

IOWA'S COUNTY CONSERVATION SYSTEM NOVEMBER

NEWSLETTER 2023

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IOWA NATURE SUMMIT

D A T E S

November 30th
District I Meeting
Marshall County

December 13th
District III meeting
Pocahontas County

December 14th
District V Meeting
Washington
County

December 20th
District VI Meeting
Linn County

January 12th- 13th
REAP Congress
Des Moines.

January 23rd-25th
Winterfest 2024
Hyatt Regency
Coralville, IA

The First Ever Iowa Nature Summit was held this month at Drake University, it was an organized gathering of any and all agencies, groups, and individuals who care for Nature to share thoughts and inspire collective efforts for advocacy. The event was very well attended with representation from all types of folks from across Iowa. The agenda was packed full and it focused on Nature's role in Iowa through a variety of lenses.

Topics included Nature and Economic Development, Integrating Nature in Education, Nature's Place in Agriculture, Nature and Community, Nature's Place in Public Health, Nature and History, Nature's Role in Addressing Climate Change, and finally Nature's place in Iowa's future.

It was exciting to see how many people from different walks of life personally and professionally found themselves connected by nature and how each of these topics somewhat unexpectedly, tied right into our mission as County Conservation Boards. We are easily caught up in focusing on one aspect of what we do, each county has a slightly different focus be it education, campgrounds, cabins, trails, or wildlife but, it is invigorating to remember that there is a potential partner at every turn, a new project waiting to find a footing.

More and more people are putting together or maybe remembering the connections between Nature, our health, and overall wellbeing not just as individuals but, as a State. It was so easy to see that County Conservation in Iowa is the perfect conduit to connect these ideas and energy to tangible results that benefit our State in so many ways.

Thanks To Dr. Neil Hamilton, The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, and all who made the event possible. This was definitely a strong step forward for Nature in Iowa! We look forward to future events and collaboration with Iowa's Nature Supporters!



ICCS BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S CHANGES

ICCS Welcomes Eastern Region Representative Cathy Ziglar- Cathy has served as a Board member on the Des Moines County Conservation Board for the past 12 years. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Science Education, a Masters of Science in Biology and works as a Biological Science Instructor at Southeastern Community College. Cathy has served and volunteered on various boards like the Leopold Landscape Alliance, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.



Cathy and her husband live on a small acreage in rural Des Moines county, in their spare time they enjoy woodworking, fishing, feeding the birds, and volunteering for conservation minded projects.

AFIRM Representative Steps Down from ICCS

AFIRM (Association for Integrated Roadside Managers) representative Blake Gamm of Fayette CCB has left the CCB system to pursue a bright opportunity working in the family business. We wish Blake all the best in his new endeavor! **ICCS hopes to find a replacement for the Board of Director's soon.** The only requirements are that the representative is a CCB employee and a member of AFIRM. **Please contact ICCS if you are interested IACCB@mycountyparks.org**

CURT WEISS RETIRES AFTER 43 YEARS OF SERVICE

Weiss grew up in Burlington Iowa hunting, trapping, fishing, and exploring the woodlands and fields along Flint Creek. He later graduated from Iowa State University with a bachelor's degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology. In 1980, Weiss began work as a Park Attendant for Muscatine County Conservation. Curt remembers his first day of work, "We were working in the wildlife area at Saulsbury, running a chainsaw all day!"

In 1982, the Board appointed Curt as a peace officer and he attended the ILEA. He became a Park Ranger, a year later, he added Naturalist to his job title. In 1988, Weiss became the Director for Muscatine County Conservation. A title he has held for the past 35 years.

"I love my job and enjoy coming to work every day. I'm really going to miss it when I retire!" One of the projects Curt is most proud of is the creation of Discovery Park and the Environmental Learning Center (ELC). "The best day of my career was the day we opened the Environmental Learning Center." The project took several years to complete, but it was worth it! Conservation isn't a career people choose for the money; the real reason people choose to work in conservation is because they love it. **Because deep down, they know they are leaving the world a little better than they found it!"**

Weiss has certainly done that and has served as a mentor to many in the industry. His advice to future generations is to attend and be involved with Statewide meetings and organizations so you can make the most of your career and make lifelong friends and connections.



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REGISTER FOR WINTERFEST NOW! Employees, Sponsors, and Vendors!

IACCBE Winterfest Committee has provided another great training opportunity with a wide variety of high quality presenters and speakers.

We already have 171 employee registrations and 13 vendors along with several sponsors. Hurry up, get rooms and get registered Today!

ALL WINTERFEST INFORMATION HERE:

<https://www.mycountyparks.org/conferences.html>



Preferred Vendors and Sponsors can complete their 2024 online membership and find sponsorship opportunities HERE: **<https://www.mycountyparks.com/Org-Event/80/WIINTERFEST-2024-VENDOR-REGISTRATION.aspx>** We have done our best to streamline this process for you all and truly appreciate your partnership and continued support! Please Contact Adam Shirley iaccb@mycountyparks.org with any questions.

POWESHIEK CCB Welcomes Tylor Nelson As New Director

Tylor is from Ankeny and is a Hawkeye Community College and Upper Iowa University graduate with a degree in Conservation and Natural Resource Management. He has been in the CCB system for almost six years as the full-time Natural Resource Manager in Guthrie County and did three years as a seasonal. He has also held positions with Polk County, AmeriCorps, and the Iowa DNR.

“My passion for the outdoors has led me in my career path, finding a core of values and ethics in our environment. I came into my current position in Poweshiek County as Conservation Director with the goal of providing recreational opportunities to the public and community. Ensuring there are natural environments left, for future generations to enjoy and recreate in is important and there is so much to learn about life in our ecosystems. I spend most of my free time in the outdoors and I think there’s a respect owed to what sustains and provides for us. Currently, a watershed renovation project is at the top of my priority list, with this comes maintaining water quality; management of woodland, prairie, and wetland ecosystems. I hope to impact future generations by supporting outdoor youth programs in quality environments.”



“Having said that, I spend a lot of personal time hunting. I have a black lab that also likes to hunt. If we’re not hunting, we’re usually getting ready to go hunting. I probably take on more projects than I should, but it keeps me off the couch and busy. I have taken to some more sustainable living practices, and I find a lot of satisfaction in reducing my carbon footprint.”

Curtis Behrens Takes Over As Director at TAMA CCB



Curtis grew up around the Chicago suburbs before attending Iowa State University, for Wildlife Ecology and Interpretation of Natural Resources. “I thought I was headed in the direction of Naturalist or Wildlife Rehabber after working seasonally for Story County Conservation and the ISU Wildlife Clinic until I found myself in prairie and wetland restoration work back Chicago which I equally loved. I’ve always enjoyed building and really enjoy public outreach and figured there was some balance of all those things for me somewhere. I moved back to Iowa to try and get my foot back in the door within the County Parks system and spent the last four years at Jones County Conservation as their Wildlife Manager.”

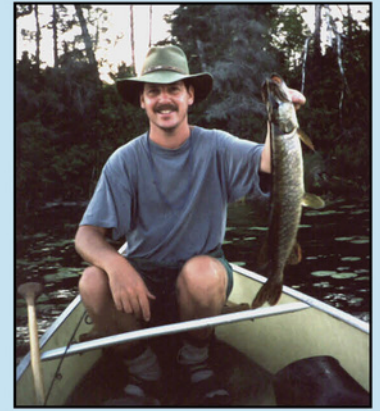
“My particular goals at Tama County Conservation are to push our endeavors more strongly towards that of wildlife habitat management. The directors prior to me did a great job fostering some amazing recreational areas within our big parks, with a large focus on campgrounds, trails and education. I’d like to see us grow into including more prairie, wetland, and forest management while maintaining our greatest public attractions like the recently reconstructed lake at Otter Creek Park. When I’m not wearing my work hat, I’m spending time with my two daughters on various outdoor adventures. I love kayaking, water and snow sports, and hiking; especially if I’m going hiking to look for insects and wildflowers. And in the meantime, I’m dragging my girls along with in the hopes of turning them into little science nerds as well.”



It's about that time... Help celebrate the retirement of

Dan Cohen

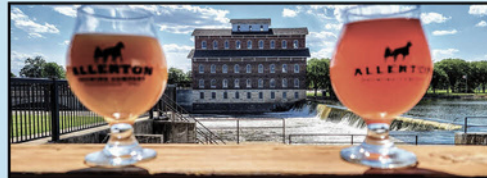
38 years with Buchanan
County Conservation Board!



Friday, December 15

- Noon to 4 p.m.,
Fontana Park Nature Center, 1883 125th St., Hazleton
- 4-7 p.m. at Allerton Brewery
110 1st St East, Independence
(They also serve pizza)

Questions - call 319-636-2617



***Attend when
and where
you can!
no need to
RSVP***

ICCS- UPCOMING SURVEY AND DATA COLLECTION

With the legislative session just around the corner, ICCS is gearing up for another year of advocacy. Our job is to provide policy makers with the information they need to make informed decisions. The first step is to make sure we have the most recent and most compelling data we can get. Directors can expect to see a new survey this month with a wide variety of questions about their land management operations as well as their Boards policy towards public and private lands in your county. We want data that connects CCB's to their local communities. We will also be pulling Data from then new **Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)** as soon as it becomes available, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, and other useful sources as they become available.

The second step will be taking that data, compiling it and distributing it back to each county in a form that can be readily used to advocate on the local level. Folks in our field tend to readily accept solid data but that is not the case with policy makers. Most have little time or trust in statistics and have a difficult time digesting or remembering them on their own.

We continue to hear that the best way to advocate is to use the facts and data we have, to tell a powerful story. Our goal is to make that as easy as possible by putting the pieces together for you to use in a way that fits your local story. Thanks in advance for your participation!

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EMAIL UPDATE REMINDER- DO IT TODAY! Please!

With so many staff and Board Member changes going on it is critical that you go into mycountyparks.com and update current staff and board member email info. Please remove any old addresses that are no longer active. Thank You! ICCS will be finalizing the new list Monday, December 4th.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Jackson County - Naturalist | 5. Wapello County - Conservation Technician |
| 2. Woodbury County - Resource Technician | 6. Jones County - Natural Resource Manager |
| 3. Woodbury County - Part-Time Volunteer Coordinator/Receptionist | 7. Scott County - Park Ranger |
| 4. Polk County - Assistant Naturalist | 8. Wapello County - Museum Staff |
| | 9. Hamilton County - Park Ranger |

SEASONAL POSITIONS ON WEBSITE!!

<https://www.mycountyparks.com/Jobs/Default.aspx>

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