

SEASONS

VOL. 41 ISSUE 1

SPRING 2026



Change

by Emily Herring, Director of Marshall County Conservation

The ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, "The only constant in life is change." Nowhere is that more evident than in nature. As the Earth revolves around the sun and the seasons shift, plants and animals adapt to survive. Soon, warm spring winds will coax trees to bud, insect-eating birds will return to Iowa, and frogs will emerge from the mud to sing for their mates. If these creatures refused to change, they would not survive. Instead, they adjust, and life continues.

Humans, however, are not always as adaptable. Many of us, myself included, dread the unknown. We wish the weather would stay a perfect 75 degrees. We like ordering "the usual" at our favorite restaurant. We want predictable gas prices, reliable vehicles, and for our families to stay close and our children not to grow up too quickly. But life does not stand still.

Recently, change came to the Marshall County Conservation Board. After 12 years of dedicated service, Tom Mack stepped down. When I asked if he would consider another term, he took 30 minutes to think before calling me back with his answer: "I don't own this position, so I think it is time for me to step down." That statement speaks volumes about his character.

I first met Mack during my interview for the naturalist position in 2016. From the questions he asked that day, I should have known he would continually challenge me to become the best employee and person I could be. Tom has always wanted what is best for Marshall County Conservation. He asked thoughtful questions, challenged decisions, encouraged growth, and helped the board find humor even in difficult situations. For his steady leadership and commitment to conservation, I am deeply grateful, and I hope he will remain connected and involved.



As Mack steps down, we are excited to announce that Tina Nelsson has filled Mack's empty seat. Tina is an avid outdoorswoman who loves camping and traveling. She has been an active volunteer and board member of the Friends of Marshall County Conservation. She is an optimistic person who brings a new perspective to fill Tom Mack's shoes. Welcome Tina!

Change does not mean something will be better or worse; it simply means it will be different. Like the natural world around us, we must adapt, trust the process, and move forward. Seasons shift, leadership transitions, and new chapters begin. And through it all, the work of conservation continues.



2026 Photo Contest Winners

Thank you to everyone who entered the contest, we had an amazing 111 entries this year! Keep your cameras ready and start watching for those unforgettable Marshall County moments for next year's contest.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

1st Place
Brookelyn Schlawin

Honorable Mention
Dorothy Barber
Brookelyn Schlawin



NATIVE WILDLIFE

1st Place
Gary Pusillo

Honorable Mention
Steve Steward
Brookelyn Schlawin
Walt Huffaker
Terri Shetler



SCENIC
1st Place
Walt Huffaker

Honorable Mention
Gary Pusillo
Nancy Sebern



NATIVE PLANTS

1st Place
Gary Pusillo

Honorable Mention
Brookelyn Schlawin
Walt Huffaker

OPEN NATURE

1st Place
Andy Spellman

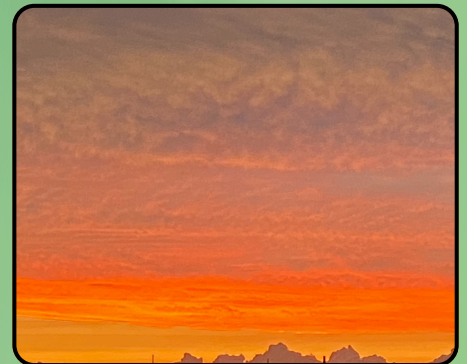
Honorable Mention
Karly Jans
Andy Spellman



YOUTH

1st Place
Andrew Barber

Honorable Mention
Henry Barber



PEOPLE'S CHOICE

1st Place
Gary Pusillo

Honorable Mention
Gary Pusillo
Steve Steward



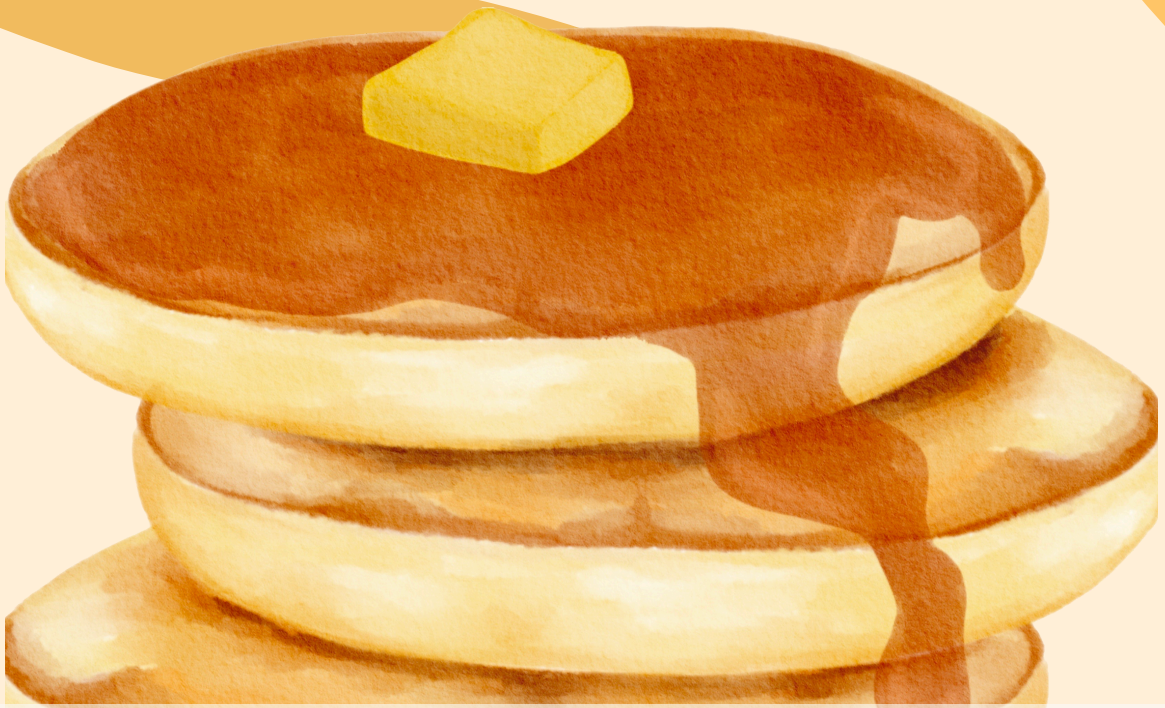
More information on contest rules:
<https://www.marshallcountytia.gov/510/Annual-Photo-Contest>

Trees to Table

PANCAKE FEED

GRIMES FARM CONSERVATION CENTER

MARCH 7, 2026
7 - 10 AM



Celebrate Maple Sugaring Season with Us! Join Marshall County Conservation as we celebrate the sweet season of maple sugaring with a Pancake Feed Fundraiser! Come learn about the art of making maple syrup and enjoy a delicious stack of flapjacks topped with real maple syrup, made from trees at Grammer Grove and served fresh at the Grimes Farm Conservation Center.

Your ticket includes: Three fluffy pancakes, two savory sausage links, locally harvested maple syrup, and a refreshing drink. From tree to table, this is one sweet treat you won't want to miss! Tickets can be purchased at the Grimes Farm Conservation Center and Treasurer's or Auditor's Office at the Marshall County Courthouse. Tickets cost \$6.00 in advance, \$7.00 at the door. Any questions, please call 641-752-5490.

SUMMER CAMP

Crickets

June 16 - 18 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

June 23 - 25 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Ages: 4 to out of Kindergarten & accompanying adult

Registration Fee: \$20

Registration Deadline: May 22 by 4:00 p.m.

Let's play! Crickets camp is all about nature play and will have kiddos and adults having hands-on outdoor fun!

Acorns and Asters

July 7 - 9 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Age: Out of 1st & 2nd Grades

Registration Fee: \$25

Registration Deadline: June 19 by 4:00 p.m.

All about aquatic fun! Kids will spend their time getting muddy and wet while learning about the watery world around them.

Muskrats

July 15 - 17 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Izaak Walton League

2601 Smith Avenue, Marshalltown

Age: Out of 3rd & 4th Grades

Registration Fee: \$35

Registration Deadline: June 26 by 4:00 p.m.

A little dirt never hurt anyone! What better way to spend your summer day than getting dirty, learning about geology, and having fun while doing it!

Praying Mantis (Uncle Ike's)

July 23 - 24 3:00 p.m. - 9:00 a.m. (overnight)

Izaak Walton League

2606 Smith Avenue, Marshalltown

Age: Out of 5th & 6th Grades

Registration Fee: \$45

Registration Deadline: July 3 by 4:00 p.m.

Ready for a campout? Come learn how to cook over the fire and pitch a tent, all while learning the basics of survival.



Register for Summer Camp online by following this link: <https://forms.gle/7aNPvXUY7PPG3x518> or by taking a picture of this QR Code with your smartphone.

SUMMER SKILLS

Do you have a youth aged 10 to 15 who is interested in building their outdoor skills? Join us for Summer Skills courses to learn geocaching, fishing, and outdoor survival skills! Sign up for one or all sessions!

Fishing

Tuesday, July 28 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Green Castle Recreation Area

2891 Green Castle Road, Gilman

Ages: 10 - 15

Registration Fee: \$10

Registration Deadline: July 14 by 4:00 p.m.

Summer is about having fun and spending time outdoors. Join MCCB naturalists as they introduce your youth to fishing. They will learn about Iowa fish species, fish anatomy, and fishing techniques.

Geocaching

Tuesday, August 4 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Grimes Farm Shelter House

2359 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Ages: 10 - 15

Registration Fee: \$10

Registration Deadline: July 21 by 4:00 p.m.

Summer is the season for fun, adventure, and time spent outdoors! Join MCCB naturalists as they introduce your youth to geocaching. Geocaching is a high-tech scavenger hunt using a handheld GPS unit that will have your youth racing to find the hidden caches throughout the park.

Survival

Tuesday, August 11 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Grammer Grove Recreation Area

2030 127th Street, Liscomb

Ages: 10 - 15

Registration Fee: \$10

Registration Deadline: July 28 by 4:00 p.m.

Learning survival skills is great fun and essential to keeping you safe when exploring the outdoors. Join MCCB naturalists as they introduce your youth to basic survival skills that will last them a lifetime. They will learn how to build a survival shelter, what to pack for a hike, and how to start a fire safely.



Register for Summer Skills online by following this link: <https://forms.gle/DKGxWdvTvygWRHDGt7> or by taking a picture of this QR Code with your smartphone.

SPRING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Brown Bag Bunch - From Ice Age to Hedgerows: The History of the Osage Orange

Tuesday, March 24 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

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

In The Amazing Osage Orange, Melissa Burdick, the Executive Director of The Brenton Arboretum, invites us to discover one of North America's most curious and charismatic trees. Through engaging visuals, stories, and science, this presentation explores the Osage Orange's unusual fruit, remarkable strength, deep cultural history, and surprising ecological role. Equal parts informative and playful, it reveals how this often-misunderstood tree has shaped landscapes, supported wildlife, and captured human imagination for centuries, proving that even the strangest trees have extraordinary stories to tell.

Nature Adventures for Homeschoolers - Skulls

Thursday, March 26, at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Ages: Kindergarten through 4th Grade

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: March 24 by 4:00 p.m.

Students will step into the role of wildlife investigators as they explore a variety of animal skulls. Through hands-on observation, they'll uncover clues about each animal's diet, habitat, and unique adaptations, revealing the hidden stories behind every bone!



Prairie Burn

An evening during the week of April 13

Exact Date TBD at 7:30 p.m.

Grimes Farm

2359 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Come and watch prairie management in action. Spectacular views are expected as the fire lights up the night sky. This program's exact date depends on weather conditions and will be determined on short notice. Listen to KDAO, KFJB, and watch our Facebook page for updates. Call 641-752-5490 or email mccb@marshallcountyia.gov to be put on the notification list.



Shed Hunting

Saturday, April 11 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Grammer Grove Recreation Area

2030 127th Street, Liscomb

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: April 3 by 4:00 p.m.

Join us on April 11th at Grammer Grove Recreation Area for a free, family-friendly shed hunt! As deer naturally shed their antlers each spring, this is the perfect time to explore the outdoors and search for these woodland treasures.

This event is open to all ages, and success is guaranteed.

Antlers will be placed throughout the area so every participant can find one to take home.



Nature Adventures for Homeschoolers - Geocaching

Thursday, April 16 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Ages: Kindergarten through 4th Grade

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: April 14 by 4:00 p.m.

Students will become adventurous explorers as they learn the basics of geocaching. Using GPS clues, problem-solving skills, and teamwork, they'll search for hidden treasures. Youth will discover that exploring navigation and teamwork makes every find an exciting adventure.



Brown Bag Bunch - Earth Day Wildflower Walk

Wednesday, April 22 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Grammer Grove Recreation Area

2030 127th Street, Liscomb

Registration Fee: Free

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

Slow down and smell the wildflowers! Join us on April 22 at Grammer Grove for a walk to learn about spring ephemerals. Ephemeral means "lasting a short time" and is a common term for the wildflowers that bloom in Iowa's spring woodlands. We will explore Grammer Grove on Earth Day and enjoy those short-blooming spring beauties. Participants can bring a sack lunch to enjoy before or after the program.

Earth Day Walk

Wednesday, April 22 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Grimes Farm Shelter House

2359 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: April 17 at 4:00 p.m.

What better day than Earth Day to take a walk at Grimes Farm? This program is a great way to connect with those around you who want to appreciate the Earth's beauty.



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

Sunrise Hike

Tuesday, April 28 6:00 am
Green Castle Recreation Area
Upper Parking Lot by Bison
2891 Green Castle Road, Gilman

Wednesday, May 20 6:00 am
Grimes Farm Shelter House
2359 233rd Street, Marshalltown

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.



Iowa Young Birders' Hike

Saturday, May 2 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.
Ages: 8 to 18 and Accompanying Adult
Grimes Farm Shelter House
2359 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Join Iowa Young Birders and Marshall County Conservation for a morning at Grimes Farm during spring migration! Early May brings an exciting mix of birds returning to Iowa to nest or continuing their trip north, and the woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands of Grimes Farm provide excellent habitat for spotting them. We'll search for warblers and other spring specialties while learning tips for identifying birds by sight and sound. This trip offers a fun, relaxed, family-friendly opportunity to experience the magic of spring migration. Bring binoculars if you have them—loaner pairs will also be available. To register: <https://www.iowayoungbirders.org/event-6565976>.

Mother's Day Painted Garden Paver

Wednesday, May 6 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Grimes Farm Sugar Shack
2359 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: \$10
Registration Deadline: April 29 at 4:00 p.m.

Head out to Grimes Farm on the evening of May 6th for a garden paver painting class! Whether you're a youngin' searching for the perfect Mother's Day gift or simply young at heart, this hands-on class provides all the tools and supplies you need to create and decorate your own colorful garden paver. Youth under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult.



Nature Story Hour

Nature Story Hour is held on the first and third Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. during the summer months at Leonard Grimes Memorial Amphitheater at the Grimes Farm. In the event of inclement weather, the program will be held indoors at the center. The program will start with a storybook read-aloud, an educational program by the naturalist on the topic, and an activity or craft. Each session will last about 30 - 40 minutes. Upcoming topics and guests include:

May 7: Bird Beaks - Naturalist

May 21: Daytime vs. Nighttime - Naturalist

June 4: Animal Signs - Naturalist

Brown Bag Bunch May - Wild Neighbors in Unexpected Places

Wednesday, May 27 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: May 22nd by 4:00 p.m.

Coyotes, foxes, bobcats, and other wildlife are increasingly common in urban areas. Iowa DNR Urban Wildlife Biologist Andy Kellner will explore why these animals thrive in cities and towns, address common concerns, and misconceptions, and share practical tips for coexisting safely and responsibly with urban wildlife.



Kayaking

Wednesday, May 27 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Green Castle Recreation Area

2891 Green Castle Road, Gilman

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: May 21 at 4:00 p.m.

Join us as we explore Green Castle Lake 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 a limited number of spots.

Nature Adventures for Homeschoolers - Insects vs Arachnids

Thursday, May 28 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Ages: Kindergarten through 4th Grade

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: May 26 by 4:00 p.m.

Students will become mini-beast experts as they investigate the differences between insects and arachnids. Through hands-on catching, close observation, and fun activities. They'll discover how body parts, behaviors, and habitats set these tiny creatures apart!



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

Friends of Marshall County Conservation

Live & Local

Live Music & Local Food Trucks
Leonard Grimes Memorial Amphitheater
at the Grimes Farm Conservation Center
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm



Watch the Marshall County Friends Facebook Page for location changes or cancellations in case of inclement weather.

Thank You to Our Sponsors: Ann C. Keyser Charitable Trust & supportive members of the Friends of Marshall County Conservation.

SEASONS

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

NON-PROFIT
U.S.POSTAGE
PAID

Marshalltown, IA
Permit No. 159

THANK YOU!

Donations

Solid Waste Management Commission, Jim Dworzak, Sherry Folks, Karen Anderson, Tammy & William Backoff, Julie Stahl, Gary Fulton, Jerry Gaffney, Friends of Marshall County Conservation, Ron Gamble, Brookleyn Wahlert

Newsletter Collating

Rob & Joyce Christensen, Karen Bach, Irene & Gary Williams, Dianne Freiboth, Charlotte McGinty, Dianna Mick, Joan Studts, Andy Lenz

Programs

Anna Buckardt Thomas (IDNR)

Christmas Bird Count

Mark Proescholdt, Evans McWilliams, Christi McMillion, Mike Kvider

Bird Feeders

Evans McWilliams

Newletter Editing:

Bren Lee

Apologies to anyone we may have missed.

MARSHALL COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

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

mccb@marshallcountya.gov

www.marshallcountya.gov

Nature Center Hours

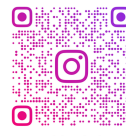
Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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