



# Conservation News



A Publication of the Muscatine County Conservation Board

Volume 38 No. 2 Fall/Winter 2025

## Fishing Line is Harmful to Wildlife

The phone at Discovery Park lit up, on average, four times a day during the months of May and June. The calls were all the same, “I was walking around Discovery Pond and there is a goose that is all tangled up in fishing line.”

It is so hard to watch wildlife suffer, but it is comforting to know that there are so many good people who want to help. Unfortunately, the Muscatine County Conservation Staff were aware of the tangled goose and attempted several times to capture it without success.

The biggest problem was that the goose could still fly. This made it impossible to catch. The more attempts that were made, the more wary and educated the geese became, making it very difficult. Each time we got too close they would head toward safety, hissing and trying to scare us off.

There is a short period of time in late June when the adults molt their primary feathers and are unable to fly. Staff were trying to be patient and wait for the molt, but we were also afraid that the goose would lose his leg before we could help it.

Each year the Iowa DNR Wildlife Units capture and band a quota of geese. “This year’s quota is 150 geese,” said Andy Robbins, Iowa DNR Wildlife Biologist at the Odessa Unit. He and his crew were called upon to help capture the geese at Discovery Park so that the goose tangled in fishing line could get the help it needed. As an added bonus, they banded all the geese that didn’t already have one.

Muscatine County Conservation is lucky to have a Naturalist with a rehabilitation background. Luke

Hart is excellent at assessing injured wildlife and getting them to a qualified person who can help. He did a fantastic job removing the fishing line and checking this goose for injuries.

The entangled goose still had warmth and blood flow to the foot. The goose lost its hallux, or back toe, due to the fishing line cutting off circulation. This toe is used for scratching or perching but isn’t very important for swimming or walking. The goose can still walk with a little bit of a limp, but staff are thankful that the foot was able to be saved, and infection had not set in.

PLEASE, pick up after yourselves when fishing, hiking, or out exploring. Fishing line and other trash are extremely dangerous to fish and wildlife. They can become tangled, or accidentally eat it, thinking it is food. Please use trash receptacles or carry your trash home with you.

The Environmental Learning Center even has a box in the entry way for anglers to deposit used fishing line for recycling.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to help or call about the injured goose. It is nice to see so many people caring about Discovery Park and its many inhabitants.

THANK YOU for helping us keep the wildlife safe!



## Park Spotlight: Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area

Saulsbury is a 675-acre, multi-use recreation area located approximately 8-miles NW of Muscatine at 2007 Saulsbury Road. With the Cedar River making up most of the western border of the park, ecosystems consist of a mix of floodplain forest, open fields, creeks, and wetlands. This unique mix provides a diversity of wildlife habitats and outdoor recreation opportunities.

A total of 601-acres are dedicated to wildlife habitat and are open for public hunting. The area is popular for species such as deer, turkey, squirrel, and rabbit.

The remaining 74-acres are utilized for recreation. This part of the property contains two boat landings. One for accessing the Cedar River and one on Chicken Creek with a fishing dock.

The Saulsbury Lodge is a great location for medium-sized gatherings such as family reunions; youth, scout or church groups; small weddings; graduation, or birthday parties.

There are three campgrounds at Saulsbury including the Main Campground with 24 sites including 20-30-50 amp service. There is also a shower house, potable water, dump station, playground, and firewood shed. Sites are reservable online at [MyCountyParks.Com](http://MyCountyParks.Com).

The River Campground and Tent Only Campground do not have electricity, but there is a latrine nearby and guests are welcome to utilize the facilities in the main campground.

The Saulsbury Bridge sits just behind the Lodge and looks out

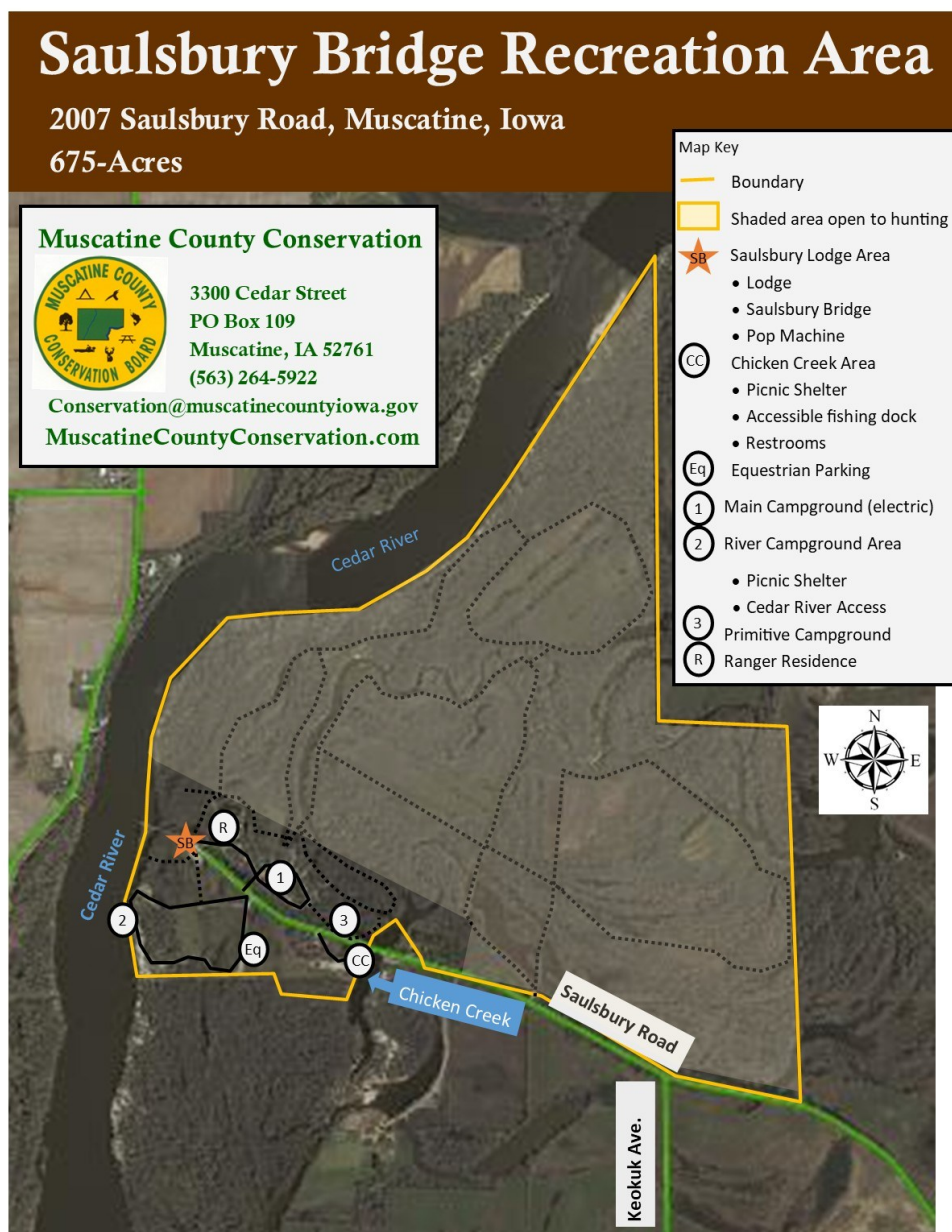
over the Cedar River. It no longer crosses the river, but offers a great lookout view or picnic spot.

Horseback riding is allowed on many of the trails at Saulsbury. There is a grassy parking area specifically for horse trailer parking.

The area is also open to all sorts of outdoor enthusiasts include hikers, birders, paddlers, photographers, and those who simply enjoy a walk in nature.

Saulsbury is also the location for several school field trips, School of the Wild, and the annual Halloween Drive Through.

Come check it out and Love Your County Parks!



# 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, 20, 30 & 50 amp electric, a shower house, hard surfaced roads and camp pads, picnic tables, and fire rings.



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!

## *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**

## Join the Circle of Friends

**Thank you to all our “Friends” whose donation 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 above with your donation and become a “Friend” today.**

**SSAB Iowa Inc.**  
**Helen Atkinson**  
**Jean Scott**  
**Doug & Judy Maxwell**  
**Jim Wester**  
*In Memory of Steve Hindahl*  
**Rogert & Brenda Roskens**  
*In Memory of Steve Hindahl*

**Mike & Phyliss Avesing**  
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**Larry & Judy Carter**  
**Steve & Marla Lee**  
*In Memory of Steve Hindahl*  
**Sally Smith Fitzpatrick**  
*In Memory of Steve Hindahl*

**Steve & Kay Paulsrud**  
**Norma I. Lewis**  
**Mark & Julie Frye**  
**Mark & Kaia Petersen**  
**Joni Axel**  
**Rich & Nora Dwyer**



*Thank You*



# We ♥ Our Summer Externs !

My name is Laura McDonald, and I have had the privilege of working as a teacher extern at the Environmental Learning Center for two summers. My role included working with summer camps; care and enrichment of the animal ambassadors; hosting visitors and field trips at the ELC; and creating exhibits for the public to enjoy. While animal enrichment was my favorite activity, I also truly enjoyed visiting with guests as they walked through the exhibits in the nature center. It is a joy to share all of the wonderful things happening at Muscatine County Conservation. Learning from the naturalists has also given me so much to share with my students during the school year.

The next time you are at the ELC, check out the new Geology exhibit displaying many of Iowa's rocks, fossils, and minerals. This is a project that I am proud to have put together and cannot wait to incorporate into my classroom curriculum. This will be the second year that my 4th-grade classes at Jefferson Elementary will participate in School of the Wild at Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area in partnership with the naturalists at MCC. The students will spend four days outdoors learning a variety of lessons in all content areas, and developing an appreciation and respect for nature.

I want to thank all of the staff at the Environmental Learning Center for teaching me so much during my externships. I have truly been a pleasure to serve our community through the programs at MCC.

Laura McDonald  
Jefferson Elementary School  
4th Grade Teacher



Michelle Haller  
Muskie Early Learning Ctr.  
4 yr old Preschool Teacher

My name is Michelle Haller and I recently completed an externship with Muscatine County Conservation and came away energized and full of new classroom resources.

Encouraged by former extern Kathi Eichelberger, I gained hands-on experience caring for the Discovery Center's resident animals — even overcoming my initial hesitation about holding snakes. I also helped run programs for kids and students of all ages and had the privilege of supporting the Environmental Learning Center's 20th Anniversary celebration.

The relationships and practical knowledge I gained will make my STEM teaching more engaging. Thank you to the staff, especially Michelle and Luke for an unforgettable learning opportunity!



## *In Remembrance of Thurston II*



Sadly, we lost one of our long-time educational owls this summer. Thurston II was a great-horned owl who sparked awe and curiosity in so many who met him. If you ever walked by to visit his mew or saw him on a glove at a program, undoubtedly you remember a majestic bird with bright yellow eyes and large black and brown ear tufts. Thurston was a quiet owl, giving only the occasional light hiss when disturbed. According to former Naturalist, Dave Bakke, he only hooted once on a traveling program. Perhaps at night, though, when no one was around to hear, Thurston sang out to the park. Thurston came to Muscatine County Conservation Board (MCCB) in 1993, after injuring his wing past the point of repair. He lived 32 years at both Saulsbury Bridge Rec Area and Discovery Park, teaching the public of the importance of predators and the wild places they rely upon for survival. On a warm Tuesday evening in August, Thurston passed away. We don't know exactly how many lives Thurston has touched. We do know, however, that we will remember him for a very long time. Farewell, friend...and thank you.



### **Thank you to our Animal Sponsor**

We want to give a big THANK YOU, to Laura McDonald for sponsoring Mr. B, the Blandings Turtle and Louie, the Speckled Kingsnake.

Laura loves to do enrichment activities with the ELC animals and has become a big fan of Mr. B and Louie. We are pretty sure the feelings are mutual when you see them together.



### **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](mailto:Conservation@muscatinecountyiowa.gov)**

### **This Summer has been a lot of work!**

Between flooding, storm damage and regular grounds maintenance, our staff has been super busy keeping up with it all!

We appreciate all the hard work they put into their daily routines and unexpected events that randomly happen.

When you see one of our crew out and about in any of our parks or areas, make sure you give them a thumbs up, and a smile!



# Programs and Special Events



**Monarch Tagging** Saturday, September 20 1:00 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.

**Autumn Leaf Art Program** Saturday, October 18 1:00 pm-4:00 pm  
Discovery Park— Meet at Environmental Learning Center



Hike through Discovery Park during peak fall colors and collect your favorite leaves for a fun art project back at the Environmental Learning Center. All art supplies will be provided. Please dress for the weather. Children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult.

**Halloween at Saulsbury** Saturday, October 18 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm Saulsbury Bridge Rec. Area

Enjoy a Halloween Drive-Thru in 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 are needed. Contact our office.



**Dutch Oven Cooking Program** Saturday, November 8 3:00 pm-6:00 pm  
Discovery Park-Meet at #2 Playground Shelter

Enjoy Dutch oven cooking at its finest—in the great outdoors! We will be cooking and baking a main dish and dessert, respectively. Please RSVP by Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>. List any food restrictions you have so that dishes may be chosen to accommodate as many as possible. Dress for the weather and bring your own beverages (no alcohol allowed at Discovery Park). Cost: \$5 per person for supplies.



**Homemade Bird Feeders Program** Saturday, December 20 10:00 am-12:00 pm  
Environmental Learning Center

Help feed your feathered friends by taking home your own home-made bird feeders. Home-made feeders are a great way to help birds through colder months, when food may be scarce. You'll enjoy how many birds come to visit your feeders this winter. All supplies will be provided. Children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult.

**Full Moon Owl Prowl** Saturday, January 3 6:30 pm Saulsbury Recreation Area

Let's go wander through Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area and listen for the owls!  
We will follow the trail guided by the light of the Wolf Moon!

Be sure to dress for the weather and we'll meet at the Lodge parking lot.

“WHO” do you think we will hear?





**Bald Eagle Days** Saturday, January 17 9:00 am - 1:00 pm  
**Pearl City Station, Muscatine Riverfront**

Join the naturalists at the Pearl City Station for eagle viewing outside on the deck overlooking the Mississippi River and nature programs. More details to come!



**Toys for Raptors Program** Saturday, January 24th 10:00 am-12:00 pm  
**Environmental Learning Center**

Our education birds of prey need enrichment. You can help by making fun toys for them! Making toys for raptors is a great way to help keep them engaged with their surroundings and even learn new tricks. All supplies will be provided. There is no cost, but please RSVP by Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup>.



**Winter Tree Walk** Saturday, February 21 10:00 am-12:00 pm  
**Meet at Environmental Learning Center to walk through the Muscatine Arboretum**

Trees without leaves can be difficult to identify. The Muscatine Arboretum makes it easy! Come explore the trees of Discovery Park and take home some winter ID tips to help you sound like a pro on your next nature hike. Be sure to dress for the weather and bring your favorite hot beverage. There will be hot cocoa after the hike. Children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult.

## Fall & Winter Nature Camp Schedule

### Polliwog Playtime



9:00 am - 10:00 am

Ages 18 months through 3 years \$5.00/session  
Maximum class size 12/session

#### Discovery Park—Environmental Learning Center

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 is required.

Saturday, September 27	Butterflies
Saturday, October 11	Spiders & Webs
Saturday, November 8	Leaves All Around
Saturday, December 6	Oh Deer!
Saturday, January 10	Tracks
Saturday, February 14	Who lives in a tree?
Saturday, March 14	Squirrels
Saturday, April 11	Aquatic Animals
Saturday, May 2	Worms

### Knee-High Naturalists



10:30 am - 11:30 am

4 - 6 year old's \$5.00/session  
Maximum class size 12/session

#### Discovery Park—Environmental Learning Center

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 is required.

Saturday, September 27	Butterflies
Saturday, October 11	Spiders & Webs
Saturday, November 8	Leaves All Around
Saturday, December 6	Oh Deer!
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Saturday, February 14	Who lives in a tree?
Saturday, March 14	Squirrels
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Saturday, May 2	Worms

## We have some Winners!

Our Artwork & Photo Contest was a great success with over 70 entries of both Artwork and Photography. All entries have been on display here at the ELC and have been viewed by all of our visitors.

Everyone that entered was a winner in our opinion! Thank you so much to each of you!



### Photos



### Hunting & Fishing

**1st**—Mitchell Meineke—Turkey Down

### Sunrises & Sunsets

**1st**—Laura Dunbar—Prairie Sunset

**2nd**—Marci Clark—Clam Man Paints the Sky

**3rd**—Sarai Camacho-Rodriguez—Geode Rain

### People In Nature

**1st**—Jessica Bunn—A Winter Walk

### Wildlife

**1st**—Marci Clark—Morning Flight

**2nd**—Sue Willits—Snowy Geese

**3rd**—Mitchell Meineke—Turkey Talk & Walk

### Artist's Choice

**1st**—Sue Willits—Reflections

**2nd**—Sue Willits—Dandelion Wishes

**3rd**—Mitchell Meineke—Branch Bird



### Artwork

**1st**—Leon—Paper Plate Owl

**1st**—Greta—Watercolor Owl

**1st**—Neamiah—Crayon Color Owl

**1st**—Isaiah—Yarn Center Owl

**1st**—Divine—Book Page Owl

**1st**—Hannah—Yarn Owl on Stick

**1st**—Elise—Plate/Cupcake Owl



## 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. - \$218	2 night min. - \$248
3 nights- \$327	3 nights- \$372
4 nights- \$436	4 nights- \$496
5 nights- \$545	5 nights- \$620
6 nights- \$654	6 nights- \$744
\$763/week	\$868/week

For more info or to check rental availability visit:  
[mycountyparks.com/county/muscatine](http://mycountyparks.com/county/muscatine)



## 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 reservation website.

**For information or to make a reservation:**

[mycountyparks.com/county/muscatine](http://mycountyparks.com/county/muscatine)

**More information about MCCB is available at:**

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





## Memorials

A tree was adopted in Discovery Park

***In Memory of Matt & Cam Summitt  
and Ainsley & Connor Anderson.***

A Crabapple tree was adopted in Discovery Park

***In Memory of Nancy Bierman Hotchkiss.***

A Crabapple tree was adopted in Discovery Park

***In Memory of Dustin Michael Kay.***

A Crabapple tree was adopted in Discovery Park

***In Memory Of Jesse Fullerton.***



## Holiday Closings

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

Veteran's Day - Tuesday, November 11, 2025

Thanksgiving - Thursday, November 27, 2025

Day after Thanksgiving - Friday, November 28, 2025

Christmas Eve - Wednesday, December 24, 2025

Christmas Day - Thursday, December 25, 2025

Day after Christmas— Friday, December 26, 2025

hello fall



**Wow! ~Thanks!**

We cannot begin to thank you enough, who generously gave time, talent, funding and/or materials to help make our programs, projects, and areas better than ever!

***Cindy Howell***—Monetary Donation.

***Brenda Erber***—Newsletter Preparation.

***Traci Lippelgoes***—Newsletter Preparation.

***Pastor Susan Bantz***—Newsletter Preparation.

***Katie Green***—Newsletter Preparation.

***Kristy Cox***—Newsletter Preparation.

***Mary Maxson***—Newsletter Preparation.

***Joan Dietrich***—Newsletter Preparation.

***Connie Hoekstra***—Newsletter Preparation.

***Joseph Reddy***—Newsletter Preparation.

***Barb Ramsey***—Newsletter Preparation.

***Kenzalynn Hammond***—Newsletter Preparation.

***Chuck Pappas***—Bird Seed.

***John & Julie Jindrich***—Monetary Donation.

***MidAmerican Energy***—Foundation Fish Fry.

***Curt Weiss***—Foundation Fish Fry.

***Denny Weiss***—Foundation Fish Fry.

***Jeff Hammond***—Foundation Fish Fry.

***Christine Nash***—HNI Group-Flowerbed Cleanup.

***Evan Aschbrenner***—HNI Group— Flowerbed Cleanup.

***Chris Payne***—HNI Group— Flowerbed Cleanup.

***Riley Paustin***—HNI Group— Flowerbed Cleanup.

***Darren Williams***—HNI Group— Flowerbed Cleanup.

***Travis Prohask***—HNI Group— Flowerbed Cleanup.

***Jess Spencer***—HNI Group— Flowerbed Cleanup.

***Laura Schulte***—HNI Group— Flowerbed Cleanup.

***Erica Shriver***—HNI Group— Flowerbed Cleanup.

***Stephany Ernst***—HNI Group— Flowerbed Cleanup.

***Rebecca Corrigan***—HNI Group— Flowerbed Cleanup.

***Carol Bauer***—HNI Group— Flowerbed Cleanup.

***Jim Wester & Charles Wester***—Educational Books.

***Jean White***—20th Anniversary Volunteer.

***Alex Doyle***—20th Anniversary Volunteer.

***Louisa Co. Izaak Walton League***—Foundation Fish Fry.

***Mark Seefeldt & Grandsons***—Fish for ELC Aquarium.

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
Jeff Snyder	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](mailto:conservation@muscatinecountyia.gov)

[mycountyparks.com/county/muscatine](http://mycountyparks.com/county/muscatine)

