

**A NEWSLETTER OF THE  
BREMER COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD**

**Fall 2025 Edition**

***Summer Projects  
By Andy Hockenson***

Another summer season is beginning to wind down for the Bremer County Conservation Board. Like summers before, staff members spend little time finding lots to do. Unlike the past few summers, this one offered very little breaks in between mowing. In and out of our daily tasks of trying to keep up with the day to day operations, we were able to put in a few new additions to our parks.

Our spring Bremer Bulletin made mention of plans for constructing a new concrete boat ramp at North Cedar Park. I am pleased to say that the construction crew was able to get the ramp and rip rap put in place early this summer. Up and down river levels made work a bit more challenging, but levels worked out long enough to get it all completed. With relatively high-water levels throughout the entire summer, the new ramp did not see high usage, however the river is now in great condition, and usage is increasing. Fall is a great time to check out the new ramp and experience some of the best fishing of the year on the Cedar River.



New Concrete Boat Ramp at North Cedar Park



Rip rap along streambank at North Cedar Park

The second project I want to highlight is the addition of a 9-hole disc golf course at North Woods Park. The sport of disc golf continues to grow in popularity. What's nice about disc golf is that a person does not need a lot to get started. There are no fees to use the course, and it takes as little as one disc to go out and play. Like many sports, a person can fully dive in and purchase a back pack full of drivers, putters, midrange discs that go left, discs that go right, etc., but if you are a beginner, feel free to come out and throw whatever you have. To work through this project, it took the expertise of avid players.

Members of the Waverly Disc Golf Club helped tremendously with this project. They spent many hours discussing, bringing portable baskets, and actually playing rounds to try to come up with a course that is not only for the golfer with a high experience level, but also the beginner. Members

***Bremer County Conservation Board Staff***

*Executive Director - Andrew Hockenson*

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*Natural Resources Technicians - Pat Hyde, Dave Steere,*

*Mike Weidemann & Nick Franzen*

***Board Members***

*Chairperson - Larry Pavelec*

*Vice Chair - Mandie Sanderman*

*Stacey Snyder, Kevin Korman, Patty Spowart*

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## Summer Projects (continued)

also came out and framed 12 tee pads to ensure they were the right size, shape, and pointed in the right direction to the basket. Staff members were able to pour the 12 pads and are finalizing the dirt work around each one. The Bremer County Nature Alliance also showed support for the project by contributing \$2,500 toward the purchase of the 9 baskets, covering more than half of the total cost.

The North Woods Park course offers two layouts where you have the opportunity to throw from a more beginner tee pad or challenge yourself to a more experienced level pad. The long course for hole 2 is one of the favorites, offering the opportunity to throw from the top of the hill to the basket below. Hole 4 is another unique challenge as you find yourself throwing over a wet oxbow and between trees to get to the basket. Currently a student with Hawkeye Community College is helping create signs for the 14 tee pads as part of a graphic design class. You can find the course online at [North Woods Park - Summer, Iowa | UDisc Disc Golf Course Directory](#). We look forward to seeing more people out enjoying a new activity while camping or just coming out for the day.



Disc Golf Basket at North Woods Park

**Thanks to the following for donations to BCCB.**

**Bremer County Nature Alliance**

Donation toward North Woods Disc Golf Course

**Lois Peters**

Memorial for Dennis Neis, Tom Power, Don Freeman, & Verdeen Pavelec toward cabin project

**Patricia Spowart**

Memorial for Don Freeman & Verdeen Pavelec toward cabin project

**Mandie Sanderman**

Donation toward cabin project

**Ten Wasp Brewing Company**

Donation toward cabin project

**Larry Pavelec**

Memorial for Verdeen Pavelec toward cabin project

**American Legion**

**Thomas E. Woods Unit 223**

Memorial for Miriam Johnson

## A Glimpse of Summer



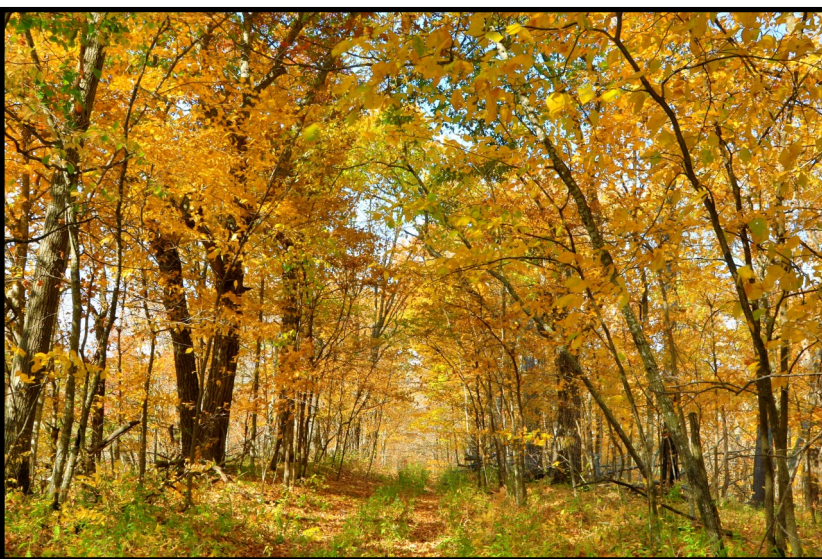
*“A changing of the seasons” by Liz Sabers*

Autumn is right around the corner, bringing all kinds of change. To the dread of kids (but maybe joy for parents) of heading back to school, changing out swimsuits for sweatshirts, there’s a lot to prepare for. But as you grab that extra notebook for school, or double-check the football schedule, nature is also preparing itself... just maybe not in the same way that you are.



As summer draws to a close, the temperatures get cooler and the days get shorter, bumblebees are beginning to think about next year’s colony. During the summer, the queen bees lay eggs that will only develop into female bees, also known as worker bees. The workers will perform various tasks around the colony, such as foraging or caring for the youth. However, right now in the fall, the queen is beginning to lay eggs that will develop into future queens or male bees, called drones. This ensures that the colony will continue to grow in the upcoming spring. Later into fall, the males and new queens will mate. Eventually, the new queen will find a cozy place underground or in a warm log to hibernate throughout the winter. Unfortunately, the males and the rest of the colony will pass away at the start of winter. Come spring, the new queen will awake from her beauty rest and begin laying eggs to start out her new colony.

Birds are also preparing for the cold weather by migrating. Triggered by the changing temperatures, shortening days, or less abundance of food, some birds will fly hundreds of miles in search for a welcoming place to spend the winter. Shorebirds, like sandpipers and yellowlegs, will be one of the first to begin migration, starting in August. Some songbirds start migrating in September, with Hawks starting to move in the second-half of the month, ending in October. But have no fear, you’ll still see some birds in the winter! Not all birds migrate, since they are still able to find food here during the winter. Although it is hard to believe while it is in the negative degrees, there are even some birds that migrate to Iowa since it is warmer here than their normal breeding range. Be on the lookout for the great bird migration this fall!

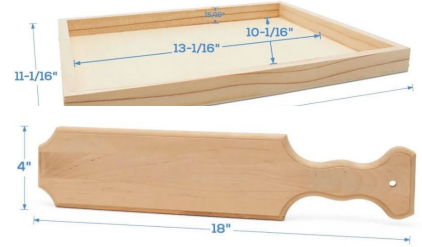


Animals aren’t the only ones preparing, plants are getting ready too! One of the most noticeable changes that it is fall is when the leaves begin changing colors. However, trees start this process just as we are starting to get into the pumpkin-spice-everything mindset. When the trees sense that the amount of sunlight is decreasing, they’ll slowly begin to form a layer of cells at the base of the leaf where it meets the branch, cutting off necessary nutrients to the leaf. Eventually, the leaf is completely cut off from the branch, resulting in it falling to the ground. While this is happening, the leaf also begins to produce less chlorophyll, the pigment that gives leaves its green color. With less chlorophyll found within the leaf, it gives a chance to other pigments such as Carotenoids (yellow/orange/brown) or Anthocyanin (reds) to really stand out, giving the leaf its yellow, orange or red color.

Here in Northeastern Iowa, peak fall colors should occur around the end of September to the second week in October. Make sure you get outside this autumn to experience all the spectacular colors!

## Wood Burning

Bremer County Conservation will host a Wood Burning class at Eagle Lodge on **Tuesday, November 4th 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 board to take home. You can choose a cutting board, paddle, or tray. Each participant will also get to make a wooden Christmas ornament and/or tag! Participants must pre-register and pay a **\$20 registration fee before October 24** 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](mailto:angie.ael@co.bremer.ia.us).



## Wreath Making

Bremer County Conservation will host two wreath-making classes at Eagle Lodge on **Thursday, December 4th at 4:00pm and 7:00 pm.** Eagle Lodge is located at Ingawanis Woodland (2588 Hawthorne Ave. Janesville). The \$30 registration fee covers all the materials needed to make and take home a beautiful wreath to decorate your door through the holiday season. Space is limited to 12 participants at each time. Contact Liz Sabers, Bremer County Naturalist at 319.231.9640 or email her at [lsabers@co.bremer.ia.us](mailto:lsabers@co.bremer.ia.us) to **reserve your spot by November 26.**

# Winter Solstice Hike at North Woods Park

*Saturday, December 21st at 10am  
Hosted by Ten Wasp Brewing & lead by Bremer  
County Conservation*

*Bring your skis, snowshoes or winter boots  
All are welcome*



## *Lye Based Soap Making Workshop*

Butler and Bremer County Conservation Boards are teaming up for a lye-based soap making workshop at Eagle Lodge on **Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 6:00 PM**. If you have ever wanted to learn how to make your own soap, this is the workshop for you. We will lead you through the step-by-step process of creating your own homemade soap. Participants will help make a couple batches of soap to give them the feel of how the process works, and all will make their own unique soaps to take home or share. Participants will also receive a soap making guide for when you are ready to make your own at home.

This workshop is suitable for ages 10 and above, but those under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. The \$20 fee includes all soap making materials – including add-ins and essential oils. **Pre-registration is required by February 3.** Space is limited so reserve your spot early.



## *Bremer County Nature Alliance*

The Bremer County Nature Alliance (BCNA) is a local nonprofit organization whose mission is to help raise funds, coordinate local volunteer efforts, support and advocate for environmental education programs, and work closely on Bremer County Conservation projects. Each year the BCNA plans a membership drive and provides an opportunity for interested individuals to learn more about the BCNA. The membership will be kicked off at the Winter Picnic at Ingawanis Woodland this winter. Like them on Facebook to see the event when it is posted!



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*

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bremer.aspx*

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