

**Project title and Project number:** Park Packs #08-02

**Organization's name, contact person, website, phone and e-mail:** Linn County Conservation, Jenny Corbett, [www.LinnCountyParks.com](http://www.LinnCountyParks.com), 319-892-6485, [jenny.corbett@linncounty.org](mailto:jenny.corbett@linncounty.org)

**Project's purpose and targeted audience:** To increase awareness and appreciation for the outdoors for families, youth groups, home school or anyone who wants to learn more about the environment.

**Reflect on your project, providing a self-assessment. At a minimum, answer the following questions: Did your project go as planned? Explain what went well and why. Explain what you would do differently if you did the project again, and why.**

We had underestimated the amount of time required to develop the activities that needed to be created for the packs. When we started to work on the packs it was during the field-trip season and couldn't devote the time needed and a grant extension was requested and approved. Once we started looking for backpacks to purchase we had to keep in mind that they needed to be large enough to hold all the items, we almost purchased some that were too small looking only at purchase price and not size. Make a list first of what items you would like to have in the packs, books, puzzles, craft items, etc. Keep in mind, if there are many craft activities, you will need to re-supply some items. For example, at one time we considered plaster of paris for the Animals of Iowa N.A.P, after thinking about this, what a mess! And the cost to replace the plaster of paris. Another thought was, what amount do you include? If you would put enough materials for 3 – 4 tracks would that be enough? Then how much do you put in if you know a Boy Scout troop will be using the pack? When the backpack order was placed, some of them were on back-order so I would suggest ordering the packs as soon as you can. Also, if they need to be embroidered you will want to plan accordingly since this took about 2 weeks.

There are many places to order environmental education materials on-line. We found that Acorn Naturalist, for many games and hands-on activities, Common Ground, for books and Nature Watch for additional hands-on activities were the best resources. And don't forget your local stores too! Wildlife Habitat, a wild bird store was a great place to shop and the owner gave a great discount.

What I would suggest doing differently is, identifying what activities and items you want to put inside the backpacks. Just because you have previous curriculums developed and a library full of resources does not mean you don't have to spend the time tailoring them to fit your needs and photocopying them.

**Please list the most relevant outputs,<sup>1</sup> and explain, if necessary.**

In the short amount of time, 23 people used 6 different packs. We expect an increase of use once spring and summer arrive. Projected results; 72 packs checked out over a 12 month period; 5 users/pack x 72 checked out = 360 individuals enjoyed nature discovery with the assistance of the Nature Activity Packs; 5 hours average use x 360 = 1800 hours of nature discovery without a Naturalist and quality family time or educational pre-k time focused on nature. I will be looking forward to report to the CEP Board towards the end of the summer to report our results.

**Please list the outcomes,<sup>2</sup> and explain, if necessary. Be sure to include the outcomes outlined in your grant proposal.**

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<sup>1</sup> Measurements of production, such as number in attendance at a workshop.

<sup>2</sup> What important things happen as a result of the project, such as a documented change in behavior or new concepts learned.

We received many great comments on the returned evaluations but some really summarized what the packs were designed to do. A family member, who used the Birds of a Feather Nature Activity Pack (N.A.P) reported, "They (children) had a new appreciation when we filled the birdfeeders and heated birdbath". Another user who checked out the Treeific Trees reported, "Got my child outdoors"! We feel these packs will continue to increase the awareness and appreciation of Iowa's natural resources.

**Were there any negative outputs or outcomes, and/or concerns about the accuracy of your evaluation data, which you did not list above? If so, please identify the most relevant ones and explain.**

No negative outputs or outcomes to report.

**Identify your one to three most effective marketing tools (i.e., conferences, e-mails, flyers, news releases in local papers), describe your use of them, and why they were effective.**

The three main marketing tools used was the Linn County Conservation's, Oak Hickory Newsletter that was distributed to over 2,500 mailings and roughly 3,000 emails sent. A Promotional Sign is displayed at the entrance of Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center. Flyers & brochures distributed at Linn County Conservation's main office in Marion and Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center. The most effective was through friends and the newsletter. We will be sending brochures to the Boy & Girl Scout office's.

**At least one but no more than three photo(s) of activities in jpeg format.**

Sent by email to Susan Salterberg.