

CONSERVATION NEWS



VOLUME 29
ISSUE 1
SPRING 2016

Campground Hillside Project

Cecilia Hagen and Heather Stratton, Seasonal Invasive Techs

Many park goers will get a surprise this coming camping season! We, Heather Stratton and Cecilia Hagen, are the seasonal invasive species technicians for Iowa County Conservation. Along with park staff, we have been hard at work eliminating invasive honeysuckle, autumn olive, and multiflora rose from the east side of the campground by the lake.

Invasive species cause many problems. They can shade out native and desirable plants and trees. Without their natural competitors they have the ability to overtake the entire landscape. Many invasives grow in dense impenetrable thickets that can make movement difficult for hunters and foragers. These dense thickets also block beautiful views. All of these problems sparked our lakeside view project. The project goal is to clear out the hillsides coming up from the lake so campers may once again enjoy the view.

One main focus has been the removal of autumn olive, a shrub found all over Lake Iowa Park. It has light gray bark with modified thorns when it is young and becomes a gray-brown as it gets older. It starts as a small shrub that can become a tree nearing 20 feet tall. The top of the leaf is green and the underside is silvery in an oval shape with a pointed tip. In September and October it produces red speckled fruits that are attractive to birds. The fruits are ingested, allowing the seeds to easily spread. It has a rapid growth rate allowing it to move into disturbed areas quickly, making it a perfect invasive species.



Above: Features of autumn olive. Leaves have a silvery underside and the plant has speckled red berries in the fall.

Below: A large bush honeysuckle.



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Bush honeysuckle is another shrub that has taken over the park. There are many species of invasive honeysuckle, most originating from Asia. They can grow to be 20 feet in height with white flowers that fade to yellow as they get older. They also have bright red fruits that are attractive to birds.

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Summer Camp at Lake Iowa

Sign your kids up for a chance to explore nature, get new outdoor experiences, and have fun! Each camp costs \$20 per child to help cover the cost of materials and snacks. Additional information will be available on our website on March 22nd. Camp registration will be available starting Monday, April 11th at 2:00pm. Registration information will be posted on our website and on the “Iowa County Conservation” and “Lake Iowa Park” Facebook pages. Registration will be limited to 12 participants per session.

Critter Camp, 5-6 year olds

Session 1: June 14 — June 17 (Tue-Fri), 9:00-11:30AM

Session 2: June 21 — June 24 (Tue-Fri), 1:30-4:00PM



Nature Explorers Camp, 7-8 year olds

Session 1: June 14 — June 17 (Tue-Fri), 1:30-4:00PM

Session 2: June 21 — June 24 (Tue-Fri), 9:00-11:30AM

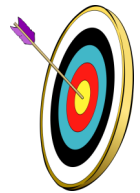
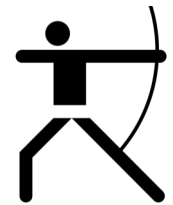


Junior Naturalist Camp, 9-10 year olds

June 28 — July 1 (Tue-Fri), 9:00AM-12:00PM

Outdoor Skills Camp, 11-13 year olds

July 5 — July 8 (Tue-Fri), 9:00AM-2:00PM



**Iowa County
Outdoor
Adventure**
June 11th, 2016

A free family event hosted at Lake Iowa Park. Kids will get the chance to try a variety of exciting outdoor activities, such as canoeing, archery, trap shooting, fishing, and much more!

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

Find Us on the Web!

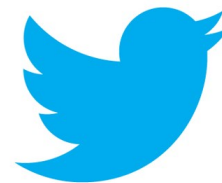
If you haven't visited our new website yet, go to www.iowacountyconservation.org.

You can check out current happenings at our properties and find information about our organization, staff, and upcoming programs. You can also find links to our social media pages.

Did you know you can find us on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter? See below!



@IowaCountyConservation



@LakeIowaPark



**Iowa County Conservation
&
Lake Iowa Park**

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The Iowa County Community Foundation and Us

Mike Bode, Director

The Iowa County Conservation Board has sought after and received many grants over the years. This encompasses larger grants through the DNR and DOT for lake and pond re-construction and development and to maintain and construct trails and roadways. It also includes smaller ones like through the Iowa Ornithologists' Union to help pay for binoculars and bird guides. We have utilized grant opportunities and partnerships with businesses in the county, service groups, conservation organizations, and individuals to bring projects and services within reach for the communities we serve. One grant source that continues to help us reach beyond our normal scope and is a great fit for the Conservation Board's mission is the Iowa County Community Foundation.

The Iowa County Community Foundation (ICCF) is funded in most part by gambling revenues that are distributed to counties that do not have casinos located within their borders. ICCF is administered by and part of the larger Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa (CFNI). CFNI includes twenty affiliate counties in Iowa. Their mission is to inspire people and connect resources to enrich our communities.



A view from the inside of the bird blind at Lake Iowa Park, a project completed thanks to the ICCF.



Volunteers hard at work taking care of the butterfly garden at Lake Iowa Nature Center. The garden was funded by an ICCF grant.

Local community leaders helped set the groundwork for how funding through ICCF would be allocated. The ICCF has been set up to have a local committee that uses an annual grant process to help determine how funds are to be divvied out into the community. We are merely one of the organizations that have benefited immensely from this program. Cities, schools, historical foundations, and non-profit groups have taken advantage of this funding for worthy causes. Although the majority of funding we have received over the years has been in the categories of Environment, Community Betterment, and Education; there is also a lot of impact on Arts and Culture, Historic Preservation, and Human Resources.

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ICCB and the Friends of Iowa County Conservation Foundation have put in for noteworthy projects over the years, first of which was funding for the construction of the Lake Iowa Nature Center. Projects that followed suit in and around the nature center were the bird blind, butterfly garden, Natural Playscape, and development of the indoor Children's Area. These projects were perfect fits for making the greatest county-wide impact as we have nearly all the elementary school students in the county, whether public, private, or homeschooled, come out for programs that incorporate use of these areas.

Looking ahead at our five year plan, ICCB will continue to work side-by-side with the Iowa County Community Foundation to offer even more in the way of conservation education, recreational opportunities, and conservation practices on the lands we manage. ICCF continues to offer great flexibility for funding a vast array of new and innovative projects. We look forward to continuing to utilize this grant process to make quality of life improvements for the residents of Iowa County and our surrounding communities.



The natural playscape, a popular attraction at Lake Iowa Park for kids and families, was funded through the ICCF.

Iowa County Conservation & Deuce Squad Disc Golf present the **Inaugural Lake Iowa Open!**

Saturday, May 7th



Check out the 18-hole disc golf course at Lake Iowa Park! This is the first disc golf tournament hosted at the park. There will be two divisions, featuring both professional players and beginners. Open to everyone! Keep posted on our website and Facebook pages for additional information.



Keeping Things Wild

Shelley Berger, Office Assistant

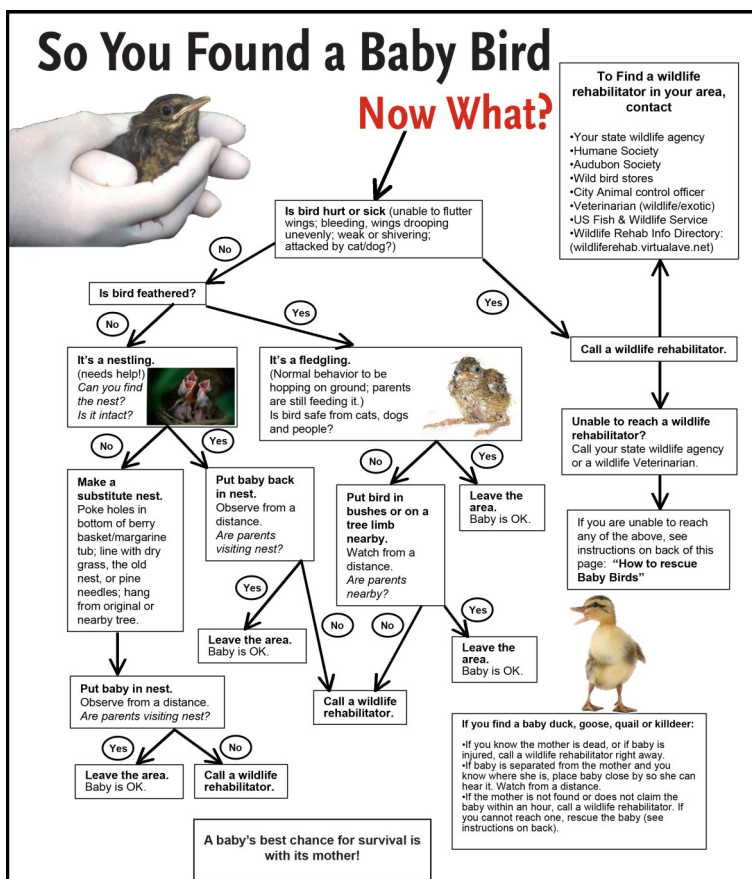
Throughout the year our staff gets phone calls that usually start out, “So I found this bird...Now what?” Many calls come in the spring when a baby bird falls from its nest but sometimes we get calls about larger birds in distress.

The most human reaction to finding an injured bird is to catch it and put it in a box or crate. I know when I see an injured animal I am pretty determined to love that baby bird/owl/hawk back to health! My husband is always leery when he comes home to find the bathroom door tightly shut when all the humans are accounted for. He’s opened the door to a litter of raccoons curled up in a cardboard box and most recently to a juvenile Red Tailed Hawk glaring at him from a dog crate. Luckily for him our bathroom guests have a short stay. There is a long list of folks who are equally determined to love those critters back to health - they just have a lot more training and experience than I do. With each injured or orphaned animal I bring in I learn a little bit more from these tireless volunteers. I’ve learned that, in a pinch, they’ve used their bathrooms as a nursery just like at the Berger farm. I’ve learned that the menu these critters get is pretty high class stuff. Rehabilitators use the same replacement formulas that are used in zoos. Raptors get a diet

of mice, rats, quail or even venison if they are healthy enough to digest them. Many rehabilitators work closely with veterinarians who can provide x-rays, surgery and medicine.

One of the most important things I’ve learned from rehabilitators is how to handle an injured wild animal. Their first suggestion is the hardest. Don’t touch it. If the animal, be it a helpless baby robin or a hawk with 3 inch talons, is safe from predators like your cat or dog and is not in immediate danger, then the animal should be left alone until you contact an expert. An injured wild animal is at a risk of going into shock. When in shock its circulation is diminished and it cannot maintain its own body temperature and heartrate. Being handled by a human for the first time in its life is not going to calm it down or lessen its risk for shock by any means.

The second bit of advice isn’t much easier to follow. Don’t feed the injured animal. Even if you’re pretty sure all birds can eat birdseed or love night crawlers you shouldn’t lay out a big buffet for an animal who may have internal injuries or lead poisoning. Providing human or pet food is even worse. Many animals lack the flora in their gut to digest new foods and their digestive systems just come to a grinding halt.



This helpful chart from the Animal Rescue League of Boston lets you know what to do when you find a baby bird.
 Source: <http://www.arlboston.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/2014-ARL-Found-Baby-Bird-Rescue-Guide.pdf>

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The third bit of advice is tough for some of the cute or helpless critters. Don't make the injured animal the new family pet. Babies require a lot of time and hands on care. When they mature they will have the same instincts as any other member of their species. They will hunt and they may view your new kitten as a food source. They will bite to defend themselves and they may see small children who are excited to see them as a danger. Your family may tire of this new "pet" long before it has reached the end of its lifespan. Since it has been fed by humans it cannot be released into the wild and will have to spend the rest of its life in captivity or be euthanized.

When you've managed to follow the first three steps you should call a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Their advice may be as simple as place the baby bird back in its nest or they may give you detailed instructions about capturing the animal so you can bring it to them for care.

We're lucky to have a group of certified raptor rehabilitators in our area called RARE (Raptors. Advocacy. Rehabilitation. Education.) Luke Hart is Executive Director of RARE. He holds a Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and a Federal Migratory Bird Rehabilitation Permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He works with a dedicated staff of volunteers that treat raptors such as owls, hawks, falcons, kites, harriers, eagles, ospreys, vultures, and condors. The group was formed in November 2015.

Recently one of our seasonal employees found a juvenile Red Tailed Hawk in her yard. To keep it safe from her curious dogs she placed the hawk in a dog crate. We called the RARE group hotline and transported the hawk to Iowa City and transferred it over to Luke. After a quick evaluation he could see that the bird was in shock. Upon examining the bird's wings he could feel a break in the bone near its shoulder. Luke was very honest about the chances for rehabilitating the young hawk. He explained that placing a pin in a break near the shoulder would cause the wing to freeze and it would be impossible to set it free. After giving it fluids and keeping it warm overnight he took it to a veterinarian for evaluation. In the end the most humane thing to do was euthanize this hawk. Without function of its wing it could not survive in the wild and it would make it hard to adapt to captivity. Although this bird could not be saved they have many success stories under their belt since beginning in November 2015. You can check out these stories at theraregroup.org.



This juvenile red-tailed hawk was found in a yard in Iowa County and brought to RARE for rehabilitation.

You can contact RARE about an injured bird on their phone hotline at 319-248-9770. If they are not able to take your call, please leave a message. Include your name, phone number, and information about the bird. You can also send them an email: help@theraregroup.org. A photo of the bird could help them determine the best course of action.

(Campground Hillside Project, continued from page 1)

Autumn olive and honeysuckle were originally planted to stabilize soils and provide food and shelter for wildlife. The shrubs quickly started growing out of control and spread to undesirable places. Removal is not a simple task. After cutting them down, their stumps must be treated with herbicide immediately to prevent resprout. It is best to remove them before they have a chance to produce seeds so birds and other animals do not help the spread.

Approximately three acres of invasives have been removed so far. That number may seem small, but a picture is worth a thousand words. Many times a path needs to be cut to enter these dense thickets. Once a

small circle is cleared, we work together to build a fire. Propane torches and a generator with an industrial fan are particularly useful on windless days or for burning down in valleys. Working in a 360 degree motion, we start up the chainsaws and continue fueling the fire until the day's end.

This is not our first season working for Iowa County Conservation, but it is our first winter season. Like brush removal during the summer, winter has its own challenges that have made themselves well known. Getting a nice fire built is the first challenge. We must break twigs into tiny pieces and slowly work to larger sticks until we can throw entire logs on top. Wind plays a major role in spreading the fire throughout the pile. If we do not have enough wind we must use the generator and a fan to create our own. Our goal is to create a bed of coals large and hot enough to last through the night so we can use them in the morning to rebuild our fire. Each snowfall reduces the amount of hot coals from the previous day. As this snow slowly melts, ice on the steep slopes becomes the next challenge for dragging the brush either



An affected area before invasive species treatment (*top picture*) and after treatment (*bottom picture*). Note the reduction in invasive shrubs that blocked the lake view at the center left of the picture.

uphill or downhill. On top of all of this we face negative wind chills and the gnarly nature of the invasives. Despite all of these challenges, our hard work is worth it in the end.

We have already started noticing many positives. Did you know another pond can be found below campsites 93 and 94 along the Lakeside Trail? The invasive trees created dense shade that harmed grasses and native prairie seeds. Now they are seeing sunlight for the first time in years and can begin growing again. Wind can finally move unobstructed through this new savannah. The thick understory collected trash left behind by park users. Clearing out the understory has allowed us to remove this trash. We hope that a clearer view will inspire everyone to keep their campsites clean. Soon everyone will be able to enjoy a breathtaking view of the lake directly from the campground edge.

There is a lot more work to be done. More ridges, valleys, and unknown obstacles stand between us and our end goal. Fire by fire, chain by chain, we are working to improve your experiences here at Lake Iowa Park!



Invasive species techs Heather Stratton (left) and Cecilia Hagen (right) take a well-earned break for a newsletter photo op.

Sources:

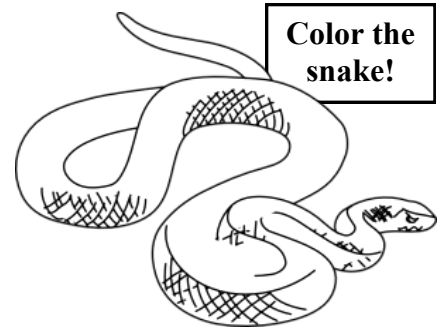
1. <http://mnfi.anr.msu.edu/invasive-species/AutumnOliveBCP.pdf>
2. <http://mdc.mo.gov/your-property/problem-plants-and-animals/invasive-plants/bush-honeysuckles-control>

Creature Feature: Brown Snake



- 🐍 Brown snakes are one of Iowa's smallest snakes. They can be 9-13 inches long.
- 🐍 Brown snakes spend the winter in a burrow or an empty ant mound. Snakes must spend the winter out of the cold because they are *ectothermic*, meaning they cannot make their own body heat.

- 🐍 Brown snakes like to live near water habitats such as marshes, streams, ponds, and lakes. They also spend time in grass and forest areas.
- 🐍 This snake eats earthworms, slugs, and insects. Some larger brown snakes will eat frogs and tadpoles.
- 🐍 Brown snakes have special long teeth that help them take land snails out of their shells to eat.



Word Search

Find the words below in the puzzle. Words can be up, down, forwards, backwards, or diagonal.

SNAKE

CARNIVORE

SCALES

REPTILE

SLITHER

TONGUE

Snakes use their tongues to bring air into their mouth. This is how they smell!

A carnivore is an animal that eats other animals.

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

PUBLIC PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Programs will meet at Lake Iowa Nature Center if location is not listed. All are free (unless otherwise noted) and everyone is welcome.

Sat, April 16th *Bird Banding,* 8-11AM

Come see the process of bird banding, and find out why it is important. During this family-friendly program, you will have the chance to see wild birds and watch how they are banded and measured. Banding will be led by licensed bird bander Bob Van Ervelde, a Grinnell resident who has been banding birds for over 23 years, first as an apprentice and on his own for the last 8 years. Experts will be banding the birds, but observers will get the chance to release them!

You can come out anytime from 8-11am, as there will be ongoing demonstrations of banding. But remember: the early bird catches the worm!

Sat, April 23rd *Geocaching: Celebrate CITO, 1PM*

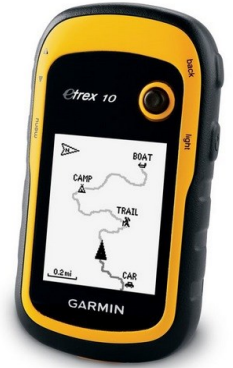
CITO = Cache In, Trash Out. CITO is a week-long geocaching event in which people have fun geocaching while serving their community by removing trash from the cache sites and nearby areas.

Come do some geocaching in

See wild birds up close — you may even get the chance to release one!

beautiful Lake Iowa Park. If you so choose we can provide you with a trash bag, and you can help us out by picking up some litter while you geocache!

Geocachers of all skill levels are welcome! We will provide GPS units and teach the basics.



Sat, May 14th *Plantable Paper, 10AM*

Spring has begun and that means that planting season is here! Find out more about the community garden at the Lake Iowa Nature Center. Then make your own recycled paper that you can plant. Makes a great gift!

Pre-registration is not necessary, but appreciated. Call (319) 655-8466 or email csavage@co.iowa.ia.us to register by Thursday, May 12th.

Lakeside Leisure, 1PM

If you haven't had a chance to check out our lakeside trail yet, this is a perfect opportunity to do so! We will go on a walk on a section of the lakeside trail, enjoying the great outdoors and good company. There is some hilly and uneven terrain.

Meet at the Roundhouse.

Memorial Day Weekend

Saturday, May 28th

Lake Iowa Park Jeopardy, 10AM

Test your knowledge on Lake Iowa Park and the wildlife here. Meet at the Nature Center for this fast-paced game! Prizes will be awarded to the winning team.

Campground Fun, 2PM

Meet at the Roundhouse for some exciting games! We will also have s'mores available to kick off the camping season! Bring roasting sticks if you have them.

Sunday, May 29th

Friends Pancake Breakfast,

8AM-noon

Enjoy a delicious start to your day! Breakfast includes pancakes, eggs, and sausage. Free will donation.

Dedication of Dale Noyes

Memorial Pavilion, 1PM

Dale Noyes was a founding member of the Friends Foundation and volunteered his service for over 12 years. Join us for the dedication of the Dale Noyes Pavilion in his memory. Meet us at the pavilion, on the hill above the Nature Center playscape.

Monday, May 30th

Pond Critters, 10AM

Explore the campground pond and the creatures that live there. Meet at the Nature Center and we will walk down to the pond together. We will provide the dip nets and containers to catch some critters!

Keep Fit with ICC



Look for this symbol for ways to get outside and stay active!

Wish List

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

Thank you!

- ◆ 9x13" baking pans (for papermaking - no glass please; old or new)
- ◆ Bird seed (black oil sunflower or thistle)
- ◆ Ear plugs and/or ear muffs (new)
- ◆ Work gloves

Visit us online at:

www.iowacountyconservation.org

or

www.mycountyparks.com/county/iowa.aspx

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
Park Ranger
Naturalist

319-655-8465 **mbode@co.iowa.ia.us**
319-655-8465 **swilliams@co.iowa.ia.us**
319-655-8466 **csavage@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.