

# THE NEW LEAF

Clarke County Conservation Board and Friends



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Larry Keller  
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## Park Technicians:

Chris Reyna  
Willard DeLong

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### Conservation Director :

Scott Kent

*"If conservation of  
natural resources goes  
wrong nothing else  
will go right."*

*-M.S. Swaminathan*

We have a YouTube Channel!

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFsjkMCwuNVKyH\\_jX3OdkWw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFsjkMCwuNVKyH_jX3OdkWw)

## Park Technicians

Chris Reyna



Chris has been working for Clarke County Conservation Board since 2005 as a full-time conservation tech. Working for the Clarke County Conservation Board is a natural fit for Chris as some of his hobbies are training horses, trail riding, hunting, and fishing. Working outdoors is one of the reasons why he wanted to work as a conservation tech, however his co-workers and work environment have kept Chris wanting to continue to work for the Board. While he enjoys his job, there is one downside to being a conservation tech, cleaning out the restrooms. So, remember when visiting our parks, please clean up after yourself to help make Chris's job easier. Of all the county parks, he enjoys East Lake Park the most as he is proud of the improvements he has helped complete at the park. It gives him joy seeing how parks like East Lake have been cleaned up for all to enjoy. Chris's dream vacation would be to go to the Big Horn Mountains to do some camping and horseback riding.

Willard DeLong



Willard has worked as a part-time conservation tech for Clarke County Conservation Board since 2011. Working at the county parks is a great fit for him as it allows him to work outdoors and serve the county doing things he enjoys. Mowing is one of Willard's favorite things to do and it is common to see him out on a mower when visiting East Lake Park. When asked why he likes his job, Willard quickly responded he enjoys the people he works with and helping to maintain the local county parks. For Willard, there are few to no drawbacks working as a conservation tech and he truly enjoys what he does. East Lake Park is Willard's favorite park in the county as he is proud of the improvement made for the public to better enjoy the park. Outside of the county, Willard enjoys Lake Ahquabi State Park for all the lake activities it offers. If Willard could go anywhere on vacation, it would be to Hawaii as it is a place he has never been to before. As you get to know Willard, you quickly learn what his favorite holiday is, Halloween. For Willard, the ability to dress up as whatever and have fun keeps him a kid at heart.



## Campgrounds



### New Modern Campgrounds at East Lake Park

East Lake Park has always offered entertainment to the residents of Clarke County in terms of outdoor recreation. Now the park has even more to offer! The new campground on the east side of the park is finished and open for campers to use during the summer season.

The new campgrounds are located on the eastern side of the lake, straight up the hill as you enter the park. The campgrounds feature 25 modern campsites, each with individual water hydrants, a fire ring, picnic table, and 23/30/50-amp electrical service hook-ups. There are 16 back-in sites and 9 pull-through sites, along with a dump station. In addition to a dump station there is a modern restroom/shower house for campers to use.



One of Clarke County Conservation Board's goals is to get more people out in nature utilizing our local county parks. This new park improvement helps achieve these goals as it will allow for people to spend a weekend at East Lake away from home. Each campsite is named after a different species of tree such as Black Walnut or Sugar Maple. Near each site is a tree specie that has been planted corresponding with the name of the campsite. As these trees grow, it will be exciting to have a variety of tree species in the same location to add to the beauty of the campgrounds.

It is \$25 a night to reserve a spot at the new campgrounds with each site needing to be reserved five days in advance of the dates you plan to camp. If a campsite has not been reserved ahead of time, it is first come, first serve. If you are interested in reserving a campsite go to [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com). If you wish to fill up with water or use the dump station, but not camp at the park, there is a \$5 charge to do so.





## Canoe Night

We offered Free Canoe Night again this year running from July to the end of August. We had great turn out with each night averaging 16 participants a night. Once night we had 28 people out on the water during the three-hour period. We plan to continue this event next summer!





## Wild Flower Walk

Have you taken a walk on the paved trail at East Lake Park recently? If not, you really should think about doing so. Not only is it a great trail for exercise, it is a great trail to see some beautiful wildflowers during the summer months. While out on the trail, you will now find a new park bench to rest on, made possible by Great Western Bank. This bench offers a great view of some of the wildflower plots. Wildflowers are one of the many attractions our local parks offer visitors.



Over the last few years, Clarke County Conservation Board has worked to seed wildflowers plots in different areas in the county. Other than the paved trail at East Lake, there is Oakwood Grassland and the Murray Roadside Park. All three are owned and maintained by Clarke County Conservation Board. We have organized wildflowers walks for the public at Oakwood Grassland. These events occur a couple times throughout the summer so participants can see the different types of flowers over a period of time. Other than these three spots, Clarke County Conservation Board has also assisted in the planting

of wildflower plots at the Osceola Lutheran Church and the Clarke County Historical Society

Museum. Each of the wildflower plots planted have been very successful with some species of

flowers growing naturally outside of the species which were intentionally planted.



## AmeriCorps Day Camps

Nature Camps returned to East Lake Park; however, they looked a little different this year. In June we had virtual day camps which offered activities kids could access online and do at home to learn more about topics such as trees, birds, insects, and other nature topics. Not only kids took part in the fun, but also their parents and even other adults interested in learning more about nature. In late July/early August we were able to have a few themed single day camps allowing kids to learn at East Lake Park in person while physically distanced. At these camps kids learned about topics such as the night sky, water conservation, and other fun topics in addition to information which was delivered digitally. Kids and their families enjoyed both day camp platforms and we hope to offer on-site nature day camps again next summer.

The biggest benefit the virtual day camp platform was that it forced us to become creative with the type of information we delivered to kids. Rather than only using existing videos from the internet, we made the decision to record our own videos with local experts. We took the time to record videos of Beth Brown speaking about her experience and the birds she had on hand at the time. In addition, we created videos of local bee keepers, Judy and Larry Kjellsen, discussing the practice of bee keeping and a hive examination walk through. Without having to do virtual day camps, these videos might never have been created. Now, they can be found at Clarke County Conservation Board's YouTube channel for all to enjoy. We hope to continue to create and upload more education videos in the future.





## Liberty Park

Liberty Park is the featured park of this edition of “The New Leaf.” The land, on which Liberty Park sits was first donated to the Liberty community in the late 1800s by John Rhoads. After the donation, the park belonged to the surrounding community landowners with the Liberty Park Restoration Committee being formed in September of 2001. One of the first goals of the Liberty Park Restoration Committee was to create a shelter house for all to better enjoy and use the park. Members of the committee were able to secure funding for a shelter house through private donations, local business donations, and help from the Clarke County Development Corporation. The shelter was built at the park in 2002 which featured men’s and women’s restrooms, a mini kitchen, a storage room, and an enclosed meeting room.

Later an open addition was built on the northern end with a roof. After the Liberty Park Restoration Committee successfully built the Liberty Park shelter, they turned over the land to the Clarke County Conservation Board. Today, this park is a hidden gem among our local county parks. The shelter house is frequently the site of family gatherings and special events. In addition to the shelter house, it offers a playground and volleyball court. It is well worth the drive-up US Hwy 69 to visit this park for a summer’s day picnic. To reserve the shelter house, visit: [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com)





## Friends Of Clarke County Conservation

The Friends of Clarke County Conservation Foundation, known as *Friends*, is a tax exempt corporation organized under the Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act, Chapter 504A of the 1990 Code of Iowa, and the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The foundation was established in 1997 for the purpose of soliciting and accepting gifts and donations from persons and organizations for developing and enhancing environmental education and conservation projects within the scope of the jurisdiction of the Clarke County Conservation Board.

The goals of the organization are: (1) to support and further the functions of the Clarke County Conservation Board by serving as a vehicle for community involvement, (2) to advise CCCB of the needs of the community regarding facilities and programs, (3) to raise funds for designated projects, and (4) to serve as an organizational base for volunteers.

Categories of membership are determined by the annual dues, which range from Student at \$5.00 to Organizational at \$100, (see enclosed membership form). Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible. Membership in the "*Friends*" foundation is open to everyone regardless of race, religion, creed, national origin, age, gender, or handicap.

An annual general membership meeting is held to elect the "*Friends*" Board of Directors, a seven (7) member board that sets the policies and goals, and generally manages the affairs of the foundation.

### Friends of Clarke County Conservation

#### Membership Application

- ☐ Organization/Business (\$100)
- ☐ Family (\$20)
- ☐ Individual (\$10)
- ☐ Student (\$5)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes! I want to be a part of the "*Friends*" volunteer corps.

Make checks payable to:  
Friends of Clarke County Conservation,  
C/O Clarke Co. Conservation Board  
100 South Main, Osceola, IA 50213

# ***Want to help?***

We are always looking for helpful individuals to volunteer for our boards and the events that we put on for our amazing community. If your interested in volunteering please reach out to Scott.

You can support Friends of Clarke County through cash donations, land or property, stimulus checks and endowments through South Central Iowa Community Foundation.

