

Nature News

POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION • 2020 NATURE PROGRAMS AND NEWS

January - April 2020



POLK
COUNTY
CONSERVATION



www.LeadingYouOutdoors.org

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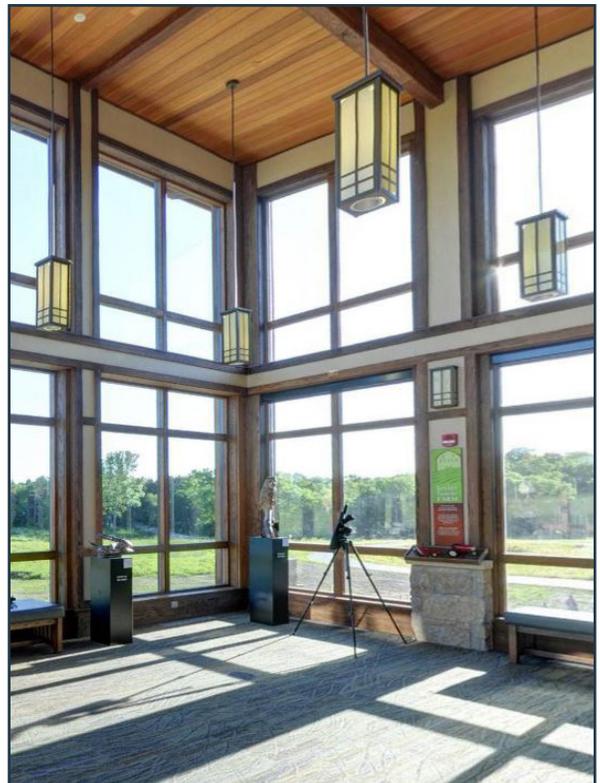
We're Hiring Summer Youth Corps Crew Members & Leaders!

Crews work together to complete conservation service projects like trail maintenance and invasive species removal, learn about environmental science, and explore through outdoor recreation.

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The Galleries Presents: Artists in the Making

Artists in the Making art exhibition highlights the work of local high school and college students. Join us refreshments, and meet the artists at the Opening Reception on Thursday, January 9, from 6 – 8 p.m. at The Galleries at Jester Park Nature Center.



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Bouldering Room at Jester Park Now Open

Jester Park's newest recreation feature, the Petra Alward Bouldering Room, opened to the public on November 24, 2019. The bouldering room is located inside the Jester Park Outdoor Recreation and Wellness Center, adjacent to the nature center.



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Public Programs & Events

View the full list of our public programs for January - April 2020 or visit our online calendar at: www.LeadingYouOutdoors.org

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

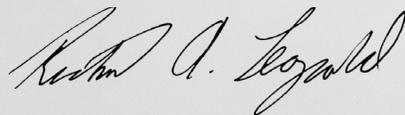
"What good is the warmth of summer without
the cold of winter to give it sweetness?"

- John Steinbeck

At one point in my life, I thought a life without winter would suit me fine. I lived for a season in Everglades National Park in southern Florida. We put Christmas lights on a palm tree and called it good. But much to my youthful chagrin, it didn't work for me.

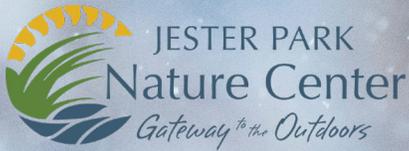
I'm at my deep and honest self a Midwesterner. I love the diminishment and decay of autumn, and the cold slumber of winter. A hike on a crisp winter morning is full of muted sounds, isolated wildlife encounters that allow me the time to contemplate the moment, and a clarity to my surroundings that I don't get at other times of the year.

And I love the frantic spring awakenings; the birds and the flowers, the rushing waters, and the schoolchildren before summer break bursting with excitement and anticipation. The fall, and the spring, can only happen if there is a winter. Therefore, despite my younger self trying to deny it, I love the winter.



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.

Holidays Closed

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

New Year's Day

Easter Day

Veterans Day

Thanksgiving Day



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Administration Hours

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

Follow Us on Social Media



Winter Cardinal

BOND UPDATES

The Latest | Polk County Water & Land Legacy Updates



JANUARY - APRIL 2020

PARKS

Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt

Restoration of newly added wetland will begin this winter. When completed, this restoration project will add 20 acres of wetland and 48 acres of restored prairie. Construction continues for the Natural Resources Department's Headquarters located on the corner of NE 112th Street and NE 118th Avenue, near Maxwell. This project is anticipated to be completed by mid-winter.

Easter Lake Park

Work on the south entrance gully channel stabilization project is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2019. Improvements to the boat ramp and parking lot will be bid in January with construction to be completed by summer.

Fourmile Creek Greenway

Work has begun to restore the Fourmile Creek Greenway back to its natural state. Restoration projects will include tree removal in conjunction with cool season grass removal, prairie, savanna, wetland, and oxbow restoration. Wetland and oxbow restorations are currently underway. This significant restoration project will span over the next few years. For more information, visit our website at www.LeadingYouOutdoors.org.

Yellow Banks Park

A boardwalk, located at Oakview Pond, will be installed this spring. Plans for the construction of three cabins is anticipated to begin in the summer of 2020.

NOW HIRING CREWS FOR 2020

Polk County Conservation Youth Corps provides opportunities to work outside while learning valuable professional and personal skills. Crews work together to complete conservation service projects like trail maintenance and invasive species removal, learn about environmental science, and explore through outdoor recreation. We are now filling spots on our spring and summer crews for 2020.

To learn more and to apply online, visit:
www.LeadingYouOutdoors.org and select the Youth Corps tab.



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- **Spring 2020 Crew** | Apply by February 10
Session runs from March 24 - April 26 on Tuesdays & some Saturdays.
- **Summer 2020 Crew** | **Must apply by March 31**
Sessions run for four weeks in June or July, Monday through Friday.

AGES 19+

- **Summer Crew Leader** (12 weeks, summer) | Apply by February 10
- **Senior Crew Leader** (6 months, May - November) | Apply by January 20

QUESTIONS?

Contact Youth Corps Coordinator, Janna Coulter, at:
janna.coulter@polkcountyiowa.gov

WHILE A SCIENTIFIC SURVEY OFTEN FOCUSES ON UNIQUE OR ISOLATED AREAS, BIOBLITZES FOCUS ON AREAS THAT ARE CONNECTED TO RESIDENTIAL, URBAN, AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS.



FOURMILE CREEK GREENWAY

An outdoor oasis in the middle of an urban landscape

Fourmile Creek travels over 30 miles, right through the heart of Polk County. Beginning near Slater, the creek winds through agriculture fields, small towns, and cities before joining with the Des Moines River near Pleasant Hill.

Flooding has become a way of life for the residents that live near Fourmile Creek, especially in the lower parts of the watershed. June 2018 brought a level of flooding that had never been seen before. Homes and businesses became inundated and personal belongings were ruined. This left many people without a place to call home. The City of Des Moines stepped in to help their residents by purchasing properties affected by flooding and removing the structures.

Now large areas in the lower portion of the Four-mile Creek watershed lay vacant. An idea arose to use these unoccupied lots to create a Greenway network along the length of the creek. This would allow the area to flood without putting structures and residents in harms way.

Polk County Conservation took over ownership and maintenance of many of the parcels in the area and will be working over the next 10 to 15 years to transition the Fourmile Creek Greenway to its natural state. Mowed lots will be converted to native prairie and overgrown woodlands will be restored. This restoration will have positive effects on water quality and will include recreational amenities like trails and water access points, allowing residents to interact with the creek itself.

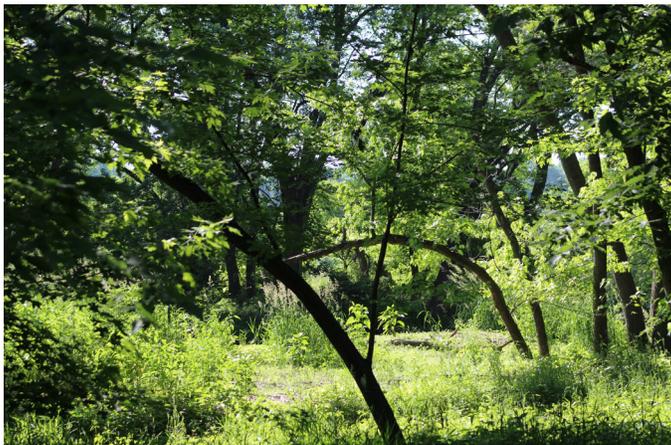


Diverse mixtures of wildflowers and grasses native to central Iowa will be planted in open areas that have little tree cover.



Restoration efforts will also benefit local wildlife. In order to gain some knowledge on what species were currently living in the area, top scientists and volunteers came together this past summer to do a BioBlitz. They scoured the water and surrounding landscape for two days, documenting everything they found. The results showed over 300 different species! The northern long-eared bat, federally listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, was among the species found. We foresee this number of species will continue to increase as we restore the greenway to its natural state.

Once complete, the Fourmile Creek Greenway will be Polk County Conservation's 3rd largest park and will serve as an outdoor oasis in the middle of an urban landscape.



Polk County Conservation, and many other partners, plan to transform the Fourmile Creek Greenway to a corridor of natural areas that provides wildlife, water quality, and flood reduction benefits.

The photos featured on this page are from a BioBlitz conducted in June 2019 along the Fourmile Greenway. A BioBlitz is an intense period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all the living species within a designated area. Groups of scientists, naturalists, and volunteers conduct an intensive field study over a continuous time period.

THE GALLERIES - ARTISTS IN THE MAKING

artists in the making

The Galleries
OPENING RECEPTION
JANUARY 9 | 6 - 8 PM



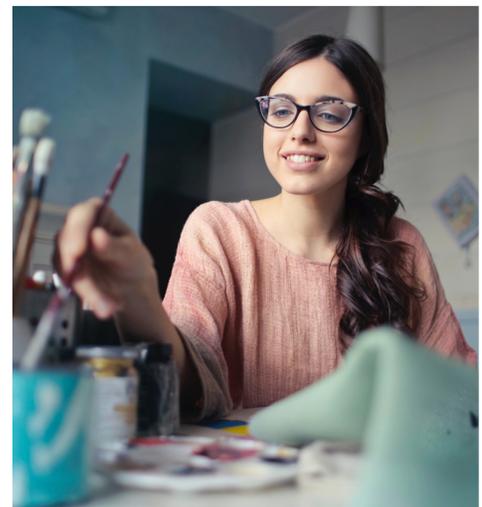
The *Artists in the Making* art exhibition highlights the work of local high school and college students. Join us for refreshments and an opportunity to meet the featured artists at the opening reception on Thursday, January 9, from 6 – 8 p.m. at The Galleries at Jester Park Nature Center.



The Galleries at Jester Park Nature Center have also created a smaller gallery located downstairs in the children's puppet show area to highlight the work of local middle school art students.

January's show will highlight the creative works of North Polk's 7th grade. Under the direction of Virginia Rose. The students will be creating works inspired by the style of Charley Harper. They will select an animal or plant species native to Iowa and create a simplified collage. Twenty-five students' pieces will be selected for display.

The winter exhibition will be on display from January 3 to April 26 during Jester Park Nature Center hours. Hours can be found at JesterParkNatureCenter.com. For additional information, please contact Missy Smith at 515-323-5317.



NEW!



PETRA ALWARD BOULDERING ROOM

Jester Park's newest recreation feature, the Petra Alward Bouldering Room, opened to the public on November 24, 2019. The bouldering room is located inside the Jester Park Outdoor Recreation and Wellness Center, adjacent to the nature center.

PRICING

- Bouldering Day Pass | \$5

INDOOR AIR RIFLE & ARCHERY

Along with the bouldering room, park users may also try their hand at air rifle and archery on select days.

DAYS & PRICING

- Saturdays | Archery (unlimited): \$5
- Sundays | Air Rifle (max. 50 pellets): \$5

For hours & more information, visit:
www.JesterParkNatureCenter.com

Jester Park Outdoor Recreation & Wellness Center
12112 NW 128th Street
Granger, IA 50109

OUTDOOR RECREATION & WELLNESS CENTER

Beginning on November 30!

• • •

Labor Day - Memorial Day

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

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

December 23 - Jan. 3: Monday - Friday | 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

March 16 - 20: Monday - Friday | 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



Photo of the Petra Alward Bouldering Room



VOLUNTEER



SPOTLIGHT

Karen Stiles & Michael Schaffer



County Park: Easter Lake Park

Favorite Plant Species: Oaks

Fun Fact: They got married underwater!

As retired educators, Karen and Mike have spent their lives dedicated to learning and passing down knowledge to their audiences whether in the classroom, in the field, or on the fly. Their drive to contribute to Polk County Conservation's mission lies in their passion for nature and outdoor recreation. They work tirelessly together to instill their values, which align with our mission statement, into their family and all those who learn from them.

Karen's involvement with Polk County Conservation began in the 1970's as a biologist where she gave presentations to middle school children. Together, Mike and Karen have worked with staff since 1998 to plant native species throughout the county as well as conduct invasive

plant removal. Recently, the couple has been hard at work at Easter Lake Park as Adopt-A-Garden volunteers. They put in an incredible amount of time and effort into planning and maintaining these native gardens as well as involvement in securing funds to make these public spaces as beautiful and diverse as possible for the benefit of both pollinators and people.

When asked what motivates them to give so much of their time, Karen and Mike replied, "we have been involved in restoration projects in other countries and other states. Now that we are retired, we want to help make a difference where we live. Polk County Conservation and Polk Soil and Water Conservation District have been working tirelessly to improve the water quality of Easter Lake and restore native habitats that support wildlife and increase biodiversity. As neighbors of Easter Lake, we want to be actively involved in those restoration efforts." Knowing that their contributions make an impact as well as having the opportunity to teach others is the driving force behind their support of Polk County Conservation and Easter Lake Park.

Mike and Karen's future goals at Easter Lake Park include establishing two large pollinator gardens, eradicating invasive plant species, developing interpretive signs for park visitors, and bringing back native insect species by planting and maintaining native gardens. Feel free to stop, introduce yourself, and ask questions if you see Karen and Mike out and about in the park!

VOLUNTEERcalendar

JANUARY - APRIL 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>
Jan.15 (Rain Date: 1/22)	10am-3pm	Easter Lake Park
Feb. 8	10am-12pm	Easter Lake Park
Feb.12 (Rain Date: 2/19)	10am-3pm	Easter Lake Park
March 11	10am-3pm	Easter Lake Park
April 8	10am-3pm	Easter Lake Park

VOLUNTEER SKILLS WORKSHOPS: WOODLANDS

Join us for a 3-part series that will improve your knowledge and skillsets as a volunteer. Each course will comprise of a classroom presentation followed by breakout sessions where you will acquire a new skill, with a focus on woodlands. Breakout sessions include chainsaw safety and certification, pesticide applicator license, and fundamentals of park stewardship.

Pre-Registration Required.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
January 25	10am-1pm	Jester Park Nature Center

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION BANQUET

You and a guest are invited to join us at the Jester Park Lodge for a special evening to celebrate your contributions to conservation efforts in Polk County Conservation's family of parks and trails. The evening will consist of live music, hor d'oeuvres, dinner, and a ceremony as we highlight the projects and events of 2019.

Volunteers who have contributed 10+ hours are invited to attend. Please contact Melissa Schmeling to confirm your hours and for further information: melissa.schmeling@polkcountyiowa.gov.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
March 22	5-7pm	Jester Park Lodge

BROWN'S WOODS COMMUNITY CLEANUP

Kick off the start of a week-long Earth Day celebration in Brown's Woods! Spend your Saturday morning assisting staff as we tidy up and beautify the preserve by removing litter from the park and adjacent roadways. Snacks and drinks will be provided.

Pre-Registration Required.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
April 18	10am-12pm	Brown's Woods

EARTH DAY 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Earth Day 2020 marks 50 years of mobilizing millions of people worldwide to take action in addressing the many environmental challenges and opportunities facing the planet today. Join us by removing litter and invasive species, as well as caring for the pollinator and rain gardens throughout Easter Lake Park. Come and go as you please throughout the day. After spending a day caring for the land, we invite you to wind down with us as we close this day of celebration by caring for our mind and body with *yoga at sunset provided by *Good Vibes Yoga*. **Pre-Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u>Location</u>
April 22	10am-3pm & 4:30-7pm	Easter Lake Park

*YOGA provided by Good Vibes | 7-8pm | Easter Lake Park

EARTH DAY TRASH BASH

Earth Day Trash Bash, Iowa's largest Earth Day volunteer event, is an annual collaborative project! This event kicks off with a Bash downtown at noon with lunch, sponsor recognition, and educational booths. After the kick-off bash and lunch, team captains will lead volunteers out to their project locations for an afternoon giving back to the community.

Register at www.earthday.dmgov.org.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
April 24	12-5pm	Fourmile Creek Greenway



INTRODUCING: STEWARDS OF BROWN'S WOODS

With the support of Polk County Conservation, Stewards of Brown's Woods represents short and long term volunteers who are dedicated to restoring and protecting Iowa's largest urban forest preserve through maintenance of trails, tending native gardens, invasive species removal, and more! Come out and learn about this initiative, meet the stewards, and lend a helping hand. An afternoon social gathering will follow this event – more details to come! **RSVP to: brian.kamplig@brownswoods.org.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
April 25	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 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.****



SHAMROCK SHENANIGANS

DATES: MARCH 13 - 22

Sneaky little leprechauns have hidden 10 special shamrocks on the trails around the Jester Park Nature Center.

See how many you can spot, snap a picture, & share your photos with us on Facebook or Instagram!



Share your adventure on Instagram with us (@PolkCountyConservation) by hashtagging #JPShamrocks or post your photos on our Facebook wall!

PUBLIC programs & events

JANUARY - APRIL 2020



TODDLER TALES - SALAMANDERS

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: 3-6. No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
Jan. 2	10-10:30am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

NATIONAL BIRD DAY

Join us on National Bird Day for hands-on avian fun. We'll learn what makes a bird a bird, what they eat, why they sing, and how they stay alive. **No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
Jan. 5	1-2pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

OLDER, WISER, LIVELIER, SENIORS (OWLS) - Josiah Bushnell Grinnell & the Iowa Underground Railroad

J.B. Grinnell and other Grinnell residents helped at least 37 fugitive slaves who passed through their town before the Civil War. But some residents opposed this work. David Connon will tell a story of racism, noble actions and conflict. He will highlight abolitionist John Brown's visit to Grinnell, and Grinnell's first riot over the presence of fugitive slaves in the public school.

Pre-Registration Required for Lunch Only. Deadline: January 4.

Date	Time	Location	Lunch Fee
Jan. 7	11am-12pm	Jester Park Lodge	\$10

BEST PUPPET SHOW EVER

Join us for an exciting and energetic puppet show. Participants will be laughing, singing, and learning about nature as we entertain them with a scripted show starring a cast of animated puppets and props. **All Ages. Pre-Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
Jan. 14	10-10:30am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

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

MINDFULNESS & MOVEMENT CLASS

Controlling our breath and moving our bodies in focused ways can bring back a connection with the natural world. This class will offer ways to connect with breath, body, and the earth. Beverage and snack served following the program. **Minimum Age: 12. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: January 12.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
Jan. 14	6:30-7:45pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

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: 6+. No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
Jan. 18	1-2pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

GET NUTTY WITH SQUIRRELS

Celebrate National Squirrel Appreciation Day a day early with some fun squirrely activities at the nature center. This is an open house program, come anytime between 12-1:30pm.

No Registration Required.

Date	Time	Location	Fee
Jan. 20	12-1:30pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE



CRITTER CLUB

Come visit Jester Park Nature Center's resident turtles, snakes, and salamanders to learn about these misunderstood animals. You may even get to touch a turtle or snake. This is an open house program, come anytime between 1:30-3pm.

No Registration Required.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Jan. 20	1:30-3pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

WOMEN IN THE WOODS WITH WINE – WINTER HIDEAWAY

Learn the different strategies animals use to survive the long, cold, and dark winter. Wear comfortable boots and warm clothing for taking a short hike. If weather permits, we will venture out on snowshoes. Become more comfortable and knowledgeable about the natural world as you unwind and have fun. **Ages: 21+.**

Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: January 17.

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

OWL PROWL

After a brief discussion around the campfire about these flying predators of the night, we'll go for a hike and learn how to call three different species of owls. **Pre-Registration Required.**

Deadline: January 6.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Jan. 24	6-7pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$5

CROSS-COUNTRY SKI BASICS

Learn the basics of cross-country skiing and practice your skills on the trails. We will review proper clothing, equipment, and skiing techniques before going outside to ski. All equipment provided. Class will be canceled without snow. **Minimum Age: 12.**

Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: January 23.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Jan. 25	10am-12pm	Outdoor Recreation & Wellness Center	\$15

ICE FISHING BASICS

Learn the basics of ice fishing and get some hands-on experience. Bait and poles will be provided. Participants over the age of 16 need a valid fishing license. **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Jan. 25	1-3pm	Jester Park, Shelter #5	FREE

BOOK WORMS

Join our book club with Naturalist Heidi Anderson to discuss *Undaunted Courage* by Stephen E. Ambrose.

Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: January 29.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Jan. 30	6:30-8pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

OLDER, WISER, LIVELIER, SENIORS (OWLS) - CLIMATE CHANGE

Join presenter Denise Frank for a presentation on the impacts and solutions of the global crisis that is affecting us here in Iowa. Colorful slides and clear explanations will make a tough topic easier to understand. **Pre-Registration Required for Lunch Only. Deadline: January 31.**

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

TODDLER TALES – LITTLE CLOUD

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: 3-6. No Registration Required.**

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

ICE FISHING BASICS

Learn the basics of ice fishing and get some hands-on experience. Bait and poles will be provided. Participants over the age of 16 need a valid fishing license. **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Feb. 8	1-3pm	Thomas Mitchell Park, Pond	FREE

CRITTER CLUB

Come visit Jester Park Nature Center's resident turtles, snakes, and salamanders to learn about these misunderstood animals. You may even get to touch a turtle or snake. This is an open house program, come anytime between 1-2:30pm.

No Registration Required.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Feb. 9	1-2:30pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

BEST PUPPET SHOW EVER

Join us for an exciting and energetic puppet show. Participants will be laughing, singing, and learning about nature as we entertain them with a scripted show starring a cast of animated puppets and props. **All Ages. Pre-Registration Required.**

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





MINDFULNESS & MOVEMENT CLASS

Controlling our breath and moving our bodies in focused ways can bring back a connection with the natural world. This class will offer ways to connect with breath, body, and the earth. Beverage and snack served following the program. **Minimum Age: 12.**

Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: February 10.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Feb. 11	6:30-7:45pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

OWL YOU NEED IS LOVE

Join us to celebrate Iowa's true winter romantics...the owls! By Valentine's Day owls are often sitting on a nest of eggs. Learn why owls court in winter, which owls call Iowa home, make an owl craft, and head outside to see if we can find other winter birds. **Ages: 5+. No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Feb. 15	1-2:30pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

KAYAK 101

Join a Polk County Conservation Naturalist to learn the basics of recreational kayaks. We'll shake off the winter blues with plenty of paddling time in the pool. A short discussion about equipment and technique will take place before hitting the water. All equipment provided. **Minimum Age: 12. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: January 24.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Feb. 8	6-8pm	Urbandale Pool	\$25

WOMEN IN THE WOODS WITH WINE – LOVE IN THE WILD

Animals celebrate Valentine's Day all year round. Some of these mating rituals are wonderfully bizarre! Join us as we reveal the "love" secrets of a variety of animals. Become more comfortable and knowledgeable about the natural world as you unwind and have fun.

Ages: 21+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: February 15.

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

ANIMAL GUIDES MEDITATION

Join Kara Simons for a guided meditation and discussion honoring our energetic and physical connections with animals as teachers and guides. Reframe your perception and explore the rich symbolism of animal characteristics and attributes, from birds to mammals to reptiles, amphibians and insects. **Minimum Age: 14. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: Feb. 18.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Feb. 20	6-8pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

SNOWSHOEING & SHINRIN YOKU

Enjoy an active hour of snowshoeing followed by two hours of nature immersion with Shinrin Yoku. Dr. Suzanne Bartlett Hackenmiller, Integrative Medicine Physician and author of "The Outdoor Adventure's Guide to Forest Bathing" will be leading this interactive class. If there is no snow, we will go on a winter woodland hike followed by Forest Bathing/Shinrin Yoku.

Minimum Age: 14. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: Feb. 19.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Feb. 21	1-4pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$30

NORTHWOODS DOGSLEDDING ADVENTURE

Have the adventure of a lifetime on this five-day trip to northern Minnesota. One full day will be spent dog sledding with extensively trained dogs and staff. Experienced guides will teach you how to harness your dogs, steer the sled, and lead our trip into the wilderness. This trip is co-lead by Polk and Story County Conservation.

Ages: 21+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: January 20.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Departing From</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Feb. 21-25	Jester Park Nature Center	Ely, Minnesota	\$750

WINTER HIKE

Join a naturalist for peaceful hike on a winter's day. We will learn what animals do to survive the harsh Iowa winters and look for early signs of spring's arrival. **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Feb. 22	1-2pm	Brown's Woods	FREE

ANTLER SHED HUNT

Learn tips on finding shed antlers and then head outside to find sheds that have been hidden around the park just for you! **No Registration Required.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Feb. 22	1-2:30pm	Thomas Mitchell Park, Shop	FREE



BALD EAGLE WATCH

Stop by the Saylorville Visitor's Center to learn about the bald eagle, then venture outside to view them in their natural habitat. Jester Park Lodge will host a live eagle used for education. Hourly programs start at 1 pm. **No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
Feb. 23	12-4pm	Saylorville Lake & Jester Park Lodge	FREE

BOOK WORMS

Join our book club with Naturalist Heidi Anderson to discuss *American Wolf: A True Story of Survival and Obsession in the West* by Nate Blakeslee.

Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: February 26.

Date	Time	Location	Fee
Feb. 27	6:30-8pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

OLDER, WISER, LIVELIER, SENIORS (OWLS)

The Okefenokee Swamp evolved from the depths of the ocean and has existed for thousands of years. The ancient peat bog, first inhabited by the Native Americans over 4,000 years ago, encompasses 700 square miles in South Georgia and North Florida. Naturalist, Missy Smith will take you on a virtual tour of this vast undisturbed swamp. **Pre-Registration Required for Lunch Only. Deadline: February 28.**

Date	Time	Location	Lunch Fee
March 3	11am-12pm	Jester Park Lodge	\$10

TODDLER TALES - NOCTURNAL ANIMALS

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: 3-6. No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 5	10-10:30am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

WATERCOLOR CLASS

Learn to paint with watercolor! We will cover the basics, discussing paints, brushes, paper, and technique before moving onto painting our first work of art. Class includes instructor, paints, brushes, spray bottle, paper, and art board. **Minimum Age: 18. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: February 28.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 7	10:30am-3pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$35

TRACKS & SCAT

Join a naturalist to explore off the beaten path as we search for signs of wildlife in this beautiful forest. **No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 7	1-2pm	Brown's Woods	FREE

FULL MOON HIKE

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

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 9	7-8pm	Thomas Mitchell Park, Pond	FREE

MINDFULNESS & MOVEMENT CLASS

Controlling our breath and moving our bodies in focused ways can bring back a connection with the natural world. This class will offer ways to connect with breath, body, and the earth. Beverage and snack served following the program. **Minimum Age: 12. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: March 9.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 10	6:30-7:45pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

BEST PUPPET SHOW EVER

Join us for an exciting and energetic puppet show. Participants will be laughing, singing, and learning about nature as we entertain them with a scripted show starring a cast of animated puppets and props. **All Ages. Pre-Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 16	10-10:30am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

CRITTER CLUB

Come visit Jester Park Nature Center's resident turtles, snakes, and salamanders to learn about these misunderstood animals. You may even get to touch a turtle or snake. This is an open house program, come anytime between 1-2:30pm. **No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 16	1-2:30pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE



JANUARY - APRIL 2020 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

GEOCACHE LEPRECHAUN HUNT

Learn to use a GPS and go search the woods to find the hidden pots of gold, collecting candy and prizes along the way. Keep an eye out for leprechauns along the way! **Ages: 3-14.**

Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: March 13.

Date	Times	Location	Fee
March 17	10-11:30am 12:30-2pm	Fort Des Moines, Shelter #3	\$5

BEST PUPPET SHOW EVER

Join us for an exciting and energetic puppet show. Participants will be laughing, singing, and learning about nature as we entertain them with a scripted show starring a cast of animated puppets and props. **All Ages. Pre-Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 17	10-10:30am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

ROCK ON AND FOSSIL FUN

Join a naturalist to learn the basics about rocks and minerals. Afterwards, participants will get the chance to make their own fossil to take home. All materials provided. **Pre-Registration Recommended.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 17	1-2pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

WOMEN IN THE WOODS WITH WINE – SPRING FLING

Our program will focus on balance as we prepare for the first day of spring. We'll discuss spring equinox facts, folklore, and more while strolling through the prairie, woodland and around the pond. Become more comfortable and knowledgeable about the natural world as you unwind and have fun. **Ages: 21+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: March 15.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 17	7-9pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

WILD NIGHT LIFE & HIKE

Join us 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. **Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: March 16.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 18	7:30-9:30pm	Jester Park, Camp Area #5	\$5

VERNAL EQUINOX HIKE

The spring equinox (vernal equinox) marks the astronomical first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. This hike will feature spring equinox facts, folklore, and more! **No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 19	4-5:30pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

STAR PARTY

Come learn the fascinating history of how our solar system was formed by focusing on our unique planets, moons, and sun. We will identify a number of constellations and other major astronomical objects in the classroom, followed by a stargazing session of the beautiful night sky. **Pre-Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 19	7:30-9pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

SUPERHEROES OF NATURE

Come dressed up as your favorite superhero and have fun as we learn which animals have superpowers like our favorite comic book heroes! **Pre-Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 20	10-11am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

SURVIVOR CAMP

Spend a day having fun and staying active. We will try archery, geocaching, and fire building! Activities will take place indoors and outdoors. **Ages: 10-12. Pre-Registration Required.**

Deadline: March 6.

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 20	9am-3pm	Outdoor Recreation & Wellness Center	\$30

NATURE MEDITATION CLASS

Join us for a relaxing meditation class surrounded by the natural beauty of the Jester Park woodland. Take in the sounds and smells of nature as we focus on calming our mind and de-stressing from the challenges of the day. **Ages: 15+. Pre-Registration Required.**

Deadline: March 24.

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 26	6:30-8pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

BOOK WORMS

Join our book club with Naturalist Heidi Anderson to discuss *In Search of the Canary Tree: The Story of a Scientist, a Cypress, and a Changing World* by Lauren E. Oakes. **Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: March 24.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
March 26	6:30-8pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

ECO-BUS TRIP 2020 REGISTRATION OPENING

More information & times for April - October bus trips will be available online in February. Discover Iowa's many hidden treasures from unique conservation & historical areas, to agri-tourism & Iowa hospitality. **Contact Lori Foresman-Kirpes at 515-323-5380. Registration Opens: March 28 @ 8am**



NATIONAL TAKE A WALK IN THE PARK DAY



Date	Time	Location
March 30	10am	Jester Park Nature Center
March 30	1pm	Yellow Banks Park, Pond
March 30	6-7:30pm	Fort Des Moines Park, Shelter #3

FREE. No Registration Required.

TODDLER TALES - S IS FOR SEEDS

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: 3-6. No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 2	10-10:30am	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

GEOCACHE EGG HUNT

Enjoy a new type of egg hunt using technology. Learn how to use GPS and go search the park nests of hidden eggs. Be sure to keep an eye out for the “golden egg” for a special prize! **Ages: 3-14. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: April 1.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 4	1-3pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$5

CRITTER CLUB

Come visit Jester Park Nature Center’s resident turtles, snakes, and salamanders to learn about these misunderstood animals. You may even get to touch a turtle or snake. This is an open house program, come anytime between 1-2:30pm. **No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 5	1-2:30pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

OLDER, WISER, LIVELIER, SENIORS (OWLS) - Plant Predators: Carnivorous Plants and their Adaptations

Through ingenious pitfalls, traps and evolutionary strides carnivorous plants have some of the most interesting adaptations in the biological world. Join Sydney Algreen-Hunter, Assistant Director of Education at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, to explore and see these fascinating plants in person. **Pre-Registration Required for Lunch Only. Deadline: April 3.**

Date	Time	Location	Lunch Fee
April 7	11am-12pm	Jester Park Lodge	\$10

BEST PUPPET SHOW EVER

Join us for an exciting and energetic puppet show. Participants will be laughing, singing, and learning about nature as we entertain them with a scripted show starring a cast of animated puppets and props. **All Ages. Pre-Registration Required.**

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

POLK COUNTY MASTER CONSERVATIONIST PROGRAM

Discover Iowa’s diverse natural resources - prairies, wetlands, forests, and more - through the Master Conservationist Program. Learn about a broad range of conservation challenges and opportunities, and connect with current conservation efforts in Polk County. Course format includes online lessons and resources from Iowa State University paired with hands-on, in-field experiences and discussions with local conservation experts. This program is a partnership between ISU Extension and Outreach, Polk County; Polk County Conservation and the Polk Soil and Water Conservation District. **Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: March 6. To Register, contact: Kalsa Parker Browning, ISU Extension and Outreach at: 515-957-5768 or kparker@iastate.edu.**

Dates	Time	Locations	Fee
April 7-May 19	6-9pm	Polk County Extension Office Jester Park Nature Center Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Easter Lake	\$95

FULL MOON HIKE

Explore the wonder and beauty of Yellow Banks Park at night under a full moon. **No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 7	7:30-8:30pm	Yellow Banks Park, Shelter #1	FREE

MINDFULNESS & MOVEMENT CLASS

Controlling our breath and moving our bodies in focused ways can bring back a connection with the natural world. This class will offer ways to connect with breath, body, and the earth. Beverage and snack served following the program. **Minimum Age: 12. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: April 13.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 14	6:30-7:45pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

WOODWORKING FOR BATS

Learn why bats are important and what you can do to help with bat conservation. Each participant will construct a basic bat house to either take home or donate back to one of Polk County Conservation’s parks. All materials and tools provided. **Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: April 10.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 17	6:30-8pm	Outdoor Recreation & Wellness Center	\$15

BUILD A BIRDHOUSE

Build your own birdhouse at this hands on woodworking workshop. A simple, one-board plan will give you a quick and versatile house that can be customized to accommodate a variety of feathered friends that live near you. All materials and tools provided. **Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: April 11.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 18	10am-12pm	Outdoor Recreation & Wellness Center	\$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! **All Ages Welcome.**

No Registration Required.

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 20	9:30-10:30am	Brown's Woods	FREE

WOMEN IN THE WOODS WITH WINE - LIGHT THE NIGHT

Enjoy the sights and sounds of nature with a glass of wine before we light up the night - with fire. We will share fire building tips and tricks, so that you can easily master or improve fire building. Show off your new skill as a pro firestarter at your next camp, cookout, or bonfire. Dress for the weather and wear comfortable outdoor shoes. Become more comfortable and knowledgeable about the natural world, as you unwind and have fun. **Ages: 21+.**

Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: April 19.

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 21	7-9pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

Happy 50th anniversary of Earth Day! Come help us celebrate by learning about our fascinating planet and the amazing biodiversity found here, as well as the challenges it faces. We will do our part by cleaning up trash in the park and reusing anything we find to make a trash sculpture! **No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 22	1-3pm	Jester Park Nature Center	FREE

BEAVER CREEK KAYAK

We'll paddle down one of the best urban streams in Iowa launching from the new and first ever beaver creek kayak launch in Johnston. We'll follow the creek to its confluence with the Des Moines River and continue on the river to Prospect Park. All equipment and shuttling provided. **Ages: 16+.**

Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: April 22.

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 25	9am-12pm	Prospect Park, Des Moines	\$20

SPRING WILDFLOWER HIKE

Join a Naturalist for a woodland wildflower hike. Discover the beauty of the forest as the colorful wildflowers decorate the forest floor announcing spring has sprung. **No Registration Required.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 26	1:30-2:30pm	Brown's Woods	FREE

SHINRIN YOKU – JAPANESE FOREST BATHING

Explore the ancient 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. **Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: April 26.**

Date	Time	Location	Fee
April 28	6-8pm	Jester Park Nature Center	\$15

KAYAKING & RAFTING TRIPS

WATERFALL CANYON HIKE & WHITE WATER RAFTING TRIP

Spend an entire day exploring this amazing park as we hike trails that wind us through 18 towering canyons and lead us to over a dozen breathtaking waterfalls. We will also spend an afternoon rafting the Vermillion River, a scenic river that offers relaxing and fun class I and II rapids. Transportation, rafting equipment, lodging (*double occupancy*) provided. Meals not provided. **Ages: 21+.**

Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: May 15.

Dates	Location	Fee
May 29-31	Starved Rock State Park, Oglesby, IL	\$375

ST. CROIX RIVER KAYAK TRIP

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 camp three nights by the river and paddle three days on this amazing National Scenic Riverway. Kayaks, paddles and life jackets provided. Meals will be prepared for you by the campfire while you relax and enjoy the scenery. Transportation, paddling equipment, lodging (*double occupancy*), and all food (*except during travel*) provided.

Ages: 21+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: April 15.

Dates	Location	Fee
June 1-5	Minnesota & Wisconsin	\$550

NIOBRARA RIVER KAYAK TRIP

Join us for a five-day adventure to the sandhills of Nebraska. We'll camp three nights along the banks of the river, within a five minute walk to the spectacular Smith Falls, the largest waterfall in the state of Nebraska. We'll spend the third day visiting Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge and Ashfall Fossil Beds. Meals will be prepared for you by the campfire while you relax and take in the scenery. Transportation, paddling equipment, lodging, and all food (*except during travel*) provided.

Ages: 21+. Pre-Registration Required. Deadline: June 22.

Dates	Location	Fee
July 13-17	Valentine, Nebraska	\$550



2020 SUMMER CAMPS

For detailed information and to register for Polk County Conservation Summer Camps, visit www.LeadingYouOutdoors.org/calendar. All camps are designed to encourage hands-on learning through outdoor exploration, activities, games, crafts, and more. Camps are led by Polk County Conservation naturalists. These camps fill up fast, early registration is encouraged.

AGES 6-7

Sessions are limited to 12 campers. Snacks provided.

- **Turtles & Tadpoles Camp | June 22 - 23**
Fee: \$40 | Session 1: 9-11:30am • Session 2: 1-3:30pm
Registration Deadline: June 8
- **Wild Kratts Camp | June 29 - July 1**
Fee: \$60 | Session 1: 9-11:30am • Session 2: 1-3:30pm
Registration Deadline: June 15
- **Mammal Mania Camp | July 13-14**
Fee: \$40 | Session 1: 9-11:30am • Session 2: 1-3:30pm
Registration Deadline: June 29

AGES 10-11

All Sessions: 9am-3:30pm | Max: 12 campers | Snacks provided

- **Junior Naturalist Camp | Fee: \$180**
Session 1: June 8-11 • Session 2: June 22-25
Registration Deadlines: May 25 • June 8
- **Fishing Camp | Fee: \$90**
Session 1: June 18-19 • Session 2: July 22-23
Registration Deadlines: June 4 • July 8

AGES 8-9

All Sessions: 9am-3:30pm | Max: 12 campers | Snacks provided

- **Water Wonders Camp | June 15-17**
Fee: \$135 | Registration Deadline: June 1
- **Astronomy Adventures Camp | June 24-25**
Fee: \$90 | Registration Deadline: June 10
- **Geology Camp | July 8-10 • August 3-5**
Fee: \$135 | Registration Deadlines: June 24 • July 20

AGES 12-16

All Sessions: 9am-3:30pm | Snacks provided

- **Shooting Camp | Fee: \$90**
Session 1: June 8-9 • Session 2: July 30-31
Registration Deadlines: May 25 • July 16
- **Paddle Camp | Fee: \$90**
Session 1: June 22-23 • Session 2: July 6-7
Registration Deadlines: June 8 • June 22
- **Survival Camp | Fee: \$45**
Session 1: June 10 • Session 2: July 16
Registration Deadlines: May 28 • July 2
- **Caving Camp | July 27-28 | Maquoketa Caves**
Fee: \$100 | Registration Deadline: June 11
- **River Kayaking Adventure | August 6-7 | Bluffton**
Fee: \$150 | Registration Deadline: July 31

Online registration opens: SATURDAY, MARCH 7
www.LeadingYouOutdoors.org/calendar

REI West Des Moines staff member, Justin Guiter, during a trail workday at Strasser Woods.



STRASSER WOODS STATE PRESERVE

POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION'S
NEWEST ADDITION



Strasser Woods State Preserve, a 40-acre preserve within the City of Des Moines, is owned by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and now managed by Polk County Conservation.

Enjoy the one-half mile hiking trail that winds through hilly upland woodlands which showcases a beautiful display of spring wildflowers. The Fourmile Creek Greenway and Gay Lea Wilson bike trail runs along the eastern park boundary.

Joseph and Elizabeth Strasser, who had owned the property since 1965, donated the woodland to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation in 1981. The area was transferred to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in 1982 and dedicated as a biological state preserve.

+ DIRECTIONS

From the intersection of I-235 and East University Avenue (Highway 163) on the east side of Des Moines, go east on University Avenue for 2 miles to East 36th Street. Turn north (left) and go 3 blocks through a residential area to the parking area at the end of the street.

+ THINGS TO DO

- Hiking
- Wildlife Viewing
- Mushroom Hunting
- Dogs must be kept on a six-foot leash; please remember to pick up after your pets.

The trails are sensitive to erosion and cannot withstand wear caused by:

- Horses
- Bicycles
- Motorized Vehicles

Visitors may collect the following for non-commercial use if the plant is not harmed:

- Nuts
- Fruit
- Edible Mushrooms

Removing plants, trapping animals, & cutting wood is illegal here.



MORE THAN JUST HORSEING AROUND

"Hope from Horses" is a program designed to allow youth to participate, under supervision, in the day to day activities and events at the Equestrian Center. This program is based off the premise of a "working student" program model, and involves training, mentorship, horsemanship, and volunteerism.

Written by:

CARLY ROUTH

Jester Park Equestrian Center,
Equine Specialist in Mental Health & Learning
Riding Instructor



If you have ever interacted with a horse, it's no secret the magical impact they can have on a person; especially on teens and pre-teens. As a riding instructor at the Jester Park Equestrian Center, I wish I could emphasize the importance of lessons that also take place off of a horse. Horses have filled a much larger role in my life than solely being a means of transportation or recreation. They are a major part of my personal support system, acting as a role on my healing team while in therapy. THIS is where the real magic of a horse lies.

The horse is a beautiful analogy for the human condition and an excellent example to model our lives after. They have so much to teach us - if we are willing to listen. I did not have access to horses throughout my youth. I can only imagine the many ways I would have benefited from such an opportunity. I am so proud that I get to be a part of an organization that thrives on the idea of creating these opportunities for our community. Here at the Jester Park Equestrian Center, our mission is to be a community resource fostering education, outdoor recreation, and wellness with horses.

Hope from Horses, a youth volunteer program, is one of the handful of our programs in line with our mission. Students ages 12-17 participate in a curriculum-based volunteer program where they get an opportunity to



learn about the horse from the ground up. Aside from practicing horsemanship skills, conversations are facilitated on topics such as empathy and acceptance of those who may be different than you, self-awareness, breaking down barriers in communication, service to others, and building confidence as a leader.

The group dynamic among the students has evolved as friendships have grown; and the acceptance and encouragement they display towards each other is an example we should all follow. This past spring we welcomed new students into the program who, otherwise would not have met. Through their shared love of horses, they quickly became friends and study buddies, encouraging each other to work to move up through their entry level. They have since taken on a mentorship role with new, incoming students and continue to grow in their leadership qualities.

“I have learned so much more about working with horses, being a leader, and even about myself. Hope from Horses has been an amazing experience. Making friends with these awesome fun-loving people makes it even better. I will treasure all of the friendships, with horses and people alike, forever.”

– Ingrid, Hope from Horses Student

I am continually inspired by the hard work, dedication, and growth that is displayed by each of the students in this program. As a horsemanship instructor, I get to experience the best of both worlds. Daily, I have the opportunity to learn from horses. The same can be said about how much I learn from the students. That is why we are here; to educate and to learn from one another, not only about horsemanship, but also about life.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HOPE FROM HORSES?

- Hope from Horses is for youth ages 12-17 years old.
- It's a FREE program – but does require a committed volunteer schedule.
- Physical labor is required in all-weather situations. Students will get their hands dirty.
- Occasional horseback riding is included, but is not the emphasis of the program. Students will not ride every visit.
- Students should be hard working, love horses, and be excited to learn and grow.

DO YOU KNOW A YOUTH THAT YOU THINK WOULD BE A GOOD FIT FOR HOPE FROM HORSES?

- February 22, 2020 | **Time: TBD**
- April 11, 2020 | **Times TBD**

Orientations are approx. 2-hours long

For more information, visit:
www.JesterParkec.com
& select the **Give Back tab**.

VOLUNTEER WITH US

General volunteers must be 18+. However, Hope from Horses is a specialized volunteer program for teens, ages 12 - 18 to help with the horses. No prior horse experience required.

View current volunteer opportunities online at:

www.JesterParkec.com.



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



Friends of
Jester
Park



Friends of
Easter
Lake

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:

PolkCountyIowa.gov/conservation/about-us/donations-gifts/



AREAmap



- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 9. Fort Des Moines Park 10. Fourmile Creek Greenway 11. Gay Lea Wilson Trail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Great Western Trail 13. High Trestle Trail 14. Jester Park 15. Mally's Park 16. Mark C. Ackelson Trail 17. Oralabor Gateway Trail 18. Strasser Woods State Preserve 19. Sycamore Trail 20. Thomas Mitchell Park 21. Trestle to Trestle Trail 22. Yellow Banks Park |
|--|--|



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

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RENT WINTER equipment




AT THE JESTER PARK OUTDOOR RECREATION & WELLNESS CENTER

Rental Prices

Snowshoes.....\$10/Day

Cross-Country Skis.....\$15/Day

...

Snowshoes and skis will only be rented if there is at least 6 inches of snow on the ground.

For hours of operation & more information, visit www.JesterParkNatureCenter.com.

