



# Conservation Quarterly

Spring 2009  
Volume 13, Issue 3

We continue our Discover Your County Parks series with a:  
Spotlight on . . .

## *Ackley Creek Campground*

In just a few short years, 1969-1973, Ackley Creek Park literally sprang from the 40 acres of farm ground and creek bottom purchased from the Losee Family. Through the efforts of the Floyd County Conservation Board a well, picnic tables, 2 shelters and a toilet were provided to accommodate the growing numbers of campers and hikers utilizing the new park. Word spread quickly and Ackley Creek Park soon became a camping “destination” for residents of Floyd County and the surrounding area.



To continue to serve the needs of the public, upgrades started to take place in 2000. The electrical system was upgraded to 30 amps and water was installed at each camp site. 2002 saw the opening of the new shower/restroom facility and dump station. Funded by a grant from R.J. McElroy, child safe playground equipment was installed in 2004. Access to the hiking trails from the campground was improved by a bridge constructed by Eagle Scout Tony Shook in 2005. Additional improvements are scheduled over the next 2-3 years.

So get your camping gear ready and discover this tranquil camping area when it opens for the season mid May 2009!

### Park Features

Location : 1/4 mile West and 1 mile South of Marble Rock

Acquired: 1971

Total acres: 40

Features: 37 electrical sites, shower/restroom facility, dump station, playground, hiking trails

# Meet Floyd County Conservation Board Member



## . . . *Larry Hicok*

This is the second in a series of interviews introducing the five Floyd County Conservation Board members.

Larry has been a member of the Floyd County Conservation Board since July 2006. Larry and Sharon are long time Rockford residents. Larry now enjoys retirement after serving as RRMR Elementary Principal for 40 years.

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- **How did you get interested in conservation?**

*I have always been interested in Conservation through growing up on a farm. My father did conservation practices of crop rotation and erosion controls. My family liked to hunt, fish, look for mushrooms and enjoy the spring wild flowers.*

- **Where is your favorite “Wild” place?**

*The Fossil & Prairie Park Preserve even before it was a park and while it was still operating as the Rockford Brick & Tile Company. I enjoyed looking for fossils, being able to walk around and see all of the variety here. Few people took advantage of being able to come here. Not sure if you were supposed to but no one told me you couldn't .*

*Another favorite place is going to the Boundary Waters with Boy Scouts. I have 3 - 50 mile Badges either on foot or afloat.*

- **In, your opinion, why should people care about the environment?**

*We only get one chance to do things right when it comes to environmental education issues. Our generation can't only pass along problems hoping they won't still be problems later (an example is water quality issues) We need to give back and care for the environment.*

- **What do you like to do in your free time?**

*I like to enjoy the freedom of a relaxed schedule, to be able to take advantage of “pop up” events. By not having a structured schedule anymore you can do things you want to without having to not do something else. With my shop I now have time to do things I've wanted to do.*

- **What do you hope will be the greatest accomplishment during your five year term?**

*I hope to see some level of completion of the kiln restoration project. This is a “do it or lose it” project that has been talked about for a long time. Now that it's underway I'd like to see it completed. I see my part on the Board as helping to establish a balance in the education, recreation, and conservation components (especially since I am interested in all of those as well) and establishing a short term/long term plan.*

# Spring Celebration Banquet

Saturday, March 7th, 2009

Rudd Community Center, 501 Floyd Street, Rudd

5:00 p.m. Social Hour & View Silent Auction items

6:00 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m. Kenny Salwey "The Last River Rat"

Dinner Tickets are \$15.00 per person.

Tickets must be purchased prior to banquet - No tickets are available at the door.

**Please RSVP by February 26th.**

FUNdraising is a major part of this evenings activities  
and this banquet is a fun way to raise money for the Fossil & Prairie Center.

Your membership and donations continue to support environmental education  
programming, matching funds for grants and new projects.

*Fossil & Prairie Center - Spring Celebration Banquet - March 7, 2009*

Yes, we are attending this years Spring Celebration Banquet

Number of banquet tickets \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15.00 per person.

I have an unique item to donate to the auction \_\_\_\_\_

Sorry, we will be unable to attend but apply \$25 towards a family membership.

Fossil & Prairie Center membership \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 single \$25 family

Total Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to the Fossil & Prairie Center Foundation, P.O. Box 495, Rockford, IA 50468

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please RSVP by February 26th.**



## WANTED : SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS

The Fossil & Prairie Center is accepting donations for the silent auction portion of the 11th Annual Spring Celebration Banquet. Hand-crafted and/or “nature” items are preferred.

To drop off donation items contact the Fossil & Prairie Center 641-756-3490.

← Tomahawk Peace Pipe that was sold at last year’s Spring Celebration Banquet

### Memorials

#### Maxine Fullerton

Tom & Carol Burnett  
 Stan & Corlyss Fitz  
 The Longcor Family  
 Maxine Fullerton  
 Pathology Assoc. of Mason City PLC  
 Mike & Mary Ellen Allison  
 Delbert & Mary Laudner  
 Fran & Harold Trettin  
 Marjorie Kornegor  
 Roger & Edna Merfeld  
 Sandra Willman  
 Rellis & Donna High

#### Lorraine Larson

John & Sally Johannsen  
 Larry & Sharon Hicok  
 Sandra Willman

#### Theresa Biber

Dale & Laura Schmitz

#### Maurice Kimball

Marilyn Fischer

#### Rev. Henry Flessner

Harold & Fran Trettin

#### Vera Mae Grimm

Kenneth & Marva Stratton

#### Lyle Cook

Marjorie Kornegor  
 Larry & Sharon Hicok

#### Jim Welton

Dale & Laura Schmitz

#### Phyllis Nauman

Larry & Sharon Hicok



Yes! I wish to be part of the Fossil & Prairie Center Foundation. I have enclosed my annual membership contribution of:

- Student (\$5)
- Individual (\$10)
- Family (\$25)
- Donor (\$50)
- Contributor (\$99 or less) Brachiopod or Blazingstars
- Associate (\$100-\$250) Crinoids or Coneflowers
- Sponsor (\$250-\$999) Gastropods or Goldenrods  
*Donor Plaque level . . . . . \$500*
- Benefactor (\$1000 or more) Pelecypods or Pasque Flowers

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_



*All donations are tax deductible!!*



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS



## Holiday Parade

A cold snowy night in December didn't slow the holiday spirits in Charles City. On December 6th the Lighted Holiday parade hosted by the Charles City Chamber of Commerce took place. The Floyd County Conservation float entitled "Traditional Holiday Feast" displayed the turkey's view on an appropriate meal for the holidays - venison.



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

- Feb. 7      A.C.O.R.N. - Owl Prowl<sup>o</sup>  
Ackley Creek Campground, 7 p.m.  
Trowbridge Wildlife Area, 7 p.m.*
- Feb. 14     Nature Tales - Reptiles<sup>o</sup> 10 am.*
- Feb. 21     Volunteer Brunch<sup>o</sup>*
- March 7     Nature Tales - Young Animals<sup>o</sup>*
- March 7     Spring Celebration Banquet<sup>★</sup>  
Rudd Community Center*
- March 14    A.C.O.R.N. - Stars<sup>o</sup>, 7 p.m.*
- March 15    Star Lab Program, 1:30 p.m.*
- April 4      Nature Tales - Eggs<sup>o</sup>*
- April 4      A.C.O.R.N. - Recycling<sup>o</sup>  
1:30 p.m.*
- April 18     Celebrate Earth Day  
Marble Rock Library 10 a.m.  
Rockford Library 10 a.m.*
- April 20     Celebrate Earth Day  
Nora Springs Library 6:30 p.m.*
- April 22     Celebrate Earth Day  
Charles City Library 3:30 p.m.*
- June 6      Free Kids Fishing Clinic<sup>o</sup>  
Elks Pond, Charles City  
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.*

For more information on programs, contact the Fossil & Prairie Center (641-756-3490)

<sup>o</sup>Pre registration appreciated.

<sup>★</sup> Pre registration required.

*A calendar of upcoming events is also available at [www.fossilcenter.com](http://www.fossilcenter.com)*

# WINTER BREAK CAMPS

Students in grades 1st through 5th spent a day discovering nature during their Winter Break at the Fossil & Prairie Park Preserve.

Forty five area youth spent a day with the Floyd County Naturalists during one of five day camps that were offered. Camp topics included: Iowa Birds, Raptors, Mammals, Winter Survival and Winter Outdoor Activities. Participants received a guide book on the camp topic, activity guide and related items they made during the Camp.

The Winter Break Camps were sponsored by Floyd County Conservation, the Fossil & Prairie Center Foundation, and Ellen Montgomery and the Basic Birder, of Mason City. Special thanks to Worth County Conservation and Winnebago County Conservation for use of materials for our camps.



## 2008 Junior Naturalists

The students pictured below received their official Iowa Junior Naturalist patch and certificate at the Winter Break Camps.

To participate students must be: 1st grade or above, attend three nature related public programs, and complete two nature related independent activities.

For more information contact the Fossil & Prairie Center, 641-756-3490.

Andrew Schmitt



Emily Reams & Marissa Norby



Back row: Justin Reams, Devvin Schroeder, Ryan Bartling, & Wyatt Paulus. Front row: Madelyn Paulus, Amy Fullerton, & Jenna Paulus

# Investing in Your Future

Clean water? Clean air? Parks? Recreational Trails? CRP? Soil conservation? During a time when budgets are tight, one wonders how we will be able to financially support items that have traditionally not come with a price tag, our natural resources. Do we continue to turn a blind eye and pass down our environmental problems to future generations?

Thankfully we have elected legislators with forward thinking that are looking into ways that will enable Iowans to enjoy clean water, have fresh air to breathe and continue to be diligent stewards of the land we are all connected to.

With current state and local funding levels these goals cannot be met. A Sustainable Natural Resource Funding Advisory Committee was formed to seek ways additional funding for Iowa's Natural Resources may be obtained. After researching what surrounding states are doing, agreeing upon a funding initiative, and surveying Iowa Citizens' willingness to pay for this initiative, it was estimated an additional \$150 million is needed.

With the funding source being the first 3/8 of 1 cent of any future sales tax increase and protecting it by amending the Iowa Constitution, the Sustainable Funding legislation passed both houses in 2008 and was signed by the governor. IF passed again in 2009, with essentially the same language, this piece of legislation could be put to a vote of the people of the state of Iowa as early as 2010. **Remember- the initiative is an opportunity for the people to vote to protect funding for natural resources- it is NOT a request for a tax increase.**

When the time is right, and a future sales tax increase occurs, a well thought out plan will be in place to fund the protection of Iowa's natural resources.



## SEE IT IN COLOR . . .

The Floyd County Conservation's "Conservation Quarterly" newsletter is now available on line at [www.fossilcenter.com](http://www.fossilcenter.com).

If you would like receive the newsletter via email contact [fpcenter@omnitelcom.com](mailto:fpcenter@omnitelcom.com)

# As the Crow Flies



*Corvus brachyrhynchos*

Learning about Iowa birds does not always take place in the classroom, sometimes it takes place as you are trying to get to the classroom.

Ask anyone who has walked across a college campus at dusk, under the trees of the roosting crows. The lower picture clearly depicts what one observes on those nights. (You don't want to get caught without your umbrella!!!). Many questions form as you make a mad dash under the trees .

***Why are they ALL roosting here?*** During the winter months, crows congregating in large numbers to sleep in communal roosts. These roosts comprise of many different family groups, where families may reach up to 15 individuals. These large families are impart due to the fact that they young may stay with their parents up to 4 years.

***Are there more here in the winter?*** No, crows do not tend to migrate as other birds. They are just more noticeable because they are all nesting together.

***How large are they?*** The American Crow measures 17 inches in height has a wingspan of 33-39 inches and weighs between 11-21 ounces. They are much smaller than the Common Raven found in the western United States and Canada.

***What in the world are they eating?*** A crow's diet is very diverse. During autumn and winter months their diet is dependent upon acorns and nuts. Other times of the year, they feed upon invertebrates of all types, carrion, scraps of human food, seeds, eggs and nestlings, mice, frogs and other small mammals.

***What can we do to get them out of here?*** If you have nuisance crows and they are not following Laura in a white Ford Ranger, you may want to try the following:

Crows on decks or patios- print and tape a large color owl photo to a window

Crows on roof tops- place on owl decoy on your roof top and/or play a tape of a distressed crow call.





# Circle of Friends

Foundation Memberships  
through  
February 2009



## Charles City

Merle & Helen Lockwood  
Jim & Dene' Lundberg  
Bill & Elaine Mead  
Tim & Patti Speas  
Leland Wulff

## Nora Springs

Phillip Schwab

## Floyd

Wyatt Wolford

## Rockford

Dave & Julie Andersen  
Brad & Renee Bartling  
Don & Barb Brown  
Robert & Sherry Fischer  
Sydney Fullerton

## Clear Lake

Mike & Mary Ellen Allison

## Mason City

Mary Ellen Cazanias

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*Contributor (\$99 or less)*

### Brachiopod or Blazing Star

Robert & Sherry Fischer

*Associate (\$100-\$249)*

### Crinoids or Coneflowers

Mike & Mary Ellen Allison  
Robert Waller & Linda Bow



## Volunteer Round-Up Brunch

Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009

10 a.m. - Noon

Fossil & Prairie Center, Rockford

\* Discover new & existing volunteer opportunities

\* Orientation / Training

\* Recognize current volunteers

RSVP by February 12<sup>th</sup>

Fossil & Prairie Center 641-756-3490

Fossil & Prairie Center Foundation  
Floyd County Conservation  
1227 215th St., P.O. Box 495  
Rockford, Iowa 50468  
Phone (641) 756-3490  
www.fossilcenter.com

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*51 years of  
Conservation in Floyd County  
1958-2009*



*Preserving our natural history . . . Ensuring the future*



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## ***Floyd County Conservation***

### **Board**

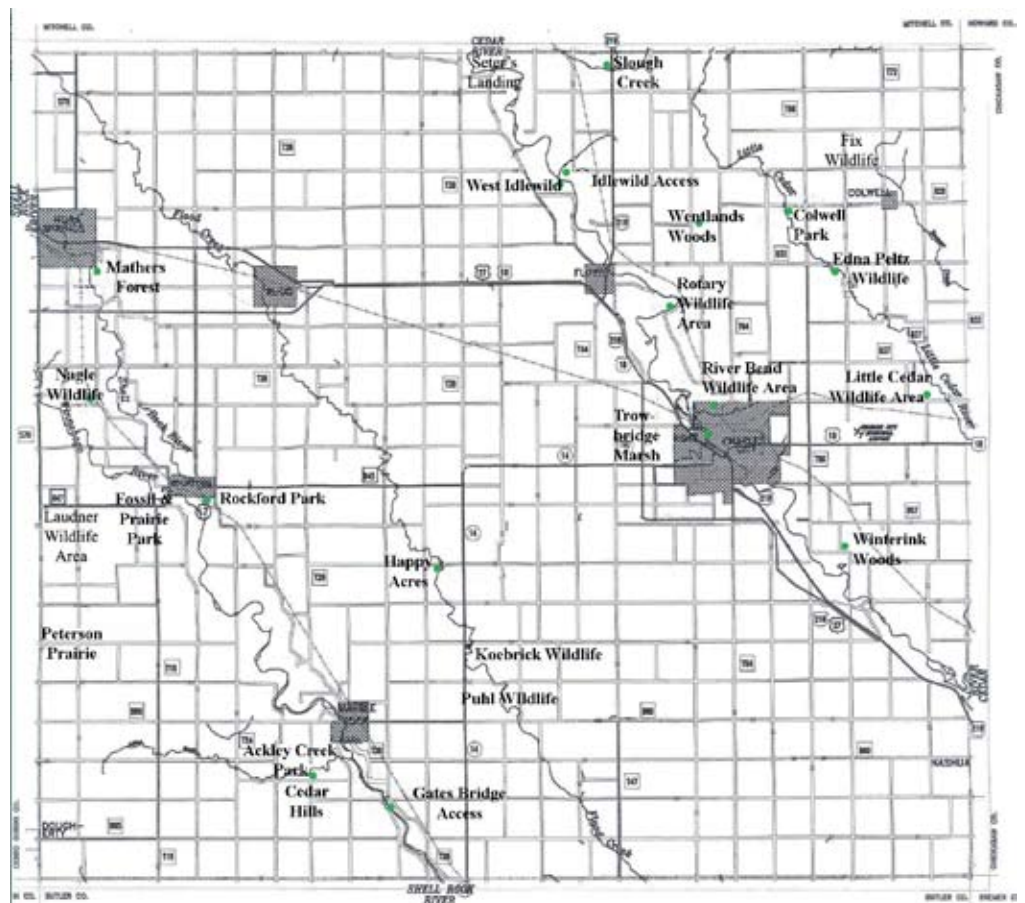
Lyle Wendland, Floyd, President  
Larry Hicok, Rockford, Vice Pres.  
Lori Paulus, Rockford, Secretary  
Larry Hibbs, Charles City, Member  
Richard Uetz, Charles City, Member

### ***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.

### ***Staff***

Doug Schroeder, Director  
Laura Elfers, Asst. Director/Naturalist  
Heidi Reams, Naturalist  
Nathan Brown, Maintenance Tech.



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.