

Sioux County Conservation Newsletter



Volume 25, Issue 3

Winter 2016

Sioux County Parks Updates

The nice fall weather that we had gave us ample time to complete some projects that we have been working on. Now that the cold winter weather is setting in we are starting to focus on other smaller projects and general equipment maintenance and repairs.

We completed the hiking trail bridge behind the Oak Grove Lodge. We are enjoying our smooth new entrance road. We manage to work around the road construction with our fall school groups and other programs without many problems. The road was completed the day of our annual Trick or Treat Hike which we were thankful for. Come spring we will be able to finish the shoulders, plant grass and paint the lines on the road. The road in front of the park was also completed about the same time.

Late this fall we stocked some of our local fishing holes with 800 walleye, 2450 crappies, 400 perch, 500 bluegill, and 200 catfish. The Sioux County Sportsmen's Club helped with the fish stocking, along with our staff. Most all of our regular fishing areas received a portion of the fish.

The maintenance staff has also been busy with these past nice fall days cutting down dead trees located throughout our different parks to be used as firewood. In hopes that we have enough stocked piled before spring rolls around.

Big Sioux Recreation Area

By: Alex Lynott-Park Ranger

As winter makes its declaration of arrival, my list of inside projects continues to grow. There are plenty of Chinese Elm trees to be cut down for firewood in the park, but winter is very young and tree cutting will have to wait until warmer winter weather.

Nineteen sites have been added in a new campground area at the entrance of the park. All sites will have water, electric, most will have septic, and potentially Wi-Fi and cable. A dump station was installed at the entrance of the park for the remaining non-full hook-up sites in the new campground and the original campground with sixteen sites. In the middle of the new campground will have a comfort station consisting of a camper registration kiosk, two showers, two restrooms, and a family restroom. These sites will be gravel and crushed concrete, just like the original campground.

Park updates continued next page...

Park updates continued...

The Big Sioux Recreation Area continues to grow in popularity, especially on weekends at the beach and in the campground. These additional nineteen sites will allow for campers from farther distances to come and enjoy the park, rather than missing out on the opportunity due to the quick rate at which our campground fills up. This campground will be great for those campers who enjoy peace and quiet from park/beach traffic. It is surrounded by tall trees and will have a nice space between sites.

Ice fishermen have already been out on the ice. This fall we stocked the lake with walleye, crappie, perch, Needless to say, the future fishing outlook looks promising yet again.

There are five Bald Eagles that seem to be permanent residents of the park. Three are adults and two are juveniles. They have a nest on the western border of the park along the Big Sioux River. They may stay here through the winter, fishing the open waters of the river and feeding on deer carcasses during hunting seasons. Iowa is a perfect year-round home for these magnificent creatures. Come and check them out! During the spring time, the Big Sioux Recreation Area is known for attracting 50+ Bald Eagles migrating back north to their homelands.

Sandy Hollow Recreation Area

By: Zach Weyer- Park Ranger

With the ice forming well, ice fishing will soon be in full swing. Each year as an agency we stock the waters around the county with fish. Sandy Hollow and Floyd Complex B were stocked with perch, crappies, bluegills, and catfish. Bruce Shoemaker Area was stocked with walleyes and crappies. Floyd Complex A was stocked with bluegills, catfish, and crappies.

Burning lanes were also installed at various areas on the eastern side of Sioux County. These lanes will help control the fire from spreading into other areas. This spring these controlled burns will take place. Controlled burns help to increase diversity in habitat and reducing invasive species in our prairies.

Sandy Hollow will also be having an open night shoot on Thursdays for both ranges (archery and air rifle), through the months of January-March. There will be at least one volunteer to help aid in questions or help with shooters.

These winter months allow us as an agency to restock on supplies and gear up for the following year. Equipment is serviced and buildings are repaired. Dead trees are cut down and split into firewood for the campgrounds in the following year.

In the Spring of 2017 is when the excavation of the ponds will begin. Electrical lines are already being moved and water lines will be capped.

Hoping everybody stays warm and enjoys this very cold winter!

Reminder: Annual passes expire December 31, 2016. New passes for the 2017 year are available for purchase for the Big Sioux Recreation Area and Sandy Hollow Recreation Area.

A vehicle pass is required at both of these areas, and may be purchased at each gate. Annual passes \$20, additional passes may be purchased on the same day for an additional \$10. Vehicle must be from same household. One pass is valid at both areas. Passes may not be transferred from vehicle to vehicle.

Funds from these passes go back into the parks for updates and additional projects.

Sioux County Conservation Foundation update...

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

The Sioux County Nature Center planning is going well. The Sioux County Conservation Foundation is in the planning stages with Split Rock Studios of MN and continues to develop exhibits to meet the needs of our community and schools. The exhibits will feature different habitats along with native, historical and even invasive Sioux County species. A handful of local experts have been providing their expertise on subjects such as history, entomology, geology, and botany of Sioux County. Also included will be a display of good agriculture practices, which has been of special interest to many in our community. This will help users to “read the land” and will be interactive, allowing the user to choose an agricultural practice (such as terraces), to learn the positive and negative effects it may have to soil and water.

“The Sioux County Conservation Foundation's Campaign Committee have been working with cities, businesses and individuals, accepting pledges for financial gifts for the Nature Center. As we get closer to year end the Committee realizes that they have not been able to contact all potential donors but would invite anyone who would like to make a gift to contact either myself or Sunday Ford, and we will be glad to follow up with you.”

SCCF member, Gordon Pottebaum

Gordon 712-395-0037 Impgnp@midlands.net

Sunday 712-551-6780 sfnaturalist@siouxcounty.org



Sioux County Archery

Archery memberships are up for renewal starting January 1, 2017, memberships are good for the current calendar year. Membership fees are as follow: Individual- \$80, Family \$125, Student (must have valid school ID) - \$50. Archery Membership fees cover use of the indoor archery range, one vehicle pass, and notification of upcoming events. Forms may be printed off online. Watch the website for update on leagues, and other events.

New this year we will be hosting open range night for both the Indoor Archery Range along with the Indoor BB/Air Rifle Gun range. Facility will be available on Thursday nights from 6:30-8:30 pm. Memberships not required fees may pertain to use of ranges. Those 16 years of age and under must have an adult present with them while using the ranges.

For more information please visit our website or contact our administration office.

Environmental Education Department- Fall 2016

By: Sioux County Naturalists

Oak Grove Field Trips

Several schools ventured out to Oak Grove Park for a half day of exploration during the fall. Groups range in size from 50-304 students at a given time. We were blessed with beautiful weather this year and didn't have to search for any rain dates! We are really excited about the opportunities we will have with our new building in a couple years!



Bringing the Kids Outside

With the start of school means the start of school programs. In the fall we try to take advantage of the nice weather and bring the kids outside when we can. Whether it is monarch tagging, canoeing and kayaking, stream testing, archery, trapping, flu flu arrows or atlatls the kids love getting outside! It gives everyone a nice break in their day. Now that winter is here, we will start ice fishing and snow shoeing.



Women in the Outdoors

We had beautiful weather and a great turn out for our event in September. We enjoyed our morning preparing our own Dutch oven dishes, learning about bees and making our own chap stick, and then walking down to the water to try our balance at paddle boarding! We took a wagon ride and toured the pre-historic area of Blood Run. We were shown artifacts and locations in which mounds were located. Over all, it was a fantastic day filled with laughter, friends, new things and of course, the outdoors.

Dutch Oven Gathering

If you were not able to make it out to our Dutch Oven Gathering this year you missed a night full of wonderful food, conversation and laughter. This year we had many cooks who prepared 22 dishes. Three categories were judged; sides, main dish, and desserts.

Halloween Hike

Though colder temperatures and road construction threatened our annual trick or treat hike early in the week, the night itself had a great turn out! We had a total of 722 children!!!

Youth Hunt

We had an amazing day at our annual Youth Mentor Hunt on Saturday, Oct 22. We had 3 or more kids get their very first bird! We had 8 roosters, 24 youth total. Three dads walked along, and there were 32 volunteers! Sponsors are Sioux Prairie Pheasants Forever, Sioux County Conservation Board, and Rock Valley Gun Club. Iowa kids ages 12-15, who have passed hunter safety, participated. It was a half day event.

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.

January 21- Public Ice Fishing/Snowshoe Program- Big Sioux Rec Area

Join the Sioux County Conservation Board's staff for a morning on the ice. We will meet at the Big Sioux Recreation Area, just southwest of Hawarden starting at 10am. Bring your own lunch and bucket to sit on, and we will provide the rest! Holes will be drilled; bait and equipment discussed, and types of fish shown. Snowshoes will also be available pending snow depth. No cost for the program, free admission to the park during the program. Participants that are ages 16 and over wishing to fish, must have a valid Iowa fishing license.



February 17- Owl Prowl- Oak Grove Park



February is a great time for hearing owls during their courtship and egg-laying. Let's take a night hike to call owls from 6 -8 pm. Meet at the Oak Grove Lodge parking lot. We will hike and call Barred, Great Horned, and Screech Owls. Meet a live captive barred owl. Dress warmly and bring a flashlight (all flashlights should be covered in red cloth or cellophane).

Seasonal Job Opportunities:

There will be openings available for seasonal maintenance staff positions at the Big Sioux Recreation Area, Sandy Hollow Rec. Area and Oak Grove. Primary duties may include but not limited to: sanitation, vehicle maintenance, camper registration, monitoring of parks and campgrounds, mowing, trimming, firewood splitting, and many more tasks.

Registration Booth staff openings at the Big Sioux Recreation Area and Sandy Hollow. Primary task include but not limited to: registering vehicles upon entering park, selling firewood and snacks, renting canoes and kayaks, and sanitation.

There are two naturalist intern positions open for the summer months. These two positions will assist with county environment education programs and summer camps throughout the Sioux County area. Positions are based out of Oak Grove. College applicants interested in pursuing a career in education or conservation preferred. If interested in applying please send resume with two references to: Sunday Ford, Oak Grove Park 4051 Cherry Ave, Hawarden, IA 51023.

For more information contact our main office at 712-552-1047 or you may go online to print off a copy of job application. www.mycountyparks.com/county/sioux.aspx

Sioux county is an equal opportunity employer.

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
Jerry Jensen-Member
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Staff

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

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