



The Jasper County Jewel

Jasper County Conservation Board Quarterly Newsletter Fall 2024

Nature Center Progress

Jasper County Conservation has been working to raise funding for an Environmental Education Center. Along with grants and donations to the Jasper County Conservation Board, \$2.55 million has been raised to build the Education Center (Phase 1) and we will be breaking ground yet this year!

However, because of bids coming in \$300,000 over budgeted costs, our project is still in need of a little assistance from individuals, families, and businesses to make it to the finish line without any significant changes to our current design. Your donation of ANY denomination will help Jasper County Conservation to reach the total funds needed to keep this project moving forward on schedule.

Two additional phases, one adding a 3-season open air classroom and another to build a greenhouse and seed lab will also be part of this ongoing capital campaign. The greenhouse and seed lab, now known as the Geisler-Penquite Land Stewardship Lab, was recently fully funded by a very generous \$700,000 donation from the Geisler-Penquite Foundation! It will also house an indoor archery range and space for outdoor recreation equipment.

For more information about the Environmental Education Center or to make a donation, please contact Keri Van Zante at 641-792-9780 or kvanzante@jasperia.org.

Right: The Environmental Education Center (Phase I) is almost fully funded.



Above: Architect's rendition of the Geisler-Penquite Land Stewardship Lab.

Liberty Avenue Campus Bond Project

Did you know there will be a bond issuance on the next ballot in November? It will be entitled "Liberty Avenue Bond Project," referring to the many county developments on Liberty Avenue near the Sheriff's office.

If successful, the bond will provide dollars **WITHOUT RAISING YOUR TAXES** for a new county engineer shop, a training facility for our Law Enforcement, and, the best part, **FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION!!!**

The Conservation projects that are a part of the bond include classroom components of the Environmental Education Center (tables, chairs, projectors, laptops, microscopes, iPads, aquariums, and native Iowa fur displays), an outdoor archery range at the Environmental Education Center area, and new maintenance shops to be located at Mariposa and Jacob Krumm Nature preserve.

These projects will not happen without the success of this bond, so we would love to have your support! If you have questions about the bond, please feel free to contact Keri Van Zante, kvanzante@jasperia.org or call 641-792-9780.

What's New Around the County

Many updates have been happening all around Jasper County Parks this past summer. Here are a few to watch for!



Above: A new map board at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve replaces the old, brown kiosk sign. New map boards are also at Ashton Wildwood Park, Sugar Creek Nature Preserve and Mariposa Park!



Above: A new parking lot and spilt rail fencing at Sugar Creek Nature Preserve. Mariposa Park has also had some spilt rail fencing added along the road, and the old, brown parking post barriers have been removed.

Right: The “eagle’s nest” tree tower at Mariposa Park’s Nature Play-scape Trail is up and ready to use. The trail has new woodchips and nature play items continue to be improved and updated.



Above: Dan Skokan, President of Jasper Community Foundation gives a check for \$8,100 to Jasper County Conservation’s director, Keri Van Zante, for the purchase of a new fishing dock. The dock is located at the Tuesday Pond in Uhlenhopp Arboretum.



Above: The new dock being installed at Uhlenhopp Arboretum’s Tuesday Pond. This dock was made possible by a grant through Jasper Community Foundation and was built by volunteers with Jasper Conservation Connection.



Above: This new shelter and bench are along the Red Rock Prairie Recreational Trail, just west of Monroe. It is built in memory of Fern Van Dalen.

A Summer of Fun!

Newton Noon Kiwanis continues to generously sponsor JCCB summer camps and the funding helps Conservation staff to create camps focusing on outdoor skills, wildlife identification, water-sports, art projects, and much more! All of the camps quickly overflowed with participants when the registration opened online in May. Over 150 campers, ages 5 to 16, have spent their summer with Conservation staff being “wild” in 18 different camps that spanned 26 days!

Some of the more popular activities included fishing, kayaking, paddle boarding, racing down the giant slip-and-slide, creek stomping, pond netting, games, looking through microscopes, launching rockets, 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 naturalists Katie or Greg if you have any questions about our summer programming.



**Thank
you**



Kiwanis
Newton Noon

Off the Beaten Path Trail Race

Saturday, September 21, 9:00 AM

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve

Registration for the 20th 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/walk will begin at 9:15AM.

Further information, including registration forms and directions to Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve, is at www.jaspercountyconservation.com and on Jasper County Conservation’s Facebook page. All registered runners and walkers will receive a long-sleeve t-shirt. Proceeds from the trail race will benefit Jasper Conservation Connection.



Older, Wiser, Livelier Seniors (OWLS)

Second Wednesday of each month

**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—Liberty Avenue Campus Bond Project

Jasper County Supervisor Brandon Talsma will present on the upcoming county bond proposal, in which citizens will vote on November 5. This is a 3-part project that includes several significant improvements in Jasper County Conservation parks!

Nov. 13—Ashton Observatory

Greg Woolever with the Des Moines Astronomical Society (DMAS) will give an update from Ashton Observatory and share a few things happening in the night sky to watch for!

Dec. 11—Evergreen Wreaths

Make your own fresh evergreen wreath or swag to take home in this hands-on, holiday program! Pre-registration is required for this program by calling (641) 792-9780.



UTV Tours

Wednesdays in September

Uhlenhopp Arboretum

Wednesdays in October

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve

Jasper County Conservation continues to offer tours with our 6 passenger UTV to view the beauty of our natural areas. Several wonderful volunteers lead these tours.

UTV tours will be offered on select days and times this fall. Please call the JCCB office at (641) 792-9780 to check on availability and to make a reservation. Tours are 1 hour long and can accommodate up to 5 people.

Uhlenhopp Arboretum is located at 2706 E. 146th St. N, Grinnell, Iowa 50112.

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve is located at 15148 Jacob Ave., Grinnell, Iowa 50112.



Halloween Hike: "Sound of Music"

Friday, October 18, 6:00 PM

Newton Izaak Walton League

889 Hwy. F-36 W, Newton

This is a fun and educational, *not* scary, event featuring musical skits performed by Newton Community Theatre (NCT) actors and members of Jasper Conservation Connection. Hikers will meet friendly characters along the trail, learn about nature and the environment, and listen to some familiar and fun songs!

This year we are very excited to have performers from "The Sound of Music" production that was held at Newton Community Theatre last June. Listen as the hills come alive with the sounds from nature at six different stops along the trail.

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. The Emerson Hough Chapter of the Izaak Walton League will serve hotdogs and s'mores at the campfire. Popcorn and drinks will also be available.

Youth under age 12 must be accompanied by an adult. *Admission: free-will donation to JCCB.*



Hunter's Breakfast

Saturday, October 26, 6:00-8:00 AM

Newton Izaak Walton League

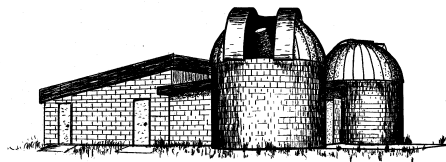
The public is invited to eat breakfast with our friends at the Newton Izaak Walton League on the Pheasant Season opener. The breakfast menu is biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs, hash browns, sausage and toast for \$10. Jasper County Pheasants Forever is sponsoring some prize drawings and a longest pheasant tail competition.



Programs at Ashton Observatory

The Ashton Observatory will be open for public programs through the end of October on Saturday nights at 8:00pm. There will be talks inside the building and telescopes will be outside for open viewing.

The telescopes are operated by the Des Moines Astronomical Society (DMAS). For more information or to reserve a viewing time for a small group, check out their website at www.dmastronomy.com.



Youth Fishing Club

Second Monday of each month

5:30-7:30 PM

Newton Izaak Walton League

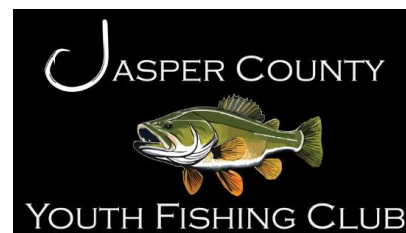
889 Hwy. F-36 W, Newton

The new Jasper County Youth Fishing Club is holding monthly meetings with Naturalist Greg Oldsen to cover different topics related to fishing, along with a handful of kayak/bank fishing tournaments. So far they have met once to learn about kayak fishing and took part in their first fishing tournament at the Deppe Lake in eastern Jasper County.

A big thank you to our sponsors:

Newton Izaak Walton League
 Brooker Plumbing Heating Cooling
 Van Hemert Family Dentistry
 Jasper County Pheasants Forever
 Barney's Services, Inc.
 Pipe Pro's Plumbing
 1st State Bank of Lynnville
 Magnum Automotive
 Scott and Colleen Curry
 Mike Gilbert

If you know a child in grades 3rd-12th in Jasper County who might be interested, email goldsen@jasperia.org.



2024 Teacher Extern Experience

Jasper County Conservation was fortunate this summer to again have 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 Department of Natural Resources (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 externs have been phenomenal and we really enjoy working with them! This year, our externs were Micaela (Sciarrotta) Scott, 4th grade teacher at Woodrow Wilson Elementary and Summer Teed, biology teacher at Colfax-Mingo High School. They assisted naturalists with summer camps, as well as working on various projects in the parks.

Here is a summary of the program by Micaela Scott:

“Working as a teacher extern at Jasper County Conservation has been a wonderful experience this summer! I looked forward to helping with camps, being out at county parks, and learning more about the connections between conservation and the classroom. I loved spending time in the parks with kids doing a variety of activities, from survival camp, wildlife explorers, art camps, water sports camp, astronomy camp, and my own pioneer camp. There was a wide variety of activities to have fun and learn at the same time.

My biggest takeaway from this summer experience has been the reminder to get out and have fun. Teachers are notorious for being stressed out, and let's be honest, a little uptight. We often worry about how fast we are teaching and are stressed about grading tests and papers and doing everything we can to help every student learn and grow. This summer, however, the focus was on experience. It was about getting the kids outside and helping them experience something new. The pace was more laid back, the stress wasn't there,

and best of all, I didn't grade a single assignment! I am grateful I had the experience to work with the kids and remember that learning is about experiencing and there are more ways to incorporate fun in our lessons.”

Right: Teacher Extern Micaela Scott shows off an insect display at Mariposa Park's "Discovery Day" for youth.



Above: Teacher Extern Summer Teed plays a guessing game with campers at her astronomy camp.

Below: Micaela and Summer help watersports campers launch their paddleboards at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve.



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 Board

M - F 8:00 - 4:00 (641) 792-9780
email: conservation@jasperia.org
website: www.jaspercountyconservation.com

BOARD MEMBERS

Robyn Friedman Carol Kramer
Bill Yeager Andrew Stone
Chris Herbold

STAFF

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

A Big Thank You To....

Volunteer instructors who taught hunter education, the Newton Izaak Walton League for the use of their clubhouse and facilities for programs, our many sponsors for the youth fishing club, Bill Yeager for mowing at Uhlenhopp Arboretum, Brad Van Zante for driving UTV tours, Newton Noon Kiwanis for sponsoring our summer camp programs, Ina Heidemann for supporting our EE program and to the many generous donors to our Environmental Education Center!
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