

Cedar Valley Visions

Conservation News

In Memory

By Mike Dauber-Director

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The Cedar County Conservation Board lost one of our valuable board member. Leon Steinhagen joined the board in 2003 and was serving as our current President.

Leon was well known for his skill in repairing small engines, a craft he pursued for many years. One of Leon's many interest was fishing and enjoying time at the cabin with Cindy. He had a unique talent for custom knife making as he would share his newest creation at the monthly board meetings.

Leon will be greatly missed by us all.



Creature Feature~ Common Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*)

Photo and Article By Jacob Wilbourne- Park Technician

This large freshwater turtle ranges from southern Canada to Florida and from the Rockies all the way to the east coast.



In it's northern range it is often the largest turtle in the area. Males are typically larger than females, with the largest adult male weighing around 75 lbs. Maximum lifespan for the common snapping turtle is reported to be over 100 years!

While these turtles can function as important aquatic scavengers they also make excellent ambush predators. Waiting for the right time to strike at their prey which can include small fish, mammals, birds, and most anything they can fit in their mouth.

It is a common misconception that snapping turtles can be grasped by their tail and moved to be moved, this in fact has great potential to harm the turtle. The recommended method for moving a snapping turtle is either using a shovel to scoop the turtle from behind or coaxing them onto a tarp and then moving them that way. Of course it's always best to leave wildlife alone unless necessary.

Hunting Reminder

As the hunting season begins please remember to be aware of your surroundings. Hunters as you place your tree stands please remember that stands may be placed seven days prior to the start of hunting season until seven days after the final day of that open season. Please remember to remove your stand in a timely manner and be respectful of public property. As always we wish you a safe and successful hunting season!

Maintenance Never Ends

Article by Chip Brown-Park Technician

Keeping up with Maintenance is a never ending job.

A question we frequently get asked is “What do you do all year?”. Our answer is different depending on which staff member you ask. As for myself, I respond with “MAINTENANCE IS NEVER ENDING!”. So long as we have people and animals using our parks and natural areas we always have a job to do.

December and January are spent fixing picnic tables, making benches, working on signage in our areas, indoor construction, budget planning, work on equipment, and trail maintenance.



Photo Credit: Jake Wilbourne

February is time to wrap up winter projects, begin advertising for seasonal positions, and conduct interviews of potential candidates. This is also the time we typically catch up on continuing education and other workshops.

March and April are hold on to your pants time! We finally get to bust outside until December! During this time we hire seasonals, conduct prairie burns (FUN, FUN, FUN), finish trail cleanup until the next storm, and plant prairie grass, food plots, and tree seedlings. The number one thing though is that this is the start of the camping season. With the weather improving and water getting turned on around April 15th campers are often looking forward to getting outside.

May through September the camping season is in full swing. Let the electric and plumbing problems begin! Whatever it takes to bring in the campers! During this time grounds maintenance and custodial work is mostly performed by seasonal help. Any cleanup from problems Mother Nature creates and cleanup from general use and vandalism as well as new construction fall to the full time staff. Seems like no matter what Mother Nature and your average everyday litter bug work faster than we can, there are always trees to cleanup and tons of garbage and litter to pick up.

October is when camping season ends. This is when water gets shut off and shower house gets closed next working day after October 15th. Any last-minute construction takes place while the weather is decent. Hunting season begins during this time too so we work hard to make sure wildlife areas are in good condition.

November is when things slow down and time for me to use vacation time!

Iowa's Hunting Heritage

Photo and Article by Jacob Wilbourne-Park Technician

Hunting is an important aspect of our outdoor heritage. Gone are the days when hunting was necessary to feed the family, instead replaced by a desire for a shared and challenging experience. Many of my most important outdoor memories of youth involve my father and me going out hunting in southwest Iowa. From learning to shoot and the ethics of hunting to finally taking my first deer, these memories hold a special place in my heart. I'm sure many of you readers hold similarly cherished memories. In my experience memories and experiences such as this are integral in forming a deep connection to the outdoors.



However, the popularity of hunting has experienced a decline since the 1980s. Currently less than 5% of the U.S. population hunts. Trends show that recruitment for new hunters is low, meaning less people and young people in particular are getting into hunting. These hunting trends spell trouble for passing on and sharing in these special outdoor moments.

At this point you may be asking “What can we do to change this?”. The best answer I have is to take a kid out hunting! Iowa is typically ranked near the top states for deer hunting, producing abundant deer and big bucks. Hunting is a fun and interesting past time to that can help form connections to the outdoors which will last a lifetime, as well as help support conservation efforts.

Kids Corner

Cedar Valley Visions

'Peanut Butter' Jar Bird Feeder

Please have an adult help you with the following project

You will need

- 1 Peanut butter jar (or any plastic, lidded container)
- 2 Camp plates or similar (small frisbees would work)
- A Drill with 1/8", 1/4" and 1/2" bits
- 1 Bolt 1" long and 1/4" wide and appropriate sized nut
- 3 Washers - 2 stainless and 1 rubber
- 1 Eyebolt with 2 nuts
- A 3/4" piece of untreated wood to act as a spacer in your jar lid

Steps

1. Drill a 1/4" hole in the center of both plats, jar lid, wooden spacer and jar bottom.
2. Assemble the top of your feeder using the eye bolt, nut, and rubber washer. Once assembled put the eye bolt through the bottom of the plate and bottom of the jar and secure in place with the second nut. This will form the top of your bird feeder with the rubber washer acting to keep out water.
3. Assemble the bottom of your feeder using the spacer inside the jar lid, being sure to leave room for you lid to still screw onto your jar. Connect these pieces with the remaining bolt and secure in place using the nut and washer. This will form the bottom of your bird feeder.
4. In the newly assembled bottom drill four evenly spaced 1/8" holes to allow water to drain.
5. Drill two 1/2" holes evenly spaced about 1 1/2" above the threads of your jar, these will allow seed to spill out onto the tray of the jar so that birds may feed.
6. Fill your jar, assemble and hang outside for birds to enjoy!



Fall Nature Scavenger Hunt
Go out and try to complete the whole list!

- A red leaf
- A yellow leaf
- A snowflake
- Canada goose
- A hackberry tree
- A white tailed deer



Word Scramble

RGEOAN _____
 NFDRLYAGO _____
 VELSEA _____
 PINPUKM _____
 BCOWEB _____
 GNTINHU _____
 ISHICEFING _____
 BALOSLNW _____

Nature Word Search

R	E	D	V	M	I	S	R	S	H
T	O	C	A	I	L	P	T	P	L
D	G	Y	F	G	Q	H	W	I	N
Y	W	E	S	R	Y	E	L	D	O
R	E	N	U	A	O	A	X	E	R
Q	I	L	I	T	M	S	O	R	T
U	H	Y	L	E	V	A	T	Q	H
F	A	L	L	O	U	N	K	C	E
R	T	N	K	O	W	T	E	O	R
W	H	I	T	E	T	A	I	L	N

FROST MIGRATE WHITETAIL PHEASANT FALL
 SPIDER YELLOW RED NORTHERN

October Events

Wednesday, October 2 Pioneer Games

Mechanicsville Library at Kruse Park, 3:45 pm. If inclement weather we will meet in the Library. Come have fun like they did back in the day! Learn and play some classic pioneer games!

Saturday, October 5 Vampire Valley Halloween Hike

Cedar Valley Park Camp Ground, 6:30 pm. Piñata at 6:30 pm, followed by a non-scary group hike. Following the group hike we will have small group scary hikes.

Tuesday, October 8 Roving Retirees Pumpkin Soup

Stanwood Library, 2:30 pm. Join the Roving Retirees as we learn to make some seasonal and delicious soup!

Wednesday, October 9 Hickory Hummus

Durant Library, 3:30 pm. Come learn to make this tasty snack with hickory syrup!

Friday, October 11 Walking Stick Making

Cedar County Conservation Office, 6:00 pm. Come learn the art and craft of making your own walking stick. Materials will be provided but please call the office at 563-886-6930 to reserve your spot. Signup limited to 15 people.

Saturday, October 12 Archery

Cedar Valley Park Shelter One, 11:00 am. Come learn how to shoot a bow and get a little bit of experience on our Genesis compound bows. This program is intended for ages 10 and up.

Sunday, October 13 Funtoberfest Booth

Cedar County Fair Grounds, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Come visit our booth at Funtoberfest!

Wednesday, October 16 Cedar County Historical Society Camp

Cedar County Historical Society 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm. Supper Provided. Please pre-register with Cedar County Historical Society call 563-886-2899.

Thursday, October 17 Little Kid Story Time

Durant Library, 10:00 am. Visit Durant Library and enjoy a good story with us!

Friday, October 18 Fall Harvest

Mechanicsville Library at Kruse Park, 11:00 am. If inclement weather we will meet in the Library. Come have fun with us and learn all about fall harvest.

Saturday, October 19 There's an App for That!

Bennett Park Shelter Two, 10:00 am. Find out which apps are helpful in exploring the natural world and which are duds! We will explore the pros and cons of each with opportunities to test them out.

Monday, October 21 Decorate Gourds and Pumpkins

Durant Library, 5:30 pm. Come decorate fall pumpkins and gourds. A perfect craft for the season!

Wednesday, October 23 Epic Wooden Train Day

Bennett Library, 1:00 pm. Visit the Bennett Library today to see this EPIC wooden train!

Friday, October 25 Spiders!

Mechanicsville Library at Kruse Park, 11:00 am. If inclement weather we will meet in the Library. Come learn all about our creepy crawly friends!

Saturday, October 26 Archery

Bennett Park Shelter Two, 11:00 am. Come learn how to shoot a bow and get a little bit of experience on our Genesis compound bows. This program is intended for ages 10 and up.



November Events

Saturday, November 2 Archery

Bennett Park Shelter Two, 11:00 am.
Come learn how to shoot a bow and get a little bit of experience on our Genesis compound bows. This is intended for ages 10 and up.

Tuesday, November 12 Roving Retirees: Turkeys

Stanwood Library, 2:30 pm.
Join the Roving Retirees as we learn about our favorite bird this time of year.

Wednesday, November 13 Toads!

Durant Library, 5:30 pm.
Come meet Tina the Toad and learn some amazing toad facts!

Thursday, November 14 Story Time

Durant Library, 10:00 am.
Visit Durant Library and enjoy a great story with us!

Friday, November 15 Animals Preparing For Winter

Mechanicsville Library, 11:00 am.
Join us and learn how animals prepare themselves for winter.

Saturday, November 16 Nature Journaling

Bennett Park Shelter Two, 10:00 am.
Come learn different styles of keeping a journal and why it's important. Be sure to bring a notepad or pocket journal and writing utensil.

Monday, November 18 First Nations Discovery Day

Durant Library, 3:30 pm.
Come find out what and how Native Americans foraged, hunted, and prepared for winter.

Wednesday, November 20 Wild Edible Surprise

Mechanicsville Library, 3:45 pm.
Come and learn about wild edibles and foraging.

Friday, November 22 Turkeys!

Mechanicsville Library, 11:00 am.
Join us at Mechanicsville Library to learn about our favorite bird this time of year.

Saturday, November 23 Archery

Cedar Valley Park Shelter One, 11:00 am.
Come learn how to shoot a bow and get a little bit of experience on our Genesis compound bows. This program is intended for ages 10 and up.

Wednesday, November 27 Mini Pumpkin Muffins

Bennett Library, 1:00 pm.
Learn how to make this sweet seasonal treat!



December Events

Monday, December 2 Gift Giving Craft Creation Event

Durant Library, 5:30 pm.
Make your own gift to give away for the holidays! Wooden ornaments, keychains, and more!

Tuesday, December 3 Roving Retirees Tree Cookie Ornaments

Stanwood Library, 2:30 pm.
Join the Roving Retirees in making this fun and natural craft. Supplies will be provided.

Wednesday, December 4 Ninja Gingerbread Cookies

Mechanicsville Library, 3:45 pm.
Come make delicious ninja shaped gingerbread cookies with us for this fun ninja themed day.

Thursday, December 5 Story Time

Durant Library, 10:00 am.
Visit Durant Library and enjoy a great story with us!

Friday, December 6 Deer!

Mechanicsville Library, 11:00 am.
Come and learn all about deer with us!

Wednesday, December 11 Tree Cookie Ornaments and Tree Talk!

Bennett Library, 1:00 pm.
Come and learn how to make a unique ornament with natural materials.

Saturday, December 14 Seed Ball Making

Cedar County Conservation Office, 10:00 am.
Get your hands dirty with this fun project! Learn how planting native species can help our pollinator friends and beautify your area!

Wednesday, December 18 Gopher Hole Game Show

Durant Library, 4:00 pm.
Nature trivia for all ages - place a bean bag in a gopher hole, answer the trivia question correctly, and receive a small prize.

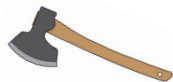
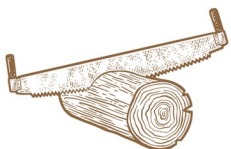
Friday, December 20 Ornaments

Mechanicsville Library, 11:00 am.
Visit us at Mechanicsville Library and make some great natural ornaments!

Wish List

Every once in a while we get asked about donations. Here is a small list of items we can make use of for education and programming. We appreciate you considering us for your donations.

A two person crosscut saw, a hewing axe, a froe, and an adze.



Monetary Donations

In addition to donations of items we also accept monetary donations as well. We accept cash and check donations. Checks can be made out to Cedar County Conservation Board. If you'd like your donation to apply to a certain program all you have to do is let us know with a memo or note and it'll be earmarked for the program of your choice.

We Want to See Your Photos!

Have you taken photos out in our parks? Would you like to share them for everyone to see? If so we would love to feature them in our Newsletter! Please send photos to Jwilbourne@cedarcountry.iowa.gov with the subject "Newsletter Photo". Feel free to tell us a bit about your photo, be sure to include which park you're at, who the subjects and original photographer are and any other relevant details.

Your Photo Could Be Here!



Wild Recipe: Autumn Olive Fruit Leather

Ingredients

6 cups autumn olive berries, washed, strained, and still wet
2 tablespoons honey, or to taste

Preparation

1. Stir berries in pot over medium-high heat until berries have burst and begin to bubble in their own pulp. Some berries will still be unbroken but burst easily when pressed between the side of the pot and a spoon.
2. Next we need to remove the seeds and skin from the pulp which we will transfer to a separate bowl. This can be accomplished with a food mill if you have one or a spoon and sieve can be used as a substitute.
3. Add honey to the pulp to taste. If you harvested your berries early in the season you may have to add more honey. Be sure to put in at least some honey or your fruit leather will not be very flexible and will stick to the tray when dehydrating.
4. Oil your fruit roll trays with vegetable or olive oil with a thin coating. Dehydrate at 125-135°F. If you do not have a dehydrator, a cookie sheet with parchment paper will do. If using the oven dry at 135°F for 6 hours or until fruit roll is no longer sticky.
5. Cut roll into serving-sized slices and store in an airtight container. If still tacky/sticky in some areas you can store in the refrigerator or freeze for long-term storage.



Photo Credit: Jake Wilbourne

Cedar County Conservation Board Members

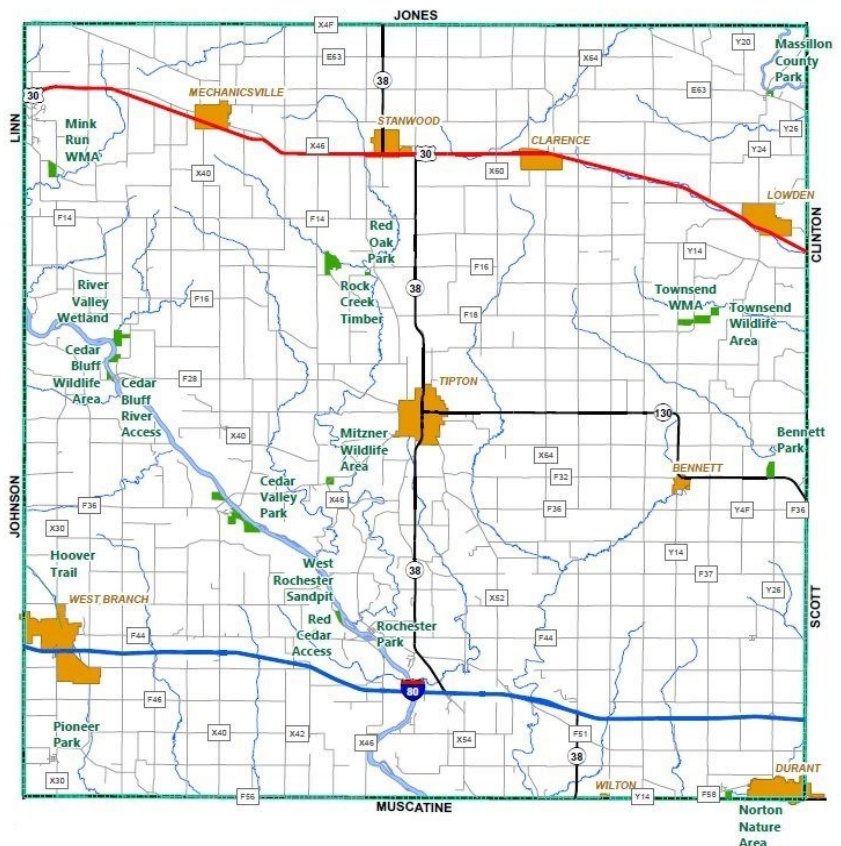
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Email address: cedarccb@cedarcounty.iowa.gov
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Office hours: Monday –Friday 8:00 am-4:30 pm
To be added to our newsletter email list please send an email to Newsletter Editor jwilbourne@cedarcounty.iowa.gov with the subject “newsletter”.

Cedar County Conservation Parks and Wildlife Areas



Scan to visit
www.mycountyparks.com
for information on our
parks.