

EARTHTONES

A BLENDING OF NATURE'S NEWS



Winter 2024



Shower House Project Progresses



As we roll into Winter, the progress on our brand-new shower house continues. This fall, demolition was completed and the foundation was poured. Work to the exterior is near completion. Next, work to the interior will begin. The goal still is to have the new shower house finished just in time for the 2024 camping season! Stay tuned for further updates!

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Winter Calendar

January 27th 8:30-10:30 AM Mary Marr Lodge

Fish On! Youth Ice Fishing Clinic

Join us for our annual youth ice fishing clinic at Marr Park. With help from our friends at Washington County ISU Extension & Outreach, we will be hosting our annual youth ice fishing clinic on Saturday, January 27th. Registration will be available through the ISU Extension office. There will be a maximum of 30 participants allowed. Youth must be in 4th grade and above. We encourage the younger ones to be accompanied by an adult. To register, please call 319-653-4811. Youth will be provided their own equipment.

March 23rd 8:00-4:30 PM CEC

March 24th 9:30-11:30 AM Clemons Creek

Hunter Education Classroom Course

Do you or someone you know, need to complete hunter education? WCCB will be hosting our annual spring hunter education class on Saturday, March 23rd, and Sunday, March 24th. Hunter Education is required for anyone born after January 1st, 1972, and must be completed before purchasing a hunting license at age 16.

This is a traditional classroom course, and will not meet the requirements of the internet course. Saturday will be a classroom day at the nature center at Marr Park. At the conclusion of the day, there will be an exam. Sunday will be a live fire field day at Clemons Creek Shooting Range SW of Washington. A maximum of 40 students will be allowed. To register, please give us a call at 319-657-2400.

Washington County Conservation Board

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The Mighty Bald Eagle

**By: Megan Jorgensen,
Naturalist**

The Bald Eagle has been the national emblem for the United States since 1782. Not truly bald, their white-feathered heads gleam in contrast, to their chocolate-brown body and wings. They are easy to spot soaring in solitude, chasing other birds for their food, or gathering together in large numbers in winter. Historically endangered by hunting and pesticides, protection has allowed them to flourish.

The Bald Eagle is giant compared to other raptors including the Turkey Vulture and Red-Tailed Hawk. With a heavy body, large head, and long-hooked bill, Bald Eagles are one of the largest birds in North America. Their wingspan is slightly larger than the Great Blue Heron. Adults have white heads with dark brown bodies and wings. Juveniles have mostly dark heads and tails, with brown wings and bodies mottled with white. By five years old, juveniles will don their adult plumage.

You'll discover Bald Eagles soaring high in the sky, flapping low over treetops with slow wingbeats, or perched in trees on the ground. They scavenge for food, sometimes stealing from other birds or by eating garbage. Fish

make up their main diet but they also hunt mammals, gulls and waterfowl.

Bald Eagles can frequently be spotted near lakes, reservoirs, rivers, marshes and coasts. They typically nest in forested areas next to large bodies of water. For perching, they prefer tall, mature coniferous or deciduous trees that provide them with a wide view of their surroundings. It is believed that Bald Eagles mate for life. Females lay one to three eggs each year, with a month-long gestation period.

Winter is the perfect time to spot eagles in Iowa. Their primary nesting period is January through August, with the largest activity taking place from February to July. It is not uncommon for them to return to the same nest each year. If you plan to go eagle watching, it is best to give them space. Keep a distance of at least 400 yards. In fact, stay in your vehicle, use a blind or stay behind stationary objects if you can. This allows them a peaceful refuge.

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Winter Color by Number



1: Ice Blue
2: Dark Blue

3: Green
4: Light Brown

5: Red
6: Yellow

7: Orange
8: Purple



Special Thanks

The weather was a bit chilly for our annual Halloween Hike, but it was still the perfect evening to learn about animals who use camouflage. This is the largest public event we host every year, as an appreciation of the support we receive from our local communities. This year, we had close to 250 individuals and their families attend our event. With that being said, the event would not be possible without the generosity of our donors and volunteers.

We would like to extend our thanks to the following local businesses for their donations:

Vetter's Culligan Water
Hills Bank
Hy-Vee
Sass Family Farms
Walmart
Duane Hammen
SACHA Club
Dino's Pizza & Steakhouse

Thank you also to our volunteers for dedicating valuable time to help run the event smoothly:

The Donkersloot Family
The Zirkle Family
The Exline Family
Jim Blakeney
Addie Pacha
Kim Prier

We look forward to hosting our annual Halloween Hike again next year! Additionally, we are always looking for volunteers for the hike. If you or someone you know is interested in joining our volunteer list, give us a call at 319-657-2400.

We would like to extend a special thank you to the following individuals and families for their generous donations to the Washington County Conservation Board. Their donations help to fund important future conservation projects and improvements.

Linda McNeil
Ed Brinton & Family
Stan Stoops

THANK
YOU

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PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. Postage
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2943 HWY 92
AINSWORTH, IA 52201

Electronic Service Requested

Winter Center Hours

Monday-Friday:
8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Saturday-Sunday:
Closed

As always, if you spot an injured eagle, you can call our office, your local conservation officer, biologist, or US Fish & Wildlife Service office. Be sure to preserve the scene the best you can. Bald Eagles are federally protected by several laws, with fines of over \$20,000 for harassing, killing, or wounding an eagle. Additionally, if you discover a Bald Eagle nest, you can report it to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Visit <https://iowadnr.gov/Conservation/lowas-Wildlife/Wildlife-Reporting>. There you will find more information about Bald Eagle nest reporting, as well as a nest reporting form. You can also become a volunteer nest monitor. As always, be sure to check out our local parks and recreation areas for eagle sightings and other wildlife observation.

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