

THE CONSERVATOR

February, 2018

THE MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER FROM POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY CONSERVATION



Visit Our Website

New Park Admission Fees & Membership Program for 2018

2018 brought a change in park admission fees 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 have increased to \$3.00 per vehicle & still be available for purchase with exact change or check at the main gate of each park.

We have replaced our 12 month annual permits with a 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 some great additional benefits. Each membership level pays for itself and then some!

Annual Membership - \$20.00 each

- 1 annual permit to all PCCB County Parks (\$10 Value)
- ½ day boat or canoe rental at Arrowhead Park, Neola (\$20 Value)
- 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 (\$30 Value)
- One additional annual permit (\$10 Value)
- A certificate for a one night cabin rental or two nights of RV camping. (\$51.50 Value)

Supporter Membership - \$100.00 each

- Includes all Annual & Family Membership benefits (\$91.50 Value)
- Two tickets to the annual PCF auction & beer tasting (\$100 Value)
- 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. 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.

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](#)

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.

A Pottawattamie County Conservation Project

Big or small, every effort counts.

HITCHCOCK OAK INVENTORY PROJECT

Starting February 24, 2018

Volunteers Needed.



Help us document and protect the mighty oaks of Hitchcock Nature Center.

We'll provide the tools. You provide the time.

To learn more and to register for training, scan here:  or log on to www.pottawattamieconservation.com.

For questions not answered online, call 712-328-5831.

 The Hitchcock Oak Inventory Project is Proudly Supported By REAP

Participants will need to provide their own smartphone for data collection and must be willing to download and install the 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.

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 register in advance to attend three training sessions that will help you 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 signs 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 prescribed 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.

PCCB Seeking Outerwear Donations for Upcoming Event

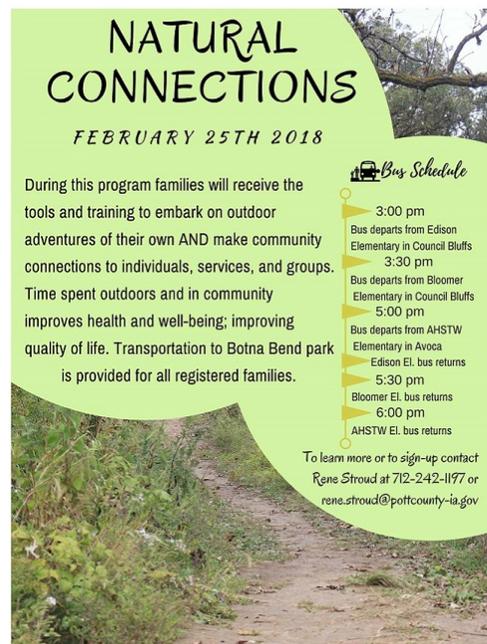
Pottawattamie County Conservation is currently seeking donations of gently used cold weather & outdoor gear to be distributed during our Natural Connections event on February 25th at Botna Bend Park.

Natural Connections is a brand new program aimed at providing access and the beginning tools needed for families to get outdoors. During this program we aim to distribute outdoor gear that will make heading outdoors easier & more enjoyable for attendees & alleviate the costs associated with outdoor activities.

We are looking for donations of children's & adult size outerwear including: coats, snow or rain boots, snow or rain pants, hats, gloves, scarves, socks, etc. Donated items will be distributed to Natural Connections attendees to help them enjoy the great outdoors as a family.

Donations may be dropped off at Hitchcock Nature Center or Botna Bend Park through Wednesday, February 21st. Donations at Hitchcock Nature Center can be dropped off at the Loess Hills Lodge foyer during regular park hours of 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. You can also deliver your donated items to the office at Botna Bend Park from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For questions & more information on this new program please contact Rene Stroud, Naturalist at 712-545-3283.



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.

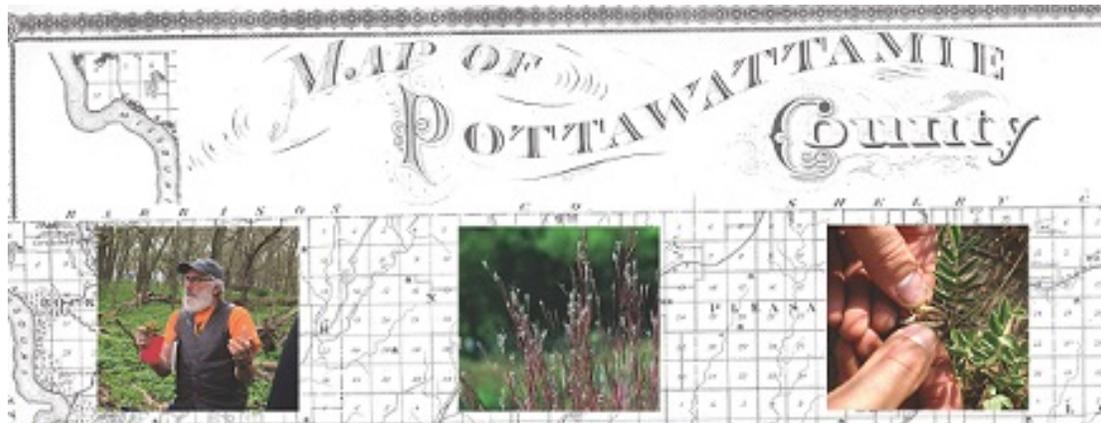
Bus Schedule

- 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
- 5:30 pm
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 712-242-1177 or
rene.stroud@pottcounty-ia.gov

Register for the Pottawattamie County Almanac Free Introductory Session on March 10th

This free program is designed to introduce the public to our new program, **A Pottawattamie County Almanac**. Based on the Aldo Leopold classic *A Sand County Almanac* & instructed by Ron Cisar, this free intro class kicks off a 10-month series of classes inspired and guided by Leopold's best-known work, his lasting legacy, and his challenge to generations.



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.



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



Flood Damage Closes the Loess Hills Lodge

2018 started with a bang & a burst for staff at the Loess Hills Lodge at Hitchcock Nature Center. The extreme cold temperatures caused an external water line to freeze & rupture flooding the building.

Damage to the staff kitchen, welcome desk & southern half of the gallery necessitated the closing of the gallery

& welcome desk to all visitors for the month of January. Flooding was not confined to the main floor unfortunately. Water worked its way through the walls & ceiling causing major damage to basement offices & the Environmental Education preparation room & supply storage area.

We'd like to send a special thank you to Cindy Schmader and the ServiceMaster team for their quick and dedicated response. ServiceMaster's efforts dried things out quickly and just may have saved the gallery's one-of-a-kind wood floors. We are on the road to recovery!

Thank you all for your patience and support during this closure. While some of our downstairs rooms are still in recovery mode, the Loess Hills Lodge gallery is now back open to the public. We're looking forward to seeing you in the gallery soon!



Upcoming Programs

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, & much more as you & 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 & 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, & conservationist Benjamin Vogt for a series of classes designed to help you plan, plant, and cultivate your own native 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 & make community connections to individuals, services, and groups aimed at assisting families. [Read More ...](#)

Bird Banding Demonstration

9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, March 3rd

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek

Get a "birds eye" view during this live song bird banding demonstration. [Read More ...](#)

Children's Maple Tree Tap

9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. Sessions

Saturday, March 3rd

Botna Bend Park, Hancock

Families with children ages 6 & under are invited to join us for this special maple tree tapping program geared toward younger learners. [Read More ...](#)

Maple Tree Tap

9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. Sessions

Saturday, March 3rd

Botna Bend Park, Hancock

Join us for the 25th annual Maple Tree Tap & learn the basics of syrup making from tapping the trees to bottling the final product. [Read More ...](#)

A Pottawattamie County Almanac - Free Introductory Class

8:00 a.m.

Saturday, March 10th

Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek

Join us at Hitchcock Nature Center as we introduce a brand new program guided by Aldo Leopold's classic work, *A Sand County Almanac*. [Read More ...](#)

Kate Simmons, Community Relations Coordinator
Pottawattamie County Conservation
katherine.simmons@pcccounty-ia.gov

STAY CONNECTED:

 Hitchcock Nature Center  Arrowhead Park  Botna Bend Park  Narrows River Park

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[Visit our blog](#)