

Naturally

LOUISA COUNTY NEWSLETTER

NEWS ABOUT OUR NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

JANUARY 2011 VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 *Creature Feature*
- 8 *Upcoming Events*
- 11 *Go Green (to Save a Little Green)*
- 12 *Book review: Stalking the Wild Asparagus*
- 13 *Tri-Rivers RUSH*

INDEX OF CONTRIBUTORS

- 3 *Louisa County Conservation*
- 6 *Iowa DNR*
- 7 *Fish & Wildlife Service*
- 10 *Soil and Water Conservation*
- 13 *Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation*

EDITED BY
Mallory Smith
Julie Ohde

Louisa Interpretive Center Land Donation

A 40-acre land parcel, donated by Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation to Louisa County, marks a major step forward in the development of a new regional environmental education center. The land that will soon become home to the Louisa Interpretive Center adjoins Langwood Environmental Center.

The land donation is part of a \$144,000 match guaranteed by Tri-Rivers to help secure a \$576,000 National Scenic Byways grant from the Federal Highway Administration. Tri-Rivers began fundraising for this phase of the project when the federal grant was awarded in 2008. An enthusiastic response from supporters allowed the foundation to purchase and donate the land less than two years later. Donations are still being sought as the grant has both in-kind and cash match obligations.

Steve Johnson, who co-chairs the Interpretive Center fundraising committee, states that the financial and volunteer support of local families, businesses and industry has been a major factor in the center's progress and he urges everyone to continue their efforts.

Funds from the National Scenic Byways grant are being used by the Louisa County Conservation Board to begin site development and to develop schematic plans for the building, outdoor features and interpretive panels.

A donation from Monsanto Fund will allow for a prairie restoration project to be included in this phase and a donation of



Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation president Al Bohling (r) presents the deed to the Louisa Interpretive Center to Louisa County Supervisor Paula Buckman (center) and Louisa County Conservation Board member Jay Schweitzer (l).

rock from River Products makes it possible to complete preliminary road work.

The Louisa Interpretive Center will join the network of more than 50 interpretive centers along the Great River Road National Scenic Byway, which stretches from Minnesota to Louisiana. The theme for the center will be Land, Place and Home. The center will serve as a focal point for more than 16,000 acres of public land that makes up the Louisa Resource Area; and will illustrate the unique natural and cultural features within the confluences of the Iowa, Cedar and Mississippi Rivers.

Preliminary site development work, including archeological surveying, soil testing, conceptual designing and other work has already been conducted. Groundbreaking for construction of roads, a pond and wetland is expected by mid-March of this year.

www.NaturallyLouisaCounty.com

From the Editors

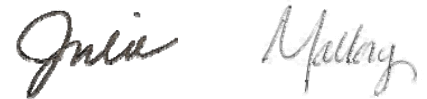
It's easy to think of winter as time standing still. Fields lie barren; streams are frozen, motionless and silent while trees stand stoically unchanging against inhospitable conditions. In January especially, the pattern of short days, long nights, and overcast skies becomes repetitive. It becomes hard to recognize progress as each new day seems similar to the last. But progress is a certainty, and time really never does stand still (except when you're young and waiting for your birthday or the last day of school to come).

However, even in the coldest days of winter, change is afoot and new growth is just below the surface.

This issue of Naturally Louisa County celebrates much that is new. We start on the front page with the land donation for the new Louisa Interpretive Center. In the next month ground will be broken on this new facility, read more about it on pages 1 and 15. Amazingly, county residents will soon inherit another new park (page 3). There are also stories about new employees at several conservation agencies, a new friends group at the refuge and a bird that may be new to your backyard feeder. As for our literary page, the title is an old one but the reviewer is new to our pages. Anita Braden from Columbus Junction reviews *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*. You may recognize her name as a photo contributor at www.tri-rivers.org.

Enjoy winter's slower pace, pour yourself a hot cup of tea, sit back and enjoy reading about what's new in Louisa County, naturally.

Editors: Julie Ohde & Mallory Smith



Award Winning Green Car Dealership in Louisa County

Congratulations to Delzell Brothers, Inc, located in southeast Louisa County, who won the Chrysler 2010 Environmental Leadership Award for its efforts as an eco-friendly company. The award recognizes Delzell Brothers' environmental stewardship as superior to that of all other Chrysler dealerships in the US and abroad, making Delzell Brothers a model for other businesses.

Delzell Brothers distinguished itself by becoming one of the first car dealerships in the Midwest to use wind turbines to generate its power. The turbine system is complemented with solar panels; their combined alternative energy sourcing is designed to make the business 100% energy self sufficient.

In 2004 a fire destroyed the Delzell Brothers dealership in Morning Sun, necessitating a new start. The business relocated to the intersection of Highways 78 and 61 just outside of town. Wind energy was under consideration for the new facility even then, but the timing was not right.

More recently, with a 30 percent tax credit provided by the stimulus package and a \$20,000 federal rural development grant factored into the budget, the investment is an easy one to make. Over 40% of the \$140,000 installation expense was covered.

In addition, the local dealer, Glory Wind Turbines of Mount Union, was able to add the solar panels for free. The maker of the wind turbines, Sonkyo Energy of Spain, wanted to use the highly visible dealership to showcase their new hybrid technology which combines wind and solar power. Wind power should meet 80% of the dealership energy needs and solar will cover the remaining 20%.

Delzell Brothers showroom will once again be the location of the annual Tri-Rivers RUSH fundraising auction on the evening of Saturday, February 26.

Come and enjoy a great event powered by the wind and sun!

One of the two wind turbines providing power at Delzell Brothers near Morning Sun.



Creature Feature: Eurasian Tree Sparrow

A relatively new kid on the block may have gone unnoticed by those who draw birds to their yards with feeders. The Eurasian Tree Sparrow at first glance looks quite a bit like its relative, the much more common House Sparrow.



The Eurasian Tree Sparrow is not native to North America. Twenty birds were brought to the Saint Louis area in 1870 and have made a (very!) slow expansion up the Mississippi River corridor. The species has probably been in Louisa County along the river for quite awhile, but has only moved further inland over

the last ten years. In 2007 the population in North America was estimated at about 150,000. By contrast, House Sparrows, which were brought to New York in 1852, are the most abundant bird in Iowa.

These non-native tree sparrows are seed and grain eating birds which feed on the ground in flocks, often with other types of sparrows. During breeding season they will also feed on insects, millipedes, centipedes and spiders. Like the House Sparrow, these birds are cavity nesters and will compete with native birds for nesting spots. However, the Eurasian Tree Sparrows are not nearly as aggressive and, therefore, not as much of a problem.

You can easily identify the Eurasian Tree Sparrows at your feeder by looking for a chestnut brown cap and white cheeks. There is a back ear patch on each cheek. They are also slightly smaller than house sparrows. There is no plumage difference between the male and female tree sparrows and the young resemble the adults but with duller colors.



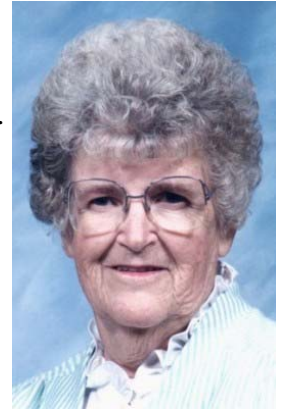
Eurasian Tree Sparrow



House Sparrow

New Park for Louisa County

The people of Louisa County were provided for in the last will and testament of Donna Eden of rural Columbus Junction. Ms. Eden passed away November 16, 2010 and left the majority of her estate to be used for a public park in the northwest corner of the county.



A 150-acre parcel of land was left to Louisa County Conservation Board to be used as a park for “the citizens in this community for recreational and conservation purposes.” Most of the farm is currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the rolling topography includes grasslands, wetlands and forest.

In addition, Ms. Eden designated that her other assets, including a Washington County farm, be placed in trust to pay for development and maintenance of “Eden Park,” as she requested the area be called.

The conservation board was surprised to find out about the inheritance, but pleased that the long-time resident of Louisa County wanted to share her love of nature with the public.

Donna Lee Eden was born March 11, 1932 in River Junction to Dayton and Mildred (Dodson) Eden. The family later moved to this property near Columbus Junction. She was a member of the United Methodist Church of Columbus Junction, past treasurer of the Columbus Senior Center and a past member of the Hobby Club and the Friendly Neighbors. She loved her cats, mowing her yard and gardening. For many years she raised chickens and sold eggs.

Ownership of the property likely will not be transferred until later this year or possibly into 2012. In the meantime, the conservation board will be working on plans for public use and development of the property. Arrangements are being made with a nearby landowner to act as caretaker in the interim.

Stay tuned to hear more about what plans the conservation board has for the area and to find out when Eden Park opens for public use.



Participants and volunteers at the 2010 Louisa County Youth Pheasant Hunt.

Spring & Summer Job Openings

The Louisa County Conservation Board has seasonal jobs available beginning in March. One fulltime assistant naturalist/intern is needed from March to August, though the position may be split into spring and summer. The ideal candidate will have some experience or training in either education or natural resources.

There is also an opening for a spring and summer conservation aide who will assist with park duties. The job will be full time in the summer and full to part time in the spring.

For more information, call the conservation board at 319-523-8381.



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

LCCB STAFF

Julie Ohde
 Katie Hammond
 Kathy Dice
 Mary Gish
 Jeff Snyder
 Kenny Moore



BOARD MEMBERS

Roger Edwards
 Sherry Humphreys
 Brad Moss
 Jay Schweitzer
 Stan Staats

Thank you!

Our list of folks to thank includes people who taught hunter safety, folded newsletters and helped at Running Wild, Youth Pheasant Hunt, Halloween Hike and school field trips.

- Louisa County Pheasants Forever
- Muscatine Shooting Sports Club
- North American Deutsch Kurzhaar Club
- Native Performance Dog Food by Kent Feeds
- TEECH Home School Group
- Heartland Chapter VDD-GNA
- Western IL North American Versatile Hunting Dog Assoc.
- Aaron & Katherine Snyder
- Andy Beaver
- Barnyard Blooms
- Becky Beaver
- Bobbi Benson & JJ
- Boy Scout Pack 16
- Boy Scout Troop 67
- Bryant's Orchard
- Candace Moore
- Carol Hinkle
- Casey's, Wapello
- Connie Veach
- Debbie Snyder
- Doris Harris
- Dutch Beenan
- Michelle & Morgan Humphrey
- Ed Mears
- Frank Best
- Greg Terry
- Hoope's Family Farm
- HyVee Drugstore
- James Wahldice
- Jan's Hanging by a Thread
- Jerry, Kim & Mark Dusek
- Vicki & Randy Meester
- Wal-Mart
- Wapello 5th Grade
- Wapello Caseys
- Winfield Wizards 4H
- Doug Brown
- Jared Shadle
- Jeff Cooley
- Paul Kay
- Tracy Lott
- Dave Boysen
- Dan Wanfalt
- Jerry Heater
- Helen & Bud Hunter
- Jerry Houtiker
- John & JoEllen Schantz
- Kathy & Michael Vance
- John Dale
- Kane Harris
- Karen Minnis
- Kathy Wilkerson
- Katie Walker
- Lane Walker
- L-M 5th Grade
- Louisa Longbeards
- Louisa County Gun Club
- Mairet's Garden Center
- Megan Yotter
- Mike Jurgill
- Mitch Schweitzer
- Morning Sun 5th Grade
- Nancy Wagner
- Patricia Hamman
- Patti Gerling
- Mike Todd
- Sean Mears
- Scheels All Sport
- Jeremy Havener
- Just2Moms
- Tammy Noble
- Scott Affeldt



Dora (Kim Dusak) and Diego (John Dale) save a softshell turtle (Mark Dusak) at the 2011 Halloween Hike.

Grants Enhance Conservation and Outdoor Recreation in Louisa County

REAP Grants Awarded in Louisa County

The cities of Wapello and Columbus Junction will both receive funding for outdoor improvements through Iowa's Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program.



Wapello's grant will fund a fishing pier and riverfront trail. The ADA compliant fishing pier will provide a unique connection to the river for area residents. The project also includes the first segment of a trail that will accommodate pedestrians, joggers, strollers, bikes and wheelchairs.

Columbus Junction's REAP funded project will make improvements to Chautauqua Park, including a park entrance sign, interpretive signage to describe historical and natural significance of the park, ADA water fountains, and a new restroom.

REAP is a State of Iowa program that invests in the enhancement and protection of the state's natural and cultural resources. REAP is funded from the state's Environment First Fund (Iowa gaming receipts) and from the sale of the natural resource license plate.

Keep Columbus Beautiful



Columbus Junction is the first community in Louisa County to become an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful (KAB). The Keep Columbus Beautiful committee received their final training October 13. As an affiliate of KAB, Keep Columbus Beautiful will have access to training, marketing materials and grants which the group will use to reduce litter and encourage beautification.

Monkey Run Watershed Management Plan

The Louisa County Soil and Water Conservation District received a grant to develop a watershed management plan for Monkey Run Creek. Funding comes from the Iowa Department of Land Stewardship's Watershed Development and Planning Assistance Grants Program.

Monkey Run Creek starts southeast of Columbus City, runs under Highway 92, and dumps into Short Creek behind the American Legion. The funding will allow for a hydrology study, plan development and grant writing to seek funds for recommended improvements.

Branching Out

The Columbus Community Trees Forever group received a Branching Out grant for \$3,500 from Trees Forever for landscape design and a tree planting at the Community Health Center of Southeast Iowa's new facility in Columbus City.

Branching Out is a nationally-recognized grant program where Alliant Energy, Trees Forever and communities work together to fund and implement tree-planting projects. Celebrating over 20 years of plantings, the program is designed to encourage energy efficiency, environmental awareness and community stewardship in Iowa.

Community Foundation of Louisa County

Our local community foundation has again funded several conservation related projects:

- Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation received money to continue the Reflections project which is recording oral histories related to natural resources.
- Louisa County Conservation Board got funding for new brochures, website and other marketing materials. In addition, they got money to be used toward wildland firefighting equipment.
- Friends of Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge received a grant for interpretive signs at the refuge.
- Columbus Junction received a grant for the Chautauqua Park project (see "REAP" above).



Community Foundation of Louisa County has granted more than \$400,000 to Louisa County projects since 2005.

Local Food Coordinator for Southeast Iowa

Adam Hohl started December 1 as the local food coordinator for Southeast Iowa. He will serve Louisa, Des Moines, Henry and Lee Counties by coordinating efforts to produce, process and sell more local food.

Geode Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) received a \$20,000 AMS/USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant. Adam can be reached by email at localfoods@geodercd.org or at 319-572-9727.

New Faces (and Old Faces in New Places)

There's a new DNR team ready to hit the ground in Louisa County. A new conservation officer will arrive in April and Odessa Wildlife Management Unit has had a 100% change in personnel since October 2010. Luckily, not all the newbies are strangers to the area. Here's a run down on who's doing what.

Andy Robbins - Wildlife Management Biologist

Andy has been at Odessa as a Natural Resources Technician 1 since 2004 but has worked fulltime with the Iowa DNR since 2002. His previous experience included work at other wildlife units across Iowa as well as at Linn and Cerro Gordo County Conservation Boards. Andy is a graduate of Iowa State University and a native of Oquawka, Illinois.

Travis Russell - Natural Resources Technician 2

Travis is originally from Dewitt, Iowa and prior to his promotion had been a Technician 1 at the Odessa Unit since 2007. Travis has been fulltime with the DNR since 2006 and has worked at wildlife units across the state since 2001. Travis is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa.

Adam Phillips - Natural Resources Technician 1



Adam is originally from Jacksonville, Illinois and recently completed his Master's research at Southern Illinois University where he researched mute swans. Adam has studied waterfowl around the country and has worked in North Dakota, Montana, Colorado, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa. After a stint at Odessa in 2010,

Adam worked for Ducks Unlimited in Minnesota.



Odessa Wildlife Management Unit staff (l to r) Andy Robbins, Travis Russell and Kyle Syfert.

Kyle Syfert - Natural Resources Technician 1

Kyle is originally from Stockport, Iowa and was most recently working at Maquoketa Wildlife Unit. Since graduating from Iowa State University, Kyle has worked in temporary positions at five different wildlife units across the state, including two at Odessa.

Bill Ohde - Southeast District Wildlife Supervisor

After nearly 28 years as Odessa Unit biologist, Bill will now supervise operations at all DNR wildlife management units in Southeast Iowa, including Odessa. Though his new office is at Lake Darling State Park, he will continue living in rural Louisa County.

Ben Schlader - Conservation Officer

Ben graduated from the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy on December 17 and is currently completing his Field Training Program. He should arrive for duty in Louisa County around April 1. Ben is from north-central Iowa and has worked at various jobs with the Iowa DNR and the Department of Conservation in Northeast Missouri.

Editors' Note: Special thanks to DNR officer Tom Campbell of Muscatine who has taken on additional duties in Louisa County while we were without our own officer.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Wildlife Biologist

Andy Robbins
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Andy.Robbins@dnr.iowa.gov

Fisheries Biologist

Chad Dolan
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Chad.Dolan@dnr.iowa.gov

Conservation Officer

Tom Campbell
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Tom.Campbell@dnr.iowa.gov

Environmental Protection

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Dennis.Ostwinkle@dnr.iowa.gov

Forester

Lisa Louck
319-523-2216
Lisa.Louck@dnr.iowa.gov



www.iowadnr.com

Refuge Welcomes New Staff

Jessica Bolser arrived in mid-summer to assume the station biologist duties following her predecessor's retirement. She recently completed her graduate work at the University of Rhode Island, where she worked on songbirds' use of coastal island habitat.

Originally from central Illinois, Jessica received her bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University and has worked as a seasonal field biologist in a variety of positions throughout the country. During the past two summers, she worked at the Illinois River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge complex in Havana, Illinois. While she enjoyed Rhode Island, Jessica is looking forward to being back in the Midwest and exploring the outdoor recreation opportunities along the river.

Alex Galt arrived at the start of the New Year as private lands biologist for the refuge. He looks forward to working with private landowners and other partners to restore and enhance habitat on their properties under the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

Alex received his master's degree in December 2010 from Fort Hays State University in Kansas and spent the last two summers conducting research on the effects of wetland restoration techniques on bird communities in western Minnesota. Alex grew up in central North Dakota and worked several seasonal wildlife positions prior to receiving his bachelor's degree from North Dakota State University in Fargo.

With these new staff members, the refuge will not only better manage wildlife habitat on refuge lands but improve wildlife habitat on private lands in eleven Iowa and three Illinois counties.



New Friends Group

A group conservation supporters has formed the "Friends of Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge." The organization's goal is to raise awareness of the refuge and what it has to offer the visiting public.

There are plans for events, a membership program and more. The group's first project has been to secure a grant to help fund interpretive signs.

For more information or to become a member, contact the refuge to get your name on the mailing list to receive notices of future meetings and events.

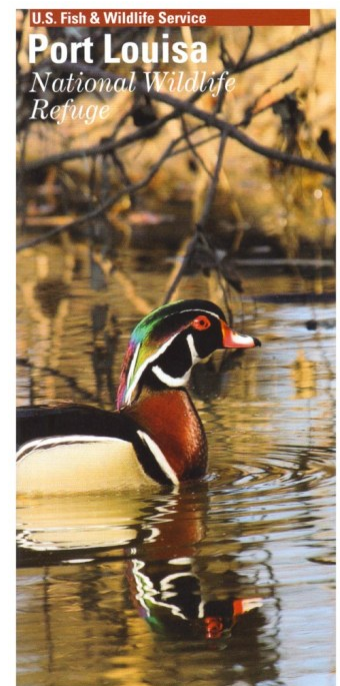
New Brochures!

The refuge has just received a shipment of its latest brochure. It provides descriptions of the area, photos and a bit of history about Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge and the refuge system.

Of course the brochure wouldn't be complete without mention of public use opportunities and management strategies used to improve habitat for migratory waterfowl as well as the other species that feed, rest and reside in the refuge.

Special thanks to the Quad Cities Photography Club who provided many of the stunning photos, including the cover shot.

Get your copy at the FWS office or request that one be mailed to you by calling 319-523-6982.

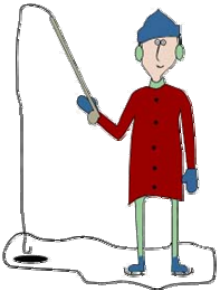


PORT LOUISA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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



Youth Ice Fishing

Saturday, January 29, 11 am – 2 pm
Langwood Education Center
Cost: \$5/child

This cool event features short educational sessions, a BB shoot, and fishing tournament. Registration fees include a National Wild Turkey Federation JAKES (youth) membership, ice fishing pole, lunch and prizes.

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.

Pre-registration requested by January 22

Prescribed Fire Class for Landowners

Friday, February 4, 9 am – 4 pm
Louisa County Conservation Office
Cost: \$10, includes lunch



This workshop is designed to help landowners better understand the process of using fire as a management tool. Instructors will discuss benefits, burn plans, firefighting tools and safety.

Attendance at the class will allow participants to borrow firefighting equipment for use on their property. Sponsored by the Lower Cedar Valley Fire Learning Network.

Pre-registration required by January 26

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.

Romancing the Moon

Thursday, February 17, 7 pm – 8:30 pm
Langwood Education Center

Celebrate the last month of winter with a walk in the light of the full moon. Listen as owls call for mates and learn more about local owls. Bring a mug and enjoy hot chocolate while you warm up in the lodge.

Hunter Safety Class

Thursday, March 24, 6 pm – 9 pm
Saturday, March 26, 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.

Looking Ahead . . .

Summer Nature Camp sign-up begins - April 1

Summer Nature Camps begin - June 8

Iowa River Water Trail Dedication - May 7

Fish 'n Fun Day - June 16



**Columbus
Junction
STATE BANK**

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

Petro & More



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



Owners: Dennis & Ann Shepard

319-729-9900

Women in the Outdoors

Saturday, April 16, 9 am – 4:30pm
Langwood Education Center

This event is tailored for women who would like to hone their outdoor skills. Sessions will include canoeing, shooting, archery, wild game cooking and more. Details, including cost, are still being determined by Louisa Longbeards Chapter of the Wild Turkey Federation. Louisa County Conservation is helping organize the workshop.

For more information as it becomes available, go to www.NaturallyLouisaCounty.com and check the local papers for more information.

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 21, February 18 & March 18
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 5
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 RUSH

Date: Saturday, February 26
Time: Doors open at 6:30 pm
Where: Delzell Brothers, Morning Sun
Cost: \$15/person; \$25/couple
Get tickets: LCCB office, 319-523-8381

Louisa Longbeards Chapter of NWTF

Date: Saturday, March 5
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 319-572-1511

Odessa Chapter of Ducks Unlimited

Date: Friday, April 8
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



Easter Antler Hunt



Saturday, April 23, 9 – 11am
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 18

High Ropes Belay Training

Monday, April 25, 9 am – 2 pm
Langwood Education Center & Camp

Learn how to run safety lines (belay) on the high ropes course at Langwood. This is a great opportunity for anyone wishing to bring a group out to the course. Trained belayers can either volunteer for the conservation board or save their group money each time they use the course.

Pre-registration required by April 18



Clockwise from upper right: Youth Pheasant Hunt, Fishing Camp, Hunter Safety and River Raiders Camp.

New NRCS Employees

Mark Delperdang has joined the staff at the Wapello Field Office as a Soil Conservation Technician under the Career Intern Program.

Mark grew up in Des Moines and later attended the University of Iowa, receiving B.A.'s in Geography and Anthropology. After college, he worked for NRCS and SWCD's in Ashley, ND; Great Falls, MT; Delta Junction, AK; and most recently in the Burlington Field Office.



Mark resides just north of Burlington with his daughter and wife Amanda who works for Des Moines County Conservation. In his free time, he enjoys being outdoors chasing his two-year old daughter Emeline and the goats, chickens, dogs, and cat around their hobby farm.



Holly Wilkens has joined the staff as a DNR AmeriCorps Habitat Specialist for Louisa County. She will be working in the county promoting the Conservation Reserve Program during her 12-month AmeriCorps service.

Holly graduated from Iowa State University in December with a major in Animal Ecology. Originally from the area, Holly graduated from Louisa-Muscatine High School in 2006. She is an avid outdoors person and is looking forward to working in the county.

Old NRCS Employee

Norm Stone, Soil Conservation Technician retired December 30, 2010. Norm had worked for the Soil Conservation Service (SCS)/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for 25 years. He has set foot on most farms in Louisa County and has made a huge contribution to soil and water conservation practices in the region.

Norm has also helped train many staff through the years. He took great pride in the sub-district soils judging contest held in Louisa County each year. Norm will be greatly missed.

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.

Applications are due March 31 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)

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

Kristen Fenderson

Buffer/Conservation Technician

Duane Lewis

Soil Conservation Technicians

Mark Delperdang

AmeriCorps Habitat Specialist

Holly Wilkens

District Secretary

Jamie Grimes

SWCD Commissioners

Mary Boysen, Wapello

Sam Willson, Wapello

Chris Ball, Oakville

Dan Vogeler, Columbus Junction

Lee Harris, Morning Sun

Go Green (to Save a Little Green)

By Kathy Vance

While setting up interviews to do this article I called the office of the United Methodist Church in Columbus Junction and left a message for Pastor Al Coffin and Church Secretary Linda Meader. The message machine indicated that if I left a number, I would get a return call. But I didn't. I got a return email instead.

The significance of that might be lost on some, but in the context of what I was inquiring about, it certainly seemed appropriate. You see, I was not looking for spiritual guidance nor was my call of an urgent nature. I was calling in reference to the new money saving/environment saving initiative at the church. And calling me back would have been long distance. And such calls cost money. (You can see where this is going, can't you?) And since the "Go Green Group" at the church is encouraging cost and energy saving measures, and emailing is free once you have the internet...well.... Church Secretary Meader did just the right thing!

Here's a list of what the United Methodists are trying or considering:

- Turning off lights when no one is in a room.
- Utilizing the sun for heat in the winter and shade for cooling in the summer by actively opening and closing curtains and blinds.
- Cutting down on postage (and phone costs!) by emailing.
- Using hand fans in the sanctuary to keep cool.
- Having the energy company (Alliant in this case) do an Energy Audit.
- Use power strips and turn them off at the end of the day.
- Clean up after yourself (to cut down on custodial hours!).
- Consider using natural products for cleaning, like vinegar.
- Using both sides of paper in the office and Sunday School Rooms.
- Have a coupon basket for swapping coupons (and use them for church purchases too).

- Provide and use recycling tubs.
- Stop using foam cups and paper napkins in favor of glass and cloth.

Do these things make an impact? The Chair of the "Go Green Group" and a member of the Finance Committee,

Connie Lewis answers that question with an emphatic "Yes!" Lewis says that a simple discussion at a May finance meeting turned into the "Go Green Group." The



group disseminated a simple flier to all the groups of the church asking for input on what they could do to "go green and save green." That flier turned into an article in the Church "Messenger" Newsletter and Lewis says the efforts saved the church \$300 in the first few months.

So what about your church? Or office? Or home? With a few conscious changes could you "go green and save green." Start with the list printed here, add your own and call the church if you need more inspiration – and be prepared to get your answer in an email – especially if it will save on long distance charges!



Make it a "Not-New" Year

You can "Go Green" (and save some green) yourself by reusing items rather than always buying new.

Reusable shopping bags are great but only if you use them rather than just collecting them. Keep them in your car or get a small one that fits inside your purse.

Use both sides of your paper. Keep a stack of paper to reuse next to your printer.

Buy used items at Goodwill, Salvation Army, garage sales and consignment stores.

Reusable water bottles are a cheaper, safer and greener alternative to recyclable plastic.

A delightful book on the recognition, gathering, preparation and use of the natural health foods that grow wild all about us. The book contained here has been every field, forest, swamp and stream for and includes into a health-food market with her merchandise.

stalking the wild asparagus

by Euell Gibbons

With a Remembrance of the Author by John McPhee

This is a book for lovers of good food, with hundreds of detailed recipes for turning ordinary wild fruits and vegetables into tasty dishes that would grace any table. The information contained in these pages will enable you to save many times the price on grocery bills and diet supplements. This book offers you economy, delicious food, fun and healthy activity.

Stalking the Wild Asparagus by Euell Gibbons

Reviewed by Anita Braden

Growing up poor (although we did not realize it at the time) there were not many luxuries in our family. We worked hard and the state fair was a much looked forward to annual treat. Since cash was short we always wondered where the money would come from to purchase the desired tickets for the wonderful rides. The woods on our property were full of cash; it just took a bit of time and sweat to gather it in. The summer after a brush fire proved to be the best year yet. You see, the cash was in the form of thousands of tiny, but oh so delicious wild blueberries. After picking for hours, the berries were sorted and placed into canning jars to be peddled around the countryside to those county neighbors without this delicious treat growing in their backyard!

Not all the berries made it into the jars as a good many were eaten as we picked. Usually before we began our bike trek around the country side we would sit down to a

bowl full of berries with creamy milk from our cow. No wonder we did not know we were poor! We were so blessed! In the 40 plus years since those days I have never yet tasted berries that good!

As I read the book: *Stalking The Wild Asparagus*; by Euell Gibbons I realized how many edible, wild plants I was already familiar with. I enjoyed chewing on sassafras leaves as a child, made crab apple jelly as a newlywed bride, and stained my hands and mouth with mulberries and blackberries. My brother enjoys dandelions in the early spring and I have seen chicory growing all along the roads here in Louisa County. My husband has fond memories of finding and eating morel mushrooms.

Some of the plants mentioned in this book I have grown in my gardens. I especially enjoy growing herbs and flowers, and many flowers have edible parts. My favorite is the dainty flowers of the viola plant. Pick, wash and place on top of crackers that have been spread with cream cheese for a pretty ladies luncheon.

This book is especially helpful because it contains drawings of most of the plants mentioned as well as cooking tips and recipes. Gibbons is very frank in sharing which ways he likes the best and admitting some failed attempts to make a tasty dish.

You see, in case you are thinking that you would never be interested in hunting for, nor eating wild plants I have tried to show that you may already have been doing so and thinking it quite normal. Our Creator has blessed us with many edible and medicinal plants in this county.

So if you like to hike and enjoy the great outdoors, as well as trying new and different foods, this is a great resource. Invite a friend or family member to walk along with you and try something new. Make a game out of seeing who can find a certain food first. Then bring home your plunder, try one of the many interesting recipes in this book and share something new with your family.



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Tri-Rivers volunteer Cindy Klebe in Escalante River, Utah on a Wilderness Volunteer trip

Making a Difference to Tri-Rivers

By Brian Blackwell

Spend even a short amount of time talking to Cindy Klebe and, before long, a major component of what makes her tick shines through. Her intense love for the outdoors and managing natural resources is a daily pursuit – one she discusses with passion and absolute certainty.

As a 16-year veteran with the Army Corps of Engineers, Cindy serves as park ranger for seven recreational areas along the Mississippi River. The Muscatine resident majored in resources management at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, with a minor in environmental communication. Her favorite outdoor activities include hiking, rock climbing, camping, and tennis.

Cindy first became involved with Tri-Rivers ten years ago when she was asked to volunteer and then became a facilitator for the high-ropes course. Of late, Cindy has donated a rappelling trip for the annual Tri-Rivers auction and her husband, Mike, will also donate an oak rocking horse for the 2011 Tri-Rivers RUSH.

At home, Cindy and Mike have four cats and one exceptional furry friend named Bernie who serves as a therapy dog in local nursing homes.

When asked why she continues to support Tri-Rivers with her time, talent and finances, a well-spoken Cindy responded quickly. “I believe in Tri-Rivers. Building the Louisa Interpretative Center is a good cause – and the foundation’s green initiatives are worth supporting.”

Added Cindy, “I want to be a part of getting kids outdoors and educating them about Iowa’s natural resources.”

The RUSH is On!

Mark your calendars to be at Delzell Brothers showroom outside of Morning Sun on the evening of February 26 to be part of the bidding at the fifth annual Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation auction.

The event has been newly named the “Tri-Rivers RUSH,” reminding folks of the exciting items available at this unique fundraiser. From hunting experiences and rock climbing adventures, to local food and custom artwork, you are sure to find something that you *must* have. This year’s event includes an all new “High Five” raffle and a “Buy It Now” feature.



The auction is the group’s 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.

A listing of items for the live, silent and online auctions are posted at www.tri-rivers.org.

Experience the RUSH on February 26 at 7:00 pm at Delzell Brothers. To reserve a table for your group (which includes eight tickets and a centerpiece) or to buy individual tickets email tri-rivers@lccb.org or call 319-527- 4530.



PO Box 123, Wapello, Iowa 52653
319-527-4530

tri-rivers@lccb.org www.tri-rivers.org

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Hafner Donation

Large community projects like the Louisa Interpretive Center offer opportunities to create special memorials honoring family members. In the summer of 2010 the descendants of Byron and Mollie Hafner came together to make a \$10,000 contribution to the project. The donation serves as a lasting tribute to their parents' commitment to conservation, education and Louisa County.

Byron and Mollie Hafner married in the summer of 1930 in Lone Tree. The young couple transitioned through a few homes as their family grew and in 1939 bought the Blankenhorn farm in northeast Louisa County. There they finished raising their children: sons, Gene and Jim, along with five daughters, Joyce Crull, Gae Ellen Crisman, Marianna Mastella, Marjorie Golden and Gloria Newell.

Education was important to Byron and Mollie. Both were graduates of the class of '29 of Letts High School and attended one year at the University of Iowa before getting married and starting a family. As parents they stressed the value of a good education and all of their children attended college except for Gene who pursued a career directly after high school.

The Hafner Farm produced corn, soy beans, dairy cattle and beef. Mollie presided over a large garden and canned for the family's use. Good land stewardship and conservation were tenets to live by for the Hafner family. The farm had one of the first concrete structures in the area to contain storm water. Byron planted hundreds of trees and kept a 40-acre timber as a retirement project. He enjoyed the wildflowers and birds that were found there. He was still buying land and planning terrace projects well into his 90's. As a testament to his longevity in farming and conservation he often commented that he had planted multi-flora rose when that was encouraged and spent the next 40 years clearing it.

Byron died in 2006 at age 95; Mollie passed away in 1968 at age 57. Their dedication to conservation and education is a legacy that continues on and will enjoy new vitality at the Louisa Interpretive Center.

The Board of Directors of Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation is honored that the Hafner family has chosen the Louisa Interpretive Center project for a memorial donation for Byron and Mollie Hafner. It is the first time the Hafner family has joined together on a philanthropy project.



Runners and walkers representing The Monsanto Company reclaimed the team prize at Running Wild held August 21, 2010.

Running Wild 2010

Dozens of runners, walkers and outdoor enthusiasts gathered at Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge on the morning of Saturday, August 21 for this annual event. Category and overall winners received oriole feeders crafted by Louisa County Conservation Junior Naturalist Campers complete with grape jelly provided by Tyson Foods, Columbus Junction. The younger set enjoyed the 1 and ½ mile Farm Bureau Fun Runs where all participants received medals for their efforts.

In addition to the athletic events there was educational programming offered by Louisa County Conservation and Port Louisa staff. The Iowa Learning Farm's new Conservation Station was also on site with their message about improving Iowa's soil and water quality. New refuge manager Cathy Henry was also on hand to meet people and answer questions about the refuge.

Proceeds (over \$2900) from Running Wild help support conservation efforts in Louisa County. Many thanks to our sponsors, runners, cookie bakers and volunteers and congratulations to the winners! See you again this August.

Overall winners

3 Mile - Male: Jack Walker (23:03)
 3 Mile - Female: Kalynn Stecher (23:07)
 5 Mile - Male: Mark McSorley (34:13)
 5 Mile - Female: Becky Eserhaut (47:07)

Team Prize

Monsanto, Muscatine, IA

Thank you's

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

- Ducky Race Ticket Buyers
- MidAmerican Energy
- Al Bohling (via United Way)
- Connie Veach (via Monsanto Fund)
- Great River Medical Center
- Larry and Karen Minnis
- Morning Sun Elementary Staff and Students
- Dan Vogeler
- Running Wild Sponsors and Participants
- Hills Bank and Trust
- Jack Estle Memorial
- Gloria Newell
- Kathryn Justice
- Columbus Community Club
- Sam Stapp
- Cleva Baird
- Columbus Junction State Bank
- Mallory Smith
- Frank and Gwen Jolly (Cloverdale Farm)
- Michael and Kathy Vance (Cloverdale Farm)
- Nancy Martin

Louisa Interpretive Center Progress Report

By Shive-Hattery Design Team

Final plans are underway for the first construction phase of the Louisa Interpretive Center. This is a multi-step process of submissions through the Iowa DOT. The project is scheduled for bid letting in February of 2011.

The project will consist of excavation and grading of approximately 30 acres of the site and will include the construction of a wetland area and pond as well as a prairie restoration. A two thousand foot one-way site access drive will be constructed featuring a "wet-crossing" between the wetlands and the pond.



Five earthen mounds approximately 10 feet high will be created that will be used for future outdoor learning opportunities featuring topics such as native American culture and local resources such as rivers, soil, rock formations and plant and animal communities.

The site for the future building will be prepared and a small parking area will be provided for visitors to view the first phase landforms, water features and plantings. Groundbreaking is expected in March.

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

Enclosed is my donation for:

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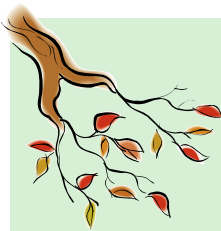
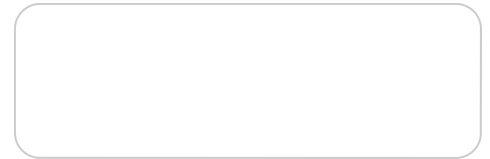
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Tri-Rivers RUSH - experience it!

A fundraising auction for Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation

5th Annual Fundraising Auction
silent auction • raffle • live auction

Saturday, February 26, 7-9 p.m.

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