



# SIoux COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

4051 Cherry Ave Hawarden, IA 51023

conservation@siouxcounty.org

Volume 29

Issue 1 Winter 2020

712-552-1047



## Grand Opening

### January 11, 2020

### Open House: 9:00 am-5:00 pm

### We have a name and opening date!

We are super excited to announce that everyone's hard work has paid off and the construction process is almost complete! We will officially open our doors January 11 at the open house, and begin our normal hours below starting January 14, 2020. The public is welcome to stop by and check out the exhibits featuring information on different habitats including wetland, prairie, forest, as well as covering Sioux County's geology and settlement history. As well as the additional programming space for the many programs that will be offered in this facility. The nature center is also home to the environmental education animals, Sioux County Conservation headquarters and environmental education space.

The exhibit area is open to the general public on a daily basis most times of the year, with the exception of Monday. We will be closed during winter holidays and open for summer holidays. We are very excited about the new facility and hope to see you visiting us soon!

### Prairie Woods Nature Center Hours Starting: January 14, 2020

#### April - October

Monday: Closed

Tuesday: 9am-4pm

Wednesday: 9am-4pm

Thursday: 1-7pm

Friday: 9am-4pm

Saturday: 9am-4pm

Sunday: 1-4pm

#### November- March

Monday: Closed

Tuesday: 9am-4pm

Wednesday: 9am-4pm

Thursday: 1-4pm

Friday: 9am-4pm

Saturday: 9am-12pm

Sunday: Closed



# Sioux County Parks Updates:

Across the county our staff have been busy prepping their campground for the winter months. As the weather has cooperated this last few months we have been able to wrap up a few things as well as start a few new projects. The staff at Oak Grove has been busy between wrapping up the winter and moving into the new building. The Prairie Woods Nature Center has been its own beast as sorts this fall by keeping us busy with learning the new fire alarm system, heating and cooling system, alarm system, phone system, lighting system and so much more. They have also been busy planting natives that you will see next spring sprouting out of the ground all around the building. There will be some green space out back for our summer campers to use and play their games. The flower beds in front of the building will feature some native short grass plants and forbs including: sky blue aster, butterfly milkweed, prairie spiderwort, pram drop seed, stiff golden rod, grey golden rod, white prairie clove, large-flowed beardtongue, prairie wild rose and purple prairie clover.

## Big Sioux Recreation Area:

By: Alex Lynott, Park Ranger

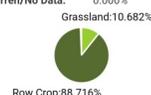
Another camping season has come and gone in what was yet again a very stressful and frustrating flood year. I'm actually looking forward to December, January and February. Those are officially three of the last months where this place has not endured a flood (knock on wood). I have three solid months to mentally prep for next flooding season!

Here is some basic information on the hydrology of Dry Creek, a creek that should be re-named and deemed a small river. Dry Creek enters our park from the east, flows west along 7th Street, into our wetland, through our spillway and into the Big Sioux River. When it reaches the height and velocity it has been these past few years, it puts the residents along 7th Street and all the rest of the southwest part of town in danger. That's especially true when the Big Sioux River is simultaneously rising. Dry Creek's output tremendously slows down as the Big Sioux River is rising herself. This causes overflow of the wetland, an overflow of backed up water onto 7th Street, a breach to one of our roads/levees, a damaging waterfall over our spillway and no room for the Big Sioux to back into. This is when the long-term damage occurs to our spillway/road. Once the Big Sioux River reaches its crest and Dry Creek's natural outlet is nonexistent, the Big Sioux River and Dry Creek breach all of our roads/levees. These breaches are what wash out our roads and cause damage to the park internally. Dry Creek's watershed is a little over 40 square miles and is composed of a little over 88% cropland and around 10% grassland. It is ever so important to implement conservation farming practices such as buffer strips, wide waterways, cover crops, etc. Poor practices create fast moving waters with no natural areas for the water to spill into and slow down, erosion, bank instability, infrastructure damage and damaged public recreational areas.



2002 Land Use Coverage

Drainage (mi <sup>2</sup> ):	40.248
Land Cover (mi <sup>2</sup> ):	40.247
LC-DA %:	99.998
Water/Wetland:	0.000%
Woodland:	0.123%
Grassland:	10.682%
Row Crop:	88.716%
Roads/Urban:	0.476%
Barren/No Data:	0.000%



Along with the never ending flood debris removal, progress is being made on the school house cabin! The basement is completely framed for the living area, bathroom and bedrooms. Window wells have been installed and back filling has been done. The stair case was completely ripped out and redone. The upstairs floor and dividing wall has been removed and the subfloor has been installed. The new metal roof looks awesome. The next steps are to insulate and sheet rock so we can run portable heat in there and continue to work through this winter.

Note: Please do not bring your Christmas trees to the park after you take them down. We do not use Christmas trees for fish habitat anymore. They do not last as long as the invasive red cedars that we cut down and sink. Although we appreciate your great intentions, please know we do not use them.



## Sandy Hollow Recreation Area:

By: Taylor Deegan, Park Ranger

The last half of the summer and this fall have been a very busy time for us out at Sandy Hollow Recreation Area and surrounding wildlife areas. This is the time of the year we try to take advantage of doing some of our projects that we can't otherwise do with higher park traffic. Recent projects include: the addition of 4 concrete pads on existing campsites, new concrete picnic table pads on existing seasonal sites, a concrete boat ramp, four water sites added to existing campsites, updating and adding aerator systems to our pond, the planting of native pollinator mixes at Sandy Hollow Recreation Area, fish stocking at our local SCCB ponds, finishing up on recent walking bridge additions, and many more smaller tasks. These past few months have been very cooperative with the weather so this takes a lot of the burden off of our spring season which often times can be cut short due to wet and cooler conditions. This freeing up of project time also opens up our schedule to focus on prescribed burning of our wildlife areas during the very limited early weeks of spring.



As we look ahead short term, it looks like a few updates should be coming to Sandy Hollow Recreation Area that have been in the works for the last few years. Our board has officially approved the digging of a channel between the east and west ponds and the construction of an 80 foot bridge that would span the channel. This project has been talked about for quite a while now but finally with the handle on some of our flooding issues it should be becoming a reality here within the next season. As we come to the close of another year we want to truly thank you for your continued support and patronage to our local parks, wildlife areas and conservation board. Public lands and parks are such an important and truly unique part of our American heritage and being a part of preservation and restoration efforts that continue to support these causes is such an important function of local communities. Have a wonderful holiday season!



## Foundation Update: Prairie Woods Nature Center Grand Opening!

Sunday Ford, Assistant Director/Environmental Education Coordinator

Yes, you read that right! The day has finally come to announce the opening of your new facility occurring January 11, 2020 from 1-5pm. So what can you do at this building? Take in the beauty of the 28 foot vaulted ceiling with wooden eye beams, gigantic ceiling to floor windows, and an open space feeling. The whole family will enjoy interactive hands-on exhibits such as a black lit star gazing room; a large bur oak tree and an oversized tiger beetle; live animals; a simulated pond scene with oversized cattails and a snapping turtle lurking in the depths; and so much more. Enjoy the beautiful view of rolling hills from the deck and "Conservation Corner." Register for one of our many events and public programs which will be hosted by our naturalist out of the classrooms in the basement. These classrooms are complete with activity areas, cupboards, sinks, cubbies and a beautiful south view. Thank you for supporting us as we continue fundraising and celebrating this wonderful addition to Sioux County!



# Environmental Education Opportunities

Join the Sioux County Conservation Education Staff for a winter full of fun! Pre-registration is required for some events please visit our website at [www.mycountyparks.com/county/sioux.aspx](http://www.mycountyparks.com/county/sioux.aspx) to learn more about the programs or to register. Participants must attend complete event they are signed up for. If you cannot fulfill this please contact us to be removed from the registration list. Cancellation of programs will be posted on our website, Facebook and on 93.9 FM.

## **January 18- 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 waived during the time of the program. Those age 16 and over actively fishing must have a valid Iowa fishing license. North entrance is closed, please use south entrance or visit our website for more specific directions.

## **January 21– Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)- Prairie Woods Nature Center**

**9:30-10:30 am**

Seniors! Looking for a great place to gather with friends? The Prairie Woods Nature Center will host Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship, SELF, ever third Tuesday of the month. 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: How to achieve “Seeing the Unseen”

## **February 7- Owl Prowl– Prairie Woods Nature Center**

**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 introduction on owls. Then we will spend time 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. A live owl will make its appearance! Pre-registration not required but appreciated.

## **February 15- Backyard Bird Bonanza– Prairie Woods Nature Center**

**9:30-11:30 am**

This is a free, fun and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in making yummy treats for the birds to enjoy. We will make suet, string garland and other bird friendly activities to celebrate our feathered friends. This is also the weekend for the Great Backyard Bird Count. By counting birds, we can help to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations and will report our sightings online at [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org). We will take to the trails, weather permitting. Snowshoes will be available, as well as binoculars. Hot cocoa will be served. Pre-registration not required but appreciated.

## **February 18– Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)- Prairie Woods Nature Center**

**9:30-10:30 am**

Seniors! Looking for a great place to gather with friends? The Prairie Woods Nature Center will host Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship, SELF, ever third Tuesday of the month. 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: Geology, the story in the rocks

## **March 7- Maple Tree Tapping– Prairie Woods Nature Center**

**9:30-11 am**

Join us Saturday morning for a lesson in maple tree tapping- a practice the pioneers perfected! We will learn the biology of the tree, taste real maple syrup and hike to tap a real tree permitting conditions. This program is free and fun for the whole family! Opportunity to support Sioux County Conservation Foundation by going home with your own Sioux County Maple Syrup at a suggested donation of \$10. Pre-registration not required but appreciated.

## **March 17– Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)- Prairie Woods Nature Center**

**9:30-10:30 am**

Seniors! Looking for a great place to gather with friends? The Prairie Woods Nature Center will host Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship, SELF, ever third Tuesday of the month. 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: Clues to our Past

**March 28- Hunter Safety Field Day-Prairie Woods Nature Center**

**9 am- 3 pm**

Those ages 11 and over are invited to join us for a hunter safety field day. Online registration required at the [www.hunter-ed.com](http://www.hunter-ed.com) website along with online class work completed prior to class. The Saturday class will cover fire-arm safety, hunting ethics, hunting laws and much more; final exam will be given at end of the day. Students will need to bring a sack lunch and snacks for the day. We will be shooting outdoors, please dress accordingly. Must attend full day.

**April 1- Summer Camp Registration– Online only**

**8 am**

This is the day to sign your kids up for this years summer camp season! Topics, dates and times will be posted prior to this date. Registration will open at 8 am on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com) April 1.

**April 21– Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship (SELF)- Prairie Woods Nature Center**

**9:30-10:30 am**

Seniors! Looking for a great place to gather with friends? The Prairie Woods Nature Center will host Senior Environmental Learning and Fellowship, SELF, ever third Tuesday of the month. 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: Spring Wildflowers

**Mark your calendar for our other annual summer programs:**

June 6- Family Fishing Clinic

June 11- Outdoor Skills Day

August 1- Ringneck Rendezvous

August 11- Hunter Safety

September 12- Women in the Outdoors

September 19- Dutch Oven Gathering

October 10- Trick or Treat Hike

October 17- Youth Hunt



**NEW**

**Prairie Woods Nature Center Gift Shop**

The Prairie Woods Nature Center will have a small gift shop open during business hours. The shop will feature a variety of plush animals of all sizes great for kids, niece, nephew or grandchild. Mugs for your coffee drinker, books for your reader, and ceramic birds for the bird lover. At this time we only accept cash or checks.



**Friends of Sioux County Conservation Foundation Coming Soon!!!!**

We are in the starting stages of forming a new group to continue to raise funds for the foundation to go towards further education programming opportunities, additional needs of our center, and other opportunities that the Sioux County Conservation Foundation feel compelled to pursue. Watch our website and further newsletters to stay up to date on this great opportunity.



## Seasonal Campsites for 2020– December 31st Deadline!!!

For those that enjoy camping week after week at your local county parks we are making it even easier for you to accomplish this task! We are offering select sites at the Big Sioux Recreation Area, Oak Grove Park and Sandy Hollow Recreation Area for seasonal camping for the 2020 camping season.

**Sandy Hollow Recreation Area and Big Sioux Recreation Area** seasonal site will have concrete pads, electric (20, 30 and/or 50 amp), water and sewer hook ups. Sites will be available from April 15 until October 15, weather dependent. **Oak Grove Park's** seasonal sites will be available April 15 to October 8, weather dependent. Sites have concrete pads and are electric (20, 30, and/or 50 amp). There is a water hydrant nearby to fill from, and sewer dump station located in the campground for use, however are not located at each site.

You are welcome to take your camper to other locations during the summer; it will remain your site throughout the summer months. Your site will have a picnic table, fire ring and room to park one vehicle. Additional parking is located in visitor parking in the campground.

To acquire one of these sites you must fill out a Permanent/Seasonal camp site application available **online or pick one up** at the Sioux County Conservation Administration Office during regular business hours. **Return application with \$50 deposit by December 31, 2019.** We will draw for sites at our regular board meeting on **February 5, 2020 at approximately 6:30 pm.** If you are drawn at this time your application deposit of \$50 will be applied to your site. You will be required to put down a **\$500 deposit by March 15, 2020.** If not received by this date you will forfeit your site and \$50 application deposit. The remainder of your balance for the site, \$1,450 for Big Sioux Recreation Area and Sandy Hollow Recreation Area or \$1,306 for Oak Grove will be **due by April 15, 2020.** Failure to make your payment by this date will result in forfeiting your site and \$500 deposit.

**Applications can be found online at [www.siouxcountyparks.org](http://www.siouxcountyparks.org) under News.**

<b>Camping/Rental Rates for 2020</b>	<b><u>Camping</u></b>	<b>Cabins (online reservations only)</b>
	<b>Big Sioux Recreation Area</b>	All located at Oak Grove, 2 night minimum stays available April 15– October 15 weather dependent.
	Electric/Water- \$20	Eagles Nest & Whitetail Lodge- \$65 a night
	Online Reservation- \$25	Bluegill Bungalow & Foxes Den- \$75 a night
	Full Hook up- \$22	
	Online Reservation- \$27	<b>Shelters</b>
	<b>Bruce Schomaker Recreation Area</b>	Open shelters located throughout the county no charge, first come first served.
	Electric/Water- \$18	<b>Alton Roadside Park</b>
	<b>Oak Grove</b>	Enclosed Shelter- \$45
	Electric- \$18	<b>Oak Grove (online reservations only)</b>
Online Reservation- \$23	Big Sioux Shelter- \$30	
Tent Site- \$13	Oak Grove Lodge \$150 + \$200 damage deposit fee	
<b>Sandy Hollow Recreation Area</b>	<b>Sandy Hollow Recreation Area (online reservations only)</b>	
Electric- \$18	Sandy Hollow Lodge- \$250 + \$250 damage deposit, and group entrance fee.	
Electric/water- \$20		
Full Hookup- \$22		
Online Reservation- \$27		

# Seeking Nature Center Volunteers!!!

We are seeking dynamic volunteers to fulfill a much-needed niche at our NEW Prairie Woods 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 Prairie Woods Nature Center is located in 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. The center is 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, weekdays, mornings, afternoons or evening shifts. You may volunteer once, twice or three times a week, once or twice a month.

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 with scheduling. 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, or sign up for the January 4th meeting.

## **Anticipated Time Line**

Informational Meeting/Tour/Scheduling:  
January 4, 2020 10am

More meeting times to be announced.

Grand Opening: January 11, 2020 1-5pm



## **We're/I'm Interested!**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Yes**

**No**

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: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please fill out and send to: Oak Grove Park, 4051 Cherry Ave. Hawarden, IA 51023*

*Or call 712-552-3057 with this information.*

**Staff**

Robert Klocke- Excutive 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

.....  
: 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 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



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