



Warren County Conservation Board
15565 118th Avenue
Indianola, Iowa 50125
(515) 961-6169
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www.warrencb.org

Annett Nature Center & ANC Park



The Annett Nature Center Park (ANCP) is 160 acres, includes a six-acre pond and a ten-acre wetland, and lies adjacent to Lake Ahquabi State Park. The Annett Nature Center opened on Earth Day 1997, the result of years of planning by the Warren County Conservation Board (WCCB) and the foresight and benevolence of Warren County citizens such as Ellis Annett. The nature center has three levels containing interpretive exhibits, classrooms, staff offices and a community room that is available for reservation. Proceeds from the sale of the Warren County Farm and Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funds also helped to create the ANCP.

The park serves as the hub for WCCB activities, acting as the focal point for many school field trips, public programs and the WCCB Day Camps. Prairie grasses and forbs, a wildlife viewing blind, an observation tower and a butterfly garden featuring sculptures and native flowers are among the attractions. WCCB maintenance and operations are also based here.

In 1955, the State of Iowa enacted a law permitting counties to establish county conservation boards. On November 5, 1974, Warren County citizens voted to create the Warren County Conservation Board. The board's purpose is to encourage a state of harmony between people and the land communities upon which our lives and welfare depend, through programs of conservation, preservation and education.

Five Warren County citizens are appointed by the Warren County Board of Supervisors to five-year terms on the conservation board, with one term expiring December 31 of each year. Meetings are held monthly and are open to the public.

The Warren County Conservation Board currently manages more than 2,200 acres of land for the benefit of county residents and visitors. A wide variety of activities are offered on the public lands the WCCB conserves for this generation and generations to come.

The picnic shelters at Hickory Hills, Otter Creek, Martensdale and Grant Nature Land are available for reservation. The Annett Nature Center is also available for private use as the WCCB schedule allows. Details are available from the WCCB office.

Hickory Hills Park

Hickory Hills features a primitive camping area, a small pond, trails, a large shelter with a raised deck, and an old homestead site that includes the original storm cellar, farmhouse foundation, and barn with a concrete floor and electricity added for park user convenience. A series of mounds built by Native Americans are also in the park. The barn and shelter are very popular for family reunions, scout outings and weddings.

Environmental Education

The Annett Nature Center is filled with activity year round. WCCB staff offer many environmental education programs and presentations. The ANC has information, interactive displays and a small collection of local species of live animals. You can visit the Annett Nature Center by appointment or during open hours. The ANC is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday (March-October). (Duties may require all staff to be away from the building on weekdays, please call ahead.) WCCB naturalists also provide educational programs in Warren County parks and schools. Staff works in classrooms with students and teachers to provide environmental experiences and information about local species and ecotypes. The WCCB education staff also provides programs for specialty groups such as civic organizations and scouts. WCCB naturalists work with every age group — pre-school to senior citizens.



Great Western Trail

The Warren and Polk County Conservation Boards manage this 16.5 mile asphalt trail jointly. Trail heads are located across from the Izaak Walton League Clubhouse on Valley Drive in Des Moines, at Inwood Street in Martensdale and on county road G14 in Cumming. Your trip along the Great Western Trail is a journey into history. It will take you through the site of Lida, past the munitions train derailment and fire near North River and across the Churchville Prairie.

Summerset Trail

Stretching 11 miles from Carlisle to Indianola, the Summerset Trail passes through rolling hills and river bottom wetland as it winds from town to town. Near the midpoint of the trail sits the village of Summerset on the south bank of the Middle River. Restroom facilities with running water are available at the Indianola trail head and pit toilets are available at the Carlisle trail head and at Banner Lakes at Summerset State Park near the halfway mark. Parking is available at all three points.



Many outdoor environmental education events are sponsored by the WCCB. Several of the events are annual programs — Kids' Fish Day, Owl Prowl and the Prairie Picnic are only a few of the favorite fun and educational events along with numerous seasonal public programs. A series of summer day camps for kids from 4–12 years of age are held at the Annett Nature Center. Each camp works with a different theme to enhance the experience and education value for the children. Call the WCCB at (515) 961-6169 or check the WCCB web site at www.warrencb.org for a list of programs and to find out how to join the Friends of Warren County Conservation and help with WCCB programs, schedule a program or request our newsletter.

Blue Flag Marsh

Established by the Iowa Department of Transportation as a wetland mitigation site, Blue Flag adjoins the Great Western Trail. The area emphasizes constructed wetlands in the lowlands and reestablished prairie on the associated uplands.

Woodland Mounds Preserve

Before European settlers came to this area, Native Americans lived along the rivers of Warren County. They were part of a culture of people who dwelled in villages located along most of the major watercourses in Iowa and the eastern half of North America. They did not leave a written record, instead they left a variety of their cultural objects such as stone tools, pottery and earthen mounds that help show us how they lived. Evidence indicates that these people lived successfully in this area for thousands of years.

Purchased with a grant from the Wildlife Habitat Stamp Fund, Woodland Mounds Preserve contains 185 acres of timber that provides habitat for many types of woodland wildlife, including many neo-tropical migrant birds such as warblers. An additional 140 acres are leased for public access.

Wilson Woods

A small bottomland wood on the North River, Wilson Woods is a protected green space for Warren County, but has no public access.

Grant Nature Land

Donated by Ferold and Dorothy Grant, this 150 acre park in northeast Warren County features a picnic shelter, a secluded pond and some wonderful woodland trails.

Lundy Acres

A lowland wood near Middle River, Lundy includes a short, pleasant trail and a picnic area.

Zo-El Annett Woods

In 1983 Ellis Annett donated this 10 acre woodland to the Warren County Conservation Board as a memorial to his late wife Zona and also in memory of his mother. Zo-El features a winding trail that climbs to the back of the park, crosses a long suspension bridge and then descends back to the trail head, affording the hiker a beautiful stroll through a lovely woodland park along with a picnic area.

Otter Creek Park

Otter Creek's shady picnic area, winding trails, secluded campsites, prairie restoration area, and small pond offer a pleasant variety of recreational and educational opportunities to park visitors. The 80 acre park was acquired by the WCCB in 1976, the board's first land purchase.



Bank Swallow Bend

543 acres of upland and wetland habitats, including more than a mile of South River, Bank Swallow Bend is a haven for fishermen, hunters, and bird watchers. Pheasants Forever, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, the Wildlife Habitat Stamp Fund, and the North America Wetlands Conservation Act all helped acquire this area for Warren County.

Rolling Thunder Prairie



Rolling Thunder Prairie is a 282 acre wildlife management area with a landscape dominated by native prairie. The preserve was purchased with assistance from Pheasants Forever and the Wildlife Habitat Stamp Fund, a competitive grant program financed by a fee included in Iowa hunting licenses.

A hilly area with a wooded creek, Rolling Thunder consists mainly of grasses and forbs. It is used extensively by a variety of upland, woodland and edge species. The western 200 acres have never been plowed and contain high quality prairie plant species.



Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The Iowa DNR is responsible for state parks and forests, protecting the environment, and managing energy, fish, wildlife, and land and water resources in Iowa. The DNR manages various lands in Warren County and their main office may be reached at:

502 E. 9th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319-0034
(515) 281-5918
www.iowadnr.gov

DNR in Warren County:
Lake Ahquabi State Park &
Banner Lakes at Summerset State Park:
(515) 961-7101
Ahquabi campground: (515) 961-7051
Wildlife areas: (515) 238-6936
Law enforcement: (515) 238-4847

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy is an international, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the diversity of life on Earth. Berry Woods and Medora Prairie are privately held lands. For information or permission to access these areas, contact TNC at:

303 Locust Street, Suite 402
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 244-5044
www.nature.org

Warren County Parks & Recreation Areas

Warren County, Iowa

