

Newsletter

Whiterock Conservancy

Winter 2025

Whiterock Conservancy is a 5,500 acre non-profit land trust that balances sustainable agriculture, natural resource protection, and public recreation on the landscape. Stretching along a seven-mile section of the Middle Raccoon River valley, the Conservancy offers 40+ miles of hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trails, paddling opportunities beneath sandstone cliffs, and epic star parties. Spend the night at one of the campsites or Airbnb's and experience Iowa's darkest skies. Whiterock Conservancy's mission is to improve the condition of our conservation land through appropriate land management, demonstrate sustainable farming methods, and provide educational and recreational opportunities for our visitors.

Improving Vital Habitat for the Blanding's turtle! **By Tyler Bruck, Land Stewardship Director**

An exciting project Whiterock Conservancy has been collaborating on with the Iowa DNR, is vegetation management that will provide crucial habitat for the Blanding's turtle, which is classified as a threatened species in Iowa. The decline of the Blanding's turtle is largely due to the loss of marshland habitat, but fortunately, Whiterock Conservancy continues to manage and preserve these essential natural areas that the Blanding's turtle calls home.

The project began when a nesting area was identified adjacent to a wetland area protected by Whiterock. However, the Blanding's turtles face difficulty getting to their nesting grounds due to a barrier of notorious reed canary grass, which invades wetland plant species and creates a thick mat of vegetation that makes it difficult for the hatched turtles to travel back to the safety of the wetland. Whiterock's goal is to remove the reed canary grass and establish a diverse native vegetation.

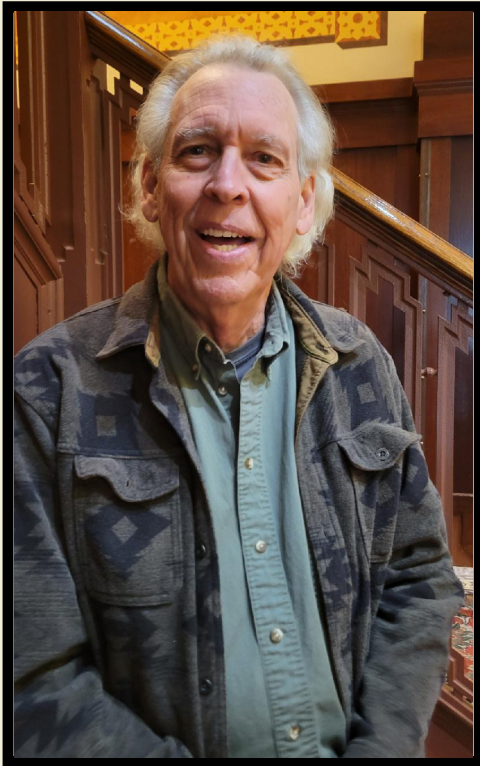
Management started this fall by hand harvesting seed for the site and conducting prescribed fire to create a good seed bed for frost seeding in the upcoming months. Restoration efforts will continue for several years until the native plant species have been established. Throughout this process, we have been able to invite volunteers to learn and participate in this project through seed harvesting and prescribed burning. Thank you to those who volunteered to help Whiterock with this significant project that will improve our natural areas and benefit the wildlife that depend on these crucial spaces in Iowa.

During the process of implementing the management plan for this important habitat area, Tyler Bruck, Land Stewardship Director, crossed paths with a female Blanding's turtle! This was a special moment and a good reminder that what we do does make an impact.



Why I give...

Welcome to the "Why I Give" section of our quarterly newsletter. Each newsletter will feature a new donor(s) and why they support and contribute their time, talent and treasure to Whiterock Conservancy.



Mark Edwards has spent his life dedicated to protecting, preserving and restoring Iowa's natural resources. After 30 years with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Mark earned his nameplate of "troublemaker" through his out of the box thinking, such as spearheading ecological restoration efforts like erosion control focused trail design, prescribed burning and interpretive programs to help educate others on these important issues.

Mark has been a long-time supporter of Whiterock since its inception, both financially and through volunteer opportunities and his hard-won knowledge. "The trial-and-error opportunities that Whiterock provides is to be greatly admired, and not something that was available to me through the DNR. The internal and intrinsic value of Whiterock is to continue to protect the land and its resources while we continue to learn from these lessons and what Whiterock is and could be."

Mark's appreciation of Whiterock being outside the bureaucratic system is that it has a higher potential to be cutting edge in a state that is near the very bottom of the nation for public land access. Whiterock Conservancy's partnership with Mark is a vital resource that provides valuable knowledge and support. When asked why he continues to support and donate to Whiterock Conservancy, Mark stated, "Whiterock is one of the few examples of this type of land for public access in Iowa and must continue to pursue its goals and explorations for the common good" Please support and participate in this exploration.

Thank you, Mark, for your ongoing generosity, support and kindness! Whiterock Conservancy continues to grow and thrive because of dedicated and passionate donors and volunteers like you!

Whiterock
CONSERVANCY

Celebrate your special day at our Historic Prohibition Era Dance Barn nestled beside the river. We provide the perfect rustic charm for your country wedding, anniversary, reunion or office retreat.

whiterockconservancy.org - 712-790-8221 ext 1
guestinfo@whiterockconservancy.org
1436 Hwy 141, Coon Rapids, Iowa





WRC Ultra Donation

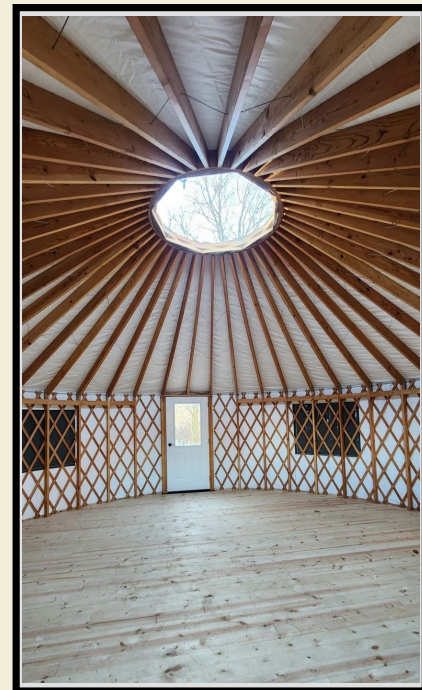
Executive Director Kate Compton accepted a generous donation for \$3,000 from the Whiterock Ultra representatives Greg and Mike! Every summer Greg, Mike, and their team put on an extraordinary race at Whiterock Conservancy! Their hard work, along with all the participants passion for this even is incredible to witness!



WRC Wander Donation

Kristen Johansen from the Whiterock Wander Equestrian group recently present Executive Director Kate Compton with a donation of over \$1,000! Kristen and her team work hard to put together an incredible leisure division equestrian ride through the North American Trail Ride Conference that continues to grow and introduce new people to Whiterock Conservancy and the recreational opportunities we offer!

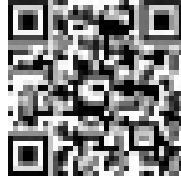
Yurt has arrived at Starfield for the 2025 camping season





Donate:

Your gift is extremely important to our work at Whiterock. Donations provide resources that make an immediate impact - whether you make your commitment annually, as a monthly sustaining gift, or to honor a loved one with a tribute or memorial gift.



Online:

Whiterockconservancy.org/donate

By Mail:

Make your contribution payable to Whiterock Conservancy, and mail to the following address:

Whiterock Conservancy
1436 Highway 141
Coon Rapids, IA 50058

By Phone:

(712) 790-8221 ext 2

Whiterock Conservancy Staff:

Executive Director: Kate Compton

Accountant: Angie Harlow

Administrative Assistant: Shelly Schlake

Land Stewardship Director: Tyler Bruck

Land Operations Manager: Matt Reiling

Land Facilities Staff: Dave Burmeister

Natural Resources Technician: Matt Wagner

Guest Services Manager: Laura Larson

Outdoor Recreation Manager: James Johnston

Housekeeping: Debbie Davis

There is an additional way to help Whiterock Conservancy achieve our goals for 2025!

Please consider donating an item from our wishlist. A full list of items can be found on our website: www.whiterockconservancy.org

Please bring or ship items to the Bur Oak Visitor Center: 1436 Hwy 141, Coon Rapids, IA 50058

Upcoming Events:

- First Saturday of every month Historic GarstFarmhouse Tours, 1390 IA-141. Coon Rapids, IA 1-3pm
- Slow Sunday Drive Events 2025 : 1-3pm

May 11th, 2025

June 22nd, 2025

September 21st, 2025

October 19th, 2025

