



Volume 32, Issue 1

Spring 2015

40th Anniversary for Mahaska County Conservation Board

By **Dave Sedivec**
MCCB Director

2015 is shaping up to be an exciting year for the Mahaska County Conservation Board, as it is our fortieth anniversary. Since 1975, there have been 19 citizen volunteers who have served as Mahaska County Conservation Board Members; people that have taken time out of their busy lives to help protect and preserve our natural resources. The current board consists of Peggy Wright, Curt Jager, Linda Fox and Ross Nilson. Please thank them for their service when you see them.

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There will be various programs and events throughout the year to celebrate the forty years of accomplishments, so please stay tuned via newsletters, Facebook, our website www.mahaskaconservation.com or the website www.mycountyparks.com.

There will be two big changes taking place this spring and summer for the Mahaska County Conservation Board. First, the county has acquired a 93 acre parcel of land along the North Skunk River, north of New Sharon. This purchase was a group effort. It would not have been accomplished without the help of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Pheasants Forever, the Oskaloosa Chapter of the Izaak Walton League and the Iowa Wildlife Habitat Stamp Grant Program. Various Pheasants Forever Chapters donated money to the project. This is the first project across the nation in which a high school chapter, a college chapter, an adult chapter and state council chapter worked together to purchase the same project. That is an accomplishment to be proud of and I want to thank them and all of the other contributors that helped with this project.

The second big item for the Mahaska County Conservation Board is the restroom/shower facility that will be completed at the Eveland Access Campground this spring. A restroom at the campground has been the

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most requested item we have heard for years, and it is finally becoming a reality. The concrete prefabricated facility will have four family style rooms, each containing a sink, shower and toilet and can be locked for privacy.

I would like to thank the board and staff as we all strive to make our fortieth year our best year.

(Photo at right) Shower house that will be located at Eveland Access.



Spring is the season for hunting morels and turkeys!

Remember.....safety in the woods and ask permission each year to enter privately owned land.

Mushroom hunters:

- Make sure no one is turkey hunting on your mushroom stomping grounds.
- Do not resemble the colors of a wild turkey by wearing red, white and blue.



Turkey hunters:

- Always identify your target.
- Make sure no one is planning on mushroom hunting the same place and time you are turkey hunting.



Leroy Nugteren

Our friend and conservation board member passed away on March 24, 2015. Leroy served as a volunteer board member for the Mahaska County Conservation Board for 20 years from February 1995 until March 2015. His dedication, participation and respected input and guidance will be remembered and missed.

Leroy was born in Iowa City in 1933 and later moved to the Pella area after his father found work as a hired man on local farms. Leroy worked as a land surveyor for Garden and Associates (then Garden Engineering), located in Oskaloosa, Iowa for 50 years. In retirement, Leroy collected and restored antique Case tractors and farm equipment. He and his wife Beverly both enjoyed traveling to antique tractor shows around the Midwest, as well as visiting their children and grandchildren.

For those desiring, memorials may be designated for either the Leighton Christian Reformed Church in Leighton or Friends of Mahaska County Conservation - Leroy Nugteren Memorial.

Nature Notes



Western Painted Turtles *Chrysemys picta bellii*

By Laura DeCook, Naturalist

The painted turtle is one of Iowa's best known turtle species. Of the four recognized subspecies, only one, the western painted turtle, is found in Iowa. These colorful turtles have a plastron, or bottom shell, with a bold and colorful pattern of black, yellow, orange and red. The colorful plastron is where the painted turtle gets its name. The carapace, or top shell, is dark green with a network of thin, faded yellow stripes. Each marginal is marked with two dark rectangles outlined in orange-red. The base color of their skin is black (sometimes greenish) with bright yellow stripes on the head, limbs, and tail, sometimes with red centers. If you look closely you'll see that the turtle's eyeballs have yellow stripes, too.

Adult painted turtle shells range from 3 ½ to 7 inches in length. Males are at the smaller end of this range, while females grow larger. Female painted turtles lay their eggs in late May or June. Females can be found seeking out nesting sites which may be a considerable distance from their aquatic home. Often, they must cross roads to reach their destination. Choice egg-laying areas are in loose sand or soil with plenty of sunshine. Each female digs out a nest, lays about 8 eggs, fills in the depression, and makes her way back home.

A fascinating fact about these turtles is that the temperature of the eggs creates male or female turtles. Females result in temperatures of 84 degrees and up and males mostly below that temperature. Young turtles hatch in August, and many over-winter in the nest and emerge the following spring.

Basking in the sun is important for turtles, as well as most reptiles, to ensure proper regulation of their body temperature. Their body temperature is largely governed by the temperature of their surroundings. Basking elevates body temperature and results in an increased metabolic rate to assist in obtaining food and digestion and good health.

Western Painted turtles are omnivores, but because they have a fixed tongue, they cannot swallow food on land. Most species of plants or animals living or dead that they find in their habitat may be eaten. This includes snails and slugs, insects, crayfish, tadpoles, small fish, carrion, algae and aquatic plants.

Spring Programs

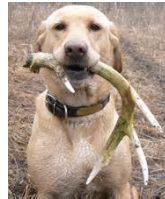


Looking for a healthy outdoor activity?
Look for this symbol throughout the list of
upcoming public programs.

Shed Hunting with Dogs



Saturday, April 11
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Russell Wildlife Area



Have you ever thought about using a four-legged canine friend to help you find antler sheds? Some people have trained their dogs to find sheds, including a local shed hunter, Jason Callen. Jason's recently trained dog found at least 23 antler sheds this winter! Come out to the conservation center to learn how he trained his dog and see how this hunt is done. *Please dress for the weather - we will go outside and watch Jason's dog in action!* There is no cost and pre-registration is appreciated. Call (641)673-9327 to sign up.

Hunter Education Class

Thursday, April 30 (6:00 – 9:00 pm)
& Saturday, May 2 (8:00 am – 4:00 pm)
Russell Wildlife Area



This course is free of charge, but space is limited and **pre-registration is required at www.iowadnr.gov**. Anyone born after January 1st, 1972 must attend a Hunter Education course before they are allowed to purchase an Iowa hunting license. Any person who is 11 years old or older is eligible to attend the class. **Participants must attend both days.**

Paddleboarding



Saturday, May 2
11:00 a.m.
Pond 1 at the
Russell Wildlife Area



Come out to the Russell Wildlife Area to learn about one of the newest and most popular water recreation activities for people of all ages! You will receive instruction on how to paddleboard and then given an opportunity to try it on the pond. All equipment will be provided. If you desire, you may bring your own life jacket. *This event is for all ages. Please sign up for this event by calling MCCB at (641)673-9327.*

Fossil Hunting



Saturday, May 9
10:30 am
Russell Wildlife Area



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





Spring Programs



Campground Movie Night At Eveland Access

Saturday, May 23
8:30 p.m. (at dark)
Eveland Access
Campground



Want something fun and relaxing to do on Memorial 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 to enjoy the show. Eveland Access is located at 2890 Galeston Ave. which is 4 miles south of Beacon, IA on Highway T39.

Kids' Fishing Day



Friday, June 5
6:00 – 8:30 pm
Russell Wildlife Area



Fun for the whole family so come out and “catch the fun”! The event will kick off with activity stations for families to participate in and help kids to learn about fish and fishing. Then, we will hike to a pond to go fishing. Trophies will be given to the largest and smallest fish caught at this event. Bring a plain, light-colored t-shirt to have it silkscreened with this year’s logo. *Iowa resident fishing licenses will NOT be needed for this event or throughout this weekend. Bring your own pole or borrow one from MCCB. Bait will be provided. Please register at the conservation center when you arrive.*



Summer Day Camps for Kids!

Pre-register by calling MCCB at (641)673-9327.

June 16-18 Discovery Day Camp

Ages 5 and younger

10:00 a.m. – Noon

\$10.00 per camper

Parents are encouraged to attend.

Kids will participate in indoor and outdoor activities to explore land, sky and water. Campers will be asked to bring a t-shirt to decorate for camp.

June 30 – July 2 Jr. Naturalist Day Camp

Ages 6-12

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

\$20.00 per camper

Campers will learn about nature around us, especially the food chain, predators and prey. The Blank Park Zoo will be bringing some “predator and prey” animals for us to see up close! Campers will be asked to bring a t-shirt to decorate for camp and a lunch each day.

July 7 - 9 Challenge Camp

Ages 10 and older

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

\$20.00 per camper

Camp size is limited to 15 kids.

The camp theme will be “Kids vs. Wild”. Campers will experience many outdoor activities: canoeing, fishing, hiking, archery, campfire cooking and lots of exploring! Campers will be asked to bring a t-shirt to decorate for camp and a lunch each day.



Friends of Mahaska County Conservation



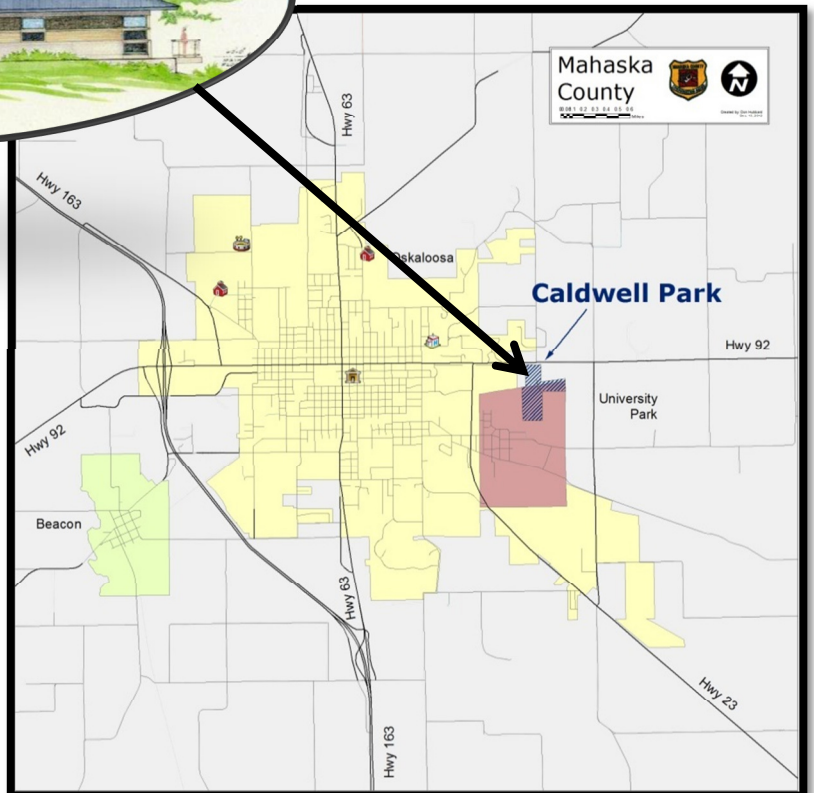
The Friends of Mahaska County Conservation is a non-profit organization created in 2011 with the purpose of raising money for a new Environmental Learning Center and other environmental education projects in Mahaska County. The Friends board consists of 10 board members who are committed to the betterment of outdoor education in our community. The Environmental Learning Center will be located at Caldwell Park, just East of Oskaloosa, on Highway 92.



If you are interested in learning how you can help the Friends of Mahaska County Conservation, contact:

Friends of Mahaska County Conservation
MaryJane Sullivan, Board President
P.O. Box 632
Oskaloosa, IA 52577
(641)660-7700
friendsmahaskacc@gmail.com
www.friendsofmccb.weebly.com

Meetings are held at 6:30 pm on the third Monday of each month in the conservation center at the Russell Wildlife Area.

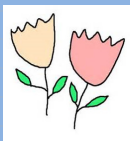


Statement

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.



"Anyone who says sunshine brings happiness has never danced in the rain."

~ Author Unknown

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, volunteer time
Doug McMillan, volunteer time
Bernie Bresee, donation of fishing rods and reels
Ryan McPherren, volunteer time
Donna Peer, volunteer time
Larry Peer, volunteer time

Eveland Access Cabins



952 square feet of living space

Sleeps up to 10 people!

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, go to www.mahaskaconservation.com.

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

MCCB CALENDAR NOTES:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| April 2 | Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| April 20 | Friends of Mahaska County Conservation
6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| May 7 | Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| May 18 | Friends of Mahaska County Conservation
6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| June 4 | Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| June 15 | Friends of Mahaska County Conservation
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

Peggy Wright , New Sharon	Chairperson
Curt Jager , Eddyville	Vice Chairperson
Linda Fox , Rose Hill	Secretary
Ross Nilson , Oskaloosa	Member
Vacancy	Member

STAFF

Dave Sedivec	Director
Laura DeCook	Naturalist
Tommy VanRenterghem	Conservation Technician
Jason Ryan	Conservation Technician
Dorothy Wedgewood	Administrative Assistant
Kyle Soderblom	Summer Ranger



Spring 2015



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Website: www.mahaskacaconservation.com

Email: mccb@mahaskacaconservation.org

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2254 - 200th Street

Mahaska County Conservation Board



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