



The Jasper County Jewel

Jasper County Conservation Board Quarterly Newsletter Summer 2022

UTV Tours at Uhlenhopp Arboretum

One of our fabulous conservation volunteers, Bill Yeager, noticed groups of people visiting Uhlenhopp Arboretum every day and sitting at the shelter but not venturing out into the park. He stopped and told them all about the park and encouraged them to go take a look! They responded they would love to see it, but their mobility wouldn't allow them to hike. Since then, we have made it a goal to create a way for people with limited mobility to be able to experience this park, as well as other parks.

With the help of a few very generous donors, Jasper County Conservation purchased a 6 passenger UTV that will allow tours to be held at our county parks for individuals who aren't able to hike and view the beauty of our natural areas.

Tours are 1 hour long and can accommodate up to 5 people. Please call (641) 792-9780 to reserve a spot!

Tours in July are at the following times:

July 6th, 9:00AM-3:00PM

July 11th, 9:00AM-12:00PM

July 13th, 12:00-3:00PM

July 20th, 9:00AM-3:00PM

July 25th, 9:00AM-12:00PM

July 27th, 12:00-3:00PM

Uhlenhopp Arboretum is located at 2706 E 146th St N, Grinnell, Iowa 50112.

Right: The new UTV is currently running tours of Uhlenhopp Arboretum for those who are unable to hike the trails.



Waldo Walker Bird Blind Dedicated

The Waldo Walker Memorial Bird Blind was dedicated at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve this past spring. The ceremony began with introductions by Keri Van Zante. She spoke about Waldo's history with the preserve, his love of the birds and plants he found there, and a history as to how the project came to be. Greg Oldsen, who designed and built the structure, spoke about the planning and building process. Carol Kramer spoke of the special relationship of birds and nature to the culture of the Ojibwa tribe, of which she is a member.

The building is handicapped accessible with two benches inside for viewing the birds and a visual aid to help with the identification of birds. Several feeders have been strategically placed to enhance viewing. The building will be used extensively in the Preserve's educational program for children. Materials for the project were purchased solely by the generous memorial gifts given by Waldo's friends, colleagues, students and family.

Representing the Walker Family were his widow Rita and his older daughter Martha Sheffield (VA). The ceremony was also virtually available by zoom to other family members and donors to this project.



Above: Included in attendance at the Walker Bird Blind dedication, from left to right are: Keri Van Zante, Carol Kramer, Greg Oldsen, Rita Walker, Jade Read and Waldo's daughter, Martha Sheffield.

2 Conservation News

Floating Wetland Project

Jasper County Conservation received a grant from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship last summer to install twenty floating wetlands around Jasper County. This structure is built from a material used in pond filters to create a floating island that can be installed in ponds and lakes to help improve water quality. Floating wetlands can be planted with any species that can tolerate wet soils. As the plants become established in the wetland base, the roots suspend under the wetland and become a substrate for biofilm to form. Biofilm is a colony of beneficial bacteria and microbes that consume excess nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus. Those nutrients are then released back to the atmosphere as gas. This prevents algae from having access to those nutrients which can cause a large algae bloom.

On top of helping water quality in Jasper County, the plants being used on the wetlands are native to Iowa. In addition, many of those plants are native flowers which will be used by pollinators for nectar and as a larval host for many butterfly and moth species in Jasper County.

A large portion of the floating wetland project included an education and outreach aspect which involved many school and youth groups around the county. This winter, the Jasper County Conservation Department partnered with the Newton Christian 7/8th grade, Newton and Baxter High School horticulture classes, and several Jasper County 4-H clubs to start native wetland and prairie seeds for the project. With their help, the Jasper County Conservation Department was able to start over 600 plants. In addition, several of these groups also helped to design, build, plant and install the floating wetlands.

Twenty wetlands will be installed around the county at these locations:

- Cardinal Pond in Newton
- Newton Izaak Walton League
- Newton Arboretum and Botanical Gardens
- Prairie City-Monroe High School Outdoor Classroom
- Giese Park in Baxter
- Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve
- Mariposa Recreation Area
- Uhlenhopp Arboretum

For more information about the project, contact Greg Oldsen with the Jasper County Conservation Department at goldsen@jasperia.org.



Above: JCCB Naturalist, Greg Oldsen, lays out the plants to be used in one of the floating wetlands being installed at Cardinal Pond in Newton.



Above: Newton Christian 7/8th grade class help plant a floating wetland they built and designed.



Above: Two floating wetlands will be used at Cardinal Pond to help control excess nutrients.

Dog Waste Stations

There are now dog waste stations at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve and Uhlenhopp Arboretum! While we love all our furry park visitors, please remember to be courteous and clean up after your pet. No one enjoys dodging piles of poo on the trails! We'd also like to remind everyone that dogs must be on a leash at all times while in our county conservation parks. Thank you!

Above: Dog waste stations can be found at the Uhlenhopp Arboretum trailhead and at the east side of Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve. Please help keep our parks clean!



Little Free Library at Mariposa

Development continues on the Nature Playscape Trail at Mariposa Park. This spring, JCCB staff were able to clear more of the trail, add a few more fun elements for kids, and woodchip the main path.

The Little Free Library was installed and has already had visitors! Feel free to take and share books, especially nature/outdoor themes!

We are looking for individuals or organizations who would like to "adopt" the Nature Playscape Trail. This would involve workdays to trim back brush, pick up litter, spread woodchips along the trail and help raise money for future additions. Contact Katie Cantu at kcantu@jasperia.org if you are interested in this project.



The Great Geocache Hunt 2022

Think you know Jasper County's parks pretty well? We are challenging you to find 10 hidden geocaches in 10 different county parks!

Coordinates for the Great Geocache Hunt 2022 are posted on Jasper County Conservation's Facebook page, [@jaspercountyconservation](https://www.facebook.com/jaspercountyconservation) the first of every month. If you are not on Facebook, you can contact Naturalist Katie Cantu by email for the coordinates at kcantu@jasperia.org.

Each of the 10 geocaches has a different wildlife card to collect. If you collect all 10 by the end of the year and turn them into the conservation office, you will receive a fun JCCB prize!

If you do not already have GPS on your mobile device, we recommend downloading the free Geocaching app. Geocaches will remain in the parks for the year so you'll have plenty of time to locate them all.

Right: Ten geocaches, similar to this one, will be hidden in Jasper County parks this year.



New Restrooms

Two new pit toilet restrooms have been installed this spring, one at Uhlenhopp Arboretum and one at the Mariposa Lake boat ramp area. The Mariposa restroom was purchased by a Water Recreation Access Grant and the Uhlenhopp restroom was paid for with JCCB's land development funds. We are very happy to have these new amenities in our parks!

Right: New handicap accessible restroom located near the grain bin shelter house at Uhlenhopp Arboretum.



4 Upcoming Events/Programs

Older, Wiser, Livelier Seniors (OWLS)

10:00–11:00 AM

Jasper County Armory/Annex Building
1030 W. 2nd St. S., Newton

Come for coffee and a short presentation. All programs are from 10:00-11:00 AM unless otherwise noted.

July 13—Discovering Ukraine

Sveta Miller was born in Ukraine and moved to Jasper County, Iowa when she was 15. During the presentation, she will discuss Ukrainian history and culture.

August 10—Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Jasper County

Nichole Baxter, Conservationist with the NRCS Department, will talk about how NRCS and partner agencies are working with landowners and producers to improve soil and water quality and protect natural resources in Jasper County. Nichole will discuss common practices implemented in the county and demonstrate the importance of soil health for a sustainable future.

September 14—Monarch Butterflies

Kim Routh of Newton has been rearing monarch butterflies for many years. She will talk about the current population status of monarchs and how efforts by “citizen scientists” like herself are helping their numbers.



Public Lake Paddles

July 7 and 12, 6:00-8:00 PM

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve
Ahrens Access (west entrance)

July 21 and 26, 6:00-8:00 PM

Mariposa Park

Kayaks and paddleboards 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.

Participants must register for these programs by filling out a form, available online at 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/person.*

Hunter Education Course

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

Thursday, August 4, 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.gooutdoorsiowa.com 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.

Wagaman Mill and Museum Tours

Wagaman Mill in Lynnville 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.

Programs at Ashton Observatory

The Ashton Observatory building is still closed for public viewing nights but the Des Moines Astronomical Society is taking small group requests.

For program updates, to request a private program, and for more detailed information, go to the DMAS website at www.dmastronomy.com.

Off the Beaten Path Trail Race

Saturday, September 24, 9:00 AM

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve

Check-in and day-of registration for the 18th annual trail race will begin at 8:00AM at Ahrens Access of the preserve. The 6K trail race will kick off at 9:00AM and the 3K fun run will begin at 9:15AM.

Further information, including pre-registration forms and directions to Jacob Krumm Preserve, will be at www.jaspercountyconservation.com and on Jasper County Conservation's Facebook page. Proceeds from the trail race will benefit Jasper Conservation Connection.

Environmental Education Externs

Jasper County Conservation has two teacher externs working with us on EE programming again this summer. Iowa STEM Teacher Externships, a program of the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council, is supported through state-appropriated funds and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (NR) Resource Enhancement and Protection Conservation Education Program (REAP-CEP) Grant for Teacher Externships with Environmental and Conservation Professionals, along with investments by Iowa business and industry partners.

During the summer, educators work side-by-side with knowledgeable and skilled industry employees who help bring the classroom curriculum to life. Teacher Externships provide educators with the exposure to answer questions about real-world application, prepare students for careers they may have in the future, and improve educational experiences.

Our externs will not only assist JCCB naturalists in current summer programming, but will also help provide insight and updates to our curriculum, and will offer summer programs of their own! Please keep watching our website and Facebook page @jaspercountyconservation for program updates.

Meet our teacher externs:

Ashtyn Vandersnick

“My name is Ashtyn Vandersnick. I am originally from The Quad Cities in Illinois. I attended Iowa State University and graduated with a Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education. I love anything Cyclone. Post graduation I accepted a job working as an elementary teacher in Nevada, IA. This brought me to Ankeny, IA for a year. After teaching for one year in Nevada, IA I accepted a job teaching 1st grade in Grinnell, IA. I relocated to Grinnell and that is where I currently live with my two cats Shadow and Pepper. I have had Shadow for over a year and I just recently rescued Pepper from a hosta.

I have one sister and a 2 year old nephew that I love spending time with, I enjoy doing anything outdoors and I am an avid reader. I am excited to be working for Jasper County Conservation because what I learn from here, I know that I will be able to bring it all back into my classroom!”



Above: Ashtyn Vandersnick will be working with JCCB staff this summer as a teacher extern.

Danielle Hoenig

“Hello, my name is Danielle Hoenig and I am excited to have the opportunity to join Jasper County Conservation this summer! I recently graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with a degree in Biology and I currently teach Earth & Space Science at SE Polk.

In my free time, I enjoy spending time horseback riding, going for bike rides, or walking my cat. This summer I am excited to get to know the community more as well as learn more about the resources that Jasper County Conservation has to offer. I cannot wait to meet all of you and start exploring!”



Above: Danielle Hoenig will be working with JCCB staff this summer as a teacher extern.

Jasper County Conservation Board
1030 W. 2nd St. S.
Newton, IA 50208

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Newton, Iowa
Permit No. 636



Jasper County Conservation Board

M - F 8:00 - 5:00 (641) 792-9780
email: conservation@co.jasper.ia.us
website: www.jaspercountyconservation.com

BOARD MEMBERS

Robyn Friedman Carol Kramer
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Keri Van Zante.....Director
Katie Cantu.....Naturalist
Greg Oldsen.....Naturalist
Jade Read.....Admin/EE Assistant
Dennis Cooling.....Park Officer
Jerry Ratliff.....Park Officer
Kent Dunsbergen.....Maintenance Technician
Ethan Vander Pol.....Maintenance Technician
Jacob Arrowood.....Maintenance Technician

A Big Thank You To....

Ina Heidemann for her donations to the educational program, Glenda Duffus for her Little Free Library donation, Bill Yeager for mowing at Uhlenhopp Arboretum, Gary Morris for mowing at Ashton Park, and Brad Van Zante and Kraig Holubar for providing UTV tours.

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, Uhlenhopp Arboretum, Reimer Refuge, Wagaman Mill and the Chichaqua Valley Recreation Trail. Call (641) 792-9780 to make your reservation.

Jasper County Conservation Board's programs are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, age and handicap. If anyone believes they have been subjected to discrimination, they may file a complaint with the Jasper County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, Washington, D.C. 29240