



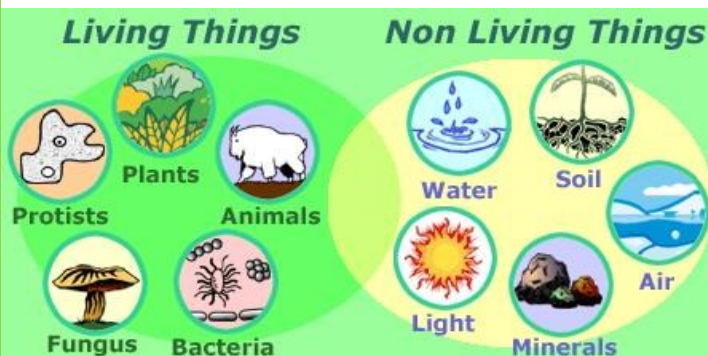
The Heron

*Newsletter of Clinton County Conservation
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We Speak For the Trees...Water, Animals, Minerals...Through Art!

by Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist & Gabriella Torres, Clinton Abstract Artist

Today, we unveil the WILDNESS Art Project! A partnership with Gabi Bird Art Studio (www.gbart.studio) and Clinton County Conservation. The definition of wild, is an animal or plant living in the natural environment, not domesticated. Ness is a state or condition. So WILDNESS is born by inspiration and materials of living and non-living things in Clinton County to make an ecosystem of art. The definition of an ecosystem is how the living and nonliving interact. That is exactly what is going to happen. We will be collecting plants and rocks to make pigments and dyes to then create art to eventually let it interact with the environment.



WILDNESS ~ A Message from Gabi

Back in December of 2022, Naturalist, Jessica Steines reached out to me asking if I'd like to collaborate in some way with Clinton County Conservation. At the time, she had suggested either teaching a painting class at Rock Creek or maybe doing a visit to my studio to see the kinds of natural tools I utilize (branches, corn cobs, etc.) when making paintings.

Like for most people, December is always a crazy month, jam-packed with getting ready for Christmas and the New Year. So, it wasn't until January of 2023 that I finally got back to Jessica. Telling her that I would love to collaborate but to give me some time to think about what we could do. Though a class or a studio visit would both be great ways to work together, I knew that I wanted to do something more. What exactly that was yet, I hadn't figured out.

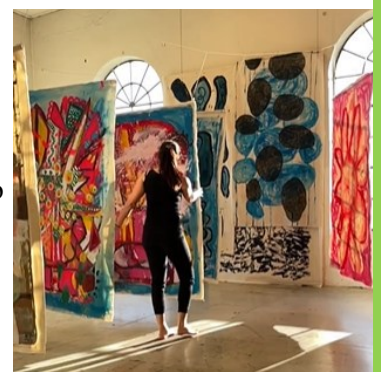
For those of you who aren't familiar with my art, I create large, abstract pieces that are inspired by and celebrate nature, either through color, composition or both. However, I am well aware that I use acrylic paint to do this, which is highly toxic to both me and the environment. One of my

new year's resolutions for 2023 had been to learn how to make my own pigments using rocks, clay, flowers and more, in order to make art that is more environmentally mindful and sustainable.

A few days later I was out walking with my dog in the arboretum, having fun trying to find animal tracks in the snow and admiring how the inky black, bare branches formed patterns against the sky, when the idea came to me. What if, instead of a class or a studio visit, I partnered with Jessica to forage for materials for my natural inks, pigments and dyes from our different conservation areas where she could teach me about the flora of our county and in turn, I could teach her the process for making pigments, inks and dyes from natural materials. We would mentor each other and be able to provide programming for children and adults who would like to learn this ancient method of making.

Additionally, I said okay, now what if after we forage and make all of these paints, then I spend 6 weeks in a cabin, and create a body of work, paintings, that would reflect my time in our conservation parks. We could then show them at Rock Creek in March 2024, and use them later for outdoor installations May through the fall? Thus, WILDNESS was born.

Fast forward to now, and WILDNESS has become a multifaceted project that includes not only mentorship and a residency through Clinton County Conservation, but will also include a 5 minute documentary, various vlogs, a magazine, a coffee table book and more. Even better, we hope that this paves the way for future artist residencies through Clinton



Visual Artist, Kristin Romberg's open studio is the inspiration for art installation at Rock Creek in





County Conservation where artists from throughout the state and the nation come to Clinton County to create art inspired by our incredible landscapes.



Gabi and Jessica with pigments made from foraged rocks on our cheeks on a sandbar in Bear Creek at Eden Valley Refuge.

We invite you to join us in this journey. After all, this is art that celebrates our land, our waterways and all the amazing beauty that forms part of our community and our home. You can follow Clinton County Conservation on Facebook, and you can follow me, Gabi, on Instagram or Facebook using @gabibirdartist. You can also sign up for my newsletter on my website at www.gbart.studio to get all the updates on the WILDNESS project!

We encourage you to join us to help forage for materials for this project. Jessica and I will be offering foraging trips to the public, where you can not only go for amazing hikes and experience our different county parks, but you can also learn about foraging responsibly and the different flora and fauna of these areas.

We hope that you too will be part of the WILDNESS experience, and help us learn about and celebrate this incredible place that we are lucky enough to call home.

See you in the forest or the stream! ~ Gabi

Things seem to happen for a reason. Sometimes, it may feel impulsive or careless at times by trusting fate, gut, instinct, intuition and the universe, but this project feels serendipitous. People also overthink things and wonder if they are making the right decisions, so nothing is really a rash decision. Sometimes this fear holds us back. You're scared because it is new. What if it is too small? Too big? What if it fails? But then you have to ask, what if it

succeeds? What if it goes beyond our wildest dreams?

THAT, I know, is what is going to happen with the WILDNESS project because I KNOW Gabi and I won't let it fail because we both strive for SUCCESS.

Just look at Gabi's most recent project at Pocket Park at 125 4th Avenue South in Clinton. With a grant and some donors she took this small little park and made it different and exciting by creating an art installation that is called "The Grove". She describes it as an art forest in the city with twelve, four to ten feet freestanding, wood framed canvases. This project earned her special recognition at the Governor's Art Awards as an Emerging Arts Leader in Iowa earlier this year! So from an art forest in a city to now she will be creating another art forest in Clinton County Conservation area forests! What opportunities will WILDNESS create for Gabi and the people of Clinton, Clinton County and Iowa now?

It's not what it is, it's about what it can become. ~ Dr. Suess, The Lorax



"The Grove" in Pocket Park at night in Clinton.



Norwegian artist, Kristin Romberg's version of art in a forest.

Be A Part Of WILDNESS

We need your help! Whether it is collecting materials for pigments or attending presentations and later, making your own art! Also, if you would like to financially contribute to this project, make a donation to Clinton Hometown Pride, a 501(c)3. Just memo: WILDNESS, then send it to PO Box 1153, Clinton, IA 52733. To be the 1st to know about WILDNESS opportunities and pop-up events, just email jsteines@clintoncounty-ia.gov or text 563-212-0955. Below are some of our planned events.



May 10th ~ Wildflowers and Streambeds ~ 6 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Welcome to the 1st of many WILDNESS outings! We will go on a short hike to identify some of the unique spring wildflowers and their uses and if you like, you can bring your water shoes/boots to wade in Bear Creek to collect crushable rocks to make the various pigments.

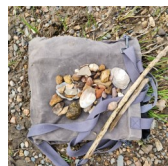


June 17th ~ Sandbar Hopping Canoe/Kayak Float ~ 10 AM ~ Walnut Grove to Sherman Park ~ We will be heading down river stopping at sandbars looking for crushable rocks for pigments. Text 563-212-0995 to reserve your spot and a canoe if needed. We will meet at Walnut Grove, this is approximately a 9-

mile float, bring a lunch and/or snacks, drinks and sunscreen.

July 5th ~ Berry Bright Pigments ~ 7 PM ~ Sherman Park ~ Here we are looking for berries for pigments! If some blackberries get eaten along the way, so be it!

August 17th ~ Rock Hunting Boat Cruise ~ 10 AM ~ Noon ~ Rock Creek ~ We get to explore the rocky areas of the mighty Mississippi for the project. Bring snacks, drinks and sunscreen! Must call 563-259-1876 to reserve your spot.





Nature's Filters: The Unseen Heroes

by Hannah Pannell, Interpretive Naturalist

Freshwater mussels are one of the most important aquatic invertebrates in our waterways. They are an indicator species, meaning that the water quality must be in a healthy state for their existence to last. Mussels in our rivers are like having filters for our water in our refrigerators, they filter out the bacteria and contaminants for other aquatic life as they are feeding and breathing, therefore making it a safer and healthier habitat. The complexity of their life

never wavers as their reproduction process is one of the most complex of all animals.

Mussels do not have eyes, legs or arms, therefore they must turn to an alternative way to not only move, but also reproduce. A male mussel will release sperm into the water which a downstream female will siphon into its body. Then, since they do not move very often, they use a luring tactic to attract a host fish to carry the glochidia or "baby mussels". The lure is part of the mussel and acts like and resembles a small fish or worm, wavering in the water. Certain

species depend on specific host fish species; therefore, their lure will resemble a certain type of prey that fish hunts. Once the lure attracts a fish, the fish will bite the glochidia sac (lure) which will then release millions of microscopic mussels into the water to latch onto the gills of the fish. There the mussels will live as a parasite for several weeks until they grow large enough and fall off the fish.

The complexity of their life cycle is one of the most interesting and unfortunately, it is also one of the reasons for their demise. In the United States freshwater mussels are the most endangered group of animals with over thirty species already extinct. By helping keep our waterways clean and making sure we are disposing of our chemicals in the proper way we can work at keeping our rivers clean. To see some of the freshwater mussels we have in our area join me on our mussel beach cruises on July 16th and August 9th. We will be diving/wading for them so please dress to get wet! Registration is required so please call 563-259-1876 to sign-up!



Yellow sandshell mussels found on mussel beach, near Camanche Island on the Mississippi River is endangered in Iowa.



12 species of mussels found on the last mussel beach cruise.

Worked My Way Up From AmeriCorp to Fulltime!

by Hannah Pannell, Interpretive Naturalist



Birds of Prey presentation at Soaring Eagle Nature Center in 2022.

Hello everyone, my name is Hannah Pannell and I am so excited to be back with Clinton County Conservation as an Interpretive Naturalist! I grew up across the river in Fulton, Illinois where my passion for the outdoors began. Growing up I spent much of my time outside chasing butterflies, swimming in the river or hunting on our farm. At a young age I fell in love with everything the

outdoors has to offer and knew that I wanted to one day, work in a position where I could teach others about the outdoors so they too could do everything they could to protect the wildlife around us.

After high school I attended the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point (Go Pointers!!), where I received my Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resource Management with an emphasis on Environmental Education and Interpretation. During college I participated in The Wildlife Society student chapter through UWSP

where I had the opportunity to work on projects banding owls, woodpeckers and even radio collaring whitetail deer. I spent my summers working at the fish hatchery in Cordova, Illinois where I learned a lot about the aquatic life in the Mississippi River and was able to help study some of the endangered freshwater mussels in the river.

During the summer of 2022, I was the AmeriCorps Naturalist intern with Clinton County Conservation and I had the greatest experience! Some of my favorite things about my summer position were the public programs I was able to lead, the mussel beach cruises and the summer camps! I am so excited to be back and to continue to bring unique programming to our county! The best part of my job is getting to work with all sorts of age groups and people from the surrounding areas. We have a great assortment of parks and natural areas in our county and I cannot wait to continue to explore them with all of you.



Showing off the tiger salamander at the 2022 Spring Fling event.





The Problems Facing Pollinators

by Kari Jeffrey, Interpretive Naturalist

With spring upon us and summer right around the corner, it is a great time to talk about the importance of pollinators and how you can help them. Many people are not a fan of the insects that buzz and flutter around, but a lot of them are responsible for the fresh foods we eat and the beautiful flowers we see!

Pollinators are animals that help by transferring pollen between the anthers (male parts) and the stigma (female part) of flowering plants, making it possible for the plant to reproduce. Over 85% of flowering plants rely on animals to pollinate them. Approximately one in every three bites of food you eat is made possible by a pollinator!

Here in Iowa, most of our pollinators are insects, but in other parts of the world, pollinators come in all shapes and



Black-and-white ruffed lemur

sizes. The largest pollinator in terms of body size is the black-and-white ruffed lemur. In Madagascar, lemurs are an essential pollinator for many types of trees on the island. Another interesting pollinator many people may not think of is bats!

Numerous fruits depend on bat species to pollinate them, including bananas, mangos and guava. Long-nosed bats, who migrate through Mexico to the Southern United States in the spring, are the primary pollinators of agave. That's right, the next time you're sipping an ice cold margarita, you can thank the bats. ☺ Other unusual pollinators include geckos, small mammals and certain bird species, like hummingbirds. Bees and butterflies are the pollinators people are most familiar with, but moths, wasps, beetles and flies have a part to play as well.

Unfortunately, pollinators all over the world have been struggling in recent decades. Globally, populations for most pollinator species have been in a decline. Since 2006, beekeepers in the United States have lost an average of 30% of their bee colonies each year. Just last summer, monarch butterflies were added as an endangered species to the International Union for Conservation of Nature's red



Look at all that pollen!

list. Because of their long migration they are especially susceptible to habitat destruction. From 1996 to 2014, the western population of monarch butterflies has been reduced by an estimated 84%. Many other pollinators are also

believed to be suffering, however there is limited historical research to compare it to.

One of the biggest threats facing pollinators is habitat loss. Native plants are being replaced by roads, crops, lawns and invasive plants. This is decreasing the food supply and nesting sites for many of these important insects. The areas of native prairie still existing are now detached from each other, making it more difficult for pollinators to travel to new sites for breeding. Species that migrate, like monarch butterflies are especially susceptible to this habitat fragmentation. The distance between healthy habitat can be too far for weak individuals to make it during their big journey. Another serious issue affecting pollinators is pesticide use. Pesticides can be used to control pests or invasive insects, but when used improperly many beneficial insects can be harmed. Being subjected to chemicals and having poor nutrition can also make pollinators vulnerable to diseases.

One way to help pollinators is to provide some habitat in your yard. Ground-nesting bees prefer bare ground with well-draining soil, so leaving some land without grass can be helpful! Since other species prefer to nest in brush or hollow stems, creating a pile of branches can provide habitat for many insects. If you're a crafty person, there are also many resources online with instructions on how to make a bee hotel out of recycled materials!

Another way to help pollinators is to start a pollinator garden. These can be adjusted to accommodate however much space is available. Even a few native species in a pot could make a difference to a hungry pollinator. It is important to do research to include a variety of native plant species that will attract and benefit the pollinator you have in mind, because each species has different preferences. If you'd like to have caterpillars, you should include that species' host plant in your garden. Host plants are where butterfly species lay their eggs and what the caterpillars snack on before their transformation.



Monarch caterpillar on their ONLY host plant, milkweed.

One of my favorite ways to help pollinators is to teach other people about their importance! Spreading the word that these species are essential and great to have around can make a big difference. Many people are quick to call buzzing insects pests, without fully understanding the impact they have on our environment. Sharing what you learn about pollinators can give your friends and family the push they need to fully appreciate these amazing species and do what they can to help!

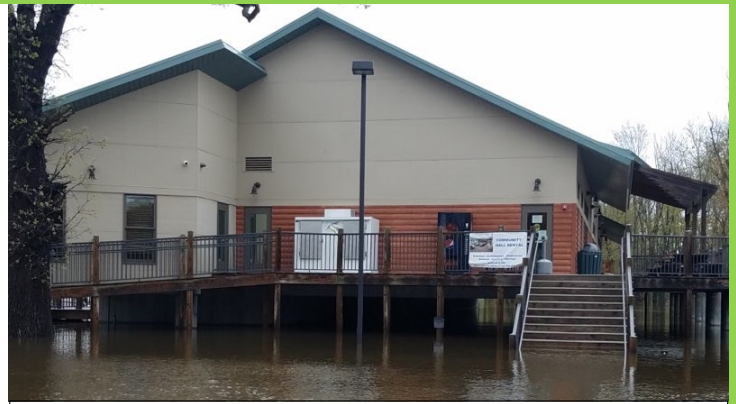




2023 Spring Snowmelt Flood

by Kyle Redmond, East District Park Supervisor

As we head into the summer season, Rock Creek Marina and Campground is flooding from the Mississippi River. This winter, Wisconsin and Minnesota had many heavy snow events. These events wouldn't be so bad if it had slowly warmed up with warm winter days then freezing again at night, but mother nature had other plans this spring with a quick warmup in the 70s! The only thing that may have saved us from more dramatic depths is that the soil was relatively dry from the drought conditions last year. Currently the water is forecasted to go down after reaching depths of 22.86 feet in Camanche. When natural disasters



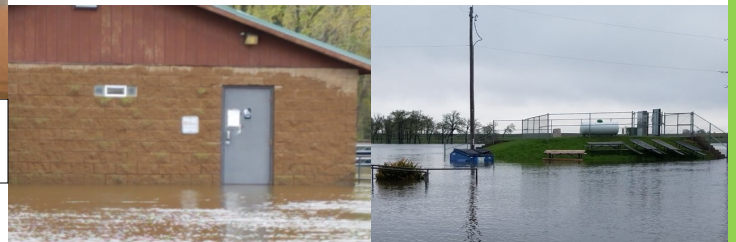
The Eco Tourism Center is built to be above the 500 year flood level, a number that some say is outdated due to current urban expansion and land use practices.



The Wood Duck and Pintail Cabins are now just sitting ducks waiting for the water to recede.

occur our staff pulls together from the West District and Central Headquarters to help ensure all buildings, tables, equipment and all other necessary needs of the park are secure and ready. We are hoping with the type of flooding we encountered this year that there will not be a high

amount of silt to clean-up, but maybe a few fish to escort out of the eco center's basement. As the river continues to recede, we will do everything in our power to get the campground, eco center and boat docks back online. Although this is a frustrating time, we appreciate everyone's patience and we are looking forward to a great 2023 camping and boating season whenever nature allows us.



Left: The shower house is probably more like a bath tub. Right: The hill that keeps the LP tank and electrical components out of the water is now an island.

Changes in the Parks

by Dillon Peyton, West District Park Supervisor

Welcome back to the parks and the 2023 camping season everyone. First, let's talk about some of the things that remain the same. Our prices for all camp sites and facilities have not changed from last year! We also are welcoming back all of our campground hosts from last year. Now, let's talk about some of the changes the West District has gone through. Eden Valley Refuge has seen some changes over the off season, most notable you will see is the expansion of the primitive campground in preparation for the moving of the 2 cabins this fall. With this there was a lot of tree removal but about 100 trees are to be planted, along with some pollinator plots.



At Walnut Grove the major change was tree removal. In preparation of removing the Ash trees that had succumbed to the emerald ash borer or were deemed a hazard tree, we planted over 150 trees last year between the campground

and the other side of the Wapsipinicon river. An acre of pollinator prairie was seeded this past fall on the south side of the river as well. Sherman

Park saw the least amount of impact over the winter. We have begun mulching on the backside of the campground in preparation of expanding the electric sites on top of the hill. All new tables have been added to the electric campsites. With our camping season underway we would like to thank you and everyone who uses our parks! We may be the ones who have the pleasure of managing the up keep of them, but without all of you doing your part keeping your sites clean and letting us know when things are out of the norm, things wouldn't be progressing as they are. So, thank you again! One last thing, we are now offering firewood sales at all campgrounds in the West District. Please see your campground host if you would like to buy some!





Sunshine and Summertime

May



10th ~ Wildflowers and Streambeds ~ 6 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Welcome to the 1st of many WILDNESS outings to help collect natural items and find inspiration for our new and exciting art project at Clinton County Conservation areas brought to you by local artist Gabi Torres (www.gbart.studio). On this particular outing we will go on a short hike to identify some of the unique spring wildflowers and their uses. If you like, you can bring your water shoes/boots to wade in Bear Creek to collect crushable rocks to make the various pigments that Gabi will use to paint during her 6-week residency at the Cabin at Miss-Elk-Ton in November/December. If you would like to be the first to know about pop-up events and to be a part of this process, from collecting to making art, send a text to naturalist Jess at 563-212-0955. Other planned excursions are June 17th, July 5th and August 17th.

16th ~ Clinton County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Conservation Headquarters, Grand Mound, IA ~ Meeting times and dates are subject to change.

20th ~ Spring Faire ~ 11 AM - 2 PM ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Old-fashioned family fun with games and crafts! Grill-out lunch offered! Free entry for all ages.

23rd ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Join this fun little group that does big things for Rock Creek!

June

***Note on Blue Heron 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).*

1st ~ 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.

2nd - 4th ~ Free Fishing Weekend for Iowa Residents ~

2nd - 4th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Season Opener ~ 10 AM - 2 PM ~ Come in for refreshments and to see all the new changes and your old favorites! We have new hours this summer stretching throughout the whole weekend Friday through Sunday, every weekend!

3rd ~ Youth Hunter Education Challenge (YHEC) ~ 8 AM - 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ This statewide event is held for children 11-18 years old who compete in eight elements: shotgun, rifle, muzzleloader, archery, wildlife ID, orienteering, safety



trail and knowledge base test. This is a full day of fun competing as a team or individual! Practices are going on right now, contact Jill Schmidt at 563-847-7202 for more information or visit www.iowadnr.gov/yhec.

7th ~ Creating an Angler ~ 6:30 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! Bring your child to the shoreline and teach them how to 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.



8th ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

9th - 11th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

11th ~ Adult Voyageur Pre-Trip Meeting ~ 1-4 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Participants will have a chance to paddle in the voyageur canoes, learn more about the trip, review the packing list, check-out gear to borrow and meet other participants.



15th ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

16th - 17th ~ Canoeing with the Voyageurs ~ 1 PM ~ St. Germain dit Gauthier House, 419 5th St. Prairie du Chien, WI ~ Join us in celebrating the 350th anniversary of the expedition of the Marquette & Jolliet! We will experience the thrill of paddling a fur trade canoe on the Mississippi River just as the voyageurs did during the 18th and 19th century fur trade.



16th - 18th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

17th ~ Furry Scurry ~ 8 AM - 10 AM ~ Eagle Point Park ~ 3rd annual two mile dog walk/run. Find treasures at the silent auction and vendor tables! Dogs need to be up-to-date on all vaccinations and leashed at all times. Registration fee is \$25 per person. To register go to



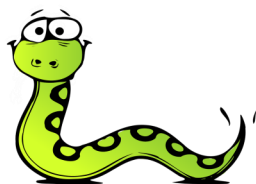


<http://getmeregistered/FurryScurry23>. Register by 6/9/2023 to secure a T-shirt.

17th ~ Sandbar Hopping Canoe/Kayak Float ~ 10 AM ~ Walnut Grove to Sherman Park ~ This is another outing for the WILDNESS Art Project featuring Artist Gabi Torres and Naturalist Jessica Steines. We will be heading down river stopping at sandbars looking for crushable rocks for pigments. Text 563-212-0995 to reserve your spot and a canoe if needed. We will meet at Walnut Grove, this is approximately a 9-mile float, bring a lunch and/or snacks, drinks and sunscreen.

20th ~ Clinton County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Conservation Headquarters, Grand Mound, IA ~ Meeting times and dates are subject to change.

21st ~ Slithery Snakes ~ 2 PM ~ Camanche Library ~ Snakes may not be liked by all, but they definitely have their role in our environment. Come check out some of our slithery friends and learn why they are so important.



21st ~ Creating an Angler ~ 6:30 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! Bring your child to the shoreline and teach them how to 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.

22nd ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

23rd - 25th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

24th ~ Fishing Has No Boundaries Youth Event ~ 9:30 AM-12:30 PM ~ Lake Malone ~ Fishing Has No Boundaries, Eastern Iowa Chapter and Clinton County Conservation are partnering up once again for our youth with disabilities fishing event! If you know of a child living with a disability please consider signing them up for a morning of fun and fishing at Lake Malone. The cost for this event is \$15/child and registration is required. We are in need of 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.



26th ~ Science & Storytime ~ 10:30 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ During this program, we will read a story and do some science exploration through hands-on experiments! Each

Science & Storytime event will include a different story and experiment. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

26th - 28th ~ Adult Voyageur Expedition ~ 10 AM ~ Boscobel, WI to Clayton, IA ~ This adult event is accepting email reservations. Contact Jess Wagner at jwagner@jacksoncounty.iowa.gov for more information. Registration is on a first-come-first-serve basis.



27th ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Join this fun little group that does big things for Rock Creek!

29th ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

30th - 2nd ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

July

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

1st & 2nd ~ Christmas in July ~ Eden Valley, Walnut Grove and Sherman Park ~ Decorating campsites in the Christmas-fashion. Weather permitting a movie played at Eden Valley Campground at dusk.



5th ~ Berry Bright Pigments ~ 7 PM ~ Sherman Park ~ For the WILDNESS Art Project, we are looking for berries for pigments! If some blackberries get eaten along the way, so be it! We suggest wearing pants, long-sleeved shirt and gloves, along with bug spray. If you would like to be the first to know about pop-up events and to be a part of this process, from collecting to making art, send a text to naturalist Jess at 563-212-0955. Registration is not required but appreciated.

6th ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

7th ~ Ice Age Backpacking Orientation ~ 9 AM ~ Hurstville Interpretive Center ~ FULL

7th - 9th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 10 AM-2 PM

8th ~ Cave Tour ~ 10:30 AM ~ Eden Valley ~ Come spelunking with a Naturalist and explore the wonders underground. We will tour the entire cave and even try some of the challenges the cave offers! Please plan on meeting at the Eden Valley Nature Center at 10:30 AM and we will drive to the cave site. Hard hats will be provided, and old clothes and head lamps are recommended. Children must be 8 years or older to attend. Space is limited so call or text 563-349-0956 to reserve your free spot.

10th ~ Science & Storytime ~ 10:30 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ During this presentation, we will read a story and do some science exploration through hands-on experiments! Children must be accompanied by an adult.





11th - 13th ~ Ice Age Backpacking Trip ~ New Auburn, WI ~ FULL

12th ~ Pond Life ~ 2 PM ~ Camanche Library ~ There is so much life beyond the water's surface! We will explore all the little critters that inhabit our waterways! They might be small but their importance is HUGE!



12th ~ Creating an Angler ~ 6:30 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! Bring your child to the shoreline and teach them how to 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.

13th ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

14th - 16th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

16th ~ Good Morning Cruise ~ 10:30 AM ~ Rock Creek
~ Join a Naturalist on a morning eco cruise as we take aboard the Blue Heron pontoon for a ride onto the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 to reserve a free spot.



16th ~ Mussel Beach Cruise ~ 1 PM & 3 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Learn about the

common mussels found on the beaches around us! The Blue Heron will take participants out on the Mighty Mississippi to discover mussels for themselves! Please dress accordingly to be wet and possibly sandy. Please call 563-259-1876 to reserve your free spots.

18th ~ Clinton County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Conservation Headquarters, Grand Mound, IA ~ Meeting times and dates are subject to change.

20th ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

21st - 23rd ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

22nd ~ Crossroads Triathlon ~ 8 AM ~ Killdeer Recreation Area ~ <https://parks.cityofdewittiowa.org>

24th ~ Science & Storytime ~ 10:30 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ During this program, we will read a story and do some science exploration through hands-on experiments! Each Science & Storytime event will include a different story and experiment. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

25th ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Join this fun little group that does big things for Rock Creek!

26th ~ Creating an Angler ~ 6:30 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! Bring your child to the shoreline and teach them how to 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.



27th ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

28th - 30th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

August

1st - 2nd ~ Hunter Safety Camp ~ 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Do you want your child to learn how to operate and respect firearms? In this camp, they will do just that while having the opportunity to receive their hunting safety certificate! For this event, we will go beyond the basics of hunter education standards of archery, shotgun, muzzleloader and rifles. All these activities plus more will allow students to actually participate, not just listen to speakers or watch films. The course is open to ages 11-17. Cost per student is \$30 for transportation, meals, ammo & targets. Space is limited so please do not wait to register. To register and find more information visit mycountyparks.com.

3rd ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

4th - 6th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 10 AM - 2 PM


5th ~ EnviroKids Family Camp ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Paddleboats, canoes, kayaks, pond critter catching and a chance to ride the Blue Heron pontoon! Complete the fun with s'mores around a campfire. Adults are encouraged to accompany children. Call Judie Petersen at 563-357-6932 to sign up for this and other **EnviroKids Events**.

- ◆ **June 10th ~ Bickelhaupt Arboretum**
- ◆ **June 24th ~ Clinton Co. Area Solid Waste Agency**
- ◆ **July 15th ~ Clinton Izaak Walton League**
- ◆ **July 22nd ~ Clinton LumberKings**
- ◆ **July 29th ~ Felix Adler Children's Discovery Center**
- ◆ **August 19th ~ The Sawmill Museum**

7th ~ Science & Storytime ~ 10:30 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ During this program, we will read a story and do some science exploration through hands-on experiments! Each Science & Storytime event will include a different story and experiment. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

9th ~ Mussel Beach Cruise ~ 5:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Learn about the common mussels found on the beaches around us! The Blue Heron will take participants out on the Mighty Mississippi to discover mussels for themselves! Please dress accordingly to be wet and





possibly sandy. Please call 563-259-1876 to reserve your free spots.



9th ~ 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! Bring your child to the shoreline and teach them how to 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.

10th ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

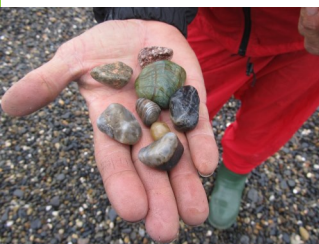
11th - 13th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

12th ~ Fishing Has No Boundaries ~ 8 AM - 2 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Clinton County Conservation will be hosting the 9th annual Fishing Has No Boundaries event. This event will provide fishing opportunities for people with disabilities on and along the Mississippi River. The cost for this event is \$20/adult and registration is required. 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.



15th ~ Voyageur Canoe Trip ~ 5:00 PM ~ Swan Slough to Rock Creek ~ Join us as we take a trip down the Mississippi River in the 29-foot Voyageur canoes. We will meet at Rock Creek at 5 PM and carpool to the Swan Slough boat ramp in Camanche, IA where we will begin our journey down river. Room is limited so sign-up is required. Please call or text 563-349-0956 to reserve your free spot.

15th ~ Clinton County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Conservation Headquarters, Grand Mound, IA ~ Meeting times and dates are subject to change.



17th ~ Rock Hunting Boat Cruise ~ 10 AM - Noon ~ Rock Creek ~ We are on the search for crushable rocks on sandy areas of the Mississippi River to

make pigments for the WILDNESS Art Project. Bring snacks, drinks and sunscreen! Must call 563-259-1876 to reserve your spot.

17th ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

18th - 20th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

21st ~ Science & Storytime ~ 10:30 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ During this program, we will read a story and do some science exploration through hands-on experiments! Each Science & Storytime event will include a different story and experiment. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

22nd ~ Friends of Rock Creek ~ 6 PM ~ Join this fun little group that does big things for Rock Creek!

24th ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

25th - 27th ~ Lower Wapsi River Clean-up Project ~ Location

Undetermined ~ This is a family oriented community service project sponsored by the Clinton County Conservation Board and Eagle Point Nature Society. Email riversflowild@gmail.com for more information.

25th - 27th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Open ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

27th ~ 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



29th ~ Tree ID Hike ~ 5:00 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Take a hike through Eden Valley with a Naturalist and learn about the different ways you can identify the trees and plants around you.

31st ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

September

Sunset Cruises ~ 6 PM in September & 5 PM in October.

1st - 3rd ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Season Finale! ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

7th ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek

14th ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek

16th ~ "Go Fish" Clinic ~ TBD ~ Malone Park ~ The Calamus Wheatland FFA group is putting on a fishing clinic! More details to come!

19th ~ Clinton County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Conservation Headquarters, Grand Mound, IA ~ Meeting times and dates are subject to change.

21st ~ Sunset Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek





Tid-bits of Our Favorite Signs of Spring

by Jill Schmidt, Environmental Education Coordinator

I believe it's safe to say that we all look forward to some of the first signs of spring. We welcome back, with open arms, the birds, flowers and budding of our trees as we anxiously await longer, warmer days and more time outside. Spring phenology is always exciting but in addition to just the presence of these natural beauties, each one has some interesting and fun facts that open our eyes to new knowledge and understandings of these seasonal signs.

The gobbling of the wild turkey in the timber is always one of my favorite spring signs. Only the males, also known as *Gobblers* or *Toms*, are the ones who make the infamous gobbling sound. There are five sub species of the American Wild Turkey: Eastern (what is found in Iowa and pictured right),



Osceola, Rio Grande, Merriam's, and the largest of them all, Gould's Wild Turkey. Weighing up to 30 pounds, the turkey can clock in at 18 mph on foot and up to 50 mph in flight. That's right, they can fly. Although not very graceful, they make their way to trees after sunset to roost and sounding like bowling balls crashing into the trees from above, make their way to the ground in the morning.

Spring flowers are always a treat to see on a hike in mid

April. The timely appearance of one of my favorites, red trillium, is absolutely beautiful on the forest floor. This spring sign has evolved by luring a local pollinator, the carrion fly, to it's flower with a foul smell, sealing the deal of pollination between plants. Pretty and "smart"! Historically it was used for *curing gangrene*, since, according to the *Doctrine of Signatures*, plants were used to cure the ailments they resembled.



As spring marches on, we eagerly await the arrival of the smallest migratory bird in the world, the hummingbird. Iowa is the summer home for the Ruby-throated hummingbird. This tiny flying machine makes the trip across the Gulf of Mexico twice a year.



Being the only bird that can fly backwards and side-to-side, it can reach speeds of 30 mph during migration. Once it arrives to our area, finding a food source is important. Attracted to the bright colors of flowers, the hummingbird will use a long tongue to lap up nectar, as it hovers in mid air.

So no matter what your favorite sign of spring is, spend time enjoying your first sighting. Embrace the presence of the new beginning of the growing season and soak it all in. Afterall, we only get the "firsts" of spring once a year.

Fishing Has No Boundaries



Eastern Iowa Chapter

Annual Youth With Disabilities Fishing Event!

June 24th, 2023
9:30AM - Noon



Malone Park Lake, Hwy 30, East of DeWitt

Children
ages 5-18
With physical or
cognitive disabilities

Cost: \$15/
Angler
(Scholarships
Available)

Contact:
Jill Schmidt
Chair of FHNB

563-349-8680 or
eifhnb@gmail.com
to register

Includes all
fishing gear,
participation
certificate, FHNB
gift &
A catered lunch
from
Matthiessen's

Fishing Has no boundaries
Eastern Iowa Chapter

Check us out @ <https://www.facebook.com/FHNBEasternIowa>

Save The Dates!!



Calamus-Wheatland FFA's
"Go Fish" Clinic

Saturday, September 16th

Malone Park Lake
East of DeWitt

More details to come!

Catfish Classic

August 27th

\$50/boat

\$10 Biggest Fish Jackpot

www.mycountyparks.com



Halloween Weekend

Rock Creek Marina & Campground
October 13th - 15th

Be sure to check out our fall news-
letter in September for the full line-
up of events!

P.10





Through the Eyes of Children

by Phil Visser, Executive Director

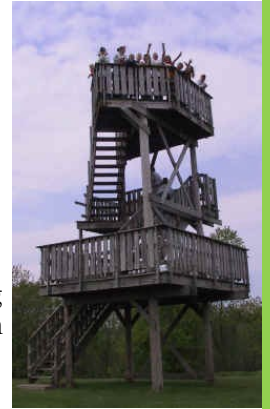
It is often said that in Iowa, if you do not like the weather you should wait 5 minutes and it will change. Even though this is true, I have to say that I have heard this saying just about everywhere. This spring has certainly been a memorable one. We have seen some late snow mixed in with 80-degree days. Often, it seems that the weekdays are nice and then we are met with near freezing temperatures during the weekends. To adults this may seem like spring and summer will never get going, to our children the rollercoaster of temperatures goes unnoticed. They are just excited to go outdoors, no matter the weather.



or walleye, kids are often just as excited about a couple of bluegills. I had an experience last year fishing with someone new who caught a small drum from Rock Creek, and you would have thought he caught a state record!



If fishing is not something you are interested in, you can always go for a simple nature walk. Eden Valley Refuge has several great hiking trails that can provide anyone with a great experience. There are many features along the trails that kids and adults can enjoy, including the observation tower and swinging bridge. There is also plenty of wildlife to see including colorful birds and butterflies. Children can get so excited about seeing things in the outdoors that we as adults may not even notice or take for granted.



Just remember when you are outdoors with children to be patient. Kids are so easily distracted and in nature there are many things to be distracted by. It is fine if your mushroom hunting trip turns into a bird watching, or if fishing turns into trying to skip stones on the water. The most important thing is that they are learning and enjoying the outdoors.



These experiences will become great memories for adults and children, and will help build lasting bonds for the rest of their lives.



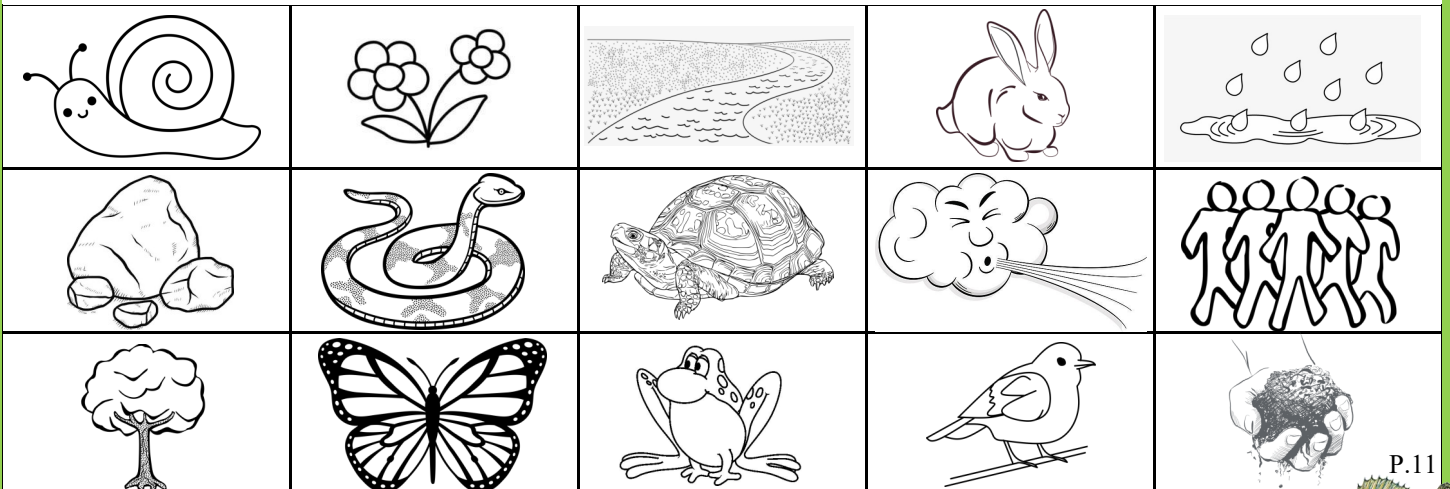
Even though the weather has been cool, we are still seeing many of the signs that we expect for this time of year. Morel mushrooms are popping all over the county and many people are finding good numbers. These little guys can be difficult to find but are delicious and certainly worth the effort! One of my best mushroom hunting tips is to take a

child with you. It can be a great chance to introduce someone to the outdoors, and you do not have to worry about scaring the mushrooms away with a noisy kid! Also, they have good eyes that are closer to the ground and often find them where an adult might miss out!

Another great outdoor opportunity for kids is fishing. One thing to always remember when you take a child fishing, or anyone new for that matter, is that quantity is often better than quality. Although it can be fun to catch a monster bass

Living Or Nonliving Activity

Color the pictures. Circle the nonliving things.





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Grand Mound, Iowa 52751
Phone: 563-847-7202
Email: conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov
Web: www.mycountyparks.com

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All of the naturalists swoon over this albino garter snake! We love its personality and how it eats worm pieces with zest.

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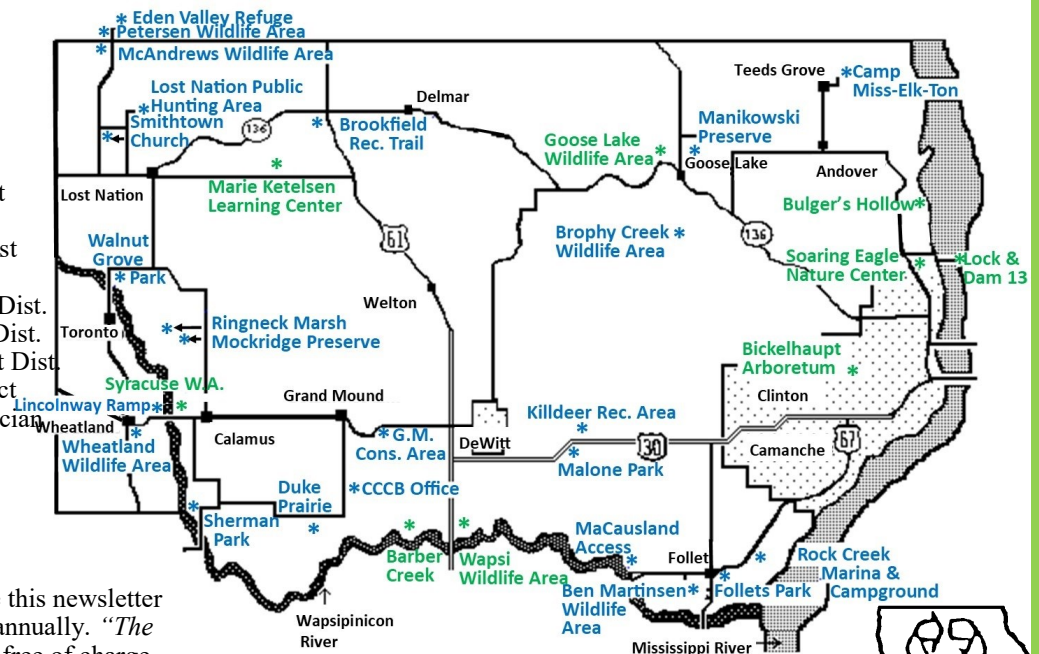
MAILING LIST

Clinton County residents may receive this newsletter at home, free. Others are charged \$5 annually. "The Heron" is on our website or emailed, free of charge.

The Clinton County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subject to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Clinton C.C.B. or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

BOARD MEETINGS

The Clinton County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. The Board regularly meets on the third Tuesday of the month, at 6 PM, in the Conservation Office, located 1 mile south of Grand Mound at 2308 255th St. Please note, this date may be changed.



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