



Spring 2024

Conservation Connection

Johnson County Conservation Newsletter



A periodical cicada rests on a small oak twig.

Brood Thirteen is Coming

Frances Owen- Naturalist

Native Americans, already present in North America for thousands of years before European colonization, were well aware of the existence and occasional emergence of periodical cicadas (they would eat them!). However, the first known written documentation of their emergence occurred in 1634, 14 years after the arrival of Pilgrims at Plymouth.

By the eighteenth century, most people were mistakenly calling them locusts, which was not great for their reputation. A locust is an entirely different creature, a known agricultural pest of biblical proportion. The common name "locust" more accurately refers to several species of

grasshoppers. Locusts, under certain conditions, locusts will migrate and feed in large groups,

consuming all vegetation in an area. In contrast, cicadas, while they emerge in startling numbers all at once, are not a threat to us or a major agricultural pest. The adults drink sap from shrubs and trees, and other than browning and breakage of the youngest twigs of hardwood trees during egg laying, they do not cause lasting damage to already mature trees, and are not considered an agricultural pest. Still, the

misnomer persists, villainizing these fascinating creatures.

"there was such a quantity of a great sort of flies like for bigness to wasps or humbebees, which came out of the ground and replenished all the woods and ate the green things, and made such a constant yelling noise as made all the woods ring of them, and ready to deaf the hearers."

An excerpt from the journal of William Bradford, the second Governor of the Plymouth Colony, during the 1634 emergence at Plymouth Colony.

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A Note from the Director

Larry Gullett - Executive Director



I want to expand on what we are doing related to restoration ecology in Johnson County. A big part of what our Johnson County Conservation team is doing is related to seed collection and using that seed in restoration efforts. With 99.9% of native prairie gone from the landscape, the efforts of

conservation organizations to focus on restoration are very well spent. If you think of it in terms of providing a home for all the invertebrates and vertebrates that depend on this type of habitat, there is no higher calling in the conservation field. It is commendable to develop and provide any type of restoration effort, but to focus on the organisms that cannot find the habitat they need to survive is to me the highest level of compassion for living things.

If you are interested in prairie, there are two books every enthusiast should read: *Where the Sky Began* by John Madson and *Faith in a Seed* by Henry David Thoreau. John Madson was originally from Iowa and grew up in Story County, just south of Ames near Slater, Iowa. His book awakens readers to the wonders of the tallgrass prairie, and underlines why prairie restoration matters. Thoreau's personal and lifelong interest in nature was focused on seed distribution and distribution patterns of plant species. Both books are meaningful in understanding and appreciating the process of restoration ecology.

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The sun sets over Williams Prairie during a prairie seed harvest.



Help us raise funds for the Friends of Johnson County Conservation *Bus Scholarship!*

Bus Scholarships make it possible for local schools to attend free ecology- and outdoor exploration-focused field trips with Johnson County Conservation education staff. Our goal for 2024 is to raise \$2,000 in scholarship aid. Donations will be collected by the Friends of Johnson County Conservation (FJCC) and funds will go to the receiving schools to cover transportation.

How to donate by check: Make a check out to: Friends of Johnson County Conservation, memo: Bus Scholarship. **Mail to:** F.W. Kent Park, Attn: FJCC, 2048 Hwy 6 NW, Oxford, IA 52322

Donate Online: Scan or click the code to the right for a FJCC donation page.



Mr. and Mrs. Orville Wolfe are rejoicing over the arrival of a 11-pound baby girl.

The seventeen year locust is here and though people differ in regard to the non-destructive qualities of these insects, they have always, in all countries, been very much dreaded by the people. The locusts vary in size from one-fourth of an inch to five inches in length, having strong hind legs they are good leapers. There are two kinds, the winged and wingless. They have ravenous appetites, travel in crowds and devour all green things in their track, sometimes each other. The winged locust crosses sea and continent. The females deposit their eggs in holes, deep in the ground. They make a queer noise, something like a flame of fire when it spreads rapidly, with their ceaselessly moving jaws, and I have seen them alight on corn-stalks, hazel bushes, and trees in the morning which at night were things which were in the air above the stalks and branches.

ure Malt Whiskey, sold by all druggists and grocers only—price \$1.00. See that the "Old Chemist" is a strap over the cork. Refuse substitutes and try, offered by unreliable dealers.

HATED LOCUST MAKES HIS BOW

17-YEAR CURSE APPEARS IN
IOWA CITY.

Three Hundred of Winged Creatures
Tunnel Three Feet Underground
in One Garden.

The dreaded seventeen-year locust
has registered in Iowa City.

The most-hated of the hemipterous things have reached the gardens of the Athens, and that probably means an invasion of the huckster places in the town. A man who has been looking up to the locusts as a pest, says, "The cicada whose calling cards are

distributed throughout the agricultural district of Iowa once in almost a double-decade will be apt to wreak sad havoc before he leaves Johnson county.

Fully three hundred of the winged things were unearthed this morning by Will J. Lorack, in his garden, at the corner of Bloomington and Linn streets, and brought down town for the inspection of scientists. Some of the onlookers call the insects grubs, only, but the university zoologists recognize the dreaded cicada's identity with the 17-year bane.

Mr. Lorack exhumed the specimens in question from deep points. Some of the ruinous locusts had dug holes as big around as one's thumb, and to a depth of three feet.

H. H. Knight left last evening for St. Louis, where he will fill a bigger and better post than that he occupied here and in the Postal Telegraph Company in Iowa City. Just what the office is he did not say, as he was simply

All About Brood Thirteen

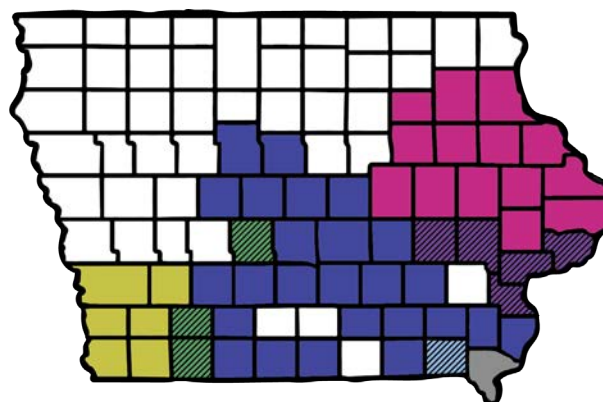
Above: Clippings from the Iowa City Daily press during the emergence of Brood XIII in 1905

Almost 17 years ago, billions of cicadas emerged throughout Johnson County (approximately 1 million per acre!) as part of Brood XIII. As you read this, their offspring are about eight inches underground, waiting for the soil temperature to reach a steady 64 degrees Fahrenheit around the end of May/beginning of June. It isn't something to fear, if anything, this amazing evolutionary adaptation is one to celebrate! They will only be around for a few short weeks, so let's take some time to get to know our mostly subterranean friends before they emerge.

Over the last 17 years, Brood XIII has been feeding on sap from the roots of trees. They move short distances, creating small tunnels between roots typically about 8-12 inches underground. If the tree they are feeding on dies however, it is possible they won't survive, unless they have access to a neighboring tree. Which causes me to wonder how the 2020 derecho may have affected Brood XIII's population.

You may have noticed small numbers of Brood XIII emerging already last year. Others will miss

Map on right: Four broods of periodical cicada are found in Iowa, with some counties containing multiple. Johnson County will experience an emergence again in 2031 with Brood III. Brood XIX is also emerging this year, though in Iowa, they will only be seen in the far southeast corner for our state. The last time these two broods emerged together, Thomas Jefferson was president back in 1803! It will be another 221 years before they will emerge together again.



Broods (Next Emergence)

Multiple Broods

17-year cicadas

Brood XIII (2024)

Brood III (2031)

Brood IV (2032)

13-year cicadas

Brood XIX (2024)

Three separate species of periodical cicada make up Brood XIII. Pictured left is *Magicicada septendecim*, larger than the other two, thick orange bands stretch across the abdomen. Pictured center is *Magicicada cassini*, slightly smaller and no bands present on its abdomen. Pictured right is *Magicicada septendecula* also smaller, has thinner orange bands across its abdomen.

M. septendecim



M. cassini



M. septendecula



the memo to emerge this year and will wait until 2025. It is not fully understood how periodical cicadas track the passage of time. However, they are likely able to track the seasonal changes occurring within the sap of trees. So when unusual seasonal variations occur, like an unseasonably warm February which causes trees to leaf out too soon, followed by another cold spell, this seems to cause them to register the passing of another year, which can cause them to become desynchronized with the rest of the brood. In Johnson County, the majority of Brood XIII will emerge sometime around the first week of June this year.

When they do emerge, they look very similar to our typical "dog day" cicadas (the big green ones!) that emerge annually in July and August. The small brown nymph will tunnel upward out of the ground and onto any surface it can cling to. Then its exoskeleton will split along the back, and the pale adult form will slowly work its way out of the shell. Once



Above: A 17-year cicada emerges from its nymph exoskeleton. Notice its eyes are already red.

free, it will cling to the surface to expand its wings and take flight once its exoskeleton is completely dry and hardened.

Brood XIII will only live for four to six weeks. The males will scream their songs, the females will lay their eggs, inserting them into small woody twigs, and the cycle will continue. After the chaos of their emergence quiets down (literally, because of their screaming), we will have another seven years to wait for the emergence of Brood III.

Cicada Activities



Download the Cicada Safari App on your phone! Create an account now, so you will be ready to take photos and submit sightings of Brood XIII!

Attend JCC's presentation about periodical cicadas on May 25th and join us for a night hike to look for emerging nymphs! Scan the QR code to register.



Take a walk along JCC's Storybook Trail from May 25th-June 9th for a story all about cicadas and a cicada scavenger hunt!

Director's Note

Continued from page 2

Before landing in Johnson County, I had coordinated and implemented somewhere between 350 and 375 restoration projects that encompassed about 4,000 acres in Jasper, Dallas, Polk, Madison, Warren, Dubuque, Jackson, and Jones counties. I planted my first prairie in 1978, using a Truax 8' standard drill in Jasper County at the Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve. I am not 100% sure, but I think this was the first Truax drill used in the state of Iowa. At that time prairie restoration was just getting off the ground and the cost of the drill was shared between Story and Jasper County Conservation Boards. At the same time we started burning native relics to rejuvenate those plant communities. When you work with people that have focused their efforts in a particular area for their entire life, it is awakening. As a restorationist, you don't just put the seeds in the ground and walk away – the process includes going back to those areas for years and assessing the effectiveness of what you did. It is through this process and comparison to native relics that one begins to realize the real fragility, diversity, and complexity of the original prairie community.

The differences in prairie, even within different parts of the same state are striking. Moving around the state has helped my understanding the complexity of prairie even in a hundred miles. What works in one particular area of the state, may not apply in other areas, but the high-level principles apply most of the time. Thus, development of strategies based on a specific area, region, or past land use cannot always be applied across a larger landscape area. This is especially important when you are talking about something like the upper Mississippi River watershed that encompasses thousands of square miles and includes many different types of plant communities. Hydrologists have recognized this and applied this principle in the development of Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) watersheds, even within the same river system.

The same concept applies in prairie restoration but no one in the ecological restoration field has yet to apply this principle, probably because no one has developed the knowledge base through experience to grasp the detailed differences in these relatively small areas.

All of this brings me to our seed collection program and appreciation of all the volunteers and staff that help with the effort. The process of going out at different times of the year and collecting seed for use in restoration is priceless in terms of supporting these restoration efforts. Seed collection also has huge financial benefits. In other organizations we would annually budget around \$30,000 per year just for purchase of seed. In Johnson County the cash outlay is much less because of our emphasis on seed collection. I cannot thank all the volunteers and staff enough for all their efforts in collecting this seed. Last fall alone, volunteers, our education staff, and natural resource staff hand collected 54.6 pounds of forb and legume seed from 20 different species with a value of \$19,143. In addition, our staff used a combine and harvested another 1,815 pounds of diverse mix from our most diverse and healthy established prairies – the value of this seed \$109,000! In total, our seed collection efforts this fall resulted in about \$128,041 in seed value. This program is incredible in allowing Johnson County to implement major restoration projects at a relatively low cost compared to many organizations.



Volunteers collect seed at Kent Park

If you really get into prairie restoration and spend considerable amounts of time immersed in the plant community, you begin to notice very small changes on a daily and sometimes hourly basis. In close observation of both restoration projects and native relics, you begin to realize there are major differences between the two. While native relics have developed over thousands of years, the oldest restorations in our area are only 50 years old. It is no wonder the differences are so profound. The most diverse prairie I have ever experienced had a soil profile of only one to four inches. One day I took a wire tile flag and stuck it in the ground throughout the prairie. I was amazed at how thin the soil was. This was a prairie that developed on top of limestone or dolomite bedrock. It was never plowed and according to research done by others we could not find any records of grazing by cattle. How a plant community can become so rich and diverse with only one to four inches of topsoil is remarkable. In addition, the diversity of invertebrates in the prairie was mind boggling. When you got down on your hands and knees and studied the soil surface, you could see there were thousands of invertebrates throughout the entire plant community.

Even though our restoration efforts are in no way comparable to native relics, we need to give them time, hundreds if not thousands of years. With this type of time scale, it is important that when we restore an area, to provide homes for all the critters that are in critical need of the plants and fungi they depend on, we start with as diverse a planting as possible. Otherwise, we invest much time and effort on a project that may be limited for a very long time based on the original seed mix. So, hats off again to all the volunteers and staff that devote so much time to collect seed as the first step in our restoration efforts.

2023 PRAIRIE RESTORATION:

20

seed harvest events and field trips

20

species of native wildflowers targeted

73

volunteers that helped harvest seeds

110

volunteer hours spent harvesting seeds

55

pounds of hand-collected seed

\$19,000

value of hand-collected seed



Building Conservation At Home

Michelle Wiegand - Naturalist

Today's environmental challenges are immense. At times, it is easy to feel these challenges are insurmountable. However, if you are a homeowner, there are things you can do to make a difference. In fact, what has become the standard lawn practices in the United States—miles and miles of turf grass—is not working and is contributing to habitat loss, continued reliance on toxic chemicals that enter our water cycle, the loss of plants and trees for carbon storage, and more.

According to entomologist Doug Tallamy, perhaps our nation's leading expert and advocate for native plant gardening, 71% of the land in the lower 48 states is privately owned. East of the Mississippi river, over 85% of all land is privately owned. 40 million acres of land is maintained as turfgrass, including school yards, parks, and golf courses. While this number can be shocking, it does mean that private landowners can have a tremendous impact on changing the trajectory of habitat loss and biodiversity.

Whether your goal is to support wildlife, decrease your water use, carbon sequestration, or simply enjoying the beauty of nature, let's explore some ways you can build conservation practices in your own back (or front) yard.



Painted lady butterfly rests on blazingstar flower.



An eastern bluebird forages eastern red cedar fruit.

Native Plants for the Birds and Bees

Numerous species of birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, and mammals have been lost or are at risk due to habitat loss. A 2019 study published in the journal *Science* reported that nearly 3 billion North American birds have been lost since 1970. Birds in every biome have been affected, with grassland birds experiencing the greatest population decline of 53%.

One of the most impactful things a homeowner can do to support wildlife at home is to reduce their turf grass and replace with native plants. Native plants are those that naturally occur in a region. Because they are naturally occurring, native insects, birds, and other species have co-evolved with those plants over time. Insects like caterpillars have evolved to overcome native plants' natural defenses. Many species specialize on specific native plants, meaning they rely on a specific native plant for food or as a host for young. The most well-known examples of this is probably the monarch butterfly whose larvae rely on milkweed plants.

As Tallamy found through his research, a native oak tree supports over 500 species of caterpillars. By contrast, non-native ginkgo trees support only five species of caterpillars. It takes 6,000 caterpillars just to support a single brood of chickadees. If you love birds and want to support birds in your yard, you need to provide habitat for the caterpillars that birds eat. As a line familiar to all Iowans goes, "If you build it, they will come". Gardening with native plants creates resources for animals that rely on these species for food, shelter, and reproduction.

In addition to supporting wildlife, because native plants occur naturally in a certain region, they require less water once established. They also do not require intensive fertilizer and toxic insecticides traditionally used in turfgrass lawns. This creates a healthier ecosystem for plants and people.

Plant Keystone Trees & Shrubs

It's easy to get excited about planting native wildflowers but don't forget about trees and other woody plants. Again, Tallamy encourages the planting of "keystone" species, such as the aforementioned oaks, to help create a more complete food web in your yard. Tallamy's [Homegrown National Park site](#) has developed an interactive mapping tool for individuals to determine their ecoregion and the keystone plants in their region. Johnson County is located in the "9.2 Temperate Prairies" ecoregion and a few examples of keystone species for our region are *Prunus serotina* (black cherry), *Prunus americana* (American plum), and *Quercus macrocarpa* (bur oak).



Black cherry tree in full bloom.

Provide a "Soft Landing"

Once you have decided on the keystone tree species you will plant (or assess the ones you already have), provide the caterpillars ready to pupate a soft landing for when they fall from the tree onto the ground. Traditional grass under these tree species is often maintained by mowing, which threatens the pupating moths or butterflies, and doesn't provide much plant or leaf litter under which to burrow.

Remove Invasive Plants

Another step toward supporting the growth of native plants in your yard is to remove invasive plant species. Non-native ornamental plants have been used commonly amongst home gardeners and are often standards on the shelves at nurseries and plant stores across the United States. Invasive plants are those that are not only non-native but they are also highly aggressive and have become problematic in a region. Many of these started out being sold commonly at nurseries to home gardeners and have since become out of control after years of planting.

Invasive plants choke out native plants and will grow so aggressively that native plants can no longer get the resources they need. An example of this is bush honeysuckle, which can grow so thick in forested areas that understory plants, like many spring ephemerals—an important food source for many native pollinators, can no longer get light and are unable to thrive. Locally, invasive plants include *Celastrus orbiculatus* (oriental or round leaf bittersweet), *Lonicera spp* (bush honeysuckle), *Rosa multiflora* (multiflora rose), and *Elaeagnus umbellate* (autumn olive). Becoming more acquainted with these and other locally invasive plants will help you to preserve space in your yard for native species to flourish.

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Building Conservation At Home

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Add a Water Feature

Planting native plants in your yard can help meet several of the basic needs for wildlife survival, including food, shelter, and even oxygen. Adding a water feature addresses a fourth basic need for water. We often think of using water features to attract birds, and they do, but water will also support invertebrates, amphibians, mammals, and even reptiles that may live in your area.

Water features can range in complexity from providing a small tray of water set out on your deck to bird baths that have a “dripper” to promote water movement to the installation of a small bubbler or small pond. It all depends on the size of your yard and the amount of time (and financial resources) you can contribute to the project.

Doing a bit of research before getting started will set you up for success. Water features with moving water, even just small bubblers or water wigglers, will attract more wildlife. Small ponds and bubblers may sometimes include filters that need to be cleaned to prevent the buildup of algae, so just keep that maintenance in mind as you plan your water feature. Not only does moving water attract more birds and other wildlife but it also helps prevent or reduce certain wildlife from occurring—namely mosquito larvae.



American robin stands in a bird bath.

DIY Window Decals



While creating a more bird-friendly yard, be sure to make the windows on your home safer, as well.

Click or scan the QR code for a simple, low-cost DIY Window Bird Strike decal tutorial.



Prevent Window Strikes

Window collisions are one of the leading causes of human-related death for birds. A 2014 study by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Smithsonian Institution found that up to 1 billion birds are killed by window collisions each year. If your goal is to attract more wildlife to your yard, it is a good idea to take steps to increase the safety of their surroundings, including your home itself.

There are numerous ways to increase the safety of your windows. Extensive resources are available online. Products such as bird-friendly window tape, UV decals, and UV paint are also available for purchase. There is also extensive research online about which products have been most effective. Each homeowner will need to assess their site needs, including where window strikes occur, their aesthetic preferences, and their desired maintenance levels. For example, clear UV window paint has been shown to be effective. It maintains your clean window aesthetic, but it will also require repeated application. Testing out a different methods with help you find the right solution for your home.

Below is a list of tips and low-cost to free strategies for your windows at home. Your goal is to make your windows more visible for birds in your yard.

- Remove interior plants near window. These plants can appear to be a potential landing site to birds outdoors.
- Move bird feeders within 3 ft. of windows, to reduce impact if birds fly away quickly due to predation and to create a visible barrier. Alternatively, move feeders 30 ft. away from home.
- Create Do-It-Yourself decals at home and tape them to the outside of the window. Scan the link/QR code on page 10 for a step-by-step guide. Note that decals must be placed close together to be effective (no more than a 4" wide by 2" high).
- Use tempera paint and create a seasonal painting on the outside of your windows.

Get Started!

As we move into spring, it is exciting to think about getting into the yard. There are many strategies listed here. Wherever you are in your journey, we hope you consider Johnson County Conservation a resource for future education and inspiration. Be sure to check out our upcoming events at the back of the newsletter for upcoming events to help support you in building conservation at home.



Cedar waxwing forages for food.

WHAT'S THAT WEED?

Chelsea Cozad - AmeriCorps Naturalist



Have you ever seen a strange plant in your yard and automatically thought "what is that weed"? I had this thought when I first encountered the plant pictured above.

After doing some research, here's what I learned about this plant:

- This native plant grows well in disturbed areas, and can grow into a thick mat. This makes it a helpful for re-colonizing spaces that are empty of plant life due to events such as fires, floods, or human development.
- It supports wildlife, providing food for many kinds of animals and ground cover for small invertebrates. Pollinating insects will drink nectar from the flowers. Larger animals, like deer and rabbits, eat the vegetation.
- Humans can eat it too! This plant is said to have a bright, tart taste and can be added to soups, salads, and more.

I suppose any plant that ends up where it's not intended can be called "weedy," but this one seems pretty useful... maybe I should reconsider calling it a weed.



Answer: *Oxalis stricta* (yellow woodsorrel)

PLANT THIS. NOT THAT.

Select native shrubs to help reduce the spread of invasive plants in our woodlands. Below are some problematic invasive woodland plants along with suggested native alternatives.

Berberis thunbergii

Barberry



Berberis thunbergii (barberry) is widely sold in garden stores as an ornamental shrub. However, this plant quickly becomes invasive and wreaks havoc in our natural areas. It's an early bloomer, so it outcompetes spring ephemerals, which many pollinators rely on as an early food source in spring. It also has the ability to change soil characteristics, making it less habitable to native plants.

Euonymus alatus

Burning Bush



Euonymus alatus (burning bush) is an invasive shrub easily identifiable by its red fall foliage and "winged" stems. Burning bush produces plentiful fruit widely dispersed by birds and other animals. Burning bush adapts to a range of growing conditions and can aggressively form thick stands, crowding out native plants.

Ilex verticillata

Common Winterberry



Native *Ilex verticillata* (common winterberry or winterberry holly) is a deciduous holly shrub that shows off a bright display of vibrant red berries throughout winter. The red berries offer a striking contrast to white snow and are especially notable because of the deciduous nature of this holly. Birdwatchers will delight in watching birds enjoy the berries.

Physocarpus opulifolius

Common Ninebark



Physocarpus opulifolius (common ninebark) is a native shrub with year-round interest, including ornate flower clusters, fruit follicles that attract wildlife, and unique bark formation. Ninebark is a host plant for numerous native moth species, supports birds with its fruit, and The Xerces Society names it an important species for bees.

IDAHO WILDERNESS TREK

**A 10-day Conservation Adventure for
Johnson County High School Students**

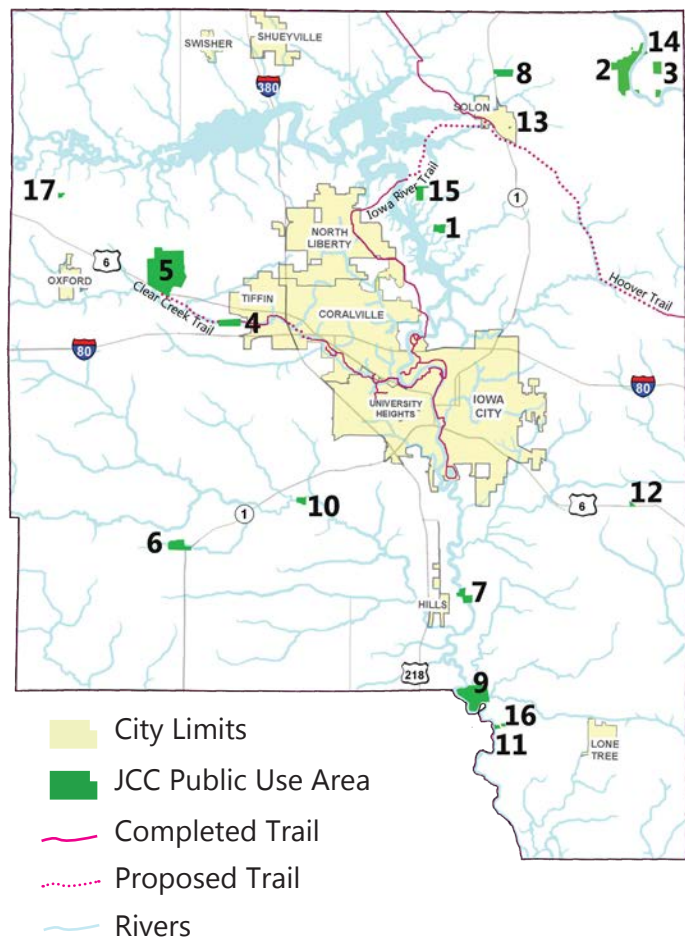
JULY 1-10, 2024

This adventure is open to students who have completed 9th-12th grades. The trip is \$500; all gear is included and scholarships are available. Scan or click the code to learn more! to learn more!



JCCB 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. Two Horse Farm	83 acres
16. Walker Park	3 acres
17. Williams Prairie Preserve	21 acres



Paved Trail Segments 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 <https://www.johnsoncountyiowa.gov/conservation/events> or by scanning the QR code to the right. For questions or sign-up help, call **319-645-1011**.



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 for assistance.

CEC Open Hours

Saturdays, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
June 1-mid-August

Come explore the Discovery Room, visit the education animals, hike the Storybook Trail, and check out the bird blind!

opportunities to see a wide variety of avian species. Target species of interest will be early spring migrants such as winter wren, hermit thrush, kinglets, yellow-bellied sapsucker, and yellow-rumped warbler. Expect to hike 1.5 – 2 miles of mowed paths that can be hilly at times and may be wet or muddy.

April

Tree Cookie Printing

Sunday, April 14, 1:00-2:30 p.m.
Cangleska Wakan
\$20 fee/print

Have you ever counted the rings on a tree to find it's age? We can learn much more about the tree by reading the rings. Join us to learn some characteristics of tree rings and then create your own tree cookie print from local trees. Prints will include hanging hardware.

Morning Migration Hike

Sunday, April 21, 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Two Horse Farm

Join Johnson County Conservation and the Iowa City Bird Club on a bird watching hike at Johnson County's newest property. This property contains both reconstructed prairie and oak-hickory forest habitats, providing

Talk & Walk: Amphibian Citizen Science

Friday, April 26, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Kent Park, Conservation Education Center

What is citizen science, and why is it important? Join a JCC naturalist to learn the basics. Discover what opportunities are available right here in Johnson County. We will focus on a program that is designed to collect data on the breeding patterns of frogs and toads. After the learning portion of this program, participants will embark on a nighttime hike in which we will demonstrate how to conduct a frog and toad survey.

May

Native Plant Speaker Series & Plant Sale

Sunday, May 5, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Kent Park, Conservation Education Center

Ready to jump into spring planting? Learn

more about native plants during the first of four native plant speaker series events. Each event will showcase two regional native plant experts and host a native plant sale. During the May event we will host Allendan Seed Company based out of Winterset, IA. Allendan will have native plugs for sale.

Native Plant Sale: Allendan Seed Co.

Sunday, May 5, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Kent Park, Conservation Education Center

Support wildlife and reduce your ecological footprint by adding native plants to your landscape! In May, we will host Allendan Seed Company based out of Winterset, IA. Allendan will have native plugs for sale.

Mother's Day Hike

Sunday, May 12, 2:00-3:00 p.m.
Phebe Timber

Join us to celebrate mothers everywhere. Learn about the cultural and natural history of Phebe Timber and hike through a forest with spring wildflowers in bloom. The hike will be one mile or less on a flat dirt trail.

Building Better Birders Workshop

Saturday, May 18, 6:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.
Kent Park, Conservation Education Center & Cedar River Crossing

Join for one or all sessions as we learn all things birds! The theme of this workshop is migrants. The event registration for this event includes a full breakdown of the sessions.

Cicadas are Coming!

Friday, May 24, 8:30-10:00 p.m.
Kent Park, Conservation Education Center

Come celebrate the emergence of Brood XIII! We will start with an indoor program about periodical cicadas, then we will head outside for a night hike and search for any that are starting to emerge. These insects only emerge every 17 years – you won't want to miss it!

June

Native Plant Speaker Series & Plant Sale

Sunday, June 2, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Kent Park, Conservation Education Center
*See May event description

Native Plant Sale: Troutleaf Native Plants

Sunday, June 2, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Kent Park, Conservation Education Center
*See May event description

Free Fishing weekend

Saturday, June 8, 7:00-11:00 a.m.
Kent Park Lake, Boat Ramp

Drop by any time during this event and try your hand at fishing. We will provide the bait and equipment.

Great Iowa River Race

Saturday, June 8, 10:00 a.m.
Sturgis Ferry Park, Iowa City

The 9.25-mile race on the Iowa River is open to canoes, kayaks, and paddle boards. The course starts at Sturgis Ferry Park and ends at Hills Campground. The entry fee is \$35 per person before April 1 (use coupon code "EARLYBIRD"), \$40 after, and includes a t-shirt and lunch. There is no day-of registration, and all registration closes June 4th. Rentals are available for \$10 while they last. To learn more and to register, scan the QR code below or visit: <https://paddleguru.com/races/GreatIowaRiverRace2024>





Johnson County Conservation
2048 HWY 6 NW
Oxford, IA 52332

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Virginia bluebells, a lovely spring ephemeral, begins to flower at Cangleska Wakan. In full bloom, the flowers have a pillowy, trumpet shape. Virginia bluebells prefer the moist, shady soil of woodlands and create a stunning display when found en masse. While these flowers create a stunning visual effect, their ephemeral nature means they quickly go dormant and will not be seen again until the following