

Conservation Matters

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mills County Conservation Board
Fall 2014



Park Highlight

Mile Hill Lake is a 39-acre area located west of Glenwood along Highway 34. It is on the east bound side of the highway at 21193 US Hwy 34. This fun little park is composed of a hardwood forest and a 10-acre fishing lake with boat dock and ramp. The lake is considered a No Wake Zone and is closed to swimming. This is a great place to go fishing whether it be from boat or from the shoreline. Crappie, blue gill, largemouth bass and channel catfish are some of the fish species found in the lake. Iowa DNR fishing regulations apply. When driving down the asphalt into the park, you will find the handicap accessible Scenic Overlook, offering an interpretive panel discussing the Loess Hills Scenic Byway. There are various hiking trails within the park. This park is open to hunting so please follow current Iowa DNR hunting regulations and laws. Canoeing and kayaking are a fun way to explore this lake as most of the lake is not accessible to the public from land. There are several fingers off the lake that you can only reach on the water, look for wood ducks and other water fowl while exploring the area.

The Ray Thomas Wildlife Preserve is a 90-acre preserve that consists of 49 acres of bottomland timber, 23 acres of restored prairie and 12 acres of agricultural land. There is a mowed path around 3 sections of the 23 acres of restored prairie, making for a serene setting for passive use such as observing wildlife, bird watching, nature study and photography. There is a small pioneer cemetery adjacent to the mowed parking lot and informational kiosk. The rural setting of Ray Thomas Preserve provides a great location to look at the night sky, whether it be star gazing, meteor showers or full moons this is the place to be. Pheasant and quail are frequently spotted on this site, as well as, numerous grassland songbirds. The variety of prairie plants makes it a fun place to visit year round to see how the landscape changes. Numerous forbs bloom from spring until late fall so there is always something new to see. To find this park head north on L66 (350th St) for about four miles until you reach 35040 Fry Ave. Don't forget to take your camera along to capture some of the beautiful sites!

Summer Work

Every summer the MCCB hires seasonal employees to help with all of the extra maintenance associated with this busy time of year. Tyler Jensen and Alex Killpack worked hard this summer helping our Conservation Specialist, Zach Kohlhoff and our Conservation Technician, Jesse Ayers to get the parks in tip top shape. Taking care of 1,800 acres is no small task. With 10 parks spread throughout Mills County this kept them quite busy with mowing and weed eating duties. They also did a lot of work keeping the areas free of litter and maintaining campsites. Mixed in with all the weekly duties the guys restored habitat, cut fire breaks, and battled invasive plants.

Meet Your *WILD* Mills County Neighbors!

One of Mills County's tiniest, mammals is the Least Shrew. They typically weigh somewhere between 3-6 grams, in comparison a nickel weighs 5 grams. Most people have never had the opportunity to spot a shrew as they are very secretive. Least shrews are typically dark brown, reddish, or gray and have dense fur. Most of their time is spent underground in their tunnels or under the cover of tall grass or leaf litter. These voracious little creatures eat 60-100% of their body weight every day. Shrews are insectivores and some of their favorite meals include larva from various insects and caterpillars. The extraordinarily high metabolism that is maintained by this diet partners with a heart rate of up to 1200 beats per minute! Next time you catch a glimpse of a speedy, small mammal you might think twice as to whether is just another mouse or if you just spotted our smallest Mills County mammal.

Classroom Connection

As the Fall school year gears up we are preparing to head into the schools to visit the students every chance we get. There are several new programs on our list of available options, as well as, customizable programs for any environmental topic. Teachers throughout Mills County have the option to include our programs in some of their curriculums

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and they pair nicely with many topics of Common Core. If you have a student that attends a school in Mills County encourage them to ask their teacher about a guest appearance from Mills County Conservation Board for a free environmental education program.

" In the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught."--Baba Dioum

Hunting Seasons

You may be gearing up for your favorite upcoming hunting season or you might not hunt at all, it is important for everyone to keep an eye on hunting season dates. Becoming familiar with these dates can help to stop poaching of wildlife. If you suspect someone is hunting out of season or illegally please call our local Iowa DNR Conservation Officer, Brian Smith at 712-520-0121. Happy hunting season to all!

Migratory Bird Hunting Seasons-
(South Zone)

September Teal: Sept. 6-21

Ducks, Coots, Mergansers: Oct. 4-8, Oct. 18-Dec 11

Youth Waterfowl: Oct. 11-12

Canada Geese, Brant: Oct. 4-Jan. 9

White-fronted Geese: Oct.4- Jan. 9

Light Geese: Oct.4- Jan.16

(Statewide)

Doves: Sept.1-Nov.9

Snipe: Sept.6-Nov.29

Rails: Sept.6-Nov.14

Woodcock: Oct.4-Nov.17

Light Goose Conservation Order: Jan.17-April 15

Rooster Pheasant (Youth): Oct. 18-19

Rooster Pheasant: Oct. 25-Jan. 10

Bobwhite Quail: Oct 25-Jan 31

Cottontail rabbit: Aug. 30-Feb 28

Squirrel (Fox and Gray): Aug. 30-Jan 31

Crow: Oct. 15-Nov 30

Deer Seasons:

Youth: Sept. 20- Oct. 5

Disabled Hunter: Sept. 20- Oct. 5

Archery: Early Oct. 1- Dec. 5, Late Dec. 22- Jan 10

Early muzzleloader: Oct. 11-19

Late muzzleloader: Dec. 22- Jan. 10

Shotgun Season 1: Dec. 6-10

Shotgun Season 2: Dec. 13-21

Nonresident Holiday Season: Dec.24-Jan. 2

For a complete list of all hunting seasons in Iowa and information of rules and regulations please reference the Iowa DNR 2014-2015 Iowa Hunting and Trapping Regulations book and/or the 2014 Iowa Migratory Game Bird Hunting Regulations. It can be found online at the DNR website, www.iowadnr.gov or you can pick up a printed copy any where hunting licenses are sold.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 21st @ 2:00 pm- Ride the Trace

Bring the family and enjoy a nice bike ride on the Wabash Trace Nature Trail. We will set the pace and distance according to the participants. The Naturalist will discuss some of the interesting things along the trail. We will start at the Malvern trailhead located west of Main Street, just follow the signs.

October 12th @ 2:00 pm- Prairie Prowl

If you are interested in learning about some of the local prairie plants and harvesting some seed to plant on your own property this will be a great experience for you. We will meet at Ray Thomas Prairie in the parking area located at 35040 Fry Ave. Pre-registration is required for this program to ensure we provide enough supplies for everyone.

November 8th @ 1:00pm - Raptor Recovery

We are excited to have Denise Lewis from Raptor Recovery join us with some of her feathered friends to share some great knowledge about Raptors. This will be a fun time of learning with opportunities to get a close up look at the LIVE raptors she will bring. SPACE IS LIMITED SO PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Call and reserve your spot ASAP, 712-527-9685. Program will be held in the office building at Pony Creek Park.

To pre-register for these events or for more information, please call Dessa at (712) 527-9685 or send us an email at millsccbia@hotmail.com.



White-tailed deer are one of the most common species of wildlife spotted in our area. These adaptable critters can run up to 40 mph and consume around 7 pounds of forage daily.



Iowa White-tailed Deer Records

State bow hunting:

278 ²/₈

Mills Co bow hunting:

206 ⁷/₈

State shotgun:

293 ³/₈

Mills Co shotgun:

199 ¹/₈

These scores are based on the Boone and Crocket Antler Scoring System which takes several measurements in account such as spread, circumference and length of tines into account.