



JOURNAL

Warren County Conservation Board

Fall 2023

Species Spotlight: Compass Plant

(*Silphium laciniatum*)

The prairies of Iowa have always played a vital role in the ecosystem, providing habitat for various wildlife, including bison, elk, and prairie chickens. The deep root systems of prairie grasses help prevent soil erosion and allow for better water infiltration, making the prairies important in maintaining water quality.

Historically 70-80% of Iowa was covered in tall grass prairie. Our prairies are home to a wide variety of plants such as, big bluestem, switchgrass, and side oats grama, as well as wildflowers such as milkweed, purple prairie clover, and coneflowers. This season we are giving a shout-out to one of our natives, the compass plant.

The compass plant can be identified by several different characteristics. At a striking height of 8 feet this plant towers over many others. It has large deeply cleft leaves, and a thick stalk. Some areas on the plant can appear whitish, this is due to the rough hairs on the stalk and leaves. Bright yellow flowers will be seen blooming from mid to late summer. These flowers can grow up to 2 inches in diameter and have a daisy-like appearance.



Why is it called a compass? This is one of the most fascinating aspects of this plant. The leaves of the compass plant orient themselves to face east and west. Having the leaves face this way limits heat stress on this plant, leaves pointed east and west are less exposed to the sun. This plant's directions have been known to be very reliable, past generations have taken advantage of this and used the plant to orient themselves.

Compass plants provide for the needs of various animals. The seeds provide food for small mammals and birds. Flowers on this plant attract a great deal of pollinators including butterflies and bees. The stem is also home to dozens of insect species. Be on the lookout for this plant the next time you go hiking!



FWCC

Thank You!

Without the help of our amazing sponsors, donors, and volunteers we wouldn't be able to provide the programs and events that we do! If you or your business are interested in becoming a sponsor, donor, or volunteer please email kelsey@warrencb.org



Geocaching

Carla Kuehl-Purdum
Logsdon Family

Craft Prep

Harper Wells
Jocelyn Wells
Lori Freeman

Editing

Lori Freeman



Volunteer Opportunities

- **Filling Geocaching Cards:** There are 25 Geocaching Adventure Caches hidden in county, state and city parks around Warren County. With your help we can ensure that our cards stay full for our adventurers!
- **Halloween Hike:** Halloween hike is a family hike, where characters are placed along the trail. Participants will have the opportunity to interact and learn about each living thing. They will also have a snack and do a craft. As a volunteer you would have the chance to play one of these fun characters, lead a hike, help in the craft room or help with snacks. Help us make this a fun filled experience for our local families!



Friends of Warren County
Conservation

Annual Prairie Picnic

SATURDAY **16** SEPTEMBER

5PM - 8PM

AT THE ANNETT NATURE CENTER

Hors d'oeuvres

Main meal catered by Whip It Good Catering

Homemade desserts

Drinks

Live Music by Ryne Doughty

Live and Silent Auction

\$30 per person

For more information or to register
please follow this link.

<https://www.warrencb.org/friends-group/prairie-picnic/>

Or call Annett Nature Center @ (515) 961-6169

All proceeds support environmental educational programming

Meet A Member



Hello! My name is Linda Urbas and I have been a Friends Board member for a couple of years. I am entering my 15th year as a teacher and will be starting a new position as a 6th grade science teacher with the Knoxville Community School District this fall. My husband and I live in Milo, with our 12 year old son, who will be entering 7th grade at the Indianola Middle School.

I think much of my interest in conservation came from my experiences of growing up in Wisconsin and spending many summers roaming the neighborhood playing in the woods. We looked forward to the ripening of the local black raspberries every July and scoring the occasional wild strawberry. As a family we traveled to Lake Superior almost every summer and explored the many waterfalls common in the state.



Currently, I enjoy walking/hiking with my dog Roni, participating/helping in many of the activities sponsored by Warren County Conservation and the Friends of Warren County Conservation, such as, the yearly Geocaching Adventure, Annual Prairie Plant Sale, Book Club, Halloween Hike, and Prairie Picnic. In the future I hope to increase my knowledge of foraging and plant identification.

I believe strongly in the need for and support of public lands, and their importance to human health - physical, emotional, and spiritual. With this in mind, I'd like to leave you with two quotes from people far wiser than I.

"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."

Foreword, *A Sand County Almanac*.

"The land is the real teacher. All we need as students is mindfulness."

— **Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants***

First picture is Trace and I at Bridal Veil Falls, Spearfish Canyon, SD, this summer. Second picture is when I brought students to Annett Nature Center this May, we are hiking up to the tower.



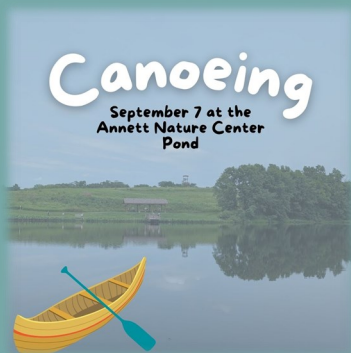
Events

September

Canoeing

September 7 | Annett Nature Center

Get the chance to paddle around our pond in a canoe! A WCCB naturalist will go over the basic equipment, paddle strokes, and get you paddling around to various areas. No experience necessary! An adult must accompany children and children must be at least 8 years old. Registration is for one adult and up to 2 additional people in their canoe. If you are signing up as an individual we may pair you with another person. There are 12 slots open, each slot equals one canoe. Life jackets (required) are provided. Register at <https://www.warrencb.org/activities/events/>



Monarch Tagging

September 10 | Otter Creek

Come discover more about monarch butterflies, their life cycle and miraculous migration to Mexico. A Warren County Conservation Naturalist will teach you how to catch and handle a monarch, determine male or female, and properly tag them in the wild as part of a national research project. All monarchs will be released after they are tagged. Bring a butterfly net if you have one, or share a park net if you don't. Fun for the whole family! Register at <https://www.warrencb.org/activities/events/>.

For more details and information, or to register for events, please visit www.warrencb.org/events or call 515-961-6169.

Monarch Tagging

September 16 | Buxton Park

Come discover more about monarch butterflies, their life cycle and miraculous migration to Mexico. A Warren County Conservation Naturalist will teach you how to catch and handle a monarch, determine male or female, and properly tag them in the wild as part of a national research project. All monarchs will be released after they are tagged. Bring a butterfly net if you have one, or share a park net if you don't. Fun for the whole family! Register by visiting <https://www.warrencb.org/activities/events/>.

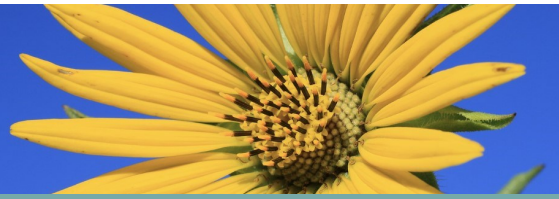


FWCC Prairie Picnic

September 16 | Annett Nature Center

Friends of Warren County Conservation would like to invite you to our annual Prairie Picnic to support environmental education programming and exhibits at the Annett Nature Center. This year's event includes an evening on the prairie with live music by Ryne Doughty. There will be hors d'oeuvres, a catered meal by Whip It Good Catering, desserts, drinks and a silent auction. The cost is \$30 per person. Seating is limited. Register by calling 515-961-6169.

Events Cont'd



Conservation and Nature Book Club

September 19 | Annett Nature Center

Friends of Warren County Conservation will be hosting a bi-monthly book club. Simply read the suggested book and join us at the Middleswart Lodge for discussion followed by an extended activity related to the book. There is no charge for this program but participants will need to provide their own copy of the book. For this session we will be discussing *Bicycling with Butterflies* by Sara Dykman. Please register ahead so we can have enough materials at www.warrencb.org/events.

October

Farm to Table

October 5 | Middleswart Lodge

Warren County Conservation invites you to a locally-sourced dinner prepared by award-winning Chef Aaron Holt, of Doolittle Farms LLC. The evening will feature a four-course farm fresh dinner. Guests are welcome to bring their own beer or wine. Glasses and non-alcoholic beverages will be provided. Enjoy your meal with friends and family, while listening to music by the Briggs Family Band and enjoying the beautiful scenery from Middleswart Lodge. Proceeds from the event will go towards an all-terrain wheelchair. Reservations are required. Tickets are \$100 per person and seating is limited. Call 515-961-6169 for reservations.



Iowa Trail Run Series

October 8 | Annett Nature Center

Join us at the hidden gem that is Annett Nature Center south of Indianola, to close out the Iowa Trail Run Series season with beautiful fall colors on a Sunday morning! You may choose to participate in a 5K or 10K race. Visit <http://iowatrailruns.com/#singlerace> to sign up.



Seasons Hike: Fall

October 14 | Zo-El Annett Woods

Join one of our naturalists on a hike to explore the foliage of fall in the Zo-El Annett Woods. Get the chance to replace the busyness of town with chirping birds and the rustling leaves, while also learning about what plants and animals are doing in the fall to prepare for winter. Register at <https://www.warrencb.org/activities/events/>.





Events

October Cont'd

FWCC Halloween Hike

October 23 | Annett Nature Center

Head on out to the Annett Nature Center for our annual Halloween Hike. This non-scary hike is educational and fun for the whole family. You will be guided along the trail to meet different characters. After the hike you can make a craft and enjoy some treats. The cost is \$5 per person and those under 3 are free.

****Registration is required. Contact 515-961-6169 to register.**

****Hikes leave the nature center at 6:30, 6:40, 6:50, 7:00, 7:10, 7:20, and 7:30.**

****Please arrive at the Annett Nature Center 5-10 minutes early to get checked in. The hikes leave the nature center at the scheduled times. In order to maintain the schedule throughout the entire night, we will not hold hikes. If you arrive late for your scheduled time, we will do our best to get you into the next open time, however that may be at the end of the night. We do have a maximum number of hikers per group time to avoid overcrowding, and to make sure everyone can hear at each stop on the trail.***

November

Birdhouse Make & Take

November 12 | Annett Nature Center

It's time to put your crafting skills to the test and build your own bird house! A naturalist will walk you through how to build the house, and you get to take it home and decorate however you like. Come Spring time you will be able to enjoy watching these beautiful animals make their home in the birdhouse you created. The cost is \$5 per bird house. Register by visiting <https://www.warrencb.org/activities/events/>.

Conservation and Nature Book Club

November 14 | Annett Nature Center

Friends of Warren County Conservation will be hosting a bi-monthly book club. Simply read the suggested book and join us at the Middleswart Lodge for a discussion followed by an extended activity related to the book. There is no charge for this program but participants will need to provide their own copy of the book. For this session we will be discussing *The Nature of Oaks* by Douglas W. Tallamy. Please register ahead so we can have enough materials at www.warrencb.org/events.

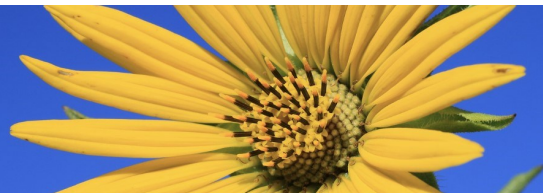
Meteor Shower Hike

November 30 | Annett Nature Center

The days are growing shorter and the nights are lasting longer. Which means it is the perfect time for a night time hike! Join one of our naturalists to get the chance to see the Geminid meteor shower and to explore the constellations in the night sky. Be sure to dress accordingly to the weather as we will be outside throughout the program. Visit Register at <https://www.warrencb.org/activities/events/> to register.



FWCC Donation



We have exciting news here at the nature center! A huge thank you to our Friends of Warren County Conservation for donating an All-Terrain Wheelchair. One of our goals is to make nature accessible to everyone. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to experience and connect with the beauty and wonder of the outdoors. Our goal is to break down the barriers that often limit access to natural spaces.

This wheelchair has several features that will accommodate citizens with short or long-term mobility limitations. This chair is a mix between a manual wheelchair and a mountain bike. It is lever-driven, which is designed to be about twice as physically efficient as a standard wheelchair. The chair can be operated manually by the user, can be pushed by someone, or both the user and pusher can work together. Hand placement on the levers can affect if the user has more torque for hills, or more speed for flat, smooth surfaces. The wheelchair comes with sand/snow tires and can be used in a variety of terrains and substrates which will encompass our trails very well. This chair can be utilized by younger elementary aged youth as well as adults, with little to no adjustments needed.

As we prepare to make this wheelchair available, we are working closely with our staff and partners to ensure proper training and guidance on its use. Safety measures and protocols will be put in place to ensure the well-being of the users and those assisting them.



Fall 2023

Warren County Conservation Board



The Warren County Conservation Board manages over 2,000 acres of land for the benefit of its citizens. Visitors can enjoy a variety of outdoor activities on areas being conserved

Subscribe to *Three Rivers Journal* via email! Reduce waste and get frequent updates on programs, parks, & projects:



wccb@warrencb.org



Board Members

Mark Kickbush, President
Ace Hendricks, Vice-President
Joe Schettler, Secretary
Sue Boll
Angie Croll

New Virginia
Ackworth
Carlisle
Carlisle
Norwalk

STAFF

Mark Wilson, Director/Operation Coordinator
Mallory Wells, Office Manager
Kelsey Longnecker, Environmental Education
Coordinator
Hannah Hernandez, Naturalist
Tyler Seufferer, Natural Resource Specialist
Kevin Brown, Conservation Technician
Mankato Stonebrook, Conservation Technician

The Warren County Conservation Board does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Warren County Conservation Board of the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Warren County Conservation Board
15565 118th Avenue
Indiana, IA 50125-8852
(515) 961-6169
www.warrencb.org
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED