

Conservation Connection

Johnson County Conservation Newsletter

FINDING BUZZING BACKYARD TREASURES

Michelle Wiegand- Naturalist

In August, my family and I set to work in our yard. Our girls were eager to help their dad continue to build onto the outdoor playscape we had recently started for them. I focused on pulling invasive plants and moving flagstone and other rock out of an area that had previously been used as a landscaped creek bed. As I worked, I began to see several bumble bees hovering in the area. I stopped to watch them and noticed some of the bees were on the ground, moving in and out of a small hole in the ground.

As I continued to observe, I noticed distinct markings on the bee's body. The thought crossed my mind, could these be rusty-patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*, RPBB)? I tempered my excitement and reminded myself it was unlikely to spot several of these endangered

bees right there in my Iowa City yard. Still, I had a nagging feeling and I wanted to find out more about what I was seeing. RPBB were listed as federally endangered in 2017 and populations have been declining since the late 1990's. RPBB range once included over 25 U.S. states from the Dakotas east to the southern portions of the Appalachians in Georgia, and northward into two Canadian provinces. Since 2015 the species has only been seen in seven U.S. states. In Canada the species is believed to be gone all together.

I used my phone to take and upload several photos of the bees onto iNaturalist. iNaturalist is an online platform for crowdsourcing species identifications and monitoring biodiversity.

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Left: One of four original photographs of the RPBB taken and uploaded to iNaturalist. Taking several photos of different angles helps capture more visuals to aid in identification. This is especially helpful if photos are a bit blurry. **Right:** Kyle Price (left) and Rob Jean (right) measure and document an initial portion of the excavated nest.

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Leaving a Legacy: Remembering Larry Gullett

Conservation Director Larry Gullett, passed away at his home surrounded by family on September 6, 2024 after a courageous battle with cancer. Larry's life was dedicated to ecological restoration with a special focus on Native American culture and their connection to the land. He believed the land was not fully restored until the voices of Native American culture had been returned. Larry understood the high regard Native American culture holds for land stewardship, and he sought to share this understanding with everyone around him. He shared his knowledge and vision with many during his 46-year conservation career. Working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jasper and Dallas County Conservation Boards and eventually serving as the Executive Director of the Jones County Conservation Board (2004-2013) and Johnson County Conservation Board (2013-2024).

Larry's accomplishments in the conservation field were many, but he was proudest of his work in Dallas County where he founded and directed Prairie Awakening, a gathering of Native Americans from ten states and Canada in a weeklong music, dance, and story-telling event integrating Native American traditions and culture with prairie restoration efforts. This event continues in Dallas County at the Kuehn Conservation Area near Earlham, Iowa, a site that held a special place in Larry's heart.

Larry was also an avid paddler, with a strong love for Wilderness Areas, including the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, where he took numerous trips with friends

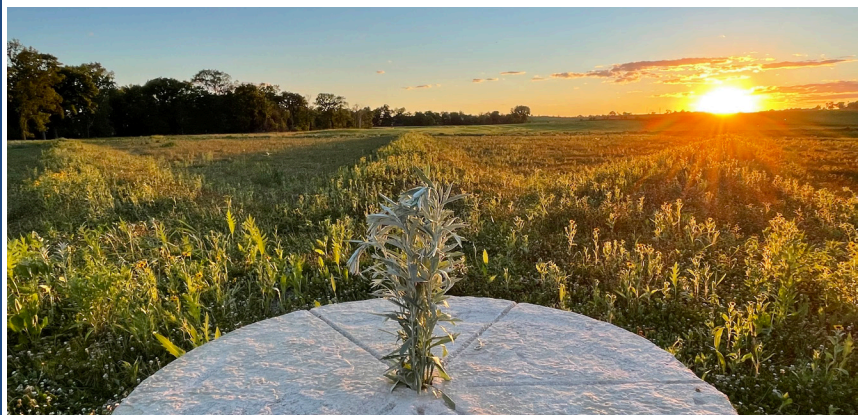


Photo taken at Cedar River Crossing's astronomical clock with a bunch of sage collected by Larry. This tranquil place was designed by Larry and it has become a place of reflection for many.



Larry collects sage at Cedar River Crossing.

and family. His passion for water was extremely evident during his career. Larry worked tirelessly to protect scenic stretches of the Maquoketa River in Jones County, served on the State of Iowa Water Trails Advisory Committee and was a member of the Board of Directors of Iowa Rivers Revival. He was also instrumental in the restoration of Kent Park Lake in Johnson County.



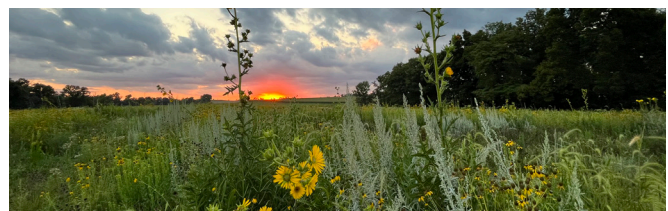
Larry is honored by members of the Ioway tribe.



Larry (far right) is pictured at Cedar River Crossing with his wife Connie (left) and former Conservation board member Gene Zdrzil (center).

The greatest legacy Larry left for Johnson County was his work facilitating the transfer of seven acres of land to the Ioway Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska – a returning of the land to the Ioway people after a 190-year absence from Iowa. The Ioway originally inhabited villages along major rivers from Minnesota to Missouri. In the 1830s, after losing territorial disputes with the Sioux and Sac and Fox Tribes – who were favored by the U.S. government at the time – the Ioway were forcibly removed to reservations in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska. The return of the Ioway was a powerful experience for everyone involved. The Johnson County Conservation Board and staff intend to continue to foster the relationship with the Ioway that was initiated by Larry.

Larry was a visionary conservationist, from his collaborative efforts to return the voice of Indigenous communities to the landscape to his purist approaches toward ecological restoration. None of us can replace Larry Gullett, but we can do our best to carry on his legacy and strive to leave this place better than we found it.



BUZZING BACKYARD TREASURES

Continued from page 1

iNaturalist is used worldwide and has catalogued over 200 million observations to date. My uploaded photos quickly received a great deal of attention from other iNaturalist users and I soon had what is considered a "research-grade" identification of RPBB. Based on the behavior of the bees going underground, it was suspected I might have observed a nest site.

A small group of iNaturalist users monitor all Rusty patched bumble bee observations on the iNaturalist database. One of those individuals is Kyle Price, a scientist with Environmental Solutions & Innovations, Inc. Kyle sent along a message and asked whether he could stop by to observe the suspected nest when he would be in Iowa in the following weeks. Kyle is based out of West Virginia. We set up a time and Kyle visited the nest site mid-September. In mid-October, Price and his colleague Rob Jean returned to excavate the nest.

Excavation

The excavation process took approximately 5.5 hours from start to finish. RPBB utilize old and abandoned rodent holes underground for their nest. During the excavation process, Price and Jean followed six meandering rodent tunnels underground before finding the RPBB's nest materials ~5.5 feet from the suspected main nest entrances that were initially seen.

Price and Jean were gracious with their time and full of enthusiasm throughout the process. Since the excavation happened on a Saturday, our whole family was home. My two children, as well as several neighborhood kids, were able to observe up close this incredibly unique scientific discovery and field process. The kids asked Price and Jean questions about their

work, about the RPBB, and learned about the tools and procedures they use for their field work. Curious neighbors stopped by to observe the process and ask questions. Two other local conservation professionals also observed the excavation process.

This is the first documented RPBB nest found in Iowa since the species was listed as federally endangered in 2017 and is one of fewer than fifteen found throughout the species' entire range. Prior to the RPBB endangered listing, there had only been two papers that documented RPBB nesting; one of those was of a lab reared colony in the 1970's and the other was from the 1920's. Very little is known about RPBB nesting ecology, which makes this a significant step toward learning more about this endangered species.



Above: Kyle Price uses an endoscope to view the network of underground tunnels. Images from the scope were streamed on his phone.



Above: Kyle Price holds a large section of the excavated RPBB nest. Each orange cone shape is a cell for growing RPBB pupae.

Purpose of Excavation

With so little existing documentation of RPBB, the nest excavation will offer researchers the opportunity to learn a great deal more about the nesting ecology of this species. The nest is still being processed by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services at this time but Kyle Price and Rob Jean discussed a couple ways the nest may be used for study. Those include:

- Study the nesting ecology of the RPBB with the potential to replicate nesting habitat in a lab setting, so RPBB can be reared and released in the wild.
- Train dogs to locate RPBB and their nests by scent in order to aid monitoring efforts.
- Learn more about the local population to understand potential pathogens or other risks existing locally.

Threats to Rusty Patch Bumble Bees

Habitat loss, pesticides, diseases introduced by commercial bees, and climate change are all contributing factors to bumble bee decline. Neonicotinoids are toxic insecticides in greater use throughout the rusty-patched bumble bee (RPBB) range. Chemicals from commercial farming or lawn application are harmful to many bumble bees, including the RPBB, especially because they do nest underground and may come into contact with contaminated soil. Habitat loss reduces the area for bumble bees to access resources such as food, shelter, and nesting grounds. While climate change is having an effect on plant phenology. Bumble bees may not have access to the same flowering plants for pollen and nectar because the time when things are in bloom has shifted due to climate change.

RPBB Habitat and Life Cycle

Rusty-patched bumble bees have an annual life cycle, so there were no concerns the nest excavation would harm the bees. In mid-fall, at the end of a nesting colony's life cycle, the new queen bees (aka gynes) emerge from the nest and find an overwintering chamber. The nest excavation occurred after any new queens had

emerged and found an overwintering chamber. Gynes typically overwinter in shallow holes in the soil and leaf litter. In the early spring, new queens that have overwintered will begin to emerge.

These gynes have stored sperm over winter from the previous fall season. After emerging, they set to work right away finding food from nectar and pollen sources. They also seek out a nesting site, typically an old and abandoned rodent hole, such as a chipmunk or vole burrow. Each gyne will seek and find their own nest site and lay eggs, which hatch approximately four days later. The gynes rear their first workers on their own and can be successful with access to plentiful flowering plants and suitable nesting sites. Since rusty patched bumble bees are some of the first bumble bees to emerge in spring, they often rely on early spring ephemerals and will continue to rely on flowering plants through early October.

Slow Down and Look

There is so much more to share and to learn about this species. My hope is that the discovery of this buzzing backyard treasure allows scientists the chance to learn a great deal in order to support ongoing conservation efforts for the RPBB. In the spring, I will be keeping my eyes out for new RPBB colonies. And, I hope you will too. Whether it's RPBB or another species, pollinators need our support at home, just as much as in our park spaces.



Above: Kyle Price and Rob Jean are shown with the first segment of the excavated RPBB nest.



PASS IT ON OUTDOOR MENTORS

Aaron Ohlsen- Park Ranger

When I was growing up my free time was most often spent with my family on the bank or in a boat on some river, lake, or pond. It was and is our thing, we fished. We enjoyed each other's company, had a plethora of snacks, and if we were lucky we'd catch a few fish along the way. We lived close to quite a bit of state and county public land to recreate on. It was here that we'd fish, walk the dogs, play in the creeks, you name it. I loved to be outdoors. One thing we never did that I always had an interest in however, was hunting. Seeing people enter the field with their own dog to chase game, or seeing a brushed in boat tucked against a wetland edge to await a flock of ducks always caught my eye and piqued my interests. I someday wanted to do that too. There was just one problem; nobody in my family hunted and thus the opportunity never presented itself. That is until I was in college.

The spring of my freshman year of college my roommates took me on my first turkey hunt. To this day I can vividly remember everything about that morning. From navigating through the terrain in the dark, to hearing a tom gobble from his roost, to the feeling I had while leaned up against a silver maple tree; watching that strutting tom make his way towards us. It's safe to say from that point on I was hooked. That experience led me to learning to hunt

pheasants and ducks, have my very own bird dogs, hunt deer, etc. All because somebody took the time to mentor me.

As one gets older you can't help but reflect on things and at some point it dawned on me that without the mentorship of friends and family, I wouldn't have been able to have experienced many of the amazing things I've seen or done in the great outdoors. I wouldn't know what it's like walking up to my own dog on point in a vast sea of prairie grass, or what a sunrise in a duck blind looks like, or even what it feels like to see a largemouth bass fly out of the water as you're reeling it in. The truth of it is, there are a whole lot of kids out there that haven't had the opportunity to have these experiences.



Above: A youth participant holds a green-winged teal hunted during a Pass It On! youth mentorship program.

Nobody in their family hunts or fishes, they don't feel confident, they have limited places to go; there are many limiting factors on why kids aren't introduced to hunting and fishing.

That's where I'm proud to say that there are organizations willing to help mentor and give kids these outdoor experiences.



Above: A youth participant stands with their dog and hunted ducks during a Pass It On! youth mentorship program.

Johnson County Conservation has been teaming up with "Pass It On Outdoor Mentors" to introduce youth to hunting and fishing opportunities. Pass It On Outdoor Mentors is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that aims to "empower youth through outdoor experiences and mentorship." In the past few years, Johnson County Conservation has hosted fishing events, and mentored turkey, duck, and pheasant hunts all through the Pass It On Outdoor Mentors Program. On their site, one can see all of the upcoming events. It's an amazing opportunity to get connected to the outdoors and make lifelong memories along the way.

A lot of my passion in conservation came from a friend or family member taking the time to

teach me to hunt or fish. I can't help but feel a sense of pride in being able to pass it on.

I encourage you to look at the Pass It On! Outdoor Mentors website and schedule your youth for a fishing or hunting program.

Visit the link or scan the code below.

<https://outdoormentors.org/>



Above: A youth bow fishing participant displays the bigmouth buffalo he caught at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area.

Reducing Bird Strikes at Kent Park

Johnson County Conservation's education team has recently transformed the Conservation Education Center at Kent Park by making the windows and doors of the facility more "bird-friendly". In an effort to show visitors a range of window treatments that could be installed at home, our educators utilized a variety of bird collision reduction techniques. Thanks to the



Top: Conservation Education Center front entrance before window deterrant install.

Middle: Installation in progress

Bottom: Window strike prevention deterrents installed on the front of the CEC at Kent Park.

financial support of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, the Conservation Education Center now displays DIY cut-out window decals, UV paint dots, chalk marker drawings, and two types of Feather Friendly brand deterrent markers and window tape.

Window treatments were installed on the front of the Conservation Education Center in September and were showcased during the Wings & Wild Things Festival, which hosted approximately 3,400 park visitors on Sunday, October 6. During the Wings & Wild Things Festival, volunteers from the Iowa City Bird Club hosted an education table about window strike prevention and invited attendees to create their own DIY cut-out window decals to take home or to donate to the Conservation Education Center. The National Audubon Society's Audubon Center at Riverlands donated educational materials and Audubon Adventure magazines for festival participants, as well. JCC Educators also hosted a group of adult dayhab participants from The Village Community, who also helped create more window decals and install them at our facility.

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 one billion birds are killed by window collisions each year. Window deterrents are meant to make the windows more visible to birds.

Be sure to visit Kent Park's Conservation Education Center to see these window treatments yourself and to learn more about each strike prevention method. We hope this inspires you to consider some of these treatments at home in time for spring migration in 2025.

A Positive Year for Butterflies



Every summer, volunteers conduct surveys to monitor butterfly populations in Kent Park. The surveys are done as part of the Iowa Butterfly Survey Network, managed by Reiman Gardens, and more broadly as part of the North American Butterfly Monitoring Network. The results from this year's survey indicate that 2024 was a great year for butterflies in Kent Park!

More than one quarter of the 122 recorded butterfly species in Iowa are listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern, so positive results from Kent Park this summer is heartening. Many survey metrics for 2024 exceeded the prior years, including:

- The overall number of butterflies counted grew by 134% from 2023, 1409 in 2023 and 3201 in 2024.
- Fewer species were not seen, and six new species were recorded for the first time.
- Counts of swallowtails, blues, whites/sulphurs, and skippers surpassed all previous years.
- A new record was set for butterflies in a single day: 305.
- A new record was set for most species counted in a day: 20.
- Of the 50 species counted at Kent Park through the survey, 15 of them had their highest single day count in 2024.
- Of the 25 common species, 17 had better years than last, and 8 had their best year.
- The zebra Swallowtail was seen in Kent Park for the first time during the survey. Other new sightings included the zabulon, fiery, and twany-edged skippers, the white-m hairstreak, horace duskywing, and mourning cloak.

Surveys help to provide baseline data on existing butterfly populations, ranges, and can help to better understand population trends, threats, and helpful/harmful land management practices. Both citizen scientists and conservation professionals can become trained volunteers to conduct butterfly surveys. If you are interested in learning more, head to the Reiman Gardens ISBN page at:

<https://reimangardens.com/insects#IBSN>



Banner: Black swallowtail on a pasture thistle bloom. **Above:** American snout on a black-eyed susan bloom. Photos and data provided by Jim Bole, Kent Park butterfly surveyer.

Learn more about Iowa's butterflies and moths this winter at our Pollinator Open House! Come to the CEC in Kent Park on Saturday, January 4 or 11 for a butterfly and moth art gallery, seed ball station, native wildflower seed give away, and butterfly and moth arts and crafts.

See page 13 for more details.





Backpacking at Yellow River with SPARK

Above: Youth backpackers walk the trail within view of the little paint creek and gorgeous fall foliage.

This past October, Johnson County Conservation naturalists took youth from Johnson County to Harper's Ferry, Iowa for a three-day backpacking trip within the Yellow River State Forest. This was the third year for this beginner backpacking trip and is made possible through a partnership with the United Action for Youth (UAY) SPARK program.

Through this partnership, we supply backpacks, sleeping bags, and sleeping pads to all of the participants, as well as shared gear like stoves, pots, and water filters. Our staff also provide backpacking knowledge, teaching best practices for cooking, filtering water, and even how to go to the bathroom in the woods. UAY recruits participants and provides some necessary items like good boots and headlamps, and works with the students to create a menu of backpacking food options. This year necessitated some additional loaner warm clothing and hand warmers with temperatures dropping close to freezing each night!

While on the trip, youth learned how to properly pack and wear their pack, filter water, and cook their own food. We practiced reading a map, making fires and roasting marshmallows. Relationships were forged, and a new group of youth experienced Iowa's natural resources in a new way.

We have partnered with UAY SPARK for the past three years to provide programming including canoeing, kayaking, archery, and guided hikes. After December, UAY will no longer be able to offer SPARK as an ongoing, fully-staffed program, but hopes to continue offering annual outdoor recreation opportunities like this one in partnership with Johnson County Conservation. If you are interested in supporting future SPARK programming, you can do so through the UAY website at <https://www.unitedactionforyouth.org/donate>.

We learned how to filter water from the stream



It was COLD at night, but a campfire and S'mores made it fun.



The first task when we got to camp was setting up our tents



Our whole crew the morning we started down the trail



We spotted some giant puffball mushrooms! We harvested one, cooked it, and ate it with dinner



The views of the changing leaf colors were epic!



One creek crossing challenged us to walk across some rocks





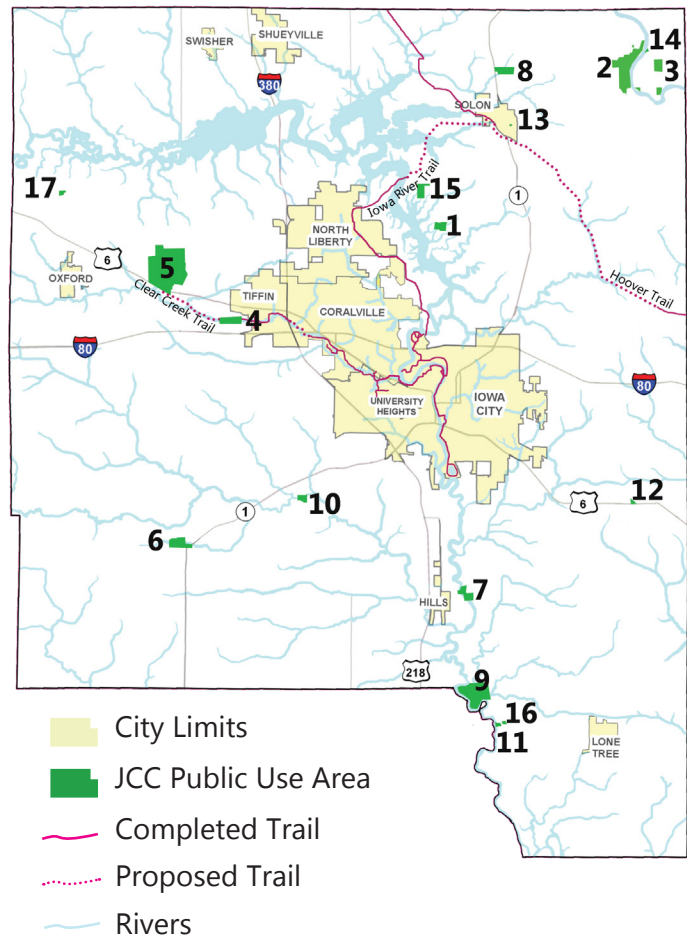
The Great Yeti Hunt is Back!

This winter, adventure out to find the reclusive yeti, hiding in one of Johnson County Conservation's parks. The search starts January 13, and the yeti treks to a new park every two weeks. Clues will be posted on JCC social media and website to help you figure out where to go. If you find the yeti at each of the four hiding spots and submit photos with her to kmorrow@johnsoncountyiowa.gov, you will be entered into a drawing for a free night of camping at at JCC campground. Scan or click the QR code for updates.



JCC Public Use Areas

1. Cangleska Wakan	132 acres
2. Cedar River Crossing	610 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. 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**.



Accessibility

JCC is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. We welcome and encourage people with disabilities to attend programs and events. Accommodations may be requested by contacting naturalist staff at 319-645-1011 or jccnaturalists@gmail.com.

December

Foraged Winter Wreath Workshop

Monday, December 9, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Create a winter wreath using natural materials collected from Johnson County Conservation sites.

Sunrise Solstice Saunter

Saturday, 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.

First Day Hike

Wednesday, January 1, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.
Cangleska Wakan

Start your year off right by getting outdoors. Join us for this two-mile naturalist-led hike at Cangleska Wakan.

January

CEC Open House - Pollinators

Saturdays, January 4 and 11, 12:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

This winter, explore the Conservation Education Center Discovery Room during the first and second weekends of the month. Each month will feature a theme with additional hands-on activity stations in the CEC classroom. This month, browse the butterfly and moth art gallery, created by local artists, make milkweed seed balls to toss into your garden, take home native wildflower seeds, and make your own butterfly and moth art with craft stations. Snowshoes will be available for free check-out during the hours of the open house (requires minimum of six inches of snow cover).

Explorers: Art of Fire

Thursday, January 9, 3:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Come learn how to conjure fire with a spark and discover the process of making your own charcoal for artistic purposes. This program is hands-on and will mostly take place outdoors. Participants will leave with their very own drawing charcoal. Explorers series is a program

designed for kids K-6 with an accompanying adult. Registration is required; email fowen@co.johnson.ia.us.

Art Club Night

Monday, January 13, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Gather for community with fellow nature-inspired artists for an evening of nature journaling, sketching, or painting. We'll provide the muses of wildlife mounts, skulls, nests, feathers, fossils, and more. You bring your art supplies of choice.

Nature Buds – Animal Tracks

Wednesday, January 15, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Nature Buds is a program for kids three to five years old accompanied by a parent. The program includes story time and a follow-up themed activity.

Winter Foraging Class

Sunday, January 19, 1:00-3:30 p.m.
Frytown Conservation Area

Take a walk with a JCC naturalist and learn about some of the foods and medicines that can be foraged in winter! This program will take place outdoors and features a two-mile walk over uneven terrain.

Explorers: Animal Tracking

Thursday, January 23, 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Learn to identify animal tracks, scat, and other signs of wildlife at Kent Park. This program will begin at the CEC and conclude with a hike to look for animal tracks and signs. The Explorers series is a program designed for kids K-6 with an accompanying adult.

Beeswax Batik with Natural Dyes

Thursday, January 16 & 23, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park
Fee: \$20

Make your very own naturally dyed fabric using a wax resist technique called batik. We will use cotton fabric, beeswax, and dye made from black walnuts to create art.

Clothing Swap

Saturday, January 25, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Spice up your wardrobe while diverting waste from the landfill. A clothing swap offers a chance to trade clothes at no cost. Clothing donations will not be accepted on the day of the event.

February

CEC Open House - Winter Birds

Saturdays, February 1 and 8, 12:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

This month, learn about the birds that frequent Iowa in the winter, explore bird nests, feathers, and other bird artifacts, and make a bird feeder to take home. A bird scavenger hunt will be up around the half-mile CEC loop, and bird bingo cards will be available to take with for a bird blind visit. Snowshoes will be available for free check-out during the hours of the open house (requires minimum of six inches of snow cover).

Explorers: Winter Birding

Thursday, February 6, 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Learn to identify Iowa's winter birds. Participants will learn to use field guides and practice bird ID in the bird blind. We will also make a bird seed craft for participants to take

home. Explorers series is a program designed for kids K-6 with an accompanying adult.

Woodworking for Wildlife: Window Bird Feeder

Friday, February 7, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park
Fee: \$20/bird feeder

Participants will learn about feeding birds in their backyard, build a bird feeder that will stick to the outside of a window, and discover how they can participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count.

Maple Syrup Class

Saturday, February 8, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Cedar River Crossing

Learn about making your own maple syrup during this hands-on program. There will be a brief indoor presentation with sticky history and an introduction to different types of equipment. Afterward, participants can walk into Cedar River Crossing with us to identify appropriate trees and set them up for collecting sap. Interested participants can rent equipment for the season (\$5) to tap their own tree!

Art Club Night

Monday, February 10, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

See January event for details.

Intro to Great Backyard Bird Count

Thursday, February 13, 3:30-5:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Learn to participate in the international community science program "Great Backyard Bird Count". This program will cover the program, offer tips, and include a visit to the bird blind for a practice count.

Luminary Night Hike

Friday, February 14, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Experience hiking under starlight and on this one-mile hike. This self-guided hike will be lit by luminaries to help direct hikers along the way. Luminaries will be taken down at 9:00 p.m. The hike will be along an unplowed limestone trail, and hikers may be trekking through snow. The Conservation Education Center will be open for exploration during the hours of the hike. Registration not required; check social media or the JCC website for weather updates.

Nature Buds – Reptiles

Wednesday, February 19, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

See January event for details.

Soap Making with Foraged Plants

Friday, February 21st, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park
Fee: \$30

Join us in making cold process soap with locally foraged ingredients. We will walk step by step through the process and everyone will make their own cold process soap.

LGBTQ+ Hike

Saturday, February 22, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Cedar River Crossing

Join us for this three-mile naturalist-led hike at Cedar River Crossing, a diverse property bordering the Cedar River. This hike is intended for LGBTQ+ adults and allies.



Johnson County Conservation
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The sun peeks through trees at Two Horse Farm.