



# The Jasper County Jewel

Jasper County Conservation Board Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2024

## My County Parks

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our E-Commerce platform through My County Parks, streamlining the booking process for our cabins and reservations for campsites. This online system will also be the go-to for all summer camps and paid programs. As of April 1, 2024, reservations for Ashton Wildwood Campground, Mariposa Primitive Campground, and Uhlenhopp Cabin will exclusively transition to this user-friendly platform.

Mark your calendars for June 1, 2024, as Bison Ridge Campground, our modern 15-site facility, and Coneflower Cottage at Mariposa will officially open for public use and booking exclusively on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com).

Our 2024 summer camps will seamlessly integrate with the platform, offering a fair and efficient online registration process beginning April 1. This not only benefits the public but also streamlines operations for Jasper County Conservation.

To facilitate a smooth experience, we encourage everyone to create a [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com) account before April 1st. It's a simple process—just provide your email and create a personalized password. By doing so in advance, you ensure a swift and efficient checkout, particularly for summer camp registration. Upon account creation, select Jasper County as your "preferred county" and sign up for event notifications and updates on summer camps.

For questions about My County Parks or assistance with account creation, feel free to call our office. We are more than happy to answer your questions and guide you through the process. This marks an exciting chapter for Jasper County and we eagerly anticipate the journey ahead!

[mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com)

## Ready, Set, Go Nature Center!

Jasper County Conservation is excited to report that construction and architectural plans are nearly finalized for the nature center project and we are hopeful construction will begin yet this summer!

We will share final detailed designs as soon as we have them available. As exciting as this all is, we are still looking for donors or business sponsors for several pieces of the building. This includes the hydroponics "living" wall, solar array, educational displays, classroom/lab stations, landscaping, signage, and artwork! This could be your chance to add your stamp of approval on the project, as well as your name on our donor wall!

If you are interested in being a part of this special project or the next two phases of it (maintenance building/outdoor restrooms or the open air classroom/pavilion), please contact Keri Van Zante, Director, at [kvanzante@jasperia.org](mailto:kvanzante@jasperia.org) or (641) 792-9780.



*Above:* The Des Moines Botanical Center's hydroponic wall incorporates plants and artwork. A living wall of plants will also greet visitors as they walk into Jasper County Conservation's nature center.

# 2 Conservation News

## NEW—Kayak Rentals at Mariposa

Jasper County Conservation will be installing a new self-serve kayak rental station at the Mariposa boat ramp in March! Park users will be able to rent a kayak directly from the station by simply downloading an app and paying with a credit card. No need to purchase your own kayak or a vehicle to haul it! Cost of the rental will be \$20/2 hour rental, and \$2.50 for every 15 minutes after. Watch for this and several more exciting updates coming to Mariposa Park this summer!

1. Download the App and create an account in 30 seconds!
2. Unlock your equipment and scan the QR code at the station to unlock your kayak. Paddles and lifejackets are included.
3. Enjoy your paddle! Wear your lifejacket at all times while on the water.
4. Return your equipment back to the station. Select "Unlock" in the App to return the equipment.



*Left:* The kayak rental station at Mariposa Park will look similar to this one, located at Hickory Grove Lake in Story County.

## Scholarship for Students

The Emerson Hough Chapter of the Izaak Walton League is offering a \$750 scholarship this year for a graduating Jasper County High School student who is majoring in conservation or natural resources.

The scholarship application is due April 1st. Information and applications are available through high school guidance offices, online at [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com), or at the Jasper County Conservation office, 1030 W. 2nd St. S., Newton.



## Uncle Jake's Syrup for Sale

Uncle Jake's Sugar Shack at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve had its earliest season yet, starting at the beginning of February and experiencing some unusual warm winter weather! About 600 gallons of sap boiled down to 8 gallons of finished product.

Jars of our pure maple syrup are available for \$12/12 oz jar. We are limiting syrup purchases to one bottle per household. Any remaining bottles of syrup will be sold at a first come basis starting July 1st. They will sell out fast, so don't delay getting yours! We are also selling heather-green Uncle Jake's Sugar Shack t-shirts that have the syrup logo on the front. They are \$15/shirt.

Money from the sales goes directly back into the Sugar Shack operation. These items are available for purchase at the JCCB office in the Jasper County Armory/Annex Building in Newton. Thanks for supporting conservation!



## Photo Contest Results

Jasper Conservation Connection (JCC) hosted a photo contest last fall, with the eight top placing photos used on greeting cards. The photographs had to be taken by amateur photographers in Jasper County, featuring wildlife, landscapes, or people enjoying the outdoors.

The photographers of the selected photos are Steve Woody, Crystal Kuger, Norm Van Klompenburg, Toni Werden, Alivia Kingery, Alex Kingery and Bryan Poulter. They each received 16 free cards.

The cards are for sale in packages of sixteen at \$15.00 a package. They are available for purchase at the Jasper County Conservation office. The cards are blank inside, so they are perfect for use throughout the year, and make a great gift!

Money raised from the cards will be used for future park projects and programs.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's contest, and keep those cameras ready throughout the coming year!



# Summer Camps: The Wild is Waiting! 3

## Summer Camp Registration

JCCB is offering programs for kids of all ages this summer! Each child is limited to 2 camps only.

Registration begins on Monday, April 1 through [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com). The link will also be posted on JCCB's Facebook page, @jaspercountyconservation.

Payment for each camp is required online at registration. If a child fails to attend the camp they signed up for, their registration fee will be considered a donation to Jasper County Conservation.

A big thank you to our summer camp sponsor, Newton Noon Kiwanis!



## Junior Naturalists

for kids ages 8-12 years old

Group 1: Wed., June 5, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Group 2: Thurs., June 6, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Both groups: Fri., June 7, 7:00-10:00 PM

Ashton Wildwood Park

*Fee: \$40.00; limit 12 kids per camp*

Campers will explore the woods with a focus on wildlife, habitat and nature discovery. We will go on a creek hike and learn various outdoor skills. *Special note: the creek hike is very steep and challenging—this is only for kids who are good hikers and don't mind getting muddy!*

Please bring a sack lunch to camp. On Friday night, both groups will enjoy a hotdog picnic and listen to a presentation by the Des Moines Astronomical Society, followed by stargazing. Campers are required to have an adult with them for Friday evening's program.



## Mariposa Park Discovery Days

for kids all ages with an adult

Tuesday, June 11, 9:00-11:00 AM

Tuesday, June 18, 9:00-11:00 AM

Tuesday, June 25, 9:00-11:00 AM

Mariposa Recreation Area

*Fee: these programs are free (suggested donation \$5/child)*

These programs will be set up “open house” style. Check in at the picnic shelter and take part in a fun craft or activity. Groups will then gather around 10:00 AM for an hour-long naturalist led hike or program. Families are encouraged to explore the Nature Playscape Trail and enjoy a picnic lunch on their own.

## Survival Camp

for kids ages 10-14 years old

June 12 and 13, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve

*Fee: \$50.00; limit 12 kids, must attend both days*

Participants will gain experience in wild edible identification, fire starting methods, outdoor cooking, and navigation. Please bring sack lunches and a water bottle.

## Wildlife Explorers

for kids ages 8-12 years old

Tuesday, June 18, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Wednesday, June 19, 7:00 AM-12:00 PM

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve

*Fee: \$50.00; limit 12 kids, must attend both days*

Our group will explore the things that fly, swim, trot and slither in Iowa's great outdoors. On Wednesday, we will join licensed bird bander Bob Van Ervelde to net local bird species. Transportation will be provided from Krumm Preserve to the bird netting location. Please bring sack lunches.

## Nature Quest

for kids ages 5-7 years old

Group 1: Thursday, June 20, 9:00-12:00 PM

Group 2: Friday, June 21, 9:00-12:00 PM

Newton Izaak Walton League

*Fee: \$15.00; limit 12 kids per camp*

Our quest is to have fun and explore the outdoors with activities including hiking, pond netting and fishing. A snack will be provided.

# 4 Summer Camps: The Wild is Waiting!

## Youth Photography Camp

for kids ages 8-12 years old

Group 1: Tues., June 25, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Group 2: Wed., June 26, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Uhlenhopp Arboretum

*Fee: \$30.00; limit 12 kids*

Outdoor photography is a great way to enjoy our parks all year long. Summer offers a wonderful variety of wildflowers, birds, and scenic views that can be captured by young photographers. Campers will learn how to compose landscape and macro photos focusing on elements such as lighting, contrast, and leading lines. Each participant will receive custom printed notebook with a photo captured during camp. Please bring a sack lunch.

## Botany & Art Camp

for kids ages 10-14 years old

Wednesday, June 27, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM at

Newton Arboretum and The Flower Court

Thursday, June 28, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM at

Mariposa Park

*Fee: \$50.00; must attend both days, limit 10 kids*

Take a closer look at what makes plants unique, using art, science experiments, flower arranging, and outdoor exploration. Participants will hike, paint water color botanical art, write in journals, learn various gardening skills at the Newton Arboretum and complete a project at The Flower Court. Drop off on June 27 will be at the Newton Arboretum, we will transport campers to The Flower Court, and pick up will be at The Flower Court at 2:00 PM. Please bring a sack lunch both days.



## Archery Camp

for kids ages 10-16 years old

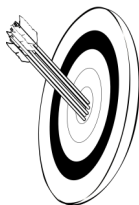
Group 1: Tues. July 2, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Group 2: Wed., July 3, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Newton Izaak Walton League

*Fee: \$20.00; limit 15 kids per camp*

Learn basic shooting techniques and safety on the line. Kids will enjoy learning the sport of archery on our mini 3D course and through games such as “arrow tic-tac-toe.” All equipment will be provided. Please bring a sack lunch.



## Watersports Week

for kids ages 8-16 years old

Group 1: Tues., July 9, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Group 2: Wed., July 10, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Group 3: Thurs., July 11, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve

*Fee: \$30.00; limit 15 kids per camp*

Spend a day on the water kayaking and paddle boarding. Slide down the giant slip and slide and take part in a fun relay. Equipment will be provided, including life vests. Bring a water bottle, sack lunch and sunscreen. Campers may only participate in one watersports day!

## Upper Iowa Overnight Camp

for kids ages 10-16 years old

Pre-trip: July 17-18

Quarry Springs Park, Colfax

Upper Iowa trip: July 23-25

*Fee: \$150.00; limit 8 kids, you must fill out an application for this camp*

Join the Jasper County Conservation staff for a fun adventure in beautiful Northeast Iowa. You will experience a three-day trip that will challenge you both mentally and physically. Our adventure will consist of a 16-mile kayak trip on the Upper Iowa River spanning two days. Previous paddling and tent camping experience is preferred but not required. A pre-trip workshop will be held the week before our departure and is required for camp participants. This workshop will cover basic water safety, river navigation by kayak, and tent camping basics.

Participants will be selected using an application process. Applications are due May 24. For more information about the camp and to receive an application, contact Greg Oldsen at [goldsen@jasperia.org](mailto:goldsen@jasperia.org).



## 100 Acre Woods Camp

for kids ages 5-7 years old

Friday, July 26, 9:00-12:00 PM

Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve

*Fee: \$15.00; limit 12 kids*

Come explore our “100 Acre Woods” with Winnie the Pooh and all of his friends! We will hunt for heffalumps and woozels and explore pollinators. Please bring a sack lunch for a picnic in the park. Parents/guardians are welcome to stay and enjoy the activities.

## Youth Turkey Hunt

**Pre-hunt Workshop:**  
Friday, April 5, 6:30 PM  
Newton Gun Club

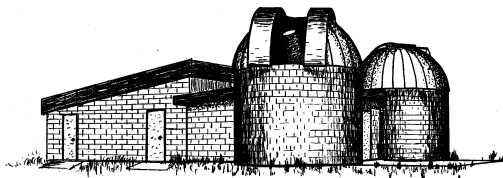


**Mentored Hunt:**  
Saturday and Sunday, April 6-7

This is a free event for youth ages 12-15 who have successfully passed a hunter education course. Youth will be paired with an experienced turkey hunt mentor. One parent/guardian must attend both the pre-hunt workshop and the mentored hunt. Space is limited; please call Greg Oldsen at (641) 792-9780 to reserve a spot.

## Programs at Ashton Observatory

The Ashton Observatory telescopes at Ashton Wildwood Park will be open for public programs at 8:00 PM Saturday evenings, April-October. There will be talks given in the observatory, followed by observing through the telescopes. For more detailed information, go to the Des Moines Astronomical Society's (DMAS) website at [www.dmastronomy.com](http://www.dmastronomy.com).



## Partial Solar Eclipse Viewing

**Monday, April 8, 12:43-3:18 PM**

Don't miss out on a rare event—a partial solar eclipse will happen in our area on April 8! The eclipse will start at 12:43pm and maximum phase will come at 1:58pm when the Sun will be about 85% covered. NEVER look at the Sun without wearing approved solar eclipse glasses! Glasses are available prior to April 8 at the Ashton Observatory or at the Newton Public Library.

This is partial eclipse for us in Iowa. "If you are in central Iowa you will not see totality," said Greg Woolever, the director of Ashton Observatory in Mingo. "You are about 350 miles away from the centerline. The width of the shadow of totality is over 180 miles in this case, and totality will last a little over 4 minutes." Woolever said there is not one specific place in Iowa that will be prime for viewing the eclipse, but recommends going to an area without clouds if possible.

## Older, Wiser, Livelier Seniors (OWLS)

**10:00–11:00 AM**

**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 otherwise noted.

## **March 13—Newton Arboretum**

Leah Busch, Horticulturalist and Co-President of the Newton Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, will talk about her work maintaining the beautiful gardens located on the east side of Newton. She will also share information about future programs to watch for.



## **April 10—Des Moines Botanical Garden**

Alex Nuzum, Education Manager at the Des Moines Botanical Garden, will give a general overview of the Botanical Garden, their history, plant collections, and a few updates on some exciting events coming up.

## **May 8—Newton Sculpture Tour**

Linda Kleppinger, recently retired Director at the Centre for Arts and Artists (CAA), will take us on a virtual tour to learn about the many sculptures around Newton. Many are found in parks and have nature themes. She'll provide a map of their locations for each participant to use on their own sculpture tour around town.

## Rendezvous with the Chichaqua

### Free Skinners

**Saturday, May 11, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM**

**Sunday, May 12, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM**

**Ashton Wildwood Park**

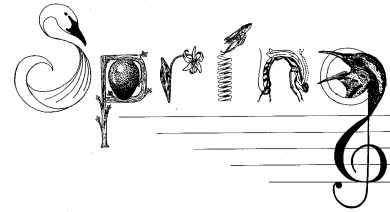
See early 1800's lifestyles of mountain men on the frontier at this free public event. Catch craftsmen and artists at work demonstrating skills from the 18th and 19th centuries, including blacksmithing, basket weaving, scrimshaw, leather working, and more. Many craftsmen offer their handmade items for sale or trade.

Also witness mountain men contests using primitive skills: bow shoots, tomahawk and knife throws, cooking contests and a cannon ball toss. Don't miss the Candy Man with his Candy Cannon, several times each day!



Jasper County Conservation Board  
1030 W. 2nd St. S.  
Newton, IA 50208

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**JASPER COUNTY**  
CONSERVATION

**Jasper County Conservation Board**

M - F 8:00 - 4:00 (641) 792-9780  
email: [conservation@jasperia.org](mailto:conservation@jasperia.org)  
website: [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com)

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Jacob Arrowood.....Maintenance Technician

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

Ina Heidemann and Toni Werden for supporting our educational programming and Newton High School Experienced Based Career Education program for taking care of our program animals. Thank you!

**Shelter House Reservation**

Shelter houses located in Jasper County parks can be reserved for \$25 per day. Shelters are located at Uhlenhopp Arboretum, Ashton Wildwood Park, Mariposa Recreation Area, Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve, Reimer Refuge, Wagaman Mill, and the Chichaqua Valley Recreation Trail. Call (641) 792-9780 to make your reservation.

**#ExploreJasperCountyParks**

Jasper County Conservation Board's programs are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, age and handicap. If anyone believes they have been subjected to discrimination, they may file a complaint with the Jasper County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, Washington, D.C. 29240