

Conservation Connection

Johnson County Conservation Newsletter

Phebe Timber: A Historically Rare, Woman-Deeded Parcel

Marci Trana – Naturalist

Johnson County Conservation is excited to share a few details with you about the most recently donated Johnson County Conservation area. In August, JCC took over ownership of a 26-acre riparian forest following the land donation by Ed Williams and his family. Currently, the area contains several mowed paths through shaded riparian timber surrounding Old Man's Creek. During spring, the wooded area teems with spring ephemerals and some of the earliest green foliage including, but not limited to, prairie trillium, spring cress, white trout lily, rue anemone, spring beauty, Virginia bluebells, Virginia waterleaf, round leaf violet, and wild ginger. Tree species include walnut, maple, hackberry, elm, and box elder. The area also contains button bush, river birch, and several other notable wetland species.

As you hike the trails you'll see depressions in the land that were once portions of the river, turned to oxbow lake, and filled in with



soil and silt. During a visit in late August, we could not help but notice how cool the air was as we walked, a welcome reprieve from a hot late summer day. The lack of poison ivy was also appreciated! For now, access to the property is fairly limited with no parking or regularly mowed trails, but in the future this area will likely serve as a welcome place for small creek fishing, paddling, or a mid-summer stroll in the cool shade of the forest.

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THE PEOPLE OF JCC

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A Note from the Director



We just came off one of the busiest seasons ever for people visiting JCC parks! It is great to see so many people out enjoying public land in Johnson County, and we expect to remain busy with winter recreation as the Iowa City Nordic Club plans to groom cross-country ski trails again at Kent Park. The ski trails were used

by people from many midwestern states last winter and with ample snow, we are expecting the same for this year.

In this winter issue of our newsletter you will learn about a recent donation of 26 acres along Old Man's Creek to the people of Johnson County. We are forever grateful to the Williams family for this generous gift of land that had been in their family since 1850. It is named Phebe Timber, in memory of Phebe C. Davis, who received the land from President Zachary Taylor. We understand the emotional bond people forge with the land and know this was a big decision for the entire family. Please take the time to read about this property and join us for the dedication next April when the spring wildflowers are in full bloom.

There are two other large donations "coming down the pipe" for conservation and recreation in Johnson County. These include a nearly \$1 million donation for land acquisition in the southern half of Johnson County, and a donation/purchase agreement to add 83 acres of high quality savanna along Sugar Bottom Road. These donations are to the people of Johnson County and we take seriously the challenge of managing them to preserve the earth and for all people to enjoy. More information will be announced in the coming months and future issues of our newsletter.

In addition to the incredible opportunities above, the Board of Supervisors recently made the decision to replace the campground shower house, restroom facility, and wastewater system at Kent Park. This project will have big implications for improving water quality in the lake while providing accessible facilities for nearly 650 people per day during the summer. Thank you everyone for your strong support of conservation in Johnson County!

Josh DeWild Joins the JCC Team as Mechanic!

The Johnson County Conservation Board is happy to welcome Josh DeWild to the staff. Josh will serve as the new mechanic for the Conservation Department. The mechanic is responsible for keeping the wide array of equipment running for the entire conservation department staff. This includes small engines to diesel equipment and everything in between. He will also be assisting staff with other projects as needed. Josh was employed by the City of Iowa City prior to joining the Conservation Department.

Josh and his wife Kimberly live in rural Johnson County and have four children - Lilly, Laney, Lincoln, and Annie. In his free time Josh enjoys hunting, fishing, and spending time with his family.

Say hi to Josh if you see him at any of the Johnson County Conservation Areas, and help us welcome him aboard.



Brad Harrig Joins the JCC Team as Utility Person!

Brad grew up in Dubuque, Iowa where he graduated from Hempstead High School. After high school, he joined the United States Navy and served from June 1995 to June 1999. He was trained as an Engineman and served on two separate ships in Auxiliary divisions.

After his discharge, Brad worked at Sundown Mountain Ski Resort on chairlift and grounds maintenance. In 2001, he moved to Riverside, Iowa to take a position with the City in Public Works. He has also worked for the City of Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation Department, and the City of Iowa City Wastewater Treatment Plant, where he served as the Senior Maintenance Worker.

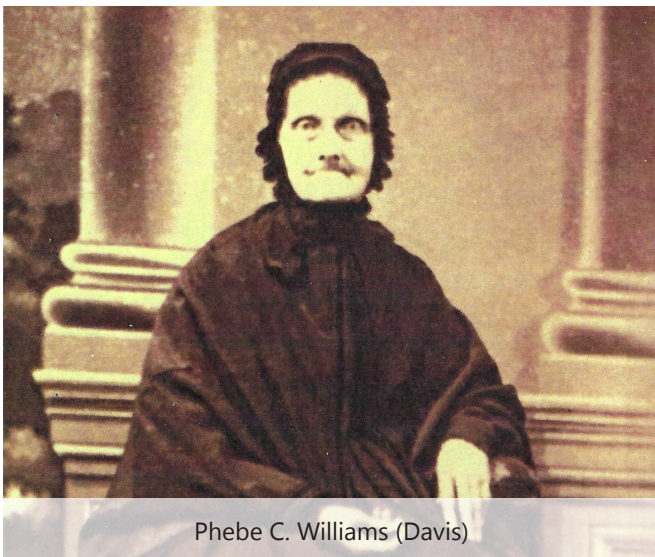
Brad lives in Riverside with his wife Misty and their three girls Anna, Katie and Emily.



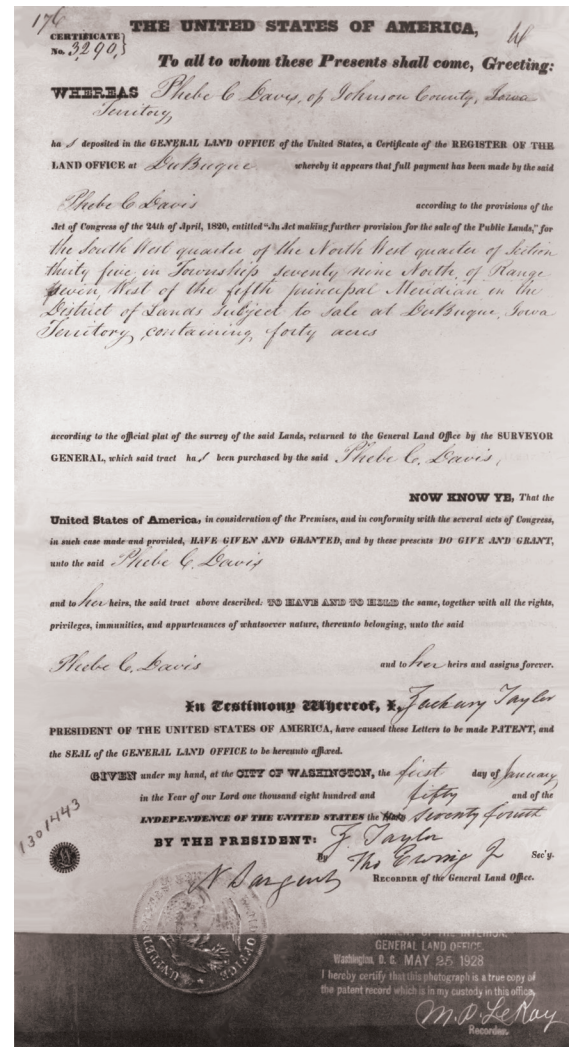
Phebe Timber: A Historically Rare, Woman-Deeded Parcel

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This newly acquired public land was part of a parcel of 40 acres applied for and deeded to Phebe C. Davis by the 12th president of the United States, Zachary Taylor (deed pictured to the right). Like many historical records, not all details are clear. As we read through historical accounts and visited the property, along with the nearby grave sites of Phebe and her first and second husbands, we left with more questions than answers. Laws regarding a woman's right to own or acquire land were rapidly changing during the time frame of Phebe's application and acquisition of this parcel of land. The federal deed or land patent, as they were called then, for this parcel is dated January 1, 1850 and just two years prior, in 1848, one of the most important property law enhancements of U.S. history was passed, the Married Woman's Property Act. This law meant that a woman could come into a marriage with land and it would remain hers, protected against seizure from her husband's creditors. The federal deed for this land shows a date of 1850 and the signature Phebe C. Davis, but Phebe had been widowed by her first husband, Josiah W. Davis in 1840 and married Edward T. Williams in 1844. Did Phebe apply for the land when she was a widow (from 1840 – 1844) or did she apply with her previous last name (Davis) in an attempt to thwart unfair land ownership laws for women of that era?



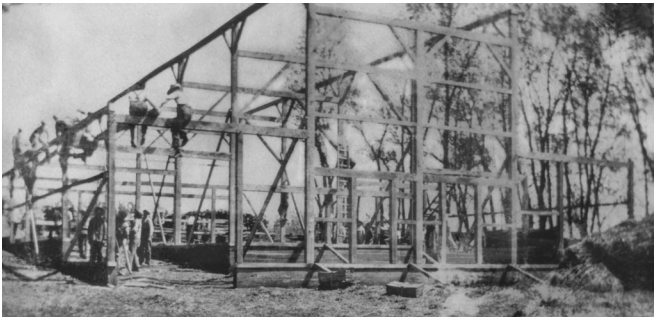
Phebe C. Williams (Davis)



Above: Deed for 40-acre parcel of land from US president Zachary Taylor.

Phebe Timber and the surrounding parcels were attractive land providing valuable resources. Lumber was used to build barns and rich prairie soils were fertile and productive for the cultivation of crops and cattle grazing. Phebe's obituary states that she "was one of the oldest citizens of Johnson County, settling here when these finely improved farms were wild prairie".

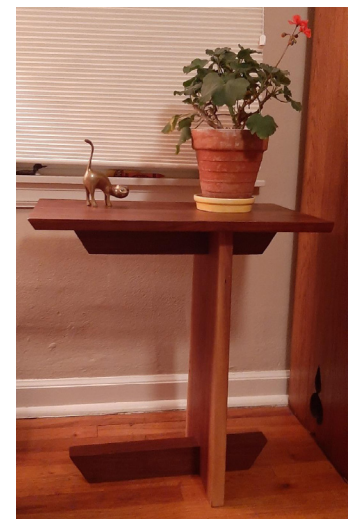
Prior to the land's transition from private ownership to public land, the land was continuously held by the decedents of the area's namesake. During more recent history, Herb and Betty Williams, passed the land to Phebe's great, great grandsons, Ed and Bob Williams, who graciously decided, with family support, to donate the land to JCC for public use.



Top to bottom: Photos from Phebe's grandchildren, still reaping the benefits of the land years later: Hauling logs up from timber; logs at the sawmill; women in the family watching the barn raising; the barn raising; and the finished barn in use.

Ed Williams shared with us the significance of this land to those descendants of Phebe as he spoke of family gatherings where the future of the land was discussed. JCC is honored to help in fulfilling the Williams family dream of making this land public. Many of Phebe's decedents continue to reside nearby including great granddaughters Alice Speraw and Marge Miller as well as great, great granddaughters, Carralee Sueppel and Connie Williams, who maintain family homes overlooking the timber. Ed also shared a few more recent uses of the land including picking bouquets of flowers for his mother, Betty, and harvesting timber that was made into beautiful walnut side tables and grandfather clocks for family members to enjoy. The Pony Truss Bridge located at F.W. Kent Park was originally located on this parcel of land, an interesting link between one of the original and most recent JCC areas.

So much more could be told of Phebe's story and of this land but already it is clear that this parcel of land has immense historical and conservation value here in Johnson County. We are thrilled to preserve this land as an area for public recreation and appreciation. Special thanks to Ed and Bob Williams for their interest in preserving the natural heritage of this land and for donating it for the public to enjoy.



Grandfather clock (**Left**) and side table (**above**) made from trees harvested from Phebe Timber in more recent years.

Kent Park, it's for the Birds!

Marci Trana – Naturalist
Mark Bowman - Sub-permitted Bird Bander

2021 was the seventh consecutive year of bird banding at Kent Park. This is an activity wherein volunteers, under the supervision of federally permitted banders, apply a small, uniquely-numbered aluminum band to a bird's leg, in order to allow it to be individually identified. Banding takes place about twice a week during spring, summer, and fall, and about once a week during winter.

The overall process occurs as follows. Dark netting, almost invisible to birds, is stretched between poles. These nets, known as mist nets, are placed in key locations, birds fly into them, and become entangled. Volunteers, monitor the nets, quickly extract the birds, and take them to a banding bench. At the bench, species is identified and the band is attached. Data is collected regarding each bird's condition, age, sex, molt status (systematic process of feather growth), wing and tail length, and weight. All of these activities are accomplished gently and quickly, and afterwards the bird is released.

The data is later submitted to the U.S. Geological Survey, which compiles it and makes it available to scientists worldwide.

It is also of great use locally. For example, our data shows that Kent Park provides excellent breeding habitat for over 50 passerine species (these species are classified as passerines due to the way their toes are arranged, allowing them to perch on branches), including American Goldfinches, American Restarts, Wood Thrushes, and Indigo Buntings. It also provides high-quality stopover and/or wintering habitat for more than 50 species, including 23 species of wood warblers. The Johnson County Conservation Board and Staff, the very many JCC Volunteers, and the Friends of Johnson County Conservation take pride in helping to conserve such threatened species as Rusty Blackbirds and Golden-winged Warblers.

Each banding year brings particular delights to volunteers.



Fall 2021 Public Bird Banding Event

Each spring and fall we offer a public bird banding event to showcase to the public what banders do. Our objective is to encourage appreciation for the various bird species present at Kent Park.



Adult (left) and Juvenile (right) Sharp-shinned Hawks captured at Kent Park fall 2021. Sharp-shinned Hawk age is determined by eye color and plumage. Raptors are held in a particular way to ensure both bander and bird safety. This grip is called the "ice cream cone grip".



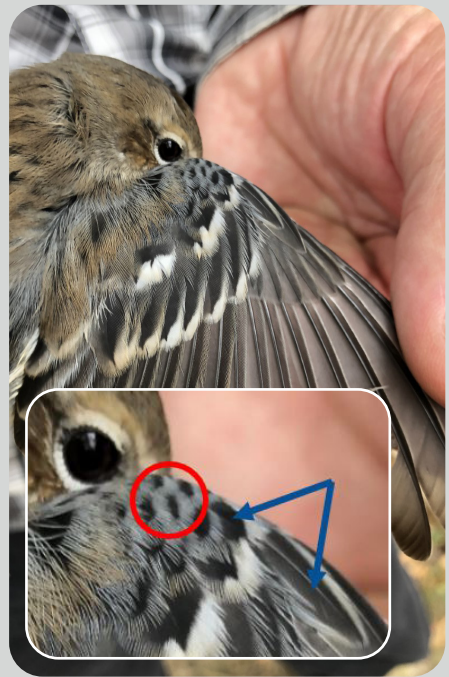
Red Headed Woodpecker
Debbie Bryant holds a Red-headed Woodpecker. Debbie, an expert at bird extraction, was our most dedicated volunteer in 2021, often arriving near sunrise to raise nets.

In the spring of 2021, we repeatedly encountered Wood Thrushes, suggesting a Kent Park population boom. In the fall, we encountered Sharp-shinned Hawks a dozen times, suggesting that Kent Park provides good passerine hunting grounds.

Rob Bradley, of Cedar Rapids, is the Master Bander through whom we are able to accomplish this work. Currently, Mark Bowman leads most Kent Park banding and he is partnering with Marci Trana to expand our volunteer pool and increase the scientific rigor with which we gather data.

We hope to soon begin a protocol that will help monitor the effects of climate change on Kent Park's breeding bird populations.

Marci and Mark also coordinate public banding demonstration events during spring and fall migration. Visitors there can closely observe the process, and many (especially children), experience the pleasure of hand-releasing banded birds. Valuable data is also gathered at these events, and bird conservation is enhanced when the public is as enchanted (as we are) by the close observations of bird behaviors and flight. Over 100 people attended September's public bird banding event.



Yellow Rumped-Warbler
Determining the age and sex of birds often requires making several observations. Blue arrows show newer more bold freshly colored feathers to lighter dull feathers. This difference indicates a molt limit (replacement of feathers) indicating this is a young bird. The red circled area shows blue-gray edging indicating this bird is a male.



Tennessee Warbler Arlen Breiholz shows a guest details that allow us to age a warbler. He contributes both gentle mist net extraction and computer skills to our team.

We thank the many volunteers who assisted Kent Park bird banding this year and invite others to volunteer in the coming year, and/or to attend future public programs and events. Potential volunteers are encouraged to contact Marci Trana by emailing: mtrana@johnsoncountyiowa.gov.

PRAIRIE ROOTS

& CLIMATE CHANGE

Kristen Morrow – Naturalist

Every year, Johnson County Conservation works to reconstruct prairie throughout the county. These efforts align with JCC's mission to promote biodiversity, but they also are a part of JCC's efforts to address climate change. Globally, prairies play a big role in climate change mitigation, and we have their phenomenal root systems to thank.

Living in the tall grass prairie region, it is easy to focus on just the above ground components of this ecosystem. After all, with the diversity of flower forms, alluring shapes of the foliage, and the sheer magnitude of the towering eight-foot jungle, it's hard to focus on the subterranean. Yet, the root system is the real engine of the prairie's power. Despite the mass of vegetation at the surface, the majority of a prairie's carbon is underground, with 60-80% of the carbon biomass stored in the roots and soil. The architecture of the root systems vary from species to species: some feature dense fibrous webs that fill the top layers of the soil profile; others sport thick tubers that branch several feet down; others reach deeper still, probing as far as 15 feet below the surface!

While root forms vary, they all share a role in carbon sequestration. Roots sequester carbon in a few different ways, including storage in the roots themselves, through root turnover, and through interactions with soil microbes. Carbon storage in the roots is short term and straightforward: just as carbon is stored in a tree branch, carbon is stored in the cells of a root. Things get more complicated when

examining the processes of root turnover and microbial interactions. To simplify, as prairie plants photosynthesize, they draw carbon out of the air to form sugars that are used for growth and energy. Leftover sugar can be exuded through the roots (along with other carbon-rich compounds) sometimes in a "trade" with soil microbes: microbes provide nutrients and minerals to the plants, and the plant gives carbon-rich sugars to the microbes. Meanwhile, up to half of a prairie plant's root system dies and regenerates each year. Some of the carbon from decomposing root and microbial matter returns to the atmosphere, but much of it is converted into a stable form that can remain locked in the soil for thousands of years!

Unfortunately, there is no quick fix. Reconstructed prairies will likely take many decades and even centuries to rebuild their original stocks of soil carbon, and there are still so many details the scientific community does not know about prairies and carbon sequestration. Rates of sequestration vary by prairie age, diversity, geography, management practices, and soil health. The long game of climate change still supports restoring prairies, however. Far into the future, prairie roots will keep chugging along, drawing out atmospheric carbon bit by bit, and locking it away in the soil. One prairie detail that garners easy consensus among scientists is that remnant prairie (never plowed) is a precious resource, and the roots and soil beneath it store huge amounts of carbon. These prairie and grasslands must be protected at all costs.

PRAIRIE RESTORATION ROUND UP

At the end of every year, we look back at the cumulative efforts of JCC's prairie restoration program. We reflect on progress made in terms of acres planted, seeds harvested, and volunteers engaged in the effort. Take a look at this year's prairie progress:

15 seed harvest events and field trips

24 species of native wildflowers targeted

268 volunteers that helped harvest seeds

395 volunteer hours spent harvesting seeds

12 acres of prairie seeded in 2021

374 acres of prairie reconstructed to date

VOLUNTEER UPDATES

This winter and spring, we will have several ways to get involved with Johnson County Conservation, both ongoing volunteer posts and one-time events. Anyone interested in the following volunteer needs can send an email to kmorrow@johnsoncountyiowa.gov or follow the event registration instructions when applicable.

- **Weekend Bird Feeder Steward** - we are seeking a volunteer to fill bird feeders at the Kent Park Bird Blind one weekend a month. One weekend slot currently open.
- **Substitute Educators** - experienced educators are needed to serve "on call" to help lead lessons for large field trips. Volunteers would be trained in 1-2 of the most common program offerings, and would be called upon if needed to fill in for a sick or otherwise incapacitated instructor. Background checks required.
- **Fishing Education Assistant** - we are seeking volunteers who are passionate about fishing and who are able to help bait hooks, untangle line, and unhook caught fish for release. Assistants help naturalists during high attendance fishing programs. Volunteers will be notified of upcoming events and can sign on to help as schedules allow.
- **Fishing Pole Repair** - volunteers are needed to help get fishing poles in good working order in between high-use programs. Volunteers would need to be able to untangle line, tie on hooks, weights, and bobbers, and trouble shoot simple issues. Training provided. Volunteers would be notified when there is need, and can work independently as schedules allow.
- **Tree Planting Event** - volunteers are needed to help plant acorns into pots for a JCC-led community climate change project. A tree planting event will be held March 11, see page 15 for more details.

Donations Needed!

An American White Pelican was a long term resident at Cedar River Crossing this past summer. Other pelicans came and went, but this one always stayed. As time went on and temperatures began to drop, it became clear the pelican was injured and would not be able to migrate for the winter. A plan was put in place to capture the pelican and get it to a safe place.

Tracy Belle came from Wildthunder Wildlife & Animal Rehabilitation and Sanctuary to lead the rescue and take the pelican with her for veterinary care. A large fish hook and fishing line was removed from one wing, and it is hoped that after a winter of relaxation at Tracy's facility, the pelican can be released back at Cedar River Crossing this spring 2022.

Until that release happens, the pelican will need a constant supply of fish. To donate fresh or frozen fish, contact Tracy Belle directly by phone: **319-961-3352** or you can donate money directly to her organization through her website: **www.wildthunderwars.org**

FISH PLEASE!



Above: Volunteers on land and water were necessary to quickly and safely capture the pelican. We are thankful to our partners at Bur Oak Land Trust, Iowa City Bird Club, and the Kirkwood College Parks and Natural Resource Program as well as the individual volunteers who came to help out that day!

Share the warmth!

Winter Clothing Drive

Hosted by Johnson County Conservation

Help us keep our neighbors warm and make outdoor adventures fun and cozy for all this winter by donating to JCC's Winter Clothing Drive!

We are seeking both adult and kid sizes of: coats, snowpants, boots, hats, gloves, midlayers, and baselayers.

Items can be dropped off at the CEC in F.W. Kent Park. All items will be donated to the United Way of Johnson and Washington Counties for distribution to our neighbors in need. Questions? Call 319-645-1011.

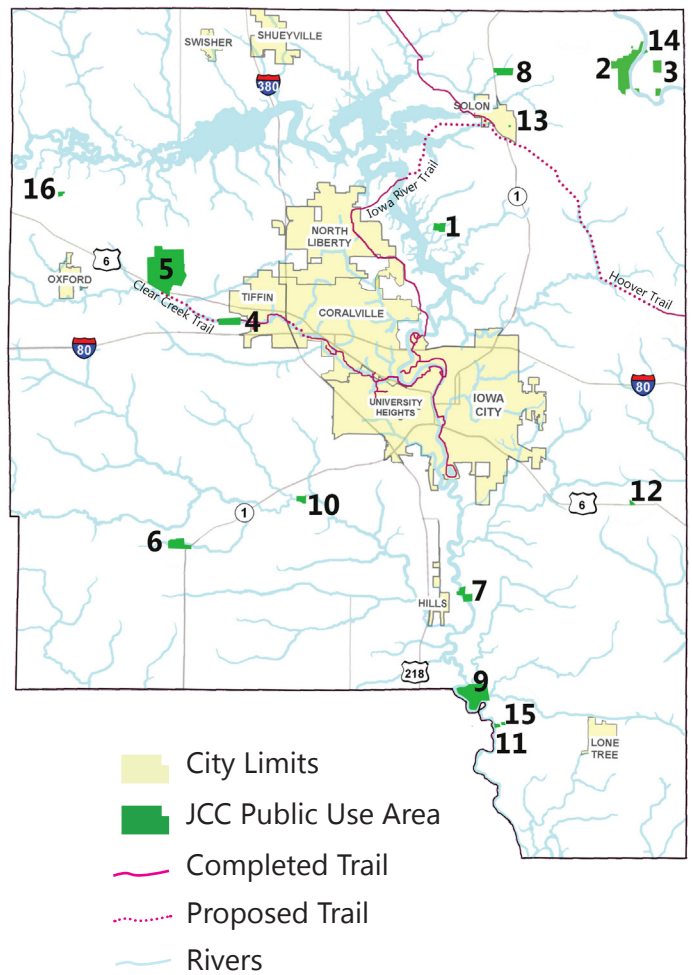




14 sets of snowshoes in youth and adult sizes are available for free check-out! To reserve for weekend check-outs, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/snowshoe21> To check weekday in-park availability, call: 319-645-1011

JCC Public Use Areas

1. Cangleska Wakan	132 acres
2. Cedar River Crossing	560 acres
3. Ciha Fen Preserve	81 acres
4. Clear Creek Conservation Area	87 acres
5. F.W. Kent Park	1,062 acres
6. Frytown Conservation Area	94 acres
7. Hills Access	40 acres
8. Malinda Reif Reilly Fen & Prairie	100 acres
9. Pechman Creek Delta	380 acres
10. Phebe Timber	27 acre
11. River Junction Access	12 acres
12. Scott Church Park	5 acres
13. Solon Prairie	3 acres
14. Sutliff Bridge & Access	1/2 acre
15. Walker Park	3 acres
16. Williams Prairie Preserve	21 acres



Paved Trails Managed by JCC

Clear Creek Trail	1.3 miles
Hoover Trail	6 miles
Iowa River Trail	3.5 miles

More information about JCC public use areas can be found through our website: www.johnsoncountyiowa.gov/conservation

Program/Event Guide

How to Sign Up:

Programs are free unless a fee is listed. Sign up for all programs is online at the link below, unless stated otherwise. Sign up at www.mycountyparks.com/Event/County/Johnson or by scanning the QR code to the right. For questions or sign-up help, call **319-645-1011**.



COVID-19

Due to Covid-19, JCC will be hosting modified public programs. Programs will have limited slots available to keep groups small. Programs will be outdoors whenever possible; Masks will be required for any indoor programs, or when groups will be in close proximity outdoors. Programs will be designed for ample spacing whenever possible. **Programs may be canceled based on current public health conditions or weather conditions.**

Program/Event Accessibility

Do you require any specific accessibility measures in order to comfortably participate in these programs? Reach out to us at 319-645-1011 to discuss.

December

F.I.N.D. LGBTQ+ Group Weekend Hike

Saturday, December 18, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park

Members of the LGBTQ + community and their friends and family join our naturalist for a guided hike in F.W. Kent Park. All experience levels and ages are welcome. We will enjoy a moderately long hike through various ecosystems. If there is snow present we will get to enjoy finding animal tracks and may have access to a limited number of snow shoes.

Sunrise Solstice Saunter

Tuesday, December 21, 6:45-9:00 a.m.
Cedar River Crossing

The winter solstice is often seen as a time for re-birth, renewal, and self-reflection. Celebrate the first day of winter and the lengthening of

daylight as we watch the sun rise over the astronomical clock in this beautiful natural area. The walk is about 2.5 miles round trip. Accommodations are available upon request to transport individuals with mobility difficulties from the Cedar River Crossing parking area to the clock.

January

Mushroom Cultivation for the Beginner

Tuesday, January 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park
Fee: \$5/log

This is a beginner friendly class to introduce the practice of cultivating different types of edible mushrooms. Various types of cultivation practices will be discussed. As part of the class, each participant will inoculate a log you can grow your own mushrooms at home.

F.I.N.D. LGBTQ+ Explore the CEC

Friday, January 7, 10:00-12:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park

Members of the LGBTQ + community and their friends and family join our naturalist to learn a bit about the live education animals within the CEC. Bird watch from the CEC windows or read about some of the natural history of the area on our interpretive displays.

Nature Buds - Animal Tracks

Tuesday, January 11, 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park

Nature Buds is a program for children 3 to 5 years old. This series encourages adult/child interaction through hands-on indoor STEAM-focused stations and outdoor exploration; one adult to every two children is required.

Junior Explorers - Animal Tracks

Wednesday, January 12, 3:00-4:30 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park

Junior Explorers is a new program designed for kids in grades K-4. Each month, this program will explore a new topic through self-guided hands-on activities and outdoor exploration. This program encourages mentorship through shared learning and exploration experiences; one adult to every three children is required.

Woodworking for Wildlife: Solitary Bee Hotels

Friday, January 21, 6:30-9:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park
Fee: \$20

Did you know there are around 400 different species of solitary bees in Iowa? Come learn about how you can protect our native pollinators and build an observation bee hotel to take home. Along with the bee hotel, participants can take home some native seed to enhance their backyard habitat.

Cricket is Back!



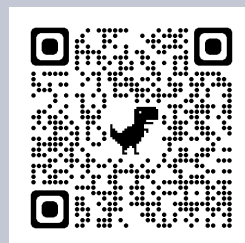
Cricket has decided to visit Kent Park! This year she'll be exploring three different trails throughout the month of December. Cricket is planning to enjoy **Trail 1 from Dec 1st to Dec 10th at 3:00 p.m.**, **Trail 2 from Dec 10th to Dec 20th at 3:00 p.m.**, and **Trail 3 from Dec 20th to 30th**. Visit our Facebook page for a trail map and clues to guide you in finding her.

If you visit her at each of the trail loops and take a picture with her in the background each time, you can be entered into a drawing for a free night of camping at a JCC campground! **To enter, send all three photos with Cricket to kmorrow@johnsoncountyiowa.gov by January 1st, 4:00 p.m.**

The JCC Passport is Ready to Print!

Download, print, and assemble our JCC passport then hit the road and plan hikes and visits to explore your local conservation areas. While this activity is fun for all ages, children can receive a Junior Naturalist Patch if they complete all pages!

Use the QR code below for a PDF download of the passport!



Luminary Night Hike

Friday, January 21, 6:00-8:45 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park

Experience hiking under starlight on this 1.5-mile hike. This self-guided hike will be lit by luminaries to help direct hikers along the way. Luminaries will be taken down at 8:45 p.m.

Introduction to Ice Fishing!

Sunday, January 30, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
F. W. Kent Park, Detailed location TBD

If you have always wanted to learn to ice fish but do not have family or friends to teach you this is the event for you! Join our naturalist as we all learn from ice fishing experts and fellow JCCB staff members Brad, Charlie, and Aaron. You will want to have nice warm clothing and boots for this event.

February

Outdoor Skills Series – Tying Flies

Saturday, February 5, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park

Join JCCB naturalist, Corridor Outdoor Adventure and Iowa DNR as we learn from an expert in fly tying. If you are interested in becoming a fly fisherperson and would like to learn how to make those colorful and realistic looking flies needed for the sport, you'll be sure to have fun at this event.

F.I.N.D. LGBTQ+ Member Event Brainstorm Fireside Session

Saturday, February 5, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
Youth Group Camp, Kent Park

Members of the LGBTQ + community and their friends and family meet together to discuss ideas and interests for upcoming events for spring, summer, and fall 2022. As this adventure group grows we hope to incorporate programs and events that appeal to the group as a whole.

Please come prepared to visit and share ideas while we sit fireside at the rustic youth group camp lodge and sip on cocoa and eat roasted marshmallows. All ages are welcome so bring all your friends and family!

Nature Buds - Raptors

Tuesday, February 8, 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park
See January 11 program for details.

Nature Journaling Workshop

Saturday, February 12, 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park

Learn the basics of nature journaling in a cozy indoor setting. After an introduction, students will go through guided practices and have optional indoor and outdoor journaling prompts. Attendees should bring a dedicated nature journal and preferred art supplies. This program is open to all ages, but is designed with adults in mind.

Naturalist Hike

Saturday, February 13, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Cedar River Crossing
Head out on a 3-mile hike into one of the most wildlife-rich JCC properties. A limited number of snowshoes will be available for hikers to use if desired.

Woodworking for Wildlife: Bat House

Tuesday, February 15, 6:30-9:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park
Fee: \$20/house

Learn all about our nocturnal friends and the many benefits of having them around. Then, show bats some love by building a house for them! This bat house is designed to hang on a building or free standing pole.

Junior Explorers - Raptors

Wednesday, February 16, 3:00-4:30 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park
See January 12 programs for details.

Luminary Night Hike

Thursday, February 17, 6:00-8:45 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park
See Jan 21 event for details.

Making Maple Syrup

Saturday, February 19, 9:00-11:00 a.m.
Cedar River Crossing

Learn all about making your own maple syrup during this hands on program. We will walk into Cedar River Crossing to identify appropriate trees and set them up for collecting sap. You will get some sticky history and an introduction to different types of equipment. A follow-up program will occur on February 24th to demonstrate the process of boiling the sap to turn it into syrup.

Naturalist Hike

Tuesday, February 22, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Cedar River Crossing

There will be an emphasis on edible plants and mushrooms as well as a tour of some tapped maple trees during a 2.5 mile walk.

March

Nature Buds - Birds

Tuesday, March 8, 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park
See Jan 11 event for details.

Junior Explorers - Birds

Wednesday, March 9, 3:00-4:30 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park
See January 19 programs for details.

Volunteer Tree Planting Event

Friday, March 11, 1:00-4:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park

Help JCC naturalists plant hundreds of acorns and hickory nuts into pots for a community tree give-away, a climate change adaptation-focused program. Volunteers are welcome to come and go as schedules allow.

Naturalist Hike

Saturday, March 12, 2:00-4:00 p.m.
Pechman Creek Delta

Look for signs of spring on this 3-mile loop to a quiet JCC property.

Forts and Fires

Thursday, March 17, 9:00-12:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park

Join our naturalist to learn a bit about surviving in cold conditions as we break into family groups to build shelters and fires using basic survival tools and skills. All ages and skill levels are welcome.

F.I.N.D. LGBTQ+ Forts and Fires

Saturday, March 19, 9:00-12:00 p.m.
Youth Group Camp, Kent Park

Members of the LGBTQ + community and their friends and family join our naturalist to learn a bit about surviving in cold conditions as we break into small groups to build shelters and fires using basic survival tools and skills. All ages and skill levels are welcome.

Pack Hike

Tuesday, March 22, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Cedar River Crossing

Bring your four-legged best friend on a 3 mile hike into one of the most wildlife-rich JCC properties. Enjoy all the sights, sounds, and smells! Dogs need to remain on a 6 foot leash at all times and pet waste must be packed out. No more than 2 dogs per handler.

Beginner Willow Basketry Class

Thursday, March 24, 10:00-2:00 p.m.
Cedar River Crossing

Learn how to identify, harvest, and prepare the willow stems for basket making. Participants will spend 2-3 hours making a woven basket from the materials they gather. Basket making will take place outside.



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When conditions are right, water vapor condenses directly to ice causing hoarfrost. These intricate ice crystals are delicate, so make sure you get out early before they melt away!