



# Up and Down the River

JACKSON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD, WINTER 2024-25

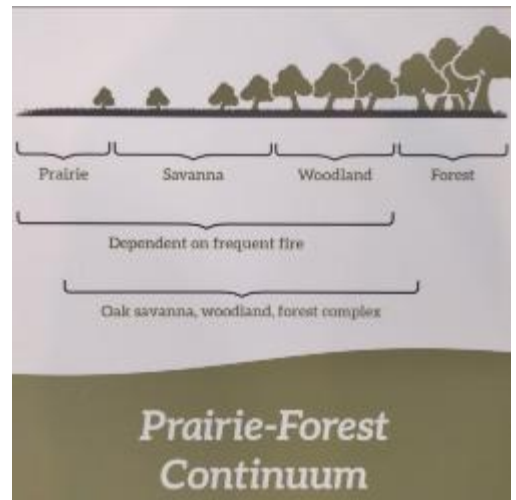
## Shedding Some Light on Buzzard Ridge

By Tony Vorwald, Natural Resources Ecologist

High above the Maquoketa River lies the iconic Buzzard Ridge Wildlife Area overlook. A small clearing atop a bluff, adorned with scraggly eastern red cedar trees, offers one of the most breathtaking scenic views in eastern Iowa. This clearing, located on the summit of the "overlook" hill, is home to a remnant prairie that Jackson County Conservation (JCCB) has been managing since acquiring the property.

Historically, this prairie extended further down the south-facing slope of the hill, and the surrounding forest resembled a more open oak-hickory woodland. However, the suppression of natural disturbances such as fire and grazing allowed the woodland to transition into a closed-canopy forest. This shift enabled shade-tolerant tree species to dominate, reducing sunlight and subsequently decreasing the biodiversity of these Midwest woodlands. The increased shade also led to woody plants encroaching on the prairie, gradually shrinking its area over time.

In recent years, JCCB has been actively working to restore the remnant prairie and surrounding woodland. Efforts have focused on removing invasive species and undesirable woody plants, reversing the encroachment, and increasing prescribed fire management to enhance biodiversity. Beyond managing the current prairie opening, JCCB is now restoring the surrounding forest by converting it back to an open woodland. This ambitious restoration process requires significant effort and time. To expedite these efforts, JCCB occasionally contracts organizations for large-scale management projects. One such partner is the Conservation Corps of Iowa (CCI), an organization that employs young professionals entering the conservation field. With generous support from the Friends of Jackson County Conservation (FJCC), JCCB contracted CCI for a week in October to cut and treat shade-tolerant tree



species in the woodland adjacent to the remnant prairie. The results were remarkable—visitors familiar with the area can now observe a striking transformation in the woodland south of the remnant prairie and north of the primitive campsite.

Looking ahead, JCCB plans to continue restoration efforts across multiple sites on its properties. The next phase at Buzzard Ridge will involve removing most shade-tolerant tree species and selectively thinning canopy trees in the woodland west of the trail, adjacent to the remnant prairie. This upcoming work is supported by a grant from the National Wild Turkey Federation.

# PRAIRIE CREEK ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Jackson County Conservation, in conjunction with the City of Maquoketa, is currently working on a community project to enhance Prairie Creek Recreation Area. This will include:

- ◆ Water quality provisions
- ◆ ADA accessible trail connecting the City of Maquoketa to Prairie Creek Recreation Area's trail system.
- ◆ Pavilion, restrooms, and parking lot connecting to the new trail along Highway 64.
- ◆ 18-hole disc golf course with both family friendly and professional holes.



The total cost for the project is \$2,596,000. To date, we have raised \$1,977,763 through grants, donations, and committed funds from the City and County. As we strive to meet our projected cost we continue to apply for grants. To be eligible for multiple large-scale grants we must show a commitment of support from our area through fundraising. If you would like to make a donation, below are donor levels.

- ◆ \$200,000 – Naming the Prairie Creek pedestrian bridge along Highway 64
- ◆ \$100,000 – Naming the interior trail bridge
- ◆ \$2500 - Sponsoring a bench (Business or name engraved on it - For the life of the bench)
- ◆ \$1000 - Advertising your business on an 18" x 24" metal sign to be placed at a hole for 10 years
- ◆ \$300 – Advertising your business on ¼ of an 18" x 24" metal sign to be placed at a hole for 10 years
- ◆ \$200 – 8" x 8" engraved paver (For the life of the paver)
- ◆ \$100 – 4" x 8" engraved paver (For the life of the paver)

This multi-tiered project increases recreational opportunities and quality of life for our area. The beauty of Jackson County and the enhancements to the park will encourage community outdoor recreation and tourism by offering fishing, wildlife viewing, scenic views, hiking, hunting, and disc golfing. The water quality portion of the project is already underway! And the recreational advancements are slated to begin summer through fall of 2025 with project completion by 12/31/2025. Jackson County Conservation and the City of Maquoketa are excited to bring a variety of opportunities to all ages and abilities for our local communities as well as out-of-area visitors.

## Meet Our Newest Naturalist!

Hello! My name is Julia Rodewald and I am excited to be at Jackson County Conservation. I grew up and live in Dubuque and have always had a love for learning and nature. I graduated from the University of Dubuque in 2021 with a B.S. in Environmental Science, Chemistry, and Biology. I then started working at Dubuque County Conservation as a seasonal worker, and then as a Green Iowa AmeriCorps member. I was able to meet a lot of cool people there, and I am excited to meet all the cool people in Jackson County! I enjoy any hobby where I can use my hands or stay active, like knitting, sewing, hiking, biking, kayaking, wandering, book making, and many more! My favorite activity, however, is playing with my dog, Huckleberry! I love trying new things and sharing my interests with new people and I am excited to have the opportunity to do just that.



## Summer Conservation Jobs

Enjoy camping? Want to camp all summer along the Mississippi River and get paid? Apply to be a **Campground Host** at Spruce Creek Park and/or South Sabula Lake Park.

Want to work for county parks? Be part of our Conservation team! We will be hiring **Summer Conservation Workers** and **Summer Naturalist** for Summer 2025! Great job for college students hoping to get into the conservation and natural resource field and to build their resume!

Check our website in late January for job postings:

[www.JacksonCCB.com](http://www.JacksonCCB.com)

[www.My.CountyParks.com/County/Jackson.aspx](http://www.My.CountyParks.com/County/Jackson.aspx)

*Click on Employment*

## Staying Connected to Nature

By Macey Yaeger, *Naturalist*

The winter months are here and with them come the holidays, hot drinks, and snow days. They also bring along things like shorter days, bitter cold, and being cooped up inside. Whether you love the cold, or you hate it, it shouldn't stop you from going out and enjoying the world around us.

Nature plays important roles in things like ecosystem biodiversity and providing natural resources, but what does it do for us as individuals? There are many benefits to spending time in the great outdoors; the fresh air helps lower your heart rate and cortisol- reducing stress- as well as keeping your mind healthy and relaxed. Being exposed to sunlight increases your vitamin D production that boosts immune cell functions, and breathing in the natural organic compounds released from plants- known as phytoncides, aids in the immune response. Stepping outside can also increase your physical fitness by promoting more activity, which in turn has a myriad of health benefits including weight loss, lower blood pressure, and relieving muscle tension.

### How can you stay connected?

There are several different things people of all ages can do to continue to reap the benefits of the outdoors even when mother nature is giving us her worst. Here are a few of my favorites:

- ◇ Bundle up and go for a walk! When venturing out into the cold, make sure you are prepared. Dress in warm layers, know your route, and make sure you know what time the sun is going to set! Even just 10 minutes outside has the power to improve your mood, and moving around will keep you warm!
- ◇ Find the beauty of winter! Look for animal tracks in the snow, or spot the wildlife and their creative solutions for surviving the winter. Find a hidden gem on a trail where the sun cuts perfectly through the snow covered trees, or a spot in your busy neighborhood that is a bit more calm and peaceful.
- ◇ Set up window feeders! Birding is a popular outdoor activity, and just because it's cold doesn't mean you have to stop. Get a bird feeder and place it in your yard, or suction onto a window, where you have a good view from a comfy chair with some blankets and hot cocoa. Or make your own bird feeders from bagels and peanut butter or pinecones! Just make sure you are refilling your feeder as necessary.
- ◇ Bring nature inside! Have plants in your home that you can tend to in the winter. Having indoor plants benefits your mood, boosts productivity and improves air quality.

There are so many other ways to get involved in nature, even when the weather is not optimal. Winter doesn't have to be a time that people think negatively about. Let nature in and see what it can do for you.

## Feeding the Birds this Winter

By Julia Rodewald, *Naturalist*

Winter can be a hard time for birds. Food is more limited, and they need it more than ever to have the energy to stay warm. A great way to support your local bird population is to start a bird feeder, but not all bird seeds are alike. If you want to make the biggest difference and avoid nuisance birds (like invasive house sparrows and starlings or bird feeder "bullies" like cowbirds) take a little time to pick out the best bird food.

- ◆ Sunflowers- When in doubt, sunflower seeds are your friend. Almost every bird will eat these, you can find them at most stores that sell bird food, and they don't spoil quickly (if with shells).
- ◆ Safflower- A favorite food for birds with strong beaks: cardinals, titmice, grosbeaks, etc. These are a good option if you have problems with squirrels and nuisance birds, as they are not a favorite food.
- ◆ Nyjer/Thistle- A small and more expensive bird seed, this seed is good for birds with pointed bills: chickadees, siskins, and goldfinches.
- ◆ White proso millet- This is good for ground feeding birds: quails, juncos, American sparrows, and doves. However, it is also liked by cowbirds, blackbirds and house sparrows, common birdfeeder bullies.
- ◆ Peanuts- In the shell, peanuts will attract larger birds, like jays, crows, and woodpeckers. Peanuts shouldn't be used if they start attracting squirrels, bears, or raccoons.
- ◆ Suet- Suet can provide a lot of carbohydrates and calories for chickadees, nuthatch, and woodpeckers. Check the label for common fillers (red and golden millet) and avoid when possible.

Other foods edible to birds:

- \* Fruit- apples, oranges, grapefruit, etc.
- \* Jelly- any kind of jelly in a small dish
- \* Eggshells- rinsed and crushed into sunflower seed-sized pieces
- \* Mealworms- dried or live, available at pet stores
- \* Peanut butter- crunchy is the best, and free of xylitol

Foods to avoid:

- \* Golden and red millet and flax- filler food that doesn't get eaten
- \* Popcorn- can be difficult to digest, and butter, salt, or oil is harmful to them
- \* Bread- has little protein and nutritional value and is hard for them to digest

Feeders can get dirty over time, so it is important to regularly check and clean the feeder. A good routine is to fill and clean it weekly to prevent food from getting moldy and bacteria from growing. Providing a feeder with a roof is another way to keep the food fresh as long as possible. It takes time for birds to find your food, but once they do, you will have a little flock of birds coming back for more!



# Winter 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](mailto:conservation@jacksoncounty.iowa.gov)

Programs are free of charge unless otherwise noted. Donations are accepted. Programs are open to all ages and are family friendly unless otherwise noted. For up to date information on our programs, check our website, [www.JacksonCCB.com](http://www.JacksonCCB.com) or visit the Hurstville Interpretive Center's Facebook page.

## **Styrofoam Recycling Collection**

**Friday, January 10 from 9:00 AM- 5:30 PM**

**Sat & Sun January 11 & 12 from 12:00- 4:00 PM**

*Hurstville Interpretive Center*

Friends is again collecting Styrofoam to be recycled. Styrofoam must be clean and free of all food residue; remove all tape and labels; white only, NO colors; packing peanuts must be bagged. Drop off ONLY during dates/times above.



## **Full Moon Snowshoe Hike**

**Monday, January 13 at 5:00 PM**

*Prairie Creek Recreation Area—Meet at Pavilion*

The initial full moon of a calendar year has been nicknamed the Wolf Moon. Let's hope for clear skies and let the Wolf Moon guide us along the trails. Snowshoes are provided.

## **Friends of Jackson Co. Conservation Meeting**

**Tuesday, January 14 at 6:00 PM**

*Hurstville Interpretive Center*

Get involved with Friends of JCC and help support our county parks. Potluck at 5:30. Meeting at 6:00.

## **Ice Fishing Clinic**

**Saturday, January 18 at 10:00 AM**

*Selzer's Pond, 10047 168th Ave, Maquoketa*

Learn how to ice fish, what equipment is needed, and then try it for yourself. Equipment will be provided. All ages and skill levels are welcome. Those 16 & older need a fishing license to fish.



## **Meet the Ambassador Animals**

**Monday, January 20 at 1:00 PM**

*Hurstville Interpretive Center*

Get a chance to meet the animals that call the Hurstville Center home! Learn about what their roles are, their day to day life, and get a chance to ask questions and interact with the animals.

## **Snowshoe Hike—OWLS Event**

**Friday, January 24 at 1:00 PM**

*Whitewater Canyon, Bernard*

Let's enjoy the outdoors this winter with a snowshoe hike along the trails at the park. OWLS (Older Wiser Livelier Souls) events are open to all adults and are a collaboration with Dubuque, Jackson, and Jones County Conservation Naturalists.

## **Sustainable Wardrobe**

**Sunday, January 26 at 3:00 PM**

*Hurstville Interpretive Center*

Did you know that it takes 2,700 liters of water to produce one t-shirt? Environmental Educator Jessica Wagner will discuss the impact of the clothing industry on the environment. Come to learn how you can make more sustainable purchases to keep our water, air and soil a little cleaner.

## **Plant Swap**

**Wednesday, February 5 from 4:00-6:00 PM**

*Hurstville Interpretive Center*

Bring a cutting or full plant to have a chance to hang out with other plant parents, and take home a new plant! Hang out the whole time, or just stop for a quick swap and add to your collection. Open to all plant enthusiasts!

## **Beers with Benefits**

**Every Thursday in February**

*Maquoketa Brewing*

Maquoketa Brewing will donate \$1 for every pint sold Thursdays in February to Friends of Jackson County Conservation. Have a pint and support the development projects happening at Prairie Creek!

## **Nature Trivia Night**

**Friday, February 7 at 6:00 PM**

*Hurstville Interpretive Center*

Get your friends together for a fun night of trivia! All proceeds from this event will go towards development at Prairie Creek. Cost is \$5/person.



# Winter Calendar of Events Continued

## Private Lands Workshop

**Saturday, February 8 from 8:30—Noon**

*Jackson County Extension Services Building*

Explore the ecological and economic benefits of incorporating prairie on private lands. Learn about the natural history, planting, management, and benefits of prairie ecosystems. Youth can attend educational youth programming. Doors open at 8:30 am and talks will begin at 9:00 am.

## Friends Social at the Brewery

**Thursday, February 13 from 4:00-6:00 PM**

*Maquoketa Brewing*

Calling all Volunteers and Friends of JCC Members! Let's gather and celebrate all we've accomplished this past year!

## Rock Wrapping

**Thursday in February—Date TBD**

*Maquoketa Brewing*

Learn the basics of wrapping stones to make one-of-a-kind serenity stones. Rocks and materials will be provided or bring a favorite rock to wrap.

## Great Backyard Bird Count Program

**Saturday, February 15 from 10:00—Noon**

*Hurstville Interpretive Center*

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology hosts an annual citizen science initiative that encourages people to count the birds in their backyard, in a park, or anywhere! Learn basic winter bird ID, practice taking data, and then take your skills home to collect more data! Plan to do some hiking outside.



## Astronomy Hike

**Friday, February 28 from 7:00-8:30 PM**

*Hurstville Interpretive Center*

We'll start inside for a few tips and tricks and then step outside for some real stargazing practice. We will go on a short hike under the starry sky, learn some constellation stories and history, and then learn how we can contribute to light pollution data collection and reduce our own light pollution.

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

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

## Reptiles of Iowa

**Saturday, March 15 from 10:00-11:00 AM**

*Hurstville Interpretive Center*

Learn about the reptiles of Iowa and their special ways to survive winter. Look at animal artifacts and end the morning with a reptile craft!



## Skunk Cabbage Hike—OWLS event

**Friday, March 21 at 10:30 AM**

*Swiss Valley Nature Center*

Enjoy a spring hike in search of the extremely early blooming skunk cabbage. OWLS (Older Wiser Livelier Souls) events are open to all adults and are a collaboration with Dubuque, Jackson, and Jones County Conservation Naturalists.

## Homeschool Programs

### KinderNature

**Thursday, January 16—Snowshoeing**

**Thursday, February 20—Geology Rocks!**

**Thursday, March 20—Turtles of Iowa**

**Thursday, April 17—Camouflage**

At 10:00 AM; *Hurstville Interpretive Center*

Homeschool families with elementary aged children are welcome to join us in learning more about nature. Youth will have fun learning about the month's topic through various activities.

### Homeschool Series

**1st & 3rd Mondays January-April at 10:00 AM**

*Hurstville Interpretive Center*

Middle and high school homeschool students are invited to learn more about problem solving with Sue Gossman. *No program January 6.*

## Recycling Drives

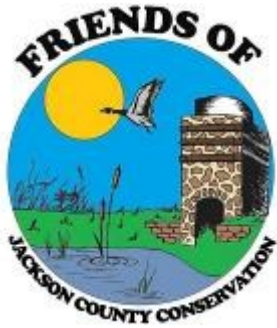
*Drop off at the Hurstville Center*



**Holiday Lights**—now through January 7, 2025

Sponsored by the Jackson County Energy District

**Styrofoam**— collection times: Friday, January 10 from 9:00 AM- 5:30 PM; Sat & Sun January 11 & 12 from 12:00- 4:00 PM. Styrofoam must be clean and free of all food residue; remove all tape and labels; white only, NO colors; packing peanuts must be bagged. Drop off ONLY during dates/times above. Sponsored by Friends of JCC.



# Friends of Jackson County Conservation

## Support Your Local Parks— Become a Friend or renew your membership today!

A big thank you to those who continue to renew their membership with Friends of JCC!! The dollars brought in through membership dues help sustain our organization and **we appreciate your support!**

Membership is for a calendar year. That means, January 1st is renewal time! Clip the portion below and mail in. Make sure we have an up-to-date email address. Most of our correspondence throughout the year is via email.

Save us time, postage, and paper by mailing in your membership before mid-February when we send out a mailing to Friends members.

## 2025 Phenology Calendars

Phenology is nature's calendar—when apple trees bloom, when a robin builds its nest, and when leaves turn color in the fall. Pick up our 2025 Phenology Calendar, specific to Eastern Iowa, at the Hurstville Center Gift Shop for \$10. We can also mail you a calendar for \$12 each. All proceeds go to Habitat Restoration projects!



### Friends of Jackson County Conservation Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Type of Membership

Student \$5

Regular \$10

Senior Citizen \$5

Family \$20

Sustaining \$50

Individual Life \$500

I'd like to make an additional donation to support my local parks in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send form and money to:**  
Friends of Jackson County Conservation  
18670 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, Maquoketa, Iowa 52060

## Join us for the Next Friends Meeting Tuesday, January 14



**6:00 PM at the Hurstville Center**

Potluck at 5:30 PM, bring your own beverage and a dish to share!

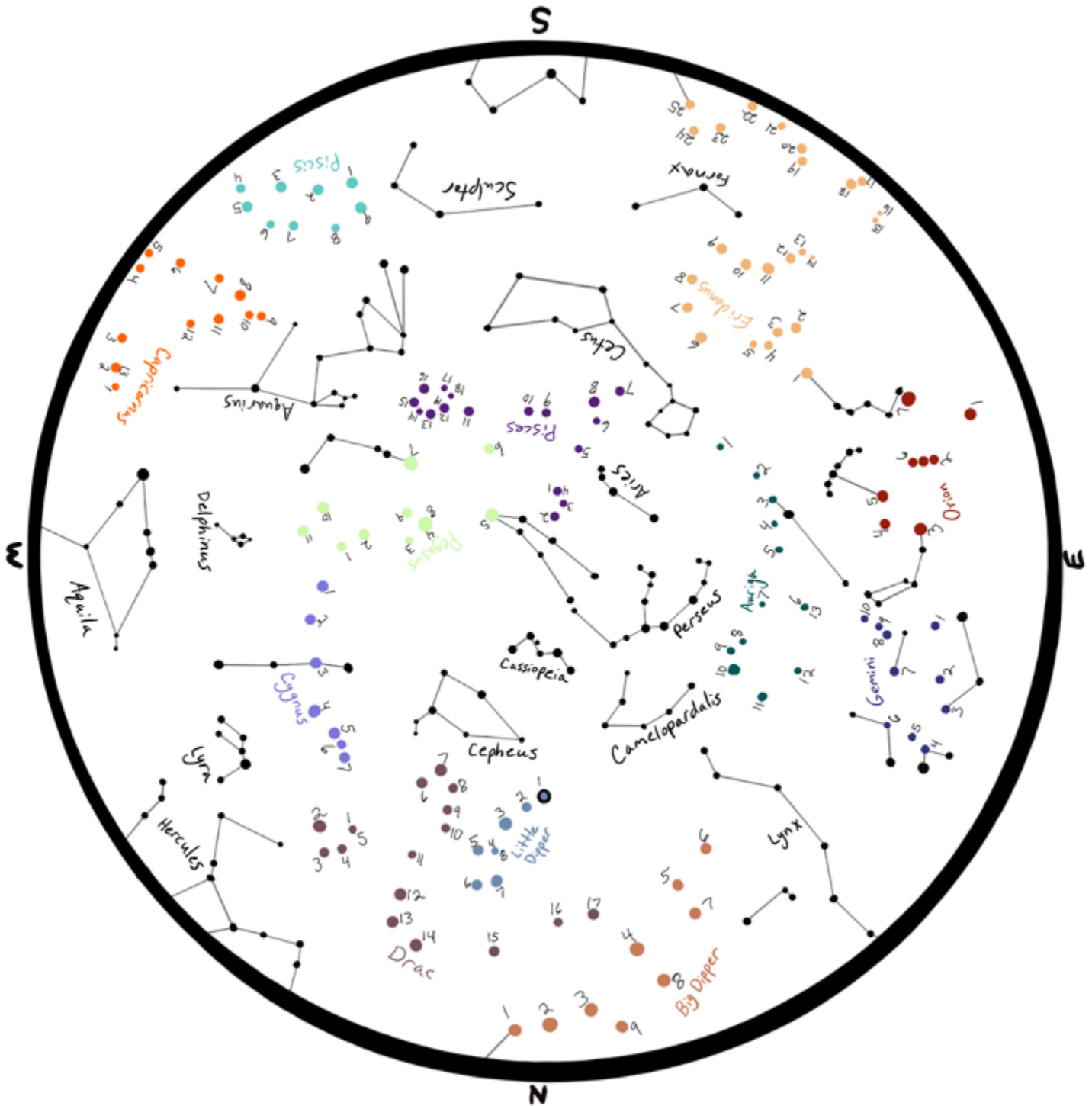
Agenda and minutes from last meeting will be sent via email a few days before the meeting. Didn't get the email? Make sure we have up-to-date contact info for you!

Mark your calendars for 2025 Friends Meeting Dates: **January 14, April 8, June 10, October 14**

*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.*

# Connect the Constellations!

Finish the constellations by connecting the dots, then use this map to find the constellations in the night sky tonight!



## Snowshoeing & Ice Skating!

Looking for a way to get outside this winter? Try snowshoeing! It's fun for all ages, great exercise, and easy! Snowshoes and ice skates are FREE to use during regular business hours at the Hurstville Interpretive Center (weekdays 9:00-4:00). Beginner ice skaters can try it out on the small pond in front of the Center. Weekend rentals for snowshoes are \$5/pair (pick up Friday and return Monday). Minimum 4" of snow/ice needed.







# 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. With your help, we have been able to do so much more!!!*

**Volunteers**—Pam Bahr, Dean Nelson, Kenny Derganz, Mary Hayward, Joyce Keller, Kim Jochum, Jeanette Hartung-Schroeder, Bellevue Boy Scout Troup, Farm Credit Services, Karen Manning, Sarah Hobbs, Judy Bickford, Jeff Tampir, Kent Crawford, Deb Holm, Carolyn Keck, Roberta Rosheim, David Rosheim, Wendy Hainstock, Ann Burns, Julie Reuter, Deb Frieman, Jo Ellen Langerman

**Codfish Concert Fundraiser Contributors**—Jo Ellen Langerman, Mary Hayward, Sheila Root, Tony Vorwald, Ann Burns, Jess Wagner, Bruce Fisher, Laura Fisher, Jennie Willcox, Greg Ueland, Roberta Rosheim, Sarah Hobbs, Wendy Hainstock, Cindy Widmar, Pam Bahr, Jim England, Diane Hermiston, Suzanne Burds, Isaac Anderson, Kayla Pirkola, Sara Millhouse, Kim Jochum, Louise Jones

**Donations**—Farm Credit Services of America, Katherine Walton, Forrest Grey, Nolan Smith, Kiwanis Club of Maquoketa, John & Christine Gilroy, Trevis & Nancy Mayfield, The Growmark Foundation, Gerald Owen, McGraw Hill, Maquoketa Garden Club, Kristen Ralston, Gayla & Allen Earles

**In-Kind Donations**—Forrest Grey (painting), Gerald Jackson & Family (great horned owl taxidermy mount)

**Donations made in memory of:**

*Del Pooler*



## Coming later this winter...

- Native Plant Sale: pre-orders will begin in mid-February.
- Summer Day Camps: sign-up will begin in mid to late March.

Both will be posted under News at [www.jacksonccb.com](http://www.jacksonccb.com).



## Conservation Board Members

Larry McDevitt	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



Nathan Jones, Executive Director  
 Sheila Root, Office Manager  
 Jessica Wagner, Environmental Education Coordinator  
 Macey Yaeger, Naturalist  
 Julia Rodewald, Naturalist  
 Jeannie Collins-Heer, Park Ranger/Roadside Manager  
 Tony Vorwald, Natural Resources Ecologist  
 Jerry Widel, Operation Technician  
 Katelyn Yauslin, Park Ranger  
 Isaac Anderson, Park Ranger

## Address & Contact Information

18670 63rd Street Maquoketa, IA 52060  
Phone: (563) 652-3783

**Website:**

[JacksonCCB.com](http://JacksonCCB.com)

[Www.MyCountyParks.com](http://Www.MyCountyParks.com)

[www.facebook.com/HurstvilleInterpretiveCenter](http://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 Apr–Oct 12:00–5:00 pm; Nov 12:00–4:00 pm; Dec–Mar CLOSED

**Holidays:**

CLOSED Dec 24, 25, 31, Jan 1  
OPEN Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day