

NE Iowa Transitions, Part 1: Passing the Torch

By Jeff Goerndt

A great legacy recently came to an end at Yellow River State Forest as long time Area Forester, Bob Honeywell, hung up his field vest and officially retired on May 22, 2014. Honeywell was the Area Forester at Yellow River State Forest for more than 25 years.

Honeywell cared deeply about the forest resource and recognized the need for better forest management to improve the health and vigor of the forest. He played a pivotal role in developing a forest management plan for Yellow River State Forest. His work included harvesting and regenerating timber, improving timber stands through thinning, converting old agricultural fields to forest, and most recently battling invasive species. Honeywell is also known for recognizing the importance of the forest resource for migratory bird habitat, and played an important role in Yellow River State Forest being recognized as a Globally Significant Bird Conservation Area in 2014.

On June 6, 2014, Bruce Blair became the new Area Forester at Yellow River State Forest. Blair transferred from Elkader, where he was a District Forester for the past 20 years, providing forestry technical assistance to private landowners. Prior to that, he worked at the Montrose State Forest Nursery for 2 years. Blair will now be taking over the management of nearly 9,000 acres of state land, and is extremely excited for his new role.

“Robert Honeywell, the Technicians, and the Park Ranger have all been doing a great job managing this wonderful Iowa resource. Now, it is my turn to be excited and feel the privilege of having the opportunity of becoming one more in the long line of stewards of this Iowa treasure,” said Blair.

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