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**PCC Works with the
2018 King Dreamers**



Polk County Conservation (PCC), with support from United Way of Central Iowa, has been working with “I Have A Dream” (IHAD) students in a program called Active Dreamers. The Des Moines IHAD Foundation was founded in 1990 as a nonprofit organization. IHAD identifies and “adopts” groups of low-income elementary school children deemed to be at high risk of becoming school dropouts. IHAD has a comprehensive program of tutoring, mentoring and enrichment for those students and provides comprehensive long-term program support for every child from elementary school through high school. The ultimate goal is for each “Dreamer” to graduate from high school prepared to pursue a higher education or a fulfilling career. Since its inception, “I Have A Dream” has grown to three Dreamer classes serving over 150 students and their families.

In November of 2006, the Des Moines “I Have A Dream” program adopted all of the first grade students attending Martin Luther King Elementary. There are currently 45 active Dreamers in the project which IHAD will be working with for 12+ years to achieve their dreams! This



Attend GOF's Friends Celebration on September 16

The Great Outdoors Fund would like to invite you to a Friends Celebration on Friday, September 16th, at the Jester Park Lodge. This celebration recognizes the many people who have contributed to the Fund and the many projects that have benefitted the citizens, land, and wildlife of Greater Des Moines.

The Lodge will open by 5:00 p.m. for our guests to mingle, enjoy fine catering by Christiani's, taste some seasonal wine and beer samples, and play some light-hearted games on the deck as you marvel at the beautiful Saylorville Lake backdrop. Following a delicious catered dinner and recognition ceremony, an entertaining live auction (hosted by Jerry Kluver) and silent auction will take place.

Tickets for this event are \$50 per person and \$400 for a table of 8. Pre-registration is required and seating is limited.

To get tickets, go to www.greatoutdoorsfund.org or call 515-323-5300.

Change in Park Rules for Beaver Creek Greenbelt

The Beaver Creek Greenbelt was established in 1998 to provide protection for a large rookery of great blue herons. A few years later, the nesting colony was destroyed by a strong storm and the site was abandoned due to a lack of suitable large trees. The colony has dispersed to other sites up and down stream.

The rules established at the time of acquisition prohibited entry during nesting season to protect the herons. Because the herons no longer nest there, the Conservation board voted in June to allow public access to the area on a year round basis as long as the herons do not return.



Thomas Mitchell Park Updates

The pond improvement contract was awarded to Elder Corporation. They began clearing and grubbing an area on the south side of the park (known as the Taylor property) during the middle of July. After the vegetation is removed they will start building a structure to hold the material dredged from the pond. Approximately 30,000 cubic yards of material will be removed from the pond. All work related to this project should be completed by December 30, 2011. During 2012, the pond will begin filling back up and stocked with fish.



Dreamer students learn how to canoe at Chichaqua.

Dreamers Continued from page 1...

class is named the 2018 King Dreamers as that is the year they will graduate from high school and pursue higher education.

PCC got involved with the Active Dreamers program to help introduce them to new and diverse outdoor recreational activities, and highlight the importance of staying active while having fun and learning about nature. We met with students after school and introduced them to geocaching in familiar surroundings, the King school grounds. During the next week students explored Greenwood Park trails and woodlands. The summer has been filled with wilder adventures exploring county parks. Dreamers have enjoyed catching bluegills on homemade willow cane poles at Easter Lake Park; catching 128 bullfrog tadpoles at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt (yes they actually counted them all); playing and running through Blazing Star Prairie at Jester Park; and getting wet in Camp Creek at Thomas Mitchell Park. Each day, students left tired, dirty, and had big smiles on their faces.

Working with the Dreamers has not only been rewarding for the students but for PCC staff as well. We have had a lot of fun watching the students gain confidence and appreciation for the natural world.



Printed on recycled paper

Mally's Park Improvements Take Shape



Conservation crews have been busy this past summer making improvements to Mally's Park in Berwick. Completed improvements include a wider road and parking area, new vault toilet, new open air steel shelter with grills and picnic tables, and a new entrance sign. A drinking fountain will be installed this fall. As future funding becomes available, we hope to install a play area and trailhead amenities that will enhance this proposed major trail intersection.

Fort Des Moines Park Master Plan Underway

Polk County Conservation is continuing master planning efforts for many of our major parks with Fort Des Moines Park being the next one slated for completion in 2011. Public feedback was gathered this past summer through an online survey, public meetings, and interactive park signage opportunities. Staff and consultants will work through the fall to develop a draft plan that will be presented to interested members of the public and the Conservation Board. Final comments and considerations will be integrated into the final plan that will be approved by the Polk County Conservation Board this winter.

Fort Des Moines Park is located on SE 5th Street, south of Army Post Road. This 117-acre park features a 14-acre lake, two picnic shelters, a playground, nature trails, and an arboretum.

If you are interested in participating in the Fort Des Moines Park planning process, please contact Kami Rankin at 515-323-5363 or kami.rankin@polkcountyiowa.gov.

New Park Ranger on Staff



This spring Polk County Conservation Board hired Chris Clingan as an Assistant Park Ranger. Chris obtained an Associates degree at Kirkwood Community College and later a Bachelor's degree at Upper Iowa University. While working for a variety of conservation organizations (public and non-profit), he was integrally involved with prairie reconstruction, habitat restoration, controlled fire burns, osprey reintroduction, bison reintroduction, white tail deer monitoring, writing management plans and presenting environmental education programs. He also has previous experience as a water patrol officer, game warden, park ranger and was part of an illegal dumping task force. Chris says "My wife and I were excited for the opportunity to return to central Iowa and I'm thrilled to continue to work in the field that I'm passionate about." Welcome aboard Chris!

Polk County Conservation

Board Members:

Jim Cataldo, Des Moines
Tom Levis, West Des Moines
Michelle McEnany, Urbandale
Tina Mowry-Hadden, Altoona
Mike Smith, Des Moines



Baby Bison and Elk Born this Summer at Jester Park

Two babies were born this summer at Jester Park. A baby bison was born in mid-April and a baby elk was born around July 1st. Both babies and their mothers are doing well. Take a few minutes this fall to come see our newest offspring and the enhancement renovations that are taking place to the elk and bison exhibit. Just be sure to respect construction zones and stay back from the animal exhibit fence when viewing the elk and bison.

New Shelter at Yellow Banks Park



The construction of a new shelter was completed this spring at Yellow Banks Park. This shelter will be known as #4 and is an open-air shelter nestled between two of the most beautiful baseball diamonds in the area. This is currently the only shelter at Yellow Banks that offers electricity and lights. It is located across from a prairie and has a

four-acre mowed field adjacent to it. There is an accessible restroom and playground within walking distance. This shelter can be reserved on-line at mycountyparks.com. It can only be reserved after the second weekend in July due to its proximity to the little league ballfields.

Trails Updates

The High Trestle Trail between Ankeny and Woodward is getting a lot of traffic with more than 3,000 visitors a week. A trail surface failure that appeared in June was quickly repaired and the surface is passable. A quick report by a trail user who noticed the failure was greatly appreciated.

During the summer of 2010, flooding occurred on the Skunk River causing major damage to the Chichaqua Valley Trail. The trail is currently closed until repairs can be made. We are waiting for approval from FEMA to provide the necessary costs of trail repair. Most likely trail repair will happen next year and will reopen in late summer or fall of 2012.

The Neal Smith to Ankeny trail section is nearly complete. This trail provides an important link between the newly reconstructed Neal Smith Trail and the Ankeny trail system. The paving is complete with only a few touch up items to be completed.

If trail users are out at night, we ask that you remember to wear reflective clothing and carry a light so bikers and other night time trail users are aware of your presence.

Heidi Anderson, Editor and Naturalist

The Nature News is a free publication produced three times a year. If you are not currently on the mailing list and wish to have a copy sent directly to your home or business, call the Polk County Conservation Office, Monday-Friday between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 515-323-5300 or email pccb_info@polkcountyiowa.gov.

Each year Polk County naturalists select a variety of programs we feel the public will enjoy. Our programs have been designed with you in mind, so they are both educational and fun.

- Program and event information is available by visiting www.leadingyououtdoors.org or by calling our administrative office at 515-323-5300, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Fees and registration are not required unless otherwise noted.
- Many programs are family-oriented and are designed so all ages can participate.
- Outdoor programs will be canceled if there is lightning or other extreme weather conditions such as wind, cold, or rain.
- Programs are developed for beginners. No prior experience is required unless noted.
- Youth and adult groups such as church, scouts, and 4-H are always welcome.
- No refunds will be given after the registration deadline.

Monarch Tagging

September 6, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

**Jester Park Lodge
&**

September 10, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Jester Park Playscape

What lives only eight months, migrates over 2,000 miles, and spends the winter in Mexico? It's the monarch butterfly. Learn about their amazing life cycle and how and why monarchs are tagged. The September 10th class will spend part of the morning catching and tagging live monarchs. *All ages welcome.*

Wild Night Life & Hike

September 9, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Jester Park, Camp Area 5

Join Polk County Conservation naturalists for an evening of outdoor fun. We'll discuss some creatures of the night followed by a hike through the woods. *All ages welcome.*

A-mazing Prairie Festival

September 11, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt

Gather the entire family and challenge yourself to a giant tallgrass prairie maze. You don't have to have a corn field to build a maze. Iowa's native tallgrass prairie is the perfect medium to create a large scale puzzle for you to solve. A walk through this maze will not only challenge your navigation and problem-solving skills, but will educate you about our natural heritage as well. A "kiddie" maze will be available for young adventurers. Free canoe floats, dog training demos, a raptor

release, kids crafts, live music, guided hayrack tours and many other family activities will happen throughout the day. Food from The Master Griller will be available for purchase. So, join us for a day of free fun and celebration at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt. *All ages welcome.*

Catfishing Basics

September 22, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Yellow Banks Park, meet at boat ramp

Have you always wanted to catch a flat head or channel cat? In this hands-on class you'll learn about catfish biology, what and when they eat, where to find them, and more. After the program, we'll go out on a sand bar and fish for catfish. Bait, hooks, and sinkers will be provided. Bring a fishing pole if you have one, bug spray, chair or bucket to sit on, and flashlight or lantern. Participants 16 years and older must have a valid fishing license. *All ages welcome. Registration deadline is September 15. Fee: \$5.*

Stargazing

September 23, 8:00 - 9:30 p.m.

Yellow Banks Park, Shelter #1

Turn your eyes to the sky to view the autumn constellations. Local astronomers will provide telescopes. *All ages welcome.*

Iowa Outdoor Expo

September 24 - 25

Des Moines Izaak Walton League

Visit www.desmoinesikes.com for more information.

To register for a program, go to www.mycountyparks.com

Youth Waterfowl Fun Field Day

October 1, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Registration starting at 12:30 p.m.

Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt, Longhouse

Come learn the basics of waterfowl hunting while having lots of fun. Sessions will include dog training, calling, decoy setup, waterfowl identification, gun and blind safety, rules and regulations, and waterfowl ecology. Youth will also shoot clay “ducks” on our trap range. Door prizes and snacks provided. Partners of this event include: Ducks Unlimited, Iowa DNR, and Mid Iowa Retrievers. Pre-registration encouraged. *Fee: \$5. Ages 6-18 (youth must be accompanied by an adult).*

Spooky Spiders

October 4, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Jester Park Lodge

What has eight eyes, fangs, and spins silk? Spiders, of course! Discuss the fears and myths about these eight legged animals. *All ages welcome.*

Youth Waterfowl Hunt

October 9, 5:15 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt

Would your child like to experience the thrill of waterfowl hunting? This mentored hunt in a controlled waterfowl hunting area at Chichaqua can provide this opportunity. Start the morning with a “hunter’s breakfast” in the Longhouse. Youth will be placed in groups of two and teamed with an experienced waterfowl hunter and a conservation officer to serve as mentors. Mentors will provide the dogs, decoys, calling skills and guidance. Youth need to provide their own gun, ammunition, and waders (PCC will provide if youth do not have them.) *Registration deadline is October 2. Fee: \$10. This hunt is for youth ages 12-15 only. Youth must have completed hunter education class and attended a field day.*

Wild Night Life & Hike

October 14, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Brown’s Woods, meet in parking lot

Join Polk County Conservation naturalists for an evening of outdoor fun. We’ll discuss some creatures of the night followed by a hike through the woods. *All ages welcome.*

Fall Colors Hike

October 15, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Thomas Mitchell Park, meet at pond parking lot

&

1:00 - 2:00 p.m.,

Easter Lake Park, Shelter #3

Come enjoy the season! A naturalist will lead a nature hike through the woods and explain the brilliance of fall colors. *All ages welcome.*

Do More Outdoors Event

October 16, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #2

Looking for some fun this fall? Come play outside! Learn how to kayak (must be 12 or older) and geocache. Enjoy a woodland hike, discover pond life, join in on some family friendly games, or learn how to stay safe in the outdoors. To learn more go to www.domoreoutdoorsiowa.com. Co-sponsored by Iowa Health - Des Moines. *All ages welcome.*

Going Batty

October 27, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

West Des Moines Library, 4000 Mills Civic Parkway

Are they blind? Do they really suck blood and turn into vampires? Come learn the truth about this “grossly” misunderstood animal. Learn how to deal with them when they become an unwanted houseguest and find out what you can do to help protect this beneficial species. *All ages welcome.*

Mission Statement

Polk County Conservation Board’s mission is to provide the citizens of Polk County with quality outdoor recreation, conservation education, and long-term protection of Polk County’s natural heritage.

Walk for Wildlife

October 29, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt

Enjoy a family walk through the park or extend your trip with a 5 or 10-kilometer Volkssport walk. There will be a Halloween costume contest, “Minute to Win it” games, and food. Girl Scouts of America are also invited to take part in the day. Walkers can start anytime between 8:00 and 11:00 a.m. Co-sponsored by the Greater Des Moines Volkssport Association. *All ages welcome. \$2 registration fee payable at the event. Past Walk for Wildlife t-shirts will be for sale. Pets on a 6-foot leash are welcome.*

Owls of Iowa

November 1, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Jester Park Lodge

Come learn to identify several Iowa species of owls by their appearance and distinctive calls. We will discuss how adaptations enable them to be good nocturnal predators. A live owl will be part of the program. *All ages welcome.*



Woodworking for Wildlife

November 19, 10:00 a.m. - Noon
Jester Park Shop

Everything needs a home, even wildlife. Come lend a hand as we build a variety of homes for birds and bats. This is a “make and take” program. Materials, tools and instruction will be provided. *Fee: \$15. Minimum age 12, accompanied by adult. Registration required; deadline is November 11.*

Tricky Tracks

November 19, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Jester Park Equestrian Center

Do you know what common animals live in your neighborhood? Come learn how to identify mammals by their tracks. Make tracks, play games, and feel furs during this hands-on program. *All ages welcome.*

Geocaching 101

November 19, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.
Jester Park Equestrian Center

Never heard of geocaching or always wanted to give it a try? Geocaching is a high tech scavenger

hunt using a GPS. Come learn the basics and try finding several geocaches hidden just for you in Jester Park. *Pre-registration is required; deadline is November 14. Minimum age 8. Fee: \$5.*

Decorate a Tree for Wildlife

December 6, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Jester Park Lodge

Share the holiday season by making outdoor decorations for wildlife to enjoy. *Pre-registration required; deadline is December 2. All ages welcome. Fee: \$5.*

Cross-Country Ski Basics

December 28, 10:00 a.m. – Noon & 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Chichaqua Longhouse

Learn the basics of cross-country skiing and practice your skills on beautiful woodland trails. Proper clothing, equipment, and skiing techniques will be discussed before we practice our new skills on the trails. Class will be canceled without snow. *Sign up for the 10:00 or 12:30 class. Pre-registration required; deadline is December 26. Minimum age 10. Fee: \$10 (includes skis, boots, and poles.) Smallest boot size available is men’s 4 1/2 and women’s 6.*

Night Hike

December 28, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Jester Park, Camp Area #5

Bundle up the family and join a Polk County Conservation naturalist for an evening of outdoor fun. A campfire talk will feature some creatures of the night followed by a hike through the woods. *All ages welcome.*

Snowshoe Hike

December 29, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
Thomas Mitchell Park, meet near the pond & 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
Easter Lake Park, Shelter #3

Learn how easy and fun snowshoeing can be while experiencing the great outdoors. Wear warm boots. Class will be canceled without snow. *Pre-registration required; deadline is December 27. Minimum age 8. Fee: \$5 (includes snowshoes).*

Rock Me

December 30, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

West Des Moines Library,
4000 Mills Civic Parkway

Come learn the “hard” basic facts about Iowa’s rocks and minerals and fossils. We’ll also discuss how sedimentary, metamorphic, and igneous rocks are formed. We’ll even learn how rocks “talk” to us. Then join us at 1:00 as we rock on, exploring how these rocks tell us the story of Iowa. *All ages welcome.*



Rock On

December 30, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

West Des Moines Library,
4000 Mills Civic Parkway

Come discover how rocks tell us the geological history of our state, how it was formed and why it looks the way it does today. We’ll be revealing some of Iowa’s oldest and best kept secrets. *All ages welcome.*

To register for a program, go to
www.mycountyparks.com

Cross-Country Ski & Snowshoe Rental

The first snow will be here before we know it. If you’d like to try cross-country skiing or snowshoeing consider renting a pair from us. Equipment can be reserved in advance by calling (515) 323-5300.

Cross-country skis: \$8/day

Snowshoes: \$7/day



Park Packs

Nature-Themed Backpacks
Free two-week checkout

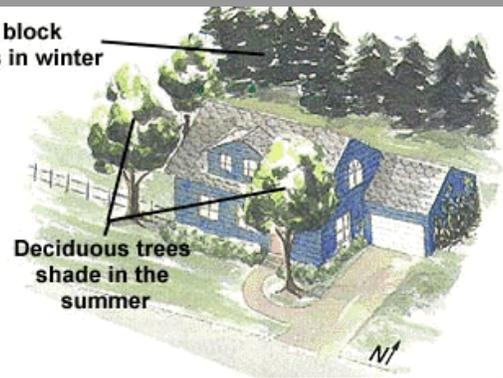
These backpacks come with a field guide and a variety of activities and fun facts to assist in the discovery of a specific nature topic. Themes include: Birds, Trees, Insects, Animals of Iowa, Geology, Life in a Pond, Wildflowers & Plants, Animals of the Night, and Outdoor Skills. *For more information, contact Lori at (515) 323-5380 or email: lori.foresman-kirpes@polkcountyiowa.gov.*

Going Green

Quick, cheap and easy ways to conserve and save

Evergreens block
north winds in winter

Deciduous trees
shade in the
summer



Plant a tree this fall and save! Trees provide numerous benefits to us and our homes. They are aesthetically pleasing, increase our property values, and can reduce energy costs when strategically placed around buildings.

Fall is a perfect time to plant trees due to favorable soil and moisture conditions. Early fall is recommended for conifers, and deciduous trees can be planted up until the ground freezes. Remember to continue watering late into the fall season until the ground freezes.

To shade your home from the sun, plant deciduous trees so they will shade east-facing walls and windows in the morning and west-facing surfaces in late afternoon during June, July, and August. This usually means trees won’t be planted farther south than the southern wall of your house. Trees with mature heights of at least 25 feet should be planted at least 10 to 20 feet east and west of the house. Plant smaller deciduous or evergreen trees with lower limbs northwest and northeast of the building to provide late afternoon and early morning shade.

To protect your home from cold winter winds, Junipers, spruces, firs, Douglas-fir, pines and evergreen shrubs are good choices. These trees should be planted upwind of the area to be protected. This will often mean planting on the west, northwest, and north sides of a building.

Before any planting is done it is wise to consult with your local specialist to ensure you plant the “right” tree on the “right” site.

Mystery River Kayak Trip

September 2, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Which way we'll flow, we just don't know, but we'll definitely float. The river will remain secret until the morning of the trip. Naturalists will guide participants down the river. Bring food and drink. Prior kayak experience is required.

Fee: \$35; includes transportation and kayaks. Departure from Jester Park. Minimum age 16. Registration deadline is August 26.



City of Energy Bus Tour Shenandoah, Iowa

September 28, 7:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Our day begins with a cutting edge tour of the renewable fuels revolution at the Green Plains Renewable Plant. We will then tour the Shenandoah museum highlighting history of the Everly Brothers and Earl May. Following lunch, there will be time to stroll downtown Shenandoah. Our next stop is the KMA Radio Station home of the Kitchen Clatter Magazine. We will also view the beautiful botanical garden. The final stop of the day will be sampling wine at the Wabash Wine Company.

Fee: \$55; includes transportation, tour fees and meals. Departure from Living History Farms parking lot off of Hickman Road, Urbandale. Registration deadline is September 14.

Mystery River Kayak Trip

October 8, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Which way we'll flow, we just don't know, but we'll definitely float. The river will remain secret until the morning of the trip. Naturalists will guide participants down the river. Bring food and drink. Prior kayak experience is required.

Fee: \$35; includes transportation and kayaks. Departure from Jester Park. Minimum age 16. Registration deadline is October 3.



Picket Fences to High Trestle Trail Bridge Fall Tour

October 11, 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Explore the diversity of culture and eco-tourism in Central Iowa. Enjoy the view of the High Trestle Trail Bridge via a horse drawn wagon ride. This bridge is one of the tallest and longest pedestrian bridges in the world. Have lunch in a restored corncrib overlooking Iowa's farm fields compliments of Corncrib catering. Tour Jester Park, the bison/elk exhibit and the award winning Natural Playscape. Relax at the Snus Hill Winery and try a sampling of their wines. Experience the warm hospitality of local agri-tourism at the Picket Fence Creamery with a tour and sample their wonderful ice cream.

Fee: \$55; includes transportation, tour fees, and meals. Departure from Wal-Mart parking lot in Grimes. Registration deadline is September 27.



Ramsey Farm, Amish and Prairie Chickens Bus Tour

October 27, 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Step back into the past as we tour the Amish Store filled with quality, handmade goods. Experience a Conestoga wagon at Graceland College. Visit the unique Tilapia and Aquaponics farm in Leon. Search for the reintroduced prairie chickens in Kellerton Wildlife area. Our final destination will be a tour of the Ramsey Farm, a 180-acre restored historic working farm and village.

Fee: \$55; includes transportation, tour fees and meals. Departure from Living History Farms parking lot off of Hickman Road, Urbandale. Registration deadline is October 6.

**To register for a trip, go to
www.mycountyparks.com**

Once again, we want to extend many “Thanks” to our volunteers who have been busy this year throughout Polk County Conservation areas. Activities this spring and summer included our annual Brown’s Woods Clean-up, Earth Day Activities and several workdays planned with Aviva USA, Wells Fargo, Principal Financial and Nationwide Insurance. Eagle Scouts have been busy this year with candidates working on some really nice park improvements. Troop 888 from West Des Moines has three scouts committed to completing the first three of four phases of the new Jester Park Amphitheater.

Another scout is preparing to install the first of five remote campsites at Jester Park; while yet another is constructing an arbor over the bridge at the Natural Playscape. Each of these projects requires the Eagle Scout candidate to plan the project, solicit donations of labor, funds and/or materials to complete the projects.

General volunteer projects and activities included helping with pony rides, cleaning stalls, therapeutic riding program, park and shoreline clean-ups, invasive species removal, planting trees, cleaning out fire rings, playground maintenance, pruning brush along trails and trail maintenance projects.



Beginning stages of the Jester Park Amphitheater

It’s time to get involved! Here are some volunteer opportunities:

Annual Des Moines River Run Garbage Grab

August 20, 9:00 a.m. (end times vary by location)

Volunteers can choose to clean up land based trails by foot or bike, or choose to clean up the Des Moines and Raccoon River Water Trails by power boat, canoe or kayak. New this year; volunteers may choose to help clean-up a section of the Raccoon River. Polk County Conservation locations: Sycamore Access, River Place, and Yellow Banks Park. Register at www.riverstewards.org.

Extra: All volunteers are invited to Sleepy Hollow Sports Complex at 6:00 p.m. for free dinner, music and door prizes! Make sure you get your wristband when checking in—it is your ticket for food.

A-Mazing Prairie Festival September 11, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt

Volunteers are needed to help at the information center, launch canoes, help children with crafts, direct visitors at the 14-acre maze or help organize hayrack rides.

Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Seed Harvest

**September 24, 10:00 a.m. - noon,
Sand Hill Prairie, meet at Sand Hill
Prairie parking lot off NE 118th Ave.**

Volunteers will be helping to collect prairie seeds from native plants such as: Rattlesnake Master, Gray-headed Cone Flower, Prairie Cinquefoil, Rose Hips, Wild Bergamont, Purple Prairie Clover, Tick Trefoil and Little Bluestem.

To volunteer for any of these events call Pat Spain at (515) 323-5280, or e-mail pat.spain@polkcountyiowa.gov.

For more information about volunteering, go to our website www.leadingyououtdoors.org and click on “How to Help”... then click on “Volunteer”.

To plan your next volunteer workday, service learning event or to find an opportunity for you or your group, please contact Pat Spain at (515) 323-5280, or pat.spain@polkcountyiowa.gov.

Nature Friends

Preschoolers Exploring Nature
3-5-year olds with an adult
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Join a naturalist in a nature adventure! We will explore a different nature topic each evening through stories, sharing time, guided exploration, and art activities. Snacks will be provided.
Fee: \$7 per program

Participate in a Park Passport Program. Attend five different programs, each located at a different park and receive a Nature Friend Explorer Pack. Participants must record program name, location and date with the speaker's initials on their passport. Turn the passport in at the Conservation Office at Jester Park or Raccoon River Nature Lodge to receive your Nature Friend Explorer Pack. One pack per child please.

Sept. 6 - Nature Forts & Homes at Brown's Woods

Sept. 19 - Spunky Spiders at Quail Cove Park

Oct. 4 - Leaves & Seeds at Easter Lake, #3

Oct. 17 - Unhuggables at Raccoon River Park Nature Lodge

Nov. 1 - Winter is Coming at Jester Park Lodge

Nov. 14 - Oh No, Snow! at Raccoon River Park Nature Lodge

To register for Nature Friends programs, call the West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Office at (515) 222-3444 or visit www.wdm-ia.com.

These programs are co-sponsored by the Des Moines Chapter of the Izaak Walton League and West Des Moines Parks and Recreation.



JP Equestrian Center Calendar

Fall Wagon and Trail Rides at Jester Park

Enjoy the fall colors on a trail ride or a horse-drawn wagon ride for your group or family.
Wagon Ride Cost: \$10 per person or \$50 minimum. Trail Ride: \$25 per person. Reservations are required.

Fall Group Riding Lessons Oct. 1, Oct. 8, Nov. 5, Nov. 12, Dec. 3

11:00 a.m. - Ages 8 to 10

1:00 p.m. - Ages 11 to 14

**Buy all 5 and get a 6th lesson free. Fee: \$30 per child. Call to register (space is limited).*

Fall Halloween Event

October 29, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Come walk through our Little Goblins Haunted Trail, take a pony ride in the indoor arena, or take a wagon ride on the trails. No reservations are needed. *Wagon and pony rides are \$5 each.*

Snowball Express to Santa

December 10 & 17, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Children ride a pony through a winter wonderland to get their picture taken with Santa, make a holiday photo frame, and enjoy hot chocolate and cookies. *Fee: \$20 per child. No reservations are necessary. Sleigh or wagon rides are available for an additional \$5 per person.*

Winter Horse Day Camp

December 28 or 29

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

During this one day camp activities include horse safety & care, grooming & saddling, basic riding skills (1 hour lesson included), crafts, movie time, and a horse drawn wagon or sleigh ride. *Fee: \$60. Call to register for either day, space is limited.*



Jester Park Equestrian Center
515-999-2818
www.jesterparkec.com



- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. High Trestle Trail | 10. Four Mile Creek Greenbelt |
| 2. Beaver Creek Greenbelt | 11. Gay Lea Wilson Trail |
| 3. Brown's Woods | 12. Great Western Trail |
| 4. Carney Marsh | 13. Jester Park |
| 5. Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt | 14. Mally's Weh Weh Neh Kee Park |
| 6. Chichaqua Valley Trail | 15. Sycamore Trail |
| 7. Easter Lake Park | 16. Thomas Mitchell Park |
| 8. Engeldinger Marsh | 17. Trestle to Trestle Trail |
| 9. Fort Des Moines Park | 18. Yellow Banks Park |

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity (*pre-registration required)</u>	<u>Location</u>
September 2	8:00 a.m.	Mystery River Kayak Trip*	Meet at Jester Park
September 6	11:00 a.m.	OWLS - Arctic Adventure	Jester Park Lodge
September 6	6:30 p.m.	Monarch Tagging	Jester Park Lodge
September 6	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Brown's Woods
September 9	7:30 p.m.	Night Hike	Jester Park
September 10	10:00 a.m.	Monarch Tagging	Jester Park
September 11	11:00 a.m.	A-mazing Prairie Festival	Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt
September 19	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Quail Cove Park, West Des Moines
September 22	6:00 p.m.	Catfishing Basics*	Yellow Banks Park
September 23	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing	Yellow Banks Park
September 24	10:00 a.m.	Chichaqua Seed Harvest	Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt
September 28	7:00 a.m.	City of Energy Bus Tour*	Shenandoah, Iowa
October 1	1:00 p.m.	Youth Waterfowl Fun Field Day*	Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt
October 4	11:00 a.m.	OWLS - Iowa Wildlife Center	Jester Park Lodge
October 4	6:30 p.m.	Spooky Spiders	Jester Park Lodge
October 4	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Easter Lake Park
October 8	8:00 a.m.	Mystery River Kayak Trip*	Meet at Jester Park
October 9	5:15 a.m.	Youth Waterfowl Hunt*	Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt
October 11	8:00 a.m.	Picket Fences Bus Tour*	Central Iowa
October 14	7:00 p.m.	Night Hike	Brown's Woods
October 15	10:00 a.m.	Fall Hike	Thomas Mitchell Park
October 15	1:00 p.m.	Fall Hike	Easter Lake Park
October 16	1:00 p.m.	Do More Outdoors Event	Fort Des Moines Park
October 17	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends	Raccoon River Park, West Des Moines
October 27	7:30 a.m.	Ramsey Farm Bus Tour*	Southern Iowa
October 27	6:00 p.m.	Going Batty	West Des Moines Public Library
October 29	8:00 a.m.	Walk for Wildlife	Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt
October 29	10:00 a.m.	Fall Halloween Event	Jester Park Equestrian Center
November 1	11:00 a.m.	OWLS - Gladys Black	Jester Park Lodge
November 1	6:30 p.m.	Owls of Iowa	Jester Park Lodge
November 1	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Jester Park Lodge
November 14	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Raccoon River Park, West Des Moines
November 19	10:00 a.m.	Woodworking for Wildlife*	Jester Park
November 19	10:30 a.m.	Tricky Tracks	Jester Park Equestrian Center
November 19	1:00 p.m.	Geocaching 101*	Jester Park Equestrian Center
December 6	11:00 a.m.	OWLS - Iowa's State Preserves	Jester Park Lodge
December 6	6:30 p.m.	Decorate a Tree for Wildlife*	Jester Park Lodge
December 10	10:00 a.m.	Snowball Express to Santa	Jester Park Equestrian Center
December 17	10:00 a.m.	Snowball Express to Santa	Jester Park Equestrian Center
December 28	10:00 a.m.	Winter Horse Camp*	Jester Park Equestrian Center
December 28	10:00 a.m.	Cross-Country Ski Basics*	Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt
December 28	12:30 p.m.	Cross-Country Ski Basics*	Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt
December 28	6:30 p.m.	Night Hike	Jester Park
December 29	10:00 a.m.	Winter Horse Camp*	Jester Park Equestrian Center
December 29	10:00 a.m.	Snowshoe Hike *	Thomas Mitchell Park
December 29	1:00 p.m.	Snowshoe Hike *	Easter Lake Park
December 30	10:00 a.m.	Rock Me	West Des Moines Library
December 30	1:00 p.m.	Rock On	West Des Moines Library

THE GREAT OUTDOORS FUND
WWW.GREATOUTDOORSFUND.ORG

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Pledge your support today for high quality, healthy living for Greater Polk County through expanded open space, restored landscapes, and greater recreation and outdoor education opportunities.

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- ◆ Be put on the mailing list to receive current GOF and PCC news and information
- ◆ Participate in special programs, tours & events designed exclusively for our Friends
 - ◆ Be invited to the annual 'Friend of the Great Outdoors' banquet
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Granger, IA 50109

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Looking for an excuse to get out of the house, make some new friends, enjoy a good meal and learn about the exciting world of nature? Then join us! These programs are held the first Tuesday of each month. The nature program will start at 11:00 a.m. at the Jester Park Lodge. An optional luncheon follows the program at noon in which pre-registration is required. The cost of the catered lunch is \$8.00 and pre-registration is required. To register for lunch go to www.mycountyparks.com.

Arctic Adventure
September 6

Come along as Karen and Wes Ritchie share their latest adventure to the Arctic. Their collection of photographs will make you feel as if you were there. *Luncheon registration deadline is September 2.*

Iowa Wildlife Center
October 4

Possom in your window well? Turtle hit by car? Oh, what to do, what to do? Call the Iowa Wildlife Center, of course! Find out how this new organization has already begun helping Iowans with wildlife-related issues, what decisions our staff, board and advisors face and how the proposed wildlife hospital and education facility near Ledges State Park will be ready to help you through our wildlife rehabilitation, public education and skills training programs. Discover a new way of helping Iowa's wildlife! *Luncheon registration deadline is September 30.*

Gladys Black:
The Legacy of Iowa's Bird Lady
November 1

The late Gladys Black of Pleasantville was widely known throughout Iowa as a conservationist, educator, and amateur expert on birds. Larry Stone and coauthor Jon Stravers have written a book about Gladys. Larry's slide program acknowledges this colorful woman's impact on so many Iowans. *Luncheon registration deadline is October 28.*

Iowa's State Preserves
December 6

State Preserves represent a wide diversity of special places, including geological, archaeological, historical and biological sites ranging from native prairies and Loess Hill landforms to Indian mounds and a 19th-century fort. John Pearson, an ecologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, who works closely with the State Preserves Advisory Board will highlight these special places. *Luncheon registration is December 2.*