

The Heron

*Newsletter of Clinton County Conservation
Volume 35 Number 1 January/February 2013*

Lots of Winter Things to Do at the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center

by Walt Wickham, Executive Director

After over 10 years of planning, meetings, fundraising, plus occasional bouts of frustration and hair pulling (have you noticed that my hair has gotten a little thin in recent years?), the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center at Rock Creek opened its doors this past April. The construction phase of the project is now complete and the public's reaction to the new facility has been very positive. Some of the comments that I've overheard were "amazing", "cool", "exceeded my expectations", and just plain "wow!"

Visitors are in awe of the Eco Center's 8,000 gallon aquarium. We are always adding more and larger species from out of the river, but it is a slow process. The collection of state record size fish replicas in the camp store is also a real crowd pleaser. Most folks are astounded at the variety and sizes of the species represented. And the Community Room is a big plus for those wanting a special place to hold their family get-togethers, wedding receptions and birthday parties as well as a forum for off-site business meetings and our larger Conservation Education events and classes.

Pretty amazing indeed, but we aren't quite done yet. The best, as they say, is yet to come! Work is now underway on the Eco Center's nature gallery. Starting in early December, an artist has been busy bringing the walls of the nature gallery to life. She is painting a mural of the water, woods, and wildlife surrounding the Eco Tourism Center. She is literally bringing the outdoors inside. With the help of many generous donors, including a recent donation of \$105,000 from Alliance Pipeline, construction of the nature gallery's educational displays will soon be underway. We hope to have these completed by next spring or early summer and let me tell you now...they will be AWESOME! Plans include a wetland with a crawl-through underwater tunnel for the kids and a large hollow tree with branches reaching out over the room. Board member Jim Haring likes to say that this will be the premier nature center in eastern Iowa. A lot of people, myself included, believe he is right.

By all measures, the Eco Tourism Center has had a very successful first summer. But this is a four-season facility. We are now venturing into what is traditionally the slower season in the park business... winter. This winter, the Eco Center is open Thursday – Sunday from 8 AM to 4 PM. But just because it might be cold or snowy doesn't mean

there is nothing to do. A number of activities are planned this winter. We've kicked things off this winter with our speaker series now called "Souper Saturday". Come and warm up with a bowl of hot soup and stay for the presentation. Staff and guest speakers will be at the Eco Center giving talks on topics that range from mussels of the Mississippi River to woolly mammoth digs and the history of Arsenal Island. Something for everyone indeed!

Other scheduled programs cover cold weather safety, winter fun days with cross county skiing, snow shoeing and a naturalist-led interpretive hike through the winter woods and around winding bayous and lost lakes of the backwater. Check out the *Calendar of Events* for dates and details.

Cross country skis, snowshoes and ice skates are also available to rent for a small fee at the Eco Tourism Center so you can drop in at your leisure and enjoy the wintertime outdoors. Check out the trails or skate on our new pond, then come in to warm up with hot cocoa in our camp store.

And don't rule out camping in the winter months! Winter time camping has been growing in popularity & we offer a \$5 winter camping discount. The parks campground is open year round with discounted winter rates. Heated cabins can also be rented for those slightly less adventurous souls.

We have a lot of activities planned for Rock Creek and the Eco Tourism Center this winter. Any way you slice it, there is something for everyone. Keep an eye out for upcoming events in *The Heron* and on our Facebook page or just stop in and say hello. We would love to see you!



A Butterfly Flaps its Wings

by Mark Roberts, Education Coordinator

A minute change in influential circumstances is referred to as *the butterfly effect*. This metaphor suggests that a butterfly flapping its wings, an almost imperceptible influence, could contribute to the development of a hurricane on the other side of the globe.

Such a thing happened as we were putting together this newsletter. I received an email from Mike Granger at the Wapsi Center that said they were changing the rhythm of their newsletter, the W.R.E.N. (Wapsi River Environmental News). He said they were shifting their newsletter cycle from a Jan.-Mar. format to Dec.-Feb. Mike's email was the butterfly wing flap.

It set off a discussion in our office of how best to get our information out to the public, what is the highest purpose of our newsletter and what is it worth in budget dollars. We currently publish four issues per year. We discussed whether we should keep our newsletter on the current schedule or should we change to three newsletters per year, or perhaps six issues per year.

We settled on a shorter newsletter in pages, but a more often published, approach. We are going to pilot a 6 to 8-page newsletter that will still have our calendar of events, but only two months at a time. The newsletter will have less

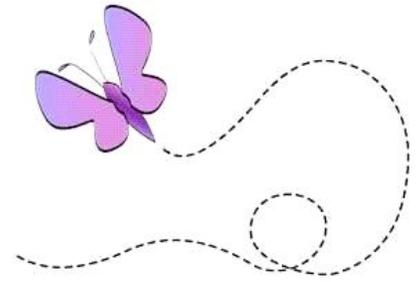
articles per issue and more tidbits of information.

The new format will allow us to be more nimble in adding

events. For example, in the last issue, the *Christmas Tree Jubilee* event at the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center was not included because we came up with the idea after *The Heron* was printed. We also hope shorter bursts of information will be more effective than longer articles.

We really hope to get some feedback from our readers, pro and con, on the change. Let us know your feelings by phone, Facebook, email or letter.

So, after 34 years and 136 issues, the newsletter of Clinton County Conservation is going through another change. We have varied the size and scope of the newsletter greatly over the years, which included a name change from *Prairie Whispers* to *The Heron*. I guess nothing is certain except for change. The butterfly flapped its wings and change came our way. It brings to mind an old saying, often attributed to Mark Twain: "If you don't like the weather, wait five minutes, it will change". We do live in Iowa after all.



Winter Sports Equipment for Rent at the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center

While the Education program takes precedence on days when they have events scheduled, most of the time, our equipment will be available for rent through the Eco-Center's Camp Store at Rock Creek.

The store is open from 8 AM to 4 PM Thursday-Sunday, now through April.

Equipment Rental Fees:

Snow Sleds ~ FREE

Ice Skates ~ \$2/day

Snowshoes ~ \$5/day

Cross Country Skis ~ \$5/day

Unlimited Equipment Use ~ \$10/day

Family Day Pass Unlimited Equipment Use ~ \$20/day

Unlimited equipment use allows individuals or families to use any of our equipment in and around the park all day. Ski a bit, take a hot cocoa break, then try skates or snowshoes. Winter fun on your schedule!

If you have winter sports equipment to donate, especially ice skates, please drop them off at the Camp Store. They will find good use!



Ice Fishing-Big Fish Contest at the Eco Center ~ Jan. 3rd thru March 3rd

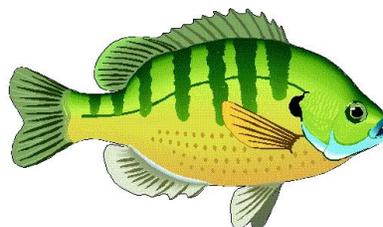
Calling all ice fishermen! Did you catch a big one? You could win fortune and glory!

Bring the fish into the Camp Store at Rock Creek Thursday-Sunday, 8 AM - 4 PM and weigh it. You will be eligible for a chance to win a weekly prize of a \$5 Camp Store Gift Certificate for the biggest fish in each category or a graphite ice fishing rod and spinning reel for season's biggest in each category! Free entry.

Three Fish Categories:

- Bluegill (or other sunfish)
- Crappie (white or black)
- Other Big Fish (anything from a northern pike or bass to a carp or catfish! Heaviest fish wins.)

Get a free small coffee, cocoa or fountain drink every time you weigh-in fish (limit one free drink/person/day)! Any ties will be settled with a coin toss. Weekly contests end at 4 PM on Sunday. Season contest ends on Sunday, March 3rd, 4 PM.



What's that? A Pukak!

by Jill Schmidt, Interpretive Naturalist

As we all know, winter brings many changes and for most of us, we welcome the mild winters with little snowfall. Others appreciate a cold, white winter. But with little snow comes many problems. A lot of people depend on the snowfall for the added benefit of the moisture in our soil. Just like humans, Iowa's wildlife species have a variety of opinions when it comes to what a good amount of snow we should receive. Some animals thrive during a mild winter. The ability to avoid energy engulfing deep snow allows animals such as white-tailed deer, pheasants and many songbirds to enter spring healthy and better prepared to parent their young. Other animals, actually look forward to the safety of a nice snowfall and as odd as it sounds, some depend on snow to better their survival chances.

When the snow falls, we can admire the beauty of its white surface, what little of us know is that under the surface lies a highway of tunnels traveled by many small mammals such as mice, voles and shrews. These prey animals depend on several inches of snow to create what is called the subnivean layer that provides shelter and protection. If you break the word down you will find the meaning of the word, sub = under, nivea = snow. Basically, it refers to anything that is found under the snow surface. Most of the time, it's used to describe the habitats of animals that are found living under the snow.

If you take a close look, in the spring, you may notice paths on the ground's surface of trails that have been worn down by the continuous movement of little feet. This "highway" system is referred to as a "pukak" by some Inuit people. It is the complex layer of ice crystals and open space that forms at the base of the snow pack.

I am quickly learning that not too many Iowans have heard of the subnivean layer, let alone a pukak, mostly due to the fact that we lack the amount of snowfall to create such a

habitat. This secret habitat is created by a minimum of six inches of snow that acts as insulation, holding in earth-warmed air and keeping out the cold air. This unique environment beneath may hold temperatures between 20 and 30 degrees Fahrenheit while air temperatures may be well below 30 degrees (F). This is extremely crucial for our small mammals who lose heat easily because of their large body surface in proportion to their size and our plants to have the ability to escape from these harsh temperatures as well as the many predators that find it more difficult to hunt them underneath this blanket of snow.

Life in the subnivean environment is so unique that entirely new food webs are thought to accompany the changing relationships and increasing energetic needs of subnivean organisms. Members of this food web include several species of insects, mammals, fungi and even plants. Typically the mammals that inhabit this area are less than seven ounces, meaning their high metabolisms require them to continuously forage for food during the cold months.

The formation of this secret micro-habitat is completely scientific but the theory behind the pukak is magical. A world filled with animals scurrying around under the snow's surface is something that is witnessed by no one, and the remnants we come across leave behind only thoughts to our imagination.



Photo by: *A Passion for Nature.*

Food Plots, Drill Rentals and More!

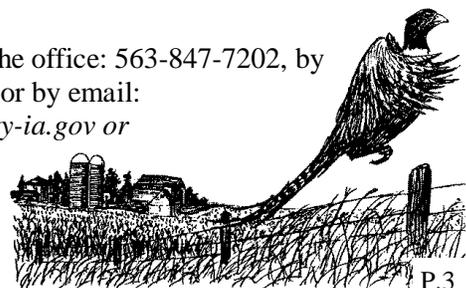
by Darin Voss, Natural Resource Technician

It's time to begin planning your spring of 2013 food plots. We will once again be providing food plot seed at no cost thanks to the generous donation of Clinton County Pheasants Forever. Seed supply may be a little tight this year so be sure to call early to reserve your seed. We will have round-up ready corn, round-up ready soybeans, grain sorghum and sunflowers available. Native seed mixes and specialty food plot mixes are also available to be ordered through Pheasants Forever as well as other seed dealers. Native no-till drills will be available to rent for \$10 per acre. We have a 6-foot Marliss available for those smaller acreages and a 10-foot Truax for larger tracts. Also, available is a tree planter for \$20 per day. Be sure to call to be put on a list. We also provide planting services of native

seedings, food plots and maintenance mowing of new seedings for a fee. Call for details!

Get your trees ordered for the spring of 2013. Whether you order from the state forest nursery or another local nursery it is important that you order early to insure you are able to get the species that you desire. You may contact me for a list of nurseries.

I can be reached at the office: 563-847-7202, by cell: 563-357-0352, or by email: dvoss@clintoncounty-ia.gov or stop by the Conservation Office, Grand Mound.



Family Fun Winter Events

January

Cross-country Skiing and Snow shoeing ~ As weather conditions allow, check the local media for cross-country skiing and snowshoe outings through winter. For those with e-mail addresses, write cjacobsen@clintoncountya.gov and place yourself on our **new** "Adventurers" list to receive a message whenever last-minute snow events are planned.

3rd ~ 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.

5th ~ The 29th Annual Bald Eagle Watch ~ 9 AM-2 PM ~ Clinton Community College

- Viewing: Lock & Dam 13
- Free bus service from college to Lock & Dam #13
- Live Bird and Nature Programs: C.C. College
- Exhibits: Clinton Comm. College, 9 AM-2 PM
- For information call 815-259-3628, Thomson Rangers



9th ~ Awesome 'Possums ~ 2 PM ~ Children's Discovery Center, Clinton ~ A free presentation for kids 5-9.

11th - 13th ~ Quad Cities Bald Eagle Days ~ QCCA Expo Center, Rock Island ~ Celebrate the Bald Eagle. 4-8 PM Friday, 10 AM-8 PM on Saturday and 10 AM-5 PM on Sunday. Stop by and visit the Wapsi Center display.

12th ~ Hunter Education Class ~ 9 AM-1 PM ~ Scott County Park (Old Nature Center) ~ Scott County Park Rangers will be teaching a Hunter Education Online Field Day at the old nature center. Participants must have completed the online hunter safety training at www.hunter-ed.com/Iowa; participants must bring voucher to class. Please call 563-328-3282 to register and more information.

15th ~ Stories in the Snow ~ 7 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Enjoy an evening of stories as Jill Schmidt explores the world of animal signs and tracks. Unravel the mystery behind the many different signs animals can leave behind and learn why winter is one of the best times to enjoy these stories.

18th ~ Awesome 'Possums ~ 10 AM ~ Children's Discovery Center, Clinton ~ A free presentation for kids 3-5.

18th ~ Dark Skies Winter Sports Night ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Come explore the wilderness of the Upper Mississippi Fish & Wildlife Refuge on a pair of cross-country skis or snowshoes provided free, on a first-come/first-served basis. A naturalist will provide night birds and sky presentations will be offered to aid you in identifying what you

see and hear on the luminary lit trail. The tourism center will be open to participants. A warming fire will be built near the skating rink and hot cider and cocoa provided.

19th ~ Ice Rescue & Cold Weather Safety ~ 9-11 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Winter can be a dangerous time of the year if you spend time on the ice! Learn from Camanche firemen as they demonstrate different scenarios dealing with cold weather rescues right outside of the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center. There will be discussion of safety techniques while moving on the ice as well as what you should do if you or a companion ever falls through! You don't want to miss this!

19th ~ Volunteer Work Day ~ 9 AM-Noon ~ Soaring Eagle ~ Volunteers work on a variety of projects both in and outdoors. Come be a part of the transformation from a local nature center and dog park to a regional destination.

19th ~ Winter Sports Clinic ~ 12 PM-4 PM ~ Emma Young Park, Clinton ~ This is an introduction to the outdoor winter sports of cross-country skiing and snow shoeing. Boots and bindings, skis and poles will be provided for free. Our new equipment will provide a better experience to those who have tried skiing and snow shoeing before.

Hot drinks provided plus snowshoe making



19th ~ "Souper" Saturday Speaker ~ 1 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Warm up with a hot cup of soup and enjoy a presentation from historian George Eaton. George is a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel and has been a historian with the Army Sustainment Command for the past ten years. He will be sharing his personal experiences as well as the history of the Rock Island Arsenal and its connection with Mississippi River as it celebrates its 150th birthday.

19th ~ Tracks and Tracking ~ 11:30 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ This free, family fun program will take you outside to explore the many signs animals leave behind! We will take a closer look at tracks and have a fun tracking craft for your children to take home with them!



20th ~ Winter Fun Day ~ Noon-7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Fight off those winter blues with an eventful afternoon and evening at the new Mississippi River Eco-tourism Center. This event will be repeated Feb 16th.

- **All day** ~ Hike, ski or snowshoe an easy loop or make a more challenging expedition into the wilderness of the refuge following the tracks or GPS trail.
- **12:30 PM ~ Hike** ~ A naturalist-led interpretive hike through the winter woods and around or over

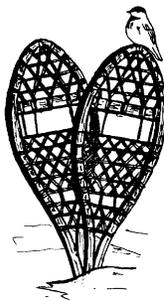
- winding bayous and lost lakes of the park and refuge.
- **2 PM ~ Project Feeder Watch and Backyard Bird Feeding** ~ Take a break while this presentation aids you in attracting, identifying and caring for our wild birds.
 - **3 PM ~ The Nature of Trapping and Furbearers** ~ Another chance to rest your legs and warm-up a bit will broaden your understanding of mammal populations in Iowa, our history involving them and the human connection to their survival.
 - **4:30 PM ~ Winter Concert** ~ The aroma of warm chili and the music of local talents will fill the air.
 - **6 PM ~ Dark Skies** ~ Our naturalist will demonstrate the sights and sounds of the night sky with programs entertaining and enlightening to prepare you for a quiet stroll in the winter woods.

22nd ~ Friends of Rock Creek ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek

26th ~ Tenth Annual Ice Fishing Competition ~ 7 AM ~ Pool 14, Lost Grove Lake & Rock Creek Area ~ Pre-registration made to Princeton Outdoor Adventures at www.princetonoutdooradventures.com or 563-289-5445.

26th ~ Cross-country Ski Exploration ~ 10 AM ~ Wapsi Center ~ This low-impact, healthy, outdoor recreation and enjoy winter scenes. Bring your own equipment or call to reserve equipment at 563-328-3286. Weather dependent.

26th ~ Snowshoe Tracking ~ 1 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Come explore the wintry wilderness via snowshoes. Learn about the history of snowshoes and then search for signs of animal activity. Call to reserve equipment; 563-328-3286.



27th ~ Snowmobile Radar Run ~ 10 AM-2 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ The Eastern Iowa Sno-riders snowmobile club will once again hold this annual event on the backwater ice at Rock Creek Marina, ice permitting. Anyone is welcome to race their snowmobile against a radar gun. \$10 donation requested per run, with proceeds going to the Spina Bifida Foundation of Iowa. Hot food, drinks and snacks will be available for purchase on-site. Spectators are welcome. Bad ice date is February 3rd. Call Ron Benhart at 319-784-7087 for more information. www.easterniowasoriders.com

February

6th ~ Busy Beavers ~ 2 PM ~ Children's Discovery Center, Clinton ~ A free presentation for kids 5-9.



7th ~ Music in the Loft ~ 7 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ See earlier description from January 3rd.

8th ~ Busy Beavers ~ 10 AM ~ Children's Discovery Center, Clinton ~ A free presentation for kids 3-5.

9th ~ Winter Fun Day ~ 9:30 AM-6:30 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Come to the Wapsi Center for a fun-filled day of winter activities. This is an event the whole family can enjoy, so plan to come out and discover winter at its best. Please call to reserve equipment; 563-328-3286.



- **9:30 AM ~ Cross-country Ski Clinic** ~ Learn the basics of cross-country skiing.
- **12:30 PM ~ Snowshoe Nature Hike**
- **2 PM ~ Winter Bird Feeding** ~ Come learn how to identify winter birds and how to feed them.
- **3 PM ~ Fabulous Furs** ~ Learn about furbearers that live in our area and how they adapt and thrive during the cold winter months. Explore the history of fur trapping, trading and how the animals were used.
- **4:30 PM ~ 7th Annual Chili Cook-off** ~ The Friends of the Wapsi Center will host this annual competition. Bring your best chili creation to share and win the coveted chili cup! Please bring your own table setting.
- **5:30 PM ~ Frostbite Star Party** ~ The winter is a great time for astronomy! The sky is never clearer than on cold, winter nights. The winter constellations center on Orion, the Great Hunter. In the sword is the Orion Nebula, which is a spectacular objects through a telescope. The Menke Observatory, park in lot A.

15th ~ Dark Skies Winter Sports Night ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ See earlier description from January 18th.

16th ~ Forcing a Little Spring into Winter ~ 1 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Join Horticultural Society members for an in-depth and fun how-to program.

16th ~ Winter Fun Day ~ 12 PM-7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ See earlier description from January 20th.

16th ~ Whitetails Unlimited Banquet ~ 5 PM ~ Millennium Ballroom, Goose Lake ~ Help provide public hunting, wildlife habitat and the future of the hunting tradition. See the largest trophy deer display in the county. Children will receive a special prize. Call for tickets at 563-349-0956.

17th ~ Winter Fun in Sherman Park ~ 12-4 PM ~ This will be an afternoon of hiking, cross-country skiing and snow shoeing. Our new equipment provides a better experience. Our ice skates will be available for the kids to use on a small 18-foot circular rink. Indoor games, crafts, a snowshoe making demonstration and hot drinks are provided.

21st ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center, Meeting ~ 7 PM ~ Gander Mountain, Davenport.

23rd ~ All About Owls ~ 4 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ We will have a good time with a simple owl craft, a presentation featuring live owls and outdoor wild owl calling.

26th ~ Friends of Rock Creek ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek



1ST Annual Veterans and Active Duty Military Pheasant Hunt

Most of us take our freedom for granted and don't take the time to recognize those who have fought for our country.

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 in the greater Quad Cities area. 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.

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

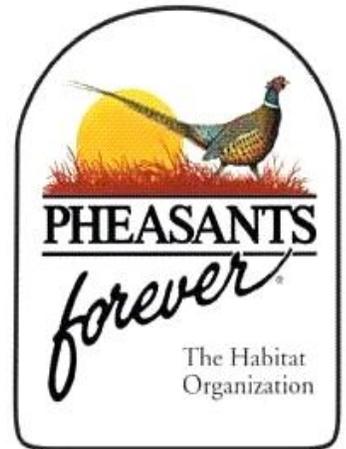
The hunt will be held at *Beckridge Hunting Preserve*, 613th Ave., Sabula, IA on March 16th, 2013.

To register, email David Crockett at crockett-david@bfusa.com or call 563-246-2229.

Volunteers needed, especially guides with dogs, ATVs and operators to help with handicapped hunter transportation. This hunt is being organized by your local Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois chapters of Pheasants Forever, includ-

ing Cedar, Clinton, Jackson, Muscatine and Scott Counties in Iowa and Carroll County in Illinois.

However, we need to raise \$9,000 dollars to make this day happen for 64 heroes and we are asking you for your support. Please become one of our many sponsors by signing up today as a business or an individual and saying "Thank You!" to those who have served our country.



- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Chick.....\$ 25 | <input type="radio"/> Gold \$250 |
| <input type="radio"/> Hen.....\$ 50 | <input type="radio"/> Platinum \$500 |
| <input type="radio"/> Rooster\$100 | <input type="radio"/> Other\$ _____ |

Please make checks payable to:

Pheasants Forever/Veterans Pheasant Hunt

Mail to: Brad Taylor, 3942 291st Street
Camanche, IA 52730

Holiday Tree Jubilee, a Big Success

by Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist

The Holiday Tree Jubilee, hosted by the Friends of Rock Creek, raised over \$2,300 for the Nature Gallery displays at the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center! First of all, the Friends would like to thank all of the people and businesses that donated in any way to the event. From the gift certificates, cookies, displays, baskets, wreaths and decorated trees, to time and effort and last, but not least, the bidders.

Clinton County Conservation would like to thank the Friends for all their hard work coordinating such a successful event. Thank you to Ashford College for the help of the student interns with the great graphic design for the fliers and printing them in various ways to get the word out.

Thanks to the area schools of Cal-Wheat High School and Prince of Peace for singing holiday carols for the event. No event is complete without goodies, so a big thanks to Leanna Geffers, Gloria Friederichsen, Ruth Keiller and Tammie McElroy for donating cookies and Jim Haring for a great pot of chili.

There were four daily door prizes along with 23 items for auction. All items were part of the silent auction but as time neared it seemed like there was going to be a mad rush for the final bid so there was an exciting, impromptu, live auction for the most popular items! As per request, here are the winning bids of the auction.

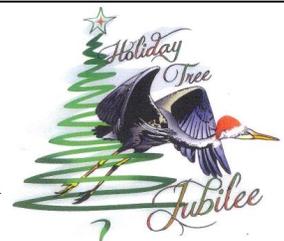
Display. Whisk Away Cafe and Bakery ~ \$25.

Baskets. Ruth Keiller's Coffee With Sweets ~ \$28, Chocolicious ~ \$30, Wine with Chocolate (Best of Show) ~ \$40, Wide River Winery ~ \$45.

Wreaths. Kim Rixen's Red and Silver ~ \$30, Cindy Williams and Sherry Sharp's lit wreath ~ \$45, Flower's on 5th Candy Cane (Best of Show) ~ \$55, Edith Pfeffer's Snowman Family ~ \$65, Sweet Woodruff, ltd. ~ \$85.

Trees. Touch of Bliss Salon and Spa ~ \$40, The Painted Rooster ~ \$55, Wilson's Floral and Gifts ~ \$65, William Wiesner's Gone Fishing ~ \$75, Kitchen and Bath Inspirations ~ \$80, William Wiesner's Fire Drill ~ \$80, Dudley's Closet ~ \$85, Crossroads of DeWitt ~ \$105, Clinton County Conservation (Best of Show) ~ \$115, Clinton Floral ~ \$150, The Old Crow ~ \$155, Calamus Crafts and Consignment with vendors ~ \$165, Jim Haring's Woodland Serenity by Sharon and Tom Powell ~ \$205.

With this first annual event under our belt, we have learned a lot, taken notes and are committed to make this new organization greater. If you would like to join the Friends of Rock Creek to brainstorm, plan and carry out events at the Eco Center, please contact Jessica at 563-847-7202.



Save the Date

- *March 9th, Turkey Federation Banquet, Goose Lake*
- *March 16th, Veterans and Active Duty Military Pheasant Hunt*
- *March 23rd, Pheasants Forever Spring Pheasant Festival, Wheatland*
- *April 6th, Whitetail Workshop, Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center, Rock Creek*

Rooms for Rent www.mycountyparks.com

Rock Creek

- **Mississippi River Eco Tourism Ctr.** 563-259-1876
Community Room ~ 2,652 sq. ft., Seating for 200.
\$250/day or \$50/hour, kitchenette.
Meeting Room ~ 484 sq. ft., Seating for 20+.
\$100/day or \$25/hour, kitchenette.
- **Wood Duck Cabin** ~ Log cabin, sleeps 6, \$50/night.
Electricity, small fridge, microwave, heat/AC, 1/2 bath (toilet/sink). Picnic table and fire ring outside.
- **Camping Cabins** ~ 6 small cabins, sleeps 4 each, \$35/night. Electricity, heat/AC, small refrigerator and microwave. Fire pit and picnic table outside each cabin.

Eden Valley

- **Bunkhouse** ~ Rustic pack-in cabin, sleeps 12, \$50/night. Electricity, small refrigerator, hotplate, wood burning stove and firewood is available.
- **Camping Cabins** ~ 2 small cabins, sleeps 4 each, \$35/night. Electricity, heat/AC, small refrigerator and microwave. Fire pit and picnic table at each cabin.



Conservation Tidbits

~ **360 Degree Mural at MRETC.** The Nature Galley in the new center is getting a huge original wildlife mural from Midwest Exhibits over the winter. Stop in during business hours to check on progress.

~ **Shower House at Sherman, Open Spring, 2013.** Park personnel in the West District have been hard at work putting the finishing touches on a much need facility.

~ **Order Trees and Shrubs Now.** The Iowa State Forest Nursery offer seedlings ranging from \$35-\$55 per 100 for wildlife habitat restoration. Call 800-865-2477.

~ **IAN Workshop.** 100 conservation educators from across Iowa spent 3 days in Clinton and at Rock Creek getting ideas for ways to improve their programs.

~ **Watch the Birds** at MRETC feeders from comfort of the Camp Store.

~ **Snowy Owls Irruption.** These artic ghosts are here for the second straight year. An irruption is an irregular occurrence of birds that don't normally winter in our area. Look in wide open spaces; they are usually perched on hay bales, posts or the ground.

~ **Call to have a Naturalist Speak** to your youth group or classroom. Groups smaller than 15 or from outside Clinton County are subject to fees.

~ **Winter Parks are in Hibernation.** Sherman (south gate), Walnut Grove and Malone Parks' gates are closed for the winter. Walk-in use is always welcome.

~ **Iowa's deer population is down** approximately 30 percent since its peak in 2006. Hunters harvested 121,407 deer during 2011-12 Iowa hunting seasons, down 4% in a year.



Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center



Winter Hours
Oct 28th-March 31st

Thurs, Fri, Sat, and Sun
8 AM-4 PM

- *Camping and Cabin Rentals
- *X-country ski, snowshoe, ice skates, weather permitting
- *Banquet Hall/Meeting Rental
- *Food and Beverages
- *Bait

Rock Creek
Marina and Campground
563-259-1876

Reservations can be
made online at
mycountyparks.com

Top Ten Iowa Bird Feeder Visitors

1. Dark Eyed Junco
2. Northern Cardinal
3. Black Capped Chickadee
4. Downy Woodpecker
5. American Goldfinch
6. Blue Jay
7. House Finch
8. House (English) Sparrow
9. Red-bellied Woodpecker
10. European Starling

Red-bellied
woodpecker



Other common species; mourning dove, robin, white-breasted nuthatch, grackle, titmouse, American tree sparrow, purple finch, flicker, hairy woodpecker, white-throated sparrow and crow.

How does this match what you see at your feeders?

-Project Birdfeeder Watch

Clinton County Conservation
P.O. Box 68
Grand Mound, Iowa 52751
Phone: 563-847-7202
Email: conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov
Website: www.clintoncounty-ia.gov

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This Snowy Owl image was captured by Matt Mostek of Camanche, in early December near Elvira.

CLINTON COUNTY CONSERVATION

BOARD

Judie Petersen, Goose Lake, President
 Gloria Friederichsen, Grand Mound, Vice President
 Jeff Beckwith, Clinton, Secretary/Treasurer
 Jim Haring, Clinton
 Kim Rixen, Clinton

STAFF

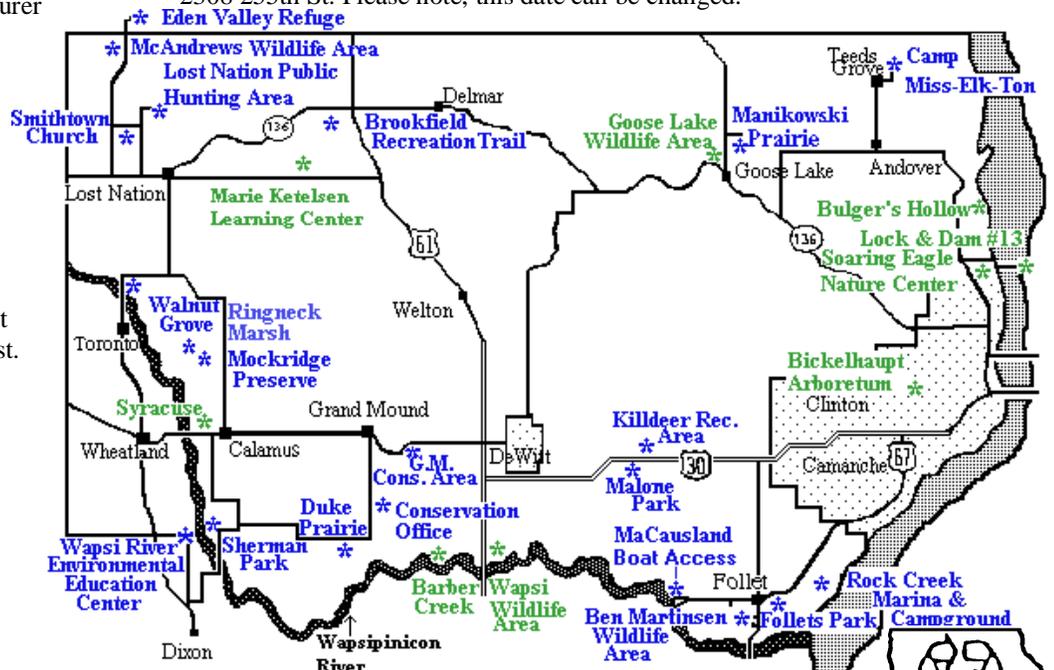
Walt Wickham, Executive Director
 Karen Brix, Administrative Assistant
 Mark Roberts, Education Coordinator
 Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretive Naturalist
 Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist
 Jill Schmidt, Interpretive Naturalist
 Chip Brown, Park Officer, West District
 Dave Schneden, Maintenance, West 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.

