

*A NEWSLETTER OF THE
BREMER COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
Spring 2026 Edition*

*Cedar Bend Park & Board Updates
By Andrew Hockenson*

As temperatures begin to warm, and actually stay warm without the return of winter, we begin to start thinking of all the spring and summer time activities to look forward to. One popular activity in Bremer County is utilizing the wonderful Cedar River that passes through. Visitors to Cedar Bend Park will be treated to a new upgrade once the park officially opens on May 1. Over the years, including several rounds of highwater events, the lower steps to the canoe/kayak launch to the Cedar River washed out, making it difficult and unsafe for those wanting to utilize the site. The original railroad tie steps were installed in the 1990's by workers through the Iowa Conservation Corps. These steps had served very well for the past 30 years, however over time, portions deteriorated. The Bremer County Conservation Board knew the river access had to be addressed and sought financial assistance through a Bremer County Community Endowment grant for needed repairs. Fortunately, the grant was successful and the project would move forward. Instead of walking up and down nearly 40 wooden steps carrying a canoe or kayak, a concrete "S" shaped walkway now leads you down to the river. Staff members still plan to do some additional landscaping to the site and plan on adding a handrail alongside the concrete path



Before, Summer 2023



After, Fall 2025

Bremer County Conservation Board Staff

Executive Director - Andrew Hockenson

Naturalists - Angie Auel & Liz Sabers

Natural Resources Technicians - Pat Hyde, Dave Steere,

Mike Weidemann & Nick Franzen

Board Members

Chairperson - Patricia Spowart

Vice Chair - Mandie Sanderman

Stacey Snyder, Kevin Korman, Scott Whitcome

Cedar Bend & Board Updates *(continued)*

By Andrew Hockenson

once temperatures and ground conditions allow. We look forward to see how the new site will be utilized throughout the summer.



Fundraising for the cabin project at Cedar Bend Park has been steadily moving along. The Conservation Board has received some very much appreciated donations, and looks forward to seeing this project through. With that excitement, the Bremer County Nature Alliance recently

announced a fundraising challenge. At their annual banquet held on February 19, they offered to match any donations toward the cabin project up to \$10,000. If fully met, that could be an additional \$20,000 or more in donations. To find out more, or to donate go to <https://givebutter.com/cedarbendcabin>. Past and future donations are greatly appreciated.

Good volunteers in our parks play a vital roll in everyday park cleanliness and appearance. Whether its picking up sticks after a storm, keeping trails cleared, or picking up garbage. These activities help staff members focus on other maintenance tasks that arise. We wish to remind park users to please pick up after yourselves and pets when using our public spaces. We greatly appreciate all those who are carrying out what they carried in when picnicking, fishing, hiking, etc. We also appreciate those picking up after their pets, however please remember to discard those little colorful baggies into the dumpsters instead of leaving them in the grass or next to parking posts. I'm sure our volunteers and staff will thank you for that.

There have been some recent changes to the members of the Bremer County Conservation Board. Richard Harms from Tripoli served on the Board from 2005 until December of 2024. The Board of Supervisors appointed Patricia Spowart of rural Tripoli to replace Dick. She is serving as Board Chair for 2026. Larry Pavelec of Readlyn served from 2021 until December of 2025. Scott Whitcome of Waverly was appointed to fill Larry's seat. When you see Dick and Larry, please thank them for all their years of service and guidance to the Board. They both have played pivotal roles in making the areas within Bremer County what they are today.



Thanks to the following for donating

Mark Bohner

Cedar Bend Cabin

Patricia Spowart

Cedar Bend Cabin
Memorial to cabin for
Arlo Pipho

Lois Peters

Memorial to cabin for
Arlo Pipho

Mandie Sanderman

Cedar Bend Cabin

Bob, Kris, Karalynn, &

Zach Brunkhorst

Cedar Bend Cabin

Dick & Joyce Harms

Cedar Bend Cabin

Peggy & Dale Rogers

Ingawanis Woodland

Thanks to the following for donating to Bremer County Nature Alliance

Giving Tuesday

Rudlof do Jong

Lynn Bolin

Darlene Joss

Megan Spooner

Banquet Donations

Bob Brunkhorst

Bradley Bunce

Jerry Dove

Michael Stevens

Linda Brandt

Larry Pavelec

First Bank

Wildflowers of Bremer County

By Liz Sabers

Although it seems like Iowa can't make up its mind with winter or spring weather, there is hope of a spring right around the corner! Starting about mid-March, deep in the woodlands and prairies, wildflowers are beginning to bloom. The ephemeral flowers are the first flowers in the spring to bloom in the woodlands, but you better find them fast for they are often short-lived, blooming for up to two weeks, with some blooming in a matter of days. While that may seem very quick, this fast-blooming cycle allows them to grow, bloom, pollinate and die off all within the matter of five to eight weeks before the tree canopy gets too thick, blocking their light. Most ephemeral flowers will emerge right at the very beginning of spring as the ground begins to unthaw, typically around the middle of March in Iowa. The peak blooming time for the widest array of flowers is mid-April, although you can find some still blooming into May. You may have to act fast, but if you know what you're looking for and keep your eyes peeled, you can see these beautiful blooms too!



Bloodroot



Dutchman's Breeches



Virginia Bluebell



Spring Beauty

Common Blue Violet



False Rue Anemone



Hepatica



Trout Lily



Photo credit: Bloodroot, Virginia Bluebell, False Rue Anemone, Hepatica, Trout Lily – Larry Reis, Winneshiek County Naturalist. Dutchman's Breeches, Spring Beauty, Common Blue Violet – Liz Sabers, Bremer County Naturalist

Ready to go on your own flower hunt? Lucky for you, you can find them in some of our county parks! Check out Babcock Woods in Waverly or Ingawanis Woodland in Janesville to view woodland flowers. Swing by Brooks/Lease Prairie in Sumner, Winzenburg Prairie in Waverly and Warren Township Cemetery Prairie near Waverly in the summer to view some beautiful prairie flowers. Remember, it is illegal to pick wildflowers in public conservation areas, so only take photos or sketches and memories!

The Bremer County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Bremer County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

**Bremer County
Conservation Board**

(319) 882-4742

www.mycountypar

ks.com/county/

bremer.aspx

For the vision impaired, or for those who cannot read the size of print in this publication, a recording or larger sized version of the text is available by contacting the Bremer County Conservation Board at 319-882-4742.

Picnic in the Park

Each family brings their own lunch items and a blanket to spread out on. Picnic tables are also available. Each week will have a book and activity. Please email Angie at angie.ael@co.bremer.ia.us to reserve your spot. There is no fee for this program but you must register by July 1st.



11:30 am - 1:00 pm

July 17 What Eats That?
at Cedar Bend Park, Waverly

July 24 Fangs!
at Cedar Bend Park, Waverly

July 31 Whose Butt?
at Cedar Bend Park, Waverly

Mini Explorers

This program is for PreK, Kindergarten and 1st grade students. An adult needs to accompany the child to these events. Each week, we will explore a different park in the county and enjoy an activity together. Please email Angie at angie.ael@co.bremer.ia.us to reserve your spot. There is no fee for this program but you must register by May 25th.



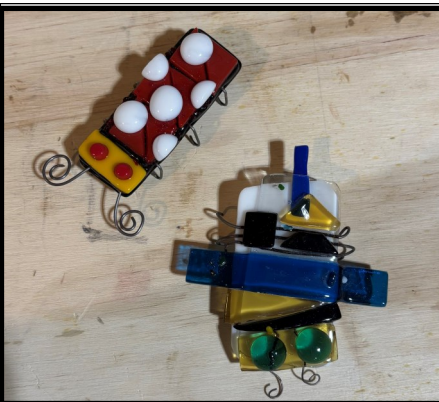
10:00 - 11:15 am

June 8 Fish On!
at Plainfield Lake, Plainfield

June 15 Seeds & Plants
at Ingawanis Woodland, Janesville

June 22 Walking Sticks
at North Woods, Sumner

Field Trip to Waterloo Center of the Arts



Enjoy a field trip to the Waterloo Center of the Arts with an insect hunt and a fused bug project. We will also take time to play at the Phelps Youth Pavilion before coming home.

Date: Wednesday, July 29

Time: 9:30am—1:30pm

Age: There is no age limit, but if transported by BCCB staff, child must not require car seat; Limit 7

Fee: \$30

Field Trips

Archery in SE Waverly

Participants will meet at the Waverly Archery Club near Babcock Woods. All equipment will be provided. We will begin our day shooting at a target, then walk through the woods to shoot at the 3D animals.

Date: Wednesday, June 10

Time: 9:00am – 11:00am

Age: Completed 4th grade and up; Limit 20

Fee: \$10

Trip to Heery Woods near Clarksville, Iowa

Participants will go fishing and kayaking at Sportsman's Park. Then they will get involved with numerous team challenges and get to check out the nature center at Heery Woods.

Date: Wednesday, June 17

Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm

Age: Completed 3rd grade and up; Limit 11

Fee: \$20

Rockford Fossil Park near Rockford, Iowa

Travel to the Devonian Age when Iowa was an ocean. That's before the dinosaurs! Participants will tour the Fossil & Prairie Center before going out to look for fossils.

Date: Monday, July 20

Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm

Age: Completed 3rd grade and up; Limit 7

Fee: \$20

Twin Ponds Nature Center near Ionia, Iowa

We will travel to the Twin's Pond Nature Center, where we will fish at the pond before touch live animals in the nature center.

Date: Wednesday, July 22

Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm

Age: Completed 3rd grade and up; Limit 7

Fee: \$20

Summer Outdoor Explorers Programs

To register for any Outdoor Explorers events, please go online to <https://bit.ly/2026OutdoorExplorers> then pay at <https://givebutter.com/BCNAOutdoorExplorers> for the amount of the class or combination of classes. Please email Angie Auel at angie.ael@co.bremer.ia.us if you have any questions. Register by May 25th.

Beginner Outdoor Explorers

Ensure your child is outside this summer by signing them up to enjoy and learn about the great outdoors! Outdoor activities are listed below. Your child may take this class 2 years in a row. Most activities will alternate every other year.

Days: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 - 11:15 am

Grades Completed: 2nd - 3rd

Place: Cedar Bend Park East Shelter (1267 205th Street, Waverly) &
Three Rivers Park (1000 Adams Pkwy, Waverly, IA 50677)

Fee: \$40

Date	Activity	Location
June 9	Get to Know You Games	Cedar Bend Park
June 11	Fishing/SUP/Kayaking	Three Rivers Park
June 16	Making Salsa and Chia Pet	Cedar Bend Park
June 18	WaterWorks!	Cedar Bend Park
June 23	Making Recycle Paper & Stained Glass	Cedar Bend Park
June 25	Using a GPS	Cedar Bend Park



Intermediate Outdoor Explorers

Participants will engage in hands-on activities. This Outdoor Explorers group will meet at various locations around Waverly. Please be on time for all activities. Children should bring a water bottle and dress to be outdoors which includes tennis shoes, most days.

Days: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Grades Completed: 4th - 5th

Place: various locations around Waverly

Fee: \$60

Date	Activity	Location
June 9	Intros, Games, Slacklining	Cedar Bend Park
June 11	Fishing/SUP/Kayaking	Three Rivers Park
June 16	Making Campfire Pizzas/Scavenger Hunt	Cedar Bend Park
June 18	Biking (Bring bike & helmet) & Disc Golf	Brookwood Park
June 23	Pellet Guns/Archery	Cedar Bend Park
June 25	Ultimate GPS Course	Cedar Bend Park



Advanced Outdoor Explorers

This group meets for three sessions in July. If you sign up for only one event, the price will be as follows:

\$25 per kayaking event and \$15 for geocaching.

9:00 am - 11:30 am

Grades Completed: 6th - 8th

Fee: \$60 for all dates

Date	Activity	Location
July 14	Kayaking (Renning's-Shell Rock)	Shell Rock River
July 15	Geocaching	Around Waverly
July 16	Kayaking (Cedar Bd-Waverly)	Cedar River

Biking in Bremer County

Participants must have completed 4th grade and up. Bring your bike, helmet, water bottle and dress to be outdoors which includes tennis shoes.

There is **no fee** for this program but you must register.

June 19 9:30-11:30 am Readlyn Grump Trail

Bremer County Conservation Fees for 2026

Camping

Cedar Bend Park \$15.00 per night per camping unit without electricity
\$20.00 per night per camping unit with electricity
\$22.00 per night charge for sites A-G (gravel pads & 50 amp outlets available)
\$485 per 30 consecutive nights, Gravel Sites (limit 5)
\$410 per 30 consecutive nights, Grass sites (limit 10)

North Woods Park \$15.00 per night per camping unit without electricity
\$20.00 per night per camping unit with electricity (30 amp lower sites)
\$25.00 per night charge for upper gravel sites (water & 50 amp)
\$485 per 30 consecutive nights, Upper gravel sites (limit 5)
\$410 per 30 consecutive nights, Grass sites (limit 5)

Alcock Park and North Cedar Park
\$15.00 per night per camping unit
\$20.00 per night per camping unit with electric (30 amp outlets available)
\$410 per 30 consecutive nights, Grass sites (limit 5)

Wednesday night will continue to be a free camping night unless the Wednesday falls on a holiday (whereby there will be regular fees).

Camping fees will be collected on a self-registration basis, whereby campers fill out an envelope upon arriving at the campgrounds, and deposits the envelope and fees in a vandal-proof collection box at the campground entrance. **No reservations, all sites are first come/serve.**

Showers

Shower facilities are located in all parks. These facilities are free to those camping in one of these parks. For anyone wanting to use the showers and not camping in the park, there is a **\$2.00** charge each time this facility is used. The fee can be placed in a camper self-registration envelope and marked "shower" and placed in the camper collection receptacle.

Dumpstations

Dumpstations are located in all parks. This dumpstation is included in the camping fee for those camping in the park. For anyone wanting to use the dumpstation and not camping in the park, there is a **\$5.00** charge for each time the facility is used. The fee can be placed in a self-registration envelope and marked "dumpstation" and placed in the collection receptacle in the campgrounds.

Firewood

Alcock, North Cedar, and North Woods cost **\$6.00** each specified amount of firewood is obtained from the firewood pile. Cedar Bend will have a private vendor and pricing at the park.

Shelters

Shelters are located in each of the four county parks and an amphitheater is located at Cedar Bend Park. These shelters have electricity as well as nearby water and a grill. They can be used free on a first-come, first-serve basis, but can be held for you by reservation. The charges are **\$25.00 per day** for shelters or the amphitheater. Contact the BCCB office at 319-882-4742 for more information or to reserve.

Ingawanis Woodland Lodge

This facility is located at 2588 Hawthorne Avenue, Janesville. It is an enclosed facility with restrooms, heat, air conditioning and a kitchenette. It can be rented for **\$100.00 per day** and reservations can be made by calling the BCCB office at 319-882-4742.

**Bremer County Conservation Board park gates are scheduled to be open
May 1 - October 31. For additional information, call Andy Hockenson at the BCCB
office at 319-882-4742.**