



Dylan Kurt • Staff Photo

Located just east of Colesburg, Ram Hollow Wildlife Management Area offers the public a place to hunt, recreate and just enjoy nature.

## 20 acres of forest now permanently protected

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Fans of the outdoors will soon have a little more room to romp around as the Iowa DNR has acquired a 20-acre addition to a Dubuque County park.

Curt Kemmerer, an Iowa DNR wildlife biologist, has announced that a successful partnership with the Dubuque County Conservation Society and the Iowa Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation has led to the DNR being able to permanently protect forested land that connects to the existing approximately 800-acre Ram Hollow Wildlife Management Area.

The family that previously owned the property wanted to see it conserved for the enjoyment of future generations. The Conserva-

tion Society was able to take possession of the land and in turn sold it to the DNR after making a generous donation on the selling price.

Under DNR ownership, the site will be managed for wildlife and open to public recreation. However, Kemmerer said it is not going to change into a more commercialized area.

"It is going to be classified as a wildlife management area," Kemmerer said of the new land. "Definitely not a park — that's something good to let people know."

Kemmerer's definition of "park" describes a developed area, something with camping facilities, established trails and the like.

"The recreation is limited to what we call wildlife dependent — meaning hunting, trapping, bird watching," he said. "It's

not going to be open to four-wheelers or horses or snowmobiles or anything like that. It's more primitive recreation — to just go out and hike and enjoy the wildlife."

The only development the DNR will typically do at a wildlife management area is a parking lot, and while Ram Hollow has a parking area, this new swath of land is not butting up against a road so you'll have to trek through the park to get to it.

A great resource for familiarizing yourself with a wildlife management area is the Iowa Hunting Atlas, an interactive map that can be found on the DNR's website.

Kemmerer also stressed that the acquisition of these 20 acres would not have been possible without help from these two conservation groups.

"Both have been great partners, they've worked with the DNR on different projects over many years," he said. "Some of these projects wouldn't happen without these partners."

While the Turkey Federation contributed grant funds to aid in the purchase, Kemmerer said he feels like the Dubuque County Conservation Society deserves the bulk of the credit on this one, being the leader in trying to protect natural resources within the county.

"The conservation ethic and partnership demonstrated by these two groups made this great project possible," he said. "Thanks to them, more of our fragile natural landscape will be forever protected and available for the enjoyment of current and future generations of Iowans."