

Spring 2017



Conservation Matters

Upcoming Event Highlights

GPS Egg Hunt
April 8th

Woodland
Wildflowers
April 23rd

Nature Painting
May 13th

Snakes!
May 21st

Tiny Adventures:
March 1st
April 5th
May 3rd

Bird Watching
Series :
March 15th
April 19th
May 17th

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

Mills County Conservation Board

Grants and Donations

MCCB received some generous donations and were able to add a beautiful turkey vulture mount and an American coot mount to the Nature Center gallery area. The support of patrons in Mills County plays a vital role in filling the gallery area with educational displays that all can enjoy.

The East Mills 5th graders received a wonderful grant through the Realtors Foundation of Iowa known as Project Jack. This unique grant is \$250 in which the class then pays forward to a project of their choice and they selected Mills County Conservation. With the money we were able to purchase 5 new microscopes that will be used in a variety of indoor and outdoor programs connecting children to nature.

Conservation Tip

Did you know that planting trees in the proper locations around your house can save you up to 30% on your heating and cooling costs? Shade trees planted on the Southeast, West, and Southwest sides of your house will block the sun. Evergreen trees should be planted on the North and Northwest sides of your house to block the cold winter winds. Of course there are dozens of choices to choose from when you are picking out which trees you want to plant. Things to consider while you are tree shopping are how fast they will grow, size, "life span" and how vulnerable to disease they are. As with all landscaping plans you should consider the benefits you can provide for local wildlife and pollinators. Native trees are always a great way to help out your neighborhood ecosystem while cutting your energy costs. Basswoods, American Linden, Sugar and Silver Maples are native trees that serve as important nectar sources for pollinators. Trees that produce nuts and fruits can be beneficial to humans and wildlife.

Customers of MidAmerican Energy can participate in a program called, Plant Some Shade, that provides trees at a discounted price. For more information visit the MidAmerican website!

Classroom Connection

We have been making the best of indoor winter programs for local school groups. The East Mills 5th grade had a series of five programs throughout January and February that focused on their science topics of habitats, environmental awareness and animal adaptations. Glenwood Highschool Ag students had a great time learning about ecological relationships with a fun activity involving M&Ms, they quickly realized ecology is a complicated web. Spring is a whirl wind season with a packed schedule of getting kids outside fishing, canoeing and exploring! Wish us all luck that the weather is beautiful for all of the scheduled field trips.

Mills County Neighbor

The Osprey is a large raptor that specializes in hunting and eating live fish. With their 6 feet wingspan your first impression might be that it is an eagle, however, they are easily distinguished from other local raptors by their slender bodies and long, narrow wings. In flight the position they hold their wings resembles an M shape. The best place to look for ospreys is near an open body of water, such as, rivers, lakes, or large ponds. In Mills County, Ospreys are regular visitors to Pony Creek Lake and typically arrive in mid April. They are excellent hunters that can spot a fish from 200 feet away, dive up to 3 feet and have a success rate of nearly 70%. Ospreys have a reversible outer toe that allows them to grasp with two toes in front and two behind, this adaptation is unique to this species. Barbed pads on the soles of the birds feet also help them grip slippery fish. After an osprey dives in the water to grab a fish it flies to a nearby perch to eat it. Everything is stream lined on this efficient hunter and they hold the fish pointed head first to cut down on wind resistance.

Osprey populations were seriously affected by DDT in the 1950s but with the ban of DDT in 1972 they began to rebound. Iowa currently has over 20 documented nest sites! Ospreys readily use man-made structures to build their nests and some groups across the state are working to erect special structures to encourage nesting in more areas. Along coastal areas it is common to see osprey nests on electrical poles, trees and elevated platforms.

The education deck at Pony Creek Nature Center is a good place to view Ospreys hunting over Pony Creek Lake. They are adapted to life around people and are typically not bothered by visitors while hunting. Another great way to view them is via kayak or canoe. Get outside and watch your beautiful Mills County neighbor and its impressive hunting skills. With the help of a grant received from the Iowa Ornithological Union, there is a spotting scope that is available for the public to use during Nature Center hours to view birds at Pony Creek. Feel free to call ahead to ensure someone is at the building if you are interested in using the scope to view ospreys or any other bird. Numerous species of migratory birds are showing up early this year so Ospreys could arrive as early as late March or early April. There are several birding opportunities scheduled for this Spring so check the schedule of public programs listed in this newsletter.



Upcoming Public Programs

GPS Easter Egg Hunt

April 8th @ 1:00 pm

Mills County Conservation is hosting an Easter Egg hunt at Pony Creek Park designed for children 5th grade and above or for younger children who have an adult that is willing to help with the GPS. GPS's will be provided to find Easter eggs that are hidden around the park. Pre-registration is required, space will be limited. Please call 712-527-9685 to sign up!

Woodland Wildflowers

April 23rd @ 2:00 pm

Woodland wildflowers are a refreshing site in the early spring. Join us at Pony Creek Park to walk the trails and learn various wildflower species and enjoy the beauty of spring. Trails can be somewhat strenuous so sturdy shoes are highly recommended! Pre-registration is required.

Snakes!

May 21st @ 11:00 am

This will be a fun, educational program for all ages to learn about our local snakes and the role they play in our environment. There will be LIVE snakes to help us learn identification skills and everyone will have the opportunity to hold one. Pre-registration is required, please call 712-527-9685 to sign up! This program will be held at Pony Creek Park, 56235 Deacon Road.

Nature Painting- Mother Bird

May 13th @ 4:00-6:00pm



Join Hannah Rief, owner of the Creative Canvas, for a fun painting class at Pony Creek Nature Center in honor of Mothers Day. Pre-registration is required, so call 712-527-9685 and save your spot today! Cost is \$30 per person and pre-payment is appreciated through the Creative Canvas website, <https://www.getcreativewithhannah.com>

Keep an eye on local newspapers and the Mills County Conservation Facebook page for public programs that may be added later!

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

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



Contact information:
712-527-9685
millsccbia@hotmail.com

Tiny Nature Adventures: The first Wednesday of each month. Nature themed activities for children 3-5 years old. Adult must stay with child and pre-registration is REQUIRED, call 712-527-9685.

Less is More- March 1st @10:00-11:00 am

Children will learn that using less is a way of sharing our resources. We will focus on sharing, what is trash, reusing and recycling with fun activities.

Who's Egg?- April 5th @ 10:00-11:00 am

Activities to learn about bird eggs followed by an egg hunt.

Woodland Wonders- May 3rd @ 10:00-11:00 am

We will explore the trails at Pony Creek Park and search for unusual flowers.

Spring Bird Watching Series- The third Wednesday of the each month. This season we will be meeting at various locations.

March 15th- Glenwood Archeological State Preserve @ 9:00 am

April 19th- Pony Creek Park @ 9:00, with an optional trip to view eagle nest

May 17th- Glenwood Archeological State Preserve @ 9:00 am, with an optional trip to view eagle nest

Call 712-527-9685 for more information.

Earth Day!

Recycling Maze

find the path from
the recyclables to
the recycling center!

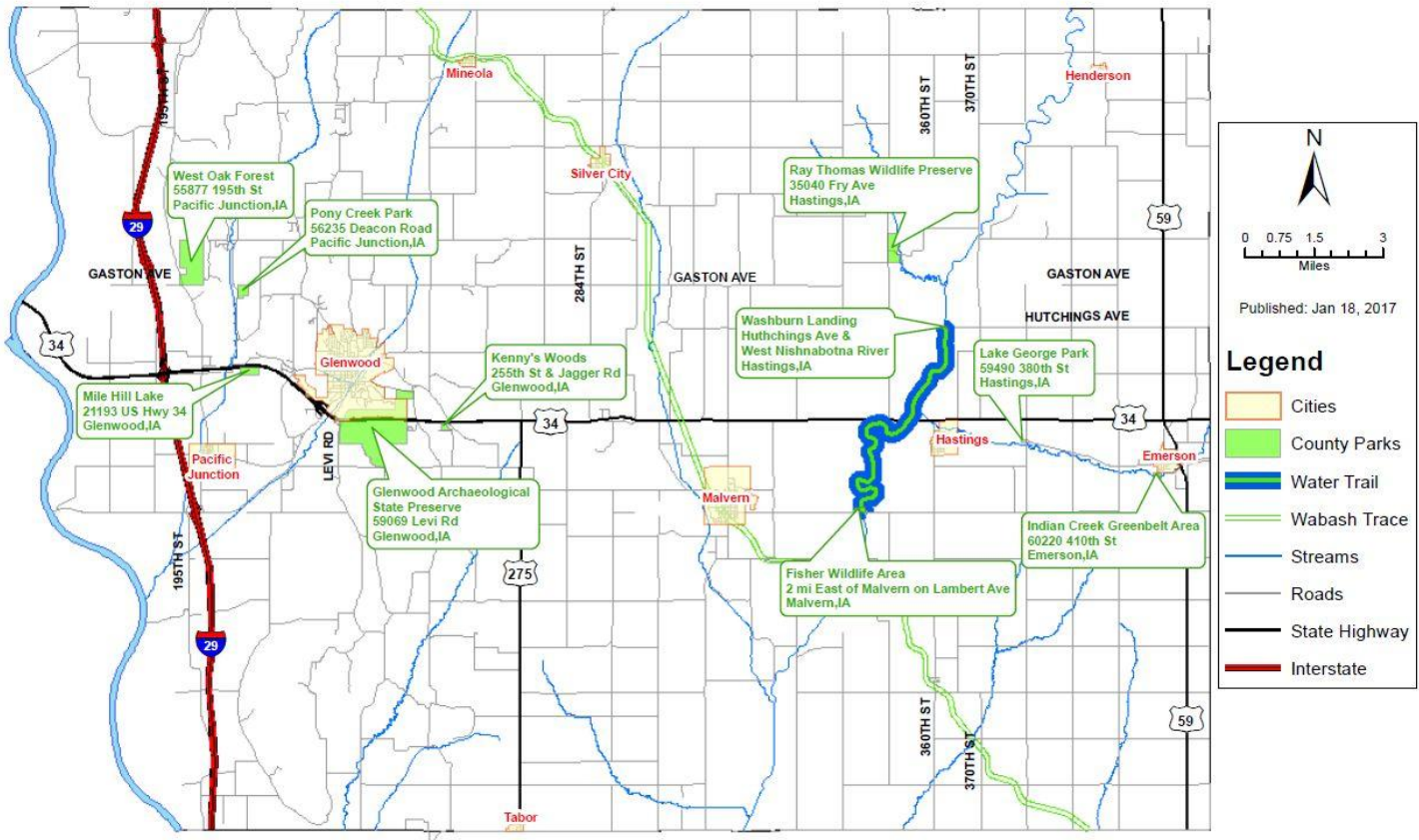


The Earth thanks you :)



**RECYCLING
CENTER**

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West Oak Forest

308 acres in the Loess Hills consisting of woodlands and prairie, open for hiking and nature viewing.

Pony Creek Park

83 acres of woodland and small prairie remnants in the Loess Hills. This park provides two open shelters, 3 pit latrines, 6 electrical camping sites, primitive camping sites, playground, hiking trails, a scenic overlook and the Pony Creek Nature Center.

Mile Hill Lake

39 acres of woodlands with a 10 acre fishing lake. Provides a boat ramp, hiking trails, scenic overlook and is open to public hunting.

Glenwood Archaeological State Preserve/ Foothills Park 906 acres of hay field/ag land, reconstructed prairie, and woodlands. Rich archaeological significance, paved trails, fruit trees, great birding location.

Kenny's Woods

20 acres of woodland, open for nature viewing.

Fisher Wildlife Area

20 acres of reconstructed prairie, woodlands, and the River. Paddlers access ramp with parking area, open to public hunting

Ray Thomas Wildlife Pres.

90 acres open for passive use ONLY, reconstructed prairie, cropland, woodland, creek

Washburn Landing

Canoe/kayak access ramp with parking area

Lake George Park

11 acres, picnic shelter, grill, 2

Indian Creek Greenbelt Area

17 acres reconstructed prairie, creek access, fruit trees

Wabash Trace Nature Trail

25 miles of biking/hiking trail. Former railroad corridor with limestone surface with access points in Malvern, Silver City, Mineola.

Contact information

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Pacific Junction, IA 51561

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Mills County Conservation Board:

MCCB Staff:

Jerad Getter, Director
Dessa Montgomery, Naturalist
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Jesse Ayers, Technician

MCCB Board Members:

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



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