



The Heron

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The 2019 Fall Hawk Watch at Eagle Point Park: A Memorable Day for Migrating Raptors and a First State Record

by Kelly J. McKay and Mark A. Roberts



The Clinton County Conservation Board decided to hold its Second Annual Fall Raptor Migration Watch at Eagle Point Park in Clinton, Iowa on September 28, 2019. Once again, we chose this date to coincide with the peak period of broad-winged hawk migration through the Upper Midwest, when large numbers of these raptors can be observed in migratory flocks called “kettles.” This site is very good for observing a variety of migrating raptors, since it is located on top of the high bluffs overlooking the Upper Mississippi at the southern extent of the “driftless area” of Iowa. Many raptors use the river as a migration corridor, where thermals generated on top of the bluffs and updrafts of wind along the bluffs allow large numbers of these predators to migrate while conserving as much energy as possible.

The observation site, which was the northern-most overlook at Eagle Point Park, was staffed from 8:AM to 7 PM. The entire day was marked by overcast skies, chilly temperatures, gusty winds out of the northeast and brief periods of misty drizzle. In other words, good conditions for viewing migrating raptors! Although the overcast sky prevented thermals from developing, the strong northeast winds produced powerful updrafts on the Iowa bluff face, allowing substantial numbers of migratory raptors to quickly race by our observation site through the day.

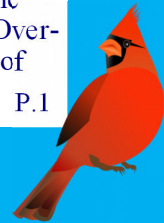
However, the less than comfortable weather conditions suppressed public participation. Only 39 individuals

stopped by during the event, 55% fewer than last year. The brave souls who did show up however, were treated to a good day of raptor migration, as well as many other species. We observed 13 species of raptors (10 species last year) and 474 individual birds (172 birds last year). These included: 73 turkey vultures, a noteworthy 19 osprey, 1 northern harrier, 15 sharp-shinned hawks, 2 Cooper’s hawks, 40 bald eagles, 2 red-shouldered hawks, 272 broad-winged hawks, 3 red-tailed hawks, 1 barred Owl, 2 American kestrels and 6 merlins. Additionally, we had an amazing number of 38 peregrine falcons!

Besides raptors, we recorded an impressive number of total birds for the day (82 species). Among these, some of the more noteworthy observations included: 32 wood ducks, 13 northern pintail, a very early single female common goldeneye, 240 chimney swifts, 6 caspian terns, 764 double-crested cormorants, 295 American white pelicans, 12 red-eyed vireos, 41 blue jays, 2 winter wrens, 20 gray catbirds, 15 pine siskins, 70 American goldfinches, 25 white-throated sparrows, and 35 northern cardinals.



However, the “bird of the day” was most definitely an immature female Kirtland’s warbler found early in the morning at Soaring Eagle Nature Center. This represented the first state record in Iowa for this federally-listed bird! Overall, this was a great day of birding and hopefully more of you will take advantage of this program next year. P.1





Do-Do-Do, Lookin' Out My Backdoor

by Mark Roberts, Interpretive Naturalist

Eden Valley Nature Center



In the last issue of "The Heron" I wrote an article looking back into my own history here with Clinton County Conservation. As I began that article, Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Lookin' Out My Backdoor" was playing, inspiring the title for the retrospective article. I have decided to make a series of my top eleven "Greatest Hits." It was supposed to be ten, but I couldn't decide which to leave out:)

See Fall 2019 for...

11. River Clean-ups, 10. Nature Center Partnerships.

9. Eden Valley Nature Center Reinvention. When I started in 1992 the Nature Center at Eden Valley had been open for 14 years and had not had a cosmetic update since the 1970's. The room's style was barn board and burlap walls with cubicle display boards. It also had a hideous goldenrod colored carpet and a yellowed, stained tile ceiling complete with shotgun pellet holes from when the front window had been shot out. The Nature Center had no furnace and no air conditioning, just a soot-stained spot on the carpet and a hole in the ceiling where a wood stove once had been.

We were just getting the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center up and running with Scott County Conservation at the time and really had our plate full with that gargantuan effort. I was told Eden Valley was not a priority and it would need to stay in its current condition for the foreseeable future. Argh! I did my best to spruce the place up "design on a dime" style, but it still was pretty ugly.

In 1996 something drastically changed, Chip Brown became Park Ranger at Eden Valley. He was full of can-do and don't-take-no-for-an-answer attitude. The previous Ranger and I were told "no" on upgrading the Center but Chip bulled forward, dragging me along with him. The first thing to go was the old carpet and ceiling. Chip put up a beautiful wood ceiling that still looks great. Over the next few years every single display, every single wall, every single idea, was changed. We changed the entire concept of the center from a set of individual learning stations to a "habitat-is-the-key" concept for the center. We were both active in Pheasants Forever and knew that to have healthy, diverse wildlife populations, you need good habitat.

The biggest thing to change was the attitude about the Center, from a forgotten relic, to an asset to be proud of. It still is evolving today with the expansion of the Center with new modern restrooms and a classroom/community hall. We are working on it diligently for an opening in this calendar year. I give Chip the lion's share of the credit and I am just happy to have been involved.

8. Hunter Safety Camp. Back in 2001, Loren and Ellen Zaruba and I sat in their kitchen and had a frank discussion about what was right and what was wrong with Hunter Safety Education in Clinton County. The Zarubas are the Chief Hunter's Education Instructors for Clinton County and I am the former Chief Instructor for Webster County. As we hashed over what we were doing, we realized nothing was wrong with the current program consisting of a

evening classroom plus an all day event with live firing.

What we agreed was missing was the next level. How could we go beyond the basics to exposing new hunters to specialty hunting, and teach special skills? Whereas the traditional class featured firing muzzleloader, shotguns, .22 rifles and archery we wanted to add tree stand safety, waterfowl and raccoon hunting, dog training, predator calling, map & compass, GPS, game preparation, first aid and more. What we needed to add to all of those classes, was more time, more money and more volunteers. We decided to create a 46-hour immersive event for kids aged 11-15.

The participants arrived on Friday evening and stayed over in the Wapsi Center's new dormitories until Sunday evening. This gave us the time to pack the topics into a marathon schedule. We brought in the best instructors for each topic available. 40 students would pass through a staggering 26 sessions in small groups over the weekend and earn their Hunter Safety Certification along the way.

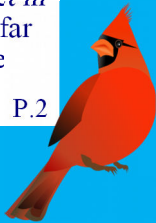
We enlisted parents of the participants as overnight chaperones and pulled in staff from both Conservation Boards. We also had to provide meals and buy extra supplies for the event, that's where our sponsors stepped in. *Clinton County Pheasants Forever, Clinton County Whitetails Unlimited & Grand Mound Sportsmen's Club* provided money for supplies and meals. The GM Sportsmen even cooked!

The event was recognized in 2003 with the *Chris Holt Youth Environmental Education Award* from the *Iowa Association of naturalists* and the *Iowa Conservation Education Coalition* as the state's best conservation education program for youth. We continued with the program for 14 years until Clinton County Conservation bowed out of the Wapsi River Center as the new Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center really took off.



Dan Mullin teaches Sporting Clays and Trap Shooting.

It lay dormant for a few years until Naturalist Jessica Steines picked up the idea and, along with the Zarubas, re-booted it into a two-day event with no overnight component, based at Rock Creek. It is pared down a bit but still has some great extras that students just can't get in a standard class. As far as I'm concerned the legacy lives on!





Voyage of the Virginia

by Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretive Naturalist

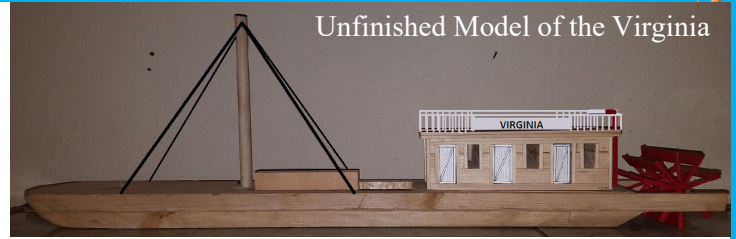
This story comes from the pages of “Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi,” the Minnesota Historical Societies “The Virginia, the Clermont of the Upper Mississippi” and “Annals of Iowa, The Eastern Border of Iowa in 1823”.

A St. Louis (A) crowd gathered around the *Virginia* on a crisp April 23rd, 1823 including Governor William Clark. The steamboat built in 1819 at Wheeling, VA was 118-ft. long, 18-ft. 10-in. wide with a 62-in. hull depth. Of her owners James Pemberton and Capt. Redick McKee were aboard along with the Sauk Chief Great Eagle, a family from Kentucky, a female missionary, Maj Lawrence Taliaferro, J. C. Beltrami and her crew. She also carried firewood for her boiler and supplies for Ft Snelling being built above the confluence of the Mississippi and St Peter (MN) rivers. Clark had presented the Chief with a coat, encouraging him to experience a trip aboard the *Virginia*. As the craft backed into the current the Chief shed the coat and stood proud with his sons as his people followed on the Illinois shore.

The current was strong approaching the Missouri river on April 24th. They crossed its waters into the current of the Upper Mississippi and passed a Sauk village at “Portage de Sioux” (B) and the rock columns of “Piasa Bluff” before rounding the “Great Bend” (C) passing Clarksville (D) and landing briefly at the village of Louisiana. Forested islands and floodplains closed with distant prairie and oak savannas seen at times. On May 6th while “wooding up” (fueling) Beltrami (E) went exploring and was left behind. Firing his rifle he rushed hopelessly along the shore. Around the bend the ship struck a sand bar. Great Eagle lost confidence in the pilot and, badly irritated, he and his sons jumped overboard and swam to shore. It was then that Beltrami’s absence was realized and a canoe was sent to his rescue.

On May 7th they arrived at Ft Edwards (F). Great Eagle was already there and came on board to collect his things. Beltrami bargained with him for a scalp that hung from the Chief’s tomahawk and the passengers were invited to his village. Along the way Beltrami shot a speckled king snake (now endangered) and became an honored celebrity. Returning to the boat they were soon headed up the Des Moines Rapids. The boat struck a rock and was forced to return to the Ft. The damage was slight and the boat was lightened. On May 8th it passed all 21 miles of rapids and the ruins of Ft Madison destroyed in the War of 1812.

May 10th they spotted Ft Armstrong (G) at Rock Island and at the Rock rivers mouth stood an encampment of the Fox Nation. Across the river was a round hill with gardens cultivated by the Fort. Cannon and gun fire saluted their arrival. While the boat prepared for the Rock Island rapids Beltrami visited the village, enjoyed marksmanship contests, sampled bear jerky “more tasty than smoked ham” and a



Unfinished Model of the Virginia

root called “pokinota.” He witnessed a ceremonial dance and ritual of purification, but was kept at a distance.

On May 11th, aided by Colonel Davenport’s steersman, they attacked the 16 mile rapids. Though stronger than the Des Moines rapids, the high river level made passage easier. Still they were snagged on a rock for 2 days before freed by rising water. The boat rested near present day Le Claire, IA. Later they passed another Fox village (Princeton) and the Wapsipinicon and Maquoketa rivers. After crossing to the Fever river and Galena country the Kentuckians disembarked along with the lady missionary.

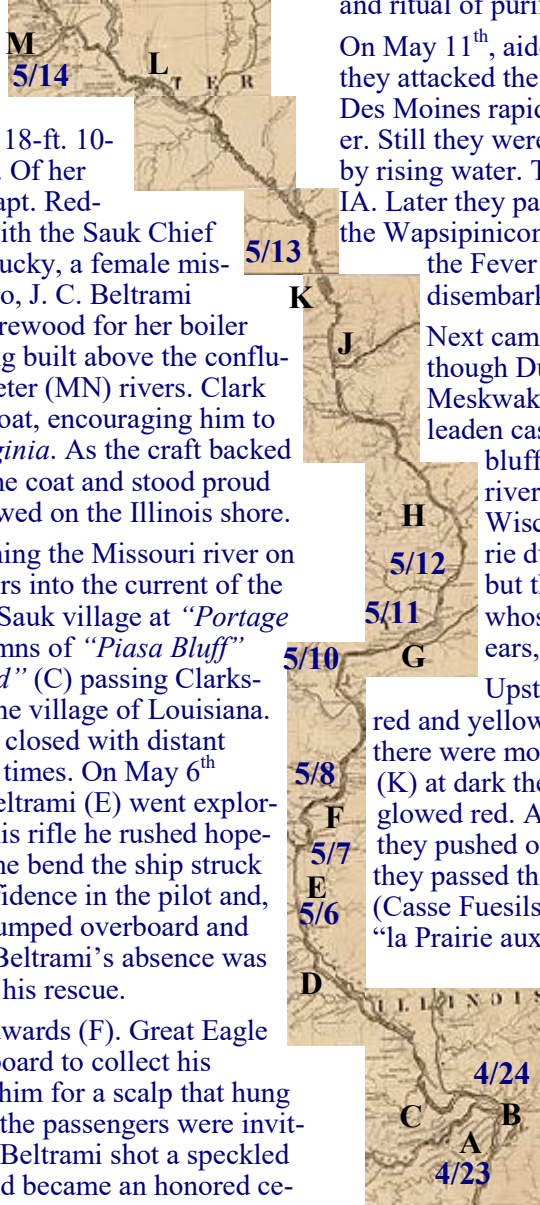
Next came Dubuque’s mines (H), active since 1788 though Dubuque had passed away in 1810. The Meskwaki miners honored him and placed him in a leaden casket inside a wooden mausoleum on a high bluff. The voyage continued through the steep river valley past the mouths of the Turkey and Wisconsin rivers. At Ft Crawford (J) and Prairie du Chien the common language was French but the population was largely Winnebago whose Chief Mai-Poek, wore a necklace of ears, noses and scalps from white opponents.

Upstream they passed a bluff that was painted red and yellow by the natives. The hills fell back and there were more islands. Reaching the Upper Iowa river (K) at dark they landed, but in the distance the sky glowed red. A forest fire lit the sky and for the first time they pushed on through the night. NW winds howled as they passed the Racine (Root) river and Broken Musket (Casse Fuesils) battle ground again in bluff county. At “la Prairie aux Ailes” the Sioux Chief, Wabasha visited.

He was impressed with the engine and offered a pipe. The boat passed the mouths of the Buffalo and Chippewa rivers and entered Lake Pepin (L). A storm blew up and they struggled to a safe landing. At Mt Grange (Barn Bluff) another Sioux village was encountered, and its chief, and leading warriors, came aboard and produced another peace pipe.

The Cannon and St Croix rivers were passed, and they came upon the village of Little Crow.

On May 14th, 1823 the *Virginia* pulled out of the Mississippi and into the St Peter (Minnesota) river (M) landing at the base of the bluff where Ft Snelling would be built. Their trip of 729 miles, over 20 days, after stopping by night and to cut fuel, striking 5 sand bars, being turned back by, and once stuck in, rapids was now over. She would make 2 more trips in 1823 to Fts Crawford and Snelling. Her last voyage left her impaled on a snag near present day Prairieville MO. On September 19, 1823. She may rest there still.





Winter's Activities

Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing ~ *As weather conditions allow, we will try to schedule some quickie events. Write cjacobsen@clintoncounty-ia.gov and place yourself on our "Adventurers" list. You will receive a short message whenever last-minute snow events are planned.*

Christmas Tree-cycling ~ **Killdeer Recreation Area** ~ *Put your old tree to good use. Drop them off and we will sink them for fish habitat! No wire or flocked trees please.*

Mississippi Valley Sportsmen Banquet ~ Check www.mississippivalleysportsmen.com for banquet updates.

Hunter Education Course ~ **Wapsi Valley Ikes, DeWitt** ~ *Check for a date at <http://register-ed.com/programs/iowa>, required sign-up.*

Winter Rates ~ **Effective thru March 31st** ~ **Eden Valley Camping** ~ \$10, any site ~ **Rock Creek Camping** ~ \$10 primitive or \$15 electric site ~ **Community Hall, Rock Creek** ~ \$250 per day ~ **Pintail Cabin, Rock Creek** ~ \$100 per night ~ **Cabin at Camp Miss-Elk-Ton** ~ \$100 per night

January

1st ~ New Years Day ~ **Eco Tourism Center Closed**

2nd ~ Animals Into Winter ~ **1 PM** ~ **Eco Center, Rock Creek** ~ Its winter and our wildlife have found ways to cope, migration, hibernation, adapt or die! Let's explore these options closer while meeting an Iowa animal who braves the frigid life all winter long, the opossum!

4th ~ 36th Annual Bald Eagle Watch ~ **9 AM-2 PM** - **Clinton Community College, 1000 Lincoln Blvd.** ~ Buses to eagle watching at Lock & Dam 13 3 miles north of Fulton, IL. runs from 8:30 AM till 1PM. Programs, some featuring live birds of prey, begin at 10 AM. Also enjoy the exhibits, door prizes, food and drinks.

7th ~ Animal Encounter ~ **11 AM** ~ **Rock Creek** ~ Kids meet a different animal each week.

7th ~ Open Range ~ **Archery** ~ **4-6 PM** ~ **Rock Creek** ~ Our range in the lower level of the Eco Center and will be open to public arriving by 6 PM. Our range master will provide safe and practical instruction through the use our equipment. An Adult must accompany children.

9th ~ Color Contest ~ **11 AM** ~ **Rock Creek** ~ We will have a different color page for kids each day. Kids will get a small prize and the pages will be displayed for the week!

10th ~ All About Owls! ~ **10 AM** ~ **Discovery Center, Clinton** ~ A group of owls is called a parliament. There will be a live owl and real owl parts for your young scientist to examine. We'll also have a story, craft and snack! Admission is free to this County Conservation event!

11th ~ Winter Open House ~ **10 AM** ~ **Eden Valley Nature Center** ~ Celebrate Winter at Eden Valley! The Center will be open from till 1 PM with our live animals encounters plus you can tour the new addition, have a cookie, hot cocoa and use our snowshoes and x-country skis. At 1 PM the naturalist will lead a birding hike along the creek.

14th ~ Animal Encounter ~ **11 AM** ~ **Rock Creek**

14th ~ Open Range ~ **Air Rifles** ~ **4-6 PM** ~ **Rock Creek** ~ Our range in the lower level of the Eco Center is open to

the public. The event will include safety and practical instruction through the use our equipment and lead by our range master. Children must be accompanied by an adult. If you are there by 6 PM we'll keep shooting!

16th ~ Movie & Popcorn ~ **10:30 AM** **Rock Creek** ~ Bring the kids in for a full screen movie and popcorn!

18th ~ Winter Sports Clinic ~ **10 AM** ~ **Emma Young Park, Clinton** ~ No fee or reservations, just come for some fun with your clothes layered to fit the weather and we'll put you in a pair of x-country skis or snowshoes. We have boots kids size 13 and up available till 12PM.

18th ~ Winter Sports Clinic ~ **2:30 PM** ~ **Westbrook Park** ~ Try out our cross country skiing and/or snowshoe equipment. We have a sizes from kids 13 and up available until 3PM. Adults must be accompany children.

20th ~ Eco Center ~ **Closed for Martin Luther King Day.**

21st ~ Animal Encounter ~ **11 AM** ~ **Rock Creek**

21st ~ Build an Ice Fishing Rod ~ **5 PM** ~ **Community Room/Rock Creek** ~ Local rod builder, Garry Land will help you build your very own, unique ice fishing rod for only \$30! It will have to cure and be picked up at a later date. Go to www.mycountyparks.com to register.

21st ~ Basket Making Class ~ **6PM-9PM** ~ **Store/Rock Creek** ~ Tracy Welch, of Basket Werks in Long Grove, is teaching this beginners course. You'll weave your own heart shaped basket, just in time for Valentine's Day. All materials provided at just \$35/person. Food will be available. Register at www.mycountyparks.com

23rd ~ Old Fashioned Toys ~ **10:30 AM** ~ **Rock Creek** ~ Check out our pioneer and old time games and puzzles!

23rd ~ Painting Class with "Fresh Paint" ~ **6-8 PM** ~ **\$35** ~ **Rock Creek** ~ Personalize your camper scene! with step-by-step painting instructions. All materials supplied! Register at www.mycountyparks.com.

The café's open & offering a homemade soup/sandwich special. Dine with us!



24th ~ Live Birds of Prey ~ **1 PM** ~ **Clinton YWCA** ~ Join our naturalist encounter with a Live Red-tailed Hawk and Barred Owl. We will also discuss Bald Eagles.

25th ~ Winter Open House ~ **10 AM** ~ **Eden Valley Nature Center** ~ See earlier description.

25th ~ Clinton Area Delta Waterfowl Banquet ~ **5 PM** ~ **Rock Creek** ~ Call Nic Hampton at 319-750-4565.

25th ~ Open House, Jens-Wendt Observatory ~ **6 PM** ~ **Sherman Park, north entrance** ~ Quad Cities Astronomical Society's monthly gathering is open to all. Two large scopes will show details otherwise impossible to see locally. Check cancelations before you go at www.qcastro.org.

28th ~ Open Range ~ **Air Rifles** ~ **4-6 PM** ~ **Rock Creek**





31st ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Normally we meet every 4th Tuesday of the month but we need to get ready for the Family Winter Festival the next day. We'd be glad to have your help!

February

1st ~ Winter Family Festival ~ 9 AM-2 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Come celebrate the good things about winter with free inside and outside activities! Children must be accompanied by an adult. Outdoor activities are weather dependent.

- **9 AM - Starlab** ~ Come explore the night sky inside and during the day with this portable planetarium!
- **9 AM - Noon ~ Ice Fishing** ~ We have all the gear, come see if you have the knack for ice fishing.
- **10 AM-Noon ~ Snowshoeing and cross country skiing** ~ A naturalist will be there for individual instruction.
- **10 AM-2 PM ~ Inside Games, tattoos and crafts.**
- **11 AM ~ A Nature Story** ~ A naturalist will use props and a live red-tailed to make the story come to life, followed by a scavenger hunt with prizes for finding all the objects!
- **Noon ~ Animals in Winter** ~ This presentation features live animals and animal artifacts to demonstrate their usefulness in surviving the frigid winter outdoors!
- **1 PM ~ Riverside Jam** ~ Live music by local talent will have listeners, tapping toes, singing and dancing!

2nd ~ Ground Hog's Day at Sherman Park~ 2PM ~ Sherman Park, north entrance, 2740 160th Ave. Calamus ~ Discover the wonders of the winter woods. Hike, snowshoe, ski or skate to your hearts desire. Our winter sports equipment will be available if conditions are good and a naturalist lead a night hike after dark. Warming fires will be lit inside and out with refreshments and games available in the Sherman House basement. No registration, just show up and bring a sled if you like.

3rd ~ STARLAB ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ We will have the inflatable dome set up for an evening of indoor education of the stars, constellations and their relationship to us.

4th ~ Animal Encounter ~ 11 AM ~ Rock Creek

4th ~ Open Range ~ Archery ~ 4-6 PM ~ Rock Creek

5th ~ A Nature Story ~ 1 PM ~ Eco Center, Rock Creek ~ It's time for some hide-n-seek! Animals have many ways to hide in nature through different forms of camouflage. This FREE kid-friendly program gives children a closer look at these forms investigating with live animals and a story. Adults must accompany children.

14th - 17th ~ The 23rd Annual Great Backyard Bird Count ~ . It's a free, easy and engages all ages. Participants count birds for at least 15 minutes at least one day of the event from their own backyard or anywhere and report sightings



online at birdcount.org. Help researchers from Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about birds, how to protect them and the environment we share. More than 160,000 participated creating the largest snapshot ever. Visit birdcount.org for more info

15th ~ Clinton Chapter Banquet Whitetails Unlimited Banquet ~ 5 PM ~ Vista Grande, Clinton ~ This Grass-roots Program provides grants to projects and activities. Nationally spending \$94 million to date thanks to members & supporters! For tickets call Jeff Beckwith at 249-7358.

18th ~ Animal Encounter ~ 11 AM ~ Rock Creek

18th ~ Open Range ~ Air Rifles ~ 4-6 PM ~ Rock Creek

18th ~ The Solar System ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ We will project a full, 12-ft. wide screen, view of our solar system visiting all 8 planets and several moons.

19th ~ Animals Into Winter ~ 2:15 PM ~ Camanche Library ~ Winter is in full swing and our wildlife have found ways to cope with the cold temperatures. Migrate, hibernation, adapt or die! Let's explore closer while meeting an animal who braves the cold all winter long, the opossum!

21st ~ Wake-up Animals! ~ 10 AM ~ Discovery Center, Clinton ~ Soon animals will be waking up from their long winters nap to forage once again. There will be live animals and animal artifacts for your young scientist to examine. There will also be a story, craft and snack! Admission is free to the Clinton County Conservation event!

21st ~ Color Contest ~ 11 AM ~ Rock Creek Store

22nd ~ Open House, Jens-Wendt Observatory ~ 6 PM ~ Sherman Park, north entrance ~ Amateur astronomers will use large telescopes to provide you a glimpse of the heavens. Check for event confirmation before going at www.qcastro.org.

23rd ~ Youth Hunter Education Challenge Tryouts ~ 1 PM ~ Wapsi Valley Ikes, DeWitt ~ YHEC is a weekend-long event for kids age 11-18 taking place on June 8th at Rock Creek! Youth compete in 8 events, learn about the outdoors and have fun with others. The event allows both kids and parents to come and experience a YHEC practice. Call Loren @ 357-4866.

25th ~ Animal Encounter ~ 11 AM ~ Rock Creek

25th ~ Open Range ~ Archery ~ 4-6 PM ~ Rock Creek

25th ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Our meetings are the 4th Tuesday of every month. We will be prepping for our annual Trivia Night on Saturday, February 29th. We'd be glad to have your help!

28th ~ Movie & Popcorn ~ 10:30 AM Rock Creek ~ This is a full screen movie for the kiddos complete with popcorn! Try lunch at our café after the show.

29th ~ Clinton County Ducks Unlimited ~ 5 PM ~ Rastrelli's, Clinton ~ Contact Ruth Marsh at 212-8133.

29th ~ Trivia Night ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ It's fun and supports *Friends of Rock Creek* (FORC) and *Fishing Has No Boundaries* (FHNB). FORC volunteers for and promotes events at the park while FHNB hosts an annual event for the disabled. It's \$15/player or \$80 for a table of 8. Register at www.mycountyparks.com, 563-847-7202, or text 563-212-0955





31st ~ Animal Encounter ~ 11 AM ~ Rock Creek

March

3rd ~ Animal Encounter ~ 11 AM ~ Rock Creek

3rd ~ Open Range ~ Archery ~ 4-6 PM ~ Rock Creek

6th ~ Mighty Minnows ~ 10 AM ~ Discovery Center, Clinton ~ There's nothing sweeter than hearing a child squeal with delight when catching a live minnow. A story will follow with a craft and snack! Admission is free!

6th ~ Color Contest ~ 11 AM ~ Rock Creek

10th ~ Animal Encounter ~ 11 AM ~ Rock Creek ~

10th ~ Open Range ~ Air Rifles ~ 4-6 PM ~ Rock Creek

12th ~ Wood Burning 101 ~ 2

PM ~Rock Creek ~ Learn to wood burn making an Iowa shaped drink coaster. Its \$15/ person gets you one coaster, additional coasters are \$5 each (pay that night), and sets make great gifts. Register at www.mycountyparks.com



12th ~ A Nature Story ~ 1:00 PM ~ Eco Center, Rock Creek ~ Floppers and loppers, animal's ears come in all shapes and sizes! This FREE and kid-friendly program gives them a chance to investigate animal's ears including our furry friend Turnip! Kids must be accompanied by an adult.

13th ~ Movie & Popcorn ~ 10:30 AM Rock Creek ~ This is a full screen Kids movie complete with popcorn!

14th ~ Eastern Iowa Wild Turkey Federation Banquet ~ 5 PM ~ Goose Lake ~ Call Mike House at 357-9251.

14th ~ Open House, Jens-Wendt Observatory ~ 6 PM ~ Sherman Park, north entrance ~ Check for event confirmation before going at www.qcastro.org.

17th ~ Animal Encounter ~ 11 AM ~ Rock Creek ~

17th ~ Open Range ~ Archery ~ 4-6 PM ~ Rock Creek

21st ~ 24th Annual Spring Pheasant Festival ~ 5 PM ~ Wheatland Comm. Center ~ Brad Taylor, 357-0465.

23rd ~ Shelter Building for Tots ~ 10:30 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Read about nature's builders and use Iowa Public Radio's "STEAM Trailer" materials to draw or build a shelter design from various materials. Watch a short video about the IPR "STEAM" trailer at https://youtu.be/_ksyrrdtS6rE and bring your 3-7yrs olds down for some fun.

24th ~ Animal Encounter ~ 11 AM ~ Rock Creek

24th ~ Open Range ~ Air Rifles ~ 4-6 PM ~ Rock Creek

24th ~ Friends of Rock Creek ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek

25th ~ Painting Class with "Fresh Paint" ~ 6-8 PM ~ \$35 ~ Rock Creek ~ Spring Wildflowers, butterflies and bees with all materials supplied and step-by-step instructions on an 11x14 canvas. Go to www.mycountyparks.com to register. Enjoy a homemade soup/sandwich special at the Café.

26th ~ Constellations ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Projected on our huge 12 foot screen you'll get a great view of the night sky. We'll look at constellations that can be seen this time of year lacing in the stories that go with them.

27th ~ Old Fashioned Toys ~ 11 AM ~ Rock Creek

28th & 29th ~ Winter Camping ~ This is the last weekend

for winter camping rates at Rock Creek and Eden Valley.

28th & 29th ~ Young Ladies Lock-in ~ (Sat. 6 PM - Sun. 10 AM) ~ Rock Creek ~ Join Naturalists for a night of fun at the Eco Center! 5th & 6th grade girls will be enjoy activities like crafts, movies, games and a night hike. Cost is \$20/girl. Registration is required and space is limited. Visit www.mycountyparks.com by March 20th. Register today!

April

8th ~ Woodcock "Sky Dance" ~ 7:30 PM ~ Sherman Park, north entrance ~ We will look and listen for the courtship display and try to get up close!

10th & 12th ~ Eco Center Closed, Good Friday & Easter

15th ~ Sandhill Crane Birding Walk ~ 6 PM ~ Goose Lake Wildlife Area ~ Meet in the NW Parking lot off 350th Av. and take an easy walk across the marsh looking at its bird life. Sandhill cranes are most vocal this time of year and our chances of seeing them rises as the Sun sets.

17th-19th ~ Camping BOGO ~ Eden Valley, Rock Creek, Sherman Park & Walnut Grove ~ Get your camper ready for the season and get your second consecutive night free!

18th ~ Spring Fling ~ 10 AM ~ Eco Center, Rock Creek ~ We'll begin with a FREE egg hunt for ages 1-12. Then join Naturalist Jill for "Skulls, Skins & Bones," investigating cool adaptations that allow animals to survive! At 1 PM enjoy some time on the river in a 29 ft canoe. We'll have lunch specials, crafts and live animals all day!

22nd ~ Earth Day Walk ~ 6 PM ~ Camp Miss-Elk-Ton ~ We will meet at the new cabin for a tour & refreshments then check out the wildflowers and other early spring forest activity in the preserve on an easy stroll through the woods.

25th ~ Outdoor Gear Swap-n-Shop ~ 9 AM- Noon ~ Rock Creek ~ Got stuff you don't use? Bring it to the Eco Center and let someone else take it home. \$5 gets you an 8-ft table on a 10 X 20 ft area or a close spot to park it outside. Reserve by March 19th at www.mycountyparks.com

25th ~ Spring Refuge Float ~ 1 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Paddle the quiet backwaters of the big river in the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge. Bring water and a snack.

25th ~ Open House, Jens-Wendt Observatory ~ 6 PM ~ Sherman Park, north entrance ~ Check for event confirmation before going at www.qcastro.org.

28th & 29th ~ Winter Camping ~ This will be the last weekend for winter camping rates (\$5 discount) at Rock Creek and Eden Valley. Take advantage of these low rates.

28th ~ Friends of Rock Creek ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek

Save the Dates

June 9-11th ~ Polliwog Camp ~ K and 1st grade

June 16-18th ~ Creature Camp ~ 2nd and 3rd grade

June 23-25th ~ Child & Wild ~ 4 and 5th grade

July 7-9th ~ Canoe Kids ~ 6th thru 8th grade

July 20th-22nd ~ Voyageur River Trip ~ This trip is for boys and girls ages 12-18. Cost: \$50

August 10th-13th ~ Ice Age Trail Backpacking Trip ~ For youth of 12 to 18 years. Cost: of \$75.

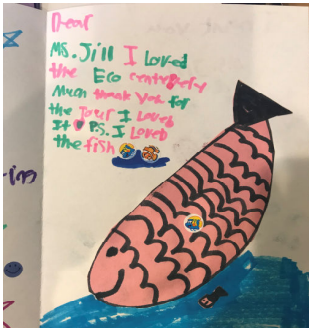
Financial assistance may be available upon request. Call 563-652-3783 or email trip@jacksonccb.com.





Animals, the Stars of the Show

by Jill Schmidt, Interpretive Naturalist



Every year our Naturalists introduce people of all ages to Iowa's wildlife during field trips, public programs and classroom visits. These up-close encounters provide life-time memories that transfer into respect, knowledge of their importance in our world and recognizing the connections between people and all things wild.

What YOU can do...join forces as a local school, business, organization or individual to financially sponsor these education animals. When you make this commitment you are not only providing food, but the proper lights, filters, bedding and enrichment needed to live a high quality life.

Choose one of the following categories and you'll be recognized as a sponsor at the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center, Eden Valley Refuge Nature Center or during presentations where the animals are used.

Below the Surface Sponsor

The Eco Centers huge Aquarium costs \$3000/yr
~ \$1500 for 6 months ~ \$750 for 3 months

Eden Valley Nature Centers Large Aquarium costs \$500/yr
\$250 for 6 months ~ \$125 for 3 months

Slithery Scales Sponsors

To feed and care for all of our snake friends it costs
~ \$600/year. ~ \$300 for 6 months ~ \$150 for 3 months

Turtle Island at the Eco Center

To feed and care for our turtles & snakes in our Turtle Island exhibit it costs \$400/year ~ \$200 for 6 months

River Bank Exhibit

To care for our river bank critters it costs us
~ \$600/year ~ \$300 for 6 months ~ \$150 for 3 months

Radical Raptors

Adopt our red-tailed hawk for \$150/month
Adopt our barred owl for \$150/month

Become a sponsor! Cut the coupon out below, fill it out and send it and a check to Clinton County Conservation Board, PO Box 68, Grand Mound, IA 52751. Your donation will support the chosen animal and you or a loved one will be recognized on that exhibit. If you are someone who would like to contribute at a different amount, you can make a one-time donation towards our education animals. Contact Jill Schmidt @ 563-847-7202 with any questions.

I wish to sponsor: _____
 for _____ months. I wish to be recognized at
 _____ location. Please use
 the name _____
 as the sponsor.

A Word from the Rangers

from Chip Brown, West District Park Ranger

The nature center addition at Eden Valley is moving along slow and steady. The shell of the building is there with log siding going on as I write this. The outside will be finished off with stone siding on the bottom side of the building. Within the next few weeks we will start construction on the inside. We are hoping for a finished product that will consist of restrooms, classroom/meeting room, kitchen and storage area. To do this great project right we are hoping to raise a few more funds to get finishing touches that will last and are as close to maintenance free as we can achieve. Some examples would be floor epoxy, tiled walls in restrooms and car-siding on ceilings.

from Brad Taylor, East District Ranger

It was a very challenging year. Parts of Rock Creek went underwater in mid-March when the Mississippi River began rising. The river crested in early April at almost 22 feet closing the entire park. Early spring flooding is expected, but this lasted for nearly 80 days rising up and down several times with a maximum crest of 22.77 feet. Only the electrical transformers and the Rangers Residence were dry. We reached 44 inches of water in the basement of the Eco Center. The only damage to our buildings was taken care of

with a power washer. Camping sites were another story with corroded electrical hook-ups needing to be replaced. Most of the sites were open for the 4th of July. But then 70mph winds hit and took out 14 large trees. Hazardous trees are removed before falling, but many of these showed no signs. That cleaned up we started gearing up for Labor Day only to have more high-water closing areas again. The water receded and we prepared for the Halloween. This is our busiest weekend of the year and enjoyed by the campers. We hoped for one last big weekend but our hopes were soon washed away when the waters again closed the campground for several weeks. Continued flooding shortened our camping and boating season significantly. The docks emptied the fall, but the docks could not be removed until the water finally dropped in November. We removed several inches of silt covering roads that were under water for months and put new gravel down.

Moving forward we are working with FEMA for things like road repair and looking at some possible changes to our electrical sites that may prevent damage to components and a speeder flood recovery. As we go into winter, we are preparing the campground for the 2020 camping and boating season. Until then grab your ice fishing gear and head out on the hard water to break that cabin fever.





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 2308 255th Street
 Grand Mound, Iowa 52751
 Phone: 563-847-7202
 Email: conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov
 Web: www.mycountyparks.com

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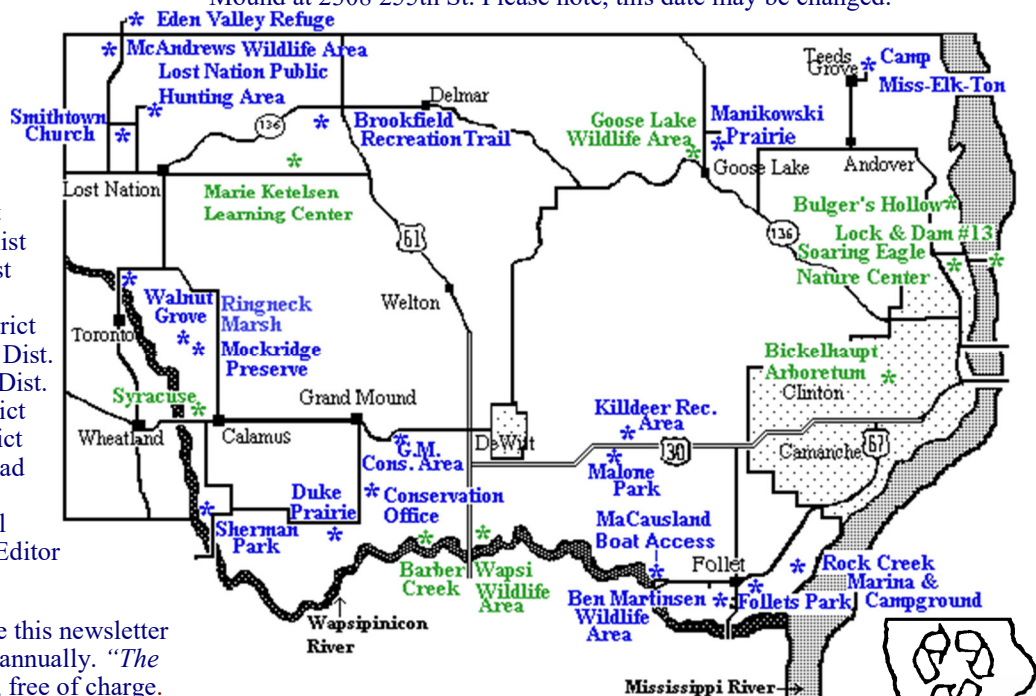
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 Brad Taylor, Park Officer, East District
 Ryan Waltz, Park Ranger, East District
 Elizabeth Carstensen, Concession Lead
 Darin Voss, Natural Resource Tech
 Allen Ketelsen, Maintenance, Central
 Chuck Jacobsen, Winter Newsletter Editor

BOARD MEETINGS

The Clinton County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. The Board regularly meets the second Tuesday the month, at 6 PM, in the Conservation Office, located 1 mile south of Grand Mound at 2308 255th St. Please note, this date may be changed.



MAILING LIST

Clinton County residents may receive this newsletter at home, free. Others are charged \$5 annually. "The Heron" is on our website or emailed, free of charge.

The Clinton County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subject to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Clinton C.C.B. or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.



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