



SIOUX COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

4051 Cherry Ave Hawarden, IA 51023

www.siouxcountyparks.org

Volume 30
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712-552-1047

Sioux County Park Overview

Sioux county parks have seen a steady stream of traffic and visitors this summer. Sandy Hollow Recreation Area campground has been full most of the summer, Oak Grove Park and the Big Sioux Recreation Area have seen steady amount of visitors as well. The summer has been a little on the warmer and drier side compared to the past few years. The river levels and ponds around the area have felt the lack of rain and are lower than typical. Granted, the perk to that is we did not have to deal with flooding. Despite the drought we have had timely rain storms which has kept the grass in the park green and looking nice, requiring regular mowing and up keep.

Big Sioux Recreation Area

The campgrounds and swimming beach have offered a nice ability to relax on the nicer days and cool off on all these hot days of summer we've had. Staff has enjoyed seeing visitors out in the park and using it. Work has continued on the cement path. We are excited to announce the Rookery Cabin is complete and available for reservations year round! The old Buncombe Schoolhouse has been remodeled and has been transformed from an old school house into a newer modern cabin. We are excited to see this cabin completed and look forward to the many family gatherings and additional stories the walls will hold. Read on in the newsletter for more details on this new cabin.

Oak Grove Park

Myron Dekkers, Park Ranger

Another full-speed-ahead summer has flown by! Once again, we were blessed with a good summer maintenance crew at Oak Grove. There is always lots to do, so it is great having the help to get it done.

Here is a list of a few summer projects:

Placed crushed rock on the steps of the Woodpecker Lane hiking trail at Oak Grove

Installed intermediate vertical supports, along with some prep work for installing a hand-rail system on a foot bridge, which we are building on the Wood Duck Trail hiking trail at Oak Grove

Pruned a section of Pouder's Pond Road on the Iowa side by Fairview, SD

Took down and cut up several dead trees at Oak Grove

Split a lot of firewood

Prairie restoration: Planted native prairie seed and mowed down competing growth

Refurbished picnic tables

Routine weekly maintenance: cleaning, mowing, string trimming, etc.

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



Sandy Hollow Recreation Area

Taylor Deegan, Park Ranger

As we inch closer to Fall it really starts to set in how fast this summer has gone. Mostly dry and warmer weather has continued to drop our pond and local waterways. Hopefully as we keep moving into Fall we will see some cooler weather combined with rainfall. One of the bigger things going on out at Sandy Hollow this year is the addition of a new shop to the park. Since Sioux County Conservation Board had taken over management of Sandy Hollow in 2014, the rangers and seasonal staff have been operating out of the original maintenance sheds that have been partially retrofitted for year around use. This has worked well so far but with the continued park expansion and the addition of more wildlife areas we have outgrown the space.

The new shop will have a 40'x50' heated workspace along with a 60'x50' cold storage space. It is a much needed addition to the park that is going to prove useful for years to come. We also are very thankful for the hard work the contractors have been putting in to create this new work space. The plans for our old shops and area is to take down both buildings for the eventual addition of more camping spots. This area will flow perfectly into our existing campground and with some grading and clean-up it will supplement our demand for more areas to camp.



It has been a very good year out at the parks and wildlife areas and we feel things have become a little more normal again in regards to traffic. As we approach the end of August we will also be losing most of our seasonal help. We have had a great crew this year and we wish them the best as they all go back to the different things they do in the off season. We hope you all have a great rest of your year and enjoy the Fall season as much as we do!



A huge Thank You shout out to our maintenance summer staff that helped us out this season:

Alyssa Peterson	Barb Dykshorn	Caleb De Jong	Cody Byl	Cole Schiefen
Daelyn Driesen	Elisabeth Martinsen	Emily Klocke	Erika McKenney	Ethan De Boer
Francisco Garcia	Hannah Van Den Berg	Jim Jonker	Joseph Kamstra	Karson Kruid
Kendall Van Zanten	Lane Dekkers	Luke Hughes	Meghan Bergsma	Mikah Mc Vay
Mike Schurman	Robert Upton	Storm Wagner		

Overall our parks have seen great use and we have enjoyed all the summer had to bring. We also usually are looking forward to a quieter season of cooler weather and time to complete other projects before I dare say the snow flies. Come out and enjoy a nice day at your local county parks and check out the projects listed or new ones under way.



Seasonal Campsites for 2022 Camping Season

Looking forward to next camping season we are once again going to offer seasonal camp sites at the following campgrounds: Big Sioux Recreation Area, Oak Grove Park and Sandy Hollow Recreation Area. Applications can be found on our website or at the administration office. Application and deposit are **due by December 31, 2021**. We will be drawing for sites at the February 2, 2022 board meeting. Total cost for campsite for season are as follows along with site details.

Big Sioux Recreation Area: 50 amp electrical service (150 kilowatts/month), water and sewer. Concrete pad, with room to park one vehicle at the site, additional parking located in campground. Occupancy is April 15- October 15 (weather dependent). \$2,180 total for the season.

Oak Grove Park: 50 amp electrical service (150 kilowatts/month). Water and sewer dump is located in the park for use not at site. Concrete pad, with room to park one vehicle at the site, additional parking located in campground. Occupancy is April 15- October 7 (weather dependent). \$2,040 total for the season.

Sandy Hollow Recreation Area: 30 amp electrical service (150 kilowatts/month), water and sewer. Concrete pad, with room to park one vehicle at the site, additional parking located in campground. Occupancy is April 15- October 15 (weather dependent). \$2,180 total for season.



Once Old Buncombe Schoolhouse Now New Rookery Cabin

If you have been following along you are well aware of the process we have been undertaking with transforming a school house into a cabin. As of last newsletter writing we were super close to being done with it and announcing our opening of the new cabin. Well, guess what, it is OPEN!! We are super excited to have this new cabin open and available for you to rent.

This cabin started off as being the Buncombe Township Schoolhouse. The building was built in 1886 at a bid of \$360 by H.L. Stiles. The school served children kindergarten through 8th grade. There was approximately 10-15 kids per year that attended school until 1957. After it closed from being a schoolhouse the township used the building for meetings and voting until recent years.

In 2017 the conservation board was approached about interest in the building as it was no longer being utilized and was in starting needs of repairs. In 2018 the Buncombe township decided to donate the building to the board, provided they wanted it. Agreements and arrangements were made with the neighboring business Land Marc Construction, Inc. who was interested in the land and agreed to pay to relocate the building. Construction began in the fall of 2018 to dig the foundation and basement at the new site at the Big Sioux Recreation Area. January 2019 we moved the building from the original location to its new home. The main construction started and continued along the way until its completion in late June of this year.

We decided to name it the Rookery due to the fitting nature with the rest of the bird themed names of this park. The term the "Rookery" stands for a collection of nests high in the branches of trees. Because this cabin is larger than the ones located at Oak Grove and intended for larger gatherings this term fit well. We are excited to see what this old schoolhouse holds for the future. We are hopeful the walls are filled with even more stories and memories than before.

This cabin is built for a relaxing couples getaway to a family gathering. There are five separate sleeping areas. It has a medium size kitchenette with stovetop, microwave, full size fridge, coffee pot and toaster. There is a gas grill located out on the partial wrap around deck which leads way to the paver patio with fire ring. The cabin has central air conditioning and heating. There is a limited number of pots and pans, cooking/serving utensils along with plate ware. Renters are responsible for providing their own linens, toiletry, and other items they may need.

Cabin is available year round, three night minimum. Peak season, April- October fee is \$225/night, off peak season is \$175/night. Discount if booked for 7 consecutive nights (must call the main administration office for details on this). All booking requests are completed through the mycountyparks.com website. Call the office for information on renting this cabin over the winter holidays.



Environmental Education Opportunities

Pre-registration REQUIRED for most events but is appreciated for all events, please visit our website at siouxcountyparks.org/events to learn more about the programs and how to register. Programs held at the Prairie Woods Nature Center are indicated by:  All other program locations noted in description. Cancellation of programs will be posted on our Facebook page and on 93.9 FM.

	September 4 - Monarch Tagging	9:30-11 am
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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, how and why we tag them. There is no cost for event, we have a limited number of nets for use. If you have your own net bring it along. Program moved indoors if raining.

September 7- Camper Registration for Trick or Treat Hike	Call in Only	8 am
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Call 712-552-1047 starting at 8 am on September 7, 2021 to claim a spot for October 9, 2021 Trick or Treat Hike. Each camper can register themselves and one other camper. Campers will receive Friday and Saturday night free camping in exchange for enough candy/goodies for 800 children per campsite.

	September 11- Ladies' Nature Escape	9 am-2:30 pm
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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 Ladies Nature Escape! We will take a stroll through he woodland, make goat milk soap, and have an intro to firearms with a chance to shoot a shotgun at clay targets. Open to ages 14 and up. Ages 14-16 must come with an adult. Cost is \$35 per person, payable at the door, to our guest speaker.

September 18- Dutch Oven Gathering 2021	Turkey Ridge Campground, Oak Grove Park	6 pm
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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 cookers will receive a free campsite at Turkey Ridge Campground for Saturday night.

	September 21- Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)	9:30 am and 2 pm
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Seniors! Looking for a great place to gather with friends? Enjoy coffee, treats and fellowship and a short presentation. Each month we will take the time to explore how the specific design of our chosen topic is essential to its owner. We promise you will enjoy your- SELF!

Topic: By Design- Seeds

October 9- Trick or Treat Hike	Oak Grove Park Campgrounds	5:30-8 pm
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Join us for a fun evening of Trick or Treating. Ages 12 and under are invited to trick or treat in costume. The campgrounds are full of campers with friendly faces at each campsite and of course candy/goodies too. If you would like to be a camper, see below for details. Trick or treating is from 5:30-8:00 pm. No pre-registration needed. Campers can register first come first served on September 7, 2021 starting at 8 am by calling 712-552-1047. Will need to provide candy for 800 kids in exchange for free camping October 8 and 9, 2021. Weather cancellations listen to KSOU 93.9 FM.

	October 19- Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)	9:30 am and 2 pm
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Seniors! Looking for a great place to gather with friends? Enjoy coffee, treats and fellowship and a short presentation. Each month we will take the time to explore how the specific design of our chosen topic is essential to its owner. We promise you will enjoy your- SELF!

Topic: By Design- Animal Homes

October 23- Youth Mentor Hunt	Rock Valley Gun Club	7:30 am-12:30 pm
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We partner with Sioux Prairie Pheasants Forever and Rock Valley Gun Club on this day to give 12-15 year old Iowa residents, who have passed their hunter education course, a great pheasant hunt experience! The day starts with breakfast and a quick review of hunter safety and trap shooting. We pair youth with a mentor and hunting dog. Youth and mentor travel in groups to local hunting areas, both public and private, for the morning. Following the hunt, youth and mentors return to the Rock Valley Gun Club for lunch. Only a limited number will be taken so you must pre-register. Please refer to mycountyparks.com for registration and emergency forms.



November 16- Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)

9:30 am and 2 pm

Seniors! Looking for a great place to gather with friends? Enjoy coffee, treats and fellowship and a short presentation. Each month we will take the time to explore how the specific design of our chosen topic is essential to its owner. We promise you will enjoy your- SELF!
Topic: By Design- Ears



December 21- Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)

9:30 am and 2 pm

Seniors! Looking for a great place to gather with friends? Enjoy coffee, treats and fellowship and a short presentation. Each month we will take the time to explore how the specific design of our chosen topic is essential to its owner. We promise you will enjoy your- SELF!
Topic: By Design- Team Jeopardy

Summer Education Department Recap

Hailey Pullman & Mikayla Balt: Naturalist Interns

Summer means different things for different people. Here at the Prairie Woods Nature Center, summer means a fun-packed season of summer camps, library programs, fishing clinics and other public programs.

Summer Camps: We have been so thankful to have our first season of summer camps hosted in the Prairie Woods Nature Center! Ranging from three years old to fifteen, we were able to provide 245 kids with the opportunity to attend summer camp! For ages 3-4, the young budding naturalists came to camp with a parent to discover more about the colors found in nature. The 5-6 year old's were able to explore more about spiders, nests, animals, etc. with Nature Up Close Summer Camp. For ages 7-9, the kids learned more about rocks, crystals, fossils, and geodes. They loved having the opportunity to go for a fossil dig and start their own rock collection! Water Works Camp with ages 10-12 was perfect with the hot summer weather. They learned about ways to manage our water resources properly, the water cycle, and water usage and availability. The camp wouldn't be complete though without trapping turtles, fishing, and, of course, a water fight! The 13-15 year old's put their skills to the test with Survivor Camp. Among some of the challenges they encountered were shelter building, GPS, compass navigation, and fishing. They were rewarded in the end with tasty s'mores!



Fishing Clinics: At this year's fishing clinics in Rock Valley, Sandy Hollow, and Boyden we reached over 180 people. Participants had the opportunity to learn about different types of fish they might catch and about different ways to cast. Even though the Rock Valley fishing clinic was rained out, we rescheduled and one of the largest groups of participants we have ever had at Rock Valley showed up! We would like to thank River's Bend Campground, the City of Boyden, Sportsmen's Club, and all of our volunteers for helping us with these events.



Ringneck Rendezvous: It was great to get back into the swing of things this year, especially with Ringneck Rendezvous! Saturday, August 7 was when all the fun took place! The activities included this year were Quick Draw, Minute to Win It, Archery, Wrist Rockets, exhibition shooting with one of the Gould Brothers, and so much more. Pizza and prizes were handed out at the event as well. We had 150 youth participants this year.



Sioux County Library Programs: This year we had the opportunity to plan and present two different themes of library programs. The first was Tails and Tales, where the kids learned about how different animals use their tails to aid in survival. The second theme was Reading Colors Your World.

The kids explored the use of color in nature and how animals use color for attraction, camouflage, and warning. The libraries chose which of the two themes they wanted to use, and each lesson came with some live animals! The kids really enjoyed our fox snake, Walt. At the library programs over 300 participants came!

Additional Programs: We enjoyed a variety of other public programs, both at the Prairie Woods Nature Center and with outreach. At the campground, the live animals paid a visit to our campers at Oak Grove. Another highlight from the summer was the Cooking with Creation wild edibles class. Participants were able to transform plants, such as stinging nettle, dandelion, and yarrow, into delicious dishes like stinging nettle hash browns and pheasant dandelion fried rice.

Overall, we were able to reach over 2,000 people with environmental education programs this summer!

Thank You from the Education Department

THANK YOU!

Evan DeGroot for animal food

Nature Center front desk volunteers- Darlene Westra, Julie Wegner, Lena Vollink, Evan DeGroot, Gordon Pottebaum, Carol Frerichs

Summer Camp volunteers- Rochelle Oordt, Janice Fedders, Dan Swier, Cynthia Smith, Rachelle Oordt, Lena Vollink, Gail Dacken, Stan Visser, Brooke Ford, Lizzie Westra, Evey Bakker

Volunteers for programs: Outdoor Skills Day, Sandy Hollow Fishing, Rivers Bend Fishing, Bruce Schomaker Fishing Clinic, Ringneck Rendezvous

SELF program volunteers and treat donors

Harlan Van Voorst for Nature Center office art

Presenters-Phyllis VanGelder, John and Cheryl Buntsma, Dave Oppegard, Kelly McKay, Jeremy Hummel, Duane Bajema
Hunter Safety Instructors-Denny DeJong, Gordon Pottebaum

Education Staff and Interns- Mikayla Balt, Hailey Pullman, Gail Dacken, Brooke Ford, Erica Smith

Prairie Woods Nature Center

The Prairie Woods Nature Center has been a popular stop for many campground visitors this summer weather it was a break from the heat or a place to dash into a minute to wait out some rain. We have seen visitors from 29 of the 50 states, and well over 2,100 visitors for the year.

There has been some great programs happening out of the center for summer camps to the monthly SELF program. We are planning and looking to offer more programs for the fall and winter months out of the center.

Reminder that come the end of October, we will start our winter hours.

Featured Artist at the Prairie Woods Nature Center

Kent TeVelde, a 23-year-old Washington native, has been doing chainsaw art in his spare time for the past 10 years—creating intricate wood carvings for shows and fairs. Starting with his first small stump bear at 11 years old, he moved on to creating 8ft tall carvings in his clients' yards. He describes the process of carving as relaxing, an outlet for pure creative energy. While studying at Dordt University, he would create carvings by recycling logs from the Sioux Center stick dump. Coming to Oak Grove last summer, he collected downed red cedar from the park with the permission of the conservation staff to create some of the carvings that you see here. This showing at Oak Grove Conservation center is a collection of smaller and medium sized carvings. He wants his work to be something that brings people joy, and finds that sharing his work with others makes it worthwhile. Come check out his exhibits through the end of September.

Summer Hours

April – October

Monday: closed

Tuesday: 9a- 4p

Wednesday: 9a- 4p

Thursday: 1- 7p

Friday: 9a- 4p

Saturday: 9a- 4p

Sunday: 1- 4p

Winter Hours

November– March

Monday: closed

Tuesday: 9a- 4p

Wednesday: 9a- 4p

Thursday: 1- 4p

Friday: 9a- 4p

Saturday: 9a- 12p

Sunday: closed



SELF- December Team Jeopardy!



We have been building up to this day all year! Jeopardy style questions are being put together after each month's topic to create the ultimate "By Design" Jeopardy Game. All questions are multiple choice or include graphics as well as photos. It's not a test it's a game! Even if you were not able to make it to all the months, don't be afraid to still participate. Participants are encouraged to put a team together for the day. It will be a great way to wrap up our "By Design" theme before we kick off next year's- "Creature Feature"!

Sioux County Conservation Friends of the Foundation

We have been excited to see all the friends join our foundation. With the donations made towards the Friends of the Foundation group the Foundation Board has determined to purchase the following items:

- Archery Net-used at schools, events, hunter safety
- Tablet for Weather Station- Prairie Woods Nature Center
- Bird Feeding Station- Prairie Woods Nature Center
- Exhibit Improvement-Prairie Woods Nature Center

If you or your family are passionate about the Foundation's work you can join the cause by becoming a member at one of the levels listed below. All members will receive a base package as a thank you for their support.

Individual/Family \$45-\$75

- Base package: Invitation to Events, Newsletter and Prairie Woods Nature Center (PWNC) window decal

Prairie Conservationist \$100-\$200

- Base package and Exclusive PWNC T-shirt

Woodland Conservationist \$250-\$450

- Base package, PWNC T-shirt and Certificate for 1 Night Free Camping

Wildlife Conservationist \$500-\$900

- Base package, PWNC T-shirt, Certificate for 1 Night Free Camping and 15% off Gift Certificate for PWNC Gift Shop

Distinguished Conservationist \$1,000+

- Base package, PWNC t-shirt, Certificate for 1 Night Free Camping, 15% off Gift Certificate for PWNC Gift Shop, Free Watercraft Rental, Name in Newsletter and on Website

Levels that qualify for a PWNC t-shirt may purchase additional shirts for \$25 each.

Members can use our online form to select mail in, pay one time, or sign up for automatic renewals. You can join online at siouxcountyparks.org/support or pick up a card at the nature center.



Distinguished Conservationists:

- Anonymous
- Den Hartog Industries, Inc.
- J. Douglas and Linda Van Berkum
- Kent & Becky Sneller
- Kraig and Cheryl Hulstein
- Michael & Joyce Wiggins
- Sioux Prairie Pheasants Forever #36

Memorials given in honor of:

- Anonymous Memorials
- Mardell De Jong
- George Kleinhesselink

Foundation Members:

- Brian VanEngen- Chairperson
- Stan Hoekstra- Treasurer
- Dawn DeWit- Secretary
- Cal DeRuyter- Member
- Gordon Pottebaum- Member
- Greg Hansen- Member
- Lena Vollink- Member
- Stan Visser- Member

Staff

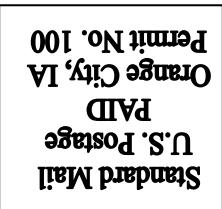
Robert Klocke- Executive Director
Sunday Ford- Assistant Director/EE Coordinator
Jessica Van Oort- Office Assistant
Myron Dekkers- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech.- Oak Grove
Zach Weyer- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech.- Sandy Hollow
Alex Lynott- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech.- Big Sioux Rec. Area
Damon Anderson- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech.- Oak Grove
Sarah Davelaar- Naturalist
Taylor Deegan- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech.- Sandy Hollow

Sioux County Conservation Board Members

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



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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.



Sioux County Conservation Board
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