

Sioux County Conservation Newsletter



Volume 25, Issue 2

Fall 2016

Conservation Parks Updates:

Oak Grove

Many things have been happening in the parks from major wind storm clean up to general daily maintenance. In June Oak Grove experienced a wind storm which brought down many trees both large and small. Clean up of the trees brought out all the chainsaws and tractors as we cut the trees up to be used as firewood and drug the remaining branches to our burn pile. Majority of the clean-up was done the week after the storm.

Maintenance staff has been busy mowing the lawns, cleaning facilities, and trimming the tree line of dead trees. Other trees deeper into the woodland will be left to create wildlife habitat.

Our largest project this summer has been tearing down and rebuilding the bridge on the trail behind the Oak Grove Lodge. This bridge was built back in the 1950's by the scouts. It has stood the test of time however, it was decided that it was time for a new bridge due to wood decay and safety concerns. Removal and building of the new bridge has proved interesting and challenging as all equipment and material have had to be hauled in by small trailer loads on the back of our gators, or hauled in by hand.

This August we look forward to having our main road in the park resurfaced. This may affect some of those that wish to camp; however, we anticipate it to be short lived. K18 or Cherry Ave is scheduled to be completed around the same time.

Big Sioux Recreation Area:

By: Alex Lynott-Park Ranger

2016 was a year of project logistics and planning for advancement in the park next year. Nineteen sites and a new comfort station in the new campground will allow several more families to enjoy their time together while utilizing the park! Thirteen of these sites will be full hook-ups, six will have water and electric, and a dumping station will be available near the exit. The goal is to have this campground ready to go for Memorial Day 2017!

Another project being planned for next spring is a paved bike trail connecting the city of Hawarden's bike trail to a paved route through the Big Sioux Recreation Area. This offers people a safer passage into the park rather than taking busy roads and intersections.

This year, the Big Sioux Recreation Area staff planted a 1,000 square foot pollinator garden next to the registration building. Not only will this create an aesthetic entrance but the plants were specifically chosen in order to attract our native pollinators such as: bumble bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds.

(Continued next page)

Big Sioux Recreation Area Continued...

The plants, “plugs,” were purchased from Diversity Farms near Dedham, Iowa and include: Purple Prairie Clover, Purple Coneflower, Wild Bergamot, Blazing Star, Common Milkweed, Butterfly Milkweed, Prairie Dropseed, Goldenrod, Silky Aster, Indian Grass, and Little Bluestem. The project itself is an experiment and only time will tell its success!

The swimming beach at times had at least 250 visitors on our hot Iowa weekends! It continues to be more popular each year! The sand gets hot quick so bring a canopy and wear your sunscreen!

Being a recreation area, the Big Sioux Recreation Area sees a lot of traffic. This summer our crew spent countless hours picking up beach litter, glass bottles from fire rings, cigarette buds on the beach and in the campground, pop bottles along the roadways, and all forms of debris from the bodies of water. The crew at this park takes great pride in providing a beautiful place for all to visit and providing an opportunity for visitors to witness our local wildlife. Please help keep our local parks litter free! Take only memories and leave only footprints!

Sandy Hollow Recreation Area:

By: Zach Weyer- Park Ranger

This year has been a year of some crazy storms. Sandy Hollow has undergone some intensive tree removal. The old rope swing tree finally gave up and was removed, creating an open shore line. Many trees have fallen, in which new ones have replaced them throughout the park.

The beach house has received some new color and plans to be remodeled back into a shower house. The oldest cart shed will be torn down to develop some new green space. Other buildings, including the third cart shed and comfort station in the campground, will receive new color by the end of fall. New prairie plantings have been made for habitat. It will take a few years to see the final result. Tree cutting of the dead hybrid cottonwoods will continue and be replaced with native trees.

Upcoming this year we will begin building an entrance booth. This booth will be beneficial in helping visitors and campers with any questions that they may have as well as providing things, such as candy and ice, for the public to purchase. One of the bigger projects that we will have this year will be excavating the two ponds together with the goal of creating a large beach. By combining the ponds, we will be able to accommodate more patrons as well as improve water quality and allow better fishing. We have hopes to start digging and begin this project within the next few months.

With big projects come small projects. We take pride in the upkeep of our park and work hard to preserve the park and keep it clean on a daily basis. We appreciate any extra help we can get, whether it is picking up litter found on the ground or just cleaning up after yourself. Taking care of Sandy Hollow will help our future generations to be able to enjoy this amazing place!

Thank you to all of our summer employees:

Big Sioux Rec.Area: Amanda Mace, Kezden Blankenship, Jake Lynott, Brooke Klemme, Mike Schurman, Alex Pick, and Robert Upton

Oak Grove: Jim Jonker, Randy Larson, Andrew Renken, Taylor Deegan, Francisco Garcia, Miranda Moss, and Hailey Pullman

Sandy Hollow Rec. Area: Charles Hahn, Antonio Topete, Benjamin Sipma, Chandler Bultman, Cody Byl, and Dan Harksamp

Sioux County Conservation Foundation update...

By: Sunday Ford Enviro. Ed. Cord. /Assistant Director

After finishing a full summer of camps, adding a second naturalist and gearing up for future field trips, our excitement for the new Sioux County Nature Center has grown! We hosted over 300 children this summer just through camps, thanks to our two wonderful summer interns and many outstanding volunteers. We would love to see our waiting list diminish by adding this center. Our goal is to run two camps, field trips, or programs, at the same time in the lower level of the center, and have wonderful interactive exhibits on the main floor, as well as our offices. I believe Sioux County deserves this and the Sioux County Conservation Foundation is working so hard to make it happen!

Currently the SCCF is in the early fundraising stages of our capital campaign. We have great leadership in this group, Josh Faber of Renaissance is our advisor and we are excited as this progress grows. We have a great architect design thanks to Terry Glade at Cannon Moss Brygger Architects. The SCCF hired Split Rock Studios out of Arden Hills, MN, to do the exhibits, and we are in the 1st phase of the schematic design. We are still on schedule for our opening in 2018. The center will be located at Oak Grove Park, just inside the entrance of Deer Run Campground, overlooking the prairie. This is the hub for the trail system leading our visitors to our prairie, pond, river, savanna, and woodland ecosystems.

Welcome to our new naturalist...

Sarah Davelaar, formally Faber, was added to our Environmental Education Department as a full time staff member in mid-April. She grew up in Pella, IA, but now calls Hawarden home with her husband, Troy. She graduated from Dordt College with majors in Biology and Environmental Science with an emphasis on Natural Resource Management. She also spent a semester abroad studying sustainable community development in Kiakoura, New Zealand. Sarah served with Sunday Ford, as an intern the last two summers helping with summer camps, public programs and library programs. She has also been involved as a seasonal teacher at Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies in northern Michigan, a participant in the Seal Deal Volunteer Program in Kiakoura, New Zealand and has been involved with Dordt Discovery Days over the last four years. She is very grateful for the opportunity to join the staff as a full time employee. She looks forward to helping expand our outreach programs and getting to know the communities and its members better. When she is not busy working she enjoys spending time with her extended family that resides in the area, taking walks, kayaking, gardening, and catching up with friends.



Thank You...

to the Sioux County Sportsmen's Club, Sioux Prairie Pheasants Forever, Rock Valley Gun Club, Iowa DNR< and Iowa State Extension for event partnerships.

To Summer Camp Volunteers:

Cindy Smith	Evey Bakker	Glenda VanWhye	Alysia Haveman	Emily Klocke
Janice Fedders	Julie Anderson	Audra Faber	Sydney Faber	Hanna Van Mannan
Jessie Ryals	Karen Ryals	Daryl and Amy Grooters		

Thanks also to:

Terry and Cheryl Heronemus, Pheasants Forever, and Sioux County Sportsmen's Club for air rifles

Tim Kurth for canoe

Amy Grooters for children's book

Summer of 2016

By: Miranda Moss and Hailey Pullman, Environmental Education Summer Interns

Outdoor Skills Day

On June 9, we were happy to host over 200 kids at our annual Outdoor Skills Day. The participants tried their hand at canoeing, bow hunting, air rifles, shotguns, spear throwing, outdoor cooking, archery, duck hunting, and hiking. Lunch was provided and served by our Sioux County Sportsmen's Club. Every child received a prize along with a couple lucky individuals who won bigger prizes. We could not put on the event without the rest of our staff at Sioux County Conservation Board, the Iowa State Extension and Outreach, and the Sioux County Sportsmen's Club.



Fishing Clinics



We were very excited to put on multiple fishing clinics this year including those at Sandy Hollow on June 11, Rock Valley Rivers Bend Campground on July 9, and Boyden on July 15. We had about 75 people in attendance at Sandy Hollow, 70 at Rock Valley, and 25 at Boyden to bring our total to 170! The weather was perfect for a fun-filled day of fishing on all three occasions. During the Sandy Hollow fishing clinic we had a small competition for the biggest fish caught, which was a tie between two 13" fish, and the most fish caught was 4, by one boy. In the end, every one received a prize to round out the fun filled day. Thank you to our co-sponsor, Sioux County Sportsmen's Club, for donating the food, bait, and the prizes that day. Thank you to the volunteers for each clinic and the bait donated.

Summer Camps

This summer we have been busy with summer camps! Even with the increase in the number of kids allowed, our waiting lists were typically just as long. We are getting excited for our new nature center in the future, so we can accept more kids! However, with the addition of Sarah, the second naturalist, we were able to add more camps than what we have offered in the past and reach over 300 kids! Our 3-4 year-olds and their parents became experts at exploring nature in our "Bug" "Herps Alive!" camp was offered to 5-6 year-olds where we studied reptiles and a chance to try to catch some! Our 7-9 year-olds became true outdoorsmen in our "Adventure" camp by learning to enjoy and survive out in the wilderness. For ages 10-12 we had a great two days out at the Big Sioux Rec Area for the "Introduction to Shooting" camp. The kids experienced wrist rockets, archery, spear-throwing, slingshots, BB guns, and air rifles. Our "Overnight Hunters' Safety" camp was offered to 13-15 year-olds interested in getting their hunting license and learning about hunting safety. In the evening, the kids went on a night hike, caught catfish, and enjoyed the bonfire. It was a great year for all of the summer camps!



Ringneck Rendezvous

We had a perfect evening for our Ringneck Rendezvous event, August 6, this year! Just over 200 kids and almost 100 parents came out for the night to try archery, wrist rockets, BB guns, air rifles, shotgun, muzzle loader. Other attractions included various games such as: casting, dummy and ring tosses, cake walk, and minnow races. Demonstration of dog training and live birds were also available. Aaron Gould put on a fantastic show for all the families. We concluded the evening drawing for prizes the kids had played for earlier in the night. Larger prizes were also given away including a kayak as our grand prize. Thank you to all our volunteers, and the Sioux Prairie Pheasants Forever for their work to help plan, organize, fund, set-up, run station and tear down. We couldn't do it without you!

Upcoming Programs...

Must **register online** for all programs, go to www.mycountyparks.com/County/Sioux.aspx to register.

Questions on program please call 712-552-3057, to cancel your registration or for help with online registration please call at 712-552-1047

Weather related cancellations will be aired on 93.9 FM.

September 6: Camper Registration for Trick or Treat Hike

Call 712-552-1047. No other phone will be used to register, no emails, and no walk-ins. Calls will be taken starting at 8 am. This is to make reservations for October 8 event. You may register yourself and one other camper. Reservations are for campsites at both Deer Run Campground and Turkey Ridge Campground. You will receive Friday and Saturday night free camping in exchange for enough candy/goodies for 700 children.

September 10: Women in the Outdoors- Lake Pahoji, Inwood, IA

Open to ages 14 and up (ages 14-17 with adult). Event hosted at Lake Pahoji, Inwood, IA from 8 am-4:30 pm. Courses include: Dutch oven cooking, wild edibles, paddleboard, tour of Blood Run, Bee, and much more! Cost is \$45, includes lunch. Event hosted by National Wild Turkey Federation and Lyon, Sioux, Osceola, and O'Brien County Conservation Boards. A fun experience for ladies of all backgrounds must call to pre-register at 712-552-3057 or print off and fill out a brochure from our website and send in with registration payment.

September 24: Dutch Oven Gathering- Turkey Ridge Campground- Oak Grove

Calling all area Dutch Oven Cookers! We will be hosting a gathering at Oak Grove Park Turkey Ridge Campground. Dishes to include: breads, appetizers, main dishes, and desserts. Dishes will be judged, with first place awarded in each category, potluck meal afterwards. **Call Sunday Ford at 712-552-3057 to sign up as a cooker.** First 10 cookers to register will receive a free campsite at Turkey Ridge for Saturday night September 24th. Public is welcome to come observe and ask questions starting at 3 pm. Join us for meal at 6 pm bring a dish along to share (does not have to be a Dutch oven dish for potluck).

October 8: Trick or Treat Hike- Oak Grove

Join the Sioux County Conservation Board for an evening of Halloween Celebration! Ages 12 and under are invited to trick or treat in costume at Oak Grove Park. You may start at the river and walk a luminary lit trail to Deer Run Campground, trick or treat at the campsites, and then make your way back down to the river for a bonfire. Turkey Ridge Campground will be included in the festivities. Parking will be located near this campground. No pre-registration needed. Listen to KSOU 93.9 FM for weather cancellations. Trick or treating is from 5:30-8 pm. Any campers wanting to reserve a spot for the trick or treat hike may start doing so at 8am on **September 6** by calling 712-552-1047 (no walk-ins or other phones, or emails will be used to take reservations). You may reserve a site for yourself and one other site. Calls will be taken until full. Campers will receive Friday and Saturday night free camping in exchange for enough candy/goodies for 700 children.

October 22: Youth Mentor Pheasant Hunt- Rock Valley Gun Club

Sponsored by the Sioux Prairie Pheasants Forever and Sioux County Conservation Board. This event is open to youth ages 12-15, who have passed their hunter education course. This event is held at the Rock Valley Gun Club, with hunting in surrounding areas. The day starts with a review of hunting safety and a trap shoot. Each group will go into the field with mentors and hunting dogs. Breakfast and lunch are provided. There is no cost, but only a limited number will be taken, **must pre-register online for event.**

Sioux County Conservation Board



If you would like to be added to the newsletter mailing list please send a postcard with your name and address to:

Sioux County Conservation Board
Oak Grove Park
4051 Cherry Ave.
Hawarden, IA 51023

Sioux County Conservation Board
712/552-1047
soococon@siouxcounty.org
www.mycountyparks.com
www.siouxcountyparks.com

Board Members

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Dave Meylink- Vice Chairperson
Daryl Grooters- Secretary
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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
Alex Lynott- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech- Big Sioux Rec. Area
Damon Anderson- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech- Oak Grove
Sarah Davelaar- Naturalist- Oak Grove

Meetings

Held the first Wednesday after the 3rd of the month at 6:30 pm
at the Administration Office in Oak Grove.

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Sioux County Conservation Board
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