



# The Otter Creek Quarterly

Autumn, 2023  
Vol. 38 No. 3

*A Newsletter of the Buchanan County Conservation Board*

*Moonlight Paddle (Click here)!*

## Plan Your Next Park Adventure!

Dan Cohen, Executive Director

Buchanan County parks and natural areas provide year-round outdoor recreation and education opportunities. They meet peoples' quality of life needs by addressing physical and mental health, improving water quality, and fostering lifelong learning. They make our communities places where people want to live, work, play, and stay.



It is never too early to start planning your next park adventures. This newsletter provides options to participate in recreational and educational programs during the next three months. Most require preregistration, so plan now and get registered.

There are some great facilities that allow people to experience extended stays in the parks. Fontana Park cabins, shelters, and some existing campsites can be reserved in advance. To make a reservation online [click here](#). Some facilities fill up well in advance, so plan now.

New in 2024 will be the Fontana Park Lakeside Campground, providing hookups to electricity, water, and sewer at each site. This modern, 26-site campground is designed for people with various degrees of mobility. Each site will have its own concrete patio, table, and fire-ring grill. Three sites will be completely paved and a bit wider to better meet needs of people who prefer a paved surface to get around. Other features include: a "family style" showerhouse with separate rooms, each having a shower, sink and toilet; a small playground;



*The new Lakeside Campground showerhouse was installed in late July. People can begin making 2024 reservations for campsites later this fall. Plan your next adventure now!*

direct access to a Learning and Discovery Trail to be paved in 2024; and close proximity to lakeside fishing jetties and canoe/kayak accesses. Plans are to have new campsites available to be reserved by early October, so think ahead!

The fall season is among the most popular to get outdoors. Many of the Conservation Board's 41 managed areas provide trails meandering through natural prairies and woodlands. Most are open to public hunting. Plan your next natural areas adventures now by visiting [www.buchanancountyparks.com](http://www.buchanancountyparks.com) and viewing the list of parks, natural areas, and river accesses. Anyone living in Buchanan County will find a place within 20 minutes of their home.

Aside from campsites, park facilities remain open throughout winter. Cabins make great winter getaways. Heated cabins are secluded near walking/cross-country ski trails. The Fontana Park Nature Center remains open during winter weekends. Ice fishing is popular on the lake. Make plans now for your winter park adventures.

### Long-time Secretary Diane Johnson Retires



After nearly 11 years as the Buchanan County Conservation Department Secretary, Diane Johnson retired on August 18, 2023. Diane was one of the friendly faces who greeted people in the nature center and on phones, assisted the Director with a variety of administrative work, and coordinated the Conservation Volunteer Program. When asked about her favorite moments at work, Diane said without a pause:

*"It was when I saw kids in the nature center, involved, hands-on, learning about conservation, because that's our future and that's important. That's why I got into a conservation career in the first place".*

In her retirement, Diane looks forward to traveling to see more of the natural beauty our country has to offer.

### 2023 Iowa Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year

The Iowa Tree Farm Committee will present the 2023 Iowa Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year award to Craig and Cheryl Parker of Buchanan County. Their tree farm is located north of Jesup and the land has been in Craig's family since 1914. The farm boasts 150 wooded acres including tree plantings and existing timber.

Working with both DNR district foresters and private forestry consultants, Craig has managed his land through tree plantings, tree protection, timber stand improvement, invasive species removal, harvesting, and more. Craig has planted several thousand trees over 30 acres along with implementing forest management techniques for natural tree regeneration. In addition, Craig plants between 200-400 trees and shrubs each year using his own tree planter. The Parker farm has also had over 40 acres of timber stand improvement completed since 2015 with 25 more acres planned for this fall. With help from neighbor Sparky Duroe, Craig has been an excellent steward of the land. He is always excited to showcase the work he has done to continually improve his property.

This event is open to the public. Please join ISU extension in honoring the Parker Tree Farm at a Field Day on October 10th, 2023. You can find all the information along with the agenda for the day at the Iowa State Extension by [clicking here](#), for more information call 563-608-0385.

Please pre-register by calling the Buchanan County ISU Extension Office (319) 334-7161 by October 3rd. There is a \$20 registration fee that covers the tour, snacks, coffee, and lunch.



Craig Parker pointing out interesting features near his property

### GO WILD in Buchanan County

There is an exciting way to explore Buchanan County by participating in the NEW program called - Go WILD - in Buchanan County! It will take place from September 29 through October 16. Go WILD will be a scavenger hunt style program. The event will feature 12 native animal, metal cut-outs, that are scattered throughout different tourist attractions in Buchanan County.



Participants will be able to get a list of Go WILD sites by visiting Buchanan County Tourism, Fontana Park, or In the Country Garden and Gifts, or on their Facebook pages.

Each location will also have a QR Code. Scan the code and fill out the form along with uploading your fun photo with the animal! The photos will be posted on Buchanan County Tourism's Facebook page. If you participate and fill out the form, your name will get entered for one of twelve prizes that have been generously donated by the participating sites.

### Reminder: Deer Stands on State or County Public Lands



All hunters are reminded that tree stands may only be placed on public lands seven days prior to the start of a deer or turkey season for which the hunter has a paid deer or turkey tag, and must be taken down within seven days of the close of that deer or turkey season. No spike, nail, or other object may be hammered or screwed into a tree. Those in violation of this state law may have their stands confiscated and/or be cited.

### Buchanan County Natural Areas Photo Contest

Have you taken a photo in Buchanan County that shows the natural world in the categories of Wildlife, Plants and Wildflowers, Landscapes, or People Enjoying Nature? Buchanan County Conservation would love to have hundreds of photos to select from in the 2023 Photo Contest. Please send us your photos from your phones and cameras. Up to 8 entries per person. Entries accepted now; deadline for submission is Sept. 15, 2023. For complete rules visit [www.buchanancountyparks.com](http://www.buchanancountyparks.com). Photo judging will be held on Sept. 20 at 5:30 p.m. with photographer Rob Nabholz.



Overall 2022 Winner Tom Moon

### Civic Group Programs

Conservation Board staff are ready to present to civic groups about upcoming plans, parks, monarchs, birds, and many other topics - indoors or outdoors. To schedule a presentation, call 319-636-2617 or email [bccbscheduling@gmail.com](mailto:bccbscheduling@gmail.com).

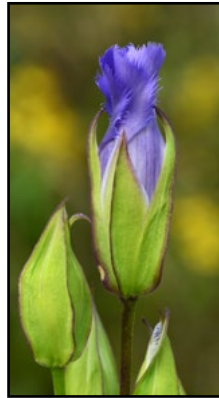


Group looking for wildflowers

To register for programs go to [www.buchanancountyparks.com](http://www.buchanancountyparks.com) and click on events.

### The Wetland Excursion!

Tuesday, September 12, 5:30 p.m.; [Click here to register](#)  
Ham Marsh/Rowley Fen



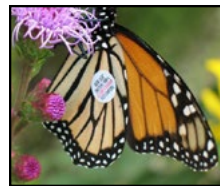
*Fringed Gentian*  
- by 2017 photo  
contest winner  
Kenneth Heiar

Late summer is a great time to get outside and explore wetlands! Buchanan County Conservation Board manages two unique wetlands; a fen and a marsh. Join a naturalist to explore these amazingly diverse habitats. If the season cooperates there will be many beautiful flowers like turtle heads, fringed gentians, grass of parnassus and many more. Also, discover why a fen is like a giant trampoline. The group will start out at Ham Marsh and then head down to Rowley Fen.

### Women in the Woods with Wine

Wednesday, September 13, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.  
[Click here to register](#)  
Fontana Park  
Donation: \$5

Women in the Woods with Wine is for women ages 21+ who are interested in becoming more comfortable in and knowledgeable about the natural world. Come relax with a glass of wine, unwind and have fun. Please dress for the weather and time outdoors after social gathering. September's program is all about Monarch Migration Mystery - These amazing insects are set to embark on a 1500+ mile journey to central Mexico without having been before - how do they do it?



*Brachiopods are fossils that can be found at Boies Bend Area.*

### Fossil Fun Day

Wednesday, October 11, 5 p.m.; [Click here to register](#)  
Boies Bend Area

October 11 is National Fossil Day! Have you wondered what was living in Iowa 400 millions years ago? Come out to Boies Bend Area and get an idea of what Iowa used to be like! Learn how fossils formed, where to find them, and have a chance to make your own fossil! There will be time to collect some fossils to take home and start your own collection.

### Monarch Tagging

Saturday, September 16, 1 p.m. Location TBD  
[Click here to register](#)  
Cost: \$4 per person or \$10 per family

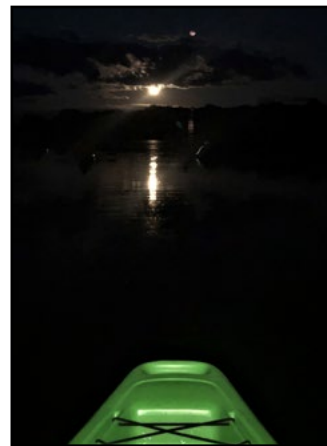
Monarch numbers are below the 20-year average and tagging research and results continue to be an important tool in measuring population. Join naturalist Sondra Cabell during to catch, tag, and release these tiny travelers as they are heading south. The monarch tagging program is made possible by the University of Kansas' Monarch Watch program, a citizen science project. Nets and tags will be provided. Pre-registration is required. We will contact those registered with the tagging location to be determined by blooming and nectar sources.



### Moonlight Paddle

Thursday, September 28, 7 p.m.; [Click here to register](#)  
Fontana Park  
Cost: \$5 per person; ages 10 and up

The water is calm and reflective at night – a perfect time for a moonlit excursion into Otter Creek at Fontana Park. Paddlers likely will see some animals settling in for the night, and others just becoming active. Participants should dress for the weather. Pre-registration is required and limited. Kayaks, life vests, and paddles will be provided.



To register for programs go to [www.buchanancountyparks.com](http://www.buchanancountyparks.com) and click on events.

### Wapsi through the Seasons: Fall Kayak and Walter House Tour

Sunday, October 15, 9 a.m.; [Click here to register](#)  
Iron Bridge Access  
Cost: \$5 per person; ages 10 and up

To give people a new perspective on the Wapsipinicon River, naturalist-guided kayak floats have been held through all seasons. Spring and summer floats were a hit! The fall kayak float is scheduled during peak time for leaf change on the river. The forested bluffs in the Wapsi Corridor likely will be in spectacular color.

Participants will meet at Iron Bridge Access southeast of Independence for the float to Quasqueton. There will be several stops along the way to learn about plants and animals, physical aspects of the river, and a tour of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Walter House at Cedar Rock State Park. Cost includes use of a kayak, life vest, and paddle. Participants should bring sunscreen, insect repellent, snacks and drinks, and a change of clothes. Transportation between accesses will be available. Children should be accompanied by an adult.



### Pumpkin Plunge and Paddle

Saturday, October 28, 1 - 3 p.m.; [Click here to register](#)  
Fontana Park; bring a pumpkin (8 inches or smaller)

Looking for a change from the regular pumpkin patch visit? Bring a mini-pumpkin (less than 8-inch diameter) or pumpkins, and slingshot it/them into Fontana Lake. Then, paddle out to retrieve your pumpkin and do the whole thing over if you want. All pumpkins – whole or in pieces – must be retrieved from the lake. Floating targets will be in place for you to compete against your friends or family for bragging rights of best pumpkin plunger! Hit the special target for one of our prizes. Show up anytime from 1-3 p.m. to participate.



### Women in the Woods with Wine

Wednesday, November 8, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.  
[Click here to register](#)  
Fontana Park  
Donation: \$5

Women in the Woods with Wine is for women ages 21+ who are interested in becoming more comfortable in and knowledgeable about the natural world. Come relax with a glass of wine, unwind and have fun. Please dress for the weather and a short walk outdoors after social gathering. The group will talk about how Wild Turkey in Iowa have a complex history. Turkey facts and feather art will get you set up for the upcoming Thanksgiving



### Natural Jewelry

Wednesday, December 6, 5:30 - 8 p.m.; [Click here to register](#)  
Fontana Park Nature Center  
Cost: \$8



Seeds, sticks, feathers, gourds, pebbles, even animal scat have been used in creating decorative wearable art. With a selection of these items and jewelry findings, you will be able to create a necklace, earrings, brooch, barrette or bracelet to keep or give as a gift. Samples and images will be available for inspiration. Bring a needle-nose pliers if you have one. Participants 10 and under need one to one assistance from an accompanying adult.

### Wanted! – Nature Center Volunteers



The Conservation Board is able to open the Nature Center on weekends and afternoons through the generous support of nature center volunteers. Volunteers also staff the nature center on Thursday mornings, and Friday afternoons.

In addition to keeping the nature center display floor open, these volunteers answer visitor questions and help citizens better understand nature and the environment. Over time, nature center volunteers become experts on the Conservation Board's education programs and

recreation areas. Every day provides a learning experience while volunteering in the nature center!

Conservation volunteers are engaged in many ways. In addition to serving as nature center hosts, volunteers are campground hosts, monitor nest boxes, help with education programs, keep parks clean, remove invasive species, and more.

**To become a conservation volunteer, individuals need to complete an application form. Depending on the type of work, the Conservation Board will conduct a criminal background check. For more information, call 319-636-2617.**

#### Nature Center Volunteer Receptionists Hours

(as of 8/24/23)

James Bond.....	147
Sally Bond.....	143
Joy Bowers.....	236
Margaret Damage.....	104
Ellen Gaffney.....	427
Elaine Hughes.....	702
Cheryl Hanson.....	13
Karla Kula.....	50
Duane Olsen.....	286
Patti Olmstead.....	334
Todd Rosonke.....	24
Shirley Rozendaal.....	352
Faith Rulapaugh.....	739
Frank Sauer.....	9
Pam Schurtz.....	322
David Voigts.....	710
Jane Watson.....	1,050

### Conservation Calendar!



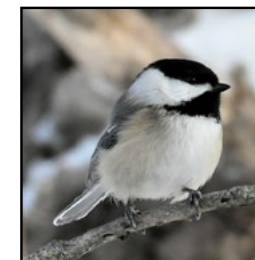
#### 2024 Animal Sponsorships

To sponsor an animal or bird feeder, contact the Nature Center at 319-636-2617 or [scabell@co.buchanan.ia.us](mailto:scabell@co.buchanan.ia.us).

Mark your calendar for September 1 which is the first day to make your reservation to sponsor an animal for the 2024 calendar year. Animal sponsorships make the perfect holiday gift for that hard to buy for person. Sponsorship packages include a letter, certificate, and photo of the sponsored animal and will be sent in time for holiday gift giving.

To sponsor an animal in our wildlife exhibit, an individual, group, or business needs to make a minimum donation to the Friends of Fontana Park. Donation amounts differ for each animal, ranging from \$50 to \$200. The sponsor's name(s) will be placed on a plaque on the animal's enclosure in early January 2024.

#### Sponsor the Bird Feeders!



The bird feeders at Fontana Nature Center provide excellent viewing of birds year-round. To help defray the costs of feeding the birds, the Conservation Department is looking for monthly bird feeder sponsors. Sponsors are asked to

donate \$60 toward bird seed. All sponsors are recognized on a plaque in the Nature Center.

The Animal Sponsorship/Feeder programs raises money for the conservation board's environmental education program. The money goes toward educational and recreational programs, animal display, and the newsletter.

Sept. 1	<i>Animal Sponsorship opens (P. 7)</i>
Sept. 12	<i>The Wetland Excursion!</i> Ham Marsh, 5:30 p.m.(P. 4).
Sept. 13	<i>Women in the Woods with Wine</i> Fontana Park, 6:30 p.m.(P. 4).
Sept. 15	<i>Photo Contest Deadline (P. 3).</i>
Sept. 16	<i>Monarch Tagging</i> TBD, 1 p.m.(P. 4).
Sept. 18	<i>Conservation Board Meeting</i> Fontana Nature Center, 6 p.m.
Sept. 20	<i>Photo Contest Judging</i> Fontana Nature Center, 5:30 p.m.
Sept. 28	<i>Moonlight Paddle</i> Fontana Park, 7 p.m.(P. 4).
Sept. 29	<i>Go WILD in Buchanan County starts (P. 3).</i>
Oct. 10	<i>Fall Forestry Field Day</i> Jesup, 8:30 a.m. (P. 2).
Oct. 11	<i>Fossil Fun Day</i> Boies Bend Area, 5 p.m. (P. 4).
Oct. 15	<i>Wapsi through the Seasons: Fall Kayak and Wright Tour</i> Iron Bridge, 9 a.m. (P. 5).
Oct. 16	<i>Go WILD in Buchanan County ends (P. 3).</i>
Oct. 17	<i>Conservation Board Meeting</i> Fontana Nature Center, 6 p.m.
Oct. 28	<i>Pumpkin Plunge and Paddle</i> Fontana Park, 1 p.m. (P. 5).
Nov. 8	<i>Women in the Woods with Wine</i> Fontana Park, 6:30 p.m. (P. 5).
Nov. 10	<i>Veterans Day Observed (Nature Center Closed)</i>
Nov. 11	<i>Veterans Day(Nature Center Closed)</i>
Nov. 21	<i>Conservation Board Meeting</i> Fontana Nature Center, 6 p.m. (subject to change).
Nov. 23-24	<i>Thanksgiving (Nature Center Closed)</i>
Dec. 6	<i>Natural Jewelry</i> Fontana Nature Center, 5:30 p.m. (P. 5).

### Show your support for the Conservation and Education Efforts of Buchanan County Conservation Board!

**Enclosed is my donation. Donations of \$100 or more are recognized on Nature Center plaques. Donors should specify if they want funds to go toward to Friends of Fontana Park (FFP) for the Conservation Board's education programs or to the Conservation Board (BCCB) for land and infrastructure projects.**

**Donor (\$1-499)  
Contributor (\$500-999)**

**Supporter (\$1,000-2,499)  
Patron (\$2,500-4,999)**

**Sponsor (\$5,000-9,999)  
Founder (\$10,000 or more)**

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please direct my donation to Friends of Fontana Park for education programs and projects (FFP).

Please use my donation for Fontana Park Master Plan projects (see cover page) (BCCB).

Names as you wish them to read on recognition: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: FFP (for education donations) or BCCB (for land and infrastructure projects) and mail to Fontana Interpretive Nature Center, 1883 125th St., Hazleton, IA 50641.

# The Otter Creek Quarterly

## Buchanan County Parks, River Accesses, and Wildlife Areas (acres)

1. Anderson Addition	1727 Baxter Ave., Jesup	(24)
2. Bearbower Sand Prairie	777 Benton Buchanan Ave., Brandon	(40)
3. Blazing Star Prairie	3022 Nolen Ave., Rowley	( 8)
4. Boies Bend Area	2465 278th St., Quasqueton	(26)
5. Bryantsburg Area	1448 Bryantsburg Blvd., Hazleton	( 2)
6. Buffalo Creek Area	2862 220th St., Winthrop	(85)
7. Buffalo Creek Wildlife Area	3217 270th St., Winthrop	(54)
8. Cortright Wildlife Area	1350 River Road Blvd., Independence	(190)
9. Crumbacher Wildlife Area	1490 240th St., Independence	(368)
10. Cutshall Area	1677 Baxter Ave., Jesup	(67)
11. Fairbank Fen	1050 Dillon Ave., Fairbank	(40)
12. Fontana Park	1883 125th St., Hazleton	(144)
13. Frogville Area	3370 Stewart Ave., Coggon	(135)
14. Guy Grover Timber and Tree Plantings	2720 Nolen Ave., Rowley	(204)
15. Ham Marsh	1747 Indiana Ave., Independence	(54)
16. Hodges & North Wildlife Area	1097 240th St., Jesup	(66)
17. Hoover Wildlife Area	3149-3 Stewart Ave., Walker	(20)
18. Iron Bridge Woodland/River Access	2707-2 Nolen Ave., Rowley	(34)
19. Jakway Forest	2791 136th St., Aurora	(315)
20. Koutny Pond/Hoffman Woods	1544-2 330th St., Brandon	(106)
21. Lime Creek Area	3205 Brandon Diagonal Blvd., Brandon	(45)
22. Mickey Fox Wildlife Area	1701 Benson Ave., Jesup	(118)
23. Newton Township Natural Area	3407-2 310th St., Ryan	(158)
24. Nibeck Area	303 North St. E., Hazleton	(33)
25. Otter Creek Roadside Park	1850 100th St., Oelwein	(13)
26. Otter Creek Wildlife Area	304 Benton St. W., Hazleton	(99)
27. Patton Prairie	1627 Quonset Ave., Aurora	(45)
28. Pine Creek Wildlife Area	2653 Gil Scout Blvd., Independence	(40)
29. Puttyroot Preserve	2408-2 262nd St., Independence	(17)
30. Quigley-Slatery Heritage Prairie	2938 180th St., Winthrop	(33)
31. Robert "Chic" McGlaughlin Easement	302 Water St., Jesup	( 5)
32. Roberts Wildlife Area	1016 160th St., Fairbank	(109)
33. Rowley Fen	2877 Lucas Ave., Rowley	(43)
34. Sand Creek Area	2763 310th St., Walker	(80)
35. Schneider-Heinick-Rowe Wildlife Area	149-2 Stewart Ave., Walker	(20)
36. Swartz Preserve	1203 Olympic Ave., Stanley	( 4)
37. Three Elms Access	2041 Three Elms Rd., Independence	(75)
38. Troy Mills Wapsi Access	3251-3 Stewart Ave., Troy Mills	(63)
39. Van Laningham Wildlife Area	1750 Pine Creek Ave., Aurora	( 3)
40. Wapsi River Access	2051 Wapsie Access Blvd., Independence	(51)
41. Wehner Woods	955 East St., Lamont	(30)

## Board Members

Ronnie Wolfe.....	Chair
Andy Crump.....	Vice Chair
Maud Bentley.....	Member
Mary Jean Blaisdell.....	Member
Orlan Love.....	Member

## Conservation Staff

Dan Cohen.....	Executive Director
Ben Bonar.....	Deputy Director
Sondra Cabell.....	Interpretive Naturalist
Michael Maas.....	Interpretive Naturalist
Mike Van Raden.....	Park Ranger
Jeremy Whittle.....	Park Ranger
Chris Hansen.....	Conservation Tech
Jacob Schwarting.....	Conservation Tech
Sam Reed.....	Naturalist Intern
Dana Kreklau.....	Office Manager
Vacant.....	Secretary/Volunteer Coord.

*Buchanan County Conservation Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age, or handicap. If anyone who believes he or she has been subject to discrimination may file a complaint with the Buchanan County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.*

## Regular Nature Center Hours

Monday-Tuesday: 8 a.m. to noon

Wednesday-Friday: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Weekends: 1-5 p.m. through October 31  
1-4 p.m. beginning November 1

For more information regarding Conservation Board activities, call 319-636-2617/[dcohen@co.buchanan.ia.us](mailto:dcohen@co.buchanan.ia.us)

## Fun during summer camp 2023



River Raiders - Upper Iowa River



Young Naturalist - solar cars



Wapsi Wanderers - Wapsipinicon River



Wee Nature Tails - bug talk



Nature Explorers - habitat day



Jesup Summer School - turtle talk