

GETTING THERE

The GrimesFarm Conservation Area is located just west of the city limits of Marshalltown. It lies on the west side of Highland Acres Road and on the north side of 233rd Street.

The Linn Creek Recreational Trail from Marshalltown to the GrimesFarm and Conservation Area was completed in 2005. This is now another way to access the GrimesFarm and Conservation Center, by bicycle or on foot. In the Spring of 2012, the Linn Creek Trail was connected with the Hwy. 330 Trail and the Heart of Iowa Trail at Rhodes. These trail segments are part of the American Discovery Trail

THE PAST

When Leonard and Mildred Grimes purchased their farm west of Marshalltown in 1964, they began the work to heal the then existing abuses to the land. Over the years soil erosion has been reduced by planting grasses, using no-till agriculture practices, establishing waterways, constructing terraces, building a farm pond, and planting thousands of trees. Eventually a “poor farm” was transformed into an excellent example of land that is productive, profitable, and beautiful.



Beginning in 1964, the area was used as an outdoor classroom for local 5th or 6th grade students. A day spent in this “classroom” was coordinated by the public school teachers assisted by guest instructors from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Marshall County Conservation Board. Together they have helped the students understand their relationship to soil, air, water, sunlight, and all living things. The students walked the trails into forest and prairie and explored the pond. They dug holes into the ground to examine topsoils and subsoils and learned about the many animals and plants living in the soil.

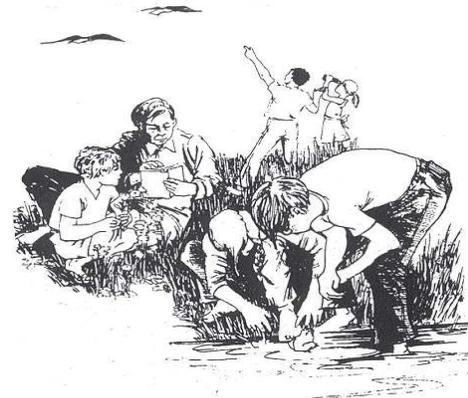
In 1992, Leonard and Mildred Grimes began donating parcels of 160 acres of land to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. A reserve life-estate retains use of most of the land and farm income for as long as either of them lives.

PRESENT & FUTURE

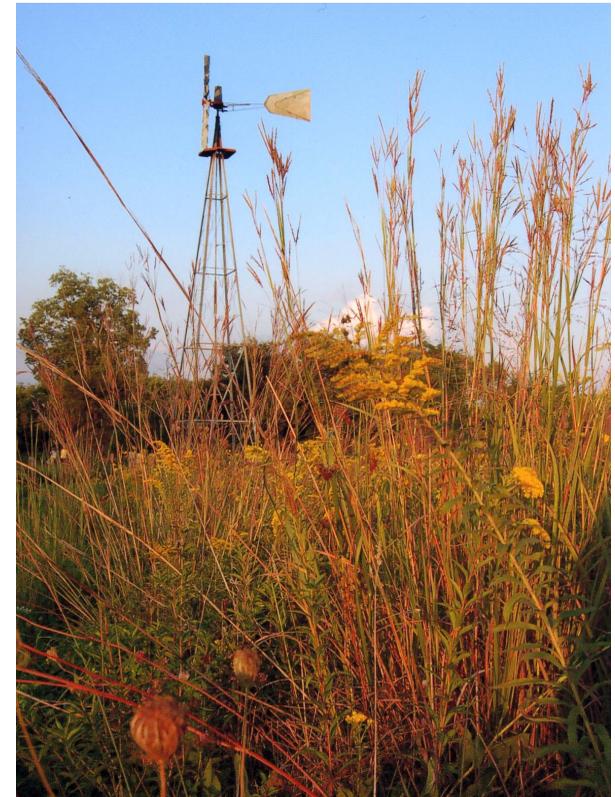
Using Resource Enhancement & Protection funds (REAP), grants, and donations from corporations, civic groups, and individuals, a Conservation Center was built at the GrimesFarm in 2003. The center provides support for environmental education, space for natural history exhibits, a classroom for indoor meetings and activities, and houses the Marshall County Conservation Board administrative offices. Today thousands of students in all grade levels enjoy this outdoor classroom. Displays will continue to evolve over the years.

Hiking trails provide access to the forests, wetlands, prairies, and crop fields. Public interpretive programs are scheduled periodically throughout the year.

Follow any trail of interest and refer to the enclosed map to learn how the GrimesFarm Conservation Area is being managed for forests, prairies, wetlands, and wildlife as well as modern agricultural production using no-till soil conserving practices. Renew your contact with nature and the outdoors as well as with Iowa’s greatest industry – agriculture – at the Grimes-Farm Conservation Area.



WELCOME TO THE GrimesFarm Conservation Area



**Marshall County
Conservation Board**
2359 233rd Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158
641/752-5490
Email: mccb@co.marshall.ia.us

CONSERVATION CENTER HOURS

Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. – Noon

Closed: Sundays, County Holidays



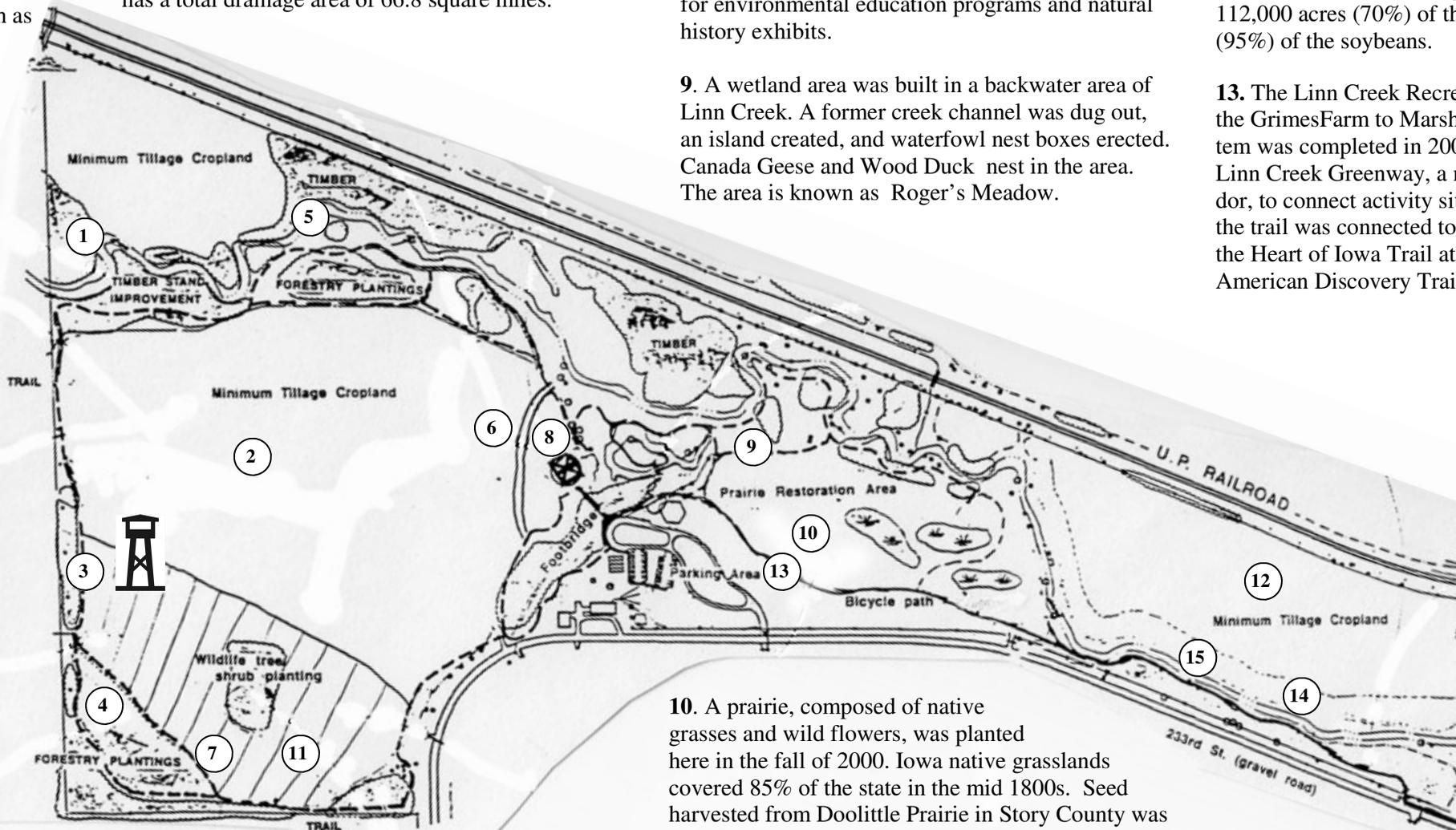
1. Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) work in the West End removed “weed trees” such as boxelder and replaced them with more desirable trees like walnut and oak.

2. Using minimum tillage practices, crop residue from previous years acts like a sponge to soak up water and provide additional ground cover to reduce erosion. Earthworm holes allow rain water to infiltrate through the soil. Minimum tillage reduces tractor passes through the field and therefore reduces costs and saves labor

3. The highest point of elevation on the GrimesFarm is about 1,010 feet above sea level. Here a person can view the rolling hills typical of the Southern Iowa Drift Plain. The 600,000 year old landscape was initially shaped by glaciers and subsequently by water and wind erosion to create a rolling, hilly topography. This is the site of the observation tower. The main viewing platform, large enough to hold groups of 12 – 15, stands 30 feet above ground level. The view to the east overlooks the Marshalltown skyline and the Linn Creek Corridor as it winds its way to the Iowa River.

4. Walnut trees are the main crop in this area. Interplanted with conifers, the faster growing pines are the “trainer” trees to force the walnuts to grow tall. Tubes are placed around trees to prevent damage from deer, rabbits, or squirrels and force the tree to grow out the top to reach sunlight. This area is called Martha’s Grove

5. Linn Creek, flowing through the farm from west to east at an elevation of about 900 feet above sea level, drains into the Iowa River on its way to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. The Linn Creek watershed begins in western Marshall County and has a total drainage area of 66.8 square miles.



6. In the spring of 2004, planting began on a model windbreak consisting of Ninebark, Nanking Cherry, and Arborvitae shrubs. Planting was completed in the spring of 2006.

7. Tree & shrub plantings in small areas unsuitable for agriculture create “islands” of diverse habitat for wildlife. Stop, look, and listen carefully to locate wildlife signs and sounds.

8. The Conservation Center, built in 2003, provides for MCCB offices and serves as a support facility for environmental education programs and natural history exhibits.

9. A wetland area was built in a backwater area of Linn Creek. A former creek channel was dug out, an island created, and waterfowl nest boxes erected. Canada Geese and Wood Duck nest in the area. The area is known as Roger’s Meadow.

10. A prairie, composed of native grasses and wild flowers, was planted here in the fall of 2000. Iowa native grasslands covered 85% of the state in the mid 1800s. Seed harvested from Doolittle Prairie in Story County was used in this reconstructed prairie and provides a glimpse of Iowa’s heritage.

11. Direct seeding, a process of planting thousands of tree seeds instead of individual small trees, was done in the fall of 2003. Natural competition for light, space, and water provides for self pruning and survival.

12. Corn and soybeans are the two main crops grown in the North Central United States and in Iowa. In Marshall County, 92% of its 351,000+ acres are used for agricultural crops, pasture, or hay. In 2005, the county’s farmers planted 160,000 acres of corn and 125,000 acres of soybeans. Conservation tillage methods were used on 112,000 acres (70%) of the corn and 118,750 acres (95%) of the soybeans.

13. The Linn Creek Recreational Trail connecting the GrimesFarm to Marshalltown’s bike trail system was completed in 2005. This trail uses the Linn Creek Greenway, a natural vegetation corridor, to connect activity sites. In the spring of 2012, the trail was connected to the Hwy. 330 trail and the Heart of Iowa Trail at Rhodes as part of the American Discovery Trail.

14. A forest ecosystem functions as a whole to provide wildlife habitat, hold the soil in place, and regenerate itself through seed production. Tree farming is the management of the forest resources to select for more desirable tree species such as walnut or oak. Trees along a creek help to improve water quality. The leaves improve air quality because they collect dust and absorb gases during photosynthesis. Trees also reduce noise

15. Plastic tubes placed around the trunk of new trees helps protect them from rabbits, beaver, and deer. It also forces the new tree to grow tall to reach the light.