

Summer 2017



Conservation Matters

Upcoming Event Highlights

Beginner Fishing
June 2nd

Nature Fit
June 10th

Nature Connect
Mondays

Nature
Detectives
Wednesdays

Tiny Nature
Adventures-
Wednesdays

Summer Solstice
June 21st

Nature Fit
June 24th

Canoe Float
June 28th

*More program
details and
contact
information
located in
newsletter.*

Mills County Conservation Board

Summer Employees

As summer heats, we are very grateful at Mills County Conservation to have extra hands on deck. Lindsey Huntsman is the Naturalist Intern, she helps with education programs and displays in the Nature Center. Payton Kalambokidis and Cory Herrmann both help to maintain the parks and also assist with education programs as needed. With parks throughout the county it takes dedication and hard work to keep these properties clean and safe.

Mills County Neighbor

Bobcats are an elusive resident here in Mills County but are much more common than people think. Several decades ago, that was not the case! In 1977 the Iowa DNR listed the bobcat as an endangered species within the state and by 2001 the status was moved to threatened. With continued population increases the protected status was changed again in 2003 and in 2007 the numbers had improved so much that a limited hunting season was opened.

Bobcats prefer wooded areas but frequently venture into open grasslands, wetlands, and sometimes urban areas. They are strict carnivores and some of their main prey are small rodents, rabbits and birds. An adult bobcat is about twice the size of a house cat and weighs between 15-25lbs. The black spots and stripes on their fur act as a great camouflage and they will often go completely unnoticed in shady areas. These cats are solitary creatures and their home ranges can be one square mile up to 20 miles, depending on the resources in the area. A male bobcat will overlap two or three females home ranges and during mating season he will be extremely active and cover lots of distance. They will mate between February and March and by early May the female will give birth to 3-4 kittens with some litters up to 7. The kittens are weaned in 10 weeks and will stay with their mother for nearly a year while they learn how to hunt and provide for themselves.

If you are fortunate enough to spot this beautiful resident of Mills County remember to view it with respect and keep a safe distance. Bobcats are not a threat to humans but like all wild animals if they are threatened they may show aggression as they protect themselves and their young.

Classroom Connection

Spring at Pony Creek Nature Center was a fun time for fieldtrips. The weather cooperated most of the time and we had over 450 students visit during April and May. Some of the highlights included the East Mills 6th grade class planting nearly 50 shrubs for pollinators and birds and the Glenwood 2nd grade class made 1,800 milkweed seed balls to help the survival of monarch butterflies. Beyond field trips to Pony Creek Park there were also great things happening at the schools. The Glenwood 1st grade learned how important reading is and that you can conquer many fears with good knowledge found in books. With the Next Generation Science Standards being implemented in local schools within the next school year 2017-18 should be one for the record books with the emphasis on our environment in each grade level.

Conservation Tip

Conservation is the careful preservation and protection of something; especially, the planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect. To have an interest in conservation the first step is to have an appreciation for our outside world and everything it provides. On a daily basis people are getting more and more disconnected with the outdoors. Healthy natural ecosystems such as woodlands, wetlands and prairies are not something we can take for granted and hope someone else is taking care of it. Nature is simply the source for everything in our lives. So, the Conservation Tip for this summer is get outside and find a connection to the amazing world we live in.

The problem many of us face is finding the time to disconnect from work, life, technology, school, etc and connect with the outside world. You don't have to look far now a days to find the latest "challenge. Let's try a challenge that will change so many aspects of your life and hopefully your view on the world? The first step is to think about how much time you actually spend outside each day.

GET OUTSIDE- Schedule time in your day to get outside and have a breath of fresh air and enjoy the natural surroundings. Start small, if you currently spend no time outside, take five minutes and sit outside and watch the birds or bugs or clouds. Every week try to broaden your scope and spend more time outside and venture to some new places. You don't have to go backpacking in the wilderness for two weeks to find a new connection with nature. Taking a walk at a local park is a great start and will have many other benefits to your health. Mills County Conservation maintains over 1800 acres of public park lands for people to enjoy. They vary from paved flat trails to steep dirt trails in the tops of the Loess Hills and even simple mowed trails winding through grasslands. Give us a call at Pony Creek Nature Center if you need help finding the perfect park to fit your interests.

Summer Solstice

June 21st @ 6:00-9:00 pm

Join us on the day with the most hours of sunlight in 2017 and the official first day of Summer. Pony Creek Nature Center will be open for the public to enjoy along with fun activities such as canoeing and more! Pack yourself a picnic and take advantage of the numerous picnic tables through the park. Pre-registration is appreciated for planning purposes, please call 712-527-9685.

Grants and Donations

The Iowa Ornithologist Union awarded a grant of \$230 for the purchase of bird feeders to be hung around Pony Creek Nature Center. These feeders will give visitors the chance to view birds and provide a great opportunity to educate people on the diversity of birds in our area. Another exciting project is underway that involves the bird feeders, details and pictures of it will be included in the fall newsletter. Donations of bird seed are always welcome to help keep the feeders full.

A grant from Mills County Community Foundation for \$4000 was received in March to purchase new chairs, speakers and a projector for the classroom in the Nature Center. The chairs look great, are very comfortable and have already been put to good use for many programs and meetings.

There are several projects going on at the Nature Center and donations are always greatly appreciated. The front landscaping project is taking shape. Erosion issues have been a challenge but slowly native plants are being established that will help hold the soil in place and serve as a habitat for insects and wildlife. Hundreds of native plants have been saved from a site in Glenwood that is going to be converted into a parking area. A special thank you goes to a group of boy scouts that volunteered their time and dug up over 80 plants that are now growing nicely at the Nature Center. As these beautiful, useful native plants become established the Nature Center will continue to amaze visitors as much on the outside as it does on the inside.

Another fun project currently in progress is purchasing items for discovery packs that will be available for visitors to check out from the Nature Center while they explore around Pony Creek Park. Some of the items included in each pack will be a magnifying glass, binoculars, and identification books. If you are interested in making a donation feel free to call the Nature Center to find out more information and remember that all donations are tax deductible and will aid in the continued growth and success of educating citizens of Mills County. Great things are happening and we could not do it without the support of grants and donations.



Classroom at Pony Creek Nature Center with art work from Glenwood 1st-5th grades!

Discover a Whole New Way of Seeing the World Around YOU with Nature Journaling.

Here are some tips on starting your own journal!

A journal can be purchased or you can make your own with loose sheets of paper. It can be as fancy or simple as you like. Gather a few writing supplies to get you started and head outside!



A journal-entry format can be used to help get started, it may help you put something down on your paper right away and kick off your thinking and observation skills.

Basic information- Date, Place, Time, Weather

First Impressions- what do you hear, smell, see?

Begin drawing- Look at the ground, eye level, overhead and at the whole landscape. What catches your eye?

Getting Focused- Observation is the heart of Nature Journaling, you cannot record what you have not observed. Engage your senses and your mind!

Upcoming Public Programs

Beginner Fishing Clinic- June 2nd @ 6:30 pm

The first weekend in June is designated by the Iowa DNR as a "Free Fishing Weekend", which means anyone can fish without purchasing a license. Join Mills County Conservation at Pony Creek Access to learn the basics of fishing and regulations. All equipment will be provided. Please call and pre-register 712-527-9685.

Nature Connect

Grades: 5th-8th

Dates: Mondays in June (5th, 12th, 19th, 26th)

Time: 9:00am-12:00

It's time to get outside and connect with Nature. Class sizes will be limited, so please pre-register ASAP by calling 712-527-9685. Kids should wear clothes and shoes that can get dirty and bring a water bottle, sunscreen and bug spray. A variety of topics will be covered including outdoor exploration, art, wildlife, environmental awareness, fishing and canoeing! More information is available upon registration.

Nature Detectives

Grades: 1st-4th

Dates: Wednesdays in June (7th, 14th, 21st, 28th)

Time: 9:00am-12:00

Let's put those curious minds to work learning and exploring. Class sizes will be limited, so please pre-register ASAP by calling 712-527-9685. Kids should wear clothes and shoes that can get dirty and bring a water bottle, sunscreen and bug spray. Pond study, nature art, journals, and much more!

Tiny Nature Adventures

Grade: Preschool (3-5 years old)

Dates: Wednesdays in June (7th, 14th, 21st, 28th)

Time: 10:00-11:00

Nature themed activities including art and outdoor fun. Adult must stay with child and pre-registration is required for planning purposes, 712-527-9685.

Canoe Float on the Nishnabotna- June 30th @ 10:00 am

We will float from Washburn Landing on Hutchings Ave to Fisher Wildlife Management Area, which takes approximately 4 hours with stops along the way. Canoes and life jackets will be provided, you are responsible for bringing your own lunch and drinks. Space is limited so please call 712-527-9685 and reserve your spot.

Pony Creek Nature Center

56235 Deacon Road

Pacific Junction, IA 51561

Summer Hours:

Monday thru Friday

9:00am- 3:00 pm

Saturday 10:00 am-1:00pm



Nature Fit- June 10th @ 8:30 am (Foothills Park)

Learn some fun new ways to get a workout done while enjoying the outdoors. Hiking and body weight exercises will be done according to individual fitness levels. Foothills Park is located at 59069 Levi Road on the Glenwood Archaeological Preserve.

Nature Fit- June 24th @ 8:30 am (West Oak Forest)

Step it up a notch and come out to West Oak Forest in the rugged Loess Hills. Learn some fun new ways to get a workout done while enjoying the outdoors. Hiking and body weight exercises will be done according to individual fitness levels. West Oak Forest is located at 55877 195th St.

More programs will be scheduled in July, please watch local newspapers or Mills County Conservation Facebook for announcements.

Pre-registration contact information:

Phone: 712-527-9685

Email: millscbia@hotmail.com

Pre-registering helps us plan accordingly for programs.

Contact information

Mills County
Conservation
Pony Creek Park
56235 Deacon Rd
Pacific Junction, IA 51561

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(712) 527-9685

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Mills County Conservation Board:

MCCB Staff:

Jerad Getter, Director
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Zach Kohlhoff, Specialist
Jesse Ayers, Technician

MCCB Board Members:

Jan Faraci, Mineola
George Marshall, Malvern
Lana White, Hastings
Kreg Kinzle, Glenwood
Ted Golka, Glenwood



The Mills County Conservation Board is committed to providing the citizens of Mills County with quality outdoor recreation areas and opportunities for environmental education experiences. Please take advantage of these services and visit the nearly 1,800 acres of public land available!

CONSERVATION MATTERS
MILLS COUNTY CONSERVATION
56235 DEACON RD
PACIFIC JUNCTION, IA 51561



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