

# Earthtones

Winter 2017

---

## *Improvements to Explore This Winter*

Winter provides a unique opportunity to view the outdoors visually unencumbered. While the wildflowers of spring and the colors of fall make for a lovely landscape, they limit our visual perspective. Come winter, most leaves have fallen. Our views of any given area stretch far and wide. If we are able to wander before snow depth hides ground features, we can see certain features much better and clearer than when vegetation hinders a detailed view.

The same applies to wildlife viewing. No more looking for that bird which landed right behind that one leaf. Often, we can watch the same bird on its journey from one tree to another. On the ground, noisy squirrels scamper on crunchy, dead leaves hint at a much larger animal in our vicinity. Quiet deer, fox, coyote and other animals may be spotted sooner and watched longer as they dodge between empty tree branches.

Visit our parks and recreational areas to discover hidden gems and updates. Frozen ground at Brinton Timber means horse riders need not be concerned with erosion issues as they enjoy this 320-acre resource. The low winter level of the Skunk River allows one to take a nice hike along its border on the Wood Duck trail. Fascinating rock features near the creek bottoms can be seen in its entirety and provide nice resting areas and scenic views.

Sockum Ridge Recreation Area is a true upland oak timber gem, and we continue to strive toward balancing this forest resource for future generations' enjoyment as well as today's. As you drive into the lower parking lot, you are bound to notice the new latrine with the modern "no foul odor" design. During the past year, our efforts have also been to make the upper drive more accessible by vehicle.

Most of the forest management efforts have occurred in proximity to the upper drive. To the south of the loop, the WCCB created a five-acre forest regeneration area in 2003, which now represents our only oak-hickory timber under 50 years old. Visit now to spot these saplings.

To the north and east of the loop, we have increased management on approximately 23 acres. Prescribed burns have been conducted on the closest nine acres for several years now, which, along with intensive understory removal are resulting in the most open timber that we currently manage. Now is an excellent time to view these management strategies and compare them to other parts of the park as well as to other areas.

Currently, we plan to manage only with prescribed burns in an effort to mimic what the Native Americans were doing before 1850. Intensive management of the 14 acres lying further north began this fall and included hiring a professional to kill all the trees larger than two inches in diameter that were not oak, shagbark hickory, and black walnut. Thereafter, we will conduct a prescribed burn there. The next management steps of these 14 acres will be contingent upon when the next major crop of white oak acorns occurs. Our goal is to maximize wildlife and forest regeneration.

Adjacent to the Kewash Nature Trail near the Washington end, Willow Pond continues to see significant improvements. The pond itself was rebuilt using a Fish Habitat Stamp grant in 2011, meaning the fish are now reaching harvestable size for the first time this year. Go ice fishing and check it out yourself once the ice is thick enough.

...Continued from page 1

A second grant allowed for the armoring of the shoreline this year, adding some lovely large rocks to the pond's perimeter. Implementation for an ADA compliant trail spur connecting to Kirkwood Community College and funded through REAP and TAP programs are now progressing (as well as paving a segment of the existing trail). In addition, tree plantings and other associated landscaping are in the works, partly planned as an Eagle Scout project.



*Willow Pond's new look*

---

A couple miles west of Willow Pond lies what historically has been the worst place on the trail, a steep grade down to the mud road of Kiwi Avenue. We appreciate the assistance of the Washington County Riverboat Foundation to provide the majority of funding to fix this issue. Additional kudos to the Washington County Engineers office for a great design and the Washington RAGBRAI Committee for their commitment of additional funds.



*Kewash Trail crossing Kiwi Ave.*

---

Finally, at the west end of the trail, excitement abounds for the planned creation of a whole new access area, including a parking lot, picnic area, and a host of other amenities. Whether hiking or cross-country skiing, the Kewash is assured to be a place to view many developments now and in the near future.

At Marr Park, always the busiest of our managed properties, likely the most obvious improvement is our new cold storage building. As its name implies, this building will store items necessary for maintenance of the 2,200 acres the WCCB currently man-

ages. We have also added our first ADA-compliant camping pad and are upgrading the tables associated with the two enclosed rental facilities. Our Center also remains so popular that we are converting it all to LED lighting.

The education program received a boost with the new makeover of the study pond to the southwest of the center. Ready for 2017 day camps, the current design should deter the formation of unpleasant algal mats while encouraging a wide variety of invertebrate (those without backbones) life. A few micro-islands of large rocks give small critters places to hide as well as some exciting perches for young explorers.

We hope you wander our parks and recreational areas this winter, appreciating the changes, and just... enjoying the view.



*New Cold Storage Building at Marr Park*

---

**Thank yous**

Andi Klein—Halloween decorations

Hawkeye Homecoming Potluck Donors

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Ace and More         | Archer Appliance           |
| Arnolds Motor Supply | Custom Impressions         |
| Dairy Mart           | Family Video               |
| Fin and Feather      | Four Corners BP            |
| HyVee                | Pizza Hut                  |
| Pizza Ranch          | The Shack                  |
| Walmart              | Washington Evening Journal |

Halloween Hike

- |                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Fareway           | Noon Kiwanis |
| HyVee             | SACHA        |
| Sass family farms | Walmart      |

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| TJ Durst                                   | Victor Miller |
| Debbie Stanton                             | Chad Dolan    |
| Jim Blakeney                               | Jeff Koopp    |
| Rita Anderson                              | Wayne Brock   |
| Linda Holz                                 | Liz Kaufman   |
| Rick and Phyllis Hofer                     |               |
| Bob and Barb Donkersloot & family          |               |
| MidPrairie Cub Scout Pack 234 and families |               |
| Kyliegh & Ryann Dolan                      |               |
| Anna & Samantha Holz                       |               |
| Colton Burmeister                          |               |
| Sammi Mellinger                            |               |
| Wyatt Stewart                              |               |



Study Pond at Marr Park

**Washington County Conservation Board**

**Office:** 319/657-2400

**Fax:** 319/657-2500

**E-mail:** wccb@iowatelecom.net

**Website:** co.washington.ia.us

**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  
Jayse Horning, Ranger/Technician

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.**

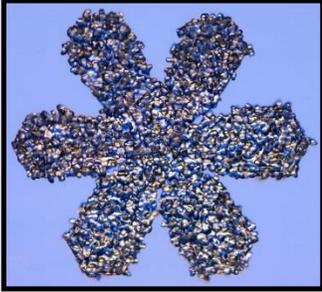
This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

**Good Luck Jayse!**

*Jayse Horning, Ranger/Tech, heads off this winter to the law enforcement academy for 15 weeks of training. He'll return home fully certified in time to assist with our normal busy spring time. We all wish him the best.*

## 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.



Sat., Jan. 21

1:00 p.m.

Marr Park

### *Ice Fishing Fun*

Explore ice fishing during this program that is open to all ages. We'll have pre-drilled holes and ice fishing poles for those that need them. Local experts will be available to assist. In addition, take your turn in a shelter to experience underwater cameras and Vexlars. Afterwards, warm up in the Center with some hot cocoa.

*Snowflake coated with rime*

Sat., Feb. 11

9:00 a.m.

Hayes Timber

### *Naked Tree Hike*

The trees are naked, not you, in this delightful morning stroll through Hayes Timber. We'll explore how the trees look without their leaves and learn some identifying characteristics. We'll also keep an eye out for any inhabitants of this old woodland and their signs. Conveniently located inside the city limits of Washington, Hayes Timber often gives the sense of a much larger and less urban woodland. Come enjoy this hike with us and see for yourself.



*Radiating dendrite*

Sat., March 18

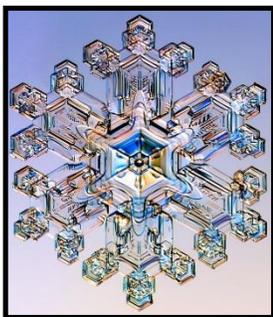
10:00 a.m.

Marr Park

### *Little Dippers: Spring Colors*

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 the different colors of spring and will include an indoor story, activity, craft, and a short outside hike all about basic colors in nature.

## Watch For Upcoming Programs



*Plate Snowflake*

Our *Night Prairie Burn* will once again be scheduled for early April. Keep an eye out for the date in area newspapers, radio, and on our web. We will be burning the section near the conservation center so the building will be open for viewing and warming up, in case of early April chills.

*Day Camp registration* forms will be available on Monday, April 3. For preschoolers on up to current 6th graders, these fun nature summer camps often fill quickly. Request to have a form sent to you by contacting the naturalist at [wccbnaturalist@iowatelecom.net](mailto:wccbnaturalist@iowatelecom.net) and the form in pdf format will be sent to you April 3.

## Know Your Snow

The Eskimos, or properly, the Inuit, we are told, have over 50 words for snow. In hearing this, we become properly amazed at a culture so in tune to their surroundings. After all, in English snow is just “snow,” right? Well, maybe not.

Once we begin to consider all the words that we use for snow, some rather common, some used by sports, and some used by meteorologists, and 50 begins to sound like no big deal. Take the following 44 words, for example:

### Compound words

<i>Snowflake</i>	<i>Snowfall</i>
<i>Snowstorm</i>	<i>Snow pile</i>
<i>Snow angel</i>	<i>Snowman</i>
<i>Snowball</i>	<i>Fluffy snow</i>
<i>Wet snow</i>	<i>Snowbank</i>
<i>Snowpack</i>	<i>Snowdrift</i>
<i>Blowing snow</i>	

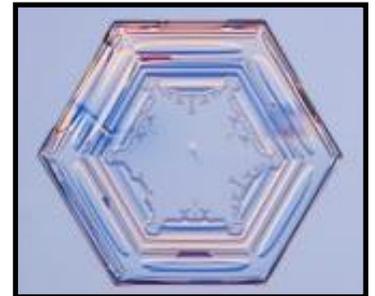


*Stellar Plate*

*Whiteout:* blowing snow that blocks visibility  
*Glacier:* large area of flowing glacial snow  
*Crust:* hardened upper layer of snowpack  
*Slopes:* Snow on mountain for skiing  
*Hard pack:* old, hard snow  
*Mogul:* tiny snow pile for skiing  
*Thaw:* when the snow melts  
*Quinzhee:* hut made of snow  
*Dusting:* a very light snow fall  
*Firn:* snow transformed into glacial snow

### Meteorological words for snowflakes shapes

*Simple prisms*  
*Needles*  
*Columns*  
*Stellar plates*  
*Sectored plates*  
*Stellar dendrites*  
*Capped columns*  
*Bullet Rosettes*  
*Radiating dendrites*  
*Polycrystal*



*Simple Prism Snowflake*



*Bulleted Rosette Snowflake*

*Flurry:* snowfall with sudden start and stop  
*Sleet:* mix of rain and snow  
*Blizzard:* snowstorm with high winds, frigid temperatures, and high snowfall

*Icicle:* melted snow, often off eaves, and refrozen  
*Slush:* partially melted snow  
*Crystals:* frozen water vapor, make snowflakes when joined together  
*Rime:* ice coating on snow flake  
*Graupel:* heavy rime, making flake look like tiny snowball  
*Powder:* new, fluffy snow, good for skiing  
*Avalanche:* a huge area of snow sloughing off a mountain without warning  
*Accumulation:* amount of snowfall

Challenge: how many words can you think of that refer to “ice” in English?



*Needle Snowflake*

*Notes:* Some of the listed words were found on the website “Fifty-five English Words for Snow.”

Also, after a quick search on the internet, you can discover a debate over whether the Inuit’s 50 words really do exist. Without actually knowing the language, this editor feels the issue is one of semantics: what counts as a separate word (e.g. compound words) and what counts as a reference to snow (e.g. words like “slush” and “avalanche”). In other words, how picky are you? (In 55 English Words, the author listed “Water”... defined as “melted snow.”)

PRESORTED STANDARD  
U.S. Postage  
**Paid**  
Kalona IA 52247  
Permit #7

WASHINGTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD  
2943 HIGHWAY 92  
AINSWORTH, IA 52201

Electronic Service Requested

***Winter Center Hours***

Tuesday—Saturday  
8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Sunday and Monday  
Closed

***Changes Proposed for Foster Woods***

Fosters Woods was donated to the county by the Foster family in the 1960s for public use, environmental education, and natural resource protection. After gathering input from a wide range of sources, the board has now created a plan to improve this resource.

The main project will focus on improving the fisheries and limiting the chances of fish kills, a recurring problem. This will include raising the pond two feet and clearing out large trees and the understory near the pond to open it up to sunlight and air as well as limit leaf fall into the pond itself.

In addition, a shelter will be added along the shoreline and a loop trail will run from around the pond and include the untouched south portion of the park. With the DNR, we will restock the pond with

the standard bass, bluegill, and catfish. Plans are to maintain the woods surrounding the pond with prescribed burning, a tool being used effectively in the management of several WCCB properties.

