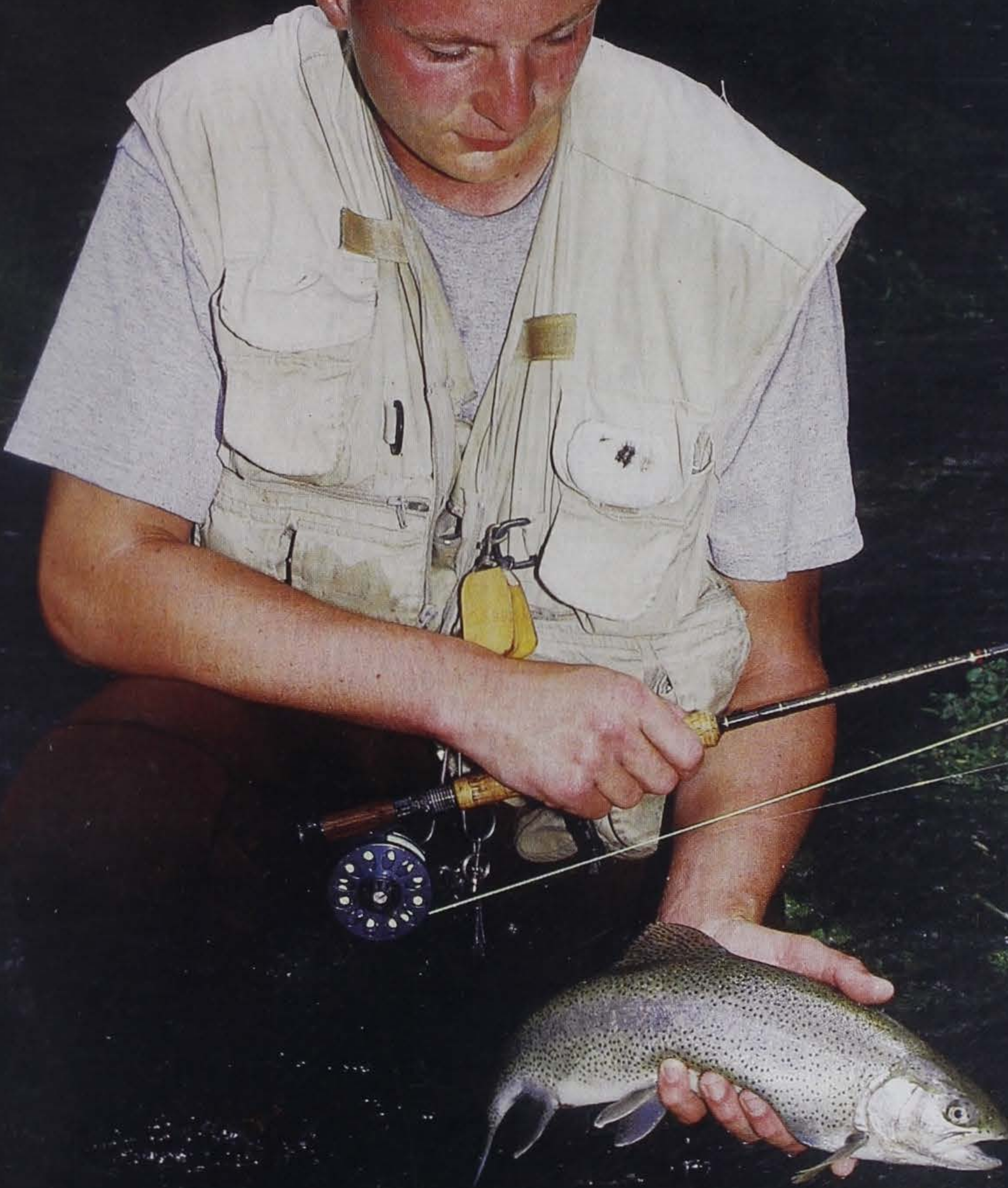


MAY/JUNE 2002

CONSERVATIONIST

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



FROM THE DIRECTOR



Bob Castelline

Camp Iowa Parks

Spending state money on Iowa's natural resources is a sound investment in the state's economic future. This concept was recently reinforced by Iowa's very own Winnebago Industries in Forest City.

In announcing its expansion of a new plant in Charles City, Winnebago cited the baby boomer generation entering the recreational vehicle market by leaps and bounds over the next two decades. The figures quoted by Winnebago are 350,000 more people reaching the age of 50 every month for the next 20 years. Winnebago is wisely investing in its own future, strategically positioning itself to capture what appears to be a growing market.

So what does a Wall Street-style market analysis have to do with the Iowa DNR? Plenty. It

shows a growing market for outdoor recreational opportunities.

The National Survey on Recreation and Environment (NSRE) in 2000 showed participation in camping nationwide increased 24.5 percent for the period from 1982 to 1995. The study also noted that a majority of those camping trips nationwide were done at state parks with developed camping facilities.

Our own camping figures in Iowa bear witness to similar growth. Camping nights in Iowa state parks in 1984 were 512,182. By the year 2000, that figure was just over 752,000, a growth of about 47 percent. While camping numbers can still vary from year to year depending on weather, the overall trend has still clearly been on an upward swing for the last 20 years.

The Outdoor Recreation Industry Association also notes two other very important trends: Americans are taking shorter vacations and staying closer to home and they are looking for diverse experiences for their leisure time. Both of these trends make a strong case that improvement of existing facilities and construction of new state park opportunities in Iowa will be a sound investment for the future economic vitality of our state.

Our camping numbers show that Rock Creek Lake State Park near Newton is traditionally our second most popular campground, behind only the Gull Point complex at Iowa's Great Lakes area. Some of the success of Rock Creek is due

in part to its proximity to Interstate 80. Iowa's location in the heartland of the country has us thinking in terms of developing and promoting camping opportunities for the millions of motorists passing through our state each year on our interstates.

With the strong growth in outdoor recreation participation in the upcoming decades, providing the infrastructure for people to engage in these activities will be key to attracting and retaining population to our state.

As it stands right now, Iowa currently ranks 47th of the 50 states in the amount of land under public ownership with 2.8 percent. I find it troubling when I hear some of our citizens talk about there being too much "DNR land." It is not "DNR land." It is your land and your children's land and your neighbor's land, managed by the DNR for the use and enjoyment of all. The quantity and quality of public land is a vital component to our quality of life and Iowa's ability to thrive economically.

Iowa is truly blessed with opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors in all four corners of our state and everywhere in between. I encourage everyone to take the opportunity to enjoy a night of camping in one of our state parks. It's worth the investment of your time because the memories will last a lifetime.

Jeffrey R. Vonk

FRONT COVER: GARY VONDEROHE WITH
A RAINBOW TROUT CAUGHT WHILE FLY
FISHING BY LOWELL WASHBURN.



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Gary Vonderohe grew up casting spinners for trout in northeast Iowa's streams. Today, he prefers outwitting trout, preferably his beloved browns, with one of his own hand-tied flies. His ultimate thrill, however, is matching the fly to the day's hatch.

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Lake Rathbun supplies water to more than 60,000 people in 18 counties and supports an estimated 1 million days of recreational use per year. There's no wonder it's an asset worth protecting.

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In honor of the outstanding job Keith and Mary Shafer have done managing their timber over the past decades, they were chosen Iowa's 2001 Tree Farmers of the Year.

LETTERS

Why ATV Advertising?

I was pleased to receive my *Iowa Conservationist* yesterday. The bird on the cover is very charming.

I understand the necessity of the advertising, however I am surprised at the type of ads that were used. There are five ads for ATVs. I know that they are useful for some purposes, but for most folks they're a toy that they use to run around, make noise, pollute the air and tear up the turf. This is not too good a thing for a conservation magazine. Perhaps they should be replaced by ads for fishing equipment of various companies, or ads for vacation spots in Iowa.

Thanks for hearing me out.

Harold R. Klossowsky
Waverly

With all the controversy regarding the indiscriminate use of off-road vehicles I am very disappointed to see a full-page ad for ATVs in the last issue of *Ia. Conservationist*. Please — don't sell out a good magazine to the motorized "sports" industry.

Ms. Elma Geater
Vinton

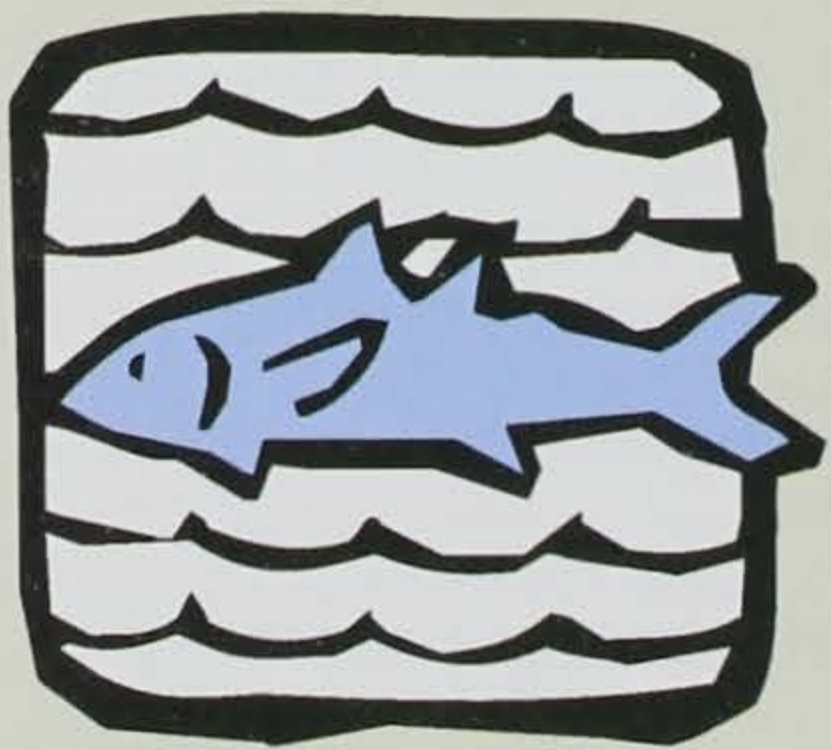
I have been a consistent subscriber of the *Iowa Conservationist* for approximately 25 years, the later nine of those from Utah. I truly enjoy the wealth of information presented in this publication . . . Even though I no longer live there, this magazine allows me to monitor the "heartbeat" of a state so dear to me.

So imagine my disappointment

upon seeing advertisements in the magazine for the first time in the March/April issue. I do not wish to deride the editors for this policy change, however, for I fully understand the need to increase revenues in order to offset rising publication costs. Other conservation and environmental magazines have resorted to the same in recent years, including one of my favorites, *National Wildlife*. What I found particularly disturbing for such a quality publication as the *Iowa Conservationist*, however, were the advertisements on pages 39-40 from five of the largest all-terrain vehicle manufacturers . . .

While I cannot argue with the fact that the responsible use of ATVs, dirt bikes, personal watercraft, and snowmobiles are

Camp State Parks



It's in our nature

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legitimate forms of recreation, you cannot deny their huge and ever-increasing negative impact on the environment and other more traditional forms of outdoor recreation . . . While there are many responsible riders out there, there are far too many (and increasing everyday) who are not, resulting in literally thousands of illegal trespass incidents into designated wilderness areas and thousands of miles of destructive "ghost roads" through sensitive riparian areas and habitats, both on public and private lands . . .

Motorized recreation has become a real paradox for many natural resources agencies. The dilemma lies in the significant impacts incurred on our environment verses the state revenue opportunity in terms of advertising and license fees. Perhaps the paradox would disappear if the state would take into consideration the full costs of getting such revenue. How much does advertising really bring in if the state has to devote more resources to management, enforcement and restoration costs? . . .

My ultimate point, however, is one that is shared by many like me . . . who hold a deep appreciation of our natural world. That is, which I cannot state emphatically enough, we are now rearing an entire generation that does not

know how to enjoy the outdoors without the roar of a motor. This, in and of itself, is a tragedy that spells grave consequences for our remaining open spaces. At the same time, these rapidly disappearing spaces are becoming increasingly impacted by more and more users . . .

I'm not necessarily suggesting the magazine realign itself toward a different audience, but a reevaluation . . . of the message it is sending with this new advertising opportunity may be in order. As the lead agency in charge of protecting the state's natural resources, I believe the DNR has a responsibility toward balance for all types of users and how that plays into the state's future . . .

*Tim Wagner
Logan, Utah*

This letter was edited significantly for length. It was printed despite exceeding the 250-word maximum.

— Editors

The Other Side

Great to see the tasteful advertising so needed to help support the work of DNR.

*Dwight W. Smith
via email*

The *Iowa Conservationist* welcomes letters from readers. Printed letters reflect the opinions of the author. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Letters can be emailed to alan.foster@dnr.state.ia.us.

May/June 2002
Volume 61, Number 3

STAFF

Ross Harrison, Bureau Chief
Julie Sparks, Editor
Alan Foster, Managing Editor
Lowell Washburn, Writer/Photographer
Clay Smith, Photographer
Larry Pool, Graphic Artist
Circulation, 515/281-3359 or 281-3887

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Energy (515) 281-5918
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Iowa Conservationist (ISSN 0021-0471) is published bimonthly by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034. Periodicals postage paid in Des Moines, Iowa and additional mailing offices. **Subscription rates: \$12 for one year, \$18 for two years and \$24 for three years. Prices subject to change without notice.** Include mailing label for renewals and address changes. **POSTMASTER:** Send changes to the *Iowa Conservationist*, Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. Ninth Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.

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Last in a series

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

A Brief History of Wildlife Conservation in Iowa

by Terry W. Little

Momentous occasions in our lives often create an introspective mood among we humans. Events of historic significance, personal triumphs or tragedies, or times of great change in our collective lives seem to generate a need to reflect on the past

and share our thoughts with others. The changing of a century, an occasion that all but the luckiest among us can experience only once in our life, is one of those times.

The beginning of the 21st century spawned innumerable attempts to capture the essence of the era just passed and look into our political, cultural and social future. Books,

documentaries and lists of the best and worst of the past century

abounded - worst tragedies, best movies, greatest achievements in medicine, art and politics. They attempted to capture the high- and low-lights of five generations of human experience during one of the greatest periods of change in history.

The 20th century began with my grandparents working an isolated farm in southern Minnesota with teams of horses, retiring and waking by lamp light, and hoping to enjoy a life span of 50 years or so, mostly of unending labor. A hundred years later my young grandchildren will probably work in an air conditioned office, communicate around the globe via the Internet and may well live to see the turn of the next century.

Two world wars and numerous smaller "conflicts" have created a more stable, if yet shaky, political structure. Periods of great economic hardship and great prosperity have created a lifestyle for most Americans my grandparents could never have imagined. The discovery of penicillin and other medical and technological advances have allowed man to walk on the moon, conduct business instantly anywhere in the world and even replace a diseased or worn out human heart. Who dares even dream what marvels await in the next 100 years?

And so it was the turn of the century that was the genesis for this series of articles on the history of wildlife conservation in Iowa. Starting with the birth of the conservation movement with Teddy Roosevelt and culminating with the restoration of many species of native wildlife once thought gone forever, it was a surprising and in many ways gratify-



Ty Smedes



Ty Simeles

Surprisingly few of these challenges involve new and better ways of managing fish and wildlife. Nearly all relate in some way to finding a way for conservation to play a continuing and important role in an ever-changing and technologically advanced society. A brief summary of these challenges follows. These are not the only views on how conservation should fit into our future, but do represent what the professionals that achieved the successes of the past century believe will have to be overcome.

Indifference of the public.

Perhaps the greatest problem facing fish and wildlife in Iowa today is one that underlies all other challenges that will follow. Concerns for wildlife simply are not high on the priority list of a majority of citizens. The reasons proposed to explain this are many. Concentration of our population in urban centers has removed our youth from the rural setting that has historically produced most of our hunters and anglers. Families with two spouses working outside the home and the increase in single-parent families make it difficult for parents to spend leisure time with their children and provide the exposure to nature-based outdoor recreation. Competing interests - whether it is organized sports or the availability of television and computer games - have created more opportunities to capture the interest of juveniles than existed for their parents. A shifting focus to agriculture as a business rather than a way of life, and the mounting financial pressures that shift in attitude has created, have reduced the incentive

ing century of change for wildlife as well. White-tailed deer, wild turkeys, river otters, giant Canada geese and many other species have returned to be viewed, hunted and enjoyed by Iowans. Thousands of acres have been acquired and managed for wildlife habitat and public recreation. Yet in a world so constantly and rapidly changing, where technology creates ever new and more intrusive means of taming and working the land, the future is no less uncertain for wildlife than for we humans.

Conservation Challenges for the 21st Century

In January of 2000, the DNR's Fish and Wildlife Division convened a group of 35 individuals from its wildlife, fisheries and law enforcement bureaus and representatives of the major private conservation organizations in Iowa to commemorate the division's accomplishments and to aid in planning for the future. Perhaps the most important product from that meeting was a list of fish and wildlife conservation challenges that these fish and wildlife professionals believe the department will face in the new century.

Maintaining traditional wildlife uses is seen as one of conservation organizations' challenges for the future. More often, hunting, trapping and even fishing are under attack by those who do not see their value.

for farmers to retain wildlife habitat on their land.

As a result, fewer Iowans seem to view retaining our wildlife heritage as important enough in their lives to provide the support to improve conservation efforts. Hunters and anglers, traditionally the financial and political support for conservation programs, are not immune to this problem. Less than 10 percent belong to an organized conservation group like Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited (DU), the National Wild Turkey Federation or many others that actively promote wildlife conservation in Iowa. And just a tiny fraction of the half of Iowans that say that wildlife is important in their lives belong to any organized general conservation group like the National Wildlife Federation, Audubon Society or The Nature Conservancy. Without support from citizens, the gains of the past century could quickly erode.

Maintaining traditional wildlife uses. Hunting, trapping and even fishing are coming under attack by some citizens who do not see the value




Lowell Washburn

of these traditions in their view of modern society. The sharpest attacks have come from organized animal rights groups that have achieved successes in curtailing at least some hunting and fishing activities - The Humane Society of the United States, Fund for Animals, and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) are a few of the most active and strident. Legal and personal attacks by these and other groups have reduced the value of furs in the fashion market to the point that trapping as an economic activity has all but ceased. They have also succeeded in ending hunting of mountain lions in some western states and ending spring hunting of bears in others. While most of their challenges to more mainstream hunting and fishing activities have not yet been successful, their efforts will continue.

Perhaps just as crucial, however, is the erosion of support for consumptive wildlife activities among the general public. City dwellers that for generations have been isolated from the realities of production agriculture and from the traditions of hunting and fishing forget that their food does not come automatically pre-wrapped in the supermarket. This ignorance of ecological processes or the role hunting plays in controlling wildlife means that unsuspecting individuals can easily be swayed by the passionate but inaccurate appeals from the PETAs of the world out to promote only their agenda of ending all human use of animals.

Securing adequate funding for conservation programs. Traditionally, virtually all fish and wildlife conservation efforts in Iowa have been funded by hunters and anglers. License fees and excise taxes on



some hunting and fishing equipment contribute \$28 million annually to Iowa. Citizens who do not hunt or fish contribute very little. No tax revenue from the state's general fund comes to the Iowa DNR for these programs. A portion of Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) money goes for land acquisition and management, but this comes from gaming receipts and is a fraction of the revenue from hunters and anglers. About 1 percent of Iowans contribute just \$150,000 annually to the Chickadee Checkoff which goes to the Iowa Wildlife Diversity Program.

So far Iowans have been content to allow hunters and anglers to foot the bill. Yet, more Iowans hunt pheasants on opening day of the season than the combined attendance at all college and university football games in Iowa if all schools played a home game on the same weekend. More than half of all Iowans say that wildlife is important in their lives and more money should be spent on its management. Hunting and fishing are multimillion dollar enterprises that generate most of their revenue into the small town bait dealers, gas stations, restaurants and motels where economic activity is most needed. More than 6,000 jobs are supported by hunters and anglers to provide goods and services, most in rural communities.

Unfortunately the number of sportsmen and women who support these programs is declining. Two decades ago nearly 300,000 Iowans hunted. Today that number has shrunk by a third as hunters have aged and dropped out of the sport and

potential young hunters are attracted to other pursuits. Continually increasing fees to hunt and fish has a diminishing capability to maintain funding if lower income hunters, who traditionally make up a substantial proportion of license buyers, decide hunting becomes too expensive.

Unless Iowans recognize the cultural and economic benefits of providing adequate financial resources for wildlife conservation, the ability to maintain current programs will be reduced. All the states surrounding Iowa provide some general tax revenue for fish and wildlife management. The epitome of sound conservation funding is Missouri, where a one-eighth-cent sales tax generates in excess of \$80 million annually in addition to license fees. Investments in hunting and fishing are ways to maintain the quality of life in Iowa and spur economic development in rural communities. Well-designed conservation programs could go far to stem the loss of well-educated citizens and slow the dramatic urbanization of Iowa's population.

Controlling habitat loss. There is no greater issue facing wildlife in Iowa today than loss of habitat. In an

Great progress lies ahead if a broad vision for conservation programs can be developed into which all these groups will join. To do so will require putting aside individual agendas and finding a way to avoid turf battles and competition for the same program funds. A combined effort could result in greater progress in wildlife conservation than that seen in the last century.

agricultural state where the land is fertile and capable of supporting intensive agriculture, loss of habitat far outweighs all other threats to wildlife and to environmental stability in general. Federal government agricultural policies currently encourage all-out production to maximize farm income. Multi-millions of dollars are paid to Iowans annually to increase production far above the market's capability to pay a fair price in return. The few millions of dollars that are placed into federal conservation programs pale by comparison.

The loss of wildlife habitat that results as marginal land is converted to row crops in order to maximize federal subsidies has impoverished wildlife habitat all across Iowa and has even greater impacts on soil

erosion and the resulting loss in water quality. Advancing technology that leads to larger equipment and consequently larger fields, the retiring of a generation of farmers and the subsequent growth in the size of farms, and the growth of corporate farms to replace the traditional, small family farm only make the problem worse.

More subtle, but also damaging, is the urban sprawl that developed from the unparalleled prosperity that emerged in the 1990s. Around any major city or even moderate-sized town, the evidence is obvious that new housing is spreading onto the landscape. In some cases whole subdivisions are taking over formerly agricultural fields. In others, small acreages with at least a degree of isolation from neighbors are taking over wooded or pasture sites.

While the fear of losing productive land for agriculture is often expressed, there is another valid point that at least needs to be debated. Is it worse to lose a few acres of potential crop ground when we are already overproducing corn and



Ty Smedes

Successful wildlife management is based on decades of research by professional biologists. Unfortunately, recent tendencies have been to cut research when budgets are tight, making solutions to wildlife management problems more difficult.

Andy Moore



John Pulo

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soybeans to the point that government subsidies are needed to keep farmers in business? Or is it worse to lose the few precious remaining acres of woodland and other undeveloped lands that provide the habitat for what is left of Iowa's wildlife heritage?

Devaluation of science. The successful restoration of Iowa's wildlife could not have been achieved without the efforts of scientifically trained professional biologists implementing the knowledge gained from decades of research. University programs such as the nationally respected Department of Animal Ecology at Iowa State have trained hundreds of undergraduates in the basics of fish and wildlife biology, ecology and management. And graduate programs like ISU's Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit have provided fish and wildlife agencies with researchers who have provided the solutions to many perplexing management problems.

When wildlife populations were scarce and restoration programs were just getting off the ground, biologists were looked to as the experts in their field and listened to by hunters and anglers with respect. Biologists releasing a new turkey flock or establishing a new goose restoration site were often considered heroes by the local conservation club.

Once populations became established and abundant, however, perceptions began to change. To some, deer became pests in crop fields and even in backyards in urban areas. Geese fouled golf courses with their droppings. Raccoons raided garbage cans and carried the potential to spread disease. Hunters



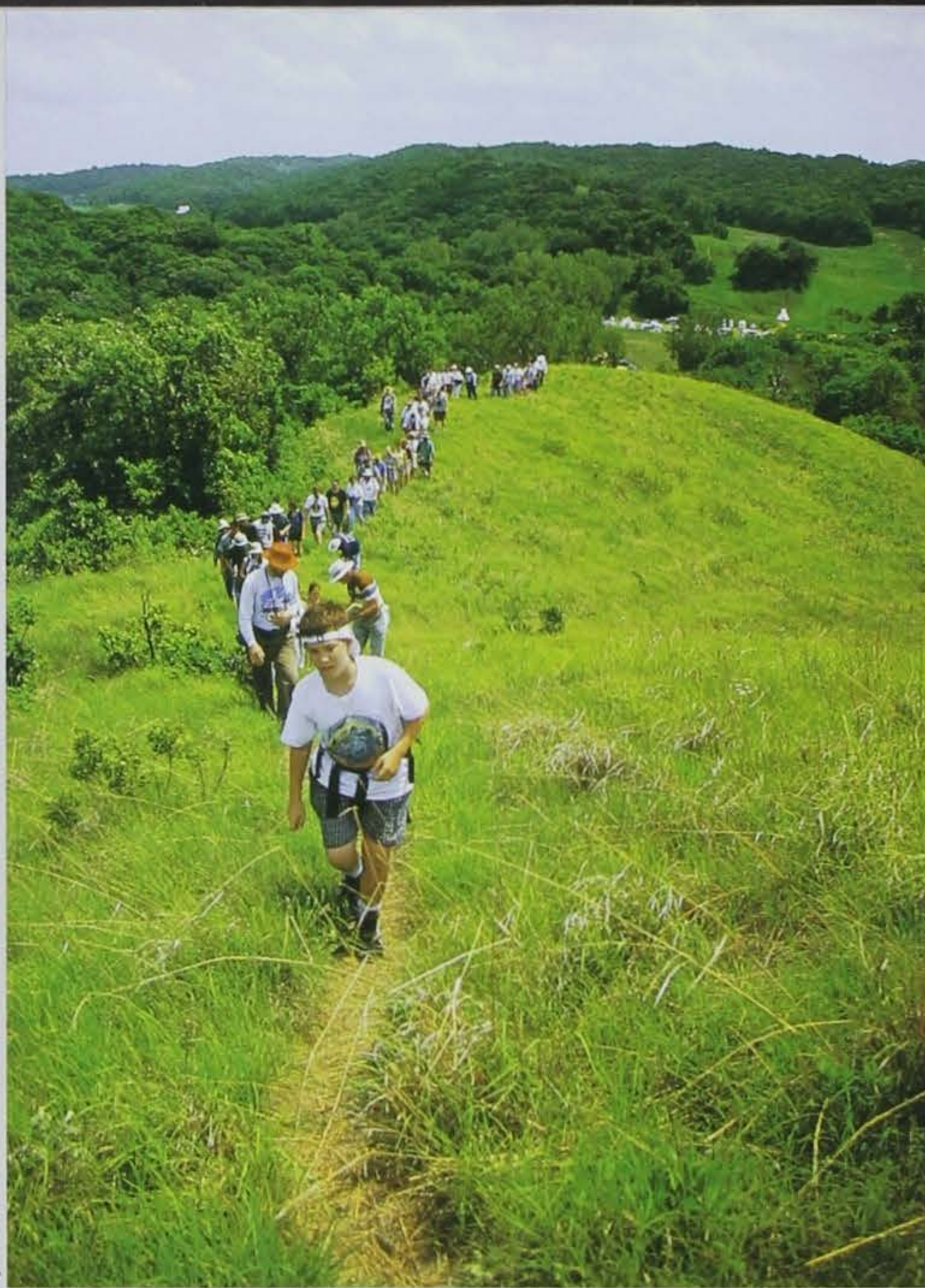
Ken Formanek



Lowell Washburn

Loss of habitat is a critical issue in Iowa.

The conversion of marginal land to row crops in order to maximize federal subsidies has not only impoverished wildlife habitat, but increased soil erosion and compromised water quality. And the prosperity of the last decade brought about a more subtle, but still damaging consequence — urban sprawl.



Ty Smedes



Lowell Washburn

Broadening the conservation movement to include a multitude of groups and interests provides the best hope for continued progress.

who were willing to share hunting opportunities when numbers were scarce now wanted seasons changed to fit their needs, even though their activities could decrease opportunities for others. Citizens began seeking solutions in the legislature rather than from the department. Biologists were no longer heroes. As funds for wildlife conservation have become tight, the tendency in nearly all government agencies has been to reduce funding for research first. Land has to be managed to

produce wildlife and laws have to be enforced, so research programs are the first to be cut. In the short term this solution allows successful management programs to continue as long as things remain the same, but they never do. In a larger perspective, research has provided nearly all the information on which successful management programs are based and without it, problem solving will be greatly slowed. Wildlife biologists understand well how to build wildlife populations. Learning to live with success and adjusting programs to meet the needs of citizens as well as wildlife will be a major challenge that will be solved with far greater difficulty without viable and ongoing research programs.

Attracting professionals who can solve diverse problems. Wildlife biologists no longer spend most of their time managing wildlife, but in managing people. While knowledge of basic wildlife biology and management will always be needed, knowing how to get a diverse and sometimes contentious and highly divided public to agree to a management plan has become equally important.

How do you reconcile demands from a group of muzzleloader deer hunters who want to change their traditional October season to coincide with the rut in November when there is an equally vocal and adamant group of bowhunters set on maintaining this time exclusively for bow hunting? How do you arrive at a solution when one farmer has too much deer damage to his crops and the neighbor that owns the timber land where the deer can be hunted

will not allow any hunting? How do you convince a legislator that his or her proposed bill to allow a constituent, perhaps a very influential constituent, to have a hunting license denied to others, that the bill is not in the best interests of all hunters?

These and other confrontations make up an increasing part of a wildlife biologist's job. Knowing what citizens want and learning to balance those interests against the interest of sound wildlife management will become increasingly important as the relatively simpler, strictly biological issues are resolved. Developing listening, team building and negotiating skills and having the temperament to handle confrontational situations in a professional manner that leads to an acceptable compromise are already, and will increasingly become, required job skills for wildlife biologists.

Developing a shared vision for conservation. Much of the history of successful conservation programs in this nation has been based on the development of a special interest group whose members saw a common cause around which to organize. Hunters were the first interest group to organize when nearly all of our wildlife was in jeopardy in the late 19th century. Since then, hunters and anglers have formed subgroups focused on promoting the interests of waterfowl, pheasants, quail, deer, elk, wild turkeys, bass, muskies, trout and a host of others. Each of these groups has been successful to some extent in promoting the needs of their target species and their constituents. An even larger gulf sometimes has separated hunters' groups from those that are interested in bird watching or some other non-

consumptive use. Most have worked successfully with the DNR to promote some aspect of wildlife conservation.

A similar splitting of functions has occurred between state and federal agencies that have similar yet distinct responsibilities for natural resource management. For example, the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has historically been concerned primarily with soil erosion. State wildlife agencies have responsibility for wildlife management, but may have separate entities for game and nongame programs. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has responsibility for all migratory birds, but until recently has had an internal conflict between game managers (waterfowl) and nongame interests. These internal divisions, and sometimes differences in the personal interests of the individuals staffing the respective programs, can hamper cooperation and efficiency of delivering conservation programs.

Fortunately there are signs of change in the air. USDA agencies now recognize and provide funding for wildlife in their more general conservation programs. Hunter-founded conservation groups like DU and Pheasants Forever cooperate on habitat restoration projects that benefit a variety of upland game and waterfowl species. And nongame groups are beginning to come to the negotiating table in a spirit of cooperation and with funding for broad based conservation projects.

Iowa provides a special opportunity for cooperative programs to succeed. The lack of habitat is such



Ty Smedes

a critical issue here that any habitat restoration project, no matter what source of funds are used, provides multiple benefits to wildlife. Research has shown that all habitat restoration projects in the DNR's Prairie Pothole Joint Venture area provide vital nesting habitat for waterfowl like mallards, blue-winged teal and Canada geese, but also to game birds like ring-necked pheasants and gray partridge, and to dickcissels, bobolinks, grasshopper sparrows and more. In fact, more nongame songbirds nest on these areas than the waterfowl and pheasants for which the projects were originally designed.

Based on these successes, a number of national and international conservation partnerships have formed to promote conservation on a local, state and continental scale. The North American Waterfowl

Management Plan has had the greatest success to date. More recent initiatives have started to coordinate efforts for other groups of species as well. Partners in Flight (PIF), an effort to conserve neotropical song birds that nest in North America but winter in the tropics, and the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), an effort to coordinate the activities of all game and non-game bird conservation groups into a more effective partnership, are in formative stages.

Great progress lies ahead if a broad vision for conservation programs can be developed into which all these groups will join. To do so will require putting aside individual agendas and finding a way to avoid turf battles and competition for the same program funds. A combined effort could result in greater progress in wildlife conservation than that seen in the last century.

Conclusion

This series started as a year-long tribute to wildlife conservation in Iowa. It quickly became apparent that six articles could not do justice to the subject and now, 18 months and nine articles later, there is still more left unsaid than said.

I hope I have managed to capture the highlights and give readers at least some appreciation for how our landscape and wildlife heritage got to the point that it is today.

In a rush to colonize a new nation and to provide for economic growth in a time when an agricultural and pastoral economy prevailed, there was a great failure by our nation to protect what was once an unimag-



Ty Smedes

able diversity and abundance of wildlife on the plains of Iowa and the West. A century and a half later, some of that diversity has been restored, but what we see today is but a shadow of what was once here. Maintaining what we have achieved and improving on it in the face of an expanding human population and an economy built on growth may prove more difficult than what has been accomplished so far. But emerging efforts to broaden the conservation movement to include a multitude of groups and interests provides the best hope for continued progress.

Iowa will always be an agricultural state. Finding room in it for wildlife and improving the quality of

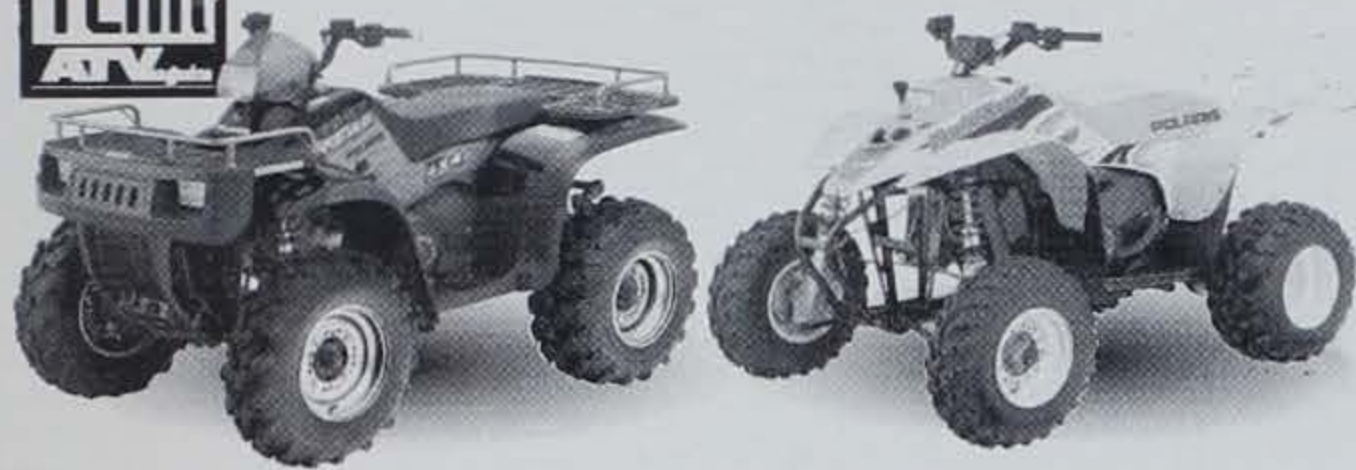
life for humans remain a challenge for the 21st century.

In a short series like this it was impossible to pay tribute to all the dedicated individuals who have contributed to our wildlife conservation history. A few of the more prominent names have been mentioned, but there have been hundreds more - politicians, educators, citizens and fish and wildlife professionals - who have devoted their life's work to recapturing Iowa's wildlife heritage. Our citizens owe them a debt of gratitude beyond paying.

Terry W. Little is the wildlife research supervisor for the department in Des Moines.



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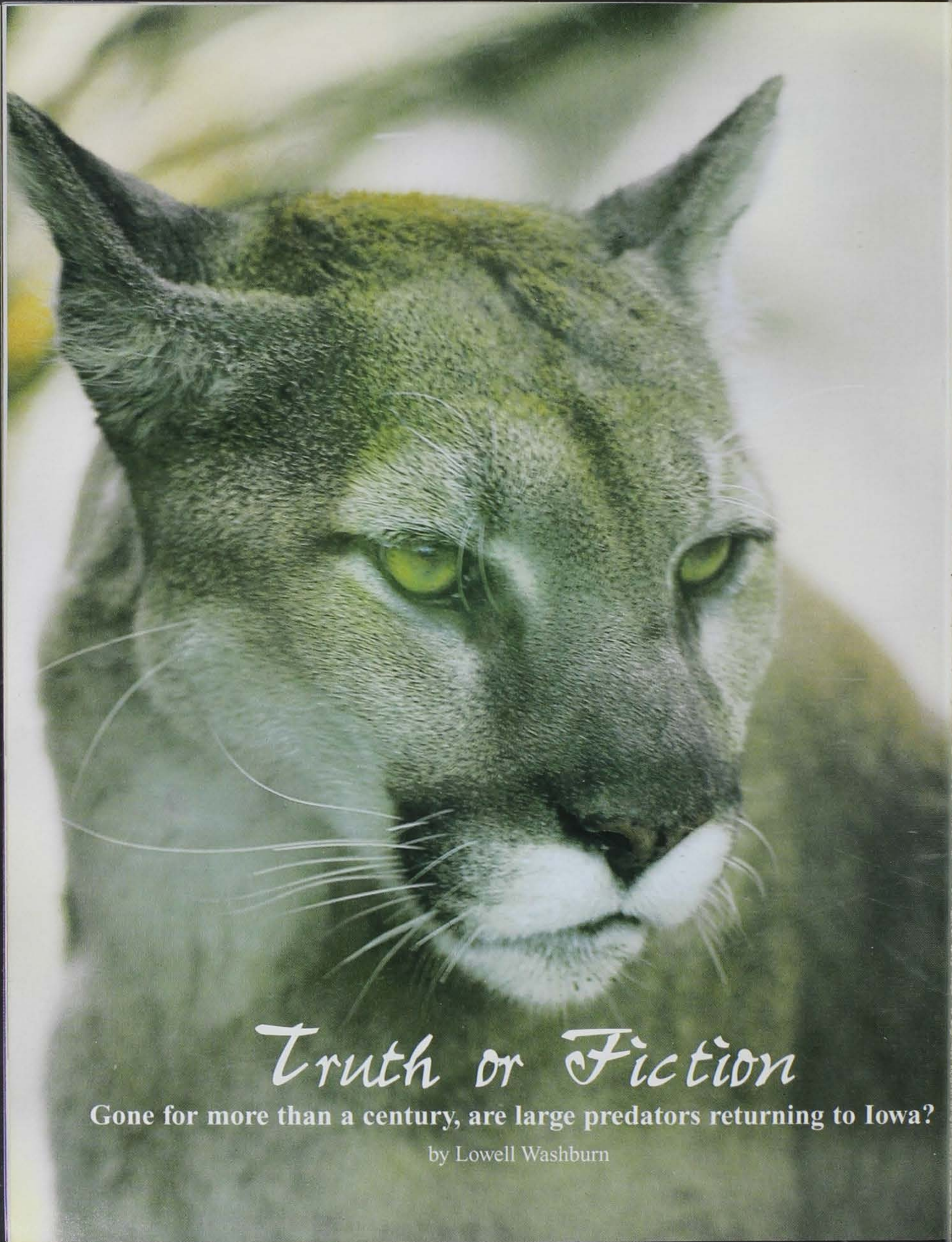
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Truth or Fiction

Gone for more than a century, are large predators returning to Iowa?

by Lowell Washburn

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Lions, and tigers, and bears — Oh my! Well, maybe not tigers. But lions and bears? — Oh yea!

Some experts even claim we might as well throw in a few wolves while we're at it.

Forget that we live in the very heart of America's highly developed Midwest Cornbelt. As incredible as it may seem, Iowa wildlife biologists say reports of black bears, bobcats, wolves and even mountain lions have increased dramatically during the past several years.

Although seemingly reminiscent of the 1800s pioneer era, the sightings of such fearsome predators in Iowa is not an aberration. Instead, it merely reflects what is already occurring in most of our border states.

MOUNTAIN LIONS

During the past two years, Iowa wildlife biologists have received more than 20 separate reports of free-ranging mountain lions, according to DNR furbearer resource specialist Ron Andrews.

The majority of those sightings, says Andrews, have been reported from the rugged, loess hills region of extreme western Iowa. Other reports of mountain lions have come from the southern and central portions of the state. At least two sightings have occurred among the rugged blufflands of the upper Mississippi River in extreme northeastern Iowa.

"Unfortunately, most mountain lion reports have offered little in the way of good, hard evidence," said Andrews.

"Consequently, wildlife biologists often find themselves engaged in the tricky business of separating fact from fiction. In the process of sorting



Ty Smedes

Mountain lions (opposite page), black bears (below) and timber wolves, which once roamed the untamed Iowa landscape, have been gone for more than a century. Recent sightings of mountain lions and black bears, and the belief that wolves are on the fringes of northeast Iowa, lead wildlife experts to contend the large predators may be rediscovering the state.

Opposite page photo by Lowell Washburn



Roger A. Hill

wheat from chaff, we are forced to make judgment calls on a lot of these. It's not always easy, but I think we have kept our standard high and have tended to be very conservative on our calls.

"We've developed a map (see page 22) to help document what's occurring statewide, and our mapping only includes those sightings that we feel are extremely credible. The positive side of our conservatism is that whenever a sighting finally does make it to the map, I'm fairly certain that someone has really seen a mountain lion."

Occasionally, reports of free-ranging mountain lions, also known as cougars or pumas, do come with something more tangible than a one- or two-second glimpse of what someone thinks was a lion leaping across the roadway in front of their headlights.

One recent example came from the Des Moines River corridor near the Webster County community of Dayton. The mountain lion report was backed by one of those priceless pieces of "good, hard evidence." Personnel from the Webster County Conservation Board presented Andrews with a perfect plaster casting of the animal's track. A second (foot print) casting was made by DNR wildlife biologist Mel Moe from an animal sighted in southern Iowa's Decatur County. Another lion, this time a female with two young, was seen and reported by several witnesses near the southern Iowa community of Woodburn.

As early eyewitness accounts and plaster cast evidence mounted, most wildlife professionals were becoming reluctantly convinced that wild mountain lions were at least

passing in and out of the state, and were perhaps doing so on a fairly regular basis. Only one piece of the Iowa lion puzzle remained missing. That piece was what scientists refer to as a "voucher specimen." To most of us, it would be called a dead lion.

That final and irrefutable bit of evidence was supplied, quite literally by accident, late last August when a healthy, free ranging cougar was killed by a passing motorist along Highway 59 near the town of Harlan in western Iowa's Shelby County.

According to Shelby County

Conservation Board director Darby Sanders, the lion was an adult male in prime condition. The big cat measured nearly 8 feet in length and weighed more than 125 pounds. The front paws had a (closed) width of slightly more than 4 1/2 inches.

According to Sanders, the cougar's saga (in Iowa) began nearly a year before the fatal accident when Harlan landowner Doug Burmeister reported "getting a quick glance of what he thought was a cougar crossing a corner of his property at dusk."

During the next several months



Ed Weiner

A mountain lion killed by a vehicle in August 2001 near Harlan left no doubt about the species' reemergence in Iowa. The cat measured nearly 8 feet in length and its front paws had a (closed) width of slightly more than 4 1/2 inches.



Ed Weiner

there was only one additional sighting when the animal was seen entering a nearby drainage ravine. The third, and final, report came when the lion was killed. The fatality was "within a stone's throw" of where both previous sightings had been made.

"This is a pretty good-sized drainage containing plenty of brush. Based on the location of previous reports, I think it's a good bet that the lion had been living in there for the whole year," said Sanders.

"Cougars are solitary, nocturnal, and elusive. Even though this one

was apparently living right under our noses, it's not really surprising that no one was seeing it," Sanders said.

Although the lion may have been secretive, there was some evidence of its existence. Burmeister, for example, had reported a noticeable decline in the ravine's rabbit population, and that feral (stray) house cats had disappeared from the area. During the December 2000 deer season, local hunters claimed that "all deer had mysteriously left the drainage."

"The fact that DNR biologists are fielding reports of cougars with

shown that individual cats can travel 100 miles or more without detection. That could help explain how one suddenly appears on someone's 'Back Forty.'

"Of course, no one can really speculate as to what the future holds for big cats in Iowa, but at this point, I think it's safe to say that they have returned to the state — or at least to its more remote regions."

BEARS

The black bear is another large predator that seems intent on rediscovering Iowa. During recent years, DNR biologists have managed to confirm at least a handful of the bear sightings reported by the public.

"Almost all of our black bear sightings have come from the extreme northeastern corner of the state," said Andrews. "I think in all cases that it's safe to speculate that these animals have moved down from Minnesota or across the Mississippi River from Wisconsin."

One of the best known Iowa bears was a subadult that showed up in Allamakee County during the fall, and eventually spent the winter of 1997 inside a tree at Postville.

"That bear created quite a stir and attained something of a celebrity status. By the time spring arrived, a lot of film had been used on that critter," recalls Andrews.

"Another bear, a full grown female, was actually accompanied by two cubs, but we think she probably brought them with her. Although I couldn't say for sure, I seriously doubt that we're seeing any reproduction (of black bears) on this side of the river."

As is the case with mountain lions, black bears are undergoing a



Ed Weiner

The mountain lion killed by a vehicle last summer was an adult male in prime condition weighing more than 125 pounds. Residents of the small Shelby County town of Harlan where the animal was killed, along with the county's conservation board director, believe the big cat may have been living in the area for nearly a year before it was killed.

increasing frequency really comes as no surprise," said Andrews. "I'm getting similar reports from biologists working in Nebraska, northern Missouri and southeastern South Dakota. Although no one can say for sure why it's happening, there is certainly a wealth of evidence that mountain lions are indeed expanding their range.

"Radio telemetry studies have



Ty Smedes

ABOVE: To date, there have been 10 confirmed sightings and 16 confirmed tracks of mountain lions in Iowa (see map page 22).

RIGHT: Bobcats have proven they can survive in Iowa. Some wildlife experts believe mountain lions, black bears and wolves can do the same.



Ty Smedes

Iowa could have black bears entering the state from two directions — Minnesota and Wisconsin to the north, Missouri from the south.

“When compared to mountain lions, we certainly have a much higher level of confidence in the acceptability of black bear sightings,” said Andrews. “Bears are not nearly as evasive and they are extremely hard to confuse with another animal.

“Of course, there is always the

Close Encounter

Sightings of free ranging mountain lions, such as the adult male pictured on page 16 that was photographed in a wildlife park, are being reported with increasing frequency in Iowa. A similar increase in mountain lion sightings is occurring in the

border states of Nebraska, Missouri and South Dakota.

Most lion sightings have involved little more than a quick glimpse of an animal fleeing down a trail or crossing a roadway. One notable exception, however, occurred on the opening day of last year’s pheasant season.

According to DNR conservation officer Craig Lonneman, a hunter was working his pair of Brittany spaniels through a block of central Iowa bird cover when a “horrendous sound” broke out. Rushing to the scene, the hunter discovered that a huge animal had

grabbed one of his dogs by the neck. The cover was thick, but the man described the huge predator as having cat-like features, massive shoulders, short tan fur and a very long tail.

As the hunter approached, the large predator carried the dog about 50 yards, and set it down again. The animal then leaped into the air and descended on the dog in what its owner described as a “death pounce.” The predator then took the dog by the neck, turned, and disappeared into heavy timber.

“At first I was skeptical,” says Lonneman. “But this guy was really

possibility that some of these (reported) bears may have escaped from game farm-type operations. But we've pretty well ruled that out on the animals that have actually been observed."

WOLVES

There is also speculation — and at this point that's all it is — that gray (timber) wolves may already be leaving footprints on the ridgetops of extreme northeastern Iowa. As was recently the case with mountain lions, current evidence consists only of tracks and eyewitness accounts.

One of the people most in touch with the situation is Rod Rovang, resource manager at Allamakee County's Effigy Mounds National Monument.

"Here at Effigy Mounds we've been receiving what I think are very credible reports of wolf sightings for quite some time now," said Rovang.

"Most of these sightings have come from farmers or deer hunters, and focus on the Yellow River and

shook up, and the more I talked to him the more convinced I became.

"We looked for the dog, which was wearing a beeper collar, but we never saw or heard anything.

"I wasn't there and I'm not sure of what really happened. But to me there's no question that this guy really had something take his dog. When you think about it, what other animal could have done that?"

Lonneman has fielded two additional mountain lion calls from the same area, but none have been confirmed.

— L. W.

Bloody Run drainages. A lot of the reports come from folks who are very knowledgeable in wildlife. They say, point blank, that they've seen a wolf. And as far as they're concerned, that's that."

Here are some examples of reports Rovang deems credible.

Returning home one evening, a retired public school principal (and wildlife enthusiast) from McGregor saw a large, dark animal pass in front of his headlights. In his mind, there was no question that he had just seen a gray wolf in Iowa. Without saying a word, he turned to look at his wife.

She returned the glance and, without hesitation, blurted, "That was a wolf!"

While working outdoors, a Waukon farmer saw a very large, very dark, dog-like animal trotting up a fenceline. The farmer froze as the animal came within 50 feet. By now there was no question that the approaching canine was a full grown timber wolf. Suddenly realizing that

There is speculation that wolves may already be leaving their footprints on Iowa soil.



Ty Smedes

it was not alone, the wolf stopped, wheeled, and ran away.

On a secluded woodland trail near Effigy Mounds, a bowhunter encountered another dark, very large, dog-like animal. This creature was in the 100-plus-pound range, and was certainly not a coyote.

"There was nothing this thing could have been but a wolf," reported the hunter. "I'll never forget the sight of that animal gliding through the timber; it just moved like smoke."

"Although we have not been able to actually document the presence of gray wolves here in Iowa, we do have some packs that live very close," says Rovang.

One of those wolf packs is currently headquartered at the Necedah Wildlife Refuge near Thoma, Wis. Another pack recently established itself near Black River Falls located northeast of LaCrosse, Wis.

"Obviously, that's not very far from the Iowa border," said Rovang. "For a wolf, that's just weekend travel. It's no stretch of the imagination for them to come to Iowa.

"I think the first ones will probably be loners. These animals range tremendously — especially young wolves looking for new territories. So far, all of our (Iowa) sightings have been of single animals. They're usually reported once, and then disappear. I think they're loners moving through."

Rovang's theory seems to be supported by a "lone wolf" that was shot and killed near Kirksville, Mo., on Oct. 23, 2001.

A Missouri man was returning home from a deer hunt when he spotted what appeared to be "a very large coyote" standing near his sheep pen. Fearing for the safety of his livestock, the man killed the animal. The coyote turned out to be a gray wolf. Not just any old wolf, but in

this case a radio-collared research animal.

The wolf (then a 22 pound youngster) had been collared near Ironwood, Mich., in the summer of 1999. As far as anyone can determine, the wandering loner was never reported during its 600 mile trek — a journey which most certainly led the wolf through Iowa.

A second lone wolf was recently shot near Winona in southeastern Minnesota. A third lobo was killed shortly after a pair was spotted near Waubishaw, Wis.

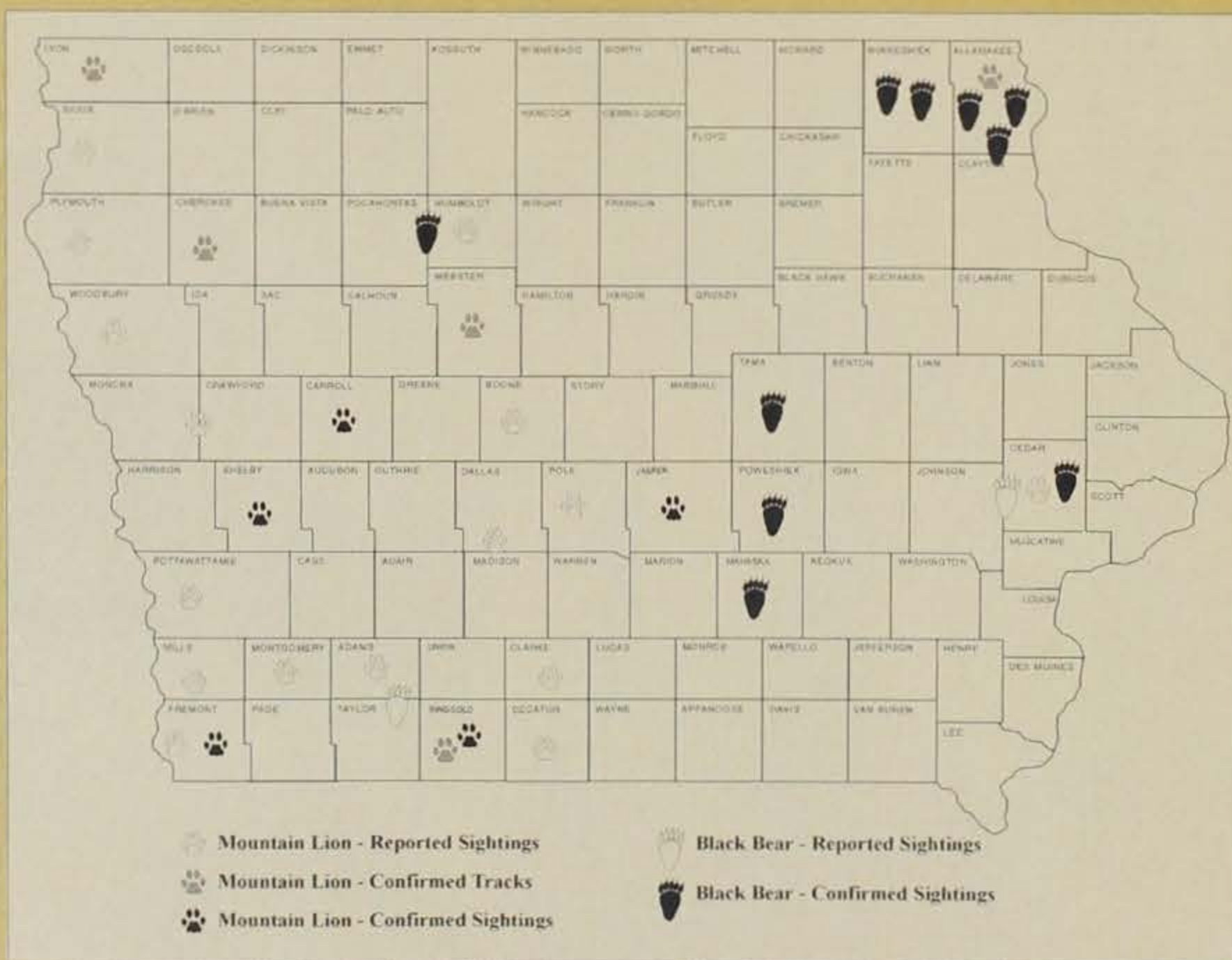
"Like most big predators, wolves are very shy," said Rovang.

"They don't like bumping into people. In Iowa, they might see a human, run over the hill, and immediately bump into someone else. That sort of thing keeps them on the move. If wolves do come to Iowa, I think we'll disrupt them a lot more than they'll disrupt us."

Adequate denning habitat is a critical component to wolf survival. Although much of the state would appear too developed to support a wolf pack, the rugged terrain of northeastern Iowa's bluff country may provide everything the species needs — including suitable den sites.

Northern Minnesota is currently home to an estimated 2,500 gray wolves. Many of those wolves are found in the transitional zone where forest meets agriculture. Many experts say that if wolves can make it there, they can also survive in places like northeast Iowa.

"I know there is some concern that wolves will prey on livestock, but a lot of that is a misunderstanding of the animals. In most cases, you could literally have a wolf living in your



backyard and never know it," says Rovang.

"In Wisconsin, wolves have been present for around 10 years now, and they haven't had a problem. These wolves have been raised on wild food sources and that is what they continue to use.

"Gray wolves are a part of our natural heritage and they've been removed from the landscape. To me it's fascinating they have survived all attempts to destroy them and are now trying to reoccupy some of their original territories."

THE LAW

Although it is illegal to kill gray wolves anywhere in the Lower 48 states, mountain lions and black bears

currently enjoy no legal protection in Iowa. The DNR is interested, however, in providing these species with "furbearer status," which would allow them the same management considerations granted to other Iowa mammals.

Late last winter, Iowa lawmakers considered such a bill which passed the Senate by a 38-6 margin. The measure was later killed in the House.

"Right now, it's really been a free-for-all with emotions running high on both sides of the issue," said Andrews.

"I don't think there should be any question about giving legal status to these species under Iowa Code. I think it's simply appropriate action for any species of Iowa wildlife.

"What granting furbearer status does not mean is that it's time to grab your babies and run for cover. Iowans will always retain the right to protect life, limb, or property," Andrews said.

"With the exception of bobcats, which have made a tremendously successful recovery in the state, I doubt that we'll ever see any significant numbers of large predators return to Iowa; but I think there will be some," said Andrews.

"All of these animals — wolves, bears, mountain lions — are generally regarded as wilderness species. But as civilization continues to advance, it is really amazing how adaptable they have become. It will be very interesting to see what the future holds."

Mistaken Identity?

As the reports of mountain lions, bears and wolves continue to increase, DNR biologists attempt to separate fact from fiction.

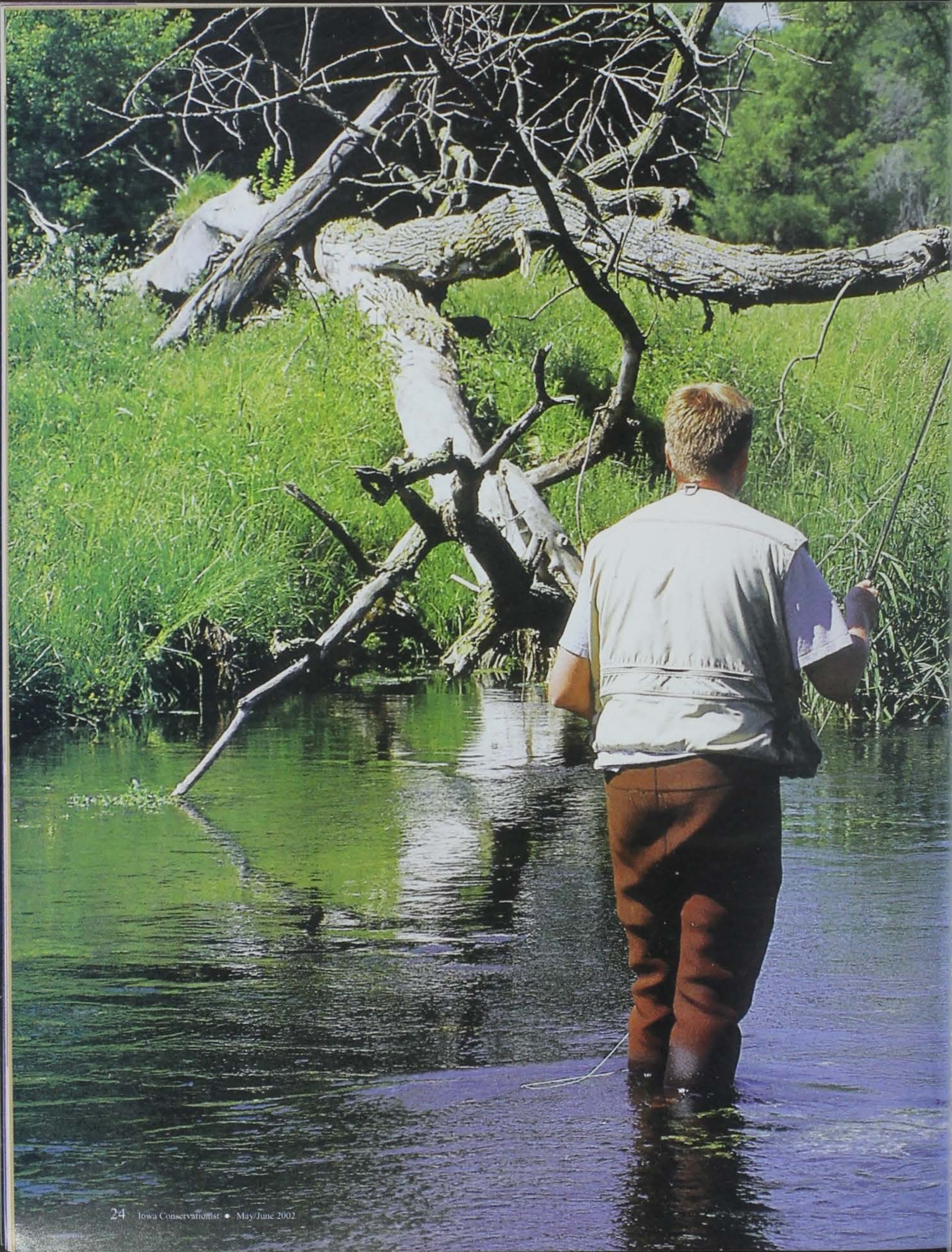
According to DNR furbearer resource specialist Ron Andrews, "look alikes" (other species that closely resemble the animal being reported) are always a consideration — especially when it comes to wolf sightings.

"If you consider coyotes, look alikes are very prevalent in the wolf arena. We've also had German shepherds, malamutes and cross-breeds reported as wolves. There's no question that these sorts of things add challenge to documenting the invasion of large predators into Iowa," said Andrews.


But wolves aren't the only species to suffer from mistaken identity. One person contacted a DNR officer to report that he had cornered an adult bobcat in his chicken house. The animal turned out to be a very large, very spotted tomcat with three-quarters of its tail missing.



A German shepherd feeds on a deer carcass.



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Gary Vonderohe eats, sleeps and breathes fishing — especially trout fishing. When not actually on the stream, he's at least thinking about it. If he's not dreaming of his favorite riffle, then he's probably busy tying flies. If not tying flies, he's talking about trout — especially his beloved browns — or perhaps he's introducing new anglers to the art of casting a dry fly. Why the obsession? What could continually lure this self-taught angler to the back stretches of northeastern Iowa's limestone streams? For this angler, there's simply no thrill that exceeds . . .

Matching the Hatch

Article and photos by Lowell Washburn

"There's one, two . . . no, there's three fish rising right over there!"

Using his fly rod like a classroom pointer, Gary Vonderohe gestured toward a snag located slightly upstream and across the river. Sure enough, three separate fish could be seen gently dimpling the water beneath the snag's outstretched arms.

Cautiously approaching at a half crouch, Vonderohe deftly cast his line to the closest trout. Nothing. Undisturbed, all three fish continued to rise. A second cast and the trout was on.

The fish wasn't particularly large. But whatever the trout may have lacked in heft was more than compensated by its will to escape. After an admirable struggle, the 9-inch rainbow was brought to hand and then released.

Vonderohe opted not to try for a second fish.

"Let's move on," he suggested. "I think we can probably find something better."

Fifty yards later we did.

On a long, flat run of stream, a trout was busily sipping insects with regularity. Approaching from downstream, Vonderohe made a single false cast to test the range. It looked good. The contest had begun.

The next cast placed the tiny dry fly immediately upstream of the rising trout. Moving silently on its course, the fly soon passed directly over the trout. For a fly fisherman, it was the moment of truth.

One, maybe two seconds passed. The trout appeared and in an instant was gone. Likewise, the tiny fly also vanished — directly into the center of a rapidly growing surface dimple.

A quick, upward motion of the arms was all it took to set the hook as the stream exploded into a geyser of water. Vonderohe was obviously pleased.

"This is more like it," he grinned. "This one let's you know you're fishing."

The trout, this time a brown, was nothing short of spectacular. Bold and beautiful, it did everything the species is famed for. It ran. It jumped. It threw water every which way.

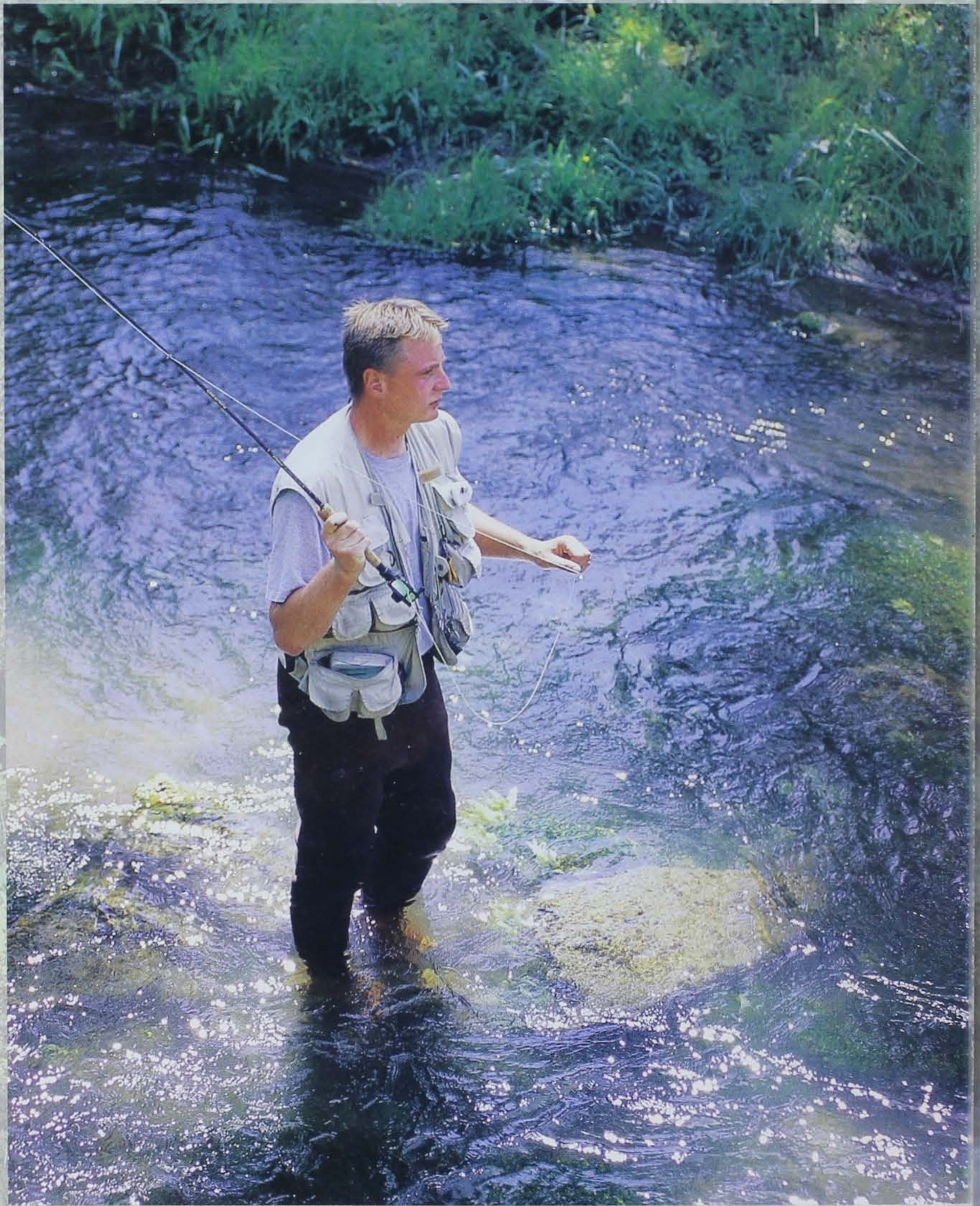
When the fish was finally landed, Vonderohe paused to admire the unique form and exquisite detail that only a "wild run brown" can possess. The 12-incher was both fat and colorful.

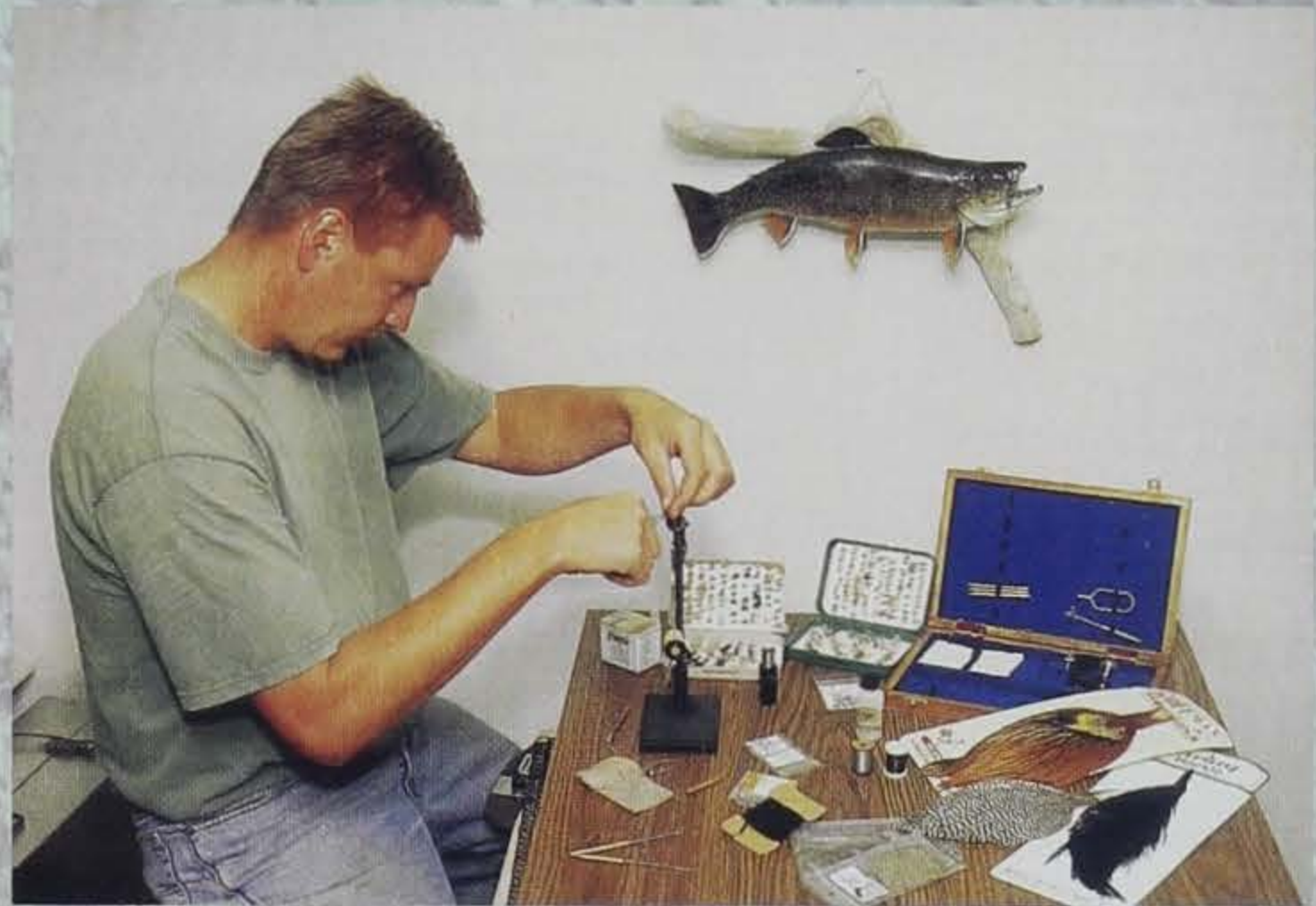
"If I only caught one of these in a week of fishing, I'd keep coming back forever," exclaimed Vonderohe as he knelt to gently return the trout to its lair.

Sensing its freedom, the brown flashed away — disappearing into the dark seclusion of a nearby patch of buttercup.

Rising to his feet, Vonderohe intently scanned the stream as his fingers carefully inventoried the leader for signs of abrasion.

"Let's go find another," he said.



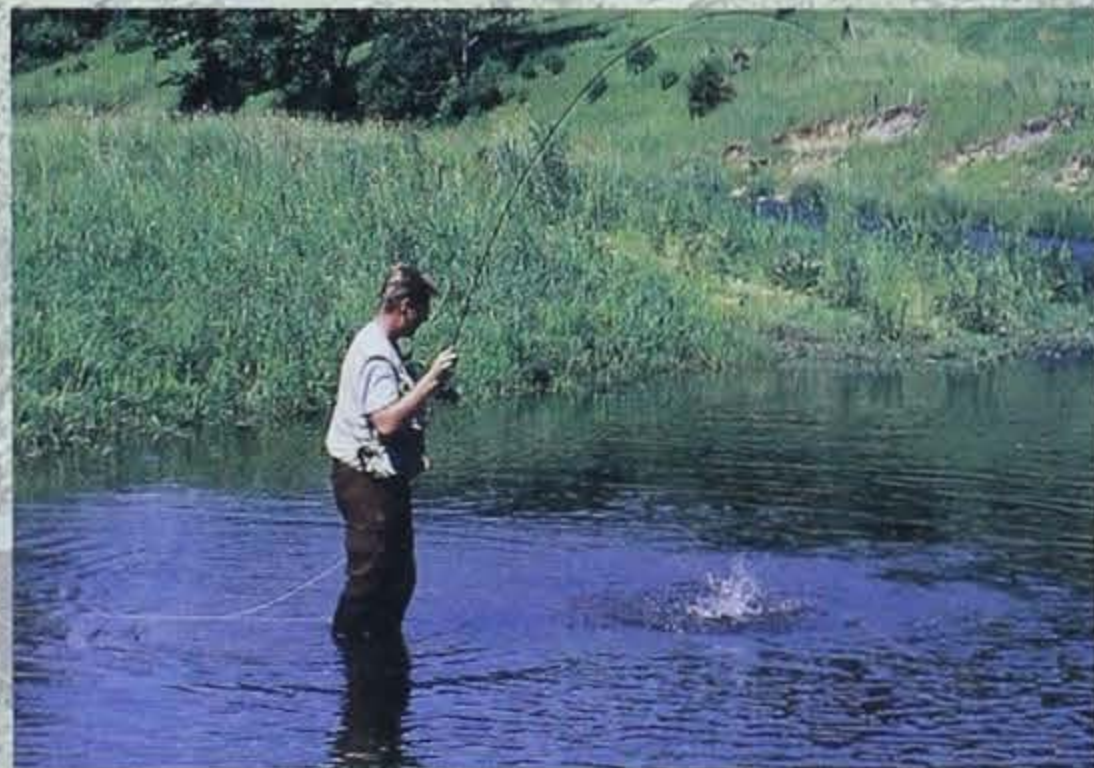


During the off season, Vonderohe may tie more than 100 flies of 20 different patterns. Hook sizes range from #12 all the way down to the near microscopic #26.

A native of New Albin, Gary Vonderohe grew up in the very heart of what geologists refer to as the driftless area — a rugged, unglaciated region where Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin converge. Well known for its hardwood forests, limestone bluffs and bubbling spring water; the driftless area is also home to some of the finest trout streams in the upper Midwest.



Vonderohe lands his favorite, the brown trout. The ever tenacious brown trout is showing the greatest surge in numbers. In the words of one seasoned biologist, "Every new generation is getting better and smarter."



As a youngster, Vonderohe became fascinated with these Iowa streams and the fish they held. He was soon casting spinners and, better yet, catching trout. His love for trout — brooks, rainbows and browns — soon became a passion.

As the years passed, Vonderohe began to encounter that minority of anglers who engage in the art of pursuing trout with dry flies.

"Most were pretty friendly, and it looked to me like they were having an awful lot of fun. I decided it was something I wanted to try," he recalls.

He did, and it was love at first cast. In fact, one initial adventure with a fly rod was all it took. From that moment on, Vonderohe wanted nothing more than to deceive wild trout with a dry fly. He has never looked back.

As is the case with most outdoor pursuits, fly fishing can take a person as deep as they care to go. It can be as simple, or as complicated, as you wish to make it.

"There is definitely no lack of challenges here," says Vonderohe. "But if someone really wants to catch trout on a dry fly, then I think it's something almost anyone can do."

Vonderohe believes many anglers tend to make fly fishing much more complicated than it needs to be. By contrast, his technique tends to be simple and very straightforward.

Upon arriving at one of several "favorite streams," Vonderohe's first order of business is to poke around and see if anything is feeding. When rising fish are located, he moves in behind, or downstream from, the trout and carefully samples any insects drifting down river.

"The insects are really important," says Vonderohe. "There are so many species. There may be over a half dozen species of mayflies alone, plus midges, caddisflies and terrestrials. At first, it can seem pretty overwhelming, and I guess that's part of the challenge. You can throw just one fly — like a general attractor fly — and catch fish. But I like to try and match the hatch. For me, that's the ultimate goal."

Vonderohe may carry up to 20 different fly patterns. Once the proper fly has been selected, he approaches the feeding trout from downstream. If several fish are visible, he attempts to pick them off, one by one, beginning with the trout closest to the tail end of the run or pool. However, there is one exception to this rule. If an unusually large fish is located, that trout automatically becomes the first contestant.

"Everyone knows that trout are spooky. Many streams are crystal clear, and I think it's important to keep a low



Like most fly fishing enthusiasts, Vonderohe chooses to release most of the fish he catches. In fact, he only keeps and eats an average of one trout per year. "Catch-and-release is just something I prefer to do. I'm certainly not opposed to people catching and eating trout, it's just that I'd rather return them to the stream where they'll probably be caught again. If I want to fry some fish, I'd rather go catch a mess of bluegills," says Vonderohe.

profile," says Vonderohe.

"I try to catch as many fish as possible without moving. I might stand in the middle of the stream or kneel in vegetation along the bank — but I'll make as many casts as possible before switching locations. It's simple, but a basic approach can be very rewarding."

During spring and summer, Vonderohe regards anything from 10 a.m. to sunset as optimum fishing time. In Iowa, multiple hatches of several insect species may occur throughout the day on streams providing quality habitat. Although many anglers forsake the streams at midday, high noon can be as productive as any other hour. Although sometimes tricky to predict, an incredible hatch usually translates into incredible fishing.

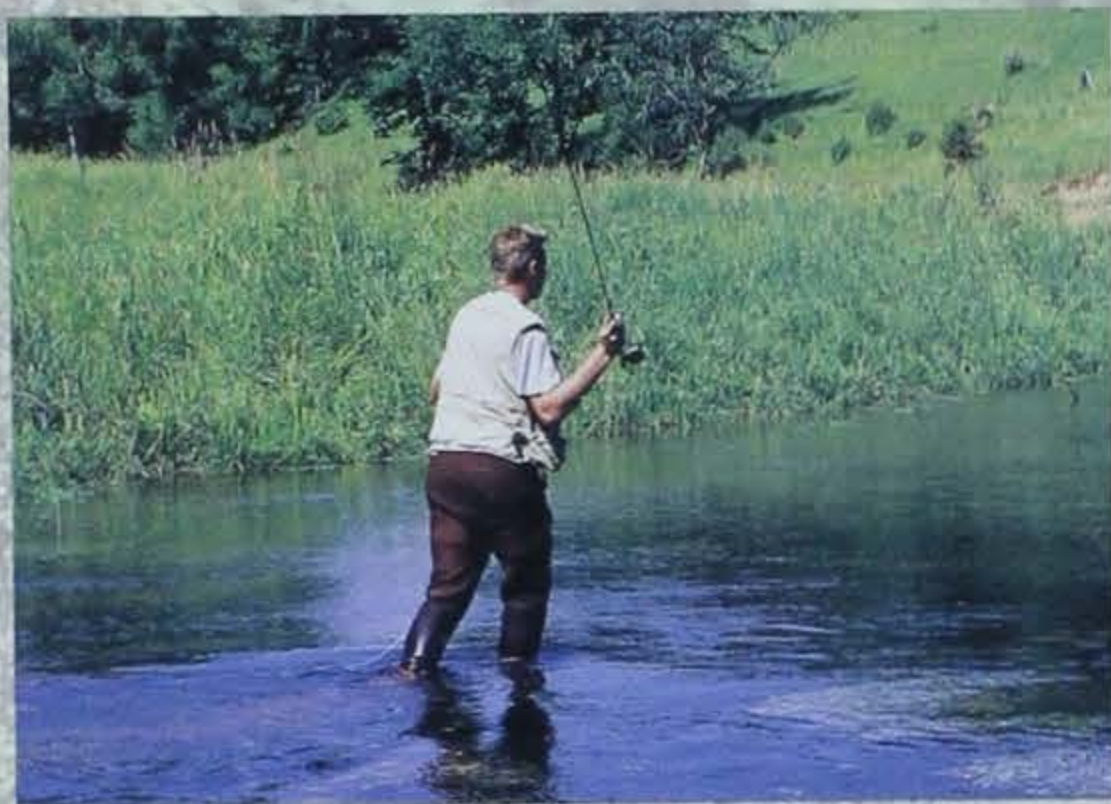
"I've had days where I've landed over 60 fish or have caught a dozen, 12-inch wild browns from a single riffle," says Vonderohe. "On one of the best days I can remember, a friend and I each caught 20 trout from a single riffle over a two hour period."

Vonderohe's biggest Iowa trout was a hog-fat, 20-inch brown. He's hooked, battled, but never successfully landed several fish that were even larger.

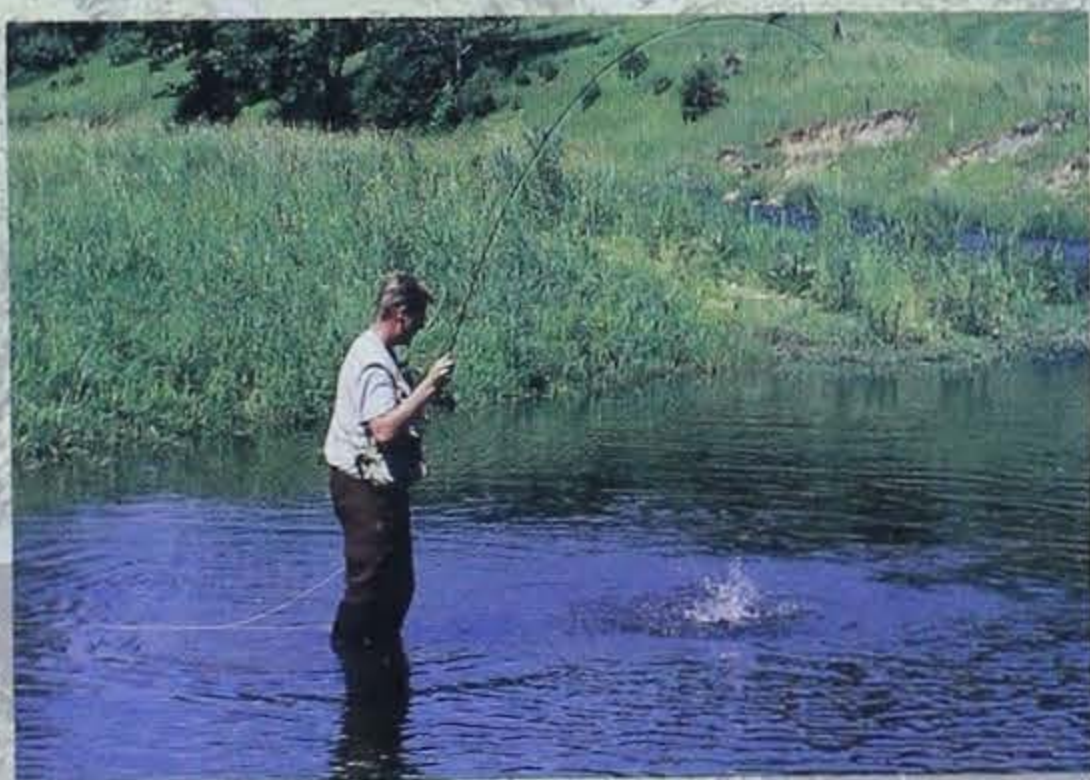
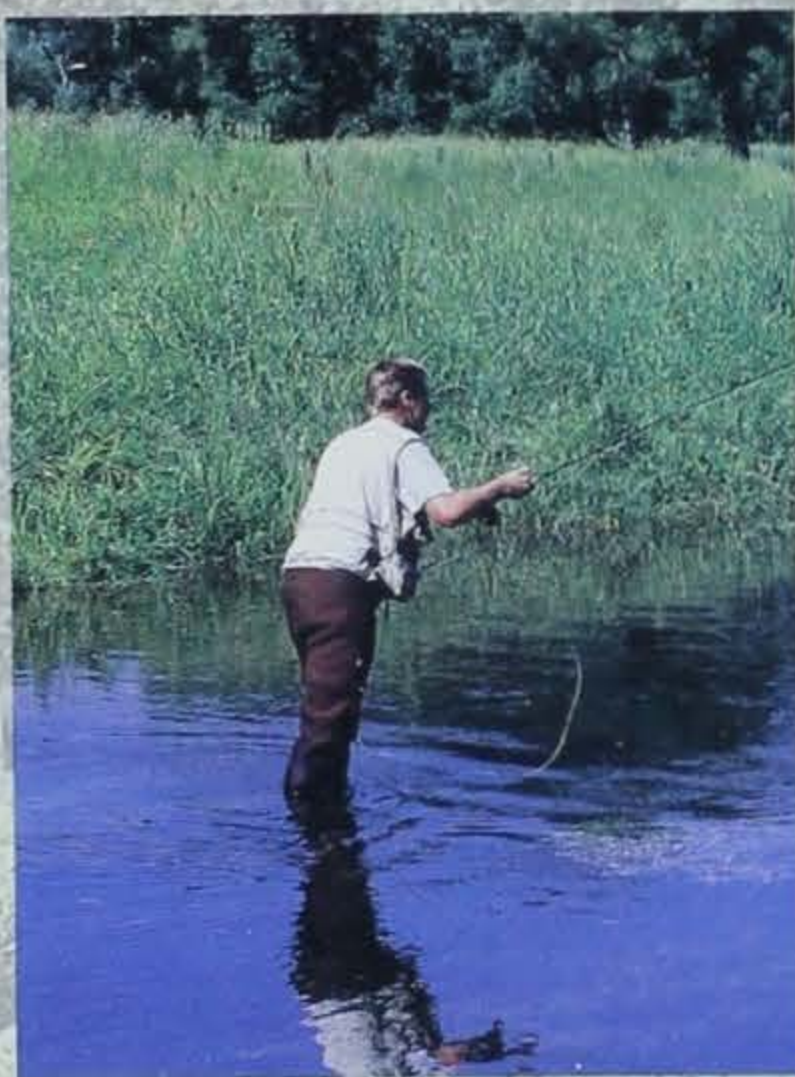
"I've been close, and have even had a couple of those fish within five feet before they broke me off. Maybe someday I'll land one, but for me the important thing is that I fooled them into taking a fly. To me, that's success."

The future of Iowa fly fishing seems bright indeed. According to DNR fisheries biologists, ongoing stream surveys have shown a dramatic increase in both overall trout numbers as well as in the quality or size of fish. Cooperative habitat work and improved watershed management is currently resulting in unprecedented natural reproduction of wild trout in Iowa. The practice of catch-and-release fishing is making additional contributions — allowing trout to grow longer, fatter and of course, wiser.

A native of New Albin, Gary Vonderohe grew up in the very heart of what geologists refer to as the driftless area — a rugged, unglaciated region where Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin converge. Well known for its hardwood forests, limestone bluffs and bubbling spring water; the driftless area is also home to some of the finest trout streams in the upper Midwest.



Vonderohe lands his favorite, the brown trout. The ever tenacious brown trout is showing the greatest surge in numbers. In the words of one seasoned biologist, "Every new generation is getting better and smarter."



As a youngster, Vonderohe became fascinated with these Iowa streams and the fish they held. He was soon casting spinners and, better yet, catching trout. His love for trout — brooks, rainbows and browns — soon became a passion.

As the years passed, Vonderohe began to encounter that minority of anglers who engage in the art of pursuing trout with dry flies.

"Most were pretty friendly, and it looked to me like they were having an awful lot of fun. I decided it was something I wanted to try," he recalls.

He did, and it was love at first cast. In fact, one initial adventure with a fly rod was all it took. From that moment on, Vonderohe wanted nothing more than to deceive wild trout with a dry fly. He has never looked back.

As is the case with most outdoor pursuits, fly fishing can take a person as deep as they care to go. It can be as simple, or as complicated, as you wish to make it.

"There is definitely no lack of challenges here," says Vonderohe. "But if someone really wants to catch trout on a dry fly, then I think it's something almost anyone can do."

Vonderohe believes many anglers tend to make fly fishing much more complicated than it needs to be. By contrast, his technique tends to be simple and very straightforward.

Upon arriving at one of several "favorite streams," Vonderohe's first order of business is to poke around and see if anything is feeding. When rising fish are located, he moves in behind, or downstream from, the trout and carefully samples any insects drifting down river.

"The insects are really important," says Vonderohe. "There are so many species. There may be over a half dozen species of mayflies alone, plus midges, caddisflies and terrestrials. At first, it can seem pretty overwhelming, and I guess that's part of the challenge. You can throw just one fly — like a general attractor fly — and catch fish. But I like to try and match the hatch. For me, that's the ultimate."

Vonderohe may carry up to 20 different fly patterns. Once the proper fly has been selected, he approaches the feeding trout from downstream. If several fish are visible, he attempts to pick them off, one by one, beginning with the trout closest to the tail end of the run or pool. However, there is one exception to this rule. If an unusually large fish is located, that trout automatically becomes the first contestant.

"Everyone knows that trout are spooky. Many streams are crystal clear, and I think it's important to keep a low



Like most fly fishing enthusiasts, Vonderohe chooses to release most of the fish he catches. In fact, he only keeps and eats an average of one trout per year. "Catch-and-release is just something I prefer to do. I'm certainly not opposed to people catching and eating trout, it's just that I'd rather return them to the stream where they'll probably be caught again. If I want to fry some fish, I'd rather go catch a mess of bluegills," says Vonderohe.

profile," says Vonderohe.

"I try to catch as many fish as possible without moving. I might stand in the middle of the stream or kneel in vegetation along the bank — but I'll make as many casts as possible before switching locations. It's simple, but a basic approach can be very rewarding."

During spring and summer, Vonderohe regards anything from 10 a.m. to sunset as optimum fishing time. In Iowa, multiple hatches of several insect species may occur throughout the day on streams providing quality habitat. Although many anglers forsake the streams at midday, high noon can be as productive as any other hour. Although sometimes tricky to predict, an incredible hatch usually translates into incredible fishing.

"I've had days where I've landed over 60 fish or have caught a dozen, 12-inch wild browns from a single riffle," says Vonderohe. "On one of the best days I can remember, a friend and I each caught 20 trout from a single riffle over a two hour period."

Vonderohe's biggest Iowa trout was a hog-fat, 20-inch brown. He's hooked, battled, but never successfully landed several fish that were even larger.

"I've been close, and have even had a couple of those fish within five feet before they broke me off. Maybe someday I'll land one, but for me the important thing is that I fooled them into taking a fly. To me, that's success."

The future of Iowa fly fishing seems bright indeed. According to DNR fisheries biologists, ongoing stream surveys have shown a dramatic increase in both overall trout numbers as well as in the quality or size of fish. Cooperative habitat work and improved watershed management is currently resulting in unprecedented natural reproduction of wild trout in Iowa. The practice of catch-and-release fishing is making additional contributions — allowing trout to grow longer, fatter and of course, wiser.

Making A Difference

by Rachel Hudson

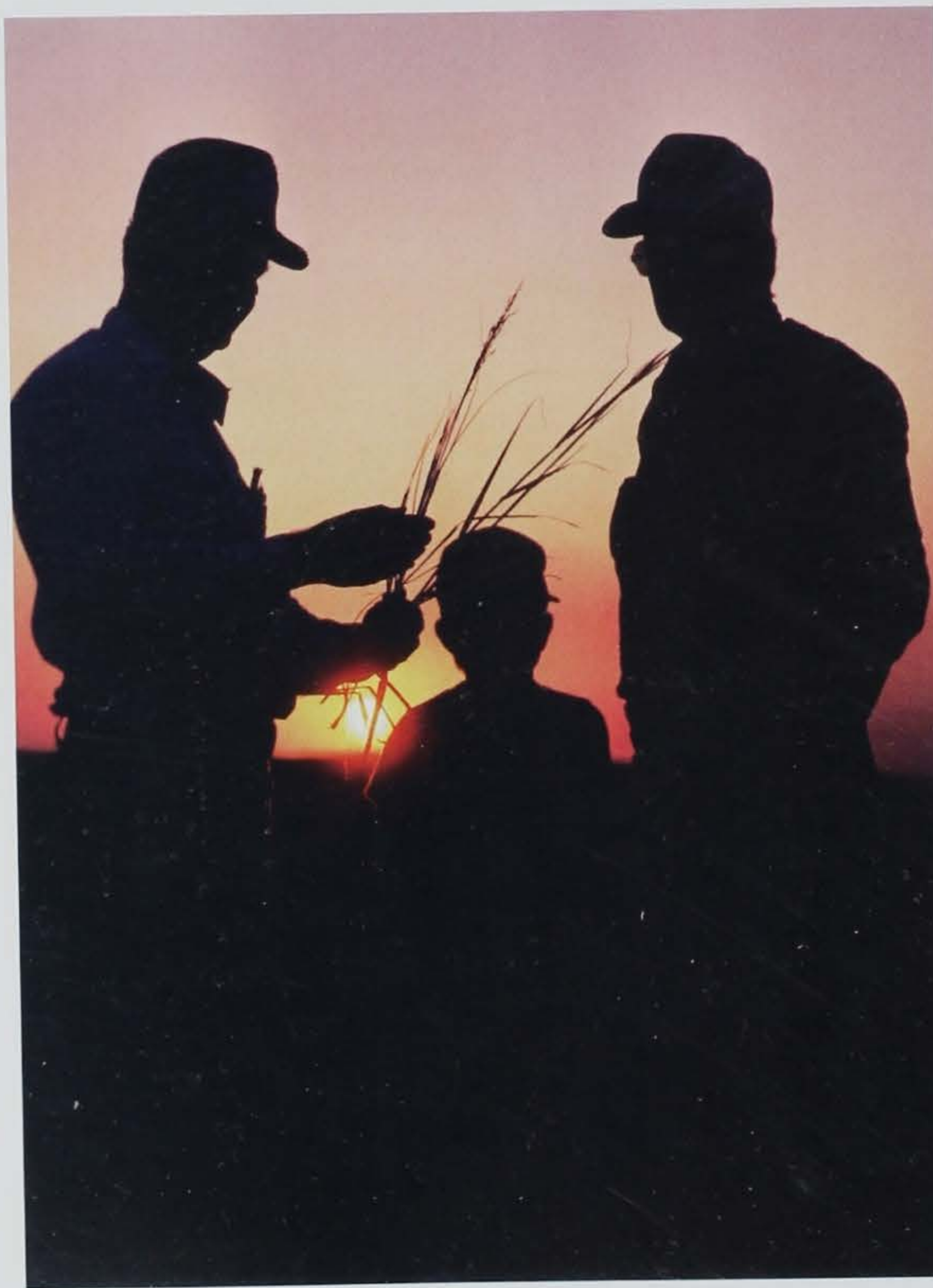


Photo by Tim McCabe, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Iowa's Private Lands Program (PLP) is as diverse as the habitat it helps establish and protect. The program partners staff of the DNR, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), and most importantly, landowners. Its cooperators are equally diverse, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, AmeriCorps, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and National Wild Turkey Federation. Whether it be technical assistance, funding or equipment, all partners and cooperators are important and help make the program what it is today — successful.

Approximately 98 percent of Iowa's landscape is privately owned. Therefore, fulfilling the habitat needs of the state's diverse wildlife species requires the reestablishment and/or protection of natural resources and wildlife habitat on private land. In response to an increased interest in wildlife habitat for recreational and aesthetic purposes, the Iowa DNR has taken an active role in private land conservation in the last few years. Today, the DNR's Private Lands staff includes four biologists, 11 wildlife specialists and 11 AmeriCorps members or habitat specialists. They are becoming valuable sources of outreach and guidance for landowners interested in Iowa's wildlife. Their mission is simple: to improve, restore and create wildlife habitat and other natural resources on private lands. From wetland restoration to food plot development to general CRP improvement, the Private Lands Program is providing critical assistance to landowners.

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Linking landowners with the right conservation programs and partners

Most private land conservation is achieved through USDA farm programs, such as continuous CRP. These programs provide landowners with a financial incentive to convert cropland into a conservation friendly land use, such as a wetland or a riparian buffer. The DNR staff provides the one-on-one contact with landowners interested in increasing the wildlife value of their property. In fact, a DNR employee will usually make a personal visit to the property to assess what programs a landowner might qualify for and what conservation partners to contact for assistance.

For example, a landowner might want to restore a wetland to attract waterfowl or shorebirds. There are currently seven programs for wetland restoration or development a landowner can use to receive financial assistance, including WRP, EWP, USDA Farmable Wetlands Pilot Program (FWP, CP27/28), Shallow Water Areas (CP9), and a wetland program under general CRP (CP23). In addition, the Fish and Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited provide a cost share program toward some wetland restoration projects.

A landowner may be interested in

revitalizing their general CRP field. Improvements to general CRP are allowed, but require approval by a Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committee. The USDA does not provide funding for these improvements, however, a member of the DNR's Private Lands staff may meet with the landowner to discuss goals for the property, such as improving habitat for quail and pheasant. They may suggest practices such as strip disking, food plot establishment or

interseeding with legumes, and may identify possible cost-share opportunities with organizations such as Pheasants Forever, Wild Turkey Federation or the Resource Enhancement and Protection program.

In its first year, the DNR's Private Lands staff made about 3,200 landowner contact or field visits, involving more than 52,000 acres. They recommended more than 170 riparian buffer strips (CP22), 118 filter strips (CP21) and 61 grassland



Roger A. Hill

Care of private land is important for the future of those who will farm the land as well as those who will reap the benefits of a healthy land. Iowa's Private Lands Program is helping landowners meet their conservation goals by linking them with the right programs and partners.

Pheasants Forever provided cost-share funding to establish the above filter strip in Story County.

Interest in wetland restoration has been high. Private Lands staff assist landowners in wading through the alphabet soup of government programs to find those that best fit their needs and goals.

burns. Wetland restoration interest was also high in the first year, with more than 395 FWPs and 86 WRP/EWP recommendations on private lands.

In this past quarter alone (October 2001 to December 2001), interest in wetland restoration continued, and the Private Lands staff recommended and assisted landowners in applying for more than 376 acres of shallow water areas (CP9), 4,354 acres of FWPs and 952 acres of potential WRPs. While this is certainly not all of the private land conservation taking place in Iowa, the DNR's Private Lands Program staff is nevertheless serving as a valuable resource to landowners, linking them to programs and partners that best fit their goals.

Providing landowner outreach and education

Another important aspect of conserving wildlife habitat on privately owned property is landowner education. Simply put, landowners who are educated in conservation issues and who are aware of the opportunities available to them are more likely to implement the available programs to their land. Whether it be the 6,000 letters mailed to landowners, the 50 newspaper/newsletter articles or the 55 workshops/field days held, the PLP staff of the DNR was busy providing this type of outreach to landowners all over the state.

Bryan Hellyer, who has been part of the Private Lands Program from the beginning and a DNR employee for several years, has given the Farmable Wetland Program plenty of attention by writing newspaper articles and making public appearances at Pheasants Forever banquets. When addressing landowners, Hellyer reminds them there is a financial benefit to many of these programs: "In many cases, the payment will exceed what the landowner and/or operator can receive if they continue to farm ground that qualifies for this new program (FWP)."

In Howard and Chickasaw counties, this past spring there were more than 2,000 acres of native prairie (CP25) mix planted. Planting native grasses can result in increased rental payments on CRP fields. Since planting and maintaining native grasses and forbs is a new experience for many landowners, there was concern many of the seedings would



Ty Smedes

not be properly established. As a CRP guideline, if the grass does not get established due to a lack of maintenance, a landowner would be required to replant with no cost share. In response to these concerns, Josh Hansen, a wildlife specialist in that area, and the local NRCS office decided to host a Native Prairie Maintenance Field Day. Throughout the day, landowners had the opportunity to learn more about CRP guidelines, acceptable weed control strategies, proper prairie management practices, and native grass and forb identification. Interest in the field day was greater than expected with more than 60 landowners attending, all eager to learn about how they can best manage their CRP.

Private Lands Biologist Angi Hanson feels that landowner education is the key to private land conservation and has assisted in several workshops during her tenure in the Private Lands Program. For example, in response to the increased interest in native grass plantings, she assisted the Cass and Montgomery Soil and Water Conservation districts in holding an Equipment Workshop. More than 30 landowners who attended learned about seedbed preparation and how to use native seeding equipment such as a Vicon broadcast seeder and a Truax no-till drill.

The Private Lands staff is continually looking for ways to reach and provide assistance to their customers: the landowners of Iowa. This is a primary goal of the Private Lands Program to provide this education to landowners who show

Photo by Lynn Betts, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



Trees planted on CRP land will provide conservation benefit to the landowner and the wildlife that share the property.

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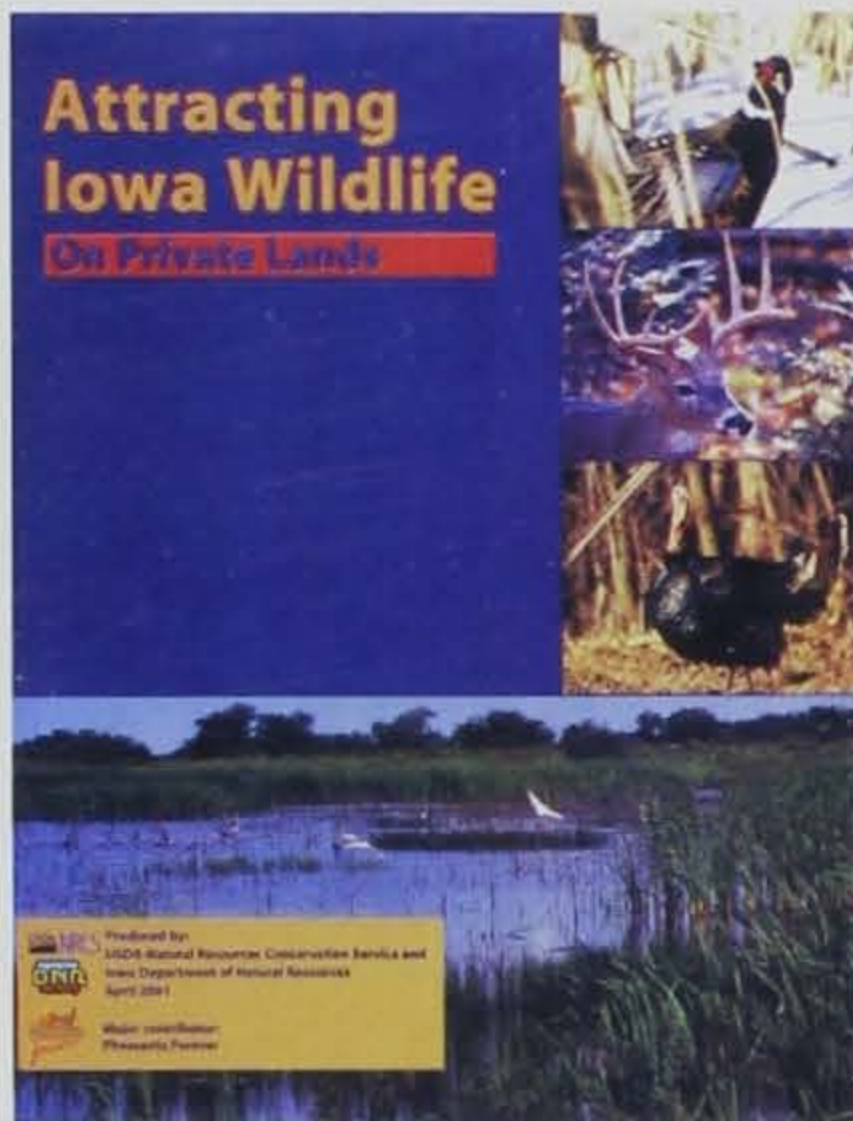
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For more information on improving wildlife habitat on private lands, pick up a copy of *Attracting Iowa Wildlife on Private Lands* at your local NRCS office or nearest DNR office, or download it from the DNR's website at www.state.ia.us/dnr.

Private Lands Program Staff

Private Lands Supervisor
Ken Herring (515) 281-5529

Area 1, Northwest Iowa
Private Lands Biologist,
Kathy Andersen (712) 372-4559

Wildlife Specialist
Maury Muhm (712) 336-3524
Osceola, Dickinson, Clay,
Buena Vista

AmeriCorps
Kenny Bentsen (712) 662-7773
Sac
Christine Evans (712) 852-3386
Palo Alto

Area 2, North Central Iowa
Private Lands Biologist,
Bryan Hellyer (712) 330-2563

Wildlife Specialists
vacant (641) 324-2431
Winnebago, Worth
Helga McDaniel (515) 993-3911
Dallas, Adair, Guthrie, Madison,
Warren

Ryan Harr (641) 456-2157
Franklin
Andy Robbins (515) 432-2235
Greene, Boone, Story, Webster,
Polk, Hamilton

AmeriCorps
Bryan Bukema (515) 532-2165
Wright

Area 3, Northeast Iowa
Wildlife Specialists
Josh Gansen (319) 882-4252
Howard, Chickasaw, Bremer,
Fayette
Jason Gritsch (641) 484-8153
Grundy, Marshall, Tama, Benton,
Poweshiek, Iowa

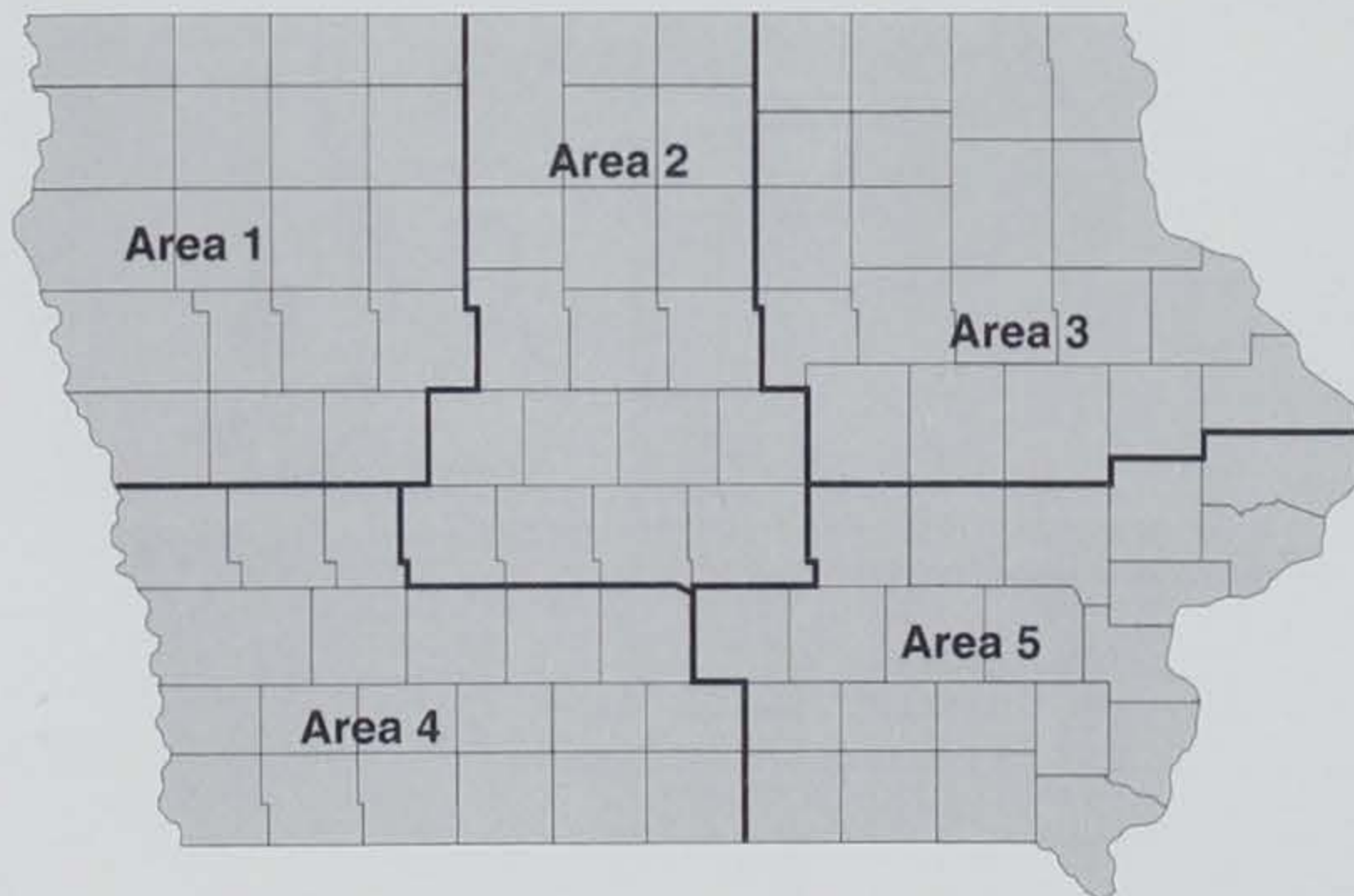
AmeriCorps
Jeremy Viles (319) 334-4105
Blackhawk, Buchanan, Bremer,
Delaware

Area 4, Southwest Iowa
Private Lands Biologist,
Angi Hanson (712) 243-2913 (X207)

Wildlife Specialists
Darwin Mills (641) 774-4918
Clarke, Lucas, Monroe, Decatur,
Wayne, Appanoose
Kelly Ramsey (712) 624-8606
Mills, Fremont, Pottawattamie

Area 5, Southeast Iowa
Private Lands Biologist,
Kevin Andersen (641) 472-8411

AmeriCorps
Joe Moore (563) 263-7944
Muscatine
Karie Wiltshire (641) 673-3476 (X3)
Marion, Mahaska
Nathaniel Umphrey (563) 886-6214
Cedar





Planting native grasses can mean increased rental payments on CRP fields.

an interest in conservation, because, in essence, it will lead to better maintained wildlife habitat on land not in public ownership.

Beyond linking landowners to the correct conservation programs and partners and providing them a means of outreach and education, the DNR PLP staff brings with them the experience of managing approximately 400,000 acres of public land for wildlife species. The DNR is also working adamantly on the Farm Bill so that landowners may continue to receive future funding for conservation programs. The proper management of both public and private lands can achieve the mission of the DNR's Wildlife Bureau: to ensure the adequate protection and appropriate use of Iowa's fish and wildlife resources, thereby providing a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities.

Rachel Hudson is a geographic information system specialist for the department in Des Moines.

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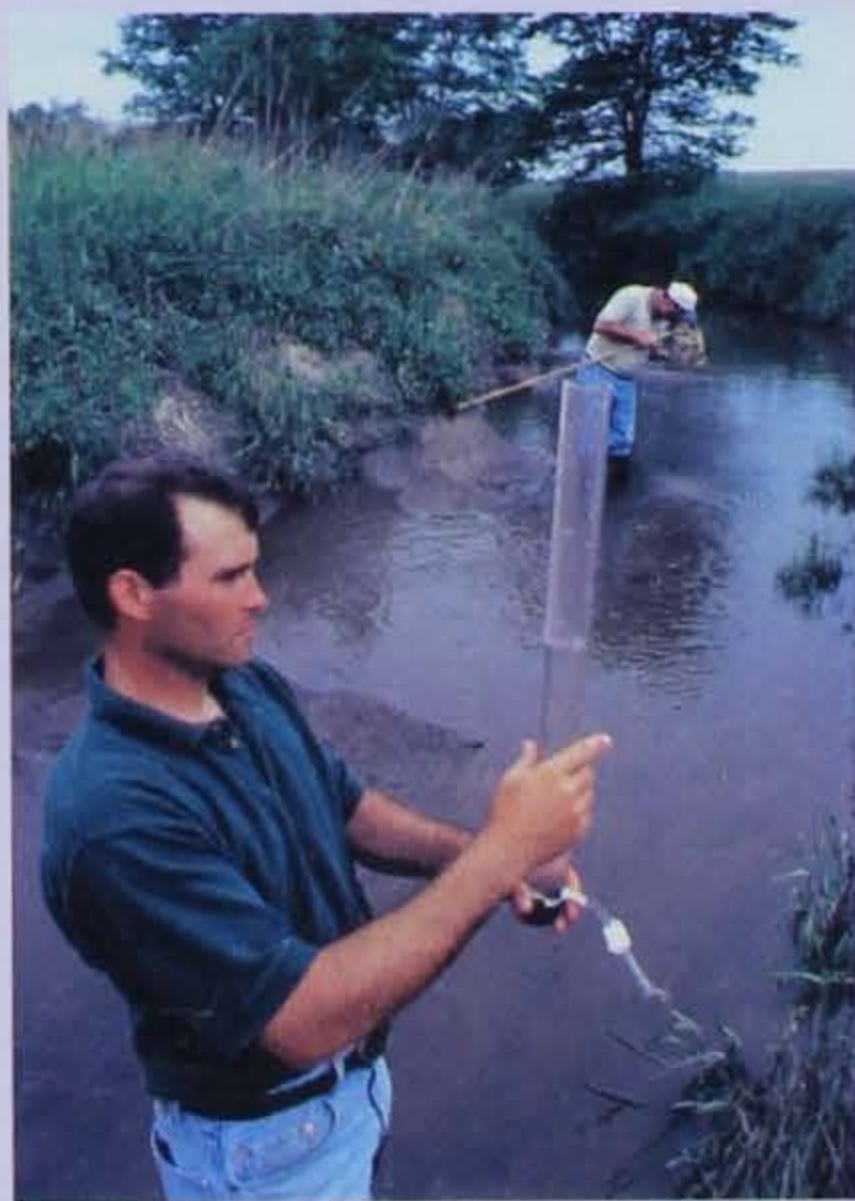


Photo by Lynn Betts, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Water quality is monitored in a tributary stream that leads to Lake Rathbun.

Lake Rathbun is the jewel of south-central Iowa and the single most valuable public asset in the region. The lake supplies water to one of the largest rural water systems in the United States. Managed by the Rathbun Rural Water Association, the system supplies an average of 6 million gallons of water daily to more than 60,000 people in 18 counties and 40 communities in Iowa and Missouri. In addition, the lake and surrounding land has supported more than 1 million recreational days of fishing, boating, hunting, swimming, camping and other leisure activities each year.

During the development of Lake Rathbun in the late 1960s, the Rathbun Land and Water Alliance was formed — a coalition of landowners, water users and representatives of public and private organizations. All recognized the need for a cooperative, voluntary approach to protect and enhance land, water and economic resources associated with the Iowa's largest lake and its watershed. The Alliance has formed a strong coalition dedicated to water quality improvement through a comprehensive watershed approach.

Needs Identified by the Rathbun Land and Water Alliance

Inception of the Rathbun Land and Water Alliance was based on the need to protect the quality of Lake

Rathbun, a valuable water supply and host to many recreational activities. The quality of Lake Rathbun is measured by the quality of lake water that is closely associated with land management activities in its 354,000-acre watershed. It is the management of this land that is a major focus of the Alliance. The primary objectives are as follows:

- Increase public awareness of issues that impact land and water resources in the Rathbun Lake watershed
- Encourage land use and practices that protect land and water resources, are compatible with profitable farming operations, and support economic growth and stability
- Monitor conditions in the Rathbun Lake watershed that affect the quality of land and water resources.
- Facilitate cooperation between partners necessary to protect land and water resources.

A Valuable Resource

Value is measured in many ways, but it really comes down to dollars spent, or hours of enjoyable recreation. For example, Rathbun Lake has provided more than 6 million hours of fishing since its development in 1969. These hours of recreational fishing have resulted in a harvest of

Rathbun Land and Water Alliance Members and Partner Organizations

Rathbun Regional Water Association • Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Appanoose, Clarke, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe and Wayne counties • County governments in Appanoose, Clarke, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe and Wayne counties • Iowa Farm Bureau Federation and

5.5 million fish and provided an estimated \$84 million to the local economy. Additionally, wildlife habitat and hunting areas are maintained on 21,000 acres of public land adjacent to the lake.

Fishing, hunting, swimming, boating, hiking, camping and wildlife viewing are enjoyed by more than 1 million visitors each year. The value of these combined activities to the local economy, since 1969, is estimated at more than \$600 million.

Problems Facing the Alliance

The primary problem facing the Alliance today is land use in the

354,000-acre Lake Rathbun watershed. Row crops comprise 60 percent of the watershed. More than one-third of the watershed — close to 133,000 acres — is highly erodible land used in row crop production.

This tillage of highly erodible land has resulted in soil erosion problems and unacceptable rates of lake sedimentation.

A recent study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers showed the lake sediment rate is three times faster than predicted at the time of construction. The report shows a loss of more than 64 percent of the lake's original sediment storage capacity.

Negative impacts on the lake's multiple use of fisheries, recreation, wildlife habitat, water supply and flood protection could be expected if sedimentation is not curtailed.

So, What's Being Done?

Getting together as an Alliance is one thing, but doing something about the problems is another. The Alliance is not only a visionary group, it believes in getting things done. Following are some of the projects on the drawing board, or which have been completed.

Southern Iowa Development and Conservation Authority: Ten

member counties cooperating on projects to protect and improve rural infrastructure and water resources in southern Iowa.



With more than one-third of its 354,000-acre watershed highly erodible, protecting Rathbun's water quality is an ongoing challenge being met by the Rathbun Land and Water Alliance.

Farm Bureau organizations in Appanoose, Lucas, Monroe and Wayne Counties • Chariton Valley Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. • City of Corydon • Chariton Valley Beef, Inc. • Rolling Hills Farm Service Cooperative • Iowa Department of Agricultural and

Since 1969, when Lake Rathbun was completed, an estimated \$600 million have been pumped into the local economy by visitors pursuing their recreational interests. Fishing alone accounts for \$84 million dollars.

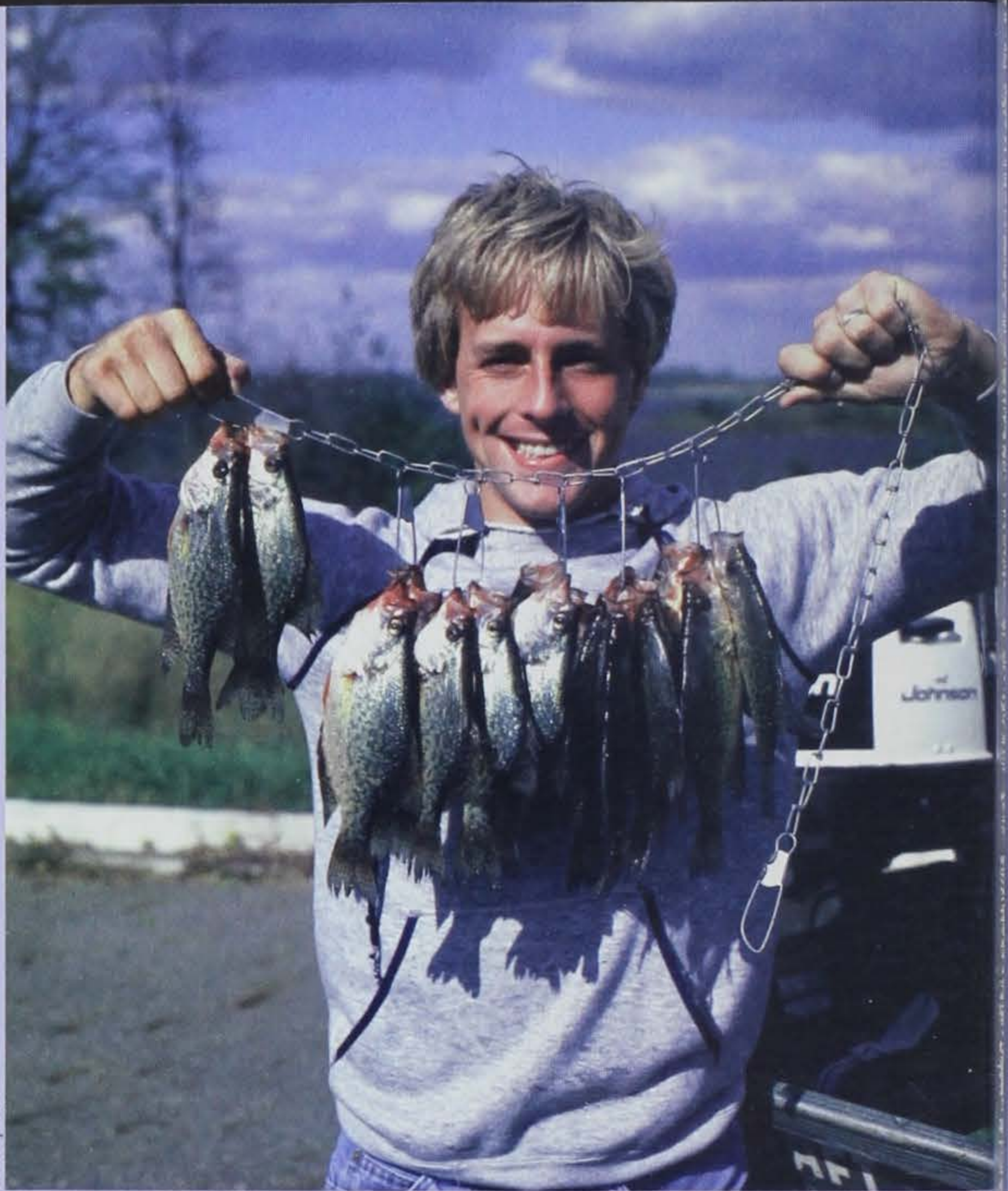
Rathbun Lake Watershed Assessment: Inventory and evaluation and identification of potential threats in the watershed to water quality in the lake.

Water Quality Monitoring Program: Collection and analysis of samples from 19 locations in the watershed and lake for sediment, chemicals and bacteria.

Environmental Quality Incentive Projects: Priority areas in Appanoose, Lucas and Monroe counties. Landowners are eligible for financial assistance to install conservation practices. Proposed priority areas were identified in remainder of watershed.

Honey Creek Watershed Project: Resource inventory completed in preparation for a water quality protection project.

Corps Section 206 Project: Preliminary plan approved by the Corps and feasibility study initiated that may result in up to \$5 million in



DNR photo

funding to install structural practices in the watershed and along the shoreline.

Water Quality in Rathbun Lake Project: Provides funds for project coordinator to assist landowners with installation of demonstration conservation practices to protect water quality and support water quality information and education activities.

Road Structure Training and Demonstration: Develop and conduct a training course for engineers on design and construction of road structures. Includes installation of demonstration structures to improve rural transportation system and protect water quality.

Livestock Waste Management Demonstrations: Assist landowners with the installation of

Land Stewardship's Division of Soil Conservation • Iowa Department of Natural Resources • Southern Iowa Development and Conservation Authority • Iowa State University • Iowa State University Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Extension Councils in Appanoose, Lucas, Monroe and Wayne counties • Iowa Association of Water Agencies • Trees Forever

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low-cost methods of managing livestock wastes in grazing and feeding operations to protect water quality.

Bob White Lake and Corydon Reservoir Projects: Funds for a second project coordinator and to assist landowners with the installation of practices to protect water quality.

Surveys of Landowners in the Watershed and Water Users in the Rathbun Regional Water Service Area: Findings will be used to develop and implement effective approaches to working with landowners within the watershed.

Development of Markets for Farm Products That Support Land Use Protective of Water Quality: Efforts to create rural business enterprises that rely on land use protective of soil and water resources including the Chariton Valley Biomass Project, Chariton Valley Beef Initiative and the Chariton River Corridor Development.

There is no doubt the Rathbun Land and Water Alliance is a forward-looking coalition with a "can-do" attitude. John Glenn, president of the Alliance, said, "It is imperative that the Rathbun Land and Water Alliance be the motivating organization bringing individuals and groups together, protecting the natural resources in the Rathbun Lake watershed. People living in the

watershed not only use these resources in the watershed to make a living and raise their families, but the water from the lake is returned to them for their own personal use by Rathbun Regional Water Association.

"People care about the water they drink and soil they farm. The Alliance can help them make better decisions or how to improve both of these resources."

The need for watershed and water quality improvement is apparent through public input, such as that received by the Rathbun Land and Water Alliance. Within the next decade there will undoubtedly be greater strides in land management and wildlife habitat development in

the Rathbun watershed. The stage is set. There is a demand for cleaner water for both drinking and recreation. There is a demand for better fishing. There is a demand for better hunting. The Rathbun Land and Water Alliance is ready to help. It is important that we begin now to design and implement strategies to enhance water quality, fishing and hunting.

Larry Mitzner is a fisheries biologist for the department in Chariton.

Vince Sitzmann is an environmental specialist with the Soil Conservation Division of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship in Corydon.



Lowell Washburn

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Then Governor, Robert D. Ray arrived that humid June morning via a National Guard helicopter that landed on the hatchery service road. The Centerville High School Band played our National Anthem as Corydon Boy Scout Troop #137 raised the flag.

It seems like only yesterday that the new and innovative Rathbun Fish Hatchery, a showpiece of Iowa, was completed and ready to produce fish for Iowa's anglers. The hatchery was dedicated on the morning of June 11, 1977, to the delight of dignitaries and curious onlookers.

Hatchery Background

The need for an additional fish hatchery to supply Iowa's anglers with fish came into focus with the construction of four large flood-control reservoirs throughout the state. Coralville Reservoir was the earliest, built in 1959; Red Rock was completed in 1968; Rathbun was close behind in 1969; and Saylorville completed the reservoir boom in 1976. Without annual stockings of game species such as channel catfish, largemouth bass and walleye into the new reservoirs, undesirable fish species such as carp

and buffalo would eventually take over.

The existing state hatchery system could not meet the demands of increased stocking plans. In addition, new state and county lakes were also being built, and they too would place an increased burden on the state hatchery production.

The concept of a hatchery at Rathbun Reservoir resulted from these increased stocking requirements. In 1963, the Corps of Engineers set aside 375 acres below Rathbun Reservoir under a lease arrangement for construction of such a hatchery. The arrangement was approved as a portion of the mitigation required for loss of fish and wildlife values on land taken by Corps projects. At the same time an 18-inch water supply pipeline was to be provided in the construction of the outlet structure in the Rathbun dam.

Intensive vs. Extensive

Originally, the plan called for the construction of a series of large ponds directly below the dam. This type of *extensive* fish culture in the large, static ponds, although proven and used

in the southern U.S., sometimes produces unpredictable results, requires large amounts of suitable land for pond construction and leaves a lot to be desired. The hatchery design, completed in 1972, called for an *intensive* culture design that would be a leap forward from prior fish culture practices in the United States.

The intensive culture design called for 20 concrete rearing ponds approximately 48 feet square that would

Rathbun Fish Hatchery *25 Years in the Fish Business*

by Dave Walljasper



Ken Formanek

Dignitaries and interested individuals from around the state gathered 25 years ago in June to dedicate the new Rathbun Fish Hatchery.



contain 56,000 gallons of water with a maximum inlet flow of 500 gallons per minute. These ponds would allow the fish culturist to maintain a close watch on fish health and provide a means for more predictable production than the extensive ponds provided. Rathbun Hatchery was to be the largest hatchery in the country at that time to use this type of design. The initial construction cost was \$6.1 million, of which most of the funding came from hunting and fishing license sales. A total of \$1.8 million was provided from the Iowa general fund and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided \$700,000.

Hatchery Facilities and Production

The hatchery design provided 40 indoor production tanks, a 200-jar egg incubator, offices, dormitory and a visitor center in addition to the 20 outdoor rearing ponds. The water provided to the indoor production tanks would pass through sand filters and ultraviolet filters to remove turbidity and bacteria from the water. Water flow to the outdoor ponds

would be via gravity, eliminating the need and expense of large pumps. Hatchery ground-breaking occurred in March 1974 with limited pond production of channel catfish as early as July 1975.

From July 1975 to December 2001, Rathbun Fish Hatchery has produced more than 1.06 billion fish for statewide stocking. (See below for breakdown by species.) A total of 253 bodies of water across the state received fish from Rathbun Hatchery in 2001. Channel catfish from the hatchery are very seldom stocked into Rathbun Lake because it has a very good self-sustaining catfish population. Large numbers of walleye fry and fingerlings are stocked into the lake each year to provide fishing for anglers. This also ensures adequate numbers of walleye brood stock for future spawning operations.

Facility Improvements

Due to the nature of Rathbun Reservoir — a flood control reservoir — lake levels can vary as much as 24 feet over a single production season.

Since the hatchery water intake was constructed at a fixed elevation, normally 17 feet below surface, high lake elevations caused undesirable water temperature and turbidity effects for the hatchery. High winds and abrupt wind direction changes caused intake water temperatures to drop as much as 10 degrees within several hours. Such abrupt tempera-

ture changes caused catfish and other fish species to stop feeding and produced abnormal stress that led to disease and death. In addition, the large volume of water in the lake warmed slowly and inhibited fish growth.

This problem was solved with the addition of a multilevel intake to the outlet structure of the lake in early 1990. A new intake level at 900 feet above sea level allowed the hatchery to use the warmer water near the surface of the lake. In addition, an oxygen production system and infusion columns in each pond and the hatchery tank supply area was also constructed. This system allowed delivery of optimum dissolved oxygen levels and water temperatures for intensive fish production. This oxygen system eliminated low oxygen levels that occurred naturally in the lake from being introduced into the intensive rearing ponds.

Lack of a suitable research lab and office space at the hatchery was addressed with the construction of the Rathbun Fish Culture Research Facility in 1995. The \$2.1 million facility is located adjacent to the hatchery and includes a research lab/office building, climate-controlled feed storage room, 12 concrete raceways, and six 0.1-acre lined research ponds. Fisheries research conducted at the facility includes feed improvement, water quality, fish rearing techniques for channel catfish and walleye, disease treatment, and other areas of fish culture research. Through the efforts of the research biologists stationed at the facility, improvements in fish culture techniques used at Rathbun and other Iowa fish hatcheries is close at hand. Rathbun Fish Hatchery is currently one of the

Rathbun Hatchery Production

July 1975 to December 2001

2-inch Channel Catfish	2,833,124
6- to 8-inch Channel Catfish	8,350,591
5-inch Largemouth bass	1,321,994
Walleye Fry	1,008,040,515
5- to 8-inch Walleye	1,068,733
Saugeye Fry	48,269,255
5-inch Saugeye	22,154
10- to 12-inch Muskies	23,258
2-inch Tiger Muskies	92,008
6-inch Tiger Muskies	367,264
Total	1,069,388,896

largest producers of pellet-reared 8-inch walleye fingerlings in the U.S. More than 161,000 were stocked in Iowa this past year.

Increased demand for 2-inch walleye for stocking in northeast Iowa rivers and for additional pellet-reared 8-inch walleye influenced another facility improvement in 2000. Ten one-acre plastic-lined extensive culture ponds for hatchery production and six 0.1 acre lined research/production ponds were constructed at a cost of \$1.8 million. In addition, these ponds are used for channel catfish production because they provide faster growth due to the warmer water in the lined pond. Additional concrete intensive culture ponds normally used for catfish fry were made available for the pellet-reared walleye fingerlings. Pond space at other Iowa hatcheries was

opened up for additional 2-inch walleye production for rivers and lakes, and bluegill production for the farm pond stocking program. The lined ponds have been used for two seasons and have proven to be a great benefit to the hatchery program.

The Future

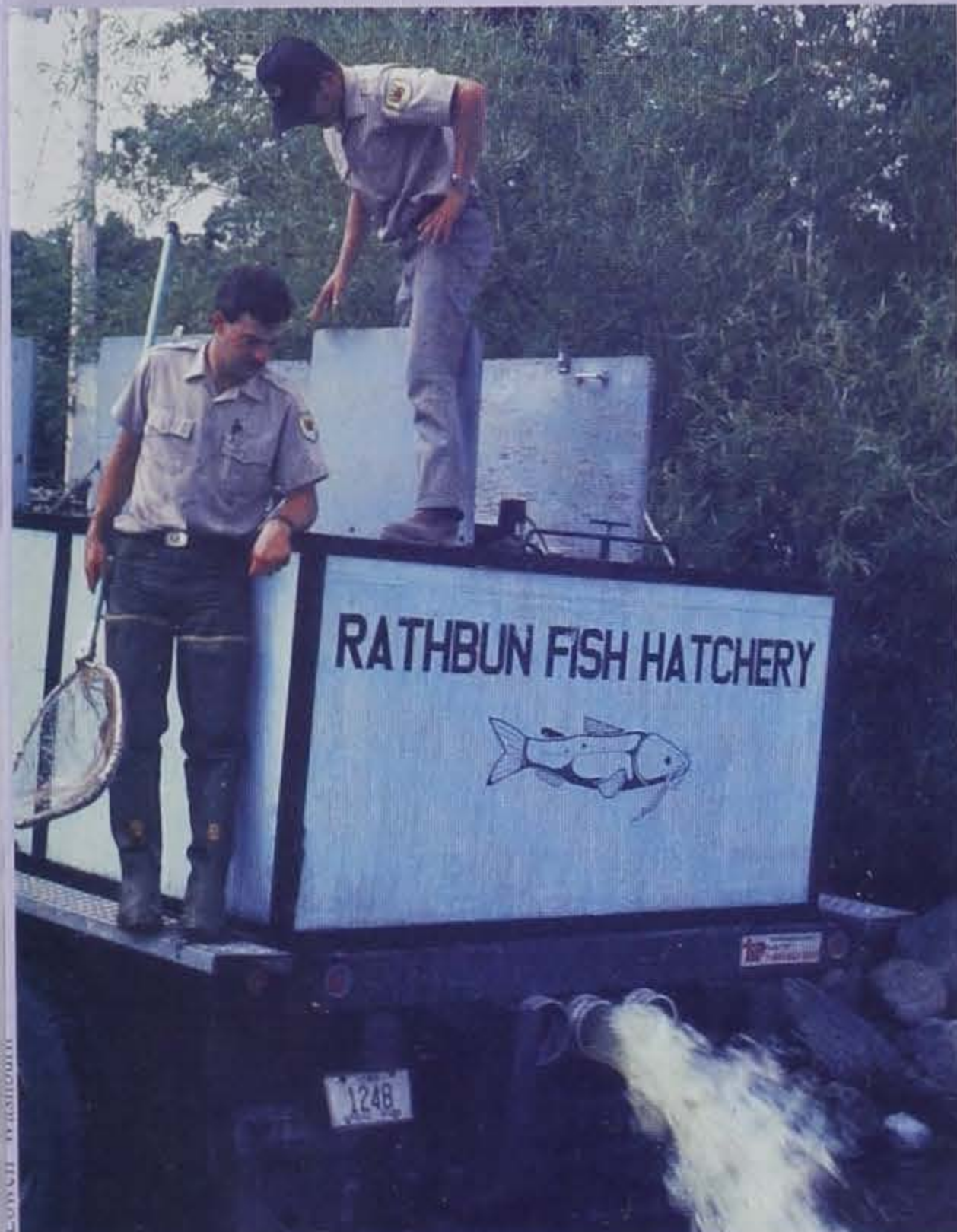
For the past quarter century, Rathbun Hatchery has met and sometimes exceeded Iowa's fish stocking requests. Future increases in hatchery production will be limited by one thing — sufficient water. Without an increased water supply from Rathbun Lake, additional expansion is unlikely. Space is available for ten more plastic-lined ponds adjacent to the existing ponds. An alternative water intake from the lake is a possibility, along with water reuse from a constructed wetland that would filter

hatchery effluent. One fact is certain, however, with or without additional facilities, the present Rathbun Hatchery will be producing fish for Iowa anglers well into the future.

Dave Walljasper is a fisheries biologist for the department at Rathbun Fish Hatchery.

You're Invited

An open house will be held at Rathbun Hatchery on June 8, 2002 from 10 AM to 2 PM as part of the 25th Hatchery Anniversary and Free Fishing Weekend. Hatchery personnel will provide guided tours of the facility and visitors are welcome to attend.



Ren Johnson

Last year, 253 bodies of water in Iowa received fish from Rathbun Hatchery. Large numbers of walleye fry and fingerlings (above) are stocked into Lake Rathbun each year to provide fishing for anglers and ensure future brood stock.

Sustainable Tree Farming

Article by Ray Lehn

Photos provided by Keith and Mary Shafer



Bottomland timber (above) on the Shafer property. A 1998 harvest from Shafer's tree farm — soft maple for Lazy Boy.



What Keith and Mary Shafer's timber looked like in 1956 — when it was first certified under the Iowa Tree Farm program — and what it looks like today, are two different pictures. Sound management decisions and a commitment to their land have left the Shafers with a healthy, vibrant timber for decades to come.

Their efforts haven't gone unnoticed. Along with an earlier Jefferson County Woodland Owners of the Year, the Shafers can now add 2001 Iowa Tree Farmers of the Year to their list of accomplishments.

The award wasn't without merit.

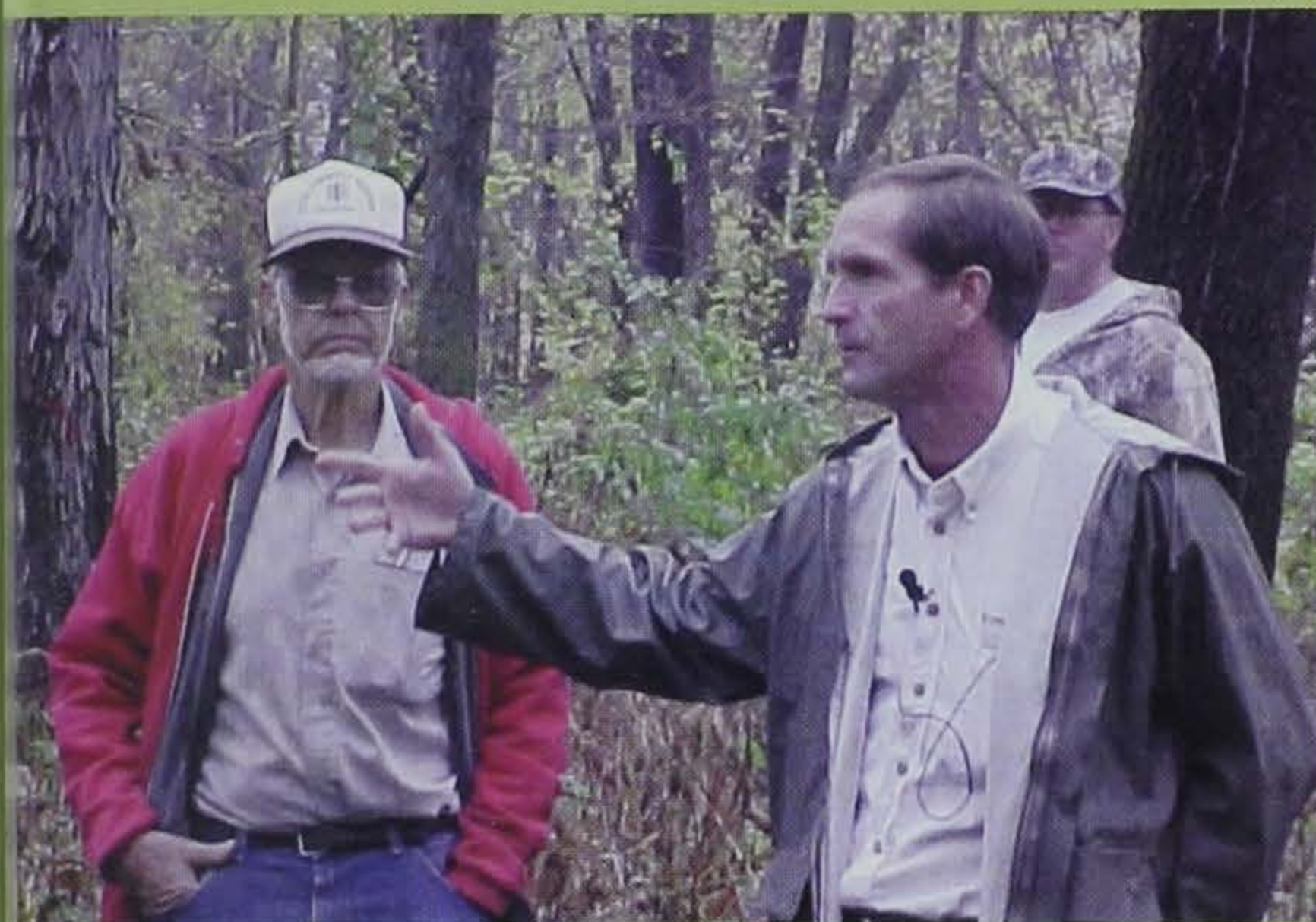


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Keith Shafer and Ray Lehn discuss timber management during a field day on Shafer's farm last October.

Over the past 45 years, the Shafer's have turned their 160-acre tree farm, nestled in rural Birmingham in southern Jefferson County, into a living legacy that will be around for future generations.

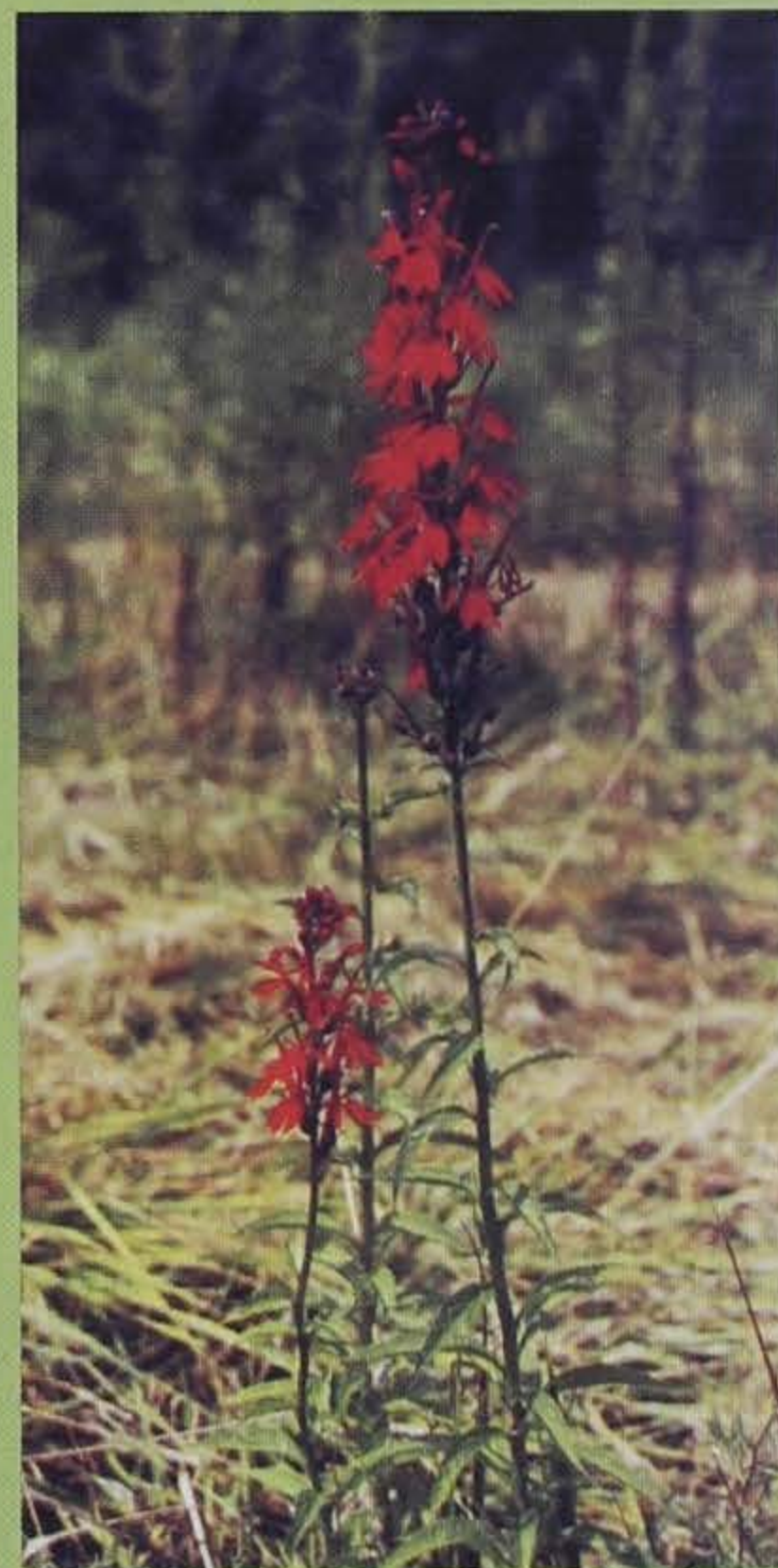
Commercial harvest of sawlogs, conducted in 1980 and 1998, enhanced the overall health of the forest and left plenty of habitat for wildlife. The reforestation of more than 25 acres, and timber stand improvements on another 100, ensured future tree growth. The development of two ponds provided both wildlife habitat and erosion control. To reduce erosion and improve water quality, they installed riparian buffers on crop ground along Cedar Creek, which borders their property.

The Shafers are multiple-use woodland owners, meaning although quality sawlog production is an

important objective, it is not the only one. The log home they built in 1981 is heated almost entirely with wood. They allow — with permission — hunting, berry and mushroom picking and other outdoor recreational pursuits. Deer and turkey make their home on the property, and Keith annually harvests some of each.

The Shafer's land has also served as a living classroom to many Boy Scout troops and other youth groups, who have been introduced to the benefits of sound forest management. The couple also enjoys sharing bits of local history with their visitors. Many have heard the story of the stream that passes through their property, which allegedly was part of the underground railroad.

For many years Keith Shafer has been the owner and operator of a sawmill providing lumber and other



Cardinal flower

products from his own land, as well as custom sawing for other local woodland owners. Every year he cuts and saws lumber from his woodlands for personal use and sale. The trim in his log home, for example, came from oak, walnut and cherry cut from his own land. He recently cut a cherry mantelpiece for restoration of a 1838 home his son purchased. Shafer is also cutting walnut siding for restoration of the Bonnifield Cabin in Fairfield, one of the oldest surviving log cabins in Iowa.

Over the years, Shafer-grown timber has supplied raw material for some unique products, including white oak used to build the ribs of an

Over the years, management activities on the Shafer farm have included commercial harvest of sawlogs, reforestation of more than 25 acres, timber stand improvement on more than 100 acres, and development of two ponds for wildlife habitat and erosion control. Below is a nine-year-old tree planting and Shafer's newest pond.

ocean-going sailboat, 10,000 board feet of custom-cut basswood for trowel handles and specialty wood for duck calls. One of the most unique products — very expensive cellos — were made from walnut sapwood taken from the Shafer's farm.

Last October the Shafer's continuing forestry activities were showcased when — despite the cool, rainy, early morning weather — more than 80 people showed up at the farm

for a field day. Timber stand improvement, plantation management, pruning and forestation techniques were featured. Anyone who wished was allowed to fill their pockets with shellbark and king-nut hickory nuts found in abundance on the Shafer property. The highlight for many, however, was

listening to Shafer describe his sawmill and watching him cut logs into lumber. The field day was cosponsored by the Iowa Tree Farm Program, Iowa State University Extension Forestry and Iowa DNR Forests and Prairies Division.

The Shafer's have been longtime promoters of sustainable forest management, evident from Keith's civil service record. He has served as Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner, Secretary of the State Association of Soil Commissioners, Chair of the Watershed Committee, member of the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors and is a graduate of one of the first Master Woodland Managers programs. His leadership roles in the county have influenced many people on the values of sound forest management.

The Shafers exemplify tree farming, and their philosophy may be best summarized by the inscription on their business cards — "Wood — a Renewable Resource."

"Practicing sustainable forestry not only makes good economic and environmental sense," Shafer says, "it is a labor of love that provides a secondary income as well as helps keep me in shape."

The Shafers plan to continue the active management of their forestland in a sustainable way. They want their four sons and their families to be able to enjoy the many benefits of a well-managed forest for years to come.

Ray Lehn is a district forester for the department in Fairfield.



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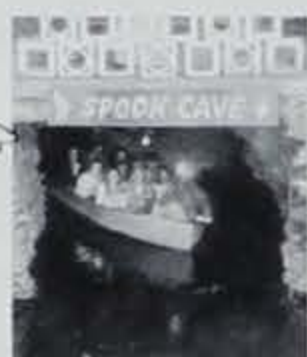
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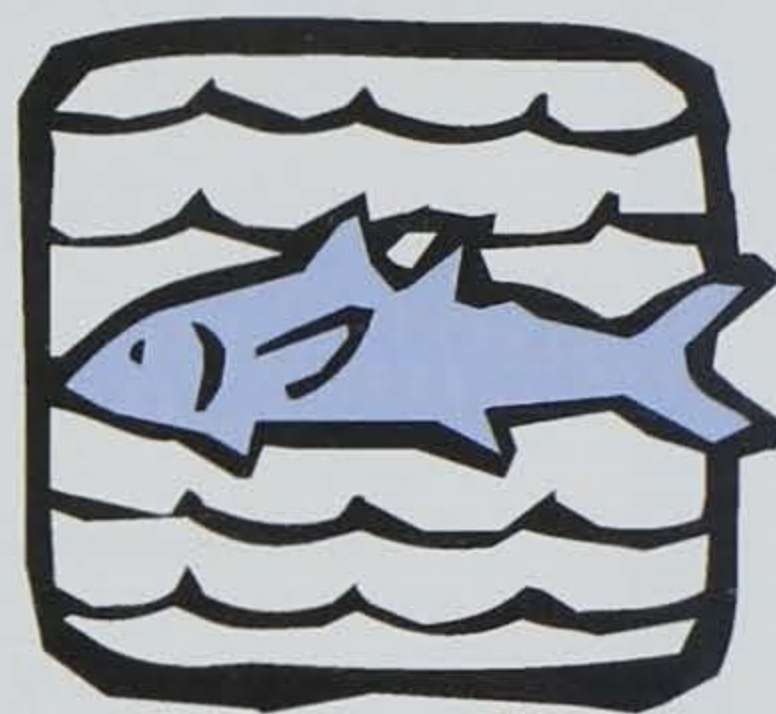
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PARKS PROFILE

Big Creek State Park

A Wealth of Recreational Opportunities

by Kim Olofson

Fed by the meandering tributaries of three small creeks, Big Creek Lake is one of the most scenic and popular lakes in Iowa. Located just north of Des Moines, it offers a multitude of recreational opportunities.

Big Creek State Park is a magnet to outdoor enthusiasts. The 866-acre lake is bordered by approximately 3,550 acres of timber, prairie, picnic areas and trails providing a variety of recreational opportunities.

Big Creek Lake was built by the Army Corps of Engineers in the early 1970s as part of the Saylorville Reservoir project. It was initially created to protect Polk City from flooding.

Over time the Big Creek complex has developed into a multiuse recreational area. Approximately 1 million people visit Big Creek

Each of the five modern boat ramps provide sailboat and wind surfboard rigging zones.

every year to fish, picnic, swim, walk or bike the paved trails, hunt or target shoot at the nearby Charles "Butch" Olofson Shooting Range.

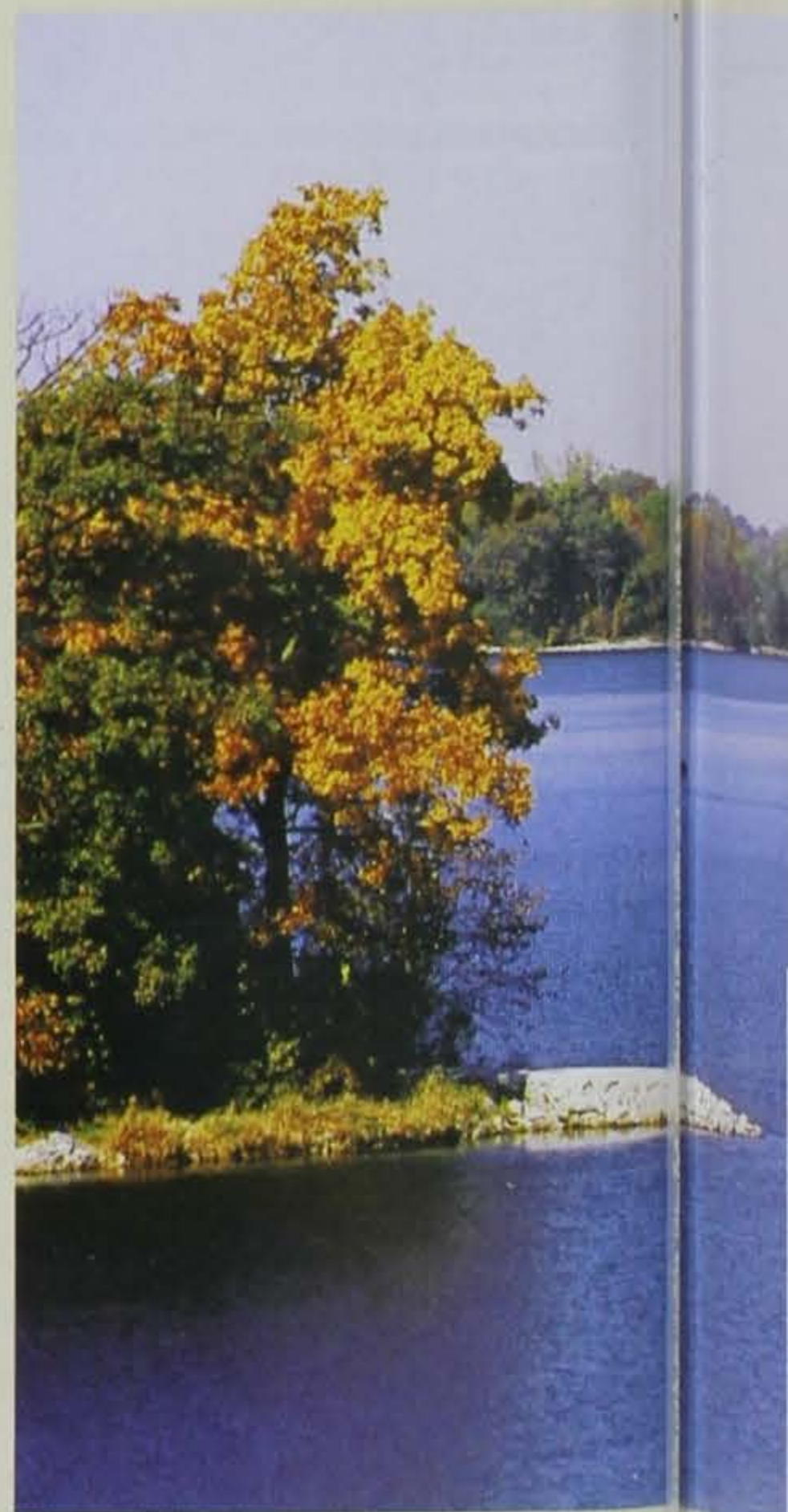
The Big Creek complex was one of the first developed under the "total recreation area" concept, intended to increase recreational opportunities at park facilities. Most state parks, for example, have boat ramps located

within park boundaries, which are accessible only during limited daytime hours. At Big Creek, five ramps located outside the park provide 24-hour access to the lake.

While hunting is also often limited in many state parks, at Big Creek a new approach was used. The lake is opened to waterfowl hunting during the season, and more than 1,500 acres of adjacent land are available for upland game hunting.

Big Creek State Park has undergone some major renovations in recent years. The lake, a

Ken Formanek



major attraction of the area, was rejuvenated in 1995 and 1996. The \$1.2 million project improved water quality, enhanced fish habitat, increased shoreline access and expanded the beach.

Reefs, rock piles, stake beds, sunken trees and spawning beds were added to create new fish habitat. Ten new jetties and bank access trails increased shore fishing opportunities. A handicap-accessible pier was built on the east side of the lake, and a fish cleaning station was installed on the west side. Three new silt dams and riprapping

nearly five miles of shoreline significantly improved water quality.

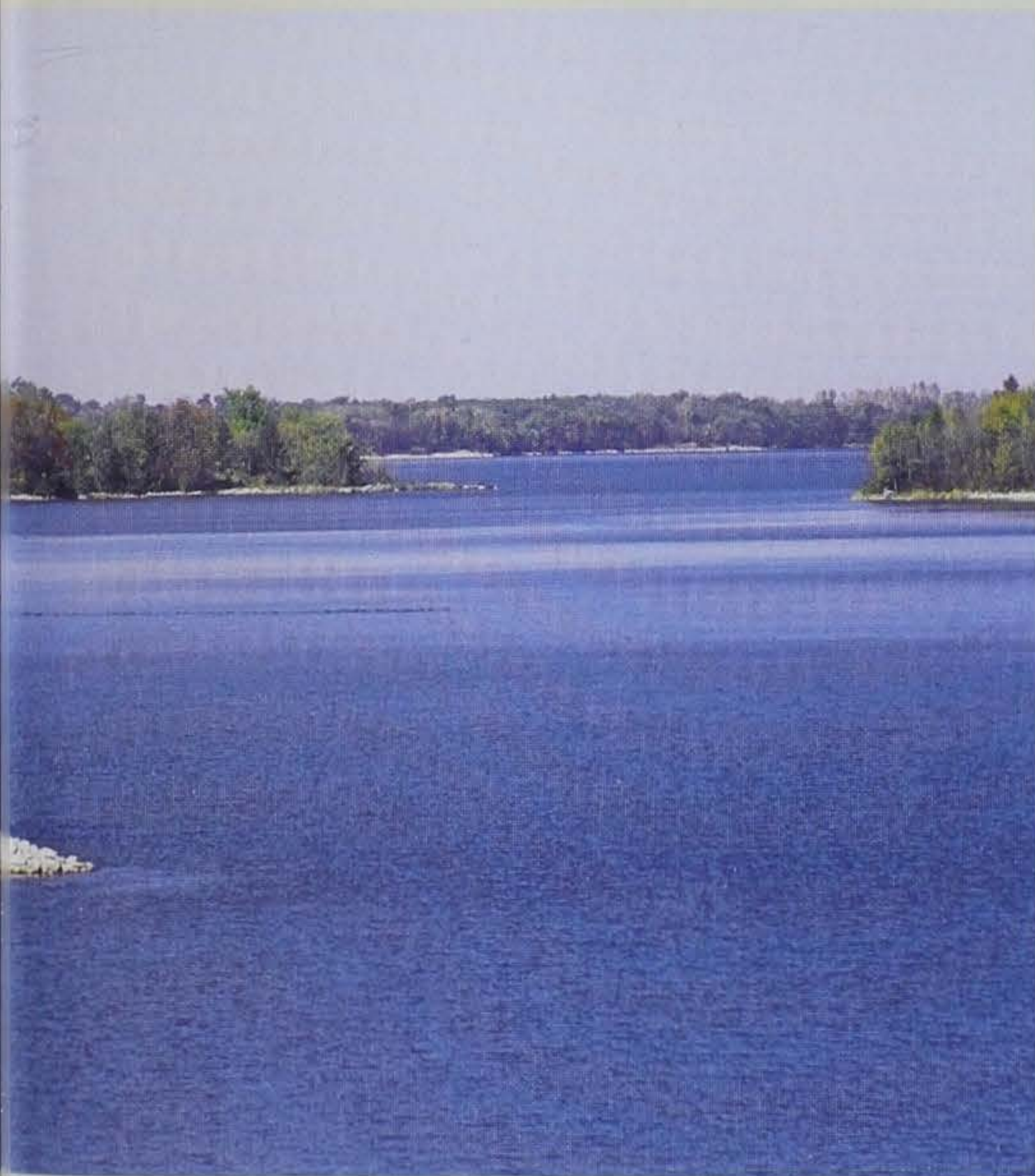
The renovation project also doubled the size of the beach — to 1,300 feet — making it one of the most popular swimming areas in Iowa. The beach features sand volleyball, full concessions, picnic shelters, outside showers, dock rental and boat storage.

The beach is also a favorite with families, thanks in part to a \$60,000 playground located adjacent to the beach. The large, wooden playground was con-

structed in five days with the help of hundreds of volunteers.

The lake is equally popular, offering a diverse array of boating activities. Boats with any size motors are allowed on the lake as long as they are operated at no wake speed. Sailboats, windsurfers, pontoons, kayaks, canoes and fishing boats are all common sights. Five concrete boat ramps and one gravel ramp provide easy access to the lake.

For those who don't have a boat, the marina rents a variety of vessels ranging from hydro-bikes to pontoons.



Clay Smith



DNR photo

LEFT: A \$1.2 million rejuvenation project undertaken in 1995 and 1996 enhanced water quality and fish habitat and increased shoreline access.

ABOVE: A handicap-accessible fishing pier is located on the east side of the lake.

PARKS PROFILE



Ken Formanek

LEFT: A large wooden playground is located at the beach.

BELOW: Prairie remnants dot the landscape in and around Big Creek.

the lake. While there is no camping at Big Creek, there are several campgrounds in close proximity.

Fishing, swimming and boating aren't the only outdoor entertainment options at Big Creek. An 18-hole disc golf course, ball field and model airplane field are located in the Hampton picnic area. A 26-mile multiuse asphalt trail winds from the beach, through the Saylorville Lake area into Des Moines. It's a highly scenic route for bikers, walkers and rollerbladers during all seasons, and can be travelled in long or short segments. More than 200,000 people use the paved trail every year.

Prairie enthusiasts can enjoy the remnant prairies, reconstructed prairies, and private prairies in and around the Big Creek area.

Several special events are held each year for fun and entertainment, such as the Triathlon, Sand Jam, Polar Bear Swim and Bike Ride, among others.

On the west side of Big Creek Lake along Highway 415, there are hunting areas marked with green "wildlife management" signs. There are also ample areas for upland game



DNR photo

Fishing is still one of the main attractions at Big Creek, whether it be open water or ice fishing. Anglers can catch a variety of fish, from bluegills, crappies, white bass and channel catfish, to largemouth and smallmouth bass, walleyes and muskies. Largemouth and smallmouth bass, wiper, walleye, channel catfish and muskie stockings were recently intensified in an effort to control an overpopulation of shad. Hence, daily length and possession limits were recently changed on bass, wipers and walleyes to control harvest, so check current regulations if you plan to take a few fish home.

For the day user, there are 13 open shelters, 17 modern rest rooms and numerous picnic sites equipped with grills dotted around

hunting, wildlife viewing, mushroom hunting, dog training and hiking. Just two miles west of the entrance to Big Creek is the Charles "Butch" Olofson Shooting Range. The range offers one 100-yard and two 50-yard sheltered stations for firing rifles and handguns. There is also a trap and skeet range to test

shotgun skills, and a classroom for hunter safety programs.

During the winter, the lake is a popular spot for ice fishing and ice-skating. The park is open to cross-country skiing and sledding. A designated 13-mile snowmobile trail circling the lake allows snowmobilers to enjoy the park in the winter.

Whether visiting in the spring, summer, fall or winter recreational opportunities abound. Big Creek truly has a wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities.

Kim Olofson is the park manager at Big Creek State Park.

BIG CREEK STATE PARK AT A GLANCE

LOCATION: Located approximately two miles north of Polk City.

FISHING: The 866-acre lake contains crappie, bluegill, largemouth and smallmouth bass, walleye, channel catfish, muskie and wipers.

HUNTING: Hunting allowed on the lake and at designated areas around the lake. The Charles "Butch" Olofson shooting range is located approximately two miles west of Big Creek.

CAMPING: Camping is not permitted at Big Creek, however there are several large federal camping areas at nearby Saylorville Reservoir.

TRAILS: A 26-mile paved multiuse trail winds south from the Big Creek beach, through the Saylorville Reservoir area and into Des Moines.

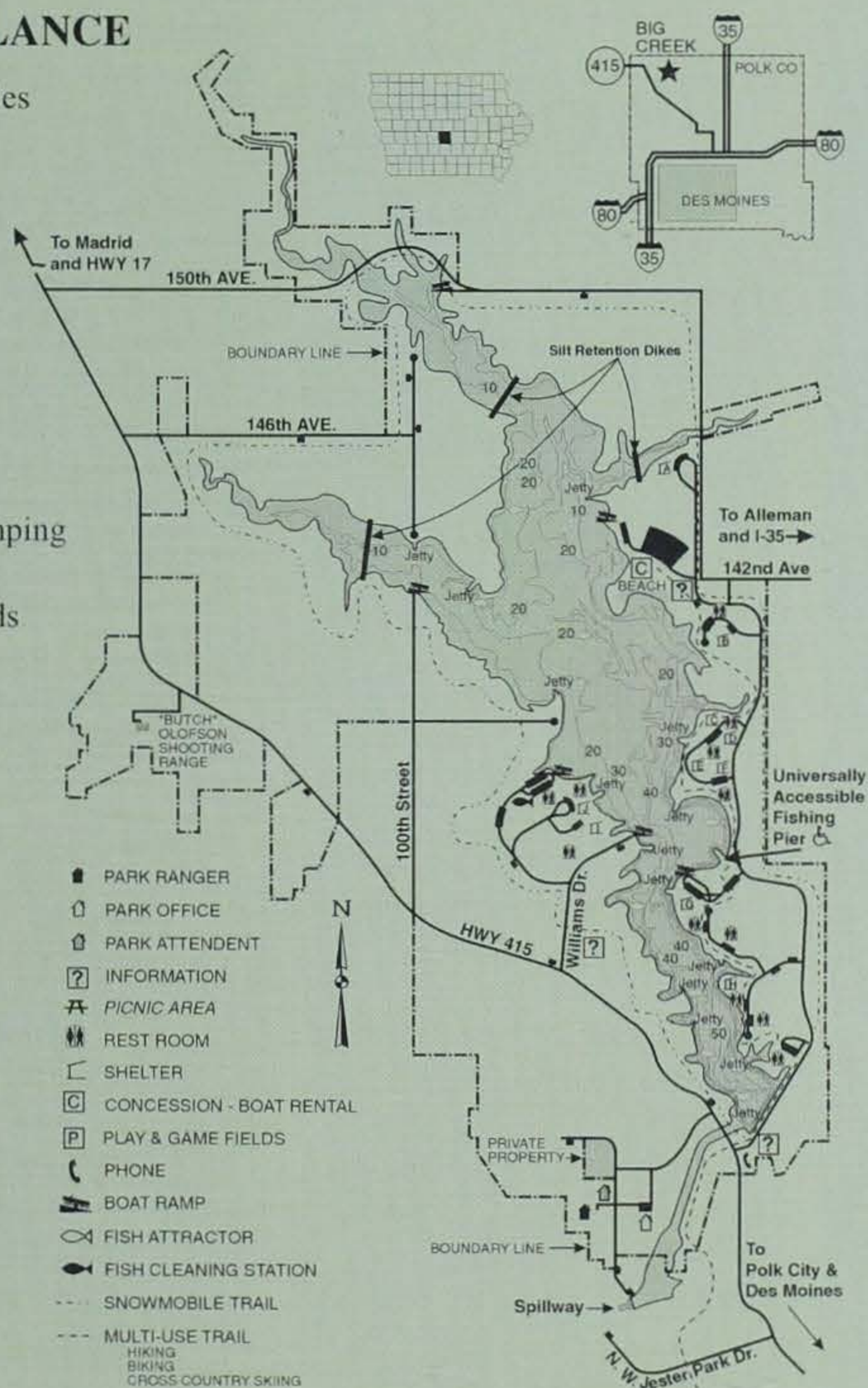
PICNICKING: There are 13 open shelters, 17 modern rest rooms and numerous picnic sites equipped with grills surrounding the lake.

SWIMMING: Popular family beach. Large, wooden handicapped-accessible play structure located at the beach.

BOATING: Any-size motor operated at no-wake speed.

CONCESSIONS: Refreshments available at the beach during the swimming season.

CONTACT: 515-984-6473; or by email at Big_Creek@dnr.state.ia.us.



A Taste of the Wild

When settlers first arrived in Iowa, they came with little more than a handful of personal belongings and a hope for a new future.

They relied on Iowa's abundant flora and fauna for survival. Small game, fish, fruits, nuts and greens harvested and

gathered in the untamed wood lots and prairies were staples.

More than a century and a half later, hunting and fishing remain an important part of many Iowans' lives. And although their bounty may often end up on the dinner table, hunting, fishing and gathering is not at all about survival. In today's world, dinner is a just a phone call or short trip to the local supermarket away.

Iowa's timbers, lakes and streams are filled with deer, wild turkeys, small game and assorted fish. But look a little deeper into the woods and waterways and you will find a hidden world of mostly unknown and under-used incredible edibles. Underneath the forest canopies, and beneath the

APPETIZER

Turkey Gobble-UPs

INGREDIENTS:

2 large avocados
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 medium onion, finely diced
6 English muffins, split
12 slices jack cheese
2 large tomatoes, sliced
sliced turkey
butter
salt and pepper

Butter muffins and place on cookie sheet under a broiler to toast. Mash both avocados in a mixing bowl. Add mayonnaise and onion, salt and pepper, to taste. Spread avocado paste on each muffin half. Add a slice of tomato and turkey. Top with cheese. Return to oven; set at 400 degrees for five to 10 minutes. Turn to broil until cheese bubbles. Serve piping hot.

*Dan Mork,
conservation officer*

DESSERT

Timber Gooseberry Pie

INGREDIENTS:

3 cups gooseberries	2 T flour
1 cup sugar	dash salt
1/4 cup water	1/2 tsp. each of cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg
1/2 cup sugar	

Cook the first 3 ingredients until berries are tender. Combine and add remaining ingredients. Pour into 9-inch pie crust, dot with butter, add top crust and bake at 450 degrees for 10 minutes, reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake for 20 to 25 minutes.

*Joan Runyan,
wife of conservation officer Mike Runyan*

SALAD

Watercress Salad

INGREDIENTS:

bunch of watercress (with or without a little freshwater shrimp)
1/4 cup tarragon vinegar
1/4 cup water
1/4 cup sugar

Mix vinegar, water and sugar together. Pour over individual salads. Can be topped with sunflower seeds, blue cheese crumbles, raisins or bacon bits.

*Julie Hoilien,
daughter of retired
conservation officer
G.I. Hoilien*

water surface, lie a treasure trove of tasty fungi, sweet and tangy wild berries and tender greens like watercress, dandelions and wild asparagus.

Morel mushrooms are undoubtedly one of the most sought after and recognized wild edible. They can be found in nearly every Iowa wood lot — if you get there before all the other

morel addicts do. They are easily identified, and arguably, one of the tastiest fungi around.

There's really no wrong way to cook morels, unless you are cooking them for someone else and not yourself. They can be sauteed in butter, sprinkled on a pizza or scrambled in an omelet. However, the time-proven method is to dip them in beaten

eggs, lightly coat with finely crushed cracker crumbs and fry in butter until golden brown.

Featured in this article is a menu for a complete meal, including appetizer, salad, main course, dessert and drink. Each featured ingredient can be found in the wild, except maybe for rhubarb, which can be found in most fruit and vegetable gardens, farmers' markets or grocery stores. All recipes were taken from Iowa's *Wardens' Cookbook*.

Bon Appétit!

MAIN COURSE

Beer Batter Panfish

INGREDIENTS:

3/4 cup beer
2 eggs, separated
3/4 cup flour
3/4 tsp. salt
1-1/2 tsp. vegetable oil
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
25 to 30 panfish fillets
enough shortening to cook the fish

Let the beer stand at room temperature for 45 minutes until it goes flat. Beat egg whites until they are stiff. In separate bowl, beat the beer, flour, salt, oil and egg yolks together until smooth. Fold in egg whites. Dip each fillet into batter and fry in melted shortening for five to seven minutes. Brown each side. This is also good for deep frying.

*Galen Heinkel, retired
conservation officer*

Dandelion Greens

INGREDIENTS:

One grocery bag of dandelions
8 to 12 strips of bacon, to taste

Dig dandelions before they blossom. Leave large white center root attached. (Looks like a small green onion.) Peel back outer brown leaves, and cut lower roots off, leaving enough of the root so that the plant remains intact. Wash thoroughly with cold water. Bring water to a boil; add dandelions and cover. Boil for five to 10 minutes and drain. Cut bacon into small pieces and fry. Do not drain bacon grease. Add dandelions and stir. Cook over medium heat for 15 to 20 minutes. Stir occasionally. Serve with salt and brown vinegar to taste. Serves two to four.

*Stan Blair,
conservation officer*

DRINK

Rhubarb Punch

INGREDIENTS:

3 pounds rhubarb
1 quart water
2 cups honey
1 cup lemon juice
1 cup orange juice
3 quarts cold water

Wash and cut rhubarb into very small pieces. Cover with one quart of water, cooking until tender. Run through blender. Add honey and check for sweetness by tasting (may add more honey or sugar for your taste. Add lemon and orange juices and allow to cool. Add remaining cold water and serve.

*Darrell Batterson,
conservation officer*

KIDS' CORNER

Strangers in Iowa

Animals and plants that move outside of the area where they occur naturally are considered alien, exotic or non-native. Occasionally when an alien organism is introduced into an area where it did not previously exist, it flourishes, quickly dominating its new surroundings. The term "invasive" is used to describe such species. Certain introduced species are very successful in their new habitats because they lack their natural competitors and enemies. Not all introductions cause long-term problems. Many non-native species are valued for their agricultural and aesthetic qualities, but when a species becomes invasive and shows up in unwanted places, public land

managers, recreationalists and property owners become concerned.

Invasive species can cause many problems. They can out-compete native animal and plant species, degrade fish and wildlife habitats, reduce agricultural yields, hinder recreational activities, and influence water quality. These effects usually aren't detected until they affect humans and by then it is often too late or very difficult to control them. The impacts of invasive species costs billions of dollars each year in North America.

Historically, natural boundaries such as oceans, mountain ranges or deserts limited the spread of species. Human activities are primarily responsible

for breaking down these barriers. Many non-native species found in North America were brought from other continents by people. Some came in accidentally, others were introduced intentionally for agricultural, medicinal or ornamental uses. As global trade and travel have expanded in recent decades, the rate of exotic introductions has increased as well.

To learn more about invasive species check out the following web sites:

<http://invasives.fws.gov>

www.aphis.usda.gov//npb

www.usgs.gov/invasive_species/plw/

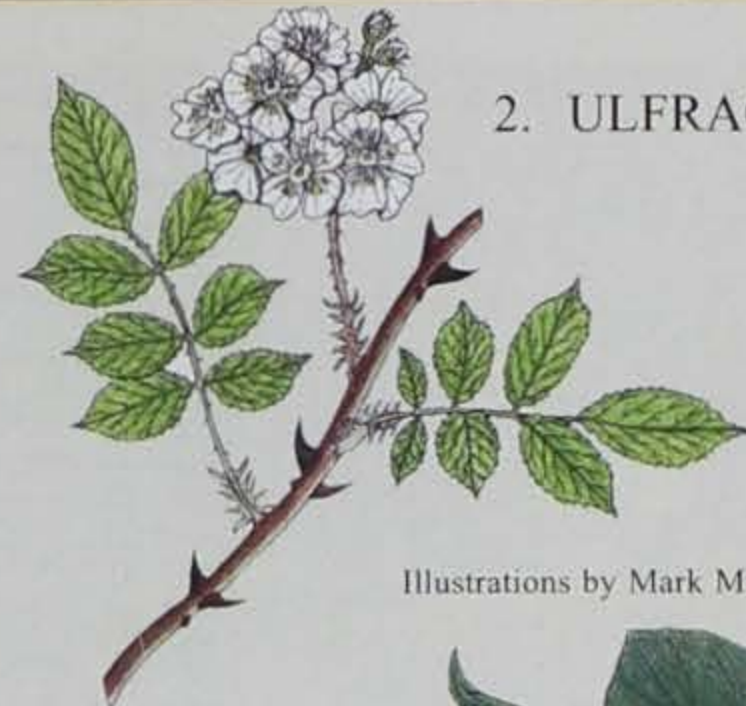
P	L	E	A	F	Y	S	P	U	R	G	E	C	A	L	I	E	N
E	Z	E	B	R	A	M	U	S	S	E	L	O	E	D	S	F	H
L	E	N	V	I	R	O	N	M	E	N	T	N	C	A	E	E	O
H	P	O	E	C	O	S	Y	S	T	E	M	S	M	E	N	I	N
R	M	R	T	L	T	R	E	E	O	F	H	E	A	V	E	N	E
N	N	Y	E	I	F	O	G	V	E	A	X	R	N	T	E	M	Y
W	A	G	E	S	O	O	A	A	X	A	I	V	A	E	P	K	S
D	T	L	Y	S	C	N	R	I	O	E	D	A	G	I	R	N	U
O	I	U	W	P	B	R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

Word Search

ALIEN	SAVANNA
BUCKTHORN	TREE OF HEAVEN
CONSERVATION	UNDERSTORY
DIVERSITY	ZEBRA MUSSEL
ECOSYSTEM	
ENVIRONMENT	
EROSION	
EXOTIC	
EXTINCT	
GARLIC MUSTARD	
GYPSY MOTH	
HABITAT	
HONEYSUCKLE	
INVASIVE	
LEAFY SPURGE	
MANAGEMENT	
NATIVE	
PRESCRIBED FIRE	
PRESERVATION	



1. IGACRL TUMSRDA



2. ULFRAOMTIL ORES

Illustrations by Mark Muller

Word Scramble

Unscramble the plant names to identify some of Iowa's invaders.



3. EENCHOULYSK



4. MOMOCN UKRNBCOTH

Word Scramble 1. garlic mustard; 2. multiflora rose; 3. honeysuckle; 4. common buckthorn

Math Decoder

Solve the problems and fill in the blanks using the decoder key to find the secret message.

_____ ,
 $(5 \times 4) - 1$ $(3 - 2) \times 1$ 11×2 $10 - 5$ $18 \div 2$ 3×5 $(3 \times 8) - 1$ $(6 - 7) + 2$ $(6 \times 3) + 1$

 7×2 $(3 \times 4) - 11$ $(3 \times 9) - 7$ $15 - 6$ $13 + 9$ $(10 \times 4) \div 8$

_____ .
 $(7 \times 2) + 5$ $12 + 4$ $25 \div 5$ $(6 \times 3) - 15$ $(30 \div 5) + 3$ $(8 + 7) \div 3$ $18 + 1$ $(27 \div 3) + 10$ $(7 \times 6) - 22$ $9 + 6$ $(6 \times 4) - 8$

_____ !
 $40 \div 2$ $(12 + 4) \div 2$ $(4 \times 3) - 7$ $7 \div 7$ $(3 \times 6) - 6$ $90 \div 10$ $43 - 38$ $(3 \times 4) + 2$

 $(2 \times 5) - 1$ $(39 \div 3) + 1$ $13 + 9$ $(7 \times 3) - 20$ $(8 \times 4) - 13$ $(24 \div 6) + 5$ $60 \div 4$ $(3 \times 4) + 2$

A=1	H=8	O=15	V=22
B=2	I=9	P=16	W=23
C=3	J=10	Q=17	X=24
D=4	K=11	R=18	Y=25
E=5	L=12	S=19	Z=26
F=6	M=13	T=20	
G=7	N=14	U=21	

Information used in this issue of "Kids' Corner" came from *Trees For Kids (TFK)* educational materials. *Trees for Kids* is a tree education and planting program targeting Iowa's elementary students. For more information about the program contact the DNR TFK coordinator at 515-281-4915.

STOP THE ALIEN INVASION!
 SAVE IOWA'S NATIVE SPECIES.
 Math Decoder

CONSERVATION UPDATE



Clay Smith

Target shooting is one of the more popular activities at outdoor skills camps, but not before a thorough lesson on gun safety.

Conservation Camps Planned For Boys and Girls

The Iowa DNR and local Pheasants Forever chapters are once again teaming up to provide outdoor skill workshops for Iowa youths. The camps target boys and girls ages 12 through 15.

Outdoor Journey for Girls will be offered June 10 to 12 and July 24 to 26. Activities include canoeing, fishing, target shooting, camping, orienteering and furharvesting. Participants will also become hunter education certified.

The Hunting and Conservation Camp for Boys will be held June 17 to 19 and Aug. 7 to 9. The camps will focus on target shooting, furharvesting, bowhunting, dog

DNR Partners with Wal-Mart to Promote Fishing

The DNR will be talking fishing from 10 a.m. to noon on June 1 in Wal-Mart stores across Iowa. The effort is part of a national campaign with state fish experts and the retail giant.

DNR fisheries and law enforcement staff will be at the

training and handling, and game care, overall habitat improvement and wildlife management.

Iowa Pheasants Forever chapters have played a key role in the camps for years. Chapter members recruit campers and cover registration fees. Pheasants Forever encourages educating youths about natural resources and their wise use to preserve habitat and the hunting heritage.

For more information, contact your local Pheasants Forever representative, or A. Jay Winter, DNR training officer, at 641-747-8383, or by email at ajay.winter@dnr.state.ia.us.

various Wal-Marts to answer questions regarding fishing, boating safety, or current fishing hotspots. Wal-Mart stores will also be sponsoring a fishing event. Events will vary by store. Check with individual stores for more details.

Outdoor Leadership Schools Planned For Iowa Educators

There is still room for educators interested in attending the American Wilderness Leadership School (AWLS) I, which will be held June 24 to 28, or AWLS II set for July 29 to Aug. 2.

Both programs are designed for educators who want to include natural resource and environmental curriculums in the classroom, but who may be lacking in outdoor skills and experience. AWLS I teaches aquatic study, shooting (rifle, shotgun and archery), backpacking, canoeing, orienteering, water quality and testing, and prairie education.

AWLS II takes those teachings one step further. It offers sessions on overnight canoeing on the Raccoon River, hide tanning, fly tying and fly fishing, turtle trapping, bird banding, radio telemetry, and rifle and handgun shooting.

The workshops will be held at the Springbrook Education Center near Guthrie Center. Registration is \$150, which includes onsite lodging, meals, programming and materials. There are also three graduate credits available from Drake University or staff development credit for an additional fee.

The schools are sponsored by the Iowa DNR and the Iowa Chapter of Safari Club International. For more information contact A. Jay Winter, DNR training officer, at 641-747-8383, or ajay.winter@dnr.state.ia.us.

Fishing Clinics, Tournaments Planned Across The State This Summer

Following is a list of fishing clinics and tournaments planned in Iowa through July.

YOUTH CLINIC

- Ainsworth**
June 8, Marr Park, 319-653-7765
- Ames**
May 18, Izaak Walton League Club House, 515-232-2516
- Bloomfield**
June 1, McGowen Recreation and Wildlife Area, 641-664-2572
- Cedar Falls**
July 11, Lake Manatt, 319-277-2187
- Cedar Falls**
July 12, Lake Manatt, Hartman Reserve Nature Center, 319-277-2187
- Cedar Rapids**
June 8, Robins Lake, Ellis Park, 319-438-1364
- Cedar Rapids**
June 11, Robins Lake, Ellis Park, 319-862-0541
- Central City**
June 8, Pinicon Ridge Park, 319-438-1364
- Chariton**
June 15, Pin Oak Marsh, 641-774-2438
- Corning**
May 18, Lake Icaria, 641-322-4769
- Davenport**
June 8, West Lake Park, 563-328-3281
- Elkader**
June 8, Osborne Pond, 563-245-1516
- Fairfield**
June 9, Waterworks Park, 641-472-8460
- Grinnell**
June 1, Lake Nyanza, 641-236-7135
- Hampton**
June 8, Beeds Lake State Park, 641-456-4375
- Harlan**
June 6, Prairie Rose Lake, 712-755-3104
- Hinton**
June 8, Hillview Recreation Area, 712-947-4270
- Lake View**
June 8, Black Hawk State Park, 712-662-4530
- Lewis**
June 8, Cold Springs State Park, 712-243-3542
- Missouri Valley**
June 1, DeSoto Bend, 712-642-5411
- Morning Sun**
June 15, Virginia Grove Recreation Area, 319-523-8381

- Muscatine**
June 1, Discovery Park, 563-264-5922
- Newton**
June 8, Emerson Hough Chapter Ikes, 641-792-8699
- Panora**
May 18, Lake Panorama Coulters Marina, 641-755-2990
- Paullina**
June 1, Mill Creek State Park, 712-448-2254
- Rockwell City**
June 1, Hwy. 4 Recreation Area, 712-297-7173
- Rockwell City**
Aug. 17, Hwy. 4 Recreation Area, 712-297-7173

- Salix**
June 2, Brown's Lake, 712-233-1513
- Shenandoah**
June 8, Pioneer Park, 712-542-3864
- Sioux City**
July 13, Stone State Park, 712-258-0838
- Sioux Rapids**
June 8, Gabrielson Park, 712-749-2563
- Toledo**
June 18, Otter Creek, 641-484-2231
- West Burlington**
June 1, Gahn Wildlife Refuge, 319-753-5808
- West Point**
June 9, Pollmiller, 319-372-7561

YOUTH TOURNAMENT

- Iowa Falls**
July 4, Iowa River, 641-648-4775
- LeMars**
July 3, LeMars Municipal Park Pond, 712-546-5910

ALL AGES CLINIC

- Allison**
June 9, Wilder's Park, 319-267-2742
- Anamosa**
June 1, Wapsipinicon State Park, 319-462-4311
- Andrew**
June 8, Andrew Jackson Farm, 563-652-3783
- Blairstown**
July 27, Hannen Lake, 319-454-6382
- Boyden**
June 22, Otter Creek Area, 712-552-3057
- Charles City**
June 1, Elks Lodge Pond, 641-756-3490
- Des Moines**
June 1, Easter Lake Park, 515-323-5359

- Dubuque**
June 8, Heritage Pond, 563-556-6745
- Fort Dodge**
June 8, Armstrong Park Pond, 515-573-3407
- Goodell**
June 8, Indian Lake, 641-923-9980
- Knoxville**
June 8, Marion County Park, 641-842-6472
- Plover**
June 9, Meredith Park, 712-335-4395
- Riceville**
June 8, Lake Hendricks, 563-547-3634
- Springbrook**
June 1, Whispering Meadows, 563-652-3783
- Tripoli**
June 9, Ikes Acres, 319-882-4742
- Vinton**
June 11, Kirkwood Community College, 319-472-2318

FISHING TOURNAMENT

- Burlington**
June 1, Lake Geode, 217-453-2034
- Carroll**
June 1, Swan Lake State Park, 712-792-4614
- Dewitt**
June 27, Malone Lake, 563-847-7202
- Martensdale**
June 1, Annett Nature Center Pond, 515-961-6169
- Mason City**
June 9, East Park, 641-421-3673
- Missouri Valley**
June 1, DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, 712-642-5411
- Rose Hill**
June 8, White Oak Lake, 641-673-9327
- Waverly**
June 8, Saints Lake, 319-352-3073
- Webster City**
May 19, Briggs-Woods Lake, 515-832-4504
- West Des Moines**
June 8, Blue Heron Lake, 515-222-3321

SPECIALTY CLINIC

- Cedar Falls**
July 29-30, Lake Manatt, Hartman Reserve Nature Center, 319-277-2187
- Chariton**
July 13, Red Haw State Park, 641-774-2438
- Council Bluffs**
June 10, Summer Camp, Camp Neyat, 712-328-2338

CONSERVATION UPDATE

Give Your House A Nontoxic Cleaning

Before dragging out the mop and bucket for the annual spring cleaning project, minimize your impact on the environment by selecting less toxic cleaning products.

Look for cleansers made with vegetable oils. They use renewable resources and are easier on the environment than their petroleum counterparts. If painting, select a water-based paint, or consider using one of the new milk-based ones. Choose products that are biodegradable and free of unnecessary dyes or perfumes, and keep an eye out for nontoxic items.

Plenty of less expensive, safer alternatives are available. A study by Consumer Reports revealed plain water worked just as well or better when matched with several commercial window cleaners. Use a water-dampened cloth for dusting and add vinegar for removing stubborn mold spots. Crayon marks can be erased with toothpaste. Table salt is a useful abrasive, and lemon juice can also help lift stains.

Baking soda is a common household product with a wide range of applications. Sprinkle on a wet sponge to scrub pots and pans, polish chrome, glass or enamel, or dust the carpet and vacuum (it's a great deodorizer).

When the cleaning is done, don't just throw out those old



Bob Castelline

Using less toxic products in and around the house helps protect the environment.

chemicals. Many cleansers and detergents are petroleum-based. If dumped down the sink, they can end up in Iowa rivers and lakes where they can be toxic to fish and animals. Products containing phosphates can also trickle into waterways, causing potentially harmful algae growths.

Of course, always read product labels before using any cleanser. If the label is worn or if you still have questions, contact the U.S. poison control hotline toll-free at 1-800-222-1222.

To find a center in your area that will accept your used supplies, and for additional information on the storage, use and disposal of household hazardous materials, go to www.state.ia.us/dnr/organiza/wmad/index.

To learn more about environmental toxins in the home, check out www.chechnet.org. For more information on the use of safer alternatives, contact the DNR's Theresa Stiner at 515-281-8646, or theresa.stiner@dnr.state.ia.us.

Beach Monitoring To Continue This Summer

Beaches at 35 state parks are again being monitored for bacteria this summer.

All state park beaches will be posted with signs explaining how swimmers can reduce health risks, information about the monitoring program and how monitoring data can be obtained.

Beaches that exceed a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standard for the amount of bacteria with five samples over 30 days will be posted with signs "Swimming Not Recommended." Beaches will not be closed due to high bacteria readings.

Beaches may still be closed in the event of a documented health risk such as a wastewater by-pass, hazardous chemical spill or localized infectious disease outbreak.

The DNR developed the policy in concurrence with the Department of Public Health and the State Hygienic Lab. To date, there has been no documented case of a health problem associated with state park beaches in Iowa. National studies show that swimmer illness is most commonly associated with swimmer-to-swimmer contamination or as a result of untreated human sewage entering lakes from sewer overflows.

The DNR, with input from the local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), county boards of health and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) will be doing watershed assessments to determine potential sources of bacteria at beaches where problems occur.

Volunteering Today For A Better Iowa Tomorrow

Preserving The CCC

During the Great Depression era, more than 600,000 unemployed young men went to work in Civilian Conservation Corps across the country to help support their struggling families. The work was often hard and always variant, ranging from building roads, bridges and buildings to planting trees, clearing underbrush and cutting trails.

Nearly 50,000 were assigned to Iowa alone. More than 700 of their projects are still in use today, many of which can be found in Iowa's state parks. Now, thanks to a new project of the Iowa Department of Natural Resource's parks bureau, some of their stories, experiences and memories are being recorded for history.

"We realized we knew a lot about the buildings, but not much about the people who built them or their lives in the camps...and time was slipping away," according to Angela Corio, project coordinator.

After a short training course, eight current or retired DNR employees are volunteering their time to interview surviving members of the CCC about their experiences and collect memorabilia from that era. To date, 55 individuals have been identified and 25 have been interviewed. The goal is to record the stories of their lives as Corps members in their own words. The information will be used to develop several resources including a website and a CD ROM for distribution to libraries, schools and historical museums.

Former Corps members interested in sharing their experiences should contact Corio at 515-281-4579.



Civilian Conservation Corps workers take a moment to relax in their barracks.

Upcoming NRC and EPC Meetings

The dates and locations have been set for the following meetings of the Natural Resource Commission and Environmental Protection Commission of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Agendas are set approximately 10 days prior to the scheduled meeting date. For additional information, contact the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.

Natural Resource Commission:

- June 13
Sioux City
- July
No meeting
- August 8
Clear Lake
- September 12
Maquoketa
- October 10
Carroll
- November 14
Neal Smith NWR

Environmental Protection Commission:

- June 17
Des Moines
- July 15
Des Moines
- August 19
Des Moines
- September 16
Des Moines
- October 21
Des Moines
- November 18
Des Moines

WARDEN'S DIARY



by Chuck Humeston

The trail stretched before me climbing slowly as it left the Denver suburb, beckoning me toward the solitude of the foothills. The only sounds were the cadence of my feet as they hit the trail, a beat which seems to grow noticeably slower as I get older. Breathing was requiring a little more effort in the altitude of the Mile-High City. The sun was shining with the first warmth of the approaching spring, making it a perfect day to escape.

Escape from what? The pain inside. Maybe if I ran far and fast enough, I could leave the hurt behind. It didn't work. I slowed, hands on my hips, and stopped, shaking my head. There were so many memories.

It started with a middle-of-the-night call, the kind that in this business either means throw on the uniform and jump into the squad car, or that bad news is on the way.

After the call, sleep was no longer a possibility. I had to wait until daylight, as it was one of those Iowa winter nights where travel was a bad idea.

As soon as I could, I headed for the hospital, arriving just in time to learn the helicopter was on its way. They loaded him, and I watched the

Goodbye, For Now

rotors turn faster and faster until the medivac lifted into the air and disappeared from sight. How many times have I stood at an accident scene and watched that same sight? I got back into the car to head for the other hospital.

Walking into the emergency room I was handed forms and told to sign for the emergency surgery that was needed. Three surgeries in six days. Waiting rooms. Respirators. Tubes. Wires. Feelings of encouragement, and dashed hopes. Coming to grips with the inevitable. How do you say good-bye?

It wasn't long after returning home from a visit with him that the call came in. He was gone. How do you say good-bye?

After it was over, I boarded an airplane with my wife and headed for Colorado to visit our children. Maybe some time away would help.

I stood there on the trail looking at the mountains. I hoped no one was looking, because frankly, the steam from my rapid breath was mixing with the steam from the tears flowing freely down my face. How do you say good-bye?

He loved the mountains. I remembered a trip we took to California, driving through the mountains. It was 1968. I don't know who was the bigger kid at the time, he or I, as we marveled at the beauty of the scenery.

I think I do what I do because of him. He was quiet and private. He led his life by

example, not talk. He believed in public service. Although he was self-employed, he was on the county conservation board, the city council and was a volunteer fire fighter.

We fished together. Sometimes he would take me hunting. A lot of times we just walked around the lake. We would sit and look at the sky. He taught me to love the outdoors for what it gives, rather than what we can take from it. He showed me how to enjoy the small things. He showed me how everything is connected.

He wasn't perfect, but I'm not embarrassed to say he was my hero. He was everything I wanted to be. He showed me the right example.

I stared at the mountains rising majestically into the sky, with their snow-covered slopes and peaks shining in the sunlight. He would have loved that. I truly believe where he is now the rivers run clear, the plains stretch endlessly spotted with colors we can't begin to imagine, and the mountains rise higher and higher into a sky that is so deep blue it glows.

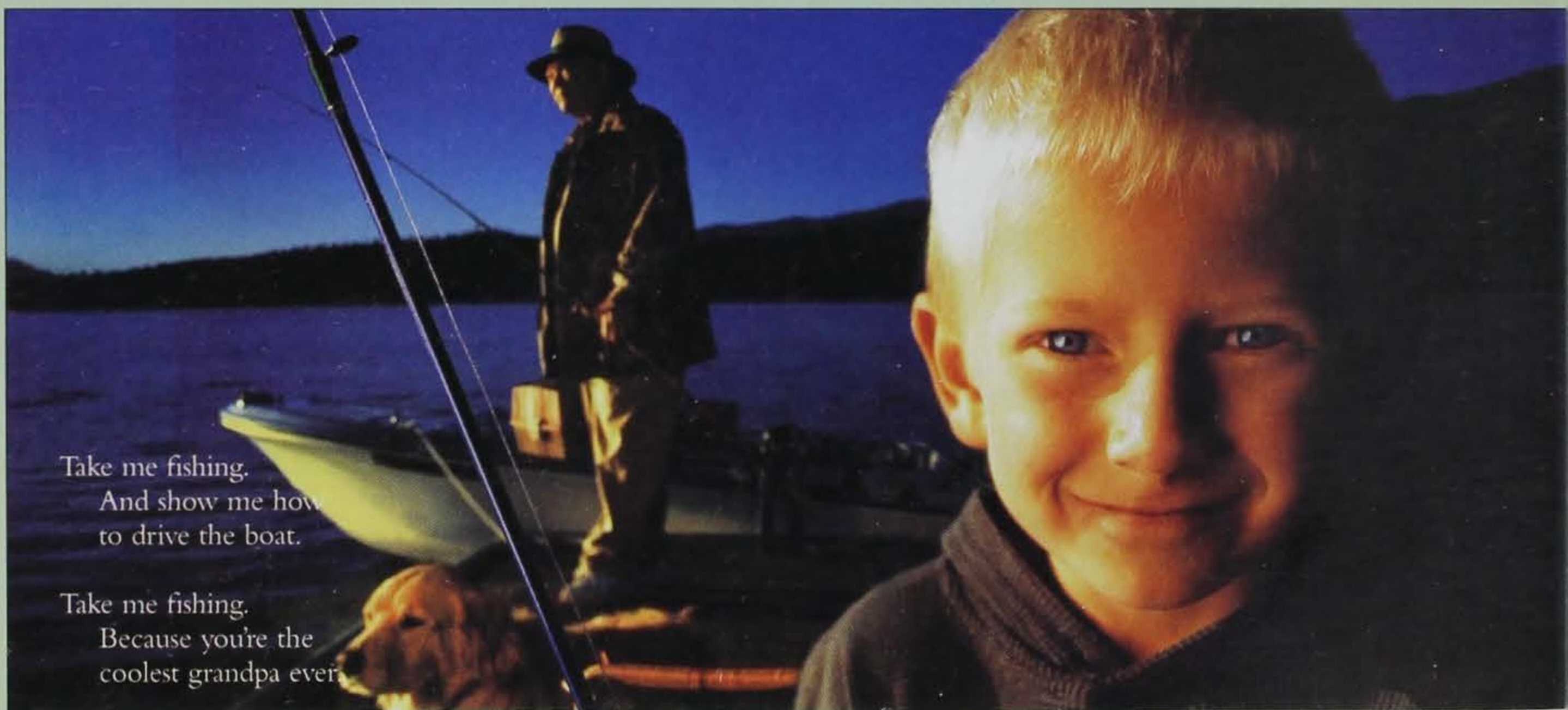
And standing there that moment, looking at that earthly beauty before me, I chose not to say good-bye. Instead, I said "I'll see you again." And I began to run again. Not to escape, but to embrace the wonderful memories and lessons he gave me.

I miss you, dad.

Building Bridges to the Past



More than 600,000 young men went to work in Civilian Conservation Corps camps to help support their families during the Great Depression. Nearly 50,000 were assigned to Iowa alone, including the men pictured above constructing the stone bridge at Ledges State Park. Today, volunteers working with the DNR are recording the stories of former CCCers for educational and historical purposes. See the volunteer feature on page 61 for more details.



Take me fishing.
And show me how
to drive the boat.

Take me fishing.
Because you're the
coolest grandpa ever.

Take me fishing.
So I'll always remember you.

Water works wonders
FOR FISHING, BOATING, AND
THE ENVIRONMENT

Free Fishing Days in Iowa are June 7, 8 and 9, 2002

For a list of fishing clinics and tournaments scheduled through July, see page 59.