

Muscatine County Conservation Board 2021 At a Glance

The year 2021 basically started out the same way 2020 ended. The Environmental Learning was still closed to the public. No public programs were held. Most of the school programs staff gave were held virtually, but education staff started planning for spring fieldtrips and summer nature camps hoping for the best.

In early April the Environmental Learning Center reopened on a part-time basis and at the end of May fully reopened. Some schools allowed their kids to go on fieldtrips while others allowed fieldtrips on school grounds. The scaled-back summer nature camps filled up quickly.

Maintenance staff spent much of early 2021 getting the Deep Lakes Park cabins ready. They installed window coverings, ceiling fans and shelves. Staff ordered furniture, and shopped for rugs, lamps, and kitchen gear. Office staff worked on getting a rental policy and other paperwork ready for when the cabins opened.

Once the weather warmed up the parks were busy again. The campgrounds opened on time and were busy from the start. There weren't even any of the usual flooding issues the entire camping season. People were itching to get together again and outside seemed like a fairly safe bet, so picnic shelter

rentals were up quite a bit compared to previous years.

On May 3 the cabins were opened for rent. As soon as it was posted the requests started coming in. Every weekend, as well as many weekdays, during the summer months the cabins were rented. The weekend rentals continued well into November and into the holiday season.

Some of the other large projects staff completed in 2021 were rip-rapping the shoreline along the McKeown Bridge River Access and repairing the marsh dam and levee at Saulsbury. With no snow cover late in the year, staff was able to get a lot of brush cut and treated on our wildlife areas.

The Conservation Board continues to focus on more development at Deep Lakes Park and in late 2021 hired Bolton Menk, the firm who drew up the current master plan, to update the Deep Lakes Park Master Plan including the campground.

Conservation Board Member Jim Goedken's final term ended in June and Karen Hartman was appointed to fill the position.

Staff looks forward to 2022 and continuing to make Muscatine County parks, wildlife areas, and facilities enjoyable for everyone.



2021 CONSERVATION BOARD

Chairperson Mike Schulte
 Vice-chairperson Deb Elliott
 Member Mark Petersen
 Member Sue O'Donnell
 Member Jan.-Jun. Jim Goedken
 Member Aug.-Dec. Karen Hartman

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Muscatine County Conservation Board is to preserve and enhance natural areas and resources in Muscatine County for the use and benefit of the community; to preserve sufficient natural habitats in Muscatine County; to ensure the survival of native plants and animals; to acquire, develop and manage land for public hunting, fishing, camping and recreation; and to promote public appreciation and responsibility for the environment through education.

Environmental Education Programs

In 2021, Conservation Board Staff gave 577 programs to 9,171 people. Program participants ranged in age from toddler through senior citizen.

In 2021, almost three-quarters of the programs were presented to children ranging in age from 18 months through high school. The remaining programs were given to adults. A little over half of the programs were given in various school classrooms and a third of the programs were given at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park.

Raptors, Animals in Winter, Archery, Reptiles & Amphibians, Monarchs, Pond Life, Animal Tracks, Bird Feeding, and Fishing were just a handful of the many programs presented to participants.

Most of the weekend programs normally held, like Bald Eagle Day, the Fishing Seminar/Derby and the Halloween Hike, were cancelled due to COVID.

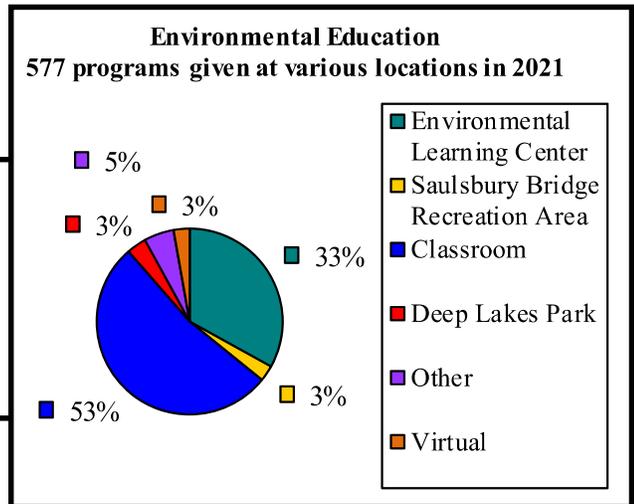
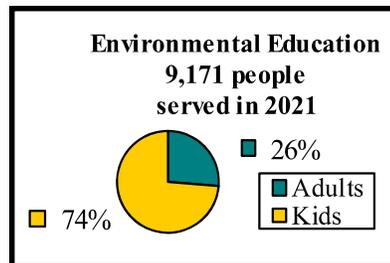
Since we did not hold the annual Halloween Hike again this year due to COVID, we hosted another drive-thru event at Saulsbury. The campers decorated their campsites with Halloween decorations and the public was invited one evening to drive through and enjoy the decorated campsites. The first 500 kids received a treat bag. We suggested a \$10 donation

per car. Around 275 cars with about 1,150 people drove through the campground to enjoy the decorated campsites. The event brought in over \$2,600 that was split between the Muscatine Food Pantry and Muscatine Humane Society.



Environmental Learning Center

In 2021, approximately 4,106 visitors (not including people who participated in our programs) came to the Environmental Learning Center to view the exhibits. Due to COVID, the Environmental Learning Center was closed to the public January, February and March. In April and most of May the Environmental Learning Center opened back up to the public three days a week before resuming normal hours at the end of May.





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