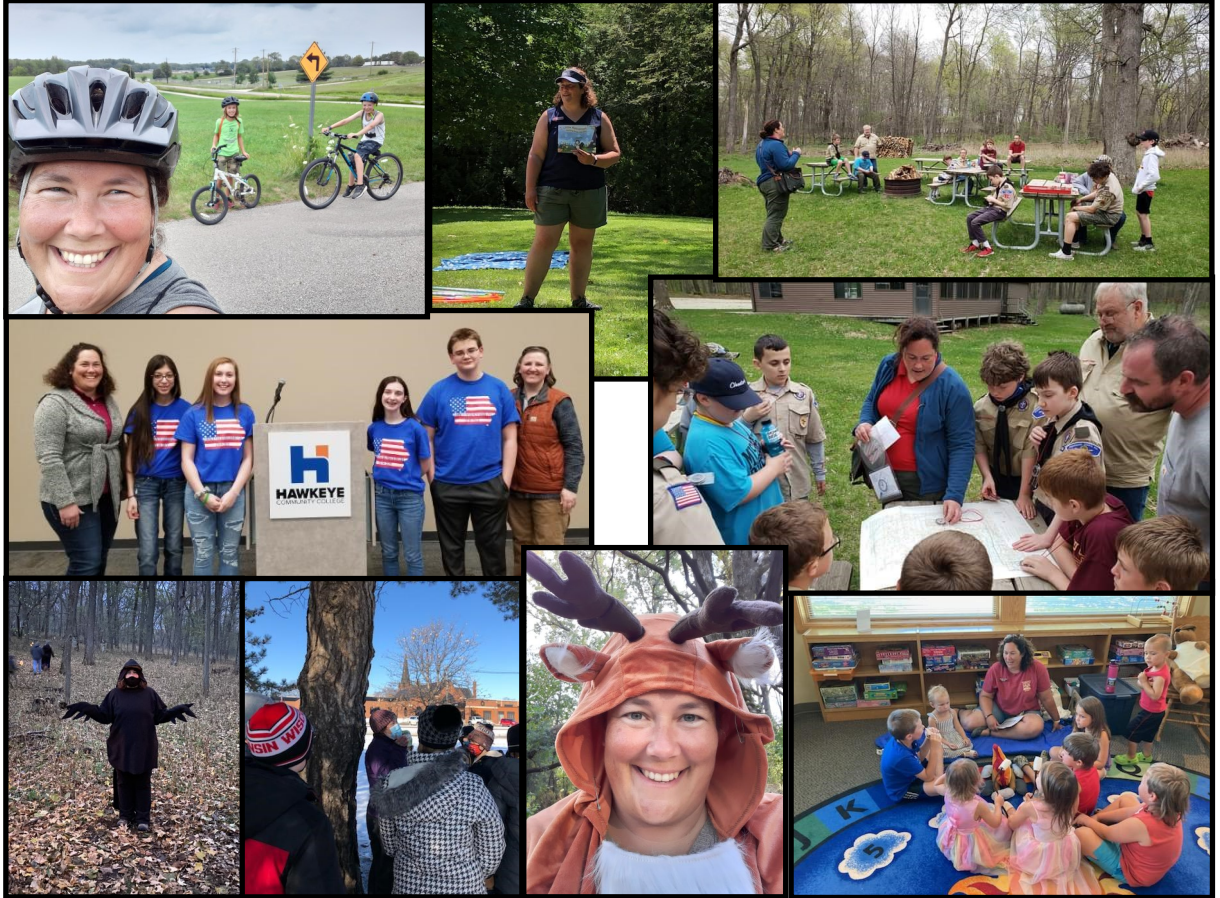


*A NEWSLETTER OF THE
BREMER COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD*

Fall 2024 Edition

*Farewell
By Heather Gamm*

I have resigned from my Environmental Education Coordinator / Naturalist position with Bremer County after 23 years. Thank you for allowing me to teach you about nature, science and the outdoors. It has been a pleasure. Whether we met at a park or in a school classroom, I am honored to have met you. I still plan to share my nature knowledge with others but I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead of me in my new position. Thank you so much for allowing me to serve you for so many years. I am forever grateful!



Bremer County Conservation Board Staff

Executive Director - Andrew Hockenson

EE Coordinator / Naturalist - Heather Gamm

Recycling Educator / Naturalist - Angie Auel

*Natural Resources Technicians - Pat Hyde, Dave Steere,
Mike Weidemann & Nick Franzen*

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Vice Chair - Mandie Sanderman

Richard Harms, Stacey Snyder, Kevin Korman

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Ringneck Wildlife Area Wetland Addition By Andy Hockenson

The Ringneck Wildlife Area, located between Tripoli and Frederika on 140th St., has been a popular Bremer County Conservation Board wildlife area since it was purchased in December of 1992. The 40-acre property is primarily a reconstructed prairie site with roughly 5 acres of trees. The area has suitable habitat for many upland and forest game species such as ring-necked pheasants, gray partridge, rabbits, squirrels, turkeys, and deer.

Because of the soil type, portions of the property have always been poorly drained, especially in the spring when upland game birds are nesting. These wet areas primarily are composed of a single species stand of Reed Canary Grass, which provides little in the way of quality nesting cover or food. Of the 7 acres of suitable wetland construction, the Conservation Board decided to focus on 1.4 acres on the north end of the property.



Ringneck Wildlife Area Wetland

To create a wetland of this size, the Board began seeking additional funding sources. Projects such as this are eligible for funding through the Iowa DNR Wildlife Habitat Stamp Grant program. Funding for that grant comes from the habitat stamp fee paid when purchasing hunting licenses each season. Successful recipients receive up to 75% of the total cost of either the purchase of new land, or habitat projects on land open to public hunting. Like most grants, funding requests generally far exceed available money, making them very competitive. Fortunately, this grant request was successful, and we went to work getting the project moving.

With the late winter/early spring dry conditions, we really felt the urge to move quickly or risk potential delays in the excavation due to the site being too wet to work. As soon as grant funding was approved, crews went to work excavating nearly 4,520 cubic yards creating a wetland 1.4 acres in size and 2ft. deep. Just as the rains started falling, finishing touches were being made to shape and seed the mound created from excavated material. The wetland quickly filled and has been holding water throughout the entire summer.

Now, not only does the area support the upland and forest game species, but also benefits many species of ducks, geese, snipe, rail, sandpipers, plovers, frogs, and turtles. Diversity of the site doesn't stop with just the birds and animals, but also the vast array of plant life and aquatic species that will establish on their own overtime. Wetlands play a very important roll within a watershed. They help slow down runoff and nutrient filled sediment. Wetland vegetation will filter and absorb chemicals naturally, and they help recharge ground water supply. We were glad to see this project through in a timely manner and are grateful for the support of the Wildlife Habitat Stamp Grant. The new wetland is a short walk from the parking lot, making it an easy place to get out to observe the wildlife using it, or with the upcoming waterfowl seasons, this may be a great place to try hunting.



Ringneck Wildlife Area Wetland

Thanks to the following for donations to BCCB.

Mike & Beth Stevens

Donation toward cabin project

Robert Fuls

Donation toward cabin project

L&L Ag Repair

Donation toward cabin project

Daniel McKenzie

Donation toward cabin project

Jim & Doris Wehling

Memorial for Jerry Finder toward cabin project

Dixie Thurm

Donation toward cabin project

Mark Bohner

Donation toward cabin project

Beverly Boveia

Donation toward cabin project

Mandie Sanderman

Donation toward cabin project

First Bank

Donation toward cabin project

Memorial Trees Planted in Honor of Former Recycling Coordinator/Educator



Tammy Turner (1998-2007) was hired part-time on September 21, 1998. By December of that year, funding was secured to bring her on full time as the Recycling Coordinator/Educator for Bremer County. Tammy spent numerous hours educating city staff and residents about the importance of recycling and reducing our waste. In addition to the recycling program, she assisted Darrin Siefken with environmental education programs. She arranged for Bremer County Conservation staff to put up the recycling sheds at each camping park. She sold all of the recyclables that came into the County Recycling Center that existed at the old county home site. She created the vermicomposting bin used for education. It uses worms to break down human food waste. She helped publicize the Bremer County Regional Collection Center for Household Hazardous Waste. It is still open today at the Landfill. Some of her passions involved water quality snapshots and monarch butterfly tagging. In 2004, Tammy received an award for her involvement in the Wapsie River Watershed Snapshot.

She also helped area residents get backyard compost bins. She left in October 2007 to work with Black Hawk County. Most recently, she was employed with INRCOG (Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments.)



In February 2024, Tammy passed away. She is remembered for her smile and her genuine love for the earth. In June 2024, two memorial trees (one oak and one linden) were purchased with donations and planted at Alcock Park in honor of Tammy.

STEM Extern

This summer, Bremer County Conservation Naturalists had the privilege of working with a STEM Extern. An extern is different from an intern in that the person in the position already has real world experience working as a professional. They are not learning the job in hopes of someday working that job. They are assisting and gathering information to take back to their classroom.

This summer the position was held by Travis Angell, math and science teacher at the Waverly Shell Rock Middle School. The externship lasted 7 weeks. Travis worked with the naturalists to organize, prepare, and run all of the summer events. This work included Outdoor Explorers, Picnic in the Parks, and a variety of other activities to encourage families to get outside. During these programs, he led a variety of activities such as canoeing, kayaking, fishing, outdoor cooking, fire starting and many others with kids ranging in age from preschoolers to middle schoolers. Travis says, "One of my favorite aspects of the externship is being able to talk about real-world science in the classroom.

We talk a lot in my classroom on how science is in everything we do. It is not just a class you take in school and then it goes away."



This experience was SO beneficial to both parties! Travis helped naturalists put science standards to the programs that were offered to teachers. He helped prepare for programs. He helped fix items and completed tasks that were on the list for some time but just never got done. It was refreshing to have someone working alongside us with knowledge of how to interact with children. We are grateful and blessed to have worked with Travis this summer! Thanks to the Bremer County Nature Alliance for paying for this special opportunity!



A Glimpse of Summer by Angie Auel

This is a small glimpse of what Bremer County Naturalists summer was filled with. We filled June with Picnic in the Park on Tuesdays, Mini Explorers on Thursdays, along with library programs throughout the county and a few field trips. We had record numbers for Picnic in the Park with 102 on our first day, and 247 total! We had fun learning about colors, adaptations, and fireflies. Mini Explorers which focused on K-1st grade students, with an adult, had 110 participants! We featured a different Bremer County park each week. We enjoyed making stepping stones and rotten log at Cedar Bend, canoeing and insects at Plainfield Lake, and the nature playscape and pond study at North Woods. We loved going to our local libraries this summer to talk about reduce, reuse, recycling, and wrens.



July was jam-packed with Outdoor Explorers— 17 Beginner (2-3rd grade), 17 Intermediate (4-5th grade), and 3 on two kayaking and geocaching Advanced (5-8th grade) adventures, along with more field trips! Four weeks worth of team building, salsa making, garden skit, fishing, stand up paddle boards, kayaking, fire building, pie iron pizzas, WaterWorks, GPS, disc golf, biking, Dutch Oven cooking, pellet guns, archery, stepping stones, and creek stomp. We jokingly called this the summer of Band-aids. So many mosquito, fly, and gnat bites that the kids were scratching like crazy!



In August, we finished a field trip to fossil hunt and another biking event. If you want to sign up your child for next year's camps or field trips, look for information in our March newsletter or email me at angie.ael@co.bremer.ia.us to be put on the list to find out about our programs.



“Cats” of Iowa Halloween Hike Monday, October 28

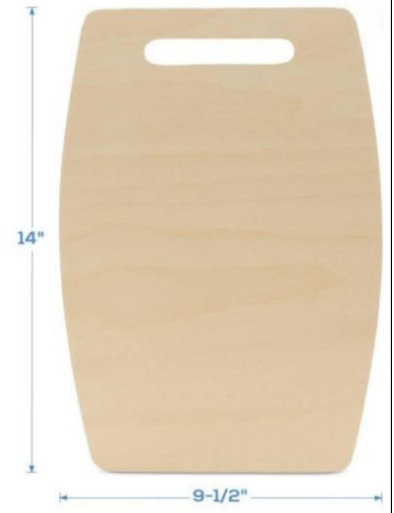
Bremer County Conservation will host its annual Halloween Hike at Ingawanis Woodland (2588 Hawthorne Ave. Janesville, IA). This is a fun evening in the woods with treats at the end. You will follow a luminary-lit trail. The theme is “Cats” of Iowa with a mountain lion, bobcat, caterpillar, catfish, and civet cat. We encourage a \$3 (cash or check only) donation per person but realize that this may not be possible for every family. We gladly accept and appreciate any donation you can give. All proceeds go towards the Environmental Education program. You must register a time-spot for this event.



Charcuterie Board Wood Burning

Bremer County Conservation will host a Charcuterie Board Wood Burning class at Eagle Lodge on **Wednesday, November 20th at 4:00 p.m. or 6:30 pm**. Eagle Lodge is located at Ingawanis Woodland (2588 Hawthorne Ave. Janesville). Participants will learn step-by-step instructions on using a heat gun, and the chemical reaction needed to create a unique charcuterie board to take home. An example is pictured below. The cutting board that will be provided is 14” by 9.5”. Each participant will also get to make a wooden Christmas ornament and tag!

Participants must pre-register and pay a \$20 registration fee before October 30 at 4:00 p.m. to reserve limited spots. Once registered, participants will be contacted to decide on the stencil they would like created for their board. To register, email Angie Auel at angie.ael@co.bremer.ia.us.



Email List for Upcoming Events

Bremer County Nature Alliance will be having a few upcoming events such as the Winter Picnic and Banquet. Naturalists will be adding more programs this winter and spring. Do you want to be the first to know about them? Email Angie at angie.ael@co.bremer.ia.us to be put on an email list. You will also be first to know about signing up for our summer camps.

Save a Tree?

Did you know you can save paper and get our newsletter emailed to you? You can send an email to Angie at angie.ael@co.bremer.ia.us to get the newsletters emailed to you. We print 280 newsletters each time, but email many more. We would love to add you to that list!

Bremer Bulletin

Bremer County Conservation Board
P.O. Box 412
1104 South Main Street
Tripoli, IA 50676

BREMER BULLETIN

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Bremer County Conservation Board

(319) 882-4742

*conservation@butler-
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