

Cedar River Crossing

5473 Sutliff Rd NE
Solon, IA 52333

Overview: Cedar River Crossing is a 610-acre property comprised of wetland, riparian forest, upland oak savanna, and both relic and restored prairie. The property is bordered by the Cedar River for over two miles, and lies within the floodplain. During floods, the natural ecosystem acts as a sponge, absorbing and filtering floodwaters. Cedar River Crossing is named to honor a historic fording area located on the site. The crossing was used by both Native Americans and settlers. A limestone monument is located in the southern portion of the property near the crossing.

History: Johnson County Conservation acquired the first portion of Cedar River Crossing in 1999, and the remaining parcels were added between 2014-2023. Much of the land was used for row crop production and cattle pasture prior to JCC's ownership. In 2019, JCC completed an intensive project to restore 144 acres of wetland, 79 acres of prairie, and 71 acres of oak savanna in the north half of the property. A half-mile stream corridor was also restored and remeandered through the project area.

Features:

- Wildlife is abundant in this habitat corridor. Species of special conservation concern, such as eastern hognose snakes and blundings turtles have been recorded here.
- The wetland complex and backwater channels on this landscape are attractive to shorebirds, providing a birding hotspot.
- A large 'astronomical clock' is built into the landscape. This feature allows visitors to connect with the annual cycles of the earth, as the lines of the clock align with the sunrise/sunset on the solstices and equinoxes.
- A denitrification basin near the 'astronomical clock' collects water drained off 800 acres of surrounding farmland. The natural microbial communities in this basin metabolize nutrients before they enter the wetlands and Cedar River below.
- Nearly 5 miles of trail wind through the north and south halves of the property. Trails in the south half may be seasonally submerged in wetlands. A latrine is at the north entrance.
- The property is open for hunting and trapping. By JCCB policy, hunters must use non-lead projectiles and shot to help prevent lead poisoning in wildlife that inadvertently consumes lead while ingesting the carcasses of animals.





Cedar River Crossing

North Entrance: 5473 Sutliff Road NE, Solon, IA 52333

South Entrance: 5398 160th St. NE, Solon, IA 52333

