

CONSERVATION NEWS

A Newsletter of the Iowa County Conservation Board

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Left: Children reading in the Children's Area. Right: Sign welcoming people to the Children's Area.

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Grant and Donation Add New Items to Children's Area

By Sean Curry, Naturalist

The Children's Area at the Lake Iowa Nature Center received many new items this winter thanks to a grant from the Iowa County Community Foundation and a donation from the Friends of Iowa County Conservation Foundation. Over \$4000 worth of new furniture and educational toys were added to the existing area.

The Children's Area, which is in memory of Ila M. and Henry G. Morse, is one of several areas in the Lake Iowa Nature Center that is still under development following the completion of construction a few years ago.

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Continued from Page 1.

The area previously offered nature themed puzzles, a few mounted fish, a tracking activity, and some animal toys. It also featured room for tables and chairs during educational activities.

The area now has much more thanks to the grant and donation. Additional nature puzzles and animal toys were added. A magnetic white board, with numerous life cycle magnets, now graces one of the walls. Child sized tables and chairs will offer more seating for educational programs. An area with a child sized bookshelf, sofa, and table will offer a place for reading and relaxing. So far, the overwhelming favorite of the new items is the puppet theater. The theater provides a space for aspiring actors and actresses to perform nature themed shows. A puppet tree and several animal hand puppets are kept nearby as props. All of these new purchases are a welcome addition to the Children's Area.

The area will be open to the public when the Lake Iowa Nature Center is open. Adult supervision is required for all children playing in the area.

A grand opening is planned for the area on April 6th from 1:00 pm until 3:00 pm. Please join us for an afternoon of fun and learning.

Left: New hand puppets and puppet tree.

Below: Puppet show in the new theater.

Are you a fan of Lake Iowa park?

Visit our facebook page to get the latest news on park events and programs, campground updates, photos, and more!

[www.facebook.com/
LakelowaPark](http://www.facebook.com/LakelowaPark)

Help us reach 1,000 fans!



New Executive Director and ICCB News

By Mike Bode, Director

At the end of February, I humbly accepted the position of Executive Director for Iowa County Conservation. I have been honored to have been the Park Ranger for Iowa County for the past 11 years. I welcome all the new responsibilities and challenges that I will face going into the future.

In my position as Park Ranger, I had always been juggling the priorities of projects that needed to get done. That aspect of my job has not changed, just shifted to a larger scale. This is going to be the biggest change I'll have to adapt to. I have been the go-to guy for getting things done out in the field for so long, that sitting back and making sure I'm seeing the big picture is going to take some getting used to.

With this new change in leadership it was the perfect time for the Conservation Board and I to leave no stone unturned. We've addressed issues dealing with the way that we do business in almost all aspects of our operations, trying to streamline and improve what we have to offer.

One of the best projects that I've been fortunate enough to look into lately is the feasibility of making the water retention wetland at Big Bend Wildlife Area functional again. Years of flooding and the deterioration of the metal tubes that once helped manage the level of water throughout the system have reeked havoc on the levies in and around the wetland.

In mid-March with the ground still frozen and after receiving a couple inches of rain, we had a wonderful opportunity to use the flood waters of the Iowa River as a natural level to assess the elevations and potential problematic areas of the deteriorated levy system.

Naturalist Sean Curry and I took a canoe out one afternoon, launching it in the middle of the access road near the north parking lot. We were able to assess where repairs were needed and find the most suitable location for a proposed earthen spillway. Besides the technical end of the adventure, we were amazed at all the different types of waterfowl the wetland section contained around each bend.



**Former Park Ranger and current Iowa
County Conservation Executive Director**

Michael Bode

2013 Iowa County Conservation Board

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Gordon Dietze, Millersburg
Shirley Messer, Ladora**

Iowa County Conservation Staff

**Mike Bode, Director
Sean Curry, Naturalist**

Volunteer Opportunities

Keep Lake Iowa Beautiful

April 13, 2013
10:00 am
Lake Iowa Nature Center Parking Lot

Join park staff and local scouts to help pick up trash at Lake Iowa Park.

Fish Habitat Installation

May 11, 2013
9:00 am
Lake Iowa Boat Ramp

Help install artificial reefs in Lake Iowa. Boats welcome, especially those with large work areas.

Special Events

Children's Area Grand Opening

April 6, 2013
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Lake Iowa Nature Center

Bring some children and come check out our awesome new additions to the Children's Area.

**Lake Iowa Nature Center Benefit Dinner
Hosted by the Friends of Iowa County
Conservation Foundation**

April 13, 2013
5:00 pm Silent Auction
6:00 pm Dinner by P.H.A.T. Daddy's
Lake Iowa Nature Center
Tickets are \$30 for individual or \$50 for a couple.
Wine tasting by Fireside Winery.
Entertainment after dinner.
Call 319-655-8466 for more information

Summer Day Camps

5 to 8 Year Old Camp

June 3, 2013—June 7, 2013
9:00 am to 12:00 pm
Lake Iowa Nature Center
\$20 per child

Registration will be available in early April on our mycountyparks.com page.
Watch facebook for more information.

9 to 12 Year Old Camp

June 17, 2013—June 21, 2013
9:00 am to 12:00 pm
Lake Iowa Nature Center
\$20 per child

Registration will be available in early April on our mycountyparks.com page.
Watch facebook for more information.

Gunderson Pond to be Renovated

By Mike Bode, Director

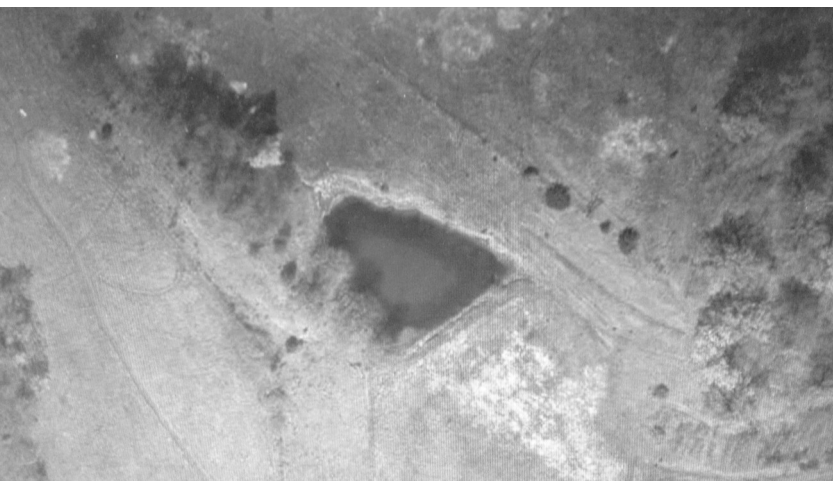
Back in late November our staff went to Gunderson Conservation Area and surveyed the two ponds that are on the property, brainstorming about ways to better utilize them. We knew that the ponds were not in the best of shape, having had only minimal maintenance done on them for well over a decade. That, coupled with the fact that the area had been reported to receive over 10 inches of rain per hour back in 2008, gave us good insight about the conditions we might find.

Just as we had expected, both ponds were extremely silted in. With the drought conditions of this past year affecting the water level in the ponds, we took depth measurements from what would have been the full height. The majority of the depths in each pond were less than 3 feet deep, with a small spot reaching to 4'2" in the West Pond and 4'10" in the East Pond. We did manage to see one lone fingerling-size bullhead in the East Pond. This wasn't too surprising as bullheads seem to be one of a few fish that winter-over fairly well in shallow bodies of water.

Through our knowledge of the Fish Habitat Grant program, we knew that a renovation of the East Pond would be a great fit for the goals of the program and ICCB. A public area that offers pond fishing that is easily accessible would be a great project that would have countless benefits to the community.

A pond that is fairly steep as well as deep, are really the two main keys to having great success in sustaining pan fish. Our project would involve dredging silt out of the current pond, building a new dam below the current one, obtaining the desired grade, and armoring the shorelines. The end result would be a 0.75 acre pond with 7.5 acres of watershed and a maximum depth of 16 feet.

I am excited to announce that we did end up submitting, and have been approved for a Fish Habitat Grant that will make this project possible. The project will include a combination of private contractors and our employees working together to complete the restoration. We will go in and open up the current dam, allowing the pond basin to dry this summer. By late fall or early winter the trench and appropriate material for a new dam will be dug and placed. The accumulated silt in the bed of the existing pond will then be removed. Fill will be built up around the edge of the shoreline for a trail that would offer easy access to users. This shoreline trail will be shaped in conjunction with grading the shoreline to a 3:1 slope and placing rip-rap along it. Once the pond fills completely, the DNR Fisheries Department will stock the pond with the appropriate species of fish for the site specific characteristics of this new pond.



East Pond at Gunderson Conservation Area

Gunderson Conservation Area is located just 2 miles north of Marengo on County Highway V66 (L Avenue). This area is one of the most serene places that we manage and includes a mowed hiking trail that winds through sections of upland timber and prairie. So be sure to stop by this site often to check out the progress on this project. While you're there, I encourage you to take a hike on the trail, checking out the entire property. The secluded West Pond that is surrounded by oak and hickory timber is quite picturesque and well worth the hike.

LAKE IOWA NATURE CENTER BENEFIT DINNER



Saturday, April 13, 2013 at the Nature Center

A Silent Auction will occur at 5:00 PM. Fireside Winery will be offering Wine Tasting during the silent auction. A dinner will follow the silent auction catered by P.H.A.T Daddy's at 6:00 PM.

Cost is \$30 per person \$50 per couple

For more information or for tickets please call Sean at the Nature Center at 319-655-8466.

All proceeds to benefit the Nature Explore Playscape!



Price Creek

Partners Work to Improve Water Quality in Price Creek

By Rose Danaher, Watershed Coordinator

When Abraham Price staked his claim in 1847, he chose a scenic site along a small, clear stream in northern Iowa County. He was one of the first settlers in Iowa County and within a few years the creek bore his name. Less than 10 years after Price picked his homestead, the future founders of the Amana Society also took a liking to Price Creek. They were so impressed by the area that they bought the farm, certain that Price Creek would pour life into their plans for a new village.

Now, over a century and a half later, there is a renewed interest in Price Creek. The thirteen mile-long stream flows through northern Iowa County before skirting the edge of Main Amana and entering the Iowa River. Unfortunately, both Price Creek and the Iowa River below Price Creek are on the state's

impaired waters list for extremely high bacteria levels. In addition to the pathogens, excess sediment and high levels of nutrients continue to threaten water quality in the creek and the downstream river.

In 2006, the Benton and Iowa County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) took notice of the pollution in Price Creek and vowed to prioritize the area for water quality improvements. Over the next several years, a strong partnership was created between local citizens, landowners, and agency personnel. In 2010, Price Creek became one of the first watersheds in the state to have an Environmental Protection Agency Approved Watershed Management Plan (WMP). The WMP is a comprehensive 10 year plan that guides the watershed project and opens the doors for additional funding. Major goals included in the WMP are to reduce sediment delivery to Price Creek by 4,500 tons/year and to reduce bacteria loading to Price Creek by 95%.


The local SWCDs have been working closely with landowners in the watershed to meet the pollutant reduction goals. Farmers have installed soil-saving practices in their fields, built wetlands that intercept feedlot runoff, fenced livestock out of the creek, replaced open feedlots with roofed systems, and much more since the project began in 2007. Educational events have helped homeowners learn about the dangers of failing septic systems and the Amana Colonies are currently participating in the Iowa Living Roadway's Community Visioning Project which will have positive water quality implications for Price Creek. The creek has seen significant changes since Abraham Price chose his homestead in 1847, but the strong partnership and local support of the watershed project show that the Price Creek is still as treasured as it once was.

If you are interested in cost-share information on agricultural practices in the watershed or would like more information on the watershed project, please contact:

Rose Danaher, Price Creek Watershed Coordinator, Iowa County Soil and Water Conservation District
rose.danaher@ia.nacdn.net, 319-668-2359

Or visit <http://www.facebook.com/pricestreamwatershed>

Iowa County Conservation News
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For more information about the
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Enclosed is my donation for:

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

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- Gateway Park Improvements
- Environmental Education materials & equipment
- Conservation News newsletter
- 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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