



Volume 34, Issue 3

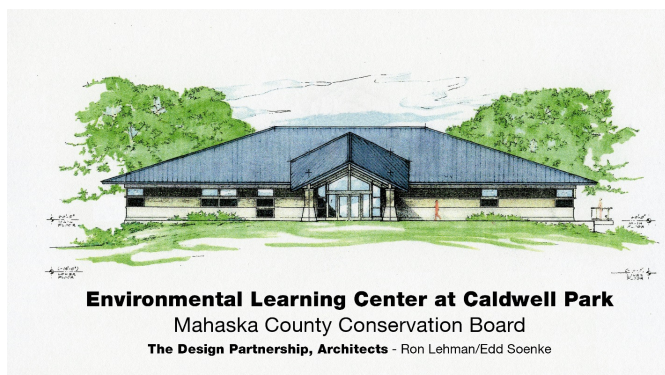
Summer 2017

## Mahaska County Environmental Learning Center is Coming Soon

**By Dave Sedivec**  
MCCB Director

This is an exciting time for the Conservation Board and the community. In August of 2008, the Mahaska County Conservation Board contracted with The Design Partnership Architects and Midwest Construction Consultants to design and build an Environmental Learning Center at Caldwell Park. It has been a long and sometimes exhausting process, but the ELC will soon become a reality.

Bids for the construction of the project were opened on Thursday July 6, 2017. The Mahaska County Conservation Board met later that evening to accept bids. Then the MCCB met with the Mahaska County Board of Supervisors on Friday July 7<sup>th</sup> to seek the approval to accept the bids at the amount Not To Exceed \$3,675,000. Contracts with the builders are being prepared at the time of writing this article and construction should soon begin.



The Mahaska County Conservation Board would like to thank the myriad of people and organizations that made this opportunity possible. All of the Mahaska County Conservation Board members and staff (past and present) that have worked diligently, the countless volunteers and the Mahaska County Supervisors (past and present) have played a major role in this project. We would also like to express our gratitude to the voters of Unincorporated Mahaska County and University Park for approving a portion of the Local Option Sales Tax to go towards this project. I'm sure that I have unintentionally left someone or organization out, but that doesn't diminish your contribution.

I wish everyone a safe and enjoyable time outdoors.

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# Nature Notes

## Total Solar Eclipse "The Great American Eclipse"

by Laura DeCook, MCCB Naturalist

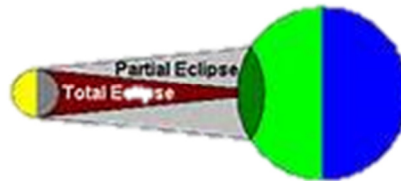


Monday, August 21, 2017 is the date set for a unique and rare solar event to take place across the United States and no other country around the world. A total solar eclipse will make its path from coast to coast, providing us a sight that won't be experienced *exactly* like this again until January 25, 2316. Solar eclipses are an annual event around the Earth, but usually cross more than one country. Not this one! The next "regular" annual solar eclipse will cross the United States and other countries in 2024.

What is a solar eclipse? A solar eclipse is when the moon goes between the Earth and the Sun, and its shadow hits the Earth. If you're in that shadow, you see the eclipse. A total solar eclipse is seen when the Moon's inner (umbral) shadow sweeps across the Earth's surface. The path of the Moon's umbral shadow is called the Path of Totality. In order to see the Sun become completely eclipsed by the moon, you must watch it within the narrow path of totality. The path of totality is typically 10,000 miles long and 100 miles wide. Here in Mahaska County, we will be outside the path of totality, but we will be able to view a partial solar eclipse – still a fantastic experience! This total solar eclipse will be the closest to our state in many years.

MCCB will be hosting a couple educational programs about the total solar eclipse. Check them out on pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter.

**Total Solar Eclipse on  
August 21, 2017**



## MCCB's Summer Staff

*Here are some helpful and  
friendly faces in  
our county parks . . .*

*Left to Right: Lake Heaton, Mike Ryan,  
Logan Roberts and Kendal Marshall*



# EXPLORE MAHASKA COUNTY



Mahaska County has over 1,500 acres of forests, wetlands, prairies and parks to explore. The Mahaska County Conservation Board manages 21 separate parks, river accesses and wildlife areas with over six miles of maintained trails.

Check out this issue's featured area!

## North Skunk River Wildlife Area

By Jason Ryan, Conservation Technician

The North Skunk River Wildlife Area is one of the newest additions to Mahaska County Conservation. It is located northeast of New Sharon on 110<sup>th</sup> Street, approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile east off of Highway 146. Many of you may be familiar with the area commonly known as the New Sharon Water Well. The North Skunk River Wildlife Area surrounds that piece of property. It was obtained by the Conservation Board on April, 15<sup>th</sup> 2015 from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation purchased the 93 acre property from Rahn Savage in December of 2013. The local Pheasants Forever chapter along with many other donors played a huge role in the land acquisition. With all the different organizations that donated to this project, we were able to apply for and receive a Habitat Stamp Grant. Without the support of local, state and many neighboring habitat organizations, this great addition may not have been possible.

The 93 acres are separated by the North Skunk River and a small section of 110<sup>th</sup> Street. The Conservation Board now has three areas along the North Skunk River providing access to the river as well as hunting opportunities. The wildlife area is obviously in a common flooding area being right next to the river. The property is enrolled in a flood protection program which limits what can be done with the property. There is roughly 4 acres of food plots currently on the property which is just shy of allowed amount. The area has been great for local hunters; providing rich habitat needed to sustain game which in turn can profit the hunter with successful game harvests. The majority of this property is grassland; great habitat for pheasants and quail when not flooded.

The next time you are out in this area make sure and swing by and check things out. We have a little parking lot right off of 110<sup>th</sup> Street with a sign listing all of the partnerships we had throughout the acquisition process.





# Summer Programs



## Dutch Oven Cooking

**Tuesday, July 25**  
**6:00 – 8:00 pm**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**



This evening program will provide you an opportunity to learn how to cook with Dutch ovens. You will also learn about seasoning, caring and storing this type of oven. Bring your own table service and drink as we will sample our creations! **Please sign up for this program by calling MCCB at (641)673-9327. Registration deadline is July 24<sup>th</sup>.**

## Evening Fossil Dig

**Friday, July 28**  
**7:00 – 8:00 pm**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**



Bring your family out to the Russell Wildlife Area and take a hike with the naturalist to search for fossils of plants and animals that scientists believe lived in a shallow sea across Iowa nearly 300 million years ago. You will find fossils such as crinoids, brachiopods and even bryozoans. Be sure to bring a flashlight, wear sturdy shoes and clothes that can get dirty! **This event is for all ages. Please sign up for this program by calling MCCB at (641)673-9327. Registration deadline is July 27<sup>th</sup>.**

## Fishing 102 – After the Catch

**Tuesday, August 1**  
**6:00 – 8:00 pm**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**



Let's catch and eat some fish on this day! We will start off this program at the conservation center with a fish fry and sample some fish. Then, we will go to a pond in the park to go fishing. Participants will learn how to take the fish off the hook and learn what to do next – release or fillet it. **Please sign up for this program by calling MCCB at (641)673-9327. Registration deadline is July 31<sup>st</sup>.**

## Bowfishing Basics

**Friday, August 4**  
**6:00 – 8:00 pm**  
**Russell Wildlife Area, Pond 1**



Bowfishing is a popular sport right now. It allows you to combine your love for archery and fishing. Participants will learn how to shoot a bow, reel in fish, what kinds of fish to shoot and how to identify them. Participants will be able to practice shooting at water targets. All bowfishing equipment will be provided. **Please sign up for this program by calling MCCB at (641)673-9327. Registration deadline is August 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

## What's the Great American Solar Eclipse?

**Friday, August 11**  
**6:00 – 7:00 pm**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**



The media is all a buzz about the upcoming Total Solar Eclipse on August 21<sup>st</sup>. What is all the hype? It will be a special solar event for the United States and no other country in the world! Come on out to the conservation center and learn all about it. **This program is for all ages and no pre-registration is needed.**

## Reptile Round-up

**Tuesday, August 15**  
**10:00 – 11:00 am**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**



Bring your kids and friends out to the conservation center to see some common reptiles of Iowa. Some snakes, turtles and a gecko will be featured in some fun and interactive activities. Don't miss this program! **This program is for all ages and no pre-registration is needed.**





# Summer Programs



## Canoe & Kayak River Float

**Saturday, August 19**  
**9:00 am – 3:00 pm**  
**Eveland Access to**  
**Hardfish Access**



Join MCCB on a canoe and kayak float down the Des Moines River. We will launch from Eveland Access at 9:00 am and arrive at Hardfish Access by 3:00 pm. There is no cost for this event and MCCB has a limited number of canoes and kayaks available. Participants may bring their own lunch and canoe or kayak. Participants will need to make arrangements to shuttle themselves between the put in and take out locations. **Pre-registration is required! Call MCCB at (641)673-9327 to register and to receive complete details for the float. Please Note: Canoe Float will be dependent upon weather and river conditions.**

## Solar Eclipse Day Camp

**Monday, August 21**  
**9:00 am – 3:30 pm**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**  
**For kids ages 9-12**



On August 21, a solar eclipse will cross the continental United States. In Iowa, people will be able to experience a partial eclipse with more than 90% of the sun in the moon's shadow. Thanks to a partnership with the Iowa Space Consortium and the Iowa 4-H program kids will learn how eclipses work, make an eclipse viewer, view the solar eclipse, and learn about sun safety. Snacks will be provided, please bring a sack lunch. **Pre-registration is required! Call MCCB at (641)673-9327 to sign up.**

Like Mahaska County  
 Conservation on



**facebook**

Check it out to receive  
 up-to-date information about MCCB programs!

## I-Spy Trail Hike

**Thursday, August 17**  
**10:00 am - Noon**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**



I-spy books are a lot of fun for all ages...how about taking it outdoors? Come out to the Russell Wildlife Area and take a hike down a trail to find hidden objects. Some won't be easy to find! While on the trail, take a "selfie" of you and the most challenging object. It will be posted on MCCB's Facebook page. Participants that find *every hidden object* on the trail will receive a prize! **Please pre-register by calling MCCB at (641)673-9327.**

## Moonlight Movie Night at Eveland Access Campgrounds

**Saturday, September 2**  
**8:30 p.m. (at dark)**  
**Eveland Access Campgrounds**



Want to do something fun with the whole family on Labor Day weekend? Campers, campground visitors and the public are welcome to come out and watch a **FREE** movie at the Eveland Access Campground. A family-oriented movie will begin at dark. Bring your family, a lawn chair or blanket to sit on and enjoy the show. **FREE** popcorn will be available! Eveland Access is located at 2890 Galeston Ave. which is 4 miles south of Beacon, IA on Highway T39.



**Youth Outdoor  
 Field Day 2017**

**Saturday,  
 September 30<sup>th</sup>**

Early registration deadline to receive  
 a t-shirt and lunch is Friday, Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>.  
 See page 6 for more details.



# Summer Programs



## Mammoth 5K Adventure Run

Sunday, September 10  
2:00 – 3:30 pm  
Russell Wildlife Area



Get ready to get muddy as you take your running shoes through the backwoods of an adventure course at the Russell Wildlife Area! This event is open to all ages.

### Age Divisions:

12 & Under  
13 – 19 years old  
20 – 29 years old  
30 – 39 years old  
40 + years old

### Schedule:

2:00 pm Opening Ceremony  
Race  
On-going Family Activities  
3:30 pm Awards Ceremony

Race participants should register by Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup>. Registration fee for runners is \$20.00 per person and includes a t-shirt. Payment can be made via PayPal at Friends of Mahaska County Conservation or by check. For more information or to print the registration form, go on Facebook at Friends of Mahaska County Conservation or visit the website <http://friendsmahaskacc.weebly.com>.

Event proceeds will benefit the mammoth fossil displays in the new Mahaska County Environmental Learning Center at Caldwell Park and MCCB environmental education programs. This event is sponsored by the Friends of Mahaska County Conservation.

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

Saturday, September 30  
9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
Russell Wildlife Area



Join MCCB, local conservation groups and community organizations for a whole day of hands-on outdoor activities for kids! The sessions held this year will include:

Fishing  
Outdoor Survival  
Bowfishing  
Tree Identification  
.22 Rifle Shooting  
First Aid  
Retriever Dog Demonstrations AND MORE!

Archery  
Dutch Oven Cooking  
Water Safety  
Zip Lining  
BB Gun Shooting  
Shotgunning

### Pre-register by September 15<sup>th</sup>!

#### **\$5.00 per child if registered by Sept. 15**

- Early registrations include a child's t-shirt & lunch and 1 adult lunch. Additional lunches will be \$5.00 each. Additional t-shirts will be \$10.00 each.
- You will receive a meal ticket at the event to present at the lunch line.

#### **\$10.00 per child if registration is received after Sept. 15 or on the day of event**

- Late registrations do not include a t-shirt and lunch.

Parents are encouraged to stay for the day. A registration form can soon be found online at [www.mahaskaconservation.com](http://www.mahaskaconservation.com). For questions, call MCCB at (641)673-9327.



## Summer Day Camp Adventures



## 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.

## The Prairie Star

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



# A Big Thank You!

The Mahaska County Conservation Board wishes to extend our deepest thanks to the following people and businesses for their donations and volunteer time.

**Mary Jane Sullivan** – Day Camp Volunteer

**Aubyn Hines** – Day Camp Volunteer

**Josh DeCook** – Day Camp Volunteer

**Sears Hometown Store, Oskaloosa** – Day Camp Donation

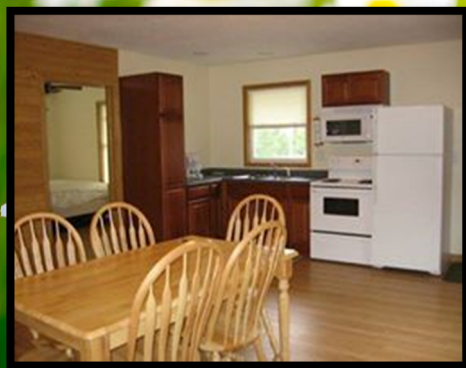
**Tackle Boxx** – Family Fishing Day & Kids' Fishing Derby Donations

**Swim Sports** – Trophy Engraving Donations

**Rick Bryan** – Fishing Pole Donations

*Are you interested in volunteering? Contact MCCB at (641)673-9327.*

## Eveland Access Cabins



The Apple and Birch Cabins at the Eveland Access are available for rent year-round. To view pictures of the cabins and to find more information on renting:  
[www.mahaskaconservation.com](http://www.mahaskaconservation.com).

Cabin Rental Prices:

Sunday-Thursday \$60/night

Friday-Saturday \$75/night

Week stay \$420

For reservations call MCCB at (641)673-9327.

## MCCB CALENDAR NOTES:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| August 3     | <b>Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting</b><br>7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| August 21    | <b>Friends of Mahaska County Conservation</b><br>6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area    |
| September 7  | <b>Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting</b><br>7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| September 18 | <b>Friends of Mahaska County Conservation</b><br>6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area    |



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



## COUNTY CONSERVATION CENTER HOURS

12:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Monday through Friday or by appointment.

The Mahaska County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public. Visitors are always welcome and encouraged to attend. The board meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Conservation Center. Please note: these dates are subject to change.

**A large-type version of this  
newsletter is available on request.**

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.

## Mahaska County Conservation Board



**Ross Nilson**, Oskaloosa  
**Peggy Wright**, New Sharon  
**Steve Dixon**, Oskaloosa  
**Curt Jager**, Eddyville  
**Linda Fox**, Rose Hill

Chairperson  
Vice Chairperson  
Secretary  
Member  
Member

## STAFF

Dave Sedivec	Director
Laura DeCook	Naturalist
Tommy VanRenterghem	Conservation Technician
Jason Ryan	Conservation Technician
Dorothy Wedgewood	Administrative Assistant
Logan Roberts	Summer Technician
Mike Ryan	Summer Technician
Lake Heaton	Musco Seasonal
Kendal Marshall	Musco Seasonal

Summer 2017



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Website: [www.mahaskacaconservation.com](http://www.mahaskacaconservation.com)

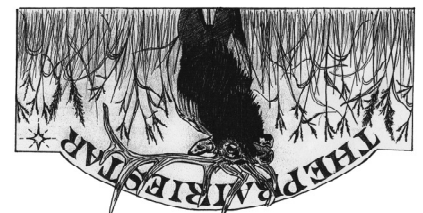
Email: [mcpcb@mahaskacounty.org](mailto:mcpcb@mahaskacounty.org)

Phone: (641) 673-9327

New Sharon, IA 50207

2254 - 200<sup>th</sup> Street

Mahaska County Conservation Board



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