

Fall 2016



# Conservation Matters

## Upcoming Event Highlights

Monarch Tagging Opportunities:

September 9th-  
Pony Creek Park

September 12th-  
Pony Creek Park

September 13th-  
Indian Creek  
Greenbelt

September 14th-  
GASP

September 15th-  
GASP

Full Moon Hike-  
September 15th

Fall Color Hike-  
October 9th

Owl Prowl-  
November 5th

*More program details and contact information located in newsletter.*

*Mills County Conservation Board*

## Fund the Trust-Iowa's Water and Land Legacy

A 63% favorable vote by the people of Iowa in the 2010 general election amended the constitution so that the next time the sales tax is increased, the first 3/8 cent would fund the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund.

The Iowa legislature and governor have yet to follow through by providing this fractional tax increase. The Trust Fund will be a game-changer for water quality and other natural resources, and will help ensure a legacy of outdoor recreation and environmental protection for generations to come! The Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards has provided vinyl banners to each county with the intent to have them signed by supporters and then they will be presented in the capital building in 2017! Stop by the Pony Creek Nature Center sometime and sign the #Fund the Trust banner to show your support.

## Mills County Neighbor

Dragonflies and damselflies are some of our most beautiful, interesting insects in Mills County. There are over 5,500 species of them that have been identified in North America and here in Iowa you can find up to 110 of those species. Dragonflies and damselflies are closely related but there are several easy ways to tell them apart. Dragonflies are larger and rest with their wings held horizontally. Damselflies are smaller and when resting hold their wings straight up. Dragonflies evolved long before dinosaurs and are thought to be the first insect and even the first animal that was able to fly. Fossil records of prehistoric dragonflies showed wingspans up to 27 inches. Today our largest dragonfly has a 7 inch wingspan. Dragonflies are incredible, acrobatic fliers and eat lots of other flying insects. The life cycle of these insects begin in the water where they hatch from an egg and live for up to two years before they crawl out of the water and emerge as an adult. They serve an important role in the food chain as both a predator and prey.

As summer is winding down you will notice swarms of these extremely beneficial bugs darting back and forth consuming dozens of small bugs. Take the time to sit and watch a real time example of the food chain in action! As these "mosquito hawks" are munching away on pesky bugs there are usually birds such as swallows and nighthawks after a meal of their own.

## Naturalist Intern Note

### Why fear?

When I started as an intern at Mills County Conservation this summer, I had a fear of toads, frogs, and pretty much anything that hops. I've always loved the outdoors and adventuring to see new things, but I couldn't get over my silly fear of such innocent little creatures. After working here for the summer, I'm not afraid of toads, grasshoppers, or crickets, and I wouldn't say I'm completely not afraid of frogs, I just don't enjoy tree frogs' sticky little toes touching me. I now pick up small toads and frogs and catch grasshoppers and crickets for our animals at the Pony Creek Nature Center. I finally realized that a "fear" isn't about the thing you're "afraid of", it's about you and what's in your head. You're only afraid of what you tell yourself you're afraid of. I "feared" frogs and toads because I decided I was afraid of them, and now I've decided I'm done fearing something so harmless. A lot of fears are passed down from other people. Sometimes things are automatically connected to fear, like snakes. People fear snakes because of things they hear about snakes or beliefs about snakes. The definition of fear is "an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat or be afraid of (someone or something) as likely to be dangerous, painful, or threatening." Snakes are most likely to bite when they feel threatened, are startled, are provoked, or when they have been cornered. You are nine times more likely to die from being struck by lightning than to die of a venomous snake bite. 99.92% of people bitten by snakes in the world, are not bitten by venomous snakes. Fewer than one in 37,500 people are bit by venomous snakes in the US each year. Over 40% of people bit by snakes in the US intentionally put themselves in harm's way by attempting to capture wild snakes. So what should you "fear" while spending time outside here in Southwest Iowa? Nothing. As long as you are cautious of your surroundings, I guarantee you will see way more beautiful things in nature than things you think you're afraid of. So go out and explore and see what's really out there. --- Lindsey Huntsman

### Seeking Donations

Have you had the chance to visit the new Pony Creek Nature Center? Some of the main focal points of the gallery area are the native, wildlife mounts. We are working on more educational displays and have several birds and mammals that we would like to have mounted. Taxidermy work on small birds and mammals can be difficult and somewhat expensive. A small song bird can cost up to \$290. If you are interested in making a tax-deductible donation to pay a portion or the entire amount to get something mounted we would happily have your name displayed with it. A few of the animals we have available are a mink, mole, shrew, common snipe, and american coot. Give us a call 712-527-9685 or send an email, [millsccbia@hotmail.com](mailto:millsccbia@hotmail.com), if you are interested in donating!

We are also always accepting donations of bird seed for the outdoor feeders and worms for the indoor native animals on display.

## Upcoming Public Programs

*Monarch Tagging*- September 9th @ 10:00am

We will be catching and tagging Monarch butterflies at Pony Creek Park, 56235 Deacon Road, meet at the Nature Center. Long pants and sturdy shoes are recommended. Call 712-527-9685 for more information.

*Monarch Tagging*- September 12th @ 10:00am

We will be catching and tagging Monarch butterflies at Pony Creek Park, 56235 Deacon Road, meet at the Nature Center. Long pants and sturdy shoes are recommended. Call 712-527-9685 for more information.

*Monarch Tagging*- September 13th @ 10:00 am

We will be catching and tagging Monarch butterflies at Indian Creek Greenbelt Area ,60163 410th St, south of Emerson. Long pants and sturdy shoes are recommended. Call 712-527-9685 for more information.

*Monarch Tagging*- September 14th @ 2:00pm

We will be catching and tagging Monarch butterflies at the Glenwood Archaeological State Preserve, 59069 Levi Road. Meet in the parking lot and we will hike out and look for butterflies from there. Feel free to call with any questions 712-527-9685

*Monarch Tagging*- September 15th @ 10:00 am

We will be catching and tagging Monarch butterflies at the Glenwood Archaeological State Preserve, 59069 Levi Road. Meet in the parking lot and we will hike out and look for butterflies from there. Feel free to call with any questions 712-527-9685

*Full Moon Hike*- September 15th @ 7:00 pm

Join us at Ray Thomas Wildlife Preserve, 35040 Fry Ave, for a hike around the reconstructed prairie with the light from the full moon. Pre-registration is required, please call 712-527-9685.

Pony Creek Nature Center  
56235 Deacon Road  
Pacific Junction, IA 51561

Hours: Monday thru Friday  
8:00am- 4:00 pm

*Fall Color Hike*- October 9th @ 2:00 pm

Hike up the bluffs in the beautiful Loess Hills at West Oak Forest and enjoy the fall colors of the prairie and woodlands. Sturdy shoes are highly recommended. West Oak Forest is located at 55877 195th St.

*Owl Prowl* - November 5th @ 5:00 pm

Denise Lewis from Fontenelle Forest's Raptor Recovery will join us at Pony Creek Nature Center with LIVE owls and present some great information. Following the program we will hike along the trails at Pony Creek Park and look/listen for some local owls. Weather appropriate shoes and clothing are recommend for the hike. Pre-registration is REQUIRED to attend this program. Please call Mills County Conservation at 712-527-9685.

**More programs may be added, please watch our Facebook page and the local newspapers!**

Pre-registration contact information:

Phone: 712-527-9685

Email: millscbia@hotmail.com

Pre-registering helps us plan accordingly for programs.

## **Mills County Conservation Board:**

### **Contact information**

**Mills County  
Conservation  
Pony Creek Park  
56235 Deacon Rd  
Pacific Junction, IA 51561**

**PHONE:  
(712) 527-9685**

**E-MAIL:  
millscobia@hotmail.com**

**Website:  
mccb.millscoia.us**



### **MCCB Staff:**

Jerad Getter, Director  
Dessa Montgomery, Naturalist  
Zach Kohlhoff, Specialist  
Jesse Ayers, Technician

### **MCCB Board Members:**

Jan Faraci, Mineola  
George Marshall, Malvern  
Lana White, Hastings  
Kreg Kinzle, Glenwood

The Mills County Conservation Board is committed to providing the citizens of Mills County with quality outdoor recreation areas and opportunities for environmental education experiences. Please take advantage of these services and visit the nearly 1,800 acres of public land available!

**CONSERVATION MATTERS  
MILLS COUNTY CONSERVATION  
56235 DEACON RD  
PACIFIC JUNCTION, IA 51561**

