been shown in other patch-burn grazing systems, the cattle will focus their grazing on the new green growth of the cool season invasive grasses within the burned unit. Some moderate grazing will take place outside of the burn unit as well. No interior fencing except for exclusion plots (4 ft x 4 ft) for control measures.

The following year, a different 1/3 of the site will be burned prior to cattle introduction, and the third year will see the final third burned prior to cattle introduction. The strategy can then be continued or altered as needed.

With assistance from Iowa Lakeside Laboratory and Iowa State University, vegetative and hydrological monitoring will be conducted prior to and during this grazing management plan to determine efficacy of vegetation modification strategy and the impacts on water quality. The vegetative monitoring will quantify change in cover between non-native cool season grasses and native grasses and forbs. Water quality monitoring will track phosphorous and nitrate levels of water entering and leaving the property.



Patch Burn Grazing continued

The grazing will last for approximately 8-10 weeks, or until early to mid-June. If drought or flooding significantly reduce the amount of available forage to the point where our objectives are untenable, the stocking rate will be adjusted accordingly.

Based upon clipping data collected in the 2019 growing season, a stocking rate of 64 AU for 61 days will achieve a grazing efficiency rate of 35%. Pre-grazing monitoring completed in 2019 by Iowa State University to document baseline plant community metrics including individual plant identification (and functional group) and percent cover of plant community within each relevé (10 meters x 10 meters = 100 m² in area). Monitoring of cattle weight, prairie bush clover abundance (federally protected under the Endangered Species Act as a threatened species), vegetation diversity and structure, water quality, invertebrates, fish, and plants in the adjacent creek. Photo monitoring will take place before, during, and after to document changes.

2020 Results:

Average Cow Weight Gain/Loss: -1lb

Average Calf Weight Gain/Loss: +133lbs

Prairie Bush Clover Monitoring-

2019 (98 ramets) vs. 2020 (75 ramets)

gain/loss: -23 ramets

2021 Results:

Average Cow Weight Gain/Loss: -68.30lb

Average Calf Weight Gain/Loss: +149.52lbs

Prairie Bush Clover Monitoring-

2020 (75 ramets) vs. 2021 (137 ramets)

gain/loss: +62 ramets

DCCB Roadside Update

by Tanner Bouchard

In 2023 the roadside program will continue to manage Dickinson County roadsides and maintain the 3% plantings per year. Last fall we began planting roadsides on county roads A22, M34, and A31. We were able to finish planting on A22 and half of the seedlings done on A31. The remaining areas were mowed and sprayed in preparation for planting this spring. Plantings will be mowed several times to combat weeds and promote native grass growth.

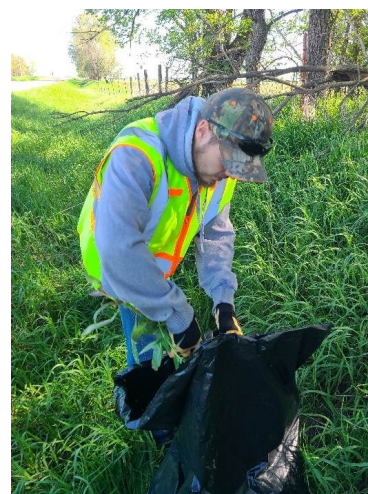
With the snowfall we had in the county this winter most of our brush cutting has been delayed. Our plan for brush cutting will continue after we accomplish spraying. This year we will be spraying for Thistles, Leafy Spurge, and Brush. We will also be hand pulling Dame's Rocket and Garlic Mustard.

This spring will also be the 3rd growing season for our county road A43 and M27 seedlings. Plans for a prescribed burn on these seedlings will happen if weather cooperates.

Our A34 seedlings have looked very good. Last year we were able to get multiple maintenance mowing on all seedlings on county road A34. This coming spring, we will be seeding the secondary roads re-sloping project on A34 with native grass.

Last fall, Dickinson County hosted the Roadside Vegetation Managers annual conference in September. Roadside vegetation managers from across the state gathered to listen to educational seminars, product demonstrations, and various vendors.

This years planned planting is just east of Spirit Lake's Hale's Slough Area, this area was chosen because it will provide a buffer for the Spirit Lake area watershed. In comparison to other county areas, this area doesn't have as many native plants as the rest of the county. Planting this area will help with soil erosion, nutrient filtration, snow drifting, biodiversity, and will help outcompete weeds in the road right-of-way. The planting will also provide nesting habitat for many birds.



CFDC Mission Statement

"to encourage environmental awareness among visitors and residents while fostering appreciation, preservation and conservation of the Iowa Great Lakes region's unique cultural history, glacial geological formations, native species and natural habitats through education and action."

Current Board Members

President: Tom Maser
Vice president: Rebecca Peters
Secretary: Erika Leupold
Treasurer: Mike McFarlin

Board members: Leah Streeter, Jim Tuel, Ron Williams, Penny Wilson, Mary Kay Donovan, Lisa Leopold, Linnea Johnson-Scott

Membership

Robin: Student, \$15
Goldfinch: Individual, \$30
Cardinal: Family, \$50
Bluebird: Contributor \$75
Oriole: Sustaining member, \$125
Wood Duck: Patron, \$250
Great Blue Heron: \$500
Osprey: \$1,000

Summer Camps

Environmental Education Staff is excited for Summer Camp Season 2023! This summer Dickinson County Conservation staff will be getting youth outside through two series of camps. June's theme will be "Magic School Bus" with themes such as exploring your senses, dinosaurs, bees, and seeds. July will focus on "Ways Animals Move" where campers will get to learn about jumping, swimming, digging, and flying animals from around the world! No matter the age, campers can expect to be immersed in nature, while exploring the world around them through outdoor play and hands on learning!

Another highlight of our summer camps, is partnering with other local entities like Lakeside Laboratories and University of Iowa Extensions. This will be our second year of partnering to offer Girls in S.T.E.M. for middle and high school aged girls. Lakeside Laboratories, University of Iowa Extension and the Conservation Board partner together to

bring this opportunity to local youth.

Through this partnership girls are able to explore different scientific fields ranging from Chiropractic care, wildland fire, and organic farming. Along with participating in science based activities, campers will be able to participate in geocaching, canoeing, and other recreational activities. If you are interested in this camp, please go to Iowa Lakeside Laboratories to register.



Become A Member

We thank you for being a member of the Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County! With your support, we can offer many and varied programs, events, and offerings to our community.

If you haven't become a member but still want to, there is still time. The Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County is an independent, non-profit organization whose purpose includes charitable, education, preservation and scientific endeavors which benefit and support conservation activities in Dickinson County.

There are many benefits to being a CFDC member. You will get access to annual membership appreciation events and a 10 percent discount at the

Nature Store. The Foundation partners with the Dickinson County Conservation Board to improve facilities and environmental education opportunities for everyone in Dickinson County! Your membership and donations will help these projects move forward. Membership and donation information can be found at dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com/foundation.



Meet a Volunteer

Risë Tracy hails from Sioux City, Iowa. She spent 60+ summers in the Lakes Area before she retired and moved here permanently with her husband, Frank.

She is blessed to live on land that has been in her family since her grandparents acquired it in the 1930's. She has many fond memories of this beautiful area, from when times moved a little slower and things were a little simpler.

She was introduced to the Nature Center by her mother, Dodie Marksbury. Who was a volunteer here, at the Nature Center, herself for many years, through the "dirt floor days" and watched the Nature Center grow.

After retiring from teaching and settling full time in the area, Risë picked up her mother's mantle and became a Nature Center volunteer. She has been with us for a few years now and we are so happy to have her here!



Risë Tracy

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."
— Winston Churchill

Why Volunteer?

With busy schedules, it is hard to find time to volunteer but the benefits of volunteering could never be calculated because of its impact to you and others. Volunteering can help people in need, worthwhile causes, and your community. The right match can help you learn new skills, find friends, and connect with your community.

We at the Nature Center, thank every one of you! Thank you for giving back to your communities! We could not function as well as we do and offer as many services with out our volunteers. Here at the Nature Center, we are lucky to utilize over 30 volunteers that help us and serve as key components to our operation.

Whether greeting people at the Nature Center, cleaning up the grounds, filling our bird feeders, tending to our bees, staffing our annual Bee & Butterfly Festival, or giving tours at the one room school-house you are appreciated! There really is a wide variety of skills used here at the Nature Center.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Jackie Jerge, Community Relations Coordinator, at the Nature Center, 712-336-6352.

You can also email any inquiries to jjerge@dickinsoncountyiowa.gov. We would love to discuss your special skills and get you involved here at the Nature Center.

Volunteer Joann Gano



Dickinson County
Conservation &
Nature Center Staff
Executive Director:

Lee Sorenson

E.E. Coordinator: TBD

Naturalist: Britney Snell

IRVM/Weed Commissioner:

Tanner Bouchard

IRVM East Technician:

Tim Frotestad

Natural Resource Manager:

Brian Cuperus

Natural Resource Technician:

Clay Pavelko

Regional Collection Manager:

Charles Vigdal

Community Relations Coordinator:

Jackie Jerge

Special Events

Bee and Butterfly Festival
September 8
4-7 p.m.

Let us know if you would like to
volunteer !



Summer Camp: Registration begins March 1

NOTE: Most camps fill up the first day of registration

June Theme: Magic School Bus

Explore the Senses	Pre K	June 5-6	9-12	Session 1
Explore the Senses	Pre K	June 12-13	9-12	Session 2
A Time of Dinosaurs	TK/K	June 19-20	9-12	Session 1
A Time of Dinosaurs	TK/K	June 26-27	9-12	Session 2
Inside A Beehive	1st/2nd	June 22-23	9-3	Session 1
Inside A Beehive	1st/2nd	June 29-30	9-3	Session 2
Plants A Seed	3rd/4th	June 8-9	9-3	
Wet All Over	5th/6th	June 15-16	9-3	

July Theme: Ways Animals Move

Jumpers	Pre K	July 10-11	9-12
Diggers	TK / K	July 13-14	9-12
Flyers	1st-3rd	July 24-25	9-12
Swimmers	4th-6th	July 20-21	9-12

Other Summer Programs

Partner Camps

Clay/Dickinson County Camp

9 am—3 pm

June 1-2

Grades 4th-6th

Kindermusik, DCCB and Art Center Partner Camp

9 am—12 pm

July 17-19

Ages 4-6

Girls in STEM

Overnight at Lakeside

9 am-9 am

August 3-4

Grades 7th-9th

Nature Explorers

Nature Explorers is a free, hour long program at the Dickinson County Nature Center in Kenue Park for ages 5-12. This program occurs on the 2nd & 3rd Wednesdays, June through mid August at 10:30 am. Expect to be outside exploring nature so please be dressed appropriately; hat, sunscreen, etc. Registration opens 2 months out.

June 14 Up in the Sky

June 21 The World Down Below

July 12 Creatures of the Day

July 19 Creatures of the Night

Aug 9 Fun in the Park

