

Earthtones

Winter 2021

Trout Fishing at Marr Park!

There are many opportunities for anglers to catch trout in Iowa. In fact, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), stocks trout in 50 publicly-accessible streams in Iowa, as well as 9 special trout fisheries, and 18 community trout fisheries. Community trout stockings offer a “close to home” option for anglers in cities and towns across Iowa. These cool weather stockings provide easy access to trout fishing in areas that cannot support trout in the summer. This fall, the small pond at Marr Park, was 1 of the 18 community trout fisheries stocked. Iowa DNR fisheries staff stocked the pond with roughly 1,000 Rainbow Trout.

If you are an avid angler and are interested in this unique opportunity to catch trout, there are some things to keep in mind before you head out. Iowa residents and nonresidents 16 years or older are required to have a valid Iowa Fishing License. Additionally, to legally fish or possess trout in Iowa, you must pay the Trout Stamp Fee. It can be purchased online, or from a local licensing vendor. Children under 16 may possess or fish for trout without a fishing license or trout fee. However, they must fish with a properly licensed adult. The daily limit for trout is 5. If fishing with a youth, the maximum number of trout taken cannot exceed 5. With the purchase of the Trout Stamp Fee, youth can keep their own daily limit.

What is a Rainbow Trout? Olive to greenish-blue over most of the upper body, with a silvery-white belly, the Rainbow Trout stands out from other trout species. They have a strikingly prominent pink-red horizontal stripe that extends down both sides of their body. Rainbow Trout populations are dependent on hatchery production, as they are not

native to Iowa. Stocking ends when the water temperature of fisheries, such as Marr Park, exceeds 70 degrees. Their primary habitat is cool streams and other bodies of water with riffles of rocks and gravel, deep pools, overhead cover, and a swift current. Their diet is highly variable, and may consist of mayflies, caddisflies, stoneflies and their larvae, small mollusks and fish.



Since the stocking of the Rainbow Trout in the small pond, we have seen an increase in fishing activity. Trout fishing is often overlooked in Iowa. Do not forget to stop by! You are sure to catch fish. A chance like this does not come often in this part of the state, so get that fishing license, grab your gear, some family and friends, and come on out to Marr Park! For those interested, we are tentatively going to be having a Trout Ice Fishing Tournament on Saturday, February 20th, starting at 8:00 AM! For more information, check out the winter calendar on page 4.

By: Megan Jorgensen, Naturalist

2020: A Year in Review

As we prepare to flip the calendar to 2021, I look back at a year that was unlike any other. For most, 2020 will be remembered for its connection to the Covid-19 pandemic. A virus that swept its way across our globe leaving behind an unprecedented wake of destruction that will ripple through society for years to come. During the pandemic, individuals were forced to tighten their inner circles and spend more time with family, in an attempt to slow the spread to aid our overwhelmed healthcare system. As an optimist, I always try to look for silver linings even when at times that may be extremely difficult to do. I recognize that during 2020, many of us lost loved ones and friends, and in many cases were unable to say good bye. Through all of these experiences one source of hope and release was ever present, that being our natural resources.

More than ever before, individuals turned to their local natural resources as a form of mental and physical therapy. Individuals visited parks they played at as a kid with their family and ventured to that hidden gem of a fishing hole that their grandpa shared with them years ago. The Iowa DNR indicated significant spikes in both fishing and hunting license sales over the last six months. Sporting goods stores struggled to keep canoes, kayaks, and camping equipment in stock. When times were bleakest, our natural resources stood strong, and although they never left, they were brought back to the forefront of what we sometimes forget is truly important.

When I think back on the year 2020, here at Washington County Conservation, I'll think about how fortunate I am to have a great staff. 2020 forced myself and the conservation board to make decisions that were extremely difficult but those decisions were eased with the help of my staff. I'll think about finally bringing back hunter education classes to our nature center, which was something that took years of planning and effort and would not

have been possible without the passion and dedication of our Naturalist Megan Jorgensen. I'll think about the unbelievable spike in trail usage here in Washington county. Not only the Kewash Trail but also our more secluded trail systems at: Brinton Timber, Clemons Creek, and Sockum Ridge. Each of these recreation areas experienced more traffic than ever before. I'll think about the relationship that the conservation board forged with the City of Kalona, that will allow us to create a new footprint in the northern half of Washington county. I'll think about the obstacles that our environmental education team faced as they worked hard to engage individuals of all ages through digital programming when in person programs weren't possible. I'll think about the facelift that was given to our Steinbeck Conference Hall, our conservation office space, and our nature center displays. Each of which has drawn rave reviews and will help form the foundation we're building for the future of conservation.

So although 2020 provided its fair share of hard times, it also provided its share of memories that will last a lifetime. I look forward to the calendar turning to 2021 and I can't wait to see what the next year has to offer here at Washington County Conservation. Happy New Year!!

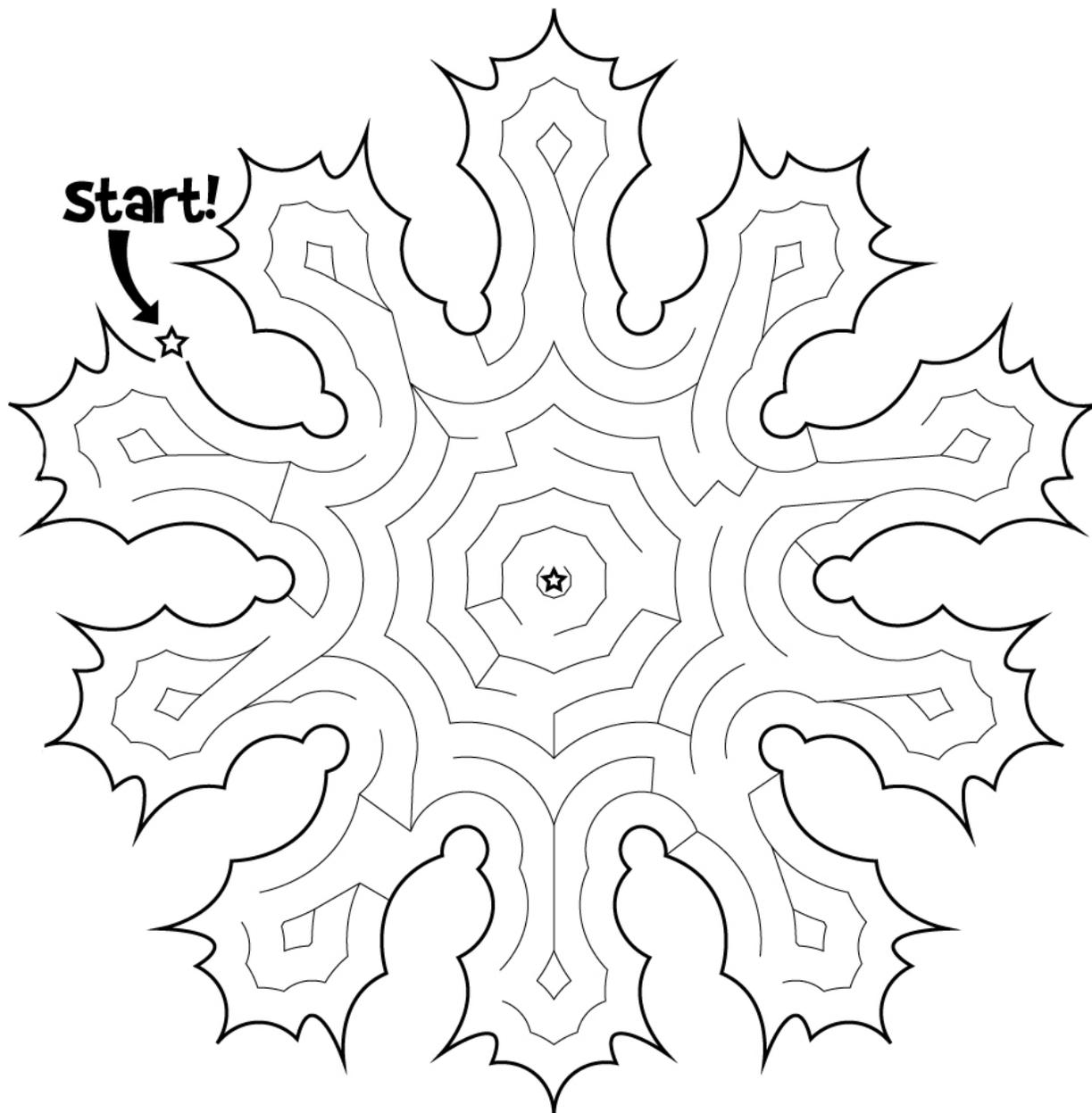
Zach
Rozmus
Executive
Director



Snowflake Maze!

Test your skills and see if you can connect the stars through the maze.

Answers on page 5.



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.

Wedns, Jan. 6th **9:30 a.m.** **CEC**

Toddler Time

Join us at the Conservation center for Toddler Time! This month, we will be learning all about the White-tailed Deer and their antlers. Face coverings are required!

Wedns, Feb. 3rd **9:30 p.m.** **CEC**

Toddler Time

Join us at the Conservation Center for Toddler Time! This month, we will be learning all about Nocturnal Animals. Face coverings are required.

Sat, Feb. 20th **8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.** **Marr Park**

Ice Fishing Tournament

Join us at the little pond next to the gazebo for an ice fishing tournament. Prizes will be awarded to those who catch the biggest fish of several species. Call us at 319-657-2400 to register.

Wedns, March 3rd **9:30 a.m.** **CEC**

Toddler Time

Join us at the Conservation Center for Toddler Time! This month, we will be learning all about spring babies! If it is nice, we will be outside. If we have to be indoors, social distancing measures will be in place and face coverings will be required.

Sat., March 20th **8:00 a.m.** **CEC**

Hunter Education Classroom Course

Washington County Conservation will be sponsoring a FREE Hunter Education Classroom course on Saturday, March 20th. The first day will be spent in the classroom, while the second day will be a field day with live fire. Students must be 11 years old or older to attend. Please note, certificates do not become valid until their 12th birthday!



Washington County Conservation Board

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Members: Craig Capps
Bill Nickell
Barb Donkersloot
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Kim Prier

Staff: Zach Rozmus, Exec. Director
Megan Jorgensen, Naturalist
Randi Brase, Center Coordinator
Fritz Engel, Maint. Technician
Cody Smith, Ranger/Technician
Brett Johnson, 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.

Special Thanks

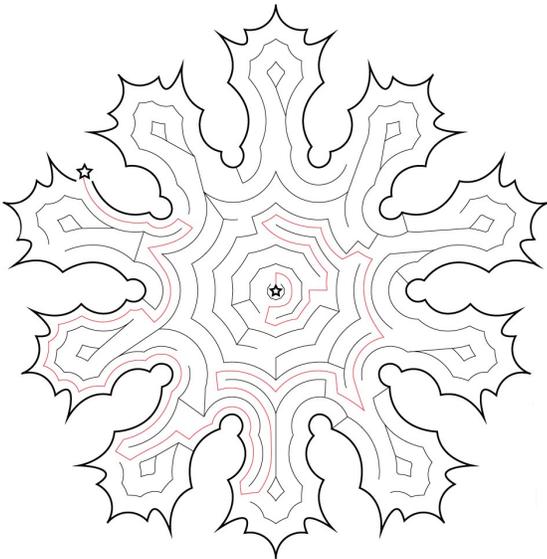
We would like to thank the Washington County Pheasants Forever group, the Washington County Whitetails Unlimited group, and Iowa Safari Club International for your incredibly generous donations to the Environmental Education Program. Your donations will be put towards the purchase of archery equipment, as it is our goal to implement archery into our environmental education programming. This includes spring and fall field trips, and summer camps.



Other Donations

Thank you to Linda McNeil for her generous donation. It will help fund future conservation projects.

Snowflake Maze



Halloween Hike Appreciation

The weather was beautiful for our annual Halloween Hike; it was the perfect evening to learn about what it means to be a conservationist. The Halloween Hike is our biggest event of the year and wouldn't be possible without the assistance of the following. We give all those listed below a huge round of applause.

Donations

Fareway
Hills Bank
Sass Family Farms
Culligan
Walmart
Hy-Vee

Volunteers

Bob, Barb, and Austin Donkersloot
(and granddaughters)
Craig and Ila Capps

Environmental Education Updates

The pandemic has continued to impact the way we provide environmental education to the county. With the exception of one school district, we have not been able to bring programs to students in person. With the help of technology, we have been able to provide students with interactive virtual lessons through Zoom and Google Meet. Additionally, we have been able to provide public programming at the Conservation Education Center, while maintaining COVID-19 safety measures.

If you are interested in programming, whether it be virtual or in-person for a group, please reach out to Megan via email at wccbnaturalist2@gmail.com or via phone, at 319-657-2400.

WASHINGTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
2943 HIGHWAY 92
AINSWORTH, IA 52201

Electronic Service Requested

Winter Center Hours

Monday- Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Closed
Saturday- Sunday

Hunter Education Classroom Course

Washington County Conservation is proud to be sponsoring a spring Hunter Education Classroom course on Saturday, March 20th at the Conservation Education Center.

Are you a hunter? If not, have you ever thought about going hunting? Are you a youth or adult who has tagged along with family or friends and is ready to seek your first harvest? If so, Iowa law requires anyone born after January 1, 1972, to become hunter education certified before they are eligible to purchase an Iowa hunting license.

Hunter education is a program designed to introduce students to life-long skills that are important to many different types of outdoor recreational opportunities. Students will learn basic survival and first aid skills, water safety, wildlife identification, and

the basics of wildlife management, hunting laws, and firearm/archery safety. Hunter education also stresses the importance of individual responsibility and outdoor ethics.

The first day will be spent in the classroom, following the curriculum. It will also include a laws talk presented by a local Conservation Officer. The second day will be a field day following a review and completion of the exam. The field day will involve live fire and a safety trail. Sign up at the Iowa DNR website under *Hunter Education*.

Students must be 11 years or older to attend unaccompanied by an adult. Please note, certificates do not become valid until their 12th birthday. For more information, please call 319-657-4200, or email wccbnaturalist2@gmail.com.