

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

**Fall 2021 Edition**

***Bird Friendly Iowa County  
By Andrew Hockenson***



Front row: Conservation Board members Richard Harms and Larry Pavelec, Director Andy Hockenson, Conservation Board member Stacey Snyder, Bird Friendly Iowa steering committee member and Buchanan County Conservation Director Dan Cohen Back row: Kip Ladage, Board of Supervisors Dewey Hildebrandt and Tim Neil, and Auditor Shelley Wolf.

In 2021, Bremer County became one of 7 counties throughout the state that has been designated a Bird Friendly Iowa County. Other counties include Polk, Winneshiek, Story, Boone, Clay, and Palo Alto. In years past, Bird Friendly Iowa focused on granting city designation and in 2020 opened it up for counties. Bremer County is no stranger to the program with Denver being designated in 2019 and Tripoli in 2021. Becoming a designated city or county requires an application to be submitted, hitting on criteria in three different categories. Category 1 highlights county wide efforts pertaining to protecting, restoring, and enhancing bird habitat. Category 2 highlights county wide efforts pertaining to reducing threats to birds. Category 3 highlights county wide efforts pertaining to educating and engaging people in birding and conservation. For additional information on Bird Friendly Iowa, you can visit <https://birdfriendlyiowa.org>. Above is a picture taken during the designation presentation with the Bremer County Board of Supervisors.

***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 - Mandie Sanderman*

*Vice Chair - Kevin Korman*

*Richard Harms, Stacey Snyder, Larry Pavelec*

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## Review of the Spring and Summer By Andrew Hockenson

This year's camping season has come to an end. All in all it was a very good year with all four parks seeing increases in camping numbers from 2020 and previous years. The hot, long summer didn't seem to deter campers from utilizing our parks, and for a good portion of the summer, all parks remained open with dry campgrounds. There was a short period of time in late August/early September when the hot, dry conditions took a drastic turn. It seemed like rains were scarce and isolated. While this allowed for less time on the mowers and a lot less time swatting mosquitoes and gnats, it was not ideal for crops, new prairie plantings, and water levels. It appeared our summer long request for rain was answered in one powerful week of heavy rains and very strong winds. Just when we thought we would be able to avoid park closures from flooding, the skies emptied, sending the Wapsie at Alcock Park to depths only seen in 1999 and 2008. Amazingly, we saw extreme drought turn into record flooding in just a few days. In all honesty, I wasn't even really surprised with the extreme weather patterns we experienced.



Left: High water level at east pit toilet in Alcock Park  
Below: Tree damage east side Alcock Park



Staff members got right to work cleaning up after the strong weather events and within a few weeks got everything opened back up. On November 1, hunting is allowed in Cedar Bend, North Cedar, and North Woods. The new campsite addition at North Woods Park continues to progress. Many utilizing the park have been seeing the new gravel sites, water hook ups, and dump station since May and may be wondering why the electric pedestals were not installed. Unfortunately, delays from the manufacturer of the campsite pedestals have pushed the opening of these 11 sites back from this spring to late October. In the meantime, staff members were able to keep the site mowed to promote more grass growth, add many tons of rock to the campsites and new road and construct a new upper registration area. It definitely would have been nice seeing these sites occupied throughout the summer, but unfortunately that was not the case. They will be in full operation for the 2022 camping season and we are hopeful that the sites will be utilized and camping numbers will continue to increase at North Woods Park. These sites would have made a huge difference this summer as water levels rose and the lower campground had to be shut down for a short period.



Also happening at North Woods Park is the addition of a natural playscape, which is replacing the old playground by the open picnic shelters. The Bremer County Conservation Board was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Bremer County Community Foundation. Outdoor musical items have been ordered and will be placed in the playscape area as the musical component of the project. Other items will include large rocks and tree logs to climb on, a rope spider web climber, a wooden library box, and other items that will keep kids active, thinking, and showing off their creativity. We would like to thank the Bremer County Community Foundation for awarding us

the grant, as well as the very generous donation from Patricia Bartie in memory of her husband Charles. The Bremer County Nature Alliance is also accepting donations for the playscape project, which can be given through the Bremer County Nature Alliance [givebutter.com](http://givebutter.com) website.

Thanks to the following for donations to BCCB. May 2021-Sept. 2021

**Augie and Barb Waltmann**

Cedar Bend Bench

**Jim Marks**

Memorial Bench & Tree at Plainfield Lake

**Lois Peters**

Memorials for Ester Wittenberg  
Garnetta Snyder  
Jim Peters

**Patricia Bartie**

Memorial for Charles Bartie  
Projects & Tree at North Woods

**BCNA Donations**

St. Paul's Lutheran School for Environmental Education

Memorial for Garnetta Snyder

Memorial for Art Kurtt

Memorials for Connie Finder towards North Woods and Natural Playscape

## *Arley Hahn Memorial by Heather Gamm*

I am not sure how long ago it was that Arley Hahn came into my office for the first time. He was a local fisherman with many other talents. I soon realized that he was an avid fisherman. While fishing, he thoroughly loved to photograph images of animals. He would tell me about how he was able to sneak up close enough to capture an image of a bald eagle or hawk. Sometimes he requested help on how to identify the bird. We would flip through bird id guides until we found his bird. He loved to share his pictures and adventures at Sweet Marsh Wildlife Area. We would often discuss Sandhill Cranes and whether or not they were nesting. I never tired of his stories and photos although I wished I had more time to listen. Arley was not only a fisherman and photographer, he also offered his knowledge and help on MANY occasions. He assisted with multiple fishing fieldtrips and often spent hours fixing fishing poles for Bremer County Conservation. Arley passed away on August 16, 2021 and he will be greatly missed. Bremer County Conservation has been blessed with numerous memorials in Arley's honor.

Here are a few of them:

Lorely Van Sant  
 Del's Auto Repair (Tereasa Lenius)  
 Richard & Susan Breed  
 Richard & Joyce Harms  
 Leondorf Family  
 National Weather Service Staff  
 David & Diane Newman  
 Douglas & Rebecca Swinton  
 Ronald & Norma Leibold  
 Heather Gamm  
 Andy Sexton



## *Iowa Waste Exchange: Helping Schools, Businesses & Non-profits to Recycle, Reuse, Repurpose, & Upcycle by Tammy Turner*



Did you know there is a local matchmaker for junk? Trash to one person can be a treasure to another. Tammy Turner, Resource Specialist with the Iowa Waste Exchange (based out of INRCOG in downtown Waterloo) is just the person to find matches for your unwanted materials (or to search for items that your group could utilize). The Iowa Waste Exchange provides free, non-regulatory, confidential assistance to schools, businesses, manufacturers, governmental agencies, non-profits, and individuals with the goal of saving disposal costs and protecting the environment by reducing, reusing, and recycling materials that would otherwise end up in the landfill.

The Iowa Waste Exchange maintains a database of available and wanted materials that the public is free to access. With over 13,000 materials listed in the IWE database, the Iowa Waste Exchange may have what you are looking for! It can be as simple as the resource specialist matching up gently used corporate desks/cubicles/chairs to a non-profit who could use that furniture or as detailed as finding a new

market for a manufacturing waste material. For an overview of the program visit: Iowa Waste Exchange (IWE) ([iowadnr.gov](http://iowadnr.gov)).

To see how the IWE program can assist area schools with waste sorts in the cafeteria, waste assessments in storage areas, and recycling consultation, check out the Area 3 School Newsletter (Iowa Waste Exchange), Fall 2021 Edition ([mailchi.mp](http://mailchi.mp)) or visit Food Waste Minimization Toolkit for Iowa Schools ([iowadnr.gov](http://iowadnr.gov)).

To aid in the match of surplus/gently used items, Area 3 distributes a monthly newsletter with a listing of Available/Wanted Materials. Iowa Waste Exchange- Area 3 Newsletter, Oct 2021 Edition ([mailchi.mp](http://mailchi.mp)). Last month 14 microscopes from a college were matched with 6<sup>th</sup> graders in northeast Iowa and this month gently used banquet tables were matched up with local churches. You just never know what might pop up in the newsletter!

Contact IWE Resource Specialist, Tammy Turner at [tturner@inrcog.org](mailto:tturner@inrcog.org) or (319) 235-0311 for more information about the Iowa Waste Exchange or to opt into the Area 3 newsletter!

## *Wilderness Studies 2021 by Heather Gamm*

On June 14, 2021, 10 students and 5 adults left the Waverly-Shell Rock high school at 4:00AM to drive to the Rocky Mountains near Salida, Colorado. Miles slowly ticked off and we eventually arrived at a camping spot along a bubbling stream. There were no bathrooms, just a place to set up our tents and a fire ring. We set up before dark and unloaded our gear. Then we started a campfire and feasted on hot dogs! So to end the day, most people use the bathroom. We had to dig a cathole. This is a 6 inch hole dug in the hard soil with a plastic trowel. It is not always easy but aiming is even harder! Toilet paper must be buried. Practice makes perfect!

On the second day of our journey, we took the students whitewater rafting. The day was warm and nerves were high. We dressed in full wet suits with water shoes. We learned about safety and then drove to our destination. We had 3 rafts since our group was pretty big. I was with 3 students and another leader. We loaded up in the raft and learned how to paddle together. Truly, we all depended on each other. Our strokes had to match. Ours did not. The guide moved me and another student. That helped. However, we still had problems and that included dumping the other adult out of the raft! EEK! PANIC! And then we were able to recover him. Whew! The rest of the rafting adventure was easy peasy. After lunch, we drove to a high altitude. Our goal is to have students get acclimated. We found snow at higher altitude. The students threw snowballs at one another. Then we drove to O'Haver Lake. It is so peaceful there. Some of the students fished for trout but they didn't catch any.



On Day 3, we drove to Great Sand Dunes National Park. It is incredibly hard to walk in sand but some of the students climbed the dunes. By the end of our trip, the sand was blistering hot! It slipped through the open spaces in my sandals and caused a blister!!! For luck, the water flowing through the dunes was cool. What a neat experience to see these natural sand dunes though! The children were covered in sand and therefore so were the school Suburbans! We drove straight to the hot springs pool! Everyone was grateful for the warm pool water and a shower! We ended the day with pizza!

Day 4 was a practice hike up Monarch Pass. We carried only water, snacks and necessities in our day pack. This area is the continental divide which means that rain water on the west side flows to the Pacific Ocean and rain water on the east side flows toward the Mississippi River and the Atlantic Ocean. The elevation is 11,312 feet above sea level. This makes it hard to breathe! We took it slow and stopped to see the beautiful scenery along the way. It took several hours and some students enjoyed the challenge while others found it difficult. We made our way down eventually. It was a good practice hike to get an idea of what it would be like to hike at higher elevation. We rewarded the students with a few hours of phone time and

time to spend in downtown Salida. They were able to shop, and eat ice cream.

Day 5 was our first day to break camp and get set up at the trailhead. We had to pack everything into our backpacking backpacks including the tent, sleeping bag/pad, pillow, clothes, toiletries and more. We were able to secure three camp spots. Our tents had to go in a designated area that wouldn't impact the tender vegetation. We got everything back out and put it all up again. Our tents were a little close to one another but they fit. We were elated to find a pit toilet, fire ring and picnic tables at this camp! We left for the afternoon to get one last swim/shower at Mount Princeton Hot Springs. However, there was a rain delay. Another leader and I moved one of the Suburbans to a midpoint in our hike. That way, we can drive the road vs. walking it with a backpack. When we returned, the Hot Springs were open. So we got in and soaked in the warm water. We also used the luxurious lounge chairs. Ok, there was nothing fancy about them other than they weren't rocks! The shower was warm and it felt wonderful to be CLEAN! Back at camp, it had rained and our tents were damp. One group had water inside so we helped blot up the water and talked more about how to tuck the ground tarp further under the tent/rainfly. Then we started a campfire. We ate our first of many freeze dried meals. These meals are dehydrated and you simply warm up filtered water. We brought along filters and backpacking stoves to use. Before the end of the day, we moved the second Suburban to the very end of our hike. It was dark when we returned and I crashed so that I might be able to get up early and help others pack up.



*Wilderness Studies 2021 (continued)*

Day 6 was the first full day of hiking. We were up by 6:00 AM. Our goal was to leave between 8 – 9 AM. We moved the last Suburban to the trailhead parking lot. We took a picture and I began leading us into the wilderness. The hike was 3.5 miles. Temperatures were in the 80's but it was cloudy. We walked steadily taking a few breaks. We found our campsite and out came all our gear again. We set up and each individual did their own thing. Some got water, some took walks, some just relaxed, and some went to dig a cathole for the bathroom. We ate freeze dried food and then had a campfire. It is somewhat rare to have campfires in Colorado. We were feeling lucky! Bear canisters hold all of our food and smelly things. This includes things that smell like toothpaste and deodorants. Bear canisters are required in wilderness areas and all plastic bear canisters need to be moved away from tents before bedtime.



I awoke on Day 7 around 6:00 AM. We broke camp. I ate oatmeal and drank hot cocoa for breakfast. Hiking began. We were in good spirits and arrived at lunch in good time. Rejuvenated, we began hiking after the lunch break but the trail went ON and ON and ON. We encountered a few black colored dogs that resembled bears for a brief second. Eek! The dogs were with their humans. We fantasized about our favorite drinks. Finally, we made it! We were overjoyed that the creek was nearby. Before setting up the tent, we made sure to lay down and gaze above. Truly we were checking to see if there were rocks in our tent area but what a view (see picture to the left). Just when you think you can't hike anymore, you are blessed with beauty. We set up our tent home, filtered water, ate supper and talked about the plan for tomorrow.

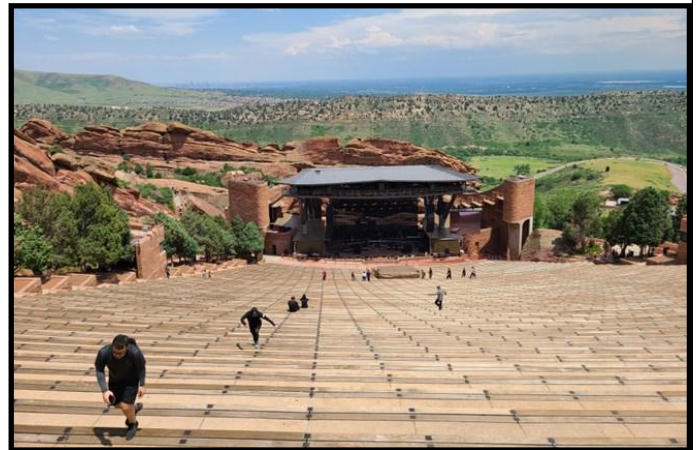
Day 8 was a rest day! No packing up our tents. Instead, we had a leisurely breakfast of oatmeal and hot cocoa. Today, we were taking our lightweight day packs. They held water, snacks, our journal and a towel/clothes because we were going to shower! JUST KIDDING. When I say shower, I mean bathe in the freezing (39 degrees F) creek water. We hiked to the waterfall which was a mere 1.6 miles. Once at the falls, some hiked up further while others in our group just sat and journaled or rested in the warmth of the sunlight and watched chipmunks, birds and other hikers. Eventually we worked our way down stream to a deep area so we could jump in. The 'rule' is that you have to get your head wet or you risk the chance of doing it over. It was SO COLD that it took your breath away! Good thing it was a warm day. We dried off and found a place to eat lunch. That evening, we gave the students some challenges. Find the prettiest rock. Who has the neatest tent? Who can build the best shelter? The students loved these activities and were so creative! They even performed skits as entertainment for the evening. We ate freeze dried meals and discussed the next day's hike.

Day 9 began early. We ate a cold breakfast and got out of camp early to beat the heat. We held a brisk pace and quickly made it to the 2 mile mark. We ate snacks and took a short break with boots off. Then we pressed on towards the top. It took a while but we were happy to reach it and take a breath. The descent turned out to be more strenuous. It was EXTREMELY steep with loose rock. I was so grateful to have hiking poles to help with my balance. I did slip on the way down but I gathered myself and trudged on. Then familiarity came and I recognized our evening campsite from 2019 when we last did this trip. YAY! Some youth fell asleep immediately after setting up tents. Some went to the creek to soak swollen ankles, cool off and get water refilled. After a few hours of rest, we made supper and played cards together. This group of students was really good at including each other. We truly became a wilderness family in the time that we spent together.

On day 10, we spent our time exploring waterfalls and the ghost town of St. Elmo.

On day 11, we left camp. We drove over Cottonwood Pass. It was breathtaking. Then we drove to Red Rocks Amphitheater. It is truly one of my favorite places in the world. It is a natural amphitheater made from red rocks. It looks like an episode of the Flintstones! The last stop of the day was a HOTEL! Real showers and a pool were huge hits. The trip was fun, challenging and hopefully life changing for the youth.

On day 12, we drove the entire day to get home to our families and the flatlands. We even brought rain with us! Each and every student had a ride waiting and we emptied out the Suburbans in 15 minutes! In August, the group met with parents to share pictures and recall events from our June trip. It was wonderful to cherish all these memories with the group. We will forever be the 2021 Wilderness Family!



## *Recycle and Compost this Holiday Season*

Help eliminate the use of styrofoam this holiday season. The Bremer County Conservation Board and Bremer County Nature Alliance promote the sustainable use of resources. Styrofoam plates and cups cannot be recycled and will remain in the landfill far into the future. Please consider purchasing recyclable, biodegradable or compostable table service for your gatherings. Here are a few examples of polystyrene-free, eco-friendly products that can be purchased locally or ordered online:



If you only recycle paper products and compost food, each house can cut their garbage by almost 50%. America Recycles Day was on November 15 and we should consider doing it every day! We need to make a conscious effort to help our earth for future generations. Thank You!

## *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.

### 2021 Recent Purchases

Kayak Trailer (pictured below)  
Stand Up Paddleboard Roof Rack

~ 2022 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) Kayaks
- 2) 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

## GAGA Pit

Cedar Bend Park has a new addition to the campground playground this year. Bryce Anderson, from Plainfield, installed a Gaga Pit as his Eagle Scout Project.

### Gaga Ball Rules

1. Players start touching the wall and throwing the ball up in the air and after it bounces 3 times the game starts.
2. The way to win is to be the last person in the pit.
3. If you get hit from the knee down you are out and must leave the pit.
  - A. This is an honor system, please be Honest.
4. If a player hits the ball out of the ring, then they are out as well.
5. Be careful and have fun.

### Gate Disclaimer

Please respect the park's equipment and do not swing on the gate and if possible only use it if it is needed, otherwise climb over the wall.



## Soap Making 101 Workshop

**February 27 at Eagle Lodge, Ingawanis Woodland; 1-4 PM; Fee \$10; Preregistration Required**

Have you ever wanted to learn how to make your own lye soap? Come learn the basics. During this workshop, you will learn what materials are needed to get started on your soap-making journey, and you will participate in making two batches of soap. Every participant will take home their own unique blend of soap to use or share. You 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. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. We must have a minimum of 10 to hold this workshop, and the maximum is 15. So be sure to give us a call to register before the deadline on February 24. The cost of \$10 is to cover the cost of soap-making materials.

## Winter Picnic at Ingawanis Woodland

**February 6 at Eagle Lodge, Ingawanis Woodland; 1-3 PM; Free; No registration required**

Come join Bremer County Conservation Naturalists and BCNA Members for a Winter Picnic on February 6 from 1:00-3:00 at Ingawanis

Woodland. We will have snowshoes available if snow conditions are right. We are inviting families to take a short winter hike and learn more about the outdoor world.



## Halloween Hike



This year's hike involved a few "fishy creatures," Snapping Turtle, Bald Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Largemouth Bass, and River Otter.

Thanks to Cindy Bierstedt and family for purchasing and bagging all the treats for the hike. Thanks to Rob and Pam Walters for recording the actors, taking pictures, and helping set up. Thanks to Jason Auel, Andy Hockenson, Kerry Larson, Angi Reid, Tammy Turner, Beah Aljutayli, and Nick Franzen for leading hikes. Thanks to Mike Weidemann for checking in groups and Jo Danielson for serving the bagged treats. Bremer County Conservation is grateful for Stacey Snyder, Matt Crayne, and Annette Wittrock for acting.

# Bremer Bulletin

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

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## BREMER BULLETIN

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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*

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319-882-4742.**