



Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2020-2021

Board Members

President, Mary Kramer, December 31, 2025

Vice President, Chris Ruhaak, December 31, 2023

Secretary, Joyce Isaacson, December 31, 2021

Board Member, Eric Hough, December 31, 2024

Board Member, Jerry Mathiasen, December 31, 2022

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.



Scan to watch the overall video of Pottawattamie Conservation

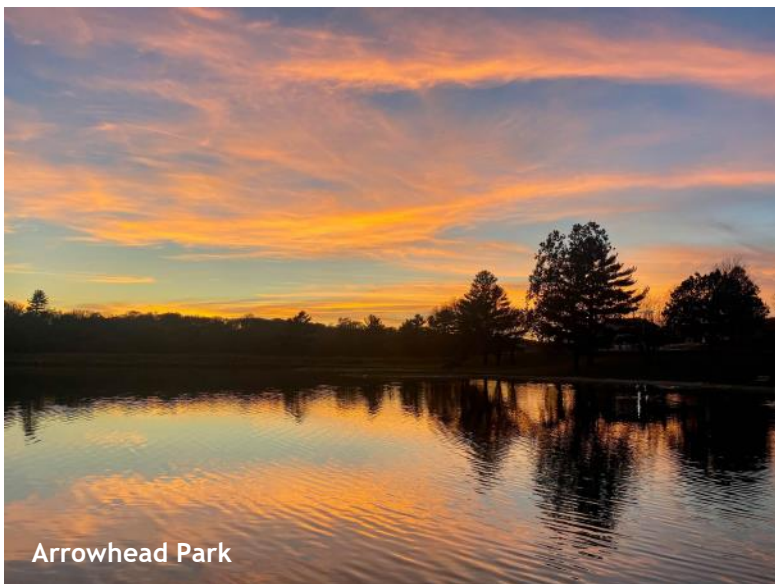
Significant Activities for Fiscal Year 2020-2021

During Fiscal Year 2020, the Conservation Board held eleven regular monthly 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 Pottawattamie County Courthouse, Council Bluffs, Iowa. At these meetings the Conservation Board:

- The Pottawattamie Conservation Foundation (PCF) Virtual Fundraiser began September 17th – October 1st, using the new Qtego platform which raised \$21,154. Also, premiered the new Jon Hustead videos on Park Rangers, Natural Area Management, Environmental Education, and an overall video.
- Concluded name search for cabins at Arrowhead and Hitchcock. Arrowhead's cabins are Cottonwood, Rustic Ridge, Skyview, White Pine, and Hill Top. Hitchcock's cabins are Blazing Star, Bur Oak, and Goldenrod.
- Met with Shive-Hattery at Arrowhead, Old Town and Botna Bend to discuss the campground improvements and development at each park and inspected the river access at Botna Bend for potential enhancements.
- Majority of the staff was trained to help with the COVID-19 mass vaccination clinics and helped throughout the months from December through March.
- New modern cabins at Arrowhead opened up for rentals mid-February.
- Moved the Main Conservation Office from Annex to a new office on 2nd floor of the Courthouse, rooms 203 and 204.
- New boat ramp and dock at Narrows River Park
- Signed agreement with Whole Trees and Morton Buildings on Hitchcock Nature Center pavilion. All trees sent to Whole Trees for shelter were acceptable as structural supports
- Coordinated with donor on new binoculars for Environmental Education, HawkWatch and new scale for Jerry Toll
- Received Western Iowa Tourism grant for 2020 Jon Hustead videos
- New shower houses were installed at Arrowhead and Botna Bend this spring and were opened up in May and June for use.
- Hitchcock Nature Center hosted a BioBlitz in June
- 4 bison calves born this year at Botna Bend

Administrative:

- Filmed intro video with Kelli O'Brien for PCF Go Wild for Conservation virtual fundraiser and Provided direct support for PCF Go Wild Event
- Identified and arrange training for law enforcement staff to cover mandated training typically covered at Camp Dodge which was cancelled due to Covid-19. Mandatory Reporting, Hazmat ERG 2020 guidebook review, Bloodborne Pathogens, Mental Health Awareness for law enforcement, and Medical Emergencies.
- Began 2021-2022 budget process for Conservation
- Presented budget, annual report and board member appointments to Board of Supervisors
- Began re-opening facilities in parks as COVID-19 restrictions were lifted
- Accepted Kody Wohler's letter of resignation and began reviewing applications for the Natural Resource Technician
- Met with Fischer and Wickersham to go over cabin regulations and open house date.
- Hired Jeremy Yost as Natural Resource Technician
- Coordinated with Huffcutt on shower layout and options for Arrowhead and Botna Bend
- Kate presented her letter of resignation after 8 years with Pottawattamie Conservation.
- Met with Board of Supervisors to approve the Promotions and Outreach Coordinator (POC) position.
- Kylie Gumpert hired as Promotions and Outreach Coordinator
- Finalized bid documents for Hitchcock Nature Center front entrance and parking.
- Met with Iowa West Foundation and BOS members about extending funding for land acquisition
- Coordinated with Jerry Mathiasen on bench near Hitchcock's front entrance
- Worked with donor on Jon Hustead HawkWatch video.
- Coordination with FEMA and Iowa EMA continues
- Reviewed materials for updated 2021 pricing changes. Implemented starting March 1st.
- Interviewed and selected Volunteer and Facilities Coordinator - Dana Kruse
- Interviewed and selected Hawk Counter Caleb Strand.
- Received grant funding for various projects from Iowa West Foundation, Peter Kiewit Foundation, Golden Hills RC&D, Gilchrist Foundation, Iowa Humanities



Arrowhead Park



Dee & Baby — Botna Bend Park

Arrowhead Park:

- New pedestrian bridge replacement between campground #3 & #4.
- The annual Chili Fest was on October 10th. It was a great success even with adjusting for COVID-19 restrictions. We did a “grab and go” bowl of chili and made around \$500.
- Worked with Matthew Schipper on another trail fund raiser here at Arrowhead on October 11th and obstacle run is scheduled for Saturday April 24th.
- We had two separate groups host 5K runs.
- Final inspection on the cabins went very well. Scheduled for opening for reserving mid-February.
- Had two returning volunteers, Pat Dingman and LuAnn Pribyl.
- Interviewed and hired Kaden McDermott & Isaac Heilman. Seasonal staff is now complete with Todd Sliger returning.
- The new shower house was completed and opened up in June.
- Ted Nugent Kamp for kid was a success with 120 kid and was a great day.
- The annual fishing derby was a little slow we only had 15 kids.



Modern Cabins
at Arrowhead
opened up
mid-February and
have been booked
almost every
weekend.



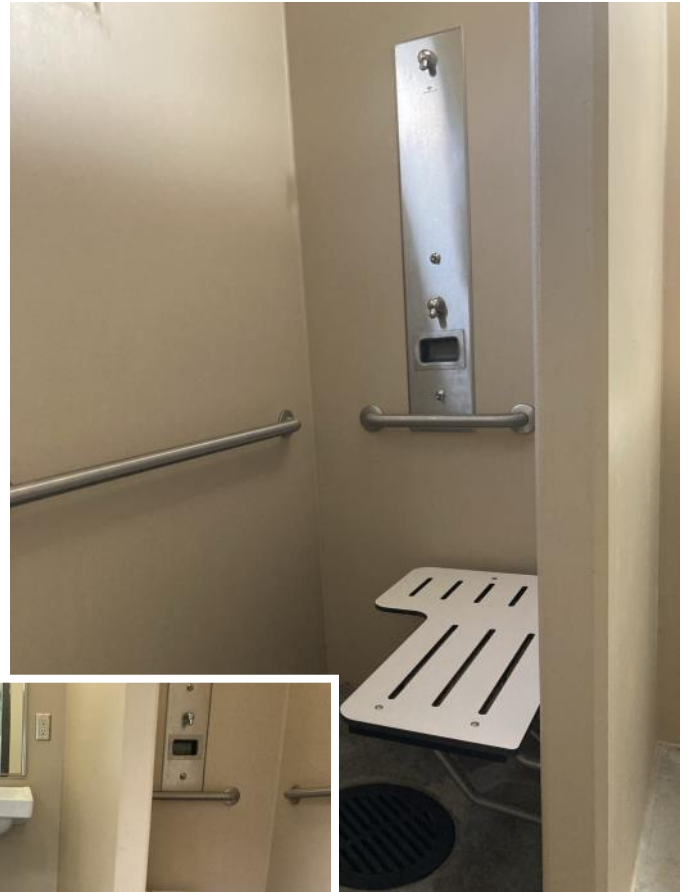
Botna Bend Park:

- Cleaned up down trees from storm, Natural Areas Management helped
- Replaced 4 targets at archery range at BB
- Assemble and install floating dock at Young Pond
- Loaded 3 elk for Black Hawk County, 5 bison from east pen (4 to Dan Schnepel, 1 sold to Jeff Gress)
- Pancake Feed 9-19-20, 15 staff and volunteers present and did a “grab & go” drive-up. Served 200 breakfasts and had tables spread out around the park if they wanted to stay and eat.
- Opening day pheasant season, 10-31-2020. Approximately 35-40 hunters between FCPWA and WGCA. 3 pheasant taken at WG that was reported, also met with Adam Gacke and Rich Price with Iowa DNR for hunting reg. updates
- Met with Mark and Shive Hattery for Old Towne and Bonta Bend campground designs
- Bison calf born 11-30-2020, Bison calf born 4-17-2021, Bison calf born 4-26-21, Dee had calf, very light colored like her 6-20-21
- Meeting at VA for vaccination clinic and online training. Helped at the MAC with the mass clinics.
- Sign inventory for Botna Bend, Old Towne, FCPWA, and WGCA to update signs with new branding
- Collected bids from Morton, Astro, and Wick for shop at BB
- Maple Tree Tap Program was a festival style
- New shower house was opened at the end of May
- Installed boat dock at Farm Creek (Young Pond)

New Shower Houses at Arrowhead and Botna Bend Parks



Above photo is of Arrowheads shower house with 6 new bathrooms and shower stalls with a privacy screen from the campground.



Below photo is of Botna Bends new shower house with 4 new bathrooms and shower stalls.

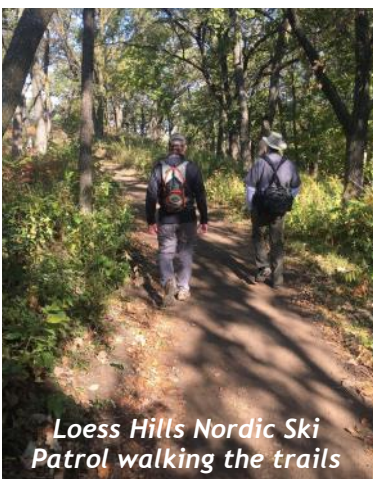




Scan to watch the park ranger video of Pottawattamie Conservation

Hitchcock Nature Center:

- Disinfecting shower house and cabins with a mister
- Labor Day was the busiest I've ever seen up here. We had to shut the park down until a few cars left so we could park more in the park. We had cars parked down to the playground.
- Had to cancel the H-100 race due to COVID-19 reasons
- Training for the Covid-19 vaccination clinics and worked some days at the MAC Center for the clinic.
- Visited with the phone company and SEI to get the fire panel fixed. The phone box in the fire panel was bad and replaced.
- Replaced lighting in the gallery and office area at the lodge with LED lights
- Renewed my CPR and First Aid training which is good for 2 years. Also completed the De-escalation training that Law Enforcement requires.
- Worked on the water run off problem at the lower loop RV sites.
- Attended construction meetings on the front entrance main road and upgraded parking area project.
- Repaired well at the campground on Father's Day Weekend.



Loess Hills Nordic Ski Patrol walking the trails



Earth Day Clean-up at Hitchcock



Sunset at Hitchcock

Narrows River Park:

- Met with Environmental Education (EE) crew to locate potential sites for rain gardens/pollinator gardens at Narrows.
- Met with concrete contractor for estimate on boat ramp replacement
- Western Engineering put down asphalt in the parking lot and boat ramp areas.
- Did the training for vaccination clinic and helped assisted with the clinics as well.
- Communicated with Superdeck to finalize the new dock design and ordered
- New boat ramp and dock pilings/piers are completed
- Started monitoring river levels: System is at full capacity for flood water. Mountain snowpack is below average and plains snowpack is melting at a slow rate and is not expected to cause any issues along the Missouri river at this time. Overall it appears there is little to no risk from flooding caused by snow melt.
- Hitchcock and Narrows intern started on the 26th. His name is Grant Carstens
- Park opened April 1st for the year, was a busy opening weekend
- Assisted with a 21st Century CBSCD afterschool program at Narrows
- Did a program for the CB Library on camping basics and outdoor safety
- Communicated with coordinator for new DNR program Field to Fork on doing a new hunter program at Narrows Archery Range. Program provides mentorship and teaches new hunters everything from using a bow to how to properly clean and butcher a deer. They will be using the archery range 2 hours once a week for about a month and will be using Hitchcock to set up a tree stand and shoot a 3D target and do a fake blood trail track.
- Missouri River Rescue used Narrows as a landing to unload trash into dumpsters. They ended up with about 125 yards of trash that was pulled from a 10 mile stretch of river - most of it came from Sandpiper cove. They said there are hundreds of large Styrofoam blocks still in the cove they didn't have time to get to. They will be back in 2 years and are going to contact Omaha to see if they will do anything to clean it up.
- Assisted EE with Summer school programs at Hitchcock and a hike at Narrows



Photos are of the construction on the new boat ramp and dock replaced after the 2019 flood damage at Narrows River Park.

Natural Areas Management:

- Cut sweet clover at HNC and treated invasives at several PCCB areas
- Loaded trees for picnic shelter to be shipped to Whole Trees.
- New UTV arrived
- Refined plans for the expansion of the Natural Areas Management program
- Developed seed mixes for FCPWA and the Rahel Reconstructions so we can over seed and diversify those plantings
- Developed a plan for treating Palmer Amaranth, a new invasive discovered at FCPWA and Wheeler Grove. Jon Fenner will be spraying it for us.
- Utilized goats and cattle as management tool grazing identified areas at Hitchcock
- Helped with promo videos for PCF fundraiser
- Prepped owl banding ridge and closed Bunker Hill Trail for Raptor Banding
- Contributed to a wildfire readiness meeting for EMA and the county VFDs
- Cleaned erosion bars and cleared trails and replaced timbers at Highpoint campsite
- Worked with John Huebscher to coordinate parking at HNC
- Planted a memorial tree with Brenda Mainwaring's family
- 3 interns started in mid and late May. 3 short term seasonal and one 6 month seasonal employee will start on June 1.
- Clean up at Crescent Wildlife Area with help from Kunze, Grant, and Franco.
- Assisted with National Trails Day Badger Ridge trail reroutes



Loess Hill Nordic Patrol cleaning up trash along the boardwalk



Loess Hills Nordic Patrol Volunteers

Finished spring burn season. We were only able to burn half of the units we had planned, mostly due to weather. We have a few growing season burns to do this summer.



Scan to watch the Natural Area Management video of Pottawattamie Conservation

Trail work at Hitchcock Nature Center with Loess Hills Nordic Patrol

Environmental Education:

- Adapted, postponed, or cancelled programs and events due to Covid-19 pandemic
- Organized, led and/or hosted educational programs:
 - In-school: 88
 - After school: 58
 - Public: 68
 - Field Trips: 12
 - Summer Camps: 9
 - Self-Guided: 13
 - Private Groups: 4
- Produced educational videos:
 - Late Summer Wildflowers for social media
 - HNC Grazing Project follow-up for social media
 - How to Snowshoe for use with snowshoe rental at HNC
 - All About Birds for Lewis Central's S'mores Camp
- Produced promotional videos:
 - 20 videos for virtual PCF fundraiser
 - A Land Ethic Workshop series for social media
 - Hitchcock Oak Inventory
 - A Land Ethic Workshop-June session
- Reached 4,673 people through 913 hours direct educational programming and countless others through indirect educational services
- Produced social media content for weekly Monday Morning Minute videos and What is It?/Where Are We? Wednesday weekly posts
- Created an Intern Handbook
- Hired, trained, and supervised two summer interns
- Continued work with Jay Gorsh with U of I and assisted Dickinson County Conservation with their pilot program School of the Wild in preparation for our week-long pilot School of the Wild with College View elementary school
- Hosted and trained
 - Pottawattamie Assessors
 - Volunteer Field Day in partnership with Golden Hills RC&D to harvest native seed for restoration



Installing Pollinator Garden at
Narrows River Park



BioBlitz 2021



Scan to watch the Environmental
Education video of Pottawattamie
Conservation

- Applied for and received grants:
 - Humanities Iowa: \$1,500 for Speaker Series
 - Mid-Day Optimists: \$500 for audio/visual equipment
 - Loess Hills Alliance: \$1,500 for 2021 Bioblitz
 - Gilchrist Foundation: \$3,000 for A Land Ethic Workshop Program
 - Iowa Native Plants Society: \$500 for BioBlitz
 - Trees Forever: \$600 for native plant area at Edison Elementary
- Attended Iowa Association of Naturalists fall and spring virtual conferences
- Set up and hosted/attended monthly Insect Club meetings at HNC
- Began partnership with 21st Century Community Learning Center's after school program to provide weekly programming for students at Bloomer, Edison, Carter Lake, and Roosevelt elementary schools.
- Partnered with Kelly McKay with the Bio Eco Research Center to provide 20 free public birding programs for Pottawattamie Conservation in 2021
- Partnered with Council Bluffs Community School District's Science Curriculum Coordinators to create field trip curriculum and schedule annual field trips to HNC for all CBCSD 3rd grades
- Began building and implementing new field trip curriculum and format
- Continued building EE webpage for new website
- Coordinated with Natural Area Management team to prepare for, participate in, and host the 2021 BioBlitz at HNC
- Assisted with daily social media content on Facebook and Instagram, promoted and set up registration for EE programs on PC website and My County Parks website, and promoted EE programs at the parks and through local news and events outlets in the absence of the Community Relations Coordinator
- Represented Pottawattamie County on the Executive Committee of Iowa Association of Naturalists
- Installed a pollinator garden at Narrow's River Park through our Gardening For Diversity program with plants donated by Mulhull's Nursery
- Installed a native plant area at Edison school as part of our after school program and in partnership with Trees Forever and Pott. County Master Naturalists
- Organized Kirn Middle School student service project to remove exposed netting from HNC trails
- Represented Pott. Conservation at City Nature Challenge at Heron Haven and at the Council Bluffs Public Library's Pollinator Palooza
- Toured four area nature centers and museums to get inspiration and begin building ideas for HNC Gallery updates
- Participated in numerous online continuing education programs including week-long American Camp Association's annual winter conference
- Conducted EE inventory
- Assisted with weekend traffic control at HNC
- Trained for and assisted with eight county Covid-19 vaccination clinics

Environmental Education 2020-2021 General Partnerships:

Alex Wiles Media	Iowa Native Plant Society
Collective For Youth	Iowa Prairie Network
Council Bluffs Leadership Program	Iowa State University Extension
Council Bluffs Public Library	Iowa West Foundation (IWF)
DeSoto Bend National Wildlife Refuge	Kelly McKay
Dustin Clayton	Lisa Marie Memorial Fund
Dickinson County Conservation	Loess Hills Alliance
Flavor Country Farms	Mid Day Optimist Club, Council Bluffs
Fontenelle Forest	Monarch Gardens
Gilchrist Foundation	Monarch Watch - University of Kansas
Girl and Boy Scouts of Greater Iowa	Mulhull's Nursery
Golden Hills RC&D	Nebraska Wildlife Rehab
Hawk Migration Association of North America	Nic Salek
Heron Haven	NRCS (East and West Pottawattamie County)
Hitchcock HawkWatch	Omaha Astronomical Society
Humanities Iowa	Pottawattamie County Bowmen
Hy-Vee-Council Bluffs	Pottawattamie Conservation Foundation
Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards	Ron Cisar
Iowa Association of Naturalists (IAN)	Shelby County Conservation
Iowa Conservation Education Coalition (ICEC)	Suzanne Gucciardo
Iowa DNR (Fish Iowa)	Trees Forever
Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF)	Trailblazers
	Union Pacific

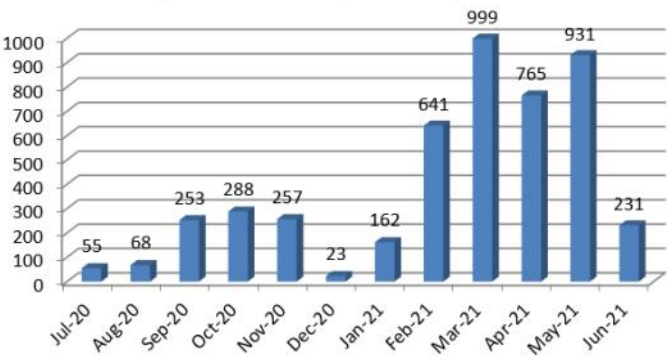
Environmental Education 2020-2021 School Partnerships:

AHSTW Community School District
Blair Community Schools
Council Bluffs Community School District
Council Bluffs Summer Exploration Program
Creighton University
Lewis Central Community School District
Omaha Christian Academy
Riverside Community School District
St. Paul Lutheran Preschool, Treynor
Underwood Community School District
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
University of Nebraska-Omaha

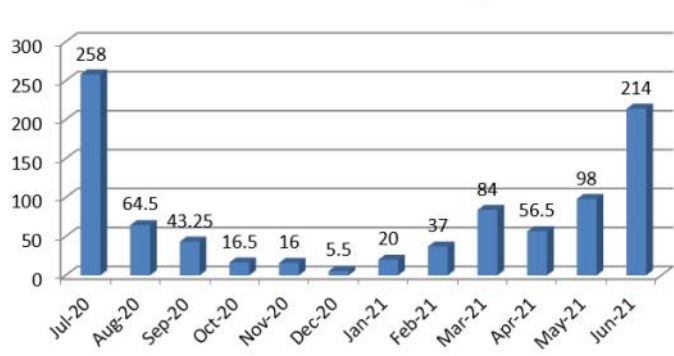


Virtual Programming Teamwork

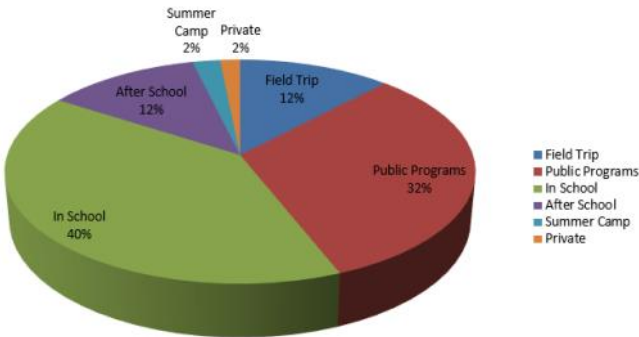
Program Participants by Month



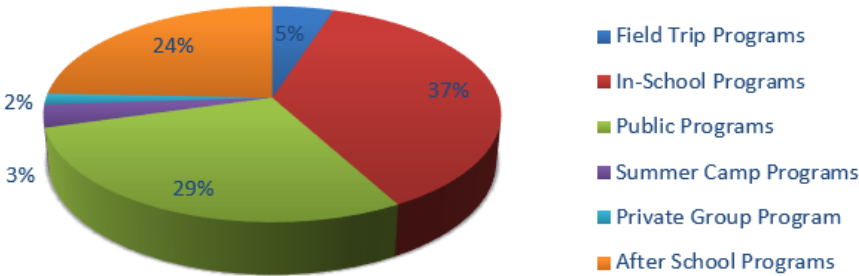
Direct Education Hours by Month



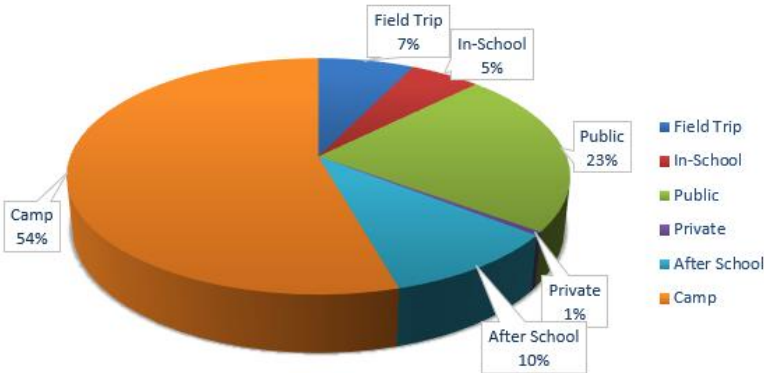
Direct Education Programs by Participation 2020-2021



Direct Education Programs by Type
2020-2021



Direct Education Hours By Type of Program
2020-2021





Building Better Birders



Witchy Woods Walk

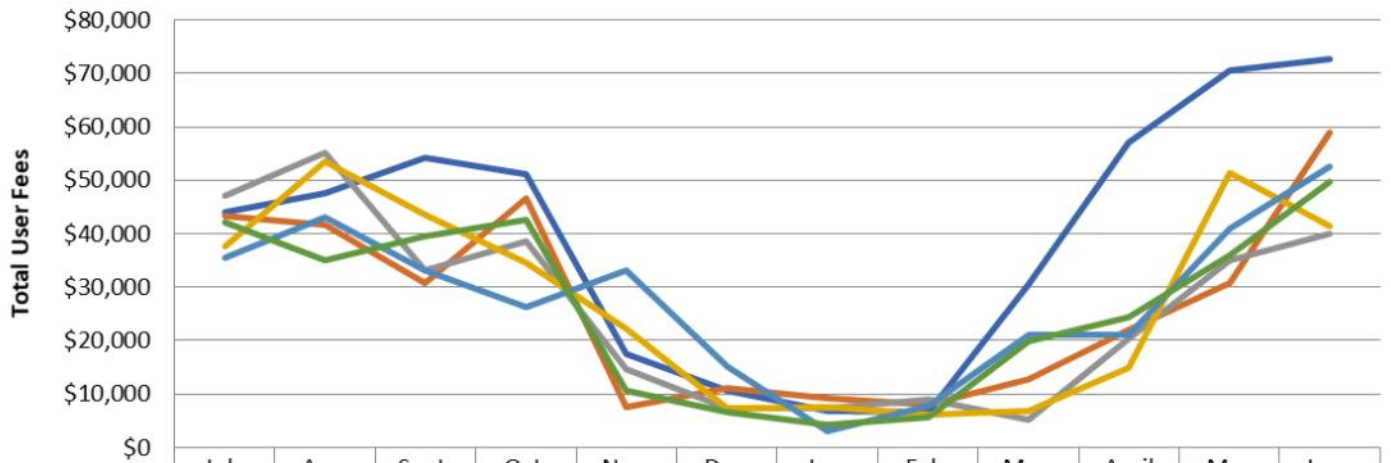


Hitchcock
Haunted Hollow

Summer Camps



Fiscal Year User Fees

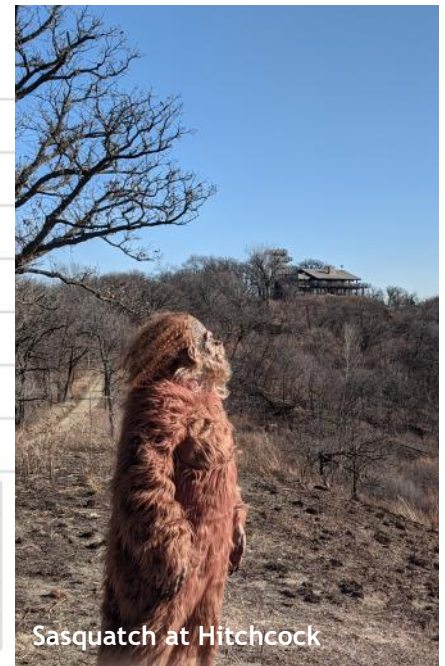
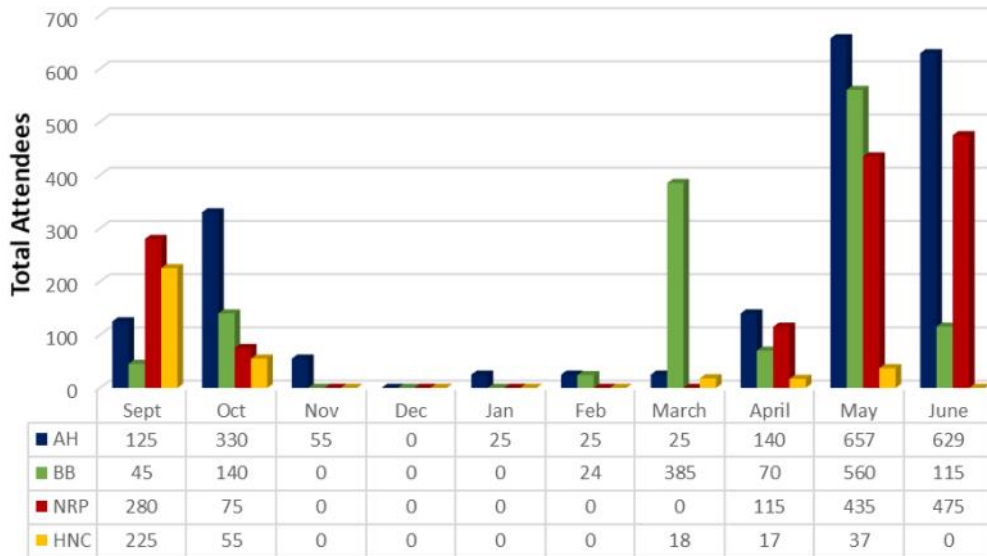


	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June
2020-21	\$43,965	\$47,555	\$54,210	\$51,048	\$17,450	\$10,675	\$6,954	\$6,686	\$30,643	\$57,013	\$70,662	\$72,618
2019-20	\$43,333	\$41,714	\$30,661	\$46,747	\$7,446	\$11,220	\$9,174	\$8,017	\$12,769	\$21,936	\$30,845	\$58,958
2018-19	\$47,067	\$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

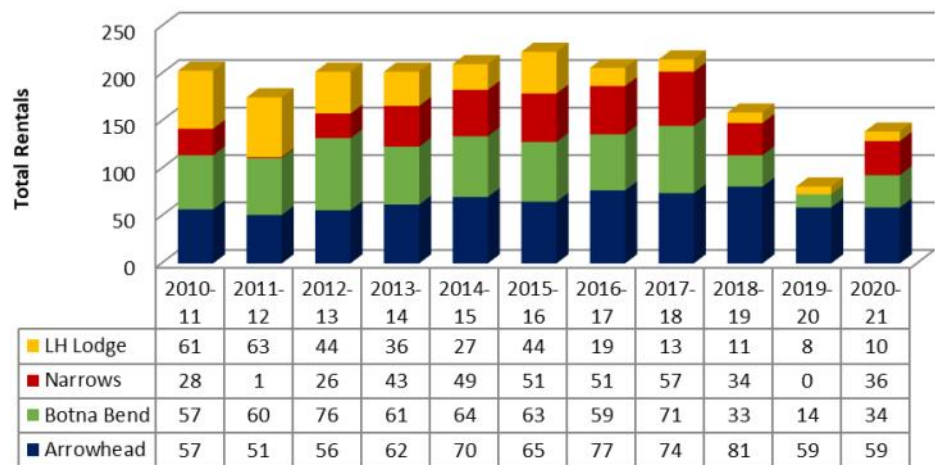


Hitchcock By: Loess Hills Nordic Patrol

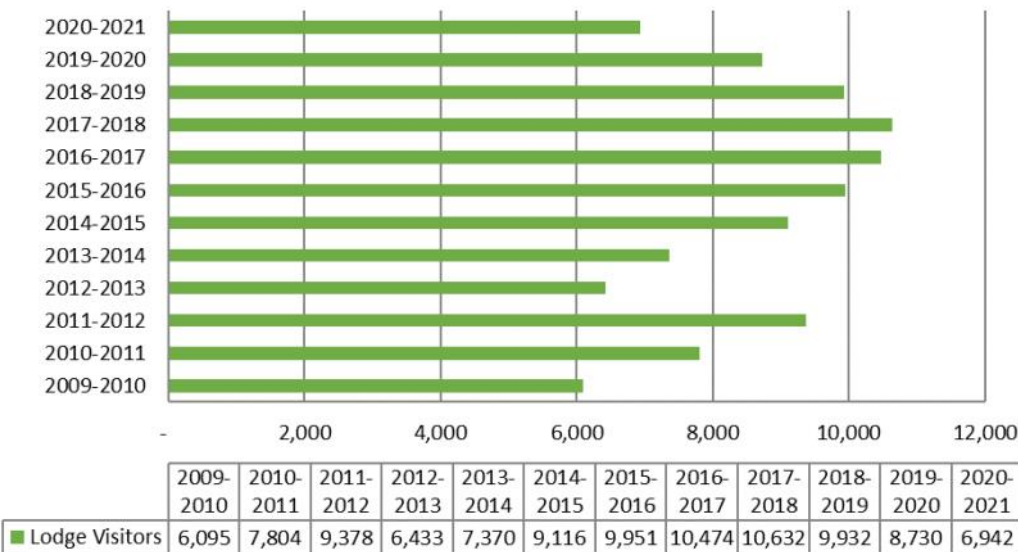
2020-2021 Lodge & Shelter Rentals



Lodge & Shelter Rentals



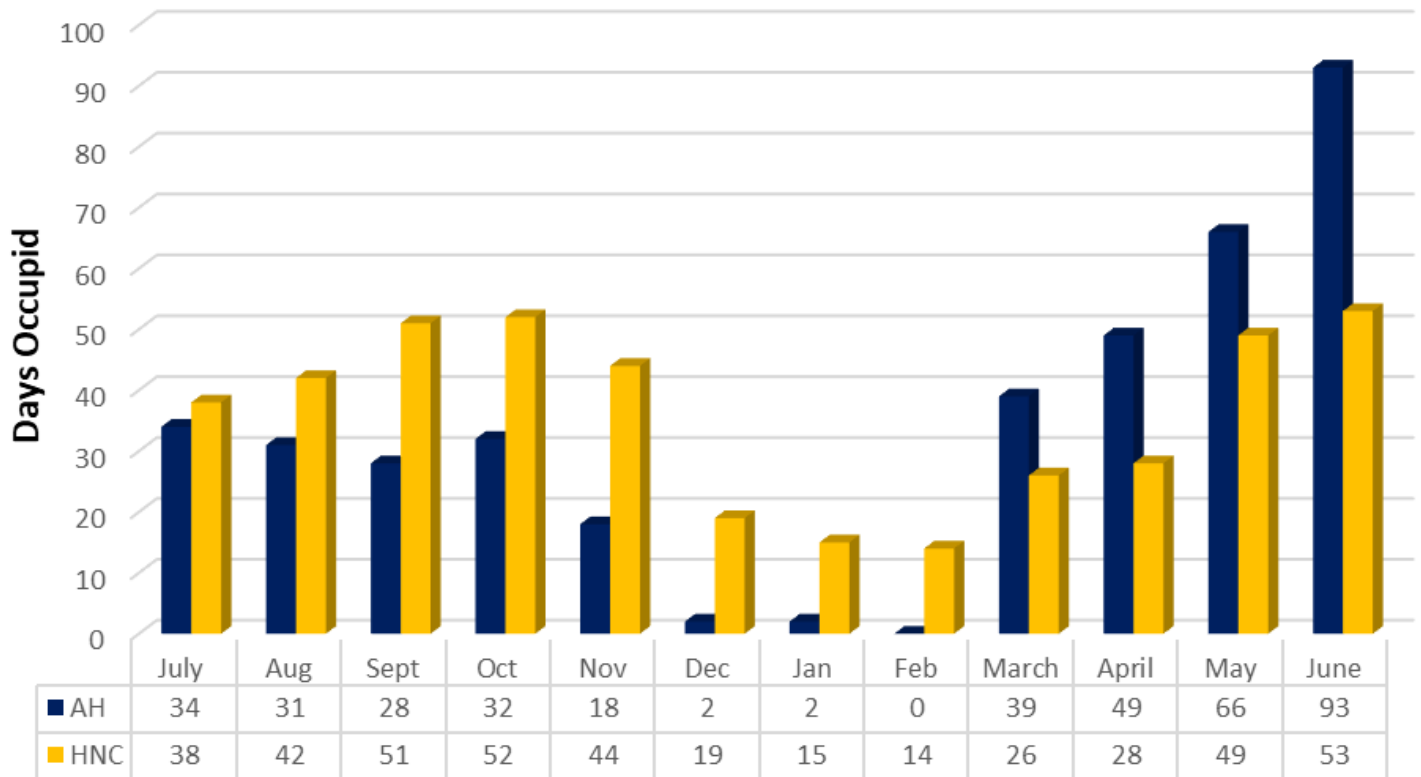
Lodge Visitors



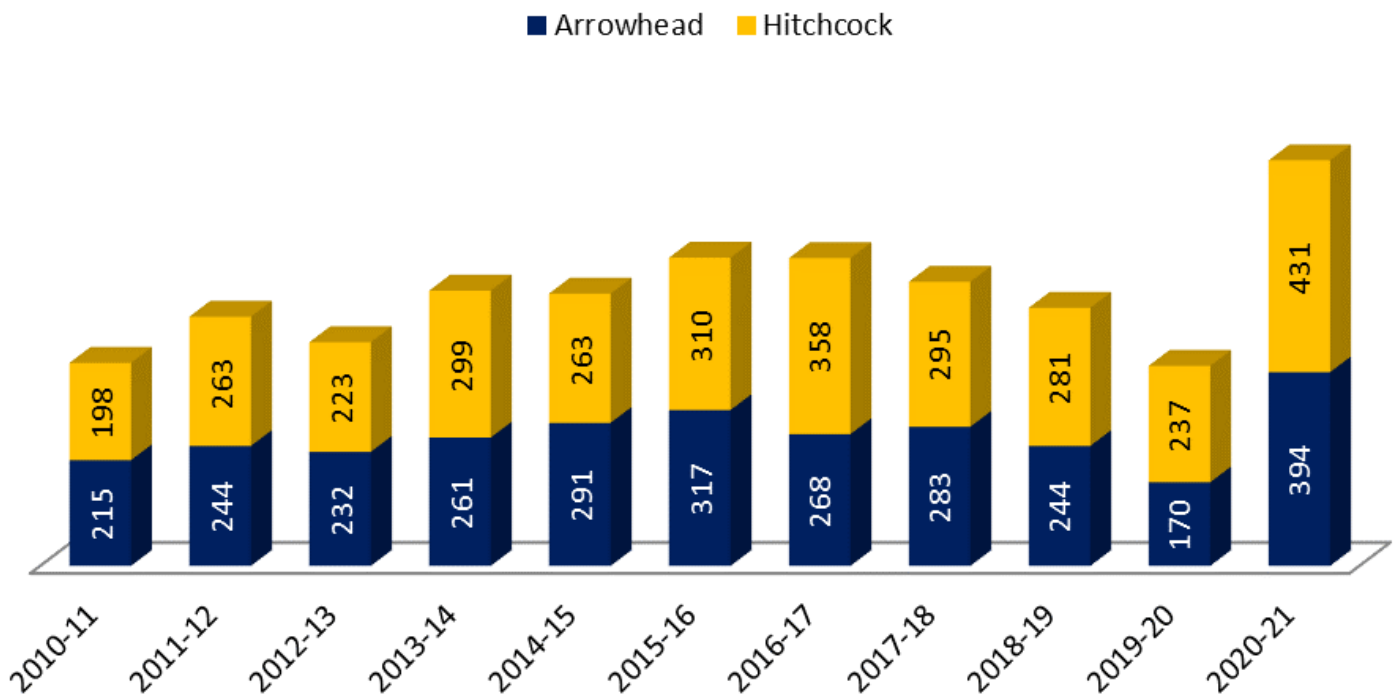
Hitch Hike



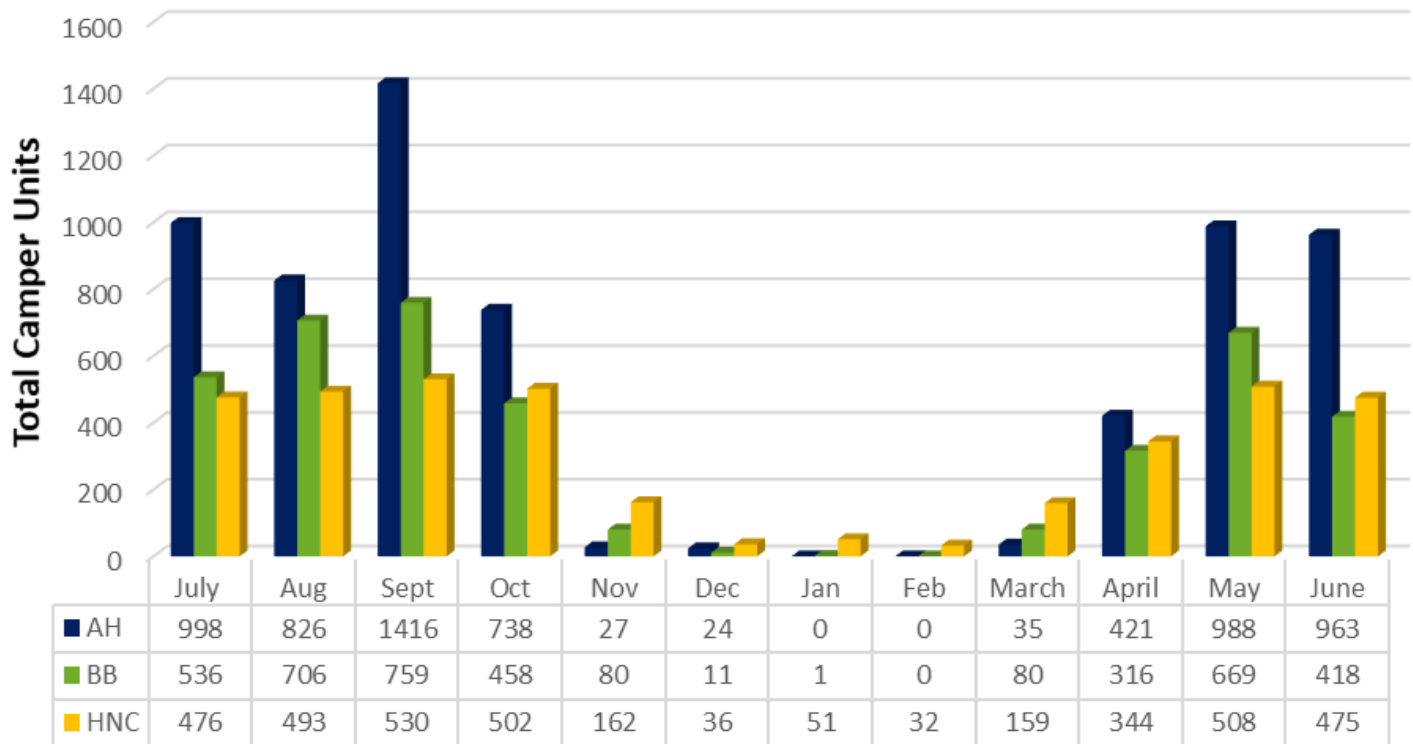
2020-2021 Cabin Summary



Total Cabin Occupancy

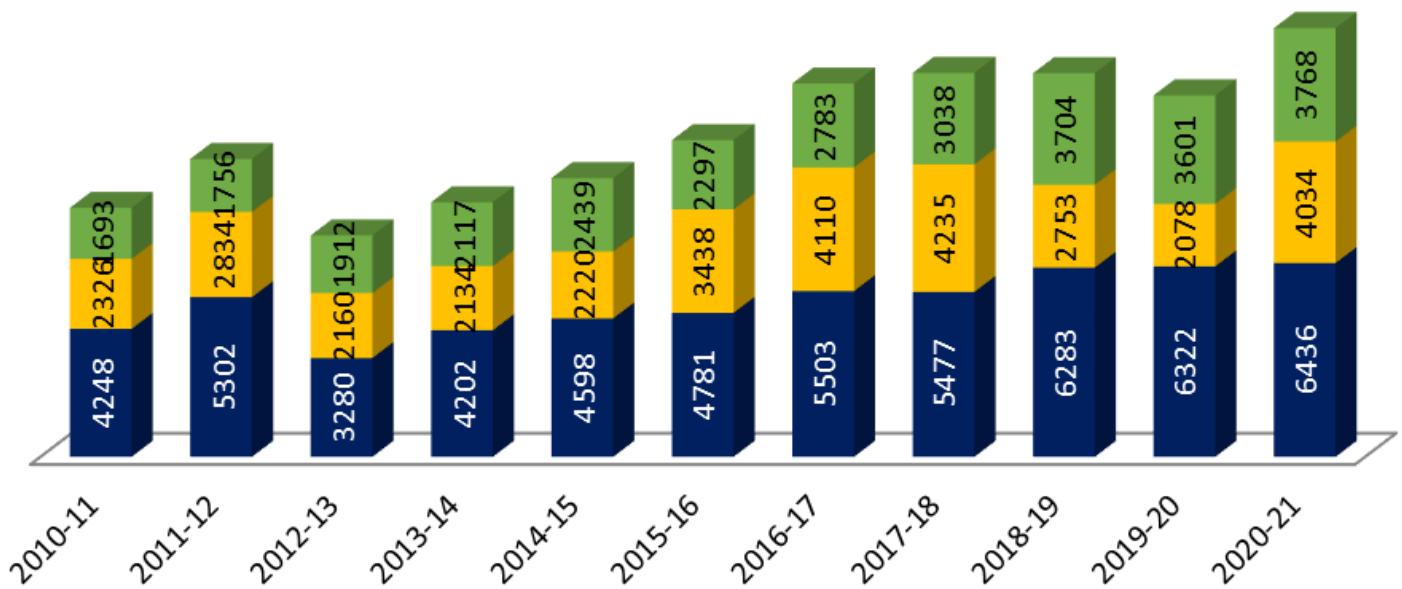


2020-2021 Camping Summary

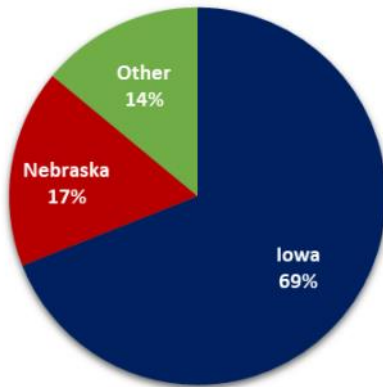


Total Camper Count

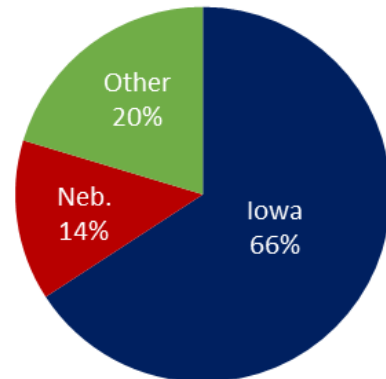
■ Arrowhead ■ Botna Bend ■ Hitchcock



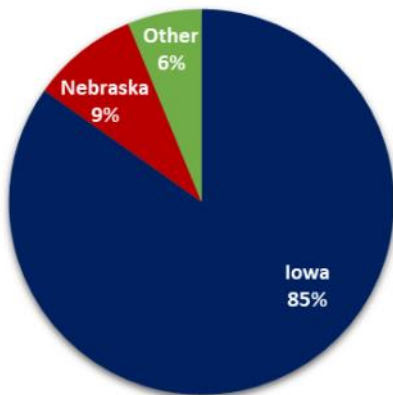
**Arrowhead Park
Camper Breakdown 2020-2021**



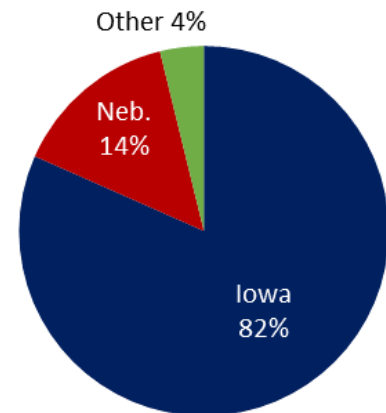
**Arrowhead Park
Camper Breakdown 2019-2020**



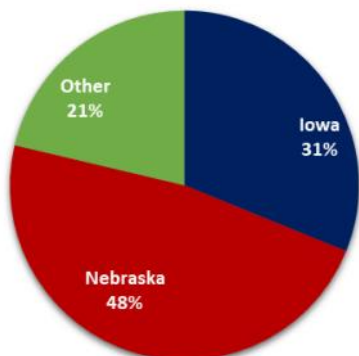
**Botna Bend Park
Camper Breakdown 2020-2021**



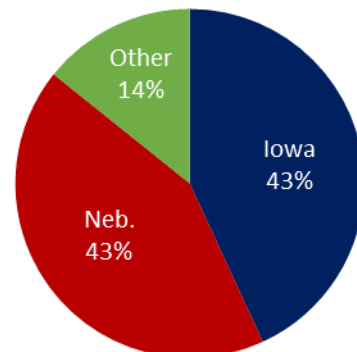
**Botna Bend Park
Camper Breakdown 2019-2020**



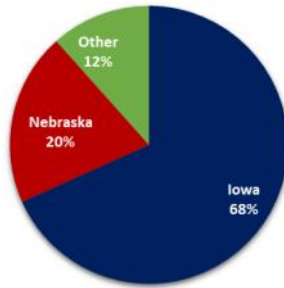
**Hitchcock Nature Center
Camper Breakdown 2020-2021**



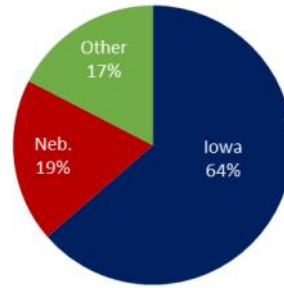
**Hitchcock Nature Center
Camper Breakdown 2019-2020**



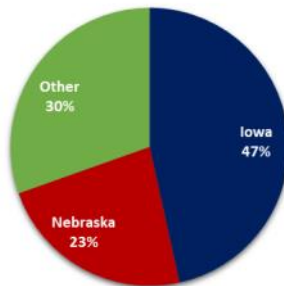
Arrowhead Park
Daily Use Breakdown 2020-2021



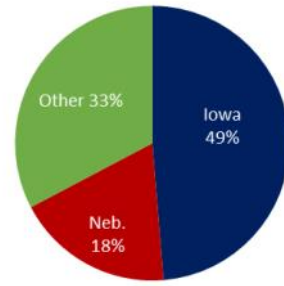
Arrowhead Park
Daily Use Breakdown 2019-2020



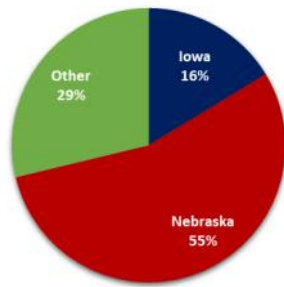
Botna Bend Park
Daily Use Breakdown 2020-2021



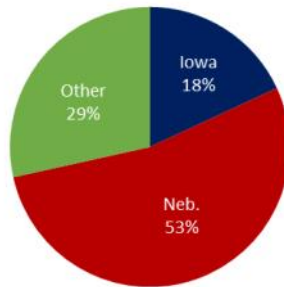
Botna Bend Park
Daily Use Breakdown 2019-2020



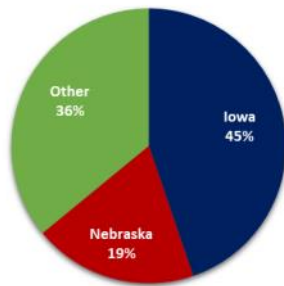
Hitchcock Nature Center
Daily Use Breakdown 2020-2021



Hitchcock Nature Center
Daily Use Breakdown 2019-2020



Narrows River Park
Daily Use Breakdown 2020-2021



Narrows River Park
Daily Use Breakdown 2019-2020

