



# The Jasper County Jewel

Jasper County Conservation Board Quarterly Newsletter      Fall 2019

## Mariposa Park Update

The Mariposa Lake restoration project is nearing completion almost a year after its original slated end date. Poor weather conditions and saturated soils placed many delays on the project but we are finally almost there!

Final touches are being placed on the new boat and kayak ramp, wetland education area, fishing jetty, and the dams of the main lake, north wetland, and the west retention pond. Seeding of the area will be a final work order.

Jasper County Conservation Board and staff are in the planning stages of what will become of the old bison area to the west of the lake. Stay tuned for some exciting news about that! It is our plan to have a grand reopening next summer for the entire park.

Thank you for your patience with this process. We look forward to having a fantastic, newly renovated lake at Mariposa!

## New Rest Station Along CVT

There is a new addition along the Chichaqua Valley Recreation Trail in Ira thanks to a generous donation from Iowa Rural Water Utilities Association (IRWUA) and Jim LaPlant. The new "rest station" (pictured below) includes a drinking fountain, bench and bike rack. Take advantage of the great weather and scenic beauty along the CVT this fall, and check out this stop in Ira!



## SAVE THE DATE!

### Caring for Conservation Auction

**Saturday, March 28, 6:00 PM**

**Sugar Grove Vineyard and Gathering Place  
6602 Ginger Ave., Newton**

Mark your calendar now for the 2nd annual Caring for Conservation Auction. Money raised will go towards the Environmental Education Center project, a hub for outdoor learning experiences as well as a significant tourist attraction and welcome center for Jasper County. Doors open at 6:00pm, silent auction begins at 6:30pm, followed by a live auction. There is no charge to get in, free appetizers and music are provided, along with a cash bar. There will be something for everyone!

We are looking for donations of a product, service or sponsorship. All donations are greatly appreciated and are tax deductible.

Your donation can be something as simple as a gift certificate to your business, cash donation or an item to contribute to a gift basket. If you have a special skill to offer that could be shared with someone as an unique experience, please consider donating your time. Donations can be mailed or dropped off at the Jasper County Armory/Annex Building in Newton. Contact Jade Read at [jread@co.jasper.ia.us](mailto:jread@co.jasper.ia.us) for information about making auction donations.

For information about the Environmental Education Center project, please contact Keri Van Zante, Director, at [kvanzante@co.jasper.ia.us](mailto:kvanzante@co.jasper.ia.us) or call (641) 792-9780. We hope to see you at this exciting event!



## A Summer of Fun

By Katie Cantu

A summer camp “registration night” was held for the first time on March 25, and WOW—we were not expecting the turnout!! Families were lined up outside the Armory/Annex Building to get their kids signed up for camp. We were stunned by the response and our 14 camps filled up within 30 minutes! In response to this, we added additional days to two of our camps, increased the size of them all, and with the help of our Teacher Externs, added four more new camps to the lineup. We made sure every child who was on a waiting list had an opportunity to be in a summer camp.

After much discussion, we are changing the camp registration process a bit for next year. We’ve already set a tentative registration night for April 13, 2020. Expect to see some changes, such as a limit on camps per child and several more camp options for kids to choose from. We absolutely love our summer camps kids and the fun things we are able to do in the parks with them, and everyone who wants to participate should have the chance to do so.

Kids participating in Jasper County Conservation’s summer camps had a lot in store for them this year. A generous contribution from Newton Noon Kiwanis allowed each participating child to receive a t-shirt appropriately imprinted with the summer camp theme: “The Wild is Waiting”. In addition, the funding helped Conservation staff to create camps focusing on astronomy, oceans, wildlife identification, watersports, art projects, and much more! 480 campers, ages 5 to 16, have spent their summer with Conservation staff being “wild” in 18 different camps that spanned 34 days!

Some of the more popular activities included overnight camping, fishing, creek walking, firing off water rockets, star gazing, blacklight tracking, painting on canvas, disc golfing, kayaking, paddle boarding, racing down the giant slip-and-slide, taking nature photos and transferring them onto a natural wood frame, games, petting live snakes and turtles, and so much more.

We all had so much fun this summer! A HUGE thank you to the Newton Noon Kiwanis from Jasper County Conservation and summer camp participants for this wonderful learning opportunity! Please contact me, Greg or Jade if you have any questions about our summer programming.

Thank you  **Kiwanis**  
Newton Noon

## Summer Camp Projects Earn Blue Ribbons at Fair

We would like to say congratulations to Mylie Soppe, Kaylie Guthrie and Alex Riney who each received blue ribbons at the Jasper County Fair for projects they created during JCCB summer camps this year.

Both Mylie and Kaylie received blue ribbons for their beautifully constructed bird feeders which they made at the Woodworking for Wildlife camp in July.

Alex Riney received a blue ribbon for her wonderfully artistic photo of a sawtooth sunflower she transferred onto a wooden plaque. Alex captured this photo at Photography Camp held at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve.



*Above, Clockwise:* Mylie Soppe, Alex Riney and Kaylie Guthrie show off their summer camp projects, which all earned blue ribbons at the Jasper County Fair.

Right: Alex Riney’s photo of a bright blue sky above a sunflower at Krumm Preserve.



## Off the Beaten Path Fall Fest

**Saturday, September 28, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM**  
**Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve**

Registration for the 15th annual trail race will begin at 8:00AM at Ahrens Access of the preserve. The 6K trail race will kick off at 9:00AM and the 3K fun run will begin at 9:15AM.

Further information, including registration forms and directions to Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve, is at [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com) and on Jasper County Conservation's Facebook page. All registered runners and walkers will receive a long-sleeve t-shirt, free entry to the Fall Fest, and an all-you-can-eat pancake brunch!

The Fall Fest kicks off at 10:00 AM at the east entrance of the preserve. The cost is \$10/adult, \$5/child (3 and under are free) and includes all-you-can-eat pancakes served by the Grinnell Fire Department. Join us for wagon rides, kids Storywalk with the Newton Library, archery shoot, face painting, apple cider, and music. Pumpkins, gourds, and decorative cornstalk bundles will be available for purchase at our pumpkin patch. Please bring the whole family, your appetites, and lawn chairs.

Proceeds from the trail race and Fall Festival will benefit Jasper Conservation Connection.



## Wanted: Apples & Fall Decorations

At our Fall Festival, volunteers will be demonstrating how apple cider is pressed and give out free samples of the sweet refreshment. Many bushels of apples are needed to provide for the large crowd expected on Saturday, September 28 at Krumm Preserve. If you have apples to spare, please contact us at (641) 792-9780. We will have a drop off area at our office building in the Jasper County Annex/Armory, 1030 W. 2nd St. S. in Newton. JCCB is also looking for donations of small pumpkin gourds that children can decorate and take home.

We are planning some additional night time fun at the Halloween Hike this year. If you have outdoor fall or Halloween decorations that you don't want anymore, please let us know! The Halloween Hike will be Friday, October 18 at the Newton Izaak Walton League.

## Older, Wiser, Livelier Seniors (OWLS)

**Jasper County Armory/Annex Building,**  
**1030 W. 2nd St. S., Newton**

Come for coffee and a short presentation. All programs are from 10:00-11:00 AM unless noted otherwise.

### **Oct. 9—Urban Fishing**

Meet Tyler Stubbs, Community Fishing Biologist with the Iowa DNR. Tyler will talk about the Community Fishing Program and urban fishing opportunities in Iowa. He will also offer up some great angling tips!



### **Nov. 13—Why Zoos Matter**

Iowa's Blank Park Zoo (BPZ) has been committed for more than a decade to position itself as a leader in conservation. Blank Park Zoo is helping to save wildlife, wild places and improve the lives of others while inspiring Midwesterners to take conservation actions. Want to help pollinators? BPZ has a conservation initiative for that. Want to help support giraffe, rhino and snow leopards in the wild? Help build a school in Madagascar? BPZ has that covered too. Angela Tague, Conservation & Curriculum Coordinator will introduce not only the conservation initiatives that have evolved at Blank Park Zoo, but also those that it has supported for many years, making impacts locally and as well across the globe.



### **Dec. 11—Evergreen Wreaths**

Make your own fresh evergreen wreath to take home in this hands-on, holiday program! Preregistration is required for this program.

## Programs at Ashton Observatory

The Ashton Observatory telescopes will be open for public programs through the end of October on Saturday nights at 8:00pm. There will be talks given in the observatory, followed by observing through the telescopes.

The telescopes will be operated by the Des Moines Astronomical Society (DMAS). For more information, check out their website at [www.dmastronomy.com](http://www.dmastronomy.com).

Several DMAS members will be at our Halloween Hike on October 18th with their telescopes, sharing views of the night sky.

## Youth Mentored Hunt

The Jasper County Pheasants Forever Chapter will be offering a youth mentored hunt on October 12, for youth 12 to 16 years old, who have successfully completed the Hunter Education course. Pheasants Forever is offering this FREE event at the former Wild Feather Hunt Club in Baxter to allow young adults the opportunity to take part in a safe and successful pheasant hunt.

The day will include safety and ethics training, a pheasant hunt, and lunch. All participants will receive a free youth Pheasants Forever hat and hunting vest. Group size is limited to 12 and it typically fills up quickly, so please register early! Visit [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com) and download an application, or an application may be requested at the Jasper County Conservation Office.



## The 15th Annual Halloween Hike

**Friday, October 18, 6:00 PM**

**Newton Izaak Walton League**

This is a fun and educational, *not* scary, event featuring skits performed by Newton Community Theatre actors and members of Jasper Conservation Connection. Hikers will meet various characters along the trail and listen to some familiar and fun songs!

Hour-long hikes will begin at 6:00 PM and will depart every 15 minutes. Each time slot can accommodate around 25 hikers. The last hike will begin at 8:00 PM. Families with young children are encouraged to come earlier in the evening.

The hikes will end with the very popular black-light animal tracking and stargazing with the Des Moines Astronomical Society. Participants will also be able to decorate a pumpkin gourd, roast marshmallows and eat hotdogs while enjoying music by the fire, and take wagon rides around the IKES property.

The cost is \$3.00 per person. Children under age 3 are admitted free. Youth must be accompanied by an adult.

## Projects Completed at Ashton Park

Visitors to Ashton Wildwood Park may recall the wooden stage that an Eagle Scout built many years ago. That stage got a major upgrade this past summer, in anticipation of hosting the band Slipstream at the Caring for Conservation Concert, a fundraiser for the Environmental Education Center. Unfortunately, Mother Nature had the final say and the concert was cancelled due to rain. We are currently working with Slipstream to reschedule.

However, we now have a much larger stage that can be used for future concerts, programs, and even as a platform to show outdoor movies! Part of this project also involved running electricity down to the stage and picnic shelter, so the program possibilities have greatly expanded.

Other new additions at Ashton Park this year include the amazing mural painted on Ashton Observatory by Pauli Zmolek and Lauren Roush, along with many Jasper County students. The mural is of the summer night sky with a prairie scene in the foreground. With the help of the Des Moines Astronomical Society, the constellations Sagittarius and Scorpio are accurately depicted in glow-in-the-dark paint! The official ribbon-cutting for our new mural had been scheduled the same night as the concert and was also cancelled, but we hope to recognize the many people who helped with this project in the near future.

There is also a new water bottle refill station at the restroom/shower house building for park visitors to use. If you haven't been to Ashton Wildwood Park in a while, you should plan to visit and see all the new updates! We hope to see you soon!



*Above:* The stage at Ashton Park has expanded in size and now has electricity available.

## 2019 Teacher Extern Experience

Jasper County Conservation had two teacher externs working with us on EE programming. Iowa STEM Teacher Externships, a program of the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council, is supported through state-appropriated funds and the Iowa DNR Resource Enhancement and Protection Conservation Education Program (REAP-CEP) Grant for Teacher Externships with Environmental and Conservation Professionals, along with investments by Iowa business and industry partners.

During the summer, educators work side-by-side with knowledgeable and skilled industry employees who help bring the classroom curriculum to life. Teacher Externships provide educators with the exposure to answer questions about real-world application, prepare students for careers they may have in the future, and improve educational experiences. Our Jasper County externs were phenomenal! Here is a summary of the summer from one of our externs, Hannah DePenning, a 5th grade teacher at Lynnville-Sully Schools:

"I absolutely loved my time with Jasper County Conservation. Not only did I learn a great deal as an educator, it was a very natural way to combine some of my passions. I love working with youth and spending time in nature, and through the Externship I had ample opportunities to do both. The majority of my time was spent assisting with programs which allowed me to work with a wide age range and to increase my knowledge on the topics. Additionally, I was able to post information about events on the Conservation Department's website and to explore more of the county parks.

Over the summer I was able to plan and hold two of my own camps which was a major highlight. In many ways this was similar to what I do as a fifth grade teacher, but there were also some unique challenges that are continually faced by the conservationists. As a classroom teacher I am lucky enough to know the students I will be working with very well. With a summer camp, it might be the first time you are meeting those attending, plus there can be a lot of flexibility on numbers and age ranges. This prompted me to plan activities and content that would work with a wide range of personalities, knowledge levels and ages. I found this encouraged me to have an even greater amount of background knowledge myself on the topic, which was a nice advantage.

I will definitely be using the many things I learned from my experiences this summer. I now have a much greater understanding and appreciation of what the Conservation Department does on

a day to day basis. The range of services they provide, along with how they are always looking for new ways to reach the community is amazing. In my classroom specifically, I am excited to try out some of the activities and instructional approaches I was lucky enough to witness."

### **Check out our summer blog!**

<https://sites.google.com/newton.k12.ia.us/explorejaspercountyparks/home>



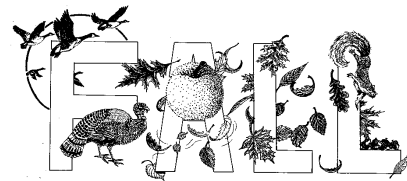
*Above and right:* Teacher Extern Hannah DePenning shows examples of how animals use camouflage and demonstrates how to set up a tent.



*Above:* Teacher Extern Michelle Delvaux helps a summer camper with a craft project.

Jasper County Conservation Board  
1030 W. 2nd St. S.  
Newton, IA 50208

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Newton, Iowa  
Permit No. 636



JASPER COUNTY  
CONSERVATION

**Jasper County Conservation Board**

M - F 8:00 - 5:00 (641) 792-9780  
email: [conservation@co.jasper.ia.us](mailto:conservation@co.jasper.ia.us)  
website: [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com)

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Robyn Friedman Carol Kramer  
Calvin Winn Andrew Stone  
Chris Herbold

**STAFF**

Keri Van Zante.....Director  
Katie Cantu.....Naturalist  
Greg Oldsen.....Naturalist  
Jade Read.....Admin/EE Assistant  
Dennis Cooling.....Park Officer  
Jerry Ratliff.....Park Officer  
Kent Dunsbergen.....Maintenance Technician  
Ethan Vander Pol.....Maintenance Technician  
Jacob Arrowood.....Maintenance Technician

**A Big Thank You To...**

IRWUA and Jim LaPlant for donating the rest station in Ira, Newton Noon Kiwanis for sponsoring our summer camp programs, Bob and Connie Van Ervelde for hosting Wildlife Explorers Camp, DMAS for hosting Junior Naturalist Camp at Ashton Observatory, Bill Yeager for helping with Woodworking for Wildlife summer camp, volunteer instructors who taught hunter education, Julie Dodds for creating the Off the Beaten Path logo, and all the wonderful sponsors of our Caring For Conservation Concert including Greencastle Tavern, Curbin Cuisine, Great Southern Bank, Riggs Printing, Karl Peters, Carol Kramer, HyVee and True Value.

**Thank you!!**

Jasper County Conservation Board's programs are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age and handicap. If anyone believes they have been subjected to discrimination, they may file a complaint with the Jasper County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, Washington, D.C. 29240