

# Blue Water Nature Notes

Summer 2013

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

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### Visit Our Nature Center

2279 170th Street  
Okoboji, IA 51355  
712.336.6352

### Hours

Tues. - Sat. 10-5 | Sun. 12-5  
Closed Mondays  
Closed Holidays



## Final Note from the Director

It is with sadness and trepidation, and also joy and anticipation, that I am leaving the Dickinson County Conservation Board. I have accepted the position of Deputy Director of the Polk County Conservation Board. My 15-month tenure has been a whirlwind of activity; restoring, reinvigorating and updating our programs and facilities.



There are many exciting projects underway. You will soon see a premier 18-hole disc golf course at Kenue Park. We are working on a new picnic shelter and playground at Orleans Beach. There are exciting acquisitions underway, most along the green-space of the Little Sioux River. Horseshoe Bend County Wildlife Preserve is renovating picnic shelters and campground facilities, and we are expanding hiking and fishing opportunities at Westport Park. Our osprey pair is back, and our new osprey camera is already a HUGE attraction!

Our Nature Center as well is in the middle of fantastic changes including a new entrance road and sign, a huge outdoor deck, a bird sanctuary with multi-level gardens and ponds, an outdoor amphitheater with a sunken stone stage, and an additional environmental education outdoor classroom.

So why am I leaving? This leadership position in Polk County is new, and their recent bond passing will be providing significant resources for water quality and capital projects. With my connections and background in central Iowa, I believe I can be a positive force for change. Additionally, my wife, Kathleen, was actively recruited by Drake University in Des Moines last summer as part of their Early Childhood Education program leadership team, a great position and a huge honor. It will also allow us to be closer to our children and grandchildren. Kathleen and I will still, of course, have our humble home in Arnolds Park as our vacation/retirement home, and plan on enjoying many more years in the Lakes Area.

I am proud of what we have accomplished together in such a short time. My role here has been largely facilitative – the leadership for all these positive changes has been YOU! I'm talking about our volunteers, staff, boards, schools, organizations, businesses, media, etc. The future for Dickinson County's natural resources and outdoor recreation is bright. THANK YOU ALL for the opportunity to serve, and I look forward to our paths continuing to come together into the future.

**Rich Leopold**

# THE RETURN OF THE OKOBOJI OSPREYS

by Charles Vigdal, *Naturalist*

While Osprey and the Iowa Great Lakes area share a long history, their modern story begins in the summer of 2000 when a pair attempted to nest on the baseball field lights at the Spirit Lake High School. In 2003, a truly exciting moment in Iowa's osprey history occurred with the successful rearing of young osprey at the Dickinson County Nature Center, the first ever recorded in Iowa! Since then, Osprey have established themselves as residents of our beautiful lakes.



## Description

The Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) – also known as the sea hawk, fish eagle or fish hawk - is a large raptor that feeds exclusively on live fish that it actively hunts by diving into the water, capable of catching fish up to 3 feet deep. Utilizing unique adaptations such as reversible outer toes and barb-like scales on its feet, an osprey will grip its prey tightly as it

employs its double-jointed wings to take-off vertically from the water.

Ospreys are not in the same family as hawks, eagles or falcons, but are instead in their own family, *Pandionidae*. Weighing up to 4.6 lbs. with a wingspan as wide as 71 in, they have very distinct colors - black or brown feathers on the back with a white underbelly - helping them blend in with the sky and camouflaging them from their fishy prey below. On their head a dark band runs across the eyes acting like natural sunglasses, reducing the glare of the sun while hunting.

Male osprey can be distinguished by their slimmer bodies and narrower wings. Females are larger with a pronounced brownish mottled breast plate. Juveniles sport streaked feathers on their head and barring on the under wings.

## Local History

The osprey has existed in the oral traditions of the Omaha Nation and in fossil records, yet no records have existed in Iowa since the arrival of European settlers. In 2006,

spurred on by the events of 2000 and 2003, the Dickinson County Conservation Board (DCCB) set out to change this. With the help of Pat Schlarbaum and Tim Waltz of the Iowa DNR, Barbara Tagami, a Dickinson County Naturalist, Alan Duis, and many more people, businesses, and nonprofits, osprey chicks from Northern Minnesota were relocated to a hacking tower - a place where you take a juvenile bird to raise until it is able to fly – near the DCCB Nature Center. The plan was to establish resident birds as young osprey imprint on the area in which they fledged. To this day, more than 15 ospreys have been released in Dickinson County.

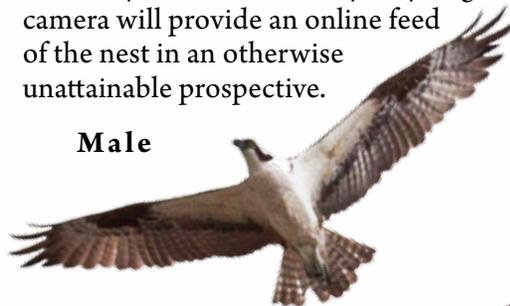


During 2011, our Osprey program was especially successful with the return of multiple pairs of nesting ospreys to the area. Currently, osprey nests are located at the Dickinson County Nature Center, by the Lower Gar outlet and a potential nest near the Okoboji High School baseball diamond.

## The Osprey Cam Project

Inspired by the success of the Decorah Eagle Cam, we decided to highlight our own feathered residents with the debut of the Osprey Nest Camera. Throughout the summer, until they leave us on their yearly migration south, this camera will provide an online feed of the nest in an otherwise unattainable prospective.

Male



Female



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

The Osprey Nest Camera Project began over a year ago when DCCB Naturalist Charles Vigdal and Berkley (Bucky) Bedell set out to raise the necessary funds to make the dream a reality. As fundraising commenced, many individuals and organizations stepped up with support, including the Prairie Lakes Audubon Society, the Bedell World Citizenship Fund and the Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County.

To properly showcase these amazing birds, a state-of-the-art solar-powered camera system was custom built by JES Hardware Solutions, a company specializing in wildlife cameras. The extremely durable camera system is not only capable of full 360-degree pan and tilt movements, it also employs an infrared lighting system that allows visitors to view the nest 24 hours a day without disrupting its inhabitants.

With the assistance of the ITC utility crew, the operation crew from the DCCB, and our tech wizard Alissa Julius,

our dream became reality, culminating in the instillation of the system atop the 60 ft tall nesting platform.

With the camera up and running we have already enjoyed observing them build their nest, and excitedly watched as the female recently laid her eggs. As summer progresses, we look forward to watching them raise their young and teaching them to fly - by mid to late July - before they leave us once again in the fall as they migrate south for the winter.



Image from our online Live Feed, Available at: [www.dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com](http://www.dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com)

## BECOME A MEMBER

AND BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THIS LEGACY

The backbone of the Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County, as with most foundations, is its membership. By becoming a member you are helping the Foundation to do its job which is to enhance and further the efforts of the Nature Center. To those of you who are considering membership, please join. If you are also interested in becoming active in our organization, we are looking for board members and volunteers to help with our annual events and Nature Center programs. The Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County meets the second Monday of every month, at 7 pm in the Nature Center. The public is welcomed to attend.

### Membership Benefits:

- Supporting environmental education, conservation, and operations at the Dickinson County Nature Center
- Playing an active role in making the decisions that affect the ecosystems surrounding the Lakes region
- Discounts on bus tours
- Access to special Members-Only programs

Please visit us online at:  
**[www.cfofdc.com](http://www.cfofdc.com)**  
 to become a member or  
 to learn more about the foundation

### Dickinson County Conservation Board Members

Steve Anderson - Chair  
 Eric Stoll - Vice Chair  
 Kathy Kleen - Member  
 Joan Gronstal - Member  
 William Mueske - Member

### Dickinson County Conservation Board Staff

Richard Leopold - Exec. Director  
 Barbara Tagami - Enviro.  
 Ed Coord./Naturalist  
 Charles Vigdal - Naturalist  
 Brianna Hanson - Nat. Intern  
 Angie Wills - Office Manager  
 Arin Miller - Event/Vol. Coord.  
 Berkley Bedell - Media/  
 Communications Coord.  
 David Booth - Operations Spvr.  
 Corey McCartan - Maint. Tech.  
 Roger Wiese - Conservation Aide  
 Sara Fenske - Conservation Aide  
 Alex Petitti - Conservation Aide  
 John Walters - Recycling Manager  
 Mike Wiese - Recycling Tech.  
 Judy Bissell - Rec. Office Asst.

### Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County Board Members

Jack Jones - President  
 Ron Williams - Vice President  
 Mary Kay Donovan - Treasurer  
 Erica Leupold - Secretary  
 Shirley Rassmussen - Mshp Chair  
 Barbara Tagami - Member  
 Paul Arnold - Member  
 Becky Peters - Member  
 Charles Vigdal - Member  
 JoAnne Sackett - Member  
 Jim Tuel - Member  
 Carol Armstrong - Member

*Our 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 PEOPLE OF THE NATURE CENTER

## MEET THE STAFF

### ANGIE WILLS

As someone that has never left the Lakes Area, I grew up with a strong appreciation for family and friends; spending much of my time working and helping others. In 2006 I became an employee with the Dickinson County Conservation Board as an Office Assistant. Through the years my job responsibilities have grown to include many aspects of the day-to-day operations of the Dickinson County Conservation Board and in 2011 I was promoted to Office Manager. My love of nature, the outdoors and people makes my job with the Dickinson County Conservation Board a perfect fit. When I'm not working I like spending time with friends and family, relaxing and having fun, gardening, watching car races and comedies, camping, golfing, or spending time with my pets and my other farm animals.



## MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS



### Ruth Nolting - 12 years

Ruth has been with us since the Nature Center was moved to its current location in 2001. Originally from Waukon, IA, Ruth earned a degree in elementary education from the University of Dubuque. Ruth taught in Oaklawn, Chicago, Cedar Falls, and in the Benton Community School District in Iowa, before relocating to Spirit Lake where, along with her husband Milton, she developed and ran CenLa Camp Ground for 25 years. She also taught in Spirit Lake for 7 years. In Ruth's free time she likes to support school events, tend to her vegetable and flower gardens, preserve foods in various ways, try new recipes, travel to visit friends and family or see historical sights, play bridge and read. She also actively volunteers for the First Presbyterian Church, where she teaches a class for the 5th grade youth program, and is a member and secretary of the RSVP Voluntary Action Center board. She enjoys volunteering because she likes to learn new things, she feels she is filling a niche that is needed, and if we didn't have volunteers we wouldn't have opportunities for kids.



### Diana Sanders - 1 year

Diana is a Spirit Lake native. She received her Bachelors in Science degree for Education in Winona, MN and is certified in Early Childhood Development. After earning her degree Diana and her husband, John, moved to Monticello, IA where she owned a preschool for 13 years. In 1984 Diana returned to Okobojo with her family, John and their two children Moya and Aaron, moving back into the same house that she had grown up in! John began teaching in Arnolds Park while Diana took up a position in Estherville in the gifted and talented program, a position she held for 26 years. When she's not spending time with her family, Diana likes to travel, learn about genealogy, gardening, kayaking, and golfing. Diana also volunteers for the Hall of Achievement for Spirit Lake Schools, Grace Lutheran Church, and is active in the Retired Teachers Organization. She enjoys volunteering at the Nature Center because it allows her to meet new people and use her background in science.

# JOIN OUR EFFORTS & BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

## NOTE FROM ARIN MILLER

I have been with the Nature Center for just over a year and I continue to enjoy what the volunteers teach me each and every day. The main thing I love about my job is the people. I have met so many amazing individuals in this community, each as unique as the last. There is at least one thing they all have in common though, their love for nature.

Communication is a big part in any relationship. I get to see one or two volunteers every day during the work-week, and my favorite part is sitting down and getting to know each one of them individually. These are relationships that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. The Nature Center is very fortunate to have such dedicated and outstanding volunteers!

Thank you for all that you do and all that you are!

**Arin Miller**  
Volunteer/Event  
Coordinator



If you are interested in volunteering or have questions, please contact me:

**W. 712.336.6352 | C. 712.330.2348**  
**arinmiller@co.dickinson.ia.us**

Additional Information is available online:  
**[www.dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com](http://www.dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com)**

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### **Butterfly Festival : August 31st 10:00 - 3:00 pm**

- Greeting visitors
- Helping with childrens crafts and activities
- Butterfly tagging
- Treat making
- Setting up and tearing down

### **Green Thumb Gardening Group**

*We will start June 5th, meeting every Wednesday through the end of August, gardening from 8:00 - 10:00 am at all the different gardens that the Nature Center and Kenue Park maintain, including:*

- Butterfly garden
- Vegetable garden, wild plant garden
- Westport Schoolhouse
- Various potted plants

*Breakfast items such as muffins, breakfast bars, rolls, juice and coffee are provided.*

### **Front Desk:**

- Greet visitors
- Answer the phone
- Give tours
- Help with simple desk work tasks
- Help prepare for programs and events

### **Butterfly House:**

- Educate the public about monarchs
- Maintain monarch enclosure
- Organize the butterfly house

### **Westport Schoolhouse:**

*Opens: June 11th, 2013 | Tues. - Sat. 10:00 - 2:00 pm*

- Greet Visitors
- Learn about one room schoolhouses
- Educate the public about one room schoolhouses
- Tell visitors your experiences if you went to a one room schoolhouse

## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Diana Sanders  
Paul Arnold  
Shirley Rasmussen  
Nick Donkersloot  
Harlan Christenson

Jack Jones  
Gloria Ditsworth  
Pam Denherder  
Ruth Nolting  
Sue Boettcher

Leah Streeter  
Barbara Falk  
Wendall Hansen &  
Bird Haven  
William Tuel

Gerry Shuck  
Lianna Vermeys

# 2013 NATURE CENTER SUMMER CALENDAR

Come enjoy programs at the Dickinson County Nature Center, Dee and Kate's Butterfly House, Nature Explore Play areas, Hands-on Rock Sculpture area, Nature Trails for jogging, walking and baby buggies and a hundred-year old one-room schoolhouse. Explore the outdoors in our tallgrass prairie, wetlands and bur oak savannah, or climb the kame for a bird's eye view of the landscape. Travel "the Art on the Trail" bike path connecting the Pearson Lakes Art Center to Kenue Park and the Nature Center. Bring a lunch or roast hotdogs on our outdoor fire pits. There's plenty of FREE FAMILY FUN to be had for an engaging, memorable and enlightening outdoor experience.

## JUNE

- 3| Birding on the Greens | 7:00 am**  
*With Ed Thelen*  
Meet at the Brooks Golf Course Pro Shop  
1201 Brooks Park Dr, Okobojo, IA 51355
- 4| Birds of Prey | 6:00 pm**  
*with Katie van der Linden, Buena Vista County Naturalist*  
Katie will bring live birds of prey and share information about their history and life
- 6| Young Nature Explorers | 10:00-11:00 am**
- 7| Kayak a Wetland | 8:30-12:00 pm**  
*Guest Kayaker, Tim Waltz, IDNR*  
Jemmerson Slough
- 12| Young Naturalists | 1:00-2:15 pm**
- 14| Kayak a Wetland | 8:30-12:00 pm**  
*Guest Kayaker: Derek Namamy, Urban Conservationist*  
Center Lake
- 18| Wild Edibles & Medicinal Plants | 6:00pm**  
*with Barbara Tagami, DCCB Naturalist*  
Learn all about the virtues of "weeds" growing in your own backyard and sample delicious wild edibles! **No registration required.**
- 20| Young Nature Explorers | 10:00-11:00 am**
- 21| Kayak a Wetland | 8:30-12:00 pm**  
Pearl Lake, Jackson, MN
- 27| Young Naturalists | 1:00-2:15 pm**
- 28| Kayak a Wetland | 8:30-12:00pm**  
*Guest Kayaker, Mike Hawkins, IDNR*  
Angler's Bay
- 29| Hike/Bike the Trails | 1:00 pm**

## JULY

- 1| Birding on the Greens | 7:00 am**  
*With Ed Thelen*  
Meet at the Brooks Golf Course Pro Shop  
1201 Brooks Park Dr, Okobojo, IA 51355
- 2| School Days in the Old One-Room Schoolhouse | 6:00 pm**  
*with Jerry Wiekamp*  
Take a trip down memory lane as we reminisce a era of time that reflected one of the true values of the USA- Education

**8-11 | Microscopic Studies Camp**  
**Mon - Thurs | 12:30 - 4:30 pm**  
*with Jerry Wiekamp, Retired Science Teacher*

**19 | American Indian: Life on the Plains**  
**All Day**  
*with Guest Speakers and DCCB Naturalists*

**11 | Young Naturalists | 1:00-2:15 pm**

**20 | Bus Tour: American Indian-History and Culture Tour | 7:00 am - 9:00 pm**  
*with Gary Phillips, professor of Environmental Studies, ILCC*

**12 | Kayak a Wetland | 8:30-12:00 pm**  
*with guest Kayaker, John Wills, Clean Water Alliance Coord.*  
East/West Hottes Lake

**25 | Young Naturalists | 1:00-2:15 pm**

**16 | Return of the Iowa Ospreys | 6:00 pm**

**26 | Kayak a Wetland | 8:30-12:00 pm**  
Little Swan Lake

**18 | Young Nature Explorers | 10:00-11:00 am**

**27 | Hike/Bike the Trails | 1:00 pm**

**19 | Kayak a Wetland | 8:30-12:00 pm**  
Marble Lake

**30 | Summer Constelations | 6:00 pm**

## AUGUST

**1 | Young Nature Explorers | 10:00-11:00 am**

**13 | Trees of Northwest Iowa**  
*with Peter van der Linden, Executive Director, Iowa Lakeside Labs and co-authored with Donald Farrar, "Forest and Shade Trees of Iowa"*

**2 | Kayak a Wetland | 8:30-12:00 pm**  
*with Catherine Sereg, Silver Lake Watershed Coord.- SWCD*  
Silver Lake, Lake Park, IA

**15 | Young Nature Explorers | 10:00-11:00 am**

**5 | Birding on the Greens | 7:00 am**  
*With Ed Thelen*  
Meet at the Brooks Golf Course Pro Shop  
1201 Brooks Park Dr, Okoboji, IA 51355

**16 | Kayak a Wetland | 8:30-12:00 pm**  
Miniwashita Lake

**8 | Young Naturalists | 1:00-2:15 pm**

**27 | Wild & Edible | 6:00 pm**  
*with Naturalist Barbara Tagami*  
**No registration required**

**9 | Kayak a Wetland | 8:30-12:00 pm**  
*Guest Kayaker- Jane Shuttleworth, Iowa Lakeside Lab*  
Little Miller's Bay

**31 | Monarch Butterfly Festival**  
**10:00 - 3:00 pm**  
**No registration required**

Our summer programs tend to fill -up, so we ask that you please **register in advance** for all programs, unless noted. This will not only ensure your participation, it will also assist us in providing you with the greatest possible experience. For additional information, inquires, updates, or to register, we encourage you to contact a member of our staff at:

**712.336.6352 or [naturecenter@co.dickinson.ia.us](mailto:naturecenter@co.dickinson.ia.us)**

or visit us online at:

**[www.dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com](http://www.dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com)**

# 2013 SUMMER PROGRAMS & SPECIAL EVENTS



## *Kayak a Wetland*

Join us for a delightful day of gliding silently across one of the regions countless beautiful lakes and wetlands, while you are provided with an in-depth understanding of the ecosystem you are paddling through. We will explore a new location nearly every Friday with a variety of exciting guest speakers joining us throughout the summer. Please check the calendar for specific information.

We meet at the Nature Center at 8:30am and caravan to the site. Kayaks are available for \$35/person for anyone over the age of 10 but are limited, so please register to ensure your participation. If you own your own kayak or canoe, we invite you to join us free of charge but still request that you register in advance.

## *Young Naturalists: 2nd - 6th Grade*

Designed to foster and encourage an appreciation for our natural world. Our naturalists will explore a variety of topics geared to stimulate the investigative and observational skills of your young science enthusiast, providing them with a new prospective in viewing the natural world.

**Class sizes are limited so please register in advance.**



## *Young Nature Explorers: Pre-school - 1st Grade*

This program is for your adventurous little pre-scholars. Providing a “hands-on” experience that is sure to captivate and excite their young minds, this program is designed to encourage the curiosity of your Young Nature Explorer by exploring the natural world in our own back yard.

**Parents must attend with students**

**Class sizes are limited so please register in advance.**



## *Birding on the Greens*

Hop in a golf cart and join us as local bird expert Ed Thelen takes us on a tour Brooks Golf Course, an Audubon certified course, in search of our fine feathered friends. Be sure to bring your binoculars, spotting scope, and/or camera to get the most out of the morning. Binoculars are available, but quantities are limited so be sure to register and reserve your pair.



## *Hike/Bike the Trails*

Add some excitement to your bike around by joining our naturalists on an adventurous hike or bike ride, identifying plants and wildlife along the Spine trail.

## MICROSCOPIC STUDIES CAMP: 4TH - 6TH GRADERS

July 8 - 11 | Mon - Thur 12:30 - 4:30 pm

with Jerry Wiekamp, Retired Science Teacher

If you like to investigate the world in a different way, this is an opportunity for your student to explore mini-worlds through microscopes. Students will make slides, tromp in local habitats to collect specimens and take home a mini microscope and slides to continue investigations. **Limited to 10 students.**



## AMERICAN INDIAN LIFE ON THE PLAINS

July 19 | All Day



with Guest Speakers and DCCB Naturalists

Help with raising a Tepee, learn about the American Indian tribes of a by-gone era and join us for an enlightening day of activities, stories and more!

## AMERICAN INDIAN: HISTORY AND CULTURE BUS TOUR

July 20 | 7:00 am - 9:00 pm



with Gary Phillips, professor of Environmental Studies, ILCC

Join us for this excursion to Pipestone National Monument, Blue Mounds and Jeffers Petroglyphs as we explore the history and culture of the indigenous people of our area.

## MONARCH BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL

August 31 | 10:00 - 3:00 pm

Come and enjoy our Butterfly Gardens and activities at Dee and Kate's Butterfly House. This festival event will enamor you with Monarch Butterflies. This astonishing insect is on its way to Mexico. Learn about their lifecycle, their incredible journey, make a craft, and much more! We will be tagging the butterflies as part of the University of Kansas Monarch Watch program. **FREE FAMILY FUN!**



# BUILDING USE OPPORTUNITIES

With summer upon us, the time to plan the season's events is now. From family reunions to weddings, or even just a BBQ with some visiting friends, the Dickinson County Conservation Board has a range of facilities, both indoor and outdoor, that can adapt to meet your needs, and for a price that's hard to beat! Book with us now and feel secure in knowing your event will be one that no one will soon forget.

## DICKINSON COUNTY NATURE CENTER

2279 170th Street | Okoboji, IA 51355

The Nature Center offers a variety of different indoor and outdoor options to meet your size and/or budget needs. This new building allows for a capacity as large as 175 people and offers: chairs, tables, 2 full kitchen with all the basics, wireless internet, projector, projection screen, and VCR/DVD/CD player with each building usage.

**Costs are based on the size (how many rooms you require) and duration of your event, so please contact me for an estimate.**



Upper Facility



Upper Level Kitchen



Lower Facility



Lower Level Kitchen

## HORSESHOE BEND PARK

1924 240th Street | Milford, IA 51351



### *Picnic Shelter - \$25 per day*

Located to the North of the Little Sioux River, this facility has 8 over-head doors for ventilation, electrical outlets, grills and potable water nearby. Inside there are several picnic tables set-up for your use with a playground and restrooms a short distance away.

### *Warming House - \$60 per day*

This newly remodeled two-room shelter is located to the South of the Little Sioux River and has walk-in doors for ventilation, electrical outlets, a restroom and water nearby.

One room has several picnic tables set-up for your use and the other room has a wood burning fireplace (electrical heat is also available) with a lot of open space for additional tables and chairs. A large deck is attached to the North side of this building providing additional space.



**For additional information, availability or to make a reservation, please contact:**  
**Angie Wills | [awills@co.dickinson.ia.us](mailto:awills@co.dickinson.ia.us) | 712.338.4786 or 712.336.6352 ext. 4**  
Reservation forms are also available at the front desk of the Dickinson County Nature Center

# OUR PARKS

## **Dickinson County Nature Center**

**2279 170th St. | Okoboji, Iowa 51355**

Open to the public year round, the Nature Center provides visitors with the opportunity to experience and learn about the ecosystems that encompass the Iowa Great Lakes region through experiencing our interchanging displays, library and/or one of the many exciting programs designed to encourage environmental awareness and foster an appreciation for the area. Outdoor and wildlife enthusiasts will enjoy the trails that wind through our restored prairie and wetland, playing host to a variety of wildlife and native plants that change with the seasons, including the resident Osprey that nest here each summer. During the summer months we open the Butterfly House and garden and the Young Naturalist Explore Area.

## **Kenue Park**

**2251 170th St. | Okoboji, Iowa 51355**

Within this 35-acre park, you will find meadows, oak savanna forest, and a spectacular overlook from the top of a glacial kame- a large bluff remaining of a river running into a glacial hole. Centrally located in the heart of Dickinson County, this park has picnic areas, fire pits, charcoal grills, nature trails, and modern bathrooms.

## **Orleans Beach**

**25040 140th St. | Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360**

Bordering the Big Spirit Lake spillway and across the street from the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery, this park offers a long sand beach. There is also a boat ramp, playground, and restroom facilities available.

## **Horseshoe Bend County Wildlife Preserve**

**1924 240th St. | Milford, Iowa 51351**

This 180-acre preserve offers an extensive trail system winding through the river valley of the Little Sioux River, and upland forests, meadows, marshes, and oxbow ponds. These diverse habitats are host to a number of creatures including deer, beaver, woodpeckers, songbirds, and hawks. Facilities include a “warming shelter” with a spectacular river valley outlook, a playground, wildlife-viewing blind, aesthetic footbridge spanning the river, modern bathroom facilities, camping (12 sites), and a picnic area. The river also offers fishing, and canoe accesses.

## **Judd Wildlife Area**

**1987 250th Street | Milford, Iowa 51351**

The 236-acre wildlife area is a wonderful destination for an enlightening and enjoyable nature hike. Located

along the Little Sioux River, this area includes large open meadows, a winding prairie stream, and a softwood forest along the water’s edge. Prairie birds such as Bobolinks, Dickcissels, and Grasshopper Sparrows are numerous, along with many other species of wildlife. There are also hunting, fishing, and canoe accesses.

## **Westport Park**

**1175 230th St. | Everly, Iowa 51338**

This county gravel pit has been converted into a fishing pond and picnic area. Small stands of ancient cottonwoods show evidence of active beavers, along with other aquatic plant and animal life. This pond once produced a state record bass!

## **Superior Marsh Wildlife Area**

**3380 130th St. | Superior, Iowa 51363**

This area is a fine example of marsh and upland meadow habitat within the Swan Lake watershed. This 40-acre area currently has a parking area, but no facilities or trails. There are also wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities.

## **Spring Run Shooting Range**

**1776 272nd Ave | Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360**

A shooting range and target practice area with distances at: 25, 50, 100, & 200 yards

## **Twin Forks Canoe Access**

**1641 170th St. | Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360**

No available facilities

## **Spooky Hollow Canoe Access**

**1823 210th St. | Milford, Iowa 51351**

No available facilities

## **Dickinson County Recreational Trails**

**23rd St. and Lincoln Ave | Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360**

These trails wind throughout the Iowa Great Lakes Region and are excellent avenues for bikers, hikers, and runners. The Spine trail is 7 miles of two-way traffic winding through the picturesque scenery of the Iowa Great Lakes. The DCCB maintains a total of 25 miles. The trail traverses through practically every natural habitat within Dickinson County. The trail system is a safe place for family or solitary enjoyment as the path winds along rural, community and nature areas. Additional information, including trailheads and parking areas, is available at the Nature Center and online.

## **Coming Soon: Golden Oaks Disc Golf Course!**



Dickinson County Conservation Board Nature Center  
2279 170th st.  
Okoboji, IA 51355

