

Naturally

LOUISA COUNTY NEWSLETTER

NEWS ABOUT OUR NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

OCTOBER 2011 VOLUME 4 ISSUE 4

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EDITED BY
Julie Ohde

In Our Own Backyard

By Julie Ohde, LCC Executive Director

As this newsletter hits the printer, this fall's work at the Louisa Interpretive Center will be finishing up. It's been exciting to watch the work progress but it's been hectic at times.

Hectic enough that some days, you think, "Why is it that we're doing this?"

Luckily, those days don't come too often, and, when they do, are usually offset with things that remind me exactly why we are doing this.

For instance, a few weeks ago, Iowa Public Television called to see if I would take them on the Odessa Water Trail for a segment of "Iowa's Simple Pleasures with Dan Kaercher." It was a tough decision—paddling vs. paperwork? Water vs. the dirt, dust and rocks of construction? Hang out with an IPTV celebrity or sit at my computer?

After a drizzly but beautiful paddle, we stopped to film a side trip at Toolesboro Mounds and Museum. While we were there, a couple from Germany happened by. They had flown to Chicago, driven to Saint Louis and were following the Great River Road to Wisconsin.

Naturalist Kathy Dice gave them the grand tour and the IPTV crew decided to interview them on camera. I've gotten an email from Alois since they got home and he says the stop at Toolesboro was one of the highlights of their trip.

My take-away from that day was twofold - IPTV thinks we have some pretty interesting places here. And, even more amazing, was Alois and Mäerta coming across the world to travel the Great River Road and stop at interesting places along the way. Clearly, Toolesboro is one of those stops (as is Port Louisa NWR - we ran into Alois and Mäerta there, too). When complete, the Louisa Interpretive Center will be yet another.

My other encounter was with a man from Mount Pleasant who told me (with envy, I thought), "You've got so many great places in Louisa County."

Continued on page 2



(l to r) Nancy Crowfoot and Dan Kaercher of IPTV, Mäerta Johansson-Mumhofer, LCC naturalist Kathy Dice, Alois Mumhofer and John Torpy of IPTV.

From the Editor

When you think about Fall, most likely an image of trees comes to mind. The changing foliage is an iconic sight that most people never tire of and, indeed, will travel great distances to view.

Sometimes that traveling is just an excuse to get outside and enjoy the near perfect temperatures, especially since we know the cold of Winter is looming around the corner. It's the perfect time to visit an orchard, take a hike, pick a pumpkin from the field or go on one last picnic.

But, the trees will demand our attention whether from their brilliant beauty or the leaves falling to the ground where they replenish the soil for trees yet to germinate (or cause you a lot of work raking, depending on the location and your perspective).

In honor of the season, this issue celebrates trees in a variety of ways - from the many critters who make them home (pages 3 and 7) to suggestions on how and where to plant more (page 10). If you enjoy both trees and cozying up with a good book, you'll enjoy the review on page 11.

And, as a transition to the next season, on page 5 you can find out where to get the perfect homegrown Christmas tree or wreath. Or, more importantly, how you can establish a tradition of beginning the holiday season with an outing among the trees.

Editor: Julie Ohde



In Our Own Backyard, *continued from page 1*

Of course, I knew that but it's nice to be reminded. Especially when you are overrun with paperwork and covered in construction dirt.

Those "great places" are the key to what we do here: conserving places for residents and visitors to appreciate nature, enjoy recreational opportunities and learn about the wonders of the natural world.

When the Louisa Interpretive Center is complete, we will have a place to help people understand those wonders and discover the opportunities they have to explore them.

Luckily, we don't have wait to make those discoveries or travel across the world for them. We can just step into our own backyard.

Get out and enjoy a beautiful fall day. May I suggest a paddling trip or a visit to Toolesboro Museum?



Trees Are Generous

It would probably be enough if trees just provided beauty (which they do), but they do so much more.

- ☛ They provide shade and protection.
- ☛ Trees help clean our air and stabilize temperature.
- ☛ There is a mutual relationship with trees and humans and other species. Trees breathe out oxygen and breathe in carbon, while other species breathe out carbon and breathe in oxygen.
- ☛ Trees act as a noise barrier.
- ☛ Their roots help to keep the ground stable and prevent soil and water runoff.
- ☛ Some trees provide nutritious food such as fruit, nuts, seeds, or oils.
- ☛ A decaying tree still provides essential nutrients for other species. Nothing from a tree goes to waste.

Amazing, isn't it?

*Adapted from "Imagine a World Without Trees" on
www.Squidoo.com*

“A man does not plant a tree for himself, he plants it for posterity”

—ALEXANDER SMITH

Creature Feature: Flying Squirrel

By Katie Hammond, LCC Naturalist

To many people's surprise, the Southern Flying Squirrel can be found in the forests of Louisa County. Why then have so few people seen these elusive creatures? The answer is plain and simple – they are nocturnal (only active at night) and somewhat secretive. So, you may not know much about this little rodent, but it comes fully loaded with adaptations that will surprise and amaze you.

Flying squirrels do not actually fly; rather they glide between trees using a unique adaptation called a *patagium*. These flaps of skin, covered by short hairs, are attached to the legs and body on either side of the flying squirrel. As the squirrel jumps from a branch it extends all four legs, and the patagium acts almost like a parachute gliding him to the landing spot. When not gliding, this skin is tucked against the body and out of the way.

These gliding rodents actually spend a lot of time climbing. They have sharp, curved claws and are able to turn their back feet 180 degrees, which makes climbing down a tree headfirst effortless. Those claws are so important that scientists believe a flying squirrel could not live without them. They are important for traction when taking off for a glide, sticking the landing, climbing, running on branches and in almost every aspect of escaping predators.

If a predator does get a bit too close and grabs their tail, it will break off, allowing the squirrel to escape without harm.

Another amazing feature is the *vibrissae*. The most well know vibrissae are whiskers. These stiffer, "tactile" hairs send information to the brain for processing. In addition to the typical whiskers found around the mouths of cats, dogs, and other mammals, flying squirrels have them around their eyes, under their chin, and near their feet each with their own function.

Facial muscles move the eye vibrissae into a forward-facing position when jumping and gliding through brush. Scientists speculate this behavior may help prevent eye injury and aid in navigation. Vibrissae near the foot is most likely used to help them handle their young, grasp food and do other more intricate tasks. Those near mammary glands stimulate milk production for the pups.



As with most rodents, the teeth of flying squirrels grow continuously so they must chew to keep their teeth at a reasonable length. The teeth of flying squirrels are used for more than just eating. They are used for pounding seeds and nuts into crevices, carrying pups, grooming, stripping bark for nesting materials and holding food while running or gliding.

Flying squirrels eat nuts, insects, spiders, flowers, fruits, berries, bird eggs, bark and sap. Right now they are busy gathering nuts, acorns, seeds, lichens and fungi to have a ready food supply for winter.

Then as winter sets in, these furry little creatures form aggregate nests where six to ten flying squirrels will occupy one nest, sharing warmth, friendship and maybe even food through the cold winter months.

LOUISA COUNTY CONSERVATION

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Sherry Humphreys

Brad Moss

Jay Schweitzer

Stan Staats

Thank you!

Our list of folks to thank includes people who donated materials and equipment; and helped at the Halloween Hike, school programs, hunter safety, Running Wild, Summer Rec, day camps and field trips.

Sons of the American Legion	Lori Fritz
American Legion Post 100	Louisa Longbeards
Bailey Yotter	Louisa-Muscatine 5th Grade
Bill Phillips	Maci Richardson
Boy Scout Pack 16	Marlin Easler
Carol Hinkle	Michelle Hemphill
Cathy & Patrick Henry	Mike Jurgill
Columbus City Masons	Mike Todd
Connie Veach	Morning Sun 5th Grade
Curt Braby	MOTT's
Debbie Snyder	Nate Quarderer
Derek Wallace	Obree Tribal
Doug Brown	Patricia Hamann
Ed, Sean & Corbin Mears	Paul Kay
Elizabeth Brown	Paul Mayes
Eric Tackenberg	Pheasants Forever
Ernie Gerst	Ron Knopik
Greg Terry	Byron Hahn
Jacob Thorton	Scott Affeldt
Jay Shafer	Sherry Humphreys
Jeff Walker	Tessa Pugh
Jeremy Oepping	The Green Team 4-H
Jerilyn & Alex Galt	Tracy Lott
Jerry Heater	Venture Crew
Joellen & John Schantz	Wapello 5th Grade
Karen Minnis	Wapello Caseys
Kathy Barrick	Wapello Home Ec Class
Kathy Wilkerson	Wapello Jack & Jill
Kathy & Michael Vance	YCC Crew
Katie Walker	
Kellen Vance	
Kyle Giese	
Larry Moser	
LeRoy Kammerer	



Morning Sun 6th Graders portray an endangered snail, mussel, falcon and eagle at the 20th Halloween Hike. Though the conservation board organizes the hike, it is only possible with the help of many dedicated volunteers.

Snively Fishing Dock Installed

Thanks to a generous donation from Monsanto, a fishing dock has been installed at Snively Campground. The dock gives campground visitors a place to fish or just sit and enjoy the beauty of Odessa. The dock will be removed for the winter months.

Day use of the Snively Campground is allowed but day use visitors must use the parking lot rather than campsites, which are only for registered campers.

Snively Campground is located on Odessa Wildlife Complex, east of Wapello.

Meet the Intern (*and Spring intern needed!*)

Louisa County Conservation has been fortunate to have another great intern helping the environmental education staff.

John van der Linden has been helping with school programs, the high ropes course and worked tirelessly on preparations for the Halloween Hike. His artistic talents really brought the characters to life (*see his work in the photo to the left*)

John is a graduate of St. Olaf College with a degree in biology and an emphasis on environmental studies. A native of Spirit Lake, Iowa, John was an AmeriCorps member in Minnesota prior to his internship here.

LCC is **looking for an intern to assist with environmental education programs** March to August of 2012. Dates are somewhat flexible. To find out more, call Julie at 319-523-8381 or lccb@lccb.org.



Honey Creek Timbers

By Dennis Fraise, LDG Director of Business Services

Honey Creek Timbers started in 1980 when Carol and Dave Pierce purchased land near Morning Sun and began managing the timber and planting seedlings. Additional land and a home were purchased in 1985 and the Pierces have been working since then to develop and diversify Honey Creek Timbers into a managed hardwood timber and Christmas tree farm.

Many Louisa County residents will recognize the Pierce name from the furniture store started by Dave's great grandparents in Morning Sun. They continue that tradition today with Pierce Furniture in Muscatine. Carol and Dave have an entrepreneur's spirit and love of the land. Honey Creek Timbers has allowed them to pursue both passions.

Since the early 1980's Dave has planted in excess of 25,000 hardwood seedlings, including white and red oak, walnut, ash, and hickory. Starting with an existing, mature timber has allowed the Pierce's to harvest some hardwoods while they wait the 50-60 years necessary for their seedlings to mature.



Early on Dave completed the Master Woodland Owner program through Iowa State University Extension and worked with state foresters to develop a plan for Honey Creek Timbers.

Looking to diversify their operation, Carol and Dave decided to start planting Christmas trees, which can typically be harvested in seven years. In 1986 they sold their first Christmas trees and have become a family tradition for many area residents that trek to Honey Creek Timbers annually. Customers can select from scotch and white pines as well as white spruce and Frazier firs. You can cut your own tree or select one of their pre-cut trees.



In addition to Christmas trees, Honey Creek Timbers offers beautiful wreaths and roping. Since 1986 they have sold more than 10,000 wreaths and 35,000 feet of roping. Great products and service have made Honey Creek Timbers a destination for families in an eleven county area and for select customers from as far away as Chicago. Hot cocoa and peanuts in the shell complete the holiday experience.

Recently Dave has been working with a small sawmill he purchased as part of the continual evolution of his business. Harvested trees can now be turned into custom cut lumber and used to produce beautiful finished wood products.

Honey Creek Timbers is the perfect example of how a love of nature and the outdoors can be combined with successful land stewardship and turned into a thriving business. Their work was recognized by the state of Iowa when they were named Woodland Owner of the Year.

This year, plan on taking a visit to Honey Creek Timbers and let Carol and Dave help you find the perfect Christmas tree grown right here in Louisa County.

LOUISA DEVELOPMENT GROUP

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Member of Eastern Iowa Tourism Association

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Flooded Forests

By Andy Robbins, DNR Wildlife Biologist

In April 2011, Mississippi River levels in our area reached the seventh highest crest on record. The Odessa levee system was not designed to withstand a flood of this magnitude and flood waters overtopped the levee and both spillways. Persistent rains kept water levels high throughout spring and early summer.

When it appeared that the river was finally going to get back to “normal” in late July, a record rain event in the Dubuque area sent another wave of high water down the Mississippi. This event kept river levels high until late August. Since Odessa water levels are controlled by gravity, water can only be let out when river levels are lower than the Odessa water level.

This season’s high water, combined with similar conditions in 2010 and catastrophic flooding in 2008, have dealt a blow to Odessa’s forest resource, which is one of the most diverse floodplain forests on the Upper Mississippi River.

The impacts of flooding to Odessa’s forest are now becoming evident. Anyone who has been out on Odessa recently can tell you that it appeared as if Fall arrived early this year. As early as mid-August, some trees began to turn and others had completely dropped their leaves.

The changes, however, were caused by stress to the trees rather than the arrival of shorter daylight and cool temperatures. Prolonged flooding starves the roots of the oxygen needed to survive and grow. It can lead to the death and decay of the root systems along with making the already stressed trees much more susceptible to disease or attacks by insects.

Flood tolerant trees, like silver maple, willow and cottonwood, should recover without much problem.



Some trees are not adapted to survive prolonged periods of time with their roots underwater.

However, the more desirable trees for wildlife - pin oak, swamp white oak, bur oak, pecan, and shellbark hickory - will suffer the most from the repetitive and prolonged flooding. Many of these hardwoods will not make it.

Buttonbush, a wetland shrub found throughout Odessa, was also hit hard by the flooding. Buttonbush is normally tolerant of partial flooding. However, water levels were so high through most of the growing season that many buttonbush plants remained almost entirely submerged. Most of Odessa’s buttonbush is showing signs of stress and it appears that many smaller plants may not have survived the flooding. Fortunately, mature buttonbush is fairly resilient and can re-sprout from the roots if water levels are low during the next growing season.

It is still too early to determine how many trees will be lost due to the extended high water. Next spring it will become apparent when leaf-out begins. Let’s hope for good news and “normal” river levels.

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The View from Inside

By Jessica Bolser, USFWS Biologist

Trees are used by all types of animals for various reasons—food, shelter, and even damming streams. And many critters use them for raising families.

Baby birds poking their heads out of a hole in the trunk of a tree can be a surprising site. While many birds that nest in trees may use the branches as a supporting platform to build a nest upon, other birds prefer the protection of a nest built inside a cavity or hole.

Woodpeckers might be the first cavity-nesting birds that come to mind, however, 85 species of North American birds use natural cavities, excavate holes, or use already-created holes in trees for nesting. Most cavities are built in snags and dead (or dying) trees. The following three species are examples of birds that build their nests in cavities, and are common in the bottomland forests of southeast Iowa.

Prothonotary Warblers (*Protonotaria citrea*) are small, showy songbirds with bright yellow feathers. Unlike most other warbler species, these birds often build their nests in tree cavities. They often use old cavities built by other species (such as Downy Woodpeckers). Starting in late spring, a clear song that sounds like ‘sweet sweet sweet’ carrying through the woods indicates that these migratory birds are back in residence.



Photo by Larry Williams

Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*) are another species that use cavities for nesting. Also, like the Prothonotary Warbler, Wood ducks use cavities that are already formed (naturally or otherwise) in trees near or in standing water. When choosing a suitable cavity, the female Wood duck (without the help of the male) may spend several mornings examining potential sites in an area before choosing one. While laying eggs, females will line the nest cavity with downy feathers.



Photo by Sheldon Farwell



Photo by Jack Denger

Red-headed Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) are one of seven woodpecker species (all of which use cavities) that breed in southeast Iowa. These birds are easily recognized by their bright red head and distinct patch of white wing feathers. After a nest site is chosen (in a dead tree or dying section of a living tree), the male does most of the excavating for the cavity. While Red-headed woodpeckers frequently nest in trees and snags, they have also been known to excavate cavities in utility poles.

A wide variety of bird species use trees and snags for cavity-nesting, thus highlighting the ongoing importance of trees, and snags, for habitat.

Species Information Source: The Birds of North America (online) <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna>



Refuge manager, Cathy Henry, explains the uses and importance of the Muscatine Slough observation deck to students and visitors at Port Louisa NWR. The new deck was completed earlier this fall to facilitate environmental education and outreach. Come visit!



PORT LOUISA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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

Office Hours: M-F, 7:30-4:00 PM
Refuge Manager: Cathy Henry
midwest.fws.gov/portlouisa

UPCOMING EVENTS

Louisa County Trails Public Meetings

Thursday, October 27

9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Letts Community Center

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Wapello High School Auditorium

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Columbus Senior Center

Columbus Junction

The public is invited to attend one of the three meetings being held to discuss the future of trails in Louisa County. Attendees will be able to ask questions as well as offer input.

For more information, contact Jeanne Mott by email - jeanmott@sjtube.com or at 319-527-3271. You may also contact Julie Ohde at 319-523-8381 or lccb@lccb.org.

Hands-On History

Saturday, October 29, 10:00 a.m. - Noon

Toolesboro Indian Mounds & Museum

History will come alive at Toolesboro as children and adults grind corn using rocks, make tools with rawhide and cut squash for drying with bone knives.

This come-and-go workshop is open to anyone who would like to try their hand at some of the ancient skills of Iowa. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

Toolesboro Mounds & Museum is located about 6 miles southeast of Wapello on County Road 99.



Port Louisa NWR Auto Tour

Saturday, November 12, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge, Louisa Division

Here's your opportunity to view and photograph thousands of ducks and geese using the wetlands of the refuge as they travel south to warmer climates. The 5.5 mile service road will be open for self-guided tours.

Additionally, at the half-way point near Fox Pond, the refuge will provide spotting scopes, binoculars, and identification guides on the viewing platform to help tour participants observe and identify waterfowl actively feeding and interacting with each other.

The Auto Tour begins at the inlet water control structure on the Louisa Division of Port Louisa located 6 miles northeast of Wapello, Iowa. Getting there: follow County Road X61 to 120th Street and then travel east on 120th Street for approximately 2 miles. For more information call 319-523-6982.

Be sure to visit the refuge website at www.fws.gov/midwest/PortLouisa to discover additional recreational opportunities and learn more about the wildlife and habitats of Port Louisa NWR.



Free Internet Banking and Bill Pay

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319-523-2131

Member FDIC

www.statebankofwapello.com

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:**Ruffled Wings
Ladies Chapter of Ducks Unlimited
Banquet**

Thursday, October 27
Dinner: 6:00 pm; Auction 7:00 p.m.
Briggs Civic Center, Wapello

Join the “Ruffled Wings” for the traditional silent and live auctions as well as games and raffles. Tickets are \$35 in advance or \$40 at the door; dinner and membership are included. Call Niki at 319-759-9179 to get your ticket today!

Fish Fry Fridays

January 20, February 17 & March 16
Fish served starting at 6:00 pm
Ikes Club House, County Rd X-61, Wapello

Here is your chance to get out of the house, eat a good supper and support conservation efforts. A \$10 donation gets you all the fish you can eat, plus a beverage and sides.

Winter Day Camp

Youth in grades preschool - K
Wednesday, December 28, 10:00 a.m. - noon

Youth in grades 1st-3rd
Thursday, December 29, 9:00 am –11:30 am

Youth in grades 4th-6th
Thursday, December 29, 12:30 pm-3:00 pm
Langwood Education Center

Cost: \$10

Here's a chance to get the kids out of the house for some outdoor fun over winter break. We will visit the pond, the bird blind, make bird feeders, play games and do crafts.

Pre-registration required by Dec 21

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

**Louisa County Regional Trails
Council Seeking Input**

A group of people interested in promoting recreational trails in Louisa County has gathered support and funding to produce a Trails Master Plan for the county. The plan creates a vision that will identify existing trails, as well as explore possible locations for future trails.

A series of public meetings regarding the Master Plan is planned for Thursday, October 27 (see details on previous page).

The Louisa County Trails Council is creating these opportunities to learn from residents about their recreational trail experiences and what they might like to see develop locally. It will also give the public a chance to learn more about the planning process.

The idea for the Trails Council came from Jeanne Mott, a local resident who is interested in using trails. “I have seen how important trails are to other communities and I wanted to see if we could improve the trails in our cities and county,” Mott says.

Mott isn't the only one who sees the value of trails. She has garnered support from both private citizens and government agencies, and currently has about thirty members participating on the council. Funding for the Master Plan came from businesses and individual donations; the Cities of Wapello and Columbus Junction; and the Community Foundation of Louisa County. The Trails Council has partnered with Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission and the National Park Service to develop ideas, processes and the master plan.

Anyone interested in serving on the council should contact Jeanne Mott at 319-527-3271 or by email - jeanmott@sjtube.com.

If you would like to make a donation to support the trails council, please see the donor form on page 15 of this newsletter.

Looking Ahead . . .

Take a look at programs coming up in January and February and beyond . . .

Edible Landscaping: January 31, 2012

Tri-Rivers RUSH: February 25, 2012

Hunter Safety: March 22 & 24, 2012

Planting Trees on Your Property

By Drew DeLang, District Conservationist

Living in SE Iowa we have a tendency to take trees for granted. Most of our river bottoms are forested or partially forested and there are still quite a few trees on our uplands and along our beautiful bluffs. With that said, there is a lot more we can do to improve our existing forest areas and there are many opportunities to add new trees to the landscape as well. The other thing to keep in mind is that you don't have to own 50 acres to think about doing some tree planting. Whether we live in the city, on a small farmstead, or on a larger farm, we all have a role to play in planting trees and improving what we have.

There are cost share programs available to help you accomplish these goals on your property. One of these programs is called Resource Enhancement & Protection (REAP). REAP is a state cost share program that offers up to 75% cost share assistance for landowners to install Windbreaks, Tree Plantings, & Timber Stand Improvement (TSI). This is an excellent program that is available in all 99 counties in Iowa. To sign up for this program and/or learn more about this program stop by your local Soil & Water Conservation District Office.

Another cost share program that is available is the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP). WHIP is a USDA Farm Bill Program that offers up to 65% cost share to do Tree Planting, Timber Stand Improvement (TSI), Invasive Species Removal and many other wildlife practices as well.

If you are interested in planting trees or improving your existing forest areas, please stop by the NRCS office for more information about these programs.



Plan Now for Spring Tree Plantings

Some things you should be doing to get ready for spring tree planting:

1. *Consult your local DNR forester* to help in the planning process (see Lisa's contact info on p 6).
2. *Sign up for cost share assistance.*
3. *Prepare the tree planting site.* For instance, if there is grass growing where you want to plant trees next spring, you should consider killing the grass this fall.
4. *Order your trees.* Fall is the perfect time to determine how many trees you will need and where you are going to get your trees. You should also consider placing your order in the fall so that you will be assured you will get the trees you want.

“A tree the span of two arms starts from a tiny seedling.”

— CHINESE PROVERB



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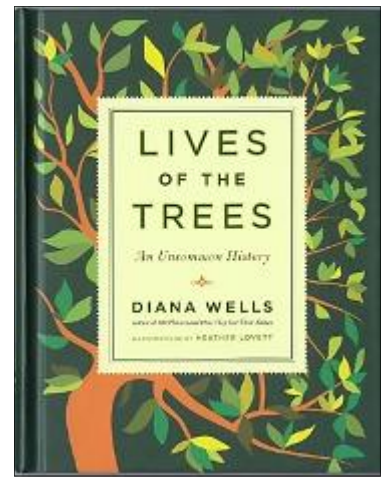
Dan Vogeler, Columbus Junction

Lee Harris, Morning Sun

Book Review: *Lives of the Trees: An Uncommon History*

By Diana Wells; Reviewed by Patrick Henry

After a lifetime in the outdoors as a kid and a natural resource professional, I have had many experiences that were directly or indirectly affected by trees. From using my tree house to hide out from the neighborhood bully, planting trees here in SE Iowa or completing a GIS model for a watershed project, trees have always been worthy of my personal and professional attention. When I was asked to review a tree book, I began looking through field guides, forestry management pubs, etc. for a good roundup of tree knowledge. I couldn't find any publication that could convey the sense of wonder and appreciation many of us have for the "tree" portion of our landscape in Louisa County. Recent cool and rainy evenings have left me yearning for a good book anyway so I picked up a copy of Diana Wells new book.



The book begins with the author's personal view of trees, followed by an exploration of the general view of trees throughout written history. From biblical times almost up to the present day she cites examples and bible versus explaining the importance (good and bad) of trees. After the introduction, well worth reading, the book is divided into chapters based on the Genus or groups of trees. I began reading about trees such as the Oaks right here in my backyard, then curiosity set in and I began soaking up information about unfamiliar trees from far away places. These stories, fables, and some facts have not been presented to me in any form until now.

This new information makes my morning walks in the timber more enjoyable and allows me to better understand the first people who lived here as well as those who later homesteaded the county. I learned that farmers used the size and quality of oak trees to judge the quality of land for farming and that in medieval times one had to earn the right to graze pigs under oak trees (at that time acorns were prized feed for the pigs). These many factoids are great for entertaining friends and family who are being newly introduced to some of my favorite haunts.

The easy reading chapters each begin with an illustration of leaves and fruit of the Genus, as well as classic poems and verse referencing that group of trees. I have found myself already coming back to reread chapters or find new facts about the trees here in Louisa County or those that I encounter on TV or in other readings. If you are looking for an entertaining book that gives more meaning and value to what we have in our own backyards, you should consider this book.

After over 40 years of trees enjoyed by climbing, studying, and staying warm with a woodstove, this book proves that there is always something to learn, especially from a tree.

About the reviewer: Having been trained in wildlife biology, Pat has enjoyed a variety of experiences involving trees. Most recently, he has worked for Geode Forestry improving local forests and at a local orchard enjoying the fall bounty. He will soon be spending time in a tree looking for deer.



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Louisa Interpretive Center - Summer 2011 Construction Project



Clockwise, from upper left:

1) Topsoil is stripped and stockpiled; 2) dirt from the pond and wetland areas ... 3) become mounds; 4) the pond begins to fill; 5) setting the limestone crossing; 6) the driveway during paving; 7) the driveway with rock in place.



The mounds with wetlands in foreground (the tree line in the upper right is at Langwood).

Louisa Interpretive Center News

As you can see from the photos on the adjacent page, construction of the pond, wetlands, driveway and mounds at the Louisa Interpretive Center site has been completed! A lot of dirt was moved around on the site and visitors to the area have been amazed at the transformation.

Other work during this phase included wetland determination, archeological investigations, soil testing and the development of building schematics.

Thank you to all of our generous donors who made this phase possible!

Drawings Unveiled at County Fair

The building schematics, created by Shive-Hattery with the help of the Louisa Interpretive Center Advisory Committee, include more detailed drawings of the facility, ideas for the type of materials to be used and planning for environmentally friendly features.

The latest drawings of the building (*below*) were unveiled at a display at the Louisa County Fair in July. They bring to life a concept that has been on the drawing board for several years.

2011 National Scenic Byways Grant

As work finishes up on site development at the Louisa Interpretive Center, we are pleased to announce that a National Scenic Byways grant has been received for additional work in 2012.

This next phase will include building a chipped limestone trail from the parking lot through the wetland, as well as interpretive planning and signage.

The \$160,000 grant will be matched with \$40,000 in private donations and fundraising by Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation.



FAQ's

When will the site be open to the public?

Once the seeding has been established, the road, parking lot and grounds will be open for visitors. Until then the driveway will remain closed to traffic.

Speaking of the driveway, what's with the two strips of paving?

The unusual one-way drive was installed to reduce the concrete footprint on the site and is just one of many green, sustainable initiatives that will be included in all phases of the project.

Are the mounds just for looks?

They are meant to draw your attention but they have other functions. The largest ones will eventually become the earth that shelters the building. The others will be part of the outdoor exhibits which will feature information about the habitats on site.

When will the building go up?

It is anticipated that construction could begin in five years, depending on how the fundraising goes. Other work on the site will continue in the meantime .



These computer-generated drawings of the proposed Louisa Interpretive Center show the earth-bermed building and green roof (above) and the entrance to the center (left).



Iowa River Water Trail Dedication

On August 6, the Iowa River Water Trail from Iowa City to the Mississippi River was designated as an official Iowa Water Trail. Over 100 paddlers hit the water and many others stopped by Hills Access for the official ribbon cutting (below, l to r, Harry Graves, Johnson County Conservation; Chuck Corell, Iowa DNR; and Julie Ohde, Louisa County Conservation).



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Who is Tri-Rivers?

By Dennis Fraise, Tri-Rivers Director

Since its inception in 1991, Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation has worked to provide funding for the protection and enhancement of the natural resources in the area of the confluences of the Cedar, Iowa and Mississippi Rivers in Eastern Iowa. Many of you have donated your time and or talents to help move the Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation mission forward.

Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation funds projects and people that contribute to a sustainable environment, whether by education or practice.

With great support from area residents we have undertaken a number of projects and programs to bring our mission to life. Listed below are a few of the projects Tri-Rivers has been involved with:

Iowa River Water Trail, Louisa Interpretive Center, Naturally Louisa County Newsletter, Odessa Water Trail, Reflections of Louisa Resource Area, Chinkapin Bluffs Park Makeover Projects, Flaming Prairie Makeover, Canoes for Langwood Education Center, Senior Citizens Trip to the River Museum and the Bill Paris Scholarship.

Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation has invested over \$200,000 in projects and programs in the Louisa Resource Area. Our mission and ongoing commitment to the residents and natural resources of our area has never been greater. Louisa County is blessed with a great abundance of beauty and natural resources. It's imperative that we all work to protect these resources and be good stewards of these wonderful areas.

Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation looks forward with great enthusiasm to the coming years as we continue our mission and work on new projects. Much of the excitement will involve the Interpretive Center that will be built next to the Langwood Center.

Our future success is only possible with your continued support as we move forward with our mission.

Whether you've purchased an item at the RUSH auction or run with us at Running Wild, we greatly appreciate your help and support. There is always room for others to join us, please consider lending your time, talent and resources to this worthwhile cause. Let's work together to leave our corner of the world a little better than we found it for future generations.

Thank you's

Our thanks to the following individuals and groups for donations to Running Wild, Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation and the Louisa Interpretive Center project.

Jerry & Diane Gerot	Tyson
Marjorie & Donald Kline	S&J Tube
Sherry & Wayne Humphreys	Jerry Heater
Morning Sun Lions Club	Monsanto
Great River Health Systems	Al Bohling
Louisa Communications	
Louisa County Farm Bureau	
Running Wild of West Burlington	

Thanks to the following who have made donations (through Tri-Rivers) toward the development of the Trails Master Plan for Louisa County:

Community Foundation of Louisa County
 City of Wapello
 Lawrence & Susan Koehrsen
 City of Columbus Junction
 Robert & Marilyn Schlutz



Running Wild 2011



It was beautiful day for the Running Wild trail race and education event held August 27. Above, Kathy Dice helps a runner and his son search for wetland creatures. Left, runners look over the selection of fresh fruit and homemade cookies. Below, 3 mile race winners show off their prizes - hand made bird houses.



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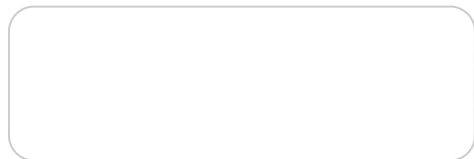
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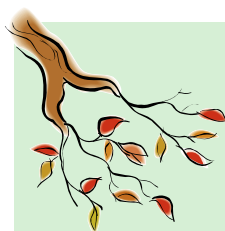
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— ALDO LEOPOLD



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