

AREA INVENTORY

The Kossuth County Conservation Board manages 24 areas totaling 1,600 acres for outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat. A brief description of the areas follows:

Burt Lake: Eagle 9: 145 acres: November 1979

Located 4 miles west and 8.5 miles north of Swea City, this area was acquired in 1979. It is managed for wildlife habitat as well as recreation. Campers and fisherman are the major users of this park. A nature trail is present, and existing facilities include a shelter house, electrical hookups, and picnic tables, grills, fire pits and pit toilets. Hunting is allowed.

Call Park Road Habitat Area: Cresco 14: 2 acres: May 1987

Located 1.5 miles south and .25 miles west of Algona. This area was left over after reconstruction of the roadbed. In June of 1990 the entire plot was tilled and planted with switch grass for use as a wildlife habitat area. The area is burned periodically to enhance the native grass planting.

Devine Wildlife Area: Riverdale 23: 41 acres: September 1967

Located 8 miles south of Algona, this area was donated by Mrs. Lyle Steele to the Conservation Board in 1967. It was originally called Steele Wildlife Area, then changed to Riverdale Wildlife Area in August, 1969, and finally named Devine Wildlife Area in November 1969. Devine Wildlife Area is managed primarily as a wildlife area. Public use is mostly for fishing and accessing the East Fork of the Des Moines River. Existing facilities include a shelter house, picnic tables, grills and fire pits. A concrete boat ramp was constructed in 1992.

Eagle Lake Wildlife Area: Eagle 28: 180 acres: July 2001

Located 4 miles west and 4.5 miles north of Swea City, this wetland area was acquired from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation in July of 2001. This acquisition includes the old Eagle lake basin, which had been a shallow lake of approximately 120 acres prior to being drained in the early 1900's. This property contains 155.0 acres in the Wetland Reserve program. Wetland restoration, drainage improvements and upland habitat development practices have been implemented on the tract. The area will be managed as a wildlife area with activities regulated accordingly.

Geigel Woods: Irvington 18: 14 acres: October 1999

Located 2 miles southeast of Algona in the area known as "Little Africa", this small tract is entirely timber. This acquisition was a donation from James Voigt and Robert Geigel. The area will be managed as a wildlife area with public hunting allowed. No development is planned on this area.

Greenwood Marsh: Greenwood 29: 7 acres: March 1989

Located 1 mile south and 4 miles west of Bancroft. In March of 1989 Maurice Bernhard turned over seven acres to the conservation board. The area is managed as a wildlife area. Hunting is not allowed.

H.M. and Eva Smith Prairie: Cresco 23: 9.44 acres: October 1990

Smith Prairie was donated to the Conservation Board by Eva Smith. It is located 2 miles south and 1 mile west of Algona. Over eighty-five species of wildflowers and native grasses have been identified on it, including one on the state-threatened list and one on the federal threatened list. The area is maintained to preserve the prairie and hunting is not allowed.

Hurlburt Wildlife Area: Union 25, 36: 180 acres: January 1991

Hurlburt Wildlife Area, located 1.5 miles northeast of Algona was purchased from Merwyn and Donna Hurlburt using Kossuth County Pheasants Forever Chapters and Iowa State Council of Pheasants Forever dollars. A Wildlife Habitat Stamp Grant was also granted. The area consists of river bottom timber, native prairie, pasture, and Conservation Reserve Program acres. A three-acre man-made pond is present, and the East Fork of the Des Moines River borders the property on the east. Since acquisition, wildlife food plots, two extensive shelterbelts, and over 50 acres of native grasses have been planted on the area. Sixty acres of additional timber was added to this area with the purchase of the Buscher tract in April of 1999. This additional 60 acres was funded by a Wildlife Habitat Stamp grant and a National Wild Turkey Federation grant. Twenty acres were donated by Gib and Bev Buscher. The area is managed as a wildlife management area with activities regulated accordingly.

Ledyard R.O.W.: Ledyard 19: 16 acres: September 1981

Located 2 miles south and 1 mile west of Ledyard. The Ledyard R.O.W. is used for wildlife habitat and public hunting. No development is planned on this area.

Michaelsen Marsh: Portland 1: 95 acres: December 1966

Located 2.5 miles west of Titonka, this area was added to in years 1967 and 1968. Michaelsen Marsh is a public hunting area with upland and wetland habitat. A shelter house, pit toilets, and a trapshooting range are provided on this area.

Patterson Recreation and Wildlife Area: Portland 20, 29: 303 acres: February 1986

Located 1.5 miles east of Burt, this is the largest area managed by the KCCB. The area contains uplands, river bottom timber, and several wetlands. It is open to the public for hunting, fishing, hiking, skiing, and general nature study. Extensive shelterbelts, a food plot and native grasses have been planted for wildlife habitat. The natural wetlands on the area have been enhanced with the construction of dikes, potholes, and the placement of water control structures. A boat ramp and parking lot in the southeast quarter of the area provide access to the East fork of the Des Moines River.

Plum Creek Dam: Union 36: 7 acres: 1983

Located 3 miles northeast of Algona, this area was given to the Algona Kiwanis in 1939, which eventually turned it over to the Conservation Board. It is entirely timberland bordering the East Fork of the Des Moines River and is managed for wildlife. Public hunting is allowed. This area receives moderate use from fisherman and is a popular access point to the river. A boat ramp was added in August 2000. This area is subject to flooding.

Plum Creek Timber: Plum Creek 19: 23 acres: December 1980

Located 3.5 miles northeast of Algona along the East Fork of the Des Moines River. It is managed as a wildlife area and gets little public use due to its inaccessibility.

Plum Creek Timber Addition: Plum Creek 19: 31 acres: October 1986

Located 4 miles northeast of Algona, this area is two parcels of land along the East Fork of the Des Moines River. The farthest 10 acres of the total is rarely used, as there is no direct access by road. The areas will be maintained primarily for their wildlife habitat values.

Plum Creek Wildlife Area: Plum Creek 17: 70 acres: November 1983

Located 3 miles northeast of Algona, this area is managed as a wildlife area. The area receives moderate public use from hunters and people fishing. In the summer of 2001, the east pit was mined for gravel by the Kossuth County Road Department. Later that fall it was chemically renovated by the Iowa DNR fisheries staff and restocked with bluegill, largemouth bass and channel catfish. This area floods frequently from the adjacent East Fork of the Des Moines River.

Rath Right of Way: Fenton 15, 16, 17: 24 acres: March 1989

Located east of Fenton. It consists of former railroad right of way, and was leased from John and Jean Rath. It will be maintained as a wildlife area with no current plans for development. Public hunting is allowed on the area.

Riverdale Timber: Riverdale 11: 16 acres: May 1981

Located 6 miles south of Algona. This area was acquired for wildlife habitat and is open to public hunting. This is a relatively secluded area and is not marked with boundary signs.

Siems Park: Whittemore 9: 41 acres: August 1965

Located 1.5 miles southeast of Whittemore. Originally called Whittemore Park, the name was changed to Siems Park in 1973. This park receives moderate use and has camping facilities, two shelter houses, pit toilets and playground equipment. In September of 2001, the pits were chemically renovated by Iowa DNR fisheries staff to remove an over abundance of rough fish. It has since been stocked with bluegill, largemouth bass and channel catfish. The park is managed as a wildlife refuge and hunting is not allowed. Members of the Whittemore Gun Club and local volunteers provide funds and labor for park improvements such as trees, grills and picnic tables.

Smith Lake County Park: Union 23: 124 acres: March 1964

Located 3 miles north of Algona. The park was dedicated in October 1970. Smith Lake County Park is the center of activity for the Conservation Board. Board meetings are held at the meeting room in the utility building, which is the headquarters for the KCCB and houses the shop and office. This park is highly used by the public, especially in the summer. There are two beaches, two shelter houses, modern and pit toilets, a shower facility, a campground, a boat ramp, two sand volleyball courts, two horseshoe pits, playground equipment, fishing docks, and a fish cleaning station at this park. A 1.5-mile nature trail begins in the Tree Garden and follows the shoreline around the lake. An informational Kiosk at the Prairie Patch in the campground was added in

the spring of 2002 by Brett Connor as part of his Eagle Scout requirements.

Smith Wildlife Area: Cresco 24 and 25: 144 acres: November 1994

This area was purchased from the Eva Smith Estate by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, with an agreement to sell to the conservation board. The area is almost entirely timbered with large stands of oak, maple and basswood. The area will be maintained as a wildlife area, with activities regulated accordingly. Where possible, practices will be carried out to maintain and improve the timber quality. A maple syrup shack built in 1949, located among a large stand of hard maples serves as the center for the maple syrup operation. In the spring of 2002 over 500 people experienced first hand maple syrup production.

St. Benedict Wildlife Area: Prairie 30: 33 acres: December 1981

Located 10 miles southeast of Algona, this area was acquired by transfer from the board of supervisors. It is managed for wildlife habitat and there are five gravel pits for fishing. Hunters and fisherman, account for most of the use at this area.

Stinson Prairie: Whittemore 13: 32 acres: February 1969

Located 4 miles west and 1 mile south of Algona. This native prairie was declared a State Preserve in August 1971. It is open to the public for hunting and general observation of prairie plants and animals. Controlled burning is practiced on this area to stimulate and enhance the prairie grasses and flowers.

Wesley Right of Way: Wesley 33, 34, 35, 36: 48 acres October 1990

The Conservation Board assumed management of this 5 mile right-of-way east and west of Wesley to protect the existing native prairie. No development is planned. Prairie and roadside management practices will be used to maintain the integrity of the area.

Whittemore Land: Whittemore 4: 4 acres: March 1987

Located 2 miles northeast of Whittemore, this area was donated to the conservation board by the City of Whittemore. It will be managed for wildlife habitat. Access to the area is limited and the boundaries are not posted.