

Nahant News

SUMMER 2018

Volume 12, Issue 3



4220 Wapello Ave. • Davenport, IA 52802
www.nahantmarsh.org • 563.336.3370

A camper looks to the prairie with his insect net during a week-long nature camp at Nahant Marsh.



ABOUT NAHANT MARSH



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NATURAL RESOURCES TECHNICIANS

- Kory Darnall
- Zach Strong
- Madeline Kull



On July 10, 2018, Iowa American Water presented Nahant Marsh with a \$2,000 check. The 2018 Iowa American Water Environmental Grant supports marsh cleanup efforts and the June 22-23 BioBlitz event.



Nahant Marsh preserve is one of the largest urban wetlands on the Upper Mississippi River. It is comprised of marshy areas, mesic, wet and sand prairie, and bottomland forest. A spring-fed quarry, known as Carp Lake, and the surrounding grounds are part of the Nahant Marsh preserve as well. The 305-acre preserve is owned by the City of Davenport and the Nahant Marsh Board, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Conservation and restoration efforts on the preserve are directed by the Nahant Board. The educational programming is overseen by Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (EICC). EICC's Advanced Technology Environmental Education Center (ATEEC) is also a critical part of Nahant Marsh.



BIOBLITZ FINDINGS

by Brian Ritter, *Executive Director*

2018 Guardians of the Prairie and Forest **BIOBLITZ** at Nahant Marsh - Davenport, IA **June 22-23**

Scientists from around the region observed a total of 743 different species during the 24-hour BioBlitz at Nahant Marsh's 305-acre preserve on June 22 and 23. The event was coordinated by the Guardians of the Prairie and Forest, in partnership with the Nahant Marsh Education Center and the Friends of Nahant Marsh.

A BioBlitz is an intensive survey of as many species as possible within a specified area during a 24-hour period. The goal is to collect basic taxonomic data and to highlight the value of local habitats. The hallmark of a BioBlitz is that members of the public witness and participate in the study of local biodiversity, learning more about the natural world in their own community.

Findings from Nahant Marsh included:

- 327 Plant species (5 of which are Iowa Special Concern)
- 264 Invertebrate species (insects, spiders, snails, crayfish)
- 81 Birds (2 of which are Iowa Special Concern)
- 23 Mushrooms
- 14 Mammals (including 5 bat species)
- 13 Fish species (1 of which is a State of Iowa Threatened Species)
- 12 Reptiles and amphibians
- 7 Freshwater mussel species
- 2 Diatoms

Continued on page 4.



EVENT SPONSORS:

Dick Fallow Foundation
Eastern Iowa Community Colleges
Iowa-American Water Company
Midland Scientific, Inc.,
Moline Foundation



BIOBLITZ FINDINGS (cont.)

by Brian Ritter, *Executive Director*



Several species were discovered that had never been recorded at the preserve or had not been observed in many years. The green frog, for instance, had not been recorded here since the 1990s, but was found in several locations during the BioBlitz. We had very few records of insects prior to the BioBlitz. A total of seven Iowa Special Concern Species and one Iowa Threatened Species were found. It's incredible that this place is as diverse as it is, considering all the human pressure around it. Nahant is a fraction of the size of Loud Thunder or the Milan Bottoms, but appears to have nearly as many species (based on previous years BioBlitzes). All of these places are incredibly important to our area in that they provide some of the last refuges for many of our rare plants and animals and provide people with a chance to experience them.

The public was able to learn from experts about the various species that are found here. A birds of prey presentation and fish presentation allowed people to see some of those species up close. The hay rack ride to Carp Lake also allowed people to see a portion of the preserve that is generally closed to the public.

The results of the BioBlitz will allow us to not only better understand what lives at the marsh today, but will help us make better decisions about how to protect and enhance the area in the future. Our hope is to perhaps do this again in 10 years to see how things have changed. Nahant Marsh has only been a preserve for 18 years. When it comes to conservation, we don't just look at one day or one year, we have to plan for decades or centuries beyond. Hopefully the work we put in now will allow this place and all the things that live here to continue to flourish for many generations to come.

Event photos by Julie Malake.

WITH EXPERTS FROM:

Augustana College
BioEco Research and Monitoring Center
Black Hawk College
Dragonfly Society of the Americas
Fairport State Fish Hatchery - Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Illinois Natural History Survey
Insects of Iowa
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Iowa Falconers Association

Iowa Ordonata Survey
Nahant Marsh
Odonata Central
Quad City Botanical Center
University of Dubuque
University of Iowa
US Fish & Wildlife Service
USFWS Port Louisa National
Wildlife Refuge
Western Illinois University

SPRING CLEANUP RECAP

On April 21, 48 volunteers participated in our April 21 Spring Cleanup. They helped to...

...remove from the newly acquired Clarke property:

- a boat;
- 21 bags of garbage;
- a cooler;
- 500 empty sandbags;
- 5 gallons of oil;
- 3 propane tanks;
- 1 halogen light bulb;
- a Jeep topper;
- 200 tires; and
- assorted metal, wood, and fabric.

...remove from Wapello Avenue and South Concord Street:

- 19 bags;
- a fishing pole;
- plastic siding;
- a carpet pad;
- a tub of computer parts;
- a TV;
- 3 tires;
- miscellaneous wood; and
- a mattress.

...remove from Nahant Marsh...

- 4 bags of garlic mustard; and
- 11 5-gallon buckets of shells and clay birds.



Event photos by Julie Malake.

WHAT FUN WE'VE HAD

by Amy Loving, *Education Coordinator*

Spring field trip season is always a busy time of year for the Nahant education staff and this year was no exception. By the second week of April, we were already booked solid! The field trip season begins around the middle of April and concludes at the end of May. Within that time period, we saw 1,257 students from 18 schools ranging from kindergarten on up. The students came from districts all over the Quad City region and many extended further out. We had several groups travel from places as far as Prophetstown, IL and even a high school group from the Chicago land area.

When teachers contact me to schedule a field trip, there are usually a few tried and true programs that are requested. By far, the most popular program is pond study. It's a great choice because our education team can tailor the program to supplement the curriculum needs for any grade. We can cover life cycles, how fluctuations in the environment affect the organisms that live there, water quality, human impacts on the environment, and more.

Another favorite is a guided hike. Taking the students on the trails give us the opportunity to teach about the history of the prairie, conservation practices, wetland habitats, the importance of wetlands, and of course the extraordinary tale of how Nahant Marsh became a protected wetland.. Teachers finishing a unit on plants or insects can take a trip to the marsh for a hands-on exploration, learning about trees, wildflowers, and mini-beasts. All the creatures, big and small, play a role in the food web and it's not just creatures – it's the plants as well. Children have an innate curiosity about the natural world. To see their eyes light up from finding a snakeskin or literally “wow!” at the realization that there are hundreds of tiny creatures swimming in a little bucket of pond water, never gets old.



Photo by Lindsey Kennedy.

NEW OUTDOOR TURTLE ENCLOSURE

McKeegan Snyder with Boy Scout Troop 203 - Long Grove finished his Eagle Scout project last month: a split outdoor enclosure for our aquatic and terrestrial turtle ambassadors. Thank you, and congratulations McKeegan!



Photos by Erin Snyder and Lindsey Kennedy.

UNIQUE BIRD SIGHTINGS AT NAHANT MARSH

by Kinsey Nielsen, *AmeriCorps Naturalist*



Yellow-headed Blackbird. Photo by Kinsey Nielsen.

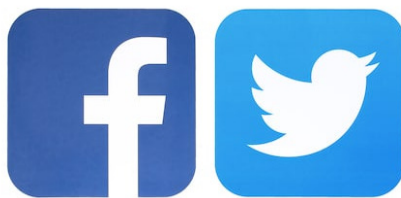


Sora Rail. Photo by Britt Vickstrom.



Cattle Egrets. Photo by Kathy Nice.

Spring brought more than the usual migrating birds this year! We were fortunate to have a yellow-headed blackbird visit us for around a week on April 19th. They often migrate with other blackbird species but are more common in the western United States. In the middle of May, the marsh experienced significant flooding and we saw many sora rails. This species isn't unusual in this area but they can be quite elusive. The flooding brought them closer to the boardwalk and many were seen during the period of high water. Cattle egrets were also spotted at the marsh in May. They are native to Africa and have become a common sighting in the southern United States. A common loon also spent a week at Nahant Marsh. It was not in breeding plumage so it is unknown as to why it ventured north. Usually only breeding adults make the trip to the northern United States and Canada each year. Stop by the marsh and see if you can find any unusual creatures on your next visit!



DON'T MISS A SIGHTING!

Like us on Facebook (@nahantmarshiowa) or follow us on Twitter (@Nahant_marsh) to keep up to date on what we are seeing at the Marsh.

FEATURED PLANT: THE LEAD PLANT

by Eric Shershen, *AmeriCorps Naturalist*



AMORPHA CANESCENS: THE LEAD PLANT

The *amorpha canescens* is primarily a prairie species that you can find in the marsh if you keep your eyes open, watching for its long, purple groupings of flowers. It prefers to be in full sunlight and likes a dry to semi-moist soil. Growing to a height of one to three feet, these plants will flower anytime from late May to early August.

As many other prairie plants do, this plant has a deep root system which can be up to four feet underground. These deep roots allow it to avoid any competition with surrounding plants for water or nutrients. These plants can populate different areas by self-seeding and do not require aid from humans to colonize a new area.



Lead Plant. lonexchange.com.

Their common name came about because it was long believed that if the plant was abundant, there was lead in the ground. The color of their stems is gray, leading people to think they indicated lead in the first place, as lead leaves a gray streak when written with. This was proven false, but the name stuck all the same. Seeing this plant actually means that the prairie is healthy!

The leaves are extremely soft and velvety to the touch, branching in an opposite arrangement. While this plant does not have many medicinal uses, its leaves can be ground into a powder and blown into cuts in order to encourage scabbing. Besides that, this flowering plant is great to attract butterflies and to introduce native prairie plants into your garden.

PLEASE JOIN US

Wednesday, August 8, 2018

from 5-7 p.m.



for a PUBLIC POSTER SESSION & RECEPTION

Our 2017 LSAMP IINSPIRE Program Student Researchers will share what they've been working on this summer at Nahant Marsh. The Iowa Illinois Nebraska STEM Partnership for Innovation in Research and Education (IINSPIRE) is a National Science Foundation (LSAMP) alliance among sixteen two-year and four-year colleges and universities working together to broaden the participation of underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education in the Midwest.

Nahant Marsh Education Center • 4220 Wapello Avenue • Davenport, IA 52802 • 563.336.3374

SUMMER CAMPS AT NAHANT MARSH

So far this summer we have held Eco-Art Camp, Tadpoles to Frogs Camp, Critter Camp, and a week-long Nature Camp where we visited Wild Cat Den State Park in Muscatine, and went canoeing, fishing, and swimming at West Lake in Davenport.



Photos by Nahant Staff.

UPCOMING FAMILY AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

Pre-registration for programs is strongly recommended, either online at www.nahantmarsh.org/events or by phone at 563.336.3370.

FAMILY PROGRAMS

Bring the whole family and enjoy the outdoors! These programs are geared toward school-age children, but adult nature lovers are welcome to attend. There is no fee for adults accompanying children.



Photo by Larry Williams.

Prairie Insects: August 11 10-11 a.m. | \$3 Nahant Members, \$6 Guests

Families will learn about the habitats, food sources, and adaptations of prairie insects. Participants will use nets to catch various species of dragonflies, butterflies, grasshoppers and more. Monarchs will be migrating at this time, and tags will be available for any captured monarchs before they are released.

Pumpkin Investigations: October 13 10-11 a.m. | \$3 Nahant Members, \$6 Guests

In this family-friendly program, we will learn all about pumpkins through various activities and experiments.

FALL SUNSET HIKE

Explore the marsh at dusk when the wildlife is abundant. Sunsets at Nahant are truly a masterpiece painted by Mother Earth. The hike will include the history of Nahant Marsh and information on the flora and fauna found at the preserve. Participants are encouraged to bring a camera. The trails are on flat terrain, making this guided hike perfect for everyone.

September 18

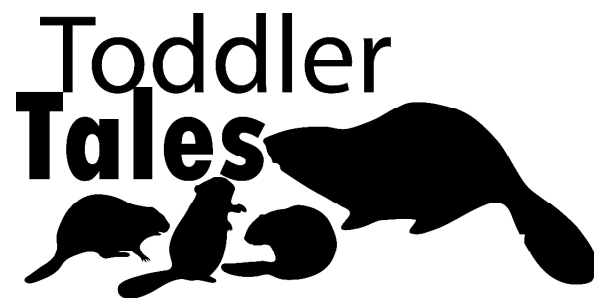
Time TBD | \$5 Suggested Donation

HOMESCHOOL PROGRAM

From September-May, Nahant Marsh provides a monthly program specifically geared towards homeschooled children grades K-9. Each program includes a lesson, hands-on activity, and outdoor exploration.

Upcoming Dates: September 28, October 26

2:30-4 p.m. | \$6 Nahant Members, \$8 Guests



TODDLER TALES PROGRAM

A great way to introduce young children, ages 3-5 years old, to the wonders of the outdoors! Each second Tuesday of each month from April-October, Nahant Marsh educators will lead a nature-themed story, craft, and outdoor adventure. Space is limited. Register early!

Observing Nature: August 10 10-11 a.m. or 2-3 p.m. | \$3 Nahant Members, \$5 Guests | Limit of 15

We will learn about some amazing things found in nature and see what we can observe at Nahant.

Jumping Bugs: September 11 10-11 a.m. or 2-3 p.m. | \$3 Nahant Members, \$5 Guests | Limit of 15

Crickets are jumping bugs that are known for the chirping noises males make with their wings. We will read about crickets and then go look for jumping insects!

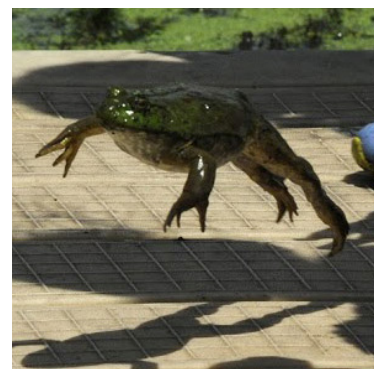


Photo by Julie Malake.

Bats: October 9

10-11 a.m. or 2-3 p.m. | \$3 Nahant Members, \$5 Guests | Limit of 15

Bats may seem scary, but they are the only mammals that fly and use echo-location to find their way in the dark! Come learn about these unique and amazing animals.

Happy Moth-ers Day



4th Annual Moth-ers Day Celebration July 28, 2018 beginning at 8 p.m.

The event begins at 8:00 p.m. with an hour-long lecture presented by Dr. Dan Mayes. Following the lecture, attendees will go outside to see what moths are attracted to white sheets lit up by ultraviolet lights. The UV lighting will continue until midnight.

FREE EVENT, but donations appreciated.

UPCOMING ADULT PROGRAMS

BREAKFAST NATURE CLUB

Learn the secrets of Iowa's wildlife during this monthly class at Nahant Marsh. A continental breakfast with coffee, juice, and tea is included in the fee. Feel free to bring your own coffee mug or travel container. Programs are held on the first Friday of the month and begin at 8 a.m.

Wild Fruits and Nuts: August 3

8-9 a.m. | \$5 Members / \$10 Guests

There are dozens of native fruit and nut-bearing trees that are indigenous to the Midwest. In this class, we will learn about the vast variety and how they are not only beneficial to wildlife, but are a nutritious source of wild food for people.

Fall Wildlife: September 7

8-9 a.m. | \$5 Members / \$10 Guests

Autumn is fast approaching, which means a season of change and migration for wildlife. Join us to learn about animals that are passing through and what others do to prepare for the winter ahead.

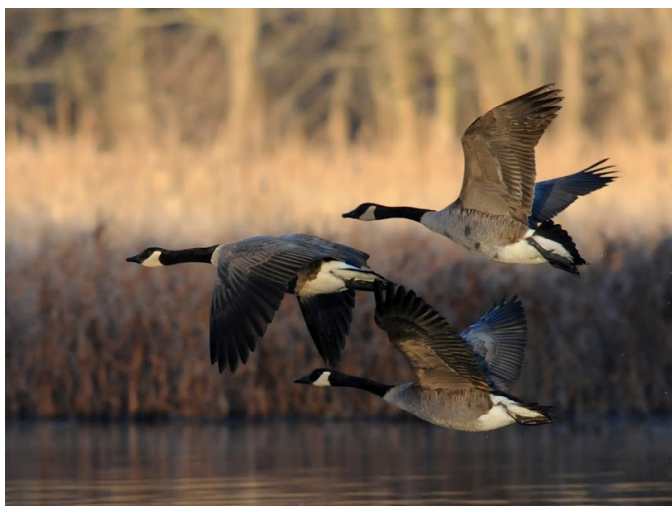


Photo by Julie Malake.

Basic Tree Identification: October 5

8-9 a.m. | \$5 Members / \$10 Guests

The morning will begin with a brief overview of Iowa's woodlands. Then we will head out and learn how to identify trees by examining bark, leaves, and seeds.



BEGINNING BIRDING

Learn how to identify birds and their habitats with expert ornithologist Kelly McKay. Kelly will lead birding tours to various areas of Nahant Marsh. Participants will learn how to identify birds by sight and call and will learn how to properly use the equipment. The tour series is sponsored by Quad City Audubon Society.

July 21, August 8, August 18, September 12, September 22, October 10, & October 20

6:30-9 a.m. | \$6 Members, \$12 Guests

BEEKEEPING

It's time for all beekeepers to start thinking about what their bees need to get them through the winter. Join beekeepers Phil Crandall and Benjamin Westerman as they walk you through testing your honeybees for varroa mites. There will be a classroom portion followed by a session in the bee yard. Attendees are encouraged to bring a bee suit; those without a suit will only be allowed to attend the classroom session. The \$15 fee includes a testing kit. Spouses or significant others are invited to attend free but will not receive a kit unless they pay/register also.

Testing for Varroa Mites: August 4

2-4 p.m. | \$15 Registration Required. Max class size: 16.

Pre-registration for programs is strongly recommended, either online at www.nahantmarsh.org/events or by phone at 563.336.3370.



Enjoy programs at Nahant Marsh? Get a membership to receive up to 50% off on programs and events. Sign up online: www.nahantmarsh.org/membership.

MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS NAHANT MARSH

- Environmental education programs for nearly 18,000 children, adults and families annually.
- The protection and preservation of the largest urban wetland on the upper Mississippi River. Nahant's 305 acres of wetland, prairies, and woodlands, are home to hundreds of species of plants and animals, including several that are threatened or endangered.
- Continuing research efforts at Nahant Marsh, which allow Nahant staff to make improvements and continue to use the best practices for natural resource management.

KIDS CORNER: NATURE ACTIVITIES

by Kinsey Nielsen, *AmeriCorps Naturalist*



Try these activities next time you are outside!

1. Find a patch of grass and lie down on your stomach to investigate the bugs that live near the ground. How many different bugs do you see? What are they doing?
2. With a partner, take turns having one person close their eyes and the other person lead them on a short nature hike. Have them touch different trees and objects and have them guess what is all around them.
3. Extreme hide-and-seek: Choose a rock and have one person hide it while the others close their eyes and count to 30. Everyone looks for the rock and if they cannot find it they can ask the person who hid it up to 10 questions, such as "If I were a snake slithering on the ground would I be able to see the rock?"

Did you know?

Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backwards! They can also beat their wings up to 5,400 times per minute while hovering.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

SAVE THE DATE

MONARCH RELEASE PARTY

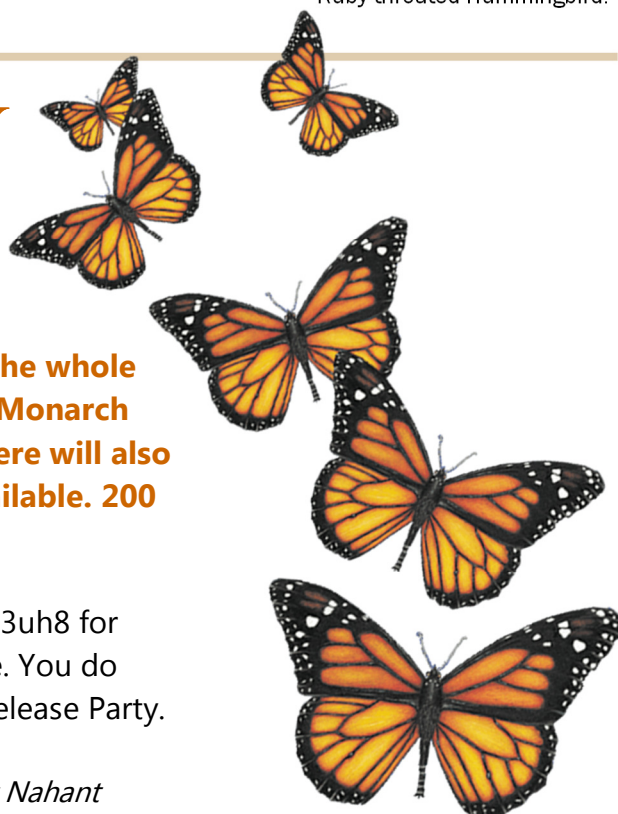
September 15

10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Join us at Nahant Marsh for this FREE event, with fun for the whole family! We will be tagging and feeding monarchs for the Monarch Watch Citizen Science Program throughout the morning. There will also be education stations and other insect-related activities available. 200 Monarchs will be released from the site at noon.

Monarch sponsorships are available online at <https://bit.ly/2In3uh8> for \$25 each or two for \$40. Each sponsor will receive a certificate. You do not need to have sponsored a monarch to attend the Monarch Release Party.

Note: this is a sponsorship program for monarch conservation at Nahant Marsh (no butterflies will be received by the sponsor).



WITH APPRECIATION

PARTNERS



Natural Resource Technicians Madeline Kull and Zach Strong install a floating island near the bird blind. Photo by Kinsey Nielsen.

CORPORATE SPONSORS



Rizzo the Black Rat Snake Animal Ambassador. Photo by Madeline Kull.

ANIMAL ADOPTIONS

Mark and Lisa Cleve
Terry Collins
Patti Holmlund
Lydia Rohner
Caden and Elysa Huynh-Smith

MEMORIALS

Carol Broughton by Jane Broughton
Neal Johnson by his Friends

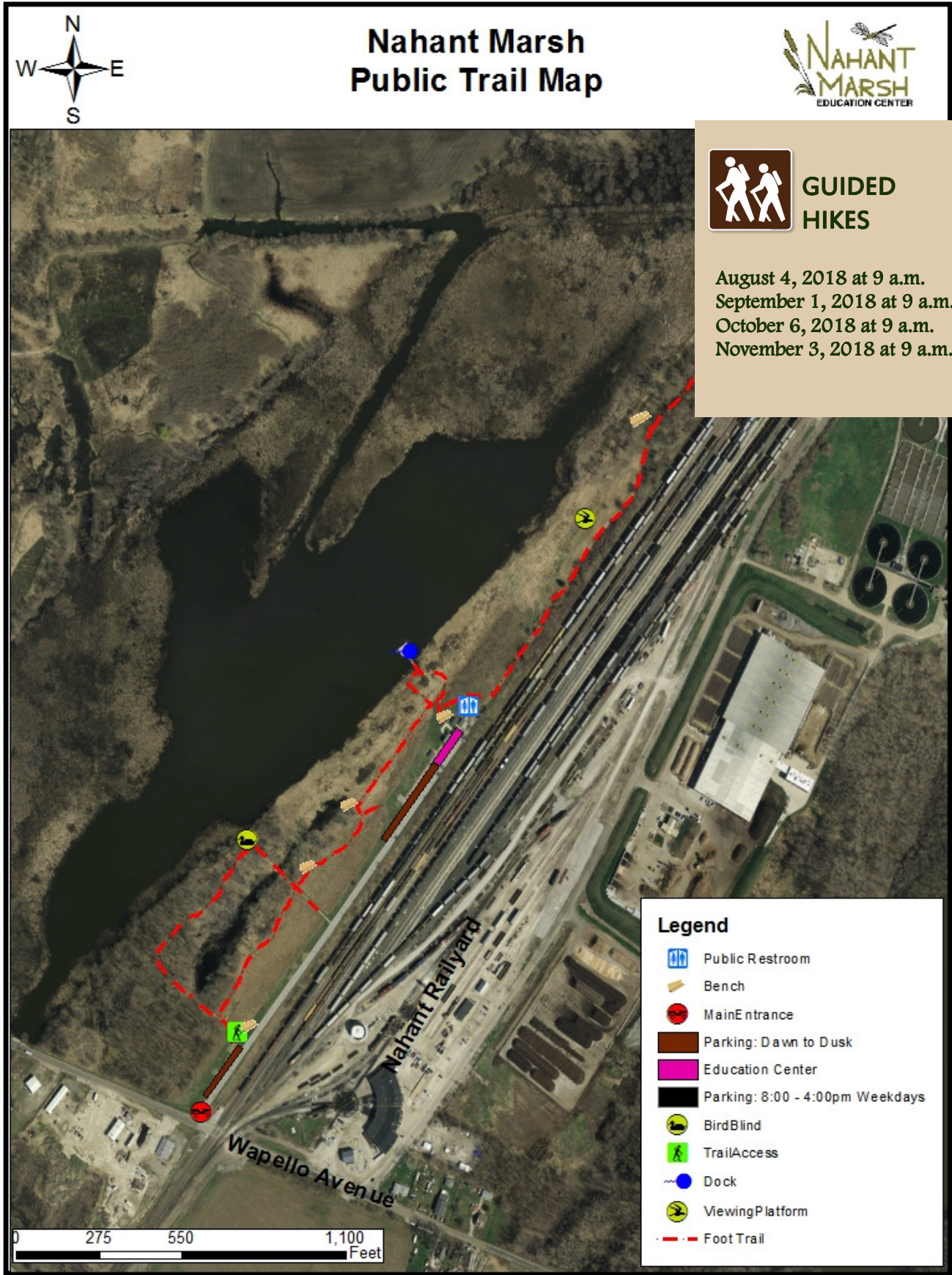
MONETARY DONATIONS

Arnie Christian
Chad and Elissa Douglas
Leroy Haeffner
Teresa Huser
John Jurich

MATERIAL DONATIONS

Lynn Abel
Marilynn Andress
Jolinda Burr
Terry Collins
Sherri Colman
Denise DeNeve
Lindsey Kennedy
Kathy Lenaghan
Amy Loving
Curtis Lundy
Julie Malake
Kathy Nice
Liz Schramm
Darren Speth
Britt Vickstrom

MAP YOUR ADVENTURE



EDUCATION CENTER HOURS

Monday–Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon (extended to 3 p.m. April–October)

There is no fee to visit the Education Center, but donations are always appreciated.

PRESERVE HOURS

Open Daily from Sunrise to Sunset

If the main gate is locked, trails are accessible from the front parking lot. Look for the opening in the fence near the kiosk.



GETTING TO NAHANT MARSH

**Nahant Marsh
4220 Wapello Ave.
Davenport, IA 52802**

From Davenport, Iowa—Take Highway 22 south (Rockingham Road), turning left on Wapello Avenue (the last turn before the I-280 overpass).

From Rock Island, Illinois—Take I-280 into Iowa to the Highway 22/Rockingham Road exit. Turn right onto Highway 22, and then right onto Wapello Avenue.

**Follow Wapello Avenue toward the river.
Nahant Marsh will be on the left just before the railroad crossing.**