



Nature News

POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION • 2013 NATURE PROGRAMS AND NEWS

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Older, Wiser,

Livelier Seniors

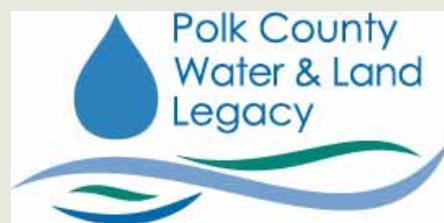
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Polk County Water and Land Legacy...Out of the Gate!

Polk County's Water and Land Legacy has become a reality. Thanks to the many volunteers across the county who gave countless hours to help all understand the many benefits of investing in our water, land, habitat, parks, and trails. Rarely does any effort receive the level of support we have all enjoyed for this initiative – 72%. The residents of Polk County have demonstrated unmatched commitment to natural resources in Iowa. Let us all be grateful!

It is now time to launch this effort – to put real projects on the ground. Polk County Conservation Board has put together an initial set of projects that have been approved by the Board of Supervisors and will be funded with bonds in 2013.



Some of those projects are outlined below and the rest can be found on our website. Funding for planning and design work, park, and trail improvements is higher during the initial years of the bond as a result of past planning efforts, identified partners, and available resources. Funding for these types of projects will decrease significantly after the initial years of the bond and give way to increased funding for land and water improvement and protection projects which require more



partners and greater planning. We are committed to fulfilling targeted expenditures for each funding area represented by Polk County Water and Land Legacy.

Water Quality Projects

Initial water quality projects will take place at Thomas Mitchell Park, Fort Des Moines Park, and the Four Mile Creek Greenbelt. Camp Creek stream bank armoring at Thomas Mitchell Park involves restoration work in approximately 14 areas. This project is designed to stabilize the stream bed and collapsing banks along Camp Creek as it flows through the park resulting in improved water quality.

Several silt basins will be constructed on each of the arms of Fort Des Moines pond to slow water flow and retain sediment before it enters the pond. Some portions of the eroded shoreline will be pulled back and rocked along the water's edge to prevent wave erosion.

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Out of the Gate continued...

The pond's water level will be lowered by the summer of 2013 so many of these improvements can begin which will impact recreational use at the pond.

A series of stream bank stabilization projects within the existing Four Mile Creek Greenbelt will reduce the erosion, improve water quality, and protect existing wildlife habitat and infrastructure within the Greenbelt.



Land and Habitat Projects

Sensitive natural areas exist in the Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt, Four Mile and Camp Creek corridors. Conservation staff will work with partners and landowners to acquire priority properties or easements to support restoring these areas to functional wetlands, prairies, and woodlands that will benefit wildlife, flood control, water quality and outdoor recreation.

Recently completed master plans for each park have identified potential areas for acquisition to provide buffer areas adjacent to the parks, protect natural areas, or to support planned park improvements. These additions are supportive of long range visions for each of our areas as usage increases and surrounding development continues to impact the overall quality of our areas.



Park Projects

Park master plans have been developed for our larger parks. Improvements within the plans have been prioritized and some initial projects to be completed include an outdoor classroom at Fort Des Moines Park; an accessible trail, cabins, and electric campground upgrades at Jester Park; nature trail expansion and trailhead improvements at Brown's Woods; a wildlife overlook and waterfowl hunting marsh improvements at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt; and an accessible trail and fishing piers at Thomas Mitchell Park.

These park improvements will provide more outdoor recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities which will improve the overall health of our community. They



will also support enhanced environmental education efforts through improved access and interpretive programming opportunities.

Trail Projects

Three significant trail projects will soon provide local and regional community connections and safe outdoor recreation trails that encourage healthy lifestyles. Constructing the last 2.5 mile segment of the Gay Lea Wilson Trail will complete the connection between Des Moines and Ankeny. The Gay Lea Wilson Trail is classified as a priority one (statewide significant) trail within the comprehensive multi-agency Central Iowa Trails Plan.

Another trail of regional importance is the Chichaqua Valley Trail Connector which will extend from the city limits of Bondurant west through Mally's Park to just south of I-80. This 7.5 mile connection will link Bondurant and Jasper County via the Chichaqua Valley Trail to Des Moines and Ankeny via the Gay Lea Wilson Trail.

A significant local trail will begin to take shape on the southeast side of Des Moines in Easter Lake Park. The 5 mile Easter Lake Trail will wrap around Easter Lake and connect through to the eastern portion of Ewing Park. This scenic trail will provide safe outdoor recreation benefits and serve as an important connection to downtown Des Moines and Carlisle in the future.

Key elements to successful project implementation are planning and design. Quality planning and design work results in more accurate timelines, budget projections, and better executed projects. A lot of planning and design work will take place in 2013. Public involvement has helped shape past planning efforts and master plan recommendations.

We look forward to involving our partner agencies and the public in future planning efforts. If you would like to receive periodic emails about upcoming meetings, project updates, and other information, please email Kami.Rankin@polkcountyiowa.gov and ask to become a Friend of Polk County Water and Land Legacy. We also encourage you to visit our website for regular updates.

EXPOSED: The Real Value of Public Land

In 2011 alone outdoor recreation at Iowa's parks, lakes, rivers, streams, and multi-use trails has resulted in at least **\$3 billion** of spending, which in turn supports approximately 31,000 jobs accounting for roughly **\$717 million** of income in the state.



Nearly **14 million people** annually visit Iowa's **71** state parks, spending about **\$786 million** in the state.

The overall impact is estimated to be **\$376.4 million** of value added and **\$216 million** of personal income.

County parks have approximately **24 million visitors** per year, who spend about **\$608.9 million**.

The overall impact is approximately **\$756.7 million** of spending, **\$291.6 million** of value added and **\$167.5 million** of personal income.



Water recreation on Iowa's rivers results in **\$520.4 million** of direct spending and provides **\$143 million** of personal income.

The state's **trails** grew in **2011** to include over **1,150 miles** of paved and packed cinder or gravel trails, which drew approximately **1.8 million** visitors who spent roughly **\$17.8 million**. The overall estimated impact is **\$8.6 million** of value added and **\$4.9 million** of personal income.

Soil erosion control improvement projects also impacted Iowa's economy. In **2011**, a total of **\$7.55 million** was spent on soil erosion control measures, such as watersheds, resulting in an **\$11.7 million** impact to the state. This provided **\$4.3 million** of personal income.

Iowa's **132 lakes** cover **324,000 acres** of surface area. **\$1.2 billion** was spent as a result of **12 million** visits to Iowa lakes in 2009.



Source: "Economic Value of Outdoor Recreation Activities in Iowa," Iowa State University Center for Agricultural and Rural Development

These statistics appeared in the Winter 2013 Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation newsletter and show us that the economic value of natural resources and outdoor recreation in Iowa is strong. The value of our public lands has a profound impact on Iowans' physical health and quality of life -- and on the economic well-being of communities, counties, and the state overall. Polk County Conservation is proud to offer more than 12,000 acres of quality public lands that are valued in so many ways.

Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Begins Master Planning in 2013

To date, five Polk County Conservation parks have undergone a master planning process to help shape future improvements and determine overall park direction. The next park in line to undergo planning efforts is Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt.

Although a management plan was developed in 2003, a complete master plan has not yet been developed for this 7,300+ acre wildlife area. Master planning will begin in 2013 and likely extend into 2014 due to the size and complexity of this large natural area. Public meetings will be held to gather feedback from neighbors and park users. If you would like to be notified of these meetings and become involved in the planning process, please contact Kami Rankin at 515-323-5363 or email kami.rankin@polkcountyia.gov.

Reptile Habitat Improvements

Polk County Conservation has been awarded a grant of \$2,500 from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for reptile habitat improvement at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt.

The first part of this project will be to thin native plant species to create more suitable habitat for the ornate box turtle. The second part of the project is the creation of two hibernacula to supply high quality wintering habitat for snakes. A hibernaculum is a shelter for overwintering animals like snakes and can range from natural structures like log or rock piles to man-made structures like foundations or well pits. The hibernacula will be placed on a steep slope and consist of a concrete pipe with limestone rip rap placed below the frost line with an entrance down slope providing access for snakes.



JP Amphitheater Available for Rental

The Jester Park Amphitheater was completed in 2012 and is now available for rental. This area can be reserved from 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. and 4:00-10:30 p.m. The rental fee is \$75 for daytime and \$75 for evening. However, from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend Saturday evening reservations are not available as the area is being used for environmental education programs and public events.

Tree Planting at Thomas Mitchell

PCC was awarded a donation of 1,215 trees from Living Lands & Waters to reforest an area west of Thomas Mitchell Pond. This area was previously cleared to allow for the installation of four sediment basins designed to improve water quality in Thomas Mitchell Pond. As a result of the clearing, PCC now has the opportunity to plant native trees in the site and has selected a wide variety of mast producing trees designed to provide a both shelter and food for numerous species. Planting date will be April 26, 9:00 a.m. – noon. Volunteers will be needed to help plant, mulch, water and install tree guards on all the trees.



Award Winning Newsletter

PCC's Nature News has received the 2012 Outstanding Print Media Award from the Iowa Association of Naturalists and Iowa Conservation Education Coalition. Nature News is distributed to over 15,000 people. Naturalist Heidi Anderson is the editor of the newsletter and accepted the award at the Iowa County Conservation Board Employee Winterfest Conference in January.



Connie Johnson is welcomed to the PCC Board

Connie Johnson was sworn into office on Wednesday, March 13th, as PCC's newest Board member. She was appointed by Polk County Board of Supervisor, Steve VanOort. Connie is a long time resident of Ankeny and has served on the Ankeny Parks Board for 9 years. She works at Marsh as a Business Analyst Manager. Connie is an avid trail user and supporter and serves on the Trails & Greenways Advisory Committee. Welcome Connie Johnson!

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.

May Day Hike

May 1 @ 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Easter Lake Park, Shelter #4

May Day celebrates the arrival of spring. Take a short hike looking for spring wildflowers then make a May Day basket to take home.

Nature Writing Workshop

May 7 @ 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Jester Park Lodge



Ever been inspired to write about nature? Learn about some contemporary nature writers and read some of their work before learning to play with writing through several simple strategies. Bring pencil and paper and be ready to exercise your creativity. Pre-registration required; deadline is April 30. Fee: \$5.

Kayak Basics

May 11 @ 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Thomas Mitchell Park, meet at pond parking lot

Learn the basics of recreational kayaking from a PCC naturalist. Participants will learn about types of kayaks, equipment, techniques, and have a chance to practice skills on the water. All equipment is provided. Pre-registration required; deadline is May 3. Minimum age 14. Fee: \$10.

Program Registration: www.leadingyououtdoors.org

Catch-n-Croakers

May 17 @ 8:00-9:30 p.m.

Chichaqua Longhouse

Learn to identify frogs by sight and sound before sloshing into the wetlands to catch these amazing creatures. Bring your own net and flashlight. Wear shoes that can get wet and muddy.

Pond Study

June 6 @ 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Jester Park, Shelter #5

Splish, splash! Come discover what creatures live in and around this beautiful pond. All sampling equipment will be provided.

Senior Fishing Derby

June 7 @ 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Easter Lake Park, Shelter #2

Senior Services of Polk County and PCC are hosting a fishing derby open to any person 60 and over. Fishing poles and bait will be provided but you are welcome to bring your own. Prizes will be awarded. A box lunch will be served to all registered participants. Registration deadline is May 31. To register, call 515-286-3536.

Wild Night Life & Hike

June 7 @ 8:30-10:30 p.m.

Jester Park, Camp Area 5

Join PCC naturalists for a campfire program about the wild night life in Jester Park. A short hike will follow as we search for some of these nocturnal animals. Afterward enjoy eating s'mores around the campfire. Pre-registration required; deadline is June 5. Fee: \$5.

Do More Outdoors

June 9 @ 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Easter Lake Park, Shelters #1 & #2

Looking for summer fun? Come learn how to canoe, fish and safely enjoy the summer sun. Educational programs will include intro to camping, water and boating safety, campfire building and safety, and healthy camping foods. Co-sponsored by Iowa Health Des Moines.

Kayak Basics

June 11 @ 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Jester Park, Shelter #5

See description for May 11 class. Pre-registration required; deadline is June 4. Minimum age 14. Fee: \$10.

Canoe Basics

June 27 @ 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Jester Park, Shelter #5

Participants will learn about types of canoes, equipment, techniques, and have a chance to practice skills on the water. All equipment is provided. Pre-registration required; deadline is June 20. Minimum age 12. Fee: \$5.

Creek Walk

June 27 @ 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Thomas Mitchell Park, Shelter #1

Take a walk and cool off as we explore and investigate life in an Iowa stream. Participants need to wear old clothes and shoes that are secure (no flip flops) and can get wet. Minimum age 5.

Birds of Iowa

July 2 @ 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Jester Park, Shelter #6

Come learn about some common and not so common Iowa birds. You'll have an opportunity to see a variety of bird mounts and learn about bird characteristics. Afterward we'll take a short walk to the bird blind to see what birds are at the feeders.

Insect Safari

July 11 @ 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #1

From ladybugs to butterflies, we'll explore the fascinating world of insects. The program will feature a large insect collection and an insect hunt. Nets will be provided.

Fishing Basics

July 18 @ 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Easter Lake Park, Shelter #1

Learn about the different kinds of fish in Iowa, fishing safety, and casting. Anyone over the age of 16 will need a 2013 Iowa fishing license. Bait and poles will be provided.

Geocaching 101

July 20 @ 10:00-11:30 a.m. & 12:30-2:00 p.m.

Easter Lake Park, Shelter #1

Never heard of geocaching or always wanted to give it a try? Geocaching is a high-tech scavenger hunt using GPS. Come learn the basics and try finding several geocaches hidden just for you at Easter Lake Park. Pre-registration required; deadline is July 15. Minimum age 8. Fee: \$5.



Pond Study

August 1 @ 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Thomas Mitchell Park, meet at pond parking lot

Splish, splash! Come discover what creatures live in and around this beautiful pond. All sampling equipment will be provided.

Reptiles

August 6 @ 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Jester Park Lodge

Come and learn about Iowa's reptiles. We'll discuss the fears and myths that surround these scaly creatures people love to hate.

Marsh Stomp

August 15 @ 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Engeldinger Marsh

Splish splash! Come discover what creatures live in and around a marsh. Wear shoes and clothes that can get wet and dirty. All sampling equipment will be provided.

Geocaching 101

August 24 @ 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Chichaqua Longhouse

See description for July 20th Geocaching 101. Pre-registration is required; deadline is August 16. Minimum age 8. Fee: \$5.

Monarch Butterflies

August 24 @ 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Chichaqua Longhouse

Learn about the amazing life cycle of the monarch butterfly. Afterward we'll go out into the prairie and try to catch some butterflies. Nets will be provided.

Princess Adventures

10:00-11:00 a.m.

Do you know a little girl who loves princesses? Want to encourage her to dress up AND have fun exploring the outdoors at the same time? Girls ages 4-6 are invited to the park in "princess attire" (whatever that means to them). We will learn about a courageous woman from the past, participate in a nature activity, followed by a tea party with a snack. **Fee: \$5/program.**

June 25 - All about Birds at *Jester Park, Shelter #6*

July 16 - Flowers and Fairies at *Easter Lake Park, Shelter #4*

August 6 - Butterflies at *Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #1*

Program Registration: www.leadingyououtdoors.org

Nature Playdates

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Explore, discover and play in your local parks with a Polk County Naturalist. Meet families interested in getting their children outdoors for natural play and discovery. Wear appropriate clothes and shoes. We may be hiking, discovering life in a log or playing in the creek. This is a morning of adventure and discovery with curiosity being the most important ingredient.

June 12 - Insect Hunt at *Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #2*

June 26 - Critter Camouflage at *Easter Lake Park, Shelter #4*

July 17 - Pond Study at *Jester Park, Shelter #5*

July 31 - Stream Walk at *Brown's Woods*

August 14 - Rock Hunt at *Jester Park, Shelter by the Lodge*

Nature's Story Hour

Noon-1:00 p.m.

Bring your picnic lunch, blanket and family for an hour of nature stories and activities with a PCC Naturalist. This family friendly program is free and all ages are welcome.

June 5 - Silly Salamander at *Easter Lake Park, Shelter #4*

June 19 - Giants of the Prairie at *Jester Park, Shelter #6*

July 10 - Animal Tracks at *Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #2*

July 24 - Feathered Friends at *Easter Lake Park, Shelter #4*

August 7 - Beautiful Butterflies at *Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #2*



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/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.

May 6 - Toadally Awesome

at *Meadow View Park, 642 Prairieview Dr., West Des Moines*

May 21 - Fossil Dig

at *Jester Park, Shelter #6*

June 3 - Fishing

at *Raccoon River Park Nature Lodge*

June 11 - Feathered Friends

at *Brown's Woods*

July 9 - Busy Bees

at *Peony Park, 1100 63rd St., West Des Moines*

July 15 - Insect Safari

at *Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #2*

August 5 - Busy Beavers

at *Raccoon River Park*

August 20 - Water Wonders

at *Easter Lake Park, Shelter #4*

To register for Nature Friends programs, call the West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Office at (515) 222-3444 or visit www.wdm.iowa.gov. These programs are co-sponsored by the Des Moines Chapter of the Izaak Walton League and West Des Moines Parks and Recreation.



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, Outdoor Skills, and Geocaching.

For more information, contact Lori at: (515) 323-5380 or email: lori.foresman-kirpes@polkcountyiowa.gov

Patriotic Salute Bus Trip

May 23 @ 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Marshalltown, Iowa



We'll pay a patriotic tribute to the newly renovated Veterans Home in Marshalltown. We will tour the beautifully landscaped grounds and facilities. We will then step into nature at the Grimes Farm, take a tour of the renovated 1940's Orpheum Theatre, tour the newly renovated Meskwaki Museum. Lunch will be at the 1902 Tremont on Main Street.

- Fee: \$50; includes motor coach transportation, lunch and tour fees.
- Depart from Prairie Meadows parking lot 1, Altoona.
- Registration deadline is May 9.

Upper Iowa River Parent/Child Canoeing Adventure

August 3-4

Bluffton, Iowa

Float past beautiful limestone bluffs as you and your child take a two day canoe trip down the scenic Upper Iowa River. We will depart Jester Park and head for Chimney Rock Campground, set up camp, and eat lunch before getting on the river. We will float about 3-4 hours, land at our campsite, have dinner, and share our adventures around the campfire with some tasty s'mores. The next day, we will break camp, eat breakfast, and float from our campsite about two hours down to Bluffton. Experienced and trained naturalists will insure a safe and enjoyable trip. Canoes, paddles, life jackets and most meals provided.

- Fee: \$75; includes transportation (15 passenger van), camping fees, paddling gear, and all food except for meals while traveling.
- Depart from Jester Park at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday and return late afternoon on Sunday.
- Participants need to provide tent, sleeping bag, personal items, and cash for meals while traveling.
- Minimum age is 12 and limited to 12 participants. Prior paddling experience is required and participants must be in good physical condition.
- Registration deadline is July 19.

The following trips are full:

Southern Missouri Paddle Trip - June 1-5

The Race is ON! - June 13

Discover Dubuque/Dyersville - July 16-17

Music on the Mississippi - August 28

Czechin' Out Cedar Rapids - September 18

For a full description of these trips, go to our website.



St. Croix River Kayak Adventure

August 22-25

St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin



Join us for a paddling adventure down the beautiful St Croix River, one of the last undisturbed tributaries remaining in the Upper Mississippi River watershed. We will depart Jester Park Thursday morning in route for Interstate Park near St Croix Falls, Wisconsin where we will camp two nights hiking and exploring the amazing landforms left behind from the last ice age. Friday and Saturday we will take on the river as we kayak on sparkling water through some of the most remote wilderness left in the Midwest. We will also visit the St. Croix River and Marshland Visitor Centers along the way. Saturday afternoon after we finish our second day on the river, we will depart for the Twin Cities and get a good night sleep at a local hotel before returning home around noon on Sunday. Kayaks, paddles and life jackets provided. Meals will be prepared for you by the campfire and along riverside while you relax and enjoy the scenery.

- Fee: \$250; includes transportation (15 passenger van), lodging (double occupancy), paddling gear, and all food except for meals while traveling.
- Depart from Jester Park at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday and return by 12 p.m. on Sunday.
- Participants need to provide tent, sleeping bag, personal items, and cash for meals while traveling.
- Minimum age is 21 and limited to 10 participants. Prior paddling experience is required and participants must be in good physical condition.
- Registration deadline is August 9.

Trip Cancellation Policy: If the trip reservation is cancelled before the registration deadline the individual will be issued a full refund. If the trip reservation is cancelled after the registration deadline, the individual will be refunded payment only if the assigned space is filled by another person. The refund shall be the amount of the trip less a \$10 cancellation fee. If assigned space is not filled, no refund will be given. The trip reservation fee may also be transferred to another trip prior to the registration deadline providing the trip is not full.

To register for a trip: www.leadingyououtdoors.org

Bridges of Madison County Bus Trip



October 10 @ 7:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.
Winterset, Iowa

Journey to the Bridges of Madison County and other unique venues. Our first stop will be at Howell's Dried Floral and Greenhouse. Explore the 1910 Gift Barn filled with beautiful fall floral arrangements or stroll through the farm exhibits. Visit John Wayne birthplace, enjoy lunch at Northside Café where Clint Eastwood ate, and enjoy free time to visit the unique shops in downtown Winterset. A step on guide will take us to the historic covered bridges of Madison County. Our last two stops will be the Pumpkin Patch and the Madison County Winery.

- Fee: \$55; includes motor coach transportation, lunch and tour fees.
- Departure from the Living History Farms parking lot in Urbandale.
- Registration deadline is September 25.



Polk County Conservation Board Members:

Jim Cataldo, *Des Moines*
Sara Kurovski, *Pleasant Hill*
Connie Johnson, *Ankeny*
Tom Levis, *West Des Moines*
Mike Smith, *Des Moines*

**Polk County
Conservation Director:**
Dennis Parker

Polk County Conservation has gone mobile!

The new mobile version of our website functions like an app to help users easily find information about parks, activities and events while on the go. This site will be accessed whenever you visit www.leadingyououtdoors.org on your iPhone, Smartphone, tablet or other mobile device. Scan this QR code to check it out now!



New Life Jacket Loaner Program

Thanks to Bass Pro Shop in Altoona for donating 15 life jackets to us for a new Life Jacket Loaner program that will be available at the Easter Lake Beach. Swimmers will be encouraged to borrow a life jacket if they didn't bring their own and return it when they are done swimming for the day. The beach will open Memorial Weekend.



Pictured are Park Rangers, Charlie Finch and James Dotzler, and Bass Pro Merchandise Manager Todd Godfrey

Polk County Conservation
11407 NW Jester Park Drive
Granger, Iowa 50109
515-323-5300
polk_info@polkcountyiowa.gov
www.leadingyououtdoors.org

Follow us on:



Paddle Camp 1

June 24 - 27

9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Ages: 12 years and up

Campers will learn the necessary skills and techniques to safely canoe and kayak. Students will then get the opportunity to apply their new skills during a daylong river trip led by naturalists trained by the American Canoe Association. This camp will be physically demanding and challenging in a safe and supervised environment.

- Fee: \$100
- Registration deadline is June 14
- Limited to 12 campers
- Meeting location: Jester Park, Shelter by Lodge



Kayaking

Paddle Camp 2

July 15 - 18

9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Ages: 12 years and up

Campers will apply the skills and techniques learned in Paddle Camp 1 to navigate down a variety of rivers. Four unique central Iowa rivers will be explored, each one becoming more technical and challenging. Each trip will be led by naturalists trained by the American Canoe Association. This camp will be physically demanding and challenging in a safe and supervised environment. Participants must complete Paddle Camp 1 to be eligible for this camp!

- Fee: \$100
- Registration deadline is July 5
- Limited to 12 campers
- Meeting location: Jester Park, Shelter by Lodge

Water Wonders and Jr. Naturalist Camps are full.

To register for a camp: www.leadingyououtdoors.org

Summer Skills

Ages: 10-16 years

Summer is about having fun and playing outside. Join PCC naturalists as they introduce your child to some fun outdoor activities which can be enjoyed the rest of their lives. Come to one or sign-up for an entire series. All equipment will be provided. Fee: \$10 for each session.

Series I

1:00-3:00 p.m. at Jester Park

June 11 - Kayaking @ Shelter #5

June 13 - Archery @ Shelter #6

June 18 - Geocaching @ Shelter #5

June 20 - Fishing @ Shelter #2

June 25 - Survival & Fire Building @ Shelter #5

June 27 - Canoeing @ Shelter #5

Series II

10:00 a.m.-Noon at Easter Lake Park

July 9 - Archery @ Shelter #3

July 11 - Shelter building @ Shelter #4

July 16 - Geocaching @ Shelter #1

July 18 - Fishing @ Shelter #1

July 23 - Canoeing @ Boat Ramp

July 25 - Kayaking @ Boat Ramp



Archery



Fire building

2012 Volunteers of the Year

On March 4th, Polk County Conservation hosted the annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet at the Jester Park Lodge honoring volunteers with 10 or more hours for the year. Joy Talmon; Volunteer Coordinator for the Animal Rescue League, was the special speaker. She was joined by artist Perry Ross from Studio 1724, who performed a live painting demonstration. Throughout the course of 2012, over 1,500 volunteers gave more than 14,500 hours of volunteer service to Polk County Conservation. Thank you volunteers!

Volunteer of the Year



Daryl Stout went above and beyond his job as a campground attendant at Jester Park. He volunteered his time by filling bird feeders at the Jester Park bird blind and then set-up bottle and can collections sites in the park. During the last three months of the camping season he redeemed over \$500 from the bottles and cans. The money helped purchase bird seed for the bird blinds at Jester Park and Chichaqua.

Eagle Scout Project of the Year



Thomas Garcia with Boy Scout Troop 93 built a shelter for one of the horse paddocks that did not have one at the Jester Park Equestrian Center. Thomas spent many hours planning and building the shelter for the paddock. He made sure the paddock would be safe and meet the needs for the horses to get in out of the weather. Thomas was able to fund almost 100% of the project with donations and a grant match.

Volunteer Team of the Year



Walter Rollman and Jim Tredway have volunteered at Chichaqua in numerous ways. They have both been involved with invasive species control, assisted with the 2012 sand hill crane count, and are the feeding station attendants at the new bird blind at Chichaqua.

Volunteer Business of the Year



Miller the Driller volunteered their time and equipment to clean out the sediment at the Yellow Banks Park boat ramp. They also spent many hours working on the baseball diamonds at Yellow Banks Park. Pictured is Brandon Young with PCC Park Ranger, Charlie Finch.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR:

- April 19 - Trash Bash in the Greater Des Moines Metro area (go to www.dmgov.org to register)
- April 20 - Beaver Creek/Sycamore Bike Trail Clean-up
- May 4 - Residential Tree Program tree pick up at Hoover State Office Building parking lot
- May 5 - Carney Marsh Invasive Species Removal
- June 3 - Camp Creek Clean-up at Thomas Mitchell Park

For more information or to volunteer, please contact: Pat Spain at (515) 323-5280 or pat.spain@polkcountyiowa.gov



1. Beaver Creek Greenbelt
2. Brown's Woods
3. Carney Marsh
4. Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt
5. Chichaqua Valley Trail
6. Easter Lake Park
7. Eagle Roost Wildlife Area
8. Engeldinger Marsh
9. Fort Des Moines Park
10. Four Mile Creek Greenbelt

11. Gay Lea Wilson Trail
12. Great Western Trail
13. High Trestle Trail
14. Jester Park
15. Mally's Weh Weh Neh Kee Park
16. Oralabor Gateway Trail
17. Sycamore Trail
18. Thomas Mitchell Park
19. Trestle to Trestle Trail
20. Yellow Banks Park

THE GREAT OUTDOORS FUND
WWW.GREATOUTDOORSFUND.ORG

Be a Friend of the Great Outdoors

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.

By becoming a friend, you will...

- ◆ Have your name published in the Great Outdoors Fund Annual Report
- ◆ 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 'Friends of the Great Outdoors' Banquet

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City, Zip _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Kids: ____ (\$25) White: ____ (\$1 to \$100) Bronze: ____ (\$101 - \$999)

Silver: ____ (\$1000 - \$2499) Gold : ____ (\$2500-\$4999) Platinum: ____ (\$5000+)

Great Outdoors Fund • PO Box 8071 • Des Moines IA 50301 • Phone 515.967.3895 • Fax 515.323.5354

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY (*pre-registration required)	LOCATION
May 1	6:00 p.m.	May Day Hike	Easter Lake Park
May 5	10:00 a.m.	Carney Marsh Invasive Species Removal	Carney Marsh
May 6	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Meadowview Park
May 7	11:00 a.m.	OWLS - Discover Iowa	Jester Park Lodge
May 7	6:30 p.m.	Nature Writing Workshop*	Jester Park Lodge
May 11	10:00 a.m.	Kayak Basics*	Thomas Mitchell Park
May 17	8:00 p.m.	Catch-n-Croakers	Chichaqua Longhouse
May 18	8:00 a.m.	Central Iowa River Kayak Trip*	Central Iowa
May 21	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Jester Park
May 23	7:30 a.m.	Patriotic Salute Bus Trip*	Marshalltown, Iowa
June 1-5	7:00 a.m.	Southern Missouri Paddle Adventure*	Salem, Missouri
June 3	TBA	Camp Creek Clean-Up	Thomas Mitchell Park
June 3	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Raccoon River Park
June 4	11:00 a.m.	OWLS - Musings of a Wildlife Photographer	Jester Park Lodge
June 5	12:00 p.m.	Nature's Story Hour	Easter Lake Park
June 6	6:30 p.m.	Pond Study	Jester Park
June 7	9:00 a.m.	Senior Fishing Derby	Easter Lake Park
June 7	8:30 p.m.	Wild Night Life & Hike*	Jester Park
June 9	1:00 p.m.	Do More Outdoors	Easter Lake Park
June 10-13	9:00 a.m.	Junior Naturalist Camp*	Jester Park
June 11	1:00 p.m.	Summer Skills - Kayaking	Jester Park
June 11	6:00 p.m.	Kayak Basics*	Jester Park
June 11	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Brown's Woods
June 12	10:30 a.m.	Nature Playdate	Fort Des Moines Park
June 13	7:30 a.m.	The Race is ON Bus Trip*	Newton, Iowa
June 13	1:00 p.m.	Summer Skills - Archery	Jester Park
June 17-20	9:00 a.m.	Water Wonders Camp*	Jester Park
June 18	1:00 p.m.	Summer Skills - Geocaching*	Jester Park
June 19	12:00 p.m.	Nature's Story Hour	Jester Park
June 20	1:00 p.m.	Summer Skills - Fishing	Jester Park
June 24-27	9:00 a.m.	Paddle Camp 1*	Jester Park
June 25	10:00 a.m.	Princess Adventures*	Jester Park
June 25	1:00 p.m.	Summer Skills - Survival & Fire Building*	Jester Park
June 26	10:30 a.m.	Nature Playdate	Easter Lake Park
June 27	1:00 p.m.	Summer Skills - Canoeing*	Jester Park
June 27	6:00 p.m.	Canoe Basics*	Jester Park
June 27	6:30 p.m.	Creek Walk	Thomas Mitchell Park
July 2	11:00 a.m.	OWLS - One Room Schoolhouses	Jester Park Lodge
July 2	2:00 p.m.	Birds of Iowa	Jester Park
July 8-11	9:00 a.m.	Discovery Camp*	Jester Park
July 9	10:00 a.m.	Summer Skills - Archery*	Easter Lake Park
July 9	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Peony Park
July 10	12:00 p.m.	Nature Story Hour	Fort Des Moines Park
July 11	10:00 a.m.	Summer Skills - Shelter Building*	Easter Lake Park
July 11	6:30 p.m.	Insect Safari	Fort Des Moines Park
July 15-18	9:00 a.m.	Paddle Camp 2*	Jester Park
July 15	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Fort Des Moines Park
July 16	6:30 a.m.	Discover Dubuque Bus Trip*	Dubuque, Iowa
July 16	10:00 a.m.	Princess Adventures*	Easter Lake Park
July 16	10:00 a.m.	Summer Skills - Geocaching*	Easter Lake Park
July 17	10:30 a.m.	Nature Playdate	Jester Park
July 18	10:00 a.m.	Summer Skills - Fishing	Easter Lake Park

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY (*pre-registration required)	LOCATION
July 18	6:30 p.m.	Fishing Basics	Easter Lake Park
July 20	10:00 a.m.	Geocaching 101*	Easter Lake Park
July 23	10:00 a.m.	Summer Skills - Canoeing	Easter Lake Park
July 24	12:00 p.m.	Nature's Story Hour	Easter Lake Park
July 25	10:00 a.m.	Summer Skills - Kayaking	Easter Lake Park
July 31	12:00 p.m.	Nature Playdate	Brown's Woods
August 1	6:30 p.m.	Pond Study	Thomas Mitchell Park
August 3-4	7:00 a.m.	Upper Iowa Paddle Trip	Kendallville, Iowa
August 5	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Raccoon River Park
August 6	10:00 a.m.	Princess Adventures*	Fort Des Moines Park
August 6	11:00 a.m.	OWLS - History of High Trestle Trail Bridge	Jester Park Lodge
August 6	2:00 p.m.	Reptiles	Jester Park Lodge
August 7	12:00 p.m.	Nature's Story Hour	Fort Des Moines Park
August 14	10:30 a.m.	Nature Playdate	Jester Park
August 15	6:30 p.m.	Marsh Stomp	Engeldinger Marsh
August 20	6:30 p.m.	Nature Friends*	Easter Lake Park
August 22-25	8:00 a.m.	Remote Wilderness Kayak Trip*	St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin
August 24	10:00 a.m.	Geocaching 101*	Chichauqua Longhouse
August 24	1:00 p.m.	Monarch Butterflies	Chichauqua Longhouse
August 28	7:00 a.m.	Music on the Mississippi Bus Trip	Moline, Illinois

JESTER PARK EQUESTRIAN CENTER CALENDAR:

Summer Riding Camps

- June 11 – 13 Beginning Western
- June 18 – 20 Beginning Western
- June 25 – 27 Intermediate Western
- July 16 – 18 Beginning Western
- July 23 – 25 Beginning Western
- July 30 – Aug 1 Intermediate Western
- Aug 6 – 8 Beginning Western

All camps are from 9:00 a.m. – noon

Equestrian camps are a wonderful way for a child to discover the world of horses. Beginning western camps cover an introduction to the horse, safety, horse care, grooming, saddling, and basic riding skills. Intermediate camps are for the more experienced rider. Campers must be able to tack their own horse, ride independently, and trot comfortably on a loose rein. Horse and equipment are provided. Children should wear jeans and sturdy shoes.

Cost for all camps is \$130 per child. Campers must be at least 8 years old. Register early as space is limited. Register for these camps on www.mycountyparks.com.

Trail Rides

Trail rides will start by June 1. Children need to be 8 years old and accompanied by an adult to ride. The price is \$30 for a one hour guided ride. Riders are required to make a reservation by calling 515-999-2818.



Jester Park
Equestrian Center
11171 NW 103 Court
Granger, IA 50109
(515) 999-2818
www.jesterparkec.com



Polk County Conservation
 11407 NW Jester Park Dr.
 Granger, IA 50109

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OWLS

(Older, Wiser, Livelier, Seniors)

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 \$9.00. Lunch registration is due the Friday before the program.

Discover Iowa

May 7

What's there to do and see in Iowa? Take a visual journey with PCC Naturalist Lori Foresman-Kirpes, and discover the variety of ecological and historical treasures in Iowa.

Musings of a Wildlife & Nature Photographer

June 4

Almost everyone who owns a camera becomes a nature photographer at some time. Nature is a magnet, drawing us to it. Sooner or later, we all want to "capture" some of it and take it home or share it with others. Join Craig Meyer as he shares photos and stories of some of his favorite destinations and their inhabitants, from Costa Rica to Canada.



Iowa's One Room Schoolhouses

July 2

Over twelve thousand one room schoolhouses once dotted Iowa's landscapes. Learn how they came into existence, who taught and attended classes there, how the schoolhouses faded into Iowa's history, and the affect they had on communities throughout their lifetime. Larry Wilson will share Iowa's One Room Schoolhouses, IPTV documentary as well as a few facts about country schools. Did you or a family member attend a one-room school in Iowa? Please bring pictures and your stories to share.

History of the High Trestle Bridge

August 6

The High Bridge Trestle Trail bridge over the Des Moines River between Madrid and Woodward Iowa has received rave reviews from users, recognition in numerous publications and awards from a number of groups. Rich Voelker with Snyder and Associates will share his knowledge about the history, design, and construction components of the bridge and the High Trestle Trail in general.

To register for lunch: www.leadingyououtdoors.org