

Winter 2020

# Conservation Connection

## Johnson County Conservation Newsletter

### Public Lands: Here for You

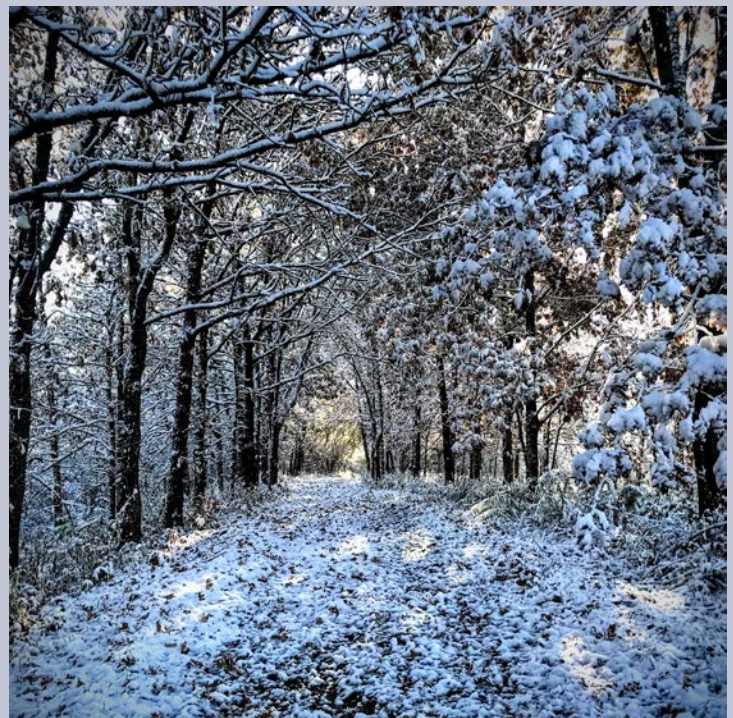
**Aaron Ohlsen** - Ranger I

We can all agree 2020 has been a pretty crummy year. The pandemic has altered our lives since March and with cases on the rise across the state and much of the nation, it's hard to be optimistic of what the near future holds. For too many throughout our great state, times are tougher than ever. That's why I'd like to take a moment and reach out to Iowa residents and let each of you know public land is here for you during these trying times.

If you need to get out of the house, break away from online work and meetings, or just escape from our current reality for a few hours, thousands of acres of public land throughout our county and state is here for you to enjoy. Hike or bike a local scenic trail, such as the Iowa River Trail Corridor. Take a drive through the park and watch the sunset, then stick around for the first glimmers of starlight. Take that youngster to a Wildlife Management Area for their first hunt. Grab a pair of binoculars and watch the migratory birds as they make their journey south, or watch our year round feathered friends forage for seeds in the prairie.

Whatever it is you choose to do, just know through it all, public land will be here for you to enjoy during these difficult times.

**Right Top and Bottom:** F.W. Kent Park has been a refuge for many throughout the year. The trails, forests, prairies, and wetlands are here for you year round, so no matter the season, get out to explore!



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## A Note from the Director



The year 2020 is certainly a year to remember. Yet, with all the challenges we have faced in the last year, it is important to also celebrate the good things that have happened. Johnson County Conservation is celebrating two fantastic additions to the public lands system that came to fruition this year, including a 10-acre addition to F.W. Kent Park, and a 100-acre prairie fen in the northeast part of the county.

In May, JCC completed purchase of a 10-acre addition to Kent Park, called the Meyer Addition. This land was previously used as a cattle feedlot and pasture, and contributed high loads of bacteria and excess nutrients into the catch basins and eventually Kent Park Lake, adding to the lake's water quality issues. Since the purchase of this parcel, JCC staff and teacher externs have documented a significant decrease in pollutants in the closest catch basins. In fact, following heavy rainfall events, bacteria loads were over 100 times lower than data from similar rain events in previous years! JCC staff have been preparing the 10-acre addition for restoration to prairie and wetland vegetation in the fall of 2021, which will make the acquisition even more effective at improving water quality.

This fall, JCC was awarded a \$400,000 Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) grant by the IDNR Natural Resource Commission and REAP advisory committee for preservation of the Malinda Reif Reilly Fen and Prairie. This 100-acre property has been in the sights of botanists and nature lovers for more than 20 years, all hoping the area would be preserved. The property includes 100 acres of open land, of which 53 acres have never been plowed. In addition, John Reilly, Malinda's husband, and Malinda Reif Reilly and her family, farmed organically for decades and did not apply herbicides or chemical fertilizers to the entire 100 acres. The result is a beautiful remnant of what this area was like before conversion to row crop and urban development. We hope to complete this acquisition sometime in January 2021. (See page 4 for more information on this property.)

Both of these acquisitions were made possible with help from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF). INHF stepped in on both projects and acquired the areas at a critical time. INHF works with landowners and serves as a bridge for transitioning critical lands from private to public ownership. We are also thankful to the Meyer and Reilly families for making the acquisition and preservation of these properties possible.



The acquisition of the Malinda Reif Reilly Fen and Prairie ensures that 100 acres of high quality natural landscape are protected for posterity and preserved for the public to access and enjoy.

## Marci Trana Joins the JCC Team!

**Marci Trana** - Naturalist

I grew up in Muscatine and Cedar counties here in Iowa. As a young child, the highlights of my summers were camping at the Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area and attending the county conservation's annual nature camp. The third day of this camp involved wading into swampy waters and netting out little critters to examine afterward. These experiences with county conservation are a large part of what created my interests and piqued my curiosity, leading me to pursue a career in the natural sciences.

I went on to get a B.S. in Zoology at the University of Wyoming, where I made great connections with professors and graduate students who hired me to work for them researching polar bears of the north slope of Alaska, forest fire ecology in Glacier National Park, and big horn sheep of Grand Teton National Park. These experiences furthered my curiosity as well as my field hardiness.

In 2010, I accepted a M.S. position at the University of Manitoba in Canada where I studied stress in beluga whales of the Canadian Arctic. I was fortunate once again, to have professors and fellow graduate students who accepted my company to join them on trips up to Hudson Bay to help them on a research station just outside of Churchill, Manitoba in Wapusk Provincial Park. While there I assisted with ringed seal and arctic fox research. In the spring of 2014, I moved to Oregon to survey spotted owls in the Tillamook

State Forest before returning to Iowa to conduct wildlife surveys at wind energy facilities across the state. I continued with this work, becoming a project manager, until starting my position here at Johnson County Conservation.

It has been a lifelong dream of mine to become a naturalist so I spent time between my adventures teaching groups about biology, science, and nature, whenever an opportunity arose. I always felt this was where I fit best. I look forward to helping others foster a love of nature and I hope to learn even more from the wonderful members of our community here in Johnson County!



# Malinda Reif Reilly Fen & Prairie

**Pictured:** Malinda Reif Reilly was 23 years old when this photo was taken in 1947. Her lifetime love for the land is recognized in the preservation of this special property.



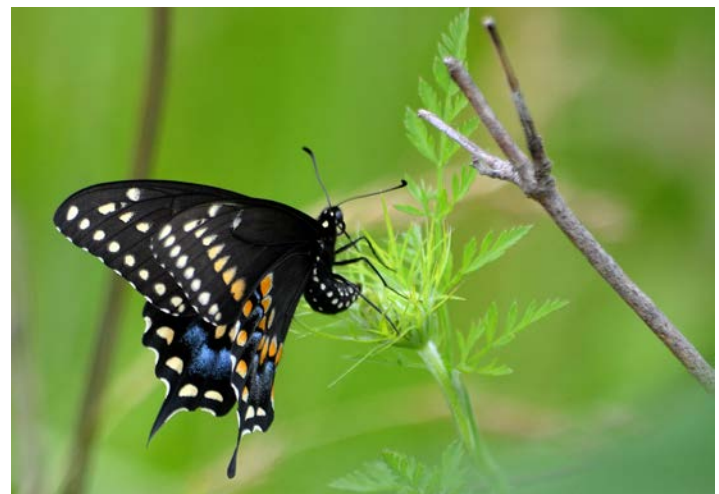
## Frances Owen - Naturalist

We are pleased to announce that Johnson County Conservation has secured funding for a new 100-acre public property just north of Solon, IA. The Malinda Reif Reilly Fen and Prairie is an island of native wetland and prairie flora and fauna amongst a sea of agriculture and urban development. The property will be named in memory of its previous owner and steward, and will be managed as a nature preserve, open for hiking and other nature appreciation activities.

Malinda's family farmed the property since 1900 without the use of chemicals. As well as farming alongside her family, Malinda sold medicinal herbs she foraged from the property to the Illinois Herb Company. Some herbs, like native Prairie Mountain Mint, came straight from the prairie! Botanists have identified 225 plant species, including some that are uncommon and rare in the state of Iowa. This diversity persists due to this property's wetland and prairie features never being tilled and drained for row crop agriculture, unlike more than 90 percent of Iowa's wetlands. Over her life, Malinda developed a deep connection to the land and wished to protect the prairie and fen for all time.

The land is currently held by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, a non-profit organization that quickly purchases and protects critical lands until local conservation agencies can raise adequate funds. To make this purchase a

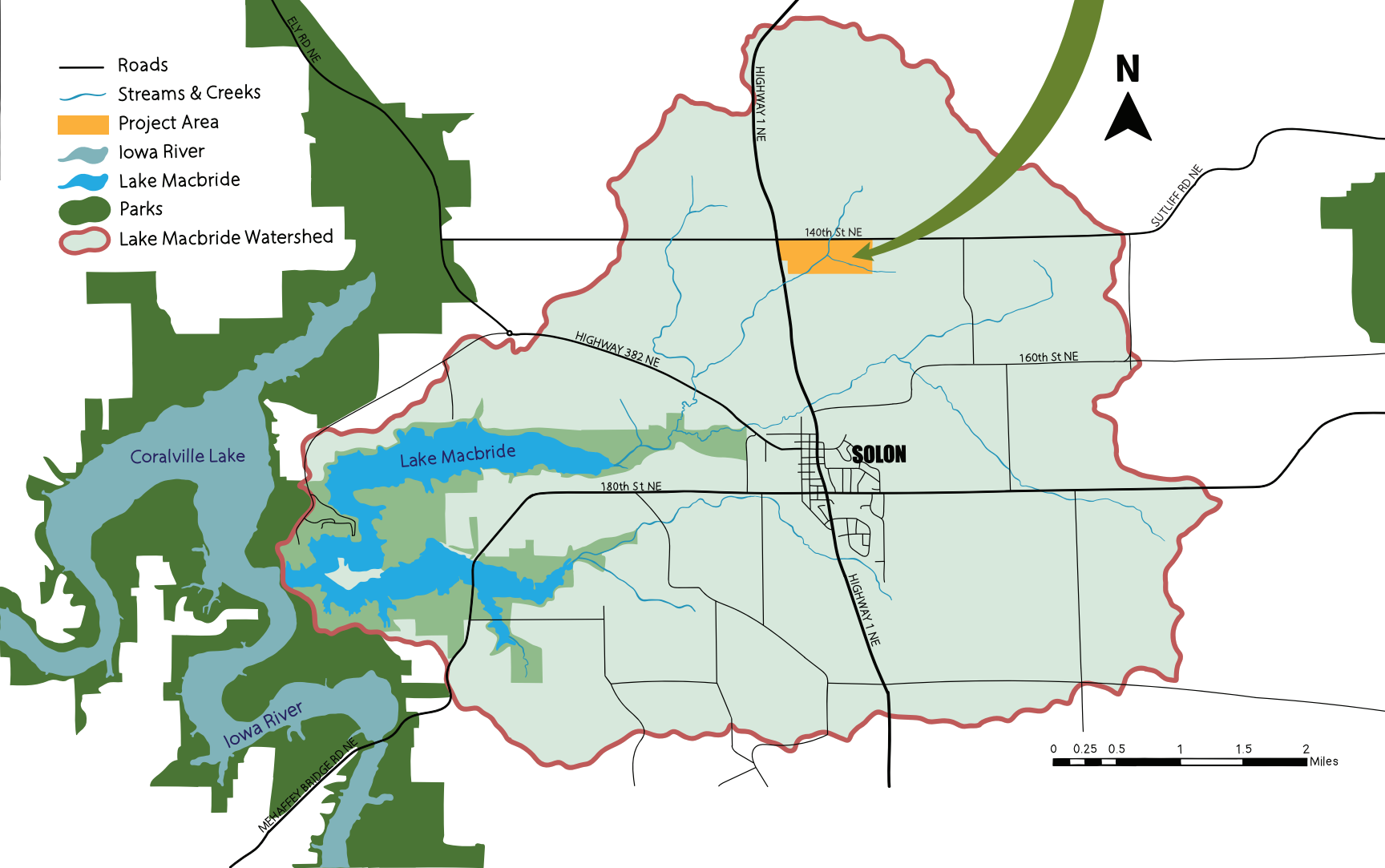
reality, Johnson County Conservation applied for and was awarded a \$400,000 Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) grant. REAP is funded annually by Iowa's state legislature. This highly competitive grant only partially funded the purchase. Matching funds were provided through the Johnson County Conservation Bond, established by Johnson County voters in 2008 to purchase and protect natural areas from development. This beautiful new area will be open to the public in early 2021 once the land's purchase is completed.



**Above:** An Eastern Black Swallowtail Butterfly found at the Malinda Reif Reilly Fen and Prairie. Native plants attract a greater diversity of insect life, which in turn supports a greater diversity of birds and other larger vertebrate fauna.



Iowa  
Natural Heritage  
Foundation



**Top left to right:** Tall Green Milkweed (*Asclepias hirtella*) found on the property is a great nectar source for many insects, host to the Monarch Butterfly, and is uncommon throughout Iowa; Patches of Wild Bergamot dot the landscape.

**Map:** To protect water quality, it is imperative we protect native habitat. The wetland and prairie within the Malinda Reif Reilly Fen and Prairie (marked yellow) will help filter and clean water which will eventually enter Lake Macbride.

**Bottom left:** A landscape view of the fen found on the property including many native wetland plants.

# WINTER FRILUFTSLIV

Kristen Morrow - Naturalist

2020, for all of its deep challenges and tragedies, has had one big silver lining: this seems to be the year that Americans have finally embraced *friluftsliv* (pronounced free-loofts-liv). Friluftsliv, a Swedish word that roughly translates to open-air-living, describes a lifestyle where time outdoors is a central part of daily life. Since March, JCC staff have witnessed a surge in American friluftsliv, with the local public engaged in the outdoors at greater levels than ever before. Kent Park's visitation numbers reached the average annual total by the month of June. Quiet and seldom-traveled trails in many JCC parks now have a steady cadence of hikers. Hunting and fishing licenses statewide have surged, and are up 68% and 53% respectively over the previous year.

With winter months ahead, the depth of this newfound American friluftsliv is about to be tested, in cold northern states especially. This part of Iowa is not known for its ready embrace of the darkest season, and in normal years, local parks are quietest from December to March. This year, however, it will be critically important to keep up with high levels of outdoor exploration. As COVID-19 rates surge on, the outdoors will provide the same gifts it has all year: rejuvenation, distraction, engagement, and physical and mental stimulation.

Read on for tips on how to embrace friluftsliv, even in the bitter cold, and for specific winter activities you can enjoy at JCC parks.

## THE WINTER BASICS



### Positive Mental Attitude

Many people bemoan winter for the bitter temperatures and hassle of snow, but this attitude doesn't make the season pass any quicker, and it clouds all the unique gifts the season provides. Try to adopt a positive mental attitude about winter instead, practicing a daily mantra until you really believe it, and pushing yourself to get outside daily. When you fully embrace all that winter has to offer, you can actually look forward to these months as some of the best each year.



### Layer, Layer, Layer!

"There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing." As this Nordic phrase suggests, you can be comfortable outside in even the coldest temperatures, so long as you are dressed right, and a key component to proper winter clothing is layers. Start with a wool or synthetic baselayer (avoid cotton as it does not wick moisture away from your skin). Include thick wool socks as part of your base. Add an insulating layer next, such as a thick fleece or puffy jacket. Finally top off with a windproof layer. Adjust layers readily as you heat up with activity, and bring a backpack to store shed layers; constant adjustment is key to avoid the heat-sapping effects of sweat build-up. For cold fingers, use mittens instead of gloves. The right winter gear is well worth the investment, and is a critical component to becoming an all-season outdoor enthusiast.



### Pack the Snacks!

Snacks are especially important during winter activities, when you are burning 25-30% more calories, thanks to added clothing and trekking over snowy trails. Warm snacks can be extra delightful in the middle of cold winter activities, and can both boost spirits and revitalize cold bodies with the fuel they need. Pack a thermos of hot chocolate or ramen noodles to enjoy midway into your outdoor activities for an instant mood booster. Plus, establishing a tradition of enjoying hot chocolate on the trail can provide extra incentive for resistant kiddos.

# WINTER ACTIVITY TIPS

## Winter Hiking

A winter filled with snow isn't a guarantee in this part of Iowa, so learn to embrace hiking itself during these coldest months of the year. Beyond planning for the winter basics, it's also important to plan for hunting seasons, especially shotgun season, which in Iowa, is open December 5-9 and 12-20. Stick to properties where hunting is not allowed or wear safety orange. Among JCC properties, Kent Park, Cangleska Wakan, or Ciha Fen Preserve are the best places to hike during hunting season. Finally, though there may not be snow, there are often icy conditions. Invest in microspikes for safer winter hikes.



## Animal Tracking

Wildlife signs are easiest to find during the winter months. JCC's properties abound with these wildlife clues, like footprints frozen into muddy trails, otter slides in the snow, or long skinny snow tunnels left behind by meadow voles. Learning how to identify these signs, or even just learning to spot them in the first place, can make cold weather hiking more exciting and engaging, especially for kids. [Check out this animal tracks scavenger hunt](#) to print out and bring along on your next winter hike!



## Night Hikes

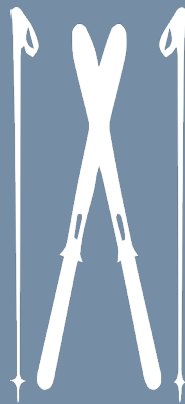


There is no shortage of darkness during a northern winter. Lean in to the extra starlight and head out on a night hike with the family - in certain parks, you have a good chance of hearing great horned owls hooting or coyotes yipping at the moon! Here are some tips for night hike success: 1.) Make sure your destination is open at night. Some parks close at sunset. 2.) Start with a short hike of a mile or less, and a trail that you know well and feel safe on. 3.) Choose a night with no adverse weather to ensure that roads will be safe to travel. 4.) Pack extra cold weather gear in the car in case of car trouble or emergencies.

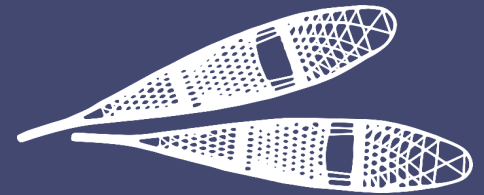
## Cross Country Skiing

Whenever conditions allow, the Iowa City Nordic Club grooms several miles of cross country ski trails at Kent Park, setting both classic and skate ski tracks. Park at the Youth Group Camp or Whip-poor-will Shelter for best access

to groomed trails. If you are new to skiing and want to try it out for the first time, rent some skis for the day from Fin and Feather in Iowa City.



## Snowshoeing



Snowshoes can provide a novel way to mix up your winter hikes. Even when the snow is just a few inches deep, snowshoes can be useful for traction and also provide a great aerobic and strength training workout. JCC has eight sets of adult-sized snowshoes that are available for free check-out for day use within Kent Park or weekend loan whenever they are not being used for public programming. To inquire about availability and to reserve snowshoes, call 319-645-1011.

Snowshoers should follow trail etiquette and stick to the edge of any trails that are groomed for skiing. For more solitude and ungroomed trails, stick to Cangleska Wakan, Ciha Fen Preserve, Frytown, Cedar River Crossing, or the western half of Kent Park.

## Fatbiking



Fatbikes, bikes with extra wide tires and designed in part with snowy travel in mind, are allowed on any of Kent Park's trails. Bikers should follow trail etiquette and stick to the edge of any groomed ski trails, as well as avoid limestone trails when they are wet. For those looking to try out fatbikes for the first time, they are available to rent from World of Bikes in Iowa City. Follow the Iowa Coalition of Off Road Riders (ICORR) for more information on fatbiking in the area.

Share the warmth!

# Winter Clothing Drive

Hosted by Johnson County Conservation

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

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

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



## JCC Volunteer Donates \$1500 for Idaho Wilderness Trek Scholarship

In late 2020, a JCC Volunteer (who wished to remain anonymous) made a generous donation of \$1500 to JCC's Idaho Wilderness Trek Scholarship Fund. The Idaho Wilderness Trek is a 10-day backpacking trip for local high school students to Idaho's Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Through a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation, the students conduct conservation stewardship activities along the way. Since JCC's first trek in 2017, 34 local teens have completed the trip. Many have since gone on to study or work in the natural science field. JCC has been able to provide full and partial scholarships to eight students, making the life-changing trip possible. *We are so grateful* for donations of any amount to this scholarship fund. If you would like to donate or learn more, please contact [kmorrow@johnsoncountyiowa.gov](mailto:kmorrow@johnsoncountyiowa.gov).





## Tax Time is for Wildlife!

Raise your hand if you know that you can make a difference for Iowa's wildlife on the state tax form. There should be at least 7,200 of you with your hands in the air. That's how many folks donated a bit or all of their state tax refund to the Fish and Wildlife Fund – affectionately called the Chickadee Check-off – on 2019 tax returns, translating to almost \$150,000 in support of wildlife conservation in Iowa!

Since the 1980s, thousands of Iowans have supported Iowa wildlife by making donations when they prepare their taxes. Since that time, Iowa tax payers have donated almost \$6 million to the state's Wildlife Diversity Program, which protects nongame and vulnerable species through habitat development, data collection and research, education, and much more. Every cent of each donation supports wildlife diversity; there are no administrative fees.

Donating is easy. Simply enter your donation amount on the Fish and Wildlife Check-Off contribution line (in Step 9 on the 1040 tax form), and the sum is either automatically deducted from your refund or added to the amount owed. Don't forget to talk to your tax preparer if you have your taxes done professionally – many tax preparers forget to mention donation opportunities.

## Update Wood-burning Appliances for Financial/Environmental Benefits

Linn County Public Health offers financial incentives to help eligible homeowners upgrade to cleaner-burning, energy-efficient heating appliances, and technologies. Eligible homeowners in surrounding counties including Johnson County, may also apply.

Residential wood heaters emit pollutants that can worsen indoor and outdoor air quality and cause health problems. Those with lung and/or heart conditions, children, and older adults are especially vulnerable.

New appliances that use wood, electricity, geothermal, or natural gas for fuel are more



If every Iowa taxpayer donated just \$1 on the Fish and Wildlife Check-off, it would mean \$1.5 million for natural resource conservation! So, if you're able, take a moment this tax season to get a little wild and consider making a donation. The 1000+ species of birds, butterflies, mammals, frogs, toads, turtles, and dragonflies that call Iowa home will thank you.

efficient and subject to EPA regulations to control emissions.

The wood-burning appliance change-out program will:

- Improve local indoor and outdoor air quality
- Warm homes for less money
- Reduce creosote build-up in the chimney and reduce the risk of fire
- Improve family lung health by reducing indoor air pollution
- Support the local economy

To learn more about the program and to apply, visit: <https://www.burncleanlinn.org/>

# CONNECTION

## Through Prairie Seeds



**Kristen Morrow** - Naturalist

This fall, volunteers came together for another great season of harvesting prairie seeds. All told, volunteers contributed 213 hours of seed harvest labor over 16 different public and private events. We gathered over 26 pounds of pure seed material, a value estimated at nearly \$4,000! Each week, JCC naturalists led volunteers in harvesting a new species, collecting a wide array that included Rattlesnake Master, Culver's Root, Thin Mountain Mint, Tall Coreopsis, Wild Bergamot, Cream Gentian, Round-headed Bush Clover, and Rose Mallow, amid many more.

For the third consecutive year, we held weekly morning harvest sessions - a program started by JCC Volunteer Lois Albrecht. Initially, this program was designed to engage retired adults in a meaningful and healthy outdoor pastime, while also providing an activity for social connection. Since then, the program has grown to include a more diverse range of volunteers. This year, with more people working from home, temporarily unemployed, or doing virtual learning/homeschooling, the community broadened considerably, and the opportunity to connect with others has never been more needed for mental health. Over the numerous reoccurring events this fall, both regular and new volunteers had a chance to be apart of a community. Many weeks, friends attended



together as a means catching up in a safe way. Often, strangers got to know each other better while harvesting. Others spent the time finding mindfulness and peace in their own corner of the prairie, but even the initial introduction to the week's task and concluding gathering provided a fulfilling sense of community and connection. While seed harvesting is always one of my favorite ways to engage with the public, this year, the activity was even more meaningful than usual.

This year, we introduced two fun new ways to engage volunteers in the harvest. We held two full moon harvest sessions where we harvested by headlamp and watched the moon rise over the prairie before hiking back to the calls of owls and coyotes. We also held two "Adventure Harvests," half-day events where we hiked greater distances into more remote sections of JCC parks. Both programs were a hit, and we plan to continue hosting these each fall going forward.

The JCC Natural Resource Team managed to get nearly all of the seed planted this year. Within Kent Park, 6.5 acres of prairie were planted across

several small parcels. Additionally, 2.5 acres of prairie were planted along the Hoover Trail, and all of the Rose Mallow seeds harvested this year were over-seeded along a restored stream bank at Cedar River Crossing.

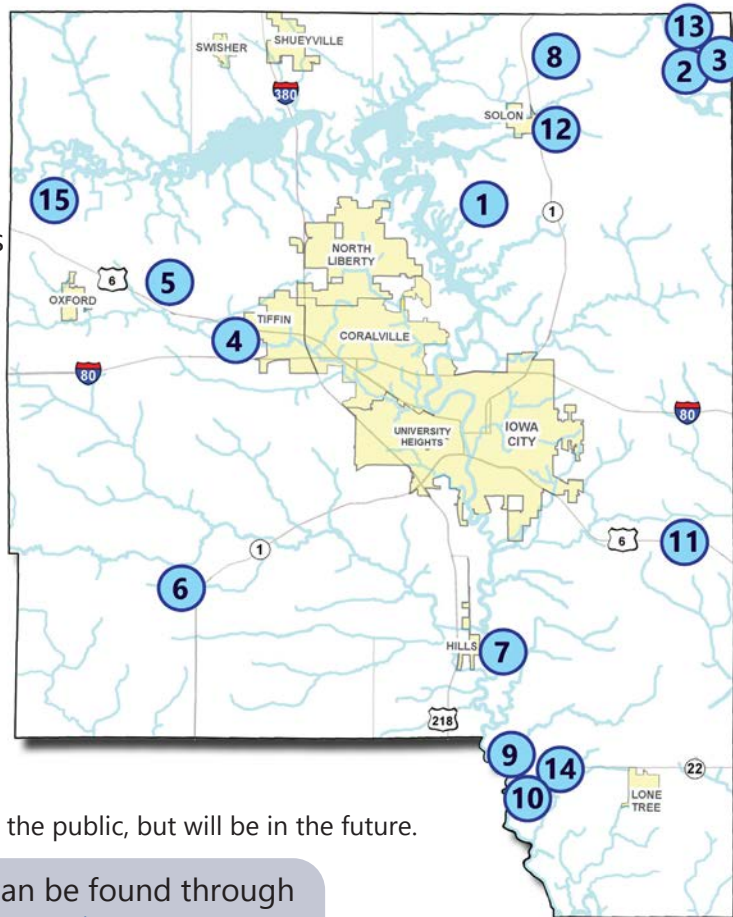


**Above:** Natural Resource Management Specialist, Mike Alexander, seeding a 3.5-acre parcel near the Bob White Shelter in Kent Park. **Opposite page (all photos):** Volunteers throughout the 2020 seed harvest season.

## JCC Public Use Areas

1	Cangleska Wakan	132 acres
2	Cedar River Crossing	560 acres
3	Ciha Fen	81 acres
4	Clear Creek 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	River Junction Access	12 acres
11	Scott Church Park	5 acres
12	Solon Prairie	3 acres
13	Sutliff Bridge & Access	1/2 acre
14	Walker Park	3 acres
15	Williams Prairie Preserve	21 acres

\* Malinda Reif Reilly Fen & Prairie is not currently open to the public, but will be in the future.



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

# Winter Program Guide

This winter, JCC will lead virtual programs only, to encourage safe social distancing habits. In addition to these virtual programs, JCC will organize many self-guided hikes and outdoor initiatives. For most recent updates on these initiatives, follow JCC on Facebook. Not on social media? Email [kmorrow@johnsoncountyiowa.gov](mailto:kmorrow@johnsoncountyiowa.gov) to receive email updates on these self-guided activities. Stay safe out there!

To sign up for any of the virtual programs go to: <https://tinyurl.com/JCCWinter2021> or call 319-645-1011 for help.

## Paint with a Naturalist

Friday, December 18, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Virtual Program over Zoom

Fee: \$15

Join us for a guided holiday painting class with a naturalist! We will be painting a delightful snowman together. The best part? We will be repurposing old barn wood from one of our buildings that blew down in the derecho storm this past summer. You will need to pick up and pay for the kit at Kent Park. The kit (\$15) will contain all the necessary paint, brushes, set-up instructions, and the barn wood "canvas". This class will be held over Zoom.

## Say YES to Foraging in Winter!

Sunday, January 24, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Virtual Program over Zoom

Talk with a JCC naturalist and learn about some of the foods and medicines that can be foraged in winter! This is will be a virtual class with follow-up outdoor activities participants are encouraged to do on their own. There will be some overlap in material between the January and February foraging classes.

## Luminary Night Hike (self-guided)

Thursday, January 28, Starting at 5:00 p.m.

Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Experience hiking under starlight on this 1.5 mile hike. You may even hear coyotes or owls along the journey! This self-guided hike will be lit by luminaries to help direct hikers along the way. Hikers should give ample space to other families and practice social distancing guidelines. If weather/road conditions are bad, the event will be cancelled or postponed, with updates posted to JCC's Facebook page, or call 319-645-1011 for updates.

## Valentine's with Foraged Paper

Sunday, February 7th, 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Virtual Program over Zoom

Make your own Valentine's Day cards this year with foraged paper! Learn the process of paper making with foraged plant materials. Make them even more special this year by adding in some native prairie plant seeds so that your cards can be planted to bring yearlong beauty and wildlife habitat to those you love. This program is great for all ages, but you will need to pick up a paper making kit to participate. It is free to "rent" a paper making kit for the class – or you can pay \$10 to own your kit forever!

## Say YES to Foraging in Winter!

Sunday, February 21st, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Virtual Program over Zoom

Talk with a JCC naturalist and learn about some of the foods and medicines that can be foraged in winter! This is will be a virtual class with follow-up outdoor activities participants are encouraged to do on their own. There will be some overlap in material between the January and February foraging classes.

## Luminary Night Hike (self-guided)

Thursday, February 25, Starting at 5:00 p.m.

Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

See Jan 28 event for details.

## Woodworking for Wildlife: Solitary Bee Hotels

Saturday, February 27th, 10:00-12:00 p.m.

Virtual Program over Zoom

Fee: \$20

During an online session, learn all about our native bees and how you can enhance your backyard to attract and protect our native bees and many other important pollinators. Participants will need to pick up their bee hotel kit before the virtual class.

# More Fun Activities!

## Elf for your Health

Cricket the Elf is hiding in Kent Park, and she's on the move! Each weekend in December, Cricket will be hiding along a new trail loop in the park. Every Friday, JCC Naturalists will post a trail map and clues on Facebook to guide you in finding her. Then, head out for a hike and get to know a new trail loop better. Each loop will be between 0.5 to 1.5 miles long, and perfect for little explorers. Take a picture with her if you find her, but leave her where she is. Afterwards, send all four pictures to [mtrana@johnsoncountyiowa.gov](mailto:mtrana@johnsoncountyiowa.gov), to win a nature prize!



## The Great Yeti Hunt



Starting on Jan 4, a giant yeti will be roaming JCC's parks, and every two weeks, she'll move somewhere new! You can track her as she moves along - to find her, you'll have to solve clues for her whereabouts posted biweekly to JCC's Facebook page, then go out to that park and hike until you find her. At the start of the yeti's adventure, maps will be provided for all JCC parks with trails/routes for that park marked ahead of time, to provide some guidance for the larger and more primitive areas. If you find her, take a photo with her in the background. If you find the yeti at all six parks, send the pictures to [kmorrow@johnsoncountyiowa.gov](mailto:kmorrow@johnsoncountyiowa.gov) to be entered into a drawing for a \$30 Fin and Feather gift card.

## Nature Subscription Box



JCC wants to help you get your "Vitamin N" this winter through a low-cost monthly nature subscription box! Each month, the box will feature numerous themed naturalist-inspired activities and educational resources, with prompts for exploring your backyard, neighborhood parks, and county-wide natural areas. Activities will be designed with preK through upper elementary kiddos in mind. **If you are interested, please fill out an inquiry form here.**

## JCC Parks Passport

Get out to explore all JCC properties in 2021, and track your progress along the way with our new Parks Passport! Each time you visit one of JCC's 14 featured parks, punch a unique stamp into your passport at the park's entrance. Once you have visited each park, you can contact JCC Naturalists to receive a hiking patch prize. Email [mtrana@johnsoncountyiowa.gov](mailto:mtrana@johnsoncountyiowa.gov) to get your passport!



## Private CEC Exploration Reservations

The CEC will be open for exploration for one family per week, with exploration hours taking place on Fridays from 10:00-11:30 a.m. Masks are required for visitors 3 years or older. To reserve a day for your family, visit the sign-up link at: <https://tinyurl.com/CECFamilyExploration>





Johnson County Conservation  
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The stream trail in Cangleska Wakan is a great place to find animal tracks  
along with the serenity of trickling water.