

Earthtones

Winter 2019

Wonderful Water

Earth is a water planet. Us land-locked Iowans may have trouble imagining this, but the planet truly has more water than land.

Our bodies are no different. About 60% of an average adult is water. This need for water exists in *all* other life forms. No water, no life. Period.

Water, though, is necessary for more than just body function. It affects, directly or indirectly, almost all aspects of life. It helps drive our climate and weather. It provides homes for the majority of life. We use large amounts in order to build the products we use. And, of course, it is fun to play in.

Much of this is possible through water's unique quirks. It is the only substance on Earth found naturally in all three states of matter: solid, liquid and gas.

Water vapor (gas) may be invisible, but it can be felt. As the summer heats up, the air has the capacity to hold more water. Hence, that heavy, muggy summer air. On the flip side, winter's dry air robs moisture from our skin, increasing sales of chapstick and lotion. This is the same process that allows evaporation of water from puddles without warming to the boiling point. The air wants to be balanced, with our skin or with the puddle. Water moves, then, from a place of high content (skin/puddles) to low (the air). Good for puddles, bad for skin.

Usually when we say "water", we mean the substance in liquid form. Logical, as liquid water makes up 71% of the Earth. The 97% locked up in our oceans absorbs heat slowly and releases it just as slowly. This characteristic of water creates different currents

around the world. The currents bring warm or cold water to areas otherwise cold or warm, respectively. These movements and temperature changes start chain reactions that affect weather everywhere, even in land-locked Iowa.

When we get to the solid forms, things become rather interesting. Snow and ice both have their own unique properties.

Ice is frozen liquid water. The quirk of ice that enables ice fishing is the same that enables aquatic life to survive the winter.

As a substance moves from gas to liquid to solid, it becomes more dense. Except for water. Water freezes—becomes solid—at 32 degrees Fahrenheit. However, it is most dense (heaviest) at 39 degrees. That means as the temps drop below 39, the water gets lighter. Thus, ice floats and protects aquatic life from frigid winter weather. It also allows polar bears to wander upon the ice for a meal of seal.

Snow, with its lovely flakes, forms differently than ice. Still solid water, it is actually made by the freezing of water vapor, skipping the fluid state entirely. Like ice, snow offers protection for animals. During frigid weather, snow acts as an insulator and protection from the wind. It also protects the ground from frost going too deep.

Water surely is a wonderful, life-giving substance. Its unique properties are essential to all life..... Try to remember that the next time you are shoveling a foot of snow.

By Pamela Holz, Naturalist

Our Director's Final Words

It has been a pleasure to serve as only the second Executive Director in the history of the Washington County Conservation Board. We were voted into existence to serve the conservation needs of the citizens of Washington County in 1963, and it has been my role to lead these efforts here since October of 1984. Way back then, those hiring me presented the challenge of making this program grow and prosper.

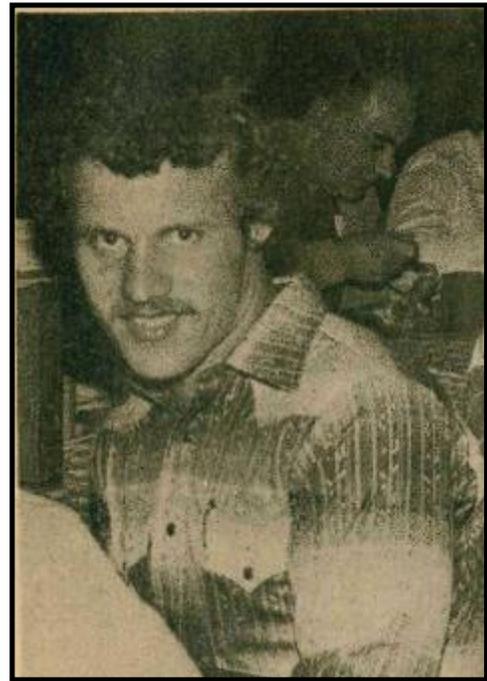
Our team took on that challenge. We accomplished many things with little or no involvement of property tax dollars. These developmental projects should continue to grow and flourish until the next ice age. The fact is, people's willingness to contribute was one of the measuring sticks we used to help determine the needs versus the wants of the citizens we served. For sure, our program has grown slowly and steadily throughout my time here.

Balance in life is essential, and this agency has prided itself in its efforts to maintain this. A few quick terms that come to mind are conservation versus preservation and parks versus wildlife management areas. And prairie versus crops versus timber versus wetlands versus . . . Even services provided versus the costs of providing them. Did we achieve balance? All any of us would say is we honestly tried.

The bottom line is, as with any public or private agency, it was the people involved that determined every aspect of our program at all times. Almost all of us made every effort to treat every person with dignity and respect. That being said, our constitution guarantees the *pursuit* of happiness. Achieving it falls to the individual. I am eternally grateful for the people who could disagree without turning hateful, and wished I could say that was everyone. Our partnerships with great people brought us every bit of the success we achieved. And successful we assuredly were!

As I retire (thank you IPERS!) on December 31st, it is my full intention to remain available but not to interfere. I have full confidence that the Washington County Conservation Board will continue to prosper and flourish. I base this confidence upon the great public support as well as the excellent combination of dedicated professional staff and incredible board members and volunteers currently involved. The fact is that I am so confident in this that I have every intention of continuing to make Washington County my home. Therefore, I say "see ya" instead of good bye.

By Steve Anderson, Director



Steve's first newspaper photo

From 1984

If You Think It's Cold Now...

On and off for the last million or so years, northern lands were covered in huge ice sheets. These Ice Ages not only carved the landscape they flowed over, but affected all other aspects of life on Earth. Worldwide climate changed. Sea levels dropped. Some areas plunged into drought as ice sheets tied up available water.

The last two ice sheets—the Illinoian and the Wisconsinan—crept into what is now Iowa. How well do you know these Ice Ages?

Answers on page 5.

1. How many degrees colder was the average worldwide temperature during the Ice Ages?
 - A. 32
 - B. 55
 - C. 0
 - D. 6
2. How is glacial snow/ice made?
 - A. It's ice
 - B. Accumulated snow
 - C. Compressed and recrystallized snow
 - D. Snowfall in cold regions
3. Why were many of the Ice Age animals so large?
 - A. To keep warm
 - B. To defend against predators
 - C. Easier to travel on ice
 - D. More energy for longer migrations
4. True or False: The last Ice Age (Wisconsinan) covered all of Iowa.
5. Which of the following is NOT an Iowan Ice Age animal?
 - A. Mastodon
 - B. Penguin
 - C. Giant beaver
 - D. Horse
6. When did the last Ice Age end?
 - A. 10,000 years ago
 - B. 100,000 years ago
 - C. 1 million years ago
 - D. 1,000 years ago
7. What is the top speed of a glacier per day?
 - A. 10 ft.
 - B. 50 ft.
 - C. Half mile
 - D. 1 mile
8. What is a glacial erratic?
 - A. Places where the glacier went off in an unexpected direction
 - B. A rock brought south by the glaciers
 - C. The unstable weather period between the Ice Age and the interglacial period
 - D. Formations left behind by the glaciers science has yet to explain
9. How many glacial lakes does Iowa have?
 - A. 6
 - B. 11
 - C. 23
 - D. 34
10. How can you tell if a valley was carved by glaciers?
 - A. It's U-shaped
 - B. It's V-shaped
 - C. It's flat
 - D. It's full of glacial debris
11. The ice sheets were continental glaciers. How many continental glaciers do we have today?
 - A. None
 - B. 1
 - C. 2
 - D. 4
12. True or False: South America was never covered by the glaciers of the Ice Ages.



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. 19 1:00 p.m. Marr Park
Ice Fishing Clinic

Discover a new way to get outside in winter or learn some new tricks during this family-oriented clinic. We'll help you with gear, bait, holes, and advice. You just need to dress warmly. We may even feature ways to see what is happening below your feet. Hot cocoa will be served in the Center when any are in need of warming up.

Sat., Feb. 9 1:00 p.m. CEC
Memory Keepers

Create nontraditional books, perfect for keeping track of memories, journaling, drawing, scrapbooking, or other keepsakes. Book making, in some form or another, has been around since the invention of the written word. But a "book" need not be simply bound pages. Many other creative forms exists. We'll discuss book making and you'll be able to make several of your own "memory keepers" to take home.

Sat., March 9 1:00 p.m. Marr Park
Be a Survivor

How well can you withstand the elements? What elements do you have to withstand? What situations may place you in a survival situation? What are your basic needs and how do you meet them? Learn some basic survival skills, focusing mostly on winter, in this family orientated program. If weather permits, we will head outside for experimenting with shelter building and fire starting.

Washington County Conservation Board

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Randi Jenkins, Center Coordinator
Fritz Engel, Maint. Technician
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.

Watch For Upcoming Programs

Our *Night Prairie Burn* at Marr Park will once again be scheduled for early April. Keep an eye out for the date in area newspapers, radio, on our web, and Facebook page. We will be burning the section next to the highway.

Day Camp registration forms will be available on Monday, April 1. 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@gmail.com and the form in pdf format will be sent to you on April 1.

Halloween Hike Appreciation

Despite a bit of drizzly weather, over 100 people came out to learn about nocturnal animals' adaptations. This event wouldn't be possible without the assistance of the following. We give all those listed below a huge round of applause.

Donations

Brandon Black	Fareway
Hills Bank	Hy-vee
Noon Kiwanis	Pizza Ranch
SACHA	Sass Family Farms
Walmart	Washington Culligan
Cub Scout Pack 234	from Mid-Prairie

Volunteers

Jim Blakeney	Ron Brock
Wayne Brock	Craig Capps
Dolan Family	Anna Holz
Linda Holz	Don Kline
Jeff Koepf	Olivia Pacha
WCDC	
Donkersloot extended family	
Angela and Emma Langstraat	



Participants experiment with echolocation

Meet Randi



Welcome Randi Jenkins as our new Center Coordinator. Randi is a native of Ainsworth and a graduate of Highland High School. After attending Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College

and Iowa State University, she received her Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and Environmental Studies in 2017. During college, she interned with the Conservation Board during the summer of 2016, helping with anything from day camps to mowing. This past summer, she became the paid intern under naturalist Pam Holz. At the end of the summer, she transitioned from that position to substituting for the previous Center Coordinator during her maternity leave.

Randi currently lives in Iowa City with her fiancé and Dalmatian. She enjoys traveling and being outdoors (mostly in the summertime). She enjoys our county parks and wants to make sure others also can utilize the wide range of recreational opportunities offered here. She states, "My goals here are making sure everyone who comes to visit the park has a great time, anyone that wants to use the facilities is able to do so, and make sure there is someone to help anyone who wants to be more inclusive with nature and the natural environment."

Answers to page 3:

1. D
2. C
3. A
4. False (only north central Iowa)
5. B
6. A
7. B
8. B
9. D
10. A
11. C (Greenland and Antarctica)
12. False

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.

Closed
Sunday—Monday

Project Updates

Kewash Trail

Phase one of the paving of the Kewash Nature Trail is nearly complete. Final seeding will take place as the weather permits in the spring, making the project complete. In the meantime, the trail is open for use. Users will be pleased to discover we were able to add a new overlay to the asphalt within the city limits.

Again, thanks for financial assistance from a TAP Grant, the Riverboat Foundation, REAP, City of Washington, and help from the City of Washington, the County Engineer, and the Regional Kirkwood Center.



CEC Displays

With the generous donation from the Washington County Riverboat Foundation, the CEC will soon be seeing new exhibits. These open-ended, interactive displays will introduce visitors to local environments. Features include a two-level tree, crawl-through ant hill, and interchangeable activity tables.

Fern Cliff

Anyone driving past Fern Cliff will be certain to see the absence of the picnic shelter in the lower drive. The structure no longer met safety requirements. The Board is now in discussion over further development of this area, including a new latrine, its possible location, and a new shelter. Your feedback, as