

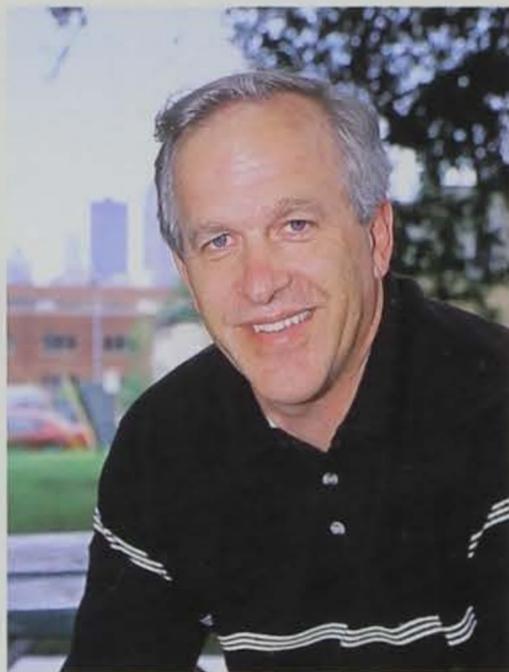
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2003

# IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



# FROM THE DIRECTOR



Bob Castelline

## It's More Than Just Clean Water

As I think about the importance of water quality on economic development, I'm struck by something I find very ironic: In the 1800s, a simple log cabin constructed along side a stream or a lake was a necessity. Access to water was essential to life.

Two hundred years later, a simple log cabin constructed along side a stream or lake is a *dream* for many. Access to water is viewed as essential to making life *better*.

In many ways, our attitude toward water has come full circle. Access to clean water was an essential element to economic development 150 years ago to sustain life. Today clean water can be fuel that drives our economic development engine.

Years ago, as technology grew and agriculture grew, water became a challenge that had to be conquered. The soils beneath the prairie potholes were viewed as far too valuable to be left covered with water, leading to extensive draining of the marshes and wetlands covering much of our landscape.

Our prairie streams and rivers were viewed as conduit, reconfigured to maximize their ability to carry away the things we didn't want, like excess water, sewage and other waste.

Where are we today? I believe we stand on the brink of a fundamental change in attitude regarding natural resources. I'd like to believe that we are coming to the point of recognizing our natural resources, such as water, as assets that can be improved and preserved to enhance our quality of life.

People are placing a high value on recreation, partly because many have less time for recreation in the fast-paced world that we live in today. We have seen land values on marginal farmland escalate in recent years as people seeking recreational land jump into the market. We've seen it climb even higher this fall in the area where a record deer was harvested.

But if that land is along a quality waterbody, watch how the value explodes exponentially. A landowner would have to sell approximately four acres of top Iowa farmland to buy a single foot of lake shore property at

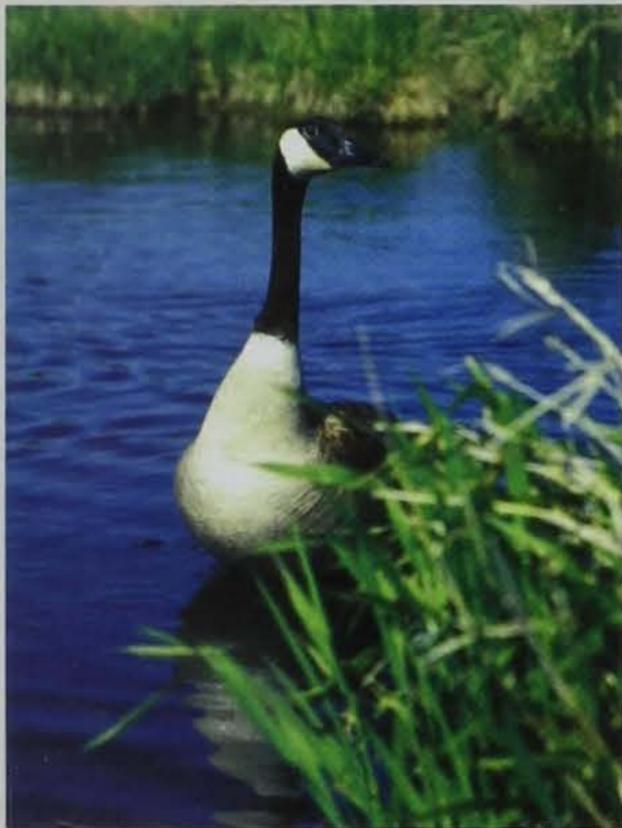
West Okoboji, Iowa's top natural lake. Let me put that in perspective for you. It costs approximately \$1,000 *an inch* to purchase lake front property at West Okoboji.

Did you know that annually 60 percent of Iowans make at least one trip to an Iowa lake? That is in contrast to about 25 percent who go outside Iowa for a trip to a lake. The average number of trips to Iowa lakes is about eight per year. Picnicking, fishing, nature appreciation, boating and swimming are the primary activities these people pursue. Water quality is the most important factor in selecting a lake. It even exceeded proximity and facilities as a factor. Freedom from bacteria and water clarity were the water quality factors most important to people's choice of lake. Forty-six percent of Iowans believe the lake nearest them is important or very important to the economic vitality of their community, compared to 25 percent who don't believe it is important. Fifty-seven percent of Iowans believe the lake nearest to them would be important or very important to the economic vitality of their community if it were significantly improved. Similarly 48 percent of Iowans believe the lake nearest them makes their community an interesting and vibrant place. Fifty-four percent believe the lake nearest their

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FRONT COVER: SNOW GOOSE HUNTING BY  
LOWELL WASHBURN  
BACK COVER: HOAR FROST BY TY SMEDES



Lowell Washburn

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by Jessie Rolph

In 1979, with little more than a card table, a borrowed phone and a focus on land acquisition and public education, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation was formed. A quarter of a century later, it's celebrating more than just an anniversary. It's celebrating a renewed commitment to protecting all of Iowa's natural resources.

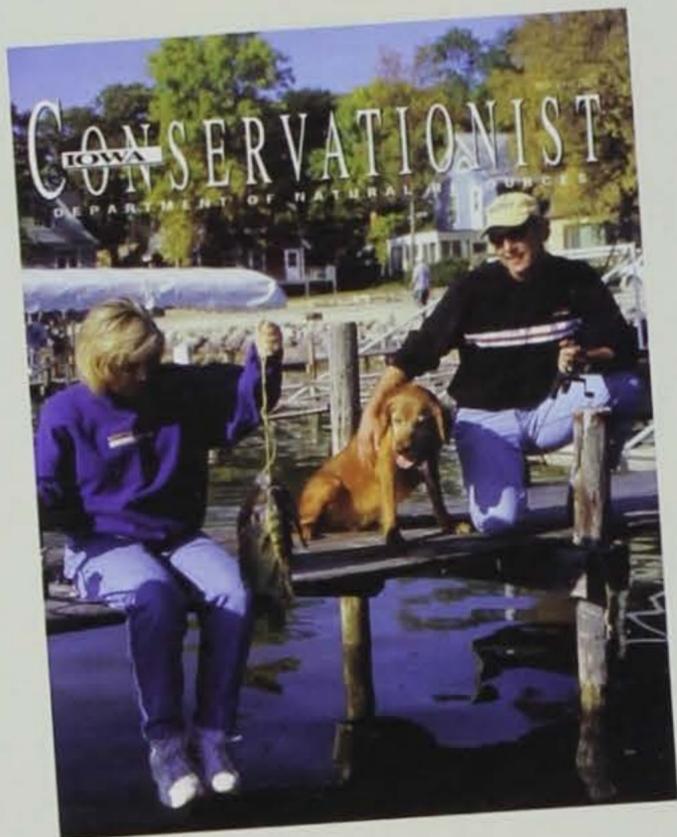
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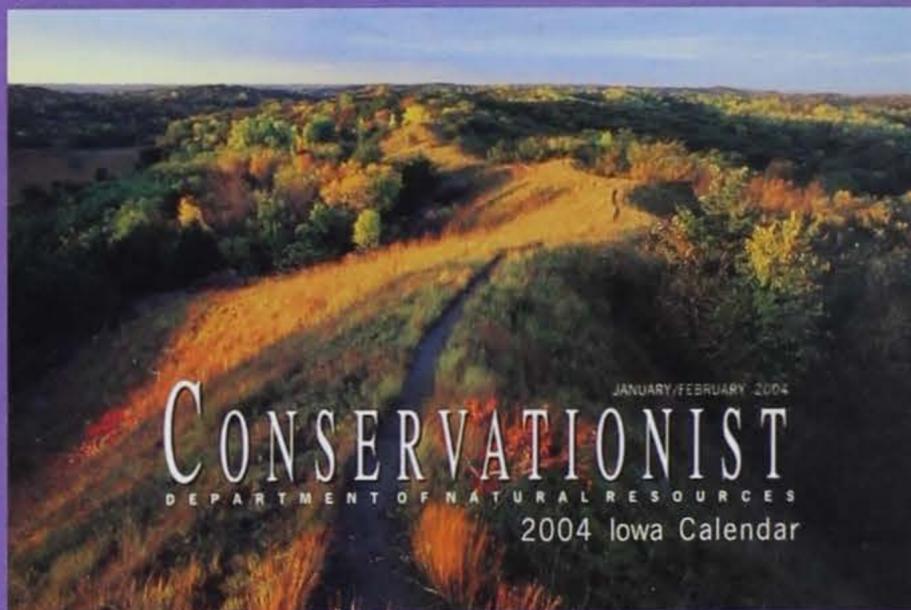
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Just in time for the holidays, our 2004 calendar (January/February issue) features photos from four notable Iowa outdoor photographers. New subscriptions ordered before Dec. 15 will begin with this calendar issue. Calendars may be purchased separately for \$3 each. Order yours today at **Iowa Conservationist, 502 E. 9th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034** or with a MasterCard or Visa by calling **515-281-3887**.



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## Director's Message

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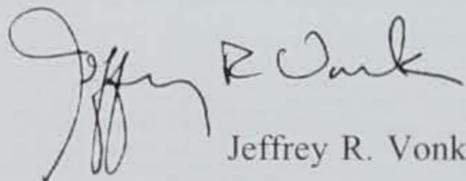
residence is important to retaining young people. Thirty-two percent believe the lake nearest them is important to attracting and retaining a skilled workforce and 33 percent believe it is important to business to establish or expand operation.

There is something in virtually all of us that is attracted to water. Revisiting the topic of shoreline cabins, when the Union County Conservation Board decided to build eight very simple cabins on the shore of Three Mile Lake AND keep them open all 365 days of the year, there were many that questioned the wisdom of such an idea. Today, those eight cabins account for more than 1,600 visitor

nights a year.

In fact, John Tapkan, director of the Union County Conservation Board, said there has been a family coming down to those cabins every year during the Christmas-New Year's holiday. For them, it's a break away from computers and television. It's a chance to enjoy one another as a family.

These are the kinds of recreational opportunities that people yearn for. These are types of opportunities we need more of. These are the kinds of opportunities that will help Iowa grow.



Jeffrey R. Vonk

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## IOWA'S RESTORED WETLANDS

# Returning a Little Slice of Paradise

Article and photos by Lowell Washburn

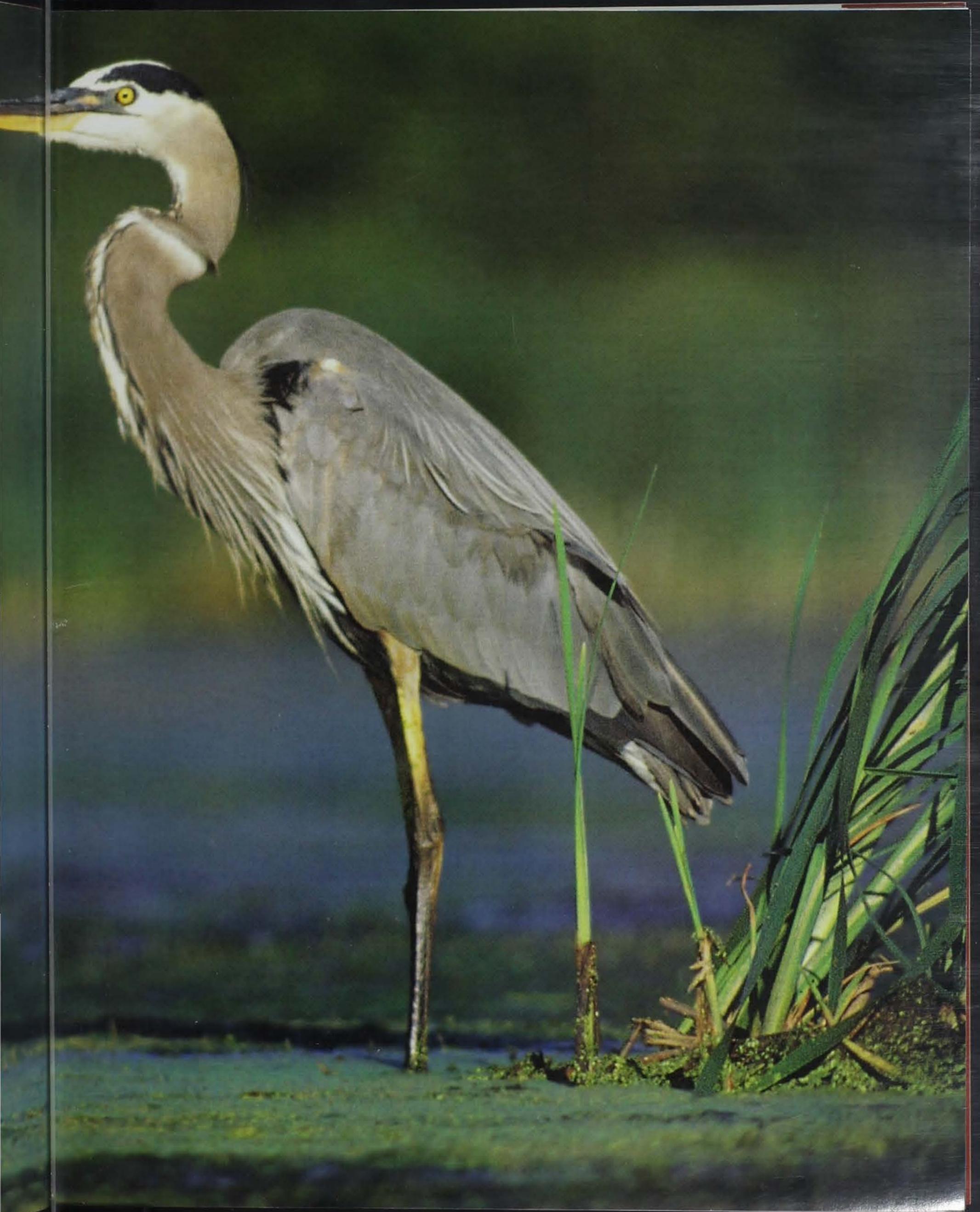
I must have been daydreaming. You know, just kind of staring off into a corner of the duck blind instead of concentrating on the sky.

The dream ended abruptly, however, when a hen mallard loudly hailed the decoys. Slowly turning my eyes skyward, I soon spotted the approaching ducks. The flock's behavior is best described in two words — total commitment.

With wings locked and orange webs extended, the mallards bailed from the November sky like an osprey after a fish. There was no time, or need, to reach for the call. The flock's descent was so rapid, in fact, that by the time I had traded my insulated coffee mug for the shotgun, the birds were hovering just inches above their plastic counterparts. It was a lead pipe

Great blue heron (right)





situation, and one bird fell at the report of each barrel.

A moment later the drakes lay, side by side, on a bed of marsh grass. Smooth, sleek and colorful, they were a sight to behold. But then, the rich elegance of full plumaged, late season greenheads has always been the gold standard of waterfowling on the Mississippi Flyway.

But on this particular morning, a brace of fat bull mallards represented far more than just the beginning of a successful Saturday duck hunt. For me, it marked the culmination of a wetland journey that had come full circle. It was a trip that had taken more than 30 years to complete.

Even today, the tale seems too far fetched to be believed. Actually, the story is more than the saga of a single marsh. It is a commentary of simpler times, economic turmoil and eventual cultural change. Taken in context, it documents incredible changes in land use attitudes and depicts how many Iowa landowners have altered the way they view, and treat, our native wetlands.

The wetland I was hunting is not particularly large. At the widest point it probably measures less than 50 yards across, and is about 100 yards or so in length. Biologists would call it a prairie pothole, a living artifact of the vast Wisconsin glacier that scoured its way across Iowa eons ago. Historically, around 6 million acres of Iowa's prairie landscape was pockmarked with wetlands — or potholes — just like this one.

I first hunted the pothole during the autumn of 1964. At that time, it lay smack in the middle of a family farm. Like most farms of the era, the operation consisted of a diversified

crop rotation that included oats, alfalfa, corn and an occasional plot of soybeans. The farmer had hogs, laying hens, and milked 18 head of Holsteins.

Dairy cows need pasture. After being milked early each morning the cattle followed a narrow, fence-lined lane that led to the grass. My marsh — or slough as the farmer called it — lay in the center of that pasture. I call it *my marsh* because, as far as I knew, no one else ever bothered to



hunt there. For me, the marsh was nothing less than a little slice of paradise.

Although the pasture was heavily grazed, the pothole itself contained a rich mix of native, aquatic plant life. Dense stands of cattail, arrowhead, and softstem bulrush were punctuated by various-sized pockets of open water. Beneath the surface, the wetland environment was choked

with all sorts of lush, submergent pond weeds. In spite of pressure from the surrounding landscape, the plants acted as effective natural filters. The marsh water was crystal clear and literally teemed with all sorts of wondrous, aquatic life. Peering into the underwater environment, I identified water boatman, predaceous water beetles, water scorpions and larval dragonflies.

All this was great entertainment but, as a budding teenaged duck hunter, I came mainly for the fowl. The slough couldn't be seen from the road, and getting there required a 10-minute walk from the barn. Because of its secluded location, abundant food and thick cover, the marsh was a veritable duck magnet.

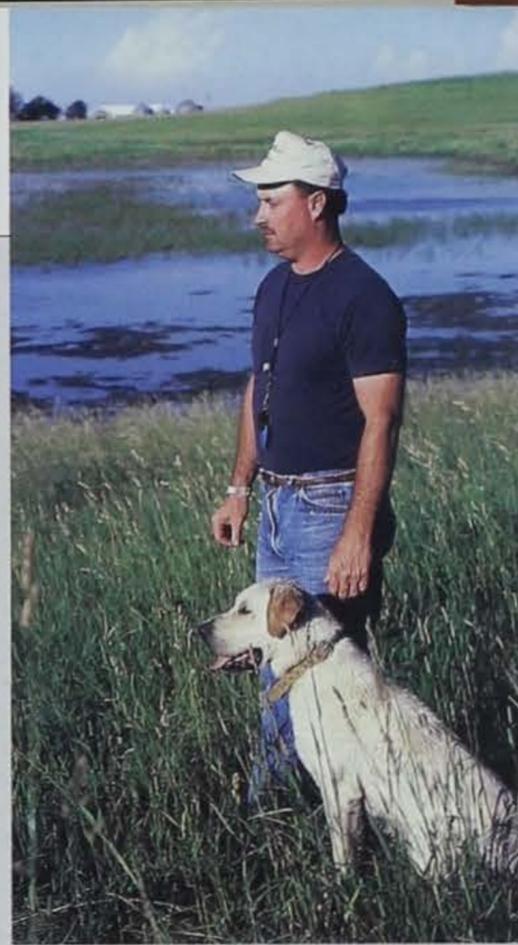
During the early days of the season, the marsh was visited by numerous flocks of migrating blue-winged teal. The bluewings were reckless and usually came straight to the decoys.

Later, there would be snipe, pintails, baldpate, green-winged teal, and an occasional flock of gadwall. At sunset, scores (sometimes hundreds) of wood ducks would fly in from the river to roost in the security of the cattails. By late October, most of the woodies would be gone and the flights were dominated by newly arrived mallards and greenwings.

The marsh also provided ample opportunities to observe all sorts of intriguing "nongame" wildlife such as painted turtles, red-sided garter snakes, blue herons and marsh wrens. During summer, the pothole even hosted a resident colony of yellow-headed blackbirds. During a tough winter, especially after the fencelines had drifted full, rooster pheasants — sometimes lots of them

## WETLAND HEROES

Right: The late Kermit Hovey (left) discusses a Hancock County soils map with DNR Waterfowl Biologist, Guy Zenner. Hovey was the first farmer in North Central Iowa to restore wetland basins under new provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill. Based on Hovey's success, other landowners soon followed.



DNR Wildlife Biologist Ron Howing examines a fragment of drainage tile broken to restore an Emmet county wetland. Described by his peers as a 'pothole pioneer,' Howing cleared his desk to make visiting with farmers, and encouraging them to restore wetlands, a top priority. His initial efforts led to the creation of hundreds of new marshlands in the state's northwest region.



Above right: Dave McBreen enjoys the scenery at a restored wetland on his Dickinson County farm. McBreen was one of the first landowners to become active in marsh restoration in northwest Iowa.

Since the NRCS first recognized water as an acceptable cover type under guidelines of the 1985 Farm Bill, nearly 500 farmers [in northwest and north-central Iowa] have restored 758 wetland basins encompassing 2,971 acres of water. On public lands, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Iowa DNR have formed partnerships with Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, and others to restore 1,307 basins providing 7,789 acres of marshland habitat in Iowa's 35-county Prairie Pothole Region. Additional restoration efforts continue statewide.

— could be found hiding beneath the pothole's wind-proof cattails.

To a young boy, life at the pothole seemed timeless. An endless cycle of freezing and thawing — birds coming north in the spring, rearing their young, and then disappearing to the south again in autumn. But the sense of stability was deceiv-

ing, and change was inevitable. When it came to my personal wetland paradise, the change would not be for the better.

By 1970, the aging farmer's health had begun to fail. Shortly thereafter, he moved to town and a new owner took over the family farm.

The new owner was a nice enough guy. But the world, and the times, were rapidly changing. A new agricultural era had arrived. In an all-out effort to "feed a hungry world," farmers were being encouraged to farm from road ditch to road ditch. The hen house and 18-cow dairy operation were doomed to



become historic footnotes. Bigger had become better. Bulldozers arrived and fencelines and woodlots were pushed aside to accommodate larger and larger equipment. My marsh, along with hundreds of others just like it, had suddenly become an intolerable nuisance.

One by one, the last surviving private wetlands were drained. In the summer of 1972, there were no muskrats, yellow-heads or mallard ducklings produced on my pothole. Instead, the now-tiled wetland produced its first crop of corn for the farm's new owner.

By the fall of 1973, every single private marsh I had hunted as a youth had been drained and pressed into row crop production.

Back then, no one even dreamed that many of Iowa's precious prairie wetlands would one day be restored. Had anyone even suggested that conservationists and farmers would

one day join forces to convert crop fields to marshes, they would have been — well, let's just say that it would have been best to keep such thoughts to yourself.

What we did discuss, though, was how fortunate we were that early conservationists had acquired and preserved a number of the region's larger, now public wetlands. Without acquisitions like Ventura Marsh, Rice Lake, Myre Slough or Eagle Lake, waterfowling opportunities would have been extremely limited in our region of the state.

We figured, that as far as Iowa's prairie wetlands were concerned, it



was the end of the story. But once again, change was inevitable. This time for the good.

Somehow, the farming-from-road-ditch-to-road-ditch thing just didn't work out. Instead of feeding a hungry world, the end result was a degraded environment, compromised water supplies, commodity surpluses, and countless farm bankruptcies. Efforts to reverse the trend produced a new and massive federal program — the 1985 Farm Bill.

Today, the 1985 Farm Bill is best



When the bulldozers arrived more recently, it wasn't to tear down fencelines and woodlots as they did in the 70s, but to enhance the restored wetlands with small dikes and islands.

In addition to supplying critical habitat, restored wetlands, such as the 3,000-acre Union Hills complex (above), offer excellent sources of food and fuel for migrating species such as these tundra swans enroute to their arctic nesting areas.

Wetlands are one of the most richly diversified ecosystems. Marshes and their surrounding vegetation attract not only ducks and geese, but furbearers such as muskrats (below), other waterbirds such as snipe (bottom right), and Iowa's favorite gamebird, the pheasant.

remembered for its Conservation Reserve Program. Idling more than 2 million acres of Iowa grasslands, CRP ushered in the greatest period of pheasant hunting, eco-tourism and soil conservation ever witnessed during our lifetimes. Perhaps less well-known is the fact the 1985 Farm Bill also had a profound and positive

impact on Iowa wetlands. So positive, in fact, that some conservationists go so far as to say the measure was the best thing to happen to prairie potholes since the retreat of the Wisconsin glacier.

"What made the 1985 Farm Bill so important is that it was the very first Farm Bill to recognize water as an approved cover type," said DNR waterfowl biologist Guy Zenner.

"Now, instead of just being able to use traditional cover types, such as brome or other grasses on idled acres, the stage was set for farmers to actually break tile lines and put water back into natural basins."

To most Iowans, the prospects of a farmer being willing to break up drainage tile to flood a corn field to build a marsh was only slightly more farfetched than the prospects of an alien landing. In the Midwest cornbelt, drainage ditches and drainage tile had been the in-thing since European immigrants first arrived on the scene nearly 150 years earlier. For at least three generations, landowners had operated under the government-subsidized concept that the only good wetland was a drained wetland.

"At first, we (wildlife biologists) figured that cutting tile lines and restoring marshes wouldn't have much support," said Zenner.

"What we were looking for were pioneers of sorts — people who were actively engaged in farming but who also had a strong interest in conservation and wildlife. At best, there were probably only two or three people like that per county, but it was a start. We talked to them about wetlands and a couple of them decided to give it a try."





## LEGACY WETLAND

Former DNR Director Larry Wilson was honored in September during a ceremony dedicating a 700-acre marsh complex that will bear his name, the first in a series of three.

Wilson served Iowa as DNR director for a record 14 years. During that time he gained a reputation for being a tireless crusader for waterfowl and wetlands

conservation. He oversaw the creation of the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, the REAP program and Iowa's private lands outreach. "For all of us who benefit from Iowa wetlands and the rich diversity of wildlife they support, this tribute is a very fitting way of saying thank you to an outstanding leader," said Ducks

Unlimited project coordinator Keith Helland.

The wetlands complex will provide more than recreational opportunities and critical waterfowl habitat it will also play a crucial role in enhancing the water quality of East Okoboji Lake.

"This complex once contained 30 separate marshes. Those basins are still there. The first thing we're going to do is go in and break every single tile line, and then we are going to bring that water to the surface. Every drop of water from 4,000 acres of watershed will be purified by these wetlands before entering Okoboji," said Richard Bishop, chief of the DNR's wildlife bureau.

The Wilson Legacy Marsh series will be located in the northern, western and eastern regions of the state, making each project accessible to the greatest number of Iowans.





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Restoration mechanics were simple. Any tile lines running through a drained marsh basin were interrupted, or cut, and a standpipe outlet was installed in the open line. A small dike was often pushed up at the marsh's low end, and the standpipe allowed excess water to continue down the tile line. If a farmer eventually decided to re-drain the marsh, leveling the dike and reconnecting the tile line would quickly reverse the process.

But although wetland restoration may have been a tough sell at first, biologists were downright amazed — shocked may be more appropriate — at how quickly interest grew. Within three years, the program had literally snowballed out of control, so much so that wetland waiting lists were beginning to develop. One DNR biologist even received a phone call from an angry landowner who claimed that one of his neighbors had somehow managed to “cut in line” and had two wetlands installed ahead of him.

“Although it was tough at first, the program really sold itself,” said Zenner.

“As soon as the restored marsh basins filled, there was an immediate and dramatic wildlife response. There was tremendous use by breeding ducks. During late spring, large numbers of mallard, teal and wood duck broods could be observed on the new wetlands and farmers liked that.”

The real selling point for many landowners, however, was the chance to attract breeding pairs of giant Canada geese to their land. The geese are big, vocal and extremely notice-

able. Contemporary farmers had never seen nesting Canadas. The chance to see geese during the summer and the opportunity to hunt them during the fall proved overwhelming, he added.

“Canada geese almost became a status symbol. I'd say that, more than any other single wildlife species, it was the giant Canada goose that prompted the most landowners to restore wetlands on their farms.”

In addition to ducks and geese, newly restored wetlands rapidly became inhabited by a host of other water birds. Egrets, grebes, herons, rails and shorebirds all found the marshes to their liking. If adequate stands of cattails were present, many potholes were soon invaded by colony-nesting flocks of yellow-

how these new areas were colonized by such a wide variety of wildlife species,” said Zenner.

“There were suddenly hundreds of acres of wetland habitat available and the birds immediately found them. But even more amazing was how quickly some terrestrial species like frogs, turtles and muskrats showed up on restored basins. Sometimes they'd arrive within a week of when a pothole filled with water. Some wetlands were very isolated and had been drained and farmed for a century or more. Of course, the birds were locating new marshes from the air. But how a turtle would know to travel there is a mystery. It was just incredible to watch — almost like spontaneous generation.”



headed blackbirds. Although yellow-heads were historically common on Iowa marshes, most modern day farmers had never seen or heard one.

“It was very gratifying to see

Wetland restoration in Iowa, particularly northern Iowa, has increased nesting by not only typical nesting waterfowl, but also some of the more uncommon ones such as canvasbacks and redheads (left).



Of course, not all of the increased inventory of Iowa wetlands has occurred on private lands. Significant gains have been made during the past decade in the acquisition and enhancement of public marsh areas. Ongoing partnerships between the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, county conservation boards, Iowa DNR, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and others have resulted in the creation of thousands of acres of wetland habitat. From 1987 to 2002, 1,307 basins totalling 7,789 acres were created in just a 35-county zone within the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture region.

Some of the projects are enormous. In north-central Iowa, for example, Cerro Gordo County's Union Hills Waterfowl Production Area has grown to nearly 3,000 acres. More than 40 wetland basins, most ranging in size from one-half acre to 25 acres, have been restored. More restorations are planned for the near future, including one basin covering 180 acres.

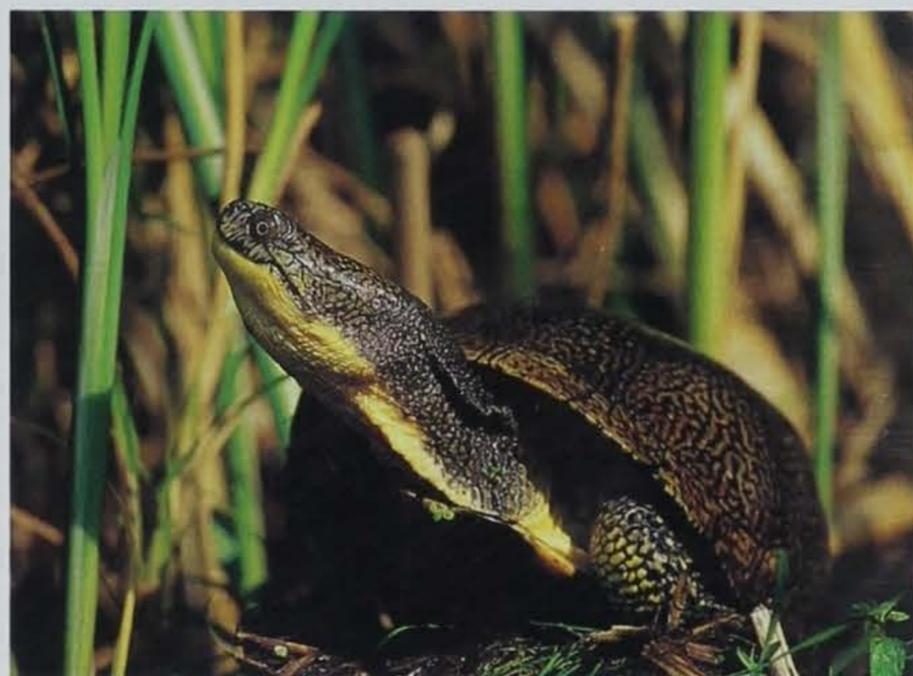
"These new public areas present Iowans with some tremendous recreational opportunities," said Zenner.

"Most of the restored basins could be described as 'walk in' areas. Getting there doesn't require a huge cash outlay for an expensive blind boat

or tons of other equipment. All a hunter really needs is a bag of decoys and a pair of hip boots. A group of hunters is usually able to move off by itself and enjoy a quality hunt. Best of all, the hunters are usually successful at bagging ducks and geese. That keeps people coming back.

"When you have large numbers of restored potholes suddenly dotting the landscape, there is strong potential for hunter recruitment. During the 2001 duck opener, we counted 72 vehicles in the Union Hills parking lots. A lot of those people were younger hunters."

*My marsh* is one of those basins restored on public land. Beginning in



1986, the new owner enrolled most

of the farm into the CRP. The next spring he cut the tile lines and refilled the very same marsh he had drained in 1972. At the conclusion of his 10-year CRP contract, the farmer was ready to retire. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Iowa DNR teamed up to purchase the property.

Today, *my marsh* is part of a prairie wetland complex that encompasses three tracts of public land and one farm partially enrolled in the Wetland Reserve Program. The combined properties contain 19 active wetlands. All but

one of those cattail marshes were formerly drained and farmed.

Except for a short earthen dike and standpipe outlet tube, the old farm pothole looks just like it did when I first visited in the autumn of 1964. The biggest difference is that, for the first time ever, it truly is *my marsh*.

Better yet, it's now *your marsh* too. I wish someday you and I could hunt there together. Once you've spent a morning in the blind, I think you'll agree the place truly is a little slice of paradise.

When combined with artificial nesting structures like the mallard cylinder (far left), restored wetlands get more "bang for the buck."

The benefits of wetland restoration are far-reaching, creating habitat for not only waterfowl species but others such as the yellow-headed blackbird, pied-billed grebe and Blanding's turtle.

# A View From Above

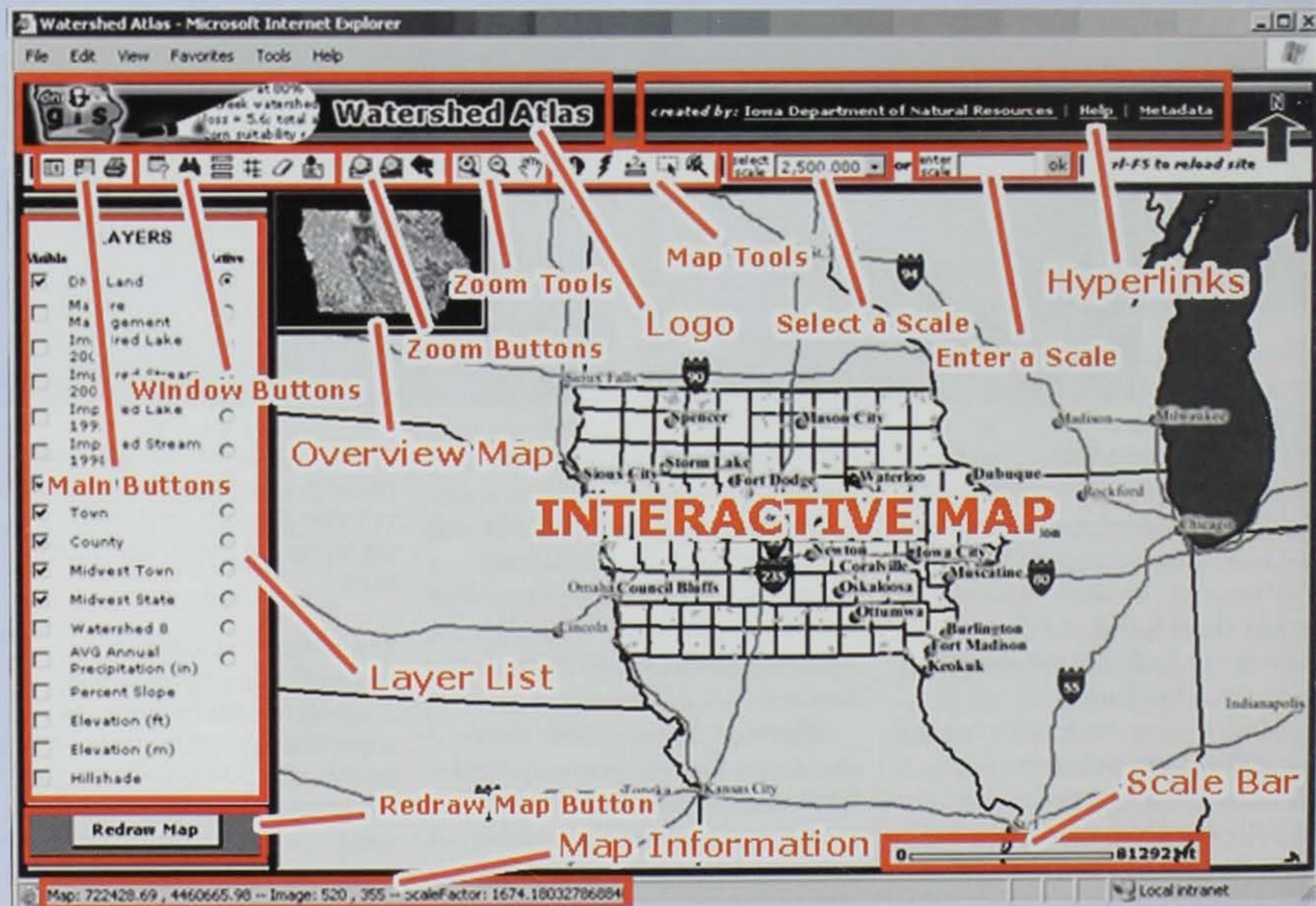
**A new interactive mapping system available on the DNR's website is educating Iowans about the relationship between watersheds and water quality. It's also making better hunters and anglers out of them.**

by Mick Klemesrud

It seems nearly every new product or service on the market today addresses one basic principle – making “your” life easier. The buzzword is convenience, from interest free financing, to home cooked meals in a box, to shopping at home over the internet. The idea is to make it as easy and pain-free as possible for customers to buy a product.

That concept is the same for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, which entered that “convenience” arena when it debuted the Watershed Atlas on its web site [www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com). The difference is, the atlas is free and users don't need special software to use it.

The primary idea behind the



watershed atlas was to illustrate how water quality is a reflection of its watershed. The atlas starts at the most basic level, explaining what a watershed is and how each sub-watershed is part of a larger one.

"We are collecting a lot of information statewide dealing with land use, erosion, that has not been easily available to the public," said Ubbo Agena, with the DNR's nonpoint source program that funded the atlas. "This atlas makes information easily available, where before it might be hard to find.

"Our hope with this atlas is, the more people know about watersheds and the better understanding they have, the better they can address issues like impaired waters or water quality. If we are successful at educating people on watersheds, hopefully it will lead to changes that result in better water quality," Agena said.

Although the atlas was developed for people who work with watersheds in mind, there are a number of features the general public can benefit from. For example, if someone wants to go pheasant hunting, doesn't know any landowners and isn't comfortable knocking on doors asking for permission, they can go to the atlas and look for the public hunting areas that have a good mix of habitat and food sources.

Anglers can also use the color infrared (CIR) photography feature to research a new place to go fishing. The CIR feature shows where boat ramps are located on a lake or river, and the estimated distance between points for canoe floats. All that information can be printed as a map to take along on the trip.

"You can zoom in to see your favorite hunting or fishing spot or to research new areas, the possibilities are practically limitless," said Cam Conrad with the Geographic Information Systems at the DNR, who developed the site. The atlas also lists easting and northing coordinates for Global Positioning Systems. Those coordinates can also be converted to latitude and longitude for other uses.

"There are a whole lot of things you can use this atlas for that go beyond water quality," Agena said.

Mark Wilson, with the Warren County Conservation Board, uses the watershed atlas almost every day when working with landowners to make wildlife habitat plans, measure a piece of land where he will install fencing, or to get an acreage estimate for prairie seed.

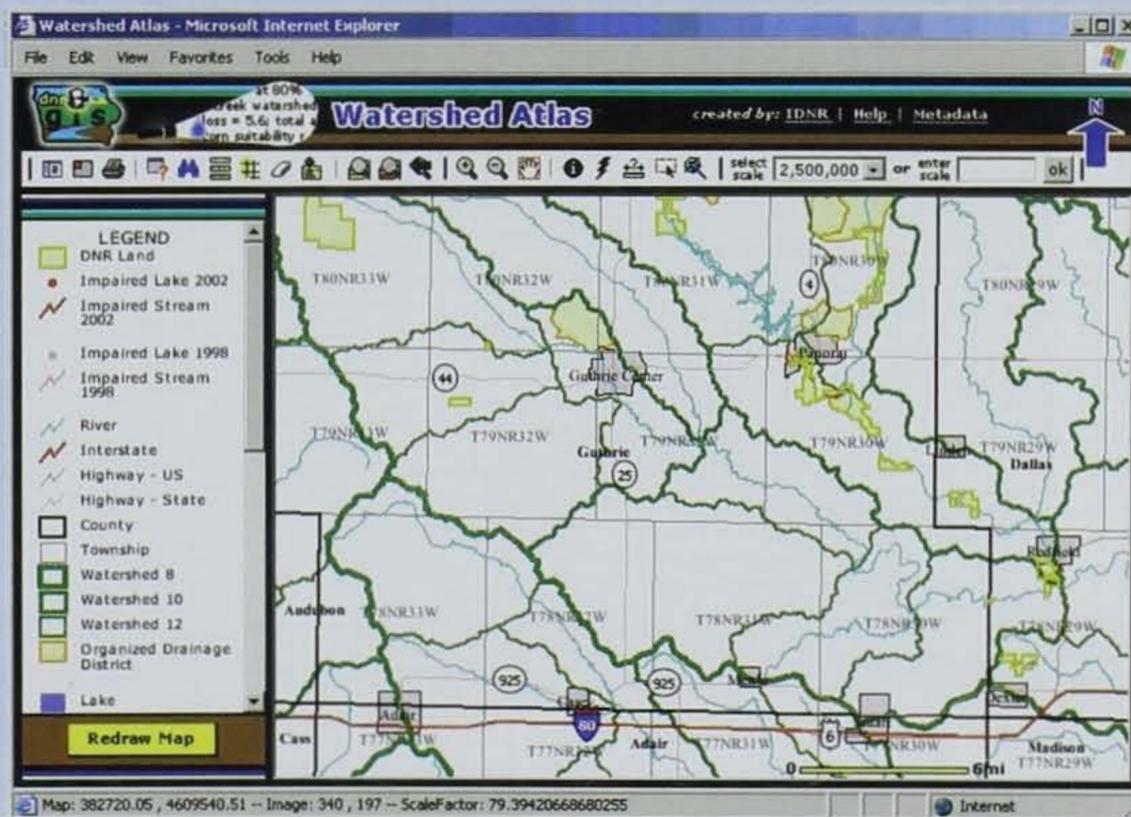
He particularly likes the CIR feature. He has a lot of people stop in his office looking for public ground to hunt. Wilson can print them a map that shows the exact boundaries of the public hunting area.

"It has been really helpful for me and for people coming in to my office," Wilson said.

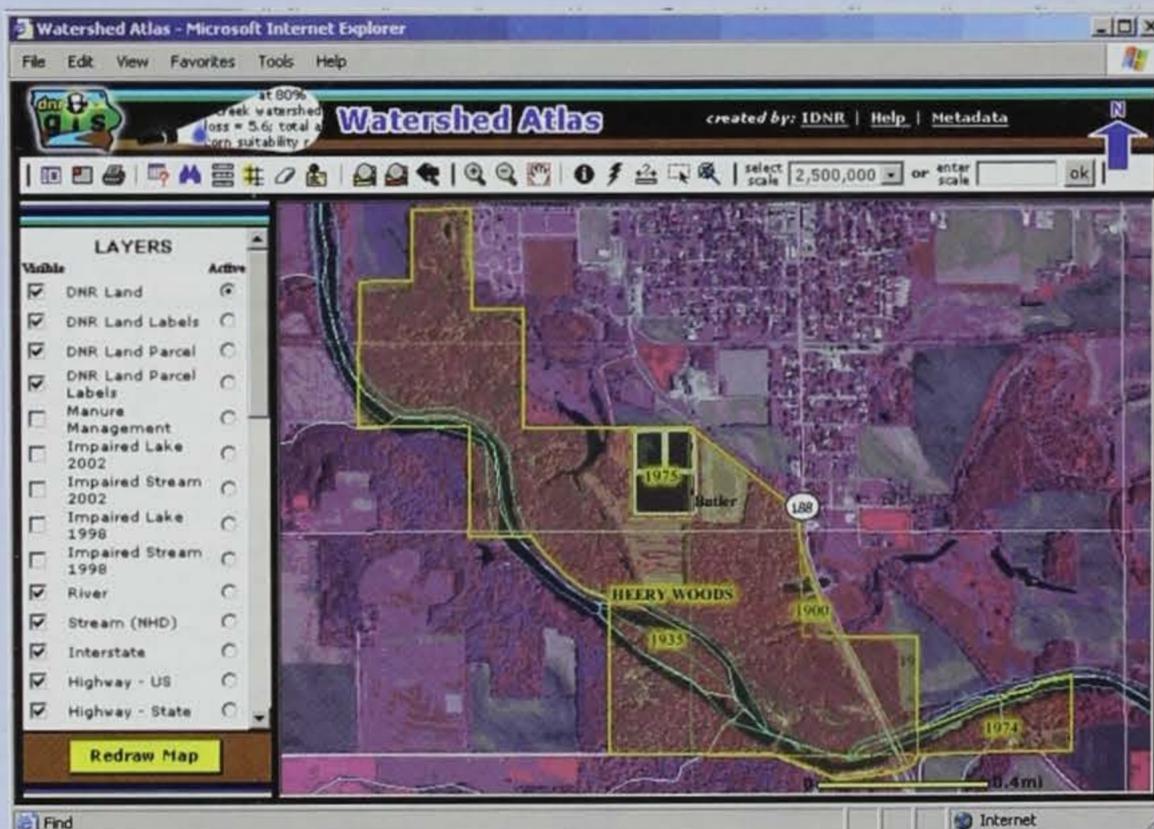
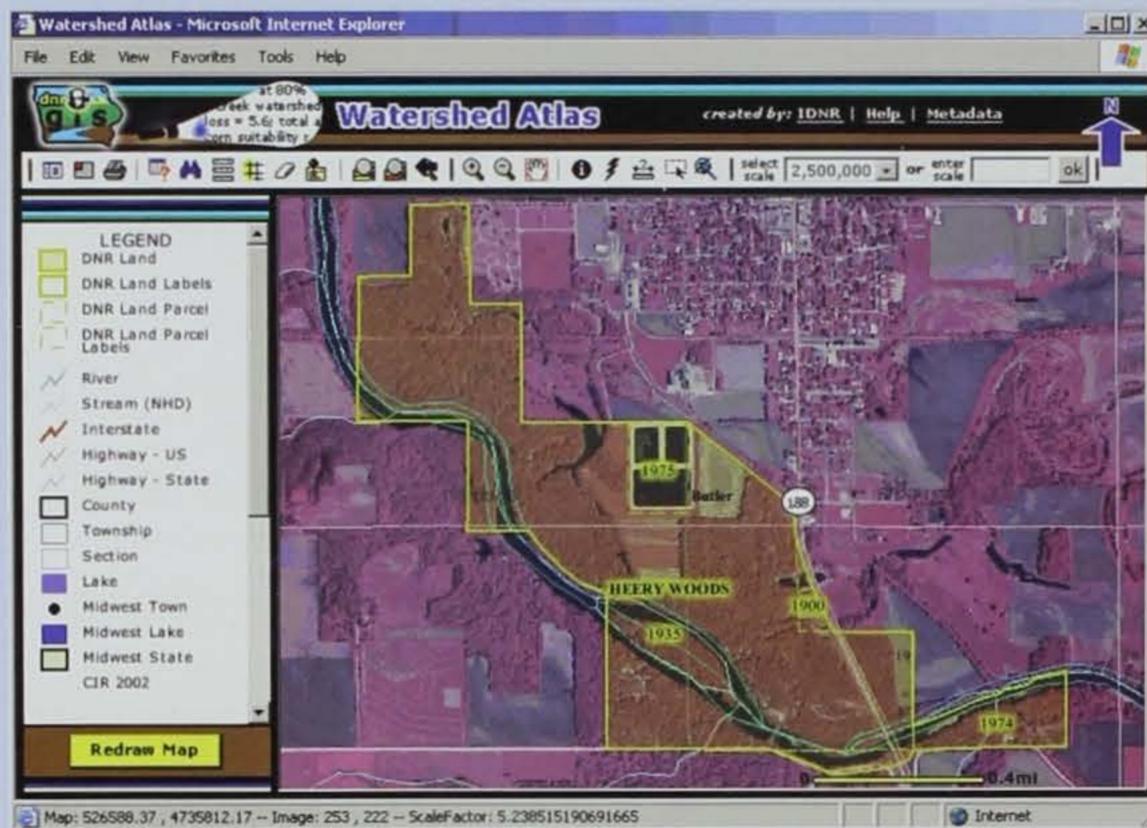
The atlas also comes in handy when he wants to see "over the hill." For example, if he finds a certain prairie plant or remnant prairie along the road, he can go to the atlas, select the CIR feature and see if there are other tracts of the prairie beyond what can be seen from the road.

Wilson also uses it to improve his hunting. He looks at the land where he hunts and how it is

The atlas can identify where a certain piece of land drains within a watershed, which can help with improvements on the landscape and lead to better water quality. Water quality is a reflection of land use in the watershed. The map below shows watersheds at the Watershed 12 level, the smallest available.



The yellow highlighted area on the map shows DNR land (Heery Woods State Park in Butler County) within the viewing area. The legend feature (top) shows what each of the colors and lines represent.



connected to land around it, looking for deer travel patterns. It's a great way to do some scouting while sitting at home, he said.

The atlas also has applications for the classroom. Conrad displayed the Atlas at the Iowa Science Teachers Fall Conference last October to an overwhelmingly positive response. The teachers said their students could use the site for science projects and would have little problem using the tools.

Ron Wilmot, the technology coordinator and science project director for Akron-Westfield Community Schools in Akron has already used it a few times in his classes.

Wilmot's students used the interactive maps to look at land use and watersheds in their area, and he will use it again this spring and fall. He said before when his students needed a watershed map, they would go to the Natural Resource Conservation Service office in LeMars and receive a hand drawn map. Now, they can simply go to the web.

"The kids adapt to that stuff real fast," Wilmot said. "They had no problem."

How does the atlas work? Well... there is an excellent help function at the top of the atlas that will prove indispensable for most users. "My best advice to users is to play around with it and get familiar with all the different site features," Conrad said. "That way you can maximize its usefulness."

The HELP file at the top of the screen explains how to use the site and what functions are available. It explains how the site works and what the different functions can do. A high speed internet connection is

desirable, along with a newer version of Microsoft Internet Explorer browser, which can be downloaded from the site. But dial up modems can work, if the users have some patience. The one potential downside is, if users have a dial up modem, 56K or slower, then the CIR feature and some other data queries can take a while to display.

"We are continuing to refine and expand its capabilities, trying to make the site more user friendly, to cut down on download time and reduce user frustration," Conrad said.

*Mick Klemesrud is an information specialist with the communications bureau in Des Moines.*

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# Springbrook: Connecting kids with nature

Article by Jessie Rolph  
Photos by Clay Smith

An outing to Springbrook is not a field trip. It's an experience. For some, it's even a tradition.

It's a theme repeated by teachers, students and staff alike. A trip to the Springbrook Conservation Education Center (CEC) is something that sticks with you for years to come.

Students who visited the CEC in elementary or middle school have mentioned their Springbrook experience in high school graduation speeches. Some students, like Dani Perrigo, have chosen the area for the

---

**"We like to start kids thinking about how to treat the land and to make them more aware of their own actions,"**

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Anne Riordan, Springbrook environmental educator

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site of their wedding ceremony. Others pursue careers in natural resources, like Angie Reiter, an environmental educator at Springbrook.

"The experience in grade school changed my life, and now I'm going into a natural resources field," said Reiter, an Iowa State University student majoring in animal ecology

with a fisheries option. "When I came here in grade school, I realized that there were job opportunities in natural resources. Working at Springbrook through Americorps has been a great experience and led me to further my education."

Every year, between 16,000 to 20,000 students from across Iowa visit the CEC, located in the 866-acre Springbrook State Park near Guthrie Center. While there's an emphasis on upper elementary, students range in age from preschoolers to adults. Church groups, scouting groups, youth groups and other organizations also come to Springbrook to learn about the outdoors and conservation.

Many groups make a trip to Springbrook a regular activity. Anthony Gaul, a sixth-grade teacher at Sioux City West Middle School, has made an annual trip with his students for eight years. The school has been coming to Springbrook for more than 15 years, he said.

"Seniors in high school come back and still talk about Springbrook," Gaul said.

## **MAKING THEIR WAY IN THE WORLD**

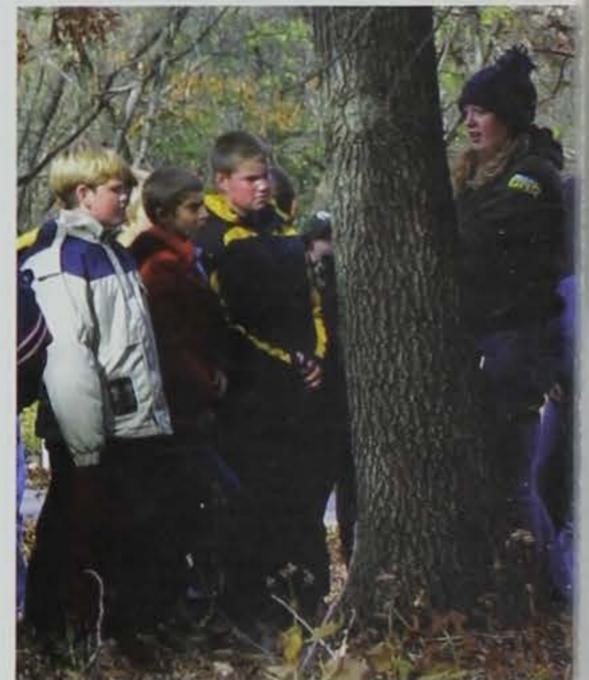
On a crisp October day, about 30 fifth- and sixth-graders from Central Lutheran in Newhall and another 60 sixth-graders from Sioux City West

Middle School descended on Springbrook. Rushing to the dormitories to pick out their beds, the students were anticipating the events of the next few days.

"I'm excited about staying over," said Miguel Salazar, a sixth-grader at West. "I want to learn different things — plants, leaves, how to identify them."

Kelsey Hanson, a sixth-grader at West, looked forward to the shooting range.

"I like to hunt. I want to shoot the guns," she said. "I like to be out in the



Central Lutheran students Stephen Muench, Jonathan Bierschenk and Joel Parr learn from Angie Reiter how poison ivy can grow on trees.

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Angie Reiter, an environmental educator at Springbrook, leads Central Lutheran students (L to R: Jonathan Bierschenk, Patrick Koopman and Wesly Williams) on a two-hour hike.

wilderness with nothing else around."

"You get to do and learn a lot of things," said Central Lutheran fifth-grader Joel Paar. "I want to do archery and learn new things about nature."

Paar, along with his classmates, started the day with a nature lesson — a two-hour hike through the park.

Winding single-file through tall grasses and trying to step quietly over a carpet of leaves, the Central Lutheran students pointed out hawks and whitetail deer to each other, snapping pictures when they could. When a student noticed a dead deer to the side of the trail, the group had a

Cody Harlow, a West sixth-grader, contemplates how to build a survival shelter.



quick lesson in forensics.

"How do you think this deer died?" asked Reiter, who led the hike.

Answers ranged from poachers to old age, with Reiter clarifying questions on coyotes and bears in between.

Further down the trail, students discovered trees that beavers had found for a snack, and crossed a small creek over a log, sometimes celebrating when they made it across.

"We saw three deer and the lake and all kinds of plants," said Ashley Olson, a fifth-grader at Central Lutheran. The most interesting thing she learned on the hike was that "poison ivy can grow on trees."

"I liked the thorny tree," said Ellie Goodsell, a sixth-grader, referring to a honey locust the students had stopped by, learning how plants adapt to their environment.

The hikers also saw the effects of glacial movements on the land, buildings constructed by Civilian Conservation Corps workers in the 1930s and Native American burial mounds.



LEFT: Bobby Hoberg, West student, takes aim at the CEC's rifle range. Students learned to load, unload and shoot a .22 caliber rifle.

RIGHT: West student Kayte Collins examines her catch during the pond study activity. Students identified aquatic life and tested water samples.



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While the Central Lutheran students wound their way through the woods, the West students were learning how to use their compasses.

After learning how to set a bearing and measure their steps, the West students set out on an orienteering course through the woods armed with topographic maps and compasses. Their mission: to find five flags in the park.

"It was fun because I like to go out in the woods and hike," said West sixth-grader Cody Harlow. "I might use the compass (skills) again in life."

"The teachers might have more fun than the kids do, and they learn just as much. The kids get to see teachers in a new light — that we're real people too."

Anthony Gaul, teacher at  
Sioux City West Middle

### A MEMORABLE LESSON

A trip to Springbrook gives students hands-on experiences they just can't get in the classroom.

"Our group is primarily city kids. Very few have been out in the woods," said Anthony Gaul, Sioux City West teacher.

The Springbrook excursion, which includes lessons in math, social studies, English and science, ties in with West's interdisciplinary unit, "The Web of Life." The students are reading the novel *My Side of the Mountain*, learning about the water cycle and the food chain, and students' spelling lists reflect science terms.

"At Springbrook, they get to experience it first-hand," Gaul said.

Springbrook provides a multi-sensory, hands-on experience that's important to learning, said Kevin Vidergar, a school improvement consultant in science and math at Heartland Area Education Agency.

"It's a powerful learning experience because kids learn in different ways. It plays to all your students' strengths at once," Vidergar said. "We organize our learning based on the experiences we have. An experience at Springbrook allows students to frame future learning in the classroom."

Springbrook can also be an introduction to new methods of teaching, as a number of college students traveling with West Middle School discovered. Katie Sieverding, a senior at the University of South Dakota, didn't realize field trips like this existed, but hoped that she could do similar trips with her future students.

"I would love to have a way to get out of the classroom and get a hands-on experience. That's always better," said Sieverding. "The kids are really into it (the projects). It's fun to watch them."

For Central Lutheran teachers, who bring groups to Springbrook every other year, the trip fosters respect and gives students something to relate to in the classroom.

"It gives kids an appreciation for nature



Central Lutheran students stop to learn about natural predators of deer.

and ties in book learning with an outside, real experience," said teacher Denise Block. "We're a Lutheran school, so we like to tie this in with creation, nature and respect. We look at how everything depends on everything else."

Central Lutheran Principal Mark L'Heureux hopes his students learn a

sense of responsibility for nature.

"Part of our job is to protect this," he said.

#### GETTING THEIR FEET WET

Crouched at the edge of a pond, West Middle School students tried to capture a small frog. Other students dotted the shoreline, dipping fishing

A deer stares down a group of Sioux City West Middle School students on their way to the pond study activity. About 300 deer make their home in the 866-acre park.



## Springbrook CEC Opens Doors to Families, Other Groups

Springbrook CEC is now available for overnight lodging by families and other large groups due to the closure of the Springbrook



State Park group camp. The facility includes a large dining hall and three modern dormitories, each with four sleeping rooms, two bathrooms and showers and a family lounge. Part of the dining hall facility has been portioned off to create a kitchenette for use by groups. Meals may also be purchased through the CEC concessionaire or groups can use a combination of the kitchenette and

concessionaire. All facilities are heated and air conditioned for year-round use. The facilities can accommodate groups ranging from 30 to 100 people.

"This is a marvelous place for families or large groups to come together and spend time in the outdoors," said Angela Corio, DNR state park landscape architect. "There are some families who have come for more than 20 years. It's a tradition for many groups."

nets in the pond hoping to retrieve a treasure. A few feet away, another group of students took water samples and gathered around a kit to determine water temperature, pH level, and levels of dissolved oxygen, nitrate and nitrite in the water.

Natalie Heisterkamp, a sixth-grader, liked the hands-on aspect of the aquatic life/water quality project. She had done the project a year earlier on a fifth-grade trip, but was enthusiastic to experience it again.

"We had nets and could fish up water and weird looking bugs, and we could find out what they were," she said.

Down the trail from the pond, another group of students took their best shot at an outdoors experience.

After learning basic safety rules and how to load and unload a .22 caliber rifle, each student put on a pair of safety glasses, put in earplugs and had the chance to take five shots at a paper target.

"I shot some of my friends' targets,

but I did good," said Miguel Salazar, a sixth-grader at West.

The pond study and rifle range are only two of the more than 50 projects offered by the CEC. Projects cover outdoor skills, water quality, plant study, team building, wildlife and basic conservation. Projects go

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**To learn more about CEC camps and programs, contact AJay Winter at (641) 747-8383, ext. 11.**

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beyond science lessons to address social studies, language arts, fine arts, math, geography and more.

"Each project schedule is individually tailored to each group," said environmental educator Riordan.

Some of the most popular activities include aquatic life, archery, bird banding, learning about watersheds with a stream table and orienteering with topographic maps.

"I'm looking forward to learn how to do plaster (animal) tracks," said Ashlee Sweet, a Central Lutheran fifth-grader.

### A GROWING TRADITION

The Springbrook Conservation Education Center opened in 1969 as a teacher training facility. Teachers who enjoyed their experiences at the CEC soon began bringing their students, said AJay Winter, Springbrook training specialist.

The CEC includes indoor and outdoor classrooms, as well as 104 beds in three dormitories equipped with heat and air conditioning, making the facilities available year-round. While some groups use the center for only a day, the majority of groups stay over one night or more.

When school is out of session, the CEC offers a number of camps for children and adults. These include a Hunting and Conservation Camp for Boys, Outdoor Journey for Girls, Iowa's American Wilderness Leadership School and Teachers Hands-on



For more information or to make a reservation, contact AJay Winter, CEC training specialist, at 641/747-8383 extension 11.



Dave Perrigo and Dani Israel were married at Springbrook in August.

Jamison Studios

In sixth grade, Dani Israel visited the Conservation Education Center as part of a two-day class trip. Twenty years later, she returned to the center — not to study pond life or leaves — but to walk down a grassy aisle at her wedding.

In a sunny opening amongst a wooded park, Israel and Dave Perrigo were married under an arbor Aug. 23 on the lawn of the Hawthorne dormitory.

“I am so glad we were able to have the wedding at Springbrook,” Dani said. “It was a perfect day. I wouldn’t have done anything differently.”

Both Dani and Dave, a farmer, are outdoors types. Dave even proposed to Dani on a hike through Rocky Mountain National Park.

While there have been weddings at Springbrook in the past, this is the first in a few years, said A Jay Winter, training specialist at Springbrook.

“I am honored that students visiting Springbrook feel so strongly about their experience that they return many years later to get married at the facility,” Winter said.

Education Workshop. Many students who first visit Springbrook with a school group return as campers in the summer.



Amanda Yong and Mariah Meyers, students at West Middle, discuss compass bearings with Anne Riordan while orienteering.

## Hunt • Fish Make Money

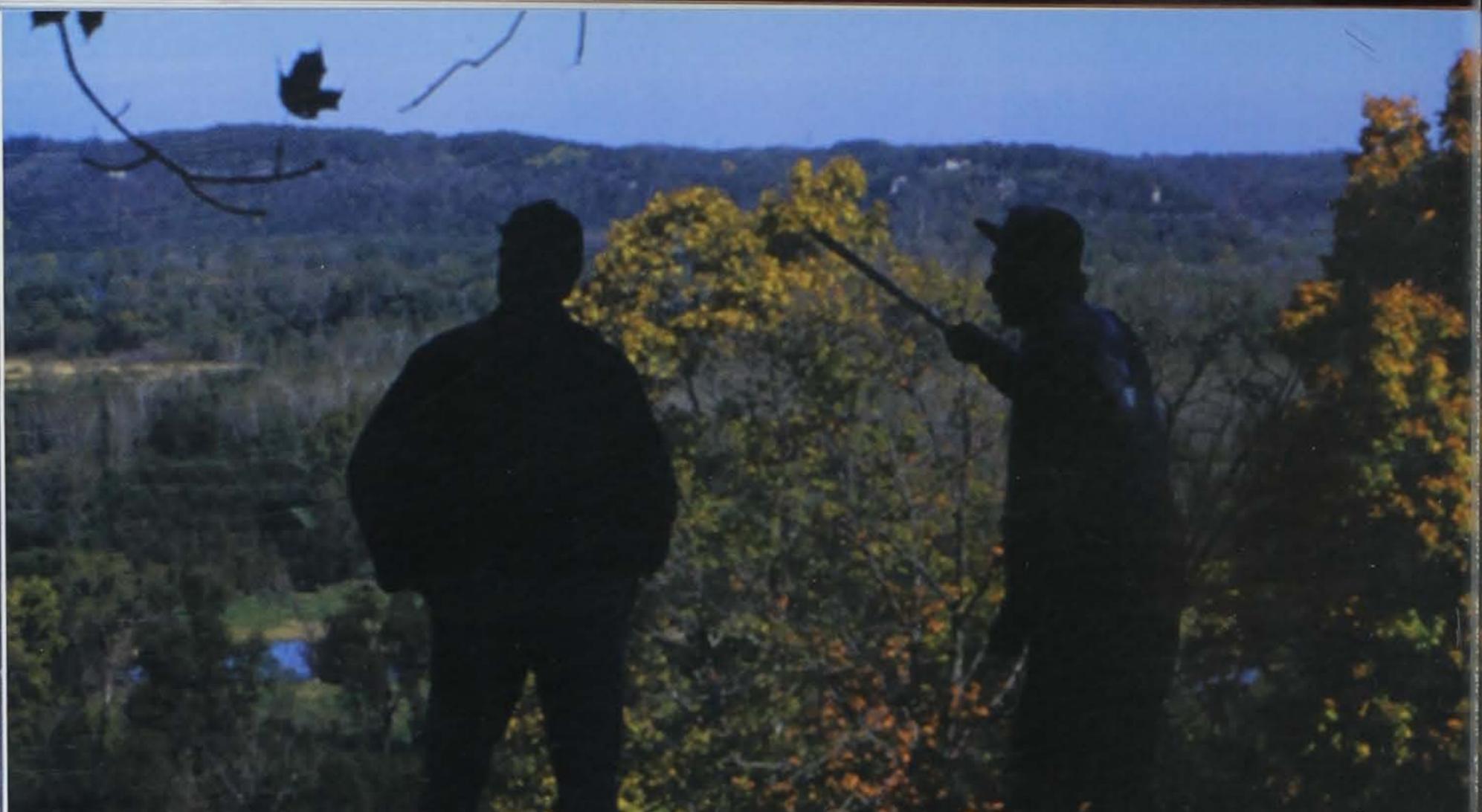
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*Jessie Rolph is an information specialist for the department in Des Moines.*



# Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

## Preserving a Tradition for 25 Years

by Jessie Rolph

Bill Witt

**M**ark Ackelson still reflects back on a time when he saw the unachievable done and the people who made it happen.

As a member of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF), Ackelson helped purchase the area now known as the Mines of Spain in Dubuque in 1980, a project that inspires him to this day.

The Iowa Conservation Commission (ICC), predecessor to the DNR, had tried to secure the land before, but it took the work of the ICC, INHF and Department of the Interior to make it happen.

"I saw how effective a non-profit organization could be working with government and landowners. We learned a lot and saw what we could

do," Ackelson said. "The most inspiring thing was seeing how many people really care."

Ackelson continues to reflect on his experiences as INHF celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2004. The private, non-profit organization works to protect and preserve Iowa's land, water and wildlife through a number



INHF founders Robert Buckmaster, Robert Ray and Gerald Schnepf

of programs supported by the group's members. Prairies, wetlands, savannas, trails, greenbelts, woodlands and river corridors — covering more than 75,000 acres of Iowa — have all been protected by INHF.

The group formed in 1979 to create a private organization that would focus on Iowa's resources. Founded by Gerald Schnepf, Robert Buckmaster and then-governor Robert Ray, the group's original mission statement focused on land acquisition and developing the public's awareness of natural resources. This small group began recruiting board members and seeking projects humbly, but effectively.

"We started with a card table and a borrowed phone," said Ackelson, who joined the organization early on

and became INHF president in 1994.

Today, INHF has about 30 people on its board of directors, about 50 advisors and more than 6,000 members. These people make possible the number of projects INHF embarks on every year, including 60 projects currently in the works.

Projects range from land acquisition and protection to land stewardship and restoration, and can take weeks to

**“We started with a card table and a borrowed phone.”**

**--INHF President Mark Ackelson, on the group's beginnings**

years to complete. Unlike most of the organization's first undertakings, projects are becoming larger and more complex in scale, including some multi-million dollar projects, according to Ackelson.

INHF selects projects according to its three-year strategic plan, which focuses the organization on permanent land protection, restoring lost resources, promoting improved land management and leading with new ideas and opportunities — including restoring state conservation funds, promoting new nature trail initiatives and encouraging nature-oriented tourism.

As for future plans, Ackelson said that INHF will continue to expand efforts on streams and lakes, continue major work on protecting Iowa's remaining wild places, look at new initiatives on education and work on major trail projects, including creating

*Since its creation in 1979, INHF has taken on more than 500 projects across Iowa. The following projects display the range of projects and activities, including some of its first undertakings and recent successes.*

## **Mines of Spain**

### **Dubuque County**

The second project INHF took on, the Mines of Spain in Dubuque remains one of the group's largest projects to date. After nearly a year of full-time effort, the project was completed in 1980 at a cost of \$3.5 million. Purchasing the area required a federal appropriation in addition to private funding and donations from landowners and the DNR (then the Iowa Conservation Commission). INHF acquired the land and held it until the DNR could secure it.



Ty Smedes

The Mesquakie at one time inhabited the area, which covers almost 1,400 acres and 3.5 miles of bluffs along the Mississippi River. In the late 1700s, Julien Dubuque, the first European settler in Iowa, acquired a land grant from Spain to mine the area for lead.

Development on the project, done by the DNR, has resulted in a staffed interpretive center, as well as woodland trails, restored prairie and a butterfly garden. Historic sites within the Mines of Spain area include old lead mines, a chapel, archaeological features and the Julien Dubuque monument.

“The project was a big gamble for us as an organization,” said Mark Ackelson, president of INHF. “It was risky, but we were determined to make it work. The Mines of Spain is one of most gratifying projects we’ve ever done.”

The annual Mines of Spain Fall Seminar, sponsored by the park managers and the Friends of the Mines of Spain, is scheduled for Sept. 11, 2004 as a featured INHF 25th anniversary event.



Whitham Woods in Jefferson County was INHF's first project. Daisy Iowa Whitham, pictured above with Mark Ackelson, donated the 130-acre site in 1980.

linked trail systems.

Virtually all of the projects INHF undertakes are done in cooperation with other entities like private landowners, conservation organizations and numerous local, state and federal public agencies. Funding comes from members, foundations, businesses and public funds.

"We may initiate a project, but then we partner with other organizations to finish it," Ackelson said. "Partnership was in our mission statement from day one. We go out of our way to seek out partners."

Most projects eventually land in the ownership of a partner. For example, INHF can purchase a parcel of land

and hold it for a county until the county secures grant funding to buy the land — a process that takes 18 months on average.

"We're the risk holder in the middle," said Cathy Engstrom, director of communications for INHF. "Sometimes we lose the risk and have to look for a new conservation buyer, or hold the land much longer than intended, but that's better than losing the opportunity for protection."

**"It gave us the peace of mind that the woods will always be there. It's an excellent way to preserve what's left of natural Iowa."**

**--Jan Lovell, on her family's conservation easement**



## Iowa River Greenbelt

### Hardin County

A canoe or inner tube may be the best way to experience the Iowa River Greenbelt in Hardin County, although scenic back roads run nearby as well. The greenbelt stretches 42 miles, winding past Alden, Iowa Falls, Steamboat Rock, Eldora and Union. The Sand Springs Wildlife Area, Wildcat Cave Access, Falling Rock Wildlife Area and campgrounds are all located along the greenbelt.

To develop a written plan for the greenbelt's preservation and protection, INHF teamed with local organizations like the Iowa River Greenbelt Resource Trust (IRGRT) and the Hardin County Conservation Board.

INHF has helped the IRGRT become a partnership between multiple communities, local governments and private groups, and helped create a "master plan" for the organization, said Bob Gunderson, a founding member of IRGRT and member of INHF and the Hardin County Conservation Board.

Out of 557 projects completed in the last 25 years, INHF owns only 66, including many temporary holdings that will soon be transferred to partners. Counties own about half of all the projects, cities own 15 projects, the federal government owns 11, and the DNR owns 106 projects covering 20,700 acres. Individuals or other private organizations own the remaining projects, many of them conservation easements.

Land acquisition is important, as less than two percent of Iowa land is in public ownership for outdoor recreational use, said Terry Little, DNR wildlife supervisor.

"INHF has helped us acquire key pieces of land," said Little. "It takes us six months to go through a detailed process when buying land. INHF buys the land and holds it until we have the money and get through the process. They provide a way to get more land in public ownership."

INHF also forms partnerships with landowners looking to permanently protect and preserve their land, offering a

number of different options in the donation, sale or title transfer on the property. A conservation easement, which allows landowners to protect their land while retaining ownership, is one option that is becoming increasingly popular.

A conservation easement protects a property's natural assets by restricting damaging practices on the land. The property remains in private ownership, but the easement applies to the current owner and all future



John Ledges, INHF

Landowners meet with an INHF staff member regarding options for preservation of their land. Property owners can take a number of different avenues to protect their land, including placing it in a conservation easement, an option that is growing in popularity.

Together, the groups focus on protecting pristine areas and providing recreational opportunities. With some technical advice from INHF, the local groups successfully fought for a more greenbelt-friendly expansion of Highway 20 and completed a new five-mile hard surface multi-use trail from Eldora to Steamboat Rock via Pine Lake State Park.

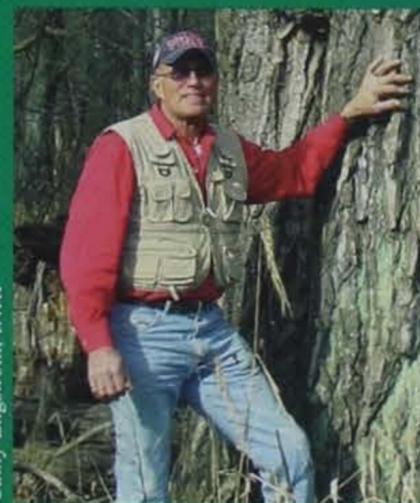
Local residents have made large individual contributions as well.

Bob deNeui donated conservation easements along the greenbelt to INHF

in 1996 and 2002. The land hasn't been grazed for the last 40 years or logged for the past 75, and is one of few places in the area that hasn't been abused, deNeui said.

"This particular area is so unique from a natural standpoint that it deserved to be preserved," deNeui said.

Iowans can visit the Iowa River Greenbelt during one of INHF's featured 25th anniversary events, the annual Pine Lake State Park Festival. Pine Lake State Park and the city of Eldora host the event, which runs from July 30 to Aug. 1, 2004.



Cathy Engstrom, INHF

Bob deNeui donated two easements along the greenbelt.



Kip Ladage

The Heritage Addition, another INHF project, added 1,045 acres to Effigy Mounds National Monument in Allamakee County. The addition connects to a portion of the Yellow River State Forest and is home to a number of state threatened or endangered species and 13 archeological sites, including two bear effigies.

owners. The easement's exact language is tailored to the land and the landowner. For example, many easements allow no buildings while others limit the number, location and type of buildings that can be built on the property. For example, an easement along a scenic byway might protect scenery like row crops, but an easement on virgin prairie would prohibit plowing. Easements are granted to an

## Cedar Valley Nature Trail

*Black Hawk, Benton, Buchanan and Linn Counties*

Considered a "granddaddy trail," as one of Iowa's first large trail projects, the Cedar Valley Nature Trail spans 52 miles. The trail, built on a former railroad corridor, runs through Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Evansdale, Gilbertville, La Porte City, Brandon, Urbana, Center Point and Hiawatha.

Those following the trail will come across farmland and small towns, as well as historical landmarks, archaeological sites and restored railroad depots. The trail passes through Cedar River bottomlands, prairie remnants and wetlands, and past several recreation areas. Originally developed and led by volunteers, the trail is now owned by counties.

When the project began in the 1980s, it faced opposition and criticism. The experience taught INHF about legal, real estate and political issues, as well as working with community organizations, volunteers and landowners.

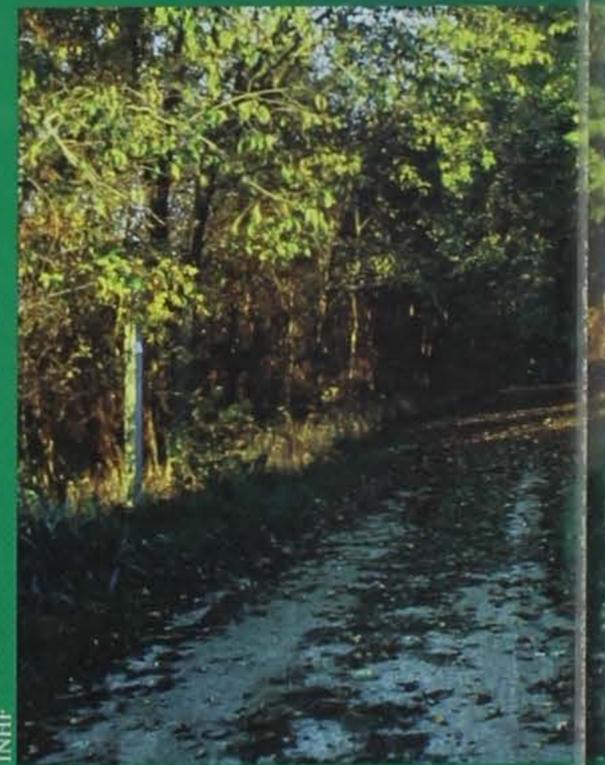
"It was a difficult project politically and legally, but there was also strong local support," said Mark Ackelson, INHF president. "It was so rewarding to work with those volunteers."

While trying to complete a much-criticized trail project across four counties was difficult, it also had positive benefits.

"Because the Cedar Valley Nature Trail became successful, it set the stage for other trails in the state," Ackelson said. "People saw that trails could work."

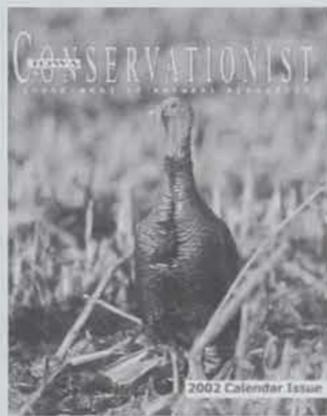
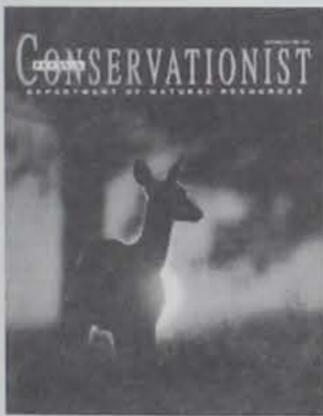
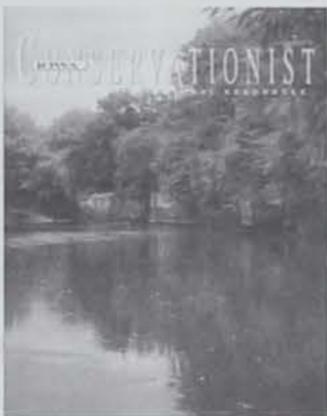
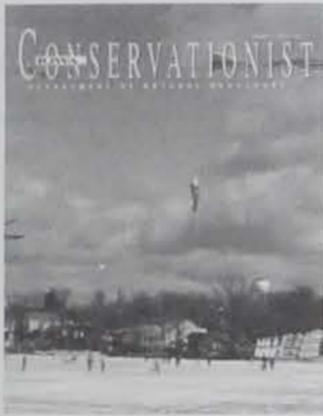
The trail has provided economic benefits for many nearby communities, helped spawn a large trail complex in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls area and has protected wildlife.

INHF will celebrate its 25th



INHF

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Gary Hamer

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## Ed-Ashland Lone Tree Point Nature Area

### Clear Lake County

Shoreline land value is measured in feet rather than dollars. The Ed-Ashland Lone Tree Point Nature Area covers 101 feet of undeveloped shoreline on Clear Lake. The area includes a large woodland, a small wetland and a meadow. In 1992 when the Jim and Marcia Connell family donated a deed easement to INHF, which allowed them to retain the land permanently protecting the site's natural resources.



Ed Harp

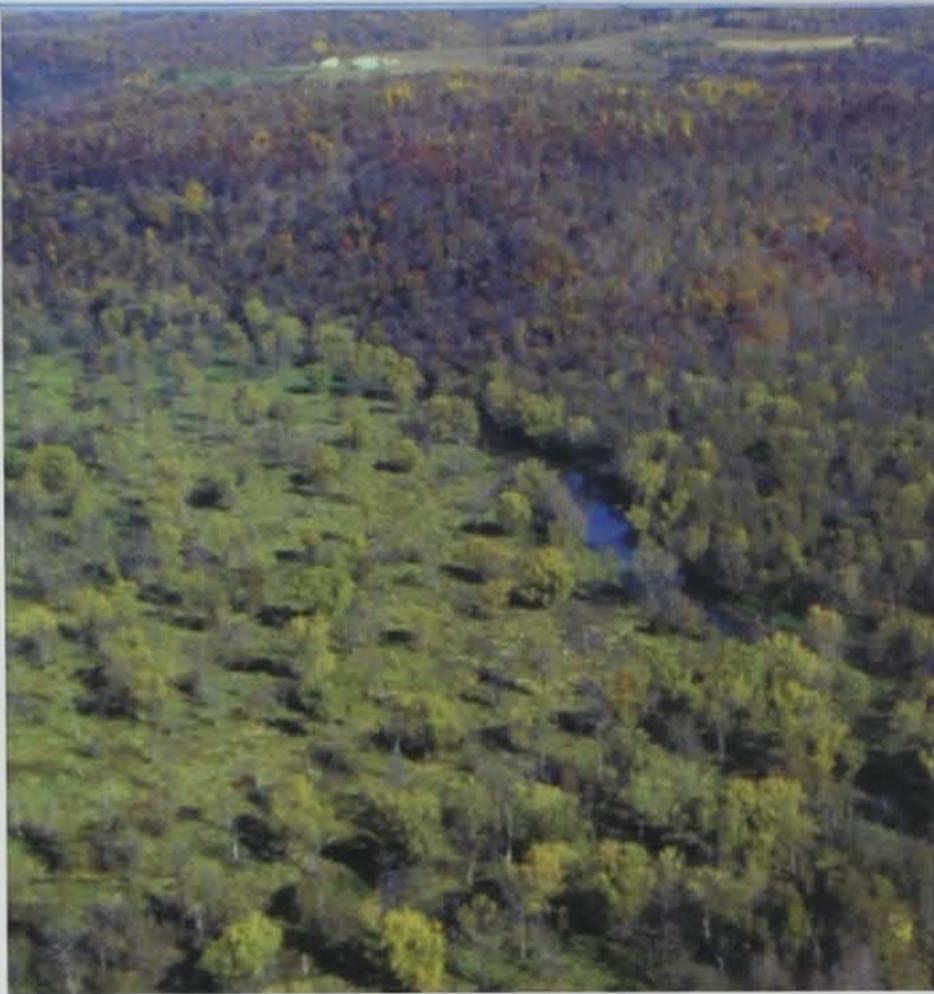
Marcia Connell and grandson Christopher Lovell plant a hardwood tree along the shoreline.

and protect the Clear Lake watershed. Unlike all other donors, the Connells chose to open their land to hiking and picnicking.

The Connell family, with the help of INHF and other organizations, is working to restore the existing 190-acre farm adjacent to the

woods — which has been in the family since the 1870s — into prairie and wetlands. The new wetlands will help filter water before it reaches the lake, and a planned trail will lead visitors through the prairie and wetland area.

Clear Lake Earth Week, hosted by the Clear Lake Earth Day committee, is one of INHF's featured anniversary events from April 17 to 24, 2004.



The Heritage Addition, another INHF project, added 1 National Monument in Allamakee County. The addition of the Yellow River State Forest and is home to a number of endangered species and 13 archeological sites, including

## Cedar Valley Nature Trail

*Black Hawk, Benton, Buchanan and Lincoln*

Considered a “granddaddy trail,” as one of Iowa’s first large trail projects, the Cedar Valley Nature Trail spans 52 miles. The trail, built on a former railroad corridor, runs through Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Evansdale, Gilbertville, La Porte City, Brandon, Urbana, Center Point and Hiawatha.

Those following the trail will come across farmland and small towns, as well as historical landmarks, archaeological sites and restored railroad depots. The trail passes through Cedar River bottomlands, prairie remnants and wetlands, and past several recreation areas. Originally developed and led by volunteers, the trail is now owned by the counties.

When the project began in the 1980s, it faced opposition. The experience taught the INHF the importance of legal, real estate and public relations, as well as working with other organizations, volunteers and local support.

“It was a difficult process, but there was local support,” said M. Ackelson, INHF president. “It was important to work with those who were skeptical.”

While trying to complete the trail project across four counties was difficult, it also had positive benefits.

“Because the Cedar Valley Nature Trail became successful, it set the stage for other trails in the state,” Ackelson said. “People saw that trails could work.”

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## Wood-Ashland Lone Tree Point Nature Area Clear Lake County

Shoreline land value is measured in feet rather than acres. The Wood-Ashland Lone Tree Point Nature Area covers 101 feet of undeveloped shoreline on Clear Lake. The site includes a large woodland, a small wetland and a meadow. In 1992 the Jim and Marcia Connell family donated an easement to INHF, which allowed them to retain the land while permanently protecting the site's natural resources.



Ed Harp

Marcia Connell and grandson Christopher Lovell plant a hardwood tree along the shoreline.

and protect the Clear Lake watershed. Unlike all other donors, the Connells chose to open their land to the public for hiking and picnicking.

The Connell family, with the help of INHF and other organizations, is working to restore the existing 190-acre farm adjacent to the

woods — which has been in the family since the 1870s — into prairie and wetlands. The new wetlands will help filter water before it reaches the lake, and a planned trail will lead visitors through the prairie and wetland area.

Clear Lake Earth Week, hosted by the Clear Lake Earth Day committee, is one of INHF's featured anniversary events from April 17 to 24, 2004.



Gary Hamner



The Heritage Addition, another INHF project, National Monument in Allamakee County. The Yellow River State Forest and is home to endangered species and 13 archeological sites.

## Cedar Valley Nat

*Black Hawk, Benton, Buchanan and*

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When the 1980s, it faced many challenges. The experience was legal, real estate, as well as work with various organizations.

“It was a challenge and legally, local support was needed. INHF president Ackelson worked with...

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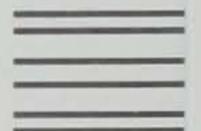


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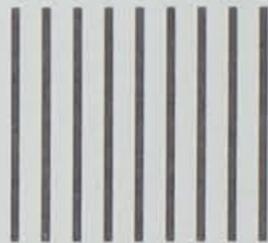
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organization or agency, like INHF, that will watch over future owners to make sure they adhere to the regulations listed in the easement.

"It was absolutely the right thing to do for us," said Jan Lovell, whose family donated a conservation easement on 101 acres along Clear Lake, which, unlike most easement owners, they opened for public use. "It gave us the peace of mind that the woods will always be there. It's an excellent way to preserve what's left of natural Iowa."

Lovell, who recently joined INHF's board, said that the organization monitors the property once a year to ensure that the family is complying with the rules set forth in the easement. INHF has done about 60 conservation easements in its history.

anniversary at the 2004 Cedar Trails Festival in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls area Aug. 14 and 15. The annual event is hosted by the Cedar Trails Partnership.



Gary Hamner

## Woodford-Ashland Lone Tree Point Nature Area

### Cerro Gordo County

In a place where shoreline land value is measured in feet rather than acres, the Woodford-Ashland Lone Tree Point Nature Area covers 101 acres, including 4,600 feet of undeveloped shoreline on Clear Lake. The area also includes a large woodland, a small wetland and a meadow.

The project began in 1992 when the Jim and Marcia Connell family donated a conservation easement to INHF, which allowed them to retain ownership while permanently protecting the site's natural resources.

"We knew we wanted to preserve the woods and the entire area beyond our lifetimes. The conservation easement was exactly the right solution," said Jan Lovell, member of the Connell family and INHF board member. "We feel strongly that we're temporary stewards of the property and that it's there for everyone to enjoy."

The land management techniques used on the easement — like native planting — help improve water quality and protect the Clear Lake watershed. Unlike all other INHF easement donors, the Connells chose to open their land to the public for hiking and picnicking.

This fall, the Connell family, with the help of INHF and other organizations, began to restore the existing 190-acre farm adjacent to the woods — which has been in the family since the 1870s — into prairie and wetlands. The new wetlands will help filter water before it reaches the lake, and a planned trail will lead visitors through the prairie and wetland area.

Clear Lake Earth Week, hosted by the Clear Lake Earth Day committee, is one of INHF's featured anniversary events from April 17 to 24, 2004.



Ed Harp

Marcia Connell and grandson Christopher Lovell plant a hardwood along the shoreline.

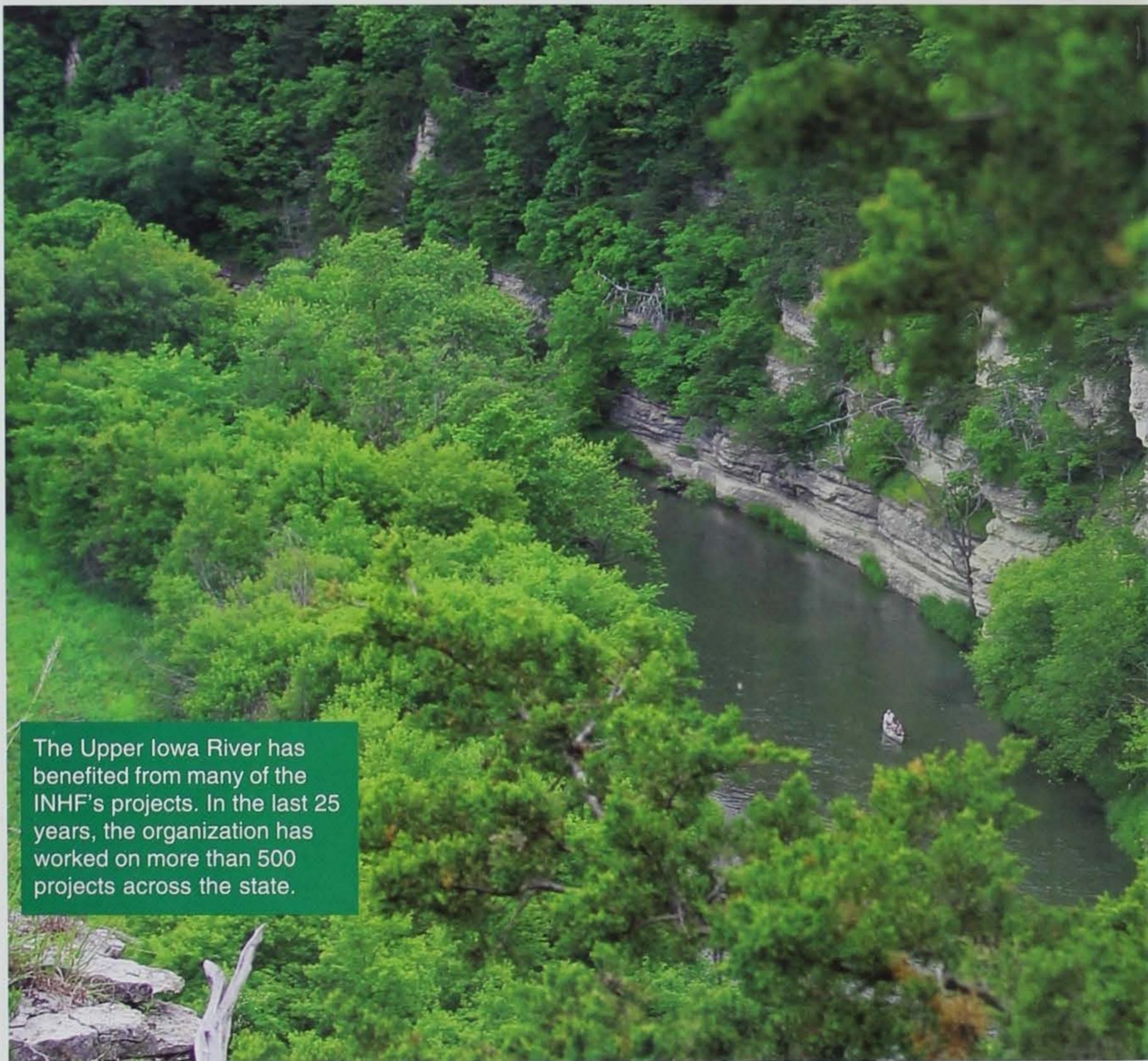
Land protection, through purchase or easements, is just one facet of INHF. The organization also works to restore land to its natural state. Restoration of Iowa's natural places — most commonly prairie, wetland and savanna — has been a growing part of INHF's work over the past three years. Many of the most complex and long-term land restoration projects are on INHF-

owned land, which includes about 10 projects. Restoration work can include planting native species, burning, mowing, cutting out invasive brush and breaking drainage tile.

At times, INHF has initiated restoration on projects it is temporarily holding. Concerned that partners may not have all the necessary resources available for high-quality restoration work, INHF is often

holding the land longer and doing the first level of restoration before handing the land over to the partner.

While INHF doesn't have the staff to consult with every private landowner in the state about land restoration, it does focus on general restoration and land management education. This education includes helping other organizations with restoration work and producing



The Upper Iowa River has benefited from many of the INHF's projects. In the last 25 years, the organization has worked on more than 500 projects across the state.

educational publications for landowners, like *The Landowner's Options*, *A Bird's Eye View* and several magazine articles.

Another INHF publication, *Iowa by Trail*, represents INHF's longtime commitment to developing and maintaining multi-use recreational trails in the state. When INHF began establishing trails in the early 1980s, they met some fierce opposition from

## Spring Run Wetland Complex Dickinson County

An ongoing project with several partners, the Spring Run Wetland Complex near Okoboji began with INHF acquiring five parcels of land in the early 1990s. Several wetland complexes were developed around the Iowa Great Lakes and came into service during the Flood of 1993, when the wetlands filtered out sediment and pollution from the lakes and continue to do so today. The complexes and the grassy uplands also provide habitat for wildlife, recreational opportunities like hunting and improved water quality.

"Pheasants are coming back into the area, as the uplands give them a place to live and protect their young," said Okoboji resident Joni Schneider, also an INHF member and DNR commissioner. "Plus, the flood of '93 proved that filtering basins do work. Anytime we can protect our lakes with filtering, that's wonderful."

Ken Halbur donated land to the complex in a conservation easement in 1990 in memory of his son, Cory, an avid hunter and conservationist. Today, he sees the benefits of the complex on the Okoboji wetland area.

"There's wildlife there, and people can hunt and fish," he said. "It filters runoff and helps improve the water quality of the lake. The more we can improve that, the better."

Spring Run will be one of many featured sites during Adult Nature Weekend, Aug. 14 and 15, 2004. One of INHF's featured anniversary events, the weekend is hosted by Iowa Lakeside Laboratory on West Lake Okoboji.



Bruce Morrison

Joe McGovern, INHF

# Hitchcock Nature Center

## Pottawattamie County

Bulldozers were on site when the area now known as the Hitchcock Nature Center was saved at the last minute from becoming a landfill. Trees had been stripped from the land and roads had been built through fragile areas by the landowner, who planned to turn the former YMCA camp into a landfill. When the landfill permit wasn't approved, the land came up for sale and INHF acquired



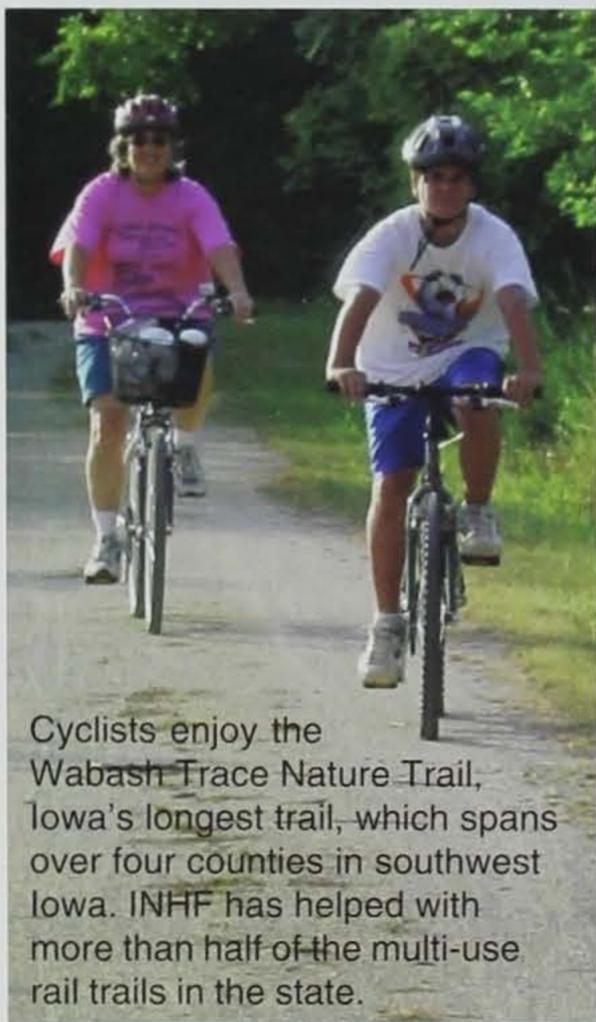
Pottawattamie County Conservation Board

it through a sheriff's sale in 1991.

Located in the Loess Hills of western Iowa, the Hitchcock Nature Center area was held by INHF until Pottawattamie County could secure funding to buy the land. The site — initially 508 acres — has since been expanded to 807 acres and includes the nature center and hiking trails. The area is also used for cross-country skiing and wildlife viewing. In addition to recreation, the center focuses on preservation and education.

people who doubted that trails could reap actual benefits. Today, INHF has assisted with more than half of the multi-use rail trails in the state.

Rail trails are built along former rail-



Cyclists enjoy the Wabash Trace Nature Trail, Iowa's longest trail, which spans over four counties in southwest Iowa. INHF has helped with more than half of the multi-use rail trails in the state.

Lisa Hein, INHF

road corridors and can be very important to conservation. A look back in Iowa history reveals that the railroads across Iowa were built just as Iowa was becoming a state, before most of Iowa became farmland.

"These corridors contain some of the few acres left in Iowa that have never been plowed, because the land has always been owned by the railroads," Engstrom said.

Many of these trail areas in former rail corridors have prairie remnants and run along rivers and greenbelts, protecting water quality and wildlife corridors. Plus, trails create economic benefits, bringing in visitors and businesses to nearby communities, as well as providing a way for urban Iowans to take in natural parts of the state.

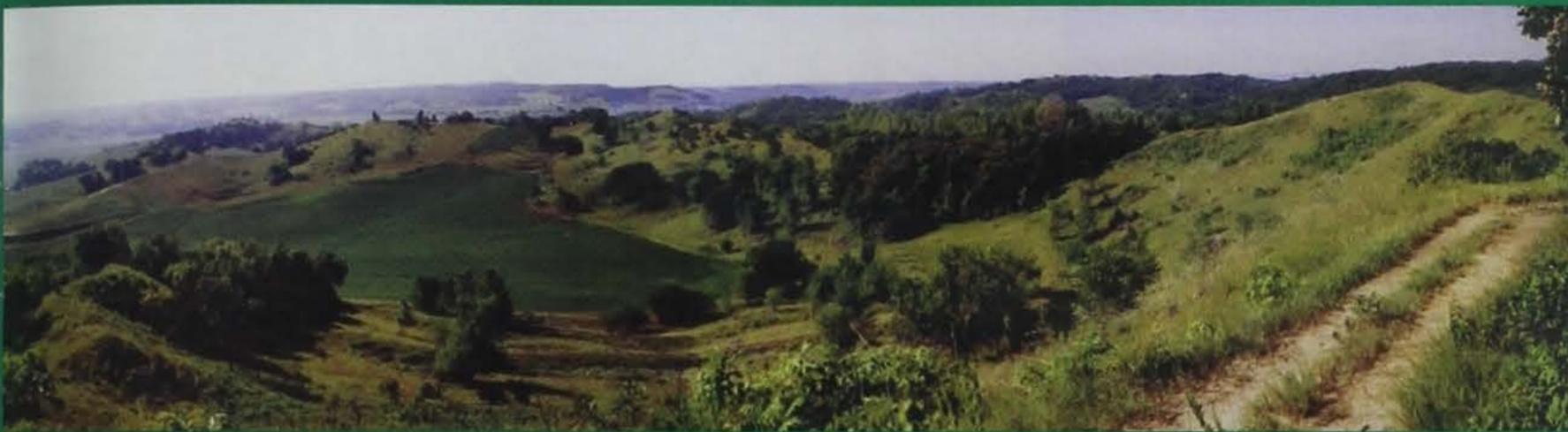
"As the years go by, fewer and fewer Iowans have a direct connection to the land," Engstrom said. "Trails are an easy way to get to know Iowa and connect people to the outdoors."

INHF initially focused its trail

work on land acquisition and helping develop trail plans. Now, they serve as technical advisors for many non-profit community and volunteer groups that are developing trails on their own. INHF is also working to create linked trail systems, promote more economic development along trails and trail maintenance as well as to produce multiple trail publications.

In addition to the variety of publications produced by INHF, the organization also offers access to resources through its website. The INHF education program supports a competitive college internship program in communications and natural resource management. Though not a lobbying organization, INHF also promotes conservation policy on both the state and federal level.

Recent INHF public education efforts have focused on building appreciation for the state's natural resources. The "Explore Iowa" section of the INHF website includes featured destinations, events and links to other conservation resources. Another



Pottawattamie County Conservation Board

“This was the rescue of a very important conservation piece,” said Lynn Ford, who chaired the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board (PCCB) at the time of the

acquisition. “The nature center is turning into a jewel in the Loess Hills area. Without the assistance of Mark Ackelson and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, that project

would not have happened.”

On Oct. 9, 2004, INHF will feature the Hitchcock Hawk Watch Public Festival, hosted by PCCB, as one of its 25th anniversary events.

section of the site celebrates the organization’s anniversary with a listing of 25 outdoor events to be held at INHF projects throughout the state in 2004.

From education and policy to land acquisition, from restoration to trails, INHF has made a significant impact on Iowa’s natural resources in the past 25 years.

“We want to benefit all Iowans in improving the quality of life and improving the environment in the state,” Ackelson said. “We’re based entirely in Iowa. We’re not a chapter of a national organization. Our focus is here in Iowa — that’s one of the reasons INHF was created.”



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*Jessie Rolph is an information specialist for the department in Des Moines.*

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Ronak  
Denn  
Tony  
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Raym

# Record DEER RACKS

PHOTOS BY ROGER A. HILL

This is a list of record deer racks scored in each category between October 2002 and July 2003 for the Iowa trophy deer record program. A list of the racks scored during this time period is also available on the DNR website at [www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com)

\* Denotes a new entry into the all-time Top 10 Racks (page 45)

Name	City	County Taken	Total Score	Year	Name	City	County Taken	Total Score	Year
<b>BOW, NON-TYPICAL</b>									
Minimum Qualifying Score - 155 pts.									
*Harlan Swehla	Cedar Rapids	Des Moines	237 6/8	2002	Ray Nicks	Durango	Dubuque	160 3/8	2002
Boyd Mathes	Pella	Marion	200 1/8	2002	David Henry	Sioux City	Plymouth	159 7/8	2001
Chad Olson	Saint Charles	Clayton	196 6/8	2002	Chad McAuliffe	Epworth	Dubuque	159 7/8	2000
Greg Wille	Sherrill	Dubuque	192 5/8	2002	Milo Fred Brown Jr.	Le CLaire	Jones	159 6/8	2002
Brian Barkley	Clarinda	Page	190 6/8	2002	Tau Vinchattle	Stratford	Hamilton	158 4/8	1998
Dave Hackett	Waterloo	Des Moines	190 5/8	2002	Phil Guy	Brighton	Washington	158 1/8	2002
Timothy J. Douglas	Des Moines	Polk	188 1/8	2002	Ryan King	Mount Ayr	Ringgold	157 6/8	2002
Adam Stout	Coon Rapids	Guthrie	188	2002	Brad Herrmann	Waterloo	Black Hawk	156 4/8	2002
Virgil High	Manchester	Clayton	187 6/8	2002	Bob Borowiak	Houston	Allamakee	155 4/8	2001
Mike Ogbourne	West Des Moines	Clarke	186 7/8	2002	John Williams	Dubuque	Dubuque	155	2002
Chris LaCour	Osage	Mitchell	182 6/8	2002	<b>BOW, TYPICAL</b>				
Henry Roberts	West Burlington	Des Moines	182 2/8	2001	Minimum Qualifying Score - 135 pts.				
Jason Gunn	Grand Junction	Plymouth	178 6/8	2002	Patrick DeBlasio	Ridgewood	Des Moines	182 4/8	2002
Scott Bunnell	Corydon	Wayne	177	2002	Joe Lieb	Dubuque	Allamakee	180 3/8	2002
Randy Fisher	Nashua	Chickasaw	176 5/8	2002	Bill White	Argyle	Lee	179 3/8	2002
Charles L. Cary	Ottumwa	Wapello	175 2/8	1998	Mark Walleser	Lansing	Allamakee	177 2/8	2002
Kevin Voeller	Foley	Van Buren	174 4/8	2002	Mike Orness	North Liberty	Van Buren	174 5/8	2002
John Cavanaugh	Runnells	Dallas	173 5/8	2002	Randy Steines	Bellevue	Jackson	174 4/8	2002
Lance Rummelhart	Iowa City	Washington	170 6/8	2002	Steve Sharer	Fulton	Scott	173 6/8	1990
Chancy Walters	Montgomery	Union	170 1/8	2002	Henry Joslin Jr.	Glenwood	Iowa	171 6/8	2000
Leeland Harvey	Omaha, NE	Fremont	170	1998	Jeff Coonts	Buffalo	Scott	171 2/8	2002
Chris Clouse	Moravia	Appanoose	169 3/8	2002	Rhett Henderson	Council Bluffs	Pottawattamie	170 5/8	2001
Steve Snow	Leon	Decatur	168 4/8	2002	Jon G Hanson	Tonganoxie	Ringgold	170 3/8	2002
Mike Noble	Wapello	Louisa	167 5/8	2001	Randy Steines	Bellevue	Jackson	170 1/8	2002
Jason JeDele	Alden	Hardin	167 4/8	2002	Chris Barton	Farragut	Fremont	169 5/8	2002
Steven G. Johnson	Riceville	Mitchell	167 1/8	2002	Cole Vinchattle	Dayton	Webster	168 6/8	2002
Eric Ranquette	Garden	Montgomery	166 6/8	2002	Blake LeFler	Knoxville	Marion	168 1/8	2002
Jim Baker	Burlington	Des Moines	166	2001	Randy Ruth	Shell Rock	Allamakee	166 5/8	2002
Ronald Mongar	Avon Lake	Polk	165 1/8	2002	William Laucamp	Wapello	Louisa	166 4/8	2002
Dennis Clayton	Allerton	Wayne	164 6/8	2002	Brian Arnold	Chariton	Lucas	166 4/8	2002
Tony C Flesjer Jr.	Sioux City	Woodbury	163 1/8	2002	Jon Syverson	Dubuque	Allamakee	165 3/8	2002
Tom O'Brien	Albia	Monroe	163	2002	Mike Peterson	Boone	Story	164 6/8	2002
Jeff Schaaf	Griswold	Pottawattamie	162 5/8	2001	Larry Curtis	Potosi	Jackson	163 7/8	2002
Greg Richards	Nashua	Chickasaw	162 1/8	2002	Scott Chapin	De Soto	Wayne	163 4/8	2002
Craig R. Belknap	Solon	Des Moines	161 6/8	2002	Brandon C. Moon	Bedford	Taylor	163 3/8	2002
Cody Keyes	Plano	Wayne	161 5/8	1999	Ron Grimm	Mechanicsville	Linn	163 1/8	2002
Raymond Ripperger	Lacona	Marion	160 5/8	2002	Rodney P. Stahlnecker	Honey Creek	Pottawattamie	163	2002
					Richard Fullmer	LeClaire	Monroe	162 7/8	2001

Name	City	County Taken	Total Score	Year	Name	City	County Taken	Total Score	Year
Bill Kimm	Cedar Rapids	Clayton	162 7/8	2002	Jason VanAusdall	Grimes	Polk	147 2/8	2002
Doug Abney	Letts	Muscatine	162 6/8	2002	Brian Peterson	Carlisle	Warren	147 1/8	2002
John P. Tigges	Dubuque	Dubuque	162 2/8	2002	Gary Knoll	Earlham	Madison	147 1/8	2001
Mark Muir	Dubuque	Appanoose	162	2002	Leonard Dahlhauser	Waterloo	Allamakee	147 1/8	2001
Tim Butler	Albia	Clarke	160 4/8	2002	Rick Petersen	Spencer	Clay	147 1/8	2002
Lucas Edwards	Holstein	Cherokee	159 6/8	2000	Thomas Ray Gross	Greenville	Clay	146 7/8	2002
Kevin Davis	Anamosa	Delaware	159 3/8	2002	Bill Ravenscraft Jr.	Davenport	Scott	146 6/8	2002
Richard M Blaess	Decorah	Winneshiek	158 6/8	2002	Brian Moore	Hamilton	Marion	146 6/8	2002
Eric Felderman	Bellevue	Jackson	158 5/8	2001	Ray W Berry	Waterloo	Black Hawk	146 6/8	2002
Rod Keeney	De Witt	Jackson	158 4/8	2002	Alan D Wiskus	Panora	Guthrie	146 5/8	2002
Timothy J. Finucan	Webster City	Webster	158 3/8	2002	John Kertels	Farley	Dubuque	146 4/8	2002
Max Hileman	Grand River	Decatur	158 2/8	2002	Mike Conlon	Sioux City	Monona	146 4/8	2002
Nicky J. Clark Jr.	Fort Madison	Des Moines	157 6/8	2002	Mike Hertges	Waterloo	Clayton	146 3/8	2002
Mike Henderson	Centerville	Appanoose	157 3/8	2001	Daniel Kauffman	Wapello	Des Moines	146 2/8	2001
Doug Hodgens	Sioux City	Plymouth	157 1/8	1998	Doug Adams	Mondamin	Harrison	146 2/8	2002
Jeremy Whittle	Elgin	Fayette	157 1/8	2001	Robert Smith	Albia	Monroe	146 1/8	2002
Mark Woldruff		Washington	156	2002	Russ Landes	Burlington	Lee	146	2002
Ryan Ladeburg	Oelwein	Fayette	155 6/8	2002	Ryan Martin	Sigourney	Keokuk	145 5/8	2002
Joe Cox	Des Moines	Warren	155 6/8	2002	Charles L. Cary	Ottumwa	Wapello	145 5/8	2000
Larry M Monell	Sioux City	Monona	155 3/8	2002	Robert Summers	De Witt	Clinton	145 4/8	2002
David Martin	Des Moines	Dallas	155 3/8	2002	Cory Ashline	Elkport	Clayton	145 4/8	2002
Bryan Kimm	Keystone		155 2/8	2001	Vicki Cowan	Exline	Appanoose	145 4/8	2002
Jeremy Johnson	Dorchester	Winneshiek	155 1/8	2002	Ben Barnhill	Centerville	Appanoose	145	2002
Bill Richardson	Walcott	Clinton	154 1/8	2002	Rick Carlson	Ute	Monona	144 7/8	2002
Stan Brinks	Audubon	Carroll	154	2002	Mark Benda	Red Oak	Montgomery	144 6/8	2002
Robert Stober	Monroe	Marion	153 7/8	2002	Jeramy Marean	Waukee	Dallas	144 6/8	2002
Rick Cain	Tabor	Fremont	153 6/8	2002	John Pottebaum	Atlantic	Cass	144 5/8	2002
Branden A. Post	Dubuque	Jackson	153 6/8	2002	Rob Downard	Indianola	Warren	144 5/8	2002
Matt Pohlman		Pocahontas	153 5/8	2002	Alan Avitt	Des Moines	Polk	144 5/8	2002
T. J. Lawler	Carroll	Greene	153 5/8	2002	Brent Duey	Albia	Monroe	144 4/8	2001
Jared Goering	Truro	Decatur	153 4/8	2002	Kevin Dempster	Delhi	Delaware	144 3/8	2002
Chad McIntosh	Osceola	Decatur	153 1/8	2002	Ron Skarda	Afton	Union	144 3/8	2001
Caleb Sunderman	Clarinda	Page	153	2002	Larry L. Brus	Churdan	Greene	144 2/8	1995
Jeremy Pettyjohn	Hamilton	Marion	152 6/8	2002	Roger L. Kafer	Dubuque	Jackson	144 2/8	2002
Doug Kramer	Monticello	Jones	152 6/8	2001	Cody Bakalar	Albia	Marion	144 1/8	2002
Scott Tallant	Johnston	Clarke	152 5/8	2002	Robb Wessels	Cedar Rapids	Clayton	143 7/8	2001
Richard Bequeaith	Russell	Lucas	152 4/8	2002	Jacob Hudson	Davenport	Scott	143 7/8	2002
Leo Bihn	Oskaloosa	Appanoose	152 2/8	2002	Bill Brown	Chariton	Lucas	143 6/8	2002
Ryan M. Gruber	Newton	Dubuque	152 1/8	2002	Wally Rogan	Bellevue	Dubuque	143 5/8	2002
P. J. Connelly	Lansing	Allamakee	152	2002	Drew Kelly	Charles City	Floyd	143 5/8	2002
Treve Gray	Allerton	Wayne	151 7/8	2002	Bill Mitchell	New Albin	Allamakee	143 5/8	2002
Steven Williams	Ottumwa	Wapello	151 4/8		Peter Schrandt	Cedar Rapids	Chickasaw	143 5/8	2001
Terry Williams	Melrose	Monroe	150 6/8	2002	Duane Vaske	Manchester	Delaware	143 4/8	2002
Jack Kalstrur	Council Bluffs	Pottawattamie	150 5/8	2002	Dean Dempster	Delhi	Delaware	143 4/8	2002
Jerry Newman	Webster City	Hamilton	150 3/8	2002	Curtis Sabers	Marion	Jones	143 3/8	2002
Tyler Tisue	Bettendorf	Scott	150 2/8	2002	Dan Goeke	West Point	Des Moines	143 2/8	2001
Ron Sperfslage	Manchester	Delaware	150 2/8	2002	Jeff Burkley	Lone Tree	Franklin	143	2001
Herbert Morley	Elkader	Clayton	150 1/8	2002	Tom Weidenbacher	Dubuque	Jackson	142 6/8	1992
Mark Webb	Decorah	Winneshiek	150	2001	Jerry Rouse	Lucas	Iowa	142 6/8	2002
Daniel Houselog	Dubuque	Dubuque	149 6/8	2002	Steve Conner	Creston	Union	142 4/8	2002
Nathan Hill	Ames	Story	149 5/8	2002	Bill Barringer	Stuart	Guthrie	142 4/8	2002
Roger Graden	Story City	Boone	149 4/8	2002	Don Mealey	Norwalk	Clarke	142 4/8	2001
Mike Hoffman	Centerville	Appanoose	149 4/8	2001	Steve Olson	Cedar Rapids	Linn	142 3/8	2002
Kurt Chizek	Belle Plaine	Iowa	149 2/8	2002	Rob Downard	Indianola	Decatur	142 3/8	2002
Rusty Fowler	Sioux City	Woodbury	149 2/8	2002	Dan Sorem	Gladbrook	Marshall	142 3/8	2001
Daniel Kauffman	Wapello	Louisa	148 7/8	1996	Steve Joslin	Johnston	Jefferson	142 2/8	2002
Jim Smith	Mount Pleasant	Henry	148 6/8	2002	Caleb Holtz	Muscatine	Muscatine	142 2/8	2002
Mike Peterson	Waukon	Allamakee	148 6/8	2002	Todd Geerts	New Hampton	Chickasaw	142 2/8	2002
Scott R McCaulley	Webster City	Hamilton	148 5/8	2002	L Brian Schluster	Dyersville	Clayton	142 2/8	2002
Mike Wells	Sigourney	Keokuk	148 3/8	2002	Tom Weidenbacher	Dubuque	Jackson	142 1/8	1991
Todd Reese	Norwalk	Warren	148 2/8	2003	Brent Schnetter	Spirit Lake	Buena Vista	142 1/8	1999
Waldon Johnson	Cresco	Winneshiek	148	2002	Dan Crossmon	Bloomfield	Jefferson	141 7/8	2002
Kenneth Eschbach	Grand Mound	Clinton	148	2002	Scott Boswell	Davis City	Decatur	141 7/8	2001
Steve Snow	Leon	Decatur	147 4/8	2001	Blayne Medema	Cedar Rapids	Clayton	141 6/8	2002
Lawayne A Luers	Urbandale	Polk	147 3/8	2001	David A Markham	What Cheer	Iowa	141 5/8	2002
Tim J Quandahl	Decorah	Winneshiek	147 3/8	2002	Rick Piel	Creston	Union	141 2/8	2002
Craig Ruffer	Monticello	Johnson	147 3/8	2001	Terry White	Nashua	Chickasaw	141 2/8	2002
Rob Kovacevich	Centerville	Clarke	147 3/8		Dan Flammang	Lawton	Woodbury	141 2/8	2001



Name	City	County Taken	Total Score	Year
Rod Wing	Carlisle	Warren	136 7/8	2002
Steve Snow	Leon	Decatur	136 5/8	2001
Shane Bork	Sioux City	Woodbury	136 5/8	2002
Jim Fees	Des Moines	Madison	136	2002
Shawn Petersen	Clinton	Clinton	136	2000
Mike Armstrong	Atlantic	Audubon	136 3/8	2002
Dan Shafranek	Sigourney	Keokuk	136 1/8	2002
Jeff Brink	Waukon	Allamakee	135 7/8	2002
Patrick Kupka	Waterloo	Delaware	135 6/8	2002
Wade M. Johnson	Urbana	Iowa	135 5/8	2002
Rick Rundel	Traer	Tama	135 5/8	2002
Paul Jindrich	Muscatine	Muscatine	135 4/8	2002
Thad DeMoss	Albia	Marion	135 4/8	2002
Craig R. Black	Eldridge	Clinton	135 3/8	2002
Adrian Dickey	Packwood	Jefferson	135 3/8	2002
Forrest Goodman	Ames	Winneshiek	135 3/8	2002
Denny Koopman	Le Mars	Woodbury	135 3/8	2002
Richard Albright	Washington	Washington	135 3/8	1999
Glen Wilson	Indianola	Warren	135 2/8	2002
Darle Myers	Lehigh	Webster	135 2/8	2002
Jon Tharp	West Point	Van Buren	135 2/8	2002
Chris Miller	Dubuque	Dubuque	135 2/8	2002
Michael G. Budde	Bellevue	Dubuque	135 1/8	2002
Nick Ginther	Ames	Clarke	135	2002

### MUZZLELOADER, NON-TYPICAL

Minimum Qualifying Score - 170 pts.

Steve Snell	Urbandale	Polk	199 5/8	2002
Bill Sickels	Mount Ayr	Ringgold	192 6/8	2003
Ryan M. Beeson	Riverside	Washington	191 1/8	2001
Travis Becker	Riverside	Washington	189 1/8	2002
Richard E. Floss	Baxter	Jasper	188 5/8	2001
Tyler Vorwald		Dubuque	185	2002
Nick Adkins	Council Bluffs	Western	185	2000

### MUZZLELOADER, TYPICAL

Minimum Qualifying Score - 150 pts.

*Ryan Scott	Ottumwa	Wapello	184 1/8	2000
*Marlon Vander Heiden	New Liberty	Clinton	183 7/8	2003
Gerald Miller	West Union	Fayette	171 1/8	2001
Scott Templeton	Blue Grass	Scott	170	2001
Luke Miller	New Virginia	Clarke	164 1/8	2003
Timothy L. Waters	Albia	Monroe	163 2/8	1996
Todd Ross	Runnells	Marion	161 5/8	2002
Eric Aleksich	Lehigh	Webster	161 1/8	2002
Sheldon Nisly	Kalona	Washington	159 2/8	2002
Duane Hayes	Washington	Washington	157 3/8	2002
Jon Shekleton	New Hampton	Chickasaw	156 7/8	2002
Mark Fish	Villisca	Montgomery	156 7/8	2001
Kevin Burge	Hamburg	Fremont	156 6/8	2002
Blake McPherran	Unionville	Appanoose	156 3/8	2002
Robert M. Smith	Marshalltown	Marshall	155 5/8	2002
Charles Bach	Center Point	Linn	155	2003
Galen .. Kuper	Scotch Grove	Jones	152 6/8	2002
Dennis Sorensen	Bondurant	Marion	152	2001
Michael King	Mount Ayr	Ringgold	151 6/8	2002
Bob Bellmer	Wellman	Washington	151 1/8	2003
Dan Holven	Waterloo	Hardin	150 6/8	2002

### PISTOL, TYPICAL

Minimum Qualifying Score - 170 pts.

*George Davis Jr.	Allerton	Wayne	160 4/8	2002
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### SHOTGUN, NON-TYPICAL

Minimum Qualifying Score - 170 pts.

*Jack Bell	St. Berlington	Des Moines	237 7/8	2002
Dennis Arnold	Chariton	Lucas	225 1/8	2000
Jack J. Pershy	Corydon	Wayne	210 7/8	2002
Andrew Meimann	Nevada	Story	203 1/8	2002
Mike Lichty	LaPorte City	Black Hawk	197 3/8	2002
Wayne M. Harvey	Dubuque	Jackson	196 6/8	2002
Eric Fabor	Belle Plaine	Monroe	195 2/8	2002
Kyle S. Koltes	Sherrill	Dubuque	194 1/8	2002
Joey Hidlebaugh	Searsboro	Monroe	191 3/8	2002
Virgil Johnson	Moorhead	Monona	190 5/8	1996
Tim Cummings	Clermont	Fayette	190 1/8	2002
Mike Feehan	Melrose	Monroe	189 4/8	2001
Marty Bolin	Drakesville	Davis	187 2/8	2000
Don Storjohann	Garwin	Tama	185 4/8	2001
Stewart Nelson	Ames	Boone	183 4/8	2002
Matt Whistler	Van Wert	Clarke	181 4/8	2000
David J. Wilke	Council Bluffs	Pottawattamie	181	2001
Dwayne Hettinger	Dundee	Delaware	181	1991
Mike Fee	Oskaloosa	Marion	180 1/8	2002
Jake Becker	West Des Moines	Ringgold	179 1/8	2002
Curt Weiss	Muscatine	Des Moines	179 1/8	2002
Bernell Dierson	Lansing	Allamakee	179 1/8	2002
Jeremy Beeson	Correctionville	Woodbury	178 2/8	1998
Mike Sergio	LaMotte	Wapello	177 3/8	1980
Raymond L. White	Pleasantville	Marion	175 7/8	2001
Roger Jackson	Johnston	Clarke	175 6/8	1989
William J. Scott	Moscow	Muscatine	175 5/8	2002
Kurt Schult	Tripoli	Bremer	175 5/8	2000
Dale Ford	De Witt	Warren	175 5/8	2001
Troy Westrum	Stratford	Webster	174 6/8	2001
Chad Woods	Cedar Rapids	Union	174 5/8	1998
John R. Hoppe	Amana	Iowa	174 4/8	2001
Ed Hoover	Ionia	Chickasaw	174 3/8	2000
Larry Hixson	Brighton	Jefferson	173 6/8	2001
Jon C. Kerns	Oelwein	Fayette	173 3/8	2002
Robert Jirontek		Van Buren	173 3/8	2002
Matthew Koch	Peosta	Jackson	173 1/8	1991
Howard Coffman	Waukee	Madison	171 3/8	2002
Timothy A. Gray	Nodaway	Adams	171 1/8	2002
Doug Marlow	Burt	Kossuth	170 4/8	1968
Rex Dewey	Urbandale	Decatur	170 2/8	1993
Ronnie McHaugh	Magnolia	Harrison	170 2/8	1987
Curt Telin	Creston	Union	170 1/8	2002
Jeff DeRonde	Chariton	Lucas	157 6/8	2002

### SHOTGUN, TYPICAL

Minimum Qualifying Score - 150 pts.

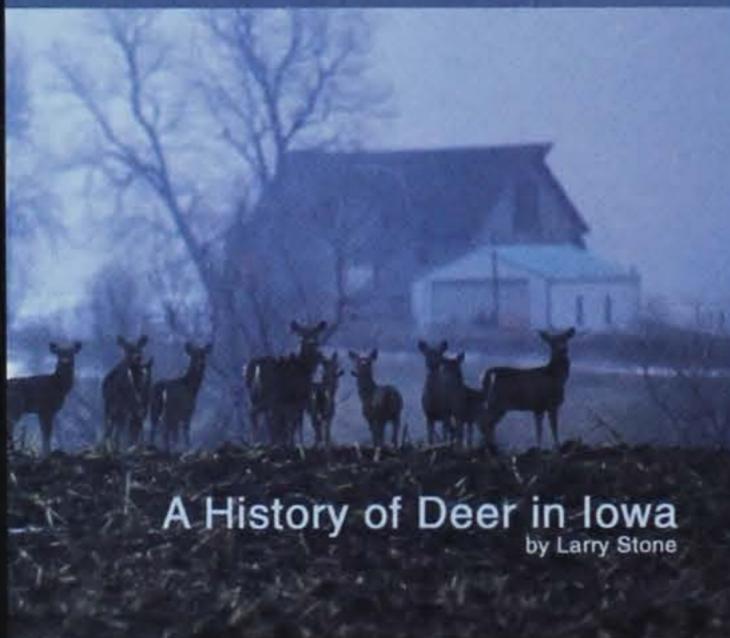
Mike Feehan	Melrose	Monroe	187 1/8	2001
Ryan Scott	Ottumwa	Wapello	184 1/8	2000
Brad A. Person	Adel	Dallas	183 2/8	2002
Kevin Harrison	Ainsworth	Washington	176 6/8	2002
Chuck Bingham	Pleasantville	Marion	176	2000
Bryan Carman	Woodward	Dallas	175 6/8	2002
Larry Davis	Chariton	Lucas	175 2/8	2002
Mike Boswell	Canyon	Decatur	174 7/8	1976
Kris Shondel	Centerville	Appanoose	171 3/8	2002
Thomas J. Straka	Peosta	Clinton	171	1994
Kenneth Veach	Zwingle	Jackson	171	1986
Nathan Rasko	Indianola	Warren	170 7/8	2002
Vince Feehan	Melrose	Monroe	170 2/8	2001
Don Mork	Elkader	Clayton	170 2/8	2000
Paul K. Adix	Ogden	Boone	170 1/8	2002



Name	City	County Taken	Total Score	Year	Name	City	County Taken	Total Score	Year
Don J. Hudgens	Jeddo, MI	Lucas	156 4/8	2001	Jay McWherter	Cedar Rapids	Madison	152 7/8	2002
Donald J. Warner	Baxter	Jasper	156 2/8	2002	Chad Johnson	Springville	Jackson	152 5/8	2002
Cody Huebner	Fort Madison	Lee	156 2/8	2002	Pat Eastlick	Albia	Monroe	152 4/8	2002
Donald Etringer	Fairbank	Clayton	156 2/8	2002	Thomas W. Marsh	Bonaparte	Van Buren	152 4/8	2002
Eric Marsh	Villisca	Taylor	156 1/8	2001	Tom Werner	Murray	Clarke	152 3/8	1991
Jerry D. Uker	Unionville, MO	Lucas	156	2002	Timothy A. Gray	Nodaway	Adams	152 1/8	1989
Brian Morrow	Ottumwa	Wapello	156	2002	Karl Wendt	Hopkinton	Delaware	152 1/8	2002
Tyler Weltz	Colo		155 6/8	2002	Doug Ben	Durango	Clayton	152	2002
Gary Shrader	Charles City	Floyd	155 6/8	2000	Terry Cozad	Weldon	Clarke	152	2002
Dave Olson	Maquoketa	Jackson	155 4/8	2001	Kenny McBride	Sac City	Decatur	152	1990
Don Hotovec	Pleasantville	Warren	155 4/8	2002	Austen Kraus	Monticello	Jones	151 5/8	2002
Heath DeForest	Pleasantville	Monroe	155 1/8	2002	Gary Klein	Cedar Rapids	Linn	151 5/8	2002
Chris Cavin	Blockton	Taylor	155 1/8	2002	Doug Seyb	Donnellson	Lee	151 4/8	2001
David Green	Jefferson	Greene	155 1/8		Mark Nienkark	Maquoketa	Jackson	151 4/8	2002
Keith Oberfoell	Dubuque	Allamakee	155	2002	Steven Grace	Diagonal	Ringgold	151 2/8	2000
Brian Deppe	Bellevue	Jackson	154 7/8	2002	Michael Blankenship	Sullivan	Jackson	151 2/8	2002
Paul Gee	Russell	Lucas	154 6/8	2002	David Johnston Jr.	Melcher	Marion	151 1/8	2002
Dave Ahlberg	Des Moines	Taylor	154 4/8	2002	Steve Cummings	Sabula	Jackson	150 7/8	2001
Darren Hansen	Oxford Junction	Clinton	154 1/8	2002	Robert Miner	Des Moines	Clarke	150 7/8	2001
Justin M. Halfhill	Dubuque	Dubuque	154	2002	Elieser Colon	Ottumwa	Wapello	150 7/8	2002
Randy Seibert	Linden	Dallas	154	2002	David L. Klobnak	Hamilton	Monroe	150 6/8	2001
Monte J. Egli	Clare	Webster	154	2002	Ronnie K. Birdsall	Mondamin	Hamilton	150 6/8	1991
James Kremer	Cascade	Dubuque	153 7/8	2002	Kenny Klein	Sherrill	Dubuque	150 6/8	2002
Greg Smith	Bonaparte	Van Buren	153 7/8	2002	Dan Kovacevich	Rathbun	Appanoose	150 5/8	2002
Jayson Harper	Keswick	Keokuk	153 6/8	2002	Jim Koboldt	Earlham	Madison	150 3/8	2002
Dennis Jipsen	Lewis	Montgomery	153 4/8	2002	Pat Eastlick	Albia	Monroe	150 3/8	2002
James Hatch	Winterset	Madison	153 3/8	1987	Mike Raue	Vinton	Van Buren	150 2/8	2002
Craig Arduser	Monticello	Jones	153 3/8	2002	Jerry Whitehurst	Ollie	Keokuk	150 2/8	1999
Don Biermann	Peosta	Dubuque	153 3/8	2002	Chad Achenbach	Oakland	Pottawattamie	150 1/8	2000
Mark Mahr	Spring Grove	Allamakee	153 3/8	1989	Nick Heiar	Bellevue	Jackson	150 1/8	2002
Nick Keith	Eldora	Hardin	153	2002	Dwayne Hettinger	Dundee	Delaware	150 1/8	2001
Trent Gravel	Center Junction	Jones	152 7/8	2001	Mark Mahr	Spring Grove	Allamakee	150	1996
Jarrett Beeson	Correctionville	Woodbury	152 7/8	2001					

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# All-Time TOP 10 RECORD RACKS

Name	City	County Taken	Year	Total Score
<b>SHOTGUN, TYPICAL</b>				
Harold Dickman, Sr.	Woodbine	Harrison	1964	200 2/8
Michael A. Hinzman	Guttenburg	Clayton	2000	200
Wayne A. Bills	Des Moines	Hamilton	1974	199 5/8
Dean Wetzel	Guthrie Center	Guthrie	1998	199 3/8
Kenneth Tilford	Lamoni	Decatur	1985	198 1/8
Michael R. Edle	Danville	Des Moines	1989	196 4/8
George L. Ross	Ottumwa	Wapello	1969	195 1/8
Forest N. Richardson	New Virginia	Warren	1989	194 3/8
W. Eugene Ziegrowsky	Washington	Van Buren	1997	192 7/8
John Chase	Glenwood	Mills	1997	192 2/8

Name	City	County Taken	Year	Total Score
<b>MUZZLELOADER, TYPICAL</b>				
*Ryan Scott	Ottumwa	Wapello	2000	184 1/8
*Marlon Vander Heiden	New Liberty	Clinton	2003	183 7/8
Jerry W. Conover	Sioux City	Monona	1990	182 7/8
Blaine Davis	Waverly	Bremer	2000	179 1/8
Ron Murray	Missouri Valley	Harrison	1998	179 1/8
Clark Corbin	Minneota	Crawford	2000	178 3/8
Nate Ames	Keokuk	Lee	2001	176 4/8
Joel Ash	Ann Arbor, MI	Appanoose	2001	173 7/8
John Russell	Blue Grass	Muscatine	1997	172 4/8
Ric Bishop	Eldridge	Keokuk	1997	172 1/8

Name	City	County Taken	Year	Total Score
<b>PISTOL, TYPICAL</b>				
William H. Fahrenkrog	Davenport	Scott	1998	171 4/8
Don Walker	Burlington	Des Moines	1998	167 4/8
Dave Hotz	Cedar Rapids	Louisa	1998	161
*George Davis Jr.	Allerton	Wayne	2002	160 4/8
Kendal Pommer	Otho	Webster	2000	159 4/8
Darle Meyers	Lehigh	Webster	2000	157 3/8

Name	City	County Taken	Year	Total Score
<b>BOW, TYPICAL</b>				
Lloyd Goad	Knoxville	Monroe	1962	197 6/8
Robert Miller	Wyoming	Jones	1977	194 2/8
Steven E. Tyer	North Liberty	Johnson	1994	194
Roy Allison	Knoxville	Monroe	1995	193 5/8
Jeffery L. Whisker	Clinton	Scott	1993	191
Richard B. Swin	Des Moines	Polk	1981	190 5/8
Alan Bloodgood	Prole	Warren	2000	190 1/8
Randy Petersburg	Waukon	Allamakee	1996	189 1/8
Kevin Peterson	Mediapolis	Des Moines	1989	188 1/8
Dave Zima	Blair	Monona	1996	186 4/8

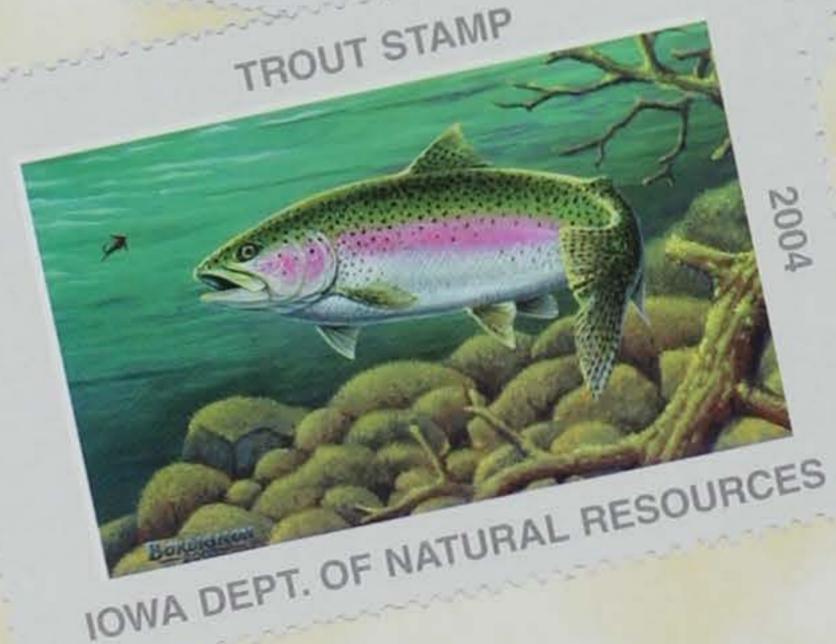
Name	City	County Taken	Year	Total Score
<b>SHOTGUN, NON-TYPICAL</b>				
Larry Raveling	Emmetsburg	Clay	1973	282
Lyle Spitznogle	Wapello	Louisa	1982	258 2/8
David Mandersheid	Welton	Jackson	1977	256 7/8
Carroll Johnson	Moorhead	Monona	1968	256 2/8
Larry J. Caldwell	Des Moines	Warren	1990	248 6/8
Don Boucher	Albian	Marshall	1961	245 3/8
Carl Wenke	Cedar Rapids	Lee	1972	245
Robert Wonderlich	Oskaloosa	Monroe	1970	244 6/8
Donny Grant	Turin	Monona	1996	240
*Jack Bell	St. Berlington	Des Moines	2002	237 7/8

Name	City	County Taken	Year	Total Score
<b>MUZZLELOADER, NON-TYPICAL</b>				
Richard Muff	Clarinda	Taylor	2000	214 3/8
Mike Moody	Hamburg	Fremont	1990	210 2/8
Alan Funk	Scotch Grove	Van Buren	2000	209 5/8
Vincent P. Jauron	Harlan	Monona	1990	209 1/8
Daniel Kauffman	Wapello	Louisa	1984	205 3/8
Jeff Tussey	Creston	Union	1995	205
*Travis Baker	Boone	Boone	2000	203 4/8
Jeremy Williams	Clarinda	Page	1998	202 5/8
Denny Baum	Ottumwa	Wapello	1990	202 1/8
Mike Garber	Eldon	Wapello	1996	200 6/8

Name	City	County Taken	Year	Total Score
<b>PISTOL, NON-TYPICAL</b>				
Bob C. Garside	Greenfield	Adair	1998	211 5/8
Bill Fahrenkrog	Davenport	Scott	2000	206 3/8
David A. Arnold	Des Moines	Mahaska	2000	178 7/8
Jim C. DeFosse	Mediapolis	Des Moines	1999	170 2/8

Name	City	County Taken	Year	Total Score
<b>BOW, NON-TYPICAL</b>				
Dave Gordon	Waukon	Allamakee	2000	240 4/8
Rick L. Dye	Knoxville	Warren	2000	240 2/8
*Harlan Swehla	Cedar Rapids	Des Moines	2002	237 6/8
Larry V. Zach	Ankeny	Monroe	2000	237 3/8
Russ Clarken	Desoto	Dallas	1994	236 7/8
Mike Hobart	Prole	Madison	1993	229 5/8
Terry M. Long	Des Moines	Polk	1995	229 4/8
Jerry L. Wells	Altoona	Madison	2001	227 3/8
Jack Schuler Jr.	Indianola	Decatur	1995	227
Jerry M. Monson	Clear Lake	Cerro Gordo	1977	222 1/8

# 2004 Stamp Designs



## the Artists

### Dietmar Krumrey

Nationally known artist Dietmar Krumrey was selected to design the 2004 Iowa Migratory Game Bird Stamp. The scene features a pair of wood ducks. Known for his extensive attention to detail and his realistic approach, the German-born artist once worked for Hallmark. He currently freelances out of his childhood town of Manistique, Mich.

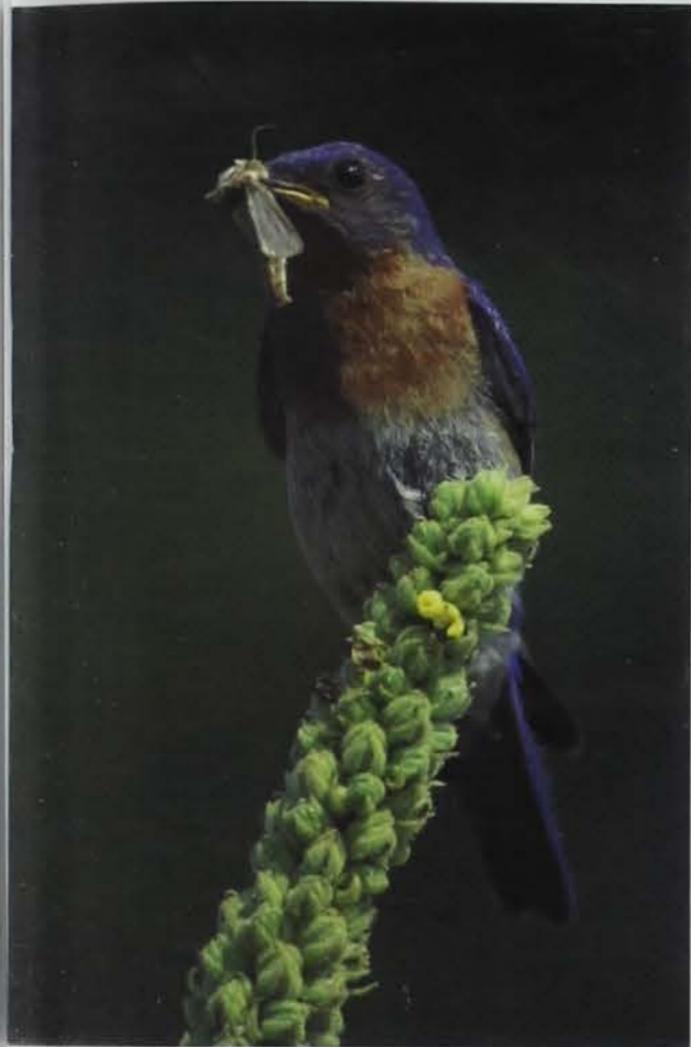
Prints can be ordered through Wilderness Art, [www.wildernessart.com](http://www.wildernessart.com), 8559 W 2nd St., Manistique, Mich., 49854; (906) 341-5263.

### Greg Bordignon

No stranger to the Iowa wildlife art scene or state habitat stamp artwork, Greg Bordignon designed both the Habitat Stamp and the Trout Stamp for 2004. An Illinois native who moved to the Cedar Rapids area in 1977, Bordignon is an avid angler and hunter who is involved in conservation organizations throughout the Midwest. This year's Habitat Stamp depicts pheasants on a snowy country road. For the Trout Stamp, Bordignon painted rainbow trout against a rocky stream bed.

A limited number of prints are available through Bordignon Ink., [www.bordignonink.com](http://www.bordignonink.com), or at 630 Grand Court, Robins, Iowa 52328; (319) 743-0874.

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# MAQUOKETA CAVES

## DISCOVERING A STATE PARK

Article by Jim Magirl ♦ Photos by Clay Smith

**M**aquoketa Caves has always been a place of enchantment and mystery. Those with any ties or interest in the state park have long-wondered about its history, the mysteries of the rock formations, even its earliest visitors.

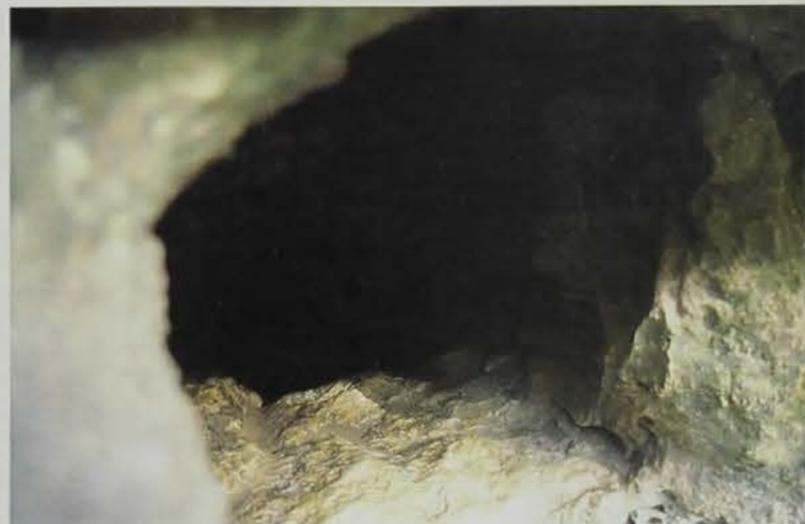
While we are dependant on archeologists to chronicle the prehistoric visitors that first came here thousands of years ago, more recent history has provided insight about the life and times of early settlers to Jackson County. The following excerpt from the book "The History of Jackson County," tells the story of Joshua

Beer and David Scott and their discovery of Maquoketa Caves.

Beer and Scott and their families arrived in the area in 1837. They have long been credited as the first non-Native Americans to have encountered Maquoketa Caves. This is their abbreviated story, in Beer's own words.

"You know that Scott and I the first year we lived in Iowa, had to depend almost

entirely upon our rifles for the subsistence of our families. In the hunting season, he would come to my house, or I would go to his, and we would start together for a ten-days' hunt. On the occasion of the discovery of the cave, we



started from Scott's for the heavy timber on the forks of the Maquoketa, knowing that the deer would take shelter there from the heavy snow-storm prevailing at the time. We hunted till near sundown, having hung up some five or six deer during the day.

"Concluding to select a camping-ground, we started up a ravine that led from the Maquoketa River, and had not proceeded far when we struck the trail of ten or a dozen deer. Moving cautiously, we were able to drop two of the herd and, the bluffs on either side being so steep the deer could not ascend them we noticed the ravine seemed to terminate in what appeared to be a bridge of rock. There seemed to be no chance for the deer to escape save by facing around and running past us, and we were just congratulating ourselves on securing them when, to our surprise, they all at once disappeared as completely as if the ground had opened and swallowed them. Upon investigation we found that our prey had taken refuge in a cave. We made our camp-fire in the mouth of the cave, in order to prevent our game from escaping.

The hunters set out after supper to find the two fallen deer, but it wasn't long before they ran into trouble. Coal-black darkness made it difficult for the hunters to find the carcasses. It didn't, however, hamper a panther from finding them. Following a vicious



Venture inside any one of the Maquoketa caves (opposite page) — breathe in that damp, chilly, musty air— and you can literally feel the mystery and wonder early settlers Joshua Beer and David Scott must have felt when they first encountered the grottos.

battle, which left the panther dead and both dog and man scratched and bleeding, the search was abandoned until morning.

"When daylight appeared, our hopes of capturing the deer were blasted by the discovery that there was an outlet to the cave through which they had escaped. Our hunt was a short one. Scott

was stiff and sore from the effects of the fight with the panther, and could not travel very well; so we concluded to go home." -Anonymous, History of Jackson County, (Chicago: Western Historical Co.), 1879

Although the Maquoketa Caves State Park of today may not be the untamed wild Beer and

# PARKS PROFILE

Scott encountered generations ago, it is still a place of wonder and mystery. You can expect to see wildlife. Deer and raccoons are plentiful, but, other than an occasional report of a bobcat, the park has been panther-free since the days of Scott and Beer.

But the reason people still flock to the park is the caves. There are at least 13 of them, in all sizes and shapes, from Hernando's Hideaway to Rainy Day, and from Widemouth to Ice Cave. They aren't all the result of water dissolving limestone. Mechanical

caves are the result of large rocks sliding down the cliffs. Fat Man's Misery and Tall Man's Misery are prime examples of this type of cave.

These places seem to have some sort of magical attraction,

turning us all into kids when we see them. It must bring out the explorer in us. Once inside these dark places, we become explorers, like Lewis and Clark, or in this case, Scott and Beer. We never know just what we'll encounter around the next corner. Was that a growl?

The park has nearly all the amenities you would expect to find in your typical state park. It has picnic areas and shelters, a campground, playground equipment and many other features. Because the park is very popular with youth groups, there are two youth group camping sites that may be reserved. The main difference from



If spelunking is not your game, there are plenty of other opportunities to experience Maquoketa Caves State Park. Try

a hike along the six miles of trails (above), which winds past such marvels as the "Natural Bridge" hovering 50 feet above Raccoon Creek,

and the 17-ton "Balancing Rock."

Explore deep into the cool dampness of the surrounding timber (right), or simply soak up the montage of fall foliage.



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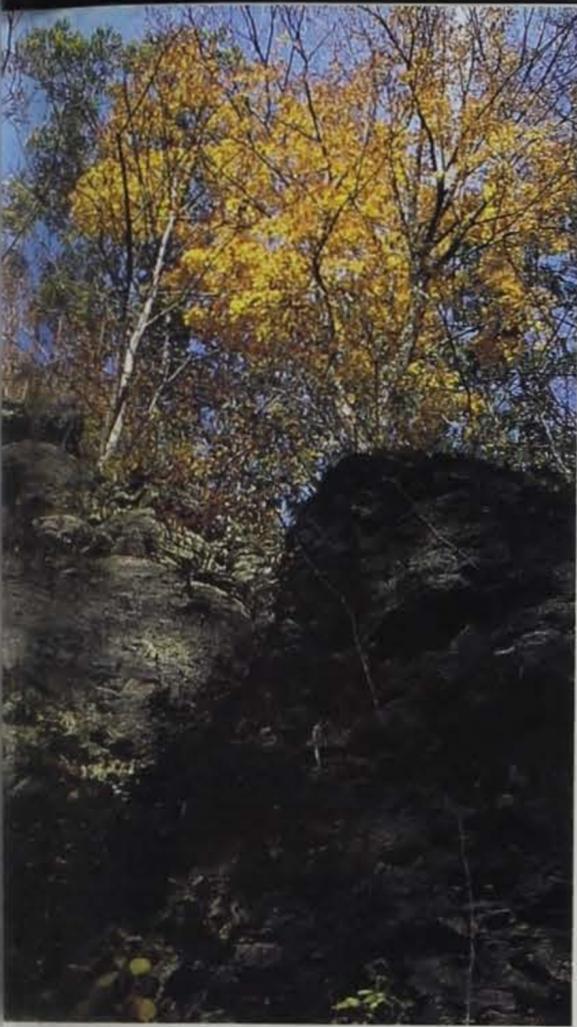
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many other state parks is that Maquoketa Caves has no recreational water opportunities to offer. Raccoon Creek, the main

body of water in the park, is normally only a few inches deep. Instead of a dip in the lake, visitors can cool off with a trek through a cave, where temperatures hover in the middle 50s.

Many visitors have returned with their children and grandchildren to introduce the next generation to the place that captured their imagination when they first visited. Some are seeing the park for the first time, and hopefully, beginning a similar tradition. Everyone has the option to enjoy the hiking trails and “walk” through the larger caves, or get down and dirty and “crawl” through the smaller ones. Even if

you’re mobility impaired, or just can’t get around like you used to, the Visitor Center has a short video that allows you to see some of the caves for yourself. It is open on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day through Labor Day and has a lot of information about the history of the park.

Whatever your reasons, come and see the wonder that is Maquoketa Caves State Park. Be sure to bring flashlights, and, be sure to keep an eye out for panthers.

*Jim Magirl is the park ranger at Maquoketa Caves State Park.*

## MAQUOKETA CAVES AT A GLANCE

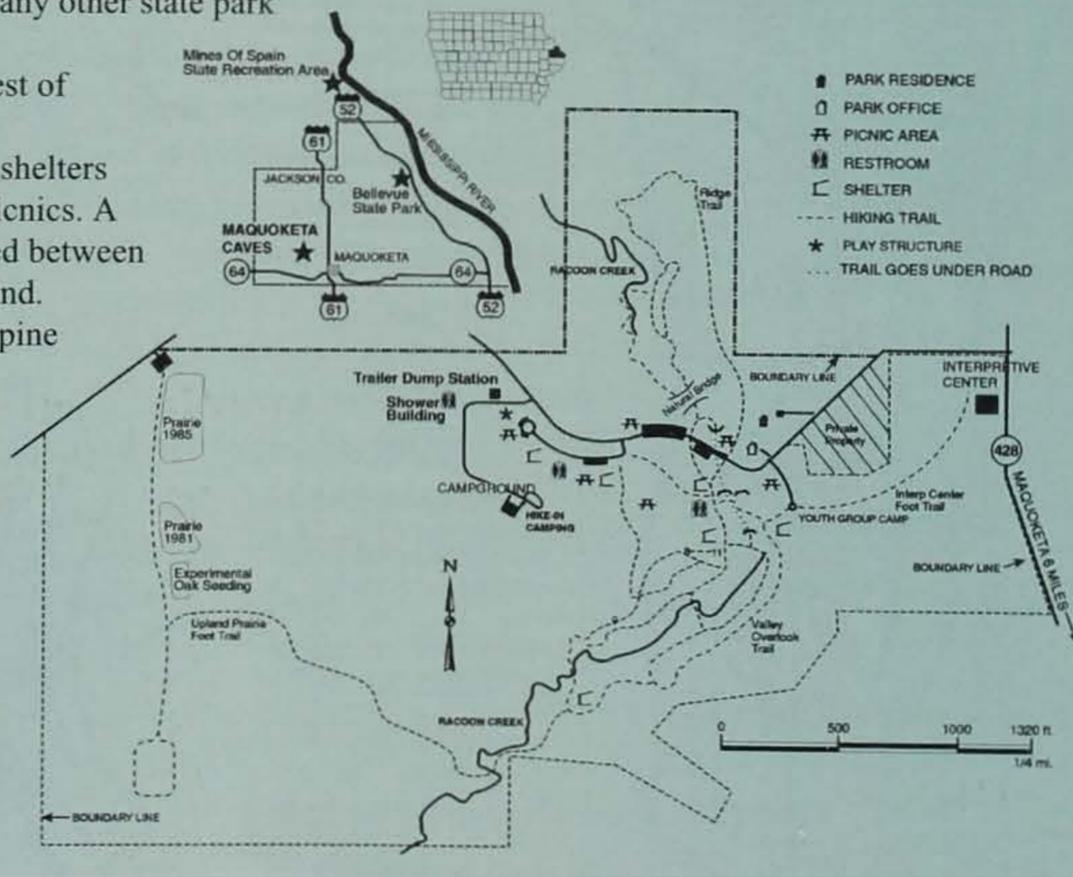
**GENERAL INFORMATION:** Settlers discovered the caves in the 1830s, since which time many artifacts such as pottery and tools have been found in the area. The park, linked by a system of trails and cave formations, has more caves than any other state park in Iowa.

**LOCATION:** Six miles southwest of Maquoketa in Jackson County.

**PICNICKING:** Two reservable shelters provide the perfect scenery for picnics. A children’s play structure is located between the picnic area and the campground.

**CAMPING:** Nestled among the pine trees are 28 campsites, 18 of which are electric. A modern shower facility is also available.

**TRAILS:** The six miles of trails lead hikers around the campground past such highlights as the “Natural Bridge,” which stands nearly 50 feet above Raccoon Creek, and the 17-ton “Balanced Rock.” Hikers can also explore the restored prairie on the western end of the park.



## From Timber To Table: Part 2

Article by AJay Winter and Al Foster

This year marks the 50th anniversary of modern deer hunting in Iowa, and much has changed in that relatively short period of time.

In 1953, for example, just 4,000 deer were harvested that first hunting season. Today, harvest estimates have exceeded 100,000 every year since 1996, reaching an all-time high of 140,490 last year. Hunter numbers have also grown from

roughly 4,000 a half-century ago to an estimated 180,000 last year.

In the early days, deer hunting was done mostly for subsistence. Many families relied on venison and other wild game to put meat on the table. Although that is not necessarily the case these days, many hunters make venison a healthy part of their regular diet, and some even prefer it over domestic meats.

Like any wild meat, proper game care, processing and preparation make a big difference in whether your venison dinner is tasty or barely edible. The first part of this series (September/October 2003) focused on the importance of making a clean, quick kill and proper field dressing afterwards. This installment takes a look at skinning, deboning and packaging the final product.

### STEP ONE

Although it may not seem like it, finding a comfortable location to process the deer is an important first step. You'll want a place where you can hang the deer at a comfortable

### TOOLS CHECKLIST

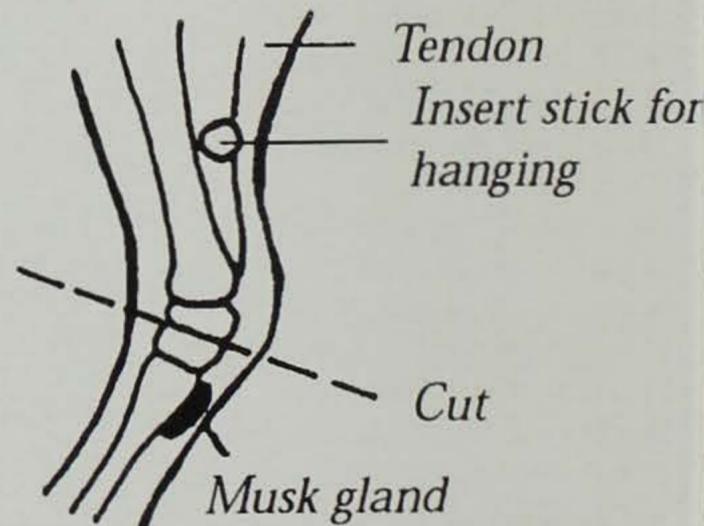
- ✓ Sharp Knife
- ✓ 50 freezer bags
- ✓ Freezer paper
- ✓ Large cutting surface (cutting board)
- ✓ Two large pieces of cardboard or plastic to protect the floor under the deer
- ✓ Permanent marker
- ✓ Masking tape

FIGURE 1: Hanging and cooling a deer



working height, and has a table or bench to debone the meat. Finding a place with a heat source is even better. Being comfortable will help you stay focused on the task at hand.

FIGURE 2: Removing the leg at the knee joint.



## STEP TWO

Getting the deer hung is the next step. Hanging helps keep the meat clean and allows the carcass to cool quicker, both important factors in meat quality (see Figure 1).

A inexpensive pulley device, such as a block and tackle, is the easiest and most efficient way to hang a deer. A sturdy rope will work, but a pulley device allows you to lift the deer off the floor with minimal effort. If you hang it from the hind legs (my preference), run a short rope through an incision made between the tendon and the leg bone above the knee joint and attach it to the pulley system. Hoist the deer to a comfortable working height. Place a piece of cardboard or

FIGURE 3: Initial skinning cuts



## SKINNING TIPS

Many fur buyers will purchase deer hides if they are in relatively good condition. If you plan to sell the hide, try to use your knife as little as possible. If you skin the deer within a few hours after the kill, the hide will come off much easier. In that case, you can often pull the skin off with your hands. If you do use a knife, be careful not to score the hide and avoid cutting hair, which will dull a knife quickly. Instead, push your knife under the hide and toward the hair.

plastic under the deer to make clean-up afterwards quicker and easier.

The question, now, comes to aging the meat. Some hunters contend aging the deer makes for a better tasting product; others prefer to process and package the meat as soon as possible. The decision is yours, but if you do decide to age the meat, do your research on proper aging temperature and duration.

## STEP THREE

If you didn't do it in the field, remove all four legs of the deer at the knee joint (or hock) with a knife (see Figure 2).

## STEP FOUR

Remove the skin. This is not as hard as it sounds. Deer have a membrane between the skin and muscle, allowing the two to be separated easily.

FIGURE 4: Removing the skin



Begin by cutting the skin from one back leg to the other. Cut each front leg from the knee joint toward the body. Make a cut from the field dressing incision to

All illustrations reprinted with permission from *So You Got A Deer*, authored by Scott Craven and Dennis Buege and published by the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

# CONSERVATION 101

## PACKAGING TIPS

Nothing ruins meat like freezer burn. Proper packaging will determine whether your frozen venison lasts weeks, months or a year or more.

✓ Trim as much fat as possible before freezing. Fat will become rancid before the meat does.

✓ Package and freeze as soon as the cuts are made.

✓ Use wrapping material that prevents moisture and air from reaching the meat. Vacuum sealers are the most effective. Otherwise, double wrap the meat, first in plastic wrap to create a vapor barrier, followed by a freezer bag or freezer paper to protect the inner wrap from puncture. Squeeze out any trapped air before freezing.

✓ Generally, venison will last up to a year in the freezer if packaged properly; more than a year if frozen in a vacuum-sealed bag. A deep freeze tends to keep meat fresh longer than a refrigerator freezer (make sure you follow current regulations on possessing game after the season).

✓ Grinding your own burger allows you to prepare it on your own schedule. Since venison is very lean, you can add up to 50 percent beef or pork fat for flavor and moisture.

✓ Label all packages with the date and contents.

the head, and around the neck (see Figure 3). Keep in mind, cutting the backside of the legs makes skin removal easier.

Pull the skin from the tail toward the head (see Figure 4). Use your knife to aid in the removal only if needed. When you reach the head of the deer, cut through the neck to remove the head and hide.

Finding stray hair on a venison steak or roast can spoil an otherwise fine dinner. Therefore, it is important to remove any hair that remain on the carcass. A stiff brush, sticky tape or small propane torch works well.

## STEP FIVE

Prepare a place to debone and trim meat. It should be clean and spacious. Unroll freezer paper across the surface of the bench or countertop and secure it with masking tape. Then place your cutting board on the paper for a clean work surface.

## STEP SIX

The front legs are connected to the body by a shoulder blade. They can be easily removed by starting under the shoulder blade and cutting through from the bottom to the top.

Front shoulders can be used for stew meat, roasts, or ground into burger or sausage. Save larger cuts for roasts, and smaller chunks and trim material for stew meat or ground burger. Make a separate pile for each.

## STEP SEVEN

The tenderloins are, as the name implies, the most tender and often most coveted part of the deer. They are smaller cuts located inside the body cavity, directly over the stomach. They are easily removed by cutting under the meat next to the bone, gently pulling on the fillets as you go. A prime cut, they are great for the grill, either whole or cut into medallions.

## STEP EIGHT

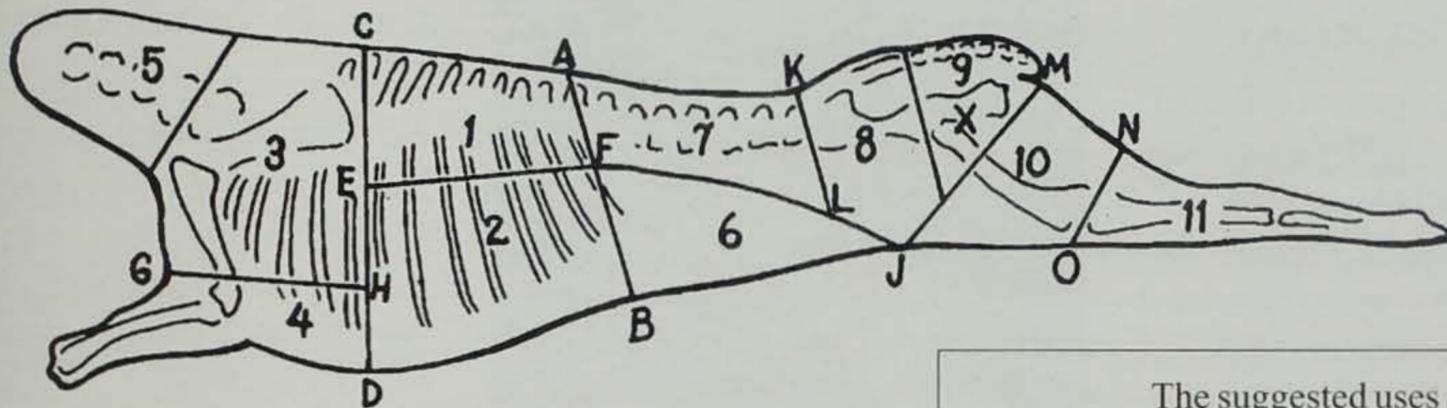
The loins, or backstraps, are located on the outer surface of the body cavity, along each side of the backbone, running from the shoulder blade to the rump. To remove, cut from the back leg to the front leg along the backbone. Then cut from the front leg to the back leg roughly 8 inches from the middle of the back along the ribs to the bottom of your last cut. Carefully work your knife under the meat to free it from the carcass.

Loins are also tender cuts and are good for steaks or roasts. The backstraps will have a tough membrane on one side that should be removed before eating.

## STEP NINE

There is more meat between the ribs and along the neck than you may think. The ribs can be saved intact for barbecue, and the neck meat for stew, soup or small roasts. Generally, though, they are ground for burger or sausage.

## "CUTTING THE FAT" OUT OF DEER BUTCHERING



### Suggested Uses

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Rack — chops, roasts                          | 6. Flank — ground burger                |
| 2. Breast — ground burger, spareribs             | 7. Loin — loin chops                    |
| 3. Chuck — roasts                                | 8. Sirloin — roasts, steaks             |
| 4. Shank — ground burger                         | 9. Rump — roast                         |
| 5. Neck — ground burger, stew meat, small roasts | 10. Round — round steaks, ground burger |
|  | 11. Shank — ground burger               |

**R**  
**E**  
**M**  
**E**  
**M**  
**B**  
**E**  
**R**

The suggested uses at left are just that — suggestions. Any part of the deer can be ground for burger, sausage and sticks, and most larger cuts can be made into jerky or steaks. Also, you may want to cut and leave the loin (backstrap) and tenderloin whole.

### Taking Precautions Against Wildlife Diseases

For years, many hunters split their deer down the backbone, then quartered and sectioned the carcass (illustrated by the letter-to-letter cuts) to

make handling and deboning the meat simpler.

Due to concerns over wildlife diseases like chronic wasting disease, however, cutting through bone structure, especially the backbone, is no longer recommended. Hunters should also:

- ◆ wear rubber gloves when field dressing and deboning.

- ◆ minimize handling brain and spinal tissue, and avoid the lymph nodes.

- ◆ Avoid consuming brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils and lymph nodes.

- ◆ Thoroughly wash hands and instruments after field dressing or deboning.

### STEP TEN

Cut along the pelvis of the free leg to expose the ball and socket joint that connects the pelvis to the hind leg. Separate the joint with a knife by twisting the joint and cutting the connective tissue. Back legs can be cut into steaks, roasts or stew meat, or ground into burger or sausage.

There are many methods to

skin and process venison, and each person has a preferred method. I have processed my own deer for years, copying tips and tricks from several people along the way. The easiest way to learn is to watch someone who has done it before, or purchase a video that details the process.

If you skip the locker this year and opt to go it alone, I hope

these tips will make the task easier and more enjoyable.

*A Jay Winter is a training officer for the department at the Springbrook Conservation Education Center near Guthrie Center.*

# CONSERVATION UPDATE

## Clear Lake Anglers Shatter Yellow Bass Harvest Record

The open water fishing season is drawing to a close at Clear Lake, capping a record year for yellow bass harvest. Anglers harvested an estimated 227,000 yellow bass during 2003, shattering the previous record of 160,000 set in 1995.

"There was never a bad month to catch yellow bass," said Jim Wahl, fisheries biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, stationed at Clear Lake. "There were so many fish cleaned at the McIntosh Woods fish cleaning station that it would plug up once a week."

The yellow bass averaged 9 inches in length and catches of 100 fish per day were not uncommon. Wahl said anglers made numerous trips to the lake over the summer to catch this tasty, scrappy panfish.

Wahl and his staff conducted fish surveys this summer to study the yellow bass spawn, and he said the species had a record hatch this year as well. That, he said, should continue to provide good fishing opportunities for anglers and a good food base for the predators in the system. Yellow bass are the primary forage base for walleyes, muskies, northern pike and channel catfish.



Lowell Washburn

Yellow bass can be a problem in smaller lakes, where the fish can become stunted, less desirable to anglers and knock the lake's fish population out of balance. But in a larger system, like Clear Lake, they can do well. They do so well, in fact, that high harvest rates are needed to keep populations in check.

"Our walleye fishing slowed in July and August and I suspect that is because of the hatch," Wahl said. "We need to continue to have a good harvest of yellow bass to keep the good growth rates we're seeing in these fish. Without the good harvest, the chance of stunted fish increases."

As the lake freezes over and ice fishing begins, Wahl expects the yellow bass harvest bonanza to continue through the winter and he looks for another good year in 2004.

## Habitat Check-off Benefits Wildlife At No Cost To Landowners

Landowners buying grass and forb seed mixtures this spring for land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) can increase their positive impact on Iowa wildlife by enrolling in the Habitat Check-off.

The Habitat Check-off is a partnership between the Iowa Seed Growers Association, Pheasants Forever (PF) and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that shares credits from seed purchased from local seed dealers. When a landowner purchases seed from a member of the Iowa Seed Growers Association, the dealer credits 10 percent of the purchase to a fund shared by the DNR and PF. The credits are then used to purchase additional seed for habitat improvement projects.

"The Habitat Check-off program is really a win-win for upland game and water quality in the state," said Angi Bruce, supervisor for the Iowa DNR's wildlife bureau in southwest Iowa. "The best part of the program is, it costs nothing for landowners to participate. All they have to do is ask for the Habitat Check-off form."

For more information, visit the Private Lands Management link off the DNR Wildlife Bureau's website at [www.iowadnr.com/wildlife/](http://www.iowadnr.com/wildlife/).

## Daily Nationwide Air Quality Information Available Year-round

Iowans now have access to year-round, daily particulate pollution levels, not only for the state but nationally as well. Des Moines and 140 other cities are providing pollution forecasts as part of an enhanced pollution reporting effort.

While daily and hourly summer smog levels have been reported for several years, similar real time monitoring technology now reports hourly particulate pollution levels.

Particle pollution – made up of airborne microscopic soot, carbon and aerosols – is blamed for 15,000 premature deaths annually and contribute to other serious health complications in the United States. High levels of particle pollution can affect everyone, but those with heart and lung disease, children and the elderly, and active adults are most at risk of symptoms. Particle pollution has been linked to asthma attacks, chronic bronchitis, changes in heart rate, arrhythmia and heart attacks.

Widespread areas of Iowa experienced unhealthy particulate pollution levels several days last August.

“This is unprecedented environmental monitoring data that allows particularly sensitive persons to make choices about outdoor activities based on health risks,” said Brian Button, DNR air information specialist. “It took extraordinary efforts from staff at Polk and Linn County air pollution control agencies and the Univer-

sity Hygienic Laboratory to work out technical difficulties in order for Iowa data to be included in this national effort.”

The monitoring and reporting focuses on microscopic particles of 2.5 microns in size — or roughly 40 times smaller than a grain of salt. These microscopic particles can bypass respiratory defenses and become lodged in lung

tissue, interfere with heart rhythms and decrease lung function.

Daily pollution levels and forecasts are available on the Internet at [www.epa.gov/airnow](http://www.epa.gov/airnow) with color maps that show current particulate pollution levels using the Air Quality Index (AQI). The information can also be viewed from the DNR web page, [www.iowacleanair.com](http://www.iowacleanair.com), or on television on The Weather Channel.

### Iowa Whitetails Unlimited Donates \$10,250 for Chronic Wasting Disease Research

Iowa's Chronic Wasting Disease monitoring program received some much-needed support in the form of a \$10,250 donation from Whitetails Unlimited. The money will be used to help research the disease in the state.

Every Iowa chapter holding a fundraising event this year contributed to the cause, according to Tim Powers, Iowa Whitetails

Unlimited field director who also serves on the governor-appointed state CWD Task Force. Whitetails Unlimited has been active in funding research and educating the public about CWD.

The Iowa DNR began testing road-killed and hunter-harvested deer for CWD in 2002, and plans to test an additional 4,000 deer this hunting season. Despite the extensive testing, no cases of CWD have been found in Iowa.

Pictured left to right: Dale Garner, DNR CWD coordinator; Richard Bishop, chief of the DNR's Wildlife Bureau; Jeff Vonk, DNR Director; and Tim Powers, Iowa Whitetails Unlimited field director.



# CONSERVATION UPDATE

## Mercury Discovery Emphasizes Importance Of Safe Handling

The discovery this fall of mercury in a Davenport home emphasizes the importance of handling the substance safely.

Exposure to the vapors of liquid mercury—the type found in thermometers, fluorescent light bulbs and some medical equipment—pose serious health risks. Short-term exposure can result in nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, elevated blood pressure or heart rate, skin or eye irritation and lung damage. Long-term exposure can cause tremors, memory problems and changes in vision or hearing. Products containing mercury should be taken to a regional household hazardous material center for proper disposal.

“It doesn’t take a lot to exceed limits for mercury, even one thermometer,” said Terry Jones, environmental specialist with the DNR field office in Washington.

In the event that liquid mercury is spilled, evacuate and secure the spill area. Make sure shoes and clothing have not been exposed to the mercury and close all doors and windows leading to other rooms. Ventilate the affected room by opening windows and doors that open only to the outside. Call the local health department or the Statewide Poison Control Center at 1-800-352-2222 for instructions on safe cleanup.



Clay Smith

## Low Water Levels Could Present Problems For Fish

Low water levels in some Iowa lakes and streams could pose a threat to fish if Iowa has a cold and snowy winter.

Farm ponds, some already heading into winter under extremely low water levels, could also be in jeopardy. An early winter could freeze the ponds solid, and an early snowfall could possibly cause significant winter fish kills in many of the ponds. When ponds freeze at a low level and snowfall blocks light into the ponds, preventing photosynthesis, oxygen for fish is limited.

Streams in Iowa were extremely low well into the fall, and some smaller rivers were actually dry. Larger rivers that had flows throughout the fall will be holding more fish this winter as the fish move downstream to deeper wintering holes in these sustained rivers.

Low conditions also make streams more susceptible to

pollution. A spill while water levels are low is potentially deadlier to aquatic life.

## Woodland Stewardship Conferences Offered

Two Woodland Stewardship Conferences for timber owners and managers will be held this spring.

The first will be held March 13 in Sinsinawa, Wis., just east of Dubuque. The second will be March 27 in Keokuk. Sessions will focus on woodland health, management and enhancement, however sessions will vary at each conference.

Registration is \$35 for each conference. Registration materials are available from county extension offices, DNR district foresters, extension foresters, Soil and Water Conservation District offices and Natural Resource Conservation Service offices.

## *Volunteering Today For A Better Iowa Tomorrow*

### **Campground Hosts Donate Nearly 8,000 Hours in 2003**

Last spring, the concept of a recognition picnic for campground hosts was just an idea devised by Department of Natural Resources Parks and Preserves Bureau Chief Kevin Szcodronski and Volunteer Coordinator Diane Ford-Shivvers. By fall, though, the first annual Campground Host Recognition Picnic was not only a reality, it was a golden success.

The event came to fruition thanks in large part to the work of Don Primus, Park Manager of Pine Lake State Park. The picnic was held in mid-September at the park, backdropped against the largest southerly stand of native eastern white pine. Presentations by Szcodronski, former DNR Parks Bureau employee and state park historian Jim Scheffler, and DNR Deputy Director Liz



Christiansen echoed the history and acknowledgment of Iowa parks and their hosts.

From May through September,

a campground host serves as a "live in" liaison at a state park or state forest campground. A host's primary responsibility is to assist campers by answering questions and explaining rules. Volunteers are familiar with local points of interest and perform light maintenance work around the campground, such as litter pickup, sweeping, stocking supplies in restroom facilities and making emergency minor repairs when possible; among various other duties.

Rewards for recognition are not the end point. The recognition event is just part of the process of volunteerism. Along with recruiting, recognizing a volunteer helps retain their services.

Last year alone, campground hosts volunteered nearly 8,000 hours of their time. Still, the need is there for more hosts. Currently, applications for campground hosts are being accepted for Springbrook, Prairie Rose, Lake McBride, Pine Lake, Lake Anita, Nine Eagles and Waubonsie state parks.

—Tom O'Neill

### **Upcoming NRC and EPC Meetings**

The dates and locations for the 2004 meetings of the Natural Resource Commission and Environmental Protection Commission of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will be set in December.

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. 9<sup>th</sup> St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.

Visit the DNR website at [www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com) for an updated list.

# WARDEN'S DIARY



This may sound like a strange question, but do you ever feel you spend more time at your job explaining what you aren't rather than what you are?

As strange as that may sound, bear with me, and you'll see why I ask. Sometimes people don't exactly understand what I do, and because of that, I get questions I can't answer. Like...

"Can you tell me if the water table is polluted under my property?"

"I don't know, I'm not a chemist."

"My neighbor and I both live on a private body of water. He says I can't fish on the water past his property line. Is that true?"

"I don't know, I'm not an attorney."

These same people are disappointed, and in some cases astonished, that I don't have the answers, even though I direct them to someone who does.

Of all the questions I get asked, far and away the two I get the most of that I usually can't

## Sometimes You Just Can't Win

by Chuck Humeston

answer is, "Can you tell me if this (insert any kind of animal, fish or bird) is sick, injured or will it live? Can you make it better?"

"I don't know, I'm not a veterinarian."

Typically, those questions coincide with a part of my job that isn't much fun, and that's dealing with wildlife that is injured beyond hope. This situation presented itself not too long ago.

A fawn was caught in a fence, the caller reported, a situation that rarely ends on a happy note. Usually, the deer suffers one of two fates; either the impact of the fall breaks bones, or the deer becomes entangled in the fence and thrashes around until it breaks its legs, back or both. On rare occasions, the fence can be cut and the deer can be released virtually unharmed, but most times the outcome is not good.

I arrived at the caller's home and was directed to a pen in back where I found a fawn with a bandaged leg. "Maybe this will turn out ok," I thought. But when the fawn tried to stand up, and only its two front legs worked, I knew it was in bad shape. It was pretty obvious the fawn had a broken back. "This will not turn out ok," I thought.

We loaded up the fawn in the

back seat of my squad, and I called a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. We both agreed it was pretty hopeless, and that the fawn should be euthanized.

I turned around and looked in my back seat. The fawn raised its head and looked at me. "Stop looking at me," I said. Every time I looked in my rear view mirror, I saw it looking at me.

When we got to a safe, out-of-the-way location, I opened the door, gathered up the fawn and put it on the ground. It looked at me, then simply lowered its head to the ground as if it knew. It was over quickly.

Now some may ask why I couldn't have taken it somewhere and fixed it? That question can lead to a long discussion about a lot of things — issues I settled in my own mind a long time ago. I've written before that the wild is not a place you would want to live. I believe in letting nature take its course whenever possible. That isn't always possible, and when it isn't, it can be a tough situation to handle.

One night many years ago I received a call that a deer had been hit by a car not too far from where I live, and was still alive. I was home alone with my young daughter at the time, so I loaded

her up in the car and drove to the scene. I parked where she couldn't see the action, and walked up to find the deer so severely injured it's legs were severed. An onlooker asked me what I was going to do. "I'm going to dispatch it," I answered.

"You mean kill it?"

"Yes." There really wasn't any way to sugar coat it.

With that the woman proceeded to plead that I take it somewhere and fix it.

"But ma'am it doesn't have any legs," I tried to reason.

She expressed — quite forcefully — that she didn't agree with my evaluation or plan and drove away. I walked up to the deer and put it out of its misery. I got back in my car and started to write a salvage tag for someone who wanted the deer. As I wrote

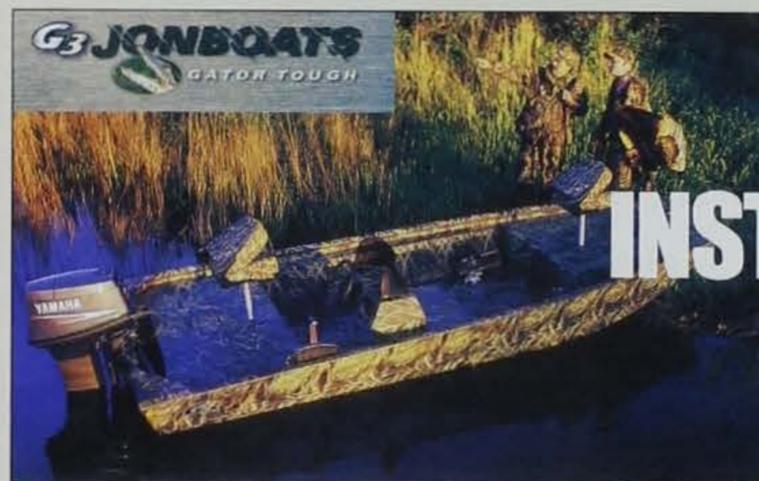
I could hear sniffing. I looked at my daughter who had heard the shot.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

She glared at me as only an 11-year-old can. "YOU DIDN'T TELL ME YOU WERE GOING TO SHOOT IT!" she yelled through her sobs.

"I can't win," I thought. I started to explain the alternative of letting the animal suffer. That wasn't going anywhere.

I don't know, maybe some people watch too much Animal Planet. Unlike the movies and TV, it doesn't always turn out for the better. I've even talked it over with my daughter who is a veterinarian. She's been there too. It isn't easy, but sometimes it's necessary. Sometimes we get caught in the middle. All I know is I try to treat the animal in death the same as in life . . . respectfully.



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