



THE TRIBUTARY

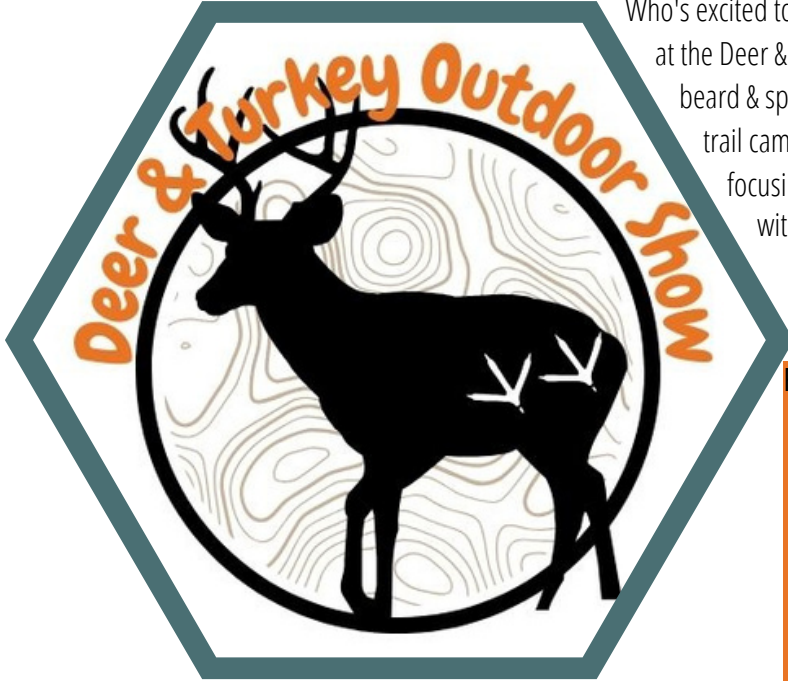
Winter 2024

NEWSLETTER FOR MITCHELL COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION



Frosty morning at Cedar Bridge Park

DEER & TURKEY OUTDOOR EXPO!



Who's excited to get outside this spring?! We are - and hope you are too after joining us at the Deer & Turkey Outdoor Show! We want to see your deer & shed antlers, turkey beard & spurs, pheasant tail feathers & mounts, trophy fish mounts, duck mounts, trail cam pictures, and more no matter how big or small! This year we are focusing on ALL things hunting, fishing, and outdoors and sharing the prizes with everyone! **Bring an exhibit? Get entered in a drawing for great prizes! Just come for fun? Enter our raffle for great door prizes! Feelin' lucky? Enter our bow shoot or other fun games and win great outdoor gear!**

Featured events this year:

- Archery Shoot - bracketed by age - 12 and under, 13-17, and 18+
- ALL Wildlife mount exhibits (deer, turkey, waterfowl, pheasant, fish, etc.)
- Raffle Prizes
- Trail Camera photo gallery
- Kids Shed hunt @ 10 & 1
- Falconry demonstration @ 11 & 2
- Raffles & Games throughout the day
- Food truck
- Outdoor vendors like local lockers, outdoor gear & equipment, hunting & fishing conservation groups, taxidermists, conservation professionals, etc.
- Official deer & turkey scoring

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For Scoring:

Legally harvested animals
White-tailed Deer and Eastern Wild Turkey only
Skull plate must be intact, unless entering shed
Skulls must be clean (European mount) and dried
Entries accepted until 2:30

All proceeds benefit the Mitchell County Conservation to purchase a broadcast seeder to be used to plant food plots and other native prairie seedings for wildlife habitat.

January Public Program



Natural Soapmaking

JANUARY 27

Start 2024 off clean and green with this fun, hands-on class! Naturalist Chelsea Ewen Rowcliffe will help you discover the history, chemistry, process, and benefits of making your own homemade soap. The best part of this class is customizing and taking home your own unique soap!

Whether you are using it as gifts, or for personal use, you're sure to be hooked on your first batch!

We will also have materials on hand to make some other natural care products, like lip balm, lotion, and sugar body scrub.

There is a \$15 supplies fee, or \$10 if you are an Environmental Education Foundation member.

Call Chelsea at (641) 732-5204 to register.

Space is limited, so sign up today!

If you enjoy participating in the programs Mitchell County Conservation/Environmental Education Foundation offers, appreciate the use of outdoor equipment and trails, or just want to ensure the youth, families, residents, and visitors to Mitchell County get to spend time in and understand the importance of conserving our natural resources - **please consider joining the Mitchell County Environmental Education Foundation!**

Your membership, donation of time & talents, and/or monetary support can make an even larger impact when used for grant matches and opportunities like those listed here.

See how to become a member on page 6.



“The Mitchell County Environmental Education Foundation creates public awareness, promotes responsible stewardship, and expands support for the conservation of our natural resources and cultural heritage.”

February Public Programs



Building Better Birders

February 3rd

8:30 AM

“Common Feeder Birds of Iowa” Presentation



Are you a beginning birder, expert in avians, or somewhere in between? Then this is the program for you! We offer a variety of high-quality workshops designed to prepare you for the next step in your birding education. Building Better Birders is a programming series designed to improve the bird identification skills of local citizens & promote a greater interest in citizen science programming. This workshop will be conducted by Kelly McKay (BioEco Research and Monitoring Center) in conjunction with Mitchell County Conservation. Kelly McKay is a recognized leader in the birding field throughout the Midwest. His 40 years of experience in the field as an avian researcher and educator makes these workshops special! Workshops are presented free of charge & supported by the Resource Enhancement and Protection - Conservation Education Program (REAP-CEP). These programs are open to all ages but are geared toward participants age 12 & over.

PLEASE CALL TO PRE-REGISTER to ensure supplies for all attendees.

Attendees may register for all programs or may select the ones that most interest them.

8:30 AM –10 AM “Common Feeder Birds of Iowa” Presentation

10 AM-Noon Build Your Own Bird Feeder

Noon –1 PM Lunch Break

1 PM-2 PM Bird Hike at Milton R. Owen Nature Center

Where Passion for Birds Meets Education - Building a Community of Lifelong Learners and Citizen Scientists!



Build-Your-Own Birdfeeder
 10 AM Feb 3rd



Winter blues got you down? How about adding some “wild color” into your life by feeding wintertime birds! Join Mitchell County Conservation Naturalist, Chelsea Ewen Rowcliffe for a fun morning learning about winter birding. This free program will be offered Saturday, February 3rd from 10 AM to Noon at the Milton R. Owen Nature Center. This program is part of the “Building Better Birders” workshop and a continuation of a morning presentation on Common Feeder Birds. Participants will learn about winter bird feeding, what species are visiting feeders, and how to attract the most birds to your backyard. We will also be making bird feeders to take home.

Please call the nature center at (641) 732-5204 to sign up to ensure we have enough supplies.

February Public Programs Cont.

February 3rd
1 PM
Milton R. Owen
Nature Center



Building Better Birders
Winter Bird Walk



Winter is an excellent time for bird watching! Bare trees give excellent glimpses of our feathered friends and their songs warm the chill air. Enjoy a leisurely walk around the nature center viewing birds to finish out our 3-part series of "Building Better Birders"! Birding expert Kelly McKay and MCCB Naturalist Chelsea Rowcliffe will guide you through the winter woods listening, watching, and identifying birds along the way. Dress for the weather and wear comfortable winter boots. Binoculars, bird ID guides, and hot beverages will be provided.

Please call our office at (641) 732-5204 to register.

Building Better Birders is a programming series designed to improve the bird identification skills of local citizens & promote a greater interest in citizen science programming. This workshop will be conducted by Kelly McKay (BioEco Research and Monitoring Center) in conjunction with Mitchell County Conservation. Kelly McKay is a recognized leader in the birding field throughout the Midwest. His 40 years of experience in the field as an avian researcher and educator makes these workshops special! Workshops are presented free of charge & supported by the Resource Enhancement and Protection - Conservation Education Program (REAP-CEP). These programs are open to all ages but are geared toward participants age 12 & over.

Winter is for the Birds!

The Great Backyard
Bird Count



Feeding and observing birds during the winter is a great way to engage with nature and add a little color and music to a sometimes LONG winter. If you enjoy birds, there are some great citizen-scientist programs that YOU can be involved with!

The Great Backyard Bird Count - Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count is a citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds. Now, more than 160,000 people of all ages and walks of life worldwide join the four-day count each February to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds. We invite you to participate! Simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, February 16-19, 2024 . Please visit <https://www.birdcount.org/> for more information.



Project FeederWatch - November 1 through the end of April. Count birds at your feeders for two days in a row and upload your information to <https://feederwatch.org>

eBird—www.ebird.org A free App for year-round counting. Data is submitted to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

eBird

Why count birds?

Scientists use information and observations from these volunteer based projects other citizen-science projects to get the “big picture” about what is happening to bird populations.

Don't forget to check in on the Decorah Eagles beginning in February for nesting season! You can watch the live stream video anytime at

<https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/decorah-north-nest/>

Winter 2024 Calendar of Events



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
JANUARY						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Cross-Country Skiing and Sledding Hill available pending favorable snow/weather conditions

Beaver trapping open until April 15th

Tour of Lights Show @ Cedar Bridge Cabin until Jan 6th

10th - End of Late Archery Deer & Turkey, Late Muzzleloader, and Pheasant Season

13th - End of Dark & Light Goose Season

14th - March 31st - Crow Season

25th - Full "Wolf" Moon

27th - Natural Soapmaking Class - Call to Pre-register

31st - End of Bobwhite Quail, Gray Partridge, Ruffed Grouse, Squirrel, HUNTING Season



S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
MARCH						1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
24	25	26	27	28			

Cross-Country Skiing and Sledding Hill available pending favorable snow/weather conditions

Beaver trapping open until April 15th

8th & 9th - Hunter Education Course

13th - Maple Syrup Program

16th - Deer & Turkey Outdoor Expo

25th - Full "Snow" Moon

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
FEBRUARY				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

Cross-Country Skiing and Sledding Hill available pending favorable snow/weather conditions

Beaver trapping open until April 15th

3rd - Building Better Birders - Presentation

3rd - Build Your Own Birdfeeder

3rd - Winter Bird Walk

10th - Sweetheart Ski - Wapsi Welcome Center - Riceville

24th - Full "Snow" Moon

28th - End of Cottontail Rabbit Opossum, Badger, Striped Skunk, and Fox HUNTING Season and End of Coyote, Mink, Muskrat, Weasel, Striped Skunk, Badger, Opossum, Fox, and Otter TRAPPING seasons.



MITCHELL COUNTY



With our ever increasing “plugged-in” world, exposure to and understanding of our natural world is more important than ever. The Mitchell County Environmental Education Foundation strives to support quality environmental education programs for ALL residents and visitors of Mitchell County. Our goals include providing financial support through memberships for programs that educate and train the public, as well as increase access to such programs through interactive displays, events, and volunteers. Program topics include ecology, local plants and animals, geology, outdoor recreation skills, recycling, human & land relationships, and many more. Consider supporting environmental education by becoming a member today!

“The Mitchell County Environmental Education Foundation creates public awareness, promotes responsible stewardship, and expands support for the conservation of our natural resources and cultural heritage.”



Recent projects funded through the MCEEF:
 New Fat-Tire Bikes & Equipment
 New Educational and Outdoor Recreation Supplies
 New A/V Equipment for educational videos

INTERPRETIVE PLAN FOR THE NATURE CENTER!
YOUR DONATION can make it a reality!!!

Benefits of being a member...

- Early signup for camps, trips, and limited classes
- Recognition on our donor wall for \$50+ donation
- Tax-deductible donation
- Input on Projects, Events, & Programs
- Volunteer opportunities
- Reduced registration prices for classes, or “members only” programs



BECOME A MEMBER

Yes! I want to join MCEEF!

Additional Family Names/Memorial Inquiries:

Name/Organization

Address

City State Zip Code

Phone

Email

Membership Levels

- Student \$10
- Individual \$25
- Family (2+ people) \$40
- Senior (60+) \$20
- Memorial **Ask about options**
- VOLUNTEER!**
 - Fundraising
 - Nature Center Host
 - Event/Program Volunteer
 - Other Talent?

Donor Levels

- Sugar Creek \$50
- Spring Creek \$51 - \$100
- Turtle Creek \$101-\$250
- Little Wapsi \$251-\$500
- Burr Oak \$501-\$1000
- Little Cedar \$1000 +
- Red Cedar \$5000+

Make checks payable to:
 MCEEF
 1879-3 Highway 9
 Osage, IA 50461

This is a TAX EXEMPT Donation!

February Public Programs

Take your sweetie for a fun ski/stroll down the luminary-lit Wapsi-Great western Line trail in Riceville! The trailhead is located at 110 East Main Street in Riceville. Mitchell County Conservation will have cross-country skis available to try for free, or bring your own ski/snowshoe gear. We will also have a bonfire for warming up, with s'mores and hot cocoa. If there is no snow, we invite you to take a stroll down the trail instead. Contact Chelsea at (641) 330-0765 and watch our Facebook page for more information and weather-related updates. Hope to see you and your sweetie on the trail!



FEB
10
5-8 PM

SWEETHEART SKI/STROLL

WAPSI-GREAT WESTERN
LINE TRAIL HEAD

RICEVILLE

SNOW many ways to enjoy the outdoors this winter!



To the west of the Milton R. Owen Nature Center is a great sledding hill that the public is welcome to use any time. Just bring your own sled and race to the bottom! Please park on the west edge of the parking lot to ensure sledder safety.

Weather permitting, we will also have cross-country skiing available. MCCB has acquired a new grooming machine, with which we will hopefully be able to groom more areas. MCCB currently grooms about 3 miles of cross-country ski trails around the Nature Center. We have ski boots, skis, and poles ranging from size 1 to adult 15! The cross-country equipment is free for the public. The cross country ski trails and sledding hill are open anytime for those with their own equipment. If you would like to use MCCB's



equipment, please visit us during the following hours:

Tuesday-Friday from 8:00-4:00

Saturday & Sunday 1:00-4:00



For our Fat-tire bike enthusiasts, be sure to check out the "Junkyard Goat" trail at the Milton R. Owen Nature Center! The trail begins near the Cedar River Greenbelt Trailhead, on the north side of the driveway. The Junkyard Goat is approximately 1.3 miles of trail winding through the backwater and wooded area of the Falk Wildlife Area. For more information on Mitchell County

FAT-TIRE TO MCINTIRE



Singletrack trails, please visit "Mitchell County Singletrack" on Facebook, or <https://www.mtbproject.com/trail/7053420/junkyard-goat>. Our local Fat-tire bike club—the Mitchell County Mountain Goats—is also to thank for volunteering to help with Cross-country Ski rentals on the weekends. Please let them know we appreciate their time!

For more Fat-Tire Fun, be sure to check out the "Fat Tire to McIntire" event on February 11th! Meet at Wapsi Great Western Line Trail head at 10 AM to register.

Winter is also a great time for birdwatching, wildlife tracking, nature photography, geocaching, and playing in the snow! Let us know which of our county areas is your favorite! We love to share pictures of people enjoying the outdoors and the beautiful nature photos you capture, so be sure to "like" us and share your photos on our Facebook page.



Looking for a little rustic getaway? Check out our Pinicon Alders Cabin near McIntire! This log cabin is set back in the woods of Pinicon Alders Wildlife Area and rents for \$50/night. It features a loft with three futons, wood stove, electricity, dorm refrigerator, microwave, three futons in the living room, custom kitchen table, and outdoor campfire pit and picnic tables. It does not have running water, but has a nice pit toilet nearby. Call the Mitchell County Conservation office at (641) 732-5204 for availability.

March Public Programs

HUNTER EDUCATION COURSE

MARCH 8TH & 9TH

5-8 FRIDAY
9-4 SATURDAY



MILTON R. OWEN
NATURE CENTER
OSAGE, IA

Hunter education is a mandatory program that is designed to introduce students to several life-long skills that are important to many different types of outdoor recreational opportunities. The course teaches students basic survival and first aid skills, water safety, wildlife identification, the basics of wildlife management, hunting laws and firearm/archery safety. Hunter education also stresses the importance of individual responsibility and outdoor ethics. The safety, recruitment, and retention of hunters are important in continuing the tradition of hunting in Iowa's GREAT Outdoors! Iowa law requires that anyone born after January 1, 1972 must be certified in hunter education before they are eligible to purchase an Iowa hunting license. This class is prioritized for students 12 years old, but can accommodate students that are 11 years old if necessary. **Students are asked to bring a sack lunch and something to drink on Friday and Saturday, as the course will continue through meal hours. PLEASE WEAR/BRING OUTDOOR GEAR as we will go outside during different portions of instruction. All other teaching materials and firearms & safety equipment will be provided. Students must successfully complete BOTH days of class to earn their certificate. This class is FREE, but students NEED to pre-register** by registering online with the Go Outdoors Iowa Event Registration System. Please visit: www.gooutdoorsiowa.com to login or create a new account. Once logged in, you can find and register for the class under "Events/Classes—Search Events" in the upper left area of the page.

You can also sign up here: <https://license.gooutdoorsiowa.com/Event/ViewEvent.aspx>.

You can also call Chelsea at (641) 330-0765 for assistance with registration.

Please Note: When you are registering a child for this course please be sure to login as the child you are wishing to register or create an account for that child and do not login or register yourself unless you are wanting to take the course yourself for certification. Students who have previously purchased Iowa DNR licenses, such as youth deer tags, will already have an Iowa DNR account and should register for this course using *their* personal information.

Maple Syruping!

March 13th

5:30 PM

Milton R. Owen Nature Center

With the county seat of Osage being the "City of Maples", what better way to break the winter blues than learning about the liquid gold that flows for free each spring—MAPLE SYRUP! Join Naturalist Chelsea Ewen Rowcliffe for a demonstration of how to harvest this sweet treat. We'll cover how to identify maple trees, the equipment needed, "tapping" the trees, and turning sap in to syrup!

This program is free and open to the public, but **please call our office to sign up**. We will be going on a leisurely walk around the Nature Center, so please wear outdoor shoes and weather appropriate clothing. Of course, this program wouldn't be complete without a sampling of the sweet stuff, too!

RECENT RECYCLING NEWS & THE LANDFILL LATEST

FMC Landfill - 3354 330th Street Elma, IA 50628

www.fmclandfill.org

Happy New Year! We hope you made a resolution to do more recycling and create less waste in 2024. The FMC Landfill and Mitchell County Recycling Center provide

many opportunities to recycle and dispose of waste properly. Here is a quick list of acceptable/non-acceptable items at the landfill and recycling center. Please visit the FMC website for more information and great ideas on recycling and proper waste disposal.

Acceptable

- Paper & Cardboard
- Metals (aluminum, tin cans, empty aerosol cans)
- Plastic #1-#5 & #7
- Batteries (in special recycle bin)
- Triple Rinse farm plastic containers
- Appliances
- Tires
- TVs/Electronics

Non-acceptable

- Waxed paper
- Tissue-type paper
- Pet food or fertilizer bags
- Wrapping paper
- Photographs
- Greasy or wax coated cardboard
- Plastic Bags, Lids, Unmarked plastics
- Plastic containing oils
- Styrofoam

2023 Disposal Data



30,180+
Waste (tons)



3.9+
Cardboard/Recycling (tons)



2,900+
Triple Rinse Plastic Containers Recycled (pounds)



19,358+
Electronics Recycled (pounds)



1,544+
Batteries Recycled (pounds)



20,642+
Appliances/CRT's Recycled (pounds)



Don't forget about the Swap Shop for those winter home projects! The Swap Shop area contains many used quantities of paints, stains, varnishes, cleaning products, and much more, all free of charge to the residents in our service area. Save money and help the environment - a Win-Win!

"Check the Chickadee" this Tax Season!

We know taxes aren't a lot of fun, but there is a small thing you can do to feel better about the process. Donating to the Fish/Wildlife Fund (also known as the Chickadee Checkoff) on line 57 of your Iowa state tax form, can help support thousands of vulnerable species through research, habitat development and education. The Chickadee Check-off was put on the state tax form in the early 1980s and it is one of the vital sources of funding for the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Diversity Program. The Wildlife Diversity Program helps monitor, conserve, and protect all of the non-game species in Iowa. Non-game wildlife are the 1,000-plus species such as songbirds, bald eagles, salamanders, turtles, monarchs, bees, and more that make up the majority of wildlife in Iowa. The Chickadee Check-off is one of the only funding sources for the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Diversity program, which is responsible for these species. It allows Iowa tax payers to donate a portion of their state tax refund to wildlife conservation. If every Iowa taxpayer gave \$1 that would mean \$1.5 million for wildlife! Here's some examples of what donations to the chickadee check-off support:

- Inventory and monitoring of all wildlife in Iowa through the Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring Program as well as several community science based surveys.
- Best practices for pollinator conservation through research and education in Iowa.
- Songbirds through the establishment of Bird Conservation Areas
- And much more!

A huge heartfelt thanks to all of you who have made a donation and a difference!

Look for the Checkoff on the Iowa State Tax Form. It's easy to do: Look for the Fish/Wildlife Fund, line 57 on Form 1040. If you use a tax preparer, be sure and ask about the Fish/Wildlife Fund! They may overlook it.

Thanks for your support!



Check it & Protect it!

Help keep an eye on Iowa wildlife when you donate to the Fish/Wildlife Trust Fund on your state tax form.



photo by: Doug Harr

Learn more at www.iowadnr.gov

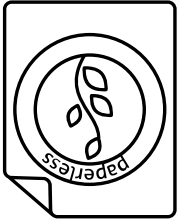


Mitchell County Conservation Board

1879-3 Highway 9

Osage, IA 50461

Office: (641) 732-5204



Help us keep costs down and save resources by going paperless. If you would like to receive our newsletter electronically, please send an email to chelsea@osage.net.



Keep up to date with our events and nature happenings by liking and following us on: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and at <https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Mitchell.aspx>



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