



MAY 1980

conservationist



IOWA CONSERVATIONIST MAGAZINE

STAFF

Roger Sparks, *Editor*
Robert Runge, *Managing Editor*
Kenneth Formanek, *A-V Coordinator*
Ron Johnson, *Photographer*
Julius Satre, *Contributing Editor*
Junie Gookin, *Circulation Manager*
Newton Burch, *Art Director*

CONTENTS

- 2 BROOK TROUT UPDATE
- 4 MORE THAN JUST TREES
- 6 DIFFERENT LAKES WITH DIFFERENT SHAPES
- 7 TREE TRILLIUMS
- 10 GRASS CARP GO PRIVATE
- 11 YOUTH FISHING CLINICS
- 12 WARDEN'S DIARY
- 13 HUNS IN SOUTHEAST IOWA
- 14 1980 NON-GAME SUPPORT CERTIFICATE
- 15 LOOKIN' BACK
- 15 CLASSROOM CORNER

COVER

Painting by James F. Landenberger, 2031 Northgate Drive, NE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402. ©Flyway Sports and Art Shop, Ltd. Used by permission.

THE IOWA CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Thomas Bates, *Bellevue*; John Brophy, *Lansing*; John D. Field, *Hamburg*; Richard W. Kemler, *Marshalltown*; Donald K. Knudsen, *Eagle Grove*; Carolyn T. Lumbard, *Des Moines*; Marian Pike, *Whiting*.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Bob Fagerland, *Acting Director*

DIVISION CHIEFS Allen Farris, *Fish and Game*; Stanley C. Kuhn, *Division of Administration*; John M. Stokes, *Lands and Waters*.

SECTION SUPERINTENDENTS Tom Albright, *Engineering*; Joe W. Brill, *Parks*; Robert Barratt, *Wildlife*; James Mayhew, *Fisheries*; Roy Downing, *Waters*; Lester Fleming, *Grants-in-Aid*; Gene Hertel, *State Forester*; Kenneth Kakac, *Law Enforcement*; Caryl Carstens, *License*; Larry Davis, *Information & Education*; Gene Geissinger, *Accounting*; Doyle Adams, *County Conservation Boards*; Arnie Sohn, *Planning*; John Beamer, *Land Acquisition*.

• • • •

IOWA CONSERVATIONIST (USPS268-780), Volume 39, Number 5, published monthly by the Iowa Conservation Commission, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa, 50319. Address all mail (subscriptions, change of address, Form 3579, manuscripts, mail items) to the above address. Subscription price: one year at \$2.00; two years at \$3.00; four years at \$5.00. Second class postage paid at Des Moines, Iowa and other points.



IT'S BRAND NEW TO MOST Iowa trout anglers. This one just doesn't fit the pattern, no familiar pink stripe down the silvery side as on the old standby rainbow and no white-ringed spots over light yellow underparts as with the German brown. This one is completely different, from the light spots on his side, the worm-like markings on the top of the back to the most distinctive white leading edges on the lower fins. Believe it or not, this fish belongs here as Iowa's only native trout, the brook trout.

In a recent article in the *Iowa Conservationist* (April, 1979), Don Degan discussed a program for returning the brookie to selected Iowa trout streams. The project has progressed quite well over its second year and has added a new look to the Iowa Trout Program. It should be of considerable interest to trout anglers looking for a unique experience in Iowa waters. We'll look at just how well the brook is doing in Iowa but first a little background on how a project developed for Iowa's third trout.

The brook has not been a common sight in Iowa trout waters since it was dropped from our stocking program in the early 1950's. Several reasons led to its disappearance but most important was the very serious decline in quality of stream habitat coupled with increased fishing pressure. The loss of available trout habitat was associated with accelerated runoff from the watershed causing soil erosion and eventual

Photos by the Author



BROOK

siltation in the stream. The deep holes, gravel riffles and even stream vegetation are smothered, leaving very little cover for trout. Even worse, the clean gravels so necessary as trout spawning areas are lost which eliminates trout reproduction. The increase in angling pressure and improved techniques affected the brook more than any other trout species because of the ease with which they can be harvested from the stream by common hook and line methods. Most Iowa brook trout streams were simply "fished out", and when reproduction failed due to siltation of spawning gravels, the brook trout populations disappeared.

One or two isolated populations of brookies have survived from those early stockings and are reproducing despite some habitat degradation. But the brook are located in remote, privately-owned streams that are not available to most Iowa anglers. To re-establish angling for the brook in our state-owned stream segments, it became necessary to recognize the characteristics that were unique to these protected brook trout populations and apply them to the state-owned segments. It appeared that to be successful brookies must have a clean, relatively silt-free stream, be protected from over exploitation by anglers and have a suitable bottom type for spawning. Two state-owned streams in Iowa seemed to meet these criteria and were chosen to be stocked with brook - South Fork of Big Mill Creek in Jackson County and North Cedar Creek in Clayton County. Special regulations were adopted to provide a closed season for brook trout while still allowing angling for other trout species with artificial lures only. All brook trout taken could then be immediately returned to the stream with little physical harm and yet provide the pleasure of catching an Iowa brook trout to the angler. These two brook trout areas became known as

TROUT UPDATE

By Gaige Wunder, FISHERIES BIOLOGIST

ep holes for fun streams. Additional preparatory work that Don discussed included improved land management on the stream watershed, marking the boundaries of the special streams and initiating an intensive habitat enhancement project. Since that report, both streams have continued to benefit from the habitat work. South Fork has new bank hides installed and several

others repaired, nine cut-banks sloped and seeded and five half-log shelters placed. North Cedar was brushed for better angler access and six cut-banks were sloped and seeded. Further improvements in land management practices have reduced soil erosion, expanded the trout habitat along the stream margins and increased the overall aesthetic value of both streams.

South Fork Big Mill Creek Jackson County



Don Degan Photo

An initial population survey in late 1978 had shown the brook trout, to be present in good numbers, growing well and sufficiently mature to spawn. Later surveys in July and October 1979 revealed mixed success for these spawning adults. The brook in South Fork had brought off a very successful spawn while they had all but failed to reproduce in North Cedar Creek. The difference was probably attributable to the better bottom conditions and more stable water flows in South Fork. The population estimate of adult trout in the streams was also considerably larger for South Fork than for North Cedar Creek. This no doubt is due to the extensive habitat enhancement work that has been performed on South Fork and the associated increase in the stream's carrying capacity for trout. The average size of similar age adult brook did not change significantly in 1979 in either stream, remaining in the 12 to 14-inch range. Because of the poor natural reproduction in North Cedar, additional fingerling brook were stocked into the stream in October 1979. No additional trout were stocked into South Fork in anticipation of natural reproduction sustaining the population.

The potential for brook trout survival and natural reproduction will be completely assessed at the end of 1980. The closed season, fish-for-fun and artificial lure only regulations will continue in effect until the end of this last assessment period when a size limit and catch regulations will be proposed to allow for the harvest of the surplus adult brook trout. The new, more liberal regulations will probably take effect on January 1, 1981.

Additional stream enhancement work is also planned for both streams in 1980. Repair of existing structures will take place on South Fork while on North Cedar, several stream banks will be back sloped and seeded and a number of half log structures will be added to the large holes in the stream to provide additional in-stream shelter for trout.

If you are interested in trying your luck for a brookie on either of these streams, South Fork is located in Jackson County just west of Bellevue on the south bank of Big Mill Creek. North Cedar is tributary to Sny Magill Creek just southwest of McGregor in Clayton County. A copy of the Iowa Trout Fishing Guide, available at all Northeast Iowa Commission facilities and the Wallace Building in Des Moines, will guide you to stream-side and the opportunity to fish for Iowa's "brought-back" trout species — the brook trout.

From left to right: Dutchman's Breeches, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Cardinal Flower.



The Woods are More Than Just Trees

by Bob Mullen
STATE CONSERVATION OFFICER

TO THE EARLY SETTLERS of Iowa, the woodlands were like money in the bank. It was a resource from which they could draw upon, as needed, to live. A tree was viewed for practical purposes. It could be used as lumber, or perhaps as a piece of wood for a beam of a horse drawn plow. The wildflowers and plants of the wood's floor held little if any attraction, unless they possibly produced food or a medicinal herb. The aesthetic beauty of such plants meant little to Iowa's early pioneers. The business of trying to make a living was often harsh on a land that was unproductive and so the pioneer was only interested in utility.

As the industrial revolution came, the early settler's descendants enjoyed the fruits of a more leisurely and gracious life style. People now had a chance to view the woods as something more than just an economic resource. Now that starvation was no longer just outside the door, people began to see the woodlands as a place of beauty and inspiration, as a cool retreat in summer's heat, and as shelter from winter's forces.

The views and nature worship of Thoreau and many others became possible only after the early settlers had made the wilds habitable and the industrial revolution had made changes in lifestyles.

In today's society the time and opportunity to really enjoy and appreciate all that the woodlands contain is truly a luxury. The city dweller looks upon the woods as a place to build that dream home, and to escape the noise and congestion of the city life. The sportsman views it for the recreational opportunities it holds in such sports as hunting and trapping. The woods to others is seen only in terms of money. How much money will the trees yield as lumber? How much corn could be produced or how many animals could graze upon the land if bulldozers cleared the land of its trees and vegetation? Spring time in the woods holds a special appeal to the mushroom hunter. In the fall many people spend enjoyable afternoons driving around the wooded areas observing the brilliant fall colors of the leaves. To those that have a lack of interest for the things of nature, the woodlands are nothing more than a bunch of trees, with wood ticks, mosquitoes, and who knows what else.

How unfortunate that many fail to realize the woods are more than just trees. The forest floor is full of beauty and treats for those that take time to enjoy and appreciate them. Springtime brings the woodland floor alive with the beauty of numerous wildflowers and plants. Throughout the summer, different species of plants bloom and provide enjoyment which so few take the advantage of enjoying.

As civilization has advanced scientifically, and with all of the products of our advanced technology to make life easier

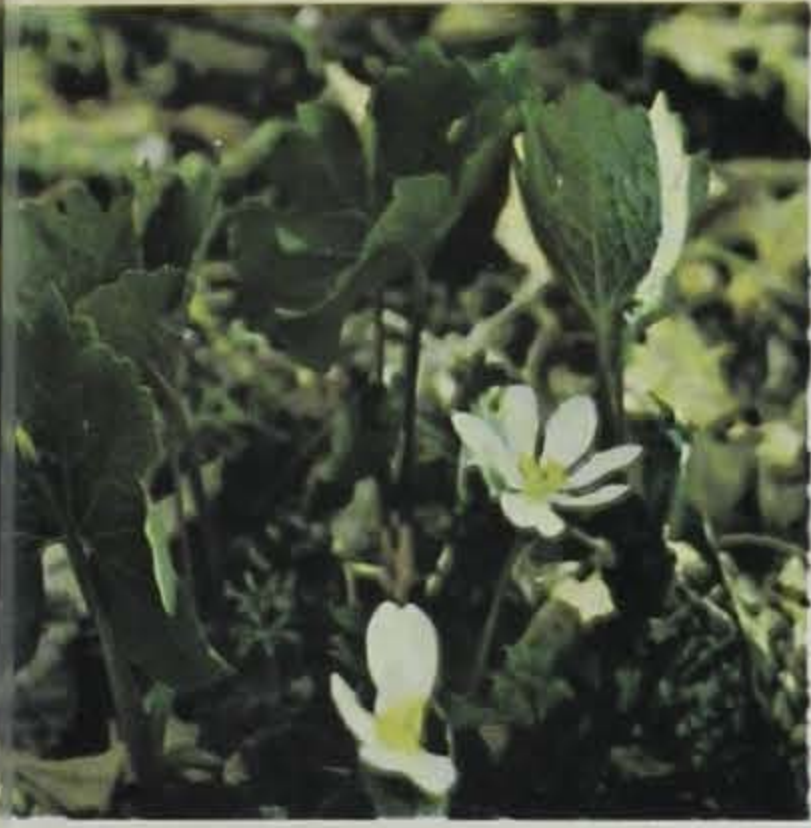
and more enjoyable, have we perhaps lost our awareness that we're part of the environment? The woodland floor holds much beauty, but we've lost this appreciation of nature.

If we take the time to study and appreciate many of these wild flowers and plants of the woodland floor, we can see the complex but delicate beauty that the woodlands hold. Through the decades we've lost much of the folklore concerning many of our wildflowers. The early settlers utilized many of these wildflowers and plants for food or some medicinal uses. Unfortunately today many of us fail to even enjoy just the aesthetic beauty of these plants.

Early settlers and Indians utilized the underground stem (corn) of the jack-in-the-pulpit as a source of food. After being roasted the underground stem was safe to eat. The corn was eaten as a snack or was ground into flour for use in recipes. Wild ginger roots were dried and used as the commercial spice which they resemble. Early settlers also believed ginger had a medicinal value in treating whooping cough. Bloodroot has a thick underground stem which the early settlers knew contained a bright red juice that was used as a dye. The bloodroot is still utilized as a dye today, even with all the synthetic dyes that have been developed. The fruit of the May apple was used to make jam, or eaten raw. The root was utilized in small amounts as a cathartic by the Indians.

Many other plants of the woodlands were, and still can be, utilized as food or a medicinal herb. But rather than destroy such beautiful plants why not just enjoy them for their aesthetic beauty? One has to see to really appreciate the delicate beauty of the wildflowers of the woodland floor. Examples are the white trout lily or Dutchman's breeches. Why not get a good field guide on wildflowers of the woods and become familiar with the beauty the woodlands have to offer. It's very tempting to pick many of the wildflowers one finds, but resist the temptation. If you want to take a wildflower home, use a camera and take it home on film. By leaving wildflowers in the woods you allow others to enjoy their beauty and allow the plant to continue to propagate its species. Many wildflowers of the forest and prairies have been almost decimated by over picking. One such flower that has been reduced in numbers by over picking has been the majestic cardinal flower.

Why don't you take time to get out and enjoy what the woods have to offer us in aesthetic enjoyment? You'll find out that the woods are much more than just trees, bugs and green plants, as many seem to think. Oh yes, don't forget to get permission from the landowner before you start on your trip into the woods.



Woodroot, above; right, Sweet William;
low, Trout Lily.



Wild Ginger, above; below, May Apple.



THERE'S NO DOUBT in my mind you'd like to catch more fish this year. But how? Did you read all the articles on crank baits, spinner baits, new wonder-bender fishing rods, super ultra-light tackle? That's good. And it will undoubtedly help you string up more fish, but, above all, keep a mental or written diary of the areas you've fished and *apply* what you've learned to new fishing areas. It's basic and sounds simple, but in practice it's quite complex.

Let's start by analyzing lake shapes. Describing lake shape and understanding how the shape affects fish populations is not only important to good fishing, but it is an important part of fisheries management. Lake shape is important in determining fish growth, reproduction, weed growth, water quality and fish-food abundance. Of particular importance to the angler — lake shape greatly affects fish distribution.

The lake can first be described by looking at the surface. Many questions about the lake can be answered simply from an aerial photo. How many acres? How long is the shoreline? Is the lake round or oblong? Are there many bays? Is the shoreline straight or irregular? What direction is the axis of the lake? How many inlets? Where is the outlet? How large is the watershed?

Obviously, lakes are three-dimensional so additional questions arise. Contour maps add the third dimension and provide answers to the following questions: How deep is the lake? What is the average depth? What is the volume? How steep are the sides? More and more fishermen are learning to "read" a lake from a contour map. They are successful

simply because they know what the bottom "looks" like and where fish are normally found in relationship to bottom shape.

Examination of the many facets of lake shape show how unique each lake is. Yet, there are many lakes which share the same characteristics. Grouping lakes with similar characteristics is called lake classification. A simple analogy would be to group tall, medium and short people into three categories. Within each group further divisions could be made using a variety of characteristics — arm length, neck size, waist size, etc. A similar procedure is used for lakes, except size, volume, bottom slope, drop-offs, depths, etc., are used.

Fisheries personnel use this type of system to classify lakes in Iowa. Lakes with similar characteristics begin to exhibit common fish management attributes and problems. For example, lakes with large watershed in hilly cropland silt in quite rapidly. A secondary problem is turbid water. Many lakes have aquatic vegetation problems which are related to the shape of the lake, particularly near the shore. Vegetation problems are much less a problem at lakes with steep-sided shorelines.

The most dramatic influence on fish life is caused by the presence or absence of a thermocline in the summer. Thermocline, in turn, is directly the result of lake shape. In shallow lakes, water circulates evenly from top to bottom. However, circulation in deep lakes with steep sides is much more restricted and by early summer, warmer water is circulating freely within the upper 10-12 feet. Colder, more dense water remains within the lower part of the

lake. In most instances oxygen is devoid in the lower part of the lake. Furthermore, there are toxic chemical compounds in the deeper layers. Obviously this has a profound influence on the distribution of fish.

Investigation at Red Haw Lake near Chariton showed how fish were distributed in the lake during the year. About 90% of the fish were within 10 feet of the surface during May, June, July and August. In effect, the thermocline forced the fish toward the surface where there was an ample supply of oxygen. At Red Haw this reduced the volume fish could safely inhabit by about 70%. The study also showed growth of bluegill was greatly reduced in the summer, undoubtedly due to crowding and lack of food in the upper strata. Based upon the lake classification system we can form a generalization about lakes which severely stratify: growth of panfish is slower than average.

However, crowding of fish above the thermocline is not necessarily bad. First, you will know where *not* to fish. Fish are more concentrated, therefore vertical searching to find the fish is minimized; your success should be greater. Likewise, predators such as largemouth bass will have their food source more concentrated during the summer. Bluegill and other panfish species become more vulnerable to predators. How can you use this information to more effectively catch bass?

You can learn from these clues. Deep lakes with steep-sided basins which are protected from the wind usually stratify during the summer. Furthermore, lakes which stratify act as fish concentrators. Use these clues in your fishing activity. Next time you fish a lake you're unfamiliar with you should be able to predict whether it stratifies or not. Then to test your ability to "read" lakes, talk to the local park officer or call the area fisheries biologist to confirm your judgment. Also, these people will have specific fishing tips such as what's biting or what bait to use.

Once you become adept at the primary level of map reading you will start looking for drop-offs, sunken islands, inlets, holes and ridges. As you become more familiar with the lake you will indeed be able to "look" at the bottom.

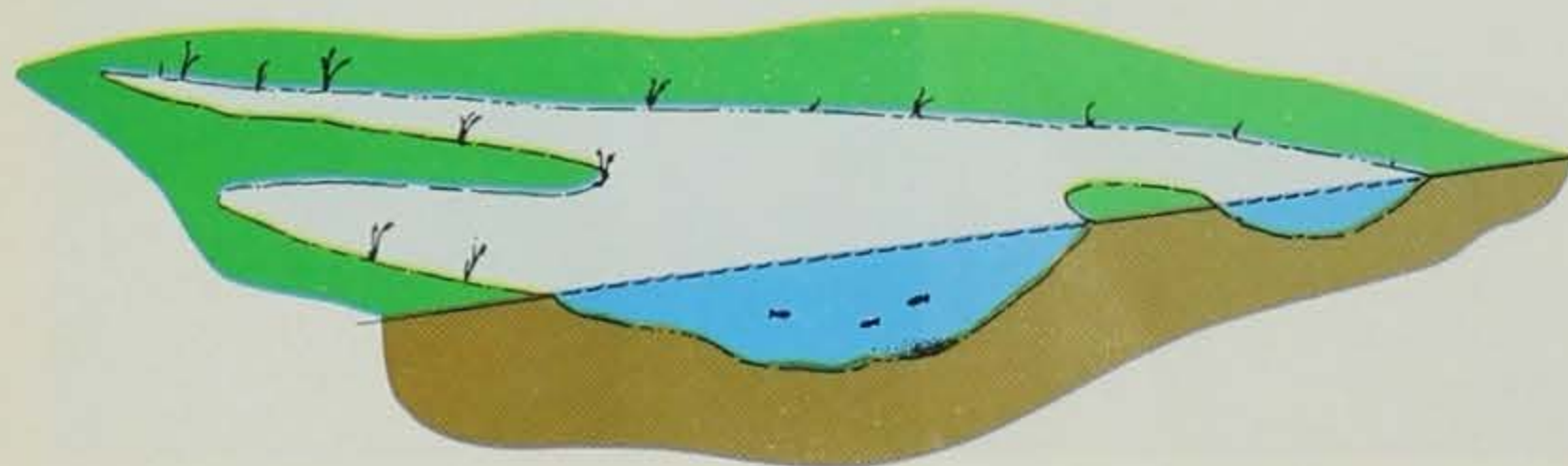
So, to become a good fisherman (1) read all the articles you can on fishing, (2) go fishing, (3) *learn* from your experiences, (4) go fishing, (5) before you fish a new lake carefully assess the shape of the lake, and (6) go fishing. Lastly, items 2, 4 and 6 are most important.

DIFFERENT LAKES WITH DIFFERENT SHAPES

by Larry Mitzner

FISHERY RESEARCH BIOLOGIST

Sketch by Larry Pool



WILDFLOWERS OF THE MONTH

THREE TRILLIUMS

DEAN M. ROOSA AND SYLVAN T. RUNKEL

Photos by Randy & Tomma Lou Maas

"BIRTHROOT" is a name given to Trilliums by the early pioneers because they thought these plants were used by Indians to assist women during childbirth. These spring woodland flowers belong to the lily family and five species are found naturally in Iowa; three are featured as this month's wildflowers.

As the name "trillium" implies, these plants are arranged in threes — three leaves, three petals and three sepals.



SNOW TRILLIUM
(*Trillium nivale*)

This woodland dwarf is our earliest blooming woodland wildflower, often blooming near the last snow drifts — hence its common name.

From two to five inches in height, it is found throughout Iowa in suitable habitat, but is most common in northern and eastern portions.

This seems to be a fairly sensitive species and its presence in a woodland indicates the woods has had some pretty good care from its owner.

Tiny but tough, the embodiment of Spring — some feel it expresses the beauty of the Trinity.



PRAIRIE TRILLIUM
(*Trillium recurvatum*)

Like the rest of the Trilliums, this species likes rich soils, but, unlike the other species, this one is found in mature oak woodlands that are scattered throughout the grassland.

This species is less common than the other two described and is mainly found in the southeastern one-fourth of Iowa.

As its name implies, the sepals are recurved, or bent downward — so much that they clasp the maroon stem. The petals are red-brown or maroon, the leaves mottled and the plant of medium height — up to 18 inches. Despite its common name, it is a woodland species.



NODDING TRILLIUM
(*Trillium cernuum*)

This lovely woodland plant grows to a height of two feet with a white flower that nods below the level of the leaves, giving it a most appropriate common name.

A denizen of moist woodland slopes, it is found most commonly in northern Iowa. This, as well as other trilliums, was a mystery to early settlers because this genus does not occur in Europe. Some 25 species are known, all in North America or eastern Asia.

The leaves are large and broad, this plant is the tallest of the tribe. The white petals are rolled tightly back.

Trilliums have been used extensively by various tribes for treating sore eyes, earache, open wounds and even internal bleeding. None have a pleasing odor; indeed some are offensive. None are suited for bouquets because they wilt quickly and lack fragrance; they are best left gracing the woodland landscape.

Finding these graceful flowers is a reward in itself, but events occurring in the woodland at the same time complete the experience. Overhead sing the passing warblers, nearby mushrooms may be popping up, streams are once again gurgling and all around are reminders that the miracle of spring is once again upon us.

THE PRAERI RAIL TRAIL

Seventeen Kilometers (10.5 miles) of Fortuitous Undertaking

By Robert R. Pinneke & Loren E. Rierson

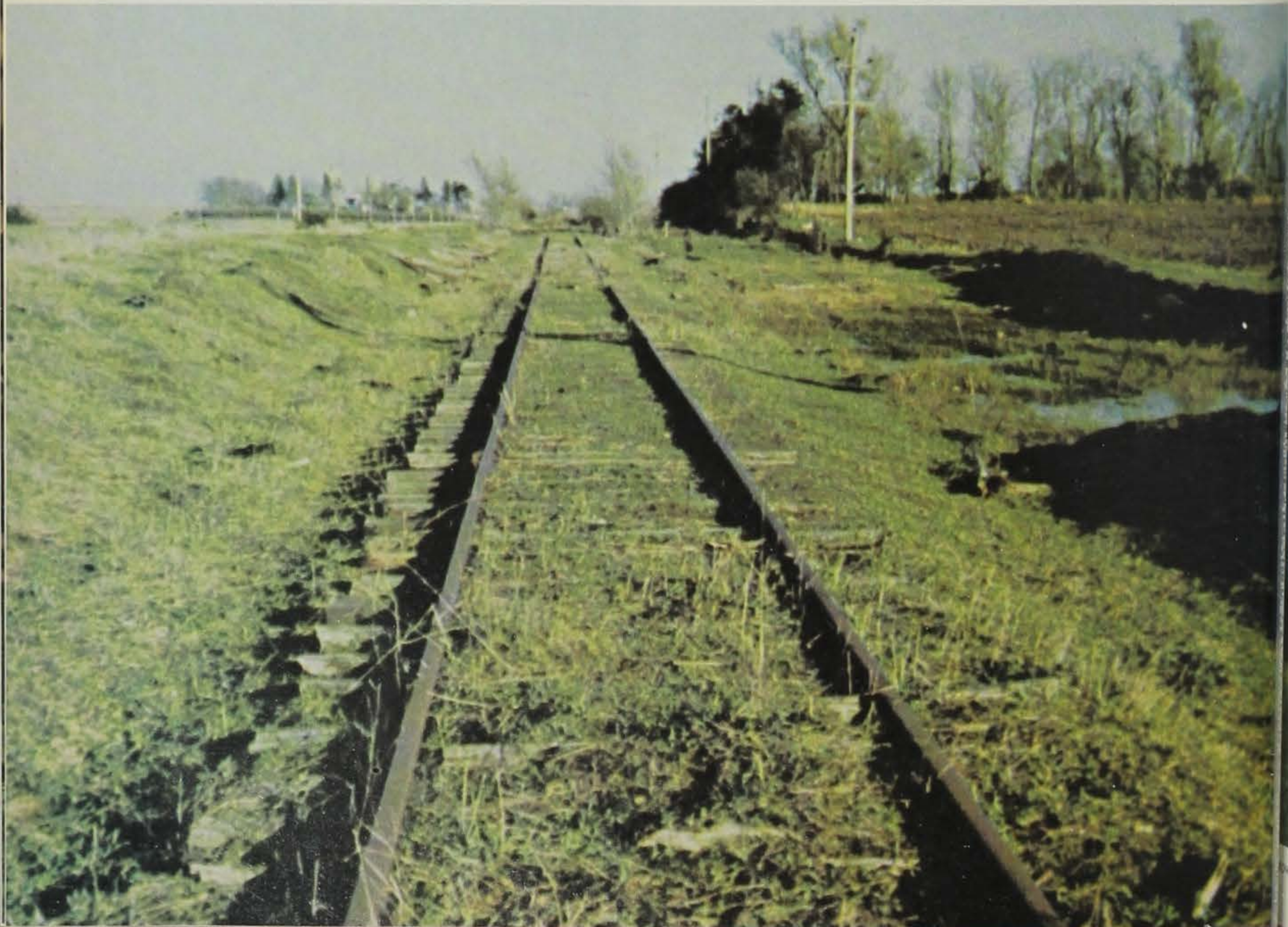
The spelling of "praeri" is correct. The Norwegian spelling of prairie is in recognition of the Scandinavian influence on northern Story County and also a reflection of the firm Nordic position which the Story County Conservation Board had to take to acquire the vacated Chicago and North Western railroad line between Roland and Zearing. Acquiring an abandoned railroad line in the modern agricultural expanse of rural Iowa is a challenge to any conservation agency in the late twentieth century.

Adjacent landowners wish to incorporate those lands back into farms which were dissected back in the late 1800's, and the political bodies are caught between conservationists, who wish to save such areas, and many landowners, who wish to farm such lands. The problem is not one easily solved and ultimately the Iowa Legislature may have to help resolve the issue. The economic plight of financially troubled railroads in Iowa has or will make available over 1,000 miles of rail line in the 1980's. Keeping portions

of such lands in public trust will require an all-out effort on the part of conservation agencies, political bodies and individuals. Such acquisitions can be accomplished, but it will take hard work and a lot of cooperation.

The Story County Conservation Board took on such a task starting in 1974 when the agency began communications with the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Iowa Department of Transportation, and the Chicago and North Western

Transportation Company. The Story County Conservation Board indicated an interest in acquiring approximately 17 kilometers (10.5 miles) of a section of railroad connecting the City of Roland in northern Story County, passing through McCallsburg and Zearing into Minerva Junction in Marshall County. Previously a four mile section had been vacated (in the late 1950's) and today lies amalgamated into the soils of grain fields between Roland and Story City. The rail bed, formerly owned by the Minneapolis



St. Louis
pany, se
n histor
ok and E
rred to th
chemical c
cars.
his partic
s laid i
ugh virg
them part
nty, land
h marshes
sses awai
ntual onsl
w. Modern
uld begin
tilling of t
ckerboard
as would o
discape, an
uld become
for movin
cket in the
antieth cent
The fate of
d North We
e, between

anging a r
simple tas
can up duti

IOWA CONSERVATION

and St. Louis Railway Company, seemed to have been historically coined the "Hick and Eye Line", which referred to the old mechanical couplings of the rail cars.

This particular rail track was laid in the 1800's through virgin prairie in the northern part of Story County, land interspersed with marshes and tall grasses awaiting the eventual onslaught of the plow. Modern agriculture would begin to emerge with the mowing of the marshes, the checkerboard pattern of fields would dot the landscape, and the railroad would become an important link for moving grain to market in the first half of the twentieth century.

The fate of the Chicago and North Western railroad line between Roland and

Minerva Junction in Marshall County, was to be challenged in the 1970's. Rail movement of grain slowed to a standstill with large truck transports taking over the interstate movement of crops. The Chicago and North Western Railroad company sought permission from the Interstate Commerce Commission to vacate the line from Roland all the way to Minerva Junction due to decreased rail traffic. After several public hearings with considerable testimony on the part of businesses, landowners, and the Iowa Department of Transportation, the rail line was finally vacated from Roland to Zearing on July 15, 1976. The process culminated

with the acquisition of the area by the Story County Conservation Board and Story County Board of Supervisors in 1978. Presently the line from Zearing to Minerva Junction is being reviewed by the Interstate Commerce Commission for vacating.

The final public acquisition by the Story County Conservation Board and Story County Board of Supervisors resulted in a unification of objectives by the Conservation Board. This movement was headed by Dr. Donald E. Boles, Professor, Political Science, Iowa State University, and Chairman of the Conservation Board to preserve a critical resource area represented by tall grass prairie and a rapidly shrinking wildlife habitat vestige in Story County.

This acquisition project was unique for the Story County Conservation Board because it ultimately involved the Story County Secondary Road Department, since six (6) miles of the abandoned rail line laid adjacent to S-14, a county surfaced road crossing the northern part of Story County and going by Zearing and McCallsburg and through Roland. After reviewing the legal records, it was determined that Story County only had a verbal agreement for right-of-way to S-14 from the railroad and such right-of-way was needed for secondary road purposes.

After abandonment, the real estate division of the Chicago and North Western Transportation Company indicated a desire to sell the vacated portion to the Story County Conservation Board. The Conservation Board had gone on public record previously, in the public hearing process, as desiring to acquire the railroad, if it should be abandoned. Under the Railroad Revitalization and Rehabilitation Act of Congress passed in 1976, public agencies have first option to acquire vacated property. The Story County Board of Supervisors, realizing that it would be

necessary for Story County to acquire about six and one-half (6.5) miles of the line for highway right-of-way, started acquisition proceedings.

The railroad company, however, refused to sell just a portion of the 100' wide strip required for highway right-of-way. Consequently, the Board of Supervisors negotiated with the Chicago and North Western Company officials to acquire all of the six and one-half (6.5) miles of railroad right-of-way.

This acquisition by the Supervisors occurred after the Story County Conservation Board had submitted a project for approval to the Iowa Conservation Commission for Land and Waters Conservation funding for acquiring the 10.5 miles of rail line. This project was approved for approximately \$38,000 in cost assistance. The Supervisors, on behalf of Story County, purchased 6.5 miles of the property in May 1978. Going into the end of the fiscal year, the Conservation Board, in reviewing its financial condition, decided to purchase and successfully acquired two (2) miles on each end of the 6.5 miles, purchased by the Board of Supervisors, in June 1978. The project change, however, resulted in a partial financial loss to Story County because the Board of Supervisors purchased six and one-half miles, changing the initial project scope as approved by the Iowa Conservation Commission by involving another public entity and source of funds.

Next began a lengthy process of attempting to obtain management of the 6.5 miles acquired by the Story County Board of Supervisors by the Conservation Board. People and civic organizations rallied behind the Conservation Board to secure management or jurisdiction over the excess land on the 6.5 mile strip. Adjacent landowners also attempted to secure the

(Continued on Page 10)

Changing a railway into a conservation/recreation trail is no simple task. The Story County conservation board found clean up duties the easiest part (bottom).





Grass Carp Go Private

by Mike McGhee

Fisheries Research Biologist

Many a frustrated shore fishermen has been heard muttering, "I can't even get my bait out to the open water with all those weeds in the way. Even if I could cast that far how would I land a fish through this mess." A solution is now available for this problem.

A biological aquatic vegetation control, grass carp, is now being used in Iowa. A controversial fish in the beginning, it has proven effective in controlling aquatic vegetation. Before the program was established in Iowa, research on the grass carp was carried out at Red Haw Lake (see Sept. 1976 Iowa Conservationist). Briefly stated, Red Haw Lake has shown no adverse effects due to the grass carp. In fact, aquatic vegetation levels are down by 90% and fishing use and success dramatically increased. Excessive amounts of aquatic vegetation can also contribute to winterkill problems. During the winter when ice covers the lake, the vegetation produced during the summer is decaying. The decaying process uses up oxygen vital for fish survival. By preventing the vegetative

buildup, winterkill possibilities are reduced.

The use of grass carp has been expanded to many public lakes in Iowa with continued great success. Some neighboring states such as Missouri, where the use of grass carp was vehemently protested and prohibited are now relaxing rules and allowing their use.

During 1979, Iowa took another positive step by allowing private use of the fish. The Iowa Conservation Commission established a permit procedure for the stocking of grass carp into privately-owned ponds and lakes. Chapter 109.47 of the Iowa code requires written application to the Conservation Commission where, if approved, a permit is issued to the pond owner.

Applications can be obtained from the district fisheries biologist, private fish hatcheries and the Iowa Conservation Commission central office in Des Moines. The application requires such information as location, pond size, and description of the problem. The fisheries biologist reviews the applica-

tion and contacts the owner. This is also an excellent time for the pond owner to ask fish management questions in addition to learning the correct number of grass carp needed to handle the vegetation problem. Grass carp are generally stocked at a rate of 10 fish per surface acre of water with fish at least 10 inches in length. Fish smaller than 10 inches are highly susceptible to largemouth bass predation.

Once the permit is issued, grass carp can be purchased from private fish hatcheries. The fisheries biologist has the names and addresses of private firms that sell the fish. Restocking efforts are necessary after 4 to 5 years because the fish do not reproduce in ponds or lakes and natural mortality gradually diminishes their numbers. A new permit is required to purchase additional fish for restocking.

There were over 300 private Iowa farm ponds stocked with grass carp in 1979. This number will increase as pond owners view the positive benefits of this successful program.

PRAERI RAIL TRAIL

(Continued from Page 9)

excess lands back into farm units.

The newly elected Board of Supervisors, in January 1979, after a public hearing and considerable testimony by resolution, passed the railroad lands not needed for road right-of-way to the Conservation Board for management. So developed a cooperative relationship with the present Board of Supervisors, the County Engineer, and the Story County Conservation Board. This was only a beginning, however, since many of the fears of adjacent landowners about trespassing, vandalism, fence repair, weeds, and hazards must still be recognized and addressed by the Conservation Board.

June 1979 saw the Conservation Board, with the assistance of a private contractor, clear over ten miles of line of old ties.

Next the Youth Conservation Corps came in and physically removed hundreds of ties. Some of the better ties were removed to Hickory Grove Park for parking barriers, sign post supports, and material for playground equipment. The poorer ties were used to build wildlife shelters along the proposed recreational trail.

The fall of 1979 saw trail development continuing with the Story County Engineering Department assisting the Conservation Board in finish-dressing the former rail bed. The County Engineer and staff also assisted in stabilizing culverts and assisted the Conservation Board staff with equipment and manpower.

Some confusion arose in the fall of 1979 when the salvage division of the Chicago and North Western Railroad Company suddenly appeared and removed six (6) culverts from the railroad bed. The Chicago and North Western Company had retained salvage rights until October

(Continued on Page 12)

YOUTH FISHING CLINICS

by Steve Waters

I consider myself one of the lucky ones. As a young boy I was able to learn fishing from my dad and grandfather. I will never forget the fishing stories and fishing trips that surrounded me as I was growing up. The fishing skills that were taught to me have provided many golden memories and will provide for additional experiences during the years ahead. Unfortunately, many of today's youth haven't had the opportunity to learn about fishing.

The Iowa Conservation Commission feels there are many excellent reasons to promote fishing. Fishing

is fun; it is a lifetime activity; it puts participants out-of-doors and in touch with nature; it is an inexpensive sport; it develops individual skills and promotes companionship between families and friends. These ideas were instrumental in the development of a new program directed at young boys and girls. The program is called Youth Fishing Clinics. The objective of a youth fishing clinic is to provide the opportunity for youths to learn about the art of fishing.

During 1979 two youth fishing clinics were held in Iowa,

one in Des Moines during May and the other in Cedar Rapids during August. These successful pilot fishing clinics were similar in that they both had local sponsorship. The Des Moines clinic was sponsored by the Izaak Walton League, Des Moines Tribune and the Iowa Conservation Commission. The Cedar Rapids clinic was sponsored by the Cedar Rapids Bass Masters Club and the Iowa Conservation Commission. Many hours were spent by dedicated individuals in organizing, promoting and providing teaching skills for the youth

fishing clinics. It was apparent that active local sponsorship was the key to a successful youth fishing clinic.

Both clinics were similar in their program. Basic tackle types, casting, fly fishing, angling techniques, fish cleaning, fish identification, conservation regulations, water safety and sportsmanship were the subjects taught. Over 150 youngsters from the two youth fishing clinics moved from station to station viewing and participating in demonstrations. The day's activities included a lake front lunch. At the end of the clinic

both teacher and pupil went home with a better understanding of how to fish.

There will be several youth fishing clinics presented in Iowa during 1980. If your organization is interested in sponsoring a clinic, or if you would like more information concerning youth fishing clinics, please contact your Iowa Conservation Commission (Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, 515-281-5208). Perhaps between you and the Iowa Conservation Commission, we can provide our youth with a lifetime friend - fishing!



Young anglers learn how to correctly identify Iowa fish.

Casting is one of the many fishing techniques taught at a youth fishing clinic.

Water safety and fishing regulations were taught to interested youths.



Steve Waters



ge 9)
nto farm
d Board
nuary
hearing
stimon
ed the
eeded
y to the
for
velopes
onship
ard of
nty
tory
n Board
ginning
y of the
ism,
, and
e
ressed
a Board
e
, with
private
er ten
ties.
s came
removed
ome of
Grove
rriers,
and
ound
orer ties
wildlife
proposed
w trail
uing
ty
ment
rvation
sing the
County
also
ng
d the
staff
rose in
a the
the
Western
and
erts
d. The
Western
ned
October
Page 12
ST-MAY 1980

PRAERI RAIL TRAIL

(Continued from Page 10)

31, 1979, but it was the verbal understanding with the railroad real estate division that such rights were only for ties and rails. Consequently, the Conservation Board reached a settlement for \$2,800 to leave fifteen remaining culverts in place and work continued on preparing the bed for a recreational trail.

The Story County

Conservation Board next looked at how the bed should be surfaced for a recreational trail and investigated the Cinder Path, another abandoned railway purchased by the Lucas County Conservation Board. The surface on the Cinder Path impressed the Conservation Board and resulted in another state agency becoming involved when Iowa State University offered cinders from its

physical plant for the bed. In September began the tedious task of applying cinders to 10.5 miles of railroad line.

Bill Stucky, member of the Story County Board of Supervisors, suggested to the Conservation Board in October of 1979 that the Praeri Rail Trail be dedicated in September or October of 1980 with the Iowa Prairie Track Club indicating an interest in

sponsoring a 10.5 kilometer run. This is presently being explored.

The Story County Conservation Board is now looking at a master plan which may include a covered bridge over Minerva Creek that bisects the trail, railroad cabooses for picnic shelters, prairie planting enrichment, and the planting of hawthorn, crabs, dogwood, and other prairie forbs and shrubs. Presently hiking, hunting, nature study, and jogging are permitted uses on the area. Development will take many years and as this linear parkway gains attention and interest, visitation will increase. Without the parkway, northern Story County would have lost considerable wildlife cover and some virgin prairie tracts would have been lost to the plow.

The Praeri Rail Trail will never be like the Cinder Path in Lucas County, but, not unlike the Lucas County trail, involved a fortuitous undertaking by a local conservation agency.

Iowa needs to look closely at its heritage, the need for public open space and the need for wise land use. Putting abandoned railroad lines back into grain fields versus public acquisition for conservation/recreation use lends itself to a healthy debate. The public value of keeping some rail lines in trust may far outweigh any economic value of putting such land back into grain production. Such values would be expressed in existing wildlife habitat, use of right-of-way for future utilities, transportation corridors, and public recreation. Iowa has less than 2% of its lands in public trust. Our fields are the bread basket of the nation and the world. We need to utilize those lands wisely so food and fiber continue to flow in abundance from our bountiful state. We, however, must always be

(Continued on Page 14)

Warden's Diary

By Rex Emerson

THE MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND is traditionally the seasonal opening for many outdoor enthusiasts. There are some who enjoy the out of doors during all the seasons in Iowa, but on this special weekend in May the parks will suddenly be full of people who are picknicking, hiking, boating, fishing, bird-watching, or just enjoying the return of warm weather. It is a good opportunity to get out and enjoy nature. The woods, streams, rivers and lakes will host many people during the spring and summer months. Cameras will be recording the good times of family outings.

However, for some families what started out to be a beautiful and happy weekend will turn into a tragic and painful time to remember in all the years to come. Many tragedies have happened in the past, and unfortunately will happen again. Will it happen to you, or someone in your family?

A message will come over the two-way radio that there has been a drowning at a lake or river. The game wardens, park rangers, water patrol, sheriff's officers, and rescue unit personnel will be among the few people working on holidays, and they will respond to the call. Other calls might concern a lost child, or be of someone falling off a cliff. Another may be about a child falling from a tree, or of someone who has

rolled a vehicle while trying to hill climb where they shouldn't have been in the first place.

One report received was of a young person, only twelve years old, who had waded out in an unsupervised part of a lake and stepped into deep water where an old creek channel had been before the lake was built. After we arrived several minutes were wasted trying to get accurate information from the child's relatives as to just where he had gone into the lake. Naturally they were suffering from shock, and were either blaming themselves for permitting him to wade in the water, or for being unable to rescue him after they saw him slip beneath the surface of the water. The rescue unit was called on the radio, and we learned that they were already on their way. As we hurriedly put on our life jackets and launched our boat at the boat landing, a man asked, "How come you guys can run a twenty-five horsepower motor in this lake, and we can only use a maximum of six horse motor?" I'm sorry I didn't have time to explain it to him. Maybe if he reads this he will understand why. We had made several passes with the drag hooks in the area where the boy was last seen before one of the hooks snagged his pant leg. We loaded his lifeless body into the boat and took him to shore. The men from the rescue unit were

there and worked on him for several minutes, but it was no use. He was another drowning victim.

As we loaded out the boat we were feeling sad and wishing we had been there to tell the kid that it wasn't legal to wade or swim any place other than the beach area. The entire family might have grumbled about that crabby old game warden who doesn't want us to have any fun. But, that would have been much better than this. As we finished loading the boat on the trailer I was thinking about that kid and that he wasn't much bigger than my grandchildren, when a man came over from a picnic table and said "I guess you guys get used to finding bodies, and it doesn't bother you one bit." I could take no more. I hurriedly went on the opposite side of the boat trailer and threw up, and then left without answering him. I sure hope it didn't ruin his picnic.

There have been many boating accidents that have resulted in drownings. Sometimes the boats were overloaded, and overturned in the river current. There were some where too much speed was involved; some where the occupants of the boat were intoxicated, and others where someone stood up in the boat and fell out. Most could have been prevented by wearing life preservers, and using common sense.



HUNS IN SOUTHEAST IOWA

by James B. Wozley, Jr. and Ronnie R. George
WILDLIFE RESEARCH BIOLOGISTS

THE GRAY or Hungarian partridge is one of Iowa's sportiest but least known game birds. Originally imported from northern Europe and Asia and released in northern Iowa in the early 1900's its range was restricted until recently to north-central and northwestern regions of the state. Populations have expanded, however, and "Huns" are now found all across the northern half of Iowa and even extend into some southwestern Iowa counties. Because of increased interest in the Hun, Commission biologists stocked about 100 partridge in three southeast Iowa counties during October of 1979 to try establishing the bird in that area.

Partridge used in the stocking effort came from brood stock maintained at the Commission's game farm and wildlife exhibit located near Boone. After banding, the birds were transported to release sites near Mt. Union and Oakville. Habitat for pheasants and quail in these areas has deteriorated due to intensive farming methods. Areas that cease to be attractive for quail and pheasants are often good for Huns. They seem to be much better able to adapt to open, intensely-farmed land with only odd areas such asencerows and roadsides available for nesting and winter cover. The major objective of this past fall's stocking is to provide a game species that can survive in this biologically demanding niche and perhaps eventually to open this portion of the state for partridge hunting.

This stocking was not the first time that Huns had been released by the Commission in recent years. From 1969 through 1972 nearly 1,500 Huns were released in southwest Iowa, and it is probable that the recent increase in sightings in that area are the result of those releases. The knowledge gained in these previous efforts was applied in the present release. Since past releases had shown that Huns often moved long distances if released in large groups, the birds released in southeast Iowa were turned out in groups of 16 to 25. The partridge were released at sites that were about 2 miles apart to keep coveys from joining immediately and leaving the area. The Huns were released at field borders and most quickly ran or flew to standing crop cover.

In addition, solar-powered radio transmitters were placed on 6 females so that their movements and habitat use could be monitored and so researchers could determine their ultimate fate. It was also hoped that some of the radioed females would survive until spring so records of breeding could be obtained. Some interesting results have developed from the radio location work done to date by personnel at the Odessa Wildlife Unit.



Photos by the Authors

Several radioed birds were associated with other released Huns for 2 weeks following the release. Habitat use consisted mainly of unharvested crops or picked fields not yet plowed. While these game farm Huns could be approached closer than wild birds, all became more wary and would fly distances of up to 1/4 mile when flushed. Most Huns appeared to stay in the sections they were released in or in adjacent sections. The longest straight-line move by a radioed partridge was 1 3/4 miles.

Unfortunately, two radioed Huns were killed by predators shortly after release and radio contact was lost with the other four birds 2 to 3 weeks later. However, some interesting secondhand knowledge has come to light. Apparently on the opening weekend of the pheasant and quail season some hunters were unable to tell the difference between legal game birds and a covey of Huns that they flushed. One partridge out of a covey of ten birds was killed. Additionally, one of the banded Huns was found dead nearly 50 miles from the release site. Whether this represents an actual movement of that distance by this bird isn't known, but movements of this magnitude by released partridge have occurred in the past.

On at least one of the release sites, Huns are being seen on a regular basis and appear to be spreading around the local area. It's still too early to determine if the stocking will be a success. Perhaps establishment will require several years of stockings. In the final analysis, we hope that sometime in the not too distant future the Hungarian partridge will be a common sight in southeast Iowa.

PRAERI RAIL TRAIL

(Continued from Page 12)

aware of the need to share such lands wisely with the wildlife. Fence lines have disappeared, as well as farm woodlots in northern and central Iowa. There is little respite from the harsh winter winds that blow across the blackened and bleak cultivated fields for fur and fowl. Even our people suffer in their farmsteads from energy loss in homes due to a lack of adequate windbreaks. The fields sometime suffer even more. Abandoned railroads may offer one of the few sanctuaries to our feathered friends and those with fur coats in rural Iowa, second only to our road ditches in

some areas of the state.

Yes, modern agriculture has been sometimes cruel to wild creatures. The long tall heads of grain that we are blessed with provide little refuge for the friends of nature in winter and, once harvested, the clean row crops provide virtually no nesting cover for birds or a place to romp in the sun for wildlife babies. We need agriculture, but we also need to share this land with our wild friends.

Acquisition of abandoned railroad lines by conservation agencies and private foundations could help preserve, in some cases, the last frontier.

The process of acquiring an abandoned railroad is

arduous. A public agency must go on record with the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Department of Transportation early in the abandonment process. Agencies interested in acquiring the land must attend public hearings held by the Interstate Commerce Commission and go on record as wanting to acquire, if the railroad line should be vacated.

Once the line is vacated, contact must be made with the real estate division of the railroads to inform them of acquisition interest and the Railroad Revitalization and Rehabilitation Act. Adjacent landowners, who feel the land rightfully

belongs to them, must be informed. Public support must be enlisted and public agencies and citizens must be coordinated to complete the acquisition.

Efforts are now under way for legislation to return land back to adjacent landowners first. In some cases this may be advisable, but Iowa will need to determine which miles will be most valuable to the public good and fight to acquire them.

The challenge is always there for the conservationist. The Iowa Legislature will need our help in defining which rail corridors will be best suited for recreational needs in the future.

1980 Non Game Support Certificate Now On Sale

IOWANS interested in helping the state's non-game wildlife now have another opportunity. The second non-game support certificate is out and on sale for five dollars. All revenue collected is earmarked for research and management of

songbirds and other non-game wildlife. This year's certificate features a color photo of a house wren perched on a bird house. Only 5,000 of the 5½" x 8" prints suitable for framing have been produced.

Not all of the 1979 certificates were sold, but revenue totaled more than \$8,000. With that money the Iowa Conservation Commission will help fund an important project. The first statewide, breeding bird survey was initiated last spring. Some 200 plots were selected on the basis of the nine major land forms that compose Iowa. Trained observers work each area counting and recording sightings of various songbirds. The project will be completed this spring, when marsh habitats and urban environs will be sampled.

Dean Roosa, State Ecologist and project coordinator noted that data collected from this survey is the first step toward providing help to songbirds. "By periodically surveying these same areas, we can determine statewide trends in bird populations. We may then be able to do something about these changes, such as improving certain types of habitat on public lands to benefit those species needing help."

On a much larger scale, successful management of game species has been made possible by just this type of research. Other projects which seriously need increased funding in the future include a winter survey on raptors, spring nest surveys, banding birds during migration and the endangered species program. Land acquisition is a critical need for certain species, although public interest in the non-game program would have to increase sharply before that level of funding would be possible.

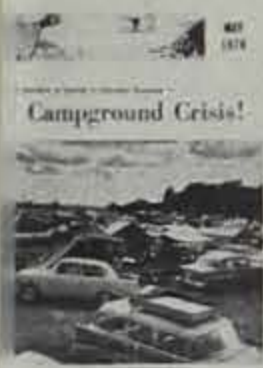
At any rate, the bird has successfully hatched. There are those who would argue that eight thousand bucks won't buy much aid for wildlife, but after only one year, the fledgling program is still alive, well and begging for more. Everyone interested in wildlife can help it grow by purchasing the 1980 non-game support certificate from state fish hatcheries and district offices and from commission personnel who sell licenses throughout the state. Certificates can also be obtained by mailing \$5 to the Iowa Conservation Commission, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

Photo by Ken Formanek



LOOKIN' BACK

Ten Years Ago



the *Iowa Conservationist* featured an article concerning the quality of camping in the Hawkeye state. Overcrowding problems were occurring and in addition to the inconvenience this caused campers, damage was being suffered by the overused facilities. User quotas, improved areas and new parks helped this situation after a few years.

Camping figures show that 18,863 campers used 25 areas in 1949 while 439,082 campers used 125 in 1969.

Twenty Years Ago



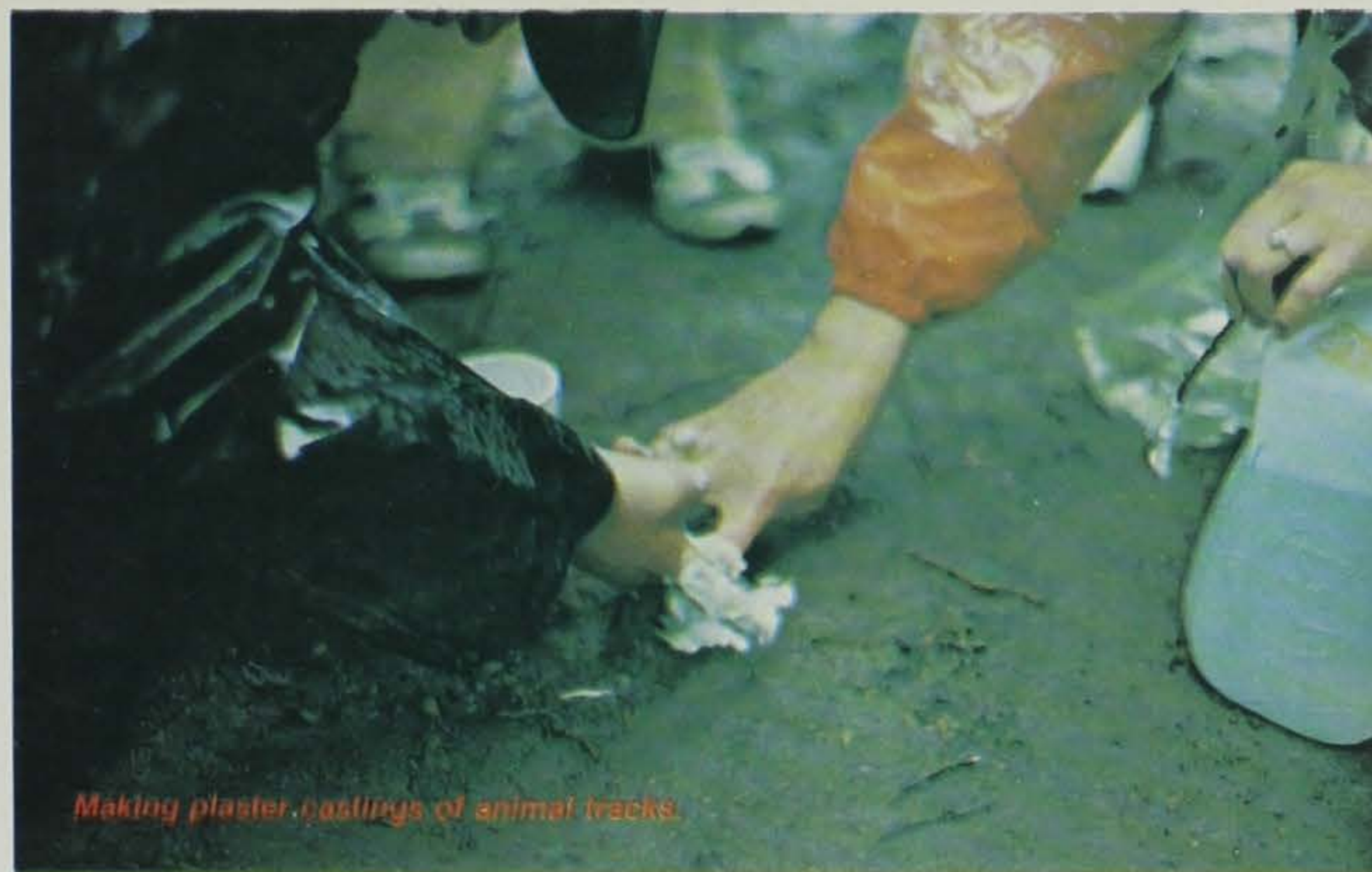
the magazine was explaining the advantages of early season trout fishing. While the weather might be unpredictable and cold, there are seldom any other anglers in the early bird's way. The long undisturbed holes might just give up a fish more easily than later in the year when they have been gone over a number of times.

Thirty Years Ago



the *Conservationist* was also looking at early season trout fishing. In those days there was an opening day of the season when anglers would take to the stream regardless of weather.

One of the last recorded buffalo hunts in Iowa took place in Pocahontas County in September 1863. The old bull killed at this time weighed around 1500 pounds.



Making plaster castings of animal tracks.

Classroom Corner

by Bob Rye

ADMINISTRATOR,
CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER

THE STUDY of the natural environment through utilization of the "out-of-doors" has become an integral part of the education curriculum of many school systems. Sixty-one school systems made use of the Iowa Conservation Commission's Conservation Education Center during the 1978-79 school year. The Center is located adjacent to Springbrook State Park near Guthrie Center. Now in its eleventh year of operation, the Center recorded over 15,000 registered guest days last year.

The displays of Sloan birdprints, taxidermied birds, fish, mammals, and rocks hold the attention of their viewers. Trails are developed and used in studying a variety of topics along the way. These include prairies, forests, streams, soil conservation (terraces and ponds), wildlife and food plots.

The objectives of the Center have changed over the years. Originally, a college course for teachers was the priority. This has been expanded to include several college courses, Conservation Commission training, school-age groups and state agencies. The production of useful educational materials for teachers and Conservation

Commission personnel are in progress.

A common question that I receive is, how does a group get to use the Center? First, the group must be planning activities in education. The second step would be to contact the Center to see if the desired date is available. May's users usually reserve one to two years in advance to insure their preferred times.

The Center staff follows up the reservation with a planning meeting. These meetings (usually at the Center itself) answer time and clothing questions, topics to be covered, and other concerns. This enables the educational program to flow smoothly and be of high quality.

May is a very active month at the Center. The activity I am referring to isn't nature's changes, as nature stays active year round. The "activity" is that of the groups attending the Center. Fourth through eighth graders can indeed be very active as they explore nature's spring activities.

The study of spring activities may be a specialty program. This is where a single college class or group of high school students or

adults work with a specific topic. Group sponsors will also connect the activities with their normal classroom activities.

Casting animal tracks with plaster of paris is an activity which can be related to the normal classroom activities. This activity may be performed year round but May is an excellent time because of the mud which is readily available. This activity also has art class value, with the hand activities which are involved. It can also include awareness, observation, and use of language by having the students describe in words and writing what the animal was doing when it left its track.

Further information on how to run the activity on track casting may be obtained. This will include several common Iowa tracks plus how the activity can be tied in with school activities and how to actually make the casts.

The track information and information on using the Conservation Education Center can be obtained from: Conservation Education Center, R. R. #1, Box 53 Guthrie Center, Iowa 50115, (515) 747-8383.



J.F. LANDENBERGER