

# Cedar Valley Visions

## Conservation News

### Park Updates

Article by Chip Brown and Photos by Jacob Wilbourne

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This season, as the weather gradually warmed up, we were able to spend more time on park improvements, which otherwise were impractical during the colder weather. We were able to improve the lighting at Cedar Valley Shelter One with brand new light fixtures. These new light fixtures dramatically improve the light level in the building and should offer shelter users a better experience.



To go along with the new and improved lighting here, we were able to build and install a countertop similar to the one installed at our Massillon Park shelter. In addition to the countertop and lighting, we made a few cosmetic improvements to the shelter. This is one of our most popular shelters for day use and reservations alike. It is always our goal to improve our visitors experience and help facilitate memorable events and gatherings.



The last couple of months also saw us performing some general upkeep duties in the park, including tree trimming around the parks and in campgrounds. We do this pruning at this time to minimize damage to young trees and give them the best chance to recover unhindered by various



pests and diseases. Finally, Bennett Park shower house received a small upgrade in the form of hand dryers. These small dryers receive their power from the solar panels near the shower house and will help save on cost and waste from paper towels, though towels will still be available for those who choose to use them. We are looking forward to the start of camping season and seeing new and regulars alike!

### Creature Feature~ American Kestrel

Article Jacob Wilbourne, Park Technician



Photo courtesy of Pixbay

The American kestrel is North America's smallest and most common falcon. They can be seen year-round through most of the U.S., with some groups migrating as far north as Canada for breeding and others migrating south to Mexico during winter.

The bird is between 8" and 12" in length with a wingspan of 20" to 24". These birds are a common sight along highways where they perch on signposts and electric wires where they keep an eye out for prey in open areas. They have a wide-ranging diet consisting of insects, small mammals, and small birds, which has aided in their wide range and relative abundance. Adult males and females have similar body sizes but differ in coloration. Males have blue-grey wings with a rufous back, while females have rufous wings and back.

## Lost In The Woods

Article and Photos by Jacob Wilbourne, Park Technician



A combination of a free weekend and higher-than-normal temperatures during the first part of February afforded me the opportunity to take a long hike out in the woods at Townsend Wildlife Area. While I initially set out looking for antlers, I soon found myself transfixed by the oft-overlooked smaller world around me. I found myself slowing down to examine the world around me, noticing the small pops of color that don't always catch our eyes right away.

My exploration soon took me off trail as I followed deer paths deeper into the woods, stopping every so often to examine fallen logs and peer into old tree cavities. Before my eyes I saw a tiny world unfold, full of homes, hideaways, and miniature ecosystems all their own. While I have long been aware of these miniature landscapes, it is always nice to reexplore them while out and about.

Between bouts of these micro-adventures, I began wondering about the lives of the animals that use these landscapes. I knew of the signs of animals themselves, but I asked myself why they chose these specific locations. Perhaps this hideaway was simply close by, utilized purely by proximity, or a squirrel found refuge here on its way to its main cache, having narrowly escaped the clutching talons of an owl. The world may never know.



It may come as a surprise that I found no antlers that day, being as engrossed as I was in this world up close. I became lost in the forests and prairies formed of moss and forgot my main goal. In doing so, though, I had found again my sense of wonder and curiosity in the natural world, taking on an adventure close to home that is

sometimes forgotten. It is my hope this tale inspires a sense of wonder in you, and you follow that sense wherever it may take you.



## Everywhere There's Signs

Article and Photos by Jacob Wilbourne, Park Technician

As you visit our parks, you may notice some improvements to the visitor information kiosks and the River Valley Wetland bird blind. During the colder winter months, we spent time developing sets of informative signs for park users to check out while at the kiosks and bird blind. We are now in the process of putting these signs out for users to enjoy, and we hope they help you learn a little bit about the area. Different parks will have different groups of signs, so if you want to see that while you visit different parks, there will always be something new to see at the kiosks.



# Kids Corner

## Cedar Valley Visions

### Beeswax Food Wraps

Please have an adult help you with the following project

#### Equipment

Pinking Shears  
Oven  
Cookie Sheet  
Clean Paint Brush

#### Ingredients

Around 1 tbsp. grated beeswax or beeswax pellets  
1 piece of 100% cotton fabric cut to size with the pinking shears

#### Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 350° F.
2. Place your piece of fabric face down on the cookie sheet. Spread beeswax evenly over the top of your fabric.
3. Place the fabric in the oven and watch carefully. Only leave it in long enough to melt the beeswax, 1 to 2 minutes should be enough.
4. Use the paintbrush to spread the melted wax evenly over your fabric.
5. Let your waxed fabric cool and dry on a flat surface.
6. Once cooled completely it is ready to use!



### Spring Nature Scavenger Hunt

Go out and try to complete the whole list!

- A goldfinch, robin, or cardinal
- A wildflower in the woods
- Geese migrating
- A pinecone
- A mushroom
- A leaf bud

## Word Scramble

EACRD            \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
TEYRKU        \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
AWTH            \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
DILW LOFWER    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
INGSHFI        \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
WHKA            \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
UEBLBRI        \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
DERSALANAM    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

## Nature Word Search

H	I	C	K	O	R	Y	V	B	A
T	A	F	J	L	I	X	U	S	C
K	C	T	E	D	V	U	I	T	O
A	G	H	C	S	E	N	N	R	L
M	Z	U	L	H	R	A	I	N	O
B	U	N	O	V	E	T	B	E	E
P	O	D	U	J	F	U	H	S	R
W	P	A	D	E	Z	R	A	T	D
T	Y	R	C	Y	Q	E	V	L	G
A	D	V	E	N	T	U	R	E	O

RIVER HICKORY RAIN NEST HATCH THUNDER CLOUD  
ADVENTURE NATURE MUDDY

## A Look Ahead

Summer is fast approaching and we have a number of programs we don't want you to miss out on! We understand that between vacations and school being out it can be hard to plan for some events so we wanted to give a quick highlight of a few of our upcoming summer camp programs. All summer camps registration cost is \$15 due before day of camp.



**Adventure Camp, Bennett (Grades 4th and 5th) , June 12th. Registration opens May 27th.**

Campers will get a chance to explore Bennett Park and work on outdoor skills in this hands on camp.

**Critter Camp, Cedar Valley (Grades 2nd and 3rd), June 19th. Registration opens June 2nd.**

Critter Camp is all about animals! Campers will get a chance to learn all about the animals around them.

**Adventure Camp, Cedar Valley (Grades 4th and 5th), June 26th. Registration opens June 9th.**

Campers will get a chance to explore Cedar Valley Park and work on outdoor skills in this hands on camp.

**Critter Camp, Bennett (Grades 2nd and 3rd), July 17th. Registration opens July 1st.**

Critter Camp is all about animals! Campers will get a chance to learn all about the animals around them.

**Little Explorer Camp, Bennett (Grades 2nd and 3rd), July 24th. Registration opens July 7th.**

We want to encourage your sense of exploration! Campers will get a chance to explore Bennett Park with us!

**Nature Explorer Camp, Cedar Valley (Grades 4th and 5th), July 31st. Registration opens July 14th.**

Campers will get to work on outdoor exploration skills in this fun camp!

**Survivor Camp, Bennett (Grades 6th and 7th), August 7th. Registration opens July 21st.**

Come learn survival skills with us! Campers will survive the day with us in this fun themed camp!

## March Events

**Wednesday, March 26, Epic Wooden Trains**

Durant Library, 3:30 pm.

LOTS of problem solving and communication skills go into creating an epic layout. Be part of the fun!

**Friday, March 28, foil printed moon**

Mechanicsville Library, 11:00 am.

Create a beautiful masterpiece of the moon with some tinfoil!

**Monday, March 31, Story time**

West Branch Library, 10:15 am.

Join Miss Sarah for a book and animal activity.

**Tuesday, April 1, Roving Retirees**

Stanwood Library, 2:30 pm.

It's no joke! We are meeting for a fun and exciting time at the library!

**Thursday, April 3, Story Time**

Durant Library, 10:00 am.

TOADLY awesome time with Tina the Toad! Meet and greet and play some cool games.

**Saturday, April 5, Easter Egg Hunt**

Red Oak Park (1056 Red Oak Park Road, Tipton, Iowa), 10:00 am.

Join Miss Sarah for a HOPPING good time with over 2000 Easter eggs! ALL ages welcome, YES, even teenagers! They are only little once; let them get some free candy! Small prizes for the top three kids with the most eggs! We make people spread out and will have a small child area, so they don't get plowed over. REGISTRATION REQUIRED by FRIDAY, April 4 at 7:00 pm. Please call 563-886-6930 or email Sarah at [naturalist@cedarcounty.iowa.gov](mailto:naturalist@cedarcounty.iowa.gov) to register. I will email specific details after you register.

**Wednesday, April 9 Green Smoothies**

Mechanicsville Library, 3:45 pm.

Try something new and exciting!

**Thursday, April 10, Easter Egg Hunt**

Cedar Manor, 5:30 pm.

This is sure to be an EGG-CELENT time with the clients at Cedar Manor! This will be an outdoor egg hunt. Please contact Cedar Manor if you have any questions.

**Friday, April 11, Prairie in a Cup**

Mechanicsville Library, 11:00 am.

Join Miss Sarah to plant some prairie seeds during this FREE, family friendly event! We will be planting butterfly milkweed, great blue lobelia, and wild bergamot flower seeds. You get to take these home to enjoy! If everything goes well, you will be able to transplant them outdoors at the end of May.

**Friday, April 11, Easter Egg Hunt**

Durant Library, 5:30 pm.

Have you ever seen 2000 Easter eggs? Well get ready! This program is for ALL ages! Yes, even the pre-teens and teens! Get them outside where they belong! Candy is a cheap bribe!

**Saturday, April 12, Easter Egg Hunt**

Cedar Valley Park Shelter 3 (main campground, 660 255th St., West Branch, Iowa), 10:00 am.

Join Miss Sarah for a HOPPING good time with over 2000 Easter eggs! ALL ages welcome, YES, even teenagers! They are only little once; let them get some free candy! Small prizes for the top three kids with the most eggs! We make people spread out and will have a small child area, so they don't get plowed over. REGISTRATION REQUIRED by FRIDAY, April 11 at 7:00 pm. Please call 563-886-6930 or email Sarah at [naturalist@cedarcounty.iowa.gov](mailto:naturalist@cedarcounty.iowa.gov) to register. I will email specific details after you register.

**Wednesday, April 16 Surprise!**

Bennett Library, 1:15 pm.

Surprise program with Miss Sarah!

**Saturday, April 26, Spring Wildflower Hike**

Cedar Valley Park Shelter One (Main campground, 660 255th St., West Branch, Iowa), 11:00 am.

Join us for a short hike at Cedar Valley Park while we look for spring ephemeral wildflowers!



**Thursday, May 1, Story Time**

Durant Library, 10:00 am.  
 Story time for the littles with Miss Sarah

**Sunday, May 4, Wildflower Walk**

Geller Preserve (265th and Snaggy Ridge Road, Tipton follow the signs), 1:00 pm.  
 This property is owned by the Cedar County Historical Society and is only available for the public to view two days a year.

**Monday, May 5, Horchata**

Durant Library, 3:30 pm.  
 Learn how to make horchata and get to taste some as well.

**Saturday, May 10, Soap Making**

Cedar County Conservation Office (713 E. South St Tipton, IA 52772) 10:00 am.  
 Come and learn how to make soap! Participants will learn some of the history of soap making, including how pioneers did it. Participants will also be able to make their own soap to take home. This is an all ages program but participants under the age of 18 must have an adult with them. Please register by contacting our office at (563)-886-6930 or emailing [Jwilbourne@cedarcounty.iowa.gov](mailto:Jwilbourne@cedarcounty.iowa.gov).



**Saturday, May 10, Wildflower Walk**

Geller Preserve (265th and Snaggy Ridge Road, Tipton) 1:00 pm.  
 This property is owned by the Cedar County Historical Society this will be the last chance to view this property for the year.

**Tuesday, May 13, Roving Retirees**

Stanwood Library, 2:30 pm.  
 Roving Retirees UNITE!!!

**Monday, May 19, Maple Syrup Celebration**

Durant Library, 5:30 pm.  
 Come taste some pancakes with some maple syrup and shagbark hickory syrup!

**Friday, May 30, Story Time**

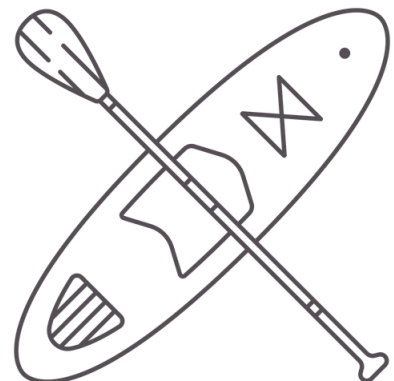
West Branch Library, 10:15 am.  
 Come read a book with Miss Sarah and play a fun game!

**Friday, May 30, Fishing**

Bennett Park (1378 Yankee Ave, Bennett, IA) 6:30 pm.  
 All ages welcome! We will provide the poles and bait. Parents must be present the entire time. Mandatory catch and release. Please bring your own snacks and water bottles.

**Saturday, May 31, Paddle Boarding at Lake MacBride**

3971 Cottage Reserve Road Extension, Solon, Iowa, 11:00 am.  
 Come paddle boarding with Miss Sarah! No experience necessary, ages four and up welcome to attend; yes adults too! We will provide the paddle boards, paddles, and lifejackets. Everyone will need to wear a properly fitting lifejacket the entire time. Please wear clothes that can get wet. Please bring your own water bottles and snacks.



**Sunday, June 1, Paddle Boarding**

3971 Cottage Reserve Road Extension, Solon, Iowa, 2:00 pm.

No experience necessary, ages four and up welcome to attend; yes adults too! We will provide the paddle boards, paddles, and lifejackets. Everyone will need to wear a properly fitting lifejacket the entire time. Please wear clothes that can get wet. Please bring your own water bottles and snacks.

**Tuesday, June 3, Squirrels!**

Tipton Library, 10:30 am.

Squirrels! Come learn about squirrels and play a game with Miss Sarah!

**Tuesday, June 3, Fishing at Bennett**

Bennett Park (1378 Yankee Ave, Bennett, IA)  
6:30 pm.

All ages welcome! We will provide the poles and bait. Parents must be present the entire time. Mandatory catch and release. Please bring your own snacks and water bottles.

**Saturday, June 7, Free Fishing Weekend!**

Bennett Park (1378 Yankee Ave, Bennett, IA)  
8:00 am to Noon.

Use the east park entrance to join us at Bennett Park for a free fishing program! All ages are welcome, and kids under 16 are eligible for door prizes! No registration required.

**Monday, June 9, Glow Paddle**

Bennett Park, (1378 Yankee Avenue, Bennett, IA)  
9:30 pm.

Kids eight and up welcome to attend, yes adults too! Parents must be present the entire time. We will provide the canoes, kayaks, lifejackets, and paddles. Everyone will need to wear a properly fitting lifejacket the entire time. Please wear clothes that can get wet and dirty, including footwear! Please bring your own water bottles and snacks.

**Tuesday, June 10, Surprise!**

Tipton Library, 10:30 am.

Surprise program with Miss Sarah !

**Tuesday, June 10, Butterflies**

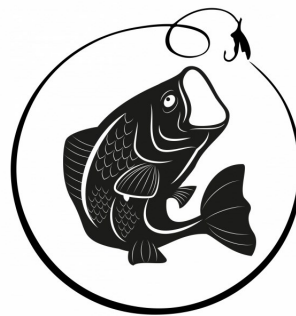
Clarence Library, 2:00 pm.

Come learn about the beautiful butterflies of Iowa during Clarence Library's Summer Reading Program!

**Wednesday, June 11, Canoeing and kayaking**

Bennett Park (1378 Yankee Ave, Bennett, IA)  
7:00 pm.

Ages three and older welcome! Parents must be present the entire time. We will provide the canoes, kayaks, lifejackets, and paddles. Everyone will need to wear a properly fitting lifejacket the entire time. Please wear clothes that can get wet and dirty, including footwear! It is very muddy getting in and out of the canoes and kayaks. Please bring your own water bottles and snacks.

**Thursday, June 13, Summer Kickoff**

Courthouse Lawn (400 Cedar St, Tipton, IA 52772) , 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

Come touch and feel all sorts of critters at the conservation booth with Miss Sarah.

**Tuesday, June 17, Bees**

Clarence Library, 2:00 pm.

Come learn about our native bees! Did you know one is actually electric blue?

**Sunday, July 6, Paddle boarding at Lake MacBride**

3971 Cottage Reserve Road Extension, Solon, Iowa, 2:00 pm.

Come paddle boarding with Miss Sarah! No experience necessary, ages four and up welcome to attend. We will provide the paddle boards, paddles, and lifejackets. Everyone will need to wear a properly fitting lifejacket the entire time. Please wear clothes that can get wet. Please bring your own water bottles and snacks.

**Tuesday, July 8, Surprise Program**

West Branch Library, 6:30 pm.

Surprise program with Miss Sarah !

**Thursday, July 10, Full Moon Paddle**

Bennett Park (1378 Yankee Ave, Bennett, IA)  
9:30 pm.

Ages eight and older welcome! Parents must be present the entire time. We will provide the canoes, kayaks, lifejackets, and paddles. Everyone will need to wear a properly fitting lifejacket the entire time. Please wear clothes that can get wet and dirty, including footwear! Please bring your own water bottles and snacks.

**Saturday, July 12, Paddle boarding at Lake MacBride**

3971 Cottage Reserve Road Extension, Solon, Iowa, 11:00 am.

Come paddle boarding with Miss Sarah! No experience necessary, ages four and up welcome to attend; yes, adults too! We will provide the paddle boards, paddles, and lifejackets. Everyone will need to wear a properly fitting lifejacket the entire time. Please wear clothes that can get wet. Please bring your own water bottles and snacks.

**Sunday, July 13, Paddle boarding at Lake MacBride**

3971 Cottage Reserve Road Extension, Solon, Iowa, 2:00 pm.

Come paddle boarding with Miss Sarah! No experience necessary, ages four and up welcome to attend. We will provide the paddle boards, paddles, and lifejackets. Everyone will need to wear a properly fitting lifejacket the entire time. Please wear clothes that can get wet. Please bring your own water bottles and snacks.

**Saturday, July 19, Raspberry Picking and Hike at Bickett-Rate Farm**

600 225th Street, Tipton, Iowa .

This is a Cedar County Historical Society Property and is only accessible during programs. So come join the fun for some berry picking! Bring your own bucket to take home your haul. All ages welcome, but we will be hiking back to the raspberry patch, which is a decent hike. If you have questions, please contact the Cedar County Historical Society at 563-886-2899.

**Sunday, July 20, Paddle boarding at Lake MacBride**

3971 Cottage Reserve Road Extension, Solon, Iowa, 2:00 pm.

Come paddle boarding with Miss Sarah! No experience necessary, ages four and up welcome to attend. We will provide the paddle boards, paddles, and lifejackets. Everyone will need to wear a properly fitting lifejacket the entire time. Please wear clothes that can get wet. Please bring your own water bottles and snacks .

**Saturday, July 26, Fungal Foray**

Townsend Wildlife Area 10:00 am to Noon.

The Prairie States Mushroom club will be joining us for a fungal foray! Come learn with experts and novices alike!

**Thursday, July 31, Cooking with Miss Sarah**

West Branch Library, 6:30 pm.

Come see what tasty concoction we can whip up at the library.



## We Want to See Your Photos!

Have you taken photos out in our parks? Would you like to share them for everyone to see? If so we would love to feature them in our Newsletter! Please send photos to [Jwilbourne@cedarcounty.iowa.gov](mailto:Jwilbourne@cedarcounty.iowa.gov) with the subject "Newsletter Photo". Feel free to tell us a bit about your photo, be sure to include which park you're at, who the subjects and original photographer are and any other relevant details.



## Thanks For Your Photos!

Cheryl Schluter sent in these photos from an end of season bash and team bonding event with naturalist Sarah Subbert for the Tipton youth football team last fall. The boys had a great time bowfishing, using slingshots and more! Thanks for sharing we love to see your photos!



## Wild Recipe: Spruce Cone Syrup

### Equipment

1 quart mason jar

### Ingredients

2 cups young clean green spruce cones

2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cups of brown or unrefined sugar

### Method

1. Combine cones and sugar in your mason jar in layers; lay one layer of cones and then sugar, repeating your process until the jar is full.
2. Let your jar sit for around 30 days, allowing the mixture to combine and ferment. During the first week, open the jar every day to release gas. During this process the volume may decrease; if you have more cones and sugar, you can add them to your jar, filling it to the top of the jar again.
3. At the end of the 30-day period, your syrup will be a liquid or slush in consistency. Transfer this mixture to a saucepan with two tablespoons of water for each quart of syrup and heat to a brisk boil, stirring frequently. Cook for 5 to 10 minutes, being sure not to reduce your syrup too much as it will crystallize.
4. After your syrup is finished cooking, strain out your cones and transfer to a clean jar. Discard the strained cones. Process the jars in a water bath as for canning for additional quality.
5. For best flavor, refrigerate your syrup.

Photo Credit: Alan Bergo | Forager Chef



## Cedar County Conservation Board Members

Jean Driscoll  
Dylan Haub  
Rick Rouse  
Teresa Wendt  
Duane Moeller

### Staff

Mike Dauber, *Director*  
Sarah Subbert, *Naturalist*  
Andy Petersen, *Park Ranger*  
Chip Brown, *Park Technician*  
Jacob Wilbourne, *Park Technician*

Contact us by phone at: 563-886-6930

Email address: [cedarccb@cedarcounty.iowa.gov](mailto:cedarccb@cedarcounty.iowa.gov)

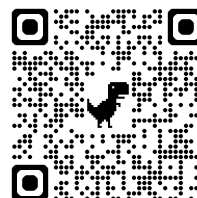
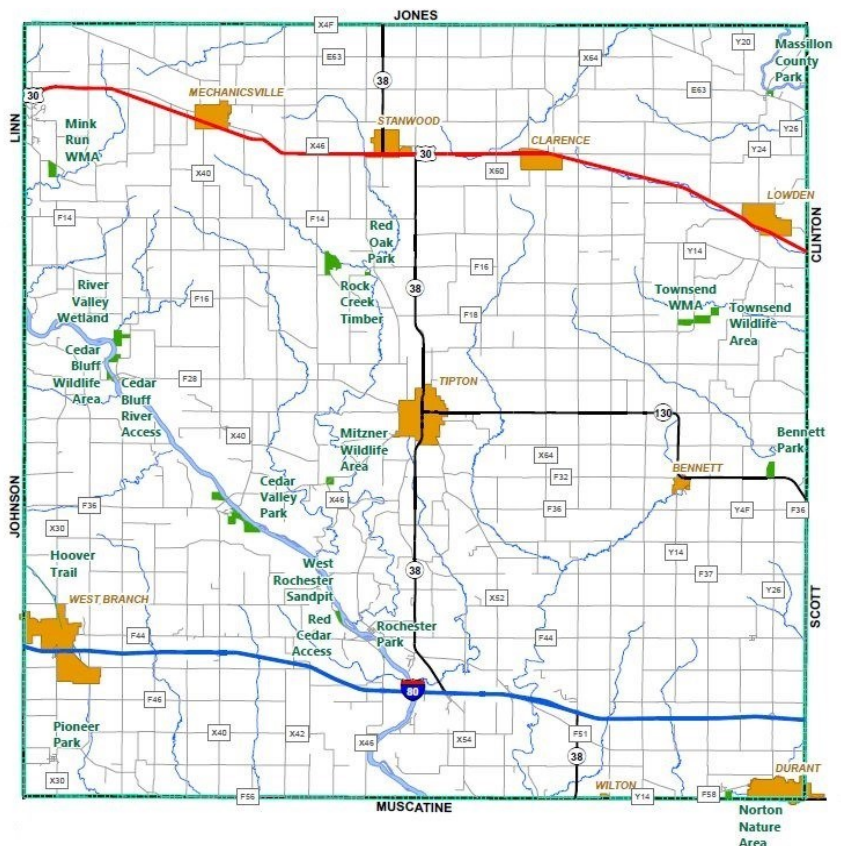
Located at: 713 E. South St Tipton, IA 52772

Address: 400 Cedar Street Tipton, IA 52772

Office hours: Monday –Friday 8:00 am-4:30 pm

To be added to our newsletter email list please send an email to Newsletter Editor [jwilbourne@cedarcounty.iowa.gov](mailto:jwilbourne@cedarcounty.iowa.gov) with the subject “newsletter”.

## Cedar County Conservation Parks and Wildlife Areas



Scan to visit  
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for information on our  
parks.