

Sioux County Conservation Newsletter



Volume 24, Issue 3

Winter 2015/2016

Project Updates:

Sandy Hollow Recreation Area: has seen updates done to the second cart shed. Work has been done to insulate, add a classroom and restroom, and transform the remainder of the building into a BB gun range.

Big Sioux Recreation Area: This fall we started laying out and placing the water and electrical lines for additional campsites. These sites will be located at the main entrance of the park. There will be an additional 19 sites added, along with a dump station for all users to use, and a modern comfort station.

Oak Grove Park: many visitors have noted the change to the Oak Grove Lodge on their recent visits. We have gotten the new roof, siding, windows and doors on the facility. After the holidays the plan is to continue work on the facility and bring the inside up to date as well.

Repairs have also started on our Eagles Nest cabin. With some moisture problems in the crawl space of the facility the flooring has gone bad. Work is underway to replace and update the flooring.

The staff has been busy keeping the snow cleared from the road ways in the main parks. This time of year many of our park signs disappear for a few weeks for maintenance and repainting. Time was spent this fall stocking many of our local ponds with fish again. The ponds were stocked with perch, bluegill, walleye, and crappie. The areas that were stocked are: Sandy Hollow Rec Area, Big Sioux Rec Area, Bruce Schomaker Rec Area, Moeller Fishing Wildlife Area, Vande Weerd Pit, Floyd River Wildlife Area C south of Alton, and Winterfeld Pond.

Reminder Annual passes expire December 31, 2015. New passes for the 2016 year are available for purchase for the Big Sioux Recreation Area and Sandy Hollow Recreation Area.

A vehicle pass is required at both of these areas, and may be purchased at each gate. Annual passes \$20, additional passes may be purchased on the same day for an additional \$10. Vehicle must be from same household. One pass is valid at both areas.

Funds from these passes will go back into the parks for updates and additional projects.

Upcoming Programs...

Must **pre-register** for all programs, sign up online at <http://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Sioux.aspx> or call Sunday Ford at 712-552-3057. **Weather related** cancellations will be aired on 93.9 FM

January 23- Public Ice Fishing/Snowshoe Program- Big Sioux Rec Area

Join the Sioux County Conservation Board's staff for a morning on the ice. We will meet at the Big Sioux Recreation Area, just south of Hawarden starting at 10am. Bring your own lunch and bucket to sit on, and we will provide the rest! Holes will be drilled; bait and equipment discussed, and types of fish shown. Snowshoes will also be available pending snow depth. No cost for the program, free admission to the park during the program. Pre-registration is required call 712/552-3057 or online.



February 19- Owl Prowl- Oak Grove Park



February is a great time for hearing owls during their courtship and egg-laying. Let's take a night hike to call owls from 6 -8 pm. Meet at the Big Sioux Shelter parking lot. We will hike and call Barred, Great Horned, and Screech Owls. Meet a live captive barred owl. Dress warmly and bring a flashlight (all flashlights should be covered in red cloth or cellophane). Pre-register by calling 712-552-3057 or online.

February 27- Ladies Hunter Education- Sandy Hollow Rec Area

Go to www.iowadnr.gov to register for a hunter safety field day at Sandy Hollow Rec Area, near Sioux Center. This class is for ladies and daughters ages 11 and over. An online course must be completed before class. No cost, potluck lunch. Class will be from 9am- 3pm, including live fire. Preregistration is required. Hunter Safety instructors Eric Oordt and Sunday Ford will teach the class.

Seasonal Job Opportunities:

There will be openings available for seasonal maintenance staff positions at the Big Sioux Recreation Area, Sandy Hollow Rec. Area and Oak Grove. Primary duties may include but not limited to: sanitation, vehicle maintenance, camper registration, monitoring of parks and campgrounds, mowing, trimming, firewood splitting, and many more tasks.

Registration Booth staff openings at the Big Sioux Recreation Area. Primary task include but not limited to: registering vehicles upon entering park, selling firewood and snacks, renting canoes and kayaks, and sanitation.

For more information contact our main office at 712-552-1047 or you may go online to print off a copy of job application. www.mycountyparks.com/county/sioux/asp

There are two naturalist intern positions open for the summer months. These two positions will assist with county environment education programs and summer camps throughout the Sioux County area. Positions are based out of Oak Grove. Applicants interested in pursuing a career in education or conservation preferred. If interested in applying please send resume with two references to: Sunday Ford, Oak Grove Park 4051 Cherry Ave, Hawarden, IA 51023.

Foundation Note...

By: Sunday Ford Assistant Dir/Naturalist

The Sioux County Conservation Foundation has been busy this fall with the Sioux County Nature Center Project. Many small group meetings have taken place in our communities, as well as interviews as we finish our feasibility study with the Renaissance Group. The feasibility report will be presented to the Foundation in January so that the Foundation Board and Conservation Board may make plans on how to go forward with this project. Other community presentations will happen this winter and spring, so please help show your support by attending!

What are the plans for Sandy Hollow Recreation Area??

This has been a very popular question to our staff and board members. While there are many things that have occurred that are noticeable, there have been many things occurring that have not been visible to the general public. Over the past year we have done many updates to the campground comfort station including: painting, lowering stall walls, finishing off the stall walls with caps, installing stall doors, and new lighting. Fire rings have been replaced through the campground. We have also removed the open shelter near the pond and replaced with an updated shelter house. The cart sheds: have been painted on the outside. Inside the first one is the indoor archery range, and work is underway in the second building to transform it into a BB gun range for use of the many youth groups out there and our naturalist programs. Inside this building we have added a classroom space, restrooms, painted and insulated the facility. Maintenance buildings have been painted on the outside, new doors and windows added, workbench, added a heating unit, updated restrooms and made a breakroom for staff. Our staff has also been removing dead trees and replacing new ones throughout the park.

What will I see in the future happening at Sandy Hollow?

In the future we plan on adding some cabins, taking down the south cart shed, possibly connect and dredge the ponds, restore the swimming hole, update and redo the swimming bathhouse. Work will continue in the old golf course to transform it into a natural prairie. This will take a few years to accomplish; work that has been done include: burning portions of the land: spraying areas to kill what is growing: and planting ten to twelve acres into native grass and forbs. Native prairie takes a few years to start looking like a prairie. The clubhouse will undergo some transformation inside to make more usable space for renters. Updates will be done in the campground to add newer picnic tables, pave and upgrade sites, and tankless toilets will be added to the comfort station.

What can I do at the Sandy Hollow Recreation Area this winter?

This winter you can spend time exploring the trails on snowshoe or cross country skis, bird watching, and ice fishing of the ponds. Join the archery club by going online to www.mycountyparks.com/county/sioux.aspx; or rent the shelter facility for your next family gathering 712-552-1047.

As a reminder this area does have a season or day pass to enter and use the facilities, all proceeds of these passes will go back into the area to continue with the updates.



New open shelter



Indoor BB gun range

Sioux County Conservation Board



If you would like to be added to the newsletter mailing list please send a postcard with your name and address to:

Sioux County Conservation Board
Oak Grove Park
4051 Cherry Ave.
Hawarden, IA 51023

Sioux County Conservation Board
712/552-1047
soococon@siouxcounty.org
www.mycountyparks.com
www.siouxcountyparks.com

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Dave Meylink- Vice Chairperson
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Sunday Ford- Assistant Director/Naturalist
Jessica Van Oort- Office Assistant
Myron Dekkers- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech. - Oak Grove
Zach Weyer- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech- Sandy Hollow
Alex Lynott- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech- Big Sioux Rec. Area
Damon Anderson- Park Ranger/Maint. Tech- Oak Grove

Meetings

Held the first Wednesday after the 3rd of the month at 6:30 pm
at the Administration Office in Oak Grove.

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Sioux County Conservation Board
Oak Grove Park
4051 Cherry Ave
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