

CONSERVATION NEWS



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Just Like Home

Shelby Williams, Park Ranger

Picture yourself getting ready to go camping and you don't have to hook up the trailer and grab the blocks, you don't have to worry about finding a flat place to lay your tent, you simply load up the vehicle with what you need and go. You have food, blankets and pillows, and maybe some extra entertainment for the kids. Soon that's all you will need to head to the Lake Iowa Park Cabins.

For fifteen years, cabins at Lake Iowa Park have been a sought after idea. Now, we can officially say they are happening. The two cabins, located in the Lake Iowa Park Campground just past the new showerhouse, will have everything one could ask for. The cabins will be 20'x30', with a full kitchen and bathroom, and sleep eight people. It's important to note the rules, rates, and specifics are still in the works.

What is allowing us to finally move forward after all these years? An insane amount of planning, a determined board and staff, the campground fees, and of course the builders — the HLV Tech IV Class. Without the hard work and determination of HLV School, instructor Joe Verdeck, and his crew of nine students, the south cabin would not be on its way quite yet.



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The cabins will provide so much to families and campers year round, but it is also providing education to the HLV Tech IV Class. Wade Van Otegham said, "I think this year's tech project has been a great experience for all of us in it. I have learned everything from building walls, porches, and roofing the cabin. For the 2 hours we work a day we get a lot done and stay at a pretty good pace. I'm glad that I got the opportunity to build this cabin and I hope other classes get the chance to do so also."

Classmate Wesley Simpson agrees that it's been quite a learning experience, "I like learning the new building styles and new types of ways to build walls and decks. I like how we learn things so we could use them later in life so I would be able to build my own things and homes."

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Save the Date!

Friends Banquet

April 9th, 2016

This annual fundraiser banquet is hosted at Lake Iowa Nature Center by the Friends of Iowa County Conservation Foundation.

Iowa County Outdoor Adventure

June 11th, 2016

A free family event hosted at Lake Iowa Park, where kids can try a variety of exciting outdoor activities.

Keep an eye on our website and Facebook pages for more details.

New Website Launched

Iowa County Conservation is happy to announce we have launched a new, all-inclusive website. Go to www.iowacountyconservation.org to access information about the 14 properties our staff manages, current news, and links to connect to our social media pages.

Seasonal Positions Open Soon

Are you or someone you know interested in a seasonal position with Iowa County Conservation? This spring we will be hiring several positions: Seasonal Conservation Aide, Naturalist Intern, and Park Ranger Intern. Keep an eye on <http://www.co.iowa.ia.us/jobs.htm> and the “Iowa County Conservation” Facebook page for job descriptions and details on applying.

Note: In the last newsletter, volunteer Gene Atkinson's name was misspelled "Gene Atkins." We apologize for the error. Thanks again for all you do, Gene!

Thank You, Jim!

Recently, Jim Scandridge, a member of the Iowa County Conservation Board, ended his term after serving for 15 years. He has been a dedicated supporter of Iowa County Conservation and we appreciate his enthusiasm and commitment to Iowa County.

For more information about Jim's work with the ICCB, see the article on page 4.

Thank you for all you have done, Jim!

Meet the New Maintenance Tech

Dan Williams was raised in Iowa County, outside of Conroy. His love of the outdoors sparked his interest in working for conservation organizations, and he has worked for numerous county and state parks. He has a long history of trapping and enjoys camping, fishing, and his yearly visits to Colorado. Dan has been doing mechanic work for many years and he enjoys combining two of his passions, mechanics and the outdoors, in this part-time position.

Iowa County Conservation Board

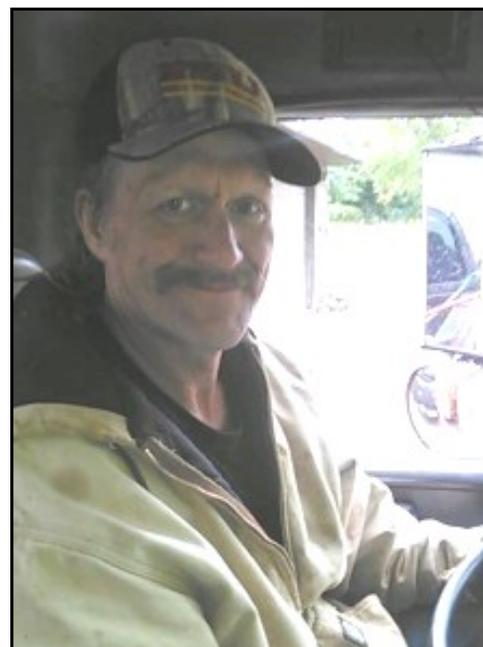
Gordon Dietze, Millersburg
John Gahring, Homestead
Shirley Messer, Ladora
Justin Parsons, North English
Marcia Wehner, Williamsburg

Iowa County Conservation Staff

Mike Bode, Director
Shelby Williams, Park Ranger
Caitlin Savage, Naturalist
Shelley Berger, PT Office Assistant
Dan Williams, PT Maintenance Tech
Heather Stratton, Seasonal Invasive Tech
Cecilia Hagen, Seasonal Invasive Tech

Iowa County Board of Supervisors

Vicki Pope
Ray Garringer
Kevin Heitshusen
John Gahring
Dale Walter



Wrapping Up the Year

Mike Bode, Director

Having a few more rain days than normal this fall, with 2015 starting to wind down, has given us a chance to reflect on this past year. There were a handful of goals that we came up short on, but the list of positive accomplishments and happenings that were above and beyond our expectations is quite hefty.

By far, the highlight of the year has to be the hiring of Caitlin Savage as our full-time Naturalist. The vast array of knowledge and experience that she has brought to the table is second only to her passion and desire to teach about how the natural world works and what each of us can do to conserve our resources. Caitlin has already become quite a celebrity in the community. The way she connects with children is seen when they “call her out” both at, and outside of work. So if you haven’t got the pleasure of meeting Caitlin, you can rest assured that whether it’s your kids, your grandkids, or the neighbor kids; they’d be ecstatic to introduce her to you. Iowa County is extremely fortunate to have Caitlin with us.



The beginning of the year started off with us working on the newly renovated pond and corresponding trail at the Gunderson Conservation Area. We alternated that with brush cutting and planting preparation at the I-80 Wildlife Area. When the weather was even less ideal, we spent time writing grants for things like more summer staff, a dock for the boat ramp on the south pond at Gateway Park, and the Bird Blind Boardwalk at Lake Iowa Park.

Spring brought with it work on the Disc Golf Course and use of our most cost efficient management tool for invasive plants, prescribed burning. Leading into summer, we were able to partner with local conservation groups and volunteers to put on the 2nd annual Iowa County Outdoor Adventure.

Our lakeside trail project was a hot topic this summer. Also came the hiring of the state AmeriCorps invasive species removal crew. These all took place alongside the large, steady influx of park users that were accommodated for the season.

When fall came it found us focusing on our Creepy Camping event, spraying re-sprouting invasive species, lining up repairs on our concrete spillway, and the start of construction on two cabins. Now that we’ve winterized all of our facilities for the season, we’re moving on to invasive species clearing and maintenance on our equipment.

We also saw one of our veteran Conservation Board members, Jim Scandridge, end his term after 15 years of service. His commitment to improve and expand recreation, especially within the Lake Iowa Park Campground, is unmatched. Board accomplishments during his tenure include: replacing both outdated showerhouses, resurfacing the main road, constructing a double-wide dumpstation, helping to make the Lake Iowa Nature Center a reality, and most recently laying the building blocks (figuratively) to get two cabins built. A lot of progress has been made over the past 15 years, and much of the future planning that he helped put in place will be positively affecting recreation in Iowa County for years to come. Many thanks Jim.



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To fill the vacancy that Jim’s departure had created, the County Supervisors appointed Justin Parsons to the Board in October. We look forward to utilizing all the experience and insight that Justin brings to the group. Warmest of welcomes, Justin!

We also continue to be blessed with the assistance of many gracious volunteers that in essence become “force multipliers” that allow us to do things that are otherwise impossible with our staff numbers. A few that really stuck out this past year include Friends of ICC Foundation, Iowa County Master Gardeners, Marengo Haunted Barn, Genoa Bluff Pumpkin Farm, Steve Wilhelm, and Gene Atkinson.

Not to mention, I am surrounded by staff members that take part in the best teamwork that I have ever seen (or even heard of). They are truly the reason operations are running like a well-oiled machine, and following every staff meeting it feels like we can take on even the most daunting tasks because the world is our oyster (at least Iowa County anyway).



New Roof at Gateway Park

Shelley Berger, Office Assistant



This year Iowa County Conservation was pleased to receive a donation from Hank Wehrman on behalf of the Iowa River Valley Conservation and Development Corp., a non-profit involved with the restoration of the Iowa River Corridor. He asked only that the money be used for a project at Gateway Park and Preserve in Marengo, as it sits on the Iowa River. Iowa County Conservation Board members discussed the need for a new roof for the building on the Gateway Park grounds. In June, Master Gardener Everett Birch gathered bids for the complete removal and replacement of the metal roof and brought them

to the Iowa County Conservation Board. A motion was approved to hire Sherman Construction to make the repairs and, as they suggested, install gutters on the building. The new roof is a great improvement to the property which is used by ICC as well as the City of Marengo.

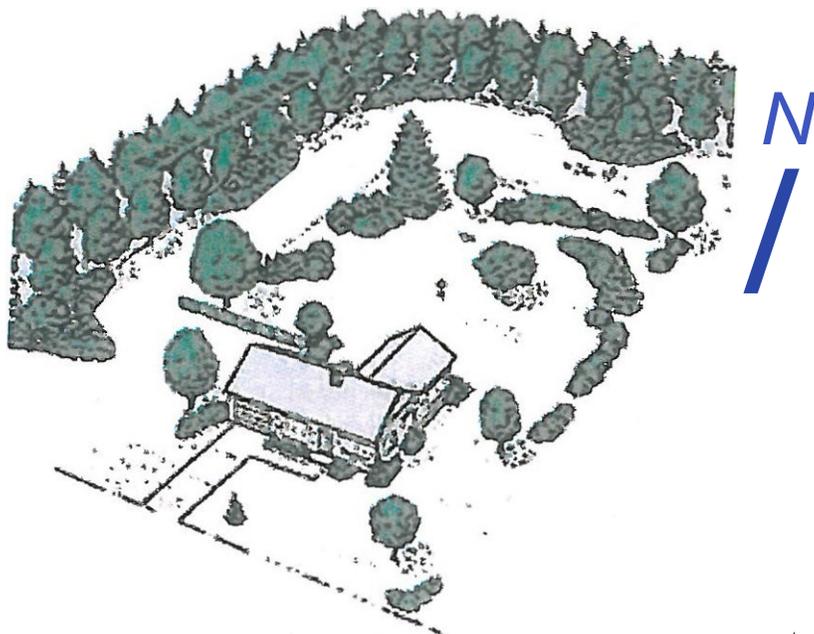
Ready for the Weather

Rob Sproat, NRCS State Technician

A windbreak has many advantages — it can reduce heating and cooling costs, control snow deposition, prevent wind damage, shelter livestock and wildlife, filter and reduce odors from livestock areas, as well as beautify an area.

Currently the Iowa Soil and Water Conservation District is accepting applications for

windbreaks through the REAP cost-share program. The cost-share rates are 75%, not to exceed \$1500 in cost-share. The windbreak must meet NRCS specifications, be at least 3 rows, and the outside row can be a row of shrubs. An NRCS employee will help in developing a plan. Applications must be signed up and approved by the Iowa Co. SWCD commissioners before starting or completing the project. The applicant's property must be physically located in Iowa County. There is no acreage limit, but it needs to have at least 100 feet of open space on the North and/or West side of the property. This would be from the outside edge of the windbreak to where you are protecting (house, feedlot, buildings).



The funds are available on first come first serve basis with final approval given by the commissioners. If interested in a windbreak, stop by or call the Iowa County NRCS office in Williamsburg (319-668-2359). The office is located at 435 N Highland St., Williamsburg, Iowa.

- A windbreak is a planting of single or multiple rows of trees, shrubs, or grasses.
- Windbreaks can be planted in many locations, including cropland, pasture, rangeland, along roads, and in urban areas.
 - They can protect crops, livestock, wildlife, and people from wind.
- Windbreaks are designed to provide multiple environmental and economic benefits, including providing wildlife habitat, preventing damage to structures, and lessening noise. Read the article above for more information on the benefits of windbreaks.

Happy Birthday to LINC!

Caitlin Savage, Naturalist

Visitors who have been coming out to Lake Iowa Park for many years have probably noticed numerous changes, including improvements to campsites, new trails, the addition of a bird blind, and a new showerhouse. One of the most drastic changes in the last 10 years was the construction of Lake Iowa Nature Center (LINC). This year marked the five-year anniversary of the completion of LINC construction.

This building serves a variety of purposes – it is an indoor classroom area for our environmental education programs, a shelter for campers during inclement weather, the headquarters for the Iowa County Conservation staff, and a place for visitors to come and relax, featuring a library and a children’s area. It is also a rental space for people who want to share their memories in a unique and beautiful setting.



LINC was completed early in the summer of 2010, after nine years of project planning and construction, and hard work from countless people. This project would not have happened without the vision of former ICC Naturalist Maria Koschmeder, as well as the time and effort from the building committee, Friends of Iowa County Conservation Foundation, Iowa County Conservation Board, Iowa County Board of Supervisors, and many others. This process included the building committee members touring numerous nature centers throughout the region. They used these tours to gather ideas on sustainable design, space, and exhibit ideas. LINC was designed with sustainability in mind. Some of the environmentally friendly designs that were incorporated into the building include a geothermal heating/cooling system, wetland septic system, and solar shades.

The nature center has been host to a variety of temporary traveling exhibits, including “Listening to the Prairie,” a REAP-funded exhibit on the connection between prairies and farming; and “Snakes, Rattles, and Holes,” which showcased snakes and their ecological benefits. We have been extremely fortunate to host these fascinating and informative exhibits. Permanent interpretive displays are in our long-term plan for the building.

One of the primary purposes for LINC is a space for environmental education programs. While one of Iowa County Conservation’s goals is to get kids and adults outdoors, it is beneficial to have an indoor space available for inclement weather, as a starting point for programs, and to use for different activities. It also offers storage space for our multitude of environmental education program materials.

As the ICC Naturalist, I am extremely lucky to have access to such a beautiful facility, and I am grateful to all the people who dedicated time, funds, and hard work to bring this vision to life. I look forward to continuing to contribute on improvements to the building in the future.

Feel free to call us at (319) 655-8465 to see if we are open or set up a time to come view the space if you are interested in renting. More information on renting LINC can be found at <http://iowacountyconservation.org/things-to-do/rentals/>.

(continued from page 1)

The class comes out in the morning and has a limited amount of time, but they make the most of it. “The thing I enjoy the most about the tech class is being outside and working on the cabin. It’s a fun experience and a learning experience. I get to learn things like how to build walls, top plating, and how to build a deck. It is a



fun class and we joke around and have a good time while getting things done,” said Garret Mess. He isn’t alone; Hunter Pidima said, “I am having a lot of fun building the cabins and getting a lot of learning experience by helping build the cabin. I have learned how to build walls and how to set them up and ram set them down. My favorite part of building the cabin is seeing the progress that happens each day we are out there working on the cabin.”

It’s clear that both the park goers and the class are going to benefit from this project. Some students of the HLTV Tech IV class are thinking to the future. Ben Lahndorf says, “Since we have been working out at

Lake Iowa I have learned a lot of things such as, we have learned how to sheet and put up walls and how to properly put in joices for a deck and a lot more things. I like working on the cabin because it gives me a sense of freedom for working and a sense of accomplishment making a cabin for a place that I always went to when I was a kid. Now I’m making the experience better for other kids, so that makes me feel good.” And Ed Henning appreciates where this project can take him: “Working out at the lake is always fun and a learning experience. The way we learn in Tech IV at the lake is a distinct contrast from normal school work. Instead of reading about abstract theories or reading a book about building houses and work, we learn through real experience. Learning on the job and seeing things come together is definitely rewarding and exciting. In my opinion, the qualities and skills that we’re learning at the lake will serve us long after high school.”

For now, only work on the south cabin is being completed; however, details on the north cabin construction are being worked out. The next time you’re out near the lake, take a drive through the campground and check out the progress. We’re excited to have the cabins and are looking forward to improving your overall camping experience.



More from the HLTV Tech Students:

Jarret Walton: “The thing I enjoyed most about this class is I brushed up on some things I already knew. Most of the things I learned I knew solely because I grew up with the construction life and grew up working with that kind of stuff.”

N.J. Cary: “I like doing it because it’s hands on.”

Riley Vercande: “I have enjoyed my time out at Lake Iowa. I learned how to build a deck and how to build walls. I enjoy being outside and working in such a beautiful place.”



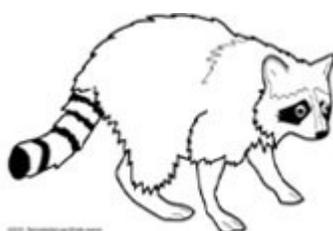
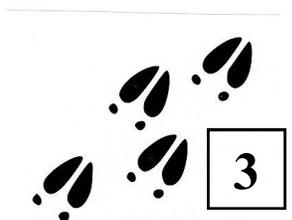
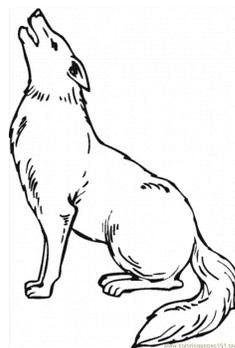
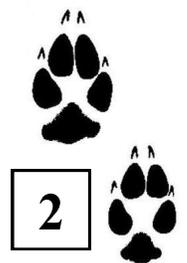
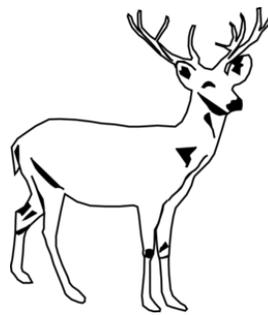
Let it Snow!

Snow is made of ice crystals that stick together. These crystals are made when water vapor in the air freezes before it turns into liquid. When enough crystals stick together, they become heavy and fall to the ground.

What do animals do in the snow?

Draw a line to match the Iowa animal with its tracks you might see in the snow. Check your answers at the bottom left of the page. Then color the animals!

- ❄ The long-tailed weasel changes color (from brown to white) during winter to camouflage with the snow.
- ❄ Deep snow is like a blanket for small animals. Mice and voles make tunnels beneath the snow — it is warmer on the ground under the snow than on top of it!
- ❄ Woodchucks are one animal that hibernates during winter. Turtles, snakes, and frogs also hibernate. Hibernation is like a deep sleep.
- ❄ Deer walk in the same trails over and over to make deep snow easier to walk through. They use their hooves and mouth to move snow away from plants they need to eat.
- ❄ Some animals migrate, or move, to a warmer place. Many birds in Iowa migrate south. They do this to follow their food source, which is not around during winter.
- ❄ Animals in places farther north have other special ways to deal with the cold. The Arctic fox hides food in the permafrost (the soil that is frozen all year long) during the summer and can eat it during winter. The snowshoe hare has feet that are wide and flat and furry, acting like a snowshoe that helps the rabbit stay on top of the snow.



Answers: Deer-3, Squirrel-1, Coyote-2, Raccoon-4

Programs will meet at Lake Iowa Nature Center if location is not listed. All are free (unless otherwise noted) and everyone is welcome.

Tuesday, December 29th

Winter Day Camp, 1-4pm

Bring your kids to celebrate the winter break! We will do a variety of fun activities, including winter animal tracking, visiting the bird blind to see what winter birds are here, and trying out snowshoeing (if there are at least 4 inches of snow). Make sure to dress to play in the snow, if there is any! We will have hot chocolate and indoor activities to warm up afterwards. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.



make sure to dress for the weather! We will provide equipment and bait, but they will be limited, so bring your own equipment if you have it. Please bring something to sit on for out on the ice.

Hot chocolate will be provided at the Nature Center following the program!

Note: If we have less than 6 inches of ice, the program may be cancelled.

Friday, January 22nd

Full Moon Snowshoe, 5:30-6:30pm

Experience Lake Iowa Park in a whole new light. Discover the basics of snowshoeing and give it a try on a relaxing walk under the full moon. Warm up with some hot cocoa afterwards.

Note: There must be at least 4 inches of snow on the ground for this program to occur.

Saturday, January 9th

Ice Fishing Clinic, 2-4pm



Try out an exciting winter activity! Join Brad Freidhof of Johnson County Conservation for a beginner's ice fishing clinic.

Learn the basics of ice fishing, ice safety, and fish identification.

Meet at the Lake Iowa boat ramp and



Saturday, February 20th

Snowshoeing, 10-11am

Try out snowshoes and find out some of the basic history and background of this winter travel.

Note: There must be at least 4 inches of snow on the ground for this program to occur.

Winter Wonders, 1-3pm

Join us at Lake Iowa Park for a fun, frosty afternoon! We will look for

some signs of animals that are still active in the winter and take a walk through the snow. There will be some indoor activities and hot chocolate to warm our chilly fingers and toes.



Saturday, March 5th

Feathered Fun, 10am

Make a treat for the birds that have been toughing out the Iowa winter. Afterwards we will check the bird blind to see who is visiting the feeders.



Scaly Tales, 1pm

Not everyone likes snakes, but they have some amazing adaptations! Visit the Nature Center to discover some of these unique traits and meet a live snake. Afterwards, kids can make a snake craft.



Wish List

The following items are needed by Iowa County Conservation. Please bring donations to the nature center. Thank you!

- ♦ Work gloves
- ♦ Bird seed (black oil sunflower or thistle)
- ♦ Dry erase markers (new)
- ♦ Ear plugs and/or ear muffs (new)

Visit us online at:

www.iowacountyconservation.org

or

www.mycountyparks.com/county/iowa.aspx

Like “Iowa County Conservation” and “Lake Iowa Park” on Facebook.





Iowa County Conservation News

Lake Iowa Park
2550 G. Ave
Ladora, IA 52251

For more information about
Iowa County Conservation,
please contact us:

Director
Park Ranger
Naturalist

319-655-8465 **mbode@co.iowa.ia.us**
319-655-8465 **swilliams@co.iowa.ia.us**
319-655-8466 **csavage@co.iowa.ia.us**

Thank you for supporting the Iowa County Conservation programs with your tax-deductible donation:

Enclosed is my donation for:

\$50 \$100 \$500 \$1000
 \$5000 Other

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Please earmark my donation for:

- Cabin Development
- Lake Iowa Park Improvements
- Environmental Education materials & equipment
- Conservation News newsletter
- Habitat improvement/development on ICCB areas
- Use my donation where needed most
- Other: _____

Send to ICC, 2550 G Ave, Ladora, IA 52251

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Yes, sign me up to receive Conservation News!

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OR

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