

the Oak Hickory

NEWS

LINN COUNTY CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT
Fall 2011 (August - November 2011)

Our Vision: To improve community through people, parks, trails and open space.

Our Mission: Protect natural resources; promote health and wellness; strengthen safety and security; support economic development; increase environmental awareness; provide outdoor recreational experiences; foster human development; and strengthen community image and sense of place.

Happy Trails to You

I know I'm going to date myself, but I remember watching the Roy Rogers Show. At the end of each episode, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans would sing, "Happy Trails to You." For me, this tune has come to signify trail use in general.

Whenever I use one of our local trails, I am struck by how pleasant trail users are and their overall demeanor. Most people acknowledge you with a smile and often a greeting. People using the trail seem to be in a genuinely good mood.

There has been a lot of research on the value of trails to people and communities. Quality of life is often cited when discussing the benefits of trails. More recently, the impact trails have on health, stress reduction and cost savings for medical treatment has been studied.

These studies have found that people who use trails are healthier and tend to have lower health-related expenses. I know in my case, I feel better when I exercise and being on a trail in a natural environment makes me feel more relaxed. I tend to forget about the problems that are bothering me - at least while I'm on the trail. Sometimes the quiet relaxation even allows my mind to develop a solution to some of those perplexing, persistent problems. Trails are indeed good recreational opportunities with outstanding health benefits for trail users.



Trails are also increasingly being promoted as alternate transportation facilities. Using trails to commute to work or run errands becomes more popular as fuel prices increase. In addition, many people like using trails for the environmental benefits of not having to start the car and drive to their destination.

The Linn County Conservation Board has been a longtime supporter and advocate for trails. In the late 1970s, trail supporters envisioned the Cedar Valley Nature Trail as the backbone for a multi-county trail system in Eastern Iowa. It took a lot of work and many meetings, but eventually the Cedar Valley Nature Trail became a reality. Today, trails

have become an accepted and valued amenity.

The Happy Trails song signaled the end of the Roy Rogers show; however, with trails, we are not even close to the end. Trails are now an expected part of most communities. The Linn County Conservation Board, in partnership with the Board of Supervisors and other organizations, continues to work toward connecting people with destinations in the community.

Currently, the Board is involved in several trail projects. The Hoover Trail connecting the Cedar River Trail in Cedar Rapids south to Ely opened late this spring. A few minor construction details

continued on next page



still need to be completed, but the Hoover Trail officially opened on June 3 at a grand opening ceremony in Ely.

Work will begin this summer on a trail in Pinicon Ridge Park. This project involves connecting the park to Central City's trails. Part of this project involves crossing the Wapsipinicon River on the Mary Lundby Memorial Bridge to connect the park campgrounds to the day-use side of the park. The trail and bridge should be open for use in 2012.

The Cedar Valley Nature Trail continues to receive attention. A project to hard surface the trail from County Home Road to Shultz Road south of Center Point is underway. Engineering work is being completed now with plans to start the work next year. Hard surfacing allows the trail to be used during times of the year when the trail would otherwise be too soft. The short-term goal is to surface the trail through Center Point.

The Board is also working with the city of Marion to connect the Grant Wood Trail with Marion's new trail system. This connection will require an underpass of Highway 13. Engineering work will be starting in the near future with construction anticipated next year.

There are many other trail projects that are in various stages of planning and discussion. The Linn County Trails Association is an ongoing, active partner in helping coordinate local governmental bodies to complete needed trail projects and connections throughout the county.

As more and more trails are developed, increasing numbers of people will have the chance to use and enjoy trails near their homes. So we urge you to take advantage of the warm weather to enjoy a local trail. We are sure it will make you feel relaxed and rejuvenated. Happy trails to you!

Dennis Goemaat, Deputy Director

Visit the Linn County website for more information about Linn County government and services at www.LinnCounty.org

Operation ReLeaf

We anticipate that Alliant Energy and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will again partner with the Linn County Conservation Board for an Operation ReLeaf tree distribution this fall. The goal of Operation ReLeaf is to promote tree-planting benefits, including energy efficiency, shade and species diversity. Interested Alliant Energy customers may purchase up to two trees for \$25 each. Alliant Energy pays the balance of the cost of the trees over \$25.

Application forms are usually available by late August for the fall distribution. Feel free to call us around that time, or contact us with your email address and we will notify you when the application forms have been released.

Matsell Range Hours

Just a reminder that the shooting range at Matsell Bridge Natural Area opens at 7:00 a.m. and closes on the following schedule:

August 1 (Daylight ST) thru Sept. 15 - 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 15 until Nov. 6 (DST ends) - 6:00 p.m.
Nov. 6 until March 1 - 4:30 p.m.

For more information about the range, go to LinnCountyParks.com select Parks, then Matsell Bridge, then Facilities, then Shooting range.



Moving Firewood Bugs Us

Please remember that the emerald ash borer has been found in northeast Iowa. This invasive insect kills ash trees and will be devastating if brought to this area. One of the ways for this insect to move is to hitch rides with people transporting firewood. Linn County Conservation sells firewood at its park as a service. Moving firewood risks moving the harmful pests that threaten Iowa's ash trees. Thank you for your cooperation. Remember, please do not move firewood. Burn it where you buy it.

Gifts are Appreciated

We truly appreciate the generous support we get from donors to your Linn County Conservation program. These donations allow us to do more for the park system than would otherwise be possible. So a big thanks to the following individuals, businesses and organizations for their financial support:

Robert & Karen Hoyt, Thomas Jantscher, Sheila Hahn, Rosemary Frederiksen, Llewellyn Balster, Janice Hikijii, Cindy Hermanson, Lily Wilson, Mary Taylor, Mary Bareis, Carolyn Cleveland, Patricia Layton, Kelly Franklin, Diane Rarick, Linn County Trails Association, Sheri Williams, Diane Handler (Robert M. Handler M.D. Ecology Education Fund), Brian Kristiansen, David Leeper in memory of Mabel Leeper, John Layton, Linn Area Photo Club, Larry Christy, Kimberly Blankenship, Rotary Club of Cedar Rapids, Frank Vanourney, Heather Akintola, John & Patricia Kerr, and John & Diana Kaeser.

We truly appreciate your financial support.

Tallgrass Prairie Exhibit at Wickiup Hill

There is still time to see the exhibit "Tallgrass Prairie – Past, Present and Future." This exhibit is on display at Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center until August 18.



The Tallgrass Prairie exhibit was produced by the Iowa Association of Naturalists with funds from the Resource Enhancement and Protection - Conservation Education Program (REAP - CEP), Living Roadway Trust Fund, Pheasants Forever, Iowa Trust for Local Conservation, the Tallgrass Prairie Center at UNI, and Truax Company.



All lodge, shelter, cabin, group camp and campsite reservations are made on-line. Go to LinnCountyParks.com for more information about your Linn County parks.

For more information about county parks elsewhere in Iowa, visit MyCountyParks.com and select the county you are interested in visiting.



Pinicon Ridge Watercraft Concession Closes in Fall

The watercraft concession at Pinicon Ridge Park will remain open on a daily basis until August 21. After that date, the concession will be open weekends only through October 2. Both shuttles and in-park rentals will be available for canoes, paddleboats and kayaks.

If you are interested in booking canoe trips, call the Pinicon Ridge Park office at (319) 438-6616 or the watercraft concession staff directly at (319) 438-1961 to make a reservation. We have 55 canoes available for shuttles, so we can accommodate large groups such as businesses, churches and other groups. Reservations require at least 24-hour notice.

Canoe shuttles: (reservations required)
2 hour trip - bus departs at 1 p.m. - \$20/canoe
4 hour trip - departs at 11 a.m. - \$25/canoe
6 hour trip - departs at 9 a.m. - \$30/canoe

Concession hours for the remainder of the season:

Weekday hours: until August 21 - 1 until 5 p.m.
Saturday, Sunday & holiday hours until October 2 - 11 a.m. until 6 p.m.

CONSERVATION CALENDAR

Pull out and save
for future reference

For information about any of the following programs or to schedule a presentation, please call Wickiup Hill Learning Center at 319-892-6485 or go to LinnCountyParks.com and select the "Events" tab. If you have special needs, contact us at least 48 hours in advance and we will attempt to accommodate you.

Note on Astronomy Sessions

Astronomy sessions are held at the Eastern Iowa Observatory and Learning Center (EIOLC) at Palisades-Dows Preserve. The observatory is located at 1365 Ivanhoe Road, two miles west of Highway 1, south of Mount Vernon. Astronomy programs are free, but donations are accepted.

August

13 - Saturday - The Sun

3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. at EIOLC

Carl Braken will explore the latest solar observing techniques and mission updates that take place everyday. We will also showcase modern user-friendly solar telescopes and safe observing practices. Weather permitting, direct solar observation will follow the presentation. Sunscreen, hats, sunglasses, and properly filtered telescopes are required! Visit Cedar-Astronomers.org for more details. Donations accepted.



17 - Wednesday

Science for Squirts: Incredible Insects!

10:00 - 11:00 a.m. at Wickiup Hill

Meet some 6 legged friends. Pre-registration is required at least 3 days before the program date. Ages 3-5 year olds. Register by calling 892-6485. Cost is \$2/child.

19-Friday

Toddler Toadstools: Incredible Insects!

10 - 11 a.m. at Morgan Creek Park Arboretum

Meet some 6 legged friends. Pre-registration is required at least 3 days before the program date. Ages 1-4 year olds. Register by calling 892-6485. Cost is \$2/child.

24 - Wednesday - Wandering Adventure Club
for Parent and Child

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. at Wickiup Hill

As a parent, have you wondered how to get your child out into nature – what to do, where to go, how to channel a child's interest and enthusiasm, and how to have a great time doing so? A new club is being formed to help you answer some of your questions and to present some opportunities to get outside and explore nature together with your child ages 2-7. We plan to use Wickiup as a base for this club and to branch out to other parks and areas over time. This first meeting will be to engage and inform parents about our ideas and to network on the direction we'd like to take this club. We will set up one weekend program a month and one weekday program a month to see what works best for the club. For more information call Chuck at 892-6485.

27 - Saturday - Edwin Hubble & the Big Bang
8:00 p.m. at EIOLC

U of I Professor Phil Kaaret will present a program about Edwin Hubble, a mid-westerner who made the first measurements of the distances to galaxies. Hubble found that galaxies are moving away from us with more distant galaxies moving away faster. Viewing will follow the presentation. Visit CAA website at Cedar-Astronomers.org for more details. Donations accepted.

29, 30, & 31 - Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday
Hunter Education Class Series

6:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. at Wickiup Hill

If you want to obtain an Iowa hunting license and you were born after January 1, 1972, it's mandatory that you complete hunter education training. The class is free as the Iowa Department of Natural Resources provides all course materials. Attendance at all three classes is necessary to receive certification. Participants must be 12 years old to use their certificates. To register for the class go to <https://www.iowadnr.gov/training/> and search for Linn County classes – note that an adult will need an e-mail address to register through this system.

September

1 - Thursday - Heirloom Tomato Taste Testing
6:30p.m. at Wickiup Hill

Are you a tomato fan turned off by today's waxy, bland tomatoes? You get to be the judge as you taste some delicious recipes made from over 10 varieties of the best heirloom tomatoes. Learn about these old-time fruits with colorful names like Hillbilly, Slanders and the sweet Orange Cherry. All varieties are at least 50 years old or older. Get some growing tips for next year too! Call 892-6485 to reserve a spot! Cost is \$2.50/adult, \$1/child 16 and under, or \$5/family.

6 - Tuesday

Monarch Migration and Tagging
5:30p.m. - 7:00p.m. at Wickiup Hill

Come and participate in tagging monarchs collected at Wickiup Hill. We will place an I.D. tag on the butterflies' wings and then release them. Unlike most other insects in temperate climates, monarch butterflies cannot survive a long, cold winter. Instead, they spend the winter in roosting spots in Mexican mountains; will our tagged monarchs make it to Mexico? Learn about the ecology of these insects and their winter roosting sites. Cost is \$2.50/adult, \$1/child 16 and under or \$5/family.

7 - Wednesday

Science for Squirts: Marvelous Monarchs!

10:00 - 11:00 a.m. at Wickiup Hill

Try and catch me! Pre-registration is required at least 3 days before the program date. Ages 3-5 year olds. Register by calling 892-6485. Cost is \$2/child.

9 - Friday

Toddler Toadstools: Marvelous Monarchs!

10 - 11 a.m. at Morgan Creek Park Arboretum
Try and catch me! Pre-registration is required at least 3 days before the program date. Ages 1-4 year olds. Register by calling 892-6485. Cost is \$2/child.

10 - Saturday - Fall Bird Banding

9:00 a.m. - Noon at Wickiup Hill

The bird banders never know which unusual birds they will catch while working the nets. Rob Bradley will again be banding birds caught at Wickiup Hill. Visitors may be surprised with special views of summer birds including many types of woodpeckers, tropical migrants and finches. Cost is \$2.50/adult, \$1/child 16 and under, or \$5/family.

24 - Saturday - 350.org Bike Ride
Moving Planet is a worldwide rally to demand solutions to the climate crisis. Come on bike, on skates, on a board, or just on foot. Come with your neighbors and your friends, your family and your co-workers. Get ready to be a part of something HUGE. A local event is being planned right here in Cedar Rapids, check us out on facebook or at <http://www.moving-planet.org/> for more details as the event gets closer.



National Public Lands Day

24 - Saturday - National Public Lands Day

9:00 a.m. at Squaw Creek Park

Join park staff and volunteers as we plant trees at Squaw Creek Park. We will meet at the Prairie Oak Lodge parking area and break up into work groups. We will work until about noon to plant and mulch 60 trees. National Public Lands Day is a nation-wide celebration of publicly-owned property and an opportunity to get involved by helping at your local park.

24 - Saturday - Juno: A Mission to Jupiter

7:30p.m. at EIOLC

Dr. William Kurth will discuss the Juno mission to Jupiter set to launch in August 2011. Visit Cedar-Astronomers.org for more details. Donations accepted.

28 - Wednesday - Creek Study and You

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at Bever Park - Cedar Rapids

Get your hands and feet wet as we dip into creek study.

Explore what's in the mud; learn about plant and critter life and discover techniques of casting a fishing pole.

Sponsored by Linn CCD and Cedar Rapids Park and Rec.

This is an early out day for Cedar Rapids Schools so send your student over to keep learning after school lets out. Register at the Cedar Rapids Ambroz Recreation Center or by calling 286-5731 soon as registration is limited. Registration is \$10 for Cedar Rapids residents and \$12 for non-residents. Students should dress in clothing and shoes that can get muddy.





October

1 - Saturday

Mushroom Hike, Potluck & Program

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Wickiup Hill

Join Prairie States Mushroom Club members as they seek, photograph, collect, and identify mushrooms found at Wickiup Hill.

Bring a dish to share for the noon potluck, which will feature mushrooms and other wild foods. Door prizes will be given away.



There will be a PowerPoint program on mushrooms after lunch. Stay, if you wish, for the annual meeting of the PSMC that follows. Donations accepted.

1 - Saturday - Journey to Freedom

6:00 p.m. at Wickiup Hill

Imagine you are a Freedom Seeker - a runaway slave traveling Iowa's Underground Railroad in 1853. On this journey, you'll encounter slave catchers, farmers, and bounty hunters while trying to navigate your way to Canada. Who can you trust? Will your group make it to freedom? Or will you be captured and sent back into slavery? Let the African American Museum of Iowa and Wickiup Hill take you back in time to experience the journey's perils and triumphs in this interactive living-history event. Hikes will last approximately 90 minutes. Please wear comfortable shoes, all-weather clothes, and be prepared to hike approximately 2 miles on uneven terrain. Advance registration is required and space is limited, so contact education@blackiowa.org or 319-862-2101 ext. 22 today.

12- Wednesday - Science for Squirts: Folly Fall!

10:00-11:00 a.m. at Wickiup Hill

Time for a fun fall hike for 3 - 5 year olds. Registration is required at least 3 days before the program date by calling 892-6485. Cost is \$2/child.

21- Friday - Toddler Toadstools: Folly Fall!

10 - 11 a.m. at Morgan Creek Park Arboretum

Time for a fun fall hike for 1 - 4 year olds. Registration is required at least 3 days before the program by calling 892-6485. Cost is \$2/child.

22 - Saturday - Autumn Celestial Wonders

7:30p.m. - EIOLC

Professor McEntaffer will examine a variety of celestial objects to give the audience an understanding of the physical processes that occur in the objects to be observed later in the night. These objects range from planets to nebulae to star clusters of various sizes to galaxies and more. The science of astronomy can obtain a surprising amount of information on these sources by capturing the mere trickle of light coming to us from as much as millions of light years away. Visit the Cedar Amateur Astronomers website at Cedar-Astronomers.org for more details. Donations accepted.

29 - Saturday - Great Pumpkin Atlatl Hunt

1:00 - 4:00 p.m. at Wickiup Hill

Come and try your hand at using an ancient hunting tool, the spear thrower. Equipment and instruction cheerfully provided. Watch as college teams compete to gain the highest team score. For more information contact Gail Barels at 892-6485.

November

5 - Saturday - Rod Builders Workshop

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Wickiup Hill

Come and learn about rodbuilding with many masters of the art from throughout the Midwest. We are arranging a variety of topics to be covered including guide placement systems, tools of the trade and much more. The meeting is free to anyone interested in rodbuilding from beginners to professionals. All will leave with knowledge to produce improved custom fishing rods. We will take a donation to cover food expenses. Drawings for door prizes will be held throughout the day. For more information or directions please contact Chuck at 892-6485.

5 - Saturday

Environmental Film Festival at Coe College
Exact place and times to be announced.

One of the films to be shown will be Green Fire, the first full-length, high-definition documentary film ever made about legendary environmentalist and Iowa native Aldo Leopold. Green Fire highlights Leopold's extraordinary career, tracing how he shaped and influenced the modern environmental movement. Leopold remains relevant today, inspiring projects all over the country that connect people and land. The film schedule and location will be posted online at LinnCountyParks.com closer to the date.

16-Wed. Science for Squirts: Turkey Talk!
10:00-11:00 a.m. at Wickiup Hill
Gobble gobble! Learn a new song about Tom the Turkey and his turkey family! Pre-registration is required at least 3 days before the program date. Ages 3-5 year olds. Register by calling 892-6485. Cost is \$2/child.

17 - Thursday - Gourd Ornaments
6:00 - 9:00p.m. at Wickiup Hill
Local gourd artist Sharon Foster will be teaching a class on how to take small, ordinary hard-shell gourds and turn them into beautiful, one-of-a-kind Christmas ornaments. Sharon has been a member of the Iowa Gourd Society and the American Gourd Society for 7 years. She now serves as the Iowa Gourd Society Editor, Instructor & Program Coordinator. Each participant will complete one Christmas ornament during class and will take home a kit to complete 2 more ornaments at their leisure. Pre-register by November 1, 2011. Cost of class \$20.00. Go to LinnCountyParks.com "Events" to view example decorations. Due to the whimsy of Mother Nature, no two gourds are alike and participants may not receive gourds shaped like the picture.

18 - Fri. - Toddler Toadstools: Turkey Talk!
10:00-11:00 a.m. at Wickiup Hill
Gobble gobble! Learn a new song about Tom the Turkey and his turkey family! Pre-registration is required at least 3 days before the program date. Ages 1-4 year olds. Register by calling 892-6485. Cost is \$2/child. Note: This Toadstool program will be held at Wickiup Hill.

19 - Saturday
The Life & Work of Christiaan Huygens
7:30p.m. - EIOLC
Christiaan Huygens is a 17th century scientist known for his theory on the propagation of light and his discovery of Saturn's rings. Visit the Cedar Amateur Astronomers website at Cedar-Astronomers.org for more details. Donations accepted.

29 - Tuesday
Summer Field School Discoveries
7:00 p.m. at Wickiup Hill
Lynn Alex and John Doershuk, Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA), will discuss details of the joint Iowa Archeological Society/OSA 2011 summer archaeological project at Wickiup Hill including results of testing at 13LN85 and the Project Archaeology Workshop. Donations accepted.

Squaw Creek Loop A Opens

The new camping loop at Squaw Creek Park opened June 16. Early use has been good as people try the new sites. In fact, all campsites were reserved for the 4th of July weekend. The new campsites feature 50 amp electrical service, water and most have sewer connections.

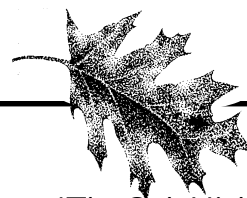
Reservations:

- 1) accepted from April 15 - October 15.
 - 2) must be at least 3 days prior to arrival and up to one year in advance.
 - 3) must be made through LinnCountyParks.com website.
- Note: Campsites that are not reserved may be used on a first-come-first-served basis.

The base camping fees in the new loop are: \$22 for non-sewer sites and \$25 for sewer sites. \$5 per night will be added to this fee for reservations. Discount camping coupons are not accepted in the new camping loop.



Recently opened A-Loop at Squaw Creek Park



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- Mike Wyrick Secretary
- Cindy Burke Member
- George Kanz Member

The Conservation Board usually meets the fourth Monday of each month at 4:00 PM at 1890 County Home Road. Meeting are open to the public.

- Linn County Conservation Department •
- Administrative and Office Staff
- Dan Biechler Director
- Dennis Goemaat Deputy Director
- Randy Burke Planner
- Vacant Community Outreach Manager
- Vicke Vail Office Staff
- John Layton..... Office Staff
- Sarah Wendt..... Office Staff
- Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center Staff
- Gail Barels.....Conservation Education
- Jenny Corbett.....Conservation Education
- Chuck Ungs.....Conservation Education

- Linn County Conservation Field Staff •
- North Cedar District
- Steve Swenson Resource Manager
- Shaun Reilly Assistant Resource Manager
- Dawn Zimpfer Resource Technician
- Gary Novotny Resource Technician
- South Cedar District
- Jason Baumann Resource Manager
- Joe Reu Assistant Resource Manager
- Christine Burian Resource Technician
- Wapsipinicon District
- Aaron Batchelder..... Resource Manager
- Steve Deaver..... Assistant Resource Manager
- Josh Volz.....Resource Technician
- Nathan Allen Resource Technician
- Natural Resources Management
- Dana Kellogg.....Natural Resource Specialist
- Doug KuehlResource Technician
- Tony Nemmers..... Resource Technician
- Services Staff
- John Scott Operations Manager
- Tom Blythe..... Mechanic
- Mick Gunderson..... Carpenter
- Dave Kephart.....Carpenter
- Bill Perrin Operations Technician
- Mike Shoop..... Equipment Operator
- Charles Bogard..... Equipment Operator

The Linn County Conservation Board intends to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act and all other local, state and federal laws pertaining to equal treatment. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability, they may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Linn County Conservation Board or the office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.