

Earhtones

Summer 2014

Name That Itch

Roughly 10% of people will never develop an allergy to poison ivy. For years, I had the confidence of one of the lucky ones. Then, three years ago, reality totaled that confidence.

Poison ivy, poison sumac in the north, and poison oak in the west and southeast are all members of the cashew family. The toxic oil is contained throughout all parts of the plant throughout the entire year. During the warm, growing months, the oil is particularly strong.

Contact with the oil is required for a reaction, but contaminated clothing, pets, and other objects can pass it on. It is not, however, contagious from a rash.



Poison ivy leaves

any poison ivy on the path. Second, a nightlong rainstorm spread this oil to other plants. Lastly, I led ten hikes through these woods the next day.

Generally, most people will react within 24-48 hours. Since different skin reacts at different rates, new rashes may break out over the next few days. However, if the rash covers a large area or continues to break out, see a doctor.

My personal immune system received its overload during some unique circumstances.

First, the woodland trail had just been cleared, slicing into

Wild parsnip leaf



Poison ivy, however, is not the only irritant out there. Wild parsnip can cause burns and blisters when the oils react with sunlight upon skin. Wild parsnip is merely the garden plant escaped into the



Wild parsnip flower

wild. It's the second year growth, with the flowers that is most toxic. Luckily, cloudy days and cloth-covered skin lower a reaction and the oil dries up in late summer.

Along bottomland, you have itchweed and stinging nettles. Both have hairy stems containing itchy irritants. Unlike poison ivy and parsnip, the reaction is immediate and short-lived. Often the itching lasts for only an hour.

Lastly, on hot summer days, most plants can be a temporary irritant when they brush against skin. In this case, it's not a toxin, but merely the friction that's bothersome. Whether walking through tall grass or brush in the woods, this tends to be immediate but short-lived and minor.

The best defense for most of these irritants is a thorough soapy wash in a hot to warm shower after your outdoor experience. Clothes contaminated with poison ivy need to be washed in hot water to prevent re-contamination.

By Pamela Holz

From the Director's Desk

The summer of 2014 finds the Washington County Conservation Board blessed with a multitude of great activities made possible by the continued generous support of our citizens, the backbone of everything we do. The Mary Marr Lodge Proximity Upgrade project, now nearing completion and certainly no exception, is the one that I am choosing to highlight.

This project started with a memorial gift towards the Lodge itself by the family of Arlene McCoy. From there, the first expansion resulted when we received an Iowa Department of Natural Resources Fish Habitat Fund Grant (a part of the license fee for all fishermen in Iowa) to fund 90% of the upper pond renovation and enhancement, which was increasingly suffering from fish kills.

The Washington Riverboat Foundation then partnered with us, effectively doubling our available funds and allowing us to “go for it”. With funding in place, the staff and volunteer board began pouring our hearts and souls into the project, constantly increasing the magnitude and quality of the project as community input and involvement kept expanding its possibilities.

The first example of increasing the quality of the project came about when Delong Construction worked with us to clean out the sediment in the pond. They virtually did everything we asked and more! The net result is this 1.5 acre pond now has an under-water road, two jetties, and more hidden features than I can possibly name. One comic relief feature is the manikin sitting holding a fishing pole on the Eldon Conry Memorial Oak Swing (it was failing), now 16 feet or so under the water. The final piece of this project was the Fish & Wildlife Service lending us a large water pump, allowing us to pump approximately 3 million gallons of water back into the pond

last fall so that it can be stocked (it is with fry of bluegills, bass, & catfish) and ready to provide beauty for our public.

Sarah's Haven, named after Sarah Marr, the mother of Marr Park's Donor, received a myriad of local donations in materials, labor, and expert advice. Primary contributions came from Iowa Bridge & Culvert as well as All American Concrete. There were also hundreds of hours of labor donation. It has already hosted several weddings. As just one example of an “extra” detail that is not so obvious yet many will appreciate, we designed the water under the structure to be 2 feet deep, and lined the bottom with white rock so that patrons can watch the fish.

The final giant piece was the playground, a hugely needed and popular item here at Marr Park. Board Members, Staff, and Patrons all had lots of input and the net result is a great fit to the site, with our patrons making heavy use.

As always, the WCCB staff, Board, & Volunteers greatly value your continued support as we carry out current projects, plan further improvements throughout the properties that we manage, and strive to keep our existing facilities safe and clean.

By Steve Anderson



Introducing our New Park Ranger

At the end of April, Mark Even began working as our new park ranger. Since that time, he has been hard at work getting orientated, prepping the parks for the Memorial Day holiday weekend, and patrolling.

Mark is originally from Bellevue, in northeast Iowa and grew up fishing. He is married to Syrena and has three children: Jacklyn and Dakota, both young adults, and 10 year old Raquel. He loves to fish, golf, bike, and grill.



At Scott County, Mark worked a number of conservation tasks, including: creating a nursery, converting a soybean field to prairie, pond development including fish habitat, wetland construction, and much more. Most recently, he comes to us from the City of Muscatine's Parks and Rec department where he worked on the gardens, the prairies, and mapped out the city's ash trees in preparation for emerald ash borer.

Mark's first impressions of the county have been positive. He is amazed at our tree plantings across the county and how successful they have been. For such a small staff, he believes we have accomplished quite a bit in our areas. He enjoys the mix of ranger and maintenance duties he now has and hopes one day to be part of the decision process.

Next time you are in our parks, be sure to stop and say hi to Mark!

Mark attended Kirkwood Community College where he obtained a certificate in Criminal Justice. After school, he spent several years working in garden centers where he learned a lot of trees and other plants. Eighteen years ago, he began work for the Johnson County Conservation Board as their maintenance technician. He shortly thereafter moved to Scott County, serving as their maintenance tech before becoming their park ranger.

Thanks to the Following

- * Don Kline, Chad Dolan and Beth Lane
- * Catharine Wilson Memorial by Roy Wilson
- * Jenine Libe Memorial by Frank Libe
- * Bill Withthoft Memorial
- * Leon McNeil Memorial



Renovations of the Marr Park Pond area is nearing completion, with only landscaping remaining. The new playground, the last component to be installed (see above) has already been very popular among younger park visitors.

Summer Calendar

The Washington County Conservation Board meets the second Thursday 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: July 4 and September 1.

Tues., July 22 6:30 p.m. Center
Our Native Herps

Learn about our native reptiles and amphibians, aka herps, with DNR fisheries biologist Chad Dolan. Chad will have several live local specimens on hand, which may include frogs, turtles, and snakes.

Fri, Aug. 8 7:00 p.m.—midnight Marr Park
Sunset Switch Night Camp

This one-night specialty camp will focus on the daily change from day to dawn to night. We'll particularly explore the wildlife in the park, play games, make crafts, and have snacks. For children 8 and older. Pre-registration of \$10 required.

Sat., Sept. 20 10:00 a.m. Marr Park
Prepping Trees for Fall

Ranger Mark Even will help landowners, both large and small, prepare their trees for the coming winter. Covered will include when to prune, when not to, what to prune, fall planting, winter care, and more. Bring your questions.

Washington County Conservation Board

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

Washington County Conservation Board meetings are held the second Thursday 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.

Save the Date for the Halloween Hike

Saturday, October 18 7:00 p.m. Marr Park

In *Aliens Among Us*, you will learn about the different plants and animals that have been invading Iowa, how they get here, what harm they do, and what you can do to help. Featured species may include garlic mustard and emerald ash borer. This family event is a not-so-scary alternative to traditional Halloween programs. To volunteer for the program, contact Pam Holz at the center or e-mail her at wccbnaturalist@iowatelecom.net.

The Darling of the Lake

As we anticipate the state's re-opening of Lake Darling, let us take a look at its namesake.

Born in Norwood, Michigan, Jay Norwood Darling (1876–1962) moved to the growing community of Sioux City in western Iowa at the age of 10. He spent his late childhood exploring the prairie, wetlands, and rivers outside town. With the goal of becoming a doctor, he headed to Beloit College in Wisconsin upon graduation.

He took a break from his pre-med studies to work on the school yearbook. Darling added drawings of professors and school events for entertainment. So he wouldn't get credit, he created a pen name by contracting his last name. This nickname, Ding, stuck with him for the rest of his life and beyond.

To earn money for medical school, Darling took a job as a reporter for the Sioux City newspaper. His artistic talents won out and he ended up not continuing his studies of being a doctor. In 1906, the *Des Moines Register and Leader* hired him. With the exception of a few years, Darling remained for the *Register* the rest of his career.

Although best known for his political cartoons, Darling was an active conservationist. In 1931, he served on Iowa's Fish and Game Commission and encouraged a biological survey of the state. The survey was conducted by another Iowa conservationist native, Aldo Leopold.

Darling then served on the federal Advisory Committee that made recommendations on the new Bureau of Biological Study. Now called the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Darling served as the chief administrator in 1934-35. He returned to his beloved Iowa after 18 months as chief.

During his short time in Washington, Darling drew the artwork for the very first duck stamp. This

stamp is a required purchase for waterfowl hunters in addition to their hunting license. The federal funds raised from the stamp are even now used to help preserve wetlands and other habitats for ducks.

After seeing how Washington operated and alarmed over the loss of wildlife and habitat, Darling became concerned over the lack of conservationist involvement. He began to call together various conservation groups and become organized lobbyists. Hence, the National Wildlife Federation was born.

Ding Darling was also awarded two Pulitzer Prizes in his lifetime. Many of his political cartoons, ranging from conservation issues to the political process, still ring true today. Thus it is as no surprise that in 1950 a local group and the DNR named the then new lake in his honor.



Most of Ding's cartoons are as relevant today as when they were first printed. He created over 15,000 of them in his lifetime.

Darling covered a variety of topics in his cartoons, not just conservation, including: presidents, war and peace, economics, holidays, political issues, social issues, and daily lives.



WASHINGTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
2943 HIGHWAY 92
AINSWORTH, IA 52201

Return Service Requested

Summer Center Hours
Mon Thur Fri Sat
10:00–6:30 p.m.

Sunday
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Tues Wed
Closed

From the Archives: Lake Darling's Origins

When Ding Darling ceremonially closed the gate at the lake Darling dam in September 1950, crowds of people came from all around to celebrate the new state park. Visitors would flock to the new lake to fish, camp, boat, and swim. By the end of the '50s, nearly 300,000 visitors came each year.



The photo on the left shows the large crowd during the grand opening of the lake back in 1950.



On the right, you can see a rustic bridge once used by hikers to the park.