



# The Jasper County Jewel

Jasper County Conservation Board Quarterly Newsletter Fall 2018

## Sugar Shack Coming Soon!

Thanks to a grant award in the amount of \$5,880 made possible by the Jasper Community Foundation, a new sugar shack will be built at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve! For those who do not know, a sugar shack is simply a building that holds an evaporator pan used to boil down maple sap, and has holding tanks to store fresh sap.

Every year, the Jasper County Conservation Department collects maple sap from the silver maple trees located at the east access of Jacob Krumm Preserve. The sap is boiled down into maple syrup which is used during pioneer field trips with the local third and fourth grade classes at Wagaman Mill in Lynnville.

The sugar shack and evaporator will allow us to process sap faster while giving the public and school groups an opportunity to learn how maple syrup is made first-hand. Construction is set to begin this fall and should be completed before next year's maple run.



*Above:* Dan Skokam presents Greg Oldsen with a check from the Jasper Community Foundation. The money will be used to build a sugar shack at Krumm Preserve.

## Mariposa Park Update

The Lake Restoration Project at Mariposa has made quite an impact on the look of our beloved park! So much activity has been accomplished already, with still more to go.

Lefler Dirt Works was initially given a September deadline for the project, but after adding the removal of additional sediment from the lake bed and from the west pond, the schedule has been pushed back to at least the end of 2018. Original plans called for the removal of 155,000 cubic yards of sediment, but economical bid prices have allowed for an additional 75,000 cubic yards to be added to the contract, totaling 230,000 cubic yards!

Visualizing this amount of earthwork can be difficult, but equating this number to over 19,000 single axle dump truck loads is amazing! Stop by this fall and watch the progress, as they install new concrete principal spillways, a fishing jetty, wetland, boat ramp and fish habitat!



*Above:* There will be over 19,000 of these dump truck loads of sediment hauled out of Mariposa Lake. Photo taken by Bill Yeager.

### A Summer of Fun

Kids participating in Jasper County Conservation Board's summer camps had a lot in store for them this year. A generous contribution from Newton Noon Kiwanis allowed each participating child to receive a t-shirt appropriately imprinted with the summer camp theme: "The Wild is Waiting". In addition, the funding helped Conservation staff to create camps focusing on cooking wild edible foods, archery, wildlife identification, watersports, art projects, and much more! All of the camps quickly overflowed with participants when the registration opened in March. Over 300 campers, ages 5 to 16, have spent their summer with Conservation staff being "wild" in 14 different camps that spanned 22 days!

Some of the more popular activities included fishing, star gazing, blacklight tracking, painting on canvas, canoeing, kayaking, paddle boarding, racing down the giant slip-and-slide, taking nature photos and transferring them onto a natural wood frame, outdoor cooking, games, archery, and so much more.

We all had so much fun this summer! A HUGE thank you to the Newton Noon Kiwanis from Jasper County Conservation and summer camp participants for this wonderful learning opportunity! Please contact naturalists Katie or Greg if you have any questions about our summer programming. We have set Monday, March 25, 2019, as our summer camp registration opener for the 2019 season.



### Congratulations Junior Naturalists!

Keiarra and Alayzha Hicks of Altoona, and Kyra, Kaylin and Nathan Hauber of Newton went above and beyond this summer to earn their Iowa Junior Naturalist badge and certificate.

The Junior Naturalist program is offered every year for kids, ages 6-12, to encourage them to experience (and share with adults) programs offered by local County Conservation Boards, the Iowa DNR, local libraries and nature centers, YMCA camps, 4H, or any other programs with a nature theme. In addition, it encourages participants to work on independent activities.

The requirements to earn a Junior Naturalist award are to attend three public programs and complete two independent activities, including reading a nature book, fishing, hunting, camping, biking, hiking, etc. Keiarra, Alayzha, Kyra, Kaylin and Nathan all attended summer camps offered by JCCB and reported about their own wildlife observation experiences.

For more information about Junior Naturalists, please contact Katie Cantu at the JCCB office.



Above: Alayzha and Keiarra Hicks completed the 2018 Iowa Junior Naturalist program and earned the Wild Rose Badge.

Thank you Newton Kiwanis for sponsoring summer camps!



## Off the Beaten Path Fall Fest

**Saturday, September 29, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM**  
**Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve**

Registration for the 14th 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 registration forms and directions to Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve, is at [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com) and on Jasper County Conservation's Facebook page. All registered runners and walkers will receive a long-sleeve t-shirt and an all-you-can-eat pancake and sausage brunch!

Pancakes will be served to the public by the Grinnell Fire Department starting at 10:00AM for \$7/plate. This will be the kick-off for our annual Fall Festival, which will feature wagon rides, prairie maze, zombie archery shoot, pioneer photo booth, face painting, apple cider, and music by Review Mirror. Please bring the whole family, your appetites, and lawn chairs. Admission for the activities is \$5.00; kids 3 and under are free. With each paid admission, participants will receive a ticket to enter a drawing for a kayak!



Proceeds from the trail race and Fall Festival will benefit Jasper Conservation Connection.

## Wanted: Apples & Fall Decorations

At our Fall Festival, volunteers will be demonstrating how apple cider is pressed and give out free samples of the sweet refreshment. Many bushels of apples are needed to provide for the large crowd expected on Saturday, September 29 at Krumm Preserve. If you have apples to spare, please contact us at (641) 792-9780. We will have a drop off area at our office building in the Jasper County Annex/Armory, 1030 W. 2nd St. S. in Newton. JCCB is also looking for donations of small pumpkin gourds that children can decorate and take home.

We are also planning some additional night time fun at the Halloween Hike this year. If you have outdoor fall or Halloween decorations that you don't want anymore, please let us know! The Halloween Hike will be Friday, October 26 at the Newton Izaak Walton League.

## Older, Wiser, Livelier Seniors (OWLS)

**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 noted otherwise.

### **Sept. 12—From Bees to Bottle, Making Mead**

Wayne and Michelle Spohnheimer, owners of Buzzed Bee Meadery in Melbourne, Iowa, will talk about making mead and how their hobby turned into a growing business. As the oldest fermented beverage, mead is making a comeback and Buzzed Bee is the first exclusive mead producer in the state.



### **Oct. 10—Saving the Courthouse Clock**

In the summer of 2018 the famed clock in the tower of Jasper County's courthouse was restarted and rededicated. Jasper County's Director of Maintenance, Adam Sparks, will talk about how he made that happen.

### **Nov. 14—Keep Iowa Beautiful**

In 2014 Jasper County made the decision to join the Keep Iowa Beautiful Hometown Pride program. This was a five year commitment, and entailed the hiring of Jeff Davidson as Community Coach to work with the 9 largest communities in Jasper County. Hear Jeff talk about how the Hometown Pride program operates, and the community beautification, community development and economic development activities which have been pursued during the first 3 years.



### **Dec. 12—Evergreen Centerpieces**

Make your own fresh evergreen centerpiece to take home in this hands-on, holiday program! Pre-registration is required for this program.



## The 13th Annual Halloween Hike

Jasper Your Friendly Host  
presents

## Nature's Glow Show

**Friday, October 26, 6:00 PM**  
**NEW LOCATION! Newton**  
**Izaak Walton League**



This is a fun and educational, *not* scary, event featuring skits performed by Newton Community Theatre actors and members of Jasper Conservation Connection. Hikers will step into a radio show, meeting various “glowing” characters along the trail and listening to some familiar and fun songs that span over the decades!

Hour-long hikes will begin at 6:00 PM and will depart every 15 minutes. Each time slot can accommodate around 25 hikers. The last hike will begin at 8:00 PM. Families with young children are encouraged to come earlier in the evening.

The hikes will end with the very popular black-light animal tracking, glow in the dark face painting, and stargazing with the Des Moines Astronomical Society. Participants will also be able to decorate a pumpkin gourd, roast marshmallows and hotdogs while enjoying music by the fire, and take wagon rides on the trail.

The cost is \$3.00 per person. Children under age 3 are admitted free. Youth under age 12 must be accompanied by an adult.



## Youth Mentored Hunt

The Jasper County Pheasants Forever Chapter will be offering a youth mentored hunt on October 13, for youth 12 to 16 years old, who have successfully completed the Hunter Education course. Pheasants Forever is offering this FREE event at the former Wild Feather Hunt Club in Baxter to allow young adults the opportunity to take part in a safe and successful pheasant hunt.

The day will include safety and ethics training, a pheasant hunt, and lunch. All participants will receive a free youth Pheasants Forever hat and hunting vest. Group size is limited to 12 and it typically fills up quickly, so please register early! Visit [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com) and download an application, or an application may be requested at the Jasper County Conservation Office.

## Trapping Basics

**Saturday, October 20 and Sunday, October 21**  
**Reimer Refuge, Kellogg**

This event is free and open to ages 12-16 years old who have successfully completed hunter education. Prior trapping experience is not needed to attend this event. Several instructors will present on topics listed below:

- Basic trapping skills/ethics
- Tools on the trap line
- Fur preparation

Group size is limited to the first 12 youth who register for the event. Registration forms are at [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com).

## Programs at Ashton Observatory

The Ashton Observatory telescopes will be open for public programs through the end of October on Saturday nights at 8:00pm. There will be talks given in the observatory, followed by observing through the telescopes.

The telescopes will be operated by the Des Moines Astronomical Society (DMAS). For more information, check out their website at [www.dmastronomy.com](http://www.dmastronomy.com).

Several DMAS members will be at our Halloween Hike on October 26th with their telescopes, sharing views of the night sky.

## My Conservation Crew Experience

By Rachel Rhoads

*“What you do makes a difference, you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”*

-author Jane Goodall, anthropologist and primatologist

This summer I got the opportunity to be a part of the first annual Jasper County Youth Conservation Crew. I had heard about the opportunity through our environmental club at the high school and knew it was something I wanted to be a part of. While I did not anticipate the hours of sweat and heat that Fridays in June brought, I so greatly enjoyed the time I had to make a difference at Mariposa Park.

During the time working at Mariposa I was the oldest youth by at least 5 years but I got to know some really great kids and work with amazing conservation staff members. It was so great to be in a community that wants to make a difference for the environment and working for the betterment of our town. It was rewarding to watch a butterfly garden transform from a weed overtaken area to a beautiful landscape.

Our second project alongside the butterfly garden was to clear out a path from the shelter down toward the wetland at Mariposa and while we cannot see the finished product we could see that we made a difference and I can only imagine how great it will look.

Being a part of the Mariposa conservation crew this summer was an opportunity to make a difference outside of myself whether I saw the completed project or not. I'm not going to lie and say it wasn't hard work—because it was. However, when you have a purpose in the hard work it is so worth it! We get to decide what kind of difference we make in the community and it is so rewarding to know the difference you make, is a positive one.

Being a part of the conservation crew was such an enjoyably rewarding experience and I hope it continues to grow in the following years!



## 2018 Teacher Extern Experience

Jasper County Conservation had two teacher externs working with us on EE programming. Iowa STEM Teacher Externships, a program of the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council, is supported through state-appropriated funds and the Iowa DNR 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 Jasper County externs were phenomenal! Here is a summary of the summer from one of our externs, Angie Richards:

Hi, I'm Angie Richards and I'm a high school science teacher at Lynnville-Sully Community School District. This spring, I got an email about an opportunity through Iowa STEM teacher externships. I thought it sounded like a fun experience, so I decided to apply. I was lucky to be placed with Jasper County Conservation. The conservation position brought my two favorite things together- kids and nature!!

There were several things that I worked on this summer. My favorite was helping with the interesting day camps. The naturalists, Katie and Greg, do an exceptional job of getting kids involved with nature and allowing them the freedom to explore. They were so knowledgeable and fun! I enjoyed creating and leading my own program on space. I'm hopeful that I can do it again next summer, possibly on forensics!

Co-extern Carly Sis and I also went through the programs that are offered by JCCB for schools. We helped identify science standards in each program. Then we created an easy way for teachers to view the programs and standards through a spreadsheet. We are hoping that more teachers take advantage of the amazing programs that JCCB offers! We also added some new high school units focusing on ecology, water testing, grant writing and environmental issues.

It was an awesome summer filled with lots of fun, learning, and cool experiences.

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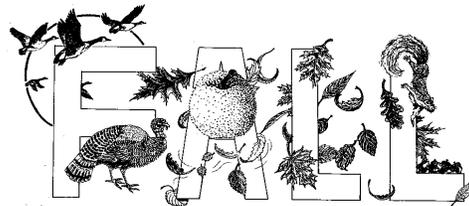
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**A Big Thank You To....**

Gordon Brand for donating a large insect collection, DMAS for hosting Junior Naturalist Camp at Ashton Observatory, volunteer instructors who taught hunter education, and Newton Noon Kiwanis for sponsoring our summer camp programs.

**Thank you!!**



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