

Muscatine County Conservation

2023 At a Glance

2023 Staffing Changes

Dave Bakke, retired in July after 35 years. Luke Hart, Naturalist, was hired in May to work with Michelle Berns who was promoted to Naturalist II.

Jill Ziegenhorn also retired in July with 35 years of service. Lori Dietrich was hired in May as the new Office Manager.

Kristin Krumm attended the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) January through April, got married and changed her last name to Neeld.



Trevor Ebeling was hired in February as the Assistant Park Officer/Maintenance Technician. He attended the ILEA August through December, and lives in the house at Saulsbury.



Curt Weiss retired after 43 years of service in November. Katie Hammond started in October and now serves as the Director.

Kent Kauffman continues to serve as the Operations Supervisor, Ryne Brimeyer as a Ranger/Technician, and Dave Schuler as a permanent part-time taking care of the live animals.

Two seasonal maintenance staff helped to take care of parks: Trinidad Martinez & Dustin Purvis. Two summer externs helped with Environmental Education: Kathi Eichelberger & Dana Kraft.

Sherry Seright and Julie Jindrich were appointed to the Conservation Board in January to replace Deb Elliott and Sue O'Donnell.

Maintenance staff kept busy with projects, park patrol, and facility maintenance.

Large projects completed

At Discovery Park, the roads were repaired, re-asphalted, and striped. A new picnic shelter was installed near the playground, and filled with picnic tables.



The Environmental Learning Center had a water sprinkler pipe replaced and updates made to the fire alarm system.

Planning began at Deep Lakes Park for a new maintenance shop. Cabin rentals were very popular, and the park map was updated.



Planning is still underway to run sewer and water to the park for a future campground.

The Saulsbury Lodge, machine shed, shelters, and restrooms received new roofs due to hail damage and new gutters on the machine shed and lodge. Electricity in the main campground was upgraded to 50-amp service.

The only vehicle purchased was the new 15-passenger Chevrolet Express 3500 van. A new mower was ordered and so was a new vehicle for the Director.

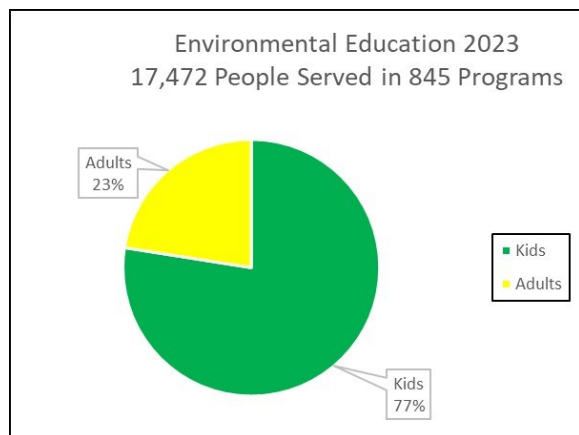
Staff looks forward to 2024 and working hard to make Muscatine County parks and wildlife areas great places for all to enjoy.

Environmental Education

In 2023, Conservation naturalists and staff presented 845 programs to 17,472 people. Participants ranged in age from toddlers through senior citizen.

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the programs were geared toward children, with 23% of the programs specifically for adult groups.

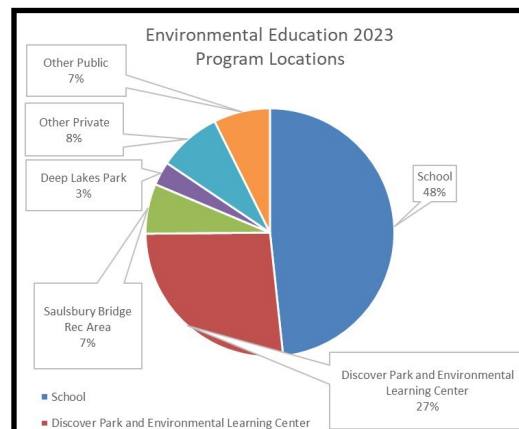
Nearly half (48%) the educational



programs took place at local schools. About a quarter of the programs (29%) took place at the Environmental Learning Center/ Discovery Park. Out of those programs, 8 were in Discovery Park only, 27 were held indoors only in the ELC, and 59 programs had participants spending time both indoors and out.

We held 7% of programs at other public areas (i.e. libraries or other State, County, or local parks) and 8% at other private areas (i.e. churches, Big Sand Mound, care centers).

EE Programs at Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area saw 2,526 participants and 290 at Deep Lakes Park. A total of 3,751 people attended programs at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park. Another 5,734 visitors visited the Environmental Learning Center on their own.



Live animal programs continue to be a huge draw and request. Our animal ambassadors (snakes, raptors, turtles, butterflies, and a frog, toad, and salamander) spend quite a bit of time helping with education programs. Program topics included a mix of recreational activities (canoeing, kayaking, fishing, archery), animal groups (birds, mammals, insects, reptiles), habitats (prairie, woodland, wetland, river, pond), night sky, history, and more.

Here is a list of some of 2023's largest public programs.

- Halloween Drive-Thru - 1,000
- Kiddie Barnyard - 504
- Creatures of the Night - 300
- Musser Public Library Live Raptor program - 250
- Community Block Party - 200



2023 CONSERVATION BOARD

Chairperson	Karen Hartman
Vice-chairperson	Sherry Seright
Member	Mike Schulte
Member	Mark Petersen
Member	Julie Jindrich



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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Muscatine County Conservation Board is to preserve and enhance natural areas and resources in Muscatine County for the use and benefit of the community; to preserve sufficient natural habitats in Muscatine County; to ensure the survival of native plants and animals; to acquire, develop and manage land for public hunting, fishing, camping and recreation; and to promote public appreciation and responsibility for the environment through education.