



Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025



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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Fiscal Year 2025 was a year of meaningful growth and progress for Marshall County Conservation (MCC).

The most significant project was the long-anticipated Green Castle Campground. After 15 years of dreaming, planning, and fundraising, Phase 1 construction began with support from the American Rescue Plan Act, Destination Iowa, the Community Foundation of Marshall County, and many generous donors. Phase 1 will be completed in early FY 2026. Because the project came in under bid and additional funding was secured, we were also able to move forward with Phase 2, which includes the upper tier of the campground.

Green Castle also saw several important accessibility improvements, including a new family-style shower building and an accessible playground. More than \$140,000 for the playground was raised by the Friends of Marshall County Conservation. In addition, an Iowa DNR Forestry Grant—matched by the Marshall County Landfill—allowed volunteers to plant over 140 trees and shrubs at the site.

In 2025, MCC received a generous donation from former board member Ross Iverson and his wife, Beverly, to fund a new observatory at Green Castle Recreation Area. This project will be completed in FY 2026 and will provide a unique new educational opportunity for the community.

Another project that was especially meaningful was the completion of the amphitheater shade structures. Thanks to a donation from Dave and Willie Perkins in memory of their son, Matt, we were able to add much-needed shade for seating during the Live and Local Concerts. These free concerts continue to be a community favorite, often drawing crowds of more than 500, and are supported by the Friends of Marshall County Conservation and the Ann C. Keyser Trust.

Many additional projects were completed throughout the county, including sign replacements, new StoryWalk signage, riprap installation at Sand Lake Addition, and construction of a boardwalk at Arti and Red's Recreation Area by volunteers led by Roger Grimes.

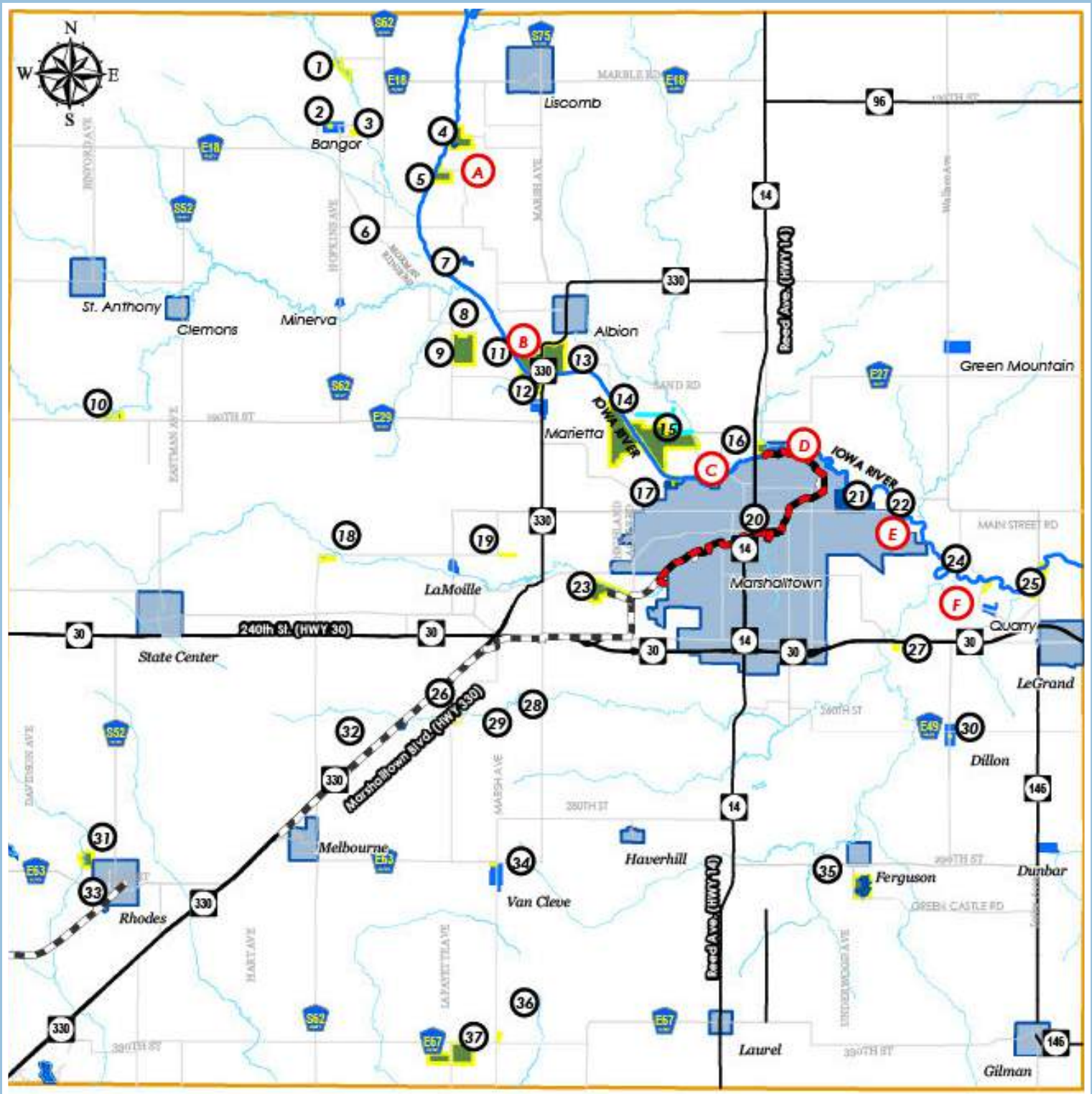
Near the end of the fiscal year, MCC received a long-awaited land donation from Gladys and Dr. Winters. The Winter Bottoms Wildlife Area, consisting of 361 acres enrolled in WRP, will provide lasting benefits for wildlife habitat, floodwater retention, and public access.

With so many accomplishments, it is hard to choose a single highlight. For me, one of the most meaningful moments was the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation selecting the Mann Wetland Wildlife Management Area as its featured project at the Under the Dome Breakfast at the State Capitol. Lawrence Mann and I had the opportunity to speak directly with legislators about the value of wetlands and public lands.

Overall, FY 2025 reflected the power of long-term planning, strong partnerships, and community support, and it leaves MCC well positioned for the future.



MAP OF AREAS



Marshall County Conservation manages 36 areas with 3451 acres of land and 15.9 miles of trails

MCCB AREAS

[illegible]

HIGHLIGHTS



Social Media Outreach:
3,806 Facebook Followers
50.1K Views
68.6K Reach
+26.8% increase in content interactions



Camping Revenues
Increased by
\$14,540.95
144% increase
146% Increase in campers
115% Increase in nights camped



Park Usage
Month Average
Three Bridges 777
Grimes Farm 2,860
Sand Lake 1,681
Timmons Grove 937
Green Castle 2,580



Environmental Education
conducted 172
programs reaching
5,928 participants

REVENUE

RECEIPTS

Reap

Program Receipts \$16,739.00

Investment Interest \$914.96

Total Reap \$17,653.96

Trust

Camping Fees \$24,622.95

Misc State Grants & Reimb \$367,070.33

Misc. Contributions/Donations \$102,442.29

Investment Interest \$2,235.98

Rents \$7,180.00

Land Rental \$26,738.29

Rent Klauenberg \$14,060.03

Total Trust \$744,259.21

Klauenberg Trust

Investment Interest \$2,148.94

Total Klauenberg \$2,148.94

CAMPING

Timmons Grove

\$16,464.95

781 Campers 744 nights

Grammer Grove

\$835.00

67 campers, 61 nights

Green Castle*

\$7,323.00

297 campers, 332 nights

*Opened in April 2025

GRANTS AND DONATIONS

- Operation Releaf \$1,000.00
- Destination Iowa \$400,000.00
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources - Fish Habitat Grant \$46,579.00
- Dave Perkins - Amphitheater Shade Project \$114,194.93
- Iowa Valley Bicycle Club - \$4,185.74
- Friends of Marshall County Conservation Zombie Run - \$500
- Green Castle Recreation Area Playground \$70,200.00
- Doug Hanken Memorial - \$2,300.00
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources - Tree Grant - \$7,260.50
- Marshall County Landfill - \$7,500.00
- James Dworzak - \$25,000.00

FACILITIES

Gander Lookout Shelter

\$2,420.00, 31 Rentals

Nature Center Classroom

\$2,480.00, 9 Rentals

Leonard Grimes Memorial Amphitheater

\$1,850.00, 4 Rentals

Grimes Farm Shelter

\$390.00, 10 Rentals



EXPENSES

General Basic

Administration

Salaries - Officers \$75,163.67
Salaries - Deputies/Assistants \$338,703.19
Emp Ben-R-FHRA CO Share \$1,602.06
Office Supplies \$2,077.20
Wearing Apparel/Co Emp \$2,572.68
Environmental Ed Supplies \$3,898.10
Official Pub/Advertising \$702.87
Postage \$1,544.15
Travel Expense \$2,233.07
Communications Equip Service \$13,815.40
School of Instruction \$2,524.20
Miscellaneous \$2,892.26
Gas/Electric Utilities \$5,5298.26
Water \$751.23
Law Enforcement Exp \$77.94
Vehicle Maintenance/Repairs \$7,205.68
Office Equipment - Maintenance \$1,115.40
License/Fees \$3,335.90
Equipment/Office Machines \$2,016.59
Total Administration \$467,530.15

Maintenance & Operation

Salaries - Other Help \$31,214.14
Miscellaneous Supplies \$2,999.30
Gas/oil \$14,463.70
Safety/Protective Supplies \$427.98
Gas/Electric Utilities \$12,229.37
Water \$4,122.45
Equipment Maintenance \$17,200.27
Misc Repairs/Service \$193,661.33
Sanitation Service \$19,265.34
Credit Card Fees \$815.67
Equipment/Office Machines \$9,995.00
Total Maintenance \$306,394.55

General Supplemental

Administration

Emp Ben FICA Co Share \$30,903.43
Emp Ben IPERS Co Share \$38,924.93
Emp Ben Health Ins Co Share \$112,158.72
Emp Ben Life Ins Co Share \$215.88
Emp Ben Dental Co Share \$3,449.04
Emp Ben Flex Adm Co Share \$229.44
Emp Ben LTD Co Share \$573.42
Emp Ben STD Co Share \$1,829.58
Emp Ben R-FHRA Admin \$241.09
Total Administration \$188,525.53

Maintenance & Operation

Emp Ben FICA Co Share \$2,387.88
Emp Ben IPERS Co Share \$179.10
Total Maintenance \$2,566.98

Cons Land Acquisition Trust Fund

Purchase \$266,276.52
Green Castle \$325,845.43
Total Trust Fund \$592,121.95



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Program	Participants	# of Groups	Percentage
Youth Program	829	30	14.10%
School Group	1446	83	24.60%
Camp	232	14	3.95%
Family Program	809	19	13.76%
Adult Program	813	20	13.83%
Concert	1669	5	28.39%
Service Club	80	1	1.36%
Totals:	5928	173	100.00%

Classrooms and Field Trips

Over the past year, Marshall County Conservation has continued to provide engaging classroom programs and field trips for students of all ages, bringing environmental education to life both indoors and outdoors. Naturalists collaborated with schools across the county, delivering hands-on lessons aligned with state science standards on topics such as wildlife adaptations, ecosystems, and conservation. In addition to these visits, naturalists conducted monthly programs with the Marshalltown XLP 4th-grade classrooms and led monthly field trips with the Junior Conservationist 5th and 6th grade XLP group, offering ongoing opportunities for deeper exploration and connection with nature.

Hundreds of students also participated in field trips to Grimes Farm and other county areas, where they explored prairies, wetlands, and woodlands through guided hikes and interactive activities. These outdoor experiences provided students with the chance to connect classroom learning to the natural world, fostering curiosity, stewardship, and a lasting appreciation for Iowa's native habitats.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Zombie Run

On a ghostly October 17th night, 132 runners braved the trails at Grimes Farm, hoping to escape the clutches of lurking zombies. Each participant earned a medal marking their fate — “Infected” or “Survivor.”

This was the fourth year hosting the popular Zombie 5K at Grimes Farm, and the event’s success wouldn’t have been possible without the help of over 100 dedicated volunteers. From serving as zombies and applying gruesome makeup, to registering runners, serving food, and handing out water, their efforts brought this thrilling event to (undead) life once again.



Summer Camps

Marshall County Conservation’s summer camps offered exciting opportunities for children ages 4 through outgoing 6th graders to explore the outdoors through hands-on learning and discovery. Divided into three age-based camps, each group focused on a unique theme designed to match their curiosity and learning level. The youngest campers, the Crickets (ages 4 through outgoing Kindergarten), explored the world of colors in nature, discovering living organisms and vibrant habitats such as wetlands, prairies, and woodlands. The Muskrats (3rd–4th graders) dove into the fascinating worlds of geology, paleontology, soil science, decomposers, and geocaching, uncovering the hidden layers of the natural world beneath their feet.

The final camp, designed for 5th and 6th graders, was an overnight adventure focused on survival skills. Campers learned to build shelters, start fires, pitch tents, and cook over an open flame. They also explored nature at night on guided hikes and practiced archery, gaining hands-on experience and confidence in outdoor skills. Together, the summer camps provided a mix of adventure, creativity, and environmental education, helping campers build lasting connections with nature and the habitats of Marshall County.



Summer Skills

In the summer of 2025, a new camp opportunity was introduced for youth ages 10 to 15. Summer Skills Camp was designed to help participants build and expand their outdoor abilities. Three sessions were offered—Geocaching, Kayaking, and Survival—with a total of 37 youth taking part and broadening their outdoor skill sets.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Live and Local

Each summer, Marshall County Conservation partners with the Friends of Marshall County Conservation to host the Live and Local Concert Series at the Grimes Farm Amphitheater. This popular annual event brings together a variety of talented artists from across Iowa, showcasing live music that celebrates local talent and community spirit. Guests also enjoy delicious offerings from area food trucks, making each concert a festive evening outdoors. In 2025, we were excited to debut new sunshades donated by the Matthew Perkins Memorial Fund, which now provide welcome shade for both performers and spectators throughout the summer. The series continues to grow each year, with more than 1,600 attendees joining us across all the concerts this past season.



Public Programming

Over the past year, Marshall County Conservation has offered a wide variety of public programs for all ages and interests, encouraging the community to connect with nature in fun and meaningful ways. Seasonal favorites included monthly kayaking during the summer, sunrise hikes from April through October, and family-friendly events such as the Nocturnal Scavenger Hunt, Monarch Tagging, and Nature Story Hour. Our Brown Bag Lunch programs continued to draw regular participants with engaging monthly topics, while our art programs with local artists inspired creativity for all ages. Throughout the school year, we also hosted monthly Homeschool Nature Adventure programs, providing hands-on outdoor learning opportunities for local homeschool families. Winter brought its own charm with the popular Shoes and Soup Snowshoe event, where participants explored snowy trails before warming up with a hearty bowl of soup. Together, these programs helped strengthen our community's appreciation for the outdoors and the natural spaces of Marshall County.



Spring into Spring Break

In 2025, Marshall County Conservation introduced a new Spring into Spring Break program, offering a fun and educational way for students to spend their school break exploring nature. Held Tuesday through Thursday of spring break, the three-day series featured a different wildlife theme each day. On Day One, participants became young birders learning about local bird species and practicing their observation skills on a guided birding walk with binoculars. Day Two focused on mammals, where students explored animal furs and skulls to discover the unique adaptations of Iowa's native species. The week concluded with Day Three's Animal Meet and Greet, giving kids the chance to get up close with the Nature Center's animal ambassadors and learn about their habitats and care. The program was a great success, blending hands-on learning with outdoor adventure and sparking curiosity about the natural world.



OUTDOOR RECREATION

Green Castle Campground

A 16-site campground, including two ADA-compliant campsites, has been added to the Green Castle Recreation Area. This project, which had been in the works since 2010, also features a shower house, dump station, and new playground equipment with ADA-compliant components. Funding for the campground was made possible through a Destination Iowa Grant and the American Rescue Plan. The Friends of Marshall County Conservation spearheaded the fundraising for the playground equipment.

The Green Castle Recreation Area already offers a variety of amenities, including a 16-acre lake that provides opportunities for fishing, canoeing, and kayaking. Visitors can also enjoy three shelter houses and a sand volleyball court.

Construction on an additional 14 campsites began in Spring 2025, further expanding camping opportunities at the park.



Tree Planting

Staff and volunteers from Emerson, Trees Forever, Friends of Marshall County Conservation, Iowa DNR Forestry, Ellsworth Community College, Marshall County Landfill, students from the Marshalltown XLP Junior Conservationists, and Marshall County staff worked together to plant 180 trees at Green Castle Recreation Area. In addition to planting, volunteers caged, mulched, and watered the trees to ensure their long-term success.

Alliant Energy assisted by pre-drilling the holes for the trees. These plantings replaced trees lost during the derecho and added new ones in the campground to provide future shade for visitors.



Winter Bottoms

In March 2025, 349.7 acres of land was transferred through a Real Life Estate (RLE) from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) to Marshall County Conservation. The land was put in a RLE in 2019 by Dr. David and Gladys Winters. This land provides additional hunting opportunities for the public.



OUTDOOR RECREATION

Arti and Red's Pond

Nestled about eight miles southwest of Marshalltown just off of Highway 330 and its adjacent trail on the way to Melbourne, Arti and Red's Pond is one of Marshall County's hidden gems with deep, clear water and a secluded feel despite its proximity to such a bustling roadway. Benson, Steve Cooper, Roger Grimes and Jim Carson built a boardwalk at Arti and Red's Pond, along with the docks installed in 2024, the boardwalk provides new fishing opportunities for anglers.

Arti and Red's Pond was purchased in June of 2023 from the Iowa Department of Transportation. This is a 9 acre area and is home to a 2.5 acre pond.



Shade Sails

Thanks to a generous donation from Dave Perkins, this project was completed in honor of his son, Matt Perkins. The newly installed tall shade sails will provide comfort and protection for visitors enjoying events at the Leonard Grimes Memorial Amphitheater, creating a welcoming space for the community to gather. The amphitheater hosts the Friends of Marshall County's concert series plus is rented for various events such as weddings or graduation parties.



Sand Lake

In Spring of 2025, 1,600 feet of shoreline on the south and east shoreline of the Sand Lake addition was armored to prevent bank erosion. The addition was purchased in the Fall of 2023 and added an additional 98 acres to Sand Lake Recreation with 52 acres of water and 46 acres of undeveloped land.

Sand Lake's proximity to Marshalltown and its status as one of the three public lakes in Marshall County make it a prime fishing area utilized by people of all ages and in large numbers. The park's infrastructure provides easy access to fishing opportunities, including a concrete boat ramp with a parking lot, fishing jetties, piers, and armored shoreline. This shoreline stabilization project allowed additional space for safe access to bank fishing.



OUTDOOR RECREATION

Prairie Burns

Periodically burning native prairie habitat is vital to maintaining its health and functionality. Staff did prescribed burns at Grimes Farm, Marietta Sand Prairie, Klauenberg, Timmons South, Green Castle, Grammer, Van Cleave, Sand Lake and Wehrmann Prairie.



Fish Stocking

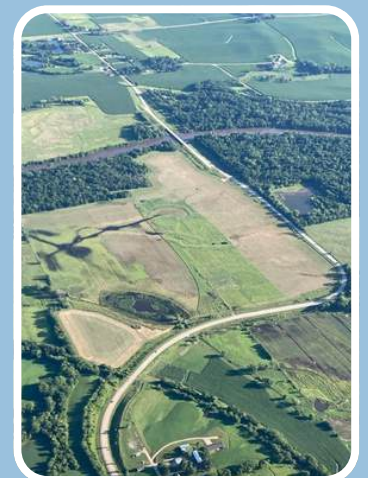
The Iowa Department of Natural Resources stocks trout at Sand Lake as part of the community trout stocking program. Sand Lake receives 1,500 trout each Fall and Spring. Community trout stockings are a great place to take kids to catch their first fish.

Additionally staff successfully raised walleye in a silt pond from fry, once they reached a suitable size, the fish were stocked into Green Castle Lake, where they will contribute to the lake's ecosystem. Stocking walleye in this manner helps restore and enhance the fish population, providing a sustainable source of fish for anglers and improving biodiversity in the lake. Additionally, introducing walleye helps to balance the lake's food chain, promoting healthier aquatic ecosystems by controlling populations of smaller fish and preventing overgrazing of aquatic vegetation. This effort also supports long-term recreational fishing opportunities, benefiting both the local community and wildlife enthusiasts.



Mann Wetlands

Natural Resource staff mowed the Mann Wetlands native prairie area to support the health and growth of the prairie ecosystem. Regular mowing in newly established prairies helps manage the early-stage vegetation, ensuring that invasive species don't dominate and that native plants have space to thrive. By removing excess growth, staff promote better air and water flow to the soil, allowing for improved seedling establishment and stronger plant growth. This step is crucial for maintaining the prairie's biodiversity and for fostering a balanced environment that supports a variety of wildlife. Properly timed mowing also helps reduce fuel loads for fire management and prevents overgrowth that could smother the prairie's delicate ecosystem.



VOLUNTEERS

Abbie Colwell
Aktion Club
Allison Walters
Andy Spellman
Anne Marie Phkhaladze
April Denton
Aubrey Denton
Barb Lageschulte
Barry Gaarder
Beth Koester
Bethany Currie
Big Bluestem Audobon Society
Bill Carey
Bob Backes
Brad Rahmiller
Brandon Runkel
Bren Lee
Carolyn Weir
Carson Wright
Carter Bell
Carter Nunn
Case Hegeman
Catholic Heart Work Camp
CERT
Chad Pietig
Charlotte McGinty
Cindy Mack
Colby Cross
Consumers Energy
Cyrus McConnell
Daisy Ambriz
Danny Nelson
Deb Kerr
Dena Graff
Denny Bruck
Diane Hall
Dianna Freiboth
Doni Sheldon
East Marshall High School
Ed Paone
Edson Gallentine
Ellie Jones
Elzya Ceren

Emerson Staff
Evan McWilliams
Gary Fulton
Gary Williams
Hobz Hooley
Hunter Dawson
Irene Williams
Isaak Bruck
Jack Mackin
James Marquess
Jeff Kooser
Jenn Clemann
Jessica Chambers
Jim Clark
Joan Studts
Joe Herring
Joyce Christensen
Julie Stahl
Kager Kremer
Kandy Witty-Kern
Katie Fink
Ken Lyons
Kristi Cameron
Krystal McConnell
Lana Bradstream
Lanny Neuse
Lenihan Junior Conservationists
Leo Herring
Lily Marquess
Lilyia Christen
Linda Mackin
Lisa Naig
Lucas Bantz
Lydia Lillibridge
Marilyn Beard
Mark Happ
Mark Proescholdt
Marshall County Master Gardeners
Marshalltown ARL
Marshalltown Police Department
Marvis Drew
Mattea Wright
Matthew Ramirez

Merle Stubbs
Mike Stegmann
Millie Heitmann
Morning Kiwanis
Myles Goodman
Nancy Sebern
Nina Herring
Pam Paone
Parker Gooding
Paul Botch
Piper Pietig
Prairie Waste Management
Preston Johnson
Randy Stubbs
Rhodes Engagement Committee
Rich Naughton
Rob Christensen
Roger Grimes
Ruben Fuentes
Ryder Reynolds
Sam Dean
Scouts 311
Seamus McConnell
Sharon Depew
Shawn Denton
Silver Cord Project
Sophie Valdez-Chavez
State Center Cub Scout Pack
Steve Armstrong
Steve Mraz
Steve Salasek
Sue Blaisdell
Tara Christensen
Theresa Walton
Thomas Stanley
Tina Nelson
Tom Deimerly
Tom Mack
Tony Briggs
Vanessa Engel
Zachary Morris
Zane Satre
Zoe Jensen



STAFF AND BOARD

STAFF

Director, Emily Herring
Maintenance Supervisor/Park Ranger,
Jeremiah Manken
Natural Resource Manager, Tyler Renze
Maintenance Technician, Alan Naughton
Maintenance Technician, Ben Steinberg
Naturalist, Emma Bruck
Administrative Assistant, Tami Krough

BOARD

Tom Mack
Pam Paone
Steve Armstrong
Rich Naughton
Tom Deimerly

SEASONAL STAFF 2024

Bill Carey, Summer Naturalist Intern
Julie Stahl, Summer Field Intern
Greg Morris, Summer Field Intern
James Lippe, Summer Field Intern
Keresten Bobby, Summer Naturalist Extern

SEASONAL STAFF 2025

Brayden Fetch, Summer Field Intern
Greg Morris, Summer Field Intern
Kaleb Grant, Summer Field Intern
Paige Martin, Summer Naturalist Intern
Abigail Kemp, Summer Naturalist Intern
Angie Dudley, Summer Naturalist Extern

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Marshall County Conservation Board wishes to express special recognition and appreciation for the cooperation given by the following agencies and people. And many others too numerous to mention.

Friends of Marshall County Conservation
Marshall County Board of Supervisors
Marshall County Auditor and staff
Marshall County Treasurer and staff
Marshall County Engineer and staff
Marshall County Attorney and staff
Marshall County Recorder and staff
Marshall County G.I.S and staff
Marshall County Zoning
Marshall County Sheriff and staff
Marshall County Chapter of Izaak Walton League
Community Foundation of Marshall County
Marshall County Pheasants Forever
Marshalltown Community YMCA
Marshalltown Garden Club
Central Rivers AEA
Iowa Valley Continuing Education
Iowa Department of Natural Resources: Wildlife &
Fisheries, Law Enforcement, & Forestry Bureaus
IDNR Resource Enhancement and Protection

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
Iowa Department of Transportation
Martha-Ellen Tye Foundation
Times Republican Newspaper
K.F.J.B. Radio Station
K.D.A.O. Radio Station
Theisens
Marshall County Soil Conservation District
Marshall County ISU Extension Service
Central Iowa Ornithologists
Marshalltown Park & Rec.
Boy Scouts of America
Central Iowa Fair
Alliant Energy
Consumers Energy
Marshall County Master Conservationists
Marshall County Master Gardeners
Marshalltown Area Chamber of Commerce
Marshall County Arts and Culture Alliance