

Nahant News

Fall 2023

Vol. 17, Issue 4

Photo by C. Shirk



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About Nahant Marsh



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 382-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).



MARSH UPDATES

by Brian Ritter, *Executive Director*



If you've been to Nahant Marsh recently, you may have noticed some changes. This year, work has progressed on several projects, including the operations building, the Rockingham Bottoms parcel, and trails. At the same time, the staff has been continuing to deliver educational programming, conduct research, and work to protect the marsh ecosystems.

The new operations building, which will feature an additional classroom, office space, and maintenance area, was built up 3 feet above the existing building to help protect against future flooding. The building will likely be completed by spring and will help free up much-needed space in the existing education center.

The project at the Rockingham Bottoms parcel, located caddy-corner from the main entrance is nearing completion and will be open to the public in October. The parcel features a sand prairie, tallgrass prairie, bottomland forest, and marshland. It has a parking lot/trailhead, a ½ mile multi-use trail, and will eventually have ¾ mile of hiking trails. The parcel gets its name from the village of Rockingham that was located on a portion of the property from 1835-1851. Interpretative signs will be installed in the near future.

Work will soon begin to expand and improve the mile-long east trail which runs from the education center to S. Concord St. and River Dr. This is part of a larger plan to make certain portions of the marsh more accessible by creating a trail loop that will connect the various marsh properties. These trails will also allow our staff and volunteers to expand our natural resource management and education efforts.

Finally, Nahant Marsh recently completed the updated Master Plan with assistance from the US Army Corps of Engineers. This plan, among other things, will help us to plan for dealing with future climate extremes. This year, we experienced the 7th highest flood crest ever recorded on our section of the Mississippi River, followed by moderate to severe drought throughout most of the summer. During a four-month period, the river has fluctuated nearly 18 ½ feet. These extremes are becoming more common and by beginning to plan now, we hope to be better prepared for the next extreme weather event.

NATURAL RESOURCES NEWS

by Kinsey Nielsen, *Natural Resource Managers*

Rockingham Bottoms has a grand opening date set!

Formerly known as the Clarke property, this 39 acre parcel has been transformed from an agriculture field into wetlands and prairie over the past several years. Most recently, a new parking lot, trails, fencing, an overlook, and signs were added to get the addition ready for public use. This new area will have a bike-accessible trail, hiking trail, and is a great spot for wildlife watching.

The parking lot and trails will be open to the public starting on Saturday, **October 7th, 2023**. In addition to the hiking/biking trails, there will be interpretive signs, a picnic shelter, and geocaches in this area in the future. The Rockingham Bottoms property parking lot will be open from April-November, with no snow/ice maintenance during the winter months. The area will remain open for hiking and wildlife watching all year but visitors should use caution on the unmaintained trails during the colder months. We are excited to have visitors enjoy these new trails!

Image Descriptions:

1. 9-11-23: Sign along new trail.
2. 9-6-23: Zach and Brian installing posts for signs
3. 8-1-23: Cardinal Flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*, blooming in the wetland area.



SUMMER RESEARCH REVIEW

by Jimmy Wiebler, *Naturalist & Research Coordinator*



Another summer research season has come to an end at Nahant Marsh. This summer, seven student interns from four different colleges and universities studied the local flora and fauna of our diverse ecosystems in the marsh.



Tanya Bell (Scott Community College) studied the productivity of our largest swallow species, the Purple Martin. Her data contributed to Project Martin Watch, a citizen science project that helps protect this bird. She documented the successful hatching and fledging of 19 Purple Martin juveniles this summer.

Cade Meek (St. Ambrose University) and **Jessie Havemann** (Black Hawk College), working in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, studied several endangered species such as the Blanding's turtle, Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, Indiana bat, and northern long-eared bat. Although each of these species are of conservation concern, it is encouraging to note that Jessie and Cade detected all of these species at survey sites in the Quad Cities metropolitan area.



Christian Gonzalez (Augustana College) studied the fungal diversity and potential for mycoremediation—using fungi to remediate contaminated soil—at Nahant Marsh. With assistance from mycology enthusiast, Joshua Shomo, Christian and Josh identified 19 different species of fungi and protists on the preserve. Of these species, oyster mushrooms and split-gill fungi could be potential candidates for mycoremediation.



SUMMER RESEARCH REVIEW, CONT.

Sarah Crowley (Iowa State University) contributed to our capture-mark-recapture study of snakes at Nahant Marsh. Although snake sightings were few this summer (possibly due to spring flooding), she successfully captured and PIT-tagged (microchipped), garter and fox snakes along our trails.



Koku Afetse (Scott Community College) continued our long-term study of turtle populations at Nahant Marsh. He found an overall increase in the number of painted turtle, snapping turtle, and red-eared slider captures over the last three years, suggesting a thriving turtle population.

Savannah Meyne (Scott Community College) studied the restoration of Nahant Marsh's oak savanna, a habitat that once covered Iowa but currently makes up very little of the landscape today. She identified 69 different plant species and determined that the savanna seed mix that was planted was well represented, with few invasive species making up the savanna plant community.



Nahant Marsh's summer research program allows student interns to experience what it is like to be an ecological scientist, which gives them the skills and experience necessary to succeed in graduate school or a career in conservation. Moreover, their research helps to support Nahant Marsh's mission, and their findings help the Nahant Marsh Board make better management decisions for the preserve.

THE CHANGING OF THE SEASON

by Allison Nodurft, Naturalist



Have you ever wondered why the leaves change colors every fall? The answer might surprise you, but first let me explain why leaves are green. Leaves get their green color from chlorophyll, a green pigment found in chloroplasts, which are small organelles found inside the plant's cells of the leaves. During the growing season, chlorophyll is constantly produced and broken down by the leaves. Chlorophyll absorbs sunlight, and this light is used as energy for the leaves. The chloroplast's job is to take that energy, and through a process called photosynthesis, convert it into glucose. Plants use this glucose and nutrients taken from the soil to grow.

Alright, so why do leaves change colors? As the days grow shorter and the nights grow longer, less chlorophyll is produced. The green color is replaced by the colors produced from carotenoids (yellow, orange, red, and purple pigments) and anthocyanin (blue, red, or purple pigments). These pigments are present all year, but they are hidden by the green chlorophyll. Once these pigments are allowed to shine through, trees begin to turn yellow, brown, or red.

Trees such as hickories, aspens, yellow-poplar and black maples turn glowing yellow. Red leaves can be found on oaks and red maples. Dogwoods produce a purplish-red color, and sugar maples can be orange-red. Lastly, weather can also affect the color of leaves. Warm, sunny days with cool evenings bring out the most spectacular colors. The warm, sunny day produces lots of sugars in the leaves, but the cool night narrows the leaf veins, and the sugars remain present in the leaves. There is no exact way to predict exactly when leaves will change colors, especially long term; however, it is always fun to see the leaves change color before your eyes!



Photo by A. Nodurft

LET'S CELEBRATE VOLUNTEERS

by Liv Humphrey, Volunteer Coordinator

Fall 2023 Volunteer Spotlight

This fall, we would like to highlight Tim Murphy! He is a long-time volunteer, Friends of Nahant Marsh member, and currently serves on the Board of Directors. Tim spends many hours removing invasive species from our prairies, conducting bird surveys, and assisting with special events.

Thank you,

Tim, for your dedication to volunteering at Nahant over the years.



MEET LIV, THE NEW VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR



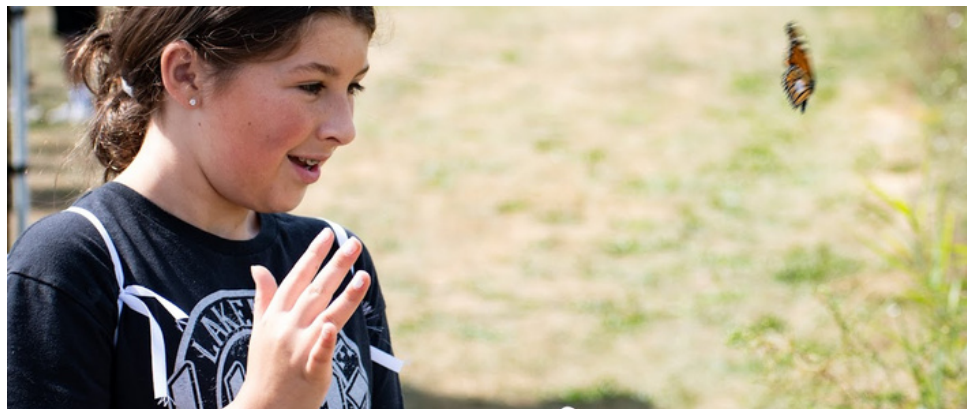
Liv Humphrey has been at Nahant Marsh since August 2023, serving as the Volunteer Coordinator and Administrative Assistant. She earned her bachelor's degree in environmental science with an emphasis in sustainability at San Diego State University.

In her free time, she enjoys practicing yoga, being out in nature, reading, painting, and spending time with her loved ones.

She looks forward to working with all of the wonderful Nahant volunteers!

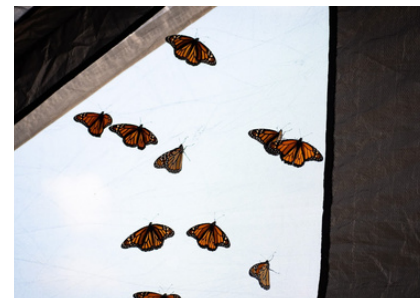
2023 MONARCH RELEASE PARTY

Photos by C. Shirk



2023 MONARCH RELEASE PARTY CONT.

Photos by C. Shirk



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS



Friends of Nahant Marsh
Monarch Rescue Team of the QC
Wild Ones QC Chapter
The Waste Commission of Scott County
Davenport Public Library
Cindy Lenger



UPCOMING EVENTS

BREAKFAST NATURE CLUB

BNC meets year round on the first Friday of the month. Enjoy a continental breakfast while listening to nature-themed presentations from 8:00-9:00 am.

NATURE HIKE

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.

WILD WOODWORKING

Build a nature-themed project with Nahant Naturalist, Allison! All materials and tools will be provided. No woodworking experience necessary.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

October 14th | November 11th

BIRD HIKE

Join Nahant Naturalist, Jimmy Wiebler, and other local bird enthusiasts for a guided bird walk through Nahant Marsh! These walks are for people with all levels of birding experience.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

October 26th

HOMESCHOOL

Nahant Marsh's homeschool program is a monthly series of natural science classes designed to supplement at-home learning for grades K-8th. Classes meet once a month on Fridays from 2:30-4:00 pm.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Sept 15th | Oct 20th | Nov 17th | Dec 15th

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
OUR UPCOMING
PROGRAMMING AND TO
REGISTER FOR UPCOMING
EVENTS, VISIT
NAHANTMARSH.ORG OR
SCAN THIS CODE:**



BUILDING BETTER BIRDERS WORKSHOP

These workshops are open to anyone and offer a great opportunity to improve birding skills, learn about issues facing wild animals around the world, and meet like-minded people interested in conservation.

The workshops will begin with a 1.5-hour evening presentation at Nahant Marsh on a specific bird group, which will cover migration class, species presence in Iowa, identifying field marks, and the song/call of each bird. The following day will include a day-long field trip to an off-site location that has prime habitat for the species covered in the lecture.

The workshops are divided into sessions; come for as many or as few sessions as you'd like!

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

September 26th | September 27th

NAHANT MARSH FALL FESTIVAL

Join us for a day filled with fun, friends, family, and fundraising as we celebrate the fall season at Nahant Marsh! Games, educational activities, and presentations throughout the day are sure to keep you and your loved ones occupied until the fish fry accompanied by LIVE music from The Tailfins to finish up the evening!

Presentations will include: Joe Wiegand as the world's premiere Theodore Roosevelt repressor, Denny Weiss on unique fish on the Mississippi River, and a LIVE raptor presentation from The RARE Group.

October 7th | 2:00pm—8:00pm

EVERGREEN WREATH WORKSHOP

Bring out your inner artist and craft a beautiful winter wreath. Using locally sourced evergreens and dried materials will ensure your wreath lasts through the winter. All supplies including a grapevine wreath base, a variety of evergreens, dried botanicals, festive ribbon, and personal instruction will be provided.

DATE AND PRICING:

December 2nd - \$30 | \$35

FUN FOR
THE WHOLE
FAMILY!



FALL Festival

-FUNDRAISER-

Generously
Sponsored by:



Join us for a day filled with fun, friends, family, and fundraising as we celebrate the fall season at Nahant Marsh! Games, educational activities, and presentations throughout the day are sure to keep you and your loved ones occupied until the fish fry accompanied by LIVE music from The Tailfins to finish up the evening!

-  Music From 
-  Fish Fry Dinner
-  Carnival Games
-  Bake Sale

-  Booze Pull
-  Pie Auction
-  Beer From
-  *& more!*



Learn more at nahantmarsh.org

- PRESENTATIONS BY -

Joe Wiegand



as the world's premiere
Theodore Roosevelt
Reprisor!



Commercial Fisherman
& Trapper

Denny Weiss

The RARE Group

with a presentation
featuring LIVE birds
of prey!



OCT 7 • 2PM - 8PM • NAHANT MARSH • DAVENPORT, IOWA

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| Brian Shirk | David Cooney | Gordon Anderson |



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| CAT | Foundation | Endowment | RDA |
| Doris and Victor Day | Hubbell-Waterman | Quad Cities Community Foundation | Safari Club |
| Foundation | Foundation | – Mark W. Schwiebert Fund for | International |
| | | Environmental Studies | SCRA |

Recent Tributes

Christopher & Rebecca Peiper in memory of David Foster

Curtis Lundy in memory on Sue von Maur

Elizabeth Brooke in memory of Anne Powers

Elizabeth Hodges in memory of Jim and Beverly Hodges

Gail Rinkenberger in honor of Nahant Staff

Herb and Deborah Ritter in memory of Rosemary Romine

Jane Cassidy in memory of Mary Cassidy

Jerry and Julie Skalak in memory of Caleb Neff

Jim Meehan in honor of Amy Kay

Mark and Deb Werning in memory of Fern Werning and Dave Putz

Mary and Jim Pelser in memory of Shirley Horstmann

Richard and Judy Kreiter in memory of John Syverud

Thomas Engelmann in memory of Robert Engelmann

Tracey Connel in memory of Shauwn Cesar

Animal Adoptions

Buddy | Painted Turtle

Alethia Hadjis
Cassie Druhl
Nicolina Turtle Co.
The Rakus and Wille Families

Captain | Blanding's Turtle

Mark and Lisa Cleve
Nicolina Turtle Co.

Micheline | Three-toed Box Turtle

Adaira Hadjis
Nicolina Turtle Co.

Sunny | Fox Snake

Aryanne (Cha Cha) Encarnacion-Cox
Kendall & Susan Schwartz Family

Oneida | Ornate Box Turtle

Nicolina Turtle Co.
Karen Peirong

Rocky | Bullsnake

Continental Cement Co.

Ethel | Red-eared Slider

Mark and Cindy Slater
Nicolina Turtle Co.

Pancake | Spiny Softshell Turtle

Cathy White
Joe and Sally Stewart
Nicolina Turtle Co.
Terry Collins
Patti Holmlund

Squirtle | Ornate Box Turtle

Cathy White
Nicolina Turtle Co.
Rescued
Squirtle the Dog

Bob | Three-toed Box Turtle

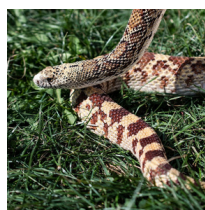
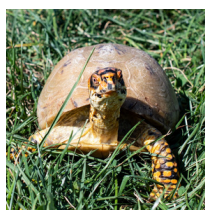
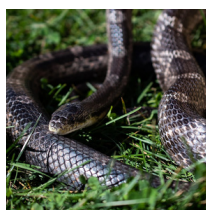
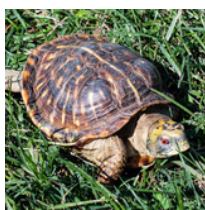
Ambrose Kerr
Cathy White
Judith Lee
Nicolina Turtle Co.

Pudge | Musk Turtle

Navarro Canoe Co.
Nicolina Turtle Co.
Thomas Thompson

Rizzo | Black Rat Snake

Tom and Leo Rizzo
Liz Schramm in Memory Shirley Horstmann



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. Nahant Marsh will be on the left just before the railroad crossing.