



The Jasper County Jewel

Jasper County Conservation Board Quarterly Newsletter Spring 2025

Nature Center Progress

Construction of the Environmental Education Center is well on its way! After the groundbreaking in October, we had a few setbacks because of rainy, and then freezing and snowy weather, but we are moving forward nicely now.

The concrete work is finished for the foundation and structural steel is nearing completion, which will lead to framing and roofing, and that will be when we can really see the building taking shape. Stay connected with us on Facebook @jaspercountyconservation, as we will be scheduling public construction tours this spring!

As exciting as this all is, we are still looking for donors or business sponsors for several pieces of the building. This includes the solar array, educational displays, classroom/lab stations, landscaping, signage, an elevator, and artwork! This could be your chance to add your stamp of approval on the project, as well as your name on our donor wall! If you are interested in being a part of this special project, please contact Keri Van Zante, Director, at kvanzante@jasperia.org or call (641) 792-9780.

Updates With My County Parks

This past winter, MyCountyParks.com—the platform we use for all our events, cabin rentals, and camping reservations—received a much-needed facelift. The site is now more user-friendly and fully optimized for mobile devices.

Key improvements include a greater emphasis on park and location photos, larger text for easier readability, and faster loading speeds on mobile.

One of the most exciting new features simplifies the reservation process: users can now enter their desired dates, and the site will instantly display availability across all campsites in all our parks. This upgrade makes booking easier than ever, ensuring a seamless experience for all our visitors!

As a reminder our campgrounds open April 1st and our camping and cabin rates are as follows:

Primitive: \$12/night

Modern (water/electric): \$25/night

Uhlenhopp Cabin: \$150/night—2 night minimum

Coneflower Cottage: \$200/night—2 night minimum

Below: Architect's image of the Dana King Ceretti Environmental Education Center, and a link for more information and how you can donate to this project.



OPENING FALL 2025!

TO DONATE, PLEASE SCAN QR CODE BELOW OR CALL JASPER COUNTY CONSERVATION AT 641-792-9780.



DANA KING CERETTI ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER



Above: Board members and staff are meeting at the nature center site every two weeks. Pictured are Keri Van Zante, Andy Stone, Katie Cantu and Carol Kramer.



2 Conservation News

2nd Annual Caring for Conservation Golf Classic

Support Jasper County Conservation as we raise funds for the classroom components of the Environmental Education Center with this 4 person best shot scramble at Westwood Golf Course on May 31, 2025.

The classroom components we are fundraising for include both the upstairs and downstairs classroom tables, chairs, projectors, white boards, laptops, microscopes, iPads, native Iowa display furs, and aquariums. These items will advance Jasper County Conservation's ability to reach more people through programing, education and events.

A four person team (registered as a "family") is \$360.00 - includes 18 holes, cart, lunch and two drink tickets.

Sponsorship

Interested in sponsoring this event? Please contact Jade Read at jread@jasperia.org or mail your sponsorship with your business information to Jasper County Conservation Attn: Jade Read 1030 W. 2nd St. S., Newton, IA 50208. The sponsorship levels are as follows:

Monarch \$150

Shared Green Sign
2 Extra Drink Tickets
Small Logo on Promotions

White Tail \$300

Individual Green Sign
4 Extra Drink Tickets
Medium Logo on All Promotions
Recognition in Tournament

Bald Eagle \$1000

Main Sponsor
Large Banner With Logo
1 Night Stay @ Coneflower Cottage or Uhlenhopp Cabin
Main Logo on All Promotions
Recognition in Tournament

Scan this link for registration and sponsorship!



Goats at Work

Jasper County Conservation is excited to utilize goats as a biological control for invasive species removal. Goats are natural browsers and not grazers, and they actually prefer to eat species at eye level and then move down.

Preferred species of food include multiflora rose, honeysuckle, sumac, poison ivy, and much more. Invasive plants, such as bush honeysuckle, create dense shade that prevents native species from growing. The bare ground under these thickets also causes increased erosion.

By rotating the goat herd through multiple paddocks each year, we hope to set back the invasive species which impact our woodland areas and promote growth of native spring wildflowers and woody species. Many Iowa animals are dependent on these native plants for food, shelter, and reproduction.

A goat herd of 20, owned by Finch Livestock of State Center, will be moved around in half-acre paddocks this year at Ashton Wildwood Park in an attempt to control the invasive species that have been spreading around the park.



Top: Goats are an effective tool for removing invasive brush in a timber. *Bottom:* Bush honeysuckle can quickly overtake native wildflowers and other plants on the forest floor.

Summer Camp Registration

JCCB is offering programs for kids of all ages this summer! Each child is limited to 2 camps only.

Registration begins on Monday, April 14 through www.mycountyparks.com. The link will also be posted on JCCB's Facebook page, @jaspercountyconservation.

Payment for each camp is required online at registration. If a child fails to attend the camp they signed up for, their registration fee will be considered a donation to Jasper County Conservation.

A big thank you to our summer camp sponsor, Newton Noon Kiwanis!



Wildlife Explorers

for kids ages 8-12 years old

Tuesday, June 10, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Wednesday, June 11, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Thursday, June 12, 7:00 AM-11:00 AM

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve

Fee: \$50.00; limit 12 kids, must attend all 3 days

Our group will explore the things that fly, swim, trot and slither in Iowa's great outdoors. On Thursday, we will join licensed bird bander Bob Van Ervelde to net local bird species. Transportation will be provided from Krumm Preserve to the bird netting location. Please bring sack lunches.



Junior Naturalists

for kids ages 8-12 years old

Group 1: Wed., June 18, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Group 2: Thurs., June 19, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Both groups: Fri., June 20, 7:00 PM

Ashton Wildwood Park

Fee: \$40.00; limit 12 kids per camp

Campers will explore the woods with a focus on outdoor survival skills, wildlife, and nature discovery. We will go on a creek hike and learn various outdoor skills such as navigation and fire building. *Special note: the creek hike is very steep and challenging—this is only for kids who are good hikers and don't mind getting muddy!*

Please bring a sack lunch to camp. On Friday night, both groups will enjoy a hotdog picnic and listen to a presentation by the Des Moines Astronomical Society, followed by stargazing. Campers are required to have an adult with them for Friday evening's program.



Nature Quest

for kids ages 5-7 years old

Group 1: Tues., June 24, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Group 2: Wed., June 25, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Newton Izaak Walton League

Fee: \$15.00; limit 10 kids per camp

Our quest is to have fun and explore the outdoors with activities including hiking, pond netting and fishing. A snack will be provided.

Botany & Art Camp

for kids ages 10-14 years old

Thursday, June 26, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Friday, June 27, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Mariposa Park

Fee: \$50.00; must attend both days, limit 10 kids

Take a closer look at what makes plants unique, using art, science experiments, and outdoor exploration. Participants will hike, paint water color botanical art, write in journals, and make various natural art projects. Please bring a sack lunch both days.



4 Conservation Events

Youth Photography Camp

for kids ages 8-12 years old

Group 1: Monday, June 30, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Group 2: Tuesday, July 1, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Uhlenhopp Arboretum

Fee: \$30.00; limit 12 kids per camp

Outdoor photography is a great way to enjoy our parks all year long. Summer offers a wonderful variety of wildflowers, birds, and scenic views that can be captured by young photographers. Campers will learn how to compose landscape and macro photos focusing on elements such as lighting, contrast, and leading lines. Each participant will receive custom printed notebook with a photo captured during camp. Please bring a sack lunch.

Archery and Fishing Camp

for kids ages 10-16 years old

Thursday, July 3, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Mariposa Park

Fee: \$30.00; limit 12 kids

Learn basic shooting techniques and safety on the line. Kids will also take part in fishing at the lake. All equipment will be provided. Please bring a sack lunch.



Watersports Week

for kids ages 8-16 years old

Group 1: Tues., July 8, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Group 2: Wed., July 9, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Group 3: Thurs., July 10, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve

Fee: \$30.00; limit 15 kids per camp

Spend a day on the water kayaking and paddle boarding. Slide down the giant slip and slide and take part in a fun relay. Equipment will be provided, including life vests. Bring a water bottle, sack lunch and sunscreen. Campers may only participate in one watersports day!

Older, Wiser, Livelier Seniors (OWLS)

10:00-11:00 AM

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 otherwise noted.

April 9—Scuba Diving the Indonesian Islands

Randy and Jo Wadle of Newton have an amazing experience to share—exploring the ocean around the Indonesian Islands! Experience a bit of their adventure through stories and photos.

May 14—The Four Seasons: How Weather Affects Our Health

Jamey Robinson, Jasper County EMA Director, will explore the impact of changing weather on the body, from winter's joint pain and heart risks to summer's heat-related illnesses. Participants will learn how to manage seasonal allergies, prevent weather-related health issues, and stay active and healthy year-round through practical tips and discussion.

June 11—Inside the Jasper County Fair

Stacey Wilson and Kara Warrick with Jasper County ISU Extension will take us behind the scenes of the Jasper County Fairgrounds and the events our local 4-H students participate in. From livestock to arts and crafts, this will be a fun way to gear up for the July events!

Youth Fishing Club

Mon., April 14, 5:30 PM: “Pre-spawn Tactics”

Mon., May 12, 5:30 PM: “Crappie Fishing”

Mon, June 9, 5:30 PM: “Bluegill Fishing”

Newton Izaak Walton League

889 Hwy. F-36 W, Newton

This group is for Jasper County youth in grades 3-12. Please contact Greg Oldsen for more information at goldsen@jasperia.org. You can also follow the group's Facebook page @JasperCountyYouthFishingClub.

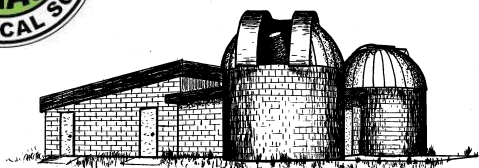


Programs at Ashton Observatory

The Ashton Observatory telescopes at Ashton Wildwood Park will be open for public programs at 8:00 PM Saturday evenings, April-October. There will be talks given in the observatory, followed by observing through the telescopes. For



more detailed information, go to the Des Moines Astronomical Society's (DMAS) website at www.dmastronomy.com.



Rendezvous with the Chichaqua

Free Skinners

Saturday, May 10, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

Sunday, May 11, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Ashton Wildwood Park

See early 1800's lifestyles of mountain men on the frontier at this free public event. Catch craftsmen and artists at work demonstrating skills from the 18th and 19th centuries, including blacksmithing, basket weaving, scrimshaw, leather working, and more. Many craftsmen offer their handmade items for sale or trade.

Also witness mountain men contests using primitive skills: bow shoots, tomahawk and knife throws, cooking contests and a cannon ball toss. Don't miss the Candy Man with his Candy Cannon, several times each day!



Scholarship for Students

The Emerson Hough Chapter of the Izaak Walton League is offering a \$750 scholarship this year for a graduating Jasper County High School student who is majoring in conservation or natural resources.

The scholarship application is due April 1st. Information and applications are available through high school guidance offices, online at www.jaspercountyconservation.com, or at the Jasper County Conservation office, 1030 W. 2nd St. S., Newton.



Native Plant Sale

Saturday, May 17, 10:00 AM-1:00 PM or until sold out

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

As you are planning your garden and landscaping projects this spring, consider using some native plants. Our native pollinators and other animals depend on these native plants for food and reproduction.

We will have a variety of plants to choose from suited for a wide range of growing conditions.

Single plants are \$3/each. A complete list of plant species will be posted on our Facebook page prior to the event, @jaspercountyconservation.



Uncle Jake's Syrup for Sale

Uncle Jake's Sugar Shack at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve had an early and short season. About 500 gallons of sap boiled down to 12 gallons of finished product.

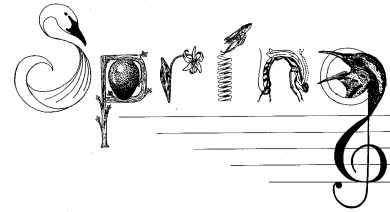
Jars of our pure maple syrup are available for \$12/12 oz jar. We are limiting syrup purchases to two bottles per household. Any remaining bottles of syrup will be sold at a first come basis starting July 1st. They will sell out fast, so don't delay getting yours! We are also selling heather-green Uncle Jake's Sugar Shack t-shirts that have the syrup logo on the front. They are \$15/shirt.

Money from the sales goes directly back into the Sugar Shack operation. These items are available for purchase at the Jasper County Armory/Annex Building, 1030 W. 2nd St. S. in Newton. Thanks for supporting conservation!



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

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**JASPER COUNTY
CONSERVATION**

Jasper County Conservation Board

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

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Jerry Ratliff.....Park Officer
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Tristan Hunt.....Maintenance Technician
Jacob Arrowood.....Maintenance Technician

A Big Thank You To...

Ina Heidemann for supporting our educational programming and Newton High School Experienced Based Career Education program for taking care of our program animals. Thank you!

Shelter House Reservation

Shelter houses located in Jasper County parks can be reserved for \$25 per day. Shelters are located at Uhlenhopp Arboretum, Ashton Wildwood Park, Mariposa Recreation Area, Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve, Reimer Refuge, Wagaman Mill, and the Chichaqua Valley Recreation Trail. Call (641) 792-9780 to make your reservation.

#ExploreJasperCountyParks

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, sexual orientation, gender identification, 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