

# EARTHTONES

A BLENDING OF NATURE'S NEWS



Autumn 2023



## Coming Soon to the Conservation Education Center

As we roll into Fall, we are excited to announce we will be adding an interactive and educational prairie root display to our nature center. After hard work by Activities Director Randi Brase and other staff members, a design and narrative has been created. We look forward to the completion of the project, when we will be able to install the display. We anticipate its arrival by Winter. Stay tuned!

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# Autumn Calendar

**October 14th 6:00-8:00 PM CEC**

## *Halloween Hike*

Enter the trail, if you dare. You never know who might be watching, while hiding in plain sight. As you travel the trail, see if you can catch a glimpse of animals using their camouflage to stay hidden. Along the way, there will be games and goodies. The Hike will begin and end at the CEC, where families can enjoy refreshments and a Halloween movie outside. The movie will begin at 7:30, which is the last chance to enter the trail. Give us a call at 319-657-2400 with any questions! Take a look at the picture to the left. Can you spot who's hiding?

**November 16th 5:00-7:00 PM CEC**

## *Holiday at the Park*

Join us for our annual ornament decorating event! We will have wood cookie ornaments that families can decorate however they'd like to! We will of course have plenty of samples to get ideas from. Give us a call at 319-657-2400 to register.

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**December 27th & 28th 9:00-12:00 PM CEC**

## *Winter Wilderness Camp*

Similar to our summer camps, kids will be introduced to the wilderness in Winter. Kids will have the chance to do several outdoor activities, such as snow shoeing and sledding. The camp is open to 4th-7th graders. If we do not have snow, we will cancel. Registration opens Friday, October 6th. Forms will be online or at the CEC. There is a \$20 fee. Give us a call with any questions.

## Washington County Conservation Board

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Megan Jorgensen | Naturalist

Randi Brase | Activities Director

Fritz Engel | Maintenance Supervisor

Cody Smith | Ranger/Technician

Brett Johnson | Ranger/Technician

Jacob Adrian | Maintenance Tech.



# The Shower House Project Begins

**By: Zach Rozmus  
Executive Director**

Year after year, Labor Day weekend marks the end of summer. This year at Washington County Conservation, Labor Day weekend also signified the end of an era. This year, the holiday weekend marked the last weekend the old shower house stood in Marr Park. On September 5th, 2023 demolition of the shower house that was built in 1991 began.

Work began on September 6th. Staff, as well as help from the county engineering department, worked hard to demolish the existing structure. By the end of the day, the only remnants of the building that remained, were the concrete footings underneath the structure. With the old structure removed, it is now time for the construction process to begin.

Our General Contractor Myers Construction Inc., with the help of Carl A. Nelson, are working towards the goal of having the new shower house open for business in time for the 2024 camping season. This is dependent of course on how well mother nature cooperates in the meantime.

The campground will remain open for business during the duration of the construction process. The WCCB apologizes for any inconveniences that arise from the project but we are confident the short term interruptions will be well worth it when our project is complete.

Water and electricity will remain turned on at each individual campsite. Restroom facilities are open at the lodge and at the front of the park. However, once the weather turns cold, water will be shut off. The nature center restrooms will be available during regular business hours. As always, we appreciate the continued support from the community. Please give us a call at 319-657-2400, if you have any questions or concerns.



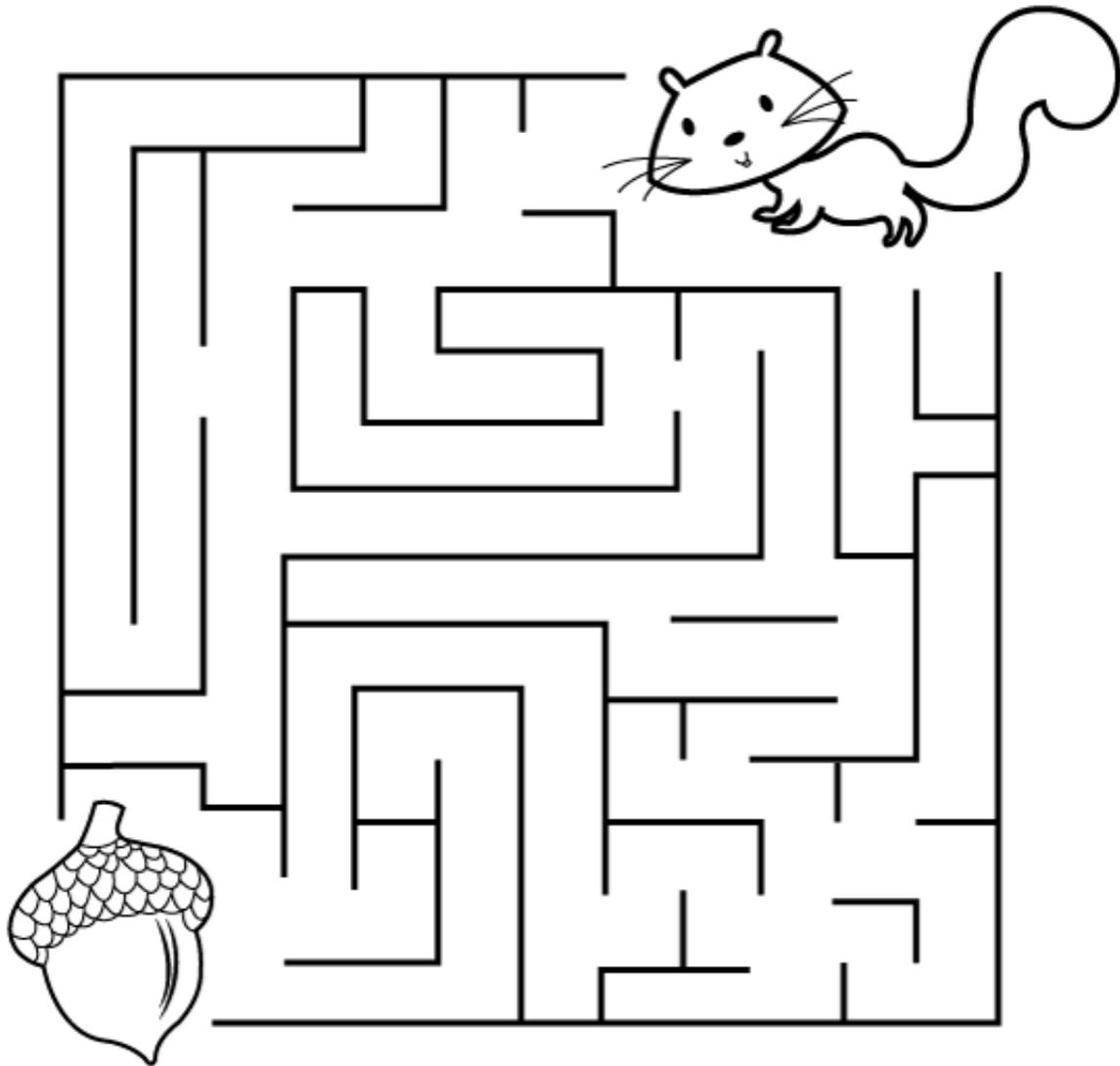


# Squirrel Maze

Can you help the squirrel find it's acorn?

# Squirrel Maze

Help the squirrel find his acorn.





# Stunning Fall Views in Washington County

**By: Megan Jorgensen  
Naturalist**

Fall is the perfect time of year to get outside and enjoy the great outdoors. With the changing of the seasons, crisp, cool air arrives. Likewise, the wilderness erupts with color, as trees prepare for winter dormancy. Washington County is home to nearly 2500 acres of wildlife areas which are managed by WCCB. Each area provides opportunities for users to recreate, including taking in the stunning views of fall.

The newest property to fall under WCCB's management is Southtown. The recently annexed addition to the City of Kalona features a beautiful oak savanna that overlooks a vast landscape known as Vista Park. Vista Park serves as the gateway to an expansive trail system that meanders its way through an old growth hickory and white oak timber before opening up to a gorgeous 6 acre pond.

Next on the list is Fern Cliff Park, with 57 acres of woodland area located southeast of Washington off Fern Cliff Road. This area features well maintained trails, with a recently renovated look-out and a picnic shelter.

Located along the Skunk River northwest of Brighton, is the historic Brinton Timber. This is our largest management area sitting at 332 acres. This area boasts a wide range of natural features. Take a hike on the trails where you will have access to small streams, shallow ponds, native vegetation and rock outcroppings. If you are quiet enough, you may spot wildlife!

Travel to the northern part of the county, and you will find Foster Woods Park. The park is 20 acres, and features woodlands with a small pond and pavilion. Fall is the perfect time of year to visit this park, as the trees paint the landscape with their colorful leaves. Cast a line into the pond, and see what you can catch. The pond is stocked with sunfish and bass.

The final park on the list is Marr Park. Marr Park is the most visited, as it is home to our only modern campground and nature center. The park features trails that go through wetlands, prairies and woodlands. There are many other natural areas to visit in Washington County, including Lake Darling State Park. We challenge you to spend time in all of them this fall! You never know what you might discover!



## Fall Trout Stocking at Marr Park

**By: Megan Jorgensen  
Naturalist**

There are many opportunities for anglers to catch trout in Iowa. The Iowa DNR stocks trout in 50 publicly accessible streams in Iowa, 9 special trout fisheries, and 18 community trout fisheries. Community trout stockings offer a “close to home” option for anglers in cities and towns across Iowa. These cool weather stockings provide easy access to trout fishing in areas that cannot support trout in the summer. This fall, the small pond at Marr Park will be stocked with Rainbow Trout.

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If you are an avid angler and are interested in this unique opportunity to catch trout, there are some things to keep in mind before you head out. Iowa residents and nonresidents 16 years or older are required to have a valid Iowa Fishing License and a Trout Stamp. Both can be purchased online or from a local licensing vendor. Children under 16 are exempt however, they must fish with a properly licensed adult. The daily limit for trout is 5. Youth cannot possess their own daily limit without a Trout Stamp.

What is a Rainbow Trout? Olive to greenish-blue over most of the upper body, with a silvery-white belly, the Rainbow Trout stands out from the other trout species. They have a strikingly prominent pink-red horizontal stripe that extends down both sides of their body. Rainbow Trout populations are dependent on hatchery production, as they are not native to Iowa. Stocking ends when the water temperature of fisheries, such as Marr Park, exceeds 70 degrees. Their primary habitat is cool streams and other bodies of water with riffles of rocks and gravel, deep pools, overhead cover, and a swift current.

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Their diet is highly variable, and may consist of mayflies, caddisflies, stoneflies and their larvae, small mollusks and fish. Marr Park is stocked with trout on a rotational basis, the last time being Fall of 2021. Do not forget to stop by. A chance like this does not come often in this part of the state, so get that fishing license, grab your gear, some family and friends, and come on out to Marr Park!

# EARTHTONES

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PRESORTED STANDARD  
U.S. Postage  
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Kalona IA 52247  
Permit #7

WASHINGTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD  
2943 HWY 92  
AINSWORTH, IA 52201

Electronic Service Requested

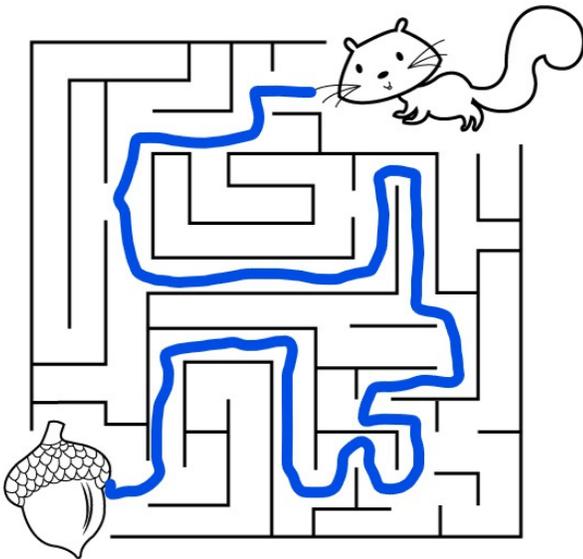
### **Winter Center Hours**

Monday-Friday:  
8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Saturday-Sunday:  
Closed

## Squirrel Maze

Help the squirrel find his acorn.



## Squirrel Maze Answers