

The Nature of Things

THE BENTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 WINTER 2013/14

Aloha to Everett, Bob, and Denni!

Aloha in Hawaiian means Hello as well as Goodbye. And so it is we say goodbye to our maintenance technician, Everett Leonard, our veteran board member Bob Mahood, and say hello to new board member Denni Randall.

Everett starting working full time with Benton County Conservation on July 20, 1998. Prior to this time, he was a seasonal for us for three years. Over the past nineteen years, Everett has seen a lot of faces come and go, and persevered through many changes, both challenging and rewarding. An integral part of the Conservation Team, he's always willing to drop what he's doing and roll with the flow - whether it's fixing a tractor, shoveling snow, pulling a seasonal out of the lake (that's another story), or dealing with the onslaught of flood and storm damage. We will miss Everett's sense of humor and dedication, and we're hoping he'll be back with us soon as a seasonal - coming full circle.



Board Chairman, Mark Pingnot congratulates Everett on his retirement. See related story on page 5.

Bob Mahood has been a Board member for the past 15 years. Serving two consecutive 5 year terms, and then taking a year off, he was reappointed to serve one more 5 year term. Bob claims that he's not coming back this time, but time will tell.

Bob's dedication to conservation goes beyond serving on the Board, as he was instrumental in starting up the Cedar River R.A.T.S. (Running Around Tidying Up Streams). A group of local citizens that take it upon themselves every August to get out and clean up the Cedar River as it flows through Benton County.

Bob has been instrumental in raising funds for the Nature Center. While serving on the Board, he and several board members formed the Benton County Conservation Foundation. This 501-c3 organization provides an outlet for people to make donations directly to the Foundation in support of conservation efforts.

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Electronic versions are available at our website or via email through the following website:
www.bentoncountyparks.com



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Tucker, the False Map Turtle *By Aaron Askelson, Naturalist*

We have a new addition to our small Nature Center animal family. Tucker, as he was named by his previous owner, is a False Map turtle (*Graotemys pseudogeographica*). Tucker comes to us from Tipton and has been an educational animal in the Tipton school district for the past 15 years. We would like to thank Jessica Bovey of Stanwood for the donation of this wonderful animal.

False Map turtles are sometimes referred to as sawback turtles. This is because they have a prominent ridge, or keel, along the top of their shell. They are commonly referred to as Map turtles because their shell appears to look like the contour lines of a topographical map. The shell of a turtle has two parts. The top part is referred to as the carapace and the underneath portion is the plastron. A False Map turtle possesses a carapace that is



Tucker, enjoying a worm for breakfast

an olive green color and plastron that is a light-yellow color. The carapace is also serrated in the back. A False Map also has a bright yellow crescent behind each eye. There are about a dozen different kinds of Map turtles. Female False Map turtles tend to be larger than their male counterparts. One can also determine the sex of an aquatic turtle by looking at the tail. The male's vent will be closer to the edge of the carapace while the females will be on the inside edge of the carapace. The male's tail will be longer and thicker than the females as well. False Map turtles use body language and touch to communicate. Male turtles will use their long fore claws to vibrate the water near a potential mate's eyes or cheeks as a way to initiate courtship. I have witnessed this behavior with another turtle at The Mississippi River Museum in Dubuque.

Their nesting spots are bank burrows and old muskrat dens. For a turtle, the False Map is known to be a skilled climber and are adept at climbing slippery logs to reach better spots for basking. Basking in the sun is important for turtles so they can warm themselves, and it allows their shell to dry, which is important to maintain the health of their shell. They often share basking spots with Red-eared Sliders and Painted turtles.

Even though they are one of the more social turtle species, they are considered extremely shy, rarely seen in the wild, and are mainly loners. But don't get me wrong, turtles often use each other to help look out for danger so they can quickly slide into the water to escape capture. Since, the False Map is considered one of the shyest turtles, it is probably the first to go into the water. False Map turtles are found in the eastern part of the state (along the Mississippi River corridor), the western part (along the Missouri River Corridor), up through the Cedar Valley area, and along portions of the lower Des Moines River. They prefer larger streams, but are sometimes found in ponds and lakes nearby. They prefer slow moving water, but are talented enough swimmers to navigate large, deep bodies of water.

Continued on page 5

Man, It's COLD! *By Scott Bahmann, Ranger, Rodgers Park*

Even though it may be cold and frightful outside, you can still enjoy the outdoors with a variety of outdoor activities. I would like to take a moment to write about some activities that you can enjoy with your families besides sitting at home watching television and playing video games.

Some of the winter activities you can experience in our Benton County Parks are cross country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, ice skating, hunting, ice fishing, and hiking. Both our lake and river parks in Benton County provide an excellent place to do some of these activities.

If you would like to get some good cardiovascular exercise maybe hiking, snowshoeing, and cross country skiing are what you are looking for. This is also a good way to gain access too remote areas to view nature and wildlife. See our parks in a different light with the changing of the seasons.

Hunting is also a great activity that you can do during the winter months. After researching the hunting seasons and getting the appropriate licenses and education, our Benton County River Parks provide an excellent place to hunt for many varieties of wildlife.

Another activity that you can experience during the winter months is ice fishing. We have three Benton County lakes that provide a great opportunity for this sport. These lakes are located at Hannen Park, Rodgers Park, and Polk Township. It is important to take precautions before walking onto the ice at any time of the year. Once you know the ice conditions are safe, the ice can provide hours of entertainment and provide many pleasant memories. A lot of fish have been caught through the ice in our parks over the years.

Sledding has been a fun family activity for years. A place that has a steep grade, a smooth surface, and is free trees would be a great place to enjoy this activity.

Many people have enjoyed the hills at Hannen Park, Hoefle Dulin, and Rodgers Park. Sledding is a very inexpensive way to spend an afternoon and provides a family with some exercise and great fun.

For the more adventurous families snowmobiling is a very exciting sport. Even though snowmobiles do not require a specific road or trail we only allow operation in designated areas. The area we allow them on is the Old Creamery Nature Trail that runs west of Vinton all the way to Dysart. This is a 14 mile stretch of trail that also joins up with other snowmobile trails in Benton County. The OCNT is also a great place to go cross country skiing. Our new equestrian trails at Winegar's Wildlife Area also offer miles of fun for cross country skiing and hiking.

With all of these ideas in mind just remember to be safe and dress accordingly. I hope this article will inspire you and your families to get out and enjoy the winter season.



Cross-country ski tracks: Evidence of a winter outing to the Nature Center

Reading Iowa's Landscape *By Karen Phelps, Naturalist*

People that know me have often told me I think too much. Honestly, I think they're right. Many decisions haven't been made yet because I'm still thinking about the options. Now, as I sit in my tree stand, I start thinking about all the responsibilities I have at home that aren't getting tended to, but these thoughts are quickly erased as nature weaves its magic spell and I no longer think; I absorb and reflect.

My thoughts take me across the landscape of Iowa. Like a literary group all reading the same novel, everyone's interpretation of the author's work is different based on their own experiences. We all view the same landscape as we go about our daily routines, but what we gain from our "reading" depends on our focus of the "words".

A farmer reads the landscape as crops and pastures, developers read shopping malls and city streets, a naturalist reads the landscape as habitats and ecosystems. All are reading the same landscape, yet the interpretation is vastly different.

Iowa is one of the most altered landscapes in the United States. Iowa's prairies and wetlands, which provided rich fertile soils, attracted readers of various backgrounds, each adding new chapters to Iowa landscape history.

As I look back a mere thirty-five years and think about reading the landscape, I remember several family trips. We would be driving towards the heart of the city when my mother would comment, "I remember when this was all cornfield," as we viewed the stores dotting the landscape. As the years advanced, it happened to me: I was pulling into a mall driveway with my children and the words flowed out – "I remember when this was all cornfield".

I slowly shift my weight in my tree stand and momentarily close my eyes, my face warmed by the sunlight filtering down through the branches of oaks and hickories. I try to replace the nearby cornfields with prairies that once covered Iowa – prairie grasses that tickled the feet of the settlers as they rode on horseback across our state.



Dr. James Dinsmore wrote in his book *A Country So Full of Game* about the animals that once inhabited Iowa; elk, wolves, buffalo, bear, and many more. As our landscape changes, so too does the wildlife that inhabits the landscape. I developed a school program I use in the lower elementary classes based on the teachings of Dr. Dinsmore's book. Students build a time line depicting the history of Iowa and the animals that were apart of our landscape. As the population of the State grows, interesting changes occur. The students can clearly see that loss of habitat, brought on by population growth, as well as lack of understanding of predator/prey relationships, have greatly altered the wildlife landscapes of Iowa.

My eyes squint open to the sound of rustling leaves under my tree stand. A chatty squirrel busily bustles through the leaves, burying acorns into the fertile forest soil. The soil that will provide nutrients for the sapling oak which will emerge in the years to come.

I look forward to those years; years that will provide interesting lessons and knowledge if I'm willing to stop and read the landscape. Like a good book you can't put down, the landscape is forever teaching us new things if we take the time to read and study it.

Happy Trails, Everett! *By Jon Geiger, Ranger, River Parks*

Over the past 18 years I have had the great opportunity to get to know a fellow employee very well. Everett and I started working together in the summer of 1995 when we both were seasonal employees working in the River Parks. This January will be his final month as a full time employee with Benton County Conservation. Everett Leonard plans to retire on January 23rd, 2014. At that time Everett and his wife Robin, frequently camped at Hoefle Dulin Park along with their family. I always remember watching his family run bank poles for Flathead catfish or playing some dice game at a picnic table. I was never taught this game but it sure looked like they enjoyed playing it.

Everett worked for Benton County Conservation as a seasonal employee for four summers before being hired on in 1999 as a full time Maintenance Technician. Since then, he has worked beside our park rangers, seasonal staff, director, and naturalists. He has also had opportunities to work alongside many nonprofit groups such as boy scouts, AmeriCorps, EPJ (Emergency Public Jobs), and many other volunteers in the Benton County Parks. Everett was always glad to help with fund-raisers designed to benefit our parks.

In 1997 Everett and I were in a Benton County Conservation truck when we were struck head on by another vehicle that was on our side of the road as we went around a blind corner heading to Benton City Park. We were not injured and the vehicle sustained minor damage. We were informed that we needed to go and get x-rays and be checked out for any injuries that we may have endured. As we filled out our paperwork at the clinic we discovered that we had something in common; we shared a birthday! Every year on December 15th it was always our thing to bring up Happy Birthday.....you too!!

I had the opportunity to sit down with Everett for a few minutes and ask him some questions about working with the department for the past 18 years. This is what he told me: "My most enjoyable experience while working here over the years is seeing the countless improvements and knowing I was a part of it."

Everett told me one of the funniest moments while working with the department was digging a tractor out of the Cedar River that a fellow employee had accidentally put in there. Another was when a van rolled down the terraces at Rodgers Park and went into the lake. If you run into Everett I am sure he would be glad to tell you these stories and probably a few others.

I think I speak for all of our staff, both seasonal and full time, when I say that it has been very memorable working with Everett. We wish the best for him and his family. We hope that he will continue to be a part of our organization and drop by from time to time. Oh and by the way- that unknown dice game Everett still plays "Twenty-One". It only took me eighteen years to learn the name of it.

Tucker *continued from page 2*

They are considered omnivores, but as they age they tend to eat more plant material. They consume dead fish, earthworms, crayfish, insects and lots of snails. They have powerful jaws that they use to crush bone, exoskeletons and snail shells. Turtles of course don't have teeth; they have beaks instead. The beak (an extension and hardening of the upper lip) continues to grow their entire life. They must constantly wear down the edge so as not to interfere with the operation of their jaw. I'm sure a healthy diet of snails helps their beak stay nice and sharp. Their beaks are actually made up of the same material that our finger and toe nails are made of; keratin.

We are so lucky to have Tucker join our small animal family here at the Benton County Nature Center, and so grateful to Jessica Bovey for donating him to us. He will educate and entertain the people of Benton County for years to come. So if you get a chance, stop out and see Tucker and our other animal friends.

Whoa, That's a Big Downy! *By Coralee Bodeker*

Two black and white birds, both woodpeckers, white patch along their backs and undersides, black wings painted with white brush marks, white wing tips, one with a vibrant red smear on the back of its crown. . .

Practically identical birds, but which is which and how do I tell as they jerk up the tree in exactly the same manner?

Now that winter has a firm grip on Iowa with a three-to-four-inch snowpack resting on the ground, I've been noticing an abundance of birds visiting my feeders — flocks of Jays, Juncos, and Goldfinches. At times I find it difficult to distinguish one bird from another (I suppose that's what field guides are for!). Two of the most difficult species for me to tell apart from one another are Hairy and Downy woodpeckers. I sometimes get confused when comparing these almost identical woodpeckers. Each species has long white patches on their backs and the same jerky movement around the feeders, but I've created a couple techniques for distinguishing them apart.



First, the beak of the Hairy Woodpecker is almost as long as its head, whereas the Downy's beak is small and short compared to the head. A second way to confirm a Hairy or Downy sighting to look at the tail feathers: a Hairy Woodpecker has completely white outer tail feathers as opposed to the uniform black on a Downy. My preferred (and favorite) method for distinguishing a Hairy from a Downy is by using a size reference. I have a suet cage that measures 5 1/2 inches by 5 1/2 inches hanging a few feet above ground on the south side of a scrub tree. Downy Woodpeckers, the smaller of the two species, are about 6 1/2 inches long at most. If I observe a Downy-like woodpecker about three inches or so longer than the suet cage,

I will positively identify it as a Hairy Woodpecker, which measure anywhere from nine to thirteen inches long. If the mystery woodpecker is measuring roughly the same size as, or smaller than the suet cage, I identify it as a Downy. Now the next time you spot a colossal Downy, it could just be a typical Hairy.

Editor's Note: Coralee is a 6th grade home school student and volunteer for our nature center. She has written and shared with us, several articles on nature which she refers to as "A Prairie Girl's Notebook" inspired by "A Naturalist's Notebook" penned by John Schmitt and found in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Living Bird journal. We look forward to being able to share her articles and drawings with you in our quarterly newsletter.

RECOMMENDED FIELD GUIDES FOR BIRDING

Birds of North America: A Guide to Field Identification (Golden Books)

Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America

Young Birders Guide to Birds of North American (Peterson)

Stokes Beginners Guide to Birds - Eastern Region

Check out Amazon.com - Bird Field Guides, for an abundance of more titles.

A Hunting Story *By Zach Parmater, Ranger, Hannen Park*

As we sat on the frozen ground firing 20 gauge slugs at a Shoot-N-See Targets from 50 yards, the thought of what would come the following morning kept me warm. The fifteen year old kid that was shooting beside me was going to experience his first deer hunt on what would be the coldest day of opening season that I have ever experienced in my fifteen years of hunting. All of his rounds were within a few inches of the bulls-eye and his closest was within a quarter of an inch. I was satisfied that this young man would undoubtedly place a good shot and quickly and ethically harvest his first deer the following morning.

As I lay in bed restlessly staring at the clock until two in the morning, I couldn't help but think if my hunting partner was doing the same. Morning couldn't come soon enough. My alarm sounded at five by six I had picked the eager young lad up at his house. I had a quick chat with him and his father and we were headed off for the timber. The temperature on the dash of my truck read -7 Degrees Fahrenheit. BRRRRRR.



The author's son, proudly displaying his doves after a morning hunt.

We arrived at our hunting grounds at 6:30am. The cold temperatures and wind seemed to chill one clear to the bone. The young man's excitement was evident and as we headed off across the corn field to the timber and he and I forgot all about being cold. With the rising sun there was hope that it would warm; we couldn't be so lucky. Knowing what the forecast was and how cold it would stay all day there was little hope. The first deer I heard was running through the timber, coming towards us on the edge of the field. The deer entered the field and stood for just a few seconds before trotting off. I looked at my partner noticing the smile on his face, but also the slight disappointment of lost opportunity. I reassured him there would be other deer.

As the morning went on, we had four other deer within fifty yards, and each time I said "get ready, get on him, and take it when you're ready". Each time the deer either saw movement and ran, or just wouldn't slow down long enough for the young man to take aim. I was proud of him for not taking the shot. "Never take the shot unless you can quickly and ethically harvest an animal." My statement to him the night before while target practicing seemed to have stuck with him. A wounded animal that is not retrieved is definitely something to lose sleep over in my book.

Although the deer were few, the sights and sounds of nature were abundant. There were turkeys calling in the timber. A Grey squirrel barking at us letting the world know that we were there, or the cackle of a rooster pheasant that is all too unfamiliar these days, flocks of Canada Geese flying overhead, undoubtedly building a massive feed in a nearby corn field. Blue Jays, Cardinals, Red Headed Woodpeckers flying in and out of the tree above us. All of these things make you forget that your toes are freezing and that you can't feel your fingers. The morning came to a close around noon. My toes, fingers, nose and ears were all but frozen. We sat in the truck for fifteen minutes with our hands in front of the heater vents before I was warm enough to drive. Some might say that his first hunt was unsuccessful, but it was quite the opposite in my eyes and I think his as well. We saw deer, we didn't lose any fingers or toes to the cold and we shared a few hours in the woods watching many animals doing what they do to survive the harsh elements that nature throws at them. As I dropped him off at home he thanked me and told me he had a good time. We made plans to go squirrel hunting after deer season and turkey hunting in the spring.

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Big Restoration at Big Grove: Restoring an Old Treasure *By Patrick McNoughton*

Big Grove Wildlife Area is one of Benton County Conservation's (BCC) outlying parcels of land. The one acre site is located approximately 2.5 miles North of Van Horne at the intersection of 21st Ave. and 67th Street. When the pioneers first came to what is Benton County today, the site would have been a small speck of timber in a sea of tall grass prairie. It later became the location of a countryside schoolhouse.

The site has been open to public hunting for some time, but the process of ecological succession left it fairly inaccessible. Over the years, native trees like Black Cherry, Hackberry, and Black Walnut combined with non-native/invasive plants like Chinese mulberry and Amur honeysuckle, slowly grew so thick that only rabbits and squirrels could easily traverse the area. To combat plant succession, BCC decided to restore the site to its historical tall grass prairie/oak savanna.

Phase 1 of the restoration project involved removing all non-native plants and thinning those that would not have occurred naturally in a prairie. Prescribed fire was implemented to remove cool-season grasses and brush piles, which began to clear the site and return nutrients to the soil. A few brush piles were left for the winter as shelter, to ease the transition from woodlot to prairie for the animals who call Big Grove home.

Phase 2 will involve removing nearly all of the undesirable trees and replacing them with Oaks. This will allow remnant plant species (like goldenrod and saw-toothed sunflowers) and restored species to thrive in the open summer sun. Prescribed fires will be used to continue to maintain the site by knocking back woody plants that shade out the prairie Forbes and grasses.

In the near future, Big Grove Wildlife Area will provide refuge for native plants and animals which rely on this type of habitat for their own existence. Grassland songbirds and upland game birds will have a place to nest. Small mammals will have food and shelter through the cold winters. And the hunters, trappers, and outdoor enthusiasts of Benton County will have an easily-accessible place to enjoy.

A Hunting Story *continued from page 7*

TV, video games, and texting are things that the youth of America do all too often. The days of playing in the dirt and mud seem to be a thing of the past. One kid, one day, one hunt and they could be hooked for life and have a little more respect and understanding for nature and why it's so important. Kids are our future, so let's make sure they know and understand nature better than we do, so that they protect it even more than us.

Extreme Outdoors: Dare to Participate!

We invite you and your family to get off the couch, put away the electronic games and get out and experience these adrenaline filled opportunities to experience the Iowa outdoors in ways you may not have tried or even knew existed as options. There are exciting opportunities for all ages and skill levels.

Extreme Outdoors is a series of adventuresome, fun, challenging, exhilarating and safe outdoor recreational activities sponsored by naturalists with Buchanan, Bremer, Benton, and Chickasaw Counties. Limited transportation may be available from these local County Conservation offices - please call Aaron or Karen at 319-472-4942 to inquire for more information. Each activity will be led by experienced professionals.

Please Pre-Register by calling 319-636-2617 or email fontanapark@iowatelecom.net

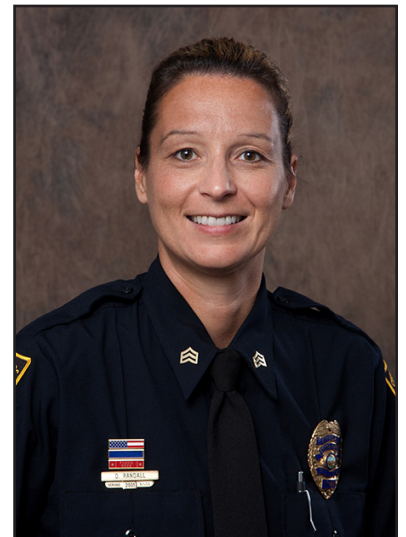
- ☐ February 2nd Biathlon; Crumbacher Wildlife Area, Independence 1-4pm
- ☐ May 3 – Slack lining & Mountain Biking; Camp Ingawanis; rural Waverly. Minimum age 10. Fee TBD
- ☐ June 17– Whitewater Kayaking; Charles City; Fee \$40/person
- ☐ August (date TBD) Bow fishing; Mahaska County; Minimum age 10; Fee \$15/person
- ☐ September 13 – Primitive Tools (atlatl & flint knapping); Vinton; 10 am - noon; Fee 10/person
- ☐ October (date TBD) – Hot Air Ballooning and Fall Colors; Fee TBD.

Aloha! *Continued from page 1*



As the former owner of Mahood's Shoe Store, people counted on Bob to come up with the perfect shoe to fit their weary feet. Now, when you're looking for the perfect fishing pole to fit your hands, Bob can make a custom rod for you, or better yet, he can teach you in a class how to build your own. The Board will be different without Bob, but we won't let him get too far out of our sight, as we know we can rely on him for continued conservation efforts.

Denni Randall joins us once again, but in a different capacity. Over 13 years ago, Denni was the Ranger for Hannen Park. Leaving Conservation to pursue a career in full-time law enforcement, Denni is now a Sergeant with the Cedar Rapids Police Department. She and her husband, Brian, make their home in Belle Plaine, where they also own and operate Great Life Fitness. Denni has a passion for conservation, and it's this dedication that has brought her back to us as a volunteer on our conservation board. We are excited to have Denni back with us, and look forward to working with her in the years to come.



Improving Your Backyard *By Matthew Purdy, Executive Director*

What can I do in my backyard to help the environment? What a great question, because that's where everyone needs to start. However understanding what we should do in our backyard is not as significant, as knowing why we need to make the change. Having this knowledge can change the overall outcome of your efforts and greatly affect the perceptions of others on your completed work.

First, all soils are not the same. In fact, Iowa has about 450 different soil types. The texture of soil depends on the: Parent material it came from, vegetative cover, length of time the soil has weathered, topography of an area, and the artificial changes caused by human activities. Diverse soil types have different drainage rates, mineral content, and erosion potential. Knowing what type of soils are on your property, allows you to know what types of projects will maximize your landscaping efforts. The Soil and Water Conservation District is a great resource to find out what types of soils are on your property. <http://www.bentonswcd.net/>

Second, in most urban settings, approximately 55 percent of rainwater becomes surface runoff. This can negatively impact water quality with sediment and unseen pollutants, such as lawn fertilizers and chemicals that may be free to move with urban runoff. Extensive surface runoff during and after high intensity rainfall events can increase the likelihood of local and downstream flooding. Conservation measures can help to capture and infiltrate this storm water, reducing a property's contribution to water quality degradation, flashy stream flows and localized flooding.



Improving Your Backyard *Continued from page 10*

How to lessen urban runoff:

1. Plant native they are hardier and can handle drought, wind, cold, and the summer heat. Once established they require no irrigation, fertilization, attract butterflies, and humming birds. They provide a blend of seasonal color, and are insect and pest tolerant even if the leaves are eaten. Growing native plants is a fun learning process. Each season brings some answers and more questions.
2. Rainwater Harvesting is the practice of collecting rainwater for future use, lessening the amount of surface runoff being directed to storm sewers. You can utilize rain barrels that are above ground basins. Bio retention cells or rain gardens utilize strategic landscape opportunities to capture runoff and give moisture back to the soil later.
3. Bio retention cells or rain gardens utilize strategic landscaping to capture runoff, giving it the opportunity to infiltrate to into the soil rather than move directly to city storm systems. These are made with layers of rock and sand to encourage infiltration and storage. The city of Okoboji, Iowa currently has over 3300 feet of curb cut-outs that drain into systems like these. Okoboji has implemented a city ordinance that mandates any new development must plan for a bio retention system sized properly to accommodate any runoff and thus keeping the water where it lands.
4. Paving surfaces like porous pavement, modular pavers, are both potentials for keeping rainwater where it lands and come in at similar cost ratios. Grants are being given for implementation of these surfaces through the NRCS Urban Conservation programs. Contact your local NRCS office for more information.

Urban Conservation Resources

www.rainscapingiowa.org www.iowastormwater.org www.exension.iastate.edu/ilf

Editors Note: This spring, the Conservation staff is planning on constructing a rain garden at the Nature Center located at 5718 20th Ave., Dr., Vinton. If you would like to volunteer to help or just be on hand to watch and learn, please contact us at 319-472-4942 for more information.



BEFORE

AFTER



Conservation Board Members

Stephanie Black - Urbana
Jean Ohlen - Blairstown, Member
Mark Pingenot - Vinton, Chair
Denni Randall - Belle Plaine, Member
Randy Scheel - Garrison, Member

Conservation Staff

Matthew Purdy	Executive Director
Scott Bahmann	Deputy Director/Ranger
Karen Phelps	Interpretive Naturalist I
Aaron Askelson	Interpretive Naturalist II
Jon Geiger	Park Ranger
Zach Parmater	Park Ranger

The Benton County Conservation Board meets the first Monday of every month at 5:30 at the Nature Center. Meetings are open to the public.

***Please follow us on Facebook at Benton County Conservation
or visit us on the web at www.bentoncountyparks.com***

***Benton County Conservation
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Benton County Conservation Board
Interpretive Nature Center
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