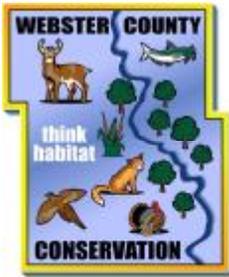


January—April 2011

Life on the Prairie



Newsletter of Webster County Conservation

Webster County Conservation's 2011 News & Activities

Trail News...

Fort Dodge/Webster County Receive \$1.2 Million From Vision Iowa For Trail Plan!



The Webster County Trails Task Force was created in January 2006 following the recommendations from the R.A. Smith Study regarding recreation in our region. Over the past four years a dedicated group of volunteers, business owners, outdoor enthusiasts, and city/county staff have worked under the umbrella of the Trails Task Force to set the stage for major trail development in Fort Dodge/Webster County.

The Trails Task Force gathered local input and began working on connecting the Fort Dodge Trail System to Harlan Rogers and eventually John F. Kennedy Memorial Park. Today, the project has evolved into fifteen projects, totaling approximately 15-miles of new trail. The overall trail project will be completed over the next three years with a "price tag" of \$6.7 million dollars!!

In late 2010, the Vision Iowa Board notified city & county officials that a grant award of \$1.2 million dollars had been approved. The latest news means that fundraising is nearing completion and construction is scheduled to begin in May of 2011!



Your help is still needed!! The Vision Iowa Grant is contingent on the local community's ability to raise approximately \$400,000 by March of 2011. A fundraising campaign is currently underway and the group has raised over \$300,000 to-date!!

If you would like to help with the Trails Project, please send your donation to the Fort Dodge Community Foundation and United Way/Trails Fund. All donations are tax deductible.

A huge "Thank You" to everyone that has contributed time and dollars to this exciting community project!

TSI at Kennedy Park

Cody Peterson

You might be asking yourself, “what is TSI?” TSI stands for Timber Stand Improvement, which is the removal of unwanted species in a stand of timber. Webster County Conservation has been doing some TSI work on the north side of Kennedy Park as well as other areas to help promote a healthier forest.

Over time, invasive species can make their way into timber and may take over the lower canopy of a forest. These invasive species usually grow faster and denser than the desirable types of seedlings. If nothing is done they will actually choke out the desirable species by robbing them of sunlight and water. These plants can spread by wildlife or by wind and can find their way into almost any area. Some of the invasive species we have at Kennedy Park include Autumn Olive, Honeysuckle, Black Locust, Buckthorn, and Mulberry. Over the past several decades, different types of shrubs and



trees were planted to establish windbreaks and to slow erosion. Some of these plants worked well, but some ended up becoming too difficult to manage and became known as invasive plants. For instance, honeysuckle is found all over Iowa and can work well as part of a windbreak as long as it’s managed. However, if it is not managed and allowed to spread it can become a real problem. A species that is considered invasive in one area may not be perceived the same way in a different region.

To combat these invasive species Webster County purchased a skid loader along with a forestry mower attachment that is designed to harvest unwanted trees and shrubs. This piece of equipment cuts the unwanted plants off at the ground and mulches them into small chips, leaving a fairly clean product behind. At this stage in the process there are a couple of options that can be done next. One option is to run a prescribed fire through the area if there is enough woody material left after the harvesting. This option would be used once the plants start to sprout again. This intense heat will cause the small seedlings to burst and will keep them from coming back. Another option is to chemically treat the plants. Once the plants are still small but have developed leaves we will go back over the area and spray them with a foliar application of herbicide. Some species are very hardy and it may take several years to control certain areas depending on the severity of the invasive plants. Using fire would be our preferred method to keep chemical use to a minimum, but in some instances there isn’t enough fuel for the fire to carry through the timber so we have to use herbicides.

Hopefully this article has informed you on Timber Stand Improvement. If you’re ever hiking around Kennedy Park or one of Webster County’s other wildlife areas and come across some woody material that looks like its been “chewed up” by a big machine you’ll know what’s going on. It may not look the best right after the harvesting process has occurred but a few years down the road there will hopefully be a healthy forest remaining that provides great habitat and food sources for all wildlife.

Calendar of Events 2011

Webster County Conservation
1415 Nelson Ave. Fort Dodge,
515-576-4258 khansen@webstercountya.org

**All programs are free unless otherwise noted.

Cross Country Skiing & Snowshoeing

Enjoy winter's crisp air and great way to exercise in Iowa's outdoor parks. Equipment use is free.

Feb. 12 *9 am—Noon* *Kennedy Park*

Feb. 19 *9—11 am* *Brushy Creek North campground*

Feb. 7, 8, 10 Hunter Safety

5:30—9:00 pm at Kennedy Park
Pre-registration in person at Keith's Outdoors, Fort Dodge.

Feb. 26 & 27 Outdoor Sports Show

at ICCC Career Education Center
Booths and displays for the public at ICCC Career Education Center. Admission fee required. For more info., contact Iowa Central Community College.

April 1 Habitat Workshop

9:00 am—4:00 pm at ISU Extension



Join other landowners in a day filled with interesting topics covering CRP mid-contract management, forest management, windbreaks, native and invasive plants, backyard habitat, etc. A portion of the afternoon will be on-site demonstrations and tours at the Smeltzer Learning Farm south of Otho.



Interested in a great workout, some fresh air, sunshine to make you smile? Try cross country skiing or snowshoeing. It's a great family activity too!

WCCB Cross Country Ski & Snowshoe Rental policy:

To rent cross-country skis sets and snowshoes, renters must pick them up no later than 4:00 pm on Friday and returned no later than 4:00 pm the following Monday at the Kennedy Park Reception Center office. Call ahead and talk to Karen.

Rental fees (paid at the time of check-out) are as follows:

Kids under 18 with a parent	FREE
Cross country ski package (skis, boots, & or poles)	\$ 10.00 / weekend
Snowshoes (pair)	\$ 10.00 / weekend

A deposit of \$100 per set of skis or snowshoes must also be paid at the time of reservation. It will be refunded when the gear is returned promptly, without damage and in clean condition. No advanced reservations will be taken. All equipment will be loaned out on a first-come, first-served basis. WCCB staff has the right to refuse rental.

Webster County Conservation

2011 Public Outdoor Events

Webster County Conservation
khansen@webstercountyia

1415 Nelson Ave. Fort Dodge, Iowa
515-576-4258

Cross Country Skiing & Snowshoeing

Feb. 12	9 am—Noon	Kennedy Park
Feb. 19	9 am—11	Brushy Creek N. campground
Feb. 7, 8, 10	Hunter Safety	Kennedy Park
Feb. 26 & 27	Outdoor Sports Show	ICCC
April 1	Habitat Workshop	ISU Extension
April 9	Spring Park Festival	Kennedy Park
April 15	Campground opens	Kennedy Park
April 28	Plant Some Shade program	Kennedy Park
May 14	Fishing Derby	Brushy SRA
May or June TBA	Duane Bill Family Fishing	Kennedy Park
June 4 & 5	3-D Archery Shoot	Kennedy Park
June 11	Women in the Outdoors	Brushy SRA
June 18	Paddling Class	Kennedy Park
June 19	Paddle with Papa	DM River
July 30	Summer Park Festival	Kennedy Park
August TBA	Dragon Boat Bash	Kennedy Park
Aug. 15, 16, 17	Hunter Safety	Kennedy Park
Aug. 20 & 21 (tent.)	3-D Archery Shoot	Kennedy Park
August 27	River Clean-up	DM River
Sept. 10	Butterfly Tagging	Brushy Creek PRC
Sept. 17	Adventure Race	Fort Dodge...
Sept. 24 & 25 (tent.)	3-D Archery Shoot	Kennedy Park
Oct. 11	Owl Prowl	Dolliver Park
Oct. 15	Campground Closes	Kennedy Park
Oct. 15	Fall Park Festival	Kennedy Park
Oct. 20	Friends Banquet	Kennedy Park
Oct. 29	State Cross Country meet	Kennedy Park
Nov. 10	Skillet Creek Night Hike	Skillet Cr. Indian Mds
Dec. TBA	Lights At Kennedy	Kennedy Park

Master Conservationist Program:

May 31, June 14 & 28, July 12 & 26, Aug. 9 & 23, Sept. 6 & 20

For more information go to www.webstercountyia.org *Link:* conservation; events

Fail To Plan...Plan To Fail

The Webster County Conservation Board was established in 1958 by a vote of the people. The board quickly started to work on building a recreational lake for citizens & visitors of Webster County. In 1965, Badger Lake was completed and John F. Kennedy Memorial Park was officially dedicated and “open for business”.

Since 1965 board members, staff, and volunteers have consistently worked to expand and improve Kennedy Park. The guiding force for park development has been the 1965 park plan. While many of the original park amenities remain today, the park has seen many changes during it's' forty-five year life.

Many things have changed since 1965, however the mission and vision of Kennedy Park has always remained consistent, “to provide a clean and safe environment for outdoor, family recreation”. In an effort to make sure Kennedy Park provides a quality outdoor experience for the next fifty years the Conservation Board is currently working on updating the original master plan for Kennedy Park. Conservation Staff is gathering information and preparing a draft plan. We welcome your input and look forward to hearing your feedback at public meetings that will be scheduled later this year!

Buying & Selling Firewood in Iowa ... Don't Get Burned!

Emerald ash borer was found in Iowa May 2010. The discovery of this invasive species is an excellent reminder to all Iowans about pests that move with firewood, as well as the basic requirements of how firewood is to be labeled for sale in Iowa.

Why is NOT moving firewood important?

Firewood can transport many invasive insect pests such as the emerald ash borer, Sirex wood wasp, Asian longhorned beetle, and gypsy moth, as well as plant pathogens causing beech bark disease, sudden oak death, thousand canker of walnut, and oak wilt. Several states in our country are engaged in control measures aimed at these destructive forest pests. The movement of infested firewood has proven to be the source of many infestations throughout the United States. In Iowa, our motto is *Buy Local & Burn Local!*

Starting January 1, 2011, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will require all firewood sold in Iowa to have the county and state of harvest location on the label of packages and the delivery ticket for bulk firewood.

Questions?

IDALS Weights & Measures Bureau
(515) 725 – 1492
WeightsAndMeasures@IowaAgriculture.gov

IDALS Entomology & Plant Sci. Bureau
(515) 725 - 1470
Entomology@IowaAgriculture.gov

Friends of Conservation

The Friends of Webster County Conservation is a non-profit group whose mission is to provide awareness, appreciation, and preservation of Webster County's natural resources for future generations. The board members meet every other month and anyone may attend. Special committees (events, membership, stewardship, and projects) meet when necessary and report back to the board.



What incentive might a person have to join? Environmental Education and outdoor recreation are building blocks for a solid foundation of social skills and learning potential in children. All ages benefit from an attachment to the outdoors and to the physical land when they work and play on it. Our society benefits when people band together with a heart for stewardship and exposing kids to more life experiences.

Bird watching, tree planting, prairie burning, geo-caching, pulling invasive weeds, butterfly tagging, adventure racing, night hiking, archery, camping, canoeing, kayaking, hunting, biking, hiking, fishing, cleaning up the river, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, etc., etc., etc. If this random list of outdoor fun / work sounds interesting, join others as we band together to enhance our outdoor experiences and to restore and preserve our natural resources.

Email Karen at khansen@webstercountyia.org for more information.

Join the Friends Group

Mail to: *Friends of Webster County Conservation*
1415 Nelson Avenue, Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501

Make check payable to: *Friends of Webster County Conservation*

Friends of Webster County Conservation MEMBERSHIP FORM	Single Membership	_____	\$15
	Family Membership	_____	\$25
	Business Membership	_____	\$100
	Name	_____	
	Address	_____	
	Phone	_____	
	Email	_____	