



# The Heron

*Newsletter of Clinton County Conservation  
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## Mississippi River eco Tourism cenTeR GRand opening!

*by Walt Wickham, Executive Director*

The Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center at Rock Creek Marina & Campground first opened its doors to the public in April of 2012. To those who didn't know any better, it may have seemed to literally sprung up over night from the very mud of the River's backwaters. What most don't realize is that it took more than 10 years of planning, dreaming, long meetings, hair pulling, arm twisting and fundraising to get to this day. It is only because of the help of literally hundreds of people who believed in the vision of an Eco Center that this dream came true. And what a dream it was! Did you know that an Eco Tourism Center was not the original plan? There is more to this story than people know.

It was back in 2003 that the Conservation Board began this journey. The board was looking for a way to replace the old camp store at Rock Creek. The existing building had been through a lot of high water and had seen much better days. The roof was bad and the structural supports were rotting. It became obvious that it needed more than just some repairs. It needed to be replaced. So discussions began on the construction of new building. Of course, the building would include a new, bigger and better camp store and cafe. But what else was needed? What follows is my 'condensed Reader's Digest' version of the making of an Eco Center.

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***A Definition: Ecotourism*** is a form of tourism involving visiting pristine, and relatively undisturbed natural areas, intended as a low-impact and often small scale alternative to commercial tourism. Its purpose may be to educate travelers and to provide funds for ecological conservation.

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"What we really need," said our environmental education team, "is an indoor classroom space. A place to gather when the weather doesn't allow for outdoor activities." So a classroom was added to what was needed at Rock Creek.

"You really should have a place for family get-togethers, class reunions, wedding receptions and the like," suggested a member of the County Board of Supervisors. So a hall that will seat 200 people was added to the vision.

The discussion continued. "What we ought to include", said the Conservation Board, "is a nature and visitors' center. A place where people can learn about the river ecosystem." We could also use a place where folks traveling through could learn about other area attractions. Another addition.

Then a staff member added, "An aquarium". "A really large aquarium with Mississippi River fish would be a great educational tool and attraction." So an 8,000 gallon aquarium that measures 18 feet in length, 10 feet in width and 6 feet deep was brainstormed. Another person said "a smaller meeting room, theater and office space is needed as well." So these items were added as well.

Over time, we developed a fanciful dream of what could be, but what we didn't have was a real plan. At this point, an architect was hired to try and put the dream on paper. The architect sat down and listened to all of our ideas and suggestions and came back with a plan. A plan, for what was to eventually become, the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center.

The catch was the price tag...\$1.7 million dollars for the building alone. "Wow, sounds great. But how are we to raise that kind of money?" I asked, as the Conservation Board's Director. A fundraising consultant was hired by the Conservation Foundation and the hard work of fundraising began. To date, over \$2.25 million has been raised. Over 95% of the funds came from a combination of grants and donations. This allowed us to put up the building, install the aquarium and add the furnishings and displays.

We are all very proud of our new Center and what it offers to the residents and visitors of Clinton County. So it is with great pride that the Conservation Board, the Conservation Foundation, volunteers, the staff and I invite you to come to Rock Creek on September 29<sup>th</sup> from 1-5 PM and help us celebrate the grand opening of the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center. I know you will love it as much as we do.



# Woolly MaMMoThs In IoWa

by Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist

“Look over to that building there...that was the size of one of these mammoths we are digging up.” The whole group that gathered that morning looks over and a sense of awe and realization comes over us. The building wasn’t much, chipped white paint and not very big for a building these days but imagining it as an animal roaming the land, grazing all the while, now that is impressive! An average woolly mammoth stood 11 feet tall and weighed 4 to 5 tons, similar in size to an Asian elephant but had up to 3 foot-long fur, with 15 foot -long tusks! Possibly, three woolly mammoths (once thought to be Columbian mammoths until the discoveries of some well-preserved teeth, skull fragments and 4-foot section of a tusk) have been unearthed at the Mahaska County farm site, including one elderly, a huge middle-aged, 40-year old bull and a juvenile.

Woolly mammoths are not thought to be as common in Iowa as their cousins the Columbian, so having three unearthed together is very exciting to researchers. The size of one of the three brutes at the site along with some findings on other Midwest mammoths have some paleontologists rethinking how big woollies might have been. Some may have stood 13 feet high and weighed 8 to 12 tons. The circumference of one of the tusks found at the site was as big around as a gallon paint can!

Not only is the size of woolly mammoths being questioned but also the theory of where they lived. According to Chris Widga of the Illinois State Museum who is a consultant of the dig and studying the distribution of mammoths in the Midwest stated, “In recent years, we've come to the realization that woolly mammoths were not necessarily the open-land, tundra dwellers we always thought they were. Rather than following tundra habitat to the north as the glaciers receded, many mammoths stayed put in the Midwest, eventually going died-out as local populations.”

We, Mary Broadfoot, the summer Intern Naturalist, Karen Brix the office Administration Assistant and myself, set off early one Friday morning to make Iowa history, unearthing more of the mammoths. Coordinated by the Mahaska County Conservations naturalist, Laura DeCook, this dig included 25 other people with naturalist backgrounds. Yeah, we all wanted to do it for the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, to be a part of history, to have some glory and bragging rights, but they also wanted to learn, first hand, the paleontology process, what does a mammoth bone look and feel like after it has been buried for 14 thousand years, help scientist figure out what

is the Ice Age history of Iowa and most importantly, how can we tell the tale to other people.

The group met first thing in the morning at the future site of Mahaska County Conservation’s nature center, outside of Oskaloosa. It sounds like the center will focus on the mammoth discovery, with talk of buying some of the bones to display and portray Iowa’s Ice Age as best as they can inside and out. We then carpooled to the farm where the mammoth site is located. As the group congregates around the truck that would carry our meals, water and tools through the pasture to the dig site, the dig leaders show us the foot bone Karen excavated 10 months before and some replicas the University of Iowa had made of it. Good job Karen!

All the while, I could see the anticipation on everyone’s face on what they would encounter. I tried to describe them how it was when we were there previously. I had no idea how the site looked now, because it was a shock to me how muddy it was when the state was in a drought. Less than a year later, it was still muddy. The seep turned into stream that created a sort of waterfall so now there was a narrow plank to get across the gully. It was speculated that bones would be found there because it had been a hotspot when they stopped digging last winter. They were not sure if the ground slumped and buried the bones deeper. It was hard work, digging one inch at time, filling the 5-gallon bucket only half full of the dense, wet, sometimes blue clay. To then lug it up the jagged steps carved into the earth, 8 feet up and 10 feet back to the waste pile. I stuck it out there most of the day to find a few fragments.

The other hot spot was unlike the mucky site it was hard, dry pay dirt! It was like the beginning of a game of “pick-up sticks” then it sort of turned into a version of the game of “Operation” to expose, but not extract or harm the mammoth bones. After lunch, Karen and Mary set to work finding a few bones but as they continued, they unearthed a sturdy, block-like bone that had a perfectly round hole in it. Hmmm, what

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Wannabe paleontologists Karen Brix, Jessica Steines and Mary Broadfoot.



Mary covered in mud after wading in the muck, sorry for the high-fives Mary!



Karen and others sifting the excavated material for bone fragments as there are no bones smaller than a walnut.

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could it be? Our suspicions were confirmed at the end of the day, it was a vertebrae! Along that same side-slope was part of a tusk, scapula, several ribs and much more!

Our long but exciting day at the site ended at 5:30 PM. We caught a ride back to our vehicles to find that there were loose cattle running around we had to help catch. But that is another story all together! Keep on exploring, it's hard telling what might be out your backdoor.



Mary and Karen's vertebrae



Flags indicating where bones were discovered.



Dirt dump zone

Thigh-high muck

Stream and gully

Getting the lowdown of the sight, little did we know we were standing on a plethora of mammoth bones.

## September events

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Half price Canoes & Kayaks ~ 8 AM-Noon ~ Rock Creek** ~ Get your family or friends together and come spend some quality time on the water. Stop in the camp store and rent a canoe or kayak to use on the backwaters.

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Hayrack Rides ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ Join us aboard a wagon for a leisurely ride around our park. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**5<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruises ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ Every Thursday evenings through October, we will be offering naturalist-guided eco cruises aboard the Blue Heron pontoon boat on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for free reservations.

**5<sup>th</sup> ~ "Bat Stream" Encounter ~ 7:30 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ Right after the Sunset Cruise, join a naturalist for a short

hayride to "The Bat Stream" for a close encounter with 5,000+ bats as they make their way to the river for a night of foraging for insects. Meet at the Eco Tourism Center.

**6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> ~ Grandparents Day Weekend ~ Rock Creek**

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Free Canoes & Kayaks ~ 8 AM-Noon ~ Rock Creek** ~ Get your grandkids together and spend some quality time on the water. Stop in the camp store and check out a canoe or kayaks to use in the backwaters.

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Grand Kid Crafts ~ 8 AM-Noon ~ Rock Creek** Kids are invited to come into the camp store to make a card to celebrate Grandparents Day.

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley ~**

Come tour the varied exhibits of this gem of a nature center. Native American, early settlement and natural artifacts fill the center and the live animal exhibits are always a hit with the youth.

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## Early autumn's conservation Education Events *continued*

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi Center ~** Join the director of the observatory, for a celestial tour of the spring sky. Call 563-333-6141 for weather cancellations.

**12<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruises ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Marvelous Monarchs ~ 6:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~**

There will be a short presentation about monarchs along with why and how to tag a monarch. So, come to tag and release these beauties so they can continue their marvelous migration down south.



**14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> ~ Tri-State Custom**

**Rodbuilders Workshop ~ Rock Creek ~** There will be various instructors including Bill Batson, BD Ehler, Ron Walter, Mark Blabaum, Becky Loyd, Dr. Garry Land & more. Chuck and Debbie Brown from Decal Connection will attend too. The gathering will start at 10 AM on Saturday and at 9 AM on Sunday. There will be lunch provided, along with a lot to learn and share. For further details or to send an RSVP, please contact Dr. Garry Land at [fl188@excite.com](mailto:fl188@excite.com) or at 563-249-1213 in order to plan ahead for food. Workshop is free – goodwill donations accepted for lunch.

**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Youth Outdoor Skills Day ~ 9 AM - 2:30 PM ~**

**Clinton Izaak Walton League ~** Looking for a way to open your child's eyes to a life of adventure in the great outdoors and gain experience with a variety of outdoor skills? We have just the thing! Clinton County kids, ages 11-17, will learn about safety and skills at various stations staffed by various Conservation Organizations such as *Pheasants Forever, Harvester Bass Club, Whitetails Unlimited, Wild Turkey Federation, Clinton Ike's and Clinton County Conservation*. All stations will involve hands-on

activities designed to give kids practical experience while keeping safety at the forefront. Parents and younger siblings are encouraged to attend. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Each participant will be charged a non-refundable \$10 fee and receive a T-shirt. Call 563-242-6939 to sign-up.



**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Clinton County Area EnviroKids ~ 10 AM-Noon ~ Rock Creek ~** Grades 3-5 (younger children if accompanied by an adult). Hop aboard the Blue Heron Pontoon Boat at Rock Creek for a cruise and activities at the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center. One-time \$5 entry fee for EnviroKids. Sign-up with Judie Petersen 563-357-6932.

**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley**

**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Big Game Hunting and Photo Safari, Around the World ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** Cole James of Bettendorf will share his experiences of a lifetime of chasing big game. He will share stories, pictures and will show off many of his trophies as well. Everything from bison and elk, to zebra and giraffe, to ibex and Corsican sheep. Learn about how hunting and photo safaris help local economies from Nebraskan farm towns to African villages.



**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Cave Exploration ~ 5:30 PM ~ Eden Valley ~** Pack a flashlight and wear your muddin' clothes and join a naturalist as you get a unique, hands-on experience exploring a local gem, Werden's cave. Participants must be physically able to army crawl and walk uphill and uneven terrain. Space is limited so please call 563-847-7202 to register before noon on September 16<sup>th</sup>.

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruises ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** Call 563-259-1876 for free reservations.

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi River Center, Inc. Meeting ~ 7 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~** Join us at the Eagle View Eco Center to learn about current events, happenings and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi River Center.

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Moonlight & Music Cruise ~ 8:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** Enjoy a relaxing cruise local musicians and vocalists offer a variety of music under the full moon. The ride is free but registration is limited so call 563-259-1876 and reserve your seats today. Be sure to stop by the camp store for your pass before boarding.

**20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> ~Tailgate Weekend ~ Rock Creek ~** Decorate your campsite for your favorite sports team.

☺ **21<sup>st</sup> ~ Chili/Soup Cook-off Fundraiser ~ 2-4 PM ~**

**Rock Creek ~** We will be hosting our 1<sup>st</sup> ever chili/soup cook off fundraiser. All proceeds will be used to fund educational displays at the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center. We invite individuals and businesses to join us for this fundraiser. Call Kim at 563-593-2171 or Michelle at 563-259-1876 for details and to sign up.



☺ **21<sup>st</sup> ~ Riverside Jam ~ 2 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** Local musicians and vocalists gather to share and enjoy music of many types from Folk to Rock and Roll. Bring your instrument and/or voice and join in the fun. Or just come sit and listen or jump up and dance! The whole family is welcome.

**21<sup>st</sup> ~ Choose to Care ~ 9 AM-Noon ~ Soaring Eagle ~** Care-givers help with a variety of projects both indoors and out. There is something to meet everyone's talents and abilities. Come and join in the fun and community spirit. *Give us a call at 563-357-0759 so we know to expect you.*

**21<sup>st</sup> ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley**

**24<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek, Eco Tourism Center ~** No dues ever! New member's and guests are welcome!

**26<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruises ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**28<sup>th</sup> ~ Twenty-Second Annual Wapsi River Fall Ecology Day ~ 10 AM - 5 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~** Bring the whole family for a fun-filled day of activities. Our theme this year is "Hunting and Gathering". Learn how to shoot a bow and arrow and then learn how to hunt with an Atlatl. Explore the Wapsi Center's prairie for a lesson on plants and harvesting seed. Lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. Please pre-register call 563-328-3286.



**28<sup>th</sup> ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley**

**28<sup>th</sup> ~ Public Open House, Jens-Wendt Observatory ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~** View skies through a 20-inch telescope, if the skies are clear.

**29<sup>th</sup> ~ Grand Opening, Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center ~ 1-5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** We invite you to come out to help us celebrate the grand opening of the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center. Watch the local media for details or call 563-259-1876 closer to the date.



## October events

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Dream Catchers ~ 4:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** This family fun program will tell the story of the dream catcher! Learn the history of this traditional craft and spend time making your own dream catcher to take home with you! Children need to be accommodated by an adult.

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Alliant Energy's Operation ReLeaf ~ 4:30 - 6:30 PM ~ Westbrook Park, DeWitt ~**

This program helps Alliant Energy customers save energy in their homes using trees to provide shade during the summer and create wind breaks during the winter. You can purchase up to two trees for \$25 each (average cost is \$65). Advance purchase is recommended. <http://www.alliantenergy.com/CommunityInvolvement/CommunityOutreach/OperationReLeaf/index.htm>



**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Fall Color Blue Heron Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** Call 563-259-1876 for free reservations.

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Music in the Loft ~ 7 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.

**5<sup>th</sup> ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley**

**5<sup>th</sup> ~ Clinton County Chapter of Pheasants Forever Banquet ~ 5 PM ~ Millennium Ballroom ~** Pheasants Forever's Clinton County Chapter is holding its annual fundraiser at the Millennium Ballroom in Goose Lake. The group provides local wildlife habitat. Call Brad Taylor at 563-357-0465 for tickets.



**10<sup>th</sup> ~ Fall Color Blue Heron Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** Call 563-259-1876 for free reservations..

**10<sup>th</sup> ~ Birds of Low Light ~ 6:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** As the sun sets and night creeps upon us we often hear sounds of birds that we rarely get a chance to see. This power point presentation will shed some light on the mysterious birds of the crepuscular world!

**11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> ~ Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Meeting ~ 5 PM (Fri.) to 1 PM (Sun.) ~ Eco Tourism Center, Rock Creek ~** The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was founded in 1923, bringing together a group of people interested in the study and enjoyment of wild birds. The Fall Meeting is the highlight of the birding year for many. This is a great time to see old friends and make new ones as well as enjoy some educational presentations and some great outings. The Fall Meeting of the IOU will be held at the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center, Rock Creek Marina & Campground, which is situated on Pool #14 of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge. There is no shortage of birding areas and with a 24-passenger pontoon made available by Clinton County Conservation, we will have the opportunity to explore the river itself. <http://iowabirds.org/Meetings/NextMeeting.aspx>

**12<sup>th</sup> ~ Old-time Bluegrass Gathering ~ Noon - 9 PM ~ Eden Valley ~** On the 11<sup>th</sup> of October we will have a big jam around the campfire all afternoon and evening and then the stage show on Saturday the 12<sup>th</sup>. This will be the 31<sup>st</sup> year and it keeps getting better each year! Once you attend, you will never want to miss it again! Call Mary McAndrews 563-343-7002 for more information.

**12<sup>th</sup> ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 PM ~ Eden Valley**

**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Fall Color Blue Heron Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** Call 563-259-1876 for free reservations.

**19th ~ Choose to Care ~ 9 AM - Noon ~ Soaring Eagle ~** Give us a call at 563-357-0759 so we know to expect you.

**19th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 PM ~ Eden Valley ~** This will be the last weekend of the season we will be open.

**19th ~ Riverside Jam ~ 2 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**19th & 20th ~ Overnight Fall Paddle Float ~ 3:45 PM (Sat.) ~ Rock Creek ~** We'll meet at the Eco-tourism Center to complete forms and checkout equipment for the final float of the year. Then at 4 PM we will carpool to the McCausland Landing for our put-in. We will complete the trip Sunday morning by landing at Rock Creek Marina. Participants will be responsible for their own food and camp gear. Participants 17 years and under must be accompanied by parent or legal guardian. The county's paddle craft (canoes & kayaks) and gear (paddles, dry bags, whistles, maps, pfd's) will be available on a first-come, first-served basis by calling 563-847-7202 to register before noon on October 17th.



**22nd ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek, Eco Tourism Center**

**24th ~ Season Finale: Fall Color Blue Heron Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** Call 563-259-1876 for reservations.

**25th-27th ~ Halloween at Rock Creek Weekend ~** Decorate your campsites for Halloween. We will be awarding prizes to the best decorated site. Judging will be on Saturday evening during hayrides.

**On Saturday, October 26th at Rock Creek**

**The Painted Dragon Face Art ~ 2 PM ~** The talented Kristal Shaff will be on hand to paint an awesome face design to show off all evening. Free!

**Pressing Apples ~ 3 PM ~** Come to make some homemade apple juice then enjoy a sample. Donation of a bag of apples is appreciated but not required!

**Trick or Treat at Rock Creek! ~ 5 PM ~** We invite our campground children to get dressed in their Halloween attire to trick or treat through the campground. We ask that our campers please pass out candy to our little ghouls and goblins.

**Owl Calling Cruises ~ 6:30 PM ~** We will be taking short pontoon boat rides out every hour to call in some barred owls and see the Halloween displays via water aboard our own lit-up vessel.

**Lighted Hayrack Ride ~ 7 PM ~** Join us aboard a wagon for a lighted ride around the park to view the decorated campsites. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**Site Judging ~ 9 PM ~** We will awarding prizes to the campsite who has the most Halloween spirit.

**26th ~ Fall Fest ~ 4 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~** Bring the whole family out for an evening of autumn fun. We'll be painting faces, carving jack-o-lanterns, roasting hot dogs and marshmallows to the tunes of John Denver and others, leading spook-tacular night hikes and pulling a hay rack through Eagle Point Park spotting whatever lurks in the darkness. And it's all free of charge, though the donation jar will be there for those who want to stuff it.



## November events Sneak-peek

**2nd ~ Bald Eagle Eco Cruise ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek ~** This will be the public's last opportunity this year to take an Eco Cruise on the Blue Heron Pontoon Boat. The American bald eagles are starting to congregate along the Mississippi for the winter, and we hope to see several of the birds, during the cruise. Before freeze-up, the bald eagles are spread out along the river and the best way to see them is via boat. Call 563-259-1876 to register.

**2nd ~ Fall Leaf Hike ~ 10 AM ~ Wapsi Center ~** Enjoy a fall stroll at the Wapsi River Center to explore our local trees. Learn how to identify trees by their leaves, bark, seeds, nuts and fruits. Bring the family for this informative jaunt through the woods. Call 563-328-3286 to register. BYOM (Bring Your Own Mug) as hot beverages will be offered at the end of the hike.

**2nd ~ Black Hawk Hiking Club's Wapsi Night Hike ~ 7 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~** Join members and representatives of the Black Hawk Hiking Club for a stroll through the Wapsi River Center's wild places. Learn more about this highly active hiking club. Light refreshments will be served after the hike. For information please call 563-328-3286.

**16th ~ 2nd Annual Veterans and Active Duty Military Pheasant Hunt ~ 8 AM-4 PM ~ Beckridge Hunting Preserve, 613th Ave., Sabula ~** Our goal is to give back to our military men, women and veterans



and thank them for all they have done by providing a fun day of camaraderie and pheasant hunting. Open to all veterans, active duty, retired and reserve military men and women. Disabled are encouraged to attend. This day is meant to bring together those who have served and are currently serving, to honor them as a community. People who hunted at the March event are not eligible to hunt again. To volunteer or donate call Beckridge at 563-687-2985. To register, <http://qcaveteranshunt.webs.com>.

- ⚡ Veterans hunt for free (no charge)
- ⚡ Half day pheasant hunt (choice: 8-11 AM or 1-4 PM)
- ⚡ Lunch will be provided
- ⚡ Hunting licenses and ammunition will be provided
- ⚡ Firearms can be supplied on a limited basis

# Iowa's Invader!

by Jill Schmidt, Interpretive Naturalist

Do you own your own timber land? Do you enjoy spending time outdoors, hunting, hiking or camping? Are you someone who appreciates the land Iowa has to offer? If you answered yes to any of these questions then this article topic is something you want to pay attention to. You may be familiar with the terms EAB, Emerald Ash Borer, or you may have seen the purple traps that have been placed in attempt to locate this invader as soon as possible but do you really know the threat this invader has on our ash trees? Do you know the damage this small insect can do to large areas of forests or even how fast they can spread through a neighborhood? This is the information you want to know, and it's our goal to spread the word in hopes to slow the spread of this Iowa invader!

A native beetle to Asia, the emerald ash borer was discovered in Detroit, Michigan in 2002. Arriving in the United States by what is thought to have been wooden crates from China, the emerald ash borer has advanced to 18 states and Canada. More recently found in Iowa in 2010, it has now been confirmed in Allamakee, Des Moines and Jefferson counties. Although that seems like a slow spread, it is just a matter of time before it enters your area and the idea of tree destruction will become a reality.

Understanding a little ecology of the insect gives you a better understanding of where to look for this invader. The EAB is a very small insect, measuring only a 1/2 inch in length and 1/8 inch in width. As you see in the picture above, it is small enough to fit on a penny. According to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources it is known to have very little flight capability only flying as far as a few miles at the most and feeds on the tree foliage through the summer months. The life cycle of the EAB depends on the ash tree for success. The adult emerges from the tree in late spring, mates and then lays its eggs on the leaves of the ash tree, 60-90 eggs per adult female. Once these eggs hatch it is the larvae that does the most damage. The EAB larvae have the appearance of a white grub and is known for leaving behind the snake-like patterns in the inner layers of the bark of ash trees. The larvae burrow through the underlying layers of the bark and feed on the living tissue, cutting off the 'pipelines' of nutrients, minerals and water. Over several years, the annihilation of the live tissue is the ultimate cause of death to the tree.

The damage this beetle has inflicted on our country is astonishing. Many years have passed since the discovery of the emerald ash borer and the numbers of trees killed continues to rise. According to the national EAB website, it has killed tens of millions of ash trees in southeastern Michigan alone, with tens of millions more lost in 21 states and provinces including, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri and now Iowa.

According to the USDA Forest Service Forest Inventory



Photo courtesy of USDA (above)  
Photos courtesy IDNR (right)



Assessments, all 99 counties in Iowa have some ash trees totaling approximately 52 million in rural forests and another 30 million in urban settings. Many people plant ash trees as an ornamental tree in their yards; it is a native tree to Iowa. In addition to its aesthetic value, wood from ash trees has many uses. It is a hardwood and is dense and tough but carries elasticity giving it tremendous durability. It is used in archery bows, multiple tool handles, electric guitars, bowling alleys, furniture, flooring and baseball bats. The economy would most definitely be affected by the loss of the ash tree.

**The ash tree needs your help!** The easiest way to aid in the war against this invader is to know what to look for. One of the earliest signs that the EAB has infested your ash tree is the leaves on the crown begin to die off. You may also notice tree suckers sprouting from the main trunk of the tree, an increase of woodpecker activity, and the bark splitting open. Upon closer evaluation you may see the burrowing patterns left behind by the larvae under the bark. If you notice any of these signs please contact the USDA office immediately at 515-251-4083.

The situation is not hopeless and much work is being done to fight against this exotic species. Many organizations are working together, educating the public and stressing the importance of the public's role. Because the EAB has been found in firewood, it is extremely important to not move firewood, green lumber, logs or any other wood products from one area to another. The EAB is a quiet traveler and is difficult to spot. Also respect the traps being set across your county, they are being used to catch the EAB early on. Most importantly, spread the word, we all need to play a role in conquering this Iowa invader!



Placing an EAB trap  
Photo courtesy USDA

**Clinton County Conservation**  
**P.O. Box 68**  
**Grand Mound, Iowa 52751**  
**Phone: 563-847-7202**  
**Email: [conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov](mailto:conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov)**  
**Website: [www.clintoncounty-ia.gov](http://www.clintoncounty-ia.gov)**

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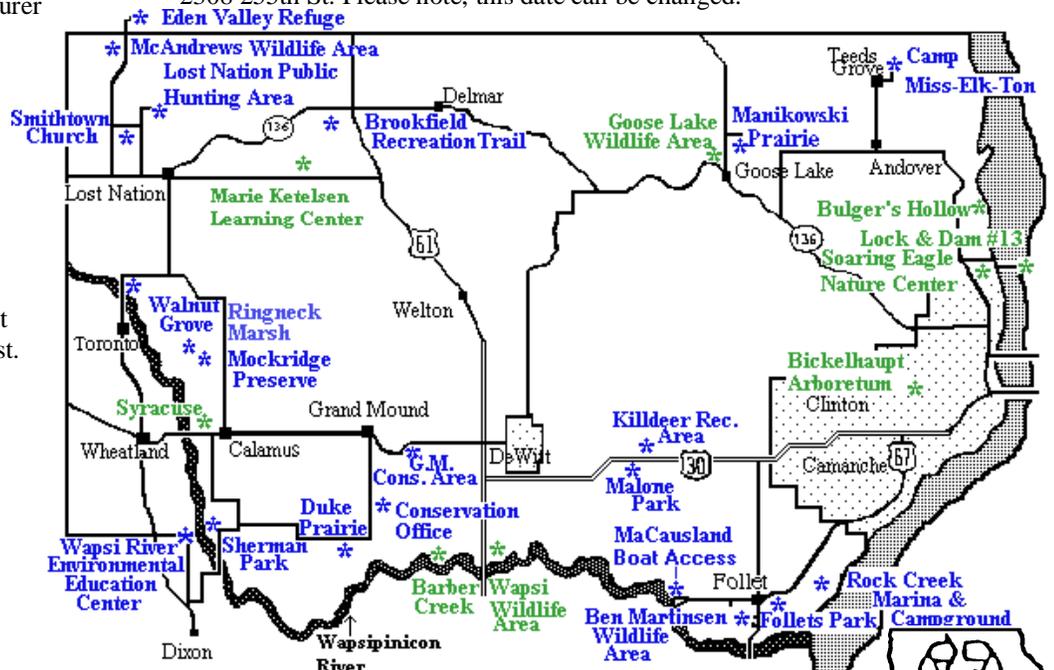
Walt Wickham, Executive Director  
 Karen Brix, Administrative Assistant  
 Mark Roberts, Education Coordinator  
 Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretive Naturalist  
 Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist  
 Jill Schmidt, Interpretive Naturalist  
 Chip Brown, Park Officer, West District  
 Dave Schneden, Maintenance, West Dist.  
 Brad Taylor, Park Officer, East District  
 Ryan Waltz, Park Ranger, East District  
 Darin Voss, Natural Resource Tech  
 Robert Schaefer, Maintenance, Central

**MAILING LIST**

Clinton County addresses are free.  
 Others are charged \$5 annually.  
 "The Heron" is on our website or emailed, free of charge.

**BOARD MEETINGS**

The Clinton County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. The Board 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.



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.

