



# The Heron

*Newsletter of Clinton County Conservation  
Volume 42 Number 2 June - August, 2020*

## And the Awards Go To...

Articles reprinted from "The Web", newsletter of the *Iowa Association of Naturalists*

### Clinton County's "Building Better Birders Cruises" "Ding" Darling Environmental Education Award

Puttin' along the backwaters of the Upper Mississippi for the last three years you could find a pontoon with people pointing excitedly at what seemed to be trees. Why was this pontoon crew so excited about trees? Well, they weren't looking at the trees, but the awesome birds perching on the trees! Kelly J. McKay, from Bio Research and Monitoring Center, has teamed up with Mark Roberts and Chuck Jacobsen from Clinton County Conservation to create a free program called, "Building Better Birder Cruises." This program has been a huge success, having four summer tours during the breeding season and four tours during the fall migration. Despite the horrible flooding in 2019 along the Mississippi, they still had 58 people attend these two and a half to four-hour programs and found a whopping 120 bird species! They

found 15 species of waterfowl and other water birds, eight species of raptors, five shorebirds and seven woodpecker species! After finding such cool birds on the tours, there were several participants that became active citizen scientists and helped with Christmas Bird Counts and even the Nahant Marsh BioBlitz Project. If you want to become a better birder, look no further than our calendar of events on pages 4-7.



### Kelly J. McKay for "Outstanding Iowa Volunteer Award"

The "2019 Outstanding Iowa Volunteer Award" goes to Kelly J. McKay. Besides being the lead birder for Clinton County's "Building Better Birder Cruises," Kelly has volunteered for numerous other organizations such as Nahant Marsh, Big Sand Mound, the Audubon Society and several other wildlife advocacy groups. For several years Kelly has participated in all 23 days of the Audubon Society's annual Christmas Bird Counts. He spent 10 plus hours birding and then traversed the countryside from southern Illinois to northern Wisconsin to get to the next bird count location, even in Chicago on Christmas Day!

Kelly is a member of an advisory board for a very special place called Big Sand Mound Preserve, south of Muscatine, Iowa. This 510-acre paradise has sand prairies, wetlands and woodlands that over 400 species call home. Unique and rare organisms, such as the prickly pear cactus, yellow mud turtles and eastern hognose snakes! Kelly helps preserve all these plants and animals for future generations so hopefully they will be able to see animals such as yellow mud turtles and the federally listed Kirtland's Warbler. Speaking of which, Kelly found an immature female Kirtland's Warbler at the Soaring Eagle Nature Center last fall during the CCCB's annual "Hawk Watch", which is the first ever state record for Iowa! Congratulations Kelly on your spectacular find! May all your hard work and willingness to share your knowledge inspire the next generation.



These awards, along with many others, are awarded each year by the *Iowa Association of Naturalists* and *Iowa Conservation Education Coalition*. Thank you to these two organizations for recognizing the work of so many in the conservation realm. Visit [www.iowanaturalists.org](http://www.iowanaturalists.org) for the other award winners, crafts and to see what the *Iowa Association of Naturalists* do for the state of Iowa.

# The Long and Winding Road...

by Mark Roberts, Interpretive Naturalist

In earlier issues of "The Heron", I wrote articles looking back into my own history with Clinton County Conservation. I have decided to make a series of my top eleven "Greatest Hits".

**6. Disc Golf Courses** ~ When I was attending the University of Northern Iowa, back in the mid-eighties, I was introduced to a new sport, disc golf. The premise was simple, play just like regular golf except you throw a disc (frisbee) at a basket. The actual skills of throwing a disc with curves, playing the wind and snaking through trees takes years to master. Come to think of it, I still haven't mastered any of it!

I was allured by the game because it was outside and free to play. All you needed was a golf disc or frisbee! There were no lines and no tee times. I continued to play through the 90's at courses in Fort Dodge, Cedar Rapids and the Quad Cities. They were few and far between back then.

In 1992, when I began my career in Clinton County, I started to think about how a course could be established here. To do that, I had to persuade the staff and Board members who never heard of the sport and couldn't imagine people playing it, that it was a worthwhile venture.

I convinced them that Folletts Park, a 7-acre, underutilized area right on US 67, would be perfect. It is an 18-hole course with nine baskets that are played twice from different approach angles. A league was started to introduce the public to the sport, while selling discs at the nearby and popular Rock Creek Campground. Finally, disc golf was off and running in Clinton County by 2001.



Governor Tom Vilsack was introduced to disc golf at Folletts Park in 2001.

During league, I even played against Disc Golf Hall of Famer, Des Reading, as her grandparents are from Wheatland. She was introduced to disc golf at the same park I played at while at UNI. She dominated the Women's World Championships between 2002-2010 with golds in 2002, 2005 & 2006. Oh yeah, she whooped me!

From that first league, brand new enthusiasts emerged that were instrumental in installing courses in Fulton, Clinton and Dewitt. I then turned my sights to Malone Park for a 12-hole course that plays around the lake to the west boundary and back; and recently, a 9-hole course at Walnut Grove Park and a three hole "free-style" course at Eden Valley Refuge. I am proud of my role in bringing the sport of disc golf to Clinton County! To learn to play attend a

Disc Golf 101 (see page 4) class this summer!

**7. Prairies for Schools** ~ Since 1995, the Clinton County Chapter of Pheasants Forever and the CCCB have cooperated on this unique program. While working with area students, we were disappointed to discover that very few children had any concept of a prairie.

The first step is to answer the question, "What is a prairie?" We wanted children to know that prairies are a dynamic ecosystem consisting of grasses, flowers and animals. Prairies are a part of Iowa's past, present and future. The past, statistics of prairie disappearance, land use change and associated wildlife loss. The present, our rich farmland created by the prairie. The future, which we feel is most important, is that prairies are restorable and we can bring it back!

A visit to a prairie remnant reinforces that a prairie is a relic of the past, pieces that are locked away like a museum specimen of an extinct animal. The idea was that if children had a piece of prairie on their school grounds, they would have a much better idea of what a prairie is. Playing in it, seeing creatures and plants living in it, would make it real. Hopefully, transforming the prairie into something in our present, something that can be restored for our future, something not alien, but familiar.

In 2001, the *Iowa Association of Naturalists* and the *Iowa Conservation Education Council* presented *Clinton County Chapter of Pheasants Forever* and *Clinton County Conservation* with the "Ada Hayden Conservation Education Award" for the "Prairies for Schools Project." We also received national recognition in a feature article in the *Pheasants Forever National Journal*. This program was named one of the "Top 25 Pioneering Habitat Projects of All-Time" by Pheasants Forever in 2007.

Since 1993, the program has established 20 prairies on schools plus daycare centers, colleges and nature center lands. Many are gone because the schools are gone, many still remain and both organizations are open to establishing new projects on school lands.

You can enjoy the previously published topics below in archived articles in "The Heron" newsletters via [www.clintoncounty-ia.gov](http://www.clintoncounty-ia.gov).

8. Hunter Safety Camp.
9. Eden Valley Nature Center Reinvention.
10. Nature Center Partnerships.
11. River Clean-ups.



Whittier Elementary School, Clinton

# News from the East District

by Brad Taylor, Park Officer and Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist

I hope this newsletter finds everyone safe and healthy. It has been a roller coaster for Clinton County Conservation. We have had parks, restrooms, cabins, playgrounds and the Eco Tourism Center open then closed and then open again over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are doing our best to get people outside, enjoying our facilities while staying within the rapidly changing parameters set by the state and county.

Our utmost concern is to keep everyone safe and healthy during these times of uncertainty. We are hopeful for a normal camping season in the coming weeks and months, both from a Covid-19 and flooding stand-point.



Before the pandemic hit the state, we were working on clearing hazard trees in the park. It looked like a war zone with the drab of winter, ruts in the ground from machinery, leftover branches and unsightly stumps. It caught the eye of the people that drove through the park and we were asked, "what happened to all the trees?!" These trees

were identified with problems that could pose a risk to our visitors. If any trees are unsafe for any reason, they need to be removed or in some cases, just the limbs need to be trimmed. There were many trees that showed signs of rot or hollow areas near the base of the tree. These trees are more susceptible of falling over during high winds, so they were removed as well.

With extended periods of high river levels the last several years, the trees experienced high stress to where they could not survive. Although many species of trees are adapted to changing water levels, last season we had record high water for a record amount of time and trees cannot tolerate that. Their roots need air! Once these trees die they are campground hazards and we must remove them.

With 130 trees down and 130 stumps leftover, ranging from 6"- 48", we have invested in a new stump grinder to help maintain our parks. Although we do not like to remove trees, it is a necessity at times and provides benefits. It will allow others around them to be healthier by having less competition for nutrients and sunlight. Opening the canopy will allow more sunlight and hopefully a better lawn as we struggle to grow grass in the heavy shaded areas.

As the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center sat empty, we have been able to work on some building improvements that our visitors are going to love. The first project was in the works in late 2019. By generous donations of two *Friends of Rock Creek* members, an unexpected bathroom remodel was started. Dave Willis contributed the ideas and funds to get the project started and Matt Loper donated his time, expertise and funds to finish it. The Eco Center now has a beautiful green, hard surface counter with integrated sinks! Also installed are soap dispensers with pleasant smelling soap. Then to top it off, hands free door openers!

The second project is changing up the small classroom. This room has seen a variety of themes, from snakes to prairies, allowing different experiences for visitors. It is important to us for the room to have hands-on activities. Right now the room has a fresh coat of paint and constellations on the ceiling but soon it will be filled with nest boxes, eggs, silhouettes and activities for all of you bird nerds out there.



Lastly, maintenance of the Nature Gallery is tough to do with all of the activity this area gets. But with this lull, we have seized the moment to touch up some areas that were seeing some wear. Also, with visitors not visiting the animals, we were able to take all the animals to a different location to put a layer of sealant on their enclosures to ensure continued easy cleaning in the future.

Now, more than ever, nature is providing us a place to play, feel safe and to enjoy the summer months! **We invite you to consider a family summer camp with a CCB Naturalist.** We have adapted our summer camp programs to allow families to spend a day with a Naturalist experiencing camp-like activities all while practicing social distancing guidelines and best health practices. Immediate families with 9 or less people can sign up for a one-day (4 hr.) camp at one of our county parks. To do this, you need to contact a naturalist to schedule a date, location and plan your activities for your camp. Cost for the family camp is \$50 and will be paid at the time of the camp. Please call 563-847-7202 or email [conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov](mailto:conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov) to schedule a family summer camp.



*Pintail Cabin, Rock Creek.*  
[www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com) to reserve cabins & campsites.

# In the Summer, In the Parks

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we as educators want you to know we are trying our best to provide opportunities for you and your families to explore the outdoors in a safe manner. With that being said, we are asking for your understanding if summer programs are changed, postponed or even cancelled because the risk outweighs the benefits. We will be sure to keep you informed of any such changes if they arise and refund options will be available if a payment was received for the program. Stay safe, stay healthy and we hope to see you soon!

## May Events

**26<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of Rock Creek ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** Doing small things to make a big difference! This fun, no pressure group meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month.

**30<sup>th</sup> ~ Jens-Wendt Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~** Starts at dusk (must be clear skies) in Sherman Park, at the north parking lot. Hosted by the Quad Cities Astronomical Society, check them out [www.facebook.com/QuadCitiesAstro/](http://www.facebook.com/QuadCitiesAstro/)



## June Events

*Note on Good Morning and Sunset Cruises. Sign-up for each cruise will begin one week before each trip. Check the forecast, gather your friends and sign-up! 563-259-1876. Note: The Blue Heron does not go out if winds are 20+ MPH, lightning is (or is forecasted) within 10 miles or the river stage is 17+ feet (Camanche river gauge).*



**2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Building Better Birders Eco Cruise ~ 6:30 AM ~ Rock Creek ~** World-class birder, Kelly McKay, will lead this free class for people wanting to improve their birding skills. Call 563-259-1876 to sign up!

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Moonlight Float ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** Bring your own craft or use one of ours. We'll supply lights and whistles if you don't have your own. We'll explore the night on the water with a veteran paddler and naturalist. There is a limited supply, so register before May 27<sup>th</sup> at [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com).

**4<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** Thursday evenings there will be naturalist-guided Mississippi River cruises aboard the Blue Heron pontoon. Call 563-259-1876 to reserve a free spot one week in advance.



**4<sup>th</sup> ~ After Dark Backwater Cruise ~ 8:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~** This will be a slow cruise along the backwaters to hear the night sounds and sights of the Mississippi. Call 563-259-1876 to reserve a free spot one week in advance.

**5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> ~ Free Fishing Weekend for Iowa Residents**

**6<sup>th</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~** The Nature Center will be open on Saturdays through Labor Day. Volunteer hosts are needed, call 563-847-7202 for details.

**6<sup>th</sup> ~ Community Fire ~ 8 PM ~ Sherman Park ~** We'll gather around a common fire for music, conversation and smores. The number of participants may be restricted, please call Chuck @ 563-357-0759 to register.

**9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> ~ Pollywog Camp (completed K-1st Grade) ~ Full ~ Cancelled**

**11<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Building Better Birders Eco Cruise ~ 6:30 AM ~ Rock Creek ~** World-class birder, Kelly McKay, will lead this free class for people wanting to improve their birding skills. Call 563-259-1876 to sign up!

**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Half Price Canoes ~ 8-11 AM ~ Rock Creek ~** Call 563-259-1876 for more details.

**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Good Morning Cruise ~ 9 AM ~ Rock Creek ~** We will be offering naturalist-guided eco cruises aboard the Blue Heron pontoon boat every other weekend in the morning this summer. Other dates are June 28<sup>th</sup>, July 18<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>, August 9<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>. Call 563-259-1876 to reserve a free spot a week before the event.



**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM**

**15<sup>th</sup> ~ Disc Golf 101 ~ 7 PM ~ Folletts Park ~** This class is for beginners and will go over the basic rules and various throws for disc golf. Loaner discs will be available. Registration is required, call Mark @ 563-349-0956.

**16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> ~ Creature Camp (Completed 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade) ~ Full ~ Cancelled**

**16<sup>th</sup> ~ Creating an Angler ~ 6 PM ~ Malone Park ~** Providing new experiences in nature for children helps build an appreciation for the outdoors at a young age that they may carry on throughout their life. We have worms, poles and tackle...let's just catch the fish! Experience and licenses are not required unless you plan on doing the fishing yourself. We will teach you how to encourage your angler even if you're not an angler yourself. This is a free event and open to the public. Call Jill Schmidt at 563-847-7202 with any questions.



**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Disc Golf 101 ~ 7 PM ~ Malone Park ~** Registration is required, call Mark @ 563-349-0956.

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Disc Golf 101 ~ 7 PM ~ Walnut Grove Park (south side) ~** Registration is required, call Mark @ 563-349-0956.

**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**20<sup>th</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM**

**20<sup>th</sup> ~ Campground Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley ~**

The campground at Eden Valley will show family movies on the big screen for campers/park visitors.

**23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> ~ Child vs. Wild Camp ~ 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ Children who have completed 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade will take a walk on the wild side! Campers will enjoy challenging themselves with fun outdoor skills such as orienteering, archery and swimming while spending time on and around the Mississippi River. Camp cost is \$50 and registration is required online by June 18<sup>th</sup>. **At this time we are proceeding with the camp but are still working out details. If you do not want your child to attend camp for any reason, contact us for refund options at [conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov](mailto:conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov).**

**23<sup>rd</sup> ~ Beaver Island Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ The Blue Heron will take a trip past Camanche and around Beaver Island. We will look at industry and wildlife along the way. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations.

## Get Into Rod Building

**23<sup>rd</sup> ~ Friends of Rock Creek ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**25<sup>th</sup> ~ Build a Fishing Rod ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ Local guild certified custom rod builder, Garry Land will be on hand to help you build your very own, unique fishing rod for \$50. The rod will have to be picked up at a future date to allow the epoxy to cure. Call Jess at 563-847-7202 with any questions. You must register at [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com).

**25<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**27<sup>th</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM**

**27<sup>th</sup> ~ Jens-Wendt Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park** ~ [www.facebook.com/QuadCitiesAstro/](http://www.facebook.com/QuadCitiesAstro/)

**28<sup>th</sup> ~ Good Morning Cruise ~ 9 AM ~ Rock Creek**

**30<sup>th</sup> ~ Creating an Angler ~ 6 PM ~ Malone Park** ~ See previous description on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

## July Events

**Enabled Hunting sign-up starts.** Call 563-847-7202 to reserve your upcoming season in our accessible blind.

**2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Painting Class with "Fresh Paint" ~ 6-8 PM ~ \$35 ~ Rock Creek** ~ Spring Wildflowers, butterflies and bees with all materials supplied and step-by-step instructions on an 11x14 canvas. This will be the same picture as the cancelled class from March. Go to [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com) to register but you will pay at the event.



**2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Building Better Birders Eco Cruise ~ 6:30 AM ~**

**Rock Creek** ~ Call 563-259-1876 to sign up!

**7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> ~ Kanoes Kids Camp (Completed 6<sup>th</sup> Grade & Above) ~ Rock Creek ~ Full ~ At this time we are proceeding with the camp, we are still working out details. For this camp we may be asking if some participants will bring their own tent. If you do not want your child to attend camp for any reason, contact us for refund options at [conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov](mailto:conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov).**



**9<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**9<sup>th</sup> ~ After Dark Backwater Cruise ~ 8:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**11<sup>th</sup> ~ Half Price Canoes ~ 8-11 AM ~ Rock Creek**

**11<sup>th</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM**

**11<sup>th</sup> ~ Campground Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley**

**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Creating an Angler ~ 6 PM ~ Malone Park** ~ See the previous description on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

**16<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Building Better Birders Eco Cruise ~ 6:30 AM ~ Rock Creek** ~ Call 563-259-1876 to sign up!

**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Good Morning Cruise ~ 9 AM ~ Rock Creek**

**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM**

**20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Mississippi River Voyageur Paddling Trip (ages 12-17) ~ \$50** ~ Join Dubuque, Clinton, and Jackson County Conservation for this year's Mississippi River Voyageur Paddling Trip. Campers and naturalists will spend 3 days-2 nights paddling the mighty Mississippi River in unique 29 foot -long voyageur canoes, similar to what French fur traders used on the Mississippi River in the 1700s and early 1800s. Campers will use paddling skills and participate in primitive camping. Campers must be registered, call Jackson CCB at 563-652-3783 by July 2<sup>nd</sup> and must attend the pre-trip meeting, July 6<sup>th</sup> at Rock Creek.



**23<sup>rd</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> ~ Christmas in July Weekend ~ Rock Creek**

◆ **24<sup>th</sup> ~ Decorate Your Campsite** ~ Decorate your campsite for Christmas in July. We will have site judging Saturday night with prizes awarded.

◆ **25<sup>th</sup> ~ Half Price Canoes ~ 8-11 AM**

◆ **25<sup>th</sup> ~ Hay Wagon Rides ~ 7 PM** ~ Join us for a lighted wagon ride around the park to view decorated campsites. Kids must be accompanied by adults.

**26<sup>th</sup> ~ Good Morning Cruise ~ 9 AM ~ Rock Creek**

25<sup>th</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM

25<sup>th</sup> ~ Campground Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley

25<sup>th</sup> ~ Jens-Wendt Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ [www.facebook.com/QuadCitiesAstro/](http://www.facebook.com/QuadCitiesAstro/)

28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> ~ Spelunking Adventure Camp ~ 9:30 AM-2:30 PM ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ New this year!! Kids who

have completed grades 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> will get the opportunity to explore the rocky bluffs of Eden Valley as well as go on a spelunking adventure in a private cave near by! This camp is very hands-on and active and registration is required online by July 21<sup>st</sup>. **At this time we are proceeding with the camp, we are still working out details. If you do not want your child to attend camp for any reason, contact us for refund options at [conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov](mailto:conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov).**



28<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of Rock Creek ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek

30<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

## August Events

1<sup>st</sup> ~ Crossroads Triathlon ~ 8 AM ~ Killdeer Recreation Area ~ [www.crossroadstriathlon.com](http://www.crossroadstriathlon.com)

1<sup>st</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM

3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Mussel Beach Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ The Blue Heron will take participants out to learn about and wade/dunk for the 15 species of freshwater mussels that live on Mussel Beach. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations.

6<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

8<sup>th</sup> ~ Building Better Birders Eco Cruise ~ 6:30 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 to sign up!

8<sup>th</sup> ~ Mussel Beach Cruise ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek

8<sup>th</sup> ~ Half Price Canoes ~ 8-11 AM ~ Rock Creek

8<sup>th</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM

9<sup>th</sup> ~ Good Morning Cruise ~ 9 AM ~ Rock Creek

9<sup>th</sup> ~ Refuge Paddle ~ 1 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Experience the backwaters of the Mississippi guided by a veteran paddler and naturalist. Bring your own boat or use one of ours. Register at [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com) by August 2<sup>nd</sup> to reserve a spot.



10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> ~ Ice Age Trail Backpacking Trip (ages 12-17) ~ \$75 ~ Come along with Dubuque, Clinton, and Jackson County Conservation for this years backpacking trip on the Ice Age Trail in north central Wisconsin. Campers will experience backpacking and primitive camping in forests and around lakes. This 4-day, 3-night backpacking trip will have campers hiking nearly 20 miles over the Chippewa Moraine to the Chippewa River segments. Campers must

be registered by calling Jackson CCB at 563-652-3783 by July 24<sup>th</sup> and campers must attend the mandatory pre-trip meeting located at the Hurstville Interpretive Center on July 27<sup>th</sup>.

13<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

13<sup>th</sup> ~ After Dark Backwater Cruise ~ 8:30 PM ~ Rock Creek

13<sup>th</sup> ~ Vermicomposting 101 ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Due to popular demand, we will have a class about how to start your own redworm composting bin to eat up your food waste. The class is free and everyone is welcome to listen but there will be a fee (yet to be determined) if you want to purchase a bin and/or buy worms. Call 563-847-7202 to register and/or preorder. Bin preorders along with fee, must be post-marked and mailed to CCCB, % Jess, PO Box 68, Grand Mound, IA 52751 by Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>.



15<sup>th</sup> ~ Fishing Has No Boundaries ~ 8 AM-2 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Clinton County Conservation will be hosting the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Fishing Has No Boundaries event. This event will provide fishing opportunities for people with disabilities on and along the Mississippi River. We are in need of boat captain volunteers and fishing buddy volunteers! If you would like to be a part of this amazing event, please contact Jill Schmidt at 563-847-7202.

15<sup>th</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM

17<sup>th</sup> ~ Mussel Beach Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ The Blue Heron will take participants out to learn about and wade/dunk for the 15 species of freshwater mussels that live on Mussel Beach. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations.



18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> ~ Hunter Safety Camp ~ 8:30AM - 5:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ If your kid loves the outdoors and you want your child to learn how to handle a firearm safely and responsibly, then this is that camp. For this event, we will go beyond the basics of hunter education standards of archery, shotgun, muzzleloader and rifles. All of these activities plus more will be covered (in the past we have had dog training, GPS, survival, tree stand safety). This camp allows students to participate in anyway they are comfortable, not just listening to speakers or watching films. The course is open to ages 11-16. We encourage adults to participate with children you are with, at no charge and if you want, you may also receive your hunter safety certificate. Please contact Jess at [jsteines@clintoncounty-ia.gov](mailto:jsteines@clintoncounty-ia.gov) if you are interested in participating with your child. Cost is \$30 for meals/snacks, ammo and targets.

19<sup>th</sup> ~ Building Better Birders Eco Cruise ~ 6:30 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 to sign up!

22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> ~ Lower Wapsi River Cleanup Project ~

**Wapsipinicon River** ~ An annual canoe based river clean-up for the last 14 years to remove unwanted trash from this area river. For more information [lwrcp.org](http://lwrcp.org) or email [coordinator@lwrcp.org](mailto:coordinator@lwrcp.org)

**22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM**

**15<sup>th</sup> ~ Campground Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley**

**23<sup>rd</sup> ~ Twelfth Annual Rock Creek Catfish Classic ~ 7 AM -12 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ The Clinton County Conservation Foundation is hosting this tournament to raise funds for our nature centers. Costs are \$50/boat and \$10 for the Biggest Fish Jackpot. Sign-up & rules at [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com)

**25<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of Rock Creek ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**27<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek**

**28<sup>th</sup> ~ Community Fire ~ 8 PM ~ Sherman Park Creek** ~ We'll gather around a common fire for music, conversation and smores. The number of participants may be restricted, please call Chuck @ 563-357-0759 to register.

**29<sup>th</sup> ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM**

**29<sup>th</sup> ~ Jens-Wendt Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park**

**30<sup>th</sup> ~ Good Morning Cruise ~ 9 AM ~ Rock Creek**

**30<sup>th</sup> ~ Voyageur Trip ~ 1 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ Climb into one of our 29-foot cargo canoes and explore the Mississippi as the voyageurs of the fur trade did centuries ago. Register by August 23<sup>rd</sup> at [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com) to reserve your spot.

## Why We Can't Have Nice Things, But Do Anyways

by Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist

Just last year, we ran an article about the birdhouse Treasure Quest at Eden Valley. It had been newly installed because of squirrels wreaking havoc by gnawing on them. So the West District crew, made them out of more durable materials and hoped for the best. This year, it wasn't the squirrels who caused trouble, it was the human variety that took it upon themselves to destroy something that wasn't theirs. Actually, it is all of ours, as it is a public park, paid for by taxpayers for all to enjoy. It is with sadness and regret (because I have never completed it) that it is now gone. It takes too much valuable time to maintain something that should be virtually maintenance free.



The missing basket is #9



Recently, there is a disc golf basket missing at Walnut Grove. That is an expensive piece of equipment. The disappearance has become our most popular post on Facebook ever with over 23,000 views, people have offered a reward for its return, no questions asked. That is why we do this, because most people are good and care. This is why we keep trying to have nice things.

The Eden Valley Nature Center addition is close to completion. As I was interviewing Park Officer Chip Brown, on its amenities and accessibility, several times he referred to the materials he was using as easy to maintain, harder for vandals to destroy and easier to fix if they do get vandalized. This is important because the larger gathering hall and kitchenette is closed if not rented while the adjoining bathrooms will be open for visitors at all times. The restrooms feature not only toilets but showers as well! The floor is sealed with TSR Concrete Coatings which gives it a



Above: The "new" Eden Valley Nature

Nature Center restroom tile:

smooth surface that has a lifetime guarantee. The flecks of tan, cream and black go perfectly with the slate and weathered wood tile. Outside of the bathroom is real locust wood shiplap. Not only is this going to be vandal resistant, it is going to be beautiful and much needed. Hopefully those reasons will thwart the wrongdoers.

If you do see something vandalized or being vandalized, please contact us. For those of you who blame the CCCB or their employees for people that do wrong, point the finger at the person that caused the trouble, not at who was wronged, that is called victim shaming.

Sometimes it is animals or weather but most of the time it is humans that cause the most destruction. The worst thing is that is a small percentage that ruins the experience for everyone. Luckily, we are resilient and we keep marching forward, a little smarter and determined as ever to keep improving for the majority of the good people.

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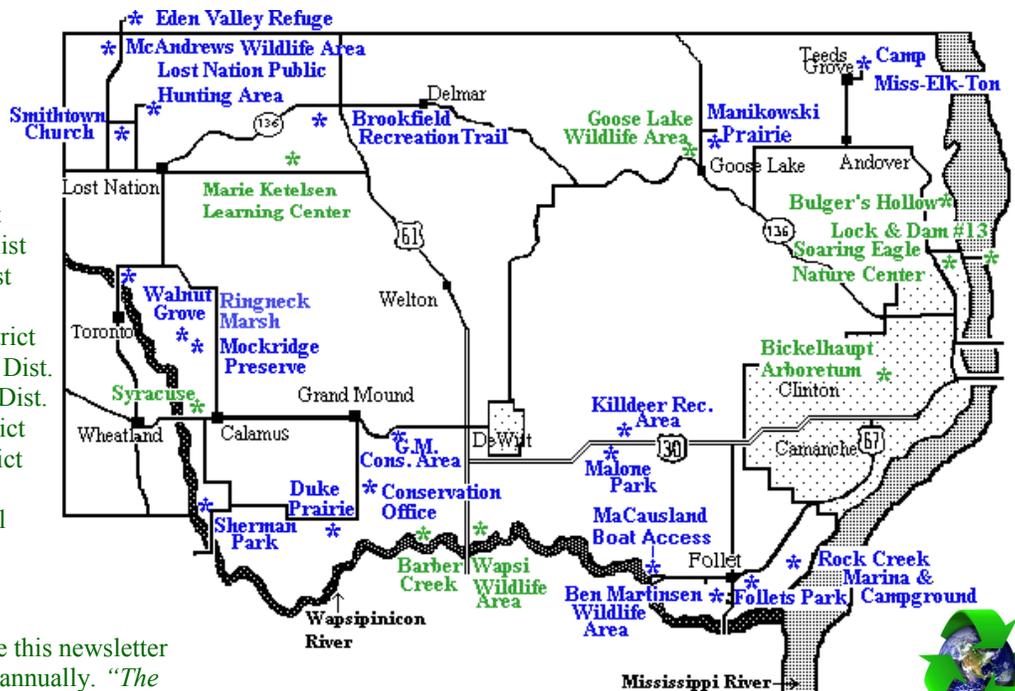
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**BOARD MEETINGS**

The Clinton County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. The Board regularly meets the second Tuesday the month, at 6 PM, in the Conservation Office, located 1 mile south of Grand





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