



Up and Down the River

JACKSON COUNTY CONSERVATION FALL 2024

New Woodland Diorama and Walk-Through Cave Exhibit **Coming this Fall!!!** Open House event October 27. More details on page 5.



AmeriCorps

**Green Iowa AmeriCorps
served with JCC this past year**

Green Iowa AmeriCorps is Iowa's leader in boots-on-the-ground energy and environmental services. GIA is headquartered at the University of Northern Iowa's Center for Energy & Environmental Education, and maintains 20+ sites throughout Iowa. Jackson County Conservation hosted 4 GIA Members for the 2023-2024 year. These 4 GIA members served their 11-month and 6-month terms by working with our staff to provide more environmental education programming and helped with natural resource management at our parks. Molly Hicks, Isaac Anderson, Shelby Davison, and Kayla Pirkola conducted classroom programs at Jackson County schools, helped with field trips to the Hurstville Center and other area parks, lead summer day camps, assisted with prescribed prairie and woodland burns, removed invasive species, cleared woody vegetation from prairies, surveyed endangered plant and animal species in the county, and performed other tasks to support the mission of Jackson County Conservation. **Below, Molly, Isaac, Shelby, and Kayla share about their experiences.**

Molly Hicks, served September 2023—August 2024:

I had a great year serving with AmeriCorps in Jackson County! For my professional development project, I hosted a fishing clinic on Iowa's free fishing weekend. We learned about water pollution, tying knots, and how to fish. It was fun helping participants catch fish! Throughout the year I did programming for all ages, a fish survey on the Mississippi River with the IA DNR, goose banding with the IA DNR, assisted with prairie burns, invasive species removal, lawn mowing, staffed the Hurstville Center, and held a solar eclipse party. I enjoyed caring for the animals at the Center. When my time serving here is done, I will work with another county's conservation board and use the skills I acquired to serve another community. My favorite part of this year has been the people I worked with and the people in the community I served. I enjoyed the variety of jobs and experiences. The most difficult part of the term was moving across the state to live independently for the first time. Thank you Jackson County!

Isaac Anderson, served February—August 2024:

My professional experience with JCC will be one to remember. I served a 6-month term and was exhilarated to be back working with kids but this time as an educator of natural resources! Doing programs was the most fun! Getting to see children of all ages outside in their element enjoying the simple pleasures outside will always make my heart warm. Paddling at Prairie Creek and doing nature hikes at the Hurstville Center seemed to be fan favorites! For my professional development project, I decided to make a plant press herbarium! An herbarium is an archive of wildflowers and grasses and is used for identification of species. My overall idea was for the Center to have a book to use for programs and be on display at the Center to educate the public about our native species of plants. I have

Continued next page...

added 60 species of native wildflowers and grasses in my collection. I'm hopeful to continue for as long as I can! Thank you Jackson County for welcoming not just me but our whole Green Iowa Team with open arms.

Shelby Davison, served February—August 2024:

As my 6-month term of AmeriCorps comes to a close, I look back with thankfulness. Thankful to meet such amazing teammates - Isaac, Kayla, and Molly. Thankful of the refreshing time serving and exploring Jackson County. I had the opportunity to visit so many places I never have before, and participate in various hard things. The highlight is being proud of my work, especially for my creation of my book - *Iowa's Native Rainbow*, which I both wrote and illustrated for the Center to use on their Storywalk. This project was something I was hungry to try, and not only did I finish it, but I finished it early! I am notorious for procrastinating, so this is a huge win for me! This time of service has been such a great experience. And while it is coming to an end, and I excitedly return to my Paraeducator position at Maquoketa Briggs Elementary - I so look forward to bringing the confidence I learned while with JCC into my everyday life. Thanks for having me!

Kayla Pirkola, served February—August 2024:

My experience was both impactful and insightful. My professional development project involved researching plant communities in remnant hill prairies. I surveyed six remnant hill prairies in Jackson County to document seed bank composition and assess restoration progress. Completing this independent research project was particularly fulfilling and meaningful for me. In addition to my research, I led programs such as an insect pinning class and a monarch blitz event. It was gratifying to create and lead programs on topics I'm passionate about. A major highlight of my time at Jackson County Conservation was bonding with my team. I developed friendships with my fellow AmeriCorps members, Shelby, Isaac, and Molly, and will sincerely miss working and laughing with them. I greatly appreciate connecting and spending time with the Hurstville Interpretive Center staff—Jess, Tony, Macey, Sheila and Nate—who supported me throughout this career-building experience. Looking ahead, I hope to pursue a Master's degree in Ecology and Environmental Management this coming year. In the meantime, I plan to continue exploring Iowa's natural areas and gaining more experience in the field.

Isaac's plant press herbarium, Shelby's book *Iowa's Native Rainbow*, and a poster of Kayla's Floristic Assessment of Remnant Hill Prairies are all on display at the Hurstville Interpretive Center.

A huge thank you to these 4 individuals for serving with Jackson County Conservation! We enjoyed working with them and are thankful for the work they did for us!

Who's Who with Jackson County Conservation!

We've had several staff changes within our department. Adam McPherson, Park Ranger since 2021, accepted a job with the City of Preston Police Department this summer. After posting the position and interviewing candidates, we are excited to announce Isaac Anderson, formerly our Green Iowa AmeriCorps member, has accepted the Park Ranger position! The Conservation Board created a new full-time position with our department starting this July. Tony Vorwald, Naturalist since 2018, has transitioned into the new position as Natural Resources Ecologist. Read below about this new opportunity in Tony's own words. And we will be hiring a new Naturalist this fall! Lots of exciting changes. See page 7 for a list of Jackson County Conservation's full-time staff.

Same Tony, New Position (Natural Resources Ecologist)

I always want to be a person who continues to learn and grow. I never want to reach a point in my career where I believe that I know it all, or that what I learned 10 years ago is the end all be all in natural resources management. When the pandemic forced HIC to shut its' doors to the public briefly in the spring of 2020 I pivoted in my career trajectory. With the absence of educational programming at the time I was able to finish my master's degree and spend more time exploring JCCB's wildlife areas and developed a personal love for these spaces. During this time, I was allowed and encouraged to help with management activities on some of the more quality/special areas on JCCB's properties i.e. remnant prairies, open oak woods, algific tallus slopes, etc. These areas captivated me, and some could say sparked an obsession. All I wanted to do was go out to the remnants and work. With the support of my amazing coworkers, working with the conservation board, and the board of county supervisors, Jackson County Conservation Director Nate Jones created a new department position, Natural Resources Ecologist, that I have transitioned into. This means I am no longer a naturalist and will be spending my time working with JCCB properties helping create management plans, conducting management activities, and trying to enhance the ecological health of our conservation properties. I will also be working on developing educational programs and field days for the public on conservation management and environmental topics. So, Jackson County Conservation gets to stick with the same Tony but in a different position.





Fall Calendar of Events



Registration is REQUIRED at least 48 hours in advance for ALL programs.

Register by calling (563) 652-3783 or email conservation@jacksoncounty.iowa.gov

Programs are free of charge unless otherwise noted. Donations are accepted.

For up to date information on our programs, check online at www.JacksonCCB.com or visit the Hurstville Interpretive Center's Facebook page.

Monarch Tagging

Sundays, September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 at 1:00 PM

At the Hurstville Interpretive Center

Learn about the monarch butterfly's life cycle and migration to central Mexico. Then head out to the prairie to catch monarchs and participate in a citizen science project to place stickers on their wings.



Birds of Prey

Sunday, October 6 at 2:00 PM

At the Hurstville Interpretive Center

Join Naturalist Macey Yaeger for a fun and educational program about Iowa's birds of prey. Learn to identify species and more about their cool adaptations for survival. Kid friendly program!

Ozark Remnants & Restoration

Saturday, September 7 at 10:00 AM

Ozark Wildlife Area

Ozark is home to some of the best remnant prairies, savannas, and open oak woodland in Jackson County. Join JCC Staff and Iowa Prairie Network members for a hiking tour. Learn about the ecological restoration. Participants will need to be able to hike in rugged conditions. Meet at the Hurstville Center to carpool.

Night Hike

Friday, September 13 at 6:30 PM

Jackson County Recreation Trail

Learn about nocturnal animals and enjoy fun activities with Naturalist Macey Yaeger and Preston Growth and Development. There will be hot cocoa and s'mores at the end! Meet at Plastics Unlimited in Preston at 6:30pm. Geared for families with kids.

Hamilton Prairie Walk

Wednesday, September 18 at 6:00 PM

Ray Hamilton's Prairie, Codfish Hollow Road

Enjoy a guided prairie hike through Hamilton's Prairie. It has been managed as a biological preserve for the past 35 years. Participants should be comfortable walking on rough terrain.

Homeschool Series—KinderNature

Sept 19 - Monarch Tagging

Oct 17 - Iowa's Ecosystems

Nov 21 - American Bison

Dec 19 - Scat & Tracks

10:00 AM *At the Hurstville Interpretive Center*

Geared for elementary students. Youth will learn more about nature and the outdoors.



Homeschool Series—Problem Solving

1st & 3rd Monday Oct-April at 10:00 AM

At the Hurstville Interpretive Center

Geared for middle and high school students, this year's focus will be Problem Solving. Learn basic problem-solving techniques that are used in solving both math problems and problems in the real world. These techniques apply just as easily to fifth grade math as they do to high school or college math, to logic puzzles, computer programming, real world business problems, or even to IQ tests.

Prescribed Night Burn

Friday, October 18 at 6:30 PM

At Prairie Creek Recreation Area, meet at Pavilion

Fall is one of the times of year where conservation managers conduct prescribed burns on prairies and grasslands to promote native plant growth and to combat unwanted species. Come and learn about prescribed fire, with the added excitement of watching the burn at night. If weather conditions are not conducive or unsafe for burning, then the burn will be cancelled.



New Exhibit Open House

Sunday, October 27 from 1:00-4:00 PM

At the Hurstville Interpretive Center

We will be unveiling our new woodland diorama and walk-through cave exhibit! Visit with the staff and exhibit team. Refreshments will be served.

Rear a monarch caterpillar! We have lots of monarch caterpillars and welcome people to take them home to watch their life cycle. You'll need a cage and milkweed leaves. Stop by the Center.



Leopold Bench Workshop

Sunday, November 3 at 2:00 PM

At the Hurstville Interpretive Center

Leopold Benches were designed by Aldo Leopold, conservationist, ecologist, and forester. Build a bench that you can use to retreat to the outdoors! Perfect for a home, garden, or porch. Materials will be provided; carpentry skills not required. Cost is \$40. Pre-registration is required by Monday, October 28 in order to prepare materials.



Teeth, Claws, and Camouflage

Saturday, November 9 at 1:00 PM

At the Hurstville Interpretive Center

Examine how teeth, claws, and camouflage help animals survive during this hands-on program with Educator Jess Wagner. Animal 'artifacts' will be used to discuss the animal's adaptations. Geared for kids!

Pine Needle Basket Class

Sunday, November 10 from 1:00-4:00 PM

Hurstville Interpretive Center

Explore the lovely art form of basket making by coiling pine needles. Materials and instruction will be provided for participants to make their own basket. Cost is \$10. Class is for adults and youth ages 12 & up. Registration is required and class size is limited.

Egypt and the Eternal Nile

Sunday, November 17 at 2:00 PM

At the Hurstville Interpretive Center

The name Egypt suggests pyramids, temples and tombs. A closer look at these edifices reveals the importance of the natural world to the ancient Egyptians. From Anubis to papyrus, animals and plants were considered deities or symbols of fertility, protection, luck and more. The Nile River was, and remains, the main source of Egypt's non-mineral natural resources. It is a source for food, fertile soil, and a means for transportation. Kevin and Ann Burns will reveal these connections as they share their January 2024 journey to Egypt.

Winter Solstice Luminary Walk

Friday, December 20 from 5:00-7:00 PM

Prairie Creek Recreation Area

Celebrate the longest night of the year! Enjoy a campfire, hot cocoa, and walk the lighted trails as we celebrate the winter solstice and coming of winter.

Registration is **REQUIRED** at least 48 hours in advance for our programs. Register by calling (563) 652-3783 or email conservation@jacksoncounty.iowa.gov

Why Scat?

By Naturalist Macey Yaeger

If you have ever had a pet, you know there is one thing they are really good at... pooping! Wild animal poop is called scat, and the study of scat is scatology or coprology. Scat helps scientists identify species and learn about their health.

Identifying Species - You can tell a lot about an animal through its droppings. To identify scat, you can look at the shape, size, color, amount, location, and the contents. What you see inside of scat is very important. The undigested parts of the animal's food end up in its scat and that can help you determine if what you are looking at is a carnivore (fur and bones), herbivore (plant matter), or an omnivore (mix of both).

Health - Scat is also a good sign of the animal's health. You can ask if the consistency and color are right, are there things (like worms and blood) that should not be in the scat? If these things are present, or the characteristics are not up to the standards, you know the species you are looking at has some sort of illness. You can also identify how the animal's diet might change throughout the seasons. This is important to note in case the animal is switching its diet because its normal food source is no longer available or because it is going to go into hibernation, torpor, or migrate. Scientists can also use scat to test the genetic pool to see how individuals are related to one another, and how different species might also be related.

Environment - The last important thing about scat is that it helps the ecosystem! As scat breaks down, it releases nutrients that are taken up by the environment and the decomposers that eat it. This in turn gets passed through the rest of the food web providing energy for all trophic levels. Scat also plays a vital role in seed dispersal. The droppings from animals can help spread seeds miles away from their parent plant.

striped
skunk



whitetail
deer



cottontail
rabbit



turkey



bobcat



coyote



OWLS Events (*Older, Wiser, Livelier Souls*)

Coordinated in partnership with Dubuque & Jones County Conservation. Programs are for adults.

Kayaking the Mississippi River Friday, October 4

Paddle 7 miles from Finley's Landing to Mud Lake.

Register with Dubuque County Conservation.

Pine Needle Basket Class Friday, November 1

Create your own pine needle basket. Class at Central Park. *Register with Jones County Conservation.*



Friends of Jackson County Conservation

The Friends of Jackson County Conservation brings people together through educational and recreational opportunities in partnership with the Jackson County Conservation Board and inspires people to understand and care for our environment

Join us for the Next Friends Meeting Tuesday, October 8

6:00 PM at the Hurstville Interpretive Center
Potluck at 5:30 PM, tableware & beverages provided—bring a dish to share!



Agenda and minutes from last meeting will be sent via email a few days before the meeting.

Didn't get the email? Make sure we have up to date contact info for you!

Friends of JCC is instrumental in providing funding for improving county parks and providing materials and equipment for programming. Jackson County Conservation could not do what they do without the Friends' support.

Friends of JCC is a 501c3 non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible and go towards projects and programs in conjunction with Jackson County Conservation.

Friends of JCC welcomes members and donors to get involved with ongoing activities. Join us for our next meeting to learn more!

New Exhibit Coming this Fall!

One year ago, we announced our plans for a large exhibit remodel at the Hurstville Interpretive Center. Jackson County Conservation Staff and Friends of JCC Members joined together to bring a woodland diorama and walk-through cave exhibit to the Center. Over the past 12+ months, Conservation Staff have been working with Edwards Creative, a creative design company in Milan, Illinois, to design, fabricate, and install the exhibit. Conservation Staff provided content, photos, and ideas as Edwards Creative figured out materials, design, timeline, and more!

Friends of JCC supported the effort by fundraising the money needed to bring in this new exhibit. We started fundraising in October 2023 with a goal to raise \$200,000. And the community responded! We are overjoyed by all the support and donations from individuals, families, businesses, organizations, and grant programs for the new exhibit. As of August 2024, we have raised approximately \$196,000!! Thank you to everyone who has supported this project—we appreciate you!



Artist Adam Eikamp of Dubuque began working on the mural for the backdrop of the exhibit in late July. Visitors have been able to watch him work on it. His work has paused for now. Edwards Creative will install the exhibit this October. Adam will then return to finish the mural around the cave.

The Hurstville Interpretive Center opened its doors to the public in August of 2004. Now, 20 years later, we are celebrating this anniversary with an exciting project.

We welcome all to attend our Exhibit Open House on Sunday, October 27 between 1:00-4:00 as we unveil the new exhibit.

Summer Fun with Jackson CCB!



Lots of exploring outdoors with our Summer Day Camps!

Bat House Workshop—Thanks Volunteer Dean Nelson for your help!



Youth backpacking trip to Yellow River State Forest



Green Iowa AmeriCorps Members Isaac, Kayla, Molly, and Shelby

Kid's corner



Fall Photo Scavenger Hunts

Scavenger Hunt 1

Head to the woods to find:

- an oak leaf
- an acorn
- a dandelion
- a pinecone
- raccoon tracks
- deer tracks
- a piece of pine bark
- a “helicopter” maple seed
- human trash item (please put it where it should go!)

Complete a list? Contact Jess Wagner at the Hurstville Center—share photos of the checklist of what you found and earn a prize!



Scavenger Hunt 2

The “experiential” hunt

- catch a fish
- skip a rock
- climb a tree or hang from a branch
- hike to the top of a hill
- watch a squirrel
- listen to a birdsong
- cross a creek bed



Scavenger Hunt 3

Head to the prairie to find:

- seeds on a plant
- a bee collecting nectar
- animal tracks
- animal scat
- a grasshopper
- a bug you have never seen before!



Fall Word Search

W	B	Y	K	N	L
O	N	R	R	R	E
R	Z	O	O	O	A
C	C	E	S	W	F
A	P	P	L	E	N
E	K	A	R	D	O

crow	acorn
leaf	apple
rake	brown



A SPECIAL THANK YOU!

*Jackson County Conservation would like to **thank and acknowledge** the following individuals, organizations and businesses for their continued support and donations.*

Volunteers—Pam Bahr, Karen Manning, Ann Burns, Deb Holm, Jo Ellen Langerman, Sarah Hobbs, Isabella Wall, Mary Hayward, Dean Nelson, Bruce Fisher, Jim England, Steve Stroyan, Jacob Stroyan, Ted Strait, Dan Holm, Dale Root, Brenda Kunau, Bob Koranda, Robin Koranda, Ethan Kalaukoa, Ashlyn Frahm, Mike Griffin, Angie Lichter, Larry McDevitt, Kory Kintzle, Joyce Keller, Carolyn Keck, Judy Bickford, Jennie Willcox, David Manning, Sophia Preciado, Kenny Derganz, Nancy Flagel

Donations for New Exhibit:

Grants: Dubuque Racing Association, Community Foundation of Jackson County, Silos and Smokestacks, Theisen's More for Community Grant, Walmart Spark Good Grant, Jackson County Area Tourism Association
From Organizations: Optimist Club of Maquoketa, Whitetails Unlimited Jackson County Chapter, Maquoketa Community Services, Pheasants Forever Jackson County Chapter, Friends of Maquoketa Caves, Izaak Walton League of Maquoketa

Thank you to area schools and the students: Easton Valley Elementary School, Maquoketa Briggs & Cardinal Schools, Andrew School, Sacred Heart School, Bellevue Elementary School

All other contributions: Maquoketa State Bank, Farm Credit Services of America, Joe & Linda Bullock, Phil & Pat Gent & Family, Geraldine Lambert Comm. Found QC, Matt & Marilyn Osterhaus, Caroline & Jerry Bybee, Bill & Wendy Hainstock, Lori & Terry Roling, Bellevue Lodge Fraternal Masons #51, Plastics Unlimited, Becker Veterinary Clinic, Maury & Laurie Anderson, Jenna Spain, Michele O'Connor, Duane & Mary Stickley, Fidelity Bank, American Family Insurance Sandy Kloos Agency, Dennis & Alice Mans, McDonalds, Judy Pooler, Kay Slade, Maquoketa Brewing, Jane Bentrrott, Kilburg Living Trust, Children of John & Donelle Kilburg, Sybesma Eye & Vision Center, Dennis Kieffer, Matt & Marcine Tracy, Karen & Daniel Breitbach, Bill's Radiator, Ardo Schmidt Construction, Inc., Jack & Marilyn Willey, Mark Rogge, Elinor Crane, Denny & Connie Wilcox, Jennie Willcox, Nemmers Realty, Inc., William & Colleen Lester, Quad Cities Outdoor Women's Club, Margaret Mootz, Jay Kahn, Scott Anderson DDS, PC, Thomas & Joanne Evans, Hans & Lori Lensch, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, Bellevue State Bank, Connie Breno, Kathleen & Benjamin Banowetz, Terri & Kevin Raymond, David & Sue Gossman, James Frandsen, Clark Saw, LuAnne Yearwood, Drexler Elementary School PTO, Kathryn Reuter, Kevin Kutsch, Lori Schnoor, Nolan Smith, Roberta Rosheim, Delwood Kindergarten, Betty Miller, Ron & Louise Jones, Charles Schwager, Jean Kelly, Deborah Petersen, Megan Megraw, Carolyn Clark, Lorraine Volkers



Conservation Board Members

Larry McDevitt, chair	Maquoketa	319/541-6357
Mike Griffin	Springbrook	563/357-1736
Jim England	Maquoketa	563/652-3213
Mary Hayward	Maquoketa	563/357-0814
Angie Lichter	Maquoketa	563/599-6573

The Jackson County Conservation Board meets the third Tuesday of every month at 5:00 pm. Public welcome.

Conservation Staff



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Naturalist—Vacant—hiring this fall

Address & Contact Information

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Website:

JacksonCCB.com

<https://www.mycountyparks.com/county/jackson.aspx>
www.facebook.com/HurstvilleInterpretiveCenter

Office Hours / Hurstville Center

18670 63rd Street Maquoketa, IA 52060
Weekdays: Monday–Friday 9:00 am–4:00 pm
Weekends: Saturday & Sunday April–October 12:00–5:00 pm; November 12:00–4:00 pm

Holidays:

OPEN Labor Day September 2
CLOSED Veteran's Day November 11
CLOSED Nov 28-30 for Thanksgiving
CLOSED Weekends December–March

Friends of Jackson County Conservation
Hurstville Interpretive Center
18670 63rd Street
Maquoketa, IA 52060

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JACKSON COUNTY CONSERVATION UP AND DOWN THE RIVER—Fall 2024 Newsletter

Goats at the Hurstville Center?

We are experimenting with a biological control method for brush – goats! The practice works best where trees and shrubs need to be removed to restore the desired plants. We currently have 5 goats in our (former) swan pond fenced in area. We are hoping to clear shrubs and trees in this area to help the prairie ecosystem. Why do goats work so well? Goats are natural browsers and not grazers, and they prefer to eat at those species eye level and then move down. Stop by to see the goats—can you spot all 5 in there?



Project Wingspan is a project through Pollinator Partnership and works to increase the quality, quantity, and connectivity of pollinator habitat across the Midwest to support imperiled native pollinators and their vital habitat. Iowa is a targeted state.

Project Wingspan is engaging a network of volunteers by providing educational training on plant identification and seed collection protocols.

Pollinators need YOUR help! Volunteer with Pollinator Partnership and Project Wingspan today!

How can you help?

- ◆ Collect Seeds! Join a native seed collection team or collect on your own.
- ◆ Allow trained volunteers to collect native seeds from your private or public land!
- ◆ Enhance your pollinator habitat project with seeds or Plants from Project Wingspan.

<https://www.pollinator.org/wingspan>