



Cedar Valley Visions

Conservation News

New Camp Sites and More!

Article and Photos by Chip Brown

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This spring was a busy time for our maintenance team. The first major update is the development of the upper area at Massillon Park for camping. This is a project that had been in the planning stage for a couple years now, and with the removal of the old shelter that was there due to safety concerns, we thought the time was right to jump on it. This camping area has ten sites with water and electrical hookups. In addition to the new sites, we have also put in an entrance road off of 122nd Street, the gravel road to the south, to make it a bit easier for RV campers.



The second major update is our Bennett Park Cabin progress. This is a project that's been in the works since last fall with site planning and development. Progress took off again this spring with finishing touches on the site, the pouring of a concrete foundation, and running electricity to the site. Work is beginning on the septic system, and in the near future contractors will be building the outside shell of the cabin. Finishing work on the cabin will be done by our maintenance staff this fall. This



project has had a lot of "moving parts," so to speak, between different contractors and lining up schedules, but the work has been worth it. While the work is still a ways off from being finished, we would like to thank John Winslow for his donation of time and equipment and Cedar County Secondary Roads for helping bring dirt to the site. All of our contractors have been excellent to work with and have made the work of building a cabin much smoother.



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Creature Feature~ Painted Turtle

Article by Jacob Wilbourne and Photo by Delaney Tresslar



The painted turtle is the most widespread turtle in North America, having a range extending from southern Canada to northern Mexico and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. These turtles prefer slow-moving fresh water and have an omnivorous diet of aquatic vegetation, insects, and even fish. Males are typically smaller than females with sizes ranging from five to ten inches in length.

Painted turtles have a substance in their blood that works like anti-freeze and keeps their cells from freezing in cold temperatures! In addition to being the most widespread turtle in North America, they have fossil records dating back 15 million years!

Family Fishing Fun

Article and Photographs by Jacob Wilbourne

Fishing is a pastime that has been with me since I could walk, from fishing on the lakes of Minnesota with my grandpa when I was young to fishing farm ponds as an adult here in Iowa and everything else in between. It is a hobby I enjoy sharing with all who are willing to participate, and with that in mind, we organized our free fishing weekend event at Bennett Park.



A lot went into the event setup, as we wanted this to be a huge success. Finding and securing donations was a new step for me. In the past this was handled by our former director, but with him gone, I chose to step up to the plate and do what I can. I was able to secure donations from Scheels and Thiesens and reached out to Kevin at Snapper City, who was already planning on donating. My coworker, Chip Brown, was able to reach out to Wapsi Bottoms White Tails and secure another donation for us. We reached out to the Cedar Wapsi Pheasants Forever, and they had a donation ready for us as well. These donations went towards prizes for the kids, including fishing poles, tackle, tackle boxes, and more!

We had help with advertising as well. While we mostly use our Facebook page and this newsletter to announce upcoming programs, we reached out to Iowa DNR to assist, and they were able to put us on their interactable Go Outdoors map of events. In addition, we had help from the Tipton Conservative newspaper, which was generous enough to run a full-color print ad to help spread the word.



The event was a huge success! The weather for the day was excellent; rain held off, and the temperatures were mild. There's nothing worse than fishing in bad weather. We had an amazing turnout as well; over 125 people flocked to Bennett Park to fish with us! Fun was had for everyone, some kids even catching their first fish! We lost track of how many



fish were caught, but they reeled them in from beginning to end! Most caught in the pond were small bluegills, but a couple sizable bass were caught as well. We appreciated all the parents who came out as well; there are few joys amongst anglers that can match helping our kids fish. To wrap it all up, we gave out over \$1,000 in prizes, all from donations from local clubs, organizations, and businesses.

Fishing is a past time for young and old alike, a past time that is one of the easiest to enter and complex to master. It was a great joy hosting our Free Fishing Weekend event at Bennett Park on June 6th. We look forward to seeing you all next year!

Photo by Heather Wilbourne

Fair Time is Here!

Article and Photograph by Jacob Wilbourne

The fair is right around the corner, and we are looking forward to seeing you there! This year is a little bit different; Jake and Sarah will still be there but in a new location. With last year's rain, we decided to try something a little new; we're going inside for a change! You can find us in the Mathew Building this year.

We'll still have the same fun and educational activities for you to check out, and even a chance for prizes! We'll have handouts for those people who visit us early, something for kids and adults too! Stop by and see us for a chat and to find out what's happening in our parks.



Kids Corner

Cedar Valley Visions

Home Made Berry Picking/Foraging Bag

Please have an adult help you with the following project

This is the perfect project to make before going out and picking your own berries

Materials:

- Lightweight fabric (See instructions for size)
- Needle and medium weight thread
- Paracord or other cord for the closure



Foraging/berry picking bag
Photo by Jacob Wilbourne

Instructions:

1. Select a piece of fabric that is about twice as wide as you want your pouch to be wide and a bit longer (about 3/4 inch) than you want your pouch to be deep, this extra length will be used to run your cord through for a closure.
2. Fold the top 3/4 or so inch down and sew to the main part of your bag, leaving the ends open for your cord to run through. Pass your cord through where you just sewed.
3. Next fold your bag closed and sew the side and bottom to form your bag.
4. Turn the bag inside out so that the seems you just sewed are on the inside.

Optional:

You can water proof your bag using wax or other water proofing substances.
For a more sturdy bag you can use thicker materials such as canvas or leather

Summer Nature Scavenger Hunt

- Milkweed
- An American toad
- Tadpoles
- A garter snake
- A s'more
- An American Goldfinch
- Coneflowers



Word Scramble

- FINGOCHLD -----
- OGBULFRL -----
- BBUMEEBLE -----
- OWESURNFL -----
- FGINORGA -----
- SINEUHNS -----
- ATVIONAC -----
- HUNTDER -----

Nature Word Search

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

Badger, Humid, Wet, Berry, Fair, Camping,
Marsh, Bee, Summer

Answers: Goldfinch, Bullfrog, Bumblebee, Sunflower, Foraging, Sunshine,
Vacation, Thunder

Cedar County Conservation Summer Camps



Summer is fast approaching and we have a number of programs we don't want you to miss out on! We understand that between vacations and school being out it can be hard to plan for some events so we wanted to give a quick highlight of a few of our upcoming summer camp programs. All summer camps registration cost is \$15 due before day of camp.

Adventure Camp, Bennett (Grades 4th and 5th) , June 11th. Registration opens May 25th, closes June 9th.

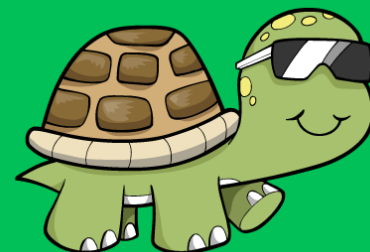
Campers will get a chance to explore Bennett Park and work on outdoor skills in this hands on camp.

Critter Camp, Bennett (Grades 2nd and 3rd), June 18th. Registration opens June 1st, closes June 16th.

Critter Camp is all about animals! Campers will get a chance to learn all about the animals around them.

Adventure Camp, Cedar Valley (Grades 4th and 5th), June 25th. Registration opens June 8th, closes June 23rd.

Campers will get a chance to explore Cedar Valley Park and work on outdoor skills in this hands on camp.



Critter Camp, Cedar Valley (Grades 2nd and 3rd), July 16th. Registration opens June 29th, closes July 14th.

Critter Camp is all about animals! Campers will get a chance to learn all about the animals around them.

Little Explorer Camp, Bennett (Grades 2nd and 3rd), July 23rd. Registration opens July 6th, closes July 21st.



We want to encourage your sense of exploration! Campers will get a chance to explore Bennett Park with us!

Nature Explorer Camp, Cedar Valley (Grades 4th and 5th), July 30th. Registration opens July 13th, closes July 28th.

Campers will get to work on outdoor exploration skills in this fun camp!

Survivor Camp, Bennett (Grades 6th and 7th), August 6th. Registration opens July 20th, closes August 2nd.

Come learn survival skills with us! Campers will survive the day with us in this fun themed camp!



Call our office at 563-886-6930 or email: Jwilbourne@cedarcountry.iowa.gov to register

Saturday, June 27th, Paddle Boarding

Lake MacBride (3971 Cottage Reserve Road Extension NE, Solon, Iowa), 11:00 am.

Ever want to try paddle boarding for free? Now is your chance! We provide paddle boards, life jackets, and paddles. Please bring your own sunscreen, water, and snacks. Please wear clothes that can get wet. If you have a properly fitting life jacket, feel free to bring your own.

Sunday, June 28th, Paddle Boarding

Lake MacBride (3971 Cottage Reserve Road Extension NE, Solon, Iowa), 2:00 pm.

Ever want to try paddle boarding for free? Now is your chance! We provide paddle boards, life jackets, and paddles. Please bring your own sunscreen, water, and snacks. Please wear clothes that can get wet. If you have a properly fitting life jacket, feel free to bring your own.

Monday, June 29th, Tiny Paper 3D Flowers

Durant Library, 2:30 pm.

We will be making tiny, but not ultra tiny, colorful, three-dimensional flowers.

Tuesday, June 30th, Seed Surprise

Tipton Library, 10:30 am.

Come learn about plants with Miss Sarah!

Tuesday, June 30th, Plant a Seed; Grow

West Branch Library, 6:15 pm.

Join Miss Sarah for a plant themed program at the library!



Wednesday, July 8th, Coconut Bowling

Bennett Library, 1:00 pm.
STRIKE! We will be using a coconut for a bowling ball in this fun summertime activity.

Wednesday, July 8th-12th , County Fair Booth

Cedar County Fair Grounds,
Join Jake and Sarah for some fun inside the Mathew's Building.

Friday, July 10th, Seed Feast and Coconut Bowling

Durant Library, 5:00 pm.
Come snack on various seeds and bowl with a coconut!

Saturday, July 11th, County Fair Booth

Cedar County Fair Grounds, 10:00 am – 7:00 pm.
Join Sarah for some fun games in the Mathew's Building.

Tuesday, July 14th, Seed Feast and Coconut Bowling

Tipton Library, 10:30 am.
Taste various seeds with Miss Sarah and see how well you can bowl with a coconut!

Tuesday, July 14th, Seed Feast and Coconut Bowling

Stanwood Library, 2:30 pm.
Snack like a chipmunk and stuff those cheeks with tasty seeds and then try your luck at coconut bowling!

Friday, July 17th, Animal Fun

West Branch Library, 10:15 am.
Join Miss Sarah for a young readers program on animals (meant for toddlers through five year olds).

Saturday, July 18th, Iowa Bats

Location and time to be determined.
Dr. Benedict from Central College will be doing a bat program. If the weather permits, he will be doing a mist netting program to safely capture live bats! This is a come and go program, so if you cannot stay the whole time, that is perfectly fine. Bring your insect repellent.

Monday, July 20th, Coconut Bowling

Mechanicsville Library, 1:30 pm.
Test your luck at coconut bowling!

Tuesday, July 21st, Coconut Bowling

West Branch Library, 6:15 pm.
Can you get a strike with a coconut? This is a family friendly event for all ages.

Friday, July 24th Coconut Bowling

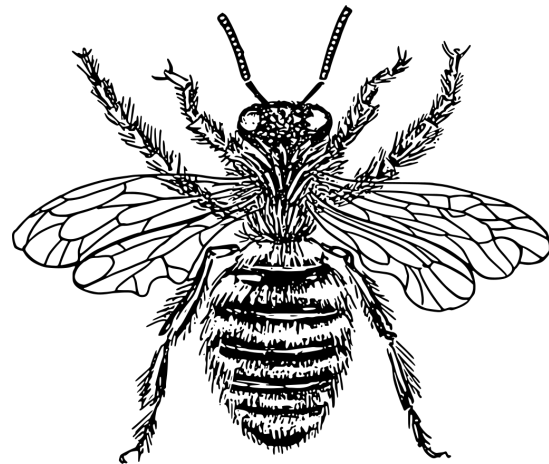
Mechanicsville Library, 11:00 am.
This program is geared towards toddlers.

Monday through Thursday, July 27th -30th, Summer Days

Camp with Miss Sarah and Ronda
Cedar Valley Park, each day 9:00 am – 2:00 pm.
Different themes each day. Cost is 20 dollars a day and only 10 dollars a day if you are an active Cub Scout Member (you do not need to attend every day). This camp is for kids going into first through fifth grade. Deadline to register is July 17th. Please register with Ronda at 563-506-3122 or pack153.durant@gmail.com

Friday, July 31st, Bees

Durant Library 2:30 pm.
Find out what the buzz is about Iowa's bees!



Saturday, August 1, Wapsipinicon River Canoe Float

Massillon Park (206 Hoover Highway, Lowden, Iowa) to Walnut Grove Park (1847 118th Avenue y32, Toronto, IA), starting at 10:00 am. Meet at Massillon Park down by the boat ramp. People will shuttle their own vehicles (we cannot drive you) to Walnut Grove Park where we will finish our river float. After people come back, we will begin our casual float down the river. Please bring your own life jacket if you have one. We will have several life jackets of various sizes as well. Please bring your own snacks, water, sunscreen, and bug spray. Pre-registration REQUIRED. Please email Miss Sarah at naturalist@cedarcounty.iowa.gov or call 563-886-6930. Deadline for registration is July 29th.

Sunday, August 2, Blackberries at Bickett Rate

Bickett Rate Farm (600 225th Street, Tipton, Iowa), 3:00 pm. Blackberry picking and desert picnic. Please bring your own collection container (empty ice cream buckets work great).

Friday, August 7, Wellness Fair Booth

Cedar County Courthouse, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. Come see Miss Sarah at the courthouse lawn along with many other great booths!

Saturday, August 8, Hoover's Hometown Day Booth

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. See what surprises Miss Sarah brings to the booth to share with everyone.

Sunday, August 9, Cedar River Float

Cedar Bluff Access (263 210th Street, Tipton) to Cedar Valley Park (660 255th Street, West Branch, IA), 2:00 pm. Meet at Cedar Bluff Access down by the boat ramp. People will shuttle their own vehicles (we cannot drive you) to Cedar Valley Park where we will finish our river float. After people come back, we will begin our casual float down the river. Please bring your own life jacket if you have one. We will have several life jackets of various sizes as well. Please bring your own snacks, water, sunscreen, and bug spray. Pre-registration REQUIRED. Please email Miss Sarah at naturalist@cedarcounty.iowa.gov or call 563-886-6930. Deadline for registration is August 5th.

Monday, August 10, Wild Plants – Treat or Toxic

Durant Library, 2:30 pm.

Is that edible? What does that taste like? How can I tell that plant from another plant? Learn foraging basics and get to try a tasty treat.

Wednesday, August 12, Seed Stash Squirrel Game

Mechanicsville Library, 1:30 pm.

How many seeds does the average squirrel stash to survive winter? Why do they stash seeds? Where do they stash seeds? We will learn all the ins and outs of being a squirrel in the fall with this fun game.

Wednesday, August 19 Seed Bombs

Bennett Library, 1:00 pm.

Bring your muddy clothes! We will be smashing native seeds into mud balls and helping save the bees and butterflies!

Thursday, August 20, Seed Stash Squirrel Game

Durant Library, 10:00 am.

This program is designed for young children (toddlers through five year olds). We will be learning about squirrels and getting to touch and feel various seeds with this fun and active game.



Monday, August 24th, Outdoor Games

Durant Library, 3:30 pm.

These games will be on, rain or shine! If it is bad weather, we will bring them indoors.

Tuesday, August 25th, Monarch Butterflies

Stanwood Library, 2:30 pm.

Learn about the monarch butterfly and their amazing journey.

Thursday, August 27th, Monarch Tagging

Rochester Cemetery (1180 Cemetery Rd, Tipton, IA), 6:30 pm.

Special guest speaker, Mary Blair, from Iowa County Conservation will be doing a monarch tagging program. Wear closed toed shoes and long pants. Please bring your own water, snacks, and bug spray.

Friday, August 28th, Glow Like the Stars

Lake Iowa Nature Center Boat Ramp (2550 G Ave, Ladora, IA), 8:30 pm.

GLOW paddle boarding and astronomy fun! This program is going to be LIT! Please bring your own life jacket if you have it; we will have several different sizes as well. After we paddle for a bit, we will be doing an astronomy program using a very strong laser pointer to point out stars in various constellations.

Saturday, August 29th, Heritage Day

Cedar County Historical Society (1094 Highway 38, Tipton, IA), 9:00 am – 3:00 pm.

Step back in time and join the free, family, friendly fun day! Lots of activities and demonstrations!

Sunday, August 30th, Pelican Fest

Hawkeye Wildlife Area (2564 Amana Road NW, Swisher, IA), 11:00 am – 4:00 pm

Join the fun with various booths and talks throughout the day.

September

Wednesday, September 9th, Miss Sarah Surprise

Bennett Library, 1:00 pm.

Join the fun and see what program Miss Sarah brings!

Friday, September 18th, Snakes

Cedar Valley Park Shelter One (673 255th Street, West Branch, IA), 6:30 pm.

Join guest speaker, Mary Bliar, Iowa County Naturalist for a riveting program on snakes! She will be bringing live examples.

Saturday, September 19th, Stanwood Funfest

Stanwood City Park, 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm.

Come see Miss Sarah amongst all the fun! Tons of booths, fun games, and food options!

Sunday, September 20th, Apple Fest

Bickett Rate Farm (600 225th Street, Tipton, Iowa), 3:00 pm.

Try various apples, use an apple peeler, and enjoy a casual day on the farm.

Tuesday, September 22nd, Miss Sarah Surprise

Mechanicsville Library, 3:30 pm.

See what program Miss Sarah brings!

Friday, September 25th, Glow Paddle

Bennett Park, 7:30 pm.

Come canoeing with style! Meet on the east side, down by the water. We will light up the canoes with pool lights and have several floating, glow objects as well. Please bring bug spray, water, and snacks. If you have your own life jacket, please bring it. We will have various sizes of life jackets to borrow as well. Children must be 10 and older to participate.

Monday, September 28th, After Supper Archery

Bennett Park Shelter Two, 6:30 pm.

This program is for adults and children over the age of 10. If you have long hair, please tie your hair back. Please bring your own water, snacks, and bug spray. We will provide all the equipment.



DeKay's brown snake
Photo by Jacob Wilbourne

Wild Recipe: Mulberry Soda Refresher

Recipe and Photos by Jacob Wilbourne

Ingredients:

- Mulberry Syrup (See recipe in Summer 2025 Newsletter)
- Sparkling Water
- Ice
- Lime (Cut and quartered)

Method:

This is a super simple recipe for hot summer days.

1. Pour about 2 tablespoons of mulberry syrup in a glass over ice.
2. Add lime wedges, I like to squeeze a bit of juice out of mine first.
3. Add a little bit of salt and top with sparkling water.



Mulberries in foraging bag



Mulberry Soda Refresher

Cedar County Conservation Board Members

Dylan Haub
Rick Rouse
Teresa Wendt
Duane Moeller
Pam Hartwig

Staff

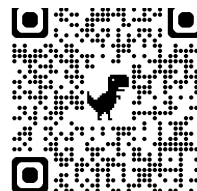
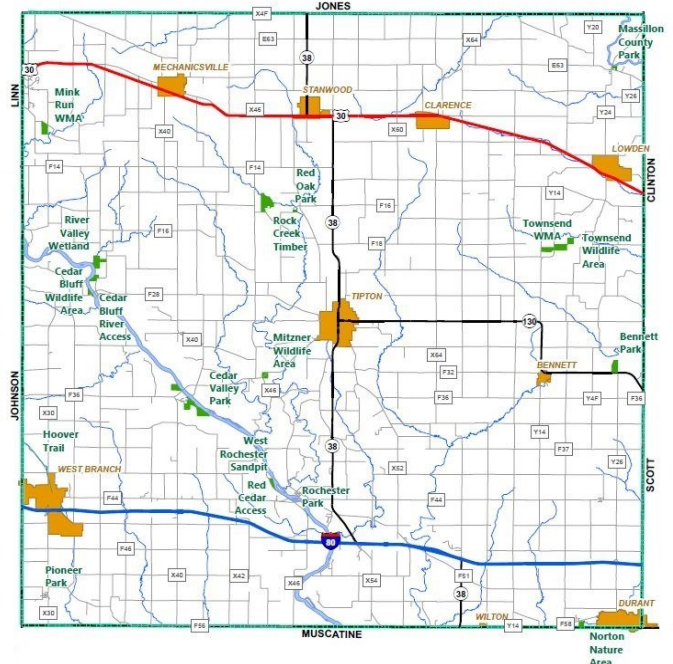
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To be added to our newsletter email list please send an email to Newsletter Editor jwilbourne@cedarcounty.iowa.gov with the subject “newsletter”.

Cedar County Conservation Parks and Wildlife Areas



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