

Earthtones

Autumn 2013

Celebrating 50 Years: For Today and For Tomorrow

We are trying to provide for the present and future recreational needs of the people and are attempting to conserve some of our natural beauty spots and assets. We appreciate the interest of the public and their cooperation with us.

From WCCB 1966 annual report

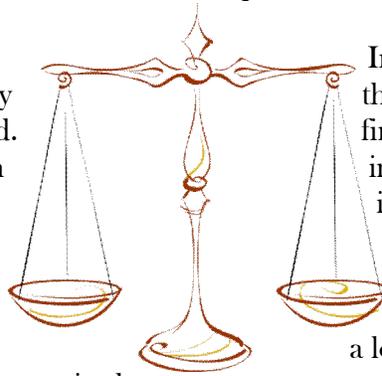
Although this quote was written nearly fifty years ago, our philosophy has not changed. We still seek to meet today's conservation needs while keeping an eye on the needs of the future. In one sense, it is all about balance.

First, we balance land holdings with need, budget and staff. After fifty years, we have acquired over 2,000 acres, which include all the main native habitats and important recreational ones (such as fishing ponds). We now no longer look for new properties nor do we have the budget and staff to maintain more.

Next, we examine the properties to balance out all the different potential needs: fishing, hunting, biking, hiking, etc. We also wish to maintain healthy populations of wildlife and natural systems. Not all these needs are compatible with each other.

In response we write and periodically update management plans for our areas. What is allowed, what is not allowed, how much active management will we maintain there, etc. We not only need to consider what today's visitors may want, but also predict what they would like in the future and compare it with natural progression and potential future obstacles.

For example, we divide our areas into two basic management methods: conservation (active management) and preservation (little to no management). We use the field's definitions in our policies: conservation means "to use wisely" while preservation means "to save or protect."



In conservation areas, we may manipulate the landscape for certain species through fire, timber harvest, thinning, seed planting, sapling planting, etc. Our goal often is to maintain a certain stage of succession (e.g. an oak timber) or re-create natural changes that no longer occur (e.g. fire or planting trees that now lack a local seed source).

Preservation areas are allowed to progress naturally. For example, in a timber, the important acorn-bearing oaks die out and are replaced by more shade tolerant species. Between the two types of areas, the public has a wider variety of ecosystems to enjoy.

But, we cannot just look at how things are today. Nature continually changes. In addition, people's recreational needs change also. Third, potential threats must be considered (e.g. emerald ash borer). We take these details into account and then add in time and funds available to prioritize projects.

In the end, we hope all these balances even out and we continue to meet the needs of the citizens of Washington County, both for today and for tomorrow.

By Pamela Holz

Mark Park Pond Update

Visitors to Marr Park have no doubt noticed the lack of water in the small pond. Through funds received through a fish habitat stamp grant, the riverboat foundation, and camping revenues, our maintenance staff and several volunteers have been hard at work improving the area in and around the pond.

Improvements have included the following:

◆ *Mary Marr Lodge upgrade*
New stove, siding, and insulation has greatly improved the look of this shelter as well as made it cozy for even the coldest months.



Renovations inside of Lodge

◆ *Pond Improvements*

Silt has been removed and the pond has been deepened and shaped. A variety of fish habitat structures have been added.

◆ *Vicinity Improvements*

Several fishing jetties have been added. The dock has been replaced by one of these jetties and will soon feature a multi-purpose gazebo. This structure will have railings to prevent accidentals dunks in the pond and provide shade for those using it to fish. Formal events, such as weddings, will be able to rent the exclusive use of this building with the rental of the lodge. It is hoped that it will provide a scenic background for precious moments photos.

Landscaping to the east of the lodge will include a change in playground. In the spring, the digger will be moved to the sandbox near shel-



Crew at bottom of pond

ters 1 and 2. The teeter-totter and slide will be relocated to the playscape area in the south end of the pine trail. This gives a larger space for newer, larger playground components.

Work on the pond will finish shortly and the disturbed ground re-seeded. Beyond adding a playground in spring, all that will remain to be done is to restock the pond with fish. Let us all hope that we receive enough precipitation over the winter and spring months to allow us to do so by next summer.



Kathy Dolan, on behalf of hunting education instructors presenting the award to Bob

Congratulations to Ranger Bob Bellmer for winning the Hunter Education Instructor of the Year Award! From the Hunter Educating Instructor Association.

2014 Fees

During the September meeting, the Board set fees for the 2014 calendar year. The only changes for the coming year include the Conservation Center and an addition for the Lodge.

Camping—electric	\$16
Camping—non-electric	\$10
7-night coupon book	\$96
Open shelters (2, 3, 4)	Free
Shelter 1	\$40 (\$50 deposit)
Shelter 6 (Lodge)	\$50 (\$50 deposit)
With gazebo	\$75 (\$75 deposit)

Conservation Center

Library	\$40
Conference hall	\$175 (\$175)



Gazebo addition for Lodge will be a modified version of this structure at the end of a jetty.

Lodge Explanation: As part of the Marr Park pond improvements, we have replaced the fishing dock with a jetty. At the end of the jetty will be a pavilion-type structure, a modified version of the above image. This gazebo will include lights and outlets. *The gazebo will be available for public use unless Lodge rentals pay an extra \$25 fee for exclusive use.*



Thanks to the Following

Day Camps

Andi Klein	Michelle Williams
Brennan Horak	Dalton Sorrells
Chelsea Nizzi	Addie Pacha
Samantha Holz	Adam Rosenstein
Lori Minor	Susan Davis
Susan Fritz	Kay Hoyle
Linda Holz	Ryan Koller

50th Anniversary/Prairie Girl Trail Opening

Samantha Holz
 Barb Donkersloot
 Liz Kaufman
 Faith Baptist youth service club

Marr Pond Project

Bill Nickell
 Craig Capps
 Jeff Prier
 Ron Sojka
 All American Concrete
 Iowa Bridge and Culvert

Other Donations

Carl Dallmeyer – monetary
 Don Kline – pond study supplies
 Drs. Anson & Vittetoe – reptile tank supplies
 Bill & Melinda Lord – meteor program

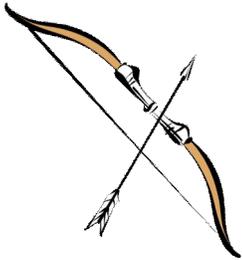


Opening of Prairie Girl Trail: (L-R) Liz Kaufman, Jim Cuddeback, Steve Anderson, Shirley Tinnes Reed, Barb Donkersloot, Ryann Dolan, Bob Bellmer

Autumn 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: November 11, November 28-29, December 24-25, and January 1.



Sat., Sept. 21 1:00 p.m. Marr Park

Digging up the Past

In honor of Archeology Month, bring out the entire family and let's learn about archeology and archeological digs. We'll do a dig of our own and see what we can learn from the objects we find. We'll examine some authentic artifacts as well as pseudo-artifacts and discuss how weather in Iowa plays a part in what is and is not preserved.

Sat., Oct. 19 Evening Marr Park

Annual Halloween Hike: Be a Conservationist!

See back page for more information.

Sat., Nov. 23 11:00 a.m. Conservation Center

Basket Weaving

The Weed Basket measures approximately 5" x 6.5". This basket can be used in many different ways! Participants can expect to spend 2-3 hours weaving this basket. Bring along your lunch and a towel. Material fee: \$8. Space is limited, preregistration is required by October 31. Contact Kathy to register at 319/657-2400 or wccb@iowatelecom.net. Must be ten or older, or accompanied by an adult.



Sat., Dec. 8 2:00—3:00 p.m. Marr Park

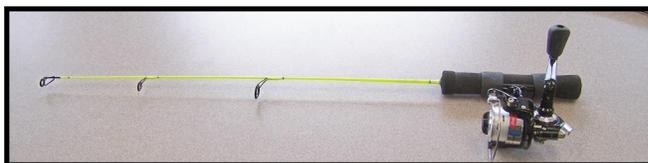
Little Dippers: Wild in Winter

Explore the wonders of nature with your toddler. This program is geared for children 3 and under with an adult friend or relative. Activities will focus on how animals get ready for winter and will include an indoor story, activity, craft, and a short outside hike. Participants should bring proper gear for the hike.

Sat., Jan. 11

Winter Adventure and Exhibit Grand Opening

Come for some indoor and outdoor fun. We will have several indoor and outdoor activities for families and individuals to enjoy. Outside, our main event will be our annual ice fishing clinic. Learn about this winter sport and see the fish with an underwater camera. Inside, tour the traveling Smithsonian exhibit *Listening to the Prairie: Farming in Nature's Image* (see next page for more information).



Visit the Smithsonian Without Leaving Home



In January, the Washington County Conservation Board will have the honor of hosting for four months a traveling Smithsonian

Exhibit. Entitled *Listening to the Prairie: Farming in Nature's Image*, this exhibit connects history and natural history by covering America's prairies and the change to agriculture. The grand opening of this exhibit will be January 11.

According to its website, this exhibit "will change how people think about agriculture in America. It's about growing food on the North American prairie and the forces of change that turned grasslands into one of the most productive agricultural lands on earth. These lands are our nation's most fertile, diverse, fragile, and endangered ecosystems, but they also serve as a model for environmentally sound agriculture. The traveling exhibition focuses on how changes in this ecosystem and other ecosystems across the country impact people and their communities. It reveals information on how a natural ecosystem works, and tells stories of farmers and ranchers who are farming in nature's image."

Already several teachers have scheduled field trips to take advantage of this opportunity. Other groups leaders—civic organizations, retirement homes, youth organizations, etc—are also welcome to schedule tours and programs. Audio tours will be available as well. A public program or two using the exhibit is also in the works. More information will be available over the next few months, but groups can call anytime from now on to schedule a program.

Listening to the Prairie: Farming in Nature's Image was developed by The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. Additional funding provided by REAP-CEP and the R.J. McElroy Trust with the support of the Black Hawk County Conservation Board, and the Friends of Hartman Reserve.



Washington County Conservation Board

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Barb Donkersloot

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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.

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Return Service Requested

Center Winter Hours
Mon Thur Fri
8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Saturday
8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

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

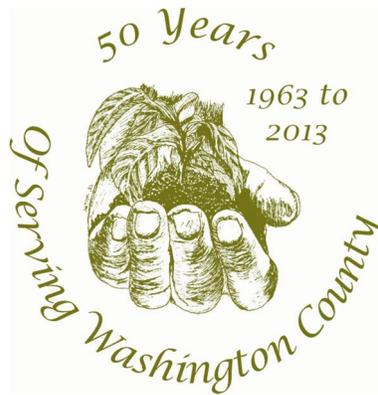
Halloween Hike: Be a Conservationist!

Saturday, October 19

6:45 p.m.— 8:30 p.m.

In honor of our 50th anniversary, we're giving participants an opportunity to explore the field of conservation during our annual, family-friendly Halloween Hike. This event is a not-so-scary alternative to traditional Halloween activities.

We'll begin at the Lodge, circle around Thomas Marr Lake, and finish at the Center. You'll face similar challenges as our staff: stocking ponds with live fish, trimming trees, using maps, and much more. The trail will be lit for you by natural and artificial means; luminaries will mark the trail while the day-old full moon helps light your way.



Finally, at the Center, you'll create your own craft, hold—if you are willing—our educational animals and, of course, have refreshments.

Enter the trail anytime between 6:45 - 8:00 p.m. Center activities will continue till 8:30.

Volunteers are also needed for this event. Call if you would like to volunteer.

For more information, contact 319/657-2400 or wccbnaturalist@iowatelecom.net.