

# Sioux County Conservation Newsletter



Volume 26, Issue 1

Spring 2017

## Sioux County Parks Update...

Spring is just around the corner by what the calendar says and almost by what Mother Nature is telling us. Except then we get the snow again and quickly change our minds that spring isn't here yet. The past couple of months have been busy ones in the parks for the park rangers, who have been checking hunters over the different hunting seasons. Collecting and repairing signs at a handful of parks (due to damages or general repairs) and many other small projects. All of the mowers have been serviced and cleaned thoroughly for another busy season of cutting the grass. Other equipment that is used periodically has also been gone through to top off the oil and other general maintenance needed.

As we look forward to spring coming we start prepping to perform controlled burns on a few acres throughout the county to help establish healthy prairies. We try to do later burns to help set back the brome grass, allowing the natives to take hold and pop up through the black surroundings. We are getting our seeder ready to replant or establish new prairies. We also start thinking about getting our restrooms ready for the busy camping season, hopefully before the phone calls roll in concerning what's open and available. Our aim and goal is to have most areas ready to go for camping mid-April. The other closely watched item during the spring thaw is how high the rivers are getting and whether we have to prep for yet another spring flood.

This spring at Oak Grove we are looking forward to wrap up the road project all that is left is to paint the lines and finishing off the shoulders. We will be hauling in a little more dirt for the shoulders, work on some of the angles and drop offs that have been created, and reseeding. We are also looking at doing some work on our rental facility parking lots.

Plans are in the works to stain the cabins, administration office and one of the shops. We are looking into doing some electrical pedestals upgrades in the campground.

### Big Sioux Recreation Area

There are a few new things to look forward to in the park. A changing/foot wash station will now be available in the beach parking lot for swimmers to use. This will hopefully cut back on the sand in the bathroom drains and overall traffic in the campground restrooms. Two paddle boards are now available to rent from the registration booth. They are \$10 for the first hour and a dollar every hour after that. You must be 16 or older to rent the paddle boards or be with an adult. We have two kayaks and two canoes that rent out for \$5 the first hour and a dollar every hour after that. For the hikers, you will notice the trails have been marked nicely and have now been named: Screech Owl, Barred Owl, and Great Horn Owl.

The Big Sioux Recreation Area continues to be promising for bird watchers of any level. What started out as a dozen Bald Eagles has now grown to over 40 Bald Eagles each day in the park during the migration season. They have been very active fishing and flying from cottonwood tree to cottonwood tree. A few bird watchers and photographers have been able to capture some beautiful photos of these raptors. Oftentimes someone will tell a Park Ranger they saw one or maybe a few Golden Eagles in the same group as the Bald Eagles.

*County Parks continue next page...*

### Alex Lynott- Park Ranger



Photo by  
Gretchen Vande Poppe of Alton.

### *County Parks Continued...*

Although this is not impossible, more than likely what they saw were juvenile Bald Eagles. It takes all of five years for a Bald Eagle to have their beautiful white heads and tails. From year one to year four, the eagles will go through a rather “speckled” phase where they are mostly brown, but have white blotches or a white belly. Both male and female will grow into their white heads and white tails, looking identical. The only way to tell a male from a female is by weight. The female will weigh on average twelve pounds while her male counterpart may weigh on average nine pounds.

Interesting fact: How did Bald Eagles get their name if they are not exactly bald? Their name came from the old English word “balde,” which means white.

### **Sandy Hollow Recreation Area:**

**Zach Weyer- Park Ranger**

What a weird winter!?! The ice fishing season has seemed to come to an abrupt end, leaving us with a short ice fishing season. Which may make it better spring fishing. Bluegills will be aggressive in their bedding and the bass will start to re-emerge on the shorelines.

With the plants coming out of dormancy soon the colors of green will take hold. There will be ten new acres of native flowers and grasses planted at Sandy Hollow to help aid the dwindling bee population. Many of the dead trees have been cut out of the campground and in a few short months new juvenile trees will be planted to take their place.

Plans are being drawn up for a registration booth upon entering the park. The booth will offer visitors a chance to ask questions, receive information on the Sandy Hollow Rec. Area and other county parks. We also look to offer minor items such as sodas, water, candy, and other small items available for purchase, along with vehicle passes.

Work has started on the Clubhouse to do some major updates. Currently we are working on removing the kitchen/bar area and finish it off with a smaller kitchen area including a stove and fridge. We also plan on creating a better storage closet for the tables and chairs.

Reminder 2017 annual vehicle passes are available for purchase in Sandy Hollow Recreation Area and at Big Sioux Recreation Area.

Come out to one of your county parks and support the great outdoors!

## **Conservation Foundation pushes need for county nature center**

Sunday Ford- Assistant Director/EE Coordinator

The Sioux County Conservation Foundation continues to seek financial support to build a Sioux County nature center.

The 12,000 square foot Nature Center will be a destination for families, school groups, nursing homes, campers, and outdoor enthusiasts. It will house historical and wildlife exhibits on the main floor; and classroom space on the lower level, with live animals also on display. The classroom will aid the SCCB staff and volunteers in providing and enhancing their education programs. Field trips, summer camps, community programs are among some of the programs that will increase due to the building. Sioux County Conservation Foundation, local Sioux County teachers, and community leaders are partnering with Split Rock Studio in Minneapolis to design the exhibits.



About \$2 million total already has been received for the project through pledges. Members of the foundation also met with city councils in Sioux Center, Orange City, Rock Valley and Hawarden. The Sioux County Board of Supervisors recently approved a \$250,000 donation over seven years, toward the \$4.8 million project. The foundation also plans to apply for an Enhanced Iowa Grant in April to provide additional financial support.



The building location is the east edge of Deer Run Campground at Oak Grove Park on the western edge of the county. The location includes majestic views and provides visitors access to many trails.

The SCCB Education Department has been presenting the plan and exhibits to local school teachers to increase awareness of the field trip opportunities for our local students.

# Summer Camps at Oak Grove

Join Sioux County Naturalist and interns this summer for outdoor adventures. All summer camps are free of charge. **Pre-registration is required** and **will start April 3, 2017 starting at 8am**. Space is limited. All registration must be done online at [www.mycountyparks.com/County/Sioux.aspx](http://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Sioux.aspx) for questions about registration call 712-552-1047. For questions about the summer camps call Sunday Ford at 712-552-3057.

## **Ages 3-4 -Budding Naturalist-**(Different activities from last year)

Little naturalists will have a hands-on introduction to nature. Parents/adult must attend. Camp includes games, crafts, and trail hikes. This camp is from 8:30 am- noon.

Choose from: June 16          June 29          July 28



## **Ages 5-6 -Nature Up Close**

This camp includes a broad range of nature exploration including: bugs, seeds, nests, and mammals. Includes games, crafts, and trail hike. Camp is offered two days; camper must attend both days of camp.

Choose from: June 13 and 14, 9am- noon OR 1pm-4pm          June 22-23, 9am- noon

## **Ages 7-9- Underground Treasures**

This camp will focus on rock collecting and identifying, archaeology, and fossils. Campers will be able to make a rock collection to take home. This two day camp is offered four different dates from 9am-2pm, camper must attend full two days of camp.

Choose from: June 20-21          June 27-28          July 6-7          July 12-13



## **Ages 10-12- Time Travelers**

Experience Iowa as the pioneers did. We will make ice cream, baskets, and go fishing. End the days with swimming or canoeing in the lake. To be held at Big Sioux Recreation Area, south of Hawarden. Camp is offered two dates from 9am-3pm, camper must attend both full days of camp.

Choose from: July 18-19          July 20-21

## **Ages 13-15- Overnight Camp**

This overnight camp will be an outdoor survival class with a mix of s'mores, night hikes, fishing, and campfire fun. Meals will be potluck, you will be contacted prior to camp on what to bring. Camp will start at 9:30 on July 25 and end at 1pm on July 26. Child must attend full length of camp.

July 25-26

*Notice: Online Summer Camp Registration will start at 8 am on Tuesday April 3, 2017*

Do you enjoy teaching the youth about the outdoors, going on hikes, and helping with craft projects?

Then this opportunity is for you... We are looking for volunteers to assist our Environmental Education Staff with our 2017 summer camp seasons. Choose how many days you want to help, and what age group works best for you.

For more information and to sign up for a time on this fun opportunity please contact Sunday Ford at 712-552-3057.

Background checks required.



# Upcoming Programs...

- Must **register online** for all programs, go to [www.mycountyparks.com/County/Sioux.aspx](http://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.

## June 8- Outdoor Skills Day- Oak Grove Park: 8:30 am-4 pm

**All ages** (8 years & under must have an adult present)

This fun filled Thursday will start at 8:30am and end at 4 pm. Participants will register at the picnic shelter near the river at Oak Grove Park. Sessions for the day may include: shotgun shooting, air rifles, archery, outdoor cooking, canoeing, improving outdoor skills and much more! This event is sponsored by 4-H Extension, Sioux County Conservation Board, and the Sioux County Sportsmen's Club. Lunch and prizes provided by the Sioux County Sportsmen's Club. You must pre-register for this event; first 270 kids will be accepted. No cost for event.

## June 10- Family Fishing Clinic- Sandy Hollow: 9 am- 12:30 pm

**All ages are welcomed!** (8 years & under must have an adult present)

Join the Sioux County Conservation Board and the Sioux County Sportsmen's Club at the Sandy Hollow pond near Sioux Center for a fun-filled morning of fishing instruction, fishing, prizes, casting contest, and giveaways. Clinic will be from 9 am-12:30 pm with lunch provided and prizes to be won. Those 16 years of age and older must have a valid fishing license to actively fish. Fishing poles are available for use or bring your own. No cost, entry fee to park waved for participants during hours of event. Must pre-register for event.

## July 8- Family Fishing Clinic- Rivers Bend Campground, Rock Valley: 9 am- 1:30pm

All ages are welcomed! (8 years and under must have an adult present)

Join the Sioux County Conservation Board and City of Rock Valley for a fun morning of fishing. Pre-registration required please call the City of Rock Valley at 712-476-6065 after April 28. Those 16 and over must have valid fishing license to fish. Fishing poles available or bring your own. No cost, entrance fee waived to park during program time.

## August 5- Ringneck Rendezvous- Rock Valley Gun Club- 4-9 pm

**Ages 5-16 years old** (5-8 years must have an adult present. All adults welcome with preregistration).

**\$10 registration fee** for all youth and adults attending event. Join the Sioux Prairie Pheasants Forever Chapter, Sioux County Conservation Board, Rock Valley Gun Club, and Iowa DNR for a fun evening of outdoor experiences. Activities for the evening being planned include; trap shooting (ages 12 and over), BB guns, archery, sling shots, games; door prizes, education sessions; and meal. **Pre-registration required by August 2, 2017.** Individuals registered will receive: meal, optional ringneck membership, water bottle, bag, and more. Many prizes to be won! Pre-registration required first 400 kids will be accepted. Follow link at [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com) to register and for updated information.

## August 8- Hunter Education- Oak Grove Lodge- 9 am to 7 pm

**All ages 11 and over** are invited to join the Sioux County Conservation Board for their annual Hunter Safety Education Course, August 8, at the Oak Grove Lodge from 9 am -7 pm. Participants must attend full length of class. Those interested in attend the course must register online, follow link at [ww.mycountyparks.com/County/Sioux.aspx](http://ww.mycountyparks.com/County/Sioux.aspx). After you are registered for class, you will need to pick up a Hunter Education Manual from the Public Libraries in Hawarden, Orange City, Sioux Center, or Rock Valley. Prior to class you will need to complete the review questions in the manual and bring the manual and questions with you to class. Class will cover firearm safety, hunting ethics, first aid, hunting laws, and much more. Students will need a sack lunch and snacks for the day.



### Additional Fall Events:

- September 5- Trick or Treat Hike Call in Date for Camping
- September 9- Women in the Outdoors- Oak Grove
- September 30- Dutch Oven Gathering- Oak Grove
- October 14- Trick or Treat Hike- Oak Grove
- October 28- Youth Pheasant Hunt- Rock Valley



# SCCB Rates and Fees 2017

## Camping:

### Oak Grove

Electrical Sites- \$16

Tent Sites-\$13

### Bruce Schoemaker Recreation Area

Electrical/Water Sites- \$16

### Alton Roadside Park

Electrical- \$10

### Big Sioux Recreation Area

Electric/Water- \$18

Electric/Water/Sewer- \$20

### Sandy Hollow Recreation Area

Electric- \$16

Electric/Water- \$18

Electric/Water/Sewer-\$20

### Vehicle Passes:

Day vehicle pass- \$5

Annual Vehicle pass- \$20, second vehicle registered same day, additional \$10

*Passes required at Big Sioux Recreation Area and Sandy Hollow Recreation Area.*

### Watercraft

Canoes (6) & Kayaks (4) - \$18 a day (5+ hours), \$10 half day use off site, must be able to transport.

Canoes (2) and Kayaks (2) available at Big Sioux Rec. Area and Sandy Hollow hourly rentals at \$5

Paddleboards (2) - \$10 per hour at Big Sioux Rec. Area only



## Shelters:

**Open shelters** located at Oak Grove, Big Sioux Rec. Area, and Sandy Hollow- no charge, first come first served.

### Oak Grove

Oak Grove Lodge- \$100 (\$100 deposit)

Big Sioux Shelter- \$25

### Alton Roadside Park

Enclosed Shelter- \$40 (reservations made by calling Alton Casey's General Store 712-756-4370)

### Sandy Hollow Rec. Area

Clubhouse- \$200 (\$100 deposit)

### Cabins:

All located at Oak Grove Park

Eagles Nest & Whitetail- \$55 a night

Bluegill Bungalow & Foxes Den- \$65 a night

All located at Oak Grove Park, 2 night minimum stays during the summer months, closed off season.

For more information on any rentals, to make reservations, or inquire about hosting special events (wedding, large gatherings) please call the Sioux County Conservation Board Administration Office: 712-552-1047



## Coming soon...

We are in the starting process of setting up online reservations for our cabins, enclosed shelters, and a portion of our campsites. Date when we plan on going live with online reservations is still to be determined but hope that it will be first part of 2018. We will be using the [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com) website for reservations. This is the same site we use for online program registration. All those that currently use the cabins and shelters or plan on it in the future are encouraged to set up a user account name and password. If you have done this for programs you will not need to do it again.

There will be a few chosen campsites (not all of the sites) at Oak Grove, Big Sioux Rec. Area, and Sandy Hollow Rec. Area that will be available to reserve online only. The remainder of the sites will remain available on a first come first served basis as they have been in the past. Sites will be available up to a year out between April 15 and October 15.

Cabins will be available to reserve up to 2 years out between April 15 and October 15. Our enclosed shelters at Oak Grove and Sandy Hollow Rec. Area will remain available year round available up to 2 years out.

All reservations made are nonrefundable. Minimum and maximum allowed stays will be set in place for holidays and major events.

# 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  
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.

Standard Mail  
U.S. Postage  
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Permit No. 100

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