THE TRIBUTARY

Fall 2026

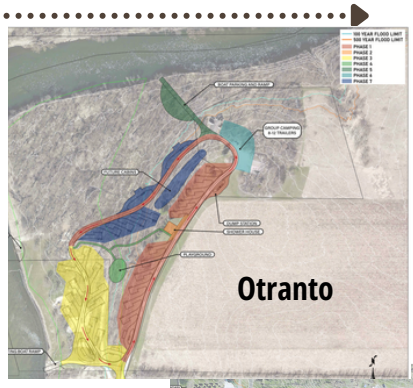
NEWSLETTER FOR MITCHELL COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION



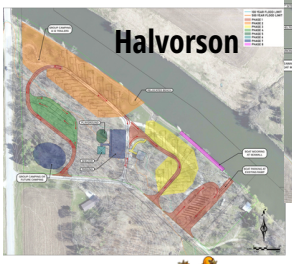
Fall fungi found in Mitchell County

What's New at Mitchell County Conservation?

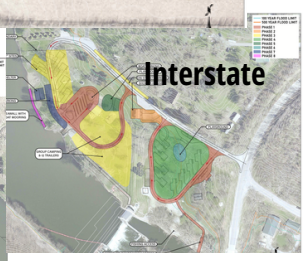
A major transformation is underway at Otranto Park. Renovations have begun, following a summer of site preparation by Mitchell County Conservation Staff, and contract work is now turning our master plan into reality. Otranto Park will remain closed to camping through the end of the 2026 camping season, with completion planned for Fall 2027. Otranto, Interstate in Mitchell, and Halvorson in St. Ansgar are the three parks selected for major redesign and improvements throughout the next three years. What began as concept designs is now becoming a blueprint for the future—helping us prioritize projects, guide improvements, and ensure each park continues to meet public needs while protecting the natural resources that make each one unique. Have an idea for something you'd like to see changed, added, or improved in our parks? Share your thoughts at our public meetings. Watch our Facebook page for meeting times and dates, along with updates about our other events and programs. See you outside this fall!



Otranto

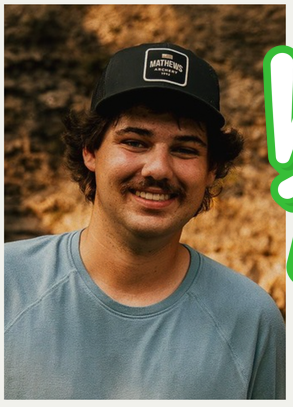


Halvorson



Interstate

Welcome to the TEAM!



Tristan Pullman
Conservation Technician

Originally from Protivin, I graduated from Hawkeye Community College in their Natural Resources program. I gained more experience in Conservation while working three summers for Howard County. In my free time, I enjoy pheasant hunting, bow hunting, ice fishing, and camping. I'm looking forward to working full time with the Mitchell County team to help improve our public lands.



Darin Tusler
Conservation Technician

I'm an Osage native of 50 years and have raised three kids in the country. After being employed in a manufacturing setting for over 20 years, working for the Conservation will be a whole new experience. In my free time, I'm an outdoors guy. I enjoy gardening, golf, fishing, hunting, and camping. I'm looking forward to working with the crew here and gaining knowledge in our natural world.



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MONARCH TAGGING!



1:00 PM

WAPSI-GREAT WESTERN LINE TRAILHEAD

110 EAST MAIN STREET - RICEVILLE

Come for Brunch, stay for the Butterflies!

Mitchell County Conservation is partnering with the Wapsi-Great Western Line Trail for a "Brunch & Butterflies" program on September 20th. Join us for an Omelet Brunch starting at 10AM, followed by a Monarch Tagging program at 1PM. Mitchell County Naturalist Chelsea will lead a program about Monarch Butterflies and how YOU can help them! Monarch Butterflies have an incredible story to tell—from their life cycle of caterpillar into butterfly, to their arduous migration to Mexico– these little beauties are a wonder to both the young and young at heart. At this program, we will discuss the life cycle, the complicated migration, importance of native wildflowers, how to raise Monarchs, and the current population and conservation status of the Monarch Butterfly. Nets will be available to try and catch any wild-flying Monarchs, and participants will learn how to tag Monarchs and release them on their journey south.

Please bring any butterflies YOU have raised or captured to be tagged, too! This program is Free and does not require registration.

We hope you can join us to learn more about the Mysteries and Magic of the Monarch!



Be on the lookout for MONARCHS!

Mitchell County Conservation needs YOUR HELP to reach our 200 tagged Monarch goal! Please let us know if you have Monarch Butterflies to tag and Chelsea will do her best to get tags to you! If you see a roost or a large population on your property or in a public area, give Chelsea a call at (641) 330-0765 and she will try to meet you there! Chelsea will bring tags, a portable butterfly container, and nets to help capture the wild butterflies.

Any captured Monarchs will get their own coded tag to identify them on their journey to Mexico. These special stickers act like "license plates" to help track the Monarch's migration patterns.

If you capture or raise your own Monarchs, Chelsea has tags that you can use at home - just give her a call to arrange pick-up. Any captured or raised butterflies should be held in a large, well-ventilated container for less than 8 hours before tagging. Place a few branches in the container for the butterflies to rest on and put in a cool place until Chelsea can visit with tags.

Help us send 200 Mitchell County Monarchs to Mexico!

HUNTER EDUCATION

October 24th

MILTON R. OWEN NATURE CENTER - OSAGE

*Pre-Registration Required!

Hunter education is a mandatory program that is designed to introduce students to several lifelong skills that are important to many different types of outdoor recreational opportunities. The course teaches students basic survival and first aid skills, outdoor safety, wildlife identification, the basics of wildlife management, hunting laws, and firearm/archery safety. Hunter education also stresses the importance of individual responsibility and outdoor ethics. The safety, recruitment, and retention of hunters are important in continuing the tradition of hunting in Iowa's GREAT Outdoors!
Iowa Law requires that anyone born after January 1, 1972, must be certified in Hunter Education before they are eligible to purchase an Iowa hunting license.

This class is prioritized for students 12 years old and older. Adults are welcome to stay with their youth student through the class, but it is not required.
Students are asked to bring something to eat & drink, as the course will continue through meal hours.

PLEASE WEAR/BRING OUTDOOR GEAR as we will go outside during different portions of instruction. All other teaching materials, firearms, & safety equipment will be provided.

This is a CLASSROOM COURSE and does not count as a field day.

This class is FREE, but is limited to 20. **Students NEED to pre-register** by registering online with the Go Outdoors Iowa Event Registration System. Please visit: www.gooutdoorsiowa.com to log in or create a new account. Once logged in, you can find and register for the class under "Events/Classes—Search Events" in the upper left area of the page.

You can also sign up here: https://license.gooutdoorsiowa.com/Event/EventsHome.aspx

You can also call Chelsea at (641) 330-0765 for assistance with registration.

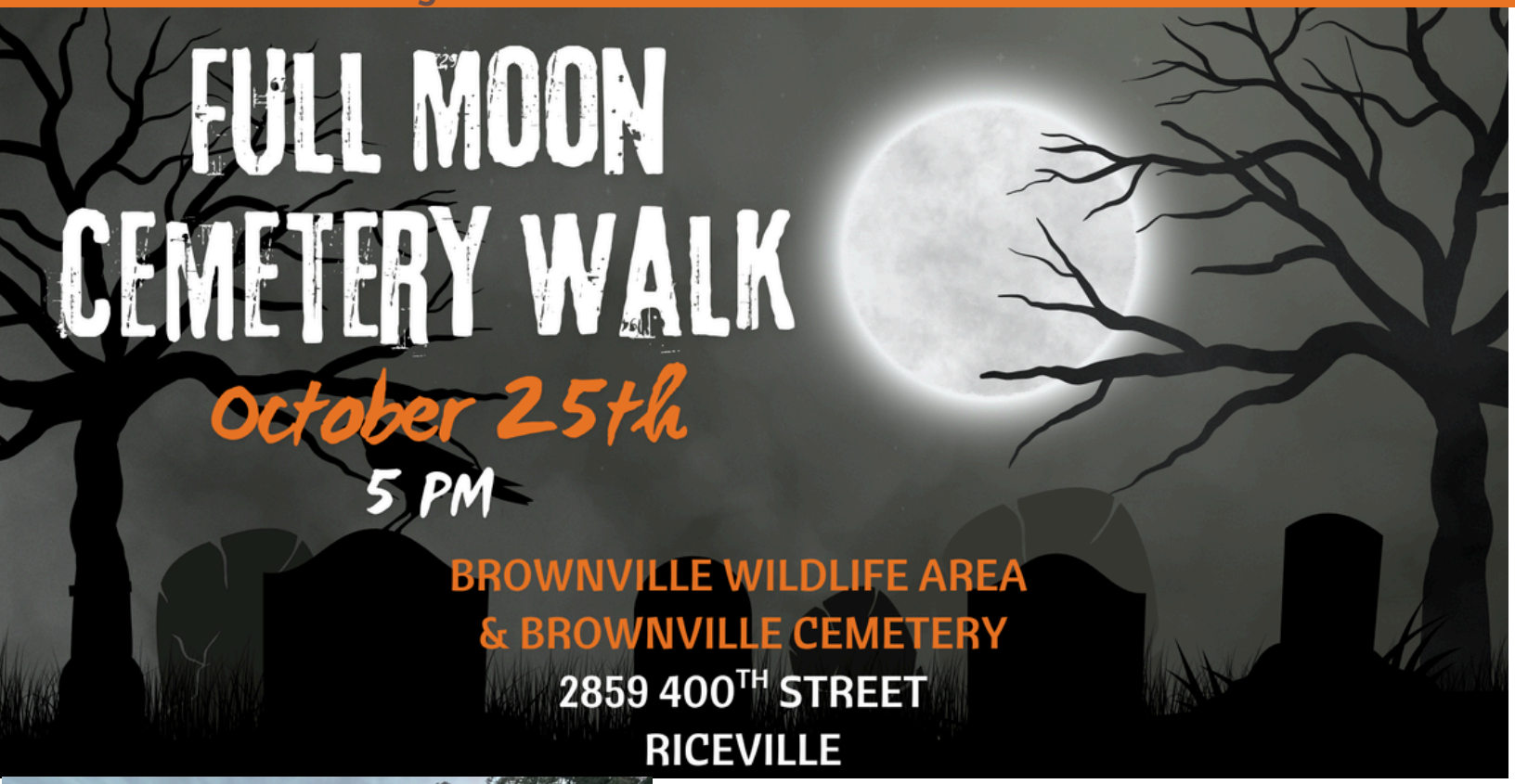
Please Note: When you are registering a child for this course, please be sure to log in as the child you are wishing to register or create an account for that child, and do not log in or register yourself unless you are wanting to take the course yourself for certification. Students who have previously purchased Iowa DNR licenses, such as youth deer tags, will already have an Iowa DNR account and should register for this course using their personal information.

If you enjoy participating in the programs Mitchell County Conservation offers, appreciate the use of outdoor equipment and trails, or just want to ensure the youth, families, residents, and visitors to Mitchell County have the opportunity to spend time in nature and understand the importance of conserving our natural resources - **please consider joining the Mitchell County Outdoors!** Your membership, donation of time & talents, and/or monetary support can make an even larger impact when used for grant matches and educational experiences like those listed in this newsletter.
See how to become a member on page 6.





"The Mitchell County Environmental Education Foundation creates public awareness, promotes responsible stewardship, and expands support for the conservation of our natural resources and cultural heritage."





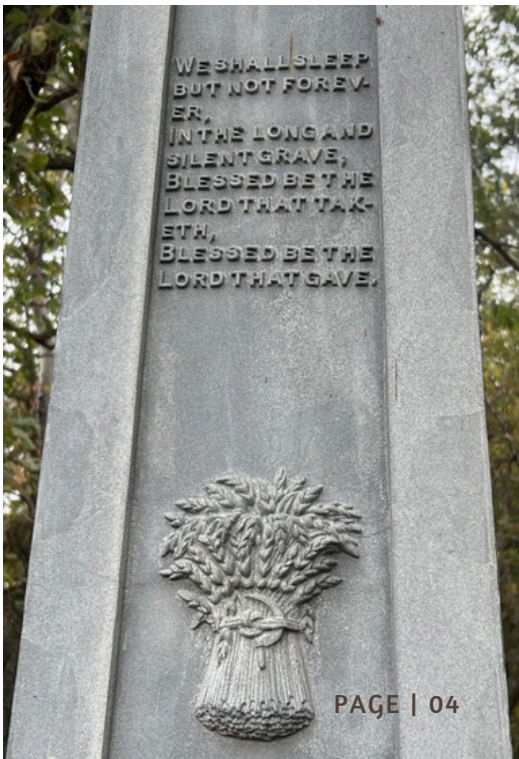


Enjoy a moonlit walk back through time at this NON-SCARY cemetery stroll.

Pioneer Cemeteries, like the Brownville Cemetery, are not only the resting place for some of Mitchell County's early residents, but also a chance to explore the rich history of this area.
The cemetery is home to a collection of grave stones that bear witness to pioneering days, and these weathered markers tell the stories of the early settlers, providing a glimpse into the past and honoring the memory of those who came before us.

At this walk, we will focus on the funerary art and symbolism of various grave stones while weaving in the history of Mitchell County's founding, providing insight into the challenges and triumphs of pioneer life. We will also discuss the connection pioneer cemeteries have to preserving and protecting native habitats, and the unique plants and animals that call them home.

Whether you are a history enthusiast, a nature lover, or simply seeking a peaceful walk in the moonlight, join us for a unique evening at Brownville Cemetery.



<u>To get to the program:</u> Park at the western parking lot of Brownville Wildlife area. The Brownville Cemetery is located just to the south of this parking area.

While the cemetery is flat and well maintained, walking over lawn and uneven surfaces in low light will be required. There are also no restrooms available at the site, however there are facilities located just down the road at Pioneer Park. This is a family-friendly program and does not require registration. Please contact Naturalist Chelsea at (641) 330-0765 with any questions, help with directions, or weather related updates.

Remember that this, and any burial or cemetery site, should be treated with the utmost respect. Please leave all plants and memorial items intact. Your assistance in maintaining the dignity of these places is appreciated.

Fall 2026 Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

- **Please check IA DNR Hunting Regulations for specific Hunting/Trapping dates, hours, limits, quotas, seasons, and laws https://www.iowadnr.gov/hunting/hunting-season-dates**
- **Coyote, Groundhog, & Pigeon continuous open HUNTING season**
- **Raccoon continuous open HUNTING season on PRIVATE LAND ONLY**

1st - Mourning Dove Hunting Season through Nov. 29
3rd - Fat Tire Bike Ride Meetup @ Limestone Brewers, 6PM
5th - 13th - Special September Teal Hunting Season
5th - Rail Hunting through Nov. 13
5th - Snipe Hunting through Nov. 30
5th - Fox & Gray Squirrel Hunting Season through Jan 31
5th - Cottontail Rabbit Hunting Season through Feb. 28th
6th - Pie Sunday @ Wapsi-Great Western Line Trailhead, 2-5PM
17th - Fat Tire Bike Ride Meetup @ Limestone Brewers, 6PM
19th - Youth Deer Hunting Season through Oct. 4
19th - Disabled Hunter Deer Season through Oct. 4
20th - Brunch & Butterflies @ Wapsi-Great Western Line Trail, 10AM-1PM
22nd - Happy 1st Day of Fall!
26th-27th - North Zone Youth Waterfowl Hunting
26th - North Zone Goose Hunting through Oct. 11th
26th - Full Corn Moon





NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

- **Please check IA DNR Hunting Regulations for specific Hunting/Trapping dates, hours, limits, quotas, seasons, and laws. https://www.iowadnr.gov/hunting/hunting-season-dates**
- **Coyote, Groundhog, & Pigeon continuous open HUNTING season**
- **Raccoon continuous open HUNTING season on PRIVATE LAND ONLY**

7th - Mitchell County Pheasants Forever Banquet
7th - Badger, Bobcat, Fox (Red and Gray), Mink, Muskrat, Otter, Striped Skunk, Weasel & Public Land Raccoon Hunting Season through Feb. 28
7th - Bobcat, Coyote, Mink, Muskrat, Weasel, Striped Skunk, Badger, Opossum, Otter, Fox (Red and Gray), and PUBLIC land Raccoon TRAPPING season through Feb. 28
7th - Beaver Hunting & Trapping season through April 15th
7th - Fat Tire Bike Ride Meetup @ Limestone Brewers, 2PM
8th - Annual WGWL Trail Association Meeting
11th - Thank You, Veterans!
15th - Field to Frame Feather Art Class, 2PM
21st - Fat Tire Bike Ride Meetup @ Limestone Brewers, 2PM
24th - Full Beaver Trapping Moon
26th - Happy Thanksgiving!
29th - Wreath Making @ MRO Nature Center, 1 PM



OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

- **Please check IA DNR Hunting Regulations for specific Hunting/Trapping dates, hours, limits, quotas, seasons, and laws. https://www.iowadnr.gov/hunting/hunting-season-dates**
- **Coyote, Groundhog, & Pigeon continuous open HUNTING season**
- **Raccoon continuous open HUNTING season on PRIVATE LAND ONLY**

1st - Archery Deer (Early Split season) Hunting Season through Dec. 4
1st - Fall Turkey Archery Only Hunting Season through Dec. 4
3rd - 9th - North Zone Duck Hunting
3rd - Woodcock Hunting Season through Nov. 16
3rd - Ruffed Grouse Hunting Season through Jan. 31
10th - Gray Partridge Hunting Season through Jan. 31
11th – GOLF CART DAY & PIE SUNDAY, 1:30-5 PM
12th - Gun/Bow Fall Turkey Hunting through Dec. 4
15th - Crow Hunting Season through Nov. 30
17th-25th - Early Muzzeloader Deer Hunting Season
17th- North Zone Duck & Goose Hunting through Dec. 8
17th - "Fatober-Fest" Fat Tire Bike Event w/Limestone Brewers/Mitchell County Mountain Goats -2 PM
24th - Hunter Education Class (requires pre-registration) @ MRO Nature Center
24th & 25th - Youth Rooster Pheasant Hunting Season
25th - Guided Youth Pheasant Hunt @ Milton R. Owen Nature Center
25th - Full Hunter's Moon
25th - Full Moon Cemetery Walk @ Brownvile W.A/Cemetery, 5 PM
31st - Happy Halloween!
31st - Rooster Pheasant Hunting Season through Jan. 10
31st - Bobwhite Quail Hunting Season through Jan 31

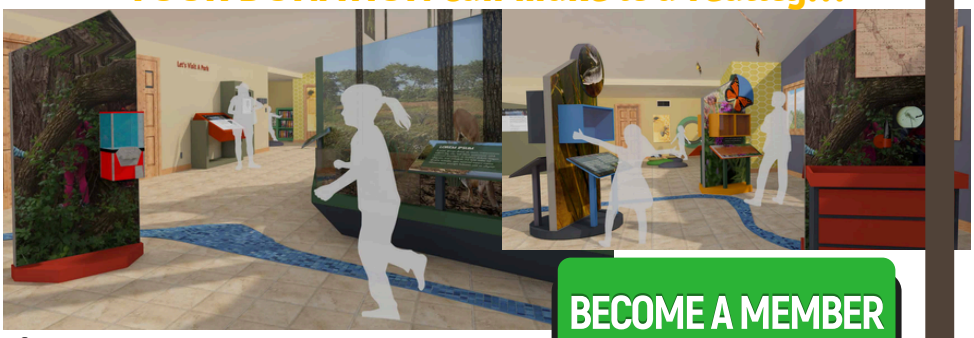
With our ever increasing "plugged-in" world, exposure to and understanding of our natural world is more important than ever. Mitchell County Outdoors strives to support quality environmental education programs for ALL residents and visitors of Mitchell County. Our goals include providing financial support through memberships for programs that educate and train the public, as well as increase access to such programs through interactive displays, events, and volunteers. Program topics include ecology, local plants and animals, geology, outdoor recreation skills, recycling, human & land relationships, and many more. Consider supporting environmental education by becoming a member today!

"The Mitchell County Environmental Education Foundation creates public awareness, promotes responsible stewardship, and expands support for the conservation of our natural resources and cultural heritage."



Recent projects funded through MCO:
-Educational Scholarship
-Native Plant Sale!

INTERPRETIVE PLAN FOR THE NATURE CENTER!
YOUR DONATION can make it a reality!!!



Benefits of being a member...

- Recognition on our donor wall for $50+ donation
- Tax-deductible donation
- Input on Projects, Events, & Programs
- Volunteer opportunities
- "Members Only" programs
- Cool swag!

BECOME A MEMBER

Yes! I want to join MCO!

Name/Organization

Address

City State Zip Code

Phone

Email

Additional Family Names/Memorial Inquiries:

Membership Levels	
☐ Student	$10
☐ Individual	$25
☐ Family (2+ people)	$40
☐ Senior (60+)	$20
☐ Memorial	Ask about options

Donor Levels	
☐ Sugar Creek	$50
☐ Spring Creek	$51 - $100
☐ Turtle Creek	$101-$250
☐ Little Wapsi	$251-$500
☐ Burr Oak	$501-$1000
☐ Little Cedar	$1000 +
☐ Red Cedar	$5000+

☐ **VOLUNTEER!**

- Fundraising
- Nature Center Host
- Event/Program Volunteer
- Other Talent?

Make checks payable to:
Mitchell County Outdoors
1879-3 Highway 9
Osage, IA 50461

This is a TAX EXEMPT Donation!



Hunting Season has begun! If you are looking for a new area to explore, Mitchell County Conservation manages over 25 areas that are open to public hunting!
For a complete list and/or maps of these areas, please contact us at (641) 732-5204 or visit our website. Be sure to stop by the Mitchell County Courthouse or local businesses like Hardware Hank, DeMaris Hardware, and True Value in Riceville to get your Fall Hunting licenses, tags, and Duck Stamps. You can also purchase license through the Iowa DNR "Go Outdoors Iowa" App!
Before you head out, be sure to brush up on the new Hunting & Trapping Regulations, copies of which are available anywhere licenses are sold, at the Milton. R. Owen Nature Center, and on the Iowa DNR Website at https://www.iowadnr.gov/hunting/hunting-season-dates
MCCB Wildlife Areas are designed for multi-use enjoyment, which includes hunting, but also canoeing, kayaking, fishing, foraging for wild edibles, photography, biking, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife & leaf watching, among many others. To keep everyone safe and provide positive experiences, please keep in mind the following tips:

For Hunters:

- **Practice safe firearm handling & hunting strategies and be observant of your hunting area.**
- **Be courteous. Promote hunting and hunters in a positive light by following good outdoor ethics and keep our natural areas clean and a space for ALL to enjoy!**
- **Always wear your blaze orange! If accompanied by a dog, make sure they have their safety gear & blaze orange also.**

For Everyone:

- **Wear bright colored clothing & accessories for yourself and any leashed pets that may accompany you when out recreating.**
- **Be courteous. If a hunter is encountered, don't make unnecessary noise to disturb wildlife.**
- **Continue to enjoy our area parks during all seasons, but be aware of the many uses of our public areas.**

MCCB WISHES EVERYONE A WONDERFUL FALL, AND A SAFE & SUCCESSFUL HUNTING SEASON!



Milton R. Owen Nature Center - Osage

Youth Ages 12-15

Pre-Registration Required

Register by October 16th

Time - TBD

Local Mitchell County Pioneer Pheasants Forever chapter and Mitchell County Conservation are teaming up to offer a guided Youth Pheasant Hunt this fall! Whether your youth is a seasoned hunter, or they are just starting their hunting journey, all youth hunters are invited to join this fun event!
How it works: Local pheasant hunters are paired with several youth to experience pheasant hunting. After pairing up, hunters & mentor crews travel out to MCCB wildlife areas for the hunt!
This event is offered for FREE through the Mitchell County Pioneer Chapter of Pheasants Forever, however we do ask that interested participants call ahead to register. This ensures we have enough mentors for interested youth. Please register by October 16th!

Registered youth should bring a refillable water bottle, their own gun & ammunition, and wear weather-appropriate clothing and safety gear. Good outdoor boots and dressing in layers helps ensure hunters will have an enjoyable time outdoors, regardless of the weather. Some guns, ammunition, and safety gear are available to borrow if needed.

Please call (641) 732-5204 - MCCB Office or
(641) 426-6212 - Brad Olson MCCB Staff/PF Member to register.



Want to preserve the memory of a successful hunt without the wall space—or expense—of taxidermy? Try Feather Art!

This creative alternative to a taxidermy mount showcases the natural beauty of game birds in an artful way. In this class, we'll use feathers from ducks, pheasants, turkeys, and more to create a one-of-a-kind feather art picture frame. You'll learn how to prepare feathers, which adhesives work best, plus tips and tricks for continuing to create feather art at home.

Have feathers of your own you'd like to use? Bring them along! If they're fresh and still attached to the skin, hand-wash them with a mild detergent (such as Dawn dish soap), then dry them with a hair dryer. For loose feathers, washing and drying them in a fine-mesh produce bag works well.

This class is limited to 25 and instruction is geared towards ages 14+.
Pre-registration is required and covers supplies. All materials (frame, adhesive, tools, feathers, etc.) will be provided.
Please register online at www.mycountyparks.com/County/Mitchell under the events tab. $30/registration for materials.



Get a Head Start on the Holiday Season!

During this workshop, you will be provided with everything you need to make a unique foraged greens wreath or swag! You don't need to be crafty or have any experience to make your own holiday décor - just come and have fun!

Class begins at 1 PM at the Milton R. Owen Nature Center with a short discussion on winter tree identification and sustainable foraging for wild décor. Next, we'll provide instructions and materials needed to create your one-of-a-kind natural wreath/swag.
You will be supplied with a 14 inch wire wreath form or grapevine swag base, an abundance of different sustainably foraged evergreens and other natural materials, florists wire, pruning shears, and ribbon. Hot cocoa and warm apple cider will also be provided.

All essential supplies are included with your registration, but feel free to bring any special items (bells, ornaments, antlers, ribbon, etc.) to add a personal touch to your wreath/swag and make it uniquely yours. We are using natural/raw materials and therefore some of them may be quite prickly or have sap on them. Some individuals may find it helpful to bring their own gardening gloves to protect their hands as these are not provided for the class. You may also want to bring your own pruning shears and/or wire cutters if you have them.

Preregistration is required due to limited space in the workshop.
There are only 20 spots available so get registered right away! Registration is $25 and includes instructions, a 14" wreath/swag base, evergreens and other natural materials, ribbon, and floral wire.

Please register online at www.mycountyparks.com/County/Mitchell under the events tab.

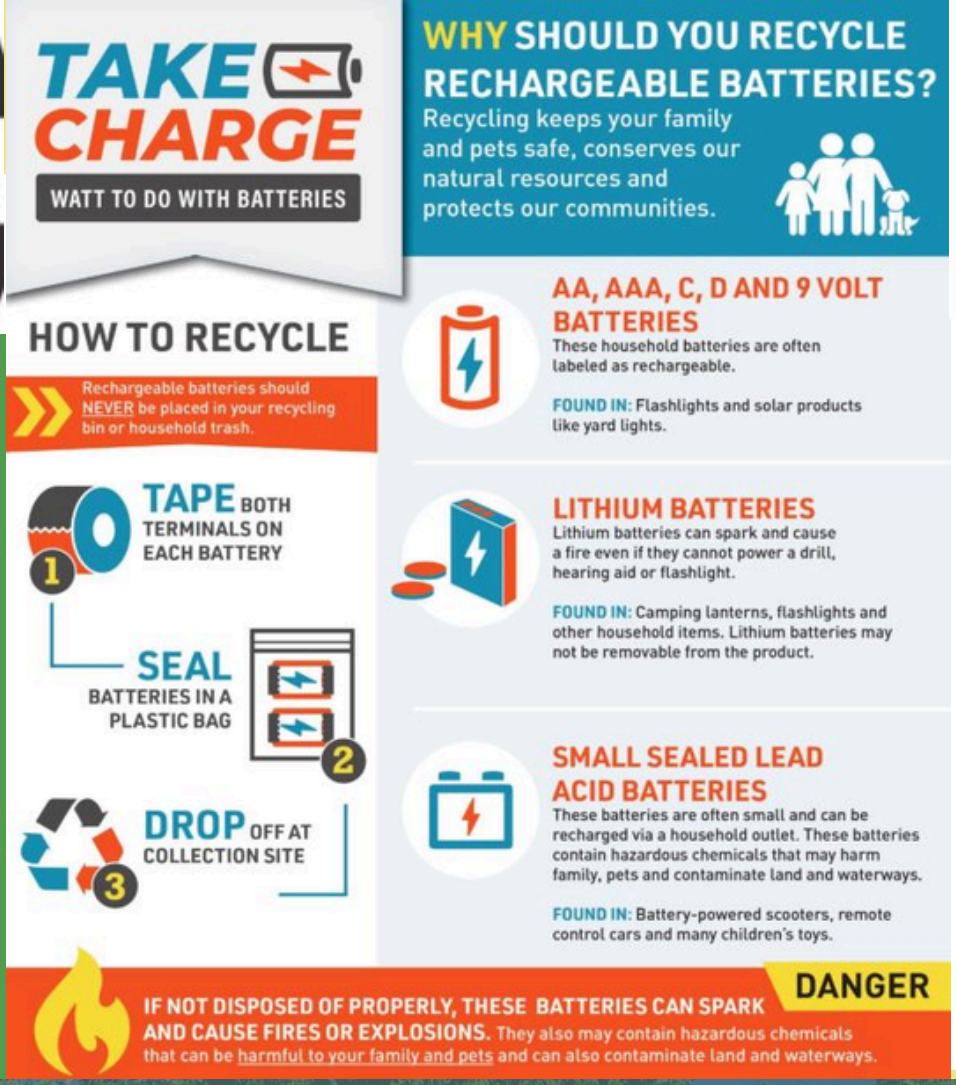


FMC Landfill
3354 330th Street
Elma, IA
www.fmclandfill.org

FMC Landfill Hours:

Monday: 7am-3pm
Tuesday: 7am-3pm
Wednesday: 7am-3pm
Thursday: 7am-3pm
Friday: 7am-3pm
Saturday: Closed
Sunday: Closed
*Large loads must be unloaded by 2:30pm.

Extremely windy days may shut us down early (give us a call to check!), but otherwise we are open year-round. We look forward to assisting with your Recycling and Waste Disposal needs.



Mitchell County Conservation Board
Mitchell County Recycling Center
Osage Location:

- **$3 Gate fee is for SMALL/REGULAR LOADS ONLY!** Large loads need to be taken to Elma.
- **Please Recycle CLEAN/RINSED items only.** Crushing is ok to save space!
- **BATTERIES & LIGHTBULBS are recycled separately from other items.**
- **WE TAKE APPLIANCES!** Washers, Dryers, Refrigerators, Freezers, Ranges, etc.

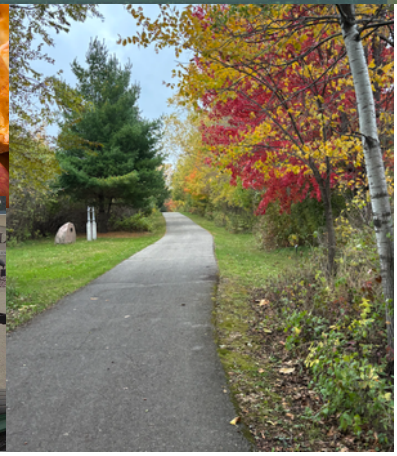
WAPSI-GREAT WESTERN LINE

Trail Events

110 EAST MAIN STREET (U.S. HWY #9)
RICEVILLE IA 50466
WWW.WGWLTRAIL.COM







- **Sunday, September 6th** – Pie Sunday 2-5PM

- **Sunday, September 20th - BRUNCH & BUTTERFLIES!**
- **10AM-1PM**
- **Omelet Brunch from 10AM-1PM**
- **Monarch Tagging Program @ 1:00**



- **Sunday, October 11th – GOLF CART DAY & PIE SUNDAY, 1:30-5 PM**

Passes available for $15 at Welcome Center. Registration fee supports Trailhead maintenance. Valid driver's license required for cart driver. Bring your own cart or rent one from Riceville Golf Course (641-985-2447). Begin and end your golf cart adventure at the Trailhead. No golf carts allowed in Lake Hendricks Park.

Mitchell County Conservation Board:

Bridget Chatfield
Lori King
Jim Oberfoell
Mike Palsic
Pat Wagner

Staff:

Mike Miner - Director
Daniele Dorsey - Office Manager
Brian Huffman - Parks & Infrastructure Supervisor
Christine Huffman - Recycling Center Attendant
Brad Olson - Operations Manager
Tristan Pullman - Conservation Tech.
Chelsea Rowcliffe - Naturalist
Connor Slifka - Natural Resource Tech.
Andy Taets - Recreation & Outreach Specialist
Darin Tusler - Conservation Tech.

Mitchell County Outdoors Foundation:

Bridget Chatfield - President
Eric Follmuth - Vice Pres.
Jessica Bohannon - Secretary
Daniele Dorsey - Treasurer
Jonathon Cramer
Gary Huffman
Ed & Joanne Kleinwort
Milt & Linda Owen
Chelsea Rowcliffe (ex-officio)
Steve Strasheim
Andy Taets (ex-officio)
Diane Wright

Keep up to date with our events and nature happenings by Liking and Following us on: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and at https://www.mitchellcountyconservation.com or https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Mitchell.aspx

Help us keep costs down and save resources by going paperless. If you would like to receive our newsletter electronically, please send an email to crowcliffe@mitchellcountyiowa.gov

Mitchell County Conservation Board
1879-3 Highway 9
Osage, IA 50461
Office: (641) 732-5204