

# THE CONSERVATIONIST

Fall 2011 Volume 15, Issue 2



Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage Paid  
Rockford, IA  
Permit No. 25

Address Service Requested

## *Calendar of Upcoming Events*

*Looking back at 10 years*

*Invasive species*

## WINTER FAMILY FUN DAY



# As the Crow Flies

Laura Elfers, Naturalist

## Looking for ways to support natural resources in Iowa?

### REAP License plates

**R**esource **E**nhancement **A**nd **P**rotection of Iowa's natural and cultural resources

Funding for REAP is set every year by the State Legislature and funded through the state's Environment First Fund (Iowa's gaming receipts) and the sale of natural resource license plates. The first plate featured Iowa's State Bird (Goldfinch) and State Flower (Wild Rose). Now there are four other plates to choose from as well.

Last year REAP was only allocated \$15 million of the possible \$20 million budget. This \$15 million was then divided by percentages into 8 areas:

- State Open Spaces
- City Parks/Open Spaces
- Soil and Water Enhancement
- County Conservation Boards
- State Land Management
- Historical Resources
- Roadside Vegetation
- Conservation Education and DNR Administration



To get a REAP License plate . . .

Take your plate and registration in to you County Treasurer. Tell them you want to buy a Natural Resources plate. Cost: \$45 for new plate, renewal \$25 each year of which \$10 from each purchase and \$15 from each renewal goes directly to the Wildlife Diversity program. You may personalize for an additional fee.

## Memorials

**Viola Newton**  
Kurt Herbrechtsmeyer & Julie Taylor family

**Carol Parcher**  
The Carol Parcher family

**Joe Marzen**  
Larry & Sharon Hicok

**Jon Tumilson**  
Evelyn Miller  
Marjorie Kornegor  
Gaylen & Gloria Hicok  
Stan & Corlyss Fitz  
Juanita Schubert  
Marilee Monroe  
Iva Ernst



**Dolores Larson**  
Gary & DeeAnn Ewen  
Juanita Schubert

**Dennis Knecht**  
Dennis & Rhonda Westergard

**Terry Swanson**  
Juanita Schubert



13<sup>th</sup> Annual

# Fossil & Prairie Park 5K Run/Walk *J.T. Honor Run*

On a beautiful autumn morning, 211 participants took off along the trails at the Fossil & Prairie Park, some running while others walked. The great attendance at this years event was due to expanding the run to honor Navy Seal, Jon Tumilson.



Melissa Fisher, Rockford  
won the Grand Prize.  
Bike donated by On Two Wheels.



Overall Mens Winner -  
Jonathan Zander,  
Charles City



Overall Womens Winner -  
Kaitlyn Muhlenbruch, Dows



## Iowa Master Conservationist Program

An opportunity for adults to learn and experience the many natural resources in our area is being planned through a cooperative effort between the Floyd, Cerro Gordo and Franklin County ISU Extensions and the Floyd and Cerro Gordo County Conservation Boards.

The Iowa Master Conservationist program is designed to allow participants to discover Iowa's physical environment, sustainable agriculture, energy uses and methods to reduce waste through field experiences and classroom trainings. At the end of this experience, adults will have had 32 hours of hands on discoveries in indoor/outdoor settings throughout three counties.

This class will be limited to 25 participants with classes held every Tuesday beginning July 10th through August 21st from 6-9:30 p.m.. Cost is \$75. To register contact the Cerro Gordo ISU Extension office 641-423-0844.



**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
University Extension



## Programs & Events

All events take place at the  
Fossil & Prairie Center, Rockford unless otherwise listed.

**December 4<sup>th</sup> Nature Tales - Hibernation • 1 p.m**

**December 28<sup>th</sup> Winter University ○ 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Discover how the animals of Iowa stay “snug “ in the winter.  
For more information see pg. 6 or go to fossilcenter.com

**December 31<sup>st</sup> Winter Family Fun Day ○ 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

Outdoor Fun can happen in the winter too! For more information see pg. 6 or go to fossilcenter.com

**January 8<sup>th</sup> Nature Tales - Wild about Winter • 1 p.m**

**January 28<sup>th</sup> A.C.O.R.N - Hoo Gives a Hoot Hike • 4:30 p.m.**

**Trowbridge Wildlife (Conservation Shop), Charles City OR  
Ackley Creek Park, Marble Rock**

Discover the creatures of the night during the silence of a cool winter night.

**February 12<sup>th</sup> Nature Tales - Owls • 1 p.m**

**March 3<sup>rd</sup> Spring Celebration Banquet**

Watch for more information

● Pre Registration appreciated

○ Pre Registration required

*For more information on any Floyd County Conservation sponsored programs,  
visit [www.fossilcenter.com](http://www.fossilcenter.com) or call 641-756-3490*

# WINTER UNIVERSITY

Wednesday, Dec. 28  
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.



Fossil & Prairie Center, Rockford (Lower level)

*Children grades 1st thru 5th can spend the day with Floyd County Naturalists, Laura & Heidi while learning and exploring the winter wonderland that is right outside their door.*

*Participants will create food for the birds, design a nature bag, and receive a guide book, plus snacks.*

**Cost:** \$10 for Fossil & Prairie Conservation Foundation members \$12 for non members



Registration forms available at  
[fossilcenter.com](http://fossilcenter.com)  
or contact the  
Fossil & Prairie Center  
641-756-3490

## WINTER FAMILY FUN DAY

at the Fossil & Prairie Park Preserve.

Saturday December 31<sup>st</sup> - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

*Outdoor fun can happen in the winter too!!*

Try snowshoeing or cross country skiing . . .

Continue the fun from Winter University

by checking the traps . . .

Play games in the snow . . .

Build a snowman . . .

Then come inside to warm up with  
hot chocolate/apple cider while creating  
a bird feeder to take home.



# Looking back ten years . . .

This past May the Fossil & Prairie Center celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Here are some statistics we found interesting . . .

- 28,131 students have visited the Center from schools outside of Floyd County.
- 50,000+ have visited the Fossil & Prairie Park Preserve in 10 years.
- 168 schools from Iowa and Minnesota have brought their students here.
- 7,614 students from Floyd County schools have been on field trips to the Fossil & Prairie Park Preserve.
- People from 48 states and 24 foreign countries have visited
- Center Volunteers have worked 2,104 hours in the Center

*Updates made to the  
Prairie Exhibit -  
Bison bones & skull, Elk silhouette  
and horse collar.*



*Thank You!*

*Bill Borchardt  
for the Fossil Collection donation*

*Jon Schneckloth -  
Volunteering with  
Timber Stand  
Improvement work*

## *A place to rest & reflect . . .*

*Thanks to the donations from the Houser, Weigand and Matthews families, new benches have been placed along the prairie trail at the Fossil & Prairie Park Preserve. These benches will enhance our visitors experience as they connect with the natural world.*



*Fossil & Prairie Conservation Foundation Board member Larry Hicok presents a \$1000 donation from the J.T. Honor Run to George & Kathy Tumilson.*



## *View from the fence . . .*

*Heidi Reams, Naturalist*

The changing of the seasons, something beyond our control, yet welcoming and comfortable. Porches and decks have been cleared, lawn furniture and flower pots put away. The shorter days and cooler temperatures seem to push us into our homes. But as Fall is called the “end of the summer” it should not become the end of the outdoor activities until warmer weather returns.

For many, Fall is the time to get back outside. A time to take a hunting buddy, whether human or canine, out to find the elusive pheasant. Even though the pheasant numbers may be low, a bad day hunting is better than . . . . you know the rest.

Fall is a time to breathe in the crisp cool air while the skies are filled with migrating birds. Your senses go into overdrive as the stillness makes all sounds and smells more intense. Colors appear from the endless sea of greens and the skeletal shapes of tall trees become visible. Footsteps are heard upon the crunching leaves. And who can resist a pile of leaves!!

So take this time of change to enjoy what nature has to offer. Get out while the getting is good!



## Floyd County Conservation

### *Board*

Larry Hicok, Rockford, President

Richard Uetz, Charles City, Vice Pres.

Lori Paulus, Rockford, Secretary

Ann Schneckloth, Charles City, Member

Lyle Wendland, Floyd , Member

### *Staff*

Doug Schroeder, Director

Laura Elfers, Asst. Director/Naturalist

Heidi Reams, Naturalist

Matt Hager, Natural Resource Tech.

### *Board Meetings*

The Floyd County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. The Board meets on the first Tuesday of the month at the Fossil & Prairie Center, located 1 mile west of Rockford on County Road B47. Please note this date can be changed.

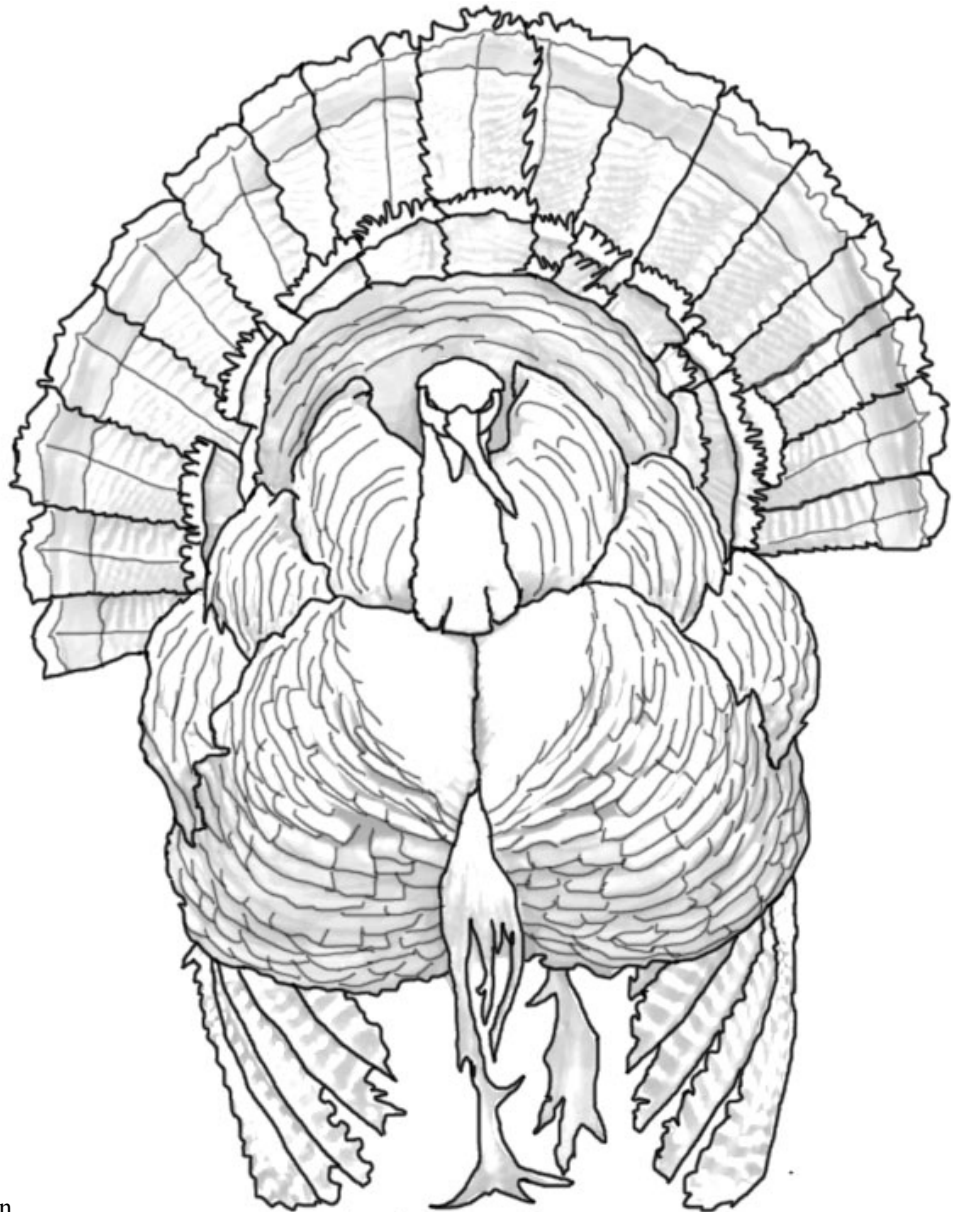
Floyd County’s Programs and facilities are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on non-discrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age and handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Floyd County Conservation Board or the Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Try to find a path through the maze that is made up of Thanksgiving words.  
 Each new word will start with the last letter of the previous word.

K  
I  
D  
S  
  
P  
A  
G  
E

				Start	P	I	L	G	R	I	M	S
A	B	Y	E	K	R	U	T	F	E	D	C	E
H	G	A	I	J	K	L	S	M	N	O	P	T
Z	Y	M	X	W	V	U	E	T	S	X	Q	R
A	B	S	C	D	E	F	P	G	H	Q	R	J
T	S	T	R	Q	V	O	Y	N	W	Z	S	K
U	V	U	W	X	I	H	I	A	A	J	M	L
E	F	F	G	H	N	A	N	B	I	M	X	Y
R	Q	I	P	O	W	A	D	A	L	C	Y	B
S	T	N	U	V	E	S	D	S	C	Y	A	Z
H	G	G	F	A	V	A	V	A	U	Q	D	A
I	J		R								Q	

End





# Habitat Management with Matt

Matt Hager, Natural Resource Tech.



## Invasive Species - Buckthorn

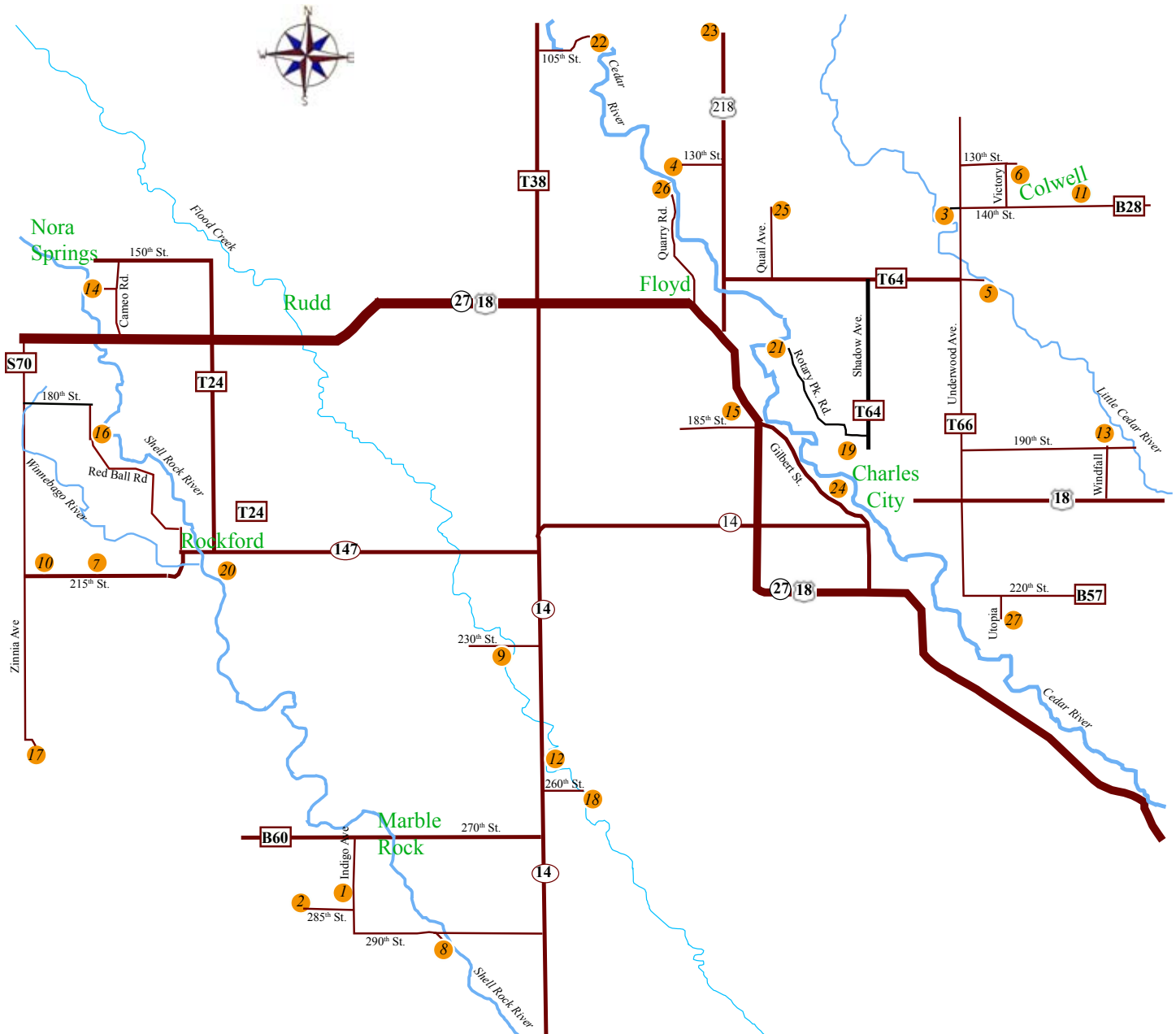
A large part of my job as Natural Resource Manager involves trying to control invasive plant species found at some of Floyd County Conservation's high quality natural areas. An invasive plant is "a plant that can grow quickly, spread rapidly, and dominate a natural area to the point that other species are displaced, especially those native to an area" (Czarzapata, 2005). Without any control invasive plants can quickly overtake and out-compete native species leading to decreased diversity and degradation of the natural habitat.

Buckthorn is one such invasive plant that is becoming more common throughout the Midwest, including Floyd County. The USDA's Forest Invasive Plant website rates Buckthorn at the top of the list of the worst invasive plant species in Iowa. Buckthorn is a small tree/shrub that was first brought to this country from Eurasia in the 1840's to be used as an ornamental. Once Buckthorn becomes established it will quickly form a monoculture and out-compete the native species there. It does this by having a growing season that is longer than native species, a very rapid growth rate, prolific seed production, and it can grow in just about any habitat. If it becomes established in an area and without any control Buckthorn greatly reduces the ability of forests to regenerate and remain healthy. Because of those reasons it is one of the main target species to control in Floyd County Conservation areas.

Buckthorn control has been going on at many Floyd County areas including the Fossil & Prairie Park Preserve, Wentlands Woods, Colwell Park, Mathers Woods and Strickers Fen. These are areas where Buckthorn has not become very well established yet. It is very important to recognize and control Buckthorn when it first becomes present to help prevent the spreading of more seeds. There have been a variety of techniques used to control Buckthorn in Floyd County areas. Some of the techniques used include burning, hand pulling, and cutting the stem and applying chemical to the stump. For more information, there are many helpful websites and books available on the identification and control of Buckthorn.



# Floyd County Conservation Areas



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ackley Creek Park, 2775 Indigo Ave</li> <li>2. Cedar Hills, 1695 285<sup>th</sup> St.</li> <li>3. Colwell Park, 2962 140<sup>th</sup> St.</li> <li>4. East Idlewild, 2400 130<sup>th</sup> St.</li> <li>5. Edna Peltz Wildlife Preserve, 3046 155<sup>th</sup> St.</li> <li>6. Fix Wildlife Area, 3116 130<sup>th</sup> St.</li> <li>7. Fossil &amp; Prairie Park Preserve, 1227 215<sup>th</sup> St.</li> <li>8. Gates Bridge Access, 2920 Kirkwood Rd.</li> <li>9. Happy Acres, 2040 230<sup>th</sup> St.</li> <li>10. Joney Laudner Family Nature Preserve, 1129 215<sup>th</sup> St.</li> <li>11. Knapp Wildlife Area, 3253 140<sup>th</sup> St.</li> <li>12. Koebrick Wildlife, 2550 Hwy 14</li> <li>13. Little Cedar Wildlife Area, 3301 190<sup>th</sup> St.</li> <li>14. Mathers Forest, 1563 Cameo Rd.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Mink Creek, 1799 Hwy18/218</li> <li>16. Nagle Wildlife, 1862 Red Ball Rd.</li> <li>17. Peterson Prairie, 2503 Zinnia Ave.</li> <li>18. Puhl Wildlife, 2190 260<sup>th</sup> St.</li> <li>19. Riverbend Wildlife,</li> <li>20. Rockford Park</li> <li>21. Rotary Park, 1661 Rotary Pk. Rd.</li> <li>22. Seter's Landing, 1050 River Rd.</li> <li>23. Slough Creek, 1035 Hwy 2</li> <li>24. Trowbridge Wildlife, 1958 Gilbert Ave.</li> <li>25. Wentlands Woods, 1498 Quail Ave</li> <li>26. West Idlewild, 1374 Quarry Rd.,</li> <li>27. Winterink Woods, 2264 Utopia Ave.</li> </ol> |
|--|---|