The Nature of Things

THE BENTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER VOLUME 13 SUMMER/FALL 2017

Lessons From Nature *By Karen Phelps, Director*

Standing on the edge of the woods, the cautious doe stood stoic. With one ear forward and the other tilted back at a sharp angle, her nostrils flared as her mouth stood agape. A few light flicks of her tail and her twin fawns inched forward.

I sat silently downwind off to one side, and waited for the family to slowly enter the field. I'd seen this behavior in deer many times, knowing their body language offered clues as to what was to come. As I sat and watched the young deer eat, frolic and seemingly annoy their mother, I pondered all the other things I learned from observing nature over my lifetime.

I was fortunate to grow up in a household where my parents encouraged outdoor experiences such as camping, hunting, fishing, night hikes, star gazing, snow shoeing, and all the outdoor games the neighborhood kids created.

Every spring my sister and I would be outdoors picking fresh dandelion greens for salad, asparagus for munching, dandelion blossoms for money, and violets for jelly.

Summer brought the berries: raspberries, mulberries, blackberries, currants, elderberries and gooseberries. Creeping into Fall with its brilliant colors and cool temperatures, assured us the wild grapes, oaks, walnuts and hickories would be sharing their bounty with anyone willing to take the time to harvest these delicacies.

An entire year could be gauged by the fruits of the earth, if you knew when to hunt and gather.

Of course the seasons also brought forth turkey and deer hunting. I'm not one to pheasant, dove or duck hunt, only because I can't seem to master the art of fast moving targets. One mustn't forget the year-round opportunity of fishing, providing the right equipment, clothing and conditions are available.

Aside from the plentiful variety of wild edibles available and the ability to design a calendar around them, nature can teach us so much more.

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Contact us at:
319-472-4942 or
info@bentoncountyparks.com
to be added
to our mailing list.

Minne Estema Makeover *By Jon Geiger, Park Ranger*

Minne Estema Park is located approximately seven miles north of Vinton. This park is owned by the state but managed by Benton County Conservation. This area was originally developed to be a resort along the Cedar River. This area used to offer dining, paddleboat rides, and a hotel. There is also Native American history associated with this area therefore it was given the name Minne Estema, meaning "sleeping waters". There is a mural painted on the side of a building in downtown Vinton. This painting was based off of a picture taken of Minne Estema during that time period. The resort closed and this area was eventually turned into a wildlife area.

The Cedar River has gone through a lot of changes in the past 100 years. Once a calm deep river it is now a fast and shallow river. Recent flooding events have moved the main channel away from this park. There is still river access when the river is up but when the river is low, a lot of what used to be water, is now a large sandbar. Unfortunately, at this time there is not much our department can do to change the situation. However, we are taking steps to update our campground area at this park.

In 2016 we remodeled the pavilion located toward the entrance of the park. This facility was renovated with a new steel roof and ceiling. The electrical inside of the pavilion was updated and now offers good lighting and outlets. This year we have added a new waist high grill and will be adding 10 brand new picnic tables.

In the spring of 2017 we updated the electrical underground and replaced the 20 amp electrical camping pedestals with 20 and 30 amp service in the main campground. We have also moved and updated the security light with a new fixture and ran electricity to the primitive restroom in this area. We have also added lighting and electrical outlets inside of this facility.

In July we began remodeling the primitive restroom next to our pavilion. This facility was originally constructed with glass board that eventually became rotten due to leaky skylights. The skylights have been removed and replaced with two windows that have been installed on the top side of the wall of the building. The inside walls have been completely stripped of the rotten material and replaced with white steel. We also replaced the primitive outhouse roof in the camping area. The original shingles were removed and steel sheeting was added. A steel soffit was wrapped along the bottom edge of the newly constructed roof that made this building look like new again.

We welcome you to come out to this park to check out our progress. Keep this park in mind for future family events at our newly renovated pavilion. Feel free to contact me at (319) 560-9802 for questions and availability.

Danger in our Ditches *by Erica Savage, Naturalist Intern*

Tis the season of sunshine, sunscreen, and the great outdoors! Summer is the time of year when people venture out into nature in search of adventure, rest, and relaxation. When you are out and about this summer, be aware of a poisonous plant popping up that could put a serious damper on your plans.

Flowers in umbel formation

Wild Parsnip (Pastinaca sativa) is an invasive species that is found in ditches, fields, and disturbed areas throughout most of the United States and Canada. It produces a sap containing dangerous chemicals called furanocoumarins. When combined with sunlight, the sap can cause severe inflammation and blistering of the skin known as phyto-photo-dermatitis or Parsnip Burn.

Identifying Wild Parsnip can be tricky, the weed resembles other non-harmful plants such as Golden Alexander and Queen Anne's Lace. It is a flowering plant that takes two years to complete its lifecycle. In the first year, the plant grows a spindly rosette of leaves that reaches up to 6 inches, while the root develops. During the second year, the plant will grow up to 5 feet tall and produce yellow green flowers in an umbel formation that bloom from May to June. The weed has a smooth, thick stem and alternating leaves arranged in pairs, with sharply toothed leaflets.

First year plant

Wild Parsnip poses a threat to Iowa and Iowans. Once established, the weed spreads rapidly and can form thick plots that overwhelm and ultimately out-compete native plants. It contains chemicals that when exposed to sunlight, can leave the skin burned and blistered. It has also been known to decrease the quality and profitableness of agricultural crops such as hay, oats, and alfalfa.

Wild parsnip can cause blistering and burns

Extreme caution should be taken when doing any work around Wild Parsnip. Pants, long sleeves, gloves, shoes, and socks are essential in the prevention of Parsnip Burn. If contact with the weed occurs, immediately cover the affected area to prevent exposure to sunlight. Thoroughly wash the skin and cover the area with a cool, damp cloth. If blisters are present keep them from rupturing for as long as possible. Apply an antibiotic cream and keep the area clean to avoid infection. If blistering is severe, call your family physician.

There are several techniques that can be implemented to help rid areas of this dangerous weed. If you have a small amount of wild parsnip in your yard, you might be able to regulate the weed yourself. Hand pulling is a simple solution for a small infestation. You will need to use a sharp spade to dig up the taproot. The best time to hand pull is during the spring or after a good rain when the soil is moist and the taproot easier to remove. Every few weeks, you will need to repeat this process to remove any re-growth.

If you have a larger infestation of Wild Parsnip, hand pulling is probably not the best management technique. Mowing however, is an efficient alternative. It is important to know when mowing should be implemented. The most effective time to mow Wild Parsnip is after peak blooming, but before the seeds set in early fall. The cut plants are also prone to re-sprouting, so it is crucial to follow up with other control techniques.

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Native Plants in Your Landscaping *By Cecilia Hagen, Integrated Roadside Manager Intern*

If you want to look out your window and see a little patch of Iowa's history, or just want a few plants to bring color and butterflies to your garden, you should consider including native plants in your landscaping. Iowa's landscape was once dominated by wide open prairie. Over the years prairie was tilled under and replaced by fields used for agriculture. Less than one-tenth of the original prairie remains in Iowa. Bringing back these plants helps pollinators and wildlife and does not require acres of land being put into prairie, you can help in your own backyard with a garden as large or small as you like.

Native plants have many benefits apart from their unique flowers. You can create an oasis for pollinators like bees and butterflies, giving your garden life and activity to watch as the flowers bloom. Another benefit is the deep root systems that have adapted to the weather in Iowa. The deeper root systems absorb and filter more water than nonnative plants. They can survive anything from heavy rains to drought, meaning less worry and maintenance, allowing you to water less, fertilize less, and save money.

Butterfly Milkweed
Photo by Cecilia Hagen

There are a few things to consider before you purchase plants to go in your garden. Prairie plants are used to getting a lot of sunlight, so design your garden so it will get at least a full or half day of sunlight. Plan for the specific type of soil you have. If you have moist, wet soils do research on plants that will thrive in that environment versus plants that are adapted to dry, sandy soils. It is also important to think about when your plants will bloom. If you take the time to plan your garden based on bloom time, you can have something interesting blooming in your garden all season. Plant grasses in your garden to allow for something interesting to look at in the winter months and provide great cover for birds and wildlife. Do not forget about final growth height! Many native plants take several years to reach their full potential when growing. A plant that starts out only a few feet high one year may reach over six feet the next! You can use these great heights to your advantage by creating depth and layers in your garden. It is also important to consider town weed ordinances if you are going to do a larger plot of natural prairie. You can show your neighbors what is going on by placing signs, birdhouses, boulders or bricks around the edges. Even just maintaining clean crisp edges can be helpful. Careful planning will help you have a successful garden in the future.

Now that everything is thought out, it is time to begin prepping the site for your beautiful piece of prairie! If you are going for a large plot, begin by killing off all grass that lives there. This can be done by covering the area with a large black tarp, newspaper, or wood for two months.

If you prefer the chemical route, a few applications of glyphosate will also take care of the grass. After the grass and weeds are dead, till the grass under and keep an eye out for any emerging weeds. The best time to plant is right before a snow in the fall. This gives the seeds time to germinate while reducing scavenging from birds and animals.

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Native Plants in Your Landscaping *Continued from page 4*

Purple Prairie Clover
Photo by Cecilia Hagen

When the plants begin to emerge in the spring, watch for weeds. For small plots it is best to mow regularly for the first year. Set the deck higher and begin mowing 4 to 8 inches from the ground for the second year. After 4 years mow once a year, preferably in the spring. If you have a small enough plot you can remove the weeds by hand. It is important to learn what the weeds look like when they come up early so you don't accidentally remove the plants you actually want in your plot. If you are lucky enough to have a large patch and live in an area where it is okay to light your yard on fire, burning your prairie off is the best option of all! It is the least amount of work and it is the most natural. Unfortunately, this is not a realistic option for most people who live in town.

Do some research and look for plants that suit your needs! There is a diversity of plants out there. Little Bluestem, Switchgrass, June Grass, and Prairie Dropseed are all great grasses to use in your garden. Scaly Blazing Star, Purple Coneflower, Prairie Smoke, Prairie Phlox, Butterfly Milkweed, and Large Flower Beardtongue are all great showy flowers that butterflies and pollinators love. Plants can be found at Prairie Moon Nursery, Ion Exchange, Inc., Shooting Star Native Seed, and many other places online. The Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines has a website (https://www.blankparkzoo.com/conservation/plantgrowfly/) with fun tips and a place where you can register your butterfly garden and become a part of a larger community. Have fun creating your garden, there is no right or wrong way to design it.

Your prairie will look different every year and after a few years of care it will be thriving! Planting a plot of native prairie can take a while to produce its full potential of flowers, but it is definitely worth it. You can look out your window and imagine what the land used to look like before agriculture took over. Enjoy your little piece of history and the benefits native plants will bring!

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So please support Benton County Conservation Foundation and use **smile.amazon.com** THANK YOU!

April 8, 2017
Sweet Marsh Wildlife Management Area
Bremer County, Iowa

Seeking the Sandhills *by Coralee Bodeker*

When I woke up this morning, my phone read 3:45AM—the perfect time to ready for a first light birding trip, but not quite so perfect for a girl who went to bed at 10PM the previous night! Nevertheless, about an hour-and-a-half later I found myself driving down a dirt road near Tripoli, Iowa, headed for the Annual Midwest Crane Count. A count site for Sandhill Cranes is surveyed at Sweet Marsh Wildlife Management Area every year by Bremer County Conservation as part of this event. More than 90 counties in the Upper Midwest are included in the survey. Stepping out of my car at precisely 5:30AM, the headlights illuminated a grassy dike and not much else. Sunrise was officially to take place at 6:39AM in Tripoli. The marsh lay just beyond the dike, still hidden in a cloak of blackness. From those black depths of the morning, I was soon greeted by a very genial fellow count volunteer with numerous years of crane-counting experience in this particular spot; by contrast, this was my very first count. After exchanging pleasantries in the dark, the two of us headed east on the dike, facing not-yet-a-sunrise, but rather much wind and continuing night. Stumbling through ATV ruts, I kept my attention to our left, listening for Sandhills out on the water, but all I heard was the chorus of frogs, the hoots of a Barred Owl, and the crunch of our own feet over last year's leaves.

At ten-to-six (AM) I sensed a change in the wind. We began to scare up unseen animals which then dove into the water causing the honks of Canada Geese and the gabbling of Mallards to grow louder with each splash. Soon the entire space echoed with the sound of waterfowl and then the real show began. The sun broke from behind the fields and splashed a tint of purple on the horizon. I blinked and suddenly the entire marsh was cast in rays of light and I got my first good look at Sweet Marsh. The water was covered in flocks of ducks! There were small bands of Shovelers and Blue-winged Teal, sprinkled with the odd Green-wing or Scaup. I glimpsed a Pied-billed Grebe near the shore and a flock of swans crossed the far skyline. Muskrats (or possibly beavers) floated lazily through the sunken reeds, while pairs of Wood Ducks fluttered overhead, startling us with their whistle-like wingbeats. Everywhere we looked were giant masses of American Coots, even crossing the path on the dike ahead of us. The only thing that seemed to be missing from this picturesque landscape was the Sandhills! No trumpeting calls sang through the mist and none could be seen foraging no matter how many times we scanned the weeds with our binoculars. As we hiked, our conversation moved from the wind, to band instructors, to Massasauga Rattlesnakes, but it always returned to the Sandhill Cranes—where were they? Finally, around 6:15AM, a Sandhill swept low over our heads, neck outstretched and black legs trailing. Its bill was open, rattling its bugle-like call, but all we could hear was the roar of the wind. We later spotted two more Sandhill Cranes, both flying northwest towards the drier, grassier parts of the marsh. Perhaps the other count groups to our north would spot them, we hoped.

At 7:30AM we packed up and headed for the event finale—a volunteer gathering at the Bremer County Nature Center. While munching donuts and sipping juice, volunteers from all over the count area discussed the morning's findings; it seemed we were the only counters who did not *hear* any cranes! Quiet as the cranes were in our location, it was still a remarkable morning, but I have high hopes for a noisier count at Sweet Marsh next April. As Aldo Leopold once wrote, "The ultimate value in [these] marshes is wilderness, and the crane is wilderness incarnate."

* * *

If you would like further information on the Annual Midwest Crane Count, visit this website and I hope you will consider joining a count yourself someday. Our count site in Bremer County tallied 64 Sandhill Cranes this year, one more than last year's total!

'A Prairie Girl's Notebook' is inspired by 'A Naturalist's Notebook' penned by John Schmitt & found in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Living Bird journal.

The Beauty of the Night *By Caitlin Savage, Naturalist*

As children, we tend to fear the things that "go bump in the night." Even as an adult, complete darkness can stir up a sense of unease which is only exacerbated by popular movies and shows that use dark lighting to set up scary scenes. Simple sounds that would be ignored during daylight seem to take on a more ominous tone in the darkness. This makes complete sense, as our eyes are adapted to see particularly well during daylight hours, but not so much at night.

Night hikes take us out of our comfort zones, but they also offer a unique and exciting perspective on the outdoors. We see and hear different things than we would during the day, and catch glimpses into the world of nocturnal animals. As you become more comfortable hiking in the evening, you get the chance to discover the beauty of night that many people pass up.

As with any new outdoor experience, you don't want to dive right in unprepared. Below are some tips that will help you get comfortable with night hikes and maybe even help you turn it into a family tradition!

Tips for Night Hikes

1. Avoid solitary hikes — go with a friend or family!
2. Use trails that you are familiar with — you may be eager to try out a new trail for a night hike, but even trails that you know will be a completely new experience in the dark. Being familiar with a trail will help you avoid obstacles and know where your turns are.
3. Start with a full moon hike so you have more natural light available.
4. It takes your eyes up to 60 minutes for your eyes to fully adjust to the dark. Begin your hike when there is still some twilight so your eyes can gradually adjust.
5. Bring a light (and extra batteries)! Even if you hope to hike without the light, you should have one for emergency purposes. Headlamps are very useful for night hikes.
6. Use the same rules of thumb as you would during a day hike — make sure to wear proper footwear, dress for the weather (bring waterproof layers), and bring water to drink.
7. As with any hike/trip, make sure to tell someone of your travel plan (where you're going, how long, etc.).

What are some animals I might see or hear on my night hike?

Bats, Owls, Raccoons, Coyotes

These are ***nocturnal*** animals. They are mostly awake at night.

Deer, Skunks, Bobcats, Opossums

These are ***crepuscular*** animals. They are most active at twilight hours, around dawn and dusk.

Lessons From Nature, *Continued from page 1*

Ship's captains to this day, often use the stars for navigation. A school program I created years ago helps children learn the importance and location of the North Star. There are at least five ways I know of to locate the North Star in the night sky. One can even tell time at night using the North Star. I'm still practicing my math skills as the time is based on March 7th, and being able to add and subtract depending on the month.

Native American Indians based the seasons on the stars as well: when to set up or take down camp, when to hunt which animals based on the probability of location. I still have a fondness for the constellation Orion, as I know my bow season is just around the corner when Orion appears in the southern night sky.

Leaves on trees can foretell inclement weather as some will "roll over" and reveal their undersides for a drink. Moss on the north side of trees, certain clouds in the sky, plants choosing one habitat over another; these things are not just coincidence, rather nature trying to teach us lessons that can keep us from getting lost, protect us from the elements, provide sustenance year round, or perhaps even save our life.

When the tsunami struck Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, and Thailand in December 2004, killing close to 280,000 people, inhabitants of an island located in the path of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean were spared from mortality by seeking shelter on the wayward side of the island. Days before the tsunami struck, having observed the marine animals pooling in the ocean and the island's animals gathering for shelter on the island's wayward side, the people took heed and followed the animals to the wayward side. Many lives were saved by having learned from nature.

Nature offers us many clues. Our water, forests, lands, and air are trying to tell us something. We have a choice to listen and learn or to simply ignore her teachings and suffer the consequences. One person can make a difference: be that person.

The New England Aster,

Symphyotrichum novae-angliae *by Aaron Askelson, Naturalist*

Our pollinators are sure having a hard time these days and I hope we all know how important they are to us, our food, and our planet. One of the best ways we can help them is by planting native flowers.

If you are thinking of planting a flower garden or butterfly garden, it is important to have different species that are in bloom at different times. This will provide pollinators with a food source that will last from spring time to fall. If you are looking for some color in the late summer I would recommend the New England Aster.

This flower most certainly made the person who named it think of the stars in the sky. Aster is from Greek meaning "star". These little flowers with yellow disk florets can have petals ranging from light pink to purple. They will brighten up any garden late into the growing season.

There are at least 200 species of asters found in North America, many of which can be found in Iowa. Since they show up late in the year (from July till the first frost) they provide an excellent food source for many insects. The New England Aster is a favorite of the monarch butterfly since it is one of the latest blooming flowers that the monarch can enjoy on its long trip to Mexico.

Meet the Naturalist Intern *by Erica Savage, Naturalist Intern*

My name is Erica Savage and I am very excited to join the Benton County Conservation team this summer as a naturalist intern. I have always had a passion for nature, conservation, and education and am thrilled to share my excitement with a wide range of audiences!

I graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with my Bachelor's degree in General Studies. My courses in education, communication, and business have given me a solid base upon which I plan to build my career. I have had several opportunities throughout my academic journey to participate in elementary classroom internships and was able to interact with children grades K-5. My background in working with school aged children has helped prepare me to assist the Benton County Naturalists this summer in planning and program development, outdoor recreation, summer camps, and natural interpretation!

Upon graduating from UNI, I accepted a position in the marketing field and quickly realized I wanted a career that was meaningful and would make a positive impact on future generations. I decided that I would follow my passion for nature, conservation, and education and begin to gain valuable knowledge and experience in these fields. My ultimate goal is to become a fulltime Interpretive Naturalist. I want to teach people of all ages about our natural resources and inspire them to get out and enjoy nature, in hopes of creating a more environmentally literate citizenry.

In addition to my love for nature and education, I enjoy hiking, kayaking, camping, photography, reading, and spending time with family and friends. If you see me out and about in Benton County this summer, feel free to stop by and say "hi!" I am looking forward to working with the community and am excited to learn more about conservation and environmental education!

Danger in Our Ditches, *Continued from page 3*

It is important that you do not burn or compost any of the cut or dug up Wild Parsnip. Leave the plant at the site to dry out completely. Once dried, carefully put the plant material into a black plastic bag and leave in the sun for a week or more.

Larger infestations of Wild Parsnip can also be managed with chemical applications. You or a professional exterminator should apply a herbicide to the spindly rosette leaves in the spring, followed by a summer application for any missed weeds that are still growing. Repeated treatments will most likely be needed over the course of several years, to ensure the dangerous weed does not return.

To ensure your summer is safe and enjoyable, learn how to identify Wild Parsnip, stay on trails, and keep away from affected areas. Remember to always take proper precaution when working in and around this dangerous plant. Wear protective clothing and gear, wash your hands, equipment, and apparel immediately after the job is done!

Wild parsnip invading a roadside

Parsnip burn can cause blistering and inflammation.

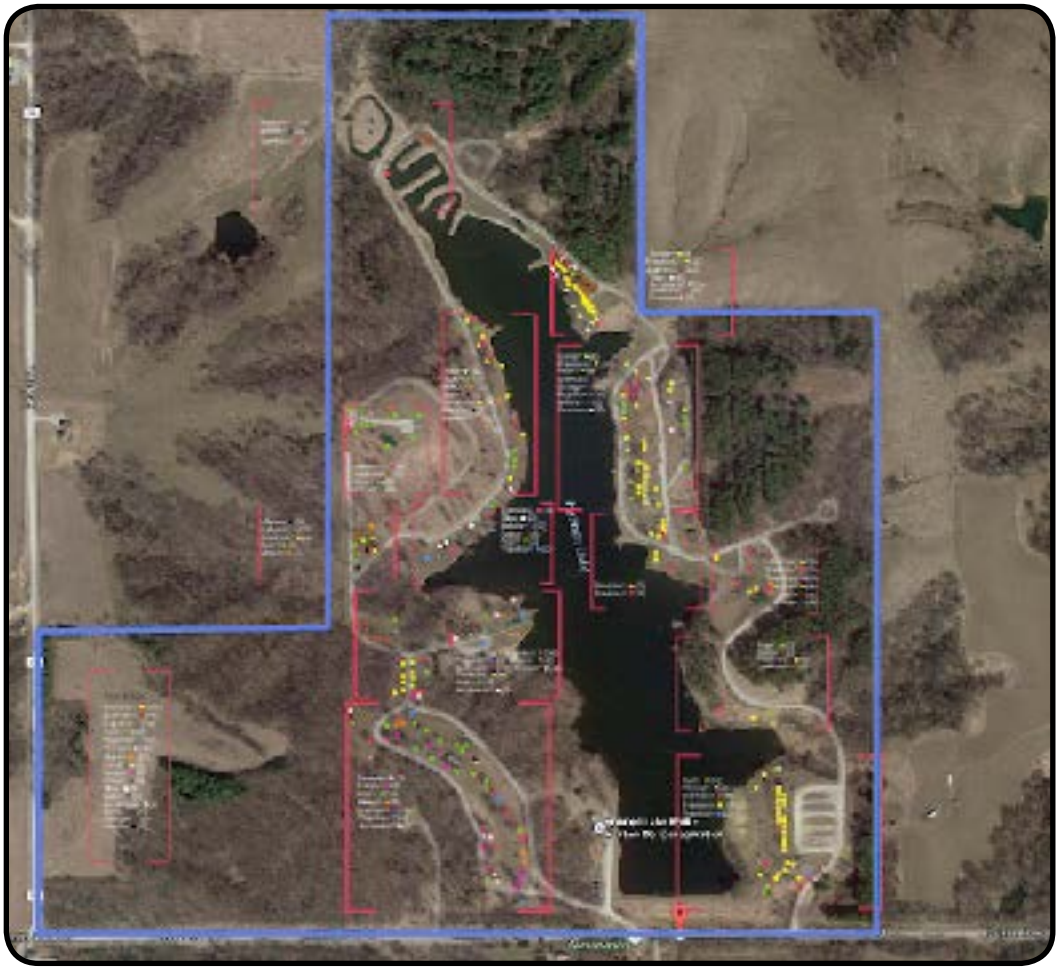
Invasive Invasion *By Logan Hahn, Park Ranger*

Although just about everyone has noticed how extra-thick and numerous the invasive Japanese beetle infestations have been this year, a different shiny green beetle has more quietly invaded Benton County this year for the first time.

These emerald ash borers, next to their "D" shaped emergence holes, should not be confused with the much more common (but also invasive) Japanese beetle from the picture on the next page. Notice the greener color, and much more narrow body shape.

This new beetle, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), has been detected in the state for years, but was not confirmed in Benton County until last month. Despite the EAB not being nearly as numerous or noticeable as the Japanese beetle, it is far more sinister. Thriving on the sapwood of ash species, the larvae of the EAB chews a serpentine pattern underneath the bark of the doomed tree on which it hatched. After the larvae has eaten its fill and grown, it will chew a "D"-shaped hole in the bark, spread its wings as a new adult, and search for a new victim to lay eggs on. In its wake, the EAB leaves trees without the ability to take up water and nutrients from the soil. Ash trees are susceptible to a quick death by this terrible nuisance species, despite how old the tree may be.

So far, a cost-effective answer to EAB has evaded the scientific community who have been searching for answers to this problem. In the meantime, it is highly recommended to anyone with ash trees on their property to be proactive about planting non-ash species as soon as possible. If native, non-susceptible trees are planted soon, they may be large enough to help take the place of ash trees that fall victim to the EAB in the following years and decades. Also, be careful to never move infested wood from one area to another, as this can dramatically increase the spreading rate of EAB.



Each yellow dot on this ortho-photo of Hannen Lake Park represents an ash tree, all of which are susceptible to a quick demise when the Emerald Ash Borer invades the park.

Continued on next page

Invasive Invasion *Continued from page 10*

At Hannen Lake Park, over 29% of the ornamental trees are ash species. These ornamental trees are the trees that provide shade and relaxation to the human visitors of the park, and important habitat to the park's wild residents. After the EAB finds Hannen Lake Park, adjusting to losing a third of the shade trees at the park over a span of 2-3 years will be tough. To help soften the blow, several trees have already been planted at Hannen Park and other Benton County Conservation properties, with plans to plant more over the following years.

With this steady phase-out approach, the impact of losing a tremendous amount of trees will hopefully be less noticeable. At Hannen Lake Park, one of the approaches being explored to fund the replacement of ash trees is a grant program. Thanks to the efforts of Bill Hannen, grant funds are being sought in addition to volunteer help in planting trees. If you would like to be included in the efforts to prepare for the devastating loss of trees at Hannen Lake Park, contact myself at (319) 560-9804 or lhahn@bentoncountyparks.com to get more information about volunteering to plant trees.Although there is no immediate answer to stopping the EAB, steps can be taken to lessen its impact. Keep the county beautiful, and take the time to do your part to mitigate this threat.

This is the very common Japanese beetle sitting on a dime. This beetle has had an explosive population in 2017. Although they can defoliate vegetation, especially linden trees, this defoliation is not directly fatal to the tree and the tree can rebound from this condition.

River Parks Seasonal Spotlight

Hello, my name is Cindy Heitshusen. I live just outside Urbana on a small acreage with my husband and 3 children. I love taking on challenges and I am always up for an adventure.

During the school year I teach 7th and 8th grade Mathematics and coach cross country and track and field. I have also been an international exchange coordinator for over 15 years, placing and supervising academic exchange students.

I love listening to music and enjoy going to country concerts. My favorite music is traditional country. I also enjoy just being outside, running, horseback riding, and traveling!

Editor's Note: Cindy has been a new welcome addition to our River Parks seasonal staff this year. The River Parks cover our largest area of public parks and Cindy, along with returning seasonal Craig, have worked hard this summer to help Ranger Jon keep things looking good for our park patrons. We also welcome back Greg at Hannen, and Rick and Ralph at Rodgers. Sara Jorgensen has been another great addition to our seasonal staff at Hannen Park. Our seasonal staff are an important part of the daily operations of Benton County Conservation. A big thank you to all of them.

Conservation Board Members

Daniel Gibbins: Urbana, Member
Dan Hill: Vinton, Member, Vice Chair
Denni Randall: Belle Plaine, Chair
Randy Scheel: Garrison, Member
Shelby Williams: Mt. Auburn, Member

The Benton County Conservation Board meets the second Monday of every month at 5:00 at the Nature Center. Meetings are open to the public.

Conservation Staff

Karen Phelps	Executive Director
Aaron Askelson	Interpretive Naturalist
Caitlin Savage	Interpretive Naturalist
Scott Bahmann	Rodgers Park Ranger
Jon Geiger	River Parks Ranger
Logan Hahn	Hannen Park Ranger
Zach Parmater	Conservation Tech/Ranger

Email anyone on staff by using their first initial combined with their last name @bentoncountyparks.com
eg: kphelps@bentoncountyparks.com

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Visit us on the web at www.bentoncountyiowa.org or www.mycountyparks.com
Benton County Conservation, 5718 20th Ave. Dr., Vinton, IA 52349
319-472-4942

Benton County Conservation Board
Interpretive Nature Center
5718 20th Avenue Drive
Vinton, Iowa 52349