

**To the editor:**

I wanted to write in and hopefully reach people in Washington, and even the surrounding towns that may not be aware, of just how incredible our county conservation department is!!!

There was an article recently in The Journal about the record-breaking year the county had with completed projects. I found out recently that not only did those projects get done, with the exception of contracted the big dirt moving, they were all done by a handful of employees of the Washington County Conservation team!!!

I am fortunate to live within a block of the head of the Kewash trail so I manage to walk and enjoy the trail on an almost daily basis! I want to encourage anyone who has not been out on the trail in the last couple of months to tie up your walking shoes and discover the gem!

The Willow Pond is about a mile and one fourth from the head of the trail. However! There is a gravel and very spacious parking lot on the corner of west 5th Ave and the trail. If you start there you have about one-half mile less to walk! It is so worth the time to get out there! The super awesome team at the conservation center hand-poured a brand-new sidewalk leading from the brand new gazebo to the brand-new benches on the jetties. Even the Boy Scouts got involved with an Eagle project by helping with landscaping and

clearing of the trail. The pond was drained and restocked about 3 years ago, and with the brand-new shoreline and drainage added this year, it's like a new pond!

The newly raised trail around the pond gives you some awe-striking views that makes you wonder if you really are in the middle of a cornfield in Iowa!

And for my fellow biking peeps, the crowning jewel of the trail projects is the Kiwi Avenue fix. It went from the worst spot to ride your bike across, to the best spot on the trail! No need to dismount and walk the bike across and hope to not break an ankle in the ruts anymore! It is full speed glide straight down and back up across that intersection! They even installed safety rumbles!

So thank you to the Board of the conservation department and to Steve Anderson all your time and efforts and for securing the funds for making these projects happen! And thank you to my friend Kathy Dolan for making sure all the i's are dotted and t's are crossed! And serious props to Fritz, Mark, and Jayse for your hands on, blood, sweat, and tears for making this old railroad track something to be so proud of!

I thank you every day, and truly hope that someone who has never been on the Kewash will be inspired by my letter to take that hike and fall in love with the beauty!

**Angi Staley  
Washington**