



October 10, 2022

Subject: Press Release

From: Friends of Blackburn State Park

## Volunteers Weekend at Blackburn State Park

Taking a cue from Iowa State Parks, which set Saturday, September 24, as its annual statewide Volunteer Day, The Friends of Blackburn State Park collaborated with local Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) personnel to host Volunteer Weekend at the park in the loess hills northeast of Thurman, IA, September 24-25. Volunteers collected and hauled away the



L to R: Matt Moles, Ken Forney and Gary Jones



Mike Younts

debris from DNR's recent demolition of the old, popular handicapped-accessible observation deck, clearing the area for the upcoming construction of the new stronger one. The new deck is being funded in part from a \$40,000 grant from the Gilchrist Foundation.

The volunteers also painted parts of the gazebo-pavilion picnic shelter, a few wooden picnic tables, and new pipe fencing. Over a dozen volunteers joined the effort, guided by park manager Matt Moles and aided by his assistants, Sarah Lammers and Luke Calfee. The volunteers included Ken Forney, Mike Younts, Glenn Pollock, Cheryl Jones, Zack Jones, Gary Jones, Valeri Albertsen, Beth Blackburn, Bill Blackburn, John and Mary Howery,



Beth Blackburn



Greg Pierce and Cheryl Jones



Valeri Albertsen and Cheryl Jones



and Greg and Bonnie Pierce. A hot-dog roast followed Saturday's efforts.

The Friends group wants to make this an annual affair, so if you're interested, please contact Friends vice presidents Ken Forney (712.313.0315, [reforney@hotmail.com](mailto:reforney@hotmail.com)) or Mike Younts (402.209.7292, [myounts@fmtabor.org](mailto:myounts@fmtabor.org)).

See the [Blackburn State Park - GOLDEN HILLS RC&D \(goldenhillsrcd.org\)](http://goldenhillsrcd.org) website for more information about the park and the Friends group. The site also contains information on how to make your year-end, tax-deductible contributions to help support future Volunteer Weekends in September, and high-school Earth Day events in April.