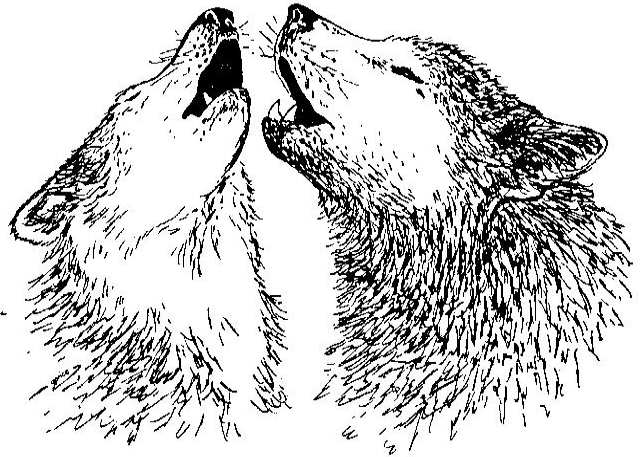


Osborne Oracle



Spring 2020

Clayton County Conservation

Vol. 43 No.1

Conservation Board Awards CJ Moyna & Sons LLC Motor Mill Trail Contract by Jenna K. Pollock, Executive Director

The Clayton County Conservation Board reviewed bids for the Motor Mill Trail project at their February 4, 2020 meeting at Osborne. CJ Moyna & Sons was awarded the project for their low bid of \$851,952.

The project, originally awarded grant funds in 2011 through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and State Recreation Trails (SRT), will be constructed in summer 2020. The TAP funds involved with the project federalize the procedures required between the Local Planning Agency (LPA) Clayton County Conservation Board, the Iowa Department of Transportation, and the primary contractor CJ Moyna and Sons, LLC. Subcontractors on the project include Streicher Excavating, Tara Erosion Control LLC, Iowa Plains Signing, Inc., 4J Fence Company, and Manatt's Inc.

The trail will begin at Turkey River Park and head south along IA 13 as 6-foot-wide bike lane shoulders on the north and west bound lanes, for two miles. The bike lane shoulder work will be an asphalt overlay and extension installed by River City Paving on IA 13. The Iowa DOT approached the Conservation Board with this partnership opportunity to bring the trail out of Elkader.

From IA 13, the trail will then travel southeast for 1.4 miles along Grandview Road, then .7 miles southeast along Grandview Loop, then .4 miles southeast on Grandview Road, and then .9 miles east overland toward the Motor Mill Historic District accessible on Galaxy Road.

This Grandview Road and overland trail segment

will be constructed as a 10-foot-wide crushed stone trail, with the majority of the trail separated from the road, and set into the backslope of the county road right-of-way.

The Motor Mill Trail project will connect existing green spaces like Founders Park, Turkey River Park, Elkader City Park, Pony Hollow Trail, Motor Mill Historic Site, Retz Woods, and the state designated Turkey River Water Trail, all within the Turkey River Recreational Corridor.

As recreation tourism continues to blossom across the nation, we're finding residents and visitors want to get from one park to another by alternative transportation. Be it by kayak, bicycle, or horseback, recreationists have ample opportunity to connect with the outdoors here in Northeast Iowa. Campers at Motor Mill and Elkader City Park can travel back and forth between parks while purchasing local goods and services in the City of Elkader.

This project marks the culmination of nearly a decade planning, fundraising, and partnering.



Map of the Motor Mill Trail

The Invest In Iowa Act by Kenny Slocum, Naturalist & Resource Manager

“Well, I’ve got people on both sides mad at the proposal so I know I’m somewhere in the middle, where I need to be.”

Governor Kim Reynolds offered this eloquent summary of political compromise to a crowd of some 50 interested citizens gathered in Waverly on a Friday afternoon to hear about her proposed Invest In Iowa Act. The bold proposal aims to generate over \$550 million in revenue by increasing the sales tax 1% accompanied by a reduction in property and income tax rates.

While out-of-staters do not pay income or property taxes in Iowa, they *do* pay sales tax whenever they visit our fine state. Thusly, the proposal strives to increase overall revenue while decreasing the property and income tax burden for Iowa citizens. Most importantly, that increased revenue would finally, after 10 years, fund the Trust.

The Natural Resource & Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund – “the Trust” – was created by constitutional amendment in 2010. Some 63% of voters checked the ballot box in favor of the trust, and a decade later support for the measure has only grown with over 70% now saying they favor its creation and funding.

Unfortunately, the trust sits empty. The funds have to come from an increase in sales tax, of which the first 3/8 of a cent per dollar would go into the constitutionally protected trust. But with no increase in sales tax since 2010, the trust is like an empty bath tub waiting for someone to turn on the faucet.

Had the funding come when the amendment passed, it would have brought in over a billion dollars over the last 10 years. An inspection of all 99 county conservation boards’ “unmet needs” list reveals that those billion dollars and then some could have gone towards the needed improvement of campgrounds, hiking and biking trails, and natural resource management. A look at the lengthy list of grant applications for deserving but unfunded projects in any REAP grant cycle drives the point home further.

Those dollars would have done wonders. Black Hawk County CCB executive director Mike Hendrickson put it best at the Governor’s town hall when he said “CCBs are used to doing a lot with a little.” Indeed, we often have to. But one of the defining characteristics of any conservationist is their intrinsic motivation – we work with what we’ve got, because we believe in what we do. The work ethic on display comes from an intrinsic desire to see our natural landscapes protected and enjoyed.

So we know the money would have been used wisely, and to great effect. It’s a little disheartening to

imagine where we would be as land stewards with such a huge influx of funding. But there’s no sense looking back. Instead, we would do well to focus on the fact that the Governor is proposing to turn on the faucet.

If passed, the Invest In Iowa Act would generate approximately \$175 million per year for the Trust. While the proposal makes a few changes in the original trust formula, it does well by making sure nothing got left out entirely. That’s \$175 million for trails, for timber management, for campgrounds, for water quality... things that most Iowans agree are worth every penny.

But just like 2010, regular citizens will need to fight for this positive change. As she spoke, Governor Reynolds looked frustrated. She does not have a lot of support in the state house for this “heavy lift.” Some legislators have told her it’s too much to take on at once. Others are concerned about the prospect of raising taxes, even when offset with property and income tax reductions.

They’re concerned because they don’t know how their constituents feel. That’s where we come in. It doesn’t take long to pick up a phone, dial a few numbers, and tell your state representatives and senators “I’m _____ from _____ and I urge you to support the Invest In Iowa Act.”

This simple gesture has the chance to impact generations of Iowans, on a scale beyond what most have seen in their lifetimes. The Invest In Iowa act goes beyond even the landmark legislation of REAP, widely considered one of the best conservation funding mechanisms in the country.

It *is* a heavy lift. However, Iowa has done a lot of heavy lifting in the past. We’ve written here in the newsletter and on our blog about Iowa’s outsized role in the American story of conservation and public lands. The Invest In Iowa Act offers a new chapter in that story.

The proposal has a lot of moving parts, impacting many parts of Iowa’s economy and tax structure. It will need a lot of help from regular citizens to push through the machinations of the state congressional body. But as Governor Reynolds said in her closing remarks, “This is Iowa. We do big things.”

Invest In Iowa Act : New Dollars for Conservation

+ \$5.1M – REAP
+ \$7.5M – Lake & Stream Restoration
+ \$4.9M – Trails
+ \$15.4M – Local Conservation Partnerships
+ 15M – Watershed Protection
+ 21.6M – Soil & Water Conservation
+ 10.1M – Natural Resources

*Total: \$79.6
Million Above
Current Funding*

DON'T MISS OUT! *We're Going Digital.*



Clayton County Conservation's newsletters are available electronically. We will discontinue print copies.

We don't want you to miss out on the Osborne Oracle news and upcoming events!

Please email cccb@claytoncountyiowa.gov with "subscribe" in the subject line to be added to our e-newsletter database.

The Osborne Oracle will continue to be available through our website: www.claytoncountyconservation.org

Clayton County Conservation Board's Upcoming Events & Programs

Nature All Around Us Art Series

The Osborne Nature Center will host a series of nature and art-inspired fundraising workshops this season called "The Nature All Around Us Art Series".

The first workshop will be:

"Painting with Abbey" on March 27th at 6 p.m.

Watch for other classes throughout the season.



National Trails Day

Saturday, June 6th, 10:00 AM

Bloody Run County Park, McGregor, IA

Enjoy a guided hike on the challenging Well's Hollow Trail in Bloody Run County Park to celebrate National Trails Day. The primitive, single track trail constructed in 2016 wanders the bluff tops and restored savanna overlooking Bloody Run Creek. Participants should bring sturdy shoes and water for this ~1.5 mile hike.

Naturalist's Choice

August TBD

Say goodbye to summer in style. As their season draws to a close, Clayton County Conservation's seasonal naturalists will host a public program focused on a topic of their choosing.

Monarch Release Party

Friday, September 4th

Osborne Nature Center

Come and celebrate the Monarch Butterfly with a program about the life cycle of these amazing creatures, topped off with the tagging and release of live monarchs! Feel free to bring your own to be tagged, and be a part of this nationwide effort to save a species.

National Public Lands Day: Prairie Seed Harvest

Saturday, September 26th, 10:00 AM

Osborne Pond

Take some time to give back to your public lands with this volunteer opportunity. Prairie seed harvesting is simple, but Osborne staff will guide you on the basics of plant ID and harvesting techniques.

Motor Motor 5K Trail Run

Saturday, March 21st, 9:00 AM

Motor Mill Historic Site

Get off the road with this rugged and beautiful trail run through the prairies & woodlands surrounding the Motor Mill Historic Site. Registration info can be found at www.ClaytonCountyConservation.org

Nature Kids

Monthly: 10:00 AM

Osborne Nature Center

Bring your 3-6 year olds out to Osborne for a little nature exploration. Each month will feature hands-on activity, outdoor play, and maybe even a little learning. For each month's topic, check out our facebook or website.

Karaoke Night for Trails

Saturday, March 28th, 7:00 PM

Deb's Brewtopia, Elkader, IA

Good Time Karaoke is allowing us to relive our night of fame! Join us Saturday, March 28th at 7pm at Deb's Brewtopia in Elkader. We'll sing, we'll dance, we'll have a few delicious brews, and we'll raise funds for the Motor Mill Trail Finish Line Fundraiser!

For more information on any of these programs, call 563-245-1516, or visit www.claytoncountyconservation.org

Motor Mill Stands the Test of Time by Abbey Harkrader, Naturalist



Photo by Keith Elster

Motor Mill is celebrating a very special 150th anniversary this year. To commemorate this monumental occasion, a year-long celebration has been planned throughout 2020. Clayton County Conservation and the Motor Mill Foundation plan to make the Mill's 150th year an exciting one and look forward to sharing the site's rich and historic background with a series of interesting speakers and events each month to celebrate its Sesquicentennial.

The historic Motor Mill has experienced and gone through many changes during its lifetime but still lives on. John Thompson's plans for the greatest gristmill of the Midwest has endured through Motor Mill's beautiful and sturdy construction. John Thompson, an entrepreneur from Dubuque, James Crosby a respected lawyer from Garnavillo and J P Dickinson, a mill operator from Clermont

optimistically built the mill, cooperage, inn, stable and smokehouse and platted the town they named Motor. The men wanted people to think of their enterprise as a center of industrial activity and picked a relatively new name that meant a driving force.

Motor Mill was constructed from 1867-1869 and officially opened for business January 1st, 1870. The stonemasons quarried limestone from the hill overlooking the site and lowered it on a two-track railcar system James Crosby devised.

The mill is 90 feet tall with 6 floors and a basement where the foundation is 5 feet thick. Oak beams on the bottom floor are 14 inches square, and held in place by gravity. No nails or pins were used in building the mill frame, except in the attic. Altogether, construction of the mill, four outbuildings, the bridge, and the mill's machinery cost about \$100,000.

Motor Mill Stands the Test of Time (continued)

The Turkey River provided ample power to drive the three turbines under the mill which were more efficient than a traditional water wheel. A dam 100 feet up river extended across the river and directed water to the mill through a flume, or channel. Each turbine generated more than 125 HP providing power to equipment throughout the mill and the French buhr stones made of a special buhr quartz that is harder than granite. Elevators and augers moved grains throughout the mill to each step of the flour milling process.

Barrels were made in the cooperage to ship the flour. Each barrel contained 196 pounds of flour and was shipped to local markets like Dubuque, as well as Chicago and as far as Pittsburgh. In a test by four prominent bakers in Dubuque, the Motor Mill flour was the winner. Motor Mill had numerous setbacks and operated only 14 years. Stone grinding was being replaced by steel roller grinding. Poor wheat crops due to drought, chinch bugs, and farmers changing from wheat to corn ended wheat's future in Iowa. Constant damaging floods hit in 1870, 1871, 1880, and 1883. These floods halted two attempts to bring the railroad through Motor, and the 4th flood caused enough damage that operations at the mill ceased forever.

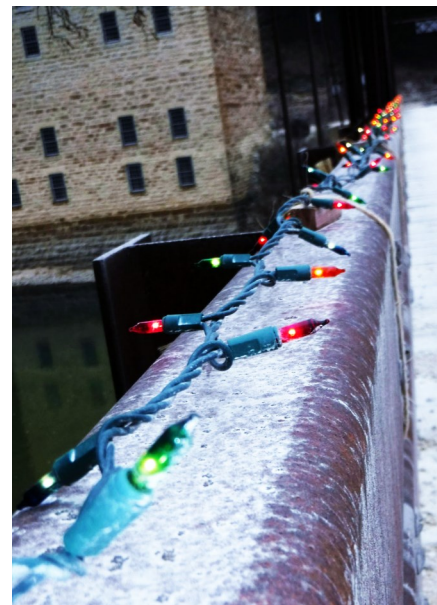
After the mill closed, the land was rented out until Louis Klink purchased the mill property in 1903. The Klink family realized its value and had it listed on the

National Register of Historic Places in 1977. Motor Mill became a park when the Clayton County Conservation Board, with help from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, purchased 100 acres of the property in 1983.

Another 55 acres where the town had been platted was purchased from Mildred Beck in 1992.

Though it was used as an active mill for only about 14 years, Motor Mill captures the fascination and respect of all who experience it. Today, the Motor Mill Historic site is a favorite destination for picnicking, fishing, camping, paddling, and hiking.

Motor Mill was thought by Thompson to be a sort of eighth wonder of the world and "more beautiful than the Taj Mahal." Today's visitors are still amazed by its beauty and resilience.



The Motor Mill bridge holiday lights

Motor Mill Sesquicentennial Events

March 21, 2020	Motor Motor 5K	Motor Mill Historic Site 8am
April 4, 2020	Egg Hunt	Motor Mill Historic Site 1pm
May 23, 2020	Celebrate Grau Savanna & Fossil Find	Motor Mill Historic Site 1pm
June 13, 2020	Paddle Pedal Pour	Turkey River Water Trail 11am
July 11, 2020	Paddle Pedal Pour	Turkey River Water Trail 11am
July 18, 2020	Ghosts of Motor	Motor Mill Historic Site 11am
August 8, 2020	Paddle Pedal Pour	Turkey River Water Trail 11am
August 22, 2020	Barn Dance	Motor Mill Historic Site Stable
September 12, 2020	Paddle Pedal Pour	Turkey River Water Trail 11am
September 12, 2020	Motor Mill Art Festival	Motor Mill Historic Site
October 10-11, 2020	Heritage Days Tour	Motor Mill Historic Site
November 21, 2020	Motor Mill Bridge Lighting	Motor Mill Historic Site 5pm

New Murals for Osborne Nature Center by Abbey Harkrader, Naturalist



Artist Jordyn Brennan, from Upper Iowa University has been hard at work this winter designing three new murals for the Osborne Nature Center. The Clayton County Conservation Board was awarded a grant through the Iowa Arts Council to bring awareness and appreciation of art and nature to Osborne's visitors. The "Nature All Around Us" Mural Project will complement the other new exhibits in the nature center and will inspire the imagination during educational programs.

Come visit us the next few weeks and you may see our artist busy at work. The project is to be completed this spring and we still need a few matching funds to complete the grant.

Please help us complete our murals by donating to Clayton County Conservation .



Osborne Junior Naturalist Camp

The Osborne Junior Naturalist Program is an exciting program held during the summer at the Osborne Nature Center. Offered to 6th - 10th grade students in the Clayton County area, it is an overnight camp that focuses on exploring nature, making friends and getting muddy! Programs are led by naturalists at the Osborne Center, local resource specialists and outdoors experts.

Gateway to Adventure
6th-7th Grade: June 16-17; June 23-24

Exploring Hidden Treasures
7th-8th Grade: July 7-8

Expedition: No Boundaries
8th-10th Grade: July 21-23

The deadline for sign up is May 15. Students will receive information at their school. However, if you need an enrollment form or have more questions, please call the center at 563-245-1516 or visit our website:
www.claytoncountyconservation.org



Youth Summer Day Camps

Osborne Day camps are full-day outdoor programs from 9AM-4PM for children ages 6-12. Each camp will offer the chance to search for wildlife, make crafts, go on hikes, and hone their nature awareness while exploring the parks of Clayton County.

Scaly & Slimy Adventures

June 4th

Osborne Park & Pond

Budding Naturalist

July 2nd

Osborne Pioneer Shelter

Motor Mill Steam

July 30th

Motor Mill

Undercover Critters

August 13th

Osborne Pioneer Shelter

Each camp costs \$10. Campers will enjoy a snack, but should pack a sack lunch and water bottle along with play clothes, appropriate footwear, sunscreen, and bug spray. Spots are limited, so register early! For more information please call 563-245-1516 or visit our website: www.claytoncountyconservation.org

O.W.L.S.

Older, Wiser, Livelier Souls

“O.W.L.S. Favorites.” Looking for an excuse to get out of the house, make new friends, and enjoy a good meal while exploring our area? Join us for Older, Wiser, Livelier Souls the 3rd Thursday of each month March through November.

March 19—Osborne’s Early Days

April 16—Allamakee Conservation Board’s Driftless Center

May 21—K & K Gardens

June 18—Kleve-Schneider Fen Walk

July 16—Humanities Iowa Speaker

August 20—The Voyageurs (Clinton County Conservation)

September 22—The Maiden Voyage on the Mississippi (*Tuesday)

October 16—Fossil and Prairie Park Preserve

November 12—The Armistice Day Blizzard (*2nd Thursday)

Reservations are required for both program and lunch

Call with questions on cost or time



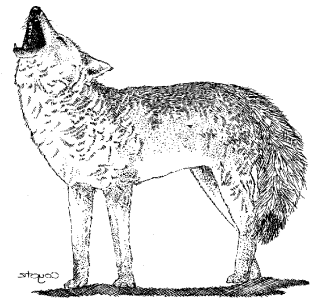
Osborne Nature Center

Phone: 563-245-1516

www.ClaytonCountyConservation.org

Clayton County Conservation
Osborne Conservation Center
29862 Osborne Rd, Elkader, IA 52043
(563) 245-1516

Osborne Public Programs
listed inside!



The Clayton County Conservation Board does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Clayton County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240

Conservation Board Members:

Gary Kregel, Garber.....Chair
Daryl Landsgard, St. Olaf.....Vice Chair
Larry Stone, Elkader.....Secretary
Marilyn Lenth, Postville.....Member
Pam Vaske, Strawberry Point.....Member

Staff

Jenna Pollock.....Director
Tucker Anderson.....Operations Supervisor
Jay Farmer.....Operations/Maintenance
Abbey Harkrader.....Naturalist
Kenny Slocum...Naturalist/Resource Manager
Molly Scherf.....Office Manager
Tammie Kraus.....Office Assistant
Deron Hakert.....Maintenance

Visit:

www.claytoncountyconservation.org
and LIKE us on Facebook!

**Osborne Nature Center &
Gift shop Hours**

Monday-Saturday

8:00am - 4:00pm

Sunday

Noon-4:00pm



Native Wildlife Exhibit Hours

Everyday 10-4:30

Clayton County Conservation Board meetings are the
second Tuesday of every month at 6:00pm in the
Osborne Center Auditorium.
Meetings are open to the public.

The mission of the Clayton County Conservation Board is to promote the health and general welfare of the people and to encourage preservation, conservation, education, and recreation through responsible use and appreciation of our natural resources and cultural heritage.