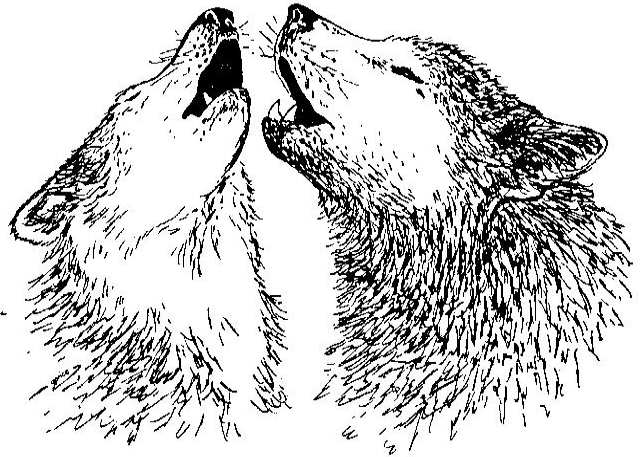


Osborne Oracle



Fall 2020

Clayton County Conservation

Vol. 43 No.2

A New Osborne Campground? by Jenna K. Pollock, Director

The Clayton County Conservation Board is seeking feedback on a proposed campground at Osborne Park. In recent surveys, the public has expressed an overwhelming desire to develop a campground at Osborne.

So we got to scheming. The preliminary design for the new campground would locate the facility south of the Osborne Native Wildlife Exhibit, out of the floodplain. The

preliminary design also includes water hookups at each site, additional tent sites, a showerhouse, proposed playground, sewage dump station, picnic shelters, and extra parking spaces. The campground would connect to existing trails and amenities within the park.

RV camping seems to grow more popular each year, but currently the CCCB has no campgrounds with hookups to accommodate the trend. A fully-developed campground at Osborne would change all that.

This project represents a significant undertaking, so we need your help! What would you like to see in a new Osborne campground? What would improve your experience or make you more likely to utilize the facility? What do you like about the design so far?

We depend on public input to guide our decisions. After all, these parks belong to the people.

Please share your feedback on the preliminary design by emailing your thoughts to cccb@claytoncountyia.gov



OSBORNE PARK CAMPGROUND
MASTER PLAN CONCEPT

SEPTEMBER 2020

SHIVEHATTERY
ARCHITECTURE+ENGINEERING



A Tale of Two Rivers by Kenny Slocum, Naturalist & Resource Manager

The term “synchronicity” was coined by analytical psychologist Carl Jung in the early 1920’s. Jung spent much of his career refining the definition of the term, but mostly it refers to “an *acausal* connecting principle.”

In other words, synchronicities occur when two events do not have a direct cause-and-effect relationship, but nonetheless have a meaningful connection to one another.

Jung’s classic example references a particularly challenging patient who’s extreme adherence to rationality had left her unable to find the magic in the world necessary for a joyful life.

During one session the patient described a dream where she received a piece of golden jewelry shaped like a scarab beetle. As doctor and patient worked to find the meaning of the dream, an actual scarab beetle— “Against its natural tendencies,” according to Jung—gently tapped on the window outside the room. The magic of coincidence broke through her rationalist shell and showed her that life had more to offer than cold calculations and materialist cause and effect.

Of course, today synchronicity is relegated to the world of pseudoscience. It cannot be verified experimentally, or explained physically. But that doesn’t mean it can’t make for a great story.

This summer, five years after I had come home to Iowa, one of my oldest childhood friends finally decided to come up and visit for a few paddle trips on our beloved Northeast Iowa rivers.



Setting sail with too much cargo...

My friend Cory is an experienced outdoorsman, but a few of the other folks who tagged along were not, so our first trip on the Yellow River had a few hiccups. People came overpacked and under-prepared for the rocky rapids and fast flows of one of Iowa’s wildest rivers.

A lot went wrong. The first night we camped on a tiny spit adjoining another one of my friends’ hunting

properties, stomping down Reed Canary grass to make space for our tents. The next morning a few more friends joined the fray, but they had not brought a vessel (!) which meant Cory and I—previously paddling our canoes solo—

had to pack a *lot* of gear into one of them and tandem paddle so we could give the other canoe to the folks joining our party.

Needless to say, our canoe carrying hundreds of pounds of gear struggled through the low flows of the Yellow at mid-summer. At one particularly shallow riffle, pointed directly at a partially submerged tree, we opted to get out and pull.

Once past the riffle, I swung my leg over the canoe to start riding again and felt a tug. My pant leg had snagged an unseen branch underwater.

At first I just laughed. But pretty soon I realized, “Wait, this is how all the really bad stories start.” I couldn’t free my foot, and the current had begun to show its strength, forcing the canoe and my leg sideways against the strainer. Cory, holding the back of the boat, started to call for help.

As his muscles started to shake from the effort of holding the canoe in place—so it wouldn’t shatter my leg or pin me under the tree—the rushing water began to flow over the gunwales, making the boat even heavier.

Our other friends came to the rescue just in the nick of time, but not without a few casualties. Of course everything in the boat got wet, but even worse, some of Cory’s gear had gotten free and floated away.

He had stored a few important items in a floating ammo box. A friend sprinted downstream in his kayak to catch up, but he never found it.

At the time, we just felt relieved that the humbling incident didn’t end up worse. We thought the worst of it was Cory’s cell phone that was in the box.

The next morning we realized his car keys were in there too.

With just the most miniscule bits of cell service available, we were able to get in touch with Cory’s dad, who lives 2.5 hours away. He was only able to yell into the phone “Dad, I lost my keys, I need you to bring a set to



Breaking camp on the Yellow

A Tale of Two Rivers (continued)

insert my address here and leave them on the porch.”

Cory’s dad had never been to my house, and he had no cell phone of his own. (!) We just had to start paddling out, hope the message got through, and hope he didn’t get lost on the way.

Miraculously, after a stressful but beautiful paddle out to the mouth of the Yellow River we took a quick trip to my home in McGregor where we saw a set of keys sitting neatly on the porch.

Our next float took place a month later on the Turkey River, floating from Elgin to Motor Mill over the course of two nights. The experience could not have been more different. The Yellow had brought beautiful weather but no fish, not to mention the aforementioned horror show that was lost gear and my own (possibly) near-death experience.

We caught loads of fish, and camped comfortably both nights in developed campgrounds, complete with firewood and toilet paper and all the good stuff.

On the second morning we contended with rain and cold temperatures, but the trip was going so well no one seemed to mind. Even a rugged portage around the Elkader dam—our boats were still a little heavy for the 6-block basket carry—seemed to boost our morale. We felt a renewed sense of confidence in our ability to tackle demanding multi-night trips on Driftless rivers.



Cory all smiles with his PB smallmouth

[childhood acquaintance we hadn’t seen in many years]. Your ammo box washed up by my cabin on the Yellow River. Everything in there seems good to go! Let me know when you’re back in town and I’ll get it back to you.”

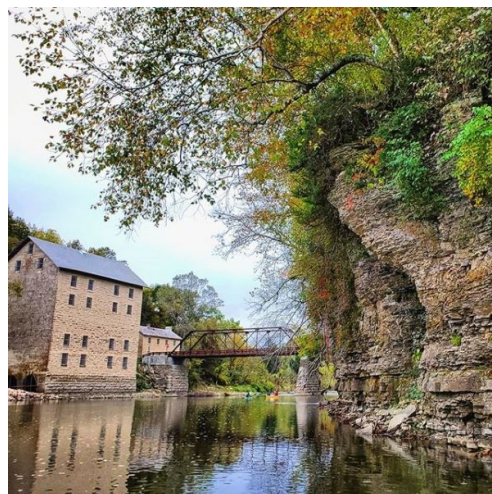
We were stunned. The sheer improbability made it all seem

impossible. Of all the cabins along the Yellow River, his box just happened to land at (probably) the *only* one owned by someone Cory knows personally.

On top of that, it reappeared at exactly the time when the whole group had gotten back together for another much more successful outing.

Perhaps less coincidentally, Cory had still been driving around with his spare key, procrastinating instead of replacing the expensive key fob, so the box actually had some real value.

I suspect Jung would have a field day with this one. What does it all mean? My intellectual side says, probably nothing. Coincidences happen all the time, and the law of truly large numbers means that in the grand scheme of human history all manner of improbable things can and have happened without the need for paranormal explanations.



Motor Mill at its fall finest

But my heart wants to believe something more. Modern Jungians take synchronicities to mean a person is “on the right path.”

Pseudoscience or not, I can find a lot of meaning in this particular episode. To me, it felt like a message from the rivers themselves. They demand respect, and when we showed up ill-prepared, the Yellow meted out the requisite punishment.

But it would have been a mistake to let the incident keep us from enjoying our water trails, one of the greatest recreational resources we have in Northeast Iowa.

So when we came back for more, this time more prepared physically and psychologically, the rivers sent a message that they admired our determination.

For all of our struggles, my friends were awed by their experience. They’d come to love and respect the Driftless. By coming back for more, we were on the right path.

Or maybe it was all just dumb luck...

Sediment Removed from Motor Mill by Larry A. Stone, CCCB Secretary



Photo by David Beck - Former Motor Mill intern Kiley Johansen examines the newly exposed bedrock in the Mill basement.

Visitors to Motor Mill, southeast of Elkader along the Turkey River, this fall will get a whole new perspective on the 150-year-old landmark. For the first time in a century, you can look into the cavernous basement to see the massive

stone footings, and wooden posts and beams that support the seven-story, limestone structure.

Workers from C. J. Moyna and Sons Construction, assisted by volunteers, recently toiled more than two weeks removing 50-plus truckloads of sediment that had accumulated in the building from years of Turkey River

flooding. In the process, they discovered the original four turbines that powered the gristmill from 1870 to 1883.



Motor Mill volunteer Chris Schoen and C. J. Moyna employee Andy Koehn admire one of four turbines unearthed from the Mill basement.

Earlier this year, when Motor Mill Foundation president John Nikolai asked John Moyna for

advice, Moyna concluded that this was no job for just amateur volunteers. Thus, he donated the time of his staff, and the use of his equipment, to help complete a project that the Motor Mill Foundation had only dreamed about.

To access the basement, Moyna supervisor Andy Koehn and assistant Bryan Willson first had to build a lane down from the adjacent Galaxy Road to the basement arches on the upstream side of Motor Mill. And once they began digging inside the mill, water seeped in from the Turkey River, requiring them to regularly add more rock to keep their machines from sinking into the mud.

Koehn used a mini-excavator to scoop up sediments, and to deftly scrape these materials away from the walls, bedrock ledge, and footings. But his work periodically was interrupted, as he had to wait for volunteers to use hand tools to scrape cross-sections of the 9-foot-deep sediments to record and photograph the deposits.

Chris Schoen of Garnavillo, a retired archeologist, documented the process. Schoen recorded the depth of

sediment, the size and location of the stone footings, the position of the turbines, the depth to bedrock, and the soil profiles of the complex layers of clay, silt and sand.

As Koehn peeled away sediments from the interior, Willson moved the material out of the building with a skid loader, then used a track hoe to scoop it into trucks furnished by the Clayton County Secondary Roads Department. When county trucks were not available, Moyna Materials workers came to the rescue. The material was dumped alongside the road to build up the shoulder north of the Motor Mill Historic Site. Koehn and Willson agreed that the challenge and



C. J. Moyna employees use a mini-excavator and skid loader inside the Motor Mill basement to remove sediment.



C. J. Moyna employee Bryan Willson digging in the mud to allow the removal of a turbine from the basement.

discoveries made the sediment removal more than just a routine earth-moving job. Like a sculptor, Koehn bit-by-bit chipped at the seemingly formless piles of dirt until he revealed the hidden post footings and turbine shafts.

Schoen said the project “was an opportunity to uncover information about how the basement foundation interfaced with the bedrock, the size and construction of the post footings . . . and the location of the turbines. The most significant results have been the discovery of four turbines,” he said.

The wooden turbines had 12-foot-tall hexagonal iron shafts. “The drum-shaped turbine heads are fashioned of wooden segments held together with wooden pegs, bands of metal, and iron bolts and nuts,” Schoen said.

Sediment Removed from Motor Mill (continued)

“They may represent some of the earliest turbine designs in the United States.”

Schoen previously had augured a series of test holes down into the sediments to assess the depth and character of the deposits and to search – unsuccessfully - for buried artifacts. Thus, finding the turbines now was a surprise. Motor historian David Beck of Elkader concluded from a search of diaries by Motor Mill co-owner James Crosby that they were Leffel turbines.

To power the turbines, water impounded by the mill dam, which was 100 feet upstream, flowed down a flume and through the archway into the mill, then dropped down into wooden cylinders around the drums, passed through and spun the turbines, then exited back into the river through vents under the mill wall. Each turbine sat on a spherical bearing, allowing it to turn freely.



Retired archeologist Chris Schoen measures the sediment profile and the stone footings in the Motor Mill basement. Note exposed turbine shaft on right.



Chris Schoen watches C. J. Moyna employees enter the basement arches to begin removing sediment from the Motor Mill Basement.

The workers were able to remove the first two turbines they found, despite them being buried in mud. The bed of the Turkey River apparently has gotten higher since the turbines were installed 150 years ago. Thus, water seeping in from the river constantly had to be pumped out to expose the turbine drum so a chain could be attached to

pull it from the mud with the track hoe.

One turbine, apparently intact, was left in the mill basement to show visitors where the turbines sat. Another turbine apparently was damaged long ago, leaving the shaft disconnected from the turbine drum. Only the shaft was removed, while the drum probably is buried under several feet of sediment.

The two turbines that were removed are temporarily being soaked in stock tanks of water to keep them from drying out and deteriorating after more than a century of being submerged in Turkey River mud and water. The goal is to stabilize the wooden drums so they can be exhibited.

Motor Mill Foundation volunteers are constructing a viewing platform, which will be accessible from a stairway down from the main floor of the mill, so visitors can get a better feel for the construction and immensity of the structure. The Motor Mill Historic Site will be open for public tours from noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 26 and Saturday, October 10.

For details, visit www.motormill.org. To arrange a group tour, call 563-245-1516.



Motor Mill Digital Photo Contest

Get outside and take some beautiful photos to enter in this year's photography contest! There is plenty of time to get some amazing shots. The contest runs until January 19.

For details, visit www.ClaytonCountyConservation.org/News

Questions please email aharkrader@claytoncountyia.gov or call 563-245-1516

Clayton County Conservation Board's

Upcoming Events & Programs



Osborne Open Air Market

October 10th & 11th, 10 AM-4 PM

Osborne Park Elkader, IA

The second full weekend of October will not bring Heritage Days. Instead exhibitors will offer their goods outside on the Pioneer Village lawn. So stop by Osborne to browse and buy your fall goodies!

Nature All Around Us Art Series

Osborne Park, Elkader, IA

The "Nature All Around Us" Art Series invites the public to come out to the Osborne Nature Center for a variety of nature-inspired art programs led by naturalist Abbey Harkrader.

Dates:

- October 23rd—Painting with Abbey
- November 20th—Rustic Board Painting
- December 11th—Christmas Door Décor
- January 22nd—Resin Jewelry
- February 19th—Painting with Abbey
- March 26th—Pine Needle Baskets

Registration is limited to 12 participants, so sign up fast to secure a spot! Visit www.ClaytonCountyConservation.org or call 563-245-1516 for more details.

Pony Hollow Trail 15K Run

Saturday, October 24th 9:00 AM

Pony Hollow Trail, Elkader, IA

A run to raise funds for future expansion of Pony Hollow Trail. **Participants must pre-register by midnight, October 22nd.** See www.ClaytonCountyConservation.org for details.

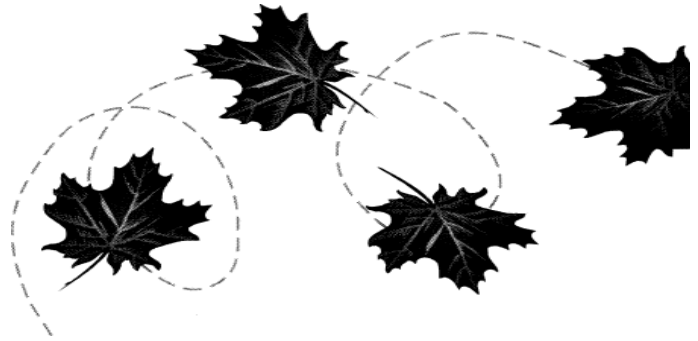
Building Better Birders Workshops

Osborne Park, Elkader, IA

Thanks to a REAP Grant, Clayton County Conservation will have the opportunity to partner with legendary birder Kelly McKay from the BioEco Research & Monitoring center for a series of designed to introduce people to the wonders of birding!

Dates:

- November 1st—6:30 PM
- February 10th—6:00 PM
- March 13th—10:00 AM



Armistice Day Blizzard of 1940

Thursday, November 12th

Osborne Park, Elkader, IA

2020's Derecho joins a long list of unexpected and dangerous weather events in Iowa, but the Armistice Day Blizzard of 1940 might be the granddaddy of them all. Join Clayton County Conservation for a program recounting of this fascinating and heartbreaking episode in Iowa's meteorological history!

Holiday Walk: Christmas in Old Osborne

Thursday, December 3rd, 6:00 PM

Osborne Park, Elkader, IA

Bring the family out for an evening of encounters with some of old residents of Osborne, from schoolteachers to blacksmiths and general store owners. Dress for the weather, this walk will be outside!

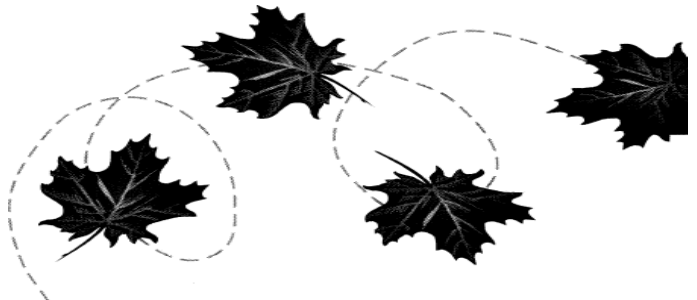
Motor Mill Bridge Lighting

Saturday, November 21st, 5:00 PM

Motor Mill Historic Site, Elkader, IA

Kick off the holiday season with the 3rd annual bridge lighting at the Motor Mill Historic Site. This program will take place outside, so dress accordingly.

Please note: these programs may be affected by COVID-19 restrictions. Stay tuned to our website and facebook for updates to programming schedules and requirements.



Leave Your Leaves! by Abbey Harkrader, Naturalist



As you look out at your lawn at all the leaves falling, you do not need to see it as a chore. It is actually beneficial to leave your leaves on the ground. So put your rake away and leave the leaves so nature can do its magic.

Other animals like toads, small mammals, and invertebrates rely on leaf litter for food, shelter and nesting material. The leaf litter protects them from the harsh elements of winter as it enriches the soil.

Raking the leaves each fall is a time honored tradition for most American families. However, these actions not only harm the environment and wildlife habitat, but also rob your soil of nutrients. Leaves form natural mulch that suppresses weeds and fertilizes the soil as it decomposes.



Luna moths make their cocoons from and within fallen leaves.

Removing leaves also eliminates vital wildlife habitat. Leaf litter is critical habitat to many creatures. Many moth and butterfly larvae overwinter in fallen leaves before emerging in spring.

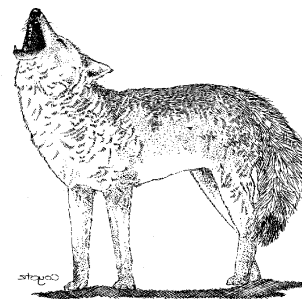
Wherever possible, let fallen leaves break down naturally to improve your soil and provide important habitat to wildlife. If you must remove leaves, use them as mulch in your existing garden beds or compost them on site rather than throwing them away.

So, put the rake away and let leaves stay where they fall. The time you save will be much better spent enjoying the gorgeous fall weather and the wildlife that will enjoy what you left for them in your yard.



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:

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

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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 -4:00 PM

Sunday: Noon-4:00pm

Winter Hours (Starting November 1):

Monday-Friday 8:4:30

Native Wildlife Exhibit Hours:

10-4:30 Every Day

Winter Hours (Starting November 1):

10-4:30 Monday-Friday

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.