Nahant News

Spring 2022

Volume 16, Issue 2





ABOUT NAHANT MARSH

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ZACH STRONG

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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.

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).





BRINGING NEW LIFE TO A DYING FOREST

by Brian Ritter, Executive Director

If you've driven along the Mississippi River over the past year, you may have noticed large swaths of dead trees. The floodplain forests throughout the Upper Midwest have been devastated by recurrent, prolonged flooding, especially the flood of 2019, which lasted over 100 days in our area. When coupled with the arrival of invasive species like the emerald ash borer, the canopy of our floodplain forests has been left barren. However, the problem started long before the 2019 floods. Beginning in the 1830's, large swaths of the original floodplain forests were clear-cut for firewood and building materials. These ancient forests were diverse- full of oaks, hickories, pecans, green ash, sycamore, maples, and birch. But after being logged, silver maples, green ash, and cottonwood establish themselves first, creating a low-diversity, and highly shaded woodland. These types of woodlands provide less food for wildlife and are far less resilient when natural disasters occur.

Our woods at Nahant have suffered from the same calamity as any other Midwestern floodplain woods. In one of our 30-acre tracts, nearly 1/3 of trees were silver maple, another 1/3 were cottonwood, and 1/3 were green ash. Only a handful of other trees, including elm and pin oak, could be found here. The green ash had already been hit hard by emerald ash borer when the 2019 flood came to provide the final death blow. Most of the silver maples and cottonwoods followed.

We viewed this mass die off as an opportunity. Over the winter, we worked with a forester to cut and sell the marketable trees. Many of the unsafe dead ash were also taken down by contractors. Even though the area looks like it was hit by a tornado, this spring, our staff and volunteers will be planting the plot with nearly 1,000 new trees. These trees will include a diverse mix: four different species of oaks, pecans, sycamores, birches, Kentucky Coffetree, and a number of different shrubs. With a little luck (and cooperation from the river), the fruits and nuts produced by these trees will provide food and shelter for a variety of wildlife, and the diversity of the woods will allow it to be more resilient in the face of future disasters.

Interested in helping to plant these trees? Sign up to be notified of volunteer times here!



BROAD IMPACTS AND THINKING SPRING

by Amy Loving, Director of Education

As I reflect on the past couple of months, I think about the reach our virtual programs have been able to provide. Like everyone else, pandemic caused us to modify the way we offered programs. Switching to a virtual world was definitely a learning curve, but learning new skills is a good thing. Being able to educate through webinars has allowed us to reach thousands of individuals that would otherwise not have a chance to visit Nahant or attend an in-person program. By partnering with the local Illinois University Extension, participants from all over the Midwest tuned in to learn about native bees and landscaping with native plants. Since these webinars are recorded and posted on YouTube, they will be able reach an even wider audience for a limitless time. How exciting is that?!

As the days get longer, we are observing the changes of the season. The arrival of red-winged blackbirds, great blue herons, wood ducks, and a variety of other creatures signals that spring has sprung. In the world of environmental education, spring also equals field trips. After two years, schools and youth-serving organizations are chomping at the bit to get their students out to the marsh. I have received an overwhelming response of program requests and am happy to report our calendar is packed full for the spring and summer season. Spring also means the start of a new cohort of Master Conservationists. If you are interested in learning more about the sustainability of lowa's natural resources and how to become a better steward of those resources, check our website for more details. Other opportunities to explore the natural world this spring include a series of themed-guided hikes, wild woodworking, Spring Celebration & Egg Hunt, and much more!

See you at the marsh! -Amy

SUMMER CAMPS

Looking beyond spring, we are excited to host another season of summer camps! See below for a list of our camps with remaining spots; be sure to register before they're full!

Critter Camp

1st-3rd Grade | June 9, July 7. July 21, Aug. 4

Jr. Naturalist Camp

3rd-6th Grade | June 14-16

Art in Nature

2nd-6th Grade | July 12-14

Gettin' Buggy With It

2nd-6th Grade | August 9-11

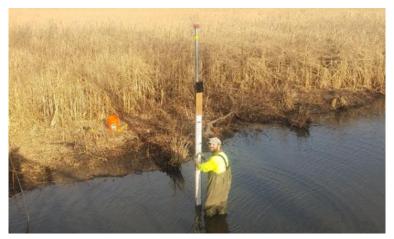
Learn more at www.nahantmarsh.org/camp



WORKING THROUGH WINTER

by Kinsey Nielsen, Natural Resource Manager

Winter projects have kept us busy during the cold, snowy months here at Nahant. Most of our work was focused on pruning trees and removing invasive woody species. Much time was spent cutting dogwood and mulberry trees from our prairies. We also selectively removed some locust, mulberry, and dogwood trees from the forest edges to encourage native plants such as sedges and asters to grow in the understory. Volunteers were also able to remove a huge amount of honeysuckle which was burned in brush piles in the middle of winter. A river gauge was installed by staff near the catwalk to monitor the level of the marsh. Data will be collected from this gauge regularly to help track the effects of the Mississippi River and how it impacts the level of the marsh. As spring approaches we will shift our priorities to transplanting shrubs, planting new trees, and trying to control herbaceous invasives such as poison hemlock and teasel early on in the growing season. We are looking forward to seeing the prairies in bloom this year and hope to see our hard work paying off with more plant diversity in the landscape.



Natural Resource Technician, Zach, installing the new river gauge. 12-15-21



Volunteer Becky H. with a sled full of honeysuckle.



Volunteers Leonard and Alexia removing trees from a prairie. 2-16-22



Burning piles of honeysuckle! 2-28-22

AWARDING CONSERVATION

In early March, environmental educators and conservationists from all around the state attended the Iowa Association of Naturalist (IAN) Spring Conference in Jackson County. There, three Nahant Marsh staff received awards: Executive Director, Brian Ritter; Research Coordinator and Naturalist, Jimmy Wiebler; and Natural Resource Manager, Kinsey Nielsen.

Building Better Birders Workshops Land 2021 "Ding" Darling Environmental Education Award By Jason Monson, Mississippi Currents Editor

The lowa Association of Naturalists and Iowa Conservation Education Council awarded Mark Roberts, Brian Ritter, Kelly McKay, and James Wiebler the 2021 "Ding" Darling Environmental Education Award for an outstanding program that informs and educates the general public. The award recognized the four men for their multi-year Building Better Birders Workshops and Citizen Scientists programs, which have been presented across Iowa since 2020. These workshops were funded through a grant from the Iowa Resource Enhancement and Protection Conservation Education Program (REAP-CEP) and reached a total of 1,806 participants at 100 workshops in 26 counties across Iowa.



From left: Mark Roberts, Brian Ritter, Kelly McKay, and James Wiebler, 2021 IAN/ICEC "Ding" Darling Environmental Education Award winners. Photo by C. Shirk.



Natural Resource Manager, Kinsey Nielsen, with Ada Hayden Conservation Education Award. Photo by C. Shirk.

Recognizing Conservation Education Through Natural Resources

Kinsey Nielsen also received the 2021 IAN/ICEC Ada Hayden Conservation Education Award for outstanding efforts to educate about preservation, land management, and natural resource conservation. Her efforts to educate others about natural resource management through weekly volunteer opportunities has helped grow an important volunteer community at Nahant Marsh. Kinsey also works with summer interns to teach them important skills for becoming future conservation professionals. She is looking forward to continuing to offer more educational programs about habitat management, training new interns this summer, and working with all of her amazing volunteers this year!

THE SOUNDS OF SPRING

by Allison Nodurft, AmeriCorps Naturalist ,

When spring arrives we often think of song birds singing, but there are so many more sounds to hear. A favorite spring sound of mine is that of Boreal chorus frogs (*Pseudacris maculata*) and spring peepers (*Pseudacris crucifer*). Both frogs are an inch and a quarter long, yet they can produce an almost deafening chorus. The two spring frogs call from early March to April, and their choruses can be heard from almost a mile away!



Spring Peeper

Spring peepers are brown or tan with a characteristic X on their backs. These frogs are found in woodland ponds along the Mississippi. Their call is a loud, sharp "peep." This single note is repeated about 20 times per minute. Spring peepers can be heard calling in shallow vernal ponds or seasonal wetlands in woodland areas.

Boreal Chorus Frog

Boreal chorus frogs are pale green or tan and have three characteristic stripes down their backs. Chorus frogs enjoy flooded grassy areas throughout lowa. Their call is similar to running your finger down the teeth of a comb. Boreal chorus frogs can be heard in vegetated areas with shallow water. Roadside ditches are a common place to hear them.



Be sure to come down this spring and hike the Marsh Trail to hear the frog calls and other beautiful sounds of spring!

TIPS FOR BACKYARD BIRDING

by Jimmy Wiebler, *Naturalist*

Spring migration is here! Thousands of birds are migrating through lowa on their way north to their breeding grounds. Birds need energy to complete this arduous task. To help them out, here are some suggested ways to attract and feed various species in your backyard:

Attract Baltimore and Orchard Orioles with orange slices, grape jelly, and mealworms

Orioles will likely be arriving in the Quad Cities by the end of April. Don't miss the window of opportunity to attract these beautiful birds to your yard! Using oriole-specific feeders, provide orange halves and grape jelly to attract them. Mealworms are also great for orioles, as they provide a good protein source during the nesting season. Other wildlife, such as cat birds and raccoons, also love these foods and may pay your feeding station a visit.

Attract Purple Martins by installing a house or gourds

Purple Martins are our largest swallow species and require artificial housing in which to nest. To attract these bluish-purple birds, simply install a martin house in your yard. There are several design types to choose from, but make sure you place it about 15-20 feet high in an open area away from trees and other structures. Although it's not necessary, having a water source such as a pond or stream nearby helps to attract this species.

Attract songbirds and woodpeckers with seed and suet

Birds that are in lowa year round such as cardinals, chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers also migrate; the individual chickadees that you see in the winter are not the same chickadees that you see in the summer. Providing bird food such as black oil sunflower seeds and energy-rich suet cakes can help to replenish the energy these birds use during their migration.

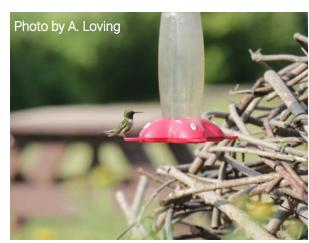
Attract finches with thistle seed

To attract finches such as the American Goldfinch and House Finch, provide thistle seed with a thistle feeder. Alternatively, make your own by hanging up a cheesecloth bag filled with thistle seed. These seeds have a high oil content, so they are rich in fat and may also attract Pine Siskins.

Attract hummingbirds with nectar

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds typically arrive in lowa about the first week of May. To attract them, hang up a hummingbird feeder filled with a homemade nectar solution. To make the nectar, boil a cup of water and dissolve ¼ cup of refined white sugar into the solution. Let it cool before filling your feeder. It's best to avoid honey and food dyes in your homemade nectar, and remember to replace unused nectar every couple of days to prevent the growth of bacteria.

Happy birding!



HELPING OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS

by Colin Shirk, AmeriCorps Naturalist

I found a baby bird... now what? With the spring thaw in full swing, our feathered friends are finding their mates and choosing the perfect location to raise their young. As these young birds start to flourish and grow, so does their tendency to wander. Oftentimes, this happens too early, and a baby bird will find itself on the ground before it can fly. You might think that these babies need immediate help, but more often than not, the better option is to leave them be. Here is a good way to determine if a baby bird truly needs your help:

1. Is the bird sick or injured? (Is it unable to flutter it's wings, bleeding, wings drooping unevenly, shivering, or has been handled by a cat or dog?)

YES: the bird needs help. Contact your local licensed wildlife rehabilitator for further guidance.

NO: continue to the next step.

2. Does the bird have feathers?

YES: it is a fledgling and the parents are still caring for it.

If it is safe from cats and dogs, it can be left alone.

If it is not safe from cats or dogs, it can be moved to a nearby brush or low branch.

NO: it is a nestling and should be returned to the nest. If you cannot find the nest, make one yourself, attach it to a nearby tree before adding the baby to the nest, and observe from a distance. If the parents don't visit the nest within a few hours, contact a local licensed wildlife rehabilitator for further guidance.

If at any time you're unsure about the steps outlined above, or just want to double-check, contact your local licensed wildlife rehabilitator for further guidance. Remember, wildlife rehabilitators are typically volunteers that may not be available at all times. Always leave a message and allow time for them to return your call.



See the sites below for a list of licensed wildlife rehabilitators:

Iowa: www.iowadnr.gov

Illinois: www.illinoisDNR.gov

A list of rehabilitators located in or near the Quad Cities can be found on our website under "Conservation"

UPCOMING EVENTS

BIRD HIKE

Join our naturalists for a guided bird walk through Nahant Marsh! These walks are for everyone: experts, novices, and people who have never gone birding in their entire life. Loaner binoculars are available for participants.

April 16, May 28 · 8-10 am Cost: \$5 Goodwill Donation

WILD WOODWORKING

Come build a three-tiered planter; this is great for herbs, strawberries and flowers! All materials and tools will be provided. No woodworking experience necessary.

April 21 · 6-7 pm

Cost: \$40 Members | \$50 Guests

HOMESCHOOL PROGRAM

Homeschool programs are offered once a month on Fridays at two different times. View program details on our website!

April: Spring Bird Migrants May: Under the Scope

April 22, May 27 · 10-11 am or 2:30-4 pm

Cost: \$6 Members | \$8 Guests

SPRING CLEANUP

Join Nahant Marsh staff for our annual Spring Cleanup! We will have opportunities for many age levels and abilities. Volunteer jobs will include light trash pickup along the marsh drive and on Wapello Ave., heavy duty debris cleanup around our adjacent properties, and invasive species removal.

April 30 · 9-11:30 am

Register at www.xstreamcleanup.com



MUSHROOM HUNT AND TABLE TALK

Meet Hunter Le Duc in the woods for a mushroom hunt and table talk. Before venturing out the major mushroom groups and their defining characteristics will be discussed as well as how to collect for identification purposes vs. the pot. Ample time will be given at the end to reconvene and go over everything we have found.

May 3 ⋅ 5:15-7:15pm

Cost: \$25 Members | \$30 Guests

TODDLER TALES

A great way to introduce young children, ages 3-5, to the wonders of the outdoors! The first Wednesday of each month from April-October, Nahant educators will lead a nature-themed story, craft, and outdoor adventure. Join us from 10-11 am for this great program!

May 4: Fantastic Frogs

Cost: \$4 Members | \$8 Guests

BREAKFAST NATURE CLUB (BNC)

BNC meets year-round on the first Friday of the month. Enjoy a continental breakfast while listening to nature-themed presentations.

May: Ferns of the QC with Bob Bryant

May 6 ⋅ 8-9 am

Cost: \$5 Members | \$10 Guests

NATURE HIKE

Join a Naturalist for an interpretive trail walk through the Marsh. Hikes are offered year-round on the first Saturday of the month and give visitors an opportunity to learn more about the diverse flora and fauna of this unique natural area.

May 7 • 9-10 am

Cost: \$5 Members | \$10 Guests

NATURE HOUR

Enjoy a light snack and BNC presentation with our Nature Hour evening program!

May: Ferns of the QC

May 11 • 5-6 pm

Cost: \$5 Members | \$10 Guests

VOLUNTEER NEWS

by Kelsi Massengale, Volunteer Coordinator

Seasonal Volunteer Highlight

This newsletter, we're excited to highlight volunteer Joe Ambrose!

Joe started volunteering with us last fall, and has quickly become a familiar face. He often participates in natural resource projects, helping with brush and invasive species removal, trash cleanups, seed harvesting, and more!

Recently, Joe helped Nahant Staff with the Reptile Room Remodel, logging nearly 17 hours in a single week! He helped to stain the new tank base, prep the room for painting, clean animal enclosures, and so much more.

Thank you, Joe, for all your help improving the marsh—both inside and outside the education center!



FNM REPTILE ROOM REMODEL

In the fall of 2021, we announced the kickoff of the Friends of Nahant Marsh's Reptile Room Remodel. This fundraiser was created in an effort to update the "Reptile Room" at the education center with larger enclosures, new filtration systems, better shelving and display units, and a fresh coat of paint.

Since starting the fundraiser in September with a goal of \$4,000, the Friends of Nahant Marsh have raised \$5,360!





Nahant staff and volunteers spent February 19th-25th remodeling the room! This included...

- Clearing and cleaning the room
- Painting the walls, ceiling and trim
- Building and staining the new tank base
- Setting up the new tank filtration systems
- Displaying new taxidermy
- Revamping the touch table, lending library, and children's library display

See more pictures on our Facebook page or visit the room yourself during our new spring hours. The education center is now open 9am-3pm on Saturdays!

WITH APPRECIATION

REPTILE ROOM REMODEL

Volunteers

Joe Ambrose

Amy Groskopf

Chris Nodurft

Kent Turner

Britt Vickstrom

Donors

Anonymous

Anonymous

Doris Matthews

Elizabeth and Nathan

Schramm

Harold Bobb

Jane and Les Cox

Jane Broughton

Joseph Weingart

Judy Guenther

Judy Joyce

Mark and Lisa Cleve

Robert Hatung

Steve and Lora Kull

Special Thanks

To Chris Wiebler and

Adam Marietta from

Aquatic Environments

for all their assistance

and expertise!

OBERHOLTZER AWARDS

This year's Oberholtzer Awards was a great success! Thanks to the following organizations and individuals, Nahant Marsh surpassed our fundraising goal.

Legacy Sponsor

THE JOYCE & TONY SINGH FAMILY FOUNDATION



Conservation Sponsors

WVIK, Quad Cities NPR
Waste Commission of Scott County
Iowa PBS Foundation
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WITH APPRECIATION

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Special Thanks

To Decker Ploehn for being an incredible emcee! Your time and efforts are greatly appreciated!

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WITH APPRECIATION

2022 DONATIONS

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Will Brooke

William McFarlin

2022 MEMBERSHIPS

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Becky & Hank Hartman
Bernadene Bowles
Betsy Huston
Betty Wood
Bloomquist Family
Britt Vickstrom
Brodersen Family

Carla Chapman

Claudia Scharf

Cathy White

David Schramm
Eileen Smith
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Randy and Coni Hervey
Robert Loch
Roorda Family
Strunk Family

Sue Albrecht
Susan McPeters
Tony and Helen Schiltz

Tony and Helen Schilt

Wille Family

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WITH APPRECIATION

2022 ANMAL ADOPTIONS



Captain Blanding's Turtle

Cathy and John White



Buddy Painted Turtle

Cassie Druhl



Squirtle Ornate Box Turtle

Cathy and John White



Sunny Fox Snake

Cathy and John White

To learn more about adopting an animal ambassador, please visit <u>nahantmarsh.org/adopt-an-animal/</u>

CORPORATE SPONSORS AND PARTNERS





Commission of Scott County



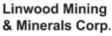
Partners of Scott County



EASTERN IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGES













TEAM UP TO CLEAN UP











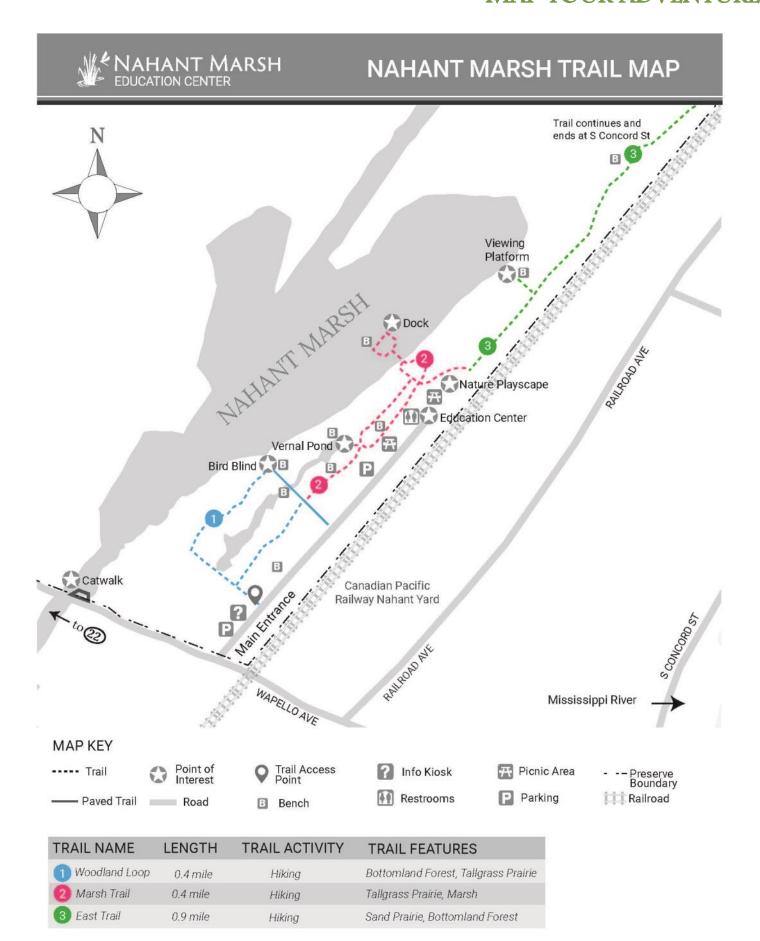


Natural Heritage Foundation





MAP YOUR ADVENTURE



EDUCATION CENTER HOURS

Monday-Friday: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Saturday: 9 am 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.