



# Cedar Valley Visions

## Conservation News

### Andy Petersen, Director

Article by Andy Petersen

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Andy Petersen, Director

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Hello, I am Andy Petersen, the new director for the conservation board. Previously, I have been the park ranger since 2021. I grew up south of Wheatland and attended Calmus Wheatland High School, then went on to Kirkwood Community College in the Parks and Natural Resources program, and then transferred to Upper Iowa and completed the Bachelor of Science degree.



During and after graduation, I worked a variety of seasonal jobs with county conservation boards and the Iowa DNR. During this time, I found my passion for wildlife conservation law enforcement. I then moved to South Dakota and worked as a wildlife conservation officer for twenty-one years.

Currently I live in Bennett with my wife Sherrie, who works for Scott County as an environmental specialist, and my daughter Evie, who is a senior at Tipton High School. In my spare time I enjoy upland bird hunting and trap and skeet shooting with my daughter.

For the future of Cedar County Conservation, I would like to continue to improve the outdoor opportunities and services we offer for the community. Work on updating our campgrounds, trail system, educational programs, and maintenance on our wildlife areas, and keep working on providing quality outdoor opportunities for our users.

### Creature Feature~ Killdeer

Article and Photo by Jacob Wilbourne



The killdeer is a large plover that has territory that ranges all the way to northern Canada during breeding season and south to northern portions of South America. Killdeer mainly feed on insects and aquatic invertebrates and at times will feed on small seeds and berries as well as small fish. Killdeer are shorebirds and can often be found near water and adjacent fields with short vegetation.

Killdeer are known for their typical call, a short two-syllable call sounding like "kill deer." They are also known for injury feigning to distract predators; this act feigns a broken wing or distress and draws predators away from nests.

Breeding occurs March through August with an incubation period between 22 and 28 days, with both parents taking turns incubating the eggs.

## Planting a Pollinator Garden

Article and Photograph by Jacob Wilbourne

Spring and warmer temperatures are coming, and with that comes gardening season! As you begin to plan and plant your garden, keep in mind our native pollinators. Your garden can act as a wildlife sanctuary by providing food and shelter, as well as beautifying your home! Planting native plants in your garden can also help cut down on watering, weeding, and overall garden maintenance, as they are already adapted to Iowa's climate. Unlike conventional gardens, you can feel free to leave dead plant stems at the end of the year, and after the last frost, these offer insects that overwinter a place to live out of the elements.

Start by identifying and preparing the area you want to plant, including the soil type, amount of water, and sun exposure. Using this information, you can select a variety of native plants to add to the area using databases such as Iowa DOT's Native Plant Database or Prairie Moon Nursery's website. Keep in mind what you like as well, such as bloom color and height. To best support pollinators, select plants that bloom throughout the growing season.

By planting natives, you can make a huge impact. Iowa is home to nearly 400 species of native bees, and that's just one group of pollinators amongst many. Planting a pollinator garden is rewarding with the diverse beauty it can bring to your home and the wildlife you help support!



Swamp milkweed

## Parks and A Look Ahead

Article by Chip Brown Photos by Jacob Wilbourne

With warmer temperatures coming, we are looking forward to the start of camping season. This same good weather brings in more park users, which makes it our busy season as well. Last year we made some great park improvements that many of our campers loved seeing, including the reorganization of "The Little Campground" at Cedar Valley and the remodel of the Rochester Park shelter. This year was an amazing year for seasonal worker applicants, with nearly all of them being from our area, and we are looking forward to working with them!



During the cooler months we completed a new outhouse for the Hoover Trail, as the old one had seen better days. This was a much-needed improvement on our section of the trail. You may remember that we installed a new bridge and mile marker signs on the trail last year; this was all done in the hopes of increasing trail usage and safety, which benefits all of our communities.

With some of the warm days we had, we were able to clear the south side of the dike on the Bennett Park pond of trees and brush. Last year we cleared the north side and planted the area to prairie grass, which we plan on doing to the south side later this year. Clearing the trees accomplishes three goals: the removal of invasive honeysuckle and black locust trees improves fishing access around the pond and helps promote the natural beauty of our park. Removal of the trees and treating of the stumps will greatly reduce the amount of maintenance required in the future for this area.

As always, we look forward to seeing you and all our other park users enjoying the great outdoors!



# Kids Corner

## Cedar Valley Visions

### Home Grown Crystals

Please have an adult help you with the following project

This cool project can be use to make cool and interesting decorations, homemade geodes and more!

#### Materials:

Measuring Cup

Boiling water

Borax

A Heat Safe Container

A Spoon or Whisk

Aluminum Foil

Something for the crystals to grow around

Fabric dye to color your crystals



Borax crystal covered raccoon skull  
Photo by Jacob Wilbourne

#### Instructions:

Start by boiling your water, making sure to measure out the amount used. You'll want enough water to fully cover whatever base object you use to grow your crystals; this can be anything from a natural artifact such as a stick to eggshells for homemade geodes!

Place your base in your heat-safe container and cover it with boiling water, then mix in your borax powder. For each cup of water used, add 4 tablespoons of borax to the container. If you want to color your crystals, add the fabric dye as you mix.

Cover your container with aluminum foil and let it sit at least 24 hours.

After 24 hours, you may remove your base and admire your amazing homegrown crystals.

#### Optional:

If you wish to preserve your creation apply a layer of spray on clear sealant such as modge podge and display out of direct sunlight.

### Spring Nature Scavenger Hunt

- A mushroom
- Geese flying north
- A turkey vulture
- Dutchman's Breeches
- Hear frogs croaking
- A prairie after it's burned
- Deer antlers



Dutchman's Breeches  
Photo by: Jacob Wilbourne

## Word Scramble

TKRYUE URTELVU

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CHAHT

-----

ZDZIREL

-----

BZREEE

-----

UMD

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GEELNSID

-----

EGALE

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NKUSK

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## Nature Word Search

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

Bloom, Blossom, Bud, Nest, Pollen, Rainbow, Sapling,  
Thaw, Verdant

Answers: Turkey Vulture, Hatch, Drizzle, Breeze, Mud, Seedling, Eagle,  
Skunk

# Cedar County Conservation Summer Camps



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 11th. Registration opens May 25th, closes June 9th.**

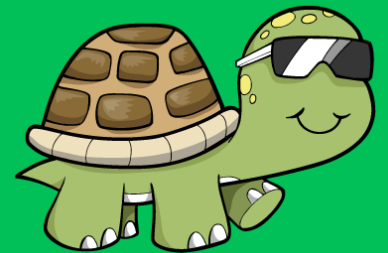
Campers will get a chance to explore Bennett Park and work on outdoor skills in this hands on camp.

**Critter Camp, Bennett (Grades 2nd and 3rd), June 18th. Registration opens June 1st, closes June 16th.**

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 25th. Registration opens June 8th, closes June 24th.**

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



**Critter Camp, Cedar Valley (Grades 2nd and 3rd), July 16th. Registration opens June 29th, closes July 14th.**

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 23rd. Registration opens July 6th, closes July 21st.**

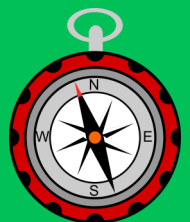
We want to encourage your sense of exploration! Campers will get a chance to explore Bennett Park with us!

**Nature Explorer Camp, Cedar Valley (Grades 4th and 5th), July 30th. Registration opens July 13th, closes July 28th.**

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

**Survivor Camp, Bennett (Grades 6th and 7th), August 6th. Registration opens July 20th, closes August 2nd.**

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



Call our office at 563-886-6930 or email: [Jwilbourne@cedarcountry.iowa.gov](mailto:Jwilbourne@cedarcountry.iowa.gov) to register

**Saturday, March 21st, Easter Egg Hunt**

Red Oak Park, 10:00 am.

Our massive 2,000 + egg hunt is back! PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED. This is for ALL ages, and when we say ALL ages, we mean ALL AGES! You are NEVER too old for free candy! Small prizes for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> most eggs! Bring a big bag to collect all the eggs! We will have a little kid area, so they don't get plowed down by the older kids. Please email Sarah at [naturalist@cedarcounty.iowa.gov](mailto:naturalist@cedarcounty.iowa.gov) or call 563-886-6930 to register. Deadline to pre-register is Friday, March 20 at 8:00 pm. We will have A FEW extra bags in case people forget to register, but please try to register.

**Monday, March 23rd, Easter Egg Hunt**

Durant Library, 5:30 pm.

Meet outside the library for an egg-cellent time! We will line up on the sidewalk behind the library for this free, family friendly program. All ages welcome! No registration necessary.

**Wednesday, March 25th, Eggs**

Mechanicsville library, 3:30 pm.

Want to touch the egg from the world's largest animal that lives today? Want to see some SUPER tiny real eggs? Now's your chance!

**Friday, March 27th, Easter Egg Hunt**

Cedar Manor, Tipton, 5:30 pm.

Want to make some residents happy and score some awesome candy? Come to this egg hunt. It will be in front of Cedar Manor (PLEASE BE CAREFUL, the road is RIGHT there). No registration necessary. Please do not come before 5:00 pm. Remember to bring your own bag for all the eggs. We'll have a few bags just in case. The egg return and candy bags will be over to the side afterwards near their door to their facility.

**Saturday, March 28th, Easter Egg Hunt**

Cedar Valley Park Shelter Three, 10:00 am.

This egg hunt is quite the spread as it covers the main campground area and shelter three with 2000 + eggs! This program is for people of ALL ages. So drag those teens along for some fresh air! Small prizes for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> most eggs!! We will have a little kid area, so they don't get plowed down by the older kids. Please email Sarah at [naturalist@cedarcounty.iowa.gov](mailto:naturalist@cedarcounty.iowa.gov) or call 563-886-6930 to register. Deadline to pre-register is Friday, March 27 at 8:00 pm. We will have A FEW extra bags in case people forget to register, but please try to register.

**Sunday, March 29th, Hunter Safety Education Class**

Cedar County Conservation Office (713 E South Street, Tipton, Iowa) 8:00 am – 4:00 pm.

This is a classroom course; attendees must be present for the entire class. This is not a field day course. Lunch will be provided. However, if you have a special diet, please feel free to bring a sack lunch. 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, water safety, wildlife identification, the basics of wildlife management, hunting laws, and firearm and archery safety. Hunter education also stresses the importance of individual responsibility and outdoor ethics. 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. You MUST pre-register for this class. Register by going to <https://license.gooutdoorsiowa.com/Event/ViewEvent.aspx?id=3569>



**Wednesday, April 1st, Prairie in a Cup**

Bennett Library, 1:00 pm.

It is time to think spring! We will be planting prairie plants to take home and enjoy.

**Wednesday, April 8th, Welcome Back Snowbird Animals**

Durant Library, 3:30 pm.

The birds are back! Find out which critters migrate in and out of Iowa.

**Tuesday, April 14th, Prairie in a Cup**

Stanwood Library, 2:30 pm.

What is a prairie? What plants live there? Find out and take some free prairie seeds home with you as well!

**Wednesday, April 15th, Frogs**

Mechanicsville Library 3:30 pm.

Learn about the life cycle of frogs and get to touch and feel a live tadpole too!

**Friday, April 24th, Arbor Day Ice Cream Celebration**

Durant Library, 5:30 pm.

Celebrate Arbor Day with some free ice cream, shagbark hickory syrup, and nuts! Open to all ages!

**Saturday, April 25th, Wild Garlic Mustard Round Up!**

Mitzner Property, 10:30 am.

Come battle this invasive plant and help make our park a better place! Prizes for the top three people that pull the most garlic mustard. Don't worry, you can make piles in designated locations, so you don't have to haul all that weight around the whole time. BYOB – Bring Your Own Bucket! We will have a few buckets to borrow. Five-gallon buckets work great and if you have little kids, ice cream buckets are perfect. We will provide snacks after all your hard work. No registration necessary. Please wear close-toed shoes, long pants, long sleeves, and clothes that can get dirty. We will provide latex coated chore gloves to borrow (they are washed thoroughly after each use). Please bring your own water and go to the bathroom BEFORE you attend (there will be no water or bathrooms). It is recommended to bring a towel to sit on afterwards in your car just in case you get into poison ivy. If you have questions, please email Sarah at [naturalist@cedarcountry.iowa.gov](mailto:naturalist@cedarcountry.iowa.gov) or call 563-886-6930.

**Wednesday, April 29th, Nests**

Mechanicsville Library, 3:30 pm.

Come make a GIANT bird's nest with Miss Sarah and get to look at some real nests too.

**Saturday, April 25th, Fungal Foray**

Cedar Valley Park Shelter One, 10: 00 am.

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



**Saturday, May 2nd, Geller Preserve Wildflower Walk**

Corner of Snaggy Ridge Road and 265<sup>th</sup> Street, Tipton and follow the signs and head east, 10:00 am.

This property is owned by the Cedar County Historical Society. This will be the only day the public will have access to the property. Please wear close-toed shoes, long pants, and clothes that can get dirty. Please bring your own water and snacks and go to the bathroom BEFORE you come. This property has no bathrooms or running water. If you have questions, please email Sarah at [naturalist@cedarcountry.iowa.gov](mailto:naturalist@cedarcountry.iowa.gov) or call 563-886-6930.



Rue anemone and Virginia bluebell  
Photos by: Jacob Wilbourne

**Monday, May 4th, Build a Droid Day**

Durant Library, 5:30 pm.  
May the fourth be with you as we build a droid out of junk day! Bring your imagination!

**Wednesday, May 6th, Wild Garlic Mustard Salsa**

Bennett Library, 1:00 pm.  
Celebrating Cinco De Mayo a day late, we will be eating salsa, but with a twist! We will be using wild garlic mustard instead of cilantro!

**Saturday, May 16th, Rock Creek Timber Hike**

Rock Creek Timber, 10:00 am  
Join us for a guided hike through the woods of Rock Creek Timber! Learn a little bit about the local history of the area and enjoy a hike. Hike will be on a loop trail, about 1 mile long. Please dress appropriately for the weather, bring a water bottle and snacks as needed. There are no bathrooms at this location.  
We will meet in the parking lot and hike for about an hour.

**Monday, May 18th, Fascinating Plants**

Durant Library, 5:30 pm.  
Explore the crazy world of plants with Miss Sarah. Did you know that Iowa is home to SEVERAL EXPLODING plants? Find out which ones!



pale jewelweed  
Photo by: Jacob Wilbourne

**Tuesday, May 26th, Shagbark Hickory Smoothie**

Stanwood Library 2:30 pm.  
Nothing says summertime like a smoothie! Join Miss Sarah for a tasty wild edible treat!

**Wednesday, May 27th, Summertime Fun**

Mechanicsville Library, 1:30 pm.  
Join Miss Sarah with some fun summertime games!

**Thursday, May 28th, Story Time**

Mechanicsville Library, 5:30 pm.  
Toddler time at the library. Join us for a short book and activity.



**Monday, June 1st, Planting Party**

Mechanicsville Library, 9:30 am.  
Come play in the dirt at the library!

**Tuesday, June 2nd, Plant a seed, grow!**

Tipton Library, 10:30 am.  
Join Miss Sarah for a fun filled learning experience about plants!

**Wednesday, June 3rd, Prairie in a Cup**

Durant Library, 5:30 pm.  
Check out the wide variety of plants that live in a prairie and plant some in a cup to take home! This is open to all ages and you can take home several species of plants.

**Thursday, June 4th, Prairie in a Cup**

Durant Library, 10:00 am.  
This is a story time for year readers and we will be planting wild bergamot seeds in a cup and letting participants take them home to grow in their own little mini greenhouse.

**Saturday June 6th, Fishing Fun**

Bennett Park, 8:00 am.  
Celebrate free fishing weekend by fishing with us at Bennett Park! Enjoy fishing with us (please bring your own fishing poles and bait, we will have a few poles and bait available for those that do not have equipment). At 11:00 we will blow our whistle and gather on the north east side (road down to the pond). Once everyone has gathered, we will start our raffle of prizes (we will raffle things off by ages, sorry adults, the prizes are for kids 18 and under).

**Monday, June 15th, Giant Paper Flowers**

Durant Library, 2:30 pm.  
We will be making super huge, colorful flowers to take home!

**Tuesday, June 16th, Squirrel Stash**

Lowden Library, 11:00 am.  
Learn about what seeds squirrels go bonkers for and play a fun game!

**Tuesday, June 16th, Depression Candy**

Stanwood Library, 2:30 pm.  
Did you know you can make candy out of potatoes and sunflowers? It sounds weird, but tastes like fudge!

**Wednesday, June 17th, Depression Candy**

Bennett Library, 1:00 pm.  
Potato candy! That's right! You can make tasty candy with potatoes! We will also be using sunflower seed spread too and a crazy amount of powdered sugar.

**Wednesday, June 24th, Seed Bombs**

Mechanicsville Library, 11:00 am.  
Come play in the dirt and make a mess making seed bombs! Be sure to wear old clothes!

**Wednesday, June 24th, Cooking with Miss Sarah**

West Branch Library, 1:00 pm.  
Come with an appetite as we make some tasty foods! This program is geared towards kids going into second through fifth grade.

**Saturday, June 27th, Paddle Boarding**

Lake MacBride (3971 Cottage Reserve Road Extension NE, Solon, Iowa), 11:00 am.  
Ever want to try paddle boarding for free? Now is your chance! We provide paddle boards, life jackets, and paddles. Please bring your own sunscreen, water, and snacks. Please wear clothes that can get wet. If you have a properly fitting life jacket, feel free to bring your own.

**Sunday, June 28th, Paddle Boarding**

Lake MacBride (3971 Cottage Reserve Road Extension NE, Solon, Iowa), 2:00 pm.  
Ever want to try paddle boarding for free? Now is your chance! We provide paddle boards, life jackets, and paddles. Please bring your own sunscreen, water, and snacks. Please wear clothes that can get wet. If you have a properly fitting life jacket, feel free to bring your own.

**Monday, June 29th, Tiny Paper 3D Flowers**

Durant Library, 2:30 pm.  
We will be making tiny, but not ultra tiny, colorful, three dimensional flowers.

**Tuesday, June 30th, Seed Surprise**

Tipton Library, 10:30 am.  
Come learn about plants with Miss Sarah!

**Tuesday, June 30th, Plant a Seed, Grow!**

West Branch Library, 6:15 pm.  
Join Miss Sarah for a plant themed program at the library!

## Wild Recipe: Venison Pastrami

Recipe and Photo by Chelsea Ewan Rowcliffe, Mitchell CCB

### Brine:

1 gallon water  
3 lbs. venison roast-y cuts (goose would be good, too)  
2 TBS Pink curing salt #1 1 cup kosher salt  
3/4 cup brown sugar 3 Tbsp. pickling spice

### Rub:

2 TBS black peppercorns 2 TBS coriander seeds  
1 TBS garlic powder 1 TBS smoked paprika



Finished venison pastrami

**Method:** First, mix up the brine. In a non-reactive pot, bring all ingredients to a gentle simmer and stir just until salts are completely dissolved. Remove from heat and allow to cool for a bit before completely chilling in a refrigerator. Trim venison of any excessive fat or silver skin. Although there can be various sizes of cuts, the final weight after trimming should equal 3 lbs. Add the venison to the brine once it's completely cooled. Place a heavy plate or food-safe weight over the meat to keep it submerged. Cure in the refrigerator for 5 days.

After the 5 days, take the venison out of the cure and rinse with cool water. Pat dry and place on some kind of cooling or drying rack in the fridge to let air dry for about an hour. While the meat is cooling, you can mix up the rub and prep your smoker! Since venison is so lean, if your smoker has some kind of water pan option, this is a great time to use it. For the rub, add all ingredients to a spice/coffee grinder or mortar and pestle. Grind just until larger pieces are broken up (it's ok to have large chunks of peppercorn). Once the venison has air dried for about an hour and the smoker is ready, lightly coat the venison in olive oil. This will help the rub stick. This is more about imparting another layer of flavor instead of a super thick coating like a BBQ bark might be applied. Smoke the venison chunks with indirect smoke @ 225 degrees until they reach an internal temperature of 145. Let the meat rest in foil or parchment for at least 15 minutes. This is a VITAL step to help redistribute juices and improve texture. Once rested, you're all set to slice and serve! This recipe is perfect for reubens, an alternative for corned beef, or any other deli sandwich specialty!

## Cedar County Conservation Board Members

Dylan Haub  
Rick Rouse  
Teresa Wendt  
Duane Moeller  
Pam Hartwig

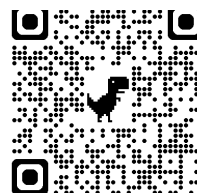
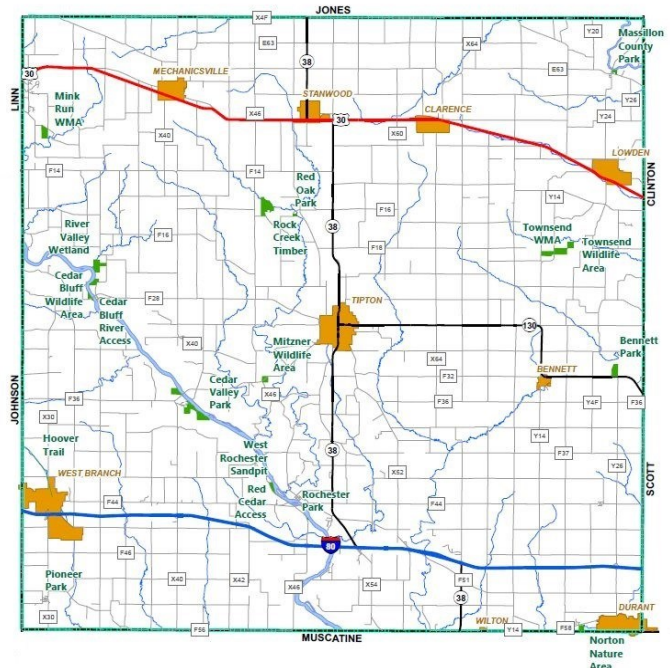
### Staff

Andy Petersen, *Director*  
Sarah Subbert, *Naturalist*  
Brad Koranda, *Park Ranger*  
Chip Brown, *Park Technician*  
Jacob Wilbourne, *Park Technician*

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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  
[www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com)  
for information on our parks.