

**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.

## Help Us Welcome New Whiterock Conservancy Staff Members

### **Tyler Bruck,** Land Programs Manager

Tyler Bruck is Whiterock Conservancy's new Land Programs Manager. He comes from a strong background of conservation-minded organizations such as the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa DNR, Audubon County Conservation, and Story County IRVM. Tyler will focus on the soil health conservation easement program, with current easements and future easement possibilities, as well as overseeing Whiterock leases and FSA/NRCS contracts. When Tyler isn't at the Conservancy, he enjoys spending time with his wife and three boys camping, kayaking, hunting, and playing with their golden retrievers. Tyler and his family also grow sweet corn and run a U-pick strawberry patch in Audubon



### **Susan Hill,** Experiential Learning Coordinator with Green Iowa AmeriCorps

Green Iowa AmeriCorps member, Susan Hill, began working at Whiterock Conservancy in September 2021 as the Experiential Learning Coordinator. While here, Susan continues to work on a variety of projects from content development for marketing, event planning, volunteer and field trip opportunities, and social media.



*Continued on page 4*

# Iowa's Darkest Skies & Their Importance

Tucked between Des Moines and Omaha, this region of the state has some of the darkest skies in Iowa. Whiterock Conservancy's dark skies are attributed to its distance from large cities and the local efforts to protect dark skies through Coon Rapids' dark sky-compliant lighting ordinance.

When you look up, the night sky no longer resembles the one humans observed for thousands of years. This is due in part to light pollution, which has reduced the visibility of stars and other celestial objects at night. The loss of dark skies is from an increased use of nighttime lighting. Yes, even your twinkle lights.

Too much light at night can affect both humans and nocturnal species. Birds, bats, and moths may experience altered behavior patterns of mating, migration, and searching for food. When wildlife becomes disturbed or disoriented by light, they are more likely to be preyed



Fortunately, light pollution is one of easiest forms of pollution to prevent and several methods can be easily implemented at home.

upon by other animals or hit by cars. Humans may even experience disruption in their circadian rhythm due to frequent exposure to nighttime light. The circadian rhythm regulates sleeping and eating patterns, hormone levels, core body temperature, brain wave activity, and even cell regeneration.

Protecting the night skies also preserves an important piece of shared human history. For eons humans have looked to the night skies for inspiration and guidance and created stories around the stars and planets. Today, the number of places in the world with truly dark skies continues to decrease. Fortunately, light pollution is one of easiest forms of pollution to prevent and several methods can be easily implemented at home.

**Help us protect our dark skies and reduce your impact when camping at Starfield.**

## Effects of Light Pollution

**Light pollution is excess use of nighttime lighting that can lead to negative outcomes like:**

- Inability to see the stars at night
- Disturbing native wildlife behavior patterns
- Disturbing human sleep and behavior patterns
- Invading privacy
- High glare lights can reduce nighttime vision and driving safety
- Wasted energy

## How You Can Reduce Your Impact

- Use only the wattage necessary
- Use light switches and motion detection lights to reduce the time lights are left on
- Use a cut-off hood, shade, or cap on light fixtures to prevent light from spreading horizontally or vertically, and position light fixtures strategically
- Reduce the brightness of light fixtures to decrease glare



# Volunteer with Whiterock Conservancy

Volunteerism with Whiterock Conservancy focuses on hands-on preservation and restoration of Whiterock's natural and historical areas, participation in ongoing construction and maintenance projects within the conservancy, including trails and along waterways, as well as fundraising and outreach opportunities.

Recently, a group of trail volunteers assisted with the reconstruction of the bridge along the Long Creek Trail. They managed to rebuild and anchor the bridge in less than a day! Volunteers work alongside conservation professionals, learn about the Iowa landscape, and participate in projects. People of all ages are invited to participate in a variety of activities and projects from trail work, prescribed burning, fundraising, office help, and more throughout the year.

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Scan to Volunteer

Scan for Volunteer Opportunities or email [volunteer@whiterockconservancy.org](mailto:volunteer@whiterockconservancy.org).

# Summer Equipment Rentals

Try out new recreational activities this summer with Whiterock's equipment rentals! Paddle down the Middle Raccoon River in a canoe or kayak, explore the trails by mountain bike, grab a fishing pole and head to one of the ponds within the conservancy, or take in the views at Whiterock in a 4-seater UTV.



Scan for Equipment Rental

For more information or to make a reservation contact: [GuestInfo@WhiterockConservancy.org](mailto:GuestInfo@WhiterockConservancy.org) or call (712)-790-8221 Ext. 5.

## Equipment Rental Fees:

### Canoes & Kayaks – Dependent on water levels

- First Boat: **\$50** | Additional Boats: **\$20**
- Includes Personal Floatation Devices, Paddles, & Shuttle Service
- Shuttle Services Depart: 9 a.m. & 1 p.m.

### Mountain Bikes

- **\$15/Day** | Includes Trail Pass & Helmet

### Fishing Equipment

- **\$10/Day** | Includes Poles, Tackle Boxes, & Lures

### 4-Seater UTV/ATV

- First Hour: **\$50** | Additional Hours: **\$10**



# Live at Whiterock for the Season

## Become a Volunteer Campground Host

Camp for free this season by becoming a Volunteer Campground Host at Whiterock Conservancy! Campground hosts must be available for the time period June 1 - October 15 and will serve as the "live-in" host at the campground.



Scan to Volunteer

For more information and to apply, please send your resume to [guestinfo@whiterockconservancy.org](mailto:guestinfo@whiterockconservancy.org).

### As a Host You Will Be Responsible For:

- Assisting campers by providing helpful information and answering questions.
- Explaining park rules and regulations to campers.
- Assuring campers register properly through the self-registration process.
- Contacting proper authorities in the event of an emergency.
- Assisting with events and projects as needed.
- Performing the cleaning of grounds and restrooms.



### Susan Hill, *continued from page 1*

Originally from Pennsylvania, Susan first began service with Green Iowa AmeriCorps in Okoboji, Iowa, where she spent the summer working at Lakeside Labs' summer camps. Susan now serves Green Iowa as a full-time AmeriCorps Member at Whiterock Conservancy.



Although her term at Whiterock ends later this summer, Susan is looking forward to the upcoming season, especially now that the prairie flowers are blooming! When Susan isn't leading a program, you can find her hiking the trails at Whiterock, reading, or baking in her free time.

Learn how you can become a Green Iowa AmeriCorps member at: [GreenIowaAmeriCorps.org](http://GreenIowaAmeriCorps.org).



### 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.



Scan to Donate

### Online

[WhiterockConservancy.org/donate](https://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

Contact our Development Office at  
**(712)-790-8221 ext. 3.**

## Upcoming Summer Programs

Join us at Whiterock for one of our many programs or events! More events will be added as the season continues. Stay up-to-date by following us on Facebook or visiting our online calendar:

**[WhiterockConservancy.org/event-calendar](https://WhiterockConservancy.org/event-calendar)**

- July 24 @ 2 p.m. | Slow Sunday Drive**
- July 30 @ 8:30 p.m. | July Star Party**
- August 7 @ 2 p.m. | Slow Sunday Drive**
- August 27 @ 7:30 p.m. | Iowa Star Party**

Starfield Campground,  
1523 140th St,  
Coon Rapids, IA 50058

Photo by: Joshua Woolfolk

