



PRAIRIE HILLS JOURNAL

Bi-annual publication of the
Harrison County Conservation Board

MISSION: To provide, develop and maintain facilities and programs that will enable county residents and visitors to understand, appreciate, and enjoy Harrison County's natural environment and encourage them to preserve it.

FALL / WINTER | 2021- 2022

Without Your Support...

by Scott Nelson, Director

In 2013, HCCB started dreaming about a new nature center to reach more people in Harrison County and visitors with conservation education. And, now I'm happy to say it's becoming a reality—in early August 2021, the HCCB accepted the bid from Meco-Henne Construction out of Omaha to build the Willow Lake Nature Center!

Of the \$3.9 million dollars needed for this project, we've successfully raised \$3.1 million from a variety of grants and donations. Grants have been received from the Loess Hills Missouri River Region, Harrison County Community Foundation, Burlington Capital, Gilchrist Foundation, Iowa West Foundation, and the Loess Hills Alliance. The Harrison County Board of Supervisors have committed \$1.021 million along with \$1 million from the American Rescue Plan Act. Generous donations have been made by the

following people: Dennis and Pat Kuhlmann, David Leonard Memorial, Raymond and Shalonn Zach, Fred Cooper Memorial, MidAmerican Energy, Steve and Linda Van Riper, William and Elaine Beach, Utman Farms LLC, Calvin Bertelsen Trust, Alicia and Patrick Makey, Scott and Kimberly Fisher, Kenneth and Joyce Kinzer, Chuck and Melody Warner, and Washington County Bank. Thank you so much from the Harrison County Conservation Board!

While we are still applying for grants for the remaining amount needed, if you would like to donate to this project, we have created giving tiers to recognize an individual, family, or business in such things as naming rights to different components of the building. Any size of donation will be greatly appreciated! You can also donate online at our website,

HarrisonCountyParks.org and click on the donations tab. Also like our Facebook page for all the updates on the building construction!

I don't make many promises, but I will on this one—the Willow Lake Nature Center will be crown jewel for Harrison County. It will be a destination not only for visitors and students — but for families across the region. It will generate its own economic impact to the surrounding businesses. It will be a place to Discover, Learn, and Enjoy by everyone. Thank you all for the words of encouragement, constant inquiries, and financial donations. It takes a village — and in this case, it takes everyone!



Donation Level	Donation	Donation Benefits
Platinum	\$500,000+	Naming rights to Nature Center Room
Gold	\$300,000+	Naming rights to Classroom
Silver	\$150,000+	Naming rights to Outdoor Classroom
Bronze	\$75,000+	Naming rights to Entry Plaza
Environmental Education Sustainer	\$10,000 to \$74,999	Recognition Plaque on Display within Nature Center
Friends of WLNC	\$50 to \$9,999	Name Recognition on Giving Plaque

Spring & Summer Events



Woodbine Summer Tiger Tots/Latchkey learning about turtles.



Resident from Westmont Care Center fishing at Willow Lake pictured with Conservation Intern Tanner Holder.



HCCB staff constructed a new registration and information booth at Schaben Park.



A new table, bench, and interpretive signs were installed at the Murray Hill Scenic Overlook.



Golden Hills RC&D worked with many partners including HCCB to develop promotional videos highlighting some of the outdoor amenities available to locals and visitors to Harrison County.

Fall/Winter Calendar

Creepy Campground IS BACK!

Saturday,
October 9th, 3-5 p.m.
Willow Lake Recreation Area,
Woodbine

Unfortunately, Creepy Campground was canceled last year due to COVID-19, but it is back this year! Bring the kids out for not-so-creepy, trick-or-treating in the campground. There is no cost for this fun event! Children of all ages must be accompanied by an adult; please do not bring pets to trick-or-treating.

For campers, we ask that you bring enough store-bought wrapped candy for 300 trick-or-treaters. Saturday night camping is free—please use the coupon below when you register to camp. Decorate your campsite—the most creative sites will win a camping coupon book for 7 nights free camping and a special trophy to keep! Decorations must be completed by 1 p.m. on Saturday to be included in the contest. This year we're going to do something a little different—a winner of daytime AND a winner of nighttime campsite decorations!

For trick-or-treaters, parking is limited and park rangers will be at the campground after 2 p.m. All trick-or-treating ends at 5 p.m. This event will be held rain or shine!

COVID NOTE: Since this is an outside event, masks will not be required. Campers handing out candy are encouraged to wear gloves and hand the candy to the children—please do not let them reach in container for candy—this just limits the number of contacts. At the time this newsletter is being written, the Delta Variant is starting to show up more—if something changes to affect Creepy Campground, it will be announced on our Facebook page—so please like and follow!



CAMPING COUPON

Good for October 9th Only
Please include in camping envelope at time of registration.



Due to the start of construction for the NEW Willow Lake Nature Center, all future programs will be announced on our Facebook page and local newspapers. Beginning September 7th, the current nature center will be CLOSED to the public until the new one is open in late 2022 or early 2023. Staff will be disassembling exhibits and taking inventory to decide what may be used in the new building. Access to HCCB offices at Willow Lake will also be impacted with increased traffic and large

construction equipment. The public is encouraged to call, email, or Facebook message with questions before coming to the office. Thanks!



HCCB OFFICE CLOSED

November 11th
November 25th & 26th
December 24th
December 31st
February 21st

Veterans Day
Thanksgiving
Christmas
New Year's Day
Presidents Day

Find us on @HarrisonCountyConservation

Parks & Recreation

Fishing and Hunting at HCCB

By Byron Vennink, Operations Technician/Park Ranger

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." A lot can be had for that saying. With the arrival of Covid 19, many people were finding themselves alone or at home for some time with social distancing. Along with the pandemic, we saw shortages of many consumer products including meat. Some places had rationing at grocery stores to one or two packs of meat per family.

Compound the fact of rationing and time at home, many people went back to their roots to use their newly acquired time to provide food or meat for their families. Bring in fishing and hunting. It is interesting to run the numbers of licenses that have been sold since more people have had time to pursue putting meat on the table. In 2019, there were 195,509 annual resident fishing licenses sold. In 2020, there were 260,048 or an increase of 64,539 fishing licenses sold. On the hunting license side of things, in 2019, 24,053 licenses were sold. In 2020, 31,205 hunting licenses were sold for an increase of 7,152. That says a lot more people are using their time to harvest meat for the table. The great thing is that this is all from a renewable natural resource that nature supplies to all. Aldo Leopold, the Father of Conservation, stated that conservation is the wise use of natural resources. HCCB has fishing and hunting opportunities around the county for all the public to utilize.

Willow Lake has a 27-acre fishing lake with a boat ramp, fishing jetties, and handicap accessible fishing pier. There is also Schaben Park located between the

communities of Dunlap and Woodbine just off US Highway 30. It offers a six-acre fishing lake with boat ramp and handicap fishing pier as well. Both these parks offer largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, and channel catfish fishing opportunities. For the hardcore fisherman, we have the Remington Boat Launch on the Missouri River. Here all river species of fish are available for the angler. It is located about five miles southwest of Mondamin on 222nd Street.

We also provide many wildlife areas in which residents may hunt small and big game species. Some of the more popular areas are Old Town Conservation Area just south of Missouri Valley. Missouri Bottoms and Nolan Wetland area are some good areas for migratory bird hunting as well. There are at least sixteen areas in which one could hunt that belong to the HCCB. You can find a listing of these and other areas by going to our website. There are also several properties with IHAP land adjacent or nearby.

A quick note to all. Fishing and hunting licenses are needed by all who are 16 years of age or older in Iowa. All hunters 16 and older in addition to their hunting license will require a habitat fee to be legal to hunt in Iowa. Sometimes this habitat fee is forgotten. This could cause you to receive a citation for not having it in addition to your regular Hunting license. So, get those licenses and get out into the great outdoors! Have a safe and wonderful time enjoying the areas and opportunities the HCCB has to offer. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the HCCB office. Have a great fall!

The staff of the Harrison County Conservation Board would like to thank all of our Campground Hosts for 2021. They provide a great amount of support to the program as they help campers, answer questions, sell firewood, and generally make all of our users feel welcomed.

Bob & Nancy McDunn, Bruce & Kris Pauley, Jason & Jill Stacy, Jim & Glenda Gibson, Neil & Bette Jensen, Tom & Sandy Robbins, Brian & Kathy Lantz, Rick & Marilyn Woodard, Tony & Connie Casperson



Natural Resources & Wildlife Management

Reviving Under Summer's Sun

By Thad Pothast, Natural Resource Technician/Weed Commissioner

Since the glaciers last retreated from North America thousands of years ago, fire has been an integral component to prairies. Without fire, prairies have no chance of long-term survival. Historically, fires managed the landscape and were started by either lightning strikes or Native Americans. Today, prescribed fire can help improve habitat, increase species diversity, as well as protect human life and property. The question is always, "When is the best time to burn?" Well, that depends on what the objectives and management goals are for the prairie. Any time of the year has its pros and cons with the effects of fire. Most fires happen during the dormant season in spring, but there may be a timeframe that is under-utilized that may offer some different benefits and that is summer fire or growing season burns.

The intensity of growing season burns is typically less than in the dormant season, which can aide in the control and suppression of the prescribed fire. However, since the fire is being used while the plants are actively growing, it can be extremely effective at controlling encroaching brush and trees such as honeysuckle, cedar, elm, and cottonwood. Boiling and damaging the growing/living tissue of the vegetation reduces the ability for these trees to store energy into the root systems for winter, severely impacting the survival chances of the tree. The likelihood of spot fires and escapes are also less due to usually higher humidity of the summer, green and growing surrounding vegetation, and agriculture fields that have less combustible green material.

One big impact that growing season fires can have is on native grasses and wildflowers. Natural historic

fires caused by lightning frequently happened during the summer as it involved the hottest and driest months of the year. Growing season fire can reduce the vigor and volume of native grasses, allowing more room and sunlight for wildflower species to germinate and grow. In areas where it is heavily grass dominated where more wildflower presence is wanted, growing



season fire could help shift the prairie from being grass dominated to favor more of a wildflower component.

Fire is necessary to maintain any kind of prairie. Prescribed fire can be utilized at varying times throughout the year to achieve different results and impacts on the system. Growing season fire offers an opportunity to achieve effects and results that dormant and spring season fires cannot. Prairie needs fire, no doubt about it, but when is the best time for fire? It depends on your management objectives for your prairie, and a growing season fire could be the underutilized and often never thought of solution to help you meet your management objectives.

Conservation Education

Donations for Exhibits

By Connie Betts, Naturalist/Public Relations Specialist



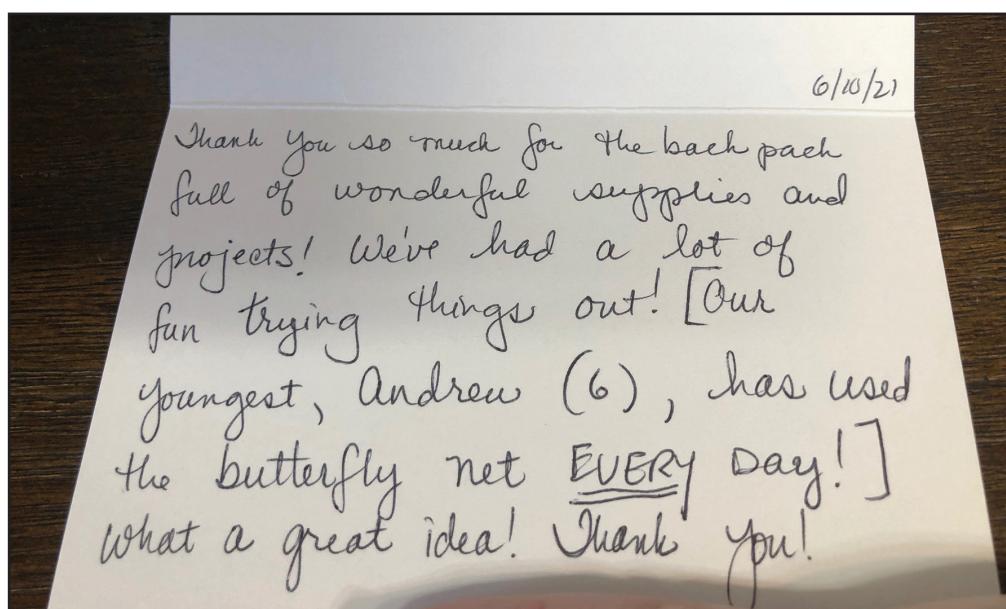
Willow Lake Nature Center

Construction for the NEW Willow Lake Nature Center will begin this fall with completion anticipated late 2022 or early 2023! During this time, HCCB will be working with McCullough Creative from Dubuque, Iowa, to create and design the exhibits that will be inside the nature center.

Exciting, interactive, and thought-provoking exhibits will help visitors of all ages learn about

watersheds—from how water moves in a cycle, everything we do that depends on water, and the plants and wildlife that call it home. The cost of the exhibits will be approximately \$350,000 and HCCB is actively applying for grants to reach this goal. However, we are also looking for donations, from small to large, to sponsor all or part of an exhibit. Donations to the Harrison County Conservation Board/Willow Lake Nature Center exhibits are tax deductible.

Would your family or business want to donate and be recognized that you contributed to conservation education in Harrison County? Please reach out to talk with either Director Scott Nelson or Naturalist Connie Betts at 712-647-2785 to learn about options. You or your organization may keep your donation anonymous if so desired. Thank you!



This summer, Harrison County Conservation Board gave out 200 Family Nature Club activity packs at programs and to visitors to the nature center!

Harrison County Historical Village & Iowa Welcome Center

Welcome Center Updates By Kathy Dirks, Program Manager

As the world has been going thru many changes in 2021, we've had a few ourselves at the village/welcome center.

We bid our wonderful Resource Technician, Gary Wenninghoff, happy retirement the end of April. Fortunately, we were able to hire someone to step into his role and take it on with the same dedication – Larry Oliver. Many of you may know Larry as a former main street business owner for 17 years and most recently as EMA/911 Coordinator for Harrison County the last 15 years. Larry and his wife, Evelyn, live in Woodbine and have four married children and six grandchildren.

Fond farewell was also bid in May to Welcome Center Specialist, Morgan Herman, who left us to attend college at Northwest Missouri State. After some consideration and to add more depth in our staffing, we recently hired two additional staff members — Roxanne Westphalen and Rhonda Kouma. Roxanne lives in Missouri Valley with her husband Steve. They have three children, six grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Rhonda lives in Missouri Valley with her husband, Larry — both long-term residents of Harrison County. They have been married for 43 years and enjoy gardening on their acreage.

We have two additional Welcome Center Specialists on staff that recently celebrated employment anniversaries – Kris Underwood and Kristin Leon. Kris was raised in Woodbine and currently lives outside Missouri Valley. She has one daughter, Shelby, that is a senior at Logan-Magnolia this year. Kris celebrated her one-year anniversary with the welcome center in August. Kristin lives outside Honey Creek with her husband, Martin. They have two grown daughters — Madeline and Abigail. Kristin recently celebrated her seven-year anniversary as a part of the team at the welcome center. We are very grateful for our dedicated staff and wouldn't be able to serve our visitors without them!

Reminder that the Welcome Center Farmers Market will be held every Thursday from 3:30 to 6:30 pm through October 15th. Thank you for supporting the vendors and the market!

Because of the pandemic, we have shortened our hours to provide staff additional time to clean and sanitize our buildings on a daily basis. Our current hours are Monday-Saturday, 10 am – 4 pm, and Sunday Noon – 4 pm. For further information, please check our Facebook page “Harrison County Iowa Welcome Center” or give us a call at 712-642-2114.

Welcome Center Specialists

Kristen Leon, Kristine Underwood, Rhonda Kouma, and Roxanne Westphalen

Harrison County Village / Iowa Welcome Center

20% OFF
Gift Shop/Iowa Products Store

Not to be combined with other discounts!

(Excludes Iowa Wines & Loess Hills Lavender Products)

Harrison County Historical Village &

Iowa Welcome Center

2931 Monroe Avenue

Missouri Valley, Iowa 51555

712-642-2114

welcome@HarrisonCountyParks.org

Hours 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Saturday

12-4 p.m. on Sunday

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas,

New Year's Day and Easter

Historical Village open April-November

2021 Summer Conservation Interns

Harrison County Conservation Board had three summer conservation interns in 2021. Interns are an essential part during the busy season assisting staff with park maintenance, natural resource management, and conservation education.

Brock Leaders is from Woodbine and going into his second year at the University of Iowa. He is currently majoring in Exercise Science with the hopes that he moves onto physical therapy. EJ Reisz will be a senior at Woodbine High School this upcoming year and is interested in the conservation field. Tanner Holden grew up in the Waterloo, Iowa, area and is currently attending Wartburg College. He is going into his fifth year

and majoring in Environmental Science and Studies. Thanks everyone for a great summer!



Pictured left to right: Brock Leaders, Easton (EJ) Reisz, and Tanner Holden.

harrisoncountyparks.org

2021 BOARD MEMBERS

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Scott Nelson, Director
Laura Hansen, Administrative Assistant
Mike Weis, Operations Supervisor/Park Ranger
Byron Vennink, Operations Technician/Park Ranger
Thad Pothast, Natural Resource Technician/Weed Commissioner
Jonah Quick, Conservation Technician
Connie Betts, Naturalist/Public Relations Specialist
Kathy Dirks, Welcome Center Program Manager
Gary Wenninghoff, Welcome Center Resource Technician



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Contact:

hccb@harrisoncountyparks.org
www.HarrisonCountyParks.org
www.MyCountyParks.com

Like our Facebook page for
pop-up programs or hikes!



@HarrisonCountyConservation

Headquarters Office
Willow Lake Recreation Area
2725 Easton Trail,
Woodbine, IA 51579
712-647-2785
Mon-Fri 8 am to 4:30 pm
Closed Holidays