



# The Jasper County Jewel

Jasper County Conservation Board Quarterly Newsletter Summer 2017

## Grant Received for Pollinator Project

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation received funding from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation to create or improve monarch habitat in Iowa. This work is concentrated in two major north-south migration corridors: one along I-35 in central Iowa and one along Iowa's western border, in the Loess Hills. The project will establish, expand, restore, diversify, and manage 7,000 acres total, split between ten 80-acre core Monarch butterfly/pollinator sites and 100-125 satellite sites.

Jasper County Conservation received a grant through this program to plant 19 acres of ground to a native prairie that will benefit pollinating insects. The acres planted were previously cool season grass pasture land and grazing areas that were a part of the former county home farm southeast of Newton. The land has not been pastured for the past eight years, since its management was entrusted to the Jasper County Conservation Board by the Jasper County Board of Supervisors, to develop into a Environmental Education Learning Center site. The conversion of these 19 acres into native prairie will allow JCCB naturalists to do additional public and school programming at this site, teaching about the importance of pollinator species and how their presence affects other plant and animal species.

The prairie planting is part of a larger project to build an Environmental Education Center on approximately 40 acres of land located just southeast of Newton. The Environmental Education

Center property is made up of eight acres of hayland (cropland), 19 acres of cool season pasture, and the remaining 13 acres are timber. The cropland will be re-seeded with native grasses and forbs after the construction of the learning center building is completed. The remaining 19 acres of pasture area has been converted to native prairie and forbs, specifically pollinator habitat.



The existing cool season grass was eliminated with an application of herbicide last fall, followed by a spring seeding done by JCCB with a Great Plains no-till drill. The area was mowed in the spring, and will be again this summer and

fall as necessary to set back weed pressure. A 3-5 year burning schedule on the 19 acres will begin within the first few years of establishment. JCCB funded the site preparation work for this project.



## 2 Conservation News

### Work Completed on Chichaqua

Good news, Chichaqua Valley Trail users! Over 2,500 feet of trail has been repaired from Ira to Baxter. While there is more work to be done down the road, the trail is opened back up for use. Get out and enjoy a ride this summer!



### Shelter House Reservation

Did you know that shelter houses located in Jasper County parks can be reserved for \$25 per day? Shelters are located at Ashton Wildwood Park, Mariposa Recreation Area, Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve, Reimer Refuge, Wagaman Mill and the Chichaqua Valley Recreation Trail. Call (641) 792-9780 to make your reservation.

### Roorda Wildlife Refuge

Roorda Wildlife Refuge is now open for shore-line fishing. The 23-acre area is located just off the Monroe exit of Hwy 163. A road was installed so that users can access the entire area and eventually, a boat ramp will also be built. For safety reasons, swimming is not permitted. Watch for improvements to happen as early as July!

### 10th Annual Fishing Derby

Jasper County Conservation held its 10th Annual Fishing Derby on Saturday, June 3, at Mariposa Park. Participants could visit the various stations to make lures, design boats, tie tackle, watch fish cleaning demonstrations, sample the cooked fish, and see some of the different kinds of fish in Mariposa Lake. Prizes and t-shirts were given out and a hotdog lunch was provided.

Fishing regulations at Mariposa continue to be relaxed until lake renovation begins. Anglers are allowed to harvest any size or number of all fish species from Mariposa, but a valid fishing license is still required. Any number of fishing poles are allowed. Anglers must remain in sight of these lines at all times, and follow all other fishing regulations and area rules. In addition, bow and spear fishing are allowed. Trot-lines, jug lines, nets, dynamite, poison, electric shocking devices, or any stupefying substances are not allowed. It is illegal to sell fish or stock captured fish into other public waters. The normal park hours of 5:00 a.m. until 10:30 pm will remain in effect.



*Above:* Volunteer and former JCCB intern Gunnar Johnson shows a 4 pound catfish that was caught at Mariposa Lake to fishing derby participants. *Below:* Pam and Andy Stone help kids make fishing lures.



## Watch For the Solar Eclipse

Keep August 21, 2017, marked on your calendar! For the first time in 38 years, there will be a total solar eclipse here in the U.S. Although we frequently have partial solar eclipses, the last total solar eclipse in the U.S. was on February 26, 1979. Back then, totality was only visible in northwestern states, but this year the path of totality will stretch across the country, so many more people will have a chance to enjoy it!

Of course, the path of totality will be rather narrow, so it won't get dark where most of us will be. But, if you're willing to drive a short distance, you should be treated to a once-in-a-lifetime show! The total eclipse will be visible as close as Lincoln, NE; Kansas City, MO; and St. Louis, MO, so a one-day drive can get you a front-row seat! Everyone outside the path of totality will still be treated to a partial solar eclipse.

A solar eclipse happens when the moon passes between the sun and the Earth, blocking out the sun, and casting a shadow on Earth. Where the moon completely covers the sun, we see a total eclipse; where it only covers part of the sun, we see a partial eclipse. Total solar eclipses are actually relatively rare. In fact, the next total solar eclipses in the U.S. won't be until 2024 and 2044.

If you'd like more info about the eclipse this August, visit NASA's 2017 Eclipse website: [eclipse2017.nasa.gov](http://eclipse2017.nasa.gov). Even if you don't plan to see the eclipse, this page has some fascinating information. Be sure to check it out!



## Programs at Ashton Observatory

The Ashton Observatory telescopes will be open for public programs at 8:00 PM Saturday evenings, April-October. There will be talks given in the observatory, including a program about the 2017 solar eclipse on August 5, followed by observing through the telescopes. For more detailed information, go to the DMAS website at [www.dmastronomy.com](http://www.dmastronomy.com).

## Wagaman Mill Tours

Wagaman Mill will be open from 1:00-4:00 PM each Sunday afternoon between Memorial Day weekend and the end of September. For more information regarding Wagaman Mill, please call (641) 792-9780.



## Hunter Education Course

**Wednesday, August 2, 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM**

**Thursday, August 3, 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM**

(students must attend both sessions)

**Izaak Walton League Clubhouse, Newton**

This course will be offered by the Jasper County Conservation Board and the Emerson Hough Chapter of the Izaak Walton League. Students must attend both sessions to receive certification. Students need to pre-register for this course online at [www.iowadnr.gov/huntered](http://www.iowadnr.gov/huntered) and pick up their workbooks at the JCCB office prior to the class.

The hunter education course is free and all materials will be provided. Persons must be at least 12 years old to take the course. Students should bring a sack lunch both days.



## **Attention, Kids!**

Kids ages 6-12 years old can earn the official Junior Naturalist certificate and 2017 embroidered Bluegill Fish Badge by attending any three JCCB programs and doing two independent activities this summer! Ask for a record book at the JCCB office.

# 4 Upcoming Events/Programs

## Public Lake Paddles

July 13, 6:00-8:00 PM

July 29, 12:00-3:00 PM

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve

Ahrens Access (west entrance)

Canoes and kayaks will be available for open paddling. The paddle programs are for participants of all skill levels and ages; basic instruction can be given for beginners. On July 13th there will also be paddleboards available to check out.

Participants must register for these programs by filling out a form, available online at [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com) or at the JCCB office in Newton. Payment can be made the day of the event. Children 12 years old and younger must be accompanied by an adult. Space is limited, so get your registrations in early! *Fee: \$5.00 per person.*



## Older, Wiser, Livelier Seniors (OWLS)

10:00–11:00 AM

Jasper County Armory/Annex Building

1030 W. 2nd St. S., Newton

July 12—Iowa Honey Queen

Come learn about honey bees, honey, and beekeeping at this interactive, informative program presented by the 2017 Iowa Honey Queen, Carly Vannoy. You will learn about how bees make mummies, the color of mystery honey, the strange use of beehives in medieval times, and much, much more!

August 9—Fossils of Iowa

Robert Wolf of Fort Dodge, and author of the book, “Fossils of Iowa,” will be presenting information about Iowa’s geologic past and sharing fossils from his collection. If you have fossils you would like Robert to identify, please bring them to this program.



September 13—Garden Grillout

Sample a variety of produce fresh from the garden and collect ideas on how to cook and enjoy the season’s harvest. Bring recipes to share!

## Bison Day at the Refuge

Saturday, August 5, 9:00 AM-2:00PM

Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge



Join the fun at this free and family-friendly celebration of bison and the prairie. Music, weaving, rope-making, archery, games and crafts will be available for all ages! See live bison and elk and compete in a bison chip throwing contest! Bison burger lunch available for purchase. Call (515) 994-3400 or email [Doreen\\_vanryswyk@fws.gov](mailto:Doreen_vanryswyk@fws.gov) for more information.

## Chichaqua Trail Events

**Pedal CVT:** June 10 the Chichaqua Valley Cyclists will host Pedal CVT. This event will include a 5K run at 8:00 am in Bondurant, and a bike ride at 9:30 am. The bike ride will include Bondurant, Altoona, Mitchellville, Mingo, Ira, Valeria, and Baxter. Check out [bikeiowa.com](http://bikeiowa.com) for more information.

**Pedaler’s Jamboree:** August 26-27 we will be hosting the Iowa Pedaler’s Jamboree on the Chichaqua Valley Trail between Baxter and Bondurant. We hope you can join us for two fun days of music, food and riding. We have already ordered up two beautiful summer days. Stay tuned for more information to come at [pedalersjamboreeiowa.com](http://pedalersjamboreeiowa.com).

**Community Events:** This summer make sure you check out these annual community events along the trail: Bondurant Summerfest in June, Jazz in July at the Bondurant Depot Trailhead on July 7, Mingo Days in June, and Baxter Fun Days in early July.

## 13th Annual Off the Beaten Path

Saturday, September 23, 9:00 AM

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve

Mark your calendar and get your registration in for this trail race and fun run/walk event! Participants will enjoy the beautiful scenery of the preserve while running in a 6K race or a 3K run/walk. Proceeds from the trail race will serve to benefit the non-profit group, Jasper Conservation Connection.

For more information and registration, go on the web to [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com)

## Jasper County Conservation Hosts First Annual "Galaxy Gala"

Jasper County Conservation partnered with Central College students and the non-profit Jasper Conservation Connection to hold the first annual "Galaxy Gala" on Saturday, April 29, 2017. This inaugural event was held at Ashton Wildwood Park to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Ashton Wildwood Park and the 55th Anniversary of Jasper County Conservation.

The outdoor event included live music by professional harpist Juli Bey, desserts, hot chocolate, and local mead from Buzzed Bee Meadery. After a social time, participants listened to a program given by Greg Woolever of the Des Moines Astronomical Society at the Ashton Observatory.



Above: Central College students Tess Hanson, Sydney Embray, Kendra Schwery and Connor Claypool planned the Galaxy Gala for their class project.



From top to bottom: Buzzed Bee Meadery owners sold bottles of mead, Juli Bey provided harp music, and Greg Woolever of DMAS talked about things to watch for in the night sky at the Galaxy Gala.



A large banner celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Chichaqua Valley Trail. The banner features the trail's logo on the left, which includes a skunk and the text "EST. 1987" and "www.chichaquavalleytrail.org". In the center is a large "30" with "TH ANNIVERSARY" written across it. Below the "30" is a list of towns: "BERWICK • BONDURANT • VALERIA • MINGO • IRA • BAXTER". On the far left is the Polk County Conservation logo, and on the far right is the Jasper County Conservation logo. The banner has a green and yellow color scheme.

The Chichaqua Valley Trail celebrates its 30 year anniversary in 2017! Mark your calendars for the Pedaler's Jamboree on August 26-27. More details to come!