

# Sioux County Conservation Board

4051 Cherry Ave, Hawarden, IA

siouxcountyparks.org

712-552-1047

## Newsletter Update

We are excited to be moving forward with updating the design and layout of our newsletter to fit in your email box or your mailbox! We are hoping to move things fully this winter season. If you want to be added to the email list please send us an email at: [conservation@siouxcounty.org](mailto:conservation@siouxcounty.org). If you wish to continue receiving a paper copy and have not notified us please let us know that as well. If you don't contact us you will not continue to receive our newsletter! Contact us today!

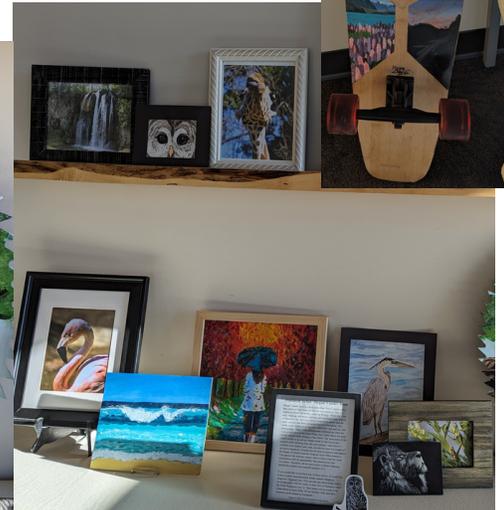
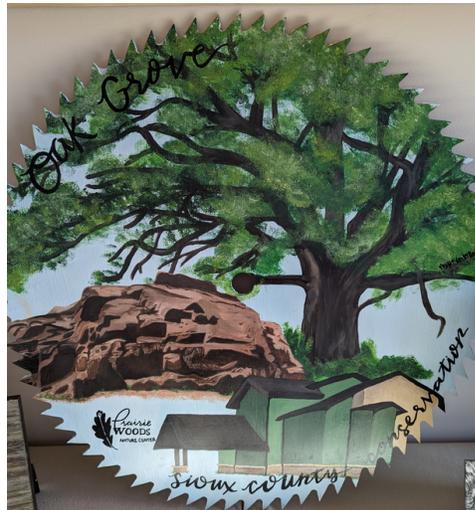


## Historic Photo Call

Oak Grove Park turns 100 this year and we are excited to celebrate this park! However we need your help!! If you have any photographs of your family enjoying the park between 1924-2023 we would love to see them and add them to our artist wall project. Do not be shy we know there is a lot of good memories of Oak Grove out there!

## Featured Artist at Prairie Woods Nature Center

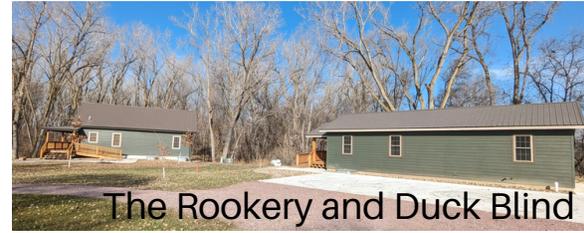
Megan Vander Kooi is a local artist from Sioux County and a past intern of Oak Grove for the past two summers. She is a student at Dordt University, studying Biology. While she's not busy studying, she enjoys painting and sketching many objects of interest to her. Her main point of interest is nature and the many animals that have influenced her love for nature. The media types on display are acrylic, watercolor, pen and ink, and photography. Many of the photographs exhibited are from her work as an intern at the Great Plains Zoo, while others are small details noticed when hiking in Oak Grove. The focal point of the entire exhibit is an old saw blade found in Oak Grove and painted while interning here this past summer. Oak Grove's resident owls, Kahoot and Luna, can also be seen in a couple of art pieces displayed. Overall, her art aims to discover and admire the beauty of creation and the Original Artist Who created it. This passion for animals, nature, and art stems from her close relationship with her grandfather who passed away last November. Therefore, all her pieces have a deeper meaning behind the creation and intended purpose of it. Megan's work will be displayed through mid January.



# Park Updates

Camping season is officially over in Sioux County well at least in most of our parks! We have a few remaining at the Turkey Ridge Campground that are planning on staying out for a little while yet. With camping season closed and the anticipated wait for winter weather to arrive the staff has been busy throughout the county prepping buildings for the cold weather. Restrooms have been winterized and closed for the season. They have also gotten their summer equipment tuned up and tucked away for the next couple of months. In addition to prepping for the winter weather and putting things away they have also been cleaning out their shops making space for them to work on projects this winter.

The Big Sioux Recreation Area staff has been busy wrapping up the final details for the Duck Blind cabin which is now open and available for reservation. This cabin sits along side the Rookery Cabin. Both cabins are larger multi-bedroom facilities that provide ample space for family to enjoy a snowed in winter retreat or a busy summer gathering. Camping is located in the campground near by, however it is not allowed in the same space as the cabins. Reservations are accepted for select sites.



The Rookery and Duck Blind



The Sandy Hollow Recreation Area crew has been busy doing dirt work and helping prep the new campground camping sites. These nicer days have been great to get the concrete poured and dirt work completed around them. We currently have ten of the sixteen sites poured as of writing this newsletter, and are hopeful the spring will be a good grass growing season to allow campers on the sites early on next season. These new sites will primarily be for our seasonal stay campers and construction campers, opening up the sites previously used for our long term stay for our regular campers coming in.

At Oak Grove the maintenance crew has been busy working on marking the fence borders throughout the new additions. With the new addition to the south of the park we are making plans to allow that to be open for controlled access hunting. Pheasants hunters will have to register for an am or pm hunt of this property and may only hunt it up to twice a season. Registration must be done online three days prior to the hunt and must fill out form available on the website to be a valid hunt. Deer hunting will be allowed as well, this will be primitive weapons only, there will be no party hunting, pushing or driving of deer on this property. Turkey Hunting will also be allowed but must obey all state laws. Additional details and rules will be available on our website once we open this location for hunting. As of writing this newsletter this site is closed to hunting. The north addition to Oak Grove will remain as a refuge along with the rest of the park.



Winterfeld Boating and Fishing Area by Rock Valley has seen recent improvements of its boat ramp. We have worked with the City of Rock Valley for a walking trail along the north side of this property and have added a new boat ramp and launch. We are hopeful make this area easier to access for boats.

We hope you have been out enjoying your local county parks with this mild season we have had so far we look forward to seeing you next summer out and about.

**2024 Park Passes** are now available. Pick yours up at the administration office or fill out an envelope at one of the entrance booths.

# Environmental Education Programs

Pre-registration is required for most events, please visit our website to learn more about the programs or register.

Programs held at the Prairie Woods Nature Center are indicated by:  All other program location noted in description. Day of cancellation will be posted on our Facebook and on 93.9 FM.

## January 16- Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)

**10 am, 12:30 pm or 2:30 pm**

Independent Seniors! Are you looking for a great place to gather with friends? Come enjoy coffee, treats, fellowship and a short nature presentation.

Topic: Bird Feeders

## January 24- Wild Child Nature Series

**10 am or 1 pm**

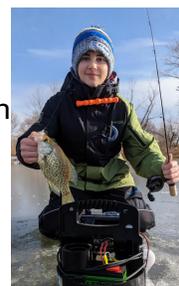
Attention animal and nature lovers ages 2 through 5! Our Wild Child Nature Series is a one-hour nature- based experience that will get your child exploring, moving, playing and using their senses. An adult is required to join child(ren). New topic each month!

## January 27- Ice Fishing Clinic

**Sandy Hollow Recreation Area**

**9-11:30 am**

We can't wait to see you and your family on the ice! Bring a sack lunch or snacks and a bucket to sit on and we will provide the rest! We will pre- drill the holes, provide bait, poles and discuss the types of fish you may catch, and equipment being used. We will feature guest instructor, 10th grader Rowan Oostra from Sioux Center. Rowan is an avid fisherman and is a Clam Outdoors Pro. He is excited to share his interests, tools and tips, and knowledge on this favorite past time. Entry fee to the park is waived during the time of event. Those age 16 and over actively fishing must have a valid Iowa fishing license.



## February 2- Owl Prowl

**6-8 pm**

February is a great time for hearing owls during their courtship and egg-laying season. We will meet for an hour of learning about owls. Then we will spend the second hour hiking and calling for owls including barred, great horned and screech owls. Dress warmly and feel free to bring a flashlight covered with a red cloth or cellophane. Sioux County's very own live barred and great horned owls will make an appearance!

## February 10- Walking Stick Program Part 1

**9:30- 11:30 am**

Back by popular demand! Ron Oostra of Sioux Center will be sharing his woodworking skills in this workshop. You will get instructions and start to personalize your walking stick during Part 1 and have the opportunity to come back to finish your project on Feb 17th during Part 2. You may choose to gather your own stick (must be dried for 2 weeks, no ash) or choose from sticks we will have on hand. This lesson includes how to choose a walking stick, how to personalize it, and how to treat it. All supplies will be provided and limited to 12 people, course is for all ages (14 and under must have an adult to help).

## February 17- Walking Stick Program Part 2

**9:30- 11:30 am**

Gather back to finish your walking stick! Or, if you were not able to attend part 1 you may join us today and get started!

## February 20- Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)

**10:00 am, 12:30 pm or 2:30 pm**

Independent Seniors! Are you looking for a great place to gather with friends? Come enjoy coffee, treats, fellowship and a short nature presentation.

Topic: Maple Tapping

## February 21- Wild Child Nature Series

**10 am or 1 pm**

Attention animal and nature lovers ages 2 through 5! Our Wild Child Nature Series is a one-hour nature- based experience that will get your child exploring, moving, playing and using their senses. An adult is required to join child(ren). New topic each month!

**February 24- Pine Needle Basket Class** **10 am- 2 pm**  
 Learn one of the oldest forms of basket weaving in the world. We will make small pine needle baskets and enjoy soup and comradery over lunch. Fee to cover supplies will be pay at the door, limited to 14 people. Join us for the whole day, or a part of the day to just get started!

**March 16- Fossil, Artifact, Rock and Bone Day** **1:30- 3:30pm**  
 Do you have a fossil, artifact or bone you would like identified? How about a ROCK you would like to show us? Bring it out, and we will attempt to help you identify it! Dr. James Mahaffey, a retired professor from Dordt University, will be available with his collection and resources to share with you.

**March 19- Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)** **10 am, 12:30 pm or 2:30 pm**  
 Independent Seniors! Are you looking for a great place to gather with friends? Come enjoy coffee, treats, fellowship and a short nature presentation.  
 Topic: Medical Plant Uses

**March 23- Hunter Safety Field Day** **8:30-noon or 1-4:30 pm**  
 Those ages 11 and over are invited to join us for a hunter safety field day. This half-day class will cover firearm safety, hunter ethics, hunting laws and much more. To register and be ready for class you will need to register online at: [www.gooutdoorsiowa.com](http://www.gooutdoorsiowa.com) **AND** take the online portion of the course at [www.hunter-ed.com](http://www.hunter-ed.com) (there is a fee through the Iowa DNR). Please dress for indoor and outdoor weather.

**March 27- Wild Child Nature Series** **10 am or 1 pm**  
 Attention animal and nature lovers ages 2 through 5! Our Wild Child Nature Series is a one-hour nature- based experience that will get your child exploring, moving, playing and using their senses. An adult is required to join child(ren). New topic each month!

## 2024 Camping and Cabin

As we look into 2024 for camping and travel adventures, remember we might have the perfect place to host your next family gathering or adventure. Oak Grove has four separate cabins available during the summer months, two which stay open year round. Along with larger enclosed shelter spaces and camping site reservations available. Making it perfect for families needing multiple spaces for their crew. We also have our two newer cabins at the Big Sioux Recreation Area which offer ample space, multiple guest rooms making it perfect for larger families and gatherings. With campground and lake recreation nearby be sure to check it out. Sandy Hollow Recreation offers ample camping space with the expanded campground to open this coming season and an enclosed shelter. No price changes for any facilities this coming season. We are excited to announce we are planning on taking credit card payment starting this year! I know many have asked for this over the past couple of years and we have things in the works to have it ready to offer you that payment option. We will be offering this availability with assistance of entrance booth and Nature Center staff. Park Rangers will be able to assist after hours as they are available.

<u>Oak Grove Cabins</u>			<u>Camping</u>	
Bluegill Bungalow & Foxes Den	\$80/night	Open Year Round	Primitive Site	\$17/night
Eagles Nest & Whitetail Cabin	\$80/night		Electric Only	\$22/night
<u>Big Sioux Rec. Area Cabins</u>			Electric/Water	\$24/night
Duck Blind & Rookery	\$175/night off season		Electric/Water/Sewer	\$26/night
	\$225/night peak season			

<u>Enclosed Rentals</u>			
Alton Roadside Park Shelter	\$45	Oak Grove Lodge, Oak Grove	\$150, plus deposit
Big Sioux Shelter, Oak Grove Park	\$35, plus deposit	Sandy Hollow Lodge, Sandy Hollow	\$250, plus deposit

# Friends of Foundation Update

A few weeks of this past November we were able to host the International Wolf Center Traveling Exhibit from Ely, Minnesota. This exhibit show cased six different wolves, along with two additional canine related taxidermies. This display brought us full body mounts of: an Arctic Wolf, Coyote, Great Plains Wolf, Mexican Wolf, Red Wolf, Rock Mountain Wolf. We also had our taxidermy fox and Timber Wolf fur on display. This displayed filled our Conservation Corner with a lot of ohs and ahs for the three weeks that it was here. Many people took advantage of the nice weather and came out to see this impressive display.

The friends group has also helped with purchase of youth waders for water related programs, bird id books, a popcorn machine, kayak transporter, along with other miscellaneous program additions and needs.

If you are interested in becoming a friends of the Sioux County Conservation Foundation check out our website for more information.



# 3rd Annual Christmas Tree Contest

This year we have four trees on display for this annual Prairie Woods Nature Center Christmas Tree Contest sponsored by the Sioux County Conservation Friends of Foundation. Ornaments have been voted on by the friends group for best decoration. Trees have been voted on by visitors to the nature center, each visit got a vote.

Come out on Christmas Break and vote for our class, school or just your favorite tree. Trees are on display through the Saturday after New Year. This years trees and sponsors are: Spaulding Catholic by Van Engelenhoven Agency; Rock Valley Community School District by Siouxland Machine; Sioux Center Christian by Sioux Center Christian School; and Hull Christian by The Grain House and B. Fierce Boutique. The schools did a great job incorporating pine cones into their designs this year.



## Distinguished Conservationists

- Anonymous
- Den Hartog Industries
- Lorna's Light
- Harold & Darlene Westra

## Memorials Given in Honor

- Anonymous
- Arlyn Kleinwolterink
- Carl Reinking
- John & Grad Van Ballegooyen
- Lyle & Jan Thompson



## Foundation Members

- Brian Van Engen- Chairperson
- Dawn De Wit- Member
- Stan Hoekstra- Treasure
- Cal De Ruyter- Member
- Gordon Pottebaum- Member
- Greg Hansen- Member
- Stan Visser- Secretary
- Lena Vollink- Member
- Mike Wiggen- Member



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4051 Cherry Ave

Hawarden, IA 51023

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Staff	Board Members
<p>Robert Klocke- Executive Director  Sunday Ford- Assistant Director/EE Coordinator  Jessica Van Oort- Office Assistant  Myron Dekkers- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech- Oak Grove  Zach Weyer- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech- Sandy Hollow Rec. Area  Alex Lynott- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech- Big Sioux Rec. Area  Damon Anderson- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech.- Sandy Hollow Rec. Area  Sarah Davelaar- Naturalist  Ryan List- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech.- Oak Grove  Robert Upton- Park Ranger/Main. Tech- Big Sioux Rec. Area</p>	<p>Gordon Pottebaum- Chairperson  Dave Meylink- Vice Chairperson  Jerry Jensen- Secretary  Josh Boersma- Member  Jason Smith- Member</p> <hr/> <p>Conservation Board meetings are held 6:30 pm the first Wednesday of the month in the Conservation Corner at the Prairie Woods Nature Center</p>