



Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2019-2020

Board Members

President, Mary Kramer, December 31, 2020

Vice President, John Newman, December 31, 2022

Secretary, Chris Ruhaak, December 31, 2023

Board Member, Eric Hough, December 31, 2024

Board Member, Joyce Isaacson, December 31, 2021

Mission Statement

Offer unique, high quality recreational opportunities for the visitors and citizens of Pottawattamie County through the development of parks, habitat and other facilities. Create environmental education and recreation programs that reach all levels. Enhance the natural areas of Pottawattamie County to create connections to the natural environment and foster responsible stewardship for future generations.



Hitchcock Nature Center by Lance Brisbois

Significant Activities for Fiscal Year 2019-2020

During Fiscal Year 2020, the Conservation Board held eleven regular monthly meetings and two special meetings. The official copies of the minutes of each of these meetings are public record and are available for inspection and review in the office of the Conservation Board in the County Courthouse Annex, Council Bluffs, Iowa. At these meetings the Conservation Board:

- Completed jetty project at Farm Creek which was funded in part by an IDNR Fish Habitat grant
- Hawk Counter position at Hitchcock was filled by Erin Scott
- Update on the Pony Creek Wetland Mitigation project was given by Adam Thien
- Approved wireless internet connection updates at Hitchcock by Calhoun Communications in the amount of \$21,992.90
- Approved building dehumidifier installation at the Loess Hills Lodge by Aireserv in the amount of \$2,450
- Approved the branding and logo completed by Daake
- The ICCS annual conference was approved to be hosted by Pottawattamie Conservation in 2022
- Reviewed and approved 2020-2021 budget
- Held annual planning session at the Loess Hills Lodge
- Passed resolutions requesting issuance of general county purpose general obligation bonds for County Park improvement projects
- Reviewed and approved user fees changes
- Received an Iowa West grant for replacement of the pedestrian bridge at Arrowhead Park between campground #3 and #4
- Established protective measures and guidelines due to Covid-19 including but not limited to facility closures and cancellation / postponement of programming
- Hired three fulltime employees; Amy Campagna Environmental Education Coordinator, Kim Wickersham Administrative Assistant, Aric Ping Natural Resource Technician

Administrative:

- Finalized plans and signed contracts with Design Homes for cabins at Arrowhead
- Signed agreement with Whole Trees and Morton Buildings for open pavilion at Hitchcock
- Hired Amy Campagna as Environmental Education Coordinator
- Completed rebranding with Daake
- Continued work on website with Neapolitan Labs
- Started video production with Jon Husted
- Worked with FEMA on flood recovery
- Discussion began on possible acquisition near Hitchcock
- Worked with Iowa West Foundation and Board of Supervisors to setup an acquisition initiative and funding
- Eric Hough was re-appointed to another 5-year term
- Hired Kim Wickersham as Administrative Assistant
- Purchased rifles for law enforcement staff with Pottawattamie County Attorney forfeiture funds
- Finalized projects for possible county bonding and presented to Board of Supervisors
- Iowa West Foundation committed \$325K towards fundraising efforts for Hitchcock Improvements Project
- Hired Aric Ping as Natural Resource Technician
- Developed Covid-19 Conservation Action Plan - Park Facilities shutdown March - May which resulted in decrease usage/revenue. Park usage however remained high at record setting numbers.



Farm Creek by Lance Brisbois



Wheeler Grove by Lance Brisbois

Arrowhead Park:

- Replaced all parking posts with boulders
- Started cabin construction
- Coordinated bridge replacement at campground #3
- Hosted Arrowhead Obstacle Run and worked with the organizer to setup up the run and obstacles
- Worked with Neola Lions Club on picnic table repairs
- Held Chili Fest which was very successful with over \$1000 raised in donations



Chili Fest at Arrowhead Park and Installation of New Playground at Old Town Park

Botna Bend Park:

- Completed park clean-up from 2019 flooding
- Installed waterless toilet at Old Town
- New fence and handling area installed at Botna Bend
- Playground installed at Old Town
- Updated electrical in Botna Bend campgrounds
- Hauled 40 round bales from Farm Creek to Botna Bend
- Pancake Feed was pushed back to September with 180 attendees and \$1000 in donations raised
- Held Creepy Camping event on October 19th
- Electrical line installed to waterless restroom at Old Town
- Completed Sugar Shack at Botna Bend
- Held Maple Tree Tapping event March 7th and started boiling sap
- Coordinated elk exchange with Black Hawk County Conservation



Botna Bend Park
by Lance Brisbois

Hitchcock Nature Center:

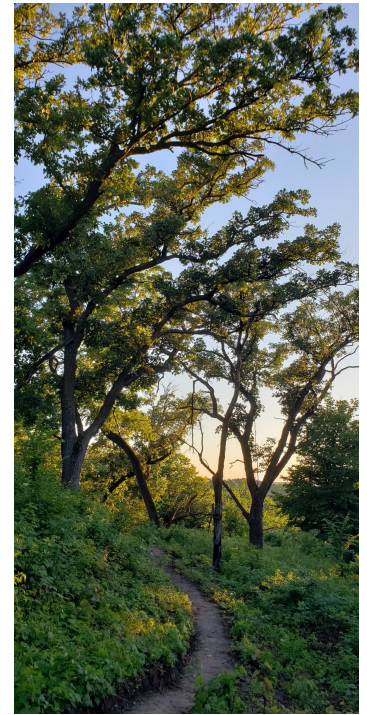
- Updated WIFI at campground with new tower and equipment
- Allowed extended stay for campers due to flooding
- Installed waterlines to all campsites in the campground
- Coordinated 5K HawkWatch Run with 58 registered runners
- Wood milled and floors installed in Goldfinch Room at Loess Hills Lodge
- Resolved moisture issue in basement of the Loess Hills Lodge
- COVID-19 spurred highest ever recorded daily and cumulative totals for visitors



Oak Inventory Tree Tag at Hitchcock



New Floors in Goldfinch Room



Hitchcock by Lance Brisbois

Narrows River Park:

- Started flood cleanup at Narrows
- Attended Smith & Wesson Armorer training
- Assisted EE staff, Park Rangers and NAM staff while park is closed due to flooding
- Served on RAGBRAI campground planning committee
- Monitored river levels and attended numerous meetings regarding river forecasts
- Drove county vehicle in CB Veteran's Day Parade
- Boat ramp remained closed due to damage from spring 2019 floods



Flooding in 2019 of Narrows River Park to Cleanup in 2020



Natural Areas Management:

- Organized RAGBRAI Campgrounds
- Participated in Oak Inventory Project at Hitchcock
- Participated in strategic planning with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
- Worked with Loess Hills Nordic Patrol on trail reconstructions
- Staff was called out on national fire assignments
- Met with Union Pacific RR on cooperative vegetation management
- Coordinated projects with Conservation Corps Iowa
- Hosted and worked on Hitchcock 100
- Setup banding shed for raptor banding station
- Assisted with bison roundups at Broken Kettle Grassland, Dunn Ranch and Cross Ranch
- Attended Winterfest and presented program on Cooperative Fire Partners and Wildland Fire Refresher
- Assisted with National Park Service fire refresher
- Hosted Annual Wildland Fire Refresher and pack test



Training Day by Loess Hills Nordic Ski Patrol



Trail Work by Loess Hills Nordic Ski Patrol



Raptor Banding at Hitchcock



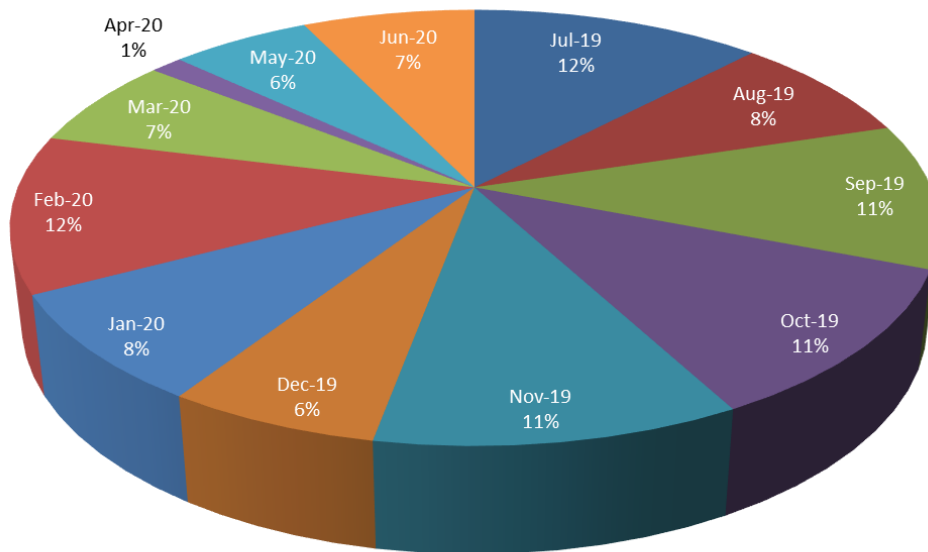
Burn at Wheeler Grove by Lance Brisbois

Environmental Education:

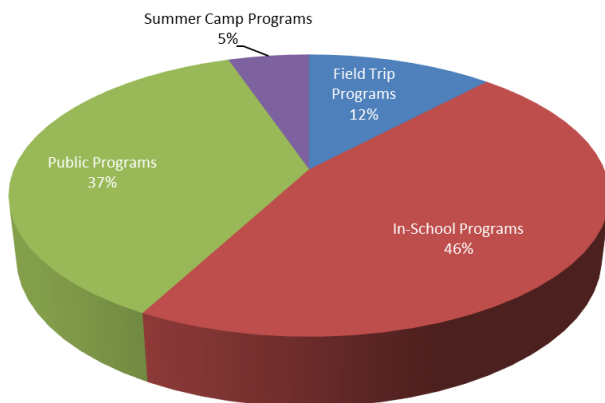
- Hosted Pott County Almanac
- Participated in Oak Inventory Project
- Began online learning / programs due to Covid-19
- Hosted Volunteer Seed Harvest Program
- Held Hunter Education Field Days with Pheasants Forever at Hitchcock
- Hosted Master Conservationist Graduation Day
- Assisted with “Chronicles from the Trails” program, Iowa Public Radio interview with Glenn Pollock
- Coordinated Speaker Series at Hitchcock
- Created Monday Morning Videos for Facebook
- Created and presented numerous online classes and programs
- Worked with U of I and Jay Gorsh on School of Wild programming
- Re-implemented limited in person learning and field trips with safety measures in place



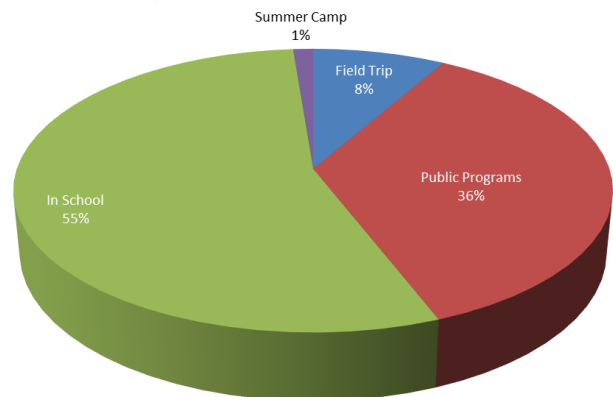
Number of Presentations by Month



EE Programs by Type for 2019-2020

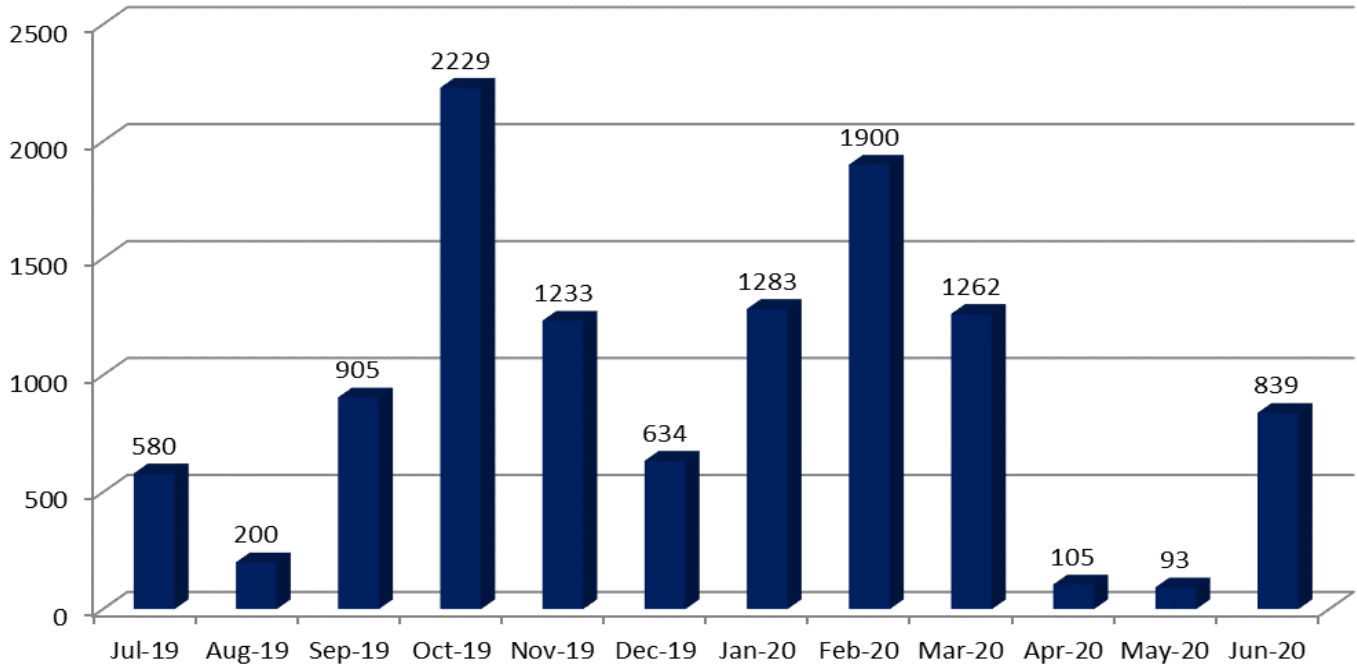


EE Programs by Participants for 2019-2020



Environmental Education Reports for Fiscal Year 2019-2020

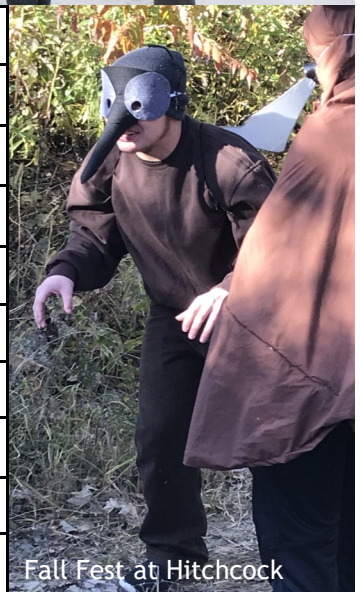
Program Participants by Month



Year	# of participants
FY 2020	11,263
FY 2019	16,064
FY 2018	17,952
FY 2017	16,202
FY 2016	11,803
FY 2015	15,947
FY 2014	15,244
FY 2013	16,551
FY2012	15,759
FY2011	17,513
FY2010	16,900
FY2009	16,172
FY2008	15,040
FY2007	14,202
FY2006	14,164



Year	# of presentations
FY 2020	223
FY 2019	276
FY 2018	336
FY 2017	957
FY 2016	906
FY 2015	1,504
FY 2014	1,357
FY 2013	1,400
FY 2012	1,416



Environmental Education General Partnerships:

Council Bluffs Leadership Program
Council Bluffs Public Library
Council Bluffs Rotary
DeSoto Bend National Wildlife Refuge
Fontenelle Forest & Fontenelle Forest's Raptor
Recovery
Girl and Boy Scouts of Greater Iowa
Green Hills AEA
Harvest Spoon
Hawk Migration Association of North America
Hitchcock HawkWatch
Humanities Iowa
Hy-Vee-Council Bluffs
Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards
Iowa Association of Naturalists (IAN)
Iowa Conservation Education Coalition (ICEC)
Iowa DNR (Fish Iowa)
Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF)
Iowa Native Plant Society
Iowa Prairie Network
Iowa Public Television
Iowa State University Extension
Iowa West Foundation (IWF)

Lauritzen Gardens
Learner's Edge Teacher Group
Lisa Marie Memorial Fund
Loess Hills Alliance
Mid Day Optimist Club, Council Bluffs
Midwest Environmental Education Conference
Missouri Valley Booster Club
Monarch Watch - University of Kansas
National Association of Interpretation (NAI)
Nishna Valley YMCA
NRCS (East and West Pottawattamie County)
Omaha Astronomical Society
Pottawattamie Arts Conservation Entertainment
Pottawattamie County Bowmen
Pottawattamie Conservation Foundation
Pottawattamie County Community Foundation
Soil Water Conservation District
Shelby County Conservation
Trailblazers
Union Pacific
University of Iowa School of the Wild
21st Century After School Program

Environmental Education School Partnerships:

AHSTW Community School District
Blair Community Schools
Blair Christian Academy
Council Bluffs Community School District
Council Bluffs Summer Exploration Program
Creighton University
Discovery Homeschool
Glenwood Montessori Program
Heartland Christian School
HOPE Home School, Southwest Iowa
Iowa Western Community College
Iowa Western Community College Early Childhood
Kiewit Middle School, Omaha
Lewis Central Community School District
Mary Our Queen, Omaha
Metro Community College, Omaha

Missouri Valley School District
Missouri Valley High School Drama Dept.
Omaha Christian Academy
Omaha Home School Group
Papillion LaVista High Ability Learner Program
Riverside Community School District
St. Gerald's, Omaha
St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool Council Bluffs
St. Paul Lutheran Preschool, Treynor
St. Wenceslaus Elementary School, Omaha
Treynor Community School District
Tri-Center Community School District
Underwood Community School District
University of Nebraska (Lincoln/Omaha)
Valley View Home School
Westside Middle School Gifted and Talented Dept.

Environmental Education Program Information:

Did You Know...

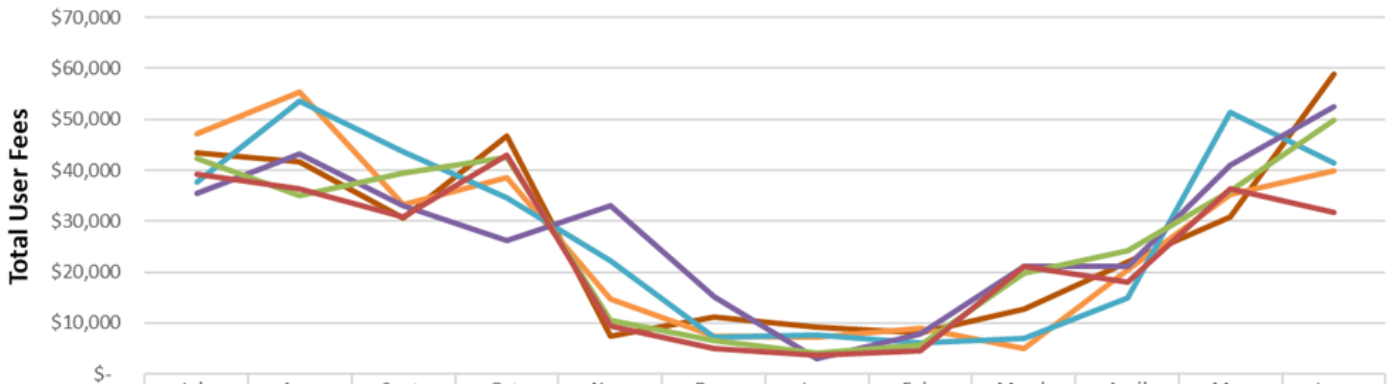
- EE held 223 programs this year.
- There was 156.5 hours of direct contact programming this year.
- 33,100 participants have been reached by EE Programming since 2016.
- 19 school districts have been served by the field trip programs, including Pottawattamie County and the greater Omaha metro.
- EE presented 88 in-school programs this year.
- 5,158 students were reached through in-school programs this year.
- 7,482 students have been reached through the PCF free field trip program since 2016.
- There were 843 field trip participants at Pottawattamie County Parks this year.
- Pottawattamie County Conservation has offered Summer Camps for 19 years.
- 5,989 raptors were counted in 2019.



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User Fees



	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June
2019-20	\$43,333	\$41,714	\$30,661	\$46,747	\$7,446	\$11,220	\$9,174	\$8,017	\$12,769	\$21,936	\$30,845	\$58,958
2018-19	\$47,067	\$55,251	\$33,185	\$38,644	\$14,684	\$7,348	\$7,335	\$9,093	\$5,130	\$20,416	\$35,141	\$39,890
2017-18	\$37,611	\$53,531	\$43,530	\$34,580	\$22,226	\$7,262	\$7,599	\$6,142	\$6,943	\$14,914	\$51,391	\$41,378
2016-17	\$35,452	\$43,137	\$33,109	\$26,176	\$33,075	\$15,155	\$3,106	\$7,810	\$21,075	\$21,166	\$41,056	\$52,487
2015-16	\$42,219	\$34,982	\$39,466	\$42,547	\$10,526	\$6,624	\$4,224	\$5,726	\$19,827	\$24,286	\$35,896	\$49,720
2014-15	\$39,144	\$36,455	\$30,873	\$43,018	\$9,518	\$5,022	\$3,633	\$4,689	\$21,018	\$17,974	\$36,326	\$31,611

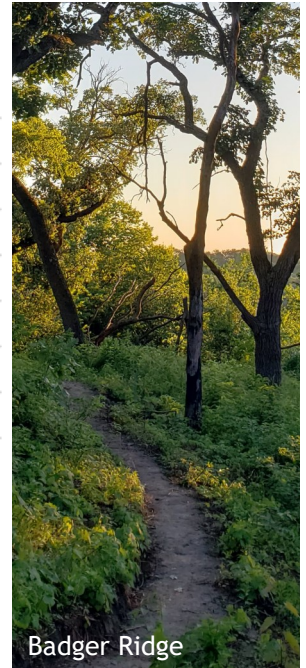
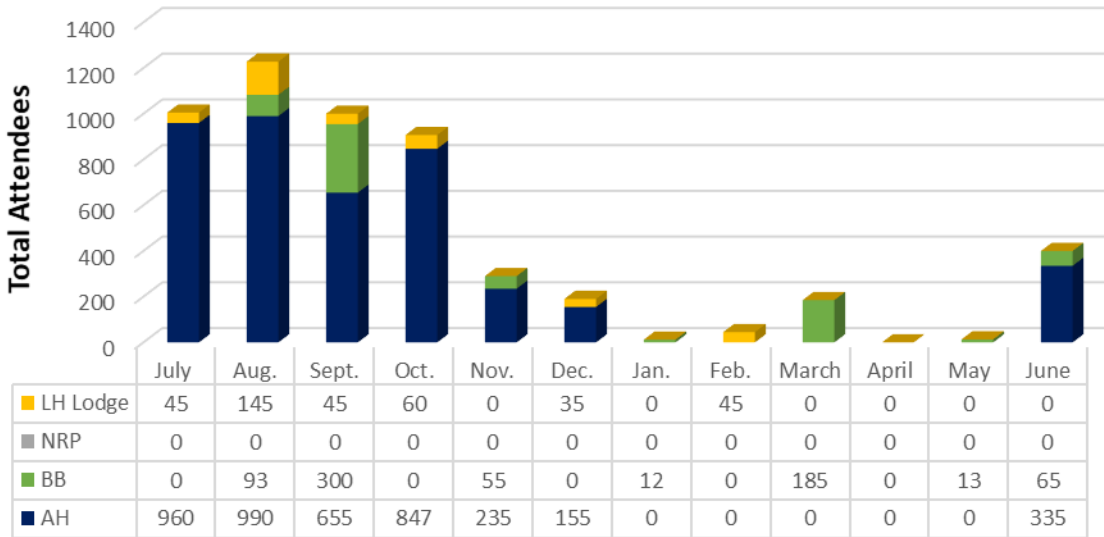


Master Conservationist Program

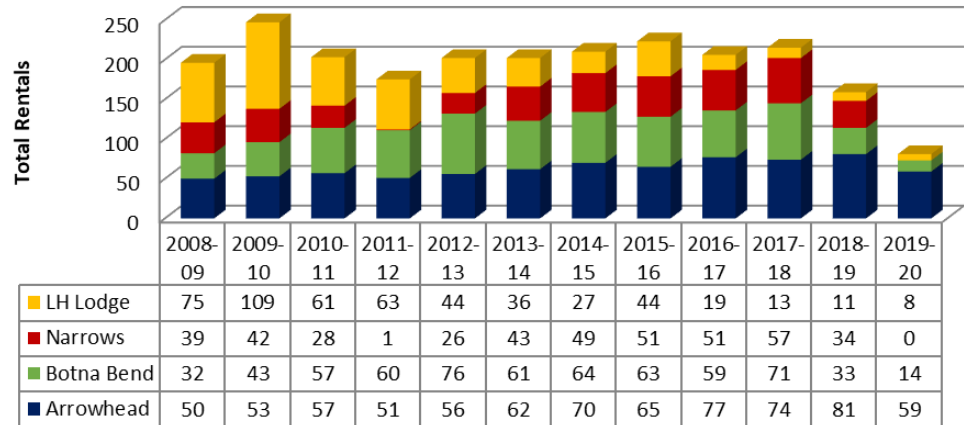


Parking Cars at Hitchcock by Loess Hills Nordic Ski Patrol

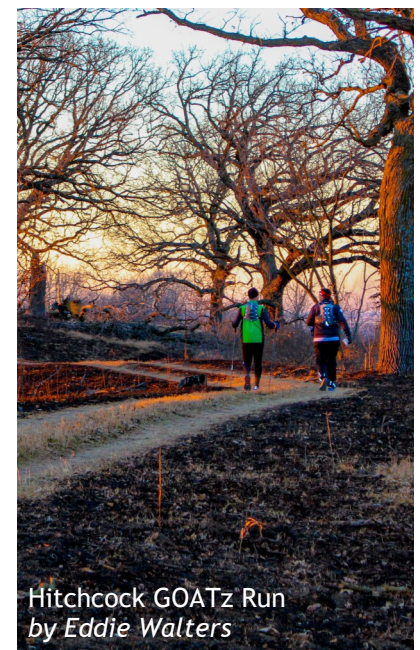
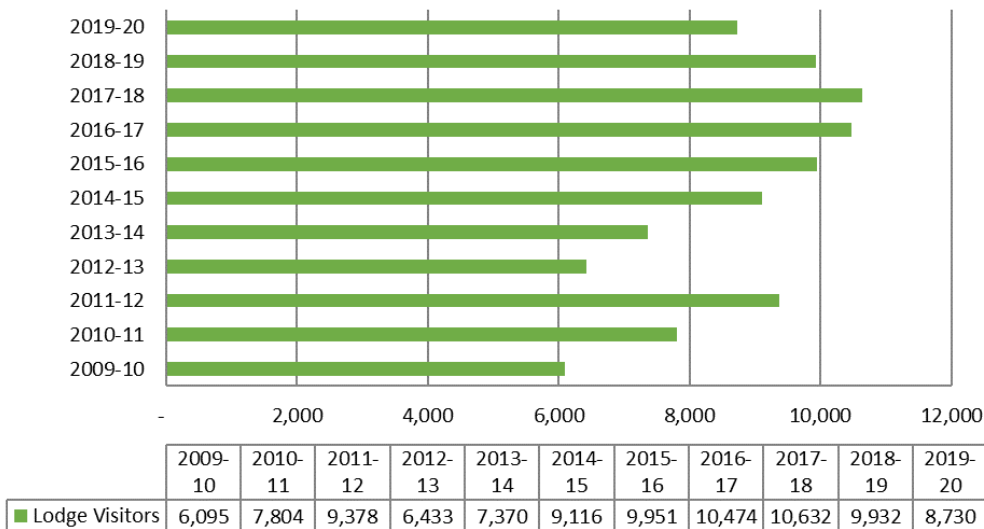
2019-2020 Lodge & Shelter Rental



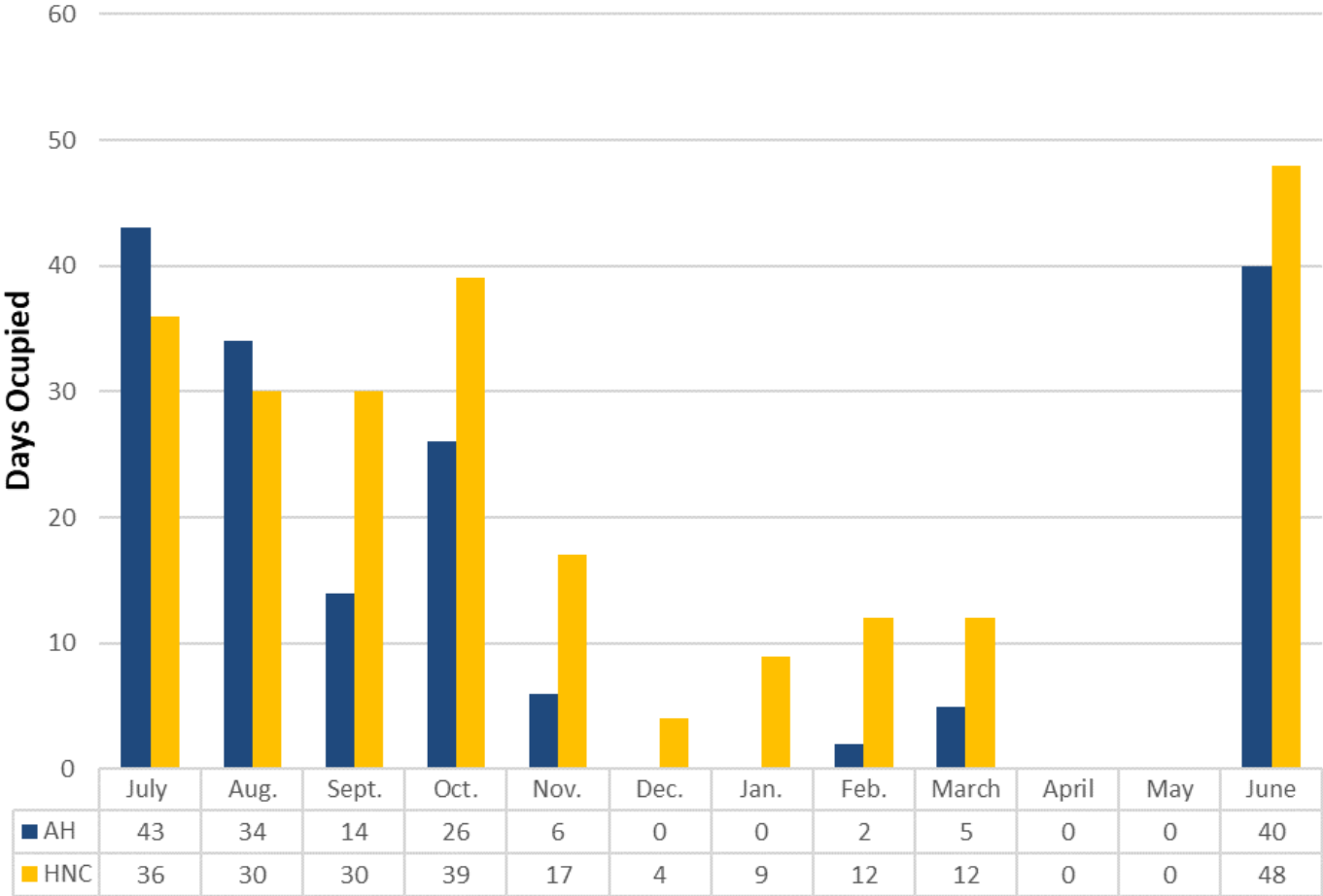
Lodge & Shelter Rentals



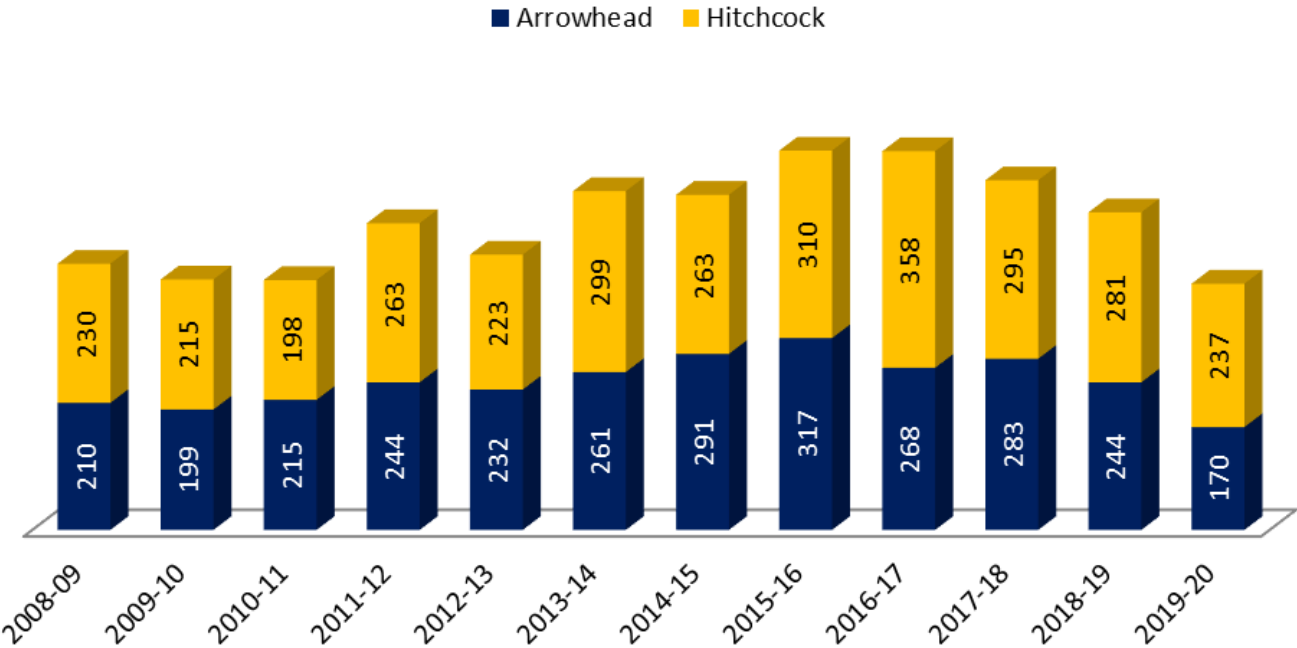
Lodge Visitors



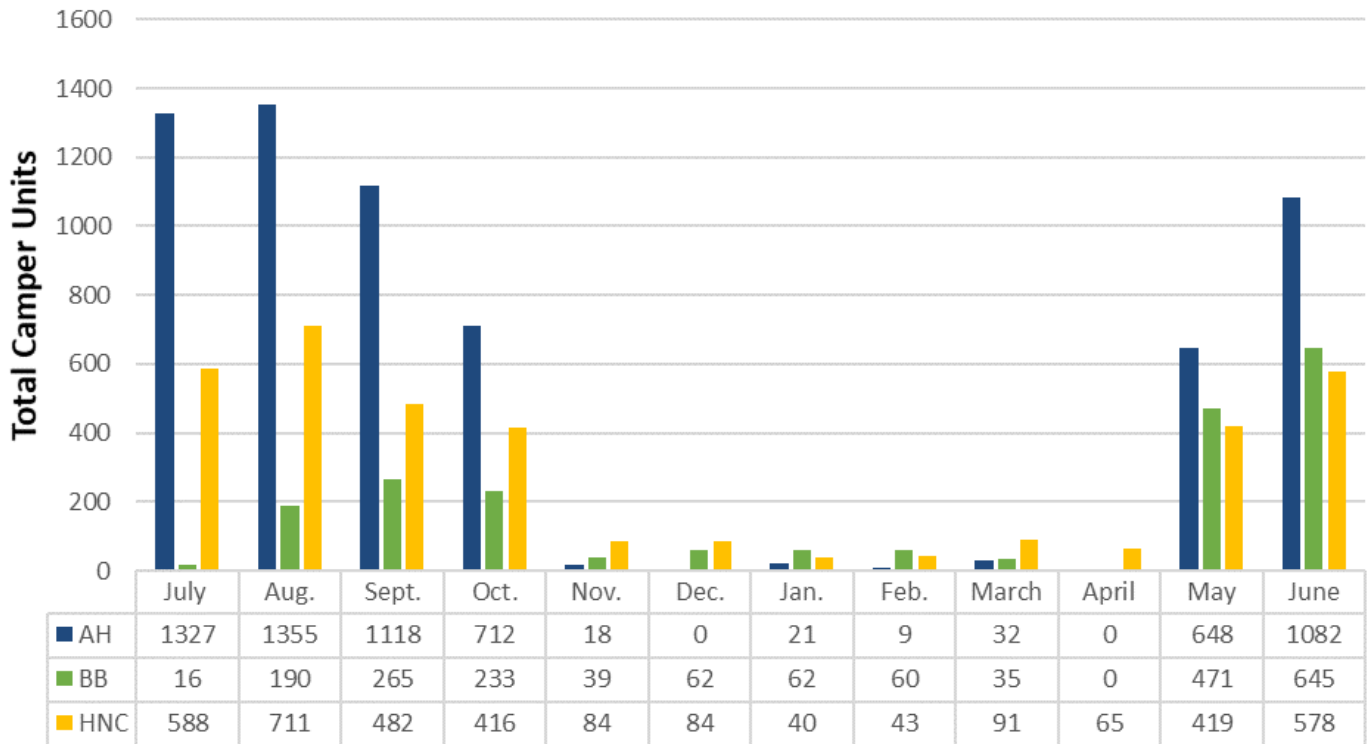
2019-2020 Cabin Use



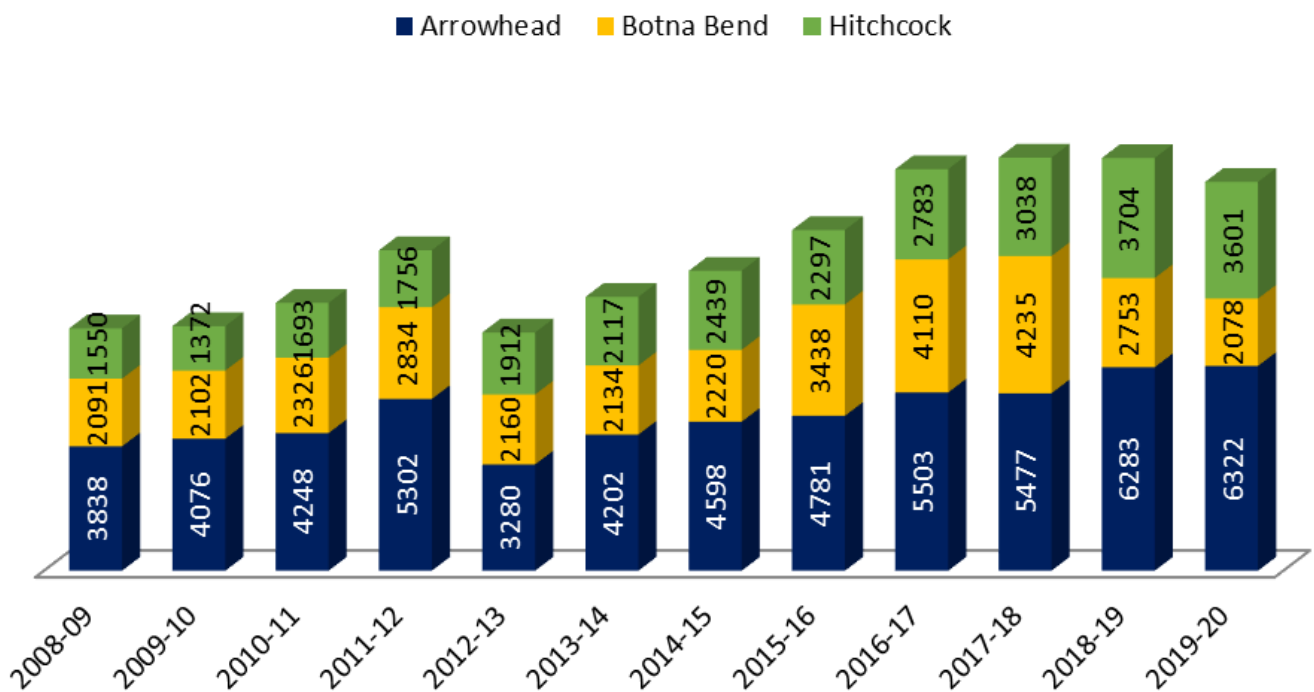
Total Cabin Occupancy



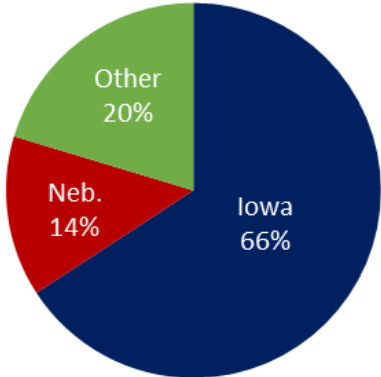
2019-2020 Total Camping Units



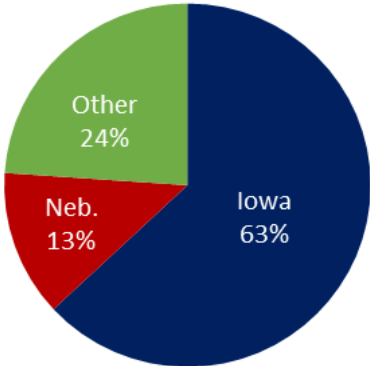
Total Camper Count



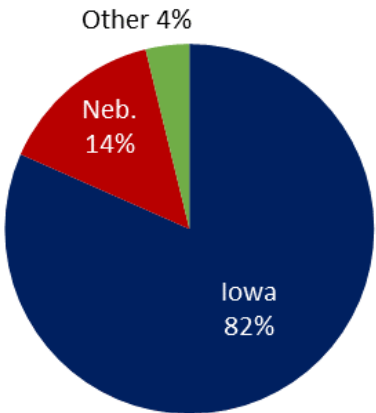
**Arrowhead Park
Camper Breakdown 2019-2020**



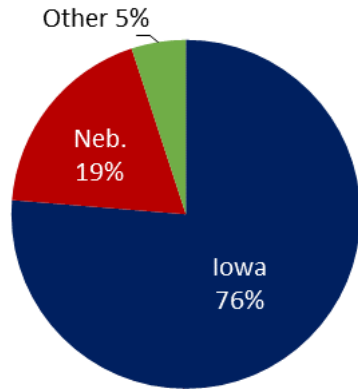
**Arrowhead Park
Camper Breakdown 2018-2019**



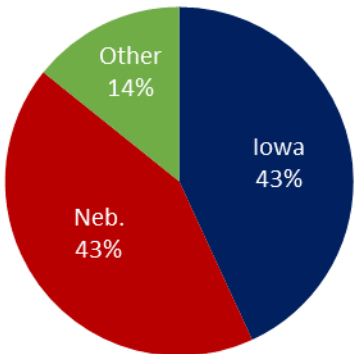
**Botna Bend Park
Camper Breakdown 2019-2020**



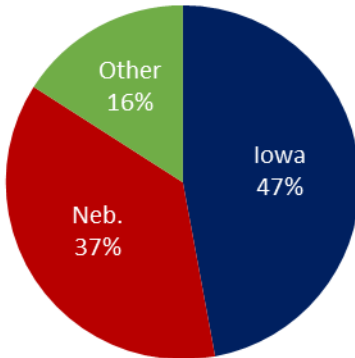
**Botna Bend Park
Camper Breakdown 2018-2019**



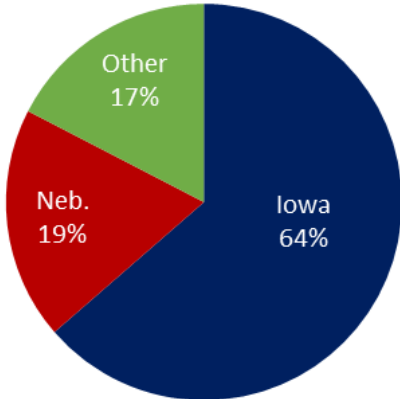
**Hitchcock Nature Center
Camper Breakdown 2019-2020**



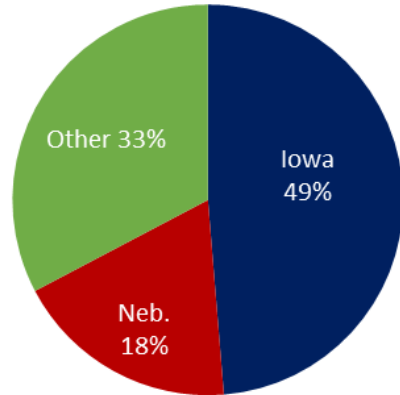
**Hitchcock Nature Center
Camper Breakdown 2018-2019**



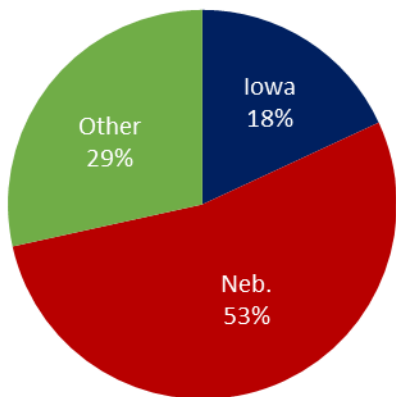
Arrowhead Park
Daily Use Breakdown 2019-2020



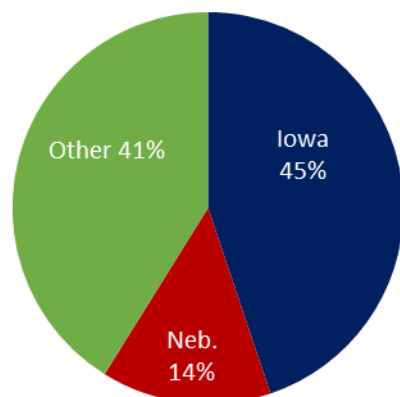
Botna Bend Park
Daily Use Breakdown 2019-2020



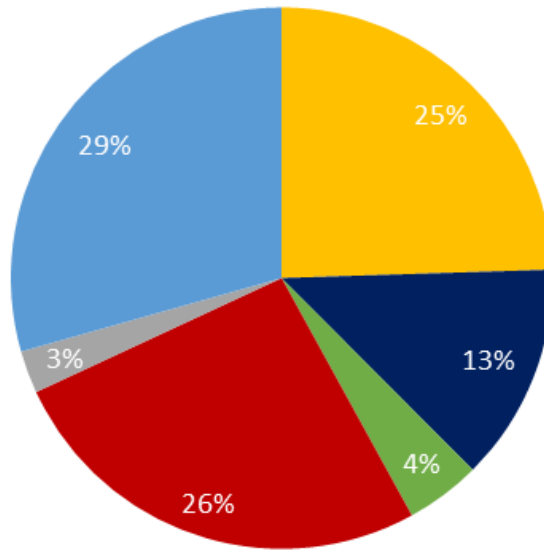
Hitchcock Nature Center
Daily Use Breakdown 2019-2020



Narrows River Park
Daily Use Breakdown 2019-2020



2019/2020 Fiscal Year Volunteer Hours



- Loess Hills Lodge Desk
- Arrowhead Park
- Botna Bend Park
- Hitchcock Nature Center
- Environmental Education
- Hitchcock HawkWatch

3,055 = Total cumulative reported volunteer hours
July 1st, 2019 through June 30th, 2020

- Loess Hills Lodge Welcome Desk - 748.5 Hours
- Arrowhead Park - 398 Hours
- Botna Bend Park - 137 Hours
- Hitchcock Nature Center Campground - 796.5
- Environmental Education Department - 77.5
- Hitchcock HawkWatch = 897.5

Flooding closures & the COVID-19 pandemic during the current fiscal year resulted in an overall decrease in volunteer hours of 354.25 or approx. 10% from the 2018/2019 Fiscal Year. All volunteer fields experienced a decline in hours with the exception of the Loess Hills Lodge & the Hitchcock HawkWatch.

- Loess Hills Lodge: + 64 Hours
- Arrowhead Park: - 54 Hours
- Botna Bend Park: - 389 Hours
- Hitchcock Nature Center Campground: - 205.5 Hours
- Environmental Education: - 118.75 Hours
- Hitchcock HawkWatch: + 241 Hours





Arrowhead Park
New Modern
Cabins



Aerial View of New Modern Cabins by Chris Ruhaak

