

# IOWA NATURAL HERITAGE

Protecting and restoring Iowa's land, water and wildlife.



## **THE LAST SHORELINE**

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## ***Creating a Spiritual Sanctuary***

How stones shaped a preserve in eastern Iowa. **14**

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### INHF Land Acknowledgement:

As a land trust it is important for us to continuously acknowledge and understand the full scope of history that has brought us to reside on, protect and steward this land. The land between two rivers is home to many indigenous people, historically and today. We acknowledge the value of indigenous communities and work to honor them on the land.



### ON THE COVER

A spreadwing, a type of damselfly, clings to a stem at the water's edge. Damselflies are the daintier cousin of dragonflies and often go unnoticed despite there being over four dozen species found throughout the state. *Photo by Thomas Scherer*



Protecting and restoring Iowa's land, water and wildlife.

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*Iowa Natural Heritage* is published quarterly by Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation for its supporters and friends. Articles appearing in *Iowa Natural Heritage* may be reprinted with permission of the publisher.

Circulation 10,000

# Our shared places of community

**O**n a recent evening, I met a friend at Big Creek State Park to do some fishing. I expected there to be a few people out because it was a nice night. But it was a Monday with school still in session, so I was surprised to see a line at the boat ramp, a mostly full parking lot, people all over the trail and a beach packed with people enjoying the park. It was amazing to see.



JOE MCGOVERN  
President

Iowa's public parks, trails and wildlife areas have seen record usage over the last two years as people looked for safe places to gather — or even to escape for a moment of peace. But as people are less hesitant to get together, our public parks have continued to be incredibly popular.

Camping and cabin reservations at Iowa's county and state parks are booked months in advance. Hiking and biking trails are full of people putting in miles or simply out for a stroll. And more and more people are discovering the rugged beauty of Iowa's wilderness areas and preserves.

Iowans are reaping the benefits of these shared spaces to get outdoors: increased physical and mental health, more protection for water quality and wildlife habitat and the sense of community that comes with gathering in beautiful places. But communities are also seeing the return on their investment by creating these spaces. More access to outdoor recreation in Iowa creates more jobs, more consumer spending, more workforce development and a better quality of life.

With your support, Iowa Natural Heritage



Foundation has been able to help create thousands of acres of parks, trails and wildlife areas in almost every county in Iowa. In fact, we just finished transferring the 1,021-acre Heritage Hills Wildlife Management Area in south-central Iowa to the Iowa DNR (see page 18), creating a haven for many wildlife species while offering access to people looking for a wild experience.

And Iowans have shown there is demand for more. With the collaboration of landowners, our public partners and supporters of conservation like you, we can continue to create popular destinations and quiet pieces of nature. Because we all benefit when our community invests in our beautiful outdoors.

**Heritage Hills Wildlife Management Area** straddles the border of Madison and Clarke counties in south-central Iowa. The 1,021-acre wilderness area is made up of woodland, restored prairie and one of the largest roadless expanses in the state. *Photo by Emily Martin, INHF*

## THROUGH YOUR **LENS**

**E**very summer, crews of young adults lend their skills and passions toward fulfilling INHF's mission. They pour their time and energy, knowledge and sweat into caring for the land and spreading the good word about land conservation in Iowa.

Their efforts have undoubtedly influenced lands across the state and without their contributions over the years we'd be in a much different place today. Accomplishments aside, their summer with us is but one step in their career journey, and with this in mind, we do all we can to provide a meaningful experience that educates, motivates and inspires young folks as they chase their goals.

We're intentional about entering learning environments that naturally create opportunities to better oneself and each other. We share our collective knowledge in ways that challenge and encourage. Getting your hands dirty in the name of land conservation is a powerful endeavor. If we can fan the flames in a way that produces a more inspired conservationist in the future, then we've done our job.

Sharing our passions and inspiring others is how our work moves forward. Whether we've encouraged the next generation of conservation professionals or simply provided a more well-rounded perspective toward caring for our earth, we've accomplished our goals. Ultimately, the impact of an internship extends far beyond a summer stewarding Iowa's special places. For it is after their time with us that the real legacy happens.

— **RYAN SCHMIDT**,  
Central Iowa Land Stewardship Director





From left to right, 2019 INHF land stewardship interns Riggs Wilson, Ryan Strauss, Josh Dykstra, Claire Carlson, Rob Kreklau and Amanda Mackey on a ridgetop at Iverson Bottoms in Allamakee County. *Photo by Derek Miner/INHF*

## IOWA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The 2022 legislative session wrapped up on May 25, and your voice made a difference for conservation! You halted legislation that would have restricted expansion of Iowa's parks, trails and wildlife areas; protected landowners' rights to receive a fair price for their property from the buyer of their choice; and saved important private land protection tools like the conservation tax credit.

The Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) budget remained at \$12 million; the State Recreational Trails budget was increased to \$2.5 million, and an additional \$5 million was added to Iowa State Parks infrastructure

budget. There was great momentum for funding the Natural Resources & Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, but the need remains for protected, consistent funding.

We hope you will join us in our continued advocacy. You can engage decision makers and strengthen the base of conservation champions by sharing your passion for the outdoors with legislators, local leaders, friends, or family. Invite them for a tour of your favorite park or trail, tell them why conservation matters to you, and ask them to use their voice for nature!

Visit [inhf.org](http://inhf.org) for more details.



## GIFT TO IOWA'S FUTURE DAY

On Wednesday, March 23, INHF joined in celebrating Iowans and their gifts of land, land value or conservation easement donations. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources' annual Gift to Iowa's Future Day had been on pause due to the pandemic, so joining each other and cherishing the stories behind the gifts was a revitalizing experience after a two-year hiatus.

In 2021, these generous gifts totaled 3,890 acres of land and water across 22 counties with a value of \$11.6 million. During the ceremony at the Iowa State Capitol, Iowans heard from Gov. Kim Reynolds and Iowa DNR Director Kayla Lyon about the significance of caring for natural resources. "We know how important conservation and recreation are for residents

and visitors alike," Gov. Reynolds said. "Iowa boasts world class outdoor recreation opportunities that also provide the benefit of environmental stewardship, water quality, wildlife habitat and so much more."

Many of those recognized worked with INHF to make these gifts. Between 2019 and 2021, INHF worked with 40 of the families and organizations that donated land or land value for conservation. INHF is proud to be a part of permanently protecting the spots that are so near and dear to them, and their gifts to our state's inhabitants — people, wildlife and plants — translate to a healthier future for us all.

Read more about these generous gifts at [inhf.org](http://inhf.org).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### JUNE 4

National Trails Day  
*Easter Lake, Des Moines*

Join INHF and Polk County Conservation for a day of food, fun and community as we do trailwork at Easter Lake.

### JUNE 11

The Narrows Preserve Open House  
*Spirit Lake, IA*

Join us in celebration of the protection and opening of The Narrows Preserve — a new 50-acre property on the shores of East Lake Okoboji. Enter the preserve through adjoining Elinor Bedell State Park. Hear about planned restoration work, gain insight into the importance of this wildlife corridor and share in the joy of this successful protection story.

### JUNE 16, JULY 21, AUGUST 18

UpCycle Stewards  
*Gray's Lake, Des Moines*

Together, volunteers will help restore land for native plants by removing invasive species from the park. After the event, organizers will take the plants to Blank Park Zoo where they will be "upcycled" into food for the zoo animals.

### JULY 11

Heritage Valley Summer Harvest  
*Waukon, IA*

This relaxing and peaceful activity is a favorite among volunteers. Together, we'll hand-harvest native seeds from Heritage Valley's hillside prairies. Seed collected will be used to diversify and expand area prairies.

**For more information on upcoming events, visit [www.inhf.org/events](http://www.inhf.org/events)**

## QUARTERLY PROTECTION REPORT

An quick look at new INHF protection projects and land transferred between **December 2021 and February 2022.**

### Newly protected areas

#### Harvest Preserve

100 acres of woodland and grassland within the city limits of Iowa City. Protects the private preserve as urban green space while allowing for future amenity additions for the benefit of the public. *(Conservation easement donated by Harvest Preserve Foundation, Inc.)*

**\*Read more about this protection story on page 14.**

#### Pleasant Grove Savanna

7 acres of oak savanna near Hawthorn Lake WMA in northeastern Mahaska County. Provides outstanding habitat for a variety of birds and other declining savanna species, and adds onto a patchwork of previously protected land in that area. *(Donated by Pleasant Grove Land Preservation, Inc. subject to a reserved life estate)*

#### Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Addition

419 acres along the South Skunk River with significant potential for wetland and oxbow restoration. This addition expands on wildlife habitat, flood mitigation and water quality protections. *(Proposed public ownership)*

#### The Narrows Preserve

50 acres of undeveloped East Okoboji Lake shoreline adjacent to Elinor Bedell State Park in Dickinson County. Lies within the Spring Run Bird Conservation Area, which has over fifty documented Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Protection of this property will provide benefits to the water quality through soil stabilization as well as preserve valuable oak savanna and prairie habitat. *(Owned and managed by INHF, conservation easement donated by INHF)*

**\*Read more about this property on page 8.**

#### Polk County

66 acres of floodplain along Fourmile Creek in Pleasant Hill. Includes prairie restoration and heavy wooded areas. Protection in this floodplain will help stabilize erodible banks, preserving Iowa's soil. *(Proposed public ownership)*

#### Stargrass

80 acres of restored prairie, wetland and riparian area southeast of Ames. The high-quality prairie has been carefully restored with local-origin seed and will remain a seed source for nearby restoration projects. The land is in the Skunk River watershed and its permanent protection helps connect other nearby habitat into a valuable wildlife corridor. *(Donated to INHF by Cindy Hildebrand and Roger Maddux subject to a reserved life estate)*

#### Marshall County

71 acres of grassland adjacent to Timmons Grove and the Iowa River. Provides opportunity for prairie and wetland restoration, offering protection against soil loss and the benefit of nutrient treatment and flood retention. *(Proposed public ownership)*

#### Coal Creek Marsh Addition

29 acres of CRP land that is part of a 700-acre marsh restoration in the floodpool of Lake Red Rock. Protection and restoration of this area will allow for better habitat management for migrating waterfowl. *(Bargain sale by Alec Pendry and Stephen Pendry. Proposed public ownership)*

#### Allamakee County

15 acres of woodland near Dorchester. Protects 650 feet of Waterloo Creek, a premier cold-water trout stream supporting all three native Iowa trout species. *(Donated to INHF by Dale Peterson subject to a reserved life estate)*

#### RRVT-HTT Connector

15 acres of critical trail corridor in Dallas County that will help link the Raccoon River Valley Trail and the High Trestle Trail, two of Iowa's most popular multi-use trails. *(Proposed public ownership)*

### Land transfers to public partners

#### Hackmann Natural Resource Area

66 acres of diverse habitat in the Turkey River Corridor including woodland and remnant sand prairie, important habitat for the endangered ornate box turtle. Future wetland and prairie reconstructions will have a positive impact on water quality and build on the nearby complex of public land. *(Bargain sale by Rowland and Barb Hackmann. Owned and managed by Fayette County Conservation)*

#### Edna Shain Fen and Wildlife Area

160 acres near Vinton including a fen and remnant pasture. Unique fen species such as Bog Willow (state-threatened), Safe Willow, Swamp Thistle, and Tall Cottongrass (state species of concern) have been documented. A wetland restoration project will provide flood storage and soil runoff reduction, and a prairie reconstruction will provide much needed wildlife habitat for the area. *(Owned and managed by Benton County Conservation)*

#### RRVT-HTT Connector

20 acres of critical trail corridor in Dallas County that will help link the Raccoon River Valley Trail and the High Trestle Trail, two of Iowa's most popular multi-use trails. *(Owned and managed by Dallas County Conservation)*

#### Kingfisher Hollow Wildlife Area Addition

114-acre addition to wildlife area near Mason City in Cerro Gordo County. Includes oxbows, oak savannas, and more than one mile of the Winnebago River. Provides vital habitat for wildlife, including belted kingfishers, mink and otters. *(Owned and managed by Cerro Gordo County Conservation)*

#### Falcon Springs WMA Addition

67 acres of woodland and restored prairie near Decorah. Provides additional habitat for the rusty-patched bumble bee, a federally endangered species, and offers excellent outdoor recreation opportunities. *(Owned and managed by Iowa Department of Natural Resources)*

#### Little Sioux WMA Addition

171 acres of scenic valley along the Little Sioux River in Clay County. Offers a great mix of habitats and protection of a variety of wildlife and a vulnerable floodplain. *(Owned and managed by Iowa Department of Natural Resources)*



# THE LAST SHORE



The protection of The Narrows Preserve is one of the most significant preservation projects the Iowa Great Lakes region has seen in recent years.

BY ABBY HADE TERPSTRA  
*Director of Philanthropy | [aterpstra@inhf.org](mailto:aterpstra@inhf.org)*



# LINE



## **D**riftling by in the boat, this special 2,020-foot span of shoreline on East Okoboji Lake in Dickinson County

is immediately noticeable. Noticeable not only for what it lacks — houses, high-rises, docks — but also for what is there: sprawling trees, a high grassy ridge and plenty of nature. Thanks to the quick response of hundreds of individuals, area businesses, community groups and foundations, it will continue to be so.

On Sept. 7, 2021, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation wrapped up a historic campaign to purchase the East Lake shoreline, now known as The Narrows Preserve, and closed on the property at the end of December. The property will be available for public access starting this summer, as a place for low-impact recreation like hiking and bird watching.

“I am happy to support this project because it is a great location and Iowans need public spaces to explore and enjoy nature,” says Winifred “Teddy” Shuttleworth. The Shuttleworth family has a history in the Iowa Great Lakes region that extends through multiple generations — and several family members gave to The Narrows Preserve.

“We are elated,” said James Blum, a neighbor of The Narrows Preserve. “It is naturally a very important tract. Any development would have increased boat traffic, overcrowding and caused much further shoreline damage to both sides of the lake in this area.”

While many people are pleased to see that the sale of this property to INHF won’t be contributing to the increase of human impact in the area, others are just as delighted to see that wildlife will continue to have lakefront access. Because the Narrows Preserve abuts Elinor Bedell State Park and is also adjacent to the Spring Run Wildlife Management and Bird Conservation Area, it provides an important link between existing open space.

“We chose to support this protection project because we know the value of this type of

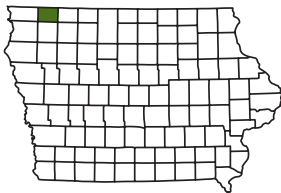


land protection projects in the past,” said McGovern. “We knew this would be a unique campaign, and a big ask, but people really stepped up, both in financial support and helping get the word out.”

The opportunity to protect The Narrows Preserve ignited the community — a community dedicated to the preservation of

### The Narrows Preserve

Dickinson County



**LAND:** Over 2,000 feet of East Okoboji Lake shoreline, comprised of 50 acres of grassland adjacent to other existing public open spaces

**PARTNERS:** INHF, numerous private partners and dozens of donors that care about the future of this place

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** One of the last stretches of privately-owned, undeveloped shoreline on East Lake Okoboji

open, natural space,” said Doug Harr, President of Iowa Audubon Society. “Birds and other animals need this kind of continuous corridor to move freely between resources. The Narrows Preserve is a unique intersection between a state park and a bird conservation area, linking some of the last remaining natural shoreline habitat on East Okoboji Lake with important and expansive protected uplands.”

“Sometimes things just come together as they should, and that was the case for this wonderful piece of land,” said Eric Hoiem, Broker/Owner of Hoiem Realty. “Everything aligned to make this conservation project work out perfectly — the right buyer, the right seller, perfect timing, and land that deserved to be protected in perpetuity. All Dickinson County residents, and all Iowans for that matter, will benefit from this protection for generations to come.”

Tom Bedell, the property seller, extended an option to INHF, which allowed time to fundraise for the \$8.2 million needed for outright purchase. With a Labor Day deadline, INHF pushed hard to line up enough pledges to execute the option.

“We simply had to act,” said Joe McGovern, President of INHF. “This land serves a critical function to the lake’s ecosystem. Opportunities like this only come around once in a lifetime.”

“The lakes community has generously supported numerous INHF water quality and

the region’s unique beauty and ecological importance.

“This was a unique opportunity to preserve undeveloped ground for the public. As the area continues to develop, it’s a place people can go to enjoy the beauty of what this place has to offer,” said Steve Goodenow, whose family was a lead contributor to the project.

Local protection groups — including East Okoboji Lakes Improvement Corporation (EOLIC), Okoboji Protective Association, Spirit Lake Protective Association and Iowa Great Lakes Association — played a crucial role in the project.

“For a local lake protective association, we dream big,” said Terry Wilts, Secretary of EOLIC. “We were ready to be a resource in whatever manner we could.” In addition to helping fundraise, EOLIC has already jumped into volunteer service on the land by helping pull trash and remove fencing.

Permanent protection of The Narrows Preserve was the goal from the beginning. So, in addition to INHF planning to own the property long-term for management — in alignment with its mission to protect and restore Iowa’s land, water and wildlife — a conservation easement was placed on the property immediately after it came into INHF’s ownership.

Dickinson County Conservation will act as the enforcer of the conservation easement — a

legal arrangement that stays with the property deed regardless of who owns it. The easement preserves the natural wildlife habitat, perennial vegetation that benefits water quality of East Okoboji Lake, and open-space character of the property as well as preventing any use that would significantly impair or interfere with its conservation values like development, permanent structures, mining or agricultural use.

“That’s the beauty of this campaign,” said McGovern. “Once it was protected it will remain so forever.”

But just because the protection is in place doesn’t mean the work is over.

“The next steps in land stewardship involve restoring a more diverse mix of prairie plants into the grassland, removing interior fences, and removing invasive vegetation within the woodland and grasslands,” said Ryan Schmidt, INHF’s Central Iowa Land Stewardship Director. “We are fortunate to have the opportunity to steward the land in a way that makes an already quality natural area even better.” There will be considerable tree work done to create habitat for grassland birds, and funding from the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission will assist with extensive shoreline and riparian habitat restoration over

the next couple of years.

The protection of The Narrows Preserve is one of the most significant preservation and restoration projects the Iowa Great Lakes region has ever seen.

“The cool thing is during these times of such great divide in our country, so many individuals, businesses and corporations all came together for one unified sole purpose: to protect the last privately owned, undeveloped piece of shoreline on East Okoboji,” wrote Steve Weisman, Outdoors Editor for Dickinson County News. “Those who gave reinforced just how much folks near and far care about the Iowa Great Lakes!”

Standing at the top of the ridge, feeling the breeze whip through your hair, gazing out across the Narrows, it is easy to feel the sense of interconnectedness. The flow of water through the watershed, the span of sky overhead, the many ways that people enjoy and value the Iowa Great Lakes. Dynamic forces — the power of community, the value of recreational spaces, the importance of water quality and habitat, and the fierce desire to protect forever this last section of privately owned and undeveloped lakeshore — culminated beautifully into The Narrows Preserve. 🌿

## JOIN US!

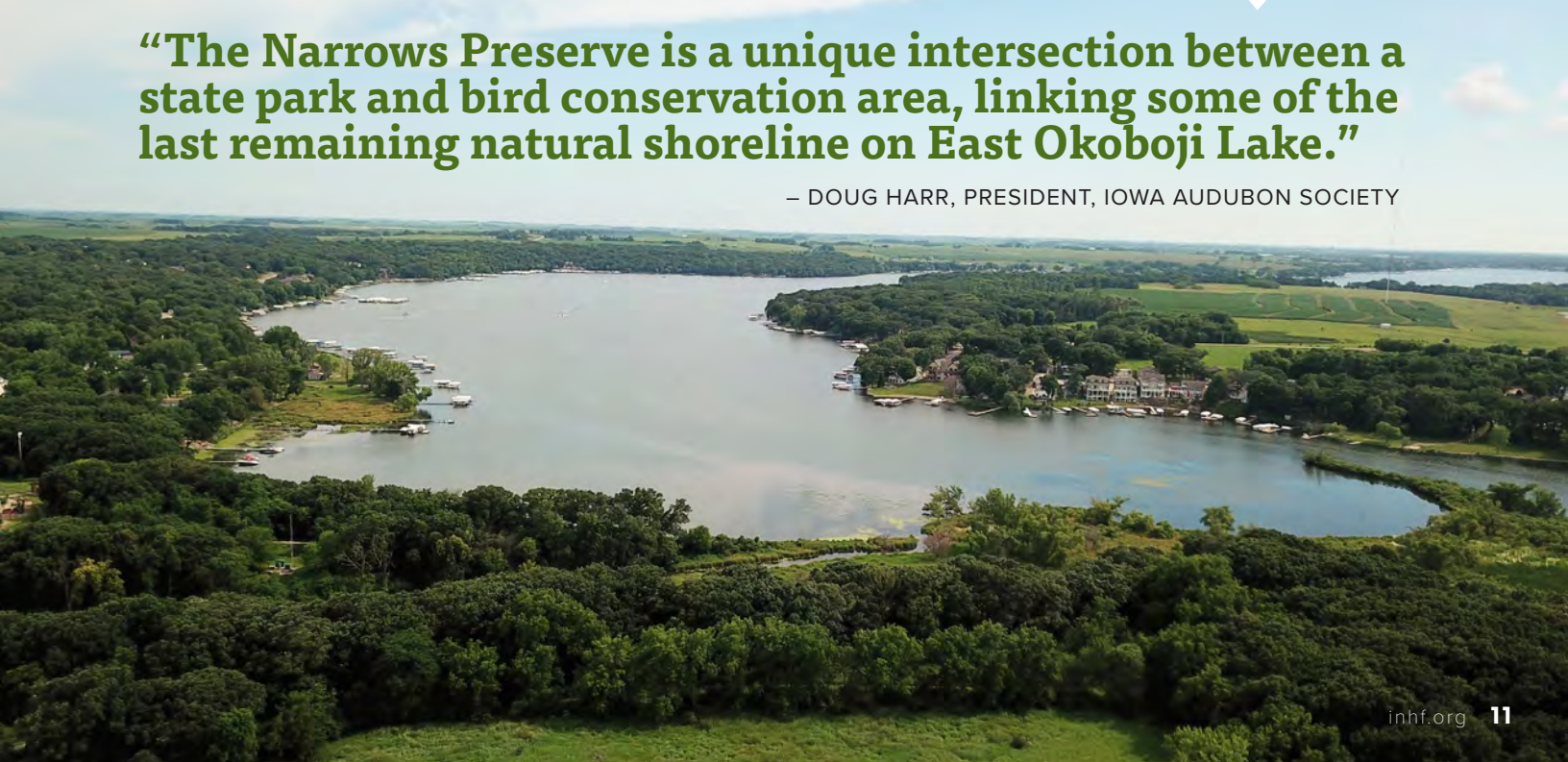
Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation will hold an open house at The Narrows Preserve on Saturday, June 11, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. The public is invited to tour the property, learn more about future restoration plans and celebrate the protection of this special place. Parking and meetup location will be at the shelter at Elinor Bedell State Park, 1619 260th Ave, Spirit Lake, IA 51360.

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### The Narrows Preserve

will provide lasting benefits to the water quality of East Lake Okoboji. Preventing the conversion of the grassland to non-permeable surfaces translates to less run-off and soil loss.

*Photos by Emily Martin*



**“The Narrows Preserve is a unique intersection between a state park and bird conservation area, linking some of the last remaining natural shoreline on East Okoboji Lake.”**

– DOUG HARR, PRESIDENT, IOWA AUDUBON SOCIETY

# Prairie Champions

Jon Judson and Kay Neumann are protecting and restoring the flora and fauna of Iowa's native landscape

BY AUTUMN OSIA  
*Communications Intern*

Iowa's landscape is the most altered in the nation. As we've changed the land to meet our needs — making room for more buildings, roads, and agriculture — habitat has largely fallen to the wayside. The prairies are no exception; less than 0.1% of Iowa's original prairies remain and preserving what is left is a challenge. Thankfully, there are still prairie champions: Iowans who work to ensure future generations can see this habitat on the landscape.

Jon Judson and Kay Neumann are two of these champions. The couple is well known by conservation professionals throughout the state for making the protection of Iowa's plants and wildlife more than just a career. They live it.

"I really became interested in



Kay Neumann and Jon Judson

biology and science. I didn't know exactly where I was going to end up," remembers Jon. "I have pictures from an old newspaper clipping from when I was a senior in high school sitting on a tree planter, putting trees in the ground. So that was the first drill of physical work that I did in

The prairie at Diversity Farms, pictured above, is used as seed source for restorations across the state. On the opposite page, a wood lily blooms in the prairie at Diversity Farms. *Photos courtesy of Jon Judson*

the conservation field — a big tree planting project."

That planting yielded more than just trees; it was the beginning of his life's work. Jon would go on to start a business directly out of graduate school from Iowa State in 1990, specifically geared towards getting prairie back on the land. Still owned and operated by Jon and Kay, Diversity Farms is a resource consulting and management business with a primary focus on native prairie seed and plant production in Iowa. INHF has worked with Diversity Farms on prairie restorations across the state, including recent additions to Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt in Polk County and

**“I’ve been doing this for 30 years or more and I’ve never once woke up in the morning and felt like I was going to work,” Jon said. “We get to do beautiful things and get to have a huge impact on our local area and globally.”**

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Heritage Hills Wildlife Management Area in Clarke County (see page 18).

If Jon has the plant perspective, then the other half of this nature duo, Kay Neumann, brings the view of the wildlife. Kay is the director of Saving Our Avian Resources, a nonprofit organization dedicated to raptor rehabilitation, education and research. Accepting raptors (birds of prey like owls, hawks, and eagles) statewide for a variety of rehabilitation needs, Kay gets an up close and personal view of the inhabitants of Iowa’s natural landscapes. She deals with human-caused injuries and illnesses, like broken wings or lead poisoning, and when patients are ready for their return to the wild, they need quality habitat to go home to. Between Jon and Kay, a holistic healing of the earth is taking place.

Jon estimates he spends about 90% of his time actively tending to the land. In the summer when everything is lush and there’s a pause between picking and planting, he gets a moment for reflection and a chance to enjoy the fruits of his labor. It also brings opportunities to educate future prairie champions.

“It’s a time of year when we’ll have a lot of tours and I’m involved with some of those. We’re trying to get people out on the land so they have the opportunity to see what prairies are all about and appreciate it so that they know why it’s so important to protect prairies.” Jon shared, “The education aspect of summer makes it

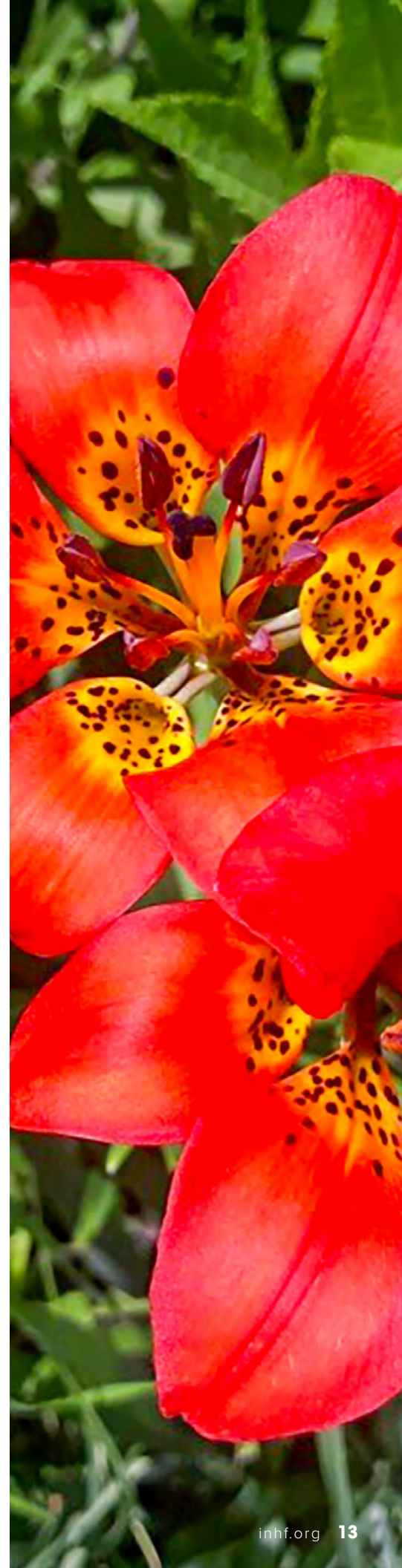
a really good time for me.”

It can’t be a hard job to convince visitors of prairie’s importance when Jon’s reconstructions are the backdrop. You can’t deny its value when it’s right in front of you absolutely teeming with life. The place of tallgrass prairie on the landscape feels obvious when you’re standing amongst the prairie clovers and coneflowers. But it took time to get to this end product. Bringing a healthy prairie back doesn’t happen overnight.

“They don’t grow if you don’t put them in the ground,” said Jon. “We were out here for years collecting seed by hand, preparing it and planting it, doing the mowing, maintenance and burning. I now have reconstructions that are just beautiful and I want to see those get protected long term.”

The desire to permanently protect their prairies led the couple to donate conservation easements to Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation on two properties — Judson Prairie (21 acres) and Tuel Prairie (39 acres) in Guthrie County. Now buffered from harm under the protection of the easements, these properties can continue being valuable seed sources for future prairies as well as equally valuable habitat supporting Iowa’s many birds, mammals and pollinators.

And while prairie doesn’t happen overnight, little bits are taking hold across the state’s landscape, in people’s yards or county ditches. As long as we have people who understand its value, that patchwork can continue to grow. As long as we have prairie champions. 🌱



The image features a forest scene with a stone table and benches in the foreground. The background is filled with trees, some with bare branches and others with green foliage. A semi-transparent white box with a thin black border is overlaid on the upper half of the image, containing the title and author information.

# CREATING A *spiritual* SANCTUARY

BY SUSAN SHULLAW  
*INHF Board Member*

# Every parcel of land in our state has a story to tell: How the land was formed eons ago; how it was utilized and revered by indigenous peoples; how it was cleared, cultivated and managed by generations after European settlement.

The story of Iowa City's Harvest Preserve — a rolling, 100-acre oasis of woods, prairie, ponds, trails, and inspirational artwork — is unique. Unlikely as it seems, that story links a prehistoric culture 9,300 miles away with the woodland memories of a young boy growing up in rural Wisconsin.

## Listening to the stones

In 2001, Doug Paul was leading a successful publishing company in Iowa City. He and his wife, Linda, were visiting Chicago when she suggested visiting a gallery specializing in art from remote corners of the world. When the gallery owner noticed Doug's interest in some ancient millstones, he told Doug about a series of Neolithic stones on the Indonesian island of Flores.

"Because the stones were from a 'pagan' culture, the local religious leaders wanted to get rid of them by dragging them into the ocean," Doug explains. Instead, the basalt megaliths — 20 in all, ranging from 16 to 30 feet in height, and each weighing from 2 to 10 tons — were eventually purchased by Doug and Linda and brought to Iowa City, a complicated process that took almost a year. When Doug saw them, he says, "the stones spoke to me, and I mean that literally." He understood he was meant to play a role in the stones' story, and that he needed to give them a home.

"The stones were the beginning of Harvest Preserve," Doug says, "but we didn't own the property itself until Linda, being the practical one, asked me where we were going to put the stones." Doug identified two historic farm properties on the northeast edge of Iowa City and approached one of the owners about a purchase.

"When I talked to the family, I told them I thought their land was holy ground and

that it should not be turned into housing developments. They agreed, we shook hands on the deal, and everything evolved from there." The second farm had been in probate for nearly two years. Doug worked with the bank and gradually reached a deal acceptable to the heirs.

The stones were installed on the former farm property in 2002, and in 2004 Doug sold his company so that he could spend more time on the land. In 2009, Harvest Preserve was incorporated as a nonprofit entity whose mission is to restore, protect, and preserve its land holdings as a spiritual sanctuary — a place to feel welcome, embraced, and open-hearted, and to indulge in the awe and wonder of nature.

## Outdoor art and open spaces

In addition to the Sacred Stone Circle, which incorporates 12 of the Indonesian stones,

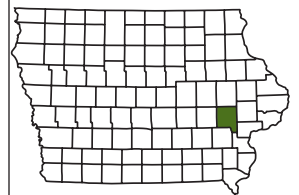
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Harvest Preserve is open to members year-round. Learn more at [harvestpreserve.org](http://harvestpreserve.org). Photos by Bob Sessions



## Harvest Preserve

Johnson County



**LAND:** 100-acre private preserve within Iowa City limits showcasing a variety of habitats and outdoor art

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Neolithic stones, sculptures, and places for quiet reflection



**Situated within city limits**, this urban green space provides a unique respite. *Photo by Bob Sessions*

Harvest Preserve includes several other large sculptures intended to encourage contemplation in harmony with the land. Other highlights of the property include a pond, a pond house and patio, a butterfly house and several miles of trails.

In order to permanently protect the natural features of the land, Harvest Preserve donated a conservation easement on the property to Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

“The idea of creating the Preserve came from the stones,” Doug says, “So our main intent has always been to preserve the land. That’s where Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation comes in. There’s a lot of pressure from developers in this part of the city, and the conservation easement will protect the Preserve property from becoming a business commodity. We’re fortunate and grateful that INHF understands our intent and that we have their trust.”

The Harvest Preserve easement allows for placement of sculptures, creation of trails, educational kiosks and other mission-related uses. It prohibits residential development and alteration of the topography, ensuring the property’s open-space character is preserved. With the easement in

place, work will continue on restoring native prairie and removing invasive species, including honeysuckle and garlic mustard.

Harvest Preserve, which is open year-round, relies on modest membership fees and donations to fund its operations. Julie Decker, the Pauls’ daughter, serves as the Preserve’s executive director. She organizes and conducts the programs taking place on the property, including summer camps for kids, which can provide opportunities for local businesses to support the Preserve’s mission.

“For example, during one of the camps this summer, a staff member from Scheels will be coming out to teach the kids how to fish,” Julie says. “We’ll cook whatever they catch and, boom, there’s their lunch!”

### *Fostering future conservationists*

Julie has developed several local partnerships that help advance the Harvest Preserve goals of cultivating public awareness, appreciation and participation in nature. Those partner organizations include Backyard Abundance, which holds nature therapy classes and similar workshops at





*“I believe the stones and the trees are always speaking to us. Our ability to listen depends on how immersed we are in our worldly lives.”*

Harvest Preserve, and Taproot Nature Experience, an Iowa City-based nonprofit devoted to getting children outdoors and fostering their love of the natural environment.

“When I see kids climbing trees and exploring our trails, it validates everything we’ve done here,” Doug adds. “Kids come alive when they’re outside.”

He can relate to those wide-eyed explorers, which brings us back to the young boy in rural Wisconsin.

“When I was seven years old, my family moved from a small town in Iowa to a country place in Wisconsin, which included a patch of woods,” Doug recalls. “It was probably only 10 acres, but as a small child, it felt to me like an endless forest that stretched for miles in all directions. It was the most wonderful feeling in the world to get out into the woods and play among the oak trees.

“I believe the stones and the trees are always speaking to us,” he continues. “But our ability to listen depends on how fast we’re living, and how immersed we are in our worldly lives.”

Visitors to Harvest Preserve are grateful that Doug slowed down and listened when the stones spoke. Their message resulted in a very special property that will be protected and enjoyed for generations to come. 🌿

**INHF Conservation Easement Director** Erin Van Waus, left, with Harvest Preserve creator Doug Paul, center, and Harvest Preserve Executive Director Julie Decker. *INHF photo*



# Partnerships, Plantings & Pollinators

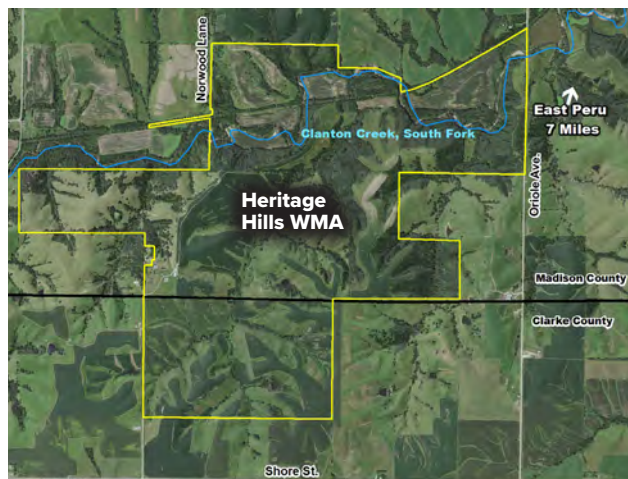
A years-long project in south-central Iowa culminates in more habitat and more wild spaces

BY ERICA PLACE | *Communications Specialist* | [eplace@inhf.org](mailto:eplace@inhf.org)



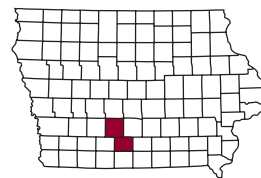
## A Project Wraps Up

The last piece of Heritage Hills Wildlife Management Area, a 1,021-acre property 45 minutes south of Des Moines, transferred to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources this May. Purchased by INHF in 2016, the property's size, habitat and proximity to the metro made it an unusual and important protection opportunity. The expansive, roadless area provides crucial habitat for Iowa's wildlife, including at least 18 bird and four mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need. It is now open for the public's enjoyment.



## Heritage Hills Wildlife Management Area

Madison and Clarke counties



**LAND:** 1,021 acres of rolling slopes covered in woodland, remnant and restored prairie

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Connects neighboring open spaces and provides ample outdoor recreation

**PARTNERS:** Iowa Department of Natural Resources, INHF, Pheasants Forever



**Heritage Hills Wildlife Management Area** is less than an hour from the Des Moines metro. Above, prairie seed is being spread on former crop fields. A “Monarch Grant” from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation helped fund the reconstruction. *Photos by Emily Martin and Erica Place/INHF*

## Creating a Home for Wildlife



Care has been taken to restore the woodland, savanna and remnant prairies. Seed mixes for prairie plantings could be thorough and diverse thanks to grant funding through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. “Restoration of the highly erodible hillsides began in 2018 with Iowa DNR restoring 100 acres to a diverse native prairie with an emphasis on native plant species that benefit monarch breeding and migration. Just this past spring, INHF coordinated the restoration of an additional 130 acres which will provide excellent habitat for wildlife, reduce runoff into Clanton Creek, and help to heal these soils long-term,” explained Ross Baxter, INHF Land Projects Director.

As a designated Wildlife Management Area, the property will remain free of trails and structures with an emphasis on providing a place for wildlife to rest, feed and raise young. But the property is clearly attracting the attention of more than just the wildlife. “This particular area has become very popular to the public with the variety of habitat types and recreational opportunities it provides,” remarks Heath Van Waus, Wildlife Biologist at the IDNR’s neighboring Rathbun Wildlife Unit. Whether you’re a hiker, hunter, photographer or forager, Heritage Hills offers something for everyone.

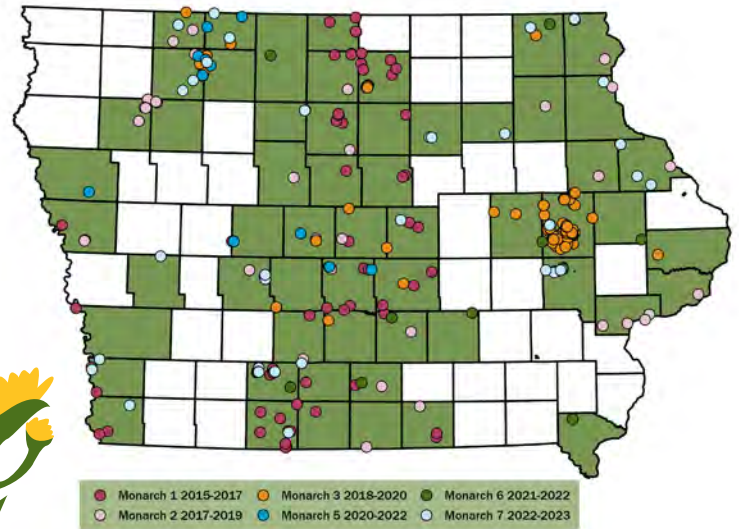
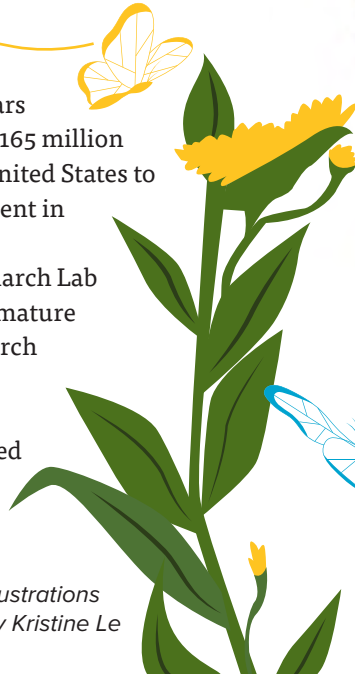


## Meals for Monarchs

The latest seeding at Heritage Hills is just one of the projects funded by this year's "Monarch Grant" through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. To date, INHF has received six grants to support the expansion and diversification of native prairie on public land and wildlife areas, specifically to benefit pollinators like the eastern monarch.

- Eastern monarchs have declined by more than 80% over the last twenty years
- Monarchs have lost an estimated 165 million acres of breeding habitat in the United States to herbicide spraying and development in recent decades
- The University of Minnesota Monarch Lab estimates that it takes about one mature milkweed plant to feed one monarch caterpillar
- Iowa Monarch Conservation Consortium has outlined milkweed and habitat goals where all Iowans can participate to improve the future for monarchs. See more at [monarch.ent.iastate.edu](http://monarch.ent.iastate.edu)

Illustrations  
by Kristine Le



**INHF and partners** have been able to use a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for restoration and enhanced management of Monarch habitat on public lands for the last seven years. Since 2015, the competitive grant has contributed \$890,000 toward restoring more than 6,000 acres to native habitat and improving management of existing habitat on more than 24,000 acres at 336 sites through prescribed fire, brush removal and invasive species management.



Green milkweed at  
Heritage Hills Wildlife  
Management Area.  
Photo by Ross Baxter/  
INHF



**“Public support and partnerships for projects are the keys to success,”** said Bryan Hellyer, Iowa DNR



### **Partnerships Make It Possible**

Spanning six years from start to finish, Heritage Hills Wildlife Management Area is a good example that projects like this take time and a shared long-game vision among partners. This was a chance to showcase not only partnership in land protection, but also in land restoration. “Public support and partnerships for projects are the keys to success,” explained Bryan Hellyer, SE District Wildlife Supervisor with the Iowa DNR. “The Heritage Hills WMA would not have been possible without the partnership between Iowa landowners wanting to continue conserving their land and working with INHF and Iowa DNR in order to do so, for all Iowans to enjoy.” 🌿

Recognizing the habitat and recreation implications of protecting this property, several local Pheasants Forever chapters provided significant support through banquet fundraisers. “Public access to recreational property continues to be a huge priority for our organization in Iowa,” said Eric Sytsma, Pheasants Forever Senior Regional Field Representative. *Photo by Emily Martin/INHF*



## THE PRAIRIE LEGACY OF CARROLL PERKINS

Carroll Perkins was rooted in Greene County, Iowa. Throughout a life of adventure and travel, serving in the Navy and in the Iowa House of Representatives, he maintained his connection to farming and the land.

Carroll took a keen interest in soil conservation and prairie preservation. When he noticed native prairie species showing up on a parcel of his grazed land in the 1980s, he began dedicating time to breathing life back into it. Countless hours were spent encouraging the prairie and beating back the invasives.

After more than twenty years of work, the land was designated as the Perkins Prairie State Preserve by the State of Iowa – one of only a few privately-held lands to receive that distinction. In 2014, the Perkins family donated the prairie to Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation for permanent protection.

Carroll recently passed, but his prairie legacy lives on. INHF has brought many of our summer stewardship interns out to the prairie to share Carroll's story and continue tending the remnant. Carroll is quoted in a 2009 interview for Radio Iowa saying, "I'm doing it because I love it, I admire it and I want it to remain for people that come long after me."

— ABBY HADE TERPSTRA, *Director of Philanthropy*

**Leave a legacy of clean water, healthy soil and beautiful outdoor places for future generations.**

To see how including INHF in your will or trust can help make your vision for Iowa a reality, contact Abby Hade Terpstra at [aterpstra@inhf.org](mailto:aterpstra@inhf.org) or 515-288-1846, ext 15.



**Carroll Perkins and Karen Voge-Perkins**

## TRIBUTE GIFTS

### IN HONOR OF

Brady Belcher  
Donald A Beneke  
Marty & Mike Boesenberg  
Michelle Devine  
Patricia Dinsmore  
Richard A Frank  
Mary C Fritz  
The Garst Family  
John D Grace III  
Abby Hade Terpstra  
Rich & Charris James  
Carroll Marty  
Anita O'Gara  
Dick & Carolyn Ramsay  
Don and Luella Reese

Pat Ryan  
Earl and Isabelle Salterberg  
Ken & Ethel Mae Schneberger's 70th wedding anniversary  
Tim Sproul  
Laura Fischer-Walter Wilkins Family  
Carol Winter

### IN MEMORY OF

Lila Andersen  
Pat and Dorothy Appgar  
Murray and Alice Applegate  
Phyllis Barber  
Susan Beck  
Dennis L Beck

Phil Beelendorf  
Erica Berrier  
William and Natalie Brenton  
Alberta Brosnahan and Mary Brosnahan Terpstra  
Bruce I. Campbell  
Dwight and Dorothy Clayton  
Phil Collison  
Dick Dearden  
Chuck and Eileen Dore  
Ruth Dorr  
Dorothy J. Dykhouse  
Mary Fritz  
Joe and Margaret Frost  
Walt Githens  
Ray Grabin  
Lonnie Hawbaker

Greg Hicklin  
Rich Hofmann  
Richard A Hoppin  
Dorothy Mae Hubert  
Chuck Klohs  
Earl Larsen  
Glenn Leggett  
Lewis McLaughlin  
Marvin and Esther Moeller  
Daniel Neitfeldt  
Ernest & Del Rose Ostwinkle  
Sandra Ostwinkle  
Wallace Parker  
Arthur Rich  
Virginia H. Richards  
Mercer Richter  
Susan Runkle

Joe Ruperto  
Dick Sempel  
Dean Sandstoe  
Beulah Schelle  
Harold & Elma Schiel  
Brett Schnepf  
Art and Verna Sessions  
Arlis Sorensen  
Ed Steinbrech  
John Strain  
Conrad Svoboda  
Avis Sweers  
Barb Uridil Zahradnik

Find more Iowa places to explore at [www.inhf.org/blog](http://www.inhf.org/blog)



BY ERICA PLACE  
Communications Specialist | [eplace@inhf.org](mailto:eplace@inhf.org)

Photo by Frank Olsen

## 15-MINUTE NATURE FIX

**S**ummer break is starting soon and your routine may be disrupted with playdates and sleepovers. Perhaps your evenings and weekends are already filling up with farmer's markets, outdoor concerts, pool parties, and dinners with friends. Warmer weather brings a hustle and bustle that can be energizing, shaking off the lazier, chillier days we mostly spent inside. But that sudden busyness can sometimes be draining as well, leaving us in need of a recharge. The outdoors can fill us back up.

We might not always have time for a camping getaway or retreat to a favorite fishing hole, but there are many simple ways we can quickly incorporate the healing of nature in between our errands or commitments. Here are just a few ideas for a 15-minute nature fix, no equipment needed:

### Reconnect with your senses

Close your eyes and lean into your sense of hearing. How many different bird sounds can you count? It doesn't really matter if you know which one is which. Or focus on your sense of touch. Maybe that means the squish of soft earth beneath your feet, the coolness of the creek water on your fingers, or the breeze blowing across your cheeks. Just be present. You can do this in any outdoor space.

### Hit up a different kind of bar

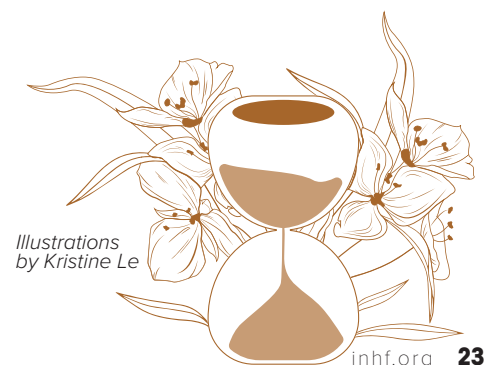
This one does require that you find a sandbar (be sure you're on public property), but it's worth the extra effort. Pick a spot and sit. Notice all the different colors, shapes, and sizes of rocks. That one is worn smooth from its movement through water and over land, this one feels heavier than it should for its size, and the one over there glimmers in the sun. You might

even find treasures from the past like a tooth from when bison roamed the state or a fossil from when this area was covered in a sea.

### Notice the little things

Take a break from the task at hand and inspect a single plant. Is anything making a meal of its blooms? Have the leaf edges been munched on? Flip over the leaves — do you see any eggs?

Take a moment and let nature be your focus, in whatever way feels right for you. 🌿



Illustrations  
by Kristine Le

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Natural Heritage  
Foundation

505 5th Ave., Suite 444  
Des Moines, IA 50309



**Summer camping season is here** with warm days and cool nights. Whether you like the amenities of a modern campground or are looking to trek to a hike-in site deep in the woods, Iowa can offer the rest and relaxation you're after. *Photo by Kip Ladage*

