

Earthtones

Winter 2012

Celebrating 50 Years: In the Beginning

Some years stand out more in memory than others. Often, these will be the years on history tests. 1492. 1776. 1941. 2001. In 1962, Americans anxiously worried over the unfolding events of the Cuban Missile Crisis. They cheered as John Glenn made his historic orbit around the Earth. And they debated environmental protection in the face of Rachel Carson's new book, *Silent Spring*.

Yet, despite all the action on the national and international stage, daily life continued. People went to work, bought homes, and practiced their democratic right and voted. In November of 1962, the ballot for Washington County included a simple yes/no vote. Were they willing, it asked, to have up to one millage point added to their property taxes so the county's conservation needs would be met.

When the nearly 5,000 votes were tallied, the majority had spoken: yes, they said, we do want a county conservation board.

With the passing of the ballot, the county supervisors performed their main duty to the conservation board: appointing five individuals to serve five-year terms on the board. With only the knowledge listed in the meeting minutes and annual reports, it quickly becomes apparent that the five charter members were men of action.

On January 31, 1963, the conservation board met for the first time and immediately set to work. Charles Hotle was appointed chair and Dr. A.C. Peterson, who had initiated scheduling the first meeting, took the position of secretary. The remaining three members were: John Walsh, Duane

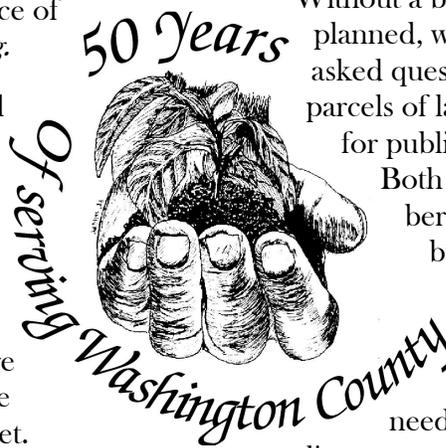
White, and Herbert Campbell. Business of the first meeting included setting a meeting date, the second Wednesday of each month. Interestingly enough, fifty years later, and that remains the Board's regular meeting date.

Without a budget that first year, the Board planned, wrote letters, contacted individuals, asked questions. At this time, only two mere parcels of land had been set aside in the county for public conservation and recreational use. Both donated through wills, Hayes Timber was immediately transferred over but the county supervisors kept initial control over Marr Park.

The charter board knew these two areas were not enough to meet the needs of the county. In fact, lack of public areas was most likely the main reason for the support of the ballot issue. As a result, the five members took extensive tours of the north and southern portions of the county in order to identify possible sites for parks and recreational areas. They looked forward to the succeeding year, when they would receive approximately \$20,000 from the general budget (1/2 mill).

Within the first five years, the board would acquire Sockum Ridge, Iowa Township Park (deeded to the City of Riverside in 2010), Fern Cliff, Foster Woods, Valley, Marr Park, McKain's River Access, and Brinton Timber. These areas now total almost 800 acres for hiking, fishing, boating, biking, horseback riding, education, camping, picnicking, and much more.

By Pamela Holz



Washington County Conservation Board

From the Director

A Great Conservation Year Ending

I hope that the holiday season found you and yours having a right jolly ole time, and that the year has been as good for you as it has the Washington County Conservation Board. In our 49 year history, the “stars” have never lined up better for accomplishing the mission that you created us for-providing for your local conservation needs. In this case, those stars include the support of many of you in conjunction with some awesome grants and donations, and even the weather. Your support included both funds and physical assistance, and we are grateful.

Patrons of Marr Park this year could not help but notice the multitude of machines coming in and out of here, leading to changes that are quite likely to last until the next glacier. The bigger ones are the modification, construction, and paving of trails and roads. We also completed all but the sewer component of expanding our campground from 27 to 42 sites.

The wildlife of Washington County seems to have also had a much needed good year of success in both survival and reproduction. Over the three to five years prior to this, the combination of harsh winters and wet springs had reduced many species numbers to the point where we were becoming concerned. In fact, several species will take two or three more years to fully recover. Our ground nesters (pheasants, turkeys, and rabbits) were at particularly low population levels.

Perhaps some of you remember how warm it got in March, so warm that I picked little gray morel mushrooms - something that normally does not occur until very late in April. Then, when the right time came, we were on the verge of being too dry. This early heat wave also “tricked” many species of plants into leafing out and blooming way too early. The cold wave that inevitably followed resulted in this being a year with very little fruit - even hardier mulberries. The few exceptions were the plants that are always later to bloom, such as Iowa-adapted pecans, hickories, and a few walnut trees.

The dry weather pattern ebbed in June, only to come back at greater strength until now. Subsurface moisture is extremely low, which has resulted in delaying transplanting trees. We even ended up watering transplanted trees that we otherwise would have considered “fully established.” On the positive side of the drought, we have been able to dig in many areas where it is not normally possible without fear of getting stuck.

We look forward to serving you during our milestone 50th year of existence in 2013. Many facets are still being planned (driven by the grants & donations we receive as well as public input), over the next year. Right now, a couple of larger projects with strong potential include rebuilding the upper pond at Marr Park and beginning to implement the landscaping & amenities plan for Marr Park’s new trail system. Keeping busy around here has never been a challenge, and we are fully confident it will continue.

Thank you and happy new year.

By Steve Anderson



Gazebo with new seats at new location, on north side of north pond

Conservation Boards in Iowa

Even before the end of World War II, the state was approached with the idea of allowing counties to create a conservation agency to meet their individual needs. Sporting groups, legislators, and interested individuals worked for over a decade to draft a bill worthy of Iowa. Passed in 1955, the law allowing for the formation of county conservation boards is one of the most successful in the US.

Until 1989, the law required the individual counties to vote on the creation of their own conservation board. In 1989, the law changes slightly, requiring each county to have one. Hence, the 99 county conservation boards (CCBs) across the state are all of different ages.

One of the best characteristics about having a CCB is that the agency is catered towards the needs of their particular county. In comparison, the DNR has to meet the needs of the entire state. Thus, the types of parks available, the recreational and educational opportunities offered, and even the number and positions of staff vary from county to county.

Legal Definition of the Conservation Board

Origin: Chapter 350: Code of Iowa 1993

No. of Members: 5; one member being appointed each consecutive year

Term: 5 years

Appointed by: Board of Supervisors

Duties:

- ◆ To acquire, develop, maintain, and make available to the inhabitants of the county, public parks, preserves, parkways, playgrounds, recreation centers, museums, county forests, wildlife, and other conservation areas;
- ◆ To promote and preserve the health and general welfare of the people;
- ◆ To encourage the orderly development and conservation of natural resources; and
- ◆ To cultivate good citizenship by providing adequate programs of public recreation.

MythMaking

Here are a few stories created by this year's Wellman 5th grade class after a session on Native American myths.

Why coyote howls at the moon

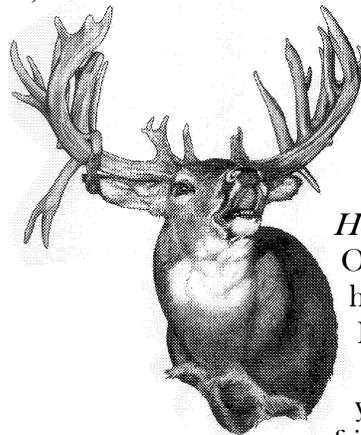
Once Chloe the Coyote was walking in the middle of the night and came across the moon. Then the moon asked Chloe, will you be my friend? Then they became friends. From now on, Chloe the Coyote talks to the moon every night. That's why the coyote howls at the moon.

By Matti, Cienna, and Lyla

Why we have day and night

One day sun and moon were friends. They are playing on a trampoline. Then they got in a fight over who can jump the highest. Moon jumps into the sky and gets stuck. Then she was telling Sun how much of a view there was so sun jumped into the sky and said, it is too crowded. So they went to different sides of the world. They decided to come visit each other. They were talking and wanted to have day and night.

By Shaylee, Dakota and Faith



How deer got antlers

Once upon a time there was a wild horse. He had lots of horse friends. But the bad things about them was then they always said, "We are faster than you!" So he felt sad. One day, his friends were picking on him about it. He got so mad that he decided to challenge them to a race. "Ok," said the other horses, laughing. So the horses started getting ready and they took off! Wild Horse was behind. "Wait up," he said. He looked around confused. Then he ran into a tree and two sticks fell on his head. "Ow!" he said. Hey, I have antlers! After Wild Horse got his antlers, he wanted to be called deer. So that's how the deer with antlers came.

By Jack, Jordon, and Mason

Winter Calendar

The Washington County Conservation Board meets the second Wednesday of each month. Meetings are held at the Conservation Education Center in Marr Park at 4:30 p.m.

The Conservation Education Center will be closed for the following holidays: February 18 and March 31.

Sat., Jan. 19 1:00 p.m. Marr Park

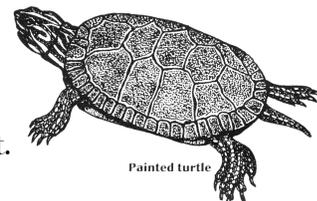
Ice Fishing Clinic

This is your best opportunity to see our fish in the pond! Between the clearer water of winter and the platform of the ice, our director's underwater camera will give you an excellent view of the one that got away last summer. In addition, you will be able to see what works and doesn't work while you attempt your own hand at ice fishing. We'll have a shelter from the wind, pre-drilled holes, and necessary equipment. Warm up in the Center afterward with hot cocoa. Families are welcome.

Sat., Feb. 23 1:00 p.m. Marr Park

Small Wonders: Tiny Turtles

This fun program is for preschool-aged children (3-5 years) and an adult friend or relative. This session will focus on the amazing world of turtles and their remarkable adaptations. Live specimens will be featured. We will also have a hike and make a craft.



Sat., March 27 7:30 p.m. Hayes Timber

Spring under the Moon

Enjoy the woods with spring only officially one week old. We'll let the rising moon light our way as we take a leisurely hike through the remarkable woods at Hayes, just inside the city limits of Washington. Listen for the increase in wildlife activity, feel the budding of the tree leaves, and smell the change of seasons in the air. We'll meet at the large parking lot for Hayes/Kewash/Sesqui Park on 5th, just east of Highways 1/92.



March 26 & 28 6: 00–9:00 p.m. Marr Park

Sat., March 31 8:00–Noon

Hunter Safety Course

Pre-registration is required. Register online at: www.iowadnr.gov/training under Hunter Education classes. Or call the Center at 319/657-2400. Must attend all three sessions and be 11 years or older.

Planning Ahead

Look for upcoming events in the newsletter, website and local media in celebration of our 50th year anniversary. This will include regulars like the Night Prairie Burn in April and the Halloween Hike on October 19 (conservation-related theme already in the planning stages) as well as some new programs. We'll also be celebrating 10 years of the Conservation Education Center so watch as this year will be full of fun, excitement, education, and opportunities.

*Thanks to All Our
Halloween Hike Supporters...*

Walmart	Fareway
Sass Family Farms	SACHA
Noon Kiwanis	Archers Appliance
Duane Hammon	Millers
Holz Family	Dolan Family
Jessica Engel	Jennine Wolf
Wayne & Ron Brock	Jim Blakeney
Rita & Bailey Anderson	Addie and Olivia Pacha
Cassie Bellmer	Kitty Brooks
Ila & Craig Capps	Rita Anderson
Jim Blakeney's grandsons	
Barb, Bob & Austin Donkersloot	



Jennine Wolf and Chad Dolan teach about photosynthesis during the Halloween Hike

*And Our Appreciation to Our
Other Volunteers & Donors*

EBD Engineering for pallets and 2x2s
 Ace and more for pallets
 Tree's Forever planning committee for Ainsworth-Marr Park
 Trail landscaping
 Millie and Bill Wilson for donation to purchase bird seed
 Ace Electric for pallets
 Joe Rosein for a dump truck for sewer project
 Riverboat Foundation for \$2000 for various projects
 Craig Capps' assistance on various projects
 Jim Millice's assistance on various projects
 Various Scout projects
 Hunter Safety Instructors

**Washington County
Conservation Board**

Office: 319/657-2400

Fax: 319/657-2500

E-mail: wccb@iowatelecom.net

Website:
co.washington.ia.us/departments/conservation

Members: Lyle Moen
Liz Kaufman
Craig Capps
Bill Nickell
Barb Donkersloot

Staff: Steve Anderson, Exec. Director
Bob Bellmer, Park Ranger
Pamela Holz, Naturalist
Fritz Engel, Maint. Technician
Kathy Dolan, Center Coordinator

Washington County Conservation Board meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at 4:30 p.m. at the Conservation Education Center. Visitors are welcome.

The WCCB is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

If you would like a copy of this newsletter in larger print, please contact our office.

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.



Wayne & Ron Brock guide participants thru the different ways herbivores eat

PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. Postage
Paid
Permit No. 43
Keota, IA 52248

WASHINGTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
2943 HIGHWAY 92
AINSWORTH, IA 52201

Return Service Requested



New Hours and Fees for Marr Park

During their regular meetings in September and October, the Conservation Board deliberated rental fees of the Marr Park facilities for 2013 as well as the hours of the Conservation Center. The following was decided.

Camping

No changes will be made for this year. Electrical sites will remain \$16 per night and tent camping elsewhere in the park will be \$10. Dump Station, once back online, will be \$5 for non-overnight guests.

Shelter Fees

Due to demand, operational costs, and improvements to Shelter 1, these fees were increased. The \$50 refundable deposit for both remains in effect.

Shelter 1 is now \$40.

Lodge (Shelter 6) is now \$50.

Conservation Education Center

Fees for the Center remain at \$160 for the Conference Hall and \$40 for the Library, with a deposit equal to the rental fee.

Open Hours: The Center will still remain closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. However, Summer Hours and the time frame of summer hours will change.

Summer Hours will last from May 1 to Labor Day.

M Th F Sa
10:00—6:30

Sunday
1:00—5:00

Winter hours will remain the same and last from after Labor Day through April 30.

M Th F
8:00—4:30

Sa
8:00—4:00

Su
1:00—5:00