

Naturally

LOUISA COUNTY NEWSLETTER

NEWS ABOUT OUR NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

JANUARY 2012 VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1

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EDITED BY
Julie Ohde

Paddle, Peddle, Walk, Trot Louisa County

By Julie Ohde, LCC Executive Director

There is a group of people in Louisa County who want to get you off the couch and out the door.

OK, so maybe they aren't targeting you specifically, but they do want to make it easier for everyone to enjoy the outdoors by providing safe, usable and interesting trails in our area.

The Louisa County Regional Trails Council has taken the lead on creating a master plan for trails. In October 2011, public meetings were held, giving everyone an opportunity to offer ideas about the type and location of trails to include in the plan.*

The meeting participants brought diverse experiences to the table. Bikers and walkers, kayakers and horseback riders, farmers and business owners, students and senior citizens, all pored over county maps. There was excitement as people talked about the wonderful places we have in Louisa County and how trails would enhance them.

The trails council is now compiling that information into the master plan, with help from Southeast Iowa Regional Planning and the Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service. Once the plan nears completion early this year, it will be presented at a public meeting for additional input.

Creating new trails will be a long process but there is a lot of other work to be done while pursuing that goal. Two projects in the works right now will provide enhanced trail experiences in the coming year.

The Mississippi River Trail (MRT), a national bicycle route that closely follows the Great River Road, will be marked with signs in Louisa County. It is a shared-road trail with bikers riding on the existing highway. The signage will make a safer experience for both cyclists and drivers.

Paddle, Peddle, Walk, Trot Louisa County is a program aimed at improving existing trails and getting information about those trails to the public. Look for brochures, a website and events in 2012.

In the meantime, feel free to get off the couch, get outside and start enjoying the trails on your own.



*Your voice can still be heard - see page 2 for information about filling out a trails questionnaire.

www.NaturallyLouisaCounty.com

From the Editor

One of my favorite winter activities is watching the birds at our feeders but my husband refused to fill them for awhile when he saw the price of sunflower seed. A bag costs twice what it did last year and Judy at The Feed Wagon says it's due to the high demand for sunflower oil. Like many things, it's probably more complicated than that but my son still says he's boycotting anything with sunflower oil in it.

As I was pondering that whole connection—and just how much boycotting would be needed to have an effect on the price of sunflower seeds—along comes the must-read review on page 12 of this newsletter. I went to the No Impact Man blog immediately and, boy, did that get the wheels turning.


If I considered the impact of everything I did, would I even be able to justify feeding the birds—think of the oil and chemicals it took to grow them!

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.” — JOHN MUIR

Should I be burning gas in my car so I can ride my bike on a nature trail in Minnesota? Should I even own the bike—how many resources went into building that? What has been sacrificed to make our binoculars and how many trees died to print the bird ID books, what ... well, you get the picture (oh no - my camera!).

No, I think the things we do that bring us closer to the natural world are usually worth the impact we might cause. Every time we interact with nature, it instills appreciation and, ultimately, the desire to protect those resources. Hopefully, you find inspiration in this newsletter to connect to nature yourself.

By the way, the feeders are being filled, but I am left wondering whether we could grow our own or if we can buy organic seeds somewhere.


Editor: Julie Ohde

Trails Input Still Available

If you weren't able to make it to one of the public meetings about the future of trails in Louisa County, don't worry. Your ideas can still be heard.

An online questionnaire has been developed and can be accessed at www.NaturallyLouisaCounty.com. Just go to the trails tab or look on the left side of the page for the link.

If you aren't online, or would rather fill out the questionnaire with pen and paper, call the Louisa County Conservation office at 319-523-8381 and we will be happy to put a copy in the mail.

Trails Grants Received

Community Foundation of Louisa County has awarded the Louisa County Regional Trails Council with grants supporting two of the group's projects.

One grant will provide posts for installing the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) signs. Louisa County Secondary Roads Department will supply the labor. The second will provide funding for the *Paddle, Peddle, Walk, Trot Louisa County Initiative*.

A huge thanks to the Foundation for its support of these and many other local projects.



Two campers find shelter in this hollow tree during Winter Day Camp 2011 at Langwood Education Center & Camp.

When Nature Galls

By John van der Linden, LCC Intern

We've all done it. Even naturalists. You look out the window in winter, and you think, "Wow, it looks BORING out there. It's a very DEAD landscape."

After all, the trees have tucked their life-giving sap into their roots; the monarchs have journeyed thousands of miles south; even the weeds in ditches and along fencerows have shriveled and browned. But life persists! We just have to take the time and effort to find it. One place you can find it is in galls.

What's a gall? The simple answer is that it's a growth on a plant, induced by disease or by insect activity such as feeding and egg-laying. But galls are oh so much more than that. When examined with a keen eye, and a touch of imagination, a gall comes alive -- as a nursery for young insects; a place of gruesome death and awesome transformation; a snack shop for birds; and even an object of captivating beauty. In other words, galls are really cool!

One well-known gall occurs on goldenrod, a common plant of meadows and fields. It's caused by a tiny fly. Right before summer, adult female Goldenrod Gall Flies lay their eggs on goldenrod stems. Once hatched, each larva tunnels into the stem and feeds. The plant reacts by building up tissue around the larva, forming a round swelling known as a "ball gall." In a small chamber at the center of the gall, the fly larva feeds on plant tissue until Fall. As freezing temperatures approach, the larva produces a special compound, glycerol, in its cells that acts as an anti-freeze, allowing it to survive the long winter in the gall. When spring finally arrives, the larva will pupate, a life stage during which it transforms to an adult. The mature fly then exits the gall.

The goldenrod "ball gall" is just one of dozens of kinds of plant galls that can be found in Iowa. Galls occur on a huge variety of plants, from oaks to asters, and on nearly all parts of a plant.

Many are caused by tiny black wasps and midges (flies). Each species of midge or wasp induces a gall of a unique color and shape. Galls can look like bull's-eyes, cones, apples, cotton balls, fireworks, hourglasses, flowers, warts, craters, even sea urchins! Many galls are distinctive enough that entomologists can simply look at a gall and identify which species of insect caused it.

But there's a twist: if you collect goldenrod galls in spring and put them in a jar, the Goldenrod Gall Fly isn't always what comes out. Sometimes nothing will come out -- perhaps because a downy woodpecker or a chickadee pecked a



hole in the gall during the winter, stealing the tasty fat grub inside. Other times a wasp or a beetle will emerge! What happened? Larvae inside galls are often parasitized by other insects. Small wasps called "parasitoids" use their long ovipositor tubes to lay eggs inside galls, sometimes on or even inside the larvae living there. The egg hatches and the young wasp eats the gall-making larva. There are even wasps that lay their eggs on other parasitoid larvae—a phenomenon known as "hyper-parasitism."

Next time you catch yourself thinking winter is dull, take a walk outside! If you inspect stems, twigs, fallen leaves, and seedheads, you're bound to find a few insect galls—a sure sign that not all insect life has vanished from our wintry woods and fields.

John, a native of NW Iowa, was an intern naturalist with LCC September - November 2011.

LOUISA COUNTY CONSERVATION

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Roger Edwards

Sherry Humphreys

Brad Moss

Jay Schweitzer

Stan Staats

Thank you!

Our list of folks to thank includes individuals, organizations and businesses who donated money, materials and equipment; and volunteers who helped with the Youth Pheasant Hunt, Duck Hunting With Grandpa field trip, Winter Day Camp and folding the October newsletters.

Adam Phillips	Jerry Houtekier
Alex Galt	Jordan Keller
Amy Bethke	Kaziah Soloman
Becky Beaver	Louisa County Gun Club
Ben Schlader	Kent Feeds
Bert Dewitt	Louisa Longbeards, NWTF
Bill Barrick	Melinda Wells
Bill Phillips	Mellissa Stalkfleet
Bob Doerres	Mick Freidel
Bob Hamann	Muscatine Shooting Sports
Bobbi Benson	Patricia Hamann
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Clint & Denise Henning	Russell Shield
Dave Arnold	Scheels All Sport
Doug Brown	Steven Coleman
Greg Terry	Terry & Jan Hubbe
Helen & Bud Hunter	Tracy Lott
Jan's Hanging by a Thread	Western Illinois NAVHDA
Jeff Henke	
North American Deutsch Kurzhaar Club	
Heartland Chapter VDD-GNA	
Louisa County Pheasants Forever	

Helping 4-H Clubs Enjoy Langwood

Memorials made in the name of Mary Pauline (Hiller) Cramer have been designated as mini-grants to assist Louisa County 4-H Clubs enjoy the fun at Langwood Education Center & Camp.

A total of three mini-grants of \$50 each can be applied for (first come, first served) but must be used to offset expenses at a Langwood event between now and October 1, 2012.

Langwood has special rates for all youth groups:
Rental, April–Oct 15: \$92/one night; \$130/two nights
Rental, Oct 16–March: \$49/one night, \$76 /two nights
High ropes: Call Katie at 319-523-8381 for a quote
Prices do not include tax

So plan something and email tessa@iastate.edu to get a mini-grant for your club! And thank you to the friends and family of Louisa County 4-Her Mary Pauline (Hiller) Cramer!

Park Notes

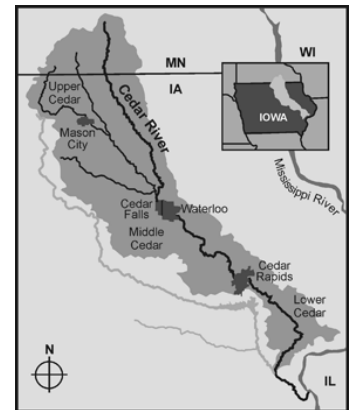
- Water is turned off in all county parks and campgrounds for the winter.
- Camping is open year round and the electricity is on. Please use the self-registration box to make your payment.
- Flaming Prairie is currently closed due to wet conditions and Snively is sometimes closed in the winter months due to road conditions. Check www.lccb.org for closure information.
- Langwood Education Center & Camp is open by reservation year round. Call 319-523-8381 to check on availability.

We're All in this Watershed Together

The Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards recently received a REAP Conservation Education Project award to coordinate an educational effort throughout the Cedar River Watershed.

This project will coordinate the outreach capacity of county conservation boards to focus educational efforts on helping citizens understand and advocate for the value of natural areas for flood mitigation and improving water quality.

The twenty counties in the Cedar River watershed, including Louisa County, pooled funds to commission an outreach plan in 2011 that addressed the need for a coordinated educational effort throughout the watershed.



The grant funding will help the group develop signs, displays, a presentation, newspaper articles and short videos. The promotional materials will use the theme, “We’re all in this watershed together,” which was developed and tested during the creation of the outreach plan.

The CCBs will launch their campaign in conjunction with the Cedar River Watershed Coalition, a diverse group seeking to reduce flood risk and improve water quality. That group also includes cities, other government agencies, organizations, decision makers, and concerned citizens.



Long Creek Candle Company

By Dennis Fraise, LDG Director of Business Services

Jodi and Duane Boysen are the perfect example of serial entrepreneurs. Together they run four different operations in Louisa County including a farm, storage business, JD’s Irish Ivy, and the Long Creek Candle Company.

Long Creek produces soy candles that are sold to a variety of retail outlets and used as fundraisers for schools. The candles are an environmentally-friendly alternate to traditional candles. The paraffin used in most candles is made of petroleum while soy wax is manufactured from a renewable resource grown right here in the Midwest. Soy candles also burn cleaner than those made from paraffin.

Long Creek Candle Company started in 2003 after the couple received a candle making kit for Christmas. After some initial experimentation they started to make soy candles for JD’s Irish Ivy. It didn’t take them long to realize that they needed more education and they soon attended a soy candle making class in Cedar Rapids. Their first sale was to an FFA group that used the candles for banquet table decorations.

In order to grow the business they decided to become wholesale manufacturers and attended their first retail tradeshow in Kansas City. Long Creek soy candles were a hit and more shows soon followed in Madison, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Louisville. Increased orders meant increased production was needed and staff to assist with orders.

Long Creek Candles is located near downtown Wapello and longtime employee Kristin Henning handles the day to day operations. She does everything from melting the soy wax, which melts at 100-150 degrees, to putting the signature soybeans in the lid. The candles, which come in five sizes and over fifty fragrances, are prepared to a high quality standard and orders are filled quickly.

Long Creek produces thousands of candles yearly, with Pecan Caramel being the most popular fragrance. Both standard candles and custom candles with custom labels are available.

Jodi and Duane are constantly looking for new ideas to keep the business growing. One such idea was adding expressive words to the candle jars to tap into a whole new market. Expressive words candles now account for 85% of Long Creek’s sales. The company’s willingness to adapt and reinvent itself has helped keep the sweet smell of success burning at Long Creek Candle Company.



LOUISA DEVELOPMENT GROUP

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

www.louisadevelopmentgroup.org

Fish Habitat Types and Benefits

By Chad Dolan, Iowa DNR Fisheries Biologist

As one drives through southeast Iowa, farm ponds are a common sight. Ponds are created by constructing an earthen dam across a large draw or gully. The area that eventually becomes the pond bottom is often shaped with a bulldozer. Large impoundments, like Lake Darling, are built in a similar manner, but at a greater scale. The result is a water retention structure that holds water, but is devoid of fish habitat.

Abundant and variable fish habitat will help fulfill critical needs for many fish species. Structures will also concentrate fish and improve angling. Although scientists often debate whether placement of artificial fish habitat is linked to increased production in fishes, it is a certainty that organisms need habitat for survival and, without it, populations suffer.

So, whether a one-acre farm pond or 400-acre lake, the same question applies, “What sorts of natural materials and artificial structures can be placed or built in a pond to benefit fish?” To arrive at an answer, consider what sorts of materials are common in Iowa’s natural (e.g., West Okoboji) or backwater lakes (e.g., Lake Odessa). Rock and wood are common in both of these environments and, subsequently, are the two most beneficial materials to fish.



“Octo-habitat,” made from buckets, concrete & flexible PVC.

Wood, in the form of standing timber, is often present close to a lake or pond site. Trees can be cut and placed in brush piles in various locations. Do not place the majority of brush in the deepest areas of the pond, but rather, mostly in areas where the piles will extend within three feet of the surface.

Brush piles can also be placed so that they extend a few feet above the pond surface. Keep in mind that wood floats; thus, it is pertinent to anchor brush piles to the lake or pond bottom. Cement-filled buckets or “duckbill” anchors, and rope, will do the trick. Fish will use the brush piles for critical life requirements such as cover, feeding, and loafing.

Rock usually must be purchased at a local quarry. It is not expensive, but don’t forget to budget for the hauling cost. There are no specific guidelines as to what size of rock is best, but variability is desirable. Sand, gravel, cobble, or boulders will all provide habitat in the form of spawning beds, feeding areas, nursery areas, or cover. Broken concrete, , can be used in lieu of rock to create many of the same habitats. Keep the tops of rock piles 3-4 feet below the surface of the lake or pond and, in some cases, flatten the material to create spawning beds or rock shelter belts.

Fish habitat structures can also be built from a variety of materials including lumber, pallets, flexible PVC, buckets, and Quikrete™. Porcupine cribs, pallet hotels, largemouth bass spawning structures, catfish boxes, and octo-habitats are all examples of artificial structures that are used by fishes. Be creative when building fish habitat as there is no wrong way to build structures to support a lake or pond fishery!

An excellent guide to building and placing fish habitat is available at www.fish.state.pa.us/water/habitat/lake_fish_hab.pdf. If you don’t have a computer, or would like to talk to a fisheries staff member, contact the Iowa DNR Southeast Regional Office at 319-694-2430.

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Energy Efficiency is For the Birds

by Cathy Henry

As I sit in front of my crackling fireplace on a chilly morning and watch birds at the feeder, I wonder if they're looking in the window with envy. How could they not? Even if I must leave the comfort of my chair to step outside, I've got my long underwear to keep me warm, and the convenience of grabbing a candy bar or cookie on my way through the kitchen.

No, they are more likely shaking their feathered heads at my waste of energy (and lack of productive activity). Energy conservation is a rule of survival in the wild. Scientists have studied the energetics of wildlife and have discovered a bit about how they survive, though there remains more to learn.

So, you may be wondering, how do birds survive and maintain enough energy to meet their needs throughout the year? After all, birds have a lot to do during a typical year: find a nesting area, entice a mate, build a nest, lay eggs, feed young, feed themselves, avoid predators, molt, grow and stay warm.

The first rule of energy conservation is to hang on to the heat you have. Birds' feathers are far superior to my long underwear in this regard. They can also fluff their feathers to make air pockets for even better insulation. Some birds can lower their body temperature at night which reduces heat loss and other species huddle together for warmth.

In the winter you may see birds tuck in their beaks. This reduces body surface area and also creates pre-warmed air to breathe. Some birds, like grouse and titmice, even plunge into snow banks to take advantage of the insulating effects of snow. Thermal protection such as thickets, cavities, and places out of the wind are also important.

Nutrition is the other key component to a bird's survival. And like humans, it takes a variety of food types to get the job done (I won't fare well if I only eat cookies and candy bars). Activity level and the weather determine how much energy a bird expends.

So diets change seasonally and sometimes they will need more fat, sometimes more protein and carbohydrates. No single food will provide all the needs of a given species. Insects are high in protein while plant materials provide more carbohydrates and nuts are a great source of fat in the avian diet.



At Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge and other natural areas in the county, the goal is to provide a variety of native foods to meet the needs of many species in different conditions throughout the year. Waterfowl arrive by the thousands in the autumn and need to maintain energy for the remainder of their migration. During this time of year, ducks and geese need foods high in carbohydrates and fats to provide the fuel for migratory flight. Birds utilize a variety of food sources to meet these requirements. Maintaining adequate nutrition during fall migration helps migratory birds arrive at wintering grounds in good condition.

If you feed birds this winter, provide a variety of feeds for different species and their different dietary needs. Try to put your feeders near shelter so the birds have to use less energy to get to the grub. There are numerous bird feeding tips on the internet and at bird stores.

Also, support natural areas that provide food and shelter at all times of the year. And better yet, get out there to do some birdwatching!

I'm off to try a 200 calorie cookie to get me through the night.....maybe I better get as busy as those birds so I don't store up too much fat.



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

Edible Landscaping: Plantings for People and Wildlife

Tuesday, January 31, 7 pm – 8:30 pm
Columbus Junction Civic Center
Columbus Junction

This workshop will provide a list of trees, shrubs, flowers and forbs for edible landscaping. Learn what plants can provide beauty and food for yourself and wildlife.

Speakers include Tom Wahl of Red Fern Farm who will suggest trees and shrubs that provide fruit and nuts without creating a mess in the yard. Lisa Louck, DNR Forester, will advise on shrubs and trees that benefit wildlife. Kathy Dice, naturalist with LCC, will talk on flowers and forbs that benefit people and wildlife with food and beauty.

This program is free and reservations are not needed.

Tap the Sap

Sunday, February 19, 1 - 3 pm
Toolesboro Indian Mounds & Museum

Come learn the basics of maple syrup production on a small scale with naturalist Kathy Dice. 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 can be found at www.NaturallyLouisaCounty.com or by calling the LCC at 319-523-8381

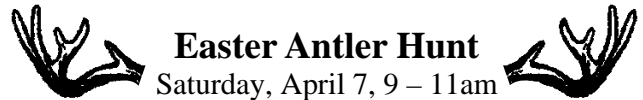
Hunter Safety Class*

Thursday, April 12, 6 pm – 9 pm
Monsanto Rec Center
Saturday, April 14, 8 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 and must be done online at www.iowadnr.gov/training. If you have problems with the registration process or do not have access to the internet, call the DNR at 515-281-5918. For information about the class call 319-523-8381.

**This date was reset from March due to conflicts*



Easter Antler Hunt

Saturday, April 7, 9 – 11 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. Space is limited so register early.

Advanced registration required by April 3



134 Main St
Columbus Junction, IA 52738
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Member FDIC www.statebankofwapello.com

Earth Day Event

Sunday, April 22, time TBA
Chinkapin Bluffs Recreation Area

Spend this special day helping the NCCC AmeriCorps crew spruce up a bit of the Earth. We will work on trails and other projects. Volunteers are needed so call if you or your group would like to help.

Reservations are preferred so we can be sure to have enough jobs, tools and refreshments!

Watch local papers, the website and Facebook for more details or call the LCC today to get involved!

Louisa County Youth Jamboree

Saturday, May 5
Bird Banding at Port Louisa: 7 am – 10 am
All other events: 9 am – 3 pm
Fee: Free will donation
Lunch included

You will not want to miss the first Louisa County Youth Jamboree. The event will be held at Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge, the Ikes Clubhouse, Shafer's Access, Snively Campground and Langwood Education Center.

Youth can participate in a variety of activities ranging from fishing and boat rides on Odessa to bird banding and nature hikes at Port Louisa Refuge, to shooting sports such as trapshooting, bb guns and archery. Don't forget to add some Native American Chores, atl-atl spear throwing and flint knapping. This event is sure to spark interest in every child.

This family event is geared toward youth ages 8-18 (must be at least 12 to do the shooting sports). Pre-registration by April 20th will guarantee a t-shirt. Walk-ins welcome, but t-shirts may not be available.

Pre-registration is requested by April 20

Looking Ahead . . .

- ...at warmer weather and great paddling events!
- Sunday, May 13 – Mother's Day on the Marsh
- Saturday, June 2 – Full Moon Paddle on Odessa
- Saturday, July 14 – Iowa River Float
- Saturday, Sept. 8 – Early Bird Paddle
- Saturday, November 3 – Fall Colors Paddle

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 20, February 17 & March 16
Time: Fish served starting at 6:00 pm
Where: Ikes "NEW" Clubhouse, Co Rd X61, Wapello
Cost: \$10 all you can eat fish plus a beverage and sides
Don't forget, the new clubhouse has *indoor* restrooms!

Louisa County Chapter of Pheasants Forever

Date: Saturday, February 4
Time: Doors open at 4:30 pm; Dinner at 6:15 pm
Where: Circle of Pride Rodeo Grounds, Conesville
Cost: \$50 membership/dinner; \$15 for spouse dinner
Get tickets: Chad Grimm 319-850-1550

Tri-Rivers RUSH

Date: Saturday, February 25
Time: Doors open at 6:30 pm
Where: Delzell Brothers, Morning Sun
Cost: \$15/person; \$25/couple; \$200 for table which includes eight admissions (see page 14 for more info)
Get tickets: LCCB office, 319-523-8381

Louisa Longbeards Chapter of NWTf

Date: Saturday, March 3
Time: Doors open at 5:00 pm; Dinner at 7:00 pm
Where: Briggs Civic Center, Wapello
Cost: \$45 membership/dinner; \$75 for couples
Get tickets: Call Dave Boysen 319-572-1551



This tax season... **Check it & Protect it!**

Help protect Iowa wildlife by donating to the Fish and Wildlife Fund, also known as the Chickadee Check-off, on your Iowa Tax Form 1040.

TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE
a natural investment

Farm Bill Biologist Hired

Louisa County landowners now have another resource for managing wildlife habitat on their land. Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever recently announced that a new Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist, Casey Bergthold, will cover Des Moines, Lee, Louisa, and Van Buren Counties.

As a Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist, Casey works in partnership with USDA-NRCS and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to provide technical assistance to private landowners—through one-on-one consulting—regarding the benefits of conservation programs (such as the Conservation Reserve Program).



Casey is a native of northeast Missouri and holds BS and MS degrees in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology and has experience working in the field with various conservation agencies.

“The job of a Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist is to serve as a one-stop-shop for landowners looking for technical, programmatic, or financial assistance with managing wildlife habitat on their private lands,” Casey says. “Some landowners want to improve hunting, others enjoy watching wildlife, and yet others simply want to find a way to earn money, while protecting, marginal or highly erodible farmland.”

The new position is a result of Pheasants Forever’s “Reload Iowa” effort, a statewide initiative to improve 1 million acres of wildlife habitat on private and public land in the state. Soil and Water

Conservation Districts and Pheasants Forever Chapters in the four counties in which Casey is working, provided financial support for the position through the Reload Iowa campaign. As a result, landowners in these counties can call on Casey to conduct site visits and develop wildlife management plans free of charge.

To contact Casey call (573) 823-0675 or email him at cbergthold@pheasantsforever.org.

SWCD Scholarship

The Louisa County Soil and Water Conservation District is offering a \$500 scholarship to Louisa County high school seniors who will pursue a college education in natural resources or agriculture. In addition, the county winner will be eligible for awards at the regional and state levels, with a top scholarship in the amount of \$1,800.

Applications are due March 2 and are available through high school counselors or the Louisa County SWCD office. 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.

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 ten trees.

Proceeds from the tree sale go toward environmental education efforts in Louisa County.



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

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jamie.grimes@ia.nacdnet.net

District Conservationist

Drew DeLang

Soil Conservationist

Kristen Fenderson

Buffer/Conservation Technician

Duane Lewis

Soil Conservation Technician

Mark Delperdang

Soil Conservation Technician

Jesse Wilk

District Secretary

Jamie Grimes

SWCD Commissioners

Mary Boysen, Wapello

Sam Willson, Wapello

Chris Ball, Oakville

Dan Vogeler, Columbus Junction

Lee Harris, Morning Sun

Go Wild this Tax Season

Iowans have an easy way to donate to wildlife and protect natural resources, according to Stephanie Shepherd, DNR wildlife biologist. The Fish and Wildlife Check-Off, commonly referred to as the "Chickadee Check-Off," lets taxpayers donate by simply marking a box with their donation amount on Iowa's state tax forms this year.

The check-off appears on line 58 of electronic and paper versions of Iowa's 1040 tax forms. All proceeds from the check-off support the DNR's wildlife diversity program, which works to protect more than 1000 fish and wildlife species.



2007 swan release in Louisa County.

Unfortunately, donations to the wildlife tax check-off have been on the decline, a trend wildlife biologists hope will reverse this year. "Without the tax check-off, species such as the peregrine falcon, trumpeter swan and osprey would not have had such successful comebacks in Iowa," said Shepherd.

Reasons for the low level of giving may be the result of many things but the top reason may be that more Iowans are relying on tax preparers and electronic programs to do their taxes.

"It is easy to pass over or forget, and many tax preparers may not remember to ask whether a client wants to donate," said Shepherd. "It may be up to the taxpayer to remind their preparer or check out the completeness of the electronic program they are using."

Money from the check-off helps improve wildlife habit, fund research studies, support the reintroduction of threatened or endangered species, and much more.

Donating on the tax form is extremely easy: simply write the amount to donate next to the Fish and Wildlife Check-Off and the sum is either automatically deducted from the refund or added to the amount owed. As with all charitable contributions, the amount is deductible from next year's taxes.

The Iowa legislature added the Chickadee Check-off, now called the Fish and Wildlife Fund, to the state tax form in the early 1980s.

DNR CONTACT: Stephanie Shepherd at 515-432-2823 ext. 102 or stephanie.shepherd@dnr.iowa.gov



Shooting Sports Club for Youth

By Tessa Pugh, Louisa County 4-H Coordinator

Many youth have a strong desire to learn shooting skills but simply do not have the opportunity. For Louisa County youth that will be changing in 2012 as local volunteers, Charles and Diana Bolander, and David and Dani Boysen, work to begin a 4-H Safety and Education in Shooting Sports club in Louisa County.

This 4-H club targets 4th - 12th grade youth interested in learning marksmanship as well as the safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment. Youth will increase sound decision making, self-discipline, and concentration skills. 4-H Shooting Sports promotes the highest standards of sportsmanship, safety, and ethical behavior. But that's not what 4-H Shooting Sports is all about; it's all about the kids and specifically it's all about developing youth, not only as sportsmen but as happy and productive citizens.

Club meetings typically consist of a short program and an hour or more of shooting practice. While the atmosphere is one of safety first, youth are also having fun. In addition to club meetings there are also competitive events that members may participate in.

There are many ways you can help with this club. Adults interested in volunteering to be a certified "discipline instructor" in archery, rifle, shotgun or wildlife skills must attend a 3-day training; this year it is March 23-25 at the 4-H Camp in Madrid, Iowa. Donations of supplies, financial support and committee members are also needed.

The next meeting for volunteers will be February 20, 6:00 p.m. at the Extension Office in Wapello. Contact the Louisa County Extension Office for more information 319-523-2371, tessa@iastate.edu



Review: No Impact Man

By Colin Beavan; Reviewed by Mallory Smith

Still in the market for a good new year's resolution? Let Colin Beavan be your inspiration. Beavan is a resolution extremist who in 2007 committed himself, his wife, their young daughter, and even the family dog to a year of living without making any net impact on the environment.

They tried on lifestyle changes from minimal concessions like making all their own food to the other edge of the spectrum, like no electricity from the grid (while living in a ninth floor apartment in New York City). At the end of No Impact year they were able to make informed decisions about how best to craft their lifestyle to satisfy their environmentalist leanings. The No Impact Project urges us all to do the same. It might help to know they only expect you to try it for a week.

Blog: www.noimpactman.com

The No Impact Man Blog is where it all began. Here you can review the build up and development of the experiment along with comments and suggestions from fellow readers. Beavan offers lots of ideas about living green and frames them in a spirit of adventure, freedom and flexibility.

Book: No Impact Man,

The book, subtitled "*The Adventures of a Guilty Liberal Who Attempts to Save the Planet, and the Discoveries He Makes About Himself and Our Way of Life in the Process,*" is developed from blog entries. It provides readers with anecdotes about the Beavan family's adventures, neat summaries of environmental impact research, and thoughtful mullings about the merits and pitfalls of trying to live a year with no environmental impact.



At just over 200 pages and organized in short chapters that follow the development of the year-long experiment, the book is a quick and easy read. The tone is inquisitive, analytical and thoughtful. Readers will be left inspired to learn more about sustainable living and ways to lessen their own environmental impact.

Documentary: No Impact Man

In spite of the film's title, the stars of this movie are No Impact Man's wife and daughter, Michelle and Isabella, who are along for the ride. The documentary does a great job of capturing their reactions and thus answering the question, "What if you're not an obsessed environmentalist?"

Michelle is not nearly as interested as her husband in solving the crisis of global warming, at least not personally and not if it involves giving up Starbucks. However skeptical she might be she is also lovingly supportive and is perhaps the person most transformed by the experiment. The couple's young daughter, Isabella, takes it all in stride. As a toddler most things are new to her and normal has not yet been defined. She thinks doing laundry in the bathtub is fun and relishes the quality time with her parents.

The movie is fun and entertaining. You can stream it online while enjoying some Iowa popcorn and feel that you are already on the road to no impact yourself.

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You Get What You Pay For

By Brian Blackwell

Pheasant hunting is a severe obsession of mine. The bad news is living in Nashville affords me limited opportunities to hunt ringnecks. However, the great news is each time I go pheasant hunting I do so with carefully selected and like-minded friends and family. Not to mention I get to visit Columbus Junction, Iowa and spend quality time with Dan and Sue Vogeler and while there I have the absolute freedom to treat their home, their carefully constructed hunting acreage, and their stocked refrigerator as my own. It really is a dream scenario for me and the chosen few I allow to share this experience with me.

For four consecutive years now I have won the auction for a guided pheasant hunt donated by Dan and Sue to Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation. Each year I look forward to calling Dan and telling him I'll see him in late November. I also make sure to tell him that being his friend seems to cost me more and more money year after year. To which he normally responds, "Remember, you get what you pay for buddy."

But the truth of the matter is this annual auction is worth at least five times what I pay for it. It's hard to put a realistic price on hunting Dan's property with the people I love and cherish. In the four years I've visited Dan we have introduced six newcomers - including myself - to pheasant hunting and developed a passion in each to love the sport and strive to comprehend the conservation efforts required to improve habitat and sustain pheasant populations for generations to come.

The highlight of my 2011 trip was watching my friend, Jack, and his Labradoodle Retriever, Shelby, work the thick Iowa cover, native grasses, and selected food plots. This was their first time to hunt pheasant and the success they had was only overshadowed by their joy and synchronized efforts in doing so.

Frequently, Shelby worked in unison with Dan's English Pointer, Bo. Their noses - combined with some timely shooting - proved a successful combination on several occasions. Watching firsthand as Shelby transitioned from a waterfowl guru into an upland warrior was a thing of beauty. She certainly earned her ride to and from Iowa in the warm SUV rather than inside a cold kennel on our trailer.

And even though pheasant numbers are struggling in Iowa, my friends and I have no plans to forgo our annual Tri-Rivers excursion for pheasant hotspots like



South Dakota or Nebraska. Dan has just enough birds to keep us fully engaged and we remain grateful and genuinely excited with each bird we bag. Our overall experience in Columbus Junction with the Vogelers is simply tough to beat. We are treated like family, hunt private land that attracts and holds birds, and we chow down like contestants prepping for an eating competition. Is it any wonder I continually come back?

I began this article by saying pheasant hunting is an obsession of mine. And it absolutely is. But mind you it has nothing to do with limiting out, making every shot, or precise dog work. Rather, my pheasant pursuits will always revolve around friends, family, and lasting memories - three items I'm sure to encounter each November as my late-model Suburban turns right into the Vogeler's flat, graveled drive marked by a sign that reads "This Way to Pheasant Country."



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Paris Scholarship Apps Due Feb 15

Established in 2009 by the family of Bill Paris, this \$500 scholarship is awarded annually to a Louisa county high school graduate or current resident planning to attend an in-state college or tech school. Students must be working toward a bachelor's or post-graduate degree in natural resources or conservation.

Find out more and download an application at www.tri-rivers.org.

Reflections Educator Guides

With the help of a grant from the Community Foundation of Louisa County, Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation has provided area schools with new study guides. The guides, called "Reflections of Louisa Resource Area," are part of the oral history *Reflections* project started in 2007.

Reflections helped document the emotional and historical connection people have to the Louisa County area. Through personal interviews and photographs, *Reflections* tells the story of and documents the social significance of beautiful natural areas in Louisa County. The project was funded by a Humanities Iowa and the National Endowment for the Humanities grant.

Each school in Louisa County received a copy of the *Reflections* DVD and study guide which includes activities for students in grades 3-8. The guide is also available at area libraries.

Included in the *Reflections* guide are a variety of activities to expand on themes in the DVD. For example, there is a section on glaciers in Iowa and an activity to create a model of a glacier.

The committee responsible for the guide together included Karen Minnis, Tammy Noble, Stephanie Whitaker, Katie Hammond and Dennis Fraise.



Committee members (far left and far right) present the *Reflections* guide to Columbus CSD teachers

The RUSH is Coming!

Mark your calendars to be at Delzell Brothers showroom outside of Morning Sun on the evening of February 25 to be part of the fun at the RUSH, Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation's annual fundraising auction.



This is the *only* place where you can bid on such a wide assortment of unique items and adventures. From hunting and rock climbing to food and custom artwork, you are sure to find something that you *must* have. A listing of items for the live and silent auctions is posted at www.tri-rivers.org.

There is one big change this year that past attendees will want to consider. Regular tickets will still get you a bidding number, beverages and delicious appetizers. However, if you want to sit at a table, you will need to purchase a table package for \$200, which includes a reserved table and tickets for eight guests. If you don't buy a table, there will be chairs available as well as stand-up tables for those who would rather mingle. There will be a very limited number of tables so get your reservation in now!!

This year's event will again include the live auction, silent auction, raffles and great food.

The auction is Tri-Rivers' largest fund raising event. Last year over \$11,000 was raised for conservation projects in and around Louisa County, with the board directing \$10,000 to the Louisa Interpretive Center project. In 2012, the Interpretive Center will receive 100% of the proceeds.

To reserve a table or to buy individual tickets, email tri-rivers@lccb.org or call the conservation office at 319-523-8381.

What experience will *you* bid on?

- Hunting rights on private land
- Weekend in the Ozarks
- Rock climbing adventure
- An old-fashioned cocktail party
- Canoe/kayak trip
- Guided pheasant hunt
- Homecooked Irish dinner for 8

Go to www.trivers.com to see the whole list!

Thank you's

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

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Kathy Wilkerson | Edwin & Mary Bayne |
| Steve & Janie Schomberg | Curtis & Linda Pierce |
| Frank & Gwendolyn Jolly | Hotel Wapello |
| P. Lester & Laurel Barrick | Roy El Motel |
| Janet & Wayne Shipman | S&J Tube |
| Larry & Karen Minnis | Marcelene Bell |
| Marjorie & Donald Kline | Lee & Doris Harris |
| State Bank of Wapello | Jay & Sue Schweitzer |
| MidAmerican Energy | Al Bohling |
| Howard Hobbs | Jim Rudisill |
| Bart Schweitzer | Charles Hoag |
| Gene & Fran Rees | |

Louisa Interpretive Center News

Below is an aerial photo taken shortly after completion of work at the Louisa Interpretive Center site last fall. The driveway is closed off until the grass takes hold on the area, but visitors are welcome to stop out and take a look at the project.

The next phase, which includes a trail from the new parking lot to the wetlands, will begin in the next few months.

A National Scenic Byways grant for \$160,000 will be matched with \$40,000 in private donations and fundraising by Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation. Community Foundation of Louisa County has awarded a \$2,000 grant for the project.



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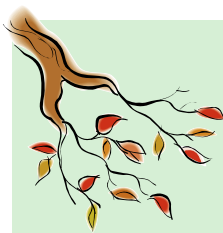
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silent auction • raffle • live auction

Saturday, February 25, 7-9 p.m.

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