

# Nature News

POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION • 2020 NATURE PROGRAMS AND NEWS

*May - August 2020*



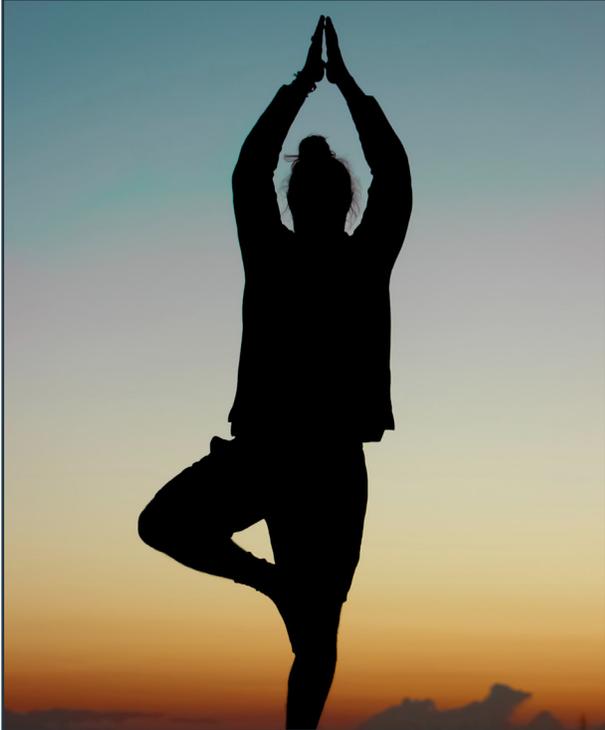
POLK  
COUNTY  
CONSERVATION



[www.LeadingYouOutdoors.org](http://www.LeadingYouOutdoors.org)

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MAY - AUGUST



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Rooted in Nature

Re-connect with nature & improve your health & wellness by attending one of the 2020 “Rooted in Nature” series programs. Enjoy the calming, restorative power of nature via the 25+ health & wellness programs offered at various Polk County Conservation Parks.

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Become a Friend  
of Our Parks

Love your local Polk County Conservation Park? Show your support and benefit from a yearly membership! Your membership support provides supplemental funds needed for operations to keep our parks beautiful and enhance conservation and outdoor recreation programming.



*The programming outlined in this edition of Nature News runs from May – August of 2020. Due to the continually evolving COVID-19 situation, we were uncertain at the time of printing when our programming would be able to resume. Please check our website frequently for programming updates to make sure that the program you are interested in is still being offered.*

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## New Volunteer Stewardship Opportunities

New Stewardship Opportunities are available with Polk County Conservation. Take a look at the list of options!



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## Public Programs & Events

View the full list of our public programs for May - August 2020 or visit our online calendar at: [www.LeadingYouOutdoors.org](http://www.LeadingYouOutdoors.org)

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Now More Than Ever...

One of my favorite John Cougar Mellencamp songs goes "Now more than ever, the world needs love. Not just a slogan, but the world needs love. Now more than ever I can't stand alone." Well, yes, I agree, although I would add "Now more than ever, the human world needs connection to the natural world." I never claimed to be a great lyricist, but I do believe the sentiment!

As we practice social distancing, and deal with the realities of a worldwide pandemic, now more than ever I see people hiking in our parks and on the recreational trails. Now more than ever, people are fishing, biking, picnicking (alone or in small groups), wildlife watching, etc. The simple pleasures of observing nature, healthy outdoor recreation for our bodies, and gratitude and appreciation of this world we live in are core necessities of the moment.

Now more than ever, people need the refreshment and revitalization that comes from communion with the outdoors. Polk County Conservation is grateful to be at the service of our community, and natural world, to continue our vision of Leading You Outdoors.

See you on the trail!



Richard Leopold,  
Polk County Conservation Director





### Hours of Operation

**Monday - Friday** | 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Saturday** | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Sunday & Open Holidays** | Noon - 4 p.m.

### Jester Park Outdoor Recreation & Wellness Center

*Summer Hours (Memorial Day - Labor Day)*

**Thursday & Friday** | 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Saturday** | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Sunday & Open Holidays** | Noon - 4 p.m.

### Holidays Closed

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

New Year's Day

Easter Day

Veterans Day

Thanksgiving Day



### Board Members

Lance Northway, *Board Chair*

Jill Altringer, *Vice-Chair*

Jim Cataldo, *Secretary*

Ryan Crane

### Executive Director

Richard Leopold

### Deputy Director

Douglas Romig

### Nature News

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### Designer & Editor

Shae Rossetti,

Outreach Technician

### Administration Office

12130 NW 128th St

Granger, Iowa 50109

515-323-5300

[pccb\\_info@polkcountyiowa.gov](mailto:pccb_info@polkcountyiowa.gov)

[www.leadingyououtdoors.org](http://www.leadingyououtdoors.org)

### Administration Hours

M-F, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

*Follow Us on Social Media*



# BOND UPDATES

*May - August 2020*

## Polk County Water & Land Legacy Updates



### PARKS

#### **Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt**

Wetland restoration on Kay's Triangle - a 68-acre former crop field at CBG - has been completed and the area will be seeded with more than 80 species of native grasses and wildflowers this spring/summer. Several grants have allowed us to supplement bond funding on this project. The new Natural Resources facility at CBG is nearing completion and should be ready for occupancy by April. Erosion damage will be repaired on the Lost Turtle tract at CBG. Years of farming the fragile, sandy soils on this site have compromised soil health that is in the process of being repaired through the restoration process.

#### **Fourmile Creek Greenway**

Non-native, invasive and defective trees have been cleared on 25 acres of land in preparation for native grass and wildflower planting scheduled for late spring/summer 2020. Work on a storm water wetland along Fourmile Creek just south of Broadway Avenue in Norwoodville will begin mid-summer. This will create a buffer for flooding and improve water quality, as well as beautifying and adding wildlife habitat to the area.

#### **Easter Lake Park**

In partnership with the Iowa DNR, two projects will take place in late summer 2020 that will benefit water quality, protect shorelines, increase biodiversity, and improve aesthetics at Easter Lake Park. More than three acres of turf-grass will be converted to native prairie on the south side of the lake. This diverse mix of plant species will beautify and add interest along the Mark Ackelson Trail. Along with this conversion project, invasive shrubs will be removed, and less desirable tree species will be removed from the area. These efforts will open up the timber, making it more inviting for public use and restore it to its healthy presettlement conditions.

#### **Jester Park**

Three biocells, designed to treat runoff from parking areas at the Nature Center, will be planted with native prairie grasses and wildflowers this spring. This will include the installation of 12,750 tranplants, mulch and amended soil. These areas will infiltrate and cleanse the runoff.

#### **Yellow Banks Park**

The cabins set to be built in Yellow Banks Park are currently on hold due to financial constraints at this time. Staff will revisit this project in the future when more funding becomes available.

# ROOTED IN NATURE

health & wellness



RE-CONNECT WITH NATURE & IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH & WELLNESS BY ATTENDING ONE OF THE 2020 "ROOTED IN NATURE" SERIES PROGRAMS. ENJOY THE CALMING, RESTORATIVE POWER OF NATURE VIA THE 25+ HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAMS OFFERED AT VARIOUS POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION PARKS.



Research has proven time in nature lowers blood pressure, improves depression, anxiety and decreases cortisol levels. Trees and plants in nature give off chemicals called Phytoncides. These forest chemicals boost the immune system, improve mental health, and self-esteem. Many doctors are now prescribing nature to improve the patients overall health and wellness.

Dr. Suzanne Bartlett Hackenmiller, Integrative Physician and one of the first certified forest therapy guides in Iowa says, "There's just been an explosion of interest in this in the last

couple of years, and an increasing understanding that this is real medicine, both by people who practice it and in health care."

Shinrin-Yoku, a Japanese term meaning, "forest bathing", is a guided mindful nature practice where participants are invited to explore their natural surroundings via various sensory experiences. Research finds that time spent in nature, in this way, offers health benefits ranging from improved mental wellbeing and memory to reducing cortisol levels, fighting cancer, and improving heart health.

**Join us for a Shinrin-Yoku program. Cost varies per session, pre-registration is required. Ages 12+. Register online at: [www.leadingyououtdoors.org](http://www.leadingyououtdoors.org).**

- May 16 @ 1:30-3:30pm, Yellow Banks Park, Shelter #2
- May 21 @ 6-8pm, Jester Park Nature Center
- June 6 @ 10am-12pm, Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #3
- June 25 @ 6-8pm, Jester Park, Shelter #5
- July 10 @ 9am-3pm, Jester Park Nature Center
- August 4 @ 6-8pm, Jester Park Nature Center



health & wellness  
THROUGH PROGRAMS  
rooted in nature.



*"I came with a headache and tension" [now have no pain and feel relaxed and pleased] "It was lovely!"*

*"I feel more peaceful and centered" grateful" Come with an open mind and it will be well worth your time!"*

*"I feel much more calm and grounded" less stressed" and grateful!"*



# BECOME A FRIEND

Support Your Local Parks & Benefit!

Love your local Polk County Conservation Park?  
Show your support and benefit from a yearly membership!

Friends of Jester Park and Friends of Easter Lake Park are a collaborative program of Polk County Conservation and the Great Outdoors Foundation that provides more opportunities for outdoor fun and adventures!

**Benefits Include:**

- Exclusive Members-Only Events & Programs
- Members-Only Birthday Parties
- Outdoor Equipment Rental Discounts
- Yearly Gift of Local Nature-Inspired Art
- Discounts on Reservable Campsites & Designated Fee-Based Programs (At ALL Polk County Conservation Parks)
- And more!

Your membership support provides supplemental funds needed for operations to keep our parks beautiful and enhance conservation and outdoor recreation programming.

Choose the annual membership level that fits the outdoor memories you want to create:

- **Nature Lover - Individual** | \$25
- **Outdoors Family - Family (Immediate)** | \$100
- **Trailblazer - Individual/Couple** | \$100
- **Pathfinder - Individual/Couple** | \$1,000 *(One-Time Gift)*
- **Business - Corporate Only** | \$1,000 + Annual

**Become a Friend today at:**

[www.leadingyououtdoors.org](http://www.leadingyououtdoors.org)





## Photography

The Fourmile Creek Greenway encompasses over 600 acres as it winds through rural and urban landscapes. Polk County Conservation has begun efforts to transition the Fourmile Creek Greenway to its natural state through native habitat restoration. This will create a vital corridor for wildlife while protecting and improving our natural resources as well as provide an urban oasis within the heart of Des Moines. This restoration will also allow the creek to flood naturally without posing risk to existing residential properties and businesses, and will have significant positive impacts on water quality which include recreational amenities such as trails and water access points. If you have an interest in photography and conservation, and would like to be a part of this effort, documentation of changes in the area over time via established photo points will provide important data for our Natural Resources division.

## On Call Corps

Throughout the seasons and years, we have found that many unique opportunities to contribute to conservation pop up with a short time frame for completion. These could include a distinct prairie plant species ready to harvest; an invasive plant that needs removed prior to setting its seed; an emergency such as a flooding event; or trail maintenance related to storm damage.

We will create a listserv of individuals interested in these last minute chances to give back to the community in a profound way and place a call-to-action when the moment arises. No experience or specific commitment required – you may join if an opportunity presents itself that interests you and fits well in your schedule.

## Wildlife Surveys

Wildlife represents an important marker of success regarding the native habitat restoration work we do at Polk County Conservation. Animal, insect, and plant population studies provide us with important information and a deeper look into our current habitat restoration practices. In addition, it provides insight into how we continue to conserve and protect wildlife and their home. If you have an interest in volunteerism as it relates to wildlife research and the natural world, consider partaking in amateur surveys and help us document the presence of unique and interesting species in our parks.

Contact Melissa Schmeling for further details regarding these volunteer positions at [melissa.schmeling@polkcountyiowa.gov](mailto:melissa.schmeling@polkcountyiowa.gov).

## CONGRATS TO OUR 2019 VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR!

- **Individual:** Brian Kampling
- **Organization:** REI West Des Moines
- **Team:** Karen Stiles & Michael Schaffer
- **Scouts:** Jacob Becker & Jacob Ridnour
- **Jester Park Nature Center:** Jan & Larry Carl
- **Jester Park Equestrian Center:** Kristin Freeseaman
- **Water Quality Monitoring Program:** Rich & Jody Anderson

# VOLUNTEERcalendar

MAY - AUGUST 2020

## VOLUNTEER TIME OFF (VTO) - WOODLANDS

Does your company offer Volunteer Paid Time Off (VTO)? Join us as we remove invasive species such as honeysuckle, buckthorn, and oriental bittersweet from one of your county parks. Come and go between per your allotted hours.

**Pre-Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
May 20	10am-3pm	TBD
June 10	10am-3pm	TBD
June 24	10am-3pm	TBD
July 8	10am-3pm	TBD
August 5	10am-3pm	TBD
August 19	10am-3pm	TBD

## ADOPT-A-GARDEN TRAINING

Interested in the maintenance of native planting sites throughout the county park system? Commitments are one growing season. Volunteers should plan to spend a minimum of 8-10 hours on their assigned area between April - October.

*All training, equipment, and ongoing support is provided by Polk County Conservation Natural Resources staff. **Pre-Registration Required.***

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
May 2	10am-12pm	Jester Park Nature Center

## VOLUNTEER SKILLS WORKSHOP - TRAILS

The second installment in a 3-part series dedicated to providing information and skillsets needed to be a steward of the land. This month we will explore the history of Iowa trails and the maintenance principles in place in our family of parks.

**Pre-Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
May 16	10am-2pm	Jester Park Nature Center

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## NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

Make your mark on 1 of nearly 200,000 miles of trail throughout the U.S. this National Trails Day! Polk County Conservation, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, with support of REI West Des Moines invite you, your friends, and family out to Jester Park for an afternoon of trail work, outdoor recreation, and fun! Volunteers will lend a hand maintaining the trails at Jester in the afternoon followed by an evening of \*local food, brews, live music, yard games, door prizes, and more. All ages welcome.

**\*Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u>Location</u>
June 1	12-7:30pm	Jester Park Amphitheater

*\*Register online at [www.leadingyououtdoors.org](http://www.leadingyououtdoors.org)*

*\*All activities, food, and drinks are free for registered volunteers. Camping is provided for registered volunteers free of charge.*

## PUBLIC WORKDAYS

Spend a morning in the field with Polk County Conservation Natural Resources staff as we work to restore native habitat or get our hands dirty in a special park project.

*Details TBD. Contact Melissa for further information.*

**Pre-Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
June 27	10am-12pm	Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt
July 25	10am-12pm	Jester Park

## GLOW WILD

Volunteers are needed for Glow Wild 2020! You will receive one free Glow Wild ticket, t-shirt, and meal ticket for the evening. Opportunities include craft table, beer tent, s'more pits, parking, greeting & ticketing, and a variety of activities. **\*No experience necessary. Training will be provided upon arrival at the event.** **Contact Melissa at: [melissa.schmeling@polkcountyiowa.gov](mailto:melissa.schmeling@polkcountyiowa.gov).**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
August 29	3:30-10pm	Jester Park Nature Center

## STEWARDS OF BROWN'S WOODS

Stewards of Brown's Woods was formed to help individuals with a passion for Brown's Woods Forest Preserve connect with volunteer opportunities, be a resource for the public and Polk County Conservation, and to bring attention to one of the metro's best kept secrets. Stewardship opportunities are held on a weekly basis throughout the year. **To find out more and to join an event find them on Facebook or visit their website at [brownswoods.org](http://brownswoods.org).**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Every Saturday	10am-12pm	Brown's Woods

**\*Detailed meeting locations, workday information, and equipment will be provided to those registered closer to the date of the event.**

**What to Wear |** Wear long pants, sturdy closed-toe shoes, gloves (supplied if you do not have a pair), and bring a refillable water bottle.

**Volunteer Registration |** Visit [apps.polkcountyiowa.gov/communityservices](http://apps.polkcountyiowa.gov/communityservices) to create your Conservation profile and begin signing up for events today!

**\*\*If you are registering a group, or have any questions or concerns for a volunteer day, please send an e-mail to [melissa.schmeling@polkcountyiowa.gov](mailto:melissa.schmeling@polkcountyiowa.gov).\*\***

# WASTE REDUCTION AWARENESS PROGRAM



In 2019, Polk County Conservation's environmental education staff received a REAP Conservation Education Program Grant to purchase a composting unit for the Jester Park Nature Center. The goal for this composter is to better manage food waste generated by nature center visitors and staff. Students who visit the nature center on a field trip take part in our Waste Reduction Awareness Program (WRAP).

Students are educated about waste reduction and composting and how compost can benefit the environment. In just one year, multiple batches of compost have been made from the leftover food scraps. The finished compost has been added to flowerbeds at the Jester Park Golf Course. Next time you are at the nature center, stop by and give it a spin!



# PUBLIC programs & events

MAY - AUGUST 2020



## OLDER, WISER, LIVELIER, SENIORS (OWLS) - Dinosaurs

Have a favorite dinosaur? This presentation will show enough information to keep you in the discussion with your grandkids and perhaps create an interest you will want to pursue for yourself. Find out why Iowa is a poor place to look for dinosaurs. Chuck Safris worked as a volunteer field paleontologist for more than 20 years for the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, the Carnegie Museum, and the Museum of Western Colorado at a Jurassic age dig site near Fruita, Colorado. **Ages: 12+.**

**Pre-Registration Required for Lunch Only. Deadline: May 1.**

Date	Time	Location	Lunch Fee
May 5	11am-12pm	Jester Park Lodge	\$10

## METAPHORS OF NATURE: A JOURNALING WORKSHOP

Come learn how mindful observation of nature's order can deepen our understanding of the self. We will learn to utilize nature journaling to connect with ourselves to build awareness of our life story through natural metaphors in the wild. **Ages: 12+.**

**Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: May 4.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
May 6	6-7:30pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

## TODDLER TALES – EGGCITING EGGS

Let your imagination run wild with this fun, nature-themed story time! Hear a story followed by an animal encounter, puppets, or a craft. **Ages: 3+. No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
May 7	10-10:30am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

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## FULL MOON HIKE

Explore the wonder and beauty of Thomas Mitchell Park at night under a full moon. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
May 7	9-10pm	Thomas Mitchell Park, Pond	FREE

## ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY

Endangered Species Day is an opportunity for people of all ages to learn about the importance of protecting endangered species and actions they can take to help protect them. This program will highlight some of Iowa's threatened and endangered species and will feature a live animal at the end.

**Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
May 15	4-5:30pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

## BUILD A COMPOSTER

Help reduce the amount of waste entering our landfills by building a composter. Composting is a great way to turn ordinary food scraps into rich soil for your garden and flowerbeds. A naturalist will give a short presentation about composting before construction begins. All materials and tools provided. **Ages: 12+.**

**Participants under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: May 13.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
May 16	9-11am	Outdoor Recreation & Wellness Center	\$30

## LOVE A TREE

Celebrate National Love a Tree Day at Thomas Mitchell Park. We'll discuss how to identify and measure trees followed by a tree scavenger hunt around the park. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
May 16	10-11am	Thomas Mitchell Park, Shelter #1	FREE

For Program Information & Registration, visit:

[www.leadingyououtdoors.org](http://www.leadingyououtdoors.org) or call (515) 323-5339

## SHINRIN YOKU – JAPANESE FOREST BATHING

Explore the unique healing path of Shinrin Yoku or Japanese Forest bathing with Brandy Case-Haub, a certified forest guide. This mindful walk will invite you to use your senses to enhance your well-being. **Ages: 12+. Pre-Registration Required.**

**Deadline: May 14.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
May 16	1:30-3:30pm	Yellow Banks Park, Shelter #2	\$15

## HIKE FOR HEALTH

Why walk the mall when you can be enjoying the great outdoors? Hike along with this friendly group of nature lovers who walk the trails each month for exercise and fun. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
May 18	9:30-10:30am	Yellow Banks Park, Pond	FREE

## WOMEN IN THE WOODS WITH WINE – WHAT'S THE BUZZ

Enjoy an evening learning about our native pollinators and why they are so important. We'll learn how pollination works, who the pollinators are, and the threats they face. We'll also discuss actions you can take to help pollinators in your own yard. Become more comfortable and knowledgeable about the natural world as you unwind and have fun. **Ages: 21+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: May 15.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
May 19	7-9pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

## SHINRIN YOKU – JAPANESE FOREST BATHING

Explore the ancient healing path of Shinrin Yoku or Japanese Forest bathing with Dr. Suzanne Bartlett Hackenmiller, Integrative Medicine physician. This mindful walk will invite you to use your senses to enhance your well-being. **Ages: 12+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: May 19.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
May 21	6-8pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

## KAYAK BASICS

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. **Ages: 16+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: May 20.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
May 21	6-8pm	Outdoor Recreation & Wellness Center	\$20

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## CATCH-N-CROAKERS

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. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
May 22	8:30-10pm	Chichaqua Longhouse	FREE

## OLDER, WISER, LIVELIER, SENIORS (OWLS) - BIKING ALASKA

Tesha and Larry Huffaker, from Newton, and thirty others with the North Iowa Touring club biked 755 miles in Alaska. They started biking in Anchorage on June 11, 2004. They biked down to Homer, ferried over to Kodak Island back to Seward and ended up in Fairbanks on June 27. They enjoyed beautiful scenery, viewed incredible wildlife, and saw Mt. McKinley 12 of the 14 days. **Ages: 12+. Pre-Registration Required for Lunch Only. Deadline: May 29.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Lunch Fee</u>
June 2	11am-12pm	Jester Park Lodge	\$10

## TODDLER TALES – FROGS

Let your imagination run wild with this fun, nature-themed story time! Hear a story followed by an animal encounter, puppets, or a craft. **Ages: 3+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 4	10-10:30am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

## WILD NIGHT LIFE & HIKE

Sit around the campfire as we discuss the wild nightlife in Jester Park. A short hike will follow as we search for some of these nocturnal creatures. **Ages: 5+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 2.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 4	8-9:30pm	Jester Park, Camp Area 5	\$5

## FISHING BASICS

Learn about the different kinds of fish in Iowa, fishing safety, casting, and how to tie a hook. It is Free Fishing Weekend in Iowa so no license is needed. Bait and poles will be provided. Feel free to bring a chair to sit in. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 5	9am-12pm	Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #1	FREE





## SHINRIN YOKU – JAPANESE FOREST BATHING

Explore the ancient healing path of Shinrin Yoku or Japanese Forest bathing with Brandy Case-Haub, a certified forest guide. This mindful walk will invite you to use your senses to enhance your well-being. **Ages: 12+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 4.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 6	10am-12pm	Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #3	\$15

## HAPPY LITTLE TREE HOUR

Happy hour with a twist. Unwind with your choice of adult beverage as we paint (and sip) along with the legendary painter Bob Ross. This beginner level program will be using acrylic based paint for ease. Our goal is to have fun and complete the entire painting by the end of the program. All materials provided, (B.Y.O.B). Participants will take their finished works home. **Ages: 21+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: May 29.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 6	1-4pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$30

## LUNCH AND LURES

Bring your lunch and fishing gear as we visit a different Polk County pond each month during the summer to see what is biting. Bait and poles will be provided but, feel free to bring your own as well. Fishing license is required for participants over 16 years of age. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 9	11:30am-1pm	Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #1	FREE

## MINDFUL WALKING

Enjoy time walking mindfully on this silent, meditative walk with Andrew from Walking Space. Participants will engage in mindful practices as they silently walk through nature and observe, through close attention to their senses, their surroundings. **Ages: 21+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 7.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 9	6:30-7:30pm	Jester Park, Shelter #5	\$10

## SUNSET YOGA

Class will begin with a short nature hike to give participants a chance to de-stress and enjoy the beauty of nature. The yoga class is perfect for beginners. **What to bring:** yoga mat and blocks, hiking shoes, comfortable clothing, and a water bottle. In case of inclement weather, the class will be inside the Nature Center.

**Ages: 12+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 7.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 9	8-9:30pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

## METAPHORS OF NATURE: A JOURNALING WORKSHOP

Come learn how mindful observation of nature's order can deepen our understanding of the self. We will learn to utilize nature journaling to connect with ourselves to build awareness of our life story through natural metaphors in the wild. **Ages: 21+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 9.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 11	6-7:30pm	Brown's Woods	\$15

## BOONE RIVER KAYAK TRIP

Come and explore one of Central Iowa's paddling gems with Polk County Conservation Naturalists leading the way. Previous paddling experience strongly recommended. Kayaks, paddles, life jackets, and transportation provided. **Ages: 12+. Participants under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 6.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Departing From</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 13	8am-5pm	Outdoor Recreation & Wellness Center	\$25

## POND STUDY

Come discover what creatures live in and around a pond. All sampling equipment will be provided. **Ages: 3+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 13	10-11am	Thomas Mitchell Park, Pond	FREE

*The programming outlined in this edition of Nature News runs from May - August of 2020.*

*Due to the continually evolving COVID-19 situation, we were uncertain at the time of printing when our programming would be able to resume. Please check our website frequently for programming updates to make sure that the program you are interested in is still being offered.*



## HIKE FOR HEALTH

Why walk the mall when you can enjoy the great outdoors? Hike along with this friendly group of nature lovers who walk the trails each month for exercise and fun. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 15	9:30-10:30am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

## WOMEN IN THE WOODS WITH WINE – EDIBLE OUTDOORS

Ever wonder what those pesky weeds in your yard are good for? Come take a walk on the wild edibles side! You'll learn to identify the common, edible plants around you and get a few new recipes to try at home! We will prepare and sample a variety of edible plants so come with a sense of adventure. **Ages: 21+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 12.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 16	7-9pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

## PRINCESS ADVENTURE – BIRDS

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, and have a tea party with a snack. **Ages: 4 - 6. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 15.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 17	10-11am	Jester Park, Shelter #6	\$5

## KAYAK BASICS

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. **Ages: 12+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 16.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 18	6:30-8:30pm	Yellow Banks Park, Pond	\$20

## DISCOVERY HIKE

Explore an Iowa woodland with a naturalist and learn what makes this woodland unique. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 20	10-11am	Yellow Banks Park, Pond	FREE

## CANOE CHICHAQUA

Explore Polk County's biggest county park as we canoe through beautiful winding oxbows while enjoying the view and wildlife this park has to offer. We will cover basic safety and instruction; all equipment will be provided. **Ages: 12+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 18.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 20	10-11:30am	Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt, Shop	\$10

## SHINRIN YOKU – JAPANESE FOREST BATHING

Explore the ancient healing path of Shinrin Yoku or Japanese Forest bathing with Dr. Suzanne Bartlett Hackenmiller, Integrative Medicine physician. This mindful walk will invite you to use your senses to enhance your well-being. **Ages: 12+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 23.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 25	6-8pm	Jester Park, Shelter #5	\$15

## GIANTS OF THE PRAIRIE

Bison and elk were two of the largest animals to ever roam across Iowa. What happened to them and where did they go? A naturalist will walk you through the exhibit and share the history of these giants of the prairie. We'll also introduce you to the resident herds of Jester Park and provide an opportunity to see these magnificent animals up close. Don't forget your cameras! **Ages: All Ages. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 26	11am-12pm	Jester Park, Shelter #6	FREE

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## MIDDLE RACCOON RIVER KAYAK FLOAT

The Middle Raccoon River might be the most scenic river for paddling in Central Iowa. Join Polk County Conservation naturalists on this day trip as we explore a section of this river by kayak. Previous paddling experience strongly recommended. Kayaks, paddles, life jackets, and transportation provided. **Ages: 12+.** **Participants under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.** **Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 23.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u>Departing From</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 27	8am-5pm	Outdoor Recreation & Wellness Center	\$25

## INTRODUCTION TO PASTELS

This is a fun introductory class to encourage the use of Soft Pastels. No drawing skills needed to create your own painting. Our instructor will guide you through the process step-by-step and you will have a finished piece of art to take home with you. All materials provided and soft pastels may go home with you! While being a dry medium, the pigment can still stain. Please wear clothes that can get dirty. **Ages: 12+.** **Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 19.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 27	1-4pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$39

## TODDLER TALES - BUSY BEES

Let your imagination run wild with this fun, nature-themed story time! Hear a story followed by an animal encounter, puppets, or a craft. **Ages: 3+.** **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 2	10-10:30am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

## OLDER, WISER, LIVELIER, SENIORS (OWLS) - BIRDING SW UNITED STATES

In early 2018, Margaret and Ray Harden took a birding vacation to Arizona and New Mexico. They visited birding hot spots near Ramsey Canyon, San Pedro River Reserve, hummingbird reserve in Patagonia, Saguaro National Park, and Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge along the Rio Grande River. Come hear about their adventure! **Ages: 12+.** **Pre-Registration Required for Lunch Only. Deadline: July 3.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Lunch Fee</u>
July 7	11am-12pm	Jester Park Lodge	\$10

## LUNCH AND LURES

Bring your lunch and fishing gear as we visit a different Polk County pond each month during the summer to see what is biting. Bait and poles will be provided but, feel free to bring your own as well. Fishing license is required for participants over 16 years of age. **Ages: 5+.** **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 7	11:30am-1pm	Jester Park, Shelter #5	FREE

## WILD NIGHT LIFE & HIKE

Sit around the campfire as we discuss the wild nightlife in Jester Park. A short hike will follow as we search for some of these nocturnal creatures. **Ages: 5+.** **Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: July 7.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 9	8-9:30pm	Jester Park, Camp Area #5	\$5

## SHINRIN YOKU & NATURE JOURNALING RETREAT DAY

Invest in yourself with a nature and wellness retreat day at Jester Park. Explore the natural healing path of Shinrin Yoku or Japanese Forest Bathing led by Dr. Suzanne Bartlett Hackenmiller, Integrative Medicine physician. After lunch, Karen Downing, Valley High School language arts teacher will lead us through nature journaling and reflective time at the park. Unwind, unplug and let nature inspire you. **Ages: 16+.** **Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: July 7.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 10	9am-3pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$45

## DISCOVERY HIKE

Explore an Iowa woodland with a naturalist and learn what makes this woodland unique. **Ages: 5+.** **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 11	10-11am	Yellow Banks Park, Pond	FREE

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## 2020 ECO-BUS TRIPS

Rock, Planes, Prairie: May 28 | Cruisin' into Summer: June 23

Music on the Mississippi: July 23 | Mystery Cave, Bily Clocks & More: August 11-12

Scenic Valley Railroad: October 21

For more information, contact Lori Foresman-Kirpes: 515-323-5380.

Registration Opened: March 28, 2020

## SUNSET YOGA

Class will begin with a short nature hike to give participants a chance to de-stress and enjoy the beauty of nature. The yoga class is perfect for beginners. **What to bring:** yoga mat and blocks, hiking shoes, comfortable clothing, and a water bottle. In case of inclement weather, the class will be inside the Nature Center.

**Ages: 12+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: July 10.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 13	8-9:30pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

## PRINCESS ADVENTURE – BUTTERFLIES

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, and have a tea party with a snack. **Ages: 4-6. Pre-Registration Required.**

**Deadline: July 14.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 16	10-11am	Jester Park Nature Center	\$5

## FIREFLIES BY FIRELIGHT

Bring the kids out for a night of catching (and releasing) fireflies while enjoying a roasted marshmallow over a fire. **All Ages. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 17	8:30-9:30pm	Yellow Banks Park, Shelter #1	FREE

## POND STUDY

Come discover what creatures live in and around a pond. All sampling equipment will be provided. **Ages: 3+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 18	10-11am	Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt, Shop	FREE

## HIKE FOR HEALTH

Why walk the mall when you can enjoy the great outdoors? Hike along with this friendly group of nature lovers who walk the trails each month for exercise and fun. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 20	9:30-10:30am	Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #3	FREE

## GIANTS OF THE PRAIRIE

Bison and elk were two of the largest animals to ever roam across Iowa. What happened to them and where did they go? A naturalist will walk you through the exhibit and share the history of these giants of the prairie. We'll also introduce you to the resident herds of Jester Park and provide an opportunity to see these magnificent animals up close. Don't forget your cameras!

**Ages: All Ages. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 21	11am-12pm	Jester Park, Shelter #6	FREE

## WOMEN IN THE WOODS WITH WINE – I AM NOT LOST, I AM GEOCACHING

Geocaching is a fast-growing sport that's akin to a modern-day treasure hunt. This fun activity will exercise both mind and body. Come learn what geocaching is all about while enjoying a glass of wine. Become more comfortable and knowledgeable about the natural world, as you unwind and have fun. **Ages: 21+.**

**Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: July 17.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 21	7-9pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

## BOULDERING CHALLENGE

Join us in this just-for-fun bouldering challenge! You will have a chance to try out our newly set routes (grades V0 – V5) and try different challenges, as well as other activities at the event. We will also provide refreshments and a raffle for prizes! **Ages: 12+.**

**Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: July 20.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 24	4-8pm	Outdoor Recreation & Wellness Center	\$10

## POND STUDY

Come discover what creatures live in and around a pond. All sampling equipment will be provided. **Ages: 3+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 25	10-11am	Yellow Banks Park, Pond	FREE

## COOL CRANIUMS

Explore the differences between animal skulls and learn how their features relate to physical characteristics or behaviors of each animal. You'll have a chance to examine and attempt to identify multiple mystery skulls. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 1	10:30-11:30am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

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## OLDER, WISER, LIVELIER, SENIORS (OWLS) - ICE AGE IOWA

People began moving into Iowa over 13,000 years ago at the end of the last “ice age”. This was a time of giant land mammals, ice, and extreme cold temperatures. Learn about what Iowa was like during this period and how people adapted to the conditions. Cherie Haury-Artz Education Assistant with the Office of the State Archaeologist will share a display of a sample of real and replica artifacts from relevant time periods. **Ages: 12+.** **Pre-Registration Required for Lunch Only. Deadline: July 31.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Lunch Fee</u>
August 4	11am-12pm	Jester Park Lodge	\$10

## ICE AGE IOWA

People began moving into Iowa over 13,000 years ago at the end of the last “ice age”. This was a time of giant land mammals, ice, and extreme cold temperatures. Learn about what Iowa was like during this period and how people adapted to the conditions. Cherie Haury-Artz Education Assistant with the Office of the State Archaeologist will share a display of a sample of real and replica artifacts from relevant time periods. **Ages: 8+.** **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 4	1:30-2:30pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

## LUNCH AND LURES

Bring your lunch and fishing gear as we visit a different Polk County pond each month during the summer to see what is biting. Bait and poles will be provided but, feel free to bring your own as well. Fishing license is required for participants over 16 years of age. **Ages: 5+.** **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 4	11:30am-1pm	Yellow Banks, Pond	FREE

## SHINRIN YOKU – JAPANESE FOREST BATHING

Explore the natural healing path of Shinrin Yoku or Japanese Forest bathing with Crystal Berkens, a certified forest guide. This mindful walk will invite you to use your senses to enhance your well-being. **Ages: 12+.** **Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: August 2.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 4	6-8pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

## TODDLER TALES – WATER WONDERS

Let your imagination run wild with this fun, nature-themed story time! Hear a story followed by the naturalist’s choice of an activity such as an animal encounter, puppets or a craft. **Ages: All Ages.** **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 6	10-10:30am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE



## NIGHT HIKE

Sit around the campfire as we discuss the wild nightlife in Jester Park. A short hike will follow as we search for some of these nocturnal creatures. **Ages: 5+.** **Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: August 5.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 7	8-9:30pm	Jester Park, Camp Area #5	\$5

## INSECT HUNT

From ladybugs to butterflies, we’ll explore the fascinating world of insects. The program will feature a large insect collections and an insect hunt. Nets will be provided. **Ages: All Ages.** **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 8	10-11am	Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt, Longhouse	FREE

## ATLATL AND ARTIFACTS

Learn more about Native American culture as we discuss authentic and rare artifacts found throughout the park. Learn how to throw and atlatl, a tool used for hunting game. **Ages: 5+.** **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 12	10am-12pm	Yellow Banks Park, Shelter #1	FREE

## METEOR SHOWER WATCH

Come learn all about asteroids, meteors, and meteorites! Plan to spend your time gazing up at the night sky for the Perseid meteor shower as well as the moon and any stars out this night. **Ages: All Ages.** **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 12	8-9:30pm	Thomas Mitchell Park, Shelter #1	FREE

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## CATCH-IT CLEAN-IT COOK-IT

Come learn the basics of fishing, how to clean fish, and then how to cook fish. Fishing license is required for participants over 16 years of age. Bait and poles will be provided but, feel free to bring your own as well. **Ages: 8+. Pre-Registration Required.**  
**Deadline: August 12.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 15	9am-12pm	Outdoor Recreation & Wellness Center	\$5

## HIKE FOR HEALTH

Why walk the mall when you can enjoy the great outdoors? Hike along with this friendly group of nature lovers who walk the trails each month for exercise and fun. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 17	9:30-10:30am	Thomas Mitchell Park, Pond	FREE

## WOMEN IN THE WOODS WITH WINE – PRAIRIE PONDERING

Tall grass prairie once covered 85% of Iowa's landscape. Most of this unique habitat has long since vanished; however, life on the prairie still lives today. During the program, we will stroll through the prairie to learn about the unique plants and animals that live there. **Ages: 21+. Pre-Registration Required.**  
**Deadline: August 14.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 18	7-9pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

## SUNSET YOGA

Class will begin with a short nature hike to give participants a chance to de-stress and enjoy the beauty of nature. The yoga class is perfect for beginners. **What to bring:** yoga mat and blocks, hiking shoes, comfortable clothing, and a water bottle. In case of inclement weather, the class will be inside the Nature Center. **Ages: 12+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: August 17.**

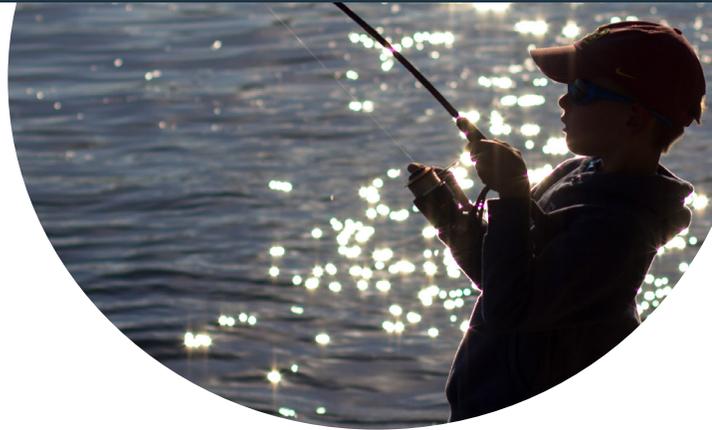
<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 19	7-8:30 pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

## LICHEN IT

Join us as we explore the wonderful world of lichens on a hike through the forest. We will look for different species, identify their characteristics, and learn what makes lichens so unique! **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 22	1-2:30pm	Brown's Woods	FREE

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## DOG GONE FUN

A dog can be a built-in companion for outdoor adventures, and is always ready, willing, and eager to hit the trail. Hiking with dogs provides health benefits to both the pets and the owners, as well as deepening their bond through shared experiences. Bring your furry friend on a six-foot or shorter leash for an evening of fun. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 26	5-6:30pm	Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #3	FREE

## MARSHMALLOWS AND MEANDERINGS

Join us for National Toasted Marshmallow Day. We will take a hike to explore the woodland and prairie. After our hike we will toast some marshmallows and make some smore's. **Ages: All Ages. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 30	1-2:30pm	Thomas Mitchell Park, Shelter #1	FREE

## GEOCACHE FOR TRAIL MIX

We eat it without thinking about it but trail mix keeps us happy throughout the day. Every year on August 31, National Trail Mix Day honors this healthy snack created for noshing on hikes in the great outdoors. This program will combine geocaching with a fun snack. So what are you waiting for? Grab a handful and let's celebrate! **Ages: 10+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: August 26.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
August 31	5-6:30pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$5

For Program Information & Registration, visit:  
[www.leadingyououtdoors.org](http://www.leadingyououtdoors.org) or call (515) 323-5339





# SUMMER NATURE PROGRAMS

## NATURE FRIENDS

Join a naturalist in a nature adventure! We will explore a different nature topic each evening through stories, sharing time and exploration. Snacks are provided. This program is co-sponsored with West Des Moines Park and Recreation. Participate in the Nature Friend's Park Passport program. Attend five different programs, and receive a Nature Friend Explorer's pack. One pack per child. **Ages: 3 - 5 with an adult. Pre-Registration Required. Fee: \$7. Time: 6:30-7:30pm.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Location</u>
*May 5	Eggciting Facts	Jester Park Nature Center
May 18	Fuzzy Furries	Raccoon River Park Nature Lodge
*June 8	Frog Hop	Jester Park Nature Center
June 23	Fishing	Raccoon River Park Nature Lodge
*July 7	Friendly Fireflies	Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #3
July 20	Let's Go Camping	Peony Park, WDM
*August 3	Water Wonders	Easter Lake Park, Shelter #4
August 18	Nature's Symphony	Willow Springs, WDM

**Programs with \* register online through [www.leadingyououtdoors.org](http://www.leadingyououtdoors.org) and select the calendar tab. Programs marked as WDM registration, register online at [www.wdm-ia.com](http://www.wdm-ia.com).**

## NATURE PLAYDATES

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. **Ages: All Ages. No Registration Required. Fee: FREE. Time: 10:30-11:30am.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Location</u>
June 10	Life in a Log Hike	Jester Park Nature Center
June 24	Fairy House Hike	Brown's Woods
July 8	Creek Walk	Thomas Mitchell Park, Shelter #2
July 22	Tyke Hike	Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #4
August 5	Water Wonders	Jester Park, Shelter #5

## NATURE STORY HOUR

Pack your picnic lunch, blanket and bring our family for an hour of nature stories and activities with a naturalist from PCC. Enjoy the fresh air, sunshine, munch your lunch, listen to a story or two and discover new natural areas with your children. **Ages: All Ages. No Registration Required. Fee: FREE. Time: 12-1pm.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Location</u>
June 3	Birding Bonanza	Jester Park, Shelter #6
June 17	Life in the Pond	Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #1
July 1	Frog Hop	Easter Lake Park, Shelter #4
July 15	Dragonfly Adventure	Jester Park Nature Center
July 29	Insect Safari	Yellow Banks Park, Shelter #1
August 12	Ants on a Log	Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #3

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For Program Information & Registration, visit: [www.leadingyououtdoors.org](http://www.leadingyououtdoors.org) or call (515) 323-5339





## JESTER PARK EQUESTRIAN CENTER

### **HORSES HELPING HEROES**

Horses Helping Heroes, known as H3 for short, is Jester Park Equestrian Center's veterans' Equine Assisted Therapy program. This program serves veterans who are currently seeking support from the VA through a 4-week course that is designed to assist them in gaining life skills. Veterans are guided through interactive lessons with horses that emphasize themes such as relationship building, effective communication skills, problem solving, and recognizing peace while providing a therapeutic environment for participants. We utilize our horses and expertise at Jester Park Equestrian Center as a means of facilitating the V.A. Equine Therapy Program as a part of their Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs (MH RRTPs).

The Horses Helping Heroes program has served over 300 Veterans to date and the program is expanding to include Veterans who live away from the domiciliary as well.

*Interested in donating, sponsoring, or volunteering to assist in our fundraising efforts? Contact us at:*

*JPEC\_info@polkcountyiowa.gov or call 515-999-2818.*



# **HORSES HELPING HEROES Veterans Program**

# EQUESTRIANcalendar

MAY - AUGUST 2020

## GUIDED TRAIL RIDES

Come out to our wonderful location right off of Saylorville Lake and enjoy a horseback ride through the timber! Each outing lasts 60-90 minutes, including a safety briefing, riding instruction, and up to an hour out on our beautiful trails. **Ages: 8+.**

**Pre-Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 5 - October 4	Friday	2:00pm   3:30pm	\$45
	Saturday	9:30am   11am   2pm   3:30pm	
	Sunday	Reserved for overflow booking	

## WAGON RIDES | \$125

Didn't make it out for our famous sleigh rides this past winter? Come out and enjoy the summer with your family, co-workers, or daycare! Experience a fun 45-minute wagon ride through our tree-covered trails and along the lake. **Online registration required. Each ride can fit up to 20 people.**

## FIELD TRIPS | \$150

Looking for a fun way to engage a small or large group? We provide a unique learning space in the spring, summer, and fall. Groups of all sizes are welcome to sign up for a 30-minute barn tour and a 30-minute wagon ride. If you have more than 50 people, send us an email, and we will work with your group for an individualized experience. **Online registration required.**

## VOLUNTEER WITH US

Do you love horses and want to volunteer at the Jester Park Equestrian Center? We need volunteers of all types to help out with a wide variety of jobs and programs.

Volunteers must be 18+ to help with the horses. Some basic barn chores and special events can be assisted by minors over 12 years of age with parental consent. No prior horse experience required.

**Find volunteer opportunities online: [www.jesterparkec.com](http://www.jesterparkec.com).**

## JR. HORSE ADVENTURES IN NATURE CAMP

Mornings are reserved for our youngest cowboys and cowgirls! Our Junior Campers will spend the week exploring the barn, learning horse care, grooming ponies, and experience beginner pony riding and ground lessons. **Programs with \* are full. Grades: K-3rd. Pre-Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
July 14 - 7	9am-Noon	Jester Park Equestrian Center	\$385
July 21 - 24	9am-Noon	Jester Park Equestrian Center	\$385
July 28 - 31*	9am-Noon*	Jester Park Equestrian Center*	\$385*
August 4 - 7	9am-Noon	Jester Park Equestrian Center	\$385
August 11 - 14	9am-Noon	Jester Park Equestrian Center	\$385

## HORSE ADVENTURES IN NATURE CAMP

Come work with our horses for a week of camp at Jester Park Equestrian Center! Each week is catered to the age group with horse care, riding, ground lessons, and more. These camps are the best "Intro to Horsemanship" you can get. Please pack a lunch. **Pre-Registration Required. Programs with \* are full.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Fee</u>
June 9-12	9am-5pm	4th & 5th	\$385
June 16-19*	9am-5pm*	4th - 6th*	\$385*
June 23-26	9am-5pm	6th - 8th	\$385
July 7-10	9am-5pm	7th - 12th	\$385

**To register for an activity or event, visit:  
[www.jesterparkec.com](http://www.jesterparkec.com).**

*The programming outlined in this edition of Nature News runs from May - August of 2020. Due to the continually evolving COVID-19 situation, we were uncertain at the time of printing when our programming would be able to resume. Please check our website frequently for programming updates to make sure that the program you are interested in is still being offered.*



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



# AREAmap



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Beaver Creek Greenbelt</li> <li>2. Brown's Woods</li> <li>3. Carney Marsh</li> <li>4. Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt</li> <li>5. Chichaqua Valley Trail</li> <li>6. Easter Lake Park</li> <li>7. Eagle Roost Wildlife Area</li> <li>8. Engeldinger Marsh</li> <li>9. Fort Des Moines Park</li> <li>10. Fourmile Creek Greenway</li> <li>11. Gay Lea Wilson Trail</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Great Western Trail</li> <li>13. High Trestle Trail</li> <li>14. Jester Park</li> <li>15. Mally's Park</li> <li>16. Mark C. Ackelson Trail</li> <li>17. Oralabor Gateway Trail</li> <li>18. Strasser Woods State Preserve</li> <li>19. Sycamore Trails</li> <li>20. Thomas Mitchell Park</li> <li>21. Trestle to Trestle Trail</li> <li>22. Yellow Banks Park</li> </ul> |
|--|---|



Polk County Conservation  
 12130 NW 128th Street  
 Granger, IA 50109

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# RENT SUMMER equipment



AT THE JESTER PARK OUTDOOR  
 RECREATION & WELLNESS CENTER

## RENTAL PRICES

- Canoes.....\$10/Day
- Kayaks.....\$10/Day
- Stand Up Paddle Boards.....\$10/Day
- Bouldering Wall.....\$5/Day
- Archery (unlimited).....\$5/Saturday
- Air Rifle (25 pellets).....\$5/Sunday

...

***Paddles & lifejackets included in price.***

For hours of operation & more information, visit:  
[www.JesterParkNatureCenter.com](http://www.JesterParkNatureCenter.com)

