Habitat for Wildlife and Your Enjoyment

By Dave Sedivec
MCCB Director

Fall is my favorite season, the leaves are turning, harvest has begun, the nights cool down for comfortable camping weather, and fall fishing can be spectacular. By the time that you read this, hunting seasons will have begun. Dove, teal and many small game seasons have already started, with archery and youth deer seasons starting soon, then duck, goose and pheasant not far behind.

The Mahaska County Conservation Board staff and the Iowa DNR staff have worked hard this year to provide improved habitat for the public to enjoy in Mahaska County. They have planted food plots and native grasses, worked on brush control, and have conducted prescribed burns. It doesn’t matter if you are a hunter or not; go out and enjoy the fruits of our labor. Watch the fall migration, go for a walk, sit around a campfire and star gaze and tell stories, or go hunting or fishing. If you choose to go hunting, think about introducing someone new to the sport. There are many people out there that would like to try hunting that just don’t know how to get started. If you go hunting, be safe and have fun, and I hope to see you in the field.
Calling all ghouls and goblins! This FREE event will be fun for the whole family.
The public and families camping are welcome to participate!

Campers are asked to decorate their campsite with a Halloween theme and provide treats to hand out to Trick-or-Treaters. The campsite with the best decorations will be awarded a free weekend of camping!

Camping sites are $15.00 per night on a first-come, first-served basis.

SHELTERHOUSE ACTIVITIES:

1:00 pm  Pumpkin Painting (pumpkins provided while supplies last – or bring your own)
          Ghoulish Games (games to play all afternoon)

2:00 pm  Creepy Contests (for children & adults)
          • Coloring Contest
          • Best Scream Contest
          • Best Owl Call Contest
          • Best Coyote Call Contest

3:30 pm  Ghoulish Games
          • Pumpkin Ring Toss
          • Worm Pie Eating
          • Scavenger Hunt
          • Mystery Touch Boxes
          • Halloween Bingo
          • And more!!!

4:30 pm  Storytelling by Mrs. Fox

5:00–6:00 pm  Trick or Treating (from campsite to campsite)

7:00 pm  Camp Site Decoration Judging Begins

8:00 pm  Award Presentations for All Contests (at movie location)

8:30 pm  Campground Movie
          Featuring “Hotel Transylvania” (bring your own lawn chair/blanket)
Mahaska County has over 1,500 acres of forests, wetlands, prairies and parks to explore. The Mahaska County Conservation Board manages 20 separate parks, river accesses and wildlife areas with over six miles of maintained trails.

Check out this issue’s featured area!

**Glendale Access**

By Jason Ryan, Conservation Technician

Glendale Access is located four miles northeast of Oskaloosa on highway T65 along the South Skunk River. This park was purchased in 1976 and was the first piece of property for the Mahaska County Conservation Board. In 1978, the concrete boat ramp, access road, and parking lot were built to give the public access to the river. Glendale Access area is a total of 41 acres and a great place to fish, picnic, or camp as long as you do not need electricity. This stretch of the South Skunk river is notorious for seeing pileated woodpeckers. Next time you are at Glendale or on this stretch of the South Skunk River, keep your eye out for these big, crow sized woodpeckers.

![Pileated Woodpecker](Image)

View of Glendale boat ramp from Hwy. T65.
Online Hunter Education Field Day

Wednesday, September 16
5:30 – 9:30 p.m.
Russell Wildlife Area

Participants must pre-register and complete the online course prior to the start of the field day class. The field day is free of charge, but space is limited. 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. To pre-register and take the course, go online to www.iowadnr.gov/huntered.

I-Spy Trail Hike

Friday, October 16
Noon – 1:30 pm
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.

12th Annual Youth Outdoor Field Day

Saturday, September 26
9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Russell Wildlife Area

The registration deadline has been extended to Sept. 16!

Join MCCB and local conservation groups for a whole day of hands-on outdoor activities for kids! The events held this year will include archery, bowfishing, .22 rifle and BB gun shooting, fishing, waterfowling, and outdoor/wilderness skills. The cost is just $5.00 and includes a kid’s t-shirt and lunch. Dress appropriately for the weather. Parents are encouraged to stay for the day. One parent's meal is provided with each child's registration. Registrations are due at noon on September 16 and is limited to the first 225 participants. A printable registration form can be found online at www.mahaskaconservation.com. Children under 7 years old must be accompanied by an adult. Registrations may be taken after September 16 if there is room, however we cannot guarantee the child will receive a t-shirt. No registrations are taken the day of the event. For questions, call MCCB at (641)673-9327.

Let us know if you would like to receive the Prairie Star newsletter by e-mail!

- You will receive each issue right away
- It helps reduce mailing costs
- You will receive program and event reminders by email

Contact us by calling (641)673-9327 or email decook@mahaskacounty.org if you want to make the change.

•
•
•
Fall Programs

Halloween Bash at Eveland Access
Saturday, October 24
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. Details about the day's activities are found on page two of this newsletter.

History of Mahaska County - Underground Mining
Monday, November 16
6:30 pm Potluck
7:00 pm Presentation begins
Nelson Pioneer Farm

Have you ever wanted to learn about underground mining in Mahaska County? Come out to the Nelson Pioneer Farm to learn about this history from the guest speaker, Doug Wilson. He will share his expansive knowledge about the mines.

S'more Fall Fun!
Friday, November 20
6:00 – 7:30 pm
Russell Wildlife Area

Bring your friends and family out to join in on some fun fall activities. We will take a leisurely hike on the park trails, make s'mores and bob for apples. This event is for all ages. Please pre-register by calling MCCB at (641)673-9327.

Winter Tales
Saturday, December 12
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Russell Wildlife Area

Bring your family out to the conservation center on this winter morning to listen to tales about wildlife in the winter. Afterwards, we will decorate cookies and meet a jolly visitor from the North Pole—Santa Claus! This event is for all ages.

Winter Day Camp
Wednesday, December 30
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Russell Wildlife Area

Kids, get out of the house during your winter break and come out to the conservation center to have fun and learn about nature on a winter day! Dress for the weather because having fun in winter is spending some time outdoors. Indoor activities (including a movie and popcorn) will also be held so we can warm up our fingers and toes. This event is for all ages. Please pre-register by calling (641)673-9327 because we have limited space.

Our meetings are held the third Monday of every month at 6:30 pm in the conservation center at the Russell Wildlife Area. Public is welcome!
From June through September, the Indian Pipe is found across Iowa, emerging in shady woods with moist, humus-rich soils. The photos of Indian Pipe on this page were recently taken at Mahaska County’s Cedar Bluffs State Preserve by Shari Barnhart. If you take a hike out at Cedar Bluffs in the near future, look for these unique native plants!

The stem of the Indian Pipe grow as high as one foot tall and it feels fleshy and clammy to the touch. The leaves appear scale-like and alternate along the stem. Its color is a pinkish white because it does not have chlorophyll (green color) to manufacture its own food from soil nutrients, carbon dioxide, sunlight and water. The brittle pad of fibrous roots that it grows out of provides it nutrients from decaying organic material. As the Indian Pipe matures, it dries up and turns black or brown in color. At the top of its stems, a blossom bends downward, drooping to form the “pipe”. It stands more erect as the fruit forms.

Indians and pioneers used the Indian Pipe to treat sore eyes. They used the clear juice from the stem (sometimes diluted with water) and dropped it directly into the eye. The pioneers also used it as a sedative, to reduce nervousness, as a pain reliever and to treat epilepsy and other convulsions.

Other names for Indian Pipe include: convulsion weed, corpse plant, Dutch-man’s pipe, fairy smoke, ghost flower, ice plant and pipe plant.

An Indian legend tells that this plant always appeared on the exact spot where an Indian had knocked the ashes of his pipe on the forest floor!
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.

Rebecca Crogman, Iowa DNR Fisheries — Day Camp presenter
Angela Tague, Blank Park Zoo — Day Camp presenter
Susan Kozak, Mines & Minerals at IDALS — Coal mining presenter
Josh Collister — Fish for day camp fish fry
Austin Schmidt Family — Fish for day camp fish fry
Mary Jane Sullivan — Day Camp volunteer
KBOE.KMZN Radio — Program and event publicity

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, go to www.mahaskaconservation.com.

MCCB CALENDAR NOTES:

September 3  Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area

September 21  Friends of Mahaska County Conservation
6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area

October 1  Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area

October 19  Friends of Mahaska County Conservation
6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area

November 5  Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area

November 16  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.

“Autumn is a second spring where every leaf is a flower.”
~ Albert Camus
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.