



Blue Water Nature Notes

Newsletter for the Dickinson County Conservation Board &
Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County

www.dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com
(712) 336-6352

Grab a Disc, Make a Memory

by Lee Sorenson
Executive Director

Typically, for the Spring Newsletter, I share updates about all the projects we are currently working on around the county, but this Spring, I am going to share a different story. When I started back in 2013 for Dickinson County Conservation Board, they were just completing a new disc golf course at Kenue Park. Like most people, I didn't really know or even understand what a disc course was or how you played the game. I remember thinking you take a frisbee and throw it from a tee pad to a basket several 100 feet away; at that time, I had in my mind a frisbee that you use in the backyard to play catch with family or friends. One day, I was out on the course doing maintenance and found someone's frisbee, also called a disc; this object was in no way something that you would want to play catch with in your backyard. So, I started to do some research on the sport, and here are some of the interesting details I discovered: Disc Golf originated in the late 1960s and was popularized in the 1990s. At the time it was known as Frolf, which was a combination of the words "frisbee and golf." The name is still used by some players but is more commonly heard as "disc golf. "Steady Ed" Headrick is now known as the "Father of Disc Golf" designed and installed the first standardized target course in California. Now, there are over 15,000 disc golf courses worldwide, and the sport is played in approximately 40 countries. Even locally, we have witnessed the growth of disc golf. From 2014, Okoboji Gold Disc Golf Course had less than 50 disc golfers using the course annually, which increased to almost 900 disc golfers during COVID restrictions. But on average, almost 400 disc golfers each year are counted through the Udisc App. Udisc is a mobile app designed by disc golfers for disc golfers. Depending on your needs, it is used for scorekeeping, statistics tracking, course discovery, and other related features, for either free or membership.

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NATURE CENTER HOURS

Tuesdays -Saturdays
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Closed Sunday,
Monday & Holidays

DCCB STAFF

Executive Director
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**Community Relations
Coordinator**
Amy Heibult

**Environmental Education
Coordinator**
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Britney Snell

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**Natural Resources
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Brian Cuperus

**Natural Resources
Technician**
Clay Pavelko

Roadside Manager
Tanner Bouchard

Roadside Technician
Tim Frostestad

Roadside Technician (p.t.)
Myles Cuttell

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Ok, time to get back on course with my story. I had watched disc golfers throw marvelous throws that flew several hundred feet through the air, gliding like gravity had little to no effect on the disc. So, in 2023, my family thought, "Let's give it a try," so we went to the local store to buy a few discs to try it out. While at the store, we learned that discs have numbers on them for ratings, which show how each disc is designed to fly. I admit the only thing we heard was the higher the first number, the further they would fly. Of course, we bought driver discs with higher numbers, like 13, along with a couple of putters. We then went out to the course, and reality set in pretty quickly - why were our discs not flying through the air for several hundred feet? After a bit of frustration, we looked into the numbers on the disc, and believe it or not, they all had crucial information that we needed to know. It was true that the higher the first number, typically the further the disc would go, but it also took into consideration the other numbers that related to glide, turn, and fade. All of these together made each disc unique to each situation, along with our own personal throwing style, which all affected the flight of the disc.

There are also four types of discs: putt & approach, midrange, fairway driver, and distance driver, which all have their different qualities. This also explains why we would see disc golfers with sling bags, backpack bags, and even carts full of discs with them to play the course. Since we started playing, we have played 12 different disc golf courses in three states, from Black Hills in South Dakota to the bluffs near Cedar Rapids, Iowa. We have actually started taking our disc golf bags on vacation with us and looking for courses to enjoy. Since that first throw, we have learned so many things that have helped improve our game; still, at times, we wish we had mulligans and have lost a disc from time to time in some of the rough areas. Putting your name and phone number on the disc helps as most people will call or text you to return your disc. Over the years, we have come to really enjoy playing disc golf with family and friends in the wonderful outdoors, and we look forward to warmer weather even though we played five rounds in January this year.

In conclusion, if you are looking for something to do with friends or family in the great outdoors, go out to your local disc golf course and give it a shot.



*Family member throwing
from Hole 4 at the
Okoboji Gold tee pad*



*Family member playing
the rule throw it where
it lies*

Welcoming Wood Ducks

by Brian Cuperus
Natural Resource Manager

Wood ducks are beautiful and beneficial birds that are native to our oak savanna and wetland areas, but their natural nesting sites—tree cavities near water—are becoming scarce due to habitat loss. Installing wood duck boxes provides an essential solution, offering a safe and secure space for these ducks to nest and raise their young.

These boxes help ensure wood ducks have a suitable environment to thrive, especially in areas where mature trees with proper nesting cavities are rare. The installation of these boxes contributes to maintaining healthy wood duck populations, which play an important role in controlling insect and plant life in wetlands.

Building and placing a wood duck box is a simple, low-cost way to support local wildlife. It is necessary to position boxes near water in a quiet, wooded area to mimic their natural nesting conditions. Regular monitoring and maintenance are key to ensuring that the boxes remain functional and safe for the ducks.

In partnership with Delta Waterfowl - Prairie Lakes Chapter, who built around 30 nest boxes, the DCCB Natural Resource Department was able to install them on DCCB properties adjacent to the Little Sioux River, including Horseshoe Bend and Judd Wildlife Areas.



In partnership with Delta Waterfowl - Prairie Lakes Chapter



Wood Duck boxes built by Delta Waterfowl



DCCB Natural Resources and Roadside Departments installing duck boxes near Little Sioux River

History of Osprey in Dickinson County

by Charles Vigdal
*Regional Collection
Manager*

The osprey has had a fruitful history here in Iowa, especially in the Iowa Great Lakes region. Historically, only known from oral traditional tales told by the Elders of the Omaha nation, this extirpated Iowan species is becoming a permanent resident of Kenue Park. An increasing trend in individuals returning to this area is hopefully here to stay.

Ospreys are large fish-eating raptors that are found all over the world. They are relatively easy to identify by their rockstar looks, featuring a dark-colored band over their eyes, much like sunglasses, stark white feathers, and black wings. In the sky, their 6-foot wingspan does not look that large as they make an M shape in the sky. This flying bird of prey has the unique feature of being double-jointed in the wings, which helps them take off from the water. Taking off from the water is essential as they can fully dive under to capture a fish with their sharp talons, sometimes a fish that weighs more than them. They fly south and overwinter in Central and South America. During this time the male and female separate and only come back together when they come back in the Spring to build a nest and raise a family.

In 1997, the Iowa DNR began the Iowa Osprey restoration program. Since male osprey tend to come back and nest in areas where they grew up, the IDNR partnered with the Minnesota and Wisconsin DNR and brought juvenile osprey to Iowa to release. Young males were introduced with the hope they would return and repopulate in the state. It took some time, but it worked. The first recorded attempted nest in Iowa started right here in Spirit Lake in 2000, with one of the first recorded successful nesting sites being at the Spirit Lake Schools (the other first location was Iowa City) in 2003, hatching out one chick.

After the first successful nest in the lakes area, the Dickinson County Conservation Board, with help from the IDNR, started its osprey release program at the Nature Center in 2007 with the creation of the hacking tower. The hacking tower has now been repurposed and serves as the observation tower in Kenue Park. Funds were raised locally, and partners also contributed so naturalist Barbara Tagami could prepare a tower for the young osprey. At the time, Pat Schlarbaum, the wildlife diversity biologist for the IDNR, helped make arrangements to get the first group of juvenile ospreys. Barbara made the trip to Minnesota to gather the young osprey that would eventually be released into the area. These osprey juveniles were gathered when they were about 42 days old from a predetermined nest with three chicks so that it would not disrupt the native osprey family too much. These osprey juveniles would be checked out by a veterinarian and transported to our hacking tower at the Nature Center, where we would take care of them.

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Adult osprey sitting on nest platform - male arrives first in Spring

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Once within the hacking tower, we waited until the birds "fledged" or learned to fly at about 53 days old. Doing this at a young age encourages them to imprint on the area they learn to fly in, in hopes that is where they return to start their own families. The program of introducing young birds here lasted until 2011, resulting in about 20 birds completing the program, which was successful as osprey started showing up, and a pair took up residence at the Nature Center's nesting platform in 2010. This platform has been occupied almost every year since these birds love to nest on very high, man-made structures that have a commanding view of the area.

The IDNR's statewide osprey-releasing program ended in 2016, but success continued as young birds returned to their hacking territories. As of 2024, there are 39 active nests in Iowa, three of which are in Dickinson County, with seven new chicks fledged in the Iowa Great Lakes Area. There continues to be a presence of the amazing birds in Dickinson County; they are especially active near the Nature Center, so go check them out this season. They will be here any day!



Osprey carrying a freshly caught fish

Erosion Control in the Right-of-Way: Erosion Mats and Hydromulch

by Tanner Bouchard
Roadside Manager

Erosion control is a critical aspect of maintaining the integrity of right-of-way areas, such as highways, pipelines, and utility corridors. Without proper management, soil erosion can lead to significant environmental and structural damage, disrupting ecosystems, causing sedimentation in waterways, and threatening infrastructure stability.

Two effective erosion control methods are using erosion mats and hydro mulch. Erosion mats, made from natural fibers like straw, coconut, or synthetic materials, are laid over disturbed soil to protect it from wind and water erosion. These mats provide an immediate barrier, helping to stabilize the soil while vegetation becomes established.

Hydromulch, on the other hand, is a mixture of water, mulch, seeds, and bonding agents that is sprayed over the surface of the soil. It forms a protective layer, preventing soil displacement while promoting seed germination. This method is beneficial in areas with steep slopes or where access for manual planting is difficult.

Both options are environmentally friendly, promoting sustainable vegetation growth and reducing the long-term costs of erosion damage. Incorporating these erosion control strategies in the right-of-way ensures safe, stable environments while minimizing the risk of costly repairs and environmental degradation.



Erosion mats laid over disturbed soil



Applying hydromulch to a bare area of right-of-way

New Display in the Nature Center

by Danika Cox

Environmental Education Coordinator

In the fall, our team got together to discuss ideas for a new exhibit, and after careful thought and consideration, we decided it was time to redo the space display in the basement of the nature center. While that area was well loved, we felt that our visitors would enjoy a change. In the end, we decided to create a space dedicated to our area's wetlands.

The E.E. team spent countless hours putting together and designing a play space that would engage and educate our smallest visitors, kids ages 0-5. To achieve this, we focused on introducing wetland concepts such as water quality, native vegetation and wildlife, life cycles, and animal diets in a way that young children could understand. We also wanted to encourage kids to learn about these themes in a way that also fostered early childhood learning concepts like numbers, shapes, colors, senses, and role-playing.

Once we had a clear idea of what we wanted for the space, we shared our ideas with our Natural Resources team. From there, we collaborated on how to bring those ideas to life. During the cold winter months, the team at the shop was able to utilize materials we already had to aid in the creation of educational displays within the play space and build all displays in-house.

Highlights of the new play area are a tree children can climb into and exit from a wood duck box via a slide, measuring water quality by matching macroinvertebrates, and "feeding" wetland animals to learn what each animal eats. Other educational components include costumes, puzzles, books, hopscotch, toys, wetland sounds, textures, and a mural of wetland plants. However, words do not do this space justice. Bring your family to the nature center and check out our newest exhibit for yourself!



Wetland-themed Kids Play Area in the lower level of the Nature Center; wood duck house slide



Feed the Wetland Animals puzzle block feature, wetland-themed games and puzzle items



Water quality color-matching magnet board; sensory fidget board; wetland plant mural

Animal Ambassador Spotlight: Tiger Salamanders

by Britney Snell
Naturalist

Two salamanders call the nature center their home. Sy and Louis are tiger salamanders, which are notable for their yellow-striped pattern. In North America, tiger salamanders are the largest land-dwelling salamanders. These amazing amphibians go through significant changes in their life cycle. During the early spring, females lay up to 100 eggs in vernal ponds, which are seasonal wetlands. Depending on the environmental conditions, the tadpoles hatch out of the eggs anytime between 2 and 4 weeks. These quick-swimming organisms breathe utilizing gills until their lungs are developed. After 2-5 months, the tadpoles metamorphose into land-dwelling adults. The average life expectancy for a wild salamander is 16 years old. Predators of salamanders include badgers, snakes, and owls. Their diets consist of worms, slugs, snails, and insects.

Sy joined the animal ambassador team in 2014 and is named after author and conservationist Sylvan Runkel. As an Iowa State College graduate in forestry, Sylvan dedicated his time professionally and personally to the outdoors. He worked for the United States Soil Conservation Service and, in his retirement, co-authored numerous wildlife identification books. You can find some of his books in our Henry and Norma Meyer Nature Library on the main level of the nature center.

Louis is our newest member of the animal ambassador team. His name stems from Louis H. Pammel, who taught botany at Iowa State College from 1889 to 1929. Pammel conducted extensive work in plant pathology and grazing efforts in weed control. He also played a critical role in the birth of our Iowa State Park system. Louis served as the first president of the Iowa State Board of Conservation.

While at the nature center, you can find our tiger salamanders in separate enclosures in the basement. Our animal ambassadors are foundational members of the programming of the environmental education department. The animals visit local schools, libraries, and nursing homes in the county. They join in on summer camps and other monthly programming at the nature center. If your organization or classroom would like to meet one of our animal ambassadors, please contact the nature center to set up a program. Otherwise, come say "Hi" to our animals anytime during the open hours at the nature center.



Meet Louis, the newest animal ambassador at the Nature Center



Sy, peeking out to say "Hi"

Spring into Adventure

by Amy Heibult

Community Relations Coordinator

Spring is finally here, and with it the Dickinson County Conservation Board and construction crews have been at work to bring some exciting new parks and features to the community and visitors!

Sherwood Forest Park Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony Scheduled

For the last year and a half, Sherwood Forest Park has been under construction, and a previous wet summer gave its share of setbacks. The DCCB is proud to announce the grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony of Sherwood Forest Park on Thursday, June 12th at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome to join at that time to see and experience the amazing features of the new park.

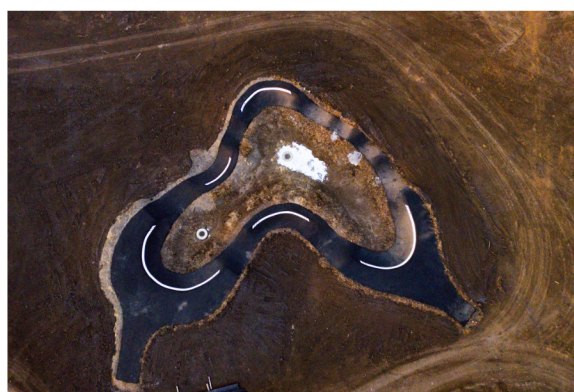
Thoughtful design went into the 75-acre property to conserve remnant prairie and the existing wetland. The space also offers about two miles of scenic biking and walking trails, reconstructed prairie, quiet resting areas with surrounding landscaped gardens featuring selections of prairie plants that boast beautiful foliage and blooms. Bring the entire family to explore the extensive playground featuring naturally-inspired equipment.



Garden promenades with long-lived trees, many of which native to Iowa



Extensive Playground



One of three bike pump tracks



Off-road mountain bike trail

New Plans to Upgrade the Nature Playscape

Over the last few months, Director Lee Sorenson had reached out to a design firm, based out of Canada to create plans for upgrading the Nature Playscape, located just west of the Nature Center's parking lot. Currently in the conceptual design phase, the plans call for a variety of features that support imaginative and creative play, spark curiosity, build confidence, and strengthen social connections. By using natural materials and organic design elements, the playscape invites children to create their own adventures and engage in environmental learning experiences.

The playscape is being designed with families and Iowa's environmental elements in mind, like native plants and natural play features that set apart the Nature Playscape from other playgrounds. It will be a place to run, climb, and explore while learning about the surrounding natural world.

This project would not be possible without your support! As plans have been designed, \$400,000 has been committed to the project. The total is estimated to cost \$2.2 million, and with donor involvement and the community's help, we can raise funds to make this dream come to life!

Whether you contribute financially or help spread the word, every effort counts. Together we can create a lasting legacy for our children and community!



Climber Log Mash; balancing ropes; climbing nets



Swing Garden; carved log furniture;

Stay tuned for our Nature Playscape webpage at www.dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com

For now enjoy a list of key features and upgrades in the playscape:

- Sand Digging area - a large digging zone with an accessible sand table to allow those who use wheel chairs to dig and build alongside their peers.
- Swing Garden - Basket swings nestled among native plantings provide a soothing, rhythmic motion that supports both fun and sensory regulation.
- Woodland Nooks - the firm calls these "Whoville Houses" made from large hollowed out tree trunks; nearby carved log furniture offers a nook to feel secluded in nature a pleasant place to sit.
- Musical Cove - A shaded area where kids can explore sound and rhythm with metal butterfly instruments, chimes, and wooden xylophone.
- Tunnel, Land Bridge and Netted Platform - A gently sloped land bridge that leads up to a central platform with a netted center for lounging, watching the birds in the trees canopy, or conquering new heights.
- Native vegetation - Selected native plant material will be installed throughout the area, supporting pollinators and wildlife and offering the backdrop to feel tucked into nature for play and learning.
- Boardwalk & Wetland Overlooks - A peaceful path through the wetland habitat, encouraging observation, while giving children the option to take a close-up look into the aquatic natural world.

Nature Spotlight: Spring Ephemerals

As you explore the new park or wander a woodland trail this spring, take a moment to look down—you might catch a glimpse of one of Iowa's most fleeting treasures: spring ephemerals. These delicate wildflowers bloom early, often before the trees have fully leafed out, and disappear just as quickly. Keep an eye out for:

Prairie Crocus – light pastel purple, very fuzzy, about four to six inches tall, found on south-facing hills of less disturbed prairies

Prairie Smoke – pinkish feathery seed heads, found in undisturbed mesic to dry prairie

Virginia Bluebells – emerging purple foliage turns green with extending stems and clusters of violet and blue tubular flowers

Dutchman's Breeches – white, pantaloons-shaped flowers that dangle like laundry on a line, found in woodlands

Trout Lilies – with mottled leaves and nodding white blossoms, found in woodlands and near rivers and flood plains

Bloodroot – blooming in brilliant white with golden centers, often one of the first to appear, found in woodlands

These blooms are an important part of Iowa's native ecosystems, providing early food for pollinators and reminding us of the quiet beauty found in our natural spaces.

Prairie Crocus



Prairie Smoke



Dutchman's Breeches



Virginia Bluebells



Bloodroot



White Trout Lily



JANUARY

- 2 Kenue Coffee Hour**
Abbie Gardner
- 8 Nature Tots**
Ants & Beetles
- 11 Winter WIND**
- 16 Homeschool Ed-ventures**
Poo-dunit?
- 24 Family Nature Night**
Lights of the Night



FEBRUARY

- 6 Kenue Coffee Hour**
Maple Syruping
- 12 Nature Tots**
Catfish & Darter
- 20 Homeschool Ed-ventures**
Winter Walk at Pioneer Park
- 22 The Maple Method**
Horseshoe Bend (N side)
- 28 Family Nature Night**
I HeART Nature



MARCH

- 6 Kenue Coffee Hour**
Little Sioux Watershed
- 12 Nature Tots**
Eagle & Fox Snake
- 20 Homeschool Ed-ventures**
Busy Bees
- 28 Family Nature Night**
Signs of Spring



JUNE

- 2 Birding on the Green**
- 5 Kenue Coffee Hour**
Stories of a Conservation Officer
- 11 Nature Tots**
Kangaroo & Lizard
- 11 Nature Explorers**
North America
- 18 Nature Explorers**
South America
- 25 Nature Explorers**
Europe
- 27 Family Nature Night**
Backyard Birds
- 28 Picnic in the Park**
in green space near Westport Schoolhouse

APRIL

- 3 Kenue Coffee Hour**
Paddlefish in West Okoboji
- 9 Nature Tots**
Groundhog & Hedgehog
- 14 Homeschool Ed-ventures**
Day Camp at Horseshoe Bend (\$15/child)
- 25 Family Nature Night**
Night at the Nature Center
- 26 Insectigations**
at Maser Monarch Lodge

MAY

- 1 Kenue Coffee Hour**
Nature Photography
- 5 Birding on the Green**
- 14 Nature Tots**
Ivory Cone Snail & Jellyfish
- 16 Family Nature Night**
Hike at Horseshoe Bend



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JULY

- 7 Birding on the Green**
- 9 Nature Tots**
Mudpuppy & Newt
- 9 Nature Explorers**
Asia
- 10 Kenue Coffee Hour**
The Iowa Bumblebee Atlas
- 10 Bumblebee Citizen Science Training Day**
by Xerces Society
- 15 Survivor: Kenue Park Edition**
- 16 Nature Explorers**
Africa
- 18 Family Nature Night**
All About Abbie Gardner
- 23 Nature Explorers**
Australia
- 30 Nature Explorers**
Antarctica

AUGUST

- 4 Birding on the Green**
- 13 Nature Tots**
Opossum & Penguin
- 13 Nature Explorers**
Your Own Backyard!
- 14 Kenue Coffee Hour**
Delta Waterfowl
- 21 Homeschool Ed-ventures**
Dutch Oven Cooking



SEPTEMBER

- 4 Kenue Coffee Hour**
Planting Native Prairie Flowers
- 5 Dee's Bee & Butterfly Festival**
- 8 Birding on the Green**
- 10 Nature Tots**
Question Mark & Rabbit
- 11 Homeschool Ed-ventures**
Aquatic Adventures at Westport
- 26 Family Nature Night**
Family Fishing at Westport Park



OCTOBER

- 2 Kenue Coffee Hour**
INHF Restoration Efforts in the IGLR
- 8 Nature Tots**
Squirrel & Turtle
- 16 Homeschool Ed-ventures**
River Rendezvous at Horseshoe Bend
- 24 Family Nature Night**
Halloween Hike "Deadly Plants"



NOVEMBER

- 6 Kenue Coffee Hour**
Peace Corps in Paraguay
- 12 Nature Tots**
Umbrella Bird, Vulture, & Wood Duck
- 20 Homeschool Ed-ventures**
Nature at Night
- 21 Family Nature Night**
Reach for the Stars

DECEMBER

- 4 Kenue Coffee Hour**
Plains Indian Hand Talk
- 6 Escape the Nature Center Session 1**
- 10 Nature Tots**
XYZ Dino's
- 13 Escape the Nature Center Session 2**
- 18 Homeschool Ed-ventures**
Can You Navigate Kenue?
- 19 Family Nature Night**
Crafting with Conifers

NO SCHOOL DAY CAMPS

Registration opens 2 months prior to No School Camps

JAN 3 K-3rd Grade
PJ's & Predators

JAN 20 4th-8th Grade
Outdoor Day at
Horseshoe Bend

MAR 17 K-3rd Grade
Green in Nature

APR 18 4th-8th Grade
Meet the Feet



JUNE CAMPS

Theme: Nature Stories

9 AM- 12 PM, \$20 (t-shirt and 1 snack included),
both sessions are identical for each grade level, all
camps are held at the Maser Monarch Lodge unless
stated otherwise

9 + 10 Pre-K Session 1
Hedgehugs

16 + 17 Pre-K Session 2
Hedgehugs

23 + 24 TK/K Session 1
Birding with Campers

30 + JUL 1 TK/K Session 2
Birding with Campers

JUNE CAMPS

Theme: Nature Stories

9 AM- 3 PM, \$40 (includes t-shirt and 2 snacks),
both sessions are identical for each grade level, all
camps are held at the Maser Monarch Lodge unless
stated otherwise

5 + 6 3rd/4th Grade
Nature's Gross at Sherwood Forest Park

12 + 13 1st/2nd Grade Session 1
Under a Pond

19 + 20 1st/2nd Grade Session 2
Under a Pond

26 + 27 5th-8th Grade
Wild Side of Reading

PARTNERSHIP CAMPS

JUN 2 + 3 5th -8th Grd - Clay/Dickinson County Camp
9 AM - 3 PM, \$10 per child

JUL 9 3rd-5th Grd- Wizarding World Camp (ISU Ext./Lakeside Lab)
9 AM - 3 PM, \$15 per child, Register with ISU Extension on February 10th

JUL 22 - 24 Ages 4-6 DCCB/Kindermusik/Lakes Art Center "Giggles"
9 AM - 12 PM, \$85 per child, Register with Kindermusik on March 1st

JUL 31 + AUG 1 Girls in STEM - 6th -9th Grd- DCCB/Lakeside Lab/ISU Ext.
Overnight, 9 AM - 9 AM, \$50 per camper, Register with Lakeside Lab on Feb. 1st

JULY CAMPS - NEXT PAGE >

JULY CAMPS

Theme: "When I grow up..."

9 AM- 12 PM, \$15 (includes 1 snack), all camps will be held in the Maser Monarch Lodge unless otherwise stated.

7 + 8 Pre-K: Pilot

10 + 11 TK/K: Naturalist

14 + 15 1st-3rd Grd: Park Ranger

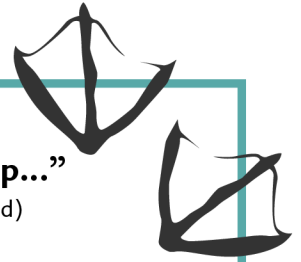
JULY CAMPS

Theme: "When I grow up..."

9 AM- 3 PM, \$15 (2 snacks included)

17 4th-8th Grd: Fisheries Biologist at Westport Park

24 4th-8th Grd: Outdoor Chef at Sherwood Forest Park



PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Kenue Coffee Hour

A free adult program held at Maser Monarch Lodge on the first Thursday of the month at 10:30 AM unless moved for an event or holiday. No registration required.

Birding on the Green

Stroll through Brooks Golf course on a cart, while in search of resident and migratory bird species. Led by local birding expert, Don Vrchota and a Dickinson County Conservation staff member. No registration or bird knowledge is required to join! Meet at 7 AM in the Brooks parking lot on 1st Monday, May - Sept.

Nature Tots

This interactive time is for children ages 2-5 and their chaperone to learn about their ABC's in nature! Sing, dance, and develop foundational concepts about our environment. Preregister online under Programs/Events tab.

Homeschool Ed-ventures

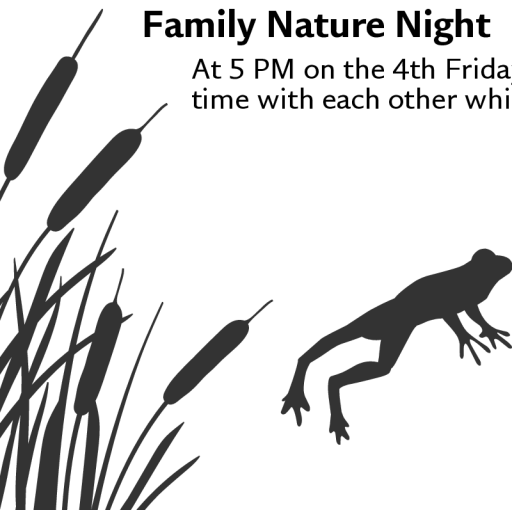
On the 3rd Thursday of the month at 9:30 AM, homeschoolers, ages 5-12, can enjoy an hour and a half of learning about wildlife and the outdoors. Preregister online under Programs/Events tab.

Nature Explorers

Youth, ages 5-12, explore various science topics and discover the natural world in a fun, engaging way! Occurs every Wednesday, mid-June to mid-August at 10:30 AM. Preregister online under Programs/Events tab.

Family Nature Night

At 5 PM on the 4th Friday of the month, families can join in on a night of fun and spending quality time with each other while in nature.





Conservation Board Members

Chair: Eric Stoll

Vice Chair: Douglas Nielsen

Members: Steve Anderson, Robert Waters, Catherine Wegehaupt

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."



Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County

The Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County (CDFC) is an independent, non-profit organization that supports the projects, education, and conservation efforts of Dickinson County. By becoming a member you can personally be involved with improving your local county parks, assist with land acquisition, improve and support the Dickinson County Nature Center, and help conserve native wildlife and habitats.

*Become a member by visiting the Dickinson County Nature Center,
22785 Nature Center Road, Okoboji, IA 51355. You can also go to
www.dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com/foundation.*

Membership Levels:

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 - \$1000+

Projects aided by CFDC funding:

- **Sherwood Forest Park**
- **Augmented Sand Topography Exhibit**
- **Pollinator Paradise**
- **Snowshoes for Winter Programs**
- **Nature Center Parking Lot**
- **and SO MUCH MORE!**

Foundation Board

President: Rebecca Peters
Vice president: Wade Brantley
Secretary: Erika Leupold
Treasurer: Mike McFarlin
Board members: Leah Streeter, Jim Tuel,
Ron Williams, Mary Kay Donovan, Lisa
Leopold, Tom Maser, Linnea Johnson-Scott



Interested in Volunteering?

Volunteers are a vital part of what we do here at the Nature Center! The special part of volunteering here is the many faces that one gets to see everyday. Young or well-seasoned, it is never too early or late to learn something new about our natural world.

Volunteers are the friendly faces at the front desk or at Westport Schoolhouse. Not only do they show visitors the facility, but also can take the opportunity to connect and teach the public. Many volunteers have joined because they also wanted to learn more about our environment, wildlife, and local historical culture. Sharing that passion and knowledge with others is at the core mission of the Dickinson County Conservation Board. We greatly appreciate our volunteers and could not carry on without them.

Monthly volunteer meetings are regularly held on the first Monday of the month at 10:30 a.m., unless moved due to a holiday or weather.

If you have an interest of volunteering at the Nature Center or Westport Schoolhouse, speak with Amy Heibult at the Nature Center or call (712) 336-6352.

