

# Earthtones

Winter 2016

## Historic Marr Park

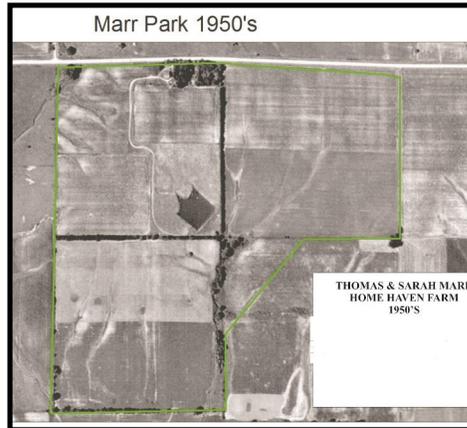
Part of planning for the future means knowing what has happened in the past. Over the last several years, the Washington CCB has been creating historical records of the development of all of the properties under our control. Right now, we are working on this document for Thomas & Sarah Marr Home Haven Farm (Marr Park) and have discovered some interesting facts.

In 1842, 39-year-old Woodford Marr moved to Oregon Township. Iowa had only recently been open to settlers and statehood was a mere four years away. According to the local genealogy library, he struggled initially when he lost almost all his horses. He persevered, and retired with 200 acres to his name.

Only one of his sons, Thomas, chose to remain within the county. He received 80 acres from the government, most likely through the Homestead Act, in 1854. He received an additional 40 acres through the Will of his father in 1959, and the acreage representing Marr Park was set.

Thomas Marr farmed those 120 acres until passing them onto his son, Thomas Junior, through his Will in 1889. Thomas Jr. married Sarah, the eldest of 10, in 1857. They had three children: William, Jesse, and Mary. These last four's final resting place can be found at the Ainsworth cemetery, along with other, presumably related, Marrs.

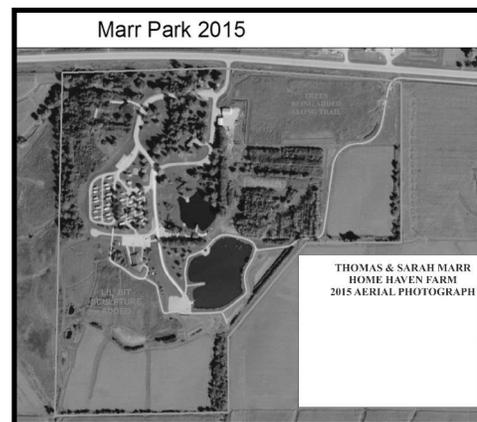
Mary inherited the farm in 1938, being the surviving member of her family. It was Mary Marr that chose to will her land to Washington County in



1957, naming it after her parents. Her will stated that 40 acres should remain a park, and the remaining 80 be farmed to provide revenues for further development until it was no longer needed. Through the intervening years, most of that farmland has been developed for the park with only two small pieces remaining in production.

When the county voted the Conservation Board into existence in 1964, the park passed into our hands. At that point, Marr Park already featured a pond not much different in size than it is today, and very few other amenities. Marr Park became the focal point of our agency's "park" developments, with continual improvements over the last five decades.

We are currently working on the creation of both a written and aerial photograph history of Marr Park & its developments. Persons with interest are invited to stop in and review it!



## *Volunteer Opportunities Abound*

Volunteers have historically played a huge role for the Washington County Conservation Board, assisting with nearly every project and every aspect of our agency's success. The reality is that we could not be who we are nor do what we do without them. If there is one message to convey during this "transition of the year" season, it is **THANK YOU** to each and every one of you that helped last year. We are hopeful that we personally thanked you, as well.

Staff is often asked what our specific volunteer needs are. We can quickly identify a host of specific tasks to include pruning, weeding, planting, and general cleaning on virtually every property under our control. However, we typically find it more beneficial for all parties if we turn this around and ask you what your specific interest and talent is that you are willing to share. We will then do our level best to find activities that balance our needs with your skills and interests. Therefore, whatever your outdoor

oriented interests are, if you are looking for a place to share your time and talents in 2016, we certainly would love to try to facilitate your doing so through us!

We especially love it when people ask us to facilitate events or activities. Our roles in these varies greatly, from assisting with advertising to various site preparations. Last year, this amounted to several great camps, fun community events, and quite a variety of "one-time" activities. Quite a few of them were at Marr Park and our shooting range, of course. However, we always have and will try to help facilitate appropriate and safe activities.

Please consider making increased volunteerism to the Washington County Conservation Board one of your priorities in 2016.

*By Steve Anderson*



*Several of our volunteer projects: clearing the Kewash (upper left), horse camping improvements at Brinton Timber (lower left), Handicap Fish Day (upper right), and landscaping next to Center (lower right)*



***Become a  
Volunteer today!***

*Contact us at  
319/657-2400*

*or*

*wccb@iowatelecom.net*



***Thanks to...***

Our *Halloween Hike* was a big success, thanks to everyone that donated, helped, or participated. We had 225 attend, with many newcomers to the event. (And 2016's Hike is already on the calendar for October 15 so save the date now!)

SACHA	Noon Kiwanis
Sass Farms	Y youth group
Fareway	Hyvee
Walmart	
Kane Family	Ron Brock
Wayne Brock	Addie Pacha
Jeff Koepp	Craig and Ila Capps
Phyllis and Rick Hofer	
Marge and Don Kline	
Barb and Bob Donkersloot	
Rita Anderson	Dolan Family
Linda Holz	Anna and Samantha Holz

***Other Volunteers***

George Colthurst for raking direct seeding  
 Neil Mills for helping with concrete  
 Cliff Daly for helping with concrete  
 Sam Donnolly for making grass mats for the wicki-up roof  
 Anna and Samantha Holz for making grass mats for the wickiup roof



***Fun with El Niño***

El Niño has forecasters predicting a mild winter for us Midwesterners. So far, it's too early to tell what the actual reality will be. Just in case it continues to be mild, here are some ways for you to take advantage:

- \* Get outside and soak up some sunlight. Cabin fever, Seasonal Affective Disorder, and just the plain old winter blues can be fought by getting vitamin D the natural way—from the sun. Improve your mood and increase your activity level without having to bundle up from head to toe.
- \* Go off-trailing without serious worry about poison ivy. The dormant plant still has active oils, but it is much harder to make contact and receive an allergic dose. However, avoid using vines (as they may be poison ivy), especially for bonfires.
- \* Earn bragging rights by winter camping. So what if the temperatures are warmer than your last fall adventure? It's still technically winter even if the weather doesn't agree.
- \* Finally catch up on those outdoor chores you didn't have time for in the fall. Clean out your gardens. Trim your trees and shrubs. Plan a winter garden.
- \* Enjoy a mosquito-free hike through the timbers.
- \* Go antler hunting. Theoretically, white against brown should be easier to spot than against snow.
- \* Be adventurous and do a polar bear dip. Without ice, your mind might be more easily persuaded to dive in.
- \* Bike the Kewash.
- \* Go boating or canoeing.
- \* Polish your snow shovel.
- \* Most of all, enjoy, have fun, and be safe.

*Answers to page 5:*  
 1. B 2. A 3. C 4. B 5. C 6. A

## Winter 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 Center will be closed the following holidays: February 15 and March 26.

Sat., Jan. 30                      1:00 p.m.                      Marr Park  
*Ice Fishing Clinic*

This fun family event will feature a relatively warm shelter and pre-drilled holes. You will have the chance to catch fish from a five-inch hole in the ice and learn some tips and tricks. Also, see the fish in action with an underwater camera. Hot cocoa will be served in the Center. Families welcome.



Tues., Feb. 23                      6:00 p.m.                      Marr Park  
*Small Wonders: In the Dark*

This fun program is for preschool-aged children and an adult friend or relative. This session will focus on things that go bump in the night. We'll talk about night animals, discuss fears, and show the beauty that can be found at night. It'll include a story, games, craft, and a short hike.

Sun, March 20                      6:00 p.m.                      Marr Park  
*Wonders of the Trail Hike*

Enjoy a lovely stroll on the paved Ainsworth-Marr Park trail and celebrate the first day of spring. We'll begin and end at the Conservation Center. During the hike, we'll show off the natural features along the trail, talk about the tree plantings, and admire the arches accenting certain features. We'll point out things to watch for in the different seasons and as the plantings progress and grow. We will hike to the benches near Highway 92 and back.



### *Coming Up*

*Night Prairie Burn:* usually scheduled for early April. Keep an eye on the website (<http://co.washington.ia.us>) for the date and more information.

*Day camp registration.* Schedule will be available in March with registration opening in April.



## Marr Park Details Quiz

How well do you know the “behind the scenes” activities in the park? Take this test and see. Answers are on Page 3.

- Marr Park was originally 120 acres. It is now 125. Where did the additional five acres come from?
  - An Adjacent landowner donated it in his will
  - It was bought in anticipation of the mini-lake construction
  - It was part of a land trade
  - It was needed when the conservation center was built
- Who was the director before Steve Anderson?
  - John Davis
  - Charles Hotle
  - George Lucas
  - No one. Steve was the first.
- The enclosed shelter in the front of the park (shelter 1) was practically rebuilt in 1999. Why?
  - Too old and needed to be reinforced
  - Wear and tear from too many rentals
  - Tree fell on it during windstorm
  - Car ran into it
- Which of these projects was NOT an eagle scout project?
  - Chimney swift tower
  - Snake hibernaculum
  - Components in playscape area
  - Campground firewood/dumpster site
- What discount can you get in the campground?
  - Senior citizen
  - Having a tent on an electrical site
  - Pay for 6 days, get 7th free coupon book
  - Large group
- What two animals are in the leaded glass above the doors exiting the Conservation Center conference hall?
  - Pheasant and eagle
  - Dragonfly and fish
  - Deer and fox
  - Snake and butterfly

### Washington County Conservation Board

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**Website:**  
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**Members:** Lyle Moen  
Craig Capps  
Bill Nickell  
Barb Donkersloot  
Linda Finke

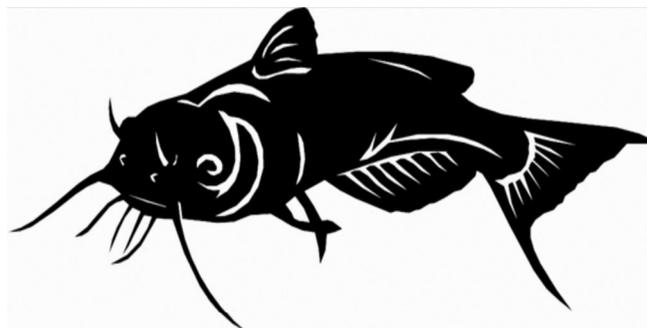
**Staff:** Steve Anderson, Exec. Director  
Pamela Holz, Naturalist  
Fritz Engel, Maint. Technician  
Kathy Dolan, Center Coordinator  
Mark Even, Park Ranger

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.



WASHINGTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD  
2943 HIGHWAY 92  
AINSWORTH, IA 52201

**Return Service Requested**

*Winter Center Hours*

Tues.—Sat.  
8:00 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.

Sun.—Mon.  
Closed

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## *Diving into the Budget*

Winter often feels like it's overloaded with paperwork. It's time to write up plans, check inventory, and begin the process of planning next year's budget. Although our budget year runs from July 1 to June 30, we must know what we want to accomplish in January.

Our director, after receiving staff input and Board of Supervisors' guidelines, creates a rough draft of our expenditures and expected revenues. At the January meeting, the Conservation Board discusses those plans and gives direction for the final proposal. This is submitted to the Supervisors who control the final amount.

The money itself for our budget comes from several different sources.



*Tax-asking budget:* these funds come from county property taxes. In our case, it provides the basics for our budget, including salaries, maintenance costs, program supplies, etc. Essentially, it funds day to day operations.

*Capital Projects:* these are monies we have raised ourselves. It can include revenue from rentals, camping fees, and program costs. It also includes donations, memorials, and any other received funds. This pool of money is usually reserved for projects, large and small (such as paving the Marr Park road) and as matching funds for grants.

*REAP:* our last budget category comes the state Resource Enhancement and Protection Act, and as the name suggests can only be used for certain projects.