



## JOURNAL

SPRING 2025

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT:  
MOUNTAIN LION*Pumaconcolor***Description**

Mountain lions are a large cat historically native to Iowa, though they were extirpated by pioneers who sought to protect their farm animals.

Standing up to 3 feet tall, males can weigh as much as 160 pounds, while females can reach up to 110 pounds. Their coat is mostly tan, with some white and black around their face and white on their belly and chest.

**Habitat**

Mountain lions are capable of living in a variety of habitats, including deserts, grasslands, forests, and (of course) mountains!

They have breeding populations in 15 western states and Florida. Occasionally, young males may wander into Iowa, but the state lacks the necessary habitat to support a breeding population.

**Life Cycle**

Mountain lions can live up to 10 years in the wild. Every two years, they typically give birth to between 1 and 6 cubs.

**Agility**

These fierce predators are full of incredible skills! They can reach speeds of up to 50 mph, and that's just the beginning— they can also leap up to 15 feet vertically and cover an impressive 40 feet horizontally!

**Diet**

Mountain lions are carnivores, and their diet primarily consists of deer. However, they also hunt rabbits, turkeys, raccoons, and other mammals.

**Fun Fact**

Mountain lions hold the Guinness World Record for the animal with the most names. How many names, you ask? A whopping 40! Some of these include puma, panther, cougar, ghost cat, painter, catamount, and mountain screamer.



# 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 [hannahh@warrencountyia.org](mailto:hannahh@warrencountyia.org)

### Iowa Bike Coalition

Louis Sajovec  
Mitch Anderson

### Hidden Heart Hunt

Lori Freeman

### Donations/ Sponsors

**FWCC-** Candy Cane Hike Kids basket  
**Halterman Live Bait-** Minnows



## Volunteer Opportunities for 2025

### SUMMER

**Geocache Adventure:** Contribute to our geocaching adventure by adopting a geocache! By adopting a geocache, you take responsibility for regularly restocking and ensuring it remains in excellent condition.

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

**Farm to table (Berry foraging):** We are looking for volunteers to assist us in harvesting fresh berries for our upcoming farm-to-table event. Help us gather the freshest ingredients for a locally grown culinary experience.

### FALL

**Geocache Adventure:** Contribute to our geocaching adventure by adopting a geocache! By adopting a geocache, you take responsibility for regularly restocking and ensuring it remains in excellent condition.

**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!

**Farm to table (Decorations):** Are you skilled at arranging decor? We are seeking assistance in decorating for our upcoming farm-to-table event. Join us in creating a beautiful atmosphere that showcases the elegance of farm-fresh ingredients.



# MEET-A-MEMBER



## Deb Schiel-Larson

Friends Member

Hello! I'm Deb Schiel-Larson. I've lived in Warren County nearly 40 years and I am the current Secretary of the FriendsWCC Board.

Paul and I raised our children here and we all enjoyed the many opportunities at Annett Nature Center, in our Warren County parks and on our trails. The children's summer day camps are still very special memories for us. Our son's Cub Scout group helped clear brush near Annett Nature Center too.

Paul and I remember attending a concert years ago at Warren County Conservation by the now famous mandolin player Peter Ostroushko! He became well known when he played regularly on Minnesota Public Radio's "A Prairie Home Companion."

I worked as a licensed Landscape Architect with a degree from Iowa State University, and also as a certified city planner. I was fortunate that I could focus on site planning with topsoil and tree preservation as priorities. Through the IOWATER volunteer water quality monitoring program, my daughter and I learned to do basic chemical, biological and habitat assessments. This experience was the start of my interest in respecting water as a resource and helping with public education related to stormwater infiltration, retention and prevention of soil erosion.

I also worked to raise public awareness on the impact of water runoff and the benefits of deep rooted, native prairie plants in urban and rural environments. When we found ways to retain and infiltrate rainwater and melted snow, we could reduce pollution and slow down the rate that water reaches streams and rivers. Many people do not realize that "storm sewer" pipes are connected directly to streams.

After I retired from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, I wanted to continue my work in natural resources and give back to Warren County Conservation. Our family joined the Friends group and I've been serving on the FriendsWCC Board since 2022.

Our family has always enjoyed riding our bikes, camping, hiking, fishing, canoeing and kayaking together. Paul and I are annual volunteers for acoustic bat monitoring. I am a member of the Iowa Women in Natural Resources group (IWINR), and I serve as a volunteer mentor/counselor at our annual Outdoor Journey for Girls summer camps. I'm learning Diné (Navajo) weaving techniques. I played the carillon while I was a student at Iowa State and I'm ringing smaller bells now in the Indianola First United Methodist Church handbell choir.

Our kids are grown. Our home now includes a rescued horse, a rescued dog and cats. We feel very lucky to live in Warren County and look forward to continued support of the Warren County Conservation Board!



Annual Acoustic Bat Monitoring volunteer (Paul and I do mobile and stationary sites). That's my look of relief after we verified that we really did do the computer and microphone set up correctly, and we really did have data saved!



I love horses. This is me with Darby.



Out in a canoe with Paul.

# EVENTS

## April

### Geocaching Disease Adventure Begins



**April 1 | Warren County**



There are 25 Geocaching Disease Adventure Caches hidden in county, state, and city parks around Warren County. Your challenge is to explore the parks and find them all using a GPS. Each disease cache includes an instruction card, a logbook, and a stack of disease trading cards. Sign the logbook to show that you found the cache and take a disease trading card for your collection. After finding all 25 caches, take your collectible cards to the Annett Nature Center. We will give you the coordinates to find the last cache challenge. All participants who finish the challenge by November 1, 2025, will receive a finisher's medal and will be added to our Geocaching Adventure Finishers Gallery.

### Geocaching 101

**April 8 | McCord Park**

Looking for a fun new outdoor hobby? Want to participate in a county-wide Geocaching Adventure? Come discover the fun and excitement of geocaching, the high-tech outdoor scavenger hunt that uses a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit!

Join a Warren County Conservation Board Naturalist for a beginner course to learn about geocaching and how to use the Geocaching app on your phone. Then head out in the park to find "treasures" called caches. Fun for the whole family! After this session, you will be prepared to head out on your own and find the Geocaching Mineral Adventure caches hidden in Warren County Parks. This activity is free, but please register by Tuesday, April 4th. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

It is a good idea to create an account on the Geocaching app or on geocaching.com prior to the event. If you need help with that, please give us a call at 515-961-6169.

Registration opens March 8, 2025.

### Homeschool Wednesday: INSECTS

**April 16 | Annett Nature Center**

For April's Homeschool Wednesday, we will be diving into the world of insects! This program will introduce you to the diversity of insects, exploring their unique body parts, feeding habits, and the crucial role they play in our ecosystems. Learn how these tiny creatures interact with their environment, contribute to pollination, decomposition, and even help us maintain a healthy planet.

This program's target age is 2nd grade and up.

Registration opens March 16th, 2025.

### Extended Hours

**April 17 | Annett Nature Center**

Take advantage of our extended hours on the 3rd Thursday of each month to visit the Annett Nature Center! There may be new things to check out, an activity, or a chance to visit after school and work that might be harder during our regular office hours! No registration required!



### Earth Day

**April 22 | Annett Nature Center**

Happy Earth Day! Join us at the Annett Nature Center for an Earth Day celebration. Discover how you can make a positive impact on our beautiful planet, enjoy making and taking sustainable crafts, and enjoy our exhibits and trails! Registration is not required but encouraged!



## May



### Family Camp



**May 2-3 | Annett Nature Center**

Enjoy a Harry Potter-style family camp. Compete with your loved ones and bond over the excitement of our challenges. Learn valuable lessons in teamwork, communication, and problem-solving as you navigate through various obstacles and tasks. Participate in camp games and enjoy an overnight camp with your family. Don't miss out on this unforgettable opportunity to connect with nature and each other in a fun and thrilling way. Your family may register beginning Tuesday, March 4th, 2025, at 8 a.m. Registration may be completed in person at the Annett Nature Center (15565 118th Ave, Indianola, IA) or by calling us at 515-961-6169 (no e-mail registrations will be accepted).

\*The cost is \$20 per person in your family

\*Camp fees are non-refundable

### Extended Hours

**May 15 | Annett Nature Center**

Take advantage of our extended hours on the 3rd Thursday of each month to visit the Annett Nature Center! There may be new things to check out, an activity, or a chance to visit after school and work that might be harder during our regular office hours! No registration required!



# EVENTS

## Homeschool Wednesday: FISHING

**May 21 | Annett Nature Center**

Get ready to cast your line and dive into the world of fishing! Whether you're a beginner or an experienced angler, this program will teach you everything you need to know about fishing! Learn how to tie knots, how to take a fish off the hook, cast, and how to handle a fish. Join us for a hands-on experience in the great outdoors! The target age for this program is 4th grade and up. Registration opens April 21st, 2025.

## Wild Outdoor Women

**May 30-31 | 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 outdoors! With so many interesting sessions to choose from, the hardest part will be deciding which to attend. The registration fee is \$65, and the itinerary includes: Friday night activities, breakout sessions on Saturday, a silent auction, and a Wild Outdoor Women gift!



## June

### Kids Fish Day

**June 7 | Annett Nature Center**

Have some fishing fun with us! Bring the family out to participate in the art of fishing. The fishing competition will take place at Lester Pond. There will be awards, door prizes, and a free fish-cleaning demonstration. Bring your own pole or borrow one of ours. Bait will be provided. You will also be able to try fish bites cooked by the Izaak Walton League. **Fish will be fried in peanut oil.** 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 Warren County Izaak Walton League. Registration opens April 7th, 2025.

## International Mud Day



**June 18 | Annett Nature Center**



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

Come 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 festive day 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. You will want to wear clothing and shoes that you don't mind getting dirty or that will become your "mud clothes."

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

Registration is not required but is encouraged.



## Extended Hours

**June 19 | Annett Nature Center**

Take advantage of our extended hours on the 3rd Thursday of each month to visit the Annett Nature Center! There may be new things to check out, an activity, or a chance to visit after school and work that might be harder during our regular office hours! No registration required!



You when you miss  
one of our programs.

vs

You when you attend  
our programs.







# PARK UPDATES

## Medora Prairie

This past November the WCCB partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to remove eastern red cedars and other undesirable trees to help restore this 102-acre prairie to its natural state. Historically, prairies were maintained by natural practices like fire and grazing, which kept tree encroachment in check. However, with the suppression of fire, changes in land use, and reduced grazing, trees like cedars have started to invade these once-open landscapes.

Cedar removal is essential to restoring native grasslands, it improves habitat for wildlife, promotes soil health, and reduces fuel loads for safer prescribed fires. The before photo shows just how much the cedars were encroaching, with over 10 continuous acres cleared in this unit.

We would like to again thank the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for this partnership and are looking forward to future projects.



Unit 2  
Before



Unit 2  
After

Scan the QR Code to see the drone footage of the entire Medora Prairie project!



### Did you know?

Over 80% of Iowa used to be covered by tall grass prairie! Less than 0.1% of that prairie remains today.





# SPRINGIN' INTO ACTION



## DOODLE DO YOU KNOW

As many of you know, spring is often referred to as "baby season," and it's also the peak time for mating behaviors in many animal species. Early spring, in particular, offers a unique opportunity to observe some fascinating animal behaviors. One species to keep an eye on is the American Woodcock, also known as the Timberdoodle.

Peent



The American woodcock performs a captivating mating display known as the 'sky dance'. Males select a spot on the ground to begin, where they start by making distinctive "peent" calls. Then, they take flight, spiraling upward to heights of up to 350 feet. As they descend in a zigzag pattern, they continue chirping, landing near a female to start the dance all over again. This dance starts in the early spring around dawn and dusk.

Get out into our parks this spring to try to get a glimpse of these awesome birds!

## ECKOFF NATURE PRESERVE

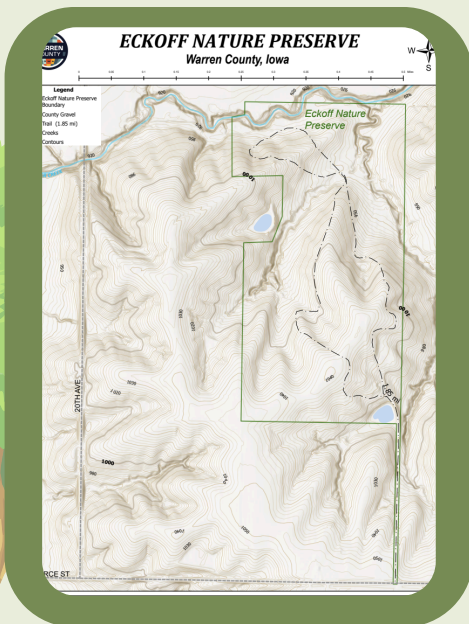
ADDRESS:  
2495 PIERCE STREET, ST.  
CHARLES, IA, 50240

Warren County Conservation is excited about our newest addition, the Eckoff Nature Preserve. This beautiful slice of Iowa comes from Ron and Barb Eckoff, who cared and managed the property for 25 years. They have donated the land to teach and inspire future generations.

The 80-acre preserve, located on the western side of the county, offers the public a chance to explore more of Warren County. Eckoff Nature preserve has a mix of prairie, woodlands and even features a pond offering a variety of landscapes to explore. Hiking along the 1.85-mile trail loop is a great way to discover a wide range of plants and animals. Whether you are a bird person, plant person or a hiker this park provides plenty of opportunities for you!

Thank you Ron and Barb Eckoff for your dedication to preserving and resorting this amazing property.

**Eckoff Nature Preserve is open now! Get out there and start exploring!**





# SPRING 2025

## Warren County Conservation Board

The Warren County Conservation Board manages over 2,700 acres of land for the benefit of its citizens. Visitors can enjoy a variety of outdoor activities on areas being conserved for this generation and generations to come.



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Warren County Conservation  
Board  
15565 118th Avenue  
Indianola, IA 50125-8852  
(515) 961-6169  
[www.warrencb.org](http://www.warrencb.org)  
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