

SEASONS

VOLUME 41, ISSUE 3

Fall 2026



Forest Management: Growing a Healthier Tomorrow

by Emily Herring, Director of Marshall County Conservation

My husband and I first crossed paths at Iowa State. He was all about Forestry, and I was deep into Animal Ecology. Our degrees were under the same department, but we hardly shared any classes. Back then, I was firmly in the “all trees are good trees” camp, while he knew how to manage a forest for its health. He’d try to persuade me that sometimes, cutting trees is actually a good thing, while I’d counter with fun animal facts. We both had a lot to learn from each other!

Fast forward twenty years and we’re still learning from each other, but one thing is clear: woodlands don’t thrive if left alone. Careful management (yes, that sometimes means cutting trees!) is key to keeping our forests healthy for the long haul. When I became director, I was excited to prioritize new forest management plans. Our team has been hard at work, and last year we were thrilled to receive an Iowa Forest Resiliency Partnership Program grant funded by the US Forest Service.

The goal of this program is to develop species and structural diversity in Iowa’s forests. This support means we can do even more forestry work, specifically at Green Castle, Grimes Farm, and Bill Ernst. Thanks to this funding, you might spot contractors working in our parks. Yes, there will be tree cutting, but there’s also a lot of replanting and renewal ahead. Here’s what you’ll see:

At Bill Ernst, we’re saying goodbye to invasive species and adding a row of native shrubs around the prairie, creating a welcoming habitat for all sorts of wildlife.

At Green Castle, we’ll be clearing out invasives and planting oaks and other native trees to bring back a beautiful oak savanna- think more shade, more wildlife, and more color each season.

At Grimes Farm, we’ll be removing dead ash trees near Linn Creek and the trails to keep visitors safe, then replanting with a diverse mix of species. We’re also thinning the instant forest and tackling invasives throughout the park, so it’ll be healthier than ever.

This work will take a few years and, honestly, it might not look pretty at first. But just like we burn prairies to sustain their health, sometimes our woodlands need a little tough love, too. The results won’t be instant, but we’re investing in healthy forests for generations to come.

If you have questions or want to know more, I’m always happy to chat. We’re excited to keep making Marshall County’s Conservation areas even better!



This is the stand map showing the different forest management needs at Green Castle Recreation Area.

PARK APOCALYPSE

5K
RACE

TICKETS
ARE \$35 IN
ADVANCE,
\$45 DAY OF
RACE

OCTOBER 10, 2026 AT 6 PM
GRIMES FARM, 2349 233RD ST, MARSHALLTOWN
641-752-5490

REGISTRATION INCLUDES: MEDAL, SWAG ITEM, AND MEAL
TO THE FIRST 100 REGISTERED RUNNERS
TO REGISTER: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/28WTMYDS](https://tinyurl.com/28WTMYDS)
OR SCAN THE QR CODE





FRIENDS OF
MARSHALL COUNTY
CONSERVATION



GRIMES FARM
CONSERVATION CENTER

NOVEMBER 13
AT 6:00 P.M.

JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF
TRIVIA, SILENT AUCTION
ITEMS, FOOD, AND FUN!

\$10/PERSON
TEAMS UP TO 6

PROCEEDS FROM THE
TRIVIA NIGHT GO
TOWARDS THE
DEVELOPMENT OF AN
ARCHERY RANGE AT BILL
ERNST OUTDOOR
TRAINING FACILITY AND
OTHER MARSHALL
COUNTY CONSERVATION
PROJECTS

TO REGISTER, SCAN THE
QR CODE OR CALL
641-752-5490
LIMITED SPOTS!



Star Gazing with the Central Iowa Astronomers

Not All Stars Were Created Equal
September 11 at 8:00 p.m.

Iverson Observatory
2891 Green Castle Road, Gilman

If you look closely at the stars twinkling high above, you will notice some vary, not only in brightness but also in color. Join the AACI for some amazing facts about the stars overhead.

Our Nearest Neighbor in Space: The Moon

October 9 at 10:00 p.m.

Iverson Observatory
2891 Green Castle Road, Gilman

AACI will review some of the lore about the moon and explore its surface via telescope!

For more information, please
call Jim Bonser at (641)751-8744.



Quilt Sealed Bid Auction

Friends of Marshall County
Conservation is pleased to offer
a beautiful handmade nature-
themed quilt through a sealed
bid auction!

Bidding Opens: March 7, 2026

Bidding Closes: August 28, 2026

All sealed bids will be
opened in early September.

Winner Announced: September 10,
2026, at the Live and Local Concert



FRIENDS OF
MARSHALL COUNTY
CONSERVATION



CLOSED

Our offices will be closed:

Wednesday, November 11

Veteran's Day

Thursday & Friday, November 26 - 27
Thanksgiving

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Sunrise Hike

Wednesday, September 9 at 6:30 a.m. Marietta Sand Prairie Preserve
1744 Knapp Avenue, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: September 8 by 4:00 p.m.

Join Marshall County Conservation for a program that encourages you to start your morning with a hike in a county park. Research has shown that people who exercise in the morning are more active throughout the day.

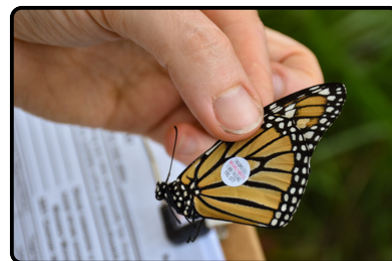
Come for a brisk hike, bring your binoculars to spot birds, or take a leisurely stroll for some fresh air. MCCB staff will be there to answer any questions you might have. Participants should dress appropriately and wear sturdy footwear. There is no charge for this event. Registration needed.



Monarch Tagging

Wednesday, September 9 from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm Shelter House
2359 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free

Join us on September 9 at the Grimes Farm Shelter House to learn about the Monarchs' remarkable migration during the fall months. The program will start at 5:30 p.m. with a short presentation about Monarchs and the tagging program. Following the program, nets will be available for families to catch Monarchs to tag. There will be milkweed available for anyone who wants to plant them to help Monarchs thrive while supplies last. No pre-registration required and the event is FREE!



Monarchs Wanted:

We are looking for Monarchs to tag. If you get large groups of Monarchs roosting in your trees, please call us at 641-752-5490 or text only 641-758-9777.



Live and Local - Jordan Beem

September 10 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Leonard Grimes Memorial Amphitheater at the Grimes Farm Conservation Center

Jordan Beem is a rising country artist out of Des Moines, IA, earning major recognition across the Midwest. Rooted in the Des Moines live music scene, Jordan delivers a high-energy, crowd-driven show alongside powerhouse drummer John Griffiths. He has opened for LANCO, Austin Williams, David Nail, Jason Brown, and Brad Morgan. Blending country, classic rock, and modern pop, Jordan's sound continues to connect with diverse audiences. His debut single "Iowa Skies" sparked early momentum, followed by "That's Just Livin' in the USA" and "Drinking with the Devil," both seeing continued success on Midwest country radio.

Food Trucks
Clare's Tenderloins
Holy Grounds
Treat Wagon



Iverson Observatory Grand Opening

Friday, September 18 at 7:30 p.m.
Iverson Observatory - Green Castle Recreation Area
2891 Green Castle Road, Gilman
Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: No Registration Needed

Join us for a night to celebrate the grand opening of Marshall County Conservation's new Iverson Observatory. The Amateur Astronomers of Central Iowa will help you explore the night sky at our new observatory! This beginner-friendly "Intro to Astronomy" program offers a relaxed and engaging opportunity to learn the basics of stargazing. Please bring a lawn chair.



TO REGISTER FOR EVENTS: CALL 641-752-5490, EMAIL MCCB@MARSHALLCOUNTYIA.GOV, OR TEXT ONLY 641-758-9777 BY EVENT DEADLINE

Nature Adventures for Homeschoolers

September

Monarch Butterflies

Friday, September 11 from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

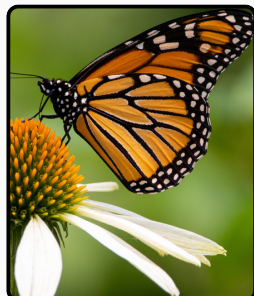
Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: September 9 by 4:00 p.m.

Discover the incredible journey of monarch butterflies as we explore their life cycle, migration, and the challenges they face along the way. Participants will learn how scientists study monarch populations through tagging and will have the opportunity to help tag monarch butterflies for migration research if weather and butterfly conditions allow.



October

Decomposers

Monday, October 5 from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: October 1 by 4:00 p.m.

Discover the hidden world of decomposers and the important role they play in nature! Participants will explore how fungi, insects, worms, and other decomposers break down dead plants and animals, returning nutrients to the soil and helping ecosystems thrive. Through hands-on activities and exploration, we'll uncover the tiny organisms that keep nature clean and healthy.



November

Nature's Oddities

Thursday, November 12 from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: November 10 by 4:00 p.m.

Nature can be weird, wild, and sometimes a little gross! Join us as we explore some of the strangest and most surprising facts from the natural world. From slimy creatures and stinky survival tactics to bizarre animal behaviors and yucky adaptations, participants will discover how these unusual traits help plants and animals survive in the wild. Get ready for a fun, hands-on program full of nature's weirdest wonders!



Brown Bag Bunch: Hidden Life of the Prairie

Tuesday, September 22 from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Marietta Sand Prairie Preserve

1744 Knapp Avenue, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: September 17 by 4:00 p.m.

Join us for a relaxing prairie walk as we uncover the hidden life all around us! From blooming wildflowers and busy pollinators to singing birds and fascinating insects, discover the plants and wildlife that make Iowa prairies such vibrant and important ecosystems. Limited binoculars will be available to borrow during the program.



Kayaking

Wednesday, September 23 from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Green Castle Recreation Area

2891 Green Castle Road, Gilman

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: September 18 by 4:00 p.m.

Join us as we explore Marshall County waters with kayaks. This family-friendly event is designed to help participants learn the basics of kayaking and stay safe on Iowa's waters. There is no fee for this program; however, you must pre-register to reserve one of the limited spots.



Rain Barrel Workshop

Wednesday, September 30 at 6:00 p.m.

Grimes Farm Shelter House

2359 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: \$20

Registration Deadline: September 23 by 4:00 p.m.

Join us for a hands-on Rain Barrel Workshop in partnership with the Marshall County Landfill! Learn how to conserve water, reduce runoff, and support a healthier environment by creating your own rain barrel.

Participants will receive step-by-step guidance on assembling a rain barrel, along with tips for installation and use at home. This workshop is perfect for beginners and anyone interested in sustainable practices.



TO REGISTER FOR EVENTS: CALL 641-752-5490, EMAIL MCCB@MARSHALLCOUNTYIA.GOV, OR TEXT ONLY 641-758-9777 BY THE DEADLINE OF THE EVENT

Zombie Run

Saturday, October 10 at 6:00 p.m.
Grimes Farm
2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Online \$35.00
Day of Registration \$45.00
Deadline: October 7 by 4:00 p.m.

The Park Apocalypse has begun, and Grimes Farm will be infested with Zombies on October 10, 2026. Put on your running shoes for this spine-tingling 5K, with registration beginning at 6:00 p.m. and a staggered race start beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Runners will brave the oncoming night and undead creatures lurking on the trails, which will try to steal their brains (also known as flags, from flag football belts). If runners cross the finish line with flags, they have avoided lively decomposition and are declared a survivor. Those with no flags - their future is not guaranteed, and they are deemed infected.

Runners can register online at Eventbrite (<https://tinyurl.com/28wtmyds>). Online registration fee is \$35 and includes a swag item, a finisher medal, a walking "dead" taco meal, a zombie antidote (Gatorade), and a zombie cookie. Registration Deadline is October 7. Registration for the race day is welcome; however, medals, swag items, and meals are guaranteed to the first 100 registered runners. The day of race registration is \$45.

Scan to register:



VOLUNTEER

If running is not your thing and you would like to sacrifice your brain and evening and become a Zombie on the trail or another volunteer, please contact Emma Bruck at ebruck@marshallcountyia.gov or at 641-752-5490. Income made from the Zombie Run will be put back into the trails at the Grimes Farm.

Brown Bag Bunch: Ice Age Iowa

Tuesday, October 6 from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: October 1 by 4:00 p.m.

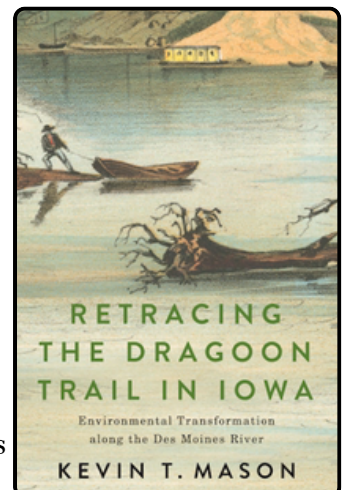
Join Chérie Haury-Artz from the State Archaeologist's Office as we journey back more than 13,000 years to the end of the last Ice Age. Discover what Iowa looked like when giant mammals roamed the landscape, glaciers shaped the land, and temperatures were far colder than today. Learn how the first people to call Iowa home adapted to these challenging conditions and explore the evidence they left behind. The program will also feature a display of real and replica artifacts from this fascinating period, offering a hands-on look into Iowa's earliest human history.



Brown Bag Bunch: Retracing The Dragoon Trail in Iowa & Environmental Transformation along the Des Moines River

Thursday, November 19 at 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: November 17 by 4:00 p.m.

Join historian and author Kevin Mason for an immersive journey along the route of the 1835 First U.S. Dragoon Expedition in Iowa. Drawing from his new book, *Retracing the Dragoon Trail in Iowa*, Mason explores how the state's prairies and wetlands evolved into the farms, towns, and highways we know today. Blending environmental history, Indigenous perspectives, and the spirit of firsthand travel, this engaging presentation reveals how Iowa's landscape still echoes with the stories of the past.



TO REGISTER FOR EVENTS: CALL 641-752-5490, EMAIL MCCB@MARSHALLCOUNTYIA.GOV, OR TEXT ONLY 641-758-9777 BY THE DEADLINE OF THE EVENT

Christmas Bird Count

Thursday, December 17, All Day

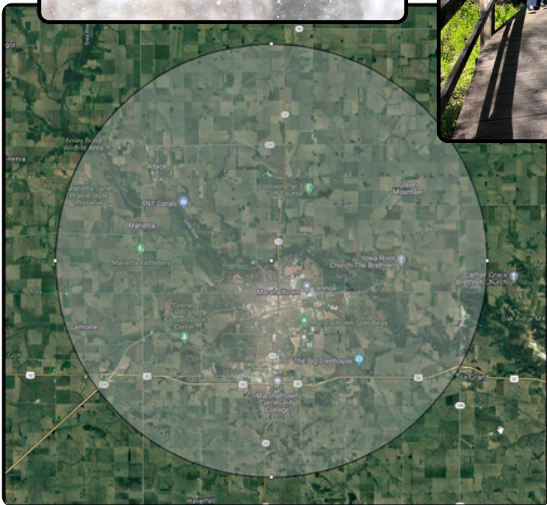
Postponement Date - January 5, 2027

**Throughout the Marshall County Christmas Bird Area
(See Below Image)**

Registration Fee: FREE

Registration Deadline: December 11 by 4:00 p.m.

For over 125 years, the Audubon Society has held Christmas Bird Counts across the United States. Data gathered from these counts is used to understand bird populations. During the Christmas Bird Count, groups are assigned an area within a 15-mile radius and record as many different bird species as possible. The species and numbers are then compiled, sent to the Audubon Society, and documented. The count must take place around Christmas, and groups must pick a specific 24-hour period to record birds. The date we have selected is December 17. We have multiple bird experts and have divided the quadrant into sections. There are several ways to participate in a birding day. 1. If you are an expert, you can help lead a group. 2. Even if you don't know birds, you can join an expert and learn about birds along the way. 3. If you have bird feeders at your home, you can watch and record the birds that come to your feeders. You do not have to dedicate 24 hours. You can give as much time as you want. If you are interested in joining us for the bird count on December 17, please get in touch with Emma Bruck at 641-752-5490 or [ebruuck@marshallcountyia.gov](mailto:ebruck@marshallcountyia.gov) by December 11 at 4:00 p.m. The map below shows the regions we will cover. This includes the towns of Marshalltown, Albion, Green Mountain, and Laurel.



YOUNG ARTIST STUDIO

SEPTEMBER 16

OCTOBER 21

NOVEMBER 18

4:00 TO 5:30 P.M.

**AT THE GRIMES FARM
CONSERVATION CENTER**

Grades 3rd through 12th are invited to join local artists to learn and sharpen their art skills. Each session will focus on an element of art or type of media, a project to work on, and studio time to be creative and work on other projects. Participants can sign up for all or one session. Preregistration is required one week before studio time.



**TO REGISTER FOR EVENTS: CALL 641-752-5490, EMAIL MCCB@MARSHALLCOUNTYIA.GOV,
OR TEXT ONLY 641-758-9777 BY THE DEADLINE OF THE EVENT**

SEASONS

MARSHALL COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
2349 233RD STREET
MARSHALLTOWN, IA 50158
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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PAID

Marshalltown, IA
Permit No. 159

THANK YOU!

Donations

Tom Mack Memorial, Dennis Eige Memorial, Howard
Messerer Memorial

Newsletter Collating

Irene & Gary Williams, Dianne Freiboth, Charlotte
McGinty, Dianna Mick, Joan Studts, Sharon Depew, Jack
& Linda Mackin

Park Maintenance

Isaak Bruck, Master Gardeners

Programs

Stephanie Shepherd - IDNR

Bird Feeders

Evans McWilliams

Newsletter Editing

Bren Lee

Live and Local Concerts

Bren Lee, Marvis Drew, Katie Fink, Clair Hamilton, Jeff
Kooser, Ken Lyons, Case Hegeman, Tina & Danny Nelson,
Christian Goodman, Vanessa Engle, Brad Rahmiller, Teri
Anson, Jinx & Mike Bloom

Special thanks to all of our RAGBRAI Volunteers!

Apologies to anyone we may have missed.

MARSHALL COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown, IA 50158
(641) 752-5490

mccb@marshallcountya.gov

www.marshallcountyconservation.com

Nature Center Hours

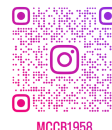
Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Rich Naughton
Pam Paone
Steve Armstrong
Tom Deimerly
Tina Nelson

STAFF

Emily Herring - Director
Emma Bruck - Naturalist
Jeremiah Manken - Operation Supervisor/Park Ranger
Tyler Renze - Natural Resource Manager
Alan Naughton - Maintenance Technician
Ben Steinberg - Maintenance Technician
Tami Krough - Administrative Assistant



MCCB1958