

Jester Park Conservation Center

Platform for Discovery, Gateway to Wonder

Vision

As a Conservation Center, our focus is on citizen engagement with diverse natural systems through quality environmental education and outdoor recreation. This Center will serve as a discovery portal where people of all ages can actively and passively experience Iowa's natural heritage.



Youth will love the active hands-on discovery labs and live animal displays before they are guided outdoors to search for butterflies in the prairie, find out what lives in a wetland, hike through a woodland, or canoe on the pond.



Families will enjoy fun and educational interactive displays, activity areas, and public programming opportunities during convenient weekday and weekend hours.



Adults will gain knowledge of our park system, natural and cultural history by means of passive interpretive signage in the upper level gathering areas, observation outlooks, and public rental spaces.

Themes and Messages

The Jester Park Conservation Center will come alive through diverse and dynamic stories about our natural world and the role we play to sustain that world. Below are just a few examples of themes that will educate, inspire, excite, and “lead you outdoors”.



WATER

We all live in the watershed. Educating the public on local watersheds, water quality within those watersheds, and citizen engagement to improve water quality in their backyard benefits everyone. Messaging about water will educate visitors about migration corridors, flooding, the importance of wetlands, and key water quality indicators.



NATURAL SYSTEMS

Ecological diversity and understanding the relationship humans have with the environment is critical to sustain, enrich, and improve these natural systems. Messaging about natural systems will educate visitors about habitat diversity, wildlife, natural area management, climate change, and citizen engagement in protecting our natural resources.



SUSTAINABILITY

Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends on our natural environment. The Conservation Center will serve as a model for sustainable building practices and conservation design. Messages about sustainability will educate visitors about geothermal heating and cooling, LED and day lighting, rain gardens and barrels, local and renewable materials, and water conservation.



OUTDOOR RECREATION & HEALTH

Outdoor recreation promotes health, wellness, and quality of life for people of all ages. Enjoyment of the outdoors leads to a better appreciation of our natural world and land stewardship. Messages about outdoor recreation and health will educate, instruct, and present resources on how and where to kayak, geocache, camp, hike, fish, and bike...just to name a few.

The Process

Conservation staff is working with consultants and the public to develop high quality exhibits, displays, and programming for the Jester Park Conservation Center. Brainstorming sessions and nature center tours have led to a variety of innovative ideas that will create a dynamic destination area for visitors to enjoy and engage in for years to come. A portal of outdoor discovery for future generations.