

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

Fall 2020 Edition

***Review of the Spring and Summer
By Andrew Hockenson***

With the 2020 summer camping season wrapped up, I look back at how this season has compared to past ones, and begin to breathe a little sigh of relief knowing that we made it through. Like many people, we were watching as new mandates were put in place, and questioned what they all meant for us. Many questions were running through our minds in April as we were preparing for a typical May 1st opening. Questions like: when will we be able to open our parks? What facilities can we open? How do we keep them clean? Can we protect ourselves while keeping our facilities clean? What does our Environmental Education programming look like this summer and school year? This list goes on and on. With a lot of questions on our minds, we did still go through the nearly normal spring routine of getting the parks prepped for the opening. The camping season was delayed a bit with a light opening for the weekend of May 8th to self-contained camping units and no shower buildings. The playgrounds and shower buildings were not able to be opened until early June, and continued to stay open throughout the summer. Although over 6 months have passed, there are still many questions and new scenarios that pop up in this ever-changing time.

Because of knowing May 1 was not a possibility of our parks opening, we put a bit more focus on our wildlife areas. This spring we were able to plant 3,345 tree and shrub seedlings in 3 different areas to better enhance the quality of wildlife habitat. We were also able to use prescribed fire to burn 182 acres of prairie at 8 different sites as a method of controlling unwanted woody vegetation growth and invasive species. Some of the areas we were able to burn this spring had not seen fire for many years.

This definitely has been a time full of uncertainties; however one thing I am certain of is that parks, trails, recreation areas, etc. are very important to our communities. This became very evident this spring and summer as folks have been dealing with the pandemic. People simply wanted to get out and enjoy all the natural areas available within Bremer County. From the Readlyn Grump and Ingawanis Woodland bike trails to the Avenue of the Saints and Plainfield Lakes, people wanted to, and have been spending time outdoors. There may have been some people thinking "I always heard Cedar Bend is a nice place to camp, let's give that a try this weekend." or "Alcock Park got new electric campsites this spring and the Wapsie River is in its banks, let's pull the camper there for a while." Even better are those that decided to give turkey hunting a try this spring and hear their first wild gobble after a barred owl sounds off early in the morning. That alone might have been enough to draw someone new into the sport. Fishing license sales are also up from people deciding to spend time out on the rivers, ponds, and lakes. Hopefully many were able to experience their first catch or be around someone who caught their first fish.

Our Environmental Education program looks a little different this year with limited face-to-face programming and in-person classroom sessions. That however, does not mean programming is not still going on. Our naturalists Heather and Angie have gotten creative, and with the help of the Bremer County Nature Alliance purchasing a GoPro camera, are presenting virtually.

A year ago I would have never even thought about this spring and summer turning out the way it did. I would have never thought that when I heard the word "Zoom", I would no longer be thinking of my binoculars or camera, but rather of my computer and screen time with others. Regardless though, I am glad people were able to get out and utilize our areas. For those that were first time visitors, I hope we'll see you back next year.

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

Board Members

Chairperson - Jim Peters

Vice Chair - Mandie Sanderman

Richard Harms, Stacey Snyder, Kevin Korman

**B
r
e
m
e
r

C
o
n
s
e
r
v
a
t
i
o
n

B
u
l
l
e
t
i
n**

Monarchs by Heather Gamm

Monarch Watch is an organization through the University of Kansas that provides resources to citizen scientists, naturalists and teachers. Through educational programming online, the public can learn the biology of the Monarch Butterfly and participate in a volunteer-based Monarch tagging program by purchasing tags. Monarch Watch utilizes the data recovered from the tagging program to better understand the annual mass migration of Monarchs to Mexico. Bremer County Conservation has participated in the tagging program for nearly 20 years.



The migration typically starts in late August through October. During 2020, participants tagged 17 Monarchs, 7 males and 10 females. We hope they arrive safely in Mexico where they will spend the winter. In March, they will fly back towards Texas to lay eggs and die. Those eggs will emerge and the butterflies will continue on to Kansas where they find milkweed growing. That generation will lay eggs and die. The Kansas generation will move north again as the milkweed blooms and temperatures warm. Iowa Monarchs generally appear in late May. They will go through several summer generations and only when fall begins to arrive will our butterflies instinctively turn toward Mexico again. This generation has never been there before and has no parent to follow on the

journey. Somehow, this simple insect makes it and we have proof with a tag that was placed on its wing. It is truly amazing.

Monarchs have been reported working their way into Mexico throughout October. Typically, the butterfly is part of Mexican heritage on Día de los Muertos or The Day of the Dead (Nov. 1). This is a celebratory remembering of those who have passed on. Because Monarchs return to the same places in Mexico every year, some believe they bring the souls of loved ones.

Tagging Monarchs by Courtney Freese

Hello, my name is Courtney Freese. I am 18 years old. I have been raising and tagging monarch butterflies for eight years. I first became interested in monarchs and conservation in the 3rd grade. My teacher, Mr. Sieck, made the natural world seem mysterious. Encouraging his students to explore nature and all its wondrous creatures. My family has always been the outdoorsy type. Hiking, camping, biking, and fishing. My grandfather is an entomologist that studies beetles that are not native to Iowa, for the University of Iowa. It has been my dream to become a conservationist. To spend my days in the outdoors, learning and teaching all about our natural world. Over the past 8 years I have engrossed myself in learning all I could about the monarch butterfly and its migration patterns. I now help the Bremer County Conservation Board teach others about the monarch butterfly and its life cycle. I plan to continue working to educate others about the importance of conservation and our natural world. To spread the message that if we all do small things to give back, it would have a huge positive impact on conserving our natural world.



Volunteer, Courtney Freese, looking for a Monarch egg on milkweed at the Summer Public Library. Thanks to Courtney for her help in raising Monarchs all year long!

Thanks to the following for donations to BCCB.

Dale and Peggy Rogers

Memorials for
Arthur Van Erem
James Walker

Jim Peters

Memorials for
Marlys Figanbaum
Lucille Bergmann
Paul Bremer
Paul Schwake
Bob Bremner

Lyle Mohlis

Donation toward county parks

Nick Franzen

North Cedar Park
memorial tree

Subscribe!

Find Bremer County Naturalists on social media!



“Bremer County Naturalist”



“Bremer County Conservation”



“bremercountyconservation”

Subscribe and never miss another educational video, program announcement or picture in Bremer County!

Cedar Bend Park

Numerous projects were worked on at Cedar Bend Park this summer. This is in addition to all the cleaning, mowing and other tasks that are required of a campground. Camping numbers were up and Cedar Bend was popular! Income generated at this park was the 4th highest ever recorded! Here are a few pictures.

The steps by the east shelter have been replaced.



Portions of the bridge below the overlook were replaced.



Bridge piers were strengthened and reinforced after numerous flooding events in the past.



Bremer County Nature Alliance (BCNA)

The BCNA, founded in 2016, helps support Bremer County Conservation programs, protect our county's natural resources, and enhances the lives of Bremer County citizens. BCNA helps raise funds, coordinate volunteer efforts, and support environmental education as well as other BCC programs.

Recent Purchases

Kayaks, 2 Paddleboards, Life Jackets, Paddles, Archery repairs and supplies, Snowshoes, GoPro, Portable Disc Golf

~ 2021 BCNA Memberships ~

“Pledge your support today for getting outdoors in Bremer County through greater recreation, conservation projects and more outdoor education opportunities.” ~ Bremer County Nature Alliance



Individual Annual~ \$20
Family Annual ~ \$50
Lifetime Member/Family ~ \$200/500
Small Business ~ \$100
Benefactor ~ \$250

Additional Donation Amount: \$ _____
Please Direct Additional Funds to...
1) Youth Mountain Bikes
2) Kayaks & Trailer Fund
3) Natural Playscape Project



Pay by Credit Card, Venmo, Paypal, or Apple Pay at <https://givebutter.com/BCNA>
Pay by check payable to BCNA and mailed to: BCNA ~ PO BOX 412 Tripoli IA 50676

Virtual Fishing Derby Winners



Congratulations to Jaily (pictured right) and Kyrah (pictured left) for winning the Bremer County Conservation Virtual Fishing Derby. Bremer County residents of all ages were welcomed to participate as we celebrated Iowa's Free Fishing Weekend June 5th-7th. Six contestants emailed their fishing photos on Monday, June 8th, with no fish necessary to participate. Winners were chosen by using the Wheel of Names generator. Both young ladies won a fishing pole that was delivered to them.



4,068 Prairie Plugs Planted

Wapsie Valley 5th grade wrote a grant to Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development in May 2019 to purchase \$5000 worth of prairie plugs to work with the community to plant at the Readlyn Stormwater Wetlands. The schedule of planting was delayed due to construction, then COVID-19. Bremer County Conservation staff created a planting event on June 24, 2020. Wapsie Valley students and families, Readlyn residents, Iowa State Extension, NRCS, SWCD, BCNA, boy scout troops, 4H groups, and the public were all invited to plant. Fifty-six people helped plant 4,068 prairie plugs from June 24-26, 2020 for a total of 167 hours dedicated to this project.



Fifty-six people helped plant 4,068 prairie plugs from June 24-26, 2020 for a total of 167 hours dedicated to this project.

Ingawanis Woodland Sign

A four year Ingawanis Woodland sign project is complete! Hannah Ray J was hired to design the original trail name stickers that are attached to posts throughout the area. Then Jackie Falconer was hired to do the trail map sign with an original map layout by Annie Kappelman. All materials were reviewed by the Ingawanis Woodland Trails Advisory Group, trail users, Bremer County Nature Alliance, and Bremer County Conservation Board. You will find this sign located at the trailhead. (1681 260th St. Janesville) An additional panel is planned to be placed at Eagle Lodge along with the names of major donors to the purchase of Ingawanis Woodland. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation is assisting with this portion of the project and has been a close partner since discussion regarding the purchase of the property began.



Portable Disc Golf

The Educational Disc Golf Experience (EDGE) is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing the lifetime activity of disc golf to the youth of the world. The equipment costs \$1300 plus shipping, however EDGE offered the equipment for \$799.95 to Bremer County Conservation Board (BCCB). Then EDGE granted BCCB \$500 towards the equipment. BCCB paid \$150 and the Bremer County Nature Alliance paid \$149.95 towards the set which includes 4 Traveler Targets, 50 Golf Discs, 50 Minis, 5 Pulsarsm, 2 Dodgebee 270, 1 DVD, 1 Rulebook, and 1 Education Book. The equipment can now be loaned to the local schools and naturalists can provide education with the equipment. Wapsie Valley Community School District has been using the equipment October through November.



Picnic in the Park

122 people attended our Picnic in the Park events this summer! They were such a huge success that we offered them October through November for our home school group.



New Kiosks

Six parks received a new kiosk sign this summer, Alcock Park, Babcock Woods, Cedar Bend Park, North Cedar Park, North Woods Park, and Plainfield Lake. The kiosks have county conservation maps, pictures, and information about the park. Travel to see all six of them!



Plainfield Lake

For those that have ventured out to Plainfield Lake, you may have noticed a few new additions. A gazebo that used to sit near the Cedar River east of Plainfield was moved to the lake. Staff members also constructed



two small picnic shelters, providing a nice place to take a break from fishing or grab a bite to eat.

Outdoor Explorers Backpacks

Bremer County Nature Alliance and Bremer County Conservation offered Outdoor Explorers Backpacks for \$30 this summer. 26 backpacks were distributed. The backpacks included an optic wonder, insect habitat, bug net, colored shapes, wren house, notebook, nature journal, star chart, and ID books from the Iowa DNR. There are 4 backpacks still available. If you are interested email angie.ael@co.bremer.ia.us



Halloween Hike

This year's hike involved a few "camping critters," Chipmunk, Black Bear, Deer Tick, Raccoon, and Crow.



Thanks to Cindy Bierstedt for purchasing and bagging all the treats for the hike. Thanks to Rob and Ella Walters for recording the actors, taking pictures, and helping set up. Thanks to Jason Auel, Andy Hockenson, Emily Callahan, Angi Reid, Tammy Turner, Nick Franzen and Nick Mills for leading hikes. Thanks to Mike Weidemann for checking in groups and Laura Chapin for serving the bagged treats. We are grateful for Stacey Snyder, Matt Crayne, and Steve Martin for acting.

Bremer Bulletin

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

BREMER BULLETIN

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

*conservation@butler-
bremer.com*

*www.mycountyparks
.com/county/
bremer.aspx*

*Like Bremer County
Conservation on
Facebook & Follow us
on Instagram*

**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.**