

The Prairie Star

Newsletter

Volume 38, Issue 3

Fall 2021

Improvements Planned for White Oak Conservation Area

By **Dave Sedivec**

Director

The Mahaska County Conservation Board has received quite a few questions this year regarding the pond at White Oak Conservation Area. Most of the questions have involved the aquatic vegetation found in the pond which, at times, makes fishing or boating challenging. MCCB has worked on improving the water quality of this pond in the past and has more plans to improve it in the near future.

To explain what has been done at White Oak Conservation Area, I will start at the beginning, at least for me. When I was hired as the director in 2010, the county was already working on a watershed improvement project at White Oak. This project was a collaborative effort between the Mahaska County



The 20-acre pond located at White Oak Conservation Area is located 3.4 miles south of Rose Hill, IA on Ventura Avenue.

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Conservation Board, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Mahaska County Soil and Water Conservation District. Due to the logistics of the area, two at-grade structures were constructed at the upper end of the pond. These structures have done a good job of reducing the amount of sediment entering the pond, but the pond is still nutrient rich. Therefore, aquatic vegetation is still found growing in the water.

The two most common aquatic plants that concern the public are Curly Leaf Pond Weed and Duckweed. Both species can grow into large mats and make boat navigation and fishing difficult. We have been communicating with the District Fisheries Management Biologist from the Iowa DNR and have developed a management plan for the near future. The plan will involve a chemical herbicide application each year for a three-year period. This technique has proven effective on other, similar water bodies. I want to thank the Iowa DNR for their help with this project, for this is their area of expertise.

We appreciate the feedback from the public, so if you have questions concerning this project or anything else that we do, don't hesitate to contact us.

Curly Leaf Pond Weed



Duck Weed



Curly Leaf Pond Weed FACTS:

Distribution:

- Native to Eurasia, Africa, and Australia.
- Now found in 48 states and has become invasive in many areas.
- Found throughout the state of Iowa.

Threats:

- Out-competes native aquatic plants because it starts growing before native plants and forms dense stands.
- The dense stands may also cause problems with recreational activities such as fishing, swimming, and recreational watercraft users.

Duck Weed FACTS:

Distribution:

- Native to Iowa
- Found throughout the state of Iowa.

Threats:

- When it covers the entire surface of water, it will act as a barrier between the water and the air, causing the dissolved oxygen in the pond to plummet. This can eliminate other plant species and lead to a fish kill.

Benefits:

- Thrives in nutrient-rich water.
- Most animals eat it, so it is an important part of the food chain.

Eveland Access Cabins

1681 – 290th St., Oskaloosa, Iowa 52577



The Apple and Birch Cabins are available for rent year-round. To view pictures of the cabins and to find up-to-date information on renting, visit our website www.mahaskaconservation.com or call MCCB at (641)673-9327.



Experience

Programs for Adults

If pre-registrations are required, call (641)673-9327 ext. 2 or email decook@mahaskacounty.org.



O.W.L.S.

Older, Wiser, Livelier Souls

Pre-registrations are appreciated.
Call MCCB at (641)673-9327 ext. 2 or
email decook@mahaskacounty.org.

11:00 – 12:00 Presentation
12:00 – 12:30 Lunch & Fellowship time
(Bring your own lunch)

McNeill Stone Mansion

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Friday, October 15, 2021

Environmental Learning Center, Caldwell Park

The McNeill Stone Mansion is one of Mahaska County's largest and most elaborate residential properties. Join us as we listen from the Innkeepers, Gary and Virginia Walker, talk about this building's history from the time it was built in 1908-09. The architectural details created within this building are amazing and you will be glad to know it is a local B&B!

Rain Barrels

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Friday, November 12, 2021

Environmental Learning Center, Caldwell Park

What are the benefits of collecting rainwater? Guest speakers from William Penn University will share information about water collection with rain barrels and about their program that offers rain barrels to the community.

Cookie Exchange Party

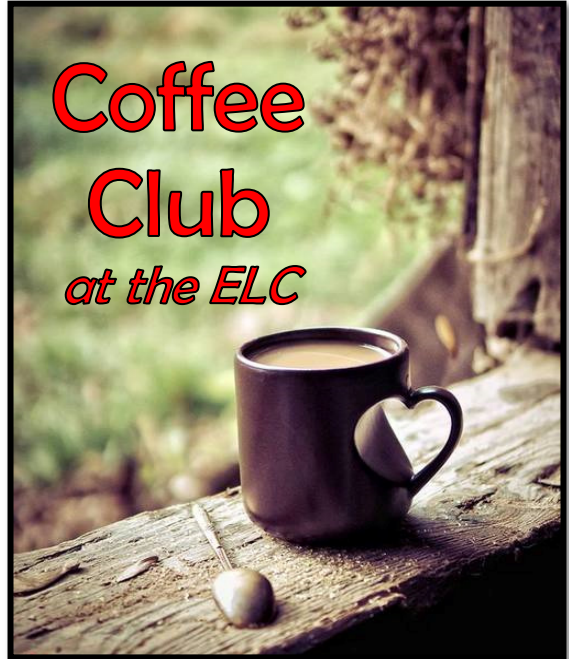
11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Friday, December 10, 2021

Environmental Learning Center, Caldwell Park

Cookie lovers need to come to this party to receive and/or exchange cookies for the upcoming holidays! All you need to do is bring 2 dozen (or more) of a cookie that you have baked or purchased and share with others. We will swap cookies and recipes (likely eat some, too). We will also have some fun and laughs with some games that will bring out your inner "elf".

Coffee Club at the ELC



9:30-10:30 am

Friday, September 3rd

Friday, October 8th

Friday, November 12th

Friday, December 3rd

Join us at the "Coffee Club" for coffee, refreshments and fellowship!

Enjoy the coffee, snacks and company. We have a great time visiting and learning about fascinating things in nature and what is new with MCCB. Bring a friend!

Donations will be appreciated to help purchase supplies for future Coffee Clubs.

We meet in the Environmental Learning Center - feel free to look around after having coffee. There are many great displays to see in the ELC.

Registrations are not needed.