



# JOURNAL

Warren County Conservation Board

Spring 2023

## Creature Feature: North American River Otter

North American river otters are known for their playful behavior. These aquatic dwellers are only seen by the lucky few. The population is stable in Iowa but since they are adapted for land and water life they can be hard to spot. Seeing these animals is an excellent sign of a healthy waterway! Learn more about this fun animal in this season's creature feature.

**Habitat:** As the name may suggest, river otters prefer to live in rivers. However they can also be found in ponds, lakes, and marshes. River otters can have a large home range, typically expanding ten miles long. However, their range can go up to thirty miles. Otters are large mammals weighing up to 30 pounds and are about 5 feet in length.

**Ferocious hunters:** Otters are expert fish hunters, an adult is able to eat up to 20 pounds of fish as long as there is a high volume. Despite the majority of their diet being fish they are not picky, they'll eat crayfish, frogs, small mammals and other aquatic animals.



**Social creatures:** These animals are found to live alone or in pairs. Otters are seen socializing in groups and displaying playful behaviors. During the months of March and April, Otters will have a litter of two or three kits. These kits will stay with their parents for about six months.

**Creature features:** Otters have long streamlined bodies, short legs, webbed feet, and waterproof coats, allowing them to be great swimmers. The tail of an otter is hard to miss as it is forty percent of the otter's body length. Their tail is muscular and helps to propel them while swimming. They are able to swim up to seven miles per hour. While swimming otters have to protect their eyes, ears, and nose. A third eyelid (nictitating membrane) does just that! The eyelid is transparent enabling them to see while underwater, they are also able to close their ears and nose to prevent any debris from getting in.

Keep an eye out on our rivers to see if you can be one of the few to spot this playful animal!



# Thank You!

## 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 [kelseylongnecker@warrencb.org](mailto:kelseylongnecker@warrencb.org)

## Plant Sale Prep



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## Volunteer Opportunities

- **Kids Fish Day:** Help us give youth the opportunity to learn how to tie knots, cast, and fish safely!
- **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!





# Meet A Member



## Angie Croll

Meet the newest Warren County Conservation Board member, Angie Croll. Angie has been a fan of WCCB since attending her first event in May of 2018 with her three children. Since then, the Annett Nature Center and all of the Warren County parks have become a big part of the summers for her and her family. A family favorite is the themed geocaching adventures. They have completed the last 3 adventures and are looking forward to completing the Mineral Adventure this year. Summer camps, Wild Women of the Woods, various WCCB programs and themed hikes also make their way on to the Croll calendar. Angie enjoys being outside observing wildlife and flowers around the area and being wowed by the natural world.



Angie and her husband, Doug, are from Urbandale and moved to Norwalk in 2017 with their children Lauren (13), Zach (11) and Collin (5). Zo-El Annett Woods is near their home and is a favorite because of the quick loop, suspension bridge and friendly farm dog that visits them on the trail. Angie is looking forward to learning all she can about conservation and encouraging staff to continue to provide quality programming and facilities for the public.



# Events

## May

### A Day for the Dogs Partnered with Kiya Koda

#### **May 6th | Annett Nature Center**

A day for the dogs is all about encouraging you to get outside with your pup-pal! Don't have a pup of your own? Come meet some of the adoptable Kiya Koda dogs and take one on a walk to give them some exercise, enrichment, and fun!! (Maybe you even want to adopt one and take it home with you!)



### Dutch Oven Cooking

#### **May 12 | Annett Nature Center**

Put your taste buds to the test with this delicious program. Enjoy good food and good company as WCCB naturalist demonstrates how to prepare different recipes. Take home recipes so you too can create these tasty meals! Please register by May 11th, and let us know about any dietary restrictions.



### Conservation and Nature Book Club

#### **May 16 | 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. Please register ahead so we can have enough materials at [www.warrencb.org/events](http://www.warrencb.org/events).

### Fire Starting and Make & Take Fire Starters

#### **May 17 | McCord Park**

Fire? Yes! Let's talk Fire!

Join a WCCB naturalist to learn about the history of fire starting, and some of the different techniques and practices. Learn how to set yourself up for success to get a fire going whether that is with lighter, a match, or a different method! Get a chance to try your hand at fire-starting and make your very own fire starters to take home with you.

We'll provide some hot dogs and buns to test our fire after we get them started!

This activity is free but please pre-register by Monday, May 15th. For adults and children ages 12 and older





# Events Cont'd



## **FWCC Native Plant Sale**

**May 16 | Annett Nature Center**

Friends of Warren County Conservation will be hosting their annual native plant sale. Spruce up your landscaping with some native plants that the pollinators will love.

A few favorites include a variety of milkweeds, purple coneflower, White Indigo, Cardinal flower, New England Aster, Goldenrod, Blazing Star, Columbine, Obedient plant, and many more. Quantities are limited. All proceeds from the plant sale will benefit Warren County Conservation Board educational programming and exhibits.

Friends will be at the Annett Nature Center from 8am-2pm, but remember, some plants are more limited and may not last until 2pm!



## **June**

### **Story Walk**

**June | Annett Nature Center**

StoryWalk® is a fun idea to get communities outside and reading. Each month, we will put new nature-themed children's stories along trails in different parks. Stories will all be nature themed and fun to read! Please sign our guest book at the end of each StoryWalk® so we know how many people made it out.

## **Kids Fish Day**

**June 3 | Annett Nature Center**

Have some fishing fun with us! Bring the family out to learn the art of fishing. Participants can learn how to tie knots, cast, and fish safely. There will be a fishing competition that will take place at Lester Pond. Awards, door prizes, and a free fish-cleaning demonstration will also be happening. Bring your own pole or borrow one of ours. Bait will be provided. It's FREE — join us. A fishing license is not required for participants at Kid's Fish Day. Please register each child so we can plan for bait and materials! This program is put on by Friends of Warren County Conservation and the Izaak Walton League.



## **Wild Outdoor Women**

**June 9-10 | Annett Nature Center**

Would you like to meet other women with similar interests, attend classes to learn new skills and enhance older ones, or just kick back in the great outdoors? If so, this is the event for you. Grab your hiking boots and your gal pals and get ready for an exciting day in the outdoors! With so many interesting sessions to choose from, the hardest part will be deciding which to attend. The registration fee is \$60 and itinerary includes: Friday night activities, breakout sessions on Saturday, silent auction, and a Wild Outdoor Women gift!



## **StandUp Paddleboard**

**June 22 | Annett Nature Center**

Get out on the water and give stand up paddleboarding a try. A WCCB naturalist will go over the basic equipment, paddle strokes, and get you paddling around at various areas. No experience necessary! An adult must accompany children and children must be at least 10 years old. Space is limited to 10 participants and registration is required.



## **SUMMER CAMP OPENINGS!**

Want your kiddo to have a blast this summer at camp? Well you are in luck we have a few more openings for our Kestrel Camp! This camp is for ages 8-9, and runs July 10-14 from 9am –3pm Monday– Wednesday. Thursday to Friday will be an over night that runs from 3pm to 8am. This camp is themed around early lowans. We will learn about Native Americans, Pioneers on the Oregon Trail, Early lowans in Nature and Primitive Cooking. Each day will include games, crafts and hiking!

# Events Cont'd

## **International Mud Day**

**June 29 | Annett Nature Center**

Did you know there is a National Mud Day? It takes place annually on June 29th!

Come out and help us celebrate National Mud Day with an invitation to get muddy and enjoy exploring mud with your kids! Discover, or rediscover, the messy joy that comes with a good mud pile. We will be watering down a mud pit at the Annett Nature Center to celebrate this holiday.

You can observe this holiday in any way you like, make a mud pie, have a mud bath, or a mud mask! Get as muddy as you can, we'll have a hose available for a quick rinse-off after you are done enjoying yourself. Share your photos and tag us on Instagram or Facebook. Heads up though, you will want to wear clothing and shoes that you don't mind getting dirty or becoming your "mud clothes."

\*This program will be canceled if we are under drought conditions\*





# Signs of Spring



## Grant Nature Land

Grant Nature Land campground expansion is nearing completion, 5 new camping sites have been added, to get 15 sites total. Electric will be available at all sites. The biggest addition to the park is a shower house featuring two flush bathrooms and two single shower rooms with a hydrant outside the building. Finishing touches are being made to the shower house, new grass is growing. New rock on the campground road has been spread. Staff is working hard to get to get the campground open soon. We are just as eager as everyone else to see this new campground up and running.



## Springing into action with wildflowers!

Phlox, Spring Beauty, Common Blue Violets, Downy Yellow Violet, and more are blooming around the county. These four flowers are bloom from mid to late spring, they can be seen for 1 to 2 months. You can find them scattered on the forest floors. The colorful flowers will stay open during warm sunny days, and will close when cloudy and at night. Not only are these wildflowers beautiful to look at, but they also play an important role in our ecosystem. They provide food and habitat for pollinators such as bees and butterflies. So, what are you waiting for? Get outside and enjoy the beautiful spring wildflowers while they last!





# Spring 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

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