

Conservation Connection

Johnson County Conservation Newsletter

Leave it to Beaver: Coexisting with Conservation Heroes

Kristen Morrow - Naturalist

Beavers were once extirpated (extinct within a certain area) from the state of Iowa, and they even nearly went extinct across the whole continent. Their population has been steadily recovering over the past century throughout Iowa and the country overall. Today you can find signs of a beaver's handiwork along many of the area's streams, rivers, and lakes.

For many, seeing the signs of beaver architecture is a source of joy and excitement. I receive many emails from Johnson County citizens sharing their observations of tracks, dams, chewed tree stumps, skulls, and occasionally videos of beavers swimming or slapping their tails. The sense of awe and admiration is always palpable in these messages.

But not everyone gleans that same sense of delight from these animals. For some, they are still considered a top nuisance, best gotten rid of. While beavers can create infrastructure challenges, their benefits to the environment

are significant, and should be considered when these challenges arise. Thankfully, there are many non-lethal and cost-effective strategies to minimize beaver damage and maximize the environmental benefits they provide. In this article, we'll share both the benefits beavers provide and some of the solutions for coexistence.

Beavers are North America's largest rodent, weighing up to 60 pounds! On land, they look rotund and lumbering, but they're a whole different animal underwater, where they swiftly swim with



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A Note from the Director

Larry Gullett - Executive Director



We have many exciting projects underway in Johnson County, and the purpose of all of them is to provide more opportunities for the people and wildlife that live here. Sometimes the workload can seem daunting, but we focus on each one individually and keep moving forward.

The first is the Clear Creek Trail Extension to Kent Park. We expect to let the bidding for Phase 1 of the project this coming November or December and for construction to occur next summer. Phase 1 will include construction of a tunnel under Highway 6 for safe crossing by trail-users and construction of the trail base from the parking area on Half Moon Ave to the cemetery along Highway 6. We are still working to raise funds to move forward with Phases 2 and 3, which will include the construction of three bridges and trail surfacing. When complete people will be able to bike or hike from Coralville and Iowa City to Kent Park and vice versa.

We just completed the construction of a new dump station for campers at Kent Park and plan to begin Phase 1 of the new shower house project in May. The old shower house and dump station were not designed to treat the increased volume of waste material due to an increase in camping, and were adding pollution to the lake at Kent Park. Phase 1 of the shower house project will include installation of the new wastewater treatment system, realigning of the road system in the campground to accommodate the new shower house and installation of the utilities. We expect to have the shower house completed within two years.

Fifty acres were added to Cedar River Crossing in October 2023, and we are preparing to seed about 34 acres of diverse prairie and savanna at the site. The 50 acres is located on the north side of the Sutliff Road and surrounds our Sutliff Operations Center. The restoration will expand the habitat corridor along the Cedar River, providing homes for wildlife, improving water quality and connect the Cedar River to its floodplain.

We are working closely with officials from Resource Environmental Solutions (RES) on developing the plan for

restoration of wetlands, streams, and savanna at Pechman Creek Delta. The plan for the 380-acre site will be complete in the summer of 2025. Restoration will then begin on improving the connection of Pechman Creek to the Iowa River, providing seamless access to the fish and wildlife that depend on the area.



Above: Visitors to Cedar River Crossing check out rose mallow in a hike guided by JCC Naturalist Kristen Morrow. This is one of Johnson County Conservation's wildest feeling parks.

This fall we will be improving an at-grade crossing along the Hoover Trail across the Ely Road between Solon and Ely. This crossing will improve safety until the Ely Road can be raised 18" to eliminate flooding during high water events at Coralville Lake.

In terms of managing natural resources within the county the staff has made great progress during the last year. In just nine months, the staff has completed significant projects at Two Horse Farm, Cangleska Wakan, Cedar River Crossing, Kent Park and other areas. Staff are focused on control of invasive species like bush honeysuckle, autumn olive, oriental bittersweet and garlic mustard which diminish the value of woodlands and prairies throughout the county.

We are also working closely with RARE (Raptor Rehabilitation and Education), an organization dedicated to the care and rehabilitation of injured birds of prey. RARE rehabilitates birds

of prey at the Two Horse Farm. This summer and fall staff will be completing work on improving the flight pens in the large barn.

And finally, we will be heating the water system in the Celebration Barn at Cangleska Wakan, providing year round use of the facility and restrooms for the public throughout the winter season.

We have a lot going on around the county and hope these projects will benefit you and make Johnson County a better place to live. If you have any questions or would like more details about any of the projects you can contact us anytime.



Above: Natural Resource Crew members work to clear ash trees infested with emerald ash borer.



Above: Two new flight cages recently constructed to add space for R.A.R.E. birds. Public can access these outdoor structures to view the birds inside (when present).



The Importance of Insects

Chelsea Cozad - AmeriCorps Naturalist

It had only taken a few months for a new visitor to take up residence in my yard. Spotting the striped, crawling thing filled my heart with delight and my children with wonder. After planting four lonely milkweed plants in our yard one summer, a single monarch butterfly found their sanctuary. We watched and waited to see its development. From caterpillar to upside-down caterpillar, to chrysalis, to empty shell, we watched this single insect's entire life cycle unfurl (pictured above). All because we bought some plants at a greenhouse and buried the roots in the soil beside our home.

We didn't buy these plants off-handedly. Scientists have found that insect populations have declined drastically over the past few decades. The homogenized landscapes of our urban and suburban homes are one of the top causes for these declines. Turf grass is one of the largest crops grown in the United States. An estimated 40 million acres in the United States consist of this one plant, which is often tended so that no other plants deemed "weeds" can mix in. Many insects need nectar, pollen, and a variety of available plant matter to feed upon and shelter in. When neatly trimmed grass is the only plant available, survival is tougher than normal. What flowers are present can often be useless to insects that evolved over millennial to use the vegetation that grew around them. Today we use the term "native" to describe the vegetation that grew in a region long before the era of industrialization. Knowing all of this, we started adding native plants to our yard.

we'd hoped to host another of the flaming orange jewels, none were found. Later that winter, when monarchs congregated in their Mexico wintering grounds, we learned their numbers were especially low that year. Despite the lack of butterflies, another invertebrate storyline was playing out amidst the milkweed. Several times a week I'd walk around my yard observing the tiny islands of plant-life we created, seeing what other types of life could be found. As the summer grew hotter and drier, tiny orange aphids began taking over the milkweeds. Whether due to drought or stress from the aphids feeding on it, one of our milkweed plants died. I learned that the species of aphids on the milkweed were non-native insects called oleander aphids that are known for congregating on milkweed. Distraught, I researched how to try saving my plants without harming other insects. It was easy enough to scrape off the aphids by hand, yet this was time consuming and tedious. A couple of times I sprayed a concoction of water, castile soap, and neem oil on the plant. But I disliked this route as it could affect other insects.



Above: Bright orange oleander aphids swarm the flower and stalk of a butterfly milkweed plant.

The next summer yielded no monarchs. Though

Eventually I noticed less and less aphids on the plants during my inspections. What I also noticed was the response of the ecological system in my yard to the aphid abundance. One day I spotted a larva grasping an aphid in its minute jaws. Some quick research told me it was probably a young syrphid fly. Syrphid flies, commonly called hover flies, are known predators of aphids. On another milkweed plant an army of ladybug larvae appeared as if by magic. Ladybugs are famously used by farmers as natural pest control because of their fondness for aphid dinners. Without any effort of my own, nature provided a solution to my aphid pest problem.

This is just a small example of how insects are needed for a balanced ecosystem. In any ecosystem, having too much or too little of any



Left: An oleander aphid is caught in the jaws of a syrphid fly larva. **Right:** A ladybug nymph patrols a milkweed leaf for food; they are great for controlling aphid infestations

component can cause imbalances. Dozens of stories on how this works have been studied and shared. For example, too many nutrients in a pond causes an overgrowth of algae that results in low dissolved oxygen, killing off much of the aquatic life in that pond. Another famous tale of imbalance is how too few predators in Yellowstone National Park caused an overabundance of elk, who in turn ate so many aspen saplings that the future of those trees was seriously imperiled. Scientists have concluded that healthy ecosystems tend to be more biodiverse. Simply put, ecosystems with a wide variety of life function better than ecosystems in which only a few species are present.



Above: A hoverfly visits a new england aster flower blooming withing the authors yard.

The tale of how those seemingly-pesty aphids became a source of energy for other insects is a perfect example of how this works. Even so, insects are only one piece of the ecosystem puzzle. We planted a young river birch around the same time we began adding native plants to our yard. Songbirds now regularly utilize the birch for its shade and the safe perching spots that it creates. I have witnessed American Goldfinches plucking seeds off of our coneflowers as a tasty treat. Even dandelion seeds have become food for the birds, as I discovered when I found a House Finch snacking on them mere inches away from my back door one morning. My children accompany me on regular trips to the garden to see what kind awesome insects we can find hanging around that day, all the while being spied upon by hungry neighborhood birds. Almost every species of songbird relies exclusively on insects to feed their young. Insects rely on having native plant life to live, eat, and reproduce. Every part of the system supports another part.

If you feel concerned about how this decline of insect life is affecting this planet we call home, rest easy and know that it's never too late to change course. It is easier than ever to create your own backyard biodiversity preserve. To quote the ever-famous Field of Dreams line: if you build it, they will come. Plant some native species and you will not only add colorful flowers to your yard, but a menagerie of creatures and endless opportunities to ponder the wonders of life which surround us.

AVIAN ADVENTURE RECAP

Michelle Wiegand - Naturalist

This winter, Johnson County Conservation launched the Johnson County Avian Adventure. Avian Adventure is a self-paced, science-based, county-wide scavenger hunt all about birds!

Over the course of a month and a half, participants competed to follow online maps and clues to find 12 hidden bird replicas each at sites throughout Johnson County. They were also challenged to correctly identify the bird. On March 28, Johnson County Conservation hosted a packed house at Big Grove Brewery for a bird-themed trivia night, where Avian Adventure winners were announced.

Thanks to all who participated. We hope your passion for bird watching and conservation of birds continues to grow!

LEARN MORE:

johnsoncountyia.gov/conservation/events



We loved the fun photos shared by participants!



Family selfie with a pileated woodpecker replica.



The Avian Adventure was a collaborative effort amongst JCC Naturalists who worked together to cut (Frances), paint, and install the birds throughout Johnson County (all).

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



300 participants



2,595 individual park visits



Largest group participation: Tamarack Discovery School with 54 K-6th Grade Students



Notable time: Jason Estes completed the program within 24 hours of program opening

THANKS TO OUR TRIVIA HOST:

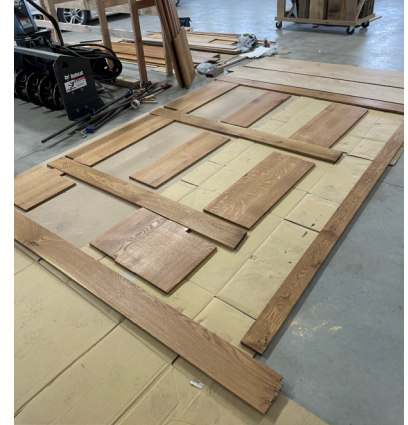
Thanks to Big Grove Brewery for hosting the Avian Adventure Trivia Night!

THANKS TO OUR DONORS:

Vortex Optics, Hilton Garden Inn in Iowa City, Raygun, VUE Rooftop, Scheels, FilmScene, Play it Again Sports- Iowa City, Prairie Kitchen Store, World of Bikes, Thiesen's, Iowa Children's Museum, Tin Roost, Prairie Moon Nursery, Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, Lenocho & Cilek Ace Hardware

New Improvements to our Education Center Displays!

The JCC education team, led by Naturalist Frances Owen, set out to create a larger and improved animal enclosure display for the CEC. This project was started in November 2022 and most construction was finished by the end of March 2023. This spring we added a matching set of steps and completed the drawers which have nature artifacts for people to touch and explore. Construction of the new display allowed education staff to double the living space for all of the educational animals.



Most of the lumber used in the construction of the display is white oak, which came from Cangleska Wakan where it was milled on site. In order to get some of the larger dimension boards needed for the display, many pieces needed to be glued and joined.

Education staff planed, joined, sanded, and cut-to-size every piece used. At the end, it was like a big puzzle with some assembly required.

All of the display's facade pieces were organized and laid out for assembly. We applied a hemp oil finish to all of the pieces.



Above: The view behind. Every tank is accessible from the back for easy animal care. **Right:** The finished display from the front with matching stairs and touch drawers.

strength and grace. The water is where beavers prefer to be, and their bodies have numerous adaptations to help them thrive in the aquatic world. Beavers have webbed back feet like flippers that propel them forward and help them to swim with speed. Their wide flat tail helps with swimming as well and serves as a rudder that helps them to steer and maneuver underwater (their tails are not used for smoothing the mud on top of their dams, as cartoons often have us believe). Beavers have a translucent eyelid, called a nictitating membrane. These close and protect their eyes while they are swimming while still allowing them to see! Their ears and nose also have valves that can be closed when they dive to keep water out, and they even have lips behind their front teeth so that they can gnaw on wood underwater! Clearly, they are perfectly built for their aquatic environment.

Beavers are considered nature's engineers because they are always busy building dams and lodges. They build both structures out of many natural materials, including sticks and logs, grasses, root balls, leaves, rocks, and mud. The lodge is where the beaver family lives (they have tight family units - the male and female mate for life and are monogamous). Lodges are built in the middle of shallow lakes and ponds. They will excavate a den in the bank if they live in a river or deep lake. The entrances to these



Above: Beavers primarily eat woody plant material, especially tree bark. They fell trees to access a whole tree trunk of food. They may also use the leftover logs and sticks as building materials. Beavers have teeth that never stop growing; chewing trees can also help keep their teeth from getting too long.

homes are underwater, which is the primary way that they protect themselves from land-based predators, who don't swim underwater to get in. Beavers build dams to further protect themselves from predators, raising the water level in shallow ponds, or establishing ponds from streams and rivers so they are protected by more water on all sides. Beavers also build dams so that they can more easily swim to their food: trees! Beavers primarily eat the inner bark of trees and shrubs. That is the main reason they chew down trees as well: cutting down the tree gives them a feast of bark to enjoy.

Beavers were once extremely plentiful across North America, with populations estimated to be over 400 million strong in the 1600s. The European Fur Trade changed that. Beavers and other fur bearing animals were trapped nearly to extinction so that their pelts could be shipped back to Europe to be made into clothes. Beavers were the top prize. Their fur could be processed into the softest felt, and beaver-felt hats were considered top fashion for over a century. By 1900, the beaver population across the U.S. plunged to just 100,000 animals. Over the last 125 years, beaver populations have been steadily growing, and their population is estimated at over ten million animals today. This is great news for watershed health because



Above: A lodge is where beavers live. The entrances are underwater so that land-based predators cannot get in. Beavers create dams to raise water levels around their lodges as further protection.

beavers are conservation heroes.

Beavers are considered a keystone species, which are species that play a significant role in shaping their environment and ecosystem. Their dams and the resulting wetlands are a boon for total ecosystem diversity. Beaver wetlands provide homes for scores of animals - they create nurseries for fish fry, breeding areas for toads and salamanders, homes for aquatic turtles, water snakes, waterfowl, cranes, herons, and songbirds. Otters, mink, and muskrats may move into the pond. Flooded trees along the pond edge die, drawing thousands of insects into the decomposing tree trunk, and woodpeckers to the insect feast.

Beaver ponds also have huge effects on the hydrology of that stream. By slowing the water, the ponds help the overall stream channel become more stabilized. The ponds can absorb and slow flood water after heavy rains, reducing flood damage downstream. The slower flow upstream of beaver dams also reduces bank erosion. Beaver ponds hold on to water throughout droughts, keeping a vital water source available for wildlife, and helping to stabilize flow downstream. By slowing and holding water, beaver ponds also help groundwater levels to recharge - water can slowly seep underground rather than swiftly moving through a stream channel.

Beaver ponds can help filter pollutants out of water too. Nutrients like nitrates and phosphates can be consumed and converted by wetland bacteria, lowering overall nutrient levels before flowing downstream. Sediments can also fall out of solution in the slow-moving pond, building and storing a carbon-rich substrate at the bottom of the wetland while more clear water flows on.

Finally, beaver ponds can serve as a critical means of reducing the effects of catastrophic wildfires, especially in the arid west. These saturated valleys can help to slow and stop

fires from spreading to the next hillside.

With the long list of benefits that beavers provide to both the natural world and humans, we should all work toward their continued success at reestablishing healthy populations. Rather than rely on destructive lethal strategies, we can adopt new solutions to prevent beaver damage to human infrastructure and promote harmonious coexistence.

Local Beaver Tour:

Pechman Creek Delta:

Hike the trail along the slough. Beaver signs you may encounter include freshly chewed stumps. Tracks have been found in the winter here, along with beaver skulls.

Cedar River Crossing:

Hike the spur trail that leads to the Cedar River. A beaver den is along the bank here, and sometimes a "clear-cut" area of willow stumps.

Cangleska Wakan:

A beaver family briefly lived here. Look for signs of chewed tree stumps in the forest areas around the main pond.

Waterworks Prairie:

Hike the trail that leads to the large fishing pond. Ample beaver activity can be found along the east side of the pond, with many felled trees, chewed stumps, and dug canals.

Terry Trueblood:

Hike the trail loop, and look for beaver signs especially in the south half of Sand Lake. An old lodge is along the bank near the southern lake edge. Beaver can often be spotted swimming at dusk.

Sugar Bottom:

Hike the 200-series trails for lots of fresh beaver activity. Many chewed stumps can be seen here, and beaver dams can be found along the stream.

Lake MacBride State Park:

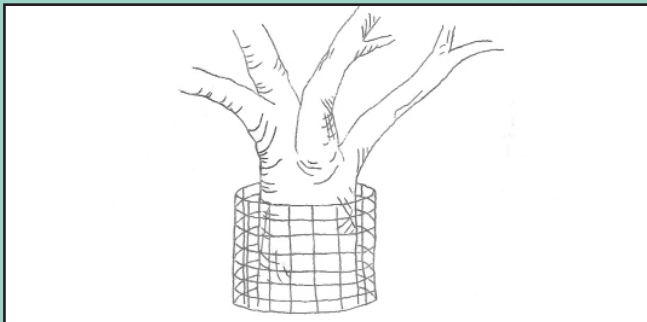
Hike the trail that passes the U of I Sailboat Club. Beavers felled large trees and many more have protective fencing around them.

Non-lethal Strategies for Beaver Coexistence

There are numerous creative solutions for forward-thinking conservationists to harmoniously coexist with beavers. The solutions below are low-cost, low-maintenance, and highly effective ways of preventing damage caused by beavers. These descriptions are brief, but more detailed information and instruction manuals can be found through [The Beaver Institute](https://www.thebeaverinstitute.org/) website. *Illustrations by Kristen Morrow*

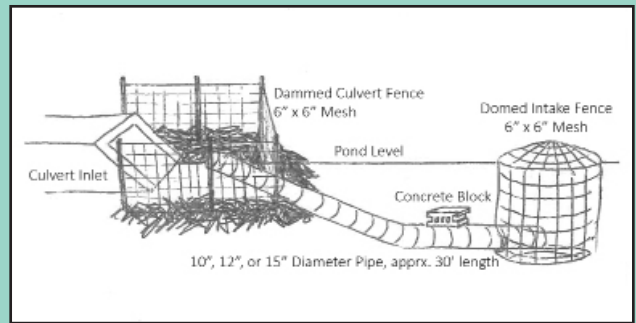
Problem: Beavers Causing Tree Damage Solution: Fence Trees

Beavers fell trees for food and building materials for their dams and lodges. Protect valuable or large shade trees simply by fencing around the trunk. Use two by four inch steel mesh fencing that is four feet tall. Allow three to six inches of space between fencing and trunk to allow for growth without girdling the tree.



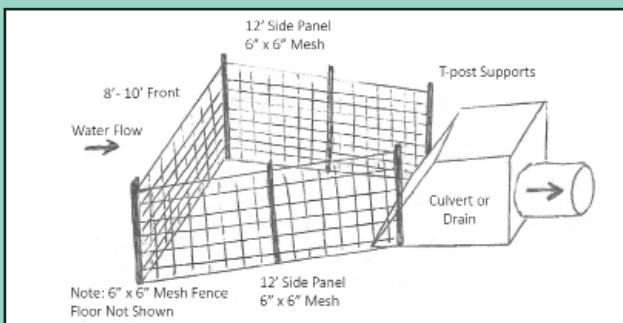
Problem: Blocked Culvert or Drain Solution: Install Fence and Pipe Device

Beavers may be drawn to culverts and drains as an easier place for them to build a dam. The Fence and Pipe solution is 99% effective and requires very little maintenance each year to maintain. The culvert inlet is fenced with a flexible pipe installed through the fence to control the height of the pond.



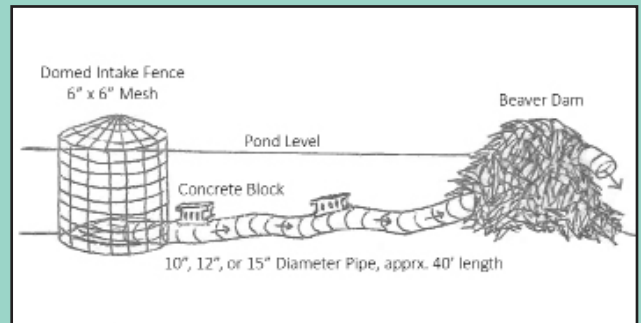
Problem: Blocked Culvert or Drain Solution: Culvert Protective Fence

Beavers may be drawn to culverts as an easier place for them to build a dam. Culvert Protective Fences are mainly used for road culverts and are best used for places where a stream cannot be ponded. For this solution, trapezoidal fencing is constructed around the culvert inlet, greatly expanding the area needed to dam from the size of the culvert opening to a length of 30-50 feet. Minimal maintenance is required, but debris does need to be removed from fencing quarterly.



Problem: Flooding from Beaver Dams Solution: Install Pond Leveler

Dams can create flooding issues for human infrastructure. Construct a "Pond Leveler" to control the size of the beaver pond. A 'pond leveler' uses a flexible pipe to create a permanent outlet flow through the beaver dam. Place an exclusion fence on the pipe inlet to prevent beavers from detecting water flow into the pipe. Water drains out the opposite side of the dam; the height of the outlet controls the pond level.





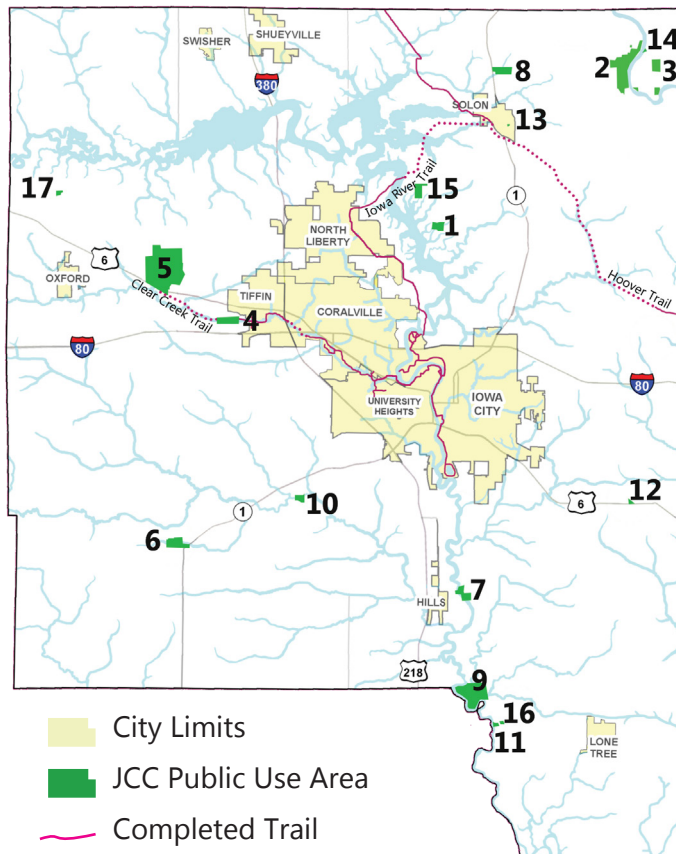
Butterfly and Moth Community Art Project

We're putting together an educational display for the Conservation Education Center about native butterflies and moths and would love help from local artists! Artists are welcome to 'adopt' a species (or multiple!) to paint. Artists will be provided a wood cutout of that species, with replica sizes ranging from 1 - 2 feet wide. Painting style should favor biological accuracy. To sign up, click or scan the code!



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



- City Limits
- JCC Public Use Area
- Completed Trail
- Proposed Trail
- Rivers

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. To sign up, **click or scan** the QR code to the right or go to: <https://www.johnsoncountyiowa.gov/conservation/events>. For questions or sign-up help, call **319-645-1011**.



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

June

Native Plant Speaker Series & Plant Sale

Sunday, June 2, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Kent Park, Conservation Education Center

Learn more about incorporating native plants at home during our second plant speaker series event. Each event showcases two regional native plant experts and hosts a native plant sale. During the June event we will host Troutleaf Native Plants. Troutleaf will have native plugs for sale.

Native Plant Sale: Troutleaf Native Plants

Sunday, June 2, 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 June, we will host Troutleaf Native Plants based out of Johnson County, IA. Troutleaf will have native plugs for sale.

Invasive Species Field Day

Thursday, June 6, 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Cangleska Wakan.

The Hawkeye Cooperative Weed Management Area (HCWMA) will be hosting this event to assist landowners and land managers in all aspects of invasive species management. Lunch will be provided to registered participants. Participants must register by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 6. Register by calling Brad Freidhof at (319) 645-2315 or email bfreidhof@johnsoncountyiowa.gov.

Explorers: Wetland Discovery

Thursday, June 6, 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Dip a net in the wetland and learn about the macroinvertebrates that live in these habitats. We'll provide nets, buckets, guides, and magnifying glasses. Explorers is a free nature program designed for elementary-aged kids.

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. JCC will provide the bait and equipment.

Raptor Meet-n-Greet

Saturday, June 8, 10:30-11:15 a.m.
Whip-poor-will Shelter Area, F.W. Kent Park

Come meet and learn about two different birds of prey with Raptology. This program will take place outside in the Whip-poor-will Shelter area, across the road from the Conservation Education Center entry. This outdoor program is an informal "meet-n-greet" style and no registration is required. No dogs permitted in the area during the time of the program.

Naturalist Hike

Tuesday, June 11, 9:00-11:00 a.m.
Frytown Conservation Area

Learn about and hike three miles through this quiet nature preserve. This forest hike features a wide grassed trail that rolls up and down

through a shady forest. Leashed dogs welcome

Writing on Nature

Monday, June 17, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Kent Park, Youth Group Lodge

Open to non-writers and writers, this program will explore various types of nature writing, including essay, poetry, and nature journaling. We will spend time on a short hike with time for observation, and then spend time writing and reflecting on our experiences in nature.

Summer Solstice Saunter

Thursday, June 20, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Cedar River Crossing

Come celebrate the first day of summer (and the longest day of the year!) as we watch the sun set at the astronomical clock at Cedar River Crossing. This walk is approximately 3 miles round trip. Dogs are welcome but must remain on a 6 foot leash and waste packed out.

Raptor Meet-n-Greet

Saturday, June 22, 10:30-11:15 a.m.
Whip-poor-will Shelter Area, F.W. Kent Park
See June 8 event for details.

Mentored Fishing at Kent Park

Saturday, June 22, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Kent Park, exact pond TBD

Join JCC rangers and Pass It On - Outdoor Mentors for an evening of mentored fishing. Fishing will take place in kayaks/canoes on a Kent Park pond. Canoes, kayaks, PFDs, fishing poles, and bait all provided in this free program. This event is designed for youth, but a parent must accompany and can join for the fun. All participants 16 or older must have a valid fishing license. Registration is through Pass It On - Outdoor Mentors. To register, head to: <https://outdoormentors.org/iowa-events/kentparkfishingjune22>

Foraging for Families and Beginners

Wednesday, June 26 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Cangleska Wakan

Learn the rules for safe foraging, then head out on a naturalist-guided hike, enjoying and

learning about wild edibles along the way.

Explorers: Froggin' Fun

Thursday, June 27, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Cangleska Wakan

Meet some of Johnson County's frogs and friends! You'll spend time learning about frogs, toads and other aquatic critters that share a home with them, and spend time trying to catch them. This program is perfect for the little ones' ages 5-10 hopping around your home. All tools will be provided; participants should be prepared to get wet or muddy.

July

Coleoptera Crawl

Tuesday, July 2, 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Coleopterans: what are they? They crawl, they fly, they dig, and they swim. Sometimes they are colorful, other times drab. You can find them in a tropical rainforest, your backyard, a desert, or your favorite county park. What in the world are they? Coleopterans are beetles! From lovely ladybugs to armored scarabs, beetles are found in nearly every corner of the planet. Join us to learn more about these interesting insects on a nature hike. A JCC naturalist will be placing pitfall traps along our route to capture live beetles. As we crawl from one trapping site to the next, we will observe the beetles and talk about their roles in nature. Beetle expert and self-described amateur entomologist Doug Veal will be joining to answer questions and assist in identifying some of the discoveries.

Raptor Meet-n-Greet

Saturday, July 20, 10:30-11:15 a.m.
Whip-poor-will Shelter Area, F.W. Kent Park
See June 8 event for details.

Prairie Night Hike

Tuesday, July 23, 8:00-9:30 p.m.
Valley View, F.W. Kent Park

After sunset is often the best time to explore the prairie during the scorching summer heat. On this hike, we'll enjoy the sunset, cicada song,

and prairie flowers at their peak. This hike will be 1.5 miles long on a grass trail with slight inclines. Leashed dogs welcome.

Foraged Pottery

Thursday, July 25 & August 1, 1:00-3:30 p.m.
Cangleska Wakan

Learn where and how to harvest/process clay locally during the first class. Then create with the foraged clay during the second class. Finished pottery will be pit fired by the instructor and should be ready for pick-up approximately two weeks after the final class.

Morning Kayaking at Kent Park Lake

Friday, July 26, 7:30-9:00 a.m.
Kent Park Lake

Soak in the morning bird song with a gentle paddle across Kent Park Lake. This program is designed for beginner kayakers and is open to adults only. JCC provides kayaks and PFDs.



Moth Night

Friday, July 26, 8:30-11:30 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Celebrate the incredible diversity of moths with a brief presentation about moths, self-guided educational activities, and an illuminated night hike through the woods! We will also be sampling for moths all night in celebration of national moth week.

Nature Night

Tuesday, July 30 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Cangleska Wakan

Join us for this open house event, where we will have nature crafts and exploration materials, including binoculars, dip nets, and more.

August

Raptor Meet-n-Greet

Saturday, August 3, 10:30-11:15 a.m.
Whip-poor-will Shelter Area, F.W. Kent Park
See July 8 event for details.

Kayaking at Pechman Creek Delta

Tuesday, August 6, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
Pechman Creek Delta

Wind up the slough exploring the wildlife and native plants that thrive in this unique aquatic habitat. JCC provides kayaks and PFDs.

Creek Stomp

Wednesday, August 7, 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Cangleska Wakan

Get your feet wet (and probably a little muddy) with this stream saunter. Explore Cangleska Wakan from a new perspective and discover aquatic critters that call this creek home.

Volunteer Monarch Tagging Events

Wednesday, August 21 & 28, 9:00-11:00 a.m.
Cedar River Crossing

Wednesday, Sept 4 and 11, 9:00-11:00 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, Kent Park

We need volunteers to help us catch wild monarch butterflies for tagging! This is a great way to support monarch butterfly research. Events are dependent on weather conditions and location may be changed depending on monarch activity. Locations include Cedar River Crossing (best for older kids or adults) or Kent Park (all ages). Updates will be shared via email with all registered participants.

Crafting With Inclusivity: Woodworking

Saturdays, August 24, 31, & September 14
Cangleska Wakan

This collaborative class between JCC and Kirkwood Community College will take you from tree to finished furniture!

This class is tailored for women, trans, and non-binary individuals. More details on the Kirkwood website. Scan the QR code to the right to register!



Teen Adventure Camp

FOR TEENS GOING
INTO 6TH - 8TH
GRADES

JULY 29 - AUGUST 2, 2024

F.W. KENT PARK

\$100 CAMP FEE

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:
KAYAKING, CANOEING,
ARCHERY, FORAGING, FIRE
BUILDING, AND MORE!



TO LEARN MORE AND
REGISTER, SCAN OR
CLICK THE CODE.





Johnson County Conservation
2048 HWY 6 NW
Oxford, IA 52332



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A female promethea moth clings to a tree trunk. Johnson County Conservation raises silk moth caterpillars (including those of promethea moths) outside ever summer around the Conservation Education Center.