



Raccoon River Greenbelt Newsletter

FALL EQUINOX 2020

Inside This Issue



Looking Back & Ahead

Growing Together

A Time of Healing

Harry Waters

Christmas Bird Count

Bench Scavenger Hunt

Salamander Crawl

Welcoming Autumn

Positive Perspective

Take Your Medicine

Tree Recovery

Woodland/Prairie Perspectives

2020-Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Mike Wallace, Director

The year 2020 could undoubtedly be dubbed “The Year of Challenges”. We at Dallas County Conservation Board (DCCB) face numerous obstacles that require us to adapt, re-prioritize and re-invent. I am proud of how our staff has responded with perseverance and flexibility to remain dedicated to our mission and projects. We look to our future endeavors with excitement and expectation, with supporters like you partnering with us.

Most fresh in our minds is the August 10 derecho storm that will be remembered for a long time. The intensity, duration, and wide-spread destruction of the storm has never before been seen in Iowa. Usually when a major storm hits, my department gets busy cleaning up one of our parks or a section of either the Raccoon River Valley Trail (RRVT) or the High Trestle Trail (HTT). However, with the Aug 10th storm, it was basically a county-wide event. Our department received infrastructure damage to

vehicles and buildings, which have been

or are in the process of being repaired.

Every park and all of our trail system

was affected by the devastating winds.

Countless trees were totally downed or

ripped from the ground, root and all.

Other trees lost large limbs which will

have a negative long-term impact on the

trees’ survival rates. All this damage

caused our staff to drop what they were

doing and completely commit the next

2 ½ to 3 weeks to cutting up trees and

dealing with debris removal. Everyone

stepped up and worked tirelessly to re-

open safely for the public to use as soon

as possible.

continued on page 2



Fun awards were given by Director Wallace to Cindy Blobaum for raking storm debris and Matt Merrick for use of ropes in forestry work during debris cleanup.

Published by Dallas County Conservation Board

email: conservation@dallascountyiowa.gov

♦ www.dallascountyiowa.gov/conservation



Woodland/Prairie Perspectives



“2020-Looking Back & Looking Ahead” continued from page 1

The storm changed the overall viewscape of our parks. Large mature oaks and hickories stood tall and provided much-needed shade in our campgrounds, but are now totally lost or severely compromised. Follow-up trimming and cutting will be necessary throughout this coming winter and next year. In places where it makes sense, we will plant new trees. Native trees will be the top choice as they have adapted to Iowa’s rigorous weather issues and climate. Anyone interested in assisting in the purchase of new trees can contact our office.

A novel and on-going challenge is Covid-19 and its effects on our department’s operations. The biggest change is how our naturalists can educate and interact with the public. In their adaptation plans, one of the main tools are videos that allow public schools, homeschoolers, and the general public to get an introduction to an environmental topic such as water quality or monarch migration. Then they can opt to sign up for a time to experience that activity as individuals or family groups, while still maintaining social distancing. Learning can still be done out in the field due to the revised interpretation process.

One positive of the last six to eight months was the ramped up activity at all of our parks, trails, and even wildlife areas by the public, as they re-discovered that value of the outdoors. We observed the increased use of our trail system, the amazing volume of canoes and kayaks using our rivers and access areas, and the sheer number of people walking and hiking in our parks. Exploring the wild places was a refreshing get-away for those dealing with the Covid-19 restrictions on their usual activities. We, of course, know that nature has much to offer, but it’s rewarding to see people re-discover the simple joys for themselves.

Despite the many hurdles 2020 has thrown our way, DCCB’s trail projects continued to progress throughout the summer. As you may know, we have been highly involved in a multi-phase project known as the “Connector”, which is a nine-mile stretch of trail connecting the RRVT to the High Trestle Trail. Phase I, completed in 2018, consisted of a 1.5 mile segment from the east end of Perry, going east. I am excited to announce that Phase II was completed this summer, consisting of a one-mile segment from the west edge of Woodward, heading west.

Besides trail expansion, crews targeted maintenance and repair of trail infrastructure. Between the towns of Adel and Redfield, all bridges received new railings and decks to the bridges and a fresh asphalt overlay of the trail surface. This was a big project and basically took the entire summer. But for the long-term success and to continue to make it one of the best trails in the state, it is very much worthwhile.



Phase II Construction RRVT to HTT, west of Woodward

Looking ahead to 2021, the “Connector” plan shows two projects that may be tackled next. Phase III continues the paving of another one-mile section of trail where Phase II ended near Woodward, heading west. In addition, Phase IV will continue the eastward movement of the trail by Perry, up to M Ave. In addition to the pavement itself, the biggest effort of Phase IV will be the construction of a bridge over Beaver Creek. Certainly, the construction of the “Connector” is not happening as fast as we would like, but the pieces are coming together, one at a time. And yep, as you might guess, we can still use additional funds for this \$5-6 million project. Contact me to see how you can assist financially.

As a matter of interest to trail enthusiasts, two other trail projects completed recently are the Adel Lighted Bridge project and the trail/bridge rehab project between Adel and Redfield. The Lighted Bridge project was totally paid for by funds raised by the Adel Chamber of Commerce and their project committee through grants, donations, and sponsorships. The Dallas County Conservation Board did not budget funds for this project nor is the DCCB using donated trail funds for that project, but it is a remarkable addition to our area’s attractions.

As I look back at the events of 2020, it was rewarding to see the flexibility and dedication of my staff as they continued with the mission of Dallas County Conservation Board. As with any group, we overcame obstacles and rose to the challenge of creating a “new normal”. I am looking forward with anticipation and excitement to the next season, seeing our plans come to fruition, thanks to the support of our valued partners.



Natural Resources



Growing Together

By Curt Cable

Deputy Director/Biologist

As we near the end of 2020, it feels as if we have been on a perpetual motion machine of negativity. If you would have told me, "Next year you will experience Covid-19 and a derecho," I would have nodded and walked away, not knowing what the heck any of those things are! Both events forever changed the way we go about our daily lives. Finding any silver lining in 2020 is challenging. Sometimes you have to dig deep to find them, but if you keep looking, I guarantee you will find them.

The pandemic exposed weaknesses in our society, just as the derecho exposed weakness in both our society and in nature. Luckily, we didn't see large-scale human mortality from the derecho. However, the vegetative destruction was immense. From the corn to the oaks, it was sad and sobering to observe the losses.

Sportsman Park lost a lot of good shade trees in and around our campground. While some of the trees were not in the best shape to begin with, a number of solid oak and hickory trees snapped in half. In fact, some of the biggest fallen trees were 150 years old or older. As I write this twenty days after the storm, we are still cleaning up debris and I imagine it will continue for some time.

The silver lining in all of this is that the storm cleared way to create new life. We are now able to plant new trees in and around our campground and various other areas. Residents may be wondering how to replace trees on their private property as well.

Fall is a prime time to plant certain trees, as it allows

root systems to develop before they go through the process of collecting water and nutrients for spring growth. Trees that establish themselves quickly tend to do better. Kentucky coffeetree, maples, sycamores and various cultivars of honey locust are great fall planting options. While trees such as oaks are usually better suited for spring plantings, we have successfully planted oaks in the fall in the past. Once planted, be sure to water the trees regularly until the ground is frozen.

Planting a new tree will not only help restore what was lost, but it will also be a way to remember the year of 2020. Let's get out and establish deep roots and grow out of this mess together.



Crews worked to clean up storm damage at Sportsman Park.

Backhoe Work

Water
Sewer
Septic
Tile Repair
Footings

Minor Plumbing
Home and Farm
Maintenance

free estimates

Marty Bennett
19718 Lexington Rd.
Minburn, IA 50167

BENNETT BACKHOE AND REPAIR



cell # (515) 480-1628
home # (515) 677-2173

HARLAND ACE HARDWARE, INC.



628 1ST AVENUE
PERRY, IA 50220
515-465-2177



2020 Prairie Awakening-Prairie Awoke Celebration: A Time of Healing

Chris Adkins, Naturalist

For the first time since 1998, I stood alone on the first Saturday after Labor Day, in the tallgrass prairie arena at Kuehn Conservation Area. However, standing there, I realized I was not alone. In spirit, I was surrounded by a community of friends that had been awakened by our Celebrations in the past. When social distancing and pandemic protocols forced the reality of not physical gathering for the Celebration this year, DCCB returned to the origins of Prairie Awakening-Prairie Awoke, leaning on traditions to guide adaptations.

Prairie Awakening-Prairie Awoke, from its origins, has been an act of healing. Through the lessons of the Celebration, we came to realize that as we worked to heal the land, we were also healing ourselves. As we struggled to define the shape of the Celebration this year, the theme of healing was tantamount. The pandemic inflicted wounds of all manner at all levels of our community. We all grieve for the losses suffered. So we asked ourselves how can we move towards healing these wounds?

How could a paused Prairie Awakening-Prairie Awoke write a new story that helps us move towards healing? Our answer to these questions is the indigenous tradition of prayer ties. DCCB's intention is that by sharing this tradition with you and inviting you to participate, we will all find a measure of healing and hope. The Celebration this year will be an on-going, individual action that you each experience on your own. A new story is being written, it's title is "A Time of Healing", and you are invited to be a co-author.

Irma Wilson White, Winnebago-Omaha Elder and long-time friend, agreed to share the story of the tradition of prayer ties and to provide a tutorial on how they are created. The video is posted on YouTube, entitled "Irma Wilson White Prayer Ties Demonstration".

Links are also available on the DCCB Facebook page, on weekly eNews, or you can click [HERE](#) if you are viewing this on the digital newsletter version.

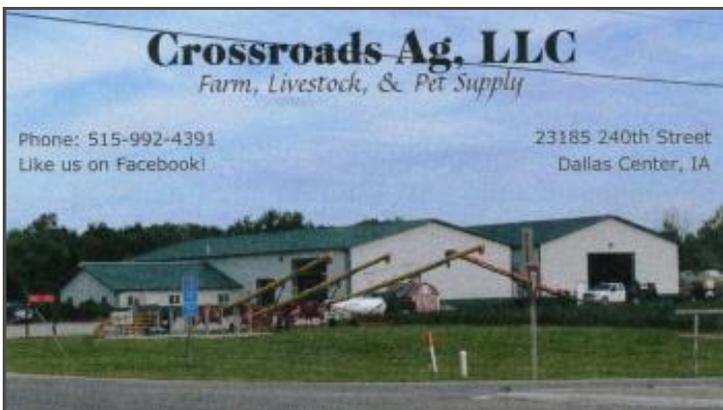
For those who are technologically-challenged like me, I will give you a short summary of the tradition. You will need 12 squares of yellow cotton fabric, cotton string, and tobacco. (Synthetic materials will not suffice.)

First, you must approach this with intention. Find a quiet, private place where you can focus and be free of interruption. Insulate yourself from technology. If you have access to prairie sage, you will need to smudge yourself, your materials and tools. If not, in the manner of your tradition, find a way to center yourself in a good place. Being mindful, your prayers become the story you are writing for our Celebration.

A prayer tie is a string of cloth squares, each carrying a pinch of tobacco, tied together on a string. Traditionally, the yellow color of the cloth square reflects healing. With intention, as you place tobacco in each square, offer up your wishes. Once you have twisted the square, containing the tobacco, tie it to the string. Continue this process until all 12 squares are attached to the string. The number 12 represents 12 prayers and is reflective of the course of a year's time.

To prevent the prayer ties from tangling, you can wrap the string around a stick for transporting to Kuehn.

Continued on page 5





"A Time of Healing" continued from page 4



Irma Wilson White demonstrates Prayer Ties on a YouTube video.

In the parking lot, find signs directing you to a cedar tree on the east boarder of the upper prairie near the arena. Cedar, in tradition is used to protect. At the designated cedar tree, you will undoubtedly see the prayer ties, healing stories, placed by others. Take a moment to reflect, to remember why you are here, and to tie your string onto the cedar branches.

The prayer ties, healing stories written by Prairie Awakening-Prairie Awoke's 2020 "participants", will remain tied to the cedar branches at Kuehn through the fall. On Winter Solstice, following tradition, all of our ties will be gathered and burnt at a sunrise fire.

Aldo Leopold, renowned ecological scientist and author stated, "The penalty of an ecological education is that it forces one to live alone in a world of wounds." If you are a past participant of Prairie Awakening, then you undoubtedly recognize the wounds in our world and may at times feel alone and helpless. This year's Celebration experiences are DCCB's attempt to help you not be alone in despair and to promote healing in these troubling times. We hope that writing your story of hope in the prairie will affirm to you that we can chose a new story for a non-pandemic tomorrow.

On September 12, "alone", in the arena at Kuehn, I wrote my story, and I would like to invite you to write yours. Together, you and I can accept the invitation from the Native Elders to stand inside the stories of this place and to experience the memory of the land.



EARLHAM BUILDING CENTER

170 S CHESTNUT
EARLHAM, IA 50072

515-758-2101

www.earlhambuildingcenter.com



Dr. Jennifer Hoffelmeyer
Veterinarian

1126 Greene Street • Adel, Iowa 50003

Phone: (515) 993-3410
theanimalhospitalofadel@gmail.com

www.AnimalHospitalAdel.com



**Law Offices of
Fineseth, Dalen & Powell, P.L.C.**

1401 Willis Avenue, Perry

Offices in Perry and Jefferson
Phone (515) 465-4641 (Perry)
Phone (515) 385-3151 (Jefferson)

*C. Scott Fineseth
DuWayne J. Dalen
Mark J. Powell
John C. Powell*



Museum Musings



Harry Waters

Friend of Forest Park Museum

1944-2020

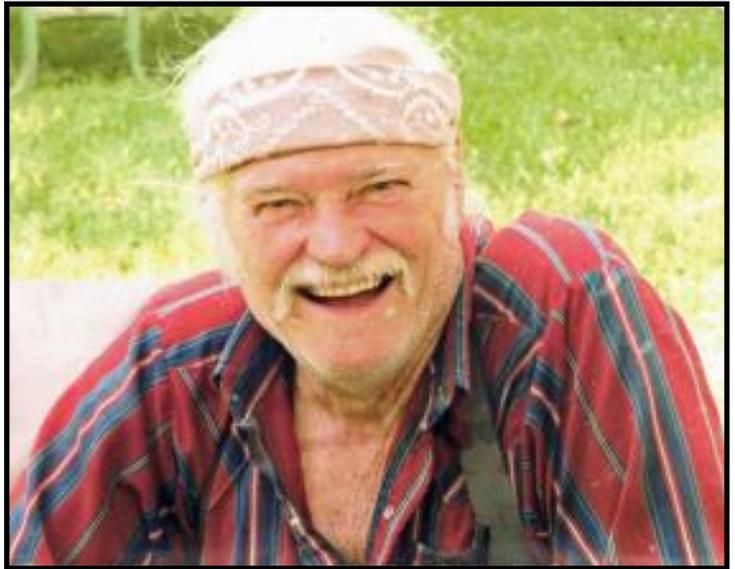
by Pete Malmberg, Curator

In the history of Forest Park Museum, numerous visitors and supporters have made the museum a part of their lives. One of the most unique, interesting, and colorful was Harry Waters.

Harry was in his mid-50s and working as a popular nurses aide at the Perry Lutheran Home when I started as museum curator in February 2000. In the early days, Harry stopped by the Museum occasionally but was mostly interested in our well-attended Native American Celebration (what is now called Prairie Awakening/ Prairie Awoke) at the Kuehn Conservation Area. He possessed a lifelong passion for Native Americans and their heritage, and he sought to master their knowledge of the natural world.

We saw more of Harry as the years passed, particularly after 2010 when he retired and began an in-depth study of plants used by native peoples. He even successfully treated many of the ailments he suffered as an older man with herbal remedies, which incidentally is something only experts should attempt. I was impressed with how spry and active he was, in spite of his emphysema and what turned out to be heart failure.

He enthralled our staff with stories about his Army hitch that ended in a jail term, and his time in the state penitentiary for bank robbery. As a young man he possessed an abiding hatred of big business that resulted in crime. However, in his older years, he made peace



with that issue and with himself.

The Waters family lived in Dallas County since the mid-19th century and counted unique personalities in its ranks. Some of these individuals acquired local reputations that caused problems for the whole family. For example, Harry told stories about his infamous great uncle, "Go About Riley", who was a gambler who controlled the Des Moines underworld during the Depression.

On behalf of DCCB, I thank Harry's family for carrying out his wishes to donate his memorial fund to the Forest Park Museum, a place that was dear to him. Personally, I will miss chatting with him in the Museum and his visits to my acreage to harvest burdock. I've known many interesting people in my life, but none quite like Harry. Rest in peace Harry, and thanks for the conversations!

GRAPHICS2U
Signs • Banners • T-Shirts **2U.COM**

We Print
T-Shirts
Sweatshirts
Hoodies • Polos

Sports Teams
School Events
Promotional T's
Parties & Reunions
Groups & Clubs
Business
Fundraising

2710 Willis Ave / 465-4271

The Village
AT LEGACY POINTE

1650 SE Holiday Crest Circle
Waukee, IA 50263
T: 1-515-987-4144
F: 1-515-987-5795
C: 1-515-442-3266

Stuart Scholz
Marketing Director

sjsscholz@watermarkcommunities.com
www.watermarkcommunities.com



Nature Notes



Dallas County Christmas Bird Count

Mike Havlik, Naturalist

Join Dallas County Conservation Board (DCCB) and Raccoon River Watershed Association (RRWA) for a day of birding with a purpose! Each year around the Christmas holiday, local bird enthusiasts “take a snapshot” of which birds are in their area by observing birds in their preferred area and collecting information. The National Audubon Society has been using this data to analyze the long-term health of bird populations for the last 100 years. This year’s Dallas County Christmas Bird Count will be Saturday, December 19.

A change for 2020 is participants will be socially distanced as a family group or as individuals, each covering their preferred area of the count circle. Some people hike their territory, while others drive, based on weather conditions and mobility issues. We also need people to watch bird feeders, which is valuable because they often see birds that are missed out in the field.

At the end of December 19, information will be e-mailed to Mike Havlik at mike.havlik@dallascountyia.gov. Totals for the diversity and number of birds will be distributed at a later date.

No matter if you are a beginning or experienced birder, young or young-at-heart, the day is filled with beauty and opportunities for learning.



Please register for this free event by calling the DCCB office at (515) 465-3577. Mike Havlik will work with you on details regarding area, mode of travel and time.

Peters Service Center

98 West Willis—Perry

Pop, Beer, Snacks, Ice,
Propane, Kerosene, Diesel

4 Seasons Car Wash

East Willis—Perry

West End Car Wash

West Willis—Perry



*\$3 automatic car wash with
gas purchase

*Never pay full price for a
car wash!



Raccoon Valley Bank

www.raccoonvalleybank.com

Adel—Dallas Center—Minburn—Perry

DAN BRUBAKER ENTERPRISES

DRAINAGE AND WATER MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST
30 YEARS EXPERIENCE

515-436-7691
800-565-0029
515-238-7875 cell

Dan Brubaker, Owner
223 Main St. P.O. Box 132
Rippey, IA 50234



DJ Services

Septic system maintenance and tank pumping



2460 337th Street
Perry, IA 50220
(515) 436-7212
(515) 339-5718
Daryle Bennett II



“Where’s Aldo?”

Leopold Bench Project

by Chris Adkins, Naturalist

In these times of pandemic social distancing, DCCB extends a scavenger hunt invitation to get you into the wilds of Dallas County, to explore, and to learn. This hunt is a spin on the “Where’s Waldo?” books, except the mission is not finding Waldo on a page. Instead adventurers will search for a wooden “Leopold bench”, named after Aldo Leopold, who was a fellow Iowan, father of the modern day science of ecology, and author of the seminal conservation book *A Sand County Almanac*. DCCB cooperated with Josh Nelson (Troop 115– Earlham) on his Eagle Scout project to build 18 wooden benches, patterned after an iconic bench designed and used by Leopold

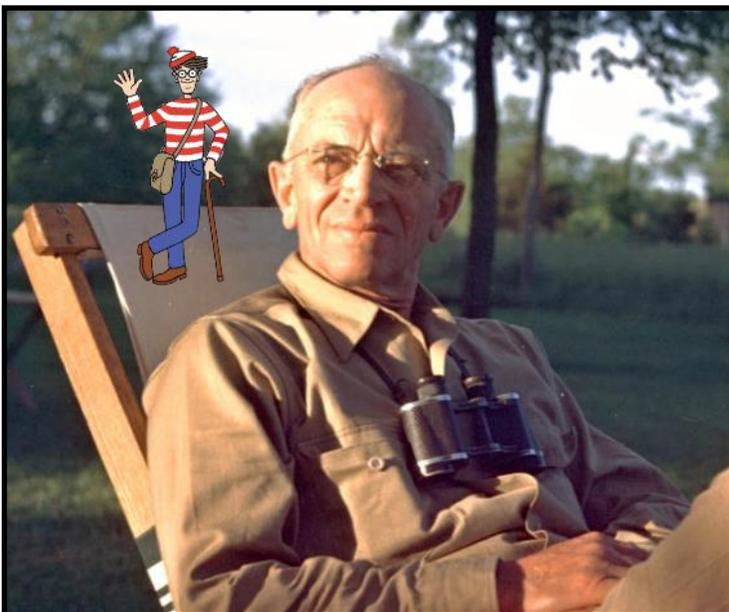
at his shack in Sand County, Wisconsin, where he authored his book. DCCB saw this as an opportunity to not only acquire benches, but also to present an invitation for people to explore Dallas County’s conservation areas and to learn about Leopold’s ecological philosophy. Each bench bears a plaque with a Leopold quote upon which tired hikers can rest, reflect, and take in the view.

Eighteen conservation-minded souls answered DCCB’s call for financial support of this project by sponsoring the cost of the plaque. In return, the sponsor selected a favorite Leopold quote to place on their bench.

While the “Where’s Aldo?” scavenger hunt officially started during the week of August 31, the

hunt will continue for the rest of the year as each bench is placed in the wilds of Dallas County. Participants can shake off their quarantine blues, follow pandemic protocol, and explore DCCB’s conservation areas. To initiate the search for a particular bench, a picture clue will be posted on DCCB’s Facebook page and website. People will search the various conservation areas in Dallas County, guided by the clue. (For a full listing of areas, click [HERE](#) or visit the DCCB website.) When an adventurer locates a bench, they should take note of the quote and shoot a selfie with the bench. They should then email conservation@dallascountyiowa.gov with the quote the bench bears and the selfie.

Continued on page 9



Don't Miss Out
Sign up for the weekly
DCCB eNews by emailing
conservation@dallascountyiowa.gov

BIKE WORLD

Iowa's #1 store for bicycles, accessories, & service since 1979

TREK GIANT
Electra **SURLY**

West Des Moines
5950 Village View Dr.
515-222-1880

Urbandale
6600 Douglas Ave.
515-255-7047

Ames
126 S 3rd St.
515-232-3669

WWW.BIKEWORLDIOWA.COM





“Where’s Aldo?” continued from page 8

Next, each first-to-find discovery will be recognized. To sweeten the deal, DCCB is offering a one-year pass to use the Raccoon River Valley Trail! We will also post an image of the bench’s sponsor and a short statement explaining how this piece of Leopold wisdom resonates with them.

Once the location is publicized and the winner is announced, everyone is encouraged to visit that bench, capture a photo, a “view from the bench” as it were, and tag DCCB if you post it to your own Facebook. This process will then be repeated with more strategically-placed benches. Once all Leopold benches are discovered, DCCB will gather them in the arena at Kuehn, and invite you to view them all and ponder the collective wisdom of Leopold’s words.

Your invitation is extended to search for the Leopold benches in the wilds of Dallas County conservation areas. Look at the picture clue and ask yourself, “Where’s Aldo?” Shake off your pandemic blues, get out in nature, and enjoy the thrill of the hunt!

Spread the word!
When you’ve finished reading your newsletter, pass it on to a friend!



Salamander Crawl 2020

by Cindy Blobaum, Naturalist

Every year we look forward to witnessing the tiger salamanders emerge from their summer habitats and head to the wetlands at Voas Nature Area for their winter sleep. On one cool, rainy October day, we usually notice large numbers of salamanders trekking across the roads and trails, and almost all of them do this on the same day! We expect their behavior to be no different this year, even if our behaviors have had to change. With that in mind, we encourage you to keep an eye on our Facebook page. When we see the salamanders on the move, we will post about it. If you want to try to see them, they are easiest to spot if you are driving in the evening, heading west on 187th St. out of Minburn. Due to distancing protocols, there will be no staff on hand, but we hope that you get to hold a salamander in yours! Learn more about salamanders by reading the article “True Life Tales of the Slowest and Fastest Fall Migrations” in the Fall 2020 issue of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources magazine, *Iowa Outdoors*. No access to Facebook? To be personally called or emailed with a notification, call the office at 515.465.3577 or email conservation@dallascountyiowa.gov.



Natural Resources



Welcoming Autumn Greg Sieck, Natural Resource Manager

Every fall, nature reveals the beauty of color. The mix of red, orange, purple and yellow takes over the parks in Dallas County. The brisk, fall air brings a sense of refreshment in the morning. In the evening, the aroma from a fire pit ushers in sweatshirt weather as the nights cool.

For myself, the change of seasons drives my passion for the outdoors because it also brings opening day of hunting season. Now I get to share that passion with my son who turns three in December and is infatuated with all of Mother Nature's creatures. When he sees a deer, he instantly starts to whisper, goes into hunting mode, and then will throw out the common "mernt" noise. He sees a turkey and he starts to yelp. He spots a duck, he starts to quack...you get the idea. He was born to be an outdoorsman and I can't wait to show him the ropes and teach him how to be a good steward of the land.

One of my favorite autumn views is located at Glissman Lodge, off of Panther Creek Road. Behind the Lodge, the view looking down the South Raccoon River valley during peak fall colors is breathtaking.



As the leaves change color, they begin to cover the forest floor. Typically with our very first hard frost of the year and the right conditions, you can witness this magical, natural event yourself. Envision the sun rise over a frost-covered forest floor. As sunlight hits the treetops, instantly the sound of raining leaves enters the quiet forest. All of Mother Nature's creatures go silent.

Looking into the science behind why deciduous trees leaves change colors is complex so simplifying it to a short

explanation is challenging. First of all, what makes the leaves green? The answer is chlorophyll, the driving factor and what I call the engine fueling the plant, or tree in this case. Chlorophyll, which gives the green color, is in charge of food production for the plant. You might ask, "What is a deciduous tree?" This type of tree annually loses its foliage in the fall and then grows new leaves in the spring. Common local examples are oaks, maples, and elms, along with various shrubs and herbaceous perennials.

As the days get shorter and the nights get longer, plants go into a winter dormancy phase, thus triggering leaf color change. The changing of daylight causes the tree to slow down its carbohydrate and water uptake. As the tree goes dormant, leaves lose their green color, allowing other vibrant colors to shine through. The autumn leaf's color is dependent on the acidity of the tree sap.

Normally, tree color vibrancy peaks in central Iowa around the third weekend of October. However, some years such as this one, stress becomes a factor when discussing leaf color change. We have been hit with a major drought across parts of the state, including Dallas County. Trees have been impacted from this drought, in addition to the hurricane-like winds that hit late this summer. Mother Nature will hopefully ease the pain with a few timely fall showers.

We see the beauty of a changing landscape, the colors of fall. We feel the cool breeze while sitting around the campfire. We hear the thunderous wing beat of a passing-by blue wing teal. Fall has arrived, so find a trail, start a campfire, and take it all in, for winter will be here before you know it. Enjoy autumn in Dallas County, for she is a beautiful place to visit and live!

Des Moines - Perry, Iowa



Iowa's Premier Thor Motor Coach and Forest River Dealer

Auto and RV Sales and Service

Hwy 141 & 144 Perry, Ia 1-800-248-4489



Since 1951

Fuel and Propane delivered to your door!

515-465-4994 Rod Gittins 1-800-475-4994

104 Willis Ave. Perry, IA 50220

www.quickoilco.com



Natural Resources



DCCB Hires New Outreach Coordinator

DCCB welcomes a new staff member, Sarah Gilchrist, as the Outreach Coordinator. She bases out of the Forest Park Museum office in Perry and is available 9:00am-1:00pm, Monday-Friday. Feel free to contact her at sarah.gilchrist@dallascountyiowa.gov.

Sarah and her husband Jeff have a daughter at University of Northern Iowa and a son at Nevada High School. She enjoys kayaking, yoga, biking, coaching cross country, and cheering on her favorite sports teams, especially the Chicago Cubs and ISU Cyclones. Join us in welcoming Sarah to the DCCB team!



**ALWAYS THERE
FOR UNEXPECTED
EMERGENCIES**
SHORT DRIVE. SHORT WAIT.

With over twenty-five specialty providers and our dedicated team of doctors & nurses available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, you can be sure that Dallas County Hospital is committed to bringing you *specialized care close to home.*



You have a choice for your healthcare, we hope you choose *Dallas County Hospital.*



DALLAS COUNTY HOSPITAL

610 10th Street • Perry, IA 50220 • (515) 465-3547

www.dallascohospital.org

IOWARealty

Iowa's Largest

WILLIAM L. CLARK CPCU
Broker Associate

1106 Willis Avenue
Perry, IA 50220
(515) 453-5883 Office
(515) 240-1523 Cell
bclark@iowarealty.com
www.iowarealty.com



**EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE.
EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE.**



Shottenkirk
WAUKEE CHEVY

755 W. HICKMAN ROAD, WAUKEE
ON THE RACCOON RIVER VALLEY TRAIL

VISIT OUR SHOWROOM AT WAUKEECHEVY.COM

West Property Management, LLC

Jeff Westendorf, CMCA
President & Community Manager
5550 Wild Rose Lane Suite 400
West Des Moines, IA 50266-5304

Ph. 515.778.7590
jeff@west-property.com
www.west-property.com



Nature Notes



Positive Perspective Cindy Blobaum, Naturalist

Call me a Pollyanna and I'll look at you with a smile. For the sake of my mental health and well-being, ever since grade school I have learned to look for silver linings and positive possibilities in all situations. A tick on me means it didn't latch onto someone more squeamish. Lots of things have happened this year that have created a mess of one sort or another. But the fact that I'm still upright, well-fed, able to swim, walk, ride a bike, work and write means that I have little to complain about. In fact, having to choose alternative routes, activities and even ways to reach out to schools has expanded my world, not contracted it.

For example, with hand sanitizer stations now a common item (due to Covid), I made a serendipitous discovery cleaning up (from the derecho). Hand sanitizer easily removes pine sap from your hands! As I shared this tip with co-workers and family members, many have remarked how helpful this tidbit will be, especially around Christmas.

Before March, I invested most of my fitness efforts doing aquatic exercise at an indoor pool. When the pool closed, I looked for alternatives. Now I am using outdoor fitness equipment and biking on the trail several times a week, plus, as long as possible, I will go to the beach in West Des Moines. These changes have awakened my knowledge of local resources, and given me the opportunity to see plenty of families enjoying time together and meet fellow RRVT trail users. I am generally more fit now than before, with the ability to go on a long-weekend backpacking trip with one son, closing in on other son's challenge of being able to do a chin-up, plus the bottoms and heels of my feet are nice and smooth from the beach sand.

Today's realities have also made it much easier to make connections with the nature around us.

I invested a considerable amount of time this spring working on invasive species removal – focusing on garlic mustard and wild parsnip. It took only a small leap of imagination to transfer the onslaught of information about the corona virus to the reality of a weed patch. Both types of plants create vast numbers of seeds making them potential "super-spreaders." To control their numbers, it is important to identify areas of new "infection", and work quickly and thoroughly to slow the spread, reduce the range, and then eradicate entirely. Even when it looks like all the plants are gone, it is important to revisit the area frequently to see if a new batch has sprouted from seeds that were late to germinate.

The considerable number of trees that were downed at Sportsman Park created a ton of potential new nesting cavities for wood ducks, bluebirds, woodpeckers, owls and squirrels. And yes, I lost my best maple trees (for syringing), but have no shortage of firewood for the boiling off (likely in a different park where the maple trees are still standing). We are looking at using some of the other downed logs for use as benches, with a large hollow stump making a great receptacle for Prairie Awakening

activities (see article by Chris Adkins).

While the operations crew worked on clearing the big stuff downed by the high winds, I did what I could manage without using power tools. Raking and piling limbs made me think of spring when I have visiting preK classes gather sticks to make a big mock nest. What a nest we could have made this summer! And as I drove through various neighborhoods, it looked like some former parent chaperones and their kids remembered the fun we had and made temporary nests in their yards. That's one way to encourage everyone to help, have fun, and create temporary habitat nooks for small animals. Hooray!

So yes, thus far this has been quite the memorable year. What remains to be seen is how we frame the memories. Change is constant, and a glance at the natural world offers visions of both the scars of past events and the potential for future magnificence. You get to choose how you look at things. I think you know how I will.



Your Waukee Cycling Hub

Happy Hours 2-6pm everyday
1/2 price flatbreads & tacos
\$1 off bar beverages

Live Bands Saturday Nights!

Free kids meals on Sundays
with the purchase of an adult meal.

One block south of the RRVT!

Hours 11 am—close
50 SE Laurel St., Waukee
515.987.9604 www.mickeyswaukee.com



TIM WALTON

cell: 515.212.0421
WaltonTreeService@gmail.com

TREE TRIMMING
TREE REMOVAL
STUMP GRINDING
FIREWOOD
INJECTIONS

Treat common health issues due to bacteria, fungus, and insects

Trained/Licensed/Certified

Commercial Sprayer License #44684



IOWA'S TRUCK HEADQUARTERS!



INTRODUCING THE ALL-NEW 2021 F-150:
THE TOUGHEST, MOST PRODUCTIVE F-150 EVER AND
THE MOST POWERFUL LIGHT-DUTY PICKUP.*

**Ford F150,
F250, F350
always in
stock and
on sale**



Preproduction computer-generated image shown. Available late 2020.
*With available 3.5L PowerBoost™ engine. Class is Full-Size Pickups under 8,500 lbs. GVWR.



Iowa's #1 Ford LINCOLN Dealer

STIVERSFORDIA.COM 1.800.747.2744

Scott Politte, President
STIVERS FORD LINCOLN OF IOWA

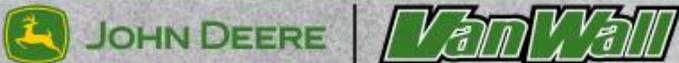


*Sales ranking based on car and truck sales report of the Kansas City Region of Ford Motor Company and Lincoln Motor Company for 2019



**IT DOES
EVERYTHING!**

3025E TRACTOR
WITH 10 YEAR WARRANTY **\$139 PER MONTH**



Albia, Ankeny, Carroll, Colfax, Denison, Greene, Grinnell, Grundy Center,
Hampton, Hubbard, Indianota, Iowa Falls, Knoxville, Madrid, Marshalltown,
Nevada, Oskaloosa, Perry, Sac City, Story City, Toledo, Urbandale

515.465.5681 www.VANWALL.com



HOTEL PATTEE

- Bikes • Bowling • Spa Services
- Special Events • Live Music • Gym
- Sauna • Weddings • Comfort food

We have lots to offer for any occasion!



Call today: 515-465-3511



1112 Willis Ave. Perry, Iowa

www.HotelPattee.com



Nature Notes



Take Your Medicine By Mike Havlik, Naturalist

This past Earth Day I shared my thoughts on the radio as part of a virtual celebration. I have always struggled with the name “Earth Day” because it implies that we are somehow protecting the Earth. I believe it should instead be called “Humanity Day” because we are actually protecting ourselves. When examining the human condition, we find suffering and death. We surround ourselves with distractions like movies, sports, and social events to make us feel that suffering and death are far away or will happen to someone else. But when Corona virus arrived, it brought suffering and death to the front door of our conscience. Quarantine canceled many of our usual distractions. So where did the humans go? Outdoors.

Being outside is good for human health. Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote, “Some old-fashioned things like fresh air and sunshine are hard to beat.” Now we have empirical data showing that being outside boosts the immune system and helps with mental well-being. Fresh air has more oxygen which raises the level of serotonin, a natural mood stabilizer that facilitates eating, digestion, and sleep. Being outside also releases dopamine, which improves blood flow and helps with learning, motivation, and pleasure. Exposure to the sun increases vitamin D levels, which is good for bones and teeth, and can lower blood pressure. Nature is full of sensory stimulation which keeps neurotransmitters sharp. Nature is also full of beautiful insects, interesting plants, melodious birds and stunning scenery. Being outside is medicine.

With that in mind, Dallas County Conservation Board is planning to continue enriching outdoor experiences for students. Since Covid-19 is still a health hazard, our typical day of three classrooms being taught by our three naturalists in our parks will not be a reality anytime soon, so we are modifying our fall programming. We plan on serving families whose children are back in the classroom

full-time, as well as those who are doing virtual learning.

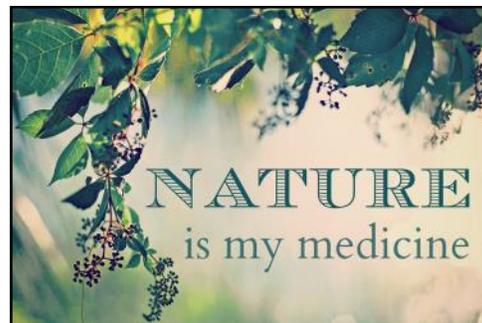
Most of the school districts we serve plan to continue with the curriculum used for fieldtrips even though they are not able to physically transport students to our parks. We will provide content on topics that teachers have specifically requested, such as water quality, ecosystem restoration, and monarch migration and tagging. As an extension of the classroom, DCCB will offer a museum-style, docent model experience for individual families to meet a naturalist at one of our parks.

For families who are choosing on-line learning or home-schooling, naturalists will provide information based on the family’s interest, activity level, or educational goals, and send them to their destination.

In all cases, families will reserve their timeslot with a naturalist through a Sign-up Genius link on the DCCB website. Doing so will enable us to efficiently serve participants while keeping safe, social distances.

Besides serving those in the education system, DCCB hopes to offer opportunities for the general public as well. Winter survival and bird study are popular outdoor interests we will continue, perhaps with modifications.

As distractions return and we slowly reestablish a sense of normalcy, carry in your heart the memory of these past months. Know that when you are overwhelmed, stressed, sad, or isolated, there is a place still filled with beauty, song, and scenery that can change your mood, lower your stress, and make you happy. Remember to take your medicine.



Where family is more than our name.

720 1st Ave., Perry
(515) 465-5180 - www.familycu.com

Diamond Oil Co.

Jason Heiden
Territory Development Manager

702 SE Raccoon Street
Des Moines, IA 50309
515-244-4271 Ext. 2223
Cell 515-360-9490
Fax 515-244-4273
800-422-7563 Ext. 2223
jheiden@diamondoilco.com





Tree Recovery By Matt Merrick

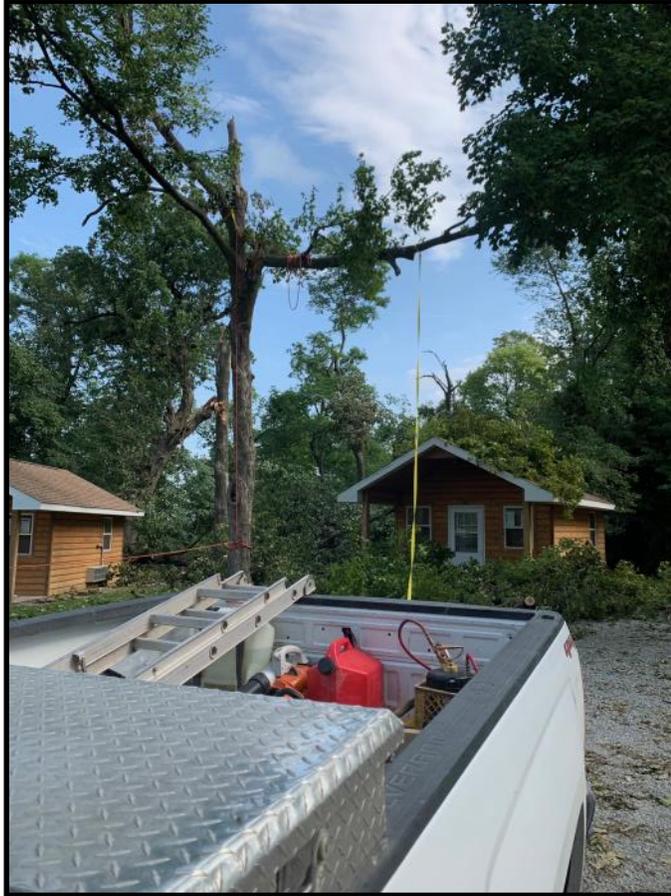
Natural Resource Manager

A beautiful morning was in full swing on August 10, 2020. The crew was ready to tackle the new work week with mowing, cleaning and maintenance on the list of tasks to be accomplished. I started out to mow the Raccoon River Valley bike trail between Forest Park and Minburn. I was making good time on my tractor and was almost to Minburn when I thought to myself, “Man, it’s getting dark and we could use this rain!” My next thought was, “Dang, that’s a big tree that just fell!” and then the tractor started to shake. I quickly left the trail and sought shelter in a relative’s garage for about forty minutes of extreme wind.

What came next was total disbelief and shock at what just transpired. Driving back to Forest Park revealed scenes of extreme crop damage, grain bins torn to pieces, and power lines scattered all over the roads. After a quick assessment of damaged caused to DCCB property, the cleanup started. The following weeks were filled with countless hours of trigger time on the chainsaw. Like most of you reading, almost everyone I know had some kind of damage. Scenes of the ongoing cleanup in Iowa fill our local news spots at five o’clock. At times, it was hard to see any progress.

Since the derecho storm affected nearly every central Iowan in some way, here are a few tips and tricks that will help with the assessment, removal, and reestablishment of community forests. Over the past few weeks, I heard stories of tree removals gone wrong. If you are untrained or inexperienced, call a certified arborist to evaluate the hazards associated with the damage and any factors that may affect the tree removal process. It’s always better to be safe than sorry.

The first step in the removal of trees is to assess the situation. Your tree could contain hidden power or utility lines. Fallen



Crews worked diligently to safely trim trees by the rental cabins at Sportsman Park.

branches may have broken gas lines or smashed electrical boxes. Downed trees may precariously lie on your roof, against the house, or on top of a vehicle. Improperly assessing the situation and taking an incorrect approach to removing the tree could cause even more damage to people or property. A rookie mistake I see all too often is people running chainsaws alone. Always have another responsible adult present. Storm damaged trees can cause limbs to be under pressure and can turn the already-risky task into a harrowing experience. Another situation that causes me worry is people cutting tree limbs while on an extension ladder. No matter the size or location of a tree limb, never use a ladder because it’s extremely easy to be knocked off as a branch falls. Having and

knowing how to use proper equipment correctly is another good reason to reach out to a professional.

After the cleanup is done, the amount of tree canopy loss in certain communities can be demoralizing. Estimates say up to 65% of the tree canopy in Cedar Rapids is either gone or needs to be removed. Fortunately, fall is an excellent time to replant trees. Deciding where and what kind of trees to replant can be daunting at times but can be made easier by keeping a few tips in mind. Planting in the same spot of a downed tree is not best practice, but few feet away from a ground out stump should suffice. Next, find a species that’s not common on your property or in your neighborhood. Diversity in the community tree canopy is key to a robust and healthy community forest.

Take this opportunity to consult your city forester or local laws for recommended species that are resistant to pests. Lastly, use this experience to teach the next generation that Iowans come together in a time of need.

In the aftermath of the derecho, the clean-up process can be a good time to learn about tree management and how to consult a professional arborist. Learning how to safely handle the clean-up process may even give you the chance to add a few cool tools to your collection. Taking this opportunity to diversify and strengthen our local forests and tree canopy can help us see the bright side of a tough situation. At DCCB, we are more than willing to share our knowledge and expertise to achieve a common goal together. Contact me at matt.merrick@dallascountyiowa.gov with questions about your trees.



eNews



#thisisiowa #mycountyparks



Raccoon River Greenbelt Newsletter

Published by Dallas County Conservation Board

Phone: (515) 465-3577 Fax: (515) 465-3579
email: conservation@dallascountyiowa.gov
www.dallascountyiowa.gov/conservation

Dallas County Board of Supervisors

Kim Chapman
Brad Golightly
Mark Hanson

Dallas County Conservation Board

Lorinda Inman—Chair
Nancy DeLong—Vice Chair
Mark Powell—Secretary/Treasurer
Keith Troester
Marlen Kemmet

Dallas County Conservation Board Staff

Mike Wallace.....Executive Director
Sherry James.....Administrative Assistant
Curt Cable.....Deputy Director/Biologist
Pete Malmberg...Museum Curator/Hist. & Cultural Resources Coord.
Chris Adkins.....Environmental Education Coordinator/Naturalist
Mike Havlik.....Naturalist
Cindy Blobaum.....Naturalist/Special Activities Assistant
Greg Sieck.....Natural Resources Manager
Matt Merrick.....Natural Resources Manager
Chris Fitch.....Office Assistant
Sarah GilchristOutreach Coordinator
Jamie Zika.....Natural Resources Technician
Bob Myers.....Natural Resources Technician
Mike Murphy.....Natural Resources Technician
James Barger.....Seasonal Maintenance Worker

No qualified individual with a disability will be excluded on the basis of a disability from participation in meetings, hearings, programs, activities or services conducted by the Dallas County Conservation Board. To request information in an alternative format or request an accommodation to participate in a meeting, hearing, program, activity or service, contact the Dallas County Conservation Board, Forest Park, 14581 K Avenue, Perry, Iowa, 50220, (515) 465-3577



Address Label
Here

Return Services Requested

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERRY IA 50220
PERMIT NO. 32

Dallas County Conservation Board
14581 K Avenue
Perry, IA 50220