



Northern Prairie Star

Fall Water's Edge Nature Center-Kossuth County Conservation Board

2015

The Fight of the Monarch

We've all heard the buzz by now. Monarchs are in trouble. Their population numbers are down 90 percent from what they used to be. Most of the decline can be associated with habitat loss both in the United States and Mexico. Here, Milkweed numbers are dwindling due to overuse of pesticides and habitat destruction due to economic development. In Mexico their over wintering grounds are being illegally logged for the valuable lumber. All of this destruction coupled with migration hazards such as vehicle collisions and severe weather such as extreme cold snaps in their over wintering grounds is a perfect scenario to create a massive population drop.

An initiative to save the monarchs was put into place by the Obama Administration in March and from there funds were allocated to get 20 of the most common species of milkweed on the ground ASAP. A three county-wide swath overlapping I-35 was designated as the "priority migration zone" throughout Iowa. The counties in the zone were allocated 2 million dollars through the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Any landowner within the zone with interest in planting 10 acres or more with a pollinator heavy seed mix was



A female monarch takes a moment to rest and refuel during her migration journey.

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given the seed for free as long as they could do the planting. The seed mix not only benefits Monarchs but also other pollinators who may not be as loveable, like the Honeybee.

With the seed in the ground from Canada to Mexico, the Monarchs have a corridor planted to aid them with their migration journey. Hopefully next year the priority zone will be widened and the planting of Monarch habitat will become a priority not only statewide but nationwide (east of the Rockies).

Monarchs are being heavily monitored and researched to see if they need to be put on the Endangered Species List but by acting aggressively and getting seed in the ground quickly we’re hoping to skip this step all together. So this fall, when you see a Monarch fluttering past, take a moment and admire their simple beauty and imagine a world where critters like that can’t survive. It’s not any place I want to live. By working together we can save the Monarch.

Smith Lake Dock Makeover

Thanks to members of the First Lutheran Church in Algona for donating their time on September 13 to paint the large fishing dock at Smith Lake. The dock is located on the southeast corner of the lake near the maintenance shed. Volunteers included: Sandy Schenck, Adam Denner, Linda Denner, Mary Haverkamp and Beverly Nordman. Great job guys and gals!



Hunter Safety Class

This past August the KCCB completed a Hunter Safety Education class with 22 students attending and completing the course. In addition to the nine hours of classroom materials, all the students also experienced the field portion of the class. Students had the opportunity to shoot a variety of weapons including rifles, shotguns, bows and muzzleloaders. Thanks to all the instructors who helped make the class a success.



Left: TJ Herrick instructs students on the basics of target shooting. Middle: Students practice the proper way to cross a fence with firearms in tow. Right: Alex Fosado talks about tree stand safety.

St. Benedict Wildlife Area Addition

This past July the KCCB acquired around 61 acres of wildlife habitat for public recreation. This wetland tract is located directly south of the St. Benedict Wildlife Area (4.5 miles south of Sexton on County Road P60). Around fifty-five acres of the total area have been enrolled in the Wetland Reserve Program since 1995. Wetland restoration projects and upland habitat improvements have been completed on the area including the installation of dikes, shallow water excavations and planting of native grasses. This tract combined with the surrounding public areas provides excellent habitat for waterfowl and wetland species as well as upland game and non-game species. The area is open to the public for hunting, trapping and other compatible uses.

Funding for this acquisition came from a variety of sources including grants, donations from local conservation organizations and KCCB funds. Grants received included a wildlife habitat stamp grant from the Iowa DNR and a grant from the Iowa Pheasants Forever State Trust Fund. Private organizations providing funding for this project include the East Fork Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation and Kossuth, Winnebago/Hancock, Palo Alto and Humboldt County Pheasants Forever chapters. A huge thanks to the private organizations for helping to fund this project.

Siems Playground Painting

Thanks to the Whittemore Warriors 4H club for painting the playground equipment at Siems Park. The crew of fourteen members along with their club leaders made short work of painting the slide, swing set and merry-go-round near the south shelter on August 15th. After working, the club enjoyed canoeing and swimming in the pits. 4H members included: Kelsea Kraus, Keton Kraus, Bailey Kollasch, Jensen Eischen, Jordan Hansen, Collin Casey, Jordan Buscher, Hunter Thilges, Carter Sullivan, Nate Bronk, Drew Casey, Noah Bronk, Cade Bormann and Megan Bronk (not in photo).



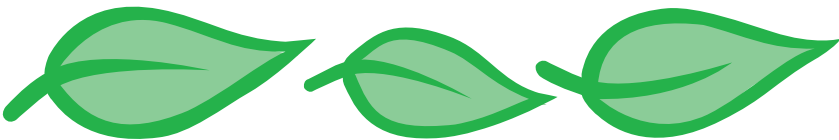
Time Flies when you're Having Fun: Pictures from a busy summer



Clockwise from Top Left: A camp kid shows off her small catch; A "nature detective" catches and examines bugs; Our new fair booth; Flower pressing public program. Nature Nerds realizing dead trees really are full of life; Campers make snakes out of old neck ties.

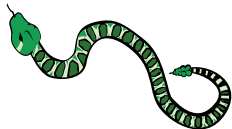


From left to right: Bernie Elbert poses with a dreamcatcher she made at the 2nd annual Outdoor Women's Day. Middle: Rebecca Wille poses with her mosquito crafts. Right: Local author Nathan Stumme poses with kids after reading his book *Life without Mosquitos*.



Upcoming programs

Snakes, Rattles and Holes
Water's Edge Nature Center
November 28
1:00 p.m.



Snakes play an important role in our environment but to some even uttering the word snake invokes deathly fear. Visit the nature center as we unveil our new temporary snake exhibit and meet our resident Corn snake while you're here. Through the snake exhibit you'll explore snake anatomy, senses, habitat and behavior. Snakes are great critters to have around. Bring the family out to turn all those nay-sayers into snake sayers!

Discover a new Hiking Spot: Hurlbert Wildlife Area
Water's Edge Nature Center
November 17
9:00 a.m.

Want to discover a new hiking spot but you don't know where to start? Join KCCB staff as we explore the 180 acre Hurlbert Wildlife Area. This piece of land has both prairie and woodland habitat as it rolls along the river and even encompasses a small lake. Assistant Naturalist Julie Fosado will lead you and talk natural history along the way. We'll meet at Water's Edge Nature Center and caravan out to Hurlbert as a group. Please call 295-2138 with any questions.