



SIoux COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

Volume 31
Issue 1 Winter 2022

4051 Cherry Ave Hawarden, IA 51023

www.siouxcountyparks.org

712-552-1047

Sioux County Parks Update

We have had a great fall with the warm weather lasting late into the season allowing campers to visit later into the season. This past camping summer season has been a busy one with general park maintenance, mowing and up keep going on but we have also been able to wrap up some of our other projects. We were able to open up the Rookery Cabin for rentals at the Big Sioux Recreation Area and pave additional walking/biking trail. Sandy Hollow Recreation Area maintenance shop is completed and moved into. This is a welcomed addition for the staff over there to work in and for equipment storage.

Oak Grove undertook a huge project of updating our trail maps with both the new mountain bike trail and existing hiking trails that cover miles of the park. We had assistance with mapping the trail system from Carter Wyatt, Dordt University, Sioux County Off Road Bicycle Club and park staff. A new map has been created and is available to view at the Prairie Woods Nature Center and online. Come this spring we will finish the process of labeling the intersections with maps and additional signage as designated, for now temporary ones are in place. The trails will take on a whole new meaning for the many users that enjoy our hiking and biking trails.



As staff move into more winter projects we will be taking down many different signs and rehabbing them. Many of our wooden signs will get stained and painted and take on a new life. We will also be busy with vehicle and equipment maintenance and some of the other projects that have been put on the back burners until things have calmed down.

Sandy Hollow Recreation Area

As we come to an end on another year at Sandy Hollow Recreation Area, we want to look back on all the things we accomplished over the last few months. We were able to finish up on the new maintenance shop. The new location for the shop is now out of the floodplain and will allow us to serve the campground and surrounding wildlife areas in an improved capacity. The old machine shed was taken down, sold and repurposed. Over twenty-five acres of new prairie seeding was planted in the southeast corner of Sandy Hollow. As the camping season closed out we were able to add new trees, while also cutting out the dead and damaged trees. With conditions remaining dry and the water remaining low we were able to remove litter and debris surrounding the pond.



We look forward in the coming year with new projects. First will be paving a walking trail through Sandy Hollow. Also improving all thirty-seven campsites to 50-amp service from 35-amp service. This time of the year also gives us the chance to catch up on repairs, equipment maintenance and projects that we otherwise can not get to due to how busy the parks are during our warmer months.

We would like to specially thank our campground hosts Alan and Barb Dykshorn for doing a fantastic job at Sandy Hollow. Sadly, fellow Park Ranger, Taylor Deegan is headed onto new opportunities. We would like to personally thank Taylor for all the hard work and dedication he has put into Sioux County Conservation and wish him the best. We want to thank you for all your support. We wish you blessings this holiday season.

Zach Weyer- Park Ranger

Snow Types According to a Park Ranger

Alex Lynott- Park Ranger

I thought I would write something a little different than my normal winter story. Before you read this nonsense article, please take into consideration there is zero scientific backing to any of my theories or thoughts! When you work alone in a park long enough, you start to develop your own theories on why things are the way things are.

Here in Iowa, we are fortunate enough to experience all four seasons. Sometimes all four seasons happen in December! Sixty degrees in the middle of December with tornadoes quickly followed by a complete whiteout blizzard. All these fluctuating temperatures result in my favorite types of snow and my least favorite types of snow.

Heart attack snow. This snow has got to be 80% water, 10% flake, and 10% concrete mix and weighs in as the heavyweight of all the snows. It is also what I call a warm snow and is the kind of snow where it is safer to crawl to your destination than it is to walk. It collects in measurements of pounds on the bottom of your boots, like thick greasy mud, and your boot essentially becomes as useful as a slippery bar of soap. Just crawl. Do not even try to scoop this kind of snow with a shovel, it will snap it right in half, because the instant a shovel touches this snow it turns to concrete.



Heart attack warm snow is also a bearcat to move with equipment, bringing park equipment to a stop and leaving you scooping it with loader buckets. Once you have got your bucket load of snow and go to dump it somewhere off the road, water dumps out. It is a very puzzling phenomenon, heart attack snow, and I find it best to just stare at from your window. Even your windshield wipers have heart attacks trying to wipe this matter off your windshield. Do not even get me started on how annoying this stuff is to drive on the next morning after a night freeze. If it is not obvious already, this is my least favorite type of snow. Whatever new types of snow I discover, this will always rank last.



Pretty sparkly snow globe powder snow. This is a very cold and fine powdery flake. It falls when temperatures are almost too cold to even make snow and very pretty and sparkly. Yes, that is right, I have a theory too that there is such a thing as it being too cold to snow. This is my favorite kind to remove off the roads and to scoop. It is too cold out to make it stick to the road or sidewalk, it is very lightweight, and most of the time a strong leaf blower will clear the sidewalk faster than a shovel! After spending a night on the ground in even colder night time temperatures, powder snow then becomes that annoying excessively loud crunchy snow when you walk on it the next morning. There is absolutely no way to be stealthy in cold crunchy powder snow. It is literally the crunch heard around the world. All that being said, this cold powder sparkly prettiness comes in ranking as my second favorite type of snow. It is the crunch, I cannot handle the crunch.

“Oh yeahhh!” snow. This is that stuff that you walk outside, bend down, scoop a handful, and the instant your hands make contact with it you just know. You know you now have in your hand the perfect makings for a cold flying projectile that must make contact with your sibling’s back. This is the type of snow when you let the kids go play outside, they will not be back in for hours. There are slides, tunnels, igloos, forts, snowmen, snow angels, snow cakes and yellow snow to be made. Mothers everywhere are yelling out windows at their children and often times not even their own children to put stocking hats and jackets back on. In come the sniffing red noses and red cheeks, the snowflake crusted eyelashes, the snow chunks across your floors, and the mess of boots, snow pants, gloves, jackets in your entryway as the little humans sprint to the kitchen chasing the smell of the hot chocolate filled mugs you have waiting for them. I also take advantage of snowfalls like this to show my niece and nephews that at thirty years old, I can still absolutely demolish them in a snow war. This perfect sculpting matter will always come in ranking as my favorite type of snow, no matter how many boot dryers I have plugged in.



So I challenge you now to pay closer attention to the types of snows and classify them in your own fun ways!

Happy Holidays!

2022 Annual vehicle passes are now available. Stop at either entrance area at Big Sioux Recreation Area or Sandy Hollow Recreation Area to fill out an envelope and we will mail you one. Or stop at the Prairie Woods Nature Center and pick yours up today.

Thank You 2021 Prairie Woods Nature Center Volunteers

2021 was an exciting year filled with hours of commitment from our volunteers.

- Hope Haven has been coming every Monday to do animal care and we have really made a relationship with each one of them. They even have a certain animal that each one of them is in charge of when they come.
- We have had a rotation of people that have volunteered as greeters at the front desk on Wednesdays. They spend their time gluing, cutting, dusting, taking care of animals, helping with flowers and generally making this facility a warm and inviting place to visit.
- The summer camp and field trip volunteers, as well as those that have helped with the Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship monthly program have been outstanding and have done endless hours of teaching, preparing, pouring coffee, and interacting with guests of all ages.
- We have had student volunteers from our local MOC-Floyd Valley High School who are preparing for their journey in the Conservation Field and have helped us tremendously by aiding in programs and animal care.
- Thank you to the volunteers who have helped greet and do special projects such as repair arrow fletchings, work on fishing rods, and other random things to make things go smoothly.
- The presenters that have offered their expertise and knowledge of our natural environment and history are priceless. We appreciate their willingness to pass on their knowledge and experience.

Interested in Volunteering?

Please stop in at the Prairie Woods Nature Center, fill out an online form at siouxcountyparks.org, or call 712/552-3057



Darlene Westra, Volunteer from Rock Valley helping a Kindergartner from Ireton Christian



2021 Visitor Facts

6,757 visitors from
January 1-November 30

3,528 people
participated in
educational programs

3,048 people explore
the building and enjoy
the view

32 states were
represented

Distance Award goes to
visitors from the
Middle East and
Canada!

Featured Artist at the Prairie Woods Nature Center

Judy Thompson is a national award-winning watercolor artist who finds inspiration from the vast prairies, farmland and wilderness of Americas heartland. Her art has been informed through artist residencies at the Homestead National Monument, Beatrice, NE; Badlands National Park, Interior, SD and Custer State Park, Custer, SD. In addition to corporate, public and private commissions, Judy also created the cover art for the Pioneer Girl series, which celebrates the life and works of Laura Ingalls Wilder. She is represented by Rehfelds Art and Framing, Sioux Falls; Prairie Edge, Rapid City; and Lanesboro Arts, Lanesboro, MN.



Judy and her husband, Dale, live in Orange City and enjoy hiking, biking and exploring the fields and forests of the Midwest. Oak Grove Park is one of their favorite stomping grounds!

“Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful, for beauty is God’s handwriting.” Ralph Waldo Emerson



Prairie Woods Christmas Tree Decorating Contest

Sioux County Conservation Foundation held their first annual Prairie Woods Christmas Tree Decorating Contest this year at the Nature Center. We asked the local schools classes 4 & 5th grades to participate. All they had to do was find a sponsor, and decorate a tree with the designated theme. This year we had Spaulding Catholic 3rd/4th grade class sponsored by Cleveringa Excavating, Rock Valley Christian 4th/5th grades sponsored by Hi-Way Chevrolet Buick, Hull Christian 4th/5th grade sponsored by D&K Door, and MOC- Floyd Valley 4th grade sponsored by Diamond Vogel. A portion of the sponsored funds went back to the classroom to provide for the Christmas tree, lights and designated theme items, what is not spent by the classes remains in the classrooms for the teachers to use as they see fit. This years designated theme was pasta. There was a lot of creativity in the ornaments made by the students. Two Prizes will be awarded.



Outstanding Use Award was voted on during the Friends of the Sioux County Conservation Foundation Winter Event. This was a blind vote on which tree used the designated item of pasta the best. This years winner was Spaulding Catholic 3rd/4th grade class sponsored by Cleveringa Excavating. The students will receive a pizza party and plaque for the class, Cleveringa Excavating will receive a plaque to display.



Peoples Choice Award will be awarded shortly after printing this newsletter. Peoples Choice is an open vote by visitors to the Prairie Woods Nature Center. With a purchase of a \$5 ticket, individuals were able to vote for tree of their choice. The winner of the Peoples Choice award will receive a live animal program and plaque for their class, and the sponsor will also receive a plaque.

If you did not make it out this year during the month of December you will want to mark it on your calendar to join us next year and check out the creativity these kids have! We look forward to seeing what the new theme and year will bring!



.....



SCCF
SIOUX COUNTY CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION

Distinguished Conservationists:

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

Memorials given in honor of:

- Anonymous Memorials
- Mardell De Jong
- Charles Hastert
- George Kleinhesselink

Foundation Members:

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

Oak Grove Hiking and Bicycling Trails

Sunday Ford Assistant Director/Environmental Education Coordinator

Many great partnerships have evolved due to the trail map project at Oak Grove Park. It started with an email received from Dordt University Environmental Studies major, Carter Wyatt, asking to help map the walking and biking paths at Oak Grove. He had been approached about the need for an updated trail map by Derek Buteyn, member of Sioux County Off-Road Bicycle Club and Director of Resident Life at Dordt University. The bicycle club members have put a lot of effort into a new off-road bicycle path at Oak Grove. This bicycle path was/is growing in popularity, but the bicycle trails were not on a sharable map and our hiking trail maps are outdated. Carter's advisor, Dr. Rob DeHaan, welcomed the partnership by offering credit for Carter's service project. After many meetings with Carter, Sioux County Conservation Board staff, and the Sioux County off-road bicycle club, we now have a fantastic map to highlight the trails.

Soon to come: our staff has worked hard to produce four large maps that will be positioned in different areas of the park. The first map is located on the back side of the Prairie Woods Nature Center sign, and the rest will go up in the spring. New posts have also been set on the trails and hiking or bicycle signs will be attached to clearly mark the intended use of the trails. There are also posts being set for small map signs with numbers corresponding to the user's location on the map.

More partnerships: The 6th grade classes from Sioux Center Christian have been part of constructing the bicycle trails at Oak Grove. Many small hands have worked hard to clear the path, and the students were able to try out off-road bikes on the new trails, thanks to the bicycle club. The Sioux Center Girl Scout Troup has donated money towards the signage on the trails and will be scheduling a time to come out and help attach signs to their posts.

Thank you for your partnership

Dordt University- Dr. Rob DeHaan, Derek Buteyn, GIS Department, Carter Wyatt

Sioux County Off-Road Bicycle Club

Sioux Center Christian 6th grade students, teachers, and staff

Sioux Center Girl Scout Troup



Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)

Whether you are new to SELF or a committed participant, we encourage you to give it a try. We promise you will enjoy your-SELF! The theme for 2022 will be all "Creature Features." Each month we will take the time to explore how the specific features our chosen topic is essential to its owner. Join us the third Tuesday of the month at 9:30 am or 2 pm. Preregistration is requested either online or by calling 712-552-3057.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| January: Groundhogs | July: Woodpeckers |
| February: Owls | August: Turtles |
| March: Beavers | September: Monarchs |
| April: Bald Eagles | October: Eww- Skunks, Turkey Vultures, |
| May: Bees | Opposums, Snakes |
| June: Bison | November: Turkeys |
| | December: Creature Feature Jeopardy |

Mark your calendar for our upcoming events: ...

- June 9- Outdoor Skills Day
- June 11- Sandy Hollow Family Fishing Clinic
- August 6- Ringneck Rendezvous
- August 9- Hunter Safety Classroom Course
- September 17- Dutch Oven Gathering
- October 8- Trick or Treat Hike
- October 22- Youth Pheasant Hunt

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.

 **January 18- 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 learn more about a chosen creature(s) of our wonderful world. We promise you will enjoy your- SELF!
Topic: Creature Feature- Groundhogs

 **January 22- Green Fire: Aldo Leopold & a Land Ethic for Our Time** **6- 8 pm**
Would you love to do something to celebrate nature indoors this winter? Take a break, have some popcorn, and enjoy the Emmy-Award winning documentary Green Fire with us at the Prairie Woods Nature Center. Iowa native Aldo Leopold created the discipline of wildlife management and was a pioneering conservationist. His ground-breaking "land ethic" suggests that "We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect." Ann Lundberg will lead this program, and invite you to continue in celebrating Aldo Leopold with a discussion of his book "A Sand County Almanac" on February 12th. Instructor Ann Lundberg teaches at Dordt University and with the Creation Care Studies Program in Kaikoura, New Zealand; she specializes in environmental literature and nature writing. A native of Colorado, she has a Bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Wyoming and has spent several summers working as a Ranger with the National Park Service. All ages welcome.

January 29- Ice Fishing Clinic **Big Sioux Recreation Area** **10 am- noon**
Whether you love ice fishing or interested in learning more about it, join us on the ice at the Big Sioux Rec Area, just west of Hawarden. Bring a sack lunch or snacks and a bucket to sit on and we will provide the rest! We will pre-drill the holes, provide bait, poles and discuss the types of fish you may catch and equipment being used. There is no cost for this event, entry fee to the park is waved during the time of the program. Those age 16 and over actively fishing must have a valid Iowa fishing license.

 **February 4- Owl Prowl with special guest, Harlan the Barred Owl** **6- 8 pm**
February is a great time for hearing owls during their courtship and egg-laying season. We will meet at the Prairie Woods Nature Center for an hour of learning about owls. Then we will spend the second hour hiking and calling for owls including barred, great horned and screech owls. Dress warmly and feel free to bring a flashlight covered with a red cloth or cellophane. Harlan the live barred owl will make its appearance!

 **February 12- Book Discussion, "A Sand County Almanac" by Aldo Leopold** **9:30- 11 am**
Book Discussion of Aldo Leopold's "A Sand County Almanac", just 240 easy to read pages. This book is a beautifully written journal of Leopold's connection to the outdoors in Wisconsin. The book review will include open discussion and will be held in the Conservation Corner Meeting Room of the Nature Center, overlooking the rolling prairie hills. Cookies and coffee provided. Instructor Ann Lundberg teaches at Dordt University and with the Creation Care Studies Program in Kaikoura, New Zealand; she specializes in environmental literature and nature writing. A native of Colorado, she has a Bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Wyoming and has spent several summers working as a Ranger with the National Park Service. All ages welcome.

 **February 15- Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)** **9:30 am and 2pm**
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 learn more about a chosen creature(s) of our wonderful world. We promise you will enjoy your- SELF!
Topic: Creature Feature- Owls

 **February 19- Great Backyard Bird Count** **7:30 am- ?**
Join the Sioux County Birding Club for this bird watching event. We will watch the nature center bird feeders, provide informational sessions, optional hiking opportunities (with snowshoes), and do it together! All bird nerds welcome, experienced and new! From Great Backyard Bird County Website, "Each February, for four days, the world comes together for the love of birds. Over these four days we invite people to spend time in their favorite places watching and counting as many birds as they can find and reporting them to us. These observations help scientists better understand global bird populations before one of their annual migrations." More information and times to come. Please watch our website for further details.

 **February 26- Goat Soap Making Class** **10 am- 12:30 pm**
Goat milk is excellent for your skin. Handcrafted, pure and local is even better. Now you can experience the process of making your own goat milk soap at the Prairie Woods Nature Center, with instruction from the folks at the Big Red Barn near Sheldon! Choose from no scent or Apricot Freesia. Take some mini bars home that day! After goat milk soap making, we will be making vapor shower bombs and end the morning with wild game soups. \$35, limited to 14 people. Pay at the door.

 **March 5- Hunter Safety Field Day** **8:30- noon OR 1- 4:30 pm**
Those ages 11 and over are invited to join us for a hunter safety field day. Online registration required at <http://events.gooutdoorsiowa.com> along with online classwork completed prior to class at hunter-ed.com. This half-day class will cover fire-arm safety, hunting ethics, hunting laws and much more; final exam will be given at end of the class. Please dress for indoor and outdoor weather.

 **March 12- Fossil, Artifact, and Bone Day!** **9:30 am- noon**
Do you have a fossil, artifact, or bone that you would like identified? Bring it to the Prairie Woods Nature Center and we will attempt to help you. Evan DeGroot, a local hobbyist from Sioux Center will be available with his collection and resources to share with you.

 **March 15- Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)** **9:30 am and 2pm**
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 learn more about a chosen creature(s) of our wonderful world. We promise you will enjoy your- SELF!
Topic: Creature Feature- Beavers

April 1- Summer Camp Sign Up **8 am online only**
This is the day to sign your kids up for this year's summer camp season! Topics, dates, and times will be posted prior to this date. Registration will be open at 8 am on mycountyparks.com starting April 1.

 **April 9- Writing Nature: using words to engage the natural world** **10 am- 2 pm**
Through this writing workshop attendees will improve their writing ability to perceive the natural world and to reflect on the meanings found in nature. Participants will learn through a series of short presentations, indoor writing exercises, and group discussions at the Prairie Woods Nature Center. Ann Lundberg is a Professor of English at Northwestern College. She specializes in environmental and nature writing as taught for the Creation Care Studies Program in Kaikoura, New Zealand. A native of Colorado, she has a Bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Wyoming and has spent several summers working as a Ranger with the National Park Service. Pre-registration required, only 15 spots open. \$10 cost that may be paid at class. Ages teen through adult. After registration, a selection of optional readings will be emailed to do in advance of class.

 **April 19- 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 learn more about a chosen creature(s) of our wonderful world. We promise you will enjoy your- SELF!
Topic: Creature Feature- Bald Eagles

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

Sioux County Conservation Board Members

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



.....
: 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. :
.....

Standard Mail
U.S. Postage
PAID
Orange City, IA
Permit No. 100

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