



Annual Report

July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

Mission Statement

The mission statement was revised and the following was approved at the June business meeting:

The Friends of Jackson County Conservation brings people together through educational and recreational opportunities in partnership with the Jackson County Conservation Board and inspires people to understand and care for our environment.

Brief History

Friends of Jackson County Conservation is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that was created in 1999 to help with fund raising for the building of the Hurstville Interpretive Center. It has since expanded its fund raising efforts and other projects to support all aspects of the conservation department.

Board Members

Board Members can serve two 3-year terms. Board members during the 2014-15 FY were:

Jo Ellen Langerman, Chair
Jeremy Meyer, Vice Chair
Wendy Hainstock, Treasurer
Sandy Walton, Secretary
Kathi Atkinson, Volunteer Coordinator

Awards/Grants

Friends received the **Excellence in Interpretive Support award** from the National Association of Interpretation in November. Kevin & Ann Burns traveled to Denver, Colorado to accept the award.

Friends received a \$7,500 award from Wellmark as part of their 75th Anniversary. Friends received the most votes for our region to receive the award. The award was used to build a pedestrian and bike bridge over Sanborn Creek and welcome kiosks at the parking lots.

Friends received a \$2,000 grant from the National Environmental Education Foundation to hold three BioBlitz events at Prairie Creek Recreation Area.

Administrative

- 216 people volunteered for Jackson County Conservation/Friends of Jackson County Conservation, spending 2,413 hours of their time. Volunteer numbers include both members and non-members.
- Friends of Jackson County Conservation & Jackson Co. Conservation served 12,272 people through environmental education programs and events.

Fundraisers

- The Annual Soup Supper was April 12. 31 people attended the presentation about The Great River Rumble, presented by Lori Roling. 65 people were served at the supper. \$732 was raised from the

supper, donations and the silent auction.

- We participated in the national Great Give Day on May 5, 2015 through the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. \$4,277.50 was contributed from donors (includes the \$1,000 transferred from Friends checking account).
- A McDonalds Wednesday night fundraisers occurred in April. \$200 was donated to us from McDonalds.
- A prairie seed sale was held in the spring. \$610 was raised.
- Held a wine tasting event/membership drive in November.

Projects Funded and Supported

- Installed the bridge at Prairie Creek Recreation Area, using the Wellmark award.
- Hosted a Volunteer Fair at the Hurstville Interpretive Center.
- Assisted with the 10 year anniversary event of the Hurstville Center in August.
- Supported Jackson County Summer Youth Corps.
- Sponsored 2nd annual Jackson County Safari & 1st Annual Geocaching Safari. Purchased pathtags.
- Sponsored a summer education intern. Tony Vorwald, a student from the University of Dubuque, was hired.
- Sponsored 3 BioBlitz events at Prairie Creek Recreation Area.
- Received an Iowa Ornithologist Union Grant to conduct a bird survey at Prairie Creek Recreation Area.
- Funded updates to the Hurstville Interpretive Center. Mulch and signs for pollinator garden. New observation bee hive for exhibit floor. Added a red fox to prairie diorama.
- Sponsored a Maquoketa River cleanup with club hOpe.
- Continued support of the trumpeter swan reintroduction program. Acquired a new captive adult female swan at Hurstville Center.
- Provided a bus scholarship to Western Dubuque & Maquoketa for field trips.
- Public & Youth Programs/Events, including summer day camps, Halloween hike, Dubuque bald eagle watch, bird feeder workshop, bird house workshop and Youth Outdoor Skills Day.

The Strategic Planning Committee met over the winter & spring and recommends the following:

1. *Prairie Creek Recreation Area:* Recommends sponsoring one or more large scale projects at PCRA.
 - a. Friends can start to create a campaign for raising money to leverage more dollars for projects.
 - b. The Friends should sponsor something that could have their name on it.
 - c. When considering what projects to sponsor, consideration should be taken for their sustainability, i.e. permeable walkways, renewable energy, composting toilets.
2. *Budget:* Recommends that Friends budget responsibly so that we can assist the conservation board with larger scale projects that require more funds, i.e. Prairie Creek Recreation Area developments.
 - a. Save and raise at least \$50,000 over the next 5 years for sponsoring projects at Prairie Creek Rec Area.
3. *Biodiversity:* Recommends making it a priority to promote biodiversity both at our parks and on private lands.
 - a. Friends can do this by continuing to offer a native plant sale.
 - b. Friends can supplement plantings done by the conservation board by assisting in purchasing more diverse species.
 - c. Friends can continue to support education and programming that promotes biodiversity.
4. *Internships:* Recommends that Friends continue to support internships with Jackson County Conservation. Internships benefit both JCCB and the student seeking experience within the natural resource field.
 - a. Friends continue to sponsors a summer education intern annually.
 - b. Recommends that Friends sponsor a high school or other student with a volunteer stipend for an extended volunteer experience with JCCB.
 - c. Recommends that Friends not fund any scholarships, instead focus on the internship aspect.
5. *Endowment:* Recommends that Friends continue to increase their endowment and continue to promote the endowment as an option for donors.
 - a. Goal is to increase the endowment \$30,000 by 2020.
 - b. Continue to transfer \$1,000 from checking account to endowment annually.
 - c. Promote the endowment through fundraising campaigns and let potential donors know about it.