

Winter 2024

Conservation Matters

Important Dates:

Tiny Nature Adventures

@10:00am

January 3rd

February 7th

March 6th

January 14th

Insects in Winter

February 18th

Nature Center Open
House

March 9th

Hike the Hills

March 19th

First Day of Spring

March 23rd

Easter Egg Scavenger
Hunt

Environmental Education

Mills County Conservation offers free environmental education programs for groups throughout the county. With the new year, MCC would like to expand the services we offer to more participants and diverse groups. These programs reach beyond school fieldtrips and classroom visits. We are committed to connecting people of all ages and abilities to our natural world. Long term care facilities, civic groups, homeschool families, and local organizations are encouraged to reach out and see how we can serve your environmental education needs.

Interest has been expressed to schedule bi-weekly or monthly science/ environmental education programs for homeschool families at local parks and Pony Creek Nature Center. If this is something you or someone you know would be interested in, I will be holding a casual meeting at Pony Creek Nature Center on Wednesday, January 24th @ 1:00 pm to work out times, dates and topics that would work best for curriculums.

Summer Jobs Available

Conservation Aides

Seeking two qualified individuals to work in the county parks and wildlife areas. The candidates are responsible for performing a variety of routine maintenance, service, and cleaning duties and to assist in the upkeep of conservation properties.

Naturalist Intern

Seeking one qualified individual that will assist with environmental education programs, summer camps, cleaning, and care of live education animals. Must be willing to work most Saturdays to open Pony Creek Nature Center and greet visitors.

Seasonal positions running from mid-May thru mid-August.

Must possess a valid driver's license and be 18 at the time of hire.

Pre-employment physical and drug test is required.

SALARY: \$14.00/hour

Kreg Kinzle

Mills County Conservation lost a valued board member and friend, Kreg Kinzle. Kreg dedicated his service and guidance on the board for over a decade. During his time on the board, he helped guide decisions and provide input on numerous large accomplishments for Mills County Conservation. A few of the projects include, the construction of Pony Creek Nature Center, expanding Pony Creek Park, canoe accesses on the Nishnabotna River, deluxe rental Cabins and a new maintenance shop. Kreg was always happy to help with fishing fieldtrips and passed his love of fishing to people of all ages in our county. Kreg once said, "Serving on the Mills County Conservation Board is like the icing on the cake to a wonderful life here in Mills County."



Mills County Conservation received memorial donations in Kreg's honor that will be directed towards a handicap accessible fishing dock.

Three of our board members, Lorraine Zanders, David Hendrix and Erik Van Fleet along with director, Jerad Getter accepted the donations from Kreg's wife, Janiece Kinzle.



Park Highlight



Kenny's Woods is a twenty-acre woodland located off Highway 34, east of Glenwood. There is a parking area 1/5th of a mile from the corner of 255th and Jagger Road. As most of the local landscape is dominated by crop fields it is a nice site for wildlife to find shelter and water. This timber provides a good place for a short hike, bird watching, mushroom hunting, and nature viewing in general. Turkey and deer are regularly spotted, as well as a variety of birds.

Mills County Neighbor

What has 6 arms and comes in 35 different shapes? If the weather predictions are correct, we will be seeing quite a bit of them this month. When the air is colder than 0° Celsius (or 32° Fahrenheit), snow crystals begin to form from water vapor high in the atmosphere. As more water vapor condenses and freezes on these crystals, they form the beautiful shapes and branches of snowflakes. The ice crystals that make up snowflakes are symmetrical (or patterned) because they reflect the internal order of the crystal's water molecules as they arrange themselves in predetermined spaces (known as "crystallization") to form a six-sided snowflake.

The temperature at which a crystal forms and the humidity determines the basic shape of the ice crystal. Long needle-like crystals will form at 23 degrees F and very flat plate-like crystals at 5 degrees F.

The intricate shape of a single arm of the snowflake is determined by the atmospheric conditions experienced by entire ice crystal as it falls. A crystal might begin to grow arms in one manner, and then minutes or even seconds later, slight changes in the surrounding temperature or humidity causes the crystal to grow in another way. Although the six-sided shape is always maintained, the ice crystal (and its six arms) may branch off in new directions. Because each arm experiences the same atmospheric conditions, the arms look identical.



Types of Snowflakes ... SnowCrystals.com

Upcoming Events:

Tiny Nature Adventures

January 3rd, February 7th, March 6th

The first Wednesday of each month from 10:00-11:00 am at Pony Creek Park Nature Center (extra dates scheduled during the summer). Nature themed activities for children ages 2-5 years old, siblings are welcome to tag along. Adult must stay with child and pre-registration is required. We will be outdoors when weather allows so dress accordingly.

Insects in Winter- January 14th @ 2:00pm

How and where do our local insects survive the winter weather? Come out to Pony Creek Nature Center to learn about the fascinating ways our small friends have adapted to endure freezing temperatures. After the presentation we will go for a hike to look for evidence that insects have left behind from the previous seasons and what they might be up to now. Pre-registration is greatly appreciated.

Pony Creek Nature Center OPEN HOUSE- February 18th @ 1:00-3:00 pm

Pop in anytime between 1:00-3:00 to check out the displays, visit with the live education animals, and visit with the Naturalist.

Hike the Hills- March 9th @ 1:00 pm

The Loess Hills are calling you. Let's celebrate, it's the day after International Women's Day, the day before Daylight Savings Time begins and 10 short days until the first day of Spring. West Oak Forest is rugged terrain so please wear sturdy footwear and bring water. This park is located at 55877 195th St, Pacific Junction.

Easter Egg Trail Hunt- March 23rd @ 2:00 pm

Easter Eggs will be placed in locations throughout Pony Creek Park. Clues will help hunt down each location, as you explore the park and gather eggs. Sturdy shoes for hiking are recommended. Weather permitting! Please call 712-527-9685 to register for this program.

Pre-registration for programs is quick and easy to do. All we need is a name and the number of participants that will be attending. You can call the Pony Creek Nature Center at 712-527-9685 or email dmontgomery@millscountyconservation.gov

