



# CLAYTON COUNTY CONSERVATION

Promote the health and general welfare of the people; to model and encourage preservation, conservation, education and recreation through responsible use and appreciation of our natural resources and cultural heritage.

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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### BOARD MEMBERS

Daryl Landsgard, Chair- St. Olaf (since 2016)  
 Larry Stone, Secretary- Elkader (since 1999)  
 Gary Kregel, Vice-Chair- Guttenberg (since 2015)  
 Natasha Hegmann- Elkport (since 2022)  
 Dave Asche-Farmersburg (since 2024)

### DIRECTOR

Jenna K. Pollock, Volga- (since 2015)

## SUMMARY

**In 2024, the Osborne Conservation Center welcomed 5478 visitors from 6 countries, 36 states, and 62 Iowa counties according to the voluntary guest register. The Motor Mill Historic Site welcomed 3,803 from 29 different states and 9 foreign countries.**

**Clayton County Conservation Staff offered 444 events, consisting of 754 presentations delivered to 11,104 participants (75% of participants were youth) for total program hours of 586. The success of our environmental education program offerings would not be possible without dedicated volunteers and several long-standing cross-agency partnerships. This year we welcomed 81 consistent volunteers, and they contributed over 322.5 hours of service to our organization.**

**Clayton County Conservation welcomed over 2,462 camping users in 2024, spending a total of 1947 nights in Clayton County. This provided \$31,115 back into the budget for maintenance and development needs. The Motor Mill Inn was fully functional and open for reservations this year. 27 groups reserved the Inn for a total of 46 nights providing \$10,759 back into the budget.**

**The Conservation Board manages 1401 acres which includes seven campgrounds and eighteen areas that are managed for wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities. These areas consist of highly erodible river-bottom ground, reclaimed native prairies, and upland mixed-age forests. Clayton County Conservation Areas have an average corn suitability rating (CSR) of 31.8 with the higher CSR rating being located in floodplains.**

**Grant money of \$375,999 was realized in 2024 to assist with Conservation projects and program improvements. Several of these grant awards were carry-over from previous years for ongoing projects like the Motor Mill Interpretation Project, the Osborne Campground, and the Pony Hollow Trail Extension.**

**The Motor Mill Stable is now fully complete with electric and a new roof in 2024. It is now ready to be reserved. The Osborne Campground Project is complete and set to open in the Spring of 2025. This campground will be open to reservations on the MyCountyParks.com website.**

**The focus of the CCCB is to now complete the Pony Hollow Trail Extension as well as find funding for engineering and repair of the pillars in the Motor Mill basement.**

# STAFFING

## **STAFF MEMBERS-Permanent Full-Time**

JENNA POLLOCK – Director

MOLLY SCHERF - Office Manager

EAN POPENHAGEN- Office Assistant/Director of Sales

ZACH DINGBAUM - Park Ranger

HUNTER JENSEN - Operations & Maintenance

KENNY SLOCUM - Naturalist/Natural Resource Manager

ABBEY HARKRADER - Naturalist

NICK MOSER – Operations & Maintenance

KELSI DAVIS – Energy District Coordinator

## **NON-STAFF MEMBERS - Voluntary Routine Service**

PAUL & CATHY MARCOTTE – Exhibit Security/ Opening & Closing

PAM & MARK REINIG– Exhibit Security

## **SEASONAL EMPLOYEES**

SUMMER MAINTENANCE – Ashley Fischer

SUMMER NATURALISTS – Nicholas Schaefer

MOTOR MILL INTERNS – Brenda Yearous and Laura Elsinger

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers help the Clayton County Conservation Board and Staff accomplish many achievements. (Statistics shared on page 17 of this report.)

# VISITOR NUMBERS

## Welcome Center Totals

Groups of People 1222

Individuals 5478

Average size of each group: 4.48 people

## Iowa Visitor Registration

2020: 7,012

2021: 8,448

2022: 5,693

2023: 4,616

2024: 4,892

(See Pages for Maps)

## Motor Mill Visitor Registration

2020: 805

2021: 1415

2022: 1067

2023: 1663

2024: 3803

## Traffic Counter Statistics

19,827 (May-October)

19,592 (April 25 –Nov. 2)

18,544 (April 12 – Nov. 8)

20,028 (April 17 – Nov. 7)

19,444 (April 16- Nov. 25)

## Website Unique Visitor Numbers

2019

## CCCB

102,317

## MMF

9,379

2020

(new website launched August) 7,178

10,061

2021

19,036

11,555

2022

11,725

10,421

2023

14,853

9,049 (website mod.)

2024

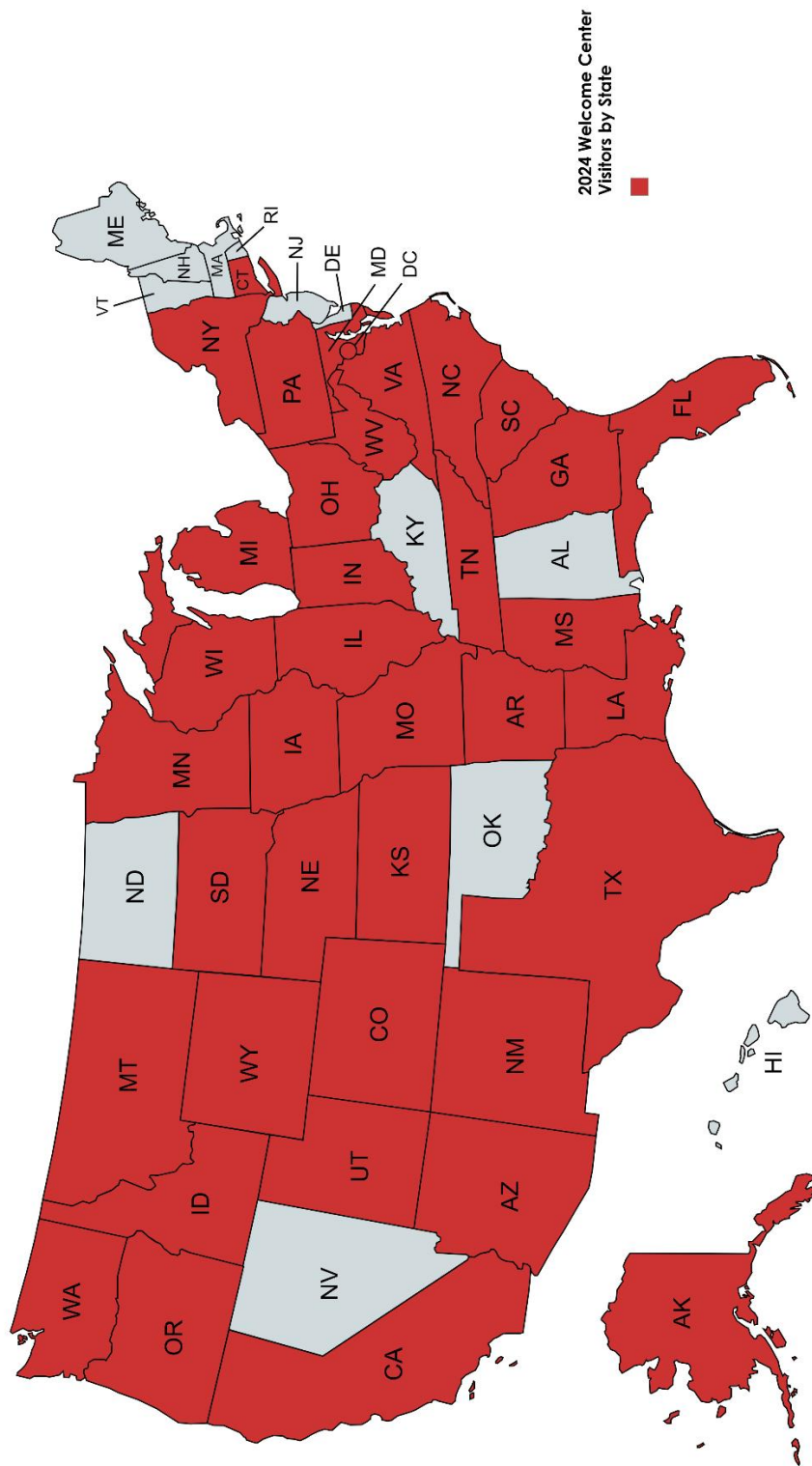
14,359

11,634





# VISITORS BY STATE



# VISITORS BY COUNTRY



# CAMPING NUMBERS

<u>Bloody Run Park</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u># of Users</u>	<u># of Nights</u>	<u>Fees</u>	
	2020	1341	1095	\$ 10,974.36	
	2021	1546	1305	\$20,660.00	
	2022	1405	1359	\$ 21,432.05	
	2023	1358	1261	\$ 19,988.54	
	2024	1168	1067	\$ 16,798.40	
<u>Motor Mill Park</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u># of Users</u>	<u># of Nights</u>	<u>Fees</u>	
	2020	462	331	\$ 3,325.00	
	2021	315	211	\$ 3,340.00	
	2022	377	206	\$ 3,394.00	
	2023	444	229	\$ 3,860.00	
	2024	446	231	\$ 3,837.00	
<u>Joy Springs Park</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u># of Users</u>	<u># of Nights</u>	<u>Fees</u>	
	2020	178	99	\$ 1,109.00	
	2021	222	123	\$ 1,885.00	
	2022	238	121	\$ 1,895.00	
	2023	132	92	\$ 1,672.00	
	2024	187	117	\$ 1,937.00	
<u>Buck Creek Park</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u># of Users</u>	<u># of Nights</u>	<u>Fees</u>	
	2020	98	83	\$ 525.00	
	2021	48	34	\$ 516.00	
	2022	61	45	\$ 699.00	
	2023	72	47	\$ 763.00	
	2024	88	63	\$ 987.00	
<u>Friedens Park</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u># of Users</u>	<u># of Nights</u>	<u>Fees</u>	
	2020	126	105	\$ 415.00	
	2021	83	65	\$ 1,021.00	
	2022	109	81	\$ 1,315.00	
	2023	178	120	\$ 1,920.00	
	2024	103	90	\$ 1,435.00	
<u>Big Spring</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u># of Users</u>	<u># of Nights</u>	<u>Fees</u>	
	2020	403	269	\$ 1,340.00	
	2021	399	325	\$ 5,187.00	
	2022	460	360	\$ 5,859.00	
	2023	548	436	\$ 7,144.00	
	2024	470	379	\$ 6,121.25	
<u>Total</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u># of Users</u>	<u># of Nights</u>	<u>Fees</u>	<u>Firewood</u>
	2020	2608	1982	\$ 17,688.36	
	2021	2613	2063	\$ 32,609.00	
	2022	2638	2160	\$ 34,414.05	
	2023	2732	2185	\$ 35,347.54	\$2,646.81
	2024	2462	1947	\$ 31,115.65	\$2,307.32













# CAMPING MAP - FRIEDENS

**Number of nights camped at Frieden Park**



# CAMPING MAP - BIG SPRING

## Number of nights camped at Big Spring



Lyon	Osceola	Dickinson	Emmet	Kossuth	Winnebago	Worth	Mitchell	Howard	Winneshek	Allamakee
Sioux	O'Brien	Clay	Palo Alto	Hancock	Cerro Gordo	Floyd	Chickasaw	Howard	Fayette	Clayton
Plymouth	Cherokee	Buena Vista	Pocahontas	Wright	Franklin	Butler	Bremer	Black Hawk	Buchanan	Delaware
Woodbury	Iowa	Sac	Calhoun	Hamilton	Hardin	Grundy	Black Hawk	Dubuque	Jones	Jackson
Monona	Crawford	Carroll	Greene	Boone	Story	Marshall	Tama	Benton	Linn	Clinton
Harrison	Shelby	Audubon	Guthrie	Dallas	Polk	Jasper	Poweshiek	Iowa	Johnson	Scott
Pottawattamie	Cass	Adair	Madison	Warren	Warren	Marion	Mahaska	Keokuk	Washington	Muscatine
Mills	Montgomery	Adams	Union	Clarke	Lucas	Monroe	Wapello	Jefferson	Henry	Louisa
Fremont	Page	Taylor	Ringgold	Decatur	Wayne	Appanoose	Davis	Van Buren	Des Moines	Lee





## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Environmental Education Programs presented by the Clayton County Naturalists and Osborne Staff are tracked by the format shown below (Table). For the purpose of the Annual Report, totals have been calculated for each category pertinent to this report. There are several specialty programs held at Clayton County Conservation Parks/Areas that may or may not be led by our Naturalists and Staff but are listed below the table to show their impact on the Clayton County Community.

Program Year	Program			Demographics		Participants		
	Events	Type Title	Presentations	School/Town	Grade	Youth	Adults	Group Hours
2018	396		705			10,544	7,743	623.85
2019	424		792			11,921	2,911	681
2020	174		327			5,175	1,463	242.5
2021	292		479			6,040	1484	464.75
2022	413		656			7,921	2,118	596.95
2023	381		640			6,812	2,268	556.25
2024	444		754			8,168	2,896	586

### Heritage Days

Estimated people:

### Hunter Education Classes

June Internet Field Day (42) & August Full Course (11)  
Students Instructors

### Deer Hunter Registration

12 Deer Hunters Registered

### Turkey Hunter Registration

1 Turkey Hunter Registered

Blog Post Views 2024		
Blog Title	Number of Views	Blog Visitors
De-Foresting and Re-Foresting at Osborne Park	75	65
Eating An Elephant	73	55
Heritage Days Weather Through the Ages	55	48
Iowa's Water: Carrots and Sticks	177	134
Leave Wildlife Babies Where They Belong - In The Wild	26	23
The Impossible Selflessness of Tree Planting	57	49
The Past and Future of Prescribed Fire	129	93
Totals	839	649



# VOLUNTEER HOURS

Volunteers assist the Clayton County Conservation Board and Staff by volunteering their time to help present Environmental Education programs, guide at Motor Mill, clean-up projects, Hunter Education Classes, Fishing Clinics, Heritage Days, Iowa Room Staffing, Bluebird House building, Fishing Pole maintenance, and many more projects. Without our dedicated volunteers, we wouldn't be able to achieve success.

## Total Volunteer Hours

Program Year	Volunteers	
	# of Volunteers	Volunteer Hours
2020	105	1,282.75
2021	205	2,193.5
2022	253	2,331.5
2023	77	1,391
2024	140	1,664.5

## Public Program Volunteers

Program Year	Volunteers	
	# of Volunteers	Volunteer Hours
2020	72	186.5
2021	172	994
2022	211	1,201.5
2023	48	199
2024	81	322.5

## Motor Mill Volunteers

Program Year	Volunteers	
	# of Volunteers	Volunteer Hours
2020	33	1,096.25
2021	33	1,199.5
2022	42	1,130
2023	29	1,192
2024	59	1,342

## GRANTS

Grant	Item	Amount	Received	Expended
Destination Iowa	Osborne Campground	345,000	2023	2023-2024
Foundations for Cornerstone Communities	Pony Hollow Trail	5,000	2024	
UMGC	Pony Hollow Trail	20,000	2024	
Clayton County Foundation for the Future	Topping off the Water Tank	1,000	2024	2024
Clayton County Foundation for the Future	AED at Motor Mill	1,000	2024	2024
Aureon	Fire Safety Equipment	500	2024	
Aureon	Motor Mill Gates	500	2024	
TAP	Pony Hollow Trail	1.2M	2024	
State Rec Trail	Pony Hollow Trail	325,000	2024	
SSNHA	MM Vido Production	2,999	2024	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,900,999</b>		



# NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

## Seedings & Plantings

- 25 swamp white oak planted at Becker West Wildlife Area
- 3 swamp white oak planted at Motor Mill Historic Site
- 4 swamp white oak planted at Joy Springs
- 3 swamp white oak planted at Frieden Park
- 3 acres overseeding at Osborne Park
- 1 acre inter-seeding at Motor Mill Historic Site
- 22 species hand-collected from remnant prairie sites
- 33 native plant plugs installed in prairie reconstructions & fish habitats



## Prescribed Burns

- 3 acres (timber, spring), Bloody Run County Park
- 23 acres (17 ac. prairie & 5 ac. timber, spring), Motor Mill Historic Site
- 5 acres (prairie, spring), Becker West wildlife area
- 45 acres (35 prairie/timber, spring & 10 prairie, fall), Osborne Park

## Forest Stewardship

- 3 acres at Becker West Wildlife Area
- 2 acres at Motor Mill Historic Site

## Invasive Species Control

- 10 acres parsnip/Canada thistle treatment at Becker West
- 2 acres Sericea lespedeza treatment at Osborne Park
- 2 acres crown vetch at Osborne Park
- 5 acres honeysuckle at Osborne Park
- 2 acres buckthorn/Japanese barberry treatment at Bloody Run County Park
- 0.5 acres Japanese Knotweed at Motor Mill Historic Site

### Bluebird Boxes

- 63 boxes monitored across county
- 36 Bluebird nests recorded
- 58 bluebirds fledged

### Bald Eagle Nests

- Nest 257** (Roberts Creek State Preserve): 2 fledglings
- Nest 903** (Osborne Park): Unsuccessful

## Conservation Mowing

- 7 acres Becker East Wildlife Area
- 4 acres Becker West Wildlife Area
- 3 acres Osborne Park
- 1.5 acres Motor Mill Historic Site





# ENFORCEMENT REPORT

## Patrol of County Parks

- Register campers
- Public Relations
- Environmental and Laws Education
- Investigate incidents/complaints in the parks
- Check for hunting, fishing and navigation violations
- Assist State Conservation Officers during hunting seasons
- Checked **78** Fishing Licenses
- Checked **26** Hunting Licenses

## Call types and numbers:

<u>Traffic</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>Suspicious Activity/Person</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Assist Motorists</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Vandalism</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>Animal Call</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Trapping Violations</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>Medical</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Fight/Assault</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Building Alarm</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>Dog Complaint</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Underage Drinking</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>Missing Person</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Fireworks Complaint</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Welfare Check</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Fishing Violations</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>Hunting Violations</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>ATV Violations</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>Building Struck with Bullet</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>Trespass</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Person with a gun</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Navigation Checks</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>Wanted Person</u>	<u>0</u>

**Total Number of Calls—36**

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## Assisting Other Agencies

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Number of Assists</u>
<u>Mar-Mac</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Clayton County</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Iowa DNR</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Strawberry Point</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Elkader</u>	<u>0</u>

**TOTAL 13**

# Energy District Report

The Clayton County Energy District (CCED) continues to advance its mission to strengthen local communities through a locally led, inclusive, clean energy. In 2024, CCED expanded its impact through strategic partnerships, grant-funded initiatives, and energy district coordination that directly benefits Clayton County residents, businesses, and municipalities.

Helped RISE and Clayton County with the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) direct pay for non-taxable entities' option for their solar systems.

Conducted energy coach training and workforce development walk-through at the new Volga public library.

Continued implementation of Clean Energy for Younger Library Patrons and smart outlet check-out program.

Advocated alongside Clayton County communities and the Clean Energy Districts of Iowa (CEDI) to challenge Alliant Energy's proposed rate hikes, resulting in resolutions passed in Elkader, Garber, Garnavillo, Luana, Marquette, Monona, and Volga.

Finalized the proposal for a new public-nonprofit partnership with the Clayton County Conservation Board. This transition includes a new Energy District Coordinator position within Conservation, funded in part by the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. Kelsi Davis was hired to fulfill this position in August 2024.

Together with Upper Regional Planning Commission, the City of Guttenberg, and the Dubuque County Energy District, CCED collaborated to secure funds to upgrade the Guttenberg flood pump house resulting in \$187,000 in Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant funding covering: 1) Building electrical panel upgrade. 2) Pump house motor replacement with a variable-speed fan drive. 3) Renewable fuel backup generation (city-funded).

Hosted an Earth Day open house at Osborne featuring electric vehicles and IRA funding opportunities.

Received a \$1,000 grant from the Clayton County Foundation for the Future to support energy technical assistance and technical training workshops for local contractors.

Groundwork began to establish a clean energy workforce education initiative, including a Clean Energy Career Discovery Day and heat pump technology training for contractors.

Received a \$4,655 Iowa Clean Energy State Table sub-grant to further CCED's initiatives.

CCED hosted a booth at the Clayton County Fair along with board members and CEDI Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) coach.

In partnership with the Allamakee County Energy District, the CCED co-hosted an air source heat pump workshop for local contractors with the intention of driving market transformation and new opportunities for local businesses.

The CCED co-hosted a Clean Energy Forum in partnership with the Allamakee and Winneshiek Energy Districts. The Forum invited local politicians, elected officials, and organization leaders to discuss energy district impacts and resources.

# **CLAYTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD**

**29862 Osborne Road**

**Elkader, IA 52043**

**563.245.1516**

**cccb@claytoncountyia.gov**

**www.claytoncountyconservation.org**

**MISSION: To promote the health and general welfare of the people; and to model and encourage preservation, conservation, education and recreation through responsible use and appreciation of our natural resources and cultural heritage.**

