



Conservation News



A Publication of the Muscatine County Conservation Board

Volume 38 No. 1 Spring/Summer 2025

Animal Ambassadors Get An Upgrade! By: Michelle Berns

In October of 2024, we received a very generous grant from the Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust. This grant has allowed us to upgrade our animal enclosures, life support filtration system, and improve our raptor cages. We are excited to announce that most of the upgrades have been completed except the raptor enclosures which will be done in late summer/early fall and updated signage.

As you first enter the nature center, you will notice on your left a very large aquarium for two of our aquatic turtles, Tim and Murtle. Tim, our Red-Eared Slider has not been on public display for many years so we are ecstatic that he has a new place where he can charm everyone who walks in. He swims right up to the front of the aquarium as if he is saying, "what's up?" This aquarium is a wonderful addition with a huge area to swim in and a very nice basking platform.

The other two aquatic turtles, Mr. B, the Blanding's Turtle and Sheldon, the Softshell Turtle reside in their original spots. They have new, larger aquariums for extended swimming periods and ramps that allow them to access basking platforms under the artificial sun lights. The best aspect, in my opinion, is that all of our aquatic turtles are on the same life support system as our fish! What does this mean for them? Cleaner and healthier water and a constant flow of fresh water.

Twenty years ago, our life support filtration system was top-of-the-line, with a three-step cleaning process, including canister filters, a bio-reactor, and UV sterilization. Both of the 1200-gallon aquariums only needed a complete empty and cleaning twice a year. About five years ago, finding replacement parts



such as filters and gaskets became more challenging as those companies disbanded.

Technology is always evolving, so our staff took a trip to the National Mississippi River Museum to view their set-up. Their state-of-the-art aquariums with both freshwater and saltwater animals are amazing. Staff gave us a tour and some great advice on how to proceed.

Throughout the competitive bidding process, we found Aquatic Environments in Davenport. They had raving reviews from other nature centers in the area doing similar upgrades.

We now have a great filtration system that should keep the aquariums cleaner with less maintenance. The new system utilizes a carbon block system to remove the city water chlorine as



well as our current UV sterilizers, bio-digesters (bacteria to eat fish poo and other organic material), and an ozone generator to counteract some of that organic material created.

We are excited to give our animal ambassadors more space to roam and healthier habitats!

Stop by 7 days a week and see for yourself the changes that are happening. We are open 8:00-4:30 Monday through Friday and 12:00-4:00 Saturday and Sunday. As always it is free to come in. If you have questions about anything just holler! See you Soon!



The Highway Blues by Luke Hart

On Thursday, February 27th 2025, MCCB received a call from a sheriff's deputy that an injured red-tailed hawk was sighted in the median of Hwy 61, near Tucker Avenue in Muscatine County



Conservation staff quickly gathered supplies to contain the bird and headed out to the site. Unfortunately, due to a serious head trauma event, the hawk had already passed away on the highway.



Busy highways with spattering's of woodlands are scenic for humans, but are certainly not good places for these beautiful animals to be hunting. For much of Iowa, though, this marginal habitat is all that is left.



Restoration of healthy, contiguous woodlands, prairies and wetlands is certainly the best option for protecting our wildlife, but there are a few simple driving habits that humans can exhibit to help mitigate the loss.

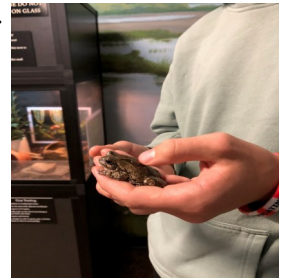
First, don't toss food out your car window; it attracts wildlife to the roadside, potentially causing a chain reaction of accidents.

Second, keep your eyes peeled for scavengers eating roadkill, or perched on fence posts, power lines, or roadside trees. This is a great way to develop that **"search image"** to help you anticipate a potential bird "swoop down" or "fly off."

Lastly, and probably most importantly, slow down. Until we have better habitat options for wildlife, we'll have to accept that we're sharing the road with them. Be careful out there. Thank you!

Animal Sponsorship

If you have been thinking of sponsoring one of our Environmental Learning Center animals, or gifting a sponsorship to a family member or friend, the opportunity will be ongoing.



Corporate sponsorships are a great thing for a group of employees to do as well!

Carter Houseman (left) is sponsoring "Lio", the Gray tree frog. Carter stopped in with his family and spent a little time with Lio.



Joni Axel is sponsoring "Sheldon" our Soft Shelled Turtle.

Thank you Carter and Joni from Lio & Sheldon!

We appreciate your kindness and friendship!



Artwork & Photo Contest

If you've been on the fence about submitting a photo or some artwork for our contest, now is the time! The deadline is May 31, 2025.

Categories are Hunting & Fishing, Wildlife, Sunrises & Sunsets, People in Nature, and Artist's Choice.

Art & Photos do need to be about places and things that you enjoy about our county parks and nature, in one or more of Muscatine County Conservation parks or wildlife areas. All submissions must be done by an amateur photographer or artist. Prizes will be awarded in July 2025. Please refer to the link below for more important details and information, or call our office at 563-264-5922.



<https://muscatinecountyconservation.com/news-events/upcoming-events/all-ages/artwork-photo-contest/>

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.

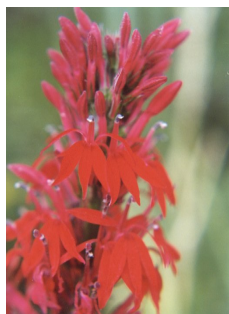
Diane Bunker **Doug & Judy Maxwell**
Curt & Janna Weiss **Mike & Phyllis Avesing**
Joyce Mathern **Larry & Judy Carter**
J & M Gutters **Triple B Construction**
Paul & Lori Carroll **Mark & Julie Frye**
Patricia Gordon **Dan & Diane Olson**
Nancy Pagel **Lee & Mary Roudybush**
Sara Anderson **Glenn & Kathy Huston**
Jim Scott
Sarah Lande – In Honor of Roger Lande

Muscatine County Conservation Foundation

The Muscatine County Conservation Foundation was formed in 1988 with the purpose of supporting the development and enhancement of environmental education and conservation projects in Muscatine County.

The Muscatine County Conservation Foundation is a nonprofit, contributions are tax-deductible.

Friends are recognized in our quarterly newsletter. There is also a beautiful butterfly display in the Learning Center that is updated annually to thank our Friends and



show our gratitude.

Please consider a gift today!
Gifts can be earmarked for Deep Lakes Park improvements if you wish.

Thank you for supporting 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
Conservation@muscatinecountyiowa.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

Programs and Special Events

Meet the Animals! Free, Family Events.



Join a naturalist and meet some of our animal ambassadors. These will be short informal programs in the exhibit area of the Environmental Learning Center.

Saturday, April 5 at 2:30
Saturday, April 12 at 2:30
Saturday, May 3 at 2:30
Saturday, May 10th at 2:30



Spring Tree Giveaway (Tentative) April 26- 9:00-10:30 a.m.- Discovery Park Shelter #1

We will have 200 saplings to give away, FREE! Limit 2 per household. First come, first served, no reservations. Species included will be Hackberry, Wild Plum, Eastern White Pine, Pin Oak, Red Oak, Bald Cypress and Arrowwood. All trees should be planted the same day you pick them up, planting information will be available. If there is a date change, information will be posted on our website:

MuscatineCountyConservation.com and on the Muscatine County Conservation Facebook page.



Pearl City Buckskinner Rendezvous - Discovery Park - Free, Family Event.

Come experience the 1800's fur trade era and the history of the mountain man. There will be demonstrations, knife and tomahawk competitions, and a candy cannon for the kids.

Back for the second year, Captain Jack!

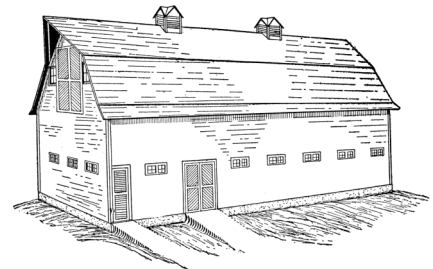
Friday & Saturday, May 16 & 17 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 18 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

The Old Barn - Discovery Park - Free.

Open House at the Old Barn in Discovery Park. There will also be a food truck & petting zoo.

Saturday, May 17 11:00 a.m.- 5:00p.m.



Free Fishing Days - Discovery Park - June 6th, 7th & 8th, 2025

The Iowa DNR's free fishing days are scheduled for: June 6th, 7th, and 8th.

Iowa residents may fish on these dates without a fishing license.

All other fishing regulations must be obeyed.

Who lives in the pond? - Wednesday, June 11 - 10:00 a.m.

Join us for a FREE, family event! Who lives in Heron Hideaway Pond? Meet the naturalists inside the Environmental Learning Center to gather pond nets, buckets, field guides, and magnifying glasses. We will explore all the little critters that make up this cool ecosystem. A limited number of pond nets will be available. If you have your own, please bring it.



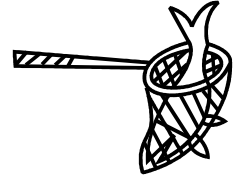
Programs and Special Events

Family Fishing - Tuesday, June 24- 10:00 a.m.- Free, family event.

Join a naturalist with all the equipment to try your hand at fishing.

Anyone 16 and over will need a valid fishing license.

Meet at Discovery Pond (front pond in Discovery Park)



Kayaking at Pike Run - Saturday June 28 - 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

Bring your own or borrow one of our kayaks to explore Pike Run by water.

Pre-registration is required by calling 563-264-5922.

Meet at Pike Run Wildlife Area

1729 Iron City Ave., Nichols - North Parking Lot

Bike Ride with a Naturalist - Wednesday July 2 - 9:00 a.m.

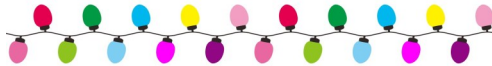
Have you ever taken a guided bike tour? Join us as we embark on a ride through nature!

Meet at the Environmental Learning Center



Lighted Bike Parade through Discovery Park - Friday July 1 - 8:30 p.m.

Meet at the Environmental Learning Center



Bring your bikes and your best lighted decorations and let's parade through Discovery Park. Riders and watchers both welcome!
FREE family event!

20th Anniversary Celebration of the Environmental Learning Center

Can you believe it? The Environmental Learning Center has been in Discovery Park for 20 years! Let's celebrate with some super cool nature activities. It will be a fun day, packed with nature exploration and activities at throughout Discovery Park!

Planning is still happening but **SAVE THE DATE!**

Saturday, July 12 from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.



Sturgeon Moon Sunset Paddle at Deep Lakes Park

Saturday August 9 - 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Meet at the Lake Chester Boat Ramp

Back by popular demand, join the naturalists for a full moon paddle at Deep Lakes Park. Canoes, kayaks, and lifejackets are available to borrow, or bring your own! This year, we are open to Paddle Boards as well. Please bring a light that can be attached to your boat or board.

Pre-registration is required by calling 563-264-5922 or emailing reservations@MuscatineCountyIowa.gov.

Summer Nature Camps for Kids

General Summer Nature Camp Info

- * The registration form is available at the Environmental Learning Center or on our website www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com
- * Registration will begin April 1, 2025
- * Signed registration form and payment are required to be registered for camp.
- * Camps may include outdoor exploration, hikes, games, stories, crafts, and lots of fun!
- * All camps meet at the Environmental Learning Center. We will provide transportation to and from any other areas we visit.
- * Snacks are provided for any camps over one hour in length.
- * Campers should bring a water bottle and wear clothes that can get wet and dirty, and sturdy shoes, no flip-flops please.
- * Refunds are only made if we have to cancel the camp.



Polliwog Playtime

Ages: 18 months through 3 years
Environmental Learning Center
9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30-11:30 a.m.
Maximum 12/session
\$5.00/session

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Who lives in a prairie? | June 9 |
| Pond Life | June 23 |
| Water, Water, Water | July 7 |
| Exciting Eggs | July 21 |
| Creek Stomping | August 4 |



Toddlers, bring your favorite adult to Nature Camp! Activities are designed to help our youngest explorers enjoy nature through hands-on activities, stories, crafts, games, and activities. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Pre-registration is required.

Knee-high Naturalists

Ages: 4-5 years old
Environmental Learning Center
9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30-11:30 a.m.
Maximum 12/session
\$5.00/session

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Who lives in a prairie? | June 16 |
| Pond Life | June 30 |
| Water, Water, Water | July 14 |
| Exciting Eggs | July 28 |
| Creek Stomping | August 11 |

Get ready for a great adventure! We will have fun exploring nature together at Discovery Park. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Pre-registration is required.



Summer Nature Camps

Chipmunk Camp

Kids who just completed K or 1st grade

9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

\$15.00/session

Maximum 16/session

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Discover Nature! | June 17 |
| Discover Geology | July 8 |
| Discover Creeks | July 29 |
| Discover Woodlands | August 12 |

All Chipmunk Camps will stay at Discovery Park and the Environmental Learning Center.

Otter Camp

Kids who just completed 4th or 5th grade

9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

\$15.00/session

Maximum 16/session



| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Discover Nature! | June 19 |
| Discover Geology | July 10 |
| Discover Creeks | July 31 |

Otter Camps will meet at the Environmental Learning Center and travel to Muscatine County natural areas.

Hunter Education



Anyone born after January 1, 1972 who wants to purchase a hunting license in Iowa must have successfully completed a Hunter Education course. Minimum age is 12. Class is free, but limited to 30 students. You must register online at www.gooutdoorsiowa.com then pick up a workbook at the Environmental Learning Center. The review questions at the end of the workbook should be completed prior to the class. Students need to bring the completed workbook, and a sack lunch.

Saturday, March 22 - 9:00 a.m.-5:00p.m.

Saturday, August 30 - 9:00a.m.-5:00p.m.

Kestrel Camp

Kids who just completed 2nd or 3rd grade

9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

\$15.00/session

Maximum 16/session

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Discover Nature! | June 18 |
| Discover Geology | June 9 |
| Discover Creeks | July 30 |

Meet at the Environmental Learning Center and travel to Muscatine County natural areas.

Outdoor Recreation Camp

Kids who just completed 6th - 8th grade

9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

\$15.00/session

maximum 16/session

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| Explore Big Sand Mound | June 6 |
| Explore Wetlands | June 27 |
| Explore Woodlands | July 25 |

Outdoor Recreation Camps will meet at the Environmental Learning Center and travel to Muscatine County natural areas.

Environmental Learning Center



Visit the Learning Center at Discovery Park

FREE and open to the public!

3300 Cedar Street, Muscatine, Iowa 52761

Hours: Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday from 12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Closed most holidays.

Highlights include:

- Two 1,200-gallon aquariums with native fish
- Live animal displays
- Over 100 animal mounts
- Natural history exhibits
- Hands-on kids area
- Live raptors & MORE!



Online Reservations - Coming Soon!!

Starting on April 1, 2025, we are hoping to roll out an easier way to reserve campsites, cabins, picnic shelters, and the Saulsbury Lodge.

The online reservations will go through the MyCountyParks.com/County/Muscatine website. All 99 counties in Iowa are featured on this site, but not all of them participate in the e-commerce option. People will also be able to register and pay for some of our environmental education camps and programs.

We are expecting a few growing pains as our customers and staff adjust to the new process. We anticipate that many of you will love the ease of making a reservation. Website data shows the majority of the online reservations are made late in the evening when offices are closed, from a phone or tablet. We would speculate, those people are sprawled out on a comfy couch, in their jammies, making plans for their next adventure.

Picnic Shelters: We have six reservable shelters that will be open to online reservations. These are great for summer birthdays, reunions, youth groups, and religious groups. There are 3 shelters at Discovery Park, 2 at Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area, and 1 at Jack Shuger.



Campgrounds: Campers wishing to stay in the main campground at Saulsbury will need to make online reservations (once the system is up and running). Reservations will need to be made a least 3-days in advance. The River Campground and Tent Only area will still be first come, first served.

Cabins: Guests will appreciate the ability to make an online reservation for the 4 cabins at Deep Lakes Park. The process will be similar to reserving a hotel, there will be no need for our office to be physically open to book your stay.

Saulsbury Lodge: The Lodge will continue to be available for day use groups, and weekend weddings.

We will update Facebook and our Websites once the online reservations go live! Stay tuned...



New Campground Coming to Deep Lakes Park

We are excited to announce that construction for a new full hook-up campground will be underway soon at Deep Lakes Park.

Designed by Bolton & Menk, this new campground will feature sewer, water, and electric at each site. The DLP Campground will be located on the North side of the park, with the entrance off 41st Street.

Triple B Construction will be the general contractor working on the project. In addition to building the campground roads, they will be installing a Huffcut shower house, and 22 paved campsites.

We do not anticipate an interruption for park visitors except for an increase in construction traffic on the North side of the park, and near the hard-surfaced trail. Cyclists, walkers, and joggers will be able to view the progress throughout the summer.

The campground is expected to be complete by the end of 2025. Sites will be reservable online, and open for business in 2026!

For more info or to make a reservation:

Conservation@MuscatineCountyIowa.gov

563-264-5922

MuscatineCountyConservation.com

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



Memorials



Monetary donations were made

In Memory of Jim Hargrave.

An Oak tree was adopted in Discovery Park

In Memory of Patti Keller.



Spring & Summer

Holiday Closings

2025

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

Easter - Sunday, April 20, 2025

Memorial Day - Monday, May 26, 2025

Independence Day - Friday, July 4, 2025

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.

Brenda Erber - Faith Together Muscatine

Folded & sealed newsletters.

Sheryl Payne - Monetary donation.

Joni Axel - Animal Sponsorship & Animal Food.

Jen Keltner - Halloween Drive-thru bags.

Audrey Randel - Halloween Drive-thru bags.

Lila Wall - Halloween Drive-thru bags.

Kinsley Owens - Halloween Drive-thru bags.

Natalie Clove - Halloween Drive-thru bags.

Angelina Rojas - Halloween Drive-thru bags.

Hailey Walker - Halloween Drive-thru bags.

Elanea Walker - Halloween Drive-thru bags.

Madyson Wyatt - Halloween Drive-thru bags.

Cayden Caliger - Halloween Drive-thru bags.

Carter Houseman - Animal Sponsorship.

Julie Herold - Books Donation.

All Seasons Glass - RARE Sponsor and

Eagles & Ivories Events.



Joni Axel sponsored Sheldon the softshell turtle, because she has always loved softshell turtles!

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

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MUSCATINE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

BOARD MEMBERS

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Julie Jindrich | Chairperson |
| Mike Schulte | Vice-chairperson |
| Karen Hartman | Member |
| Sherry Seright | Member |
| Dakoatah Jacobs | 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@muscatinecountyia.gov

www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com

