

# Earthtones

Autumn 2021

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## *Brinton Timber, A Hidden Gem in Washington County*

We are approaching the time of year when the weather turns cooler. Leaves change color and fall, transforming our natural landscapes, making them arguably the most beautiful they will be all year. While Washington County Conservation has a lot to offer, as far as outdoor recreation areas, one in particular will make anyone feel at home in nature. That particular area is Brinton Timber.

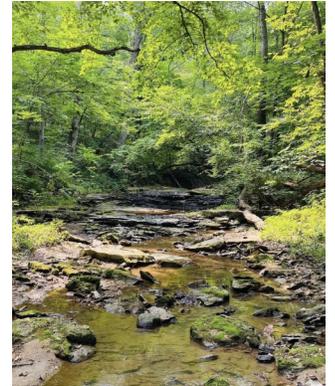
Brinton Timber is our largest preserve, located along the Skunk River in the midst of 1,000 acres. 320.5 acres in total, Brinton Timber was acquired in 1967. This “living monument” features a wide range of natural features as it transitions from upland to lowland timber. Several small streams cut through the park on their way to the Skunk River. A few shallow ponds may be found where, in spring and summer, visitors can be serenaded by frog songs. Near the creek, rock outcroppings await discovery.



In early spring, the abundance and variety of wildflowers in the timber, colors the landscape. When the oak leaves are about the size of a mouse's ear, morel mushrooms can be found here. As the weather warms, the trees and shrubs come alive with bird song. Some species can be spotted as they use this

wildlife refuge as a layover on their journey north. Others can be found gathering materials for their nest. Woodpeckers call up in the treetops. Their drumming can be heard throughout the park.

Return in the fall as the trees show off their colors. Oaks, maples, hickories, and walnuts decorate the hills. Listen as dead leaves crunch underfoot, and watch the squirrels gather nuts. You may also visit in the winter. After the first snowfall, follow the abundant tracks made by wildlife, including deer, squirrel, rabbit, and mice. Feel the hush, winter makes in the depth of the woods. If you choose to visit Brinton Timber, take the time to enjoy the solitude of the wilderness.



Brinton Timber is located northwest of Brighton. Take Highway 1/78 west out of Brighton for 1 mile. Here you will turn north on Fir Avenue. Brinton Timber is located at the end of the road. Amenities include primitive camping, pit toilets, a picnicking area, hiking, biking, equestrian and cross country skiing trails. Brinton Timber is open year round. Hours are from 4:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.



Megan Jorgensen,  
Naturalist

## *Kewash Nature Trail*

As of August 16th, 2021 the long awaited Phase 2 enhancements to the Kewash Nature Trail are underway. Years of planning, grant writing, and fundraising efforts have led to a large scale trail project that will involve no local tax dollars. Phase 2 will involve the grading and paving of approximately 1.41 miles of existing Kewash Nature Trail. The project will begin at the west end of where Phase 1 of the project left off in 2019. The 10 foot wide 6" thick concrete trail will extend west from this location to the Crooked Creek Pedestrian Bridge. The Crooked Creek bridge is a historical scenic location in Washington County, that has been used for generations as a beautiful backdrop for wedding photos, senior pictures, and as a hidden gem of a fishing location. The current existing trail is surfaced with a 3/8" minus limestone. This is the same surface type that is used on the entire trail, excluding the areas that have received pavement or enhancements. Although this surface choice is a cost-effective one, it also has its limitations. Fluctuating weather conditions during the fall and winter months can limit travel on portions of the trail due to varying surface conditions. Paving sections of the trail such as the one designated in Phase 2 would alleviate most, if not all of these variables, and in turn, allow more year-round usage. The continued paving will allow additional accessibility to areas of the Kewash Trail that would otherwise be difficult to access for individuals with alternative methods of mobility. Thus, continuing recent investments that the WCCB has made towards projects that are all-inclusive to all individuals. Funding sources for the project include: a Transportation Alternative Program Grant, a Wellmark Foundation Grant, funds derived from the WCCB's capital projects and REAP accounts, as well as private donations.

We apologize for the inconvenience of the trail closure. It is our goal to have the project completed in a timely manner.

Zach Rozmus, Executive Director

## *Environmental Ed. Updates*

Like every year, summer 2021 flew by incredibly fast. Randi Brase (Naturalist Assistant) and I spent the better part of the summer diligently planning, preparing, and providing day camps to kids throughout the county and beyond. This year, we were able to open our camps to full capacity, which was 15 campers. We were also able to host a camp for every age group this year, something we were unable to do last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

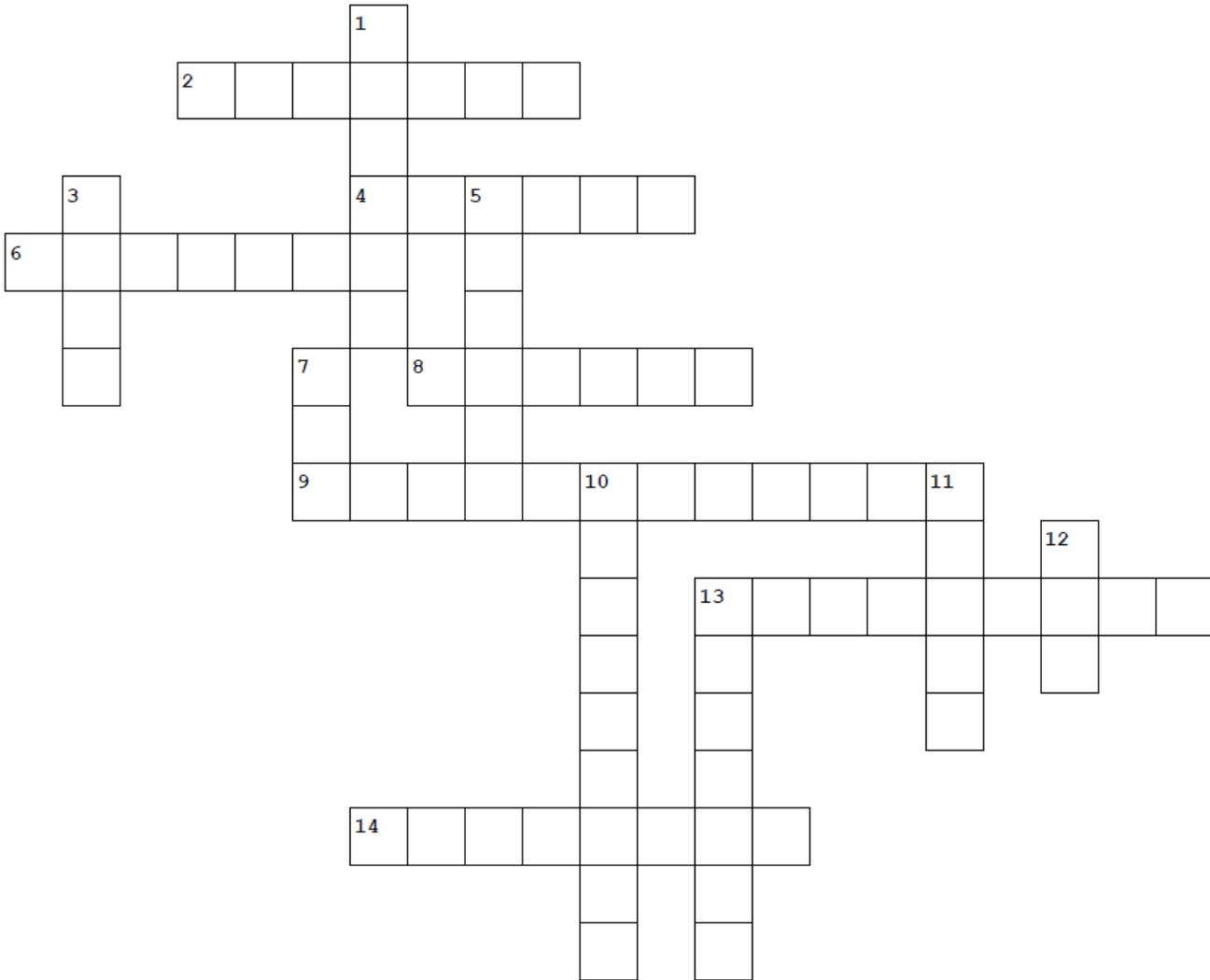
We kicked off our camping season with Dragonfly Camp, our camp for 1st and 2nd graders. We provided an Olympic themed experience for them. Brand new for 2021, our next camp was Archery Camp. This camp was for 4th-7th graders. I have never seen so much enthusiasm for archery. Many had never shot a bow before. It was awesome to see their excitement when they hit the target for the first time. Our final camp for June, was Tadpole Camp. Designed with preschoolers and kindergarteners in mind, these kiddos got to explore our wilderness in search of signs of wildlife.

In July, we hosted Mink Camp and Kestrel Camp. Mink Camp is our camp for 5th-7th graders. They learned about the wilderness with a Hunger Games themed camp. Kestrel Camp is our camp for 3rd and 4th graders. They learned about the outdoors with a Harry Potter themed camp. While I am sad that camps are over for the year, I am looking forward to visiting students in their classrooms this school year. As always, feel free to reach out to us for any of your programming needs. You can give us a call at 319-657-2400, or email me at [wccbnaturalist2@gmail.com](mailto:wccbnaturalist2@gmail.com).

Megan Jorgensen, Naturalist



## Fall Crossword



### Across

- 2. Can be carved into a Jack O' Lantern.
- 4. Change color on trees as the weather gets cooler.
- 6. Kids often dress up in one for Halloween.
- 8. Traditional Thanksgiving bird.
- 9. A holiday for giving thanks.
- 13. Kids go trick-or-treating every year on this day.
- 14. Likes to eat acorns and other nuts.

### Down

- 1. Can be picked from trees in the fall. Some like to dip them in caramel.
- 3. How the weather turns in the fall.
- 5. Another word for fall.
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_ Chocolate; a warm chocolatey beverage.
- 10. Used to scare the crows.
- 11. A spooky apparition.
- 12. The brightest fall color.
- 13. When farmers collect corn and beans from fields.

## Autumn 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. September 1st**                      **9:30 a.m.**                      **CEC**  
*Toddler Time*

Join us for Toddler Time! This month, we will be learning all about camouflage, and how animals use it to survive in the wild. If the weather is nice, we will be outside. Otherwise, we will meet in the big room in the Conservation Center.

**Wedns. October 6th**                      **9:30 a.m.**                      **CEC**  
*Toddler Time*

Join us for Toddler Time! This month, we will be learning all about Animal Adaptations. Over time, animals have developed adaptations that help them to survive in the wild. If the weather is nice, we will meet outside. If it is too cold or there is rain, we will be inside the nature center.

**Sat. October 9th**                      **7:00 p.m.**                      **Shelter #3**  
*Movie Night at the Park*

Join us a Shelter #3 for a Halloween themed movie! We will start the movie right at 7:00 p.m. This year, we will be showing the original Ghostbusters movie. Bring chairs or blankets to sit on, and your favorite snacks and drinks. It should be a spooky good time!

**Sat. October 16th**                      **6:00 p.m.**                      **CEC**  
*Halloween Hike*

Join us for our annual Halloween Hike. This year, enter the Tall Tale Trail, where you will be introduced to a traditional Native American story at each station, with fun activities along the way. The event will start at 6:00 p.m., with the last chance to enter the trail being 8:00 p.m. Check-in is in the gravel parking lot near the boat ramp. The trail will begin here, too. We encourage all of our participants to dress in their favorite Halloween costume. The trail will end at the nature center, where refreshments will be served.

**Wedns. November 3rd**                      **9:30 a.m.**                      **CEC**  
*Toddler Time*

Join us for Toddler Time! This month, we will be learning about the difference between nocturnal and diurnal animals. If the weather is not too cold, we will be outside. Otherwise, we will be in the big room in the nature center.

### Washington County Conservation Board

**Office:** 319/657-2400

**Fax:** 319/657-2500

**E-mail:** wscountyconservation@gmail.com

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

**Members:** Craig Capps  
Bill Nickell  
Barb Donkersloot  
Stan Stoops  
Kim Prier

**Staff:** Zach Rozmus, Exec. Director  
Megan Jorgensen, Naturalist  
Randi Brase, Naturalist Asst.  
Fritz Engel, Maint. Supervisor  
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.

## Calendar Continued

**Thurs. November 18th 6:00 p.m. CEC**

### *Crafty Conservationists*

Join our Naturalists for a fun night of holiday crafting. This is an adult only event, and will be limited to 15 participants. Each registered participant will have a choice between 3 different projects to make and take home with them. To register, call us at 319-657-2400. Be prepared to tell us your project choice.

**Wedns. December 1st 9:30 a.m. CEC**

### *Toddler Time*

Join us for Toddler Time! This month, we will be doing animal yoga to stretch our bodies and feel relaxed.

**Sat. December 11th 1:00 p.m. CEC**

### *Holiday at the Center*

Join our naturalists for a family-friendly ornament making event. Each child will make and take home their own ornaments. Family registration is required. There will be half hour time slots for families. Time slots are 1:00-1:30, 1:30-2:00, 2:00-2:30, and 2:30-3:00. To register, call us at 319-657-2400 with the number of people in your party, and your preferred time slot.

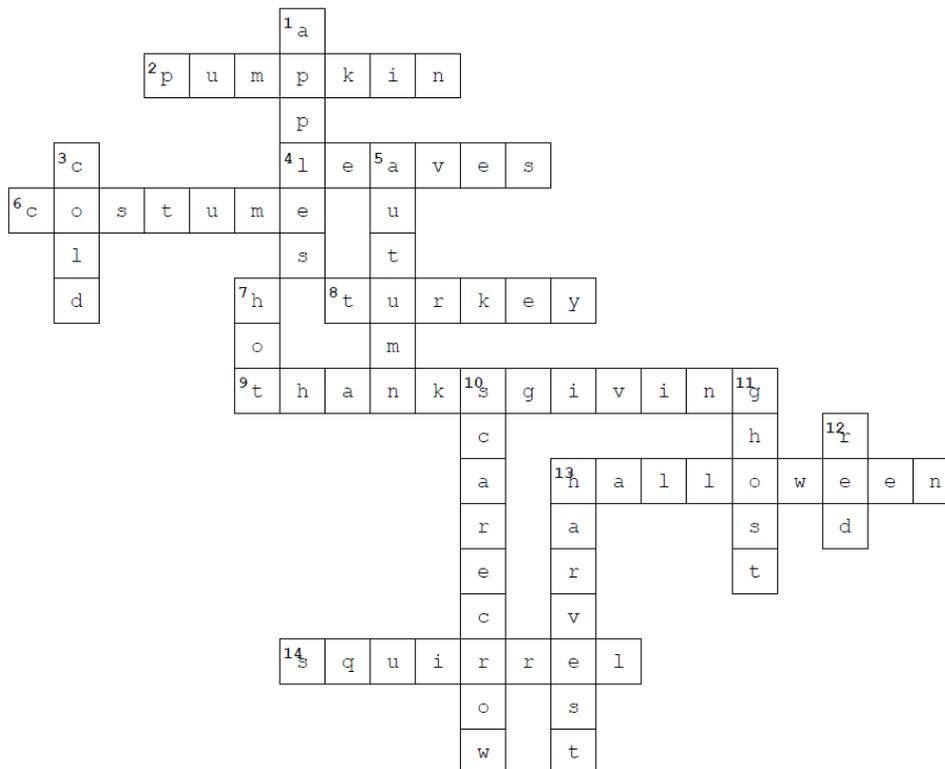
**Sat. December 11th 5:30 p.m. CEC**

### *Movie Night at the Park*

Following our ornament decorating event, we will be hosting movie night. Bring your favorite snacks, drinks, and blankets and pillows to sit on. The movie will be Disney's Cool Runnings.

## Crossword Answers

### Fall Crossword



PRESORTED STANDARD  
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Kalona IA 52247  
Permit #7

WASHINGTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD  
2943 HIGHWAY 92  
AINSWORTH, IA 52201

Electronic Service Requested

*Autumn*  
**Center Hours**  
Monday-Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
  
Closed  
Saturday-Sunday

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## *Winter Wilderness Camp*

Have you ever wondered what happens to the wilderness and it's living things during winter? Have you ever thought about how they are able to survive Iowa's often freezing temperatures and blistering snow storms? Plants and animals have many ways of adapting to their environment during every season, in order to survive. WCCB has some exciting news! In an effort to continue to provide our youth with programming in the winter, we will be hosting Winter Wilderness Camp.

New to this year, kids will have the opportunity to learn all about what happens to the environment when the weather turns cold. Additionally, they will have the chance to try some popular winter activities, such as snow shoeing and sledding. We may even learn some winter survival skills in case any of them ever find ourselves lost outside in the cold.

Camp will be December 28th, 29th and 30th from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. To be eligible, your child must be in 3rd grade or older. Registration is required, with the camp fee of \$20 included. Registration forms will be available on our Facebook page, website, or at the nature center, starting October 1st. We will be limiting the camp to 15 participants. Questions or concerns? Call us at 319-657-2400, or email Megan at [wccbnaturalist2@gmail.com](mailto:wccbnaturalist2@gmail.com).

