



# Conservation News



A Publication of the Muscatine County Conservation Board

Volume 37 No. 2 Fall/Winter 2024

## Ambassador Animals for Education

Muscatine County Conservation has several co-workers who help us share the love of nature and conservation with audiences big and small, young and old. These teammates may be covered in scales, feathers, fins, shells, fur, or exoskeletons.

We are excited to introduce you to one of our newest animal ambassadors, a gray morph screech owl named Asio (right).

Asio has a home in the raptor exhibit behind the Learning Center where she relaxes between programs. We have 4 raptors.



Other ambassador animals you might meet include Louie the speckled prairie kingsnake (left) and Kajika the fox snake (right). We have 5 snakes, and 3 of them need names!



Two aquariums full of fish are a constant source of relaxation and entertainment. Bobbie the black crappie (below) demonstrates swimming maneuvers.

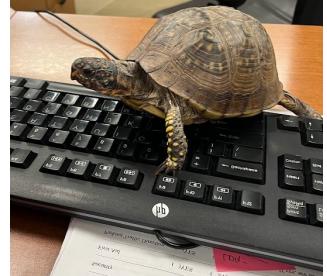


Sheldon the softshell (right) more closely resembles a pancake than a turtle. Two other aquatic turtles share the aquarium space next to him.



Lio (right) is a chill grey tree frog who spends much of the day playing hide and seek. He shares his home with a salamander and a toad.

TT the three-toed box turtle tries to help with some typing and answering the phone when Lori is busy.



The Naturalist team has been making plans for more enrichment for our animals. This could include a greater diversity of food, more space to roam, exercise areas, new hiding spots, and more textures to explore.

You can help by sponsoring an animal for the year. Sponsorships are \$100 each. Multiple people can sponsor the same animal. Donors will get a certificate, photo taken (if desired), and recognition listed by the animal in the newsletter. If you want a chance to help feed or clean-up after the animal, we can use help with that too!!

Let us know your name, which animal you would like to sponsor, and why you chose it. Please have sponsorships in by December 1 so we can have the signs up in time for winter break. A list of all the possibilities will be available at the office in the Environmental Learning Center. Thank you!!



## Thank You Seasonal Staff

A HUGE shout-out to this summer's interns and externs. We couldn't have done it without you!!

Every time I pull into Discovery Park I think, "WOW! This place looks great!" and I know that Trinidad Martinez is to thank! He takes a lot of pride in his work and it shows.



Zuzu (Isabelle) Hartman has also been knocking it out of the park at Deep Lakes this summer! From the beach to the bathrooms and everything in between she has done a fantastic job!

From flood clean-up (twice), to playgrounds, tree plantings, mowing, and the Lodge; Kyle Bentley has helped keep Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area looking it's best!



Externs Kathi Eichelberger (left) and Laura McDonald (below) spent the summer rocking the nature camps and other youth programs. Their passion and enthusiasm for education and nature is fantastic!

Our ambassador animals, and staff are really going to miss this great crew!

Looking for a job next summer? Internships will be posted on the website and Facebook by the end of December for 2025 positions.



## FY24 Annual Report - Highlights

The FY24 Annual Report is available on the [MuscatineCountyConservation.com](http://MuscatineCountyConservation.com) website. You can read it in full under the "About Us" tab.

The Staff and Conservation Board are so thankful for the support of so many community members who love and enjoy attending programs and spending time in their county parks and wildlife areas. Here are a few of the highlights.

- Three long-time staff members retired, and new faces are now serving the residents of Muscatine County.
- Naturalists and externs gave a total of 832 EE programs with a total of 16,670 in attendance.
- The ELC was visited by over 6,000 people and an additional 3,592 guests attended the 234 programs held in the park.
- Park Rangers and maintenance staff worked hard to keep the parks safe, restrooms cleaned, and natural areas looking fantastic!
- Saulsbury Campground did experience some flooding the end of May-June, but still managed to have 1,690 camper use nights and bring in over \$30,000 in revenue.
- Saulsbury Lodge was rented by 70 groups including baby showers, scout groups, family reunions, grad parties, weddings and more.
- 153 groups enjoyed the cabins at Deep Lakes Park, bringing in over \$42,000 in revenue.
- An Iowa DNR Community Forestry Grant helped to plant trees that had been destroyed by the Derecho at Saulsbury and in the Muscatine Arboretum at Discovery Park.
- Multiple volunteer groups helped to weed flower beds, pick up litter in the parks, and plant trees.

*(Photo right)*

*Staff was conducting a prescribed burn at Saulsbury during the solar eclipse.*



## Become a Friend

Thank you to all our “Friends” whose donations to the Muscatine County Conservation Foundation support the development and enhancement of environmental education and conservation projects in Muscatine County.

The names of all donors go into our donor book and those who donate \$250 or more receive a plaque on our donor wall located in the Environmental Learning Center. Please include the form below with your donation and become a “Friend” today.

**Norma L. Lewis**

**Mike & Phyllis Avesing**

**Jean L. Scott**

**Lee & Mary Roudybush**

**Mark & Kim Washburn**

**Charles & Kimberly Swanson**

*In Memory of Fred Hoopes*

**Muscatine Power & Water**

*In Memory of Gary*

*Bennett*



## Muscatine County Conservation Foundation

The Muscatine County Conservation Foundation is currently dedicated to supporting the Campground development project at Deep Lakes Park with the help of private donations.

This campground will be located on the North side of the park, adjacent to the hiking/biking trail. It will allow for greater recreation opportunities within the park, and provide another place for Muscatine visitors to stay. The campground will feature full-hook-up sites, 50-amp electric, a shower house, hard surfaced roads and camp pads, picnic tables, fire rings, and WiFi.



Please consider a tax-deductible gift to the Muscatine County Conservation Foundation today to assist with this and other great projects!

We recognize and appreciate your efforts to support conservation projects in Muscatine County!

## Newsletter Contact Information



To help save on Newsletter expenses, we would like to update our mail and e-mail information. If you have moved or changed your email address, please contact us or email us with new information. Thank you!

Muscatine County Conservation Board  
P.O. Box 109, Muscatine, IA 52761  
563-264-5922  
Email:  
[conservation@muscatainecountyiowa.gov](mailto:conservation@muscatainecountyiowa.gov)

### A Gift For the Conservation Foundation

I would like to become a Friend,  
please accept my donation.

<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor	\$10—\$49
<input type="checkbox"/> Partner	\$50—\$99
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$100—\$249
<input type="checkbox"/> Guardian	\$250—\$499
<input type="checkbox"/> Steward	\$500—\$999
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$1000 +
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to donate my time.	

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your support!*

Please make checks payable to:  
**Muscatine County Conservation Foundation**  
**PO Box 109**  
**Muscatine, IA 52761**

# Area Spotlight: Deep Lakes Park

Deep Lakes Park is Muscatine County Conservation's newest park. This 435-acre sand and gravel quarry features over 120-acres of clear water lakes of varying sizes and depths.

The area was donated by W.G. Block Company in December of 2012. Since then, the Conservation Board and staff have been busy making improvements for public access.

The area is open to fishing, paddling, boating (trolling motors only), nature exploration, and swimming in the designated beach area ONLY.

The Main Access is located on the South side of Muscatine, at 2552 Pettibone Avenue. It provides access to Lake Chester, the biggest lake, where the swimming beach, boat landing, accessible fishing dock, and cabins are located.

Three parking areas are located along 41st street. One features a small picnic gazebo, two offer access to the hard-surface biking/walking trail.

Two more access points are located along 57th street. One is at the bicycle trailhead and the other is a small parking area with a boat access to Lake Jewel & Lake Violet.

There is an access on Stewart Road with walk in trails to Lake Patricia or Island Lake.

A hard-surfaced bicycle/walking trail z's for 1.4-miles (one-way) through the park stretching from 57th street to 41st. It passes picturesque lakes, sand dunes, summer wildflowers, the cabins, and the gazebo before connecting to the Greater Muscatine Trail System at the corner of Stewart Road and 41st.

There are 4 reservable cabins

at Deep Lakes Park. Check our website for availability or call the office.

Visitors can rent kayaks for paddling at Deep Lakes Park. They must be reserved at least 3-days in advance.

Future plans for Deep Lakes Park include building a campground on the North side of the park. We hope to begin construction for Phase 1 in 2025. This will include construction of an access road and 25 full-hook-up sites (electricity, sewer, & water), plus a modern shower house.

Phase 2 will include building a playground in the campground, and the addition of up to 25 more campsites. The Master Plan also includes space for the addition of 3 or 4 more cabins. Due to the popularity of the 4 cabins we currently have, there is a good chance they could become Phase 3.



## Make the Most of Fall!

Fall means cooler temperatures and shorter days. The greens of summer turn to various shades of vibrant reds, oranges, yellows, and browns. It is a great time to spend outdoors, enjoying the weather and natural beauty.

Here are a few ways to boost your mental health, breathe in some fresh air, absorb some vitamin D, and make memories with family and friends:

1. **Go Hunting** - Hunting is allowed at Cedar Bluffs, Richardson, Shield Prairie, Pike Run, and Saulsbury. Some of the most popular game species includes deer, pheasant, rabbit, squirrel, ducks, and geese!
2. **Drop a Line** - As the old saying goes, "A bad day fishing still beats a good day in the office!" Easy access pond fishing is available at Discovery Park. Deep Lakes, Gedney Lake, and Saulsbury also offer great fishing options.
3. **Enjoy a Couple Nights Away** - Rent a cabin at Deep Lakes Park or go camping at Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area. There are so many ways to enjoy nature while you are there!
4. **Paddle** - Canoe shuttles are available on the Cedar River from Jack Shuger in Moscow to Saulsbury. You can also rent a kayak to paddle at Deep Lakes or haul it to your favorite paddling location.
5. **Picnics in the Park** - No matter if your idea of a picnic is tossing down a blanket and opening the basket of food or reserving a shelter and catering in a buffet, we have the space for you! There are playgrounds near several of our shelters to entertain your younger guests as well.
6. **Hit the Trails** - There are paved hiking/biking trails at Discovery Park and Deep Lakes Park. Saulsbury, Pike Run, and Cedar Bluff all have natural surfaced, mowed trails to explore as well. If you have horses, riding is allowed on the trails at Saulsbury!
7. **Hone in on History** - The Old Barn at Discover Park will take you back to the old farming days, or maybe you want to check out Nye Cemetery, the final resting place of Benjamin Nye who is credited with being the first settler in Muscatine County. Fun fact, he also starting the Pine Grist Mill at Wildcat Den State Park, which is adjacent to the Cemetery.
8. **Attend a Program or Event** - Check out all the events listed in this newsletter and join us on an adventure!
9. **Fall Colors** - The Muscatine Arboretum at Discovery Park is an awesome place to view fall colors. The diversity of trees leads to a beautiful array of colors, shapes, and sizes throughout the season. Saulsbury and Shield Prairie are also great places to view an array of fall colors.
10. **Visit the Environmental Learning Center** - The ELC is open daily with free admission. It is always fun to watch the fish swimming in the aquariums, the snakes hiding in their enrichment materials, and the raptors on their perch.

For more info on places to go, things to do, or to check availability for shelters and cabins, visit [MuscatineCountyConservation.com](http://MuscatineCountyConservation.com) or contact us.



# Programs and Special Events

## Monarch Tagging

Tuesday, September 17

6:00 pm

Environmental Learning Center

Try your luck at catching Monarch Butterflies to tag on their way to Mexico. Wear long pants and bring a butterfly net if you have one. We will have a few extra nets to borrow if you don't have one.



## Prairie Seed Harvest

Saturday, October 5

9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Discovery Park

Help make Muscatine County more beautiful and pollinator-friendly through seed propagation. We'll discuss how to identify, collect, and store select wildflower seeds for future planting. We will be walking through tallgrass prairie, so please dress in pants and close-toed shoes. Long-sleeves may make you more comfortable, as well. Snacks will be provided, but feel free to bring a sack lunch to enjoy outdoors. Children under 13 must be accompanied by adult. Please meet by Environmental Learning Center entrance by 9am.

## Halloween at Saulsbury

Saturday, October 17

6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Saulsbury Bridge Rec. Area



Enjoy a Halloween Drive-Thru the campground. Campers will have their sites decorated with a spooky (not scary) Halloween theme. This event is very accessible, since guests will remain in their cars for the tour. There is a suggested donation of \$10/vehicle with proceeds going to the Muscatine County Conservation Foundation. The first 300 children, ages 2-12, will receive a treat bag. Volunteers & treat bag donations needed.



## Trout Stocking

Saturday, October 26

12:00 pm

Discovery Park

The Iowa DNR will be stocking rainbow trout at Discovery Pond (the front one near Cedar Street) at noon. There will be around 100 tagged fish. The first 20 tagged fish, turned in will receive a gift card. In order to fish for trout, you must have a valid Iowa fishing license, AND a trout stamp. Fish can either be turned in to a Ranger on Duty, or bring your fish to the Environmental Learning Center during open hours: noon-4pm on Saturdays and Sundays; or Monday - Friday from 8am-4:30 pm.

## Dutch Oven Cooking

Saturday, November 2

9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Saulsbury Bridge Rec. Area



Ever get tired of the same old hot dogs and hamburgers around the campfire? Come join us for Dutch oven stews! This program is for cooks of any experience level. RSVP for a spot by Sunday, October 27. Participants must be 16 or older. We will be stationed at campsites 23 and 24 in the Main Campground at Saulsbury. Maximum participant count is 15. Reservations can be made by phone 563-264-5922 or email.

## Recycled Seed Tags

Saturday, November 9

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Environmental Learning Center

Come to the Environmental Learning Center and make some recycled paper seed tags. Once they dry you can make gift tags for all of your Holiday presents. Just plant the tags in the spring and watch the prairie flowers emerge. This program is FREE!!

## Winter Sunset Hike

Saturday, December 21

4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

## Discovery Park

Winter is officially here and sunset comes early. Come enjoy the evening solstice sky with a nature hike through Discovery Park. We'll highlight topics of wildlife hibernation and dormancy, but also how some denizens adapt to the darker, colder months. Dress for the temperatures and cross your fingers for good walking weather. Meet by the bald eagles inside the Environmental Learning Center. Anyone 13 or under must be accompanied by an adult. Hot drinks provided for attendees. Happy Solstice!

## Homemade Bird Feeders

Saturday, January 25

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

## Discovery Park

Colder weather means hungry birds. Help feed our feathered friends by making your own bird feeder to put up at home. Learn how to attract birds, and keep them coming back to your feeders. We will send you home with a sample pouch of bird food to get the action started. Please meet by the bald eagle display inside the Environmental Learning Center. Children 13 or under must be accompanied by an adult. Dress for the weather, as a trip to our Wildlife Viewing Blind will be on the agenda.



**SAVE THE DATE !** Bald Eagle Days Saturday, January 18th, 2025

# Fall & Winter Nature Camp Schedule

## Polliwog Playtime

9:00 am - 10:00 am

## Environmental Learning Center

**Ages 18 months through 3 years \$5.00/session**

**Maximum class size 12/session**

Join us for activities designed to help toddlers explore nature. Children must be accompanied by an adult. You can sign up for as few or as many of the classes as you would like. Pre-registration required.

Saturday, September 28

Monarchs

Saturday, January 11

Astronomy

Saturday, October 12

Spiders

Saturday, February 1

Groundhogs

Saturday, November 9

Nocturnal Animals

Saturday, March 1

Owls

Saturday, December 21

Hibernation

Saturday, April 12

Gardening

## Knee-High Naturalists

10:30 am - 11:30 am

## Environmental Learning Center

**4 & 5 year old's**

**\$5.00/session**

**Maximum class size 12/session**

Join us for nature activities such as games, crafts, stories, and outdoor exploration. Children must be accompanied by an adult. You can sign up for as few or as many of the classes as you would like. Pre-registration required.

Saturday, September 28

Monarchs

Saturday, January 11

Astronomy

Saturday, October 12

Spiders

Saturday, February 1

Groundhogs

Saturday, November 9

Nocturnal Animals

Saturday, March 1

Owls

Saturday, December 21

Hibernation

Saturday, April 12

Gardening

## Artwork & Photo Contest

2025 will be the Environmental Learning Center's 20th Anniversary and we are planning a celebration! We invite you to bring in your artwork and photos of places and things that you enjoy and love about our county parks and nature.

### Five Categories

Hunting & Fishing  
Sunrises & Sunsets  
People in Nature

Wildlife  
Artist's Choice



Artwork and photos should be no smaller than 5" x 7" and no larger than 24" x 24" in size. We will be accepting items from November of 2024 through May of 2025. Then, showcasing different pieces at the Environmental Learning Center throughout the months leading up to a date that will be in July 2025.

Staff will judge entries and there will be a Peoples Choice Award by public vote. The Peoples Choice prize will be a 2 night stay in one of our cabins at Deep Lakes Park. The five category winners will receive a choice of 2 nights of camping coupons, 2 kayak rentals, 2 canoe rentals, or a shelter rental.

All artwork and photo entries must depict areas or things in one or more of the Muscatine County Conservation parks or wildlife areas. All photos and artwork must be done by an amateur photographer or artist. The Conservation Board reserves the right to keep copies of any entries and utilize them in promotional materials. (Credit will be given). Please give your entry a title and label the back with name, address, phone, contest category, and name or location of the subject. Entries should be submitted to the Environmental Learning Center in Discovery Park, 3300 Cedar St., Muscatine, IA.

More events and dates to follow this notification will be coming soon. Keep watching our Facebook page: [facebook.com/MuscatineCountyConservationBoard](https://facebook.com/MuscatineCountyConservationBoard)

and our website:  
[Muscatinecountyconservation.com](http://Muscatinecountyconservation.com)



## Deep Lakes Park Cabins

Take advantage of our off-season rates on cabin rentals! Muscatine County Conservation has 4 reservable cabins at Deep Lakes Park. Cabins #1 & #2 have a great view of Valentine Chute. Cabins #3 & #4 overlook beautiful Lake Patricia. Enjoy the serenity of the fall & winter months.

### November—March Rates

One-bedroom Cabins	Two-bedroom Cabins
#1 & #3- 4 person max.	#2 & #4- 8 person max.
2 night min. - \$170	2 night min. - \$200
3 nights- \$250	3 nights- \$290
4 nights- \$330	4 nights- \$380
5 nights- \$410	5 nights- \$470
6 nights- \$490	6 nights- \$560
\$510/week	\$600/week
A \$150 deposit per cabin is also required.	
For more info or to check rental availability visit: <a href="http://MuscatineCountyConservation.com">MuscatineCountyConservation.com</a>	

**Saulsbury Lodge is open for rentals year round!**



The Saulsbury Lodge is a great setting for a family reunion, small wedding reception, graduation or birthday party.

This enclosed building has both heat and air. There is a small kitchen area, modern restrooms, and access to the Saulsbury Bridge. It has the capacity to seat around 75 people with tables and chairs.

Prices vary depending on the day of the week and type of event. Availability can be viewed on our website. Call or email us to make a reservation.

**For more info or to make a reservation:**

[Conservation@muscatainecountyiowa.gov](mailto:Conservation@muscatainecountyiowa.gov)

563-264-5922

[MuscatineCountyConservation.com](http://MuscatineCountyConservation.com)

Facebook: [MuscatineCountyConservationBoard](https://Facebook.com/MuscatineCountyConservationBoard)

## Memorials



Monetary donations were made

*In Memory of Bev White.*

A Crabapple tree was adopted in Discovery Park

*In Memory of Juan Y Olivia Cardenas.*

A Maple tree was adopted in Discovery Park

*In Memory of Edna Askam.*

A Bench was purchased in Discovery Park

*In Memory of Alfred Matthew Airola.*

A Monetary donation was made

*In Memory Of Linda Stoddard.*

Monetary donations were made

*In Memory of Fred Hoopes.*

Monetary donations were made

*In Memory of Rod McCullough.*



Thank you to all those who generously gave time, talent, funding and/or materials to help make our programs, projects, and areas better than ever.

**Julie Buster** - Newsletter help

**Todd Stammer** - Environmental Ed. Program help

**Drew Kurriger** - Environmental Ed. Program help

**HNI Group** - Discovery Park cleanup

**Linda Stoddard** - Potted plants for the Learning Ctr

**Jay Harter** - Fishing tackle

**Casey Frantz** - Book Nook children books

**John Murphy & Bruce McGowan** - Kids fishing poles and tackle boxes

## Meet Geordi!

5 yr. old Geordi and his mom came in to the Learning Center the other day and donated this great acrylic heart that he made. It was filled with things that he loves! Insects, snakeskins, and a crawdaddy claw. Thanks Geordi! We will proudly display this, and maybe someday you'll become a Naturalist!



## Holiday Closings



The Conservation Board offices and Environmental Learning Center will be closed in honor of the following holidays.

Veteran's Day - Monday, November 11, 2024

Thanksgiving - Thursday, November 28, 2024

Day after Thanksgiving - Friday, November 29, 2024

Christmas Eve - Tuesday, December 24, 2024

Christmas - Wednesday, December 25, 2024

MUSCATINE COUNTY  
CONSERVATION BOARD  
3300 CEDAR STREET  
PO BOX 109  
MUSCATINE, IA 52761

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## MUSCATINE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

### BOARD MEMBERS

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

The Muscatine County Conservation Board meets the third Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Meetings are held at the Environmental Learning Center, 3300 Cedar Street in Muscatine. The public is welcome to attend.

If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender, or handicap, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Muscatine County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240

### STAFF

Katie Hammond	Director
Michelle Berns	Naturalist II
Luke Hart	Naturalist
Kent Kaufman	Operations Supervisor
Ryne Brimeyer	Park Officer
Kristin Neeld	Maint. Tech./Park Officer
Trevor Ebeling	Maint. Tech./Park Officer
Lori Dietrich	Office Manager
Dave Schuler	Learning Center Assistant

### Contact us at:

3300 Cedar Street, PO Box 109  
Muscatine, IA 52761  
P(563) 264-5922  
[conservation@muscatainecountyiowa.gov](mailto:conservation@muscatainecountyiowa.gov)  
[www.MuscatineCountyConservation.co](http://www.MuscatineCountyConservation.co)

