

## Pottawattamie County Parks



Tina Popson, Pottawattamie County Parks Education Program Manager spoke at the Treynor Optimist Club on May 5. Tina has worked there for ten years, doing field trips, summer camps, public programs, and Kinder Nature.

Pottawattamie County has four parks: Arrowhead in Neola, Botna Bend in Hancock, Hitchcock Nature Center near Honey Creek, and Narrows River Park in Council Bluffs.

Arrowhead is 147 acres and has about 26,000 visitors each year. They are celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on July 13-14. It has a 17 acre fishing lake.

Botna Bend Park is 119 acres and has about 11,000 visitors each year. It has bison and elk herds. Each March they have maple tree taping. This year they collected 500 gallons of sap, which boils down to 50 gallons of syrup. They put three taps in a tree and can collect five gallons of sap in a day.

Hitchcock Nature center has 1248 acres and about 45,000 visitors each year. They hold camps for ages 3 through college. It contains a 45 foot observation tower.

Narrows River Park is 36 acres and has about 13,000 visitors each year. It provides access to the Missouri River with a

shelter overlooking the river.

Tina said that a recent study showed that children spend less than six minutes a day outside. Researchers have coined the term "nature deficit disorder" to describe a rapidly-decreasing connection to the natural world. Children with this problem think of themselves as the center of the universe.

Tina said she likes working with children from Treynor because of their politeness, intellectual curiosity, and adult support.