

CONSERVATION NEWS

A Newsletter of the Iowa County Conservation Board

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The Green Menace And The Impending Threat to Iowa County

By
Mike Bode,
Director

There have been countless articles on the danger that our local ash trees face from the now infamous Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). You may personally feel that the EAB threat really isn't that big of a deal. That you're really not concerned about the pest getting to your "front door step," or that there's nothing worth doing to help slow the infestation of this pest locally.

Almost all of the studies out there agree that eventually, the EAB will wipe out nearly every single one of our ash trees. The studies do however, also show, that just the sheer demographics of our state, that the natural spread of these pests across the state may take quite a bit of time. That is, Iowa having smaller sections of trees separated by large chunks of row-crop farmland, makes it hard for EAB to spread on it's own. The number one thing that works against this so-called natural defense and the one thing we can attempt to control, is the movement of wood out of the infected areas into uninfected ones. If this type of transport does end up happening, this highly adaptive pest is then able to start spreading from these satellite locations.

The new confirmed locations that have EAB in Eastern Iowa show how the transport of tainted wood into unaffected areas can really be a game-changer in our battle against EAB. Now instead of the "front line" of our battle moving from East to West across the state, we have to defend the spread from multiple flanks. The more of these point sources that are created out there, the harder our fight is going to be, and the quicker everything will fall.

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Some people out there think that they are not hauling any ash wood so they're fine, or if they know they are that they would be able to identify infestation, or be seeing symptoms on the trees they are sawing up. The truth is, it typically takes 3-5 years of emerald ash borer is present before symptoms become noticeable and confirmation can occur. So an area you take wood from now, could already be infected, just not identified and confirmed yet. With any of these thoughts / justifications keeping you transporting wood, you could be inadvertently worsening this problem in a major way.

Folks that have an acreage or live in town will be the ones affected the most. All of the shade and beauty that the ash trees currently provide will be gone.

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Scary Awesome Volunteers



Creepy Camping volunteers painting a black light scene for the haunted hayrack ride trail

By Shelby Williams, Park Ranger

Creepy Camping, an event people look forward to months in advance, it also takes months to prepare. Fortunately, we had an abundance of volunteers, which helped tremendously. On September 19th, the Williamsburg Jr. High (grades 7th and 8th) made up a service event of a whopping 200 people! Sore muscles, a lot of sweat, and several gallons of paint later, several projects had been finished and others well on their way to completion! On Saturday, September 21st from 9am-5pm, approximately 25 volunteers and staff helped us with tasks from building to painting. All of the trail's largest projects were completed that day, leaving only minor items to be finalized. Because of these volunteer days, we were able to get the new and still under construction campsites ready for more campers to enjoy our "creepy weekend."

This year, during Creepy Camping, we packed the campground and were prepared

for a fun filled Saturday. Unfortunately, it rained... all day. Regardless of the unavoidable rain, we had great participation in our events! The children's games were limited and moved inside, but our volunteers made it happen. The costume contest proved to be entertaining and rain couldn't slow down the kids, or parents, from getting their candy during trick-or-treating!

The staff had to make the difficult decision to alter the original hayrack trail – a hard surface route needed to be established for safety purposes. In a mere two and a half hours, staff and volunteers moved and set up one of the scariest hayrack rides to date. We completed an amazing trail in a small amount of time thanks to our volunteers. On the hayrack ride alone, we had about 20 volunteers, not to mention the drivers and people manning waivers and popcorn, who were all volunteers. To all the volunteers who helped with creepy camping set up and the events of the weekend, we thank you!

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When it comes to the land under our department's management, most of our timbers stand to lose a percentage of trees that will eventually be filled in by other species. At some locations the timber stand will be completely decimated, while the majority of them will have a small percentage of trees wiped out.

Where this is really going to hurt the most, is in the campground, fishing, and picnicking areas at Lake Iowa Park where more than 60% of the trees in these high-use recreation activity areas are ash. We have, thankfully, taken a proactive approach. Starting in the early 2000's, and even more intensely in the last five years, we've started planting a more diverse array of native trees throughout the park. These were to take the place of our ash trees, when the EAB actually makes it to our neck of the woods. An Emerald Ash Borer infestation in Iowa County seems inevitable, but the more years our ash trees can hang in there and these other species of trees get large enough to start taking their places, the better off everyone is going to be.

The Iowa County Conservation Board, along with many other county conservation departments across Eastern Iowa, have taken a proactive approach to help potentially slow the further spread of this epidemic. **Only firewood that was**

harvested in Iowa County, and properly labeled according to state law as such, shall be allowed to be brought into any of the areas that we manage. This includes the Lake Iowa Park Campground. No need to fret if you don't have a source for firewood in Iowa County, as we will plan for a larger need and still be offering firewood that was harvested in Iowa County for sale in the campground.

We're asking for everyone's help to spread the word about the severity of this issue and the facts and reasoning behind this new policy. Having as many people out there as possible, review the facts and make a conscientious decision to go above and beyond, helping us fight this epidemic, will help us pull way more weight than just putting up a new rule sign.

Thanks in advance for your help in this matter.

-Mike



FRIENDS OF IOWA COUNTY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Friends of Lake Iowa Nature Center, Who are They?

Thought we all liked Lake Iowa and were friends? Sure hope you do because there is a lot to like about the lake: camping, fishing, swimming, hiking, enjoying picnics at the pavilions, playing at the playscape, walking around the butterfly garden, checking on the birds at the bird blind, taking classes with the naturalist, viewing the exhibits at the nature center, celebrating Christmas in July and certainly enjoying the Creepiest Camping weekend EVER!

So what is different about those “Friends of Lake Iowa Nature Center?” Well, they are an organized group that started over 10 years ago to raise money to build the nature center and guess what, they did it, along with lots of other people who donated money, time and talent to get the job done. So now that we have a center, what's their job?

Hmmmm, they are a determined group who just keep on giving. Once the center was built, they looked around and thought..... we need beautiful landscaping to surround a beautiful center. Of course, that meant more money was needed and more volunteers required to dig in the dirt, plant, weed, mulch and oversee the gardens. A big shout out went to the Iowa County Master Gardeners and they picked up the challenge and have joined in with the Friends' group to help out.

Then there is the fun, fun, fun playscape. Once the idea was developed, it was back to the Friends' bank with a wish list. The group was able to help with the finished product. There is more to come with musical instruments on the way that the kids, big and small, will love.

The children's play area, on the top floor of the center, was in need of puppets, puzzles, playthings and furniture so the Friend's group got involved with some of the funding to finish that project.

You do know about those horrid invasive plants that are growing by leaps and bounds out there alongside the beautiful native plants. They are on their way out if the lake staff and the Friends have anything to say about it. The group is donating money to eliminate some of that nasty not wanted vegetation.

The Friends group has donated trees to all Iowa County 5th graders through a special program that gives each student a free tree to take home and plant, improving the environment.

The Friends group raises money in lots of ways. We have an annual spring dinner/auction that is tons of fun, good food, yummy wine, and lots of local donations from supporters in our county and beyond that are auctioned off. We have a costume contest and other ways we raise money at Creepy Camping weekend. We will have a fall event to highlight local artists with a soup competition and supper.

We will be sending out our annual appeal letter this fall to support future projects for the lake and appreciate all our friends who have given generously in the past. Donations are accepted any time so don't wait until you receive our request.

Of course, the Friends can't do it alone. Lots of money comes from the Conservation Board, camping fees, rental of the center, grants and other sources. But together with the other “friends” out there, we can do more to increase the usage of the park, keep improvements coming, take care of the beautiful land, and see that our children and grandchildren have this valuable park to continue to use.

If anything we do interests you, we'd love to get you involved. We can all use more “friends.” Contact any of the lake staff and they will put us in touch with you.

Lake Iowa Nature Center



To: Lake Iowa Nature Center Supporters
From: Friends of Iowa County Conservation Foundation
Subject: 2013 Annual Fund Raising Drive

Greetings to all the friends of the Lake Iowa Nature Center and to those of you who may not have had the opportunity to spend time at the lake or the Nature Center. We invite you to join us and become our new best friends. We are looking good. If you haven't been out for awhile you will notice that a brand new shower house has been built. Improved campsites are on their way when you first enter the campgrounds. And for you campers the dump station has been completed. The staff at the lake have worked extremely hard to make this facility the best it can be and there are more improvements on the way.

A Smithsonian exhibit on Prairie was on display all summer, enjoyed by all who viewed it. The Children's area on the upper level of the center has new, inviting nature puppets and puzzles, arts and craft supplies, a white board and children's sized furniture for the young ones. Our naturalist has an indoor classroom to introduce children to the wonders of nature. Outdoor musical instruments will be added to the Playscape in the near future. Our group has donated a considerable amount to eradicate the invasive plants taking over the park.

The Iowa County Master Gardeners have partnered with the LINC committee to beautify the butterfly garden. For you gardening folks, new gorgeous mulch and rock for our dry river bed have been added and there will be more plantings to come. We, Iowa County residents, are so very fortunate to have this outstanding county park and Nature Center in our midst. You don't have to be a camper to soak up the beauty of the land, enjoy the fishing, swimming, hiking, picnicking and bird watching. Plan a family event at the park or Nature Center so those you love can enjoy it with you.

We have been able to help with financing some of these improvements and will continue to do so with your help. We thank all of you who have supported our efforts and look forward to your continued donations, which are tax deductible. Enclosed is a donation form along with a return envelope.

We've added a Fall Festival this year and will continue with our 4th Annual Dinner/Auction in the spring. You're invited to come look us over and join in on the fun.

Friends of Iowa County Conservation Foundation
2550 G Ave
Ladora, IA 52251

If you have financial questions, contact Bill Shafer, Treasurer at 319-668-2565

New Faces at Williamsburg NRCS Office



Hello! My name is Kate Timmerman, and I have the honor of being the new NRCS District Conservationist for Iowa County. When I moved to Iowa, from Tennessee, I had the intention of going back home after a year or two, but plans changed. Jason and I married in 2005, and have two wonderful children, Elizabeth (5) and Jack (3). Growing up on a cow-calf family operation (it was just my mother and I) I loved being on the farm and learning about land stewardship.

Though Tennessee is very different from Iowa, the need to be a steward to the land is universal. I've learned so much during my 10 years with NRCS, and look forward to meeting new producers and sharing new ways to get conservation on the ground.

FUNDS AVAILABLE TO FARMERS!

On August 9, 2013 the Iowa Department of Agriculture announced a Water Quality Initiative program to implement practices to help the Nutrient Reduction Strategy! Over 1.5 million dollars have been set aside to put these practices to work! The three different practices include: Cover Crops, up to 160 acres at \$25 per acre, Strip-Till/No-Till up to 160 acres at \$10 per acre and Nitrification Inhibitor (N-Serve that has NITRAPYRIN) up to 160 acres at \$3 per acre. **These practices are for FIRST TIME users only.** Each of these practices have become very popular in the last few years! If you have wanted to try any of these practices now is the time! To sign up or for questions please contact Leslie at the Iowa County Soil and Water Conservation District in Williamsburg at 319-668-2359.

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Hello, my name is Kristen Fenderson. I am the new Soil Conservationist for the NRCS in Iowa County. Originally, I am from Springfield, Missouri and I attended the University of Missouri in Columbia. Currently, I live in Muscatine County with my husband and 2 dogs. I enjoy turkey, duck, and mushroom hunting, fishing, boating, camping, and visiting National Parks.

I began my career in a USDA Service Center as a Soil and Water Conservation District/Iowa DNR Private Lands employee out of the Louisa County, Iowa NRCS office. I was hired by the NRCS as the Soil Conservationist for the Louisa County field office in 2010.

I started in the Iowa County field office in May of 2013, and I am looking forward to meeting more producers and assisting them with their conservation needs!

Volunteering is a Wonderful Thing

My name is Kristen Geno and I am a volunteer at Lake Iowa Park. This past summer I volunteered everyday Monday – Friday, 40 hours a week. It’s almost as if I work there. I really enjoy cleaning up our park and making it its best for campers and visitors to admire and have the best camping experience possible.

Every day is different when I wake up and head to volunteer. I am not sure what the park will have in store for me, but I know I will have fun and make our park better. Obviously I don’t do this for the pay check; I do it because I believe volunteering is a wonderful thing. It helps out your community and really makes you feel good.

You don’t have to volunteer as much as I do to feel good, but you should try to make it a point to volunteer. Whether it’s at a park, with a local school or program it helps! Not to mention, it really has benefits. It looks great on resumes or college applications, and you get the satisfaction of an accomplishment. Since my parents own “Dee’s Trading Post” I spend a lot of my time out here at the park, when I drive through with them I point out the work I’ve done, thinking to myself, “I did that!” It’s a great feeling and I believe everyone should volunteer.

So go out there, volunteer, and make a difference.

Kristen Geno, 15 years old

If interested in Volunteering at Lake Iowa Park, or have a group that would like to volunteer, please contact Sean Curry (scurry@co.iowa.ia.us) or Shelby Williams (swilliams@co.iowa.ia.us) or call 319-655-8465. A variety of skill groups are always needed!

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Contrary to popular belief, the staff at Lake Iowa can’t do it all! We have volunteers that help us with events such as Creepy Camping, as well as daily activities such as playscape maintenance. Your dedication to Lake Iowa is appreciated and we hope to maintain such an outstanding volunteer base. We are always looking for people interested in spending time at the lake and working with us. Volunteers make events such as Christmas in July and Creepy Camping possible. If you are interested in devoting some of your time to the lake, we would love to hear from you. Contact us on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/LakeIowaPark), email swilliams@co.iowa.ia.us, or call the office at 319-655-8465.



Creepy Camping volunteers painting a new scene for the haunted hayrack ride trail

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- Habitat improvement/development on ICCB areas
- Nature Explore Playscape Project
- Use my donation where needed most

Send to ICCB, 2550 G. Ave, Ladora, IA 52251

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