



## Mahaska County Farm Bureau: A Partner in Conservation

**By Dave Sedivec**  
MCCB Director

County Conservation Boards could not thrive without partners. We rely on cooperation from other county departments, state and federal agencies, and many non-governmental agencies to carry out our mission. Most of our stake holders know about the more common partners; Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, Izaak Walton League and Friends and Foundation groups, but the Mahaska County Conservation Board has what I believe is a rather unique partnership with the Mahaska County Farm Bureau.

It was a cold, rainy day when I stopped by the machine shed of Steve Wanders, Mahaska County Farm Bureau President. I was there to discuss rumors that I had been hearing about the Farm Bureau's attitude towards the upcoming local option sales tax ballot, and the MCCB's Environmental Learning Center. We had a good dialogue and Steve invited me to attend the next local Farm Bureau meeting to discuss our project, which I did. I was able to address some of the concerns of the group, and received some important feedback and ideas about our project. Since then we have had farm bureau members at some of our board meetings, and I think that keeping the lines of communication open has been a great benefit to both organizations and the county as a whole.

I am thinking about later today as I am typing this, the MCCB will work with the NRCS and the Mahaska County Farm Bureau at Sweet Corn Serenade. We will have educational events for all ages dealing with soil erosion, water quality, conservation farming practices and wildlife. I am sure that I will learn a lot from the experience, and I hope that we can continue this great partnership.

Most County Conservation Boards have at least one farmer as a board member, so this seems to me to be a natural fit. Iowa is and always has been an agricultural state. There are many farm related organizations, cattlemen's association, pork producers, corn growers and soybean producers to name a few. We all work outdoors in Iowa and we all benefit when Iowa is a better, cleaner and more productive place. We have more in common than we disagree on, so I think that it is great that the MCCB and the MCFB have decided to work together to make a better Mahaska County. Hopefully other organizations can join in, and other counties can look to our program as a model to use in their area.

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# 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.

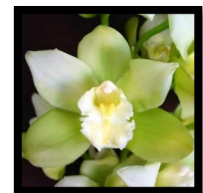
Check out this issue's featured area!

## Eddyville Sand Dunes

By Jason Ryan, Conservation Technician

55 acres of the Eddyville Dunes are managed by the MCCB. Here you'll find windblown sand dunes dotted with several open water wetlands and wet meadows. Located on the outskirts of Eddyville, IA this is one of the most unique sand prairie remnants in the Midwest; an ecosystem that has disappeared from Iowa except for a few small areas around the state. On a hike over the dunes you can often find rare plants and animals such as prickly pear cactus, pale green orchid, 6-lined race runner lizards and ornate box turtles.

The Eddyville Sand Dunes are part of a very unique sand/soil based grassland, wetland and woodland complex. This area was formed when the Des Moines lobe of the Wisconsin glacier retreated and left behind huge deposits of sand, silt and clay in an outwash plain. Strong westerly winds blew these deposits dropping the heavier sand particles on the east side of major drainages (rivers) and the lighter silt and clay particles deposited much further to the east. This sand deposition is up to 60 feet deep in places and has created a somewhat rare dry upland that holds plant and animal species far removed from their original range. Eddyville Sand Dunes' dry sandy uplands interspersed with wetlands and scattered woodlots have created a very diverse ecosystem that is rare in Iowa. Dr. Jim Christiansen of Drake University performed the field investigations as part of the Environment Impact Statement and stated that the Eddyville site represents "one of the most complete, although fragile, prairie communities present in Iowa". Dry sand prairies like those at the Eddyville Sand Dunes, are classified by the Iowa Natural Areas Inventory as very important natural resources.



# Nature Notes



## Ornate Box Turtles

*Terrapene ornata*

by Laura DeCook, MCCB Naturalist

The ornate box turtle is the only fully terrestrial turtle found in Iowa. These turtles prefer a sandy habitat that is suitable for nesting and overwintering. The sand dunes need to be open, shifting and unstable. In order to keep cool in the summertime sun, they search for tall prairie grass or shrubs for protection. The Eddyville Sand Dunes located in Mahaska County is one of the few places where these turtles are found in Iowa.

Ornate box turtles grow to be about 5 inches long across their carapace. The carapace, or top part of the shell, is highly domed and resembles a tortoise shell. It is uniquely marked with yellow radiating lines on a black or brown ground color. The plastron, or bottom part of the shell, has a single front hinge that allows this turtle to completely close its shell. The plastron is yellow with many well defined dark wavy stripes. The turtle's skin color is dark, from black to olive, and there are numerous yellow, orange, or red spots on the front legs and head. The feet are not webbed and have a rather club-like appearance.

In Iowa, ornate box turtles are listed as a threatened species and it is illegal to take one and keep it as a pet or to sell it. There are several reasons why these turtles are listed as endangered. Loss of habitat is a major reason. Nest predation, being killed by vehicles on roadways and being collected as pets, are other reasons for decreasing ornate turtle populations.

The Mahaska County Conservation Board has a new education turtle living at the conservation center. It is an ornate box turtle that had lived with the Polk County Conservation Board for several years. It has come to Mahaska County to represent a native population found at the Eddyville Sand Dunes. It will be an addition to the other educational animals found in the conservation center at the Russell Wildlife Area. MCCB has special permits to care for educational animals such as box turtles, aquatic turtles, snakes, fish and a salamander. So come on out to the conservation center this summer and visit the ornate box turtle!



# Summer & Fall Programs



## Evening Fossil Hunt



**Friday, August 5**  
**6:30 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 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 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.*

## Lunch in the Park “Monarch Butterflies”



**Friday, August 12**  
**12:00 - 1:00 pm**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**

**Join us and stay for as long as you can!**

Bring a lunch and enjoy a picnic with the MCCB Naturalist on the following dates. The conservation center is a quick 5 mile drive north of Oskaloosa. Each day, a short, but fun presentation will be given on a nature-related topic. Lunch will be held indoors during bad weather. **Please call MCCB at (641)673-9327 if you plan on attending!**

## Kids’ Fishing Derby 2016 Winners



**SMALLEST FISH: Johnathan Powell      LARGEST FISH: Morgan Miller**

## Looking for a healthy outdoor activity?



Look for this symbol throughout the list of upcoming public programs.

## Moonlight Movie Night at Eveland Access Campgrounds



**Saturday, September 3**  
**9:00 p.m. (at dark)**  
**Eveland Access Campground**

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.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Mammoth Day Celebration



**Sunday, September 11**  
**2:00 – 5:00 pm**  
**Caldwell Park**

Come out to Caldwell Park on this afternoon to learn all about Woolly Mammoths and to have fun outdoors! The Friends of Mahaska County Conservation will be holding a 5K and other fun runs as a fundraiser for Mahaska County Conservation Board’s Environmental Learning Center. The ELC will house a collection of bones to three mammoths found right here in Mahaska County! Other building displays will teach about nature and showcase a Conservationist Hall of Fame. Come join us! Caldwell Park is located at 2342 Hwy. 92 East, Oskaloosa, Iowa. *More information will be provided as this date nears.*



# Summer & Fall Programs



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

*“Connecting Kids with the Outdoors”*

Saturday, September 24  
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Russell Wildlife Area  
2254 – 200<sup>th</sup> Street  
New Sharon, Iowa 50207

Join MCCB, local businesses and conservation groups for a day of hands-on outdoor activities for kids!

**Pre-register by September 9<sup>th</sup>!**

**\$5.00 per child if registered by Sept. 9**

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

**\$10.00 per child after Sept. 9 or day of event**

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

*NEW THIS YEAR: Families will be able to visit and spend time at activities at their own leisure – no rotation schedule! So come on out and help your kids find an outdoor activity to experience!*

- ARCHERY
- BOWFISHING
- SHOTGUN SHOOTING
- FLY ROD CASTING
- FISHING
- .22 RIFLE SHOOTING
- BB GUN SHOOTING
- OUTDOOR FIRST AID
- WILDERNESS SURVIVAL
- RETRIEVER DOG DEMONSTRATIONS
- ... AND MORE!

- Bring a re-fillable water bottle to use at the event.
- 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 soon be found at [www.mahaskaconservation.com](http://www.mahaskaconservation.com) or call MCCB at (641)673-9327 to sign up.

### Halloween Bash at Eveland Access



Saturday, October 22  
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! There is no cost for this event. If you are interested in camping at Eveland on this weekend, each site is \$15.00 per night on a first-come, first-served basis. A detailed event schedule will be advertised.

### Hunter Education Class

Dates & Times TBA  
Russell Wildlife Area



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. This course is free of charge, but space is limited. **Go to the website [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov) to find the dates and register for the course. Pre-registration is required!** If you have questions, call MCCB at (641)673-9327.



FRIENDS OF  
**MAHASKA COUNTY**  
CONSERVATION

1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL

# MAMMOTH DAY CELEBRATION

**Sunday, September 11 @ Caldwell Park**  
**2:00 – 5:00 pm**

*MARK YOUR  
CALENDARS!*

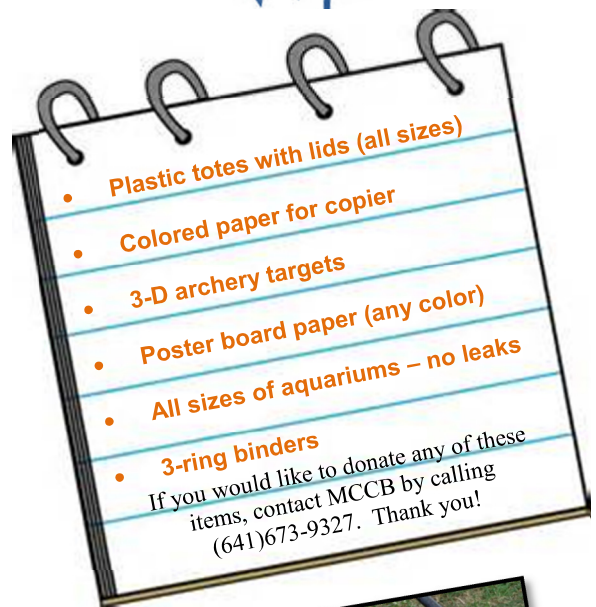


There will be a fun run, 5K run and possibly other runs as well as plenty of activities for all ages to keep you and your family busy. PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND! Watch for more information about this event....



A few new faces will be seen at the Mahaska County parks this summer. Lake Heaton (left) is the MCCB Summer Park Ranger and Conrad Cunningham (right), a summer employee from Musco.

## Environmental Education Wish list



## SUMMER CAMPS!



## 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.



"The world is big and I want to have a good look at it before it gets dark."

~John Muir

# 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** – Field trip & summer camp volunteer

**Linda Fox** – Field trip volunteer

**Wesley Yoder** – Field trip volunteer

**Celeste Moreno** – Created replica Woolly Mammoth foot

**Austin & Jill Schmidt** – Fish for fish fry program

**Justin Hunolt** – Fish for fish fry program

**Billie Summers** – Archery & bowfishing volunteer

**Doug Swim** – Trophy engraving for Kids' Fishing Derby

**Kamryn Beers** – Summer camp volunteer

**Andrew O'Day** – Summer camp volunteer

**Clint O'Day** – Thermacell mosquito repellent donation

**B&B Bedding Inc.** – Playground mulch

*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).

Beginning January 1, 2016  
the cabin rental prices will be:

Sunday-Thursday \$60/night  
Friday-Saturday \$75/night  
Week stay \$420

## MCCB CALENDAR NOTES:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| August 4     | <b>Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting</b><br>7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| August 15    | <b>Friends of Mahaska County Conservation</b><br>6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area    |
| September 1  | <b>Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting</b><br>7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| September 19 | <b>Friends of Mahaska County Conservation</b><br>6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area    |
| October 6    | <b>Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting</b><br>7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| October 17   | <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



<b>Linda Fox</b> , Rose Hill	Chairperson
<b>Ross Nilson</b> , Oskaloosa	Vice Chairperson
<b>Peggy Wright</b> , New Sharon	Secretary
<b>Steve Dixon</b> , Oskaloosa	Member
<b>Curt Jager</b> , Eddyville	Member

### STAFF

Dave Sedivec	Director
Laura DeCook	Naturalist
Tommy VanRenterghem	Conservation Technician
Jason Ryan	Conservation Technician
Dorothy Wedgewood	Administrative Assistant
Lake Heaton	Summer Park Ranger
Jeff Long	Experience Works
Conrad Cunningham	Musco Seasonal

# Summer 2016



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

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

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New Sharon, IA 50207

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

Mahaska County Conservation Board



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