

Sioux County Conservation Newsletter



Volume 28, Issue 2

Fall 2019

Sioux County Parks Updates

There's no doubt that the spring and summer months have been busy for all the staff in the County Conservation System. Between ice dam flooding early this spring affecting parks to weekly mowing to yet another flood it has been a little hectic! Now that August has hit and is almost gone, with the fall season knocking on our door, we can catch our breath and get some of those other projects off the back burners before, dare I say, the snow flies? At Oak Grove, construction continues on the nature center. We anticipate seeing that completed late this fall. No opening dates have been set yet however stay tuned to our website and next newsletter as there will be some major announcements for the openings and changes that will occur with the facility opening up. Big Sioux Rec. Area has been busy trying to repair the main entrance in between flooding events. Unfortunately our last flood caused it to be closed for the rest of the season. We are working on mitigating this project and hope we can get it repaired soon! We will continue to use the south entrance for that park's access until the roadway is repaired. Sandy Hollow Rec. Area also saw flooding however all areas are back up and running. We hope everyone enjoys the next few months before it's too cold to do much more outside.

Sandy Hollow Recreation Area

Taylor Deegan, Park Ranger

This past season has been one of both of continuous change and increased utilization at Sandy Hollow. We were quickly reminded of the remaining saturation and high levels of precipitation very early this past spring. The first flood left us with some of the highest water levels we've had in the park with the unique addition of ice breaks that really seemed to help capture even more field debris than previous flooding. While the waters quickly drained back into the West Branch, we were left with what damages were left behind. With continued work on the East pond's dike and the addition of a few culverts with backflow gates, we were able to avoid the second round of flooding that occurred early this season. Sandy Hollow is at a point now where we feel pretty confident in its handling all of these 100 year floods we seem to be having recently.



Other than continued flood prevention and clean up from the damages, our spring and early summer consisted of getting the parks ready for the busy season and management of some local wildlife areas through burning, mowing, and tree pruning. Fishing reports for the West pond have been very good, the bluegill and perch seem to have been the most popular angler's catch throughout the summer with some nice catfish also being thrown into the mix. As temperatures increased though, better fishing spots moved into deeper areas of the pond where the water stays cooler on the hot summer days. On the other hand, the East pond is still developing its fish populations, especially after it is the body of water that experiences the most impact when flooding occurs. This flooding also brought in a lot of bullhead from the West Branch that unfortunately had a large and successful hatch. As we move into fall we will be stocking more fish into the ponds to help curb these increasing populations.



The summer season has been a very busy time due to camping, recreation, and programs. It really makes the days seem to fly by. The time we didn't spend mowing, which seemed to be a very frequent occurrence, we worked on a few main projects we had planned for around the park. Some of these projects included: construction of walking bridges, creation of dry

creek beds for water runoff, expansion of walking trails, and continued planting of native seed mixes. We hope to complete more of our planned projects as we move forward, especially with the cooperative weather we have been having. As we close out the summer we also want to say a big thanks to the summer part time help that really make it possible for the park to function in these busy months.

Big Sioux Recreation Area

Alex Lynott- Park Ranger

With the summer winding down we reflect on the past season which has been a busy one. Our spring started out with a flood that took out a section of roadway along with our spillway at the entrance of the park leaving us to keep the park closed a little longer this spring then I would have liked. We made the repairs to the spillway and road way and watched as the next major flooding event wash it away again. We made adjustments and redid the roadway temporarily around the main spill way in hopes to get it repaired and opened up again. However, wonderful mother nature had yet another major rain event for our area up her sleeve and sent it on down at us again only to completely wash away our cemented road way which left the main entrance to the park closed for the season. We opened the south entrance in between the opening and closing of the spillway. Our part time entrance booth staff had to be extra flexible with which entrance they'd be staffing as our main entrance shack wasn't open much of the season due to the flood damage. We made a temporary entrance booth with our camper which worked, however, after shutting the entrance road for the season we invested in a small building to be used at the south entrance to greet guest.



With the flooding hopefully behind us for the rest of this year, we are moving forward on different projects. We are creating an outdoor classroom area in the woods along with the construction project on the old school house. It's been a busy season and one heck of a way to celebrate our 10th anniversary of this park! Celebrate by coming out for a few nights of camping, swimming at the beach, hiking the trails, fishing the waters from boat or shore, or enjoying an afternoon picnic. T-shirts were designed and are for sale to celebrate the park. They are \$15 an are all adult sizes. We hope to see you out here to celebrate with us!



Oak Grove Park-Hunting Season Update

Myron Dekkers- Park Ranger

My favorite season is right around the corner...FALL!! I'm excited about cooler temperatures and autumn colors.

Along with Fall comes our hunting seasons. This year, the IDNR has installed a new license sales system and mobile application that allows you to manage your hunting/fishing licenses on your mobile phone. The Go Outdoors Iowa app, which is free from the App Store or Google Play Store, allows you to purchase and access your hunting and fishing licenses, view hunting regulations, report harvests and more using your mobile device. The new licensing system is also accessible by going to www.iowadnr.gov/GoOutdoorsIowa. This should be a pretty handy set up. If you are asked to present your license, you can take out your mobile device and show your electronic copy of your license to who it may concern.

There are a couple misprints in the 2019-20 Iowa Hunting, Trapping & Migratory Game Bird Regulations, which were made known to us by IDNR Officer John Sells. The misprints say that both the cottontail rabbit season and the squirrel (Fox squirrel and Gray squirrel) season opens on September 1, but actually they both open on **August 31**.

If you will be out there hunting this year, be sure you are familiar with the 2019-20 Iowa Hunting, Trapping & Migratory Game Bird Regulations, properly licensed for what you are hunting, and always putting safety first! Remember, you can get a copy of the Iowa regulations at local businesses that sell hunting/fishing licenses, or you can get the regulations online as well.

Have a great Fall, and I'll see you around!

The screenshot shows the main menu of the Go Outdoors Iowa app. At the top is the DNR logo. Below it are four main buttons: "My Licenses" (with a license icon), "Purchase License" (with a plus sign and license icon), "Sunrise/Sunset" (with a sun icon), and "Mobile Game Check" (with a deer icon). At the bottom are five category links: "Home" (house icon), "Fish" (fish icon), "Hunt" (target icon), "Boat/OHV" (boat icon), and "View" (binoculars icon).

The screenshot shows the "Watching Wildlife" section of the app. It includes a header "Watching Wildlife" and a "Purchase/Renew Access Permit" button. Below are six items with arrows: "Watchable Wildlife", "Birding & Wildlife Trail", "Wildlife Management Areas", "Butterfly Garden at Bellevue", "Wildlife Cams", and "Wildlife Action Plan". At the bottom are five category links: "Home" (house icon), "Fish" (fish icon), "Hunt" (target icon), "Boat/OHV" (boat icon), and "View" (binoculars icon).

Summer 2019

By Kendall Van Zanten and Hailey Pullman Environmental Education Summer Interns

Outdoor Skills Day

Outdoor Skills Day was a blast! We reached around 270 kids, 84 adults and 40 volunteers! Kids got to experience a variety of outdoor activities covering a range of topics: outdoor cooking, catfishing, archery, air guns and wrist rockets, bird identification, deer hunting and primitive hunting, hiking and the popular choice for a hot day... canoeing and kayaking. Every kid got to pick one of seven different tracks that allowed them try six different activities throughout the day. A big thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers who made the day possible and helped everything run smoothly!



AmeriCorps Outreach

The AmeriCorps outreach was a fun addition this summer, allowing us to expand with new creative ideas, programs and topics. To begin the summer, we explored the night sky with the star lab at several libraries throughout the county. As the kids (and some ambitious parents) crawled into the inflated dome, they were able to learn more about the stars and constellations. Another fun part of the outreach position was the week-long Survivor. Each day (leading up to the challenge on Friday), the kids learned different survival skills, such as fire-building, shelter-building, wild edibles, signaling, water filtration and more! One of my favorite aspects of the outreach was the campground programs! We traveled to Oak Grove, Sandy Hollow and Big Sioux Rec. with live animal public campground programs. For the brave at heart, the wild edible program allowed adults to take a bite on the wild side! It was fun trying samples of different dishes, from stinging nettle noodles and deer tacos to cattail pollen pancakes and clover fritters! Reaching the younger kids, we traveled to different daycares, allowing the kids to discover and explore with nature lessons. From the first day to the last, the summer provided lots of opportunities for learning, laughing, and developing greater appreciation and enjoyment of the outdoors!



Fishing Clinics

We had three fishing clinics this year. The first one was at Sandy Hollow. The kids learned about the different types of fish and then headed out to the pond calling out, "I got one," each time they caught a fish. A big thanks to the Sioux County Sportsmen's Club for volunteering and providing prizes for the winners to take home! We also did a fishing clinic at River's Bend Campground in Rock Valley. The most unique catch of the day was a softshell turtle! Also, a new record was set for most fish caught with 34 fish in an hour and a half! Thank you to those who volunteered and to the campground for hosting and providing the fun prizes. The third clinic was at Bruce Schomaker Area near Boyden, with 22 kids and their adults!



Summer Camps

This summer our camps at Oak Grove were able to reach about 280 kids. Looking forward to the future, we will be able to increase that number with the completion of the new nature center this fall! This year we had four Budding Naturalist camps for 3-4 year olds throughout the summer. At these camps the kids got to use their senses to feel, see, hear, smell, and even taste things found in nature. We had four Animal Detective camps for 5-6 year olds. At these camps the kids learned about the clues that animals leave behind in nature. How Nature Works camp for 7-9 year olds was offered four times this summer. At this camp the kids focused on learning how and why things happen in nature. For the 10-12 year olds, a Wilderness Survival camp allowed the kids to expand their survival skills. This camp offered them the chance to learn different skills, such as building a shelter, tying knots, making a fire, and using GPS. Finally, for the 13-15 year olds, there was a camp at the cabins. A fun filled time of hiking, archery, disc golf, campfires and a little catfishing!

Upcoming Programs....

Must register online for all programs, go to www.mycountyparks.com/county/sioux.aspx to register. Questions on programs, to cancel your registration or for help with online registration please call 712-552-3057. Weather related cancellations will be aired on 93.9 FM.

September 3- Trick or Treat Camper Registration

If you are wishing to make reservations for our annual Trick or Treat hike this is the day to make your call. Please call our main office line at 712-552-1047 to make your reservation starting at 8 am. No other phone numbers, emails, messaging services or walk-ins will be used to register. This is to make reservations for the October 12th event. You may register yourself and one other camper. Reservations are for campsites at both Deer Run Campground and Turkey Ridge Campground. Campers will receive Friday and Saturday night free camping in exchange for enough candy/goodies for 800 children for our October 12 event.

September 14- Women in the Outdoors– Willow Creek County Park, Osceola County

Open to ages 14 and up (ages 14-17 with adult). Event hosted at Willow Creek County Park in Osceola County from 8am-4:30pm. Courses will include Dutch Oven Cooking, Prairie plant pressing, slingshots, canoe/kayak and shooting sports. Cost is \$45, includes Dutch Oven lunch and membership to NWTF. Event hosted by National Wild Turkey Federation, Lyon, Sioux, Osceola, and O'Brien County Conservation Boards. A fun experience for ladies of all backgrounds. Pre-registration required. For event fill out form you received in mail, print off from website or call 712/552-3057 for registration information.



September 21- 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 include: breads, appetizers, main dishes and desserts. Dishes will be judged with first place awarded in each category, potluck meal afterwards. **You must preregister by calling 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 21. Public is welcome to come observe and ask questions starting at 3pm. Join us for meal at 6pm bring a dish along to share (does not have to be a Dutch oven dish for potluck).



October 12- Trick or Treat Hike- Oak Grove

Join us for a fun evening of Halloween Celebration! Ages 12 and under are invited to trick or treat in costume at Oak Grove Park from 5:30 - 8 pm. We will have designated parking areas near each campground, or park at the river bottom and walk up the luminary lit trail (trail is not stroller friendly). Both Turkey Ridge and Deer Run Campgrounds will be participating in the trick or treating. No pre-registration needed for this event. Bring the family out for a fun night of trick or treating. Anyone wishing to camp on this weekend does need to call for available sites and provide candy/goodies for the event. We will start taking reservations September 3 at 8 am call 712-552-1047.

October 19- Youth Mentor Pheasant Hunt- Rock Valley Gun Club

This event is sponsored by the Sioux Prairie Pheasants Forever and Sioux County Conservation Board. Youth hunt 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 at 7:30am with a review of hunting safety, breakfast and a trap shoot. Each group will go into the field with mentors and hunting dogs. The day will conclude at 12:30pm with lunch and hunting stories. There is no cost, but only a limited number will be taken, **must pre-register and print/fill out forms online for event**.



Watch our website for updates on our nature center open house and additional programming!



Aaron Lauters
Andrew Renken
Bryan Shicks
Cody Byl
Cole Schiefen
Cori Franken

Dakota Allen
Dan Harskamp
Daniel Martinsen
Devyn Driesen

Donald Ruhland
Emily Klocke
Francisco Garcia
Hailey Pullman
Jim Jonker
Joshua Beach
Kaden Regnerus
Kailey Bak
Kendall Van Zanten

Lane Dekkers
Mike Schurman
Randy Larson
Robert Upton
Samuel Hoekstra

Thank you for all your hard work this summer!

Nature Center Project Updates

Sunday Ford, Assistant Director/EE Coordinator

The Nature Center is no longer a dream but a real standing reality with doors, windows, siding, a deck, and retaining walls. Although it is not completely finished as I write this article, we are watching it change dramatically every week. We are impressed with our Nelson Construction team and subcontractors. Some are: PR Construction, Odell Electric, MidWest Mechanical, Tri State Drywall, Geels Glass and DeRocher Brothers Construction. The Architect team, CMBA, has been wonderful to work with as well, and we can't say enough about EDA Engineering. Split Rock Studios has given their all on the exhibits, and Canfield has been great to work with for furniture. We haven't run into too many setbacks besides weather early on. The finish date is slated for October 31. After that date, a final checklist will be done and we should be moving in during the first part of November. We are planning on an open house for donors, and an open house for the public. There is no date in mind for this, but would like to be up and running after our open house.

There are other local people that are supporting the project in their own unique ways. We have a group of local photographers who have graciously provided their photography for the exhibits. Bakker Taxidermy has donated a beautiful piece; Del Vander Zee has a slab of ash tree from the Dordt campus that has been crafted into a table; Jeremy Hummel of Dordt University, as well has his students, are working on an insect collection for the center; a very talented Dordt student, Katie Eshelman, has provided drawings for artifacts in the displays; Evan DeGroot has supplied Sioux County maple syrup to those that give towards the Nature Center as well as his expertise on artifacts; Ian and Aiden DeBoom have donated artifacts; the Sioux County and State Historical Societies have helped with photos and information; Cal DeRuyter has offered his sign work talent for the sign in front of the building. Charlene Elyea with O'Brien County Conservation has helped us start the seed by giving us her experience with Foundations, fundraising, grant writing, and building details. Renaissance Group got us going with a feasibility study and fundraising. With this, our Sioux County Conservation Foundation and Capital Campaign Committee have dedicated hours and talent towards this project for the last 4 years.

I plan to tell you all about being in the new building in the next issue, or better yet, in person when you visit the Sioux County Nature Center (yet to be named!)



New Rendering of front of building.



Current Picture of back of building.

For monthly updates check out our Nature Center page on our website!

Rental & Facility Details.....

This summer has been a busy one indeed for all of our staff in various locations watching and waiting to see what the weather does to seeing how soon we can get projects completed and opened back up to the public. The office has been a buzz with different phone calls, incoming reservations and general day to day operations. In addition to the watch of the new facility being built.

Something to think about as you start planning your winter holidays is that we offer facility rentals year round at both the Oak Grove Park and Sandy Hollow Rec. Area. And yes if it happens to snow we will have the driveway and main pathways scooped for you most of the time before you arrive, if not we are sure to be working on it as quick as we can.

Sandy Hollow Clubhouse, near Sioux Center at the Sandy Hollow Recreation Area. This facility has seen much remolding done these past couple of years. This large open space can fit 150 people comfortably. There is a small kitchen area including a kitchen range, two refrigerators, along with tables and chairs to set up in the fashion you see fit for your event. This facility is \$250 for the day, in addition to the \$1 per vehicle parking pass if purchased ahead of time and the damage deposit. This facility also has modern restrooms, along with central AC/heating units.

Oak Grove Lodge, near Hawarden at the Oak Grove Park, is a heated facility available year round. This facility will host approximately 100 persons. There is no kitchen in this facility, however there is a refrigerator and counter space. This facility is \$150 for the day and does require a damage deposit. There is modern restroom facilities, working fireplace, along with central AC/heat.

Our last facility we offer for year round reservations is the Big Sioux Shelter, near Hawarden at the Oak Grove Park. This facility is primitive offering wooden fire places, and picnic tables for seating. There are water hydrants located outside of the facility, along with pit toilets located near by. During the winter months the water to this facility is turned off.

Check out availability and make your reservation all online for any of the above mentioned facilities. Or if you're really planning a head and looking forward to the next season of family gatherings you can book select campsites at our three main parks or the cabins (Oak Grove only).

Help us Close the Gap!!!

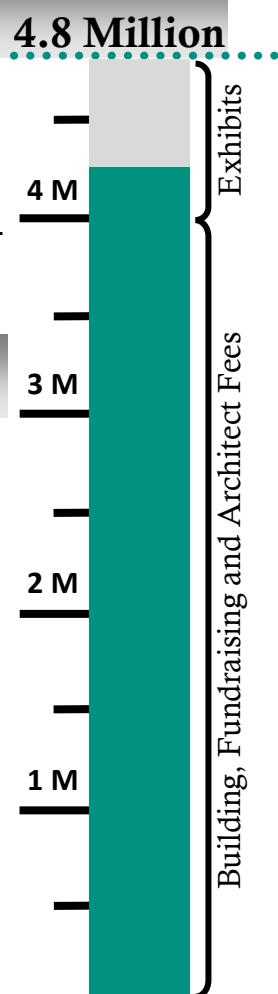
Help us reach our goal of \$4.8 million for our nature center project. We are around \$500,000 short of our goal. This will help finish off our exhibits that are scheduled to arrive in October! You can make your tax deductible donation by visiting our website and making a secure donation there or you can send your payment to Sioux County Conservation Foundation– 1603 Oak Grove Road– Hawarden, IA 51023.

Part-Time help for Nature Center

With our new nature center nearing completion of its building project it is time for us to start looking at our staffing needs and desires. We are hoping we will have individuals interested in working for us in both a volunteer and part time capacity to help keep the building running. For those interested in helping in a volunteer aspect please refer to the next page of this newsletter.

Part time positions will be primarily at the entrance desk of the facility. Responsibilities to include greeting guest, answering general park related questions and exhibits on display light cleaning of facility, and assisting with other tasks as assigned. This position will be year round and varying hours including; days, nights, weekends and summer holidays.

If this is something of interest please head over to our website and print off a copy of our employment application. Questions feel free to contact us. There remain many different variables in scheduling things at this time and figuring everything out. Start date will not happen until building is ready to open late this fall early winter.



Seeking Nature Center Volunteers!!!

We are seeking dynamic volunteers to fulfill a much-needed niche at our NEW Sioux County Nature Center! Whether you are seeking an inspiring setting in which to give back to the outdoor community; are a college student looking to fulfill internship credit hours; a senior looking to enjoy retirement; or an instructor wishing to spend a summer in a county park setting, all are invited to share their unique talents and passion for the outdoors with our park visitors.

The nature center is located in Oak Grove Park overlooking a spectacular vista. Inside will be filled with interactive displays with information regarding our local habitats, history and culture for visitors to explore. The center will become the SCCB Environmental Education headquarters, hosting field trips, nursing home picnics, summer camps and family events. Volunteers will greet guests as they visit, answer basic questions and assist in small nature center related tasks. Volunteer hours vary including weekend, weekday, morning, afternoon or evening shifts. We are still figuring out our layout of shifts we need covered.

We admit we are new to this so it will be a learning curve for us all. We promise to be open about changes to tasks, responsibilities and welcome your feedback. We do not need a commitment right this second, but interests would help us better plan for a smooth transition. Please fill out the information below and mail it in if you would like to receive more information on becoming a Nature Center Volunteer. Or check out our website and fill out the volunteer application there. You may also call 712-552-3057 to express interest and get more information.



Anticipated Time Line

Spring-Summer 2019: Recruitment

Early Fall 2019: Informational Meeting

Early Winter 2019: Training for those who have committed and schedule times

Grand Opening: Start Volunteering!

We're/I'm Interested!

Name(s) _____

Address _____ Phone # _____

Email _____

Yes No

We/I would like to only see more information at this time.

We/I would be interested in attending an informational meeting.

We/I would be available for a meeting at the circled times: *Morning Afternoon Evening Weekend Only*

Preferred method of contact, circle one: *Mail Phone Email*

Specific Questions/Concerns you would like answered up front: _____

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
conservation@siouxcounty.org
www.mycountyparks.com
www.siouxcountyparks.org

Board Members

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Dave Meylink- Vice Chairperson
Jerry Jensen-Member
Josh Boersma- Member
Jason Smith- 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
Taylor Deegan- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech- Sandy Hollow

Meetings

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

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