



Wild River Ramblings

Des Moines County Conservation's Newsletter *Spring 2017*



STARR'S CAVE NATURE CENTER RECEIVES REAP FUNDING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Des Moines County Conservation is excited to announce that Starr's Cave Nature Center has received funding from Iowa's Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Conservation Education Program (CEP) in the amount of \$16,794. This grant will help Starr's Cave Nature Center revise its environmental education programming into a more interactive and comprehensive experience by implementing a three-point approach (Learn, Experience, Reinforce). This approach is designed to deliver a consistent EE message to over 10,000 K-12 students annually within three environments: the classroom, the nature center, and the outdoors.

The project will create a revolving system of dynamic modular displays within Starr's Cave Nature Center (SCNC) that provide information on modern environmental topics. Each display will have curriculum and classroom materials that compliment each topic and support Iowa Core standards. Curriculums will be used in classrooms by SCNC EE staff and local educators. CEP funds will also help update and revise existing camp and field trip curriculum to also be consistent with the themes and subjects presented via the new Three-Point Approach. This is the first of potentially three project phases. Each phase will develop additional displays and curriculum. This first phase will focus on pollinators and water quality.

This REAP CEP award compliments a previous grant awarded to SCNC from the Harry & Virginia Murray Foundation for nature center renovations. Starr's Cave Nature Center will begin its second phase of renovations this fall. Renovations will primarily focus on the second floor and will include expanding the exhibit space, new flooring, walls, and windows.

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Spring & Summer Calendar of Activities

1st Wednesday each month, 5:30 pm
County Conservation Board meetings
held at DMCC main office in West Burlington

1st & 3rd Friday night each month
Open viewing
Witte Observatory

Friday, March 31, 7:30 pm
The Tillers concert
Starr's Cave Nature Center

Monday, March 20, 6 pm
Hunter Safety begins
Starr's Cave Nature Center

Saturday, April 1
Starr's Cave Nature Center
Summer hours begin

Thursday, April 13, 6 pm
Shooting Range Certification Course
Starr's Cave Nature Center

Saturday, April 22, 8:30 am
Keep Burlington Beautiful Earth Day Cleanup
Port of Burlington

Tuesday, April 25, 12:00 am
Online Registration for Summer Camps begins

Saturday, May 13, 9 am
Outdoor Youth Jamboree
Big Hollow Recreation Area

Monday, May 23, 5 pm
Volunteer orientation
Starr's Cave Nature Center

Saturday, May 27, 10 am
Critter Catch
Starr's Cave Nature Center

Monday, May 29
Memorial Day
Main Office and Starr's Cave Nature Center closed

June 2nd -4th
Free Camping and Fishing Weekend
DMCC campgrounds

Monday, June 5, 9 am
SCNC Summer Camp Programs Start
Starr's Cave Nature Center

Saturday, June 17, 9 am
Paddle in the Park
Big Hollow Lake

Saturday, June 17, 2 pm
Shooting Range Certification Course
Starr's Cave Nature Center

Tuesday, July 4
4th of July
Main Office closed

Tuesday, July 4, 8 am
Starr's Cave 4th of July 5K
Starr's Cave Park & Preserve

Wednesday, July 19, 7:00 pm
Nature At Night
Starr's Cave Nature Center

Saturday, July 22, 9 am
Paddle in the Park
Big Hollow Lake

Tuesday, August 8, 1:00 pm
Rock Climbing Wall Open
Starr's Cave Park & Preserve

Wednesday, August 16, 1:00 pm
Rock Climbing Wall Open
Starr's Cave Park & Preserve

Saturday, August 19, 9 am
Paddle in the Park
Big Hollow Lake

Monday, August 21, 8 am
Great American Solar Eclipse 2017
Starr's Cave Nature Center

Wednesday, August 23, 1:00 pm
Rock Climbing Wall Open
Starr's Cave Park & Preserve

Monday, September 4
Labor Day
Main Office and Starr's Cave Nature Center closed





Big Hollow Updates



Online Reservations Coming to DMCC

A new online reservation system will roll out in early April for the Big Hollow cabin and shelter houses county-wide. The new process will allow payment by debit / credit cards, eliminating the need to mail a check, further streamlining the reservation process. Along with the new process comes a new website for the reservation system. To set up an account, visit www.mycountyparks.com. In the upper right corner of the site, click the "Login" button to go to the login page. Then, click the blue "Create an Account" button in the center of the page. Fill out the simple form and select the Iowa counties and any interests you would like information about. It's that easy!

To reserve a facility, select the facility and click on the "Book Now" button. An availability calendar will show you the dates available. You can select the dates and add them to your cart to check out and finalize your reservation.

As work on Big Hollow progresses, online reservations for the RV campground will be added. Following the State Park model, roughly half of the current sites will be reservable. The sites will be "grouped", allowing people who want to camp together the ability to reserve sites next to each other. These spots will be announced at a later date.

Other Big Hollow Improvements

2017 will see a flurry of activity at Big Hollow. Current plans call for at least 21 of the RV sites to be upgraded to full hook-up with electric, water and sewer connections. The remainder of the sites will be upgraded with electric & water connections. Planning will also continue for the shower house.

Our Mission...

Des Moines County Conservation is dedicated to the sustainability of natural resources through land stewardship, conservation education and by providing quality outdoor recreation opportunities.

Wild River Ramblings

Spring & Summer 2017

Wild River Ramblings is a biannual publication distributed free of charge by Des Moines County Conservation. Everyone is entitled to full and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, privileges, and advantages available in the conservation areas within Des Moines County. For those who can not read the size of the print in this publication, a large print version is available by contacting Starr's Cave Nature Center, 11627 Starr's Cave Road, Burlington, IA 52601, (319) 753-5808. Edited by Kent Rector. Visit us Online: www.dmccconservation.com.

DMCC Board Members

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 Jim Garnjobst, Member
 Jim Steer, Member

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 Pat Rogge, Park Ranger - Technician
 John Mercer, Park Ranger- Technician
 Jeremy Yost, Natural Resource Manager
 Tanner Grim, Technician
 Kent Rector, EE Coordinator
 Frances Owen, Interpretive Naturalist

Burlington Kiwanis Sponsor Programs at Starr's Cave Nature Center

With the help of Kiwanis, Starr's Cave Nature Center will offer three additional summer camps and increase fall classroom programming. Kiwanis is a global organization dedicated to improving the world, one child and one community at a time. Every year parents and teachers ask for more camps and classroom programs and until now we haven't had the resources or funding to do so. The Burlington Kiwanis group has awarded Starr's Cave Nature Center a grant to help expand its Environmental Education programming for 2017.

Getting students outside is probably the most important aspect of our education model. Research shows that children are spending more than six hours a day interacting with "screens" and less than six minutes outside in free play. This grant will allow Starr's Cave Nature Center to bring on additional seasonal staff to help teach and lead EE programs, including summer camps. More programs and camps gets more kids outside! Several resources including the No Child Left Inside Coalition describe how environmental education increases students' engagement in science, improves achievements in core subjects, increases engagement and enthusiasm for learning, and can even reduce discipline and behavioral problems. It has been proven that increased outdoor time benefits cognitive functioning, reduces symptoms of attention deficit disorder, and increases self-discipline and emotional well-being. Starr's Cave Nature Center summer camps and fieldtrips address the growing need to introduce and engage today's youth in the natural world. Camps are designed to be fun and active and to provide high quality environmental learning experiences through games, crafts, stories, and in-depth nature exploration.

This year with the help of Kiwanis Starr's Cave will offer additional dates for Adventure Camp. During Adventure Camp students learn about the natural and human history of the land and acquire valuable outdoor-living and safety skills. Campers learn to work together to accomplish goals and challenges, building confidence and trust both in themselves and in others.

SCNC will be offering two new camps this year for students ages 13-15. Explorer Camp and Survival Camp. The new camps will introduce new elements to a new age group. Camps will be longer and off site. Explorer Camp will focus on Iowa's outdoor recreation opportunities. Campers will canoe a section of the Iowa River, climb at the University of Iowa, and explore Maquoketa Caves State Park. Survival camp will focus on outdoor skills. Students will get a day of orientation and team building in preparation for a two-day expedition into the Big Hollow Recreation Area. Local experts will guide us as we fish and forage for food, build shelters, canoe, track wildlife, and camp out under the stars.

More information regarding 2017 summer camps can be found on page 6 & 7. For more information regarding environmental education programs at Starr's Cave Nature Center, or for information on how you could sponsor a camp call (319) 753-5808.



Kiwanis®



Public Programs

All programs can be made fully accessible for the disabled. Please call (319) 753-5808 so we may accommodate your special needs or if you would like to register for a program.

17th Annual Earth Day Clean-up

Saturday April 22, from 8:30 am - 12 pm

Port of Burlington, registration begins at 8:30 am.

Lunch provided for volunteers.

Get out and celebrate Earth Day by helping clean up litter and trash around Burlington.

Outdoor Youth Jamboree

Saturday, May 13, 9 am, Big Hollow Recreation Area

The Outdoor Youth Jamboree has quickly become our area's premier outdoor youth event. This event is free and open to the public. This year's event includes fishing, instructor-led shooting, outdoor programs and activities, free lunch, and much more!

Critter Catch

Saturday, May 27, 10 am - 12 pm

Starr's Cave Park & Preserve

Come catch critters in Flint Creek! Bring your own net if you have one, otherwise we have some to lend. We'll help you identify the critters you catch.

Hunter Safety & Shooting Range Classes

To use the Big Hollow ranges, you must attend our Shooting Range Certification Course. To purchase an Iowa hunting license, most people must take a hunter safety course. For questions call our main office (319) 753-8260.

Shooting Range Certification (1 day course)

Thurs, April 13, 6 - 9 pm OR Sat, June 17th, 2 - 5 pm

Starr's Cave Nature Center

No pre-registration required; Cost for range membership \$25/individual, \$30/family.

Hunter Safety (4 day course)

Mon- Thurs, March 20-23, 6 - 8 pm

Starr's Cave Nature Center

Saturday, March 25, 9 am - 12 pm

Big Hollow Shooting Range

Visit www.iowadnr.gov/huntered to register

Climbing Wall

August 8, 16, 19, 23

Starr's Cave Park & Preserve

For ages 8 & up. Cost: \$5. No pre-registration.

Learn how to climb a rock wall. Gear is provided. No experience necessary - we'll show you the ropes!

Free Camping & Fishing Weekend

June 2, 3, 4

Camp for free in any DMCC park where camping is permitted. This weekend coincides with the DNR's Free Fishing Weekend.

Nature at Night

Wednesday, July 19, 7 pm - 9 pm

Starr's Cave Park & Preserve amphitheater

All ages. Free. Registration required.

There's lots to explore at sunset. Come to the park and learn about nature's nightlife with a Des Moines County naturalist.

Paddle In The Park

Saturday, June 17, July 22, August 19, September 23

9-noon, Big Hollow Recreation Area

DMCC Environmental Education staff will be on Big Hollow Lake once a month from June thru October. Get out on the water for some paddling fun as we explore the lake. Registration for each event is required in advance. (319) 753-5808

Great American Solar Eclipse 2017

Monday August 21, 8 am—6pm

Des Moines County Conservation will be chartering a bus to the path of totality in Washington, Missouri. This will be a trip for the whole family with educational activities, souvenir vendors, an art exhibit, eclipse viewing and an after-eclipse party! Seats on the charter bus will be limited. Cost is yet to be determined. For more information or to reserve your spot, call the Starr's Cave Nature Center at (319) 753-5808.

Summer Day Camps at Starr's Cave Park & Preserve

Starr's Cave Nature Center camps address the growing need to introduce and engage today's youth in the natural world. Camps are designed to be fun and active and to provide high quality environmental learning experiences through games, crafts, stories, and in-depth nature exploration. Kids love coming to our camps and look forward to them each summer. Parents love our camps too because they know their kids are having fun AND are learning at the same time! All camps include a mid-morning snack.

Summer Camp Sign Up/Registration

Registration for all camps at Starr's Cave Nature Center will be held online through CampDoc.com. Links to the SCNC CampDoc registration page will be made available on the DMCC home page and SCNC Facebook site prior to registration. Registration is scheduled to open at 12:00 am on April 25th.

All camps will remain open until filled. No registrations will be accepted prior to the opening dates.

Scholarships

A limited number of scholarships are available. If the camp fees are a financial hardship, please call (319) 753-5808 to inquire about assistance.

Volunteers

Most camps need one parent volunteer to help our EE staff. If you would like to volunteer for a week of camp contact Starr's Cave Nature Center (319) 753-5808. Volunteers are required to attend the May 23 Volunteer orientation meeting. Volunteers are also expected to pass a background check, and agree to a volunteer conduct policy.

Disabilities

Camp activities can be designed to accommodate children of different abilities; please let us know any special needs when you register.

Refunds

Refunds will be given for cancellations made one full week before the start of the camp. Cancellations made less than a week before camp starts will not receive a refund (with the exception of medical emergencies).

2017 CAMP SCHEDULE

June 5-8	Caterpillar #1
June 5-9	Discovery #1
June 12-15	Dark Wings #1
June 12-16	Discovery #2
June 19-22	Firefly #1
June 19-22	Caterpillar #2
June 26-27	Polliwog #1
June 28 -29	Polliwog #2
July 10-13	Dark Wings #2
July 10-14	Discovery #3
July 17-20	Firefly #2
July 17-20	Caterpillar #3
July 24-28	Discovery #4
July 24-27	Caterpillar #4
July 31- Aug 4	Adventure Camp #1
July 31- Aug 3	Explorer Camp
Aug 7-11	Adventure Camp #2
Aug 8-11	Survival Camp



CampDoc.com



SCNC Camp Descriptions

POLLIWOG

Ages 3-4 with ADULT accompaniment

9:30 am - 11:30 am

\$20

Parents can introduce their child to the wonders of nature during this camp. Each day there will be a hike, craft, story, and hands-on nature learning that parents (or grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) and children will get to experience together.

CATERPILLAR

Ages 5-6

Monday - Thursday

9 am - noon

\$40

In this fun camp, young children explore the outdoor world. Activities include a different art project each day, stories, games in the woods, insect netting, and much more!

DISCOVERY

Ages 7-9

Monday - Friday

9 am - noon

\$50

Campers explore the prairie, forest, and creek around the nature center with a focus on ecosystems, habitat, and nature discovery. They look closely at where things live and what they need to survive. They use dip nets to catch aquatic critters; learn about amazing birds and mighty mammals. They play camouflage games to discover how animals survive; discover animal trails, tracks and signs; and learn about the predators who hunt and the prey that escapes.

Adventure Camp

Ages 10-13

Monday - Friday

9 am - noon

\$50

Students will learn about the natural and human history of the land and acquire valuable outdoor-living and safety skills. Campers will learn to work together to accomplish goals and challenges, building confidence and trust both in themselves and in others. This camp includes one or more days at Big Hollow Recreation Area near Sperry.

FIREFLY

Ages 7-9

Monday - Thursday

7 pm - 10:00 pm

\$40

Learn about what comes out in nature during the night! As the sun sets, we'll see bugs that light up, bats that eat them, and extraordinary birds with night vision.

DARK WINGS

Ages 10-13

Monday - Thursday

7 pm - 10:00 pm

\$40

What goes on in the natural world at night? We'll go hootin' for owls, listening for bats, and peering through a telescope at the night skies. This camp includes one evening at Big Hollow Recreation Area near Sperry.

Explorer Camp New Camp!

Ages 13-15

Mon. 9-Noon

Tues-Thurs, 9am-5pm, off site

\$100.00

Join us as we explore Iowa's outdoor recreation opportunities. Campers will canoe a section of the Iowa River, climb at the University of Iowa, and explore Maquoketa Caves State Park. This camp is off site, pick up times may vary depending on travel time.

Survival Camp New Camp!

Ages 13-15

Wednesday, 9-noon

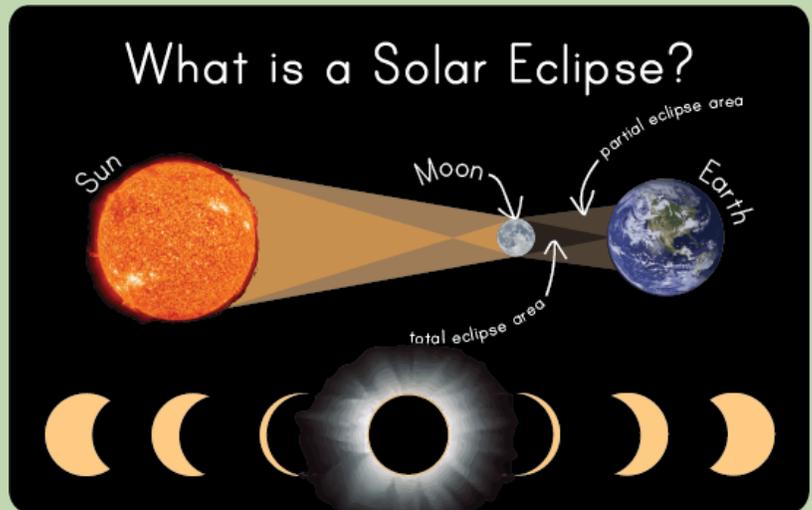
Thurs-Fri, overnight at Big Hollow

\$100.00

Campers will get a day of orientation and team building in preparation for a two day expedition into the Big Hollow Recreation Area. Local experts will guide us as we fish and forage for food, build shelters, canoe, track wildlife, and camp out under the stars. This camp includes one overnight at Big Hollow Recreation Area near Sperry.

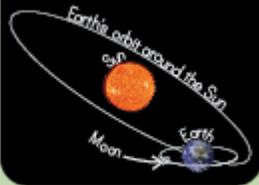
The Great American Eclipse

On August 21st, 2017, a remarkable natural phenomenon will be crossing the continental United States. A total solar eclipse will begin its journey at 10:46 am CDT off the coast of Oregon and finish off the coast of South Carolina at 4:04 pm CDT. The last time a total solar eclipse passed coast to coast across the United States was in 1918! It is also incredibly rare for an eclipse to only pass over one country. The Great American Eclipse will be the first total solar eclipse to only touch the mainland U.S. and no other country since July 29th of the year 436!



Annular Eclipses and Elliptical Orbits...

Our moon has an elliptical orbit around Earth so it can range from 1,923,723 miles to 1,934,792 miles away from us. Earth also has an elliptical orbit and our distance from the Sun varies from 91,404,606 miles to 94,509,411 miles.



A solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes between the sun and the earth. An annular solar eclipse occurs when the moon is a little further away from the earth (See: Annular Eclipses and Elliptical Orbits sidebar) and is unable to completely block the sun leaving a solar ring around the moon. During a total solar eclipse the moon completely blocks the sun and the moon's shadow is cast onto the surface of the earth. As the moon's shadow moves across the surface of the earth, it can make a path about 70 miles wide. You must be within this narrow path of totality to see a total solar eclipse or you will only see a partial eclipse. The closer you get to the center of the shadow's path, the longer you will get to experience the remarkable effects of the eclipse.

Darkness isn't the only effect of a total solar eclipse but it can be an unnerving one. During totality it will seem like nighttime, confusing some animals like birds to head to roost for the night! Other seemingly magical effects occur during a total solar eclipse. You can get a "diamond ring" effect as the moon is moments away

from completely blocking the sun. Witness the "corona" or filaments of light that stream out from the moon's silhouette. You'll be able to see some filaments of light are longer than others because of the cratered and uneven surface of the moon. During a solar eclipse even the shadows take on strange characteristics, forming crescent shapes and wispy edges. All of these effects make a solar eclipse an unforgettable experience!



People all over the world will travel great distances to see the Great American Solar Eclipse of 2017. Make your plans to witness this once in a lifetime event – if you stay in Iowa you will miss it! Des Moines County Conservation will be chartering a bus to Washington, Missouri to the path of totality on Monday, August 21st, 2017. This will be a trip for the whole family with educational activities, souvenir vendors, an art exhibit, eclipse viewing and an after-eclipse party! Seats on the charter bus will be limited – you must call to reserve your spot. There will a fee for the trip largely dependent on the number of people going. The fee will help cover the cost of the charter bus, snacks, beverages, meals and eclipse viewing glasses for all passengers. Cost per person is yet to be determined but if you are interested in more information about this event or want to reserve your spot today, please call the Starr's Cave Nature Center at (319)753-5808.