

Conservation Corner

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“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”
—William Arthur Ward

Thanksgiving Season is here, a time to pause and give thanks, a time to give those gifts of gratitude and appreciation away! What are you thankful for this year?

Here at Conservation, we’re thankful for the many acres of prairie, woodlands, and wetlands that are being preserved and restored right here in our corner of the Prairie Pothole Region. We’re thankful for each wild creature and each newly planted tree that survived last summer’s drought. Most of all, we’re thankful for people like you who are also interested in and dedicated to “conserving our natural heritage for those who follow.”

Many families open their gifts of gratitude around the dinner table on Thanksgiving Day. Here at Conservation, we opened ours around the break table so we could share them with you.

Our Director Brian is thankful for family, friends, and winter sports. Kyle, our Parks Manager, is thankful his broken thumb is on the mend; while Aaron, our Roadside Manager, is thankful for his growing family. Jill, our office gal, is thankful that another harvest is in the bins and, on cold mornings, that her new car warms up much faster than her old one did. And Corinne, the Naturalist, is thankful for grandkids to enjoy, books to read, and songs to sing.

We’re all thankful for the chance to introduce our newest staff member, James Conway, who began his duties as Park Ranger this fall. Likewise, James is thankful for a new job in his field of study.

When I asked James what sparked his interest in conservation, he related that though he grew up in Sioux City, he’s always enjoyed fishing and hunting. While at Briar Cliff he said botany class, prescribed burns, and field trips to Konza Prairie in Kansas, the Black Hills in South Dakota, and perhaps his favorite, a canoeing trip on the Buffalo River in Ponca, Arkansas, opened his eyes to the many facets of conservation. Graduating with a B.A. in Environmental Science in 2014 and completing an internship with the Iowa DNR at Stone Park in Woodbury County sealed the deal. So, after stints as an Admissions Rep at Briar Cliff and recycling equipment operator in Vermillion, he’s thankful to be out in nature once again. Most of all, James is thankful his wife Stephanie will be joining him in Pocahontas following her graduation from the University of South Dakota in early December, Occupational Therapy degree in hand. Welcome to Pocahontas, James & Stephanie!

In closing, if it’s Thanksgiving, it must be time for the Art Walk! We hope you can join us this coming Saturday, Nov. 25. Conservation will be hosting a Make & Take Workshop at the ISU Extension Office on Main Street from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. We hope you can stop by and create a Christmas bird ornament on a day sure to be filled with fun, friendship, and gratitude.

