

WINTERFEST 2026

IOWA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD EMPLOYEES

JANUARY 27-29, 2026

Hyatt Regency Coralville Hotel &
Conference Center

300 East 9th Street, Coralville, IA 52241



FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Happy 54th Winterfest Fellow IACCBE Members!

On behalf of the IACCBE Winterfest Planning Committee, I am pleased to invite you to the 54th Annual Winterfest. This year's event will again be held at the Hyatt Regency Coralville Hotel and Conference Center from January 27th - 29th, 2026.

We are excited to announce our two top-notch keynote speakers for the event! First we have Chris Lee, one of our own, as well as an Organizational Ecologist and co-host of the Parks and Restoration Podcast. Second, we have Billy Molls, an Alaskan big-game guide and author of the Modern Day Mountain Man documentary series. Both will share their unique perspectives on leadership, purpose, and the great outdoors.

This year, the committee has scheduled over 30 educational sessions to choose from throughout the event. The topics cover natural resource management, environmental education, law enforcement, and marketing/outreach. We will also be hosting the 20th annual Collegiate Day on Wednesday, so please welcome the students with open arms, as this will be the first exposure to Iowa's County Conservation System for many of them. We will have a table at the entrance where you can post any potential job opportunities. Please limit the number of copies and use QR codes if possible.

A block of rooms has been reserved under "IACCBE Winterfest." The rate for 2026 will be \$110. Rooms may be reserved by calling Hyatt Regency at (319)688-4000 or using the link on mycountyparks.com. Please reserve your room by January 5, 2026, to ensure availability. With the dates set for January 27th - 29th, we're eagerly counting down the days to another Winterfest Conference. We're confident that this event will not only meet but exceed your expectations. Please register at mycountyparks.com at your earliest convenience to avoid the late fee. Remember, the deadline for registration is **January 10th, 2026**. I can't wait to see everyone in Coralville for another fantastic year of training, networking, and fun!

Sincerely,



Missy Smith, President IACCBE
Nature Center Coordinator, Polk County Conservation Board

**REGISTER BY JANUARY 2nd
TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
THE EARLY BIRD PRICE OF
\$130!!**

WORKSHOP 101

Lodging

A large block of rooms has been reserved at the Coralville Hyatt with room rates at **\$110/night**, plus tax. Rooms may be reserved by calling the hotel at (319) 688-4000 or via the Hotel Reservations link on mycountyparks.com. The cut-off deadline for room reservations is **January 5, 2026** - so please book your rooms early to ensure availability.

HYATT®



The Committee

Committee members will be on hand during the conference to answer questions about the conference, the hotel, or the meeting facilities. Look for the folks in the BLUE IACCBE SHIRTS if you need anything.

Upon Arrival

Please check in at the registration table where nametags and other workshop information will be distributed. We request that nametags be worn at all times for admittance to meals and to improve workshop networking opportunities.

What to Wear

Winterfest is a casual atmosphere so your informal uniform or regular winter casual wear is just fine. You may wish to dress in layers as some rooms are warmer or cooler than others.

Exhibitors

We will have numerous exhibitors on site to share their products and expertise with us. Their contributions help to keep the cost of certain portions of the workshop lower, so please take some time to visit with them and thank them for participating in our event.

WORKSHOP 101

Brochures, Job Postings, Etc

We will have a table set up for you to put out information about your CCB job postings and other recruitment information. No need to make advance arrangements, just bring your “stuff” and put it out for display.

Collegiate Day

We will once again see an influx of attendees on Wednesday when college students from as many as eight college campuses will join us for Winterfest Collegiate Day. Very popular with the undergraduates, this day provides a special break-out session to introduce the collegiates to Iowa’s County Conservation System, a resume review session, opportunities to network with full-time CCB employees from across the state, and the chance to attend numerous concurrent sessions. Please take some time to interact with the students and make them feel welcome! If you are interested in assisting with any portion of collegiate day, please contact Adam Shirley at IACCB@mycountyparks.org.



IACCBE Raffle

Bring some items to donate and stash away some cash for the always enticing IACCBE Winterfest Raffle. Funds raised are used to support aspects of the workshop that are not funded through your conference registration fees. Unique artwork and crafts, CCB facility use packages, and assorted merchandise & apparel make for great workshop souvenirs. Stay tuned for what big ticket item the Winterfest Committee has in store for 2026... you won't want to miss out on this raffle!

Social/Entertainment



Get ready to connect and have a blast because networking at Winterfest is a two-night affair! On Tuesday night, the city is your oyster. Grab your coworkers and friends and explore everything Iowa City and Coralville have to offer. On Wednesday, the real party starts! Thanks to the IACCBE Winterfest raffle, we're bringing the fun to you. Get ready to show off your skills in our incredibly competitive bags tournament, or just kick back with some classic backyard games and trivia. Johnson County Roadside Manager Chris Henze will be your host, so get ready to unleash your inner geek and test your knowledge of current events, science, and a bunch of other random (but fun!) topics. Don't miss out on the good times!

WINTERFEST

At a Glance

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

- 8:00 AM REGISTRATION
- 9:00 AM - PRE-WORKSHOP SESSIONS
1. Kinnick Stadium Tour
 2. Hunter Education New Instructor - Coral A & B
*Starts at 8 am
 3. Building a Cigar Box Guitar (CBG) - Coral C
 4. Load Security & Tie Downs - Exhibit Hall
- 11:30 AM LUNCH ON YOUR OWN
- 12:50 PM WELCOME - Missy Smith, President
- 1:00 PM KEYNOTE ADDRESS - Chris Lee
- 3:00 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS
1. Hunter Education Recertification Part 1
 2. Take this Job and Love It!
 3. Natural Playscapes: Let's Talk!
 4. Microsoft Office's Hidden Secrets
- 4:15 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS
1. Hunter Education Recertification Part 2
 2. Collaboration on the Inkpaduta Canoe Trail
 3. MyCountyParks.Com: Ask, Share, Solve!
 4. A Nature Hike for Field Staff

DINNER & EVENING - On Your Own

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28

- 7:30 AM REGISTRATION
- 9:00 AM - KEYNOTE ADDRESS - Billy Molls
- 10:30 AM BREAK
- 11:00 AM COLLEGIATE SEMINAR - Oakdale 4 & 5
- 11:00 AM CONCURRENT SESSIONS
1. Food Forests: Trees to Feed People & Wildlife
 2. Beyond IPERS: Strengthening Your Retirement
 3. 30 Years of Muskie Fishing in Iowa
 4. Maximize Your REAP Investments
- 12:15 PM LUNCH

WEDNESDAY CONT.

- 1:30 PM - CONCURRENT SESSIONS
1. Insects: All Around Us, Yet Little Known
 2. Updates on Iowa's Black Bears
 3. IDNR Lake Restoration Program
 4. Somebody's Watching You
- 2:45 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS
1. 2020 Timber Theft Case Review
 2. Des Moines River Mussels
 3. Silent Sky: Birds in Decline
 4. Putting the Brakes on Fish Escapement
- 3:45 PM BREAK
- 4:15 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS
1. Goatscaping with Iowa Kiko Goats
 2. Demystifying Video Content Production
 3. Iowa's Toughest Invasive Plants
 4. Storm Water Conservation Practices
- 5:20 PM IACCBE BUSINESS MTG
DINNER & SOCIAL TO FOLLOW

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

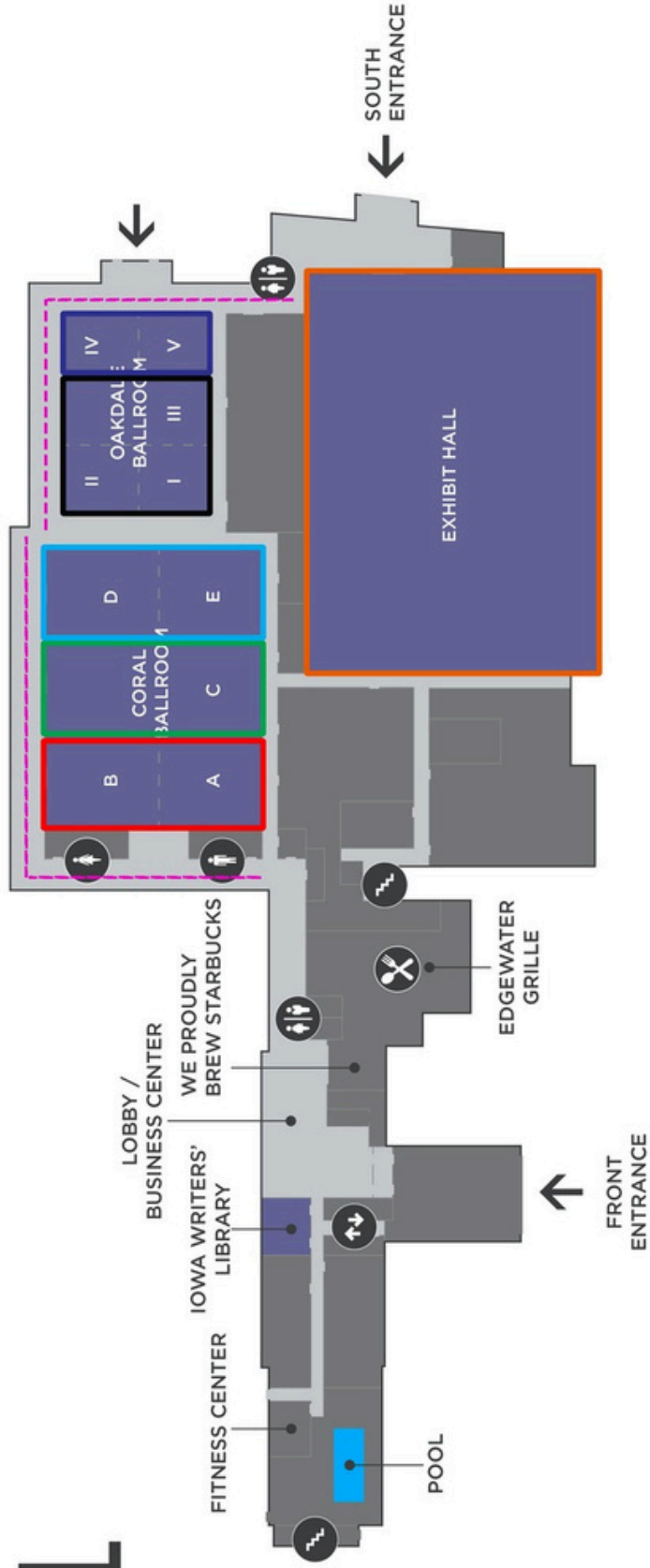
- 8:30 AM - CONCURRENT SESSIONS
1. Cultivating a Culture of Ownership
 2. Gray Fox & Blanding's Turtles
 3. Bjorensen Pond Management
 4. Natural Resources & Outdoor Recreation Trust
- 9:30 AM BREAK
- 10:00 AM CONCURRENT SESSIONS
1. Successful Motivation
 2. A Journey to More Sustainable Trails
 3. Prairie Seed Production
 4. Iowa's Imperiled Plants
- 11:15 AM CONCURRENT SESSIONS
1. Iowa DNR Update
 2. Tracking Bird Migration in Iowa
 3. Navigating a Path to Funding
 4. Fugitive Guild Prairie Species

CONFERENCE CENTER MAP

flr 1

Keynotes, Lunch, Evening Dinner, & Social - Exhibit Hall
 Vendors

Concurrent Session #1 - Coral Ballroom A&B
 Concurrent Session #2 - Coral Ballroom C
 Concurrent Session #3 - Coral Ballroom D&E
 Concurrent Session #4 - Oakdale Ballroom 1, 2, & 3
 Collegiate Session - Oakdale Ballroom 4&5



KEYNOTE *Speakers*

Chris Lee

Evolved to Thrive: An Ecologist's Guide to the Good Life

Organizational Ecologist Chris Lee is a leadership consultant who translates the wisdom of the natural world into practical strategies for building a truly thriving life. Far from simply being "good enough," he helps individuals and teams cultivate a mindset where they can truly flourish.



As a longtime conservation leader and the co-host of the Parks and Restoration Podcast, Chris combines his deep understanding of ecological systems with modern organizational science. He has worked with a diverse range of organizations, guiding them to build more resilient and dynamic cultures. In his keynote, Chris provides actionable strategies for moving beyond a "good enough" existence, offering a powerful perspective on leadership, purpose, and growth.

Billy Molls

Modern Day Mountain Man Shares Adventure

Raised on a Wisconsin dairy farm, Billy Molls' passion for the outdoors led him to the Alaskan wilderness. For the past 25 years Billy has guided big game hunters from around the globe for brown bear, grizzly bear, moose, caribou, Dall sheep, and wolf. Having lived more than eight years of his life in a tent in the wilderness, Molls has documented his adventures through his "Modern Day Mountain Man" documentary series. An author and renowned storyteller, even non-hunters will be entertained, educated and inspired by riveting tales of airplane wrecks, grizzly encounters, and countless life changing experiences highlighting leadership, communication, teamwork, safety, motivation, and inspiration. For more information go to www.billymollsadventures.com.



PRE CONFERENCE

Kinnick Stadium Tour



Walk where legends have walked and step into the story of Kinnick Stadium. Get an exclusive, behind-the-scenes look at one of college football's most iconic venues. Whether you're a lifelong fan or new to the Black and Gold, this is a chance to get closer than ever to the heart of Iowa Football. This tour is more than a stadium walk-through; it's a Hawkeye tradition. This is your opportunity to experience what players feel as they walk through the tunnel, stand on the turf where heroes are made, and soak in the mystique of a place that has seen decades of triumph and tradition. *Field access dependent on weather. GO STATE :)

Fee: \$5 60 participants max.

Hunter Education New Instructor Workshop



Jamie Cook - IDNR Hunter Ed. Coordinator

Holly Schulte & Rose Danaher - IDNR Outdoor Skills Specialists

This session is for those who wish to become certified as an Iowa Hunter Education Instructor. The session will include an overview of the hunter education program in Iowa, a review of our policies and procedures and a lesson on teaching tactics. In addition to this workshop, you must have an Iowa Hunter Education Certificate, pass a background check, and apprentice at a hunter education course to earn your full certification.

*Starts at 8 am

Building a Cigar Box Guitar (CBG)



Craig Mackaman - Blues Musician & Lewis Major - Naturalist, Polk CCB

Up-cycling may be a trendy word today, but it's not a new concept. We'll learn the history of cigar box guitars (CBG) and how they were made using items from a trash pile. After you construct your own CBG, we'll conclude by demonstrating techniques and instructions on how to play your new instrument. All instruction and materials provided.

Fee: \$50 10 participants max.

Load Security & Tie Downs



Margaret Meade - Safety Specialist, Iowa Assn. of Municipal Utilities

This session will address the requirements of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Cargo Securement rules. Learn how to calculate a load securement system, how to choose the proper securement components and proper inspection techniques.

35 participants max.

Concurrent SESSIONS

Hunter Education: Recertification Part 1

Holly Schulte & Rose Danaher - IDNR Outdoor Skills Specialists

This session is for **current Iowa Hunter Education Instructors** and will count as the recertification requirement for all hunter education instructors in Iowa. These workshops are typically held in March and April statewide. The materials covered will include any changes to the program's policies and procedures, teaching best practices, training in our registration system, and instructor recognition through our years of service program. If you are not yet a hunter education instructor but would like to become one, please sign up for the "New Instructor Workshop".



Take This Job and Love It!

Chris Lee - Director, Des Moines CCB

In this inspiring and motivating presentation, Chris taps into core principles found in the natural world to re-energize you and your team. He shares actionable strategies - not just short-term "hacks" - for creating the type of workplace that you and your team can look forward to being a part of everyday.

Natural Playscapes: Let's Talk!

Lewis Major - Naturalist, Polk CCB

If you have a natural playscape in your park, or may be thinking of creating one, this session is for you. Attendees will have the chance to share their experiences (or concerns) with planning, designing, installing, managing and maintaining playscapes. We'll also explore the evolution of non-traditional play areas and what may be the next trend. This will be an informal round table format session, so come ready to participate and contribute.

Microsoft Office's Hidden Secrets

Nate McSparin - Network Support Technician, Webster County

Tired of feeling lost in a sea of emails and endless documents? This isn't your average, yawn-inducing tech presentation! Get ready to level up your digital skills and transform the way you work. We'll dive into the hidden power of Word, Outlook, and Teams, showing you how to become a master of efficiency.

Discover secret shortcuts, automate tedious tasks, and learn to navigate your inbox with ninja-like speed. Plus, we'll unlock the mystery of creating slick, professional, and fillable forms in Word and Adobe, turning a dreaded chore into a creative superpower. Join us and learn to work smarter, not harder. Let's conquer the digital jungle together!



Concurrent SESSIONS

Hunter Education: Recertification Part 2

Holly Schulte & Rose Danaher - IDNR Outdoor Skills Specialists

This session is for **current Iowa Hunter Education Instructors** and will count as the recertification requirement for all hunter education instructors in Iowa. These workshops are typically held in March and April statewide. The materials covered will include any changes to the program's policies and procedures, teaching best practices, training in our registration system, and instructor recognition through our years of service program. If you are not yet a hunter education instructor but would like to become one, please sign up for the "New Instructor Workshop".

Collaboaration on the Inkpaduta Canoe Trail

Kevin Mason - History Professor, UNI, John Wenck - Water Trails Coordinator, Iowa DNR, & Greg Johnson - Director, Buena Vista CCB

Join us for an engaging presentation about the Inkpaduta Canoe Trail along the Little Sioux River in northwest Iowa and the effort towards State Water Trail designation. This session will explore the region's cultural heritage, and recreational opportunities, as well as ongoing efforts to enhance public access and state water trail designation. Attendees will learn about the trail's history, its connection to regional outdoor recreation, and the collaborative work of volunteers, education institutions, local, state, federal, and tribal partners dedicated to preserving and promoting this unique natural resource.

MyCountyParks.Com: Ask, Share, Solve!

Zoey Schorzmann - Administrative Specialist, Polk CCB

Whether you're just discovering MyCountyParks.com or you've been around the block and still have a few questions, this open-forum panel is your chance to connect, ask, and collaborate. Bring your curiosity, your ideas, and let's brainstorm solutions together!

A Nature Hike for Field Staff

Victoria DeVoss - Naturalist, Plymouth CCB

Have you ever been asked to lead a hike for a group, and not really known what to do? I would like to invite you to take a hike with me and get some tips on how to lead an awesome nature hike! This session is for non-education staff members. Please dress for the weather as we will be spending most of this session outdoors.



Concurrent SESSIONS

Food Forests: Trees to Feed People & Wildlife

Tom Wahl & Kathy Dice - Owners, Red Fern Farm

J. Russel Smith talked about Tree Crops back in the 1920s. Now called Food Forests or Permaculture, or perennial polyculture, planting trees that can feed people and or wildlife is always a good idea. Tom Wahl and Kathy Dice run a farm with such a design. They will give a summary of the best species to utilize in Iowa such as American persimmon, pawpaw, chestnut, hazels, pecans, Cornelian cherries and Asian pears.



Beyond IPERS: Strengthening Your Retirement Income - No Time to Wait

Todd Manternach & Matt Temple - ACCEL Wealth Management

In this session, you will learn to identify and mitigate the four major risks to your retirement lifestyle. We will explore how to integrate IPERS into a comprehensive financial strategy—rather than viewing it in isolation—and discuss effective approaches for supplementing your benefits to ensure a secure post-career income.

30 Years of Muskie Fishing in Iowa and the Midwest

Pete Hildreth - Conservation & Recreation Division Administrator, Iowa DNR

Discover insights from Pete Hildreth's fishing journal, documenting over 721 muskies caught—436 in Iowa alone! His data reveals favorite lakes, top lures, and the best times of year to land this trophy fish.



Maximize Your REAP Investment: Projects as Teaching Tools

Patti Petersen-Keys - Environmental Education Coordinator, Polk CCB & Victoria DeVoss - Naturalist, Plymouth CCB

Get the most educational value from every conservation dollar! Join this practical, interactive panel featuring two REAP CEP Grant Reviewers and successful award recipients. Bring your questions about applying, and we'll share real-world tips used by top County Conservation staff to turn REAP-funded capital projects (trails, land, facilities) into engaging and measurable teaching goldmines. Learn how to secure highly sought-after CEP grants, implement effective low-cost programs, and use your results to be a strong advocate for continued REAP funding.

Concurrent SESSIONS

Insects: All Around Us, Yet Little Known

MJ Hatfield - Insect Enthusiast

Cryptic, tiny to somewhat larger, and new to science: these insects, and their native host plants, are all around us. We'll explore why protecting even small 1.5-acre native habitats is crucial for these cool critters.

Updates on Iowa's Black Bears

Vince Evelsizer - Furbearer & Wetland Biologist, Iowa DNR

This talk provides a comprehensive update on black bears in Iowa. We'll cover their recent history and the reasons behind their return, as well as the phenomenon of bears successfully over-wintering in the state. The session will also include a specific profile of the Dubuque bear and a discussion of effective public outreach strategies with city officials.



IDNR Lake Restoration Program & Partnerships

Michelle Balmer - Lake Restoration Program Coordinator, Iowa DNR

This session will provide a comprehensive overview of the Iowa DNR's Lake Restoration Program. We'll cover the program's history, highlighting key successes in restoring Iowa's public lakes. We'll also discuss current projects and look ahead to future efforts, including collaborative partnerships and new strategies to ensure the long-term health of our lakes.



Somebody's Watching You (Digital Security & Visitor Counting)

Jeremy Basset - Park Ranger, Polk CCB & Zoey Schorzmann - Administrative Specialist, Polk CCB

Join us for an inside look at how Flock Safety cameras are enhancing security across our parks, and how Unacast's cutting-edge location intelligence is replacing traditional visitor counters—delivering more accurate counts, richer demographic insights, and greater operational efficiency. This session is your gateway to safer parks and smarter data.

Concurrent SESSIONS

2020 Timber Theft Case Review

Nathan Hauptert - Conservation Officer, Iowa DNR

This case involves a timber theft and violations on State-owned conservation land. The appellant, Jason Ferguson, challenged his convictions on the grounds of insufficient evidence, specifically arguing the State failed to prove when the trees were cut, that he cut or appropriated the trees, and that he was not acting under a mistake of fact as to property ownership.



Des Moines River Mussels Prior to Anthropogenic Disturbance

Matt Hill - Associate Professor World Languages and Culture, ISU

Before humans changed the central Des Moines River in the 1800s, it was home to at least 35 species of freshwater mussels. Five of these species were previously unknown to scientists. Today, only six species are left; the rest disappeared around the 1930s. This massive loss of species is much greater than in other rivers in Iowa and shows how easily these mussel communities are harmed by pollution, habitat destruction, and changes to water flow.

The Silent Sky: Understanding and Reversing North America's Bird Decline

Jenni Boonjakuakul - Executive Director, Iowa Bird Rehabilitation

Since the mid-1970s, North America has lost over a quarter of its bird population—a decline as high as 50-60% for some species. This session dives deep into the causes behind this massive loss and outlines actionable steps we can take to help. Finally, from a wildlife rehabilitator's perspective, we'll explain why Iowa's unique geography makes it a critical battleground for bird survival.



Putting the Brakes on Fish Escapement: A Look at Iowa's Reservoir Barrier Program

Madeline Lewis - Large Reservoir Fisheries Research Biologist, Iowa DNR

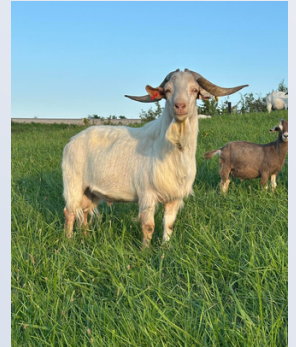
Join me for a deep dive into the Iowa DNR's innovative approach to keeping fish where they belong. We'll explore the problem of reservoir fish escapement and how the Iowa DNR is tackling it head-on by installing physical barriers on reservoir outlet structures. I'll share the research and real-world results of this project and showcase a powerful new tool designed to help evaluate the costs and benefits of barrier construction. If you're interested in fisheries management, conservation, or just want to learn how we're making sure Iowa's fish populations thrive, this is the session for you.

Concurrent SESSIONS

Goatscaping with Iowa Kiko Goats

Adam Ledvina - Owner, Iowa Kiko Goats

Clearing brush around the family farm in 2013 has turned into thousands of goats clearing invasives across Iowa and beyond. Adam has selected breeding traits to make his herd more efficient at goatscaping and the herd clears 1,000- 2,000 acres per year of Iowa invasives. Learn more about goatscaping and Adam's story.



Demystifying Video Content Production

Jessica Lown - Community Outreach Supervisor, Polk CCB

Roll sound. Roll camera. Action! Community Outreach pros—learn to create quality video with affordable equipment and quick turnarounds. You'll get an equipment list, editing software comparisons, and technique tips (angles, sound, lighting, framing). Gain the confidence to bring nature and conservation to a small screen near you.

Iowa's Toughest Invasive Plants

Chris Henze - Roadside Vegetation Manager, Johnson CCB

Not all plants are created equal. Some are mild mannered, law abiding, good citizens. But some, well, lets face it- are just plain thugs. They show up to a party they're not invited to, take over the party, eat all the party snacks, and then just WILL NOT LEAVE! And then they bring their friends, too! This presentation will talk about some of Iowa's worst and most problematic plant thugs, how to identify them, and how, with enough dedication and convincing them to leave your party, you may be able to better manage some of Iowa's worst invasive species to keep the party going.



Storm Water Conservation Practices

Ann Seda - Urban Conservationist, Iowa Department of Agriculture

This session will teach county conservation staff how to improve water quality and reduce erosion by implementing stormwater management practices. You'll learn about different methods like rain gardens and permeable pavement, and how to choose the right solution for your site. The presentation will also cover potential funding through the Water Quality Initiative (WQI) program and show examples of successful projects in Iowa.

Concurrent SESSIONS

Cultivating and Fostering a Culture of Ownership

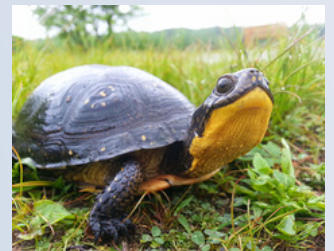
Terry Whitson - Owner, TW Training

Having a positive attitude is the key to creating and fostering the environment we all want to be a part of. Please join us to discuss developing and cultivating respectful relationships and learn to promote positive results through empowerment. We will discuss ways to recognize and acknowledge achievements by creating a supporting and engaging workplace.

Gray Fox and Blanding's Turtles: Current Status and Research

Dave Hoffman - Wildlife Technician, Iowa DNR

Join us for an in-depth look at two of Iowa's most vulnerable and secretive species. We will present the latest updates on ongoing research, including radio tagging, habitat, and management.



Bjorensen Pond Management

Kevin Bjorensen & Wes Sleeper - Bjorensen Pond Management

Bjorensen Pond Management offers comprehensive services to keep your water body beautiful, healthy, and productive. Their expertise includes audits with electrofishing, fish stocking (especially vital since the Iowa DNR discontinued its program), supplies, and land management. As native Iowans with years of experience, the Bjorensen team knows what works in the Upper Midwest and manages hundreds of private and municipal properties, from HOAs and golf courses to fishing clubs. Get the advice and products you need to create your perfect pond!

Securing the Promise of the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust

Dan Cohen - Consultant, Nature Communications

The Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund (also known as I WiLL) represents a game-changer for Iowans, including those who work to protect, enhance, and educate about water quality, parks, plants and wildlife, trails, and other aspects of nature and the outdoors. The Trust is a promise made to, and by, Iowans. Learn more about the Trust, and how CCBs can help secure the Trust Fund promise.

Concurrent SESSIONS

Up and At Em-Successful Motivation

Terry Whitson - Owner, TW Training

We all want to love coming to work every day! Let's talk about many of the things that encourage and engage us to be our best selves! Our focus will be on what team members really want us to know about how to motivate them in the workplace, specifically focusing on respect, expectations, feeling valued, and trusting one another to complete the task and job at hand.

A Journey to More Sustainable Trails: Building Your Trail Foundations

Julie Perreault - Volunteer Coordinator, Polk CCB

This session is for anyone who needs to fix up or create new trails but has little to no experience, staff, or budget. Julie will share her journey from a trail novice to a trail builder in just two and a half years. She will cover the basics of sustainable trail design and offer advice on key tools and training to help you get started.



Prairie Seed Production: From Teaspoons to Pallets

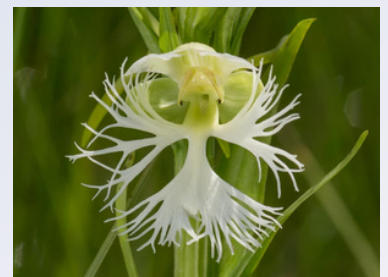
Laura Fischer Walter - Plant Materials Program Manager, Tallgrass Prairie Center

This session will cover how the Tallgrass Prairie Center turns small amounts of native seed from leftover prairies into large quantities for restoring roadsides and other areas. Laura Walter, Plant Materials Program Manager, will discuss their process of collecting and growing seed, as well as how they partner with the native seed industry. This session will also highlight how Iowa counties are crucial partners in this effort, as they help locate plant populations and give permission for collection. Come discuss, learn, and share ideas on how to manage and protect these important prairie remnants!

Iowa's Imperiled Plants and their Protection

Thomas Rosburg - Professor of Biology, Drake University

A review of Iowa's endangered and threatened plant species, including the recent revision of the vascular plant species listed as endangered, threatened or special concern. Many examples of listed species will be discussed.



Concurrent SESSIONS

Iowa DNR Update: Education, Outreach, & Marketing in Action

Gus Elliott & Megan Wisecup - Education, Outreach, and Marketing, Iowa DNR

Join us for a hands-on session with the Iowa DNR! We'll provide a quick update on current Education, Outreach, and Marketing initiatives, highlighting successful school and county partnerships with K-12 districts. You'll get a chance to participate in an example lesson and get your hands a little dirty!

Tracking Bird Migration with the Motus Wildlife Tracking System

Anna Buckardt Thomas - Avian Ecologist, Iowa DNR

Come explore the amazing wonders of bird migration in Iowa and beyond! Learn about the Motus Wildlife Tracking System; an automated radio telemetry network used to track the migratory movements of small animals like birds and bats. The network has been expanding in Iowa, with over 30 Motus stations helping us learn about the birds that migrate through our state. We'll also share how we've put the system to work learning about the migratory routes and patterns of Wood Thrush that breed in Iowa.



Navigating a Path to Funding - TAP/FRT/SRT

Scott Flagg & Susan Hollenkamp - Program Managers, Iowa Department of Transportation

This session provides an in-depth overview of the federal and state grant programs administered by the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) for the development of recreational trails. Designed for local government officials, trail advocacy groups, non-profit organizations, and community planners, this workshop will demystify the grant application process, highlight key program requirements, and offer practical guidance for securing funding for your next trail project.

The Biology and Ecology of Fugitive Guild Prairie Species

Thomas Rosburg - Professor of Biology, Drake University

Prairie ecosystems are known for their high plant diversity. Some of those plants are ruderal species that colonize disturbed patches in prairie. This session will discuss the ecology and biology of those species and the work published in the paper "The colonization and formation of equilibrium plant species associations on badger disturbances in a tall-grass prairie" by WJ Platt.

Special Thanks to Our
SPONSORS

Platinum



Gold



Silver



Bronze

