



## *Teacher's Environmental Education Newsletter* *Brought to you by the Clinton County Conservation Board*

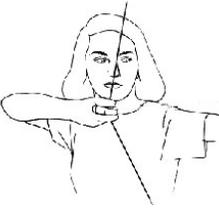


### *Fun Night Opportunities*

by Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretive Naturalist

Recently we were privileged to be invited to present at a Lyons Middle School Fun Night event. Our portion of the night was to introduce interested youth to snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. The night was a great success which naturally has us wanting to repeat it as often as possible.

This got us thinking about what other types of presentations we could offer. My own thoughts ran back to my oldest kids' elementary years and the fun night we attended at Horace Mann Elementary.

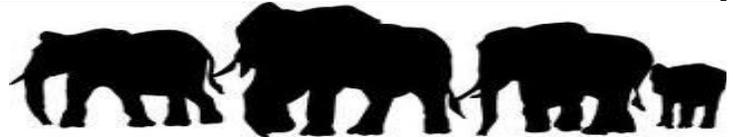


Here's what we came up with. Along with our winter sports equipment we can offer the Stellarium, STARLAB, Cargo for Conservation, Leave No Trace, Archery and Mobile Teams Course presentations.

**Stellarium** is a software planetarium, that is projected onto a large screen to render a realistic view of the night sky. With Stellarium, it is possible to see what you can't always see with the naked eye, binoculars or a small telescope. We will bring it in to your school to take your participants on a virtual tour of our solar system and points beyond.

**STARLAB** Since its introduction more than 20 years ago, "STARLAB" Planetarium System has been not only a place where people "see the sky", but also the curricula was developed with viewer participation in mind. The STARLAB inflatable dome is available through Mississippi Bend AEA and our staff is proficient in presenting the material and leading discussions on the subject. This requires a 30' W x 10' H space.

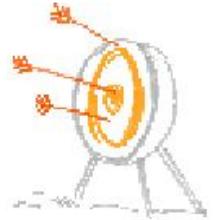
**Cargo for Conservation** is a program of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. It's designed to bring a representative sampling of illegal wildlife parts and products directly to the classroom. The collection includes 69 different items such as elephant ivory, reptile skins and products, sea turtle shell products, medicinal products, corals and sea shells and a variety of miscellaneous



consumer products manufactured from animal parts. These items are used by us to facilitate conversation concerning wildlife conservation and to inspire a concern for the plight of threatened and endangered species the world over.

**Leave No Trace** introduces participants to the concept of low impact living through camping. We will set up a mock campsite using packs, tents, cookstoves and cookware to demonstrate proper camping etiquette that transfers well to daily life. Discussions include water quality, waste management, food storage, campsite selection and arrangement, fire safety and survival skills. The knowledge gained can lead to greater appreciation and enjoyment of the outdoors, a greener life style and may even be lifesaving.

**Archery in the Schools** is part of the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) and is a joint venture between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Clinton County Conservation Board and schools. The program promotes student education, physical education and participation in the life-long sport of archery. The Clinton County Conservation staff is fully trained in the presentation and use of the archery equipment and will give participants the basic instruction. This requires a 50' x 50' gymnasium or outdoor space.



**Mobile Teams Course** is a battery of challenges intended to build character through cooperation, listening and communication. This requires a gymnasium or outdoor area.

We would like to be part of your event! See Page 4 for contact information.



### *Utilizing CCCB Naturalists, We Are Here For You!*

Sometimes when talking to educators that are not familiar with exactly what we do, I get the feeling that they think they are an inconvenience to us. To put it bluntly, you are not. The naturalist's mission for Clinton County Conservation essentially is to provide conservation education (anything to do with science, nature and outdoor activities). If it is an out-of-county school group, we charge a fee, but if you are a Clinton County school group, it is free of charge. Really our only policy is that we will only come into the classroom the months of November through March. Our priority for the other months are field trips. If you want us to come into the classroom or schedule a field trip, give us a call or email and we will work out all of the details with you. Also you can borrow equipment like GPS units, snowshoes, etc. If your class is studying the night sky, call us to schedule a date then check out the STARLAB from the AEA. We will set up, teach and take down the lab. We try to be as efficient as possible with both our time and your time but we can be flexible with your schedule. Remember it is our job. Don't feel bad about it, just give us a call!

# A Field Trip to Eden Valley

by Mark Roberts, Education Coordinator

Eden Valley Refuge is a 201-acre wilderness park located north of Lost Nation, Iowa. The 150-foot high limestone bluffs and the scenic, riffle-filled Bear Creek dominate the park. Five miles of hiking trails lead visitors to many overlooks and through cathedral forests.

Eden Valley served as a county park long before county parks existed. The valley served as a gathering place for family picnics and adventure for local residents for over a hundred years. In 1978, Eden Valley Nature Center opened for weekend visitors and school groups.

Eden Valley is our most beautiful park and provides a stunning backdrop for school visits. Activities can take many directions but two main field days dominate the EV schedule, the lower elementary nature center visit/hike/nature games trip and the 5th grade-high school caving/rock climbing/stream study field day.

**Lower Elementary Sample Schedule.** We will look at the lower elementary schedule first. Usually 2-3 classrooms come out at a time. With today's larger schools and the cost of busing it just makes more sense to get several classes out at once. Since Clinton County has three naturalists we can divide into smaller class-sized groups for rotations.

**Rotation #1, Nature Center Visit and Animal Encounter.** The nature center has many neat things to see and do. The highlight is the snakes and turtles that are housed in the building. We have the kids sit in a circle and bring out the critters, one at a time, for a hands-on, up close, educational experience.

## Eden Valley Nature Center Features

- Dioramas featuring local ecosystems such as wetland, forest and prairie with many mounted animals
- Touch table
- Iowa furbearer collection
- Large rock & mineral collection
- Very nice fossil collection
- Buzz board matching game
- Native American artifacts
- Live animals including native snakes, native turtles, tiger salamanders, local stream fish, frogs & toads.

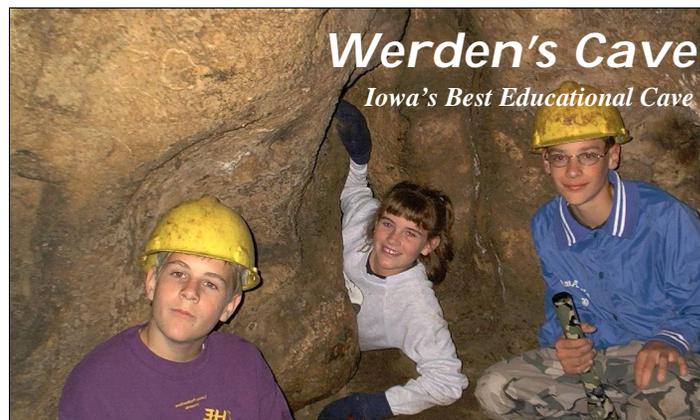
**Rotation #2, Hike.** Taking a nature hike up the bluff trail is a must for any visit. The towering bluffs look down on a blanket of woodland flowers along well-maintained trails. Depending on time available, we hike to the tower, the swinging bridge or both! Along the way we look for animal signs, learn about the plants in bloom, see poison ivy and nettle, look for colors and shapes, make collections, whatever fits your needs.

*Swinging Bridge* ~ An 85-foot suspension bridge spans Bear Creek, a favorite of kids for many years. Despite its name, it bounces much more than it swings.

*Observation Tower* ~ A three-story tall tower set on top of a high hill gives students a chance to get above the trees for a bird's-eye view.

**Rotation #3, Nature Games.** We have a long list of games that are fun and teach kids about nature. Here are a few favorites.

- *Bug Relay Race.* Kids learn about the many ways insects move and then imitate them during a relay race. From back-



swimmers to butterflies, from bumble bees to dragon flies, this is a lot of fun.

- *Steal the Carrion.* In honor of the many turkey vultures that call Eden Valley home.
- *Bass and Minnows.* Predator/prey with an aquatic twist.
- *Snake's Dinner.* Kids sit on the ground facing each other creating a "snake". Then a "mouse" is passed head first thru the snake using the snake's many muscles to swallow the mouse.
- *Bat & Moth.* Kids make a circle, then a blind-folded "bat" is put in the center with a "moth". The bat has to catch the moth using echolocation.

**5th Grade-High School Sample Schedule.** For older kids this is a very popular line-up of activities. Of course the same activities with high school students will vary in content from 5th graders, but the basic activities are the same.

**Rotation #1, Caving.** Werden's Cave, Iowa's 10th longest cave, is located only a 5-minute bus ride away from Eden Valley. The cave is on private land, but the Clinton CCB has permission to bring groups to the cave to educate and explore. We use Werden's Cave as a laboratory to learn about caves and the creatures who live there. Werden's is a 1,000 foot of user-friendly maze. Students explore the cave's many passages and try several squeezes while observing bats, cave formations and getting very dirty. Spelunking practices teamwork and builds self confidence. We provide hardhats and kids should bring a change of clothes and flashlight. Often they just wear shorts & t-shirt under sweats.

**Rotation #2, Rock Climbing.** Eden Valley has many limestone bluffs with crevices that allow for some fun team climbing. No ropes are used, students rely on each other for support. We have several different levels of difficulty. Climbing practices teamwork and builds self confidence.

**Rotation #3, Stream Study.** Bear Creek can teach us about watersheds and how pollutants can travel and concentrate downstream. Each student uses a net to see what animals they can catch in the stream. We also can use water test kits supplied by IOWATER to check for dissolved oxygen and ph levels and test water clarity. Old tennis shoes and "just let the kids get wet" is the norm. A change of clothes is recommended.

## Other programs often performed at Eden Valley:

Ecosystems	Bird Adaptations
Geology Rocks	Iowa Furbearers
Reptiles & Amphibians	GPS Geo-cache Course

Eden Valley is a significant distance from much of our population (47 miles from Clinton, 31 miles from DeWitt), so the busing scholarship can be extra helpful.

# Teacher of the Semester ~ Cal-Wheat's Penny Jacobi

by Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist

Here at Clinton County Conservation, we have a list of potential recipients for this biannual award. There are candidates from all of the school districts and we like to make sure we recognize a variety of educators throughout Clinton County because we believe they deserve some recognition and a big THANK YOU for sharing nature with the future! Without their support, our careers would not exist and people would not have as many opportunities to experience the outdoors. Penny Jacobi, a physical education teacher from Calamus-Wheatland Elementary School, has introduced many children to outdoor recreation that may not have had a chance otherwise.

When I told Penny she was the recipient she seemed surprised and genuinely pleased, which by the way, makes us feel good! She came back with the response, "Most of my field trips are spent with you (CCCB) and being able to use your equipment allows us to introduce lifelong skills and activities that would otherwise not be possible."

Penny schedules field trips for the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. With all of the activities, Penny also actively participates and teaches with us. The 3rd graders go to the Wapsi River Center to snowshoe, learn about animals in winter, fur-bearing animals and experience everything the Eagle View Eco Center has to offer (live reptiles, amphibians, birds, various mounts, displays and real furs to examine). The 4th graders go to Malone Park near DeWitt to fish, learn to frisbee golf, canoe and participate in pond study. This is one of a handful of field trips that utilizes Malone Park; even though it is small, it has a lot to offer. On this field trip Penny uses our telescoping cane poles to let the kids fish and you would be surprised how many the kids get to catch and release. The 5th graders then go back to the Wapsi River Center to learn

to cross country ski and get reintroduced to the nature center. The 3rd and 5th grade field trips are fairly unique because Penny is utilizing a time of year that many other schools do not. With the help of our foundation's bus scholarship, it makes the field trips much easier to attend. This allows her to continue with these great programs.

The participation has grown. As Penny states, "I believe I started with snowshoeing and it just went from there... one opportunity just grew into another." A fairly recent addition is for us to go into the school to teach the 4th through 6th grade archery in a safe and positive way in the gym. Penny "keeps" the equipment for three weeks to continue the unit. It has been amazing to see the skill development over the years in these kids!

Along with the title of being the "Teacher of the Semester", a commemorative framed certificate and \$50 award from the Clinton County Conservation Foundation (CCCF) was presented for environmental education. Penny has graciously donated the money back to the CCCB environmental education department to fix arrows that have been damaged by wear and tear over the past few years.

On behalf of the CCCB and the CCCF, thank you Penny for your hard work and dedication to bringing these life-long memories and skills to the youth of Clinton County!



Penny helping students with their archery skills.

## Where the Wild Woods Are ~ Discover Iowa's Woodlands

EDIWILD (Educators in the Wild) is a 4-day educators' workshop (including evening activities) held Monday, June 20<sup>th</sup> - Thursday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 to facilitate the incorporation of environmental education into the school curriculum. The workshop will use an interdisciplinary approach of teaching and will emphasize Iowa's woodland habitat.

**Workshop Sites:** Nahant Marsh Educational Field Station, Wildcat Den State Park, Sherman Park, Eden Valley Refuge and Wapsi River Environmental Education Center.

**Activities and Topics include:** Iowa's Woodlands ~ Past, Present, & Future, Tree Personality Activity, Introduction to Keying, Grist Mill Tour, Woodland Systematics, Woodland Management Hike, Woodland Flora Hike, Leaf

Presses, Tree Identification, Woodland Fauna with Trapping, Threatened & Endangered Species Hike, Invasive Species, Owls, Bats, Night Hike, Plants & Pioneer Hike, Soils with Hands-on Activities, Native Woodland Cultures, Orienteering/GPS, Project Learning Tree Activities, The Lorax-based Curriculum and How Many Bears Can Live In This Forest?

**Overnight Accommodations:** Available at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center's Owl's Nest Dormitory June 20 - 22 (recommended stay Tuesday).

**Continuing Education Credit:** Through Drake University (2 hrs. \$280) and re-licensure credit (2 hrs. \$140) through the AEA 9 will be available for those interested. Paperwork has been sent to the AEA; it should be on the website shortly.

**Cost:** The workshop will cost \$65. This does not include continuing education or re-licensure credit fees.

If you are interested in participating, please contact the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center at 563-328-3286 to reserve a spot. A brochure will be sent to you. The brochure includes a registration form, daily activities and locations; plus other details.



# Set up Your Field Trip Today!

## Who to call?

To set up your next field trip to Rock Creek, including the Blue Heron Eco-Cruises, Eden Valley Refuge, Soaring Eagles Nature Center and the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, please contact conservation education coordinator Mark Roberts or interpretive naturalists Chuck Jacobsen or Jessica Steines at 563-847-7202.

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

You can find out more about us on [www.clintoncounty-ia.gov](http://www.clintoncounty-ia.gov), [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com) and [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).



## New! Cargo for Conservation

Recently, the Clinton County Conservation Board acquired 69 confiscated items from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. These things were confiscated because they were made from various plants or animals from all around the world that are protected by law. Many of these things were probably bought by tourists as souvenirs, but some were brought to the United States in bulk to sell illegally. There are some oddity things like snake wine from Vietnam or the iguana skin belt, which is a crowd favorite. There are carved walrus and elephant tusks, whale baleen (filter feeding structure), coral and many other items that are from endangered and threatened creatures that are in real danger of becoming EXTINCT. What is hurting wildlife the most is probably habitat destruction, but the wildlife trade is not helping the already stressed populations. This kit is on permanent loan to the CCCB to educate you and your classroom how people can help because the market is driven by consumers. This is relevant to the children because they will learn this doesn't just happen in other places, but here in their own backyard and it affects biodiversity everywhere. We have already taken some pieces into the schools to use with our the other presentations. (polar bear fur for Into Winter and sea turtle shell for Reptiles and Amphibians). It also works well for the Extinct and Endangered presentation that focuses not only on Iowa, but also extends to world aspects. Contact us to bring some of these items into your classroom.

## Field Trip Bus Scholarship Program

The Clinton County Conservation Foundation is committed to assisting schools in taking field trips to the nature centers and parks of the Clinton County Conservation Board. They have established a program 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.

**Who is eligible?** School districts with significant coverage in Clinton County. Specifically Clinton, Camanche, Central Clinton, Northeast, Midland, Delwood and Calamus-Wheatland School Districts plus St. Joseph's and Prince of Peace Parochial Schools.

**How much is available?** Funds are limited and will be awarded based on the order in which each request is received. Requests will receive scholarships until the fund is exhausted.

**Where can field trips go?** Any Clinton CCB area including Rock Creek (Blue Heron Eco Cruises), Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, Eden Valley Refuge, Soaring Eagle Nature Center (The Nature Barn, Clinton), Malone Park, etc.

**How much can a school receive?** We determine scholarship amounts at \$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

School district \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Classes \_\_\_\_\_ Field trip destination \_\_\_\_\_

Field trip date \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated round trip miles \_\_\_\_\_ 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 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*

