

**Marshall County Conservation Board
Nature Center and Amphitheater at the Grimes Farm
Policy and Procedures**

I. Statement of Purpose

The Nature Center at the Grimes Farm Conservation Area is owned and operated by the Marshall County Conservation Board (MCCB) for the following purpose:

“To provide an inviting place, with educational programming, that encourages visitors to make a personal connection with nature and offers opportunities to discover, experience, and enjoy nature’s message of harmony.”

II. Policy for use of the Nature Center

This policy has been written with the following points in mind:

A. Nature Center Hours

Normal building hours are defined as:

8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Monday – Friday
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Saturday seasonally
Closed	Sunday

The Nature Center will be closed on county holidays unless otherwise noted. The Nature Center reserves the rights to be closed additional days and times.

Park Hours for hiking trails, access road, and immediate vicinity

5:00 a.m. – 10:30 p.m.

B. As a public facility, the Nature Center (and 100-foot radius) will be a smoke free zone.

III. Allowed Uses

- A. MCCB sponsored programs and events for the public.
- B. Educational groups defined as public school, private school, preschool, and college classes who request a formal program from the MCCB staff at the Nature Center, or plan to use the Nature Center as a self-guided tour. These groups will be scheduled on a first come first served basis as staffing allows during normal hours.
- C. Youth groups are defined as any scout, church, 4-H or special youth club that may choose to educate youth on conservation or environmental issues. There shall be an adult to child ratio of no more than 1:15.
- D. Teacher or Educator Workshops are defined as educational workshops for teachers, conservation personnel and other educators such as staff development and teacher in- service.
- E. Conservation or educational organizations such as ISU Extension, Central Iowa Ornithologists, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, Izaak Walton League, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, County Conservation Boards, REAP Alliance, Amateur Astronomers of Central Iowa, Parent Teacher Associations, and other groups as decided upon by the MCCB director or staff may use the Nature Center meeting/classroom for board or general membership meetings.
- F. Marshall County sponsored events i.e. Supervisors meetings, department meetings, wellness committee.
- G. Marshall County business or industry training sessions/retreats
- H. Private groups: receptions, reunions, etc.

***Groups will be limited by fire code to no more than 80 people in the classroom.**

Scheduling and Rental Fees

I. Scheduling

Reservations must be made through the MCCB administrative office at least two weeks in advance of date requested.

II. Rental Fees

A. Conservation or educational groups

May use the classroom for board or general membership meetings at no charge.

B. Teacher or educational workshops

Held at the Nature Center may use the meeting room at no charge.

C. Private Events

The use of the Nature Center is restricted to the classroom, display room, resource library, and public restrooms. The following times will be in effect:

Monday – Friday, normal business hours 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Monday – Friday, after hours 4:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. (except 2nd Monday of the month)

Saturday 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Sunday 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Groups requesting reservations for use need to be aware that during school field trip seasons, a school group may be scheduled at the same time at the facility.

D. Rental Fees

1. Classroom, restrooms, and kitchen \$200
2. Classroom, restrooms, kitchen, exhibit area, and library \$300
3. Amphitheater, classroom, restrooms, kitchen \$350
4. Amphitheater, classroom, restrooms, kitchen, exhibit area, and library \$450

E. Deposits

A \$200 deposit is required. A \$500 deposit is required if alcohol is present. Damage deposits are assessed to partially cover damage or loss of items.

1. The deposit is to be returned upon compliance with this agreement and when inspection of the facility by MCCB staff has been completed and approved as satisfactory.
2. The deposit is not to be considered as a limit of liability for damage to county property. The conservation board may take any legal action necessary to recover additional damage.
3. Damage to the exhibits, displays, and mounted animals will be assessed depending on full replacement costs.
5. Missing or broken items will be charged at their replacement value.

F. Alcohol

Alcohol is allowed at GrimesFarm and Conservation Center under the following conditions.

1. The renter must declare prior to the rental if alcohol will be present at the rental. Failure to notify the Marshall County Conservation Board of the presence of alcohol prior to the rental will result in the forfeiture of the damage deposit.
2. The minimum deposit for a rental where alcohol is present is \$500.
3. All laws of the State of Iowa regarding consumption of alcohol will be strictly observed. Violation of state code with regard to alcohol consumption will result in expulsion from the area, revocations of rental privileges, and forfeiture of deposit.

4. No kegs, hard liquor, or glass beer bottles are allowed.

G. Payment

Payment of the fee is due with completed reservation forms or your request will be voided and the date made available to others. A reservation form must be completed and signed by the person responsible for the room rental. Two checks must be submitted (one for deposit and one for rental fee) There will be no refunds for cancellations; however an alternate date can be selected in the same calendar year. Groups are responsible for setting up and taking down for their event.

H. Kitchen Use

Groups using the kitchen may use all appliances provided that following the meeting the kitchen is thoroughly cleaned. Caterers may use the kitchen for meal service. The group or organization hiring the caterer is responsible for clean-up.

I. Renting Rules:

- Renter is responsible for making arrangements to pick up a key and receive instructions for securing building during regular business hours.
- Staff will not be at the door to let you in after regular business hours. An alarm access code will be assigned the person filling out rental agreement and will be responsible to return the key.
- Access to Center will be from east door only after regular business hours.
- Tobacco free area. Alcohol is permitted but no kegs, no hard liquor, and no glass beer bottles.
- Amphitheater electricity will be turned off unless facility is rented.
- Fire pit will be locked unless facility is rented and requested for use.
- Use of fire pit requires user to supply own wood.
- Park hours 5:00 am- 10:30 pm.
- Lost key fee of \$100.
- If building is not secured properly (alarming and locking door(s)), there is \$200 fee.
- Ensure that guests follow parking rules, parking is allowed in parking lots only. Do not park on the service entrance drive and no parking on grass.
- No motor vehicle may be operated off of the established roadways.
- Renter is responsible for clean-up of the facility and trash removal. Garbage is a take in carry out policy.
- No candles or other open flames are allowed except in the fire ring of the amphitheater.
- No nails, tacks, pins, staples, screws are allowed to affix decorations, only blue painters tape may be used to affix decorations. Free standing decorations are allowed. No confetti or artificial flower petals. This includes the pergola on the amphitheater and the outside of the Nature Center.
- NO PETS are allowed in the nature center. Only “service animals” or similarly medically trained animals are allowed.