

The Heron

*Quarterly Newsletter of Clinton County Conservation
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Field Trips and Classroom Visits

by Mark Roberts, Education Coordinator

Our field trip offerings are free of charge to school districts of Clinton County, which include Calamus-Wheatland, Camanche, Central, Clinton, Delwood, East Central, Midland and Northeast. Since a portion of Maquoketa and Preston overlap the county borders we also treat them as Clinton Co. Schools. We also offer bus scholarships through our foundation to those same districts. The rate is \$2 per mile round trip with a minimum of \$20 per bus and maximum of \$100. This is a reimbursement meant to defray some of the costs of busing students. Out-of-county schools incur modest fees while in-county schools are free.

Our conservation education program that has won multiple state-wide awards for excellence, including *Iowa's Most Outstanding EE Program Award*, four times in the last decade.

Our primary field trip sites are:

Eden Valley Refuge, 2 miles south of Baldwin, featuring a nature center, Bear Creek, limestone bluffs, hiking trails, observation tower, Werden's Cave and swinging bridge.

Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, 5 miles south of Wheatland, featuring a nature center, Wapsi River trails, aquatics lab and frog pond, teams course, combined Clinton and Scott County Education staffs, prairie, observatory and, soon, a canoeing pond.

Soaring Eagle Nature Center, Clinton, featuring a 1938 Iowa barn converted to a nature center, trails, prairie, historic one-room schoolhouse, adjacent to Eagle Point Park with limestone observation tower and scenic Mississippi River overlooks.

Rock Creek Marina and Campground, Camanche, featuring Blue Heron Eco Cruise 30-passenger pontoon boat, Mississippi River tours, backwater canoeing/kayaking and, coming this spring, the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center with an 8,000-gallon river aquarium, crawl through turtle tank, state record fish collection, state record deer mount, large classroom, indoor archery range and a small theater.

We have many great choices for you. Our staff has over 40 years combined experience (Jessica Steines, Chuck Jacobsen and Mark Roberts).

I feel we can offer excellent hands-on, real-life experiences with, and in, the outdoors for your children. We are happy to come into the classroom in the months of November through March, saving the other months for field trips. We offer show and tell, demonstrations and experiment type activities in the classroom featuring Iowa wildlife, habitats, live animals, endangered species, the solar system, weather and water cycles and so much more. We

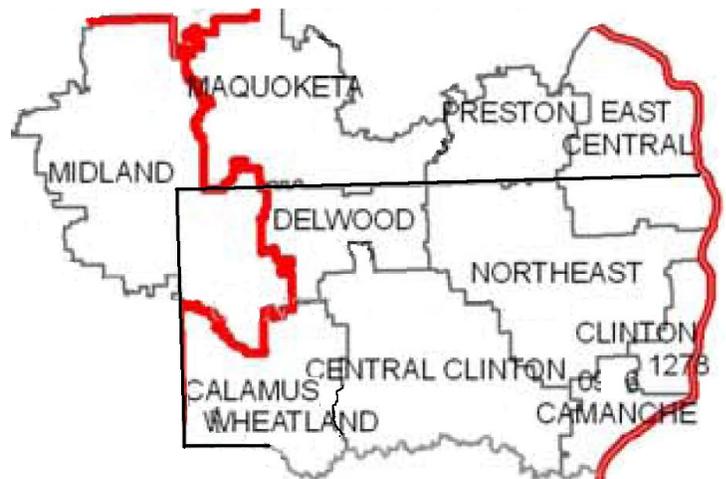
also love to teach outdoor skills that help kids experience the outdoors for a lifetime. Activities include cross country skiing and snowshoeing in winter, shooting sports, archery, atlatl, canoeing, boater safety, GPS/geocaching, disc golf, compass and fishing.

The most important part of making a great and educational field trip or classroom visit is to have the experiences fit with your classroom topics. You can take a field trip in the fall that will reinforce and introduce topics students will learn about in the winter. Or you can schedule a visit that works perfectly with your current units. Both approaches are fine. The best way is for the teacher to inform us what they are studying and together plan experiences in the field and in the classroom that take learning out of school books or computers and into the real world.

We have a teacher's guide that we are updating and will re-print this winter, but the 2003 version is still valid. It lists and describes all our activities as they fit with national science standards and age levels. The new version will cross reference with the ever-changing Iowa Core. Our teacher's newsletter, "*In The Field*" has some great ideas as well. It is available online. We can also incorporate music, art, social studies, history, technology and PE into our field trips.

We look forward to serving our school districts in the future. We would love to attend teachers' in-service or other meetings to explore possibilities with teachers from many levels in any of our local school districts.

If you have a group you would like to schedule with us please contact me at: mroberts@clintoncounty-ia.gov or call 563-847-7202.



School districts overlapping Clinton County lines.

Wetland or Not

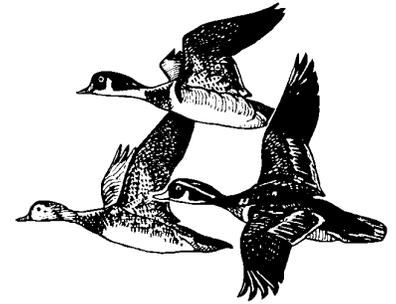
by Darin Voss, Natural Resource Technician

As we all know, in recent years we have had some extremely wet spring and summer conditions. With the recent rainfall trends, farmers have been compelled to put in more tile to make the land more productive. Another factor that has farmers feeling it is necessary to tile is that corn and soybean prices are at record highs and unproductive wet spots are limiting overall profits. Tiling agricultural fields is not a new concept. Tiling came about shortly after the plow turned over rich prairie soils in the early twentieth century. Of course, the methods of tiling have changed a bit. Back then, tiling was very labor intensive, a lot was done by hand digging trenches and later clay tiles were laid to give an underground drainage system. Today large tiling machines, backhoes and excavators are much less labor intensive and much more efficient at laying large roles of plastic tile in a short period of time.

People have many different opinions on the tiling of agricultural land. You have those who make their living on the land and look for ways to make the land as productive and profitable as possible. You have those who are more concerned about habitat, water quality and flood potential. Some feel that tiling is an absolute necessity where others would like to see tiling halted completely. I don't want to get into whether tiling is good or bad. That is not the purpose of this article. I would just like to share with you a story that involves an unintentional tiling of a wetland and the repercussions of doing so.

So, you may already be asking, how does a wetland unintentionally get tiled? Well, not every wetland looks like a wetland at first glance. By definition, "a wetland is a generic term used to define the universe of wet habitats including marshes, swamps, bogs, fens and similar areas. Wetlands are environments subject to permanent or periodic inundation or prolonged soil saturation sufficient for the establishment of hydrophytes and/or the development of hydric soils or substrates unless environmental conditions are such that they prevent them from forming". (*Tiner, Ralph W., Wetland indicators: a guide to wetland identification, delineation, classification, and mapping*) This is just one definition of a wetland and in many instances it can be difficult to tell whether an area falls into the category of a wetland or not. There are three main indicators that are used in determining if an area is a wetland; vegetation, animals and soils.

to him he didn't look into it any further. After the tiling project had been completed, it was brought to his attention by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that he had indeed tiled through a wetland.



Now there was a problem! The area farmer was given a couple of options. One was to remove the tile that had just been completed and the other was to do a wetland mitigation. The definition of mitigation is "to make milder or less severe". In the case of wetlands, to mitigate is to find another location to restore and preserve a wetland to compensate for the one that has been converted or destroyed. The area farmer did not want to remove the new tile so he began looking at mitigation. One option was to buy into shares of a mitigation bank. A mitigation bank is an area that has already been restored by an investor and then people or entities that need to mitigate a site can buy into X amount of acres that are needed. The problem with this option, was that each acre was expensive and 4.4 acres were needed. The other option was to find an area that would qualify to restore a wetland and do the work himself. This became feasible because he had large earth moving equipment that could complete the job. The trick was finding an area that would qualify and be large enough to equal the 4.4 acres needed.

This is where we (Clinton County Conservation) came into play. Last January, I met with the NRCS to discuss establishing a wetland on Manikowski Prairie next to Goose Lake. We had an area on the south side, just east of the Northeast School, that we felt would make a good wetland. At this point, we still weren't sure how we were going to fund the project. To my surprise, it was brought to my attention that an area farmer was looking for an area to mitigate and was willing to do the work if the location would qualify. The first hurdle was that the area we were looking at was only 1.5 acres and 4.4 acres were needed.

After several meetings with the NRCS and the area farmer, and discussions about other areas that might qualify, we came up with an agreement. Two wetlands, totaling 3.8 acres, on the Manikowski Area and one wetland for 0.7 acres, on the neighboring property would be constructed for a total of 4.5 acres. It was agreed that the farmer would do all the work of building the wetlands and put a creek crossing in for us. The farmer would also cover the cost of the work and the control structures. We would cover the cost of the tube for the crossing and do the seeding of the wetlands once the project was completed.

Construction began in the middle of July and was completed by the middle of August. Wetland #1 was constructed, just east of the school. We thought we would get 1.5 acres of wetland from this area, but with shallow excavating they were able to get 2.8 acres total. This area was scraped and the soil removed was used to build a dike on the north end and to also build an island for nesting birds. The dike has a control structure so the water level can be altered by removing blocks to the desired level.



In this particular case, an area farmer had recently purchased a farm and decided that he would tile it. He checked several sources and nothing indicated a wetland on this piece of property. The area had previously been farmed so it didn't look like a wetland to the naked eye. Because nothing indicated a wetland

“Wetland or Not” continued from previous page.

Wetland #2 is just to the north of wetland #1 on the other side of the old railroad tracks and is located along the creek. This wetland was a shallow excavation and also had an island built in the center. This wetland has no control structure and totals one acre. Wetland #3 is located on the neighboring property to the east. The dike was built right on the boundary of Manikowski Prairie. This wetland also had some shallow excavating done and several small islands were left for nesting birds. There was also a control structure placed in the dike of this wetland.

Since the construction has been completed, I have seeded the

disturbed areas with a cover crop to protect the soil from erosion. Later this fall or early winter, I will go back and do a frost seeding of native grass and forbs.

Now that the projects are completed, I am excited to see how the wetlands will look when they fill up in the spring. It's going to take some time, but I am optimistic that these wetlands will be fully functioning. I don't like to see wetlands being converted by being drained, but in this case another area has been improved and these reconstructed wetlands will be permanently protected. One lesson that can be taken from all of this is to keep in mind that just because an area may not look like a wetland doesn't mean that it isn't.

What Really Matters

by Brad Taylor, Park Officer, East District

With all the activities that kids have to do these days such as soccer, football and other school activities, it is hard to find time to take a kid hunting and fishing. While these activities beat sitting on the couch watching TV or playing video games, a lot is lost when a kid doesn't have a chance at trying to catch a fish or shoot their first duck. To help with this, many conservation and habitat organizations such as Pheasants Forever, Whitetails Unlimited, Harvester Bass Club, Clinton Izaak Walton League, and the Wild Turkey Federation put money towards youth outdoor education. The money is used for hunter education classes, youth mentor hunts and archery in the schools programs. Every year there are fewer and fewer kids getting involved in hunting. These organizations have seen this and do what they can to help out. The future of hunting depends on young kids getting involved. You can also make the case that the future of the outdoors depends on hunting as well since hunters pay for much of the public lands in our area.

The latest event, which I believe is the most fun for kids, is the annual *Youth Outdoor Skills Day* held at the Clinton Izaak Walton League. This is a day where kids from ages 11-17 are able to spend the day shooting and fishing. They shoot with shotguns, muzzleloaders, arrows and .22 rifles along with learning fishing and turkey hunting techniques. Several of the habitat organizations put money towards this to make it virtually free for kids to come and experience these outdoor activities.

One thing that stands out for me, is that kids from all ages and skills attend. Some kids have never shot a gun. One kid shot 20

out of 25 clay birds, having never shot a gun before that day! Another kid (Josh) had never shot before and found out he liked it and signed up for the hunter safety class the following week. I then took Josh and his dad duck hunting for their first time. While the action wasn't super hot, they both got in a lot of shooting and even managed to get a duck or two. I felt a lot of pride on that day. Not only did I help out at the *Youth Outdoor Skills Day* encouraging him to learn to shoot, I also followed it up with a duck hunt the next week. Josh was super excited and can't wait to go again. I hear his younger brother, Jake, can't wait to go too!

Scoring a touchdown or kicking a goal are good things, but if you have the chance to teach a kid to shoot and enjoy the outdoors, that feels a lot better to me than anything else.

It is hard to find kids that want to get involved in hunting. If their parents don't hunt, it's even harder. A lot of times they don't have the opportunities to go. That is what is so great about the habitat organizations. They give these kids opportunities for experiences that they may never otherwise have.

I would encourage all kids to go through hunter safety and learn about gun safety and the outdoors. They will have more respect for the outdoors and weapons and hopefully want to spend time in the woods or the marsh.

If you want to help, go to the conservation fundraising banquets in the county that support these programs so they can continue to support youth in the outdoors.



Kid' shoot archery at the Youth Outdoor Skills Day



Jack, Brad, Josh, Jamie & 5 wood ducks.

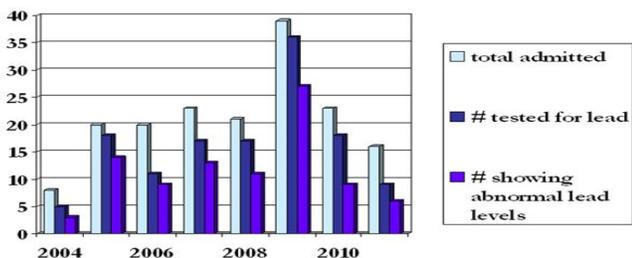
Let's Get the Lead Out!

by Walt Wickham, Executive Director

Lead has been used in hunting ammunition for centuries. Recently, there has been a growing movement for banning the use of lead ammunition. The use of lead shot and lead bullets (even lead fishing sinkers) has been shown to negatively impact the health of wildlife, humans and the environment. Sixty-two species of Iowa birds (including upland birds, raptors and waterfowl) have been shown to have ingested and/or been poisoned by lead shot. People who eat wild game harvested with lead ammunition often, unknowingly, ingest lead fragments with their meal. Lead can affect health, impair ability to fight off disease and impact reproduction.

Kay Neumann of S.O.A.R. (Saving Our Avian Resources), a non-profit raptor rehabilitation and education center located in Dedham, Iowa, has been a leader in the charge, in Iowa, against the use of lead ammunition. Kay, an advocate for non-toxic ammunition and a hunter herself, estimates that as many as 80 bald eagles die every year due to ingesting lead fragments found in deer carcasses and gut piles. In 2005-2006, 13 of 25 bald eagles that were brought in for treatment to the rehab center were found to have ingested lead. In bald eagles, even small amounts of lead can cause damage to the nervous system, paralysis and eventually death.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service banned lead shot for hunting waterfowl nationally in 1991 due to concerns over the ingestion of lead by waterfowl. This switch is credited for saving the ducks everywhere. There are 35 states that ban the use of lead in at least some situations. Many Iowa's state and county public hunting areas also have some sort of ban on the use of lead. Iowa hunting regulations (www.iowadnr.gov) lists state-managed wildlife areas



Incidents of Abnormal Lead Levels in Bald Eagles admitted to Iowa Wildlife Rehabilitators, 2004 to March 2011



On this eagle x-ray, white spots in the center of the photo are pieces of lead shrapnel, where the stomach would be. Courtesy of S.O.A.R.

that prohibit lead for all hunting except for deer and turkey hunting. Non-toxic ammo is even required for target shooting in many state and federal wildlife areas. The Clinton County Conservation Board currently bans the use of lead shot on its Ringneck Marsh Wildlife Area, northwest of Calamus since it is primarily a wetland complex.

Most recently, an attempt to ban lead shot for dove hunting in Iowa was essentially knocked out by a legislative committee, allowing the legislature to decide the issue next year. Those opposed to a ban on lead ammunition cite the higher costs of non-toxic ammunition and question the true affect of lead on wildlife populations. They feel it is just another attempt by anti-hunting groups, such as the humane society, to cripple legal hunting. The fact is, there are non-toxic alternatives available at costs comparable to lead. A recent review of ammo prices found several cost-effective, non-toxic alternatives. As demand increases for non-toxic ammunition, the prices will continue to drop. Most hunters also consider themselves to be conservationists. They tend to be people who care about wildlife and have a love for all the outdoors. Doesn't it make sense that hunters should be willing to make a small sacrifice and switch to non-toxic ammunition so they can help to protect all wildlife, the environment and even their own health? For more information on non-toxic shot go to www.iowadnr.gov or www.soarraptors.org.

The ultimate test of a man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today, for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard.... Gaylord Nelson

A Great 2011 Camping Season

by Chip Brown, Park Office, West District

The 2011 camping season started off with a great Memorial Day weekend with all campgrounds full on the west half of the county. At Eden Valley, the campground was jam packed as usual with people doubling up on several sites. The 12 sites at Walnut Grove also saw doubled-up sites.

From Memorial Day through the Fourth of July, we worked nonstop to get the new electric sites finished at Walnut Grove. While working there, we were very fortunate and did not have a flood and never did have one at all. This will be the first time in several years, that the west district goes flood free. From the July 4th weekend through the September 16th

weekend, Eden Valley was surpassed in camping units by Walnut Grove. The new campsites at Walnut Grove have seen several new campers that have never been there before. Not only have they not been there before, but also they have never been to a Clinton County Conservation Department park. This, to me, shows that we are doing things right to attract new campers.

Next year, with the new shower facilities being built at Sherman Park, maybe it will be another surprise for the conservation board. However, I am quite sure Eden Valley will have a strong finish to the camping season with the upcoming Bluegrass Jam on October 8th. Hope to see you there.

Pre-Historic Peoples of the Mississippi River

by Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretative Naturalist

With the European exploration of the Mississippi River came the advent of recorded history of the area. Before that stories, bone, soil and stone archived the natural and human history of this region. This article will attempt to summarize the technological advance of indigenous populations of the Mississippi River prior to historic times.

50,000 years ago (ya). - Though evidence found in the Eastern United States points to human habitation of North America at this time, very little other supporting evidence has been found to date. We in Iowa currently only have evidence and some understanding prehistory of the last 11,500 years.

11,500-9,500 ya.- Paleo-Indian peoples occupied North America at this time. The environment was cooler and wetter then. In north central Iowa these people lived on recently deglaciated landscapes covered by evergreens and mixed conifer-hardwood forests which later evolved into elm and oak dominated woodlands. Deciduous woodlands covered most of the rest of the state. Lance-shaped points known as Clovis points as well as butchering tools and the use of chert and specialized stone technologies were in use. These peoples were nomadic; hunting various animals including the extinct large mammals like mammoth, mastodon and giant ice age bison. None of their villages or camps have ever been found in Iowa.



Clovis Point

9,500-7,500 ya.- The Early Archaic culture developed when a change occurred from people mainly hunting big game to those with a more rounded diet. The environment changed as deciduous woodland and prairie-woodland mixes became open prairies in western areas. Bison was probably the main meat animal in western Iowa, while elk were more plentiful in eastern Iowa. Large mammals were supplemented by smaller game and a growing dependency on plant foods. Settlements included base villages and seasonal hunting camps. Early Archaic groups were probably small, relying on seasonally available foods. Their artifacts include medium to large spear points, with serrated and beveled blade edges.

7,500-4,500 ya.- The Middle Archaic period is so similar to the Late Archaic that they are often viewed as one. The environment was becoming increasingly dry throughout the period. Human populations in the Midwest were attracted to the wetter river valleys. Huge amounts of silt filled river valleys and other deposits created deltas. Many Middle Archaic sites were probably buried in these alluvial areas.

4,500-2,500 ya.- During the Late Archaic, the Midwest was becoming crowded, resulting in similar cultures over large areas. The people were becoming more territorial with locally different manufactured goods. They began to trade between themselves. As the climate continued to dry and stabilize, more areas became suitable for settlement. Populations increased,

leading to a more sedentary lifestyle as well as construction of large common graves.

2,500-2,100 ya.- Early Woodland period settlements of the Midwest were small and seasonally occupied at this time. They probably collected many different mammals, birds and aquatic animal and plant species. Early Woodland peoples built large burial mounds and interacted with groups throughout the Midwest. Pottery of the period includes both a thick, flat-bottomed type (2,500-2,300 ya.) and a thinner bag-shaped type often decorated with lines in geometric shapes (2,300-2,100 ya.). Early Woodland sites are relatively common in the Mississippi Valley. It's likely that groups farther west retained an Archaic lifestyle during this period.

2,100-1,700 ya.- The Middle Woodland period is noted for its finer artwork, complex burial rituals and extensive trade networks. Throughout the Midwest, their communities were linked by a network archaeologists refer to as the Hopewell Interaction Sphere. Trading involved materials such as Knife River flint from North Dakota and obsidian from the Yellowstone Park area. They also exchanged artifacts of marine shell, copper, mica, and several pipestones, as well as high quality ceramic vessels and probably perishable materials. They were becoming more complex economically, socially and politically. Most of them probably lived in small communities or farmsteads, near food resources in large river valleys. They tended gardens of squash, tobacco and native grain crops such as marsh elder and goosefoot. Typical Middle Woodland tools include broad, corner-notched spear points and finely made, thin blades.

1,700-1000 ya.- These were Late Woodland times. The intercultural exchange of goods declined but interaction between communities and tribes continued. Population levels increased rapidly. In some parts of Iowa, the people gathered into large, planned villages, but most continued to be small. Uplands and small interior valleys became settled and more heavily used. These people introduced the Midwest to the bow and arrow and corn around 1,200 ya. but corn did not become a food staple until the Late Prehistoric period. Mound construction was generally simpler but regular gatherings for rituals and other purposes to continued. Groups of linear, effigy and conical mounds in northeastern Iowa form a distinctive element of the Effigy Mound Culture from 1,150-1,000 ya. The living sites of Effigy Mound peoples show a seasonal settlement pattern of fish and shellfish collection during warm seasons, nut harvesting in uplands in the fall and winter use of rock shelters. They may have dispersed into



*Great Bear Mound Group,
Effigy Mounds National Monument*

smaller groups and moved inland during most of the year. By this time plant and animal life was much the same as found by the first European explorers.

Fall is a wonderful time to visit prehistoric sites in the Midwest.

Happy Fall Y'all



October

Special Notice: The Wapsi Center is conducting a mentored youth deer hunt. Participants have passed a proficiency test and Hunter Safety course. The Wapsi Center will remain open for visitors while no hunting zones will be observed. Dates of the mentored hunts are October 1st through December 2nd and December 19th through January 10th.

6th ~ Fall Color Blue Heron Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~
Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

7th & 8th ~ Bluegrass Jam ~
Noon - 9 PM ~ Eden Valley ~
On October 7th we will have a big jam around the campfire all afternoon and evening. The stage show begins on Saturday, October 8th. This will be the 29th year and it keeps getting better each year! Once you attend, you will never want to miss it again!



8th ~ Saturday at the Arb - Aldo Leopold ~ 10 AM ~ Bickelhaupt Arboretum ~ Listen to the history of Aldo Leopold, considered the father of modern wildlife management, and the author of "A Sand County Almanac". Each participant will build a "Leopold Bench", a simple, strong bench to take home and enjoy in the garden. Requested donation of \$45. Class size is limited, so please call 563-242-4771 to reserve a spot.

8th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Come tour the varied exhibits of this gem of a nature center. Indian, early settlement and natural artifacts fill the center and the live animal exhibits are always a hit with the youth.

13th ~ Fall Color Blue Heron Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~
Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

15th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 PM ~ Eden Valley

15th ~ Wapsi Overnight Paddling Trip ~ 1 PM ~ Conservation Office, Grand Mound ~ This expedition will entail some extra effort and planning. Participants will need to be prepared for the cool temperatures and fall weather. They will need to plan their own meals and pack any personal survival gear (rain gear, sleeping bags, sunscreen, etc.). Clinton County Conservation has two-person tents, cook stoves, cook sets, mess kits and dry bags for those who don't have their own. There will be a 30-minute intro in the proper use of these items at 12:30 PM. The put-in will be at the Wapsi Wildlife Area, south of DeWitt. Moving downstream, we will pitch our tents for a night on a sandbar in the Wapsi wilderness. You will have the aid of experienced wilderness campers to draw from. Those not wishing to spend the night are welcome to join us, but will be responsible for their own gear, Saturday shuttle and well being.



On Sunday, paddlers can join us at the McCauseland Access to Rock Creek portion of the trip. Participants must call 563-847-7202 by October 10th to register and make any equipment requests. For more specific info on the trip, please contact Chuck at 563-357-0759.

15th ~ A Tisket, A Tasket, A Recycled Trinket Basket ~ 1 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ This hands-on, recycling project utilizes a plastic pop bottle bottom as the base for the basket. Then use "plarn" (plastic yarn) and pop can tabs to create a decorative edge around the top. Basic sewing skills are needed to complete the project. Great idea for scout groups! Participants are asked to register by Thursday, October 13th by calling 563-328-3286.

20th ~ Fall Color Eco Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~
Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

20th ~ Friends of the Wapsi River Center Meeting ~ 7 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Join us to learn about current events, happenings and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi River Center.

22nd ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 PM ~ Eden Valley

22nd ~ Fall Fest ~ 4 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ Bring the family out for hot dogs, chips and s'mores at the fire, pumpkin carving and face painting in the Nature Barn, a spook-tacular night hike and wagon ride around the north end of Eagle Point Park. A free-will donation will be taken at this otherwise free event.



27th ~ Season Finale: Fall Color Eco Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation.

29th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ This will be the last weekend of the season we will be open. We will reopen April 21, 2012.

29th ~ Jens-Wendt Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. Star parties are dependent on the weather. To confirm a party will be held, check www.qcas.org, after 4 PM on the day of the party.

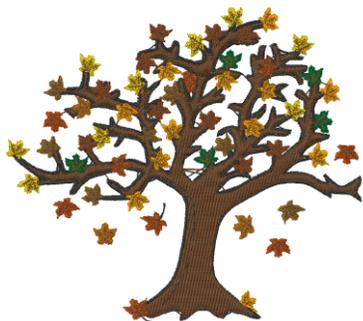
November

2nd ~ Wild for Turkeys ~ 2 PM ~ Children's Discovery Center ~ This program is for elementary school age children with a hands-on presentation about our favorite Thanksgiving animal, the wild turkey. It includes a story around a "campfire", game and snack. The Children's Discovery Center is located at 332 8th Avenue South in Clinton, near Clinton Library. This event is free of charge.



3rd ~ Music in the Loft ~ 7 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ Local musicians will play, sing and lead you through a night of music, dance and fun. Musicians interested in playing should contact Chuck at 563-357-0759 before the event. All are welcome.

4th ~ Wild for Turkeys ~ 10 AM ~ Children's Discovery Center, Clinton ~ This nature program is for children ages three to five with a hands-on presentation about our favorite Thanksgiving animal, the wild turkey! It includes a story around a campfire", game and snack. This event is free of charge.



5th ~ Fall Leaf Hike ~ 10 AM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Enjoy a fall stroll while you learn how to identify our local trees by leaves, bark, seeds, nuts and fruits. Bring the family for this informative jaunt through the woods. Call 563-328-3286 to register.

5th ~ Bald Eagle Eco Cruise ~ 1 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ This will be the public's last opportunity this year to take an Eco Cruise on the Blue Heron Pontoon Boat. The American bald eagles are starting to congregate along the Mississippi River for the winter, and we hope to see several of the birds, plus many other species, during the cruise. Before freeze-up, the bald eagles are spread out along the river and the best way to see them is to go to them via boat. Call 563-847-7202 to register.

5th ~ Black Hawk Hiking Club "Wapsi Night Hike" ~ 7 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Join members and representatives of the Black Hawk Hiking Club for a stroll through the Wapsi River Center's wild places. Learn more about this highly active hiking club and how to join. Light refreshments will be served after the hike. For more information about the hike, club or future events please call Jeff Beard at 563-370-6449.



12th ~ Saturday at the Arb - Orchids ~ 10 - 11 AM ~ Bickelhaupt Arboretum ~ The Illowa Orchid Society members will present a program on how to grow and raise orchids in Iowa. Examples will be on display and it is a great time to ask the experts about the proper care for orchids in the home. Freewill donation goes to the orchid society. Please call 563-242-4771 to reserve a seat.

16th ~ Nature Tails ~ 10 AM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ This nature program is for children ages three to five. Come experience this hands-on presentation about why an animal's tail is so important. It includes a story around a "campfire", game/hike and snack. This event is free of charge.

17th ~ Friends of the Wapsi River Center Meeting ~ 7 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Join us to learn about current events, happenings and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi River Center.

19th ~ Winter Bird Feeding ~ 10 AM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Learn how you can attract and feed our feathered friends on any budget. Simple supplies and presentation can get you started right in your own backyard. Call to register 563-328-3286.



19th & 20th ~ Girls' Night Out ~ 1 PM (Sat.) - 4 PM (Sun.) ~ Eden Valley ~ Women of all ages (11-17 year olds must be with a female chaperone) are invited to attend this fun forest foray. There will be activities including geocaching, archery and atlatl throwing, recycled t-shirt rugs and basket making. There will also be time for self exploration and relaxing around a campfire. There is a \$30/person fee to cover cabin rental, food and workshop materials. Space is limited, call 563-847-7202 to register.

19th ~ Winter Birding Workshop ~ 1 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ Learn the ins and outs of viewing and feeding birds through the winter months, what species to expect, what foods to present and steps you can take that will help draw them in. Afterwards you may build a simple feeder free of charge or order a kit. Tray, tube and suit feeders are \$5 each.



26th ~ Jens-Wendt Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. Star parties are dependent on the weather. To confirm a party will be held, check www.qcas.org after 4 PM on the day of the party.

December

1st ~ Music in the Loft ~ 7 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ Local musicians will play, sing and lead you through a night of music, dance and fun. Musicians interested in playing should contact Chuck at 563-357-0759 before the event. All are welcome.



3rd ~ Cross Country Ski Clinic ~ 9 AM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Learn the basics of this heart healthy, low-impact winter recreation. Basics will include instruction, equipment (you may bring your own) and time on the trails. Hot drinks will be provided in the Eagle View Eco Center. This clinic is weather dependent. Call 563-328-3286 for registration as a limited number of equipment is offered.

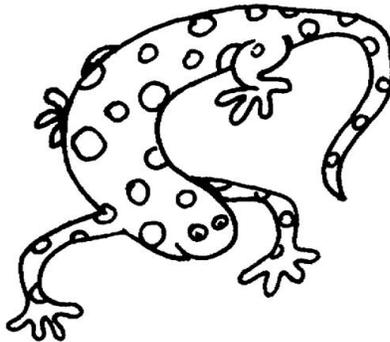
3rd ~ Saturday at the Arb - Evergreen Wreaths ~ 10 AM ~ Bickelhaupt Arboretum ~ Make your own fresh evergreen wreath with trimmings from over 10 different conifers in time for the holiday season. Requested donation of \$25. This popular class fills up fast, so sign up early by calling 563-242-4771.

7th ~ Hibernation ~ 10 AM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ This nature program focuses on children ages three to five. Come experience this hands-on presentation about why some animals hibernate. Includes a story around a “campfire”, game/hike and snack. This event is free of charge.



7th ~ Camouflage ~ 2 PM ~ Children's Discovery Center ~ Come to the hands-on presentation for school age children. The topic is about animal camouflage, including a story around a “campfire”, game and snack. The Children's Discovery Center is located near Clinton Library. This event is free of charge.

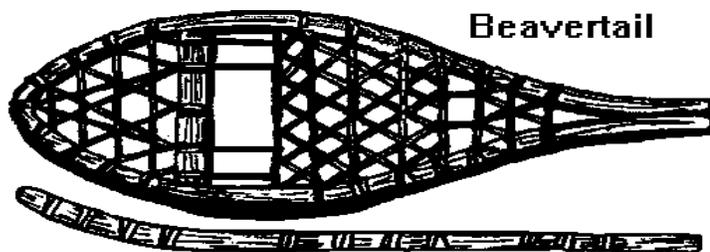
9th ~ Camouflage ~ 10 AM ~ Children's Discovery Center ~ Come to the hands-on presentation for children ages three to five. The topic is about animal camouflage, including a story around a “campfire”, game and snack. The Children's Discovery Center is located near Clinton Library. This event is free of charge.



10th ~ Natural Wreaths ~ 10 AM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Come learn how to use natural items to make beautiful seasonal wreaths. Grapevine, pinecones, evergreen cuttings, seeds, nuts and berries can add a touch of the outdoors to anyone's decorating needs this season. Please call 563-328-3286 to register as space is limited to 12 participants.

15th ~ Friends of the Wapsi River Center Meeting ~ 7 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Join us to learn about current events, happenings and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi Center.

17th ~ Snowshoe Workshop ~ 1 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ Come discover the ease and fun of snowshoeing and get help starting your own pair from a preordered kit. Purchase them through Clinton Conservation and get them at wholesale prices. Kits can be viewed on line at www.snowshoe.com. Then call to place your order and register at 563-847-7202 by December 1st. A minimum of eight orders must be placed before the order can be processed.



22nd ~ Winter Solstice Party ~ 6 PM ~ Sherman Park House ~ Join in the celebration of the holiday season learning the origins of many traditions. Bring a potluck dish and enjoy an evening of activities planned through 9 PM. Call 563-847-7202 by December 10th to RSVP for the event.

January

Winter Sneak Peak!
More events to come in our winter newsletter.

5th ~ Music in the Loft ~ 7 PM ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ 3923 N 3rd St, Clinton Iowa ~ Local musicians will play, sing and lead you through a night of music, dance and fun. Musicians interested in playing should contact Chuck at 563-357-0759 before the event. All are welcome.



6th - 8th ~ Quad Cities Bald Eagle Days ~ QCCA Expo Center, Rock Island ~ This huge, annual event showcasing our national symbol, the American bald eagle, also involves various wildlife artists, informational booths and live animal presentations. The event is held at the QCCA Expo Center, 2621 4th Avenue, Rock Island, from 4 - 8 PM on Friday, January 6, 10 AM - 8 PM on Saturday, January 7 and 10 AM - 5 PM on Sunday, January 8. Come see us at the Wapsi Center's booth.

7th ~ Bald Eagle Watch ~ 8 AM - 2:30 PM ~ Clinton Community College ~ The program is dedicated to the understanding, appreciation and protection of our national symbol. Naturalists and volunteers will be on hand to share their enthusiasm and knowledge of the outdoors. Presentations will feature lectures, videos, songs, stories and live birds of prey. The exhibit hall will host wildlife exhibits, children's activities, door prizes, food and drink.

Eagle watching at Lock #13, Fulton, IL, will take place from 8 AM - 3:30 PM. Naturalists will be on hand with spotting scopes available to aid in viewing the bald eagles. Participants are encouraged to bring binoculars, spotting scopes and cameras. Participants are encouraged to wear warm clothing to the viewing sites. Due to limited parking and additional security, participants are encouraged to use the free courtesy bus service sponsored by local businesses and provided by the Municipal Transit Administration of the City of Clinton. The bus will travel between the viewing site and the college, departing and arriving every half hour, beginning at 8:30 AM.



21st ~ Winter Sports Clinic ~ 1 PM ~ Emma Young Park & Erickson Community Center, Clinton ~ A short introduction to the sports of snowshoeing and cross-country skiing will be followed by open and free use of the county's equipment. Group and private lessons will be available and led by a seasoned veteran. No registration is necessary and equipment will be loaned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Turtleheads and Checkerspots

by Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist

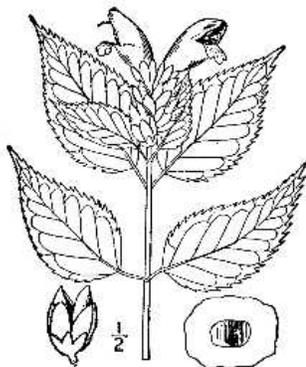
I decided to write this article on the pink turtlehead because the rangers at Rock Creek asked me to identify it. I replied that it looked like turtlehead, though I wasn't familiar with the pink color. The white variety is called white turtlehead. This prompted the humorous remark that it looked more like a catfish head! They also said that they had never seen it around the park and they know that area better than most. Was it similar to white turtlehead, just with pink flowers or was it a different species? And, was it rare? So, with curiosity, I began researching.



Pink Turtlehead

To answer the first question, the pink turtlehead is a different species from the white turtlehead. They look very similar to each other with one having brilliant pink to purple flowers whereas the other has white flowers, though they can have faint pink or purple petals. They also tend to grow in the same type of habitat of moist, fertile soil. They do have slight differences, making them a separate species.

Pink turtlehead has brilliant pink to lavender flowers up to one and a half inches long. This tall plant, with a rounded stem and reaching up to six feet tall, has a cluster of flowers extending to the tip of the stem with the younger blossoms on the top. The leaves are thin (about 1 inch wide), long (5 inches long) and positioned opposite with one leaf on each side of the stem. The upper lip of the petal broadly arches into a protective hood while the lower lip acts as a landing pad for insects. For the pink turtlehead, the upper lip will have two lobes and the lower lip will have three lobed with a pale yellow beard. Pollination is aided by bees, primarily the stronger bumblebees that force their way into the flower to reach the nectar, spreading pollen to other plants. It was even mentioned that when the bee maneuvers inside the flower, the resulting vibration looks like the flower is chewing up the bee. I personally would like to see that. After pollination, a two-celled, half-inch long oval capsule develops which contains many small, winged seeds.



White turtlehead seems to be more common than pink turtlehead, being found throughout the state, primarily along streams and bottomland woodlands, especially in the eastern and southeastern part of the state. This plant is not as tall as the pink, only reaching up to three feet in height, and seems to grow along the ground. The stem is squarish. The dark green leaves are long, narrow and sharply toothed with pronounced leaf veins. Like the pink turtlehead, they have five stamens, with one being shorter than the others and sterile.

and sterile.

To answer the second question, the pink turtlehead is a fairly rare plant, in fact it is on Iowa's Special Concern List for Threatened and Endangered plants and animals. It is also on other states' list

too. Pink turtlehead can be found growing from Indiana to southern Minnesota and south to Arkansas. In Iowa, the plants seem to be found in counties bordering the Mississippi River, in swampy wetlands. It grows well in shade or sun as long as the soil is rich. This would explain why it is at Rock Creek with new topsoil deposited with each flood. Along with the soil, a seed could have been deposited by the floods.

The caterpillar stage of a butterfly named the Baltimore checkerspot, *Euphydryas phaeton*, feeds almost exclusively on turtlehead plants and is on the endangered and threatened list of animals in Iowa. It can only be found in few fen areas in Iowa. Interesting how everything is connected. The turtlehead will only grow in wet areas, which are usually tiled and farmed, meaning few and far in between. Turtlehead is fairly uncommon, in return, so is the Baltimore checkerspot.

In Iowa, only pink and white turtlehead are native while Lyon's Turtlehead, a native to the Appalachian mountains, is grown in gardens but has not naturalized in Iowa. The origin of the turtle-



head is as intriguing as the flower. For instance, in Greek mythology there was a nymph named Chelone (pronounced like baloney) that upset the gods by not attending

Zeus and Hera's wedding. To punish her, they pushed her house on top of her. To further insult her, the gods then turned her into a turtle, so she would have to carry her house for the rest of her life and have a life of silence. You see, the turtle was a Greek symbol for silence. Hence the Greek word for turtle or tortoise is chelone. The plant's common name of turtlehead and Latin name of chelone come from the shape the fused petals make, resembling a turtle's head with its mouth open. Some of its other common names of pink turtlehead are red turtlehead, rose turtlehead, shellflower, snakehead, turtleblood and turtlehead. White turtlehead, *Chelone glabra*, is also called balmony (Chelone = baloney = balmony = ?), bitter herb, codhead, fishmouth, shellflower, snakehead, snakemouth, turtlebloom and turtlehead. It is part of the *scrophulariaceae*, (try to pronounce that name!) or snapdragon, family. Now if you know what a garden variety snapdragon looks like, you can see the resemblance to the turtlehead.

The white turtlehead has historically been used for medicinal uses by the pioneers and native Americans alike as a tonic and treatment for jaundice, constipation and internal parasites. Leaves were also made into an ointment to relieve itching and inflammations. Though there is not a lot of documentation for pink turtlehead being used medicinally, it was probably interchangeably used for the same ailments.

If you want to see it, hurry, because it usually blooms in late August through September. It can be found along the trail loop on the southwest end of Rock Creek Marina & Campground.

Mountain Lions in Iowa ~ Myth or Reality?

from the Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources 2007 brochure of the same name.

CURRENT STATUS OF MOUNTAIN LIONS IN IOWA

Mountain lions have no legal wildlife status in Iowa. That means that they can be taken and possessed by anyone at any-time as long as legal methods and means are used to take the animal. Mountain lions and black bears are not listed in the Iowa Code as designated wildlife species, because they were extirpated before fish and game legislation became prominent. The pioneers did not see their presence of any value to their own way of life, so basically persecution by humans brought their demise. In the late 1990's, the DNR began to receive several reports of mountain lions in the state. In midsummer 2001, we received enough reports that we felt it appropriate to make a news release stating the possibility of the presence of a few free-ranging mountain lions in Iowa. Two weeks after we made the first announcement that there may be a few free ranging mountain lions in the state, a road kill occurred near Harlan in late August, 2001.

Since that time, two more mountain lions have been shot and one actual photo taken by a trail master motion sensitive camera. The DNA results of the 3 dead mountain lions, as well as the lack of worn claws or broken teeth, indicates that all 3 dead animals in Iowa are of wild western origin. Numerous other fake photos of so called Iowa mountain lions are circulating the internet. We have also had 5, what appears to be mountain lion, tracks in the state. Over 1,000 mountain lions have been reported to DNR personnel since 2000 but most have no substantial evidence to back them up. Strong evidence consists of a photo or video of the animal, photo of its track, a scat or animal dropping, or some sort of DNA evidence. In Iowa, it is likely that over 95% of the reports are mistaken identity. Usually mountain lions are mistaken for yellow lab or shepherd dogs, bobcats, feral house cats or deer. Many reports occur at night, in very poor lighting conditions, poor weather conditions or at very far distances.

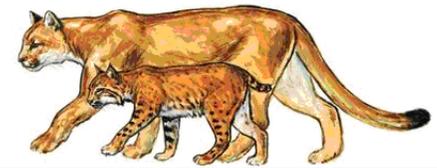
Two legislative efforts have been made to place the mountain lion and black bear in the Iowa code as designated wildlife species, but in an agricultural state like Iowa, it soon became very political and failed both times. Only young reproductively immature males have shown up in surrounding states as either road killed, shot, or in one instance, a captured animal in Omaha, NE.

REPORTING MOUNTAIN LION SIGHTINGS

Even though Iowa Code does not list the mountain lion or black bear as designated wildlife, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources is the logical agency to report killed mountain lions. It is very valuable to the DNR to collect as much scientific data from any dead mountain lion that turn up in the state. If a report can be substantiated with strong evidence (video, photo, photo of track or DNA material), the DNR should also be contacted. Call Luke Webinger, IDNR Conservation Officer at 563-357-1078.

HISTORY

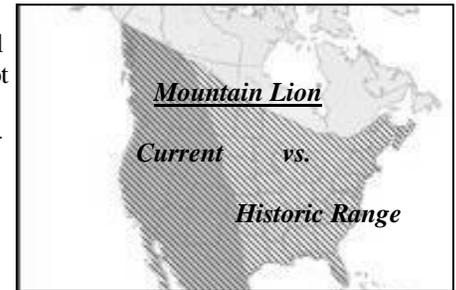
Mountain lions are often times referred to as cougars, pumas, panthers, painters and catamounts. They are the largest of three wildcats historically documented in Iowa. The lynx and the bobcat are the other two. The mountain lion probably occurred throughout the state, but nowhere in great numbers. The last historical record of a mountain lion in Iowa appears to be near Cincinnati, Iowa, in Appanoose County, where one was shot in 1867.



DESCRIPTION

The mountain lion is a very large, slender cat with a small head, small rounded ears that are not tufted, very powerful shoulders and hindquarters, and a long, heavy, cylindrical tail. Adults are 6-9 feet in length including the tail which is 2½-3 feet in length.

Males weigh 140-160 pounds and females weigh 90-110 pounds. The mountain lion is grizzled gray to cinnamon tawny brown in color and the last 2 inches of the tail are black.



BIOLOGY

Mountain lions are usually 3 years old before reaching reproductive maturity and usually have young (kits) at 2 year intervals. Kits can be born any time throughout the year, but the peak period is summer. They will average 2-3 kits per litter and kits have brown spots on a buff color. Adults are very capable of swimming. Mountain lions can readily climb trees to escape dogs or obtain food. Female home ranges average 90 square miles while male home ranges average 300 square miles. Longevity is 12-20 years, but only a few live longer than 12 years. Mountain lions have an interesting social hierarchy. Dominant males have their harem of females and occasionally young males will challenge the dominant male for females. The younger males usually are forced out and leave the area, basically becoming nomads of the landscape, most likely searching for the presence of females. Mountain lions can move several hundred miles in a very short period of time. **ALTHOUGH RUMORS WILL CONTINUE, BE ASSURED, THE IOWA DNR HAS NOT RELEASED MOUNTAIN LIONS IN IOWA AND HAVE NO INTENTION OF DOING SO.**

FOOD HABITS

Mountain lions favorite food items are small mammals and deer. Like all predators they are opportunists and will also take what is readily available. They rarely take livestock. They are ambush predators, taking large prey by a bite on the back of the neck or throat. They sometimes will carry a prey item to cover and forage first on the liver, heart and lungs. If they cannot consume the entire kill all at once, they will cache it (cover and camouflage) and return later to feed again. Mountain lions prefer fresh meat and once the cached food items become tainted, the rest is left for scavengers such as coyotes, vultures and crows to feast upon.

THE FUTURE OF MOUNTAIN LIONS IN IOWA

The mountain lions will remain difficult to manage both from a biological and political standpoint. It is doubtful that the mountain lion will ever have much presence in Iowa. First of all, there is some question about whether Iowa is good mountain lion habitat. The tolerance or intolerance of humans will dictate whether they will ever be able to get a foot hold in the state. Some sort of legal status in the Iowa Code will be necessary. In the meantime, their possible presence in Iowa has generated considerable excitement both pro and con and only time will tell whether they will become designated wildlife in the state.

Iowa DNR Confirms Mountain Lion Photo from Clinton County

Iowa DNR press release as printed on www.the gazette.com

An image captured on a trail camera in Clinton County during the past week has been confirmed as a mountain lion by wildlife biologists from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

"We want the public to know that we have a confirmed photo of a mountain lion, but we don't want to alarm the public," said Vince Evelsizer, a DNR wildlife biologist.

"When it comes to mountain lions, Iowa tends to be a place to pass through, but not to stay. It is very likely this animal will keep moving, if it's even still in the area, and will keep to itself," Evelsizer said.

The photo was taken from a wooded area along the Wapsipinicon River in the eastern part of Clinton County. DNR conservation officers were able to confirm the location where the photo was taken by matching the surrounding landscape to what is shown in the photo.

The mountain lion is likely a young male that has been pushed from its native area by older, dominant males. The lion likely came from a state west of Iowa and the fact that is already on Iowa's far eastern border suggests that it will likely continue to wander. Mountain lions have the ability to move several hundred miles in a short period of time, said Evelsizer.



A trail camera captured this image of a mountain lion in Clinton County earlier in September. (image courtesy Iowa DNR)

While the DNR gets many reports each year of mountain lion sightings, only a very small percentage are ever confirmed by the department. Most sightings are mistaken identity with other animals such as bobcats or yellow coated dogs.

"But in this case, we've got a pretty good image from the trail camera. I don't have any doubt on this one that we have an image of a mountain lion," said Evelsizer.

Kim Rixen to Finish out Ross Spooner's CCCB Term.

Ross Spooner

With regret I would like to say farewell to all of you. Due to a drastic decline in my health I had to discontinue my role as a Clinton County Conservation Board Member. I served on the board from 2003 - 2011 and have thoroughly enjoyed helping to manage conservation areas and programs in Clinton County.

For the past six years the Conservation Board has diligently worked to make the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center a reality. I would have liked to remain a board member from start to finish and even though I am no longer on the board, I hope to be there for the center's grand opening this coming spring.

Thank you, Clinton County for allowing me the opportunity to serve you both as a Conservation Board member and prior to that, as a County Supervisor.

Kim Rixen

As the newest Clinton County Conservation Board member I would like to introduce myself and share with you my commitment to conservation. My name is Kim Rixen; recently I took my Uncle Ross Spooner's, place on the board. For the past four and a half years I have regularly attended the monthly conservation meetings; providing me with up-to-date knowledge of the issues faced by the board. I felt this knowledge, combined with my life experiences and deep passion for conservation, made me a good candidate to step in and fill the position. The Clinton County Board of Supervisors agreed and appointed me to finish out the last two year's of Ross's term.

My passion for conservation began at an early age; I was raised

on a farm in rural Clinton County where my father instilled in me the need for preserving our environment. As the daughter of a farmer, I spent most of my childhood and adolescent years outdoors; whether it be helping tend to the farm or vacationing in our local parks. In my free time, I enjoy fishing and canoeing, exploring the trails of our county parks and monitoring the trumpeter swans released by the Clinton County naturalists.



Kim Rixen releases a trumpeter swan last spring at Ringneck Marsh.

Already in my newly appointed position, I have helped out with the Rock Creek Catfish Classic and the Enviro-Kids Program. I found both of these adventures extremely enjoyable and look forward to helping out again and again! I am very excited about the Eco Tourism Center being built at Rock Creek Marina and Campground and look forward to its completion.

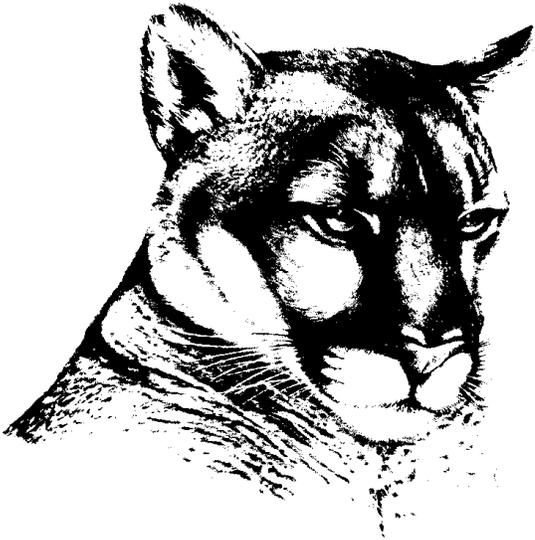
Petitioning to save the wetlands, preserving the prairie grass, bringing back native wildlife populations and maintaining our county parks are my main priorities. I have made it my goal to pass on my passion for conservation to my niece and granddaughter; including them in my outdoor excursions.

I actively embrace the opportunity to serve on the Clinton County Conservation Board and will give my all to conserving the natural beauty 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

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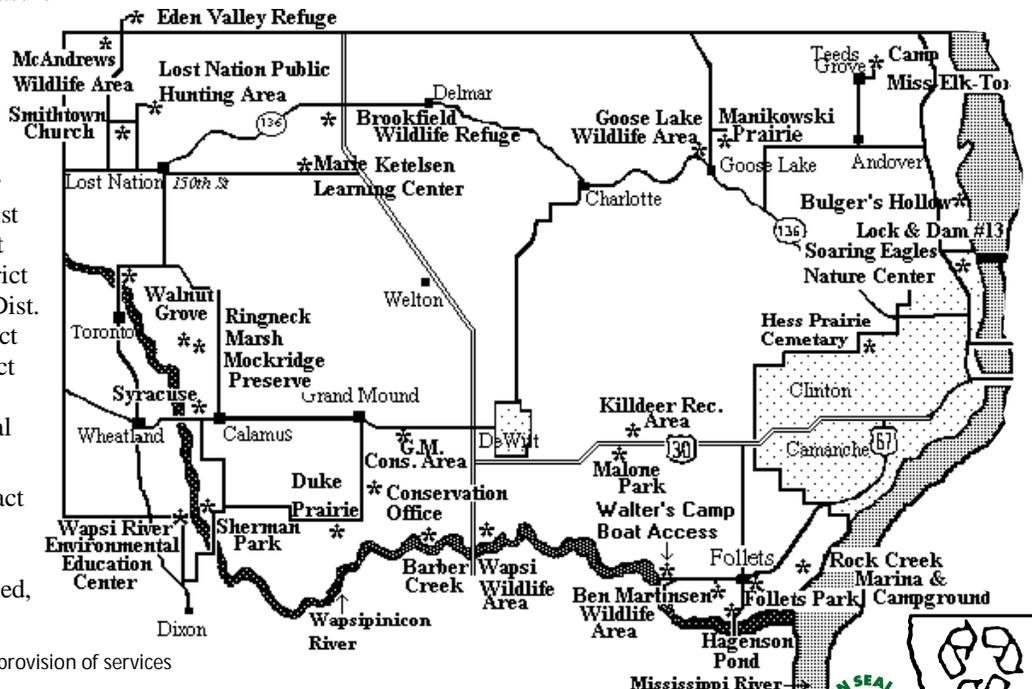
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If you'd like to get "The Heron" contact the CCCB. It is mailed to County addresses free. Others are charged \$5 annually or is on our website or emailed, free of charge.

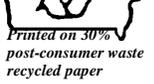
The Clinton County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subject to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination

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.





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