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EDITED BY

Lana Artz-McComb

Virginia Grove Pond Improvements

By: *Lana Artz-McComb, Naturalist*

Exciting things are happening at Virginia Grove Recreation Area this Spring! LCC will be completing a pond improvement project that will help restore the fish habitat for all to enjoy.

Worked started with the installation of a solar powered aerator to increase the oxygen circulation within the pond. The solar panel is located at the end of the dam and the aerator can be spotted in the center.

Larger rock is being installed along the pond dam itself for bank stabilization and erosion prevention. The final finishing touch will be adding rock to the north of the existing fishing pier to create a small access perfect for getting a kayak or canoe out onto the pond.

These improvements will hopefully allow us to stock the pond and create sustainable fish populations for the future.



This project is funded by an Iowa DNR Fish Habitat Grant. Grant funds come from the hunting and fishing license fees and are disseminated to County Conservation Boards by a Committee composed of County Conservation employees. Fish Habitat Grants put the dollars spent by outdoors people to work in conservation and recreation areas throughout the state.

This project as included using 1" limestone to create fish habitat along the pond dam by creating shallow areas for nesting and long fingers of rock for shelter.



LOUISA COUNTY CONSERVATION

Leveling Up the Landscape

By: Amanda Stallman, Naturalist Tech.

If you're a regular at Snively Campground, you've known about the bathroom at the park for quite some time now. The brown-looking shed behind a row of trees has been tucked away behind sites fourteen and sixteen for years. This season, things may look a bit different.

This spring, LCC has been in action on the renovations to the parks we all know and love. In January, the crew geared up their chainsaw skills by removing eleven hazardous trees that once hung over the roof of the bathroom. Previously, these trees posed a risk of falling on the roof of the bathroom or the camper's personal belongings during high winds or weather events. Though this may slightly reduce the shade at these sites, the bathrooms are now easy to locate and can be used for shelter in the case of bad weather in the future.

Additionally, the bathrooms are planned to receive a much-needed facelift in April. You can visit Snively in the next few months to see that this building will be painted with a new green on the outside and a fresh coat of grey on the inside. The roof and the woodwork will be updated to ensure structural integrity. New signs are soon to be placed on the outside of the building to be read from afar.



We know camping can be a “dirty” adventure, so LCC has purchased hand sanitizer fixtures for both the men’s and women’s restrooms to help keep your hands clean before you roast marshmallows over the fire.

LCC hopes that with these changes, the bathrooms will become a more inviting space to take care of business. Check the structure out yourself and share your opinions on the new updates at Snively!



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LOUISA COUNTY CONSERVATION

Community efforts, big rewards

For the last three months, community members have been coming together to make a difference near their homes. USFWS Wildlife Biologist, Nate Barnett, and Amanda Stallman from LCC joined forces to organize three separate clean-up days throughout the parks.

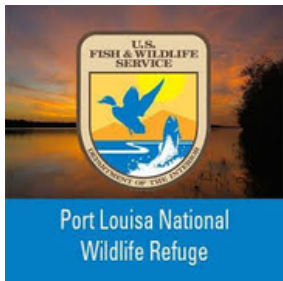
On President's Day, February 16th, 2026, nine volunteers stepped up to the plate to collect eight bags of trash, seven tires, and a wide variety of thrown metals and scraps. Flaming Prairie park and Big Timber boat ramp looked cleaner than ever before the spring high waters.

For one of the warmest days in March this year, members of the community gathered on a Saturday to pick up waste at Klum Lake, and Lake Odessa's Inlet tubes and boat ramp. With a total of 28 dedicated volunteers, the group picked up 16 bags of trash, nine tires, two box springs, and tons of metal odds and ends.

Thank you to all the volunteers who showed up to make this event a success! It was truly a team effort between community members, LCC, USFWS, and the Louisa Regional Solid Waste Agency!



Greyson Blaesing, of Muscatine standing next to a stack of tires during the first event.





Big Sand Mound Field Day

Saturday, June 13, 2016

2705 Ogilvie Ave. Muscatine, IA 52761

Cost: \$15/adult, youth free

Registration cost includes a light breakfast of pastry and beverage plus a field guide.

Learn from experts in the field while exploring one of the most unique Preserves in Iowa. Field Day features hikes and talks of varying lengths and effort level on subjects from birding to reptile research to insects to prairie plant identification to prairie management and more!

Participants will choose their sessions upon registration.

Register at LouisaCountyConservation.org



What is Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve?

Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve is important in the Midwest for its diverse ecosystem of unusual plants and animals. With 510 acres owned by two companies, the preserve includes open prairies, sand barrens, shallow ponds and woodlands.

Animals find the preserve relatively undisturbed, with a variety of habitats in close proximity to each other. Of more than 400 different plants at the site, 80 percent are native. The cactus and lizards are well adapted to the dry, infertile sandy soils more like the southwestern United States.

Many people have generously worked and studied together to protect this regionally important resource. Normally closed to the public, Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve can be visited only with advance arrangements.

The Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve showcases the ability of business and industry to maintain and enhance biological, ecological and cultural resources and make a positive impact on the environment.

TRI-RIVERS CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

2026 Scholarship Recipients

Sedric Lamb is the 2026 recipient of the Paris Scholarship. William J. Paris was a lifelong resident, farmer and sportsman of Louisa County who had a deep appreciation for the area's natural resources. His family recognizes Bill's commitment to conservation through this scholarship to provide financial support to Louisa County students who share Bill's commitment and appreciation.

Sedric will be a 2026 graduate of Louisa-Muscatine High School pursuing a degree in Agronomy. Sedric is passionate about protecting Iowa's waterways and wildlife from runoff. Sedric's plan is to become a soil scientist or agronomist, working alongside farmers to protect soil health while getting the best yield. Congratulations and Good Luck, Sedric!

William Parsons is the 2026 recipient of the Foundation Director's Scholarship. The Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation Directors choose to support area students who share the Foundation's commitment and appreciation of natural resources and conservation.

William will be a 2026 graduate of Wapello High School. He will be attending Coe College to major in Social Studies Education. William completed his Eagle Scout Project in 2024-2025 at Langwood Education Center, building a 32-foot long wood bridge connecting trails on the north east side of the facility. William writes about his connection with Langwood Education Center, camping there with Scouts and visiting frequently.

Congratulations and Good Luck, William!



TRCF Directors (Clockwise from top): Katie Hammond, Jon Solt, Jay Schweitzer, Al Bohling, Cindy Klebe, Amanda, Heindel, and Steve Johnson with Scholarship Recipients Sedric Lamb and William Parsons.



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The Mission of Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation is to provide funds for the protection and enhancement of the natural resources in the environmentally rich area of the confluences of the Cedar, Iowa and Mississippi Rivers in eastern Iowa. The Foundation will employ enjoyment and use of these resources to educate and instill an appreciation for good land stewardship. It will seek to distribute these funds to carefully chosen public, civic, institutional, and quasi-public programs.