



SIoux COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

Volume 29
Issue 3 Fall 2020

4051 Cherry Ave Hawarden, IA 51023

www.siouxcountyparks.org

712-552-1047

Sioux County Parks Updates:

The parks in Sioux County have been a popular place to be this season. We have seen a lot of you out enjoying the campgrounds, hiking trails, swimming beaches and checking out the Prairie Woods Nature Center. It has been great seeing everyone out and about. The maintenance staff across the county have been busy with the general up keep of the parks, between the mowing, cleaning, equipment maintenance and the regular park maintenance that gets completed on a regular basis. Amidst all the regular projects we have been able to work on some larger projects. Some have been completed as of writing this newsletter, others are still under way.

Oak Grove Park

Oak Grove in general has seen an uptick in visitors both in the campground and visiting the Prairie Woods Nature Center. One big project we have completed this summer at Oak Grove is a walking bridge near the pond over the ravine. We upcycled some old telephone poles for the main support and structure of the bridge and used new lumber on the planks. We have it nearly completed as of writing this article and will finish it up with some railing. (See photos to the right). We have also done some invasive species control in the prairie near the nature center and hill side to the south. We have cut down a lot of sumac, buckthorn, eastern red cedars and other plants and have uncovered some small native bur oaks. We are hoping we can encourage these small oaks to continue to grow, as well as encouraging the native plants to get better established and create a better ground cover.



Big Sioux Recreation Area

Big projects that we have worked on include a cemented walking trail around the back side of the pond. We have also started working on the spillway coming into the park. We will be repairing this stretch of roadway and plan to have it open for next season. We have restructured the design in hopes that it will handle future flood water better. Work has also continued on the old school house cabin that was moved in last fall. We are looking forward to this project being completed as well.



Sandy Hollow Recreation Area

Zach Weyer, Park Ranger

This year has been an incredibly busy and productive year at the Sandy Hollow Campground! With this warm weather, foot traffic and camping have been at its highest! The outdoors have been thriving and we hope this continues throughout the rest of the season and years to come. Sandy Hollow continues to welcome new people and appreciates all of the wonderful people that have been coming to the park, we hope to see more of you going forward! A big thank you to everyone for taking such great care of and respecting our park.

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Over the last couple of months, we were able to connect the two ponds by constructing a 50-foot walking bridge. Also added, was a 25-foot wooden dock, which was placed at the boat ramp. Adding this dock has been a wonderful addition to the variety of fishing spots that we have available. With these additions, we have seen better water quality and a larger area for boats, kayaks and paddle boards to explore.



In the future we would like to add another expansion of the ponds on the north side. We will also look forward to paving more spots, adding 50 amp power, water and more sewer sites.

Summer Update from Naturalist Interns

Written by Mikayla Balt and Hailey Pullman

Summer Camp: Even though this summer looked very different from previous summers, it has still been filled with fun programs! At summer camp, we whittled soap, made hummingbird feeders, and so much more...socially distanced style in the great outdoors! Camp was held in the campground with stations spread out. Each child received a nature box specially packed for them with items to use at each station and to take home. Parents accompany their child to visit each station one at a time. For the young Budding Naturalists (3-4 years old), they were able to learn more about toads, animal habitats, and how their senses allowed them to explore nature. The Herps Alive campers (ages 5-6) had a blast making their own turtle craft, singing and dancing to learn about amphibians, and examining animal x-rays to determine the differences between reptiles and amphibians. They also loved meeting our tiger salamander and fox snake! The theme for ages 7-9 was Adventure Camp. These campers were certainly in for an adventure with a shelter building challenge, nature journaling, learning to whittle soap, and meeting the live falcon! For those ages 10-12, they traveled back in time for a day to discover more about pioneers in Time Travelers Camp. They were able to play pioneer games, such as shadow tag, the hot/cold game and charades. Campers discovered more about the pioneer lifestyle by learning to write with quill and ink and weaving their own basket. Overall, we were able to reach about 600 people through our summer camps during June and July.



Fishing Clinics: Our fishing clinics this year were very successful. We were able to reach over 130 people at Rock Valley and Boyden. The biggest fish caught was an 18-inch Largemouth Bass and the most fish caught was 22. We would like to thank the City of Boyden, Rivers Bend Campground and all of our volunteers for helping us make these events possible!

Ringneck Rendezvous: This year we were not able to hold our big event as normal, but we were still able to have a grand prize! The grand prize was sponsored by Sioux Commercial Sweeping and was a certificate for a guided Ice Fishing Trip or Boat Trip. We had a total of 84 entries for the grand prize. It was fun to see the picture submissions of all the fish being caught! Congratulations to our 6-year-old winner, Bennett!

Campground Programs: We were excited to be able to offer more campground live animal programs again this summer! There were programs at Big Sioux Rec. Area, Sandy Hollow Rec. Area and Oak Grove Park available to the campers. At Oak Grove, we were also able to add a few independent interpretive hikes on the trails.





Prairie Woods Nature Center

Sunday Ford, Assistant Director/Environmental Education Coordinator

Being open to changes has been our motto this season. We have prioritized safety while providing outdoor education and family opportunities. The Prairie Woods Nature Center opened its doors for the first time on January 11, 2020. We were closed from mid-March through June 30th and we had a soft opening starting July 1st with limited hours and occupancy numbers.

All of our public programs this summer were outdoors, and we had our first public program in the building August 11th for hunter safety. Our future programming will be conducted outdoors when possible, with limited sign up and social distancing for any upcoming indoor programs. Some of our annual programs are **TBD (To Be Determined)**. Please be patient with us as we continue to make decisions as these events get closer.

Please join us at the **Prairie Woods Nature Center** in Oak Grove Park this fall. Our current hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday from 9am-4pm and Thursday 1-7 pm. At this time, we are not requiring masks, but do have a hand sanitizer station at our entrance and have a strict schedule of disinfecting surfaces for your safety. We are limiting numbers to 30 visitors at a time. The hours and days open can change at any time, so please keep a good eye on our website www.siouxcountyparks.org. We will be posting all updates to programs there as well.

Another exciting update to talk about is the addition of prairie flowers and grasses around the nature center. These plants were started as “plugs” and transplanted around the center to provide beauty, education and pollinator food and habitat.

We have a couple of exciting program series coming up that I’d like to highlight. **“Building a Better Birder Workshops”** are a series of local citizen scientist programs designed to create better bird identification skills and to promote local participation with citizen science projects. The programs include research presentations, bird walks and identification presentations. They are conducted by Kelly McKay (BioEco Research and Monitoring Center), with assistance from Mark Roberts (Clinton County Conservation) and Brian Ritter (Nahant Marsh Education Center). Funding for this workshop was provided by the Resource Enhancement and Protection-Conservation Education Program (REAP-CEP). **See side bar for further details.**

Also, note that we have a new program series for seniors entitled, **Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)**. Topics change monthly. September topic will be Conservation Success Stories and will remain social distance style. Details to come. Please see our website to register for all programs.

Volunteers for Prairie Woods Nature Center

If you love nature, teaching kids, getting out on the land, or simply lending a helping hand we have a place for you! We are seeking dynamic volunteers to fulfill a much-needed niche at the Prairie Woods Nature Center located at Oak Grove Park overlooking a spectacular vista. Inside is filled with interactive displays with information regarding our local habitats, history and culture for visitors to explore. Volunteers will greet guest as they visit, answer basic questions and assist in small nature center related tasks. Morning, afternoon and evening shifts available during week days, evenings, weekends and summer holidays.

We are looking for assistance with the following areas:

Animal Care	Building & Grounds	Front Desk	Interpretive Trail
Program Development	Teaching Naturalist	Event Volunteer	Summer Camp

Other: baking/sewing/research/etc.

If interested in volunteering at the Prairie Woods Nature Center please visit us at our website for further descriptions. Fill out the volunteer application online or one can be picked up at the center. We will be happy to answer any of your questions please call us at 712-552-3057.

Build a Better Birder at the Prairie Woods Nature Center

Tuesday, October 20

- noon-1pm **Bird Hike**
- 6-8pm **Presentation**
Birding Internationally: Tales from a Sometimes Wannabe World Lister

Friday, February 5

- 6pm-8pm **Owl Hike**

Saturday, February 6 **Eagle Day**

- 8-10am **Eagle Watch**
- 10-11am **Presentation**
Bald Eagle Night Roost Survey
- 11am- 1pm **Eagle Watch**
- 1-2:30pm **Presentation**
Human Activity Impact on Bald Eagle Reproductive Success

Thursday, May 6

- 6-8pm **Presentation**
Introduction to Warblers of IA

Friday, June 4

- 7:30-11am **Bird Hike**
- 1-3pm **Presentation**
Introduction to Songbird ID

SELF-Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship meets on the 3rd

Tuesday of every month. Watch our website for topics and times.

October 20th SELF topic: **Presentation** Summary of the First Ever Christmas Bird Count Marathon **Part of the Building a Better Birder Workshop Series**

Environmental Education Opportunities

Pre-registration is required for some events, please visit our website at www.mycountyparks.com/county/sioux.aspx 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 of programs will be posted on our Facebook and on 93.9 FM.

September 5- Monarch Watch

9:30-11 am

Join us Saturday morning with the family to learn about monarch migration to Mexico. We will have an overview of monarchs and their anatomy, their migration pattern, and how and why we tag them. We have a limited number of nets for use. If you have your own net, please bring it along. **Cancelled if raining.** Pre-registration is not required but appreciated.

TBD September 14- Trick or Treat Camper Registration- phone registration only

8 am

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 TBD October 10, 2020 event. You may register yourself and one other camper. Campers will receive Friday and Saturday night free camping in exchange for enough candy/goodies for 800 kids.

September 12- Ladies' Nature Escape- Big Sioux Recreation Area

9am- 2pm

Attention all ladies! Do you love to try new things outdoors? Do you love it even more with like-minded women? Then you should join us for our NEW Ladies' Nature Escape! Imagine a slow paced stroll through the woodland with Naturalist guides interpreting your surroundings. Reset your mind with the sounds of birdsong, the wind through the cottonwoods, and a river view. Next, try your hand at kayaking, canoeing and paddle boarding, and finally use your own artist style to make a cast of nature items of your choosing. We are hoping this catches on as an annual event, with topics that change according to interest.

Open to ages 14 and up. Ages 14-16 must come with an adult. Cost is \$10 per person. Limited to 10 people. In the case of bad weather, we will reschedule. Pre-registration required.

September 15- Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)

9:30-10:30 am and 2-3pm

Seniors! Looking for a great place to gather with friends? Each month we will explore a different area of the natural world. We promise you will enjoy your- SELF!

Topic: Conservation Success Stories: How the River Otter, American Pelican and Trumpeter Swan returned to Iowa!

September 19- Dutch Oven Gathering- Turkey Ridge Campground- Oak Grove Park

6 pm

Calling all area Dutch Oven Cookers! We will be hosting a gathering at Oak Grove Park. 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 cooks will receive a free campsite at Turkey Ridge of Saturday night, September 19. All chefs must wear gloves while preparing food, and gloves will be provided and required in the serving line. Masks are optional. The food line will be outdoors if weather permits. *We will be limiting the event to registered DOG participants only, and will not be inviting the general public to join us due to COVID-19 safety concerns.*

TBD October 10- Trick or Treat Hike- Oak Grove Park

5:30-8 pm

Bring the family out for a fun night of trick or treating at the campgrounds. Ages 12 and under must dress in costume, and campers will be waiting with candy at each campsite. This event is TO BE DETERMINED. If the event is held, some measures will be in place due to COVID-19. Watch our website for details and announcements.

TBD October 17- Youth Hunt- Rock Valley Gun Club

7:30 am- 12:30 pm

This event is sponsored by the Sioux Prairie Pheasants Forever and Sioux County Conservation Board. It is open to youth that reside in Iowa AND have passed their hunter safety course. A review of hunter safety, trap shooting and a mentor hunt are on the agenda, as well as lunch. No cost, pre-registration is required, forms to print and fill out are found online.

 **October 20– Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)**

9:30-10:30 am and 2-3 pm

Seniors! Looking for a great place to gather with friends? Coffee, treats and fellowship will follow a short presentation. Each month we will explore a different area of the natural world. We promise you will enjoy your- SELF!

Topic: Build a Better Birder Workshop Series: The Ultimate Winter Bird Survey: Summary of the First Ever Christmas Bird Count Marathon- guest speaker Kelly Mc Kay. Brought to you by a REAP-CEP Grant.

 **October 20- Bird Hike**

12-1 pm

This hike is part of the Build a Better Birder Workshop series. We will be joining expert birder, Kelly Mc Kay who is presenting programs later in the day. Brought to you by a REAP-CEP Grant.

 **October 20- Birding Internationally: Tales from a Sometimes Wannabe World Lister**

6-8 pm

This Presentation will summarize birding trips from different countries around the world. We will discuss the threats that are eliminating natural habitats around the globe. Get ready to view a tremendous variety of unique bird species from far-flung locations. Brought to you by REAP-CEP Grant.

 **November 17- Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)**

9:30- 10:30 am and 2-3 pm

Seniors! Looking for a great place to gather with friends? Coffee, treats and fellowship will follow a short presentation. Each month we will explore a different area of the natural world. We promise you will enjoy your- SELF!

Topic: Constellations and their stories.

 **December 15- Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)**

9:30-10:30 am and 2-3 pm

Seniors! Looking for a great place to gather with friends? Coffee, treats and fellowship will follow a short presentation. Each month we will explore a different area of the natural world. We promise you will enjoy your- SELF!

Topic: Sioux County History

Camping/Rental Rates for 2021

Camping

Big Sioux Recreation Area

- Electric/Water- \$22
- Online Reservation- \$27
- Full Hook up- \$24
- Online Reservation- \$29

Bruce Schomaker Recreation Area

- Electric/Water- \$22

Oak Grove

- Electric- \$20
- Online Reservation- \$25
- Tent Site- \$15

Sandy Hollow Recreation Area

- Electric- \$20
- Electric/water- \$22
- Full Hookup- \$24
- Online Reservation- \$29

Cabins (online reservations only)

All located at Oak Grove, 2 night minimum stays
Available April 15- October 15 weather dependent.

- Eagles Nest & Whitetail Lodge- \$70 a night
- Bluegill Bungalow & Foxes Den- \$80 a night

Shelters

Open shelters located throughout the county no charge,
first come first served.

Alton Roadside Park (online reservations only)

- Enclosed Shelter- \$50

Oak Grove (online reservations only)

- Big Sioux Shelter- \$35
- Oak Grove Lodge \$160 + \$200 damage deposit fee

Sandy Hollow Recreation Area (online reservations only)

- Sandy Hollow Lodge- \$275 + \$275 damage deposit

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

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: Conservation Board meetings are held the first
: Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm in the
: Conservation Corner at the Prairie Woods Nature Center.
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Sioux County Conservation Board Members

Gordon Pottebaum- Chairperson
Dave Meylink- Vice Chairperson
Jerry Jensen- Secretary
Josh Boersma- Member
Jason Smith- Member



Sioux County Conservation Foundation Members

Brian VanEngen- Chairperson
Stan Hoekstra- Treasurer
Dawn DeWit- Secretary
Gordon Pottebaum- Member
Greg Hansen- Member



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