



Bremer County Conservation

Summer 2019

Written by Alexis Watkins

A Trip Through the County Parks *By: Andrew Hockenson, Director*

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We've all heard the words "there's nothing to do," or how about "I'm bored. If this sounds familiar and you're running out of activities to keep your kids entertained this summer, get out and explore your county parks. My wife and kids did just that earlier this summer and had a great time doing it. They made a day out of exploring each of the four parks in Bremer County as well as one recreation area. The first stop of the morning was to North Woods Park a few miles north of Sumner. There they parked, put on their bug spray, and went for a hike along the river and then on the trails. Constantly on the lookout for cool things to see along the trail, they were able to catch a glimpse of a green tree frog. Of course they had to try to be sneaky so they could get close enough to catch it for a closer look. Three little ones all trying to be the first to catch it is probably not the sneakiest scenario, but they managed to get it caught. They were surprised to learn the frog was even easier to catch than all the toads at home. After admiring its smoothness and amazing camouflage capabilities, they gently let it go. After releasing the frog and a long hike on the trails, they made their way back to the car.

Next stop was Alcock Park near Frederika. It was nearing lunch time, so a picnic lunch was in store. There are picnic tables and grills throughout the park, but for them, throwing a blanket down on the ground near the dam and unpacking cold sandwiches and snacks worked just fine. Nobody brought any fishing poles to try their luck by the dam, so they just walked over and watched the power of the water. While at the dam, they spotted two snakes sunning themselves on the rocks. Unlike the frog at North Woods, there were no races to see who could catch it first, and were completely satisfied with watching it from where they were standing.



Enjoying a picnic near the dam on the east side of Alcock Park

North Cedar Park near Plainfield was next on the list. Like the other parks, the river was drawing their attention and this time they all found a comfortable seat on the bench swing overlooking the river. When river levels are normal, this is a great place to get on and off for canoeing or kayaking. There are trails at North Cedar as well, but taking a break on that swing for a bit was okay with all of them. Plainfield Lake is a short distance from the park and they decided to drive there and go for a walk around the lake. They enjoyed skipping rocks and the youngest gathered a nice collection of goose feathers.

Find a sick or injured animal?

Please contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

Black Hawk Wildlife Rehabilitation
(319) 277-6511

Making their way back south, Cedar Bend Park near Waverly was the last stop. What day wouldn't be complete without spending time playing on a playground? This past April a new playground was installed at Cedar Bend and the kids wasted no time running over to that. It's good getting feedback from those using our parks and facilities, and it was evident from the smiles, laughs, and sweat running down the side of their faces, that all three were happy with the updated addition to the park.

Travel Iowa along with Iowa's County Conservation System have a 99 Counties 99 Parks Promotion going on throughout the summer to get travelers out and visiting all the wonderful parks throughout the state. Each county has a park to list for the promotion, and for Bremer County, that park is Cedar Bend. Staff members installed a "Selfie Station" near the East Shelter for park users to set their cell phones, snap a selfie, and post that they were there. I encourage you to visit ours at Cedar Bend and to see how many others you can find.

I'm glad my wife and kids were able to spend the day enjoying the parks in Bremer County. Each person had their own highlight of the trip and the place they liked best. It was a simple day with little planning, but one I believe they will remember.



New playground at Cedar Bend



Selfie Station at Cedar Bend near the East Shelter

All the parks in Bremer County have similar yet unique outdoor recreation opportunities. These activities even vary with the time of year. So if you're looking for something simple to keep everybody entertained with very little expense, come create your own adventure at the parks and recreation areas in Bremer County.

Donations

Jim Peters donated memorials for: Jerry Spowart, Gary Stromer, Marv Tiedt, Susan Clark, Greg Blasberg, Bonnie Kukral, Marlys Ellison, Oscar Heideman, John Woodring, Mardell Kirchhoff, Robert Kerr, David Bolte

Donald Jacque Memorials Were Received From: Brian & Nancy Robbins, Northwest Bank & Trust, Kevin & Janice Thedens, David & Delpha Musgrave, James & Susan Mellig, Tim or K. Lanae Rohwer, Laurel or Richard Worden

James W. Miller Memorials Were Received From: Sheryl Asmus & James A. Miller

Environmental Education donation received from Peggy Rogers

Alcock Park Bench donated by Mary Dove and family

Pollinators

Pollinators, pollinators, pollinators! They are everywhere this time of year. Butterflies, bees, moths, insects, birds, even fruit bats are pollinators. It is a great thing to have so many pollinators, because pollinators help with cross-pollination of plants.

Approximately 70-87% of flowering plants rely on pollinators! This is extremely important in a crop state like Iowa. Some of the most prominent pollinators are bees, wasps, butterflies and moths.

Many of us have heard of the beloved Monarch butterfly. It won our hearts because it's the

only butterfly to migrate nearly 3,000 miles every winter. However, their populations have dropped due to habitat loss.

There are approximately 300-400 native bee species in Iowa. The Honey bee, is not native to Iowa, but was brought to the U.S. for its ability to make honey. However, bumble bees and mason bees are native to Iowa and help with pollination. The Rusty Patched Bumble Bee is the first bumblebee to be listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act.

How can you help?
Provide habitat for these glorious creatures by creating a

pollinator garden! There's only three things that make up a good pollinator garden: sun, flowering plants, and blooms from Spring through Fall. It is also recommended that you use native Iowa species; there are many to choose from, they are easy to maintain and pollinators love them!

For more information on pollinators and making pollinator gardens, feel free to visit the Iowa DNR website.

www.iowadnr.gov



Monarch Tagging – Aug. 27

Bremer County naturalists will be putting on a program at the Sumner Public Library on Tuesday, August 27 from 5pm-6pm. They will be providing information about monarch life cycles, how they migrate and why we tag them.

Endangered Species of Iowa

Wood Turtle (*Clemmys insculpta*)

The wood turtle got its' name due to the appearance of the shell looking like this growth rings of a tree.

Appearance

Wood turtles can be 5^{1/2} - 8 inches long. The belly side of the turtle is yellow with black blotches. The skin is yellow close to the shell and

becomes brown further away from the shell. Males have larger heads, overall larger body size, and longer, thicker tails than females do.

Habitat

Clear rivers and ponds near woodlands. The destruction of forest habitat is one of the reasons for the decline in this species' population.



Food

Wood turtles are omnivores. They will eat berries, dandelions, worms, insects, and mollusks. Turtles are known to stomp their feet to bring earthworms to the surface while hunting.

Meet Our Summer Staff!

Christopher Hamilton

Chris lives in Waverly with his family. He has a wife and four beautiful children. He graduated from the University of Northern Iowa in Art Education. Chris teaches 7th and 8th grade art at Waverly Shell Rock. Chris's favorite animal is a dog, specifically a Doberman even though he has two Labradors and five cats at home.

Brandon Beaty

Brandon is from Denver, IA. He is currently enrolled at the University of Northern Iowa in Tech Management, hoping to someday work for John Deere. Brandon works at Menard's in Waterloo. Brandon's favorite animal is a white-tailed deer due to his hunting background.

Alexis Watkins

Alexis is from Charles City. She graduated from the University of Northern Iowa in Biology. She is pursuing a career in conservation as a naturalist. She would also love to go back to school for taxidermy. Alexis's favorite animal is a moose because her goal is to ride one like Teddy Roosevelt.

Selfie Station

Instagram Account
 Follow us for updates, programs, and flyers!
 @bremercountyconservation

A brand new structure was erected at Cedar Bend. A selfie station was put up at the overlook on the furthest end on the park. All you have to do is set a timer on your phone's camera, put it on the station, pose, and smile! Selfie

stations are being putting up all over county parks to help us showcase how beautiful our parks are. Take a picture and tag us on Facebook or Instagram!

What's Blooming?

Prairie flowers are gorgeous no matter what time of year, but here is what's blooming in late summer through fall. The list is for wildflowers and does not contain grasses.



- Black-eyed Susan (Aug-Sept)
- Bottle Gentian (Aug-Sept)
- Prairie Blazing star (Jul-Sept)
- New England Aster (Aug-Oct)
- Round-headed Bush Clover (Aug-Sept)
- Stiff Goldenrod (Aug-Sept)
- Woolly Verbena (Jun-Sept)
- Compass Plant (Jul-Sept)
- Lady's Tresses (Aug-Oct)
- Western Ironweed (Jul-Sept)
- Blue Sage (Jul-Oct)

- Heath Aster (Sept-Oct)
- Cardinal Flower (Aug-Sept)
- Prairie Sage (Jul-Sept)
- Smooth Blue Aster (Aug-Oct)
- Wild Bergamot (Jul-Sept)



Bremer County Conservation Fees for 2019

Camping

Cedar Bend Park \$12 per night per camping unit without electricity
\$17 per night per camping unit with electricity with the following exceptions:
Sites A-G will be for ONE CAMPING UNIT ONLY with a \$20 per night charge
(50 amp outlets available)

Alcock Park, North Cedar Park and North Woods Park

\$10 per night per camping unit
\$15 per night per camping unit with electric (30 amp outlets available)

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.

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** 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

There is a dumpstation in 3 of the 4 parks. This facility is meant for those camping in the park and is included in the camping fee. For anyone wanting to use the dumpstation and not camping in the park, there is a **\$5** 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

There will be a **\$5 donation** requested each time a defined amount of firewood is obtained in the parks from the wood pile. There is a collection receptacle in each park near the firewood pile.

Shelters

Shelters are located in each of the four county parks and an amphitheater is located in Cedar Bend Park. They can be used free on a first-come, first-serve basis, but can be held for you by reservation. The charges are **\$20 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 Ave., Janesville. It is an enclosed facility with restrooms, heat, air conditioning and a kitchenette. It can be rented for **\$75 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– Oct 31. For additional information, call Andy Hockenson at the BCCB office at 319-882-4742.

Check out our website at:

[http://www.co.bremer.ia.us/
government/conservation_board_
index.php](http://www.co.bremer.ia.us/government/conservation_board_/index.php)



Bremer County Conservation Board Staff

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