

Earthtones

Autumn 2022

Catch & Release

In September of 2020, while hosting a field trip, local students found a newly hatched Snapping Turtle near the water's edge of the small pond at Marr Park. The students were ecstatic of course, and immediately asked me what they should do with the turtle. To make a long story short, we decided to bring the turtle into the nature center. You might be wondering, why in the world would they bring a wild animal into the nature center?



Born the size of a quarter, statistically turtles have a 1% chance of surviving to adulthood. For example, out of 100 turtle eggs laid, only 10 will hatch. Of the 10 that hatch, only 1 will survive to adulthood. Why is this? Sadly, turtle moms are 100% hands-off mothers. Their job is to mate, find a good spot in the ground to create a nest, lay their eggs, and immediately head back into the water without getting eaten. Turtles are vulnerable to predation not only because of their size but also their inability to defend themselves.

Unfortunately, turtle nests are destroyed by mammals such as raccoons and skunks looking for an easy meal. Even certain fish species, such as the Northern Pike or the Muskellunge will devour young turtles. So when we are outdoors and a live hatchling is discovered, we bring it inside in order to give it the best chance of survival. Typically, we will raise the turtles to adulthood, which can be two to

four years depending on the species. During that time, they become an integral part of our environmental education program!

Though we did not name our snapping turtle, we later determined the turtle was a female. During the beginning of her residency at the nature center, she developed shell rot, a condition brought on by lack of Vitamin D. Typically, turtles bask on rocks or logs to "sun bathe." Basking allows their shell to harden, as it is soft at birth. After research, we determined that by giving her daily baths with the application of Iodine, her shell should heal. Miraculously, it did!

For the past two years, she has lived a happy turtle life at the nature center. She lived in a tank with her painted turtle "roommates," was fed daily, and had her favorite rock she could be found basking on almost daily. By the end of this summer, we decided her time with us was coming to an end. Not only was she large enough to be released, we also grew concerned she may some day eat one of her "roommates," as snapping turtles are omnivores.

On August 23rd, we released her to the big pond at Marr Park. She was hesitant at first, but eventually swam off to live a happy life in the wild!



Washington County Conservation Board

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.

Wednesday, October 5th **9:30 a.m.** **CEC**
Toddler Time

Join us for Toddler Time! This month will be a lesson all about the creepy crawlies. We will learn about spiders and beetles and all the bugs we all find a little “eww”. We will explore the outdoors in search of bugs, and finish with a fun craft! All are welcome!

Saturday, October 22nd **6:00-8:00 p.m.** **Marr Park**
Halloween Hike

Join us for our annual Halloween Hike! This year, kids will enter the trail where they will hear tales about *tails of the night*. What might you hear howling in the night? Or *hoo* might you see perched high up in the trees? You might even spot a bat, flapping its tiny bat wings through the dark sky, as it hunts for its next prey. Along the way, there will be games and goodies. The hike will end at the Conservation Education Center, where families are invited to enjoy refreshments and a Halloween movie outside. The hike will begin at 6:00 pm, with 7:30 being the last chance to enter the trail. The movie will begin promptly at 7:30 pm.



Saturday, November 19th **5:00-7:00 p.m.** **CEC**
Holiday at the Park

Join us for our annual Holiday at the Park ornament decorating event! We will have our usual wood cookie ornaments that kids will be able to decorate however they'd like. We will of course have plenty of samples! We will also be doing a couple pine cone ornaments! The event starts at 5:00 pm at the nature center, and ends at 7:00. Give us a call at 319-657-2400 or email wccbnaturalist2@gmail.com to register.

Wednesday, December 28th & 29th **9:00-12:00 p.m.** **Marr Park**
Winter Wilderness Camp

Do you have a child in your life who loves the outdoors? Join us for Winter Wilderness Camp. Similar to our summer camps, kids will be introduced to the wilderness in Winter. Kids will have the chance to do several outdoor activities such as sledding and snowshoeing. The camp is open to 4th-7th graders, and will be weather pending. If we do not have snow, we will cancel. Registration opens Friday, October 7th. Forms will be available online or at the nature center. There is a \$20 registration fee required. Questions? Give us a call at 319-567-2400.

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, Center Coordinator
Fritz Engel, Maint. Supervisor
Cody Smith, Ranger/Technician
Brett Johnson, Ranger/Technician
Jacob Adrian, Maint. 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.

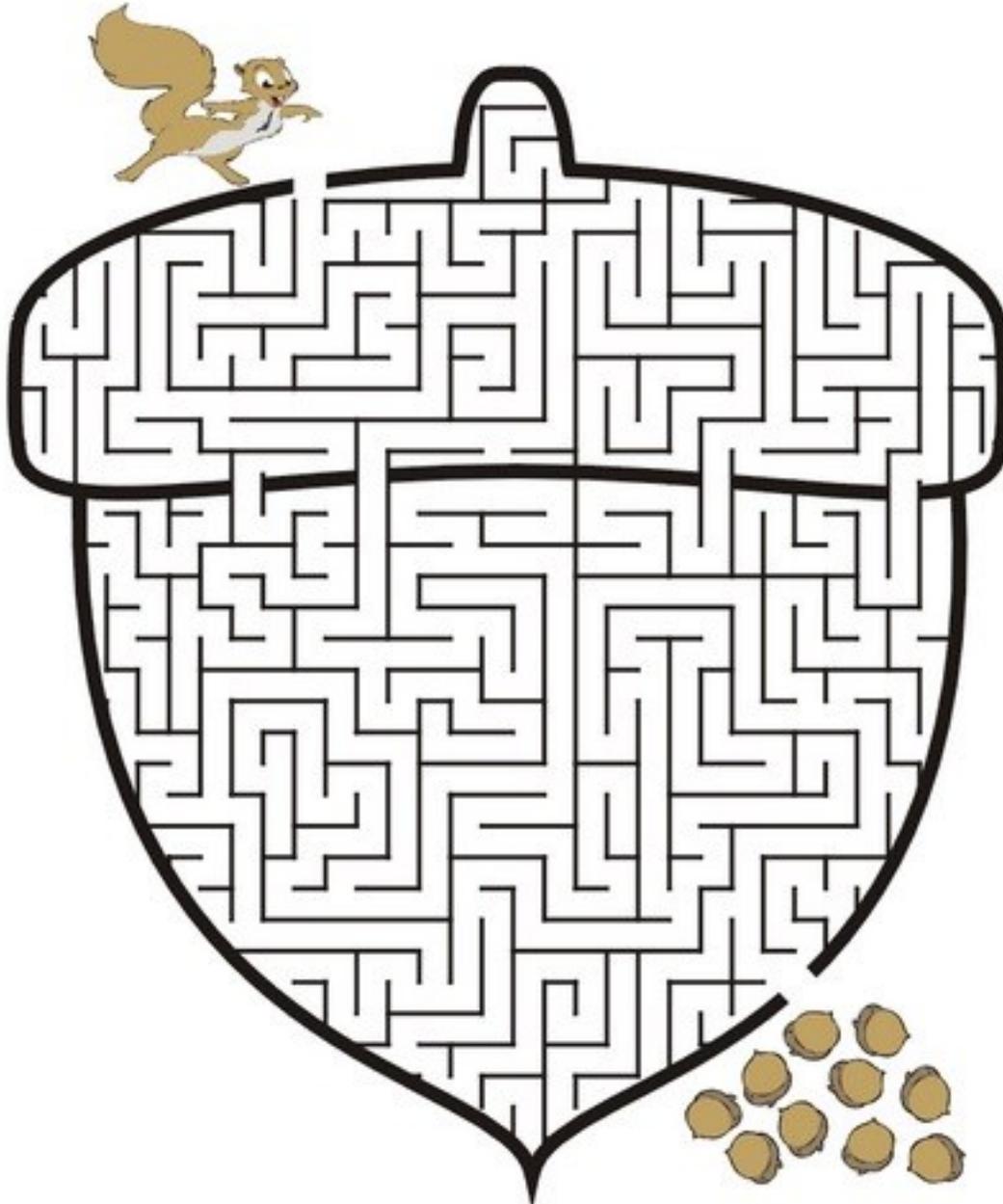
The WCCB is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

If you would like a copy of this newsletter in larger print, please contact our office.

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

Acorn Maze

Help the squirrel through the maze to find its acorns



Maintenance Technician Hired

The Washington County Conservation Board (WCCB) is pleased to announce that we have added a new staff member to our team. Join us in welcoming Jacob Adrian to our staff as an additional Maintenance Technician. A native to Keokuk County, Jacob was born and raised on his family farm where they raised livestock and would hunt and trap during the winter months. After graduating from Mid-Prairie High School in 2016, Jacob continued to farm. In addition, he worked as a seasonal ranger for Keokuk County Conservation Board. In that position, he learned to care for public lands, and to deploy conservation efforts to maintain those lands.

Jacob currently lives in Keota with his wife and kids. In his free time, he enjoys traveling to new places to camp and canoe with his family. His goal as a staff member with WCCB is to be a good steward of the public lands and parks in Washington County, and help to create places for anyone and everyone to have a place they can relax and enjoy God's creations.

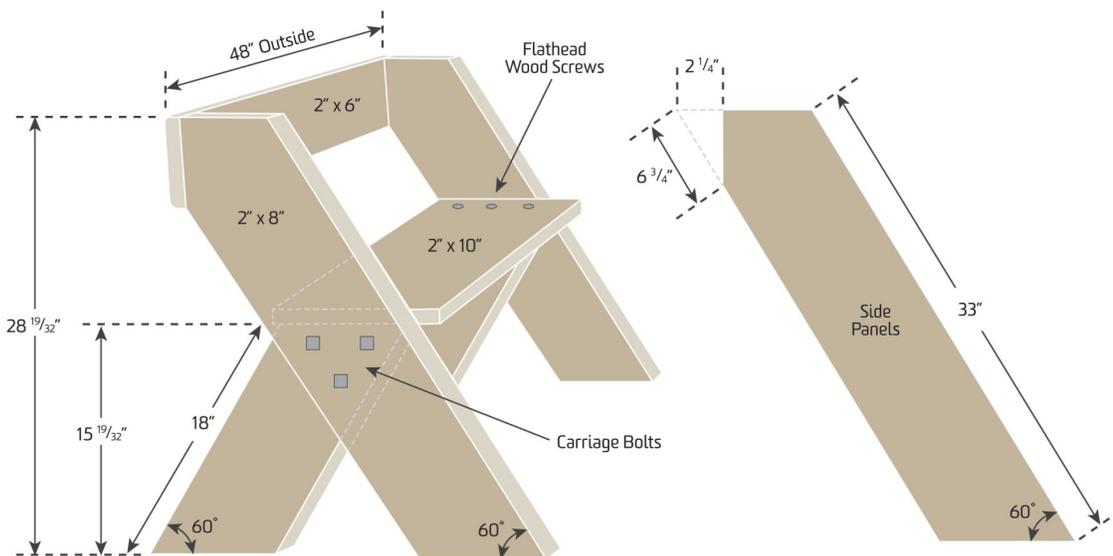
Build a Leopold Bench

Aldo Leopold, the “father of wildlife conservation,” was born in Burlington in 1887. As a boy, Leopold had a lively interest in studying birds and natural history. He spent hours observing nature and exploring the river bluffs. As Leopold grew older, he carried his passion for the outdoors with him, later becoming known as the most influential conservation thinker of the 20th century. In Leopold’s classic book, *A Sand County Almanac*, he tells tales of observations of nature and wildlife he made from his favorite bench.

Known today as the Leopold Bench, it is indistinguishable from most other benches. By sitting backwards with legs through the opening, the backrest provides a sturdy support for the elbows, while using binoculars or cameras to observe nature around you. Follow the directions below to build your very own Leopold Bench. It is an easy bench to build, requiring modest skills, materials and about two hours of time.

Materials:

- 2 x 6 x 48 inch board for backrest
- 2 x 10 x 45 inch board for seat
- 2 x 8 x 10 foot boards for sides and legs
- (6) 3/8 inch x 3.5 inch carriage bolts with washers and nuts
- (12) 3/8 inch x 3.5 inch #12 or #14 flathead wood screws



The Leopold Bench is the perfect fall project for any one! If placed in the right spot, the bench is the perfect place to kick back, relax and enjoy the great outdoors.

New Latrine at Brinton Timber

The Washington County Conservation Board (WCCB) is happy to announce the placement of a new restroom facility located at Brinton Timber outside of Brighton, Iowa. The new rustic style pre-fabricated structure was delivered to the park at the end of August in three separate pieces. A crane was used to place the self-contained waste tank into the ground. Once the tank was leveled the base and roof structure were stacked on top of the tank one after another.



The predominately concrete structure showcases a river rock wainscoting, wood grain shiplap walls, and a cedar shake style roof. The new facility blends directly into the beautiful hardwood timber backdrop and will be an immediate upgrade to the previous latrine that was constructed at the property in 1991.

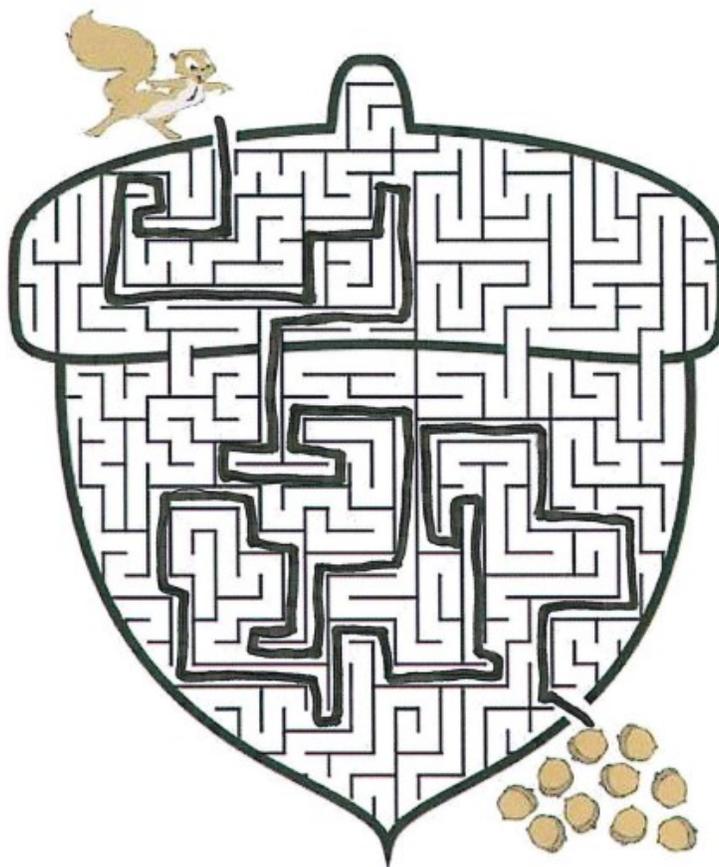


Although a latrine isn't exactly the most exciting topic to talk about, the WCCB hopes the new facility will promote accessibility to the property that is a hidden gem in a secluded area of Washington County. The WCCB would like to send a thank to all the organizations and individuals that helped make this enhancement possible. Also, a special thank you to the Brinton family for their generous donations and their continued support.

Zach Rozmus, Executive Director

Acorn Maze Answer

Help the squirrel through the maze to find its acorns



WASHINGTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
2943 HIGHWAY 92
AINSWORTH, IA 52201

Electronic Service Requested

Summer Center Hours

Tuesday-Thursday
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Friday-Saturday
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday–Monday
Closed

Tails of the Night Halloween Hike

Join us for our annual Halloween Hike! This year, kids will enter the trail, where they will hear tales about *tails of the night*. What might you hear howling in the night? Or *hoo* might you see perched in the trees? You might even spot a bat, flapping its tiny bat wings through the dark sky, as it hunts for its next prey. Along the way, there will be plenty of games and goodies.

The hike is taking place on Saturday, October 22nd from 6:00-8:00 pm at Marr Park. The last chance to enter the trail will be 7:30 pm. The trail will begin at the Mary Marr Lodge. Along the way, kids will learn about some of the spooky nocturnal animals living in the woods around us. They will have the chance to experience the life of a nocturnal animal themselves as they complete activities.

The hike will end at the Conservation Education Center, where families are invited to enjoy refreshments of cookies and hot chocolate. New to 2022, we will be showing a Halloween movie outside the nature center. The film will begin promptly at 7:30 pm, with the showing of the 2015 version of *Goosebumps*. We encourage everyone who is staying for the movie, to bring their own chairs or blankets to sit on.

Registration for the hike is not required. Feel free to bring family and friends along! It is an event you will not want to miss. If you have any questions or concerns, or wish to volunteer for the event, feel free to give us a call at 319-657-2400 or email at wcbnaturalist2@gmail.com.

