

Sioux County Conservation Newsletter



Volume 26, Issue 2

Fall 2017

Sioux County Parks Update...

Sioux County campgrounds have been busy this summer with additional sites added in parks and an increase in campers through the week days. The road project at Oak Grove has been completed the lines look sharp and the shoulders have been growing well. Summer is always busy mowing between the rain showers, cleaning rental facilities and general maintenance on the campgrounds. A couple of weeks have been spent prepping and staining our the cabins, along with the many posts we have in place around the campgrounds and picnic areas. Picnic tables have been repaired, fire rings cleaned every few weeks, and the walking bridge behind the Oak Grove Lodge has also been stained.



Work has been done to the Big Sioux Shelter facility by replacing some siding, and door ways. This spring we had some really good controlled burns throughout the county to help set back some of the invasive plants in our prairie areas along with bringing up healthier grasses and flowers in the prairies. We have had some big changes in our Sandy Hollow Rec. Area along with the Big Sioux Rec. Area. Keep reading to learn more about these parks.

Sandy Hollow Recreation Area Update...

By: Zach Weyer Park Ranger



Big changes are underway at Sandy Hollow Recreation Area. The old beach pond is currently being excavated to the north and east with over 20,000 cubic yards of dirt that have been moved already. When the north expansion is finished the maintenance road between the two ponds will be removed leading to the ponds finally being connected. After the digging is done with excavators (before the ground freezes), a sand dredge will be brought back in to deepen the new expansion. Beach sand will be blown in on the southeast corner of the old beach house. Once the new beach is up and running the old campground beach will be shut down.

Further enhancements of the larger pond will include some rock jetties, a possible fishing pier will be added, along with some constructed fish habitat to help enhance fishing capabilities. A walking bridge will be placed where the old service road was for visitors to cross between the swimming beach and the campground.

The clubhouse is undergoing phase 2 of its remodeling. The old catering kitchen has been gutted and replaced with a new meeting room, storage space, along with entrance for caterers to be close to the kitchenette. Small changes are left including paint and carpet of this phase. The old golf course office and pro shop are being transformed into a storage area for the chairs and tables.



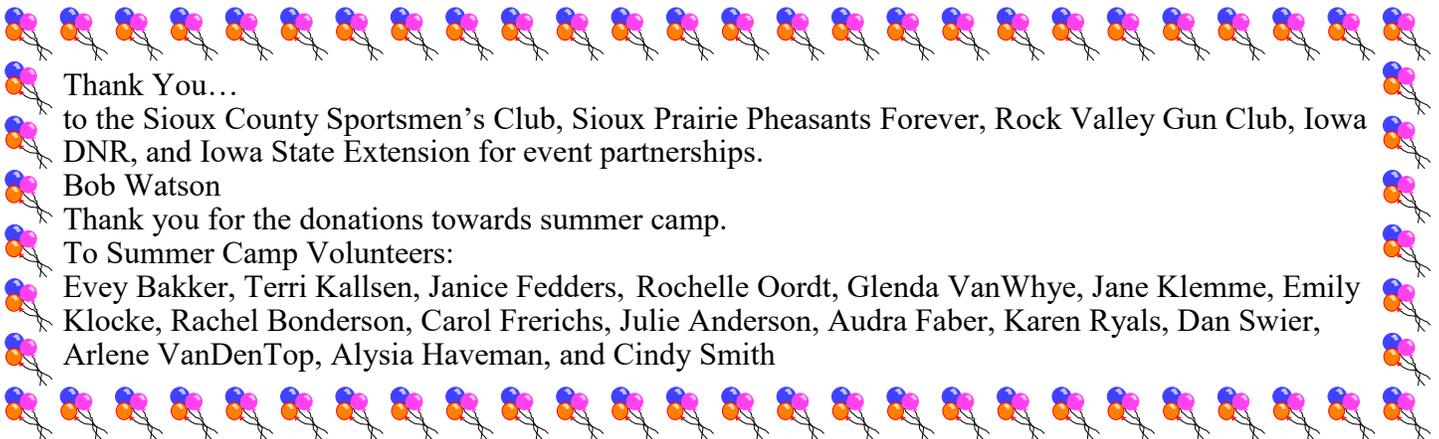
Online reservations...

The staff and Board have met and started making footway towards going online with our rental facilities and some of the camp sites. Our hopes is that it will help ease your planning when it comes to family reunions and other larger gatherings where multiple facilities need to be reserved on the same day. Reminder at this time it does not impact all of the camping sites that we have in our parks.

We are still looking at going online first of the year of 2018. We will be using the www.mycountyparks.com website for reservations. Reminder this is the same site we currently use for our summer camp and program registrations. If you have an account set up you will not need a new account. However if you do not have an account set up you may want to consider getting on the website and set one up, account is free to set up.

We are currently planning on having our cabins and a few select campsites available between April 15 and October 15 of each year for reservations. The shelter facilities will remain open year round. All reservations made will be nonrefundable. Minimum and maximum allowed stays will be in place for holidays and major events. Cabins and shelters will be available two years out for reservation, select camping will be available for one year out. We will still have camp sites that will remain available on a first come first served basis.

Set start date and reservation details are projected however are subject to change as things get finalized.



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.

Bob Watson

Thank you for the donations towards summer camp.

To Summer Camp Volunteers:

Evey Bakker, Terri Kallsen, Janice Fedders, Rochelle Oordt, Glenda VanWhye, Jane Klemme, Emily Klocke, Rachel Bonderson, Carol Frerichs, Julie Anderson, Audra Faber, Karen Ryals, Dan Swier, Arlene VanDenTop, Alysia Haveman, and Cindy Smith

Sioux County Conservation Foundation Update

By: Sunday Ford Environmental Education Coordinator/Assistant Director

Currently, the Sioux County Conservation Foundation has broken the halfway mark for fundraising and is in the process of working with the Enhance Iowa Committee towards a sizeable grant. The Foundation, Capital Campaign Committee, and staff have been meeting with individuals and businesses, spreading the word about the great project, and asking for support. A meeting was held at Oak Grove in July and the group toured the future Nature Center site. As we were reminiscing about how Oak Grove came to be, and looking towards the future plans, three deer graced us with their presence. We can't wait to share sightings like this with the community, right from the back porch of the center.

The education staff is working hard on planning future field trips; coordinating two naturalist schedules; meeting National Science Standards; and planning for nursing homes, families, civic groups and college classes at the new center. Depending on fund raising, the center will break ground next Spring.

Summer of 2017

By Hailey Pullman and Britney Thompson, Environmental Education Summer Interns

Outdoor Skills Day

Outdoor Skills Day was another success this year! There were 209 kids that experienced various outdoor activities and developed a deeper love for the outdoors! For example, they were able to explore fly fishing, guns/wrist rockets, air rifles/BB guns, canoeing, spear throwing, deer hunting, outdoor cooking, hiking, archery, and duck hunting. We are incredibly grateful for the amazing volunteers and to the Sportsman's Club for donating the food and prizes!



Fishing Clinics

Sioux County Conservation enjoyed several fishing clinics this year as well. The Sandy Hollow fishing clinic proved to be a big success, with the largest fish being an 18" bass! The Rock Valley fishing clinic also provided the kids an awesome opportunity to fish. It was fun to hear yells of, "I got one!" around the pond throughout the day! For Rock Valley, the award for "most fish caught" was for twelve fish. At the Bruce Shoemaker Area by Boyden, the kids were able to practice their casting skills and fish. Thanks again to those who donated worms, prizes, food, and their time!

Summer Camps

Summer camp always provides lots of fun, laughter, learning, and adventure! For ages 3-4, the Budding Naturalists hiked outdoors, played games, and explored the variety of colors displayed throughout nature. Children aged 5-6 were able to attend the Nature Up Close camp. This fun-packed camp was two days and highlighted some of the typical plants and animals at Oak Grove. They enjoyed catching spiders and snails, hiking, and making a fun craft to take home! For ages 7-9, the campers attended Underground Treasures camp. We discovered more about the sedimentary, metamorphic, and igneous rocks. The kids also learned more about volcanoes, crystals, and fossils. The Time Travelers camp was for ages 10-12. Stepping back in time to the pioneer days, the kids loved making (and tasting!) their homemade ice cream, weaving their own baskets, and playing pioneer games. The swimming, kayaking, and canoeing were a nice end to both days, especially with the warmer weather! For the 13-15 year olds, we had a blast with the overnight camp. This year, it had a wilderness survival theme. The kids learned how to identify and cook with wild edibles, build different types of fires, send signals during an emergency, filter water, and build their own nets. The camp also included a fun, challenging GPS and orienteering course. All of the camps were enjoyable, and it was fun to see the kids loving and engaging in the amazing outdoors! Overall, we were able to provide the opportunity of summer camp to 285 kids! It will be exciting to continue to see the numbers grow and expand as we progress towards the new nature center! A huge thanks to all of the excellent volunteers that helped with the summer camps!



Upcoming Programs...

Must **register online** for all programs, go to www.mycountyparks.com/County/Sioux.aspx to register. *No telephone registrations please.* Questions on program please call 712-552-3057, to cancel your registration or help with online registration please call at 712-552-1047.

Weather related cancellations will be aired on 93.9 FM.

September 5: 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 14th 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 800 children.

September 9: Women in the Outdoors- Oak Grove- Hawarden

Open to ages 14 and up (ages 14-17 with adult). Event hosted at Oak Grove Park, Hawarden, IA from 8 am-4:30 pm. Courses include: Dutch oven cooking, fire starting, GPS, Muzzleloader/Rifle, and Cording. 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 30: 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 30th. 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 14: 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 5** by calling 712-552-1047 (no walk-ins, other phones, or emails will be used to take reservations). You may reserve a site for yourself and one other site. Campers will receive Friday and Saturday night free camping in exchange for enough candy/goodies for 800 children.

October 21: 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 Iowa youth ages 12-15, who have passed their Iowa 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

Gordon Pottebaum-Chairperson
Dave Meylink- Vice Chairperson
Jerry Jensen-Member
Brian Oordt- Member
Josh Boersma- Member

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.

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