



# Spring IAN Workshop 2025

## "Champions of Conservation"

March 5th-7th

**Mahaska County Conservation  
Environmental Learning Center**  
2342 Hwy 92  
Oskaloosa IA 52577



*Wednesday, March 5th - Offsite and Extended Learning Sessions*

### **Option 1: Cedar Bluffs Hike with Bob Leonard**

**Cost:** FREE    **Time:** 1:00 - 4:00PM    **Category:** I    **Location:** Lower-level parking lot

Bob Leonard is one of Mahaska County's valued volunteer park stewards. He spends hours each week at Cedar Bluffs State Preserve walking the trails and working on upkeeping projects. Bob knows the on and off-trail areas of the park and will lead you on a fun excursion through the area. Cedar Bluffs contains 225 acres of the most unique topography in Southern Iowa. There are deep canyons made of sandstone lined with mosses, liverworts, rare ferns, and a waterfall. The history of the area is interesting too! It spans from riverboats on the Des Moines River, John F. Lacey living nearby and even native burial mounds and rock formations. Dress for the weather and hiking. Meet in the lower-level parking lot of the Environmental Learning Center to carpool to the area.

### **Option 2: Birding in a Park with Diane Crookham**

**Cost:** Free    **Time:** 1:00-4:00PM    **Category:** I & II    **Location:** Lower-level parking lot

Diane Crookham-Johnson is a local birder and wildlife photographer. She will take you birding at some of Mahaska County parks and share what birds she has found over the years. In the summer of 2021, Diane found Yellow-crowned Night-Herons at Maskunky Marsh! This will be a fun and informative adventure for all skill levels of birding. Wear clothing appropriate for outdoor weather, good walking shoes and binoculars. This group will meet in the lower-level parking lot of the Environmental Learning Center and carpool to the parks.

### **Option 3: Tram Ride around Oskaloosa (weather permitting)**

**Cost:** Free (donations accepted)    **Time:** 1:00-3:30PM    **Category:** I

**Location:** Meet at Environmental Learning Center & carpool

The Mahaska Community Recreation Foundation will give you a 12-mile tour on the Oskaloosa bike trail while riding on a club car. The tour is 2 hours/13.5 miles long and loops around town. Highlights of the tour are hearing how Teddy Roosevelt came to dedicate the old YMCA, the hidden gnomes, history of the local area, and beautiful scenery. Please dress for the weather and bring a blanket for extra warmth. Tour will start and end at the Lacey Recreation Complex. There is a limit of 14 seats on the trams.

### **Option 4: Program Round Table @ Environmental Learning Center**

**Cost:** Free    **Time:** 1:00-4:00PM    **Category:** II    **Location:** Lower-level meeting room

This will be a great opportunity to share some of your favorite programs and power points to other naturalists. Bring your program and explain how it works for you. If you bring a copy of power points, others can download them on site.

**Wednesday Evening . . . Supper on your own & hangout at the Trio Complex for food, movies, indoor tennis, and pickle ball.**

## Thursday, March 6th - Sessions at the Environmental Learning Center

**8:00 - 8:30 AM - Registration**

**8:30 - 9:00 AM - Welcome, Announcements & Introductions**

**9:00 - 10:00 AM - General Session**

### Champion of Conservation: John F. Lacey

**Presenters:** Neil Hamilton, Professor Emeritus of Law at Drake University Agricultural Law Center

**Category:** I **Room:** Lower-level meeting room



A century ago, an Iowan, conservation leader, and US Congressman, John F. Lacey, became the first voice of conservation in the United States. He led the passage of legislation that still protects wilderness areas, migratory birds and wildlife. Over time, Lacey has been unrecognized as a conservation hero throughout our country and in Iowa. Professor Emeritus, Neil Hamilton will share what Lacey has done for conservation and recognize him as a well-deserved champion of conservation. Hamilton has a strong background in conservation policy, law and writing. He is a board member of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and has authored the books *The Land Remains: A Midwestern Perspective on Our Past and Future* (which mentions Lacey), and *The River Knows: How Water and Land Will Shape Our Future*.

**10:00 - 10:30 AM - Break**



*\*Take a stretch on the trails outside and see if you can find one of three Woolly mammoths. Bring one back to win a prize!*

**10:30 - 11:15 AM - Concurrent Sessions**

### Storytelling with Pizazz

**Presenter:** Linda Fox, Mahaska Co. Conservation Board Member **Category:** II & III

**Room:** Lower-level Meeting Room



Linda Fox is a retired children's librarian and is known by generations of families throughout the local area for her storytelling talents. Linda will share stories and provide ideas on how naturalists can strengthen their oral storytelling skills. This will be a fun, hands-on activity for all participants!

### Designing an Outdoor Exhibit

**Presenters:** Lewis Major, Polk Co. Conservation **Category:** II & IV

**Room:** Discovery Lab

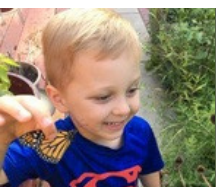
Polk County Conservation recently completed a high quality interpretive outdoor exhibit at Yellow Banks Park in SE Polk County. This inclusive exhibit features a 120ft X 6ft limestone wall adorned with large interpretive panels, tactile art tiles, and title lettering. This session will introduce the process of planning an outdoor exhibit, focusing on concept, funding, planning, design, permits, materials, fabrication, and installation. This project was funded with support from REAP-CEP.

**11:30 - 12:30 PM - Lunch & Business Meeting**

Catered by the Friends of Mahaska County Conservation. Pulled smoked pork sandwich (carnivore), Plant based burger (herbivore) with backed beans, pasta salad, fresh veggies & dip, bars for dessert. \$12 per person



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# Thursday, March 6th - Sessions at the Environmental Learning Center

## 12:45 - 1:30 PM - Concurrent Sessions

### Branding and Marketing for Naturalists

**Presenter:** Chris Clingan, Mahaska Co. Conservation Director and  
Laura Friest, Travel Iowa Tourism Liaison

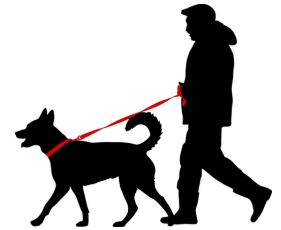
**Category:** III & IV      **Room:** Lower-level meeting room



This session will cover how naturalists can brand and market the great things done in their county. Also, find out how the Iowa Tourism Office can help you and your CCB with a Tourism Marketing Grant and free tools such as Localhood. Mahaska County Conservation was awarded an Iowa Tourism Grant in 2024 and used the money to create a promotional video titled "Home Away From Home". Discover how this video was made and how it will be used in social media including Google ads.

### B.A.R.K. Rangers in Our Parks

**Presenter:** Vallin McReynolds, Mahaska Co. Conservation Volunteer and Linda Merck & Reine, BARK Ranger participants      **Category:** I & II      **Room:** Discovery Lab



B.A.R.K. Rangers is a national park program designed to educate pet owners about responsible park travel with dogs. The B.A.R.K. Ranger principles follow (Bag, Always Leash, Respect Wildlife, and Know where you can go). Mahaska County Conservation has joined this program and is offering dog owners fun activities in county parks. Come and see Reine and how she has explored county and national parks! She is also bringing a collection of park swag to show off.

## 1:45 - 2:30 PM - Concurrent Sessions

### USDA Animal Care Licensing

**Presenters:** Paige Johnson, Animal Care Inspector-Northern Iowa/USDA APHIS Animal Care      **Category:** IV

**Room:** Lower-level meeting room

This presentation will be a brief overview of the licensing process, who needs to be licensed and a brief overview of the avian regulations.

### Creating a Sensory Trail

**Presenter:** Heidi Andersen, Polk Co. Conservation      **Category:** II & III      **Room:** Discovery Lab

We use our senses to explore and connect with the natural world. However, some people with disabilities or other health challenges often experience barriers to the outdoors preventing them from making these connections to nature. Learn how Polk County Conservation has created a sensory trail to provide unique opportunities for nature to be inclusive to everyone, regardless of their ability. This project was funded with support from REAP-CEP.



## 2:45 - 3:45 PM - General Session

### Oskaloosa High School Storybook Players

**Location:** Lower-Level Meeting Room      **Category:** II & III

For 42 years, students from Oskaloosa High School have showcased a talented group of students that perform a fun array of story skits for audiences of all ages. These students travel around the state to perform for schools and other groups. Find your seat to watch the fun performances of The Little Boy Who Cried Wolf, The Frog Prince Continued, The Princess and the Pea, and Peter Pan.



## 3:45 - 4:15 PM - Break & IAN Group Picture

*\*Take a stretch on the trails outside and see if you can find one of three Woolly mammoths. Bring one back to win a prize!*



Questions???? Workshop Chair:  
Raina Genaw, rainagenaw@gmail.com

## Thursday, March 6th - Sessions at the Environmental Learning Center

### 4:30 - 5:30 PM - Concurrent Sessions

#### Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

**Presenter:** Ross Baxter Senior Land Protection Director and Counsel,  
Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

**Category:** I **Room:** Lower-level meeting room



Iowa  
Natural Heritage  
Foundation

Since 1979, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation has helped protect over 200,000 acres of prairies, woodlands, lakes, river and trails throughout Iowa. Ross will share what INHF does for land and landowners in Iowa to ensure Iowa's most important natural treasures for future generations. County conservation boards can also join INHF in this mission. Come and see how it can be done.

#### Plastic Bag Recycling

**Presenter:** Rodney Anderson, Friends of Mahaska County Conservation **Category:** I & IV  
**Room:** Discovery Lab

The Friends of Mahaska County Conservation are local leaders with the recycling of plastic shopping/grocery bags. Rodney will share what FMCC has done to increase awareness, as well as the amazing results of their efforts and future goals. Information will also be provided on the Iowa Grocers Association-Build with Bags grant and Plastic Recycling of Iowa Falls who are the recyclers of our bags, and some tips on how to start recycling plastic shopping/grocery bags in your county.



### 6:00 PM - Dinner

Choice of fettucine or penne pasta, marinara sauce (plain & meaty) and meatballs, garden salad, breadsticks and Cherry cheesecake \$17 per person

### Fundraising / Socializing After Dinner in the Hospitality Room at the Fairfield Inn



*To bring your  
fundraising items!*

#### One Million Grocery Bag Drive



Friends of Mahaska County Conservation is 300,000 plastic shopping/grocery bags short of 1 million collected for recycling. We would like for the Iowa Association of Naturalists to be part of our quest to reach 1 million in 2025.

Please bring your clean, dry plastic shopping/grocery bags to the Spring Workshop. Our mobile recycling trailer will be on site for collecting bags on March 5th and March 6th. You will be entered into a drawing for a special prize if you donate bags. Thank you for your help and support!



Participants can register online at:  
<https://portal.mycountyparks.com/Org-Event/101/Spring-IAN-Workshop-Mahaska-County.aspx>

## Friday, March 7th - Sessions at the Environmental Learning Center



**8:00 - 8:30 AM - Tour of the Environmental Learning Center**

**8:30 - 9:00 AM - General Announcements**

**9:00 - 10:00 AM - General Session - Mammoths of Mahaska County**

**Presenters:** Laura DeCook, Mahaska Co. Conservation

**Category:** I & II

**Room:** Lower-level meeting room

You can't miss the presence of Woolly mammoths when you walk into the Environmental Learning Center. The mammoth bones were discovered back in 2010, not too far from Oskaloosa. Since then, these bones have stirred up curiosity and excitement for many people. Naturalist, Laura DeCook, will share the story of how the bones were discovered, the journey in recovering bones and how they ended out on display.



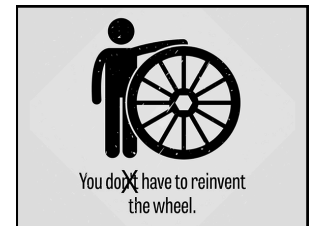
**10:15 - 11:00AM - Concurrent Sessions**

**Don't Reinvent the Wheel: Refresh the Cube**

**Presenter:** Sarah Davelaar, Sioux Co. Conservation **Category:** II

**Room:** Discovery Lab

Do you have that one activity where your audience are actively engaged, indirectly learning and coming away with a big impact? Why not take that same idea and put a new spin on it? Sioux County Conservation has done just that with the simple cube. We refreshed the basic cube to teach complex topics like water cycle, pollination, rock formation, energy and water quality! Session will show our various cube activities and how we integrate them into our field trips, camps and more for multiple age groups.



**Tip Sheets to Promote Programs**

**Presenter:** Justin DeVore, Director of Marketing, Communications, and Development for Oskaloosa School District

**Category:** II, III & IV

**Room:** Lower-level meeting room

In this hands-on session designed for naturalists, learn how to share your programs and events with the media. From crafting compelling press releases and tip sheets to refining your messaging through group critiques, this workshop will provide practical strategies to elevate your media outreach.

**11:15 - 12:00 PM - Concurrent Sessions**

**Restoration of the Eddyville Dunes Sand Prairie**

**Presenter:** Lilly Moran, Green Iowa AmeriCorps in Mahaska County **Category:** I

**Room:** Discovery Lab



The Eddyville Dunes Sand Prairie in Mahaska County is a unique ecosystem and its current habitat restoration and plant and animal surveys are taken under the wing of Mahaska County's Green Iowa AmeriCorps member, Lilly Moran. Lilly will share information about this sand prairie, how it became a county park, and the plans being made ensure the future of this Iowa land treasure.



Participants can register online at: <https://portal.mycountyparks.com/Org-Event/101/Spring-IAN-Workshop-Mahaska-County.aspx>

## Friday, March 7th - Sessions at the Environmental Learning Center

### 11:15 - 12:00 PM - Concurrent Sessions

#### Mini BOWS (Becoming an Outdoors Woman) – Partnering with the Iowa DNR

**Presenter:** Christina Roelofs, Shelby CCB/Iowa DNR; Anne Riordan, Iowa DNR;  
Rachel Alliss, Iowa DNR; and Chelsea Rowcliffe, Mitchell CCB  
**Category:** II      **Room:** Lower-level meeting room



Becoming an Outdoors Woman events are aimed to provide women 18 years and older opportunities to learn about the outdoors and gain outdoor skills. This team will share some examples of events that have been held in Iowa, including setting an agenda, cost, etc. Come and learn how the Iowa DNR can be a great partner with women's events.

### 12:00 PM - Lunch/Depart

All to go \$12 per person ·

Sandwich, chips, whole fruit, bakery fresh cookie in individual lunch box with mustard, mayo and napkin.

Sandwich Choices:

- Carnivore: Di Lusso choice of meats and cheeses on harvester bread
- Herbivore: Vegetarian sandwich on harvester bread



## Remember

- Dinnerware (plate & utensils)
- Reusable water bottle
- Snacks
- Freebie table items
- Fundraiser Donations



### Lodging

#### *Fairfield by Marriott*

2325 Coal Mine Loop, Oskaloosa IA 52577  
641-676-7600

Room Rate: \$110 /night

To book a room call and mention that you want a room that is blocked for "Iowa Association of Naturalist"  
20 rooms are available for the Fall IAN Workshop on Wed., March 5th, and Thursday, March 6th, 2025.

**Alternative Lodging: Eveland Access Cabins, 2890 Galeston Ave., Oskaloosa, IA 52577**

**(641)673-9327**

Rate: \$100/night and \$200 refundable deposit per cabin

Mahaska County Conservation has (2) two-bedroom cabins with a queen bed in each bedroom (bedding not provided). Each cabin has a kitchen, living room and bathroom. Located approximately 20 minutes from the Environmental Learning Center. [www.mahaskaconservation.com/cabins/eveland\\_access\\_cabins/](http://www.mahaskaconservation.com/cabins/eveland_access_cabins/)