

## HARTMAN RESERVE NATURE CENTER (HRNC)

### History

Hartman Reserve Nature Center is a special island of green located in Cedar Falls and Waterloo. Hartman Reserve has been maintained since the 1940's by the YMCA of Black Hawk County. The area was purchased and set aside as a natural area at that time by a group of local citizens under the leadership of John C. Hartman. Mr. Hartman was editor of the Waterloo Daily Courier and was well known for his interest in natural history.

Around 1950 the present area within the city limits of Cedar Falls was added to the Reserve. It was purchased by the Y from the Rownd Estate. An additional 11 acres south of the railroad tracks in the northwest corner were purchased in 1960. Total acreage was then 87 acres. Seven acres were purchased from the Y in 1966 by the Minnie Crippen Foundation as a site for a school for exceptional persons. (River Hills)

The camp facilities were constructed in the late 1950's. The YMCA used the area for various recreational programs including day and over-night camping. Due to rising maintenance costs, the YMCA ceased operating it as a camp in the early 1970's. In 1975 the decision was made to put the area up for sale.

There was concern on the part of the YMCA, the cities of Cedar Falls and Waterloo, the University of Northern Iowa, and the Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors that the land remain in its natural state.

Due to the beauty and unique character of the property, it had long been enjoyed by local citizens and used as a scientific study area by the University. It had also been used as a site for outdoor educational experiences by area schools. Furthermore, it had the potential to fill the need for a nature center near the metropolitan area, as indicated in the 1974 Parks and Open Spaces Plan Update for Black Hawk County.

In the interest of preserving this valuable remnant of the once extensive Cedar River bluff forest and establishing an environmental education center, the Black Hawk County Conservation Board purchased the property from the YMCA. Acquisition of Hartman Reserve Nature Center took place in March of 1976.

At one point, the quality of Hartman Reserve was threatened by an alternate route for Intercity Freeway 380. The efforts of many concerned citizens and the importance of the land as an undisturbed natural area, influenced the decision to choose another route for the Intercity Freeway.

Since 1976, the building housing the Interpretive Center and other buildings on the property have been renovated and the trail system has been improved to provide a pleasant setting for environmental education and quiet recreational pursuits.

### Rules and Hours

The atmosphere here is different from that of our other county parks and accesses. In keeping with this serene atmosphere we encourage activities which bring you closer to your environment such as walking, hiking, bird watching, photography, astronomy, cross-country skiing, etc. Because this area is a biological reserve, the following rules must be observed. No camping; no hunting; no motorized vehicles; no horses; no bicycles; no alcohol. Do not pick or take anything from the forest. However, you can pick things up and look at them but you must put them back when you are done. STAY ON THE TRAILS! There are no designated picnic areas, but people may sit down and eat anywhere.

The center and trails are open in all seasons to the general public. The hours at the Center are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays and 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekends. The trails are open any time from sunup to sundown. Black Hawk County Conservation Board employs two full-time naturalists, one of whom lives in the house at Hartman Reserve.

To add to the enjoyment and understanding of HRNC, we sponsor programs free of charge to the public. (The programs are listed in another section of the guidebook.) A schedule of these programs is published quarterly in The Red Cedar, the Black Hawk County Conservation Board newsletter. The Center staff welcomes invitations to speak to community organizations about the Reserve and its programs.

"What has gone wrong, probably, is that we have failed to see ourselves as part of a large and invivisible whole. For too long we have based our lives on a primitive feeling that man's "god-given" role was to have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. We have failed to understand that the earth does not belong to us, but we to the earth."

Rolf Edberg