



SEASONS

VOL. 40 ISSUE 4

WINTER 2025

Small But Mighty

by Emily Herring, Director of Marshall County Conservation

For more than 50 years, the Izaak Walton League of America and Iowa's County Conservation System have partnered to recognize the people and counties making a real difference for wildlife across our state. This year, I'm proud to share that we earned Second Place among counties with populations over 20,000, an especially meaningful honor given the strong competition from larger counties like Polk, Linn, and Scott.

This achievement reflects the work of our small but incredibly dedicated team of seven staff members who manage over 3,000 acres of prairie, timber, wetlands, riparian areas, and lakes. Every acre requires careful stewardship, from prescribed burning and invasive species control to tree and shrub plantings, improving habitat, and supporting public use.

But this recognition isn't just about staff. It's also a testament to the hard work and commitment of our Conservation Board, whose leadership, support, and long-term vision make our success possible. Their dedication ensures we can protect natural areas, pursue new opportunities, and continue serving our community.

Over the past year, our team accomplished a significant amount of natural resource work, including:

- Permanently protecting 370 acres of connected wildlife habitat
- Conducting prescribed burns on 405 acres and establishment mowing on 480 acres to support healthy ecosystems
- Hosting educational programs to help community members learn about wildlife habitat improvement
- Offering equipment rentals and food plots for local landowners who want to improve habitat on their own property
- Completing a fish habitat project that enhances aquatic environments for both anglers and wildlife

These accomplishments highlight our ongoing commitment to restoring and caring for Iowa's natural resources. I am incredibly proud of our staff, our board, and our community partners who continue to support this work.



MCCB Members (L to R): Rich Naughton, Steve Armstrong, Pam Paone, Tom Mack, & Tom Deimerly

MCC Maintenance (L to R): Alan Naughton, Jeremiah Manken, Tyler Renze, & Ben Steinberg (not pictured)

WINTER PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

DECEMBER

Nature Adventures for Homeschoolers - Animal Signs

Thursday, December 4, at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: December 2 by 4:00 p.m.



Join us for a nature program in a flexible format designed for kindergarten through third-grade students. Programs will engage students through a story, craft, or activity, with an outdoor fun component.

Students will become nature detectives as they learn to spot animal signs like tracks, scat, and nests. Through hands-on activities and exploration, they'll discover how these clues reveal who's been nearby!

Full Moon Hike

Thursday, December 4, at 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Grimes Farm Shelter House
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: December 2 by 4:00 p.m.

Enjoy a moonlit hike through the winter woods. Dress warmly. Hot chocolate and cookies will be available in the classroom after the hike.



Brown Bag Bunch - California Camper Van Adventure

Thursday, December 11, at 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: December 5 by 4:00 p.m.

Join director Emily Herring for a picture-packed tour of the Pinnacles, Kings Canyon, Sequoia, and Yosemite National Parks! Follow along on her summer camper van adventure with her family, as they explore the breathtaking landscapes of central California - plus make a few iconic stops in San Francisco along the way.



Whether you're planning your national park road trip or want to live vicariously through a young family's fun (and sometimes comical) vacation, this engaging and informative program is for you!

Christmas Bird Count

Thursday, December 18, All Day
Throughout the Marshall County Bird Count Area
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: December 16 by 4:00 p.m.

Join Marshall County Conservation in participating in the Audubon Society's long-running Christmas Bird Count to help track bird populations. Participants will help survey a 15-mile radius area, recording as many species as possible. You can join a group led by bird experts, assist as a beginner, or record birds at your own feeders for any amount of time.



To participate, contact Emma Bruck at 641-752-5490 or [ebruick@marshallcountytia.gov](mailto:ebruck@marshallcountytia.gov) by December 16 at 4:00 p.m. Areas include Marshalltown, Albion, Green Mountain, and Laurel.

Our Offices Will Be Closed:

December 24 - Afternoon
December 25 - All Day
December 26 - All Day
January 1 - All Day
January 19 - All Day



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

JANUARY

Felt Embroidery Flower Bookmark Class

Tuesday, January 13, at 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
Registration Fee: \$20/person
Deadline: January 9 by 4:00 p.m.

Celebrate the beauty of nature while creating a flower-inspired bookmark with colorful felt and simple embroidery stitches. This beginner-friendly class will guide you step by step through stitching petals, leaves, and details to bring your design to life.

All supplies are provided, and participants will take home a unique handmade bookmark to brighten their favorite book. Open to ages 16+, this class requires pre-registration and a \$20 payment by January 9 at 4:00 p.m. to secure a limited number of spots.



Nature Adventures for Homeschoolers - Snowshoeing

Thursday, January 15, at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: January 13 by 4:00 p.m.

Join us for a nature program in a flexible format designed for kindergarten through third-grade students. Programs will engage students through a story, craft, or activity, with an outdoor fun component.

Bundle up and join us for a winter adventure made just for homeschool families! Discover how people have used snowshoes for hundreds of years to explore snowy landscapes, then strap on a pair yourself to experience the magic of walking on top of the snow. Along the way, we'll look for animal tracks and enjoy the quiet beauty of nature in winter.

Brown Bag Bunch Owl & Nightjar Monitoring in Iowa

Tuesday, January 20, at 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: January 15 by 4:00 p.m.



Most bird monitoring in Iowa happens during the day, leaving much unknown about the state's owls and nightjars, of which five owls and three nightjars are listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Since 2016, the MOON program (Monitoring of Owls and Nightjars) has been listening for these mysterious nighttime birds, finding steady owl numbers but wildly fluctuating nightjar counts.

In 2024, monitoring expanded to 14 Bird Conservation Area routes, with all 23 BCAs covered by 2025. These surveys give us a clearer picture of Iowa's nocturnal bird populations and help guide habitat management to protect them.

Join Iowa DNR Avian Ecologist Anna Buckardt Thomas as she shares fascinating insights from this work and what it means for conserving these secretive nighttime visitors.

Snowshoe and Ski Rental

Beat the winter blues and enjoy the outdoors! Marshall County Conservation offers snowshoe and ski rentals for all ages at just \$5 per day, plus a \$50 deposit per set. All renters must sign a liability waiver. Deposits are refunded when equipment is returned in good condition within 72 hours.

Great places to explore with snowshoes or skis include Grimes Farm, Green Castle, Timmons Grove, and Grammer Grove. During Marshall County Conservation Board-sponsored events, equipment is available free of charge.



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FEBRUARY

Shoes and Soup

Wednesday, February 4, at 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

Registration Fee: \$12/person

Deadline: January 30 by 4:00 p.m.

Bundle up and join naturalist Emma Bruck as we brave the cold and spend the evening snowshoeing the trails of Grimes Farm. The full moon will illuminate the winter trails as we explore and take in the peaceful beauty that winter has to offer. The evening will consist of a brief snowshoeing tutorial, followed by time to explore Grimes Farm independently. Complete the evening with a warm bowl of soup at the conservation center.

Participants must weigh 40 lbs or more, and anyone under 18 must have an accompanying adult. The registration fee includes snowshoes, instruction, and a soup supper.

Participants must pre-register and pay a \$12.00 registration fee before January 30th at 4:00 p.m. to reserve limited spots.



Herbal Soap from Scratch

Tuesday, February 24 at 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

Registration Fee: \$35.00

Deadline: February 17 by 4:00 p.m.

Explore the art and science of making handcrafted soap from scratch with Ann Staudt of Siberian Soap Co.! Using the centuries-old cold-process soapmaking technique, students will combine plant-based oils and lye to create soaps that are mild, moisturizing, and eco-friendly. This workshop is very hands-on, with each participant making and taking home 1 pound (4-5 full-size bars) of their own custom batch of herbal handcrafted soap.

Long sleeves, long pants, and closed-toe shoes are required of all participants. Please bring an old towel or blanket to insulate your finished soap. Open to age 16+; younger students must have advance permission from the instructor. Pre-registration and payment of 35.00 are required to secure limited spots by February 17 before 4:00 p.m.



Brown Bag Bunch - Voyage to the Bottom of the World

February: Voyage to the Bottom of the World

Wednesday, February 18, at 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: February 13 by 4:00 p.m.

In December 2014, Ty Smedes spent nearly a month exploring the southern reaches of the globe aboard the expedition ship Ortelius. The trip began in the Falkland Islands, home to 220,000 pairs of Black-browed Albatross and numerous Rockhopper Penguins. The next stop was South Georgia Island—one of the world's great wildlife strongholds. Amid its dramatic glaciated landscapes, Ty visited vast Fur Seal colonies and witnessed bull Elephant Seals battling for territory. He also explored King Penguin colonies exceeding 335,000 pairs on an island just 100 miles long and home to 100 million birds. Along the Antarctic Peninsula, he encountered dazzling blue icebergs, several penguin species, and the leopard seals that hunt them—framed by endless glaciers and towering mountains.

Join us for this educational and visually stunning presentation highlighting one of the planet's most wildlife-rich regions.

Nature Adventures For Homeschoolers - Water Cycles

Thursday, February 19, at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

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

Join us for a hands-on science adventure designed just for homeschool families for ages Kindergarten through third grade.

Together we'll follow the journey of water through evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and collection. Students will discover how water shapes our world, supports life, and connects to the weather we see every day. Come ready to learn, explore, and experience the amazing journey of a single drop of water!



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

A SCARY SUCCESS!!!!

Thank you to all our supporters of the 2025 Park Apocalypse.
Your support made the event possible!

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS:

Appleberry Farm - Mitchell Family Funeral Home
Pinnacle Bank - Friends of Marshall County Conservation

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Marvis Drew, Joyce Christensen, Katie Fink, Joan Studts, Barb Lageschulte, Linda Leaton, Claire Hamilton, Linda Von Holten, Denny Bruck, Kari Bruck, Anna Classen, Hunter Cawson, Vanessa Engel, Paige Martin, Kendra Dawson, Case Hageman, Ken Lyons, Bill Carey, Chad Pietig, Bonnie Baskill, Allison Walters, Jeff Kooser, Isaak Bruck, Leo Herring, Nina Herring, Joe Herring, Kelly Balvanz, Dani Balvanz, Dylan Balvanz, Reid Gerstandt, Bennett Wittkop, Maddie Craudon, Brenna Steinkomp, Madeline Manken, Olivia Wise, Elena Wise, Piper Pietig, Lina Morrison, Elli Wahl, George McAndrew, Patrick Hoss, Reagan Burns, Ashlynn Duncan, Kinzey Sawyer, Emery Allen, Katelyn Larson, Emmi Meier, Costin Piscitelli, Elyza Ceren, Anessa Morrison, Conner Holman, Myles Goldman, Thomas Stanley, Shoney Albert, Carter Nunn, Kyle Holberg, Adam Bouhssine, Myles Goldman, Jorja Jannssen, Carrie Barr, Max Scheir, Sophia Valdez Chavez, Millie Heitmann, Lily Johnson, Edson Dominic Gallentine, Carson Wright, Alina Garcia, Alexia Garcia, Ariana Garcia, Jaden Schwartz, Lana Bradstream, Hobz Hooley, Jaime Hooley, Boy Scouts, Daniel Anderson, Rueben Fuentes, Steve Burr, Emmanuel Burhop, Anthony Bradstream, April Denton, Audrey Denton, Shawn Denton, Shawn McConnell, Cyrus McConnell, Krystal McConnell, Sam Dean, Kinsely Dean, Brian Krumm, Dan Faas, Daniel Ritter, William Ritter, Kade Randall, Preston Johnson, Michelle Ritter.



Annual Photo Contest Deadline: January 31 at midnight

All entries must be emailed to mccb@marshallcountytia.gov, with the subject line "Photo Contest," by Saturday, January 31, at midnight. In the body of your email, state the category for the photograph(s), your name, address, a brief description of the photo, and phone number. No images will be accepted in person at the nature center. Do not compress pictures in email.

Photographs will be judged the week of February 9 for the categories listed below: Scenic, Native Wildlife, Native Plants, Open Nature, and Outdoor Recreation. Winners of each category will receive a \$25 gift certificate. For more information on the categories, <https://www.marshallcountytia.gov/510/Annual-Photo-Contest>

All photographs received will be posted on Facebook from February 9 through February 15. The picture that gets the most likes for People's Choice will win a \$25 gift certificate. All certificates will be mailed to the winners.

Trees to Table Pancake Feed

Saturday, March 7 - 7:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

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. \$6.00 in advance, \$7.00 at the door. Any questions, please call 641-752-5490.

SEASONS

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

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THANK YOU!

Donations:

Kenn's Transmission, Garry & Bobbi Brandenbrug, St. Francis School, Mitchell Family Funeral Home, Pinnacle Bank, Friends of Marshall County Conservation, Appleberry Farm, Beverly Iverson, Trees Forever, Marshall County Landfill.

Newsletter Collating:

Rob & Joyce Christensen, Karen Bach, Kayann Lowry, Jack & Linda Mackin, Kristi Cameron, Carolyn Parry Weir, Irene & Gary Williams, Dianne Freiboth, Charlotte McGinty, Dianna Mick

Tree Planting:

Laura Rangel, Jennifer Woster, Daniel Speese, Paul Podhajsky, Jeremy Neisess, Steven Walter, Jonathan Richardson, Eric Strong, Steffenie Edwards, Jace McKeever, Shannon Schmal, Matthew Heller, Keri Gaschler, Ethan Dial, Jeremiah McKeever, Brad Weiner, Mark Weese, Ruzan Morrison, Nick Stanton, Gene Harmon, Jose Rodriguez, Daniel Silva, Tim Parrie, Delania Halter, Erin Carpenter, Joe Herring, Kayla Bogenrief, Brad Riphagen, Sandy Bennett

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

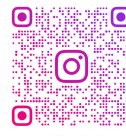
Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Rich Naughton
Pam Paone
Steve Armstrong
Tom Deimerly
Tom Mack

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



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