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Subject Press Release

From: Friends of Blackburn State Park

Sharon Nyquist, sharon.nyquist@outlook.com

32 Volunteers at Blackburn State Park



Ava Forney and her dad, Luke Forney, prepare to place cages around the new plum trees.



Corey Madison holds a stake for a new plum tree as Ken Forney drives it with the tractor.

Thirty-two volunteers made a success of Volunteer Day at Blackburn State Park, northeast of Thurman, on September 24th. The event, hosted by the Friends of Blackburn State Park, completed three improvement projects under the direction of park personnel from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).



Glenn Pollack, Bill Blackburn, Jonathan Lloyd, and Gary Jones pause for a quick break.

Volunteers planted and caged 13 new wild plum trees and reset four others, all near the park entrance. The trees will not only bear fruit but also provide showy white blossoms in springtime against a background of pink blooming redbud trees. Wild plums flourished in the area in pioneer days, which gave rise to Thurman's original name: Plum Hollow, and to the name of Plum Creek, which flows through it. The new trees were funded

by the Friends of the Park and the Grace Blackburn Memorial Fund.

Volunteers also stacked firewood and repaired the firepit, adding a new ring to safely contain burning wood and protect outside stonework. Other workers stained wooden picnic tables. After the event concluded, volunteers gathered in the gazebo for refreshments and conversation.



Addie Madison stains a picnic table.



Cheryl Jones, Bonnie Pierce and Angie Blackburn work on the firepit.

The Friends group will be organizing a Student Earth Day at the park on April 17 and another Volunteer Day late next September. Those who would like to help should contact Sharon Nyquist (sharon.nyquist@outlook.com) or other representatives of the Friends group listed on the park's website.

Participating volunteers were Mike and Angie Blackburn; Greg and Bonnie Pierce; Kevin and Valeri Albertson; Lorraine Zanders; Lorna Blackburn; Riley Nebel, Wyatt, Addie, and Ashton Madison; Mike and Holly Galea; Cheryl Jones; Jonathan Lloyd; Jennifer Lutrell; Gary Jones; Jon and Mary Howery; John Howery; Ken and Regina Forney; Glenn Pollock; Beth Blackburn; Corey and Terra Madison; Luke and Ava Forney; Bill and Sara Blackburn; and Sharon Nyquist. Sarah Lammers, DNR Technician, provided helpful supervision and guidance.

Blackburn State Park, the state's newest park, is located at 1291 Cemetery Road northeast of Thurman, IA.

Tax-deductible donations may be made to the Friends group by Venmo (scan QR Code), or online at the park's website (Google "Blackburn State Park-Golden Hills"), or by check payable to "Friends of Blackburn State Park" and sent to Glenwood State Bank, Tabor Branch, 711 Main St., Tabor, IA 51653.



Beth Blackburn and Regina Forney move wood for future firepit use.



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