

Story County Naturalist Heather Hucka Connects People to Nature

People who attend her presentations on the natural world and its resources regularly give her high marks. Her coworkers at Story County Conservation readily praise her knowledge. Her peers in other Iowa counties have incorporated her ideas into their programming. And now, Heather's work is being appreciated on the national level.

Heather has been selected as the 2017 National Association for Interpretation (NAI) Master Frontline Interpreter. This is one of NAI's most prestigious awards and presented for demonstrating a mastery of interpretive techniques, program development, and design of creative projects. NAI will make their official presentation at the NAI National Workshop in Spokane, Washington November 14-18.



Above: Heather shares turtle stories
Left: Some lessons are sung



As a naturalist with the County's Conservation Department, Heather works in a team of environmental educators. She and her coworkers were recognized with a statewide award, the Outstanding Environmental Education Excellence Award, in 2011.

Heather spends much of her time developing and providing curriculum-based programming, offering outdoor experiences and leading adventure trips. Her audiences range from children to seniors, with plenty of inner-generational families and groups in the mix. The experiences she offers are just as diverse.

Heather does not get surprised easily. But receiving the Master Frontline Interpreter award is different, she said.

"As someone who is constantly in front of an audience, I never thought winning an award would be so humbling."

Victoria DeVoss, a naturalist with Plymouth County Conservation, nominated Heather for the award. The nomination packet included letters of support from a coworker, the regional director of the

National Association for Interpretation and Mike Todd, a teacher at Ames High School.

"Heather is a very energetic and passionate naturalist who is always looking to collaborate on projects that would make great experiences for kids," Todd wrote. "I don't even know how many times Heather has contacted me over the years to see if I'd be interested in working with her to engage our students in meaningful experiences. These aren't experiences that are easy for her to arrange, plan, or implement. It would be easy for her to just sit around and do the minimum at her job, but she truly cares about our youth and our community, so she is constantly looking to get kids outdoors and help them develop deep connections with nature."

Heather has been with Story County Conservation for 11 years. Being a naturalist allows her to be creative and spend time outdoors. She has done much during that time. She especially takes pride in three of her accomplishments:

- Expanding the county's FLOAT programs for middle and high school youth to include caving and backpacking trips
- Developing innovative classroom programs to meet a school's specific curriculum standards like "Shocking Developments," which teaches about electricity
- Learning that other counties have picked up her "Pooches in the Park" program

"To have a career where you can make such a lasting impact on such a diverse audience, while simultaneously having fun and growing as an individual, propels me to constantly push towards excellence," said Heather.

Story County Conservation will be hosting an open house for Heather on Monday, November 20, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. at the Conservation Center at McFarland Park. Please stop by and congratulate her for being one of the best naturalists in the nation.

STAY CONNECTED!

Sign up for Notify Me at www.storycountyia.gov

Citizen Help Center

- Notify Me
- Payments
- GIS Maps
- Report a Concern
- Transparency Tools

Upcoming Events

- Supermarket of Veterans Benefits on November 17, 2017 from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm at the Ames Moose Lodge (644 W. 190th Street)
- Heather Hucka's Open House on November 20, 2017 from 4:30 - 6:30 pm at Conservation Center

Story County Offices will be closed on the following dates in observance of holidays:

- November 10, 2017
- November 23 and 24, 2017
- December 25 and 26, 2017
- January 1, 2018

Story County Board of Supervisors meet Tuesdays weekly at 10:00 am in the Public Meeting Room - 2nd Floor - Story County Administration Building, Nevada

For more Story County events and classes through Story County Conservation, please visit:

www.storycountyia.gov

Our Story is a publication of Story County, Iowa. For questions or comments, please contact Leanne Lawrie Harter, County Outreach and Special Projects Manager, by email at lharter@storycountyia.gov or by calling 515-382-7247.

It's a Stinky Situation

Amy Yoakum, Natural Resource Specialist

It is that annoying insect time of year. Bee's, minute pirate bugs, Asian beetles, boxelder bugs, and now the brown marmorated stink bug. Native to Asia, these nuisance home invaders were detected in eastern Iowa in 2012 and have spread into central parts of the state. It takes a few years for their population to grow before they become a problem.



Just like Asian beetles and boxelder bugs, brown marmorated stinkbugs will invade your house looking for a place to overwinter. They are large (slightly less than an inch long), have the typical shield shape of a stinkbug, and yes, they stink.

The bugs have scent glands on their abdomen and release an unpleasant odor when threatened. The odor has been described as smelling like coriander.

We have received reports from Ames and even in Boone County of these unwanted guests trying to get into homes already this fall.

For more information and good identification tips, please visit: <http://www.stopbmsb.org/>

Boards and Commissions Openings Get Involved!

Deb Schildroth, Director of External Operations and County Services

More than 70 volunteers are serving on Story County Boards or Commissions. The Board of Supervisors encourages citizen involvement and expertise to assist the Board in serving the community. Boards and Commissions were established to help the Board address many and varied duties and responsibilities of county government. These Board and Commissions are created by state code, county ordinance, or by action of the Board of Supervisors and provide opportunities for citizen input and accessibility to county government. The Board of Supervisors looks to these groups to advise them on a wide-range of issues affecting their constituencies, and to assure they are responsive to community needs.

Appointments to Boards and Commissions are on a volunteer basis. Appointees must be residents of Story County and may need to meet additional criteria depending on the Board or Commission. While applications are accepted at any time, Story County is currently recruiting for members on the following boards and commissions.

- ASSET - 2 openings
- Board of Adjustment - 1 opening
- Board of Health - 2 openings
- Civil Service Commission - 2 openings
- Condemnation Commission - Up to 30 openings

- Conservation Board - 1 opening
- Planning and Zoning Commission - 1 opening
- VA Commission - 1 immediate opening (to finish a term)

You can find further information about Story County boards and commissions by visiting the "Your Government" tab on the county website at <http://www.storycountyia.gov>.

If you have any questions about the boards and commissions, the openings or application process, please contact Deb Schildroth at 515-382-7243 or dschildroth@storycountyia.gov.



Animal Control and Welfare Ordinance Changing

Sue McCaskey, Animal Control Director

Story County Animal Control recently made proposed changes to the "Animal Control and Welfare" ordinance, Chapter 45, of the Story County Code of Ordinances.

The world of animals is rapidly changing, and it was time to update our ordinance. These changes cover not only new situations we have been encountering, but also make improvements in defining neglect, cruelty, and standards of care. We also have added animal hoarding as a separate offense.

In addition to seeking input from County staff, the Animal Control Department held an animal control workshop in September to increase the public's awareness that ordinance changes were being proposed. The Story County Board of Supervisors held public hearings on the proposed changes in October, with the third and final vote being taken on October 31. The amendments to the ordinance are expected to become effective on November 9, 2017.

For more information on the ordinance changes, contact the Story County Animal Shelter at 925 Lincoln Highway in Nevada or by phone at 515-382-3338.



"Itty Bitty" finds her forever home. Another happy adoption story!

Government Contributors to the Story County Housing Trust Fund

Local government entities are currently the major funders for the Story County Housing Trust Fund (SCHTF).

The trust's rules require a monetary investment from every community wanting its citizens to be eligible to apply for funds from the trust. The Story County Board of Supervisors volunteered to pay the investment contribution for the county's smaller municipalities for Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019.

Communities of 2,000 citizens or less that are covered by Story County's offer and the per-year amount are:

Cambridge \$446.40	Collins \$263.51
Colo \$470.21	Gilbert \$585.46
Kelley \$166.66	Maxwell \$495.64
McCallsburg \$178.56	Roland \$697.47
Sheldahl \$173.59	Slater \$811.64
Zearing \$291.11	

Communities with populations over 2,000 whose city councils are contributing funds themselves and their per-year contribution amounts for the next two years include:

Ames \$33,547.61	Huxley \$1,831.59
Nevada \$3,666.43	Story City \$1,868.10

Story County Participating in Local Housing Trust Fund

Story County government is a major participant in the latest effort to provide affordable housing to county residents.

This spring, the Board of Supervisors committed to contributing \$18,172.54 to the Story County Housing Trust Fund, a newly formed non-profit eligible to receive money from the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA). The authority's housing trust match program awards \$4 for every \$1 up to \$60,000 yearly that the local program plans to spend to make housing affordable to low and moderate-income individuals and families.

Under this formula, the Story County Housing Trust Fund could receive up to another \$240,000 per year, making a total of up to \$300,000 available in each of 2018 and 2019 for housing supports and administration costs. The county's contribution will be split over a two-year period, with half being paid in this fiscal year and the other half in FY2019. The county money is further broken down into \$4,505.94 per year as the contribution covering residents living in the county's unincorporated areas and \$4,580.33 per year as covering residents living in communities with populations of less than 2,000. (Please see chart for details.)

The Story County Housing Trust Fund is the result of a two-year effort spearheaded by volunteers from local faith congregations.

Approval creating the housing trust fund organization was done at the Iowa Finance Authority's housing conference in September. The trust fund board submitted its application for funding in October. The Story County Housing Trust Fund board of directors anticipates accepting applications for funding assistance after the first of the year.

Paving Projects - Our First Gravel Road Conversions in 15 Years

Darren Moon, Story County Engineer

The Story County Engineer's Office completed two construction projects this summer that converted existing gravel roads to pavement. These were the first two significant grade and pave projects that the county has been able to complete in over 15 years due to road funding constraints. These two projects were made possible in part due to the fuel tax increase that was approved by the state in 2015.

The first project included paving one mile of 600th Avenue between US Highway 30 and Lincoln Highway. This road is used heavily especially during harvest season to bring crops into Key Cooperative and the ethanol plants. This project was completed in early August, and the pavement is open, ready for the fall harvest traffic. The cost for the project was \$855,000 and it was paid for with Farm to Market funds.

The second paving project was on Grant Avenue between Ames and Gilbert. Grant Avenue was seeing an increase in traffic due to the new Gilbert High School at the north end. The increased traffic was making the gravel road difficult to maintain and the dust that was created at the beginning and end of the school day was causing traffic safety concerns.

Paving this 1.5 mile stretch connected the recent Hyde Avenue paving that Ames completed last year to Gilbert. Our project also included a separated bike trail on the east side of the Grant Avenue that connects onto the Gilbert High School property. The bike trail extends south down to W. 190th Street and will end on the north side of the intersection at this time. Ames plans to extend the bike trail south of W 190th Street in the next year or two as the land develops on the west side of Hyde Avenue. This \$1,600,000 project was paid for with local Secondary Road Fund dollars.

Looking Forward to Winter!

While we don't want to admit it, winter in Iowa is heading our way!

Please keep in mind the adopted maintenance procedures followed by Story County Secondary Roads



when that first snowfall hits. County roads will be maintained to the best of our ability subject to weather conditions, available equipment, and safety of personnel.

The entire snow removal ordinance can be viewed on the Secondary Roads website at www.storycountyiowa.gov. Questions can be referred to the Story County Secondary Roads Department at (515) 382-7355.

Administration Building
Phone: 515-382-6581

Human Services Center
Phone: 515-663-2930

Engineer and Secondary Roads
Phone: 515-382-7355

Animal Shelter
Phone: 515-382-3338

Justice Center
Phone: Attorney 515-382-7255
Sheriff 515-382-6566

Engineer and Secondary Roads
Phone: 515-382-7355

STORY COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS



County Attorney
Jessica Reynolds



County Sheriff
Paul Fitzgerald



County Auditor
Lucy Martin



County Treasurer
Renee Twedt



County Recorder
Stacie Herridge



Supervisor
Lauris Olson



Supervisor
Rick Sanders



Supervisor
Marty Chitty