

# THE CONSERVATOR

January, 2018

THE MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER FROM POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY CONSERVATION



[Visit Our Website](#)

## Park Admission Fees to Change January 1st, 2018

Beginning January 1st, 2018 daily use & permit fees will be increasing for visitors to all Pottawattamie County Conservation Parks including Hitchcock Nature Center in Honey Creek, Arrowhead Park in Neola, Botna Bend Park in Hancock, & Narrows River Park in Council Bluffs.

Daily entrance passes will increase to \$3.00 per vehicle & still be available for purchase with exact change or check at the main gate of each park.

Annual permits have been replaced with membership to the Pottawattamie Conservation Foundation. Your new membership options support PCF's continued mission "To support conservation of natural resources through public education and to provide funding for preservation of land for habitat and public enjoyment". Three membership levels have been created for our visitors & each come with our 12-month admission permit along with additional benefits.

### **Annual Membership - \$20.00 each**

- 1 annual permit to all PCCB County Parks
- ½ day boat or canoe rental at Arrowhead Park, Neola
- A subscription to our monthly e-newsletter
- Email notification of exclusive members only events
- Discounted admission to ANCA parks including Fontenelle Forest
- A 10% discount on gift shop merchandise at the Loess Hills Lodge

### **Family Membership - \$50.00 each**

- Includes all of the Annual Membership benefits
- One additional annual permit
- A certificate for a one night cabin rental or two nights of RV camping.

### **Supporter Membership - \$100.00 each**

- Includes all Annual & Family Membership benefits
- Two tickets to the annual PCF auction & beer tasting
- Recognition at the annual PCF auction & beer tasting
- Recognition in our e-newsletter.

Memberships may still be purchased through staff at any of our parks, at the Loess Hills Lodge at Hitchcock Nature Center, & through the mail. Memberships are also available for purchase online at [www.pottawattamieconservationfoundation.com](http://www.pottawattamieconservationfoundation.com). Purchase your membership online and all materials will be mailed to you within 10 business days.

Annual permits purchased in 2017 will be honored through their current expiration date so any guest with a current permit will have continued access to our parks throughout this change. When your renewal date comes due you will be asked to purchase a membership.

For more information on the Pottawattamie Conservation Foundation & our new membership program please visit [www.pottawattamieconservationfoundation.com](http://www.pottawattamieconservationfoundation.com).

## **Fill Out Our 2017 Programming Survey and Help Us Grow**

Feedback is an important tool for our Naturalists as they look for ways to improve and grow our public programming opportunities in your county parks. Please click the link below and help us as we prepare for a new season of fun in 2018.

[Click Here to Fill Out Our Survey](#)

# NATURAL CONNECTIONS

FEBRUARY 25TH 2018

During this program families will receive the tools and training to embark on outdoor adventures of their own AND make community connections to individuals, services, and groups. Time spent outdoors and in community improves health and well-being; improving quality of life. Transportation to Botna Bend park is provided for all registered families.

## Bus Schedule

- 3:00 pm  
Bus departs from Edison Elementary in Council Bluffs
- 3:30 pm  
Bus departs from Bloomer Elementary in Council Bluffs
- 5:00 pm  
Bus departs from AHSTW Elementary in Avoca
- Edison El. bus returns
- 5:30 pm  
Bloomer El. bus returns
- 6:00 pm  
AHSTW El. bus returns

To learn more or to sign-up contact  
Rene Stroud at 712-242-1197 or  
[rene.stroud@pottcounty-ia.gov](mailto:rene.stroud@pottcounty-ia.gov)

## New Volunteer Opportunity, The Hitchcock Oak Inventory Project Beginning in 2018

The sprawling mighty oak tree remains a symbol of the American Midwest but a new, swift, and little understood disease has recently emerged in our area with the potential to eliminate these iconic trees from our landscape. Join us at Hitchcock Nature Center to be a part of a new volunteer project aimed at understanding and alleviating the effects of this new threat.

Participants will need to provide their own smartphone for data collection and must be willing to download and install the project and data collection application for use. The app is available for both iPhone & Android users. Participants are also asked to dress for the weather including appropriate footwear for outdoor terrain. A notebook, water bottle and snack are also recommended.

In partnership with The Naturalist School, Pottawattamie County Conservation's Hitchcock Oak Inventory Project is a truly original volunteer-led citizen science effort. The project aims to support researchers' effort to better understand the dramatic decline and mortality of oaks observed throughout our region. Additionally the project helps ensure that current and future generations of oaks remain part of the Hitchcock Nature Center landscape through volunteer-led protection & planting.

Volunteers interested in joining this citizen science volunteer project are asked to attend three training sessions to learn the skills necessary to participate in the project before heading out in to the hills on their own to document and tag the park's oak trees. Due to the paperwork needed to register new participants we are asking that interested parties register in advance. Please click the links below to register for each individual training session.

[February Session: 8:00 a.m. to Noon, February 24th, 2018](#)

Introduction to the project & field data collection app, oak ecology, and oak fire wounds

[June Session: Noon to 4:00 p.m., June 23rd, 2018](#)

Understanding and identifying the symptoms of oak decline in our region, review of the smartphone data collection app

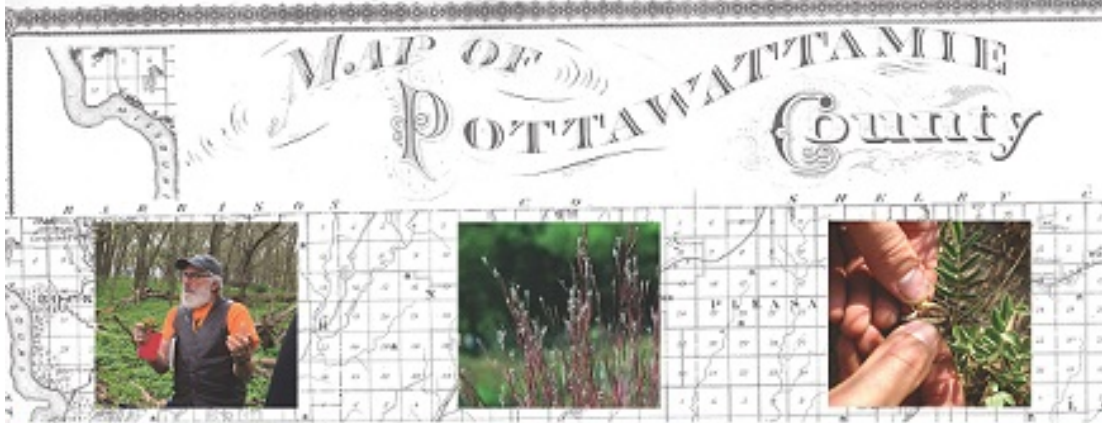
[September Session: Noon to 4:00 p.m., September 22nd, 2018](#)

Preparing oaks for fire, oak/acorn propagation & planting

While the project will benefit most from dedicated participants, project volunteers are not required to attend all three sessions, though it is recommended. Hitchcock Oak Inventory Project participants must register as volunteers of Pottawattamie County Conservation, including a background check.

Participants should note this project will require pedestrian travel over difficult terrain. Accordingly this project may be challenging for young children and those with restricted mobility.





# A Pottawattamie County ALMANAC *with RON CISAR*

*observe + engage + reflect*



Journey with legends through  
the rhythms of a Midwestern landscape.

At **Hitchcock Nature Center**  
8AM - Noon  
The second Saturday of every month,  
March through December.

\$15 per session or \$75 for the series.

Register online at [www.pottcoconservation.com](http://www.pottcoconservation.com).



Questions? Go online or call 712-545-3283.



## **A Pottawattamie County Almanac with Ron Cisar**

Join us at Hitchcock Nature Center for a new program guided by Aldo Leopold's classic work, *A Sand County Almanac*. Classes will occur at Hitchcock Nature Center and will follow the natural rhythms and timings of Pottawattamie County's Midwestern setting. Activities will provide students with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the natural world around them and will include guided hikes, aquatic studies, native prairie and woodland investigations, guest lectures, journaling, sketching, invasive species studies, and more.

A Pottawattamie County Almanac is intended for people of all experience levels and walks of life, and from all areas of the Midwest; anyone interested is encouraged to attend.

Participants should note that classes will be held at Hitchcock Nature Center, located on the western edge of Iowa's Loess Hills and will at times require pedestrian travel over difficult terrain; some sessions may be physically challenging. Much of each session will occur out-of-doors and participants should come prepared for weather and the elements. This program is being presented as part of our adult education program, we ask that all participants be age 15 & over please.

Classes will occur monthly, March through December, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. with a free introductory class kicking off the series on March 10th, 2018.

To maintain an effective teacher-to-student ratio, class size will be limited and early registration is encouraged. A spot in each of the 10 classes can be reserved for \$75.00 per person. While intended to be taken as a series, individual classes can be attended for \$15.00 per class per person. Please understand that space in individual classes is subject to availability.

March 10th, 2018 - Free Introductory Class

March 24th, 2018

April 14th, 2018

May 12th, 2018

June 9th, 2018

July 14th, 2018

August 11th, 2018

September 8th, 2018

October 13th, 2018

November 10th, 2018

December 15th, 2018

[Click Here to Register for the Free Introductory Class](#)

For more information on this exciting new adult education opportunity please visit our website, [www.pottcoconservation.com](http://www.pottcoconservation.com) or call 712-545-3283 for more details.

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY  
CONSERVATION PRESENTS

# Native Gardening with Benjamin Vogt

at Hitchcock Nature Center

COME LEARN FROM NOTABLE AUTHOR AND SPEAKER BENJAMIN  
VOGT HOW TO PLANT A BEAUTIFUL NATIVE GARDEN FOR  
YEAR-ROUND ENJOYMENT.

2PM

**February 17th**

PLANNING AND PLANT CHOICES

**March 17th**

PLANTING FOR POLLINATORS

**April 14th**

WINTER WILDLIFE HABITAT

**\$10 per session**

Register at [www.pottcoconservation.com](http://www.pottcoconservation.com)

Questions call 712-545-3283

To learn more about Benjamin Vogt and native gardening

Go to Monarch Gardens LLC

[www.monarchgard.com](http://www.monarchgard.com)

## Upcoming Programs

### **Guided Family Snowshoe Hike**

[1:00 p.m. Saturday, January 27th](#)

[1:00 p.m. Saturday, February 24th](#)

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek

Families with children ages 5 to 11 are invited to strap on some snowshoes & discover your own winter wonderland during the Family Snowshoe Hike at Hitchcock Nature Center.

Children must be at least 5 years old to participate. [Read More ...](#)

### **Guided Snowshoe Hike**

[3:00 p.m. Saturday, January 27th](#)

[3:00 p.m. Saturday, February 24th](#)

## **Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek**

Join Pottawattamie County Conservation staff on a snowshoeing adventure through the beautiful Loess Hills. This workshop is designed for participants age 12 & over. Please note participants must be age 12 or over to participate. [Read More ...](#)

### **Adult Guided Night Hike**

6:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 27th

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek

Participants age 18 & over are invited to join us at Hitchcock Nature Center on Saturday, January 27th at 6:00 p.m. for a guided night hike as we explore Hitchcock Nature Center and the Loess Hills in the dark. [Read More ...](#)

### **Family Guided Night Hike**

6:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 27th

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek

Families are invited to join us at Hitchcock Nature Center as we explore the Loess Hills at night. [Read More...](#)

### **Breakfast With the Birds**

8:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, February 3rd

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek

Beginning birders are invited to enjoy breakfast at the park, a birding class & a live bird banding demonstration during this special event featuring Nic Salick. [Read More ...](#)

### **Bird Banding Demonstration**

9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, February 3rd

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek

Come get a "bird's eye" view of our fine-feathered friends as you join volunteers for a live songbird banding at Hitchcock Nature Center. [Read More ...](#)

### **Native Earth Skills: Winter Edition**

12:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 3rd

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek

Join Naturalist & experienced Native Earth Skills practitioner Dustin Clayton as he discusses and demonstrates common skills and techniques of eastern Nebraska and western Iowa's native cultures. [Read More ...](#)

### **Homeschool in the Hills: Winter Wonders**

10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Morning Session

1:00 to 2:30 p.m. Afternoon Session

Tuesday, February 6th

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek



Area homeschool students and educators are invited to join us at Hitchcock Nature Center for a series of field trips designed to focus on nature throughout the seasons at Hitchcock Nature Center. [Read More ...](#)

### **Families Love Nature**

3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 10th

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek

Join us at the park from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. & enjoy crafts, activities, guided hikes and much more as you and your family discover all kinds of things to love about nature! [Read More ...](#)

### **Sweethearts Love Nature**

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 10th

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek

Join us for a sweet time at Hitchcock Nature Center as we get ready for Valentine's Day and find romance in Iowa's Loess Hills. [Read More ...](#)

### **Native Gardening: Planning & Plant Choices**

2:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 17th

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek

Join author, poet, and conservationist Benjamin Vogt for a series of classes designed to help you plan, plant, and cultivate your own native plant garden. [Read More ...](#)

### **Hitchcock Oak Inventory Project February Training**

8:00 a.m. to Noon

Saturday, February 24th

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek

The February training session will introduce new volunteers to the program including the project & field data collection app, oak ecology, & oak fire wounds. [Read More ...](#)

### **Natural Connections**

4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 25th

Botna Bend Park, Hancock

Families will receive the tools & training to embark on outdoor adventures of the own and make community connections to individuals, services, and groups aimed at assisting families. [Read More ...](#)

Kate Simmons, Community Relations Coordinator  
Pottawattamie County Conservation  
[katherine.simmons@pottcounty-ia.gov](mailto:katherine.simmons@pottcounty-ia.gov)

STAY CONNECTED:

 Hitchcock Nature Center  Arrowhead Park  Botna Bend Park  Narrows River Park

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