

In The Field

Teacher's Conservation Education Newsletter

Brought to you by Clinton County Conservation
Spring Semester ~ 2015



Conservation in the Classroom

by Jill Schmidt, Interpretive Naturalist

Every semester, Clinton County Conservation Naturalist award a local teacher for his or her efforts with conservation education with their students. This award is given to teachers who encourage environmental education in their classroom as well as in the field. This semester we chose Camanche 5th grade Science teacher, Whitney Veenstra. Mrs. Veenstra has invited me into her classroom the past couple of years and has explored the "Our Mississippi" curriculum with her students. I have had the pleasure of sharing fun, hands-on activities with her students concentrating on *ecosystems, wetlands, wildlife and stewardship*.

After awarding Whitney with the Clinton County Conservation Board's Teacher of the Semester award, here is what she had to say: I am very honored to be named Clinton County Conservation Board's Teacher of the Semester. My students and I have been fortunate to have Naturalist Jill Schmidt visit our classroom multiple times over the past two years to teach real-life science lessons. Jill has taught lessons from "Our Mississippi," a curriculum about the Upper Mississippi River put together by the US Army Corps of Engineers. She has a deep knowledge of the natural world, and she always prepares hands-on lessons that captivate the interests of my students. One of my fifth grade students said, "She turns learning into fun."



Exploring pollution through a hands on demonstration.

In addition, all of her lessons align with my curriculum and the Common Core Standards.

I have been teaching science at Camanche Middle School for ten years. Two years ago, Jill contacted me with the offer to provide "in-school field trips" in my classroom. What an amazing program! It has been a pleasure to work with Jill. She is reliable, flexible with our school schedule, and brings materials (and even live animals) into our classroom for FREE! She developed a positive rapport with my students from the beginning. My fifth graders are always excited for her visits, and many of them have even started participating in other opportunities through the Clinton County Conservation at the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center. I also think it is important for my students to realize that there are many real-life occupations in science they can explore.



"Fishing" for renewable resources.



Creating a food web.

Thank you so much for choosing me to receive this award. My students and I are grateful for your wonderful program that provides enrichment to our learners. I recommend that other teachers explore the many opportunities you have to offer!

In addition to the classroom time, Whitney will be bringing the Camanche's entire 5th grade class to Rock Creek this April for a field trip. A first for both Whitney and Camanche's school. She is excited to explore what Clinton County Conservation Board has to offer her students just down the street!

Spring Field Trip Season is Just Around the Corner!

Book your date now! To set up your next field trip to Rock Creek (including the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center and Blue Heron Eco Cruises), Eden Valley Refuge, Sherman Park or the Soaring Eagle Nature Center, please contact Conservation Education Coordinator Mark Roberts or Interpretive Naturalists Chuck Jacobsen, Jessica Steines or Jill Schmidt at 563-847-7202. We would be happy to help guide you through your schedule and prepare you for your fun day outdoors!

You can also email us to schedule a field trip:

- ~ Mark Roberts - mroberts@clintoncounty-ia.gov
- ~ Chuck Jacobsen - cjacobsen@clintoncounty-ia.gov
- ~ Jessica Steines - jsteines@clintoncounty-ia.gov
- ~ Jill Schmidt - jschmidt@clintoncounty-ia.gov

Field Trip Bus Scholarship Program

The Clinton County Conservation Foundation is committed to assisting schools in taking field trips to nature centers and parks of the Clinton County Conservation Board, resulting in a scholarship to help defray busing costs for Clinton County Schools. We hope that schools will help us stretch the money as far as possible by packing the buses full and taking as few buses as possible. School districts with significant coverage in Clinton County are eligible, including Calamus-Wheatland, Central, Northeast, Clinton, Delwood, Camanche, Midland, Maquoketa, and Easton Valley School Districts plus St. Joseph's, Prince of Peace and Unity Christian Parochial Schools. Keep in mind, funds are limited and will be given out based on the order on which each request is received. Requests will receive scholarships until the fund is exhausted.



The Scholarship amount is \$2 per mile per bus, round trip with a minimum award of \$20 and a maximum award of \$100 per bus per field trip.

Field Trip Bus Scholarship Reimbursement Request Form Date of field trip _____

School _____ Teacher(s) _____

Classes _____ Field trip destination _____ Number of buses _____ Number of students _____

Contact information (name, phone, email) _____

What percentage of busing costs for this trip is the scholarship covering? _____

Would this field trip have happened without the this scholarship assistance? _____

Make reimbursement check out to: _____ Attention: _____

Internal use only: Round trip miles, school to park _____ Scholarship award \$ _____ Date received _____

Mail form to: Clinton County Conservation Foundation, PO Box 68, Grand Mound, Iowa 52751

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