



The Heron

*Newsletter of Clinton County Conservation
Volume 32 Number 1 January ~ April 2010*

Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center

Awarded 3/4 Million Dollar Scenic Byways Grant!

by Walt Wickham, Executive Director

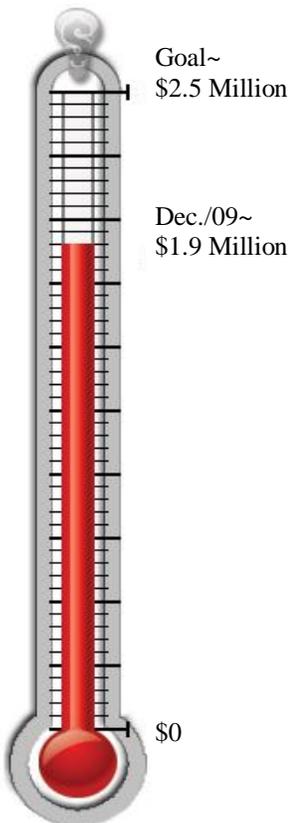
GREAT NEWS!!! Senator Charles Grassley recently announced that the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center has been awarded a \$760,007 Scenic Byways grant by the Federal Highways Administration! When I found out about the award, I could hardly believe my ears! I have written a lot of grant requests over the years, but this is by far the largest. I have been told that \$40.7 million dollars were awarded to 160 projects throughout the country. Of these, the MRETC was the ninth largest award made. Wow! I still have a hard time believing it. It looked like all the hard work is finally paying off. We now have funds to break ground and begin construction of the Eco Tourism Center. Or do we?

As the excitement of the announcement began to subside, my head started to fill with unanswered questions. What do we do next? How do we actually receive the funds from the Highway Administration? And why haven't we been officially contacted regarding the grant? I found out that we received the grant the same way everyone else did-- through newspaper articles and a National Highway Administration press release. It seemed a bit odd to me that nobody had called us directly. I decided to make a call to the Iowa Byways Coordinator, Troy Siefert to see if I could find some answers and how we should proceed. I know from experience that government grants typically come with a mountain of red tape and can take several weeks (if not months) to process. Mr. Siefert informed me that while we had indeed been awarded a grant, Congress has not yet appropriated the funding for the program! This didn't sound good. When will Congress make the appropriation? There is really no way to say for sure, but our best guess at this time is that we will not see any money from the Scenic Byway Grant until late next summer or fall at the soonest.

Others have since told me that this has happened before with this grant program, and that I shouldn't panic. While it might take some time, Congress has always come through and appropriated funding for this grant program. So it sounds like patience is the key. While we really were hoping to be able to break ground in spring of 2010, it looks like it might take just a little longer. Not quite what we had hoped for, but it's still great news!

So where does this put us now? When the Scenic Byways dollars are added to other grants, donations, and private pledges already raised by the Conservation Foundation, the dollar amount raised for the project so far is approximately \$1.9 million. According to our architect's estimates, we now have enough money to put up the building and install the aquarium. But the project doesn't stop there. There are other items for which we still need funding. These include all the kitchen appliances and fixtures, the furnishings, audio-visual equipment for the classroom, and all of the educational displays that will be located throughout the building. Outside the building, we still need funding to hard surface the parking lot and to put up lighting. The last, but perhaps most important item that we need to raise funds for is an endowment fund. The endowment fund would allow us to have a sustainable funding source to help pay for environmental education programming needs and for the upkeep of the facilities for years into the future.

I can hardly believe how far we have come since officially announcing the plans for the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center via *The Heron* newsletter in the summer of 2006. With the help of some very dedicated volunteers and a little bit of luck (okay, a lot of luck), it looks like this dream really is going to become a reality! But we are not there yet. Funds are still needed to complete the project. Donations of any size are greatly appreciated and can be made to the Clinton County Conservation Foundation, P. O. Box 68, Grand Mound, Iowa 52751. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at wwickham@clintoncounty-ia.gov or by phone at 563-847-7202. This has been a very good year for the MRETC. If our luck holds, 2010 will be even better! Who knows. My next article could be on the construction progress!



December Miracle

by Chip Brown, Park Officer, West District

My little girl is finally full of smiles on our first shotgun deer hunt. She was beginning to think it was never going to happen. It's been a long season, starting way back with the opening of bow season. During this years early bow season, Kallie got a chance to see several deer, however none were big enough for me to shoot. I was thinking it was going to be a repeat of last year.

The hunt started on Thursday with her and I setting up the blind on a primary deer trail leading to a fall food plot on our rural Jackson county property. Scouting and knowing your hunting ground is a plus when taking a youngster that wants to kill a deer as bad as you. On Saturday afternoon after a quick visit to Santa from 2:00 - 2:30, she was in good spirits with lots of hope. By 3:00 we were walking to the timber with excess layers of clothes on. Kallie looked like she added two hundred pounds and could hardly move, but I wasn't going to risk her getting cold. While walking along the edge of our massive 10 acre chunk of property, we scared out several deer. After getting to the blind, we unzipped the windows and got settled in. Kallie's definition of settling in, includes taking off her gloves and unwrapping a Tootsie Pop. Within ten minutes we had a deer coming down the hill to the main trail. Kallie started to tell me to shoot when the deer was still 200 yards away. After waiting what seemed like hours the deer got within 50 yards for the shot. Of course the deer didn't drop, it had to run a little ways and make us wonder.



Kallie Brown with her Trophy Whitetail

It did however stop within eyesight to put us at ease when it crumpled to the ground. When it fell to the ground, I could not get the blind unzipped fast enough, Kallie was pushing me through the door and running over to the deer. When we got to the deer, Kallie was smiling from ear to ear with the Tootsie Pop still in her mouth. She was a lot of help when it came time to gut the deer, wanting to help hold the legs. However, she informed me that she wanted no part of dragging the deer to the truck. This for me will be one of the top ten hunts of my life and hopefully for her it will be one of her most memorable hunts. Once again, I strongly recommend to hunters with kids, get them out & take them hunting so they can enjoy what we did growing up.

If I Had A Dime

by Dave Schneden & Chip Brown, West District

Whether were out and about getting supplies for a project or were hanging out with friends at home one question that gets asked repeatedly is, "What do you do in the winter?". Some other variations include, "You don't cut grass in the Winter!", "Aren't the parks closed in the winter?".

If I had a dime for those of you that don't know and for the ones that don't care, but still ask that ridiculous question, "What do you do in the winter?", we would be very rich. Yes we work in the winter!!! We also take a lot of paid time off due to the bank of hours we accumulate in the Summer from working 50 and 60 hour weeks. A list of winter jobs include but are not limited to: fixing and maintaining over 100 picnic tables that some how see a lot of abuse in the summer, trail maintenance on over ten miles of hiking trails, tree pruning in the campgrounds, cut and split firewood that we sell all summer long, remove snow from parking lots and roads in park, machinery maintenance on food plot equipment and others, and finish any projects that may have been left incomplete from summer construction. We also spend a lot of time on planning and preparing for the following summer projects, that need to be thought out and organized before hand, in order to get them accomplished in the short window of opportunity we have. Winter is also when we attend a lot of workshops and required continuing education classes and safety meetings. Winter cabin rentals keep us busy with housekeeping chores.

Next time you see us out and about just say "Hi" and remember yes we do work in the winter. Have a safe winter and remember to get out and enjoy the outdoors.

If I Had A Dime ~ Part II

by Eric Wright, Park Officer, East District

Is it really Winter already? Although the camping season, for the most part is over, things continue to remain busy in the Conservation Department.

We were awarded a large grant for Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center. The architect is finishing the working drawings and construction may start as early as late summer. Fundraising continues for the amenities of the building.

Budget time has arrived and should be an interesting one. Hopefully the county budget is in better shape than the states. The old saying of "gonna have to do more with less" will be heard. That saying really bothers me; we don't truly do more with less. We are doing less with less. I believe our department has done a good job of finding ways to continue to build. Grant writing has become a skill and a big part of our jobs. We have a desire to provide the best parks, education programs, facilities and wildlife areas that we possibly can. The main thing that hinders us is the same that hinders all the county departments MONEY.

Hunting season is in full swing. Our public hunting land has been seeing a steady flow of hunters. Reports have been good considering the mild weather. Waterfowl season has ended soon and without a big push from cold weather, it was less than average. Shotgun deer season has passed. It was shaping up to be mild with no snow, then it decided to blizzard and plunge us into the arctic. Late Muzzleloader season is next then before you know it the turkeys will be gobbling and the walleyes will start to hit. Remember, in all your outdoor adventures, stay safe.

Eden Valley's Blooms & Beasts

by Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretative Naturalist

Eden Valley Refuge has long been a wonder for its many visitors. From my earliest excursions there with my uncle, to my latest with a group of 5th graders it has captured my interests, enthralled my senses and renewed my spirit.

The land itself is a wonder; huge limestone bluffs hundreds of thousands of years old. Its deep valley was cut by Bear Creek; the relentless stream that snakes through the park usually flowing with cool, crystal clear waters babbling over a rocky bottom. Even the sky there seems bluer.

But it is the long list of organisms that find their home there that really steals the show. For the botanist the plant life is tops, but the zoologist in you will find plenty to admire as well. Even the fungi are numerous and diverse.



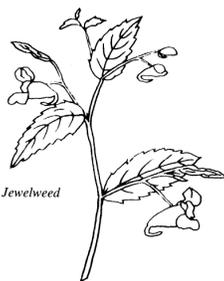
Hepatica, *Heppatica noblis*

The publication "It's a Blooming Miracle" is available at the nature center that covers the more than 50 types of flowering plants that are found in the valley. Then there are the mosses, liverworts, lichens and ferns that spread across the dark forest floor and moist limestone outcrops. Amongst these are walking ferns, common liverworts and northern maidens hair.

Wildflower enthusiasts rush to the park in early spring for their first spotting of the hepatica, Dutchman's breeches, blood root, and shy trillium.

At the same time many early visitors are out after those yummy morel mushrooms. But did you know there are more edible fungi in the fall woods? Probably the greatest of these is the giant puff ball. Spring or fall, a wild food gatherer must know their stuff. Poison fungi and berries far out number the edibles and can be very similar in appearance.

Spring and fall seem to me to be the most fleeting seasons of the year and soon the early woodland floor becomes dominated by green plants whose flowers are less showy. Large patches of wood nettles develop along the trails and poison ivy is present under the trees



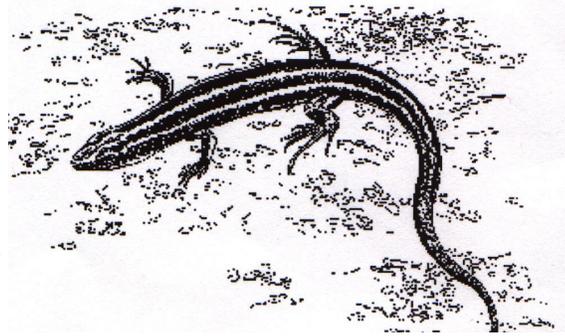
Jewelweed, *Impatiens capensis*

and in the prairies. Growing amidst these you will find the jewelweed whose succulent stem can be used as a balm to itchy skin irritations. As the trees of the forest leaf out, it leaves the floor darkened and becomes a cool retreat from the warm days of summer.



Wood Nettle, *Laportea canadensis*

It's in these warmer days when a visitor might spot the five-lined skink sunning on the rocks and even the walls of the



Five-lined skink, *Eumeces fasciatus*

nature center. The adult skink is rather dull looking, but the young have a beautiful blue tail and yellow striped abdomen. I have never spotted a six-lined racerunner lizard there, but the thirteen-lined ground squirrel is common as well as the occasional chipmunk. The chipmunk is lined as well but we are spared the work of counting them. It's here alone that I have spotted the black rat snake; an arboreal (climbing) species that feeds on anything from eggs to young squirrels. Probably the most interestingly colored of Eden Valley's snakes is the milk snake; with its reddish brown, gray and black bands.



Eastern Chipmunk *Tamias striatus*

June thru August is the season of the prairie flower. The park has two reconstructed prairie areas and several other open grasslands; one near the nature center entrance and another surrounding the 30-foot observation tower that crowns a high, round hilltop at the end of the Red Gate Trail. Black-eyed Susan, purple coneflowers and wild bergamot make an early showing while later in the summer months come the compass plant, daisy fleabane and goldenrod. Tall Indian grass and big bluestem dominate the grass species.



Much of the park is wooded, containing a rich variety of maple, hickory and oak. Smaller trees include sumac and dogwood. Eastern yew and red cedar can be found growing from the rocky crags and there is an aging white pine plantation just across the swinging bridge in the back valley. Fall is a glorious time of year to plan a visit hoping to catch the colorful foliage of Eden Valley at its peak.



Eastern Yew, *Taxus canadensis*

Finally winter seems to wipe the slate clean but there are still attractions here for those who enjoy the winter sports of birding, skiing and snow shoeing. The quiet cold of the winter woods is very refreshing.



Winter Fun Sponsored by Jack Frost!



January

Cross-country Skiing and Snowshoeing ~ As weather conditions allow, check the local media for cross-country skiing and snowshoe outings throughout the winter. Or, for those with e-mail addresses, write clintonccb@yahoo.com and place yourself on our handy adventurers list. Adventurers will receive a short message whenever last minute snow events are planned.

6th ~ Furbearers ~ 2 PM ~ Children's Discovery Center ~ This program is for elementary school age children. There will be a short video showing Iowa mammals in the wild, afterwards there will be real fur pelts to touch with book reading, hands-on activities, craft and snack. This event is a collaboration with Discovery Center and is located at 332 8th Ave. South in Clinton, Iowa, near Hy-Vee. This event is free of charge.

8th - 10th ~ Quad Cities Bald Eagle Days ~ QCCA Expo Center, Rock Island ~ Celebrate the return of the Bald Eagle. Enjoy more than 100 display and information booths. The event is 4 PM-8 PM Friday, 10 AM-7 PM on Saturday and 10 AM-5 PM on Sunday. Come visit us at the Wapsi Center display.

9th ~ The 26th Annual Bald Eagle Watch ~ 9 AM-2 PM ~ Clinton Community College ~ Speakers, exhibits and parking will be at the college. Courtesy transportation will be provided by MTA from the college to the viewing site at Lock & Dam #13 from 8:30 AM-3:30 PM. Participants should dress for the weather and bring binoculars. The exhibits, including the CCCB, and speakers will be at the college from 9 AM - 2 PM. For information, call the Thomson Park Rangers, 815-259-3628.

- **9:30 AM "Listen to the Eagles' Message" DVD**
- **10 AM "Live Birds of Prey"**
Atwood Environmental Center
- **11:15 AM Kids "Birds of Prey"**
USFWS & Army COE
- **12 PM "Nature Songs"**
Chuck Jacobsen, Naturalist, CCCB
- **12:30 PM "Live Birds of Prey"**
Atwood Environmental Center



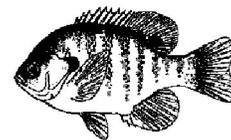
15th ~ Furbearers ~ 10:30 AM ~ Children's Discovery Center ~ This nature program, which builds on awareness of the environment, focuses on our young county residents, three to five year-olds, but all ages can come! There will be a short video showing Iowa mammals in the wild, afterwards there will be real fur pelts to touch with book, hands-on activities, craft and snack. This event is a collaboration with Discovery Center and is located at 332 8th Ave. South in Clinton, Iowa, near Hy-Vee. This event is free of charge.

16th ~ Cross-Country Ski & Snowshoe Clinic ~ 1 PM-4 PM ~ Emma Young Park, Clinton ~ Learn the ups and downs of the outdoor winter sports snow-shoeing and cross-country skiing. A short introduction will be followed by instruction on sizing the equipment to your needs and personal private tutorage by a well-seasoned veteran of the hills. There is no fee for this presentation and county equipment will be available for use until 4 PM. Sign-up today by calling 563-847-7202.

24th ~ Snowmobile Radar Run ~ 11 AM-3 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. Donations accepted per run, with all proceeds going to the Spina Bifida Foundation of Iowa. The club also holds a wheelie contest. Registration will begin at 11 AM. Hot food, drinks and snacks will be available for purchase on-site. Spectators are welcome. Call Kelly Meyer at 563-349-4045 for more information.

30th ~ 7th Annual Ice Fishing Tournament ~ 7 AM-2:30 PM ~ Rock Creek Area ~

Entry fee is \$20.00 per person with 2 person teams. Pre-registration & entry fee must be made to Princeton Outdoor Adventures by Jan. 29th, at www.princetonoutdooradventures.com or call 563-289-5445.



30th ~ Snowshoe Tracking ~ 10 AM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Join us as we take participants on a stroll through the Wapsi woods. While making tracks of their own, via snowshoes, participants will have the opportunity to search for animal tracks and other signs of animal activity in this winter wonderland. Pre-registration is required by calling 563-328-3286. BYOM ~ Bring Your Own Mug.

30th ~ Recycled Card Crafts ~ 1:30 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Did you know that during the holiday season we generate 5 million tons of trash? Recycling is the key! By attending this fun afternoon program, participants will learn to make gift boxes, decorative tags, ornaments and much more from recycled holiday cards. Scissors, glue, rulers and pencils will be provided; participants need only to bring cards. Pre-registration is required by calling 563-328-3286. BYOM

February

4th ~ Music in the Loft ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ 7 PM-9 PM ~ Join area musicians for an evening of vocal and instrumental music. The audience is invited to sing along, shake a rattle, pat a drum, slap their knee or just sit back and enjoy. Hot cocoa and cider will be served along with home-baked goodies. Call 563-847-7202 to reserve your seat.

6th ~ Snow Day for Grown-ups ~ 2 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ This is taking the place of our annual Winter Camp for Adults. We are keeping the best parts of the old camp and cutting back to a free, one-day event. We will cross-country ski, snowshoe hike, bring your ice skates, have a potluck supper, folk concert and social around the fireplace in the evening for all. To pre-register call 563-847-7202.



6th ~ Folk Concert ~ 7 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Relax and enjoy an evening of acoustical guitar and vocal offerings of the music of Paul Simon, Peter Dinklage, John Denver, John Prine and several others as rendered by local talents. You may participate by using one of our simple percussion instruments, bringing your own, singing along, slapping your knee, tapping your foot or just being a quiet listener.

13th ~ Winter Fun Day ~ Wapsi Center ~ Come to the Wapsi River Center for a fun-filled day of winter activities. A limited number of skis and snowshoes are available, so please call to reserve equipment 563-328-3286. BYOM

- **9 AM ~ Cross-country Ski Clinic** ~ Come learn the basics of cross-country skiing and tour the Wapsi Center trails. Participants may bring their own equipment.
- **11 AM ~ Woodland Crafts** ~ Join naturalists to learn how to create a beautiful deer display for the whole family, please call to register for kits, 563-328-3286.
- **Noon ~ Chili and Soup Lunch** ~ Chili and soup will be provided by the friends of the Wapsi Center for their annual "Chili Cook-Off". Come and sample all recipes and then vote for the winner!!! (First come, first served)
- **1 PM ~ Snowshoe Nature Hike** ~ On this excursion into the Wapsi Center's woodlands we will be traveling the way of the Native Americans and early pioneers, looking for signs of life in the still, winter woods.
- **2 PM ~ Winter Bird Feeding/Winter Birding** ~ Join naturalists to learn how to attract birds into your backyard and learn how to identify some of our common feathered friends.



19th ~ Is This Thing Alive? ~ 10:30 AM ~ Children's Discovery Center ~ This nature program, which builds on awareness of the environment, focuses on three to five year-olds, but all ages can come! After a short musical opening, a number of objects alive, dead or inorganic will be placed before the group. The children will then act as a panel of scientists fashioning a tiny universe of objects. This event is free of charge.

20th ~ Tracks and Tracking ~ 1 PM-4 PM ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Take a hike through the nature center's winter landscape in search of traces left behind by wildlife. Participants will learn to make plaster casts of tracks and interpret the stories they tell.



24th ~ Dirt Made My Lunch ~ 2 PM ~ Children's Discovery Center ~ This program is for elementary school age children. The program will open with the presenter eating a quick lunch consisting of a potted plant. When the giggles and yucks subside we'll sing a short but educational song. To finish, each child will create their own edible potted plant. This event is free of charge.

27th ~ Winter Tree I.D. ~ 10 AM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Come to the Wapsi Center to be a winter tree detective. Learn how to identify trees by looking at the bark, buds and needles. Please call to register 563-328-3286.

27th ~ Maple-Syruping Demonstration ~ 1 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Join Tom Greene as he discusses the history and procedure of tapping trees for syrup. Handouts and where to find tapping equipment will be provided to participants. Please call to register 563-328-3286.



March

6th ~ Woodland Creations ~ 10 AM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Learn how twigs, bark, seeds and leaves can be used to create miniature figurines. Make people, animals or whatever your creative spirit can come up with. Please call to register your family by February 26th, 563-328-3286.

6th ~ Maple-Syruping Demonstration ~ 1 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Once again, join Tom Greene as he discusses the history and procedure of tapping trees for syrup. Please call to register 563-328-3286.

13th ~ Wild Turkey Federation Banquet ~ 6 PM ~ Millennium Ballroom, Goose Lake ~ Help raise funds for turkey habitat & public hunting. Call Craig at 563-249-3261 for tickets.

20th ~ Recycled Stitches ~ 1:30 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Learn how to create a uniquely versatile yarn from recycled plastic bags. "Plarn" (plastic yarn) is not a new fad, but rather a frugal technique reminiscent of the Depression Era. Participants will learn about the plastic industry, plastic's waste-to-energy potential, as well as how to create two versions of "yarn" out of recycled shopping/grocery bags. Knitted, crocheted, woven, braided and corded items will also be on display. Those interested need not be fancywork experts to enjoy this. Each participant needs to bring 5 plastic shopping/grocery bags and a pair of sharp scissors. If you have access to a quilting tool called a rotary cutter and mat, consider bringing these. Pre-registration is required, by calling 563-328-3286.

20th ~ Pancake Breakfast ~ 8-11 AM ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Join fellow conservationists in support of Clinton's nature center locally known as The Nature Barn. A free-will donation at the door will treat you to hot cakes, sausage links, scrambled eggs, milk, juice and a hot drink (coffee, cocoa or apple cider). The center is located south of Eagle Point City Park and serves a large area bringing in classrooms from DeWitt, Long Grove, Princeton and others. Public outreach programs are also staged often at the center so your donation will serve a wide range of people.



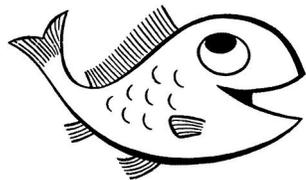
20th ~ Birdhouse Workshop ~ 1-4 PM ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Build a cavity nest box from a selection of plans suited to house wrens, chickadees, nuthatches, swallows, bluebirds, martins, wood ducks, owls, or kestrels. Fees vary from \$5 to \$30 depending on materials needed. Call 563-847-7202 to register.

24th ~ The Magic in Seeds ~ 2 PM ~ Children's Discovery Center ~ This nature program is for elementary school age children. After a bit of musical fun we'll pass out a plant growth guide and discover the stages of germination. Then we'll pass out the peanuts for a dissection investigating the make-up of a seed. This event is free of charge.

25th ~ Birdhouse Workshop ~ 6:30 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ You can build your own bluebird, wren, kestrel or wood duck nest box from a kit to provide for wildlife in your world. You will also learn about placement and maintenance of the boxes. The kits will be available for a small fee to cover materials. Fees are \$5 for a wren or bluebird and \$25 for a wood duck or kestrel box. You must call 563-847-7202 before March 20th to order your kits.

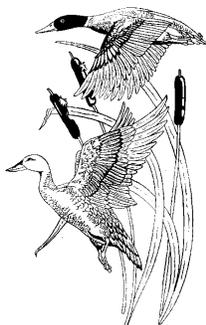


26th ~ Sorting Out Nature ~ 10:30 AM ~ Children's Discovery Center ~ This program is for which builds on awareness of the environment, focuses on three to five year-olds, but all ages can come! Kids will be presented with a song and three fish tanks; one of which will be filled with dozens of colorful fish of many shapes and sizes. They will each be handed a small net and asked to sort the fish in different ways. To top things off they will be presented with an "Aquatic Animals Activity Book". This event is free of charge.



27th ~ Spring Pheasant Festival ~ 5 PM ~ Wheatland Community Center ~ The Clinton County Chapter of Pheasants Forever is planning a family night of fun at the Wheatland Community Center. They will have lots of games, door prizes, an auction and a pork dinner. Cost is \$10, people need not be members to attend. Call Mark at 563-659-2422 for tickets.

30th ~ Waterfowl Watch ~ 6 PM ~ Ring-neck Marsh Wildlife Area ~ The marsh is a resting and feeding point along the spring migration route for many species of ducks and geese. We will also hope to see and hear rarer species like sandhill cranes and trumpeter swans. Ringneck Marsh can be found by traveling north from Calamus on Y44 and following the signs west starting at 215th Street to 150th Ave. We will have some binoculars and spotting scopes set up.



April

8th ~ Woodcock Watch ~ 7:30 PM ~ Sherman Park ~ Watch the dynamic display of the American woodcock at Sherman Park's north entrance. This is our 25th year watching the woodcocks' courtship "Skydance", and they usually give a good show. Walking over rough terrain may be involved.

10th ~ Kite Flying ~ 1-3 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Up, up and away! Learn how to create a two-stick bow kite the old fashioned way. Using sticks, paper, glue and string make a kite like your grandfather did. There is a \$2 material fee for each kite. Please call to pre-register and reserve your supplies, 563-328-3286.

10th ~ Whitetails Unlimited Banquet ~ 5:30 PM ~ Millennium Ballroom, Goose Lake ~ Help provide public hunting, wildlife habitat and support the future of the hunting tradition. Also see the largest trophy deer display in the county. Children are encouraged to attend and each will receive a special prize. Call Mark for tickets at 563-659-2422.



15th ~ Nighttime Prairie Burn ~ 8 PM ~ Malone Park ~ Clinton County Conservation's Prescribed Burn Team will light up the night during this educational program. Fire is a natural part of a prairie's life cycle. Along with a spectacular show, the team of trained staff will explain the how, why and when of prairie burns. Malone Park is located 4 miles east of DeWitt on US 30, on the south side of the road. The rain/wind date is the 27th.

17th ~ Water Trail Dedication & Wapsi River Float ~ 9 AM - 4 PM ~ Walnut Grove Park ~ Get an early start on the festivities by joining the Clinton County Conservation Crew for a 9 AM Float on the Wapsipinicon from the start of Bends & Beaches Water Trail at Massillon Park to the Muhl Bridge Site before the afternoon's festivities begin. We'll meet at Walnut Grove Park and shuttle up to Massillon Park to paddle the 4.5 back to Walnut Grove. Shuttles will be offered to those with cell phone service that wish to paddle on until 4 PM. Back at Walnut Grove we'll have a short ceremony and enjoy food and games. We're also celebrating the opening of our new shower house there so you may want to grab a campsite for the whole weekend. All paddlers must wear a PFD when on the water and remain in site of the leader if paddling with the CCCB group. Register today by calling 563-847-7202.



17th ~ Volunteer Workday ~ 9AM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ Call 563-357-0759 to lend a hand.

17th ~ Earth Week Fair ~ 10 AM-4 PM ~ QCCA Expo Center ~ The Quad Cities Earth Week Coalition is hosting its 6th annual Earth Week Fair at the QCCA Expo Center in Rock Island, IL. This event is free to the public and will feature over 60 booths offering hands-on activities, demonstrations, make and take crafts, literature, videos, quizzes and other interactive projects. For more information, contact Erin Robinson, at 563-386-9575.



22nd ~ Celebrate Earth Day ~ Find your personal way to show the earth you care. Go to www.QCEarthweek.org for a listing of local events.

23rd ~ Arbor Day ~ Planting a tree shows faith in the future! It's also a great way to commemorate a birth, death, anniversary or other special event.

23rd ~ Nighttime Prairie Burn ~ 7:30 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Join the trained Wapsi Center and Clinton CCB staff to learn how fire is an important tool in managing prairie ecosystems. A portion of the prairie will be burned to promote new growth. Please call the day of the event if you plan to attend 563-328-3286. The rain/wind date is the 27th.

24th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Opener ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ The Nature Center will be open from 1-4 PM on Saturdays, now through October. Take a wildflower hike at 1:30 PM to explore the spring colors. As always, we are looking for volunteers to open the Nature Center on Saturdays. No experience is necessary. Call 563-847-7202 for information.

24th ~ Star Party ~ 8:30 PM ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north entrance to explore the night sky. Check www.qcas.org for last minute sky conditions.

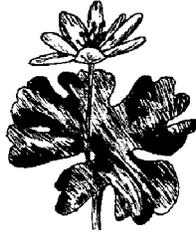
Late April ~ Hunter Education Course ~ Typically 6:30-9 PM (Tue.) & 8AM-4PM (Sat.) ~ Arrowhead Hunting Club, Goose Lake ~ Visit www.iowadnr.gov/law/lawdb/viewcourse.html for required sign-up and check the dates.

May Sneak-Peek

1st ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ The Nature Center will be open by volunteer hosts. The center features live local reptiles, rocks & minerals, Iowa habitats & artifacts.

1st ~ Wildflower Hike ~ 5-6:30 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Join us for a hike to identify some spring woodland wildflowers. Participants are asked to pre-register by calling 563-328-3286.

1st ~ B.Y.O.P. "Bring Your Own Picnic" ~ 6:30-7:30 PM. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join us for a outdoor feast at the Pine Ring. Please bring your picnic food items and we'll provide the fire, forks and fun!!!



1st ~ Moonlight Frog Chorus ~ 7:30 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Experience the sounds of the season, in search of the frogs and toads which inhabit the Wapsi Center. Please bring a flashlight and waterproof footwear.

8th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley

Monsignor Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi Center ~ As of this printing the Spring schedule had not been set. You may go to <http://web.sau.edu/astronomy/menke/default.htm> to see upcoming dates in early spring.

June Sneak-Peek

25th-27th ~ Hunter Safety Education Camp ~ 6 PM (Fri)-4 PM (Sun) ~ Wapsi Center ~ Save the Date! ~ Our award winning camp is moving from August to June. Kids spend the entire weekend doing all things hunting and stay over night in the dormitory. Space is limited, so sign up early by calling 563-847-7202.

Meet the New Board Member

by Judie Petersen, Board Member

Hello, I am Judie Petersen of Goose Lake and I am the newest member of the Clinton County Conservation Board. I grew up on a farm two miles east of Charlotte, Iowa. I graduated from North-east Community High School and retired from Lyondellbasell, originally Chemplex Company, in July after 25 years of service. The last twenty years were spent in the Health, Safety, and Environmental Department. My husband Steve and I have six children, Steve Nielsen, Amy Ewing, Amy Scott, Scott Petersen, Chad Petersen, and Kelli Petersen. We also have nine wonderful grandchildren.

I have worked for several years with the CCCB and other organizations with the Award winning *Clinton County Enviro Kids* summer programs. For the past two years I have been a member of the Clinton County Conservation Foundation working toward the *Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center*, so when a vacancy came up on the Conservation Board I put in an application. The conservation and preservation of land and wildlife has always been very important to me. I am very impressed with the accomplishments of the Conservation Board and am proud to be a part of this great group of people.

Some of my likes and hobbies are, attending the grandchildren's sporting events, spending time with my family, working in my yard and garden, volunteering at the Bickelhaupt Arboretum, spoiling my cats and working with my photo glazing business.



Twenty Years of Service ~ Twenty Years of Success

by Dayton Howe, Board Member, 1989-2009

It was with great regret and a little sadness that I made the difficult decision to resign from the Clinton County Conservation Board after 20 years of serving. The decision was not reached without a great deal of soul searching because I'm proud of all we have accomplished in those 20 years and I'll miss all of the people both in local conservation and State of Iowa conservation with whom I've become friends over all of those years. The only reason I reached the decision was because of my age. It was time for me to step aside and make way for someone younger who is passionately interested in conservation.

When I began my association with the CCCB things were not in great shape. I was ashamed of the condition of most of our parks and we had only two public hunting areas and little wildlife habitat. With the hiring of Al Griffiths as our CCCB director we began to undertake real improvement: new playgrounds in our parks, new and upgraded campsites, our first cabins, new homes for our rangers, who are required to live in our parks, new boating docks and on and on. My five kids are all outdoor people and that was extra incentive to stay involved. In fact, my youngest has a master's degree in environmental science and makes actual use of the knowledge in work with a major player in the field.

In the past three years we have acquired three large tracts dedicated to habitat for wildlife, in spite of critics who don't want to be bothered by facts. These have been acquired with little or no county money, mostly acquired through grants and the generous donations of the many wildlife organizations of the area.

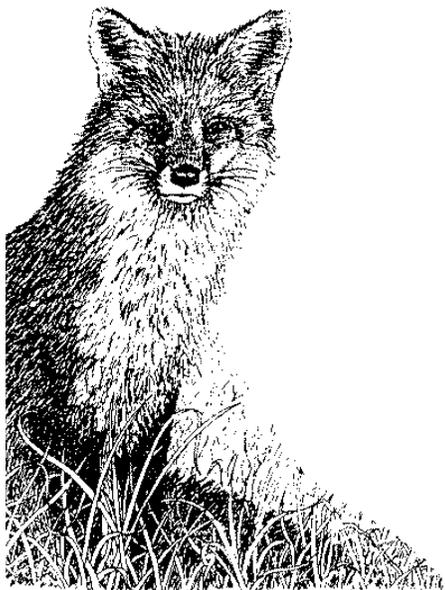
Now we have embarked upon our largest project to date through the Clinton County Conservation Foundation. We have raised almost \$1,200,000 toward construction of this project, and have recently been awarded \$750,000 in a Federal Highway Grant. When this money is in hand we will immediately begin construction of our new Conservation Education Center at our Rock Creek location, well above 500-year flood level. It will serve as headquarters for our conservation education work, which is recognized as the best in all of the 99 counties of Iowa. In addition the center will be available for the public to use with a capacity of about 225 people.

I hope to continue my work on this project as a member of the CCCF Board of Directors. In this way I will continue to work for Iowa conservation. We have had a very dedicated group of volunteers working with a thoroughly professional and dedicated staff toward our joint goal of providing county parks for the education and enjoyment of the citizens of Clinton County.

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

Address Service Requested

Pre-sorted STD
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 CLINTON, IA 52732
 Permit No. 164



CLINTON COUNTY CONSERVATION

BOARD

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

STAFF

Walt Wickham, Executive Director
 Karen Brix, Administrative Assistant
 Mark Roberts, Education Coordinator
 Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretive Naturalist
 Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist
 Chip Brown, Park Officer, West District
 Dave Schneden, Maintenance, West Dist.
 Eric Wright, Park Officer, East District
 Brad Taylor, Park Ranger, East District
 Robert Schaefer, Maintenance, Central

MAILING LIST

If you'd like to get "The Heron" contact the CCCB. It is mailed to County addresses free. Others are charged \$5 annually or 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 meets the second Tuesday the month, 6:00 PM, in the Conservation Office, located 1 mile south of Grand Mound at 230th Ave. and 255th St. Please note, this date can be changed.

