

# Conservation Matters

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mills County Conservation Board  
Summer 2012



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## What Exactly is the Conservation Board?

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If you receive this newsletter you have at least heard of the Conservation Board, but how much do you really know about the conservation board system. In 1955, the Iowa State Legislature approved the County Conservation Law, now Chapter 350 of the Code of Iowa. This law allowed citizens of Iowa counties to vote to create a county-run and county-financed conservation board system. These conservation boards are authorized to acquire, develop, and maintain areas devoted to conservation and public recreation. Parks, wildlife areas, preserves, river accesses, recreation areas, and museums are a few examples of areas that have been acquired. Conservation boards also serve as a primary nature resource management agency in their respective counties, help educate local residents about environmental issues, operate nature centers, manage county wildlife conservation efforts, and administer roadside vegetation management programs. County conservation boards have been created in all of Iowa's 99 counties. The system is a unique blend of lay input, professional staffing, and cooperation between county and state agencies. This system is recognized as one of the most successful county conservation programs in the United States.

Conservation board members are responsible to the taxpayers of the county to provide the best conservation/outdoor recreation/education programs possible with the resources and finances available. Boards have to listen to and respect many points of view; determine the overall benefits to the citizens of the county; be aware of state and federal statutes, county rule ordinances and policies implemented by the board in the past; then make decisions and set the direction of the board. Chapter 350 of the Code of Iowa requires that any person appointed shall be selected on the basis of their demonstrated interest.

State wide the Conservation Board system has around 565 full time, permanent employees and takes on another 600 seasonal/part time employees during parts of the year. These employees help to manage 176,385 acres of land state wide.

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## What's New at MCCB

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MCCB has a new board member. Kreg Kinzle of Glenwood replaced Greg Pierce of Malvern in January.

Kreg grew up in Denison, Iowa and attended the University of Iowa, Sioux Falls College, Augustana College, and Drake University. He taught eighth grade reading in Glenwood for thirty-six years before retiring a year ago. The Glenwood Masonic Lodge honored him as the co-recipient of the 2008/2009 Glenwood Community School District Teacher of the Year Award. He has been a member of the Southwest Iowa Sportsman's Club and served on the Fremont-Mills Pheasants Forever Banquet Committee. Each October he helps with the youth skeet and trap shooting that the gun club offers and in May he teaches the Outdoor Ed Day fishing class for the Glenwood Middle School eighth graders

He has served as a deacon the past eight years at the First Baptist Church of Glenwood. Together with his wife and two sons they have enjoyed traveling, fishing, camping, sailing, and photography.

Some of his earliest outdoor memories are catching bluegills with a cane pole in the Denison gravel pits, picking wild plums for his grandmother to make into jam, and carrying his BB gun while following his grandfather's and father's boot prints in the pheasant fields of Crawford County.

As you see we are fortunate to add Kreg to our Board.

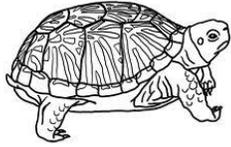
*"I'm the newest member of the Mills County Conservation Board and very enthused about promoting outdoor recreation, nature education, and lasting conservation here in Mills County. I'm truly impressed with our director, Jerad Getter, and his dedicated staff and their professionalism ... and all the resource possibilities we have for growing outdoor recreation and conservation here in Mills County. I believe that we have important work to do".--Kreg Kinzle*

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## Meet Your WILD Mills County Neighbors!



Ornate box turtles are the only terrestrial turtle found in Iowa. They are dark brown or olive colored with yellow lines. The plastron (bottom shell) has a hinge near the front which allows the shell to be almost completely

closed once the legs and head are withdrawn. Unlike most other turtle species, sex can be determined in ornate box turtles by looking at their eye color. Males have orange eyes, while females have yellow eyes.

They are diurnal but spend the hottest part of the day burrowed under vegetation or in another animals burrow. They are well adapted for life in the prairie and prefer open areas with sandy, loose soil. Slow and steady they meander through their habitat looking for plants, berries, and insects. This interesting little creature is found more commonly in other parts of its range, but is listed as Threatened in Iowa. Here they are only located in the Loess Hills and sandy areas in eastern Iowa. Habitat loss and fragmentation are big problems for this species. Box turtles are a popular pet, however, it is illegal to capture and keep one of these little critters from the wild. If you would like to meet one up close and personal stop by our office sometime. We have a female box turtle named, Lucy, that serves as an education animal for environmental programs.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**June 22nd @ 1:00 pm- "Lazy Afternoon Canoe Float"**  
Canoe down the Nishnabotna River. Space is limited so call now to reserve your spot.

**July 14th @ 9:00 am- Canoeing @ Mile Hill Lake**  
Join us at Mile Hill Lake for some canoe fun. Pre-registration is required.

**August 4th @ 9:00 am- "Dog Days of Summer"**  
Bring your pooch out to Pony Creek Park for a hike around the park. All dogs need to be current on vaccines, proof required. Dogs are required to stay on a leash. No aggressive dogs please.

**August 12th- "August Showers Bring ?"**  
Meteors of course. The Perseid Meteor Shower Ray Thomas is a great place to get out of town away from street lights and woodlands to see the night sky. It is located 4 miles north of Hwy 34 on L66 (350h ST), just west of the Hastings, IA turn. **This is NOT a program**, just a recommendation on where to view the meteor shower at.

**To pre-register for these events or to ask questions, please call Dessa at (712) 527-9685. Thank you.**

**GO GREEN!** If you would like to receive your Conservation Matter's newsletter straight to your email inbox please send your request to [millsccbia@hotmail.com](mailto:millsccbia@hotmail.com)  
It is also available on the MCCB website:  
<http://mccb.millscoia.us>

This will also put you on the email list to receive event reminders.

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**Mills County Conservation Board**





## PARK SCAVENGER HUNT

### Lake George

(located 3 miles west of Emerson on H34, south of Indian Creek Museum and Nishna Valley School)

Pack a picnic and head to the Lake! At this park you are looking for:

- ✓ A bullfrog
- ✓ A large Oak tree
- ✓ Cricket frog
- ✓ Painted turtle

### Mile Hill Lake

(located 2 miles west of Glenwood on the eastbound lane of HWY 34)

Grab a pole and chase down a worm, it's time to go fishing. See if you can:

- ✓ Catch a fish
- ✓ Red wing black bird

### Ray Thomas Wildlife Preserve

(located 4 miles north of Hwy 34 on L66 (350th ST))

Step back in time to a small parcel of what Iowa historically looked like. Explore the reconstructed prairie for:

- ✓ 3 different kinds of wildflowers
- ✓ Grass that is taller than you

### West Oak Forest

(located 2 miles north of HWY 34 on L31)

Brush off those hiking shoes once more and head out to find:

- ✓ A Yucca plant
- ✓ A view of the Missouri River

### Glenwood Archaeological State Preserve

(located south of Glenwood at HWY 34 and Levi Rd)

Ready, set, count.....

- ✓ How many bluebird houses are along the walking trail at Foothills?

### Pony Creek Park

(located 2 miles north of HWY 34 on Deacon Rd)

Put on your hiking shoes. Go find the:

- ✓ Lookout tower
- ✓ Playground

Other things to look for while enjoying your county parks:

- A bird feather
- Orange flower
- Heart shaped leaf
- Cloud shaped like an animal
- Hawk soaring overhead

Quick Tip:

*Don't collect things from nature while scavenger hunting, take along a camera and capture the memories with it.*

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## Little Critters Fun Page

The Yucca plant is uncommon in Iowa but can be found in the Loess Hills. It typically grows in dryer climates to the west.

