



# The Prairie Star

## Newsletter

Volume 39, Issue 2

Fall 2022

### Flag Retirement Box at Caldwell Park

**By Laura DeCook**

Naturalist

Local Boy Scout, Brody Barnhart recently completed and installed flag retirement boxes for his Eagle Scout project which are intended to help area residents deposit their faded and tattered flags for proper destruction. One of those boxes is now installed at Caldwell Park, adjacent to the front parking lot of the Environmental Learning Center. The other box is located at the VFW in Oskaloosa.

Barnhart designed the boxes and had them built to help people learn about flag etiquette and the importance of properly retiring a flag. When is your flag ready to retire? Sometimes your flag will only need to be cleaned by machine washing it in mild detergent and cold water to restore its original appearance. Regular cleaning of your flag can extend its life considerably. Flags should be hung to dry or laid flat. Do not fold the flag if it is damp. Mending a tattered flag is recommended. When you believe your flag is unable to be repaired or is too tattered, then the flag is ready to be retired. The retirement box at Caldwell Park is now one of the local options to retire your flag.



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# Did You Know?

## *Eveland Access Cabins*

1681 – 290<sup>th</sup> St., Oskaloosa, Iowa 52577



### **Apple and Birch Cabins**

are available for rent year-round.

To view pictures of the cabins  
and to find rental information,  
visit the MCCB website:

[www.mahaskaconservation.com](http://www.mahaskaconservation.com)  
or call MCCB at (641)673-9327.



## **EVELAND ACCESS CAMPGROUND**

### **Camping Season Ends**

**12:00 pm**

**Monday, October 31, 2022**



**\$15.00 per night**

**No reservations.**

Camping rules & regulations are found online  
at [www.mahaskaconservation.com](http://www.mahaskaconservation.com).

## *To all the donors, volunteers, & event participants... THANK YOU!*

*Jane Krutzfelt – donation*

*Mary Jane Sullivan – book donation & program volunteer*

*Lona Brager – Program & animal care volunteer*

*Kim & Steve Dixon – book donation*

*Chad Farner – program volunteer*

*Janet Farner – program volunteer*

*Kim Ferguson – cleaning volunteer*



Donations  
are  
appreciated!



- Worms for feeding educational animals
- Frozen mice for feeding educational snakes
- Bags of candy for Halloween Bash
- Quart and pint-sized mason jars with lids
- Butterfly nets for programs
- Collapsible awnings for outdoor programs



# Nature Notes



## Winter Bird Feeding by Laura DeCook, MCCB Naturalist

Bird feeding is one of the most popular recreational activities enjoyed by people across the country. Do you plan on feeding birds this winter? The best time to start feeding birds in Iowa is during October or early November. During the fall season, birds are exploring and locating their winter-feeding areas. If you have your feeders up by the first part of November, more birds will likely visit your feeders during the winter.

When preparing an area for bird feeding, you must first consider the basic needs for wildlife. Like humans, wildlife need food, water and shelter in order to survive. Certain plants can easily provide food for birds. Sunflowers and honeysuckles are good food sources in the fall. Crabapples, rose hips, nut-bearing trees, and vines such as grapes and bittersweet are good winter food sources. Areas that have flowers such as Black-eyed susans, goldenrod, coneflower, sumac, marigolds and zinnias provide seeds during the winter. A source of water is also important for the birds.

When planning a location for winter bird feeding and viewing, try to place your feeders where they are out of the wind, in a place for you to easily view them and have easy access to fill them when needed. Also, hang the feeders near cover such as trees or shrubs which provide perching areas for birds to wait for their turn to feed or fly to for protection if a predator is nearby. If you do not have cover available, you can easily build a temporary one by creating a brush pile or use old Christmas trees.

One of the most attractive sources of food for birds is sunflower seed. Black oil sunflower seeds are the most popular and it is high in protein and fat. The next popular seed is white proso millet, followed by suet and peanuts. Niger thistle seed is more expensive, but very popular with American goldfinches and house finches. Did you know that birds eat 30 to 80 percent of their body weight per day?

Birds have different types of bodies, bills, and feet so they tend to have different feeding styles. When selecting a feeder, you can make or purchase different types of feeders to attract different types of birds.

Ground feeders attract cardinals, blue jays, pheasants, quail, pigeons, mourning doves, juncos and various sparrows. These birds often feed on seed that has spilled from hanging feeders. These birds can be fed with food placed upon the ground or in a tray mounted on a stationary object such as a post, stump or deck railing. Placing this feeder 5 to 10 feet from your house would provide an ideal distance for viewing.

Hanging feeders attract goldfinches, chickadees, nuthatches, pine siskins and woodpeckers. These feeders often sway in the wind – and the birds do not mind this. Just remember to place the hanging feeders at least 5 feet off the ground and out of jumping reach of squirrels.

Clinging feeders do not provide perches and come in a variety of styles. Birds with feet adapted for grabbing are attracted to these feeders. The hairy, downy and red-bellied woodpeckers will be seen at clinging feeders because their feet enable them to grab this type of feeder. Clinging feeders include log feeders, an onion bag filled with suet, or a dead tree.

Birds tend to feed in different areas, so you may want to provide different types of feeders. This will also ensure a wide variety of bird species visiting your yard throughout the winter!



# Experience

## Programs for Adults



### O.W.L.S.

*Older, Wiser, Livelier Souls*

**Pre-registrations are needed.**

Call MCCB at (641)673-9327 or  
email [decook@mahaskacountyia.gov](mailto:decook@mahaskacountyia.gov).

**BRING A LUNCH AND A FRIEND!**

#### Nelson Pioneer Farm

11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Friday, August 19, 2022

Environmental Learning Center, Caldwell Park

Come and learn about one of Mahaska County's historical treasures as Margaret Spiegel, Nelson Pioneer Farm Director, shares information about the farm, exhibit updates, and upcoming events.

#### Backstage Pass to the ELC

11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Friday, September 9, 2022

Environmental Learning Center, Caldwell Park

Bring a lunch to eat and fellowship with other guests and afterwards take a "backstage" tour of the Environmental Learning Center. You will learn about new display exhibits and how the education animals including the 1,000-gallon aquarium is maintained.

#### Owls – Silent Hunters of the Night

11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Friday, October 21, 2022

Environmental Learning Center, Caldwell Park

Owls are superb hunters of the night and are fascinating in many other ways. Come and learn about some of Iowa's owl species by MCCB's naturalist, Laura DeCook.

#### Restoring Treasures

11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Friday, November 18, 2022

Environmental Learning Center, Caldwell Park

Judy Groenendyk, owner of Brushed by Jude, will be our guest speaker to talk about restoring furniture and other treasured items. She will also demonstrate how she can transform something old into something new. Come and see her amazing talent!

### Coffee Club at the ELC



**9:00-10:00 am**

Friday, August 12<sup>th</sup>

Friday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>

Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>

Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup>

Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>

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

Enjoy the coffee, home-baked snacks and company. We have a great time visiting and learning about fascinating things in nature and with MCCB. Bring a cup and a friend!

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

We meet in the Environmental Learning Center's Discovery Lab (upper level). Feel free to tour the exhibits after having coffee. There are many great displays to see in the ELC! **Reservations are not needed to participate.**



#### O.W.L.S. Christmas

#### Potluck & Games

11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Friday, December 16, 2022

Environmental Learning Center,  
Caldwell Park



# Investigate

## Programs for Kids

If pre-registrations are needed, contact (641)673-9327 or [decook@mahaskacountyia.gov](mailto:decook@mahaskacountyia.gov).



**Knee-High Naturalist programs are free activities for kids ages 5 and younger.** The program activities are designed to help foster learning about nature and exploring the outdoors. Adults that bring the children to the program need to remain with them during the program. **Pre-registration is required to participate.**

**10:00 – 11:00 a.m.**

- September 20 Nature Play Date**  
@ Quercus Wilderness Area
- October 11 Turtle Races**  
@ Environmental Learning Center
- November 8 Hibernation**  
@ Environmental Learning Center
- December 6 Pigs In A Bush & Pajamas**  
(AKA hedgehogs and wear pj's)  
@ Environmental Learning Center



## Homeschool Science Labs

**Contact MCCB  
to sign up!**



**Free monthly programs for your children that will provide hands-on learning experiences and excite them about science and nature.**  
**Registrations are needed!**

- September 9 Insect Life Cycles**  
10:00 – 11:00 am  
Environmental Learning Center
- October 14 Fall Hike & Campfire Building**  
10:00 – 11:30 am OR 1:00 - 2:30 pm  
Quercus Wilderness Area
- November 3 Lego Molecules**  
10:00 – 11:00 am OR 1:00 – 2:00 pm  
Environmental Learning Center
- December 9 History of Bison**  
10:00 – 11:00 am OR 1:00 – 2:00 pm  
Environmental Learning Center

**“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn”.**

~ Benjamin Franklin ~



Return this form with your payment to sign up for the Youth Outdoor Field Day!

**Saturday,  
Sept. 24, 2022**

## 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Outdoor Field Day

*"Connecting Kids with the Outdoors"*

### Pre-register by September 14!

\$5.00 per person (children & adults) if registered by noon on Sept. 14

- Early registrations include a t-shirt for each person signed up.

\$10.00 per person (children & adults) if registration is received after 12 pm on Sept. 14 through the day of event

- Late registrations do not include a t-shirt.
- Walk-up registrations will be taken at the event.



**8:00 am – 12:30 pm**

Join MCCB, local organizations, and conservation groups at the Russell Wildlife Area for a day of hands-on outdoor activities for kids and their families! Visit a variety of activities at your own pace. Also, kids can earn a participation prize!

Registration forms are found at [www.mahaskaconservation.com](http://www.mahaskaconservation.com) or pick one up at the Environmental Learning Center.

- DISC GOLF • TREE IDENTIFICATION
- TURKEY HUNTING • MAHASKA COUNTY SHERIFF K-9 DOG "ROCCO" • PIONEER GAMES
- KAYAK SAFETY • CHILD SAFETY & AWARENESS SKILLS ... & MORE!

Check back on Facebook (Mahaska County Conservation) for more additional activities & updates!

Questions? Call MCCB at (641)673-9327

Russell Wildlife Area is located at 2254 – 200<sup>th</sup> St., New Sharon, IA.

## Youth Outdoor Field Day Registration Form

RETURN THIS FORM WITH THE REGISTRATION FEES TO:

Mahaska County Conservation Board  
2342 Hwy. 92  
Oskaloosa, IA 52577

Names of children/age:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

(More names can be added to the back of this form)

Names of adults attending:

- \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Address \_\_\_\_\_
- Email \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_
- Parent/Guardian's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_
- Parent/Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Registrations received by noon on Sept. 14 are \$5.00 per person (children and adults) and includes a t-shirt for each registered person.

➤ Registrations for children and adults received after 12 pm on Sept. 14 will be \$10.00 each and will not include a t-shirt.

### Consent for Photographs

(Circle one) I GIVE / I DO NOT GIVE permission and consent to allow photographs to be taken of the participants registered on this form during the Youth Outdoor Field Day activities. I further give permission and consent that any such photographs may be published and used by the Mahaska County Conservation Board to illustrate and promote the event experience for future educational programs.

Indicate the size of each registered person's t-shirt:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Small
- \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Medium
- \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Large
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Small
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Medium
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Large
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adult X Large
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adult XX Large

Total Payment \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Checks may be written to MCCB.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_  
Method of Payment: Cash / Check / \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount Paid: \$ \_\_\_\_\_



9<sup>th</sup> Annual

# Halloween Bash

at Eveland Access

Saturday, October 22, 2022

This is a FREE and FUN event for the whole family!  
Come for fun during the day and see the decorations and  
lighted campsites during the auto tour at night.

**SHELTER HOUSE ACTIVITIES:**

1:00–4:00 pm **Ghoulish Games** (for all ages)

- Yard Games
- Halloween Bingo

1:00 pm **Kids' Decorated Pumpkin Contest** (bring your own decorated pumpkin)

2:00 pm **Creepy Contests** (for all ages)

- Coloring Contest
- Worm Pie Eating Contest
- Best Witch Cackle Contest
- Best Owl Call Contest

3:00 pm **Costume Parade** (for all ages at shelter house)

3:30 pm **Spooky Storytelling by Mrs. Fox** (in shelter house)

4:00–5:30 pm **Trick-or-Treating** (from campsite to campsite)

7:00–9:00 pm **Auto Tour of Campsite Decorations & Judging of Best Campsite Decorations**

9:15 pm **Award Presentation for Best Campsite Decorating** (in shelter house)

*Campers are asked to decorate their campsite with a Halloween theme and provide treats to hand out to trick-or-treaters. The campsites will be judged for the "Best Decorated Site" by anyone in a vehicle driving through the evening auto tour. The winner will be awarded a free camping coupon book (11 free nights = \$150.00 value) & more great prizes!*

*Camp sites are \$15.00 per night on a first-come, first-served basis.*

**MAHASKA COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD 641.673.9327**

Eveland Access is located at 2890 Galeston Ave., Oskaloosa, IA 52577  
(4 miles south of Beacon, IA).



# Discover Programs for All Ages

If pre-registrations are needed, contact (641)673-9327 or [decook@mahaskacountyia.gov](mailto:decook@mahaskacountyia.gov).

## Canoeing Lessons

6:30 – 8:00 pm

Thursday, August 11, 2022

Russell Wildlife Area

2254 – 200<sup>th</sup> St., New Sharon, IA 50207



Have you ever wanted to learn the basics about canoeing? Join MCCB on this summer evening program that will teach the basics of canoeing skills and safety. After practicing, we will test your new skills with some fun water games!

**Pre-registration is required to participate. Registration deadline is August 10<sup>th</sup>.**

## Canoe & Kayak Float

Time TBA

Saturday, August 20, 2022

Eveland Access

2890 Galeston Ave., Oskaloosa, IA



Join MCCB on a canoe and kayak float down the Des Moines River. The tentative plan is to leave from Eveland Access to a soon to be determined location. More launch information will be given on Mahaska County Conservation Facebook as it becomes available.

Registrations are needed to participate! Contact MCCB at (641)673-9327 or email [decook@mahaskacountyia.gov](mailto:decook@mahaskacountyia.gov) to reserve them at no cost.

At sign up, we will need:

1. # people coming with you
2. # canoes/kayaks (if needed)
3. Life jacket sizes (if needed)
4. Contact information

**NOTE: The river float will be contingent upon the weather and river level conditions. Contact MCCB for updates.**

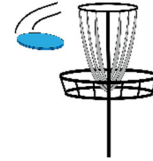
## Disc Golf 101

6:00 – 7:30 pm

Friday, August 26, 2022

Environmental Learning Center

2342 Hwy. 92, Oskaloosa, IA



The Mahaska County Conservation Board and the Oskaloosa Disc Golf Club is offering an evening Disc Golf class on Friday, August 26<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-7:30 pm to teach interested participants how to play disc golf. We will meet in the parking lot behind the Environmental Learning Center at Caldwell Park which is the location of a new 18-hole disc golf course.

This is a free event, and no experience or equipment is needed. Participants (all ages) will learn about the variety of discs used by players and how to throw a disc. The Oskaloosa Disc Golf Club will have discs available to use.

**Pre-registration is required to participate. Registration deadline is August 24<sup>th</sup>.**

## I Recycle!

6:30 – 7:30 pm

Monday, November 14, 2022

Environmental Learning Center

2342 Hwy. 92, Oskaloosa, IA



In honor of *Iowa Recycles Day* (November 15) come and learn about all your recycling options in Mahaska County. Whether it is cardboard, glass, used motor oil, plastic grocery bags, and paper...it has a place to go. Be a part of Iowa's recycling movement! **Pre-registration is required to participate. Registration deadline is November 10<sup>th</sup>.**

**Feed  
Fish  
Fridays!**  
**@ 12:30 pm**



Come to the Environmental Learning Center to watch fish eat in the 1,000-gallon aquarium! Afterwards, check out all the activities in the Discovery Lab.

**Registrations are not needed!**

September 2<sup>nd</sup>   October 7<sup>th</sup>   November 4<sup>th</sup>   December 2<sup>nd</sup>





# Volunteers



**Volunteers are a tremendous help to MCCB!**

**There are some ways YOU can volunteer this fall.**

Contact MCCB if you are willing to help by calling (641)673-9327 or email [decook@mahaskacountyia.org](mailto:decook@mahaskacountyia.org).

- Program greeter
- Bake snacks for Coffee Club programs
- Attend programs to help with activities
- Youth Outdoor Field Day
  - Registration tables
  - Photograph event activities
  - Assist with event activities
  - Event set up and clean up
- Halloween Bash
  - Contest judge (3 needed)
  - Help direct traffic during evening campsite tour
  - Collect & count ballots for best campsite decorating
  - Event set up and clean up
  - Photograph event activities
- Environmental Learning Center
  - Greeter and monitor displays
  - Feed educational animals
  - Light housekeeping: sweeping, dusting
  - Replace fishing line on program fishing poles



## **The Last Volunteer Training of 2022!**

**SEPTEMBER 6, 2022**

**6:00 – 7:00 PM**

**@ ENVIRONMENTAL  
LEARNING CENTER**

***Sign up today!***

### **The Prairie Star**

The Prairie Star is the quarterly newsletter of the Mahaska County Conservation Board and is emailed to those persons on our mailing list. There is no charge for the newsletter, although contributions to help defray costs are greatly appreciated. Please help us by keeping us informed of any change of email address or if you no longer wish to receive our newsletter.



### **MAHASKA COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER HOURS**

**12:30 to 4:30 p.m.**

**Monday through Friday or by appointment.**

Mahaska County's programs and facilities are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on non-discrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, and handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Mahaska County Conservation Board or the office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington D.C. 29240.



## **MCCB Meeting Dates:**

### **Mahaska County Conservation Board Monthly Meetings**

Begins at 7:30 p.m. – Public is welcome to attend.  
Environmental Learning Center (lower level),  
Caldwell Park

**August 4, 2022  
September 1, 2022  
October 6, 2022  
November 3, 2022  
December 1, 2022**

*Dates and times are subject to change.  
Call MCCB at (641)673-9327 for more information.*

## **Mahaska County Conservation Board**

<b>Peggy Wright</b> , New Sharon	Chairperson
<b>Willie Van Weelden</b> , Oskaloosa	Vice-Chairperson
<b>Steve Dixon</b> , Oskaloosa	Secretary
<b>Curt Jager</b> , Eddyville	Member
<b>Linda Fox</b> , Rose Hill	Member

### **STAFF**

<b>Dave Sedivec</b>	Director
<b>Laura DeCook</b>	Naturalist
<b>Tommy VanRenterghem</b>	Park Ranger
<b>Jason Ryan</b>	Park Ranger
<b>Dorothy Wedgewood</b>	Administrative Assistant

### **Mission Statement**

*The primary mission of this organization shall be to create an awareness of our natural environment, encourage a state of harmony between people and their natural communities, develop and implement public conservation policy, maintain the public's investment in our natural resources, and strive diligently within the budget restraints to provide adequate services for the environmental education and enjoyment of the citizens of Mahaska County.*