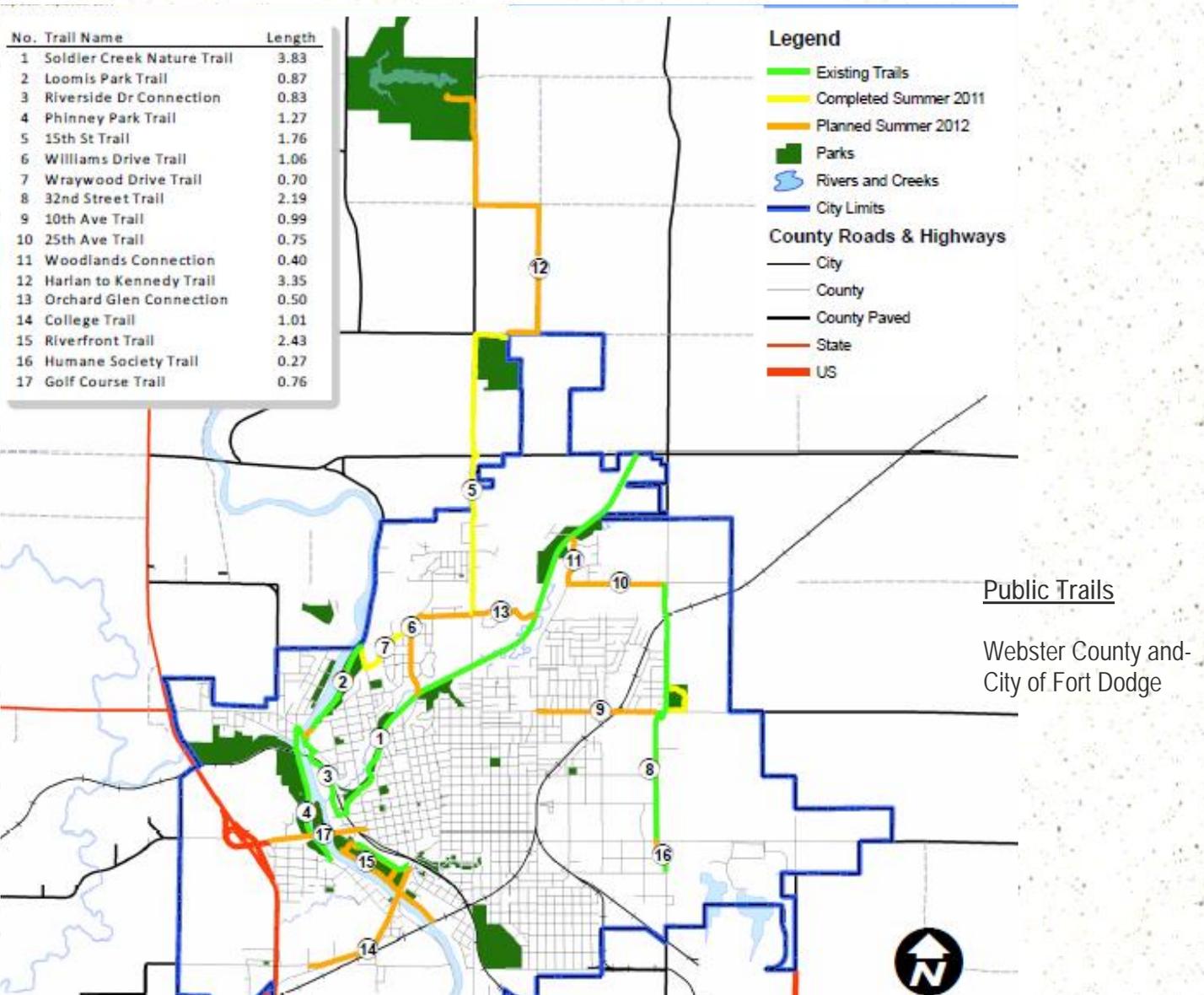




## Trail News...By Matt Cosgrove, WCCB Director

The first stage of trail development has been completed with the new trail along North 15<sup>th</sup> Street to Harlan Rogers Sports Complex. This is the first step in the Vision Iowa Project that will create 15-miles of new trail by 2013. The nice fall and mild winter have allowed many trail users the opportunity to check out this new 2.5-mile addition. This year the segment will be connected to the Soldier Creek Nature Trail, Snell-Crawford Park, and John F. Kennedy Memorial Park.

In addition to the trail construction, the Trails Advisory Committee has been working on a trail signage and amenity plan. The plan will provide a seamless appearance on all Webster County and Fort Dodge Trails. See you on the trails in 2012!!



# Moorland Pond

By Pat Shehan, WCCB Park Ranger

2011 was another year of ups and downs with our swans at Moorland Pond. The spring season started off well with our pair building a nest on the shoreline and later hatching out two cygnets. Yeah!! But, a week later we had one of our “downs”. One of the two cygnets disappeared.

Throughout the summer and early fall the lone young cygnet grew well. In November the second “down “ occurred. The old male of our bonded pair died. He wore green neck collar 2E0 and was 15-20 years old. Originally a wild swan from Minnesota but suffering a wing injury, he was brought to us to be one of our resident pair.

We were also visited once again by P16 and P80, who have been spotted at Moorland Pond every year since 2004. Most of the free flying swans left the pond after the trout release in mid November due to the increase in the amount of people fishing the pond.

Mid January saw the last of our “downs”. Our lone 2011 cygnet died. Mortality like this is just a fact of life, but it sure feels different when it's one of your own birds.

We are currently looking to find a male to place at the pond to bond with our female. Maybe 2012 will be a successful year as we work toward the ultimate goal of having free flying wild nesting swans back in Iowa.

## Something New...

It has become easier for fisherman and other outdoor enthusiasts to access Moorland Pond. This fall the staff removed the old “walk-over” entrance and replaced it with a “walk-through” gate. This new gate is spring loaded and designed to close by itself after opening so swans cannot escape and people fishing can have better access.

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## Trout Stocking

On November 14<sup>th</sup> Webster County Conservation teamed with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and released 1,500 10-12 inch Rainbow Trout into Moorland Pond. It was a cold and windy day to be fishing, but there were still 20 or more fisherman that decided to brave the cold and try their luck at catching a trout. It only took a few minutes for the first fish to be caught after all the trout were placed in the water. Once the trout had acclimated themselves to the pond they really began to bite. These fish are “put and take” which means that most of these fish will be caught in the first month or so. Trout are not adapted to warmer water and will most likely not make it once the water temperatures rise above 70 degrees. Released trout are relatively easy to catch. The most effective baits used are corn, salmon eggs, Power-Bait, and small shiny spoons.



The second release of trout had to be postponed due to the lack of safe ice. We have rescheduled the release for **March 24<sup>th</sup>** at 1:00 pm. There will be much to see and do that day for all ages. This should be a great way to kick off spring!

**\*REMINDER: A TROUT STAMP IS REQUIRED TO KEEP ANY OF THESE RELEASED TROUT\***

# Timber Stand Improvement at Kennedy Park

By Cody Peterson, WCCB Operations Supervisor

Some of you may have noticed over the past couple of months that the Conservation staff has been clearing trees along the North boundary of Kennedy Park. We have had some concerned questions about the removal of these trees, both from a habitat and aesthetic point of view. This area of the park has not been receiving the management it needs due to early and harsh winters of late. This is the only time the Conservation staff has to perform timber work. Unwanted species are taking over the timber. Bushes and trees have been growing into adjacent landowners fields for years. Invasive plants have been taking over the timber and shading out desirable trees. What was thought to have been ideal windbreak plantings many years ago turned out to be invasive forms of shrubs and trees such as Honeysuckle and Autumn Olive.



Now that we've had the good fortune of a late winter, it has allowed us to get our forestry mower and staff over to that area to manage it correctly. The Conservation staff is going to work around the perimeter of Kennedy Park doing TSI (Timber Stand Improvement) work as the winters permit. Hopefully in a few years the perimeter will be cleared of undesirable tree species, which will allow us to plant native prairie in its place. By planting natives it will not only provide better habitat for our wildlife but will also be easier to manage. The prairie will also allow us to travel around the edges of the park to perform maintenance on fence lines and trails.



The future management of these areas will be a prescribed burn every year or two which will keep out unwanted woody species and other invasive plants. We realize at the current time it isn't the most visually pleasing area to look at but as we work along the perimeter we will be planting prairie right behind where we have cleared so in a few years it will be providing great habitat as well as being aesthetically pleasing with various grasses and wildflowers growing.

If you'd like to join us this spring for some hands-on fun, such as cutting trees, throwing them into piles, and maybe even burning, contact Karen at our office, 576-4258 or email her at [khansen@webstercountyia.org](mailto:khansen@webstercountyia.org). Volunteer work days will give people the chance to get involved with this labor of love for the land. There is great value in giving all citizens an opportunity to have an attachment to the land. And this too is one of our goals, besides improving the quality of the woodlands and wildlife habitat.

# Webster County Conservation Calendar of Events 2012

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

For more information go to [www.webstercountyia.org](http://www.webstercountyia.org) Link: conservation; events

Jan. 28	Cross Country Skiing	Dolliver Park
Jan. 31	Evening Cross Co. Skiing	Kennedy Park
Feb. 4	Cross Country Skiing	Dolliver Park
Feb. 11	Cross Country Skiing	Brushy Creek SRA
Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28	Evening Cross Co. Skiing	Kennedy Park
Feb. 27, 28, March 1	Hunter Safety	Kennedy Park
March 17	Bald Eagle Workshop	Kennedy Park
March 17	Geo-cache Hide & Seek	Kennedy Park
March 24	Trout Stocking & Fishing Clinic	Moorland Pond
March 31	Hy-Vee Half Marathon	FD / Kennedy Park
April 14	Spring Park Festival	Kennedy Park
	(Maple Syrup Festival, CITO, Nest Box Bldg, Prairie Burn)	
April 15	Campground opens	Kennedy Park
May 4	Night Paddling	Brushy Cr. south boat ramp
May 12	Duane Bill Family Fishing	Kennedy Park
May 17?	Plant Some Shade program	Kennedy Park
June 2	Fishing Derby	Brushy Creek SRA
June 2	Night Paddling	Brushy Cr. south boat ramp
June 2 & 3	3-D Archery Shoot	Kennedy Park
June 9	Women in the Outdoors	Brushy Creek SRA
June 16	Paddling Class	Kennedy Park
June 30	Prairie Hike	Brushy Creek SRA
July 3	Night Paddling	Brushy Cr. south boat ramp
July 13	Water Trails Dedication / Paddle the Lizard	Phinney Park access
July 14 (morning)	River Trash Bash (clean-up)	DM River
July 14 (evening)	Summer Park Festival	Kennedy Park
July 21 & 22	3-D Archery Shoot	Kennedy Park
July 27, 28, 29	Dragon Boat Bash	Kennedy Park
August 1	Night Paddling	Brushy Cr. south boat ramp
Aug. 13, 14, 16	Hunter Safety	Kennedy Park
August 18 & 19	3-D Archery Shoot	Kennedy Park
August 25	Adventure Race	Brushy Creek SRA
August 25	Butterfly Tagging	Brushy Creek PRC
August 31	Night Paddling	Brushy Cr. south boat ramp
Sept. 9	Sillet Creek Hike	Sillet Cr. Indian Mds
Oct. 13	Fall Park Festival	Kennedy Park
Oct. 15	Campground closes	Kennedy Park
Oct. 27	State Cross Country meet	Kennedy Park
Nov. 8	Friends Banquet	Kennedy Park
Nov. 17	Archeology Workshop	Kennedy Park
Dec. TBA	Lights At Kennedy	Kennedy Park

# Calendar of Events 2012

For information: 515-576-4258

[khansen@webstercountya.org](mailto:khansen@webstercountya.org)

\*\*All programs are free unless otherwise noted.

## Feb. 11 Cross Country Skiing

9–11 am Brushy Creek north campground

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

## Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 Evening Skiing

5:00–7:00 pm Kennedy Park Reception Center

Tuesday evenings...bring family or friends, enjoy Iowa winter, ski/snowshoe into the twilight sky around Kennedy Park.

## Feb. 27, 28, Mar. 1 Hunter Safety

5:30–9:00 pm Kennedy Park Heun shelter

Register online at [www.iowadnr.gov/training](http://www.iowadnr.gov/training); then stop at Keith's Outdoors in Fort Dodge to get the HS manual.

## March 17 Bald Eagle Workshop

10: am– 4:30 pm Kennedy Park Heun shelter

Help the DNR Wildlife Diversity Program with documenting eagle nests. \$10 reg. fee covers materials, meal, etc.

## March 17 Geo-cache Hide & Seek

5:30 – 7:30 pm Kennedy Park Heun shelter

Learn how to geo-cache and enjoy a new outdoor activity. We'll provide the GPS units or bring your own.

## March 24 Trout Stocking / Clinic

1:00 pm Moorland Pond

Join the DNR and WCC staff for an afternoon of catching tagged fish and winning prizes.

## March 31 Hy-Vee Half Marathon

FD to Kennedy Park

Challenge yourself to a half marathon from FD to Kennedy Park or run a 5K at the park. Kids activities at the park too.

## April 14 Spring Park Festival (Earth Day Celebration )

10—Noon	Garlic Mustard Pulling	at Brushy Creek
9—Noon	Cache In Trash Out	at Brushy Creek
3—4 pm	Nest Box Building	at Kennedy Park
5—7 pm	Maple Syrup Festival	at Kennedy Park
7:30 pm	Prairie Night Burn	at Kennedy Park

Dress for day-long exploration & hands-on activities. Family fun. Free will donation for pancake meal at Festival.

## April 15 Campground at Kennedy Park OPENS

### Cross County Ski & Snowshoe Rental (summarized)

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

Kids under 18 with a parent FREE

ski package (skis, boots, poles) or snowshoes \$10 / 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. A damage fee may be assessed.

Cross-country skis sets or snowshoes must be picked up by 4:00 pm Friday and returned to the Kennedy Park office by 4:00 pm Monday. If there are scheduled weekend ski dates listed above, equipment may be rented immediately following at the location listed. Return to Kennedy Park Reception Center by 4:00 Monday. If special arrangements are needed, call Karen or Erin at 576-4258.

# OHV Developments

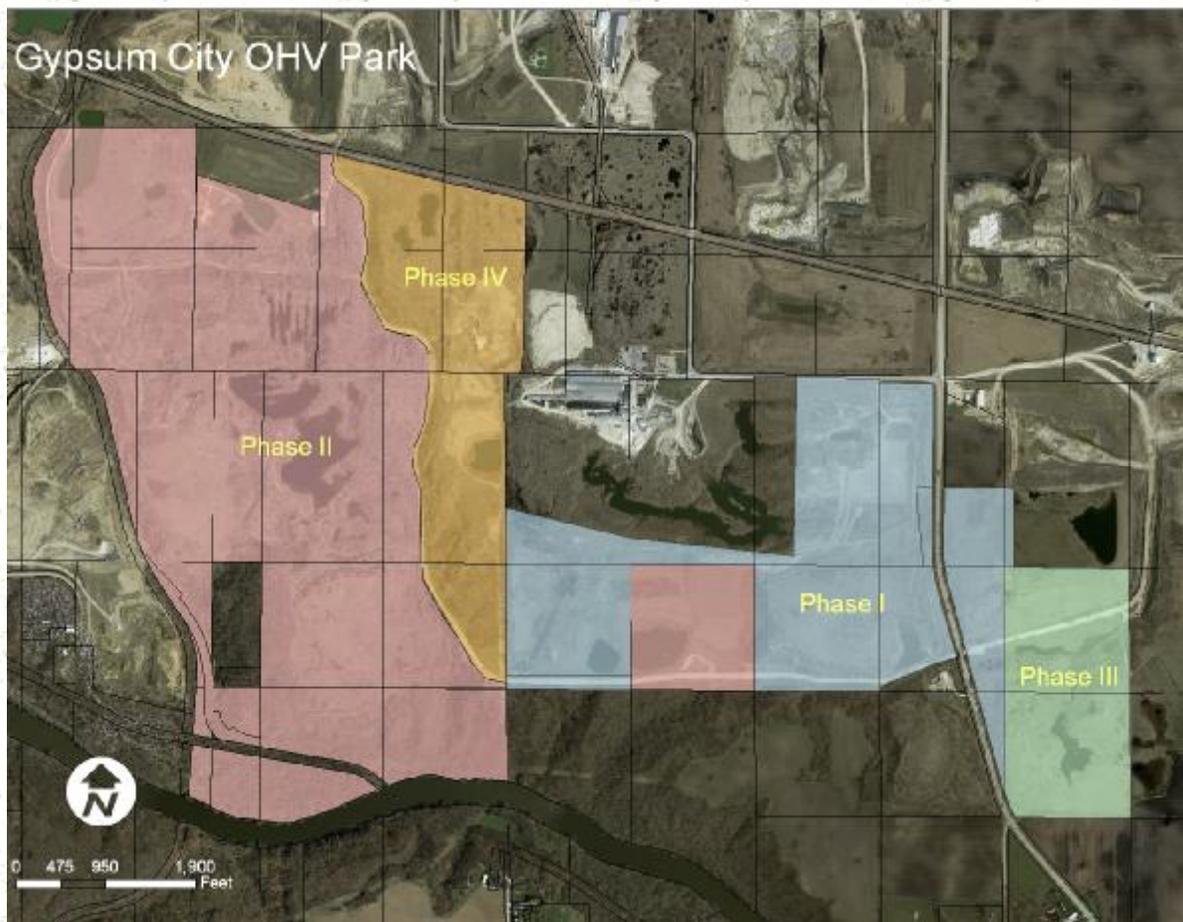
By Stephanie Sheetz, Senior Planner, City of Fort Dodge

WCCB's latest adventure is entering into a partnership with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Webster County Improvement Corporation, and the Webster County Wheelers to expand the Gypsum City OHV Park.

Located southwest of the City of Fort Dodge, the Gypsum City Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Park serves as a destination for All Terrain Vehicle (ATV), dirt bike, and snowmobile riders as well as other outdoor enthusiasts from across Iowa and the Midwest. This park, currently 220 acres but expanding to 800 acres, is located in the center of thousands of acres of properties currently and formerly used for gypsum mining and production of gypsum related products. The Gypsum City OHV Park is part of a state-wide network, comprised of eight OHV Parks throughout the state. Upon this expansion to 800 acres, it will be the largest riding area in Iowa. It will also be the most unique riding experience, due to the terrain in the park. The Gypsum City OHV Park is located in an area that is predominately mined. The land is no longer suitable for urban development and has few possible uses. Its diverse topography and natural landscape of open fields, rolling hills, and challenging cliffs is attractive to motorized vehicle use.

Phase I opened to the public in 2006. The Park currently features approximately 15 miles of trails running through native prairie vegetation and trees, a 1½ mile long motocross course, a safety training area, a youth riding area, two picnic shelters, a vault toilet, loading ramp, and a parking area for 350 vehicles with trailers. A modern campground facility is currently in the works.

Stay tuned for exciting developments in 2012!!



# Veterans Memorial Park Continues Expansion

By Dr. Terry Moehnke

2011 has been a busy season for Fort Dodge Noon Sertoma. The club continues to enhance the west side on Kennedy Park with a beautiful tribute to our service men and women.



The construction of Phase II started in the fall of 2010 with the clearing of brush on the east side of the amphitheater which allowed the sidewalk to be extended another 600 feet to make the lower level handicapped accessible and to allow the planting of additional memorial trees. Overlooking Badger Lake, several benches have been placed near the sidewalk to encourage visitors to spend time enjoying the setting. Local military personnel who have lost their lives (over 300 have been identified to date) will be recognized with engraved bricks that will form a walkway leading to a block wall with a granite insert recognizing the major donors to the park.

Plans for the spring of 2012 include cement stairways on both sides of the amphitheater and the construction of a covered picnic area. Fort Dodge Noon Sertoma invites you to stop by the park this spring to see the new enhancements and remember the brave men and women honored at the park.

If you would like to make a donation to the Veteran's Memorial Park, or need information on purchasing a tree or paver please contact Terry Moehnke at 515-955-6720. Donations can be made payable to Veterans Memorial Park, c/o CS Bank, P.O. Box 934, Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501.

## WCCB Board Members

Jerry Beck	Fort Dodge
Beth Collins	Fort Dodge
Jim Eslick	Gowrie
Brad Luke	Fort Dodge
Kirk Seltz	Clare

## WCCB Staff

Matt Cosgrove	Director
Cody Peterson	Operations Supervisor
Pat Shehan	Park Ranger
Darren Herzog	Park Ranger
Karen Hansen	Naturalist
Erin Ford	Naturalist WCCB/DNR
Cindy Knickerbocker	Secretary part-time
Dave Scherff	Natural Res. Tech.

# 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.



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.

If bird watching, tree planting, prairie burning, geo-caching, butterfly tagging, adventure racing, night hiking, archery, camping, canoeing, kayaking, hunting, biking, hiking, fishing, cleaning up the river, and cross country skiing sound interesting, join others as we band together to enhance our outdoor experiences and to restore and preserve our natural resources. Email Karen at [khansen@webstercountyyia.org](mailto:khansen@webstercountyyia.org) for more info.

**On Monday, Feb. 27 at 6:00 pm, join us for a brainstorming meeting on the potential for a active, engaging stewardship group that works on the land restoring natural areas, etc.**

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## Join the Friends Group .....

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

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



Single Membership	_____	\$15
Family Membership	_____	\$25
Business Membership	_____	\$100

**Friends of  
Webster County  
Conservation  
MEMBERSHIP  
FORM**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Email** \_\_\_\_\_