

Naturally

LOUISA COUNTY NEWSLETTER

NEWS ABOUT OUR NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

JANUARY 2010 VOLUME 3 ISSUE 1

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EDITED BY
Mallory Smith
Julie Ohde

10 in 2010

By Mallory Smith & Julie Ohde, NLC Editors

As the first decade of the 21st century recently drew to a close there was no shortage of top ten lists in the media—most influential people, best-selling authors, and popular new words just to name a few. However, the big players that generate all these rankings, Time, Newsweek, CNN and the like overlooked Louisa County leaving it to us to generate our own top ten rankings.

In this issue of Naturally Louisa County you will find lists of earth friendly products, conservation focused books and good things you can do for yourself (and the environment).

But, the list we are most interested in is still a work in progress. To kick off 2010 we'd like to compile the "Top Ten Favorite Places in Louisa County" and we need your help to do that. We want you to tell us where you enjoy the natural resources of our unique area and what you like to do there.

Is it hiking at Chinkapin Bluffs in the spring when the wildflowers are in bloom, paddling with friends on Odessa, or watching the birds at the feeder in your own backyard? You can put a note in the mail, send an email or even write an essay. We'll compile a list to share with our readers and website visitors profiling the most popular or interesting submissions.

To get us started we are opening this issue with an essay on page 2 written by a friend from Kentucky. Brian Blackwell first visited Louisa County a year ago after winning a pheasant hunt in the online portion of the Tri-Rivers Auction. Having no idea what he was venturing into, he found a place, people and activities in Louisa County that are now part of his life.

We hope you enjoy his story and will let us know what fits that bill for you by sending in *your* story.



10 Favorite Outdoor Places

1. Big Sand Mound
2. Anywhere on the Mississippi
3. Grandview Drive-In Theater
4. The berry patches at Cairo Woods
5. My duck blind on Odessa
6. Columbus Junction Farmer's Market
7. On the water, in my kayak
8. An old quarry near Morning Sun
9. The wildflower patch at Snively
10. Inlet tubes at the Refuge

Whose favorite places are these? See if you can guess which NLC Newsletter contributors they belong to, then check page 15 to see if you are right!

Successful Bidding Brings Me Back

By Brian Blackwell

In mid-January 2009 I received an email from Tri-Rivers concerning their upcoming fundraising event, which would, for the second year in a row, offer a guided, two-day pheasant hunt – courtesy of Dan, Sue, and D.J. Vogeler – on eBay.

Seeing the email on my computer monitor screen made me grin at first and, within a minute's time, my smile was excessive and my palms grew slightly damp.

I'm not exactly sure why I was so excited and nervous over a lifeless email – for I had been down this road before. After winning Tri-Rivers' initial pheasant hunt auction in 2008, I traveled from Kentucky with my buddy J.P., met the Vogelers, loved the Vogelers, hunted pheasant for the first time, came one rooster short of our two-day limit, and vowed to come back annually to hunt Dan's carefully constructed cover and fellowship with my new Iowa family.

Therefore, as the eBay auction neared completion, I entered an insane dollar amount to insure my bid would reign supreme. My PayPal transfer of funds secured my hunt and supported the conservation efforts of Tri-Rivers – a win-win scenario if ever there was one. I was heading back to Iowa and this time I would bring more southern folk with me.

For our 2009 hunt, J.P. and I brought our good friend Nick with us and I managed to talk a UPS co-worker and one of my hunting mentors, Virgil, into our second annual pheasant pilgrimage to Iowa.

On Saturday, November 21 our morning hunt began on Kathy Vance's farm. As our white Chevy 4X4's pulled into the historic graveled drive of Kathy's property my palms once again dampened with excitement and anticipation. The English Pointers, Bo and Gunny, were more than ready and, yet again, I felt truly honored and blessed to hunt with my friends Dan, D.J., and J.P – while introducing Nick and Virgil to Iowa's landscape, Iowa's people, and Iowa's upland birds.

I had the pleasure of taking the first rooster just five minutes into our drive. Dan and I shot at the same time, but being an excellent guide he gave me credit and even packed the bird for me – as he does with nearly every bird we take. J.P. and Nick took the next two birds and, just 50 yards from the trucks and nearing our morning hunt's end, my double-barreled Remington and I had success again. As I picked the colorful bird from the farmland's brown and green ground I uttered quietly to myself, "What a way to spend a weekend morning."

Back on Dan's property, Virgil got into the action and had his daily limit quickly – making one well-discussed and dramatic follow-up shot with his Browning .20 gauge from, what we all agreed, was at least 60 yards.



On Sunday we started on Dan's property and then relocated to Jay Schweitzer's land to hunt the dense cover behind his house. The weather was unseasonably warm – over 70 degrees – and the sky was baby blue and completely sun filled

and simple – like something from a Bob Ross painting.

Needless to say, we had to work incredibly hard for the three roosters we harvested on Sunday. But we were thrilled to be outdoors with each other and willingly laughed about the difficulties in chasing wild pheasants.

And the best part about our weekend was that we donated over \$1,200 to the Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation. We did so in support of a cause we all believe in and to get the chance to spend some quality time with the Vogelers in the field, around the camp fire, and certainly around the kitchen table.

Special thanks to Tri-Rivers Board Members Kathy Vance and Jay Schweitzer for allowing us to hunt their land. And a very special thanks to Dan, D.J., and Sue who are not only extremely hospitable and fun, but treat us like family. God willing, we will see them again in just ten months to hunt birds, swap stories, and enjoy each other's friendship.

Creature Feature: Bobcat

By Nate Quarderer, AmeriCorps Naturalist

Imagine yourself standing at the edge of a snow covered field on a blustery, winter morning in Louisa County. To your west you spot what appears to be an oversized housecat sitting quietly at the edge of the field, its spotted coat blowing gently in the breeze. You crouch down and quietly begin to move towards the large feline when - just like that - the cat disappears into the timber.

Don't worry, your mangy old Tom cat didn't sneak out the back door again! Rather, you just had the unique experience of witnessing a bobcat in its natural setting, something very few people get the opportunity to enjoy, especially in this part of the country.

Bobcats, once found throughout most of North America from northern Mexico to southern Canada, saw their populations decimated in the early 1900's, due to the increased value of its fur. Modern range maps typically show a pocket of territory in the U.S. Midwest and parts of the Northeast where bobcats are no longer thought to exist, including Iowa, southern Minnesota, eastern South Dakota and much of Missouri, primarily due to habitat changes from modern agricultural practices.

During the time of European settlement, bobcats could commonly be found throughout all parts of Iowa; however these populations began to be confined to the corners of the state by the mid 1900's. When the DNR developed the first comprehensive list of threatened and endangered species in 1977, the bobcat was listed as endangered. However, during the 1980's bobcat populations in Iowa saw a notable increase, possibly due to heightened availability of brushy, grassland habitat generated by the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and the increase of bobcat populations in surrounding states, especially Missouri and points west.

Today, bobcats in Iowa are generally found in the southern tier of counties and in the area known as the Loess Hills, located along the state's western border.



These are also the only areas of the state where hunting and trapping seasons on bobcats currently exists, typically

running from early to late November. Since Iowa's first modern season in 2007, nearly 400 bobcats have been harvested. In 2009, the DNR set a quota for the number of bobcats harvested in Iowa at 200.

To date, hunting or trapping bobcats in Louisa County is prohibited, though the DNR estimates that such a ban will be lifted in the near future. Bobcat sightings in Louisa County seem to be on the rise and experts characterize their distribution as widespread with a low, but steadily increasing, population.

People sometimes ask what they should do if they encounter a bobcat in the wild. Should you be fortunate enough to see one, quietly take the time to appreciate what is a rare experience, because as soon as they catch wind of you, they'll be gone.



10 Facts About Bobcats

1. Bobcats usually live six to eight years.
2. Bobcats are about twice as large as house cats.
3. Despite their small size, bobcats are capable of bringing down an adult deer. However, their main diet is small mammals like rabbits and mice.
4. Female bobcats have a typical gestation period of only about two months.
5. The female raises the young alone.
6. Kittens are born well-furred and already have their spots.
7. The largest bobcat on record weighed 48.9 pounds.
8. Bobcats are crepuscular (active at dawn & dusk).
9. The home range of a bobcat is marked with feces, urine scent, and by clawing trees in the area.
10. Usually solitary and territorial animals, females never share territory with each other. Male territories often overlap.

Rent Langwood

Are you planning a family reunion, youth group campout or just looking for a place to gather some friends for a weekend? Langwood Education Center & Camp might be just the place.



Located southeast of Grandview, the camp features a lodge with full kitchen, dormitory with 20 beds, showers, pond, hiking trails, canoes and much more. It's peaceful, quiet and beautiful.

NEW IN 2009 - several camping pedestals were added, expanding the possibilities of bringing in RVs for additional space.

Meet the Challenge

Langwood Education Center & Camp also boasts one of the few challenge courses in the area. On the high ropes course, participants climb poles to traverse cables strung 30 feet in the air or leap off the top of a pole to catch a trapeze. On the low ropes, groups work on skills such as team building, communication and leadership.



NEW IN 2010 - a mini-grant program is being offered by Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation to Louisa County schools and organized youth groups to help fund visits to the challenge course. Contact Katie for an application or for more information at khammond@lccb.org.

For more information about renting Langwood or the ropes challenge course, go to www.lccb.org, then call 319-523-8381 to schedule your visit. Adventure awaits you!

Job Opportunities

To find out more or to apply for these positions contact the LCC or visit www.lccb.org.

Toolesboro Museum

This employee greets visitors and conducts tours at the Toolesboro Museum, 12:30-4:00 p.m., Memorial Day to Labor Day and weekends-only September-October. Duties are split with another staff member.

AmeriCorps Natural Resources

Two full-time, six-month positions working with the parks staff to maintain natural areas. Learn new skills while serving your community!

Thank you!

Many thanks to everyone who has lent a hand in the last few months with donations and volunteer help. **Dale Stille**, U of I, provided props for classroom weather programs; **Rebecca Beaver** helped fold news-letters; and the following all helped with school field trips: **Todd Bauer, Todd Stammer, Bill Ohde, Jeff Hammond, Brad Moss, Travis Russell, Bud & Helen Hunter**.



Wapello 3rd graders listen at the annual "Duck Hunting With Grandpa" field trip as Bud Hunter talks about waterfowl decoys. Bud's wife, Helen, wrote the book on which the field trip is based.

LOUISA COUNTY CONSERVATION

12635 County Road G56, Suite 101

Wapello, IA 52653

319-523-8381 Fax:319-527-2131

lccb@lccb.org www.lccb.org



OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday, 10 am -3 pm
Other times by chance or appointment

**Naturally Louisa Business Highlight:
Ardon Creek Winery**

Add Ardon Creek Vineyard and Winery to your list of interesting places to visit around Louisa County.

Mike and Diane Furlong will be happy to show you around their place, located north of Letts on gently rolling farmland. The wine making operation includes 4.1 acres of grape vines; equipment dedicated to cleaning, sorting, crushing, fermenting, filtering, stabilizing and bottling; a tasting room and the farm house that serves as office space for the friends and family who pitch in on the more labor intensive processes like harvest and bottling.



Everything is located on land that has been in Mike’s family for 154 years. The owners of the original 40 acres came to Iowa from Ireland to escape the potato famine; their descendents have the good fortune of living in better economic times.

Mike and Diane place much importance on good land stewardship. They have undertaken three water management projects in the last five years, with help from NRCS, and have purchased livestock to keep the pasture trimmed and weeds at bay. With crop diversity as a top priority, they see adding viniculture to the farm operation as a good way accomplish that.



2391 Independence Ave
Letts, Iowa 52754
563-506-8044
www.ardoncreek.com

Ardon Creek is a family owned and managed operation established in 2008 by Mike and his son, Chad. Day-to-day vineyard and winery operations are managed by Mike, Diane and a crew of local community members.

The Furlongs began planting grapes in 2004 and sold their first wine at the end of 2009. This Nouveau, or “new wine,” is a red wine aged for three to four months rather than the nine months for most red wines. The Ardon Creek 2009 Nouveau and Red 52 are available at the winery and also at Plants and Things, Economart, Farmers Bar & Grill, 92 Roadhouse and Jack & Jill. More red, white and rose wines will be ready in the summer of 2010.

**Top 10 Earth Friendly Products
in Louisa County**

Here are some ideas for a few environmentally friendly items you can purchase in Louisa County. Remember, if you shop locally, you are already making a difference by not burning the fuel to drive out of town.

1. Ardon Creek Wine from locally grown grapes - See the above story for all the locations
2. Go paperless with online banking - any local bank
3. Hybrid car - Weile Motor Company and Mincer Ford
4. Reuse with second hand items - Gips, Columbus Junction, or Buttons & Bows, Wapello
5. Try something from the Nash Brother organic line - Economart and Wapello Jack & Jill
6. Long Creek soy candles - made here in Louisa County and sold at JD’s Irish Ivy in Wapello
7. Recycled plastic deck lumber - Columbus Lumber
8. Fresh produce, flowers and meat - Columbus Junction or Morning Sun Farmers Markets
9. Compact fluorescent light bulbs - Wapello Elevator Farm Store
10. Feed the birds - Bieri Grain, Letts or The Feed Wagon, Columbus Junction



Al Muhlenbruck, Board Chair
319-527-5182
ldg@louisacomm.net

Official tourism contact for Louisa County
Member of Eastern Iowa Tourism Association

10 Wildlife Surveys

By Bill Ohde, IDNR Wildlife Biologist



The Iowa DNR is responsible for many wildlife surveys and in keeping with the theme of this newsletter, here's the top 10 surveys we do in Louisa County, and in most cases our other Odessa Wildlife Unit counties as well.

1. Bald Eagle Midwinter Survey—Driving routes set up along major rivers and wintering areas, done in early January.
2. Midwinter Waterfowl survey—Waterfowl are counted at wintering areas in early January.
3. Aerial Deer Survey—Transects flown in winter after the hunting seasons are over and with fresh snowfall to count deer from an airplane.
4. Spring Spotlight Survey—On early spring nights, just before leaf-out, count deer and furbearers using spotlights while driving slowly on selected gravel roads.
5. Quail Buffer Strip Breeding Bird Survey— In late spring/early summer beginning at sunrise, count and record numbers of whistling quail and singing songbirds at buffer strips to evaluate impact of this USDA program.
6. Canada Goose Production Surveys—Done in spring to estimate Canada Goose nesting populations and production.
7. August Roadside Survey— During the first half of August starting at sunrise on mornings with heavy dew, count pheasants, quail, gray partridge and rabbits from slow moving vehicles on gravel roads.



8. Fall Weekly Waterfowl Migration Survey— Ducks, geese and swans are counted every week from September through December on the Odessa Complex, Horseshoe Bend NWR and Allen Green Refuge (Des Moines County).
9. Quail Buffer Strip Fall Covey Survey—In mid-October beginning 45 minutes before sunrise, count covey calls to evaluate impact of this USDA program.
10. Christmas Bird Count—Coordinated nationally by the Audubon Society. Done within a few days of Christmas every year, a day-long survey to record all birds in a 15-mile diameter circle.

With most surveys, we are not trying to count every single animal. The purpose is to look at trends by measuring a sample of the population that is comparable from year to year. We do that by running surveys over the same routes, at the same time of year, under similar weather conditions and using the same techniques. That way we expect to see approximately the same proportion of the population each year and can determine how much the population is up or down compared to previous years.

Other important surveys that help the Iowa DNR manage wildlife species are up to YOU. Hunters are surveyed by postcard for some game, when you buy your state license for waterfowl, and by registering your deer or turkey either by phone or online. That harvest information is important to discover success rates, impacts to the various populations, and determining future hunting regulations. A new survey of bow hunters has also helped track the distribution and relative abundance of bobcats and river otters across the state.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Wildlife Biologist

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www.iowadnr.com

10 Things to Do at the Refuge

By Ron Knopik

Instead of writing about and reflecting on the refuge events of 2009, we at Port Louisa NWR challenge you to visit us in 2010 and witness— firsthand— the beauty of nature in your own backyard. There is something for everyone in the family!

1. In winter, watch as majestic eagles soar above the treetops and perch on branches overlooking the Iowa, Cedar, and Mississippi Rivers.
2. Watch as courting male turkeys pose, strut, and fan their feathers as they vie for the attention of the females in spring.
3. In the spring, look and listen for the return of the bright colors and melodic notes of the thrushes and warblers amid the vegetation as they migrate through in late April to the middle of May.
4. Fish the inlet channel of the Louisa Division and other refuge locations for catfish, carp, sunfish, crappie, and a host of other species.
5. Grab a canoe or kayak and navigate the Odessa Water Trail in the early summer to check out turtles and snakes, pelicans and herons, as well as the years' hatch of ducks and geese.
6. Marvel at the colorful and diverse native wildflowers throughout the summer.
7. In August, tour the refuge during "Friday Night Flights."
8. Dust off your decoys, outfit your field vest, and buy your licenses to hunt the open areas of the refuge throughout the fall and into the winter.
9. Witness the spectacle of the fall waterfowl migration as thousands of ducks, geese, and other waterfowl visit the refuge to feed and rest on their southward journeys.
10. Introduce a child to the outdoors and inspire a life-long appreciation of wildlife and nature all year long.



Goodbye Port Louisa, Hello Desoto

By Bill Ohde, Iowa DNR

Tom Cox, Refuge Manager at Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge, has accepted a position as manager of Desoto NWR in Missouri Valley, Iowa. I'm not sure who will miss having Tom at the Refuge more - the other agency people who have had the privilege of working with Tom or the many critters who benefited by his work. He went a long way in pioneering a spirit of partnership among the various agencies and promoting cooperation on projects, while also making the refuge a place where a wide variety of wildlife can find what they need to thrive.



Tom Cox amid vegetation that will become the food for waterfowl during the fall migration

Tom is a "we can do that" type person, and when problems came up, like the tremendous damage the 2001 flood wreaked on Port Louisa, he simply rolled up his sleeves and went to work with his crew and made the repairs. That involved not only the physical work but the knowledge and initiative to capture the funding and manpower to make it happen. That's only one example but there are many refuge developments that happened over the last nine years that were a result of Tom's, "I saw what needed to be done and I did it!" attitude.

We will miss his passion for the resource and his enthusiasm for getting things done.

Note from the editor: While the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) completes the selection process for Tom's replacement, the refuge manager position will be occupied by Bob Clevestine, biologist on detail from the USFWS Ecological Services, Rock Island Field Office.

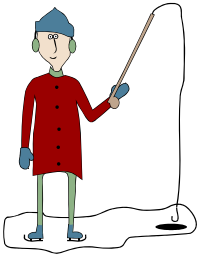


PORT LOUISA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

10728 Cty Rd X61
Wapello, Iowa 52653
319-523-6982

<http://midwest.fws.gov/portlouisa>

UPCOMING EVENTS



Youth Ice Fishing

Saturday, January 30
11:00 am - 2:00 pm
Cost: \$10/family

This cool event allows participants to make and take an ice fishing pole, short educational sessions and a BB shoot.

Registration fees include a National Wild Turkey Federation JAKES (youth) membership for each child, lunch, prizes and more.

This event is sponsored by Louisa County Conservation and the Louisa Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation JAKES program. JAKES stands for Juniors Acquiring Knowledge, Ethics and Sportsmanship.

Registration is available by phone or online at www.NaturallyLouisaCounty.com. Everyone who pre-registers by January 25 will be entered into a drawing for a Jakes pocket knife.

Tap the Sap

Sunday, February 21, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Toolesboro Indian Mounds & Museum
Toolesboro, Iowa

Learn the basics of maple syrup production on a small scale. We will go over tree identification, selection, drilling, tapping, collection and boiling. The equipment used will be low tech and inexpensive and include examples of past, present and future sap collection techniques.

Afterward you should feel comfortable tapping trees in your own yard for a treat. No pre-registration is required for this free program.

Unless otherwise stated, all registration and program information for upcoming events can be found by calling 319-523-8381 or by visiting www.NaturallyLouisaCounty.com.

Hunter Safety Class

Thursday, March 25, 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Monsanto Rec Building
Saturday, March 27, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
Langwood Education Center

The course will consist of classroom lessons, as well as live fire and shooting demonstrations. Students must be 11 years or older to take the class. You must attend both days to receive a certificate.

Pre-registration is mandatory. Have your full name, date of birth and social security number ready when you call.

Pre-registration required - starts March 1



Easter Antler Hunt



Saturday, April 3, 9:00 - 11:00 am
Virginia Grove Recreation Area
Fee: \$3/child

Join us for this fun twist on the traditional Easter egg hunt. There will be a short educational program, followed by a hunt for antlers along the nature trails.

Youth will be divided into three age groups with a prize offered in each category. There will be other games and prizes also.

Advanced registration required by April 1

Roy-El Motel

405 Highway 61 South
Wapello, Iowa
319-523-2111



Historic HOTEL WAPELLO

227 N Main
Wapello, Iowa
319-523-2341

Pat & Gladys Murphy, owners

Petro & More



Gas, pizza and a full convenience store
Across from All Vets Memorial on Highway 61



Owners: Dennis & Ann Shepard

319-729-9900

Conservation Fundraisers

It's that time of year! Support your favorite cause and have a fun night out, too.

Izaak Walton League Fish Fries

Dates: Fridays, January 15, February 19 & March 19
 Time: Fish served starting at 6:00 pm
 Where: Ikes "NEW" Clubhouse, Co Rd X61, Wapello
 Cost: \$9 all you can eat fish plus a beverage and sides
 Check out the new clubhouse with *indoor* restrooms!

Louisa County Chapter of Pheasants Forever

Date: Saturday, February 6
 Time: Doors open at 4:30 pm; Dinner at 6:00 pm
 Where: Circle of Pride Rodeo Grounds, Conesville
 Cost: \$40 membership/dinner; \$15 for spouse dinner
 Get tickets: Louisa Vet Clinic or call 319-850-1550

Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation

Date: Saturday, February 27
 Time: Doors open at 6:30 pm
 Where: Delzell Brothers, Morning Sun
 Cost: \$15/person; \$25/couple
 Get tickets: Tri-Rivers, 319-527-4530

Louisa Longbeards Chapter of NWTF

Date: Saturday, March 6
 Time: Doors open at 5:00 pm; Dinner at 6:00 pm
 Where: Briggs Civic Center, Wapello
 Cost: \$45 membership/dinner; \$75 for couples
 Get tickets: Call Todd Shutt, 319-572-1522

Odessa Chapter of Ducks Unlimited

Date: Saturday, April 2
 Time: Doors open at 5:00; Dinner at 6:00 pm
 Where: Briggs Civic Center, Wapello
 Cost: \$45 membership/dinner
 Get tickets: Eric Small, 319-759-4223

GPS Program

April 10, 2010, 9:00 am - Noon
 Langwood Education Center

Familiarize yourself with the wonderful world of navigation through the Global Positioning System!

Twenty "Garmin Etrex Legend" GPS units will be provided, though participants are welcome to bring their own equipment.

Anyone under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. **Pre-registration requested by April 5.**

Earth Day River Cleanup

Saturday, April 17, 8:00 am – 3:00 pm
 Iowa River, Fredonia to Wapello



Calling all boaters, anglers and river enthusiasts...we need your help to clean up the Iowa River.

We'll need volunteers both on the land and in boats to pick up and sort trash. Watch www.NaturallyLouisaCounty.com and local papers for more details or call 319-523-8381.

If you or your group (church, civic, youth, etc) are interested in helping, let us know!

Looking Ahead . . .

- Summer Nature Camp sign-up begins - April 1
- High Ropes Belay Training - April 2
- Full Moon Paddle - April 30
- Mother's Day on the Marsh - May 9
- Odessa Water Trail Paddle - June 5
- Father's Day on the Ropes - June 20



134 Main St
 Columbus Junction, IA 52738
 (319) 728-2436



28 West Division Street · PO Box 96
 Morning Sun, IA 52640
 319.868.7636 · 319.527.7636 · FAX 319.868.4297
custserv@louisacom.net www.louisacom.net

Cost Share Available for Windbreaks

The Louisa County Soil and Water Conservation District has cost share available for windbreaks through the Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP).

Windbreaks consist of multiple rows of trees and shrubs established to protect structures from troublesome winds. Windbreaks also can increase aesthetic value, lessen noise, and provide wildlife habitat.

REAP is a cost share program for forestry practices on privately owned land used for agricultural production. Besides windbreaks, REAP can be used for timber stand improvement, tree planting, site preparation for natural regeneration, and riparian forest buffers.

Since 1989, REAP has invested over \$34 million into soil and water enhancement activities throughout Iowa. Locally, the Louisa County Soil and Water Conservation District has received \$480,759.



Applications are accepted year round.

Trees for Sale

The SWCD is taking orders for trees to be delivered in April. See the insert in this newsletter for more information. The minimum order is 10. Funds go toward environmental education in Louisa County.

SWCD Scholarship

The Louisa County Soil and Water Conservation District is offering a scholarship for Louisa County high school seniors who will pursue a college education in natural resources or agriculture.

The recipient of the \$500 local award will also be entered into competition for a scholarship at the state level (given by Conservation Districts of Iowa) for amounts up to \$1,800.

Information is available through high school guidance counselors or the Louisa County SWCD office. Applications are due March 3. Students living outside of Louisa County must submit their applications to the soil and water conservation district in which they reside.

The local scholarship is made possible through the district's environmental education program which is funded through tree sales to the public.

Poster Contest

The Louisa County Soil and Water Conservation District is sponsoring a poster contest for all students in Louisa County.

The theme for 2010 is "Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats". Each of us can be good stewards of our natural resources at our home and in our communities. When we think about protecting and managing our natural resources, we can provide healthy habitats for the ecosystems on our planet.

The deadline to complete the posters is March 31, 2010. For more information, contact the SWCD.



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCD)

260 Mulberry St., Suite 2, Wapello, Iowa 52653
319-523-6411 Fax: 319-523-3605
jamie.grimes@ia.nacdnet.net

District Conservationist

Drew DeLang

Soil Conservationist

Jonathan Matz

Buffer/Conservation Technician

Duane Lewis

Soil Conservation Technicians

Norman Stone

Chris Bradley

Wetland Restoration Technician

Kristen Ellis

District Secretary

Jamie Grimes

SWCD Commissioners

Mary Boysen, Wapello

Sam Willson, Wapello

Chris Ball, Oakville

Dan Vogeler, Columbus Junction

Lee Harris, Morning Sun

10 Choices for a Healthy Environment

Are you ready to pledge Green? Here are ten simple things each of us can do to help make Louisa County a better place to live, work and play. See what you can do ...

1. **Energy** - save energy by shutting off unused lights and replacing regular bulbs with Compact Fluorescent Lights . 
2. **Water** - save up to four gallons of water every day by turning the water off while brushing your teeth.
3. **Transportation** - save gas and stay healthy by walking, running or biking .
4. **Air** - plant a tree that will take 48 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the air each year.
5. **Resources** - eliminate 800 pounds of wasted resources each year by reducing, reusing and recycling. 
6. **Wildlife** - make your backyard more suitable for wildlife by providing a bird feeder or water source.
7. **Green Economy** - protect the environment by using more earth-friendly cleaners.
8. **Food** - grow your own or buy fresh, locally grown foods. 
9. **Eco-literacy** - increase your knowledge of local plants, fish and wildlife.
10. **Leave No Trace** - protect natural areas by not littering or destroying the plants and animals that live there.

Together We Can Make a Difference!

I pledge to make Louisa County a great place to live by making healthy choices for a healthy environment.

Name: _____

City: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____



Mail or email to Louisa County Conservation to be entered into a prize drawing!

Keep Columbus Beautiful

The City of Columbus Junction recently became a Keep America Beautiful affiliate community. Look for information about 2010 community projects including spring clean up and beautification activities in the next issue. Provided below is an introduction to the organization behind the Great American Cleanup and other anti-littering efforts.

Keep America Beautiful Inc., established in 1953, is the nation's largest volunteer-based community action and education organization. With a network of over 1,200 affiliate and participating organizations, Keep America Beautiful forms public-private partnerships and programs that engage individuals to take greater responsibility for improving their community's environment. To learn more about Keep America Beautiful, go to www.kab.org.



In December, Keep America Beautiful announced the results of the largest litter study ever conducted in the U.S. The study identifies and dissects the causes, effects and costs of litter in America, and is the first major national survey of litter in the U.S. in 40 years. The study included observation of nearly 10,000 individuals in 130 locations in 10 states as well as quantitative surveys measuring roadway litter in 45 metropolitan areas and 180 non-roadway locations.

- The study concludes that at least 51.2 billion pieces of litter are left on roadways in the U.S.; an average of 6,729 pieces of litter per mile.
- Cigarette butts comprise 38% of all items littered on the highways, streets, parks and playgrounds (in urban, suburban and rural areas of America).
- Context matters. 15% of all littering can be attributed to context. The strongest contextual contributor to littering is the prevalence of existing litter. Other contextual variables affecting litter are the number of trash or ash receptacles present, and the distance between receptacles.
- Age matters. Older individuals (30 and over) littered less than younger individuals, but gender was, surprisingly, not related to litter rates.

Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks

Reviewed by: Kathy Vance, ISU Extension

What should a society put aside, in terms of land, from “progress and development” to save for “nature and wildlife?” And if society can agree on an answer to that, then how should humans be able to experience those areas? Those are the basic questions addressed in a great little book called “Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks” by Joseph L Sax.

I ordered the book after it was recommended to me by Rich Leopold, the Director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. He was in Louisa County and we were discussing Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge in Louisa County, the policies regarding access to the refuge and the areas adjacent to the refuge that are managed by the DNR for more recreational uses.

The book begins with a short and interesting history on the National Park system, then begins to delve into the “Why” questions. For instance, why, Sax asks, should large swathes of public lands be free from development and motorized recreation? His answer is not what you might expect.

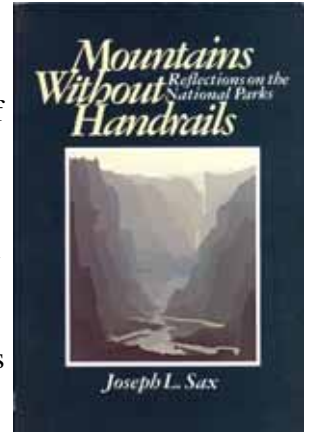
So often today such ideas are labeled as the crazy plans of “tree-huggers” or “preservationists” who are perceived as opposed to economic development or more worried about rare bugs than people. But Sax suggests that the justification lies in the kinds of activities in which such places allow us to participate. Wild places provide us with the ideal conditions for “contemplative” or “reflective” recreation including backpacking, rock climbing, fly-fishing, and mountaineering.

These activities require us to be creative, self-directed, and engaged in ways that other activities do not. Sax urges us to heed the “secular prophets” of preservation, who encourage these types of recreation because they know from their own experiences with nature that it is something that is good for us.

Sax’ theories are idealistic, perhaps at times paternalistic...but he’s on the right track. We must carefully examine the ways we attempt to enjoy that which we are attempting to save – for by “over-enjoying” it, we are likely to destroy it.

It’s a great read....I recommend it and have a copy to share!

Editors’ note: If you like National Parks, be sure to check out “The National Parks: America’s Best Idea,” a documentary by Ken Burns, now out on DVD.



Kathy’s Top 10 Nature Book Picks

1. The Hunter & Conservation *Compiled by the Council for Wildlife, Conservation & Education*
2. A Walk Across America *by Peter Jenkins*
3. A Journey North *by Adrian Hall*
4. The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire that Saved America *by Timothy Egan*
5. Hope for Animals and Their World: How Endangered Species Are Being Rescued from the Brink *by Jane Goodall*
6. Stuff: The Secret Lives of Everyday Things *by Alan Thein Durning and John C. Ryan*
7. How to Live Well Without Owning a Car: Save Money, Breathe Easier, and Get More Mileage Out of Life *by Chris Balish*
8. Last Child in the Woods *by Richard Louv*
9. The Lorax *by Doctor Seuss*
10. Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks *by Joseph L Sax*

306 North Second Street
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LIC Donations to Benefit Louisa County Education

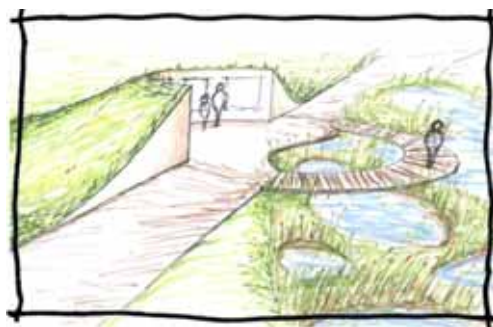
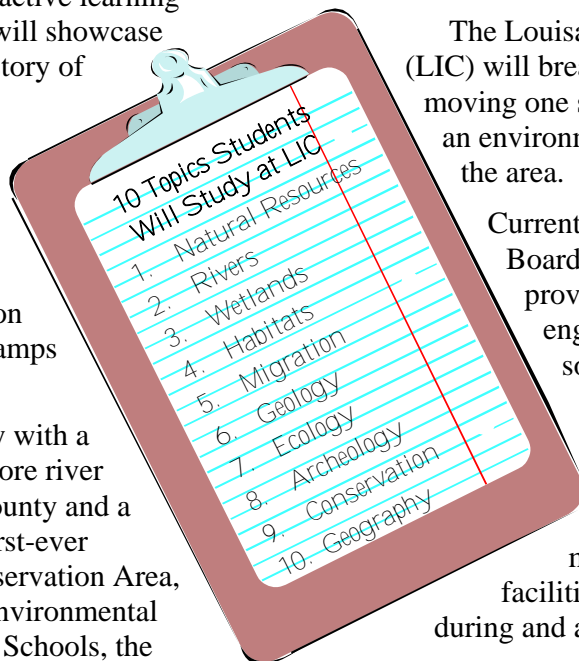
The Louisa Interpretive Center at Langwood (LIC) will have a huge impact on the education of area students. Its completion will mean they will have a premier field trip destination in their own back yard.

The interpretive center will consist of nearly 40 acres of grounds with a diversity of habitats, interpretive panels, and interactive learning opportunities. The building will showcase the unique attributes and history of the Louisa Resource Area. When the current phases of the project are completed, the outdoor interpretive area will begin to be used for field trips and other environmental education programming, such as day camps and public events.

As is fitting for a county with a National Wildlife Refuge, more river miles than any other Iowa county and a big portion of the nation's first-ever Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Area, much emphasis is given to environmental education in Louisa County. Schools, the conservation board, Extension, and non-profit groups like Pheasants Forever are all part of the effort. You can be too.

The Louisa Interpretive Center is an opportunity for supporters to help ensure an expansion of environmental education in Louisa County, not just for today but also for future generations. Donations are currently being sought for Phases 4 and 5 of the Louisa Interpretive Center project which includes land purchase, excavation work and LEED certification plans for the building. The current fundraising goal is \$144,000 to provide matching funds for a federal grant of \$576,000. The effort is nearly half complete.

If you would like to be a part of this important project at any level, see page 15 for a donation form. For more information or to schedule a presentation to you, your family or a group, contact Mallory Smith at 319-527-4530.



LIC Update

The Louisa Interpretive Center at Langwood (LIC) will break ground during the upcoming year, moving one step closer to completing the vision of an environmental education and visitor center for the area.

Currently, the Louisa County Conservation Board is in negotiations with a firm who will provide design work, preliminary engineering and project coordination. As soon as that contract is signed the work will begin, starting with an archeological survey.

Over the next 18 months the work will include soil testing, earth moving and planting. The current facilities at Langwood will remain intact both during and after construction.



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Don Kline, Washington
Karen Minnis, Morning Sun
Jim Rudisill, Wapello
Jay Schweitzer, Columbus Junction
Kathy Vance, Morning Sun
Dan Vogeler, Columbus Junction

Delzell Bros. Site for 2010 Auction

The Annual Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation auction will be held at a new location this year, Delzell Brothers auto dealership just outside Morning Sun. The combination of growing popularity, the opening of the new jail at the former location of the event and a desire for more visibility prompted the change. Organizers hope the new location will make the auction even more fun and interesting.

The auction needs space for over 70 people to spread out and mingle, as well as to sit down and bid. There are food tables, a bar, tables with silent auction items and a stage of sorts where the auctioneers hold forth. When the planning committee was looking for a space that could accommodate the many needs of an auction, committee member Kathy Vance suggested Delzell Bros. showroom and they generously agreed.

The facility is clean, bright and open - state of the art for car showrooms. It was built in 2005 when Delzell Bros. relocated their dealership from Morning Sun to the busy intersection of Highways 61 and 78 following a fire at their former location.

The location will be the largest change at this year's auction but there will be other innovations as well. Most importantly a slide show will be added to give bidders a better "view" of the items up for bid. The Tri-Rivers auction is unique in that many of the items sold are really experiences (see Top 10 List) and thus cannot be placed on the auction block for those present to view. Snap shots of 2009 auction winners enjoying their outings along with photos of new auction item locations will bring these items to life.



Sketch of Your Home purchased by Gloria Newell, donated by Al Bohling.

HIGHEST BID ITEMS

1. Sketch of Your Home
2. Hunting Privileges on Private Land (2nd Shotgun)
3. Hunting Privileges on Private Land (late muzzleloader)
4. A Night in the Slammer
5. Hunting Privileges on Private Land (Bow)
6. Hunting Privileges on Private Land (1st Shotgun)
7. Guided Paddling Adventure
8. Locally Grown Produce
9. Mississippi River Fishing Adventure
10. Sabor Latino-Dinner

FROM THE 2009 AUCTION

For those interested in bringing a group, the option has been added to reserve a table. For \$150 you can make it an evening out for eight. Otherwise, tickets are \$15/person or \$25/couple. Specific items for the live, silent and online auctions are still under development. Check www.tri-rivers.org for listing updates.

The auction is the Tri-Rivers' largest fundraising event. Last year over \$8,000 was raised for conservation projects in and around Louisa County. The committee is hoping to reach the \$10,000 mark this year. A portion of the proceeds will go the Louisa Interpretive Center.

Please join us on February 27 at 6:30 pm at Delzell Bros. To reserve tickets, call 319-527- 4530 or email tri-rivers@lccb.org.

Thank you!

Our thanks to the following individuals and groups for their donations to Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation and the Louisa Interpretive Center.

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Brian Blackwell | Sam Stapp |
| Al & Dianne Bohling | Jay Schweitzer |
| Andrew Brown | Mallory Smith |
| Joyce Crull | Michael & Kathy Vance |
| Lee & Doris Harris | Kathy Wilkerson |
| Jim & Pat Howell | Community Foundation of Louisa County |
| Frank & Gwen Jolly | United Fund of Columbus |
| Larry & Karen Minnis | United Way of East Central Iowa (Al Bohling) |
| Willard & Mildred Ohde | Anonymous |
| Bev Paris | |
| Jim Rudisill | |



Merle Ihne & Lois Hughes, winners of the Guided Paddling Adventure at the 2009 Auction enjoyed their time on the Odessa Water Trail

Answers from 10 Favorite Places - page 1

1. Al Bohling, Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation
2. Mary Gish, Louisa County Conservation
3. Nate Quarderer, AmeriCorps
4. Katie Hammond, Louisa County Conservation
5. Bill Ohde, Iowa DNR and Drew Delang, NRCS
6. Mallory Smith, Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation
7. Julie Ohde, Louisa County Conservation
8. Kathy Vance, ISU Extension
9. Kathy Dice, Louisa County Conservation
10. Ron Knopik, Port Louisa NWR

Paris Conservation Scholarship

Applications will soon be available for the William J. Paris Conservation Scholarship for the 2010-11 academic year. Established in 2009 by the family of Bill Paris, the \$500 scholarship is awarded annually to a Louisa County high school graduate or current resident planning to attend an in-state college or technical school. The individual must be studying toward a bachelor's or post graduate degree in a natural resources or conservation area.

Applications will be available February 1 at www.tri-rivers.org and are due March 1. For more information contact Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation.

MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO SUPPORT CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN LOUISA COUNTY

Enclosed is my donation for:

- \$25
 \$50
 \$100
 \$250
 \$500
 \$1,000
 Other _____

Name or Business _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____

Please earmark my donation for:

- Louisa Interpretive Center
 10K Challenge Fund _____
 Water Trails
 Scholarships
 Use my donation where needed most
 Other: _____

Make checks payable to:

Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation

Return this form and payment to:

Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation
 P.O. Box 123
 Wapello, IA 52653

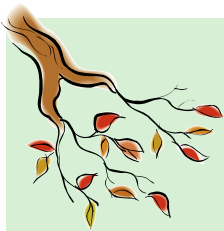
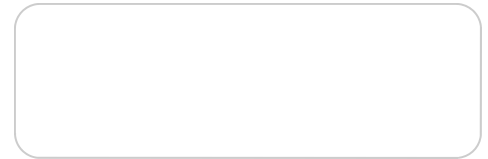
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A U C T I O N

Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation
4th Annual Fundraising Auction
 silent auction • raffle • live auction

Saturday, February 27, 7-9 pm
 Delzell Brothers Showroom
 Highway 61 & 78, Morning Sun
 \$15/person \$25/couple \$150/table of 8

**One-of-a-kind Items
 Outdoor Experiences
 Great Food
 Lots of Fun!**

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 319-527-4530 tri-rivers@lccb.org

*complete auction listing
 coming soon
www.tri-rivers.org*