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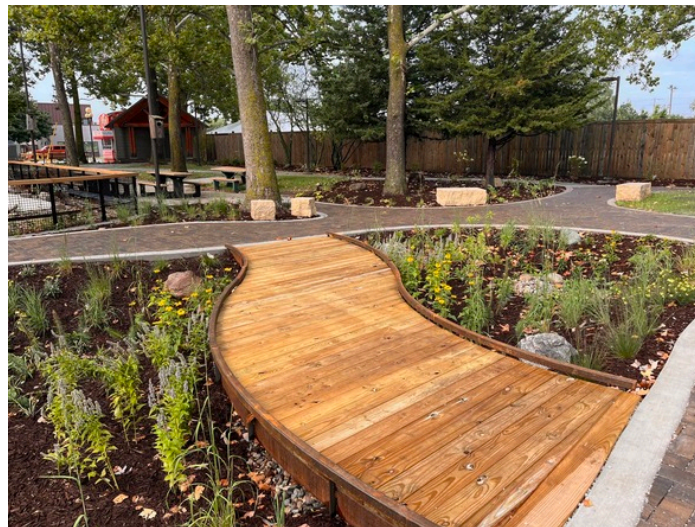
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## Iowa DNR unveils new courtyard buildings, innovative landscaping at the 2024 Iowa state fair

DES MOINES - Visitors to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) building at the 2024 Iowa State Fair will notice several exciting upgrades and renovations to the open-air courtyard on the west side. Upgrades include a new covered stage, a shooting range building, and a rainscape garden, all designed to provide fairgoers with more connections to the outdoors.



*New walkway over the rainscape for water quality feature at the Iowa DNR building on the grounds of the Iowa State Fair. Photo Courtesy of the Iowa DNR.*

### Rainscape for Water Quality

The newly designed outdoor courtyard demonstrates several landscape practices, known as “rainscaping,” to filter stormwater pollution, absorb water into the ground, and reduce runoff to rivers and streams. Visitors will see a bioretention cell, permeable pavers, native plantings and redirected gutters.

Best of all, these attractive rainscaping practices can enhance any yard or neighborhood while improving water quality. Fairgoers will also enjoy lots of shade, along with accessible pathways throughout the courtyard.

Funding for the rainscaping was provided by the Iowa DNR Water Quality 319 program via the US Environmental Protection Agency 319 grant.



*New shooting range and rainscape for water quality features at the Iowa DNR building on the grounds of the Iowa State Fair. Photo Courtesy of the Iowa DNR.*

### **Shooting Range Building**

The new shooting range on the north side of the courtyard provides fairgoers an opportunity to safely try archery and shooting sports. The building replicates other DNR shooting ranges across the state, while boasting architecture emulating state park buildings. The shooting range will operate from noon to 6 p.m. daily.

After the fair, the building will be used for hunter education classes and firearm safety for law enforcement officers and education instructors. Shooting sports are a known contributor to conservation and wildlife management across the country.



*New courtyard stage for programming at the Iowa DNR building on the grounds of the Iowa State Fair. Photo Courtesy of the Iowa DNR.*

### **Covered Stage**

The DNR's highly popular courtyard presentations have a new stage, which has been relocated to the southwest corner of the courtyard. The stage features a covered roof, electricity/AV capabilities, an architectural design replicating state park buildings, along with seating for several dozen people.

DNR staff and guest speakers will present on a range of topics daily, including family recycling crafts, wildlife demonstrations, camping cooking and more. Additionally, August 9 is Smokey Bear's 80th birthday, with several programs to celebrate that day and throughout the fair. To see the full listing, go to: [www.iowadnr.gov/statefair](http://www.iowadnr.gov/statefair)

Funding for the shooting range and stage were provided through an allocation by the Iowa Legislature. Additional funding donated by the Iowa Chapter of Safari Club will provide equipment for both the range and the stage. The courtyard was designed by LT Leon and Associates, with construction by Eick and Day Construction.

As always, fairgoers will enjoy visiting the historic building featuring fish aquariums, a magazine booth with free t-shirt offer, duck pond, animal displays, and a new display about environmentally sustainable practice in the home. Come visit the DNR building at the Iowa state fair, and have your best year ever.

For more information, go to [www.iowadnr.gov/statefair](http://www.iowadnr.gov/statefair)

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## Kalsow Prairie State Preserve offers a glimpse of Iowa before settlement



*Kalsow Prairie State Preserve was one of the first 10 areas in Iowa designated as a state preserve due to its extraordinary biological diversity. More than 250 different plant species having been documented here, with only 24 of those being grasses. This is the largest remnant prairie in Pocahontas County and one of the larger remnants outside of the Little Sioux River valley. Photo courtesy of the Iowa DNR.*

MANSON, Iowa - The 160-acre Kalsow Prairie State Preserve in southeast Pocahontas County is one of the rarest habitats in the state – a never-been-plowed remnant prairie in the heart of Iowa farm country.

This small piece of living history was part of the Kalsow family farm and served as a hayfield and pasture before it was acquired by the Iowa Conservation Commission in the late 1940s. The parcel was surveyed by professor Ada Hayden – yes, that Ada Hayden – who wrote in her report about the importance of preserving this area due to its extraordinary biological diversity. More than 250 different plant species having been documented here, with only 24 of those being grasses.

It was one of the first 10 areas in Iowa designated as a state preserve in 1968 under the State Preserves Act (1965), that defined a preserve and established a system of state preserves in Iowa.

The unique piece of land supports smooth green snakes, two spotted skippers, regal fritillaries, common yellow throats, short eared owls, upland sandpipers, bobolinks, dickcissels, Henslow's sparrows, northern harriers, bobwhite quail and more.

The prairie is home to white prairie clover, Canada milkvetch, panic grass, prairie sage, prairie blazing star, big blue stem, Canada wild rye, compass plant, golden Alexander, round-headed bush clover, sullivant's milkweed, showy tick trefoil, and swamp milkweed, just to name a few.

Exiting the dew covered, mosquito filled prairie to the safety of the gravel road on this hot July morning, bobwhite quail can be heard whistling from the southwest and western edge of the area. A rooster pheasant can be heard crowing nearby. The area is open to public hunting.

"Someone thought enough of this landscape to keep it for what it is," said Clint Maddix, wildlife biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Blackhawk Unit.

The slightly rolling, northwest Iowa land has a few shallow seasonal wetlands on it with a small, narrow, nearly hidden water source on the northwest part of the area.



This is the largest remnant prairie in Pocahontas County and one of the larger remnants outside of the Little Sioux River valley.

The management plan includes rotating and targeting prescribed fire at different timed intervals during the year to stimulate prairie plants and to set back introduced cool season grasses.

"Maintaining the plant diversity here is a priority," Maddix said. "We have been varying the timing of prescribed fire and attempting to minimize the impact on certain plant species and insects, while still trying to knock back the brome."

For prairie enthusiasts, Kalsow Prairie State Preserve yields a plethora of diversity. For the passer-by, the area provides a glimpse into the sea of prairie and wetlands that blanketed Pocahontas County pre-settlement.

**Media Contact:** Clint Maddix, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-661-9726.

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## Late summer underwater aquatic plant control for ponds

A healthy pond needs aquatic plants, but too many can upset a fishing pond's balance and become a nuisance. Many pond owners struggle with how to control the amount of aquatic plants, without completely removing all of them, so they can enjoy their pond.

Pond owners can use herbicides to reduce aquatic plants, but their growing season is almost over by August.

Pond rakes or cutters, although more labor intensive, are perfect this time of year to control aquatic plants in small areas to create fishing lanes, swimming areas and dock access.

Pond rakes cut plants from the bottom and let you remove them from near shore or around docks. Attach a float to the rake to let it skim and remove plants and moss or algae from the surface.

A cutter will sink to the bottom and cut the plant stems as it is dragged back, allowing the plants to float to the top. The pond plants are often carried away by the wind or you can pick them up with a floating rake.

Use a rope attached to a long-handled rake or cutter that you can throw and pull back. You can use these handy tools for many years, and they cost less than a gallon of some aquatic herbicides. Local hardware or pool stores may carry these, or try an online search for "pond rake or cutter."

A few tips to remember:

- Many plants spread by fragmentation, so if growth is not throughout the pond, do not use these methods.
- Once out of the water, let the plants dry out before moving them too far. This will greatly lighten your load.
- Obey State Law. Don't haul the plants off your property; you cannot transport aquatic vegetation in Iowa. Once out of the water, leave the plants onshore to dry and compost or move dried plants to your garden where they make excellent mulch.
- Lakeshore property owners on a public lake can physically remove a 15 foot wide path of vegetation for navigation to the main lake without a permit; you cannot use herbicides to remove the aquatic plants in a publicly-owned lake. Contact the DNR fisheries office in your area if you have questions.

Learn more about aquatic plants in ponds at [www.iowadnr.gov/pondplants](http://www.iowadnr.gov/pondplants).

**Media Contact:** Jason Euchner, Fisheries Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-230-4789.

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## Dolliver Memorial State Park closed for road renovations

LEHIGH – The road through Dolliver Memorial State Park closed on Aug. 5 for a major road repaving project. The closure includes the campgrounds, cabins, lodges, shelters, and picnic areas. Additionally, boaters on the Des Moines River

will not be able to access the boat ramp in the park as the road into the park is closed for repaving. The project is expected to last several weeks, depending on weather.

For updates, visit the Iowa Department of Natural Resources alerts and closures page at [www.iowadnr.gov/parkclosures](http://www.iowadnr.gov/parkclosures)

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