

*Important  
Dates:*

Nature Center  
Open House-  
December 28<sup>th</sup>

Wild Winter Day-  
January 11<sup>th</sup>

Tiny Nature  
Adventures-  
NEW TIME  
January 8<sup>th</sup>  
February 5<sup>th</sup>  
March 4<sup>th</sup>

Ice Fishing- TBD

*Mills County Conservation Board*

## Fieldtrips and Environmental Education

Pony Creek Park and Nature Center are busy during the fall season with some great fieldtrip for local students. Glenwood 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Science camp is one of the highlights as several organizations and the school work together to give the kids an experience that will stick with them for a lifetime. Students arrive at the park at 9:00 am and stay until nearly 10:00 pm! They have a full day of outdoor activities such as fishing, team building, astronomy, hiking, nature art, campfire songs and the chance to explore the Nature Center and meet some of the live animals. For many students this is their first chance to catch a fish, hike trails at Pony Creek Park and hold a snake. Highschool students serve as counselors and many have fun stories to share with the younger students about their times at 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Science camp. In the Spring there will be another round of fun adventures to complete the experience with canoeing, pond studies, tree lessons and more.

Glenwood 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes also have a bi-annual trip to Pony Creek Park where they learn about pollinators, seed dispersal, landforms and make milkweed seed balls to help with monarch conservation. Again, this fieldtrip is put together with the help of volunteers and other local agencies that make it a lasting memory for the students. School visits happen throughout the year to all ages of students in the county and with local homeschool groups.



## Grant

Mills County Community Foundation awarded Mills County Conservation a grant in the amount of \$7,500 to purchase an enclosed trailer to safely store and transport the canoes and kayaks. This is fantastic news for the public as we will be able to offer many more opportunities for people to use them at Mile Hill Lake and Pony Creek Lake throughout the summer!

# Tiny Nature Adventures

Tiny Nature Adventures is a monthly program for children ages 3-5 years old that is focused on opening the world of nature up to these young minds. Letting kids be outdoors with unstructured play encourages their imaginations and leads to inquisitive exploration. Often it can be difficult as care givers to let young children explore because of all the “unknowns and what ifs” that could happen. This is a great time for children and adults to learn that it is okay to get dirty, it’s ok to touch new things and how to identify parts of nature that we should use caution around. Learning to explore safely gives everyone a peace of mind.

Join us the first Wednesday of each month from 1:00-2:00pm at Pony Creek Nature Center, siblings are welcome to tag along. We will be outdoors when weather permits and will utilize the beautiful Nature Center when the weather is not ideal. Adult must stay accompany child throughout the program and pre-registration is required. If you have recommendations on date/time changes that would better suit your schedule feedback is always appreciated.

**Winter Dates: January 8<sup>th</sup>, February 5<sup>th</sup> and March 4<sup>th</sup>.**

## Mills County Neighbor

Poison Ivy is less of a risk during this time of year which makes many people’s nerves settle a little while out exploring the woodlands. There is more to know about this common plant besides the nasty rash it can cause. Poison ivy grows as a vine, shrub or groundcover and in a variety of habitats. It is a native plant and the berries that it produces serve as a valuable food source for many birds including; flickers, woodpeckers, catbirds, chickadees, hermit thrushes, quail, pheasants and turkey. Deer and rabbits will occasionally browse the twigs and stems. The plant produces an oily resin known as urushiol which is present in the leaves, stems and roots of the plant. Approximately, 70-85% of people have an allergic reaction when the oil contacts their skin, so it is important for most to know how to avoid it, what to expect if you do have a reaction and how to treat it. The vines and roots of the plant still contain urushiol during the winter so caution should taken when cutting firewood, etc.

If exposure to poison ivy occurs there will typically be redness, itching, swelling, and even blisters in some cases, within 12-48 hours. Washing the area with soap and cool water right away will help remove the oils. If a rash does appear, calamine lotion, zinc carbonate and zinc oxide are all good home remedies to ease the symptoms. Some cases require a visit to a physician to get some prescription medications.



During the winter poison ivy vines can be identified by the distinct tiny, red root hairs that attach to vertical surfaces as they climb.



Don't let the cold weather keep you cooped up inside, Mills County Parks have a lot to offer year-round. Here are a few ideas:

Pony Creek Park has great hills for sledding!

Snow shoes are available to borrow at Pony Creek Nature Center during open hours.

Foothills Park (59069 Levi Road) has paved trails that are cleared if it snows, so they provide a nice place to enjoy the outdoors even when everything else is covered.

Mile Hill Lake is a good ice fishing spot. Remember to always be safe and have proper gear when going out on the ice. Share your location and fishing plans with someone if you are going out alone. Ice conditions can change daily, and no ice is 100% safe.

### ICE THICKNESS SUPPORT

*ice thickness*

*can safely support*

**4 inches**

**200 pounds** *(one person and gear)*

**5 inches**

**800 pounds** *(one snowmobile)*

**7 inches**

**1,500 pounds** *(group of people)*

**8 inches**

**2,000 pounds** *(one car)*

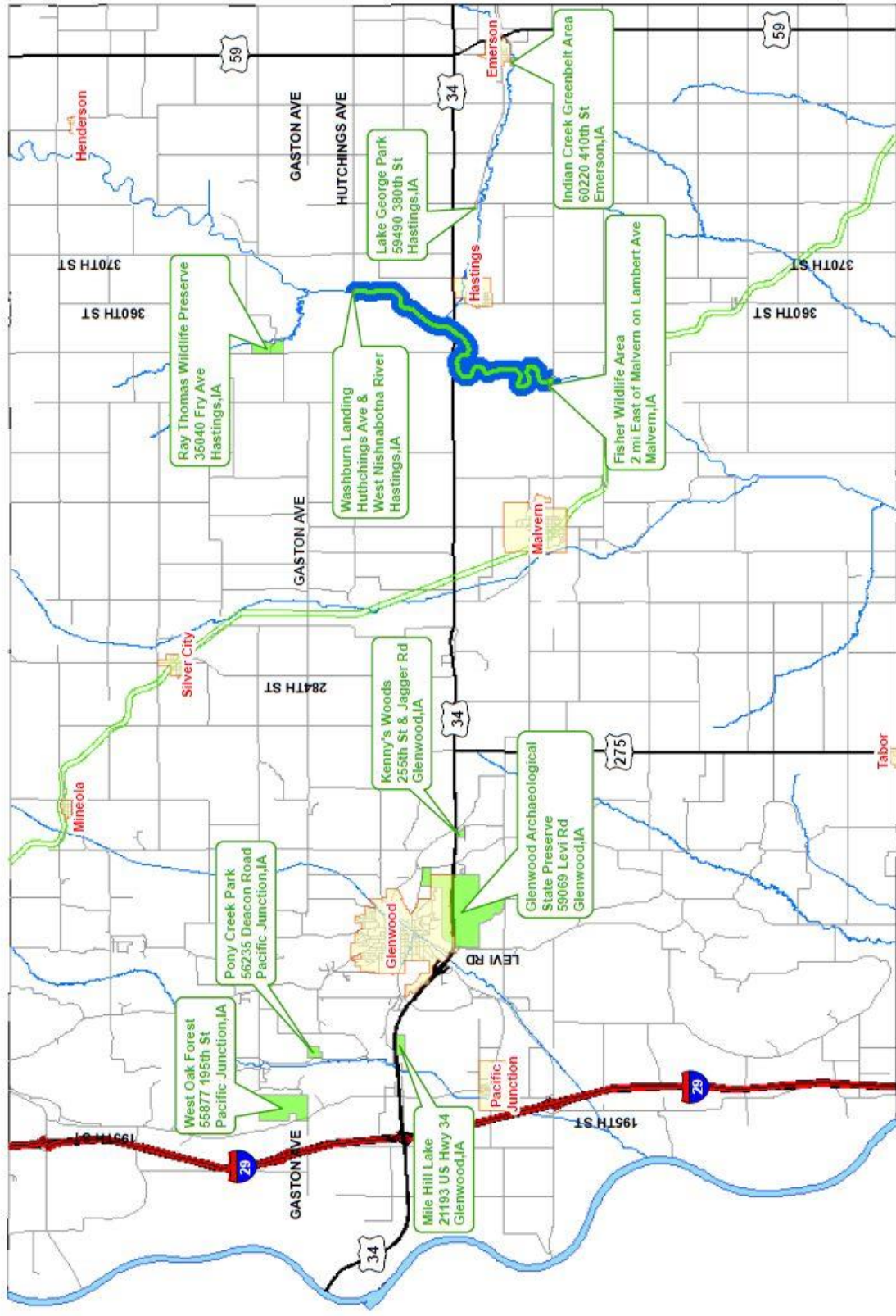
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**Legend**

- Cities
- County Parks
- Water Trail
- Wabash Trace
- Streams
- Roads
- State Highway
- Interstate

0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

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## Upcoming Public Programs

### **Nature Center- Open house December 28<sup>th</sup> @ 1:00 pm-3:00pm**

Your chance to enjoy the Nature Center on a Saturday! Browse through the building and meet the live animals. This is come and go as you please, the Naturalist will be available to answer questions.

### **Wild Winter Day – January 11th @ 1:00 pm**

Join us at Pony Creek Park for some outdoor WILD time. We will be building forts, rolling down hills, exploring the trails and enjoying the outdoors. Weather permitting!

### **Ice Fishing Basics- TBD**

Join us at Mile Hill Lake to learn the basics of ice fishing. Fishing equipment and bait will be provided. If interested in attending this program, please call 712-527-9685 to get on a notification list as this program is dependent on ice conditions and weather.

**Pre-registration is greatly appreciated to help with planning purposes.**



(C) <http://712news.com>

### **Pre-registration contact information:**

**Phone: 712-527-9685  
Email: [millsccbia@hotmail.com](mailto:millsccbia@hotmail.com)**

**Pre-registering helps us plan  
accordingly for programs.**



**Pony Creek Nature Center  
56235 Deacon Road  
Pacific Junction, IA**

**712-527-9685**

**Hours: Monday thru Friday  
9:00am to 3:00 pm**

## Contact information

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

PHONE:  
(712) 527-9685

E-MAIL:  
millsccbia@hotmail.com

Website:  
[www.millscoia.us/index.php/depts/conservation](http://www.millscoia.us/index.php/depts/conservation)



## Mills County Conservation Board:

### MCC Staff:

Jerad Getter, Director  
Dessa Montgomery, Naturalist  
Zach Kohlhoff, Specialist  
Chase Brumm, Technician

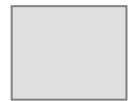


### MCC Board Members:

George Marshall, Malvern  
Lana White, Hastings  
Kreg Kinzle, Glenwood  
Ted Golka, Glenwood  
Debra Swirmiky, 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



Winter 2019