

# Newsletter



A Newsletter of the Webster County Conservation Board

## River's Edge Discovery Center Update

### The Matt Cosgrove River's Edge Discovery Center is now open!

Our grand opening was a huge success and we are super excited for you to visit!!

After nearly three decades, the Discovery Center has become a reality and will serve as the hub for conservation and recreation in Webster County.

The central theme of the Discovery Center is **"Immerse yourself in the living story of Iowa's water - the lifeblood that shapes our communities and our landscapes - while discovering our responsibilities to protect it for the future.** The hands-on, interactive exhibits tell the story of Iowa's most precious resource...it's water.

The Webster County Board of Supervisors surprised Conservation Director, Matt Cosgrove at the July 12 ribbon-cutting by naming the facility to honor his vision and dedication for making the project a reality. **COME SEE US!**



### *A Thank You Note from the Director...*

When I started this career almost thirty years ago I had no idea where this journey would lead, but little did I know it would lead me home...a place I love and a place I strive to

make better each day. I do this with a dedicated team and a variety of partners (too many to mention) that all have a similar goal.

To be recognized for doing a job I love by the Webster County Board of Supervisors and Conservation Board with this incredible honor is truly amazing and speaks volumes about the kind of leaders we have in this community.

Thank you to all the elected officials, individuals, businesses, organizations and friends that supported our capital campaign and mission over the years. We all share in this accomplishment and we look forward to the next. Words can not express my gratitude for this incredible and humbling honor.

My family and I are forever grateful.

*Matt Cosgrove*



# WE ARE OPEN!

MONDAY - FRIDAY:  
9:00 AM TO 4:00 PM

SATURDAY:  
9:00 AM TO NOON

20 North 1st Street  
Fort Dodge



# GRAND OPENING

RIVER'S EDGE  
DISCOVERY CENTER



July 12 & 13, 2024





# "Connecting Kids & Nature" Capital Campaign

The Friends of Webster County Conservation launched their "Connecting Kids & Nature" Capital Campaign in the Fall of 2022 with a Trivia Night at River Hops Brewery. The goal of the campaign is to raise \$500,000 of private funds to match the state's \$4 million Destination Iowa Grant.

**Thanks to the generous donations of local businesses, individuals and organizations the campaign raised \$570,095!!**

If you are interested in learning more about giving opportunities or would like to make a donation, you can fill out the attached donor form or contact the Conservation Department Office for more details and to schedule a presentation.

## YOU DID IT!!

*Stay Tuned for the playscape, trails, fishing jetties & more exhibits coming soon!*



**\$570,095**

**FUNDS RAISED**

**\$500,000**

**Our goal**

**THANK  
YOU!**





# RIVER'S EDGE DISCOVERY CENTER

## Pledge & Donation Form



Full Name / Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Partner Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

I/We would like to make an immediate donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to this project.

I/We would like to make a pledge of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_ years. (1, 2, or 3 yrs)

This gift is a corporate commitment from: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and title of corporate contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Please have this gift recognized in publications, Wall of Honor, (etc.) in the following way:

\* All donations/pledges over \$100 will be permanently recognized at the facility in order of giving levels. Your gift is tax deductible according to current tax law

### MAIL PLEDGE & GIFT TO:

Friends of Webster County Conservation  
c/c River's Edge Discovery Center  
1415 Nelson Ave Fort Dodge IA 50501  
QUESTIONS? Call: 515-576-4258



Thank You!



Webster County Conservation  
1415 Nelson Avenue, Fort Dodge, Iowa 515-576-4258  
www.mycountyparks.com  
conservation@webstercountyia.org



# QUALITY OF LIFE PROJECT UPDATE

With the completion of the River's Edge Discovery Center, we shift our focus to completing the remaining Quality of Life Projects...the Badger Trail, Gowrie Trail and Dayton Trail. The projects are part of an \$11 million investment by the Webster County Board of Supervisors to improve our communities and recruit and retain a qualified workforce. The investment has leveraged more than \$11 million in matching funds for a total investment of \$23 million.

## Badger Trail Connection

The Badger Trail project is a 5.43 mile extension of the Prairie Rivers Trail System connecting Fort Dodge and Badger. The \$4.1 million project is partially funded through a DOT COVID-19 Trail Grant. The 10-foot, concrete trail is currently under construction and should be completed by Labor Day.

The project is the first phase of eventually linking the Prairie Rivers and Three Rivers Trail System, creating the fourth longest trail network in Iowa! Webster & Humboldt Counties have secured a \$750,000 Transportation Alternative Grant for 2026. Additional planning and fundraising are currently underway.



## Gowrie Trail

The Gowrie Trail project is the first of four phases of creating a trail network in Gowrie. The community formed a trail committee and created a multi-phase trail plan that follows the perimeter of town.

The project has been awarded to Howerly Construction and construction is scheduled to begin in August and be completed by the end of 2024.



## Dayton Trail

The Dayton Trail project consists of creating a hard-surfaced trail connection from downtown to the rodeo grounds and a new community center.

The community center is a \$1 million project funded through a Destination Iowa Grant. The center will be located at the golf course adjacent to the upper rodeo grounds.

The project is schedule for bidding in August and construction could start following the Dayton Rodeo on Labor Day weekend. The anticipated project completion is summer of 2025.





# Habitat News

## They're Back...

Back by popular demand, the goat herd has returned to Kennedy Park to graze on the park's invasive understory. The hungry herd can be found on the northeast side of Badger Lake along the hard-surfaced trail.

The grazing program is in its second year and is a unique partnership with Peace Creek Animal Sanctuary & Rescue to utilize the eight goats to combat invasive vegetation.

The goats provide another "tool" in the toolbox for habitat management in county parks and wildlife areas. Our hungry herd is making an immediate impact on the honeysuckle, buckthorn and other invasives. A special "thanks" to our friends at Peace Creek, Humboldt Vet Clinic, and Franklin County Conservation.

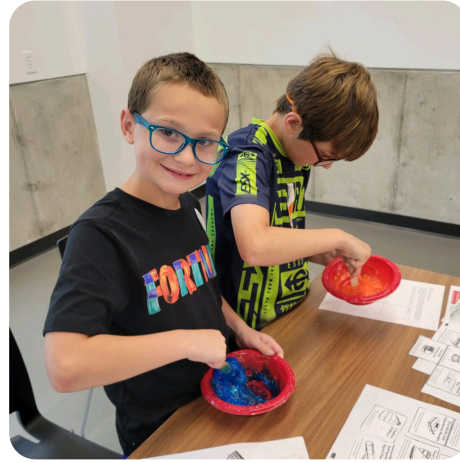




# Summer Programs



Nature Camp



Astro Camp



Ready, Set, Cook

In partnership with Iowa State University Extension, Webster County Conservation was able to get its first Intern in almost 20 years for the summer of 2024. Hannah Maschino of Badger started in May, having a strong background in 4-H. She had just finished her first year at the University of Iowa, and a fun summer was planned as she came with a new perspective and fresh ideas.

Thanks to this partnership, we were able to boost participant numbers for camps and programs throughout the summer. Our most popular, Astro Camp, which was held at the new Matt Cosgrove River's Edge Discovery Center in early July, included 40 participants in two 3-hour sessions. The campers were engaged in various hands-on activities, including a crash-landing lesson, making galaxy slime, playing an asteroid game, making mission patches, and learning about space through virtual reality Merge Cubes. Other camps and programs this summer included Nature Link Day Camps, a Ready, Set, Cook! Camp, and our first ever Mud Day! We also provided programming for many local groups and agencies.

We are excited for Hannah as she pursues her degree in Criminology on the pre-law track. We will miss her here at Webster County Conservation as she was a great asset this summer. Hopefully we can convince her to come back and help next year!



Ready, Set, Cook



Nature Camp



Astro Camp



# NEW FACES OF WEBSTER COUNTY

## HANNAH MASCHINO



Hello! I'm Hannah Maschino and I hold a shared Summer Educator position with Webster County Conservation and Iowa State University Extension. I graduated from Humboldt High School in 2023 and just finished my first year at the University of Iowa, where I am studying Criminology on the pre-law track! I live in the country between Badger and Humboldt, so I love being outside and look forward to helping with camps and programs this summer, and of course, seeing the new River's Edge Discovery Center come together! I couldn't be more grateful for this internship opportunity.

Hello! My name is Lindsay Kavanaugh and I am the new Administrative Assistant for Webster County Conservation. I began at the end of May and thank everyone for being so welcoming. I am excited to be a part of this incredible team and all Webster County Conservation has to offer. I have a Bachelor of Science Degree in Health Promotion/Wellness from the University of Northern Iowa. I enjoy spending time with my husband and two children, being outdoors, and attending my children's sporting events and activities. Stop in to say "hi" anytime at the Matt Cosgrove River's Edge Discovery Center!

## LINDSAY KAVANAUGH





**NOT SURE WHAT TO DO AND  
LOOKING TO GET OUTSIDE?  
JOIN US FOR AN ACTIVITY AT  
ONE OF OUR PARKS!**



**VIEW ALL OF THE  
CURRENT EVENTS  
HERE!**



**SIMPLY SCAN THE CODE TO GET STRAIGHT TO  
OUR EVENTS PAGE ON MYCOUNTYPARKS.COM**





# Upcoming Public Programs & Events

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
August 7	9 am	Play & Learn	River's Edge Discovery Center
August 8	9:30 am	Kids: Artists by Nature	Children's Forest
August 10	9 am	Kids Trap Clinic	Iowa Central Trap Range
August 14	9 am	Play & Learn	Camp Wa No Ki
August 20	10 am	Tuesday at Ten Hike	TBD
August 22	6 pm	Fireside Chat- Geocaching	Camp Wa No Ki
September (TBD)	6 pm	Nature Trivia	River Hops Brewery
September 17	10 am	Tuesday at Ten Hike	TBD
September 26	6 pm	Fireside Chat- Flint Knapping	Camp Wa No Ki
October (TBD)	5:30-8:30 pm	Wild Game Feed Fundraiser	River's Edge Discovery Center
October 12	4-6 pm	Trick or Treat	Kennedy Campgrounds
October 15	10 am	Tuesday at Ten Hike	TBD
October 19	8 am	Youth Pheasant Hunt	TBD
October 24	6 pm	Fireside Chat- Luminary Night Hike	Camp Wa No Ki
November (TBD)	6-8 pm	Friends Annual Meeting	TBD
November 7	6:30 pm	Nature Craft	Soldier Creek Winery
November 19	10 am	Tuesday at Ten Hike	TBD

Follow us on Facebook for any additional pop-up programming.



***For a complete listing of Webster County Conservation events and for more information, including registration, please visit [www.mycountyparks.com/County/Webster.aspx](http://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Webster.aspx)***



**For the most up to date information,  
LIKE us on Facebook:  
Webster County Conservation**





Working together to make Webster County a great place to play, live, and work!

**Get Involved & Get Outside!**

# FRIENDS OF WEBSTER COUNTY CONSERVATION



The Friends of Webster County Conservation is a non-profit organization of people who are concerned with preserving our natural areas and providing opportunities for people to interact and learn about our natural environment.

Pledge your support today for high quality environmental education, healthy living, expanded open space, restored natural areas and greater outdoor recreation opportunities in Webster County.

**BE A FRIEND**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Levels (please check)

- Family (\$25)
- Business (\$100)  
\*Additional gift
- I would like to volunteer  
\*The Friends of Webster County Conservation is a 501c3 organization. Your donation may be considered tax deductible



On-line Volunteer Form



**CONTACT US**

On-line Friends Form

515-576-4258 📞  
 conservation@webstercountyia.org ✉️  
 mycountyparks.com 📍  
 Friends of Webster County Conservation 📍  
 1415 Nelson Ave Fort Dodge IA 50501



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Fort Dodge, IA 50501

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conservation@webstercountyia.org

www.mycountyparks.com/Webster.aspx

# WEBSTER COUNTY CONSERVATION

## STAFF

Matt Cosgrove	Director
Cody Peterson	Operations Supervisor
Darren Herzog	Park Ranger
Joe Sherbon	Park Ranger
Karen Hansen	Environmental Education Coordinator
Erin Ford	Naturalist
Andy Stanberg	IRVM/Vegetation Specialist
Tasha West	Trail Tech II
Adam Moeding	Natural Resources/Park Tech
Brody Bertram	Trail/Park Tech
Lindsay Kavanaugh	Administrative Assistant



## BOARD MEMBERS

Jerry Beck	Fort Dodge
Geri Winge	Fort Dodge
Nick Carlson	Fort Dodge
KC Coleman	Fort Dodge
Beth Collins	Fort Dodge

The Webster County Conservation Board meets monthly on the second Tuesday of each month.

The meetings are held at the River's Edge Discovery Center at 5:30 p.m.

All meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome.

The Webster County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age, or disability. If anyone believes he/she has been subject to such discrimination, he/she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Webster County Conservation Board, Webster County Human Resources or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.