

THE PRAIRIE STAR

NEWSLETTER

Volume 36, Issue 2

Summer & Fall 2019

The Environmental Learning Center is Now Open!

By **Dave Sedivec**

MCCB Director

Friday May 31st was an exciting day for the Mahaska County Conservation Board as Board Member, Peggy Wright cut the ribbon and we invited the public in to see the Environmental Learning Center. The large crowd filed inside after a few short speeches and presentations. They were greeted by members of the board and staff, along with Betty Brennan, the president of the company that created the displays in the building, and members of Friends of Mahaska County Conservation. It was good to see former MCCB directors Dennis Lewiston and Perry Thostenson, and past board members Gene Phillips, Hubert Parker, Mike Long, Steve Fox and Barry Versteegh. I was also very pleased to see Beverley Nugteren and Carol Jean White, widows of former board members Leroy Nugteren and John White, and the family of Shirley Stursma, a former administrative assistant to the board. The event almost had a family reunion feeling. The support from the public was overwhelming!

There are too many people to thank individually in this short article, and I don't want to miss anybody, so we will do a proper thank you in a future newsletter.

Please come out to Caldwell Park and explore the new and exciting Environmental Learning Center.



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Congratulations **Tommy Van Renterghem, MCCB Park Ranger**

It was a busy winter for the Mahaska County Conservation staff. Over the winter, four members of the staff spent their time moving into the new Environmental Learning Center at Caldwell Park and getting things transitioned from the previous conservation center at the Russell Wildlife Area.

Also over the winter, Tommy Van Renterghem spent four months training at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy at Camp Dodge, in Johnston, Iowa. Van Renterghem arrived at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy on January 2nd, and then spent 16 weeks taking classes and tests. He was also involved in many hands on activities like physical fitness training, defensive tactics, firearms training, Taser training, driving instruction, Pursuit Intervention Technique training, and several other scenario based trainings before graduating as a certified peace officer on April 19th. Van Renterghem has been a Park Technician with the Mahaska County Conservation Board since May 2014, and has now been promoted to a Park Ranger.



Thank You

With gratitude, the Mahaska County Conservation Board extends our appreciation to the following people and business for their donations and volunteer time. Thank you!

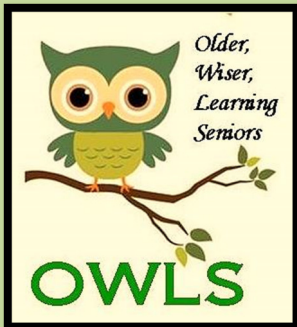
- Betsy Luck** – Construction of book shelf for Discovery Lab
- Malcom Lumber** – Lumber for book shelf
- Doug Drummond** – Shooting range clean up
- Norma McQueen** – Shooting range clean up
- Modern Floor Covering** – Area rug donation for Discovery Lab
- Peggy Wright** – Donation of markers
- Linda Fox** – Donation of craft and kitchen supplies
- Mark & Mary Jane Sullivan** – Put tables together for Discovery Lab, volunteers
- Friends of Mahaska County Conservation** - Tables for Discovery Lab, pond nets, volunteers
- Vicki Cope** – Donation of craft supplies
- John Crumly** – Donation of fishing trophies
- Jeff Pierson** – Donation of fishing poles
- Bob DeBoef** - Donation of fishing poles, tent
- Dan Anderson** – Donation of fishing lure awards



EXPLORE

Just for Adults

Program Opportunities



*Hey adults,
do you enjoy nature?*
**Then the OWLS
program is for
YOU!**

The OWLS - Older, Wiser, Learning Seniors, is a new group program with MCCB that has a lot of participants. This program is designed for adults and senior learners with an interest in environmental science and conservation topics. Programs are presented monthly by the MCCB Naturalist and guest speakers. The programs will be held on the lower level of the Environmental Learning Center.

Wednesday, June 26th
11:00 am – 12:30 pm

“Gardening for Pollinators”

Presenter: *Suzette Striegel, Mahaska County Extension Horticulturist*

Wednesday, July 24th
11:00 am – 12:30 pm

“Stellar Stars of the Night”

Presenter: *Laura DeCook, MCCB Naturalist*

Wednesday, August 28th
11:00 am – 12:30 pm

“Chief Mahaska & the Ioway Indians”

Presenter: *Laura DeCook, MCCB Naturalist*

Wednesday, September 25th
11:00 am – 12:30 pm

“Belle Fountain History”

Presenter: *Linda Fox*

Wednesday, October 23rd
11:00 am – 12:30 pm

“History of Popcorn”

Presenters: *Bill & Ginger Grubb,
Grubb's Premium Popping Corn, LLC*

Wednesday, November 20th
11:00 am – 12:30 pm

“Pioneers of Mahaska County”

Presenter: *Margaret Spiegel, Nelson Pioneer Farm*

Join us at the **Coffee Break!**

9:00 - 10:00 am

**Environmental
Learning Center**

June 14

June 28

July 14

August 9

August 23

September 13

September 27


October 11

October 25

November 8

November 22



 Please bring
your own coffee cup!

Stop by and visit the ELC, fill up a cup of coffee and indulge in something tasty! This special time is set aside for adults that would like to visit the ELC and talk to others that enjoy nature and take a look around. It's a perfect time to learn more about the conservation board, its parks and programs, and how you can volunteer.



**Eveland Access
Campgrounds**

Will CLOSE for the season at noon
on Monday, October 28, 2019.

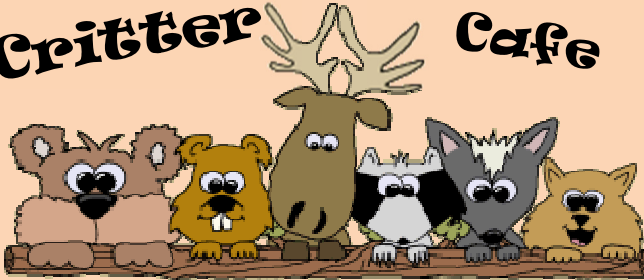


EXPLORE

Just for Kids

Program Opportunities

Critter Cafe



12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Bring your lunch to the Environmental Learning Center to dine with the naturalist and a featured live animal that lives at the ELC. Following lunch, you will be able to take part in a nature lesson that relates to the current season.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Friday, June 14 | “Fish” |
| Friday, July 12 | “Fishing” |
| Friday, August 9 | “Bird Watching” |
| Friday, September 13 | “Bird Food” |
| Friday, October 11 | “Fall Leaves” |
| Friday, November 8 | “Turkeys” |

*Perfect for Parents & Young Kids,
Homeschool Families, Day Care Kids*



Knee-High Naturalist programs are for kids ages 5 and younger. The program activities are designed to help foster learning about nature and exploring the outdoors. We ask that adults bringing the children and remain with them during the program.

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| July 10 | Owl Pellets |
| July 24 | Animal Tracks |
| August 14 | Ants on Parade |
| September 4 | Monarch Butterflies |
| September 18 | Nature Hike |
| October 2 | Bird Beak Buffet |
| October 16 | Spider Web Wonders |
| November 6 | Grow As We Go |
| November 20 | Terrific Turkeys |

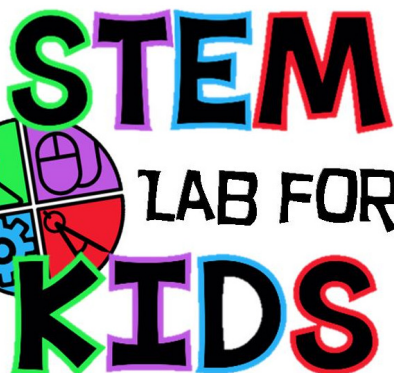
Q: Why are frogs so happy?

A: They eat whatever bugs them!



Q: What's green green green green green?

A: A frog rolling down a hill



**Fun and educational science activities
for kids ages 8 and older!**

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Tuesday, July 2 (1-2:30pm) | “The Science of Tie Dying”
<i>Bring an all-white cotton t-shirt!</i> |
| Tuesday, July 9 (1-2:30pm) | “Creek Stomp”
<i>Wear old clothes and shoes!</i> |
| Tuesday, July 23 (1-2:30pm) | “Homemade Paper” |

Call to sign up! (641)673-9327 Ext. 2

Summer & Fall Programs

for all ages

Mahaska County Conservation Summer Day Camps



At the Environmental Learning Center

Discovery Camps

- Ages 5 and younger
- \$10 each day
- Limited to the first 20 kids that pre-register
- An adult must attend with the child

June 4, 2019	June 5, 2019	June 6, 2019
"Animals Around Us"	"I-Spy"	"Exploring Nature"
10:00 am—Noon	10:00 am—Noon	10:00 am—Noon

Jr. Naturalist Camps

- Ages 6-12
- \$10 each day
- Limited to the first 25 kids that pre-register

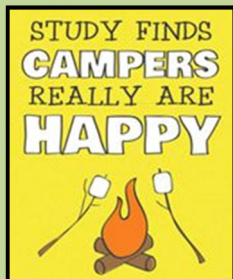
REGISTRATIONS ARE FULL!

June 11, 2019	June 12, 2019	June 13, 2019
"Nature Adventures"	"I-Spy"	"Let's Go Camping"
9:00 am—Noon	9:00 am—Noon	9:00 am—Noon

Challenge Camps

- Ages 10-18
- \$10 each day
- Limited to the first 25 kids that pre-register

June 18, 2019	June 19, 2019
"Let's Reuse It"	"Inventions from Nature"
9:00 am—Noon	9:00 am—Noon



Sign up today!

Facebook:

Under "Mahaska County Conservation"
Find the camp listed under events and click on the sign up link.

Email:

decook@mahaskacounty.org

If you have questions, call (641)673-9327 Ext. 2.

Family Fishing Day & Kids' Fishing Derby



Saturday, June 8
12:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Russell Wildlife Area

12:00 – 1:00 pm **Campfire Picnic**

- Bring a drink & side dish
- Hot dogs and table service provided

1:00 – 3:00 pm **Kids' Fishing Derby & Family Fishing**

- MCCB will provide fishing poles and bait, but feel free to bring your own

It's **FREE FUN** for the whole family! The event will kick off with a picnic lunch. We will cook hotdogs over a campfire (while supplies last). If you come for the picnic, please bring your own drink and a side dish to share. MCCB will provide the table service and hot dogs.

At 1:00 we will hike to a pond and go fishing. For kids ages 18 and younger, awards will be given to the largest and smallest lengths of fish caught during this event. *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 (night crawlers) will be provided. Please register at the picnic shelter when you arrive.*

Eveland Access Summer Fest & Campground Cook-off

A new event for the public and campers!

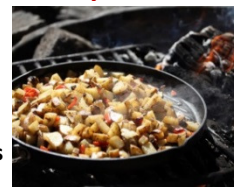
Saturday, July 20
Eveland Access Campground

1:00 pm Chef's meeting & registration at the shelter house

4:30 pm Music by the Backrow Hooligans

6:00 pm Dinner Menu Judging:

- Main Dish
- Side Dish
- Dessert



Campers and the public can enter food dishes for prizes!

Bring your best cooking recipes and supplies to create a tasty entry to be judged for prizes! Following the judging, all dishes in the competition will be set out for tasting.

All entries must be cooked at the campgrounds on the day of the event and can only be cooked on/in:

- Campfire with wood or coals**
- Grill or smoker**
- Dutch ovens**

Campfires can only be used in campsite fire pits. Grills, smokers and Dutch ovens not needing a campfire can be set up by the shelter house if not done at a campsite. Questions? Call MCCB at (641)673-9327 Ext. 2.

Summer & Fall Programs

for all ages

“Escape the Woods” A Nature Adventure

Tuesday, August 13
Environmental Learning Center
at Caldwell Park

Call (641)673-9327 Ext.2 to reserve a time:

9:30 – 10:30 am
11:00 - Noon
1:00 – 2:00 pm
2:30 – 3:30 pm

Bring a group of up to 8 people out to the ELC and take part in a fun twist to the “escape room” craze. Each group will solve puzzles and complete activities at stations located outdoors within the park. The goal is to complete the course faster than other groups throughout the day. This event is for anyone ages 10 and older, but younger kids are welcome to participate. Adults must supervise kids at all times during the event.



Canoe & Kayak River Float

Saturday, August 17
9:00 am (exact time TBA)
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 float to Hardfish Access. 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. **Pre-registration is required! Call MCCB at (641)673-9327 Ext. 2 to register and receive complete details for the float. Please Note: Canoe Float will be dependent upon weather and river conditions.**

Hunter Education Field Day

Saturday, August 24
Environmental Learning Center
at Caldwell Park & Russell Wildlife Area
9:00 am – 4:00 pm



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 complete the online hunter education class prior to the field day. Participants must also bring their printed certificate to the field day.**

16th Annual

Youth Outdoor Field Day

Saturday, September 28
9:00 am – 12:30 pm: *Activities*
12:30 - 1:30 pm: *Lunch for pre-registered participants*
Russell Wildlife Area

Pre-register by Friday, September 13th!

\$5.00 per person if registered by Sept. 13

Early registration includes a t-shirt & lunch. You will receive a meal ticket at the event to present at the lunch line.

\$10.00 per person after Sept. 13 and on day of event

Late registration **does not** include a t-shirt and lunch

Join MCCB, local businesses and conservation groups for a day of hands-on outdoor activities for kids and their families. Hike around the park at your own leisure to learn about and experience a wide variety of outdoor-related topics: *Fishing, Bowfishing, .22 Rifle Shooting, Tree ID, Shotgun Shooting, Mammal Research Station, and many more activities!*

- Bring a re-fillable water bottle to use at the event.
- Kids can win a water bottle by participating all the activities!
- Please dress appropriately for the weather – the event is held rain or shine.
- All children must be accompanied by a parent or adult.
- A printable registration form will be available on Aug. 15th at www.mahaskaconservation.com.

Coal Mining on the Muchikinock Creek

Monday, October 21
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Environmental Learning Center
At Caldwell Park



Guest speaker, Mr. Doug Wilson, has been studying coal mines in this area of Iowa all of his life. Mr. Wilson will give a presentation on what he has learned about the history of coal mining along Mahaska County's Muchikinock Creek. His presentation will be very informative and include photographs and artifacts that he has collected over the years. Refreshments will be provided. There is no cost to this program and registrations are not needed.

Halloween Bash at Eveland Access

Saturday, October 26
1:00 pm – 10:00 pm
Eveland Access Campground



Bring your family and the little ghouls and goblins to spend the afternoon and evening at Eveland Access to participate in fun Halloween activities and contests! We will end the day with an outdoor movie. There is no cost for this event. If you are interested in camping at Eveland on this weekend, sites are \$15.00 per night on a first-come, first-served basis. Watch for a detailed event schedule.



IOWA JUNIOR NATURALIST

These wonderful outdoor learning opportunities are for kids 6-18 years old. Participants will receive a colorful Iowa Junior Naturalist Patch and Certificate of Achievement upon completion.

Earn a patch!

Program Attendance

- Participants must attend 3 different programs. Check out this newsletter to find out about all of our programs!

Independent Activities

- 6-12 years old – complete 2 independent activities
- 13-18 years old – one independent activity; must be a formal volunteer commitment totaling 1 or more hours

Awards

- All the above requirements must be completed in a 12-month period. (Jan. 1, 2019 – Dec. 31, 2019). An award celebration will be held at the end of the calendar year.

Brochures to record your participation are available at public program and at the Environmental Learning Center.

Eveland Access Cabins

Cabin Rental Prices:

Sunday-Thursday \$60/night

Friday-Saturday \$75/night

Week stay \$420

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.

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



WISH LIST

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

- Custom-built wall coat hooks for Discovery Lab (*See us for details*)
- 65" Smart Television for Discovery Lab
- Rolling coat rack
- New electric oven
- New kitchen supplies: baking sheets, mixing bowls, mixing spoons

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 our newsletter by email.

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

June 6, 2019

July – To Be Determined

August 1, 2019

September 5 2019

October 3, 2019

November 7, 2019



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

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.



MAHASKA COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING 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 Environmental Learning 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



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

STAFF

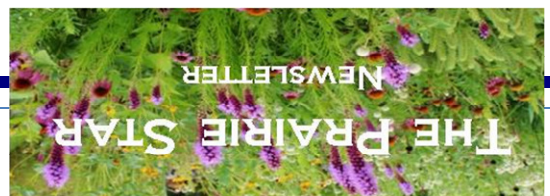
Dave Sedivec	Director
Laura DeCook	Naturalist
Tommy VanRenterghem	Park Ranger
Jason Ryan	Conservation Technician
Dorothy Wedgewood	Administrative Assistant
Mike Ryan	Summer Conservation Technician
Cole Rozendaal	Summer Conservation Technician
Emily Van Der Veer	Musco Seasonal

Summer/Fall 2019



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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