

CONSERVATION NEWS

A newsletter of the Iowa County Conservation Board
VOLUME 22 ISSUE 1 **SUMMER 2009**



*Individual flowers from a common milkweed.
Photo courtesy of Karen Phelps, Naturalist, Benton
County Conservation Board.*

Lake Iowa Nature Center Groundbreaking Ceremony

Saturday, August 29

Lake Iowa Park Office

Thank You Breakfast 7:00 am—10:00 am

Ceremony 10:00 am

Breakfast sponsored by
Friends of ICC Foundation,
ICCB and Marengo Kiwanis



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the ICCB
newsletter!

We Found Gold!!

by Maria Koschmeder,
ICCB Naturalist

A friend of mine shared a new prairie remnant with me. It was only an acre or two of steep hillside bordered by gravel roads and corn fields. It was, however, the most awesome butterfly milkweed patch I have ever seen.

Butterfly milkweed is a bright orange color- hard to miss in an open grassland in July. It tends to grow on poorer soils just like the ones in Lake Iowa Park or around Iowa County's many pastures and roadside ditches.

For those of us who are prairie enthusiasts, butterfly milkweed is the most wonderful of plants. Why not, it has complicated and diabolical biology, certainly designed by a master. It offers sweet nectar to butterflies, especially monarchs, so they can carry off their pollenia (small suitcases of pollen) to the next plant; the plants produce a toxic milky sap that only monarch caterpillars

can love and they look fabulous, brighter and more colorful than any other prairie flower in July!

Of course, I had to share this with someone else. Karen Phelps, naturalist from Benton County joined me and we walked through the roadside ditch to see what else might be lurking in this remnant.

We found more butterfly milkweed- shades of orange so dark it was almost red. We found other species of prairie plants, flowers, grasses, sedges, and even a rare prairie crabapple.

We found signs of wildlife use- insects, birds, and mammals- we were in this ditch at least an hour and a half, taking pictures and exploring like little kids. And then, behind a willow bush, we stumbled upon a **yellow** butterfly milkweed...we could not believe it! You would have thought we found a boulder of gold! Well, ..it was...gold!.

(Continued on page 2)

-Creepy Camping Weekend- an Outdoor Camping Adventure

**Friday, October 2 &
Saturday, October 3**

Events

Friday:

8:00 P.M.—Movie
Pop & Popcorn

* *Donations Welcome—
proceeds go to future special weekend events*

Saturday:

9:00 A.M. Registration –Dummy Board Tournament
9:30 A.M. Dummy Board Double Elimination
12:00 P.M. Potluck Lunch

* *Please bring a covered dish and join the fun!*

1:00 P.M. Free Face Painting & Animal Balloons
1:30 –3:30 P.M. Free Games: Mummy Race, Balloon
Pump Race, Hedge Ball Throwing and
more games for all ages
5:00 –7:00 P.M. Free Trick-or-Treating at the
Campsite.

* *Campers, please bring lots of candy for the trick-or-treaters!*

Dark- Haunted Hayrack Ride

* *Fee- \$5.00 per person for Non-Campers. Children 2 years
and under are Free.*



**** Fourteen Day Rule:**
*Campers are allowed to stay for
a maximum of 14 days. You
may bring your
campers and tents,
September 20 to
October 3rd for
Creepy Camping
Weekend.*

(Continued from page 1)

Like the red butterfly milkweed, it just had a different amount of carotenes, the natural orange to red crystalline hydrocarbon pigments that makes plants yellow, orange and red. This yellow butterfly milkweed simply had less carotene than others. In a sense, it was like an albino squirrel-just lacking all the melanin pigment in its skin.

We took pictures, more pictures and even more pictures, and then, we took more pictures. It was dark before we left. Once again, we found treasure – not just a huge population of butterfly milkweed but in a variety of colors and in the most unlikely of places, a roadside ditch.

I consider the county roadsides a linear habitat, a wealth of plant and wildlife sources. Now is a great time to “notice” the prairie while you are driving. The Iowa DOT has developed prairies along the interstate. They are hard to miss since they have now covered most of the 4-lane highways in Iowa.

Our Iowa County Roadside Biologist has replanted and developed prairies anywhere there was a ditch cleaned, new bridge construction or occasionally when landowners ask for a planting in their own roadside.

We are literally surrounded by prairie but they are in bits and pieces, you have to look for these kind of treasures. When was the last time you went on a treasure hunt? Your roadside prairies are waiting to be discovered. You never know when you might strike it rich!

For more information about roadside prairies in Iowa, contact your local county conservation board, county roadside manager or Steve Holland at the Iowa DOT’s Roadside Vegetative Management Program– at www.iowalivingroadway.com.



Butterfly
Milkweed

- * **Iowa County Conservation Board meetings** are held every second Tuesday of the Month at ~7:00 PM at Lake Iowa Park. Please call to check the time at 319-655-8465.
- * **Friends of Iowa County Conservation Foundation** meetings are held monthly. Contact Randall Betz at 319-623-3186 or rbetz@netins.net for more information about this volunteer organization.



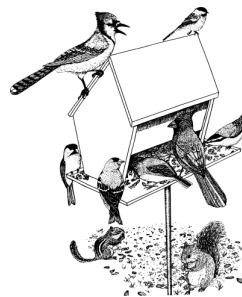
- * **August 29: Groundbreaking for the Lake Iowa Nature Center**- Lake Iowa Park Thank you breakfast served by Friends Foundation, Iowa County Conservation Board and Marengo Kiwanis from 7–10 am. Ceremony begins at 10:00 am- Everyone is welcome!
- * **September 5: Whitetails Unlimited Kids Field Day** at Lake Iowa Park Scout Camp Registration at 8:30 am; Activities such as archery, fishing, games & prizes from 9:00 am -2:30 pm; for more info contact Chuck Moore at [641-660-4199](tel:641-660-4199).
- * **September 10-11: Williamsburg 5th Overnight** Trip to Springbrook Conservation Education Center
- * **October 2-3: Creepy Camping Weekend;** See page 2 for details.

- * **October 17: Prairie Wreaths: Hike the Fall Prairie,** collect your own materials and make your own wreath. Meet at the Roundhouse at 10 am. There will be a materials fee of \$5/person. Please contact us if attending.



- * **October 24–December 27- Special Deer Management Hunt-** Archery Season; See page 4 for details.

- * **November 14: Recycling goes to the Birds** program for families at 10 am. Create your own birdfeeder to take home or set up at Lake Iowa. The program will be held at the Roundhouse at Lake Iowa Park. There are no fees for the program.



- * **November 9-10: Williamsburg LIS 6th/7th Overnight** Trip to Springbrook Conservation Education Center

- * **December 12: Snow Day at Lake Iowa** for families at 10 am. Make snow or ice candles; check deer feeding areas, read a story and make a snowman or tree feeder for wildlife. Meet at the Roundhouse and dress for the weather- this program may be canceled in case of poor weather.
- * **December 28-January 31 Special Deer Management Hunt-** Muzzleloader Season; See page 4 for details.

Deer Management Fall Hunt Set for Lake Iowa

The Iowa County Conservation Board will be having specialized hunting seasons at Lake Iowa Park this fall. These special hunting seasons are designed to help manage the excessive deer population in and around Lake Iowa Park. These seasons will consist of:



<u>Season dates</u>	<u># of licenses</u>	<u>Type</u>
Oct. 24 – Dec. 27	100 antlerless	Archery
Dec. 28 – Jan. 31	100 antlerless	Muzzleloader

If you wish to participate in one or both of these seasons, you must first obtain, or be able to obtain, a valid Iowa hunting license. Next you need to attend the safety / orientation meeting on **Saturday, September 19, 2009 at 9 am**. If you are interested in participating in this hunt and are unable to attend this meeting, you must contact the park staff prior to the scheduled date to set up an alternate orientation time. Archery participants must then pass a proficiency test that same day. Upon completion of these requirements, qualifiers will be able to purchase licenses. Qualifiers will have the ability to purchase licenses (on location) the day of the safety / orientation meeting.

For a more detailed look at the rules and regulations for this hunt, visit iowacountyconservation.com, or you can call 319-655-8465, contact the director at lsorenson@co.iowa.ia.us or mbode@co.iowa.ia.us or write to:

ICCB DEER MANAGEMENT HUNT, 2550 G AVE, LADORA, IA 52251 The hunt is listed in the Iowa DNR 2009-10 Hunting Regulation booklet under “Iowa Lake County Park” on page 30.

2009 Iowa County Conservation Board

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Jim Scandridge, Victor
Marsha Wehner,
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Gordon Dietze,
Millersburg
Shirley Messer, Ladora

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Mike Bode, Park Ranger
Maria Koschmeder,
Naturalist
Jerry & Glenda Eden,
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Conservation
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Short movie especially for landowners is now online

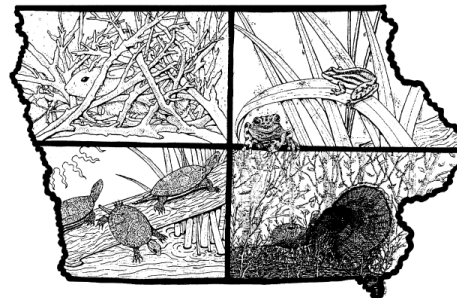
Are you a landowner who is wondering about the future of your land? Do you know landowners who might be wondering?

Check out the new 3-minute [online movie](http://www.inhf.org/landownermovie/) at <http://www.inhf.org/landownermovie/> about land protection options—and please forward this info to others who could use the information.

The movie shows examples of how Iowans are making sure their natural lands remain natural forever. It also introduces the intangible and financial benefits to landowners who choose protection, including Iowa’s new conservation tax credit.

This is basic information every landowner needs to know. Please help us spread the word. Thank you! For more information contact the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation at www.inhf.org/landprotection. Or contact Anita O’gara at aogara@inhf.org.

New Conservation Steward Program Announced



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin a continuous signup for the new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Aug. 10, with the first signup period cutoff scheduled for September 30. CSP is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural and forestry producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones on their operations.

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) authorizes CSP. Congress renamed and revamped the former Conservation Security Program completely to improve its availability and appeal to agricultural and forestry

producers. The new CSP is available to all producers nationwide. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie, improved pastureland, non-industrial private forestland—a new land use for the program—and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe.

Eligible applicants may include individual landowners, legal entities, and Indian tribes. Although CSP is continuous signup, agricultural and forestry producers must submit applications by Sept. 30 to be considered for funding in the first ranking period.

To apply for the newly revamped CSP, potential participants are encouraged to use a self-screening checklist first to determine whether the new program is suitable for them or their operation. The checklist is

available online at www.nrcs.usda.gov/new_csp and at NRCS field offices. After self-screening, the producer's current and proposed conservation practices are entered in the conservation measurement tool (CMT). This tool estimates the level of environmental performance to be achieved by a producer implementing and maintaining conservation activity. The conservation performance estimated by the CMT will be used to rank applications.

For information about CSP, including eligibility requirements, producers can visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/new_csp or contact the NRCS field office in Williamsburg.

Iowa County Soil and Water District

District Commissioners:

Doug Roberts,
Larry Wetjen,
Dan Glandorf, Al Rudin,
Robert Faber and
Maria Koschmeder
(assistant commissioner)

Staff:

Steven Johnston
District Conservationist
Regina Leer
Technician NRCS
Quenten Offerman
Technician Iowa SWCD
Robert Sproat
Technician Iowa Dept. of Soil Conservation
James Martin
Price Creek Watershed Coordinator
Julie Hocker
Secretary
Iowa Dept. of Soil Conservation

CRP Mid-Contract Management Meeting

CRP is the program that sets aside Highly Erodible Cropland for periods of 10-15 years for wildlife use. The former cropland is generally planted to native prairies or cool season grass seedings. Mid-Contract management describes management options that are used during the contract period to improve the wildlife values.

If you have a current CRP contract you may be interested in an information/training session on CRP Mid Contract Management (MCM) on August 27th, 2009 at the Hilton Hall in Conroy. Jason Gritsch, DNR Wildlife Technician, will go over the benefits of each type of MCM, discuss how you should do MCM, and answer any questions you may have. FSA will also provide Cost Share Information.

Mid Contract Management is the single most important management activity you can do to revitalize old CRP stands, improve wildlife habitat, and improve plant diversity on your land. Come learn how to be successful with Mid Contract Management.

If you are interested in attending this meeting you may RSVP to the NRCS office by August 25th.

Nature Photography- Outdoors and Enjoyable

By Maria Koschmeder,
ICCB Naturalist

Our staff includes people with a wide array of natural talents and interesting hobbies. Campground host Jerry Eden spends many hours on the mower but he puts that time to good use.

In the last couple of years he has developed a new hobby via the camera and his computer. Since he lives at the park, after work, he has plenty of opportunity to photograph anything that catches his eye.

He also makes nature videos. His photos and subsequent video collections include an impressive collection of birds, mammals, reptiles, flowers, bushes and other prairie plants. He also practices his art in Arizona in the winter.

This spring he came back with a video of a hummingbird he found in a tree. It was sitting on her nest and later the video showed her feeding her young. It was an



Turkey Vultures “sunbathing” at the Lake Iowa Beach. Photo courtesy of Jerry Eden.

amazing shot and similar to something you might see on public television’s wildlife shows.

Many outdoor enthusiasts combine their interest with photography. It makes sense, since the photos and video helps us preserve and understand better what we experience.

Today, photography or videography is so easy and inexpensive, anyone can do it. Your initial expense is in

equipment but no longer are we spending thousands of dollars on film and throwing away the leftover photos and tapes. Today, experiencing the outdoors through a lens is almost effortless due to technological advances.

Bring your camera next time you take a walk. Practice on those flowers– they don’t move! Be ready for the fawns that might cross your path and enjoy the outdoors!!!

Thank you for going the extra mile!

Lake Iowa Park Events

- Gene Atkinson
- Quenten & Chastity Offerman
- Tim & Raejean Hollopeter
- Larry Sears Family
- Cory Knox Family
- Jim Scandridge
- Brandon Strasser
- Mike Gent
- Denise Henry
- Dee Owen Johannes
- Shirley Messer
- Mary Brandon

- Trampus Cook
- Sue White
- Bob Scoville
- Duane Stohlmann

Lake Iowa Nature Center

- (includes breakfast benefit donors not listed in the spring issue)*
- Bill McNulty
 - Greg DeBrower family eggs
 - Mary Huinker
 - Lynn Gehring
 - Williamsburg Foods
 - Jackie Patterson
 - Frontier Herbs, Inc.
 - Big G Foods
 - Cindy Maxwell

- Shirley Messer
- Gene Atkinson
- Joan & Dennis Robinson
- Brien & Deb Michalek
- Joanne Slockett
- Randall Betz
- Dale Noyes
- Bill Shafer
- Sharon Grimm
- Steve Rose
- Bob Scoville

Environmental Education

- Steve & Marna Durr
- Steve Holland– Living Roadway Trust
- Fund– Iowa DOT

Prairie walking sticks- are they here?

by Maria Koschmeder, ICCB Naturalist

A new species, unique to prairies, has been found at Lake Iowa Park, at least we hope so. We need your help now to confirm it! We know that the park is home to many unique prairie or prairie savanna species such as the prairie violet or great plains ladies tresses or a prairie skink but we don't know much about our insect populations. This year I am hoping it will be the year of the prairie walking stick.

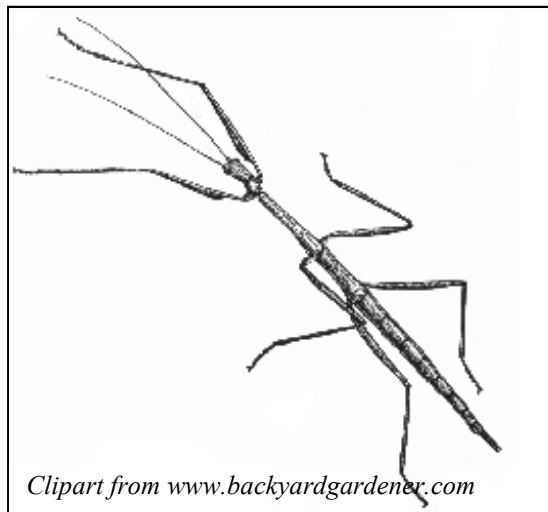
During the summer, scouts and youth groups frequently use the park for field trips. This year, we hosted the Williamsburg Migrant Education program with a series of field trips including collecting prairie insects, pond study, woodland study and savanna restoration and fishing.

One morning, we used the sweep nets to examine insects at the Shelter 5 prairie. The students collected all sorts of butterflies, grasshoppers, some I had never seen before since most of our field trips are in the fall season. One of the first collections included a green walking stick. I had never seen such a thing before.

At this shelter, there is a small grove of oak savanna. It supports a population of walking sticks and we usually find one or two each fall. They are great for teaching about camouflage and kids love them. They often look just like oak sticks, same color, texture, behavior, you name it, this bug can fool the best of us...but kids have fresh eyes and they can find things we cannot!

When I went back to the office and looked it up, I found that what

we may have had that day was a prairie walking stick, a new species. Unfortunately, we were practicing "catch and release". Otherwise, the kids would have left with several dozen peanut butter jars full of critters. I know at least a few of the moms would not have appreciated that!



Clipart from www.backyardgardener.com

I found that the traditional woodland walking stick, *Diaperomera femorata* can be any shade of brown to green and for the most part are found in and near oak woodlands. I also found out that their eggs are relatively large and highly sculptured resembling plant seeds. They are laid singly, and are dropped, flicked, buried, glued to a surface, or riveted to a leaf. Some species that drop the eggs rely on ants to disperse them. *D. femorata* eggs are reported to require two years to hatch.

We have seen these insects many times. This time however, we found the walking stick clear on the other side of the hill, away from the timber and definitely in the tall prairie grasses. It definitely was green and

frankly I thought it's texture was smoother. It looked different, more slender, longer than usual. That doesn't sound very scientific so I looked it up! In order to figure out if we have a prairie walking stick, *Diaperomera aveleii*, or just a plain old woodland walking stick, I need to look at this critter again!

I need to find a female, (larger than the males) and I need to find out if the cerci or tail-like appendages at the end the abdomen are long or short. These cerci are an additional sensory organ for many insects. In the prairie walking stick, these cerci are twice as long as the woodland walking stick. It makes sense since they are moving in a less stable, more flimsy habitat of grasses. Also, their femurs or thighs are half the width and would more slender.


So, I am asking the people of Iowa County to help me find this critter in the prairies of Lake Iowa. Now if you go looking for a walking stick, they are hard to find. I think they have to find you. It helps if you are a child or at least have the heart of a child yet. Then it seems to be quite easy.

The bottom line is that you need to be in the prairie so if you want to help, you have to visit the ICCB prairies before snowfall. Let me know if any of them find you, better yet, bring them to my office and we will examine them. I really think we have them, I just need to look a little closer. Anyway, wouldn't this be a great reason to picnic and play at Lake Iowa Park?

Iowa County Conservation News
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 Lake Iowa Park
 2550 G. Ave
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 please contact us 

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 iaconservation@aol.com
Campground Hosts 319-655-8465
Naturalist 319-655-8466
 iccbee@netins.net
Fax number 319-655-8400
Website iowacountyconservation.com

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Enclosed is my donation for:

\$50 \$100 \$500 \$1000
 \$5000 Other

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Address _____
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Please earmark my donation for:

- Lake Iowa Park Improvements
- Gateway Park Improvements
- Environmental Education materials & equipment
- Conservation News newsletter
- Habitat improvement/development on ICCB areas
- Lake Iowa Nature Center Project
- Use my donation where needed most

Send to ICCB, 2550 G. Ave, Ladora, IA 52251



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You bet I would like to be on the Conservation News mailing list!

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Maria Koschmeder
Iowa County Conservation Board
Lake Iowa Park, 2550 G. Ave
Ladora, IA 52251

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