

# CONSERVATION NEWS

*A newsletter of the Iowa County Conservation Board*

**VOLUME 24 ISSUE 1**

**WINTER 2011**



## **Save the Date!**

### **Memorial Day Weekend**

Saturday, May 28

Pancake Breakfast

7-11am free will donation

Dummy Board Tournament

10am start \$10 entry fee per team

Larry Goodman & Don Anders Band

6-9pm \$6 at the door - proceeds will go to support specialty weekends

### **Christmas in July**

Friday & Saturday

July 22-23

### **Creepy Camping**

Friday & Saturday

September 23-24

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## **Join V.O.I.C.E.- a network for our volunteers**

*By Lee Sorenson, Director*

Are you looking for something for you or your family to do over the next year or so, well look no more! Join V.O.I.C.E. (Volunteers of Iowa Conservationist Enthusiasts), a new volunteer based program where you can sign up for an e-mail list that notifies you of volunteer projects that are available through the Iowa County Conservation Board. These projects could range from being a receptionist at the new nature center, natural resource management such as working to eradicate invasive species, monitoring the bluebird boxes around Lake Iowa Park, helping on special projects such as the construction of the bird blind, or assisting with our specialty weekend games and activities and more. So here is how V.O.I.C.E works- Send an email to Iowa CountyVOICE@gmail.com and put the word Voice in the subject box and you will be

added to the list. Please include your basic contact information, if any other members of your family will be volunteering, and what type of projects you are interested in helping with (indoor, construction, education, etc.). When volunteers are needed, an email will be sent out to notify you of the opportunity. You may then select projects that fit your interests and availability. If you are interested in volunteering, but do not have e-mail, please call 319-655-8466.

### **Bird Blind Construction Project Saturday, March 5 10am-?**

Volunteers are needed to help construct a bird blind at the Lake Iowa Nature Center. Work will begin at 10am and continue until the blind is complete. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. Please call 319-655-8465 if you are able and willing to help. Thanks!



### Snowshoe Programs

The Lake Iowa Nature Center recently acquired 22 pairs of snowshoes for children, teens, and adults. These snowshoes will be used for school programs as well as guided public hikes around Lake Iowa Park. Programs will be scheduled when snow conditions are right (at least 5 inches on the ground). Check for scheduled programs at [www.mycountyparks.com/county/iowa.aspx](http://www.mycountyparks.com/county/iowa.aspx), on Lake Iowa Park's Facebook Page, and in the local newspapers.

### \* Wish List \*

The following items are needed for our conservation education and public programs. If you wish to donate an item, please drop it off at the nature center. Thanks!!

- \* Hayrack wagons (free or reasonable cost) for special events
- \* Used nature/wildlife magazines
- \* Bird feed (black oil sunflower seeds, thistle, peanuts, suet)
- \* Empty, clean plastic (peanut butter type) jars



A junco enjoys a tasty treat created by participants at the January 8 'Winter Birding' program.

## Campground Pond Update



*By Lee Sorenson, Director*

On January 5, 2011, the campground pond renovation and expansion project started! It seems like it has taken forever to get this project going. During the summer months we had to lower the water level in the pond multiple times due to all the rain that never seemed to end. Even now with the cold temperatures on us, the contractors are still dealing with water that is coming out of the soil. You would think that bitter cold would mean a lot of frost in the ground, but dealing with pond soil is an entirely different ball game.

Since Kinzenbaw Earthmoving has started they have accomplished a great deal. Even though the soil has been wet, they have been able to divert the water to help the soil dry. By the time you receive this newsletter, more than likely the pond excavation will be finished, but the project will be far from complete. There is still the entire shoreline that will be covered with shoreline protection, several fish structures will be put into place and the hiking trail that will go around the west side of the pond, extending from the nature center. The fingerlings will be placed in the fall so it will be a few years before we see any size to fish, but we will have great fishing in the future. This is a project that was funded by the fish habitat stamp program.



# Spring 'Green' Cleaning

Are you tired of spending money on household cleaners that can be toxic to you and the environment? Then green up your spring cleaning this year by concocting a few earth-friendly products. These recipes are safe, effective and are made from many ingredients you probably already have at home.

## All-Purpose Cleaner

*Use on hard surfaces like countertops, kitchen floors, windows and mirrors.*

- 2 cups white distilled vinegar
- 2 cups water
- 20-30 drops of essential oil (optional)

Mix together and store in a clean spray bottle. For extra tough jobs, microwave mixture in a glass container until it is barely hot before use.

## Creamy Soft Scrub

*Use this scrub on kitchen counters, stoves, bathroom sinks and more.*

- 2 cups baking soda
- 1/2 cup liquid castile soap
- 4 teaspoons vegetable glycerin
- 5 drops antibacterial essential oil such as lavender, tea tree, or rosemary (optional)

Mix together and store in a sealed glass jar- shelf life of 2 years. For tough jobs, spray the surface with vinegar first, let sit and then follow with scrub.



## Furniture Polish

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup white distilled vinegar
- 20-30 drops lemon essential oil

Shake well before using. Dip a clean, dry cloth into the polish and rub wood in the direction of the grain. Use a soft brush to work the polish into corners or tight places. Two teaspoons lemon juice may be substituted for lemon oil, but then the polish must be stored in the refrigerator.


## Drain Opener

- 1/2 cup baking soda
- 1/2 cup vinegar

Pour baking soda down the drain and follow with vinegar. Cover and let sit for at least 30 minutes. Flush with boiling water.

## Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Sprinkle toilet bowl with baking soda then drizzle with vinegar. Let soak for at least 30 minutes and scrub with toilet brush.

2010 Iowa County Conservation Board	Iowa County Conservation Board Staff
<p><i>Vic Rathje, Amana</i>  <i>Jim Scandridge, Victor</i>  <i>Marcia Wehner, Williamsburg</i>  <i>Gordon Dietze, Millersburg</i>  <i>Shirley Messer, Ladora</i></p>	<p><i>Lee Sorenson, Director</i>  <i>Mike Bode, Park Ranger</i>  <i>Laura Stephens, Naturalist</i></p> 

These recipes and more can be found at Women's Voices for the Earth [www.womensvoices.org](http://www.womensvoices.org)

# Spring and Summer Programs

## Lake Iowa Nature Center



### May

#### Breakfast with the Birds

Saturday, May 21 9-10 am  
Enjoy a few breakfast treats while watching the birds from the nature center and bird blind.

#### Wildflower Hike

Saturday, May 21 1-2 pm  
Learn about spring ephemeral wildflowers on a relaxing 1 hour hike around Lake Iowa Park.

### June

#### Free Fishing Weekend Activities

Saturday, June 4 all day  
Meet at the nature center from 10 am until noon for fishing activities including casting practice, fish ID, water safety, and fish print t-shirts (bring a plain white t-shirt or canvas bag). From noon to 4pm fishing equipment will be available to check out on a first come first served basis (please bring your own bait). Any Iowa resident may fish without a license, but all fishing regulations must be observed.

#### Dutch Oven Brunch

Saturday, June 11 9-11:30 am  
Learn to cook breakfast favorites in a cast iron Dutch oven. Cost is \$5 per person. Must call ahead to register by June 9.

#### Family Orienteering

Saturday, June 11 1-4 pm  
Use both compasses and GPS units to navigate your way through courses at Lake Iowa Park. Must call ahead to register by June 7.

#### Breakfast with the Birds

Saturday, June 25 9-10 am  
Watch the birds eat from the bird blind as you enjoy your own breakfast of bagels or doughnuts.

### July

#### All About Bluebirds

Saturday, July 9 10-11:30 am  
Learn about bluebirds in Iowa, then take a hike to peak in to many of the bluebird boxes located around the park.

#### Composting 101

Saturday, July 9 2-3 pm  
Find out how you can create compost at home, both inside and in your backyard.

#### Kids Campfire Lunch

Saturday, July 30 11 am to noon  
Create pudgie pies, foil packets, banana boats and more! Cost is \$5 per person. Must call ahead to register by July 28.

#### Dutch Oven Just Desserts

Saturday, July 30 2-4 pm  
Get your sweet tooth ready! Learn to make a variety of delectable desserts in a cast iron Dutch oven. Cost is \$5 per person. Call ahead to register by July 28.

### August

#### Family Campout

Friday, August 12 to Saturday, August 13  
Get everyone together for one last family night before school starts for the year. Camp behind the nature center (tents only!) and enjoy many evening activities including a night hike, movie, and a campfire. A light breakfast will be provided in the morning. Cost is \$10 per immediate family. Pre-registration is required- call to reserve your spot! More details will be included in the spring newsletter.



To register for a program or for more information, please call (319) 655-8466 or e-mail [iccb@netins.net](mailto:iccb@netins.net)

## New This Summer: Nature Day Camps

Planning for two different weeks of nature-themed day camps is currently in the works at Lake Iowa Park. The half-day camps will take place from Monday thru Friday, June 13-17 and July 11-15. A camp for 5-8 year olds will take place from 9 am until noon, and the 9-12 year old camp will be from 1 until 4 pm. Pre-registration is required. There will be a small fee to help cover the cost of snacks and supplies. More details and registration information will be available April 1 at the Lake Iowa Nature Center and on our website ([www.mycountyparks.com/county/iowa.aspx](http://www.mycountyparks.com/county/iowa.aspx)).

### Tentative Program Schedule:

#### Week 1 June 13-17 Wildlife Investigations

- Insect Invasion
- Slime and Scales
- Budding Birders
- Amazing Mammals
- Fishing Frenzy



#### Week 2 July 11-15 Plant Explorers

- Seed All About It
- Tales of Trees
- Prairie Pastimes
- How does your garden grow?
- In the Water



Interested in volunteering? Helpers for both weeks of camp will be needed! E-mail us at [iowacountyVOICE@gmail.com](mailto:iowacountyVOICE@gmail.com) or call (319) 655-8466 to find out how you can become involved.



### **WANTED: Old Sledding Hill Pictures**

We are currently trying to locate any pictures of our old sledding hill (and tow rope) that may be floating around. If you, or someone you know, has any pictures of the operation please call and let us know. We don't need to keep the pictures, we are just interested in seeing how everything was set up. Thanks!



### **Become a Junior Naturalist!**

The Iowa Junior Naturalist Program is a great way for children ages 6-12 to learn more about environmental education, outdoor recreation, natural resources, conservation, and historical interpretation. The program is offered every year and encourages children to attend nature-themed programs offered by County Conservation Boards, state parks, nature centers, libraries, and other organizations.

To become a recognized Junior Naturalist, participants must attend 3 public programs and complete two independent activities such as reading a nature book, fishing, hiking, or building a bird feeder. Interested participants may pick up a record sheet at the Lake Iowa Nature Center. Once the requirements have been fulfilled, the completed record sheet may be turned in at the nature center in exchange for an official Iowa Junior Naturalist patch and Certificate of Completion.

All summer programs at Lake Iowa count towards program completion!



# What exactly are feral hogs?

*By Mike Bode, Park Ranger*

Feral hogs, as with most invasive species, are becoming more and more of a problem here in Iowa. They are still in the early stages of becoming established here, so there is currently little legislation to deal with them. This means it is legal, and encouraged by the state, to kill any and all feral hogs (you must still have permission when hunting on private land). Researchers estimate that the state of Texas contains nearly half of the known population in the U.S. (approximately two million feral hogs). Even our neighbor to the south, Missouri, has been dealing with millions of dollars worth of destruction from these pests each year. They have come up with a cooperative, statewide action plan that focuses on keeping numbers in check. I have always heard that Missouri has been dealing with this nuisance for awhile now, but figured it was only in the southern part of the state. In reality, there have been substantial populations only minutes from the Iowa border, for many years now! These large “pockets” of feral hogs have since expanded into multiple Iowa counties along the border.

Feral hogs are simply domestic swine that have escaped and become wild. Not to be confused with wild boar, which are hogs that had an original range of almost all of Eurasia and extreme parts of Northern Africa. However, domestic swine were derived from the original wild boar. Wild boar were also released by European settlers in North America, and coexist in a lot of the same areas that feral hogs do. With so many variations of features within both feral hogs and wild boar, genetic testing is the only way to accurately distinguish between the two. And because they cohabitate (mainly in the southern U.S.) there has been quite a “mixing” of these two gene pools. Feral hogs can look like domestic pigs from the barnyard (pink-skinned with fine hair). Or they could have black, brown, or red thick bristly coats, or any variation in-between. It takes as little as three generations, after domestic swine escape, for them to “transform”, developing

and retaining the traits of the feral hog! As a general rule, they develop smaller ears and a longer snout. Their tail straightens and they get long, bristly hair. The hair along their back can be raised 2-3 inches when they get agitated, which is where they get the common name; razorback.

Feral hogs can weigh up to 500lbs, standing 3ft high and 5ft long. On the average however, sows are around 110lbs while their male counterparts average 130lbs. Boars also have longer, constantly growing tusks that frequently



reach five inches long that are used mainly for fighting. Hogs are omnivores, which means they eat pretty much anything. Feral hogs are mostly nocturnal, but can be seen during the day. They require an abundant source of water mainly because pigs do not have the ability to sweat (so they cool down by wallowing). Their average home range is eight square miles with their natural life expectancy at anywhere from 4-8 years. They have been known to attack humans but attacks are quite rare.




## Iowa County Conservation News

Iowa County Conservation Board

Lake Iowa Park

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Ladora, IA 52251

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please contact us 

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- Gateway Park Improvements
- Environmental Education materials & equipment
- Conservation News newsletter
- Habitat improvement/development on ICCB areas
- Lake Iowa Nature Center Project
- Use my donation where needed most

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