

Spring 2018

# Conservation Matters

## Upcoming Event Highlights

*Milkweed Seedball Workshop-  
April 21st*

*Sunset Hike-  
April 28<sup>th</sup>*

*Screen Free Week-  
April 30<sup>th</sup>-May 6<sup>th</sup>*

*Hike-A-Thon  
May 5<sup>th</sup>*

*Tiny Adventures-  
1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of  
each Month*

*Summer Camp  
Information coming  
soon!*

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

*Mills County Conservation Board*

## Mills County Neighbor

Love them or hate them, there is a small yellow flower that shows up every spring and sticks around until late fall. The common dandelion grows quickly and is found in both urban and rural areas. You mow your lawn and the next day they reappear. Many people wage war on these persistent plants but there are some great reasons to leave it be. Dandelions are rich in vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, calcium, and detoxifiers that make them a great food source for people. WHAT! Eat a dandelion? Every bit of the plant can be consumed; flower, leaves, and root. You can eat them raw in a salad or cook them, they are one of the most nutrient rich plants you will find! One half cup of dandelions contains more calcium than a glass of milk, and more iron than spinach. One cup of dandelion greens contains 19mg of vitamin C and the leaves contain more vitamin A than carrots. They are also full of vitamin K and other essential minerals such as potassium, folic acid, and magnesium. If that isn't enough reason to leave the herbicide on the shelf and let these beauties grow, there is more. Local pollinators are heavily dependent on the early blooms as their first meal in the spring and often last meal in the autumn. Bumblebees, solitary bees and honey bees all visit dandelions, as well as, hoverflies, beetles and butterflies. If the value to insects isn't quite enough to keep you from removing this plant from your yard, maybe the American goldfinch might change your mind. This beautiful little yellow bird is a strict granivore (only eats seeds) and happens to love the tiny seeds of dandelions.

With all the benefits of the dandelion, maybe you will be willing to live with at least a few in your yard?

## Grants and Donations

Mills County Conservation was awarded \$5000 from the Wildlife Diversity Programs Habitat Management Grant funded by the Natural Resource license plate fund. This fund, generated through the sale of natural resource license plates, is to be expressly used for the preservation and promotion of wildlife diversity. With this generous grant a brush cutter will be purchased to assist in removing invasive trees and shrubs from the Loess Hills on MCCB parks.

## Screen Free Week – April 30<sup>th</sup> thru May 6<sup>th</sup>

Mills County Conservation is challenging people of all ages to participate in this eye-opening experience. This nationwide event is dedicated to turning off televisions, smartphones, tablets, and gaming consoles for seven days and turning on the world around you. Screen-free week is a chance for children and adults to read, play, think, create, be more physically active and to spend more time with friends and family. On average, preschool children spend over four hours a day consuming screen media, while older children spend over seven hours a day. Excessive screen time is linked to a number of problems for children, including childhood obesity, poor school performance, and problems with attention spans.

It's helpful if everyone in your family makes the commitment to try and make Screen- Free Week work for all of you. If adults are fully committed, children feel everyone is sharing the experience and taking it seriously. The overall goal is to spend these seven days with zero exposure to a screen during your free time. This challenge does not interfere with your job or homework, continue to use technology as needed every day. The focus is what you are doing to entertain yourself when not at work or school.

Ready to get started? This week is meant to be a fun and eye-opening time. Mills County Conservation is here to help you plan some exciting, outdoor opportunities to fill your free time. Check out the list of upcoming events, with a special section for Screen- Free Week!

Step 1: Decide what "screen free" means for your family so that everyone is clear about the commitment ahead. Fill out the Pledge Card and display them as a reminder for everyone throughout the week.

Step 2: Make plans together for the week. Start planning early so you won't need to rely on social media or internet searches to plan outings or activities to keep you busy.

Step 3: Enjoy your week! Play board games, read books, visit friends and family, have a picnic, make crafts, go hiking, reclaim the family meal time for talking and sharing stories. The sky is the limit on how you chose to spend your free time now that the distraction of a screen is out of the picture.

Step 4: After you have completed the Screen- Free Week take time to talk about how you feel, what all of you have accomplished and what aspects of the week you would like to keep going. Keep the fun going by making one day a week screen free or maybe weekends screen free. Hopefully this experience will reduce the dependence on screens year-round.

If you would like more information about Screen- Free week feel free to contact MCCB at 712-527-9685 or send an email to, [millsccbia@hotmail.com](mailto:millsccbia@hotmail.com). Pledge Cards are available for pick up at Pony Creek Nature Center during business hours and one is included in this newsletter.

UNPLUG TO CONNECT --- UNPLUG TO LEARN--- UNPLUG FOR  
HEALTH--- UNPLUG AND GO OUTDOORS

# SCREEN FREE WEEK

APRIL 30<sup>TH</sup> THRU MAY 6<sup>TH</sup>

## PLEDGE CARD

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
pledge that during the week of \_\_\_\_\_,  
I will only use screens when they are required for  
school. I will not: **1)** watch TV or videos; **2)** play  
games on tablets, websites, phones, or consoles;  
**3)** surf the web; **4)** use social media.

Instead of spending time with screens, I will:

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Remember to encourage your friends and family  
to go screen-free!



Presented by Campaign for a  
Commercial-Free Childhood  
[www.screenfree.org](http://www.screenfree.org)

## Upcoming Public Programs

### Milkweed Seed ball Workshop

**April 21<sup>st</sup> @ 1:30**

Join us to make seed balls to benefit the Monarch Butterfly and other local pollinators. Pre-registration is requested for planning purposes. All ages welcome, clothes that can get dirty are highly recommended. Workshop will be at Pony Creek Nature Center, weather permitting we will be outside.

### Sunset Hike- April 28<sup>th</sup> 8:00-9:30 pm

Hike to the top ridges of West Oak Forest and watch the sunset. The Naturalist will share some information about the Loess Hills during the hike. A blanket to sit on and sturdy shoes are recommended and feel free to bring a flash light for the hike back down. Call to pre-register or for more information.

### Hike-A-Thon- Saturday, May 5th

Guided hikes at four of Mills County Conservation's parks. You are welcome to attend as many of the hikes as you choose. Pack a lunch and have a picnic at Pony Creek Park during the lunch break.

West Oak Forest (8:00am-9:30 am) Approximately 2 miles in the Loess Hills, expect areas with steep inclines and rough terrain. 55877 195th St, Pacific Junction

Pony Creek Park (10:00-11:30 am)  
1.5-mile hike, option to stop at the half way point.  
56235 Deacon Rd, Pacific Junction

Foothills Park (12:30-1:30 pm)  
Paved trail, stroller friendly! One-mile hike, option of 2+ more miles of a self-guided hike.  
59069 Levi Rd, Glenwood

Ray Thomas Wildlife Preserve (2:00-3:00 pm) One-mile hike, mostly flat terrain around reconstructed prairie.  
35040 Fry Ave, Hastings

Pre-registration contact information:

Phone: 712-527-9685

Email: [millsccbia@hotmail.com](mailto:millsccbia@hotmail.com)

Pre-registering helps us plan accordingly for programs.

Mills County Conservation

### Tiny Nature Adventures:

The first Wednesday of each month, 10:00-11:00 am. Nature themed activities for children 3-5 years old. Adult must stay with child and pre-registration is REQUIRED, call 712-527-9685. We will be outdoors when weather allows so dress accordingly! Pony Creek Nature Center, 56235 Deacon Road.

April 4<sup>th</sup>- What is Spring?

May 2<sup>nd</sup>- Wildlife is Everywhere



### Pony Creek Nature Center

56235 Deacon Road  
Pacific Junction, IA

712-527-9685

Hours: Monday thru Friday  
9:00am to 3:00 pm

**Contact information**

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

PHONE:  
(712) 527-9685

E-MAIL:  
millscbia@hotmail.com

Website:  
[www.millscoia.us/index\\_](http://www.millscoia.us/index.php/depts/conservation)  
[php/depts/conservation](http://www.millscoia.us/index.php/depts/conservation)



**Mills County Conservation Board:**

**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  
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



Spring 2018

### 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. Access from east side of the river.

### Lake George Park

11 acres, picnic shelter, grill and two-acre pond

### 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.

