



The Heron

Newsletter of Clinton County Conservation
Volume 43 Number 1 January-April, 2021!

TRACKS & TRAILS

by Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretive Naturalist

Finding myself with time for things I would probably never have gotten to do otherwise, I have taken on the task of mapping our existing trails and laying tracks where additional trails might be useful. Some may question the importance of this. I'm taking this opportunity to lay out my feelings, hopes and the practicalities of this work.

Trails are a practical and an important component of any conservation area, commonly used by animals and people. A well defined trail makes traveling easier, faster and safer. This concept is not lost on even the simplest of legged creatures. I often leave the more developed trails in my wanderings. Heck I have a t-shirt with the word interstate-aphobia on it, a very appropriate term for my wandering ways. I often find myself following game trails, ducking under brush and pushing through tall grass. Not the easiest of paths and by no means the fastest, I'm always glad to rejoin a developed trail when I have exerted myself.

There have also been times when I started down a developed trail with a lack of prior knowledge and found myself turning back due to fatigue, time constraints or lack of provisions. Even the best of trails are better if one has a map or at least accurate, well placed wayfinding signage.

Imagine yourself casually walking a trail thinking how lovely the pond your passing is and how nice it is that someone has placed a wood duck nest box there. Wait! Didn't I just pass this place 20 minutes ago? Am I lost? It's getting dark! Has this ever happened to you? It has happened to me while hunting squirrels at Sherman Park.

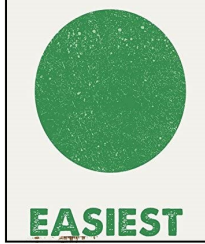
Worse yet, think how you'd feel just a half mile into some seldom traveled area with a sudden injury or ailment. You may have your cell phone to call for help, but what if help can't get to you easily or is delayed by the difficulty of finding you. Every autumn I hear some story of a hunter falling from a tree stand or being shot. Are they going to need help? Would it be better if help got there sooner than later? Worse case situations I know, but they do happen. We responsible for our own actions, but when in public places we expect it to be reasonably maintained.

Are all trails safe? Your drive is a type of trail and if you think your not taking on some risk pulling out of your garage you might want to think again. Would you buy a vehicle with no mirrors or tail lights on it? No, we take precautions and do our best to be safe. How many of us would ever be caught dead without our phones? Well don't count me, lol. I also go off without a map, compass or GPS at times and I have paid the price a time or two. You should use these things whenever. What would driving be like without road signs? These are practical and essential to any road system and a trail is a road of sorts.

Here is an example (upper, right) of a sign you might see on a trail. What is this telling us? Obviously this is the easiest trail in a designated area. But just what is easy? It is completely relative to prospective; meaning different things to different people. Does it tell us how much climbing we'll do or how steep a slope is? Does it tell us how long the trail is, what the surface is like or what we might find along the way? I want to know these things especially now that I am a senior. I've always said that most people can walk most trails. It's simply a matter of pacing yourself and being prepared. How does somebody telling me "it's easy" help me accomplish that?

I think you'll agree with me that the sign at the bottom of the page says a whole lot more. We're on the main trail and it's just .2 miles (2 city blocks) long. We can scan the QR code with our phone for a map. It's downhill for 61 feet and back up 1 foot. The arrow indicates what's called an "out-n-back" and its green because it leads to other trails. Yes, we will have to come back up the 61 feet when we return. The lime green area is the trails profile showing it's rise and fall. The hike will be on a gravel surface, with hills, bluffs and a bridged creek.

It's work to collect all this data and costs dollars to maintain trails plus to produce and place signs. If it saves a life or just gives hikers more confidence, making outings more pleasant, I say it's worth it. Go take a hike! Really, HIKE!





Main Trail

Distance .2 mi

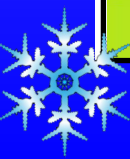
Total Decent 61 ft / Total Ascent 1 ft

Features

Gravel surface, sloped terrain, limestone outcrops and bridge over creek.



P.1





A LONG, LONG TIME AGO... *I CAN STILL REMEMBER HOW THAT MUSIC USED TO MAKE ME SMILE.*

by Mark Roberts, Interpretive Naturalist

In earlier issues of "The Heron" I wrote articles looking back into my own history here with Clinton County Conservation. I have decided to make a series of my "Greatest Hits". I also hope to get some great music playing in your head like the lyrics to *American Pie* by Don McLean.

4. Nature Gallery, Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center ~ More than a decade ago, I and the rest of the Clinton County Conservation Education Team were tasked with envisioning what the Nature Gallery in the new Eco Tourism Center would look like and what a task it was too!

We asked ourselves many questions...

- ◆ *What messages do we want to convey?*
- ◆ *What role will live animals play?*
- ◆ *How can we make the displays interactive?*
- ◆ *What can we build in-house?*
- ◆ *What will have to be custom-built by others?*
- ◆ *How much will it cost? Can we afford it?*
- ◆ *Can we care for the displays long term?*

All these while keeping in mind traffic flow, accessibility and creating displays that will still be relevant far into the future.

Wildlife Habitats. We definitely wanted to showcase the importance of habitats and the wildlife of the Mississippi River at Rock Creek. It would be the anchor for our message. We decided to focus on four major displays.

- A. **Deep Water Habitat:** Our 8,000 gallon aquarium is large enough to be home to a wide variety of river fish. It was important that the fish be on the larger side, at least "keeper" size. Seeser Crane Service was responsible for moving in the aquarium on a hair-raising day! (*pic on back page*)
- B. **Backwater Habitat:** The *Turtle Island* display features life in and around the quiet backwater sloughs of the river. The crawl under acrylic tube really allows visitors to feel a part of the habitat. The beaver lodge, bobcat den, nesting turtles and live snake enclosures round out the backwater scene. A nice addition was the *Touch Tank* we acquired courtesy of the National Mississippi River Museum in Dubuque.



A toddler in the Crawl-Through Turtle Tunnel:)

- C. **Snag Habitat:** Standing dead and hollow trees provide homes and food for many of our wildlife species that call the floodplain forest home. Our *Giant Cottonwood* is based on Iowa's largest, that resides near Welton, IA. Kids can explore the 8-foot diameter tree by climbing up inside, learning about wildlife on the way. This display was built by our Rangers Brad Taylor and Ryan Waltz and artist Susan Holgersson of Rock Island.
- D. **Riverbank Habitat:** Our Riverbank display creates the illusion of ducking under and seeing where critters live, like flathead catfish and muskrats. The display is home to several live animal specimens and features sand prairie habitat spots along the rivers edge. This was also built by our Park Rangers and Susan Holgersson.
- E. **360° Wildlife Mural:** We wanted to give the feeling of being outdoors, not being within the confines of a building. The answer was a huge mural with over 70 species of wildlife depicted in their natural habitat. Susan Holgersson was again employed to create this masterpiece of art. She even painted animals of Iowa's past in the clouds on the ceiling.

Changing up the displays. We knew going in, that once the major displays of the Nature Gallery were completed, we would need to use them for a long time, even as the fish and wildlife on display needed to be flexible.

We decided to use our classroom area as a changing display room. Over the years it has housed displays on Iowa's prairies, snakes, fish and furbearers. Our next reincarnation will be devoted entirely to birds, opening this spring. Naturalist Chuck Jacobsen is taking the lead on this project.

Other education areas in the Eco Tourism Center include:

- A. **Iowa's State Record Fish Collection.** This one-of-a-kind display "swims" overhead in the Camp Store. The 37 species of fish represent Iowa's all-time largest!
- B. **Shooting Range.** In the basement we have created a versatile shooting range for both archery and air rifles. Kevlar curtains stop arrows & pellets cold and the windowless room makes a safe place for kids to practice skills. We also teach Atlatl, Tomahawk and Slingshot!
- C. **Field Trip Picnic Shelter.** Under the Eco Center is a great venue for our large groups to gather. The Clinton County Conservation Foundation provided funding for concrete floors electricity and overhead lighting to make this spot very useful. We even added a 6 faucet handwashing station so lunch-time is safe and clean.

You can enjoy the previously published articles in this series in archived articles in "The Heron" newsletters via www.clintoncounty-ia.gov.

5. *Voyageur Canoes.*
- 5a. *Building Better Birders Grant.*
6. *Disc Golf Courses.*
7. *Prairies for Schools & Pheasants Forever.*
8. *Hunter Safety Camp.*
9. *Eden Valley Nature Center Reinvention.*
10. *Nature Center Partnerships.*
11. *River Clean-ups.*



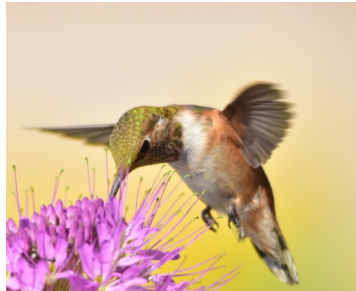


2020 "BEGINNING BIRDER CRUISES" AT ROCK CREEK PARK!

by Kelly J. McKay, Biologist, BioEco Research & Monitoring Center

During 2020, Clinton County Conservation continued the "Beginning Birder Cruises" Program at Rock Creek Park on their Blue Heron pontoon boat. This past year we increased the number of cruises from 8 to 11, including one evening cruise. Once again, these birding cruises were offered free to the public during the summer breeding and fall migration seasons. Participants were taken on a guided cruise through the labyrinth of wooded backwater sloughs of the Mississippi River at Rock Creek Park. The cruises were co-led by Mark Roberts, Interpretive Naturalist, who served as a birding guide and boat pilot, as well as Kelly McKay (BioEco Research and Monitoring Center) who was involved as the primary birding guide and instructor.

This year the river experienced heavy flooding in the spring, followed by minor flooding during the early summer months. Relatively normal to lower water levels characterized much of the late summer and fall seasons. The number of participants on the 2020 cruises ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 11. Overall, 77 total participants took part in the 11 cruises (an average of 7.0 per trip).



Rufous Hummingbird

Four cruises occurred during the summer breeding season (June 2nd, 13th and July 7th, 18th), while the other seven occurred during the fall migration season (August 8th, 19th, September 2nd, 9th, 15th, October 27th and November 7th). Cruises began shortly after sunrise (6:30-7 AM) and lasted 2.25-7.75 hours, depending on availability of the boat and interest of the participants. Furthermore, everyone had the option of birding on foot throughout the park with Kelly for an additional hour or two after each cruise. Overall, 48.25 hours were logged in on the birding cruises in 2020, producing an average of 4.4 hours per trip.

The 2020 birding cruises identified an amazing 128 species, ranging from a low of 46 species (September 15th) to a high of 85 species (September 9th). This resulted in an average of 59 species per cruise.



Golden-winged Warbler

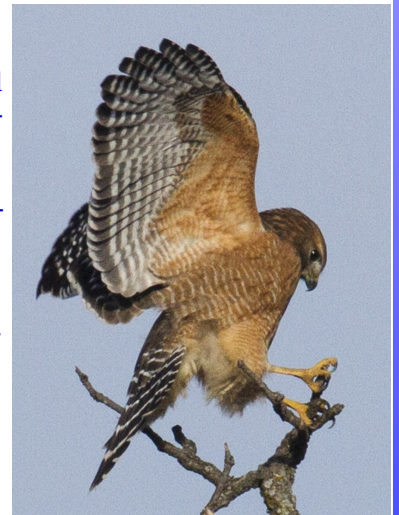
This diverse avifauna included: 13 species of waterfowl and other water birds, 8 species of shorebirds and 7 raptors, as well as all 7 woodpecker species occurring in Iowa. Additionally, these cruises produced 9 species of flycatchers, 4 vireos, all 6 swallow species occurring in Iowa, 3 wrens, 6 thrushes, 4 finches, 6 sparrows, 5 blackbirds and an impressive 21 warblers.

Some of the noteworthy species encountered included: Bufflehead, Pied-billed Grebe, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Common Nighthawk, Rufous Hummingbird, Sora, Wilson's Snipe, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-headed and Pileated Woodpeckers, Peregrine Falcon, Great Crested and Acadian Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-throated and Red-eyed Vireos, Tree and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Purple Martin, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Veery, Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Baltimore Oriole, Rusty Blackbird, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Indigo Bunting.



Scarlet Tanager

Additionally, several notable warblers were observed such as: Ovenbird, Golden-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Bay-breasted Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler and Canada Warbler.



Red-shouldered Hawk

During 2020, 15 species were observed on all 11 cruises (Wood Duck, Killdeer, Double-crested Cormorant, Bald Eagle, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, House Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle and Northern Cardinal), with an additional 6 species reported on all but one cruise (Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, European Starling, Song Sparrow and Brown-headed Cowbird).



Red-breasted Nuthatch

We would like to thank everyone who participated on the 2020 Beginning Birder Cruises. We hope to offer cruises in 2021!





WINTER IS GREAT.... DON'T HIBERNATE!

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we are asking for your understanding if events are changed, postponed or even cancelled because the risks outweigh the benefits. Many of our events are “*Registration Required*” so we can control numbers at safer levels.

Winter Sports. We will be offering our winter sports equipment at various places and times whenever conditions allow. Check our Facebook page for details.

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.

Winter Rates ~ Effective thru March 31st ~ Eden Valley, \$12 any site ~ Rock Creek, \$14 any site

JANUARY

1st ~ New Years Day ~ Eco Tourism Center Closed

5th ~ Nature Gallery Open ~ 2-5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ We will have the Eco Center Nature Gallery with animal encounters, birdfeeder watch and fish feeding at 4 PM! All FREE of course! Masks are required.

5th ~ Open Range ~ Archery ~ 5-7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Our range in the basement of the eco center will be open by appointment. Our Range Master will provide safe and practical instruction while using our equipment. Children (9+ recommended) must be accompanied by an adult. Sign-up required with just 12 people allowed for each of the 2 hour sessions. Call 563-847-7202.

6th ~ Nature Story ~ Eden Valley ~ This “presentation” series is a time where youngsters and their guardians can spend time simply playing in nature, making up their own “nature story”. Though at times, there will be a story read. This is youth led but a naturalist is there to help facilitate and share knowledge of the things encountered. Call or txt 563-212-0955 to reserve your 1-hour time slot.

7th ~ Nature Story ~ Rock Creek ~ Call or txt 563-212-0955 to reserve your 1-hour time slot.

7th ~ Eagle Viewing ~ 10 AM - 3 PM ~ Lock & Dam #13 ~ Clinton’s Annual Eagle Watch is cancelled so we will set-up scopes for public viewing.



8th ~ Rock Creek Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ This program is free & geared towards home schoolers but is open to anyone interested! All children must be accompanied by an adult and masks are required while indoors. Group size is limited to 12 and we can take 2 groups at a time (24). Registration is required, call 563-847-7202.

9th ~ Bird of Prey Day ~ 10 AM - 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Due to unfortunate circumstances, the Bald Eagle Watch in Clinton is cancelled. To try and make up for it, Clinton County Conservation is bringing in their LIVE red-tailed hawk and barred owl, along with mounts and various artifacts to showoff. Call/txt 563-212-0955 to reserve your group’s 1-hour time slot. Bring your binoculars as the deck can be a great location to see a bald eagle or two!

12th ~ Nature Galley Open ~ 2-5 PM ~ Rock Creek

12th ~ Open Range ~ Air Rifles ~ 5-7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ We are opening our Air Rifle Range in the basement of the Eco Center. The event will include both safety and practical instruction. Children (9+) must be accompanied by an adult. Sign-up is required, 12 people will be allowed for each of the two 1-hour sessions. Call 563-847-7202.

13th ~ Nature Story ~ Eden Valley ~ Call 563-212-0955.

13th ~ Nature Barn Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Call 563-847-7202 to sign-up.

14th ~ Nature Story ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-212-0955.

14th ~ Eden Valley Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Eden Valley Nature Center ~ Call 563-847-7202 to sign-up.

14th ~ Riverside Jam ~ 6:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ We have this big empty room and plenty of local talent. Lets get together for some music. Call 563-357-0759 to sign-up.

15th ~ Awesome Owls ~ 10:30 AM ~ Discovery Center, Clinton ~ Did you know that your eyes would be the size of softballs if you had the eyes of an owl? Come see the LIVE barred owl and make & take an awesome owl craft!



20th ~ Nature Story ~ Eden Valley ~ Call 563-212-0955.

21st ~ Nature Story ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-212-0955.

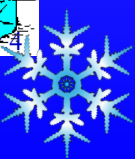
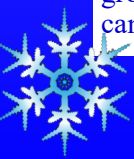
22nd ~ Rock Creek Science Club ~ 10 am ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-847-7202 to sign-up.

23rd ~ Winter Sports Clinic ~ 10 AM ~ Emma Young Park, Clinton ~ After a brief introduction, skis, snowshoes and private lessons will be available till 2 PM. Make your reservation by calling 563-357-0759 today.

23rd ~ Animals Into Winter ~ 10:30 AM ~ Eco Center, Rock Creek ~ Winter is in full swing and our wildlife have been forced to find ways to cope with the cold temperatures - migration, hibernation, adapt or die! Let’s explore these options closer while meeting some Iowa animals who demonstrate these behaviors! A Zoom link is available upon request, please email jschmidt@clintoncounty-ia.gov to receive the Zoom invitation.

23rd ~ Winter Survival ~ 1:30 PM ~ Eco Center, Rock Creek ~ Take a minute to learn about the many challenges winter has and have fun doing it! This FREE family fun program will teach you how to build fires, boil water and build shelters all fun outside! All children must be with an adult, registration required at www.mycountyparks.com or call 563-847-7202 by January 20th.

26th ~ Build an Ice Fishing Rod ~ 5:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Local rod builder, Garry Land, will help you build your own, unique ice fishing rod for only \$30! Note: the rod will have to “cure” overnight and be picked up at a later date. Call/txt 563-212-0955 to register.



26th ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek/Zoom ~ Research has shown, and I am POSITIVE that the FORC members can attest, that volunteering can improve your physical and mental health! There is NO commitment to join our small but mighty group to help with making Rock Creek be the best it can be. If you want to help in some way or are coming to the meeting, let me know by call/txt 563-212-0955.

27th ~ Nature Story ~ Eden Valley ~ Call 563-212-0955.

28th ~ Nature Story ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-212-0955.

28th ~ Full Wolf Moon Hike ~ 6:30 PM ~ Eden Valley Refuge

~ Join us for a guided hike along Bear Creek Trail as we enjoy the rising moon and the other sights, sounds and sensations of a winter's evening. There will be hot cocoa and cookies at the nature center afterwards. Numbers are limited. Call 563-357-0759 to reserve your spot today.



31st ~ Bird of Prey Day ~ 10 AM - 7 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ We are bringing our LIVE red-tailed hawk and barred owl, along with mounts and various artifacts to showoff. Call/txt 563-212-0955 to reserve your 1-hour time slot. There will also be a craft to take home. Bring your binoculars as the towering limestone bluffs that surround the beautiful valley is a perfect spot to see majestic birds of prey.

FEBRUARY

Clinton Chapter Banquet Whitetails Unlimited 27-item raffle! This is in place of their annual banquet. For tickets call Jeff Beckwith at 563-249-7358.

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

2nd ~ Nature Galley Open ~ 2-5 PM ~ Rock Creek

2nd ~ Open Range ~ Archery ~ 5-7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Sign-up is required. Call 563-847-7202.

3rd ~ Nature Story ~ Eden Valley ~ Call 563-212-0955.

3rd ~ Nature Barn Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register.

4th ~ Nature Story ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-212-0955.

4th ~ Eden Valley Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Eden Valley Nature Center ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register.

5th ~ Rock Creek Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-847-7202 to sign-up.

5th ~ Happenin' Hawks ~ 10:30 AM ~ Discovery Center, Clinton ~ I wish I could see something as small as a mouse from 100 feet away! Come see the live red-tailed hawk and make an adorable mouse craft to take home!

4th ~ Woodwork for Wildlife ~ 6:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ The derecho damaged more than just human homes. Help out our feathered friends and others by putting up a feeder this winter or a bird house in the spring. We have many designs to fit various species and your costs will depend on the project you choose. Your kit will be cut and pre-drilled and you can build it on your own or let us provide the tools and help. Call 563-357-0759 to make your choice.

7th ~ Animal Signs Hike ~ 1:30 PM ~

Eden Valley ~ We will investigate the timber looking for animal signs such as tracks, homes and scat! We will meet at the Nature Center and make our way through the trails. This is a free program, all children need to be with an adult.



9th ~ Hula Hoop and T-shirt Loom Day ~ Eden Valley ~ Do you want a fun craft and a useful way to use up some old T-shirts? Then look no further! Just bring the t-shirts and a hula hoop (or buy one from us for \$10) to make a small circular rug or seat pad. Call/txt 563-212-0955 for your 2-hour time slot.

10th ~ Nature Story ~ Eden Valley ~ Call 563-212-0955.

11th ~ Nature Story ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-212-0955.

11th ~ Dark Sky Observation ~ 6:30 PM ~ Lost Nation Wildlife Area ~ From the parking lot you can clearly see in all directions allowing us to point-out the many constellations of the mid-winter sky. We'll limit the number viewing and take 20 minute shifts waiting in/near our cars for our turn. Overcast skies will move us inside at the nearby Eden Valley Nature Center where we will project the stars on the wall. Call 563-357-0759 for reservations.

12th - 15th ~ The 24th Annual Great Back-yard Bird Count ~ It's free and easy. Visit birdcount.org for info.

16th ~ Nature Galley Open ~ 2-5 PM ~ Rock Creek

16th ~ Open Range ~ Air Rifles ~ 5-7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register.

17th ~ Nature Story ~ Eden Valley ~ Call 563-212-0955.

17th ~ Nature Barn Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register.

Tree Tapping Time ~ 10 AM & 2 PM ~ West Brook Park, DeWitt / Soaring Eagle Nature Center, Clinton / Eden Valley Refuge ~ Its nearly over! Winter is in her final days and the daytime temps will be climbing into the 40's. This triggers the flow of sap carrying nutrients, including sugar, to the developing buds in the branches. Watch our Facebook page for dates and come out to watch or help with the gathering, cooking and tasting of syrup, possibly even snow taffy cooked from the sap.

18th ~ Nature Story ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-212-0955.

18th ~ Eden Valley Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Eden Valley Nature Center ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register.



18th ~ Creekside Jam ~ 6:30 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ We have this big empty room and plenty of local talent. Lets get together for some music. Come and listen. Call 563-357-0759 today and make your reservation.

19th ~ Rock Creek Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register. p.5



20th ~ Winter Fun Day ~ 9 AM - 2 PM ~ Rock Creek ~
If the conditions are right, this is going to be epic! We will have all you need to cross country ski, ice fish, snowshoe and ice skate along with a warming fire. Call/txt 563-212-0955 to reserve your time(s).

21st ~ Building Better Birders and Citizen Scientists Workshop ~ Rock Creek ~ Join us for the first of two days of learning about birds and how we can help them. Funding for this workshop was provided by the Resource Enhancement and Protection – Conservation Education Program (REAP-CEP). This workshop will be conducted by Kelly McKay (BioEco Research & Monitoring Center), with assistance from Mark Roberts (Clinton County Conservation) and Brian Ritter (Nahant Marsh Ed. Center).



5:30 PM ~ *Common Feeder Birds of Iowa*
7:30 PM *Live Red-tailed Hawk and Barred Owl*
8:00 PM *Owl Prowl Walk at Rock Creek*

22nd ~ Building Better Birders and Citizen Scientists Workshop ~ Rock Creek ~ Day two of learning about birds and how we can help them.

7:00 AM ~ *Bird Walk at Rock Creek*
9:30 AM ~ *Passerines (songbirds) of Iowa*
11:30 AM ~ *Feeder Watch and Lunch Break*
12:30 AM ~ *Non-Passerines (non-songbirds) of Iowa*
2:45 PM ~ *Midwestern Raptor Population Trends as Determined by Forty Years of Christmas Bird Count Data.*
4:00 PM ~ *Bird Walk/Owl Prowl*

23rd ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek/Zoom ~ If you want to help call/txt 563-212-0955.

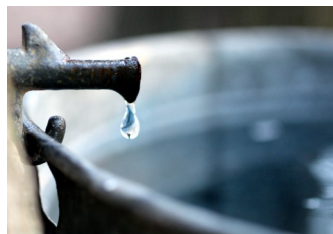
24th ~ Nature Story ~ Eden Valley ~ Call 563-212-0955.

25th ~ Nature Story ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-212-0955.

25th ~ Full Snow Moon Hike ~ 6:30 PM ~ Sherman Park ~ Join a naturalist for a guided hike through the trees along Choke Cherry Trail as we enjoy the rising moon and the other sights, sounds and sensations of a winter's evening. Numbers are limited so call 563-357-0759 today.

MARCH

Tree Tapping Time Continues ~ 10 AM & 2 PM ~ West Brook Park , DeWitt / Soaring Eagle Nature Center, Clinton / Eden Valley Refuge ~ Watch our Facebook page for your last chances to come out to watch or help with the gathering, cooking and tasting of syrup.



2nd ~ Nature Galley Open ~ 2-5 PM ~ Rock Creek

2nd ~ Open Range ~ Archery ~ 5-7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register.

3rd ~ Nature Story ~ Eden Valley ~ Call 563-212-0955.

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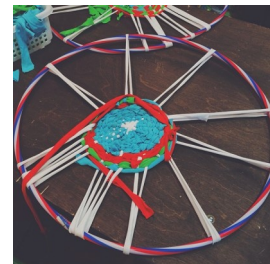
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4th ~ Eden Valley Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Eden Valley Nature Center ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register.

5th ~ Rock Creek Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register.

5th ~ Mighty Minnows ~ 10:30 AM ~ Discovery Center, Clinton ~ What do you get when you bring a bunch of minnows to the Discovery Center? Happy, giggling kids! Kids will “catch” and “race” these mighty minnows then make & take home a handprint minnow.

9th ~ Hula Hoop and T-shirt Loom Day ~ Rock Creek ~ Do you want a fun craft and a useful way to use up some old T-shirts? Just bring the t-shirts and a hula hoop (or buy one from us for \$10) to make a small circular rug or seat pad. Call/txt 563-212-0955 for your 2-hour time slot.

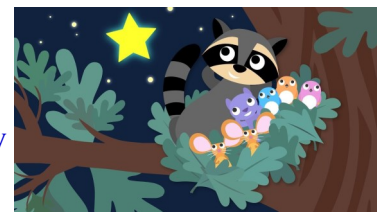


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11th ~ Riverside Jam ~ 6:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ We have a big room and plenty of local talent. Lets get together for some music. Call 563-357-0759 for reservations.

13th & 14th ~ Young Ladies Lock-in ~ (Sat. 6 PM - Sun. 10 AM) ~ Rock Creek ~ Join Naturalists Jill and Jessica for a night full of fun at the Eco Tourism Center! This lock-in is for 5th & 6th grade girls and will be filled with “lock-in like” activities such as crafts, movies, games and a night hike. Registration required, visit www.mycountyparks.com by March 10th. Cost is \$20/girl. Space is limited.



13th ~ Eastern Iowa Wild Turkey Federation Banquet ~ 5 PM ~ Goose Lake ~ Call Mike House at 563-357-9251 .

16th ~ Nature Galley Open ~ 2-5 PM ~ Rock Creek

16th ~ Open Range ~ Air Rifles ~ 5-7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register.

17th ~ Nature Barn Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register.

18th ~ Eden Valley Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Eden Valley Nature Center ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register.

19th ~ Rock Creek Science Club ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-847-7202 to register.

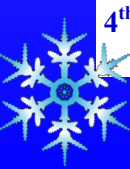
23rd ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek/Zoom ~ If you want to help call/txt 563-212-0955.

24th ~ Nature Story ~ Eden Valley ~ Call 563-212-0955.

25th ~ Nature Story ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-212-0955.

25th ~ Full Worm Moon Hike ~ 6:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Join a naturalist for a guided hike along the Backwater Trail as we enjoy the rising moon and the other sights, sounds and sensations of a winter's evening. Call 563-357-0759 to reserve your spot today.

27th & 28th ~ Winter Camping ~ This is the last weekend for winter camping rates in our parks.





APRIL

Clinton County Pheasants Forever ~ Call Brad Taylor at 563-221-1214 for information on the Spring Fundraiser.

2nd & 4th ~ Eco Center Closed, Good Friday & Easter

6th ~ 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!

7th ~ Creekside Jam ~ 6:30 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ We have a big room and plenty of local talent. Lets get together for some music. Call 563-357-0759 to sign up.

9th ~ Building Better Birders and Citizen Scientists Workshop ~ Rock Creek ~ Join us for the first of two days of learning about birds and how we can help them. Funding for this workshop was provided by the Resource Enhancement and Protection – Conservation Education Program (REAP-CEP). This workshop will be conducted by Kelly McKay (BioEco Research and Monitoring Center), assistance from Mark Roberts (Clinton County Conservation) & Brian Ritter (Nahant Marsh Ed. Center).

6:30 AM ~ Bird Watching Cruise on the Blue Heron. Call 563-847-7202 to sign up.

10:00 AM ~ Waterbirds of Iowa.

12:00 PM ~ Feeder Watch and Lunch Break.

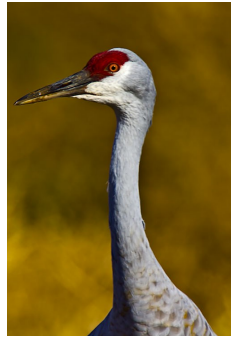
1:00 PM ~ Bird Watching Cruise on the Blue Heron. Call 563-847-7202 to sign up.

3:30 PM Waterfowl of Iowa.

10th ~ Building Better Birders and Citizen Scientists Workshop ~ 5:30 AM ~ Goose Lake, NW Parking Lot (350th Ave.) ~ Day two of learning about birds. *5:30 AM ~ Bird Walk and Sandhill Crane Count and Watch.*

10th ~ Run/Walk Club ~ 9 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Rock Creek is a great place to get outside to run or walk. Waterfront property along the backwaters of the Mississippi is relatively quiet with an abundance of wildlife along with nice flat roads/trails. There will be a map provided with distances so you can customize how far you want to go.

10th ~ Spring Fling ~ 10 AM ~ Eco Center, Rock Creek ~ Spend the day celebrating spring! At **10 AM** there will be a FREE egg hunt for ages 1-12, in and around the Eco Center. Join Naturalist Jill Schmidt for "Skulls, Skins & Bones," a wildlife program at **11 AM**. You will get a chance to investigate all of the crazy cool adaptations that allow these animals to survive in the wild! At **1 PM** enjoy some time on the river in one of our 14-passenger, 29-foot voyageur canoes (weather permitting). Get a chance to experience what it was like to paddle one of these magnificent boats in the backwaters of the Mississippi River. There will be many more fun things going on throughout the day including lunch specials from the café, crafts & live animals!



14th ~ Spelunking ~ 4:30 PM ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Explore all of the cracks and crevices of a private cave! We will meet at the Eden Valley Nature Center, then drive to the nearby cave to spend time underground. Do as much or as little exploring as you like. We will provide a hard hat, we recommend knee pads and old clothes. Visit

www.mycountyparks.com to sign up by April 12th.

17th ~ Run/Walk Club ~ 9 AM ~ Rock Creek

17th ~ Animal Care Apprentice ~ 10:30 AM - Noon ~ Rock Creek ~ Do you love animals? Even ones that are scaly or maybe a bit slimy? Then, do I have a hands-on experience for you! Get some volunteer hours while helping your local non-profit out by getting some real world experience handling, interacting and caring for the various Nature Gallery animals. Must be 13 years of age or older. Call 563-212-0955 for more information.

21st ~ Refuge Paddle ~ 1 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ It's time to get our paddling year started. We will go over the basics for paddling safety and explore the quiet backwaters of the Upper Mississippi Wildlife & Fish Refuge. There is no fee. Call 563-357-0759 to register.

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.

26th ~ Backpacking Preview ~ Noon ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ If your planning to join us on the 27th thru the 29th you'll need to stop by between noon and 2 PM for your gear and some tips on packing for this fun filled family frolic. Registration closes April 18th, call 563-357-0759.

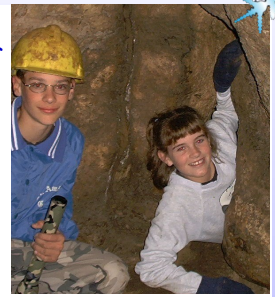
27th ~ 29th ~ Family Friendly Backpack Trip ~ 12 PM Eden Valley Refuge ~ We'll break-out our backpacking gear, tents, packs, stoves, mess-kits and cook-kits for your use. It's just a half mile to the primitive campsites unless you want to challenge yourself and go by way of the Hardwood and Primitive Camp Trails. There is no fee as you will be transporting and feeding yourself. You will leave our gear at the Nature Center before you head home.

27th ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek/Zoom ~ If you want to help call/txt 563-212-0955.

28th ~ Full Pink Moon Hike ~ 6:30 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Join a naturalist for a guided hike along Bear Creek Trail as we enjoy the rising moon and the other sights, sounds and sensations of a winters evening. There will be hot cocoa and cookies at the Eco Center afterwards. Numbers are limited. Call 563-357-0759 to reserve your spot today.

MAY

1st ~ Trivia Night ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ It's fun and it supports TWO great organizations Friends of Rock Creek (FORC) AND Fishing Has No Boundaries (FHNB). It's \$15/player or \$60/table of 6. Register at www.mycountyparks.com or call/txt 563-212-0955.





Clinton County Conservation
 P.O. Box 68
 2308 255th Street
 Grand Mound, Iowa 52751
 Phone: 563-847-7202
 Email: conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov
 Web: www.mycountyparks.com

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In 2012 Seeser Crane carefully slides the 8,000 gallon, 18-foot long, aquarium into the Eco Tourism Center.

CLINTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

Dan Srp, Camanche, President
 Gloria Friederichsen, Vice President, Grand Mound
 Brian Grell, Dewitt, Secretary/Treasurer
 Jeff Beckwith, Clinton
 Rita Hart, Big Rock

BOARD MEETINGS

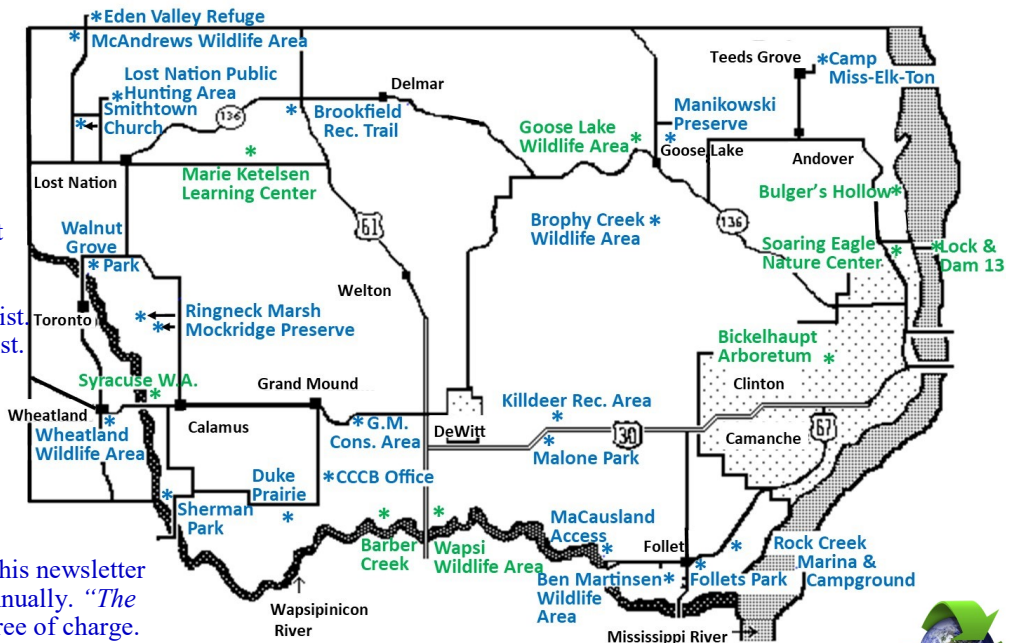
The Clinton County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. The Board regularly meets the third Tuesday of the month, at 6 PM, in the Conservation Office, located 1 mile south of Grand Mound at 2308 255th St. Please note, this date and location can be changed.

STAFF

Phil Visser, Executive Director
 Autumn Griffin, Executive Secretary
 Mark Roberts, Interpretive Naturalist
 Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretive Naturalist
 Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist
 Jill Schmidt, Interpretive Naturalist
 Robert Schaefer, Maintenance, West Dist.
 Dave Schneden, Maintenance, West Dist.
 Ryan Waltz, Park Ranger, East District
 Darin Voss, Natural Resource Tech
 Allen Ketelsen, Maintenance, Central
 Mark Roberts, Newsletter Editor

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.

