



Seasons

Marshall County Conservation Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 39, Issue 3

Fall 2024



Unmeasurable Kindness By Emily Herring, Director

Our work in Marshall County parks is ongoing. There's always litter to pick up, invasive species to eliminate, fallen trees to cut, trash to collect, grass to be mowed, equipment to be repaired, signs to post, trees to plant, prairies to restore, and more. These tasks make up our daily maintenance. But beyond these, there are numerous large-scale improvements we could make, such as building new campgrounds, an observatory, a frisbee golf course, playgrounds, shelter houses, art installations, bathrooms, an archery range, bridges, bike trails, educational signage, to name a few.

As the director, one of my biggest challenges since taking on this role last year has been the realization of the numerous possible improvements. I understand that I cannot make them all happen immediately. I've been reminded more than once that this is a marathon, not a sprint, but if you ask my high school track coach... I was not a long-distance runner. Changing my mindset has been challenging but essential to be successful in this position. I face two significant hurdles in making the parks everything they could be: 1. Funding and 2. Staffing. I could make the world a much better place with unlimited funds and staff. Unfortunately, that is not how the real world works, sigh....



Today, I want to focus on the backbone of our organization, the conservation staff, and shine a light on their support team, our volunteers. Marshall County Conservation is a team of seven full-time staff members managing 34 areas, over 3,000 acres, and three bike trails. We also provide environmental education for the 40,000 people who call Marshall County home. Their dedication and hard work are what make our projects successful. They make me look good, and their commitment to the county empowers me to be the best director I can be. Please thank them when you see them working in the parks. It means a lot to them to know their efforts are appreciated.



Regardless of the number of hours our staff work, we heavily rely on volunteers. In fiscal year 2024, we were fortunate to have over six hundred volunteers who generously gave us over 3,000 hours of their time. To put this into

perspective, that's equivalent to another 1 ½ full-time staff member. The Do Good Institute, in April of 2024, calculated that the value of a volunteer's hour is \$33.49. This means that volunteers for Marshall County Conservation saved county taxpayers over \$109,830 in a single year. We may be able to put a monetary value on their time, but their kindness is unmeasurable. Volunteers have been busy cutting honeysuckle, filling bird feeders, repairing fishing piers, painting shelter houses, building trails, restringing fishing poles, hosting Live and Local Concerts, picking up litter, removing graffiti, planting trees, tagging monarchs, weeding flower beds, clearing and maintaining the bike trails, collating the newsletter, being Zombies, serving pancakes, writing grants, fundraising, writing management plans..... Filling in gaps that we cannot fill.

Being a volunteer is something everyone can do, no matter their age, race, or ability, and we are always looking for more help. We can find something you are passionate about. We understand that everyone's schedules are busy, but even if you only have an hour to give, we would love to make you a part of our team!

Many of you reading this have volunteered for us in the past, and I want you to know that we see you and appreciate you! I want to end with a wonderful quote by Joseph Addison that puts into perspective how we at Marshall County Conservation feel: "No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burden of another." Thank you.





FALL

Nature Story Hour

Nature Story Hour will return next Spring, starting in May and running through the month of August.



Live and Local - Joseph Huber

Thursday, September 12 at 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Leonard Grimes Memorial Amphitheater at Grimes Farm

Singer, Songwriter, and Multi-Instrumentalist Joseph Huber, from the state of Wisconsin, creates music that is mix of rock and folk. He honed his songwriting abilities captivate folks with his sincere and well-crafted songs. Whether it's irresistible, fiddle-driven, dancing tunes or honest, heart-wrenching "songwriter" songs, Huber's songs and shows span the spectrum of 'Roots' music while preferring not to stay within the boundaries of any strict genre classification.



Food Vendors: Comal Kaxi, Magoo's Pizza, Lillie Mae, Lucky Wife Wine Slushy



Marshall County Conservation offices will be closed:

- Monday, November 11 in observance of Veteran's Day
- Thursday, November 28 and Friday, November 29 for Thanksgiving



Monarch Tagging Event

Tuesday, September 10 at 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm Shelter House
Registration Fee: Free

Join us on September 10 at the Grimes Farm Shelter House to learn about the Monarchs' amazing migration during the fall months. The program will start at 5:30 p.m. with a short presentation about Monarchs and the tagging program. Following the program, nets will be available for families to catch Monarchs to tag. Each person will also get a cookie, a take-home craft, and milkweed seeds to plant to help Monarchs thrive while supplies last. No pre-registration is required, and the event is FREE!



Kayaking

Tuesday, September 17 at 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Green Castle Recreation Area
Registration Fee: Free
Deadline: September 13 by 4:00 pm

Our final kayaking event for 2024! Join us as we explore Marshall County waters with kayaks at Green Castle Recreation Area - 2891 Green Castle Road, Gilman. This family-friendly event encourages participants to learn the basics of kayaking and how to be safe on Iowa's waters. There is no fee for this program. However, you must pre-register to reserve limited spots. **Register by calling the Conservation Center at 641-752-5490, email mccb@marshallcountya.gov, or texting only 641-758-9777 by September 13.**



Sunrise Hike

Join Marshall County Conservation for a program that will encourage you to begin your morning with a hike through a county area. Research has shown that people who exercise in the morning are more active throughout the day. So come for a brisk hike, bring your binoculars to look for birds, or just to get some fresh air while strolling leisurely. MCCB staff will be present to answer any questions you might have. Participants will want to dress appropriately and wear sturdy footwear. There is no charge for this event. **Register by calling the Conservation Center at 641-752-5490, emailing mccb@marshallcountya.gov, or text only 641-758-9777.**

September 24 at 6:30 a.m.
Iowa River Wildlife Management Area (Parking Lot)
2503 Sand Rd. Marshalltown, IA 50158
Registration Deadline: September 20

October 8 at 6:30 a.m.
Grimes Farm and Conservation Center (Shelter House);
2359 233rd St. Marshalltown, IA 50158
Registration Deadline: October 4



Brown Bag Bunch

To register for Brown Bags, please call 641-752-5490, email mccb@marshallcountyia.gov, or text only 641-758-9777 by the deadline of each event listed below.

September: Hawk Watch

Monday, September 16 at 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 pm
Grammer Grove Wildlife Area
2030 127th Street, Liscomb
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: September 12 by 4:00 pm

Join Mark Proescholdt, hawk expert at Grammer Grove, for Hawk Watch on September 16. Learn to identify migrating raptors and help us count them for scientific research and long-term monitoring of populations. Bring a lawn chair and binoculars. If you don't have any, binoculars will be available. Park by the main entrance sign or along the road after the main entrance sign.



October: Wild Edibles and Foraging 101

Wednesday, October 23 at 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm and Conservation Center
Registration Fee: FREE
Registration Deadline: October 18 by 4:00 p.m.

Join Tama County Naturalist Raina Genaw to learn about safe, ethical foraging in Marshall County Conservation Parks. Raina will share her experience with foraging, discuss safety and ethics, and share examples of forageable plants and how to identify them. There will be samples of foraged foods and drinks to try.



November: Great Horned Owls

Thursday, November 7 at 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm and Conservation Center
Registration Fee: FREE
Deadline: November 2 by 4:00 p.m.

Let me introduce ya'll to Athena! She is a great horned owl, whooo just turned one this past March. Brenda and Jeremy Smith are licensed falconers who train wild birds of prey to hunt with them. Athena will be starting her training program to learn to hunt this fall! Brenda and Jeremy also are mentoring apprentices to share their knowledge and experience. Come check out Athena and learn all about falconry.

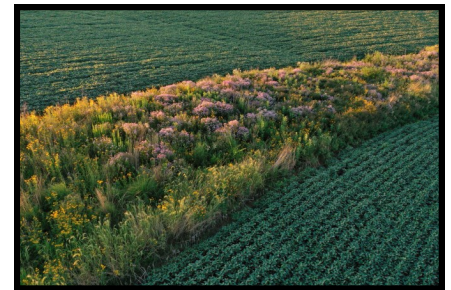


Brown Bag Bunch - continued

December: Sustaining Iowa's Future with Innovative Land Management Practices

Monday, December 9 at 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm and Conservation Center
Registration Fee: FREE
Registration Deadline: December 5 by 4:00 p.m.

Ann Staudt, Iowa State University, will dive into the science of in-field and edge-of-field conservation practices for Iowa, crucial to supporting water quality and long-term sustainable agricultural production, as well as adding beauty to Iowa's landscape. Staudt is an environmental engineer who actively blends scientific knowledge and creative expression through water-focused extension work and teaching, from high-impact presentations with youth, to farmer field days, teacher training workshops, and the fleet of four Conservation Station trailers. With 14 years experience working in conservation at ISU, Staudt currently serves as Director of the award-winning Water Rocks! youth water education program and Conservation Outreach Specialist with Iowa Learning Farms, supporting on-farm demonstrations and outreach statewide related to water quality and soil health.



Live and Local - Royce Johns

Thursday, October 3 at 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Leonard Grimes Memorial Amphitheater at Grimes Farm

Join us for a night of traditional country music with Royce Johns. Royce is a husband, father, guitar picker, and singer/songwriter. He has been pickin' and grinnin' for the last decade and has been fortunate to work with some talented singers, songwriters, and musicians. He has played with Sammy Kershaw, Sawyer Brown, Trick Pony, and many others.



Food Vendors: Clare's Tenderloins, Comal Kaxi, Ma Brown's



Nature Adventures

Join us at the Grimes Farm Conservation Center for a nature program delivered in a flexible format specially designed for kindergarten through fourth grade students. Programs will engage students with a story, craft, or activity and an outdoor fun component. There is no fee for this program. **To register for Nature Adventures, please call 641-752-5490, email mcch@marshallcountya.gov, or text only 641-758-9777 by the registration deadline.**

September: Decomposers

Thursday, September 12 at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
Grimes Farm and Conservation Center
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: September 10 by 4:00 p.m.

Come and learn about decomposers! Why are they important, what role do they play in our ecosystem, and how do they move energy through the soil?



October: Birds

Thursday, October 3 at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
Grimes Farm and Conservation Center
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: October 1 by 4:00 p.m.

In October, we are taking a deep dive into birds and the adaptations that make them special!



November: Ancient Animal

Thursday, November 14 at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
Grimes Farm and Conservation Center
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: November 10 by 4:00 p.m.

Discover Iowa's past through ancient animals that once roamed Iowa's landscape.



December: Mammals

Thursday, December 12 at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
Grimes Farm and Conservation Center
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: December 10 by 4:00 p.m.

What is a mammal? Join us to learn more about Iowa's mammals and discover what makes them unique.



Sand Lake Trout Release

The Iowa DNR will be releasing 2000 rainbow trout tentatively on October 18 at Noon. For more information call our office at (641)752-5490

Zombie Run

Saturday, October 19 at 6:00 p.m.
Grimes Farm
Registration Fee: \$35.00
Deadline: October 11 by 4:00 p.m.

The Park Apocalypse has begun, and Grimes Farm will be infested with Zombies on October 19, 2024. Put on your running shoes for this spine-tingling 5K, with registration beginning at 6:00 p.m. and a staggered race start beginning at 6:30 p.m. Runners will brave the oncoming night and undead creatures lurking the trails, which will try to steal their brains (also known as flags, from the flag football belts). If runners cross the finish line with flags, they have avoided lively decompositions and are declared a survivor. Those with no flags - their future is not guaranteed, and they are deemed infected. Runners can register online at Eventbrite. Registration fee is \$35 and includes swag item, finisher medal, walking "dead" taco meal, zombie antidote (Gatorade), and zombie cookie. Registration Deadline is October 11. Day of the race registration is welcomed; however, medal, swag item, and meal are guaranteed to the first 120 registered runners. If running is not your thing and you would like to sacrifice your brain and evening and become a Zombie on the trail or another volunteer, please contact Emily Herring at eherring@marshallcountya.gov or at 641-752-5490. Income from the Zombie Run will be put back into the trails at the Grimes Farm.



Scan the QR code to register

Needle Felting Program

Intro to 2-D Needle Felting: Bluebird
Thursday, October 24 at 5:30-7:00 p.m.
Grimes Farm and Conservation Center
Registration Fee: \$45
Deadline: October 18 by 4:00 p.m.

This 1.5 hour class will start with the basics of needle felting, and learning the capabilities of 3 different species of wool types: Alpaca, Sheep's wool and Llama fiber. We will go over the steps involved in order to create your own style or design of the pictured example of a Mountain Bluebird.



Students do not need to bring anything – as all materials will be provided. A "Starter Kit" is included with the \$45 class fee. This kit includes all materials needed to create your picture – with plenty of wools to take home to continue another project!

No special skills are required – as when doing any needle felting pictures – your own creativity will show through. Everyone has their own style and this is just a fun new art concept to learn! Led by fiber artist; Bonnie Ohrt (Homespun Family - <https://www.homespunfamily.net/>)

Geocaching for Candy!

Monday, October 28 at 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm Shelter House
Registration Fee: \$10 per group
Deadline: October 23 by 4:00 p.m.



Families will learn how to use handheld GPS units, then using coordinates will search the Grimes Farm for hidden candy! Bring a bag for your finds and feel free to dress up!

Participants must pre-register and pay the program fee before October 23. Register by calling 641-752-5490, emailing mccb@marshallcountya.gov, or texting only 641-758-9777.

Sock Gnomes

Thursday, December 5 at 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm and Conservation Center
Registration Fee: \$15.00
Deadline: November 27 by 4:00 p.m.



Get ready for the holiday season by creating a sock gnome. Participants will learn how to make a gnome using a non sewing method using a sock. Hot glue guns will be used, therefore children must be accompanied by an adult. All supplies will be provided. **Participants must pre-register and pay the program fee before November 27. Register by calling 641-752-5490, email mccb@marshallcountya.gov, or text only 641-758-9777.**

Bee Lawns

By Zackary Morris

Did you know that bees, which are responsible for the pollination of many of our flowering crops, are in danger from human activity? My name is Zackary & I will be a Senior at BCLUW. I am a finalist for the \$10,000 dollar Herbert Hoover Foundation Scholarship, in which applicants must create a project that is beneficial to their community. My project is to save the bees!

One of the several things I'm doing is planting "bee lawns" in 3 locations, including one at Riverview Park in Marshalltown. However, a goal of mine is to help create as many bee lawns as possible in the Hardin, Grundy, and Marshall County area, & for this I'll need your help!

Firstly, the plants used in a bee lawn are primarily flowers, completely native, & can be mowed if desired (optional). Additionally, many of the plants in a native seed mix require cold stratification, which means they must be planted in the Fall. The flowers I will be planting are common violets, prairie pussytoes, prairie sage, partridge pea, lance-leaf coreopsis, black-eyed susan, & silky aster. I will be planting them in an 8'x8' plot, where I have already turned over the soil & planted oats in preparation. I was able to select my seeds from the Prairie Moon Nursery website, but there are many other companies you can buy native seeds from, such as Pheasants Forever.

If you are interested in planting a bee lawn, I highly recommend doing so! It will help meet the goal of bringing bee lawns to the area to create a healthier environment for bees, thus bringing more pollination for food and flower gardens.



Park Packs



Parents, are you looking for something to keep your children entertained and educated? Our Park Pack rentals are specially designed for kiddos aged 3-9, offering a fantastic opportunity to deeply explore our county parks. These backpacks are not just ordinary bags but treasure troves filled with exciting learning and exploration activities that will captivate young minds and foster a deeper connection with the natural world.

Parents, imagine the joy of watching your children discover the beauty of nature while having a blast outdoors. These backpacks are educational and incredibly entertaining, making them the perfect tool for learning and outdoor adventures.

With scavenger hunts, games and puzzles, crafts, binoculars, movement dice, and bug-catching equipment, these backpacks provide a hands-on approach to learning about the environment and wildlife. Every trip to the park becomes an unforgettable experience, brimming with enriching opportunities to learn and explore.

There are five park packs: tracks, sense, birds, trees, and insects. Grab a backpack, and let the wonders of nature spark curiosity, imagination, and a lifelong love for the environment in your young adventurers.

There is no fee to use the packs; however, the user will be charged for any missed or broken items. The backpacks can be rented for up to three days. **For more information, contact us at the Conservation Center by calling 641-752-5490 or emailing mccb@marshallcountya.gov. Backpacks are available to rent at the conservation center Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

STAR GAZING WITH THE CENTRAL IOWA ASTRONOMERS

Astronomy Night at Otter Creek
Saturday, September 7 at 7:15 p.m.
2288 270th St., Toledo



Join Steven Spangler, PhD, to explore space! During his 39-year career at Iowa, Spangler taught courses at all levels from general education courses for non-science majors, to graduate courses in Astronomy and Physics. This presentation is intended for adults, but all are welcome. After the talk, we will look at Saturn through telescopes with Spangler and astronomers Deb and Jim Bonser. In addition, Spangler will describe some of the main sights to be seen in the sky that night, and we will look at some of them if the sky is clear. Registration is greatly appreciated but not required to attend. Register online on mycountyparks.org or email rgenaw@tamacounty.org

Friday, September 13 and Friday, October 11 at 7:00 p.m.
Dean Memorial Observatory, Green Castle

We will be touring the late summer and early fall constellations and objects in the night sky. We will explore what is up in the sky. This will include things like Jupiter and Saturn and any interesting galaxy and double stars that might be in the night sky. The event will start as the sun sets. The Amateur Astronomers of Central Iowa invite the public for a telescopic view of the night sky. For more information, contact Jim Bonser at (641)751-8744.

If running is not your thing and you would like to sacrifice your brain and evening and become a Zombie on the trail or another volunteer, please contact Emily Herring at.

eherring@marshallcountytia.gov

or at 641-752-5490. Income made from the Zombie Run will be put back into the trails at the Grimes Farm.

PARK APOCALYPSE ZOMBIE RUN

OCTOBER 19, 2024

REGISTRATION 6:00 P.M.

RACE STARTS 6:30 P.M.

**REGISTRATION
ONLINE AT
EVENTBRITE**

**REGISTRATION FEE
OF \$35 INCLUDES:**

SWAG ITEM

MEDAL

MEAL

For more information about the
Zombie Run check out page 5 of
this newsletter.



Special thanks to the Catholic Heart Workcamp for volunteering for Marshall County Conservation this July! We received a huge helping hand from volunteers. These amazing youth and adults volunteered four days in our parks, staining, painting, and making them look beautiful!



Photo Contest

Now is a great time to get out and capture some beautiful images!

All entries are due by midnight Friday, January 31, 2025!

Categories include Scenic (Natural Resources), Native Wildlife, Native Plants, Open Nature, and Outdoor Recreation.



For contest details, call (641)752-5490 or visit www.marshallcountya.gov. Click on Departments, then Conservation Board, and then Annual Photo Contest. Winners of each category will receive a \$25 gift card.



Monarchs Wanted:

We are looking for Monarchs to tag. If you get large groups of Monarchs roosting in your trees, please call us at 641-752-5490 or text 641-758-9777.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED MAKE PEOPLE IN THE PARK A HUGE SUCCESS! THANK YOU TO OUR DONOR THEISEN'S. ALSO, THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SEARCH FOR LEGO PEOPLE.

**"I'll Be Back"
July 2025**



SEASONS

Marshall County Conservation Board
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Marshalltown, IA 50158
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Thank You

Newsletter Correlation: Irene Williams, Joan Studts, Dena Graff, Marvis Drew, Jack & Linda Mackin, Joyce & Rob Christensen, Dianna Freiboth, Charlotte McGinty, Zoe Jensen, Sharon Depew

Programming: Marshalltown ARL, Jenn Clemann, Prairie Waste Management, Beth Koester, Zane Satre, Big Bluestem Audubon Society

Playscape Flower Beds: The Marshalltown Garden Club

Flowerbed Maintenance: Gary Fulton, Nancy Sebern

Park Maintenance: Rob and Joyce Christensen, Catholic Heart Work Camp, Marshalltown Police Department and Silver Cord Project, Roger Grimes, Evans McWilliams

People in the Park: Theisen's

Donations: David Perkins, Marian Hale Memorial

Newsletter Editing: Bren Lee, Zackary Morris

If we inadvertently missed someone, our thanks to you also.



Help us keep costs down and save resources. If you would like to receive the newsletter electronically rather than having it mailed, please send an email to mccb@marshallcountya.gov. Also the electronic version is in color!

MARSHALL COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown, IA 50158
(641) 752-5490
mccb@marshallcountya.gov
www.marshallcountya.gov

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Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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