

Spring 2025

Conservation Matters

Important Dates:

Pony Creek
Camp Ground
Open
April 1st

Easter Egg Hunt
and Hike
April 12th

Tiny Nature
Adventures
May 7th

Homeschool Group
May 9th and 23rd

Conservation Matters Newsletter will be available ONLY in electronic form after this edition. If you receive the newsletter via traditional mail, please contact our office to be added to an email list. Special accommodations can be made for individuals that only have traditional mail as an option.

**Conservation Matters is also found on our website,
<https://www.millscountyiowa.gov/191/Conservation-Parks>**

Summer Camp

Summer camps are always a fun time at Pony Creek Nature Center that many local families look forward to during the month of June. This year will be our 9th year offering these free opportunities to get kids outdoors learning and having fun.

Nature Detectives is for 6–9-year-olds with a focus on slowing down to look at the parts of nature that are often overlooked. Exploring, questioning, documenting and investigating.

Nature Connect is for 10–13-year-olds. This group will be challenged to step away from our electronic world and find a connection with our natural one! Fishing, canoeing, hiking, and exploring ecosystems will fill the three sessions of camp.

If you have a child interested in attending there are a few ways to get signed up. The first step is to contact Pony Creek Nature Center via 712-527-9685 or email dmontgomery@millscountyiowa.gov to check availability. If there is space in a camp a registration form will be emailed or printed copies are available at the Nature Center. Each camp is limited to 20 participants.

Camp details: All camps are held Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 9:00am-noon at Pony Creek Nature Center. Both sessions offer the same activities.

Nature Detectives is offered June 3rd, 4th, 5th and June 17th, 18th, 19th

Nature Connect is offered June 10th, 11th, 12th and June 24th, 25th, 26th

We haven't forgotten about our younger friends! Tiny Nature Adventures is a year-round preschool aged program that changes its schedule during the month of June. Every Monday in June from 10:00-11:00 we will explore a new topic and activity for children ages 2-5 years old. Adult must stay with child and weather permitting we will be outdoors for the duration of the program. Pre-registration for each class is greatly appreciated to help with planning, give us a call or email if you plan to attend. June 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th are the dates for the "Summer edition" of Tiny Nature Adventures.

Upcoming Events:

Easter Egg Hunt and Hike-April 12th @ 2:00 pm

Fun hike and hunt for older kids that have outgrown the town hunts. "Easter Eggs" will be placed in locations throughout Pony Creek Park with clues to help you hunt down each location, as you explore the park and gather paper eggs. No basket necessary. Sturdy shoes for hiking are recommended. Weather permitting!

Tiny Nature Adventures

Typically held first Wednesday of each month from 10:00-11:00 am at Pony Creek Nature Center. 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.

Homeschool Environmental Education-

Pre-registration is REQUIRED to attend! Join us at Pony Creek Nature Center to learn and explore. Classes are typically held the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 1:00pm, please call for more information or to get registered. April 9th, 23rd and May 7th and 21st will be the upcoming homeschool opportunities. Homeschool classes will take a summer break and resume in the September.

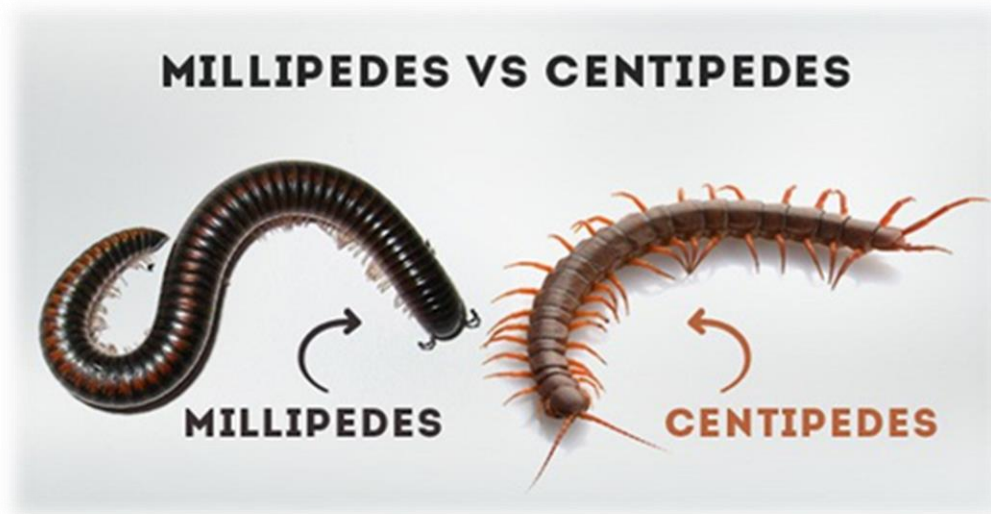
Programs will be added as weather and schedules allow, please follow the Mills County Conservation Facebook Page for Pop Up program announcements.

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

Mills County Neighbor

Millipedes and centipedes are sometimes confused with one another but besides a lot of legs, they have little in common. Millipedes have two pairs of legs per segment, tucked under their round body. Depending on the size of the individual this could equal up to 400 legs. This walking worm like invertebrate prefers to hide in moist outdoor places such as loose soil where they feed on decaying organic materials. If a millipede feels threatened it will coil up on a ball and release a foul-smelling odor.



Centipedes have one pair of legs per segment with a flattened, elongate body. If you are looking for a centipede (or trying to avoid one) they can be found in damp, dark places such as woodpiles and mulch. Centipedes can bite if handled and feed on small insects and arthropods.

Both common invertebrates are important features in their ecosystems. Millipedes are busy recycling organic ground matter and centipedes are helping to control potential pests. Welcome them to your garden and outdoor living spaces by avoiding the use of insecticides.

Bumble Bee Atlas

The Iowa Bumble Bee Atlas Needs You!

The Iowa Bumble Bee Atlas, initiated in 2024, is a community science project focused on tracking and conserving Iowa's native bumble bees. Thanks to the hard work of volunteers, the Iowa Atlas has already made enormous strides in understanding the distributions and habitat needs of these important pollinators. However, we still have a lot to learn about bumble bees and could use your help!

To learn more about native bumble bees, and what you can do to help them, sign up for the Iowa Bumble Bee Atlas spring webinar series (details below). You can also visit www.BumbleBeeAtlas.org to learn more about the [project](#), register for [upcoming events](#), or sign up for the Atlas [newsletter](#). The Iowa Bumble Bee Atlas is a collaboration between Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources, Iowa State University, and the Xerces Society.

Spring Webinar Series:

Ecology and Conservation of Bumble Bees (April 19, 2025, 2 pm - 3:30 pm CST)

Registration Link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BVPnKSx-RFGcqSIddPdbBQ

Bumble Bee Atlas Protocols for Minnesota and Iowa (May 10, 2025, 10 am - 12 pm CST)

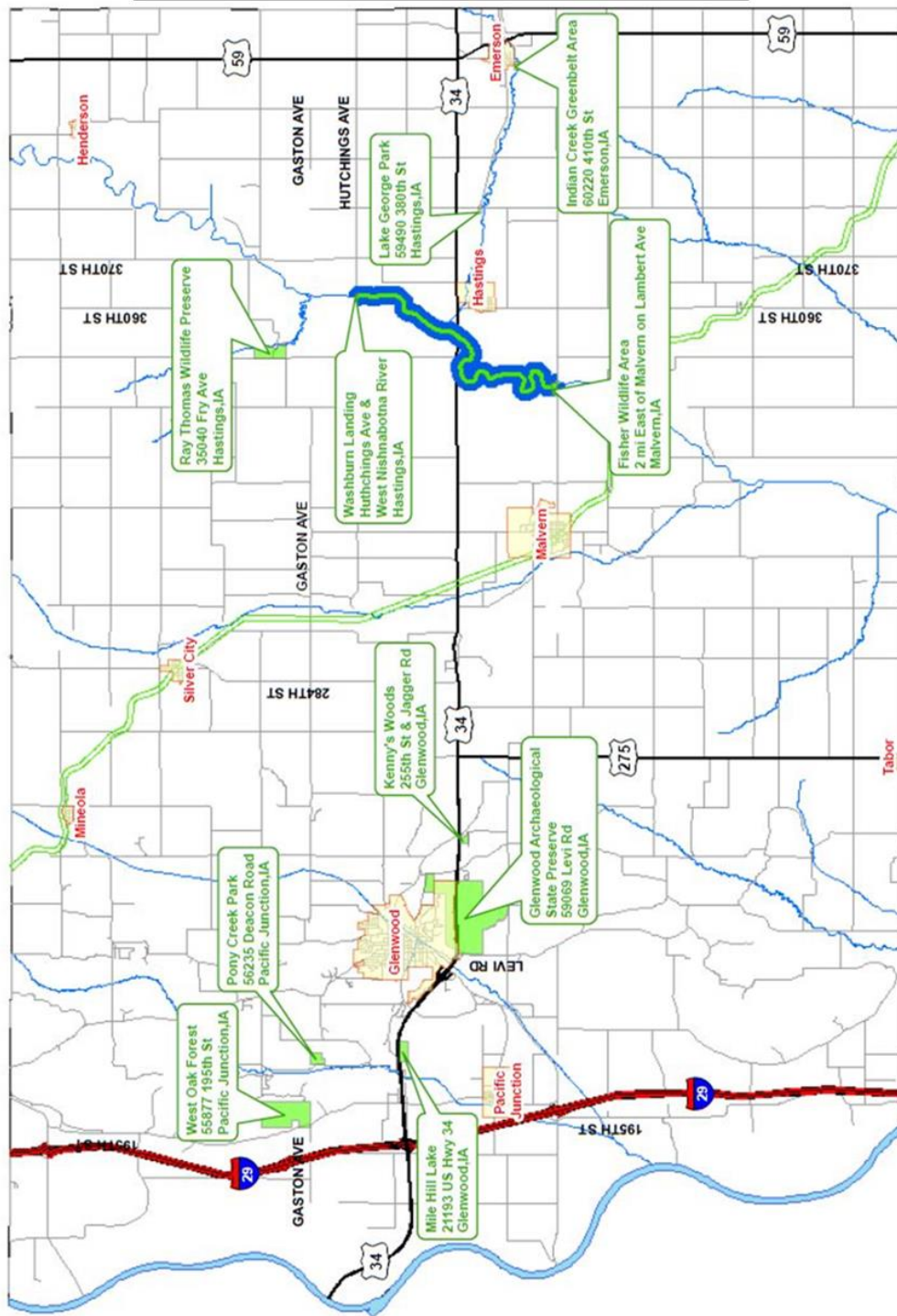
Registration Link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qBEhNPrQQICE_3t-TnERtQ

Training webinars will be recorded. To access the recordings, visit

www.bumblebeeatlas.org/pages/train-online





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Legend

 Cities	 County Parks	 Water Trail	 Wabash Trace	 Streams	 Roads	 State Highway	 Interstate
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