



The Heron

*The Newsletter of Clinton County Conservation
Volume 38 Number 4 December 2016 ~ January 2017*

A New Beginning...

by Jill Schmidt, Interpretive Naturalist

Red-tailed hawks are one of Iowa's most common birds of prey. Often seen perched on power poles or highway signs, this member of the *Buteo* genus surrounds us on a daily basis. Perching high in the air, it uses its amazing eye sight to scan the ground below, searching for scurrying rodents or other small mammals. This has always been one of my favorite birds. It reminds me of home. It reminds me of Iowa.

The first time I had an up-close encounter with a captive red-tailed hawk was when I was in fourth grade. A naturalist from Delaware County Conservation Board was visiting our classroom, she was there to do a program on birds of prey. I remember sitting on the floor staring up at this bird admiring its beauty, admiring its sharp talons and rusty red tail. I remember thinking this had to be the coolest career on the planet, this person was "holding" a live red-tailed hawk right in front of me AND getting paid to do so. I knew at that moment, that some day I would be doing the same thing.

My first internship where I was introduced to training of wild birds and using them in programs was at a place in Wisconsin Dells. They had two birds, a red-tailed hawk and a barred owl. Both birds were used on a regular basis to educate the public on the importance of birds of prey. I spent many hours "living" with the birds. I wanted to learn their behaviors, the good and the bad. I also wanted them to learn my behaviors and I worked hard to earn their trust. I soon learned that what these birds were showing me was not good. I researched their behaviors and soon learned they were stressed, and the quality of their lives was not up to standards. I became determined to change that and my adventure with training birds of prey began.

You have to be an animal lover to want to train a bird. You use similar training techniques as you would training a dog but it is a much slower process. These wild birds are not pets. They are not "born" in captivity and hand raised by humans. Their natural fear of people is real and it is what protects them in the wild. Once they are taken from the wild, this fear does not turn off immediately. It takes time to change. They give up all that is natural in their world and they must learn to adjust to their new lifestyle. I respect these birds and it saddens me when a bird has to be removed from the wild, but understand it is done to save the bird. To give it a new beginning.

Throughout the years I have gained experience with a variety of birds. From the wildest of wild to the more calm and

adaptive. Each bird I have handled has been injured by a human-made object, whether a gun, power line or a car, our human existence makes living in the wild very challenging for these birds, more so than normal. But from the bad comes a lot of good. The look on the faces of children when you introduce them to a wild bird of prey is priceless. It makes all the hours training a bird worth it, not only for me but also for the kids as well. More importantly having a bird that is calm, relaxed and not fearful throughout a program allows us to share our knowledge of these great birds. After all, that is our job.

On July 12, 2016, a juvenile female red-tailed hawk was found injured at Rock Creek campground near Camanche. One of our park rangers was able to catch the bird and bring it to the RARE Group (Raptors Advocacy, Rehabilitation and Education) in Solon, Iowa, where it received treatment for a broken right wing. Unfortunately the break was too severe and was unable to heal correctly prohibiting the bird of flight. Both the veterinarian and the wildlife rehabilitator agreed this bird was non-releasable and would need to find a forever home as an education bird.

Clinton County Conservation has an amazing environmental education department. The teaching tools we use to connect people to the outdoors increases our success in increasing knowledge and respect for our natural world. This bird is the best teaching tool you can have. As the leader for its training, I have set up goals for this bird to prepare it for being an education bird. Luckily for us, the volunteers at RARE had already begun working with the bird and we are well ahead of schedule. Our goal is to get this bird ready for education and to be able to bring it into the classrooms and nature centers throughout the county and surrounding areas. We will be able to give people an up-close, personal experience in hopes they will remember it when it comes to choices they make when dealing with our land.

On February 22nd, you will likely be able to meet this red-tailed hawk at the Wild Winter Wednesday talk at the Windmill Cultural Center in Fulton (see *Events*). It is our hope that you will see how amazing they are and how they are needed in the wild.



A Neighborhood Connection

by Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist and FORC Liaison

Sherry Sharp grew up, just down the road from Rock Creek. For over 70 years she has watched floods, buildings and people come and go. At one time, Rock Creek was just a “small place to put your boat in and go fishing.” Now, it is a place to do a plethora of activities on the mighty Mississippi. Even though Rock Creek has changed quite a bit, it is still a great place for families to do the same thing she did as a kid, like, “build a fire to roast wieners and marshmallows.”



One of the things that have come and gone is the pavilion but “when they built it, we would have reunions and birthday parties there.” Some of Sherry’s cher-

ished memories are at Rock Creek, including gatherings with family and friends and ice skating on the slough. Although Rock Creek no longer has the pavilion, there are many places that people congregate together, from the community room in the Eco Center to the picnic tables underneath the deck to the many campsites. There is something about water that brings people together to have a good time. With the changing of the seasons comes a change of activities. When the ice and snow conditions cooperate, come visit us to borrow our equipment so you can create your own memories of ice skating on the slough.

Even though she has seen many things living near the river, this fall flood showed her something that she had not seen before. Blue herons wading through the creek behind her house is fairly common but one wading through their hostas right by their house is not! The heron had apparently learned that there were chipmunks living there and it would stalk through the hostas waiting by the chipmunk burrow for its next meal. Since the water has returned to its banks and the weather cooling, the heron has since left but will remain as one of her river memories and mine as well.



Sherry says she became a part of the Friends of Rock Creek (FORC) nearly 4 years ago to “encourage fun activities for families.” In fact, I met her at the FORC monthly meeting after the first Holiday Jubilee. She had attended the event and liked the family atmosphere but thought there was room for improvement. So she came to the next meeting, voiced her



opinion and now attends meetings to plan events and then volunteers to work them. Right now we are planning for the upcoming Holiday Jubilee for Saturday, December 10th. With the insight of Sherry and the other FORC members, this year’s jubilee is evolving into a more family-oriented event with more activities for the children and no auctions.

With Sherry being close by, she is involved with most of our events and more. She was instrumental in starting our flag display during patriotic holidays. Along with a couple others in the group, she enjoys sprucing the landscaping up after the winter and planting annuals in the spring. A couple of months ago, FORC was asked to revamp the entrance sign landscaping. Without hesitation, Sherry volunteered for the job. I am grateful because landscaping is not my forte. That day a group of us had to weed out the towering milkweed, dig up the behemoth hostas and daylilies, split them up into more manageable sizes, work up the soil, replant and add mulch. After we finished the job we set out to do, we had so many plants left, Sherry felt it was a shame to just get rid of them so we added them to the landscaping by the Eco Center. I’ll tell you what, that great lady who is twice my age had me beat!

That is not the only way Sherry has left an impression on me. With FORC, she brings a unique list of attributes to the group that help us accomplish our goals. She is family-oriented, hardworking, caring, dependable, a problem solver and enjoys the outdoors. With all the changes, Sherry hopes that Rock Creek contin-

ues to grow, providing new and exciting family activities and encourages anyone who loves nature to join our friends group. We would appreciate your help, new ideas and whatever unique attributes that you can bring to the group.

Check out the calendar of events for the monthly meetings.



Lake Delhi Success & Failure

by Chuck Jacobsen, *Interpretative Naturalist*

The Maquoketa River is one of Iowa's most beautiful waterways and greatest smallmouth fisheries. Its best stretches are located below the Backbone Dam through Lake Delhi and again below its dam. These areas provide chances for a trophy fish with catches in the 12 to 15 inch range because this species depends heavily on stable water levels and good clarity. The Delhi Dam was built around 1922 to generate electricity, provide passage of county road X31 and also create a 9-mile long, 450-acre lake. In 1973, Interstate Power Company quit operating the power plant even though the river's flow could generate enough electricity to power 750 to 1,000 homes. Still, the dam provided a settling pool for heavy sediments leaving bright clear water below it.

I last paddled this stream in the fall of 2010 just weeks after the failure of the Delhi Dam that July 24th. That trip was an interesting one for a river citizen like myself and the other clean-up veterans accompanying me. It was mega trash everywhere belonging to the unfortunate residents within the wake of the dam's destruction. I remember then thinking how much work was needed to clean up such a catastrophic mess. Living in a floodplain or directly below a dam, most of us would plan for the unthinkable. But in 2008, few Iowa cities and counties had enrolled in the National Flood Insurance Program. Participants must agree to adopt and enforce management ordinances to reduce future damage; Delaware County chose not to. That seemed to touch off a series of unfortunate events, damage and costly repairs.

- 2008 floods caused the dam an est. \$500,000 in damage
- 2009 the dam is cited for problems by the Iowa DNR
- July 24, 2010 the river flooded after approximately 10 inches of rainfall over a 12-hour period. Only two of the dam's three spillway gates were fully open. Unable to keep pace, water eventually overtopped the dam causing a 200-foot long embankment and roadway to erode away. The lake emptied in a matter of hours. Around 8,000 people had to be evacuated. The torrent released caused wide-spread damage to public infrastructures estimated in the \$10s of millions. About 500 homes around the lake were damaged. In Monticello, 50 homes and 20 businesses among other structures received major flood damage including their sewage treatment plant which left residents without service.
- December, 2010, a study was published determining the cause of the failure "was internal erosion in the embankment coupled with overtopping flow." The study shows a malfunctioning spillway gate and increased reservoir size exacerbated an existing problem. The embankment was constructed so that its fill did not settle correctly and a reinforcing concrete wall fell short of the height of the dam's crest."
- 2011 residents voted themselves a \$6 million bond that would increase their property taxes by \$4/\$1,000 of assessed value to support the operation of the dam and



July 24, 2010 Breach of Lake Delhi Dam

maintain the lake. When asked to help, FEMA determined the taxing district "does not provide any essential governmental service to the general public" and denied assistance. Then Gov. Culver encouraged the district to appeal. Sen. Tom Harkin had warned the dam might not be FEMA-eligible.

- April, 2014, work began on repairs and upgrades
- Sept. 27th, 2014, reconstruction of a 400-foot dike topped by a concrete spillway began and was constructed so any increase in the lake level would go directly over it, handling flows of 69,000 cubic feet per second.
- June 24th, 2016, the floodgates closed & the lake filled.

The dam is privately owned by the Lake Delhi Home Owners Association. The cost of reconstruction was extraordinary with little outside interest in the lake. The Association raised \$1.7 million in private donations and \$6 million in property tax increases to help pay for the rebuilding effort. They secured \$3 million from Delaware County and \$5 million from the State. It took six years and \$16 million to build the new dam and spillway. State Rep. Lee Hein, R-Monticello, said, "You did everything the state asked, and you stayed with it." Gov. Terry Branstad added "a wonderful recreation area for the state of Iowa."

With all the joy and long-awaited fulfillment of area residents' hopes going on above the dam that day, my heart was especially struck when just 30 feet from our launch we discovered an over-turned paddle boat 3/4s buried in the riverbed. As we continued, we encountered much of the same debris I'd seen six years earlier. Passed later by a couple from Minnesota, I couldn't help but wonder if they would carry the story of the disgracefully abandoned remains of Lake Delhi's debris back home with them. There were still traces in the river just above our take out at Hopkinton and I've seen more downstream of HWY 136 since then. I'm sure Lake Delhi debris will be found even more widely scattered along the Maquoketa's channel and floodplain further downstream.

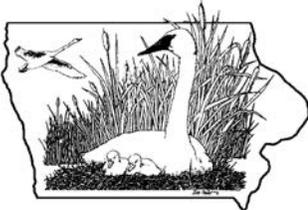
This was a major disaster for the people of Lake Delhi and all those above and below influenced by the deluge and resulting floods. But does our concern for our environment really end at our horizon? Shouldn't the first step be to reclaim our property and repair any damages it caused? Do we really take money (tax dollars) from our neighbors and then forget them? Will they clean it up now or will others have to? For now, I'd have to call this project a failure.

Events Calendar - Sure Cures for Cabin Fever!

December

Cross-country Skiing and Snowshoeing ~ As weather conditions allow, check the local media for cross-country skiing and snowshoe outings throughout the winter. For those with e-mail, write cjacobsen@clintoncounty-ia.gov and place yourself on our "Adventurers" list. Adventurers will receive a short message whenever last-minute snow events are planned.

1st ~ Trumpeter Swans ~ O.W.L.s ~ Noon ~ MRETC, Rock Creek ~ Learn about the very successful reintroduction of trumpeter swans to Clinton County. O.W.L.s are people Older, Wiser & Livelier. This is a new series we are trying to establish. Each O.W.L.s event will start off with a hearty cup of soup then feature an educational talk and slideshow plus artifacts.



1st ~ Music at the Barn ~ 6:30 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ The Nature Barn will open its doors to celebrate the approaching Winter Solstice and holiday season. Local talents will provide entertaining instrumental and vocal music. Participants with musical talents are invited to bring their instruments along for this "coffee house-style" jam. Refreshments are available and the entire family is welcome. This is a free event although donations to support the center are always welcomed.

6th ~ A Nature Story ~ 10 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek ~ Join us every Tuesday this winter for a presentation geared for children ages 3-5 with their guardians and siblings. All presentations feature a book and hands-on activities.

7th ~ Bird Watching Walk ~ 9 AM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ Check out the birds of the nature center trails and Eagle Point Park with a Naturalist during this low-key activity. The forested bluffs above the Mississippi make for good birding. Binoculars, scopes, field guides and hot chocolate provided. Meet at the Nature Barn.



8th ~ An Animal Encounter ~ 10 AM ~ Eco Center, Rock Creek ~ Preschoolers and their parents can enjoy an animal encounter through games, crafts and live animal presentations. This program is free and siblings are welcome!

10th ~ Holiday Jubilee ~ 10 AM - 2 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Come to this fun event for the whole family. There will be carnival games for the kids along with crafts, games, activities and Santa! Local musicians will also be singing holiday tunes at 1 PM.



Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center Rock Creek Marina & Campground

Open Every Day, All Winter!

Camp Store + Nature Gallery, Thursday - Sunday ~ 8 AM - 4 PM
Nature Gallery Only, Monday - Wednesday ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

We Rent Cross County Skis, Snowshoes & Ice Skates!

- ◆ Watch Big Fish in the Huge River Aquarium
- ◆ Feel Mussels in Our Touch Tank
- ◆ Investigate Underwater at Turtle Island
- ◆ Climb Through a Giant Hollow Tree
- ◆ Explore a Mississippi Riverbank



3942 291st St., Camanche, IA, 563-259-1876

ECO TOURISM CENTER

10th ~ Christmas Riverside Jam ~ 1 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ This month we'll be offering holiday music through local talents as part of the Holiday Tree Jubilee. Step up and lead or just play/sing along, sit and listen or get up and dance. There is enjoyment for all and all are welcome. Come and go at will but the music may linger until 4 PM. Refreshments are available and the entire family is welcome. This is a free event although donations to support the center are always welcomed.

13th ~ A Nature Story ~ 10 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek

14th ~ Build an Ice Fishing Rod ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Local rod builder, Garry Land will be on hand to help you build your very own, unique ice fishing rod for only \$30. Space is limited so register today at www.mycountyparks.com



16th ~ For Goodness Snakes ~

10 AM ~ Discovery Center, Clinton ~ Naturalist Jess will share her love for animals by bringing a few live snakes for your child to see, touch and hold (if they want)! There will be a story, activity and snack. This event is free of charge.

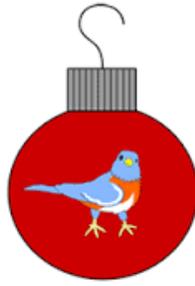
20th ~ A Nature Story ~ 10 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek

20th ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Join this great volunteer group that supports the Eco Center through volunteering for events, hosting events and much more!

21st ~ Funny Feathers ~ 11:15 AM ~ Camanche Public Library ~ This presentation will be all about feathers and the animals that are covered by them. There will be a book, craft and snack.



21st ~ Natural Ornaments For Your “Elves” ~ 5:30 PM ~ Eco Center, Rock Creek ~ Join us as we make several Christmas tree ornaments out of natural materials. Crafts are designed for five years old and up and all children must be accompanied by an adult. Sign up is required, please visit www.mycountyparks.com or call 563-349-8680 by December 19th.



27th ~ A Nature Story ~ 10 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek

28th ~ Iowa Furbearers ~ O.W.L.s ~ Noon ~ MRETC, Rock Creek ~ Learn about our wide variety of winter mammals here in Clinton County. With kids on Christmas Break, this would be a great time to bring them out for the day. O.W.L.s are people Older, Wiser & Livelier. This is a new series we are trying to establish. Each O.W.L.s event will start off with a hearty cup of soup then feature an educational talk and slideshow plus artifacts.



January

3rd ~ A Nature Story ~ 10 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek

5th ~ Bird Watching Walk ~ 9 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek ~ Brave the elements and walk around with a Naturalist at Rock Creek during this low-key activity. The area is great for birds as water and woods come together. Binoculars, scopes, field guides and hot cocoa provided. Hopefully, this will become a popular monthly event that rotates around many of our parks and wildlife areas. Meet at the Eco Tourism Center.



5th ~ Music at the Barn ~ 6:30 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~

Local talents will provide entertaining instrumental and vocal offerings of a wide variety of music. Participants with musical talents are invited to bring their instruments along for this “coffee house-style” jam. Refreshments are available and the entire family is welcome. This is a free event although donations to support the center are always welcomed.

7th ~ 33rd Annual Bald Eagle Watch ~ 9 AM—2 PM - Clinton Community College ~ Eagle Watching at Lock & Dam 13 ~ Lock & Dam 13 is located 3 miles north of Fulton, IL



along Highway 84. Clinton Community College is located at 1000 Lincoln Blvd., Clinton, IA. The program is dedicated to the understanding, appreciation and protection of our national symbol. Programs will feature live birds of prey. The exhibit hall at Clinton Community College will feature exhibits, door prizes, food and drinks. For information contact the Thomson Park Rangers at 815-259-3628.

10th ~ A Nature Story ~ 10 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek

11th ~ Sharks and Rays of Monterey ~ 9 AM ~ Wild Winter Wednesdays @ the Windmill Cultural Center, Fulton, IL ~ Learn about the shark & ray study Naturalist Mark Roberts participated in with the Pelagic Shark Research Foundation in 2007. Light refreshments served. The event is free and for everyone.



12th ~ An Animal Encounter ~ 10 AM ~ Eco Center, Rock Creek ~ Preschoolers and their parents can enjoy an animal encounter through games, crafts and live animal presentations. This program is free and siblings are welcome!

12th ~ Full Moon, Eye Shine & GPS Hike ~ 6 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ We’ll hike the Nature Barn’s trails to Eagle Point Park, stopping to enjoy the sights and sounds of the winter night under the illumination of Luna.

Learn to identify certain mammals by their eye shine while navigating with a GPS unit or your phone app. Snowshoes will be available if necessary. Refreshments are available and the entire family is welcome. This is a free event although donations to support the center are always welcomed.



13th & 14th ~ Fifth Annual Young Ladies Lock-in ~ (Fri. 6 PM - Sat. 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 is required, visit www.mycountyparks.com to register your child by December 9th. Cost is \$15/girl which will include a t-shirt! Space is limited so register your child today!



17th ~ A Nature Story ~ 10 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek

17th ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Join this great volunteer group that supports the Eco Center through volunteering for events, hosting events and much more!

18th ~ Snow Science ~ 11:15 AM ~ Camanche Public Library ~ This will be all about snow and the cool science behind it! There will be a book, craft and snack.

21st ~ Winter Sports Clinic ~ 10 AM ~ Ericksen Community Center ~ Emma Young Park, Clinton ~ This is winter fun for all that begins with an in-depth look at the sports of snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. After, we will crack open the gear trailer and check out equipment, free of charge, from 11 AM till 1 PM. A group demonstration will be followed by private lessons if desired.

21st ~ Riverside Jam ~ 2 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ This “coffee-house-style” music event offers local talents and center guests an opportunity to gather together for a variety of music in a casual setting. Step up and lead or just play/sing along. Sit and listen or get up and dance. There is enjoyment for all and all are welcome. Come and go at will but the music may linger until 4 PM. Refreshments are available and the entire family is welcome. This is a free event although donations to support the center are always welcomed.

24th ~ A Nature Story ~ 10 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek

25th ~ Cargo for Conservation ~ O.W.L.s ~ Noon ~ MRETC, Rock Creek ~ Learn

about the problem of the world trade in illegal wildlife products. We will be showing a vast collections of items made from elephant ivory to endangered turtles. O.W.L.s are people Older, Wiser & Livelier. This is a new series we are trying to establish. Each O.W.L.s event will start off with a hearty cup of soup then feature an educational talk plus artifacts.



27th ~ Turtle Talk ~ 10 AM ~ Discovery Center, Clinton ~ Naturalist Jess will share her love for animals by bringing a few live turtles for your child to see, touch and hold (if they want)! There will be a story, activity and snack. This event is free of charge.

31st ~ A Nature Story ~ 10 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek

February (Sneak Peek)

1st ~ Bird Watching Walk ~ 9 AM ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Meet at the Nature Center and walk around with a Naturalist at Eden Valley during this low-key activity. The area is great for over wintering birds in the shelter of the valley’s high bluffs. Binoculars, scopes, field guides and hot chocolate provided.

1st ~ Very Beary ~ 11:15 AM ~ Camanche Public Library ~ This presentation will be all about bears! There will be a book, craft and snack.

2nd ~ Music in the Barn ~ 6:30 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ Local talents will provide entertaining instrumental and vocal offerings of a wide variety of music. Participants with musical talents are invited to bring their instruments along for this “coffee house-style” jam. Refreshments are available and the entire family is welcome. This is a free event although donations to support the center are always welcomed.

4th ~ Winter Survival ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a minute to learn about the many challenges winter has and have fun doing it! This family fun program will teach you how to build fires, boil water and build shelters all while having fun outside! All children must be accompanied by an adult, registration is required for this free event. Space is limited, sign up at www.mycountyparks.com or call 563-847-7202 by January 30th.



4th ~ Hunting Heritage Banquet, Eastern Iowa Wild Turkey Federation ~ 5 PM ~ Millennium Ballroom, Goose Lake ~ For more information call Mike House at 563-357-9251 or email mike.house@adm.com

7th ~ A Nature Story ~ 10 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek

8th ~ Mammoth Discovery ~ O.W.L.s ~ Noon ~ MRETC, Rock Creek ~ Learn about the CCCB’s adventure helping dig out woolly mammoth bones from the earth near Os-kaloosa. O.W.L.s are people Older, Wiser & Livelier. This is a new series we are trying to establish. Each O.W.L.s event will start off with a hearty cup of soup then feature an educational talk plus artifacts.



9th ~ Full Moon, Eye Shine & GPS Hike ~ 6 PM ~ Sherman Park ~ We’ll hike the parks trails stopping to enjoy the sights and sounds of the winter night under the illumination of Luna. Learn to identify certain mammals by their eye shine while navigating with a GPS unit or your phone app. Snowshoes /skis will be available if necessary. Refreshments are available and the entire family is welcome. This is a free event. Meet in the North Parking lot.

14th ~ A Nature Story ~ 10 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek

18th ~ Riverside Jam ~ 2 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ This “coffee-house-style” music event offers local talents and center guests an opportunity to gather together for a variety of music in a casual setting. Step up and lead or just play/sing along. Sit and listen or get up and dance. There is enjoyment for all and all are welcome. Come and go at will but the music may linger until 4 PM. Refreshments are available and the entire family is welcome. This is a free event although donations to support the center are always welcomed.

18th ~ Whitetails Unlimited Banquet ~ 5 PM ~ Millennium Ballroom, Goose Lake ~ Help provide public hunting, wildlife habitat and the future of the hunting tradition. Children in attendance receives special prizes. Tickets are \$45 each, \$20 for spouses and children. Deadline is February 10th. Call Mark Roberts at 563-349-0956 for tickets.

21st ~ A Nature Story ~ 10 AM ~ MRETC, Rock Creek

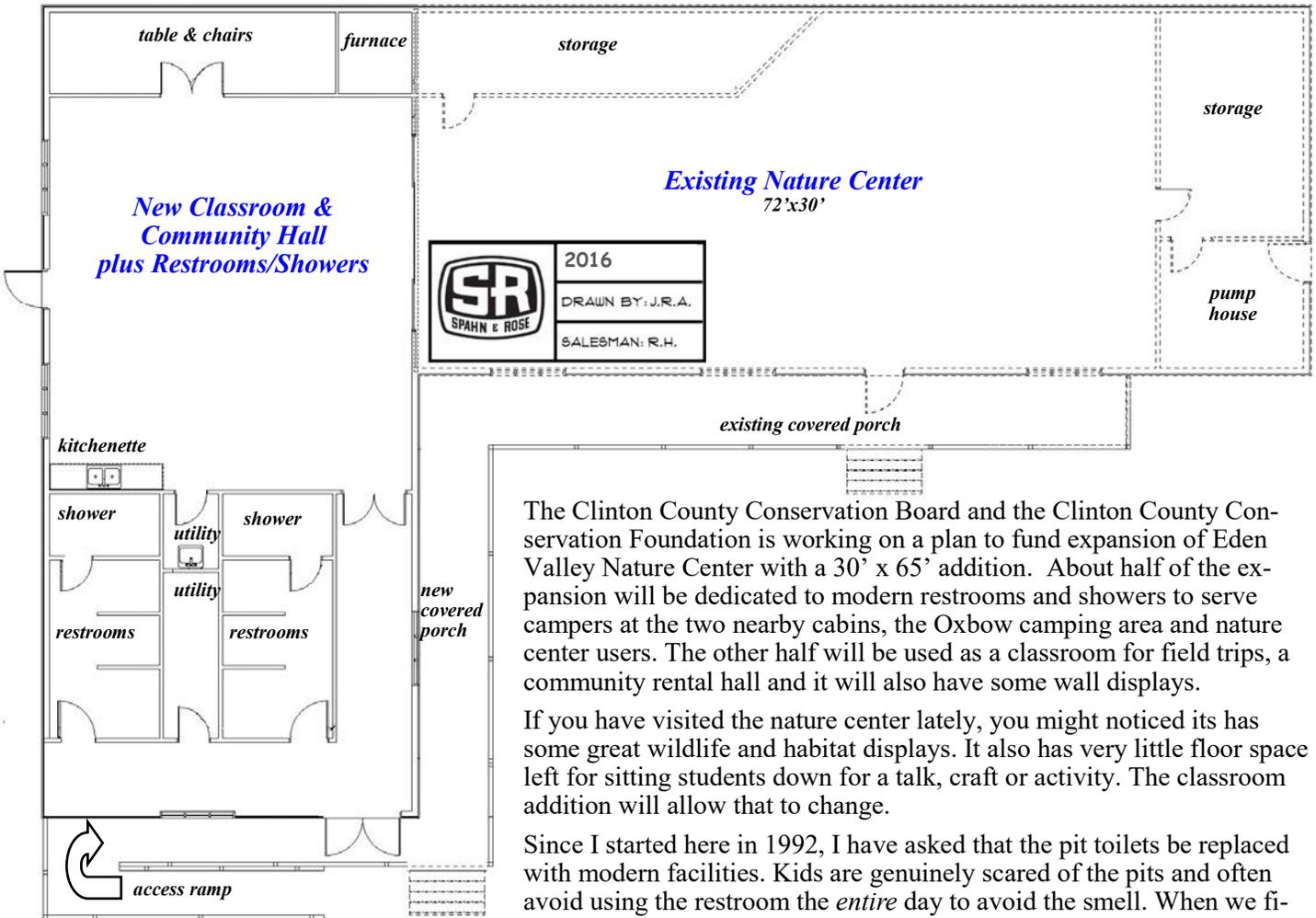
22nd ~ Birds of Prey ~ 9 AM ~ Wild Winter Wednesdays @ the Windmill Cultural Center, Fulton, IL ~ This will likely be the public debut for our new Red-tailed Hawk. Learn about red-tails and other local raptors. Light refreshments served. The event is free and for everyone.



23rd ~ An Animal Encounter ~ 10 AM ~ Eco Center, Rock Creek ~ Preschoolers and their parents can enjoy an animal encounter through games, crafts and live animal presentations. This program is free and siblings are welcome!

Eden Valley Nature Center Expansion Plan

by Mark Roberts, Education Coordinator



The Clinton County Conservation Board and the Clinton County Conservation Foundation is working on a plan to fund expansion of Eden Valley Nature Center with a 30' x 65' addition. About half of the expansion will be dedicated to modern restrooms and showers to serve campers at the two nearby cabins, the Oxbow camping area and nature center users. The other half will be used as a classroom for field trips, a community rental hall and it will also have some wall displays.

If you have visited the nature center lately, you might noticed its has some great wildlife and habitat displays. It also has very little floor space left for sitting students down for a talk, craft or activity. The classroom addition will allow that to change.

Since I started here in 1992, I have asked that the pit toilets be replaced with modern facilities. Kids are genuinely scared of the pits and often avoid using the restroom the *entire* day to avoid the smell. When we finally get facilities, field trip experiences will be much better and I believe that more classes will want to go to Eden Valley for class trips.

Eden Valley is our most beautiful park and has the best trails for hiking and exploring. The Swinging Bridge and Observation Tower are great attractions. Bear Creek and the high limestone cliffs are spectacular. With this addition, more people will enjoy Eden Valley Refuge.

It pays to dream. Eden Valley Nature Center has undergone many changes since it was first built in 1978. We have changed displays, flooring, ceiling, even heat and air. None are as dramatic or useful as what we have planned.



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MAILING LIST

Clinton County addresses can 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.

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 can be changed.

