

CONSERVATION NEWS



VOLUME 29
ISSUE 4
WINTER 2016-2017

2016 a Year In Review

Mike Bode, Director

Winter greetings from the Iowa County Conservation Staff and Board! We've had another successful year come and go with the passing of 2016. At the onset of the year we took on invasive species removal at Lake Iowa between the campground and the lake to not only increase biodiversity and soil retention, but to open-up a pretty stellar view as well. In the spring we did a handful of prescribed burns and prairie plantings at Gunderson Conservation Area (between Marengo and Blirstown) and the I-80 Wildlife area (the area southwest of the Kinze Interchange).

Spring also brought the 3rd annual Iowa County Outdoor Adventure where we again saw record numbers of participants as well as volunteers. We secured grants to hire additional summer staff, build concrete ramps at the Lake Iowa Nature Center and the boat ramp at Lake Iowa, and construct bridges, boardwalks and trails.

With summer came the tackling of our largest project of the year, the two cabins at Lake Iowa. Once the HLV Tech IV (shop class) students finished their school year, our staff took over construction on the first cabin to be built. It was decided that construction of the second cabin should be contracted out, and both cabins were fully constructed by the end of October.

IN THIS ISSUE

- | | |
|-------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | From The Directors Desk |
| 2 | Park Happenings |
| 3-4 | Creepy Camping 2016 Thank You |
| 5-7 | Meet The New Staff |
| 8 | Adopt an Animal Educator |
| 9 | Nature's Neat! Kid's Page |
| 10-11 | Public Program Schedule |

Although the rainy September that we had kept throwing us curve balls, with the help of dedicated volunteers we managed to deliver a top-notch Creepy Camping event for the 13th year in a row. The campground was even full a week ahead of the event despite the soggy weather.

(continued on page 2)

2016 a year in review continued...

Late fall brought work on restoring the Oak Savannah within Lake Iowa Park by Scout groups completing service projects, along with the efforts of two seasonal invasive species techs that were hired. The welcoming of Mary Bulger as our full-time Naturalist and Blaine Manning as our full-time Park Ranger were the two biggest highlights of the year. The skills and experience they bring to the table are truly superb. ICC is fortunate to have them both on staff and you'll get a chance to learn a little more about them later on in this newsletter.

We have hundreds of volunteers and supporters that make all of our efforts possible and so worthwhile. The energy and enthusiasm that individuals and organizations put into each of our causes is phenomenal. The community ownership that we have for our parks and wildlife areas and the emphasis of providing hands-on environmental education to youth and adults alike, is the driving passion that allows us to continue working side-by-side with our neighbors to achieve our overall mission.



Pictured above are Jacob Solberg and Bailey Berger completing invasive species removal at Lake Iowa Park. Removing invasive species like autumn olive, honeysuckle, and redosier dogwood improve the health of the Oak Savannah forests in Lake Iowa. It can be a long process removing invasive species. First they have to cut the invasive species out, next the stumps or what is left in the ground must be treated with herbicide so it does not regrow, last they must burn the brush they had removed.

Creepy Camping Thank You and Review

Shelley Berger, Office Assistant

Another Creepy Camping weekend has come and gone and as per our usual Creepy Camping agenda nothing went according to plan and everything turned out just fine anyway.

This year we battled Mother Nature and, of course, she won. After months of planning and weeks of construction in hot and humid bug-filled weather, Mother Nature gave us enough rain to turn the hayride trail by the silt pond into a swamp. It would have been a perfect fit with our New Orleans Voodoo theme if we had air boats instead of hayracks. A very short meeting took place the day before the



hayride to decide whether or not to cancel the hayrack ride. We had a unanimous vote to keep the hayrack ride and plans were made to move most of the scenes to higher ground near Shelters 1A and 1B.

Some scenes were set aside for 2017 but we just couldn't hide one newcomer for the year. Our big mama gator, Ali

(ali-gator...get it??) made her Creepy Camping debut on Saturday night. She was a foam board, chicken wire and paper mache masterpiece created by Heather and Emily, a couple of our seasonal staff. A launch system made from garage door guides created by our Director, had her lunging at hayrack riders who were distracted by her baby gator, Seymour. Ali attempted to devour 650 unsuspecting victims who also survived the attacks of dozens of spooks that hailed from Iowa Valley Schools or the Marengo Haunted Barn. A few nightmares may be blamed on a little girl and her kidnapped victims dressed as dolls ("No one leaves MY tea party!!"), a voodoo witch doctor, a fortune teller who doomed someone on each hayrack to certain death. We also had some comedy relief provided by a life-sized voodoo doll being chased by a crazy guy with a giant pin.

(continued on page 4)



CREEPY CAMPING 2016 THANK YOU

Although we had fewer volunteers because some were dealing with flood waters we did have over 60 people lend a hand on September 23rd and 24th. People lent a hand by helping with the kid's games, helping setup of the haunted trail (twice), giving everyone a good scare, selling tickets or pop or popcorn, playing music to keep the line entertained, chaperoning or driving the hayracks, providing food for all the spooks, keeping the bathrooms clean and stocked for a campground full of people. So much has to happen to make our biggest fundraiser a success and we could not have done it without every single volunteer.

We were rewarded with the highest donations we've ever received during Creepy Camping which will be used for more improvements to Lake Iowa and other conservation properties. Some will be set aside for 2017 Creepy Camping for things like paper mache materials for 8 foot alligator heads, or whatever other crazy stuff we think of. Most of all we are lucky to have a community who supports all our hard efforts and makes Creepy Camping part of their plans each year. All the Iowa County Conservation staff and volunteers are ready to brave the heat and the mosquitos and the rain again next year just for you.

Mark your calendar for September 29th and 30th 2017, for next years Creepy Camping Event and we'll do our best to scare you again!



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
Mary Bulger, Naturalist
Shelley Berger, PT Office Assistant
Blaine Manning, Park Ranger
Jacob Solberg, Park Ranger Intern
Bailey Berger, Invasive Species Tech**

Iowa County Board of Supervisors

**Vicki Pope
Ray Garringer
Kevin Heitshusen
John Gahring
Dale Walter**

Welcome New Staff

Blaine Manning - Park Ranger



Hello everyone, my name is Blaine Manning I am the new Park Ranger for Iowa County Conservation Board (ICCB). Although I am the new Ranger I am not new to Iowa County. I was born and raised here.

I have worked for ICCB since 2009 as a seasonal employee. There are numerous reasons why I love working for ICCB, all the employees are amazing. I enjoy being able to come to work and see all the beautiful scenery from the native prairies to the beautiful oak/hickory timbers. Last summer was great we had beautiful weather to get a lot of park projects done, and for people to be out camping and enjoying the park.

This winter I am heading off to the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) to become a certified Peace Officer. It will be fifteen weeks of various topics, and I am very excited to attend ILEA and learn a lot from my courses. What will I be learning you ask? Many topics including criminal law, defensive tactics, verbal judo, physical training (boxing another peace officer cadet included) just to name a few. But one “activity” I will not be looking forward to is being pepper sprayed!! While I will learn a lot and am excited to attend the ILEA, what I am really looking forward to is getting back this spring and then really hit the ground running with all of the projects we have in store for 2017.

I am an avid archer and hunter, I spend a lot of time in the summer shooting my recurve and going to tournaments. Last year I finished 19th at the International Bow hunters organization traditional archery world competition. I also got first place in five competitions and top ten at a few. The last few years the archery and hunting industry has been blooming and I love to see so many people out enjoying the outdoors. I look forward to seeing all of you guys out here and visiting with you, and I hope you have a great year.

Bailey Berger - Invasive Species Tech

Bailey is a Iowa County native, and started with Iowa County Conservation in mid-October. She went to school for anthropology and history, with the idea of becoming an archaeologist or museum curator. She then started working at Lake Iowa as a seasonal where she discovered her love for conservation. Taking a chance she moved to work with the Washington Conservation Corps, and AmeriCorps program dedicated to helping young adults obtain skills and gain hands-on experience within the conservation field. She lived and worked in Washington state for two years. Her experience turned out to be one of the best decisions she had ever made. Bailey highly recommends anyone who wants to get into the conservation field join the AmeriCorps program. Now Bailey wants to share her love for the outdoors with others and hopes to go into the conservation education field. In her free time Bailey enjoys backpacking and creek stomping.



Jacob Solberg - Park Ranger Intern

Jacob was born in Olympia Washington, and recently moved from there to work for Iowa County Conservation in mid-October. He has worked in the conservation field for over five years. Previous to working for Iowa County Conservation as the Park Ranger Intern he worked for the Washington Conservation Corps as an assistant supervisor. This started his interest in the conservation field. Jacob likes to spend his free time fly fishing, hunting, and backpacking in remote settings.



Mary Bulger - Naturalist

Hello my name is Mary Bulger and I am the Naturalist for the Iowa County Conservation Board. I grew up in a small rural eastern Iowa community. This gave me lots of time to spend outdoors and enjoy all the wonders nature has to offer. My family spent endless hours fishing, camping, gardening, and just enjoying the outdoors. Through spending most of my youth in nature, I developed a love for it as well as for animals. This is what lead me to my chosen career path.



After graduating high school I attended Kirkwood Community College, and earned my parks and natural resources degree. While attending Kirkwood I did an internship and then worked part-time with the Macbride Raptor Project. There I gained experience working with birds of prey. I assisted with rehabilitation and care of wild injured and resident non-releasable raptors, presented educational programs with and about raptors, and participated in raptor research projects. I loved working with and caring for these beautiful birds.

After graduating from Kirkwood I worked seasonal and part-time naturalist jobs for a few years, and then decided to return to college to get my bachelors degree from the University of Iowa in environmental science with a minor in education. While perusing my degree I worked four summers with the U of I Summer Wildlife Camps where I spent time outdoor with kids of all ages teaching about nature, and doing fun outdoor recreation activities. I also started working at the MacBride Raptor Project again, continuing to teach about and care for Iowa's birds of prey.

After graduation I accepted a conservation education position with Muscatine County Conservation. This was a full-time volunteer position through the AmeriCorps national volunteer service program, that I worked for two years, then continued to work part-time with them for an additional two and a half years. At Muscatine county I was able to expand my knowledge and experience within conservation education, worked with and cared for resident education wildlife, and was mentored by two great naturalists!

I accepted my first full-time permanent naturalist position with Lee County Conservation, and after educating the citizens of Lee county for three and a half years I was fortunate to accept a position closer to home with Iowa County Conservation.

Working with many different organizations has given me lots of great experience in the conservation education field. It has allowed me to spread awareness, appreciation, and good stewardship for the environment. I am very excited to have this wonderful opportunity to serve the people of Iowa County through educating them about nature. I look forward to meeting you at one of our parks or schools.

Adopt an Animal Educator!

Our Animal Educators are housed at Lake Iowa Nature Center. We use these live animals for educational programming to inform people about wildlife, as well as the importance of conserving their habitat. These animals have allowed us to expand our environmental education programs with school children and the public, allowing people to meet the reptiles up close.

The Animal Educators are a huge asset to our educational programs, but there are expenses due to feeding, bedding, and enclosure necessities and upgrades (such as heating, lighting, and enrichment items). It costs approximately \$150 for each animal educator per year. This does not include unexpected costs (ex: replacing a heating pad) or electricity and water for the animals. We appreciate any financial assistance we can get to take proper care of our animals and keep them as long as we are able.



Bullwinkle the Bull Snake



Samantha the Ornate Box Turtle



Foxy the Fox Snake

How Can You Help?

Participate in our “Adopt an Animal Educator” program. Pick the animal that you would like to support, as well as the level that you would like to support them! Each level is good for one year, and can be renewed. You can adopt as an individual, family, or group.

Animal Ally: \$0-74 - Your name(s) or organization’s name will be printed in our next quarterly newsletter. You will receive a certificate of appreciation and an approximately 5”x7” color picture of the animal you chose to support.

Animal Assistant: \$75-149 - Your name(s) or organization’s name will be printed in our next quarterly newsletter. You will receive a certificate of appreciation and an approximately 5”x7” color picture of the animal you chose to support. Your name will also be added to an appreciation plaque hung near our Animal Educators.

Animal Ambassador: \$150 or more - Your name(s) or organization’s name will be printed in our next quarterly newsletter. You will receive a certificate of appreciation and an approximately 8.5”x11” color picture of the animal you chose to support, your name will be added to an appreciation plaque hung near our Animal Educators. And you will receive a FREE live animal program with your Animal Educator.

If you are interested in participating in the “Adopt an Animal Educator” program, please call Mary at (319) 655-8466 or email mbulger@co.iowa.ia.us

Great Horned Owl

Color the picture and learn about the Great Horned Owl by reading the fun facts below, then try to find the **BOLD** words in the word find puzzle!

The **Great Horned Owl** is the largest year round resident owl that lives in Iowa. And is one of the earliest breeding birds, starting in January every winter. They use their excellent sense of **vision** and **hearing** to find prey animals. Two of the owls favorite animals to eat are the **skunk** and **mice**. When hunting the owl has **silent flight**, swooping down on its prey and catching them with its strong sharp **talons**. Then it uses its sharp **curved beak** to tear its food into smaller bite-sized pieces. About once per day the owl will regurgitate a **pellet**, a little ball of fur and bones, parts of the animals they eat that can not be digested.



Coloring page image found at www.coloring-pages-kids.com

P	E	B	N	O	I	S	I	V	E	H	J	K	I	S
Y	Y	S	B	K	A	E	B	D	E	V	R	U	C	V
S	I	L	E	N	T	F	L	I	G	H	T	U	L	F
Q	U	C	D	S	H	B	B	O	L	I	E	Z	P	S
T	A	L	O	N	S	C	V	F	T	N	D	E	G	E
S	H	Y	O	P	D	M	T	E	L	L	E	P	W	T
H	G	R	E	A	T	H	O	R	N	E	D	O	W	L
A	I	R	D	F	E	E	Z	L	X	X	R	S	Z	F
S	Q	U	X	O	H	H	I	C	S	J	P	S	C	O
X	E	I	L	Y	W	A	P	H	U	I	H	A	P	O
O	C	T	T	P	Z	H	Q	S	Z	W	Y	T	A	E
R	I	G	Q	G	S	H	E	A	R	I	N	G	R	S
X	M	J	L	L	R	E	Q	H	F	T	J	Z	B	I
O	L	K	H	A	F	O	D	M	A	Z	O	B	E	Y
B	K	F	S	K	U	N	K	Z	I	O	M	C	W	T

Programs will meet at Lake Iowa Nature Center if location is not listed.
Pre-registration is required by calling Mary at 319-655-8466 or by email mbulger@co.iowa.ia.us All are free (unless noted) and everyone is welcome.

Saturday January 21st



Snowshoeing 10-11am

Try out snowshoes and find out some of the basic history and background of this winter travel. Hot refreshments will be available in the nature center to warm up. Dress to be outside in the elements.

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

Snow Play Afternoon 1-3pm

Come out to Lake Iowa Park and have some fun in the snow! This is a fun family event to encourage outdoor play in the snow. Build a snow fort, snow sculpture, a snow man, whatever your creativity can imagine. Building materials will be provided to aid in your snow fun. Hot refreshments will be available in the nature center to warm up. Dress to be outside in the elements.



Owl Prowl

Saturday February 11th

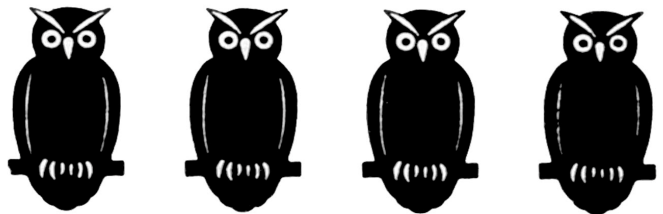
6-7:30pm

Would you like to learn more about an amazing nocturnal animal? Then join us at Lake Iowa Park for an Owl Prowl adventure!



There will be an indoor presentation at the nature center about the three most common owls in Iowa. Then we will venture outside to call and try to find some of these amazing nocturnal creatures.

Dress to be outside in the elements. After our Owl Prowl we will return to the nature center for hot refreshments.



Great Backyard Bird Count

Saturday February 18th 1-3pm

Come out to Lake Iowa Nature Center to be citizen scientists and participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count! We will start with a short presentation on what the count involves, make some pinecone bird feeders to hang and attract birds, then venture outside to count all of the beautiful birds!

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time. Now, more than 160,000 people of all ages and walks of life worldwide join the four-day count each February to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds.



Container Garden Program

Saturday March 25th 10a-Noon

Don't have a yard or the time to plant a large garden outside? Just in time for spring come out to Lake Iowa Nature Center for a fun and interactive program about container gardening.



Participants will learn how to create their very own container garden, then make one to take home with them. All materials will be provided.

Space is limited to 20 participants, pre-registration is required by March 20th.

Save The Date!

Friends Banquet - April 8th, 2017

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

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

Wish List

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

- New or gently used pots and pans for the new cabins
- Bird seed (thistle, peanuts, black oil sunflower, suet)
- Large hardwood tree trunks for nature playscape
- Various sized Rubbermaid totes

Visit us online at:

www.iowacountyconservation.org

www.mycountyparks.com/county/iowa.aspx

<https://twitter.com/LakeIowaPark>

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
Naturalist
Park Ranger
Office Assistant

319-655-8465 **mbode@co.iowa.ia.us**
319-655-8466 **mbulger@co.iowa.ia.us**
319-655-8465 **bmannig@co.iowa.ia.us**
319-655-8465 **sberger@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

Conservation News is a quarterly newsletter of Iowa County Conservation. You can sign up to receive the electronic or hard copy of the newsletter. There is no charge for the newsletter, although contributions to help defray printing and mailing costs are greatly appreciated. By changing your subscription from a hard copy to electronic, it helps us save on printing and mailing! Make sure that you get your newsletters on time by keeping us informed of any change of address.

Yes, sign me up to receive Conservation News!

If you want to receive *Conservation News* electronically, go to www.iowacountyconservation.org to sign up.

OR

If you would like to receive *Conservation News* by mail, send completed form to:

Iowa County Conservation
2550 G Ave
Ladora, IA 52251

Name: _____

Address: _____

The Iowa County Conservation Board's programs and facilities are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on non-discrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, and handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Iowa County Conservation Board or the office of Equal Opportunity, U. S. Department of Interior, Washington D. C., 29240.