

**Marshall County Conservation Board
Nature Center at the Grimes Farm
Policy and Procedures**

I. Statement of Purpose

The Nature Center at the Grimes Farm Conservation Area is owned and operated by the Marshall County Conservation Board (MCCB) for the following purpose:

“To provide an inviting place, with educational programming, that encourages visitors to make a personal connection with nature and offers opportunities to discover, experience, and enjoy nature’s message of harmony.”

II. Governance

Chapter 350, code of Iowa

350.5 Regulations. The county conservation board may make, alter, amend or repeal regulations for the protection, regulation and control of all museums, parks, preserves, parkways, playgrounds, recreation centers, and other property under its control....

III. Policy for use of the Nature Center (and immediately adjacent lands out to 100’)

This policy has been written with the following points in mind:

A. Nature Center Hours

Normal building hours are defined as:

8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Saturday

Closed Sunday

The Nature Center will be closed on county holidays unless otherwise noted.

Conservation office hours

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday

Area Hours for hiking trails, access road, and immediate vicinity

5:00 a.m. – 10:30 p.m.

- B. The Nature Center cannot be all things to all people at all times because of limits on time, staff, and space. Thus, priorities have been established to insure an orderly use of these limited resources based on the stated purposes.**
- C. To properly protect the Nature Center, it should not be left unsupervised when being used by the public. To accommodate after-hour use an additional fee may be charged to pay for staffing and overhead.**
- D. Only the five full-time professional staff of the MCCB will be permanently assigned keys. One key will be assigned on a temporary basis to a volunteer responsible for an assigned shift to staff the center. The “volunteer key” and security code may be checked out from the MCCB office the day prior to an assigned shift and must be returned to the office the day after the shift.**
- E. The use of any alcoholic beverages is prohibited in the Nature Center and surrounding facility (100 foot radius). No red colored drinks allowed.**
- F. As a public facility, the Nature Center (and 100-foot radius) will be a smoke free zone.**

IV. Priority Uses

Priority use will be given to groups that include conservation education as a primary goal or purpose. Educational groups as defined below will be given priority during peak use periods in fall and spring. Groups are not necessarily listed in priority order.

- A. MCCB sponsored programs and events for the public.**
- B. Educational groups, defined as public school, private school, preschool, and college classes who request a formal program from the MCCB staff at the Nature Center, or plan to use the Nature Center as a self-guided tour. These groups will be scheduled on a first come first served basis as staffing allows during normal hours. A classroom is defined as an instructor and students (up to 30) and any volunteer helpers. An adult to student ratio shall be one adult to every 15 students (1:15), not including Nature Center staff.**
- C. Youth groups are defined as any scout, church, 4-H or special youth club that may choose to educate youth on conservation or environmental issues. There shall be an adult to child ratio of 1:15.**
- D. Teacher or Educator Workshops are defined as educational workshops for teachers, conservation personnel and other educators such as staff development and teacher in-service.**
- E. Conservation or educational organizations such as ISU Extension, Central Iowa Ornithologists, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, Izaak Walton League, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, County Conservation Boards, REAP Alliance, Amateur Astronomers of Central Iowa, Parent Teacher Associations, and other groups as decided upon by the MCCB director or staff may use the Nature Center meeting/classroom for board or general membership meetings.**

V. Secondary Priority Uses

The Nature Center will be available to other groups as a second priority. These groups will be scheduled on a first come first serve reservation basis as staffing allows. These groups will be limited by fire code to 80 people in the classroom.

- A. Civic and community groups defined as service organizations such as Kiwanis, Optimists, Lions, Rotary, American Legion, etc. that do not include conservation education as their main goal or purpose.**
- B. Marshall County sponsored events i.e. Supervisors meetings, department meetings, wellness committee.**
- C. Marshall County business or industry training sessions/retreats on an occasional basis**
- D. Private groups: receptions, reunions, etc.**

Scheduling and Room Rental Fees

I. Room Scheduling

The Nature Center at the Grimes Farm Conservation Area has one classroom/meeting room that may be rented for use. Reservations must be made through the MCCB administrative office at least one week in advance of date requested. The reservation book and rental contract binder are located at the receptionist desk.

II. Rental Fees

These fees will be assessed for use of the Nature Center's classroom. Fees may be waived for any co-sponsorship associated with the MCCB.

A. First priority conservation or educational groups

may use the classroom for board or general membership meetings at no charge. A \$100 damage/cleanup deposit may be required if food or drink is served.

B. Teacher or educational workshops

held at the Nature Center and co-sponsored by the MCCB may use the meeting room at no charge. Workshops not co-sponsored by the MCCB will be charged the following rate with a four hour minimum charge:

Monday – Friday	8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	\$20/hour
Tuesday – Thursday	4:30 p.m. – 10 p.m.	\$30/hour
Saturday	8:00 a.m. – 5 p.m.	\$30/hour

C. Secondary Priority Uses

The use of the Nature Center is restricted to the classroom, display room, resource library, and public restrooms. The following times and fee schedule will be in effect with a four hour minimum charge:

Monday – Friday	8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	\$20/hour
Tuesday – Thursday	4:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	\$30/hour
Saturday	8 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	\$30/hour

Groups requesting reservations for use need to be aware that during school field trip seasons, a school group may be scheduled at the same time at the facility.

D. Deposits

A \$100 deposit may be required if food or drink is served. Staff may charge deposits for first priority users if they deem it necessary. Damage deposits are assessed to partially cover damage or loss of items.

1. Set up and clean up shall be the responsibility of the reserving organization. Rental time includes set up and clean up.
2. The deposit is to be returned upon compliance with this agreement and when inspection of the facility by MCCB staff has been completed and approved as satisfactory.
3. The deposit is not to be considered as a limit of liability for damage to county property. The conservation board may take any legal action necessary to recover additional damage.
4. Damage to the exhibits, displays, and mounted animals will be assessed depending on replacement costs.
5. Missing or broken items will be charged at their replacement value.
6. No pets are allowed in the nature center. Only "service animals" or similarly medically trained animals are allowed.
7. Confetti and decorations affixed to walls are not allowed

E. Payment

Payment of the fee is due with completed reservation forms or your request will be voided and the date made available to others. A reservation form must be completed and signed by the person responsible for the room rental. Two checks must be submitted (one for deposit and one for rental fee) There will be no refunds for cancellations, however an alternate can be selected in the same calendar year. Groups are responsible for setting up and taking down for their event.

F. Kitchen Use

Groups using the kitchen may use all appliances provided that following the meeting the kitchen is thoroughly cleaned. Caterer’s may use the kitchen for meal service. The group or organization hiring the caterer is responsible for clean-up.

G. Library Use

The purpose of the MCCB library is to make available to the citizens of Marshall County the reference and curriculum materials on identification, history, and management of natural resources. Materials may be viewed during regular business hours when the library is available. Circulation of library materials shall be available only to staff, board members, teachers, naturalists, cooperative organizations and agencies and other persons approved by the board or staff (see loan form). Items may be checked out for up to 30 days.

This policy adopted by the Marshall County Conservation Board at a regular public meeting held on August 11, 2003.

President

Secretary



**CONSERVATION CENTER/CLASSROOM RENTAL CONTRACT
MARSHALL COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD**

2349 233rd Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158
641/752-5490 FAX: 641/754-5496

FEE SCHEDULE

**\$20.00 per hour, four hour minimum (Priority users)
\$30.00 per hour, four hour minimum (2nd priority users)**

Date of Reservation: _____

Name of Group: _____

Responsible Person: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Home Phone: _____ **Work Phone:** _____

Time of Arrival: _____ **Time of Departure:** _____ **Fee:** _____

**NOTE: The conservation staff will only be available for 1/2 hour following the stated time of arrival.
If you are later than this 1/2 hour, the building will be locked and your fee will not be refunded.**

Number of People: _____ **Remarks:** _____

Date Reservation Made: _____ **By:** _____

***** IMPORTANT: PAYMENTS OF _____ MUST BE RECEIVED IN OUR
OFFICE BY / / OR YOUR RESERVATION WILL BE CANCELLED*****

OFFICE USE ONLY: Date Reservation Fee Paid: _____ Receipt Number: _____ Comments: _____

Marshall County Conservation charges a fee for administrative and maintenance overhead for others utilizing the facility at a rate of \$20 - \$30 per hour, with a four-hour minimum. Room capacity is 80 people. Comfortable seating capacity for meals and table set-up is 40 people. If you feel you are eligible for waiver of the rental fees (i.e. MCC co-sponsors a public event), please request a Classroom Fee Waiver Application form.

Should damage to the facility occur, damages are assessed to the group and the group may not be allowed to use the classroom again. Inasmuch as your name is recorded on the reservation form, you are responsible for the conduct of and/or damages caused by any member of your group. If the facility is not left in an orderly fashion, you may be charged extra janitorial fees.

**MARSHALL COUNTY CONSERVATION
CLASSROOM FEE WAIVER APPLICATION**

- A. Is the meeting open to the public? Yes No
- B. Is the meeting free to participants?
If no, how is the fee to be used? Yes No
- C. Does your meeting fulfill Marshall
County Conservation's mission
statement? Yes No

Define the purpose of your meeting.

(The mission of the Marshall County Conservation Board is to enhance the quality of life for all citizens of Marshall County by wisely managing our natural resources, by providing recreational and leisure opportunities, and by educating citizens to be wise caretakers of our natural environment.)

- D. Is the meeting tied to volunteer work for
Marshall County Conservation? Yes No

If yes, please define.

- E. Is it a Marshall County Meeting? Yes No

Please return this completed form with the proposed payment by the due date stated on the front of the contract. If MCC waives your fee, the payment check will be returned within one week of receipt. Due to time limitations, all paperwork must be completed prior to the stated date of reservation.

If fees are waived, Marshall County Conservation reserves the right to co-sponsor an event. Final considerations rest with Marshall County Conservation.

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Office Notes:

- Fees Waived: Yes No
If denied, reason(s):