

Earthtones

Summer 2023

Shower House Updates

In 2017, the Washington County Conservation Board (WCCB) began the brainstorming process for bringing a new shower house to Marr Park. The current shower house was constructed in 1991, and was originally designed to serve a 19 site campground. In 2012, the campground more than doubled in size, expanding to offer 41 campsites. During this time, planning and funding was put into making sure the septic system and park infrastructure could one day handle a larger shower house.

Fast forward to 2017, the WCCB began planning to build a new shower house. The project ultimately stalled due to the large price tag that was associated with the project. Years have now passed since those original planning conversations, and through that, our current shower house has weathered the storm. The WCCB staff has worked hard to keep the amenity functioning, which at times has been difficult. The age of the structure and usage in excess of its original design has taken its toll on the building.

In 2018, I accepted the position of Executive Director of the WCCB. As someone who is very goal driven, I sat down during those first few months as Director and wrote down goals for myself professionally and for projects for the parks we are tasked with managing. One of the first projects on my list was "Bring a new shower house to Marr Park." Although I had hoped the project would have been on a shorter timeline, myself and the board put an emphasis on updating the campground electrical and water infrastructure prior to addressing the shower house.

The elongated timeline allowed our board and staff time to hone in on a design of a building that we feel really meets the needs of our park users. In addition, a camper survey was distributed to our visitors so we could receive feedback from the public on what they would ideally like to see in a new shower house.

As I sit here writing this article, the bid packet for the structure has been finalized. In the coming weeks the WCCB will open bids from general contractors. Years of discussion and meetings have culminated into a project that I feel will continue a strong pattern of investment into enhancing the park experience here at Marr Park. If all goes to plan the contract will be awarded at our regular scheduled board meeting in July. Demolition of the current structure will be after Labor Day weekend in September. As soon as the current shower house comes down, work will begin on building the new one, with hopes of construction being completed by the Spring of 2024.



This project would not be possible without the support from the public and the Washington County Riverboat Foundation (\$250,000 Grant!!). In future newsletters, I will provide a list of local contractors and manufacturers that have generously donated towards the project. The WCCB can proudly say that this project will contain zero tax dollars, which is something we are very proud of. Thank you to our loyal readers for your continued support. I look forward to having a ribbon cutting ceremony for our new shower house next spring!

Executive Director,
Zach Rozmus

Summer 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.

Saturday, July 22rd **At Dark**
Movie Night at the Park

Shelter #3



Join us for movie night! This month, we will be showing the classic movie Shrek! We will begin the movie at dark. We encourage everyone to bring their own chairs or blankets to sit on, in addition to your own snacks.

Wednesday, August 2nd **9:30 a.m.** **CEC**
Toddler Time

Join us for Toddler Time! This month, we will be learning all about the “litter” animals leave behind! We will get the furs, feathers, and scat out, as well as go on a hike in search of signs of wildlife. We might even eat some “scat.”



Saturday, August 5th **At Dark**
Movie Night at the Park

Shelter #3



Join us for movie night! This month, we will be showing the movie Over the Hedge! As always, we will begin the movie at dark. We suggest that everyone bring their own chairs or blankets to sit on, and your favorite snacks!

Saturday, August 26th **8:00-5:00 p.m.** **CEC**
Hunter Education Classroom Course

WCCB will be hosting a traditional Hunter Education Classroom Course on Saturday, August 26th, and Sunday, August 27th. Saturday will begin at 8:00 a.m. at the nature center, and will be a class day. An exam will be proctored at the end of the day. Sunday, will be required range day at Clemons Creek Shooting Range beginning at 9:00. To sign up, give us a call at 319-657-2400.

Washington County Conservation Board

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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.

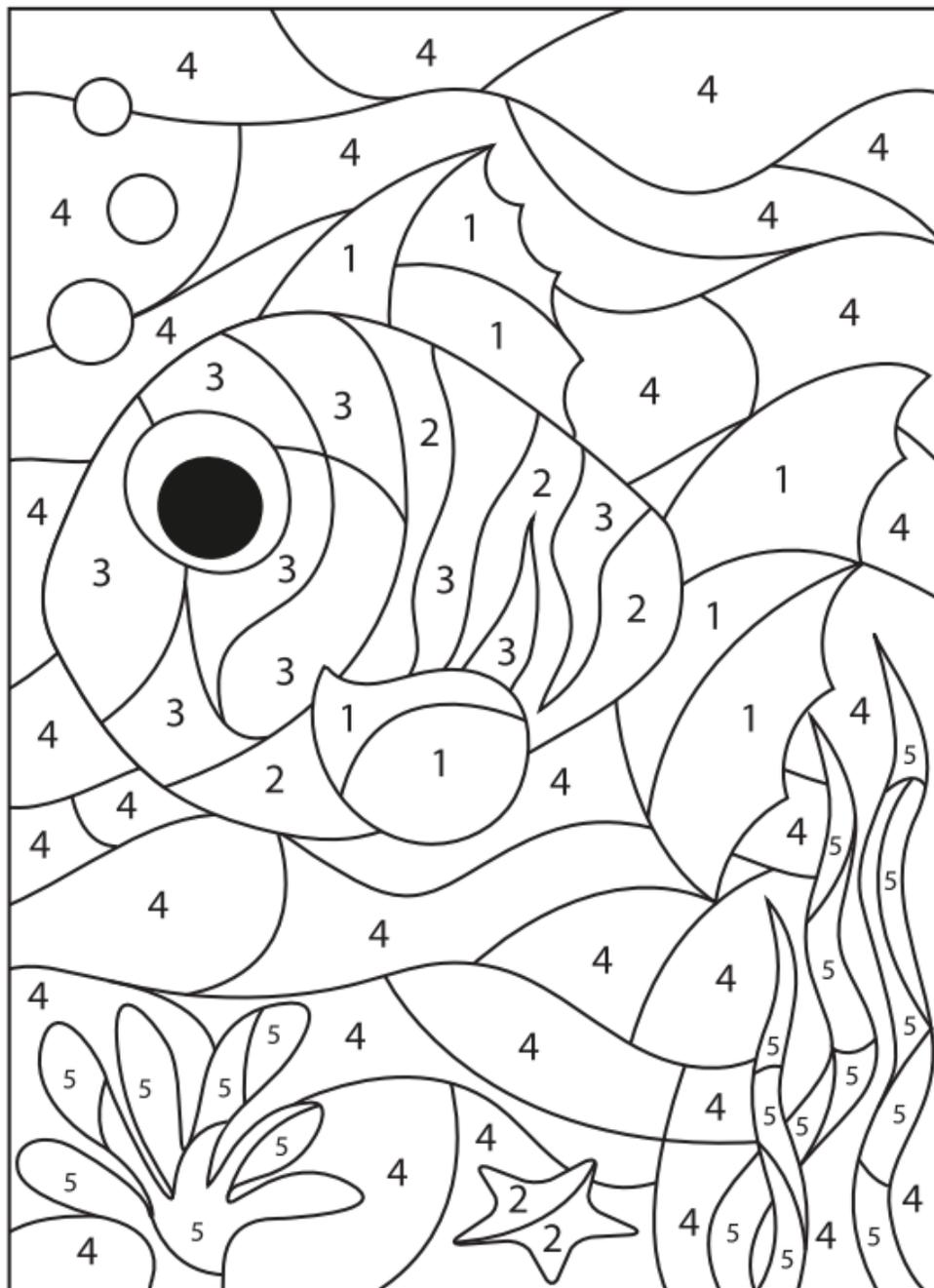
The WCCB is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

Color by Number Fish

Directions: Color the picture according to the color that corresponds with each number.



1: Yellow

3: Light Blue

5: Green

2: Pink

4: Dark Blue

Updates to the Conservation Education Center

In November of 2019, updates to the Conservation Education Center at Marr Park were made. Thanks to McCullough Creative, new interactive education displays were designed, created, and installed. Those displays included a tree that can be climbed up into, an ant display, an invasive species battleship game, a fish species puzzle, and a predator-prey game. These new displays have quickly become a favorite of visitors of the nature center.

Earlier this year, WCCB staff members worked tirelessly with McCullough Creative to design a turtle display to go along with our education turtles, as well as add some colored graphics to the rest of the nature center walls. This spring, McCullough Creative travelled to Marr Park to install the displays. After a little bit of painting, completed by WCCB staff members, McCullough installed vinyl sheets onto the walls. The turtle display included a few additional materials.

Our fish display features several fish puzzles. Kids are challenged to put the pieces together to create fish species that can be found at Marr Park and throughout Iowa. The puzzles include species such as the Large-mouth Bass and the Bluegill. Visitors will also learn facts about each of the fish. Updates to the display include a colorful background that brightens it up.



Completed fish display



Completed turtle display

The turtle display includes a wetland graphic, as well as a larger turtle shell. The turtle shell lists and briefly describes the 10 species of turtles we have native to Iowa. Additionally, there is a smaller sign that includes general information about turtles. The hope is that when visitors come to the nature center, they will have the opportunity to learn about turtles on their own in addition to viewing them.

Finally, updates were made to the south wall which features our predator-prey game and ant display. Colorful prairie graphics were installed on this wall to add color and draw attention to the game. We encourage everyone to come visit the nature center to check out these awesome updates!



Completed predator-prey & ant display

Tin Can Bird Feeder

Looking for a fun craft project to do with the kiddos in your life, that will also encourage them to go outdoors? Follow the steps below to create a tin can bird feeder. Then, fill the feeder up and hang it in your yard! There is no doubt you will have a variety of birds come to visit!

Supplies:

Empty tin can (any size works)

Paint

Paint brush

Wooden dowel

String or rope

Hammer and nail

Hot glue or super glue

Directions:

1. Paint the tin can the color or colors of your choice. Don't be afraid to get creative!
2. Using the hammer and nail, create two holes on both sides of the top of the can. This is where you will put your hanging string.
3. On the inside, glue the wooden dowel to the can. Make sure it is long enough that a few inches of it sticks out of the can. This is the perch the birds will feed from.
4. Fill the bird feeder with bird seed. Be sure not to over fill it. Another option is to keep the lid to the can, cut it in half, and glue it to the opening of the can to serve as a stopper for the seed.



Education Updates

Another school year has come to an end. The environmental education team was incredibly busy this year. We added more classrooms to our schedule county wide, with hopes to add even more for the 2023-2024 academic year. We had a whopping 489 school programs this year. In total, that is 9,561 students. That is an increase from the 438 in school programs we had for the 2021-2022 academic year! As a team, we are incredibly appreciative of the teachers and staff who have welcomed us into their classrooms! We would not be able to carry out our mission without them.

After a short break, we have been getting to work with the planning and implementation of our summer day camps. We welcomed two seasonal Naturalists to our team this summer. They have been a tremendous help thus far, and as teachers, have brought with them a lot of wonderful ideas. Throughout the summer, we will have 8 camps, providing an opportunity for kids ranging in ages from preschool, to the eighth grade. Our hope is for the kids to grow in their knowledge of the outdoors, and hopefully discover something in the wild they can develop a passion for.

Apart from day camps, we will be offering movie nights approximately once a month at the park. We will also be doing our monthly Toddler Time program. As always, if you or a group are interested in environmental education programming, do not hesitate to reach out to us at 319-657-2400. You may also email Megan at wccbnaturalist2@gmail.com. We would be happy to schedule programs with you, whether that be a fishing experience or time with our resident reptiles, etc. All in all, we encourage everyone to take the time to get outdoors this summer!



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

Hunter Education Classroom Course

Washington County Conservation will be hosting a traditional Hunter Education Classroom Course Saturday, August 26th, and Sunday, August 27th. On Saturday, class will be held at the Conservation Education Center (CEC) at Marr Park from 8:00 AM- 4:30 PM. A majority of the day will be spent indoors going through the curriculum. Students will also complete gun handling, fence crossing, and listen to an Iowa fish and game laws presentation. At the conclusion of the class, we will do a test review, and then the students will complete the exam.

Sunday's class will be a live-fire field day at Clemons Creek Shooting Range. The range is located west of Washington on Kiwi Avenue and 242nd Street. The field day will begin at 9:00 AM, and end at 11:00 AM. Students will have the opportunity to shoot rifles and shotguns and also do archery. This is a mandatory field day; students will not receive their certificates if they do not attend. It is also important to note that this field day does not meet the requirement of the internet class. If your son or daughter has taken the online course, they are required to attend an Internet Field Day Course. It is different than this field day. If your child has completed the online class, they are still welcome to attend our class. We just ask they attend both days.

To register for the class, type the following address into your internet browser: <https://license.gooutdoorsiowa.com/Event/ViewEvent.aspx?id=2662>. Please give us a call at 319-657-2400 if you have any questions or difficulties registering. The deadline to register is Friday, August 18th.