

# Nahant News

*Winter 2024*

Vol. 18, Issue 1



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).



# PUTTING GENEROSITY TO WORK

by Brian Ritter, *Executive Director*



In 2019, Nahant Marsh kicked off an ambitious capital campaign to better connect, protect, and grow the marsh. Hundreds of people generously donated their time and over \$4.2 million to expand Nahant Marsh's trails while making portions of them more accessible. Here are just some of what our community's generosity allowed us to accomplish during this past year:

- The Rockingham Bottoms at Nahant Marsh was officially opened to the public. This 39 acre parcel, purchased in 2018, features restored tallgrass and sand prairies, marsh, and a bottomland forest. It currently has a ½ mile multi-use trail, a viewing platform, and a trailhead/parking area. During the next year, Nahant Marsh staff will be working to add an additional ¾-mile hiking trail on the property, as well as interpretative signage about the parcel's unique history.
- A new operations building is nearing completion. This space features a much needed maintenance shop, a classroom/lab space, restrooms, and office space. This space, expected to be open by Spring 2024, will allow us to serve more people while better protecting the Marsh.
- Work has begun to improve our east trail. A ¼ mile of paved trail was completed that will allow better accessibility to our viewing platform in the sand prairie. The remaining mile of trail will be improved with a crushed rock/polymer substrate. This work will be completed in 2024.
- Nahant Marsh staff and volunteers planted 539 trees and shrubs this year. Over the past few years, nearly 3,000 trees have been planted at Nahant Marsh.
- This year, Nahant Marsh has provided programming for over 21,000 people. And since 2019, Nahant Marsh has provided educational programming for nearly 100,000 total participants! The funds raised have allowed us to offer discounted or free programming, especially for thousands of K-12 students.
- Volunteers and staff continue to improve the habitat at Nahant Marsh by conducting prescribed burns, removing invasive species, and planting hundreds of pounds of native wildflower seed.

Our team works to ensure that there is a balance between protecting the marsh ecosystem and connecting people with this unique treasure. Please visit soon and see how our community's generosity is being put to work.

# A LOOK AT THE MASTER CONSERVATIONIST PROGRAM

by Amy Loving, Education Director



Join the upcoming Master Conservationist Program, a collaborative initiative by ISU Extension and Outreach, County Conservation Boards, and local conservation leaders. Nahant Marsh is now entering its 12th year in coordinating the program locally and we are inviting individuals interested in conservation and Iowa's natural resources to enroll and become stewards of the environment.

The program's primary goal is to "plant the seeds of conservation" by connecting local community members and leaders who share a passion for preserving Iowa's natural resources. Through a comb-

ination of in-person field days and self-directed online learning, participants will gain comprehensive insights into the state's diverse ecosystems and conservation strategies.

Requirements for the course include 19 hours of in-person field days and 12 hours of self-directed online learning. These in-person experiences provide hands-on activities and learning opportunities led by local conservation professionals. Complementing the field days, the online modules offer flexibility and additional resources to deepen participants' understanding of ecology, conservation principles, and environmental challenges.

If you're passionate about conservation and eager to contribute to the well-being of Iowa's natural resources, consider joining the Master Conservationist Program at Nahant Marsh. Become part of a community dedicated to preserving the beauty and biodiversity that makes Iowa a special place to call home. Enroll today and take the first step toward a future where conservation is ingrained in everyday life.



*Master Conservationist Group, 2023*





NAHANT MARSH  
EDUCATION CENTER

# Nature & Education at Nahant Marsh

## Eastern Iowa Community Colleges' Continuing Education

Join the naturalists and staff at Nahant Marsh Education Center for some hands-on learning. Go birding. Discover ways to attract a flock to your backyard. Learn how red wiggler worms can reduce food waste and benefit the soil. Harvest some grapevine and make a wreath. And master the technique, and essential safety skills, to use a chainsaw.

Unless noted below, all classes will be held at:

**Nahant Marsh, 4220 Wapello Ave., Davenport, Iowa.**

### BACKYARD BIRD WORKSHOP

Join a Nahant naturalist and learn how to attract backyard birds and identify common species by sight and sound. During this interactive workshop you'll build a hanging bird feeder perfect for birds of all types. All tools and supplies provided.

Jan. 18 • 10–11:30 a.m.

Cost: \$39

Register at [eicc.edu/backyardbird](http://eicc.edu/backyardbird)



### COMPOSTING AT HOME

Reduce your impact by turning food waste into compost using red wiggler worms. Make an indoor compost bin to take home, learn how to maintain it, and ways to use the compost in houseplants and gardens. All supplies provided.

Feb. 29 • 10–11:30 am.

Cost: \$39

Register at [eicc.edu/composting](http://eicc.edu/composting)



### GRAPEVINE WREATHS

Meet at Nahant Marsh to harvest wild grapevines then learn the techniques and tips for design using natural and faux materials. Spring floral accents and tools will be provided. Dress for the weather as a part of the class will take place outside.

March 28 • 10–11:30 a.m.

Cost: \$39

Register at [eicc.edu/grapevine](http://eicc.edu/grapevine)



### BIRDING EXCURSION

Join Nahant Marsh naturalist Jimmy Wiebler on a guided bird tour at Loud Thunder Forest Preserve in Illinois City, Illinois. Birders and nature enthusiasts of all skill levels are welcome. Loaner binoculars will be available. Specific meeting location to be announced.

**Loud Thunder Forest Preserve,  
19408 Loud Thunder Road,  
Illinois City, Illinois**

April 25 • 10–11:30 a.m.

Cost: \$22

Register at [eicc.edu/birding](http://eicc.edu/birding)



### SAFETY AND WOODS WORKER (SAWW) TRAINING LEVEL I & II

Learn how to safely use a chainsaw, whether you are a professional or recreational user. Nathan Stanford, a SAWW Certified Trainer, will provide an overview on OSHA regulations, body mechanics, personal protective equipment, tools, tree felling, and more. In the Level II training, learn about maintenance, limbing techniques, precision felling assessment, including notching, and more. Complete both sessions and receive a certificate. Supplies and lunch provided each day.

March 20-21 • 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$320

Register at [eicc.edu/SAWW](http://eicc.edu/SAWW)



You deserve  
**MORE**

### QUESTIONS?

**Amy Loving**  
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Nahant Marsh  
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[aloving@eicc.edu](mailto:aloving@eicc.edu)

### CONTACT EICC

Toll-free - 1-888-336-3907

Email [eiccinfo@eicc.edu](mailto:eiccinfo@eicc.edu)



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# NATURAL RESOURCES NEWS

by Kinsey Nielsen, *Natural Resource Managers*

**What a year 2023 has been! Our big projects included:** sandbagging, flood debris removal, tree planting, trash cleanups, seed harvesting, invasive species removal, and enhancing prairie diversity- just to name a few. A big thank you goes out to our dedicated volunteers who are an essential part of our restoration efforts. This year we planted 539 trees and shrubs; most of these trees are located in our wetland mitigation bank areas as part of a bottomland forest restoration project



We had a very successful season for prescribed burns this **fall with a record 17.9 acres of prairie burned!** Fire helps to control unwanted trees in our prairies, remove dead grasses, and allows for an excellent soil surface to spread native prairie seed. Staff and volunteers collected over 130 species of seed which was used to enhance 14+ acres of prairie and wetland habitat. We are looking forward to seeing these areas increase in diversity next year and beyond.

### Image Descriptions:

- 1. 8-2-23 Volunteers clearing brush along a trail.
- 2. 11-14-23 Prescribed burn in tallgrass prairie.
- 3. 11-30-23 Prairie seeding near education center.

Pictured (l-r) Maddie K., Kinsey N. and Mark S.



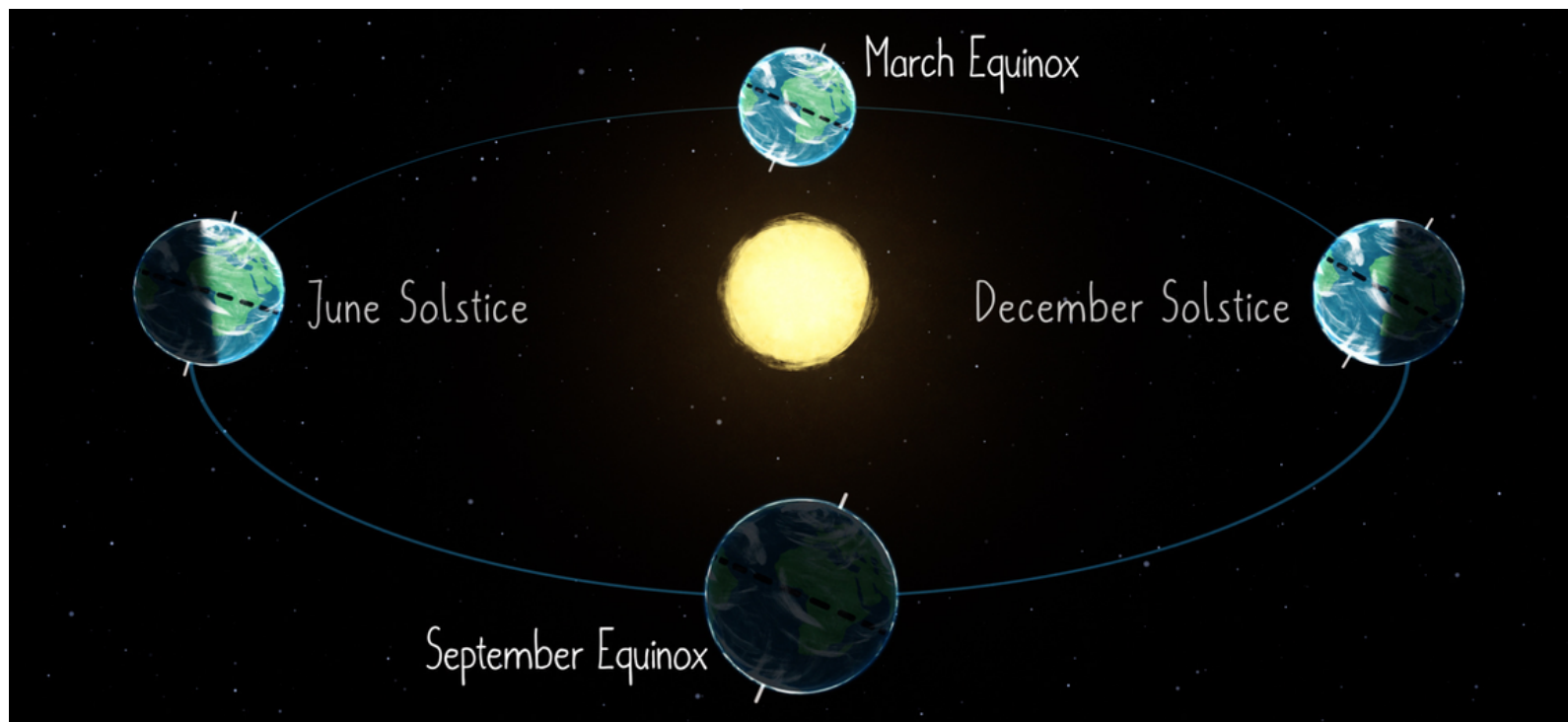
# BRIGHTER DAYS AHEAD

by Allison Nodurft, Naturalist

December 21st at 10:27 PM marked the 2023 winter solstice and the celestial start of the winter season. In the Northern Hemisphere, December 20th or 21st (depending on the year) are the shortest day and longest night of the year. We typically think of the winter solstice as an entire day or season, however, it happens for only a moment. During this brief moment the earth is tilted as far away from the sun as possible; blink and you may miss it.

Solstice comes from the Latin words sol, meaning “sun” and sistere, meaning “to stand still.” During the days before and after the solstice, the sun seems to stand still at noon. The sun's elevation change is so slight the sun appears to stay in the same location. After the winter solstice, the sun's elevation begins to advance north, eventually reaching the elevation of the summer solstice. While the winter solstice is happening in the Northern Hemisphere, the summer solstice is occurring in the Southern Hemisphere. To observe the effects of a solstice, stand outside at noon on the solstice date. During the winter solstice, your shadow will be the longest it will be than any other time of the year. During the summer solstice, you will cast almost no shadow at all.

The 2024 winter solstice will be Saturday December 21st at 4:19 AM, and the summer solstice will occur six months later on Thursday, June 20th, at 3:50 PM.



*Farmers Almanac, 2023*

# NEW YEAR GULLS

by Jimmy Wiebler, *Naturalist & Research Coordinator*

*Ring-billed Gull*



Every winter, as the mercury drops and the marsh begins to freeze at the surface, hundreds of gulls descend in flocks to rest upon the ice. Birds in the gull family, called Laridae, are water-loving birds that can be found across the United States. Although oceans and sandy beaches come to mind when thinking about gulls, these birds can be found miles from any saltwater; therefore, the term “seagull” doesn’t quite fit the bill.

When lakes and rivers freeze, gulls migrate to find food, even if that means visiting a McDonald’s parking lot or sanitary landfill. Aside from French fries and trash, gulls find open water to eat fish, crustaceans (e.g., shrimp and crabs), mollusks (e.g., mussels and clams), insects, and even other birds. Here at Nahant Marsh, we often observe gulls eating the seeds (and presumably invertebrates) out of the American lotus pods that litter the ice.

Identifying species of gulls can be notoriously difficult because individuals change their appearance as they age into their adult plumage, which can take up to four years depending on the species. Our most common gull visitor at Nahant Marsh, the Ring-billed Gull, is mostly white with gray, black-tipped wings. These gulls are named for the black ring around their bill, which becomes apparent after three years of molting. As juveniles, however, the Ring-billed Gull is speckled brown with a mostly black bill.

The Herring Gull is also common and closely resembles the Ring-billed Gull, but it is roughly double the size and has a yellow bill as an adult. But don’t be fooled! Herring Gulls also have a black ring around their bill during their second and third winter, making them difficult to tell apart from Ring-billed Gulls in the field. When in doubt, look for pink legs, which is another character that distinguishes this species from the yellow legs of the Ring-billed Gull.

With a little practice, identifying gulls can be great fun, especially when less common species such as the Lesser Black-backed Gull, Franklin’s Gull, Bonaparte’s Gull, or Glaucous Gull are spotted hiding amongst the Ring-billed and Herring Gulls at Nahant Marsh.



# OUR OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER

by Liv Humphrey, Volunteer Coordinator

## Winter 2024 Volunteer Spotlight

This inter, we would like to highlight Tom Thompson! He is a newer Friends of Nahant Marsh member, joining in January 2023. Since then, he has been a tremendous help with being a docent whenever he can, stepping up to volunteer at our events, guided hikes, camps, and overall being a great asset to the Nahant family.

*Thank you,*

Tom, for the dedication and support you have given to the Marsh.



## MEET ALYSSA, THE NEW AMERICORPS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR.



Alyssa is from Rock Island, IL, and graduated from Augustana College in 2022 as a double major in Anthropology and Public Health, with a Spanish minor.

Alyssa recently joined the Nahant team as an AmeriCorps Environmental Educator. Prior to this experience, she worked for the University of Illinois Extension and spent a summer building and restoring hiking trails with the Southwest Conservation Corps-AmeriCorps in Durango, Telluride, and Ouray, Colorado. While exploring various paths in conservation, she enjoys hiking, rock climbing, reading, thrifting, making jewelry, and yoga.

# 2023 FALL FESTIVAL

Photos by C. Shirk



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS

# PRESCRIBED BURNS AT THE MARSH

Photos by C. Shirk



*17.9 ACRES OF PRAIRIE BURNED*



# 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.

*Upcoming: February 2, March 1, April 5*

## 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.

*Upcoming: February 3, March 2, April 6*

## WILD WOODWORKING

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

*Upcoming: February 10, March 23, April 13*

## 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: February 17, March 30, April 27*

## 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: February 16, March 15, April 19*

## TODDLER TALES

Toddler Tales is a great way to introduce young children, ages 3-5 years old, to the wonders of the outdoors! This program meets on the first Wednesday of each month from 10:00-11:00 a.m., from April through October, Nahant educators will lead a nature-themed story, snack, craft, and outdoor adventure.

*Upcoming: April 2*

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

## VALENTINE'S DAY LANTERN HIKE

On this self-guided, lantern-lit walk, follow the lanterns along the trails and then warm up by the bonfire. Savory hors d'oeuvres, sweet treats and hot cocoa will be available in the education center. Registration is required.

*2/9/2024 | 5:00pm-7:00pm*

## ST. PATRICK'S DAY STORY TIME

Join a naturalist to read the story How to Catch A Leprechaun and build your own leprechaun trap just in time for St. Patrick's Day! Registration is required.

*3/16/2024 | 10:00am-11:00am*

## MASTER CONSERVATIONIST

The Master Conservationist Program is a collaborative initiative offering a blended curriculum on natural resource conservation. Graduates are encouraged to apply their knowledge within their communities, fostering connections with other conservationists. Registration is required.

*4/17/2024-8/21/24 | Times will vary*

## 5TH ANNUAL OBERHOLTZER AWARDS

Nahant Marsh's Oberholtzer Awards were started to recognize local people who have dedicated their lives (or will dedicate their lives) to protecting our natural world. Often times these people go unnoticed, or have been largely forgotten for their contributions. The awards are a way to recognize their hard work and leadership in conservation, to bring awareness to the causes they believe in, and to inspire others to take action.

A buffet style brunch (vegetarian options available) will be served accompanied by live music, followed by the awards ceremony, fund-a-cause, raffles, and a live auction. Registration is required. Tickets for individual seats, and/or tables of 8 are available.

*3/9/2024 | 9:00am-12:00pm*

*The Bend Event Center | East Moline, IL*



## CURRENT MEMBERS

Aimee Hagen	Ferguson Family	Linda Clewell	Slater Family
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Raccoon Motel	Silke Mast	Tony Knobbe
Ragged Records	Spin and Mindy Williams	Tony Schiltz



**RECENT DONATIONS, CONT.**

Tracey Connell  
Trash Can Annie Vintage Clothing  
TREK Bicycle Davenport  
Trina Burns  
Trish Fuess  
Tyler Schott  
Unitarian Church  
Verana Coffee  
Vicki and Joe Arnold  
Wallace's Garden Center  
Walter DeDoncker

Waste Commission of Scott County  
Watermark Corners  
Wide River Winery  
Will Collier  
Will Moon  
William Howe  
William McFarlin  
Wright Cycles  
Wynne and David Schafer  
Zachary Campbell  
Zachary Strong

**ANIMALS SPOTTED AT THE MARSH IN 2023**

Photo by J. Malake



Photo by J. Malake

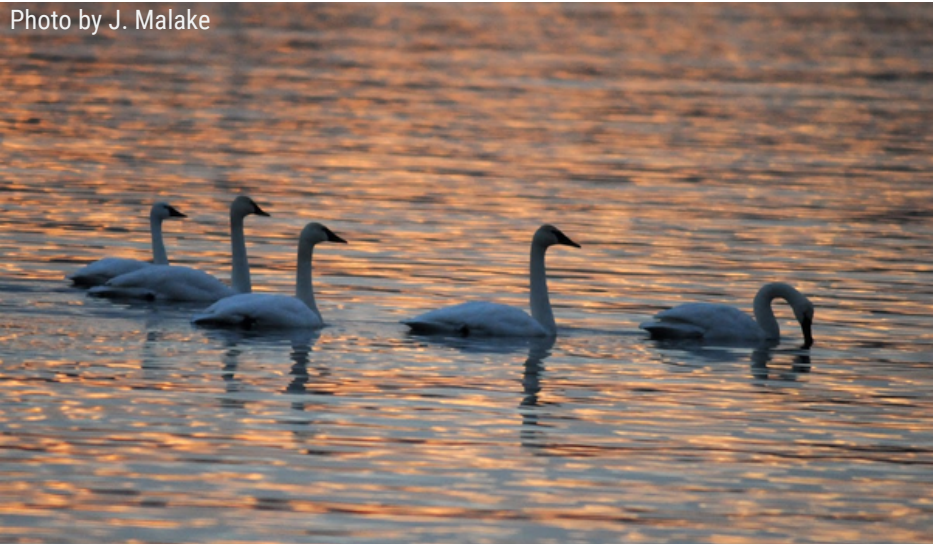


Photo by C. Shirk



Photo by J. Malake



Photo by C. Shirk



## Granting Organizations

American Water	GreenState	Quad Cities Community Foundation	Rauch Family
Arconic Foundation	Foundation	– Caroline Kimple Charitable	Foundation
CAT	Hubbell-Waterman	Endowment	RDA
Doris and Victor Day	Foundation	Quad Cities Community Foundation	Safari Club
Foundation	Moline Foundation	– Mark W. Schwiebert Fund for	International
Fish and Wildlife	Quad Cities Audubon	Environmental Studies	SCRA
	Society	Quad City Plus 60	The Bechtel Trusts
			Two For the Trails

## Recent Tributes

Bernard & Ruth Brus in honor of Daniel & Rachael Avise	Jerry & Julie Skalak in memory of Caleb Neff
Christopher & Rebecca Peiper in honor of Amy & Damion Sad	Libbet Brooke in memory of Anne Powers
Christopher & Rebecca Peiper in memory of David Foster	Mary & Jim Pelzer in memory of Shirley Horstmann
Clarice Wunderlich in memory of Richard Wunderlich	Richard & Judy Kreiter in memory of John Syverud
Jane Cassidy & Rick Dienesch in memory of David Foster	Thomas Engelmann in memory of Robert Engelmann

## Animal Adoptions

### **Buddy | Painted Turtle**

Alethia Hadjis  
Cassie Druhl  
The Rakus and Wille Families

### **Captain | Blanding's Turtle**

Mark and Lisa Cleve

### **Micheline | Three-toed Box Turtle**

Adaira Hadjis.

### **Sunny | Fox Snake**

Aryanne (Cha Cha) Encarnacion-Cox  
Kendall & Susan Schwartz Family  
Elysa and Caden Huynh-Smith

### **Oneida | Ornate Box Turtle**

Karen Peirong

### **Rocky | Bullsnake**

Continental Cement Co.

### **Ethel | Red-eared Slider**

Mark and Cindy Slater

### **Pancake | Spiny Softshell Turtle**

Cathy White  
Terry Collins  
Patti Holmlund

### **Squirtle | Ornate Box Turtle**

Cathy White  
Rescued  
Squirtle the Dog

### **Bob | Three-toed Box Turtle**

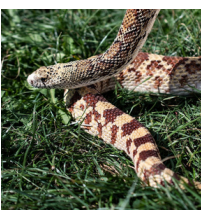
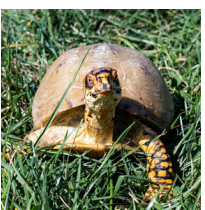
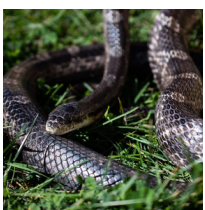
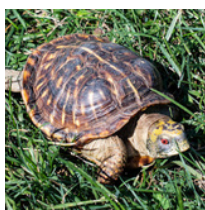
Ambrose Kerr  
Cathy White

### **Pudge | Musk Turtle**

Navarro Canoe Co.  
Thomas Thompson  
Etta Larson

### **Rizzo | Black Rat Snake**

Tom and Leo Rizzo  
Liz Schramm in Memory of 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.